

Chajka Klinger

I AM WRITING THESE WORDS TO YOU
The Original Diaries, Będzin 1943



Mifal Hapais
Great Things Start Here

This publication has been supported by the
Israel Lottery Council for Culture & Arts.

This book was published under the auspices of the
Center for Research on the Holocaust in Poland,
generously supported by the Aaron Gutwirth Fund and the
Danek Gertner Yad Vashem Scholarship.

Chajka Klinger

I AM WRITING THESE WORDS TO YOU

THE ORIGINAL DIARIES, BĘDZIN 1943

Edited by Avihu Ronen

Translated from the Polish by Anna Brzostowska and
Jerzy Giebułtowski

Moreshet, The Mordechai
Anielewicz Memorial
Holocaust Study and
Research Center,
Givat Haviva



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The Center for Research on the Holocaust in Poland

Chajka Klinger
Eleychem Ani Kotevet

Language Editor: Evelyn Grossberg
Production Editor: Dania Valdez
Typist: Paulina Sznajder

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First published in Hebrew by Yad Vashem and Moreshet, 2016

Yad Vashem
P.O.B. 3477, Jerusalem 9103401, Israel
publications.marketing@yadvashem.org.il

Moreshet
Givat Haviva, D.N. Menashe, 3785000 Israel
moreshet@givathaviva.org.il

ISBN 978-965-308-548-0

Typesetting: PageUp

Printed in Israel by xxx

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Introduction: The Diaries of Chajka Klinger

Avihu Ronen

“The avant-garde must die where its people are dying.” This statement by Chajka Klinger is a sharp reflection of the unique view of the ghetto uprising documented in her diaries.

Chajka Klinger’s diaries are a source of primary importance for an understanding of the activities of Jewish youth movements during the Holocaust, the development of the Jewish Fighting Organization (*Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa*, ŻOB) in Będzin and in Warsaw, the character of Mordechai Anielewicz, the relations between the underground organization and the *Judenrat* (Jewish council), and the Jews’ reactions to the destruction.

The diaries, which were written in hiding near Będzin in the summer and autumn of 1943, were among the first comprehensive documents about the defense of the ghettos to reach the outside world from occupied Poland during World War II. However, only some parts of the diary were published, and they were censored after Chajka Klinger committed suicide in 1958.

The story of Chajka Klinger’s life and her diaries have been described in detail in the book *Nidonah le-hayim* (Condemned to Life).¹ This book presents the diaries as they were written with only minimal background material. Those who are interested in

1 Avihu Ronen, *Nidonah le-hayim: Yomanah ve-hayeha shel Haikeh Klinger* (Hebrew) (Haifa: University of Haifa Press; Tel Aviv: Yedi’ot Aharonot: Sifre Hemed, 2011).

additional information are, of course, invited to read the more detailed book.

Chajka Klinger

Chajka Klinger was born on September 25, 1917, in the city of Będzin in the region of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie to a poor Hasidic family that barely supported itself through a grocery store run by Chajka's mother, Perla (Schwinkelstein) Klinger. Her father, Leibel Klinger, spent his life studying Torah. Despite her background, Chajka was accepted into the bilingual Furstenberg Gymnasium in Będzin, and there became fluent in several languages, including Polish, Yiddish, Hebrew, and German. During the 1930s, she joined the local branch of *Hashomer Hatzair*, a Zionist-Socialist youth movement, and quickly became a group leader and a member of the local leadership. In 1938, she joined her comrades in Kalisz to train and prepare for immigrating to Israel.

In September 1939, with the outbreak of the war, Chajka and her boyfriend, Dawid Kozłowski, attempted to escape from Poland but failed and returned to Będzin. Later, when they wanted to set out for Vilna, which apparently would have enabled them to leave for Israel, they received instructions from the central leadership of *Hashomer Hatzair* to remain in Będzin and to revive the youth movement there.

From early 1940, Chajka became a central figure in the renewed *Hashomer Hatzair* branch in Będzin and the associated branches in the Zagłębie area. Together with Dawid and the Pejsachson sisters, Lea and Idzia, she assumed local leadership of the organization. In the summer of 1942, she took part in the establishment of the ŻOB of Będzin. As a devoted supporter of the idea of self-defense, Chajka became one of the prominent activists in the underground. She uncompromisingly rejected any rescue plan suggested by representatives of other movements, but the plans for self-defense in Będzin failed and she lost most of her

close comrades including Dawid, whom she had married a short time before.

At the beginning of the last deportation of the Będzin Jews on August 1, 1943, Chajka was in an underground bunker, planning to fight. The bunker was discovered and a handgun was found in Chajka's purse. She was taken for interrogation and severely tortured by the Gestapo. Witnesses testify that she returned to her friends covered in dark bruises from the beatings she had received, and these remained on her body for the rest of her life. It appears that the Germans spared her life as she was slated to be sent to Auschwitz. But adhering to her firm decision ("I will not go to Auschwitz") and with the help of friends, she managed to escape from the detention camp and reached a hiding place in the village of Dąbrówka. She remained there for several months, under the protection of two Polish families, the Kobylecs and the Banasiks.

During this period, Chajka recorded her recollections of the *Hashomer Hatzair* movement and the underground in Będzin. She had actually been chosen to perform that role earlier, when she had been "condemned to life," that is, she had been chosen to survive the fighting and to document the stories of her friends for the sake of history. Her accounts of this period are studded with comments about committing suicide, and apparently the act of writing and the need to convey her testimony are what kept her from ending her life then.

At the end of December 1943, Chajka and a few other survivors from the underground managed to cross the Slovakian border. They were welcomed by local underground activists under the leadership of Yaakov Rosenberg (later: Ronen), a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*. Chajka and Yaakov eventually fell in love.

In Slovakia, Chajka took part in an underground gathering of local *Hashomer Hatzair* members and told them about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the destruction. It was the first they had heard of these events and they were shocked. In January

1944, she was smuggled into Hungary and joined the members of her movement in Budapest. There, too, she delivered her alarming report. It should be noted that although Chajka's accounts shocked her listeners both in Slovakia and in Hungary, her comrades rejected her proposals to organize a Jewish revolt like the ones in the Polish ghettos and preferred to prepare rescue missions. One of them later stated ironically, "I don't want a *kibbutz* in Israel to be named after me — I want to live in one."

As she was the first survivor of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership in occupied Poland and as her diaries provided a primary source of information about the development of the defense concept, great efforts were made to bring Chajka to *Eretz Israel* (Mandatory Palestine). In March 1944, using one of the small number of immigration certificates that could be obtained in Hungary, she left legally for *Eretz Israel*. She crossed the Balkans, traveled through Istanbul, Syria, and Lebanon, and finally arrived in Haifa.

Upon her arrival in *Eretz Israel*, she spoke at special meetings of Jewish organizations in *Eretz Israel* (the *yishuv*) and she reported on the deportations and the underground units in Będzin and in Warsaw. As the first witness of the Jewish resistance in the ghettos to reach *Eretz Israel* and as a survivor of the deportations, Chajka aroused deep horror in those who heard her reports. She, for her part, did not withhold her criticism. In particular, she stressed the inadequacy of the efforts of the Jewish *yishuv* in assisting the youth movement fighters, the process of radicalization to the left that the *Hashomer Hatzair movement* underwent during the war, and the cooperation with the Germans, as she viewed it, by Zionist activists in Poland who were members of the *Judenräte*. As a result of these claims, Chajka came into conflict with the leader of *Hashomer Hatzair*, Meir Yaari, who rejected her claims about the lack of support from the *yishuv* and demanded clarifications about the positions of *Hashomer Hatzair* in the ghettos, which Chajka could provide only sparingly.

In 1944 she married Yaakov Rosenberg and the two settled in his *kibbutz* — Kibbutz Haogen. Chajka began to adjust to *kibbutz* life, and simultaneously began to prepare for the publication of the diaries that she had written while in hiding in Poland. She never completed this project, and at a certain stage, apparently after the birth of her first son, Zvi, she decided not to continue with her writing. During the following years, she gave birth to two more sons, Avihu and Arnon, worked in various facilities (the *kibbutz* factory, the clothing department, and others) and attempted to shut out the past as best she could. However, sections of chapters from her writings were published in a range of journals and collections, and she was apparently not satisfied with the way they were edited, shortened, and censored. In 1958, Chajka no longer had the strength to go on. She took her own life on the fifteenth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

The Notebooks

Chajka's diaries were written during a period of about three-and-a-half months. She began her diary on August 25, 1943, a day or two after she had escaped from the detention camp at Będzin. The final documented date in the diaries is December 17, 1943, about ten days before she crossed the border into Slovakia. During that period, she recorded her memories in nine school notebooks or parts of notebooks. These are now preserved in the the Moreshet Archive of the The Mordechai Anielevich Memorial Holocaust Studies and Research Center located at Givat Haviva. (D.2.211) and include 222 handwritten pages in Polish.

The notebooks, which have been identified with certainty as having been written in Będzin in 1943, are made up of a number of main parts, which do not necessarily correspond to the structure of the notebooks themselves. This is due to the underground conditions under which they were written. The notebooks and

pages were apparently numbered post factum, and some of this was not done by Chajka herself.

1. Coming Back to Life: Chajka's immediate thoughts after her escape from the detention camp in Będzin (half of Notebook I – ten pages).
2. The Final Deportation from Będzin that began on August 1, 1943; The underground's attempts at defensive actions; Chajka's interrogation and torture by the Gestapo; and her short stay in the detention camp (continuation of Notebook I, Notebook II, Notebook III, half of Notebook IV – sixty-five pages).
3. The History of *Hashomer Hatzair* and the ŻOB in Będzin during World War II: Winter 1939–Summer 1943 (continuation of Notebook IV, Notebook V, Notebook VI, most of Notebook A – sixty-five pages).
4. "Supplements": Short essay segments. Among them: *Hashomer Hatzair* conferences in Zagłębie and the development from a youth movement to a fighting organization (continuation of Notebook A – ten pages).
5. "The *Hagana* in Warsaw": A description of the ŻOB and the Warsaw Ghetto uprising (Notebook VII – thirty pages).
6. Eulogies for Her Friends: The fighters in the Dror bunker (Frumka Płotnicka, Baruch Gaftek), Dawid Kozłowski, and Cwi Brandes (Notebook B – thirty-eight pages).
7. Testimony of Abraham Potasz regarding the destruction of the fighters' bunker (Notebook P – four pages).

There are two additional notebooks (or two parts of the same notebook). It is not clear when they were written. Perhaps she began writing them in Będzin, but completed them only later, upon her arrival in *Eretz Israel*. It is assumed that they were written between the end of 1943 and the spring of 1944:

8. An essay concerning the fate of the adult group of *Hashomer Hatzair* during the war years (Notebook D – seventeen pages).
9. An essay concerning the role of women in the fighting organizations (Notebook E – fifteen pages).

