

From Monika Sznajderman, *Falszerze pieprzu. Historia rodziny* (The Pepper Forgers: A Family History)¹

Abstract

“... it’s not a matter of blame here, but of the fact that it is very difficult to find space in the imagination for such extremely different human fates, such extremely different situations under the Occupation”. The concluding sentence of the extract printed here captures in a nutshell the author’s aim in her text. She presents in detail the war-time and post-war experiences of her Polish and Polish-Jewish families. Throughout the text Sznajderman sets out the radically different experiences of her complex family. The extract printed here also takes the form of a process of discovery whereby the author uncovers the many layers of silence and knowledge, survival and suffering that shape the German Occupation of Poland in the 1940s and the post-war period.

Keywords: the Holocaust, memory, family experiences, the German Occupation of Poland, post-war Poland

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For Dad – instead of a conversation
For my children – here, now
For my grandchildren, when they grow up

* * *

My oldest memory from my childhood is the kitchen, and particularly the kitchen table. The window looked out onto the narrow courtyard that belonged to a townhouse on Okólnik Street in the centre of Warsaw. The table stood under the window and, from way back then, I remember that we sat at it in an order that never changed:

¹ Monika Sznajderman, *Falszerze pieprzu. Historia rodziny* (The Pepper Forgers: A Family History) (Wołowiec: Czarne, 2016), 15–18, 24–25, 30–31, 42–44, 46–48, 86–90, 91, 116–127.

on the left my father, next to him me, mother at the head of the table, to the right from the window my mother's mother, that is Grandma Maria, and then next to her – depending on the day – grandfather, some cousin or aunt from my large Polish family. On the table was an oilcloth with a design of coloured flowers. It was dark in the kitchen and the light was always on, because the sun didn't reach into the narrow courtyard, but a motionless tension, which the children could feel, hung over the table. Father didn't say much; basically he was silent. Grandmother dominated the conversation. From her very first words, sparks began to jump through the air, and there were small electric discharges. Mother calmed the conflicts down.

The most heated dispute – one that came back regularly – had to do with the food. Thanks to grandmother's social contacts abroad, we received a mass of packets from her lady friends among the White Russian emigrées in France and England. I wasn't much of an eater, but dishes appeared on our table that were unheard of in Gomułka's Poland. I only remember the ones I hated most, the ones I spent most time in torment over: perch filet with capers in béchamel sauce, brains in ramekins, baked bananas (when a child dreamed of fresh ones – to get hold of which bordered on the miraculous), some invented baked dish with asparagus and chicory (grandma spoke of them as "*gratin*"), everything under that awful béchamel sauce, and with oily and insipid olives too. I was sure that was the way it was in every home, and so when, for the first time in my life, I went to summer camp in Świder, I asked the rather surprised lady in charge that I be absolutely never served such dishes.

So when I sat over a plate full of this or some other casserole, swallowing my tears and waiting for the moment when I could bury the leftovers of the meal in the flowerpot with the lemon tree on the balcony (oh, why, oh, why, can't I – just like other children – eat fatty meat, carrots with peas and potatoes with sauce in the school canteen smelling so temptingly of ersatz coffee and wet dishtowels?), my father would intervene and there would follow the one educational lecture he ever gave me. He would say, I remember: "When I was a child and I didn't want to eat something for breakfast, I would get it for dinner, and if I didn't eat it at dinner, then I got it for supper". After this speech, he always left the kitchen. I remember these words because even as a little child, I felt the incomprehensible dissonance between – as it seemed to me then – their absoluteness and my father's everyday exceptional easy-goingness.

Only many years later did I understand how strongly the memory of this principle was connected in his mind with his family home and the figure of his mother, and with the belief that it was her teachings that had made it possible for him to survive starvation in a succession of camps. In a conversation with Barbara Engelking, he said of her: "She was very consistent and firm. She made sure you ate up everything you had on your plate. When I insisted that I wasn't going to eat something, I kept getting the same food. Sometimes this went on for days – as long as one of us didn't give in. That was when I learned to eat up everything, which came in handy later, in times of hunger".

Yes, at that time, I didn't understand anything.

There were moments when Dad livened up. That was when our home was full of foreign smells: cigarettes, washing powder and perfumes; when in the air there would fly around words that were seemingly Polish, but pronounced with some unknown, hard accent, when the word “Jews” turned up, and various strange names – Fela, Frania, Stefa, Rózia, Stach... The name Korczak would turn up too, and not in the only context I knew then, that of *Król Maciuś*, which I did not care for. Because the cousin of my Dad, Stanley Robe (Stach Rozenberg, in a former life, before leaving Poland) was the chairman of an Australian Korczak committee. We would go with them all for supper to hotels – to the *Sala Malinowa* at the Grand, and in later years to the Forum (the cuisine not as good, it was said, and the waiters were stuck-up), and after they’d left, you had to sign, with the impatience of childhood, numberless postcards to “dear Stefa”, “dear Fela”, and “dear Stach”. In answer, in packages with colourful stamps, there arrived at our apartment series of koala bears and kangaroos in every possible shape and size: stuffed toys, three-D postcards, ashtrays, key-chains, and coasters. In my early childhood, I thought, it seemed that Australia, where our relatives came from, was part of Poland, some distant colony beyond the seas.

That’s why I didn’t ask what had caused them to be there, why at the start of the ‘twenties they got on board a ship and sailed to Australia. For a long time, too, I didn’t connect this with the fact that they were the only ones to survive the War, and like ghosts from a lost world with their names, tales, and funny accents, were able to visit our kitchen on Okólnik Street. When I was a child, all that seemed to me to be completely natural. I knew that your grandfather Selim had a brother Józef, who lived at 30 Świętojska Street in Warsaw in 1896, and according to *Józef Unger’s Illustrated Calendar for the Leap Year 1896*, he was an assistant to a lawyer. That Józef had a son Adolf and grandchildren, Stach and Irena. That these, in turn, also had several children. That the sister of your grandfather, Salomea, married Leon Czapnik and had three daughters and a son by him – Fela, Rózia, Stefa, and Zygmunt. That these children also got married and had many children, and so my childish conviction that Poles lived in Australia (though they were a bit different from the ones in Poland) was, in a certain sense, quite justified. I imagined that those strange Poles-not-Poles lived in the bush among the kangaroos and koala bears, and I knew that they called themselves Jews. This exotic cluster of ideas and images – Australia, Jews, the bush, kangaroos, and koala bears – would accompany me throughout my childhood.

