„Our Return Home”

Seminar

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Where is my home – where is my city

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JACEK E. WILCZUR

Returns to Warsaw

The martyrdom of Polish and Jewish children in World War II in the two zones of partition and extermination – German and Soviet – and in the Wilno region, in the so-called General Commissariat of Lithuania, is known reasonably well. But the least known is the history of the Wilno region and the terror of the Lithuanian police, army and administration. There is rich documentation on the subject of the martyrdom and extermination of Polish children on the former eastern territories of Poland, documentation relating to cruelty and mass atrocities on a scale unheard of in Europe, perpetrated by the Ukrainian auxiliary police at the service of the Germans, by the so-called Ukrainian Insurgent Army and Halychyn's 14th SS Galizien Division.

Historians dealing with :Poland's ethnic losses during World War II calculate that out of the total number of six million Polish citizens who died in the war, two million were children, mainly on Polish territories occupied by the Germans, in Germany itself, and on inhuman soil – inside the Soviet empire.

The seizure of Polish children earmarked for Germanisation was carried out by a special SS unit formed specially for this purpose, called *Lebensborn* – the source of life. The children who were taken had their biographies altered. Their names were changed from Polish to German. Their dates of birth were changed and their parents' names were altered from Polish to German. After a period of adaptation to their new conditions, they were handed over to childless German families and to special centres under the auspices of the SS.

A kind of brainwashing was applied in German homes and in these centres. The children were brought up in a German and Nazi spirit. Care was taken that the children forget their mother tongue, parents and brothers and sisters. The younger these children were on the day of their abduction, the lesser

their consciousness was and the greater the chance of producing new “warriors “

However, it did not always succeed. Despite prohibitions and harsh punishments, older children sometimes spoke in Polish and prayed in Polish, and there were attempts to escape from German homes and centres.

The criminal work of the SS in seizing and Germanising children covered all the European countries occupied by the Germans. For example, in Norway SS *Lebensborn* opened nine maternity and care centres for Norwegian children, in order to Germanise them and win them over for the SS in future.

On orders from Himmler, Max Sollmann, the commander of *Lebensborn*, sent children from the Czech village of Lidice, orphaned following the massacre of their parents by the SS, to suitable centres of upbringing.

Although many decades have gone by since the end of the war, we still do not have full knowledge about the return, following Germany’s defeat, of children who had survived the ravages of war and annihilation, from German and Soviet camps and from their locations of enforced settlement.

Surviving Polish children returned to their homeland from every single geographical direction – from the west, from Germany, Austria and Alsatia, and from the boundless wastes of the Soviet empire. They returned with their parents or guardians, and sometimes completely on their own. They returned from Soviet kolkhozes and sovkhozes, children’s homes and places of enforced settlement in the European and Asian parts of the Stalin and NKVD empire.

The returning children were sent to where they had been born and loved prior to deportation. That was the case with children who found themselves within the borders of the renascent Polish state after July 1944. Children from Poland’s former eastern territories, if they returned without their parents, were temporarily housed in care centres all over the country, and later moved to places of permanent abode. Many children whose parents died in the war found foster parents.

Tragic was the situation of returning children who lived on the left bank area of Warsaw before the Uprising, because 85 percent of that part of the city lay in ruins. The situation of children from right-bank districts of Warsaw - Praga, Targówek, Grochów – was incomparably better. In these parts of the city, the Germans crushed the uprising within two days, therefore the right bank of Warsaw did not suffer bomb damage, and there was no massacre of the kind perpetrated on the other side of the Vistula.

In a single short article, it is impossible to do justice to the extensive problem of the return of surviving children to Poland. Therefore we shall merely indicate a few examples of the return of children to the ruins of their city.

Shortly after the end of the war in Europe, the Office of the Commissioner for the Repatriation of Children was formed. Its purpose was to organise a search for children who had been taken to Germany during the war and occupation, as well as the children of Polish women who been sent to Germany on forced labour. The office in question ensured help and care for recovered children, and enjoyed the support and help of the State Repatriation Office, Polish Red Cross, the Church and Caritas.

When in 1945, the Office for the Reinstatement of Children from the allied occupation zones of Germany was formed within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Office’s delegates travelled to the four occupation zones – American, British, French and Russian – to look for children. Polish missions and representatives of the Office encountered no difficulties from the Soviet authorities in the Soviet occupation zone. On the contrary, they received help from these authorities. However, difficulties were posed by German families who had received these children as a gift from the SS, and from German offices and parishes, mainly in the western zones.

Surviving reports,, memoirs and records of the State Resettlement Office, Polish Red Cross and other institutions and organisations engaged in the repatriation of and assistance to returning Polish children between 1945 and 1947-8 allow us to recreate a picture of these years and events and illustrate the fate of Warsaw children.

Ania Morawska came back in a transport arranged by the he Office for the Reinstatement of Children in September 1945. From the place where they arrived, the corner of Jerozolimskie Avenue and Marszałkowska Street, she and her friend Agata, whose surname is no loner known, went straight to Barska Street, where she had lived with her parents and brothers and sisters until the Uprising broke out. The building she had lived in was occupied by new tenants, except for one, a railwayman called Wroniszewski. He told Ania that her parents, from whom she had been separated during the deportations, had been shot by the SS.

Krzyś Zabłocki, 10 years old, returned from the British occupation zone. His mother, with whom he had been deported after the collapse of the Uprising, was killed by an Allied bomb in the middle of October 1944, and his father

died while serving in the partisan People's Army in the Lublin region.

In July 1945, two brothers – 12 year-old Maciek and 14 year-old Antoni Zawadzki, returned from Wuppertal. At no. 41 Marszałkowska Street in Warsaw, their address until 1 August 1944, they saw the skeleton of their building and rubble reaching as high as the first floor. They were taken in by strangers in Grochów, and they never found their parents. From eye witnesses who had survived the Uprising, they learned that their parents had died beneath the ruins at the end of August 1944, and their bodies had been burned on a heap by the *Verbrennungskommando Warschau* – a special German unit engaged in burning the bodies of murdered Poles.

In 1946, two commissioners from the Katowice branch of the he Office for the Reinstatement of Children, while searching for children from Silesia in the western occupation zones of Germany, came across five children from Warsaw who had been brought there in 1943m after their parents had been shot in public on Jerozolimskie Avenue.