Three other notebooks, also written in Polish, were identified as parts of the second version, which was written in Kibbutz Haogen in 1944:

10. A description of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Będzin during the war (OGEN I Notebook – seventy-seven pages).
11. A description of the ŻOB in Będzin (OEGN II Notebook – sixty-one pages).
12. A description of the activities of the ŻOB in Będzin (Notebook C – 20 pages).

The Diaries: Chajka and the Idea of Jewish Defense in the Ghettos

The diaries focus on one main theme, which was the essence of Chajka's beliefs and actions: the idea of Jewish defense in the ghettos. Around this axis she constructed the story of the Jewish ŻOB in Będzin and in Warsaw, the role of *Hashomer Hatzair* in this framework, and her personal experiences as a ŻOB activist.

As a devoted member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, Chajka zealously adopted its radical views, which were an integration of revolutionary Marxism, Zionism, and romanticism. As such, she viewed *Hashomer Hatzair* as an avant-garde movement, which would later lead the Jewish nation to a social and national revolution. These views are reflected in the way she describes the transformations of the movement during the war.

During the first period of the war (end of 1939–mid-1942), when all possibilities of immigrating to *Eretz Israel* were blocked, Chajka and her comrades saw their main objective as educating

abandoned Jewish youth for the future implementation of their ideals. Their educational activities were most successful and at their peak included some 2,000 Jewish youth. The center of their activity was an agricultural farm near Będzin, which they ran in cooperation with other pioneering (*chalutzic*) Jewish youth movements.² These well-planned activities, which even then bore a semi-underground character, were enabled, inter alia, by the special conditions created in Zagłębie, which had been annexed to the German Reich as part of East Upper Silesia (*Ostoberschlesien*). Until the autumn of 1942, no ghettos were established in this region and the Jews were employed in a special economic organizational framework of the SS called the Schmelz Organization.³ Another unique feature of the Jews in Zagłębie during the war was the existence of a strong regional *Judenrat*, with Moshe Merin at its head. The central *Judenrat* located in Sosnowiec was responsible for some 95,000 Jews in thirty-five communities. Merin, a controversial figure, attributed some of the special conditions that prevailed in Zagłębie to his policies, but Chajka and her comrades saw him as a collaborator.

However, with the beginning of the deportations to Auschwitz (May 1942), the educational activities became meaningless. Under the inspiration of Mordechai Anielewicz, who was then in the area (end of August 1942), members of *Hashomer Hatzair* along with their comrades from other Zionist youth groups established a fighting organization, which was apparently subordinate to the ŻOB in Warsaw. Chajka, who was a dominant activist in both the farm and the fighting organization, and even personally entertained Mordechai Anielewicz, documents this development in her diary, as a dramatic turning point for the Jewish youth in Poland.⁴

The ŻOB in Zagłębie was composed only of representatives

2 Notebook IV, pp. 92–99.

3 *Dienststelle des Sonderbeauftragten des RFSS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei für fremdvölkischen Arbeitseinsatz in Oberschlesien.*

4 Notebook V, pp. 104–110 and Notebook VI, pp. 111–112.

of the pioneering youth movements (*Hechalutz*) of the region: *Hashomer Hatzair*, *Dror*, *Gordonia*, *Hanoar Hatzioni*, and *Hashomer Hadati*. There was also a small group of underground communists who were not part of the organization, and members of the right-wing *Beitar* movement were excluded as well. It is estimated that the organization included about 200 members, who were divided into smaller groups according to their youth-movement affiliations. The importance of the ŻOB in Zagłębie was due to its ties to the Warsaw organization, as well as to the *Hechalutz* Center (the coordinating organization of pioneering youth movements) in Geneva. Information, organizational plans, and weaponry were carried from Warsaw to Będzin by underground couriers, while those in Będzin could send postcards and letters to Geneva with information about the activities of the ŻOB in Warsaw. This is all described in Chajka's diaries as she was not only a central activist, but also was responsible for some of the communications with Geneva.⁵

Another unique aspect of the organization in Zagłębie was the fact that it was able to consider feasible rescue plans for the rescue of its members; such possibilities did not exist in other Polish ghettos during the period of the deportation and extermination of the Jews. The main rescue plan, beginning in January 1943, involved obtaining South American passports by way of Geneva. The bearers of these passports would then be arrested by the German police and sent to detention camps for foreign citizens (*Internierungslager*), where, or so it was hoped, they could survive until the end of the war. Two small groups were successful in leaving Zagłębie in this way, but following the Gestapo's intervention, the program was tragically stopped on June 19, 1943. This failed affair is discussed

5 Notebook A, pp. 23–26, 30. See Avihu Ronen, ed., “Saba Meir Yachol le-hiyot ge’eh be-nechadav: Michtavim me-Bendin le-Schwitzerland January–July 1943” (Hebrew) *Yalkut Moresheet* 92–93 (2013), pp. 317–327; Avihu Ronen, “The Cable That Vanished: Tabenkin and Ya’ari to the Last Surviving Ghetto Fighters,” *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2013), pp. 95–138.

in Chajka's diaries, in which, as noted, she absolutely rejected any rescue plans.⁶

The ŻOB in Zagłębie, like other Jewish fighting organizations in the ghettos of Poland, faced fundamental difficulties: the lack of weapons, the lack of training for underground activity, the absence of significant contact with other Polish underground groups, and the strict objections to its activities on the part of the *Judenrat*. In consequence, the Będzin underground suffered many failures: their female couriers were captured on their way back from Warsaw; the *Judenrat* betrayed two leading *Hashomer Hatzair* activists from Sosnowiec to the Gestapo (Cwi Duński and Lipk Minc); and two groups of ten fighters each who set out to join the partisans were killed in an ambush after their Polish contact betrayed them to the Germans. The organization never had more than 15 handguns — a number of them out of order — some explosives and grenades, but not even a single rifle.

Nonetheless, in the wake of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, Chajka and her comrades adhered to their aspiration of self-defense. They even ignored the instructions they received in June–July 1943 from Warsaw and from *Eretz Israel* not to engage in any further fighting in the ghetto but to save themselves.⁷ The Będzin group was firm in its decision to continue fighting. In her diaries, Chajka emphasizes the concept of defense in the ghettos again and again, an objective she held to even though all the surrounding circumstances impeded armed resistance. It also became clear to her later that most of the Jewish people did not view resistance positively, fearing that it would accelerate the extermination of the Jews.⁸

Indeed, the many preparations for defense in Będzin achieved very few results. At the time of the last deportation from Będzin

6 Notebook A, pp. 28–32.

7 See Ronen, "The Cable That Vanished," pp. 95–138.

8 Notebook IV, pp. 83–85.

(August 1–7, 1943), in which about 700 German policemen and soldiers took part, only one bunker resisted, with seven members of the Kibbutz Dror, who were all killed during the fighting. In Chajka's bunker there were two handguns, one of them in Chajka's purse, and as mentioned above, for which she was interrogated and tortured by the Gestapo.⁹

The diaries, written in retrospect after the deportation and the attempts at defense, bear the marks of Chajka's self-examination in her hiding place. Their unique character is due to the extreme circumstances under which they were written. At the time she wrote them, Chajka thought that she was the last of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership in Warsaw and in Będzin who had survived, as most of her comrades had been killed during acts of resistance against the Germans. It was Chajka who had earlier reported their deaths to *Eretz Israel* (via the postal connection with Switzerland). The diaries also bear the impact on Chajka as being "condemned to life," the one who had survived to document the dead.

Her feelings of mourning, deep loneliness, and responsibility cast their shadows over her accounts. She tried to document the story of the underground and the destruction without "a single word of exaggeration," and to present "the naked truth." But she also tried to create a memorial to her dead friends, whom she viewed through the prism of an image of the heroes of the revolutionary books she had read. Chajka's mode of writing swings between two poles: from sharp narrative without compassion as events develop to a narration of the deaths of her close friends in Warsaw and in Będzin. Thus the Jewish revolt is simultaneously portrayed as both a great historic act and a story of failure and human weakness.

Chajka's piercing descriptions do not spare anyone: the *Judenrat*, which feared the hasty acts of the youth movements

9 Notebook III, pp. 65-69.

and warned them to stop their underground activities;¹⁰ the Jewish police who handed over the members of the underground to the Gestapo;¹¹ the Jews who obeyed orders passively and obediently; the mothers who took leave of their children in order to gain another hour of life;¹² the traitor in the Warsaw Ghetto underground who betrayed his comrades and revealed the name of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leader to the Germans;¹³ the members of the ŻOB in Będzin who again and again became involved in amateur activity that ended in disaster;¹⁴ the leadership in *Eretz Israel* that was indifferent to the suffering of their people in Poland;¹⁵ the Jews of the United States, satiated and apathetic regarding the distress of their brothers and sisters in Poland;¹⁶ and the Polish underground, which did not aid the Jewish fighters.¹⁷ In contrast, Chajka presents the romantic ideal of her friends who were killed in battle, although she does not even spare them, including Mordechai Anielewicz, from criticism.

Chajka does not spare herself from criticism either. In tormented detail, she outlines her sufferings in the bunker, the torture of interrogation, and her encounter with the empty and desolate ghetto. But she expresses, in particular, deep feelings of guilt for having survived. She, who had directed her life for so long toward dying for the ideal that she had adhered to, remained alive yet alone, and only the act of writing justified her continued existence.¹⁸ These feelings of guilt remained with her for the rest of her life.

Despite this attitude, or perhaps because of it, her diaries include a great deal of unique and accurately detailed testimonies

10 Notebook A, p. 17.

11 Notebook A, pp. 18–22.

12 Notebook III, p. 65.

13 Notebook A, p. 12.

14 Notebook B, pp. 30–31.

15 Notebook II, pp. 10–11.

16 Notebook II, p. 8.

17 Notebook VII, p. 37.

18 Notebook I, pp. 1–10.

that offer today's historians important insights into the special character of the ghetto defense and the reactions of the Jews in general.

Style of Writing

Chajka's writing is systematic, and the structure of its sections is clear, as should be apparent from the detailing of the notebooks above. At the beginning of the diaries, she writes in great detail about the final weeks of the Będzin ghetto from her own personal standpoint. She then goes on to describe the history of *Hashomer Hatzair* and the ŻOB in Będzin chronologically. She adds a special piece about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, assuming that none of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leaders from Warsaw are still alive. Finally, she deals with a number of issues that she views as unique — a sort of collection of short essays — which she perhaps considered elaborating on later in the diaries.

However, the attempt to express the intensity of the historical experience was much more important to her than a chronological detailing of the facts. Chajka almost never cites the dates of the events she experienced, except for a number of references to the entry dates in her diary. Moreover, most of the names she mentions are not complete. She refers to her comrades using their first names, as if indicating a deep relationship, whereas she refers to the members of the *Judenrat* using their initials (for example, M. M. for Moshe Merin). Perhaps this was also a precautionary measure in case the diaries fell into the wrong hands.

Her handwriting is rounded and clear, but in certain sections, whether owing to the unlined notebook paper, or to the painful content of the subjects she is writing about, the writing slopes downward as if there is not enough paper, or perhaps she seeks to rid herself quickly of the pain of the recent past.