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(...)

You were born at night, Sunday into Monday. Fortunately, it wasn't hot then – the daytime temperature from ten to seventeen degrees. "Generally fairly calm, with considerable cloudiness, though generally lessening". A good day for giving birth.

At that time Warsaw covers an area of twelve thousand hectares and is considered to be sparsely populated – the average living space per person amounts to 22.25 square meters. This year, the press announces, you shouldn't expect an outbreak of scarlet fever. That must have pleased Amelia, because in August, just before your birth, twenty-five cases were recorded, along with thirty-one of typhoid fever, two of diphtheria, seventy-two of measles, twenty of rubella, thirteen of whooping cough, fourteen of dysentery, five of trachoma, and a hundred and twenty cases of tuberculosis. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied rumors spread by the American Consulate that there was an outbreak of cholera in Poland. In the first half of August, in the capital, ninety-two Jews died. Intensive efforts aimed at improving hygiene are being implemented. A campaign against rack renting is under way. The ox slaughterers' union informed the public about a reduction in the wholesale price of beef of twenty, thirty groszy a kilogram. There is a plan to lay down eight kilometers of new tram lines: the line from Leszno Street to Górczewska, for instance, is to be extended by five kilometers, up to the borders of Greater Warsaw, and the tracks running through Młynarska Street towards the Evangelical Cemetery, as well as through Targówek to the viaduct and the cemetery in Bródno will also be extended by a kilometer. In Śródborów, the House in the Forest has just been opened – an educational institution for children from six to fourteen, under the management of Julia Wilczyńska. "Such wonderful and prompt results in a free-spirited school in the country", writes Janusz Korczak, "where no one demands the impossible, where energies are not tamed or suppressed, but unleashed....This is the kind of school that parents beg for...". The House in the Forest is patterned after institutions like the *Landerziehungsheim* (an institute for the rational education of children in the countryside). In the favorable, dry climate of Śródborów and in a friendly atmosphere, children removed from the poor tenements of downtown Warsaw are supposed quickly to recover their lost spiritual balance and health.

On a photograph taken two days later, on 31 August, Amelia wrote: "In the clinic. My face covered with a flower – it looks like a mask". Yes, to my grandmother,

these inseparable elements of masquerade in everyday life were essential to happiness. Bottles and vases were replaced by flowers, by many flowers. On the bedside table next to a white cup lies a croissant on a white plate, a watch, and a newspaper. Your eyes are open already.

From another photo, dated 18 October, I learn that Amelia – holding you, not quite two months old yet, in her arms – sat for a Jewish painter well-known in Warsaw circles, Maksymilian (Maks) Eljowicz. During the war, Eljowicz, who came from a poor Hasidic family from the city of Raciąż near Płock, painter, graphic artist, and interior designer, will paint – among other things – portraits of German officers in the Warsaw ghetto. On 25 August 1942, he'll be transported to Treblinka. He'll be fifty-two years old then. But this will happen later.

(...)

On 1 September, you were supposed to go to a new school: you had already finished your education in the elementary school on Miodowa Street (you remember reading books on the street, on your way to school, *Arsène Lupin*, *Gentleman Burglar* was your favourite), and – even though you suffered from whooping cough at the time – you were the only Jew to pass the entrance exams to the Tadeusz Czacki State Middle School in Warsaw. But you aren't thinking about that yet. Rather, you think about your birthday. The most recent one, spent with the family, a child's birthday. You don't know about that yet, but soon you'll be forced to become completely adult. And soon you're going to be left all by yourself.

Among the photographs that have survived there are others – artistic, decorative, professional, taken in the ateliers of photography studios in Warsaw and other places in the world, marked with the names of distant cities: Leipzig, Archangel, Paris, Toronto. They reveal, though, at the same time, they inexorably conceal in an inextricable mystery the fortunes of my distant family, and the earlier fortunes of the more immediate one. Apart from Maurycy (called in the English manner Morris), in several photographs another uncle of Amelia's, Gustawa's brother Jerzy also appears. A photograph from the beginning of the twentieth century, taken at atelier Raphael in Toronto, is captioned: "He was a great scientist and a brilliant intellectual". We can see Jerzy (George) Weissbaum standing, with his gaze turned downwards at a newspaper held by his wife. He wears wire-rimmed glasses and a tly arranged mustache. A background depicting hills and trees behind them. He looks very much the same in a photograph that had certainly been taken earlier, at the end of the nineteenth century, in the Adolph Richter atelier in Leipzig-Lindenau at 61 Merseburgerstrasse. So even then he was already living abroad – maybe Leipzig was a stop on his journey beyond the ocean? Where in the wide world do his descendants live today – flesh and blood of the Weissbaums of Warsaw?

(...)

In the autumn of 1940, your grandfather Selim Rozenberg ended up in the ghetto on the border of Falenica and Miedzeszyn. The resettlements ended on 1 December, and on 15 January, the ghetto was closed. Crowded into it were 6,500 people.

On 20 August 1942, the ghetto was liquidated. It was very hot, sultry. A day earlier, recalls Calek Perechodnik, when 8,000 Jews from the ghetto in Otwock were brought through Falenica, the Falenica Jews saved the thirsty ones with water. Now it was their time. The operation began at three o'clock in the morning and lasted until late evening. Those who survived went in cattle wagons to Treblinka. There, but perhaps earlier, somewhere on the way, Selim your grandfather died.

Amelia, who at the end of September 1939, along with you and Aluś and some acquaintances, escaped eastwards through Wyszaków and over the River Bug, died on 3 July 1941 in a pogrom in Złoczów in what is today the Ukraine. It happened shortly after the Germans entered Eastern Galicia after the withdrawal of the Soviet Army, and terror was let loose there. In the pogroms that took place all over the cities, towns, and little villages of Eastern Małopolska – including Lwów, Tarnopol, Borystaw, Drohobycz, Gródek Jagielloński, Sambor, Zbaraż, Skatów, Brzeżany, and Zaleszczyki – at the hands of Ukrainians and Germans in total many thousands of people died. In the towns and cities, they were shot and robbed, in the villages Jews were killed with agricultural implements: pitchforks, axes, spades, sticks, and scythes, but sometimes, like in Jedwabne, they were shut up in stables and burned to death.

That's how it was in Złoczów too. Bad news travels fast and far, so it's not surprising that when the Germans entered the town, the Jews of Złoczów were seized with great fear. I cannot even try to imagine how on a beautiful July day in 1941, my young grandmother full of life must have been afraid. She was thirty-seven then.