The to commissioners – Jadwiga Makowiecka and Roman Hrabar – looked after those five children from Warsaw, They arranged care for them in the British zone, in the town of Osnabrück,. They arranged hospital care for two of the children, and in January 1947 they organised the entire group's return to Poland.

The children who returned in that group were Anna Sieradzka – aged 11, Andrzej Regulski – aged 8, Halina Wyrwicka – aged 9, Ireneusz Maćkowski – agd 10, and Wojciech Jastrzębski. Only Halina Wyrwicka and Ireneusz Maćkowski found their relatives, who took them into their care. The remaining children were taken in by strangers, who gave them shelter and assistance until the Warsaw authorities provided then with permanent care and a roof over their heads.

In later years, after the end of the campaign to repatriate Polish children taken by the SS and by the German authorities, there were very few cases of children returning from Germany and Austria.

Alojzy Twardecki of Warsaw, who was taken from Poland, received a false birth certificate in Germany made out in the name of Alfred Hartmann, and considered himself a German until the age of 16. His father, a Polish officer, was killed in the battles of September 1939. Over 20 years after the end of World war II, he was found by his mother and he retuned to her in Warsaw.

* * *

Out of the huge number of Polish German seized by the Germans and subjected to Germanisation, only a few were found after the war. Most of these children had lost all awareness of their origin and spoke only German, and their German surrogate parents after the war hid the truth about the Polish and Byelorussian children and children of other nationalities, who had been seized by the SS.

Following the defeat of the Third Reich, the problem of the return of Jewish children to Poland did not exist because, sentenced to extermination by Hitler the German leadership, they and their parents and brothers and sisters had died in extermination camps in occupied Poland, Germany and other countries. The only Jewish children to return to Poland were those who had survived on Soviet territory behind the front, although there too they died in exile from hunger, cold, disease and a lack of medical care, just like Polish children in the European and Asian parts of the Soviet Union.

All in all, between the middle of 1941 and 1944, the Germans abducted over 200,000 Polish children to Germany, Austria and Alsatia for the purpose of Germanisation. Not more than 15-20 percent of them were found and returned to Poland after the war. The rest never returned to their homeland to their families. The firm majority of them, grabbed from their parents still in infancy or when aged 1–5, have never learned from their surrogate parents the truth about their origin, and are lost for Poland.

translation: Jerzy Szenderowicz

EULALIA RUDAK

...who will bring tears back?

6 August 1945 - a fine and warm day – our returns to Warsaw

I am in a flat in the attic in 43 Krzyżanowski Street. The wife of my cousin Bolek took up quarters in the attic - the former washroom in an unfinished building. After the war there were no flats in Warsaw. None of my family's flats escaped destruction during the war. Before the Warsaw Rising my father's sister, Leokadia, lived at 11 Wolska Street. She had a husband Władysław and two sons: Eugeniusz – 26 years old and Bolesław – 24. None of them survived the war. Uncle Władek was killed in Koenigsberg. Gienek, a sportsman, member of the SKRA sports club, died in Kraków; he could not stand the strain and hardships of a journey by truck onto which he was put on a bed carried out of a flat in a house burnt down by the Germans and then wrecked. If the neighbours, risking their lives, had not carried Gienek out, he would have been burnt alive in that flat. He could not walk because after the interrogation in Szucha Avenue (at the Gestapo headquarters) his health broke down: his kidneys and lungs were badly bruised and he suffered from a serious intestinal condition. Aunt Lodzia's second son, Bolek, also a "skrzak", member of the SKRA sports club married a sports club colleague ,Alicja. Before the Rising they had a few months old baby son Jurek who was born on 4 January 1944. Bolek took part in the Warsaw Rising and when the Germans took the Wola district, he was sent to the concentration camp in Buchenwald. Before the end of the war he was ordered to march with other prisoners to escape the nearing frontline and he fell from utter exhaustion. One of the Germans escorting them killed him off. Bolek's wife and baby son were taken to the country. After the liberation of Warsaw she returned and moved into that attic taking accommodation in

a space under a slanting ceiling with protruding beams against which we often used to hit our heads. There was a cement floor. On the side of the floor there stuck out an open sewage pipe which we covered with a lid found in the ruins.

In the corner Ala, together with her mother and sister Wiesia, made a stove of clay and bricks and we could cook food. The flat thus adapted was about 24 square metres large, next to it there was a loft and another flat taken by some other family. This attic place accommodated Ala with her baby son Jurek, her mother and a 14 year old sister Wiesia. Ala's father was killed in the Warsaw Rising. Their flat was not destroyed but taken earlier by some other people. We, in our attic flat, were soon joined by Ala's mother-in-law, my aunt Celejewska, who was taken away to do forced labour in Germany after the Rising and returned when the war ended. On her return she did not have a place to live because her house at 11 Wolska Street was in ruin. Also the flat of Ala and Bolek at 22 Okopowa Street was destroyed and burnt.

When on 1 May 1945 we returned to Warsaw from the concentration camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau and Sachsenhausen-Blankenburg) with my aunt Jadzia, my father's sister (my mother was long dead – she was murdered in the Pawiak prison in 1941 at the age of 34) there were groups of people going along Wolska Street with white and red flags. I asked a woman what it was. She said she was returning from the 1 May parade. I asked her if it was allowed to have white and red flags. And I heard from her: "Yes, because this is already Poland". I sat down on a stone at the corner of Wolska and Bema Streets and cried from joy that "it was already allowed". I was 13 at that time. In a moment we went on to look for a flat and the family. We knew that our house at 20 Kacza Street was burnt down and destroyed. Such news was brought to concentration camp in Auschwitz by people from the later transport. On the still existing part of the gate to 11 Wolska Street we found and read a message:" Leokadia Celejewska, Alicja and Jerzyk live at 43 Krzyżanowski Street".