The language she uses in her diaries consists of many layers. In the Polish text, there are expressions that appear in three

other languages in which Chajka was fluent: Hebrew, Yiddish, and German. When writing Hebrew and Yiddish, she switches between Latin and Hebrew script. Hebrew is used to indicate youth movement institutions (e.g., *asefa* [meeting, assembly], *bogrim* [the adults]); or for important expressions, perhaps even sacred in her eyes (like *Hashomer Hatzair* or *hagana* [defense]). She uses Yiddish to express feelings or to characterize situations and Jewish types (e.g., *moiserim* [informers], *amai haartzim* [the ignorant]). German was used for names of institutions or actions by Germans, but also for the language of perpetrators, to recreate them exactly as they sounded.

Another aspect of Chajka's writings is cultural in nature. She mentions the titles of many books, and sometimes even the names of their protagonists, on the assumption that the educated reader will be able to identify them. Salient among these are examples of the revolutionary literature of the 1930s (e.g., *La Condition humaine* by André Malraux) as well as of Polish (*Plomienie* by Stanisław L. Brzozowski), German (*Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh* by Franz Werfel), and Yiddish literature.¹⁹ Additionally, her descriptions are based on wide-ranging historical knowledge and Marxist analyses. These too are usually brief, again with the assumption that the future readers of the diaries will share her cultural world.

The Wanderings of the Diaries

As mentioned above, Chajka wrote a second version of her diaries in preparation for their publication in 1944. The 1944 version is different from the original diaries and is an expanded chronological narrative of the history of *Hashomer Hatzair* and the ŻOB in

19 André Malraux, *La Condition humaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1933); Stanisław Brzozowski, *Plomienie* (Polish) (Lwów: Połonieckiego, 1908); Franz Werfel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, translated from German by Geoffrey Dunlop (New York: Modern Library, 1934).

Będzin. It opens with the beginning of the war on September 1, 1939, and ends in the spring of 1943.

In the expanded version, various events receive wider and more systematic coverage than in the original version, which was written in haste. These include the policies of the *Judenrat* in Będzin, the character of Moshe Merin, the establishment of the agricultural farm, the visit by Tosia Altman, the great deportation of August 1942, the betrayal and execution of the two *Hashomer Hatzair* members from Sosnowiec, and the deportation of her two friends in the leadership, the Pejsachson sisters. Other events, such as the attempt to join the partisans and the time spent in the bunker and the detention camps, are not discussed, perhaps because she stopped writing without completing the work or because she wanted to integrate the suitable portions of her original diaries. The tone of the 1944 version is softer compared with that of the diaries written in 1943. The piercing and accusatory style she employed when writing in her hiding place became essentially informative in *Eretz Israel* and thus also more acceptable. However, the sharp and critical spirit of the descriptions did not disappear.

It is not clear why Chajka's diaries in their second version were not published in 1944 or 1945. One can assume that her descriptions did not match the collective memory of the Holocaust in Israeli society as it was constructed at that time. The diaries did not conform to the ideal of the brave fighter or to the representation of the victimization of the Jewish people, nor did they comply with the impression of the support proffered by the Jews of *Eretz Israel* to the Jews who were being killed in Europe. Nevertheless, due to the unique nature of her testimony and, in particular, her descriptions of the ŻOB, parts of the diaries were published in Israeli newspapers during 1944–1946, after being tendentiously edited and censored.²⁰

20 Chajka Klinger, "Linkom ve-lihyot: prakim mi-toch yoman ba-getto" (Hebrew), *Mishmar*, September 1, 1944; Chajka Klinger, "Ha-raayon she-hisiir et ruhenu"

In 1955, Chajka's original diaries were used in election propaganda by MaKI, the Israeli Communist Party, which emphasized the pro-Soviet tendencies of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Poland and attacked the failure of the Jewish leadership in *Eretz Israel* to act during the war. This was done without Chajka's permission, and following her insistent demands, the use of her work for that propaganda was discontinued.²¹ A year later, in 1956, a long article by Chajka was included in the *Hashomer Hatzair* Book,²² which was based on the expanded version of her diaries. This article was also tendentious and censored. It omitted her sharp criticism of *Eretz Israel*, and even her description of the failures of the underground as they appeared in the book, became descriptions of acts of heroism. Chajka complained about this distortion in a letter to her friend, Chajka Grossman, in 1958.

Only after her tragic death did Kibbutz Haogen publish the book, *Mi-yoman ba-getto* [A Diary from the Ghetto],²³ which was to include all of her diaries. However, the book was negligently edited, integrating various passages from the diaries by the editor without noting the proper sources. Most of the material was taken from the 1944 version, but was edited and censored, sometimes beyond recognition. Many sections were omitted and other passages were softened. The editor was especially careful to mask Chajka's sharp criticism of the failures of the *yishuv* in *Eretz Israel*, in general, and those of her movement, in particular; her radical positions in regard to Zionism; her Marxist analysis of the Jewish nation in distress during the war; and her depictions of the betrayals and the

(Hebrew), *Mishmar*, March 4, 1945; Chaja Rosenberg, "Chaverot ba-getto" (Hebrew), *Hedim*, April 1945, pp. 40–42; Chajka Klinger, "Shney bikurim: kitei yoman" (Hebrew), *Mishmar*, April 18, 1947.

21 See Ronen, "The Cable That Vanished," pp. 95–138.

22 Chajka Klinger, "Ha-shomrim be-bendin al mishmar kvod amam," in Israel Rozenzweig and Levi Dror, eds., *Sefer Hashomer Hatzair* (Hebrew) (Merhavia: Sifriat Poalim, 1956), pp. 691–705.

23 Chajka Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim and Kibbutz Haogen, 1959).

failures of the underground. Nevertheless, the book was regarded as an important source to understand the defensive actions taken in the ghettos, and researchers have made use of it through the years.

Following the publication of the book, *Nidonah le-hayim* [Condemned to Life] by Chajka's son, Avihu Ronen (2011),²⁴ in which considerable use is made of the complete original diaries, there was new interest in publishing the original diaries. This publication, for the first time, includes a number of sections as they were written.

General Comments About the English Edition

All first and surnames, diminutive forms of first names (including the author's name), and names of localities, as well as any words in languages other than Polish and Hebrew, were retained in their original form. Their meaning is clarified in square brackets in the text.

Interspersed throughout the book is a number within square brackets; each of these numbers refers to the original page number in the author's notebooks.

All fragments crossed out by the author in the original diaries were omitted from the translated text, the premise being that the final text should not include what the author wanted to exclude. Lines marked in the original at the end of paragraphs were marked in the translation as well.

The terms, Jewish militia and *shomer*, were used for the Polish *milicja żydowska* and *szomrowy*, respectively. However the Polish word *gmina* [(Jewish community), was left in, as well as the German term *Judenrat*. For the sake of clarity, we added Street to Polish names of streets and inserted any punctuation missing from the original.

24 See Ronen, *Nidonah le-hayim*.

The Editor

The editor of the diaries is Prof. Avihu Ronen, a historian and senior lecturer at Tel Hai Academic College and Haifa University, and the second son of Chajka Klinger. Ronen has published several books and articles about the youth movements and the Holocaust period.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following for their great contributions to the publication of the diaries: Daniela Ozacky-Stern, Director of Moreshet Archive; the dedicated typist Paulina Sznajder; the Polish translators Anna Brzostowska and Jerzy Giebułtowski; the language editor Evelyn Grossberg; the production editor Dania Valdez; Neta Shapira of the Moreshet Publishing House; and the publishing house staff of Yad Vashem.

Part One

Prologue – Coming Back to Life

Notebook I¹

[1] Thursday, August 26, 1943²

So I am alive?! Am I? After all those experiences, I have broken free from that circle, that ambience of death, from the deportation point and I'm sitting here. Alone with Chawka [Lenczner]³ in a room, detached from the whole [living] world, in silence and peace. I'm resting. I'm resting. I'm living.⁴ Apparently, I have already forgotten what "life" means in a normal language.

- 1 Notebook I is a mathematics school notebook. It contains 24 pages, which were preserved without binding. The handwriting is firm with only few corrections. Pages 1–10 of Notebook I were typewritten in Istanbul in 1944 and were called *Reshimot A* [Papers A], ("Bader Photocopy," pp. 6–8, Moreshet Archive C.36.3.1). For more about the "Bader Photocopy," see below. These pages in their Hebrew translation were not included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto* (1959), but were published in the memorial booklet of Kibbutz Haogen entitled *Chajka* (Haogen, 1958).
- 2 The date is a day or few days after Chajka Klinger escaped from the evacuation (liquidation) camp in Będzin.
- 3 Chawa (Chawka) Lenczner (Rubinowicz) (1912–2015) — member of Kibbutz Dror, survived, and went to live in Kibbutz Yagur.
- 4 Chajka Klinger and Chawka Lenczner were hiding in some small village (Dąbrówka) near Będzin in the house of the Banasik family. Mrs. Klara Banasik was the daughter-in-law of Mr. Kobylec, who took upon himself to hide the whole group of the *chalutz* underground — about 20 people. Mrs. Banasik's hiding place was considered as the best owing to its location in the countryside and to Mrs. Banasik's status as the wife of Mr. Banasik, a *Volksdeutscher* [ethnic German] who served in the German Army at that time. See "Kobylec, Piotr; Kobylec, Karolina (wife); Kobylec-Banasik, Klara (daughter); Kobylec, Mieczysław (son); Kobylec,

I am twisting and turning as if in a nightmare because I can still see the barrack full of people, the elderly and the children. That screaming before death, those silent complaints and that quiet waiting for the truck, that is, for death. I can still see the empty, ruined houses; everything turned upside down, the knocked-over furniture, such as chairs, stools, eiderdowns, pillows, underwear, clothes, shirts, and silks. Everything lying discarded on the ground. The whole Jewish settlement is deserted, terrifying and dead. There is emptiness and deathly silence wherever you turn your head. Emptiness. Once it was such a blissful place: lots of people, laughter and joy, the cheerful noise [2] of children and now there is this emptiness. Can you imagine it? A vast area covered with houses, so close to one another, so squeezed and not a living soul inside. The houses radiate such absolute, utter horror. And when you go in, you immediately rush out as if hit by a bullet — deathly stuffiness has wafted over you. It is a corpse; old with a yellow face peeking out of bed. You want to run away, far away, to the end of the world, but you cannot, because they are watching you.

Such images haunt and nag at you. Both by night and by day. And have you already forgotten for a moment the time that we were on our hands and knees outside the barracks [and] when they called out four boys? “At last,” you think, relieved. “[They are being taken] to be executed.” But they come out carrying the corpse of Cwi,⁵ our dear companion and leader.