When we went there seventy years later, on a sunny Sunday, on 26 June 2011, in Złoczów they were celebrating the octave of Corpus Christi, which had been held three days earlier. They were also commemorating a seventieth anniversary – but of a crime committed by the NKVD. In June 1941, 649 Ukrainian prisoners died in the castle in Złoczów, which was being used as an NKVD dungeon and, in fact, that was why several days later the Ukrainian militia, with the silent permission and help of *Einsatzgruppen* and – witnesses report – Poles too, in revenge started a pogrom against the Jewish population of the town. According to the account of Szymon Stassler, one of the few witnesses who survived, "part of the Ukrainian population formed a line across the streets leading to the castle. They were all armed with clubs, iron rods, and they beat the Jews brought to the castle in a terrible fashion. The Jews transported the murdered Ukrainians to the cemetery. After that work had been done [the Germans] herded them back to the castle and murdered them there. The pogrom lasted two days. Around 3,000 Złoczów Jews died".

The pogrom in the castle in Złoczów, in which my grandmother died, was survived by Szlomo Wolkowicz, crushed under the corpses of his relatives. At night he crawled out from under the bodies and hiding himself from his neighbours, he returned home. On that terrible day he had first to lift up from "a bog of dead bodies" the corpses of the murdered Ukrainians, then he found himself among those who were supposed to take their place. The tension, he recalls in the book entitled *Wrota piekieł* (The Gates of Hell),

was “not to be borne – let it finish now. It doesn’t matter how, do it soon! And suddenly the order of one the SS men: ‘*Feuer*’. The whistle of bullets breaking a deathly silence, bullets hitting people, people praying a moment before now crying to the heavens, calling out the words of the prayer *Szma Israel* ‘SZMA ISRAEL!’ Screams, screams. ... The screams echoed from the castle walls. Hell opened up under our feet”.

So we went there a few years ago, almost exactly on the seventieth anniversary of the pogrom. Ukraine is vegetal, the great Ukrainian prose writer Taras Prokhasko wrote once. We walked in greenery, lush, with a light coating of dust. Greenery was everywhere: it poured out of the ditches, it spread over the earth, it shadowed the road. In my head the *russian disco* still throbbed from a night spent in a cheap hotel on the main street. Merry groups of people passed us by. The Złoczów castle is a popular site for Sunday excursions. We climbed up Ternopilaska Street. Were they herded up that way too? It was a lovely sunny day. For sure, 3 July 1941 was like that, but it must have been sultry and heavy, since in the evening, as Helena Kitaj Drobner, who also survived the pogrom recalls, a storm broke: “After the storm the shots fell silent and I heard how with a terrible heart-breaking lament a crowd of people came downhill. I could distinguish women’s voices. I realized that those women were coming down from the castle. I heard the Jankowskis talking: ‘Well, now at least those Jews have been taught a lesson’. Jankowska was an old woman, the mother of a doctor. She ran through the names of the people herded up there. She was pleased. ‘It’s good that this one’s gone, that that one’s gone, they won’t feel much like being communists any more. Our Poles could never deal with them in that radical way, like the Germans can. They were just playing with them, gave them two or three years in jail and that was it. They came out, all fattened up after prison’. She was only sorry for old Groskopf, her neighbor, because he was a pious man, and my father, because he was a quiet and decent fellow. At that moment, when up the hill they had shot – it turned out later – (more than) three thousand people, she hadn’t been upset by the shooting or the groaning and howling, but several times she reminded her daughter, an old maid, to let the cat into the room because otherwise he’d catch a cold”.

Did Jankowska, “an old woman, the mother of a doctor”, watch as a mother of two little boys in striped shirts died, my thirty-seven-year-old grandmother Amelia, and was pleased about it? And was only worried about her cat catching a cold? How to believe that such things are possible?

The storm turned out to be a blessing; it discouraged the murderers, and it helped to alleviate the thirst of the very few survivors – including Szlomo, who, having pushed aside the corpses that were crushing him, “swallowed down the drops of rain, the drops of life”. “The mighty song, the prayer *Szma Israel*, coming from the throats of the dying, clearly reached the Father of Mercy in heaven”, he writes. “And only now did He show pity for our sufferings”.

My grandmother was not among those to whom pity was shown.

(...)

As early as July 1942, the Germans were seriously getting ready for a large-scale operation. On 22 July 1942, the Ghetto was “tightly sealed off, the guards on duty were strengthened, around the wall circled patrols of the blue police and of the SS in black, and outside the wall, at first- and second-floor level, Latvians in brownish-green uniforms were on watch with rifles pointed at the street, stationed on balconies, at open windows on staircases, and in hallways”, writes Bogdan Wojdowski, chronicler of those days. “Huts full of gendarmes stood clustered together on Żelazna Brama Square and on Grzybowski Square, ready for action”. From that time, day after day, to the *Umschlagplatz* marched crowds “silent as a stone. Those crowds no longer believed in the value of human speech”, recalls Adolf Rudnicki. On 3 August, on Monday, “the thirteenth day of the slaughter”, after “a terrible night haunted by spectres”, Ignacy took his younger son and went too.

And so your father with your brother walked, that hot summer day, through the whole ghetto. They went alone, or did they rather walk in a crowd, in convoy, in “a long silent procession” or among cries, curses, and shots? Did they cut through Nowolipie, Nowolipki and Dzielna Streets, in order later to avoid Smocza and Lubecki Streets that were blocked that day? What did Ignacy say to Aluś? Did he know where they were going? Did they take luggage with them or did they have nothing? Or maybe like Mieczysław Hartzylber’s parents they went to the *Umschlagplatz* in a horse-drawn cab, “as if they were going to the train station”, a case with things in it against the seat by the cab-man’s legs?

That day the propaganda newspaper, the *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*, reported that on Sunday at the race course in Lublin, two-year-olds, stallions and mares, made their debuts. In the second race, first past the post was Game, a stallion belonging to Count Smorczewski, ridden by Pasternak. The Tote registers in Warsaw and Lublin paid out twenty-nine zloties on each bet.

That day horses in general were the main topic of the news. While walking down Koszykowa Street, forty-nine-year-old Józef Kleczeński of 68 Młynarska Street was kicked by a horse standing on the street close to the pavement.