Terribly tired as we were, we went to the address and in front of the house we met aunt Lodzia with the grandson in her arms. We went to the flat – that attic place. Soon Alina came from work, gave us some soup and let us stay and live there. It was a great help to us because we had nowhere to go. We lived there, all seven of us, thanks to the good will of the family whose poor conditions got worse in that small room. From the ruins of some house we dragged out a twisted iron bed and that was how our new "existence"

started. At first we filled a paper sack with dry grass and nettles and it was our mattress for our iron bed. Then we used to go into the ruins to collect feathers from torn eiderdowns and pillows for our pillow. When such a torn eiderdown got wet in the rain, the outside feathers hardened into a shell and the water did not go inside. You removed the shell and underneath there were dry feathers, sometimes less at other times more, at first I collected enough to fill an old stocking but got more every day. We started a new life of sorts with aunt Jadzia. With the hundred zlotys we got from the Red Cross in Poznań when we were returning from the concentration camp, we bought some food and a thin bedspread with a flowery design, some sewing thread and needles. We made two hand-sewn skirts from the bedspread and sold them at the market in Pańska street the following day. And with the money we got we again bought a new bedspread and some food. Then we bought a cape, a beautiful woollen cape but it was not for me to wear only to get the wool. I was still wearing the dress I left the concentration camp in.

At the back of the dress there was a rectangle cut out and a piece of striped material sewn in.

I just tore off a piece of material with a red triangle with the letter "P" and the camp number. From the cape wool I knitted a sweater to sell and we bought a pair of shoes for me because I was still wearing the camp shoes – two different shoes all torn after our way from Berlin to Warsaw on foot. I knitted a small sweater for myself from the remaining wool I mixed with old stockings yarn. I earned money or paid for some things repairing thick stockings I fitted with knitted heels and toes from other stockings. Then with aunt Jadzia we started to cook rhubarb and coffee, naturally ersatz coffee. We used to take bottles with the drinks to the Western Railway Station through which there run the military trains with soldiers returning from the war. The soldiers were poor but bought something to drink paying in groshes or copeks. We returned with empty bottles, collecting on the way some wood or coal if there was any so that we had something to make fire with to cook. It was hard work but we could buy food and pay our "rent". Our health was weakened after the concentration camp experiences and it was difficult to work hard all the time.

At the same time I started to make inquiries about my brother Zenon, a seventeen year old Insurgent. During the German occupation he was the scoutmaster of "Squires of Freedom" in the Wola district then in the "Combat Schools". Last time I saw him on the eighth or ninth day of the Rising

when he came to Kacza Street to our cellar bringing the insurgent news sheet. He came to see us several times. He wore a helmet with a white and red stripe and a white and red armband.. There was an inscription “Zawisza the Black” on the armband.

He had a gun and some hand grenades. He was joyous and happy which spread to us and the neighbours. Only my father was worried, he was anxious for his son; he himself was wounded on the first day of the Rising and was brought home to the cellar. When Zenek came on the eighth or ninth of August he looked serious and wanted to take me to the “Combat School” in Okopowa Street but our father was apprehensive about it and would not let me go. He already knew that the Germans recaptured some part of the Wola district and were murdering everybody. Zenek confirmed it and said that the Insurgents from his Unit were to fight their way across Okopowa Street and on to the old Town. My dear brother went to join his Unit. I never heard of him and never saw him again. I dreamt about him very often, even in the concentration camp, is such strange circumstances. I have always thought about him. He was so good and dear. I was very proud of my brother, elder by 5 years, seeing him as a hero and a patriot.

So, on our return from the concentration camp I started to look for any traces of my brother. I found the grandmother of Heniek and Jurek, my brother’s colleagues and comrades in arms. She told me that Zenek had not got into the trap and encirclement at a local tannery like his other colleagues on the premises of the Pfeiffer factory in Okopowa Street but lost his life from German bullets together with some other people when they were encircled in a small chemical factory in Okopowa Street. Only two elderly women escaped death. The bodies of the fallen were carried by somebody to a cemented area in the tannery and covered with sand. Those who got into traps managed to get away but, unfortunately, later lost their lives in combat or in concentration camps. Only Henryk and one nurse saved their lives. I walked all over the factory premises and found the cemented area where there were several bodies covered with a thin layer of sand and you could see human shapes very distinctly. I started to move the sand from one corner and got to a foot and recognized the sock I myself made.

I was sure my brother was there. Tragedy. Terrible. I ran away from the spot and the caretaker was reprimanding me anyway. I ran home to tell the aunts about it. It felt as if I was running on one breath, I did not cry, I just hurried back to be with people. I got to the fourth floor and ... found

nobody, the flat was empty, everybody was out. Then a feeling of such profound loneliness enveloped me I had never felt before, I did not know where to hide. I went to the darkest corner of the loft. Later, I remember, I hid under the bed. I wanted to curl up and to disappear, the world was too enormous and frightening, I did not cry.

I went to “that place” many more times, I asked the caretaker to let me know when the Red Cross would come to exhume. I also asked at the Red Cross but I was not notified. The bodies were described and buried first at the so-called small playing field belonging to the pre-war SKRA sports club in Okopowa Street, and then moved to the Insurgent Cemetery in the Wola district. Neither from the notes made by the Red Cross nor from the deposits did it turn out that Zenek was there but several people out of eight were not identified. It is a pity I was not present at the exhumation.

One day I met Heniek in Okopowa Street: he was returning home from the concentration camp but could not say anything I did not already know, he looked very ill, shaken and shocked. I met him once more but he did not want to speak about the Rising and all those things especially as the meeting was taking place during some festive occasion for youth art groups in the palace in Krakowskie Przedmieście at the invitation of president Bierut. We were both wearing scout uniforms but, it seems, Heniek did not want anybody to know that we were in the underground “Grey Ranks”. Because we were not alone, I gave up the idea to talk to him.

Life went on despite all this. We were given rationing cards. In order to buy meat (very scanty quantities) one had to go as far as Wolska Street, more or less across the road from Redutowa Street, and it took several expeditions to get something. I was put under an obligation to do it for the whole family and there was no transport in that direction. Every time I went to the shop I went into St.Wojciech Church in Wolska Street (where my father was taken) or the Redemptorist Church in Karolkowa and then, walking on, I climbed the rubble and read the names written on the crosses made of wood: there were very many big crosses and little crosses. Everybody who knew that someone was killed wrote it down, often in indelible pencil, on those crosses. But the names paled in the rain. I managed to obtain a pencil from a carpenter, a red, flat carpenter’s pencil, and wrote out the names carefully in the hope that, maybe, I would find somebody we knew, a close acquaintance or a relative and maybe I make it easier for the others. There were lots of poppies growing on the rubble then, very many light violet flowers (they must have come from the kitchen cupboards of

destroyed houses). I used to pick those poppies and put them at the crosses, countless crosses in the neighbourhood of Wolska Street.