[3] And when you looked into the distance, you saw that small house where 12 of your dearest ones died. I’m not thinking anything. I’m twisting and turning as if in a dream. You must not

Wiktor (son),” in Wladyslaw Bartoszewski and Zofia Lewin, eds., *Righteous among Nations: How the Poles Helped the Jews 1939–1945* (London: Earls Court Publications, 1969), pp. 124, 147, 153. It seems that Chajka had the best hiding place owing to her status as the only survivor of the underground leadership and to her role in documenting the history of the ŻOB in Będzin and Warsaw. However, if a neighbor came to the Banasik house, Chajka had to hide in the closet.

5 Cwi Brandes (1917–1943) — underground leader in Będzin. See Notebook B, pp. 32–38.

think. Otherwise you will scream, shout, cry, and pull your hair out — either fly into a rage or commit suicide. I think about it a lot. Why? What do I live for? I have lost everything and everybody for whom I wanted to live and for whom life was worth living. The nation is no more. I've lost so much time. Why that path and not another? The path of *Hashomer Hatzair*.⁶ I wanted to and I did come to love the Jewish nation. I abandoned the idea of studying, and the idea of a career. The departure for *hachshara* [training]⁷ and then to *Eretz* [land (of Israel); also: country, homeland]. And now the nation is no more. Seven million Jews deported, murdered, annihilated.

- 6 *Hashomer Hatzair* [Young Guardian] was founded in 1916, as a union of Jewish scout groups (*Hashomer*, following the name of the first Jewish self-defense organization in Mandatory Palestine) and nationalistic Jewish students (*Tzeirei Zion* — Youth of Zion). *Hashomer Hatzair* was heavily influenced by the German youth movement *Wandervögel* [Wandering Bird] and adopted some of its romantic ideas, mainly the concept of *Jugendkultur* [Youth Culture], the belief that being young is not only some passing stage of life but rather an autonomous period when youth has its own pure values and norms in contradiction to the deteriorated adults' ways of life. They followed Martin Buber's saying, "Youth is the eternal chance of humanity," but preferred to ignore the end of the saying: "and in every generation it is missed again." During the 1920s *Hashomer Hatzair* also adopted revolutionary Marxism, and considered itself as the vanguard of this movement. This mixed ideology of nationalism, socialism, romanticism and the scout tradition was most attractive to many young Jews during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1939 there were about 25,000 members of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Poland alone (and about 15,000 more all over Europe). At that time there were already some 40 *Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim* in Mandatory Palestine, where the refugees had settled. The *kibbutzim* were organized into a central federation called *Hakibbutz Haartzi* [the national *kibbutzim*].
- 7 Term used by the *Hechalutz* movements denoting the training period of the *chalutzim* [pioneers] before immigrating to Mandatory Palestine. The older members of the Zionist-socialist youth movements used to organize themselves as a *kibbutz* in Poland (and other countries as well), to leave their homes and to move to a designated location (usually in the countryside), to prepare themselves together for a productive life in Mandatory Palestine while maintaining a collective way of life. Chajka belonged to the *hachshara* in Kalisz and stayed there for about a year and a half. She was supposed to leave for Mandatory Palestine (probably by illegal immigration) on September 1, 1939, but she was stuck in occupied Poland.

I've lost my family — parents, sister, brother-in-law, and those children, who were so dear to me.⁸ I've lost the man whom I loved so much, without whom I neither imagined life, nor wanted to live. He was my companion, friend, and lover.⁹ I've lost my companions, who were so dear to me.

[4] So what am I living for and why? How can I justify my miserable existence? Initially, I used to say, "I want to live to be able to do something, to take part in *hagana*." And today, when it's already over, why don't you, you miserable creature, have the courage to put an end to your life? I'll try to justify myself, but it won't be true, because deep at heart I want to live. Why and what for? Because of my memory of them, my companions. They had always wanted, and they crammed that into my head day and night, somebody to stay alive and tell their stories. Why shouldn't they come back to life at least on paper? But why should I live forever with the horror of those days and that unfulfilled task?

Have I fulfilled my duties? I'm so happy that I was accused. It was a kind of debt, which I'm paying off now. It is a debt to *hagana*. [5] I did not beg them. I did not cry in front of them. I walked calmly, silently, without fear.

I ate an apple before I went in. And then they were hitting me, smacking me on the head and face. Even though they injured me so severely, I felt so deeply satisfied. I endured and now I know that I shall endure even worse. I do not need cyanide. That test of mine is a justification of my still being alive today. Perhaps tomorrow I already won't be. They might discover us. And it will all be over.

8 Chajka lost most of her family during the final deportation: her father Icek-Leibus (Leibel) Klinger (1880–1943); her mother Ryvka-Perla (Schwinkelstein) Klinger (1880–1943); her elder sister Sara-Mindela (Klinger) Mglá (1909–1943), her brother-in-law Jacob Mglá (1906–1943); her nieces Malka-Chana Mglá (1933–1943) and Tauba ("Tamusia," Tamar) Mglá (1940–1943). At that time, her younger sister Malka-Chana (Mania) Klinger (1919–1944) was still alive in a forced labor camp. Chajka also lost three elder brothers before the war.

9 Dawid (Didia) Kozłowski (1916–1943). See Notebook B, pp. 12–31.

And that debt to my comrades, my comrades who were dearer to me than anything else — is it true? Yes. I loved my poor old father, so why did his passing not hurt me so much? Why am I not always thinking about them [my family]? Because my companions had grown into my blood, because they were in me, because they had been pulled out together with my entrails. They are gone. I cannot understand, or comprehend it. It still seems to me that I'm living in some desolate area, away from the world, [6] and that they are living there, far away; that something's happening somewhere, only that I am not there.

My dear ones, I can hear music here, in this room and everything inside me tears apart and tugs so and a miracle [has happened]. I've been hard as a rock. I have not cried (except once). But now I've started crying. It's the music. Unheard for four years, it exposed my miserable, inhuman loneliness.

My dear ones, deported, executed comrades; I have a debt with you — to tell of your lives and deaths.

I do not want you to depart forgotten. I want you to come back to life on paper, in people's memories, in the hearts and souls of our companions who are there, far away.

I want your memory to be celebrated, your names to be respected and loved.

But am I capable of it? I have already wanted to put down my pen a few times. I know I am incapable. The words I am writing [7] are chaotic. Chaos still pervades in my heart and soul. One image chases another. I keep having horrible nightmares, too...

And isn't the human language too simple to tell all this?

Human language is too inadequate to properly express all that must be told. Indeed every word and expression seems too pale and inappropriate to render our feelings and what we really [went through].

For words able to render our epoch have not been born. [Nor are there words] to render the situation, destiny, and demise of the Jewish nation in this epoch.

I don't want to embellish. I do not want even the slightest exaggeration in my story. I want to depict the naked truth, but I am lost for words, lost for words to describe those horrible days and our terrible experiences. As I have said, the human language was not created for our times. Language and literature grew from a certain reality and conditions. [8] This reality and these conditions are without precedent. Or am I mistaken?

For what did we know about the life and death of other races, of people in colonies?¹⁰ But no. What has been done to us has no precedent in history.

This has never been done to any other nation. I've read about the Armenians,¹¹ but how can you even attempt a comparison?!

There was the Spanish Inquisition,¹² the pogroms during Chmielnicki's [period]¹³ [in] Kishinev.¹⁴ Why, there were murders and hangings during the times of the tsars. I have read descriptions of the experiences of many great revolutionaries in prison and [there were] the infamous [deportations to] Siberia. I burst with vacuous laughter. It's Satan's play. Some time ago, Irka [Pejsachson]¹⁵ and I accidentally read descriptions of Gershuni's¹⁶ time in prison. The two of us roared with laughter. [9]

10 European colonies in America, Africa, and Asia.

11 Franz Werfel's book *Die Vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh* [The Forty Days of Musa Dagh], which tells the story of the massacres of the Armenians by the Turks during World War I, was most popular in *Hashomer Hatzair* during World War II.

12 The Spanish Jews were haunted and tortured during the Inquisition in the late Middle Ages.

13 Tens of thousands of Jews were massacred during the Ukrainian peasants' revolt led by Bogdan Chmielnicki (1648–1649).

14 66 Jews were killed in the Kishinev (Bessarabia) pogrom (1903).

15 Irena (Irka) Pejsachson (1922–1943) — leading activist and instructor in *Hashomer Hatzair* in Będzin, the youngest daughter of Icek-Mordke Pejsachson (1866–1943), *Bund* [a socialist Jewish movement] activist, who took part in the 1905 failed uprising. She was a notable *Bund* leader in Będzin, deported to Auschwitz in June 1943. See Notebook E.

16 Grigory Andreyevich Gershuni (1870–1908) — Jewish revolutionary in Tsarist Russia and head of the combat organization of the Socialist Revolutionary Party

These prisons, murders, torture methods are without precedent. And, finally, could anyone imagine extermination, total annihilation of an entire nation?

Yes, this is what has been done to the Jewish nation. Seven million Jews have been totally annihilated. Today there is not even one Jewish community, no official *yishuv* [settlement/community]. Here and there are some single individuals on the “Aryan” side, but there’s not even one *yishuv*.

The whole nation in the European countries [has been annihilated]. There are no Jews in the territories occupied by the Germans. There is no Jewish youth. There is no *Hechalutz*¹⁷ movement. There is no *Hashomer Hatzair* movement. The flower of Jewish youth — that which was the most beautiful in our nation, and not only in our nation — [is gone]. Surely in the course of many centuries no such movement or such people have been born.

Our movement has died, perished together with the nation (*shtrift fon hertzen*) [Writings from the heart].

But it had to be so. It is good that [10] it happened so.

If there is no nation, there is no need for its avant-garde. What was it for if not for the nation?!

We should have died with it. But how?!

Hatzala [rescue] was not an issue for us. It was clear to us, that it was our duty to die together with the nation. But how? Not like the entire nation, not like sheep going to the slaughter! To die with honor, to create the final act in the history of the Jewish nation — that was the birth of a new thought — *hagana*.

I will return to the history of *hagana*, but first I want to write about the experiences of the last couple of days.

(SR). Exiled to Siberia, he escaped from there and returned to Russia. His book, *Mein Entrinung vun Katorga*, was published in Yiddish (New York: Socialisten Revoltioneren in America, 1907) and was popular in revolutionary circles.

17 *Hechalutz* [The Pioneer] — training and immigration organization of the socialist Zionist movements: *Dror*, *Hashomer Hatzair*, *Gordonia*, and *Bnei Akiva*.



Part Two

The Final Deportation¹

Notebook I (continuation)²

[11] For a couple of days people have been saying that something is about to happen. There is some anxiety in the air again.