That day from the *Umschlagplatz*, 6,450 people were transported, including around 3,000 who had reported of their own free will. Ignacy and Aluś were among them.

Of the last journey of my grandfather and my paternal uncle, who will forever remain in my thoughts a small boy with a mop of dark frizzy hair, and not an uncle, there has survived a trace in the memoirs of Alex – Alexander Szejman, the protagonist of the book *A jednak czasem miewam sny* (But Sometimes I have Dreams) by Joanna Wiszniewicz. “One time a well-known doctor, Dr Sznajderman, turned up at our place. He said he wanted to say goodbye. With his ten-year-old son, he had decided to go to the *Umschlagplatz*. ‘But doctor! What are you doing?!’ mother burst into tears. ‘I can stand it anymore, madam. I haven’t the strength to struggle’. He had money, documents, things to fall back on. But the daily tension – he couldn’t stand it any longer.

This Dr Sznajderman had two sons, who at the start of the War had fled with their mother to Złoczów. But when the Germans entered the town and shortly afterwards the mother was killed, they came back, after some awful experiences, to Warsaw. And now, their father had decided to take the younger one to the *Umschlagplatz*, and the older one, fifteen years old, had been moved outside the ghetto with a special group of Jewish workers. I knew the older son [Marek]. He went to underground school classes with Michał Dorfman. He was a handsome lad, tall, always terribly sad. In his eyes he had something noble about him”.

(...)

What to do with experiences that go beyond all known borders of reality, with experiences to describe which we have no language, concepts, or categories? What to do with a place in which, as Agamben says, a state of exception has become a norm, and an extreme situation has been transformed into a paradigm of the everyday? Camp reality is not subject to the norms of the world we know and closes itself off against attempts to understand it. So – if we do not possess tools to describe that reality, if, citing the title of Primo Levi’s book, we do not even know “if this is a man” – how can we use any known terms to refer to it? Such as, for example, “evil”? In the Ghetto, Rachel Auerbach asked herself the same questions, as did many philosophers, writers, and historians after the War. And no one has found words other than ones that are completely conventionalized, but that are indispensable to describe an experience in relation to which language otherwise would have to remain mute – for, even in the face of the ultimate, we are subject, as Jerzy Jedlicki writes, “to the enslaving power of coagulated literary conventions, which by themselves flow out from our pen, even in the description of a situation that is previously completely unexamined”.

But if we do use the concept of evil, the question immediately arises: do Majdanek and Auschwitz weigh the same on the scales of evil, or is Majdanek, in fact, a lesser and Auschwitz a greater evil? In Auschwitz was evil taken to its most acute, most cruel, its extreme form? Did those who survived Auschwitz, come out of it a little, as Irit Amiel writes, more scorched? And if so, does that not mean that the crematoria flames in Majdanek were somehow cooler and burned a little less than the crematoria flames in Auschwitz? And that those who died in Majdanek died less? But perhaps the extreme evil was the extermination camps, not the work camps, and among them Bełżec, where in the course of not quite ten months around half a million people were murdered and which, according to some sources, only four people survived – Sylko Herc, Rudolf Reder, Rabbi Izrael Szapiro, and Chaim Hirszman (killed in his own flat in Lublin on 19 March 1946) – according to other sources, three, and according to still others, only one? Reder and Hirszman gave accounts after the War, all trace of Herc and Szapiro vanished. So Bełżec, then, which did not even leave any memory behind? And if, indeed, Auschwitz in the summer of 1944 (up to 23 August) was the most extreme experience of evil that humans have ever known, since – from an economic perspective – it was then

that the Auschwitz enterprise of death achieved its highest productivity, working two shifts of twelve hours each, does that then mean that the evil that reigned in Auschwitz earlier and later was a lesser evil? On 2 November 1944 killing with gas was stopped completely. From then on, prisoners were killed “only” by shooting in the gas chamber or in the yard of Crematorium V. Also the number of members of a *Sonderkommando* was reduced to 105. From November the dismantling was begun of the technical equipment in the gas chambers and ovens of Crematoria II and III. Crematorium IV was completely taken down. “From August 1944 to the middle of January 1945, the camp gradually passed”, Andrzej Strzelecki writes in the fifth volume of *Auschwitz 1940–1945: Crucial Issues from the History of the Camp*, “from its apogee to a slowing down of the dynamic of its development and finally to its liquidation”. The use of the expression “a slowing down of the dynamic of its development” in the context of the most terrible annihilation factory in history betrays the complete helplessness of the language of science and scholarship in relation to the Holocaust as a subject of research.

To all those questions I cannot find an answer.

Many of those who survived – ordinary people, philosophers, writers – think, however, that the Holocaust, that liminal situation extended in time and space, which was, looking at the matter technically, one of the elements and the ultimate consequence of the state of emergency introduced by the Nazis in February 1933, shortly after they took power, and never officially suspended, has its half-lights and half-tones. For several, the most extreme figure, embodying the operation of pure evil and going beyond the scale of human experience was the figure of the *Muselmann*, called by Primo Levi “the complete witness”. But that was an oxymoronic figure, for the *Muselmann* was a witness who had no chance to deliver a speech and bear witness and in whose name survivors speak. (That is why some call testimony given by survivors pseudo-testimony and the Holocaust “a space without witnesses”.) Because of a lack of better definitions of the previously unknown state of humanity experienced by *Muselmänner*, according to Giorgio Agamben, they were called “corpses holding themselves up on tottering legs” (Jean Améry), “walking corpses” (Bruno Bettelheim), “beings half-dead, people-mummies” (Aldo Carpi). According to Agamben, *Muselmänner* did not so much situate themselves in camp reality on the border between life and death, so much as they marked out the border between the human being and the non-human being and they inhabited a central “non-place”, the extreme, ultimate realization of which were the gas chambers.

To you it will not be given to reach the furthest border of this world beyond the world, to a reality “beyond guilt and punishment”. It will not be given to you to reach the central “non-place”, nor will you become a participant in one more extreme situation, which, according to Agamben and Primo Levi, was to work in a *Sonderkommando* – an ultimate border of that excerpt of camp reality that Levi called “the grey zone”: a zone in which, from the point of view of the ontology of evil nothing was obvious, in which going beyond

categories, known to us and made familiar, of good and evil, a new ethical element was forged, in which it was difficult to make a distinction between butcher and victim.