I did not know where and how my father was: a German soldier chased him away from me with the butt of his gun when we were driven out of our home on 10 August 1944. My father stayed but I and aunt Jadzia together with other inhabitants of the Wola district, were made to march to the nearby town of Pruszków. From there we were sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. When the front line was nearing Oświęcim we were truck loaded and taken to a branch of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Blankenburg, near Berlin.

On 6 August 1945 I was at home thinking about all this, Jurek played on the floor, aunt Leokadia was cooking something on the stove. At some point I heard some steps on the stairs and in the corridor, or just felt someone coming. I knew it was my daddy because I had called out to him before I even saw him, and both my aunt and Jurek were startled. My father came in wearing a khaki uniform and carrying a bundle and a sack. We rejoiced no end. We were both happy. Father gave us what he had brought: a sack of hard tack, a cream-coloured, satin tablecloth to make a dress for me and a blanket of bright woollen cloth. He told us about his experiences from the moment he was taken to St. Wojciech Church with other men. Then people were thrown out in groups: some were executed right there and then, others were never heard of again. My father was sent in group of a 100 strong of men to work at the railway stations to load everything the Germans looted and were taking out of Warsaw. All Poles did all they could to delay the departure and removal of the goods and they sabotaged the German orders, put sand into the cog-wheels and bearings, damaged machines and destroyed them. When the Germans found out, it was already the end of November, and they took that group to Austria to dig trenches in Austria. The Poles worked there in terrible conditions in mud and then in frozen earth. When during that work my father was hit by a beam, his old wound from the Rising reopened and he was left in some shed to die.

But a German "Bauer", farmer, found him and gave him work on his farm. Better food and lighter work helped father to regain strength. He was liberated by American soldiers and put to "quarantine" in a camp for Poles where they were persuaded not to return to their country because the things were in a very bad shape there. Some decided not to return but my daddy returned to us, precisely speaking he returned

only to and for me. We both cried over Zenek. Now, with my father, I could cry. It made daddy suffer very deeply: we used to go and look for traces and news at our acquaintances and the Red Cross. We visited all the families who collected the things of their dearest ones from the deposit after exhumation.

In general, we were received cordially but in several cases we puzzled over secrecy, unwillingness to talk and show us the things which they recognized as belonging to their dearest ones. We found nothing.

My dad found us because he saw the message in our destroyed house. In the evening on the day he came back, after all the stories were told, he asked me how we did after our separation: he presumed we must have been somewhere in the country and at least had enough to eat. I told him then that we were deported to Auschwitz. My daddy went pale, lowered his head and said: – my darling girl, Liluniu, why didn't you tell me anything all day long when I was telling you all these "silly little things" about myself. It is nothing in comparison with what you had to bear. How could they harm my family like that, to wrong my children! I will never forget that. – Neither will I – I said. And I had to tell my father everything, he asked not to be spared and tell him everything. A few days after the return my father started to work and our "new" life began. In September I went to school, the seventh grade, in a new dress made from the material my father got as allowance for a part of his earnings. I stopped being afraid of the Germans, I stopped fearing hunger and inhuman humiliation.

Unfortunately, my father died as early as 1952 at the age of only 53.

Today, 6 August 1998, I am alone at home. My thoughts wander back to those distant times. I started to write this. Maybe I will write something one day again although it may surely seem rather unpolished and anxious but I just followed my mood. Till now, I could not describe my experiences although my children and my grandson asked me to. I am afraid, because such reminiscences and memories one has to tear out straight from one's heart and it is very difficult to convey the thoughts, the mood and feelings, and even the facts about those days… it may be well nigh impossible.

In the concentration camp dramatic dreariness one's memories of freedom, of home, of the dining table were glittering in full colour, they were fragrant, fresh and warm… In the concentration camp I imagined that when I got home I would find my whole family gathered round the

stove spreading warmth and that the light of the fire would dispel the darkness of the evening. We would all greet each other, rejoice and sit at the table together. Yet the whole family was never to be together again, there was no home, no table, no bed, no rejoicing only the pain remained.

P.S. On the day I saw my father back, a bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

transtation: Magda Mierowska

STANISŁAW SOSZYŃSKI

Returning to life

"A pearl has died. Has died. Its windows did not exist.
The night lay itself on the white body, and the day
illuminated the plain. And that is how they saw her."
Pablo Neruda

This verse perpetuated the view of Warsaw in January 1946, a view which young generations of Varsovians cannot (could not) imagine. After the signing of the cease-fire in Warsaw on 2 X 1944, the occupant completed the city's destruction which he had been planning since 1939. This plan, known as the Pabst plan, envisaged the demolition of Warsaw and the reduction of a city of 1.5 million people - the capital of Poland – to a prison camp with one hundred thousand people. The plan was realised during the five years of occupation and completed after the collapse of the Uprising. The Germans acted methodically and scientifically. They produced special maps on which the central part of Warsaw was divided into 83 quarters, and then in each quarter houses were earmarked for demolition. Art historians and architects were brought in, who showed the sappers the buildings that must be destroyed at all costs. In Śródmieście, 731 out of 878 historic buildings were destroyed. Most of the 82 houses of worship of various denominations were destroyed. Out of 55 Catholic churches, 8 survived. Dendrologists were also brought in, who showed which trees in the Łazienki Park should be destroyed. An attempt was made to destroy the city using a special technique developed earlier and making use of the city's sewers, which would have resulted in the city's final annihilation, but it proved impossible – thanks to the Uprising. For this to work, the sewers would have had to be airtight, but when using the sewers, the insurgents removed the manhole covers in many places. The sewers survived. Warsaw's location survived. Only a few days before evacuating the city, the Germans destroyed the Saski Palace with its colonnade and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the Bruhl Palace. Telephone cables were removed and the streetcar network taken away. According to Hitler's insane order, Warsaw was to be *glattrasiert* – shaven smooth – as a deterrent to the whole of Europe.

And that is how they saw her.

When on 16 January 1945, Polish soldiers were clearing the ruins of the BGK building while fighting the enemy, they saw some people running after them. One of the soldiers shouted: "This is no place for civilians". He received the reply: " We are not civilians. We are Varsovians". Indeed, they had emerged from the ruins, already inhabited, in order to buy a copy of *Życie Warszawy* from a vendor. The city came back to life. Between January and March 1945, 93,170 bombs, mines and shells of various kinds were removed from 990 buildings and defused. Thirty four officers and men died while carrying out this work. The streets were cleared of rubble, public transportation (horse-drawn carriages) was restored, and the sewers and the gas and water networks were repaired. At the same tine, the telephone exchanges, National Museum, *Zachęta* Gallery and Public Library were rebuilt. The ceilings of collapsed railway tunnels were restored and the parks were cleared of fallen trees and tidied up. In December 1946, 450,000 people lived in Warsaw. They included over a dozen thousand children.