One day Dreier³ visited the ghetto. [He] carefully checked every nook and cranny. [He checked the] Ghetto plans every morning. Something is about to happen. It is certain that a [deportation] campaign is about to start. The *gmina* [community]⁴ is calling for an *Arbeitseinsatz* [work assignment] but the Jews still have time at the center, as always. Rosner⁵ took 300 people

- 1 Part 2 of the diaries includes the second part of Notebook I, Notebooks II and III, and half of Notebook IV. It is a chronological description of the last deportation from Będzin, the experiences of the underground bunker, its exposure, Chajka's interrogation by the Gestapo, and her time in the liquidation camp (August 1–24, 1943).
- 2 Pages 11–24 of Notebook I are the opening of the bunker narrative. These pages were typed in Istanbul and called *Reshimot B* ("Bader Photocopy"), pp. 4–6. Its Hebrew translation was included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 99–104, with significant censorial omissions and/or editing.
- 3 Hans Dreier (Dreyer) (1907–1945) — head of the Department for Jewish Affairs at the Gestapo in Katowice.
- 4 A reference to the *Judenrat*.
- 5 Alfred Rosner (1906–1944) — German owner of the large workshops. Rosner was the most important German entrepreneur in Będzin and employed some 5,000 Jews. Rosner, who sold his products (mainly textiles and footwear) to the *Wehrmacht* [German Army], successfully defended his employees from being deported to Auschwitz for a long time. He was executed in 1944. Rosner was recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations.

to Talstrasse.⁶ The anxiety is intensifying. People are saying that it will be on the night between Saturday and Sunday. But I somehow cannot believe it. Why would they ruin their holiday — Sunday? And of course it has not dawned on anybody that there could be a general deportation, *Judenrein* [cleansed of Jews]. Only we, the black ravens, say that if there is a campaign, they will no longer handle us with kid gloves — they will finish us off once and for all. For it was as clear as day to us that since they did not take any economic [matters] into account in the entire General Government or in Germany and liquidated *kriegswichtige* [important for the war effort] arms factories, which employed Jews, they surely would not count take into consideration our tailoring workshops owned by Rosner, [12] which produce clothes, but only for the *Wehrmacht*. Because Rosner was told during the previous campaign: “*Das ist eine Staats politische Aktion und es gibt keine Kraft die Stören soll*” [This is a political situation, and there are no forces that can disturb it].

But was that declaration necessary? Was the two-year practice of clearing settlement after settlement, district after district, not sufficient?

But apparently it had not been enough for the Jewry of Zagłębie. Why, we have Rosner. So far his people have been spared. And that was why when we spoke about *hagana* they looked at us like at madmen, lunatics. They feared us like fire, thinking that we would bring misfortune upon them. And Saturday came. In the evening, just as it had been for the last couple of days, there were guards in the entire Jewish ghetto, outside every building, including ours. They wake us at 3 A.M.

I walk out, anxious. I hear shots. We wake everybody. Cwi [Brandes] opens the hiding place and takes out [several] pieces. “Why so few?” I ask [13] anxiously. “Has something happened?” He says in a trembling voice that they didn’t expect that something would happen, that they had information that nothing would, and

6 The center of Rosner’s workshops.

that, consequently, everything's at Baruch's [Gaftek],⁷ and there's not even one in the main bunker [of Dror⁸] at Herszel's [Springer].⁹ Frantic, we clutch our heads. What now? What now? Have we been cultivating the thought of *hagana* in our heads only to be empty-handed now in case nothing happened? I become furiously angry with the OKW¹⁰ and the entire world. But no, we won't let them deport us. We'll do something stupid — maybe only one shot will be fired, but something will happen, something must happen.

We walk downstairs, but first Abram [Avraham Zylbersztejn]¹¹ cleans his weapon. He takes it and immediately is furious that it's so dirty and soiled. And he begins to delicately, slowly clean it, caressing it with his palm and gazing at it with affection.

And we descend through the oven,¹² which is rather

- 7 Baruch Gaftek (1913–1943) — member of Kibbutz Dror and *hagana* commander in Będzin.
- 8 Dror [Freedom] — Marxist Zionist youth movement. Dror was founded in 1938 as a union of two youth movements: *Freiheit* [Freedom], which was composed of working-class Jewish youth whose main language was Yiddish, and *Hechalutz Hatzair* [Young Pioneer (movement)], which prepared its members for immigration to Mandatory Palestine and, accordingly, demanded training in Hebrew. Dror's ideology was based on Ber Borochov's (1882–1917) Marxist theory that only in Mandatory Palestine could the Jewish workers achieve the aims of their national class struggle. Dror was linked to *Hakibbutz Hameuchad* [United Kibbutz] in Israel, the largest *kibbutzim* movement in the 1930s, headed by Yitzhak Tabenkin. In Poland they were linked to *Poalei Zion* [Workers of Zion] Right. Kibbutz Dror in Będzin was a strong Jewish organization, most of whose members came from other Polish cities. It cooperated closely with *Hashomer Hatzair*.
- 9 Herszel Springer (1913–1943) — secretary and leader of Kibbutz Dror in Będzin, representative of Dror at the underground headquarters.
- 10 OKW — name of a fighting organization in Będzin (not to be confused with the German abbreviation for the Joint High Command). The abbreviation is unclear — Chajka's diaries are the only source that uses this name. The local leaders David and Arie Liwer mentioned *Lakrav* [to battle] as the name of the organization. See David Liwer, *Ir hametim* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Twerski, 1946), p. 82.
- 11 Avraham Zylbersztejn — *Hashomer Hatzair* and ŻOB member from Warsaw, arrived in Będzin at the end of June 1943, survived and immigrated to Israel, and died in the United States. See Adam [Avraham Zylbersztejn], *Be-getaot varsha ve-chenstochova* (Hebrew) (Merhavia: Sifriat Poalim, 1945).
- 12 In the original text the author uses the Polish word *piecznik*, which probably denotes an oven.

uncomfortable. [14] It's Abram's first time in the bunker, which is very small and awfully uncomfortable, still quite unfinished. We hastily grab two loaves of bread and some water in a pot. We lock the oven. Soon afterward the campaign begins. It was awfully stuffy underground. Some air was coming in only through a tiny hole in the oven and there was such a squeeze that it seemed that we could not endure it. There was no bucket. How horrible it is even for someone who has the most primitive human needs; to satisfy them and other needs in the same place (an empty corner) where he sleeps! And how awful it is for us! It's so humiliating to one's human dignity. It's worse than the most brutal tortures. Our hideout connected two streets so it [the search] was repeated ten times a day. They were hitting pickaxes on the floor. They were trying to open the oven. At one point they were tearing apart the floor just above our heads. Cwi ordered Abram to get ready. He [15] began looking for his gun and said, "Kasia [Szancer]¹³ will go out first. I'll follow. I'll do my duty. Run away. If you succeed — good, if not — too bad." Breathless, we waited to see what would happen. Our only worry was whether we had working guns in our dirty pockets. We spent three days like that. And nobody came to us with any sign of life. We immediately had a bad feeling. *Judenrein*. Cwi says, "I must go to the *kibbutz* and see what has happened to them." Everybody's worried. He has to go, but something could happen to him. And we would be left alone, without protection, without a leader, just like someone whose head has been cut off — the only thing left is the dead, inert body, or like a person whose heart has been taken out. We loved and at the same time respected him so much, as a companion, a brother, and at the same time like a father.

He left. Yet another awful, horrible day ahead of us.

[16] Again the hammering, pounding of a pickaxe, bated

13 Miriam (Kasia) Szancer (Barenblat) — *Hashomer Hatzair* member from Sosnowiec, survived and immigrated to Israel.

breaths, mortal fear and nervous tension. They were near our bunker for three hours. Perhaps they had heard a murmur. They've torn up half the floor. They're reaching the oven. They call, "*Juden, geht schon raus*" [Jews, come out at once]. Panic. The people want to get up. There's a murmur. With all my willpower I calm everybody down with a quiet hiss, "On the floor." Nobody dares to get up without my order. I have instinctively taken command.

I hoped for one thing — their laziness. And I was not disappointed. They left.

Cwi came back at night with mortal fear in his heart. He had thought that we were already doomed. And he sighed with relief and I did too. I was so happy that he was already back. I felt such a relief. I no longer have to be the only one responsible for what is to happen. It was such a great responsibility on my part.

[17] We've run out of water. We open our hatch. We can hear shots, so we can't [go out]. There's somebody in the hall. They back out. But what now? There's no water. We won't be able to endure. Having only a piece of bread a day is nothing, but we won't be able to survive without water. We open the oven again and that causes a hell of a noise, which could betray us. That makes everybody anxious.

Cwi goes out with another man. He is the first, as always. Silent minutes of waiting. They bring water. Everybody sighs with relief. Our dear, beloved Cwi, the bravest of us all. And yet another day of fear and anxiety. What now? How long can we endure staying in this dungeon? It is so stuffy that everybody is getting weaker and weaker every day. Somebody switched on a torch. Hell — no matter if you heard about it or saw it in a painting.

This is what Hell must look like — like our dungeon, our shelter.

[18] You can't recognize the faces in the [dark]. You can see young bodies, stripped, half-naked, lying on rags. Lots of legs, one next to another. Haven't they become intertwined with one another? Yes, they have. Arms, so many of them. One next to another. Palms

so wet and sticky, pressing on you. It's disgusting. And the people make love here. These might be their final moments. Let them at least bid their farewells. Cwi is lying with Dora [Hercberg].¹⁴ It has been four years of war. They were so close to each other, but they didn't see each other. I reproach Dora. She regrets. "I was so stupid, I didn't have the courage. I've wasted four years." She regrets it so much now. It's too late. Thirsty, they're lying next to each other. As always, I make a stinging remark, "Cwi, they must have chosen you for a sweet death in heaven." And [19] my prediction proved to be true. He lived only a couple more days after that.

The next day we ran out of water. They walked from flat to flat. No water. What now? We have to get out of here. Making matters worse, Pesa [Brandes]¹⁵ is having an attack of hysteria. She begins shouting; screaming at the top of her lungs, "Kill me. I don't want to live anymore. I can't stand it anymore. Finish me off. I'm Cwi's sister. I want to die an honorable death." She's screaming at the top of her lungs. The hatch is open. They might hear us any moment now and it would be over. Cwi makes a decision. Everybody disperses and goes to the *kibbutz's* bunker. Dora and Kasia depart. Cwi stays with his sister. He is very nervous and pushes everybody out. I leave with Srulek.¹⁶ The first stretch is fine. But rockets appear out of the blue, lighting the entire street and shots begin to be fired from all directions. [20] We hit the dirt. We're doomed. We're being lit from all directions. Shrapnel and stones are flying from all directions. They call, "*Komm hier, Jude*" [Come here, Jew]. My heart is aching so much. Why am I to die this way? I haven't done anything yet. I wanted to be with my entire *chevra* [group of comrades] and not alone on a field like this. What will people say? That I ran away to

14 Dora (Dorka) Hercberg (...-1944) — *Hashomer Hatzair* activist and Cwi Brandes' girlfriend.

15 Pesa (Pola) Brandes (1915–1983) — Cwi's sister, survived and immigrated to Israel.

16 Probably Israel Warszawski.

save my skin? That I fled at night to save myself even though I had been talking so much about *hagana*?

My heart is thumping and pounding there, so miserable, so very lonely.

And what have I experienced? There have been few good moments in my [life]. [I have led] an exhausting life in poverty and indigence. But stop complaining. There have been good moments too. You had good companions and such deep, great love and such wonderful moments with the man you loved.