If it had happened otherwise, I would not exist. Miracle, fate, destiny, providence, but maybe just chance or luck became your and my share. You survived, and Maria Thau could write what she wrote: "I believe that the camps, hunger, and loss of parents and brother did not destroy his personality, did not soil his inner purity". But can these words be true? Is it really possible to survive the Holocaust? Available testimonies seem to contradict this. All that remains for me is a saving, redeeming faith that you are an exception. That you alone managed. For, although I know that you bear and will forever bear Auschwitz in yourself, I have to believe that at least to a certain extent, both physically and morally, you were victorious against it. I have to believe in your words that you were able so far to free yourself from memories that you were able to live normally, and that you never thought of revenge. I have to believe that the Auschwitz number on your forearm is not – as it was for Améry – the entire meaning of your existence and that, unlike Améry the "stubborn memory of the victim" left you. I have to believe that you are free from the feeling of shame that, according to Primo Levi, does not depart from those who survived, since they feel themselves "in a certain sense 'worse', not just in relation to the best, to those for whom rectitude made accommodation impossible, but also in relation to the anonymous mass of the lost whose deaths cannot even be called death". I have to believe that at least sometimes you do not share with Elie Wiesel the feeling of guilt expressed in the famous observation that he was alive and therefore was guilty. I am happy that Auschwitz did not overtake you in after years – as it did Dawid Rosenberg, Paul Celan, Primo Levi, Bogdan Wojdowski, and many others – in the shape of madness and suicide, like a deferred death penalty.

We were recently together on the occasion of your birthday. Grandchildren, great-grandchildren. "On 9 May 1945, I was completely on my own", you said with some hesitant – and that was you always – incredulity. "And today, look – today I've rebuilt the family".

(...)

"We all survived, they all died"

When I was a child, they were for me a safe nest, a protective clan. My large Polish family: grandmother, her sister, and three brothers, along with their endless number of wives and husbands, second ones, third ones, tenth ones... the Lacherts: Maria, called Masia by everyone; Anna, the youngest of the siblings, because of her beauty and height known as Lalka (the Doll); Zygmunt who was closest to my grandmother's heart; Czesław the *bon vivant*; and the oldest of the five, Bohdan the architect. Stalwart, handsome, clearly defined. Heroes and heroines of countless stories, which a child's imagination was delighted to feed on: of how Czesław escaped in 1944 from the prison in Lublin Castle, when hidden under a manger in the stable where he worked, he overheard that there was to be a mass execution of prisoners; how Maria became friends with

the famous fortune teller Stefan Ossowiecki and was herself gifted with second sight (I could endlessly listen to how Ossowiecki saw the pre-death aura of Count Wielopolski, to stories about his ability to divide his person into material and astral bodies, about the miracle of bi-location). Of how the family abandoned the name “de Peselin” that they had lugged with them from somewhere in Saxony, because the children at school teased them shouting out “de-bum-slime”, and how the father of the clan, Wacław – when the family was still living in Russia – won at cards a coach drawn by four horses and an estate of fifty-four hectares in the Far East, where he had never been, but from which he drew substantial profits. Of how Czesław was taken in the 1920s straight from the tennis court into the army, in faultless tennis clothes and a monocle in one eye, and how in the course of some hard betting at the racecourse, he lost all the furniture in his parents’ apartment, and they said not a word to him about it. And of how, in turn, Maria’s first husband, my own grandfather, lost their property in Rudnik at cards, which Maria learned about from the announcements of auctions hanging up in Lublin, and immediately divorced him.

Yes, I had a colourful, rich childhood, without a feeling of lacking anything. As opposed to my Jewish ancestors – “ordinary people without a history” – my Polish ancestors were people with a history and deeply marked by history, with varied political views and various post-war experiences. In the 1960s and 1970s, at family gatherings at the home of Maria’s oldest brother, the architect Bohdan, there were always several dozen people. And my *madeleine* is the unique and unrepeatable taste of my grandmother Mucha’s shortbread and a memory of the dumb waiter travelling up and down between the cellar and the salon in the strange villa that looked like a ship at 9 Katowicka Street in Saska Kępa in Warsaw.

The experience of absence came much later.

(...)

The duties of landowning society – besides work, bridge, picnics, balls, and charity work – also included taking part in politics. Or at least holding political views and having suitable political connections. The Lachert family has one excellent card: it assiduously cultivates the story of its masonic past, in accordance with traditional gentry values it is deeply patriotic, and it also boasts unquestionable services in the struggle for an independent Poland and its reconstruction. Wacław is friendly with *Sanacja* politicians: from his years of study at the prestigious Leopold Kronenberg Business School, he has been a friend of the Piłsudski ideologue Walery Stawek, works together with the pragmatic Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, who has a high opinion of his knowledge and abilities ... my goodness, he knows Józef Piłsudski himself, who apparently, as the family legend has it, several times offered him the post of Treasury Minister. But Wacław, a man of deeds and a genuinely nineteenth-century Positivist in the mould of Aleksander Świętochowski, says no. He does not crave applause or honours; he considers that he is much more use to the new Polish state in the economic field.

After Piłsudski's death in 1935, there is a split among the Marshal's supporters: Walery Sławek resigns, and Marshal Edward Rydz-Śmigły along with Adam Koc form the non-governmental Group of National Unity. Many old *Sanacja* politicians consider its conservative and nationalist programme to be a betrayal of ideals. Poland turns sharply right, and along with Poland, it seems, a part of my Polish family too. Despite a masonic past and a tradition in the Polish Legions, they inexorably sail off, along with a large part of society, in a Catholic-nationalist direction, and the squire of Ciechanki Zygmunt Lachert becomes a prominent activist in the National Party. If I'm not mistaken, the only exception in the family monolith will be Bohdan, the eldest of the children. From the beginning of his architectural studies, averse to reproducing the patterns of manor houses in Soplicowico and fascinated by the avant-garde, he founds the "Praesens" group at the end of the 1920s, along with his friend and close collaborator Józef Szanajca and Helena and Szymon Syrkus, and then later with others, among them Barbara and Stanisław Brukalski, Maksymilian Goldberg, and Zygmunt Skibniewski. "Praesens" drew on the ideas of Le Corbusier and designed several workers' housing estates in Warsaw, including the WSM estates in Żoliborz and Rakowiec. It is all about architecture for the masses, along with "improving forms of social life", we read in the second issue of the journal *Praesens*. From his youth right up to his death at the end of the 1980s, Bohdan will remain a man of the left – at the start deeply and sincerely, though in time certainly opportunistically – something that in my Polish family was never fully understood and never fully forgiven. After all, tradition, history, and class do carry an obligation to something. ...After all, upbringing and education... . After all, with his own eyes he saw revolution and had to flee along with the rest of the family, abandoning everything they owned. ...After all, he fought against Bolshevism and served time in a Bolshevik prison... Didn't he?