"Armed childhood" – that is the title one of those children, Stefan Tomaszewski, gave to his memoirs many years later. The title was very appropriate, but it was more than just an armed childhood. Those children – girls and boys – witnessed atrocities and violence. Some of them had numbers tattooed on their arms, given to them in concentration camps. They survived a period of contempt for humanity. They survived hunger and mistreatment. Some of them were war invalids, to whom fortune provided artificial legs and arms much later. They were communications specialists and medics. They helped feed their families and, though still children, were adult beyond measure. We are talking about Warsaw, but there were hundreds and thousands of children like these all over Poland. And no psychologist will ever answer the question which 12 year-old Kazimiera Kostewicz asked her slain sister on 14 IX 1939: "What have they done to you?" Her sister was killed by a German pilot while picking potatoes. It was recorded and shown to the world by the American photojournalist Julian Braun. These children witnessed death that was dealt out of hatred to them and to their world. And now they were about to make up for the lost time sitting behind their school desks.

Schools

Out of a total of 289 schools in Warsaw before the war, 123 were completely destroyed, 36 required general

refurbishment, and the remainder temporary repairs. Some schools, for instance the Stefan Starzyński school in Saska Kępa, were accommodated in hastily-erected barracks, heated by "goat"-type stoves produced by the "Neptun" foundry in Końskie. There were no desks. The children often sat on the floor. The desks that had survived were mostly of the old type, fitted with inkwells. The children wrote using penholders fitted with nibs. Books were treated with care. Falski's primer was passed from one class to another. The teachers allowed no writing in the books. The habit of respecting books was programmed into children by the school. "Scribbling" in books was highly reprehensible, not like today. Exercise books were used sparingly because most of them came from American aid and were in short supply. Coloured pencils and paints were the dream of many girls and boys. They said so in their memoirs. Children made the maximum use of school aids that had survived by lending them to each other. The teachers drew posters for nature and biology lessons either themselves, or asked artistically gifted children to do so under their supervision. Physical education was held outside if the weather permitted. Swedish gymnastics was usually taught – the long jump, high jump and running around the field.

Health

There was a hygienist in each school. Some of the children had lice, scabies and other problems caused by the exceedingly difficult living conditions and water shortage. Such health control was essential. The hygienists taught the children the rules of cleanliness, and provided help to growing girls when they started menstruating. In some schools an attempt was made to introduce the habit of cleaning teeth. Compulsory use was also made of a special fungicide which was smeared on hands and feet. Because schools often operated in two shifts, the lighting of classrooms was a particular problem, especially during the first year of reconstruction. Children during the second shift had to study by the light of candles or carbide lamps, left over from the occupation. Most children were undernourished. Cases of open tuberculosis were even discovered. Cod liver oil was dispensed in schools. Classes were lined up in rows. Each pupil had his own spoon. When he approached the teacher who poured the cod liver oil, each pupil had to swallow the oil in the teacher's presence and also swallow a piece of salted rye bread. Such a method of dosage was necessary because some children tried to spit the

cod lover oil out. An attempt was also made to provide extra nourishment to children on the school premises. Lunch was cooked in central locations and delivered to the schools. Sometimes, lunch was cooked on the school premises, especially if the school building had not been damaged. "The lunches were not good" – is the opinion expressed years later on the subject of lunches delivered to the schools. I heard a similar opinion about teas or second breakfasts, which some Warsaw schools made an effort to serve. At least, they were served. For many children, these were the only meals of the day.

The pre-war teachers tried to maintain a high standard of teaching, which was not easy for many reasons. The system of teaching was altered by new directives. These people, not wishing to convey to children values that were alien to them, were often compelled to remain silent on the subject of problems that were sometimes of fundamental importance. One teacher, a member of J. Piłsudski's legions, in other words a participant in the 1920 war, had to make a choice – either to remain silent, or to tell lies about these events. He chose silence. There was yet another problem. These people had been heavily affected by the war. They had experienced arrest, interrogation by the Gestapo or NKVD and camps. Sometimes, the explanation "he was in a concentration camp" had to suffice as justification for a teacher's too impulsive behaviour Until 1949, most schools employed a priest to teach the catechism.

The road to and from school was not safe. It often led through rubble. Therefore, an effort was made to take children to school, especially the younger ones, and collect them later. I myself witnessed how a man walking ahead of me fell into a cellar when the roof of the cellar and supporting walls collapsed. He died, even though I summoned help immediately.

Recreation

Games were not refined. Boys mainly played at being soldiers or pretended they were fighting in the Uprising. In the ruins following excavations there were many helmets that had been previously hung on crosses marking graves. Older boys often had hand weapons or grenades. I heard that some pistol bullets were thrown into a burning school stove, which then exploded. The teacher, of advanced age and from outside Warsaw, described this prank in a single word: "Sewer people" *(kanalarze*). That is how he expressed his disapproval of this band of youths – now pupils – who had

been in the sewers one year before. Luckily, there was no fire.

The girls played with dolls, mainly brought over by vendors from the Regained Territories (regained after centuries). Some of the dolls were very beautiful, with porcelain heads. A carriage for the dolls was a dream and an object of envy. So was a bicycle. When a boy asked whether he could have a ride, he was given the exact route, e.g. " to Kurdzin" (the owner of the estate) and back" and the bicycle was lent. Of course, there was no question of a bicycle ever being stolen. (I discovered that such a thing is possible not until after the so-called political transformations in the 1990's, when an angry father and his distressed son were looking for the thief who had stolen his bicycle, asking passers-by). The bicycles were usually old, with wooden wheel rims, so they were in need of constant repair. A ride on a parental motorcycle, a Polish-manufactured *Sokół,* was a great distinction and pleasure. So was a ride on a carousel. Schools tried to form hobby circles. There were music ensembles, poetry groups and drama groups. School choirs were formed. Children took part in thematic programmes, such as "Warsaw our capital" and "We are building Poland". They took part in gala performances marking the end of the school year or celebrating Christmas. Some schools organised excursions to the mountains or to the sea. The fees, extremely varied, were borne by parents with higher earnings. The children of poorer families received subsidies from the Parents' Committee or Education Board. The Friends of Children Society organised summer camps, in which decent meals was the greatest value. Some poorer children received American food parcels,. just like adults at work. They contained mainly tins of meat preserve, but there was also jam and powdered eggs, as well as sugar, coffee and – rarely – smoked and cooked bacon in long white slices. Chewing gum in packets was also a great delicacy. It as a subject of barter between children and young people.