[21] And there's a boy lying next to you. An 18-year-old boy. What does he know about the world? Such a pleasant, sweet, good boy!

I pity him so much. He truly had not even begun to live. I pity him so much. We're lying for a long time, our heads hidden, as if pinned down to the ground. I'm slowly growing calmer (they keep shooting at us and shining lights around us). I must be destined for the same kind of death as Dawid [Kozłowski]. Tough luck. I'm waiting.

I decide to continue walking. And we somehow succeed in crawling to the nearby buildings. We enter a flat. We cannot believe that we are alive. I feel my body. Yes, I'm alive. And I'm happy. Srulek and I kiss. We drink water. And after that we reach the *kibbutz* without any more adventures. It's already 3 P.M. They are happy to see us. They thought that we were *kaput* [broken, dead].

[22] We meet everybody [there]. Cwi [and Pola] came over. They have been through a lot too. They carried Pola into a flat so that she would calm down in the open, but she didn't stop. "Kill me; I don't want to live anymore." They heard her and walked over, but were afraid to enter the flat. One stood by the window and said, "*Komm raus*" [Get out]. Cwi walked up to him from behind and knocked him down. He then dragged the half-conscious Pola¹⁷ to the *kibbutz*. This is what Cwi is capable of. He didn't leave her. The

17 Pesa (Pola) Brandes.

first shot. I am so proud. I am so happy. But not for long. Before I can catch my breath, they tell me, “There’s nobody at No. 5. It’s a ruin. There’s nobody there.”

I stop dead. Everything inside me stops, freezes for a moment. It feels as if my heart has stopped beating, that I’ve gone deaf and dumb. I’m sitting like [23] a dead log without a word. So Frumka [Płotnicka],¹⁸ Baruch, Cipora [Bocian],¹⁹ and so many others of our people are already gone. They were so young, in their prime, healthy, full of life and energy, but they’re already gone.

Surely I knew that all of us would die, that all of us would perish. But it was to be different. We were supposed to all go together and not like that, like pieces of living, healthy flesh being torn off piece by piece. Why, we were to do something, something great, no less than they did in Warsaw. We weren’t supposed to end up like they did. A single shot — this is how Baruch killed one, but we lost a dozen. I’m less sorry that they’re gone than about the fact that they had done so little, which makes me furious, screams inside me and rips my intestines apart.

I’m sitting without saying a word, but everything inside me is seething.

All of us will come to such an awful end.²⁰

[24] There’s not even one gun. Cwi came to have a look but he didn’t find any. What now? They’ll come and take us all empty-handed. No, I swear to myself for the thousandth time that I won’t go into a wagon. Let them execute me. I’ll run for the nth time, but I won’t go. I won’t go in alive. What should we do? This is the first time that a thought about leaving here comes to my mind. I don’t want to sit in a bunker anymore, without air or water. I want to breathe my last on the surface, look up at the sky once more, and swallow my fill of water and air. And that thought has kept nagging at me ever since.

18 Frumka Płotnicka (1914–1943) — delegate of *Hechalutz* Center of Warsaw and one of the *Dror* leaders. See Notebook B, pp 1–11.

19 Cipora Bocian — *Dror* member.

20 See also Notebook B, pp. 1–11 and Notebook B, pp. 1–4.

Notebook II²¹

[1] Saturday, August 29, 1943²²

Some thought that it would be better in the *kibbutz* bunker than it was in ours. I have the impression that it's worse. It's stuffy as hell. Everybody's skin is glistening from sweat, of course, and they're walking around half-naked, in pyjamas and shirts. Everybody's lying on the floor, their bodies like corpses. It feels as though I won't stand being here for long. It's difficult for me to catch my breath. But there's an electric fan, which turns nonstop, spinning the stuffy air and bringing some relief. When you sit close to it you have the impression that real wind is blowing at you. And there's a kitchen, an actual kitchen, because there's even an electric cooker. So we eat a warm lunch instead of a dry piece of bread. The petite Chawka is bustling about by the stove. Everybody's lying on the ground like corpses, and she's cooking lunch plus semolina for Aliza [Zeytenfeld].²³ I admire her. It's so hot by that stove and she looks after the people nonstop. She bandages a wound for one, hands talcum powder to another for him to rub on his skin, and orders another to wash himself so that we do not become infested with lice and ill from dirt. And then she washes herself and [we eat] lunch. It's so nice to look at her, so clean and kind.

21 Notebook II is a mathematics notebook without a binding. The date and the descriptions suggest that it is a direct continuation of Notebook I. The handwriting on pages 1–13 is firm and the lines are straight. The lines on the upper part of pages 13–20 are straight, whereas the bottom lines usually slope downward diagonally. It seems that Chajka was either trying to put more words on each page, or simultaneously trying to get rid of her painful memories. The approximate chronological dates of events in Notebook II are August 4–7, 1943. Notebook II was translated into Hebrew and was included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 111–118, with heavy censorial editing and significant omissions.

22 In fact, it was Sunday.

23 Aliza Zeytenfeld (...–1944) — *Dror* member and Herszel Springer's girlfriend.

When I came, I was angry with Herszel about her staying here instead of passing to the “Aryan” side despite her good “Aryan” appearance. And Herszel tells me, “If it weren’t for Chawka, everybody would be dead.” And I can see that he’s right. Time’s dragging in the bunker. I look at the people — living dead. I revolt. I won’t stand it. I won’t stay here. I wait longingly for the evening. They finally open the hatch and I go out with the boys. Air — live, healthy, fresh [2] air. I take in a deep, deep breath. I want to breathe in as much air as possible to have some for later. I’m standing by a wall when I suddenly hear the sound of shots. Rockets light the building. I retreat into the cubbyhole. I’m angry with myself for still being scared. After all, I’ve become rather used to that.

I walk out and look around. There’s a bright light in front. Those are the barracks — the deportation center. The Germans have assembled all the people there and they’re watching them. They also put search lights there so that they cannot escape. The victims are being carefully watched. And in the back, behind the hill, there’s an observation post and another two on the other side and by the wall near the factory that leads to the “Aryan” district. This must be what a front line looks like. Rockets keep falling and lighting the way. An actual war is being waged against us. I burst out with vacuous laughter. Ha...Ha... War against Jews in bunkers, against my father and mother.

Yes, they’re going to win this war. If they still can. They can be proud, happy. The boys bring water. We go underground again. I thought that I’d feel better after breathing in fresh air, but it’s worse. My lungs need to get used to working in this stuffiness again. And there’s a tumult, fuss in the bunker. It’s the women arguing. What now, with the hatch opened? And what are they arguing about? About rags! For God’s sake, have they lost their minds or what?! [3] I’m so furious that I say nothing and only burst into tears. Oh my God, why do I need to sit here with these people? Where are

Lea [Pejsachson],²⁴ Idzia [Pejsachson],²⁵ Irka [Pejsachson], Dawid [Kozłowski], Yankele [Landou],²⁶ and so many other people who were dear to me? Or maybe it is better that they're not here and that they have not lived to see this disgrace. Their dreams have been shattered. What they died for no longer exists and never will. It is better that they have not lived to see that. Or maybe it would be different if they were here? Maybe? How can you doubt that? Of course it would be different. It grieves my heart so much and I feel so sad.

Oh, how I loathe these women, these girls! Do all women have to think about rags even in the face of death? Ugly, loathsome creatures! Why do they live on in this world, while the good are already gone? Those who had the ideal of *hagana* deep in their hearts are already gone. There were arguments in our bunker, too. There was a boy named Meir, who gave us a hard time. An epileptic, [4] mentally ill. When everybody told him to be quiet he couldn't refrain from moving. He was unable to adapt to the conditions. He had to lie in a comfortable position. He didn't follow Cwi's orders because he wanted to give them. And his palms were so huge and slick like a monkey's. And he kept touching the girls, which was so annoying. An uncouth, wild animal. But the most annoying thing was his voice. He spoke at the top of his voice, his veins swelling up on his neck, in a situation where any murmur might have given us away. And one of us was no longer able to control himself. He couldn't take that anymore and the two of them had a fight.

Dear God, my face was all red. I wasn't angry with Meir, as he wasn't one of us, and had joined us just a couple of days before. But how could Abram not control himself? Had he forgotten all

24 Lea Pejsachson (1919–1943) — dominant youth leader of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Będzin and Chajka's best friend, elder daughter of Icek-Mordke Pejsachson, deported to Auschwitz in June 1943. See Notebook E.

25 Idzia Pejsachson (1921–1943) — *Hashomer Hatzair* activist in Będzin, second daughter of Icek-Mordke Pejsachson. Idzia was killed as an underground courier in the spring of 1943.

26 Jakow (Yankele/Jankele) Landou (...–1943) — *Hashomer Hatzair* member, deported to Auschwitz. See Notebook A, pp. 28–32.

we had been taught? Abram tried to move closer to me to explain and apologize. I pushed him away with my leg like a dog. Because at that moment I hated him and everybody around me. Something was screaming, crying inside me.

We're so lucky that there's water. Our beloved have risked their own lives to fetch it. Shots were fired as they were on their way. They had to leave the buckets and hit the ground, but then they walked on. I decide that tomorrow I'll also go for water. I'm becoming daring. I've been lucky once, so I need to keep trying. The shots are nothing; you have to get used to them. But these rockets are scary as hell.

Why do they shine so brightly? Why are Lea, Irka, Dawid, and Yankele not here now? Why is it that during our last moments we're not lying with those [with] whom we had walked all the way, with whom we had dreamed of the ideal of *hagana* — the final act of our life? Why did they pass away so prematurely and why do such petty and unworthy people [5] now have to walk this path with us.

Dora's sitting next to me and she asks, "So this is who you've sacrificed your life for?! Do you want to do something together with them?! Die for them?!"

"If such scum joins your ranks..."

"And you want to leave with them! No, I won't let you do anything. It's foolish in my opinion. If you want to do something great then do it with men, not puppies. If you want to die, then do it when they understand you." She's from a different world and can't understand us. She doesn't want to lose Cwi either. I'm sitting without a word. How much pain her words cause me! How deeply they've hurt me! There's so much truth in what she's said. But she can't understand us.

We've been living here for a year with the thought of *hagana*. We've been cultivating it inside us. "No, we're not going to let them deport us," we kept saying. "We're going to sacrifice our lives for something, for an act." *Hagana* had seeped into our blood. It had

become a need each of us felt. We had only two weapons, but even that obliged us to do something.

Dora was unable to understand that. She was young and wanted to live and love. Her beloved was lying right next to her. She didn't want to lose him.

And in his veins and blood there was a feeling of responsibility with regard to what he had taught us and what he always [6] preached. To remain faithful to the ideal to which we had sworn our lives. And he did remain faithful to it instead of to her. This is why he's no longer among the living. Dora talked about that when she was about to depart. "You should come too." But he only laughed. "How could I leave my group of friends? No matter what it's like." It was ludicrous. That was as impossible as for the sky to touch the earth. And she wanted me to go too. I very, very much wanted to get out of this stinking hole and breathe the fresh air. But could I leave as one of the first? That was out of the question. Perhaps later, after some members of the group had already left.... And I can't leave Cwi alone with all the burden of responsibility and decisions. No, I won't leave him alone.