I spent a lot of time dealing with my Polish family's nationalist sympathies, although they were never spoken of directly. For example, although I often heard of the Polish Legions to which Kazimierz Rojowski belonged, I don't recall that it was ever mentioned that he also belonged to the National Party, and at the start of the War to the National Military Organization. Today, years later, although I know the historical causes and mental factors involved in my Polish relatives' right-wing conservatism, it is still difficult for me to comprehend it. In the 1930s, the National Party was openly fascist. Publicly and loudly it propagated anti-Semitic ideas and called for the complete extirpation of Jews from public life, pushed through *numerus clausus* and *numerus nullus*, and nationalist thugs organized many "crystal days and nights", as Alina Cata calls smashing windows in Jewish shops and homes. From May 1935 to September 1937, like an infectious disease, pogroms inspired by the Nationalists spread throughout the country. Altogether there will be well over a hundred such (in Silesia there were even bomb attacks). Ones like the one in Przytyk on 9 March 1936 during the yearly Kazimierz market, the result of the campaign over several months "Each to his own in his own way". The reporter and writer Ksawery Pruszyński will call these events the struggle of the poor

for the market stall. In the Przytyk pogrom, among others, Chaja and Josek Minakowski died, and their sons were badly beaten up. Following the trial, Pruszyński calls up a picture of “the low-ceilinged rooms of the Jewish house”, where the window frames “give way under the weight of the stones”, a picture of three terrified children “pulled out by their legs, hair, and heads from under a wretched squalid bed”, before “the heavy peasant yoke bars come down [on them]”, a picture of “Josek Minakowski’s head crushed and smashed by rods until he was dead” and of “what was left of the head of Chaja Minakowska after it had been smashed by the yoke bars from carts and cut through with a knife or the blade of a peasant sickle”. According to various calculations, in the years from 1935 to 1937, there will die in pogroms like the one in Przytyk from several dozen to several score people, while around two thousand will be wounded. There were also many anti-Jewish – to cover up, sometimes called “anti-communist” – rallies held by the National Party. Like the one in Wąsosz on 7 August 1938, which seven hundred took part in, or the one in Radziłów on 3 October 1937, which brought together a thousand people.

It is hard not to see the tragic results of the anti-Semitic campaign conducted by the nationalists. The Lacherts, too, must have been aware of them. In June 1939, not quite three months before the outbreak of the War, when it was already impossible to have any illusions about what the fate of the Jews is in Hitler’s Germany and Austria, the Central Council of the National Party keeps on writing of the “Jewification” of Poland and sees in that the main obstacle on the road to the consolidation of the nation. What did Walery Stawek’s friend, my Polish great grandfather Wacław Lachert, think? Is that how he had imagined the kind of state in the rebuilding of which he had actively participated? Could – leaving aside moral issues – an entrepreneur experienced in economic matters and a social activist really imagine Poland without Jews? What did he think when some months later the theme of the “Jewification” of Poland is taken up by the German reptile press, writing about it – and not by coincidence – in a language similar to the one used in publications of the Polish nationalist underground, such as *The Struggle* owned by the National Party or the National Radical Group’s *Barricade*? What did he think when – especially then – his son Zygmunt announced he had formally joined the National Party?

It’s not easy for me to understand all this. And I don’t know if it happened suddenly, or if it was perhaps always in us, and I just deceive myself that it wasn’t.

It’s true that Zygmunt joined the National Party only during the War. He was inducted into the Party by (as he writes in his diary) the “utterly charming, noble-minded, and obliging” Tomasz Kozuchowski, but probably, for reasons that were both social and connected with his view of the world, his sympathies had been with the Nationalists earlier. In 1922, when he was still at school, he became a member of a combat squad the aim of which was to attack newly elected President Gabriel Narutowicz (which did not prevent him, shortly afterwards, from being authentically shocked by his death). As his spiritual guide during his school years he names Father Kazimierz Lutosławski – collaborator

of Roman Dmowski and great opponent of Narutowicz, whom he considered a leader forced on Polish society by the Jews (after the President's death, Lutoslawski was even, along with Haller, accused of incitement to commit a crime). And the Jews, Father Lutoslawski, on whom my young grandfather and his friends had their eyes fixed, believed should be ruthlessly excluded from society and politics, because "the admission of a Jew into the family, into company, into the firm, into business, into the association, into the officer corps, into public office, into the community of teachers, into the school, into the club, into any manifestation of collective Polish life is a kind of high treason".

It is not surprising that having such a *cicerone*, Zygmunt will take part in many acts of agitation organized by the national Party, including tearing down posters and scattering fliers calling for votes for Dmowski, Haller, and Korfanty. Did Wanda and Waclaw Lachert, citizens of the world and caring parents, not know of this? Did they not try to prevent it? Did they not react? Zygmunt's choices could be put down to youthful wildness, if it were not that at the start of the War, when finally and formally he sealed his belonging to the nationalists, he immediately received a proposal to join the Main Governing Body and accepted it. "After the formation of the authorities of the underground state, the so-called Delegation of the Polish Government in London, and thus after the fall of France and General Sikorski's move to London", he writes in his diary, "I was nominated on behalf of the National Party the Deputy Delegate of the Government to the Lublin voivodeship. The Delegate himself was a member of the Polish People's Party called Cholewa. The position was the equivalent of the function of Vice-Voivode, and its remit included the organization of civil struggle and passing sentence on German torturers and collaborators". In the Governing Body, he will work together with, among others, Otmar Pożniak, Deputy District Delegate of the Government of the Polish Republic in the Lublin voivodeship on behalf of the National Party, with the President of the Main Governing Body Stefan Sacha, with Władysław Jaworski (pseudonym: "Olza"), who in 1944 on behalf of the national Party entered the Council of National Unity within the structures of the Underground Polish State, with member of the Governing Council of the Party Stanisław Jasiukiewicz, with Father Jan Stępień, who had the function of head of propaganda, and with Kazimierz Kobylański, who was also a representative of the National Party in the Council of National Unity. In 1947, Zygmunt, along with Władysław Jaworski, Kazimierz Kobylański, Adam Doboszyński (whose action squad in 1936 attacked the Jews of Myślenice, a police station, and shops, and tried to set fire to the local synagogue, from which even the leadership of the National Party dissociated itself, although with some delay), and with many other prominent activists of the Party, will be arrested, tried in 1949, and sentenced to life imprisonment; he will serve nine years until 1956. At that time, his older brother Bohdan will design the Cemetery Mausoleum of Soviet Soldiers on Żwirki and Wigury Street in Warsaw, where, the family story goes, he will want to be buried.