It is worth remembering that a film reel, cut into strips of five frames, was used as money by the youngest children. Looking at this "money," an observant parent noticed that this was a film about the Uprising. Following a thread, someone reached a gas generator which concealed disintegrated film reels that had been hidden there on the day of surrender. Now that the cinema was Polish again, older children, 14-15 year-olds, who remembered the cinema before the war and were deprived of its pleasures during the war ("if you buy a ticket to a German cinema, you're buying a bullet") went to see the same film several times, especially

because the cinema was free during the first few months. The "Polonia" cinema (formerly the "Imperial") was opened in Warsaw. It showed mainly Soviet films, including *Sekretarz Rejkom*. I remember that the plot of this film was straightforward. The leaders of Soviet partisans, assembled for a conference, are surrounded by a thick cordon of Germans, who in turn are surrounded by the remaining partisans summoned to help. And then everyone starts shooting at each other. Because there was no electricity in Warsaw, the projector was powered by a generator. This worked extremely loudly, which heightened the film's sound effects. After the film, my cousin, who was outside Warsaw during the war, asked me to explain how it is possible to shoot from a gun that is fitted with a bayonet. I explained exactly. Today, in hindsight, and equipped with a knowledge of Russian literature, I see that such a use of the cinema was described by M. Zoshchenko exactly 30 years ago. Wonderful.

Clothing

Clothes is a separate subject. I remember that during the first six months after the war, I went around dressed smartly in a dinner jacket. It was too big, so I rolled up the hem and fastened it with a German army belt. The buckle bore the memorable inscription *Gott mit uns,* before I rubbed it down. Items of military uniform, mainly handed down from the Americans, were elegant. Jackets, coats, trousers – often altered, shortened and dyed. These clothes – let's call them "civvies" – were worn until they were completely in tatters. Children continued wearing clothes when their older brothers and sisters had grown out of them. Shoes, usually not the right size, posed the danger of contracting athlete's foot, especially if they were hand-me-downs. American linen shoes for young people, with leather toes, appeared in 1946.

It was an unwritten rule in schools that girls had to wear an apron. Navy blue. Sometimes with a decorative projection. There were no satchels. Books were carried in gas mask bags made of webbing (Polish) or tarpaulin (English). But they were often simply tied together with belts. Teachers tied to impart material that contained substance but involved little homework. In this way, they took into account the very difficult living conditions, for there were cases where a child could do his homework on the kitchen stove only when the meal had been eaten and the stove had cooled. This problem applied particularly to children on Warsaw's left bank. Attics, cellars and ex-shop premises were used , and even

(I know of such a case) an old refuse store built of brick. Before the war, the house owner had developed a refuse store into virtually a little house, with proper door and window. A round one. The garbage container was thrown out and the building was used for sleeping in. The walls of burnt-out buildings, often buffeted by stronger gusts of wind, were a danger. There was one more reason for this method of teaching. These children – the children of those times – were often breadwinners as well, or at least made a major contribution to the family's upkeep. Therefore they engaged in trade, with boxes hanging on string or on a ribbon around their necks. Out of these boxes they sold cigarettes singly, chewing gum, pumpkin or sunflower seeds, measured out with a glass. Bolder children offered vodka. A separate group were children offering drink to travellers at railway stations. They sold rhubarb or cherry compote, carbonated water and orangeade, in glasses. Boys sold newspapers, loudly shouting their titles, or invited people for a ride – at first in a horse-drawn cart, but later in cars. Young sharks shouted "To Praga, to Praga," and were paid for this. This was not much, but it was always something. In the afternoon, the more gifted children gave tuition in return for food or lunch. Children engaged in trading picked scrap metal out of the ruins, and later, when the practice of acting as "tout" developed, they contributed to the family budget in this way. They were assisted by the shortages.

Those little Poles also instinctively felt the complexity of the current political situation. They saw and lived through the improbable experience of the Uprising. Their city, their street, their building was a fortress of freedom. Unheard of! Almost tangible freedom. For those from Śródmieście, the Uprising lasted an unimaginable 63 days. And suddenly, it transpired – the information appeared on labels and posters – that they should be brought before justice. Their older brothers, fathers and mothers too. Their sister, who was inc communications, and a cousin who had been with General Anders' II Corps as well. And the dearth sentence, no matter what age, for carrying weapons, even those won in battle, often at the expense of bloodshed.

"Still in school, I took my pistol apart into the tiniest pieces, even removing the protectors on the butt. I went home by Krucza St., and from Piusa St. onwards, every so often, I threw a piece of my pistol far away. No one had the right to inherit the pistol after me". That is the last paragraph of the memoirs of the above-quoted Stefan Tomaszewski, who was then 14 years old. What a meaningful message .

translation: Jerzy Szenderowicz

SISTER MARIA ZOFIA WILKÓWNA
FROM THE CONVENT OF THE NUNS
OF THE VISITATION IN WARSAW
TALKING TO HALINA CIENKOWSKA

Return from Siberia (fragment)

Work in the sovkhoz and my wages

...I also worked in the field in this sovkhoz. My sisters did not work because the older one was always ill and the younger ones were still too small. Therefore I worked. In the field, 15 kilometes away from that sovkhoz, from that settlement. When we went out to work in the field in the summer, we spent the night there. I only had one dress, so after one month I came back to wash it and put on another one, and then went back, because there was nothing else to wear. When I came home from the field, my father asked the Russkies how is the *docz*, and they replied she's doing as much work as five people. And my father said that she'll earn a lot if she works like that. But later, my father said, when they started to calculate everything, I had to pay 54 roubles because they claimed I had eaten. Such were the wages. The work lasted until the autumn, and when autumn came Father tried to arrange for me at home in the sovkhoz, fuelling the furnaces where they repaired the tractors, and they gave us different accommodation. It was also a barrack, with several other families already in it. Later, Father became such a great man, and did so much, that they wanted to keep him. They promised to give him immunity, that he would not have to join the army. I was 14 years old and working in that field.