Words of reproach begin. How come? You've already promised. A *shlichut* [mission],²⁷ somebody has to, and so on. I have gone deaf. I can't hear anything. Besides, those words are meaningless now.

[7] God, how very inadequate my words are. Am I able to express what was happening in the souls of the handful of people who were dearest to me? Am I able to express the greatness of their souls? I haven't written for such a long, long time.

Am I not too small a mortal to comprehend and express the breadth of their horizons and their greatness? Surely I am.

But perhaps with the power of my heart, which loves them,

27 Chajka was assigned by her comrades to survive the deportations and the armed resistance in order to document the history of the underground and/or to deliver their story orally to their comrades in *Eretz Israel*. A designated *shaliach* (missionary, delegate, messenger), she was "condemned to life."

and from the days we lived together, something will flow out even from my heart.

If only I knew that I could get that at the price of a great sacrifice, at the price of my life, years of happiness given away! Oh, how happy I'd be to do that.

On the other hand, does it make sense to write at all? For whom?

For the nation, for the masses. Oh, how much I have come to hate the masses. Why, I knew that it was a rural riffraff, that it was clay, which can be molded at will, in which beautiful heroic impulses can be inspired during a revolution as fast as it can be brought to do base, vile, criminal acts, [8] to lynching, to stoning. But what the Jewish riffraff truly is — do say — it is because of the conditions. I don't want to hear about anything. They're all whores and menials. I hate them. Oh, how much I hate them. A disgraced, beastly nation.

So who should I be writing all this for?

Perhaps for my American brothers. Ha-ha-ha! For those fat apes, who tap their bellies with watch chains on them, who think, "If only the Polish Jews went to [Mandatory] Palestine."²⁸ I hate them. But who do I actually love? How do I not hate? Yes, there was a period when I hated everything and everybody. I was raging with madness and vengeance, that bloody, merciless vengeance. I wanted revenge, revenge. For the millions of Jewish children suffocated, suffocated in wagons, thrown like balls into trains, for those strangled by their own parents, for those abandoned by their own mothers. For the millions of Jewish young people blossoming and tall like trees who were strangled and executed, tormented and

28 *Eretz Israel* was called Mandatory Palestine by Great Britain. This should not be confused with modern-day Palestine.

tortured in prisons, who toiled like horses [9] in labor camps. And for our fathers, slaving away and exhausted by the harsh, toilsome life. I was raging with desire for a brutal revenge, more terrible than the world has ever seen. I wanted to suffocate, kill them all; whoever came to hand — adults, men, women, children, tiny little children. I wanted to strangle, kill.

And then I came to this house. To a German woman, though not native,²⁹ and her child. She's good to us like a sister. Could I do her any harm? Or harm her child? But when I look at this child, pale and somehow weak, I can see those Jewish children with their rosy cheeks and lively, black eyes. Our sweet, little Tampusia [Mgla].³⁰ My heart's aching so much, so much. But I wouldn't be able to hurt this child. I've even grown fond of her. She's not to blame that the world's so cruel, so unjust. Perhaps in another 20 years she will have to go to spill her blood for some alien, adverse cause. The world's unjust and cruel.

And so my hate has somehow subsided [10] and am I to again believe in our *shomer* [*Hashomer Hatzair* member] truth, that the entire German nation isn't to blame? That the entire nation cannot be destroyed for what's happening? The mind says that it's true. But the heart is bleeding profusely and calling for revenge.

I'm writing so chaotically and I'm diverting from the topic. Who am I writing for?

Who will understand this epoch? Cwi had a dream, and so did Dawid. I'd like to see somebody from the *Kibbutz Artzi*³¹ someday.

29 The woman was Mrs. Banasik, a *Volksdeutsche*.

30 Chajka's niece, Tauba (1940–1943), daughter of Sara (Klinger) and Jacob Mgla. It seems that her Hebrew name was Tamar. She was strangled in another bunker during the same deportation. It is unclear whether Chajka knew the fate of her niece when she wrote these lines.

31 *Hakibbutz Haartzi* — federation of the *Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim* in Eretz Israel.

Am I writing for them? Yes, for them. Perhaps they'll understand. If not, then I think I'll have to blow my brains out. We didn't walk the path we chose only for ourselves, but also because of them and for them, for history.

They must understand. Because we had grown from them, because they had always been a signpost showing the way to go.

How happy we were that it wasn't Meir Yaari³² but [Yitzhak] Tabenkin³³ who sent that stupid telegram. How did he dare dictate to us such a shameful thing: to leave everything and flee? And that after four years of war, during which they had done nothing for us, [11] having left us to the mercy of fate.³⁴

We're so angry with you, my Zionist brothers. I speak about it with irony.

What did you do for us? No, not for us. What did you do to find out what was happening to us, what was happening to the Polish *yishuv*, which after all was your foundation, without which you are a mere cipher.

We risked our lives for every post-delivery. And you? Shame on You!

Why, parties and organizations without a Diaspora are of little importance. What would have been the importance of the Bolshevik Party without the Diaspora back then? And how much has been accomplished with it!

32 Meir Yaari (1897–1987) — leader of *Hashomer Hatzair* and *Hakibbutz Haartzit* in *Eretz Israel*.

33 Yitzhak Tabenkin (1887–1971) — leader of *Dror* and *Hakibbutz Hameuhad* in *Eretz Israel*.

34 A telegram from Mandatory Palestine, signed by Tabenkin — or by Tabenkin and Yaari — was received in Będzin in June or July 1943. According to other paragraphs in the diaries, the telegram called on the underground members to “use all means for immigration.” It seems that the telegram arrived in Będzin through the exiled Polish government in Poland and was transferred to the underground by an *Armia Krajowa* (AK) [Home Army] courier. See Avihu Ronen, “The Cable That Vanished.”

Whereas we, even though we have such a powerful Diaspora – such a powerful *yishuv*...You are zero in my eyes.

But I'm writing these words to you.

And what about? There was the wartime epoch and it will pass away. The people and events will perish. Maybe Abram was right. It's not worth it. There were base, mean, villainous people and base [interests]. An awful, horrible epoch. Why should it be brought back to life? There was a nation. There were lofty ideals in that nation before the war. It proved unworthy [12] – a nation of slaves. There has never been more corruption and slavery in any nation. The Jewish militia did the messy work, not only manhunts, but also conducted deportations. The Jewish *Gminy* [communities; *Judenräte*] will be a dark stain on the history of Jews.

And there was our movement against the background of that epoch. There were black sheep in it too, but there were also people whom I believed in so much and whom I trusted. And they sealed that trust with their death. They lived and died like men with a free spirit, like men of courage and ideals. And these people are worthy of being brought back to life, resurrected.

It's worth surviving to tell [their story], but the one who survives will be like a leaf cast about by a gale, a leaf that doesn't belong to anyone and has lost its mother tree, which has died. The leaf should have stayed with it and died too. An epoch died there, so those people have to perish as well. The leaf will fly with the wind and won't find a place for itself, neither finding the old leaves it used to know, nor a patch of the old sky. It's impossible to accrete to a new tree. And the poor leaf [13] will wander, recalling the old, though very sad, days, and ever longing to return, but it won't find its place.

We're sitting in the bunker. We can't continue to sit idly like this anymore. First of all, everybody will suffocate here. Secondly,

what's the point? It's surely *Judenrein*. The people should be sent on to the "Aryan" side. Lots were drawn. "Ajzyk [Najman]³⁵ and Maks [Fischer],³⁶ you're going today." The people are frowning. They don't want to go. It's so difficult for them to detach themselves from the *chevra* and leave, into the unknown, without an address or anything. They are complaining, "You didn't prepare us for this. We thought that we'd go together." "To die," somebody says. Yes, to die, but together. Everybody becomes so sad deep at heart. I hang my head and sit [there] without a word.

But it can't be helped. One has to go. It's so sad, so very sad. We bid them farewell. Tears come to my eyes. If only we could die together instead of [14] [it] ending so miserably, so miserably.

God, how shortsighted all those people were! They were afraid of *hagana*. We have lost so many people anyway. Why were they such cowards and why could they not find the courage to do something great?

We are sitting in the bunker. Our numbers are steadily decreasing. Every day somebody goes away. Today it's my turn. Today I'm going. No more procrastinating. I would like to go with Cwi or Herszel. I was about to go with Herszel, but Aliza [Zeytenfeld] kept putting it off again and again. So what? If they're not going, then I'm going today. So what? I can go with Pesa and Uncio [Brandes].³⁷ Three dirty Jews — we are bound to be caught. I'm often angry with Pesa for being like a ball and chain on Cwi's ankle. But I still pity her. She's so miserable and helpless yet wise.

35 Ajzyk Najman — *Hashomer Hatzair* member from Żarki, survived and immigrated to Israel.

36 Maks (Max) Fischer — *Dror* member, survived and immigrated to Israel.

37 Aharon (Uncio) Brandes (1912–1996) — Cwi Brandes's older brother — survived and immigrated to Israel. See Aharon Brandes, *Ketz ha-yehudim be-drom maarav polin* (Hebrew) (Merhavia: Sifriat Poalim, 1945).

Suddenly we hear a shout — they're reaching us. They're scraping at the coal. The hatch opens. We've been discovered. I don't understand. What's happened? How come? I'm standing transfixed. But there's commotion all around us. The people are hastily getting dressed, grabbing briefcases and bundles. What's happened? What now? We're doomed! What now? There's such commotion, tumult, bustle. A Jew comes down to us.³⁸ Meir [Schulman]³⁹ talks to him. Some have to go out and some can stay. Everybody's standing speechless. Nobody moves. For God's sake, somebody has to go out first. [15] Let the girls and children go out. They won't hurt them. I'm still undressed. I hastily grab my clothes. I have no shoes or anything at all. I put a dress on my naked body. Meir and Necha [Schulman]⁴⁰ open the second exit. I want to go out with them through that exit. Suddenly, bang! They close it. There's a sentry post. What now? Nobody wants to go out first. Chawka goes out. She comes back after some time. She talks to us, her speech disjointed. They asked about Herszel. They said that if we came out at once we would go to Talstrasse.⁴¹ So maybe Böhm⁴² has sent them? Maybe they'll take us to Talstrasse to Rosner's workshop? A ray of hope.

So what should we do with our guns?! Cwi says, "No, maybe they're not here for us. Meir! Meir, where are you?" he shouts. "Take your gun and come." But Meir's not there. He's hidden away with Necia [Necha] under the cots.

38 Max Fischer, who left the bunker earlier, contacted Böhm, a *Judenrat* official in the ghetto, and told him about the bunker, intending to help those in the bunker to move from there to the liquidation camp. Böhm sent a Jew as his delegate, but he was accompanied by two Germans.