But all that happened only some time later.

Because for the time being – at the beginning of the Occupation and in the summer of 1940, and even later – everyday and social life in Ciechanki and the majority of local estates (the majority, because, for example, Łancuchów and Podzamcze were nationalized by the Germans) – at the Nowakowskis' in Krzywomla, at the Kołaczkowskis' in Pliszczyna, at the Rojowskis' in Sobianowice, and at the Ciświckis' in Rudnik – went on rather as if nothing had happened, as if there were no war. It's true that people came who were fleeing occupied Warsaw, but there was an attempt at all costs to live as before: the old pre-War life. "Our home was filled with guests", Zygmunt notes in his diary. "Zosia Kożuchowska was there, Lieutenant Kawecki who is in hiding, Dr Ostaszewski, Colonel Rokicki, later Commandant of Mokotów during the Warsaw Uprising. Dr Kożuchowski and the lawyer Bortnowski came almost every Sunday. I would send horses for them to the bus going to Łęczna. My father – my parents – spent several summer weeks in Ciechanki – they enjoyed some excellent bridge. Stasia helped Hania out in the kitchen and always prepared excellent suppers". On 18 August 1941, almost two years after the outbreak of the war, when in Lublin Jewish schools, synagogues, and prayer houses had long been closed, and in the Lublin ghetto in Podzamcze tens of thousands of people were existing in terrible conditions, my grandmother's second husband Kazimierz Rojowski after some incident about which I know nothing more, on 17 August on the horse-racing track in Lublin challenged Jerzy Bruno Netter to a duel. However the duel didn't take place because the seconds – Mr August Jurjewicz and Mr Henryk Zajęczkowski – maintain (and record in the protocol) that "the present difficult political situation in the country does not permit a settling of private matters with serious consequences that do not have the general good as their aim. Besides, all procedures at present against someone bearing a purely German surname, and insufficiently known in circles here as he is someone who has arrived from the west, suggest well-founded fears that this might cause, instead of the customary manner of dealing with matters of honour, a conflict with the authorities, and as a result might turn out to be pernicious both for us as seconds and for our principal". In the summer of 1941, when the Soviet-German war is being fought and my Jewish grandmother is dead already, and my Jewish grandfather and his younger son have only a year left to live, the conduct of the squires from near Lublin is still governed by the Boziewicz Code of Honour. It's true that the War constitutes a certain difficulty to applying it, but once that's over, everything for sure will return to normal. Therefore "the deferment of the challenge issued to Mr Jerzy Bruno Netter by Mr Kazimierz Rojowski can have no bearing on the relevance of this matter of honour at the right time, and it is because of the above-mentioned causes unforeseen by the Codes of Honour. Sobianowice, 18 August 1941".

They still do not know that "the right time" will never come. That generally there is not much time left for them all, not only because Kazimierz "Kizio" Rojowski will die in the 1944 Uprising. Their world will vanish into the past, their world with its bridge games, sleigh rides, horse racing, duels, and code of honour, which in its modern version, brought up to date for the times, enjoined seconds to disinfect swords used in combat.

But for the moment the Occupation goes on, and in Wrotków in Lublin, there are apparently very popular horse races. The first in 1940, the last in the summer of 1944 – posters advertising them hung on the advertising pillars right before the Red Army marched in. In the grandstands, if the surviving photographs are to be believed, there are crowds, jolly and elegant: no trace of the War. There are two grandstands – a German one and a Polish one. According to the official Occupation press, the races were organized by the German authorities with the active cooperation of the Polish Horse-Breeding Association and, above all – the propaganda newspaper *Nowy Głos Lubelski* of 17 August 1941 informs us – “of Director Konopnicki, who has been organizing racing events since 1935, and Dr Korbel, former head of the stud herd in Gniezno”. In the races on 16 and 17 August, the favourites are Gwatemala, Est, Carnival Queen, Maygland, Łopuszanin, Goplana, and Harmony Gerl. On 19 August, the same newspaper announces triumphantly that the races had around three thousand spectators, the weather was fine, and on the track the going was dry. The results of the races were very close to the gamblers’ choices; the tote paid out. And above the hubbub on the grandstands and the drumming of horses’ hoofs there rose – as the memories of witnesses recall – the noise of carriages driving over the track and the sounds of a German orchestra.

In the wartime press I look for the causes of the duel that almost took place. Horse racing was a popular subject in the official propaganda press. On Monday 18 August 1941, the reptile journal *Nowy Kurier Warszawski* reports: “The second and third days of the Lublin horse races transferred to Warsaw with similar attendances and interest among gamblers as was the case at the inaugural races of the previous Sunday. The overall turn-over came to nearly 130,000 zloties. Warsaw – 63,750 zloties; Lublin – 65,910 zloties”. A day earlier, when there was the conflict between Kazimierz Rojowski and Jerzy Bruno Netter, the first race was won by Rumor ahead of Garibaldi, the second by Gomora ahead of Litawor, the third by Dukora ahead of Mousguetaire, the fourth by Łopuszanin ahead of Goplana II, the fifth by Meloman II and Ostra, the sixth by Ypres, Limba II, and Nitra. Unfortunately, I only know the names of the jockeys and not of the horses’ owners, so I continue to know nothing – all the more so because on 20 August 1941, summing up the previous fine and sunny weekend, which the citizens of Lublin had spent in the bosom of nature and cheering on their favourites at sporting events, the *Nowy Głos Lubelski* remarks that among the clients of the tote, gentlemen lay their bets on the races in a calm and controlled fashion, even if it is harder for them than the ladies to decide which horse to choose. “To the credit of the gentlemen, it can be noted that they are able to conceal their irritation at a loss, something that is excessively hard for women. Although they eagerly follow the course of a race, they do not shout as much as the ladies and that is why they receive no applause from them”.