– *And what was the work in the field like?*

The field was ploughed using a tractor, behind the tractor was the plough, which ploughed 3 or 4 furrows. I stood on the plough, which had a kind of handle with which I con-

trolled the depth of the furrow, and sometimes I had to lower or raise the handle, depending on the noise the tractor made.

Sometimes behind the tractor there were 12 harrows, 6 furrows with 2 harrows each. You had to get off the tractor – I was sitting next to the driver – in order to support those harrows – to throw out the rubbish, and let go of them again. And that's what it was – either harvesting work, or the threshing machine, or cutting and gathering hay.. Those Russian women were angry with me because I didn't like slipshod work, and they were angry because that was the way you were supposed to work. But if I had work to do for which they paid me, why not do it properly? I worked alone. My older sister was ill and the younger ones too small.

To Poland at last

Later when the war was over, Father somehow found out that the Poles were going to be released. That I can go to Poland. But they refused to let us go, and didn't even tell us about this. This was in 1946. And it was not just Poles who wanted to go to Poland. One Russian girl, the daughter of a kolkhoz manager who married a Polish boy, she was a teacher, did not want to stay in Russia, but to go to Poland. And she went. They promised my father everything, just to make him stay. But he said he wants to go home. And they said it'll be just the same in Poland. Whatever will be will be, said Father, but I want to go. After a long while we got together with other Poles, heaved ourselves onto a train to Poland and on 17 April 1946, we reached Medyka. The journey took a whole month.

– *What did you eat on the way?*

– What we had with us. Those people from the State Repatriation Office looked after us a bit. That was their job, to look after Poles who had been deported to Russia. They gave us food coupons, and told us we could get bread here and soup there, and that we had to hurry because if someone was late, the train might leave him behind.

Brother Jews and typhoid

...there was an awful lot of carriages, they said 90 or something like that, the train from Russia, and in the train they said only 10% of the train was Poles, and the rest were Jews and various others. Some said there were only Jews. When they searched the carriages on the border at Medyka, it turned out the Poles were poor, but the Jews had been hiding

their gold in the clothes and boots. Thy were scared it might be confiscated, because the Jews used their heads in Russia. For instance, one could get 40 decagrams of sugar at a lower price, the amount allowed per person. They stood in line for it with their whole families. They got the sugar and then resold it at a higher price. If anyone had the money for this sugar, he bought it. The Poles worked with their hands and feet, bu the Jews worked with their heads. They had gold because they indulged in trading. Well, that's what I heard in any case. In Medyka they uncoupled the Jews from the rest of the train and took them somewhere, I don't know where. It was such a long train. When we looked back as the train was rounding a bend, it looked like a long, long snake.

But there was a train earlier.

– When in 1943 the Jews found out that they were being persecuted and murdered here in Russia, they wanted to get their own backs on the Russians. For instance, a Jewish girl used to come to a Russian woman pretending to buy milk, those Russians always made the milk in such a way that it was almost like cream. The Jewish girl asked the Russian to put a drop of the milk on her hand to taste it, but in the meantime she sprinkled some kind of powder into the pail with the milk, and the milk soon started to curdle. They sprinkled this powder in the fields, on the sheaves of grain. And later, children gathered this grain out of hunger. It was pounded n a mortar and made into cakes. In one Polish family there were twelve children. They went to get this grain quite often. In the end, the parents died, and there were their children left. Nine children died of that disease. Father took those there into his care, and together we spent the remainder of the time in exile, and together we came back to Poland, to our parts. And the disease began like this. First there was a little blotch beneath the skin, then a spot was formed, and then somehow the blood inside became poisoned. People didn't know what it was, but in the hospital they called it sepsititiska angina [she probably means typhoid (typhus) caused mainly by dirt - H.C.], and because my sister also went to pick that grain and I never did, because I was not at home and ate in the field, my oldest sister and Father caught the disease. Father developed these blotches on the skin, and went to hospital, and as he left he told us that as soon as we notice anything similar on our skins, we must immediately go to the hospital in Chkalov. (It used to be called Chelabinsk, but then they renamed it Chkalov). I found this out from Father. Once, when I visited

Father in hospital, I saw with my own eyes how he was choking. I saw with my own eyes how he coughed up blood. Father an my sister were poisoned by eating cakes made of grain gathered from those sheaves. A lot of people were ill. And where there was a Jewish doctor, no one came back from hospital, and the doctors were usually Jews. In the hospital where my father and sister lay, the doctor was a Russian, and that saved us, and that's also where they encountered God's Mercy. Father caught the disease in the kolkhoz near Chkalov in 1943, before he was drafted into the army.

And Poland was already so green

But to get back to the journey – we left Russia sometime in the winter, but I don't remember which month, perhaps January or February.

And Poland was already so green - April. The carriages were so packed that there was no room to move. All you could do was lie on these shelves. If anyone wanted to see something, he took turns standing at a tiny window. The carriages were closed, they only had tiny windows, and we lay like sardines on these shelves. There was a stove in the middle of the carriage only. No question of movement. During long stops we could get out, but you had to take care not to get left behind, because the train could start again at any moment, and that was the end. The people were quiet somehow inside the carriages. There was no conversation, only ceaseless prayers, and they surrendered themselves to God's will just as they had done in Russia. Only prayer brought calm. This is how they transported us, through the breadth of Poland, all the way to Szczecin.

A difficult start in Poland

– A soldier boarded the carriage. Father asked him what, and where, etc. The soldier's advice was that if anyone had a family, they'd be better off going back where they came from, for the place where we were being taken was unfit for habitation. He even said we were being taken to territories vacated by the Germans. Others also gave good advice. Fortunately, Father had his papers with him and he had sisters and a brother in Boguchwała, so, without a moment's thought, he travelled back to Rzeszów.

So not everyone in yiour family was deported to Russia?