On the map of everyday life in occupied Poland, there are still many blank spaces. Did Polish landowners, after all, also active in the Home Army (generally in the quartermaster section “Uprawa”), actually supply their best horses and their best jockeys for these races, and then cheered them on from the grandstands? Did they do it because

they were forced to or willingly out of an attachment to pre-War forms? Did the Underground State forbid taking part in the races and they broke the regulations, or was it some kind of gap in the law which was eagerly exploited? I would really like to believe that the Polish patriot, the second husband of my grandmother, Kazimierz Rojowski, did not take part in an event organized by the occupier in a place where right next to it Jews were dying of hunger and typhus. And that neither the family nor its neighbours cheered on the event with him from the grandstand. That the horses, the races, and all these imponderables of landowning life were so important for them that it was difficult for them to live without them even in the reality of the Occupation. All the more so because the Lublin area had been famous before the War for horse-breeding. The Union of Lublin Pedigree Horse Breeders organized every year national exhibitions and races, the Rojowskis from Sobianowice – just like the Ciświckis from Rudnik – were among the most celebrated of the best breeders.

But in Warsaw, to which Zygmunt often travels in 1941, the atmosphere is different from that in the provinces, and even more so than in the sleepy countryside outside Lublin. These trips, notes Wacław's son, "despite the joy of seeing parents and siblings were depressing. The Germans were systematically and with cruelty destroying the Polish intelligentsia. In the countryside, this was not felt to the same degree. Food production was important to the Germans and the terror was lighter". That is true. The Warsaw intelligentsia were persecuted from the very start of the Occupation. Already in October 1939, several hundred teachers and priests were arrested. On 27 October, the Gestapo came for President Stefan Starzyński. During the first autumn of the Occupation and its first spring, as part of the so-called AB operation – *Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion* – that is, an emergency pacification operation, prominent politicians were persecuted along with social activists, army personnel, doctors, engineers, journalists, and lawyers. In June 1940, Mieczysław Niedziałkowski and Maciej Rataj die in Palmiry. In addition, from 8 May 1940, mass round-ups take place on Warsaw streets, and the majority of those picked up are sent to concentration camps. The occupier's aim is the complete liquidation of the Polish intelligentsia and the political class. However, in time, those who survive start to manage somehow: they do physical labour, they go into business, or even gradually they return – usually underground and illegally – to intellectual and artistic work. Teachers can earn something by teaching secretly, actors by performing in theatres and in cafés. But to those who cannot earn anything because they are involved in resistance activities, the Polish Underground State pays allowances.

Yes, 1941 was certainly a hard year for Poles, but it was incomparably harder for Jews. In April 1941 in the Warsaw Ghetto there were almost half a million people. There was starvation – food rations for Jews had for a year been at least two times lower and, according to other sources, even several times lower than those for Poles, and many times lower than German ones. But yet, when I read the notes of my Polish grandfather, I cannot resist the impression that when he looks at the wartime reality that surrounds him, he sees around him, just like the majority of Poles in fact, above all, the wrong

done to the Poles. That when he travels from Lublin to the capital, he barely sees the packed Lublin Ghetto in Podzamcze (nor, later, after the “expulsions” does he see, surrounded by double lines of barbed wire, the rudimentary ghetto in Majdan Tatarski) and the rising walls of the Warsaw Ghetto. He barely sees Jews with armbands, Jews starving and begging on the streets, Jews who before the War made up a third of the citizens of his own 120,000 strong county town.

In *Dry Tears*, the Lublin-born Nechama Tec notes that after the War not more than a hundred Jews returned to Lublin, and for only a short time. Among them were only three whole families.

And even if he sees something, then certainly – along with the greater part of Polish society – he sees in the ghetto walls nothing but a guarantee of Jewish safety. After all, it is only Poles who are persecuted: it’s they who end up in Pawiak, in Palmiry, and in the prison in Lublin Castle, in Majdanek, and in Auschwitz; it’s they who are shot in street executions and sent off to forced labour in the Reich. But the Jews, although they suffer because of lack of food and diseases, remain untouchable. Only in 1943 does Zygmunt note with sympathy the extermination of the inmates of the Warsaw Ghetto, does he describe people dying of hunger on the street and prostitutes selling themselves for a piece of bread. He juxtaposes these images with a view of luxury establishments in which “rich Jews to the accompaniment of music drank away with champagne their gnawing hopelessness”.

Theoretically they could have met in the summer of 1941 on the way to Warsaw – my relatives from both sides: the Polish squire and two terrified Jewish boys returning after their mother’s death from Złoczów to the Warsaw Ghetto. But if by chance that had happened, they would have certainly not noticed each other – they would have passed by each other with indifference, as they had lived side by side in Poland for ages.

Two currents of life under the Occupation – a Jewish one and a Polish one – had almost no points in common.

Even in Auschwitz, where on 2 October 1943, Czesław, the youngest of my grandmother’s brothers, was taken from the prison in Lublin Castle, his fate was different from the fate of my father and his Jewish fellow prisoners. Belonging to the “officer caste”, Czesław was there with those like himself – with a small exception: “among us there was one fellow with clearly Semitic features but not wearing a Star of David... Evidently polonised he had not at birth been subject to the Mosaic ritual of circumcision and was overlooked while in prison”. The Polish officers admitted the Jewish prisoner into their company, but Czesław saw this as so exceptional and important that it was worth taking note of it: “Here in Auschwitz, his national affiliation did not arouse any doubts. From crumbs of bread he would make rosaries, which he then bartered, mainly for onions”.

And when in the Occupation winter from 1941 to 1942 my Jewish grandfather is still living in 41 Sienna Street and there is still no word of the first of the Warsaw uprisings, the liquidation of the Ghetto, the final destruction of Muranów, or the rising of the “post-ghetto-place”, as that inexpressible emptiness after life is gone will be called many

years later by Jacek Leociak, Bohdan the eldest of the brothers of my Polish grandmother, along with other architects and city planners, is already clandestinely planning a new Warsaw, built up from the ruins. In the post-war Northern District, they dream, there will be no more ramshackle, overpopulated hovels, in which people die of TB. In the post-war Northern District, in place of the poor crowded tenements of Nalewki Street, there will rise broad avenues planted with greenery and spacious squares, everything in keeping with the latest trends from the West. For urban planners and architects it was, indeed, an unrepeatable opportunity. Can we blame them that they took it? That they showed themselves to be prophets?

No, we cannot blame them for it. And, in any case, it's not a matter of blame here, but of the fact that it is very difficult to find space in the imagination for such extremely different human fates, such extremely different situations under the Occupation.