No, the rest of the family stayed here. But first we got to Szczecin and got off the train, and the soldier said there'd be another train soon. Father arranged what was necessary, and so we arrived in Rzeszów. When we got off in Rzeszów, Father found out what and how. He went to one family and then another, and "distributed" us among each of his sisters. My cousin took my smallest sister because her own children were dead, and she had a vacant bed. My little sister ended up very comfortably. My cousin was alone with her husband and they lived on the market square in Rzeszów. But with us it was different. We knew no luxuries. We lived among aunts who were also poor as a result of the war

– Do you remember your first dress after your return to Poland? After all, you must have changed into something else,

– I didn't even consider it. Change? Into what? I continued wearing what I had on me for a very long time afterwards. The material was like drill something like this. It was sewn in strips using agricultural machines in Russia, and when I tried to wash it with a brush and it was wet, it became as stiff as a sheet of tin. And later this rag turned out to be as big as a sack, because in Russia I was swollen through hunger. Father had no trouble with me. My sisters grew fast, my aunts had to sew them dresses and everything. On returning from Siberia, we all stayed briefly with Father's sister in Boguchwała, but later we had to separate. I remained in Boguchwała because my aunt's daughter worked in a porcelain factory, and she arranged work for me in the manufacture of electric insulators. I worked there together with that cousin, we left home together to go to work, and came home together afterwards. I liked my cousin the way she was – there was no comparison between me and her, after what I'd been through in Russia. But to prevent me from becoming too accustomed to her company, the Lord Jesus caused that, without any fault on my part and without discussing anything with me, my cousin blamed me for all sorts of invented things, and in such a way that all the factory employees believed her and turned away from me. I was very distressed. Only the Lord Jesus did not forsake me. He kept me company, letting me know that he is jealous of me. And that everything would be all right, that I only had to trust him. But I stayed on at that factory until Father obtained a farm and employed all of us there, so that we were temporarily accepted into his family.

Looking for a farm

– But let's get back to looking for a farm. Father was looking all the time for a farm to take the place of the one he'd lost before the war, the one they took from him. First he went to the western part of the country from where the Germans had been expelled, but he got malaria, came back and said that he had even found the kind of farm where you don't have to go anywhere else. It had everything – water, taps, and beautiful furniture left by those Germans. He got all of this, but, as he said, he was always worried because no one ever knew if the Germans might return. Well, he thought about this, got malaria, and never went back there again. After a while he found a farm near Przemyśl, left by Ukrainians, for the Ukrainians were resettled in Ukraine, and there were a lot of them in Poland. He found a farm that was suitable in Grochowce, but everything had to be taken over straightaway because if the farmer is absent everything gets stolen. And he had to come to Boguchwała, to tell us to get ready. In the meantime, he asked a cousin to look after the farm, and he soon went back there because we had to guard everything. Later he came to us again. I was the first to pack and join my father, and my sisters went later because they were still going to school and couldn't go right way.

The family reunited

My father's family strongly advised him to marry, but Father feared very much whether he would find a mother for his children, and he himself enveloped us in his great care. When we were all beneath the same roof, he was a kind Father and Mother to all of us, and taught us everything. So, from 1947 onwards, with Father's ideas and God's help, the farm developed. The church was not far, about one kilometre. My two sisters went to school, and my older sister Kazia got married in 1952 and moved to a neighbouring village. My sister Zodia, two years younger than me, got an office job when she finished school, and went to live in Przemyśl. And so I remained with my father and younger sister Krysia, who was still in school, so that the fulfilment of my dream of entering a convent was not in sight. I couldn't leave Father alone on the farm.

But everyone discourage me from entering a convent. The vicar and the nuns said that I would never be accepted without school and a dowry, and that an evil spirit had multiplied my sufferings, so that it would be a great sin to

abandon everything – Father, the farm, and all the domestic duties.

A choice already made in childhood

It began when I was still with Mother, before the deportation, in our house in Podole. I felt such a desire to devote my life to the Lord Jesus and to suffer for Him. From my youngest days, when I was already five years old, I wanted to help my parents at work, even if the work was too heavy for me. And whenever Mother had a spare moment, she told us about little heroes who worked in suffering and bore everything in silence for the sake of the Lord Jesus, without complaining. And she told us mostly about the Lord Jesus and the Holy Mother, in order to give us an example to follow. She said that the only way to haven is via the Cross, teaching us not only with her words, but also with her example. Growing up with this, I wanted to emulate the Lord Jesus, taking every opportunity to do penance, without considering the cost.

Maturing for the convent

And now, in my suffering and dilemma, I escaped even further to prayer to Mary and Jesus for help in this matter. They cheered me that I need only have faith, and that everything would come in time, for there is time for everything. I did not cease prayer.

As if new strength had entered into me following the experience of my blessing during sleep, I began to tidy every corner, whitewashed the house, cleaned the stables, did the pre-winter garden work, etc. I did everything in secret, not telling anyone, even tough the evil spirit had not ceased tormenting me that it would be sinful to abandon everything like this. But I once read in St. Mathew that he who leaves everything in the name of Jesus shall receive one hundredfold of that which he has left, and shall inherit everlasting life. Therefore I realised that it is not a sin to leave everything, and that in the convent I would pray for Father whom I loved very much, and for my sisters, and the circumstances were such that my younger sister Zosia was at home looking for a new job, so at last I could leave Father on the farm with two sisters. Then I went to Carmel to ask whether would take me without a dowry and without school. When they answered that they could even take me right away, I said it is impossible because they knew nothing about it at home. At home, Father was planning on making

various purchases with my help. Seizing this opportunity, I agreed to go with him,. but at the sane tine I asked him for permission to enter the convent. After a moment's thought, he asked who would accept me. I said that I'd already been told that they would take me into Carmel in Przemyśl, and Father replied with tears in his eyes that I am already mature and that I can choose whatever road in life I want. I considered Father's rapid decision to be God's handiwork. That same day I went to town with my father to do the planned shopping, and he gave me the money to buy material for a black dress sand underwear. My sister was a seamstress, and she sewed everything, not believing that I would last there long.

Carmel

Within the space of a week they took me to Carmel, on 30 September 1954. No one in the village knew. My probation lasted almost one year, but I did not take holy orders until 1957, on 13 January. I took the name Maria Michaela of the Virgin Mary of Jasna Góra. Then I was invited to take vows for a period of 3 years. I did so on 14 January 1958.

The Nuns of the Visitation

I joined the Nuns of the Visitation on 14 January 1961. After six months of probation, I took the name Maria Zofia, and one year later, after my novitiate, I took perpetual vows on 6 August 1962.

I am happy that the Lord Jesus has shared His Cross with me for all my life. I trust Him until the end of my days.

translation: Jerzy Szenderowicz

FUNDACJA

Moje Wojenne Dzieciństwo