39 Meir Schulman — from Chrzanów, active in the underground mostly by producing homemade arms (bombs) and false documents, survived and immigrated to Israel.

40 Nechama (Necha) Schulman — Meir's wife, survived and immigrated to Israel.

41 Będzin became a Germanized town called Bendsburg and its streets had German names.

42 Wolf [Władysław] Böhm — ex-chairman of the Sosnowiec *Judenrat* (under Moshe Merin), Zionist on good terms with the Zionist youth movements, in charge of the liquidation camp.

What now? Suddenly, Chawka descends for the second time and leaves. People, come out, hurrying upward. Herszel must go out. But he's so confused. He doesn't know what's happening with him. Neither does Cwi. I don't recognize them.

Herszel distributes money. He has such a lot of it. I have never seen so much money. [16] We walk out. There are three of them. They frisk us and take away the money. That was the deal that somebody would go out and talk to them about transporting us to Talstrasse in return for the money. Before we manage to get out and say something, they're already frisking us. Weak, Aliza tells them something in a weak voice about transporting us to Talstrasse. I'm standing in the coal cubbyhole, looking at this sad happening and wondering what to do with the money. I'm worried that they're taking away all the money. Where can I hide it? Perhaps in my knickers? Pesa's next to me. "What should I do with my gun? They gave it to me, thinking that they wouldn't frisk the girls." Oh, fools! I got scared, terrified. It should have been used or hidden somewhere deep underground, in the bunker.

"Put it in the coal," I say. She obeys. We walk out of the cubbyhole. I'm already confused on account of that gun. They take away all my money. They frisk everybody and then walk up to the coal. They take out the gun wrapped in a bloody red bag. And "*So — Genau habt ihr auf uns*" [So, you have something to attack us with]. Everybody's terrified. The girls start saying, crying, "It's not ours. Somebody's planted it." [17] *Es ekelt* [disgusting]. I think we're doomed. I return into the cubbyhole. He [the German] jumps to the exit and I follow him without a moment's thought. Perhaps I'll be able to go out through the other exit. Cwi says, "I've lost the other gun. I put it in the briefcase. I can't find it." We begin looking for it frantically. "Where did you put it? Try to remember," I ask him. We can't find it. Abram descends into the bunker. "They've arranged everybody on the ground and he threatens to execute everybody unless you come out." Silence. Cwi says, "*Ich gib mich on por a korb — ich gey*" [I'll be the sacrifice. I'll go]. He goes out.

Abram comes over again. “Necha, you have to go out because he [the German] has seen you. Leave.” Meir is furious, “What are you talking about? Necha’s not going out.” “Abram, why are you calling Necha?” I say. Too bad, I’ll go out. Everybody’s lying on the ground with their arms outstretched. 12 people. I lie down as well. They ask, “Is anybody else there?” “No, there isn’t.” They send Herszel to see if anyone is left. “There’s nobody there.” We won’t give Necha and Meir away. He descends and takes one step. He picks up a briefcase and reaches inside. He takes out the other gun and bursts out laughing, “*Nicht eure, so?!*” [Not yours, right?!]. He fumbles inside the briefcase. [18] He takes out a *Lichtbild* [photograph] [of Aliza] Zeytenfeld. We can hear their faint voices again. They’re laughing. “*So eine Dummheit, [das] Lichtbild übergelassen*” [How dumb to have left the photograph]. Aliza starts talking and pleading. “It’s not mine...not mine...” You stupid, stupid girl. Your words are meaningless so at least be brave.

Can they believe your words? They cannot and should not. Would you believe?

And then he points at me. “*Und das ist ihre*” [And this is yours]. It’s a done deal. Fate has passed its sentence. “*Was, meine?*” [What, mine?] I say.

He said nothing and only kicked me twice so hard, that I heard a thud. And then he kept hitting me with a wooden pole, one, two, three, four times. And I didn’t even squeal, only at the end, when I saw that he was getting furious. Why should he keep hitting me if he’s going to shoot me anyway?

We’re lying, waiting for the sentence.

I’m perfectly calm. I’m looking at the sky, looking around greedily, absorbing everything. I’m looking around fully convinced [19] that it’s the last time. But why do they make us wait so long? I’d only like to drink some water and then they can finish me off. As long as it’s fast and without suffering. I heard that death from a bullet is painless.

They order us to get up. We all gather our bundles. I look at

them, confused. What for? I'm forbidden to either put on my shoes or take the briefcase. I must look like a mad woman in the untidy dress, which is dirty from lying on the ground. I can't shake off the dust. I have no shoes. I must look like I'm out of my mind.

I'm ordered to walk last. "*In Beine werden Sie bekommen*" [I'll hit you on the legs] and he hits me with a [rifle] butt from behind. "*Ich werde sie jetzt erledigen*" [I will finish her off now], I hear him say to another man, but the other man tells him, "Let her be. Don't do anything on our own initiative." He leaves me alone.

Everybody's walking in single file. We arrive at the square opposite the barracks. Lots of soldiers and officers. "*Das sind diese, das sind diese...*" [It's them. It's them...], we hear from all around. They're standing, looking and pointing at us.

Aliza's pleading again, [20] crying. I can't stand listening to that anymore. "You idiot, calm down," I say. "It won't help you. Have some dignity." "I will," she says, shaking like a leaf. "One is not allowed even to speak."

I'm cursing myself and others. Oh, how much I'm cursing OKW [the fighting organization in Będzin]. I hate them. Why did they give me a role that disgraces and hurts me? Why can't I now clearly and openly shout in their faces, "Yes, it's mine. It's ours. I wanted to wipe out our disgrace with it and teach you, *Mörder* [murderers], villains, a lesson." Why must I remain silent and lie? Why did they give me such a disgraceful role? I'm so furious that I'm biting my fingers. Why did we put such a burden on weak Aliza's shoulders? "Farewell," I say. "We, Aliza and I, are probably going to be executed." Only Cwi, I only want to drink some water. "Water!" I call in vain.

The deportees are sitting in the barrack. We are forbidden to enter the barrack. They order us to sit down on the ground in front of the barrack. We can get neither water nor food. We are like lepers.

Notebook III⁴³

[62] Jews, many of them familiar to us, are sitting by the windows. They come out through the door and move about rather freely, but of course they're being watched. We cannot move from this spot. Guards keep coming to have a look at us, like at wild animals in a menagerie. I'm furious. I often have an urge to stick my tongue out. I look around. It's empty all around. All the streets, alleys — the entire Jewish ghetto is deserted. The campaign has been on for a week. Everybody was hiding in bunkers but they brought soldiers trained for Jewish deportations, who dragged them [the Jews] out of the bunkers. During the first couple of days all the Jews without exception went into wagons. Led by the chairman, [the members of] the Jewish *gmina* went by hansom cab. Many executions, with the number reaching a thousand — they were those who tried to reach the "Aryan" side. And the wagons had tops, cattle wagons. And now they've left 500 people at Rosner's⁴⁴ workshop to liquidate

43 Notebook III is without a binding; the pages do not have printed lines. As in Notebook II, the handwriting is steady and straight in the upper part of the pages, whereas the bottom lines usually bend downward diagonally. Notebook III is identical in type to Notebook II, and its content is a continuation of II. It seems that either Chajka had two identical notebooks or these are two parts of the same original notebook. It is unknown who wrote the notebook numbers (I, II, III, etc.) — either Chajka herself or one of her comrades, before or during her long travels (Poland–Slovakia–Hungary–Turkey–Mandatory Palestine), from late December 1943 to early March 1944. Owing to the underground conditions it is possible that the notebooks arrived in Istanbul in pieces and were stacked together. In any case, it is quite certain that the confusing numbering of the pages (62–84), was done in Istanbul, because the original notebooks with their numbering are identical to the photocopy that was made in Istanbul by Menachem Bader in 1944. (See the "Bader Photocopy," Moreshet Archive C.36.15). Most of Notebook III, was included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 118–126, although heavily edited and censored. Its approximate time frame was August 7–10, 1943.

44 Rosner himself led the evacuation work. He was executed later by the Nazis.

the workshop. Some were sent to Annenberg.⁴⁵ 300 remained. The same at Braun's.⁴⁶ They also left for a while 20–30 young people from the last transport to liquidate the apartments. The number was growing with every transport. So everybody was very eager to work. Even though they knew. Of the 1,000 or 2,000 people to be deported, only [63] 20 will go to work.

Every now and then they bring somebody new from a bunker.

Poor old Jews and you, children, I pity you so much. They're so intimidated and dirty.

And so thirsty. They dash for the water buckets like wild animals. They snatch mugs from one another and fight. They have had no water for three weeks and have been drinking rainwater or urine.

And the Germans are looking at them as if at negroes or some exotic animals, for they are very shaggy. And they take pity on them. They have water and bread brought to them. They are merciful and grand in their generosity.

They've brought an old Jewish man with sidelocks. Laughter.

The brethren ask, "Do you have gold? You've hidden it. Give it to us."

Good God, the man looks as if he has never seen a pfennig [penny] in his entire life and they want gold from him.

And one of the soldiers who are frisking him [says], "*Das ist der richtige* — '*Jude Schwindler*' [That's the real "Jewish Swindler"]. He must have had a lot of gold."

But I know the faces of my Jews. I could swear, that he's another [64] *Boncie Schweig*.⁴⁷ He's staring at them and says, "*Ja... was...*" [Yes... What...].

45 Annenberg — labor camp in Schlesien [Silesia], administrative center of *Organisation Schmelt*.

46 Braun — a German workshop owner.

47 *Boncie Schweig* [Boncie, shut up]. Boncie Schweig is the protagonist of a story by Icchok Lejbusz Perc (1851–1915), a leading Yiddish social author. Boncie suffered all his life but never spoke about his pain, being exploited by his

And they just keep laughing.

And it hurts me so much that I can feel something turning and writhing inside me.

Ha! Order this *Majufes* [How Beautiful]⁴⁸ to dance and dance he will. And you'll laugh and laugh. (They're here — a lady in black gave the children some bread). They're already escorting another, shouting, "*Wo sind die Anderen?*" [Where are the others?] The man doesn't want to say. They lay him on a chair. "*Oy, vey. Oy vey,*" he cries. "I'll talk. *Schon bald* [pretty soon]."

Ribono shel Olam! [Master of the World!]. They're there, walking. Any minute now. They couldn't have beaten them long. He's already coming. They'll come soon. They have made *moiserim* [traitors/informers] out of them, ingratiating parasites, slaves, who give away their own brothers and wives.

They are taking people to work.

Everybody is eager. One looks for backing from another. The Jews are scheming. How about bribing a soldier? But there's nothing to bribe him with. One had a gold watch and did bribe him. What could I bribe him with?

They leave. People volunteer to work. They select the young

employers, cruelly controlled by his wife, and neglected by his children. When he arrived in paradise, the angels held a special ceremony on his behalf and God told him that he would get whatever he wished for. Then, at last Boncie uttered his first words, "Do you have a roll and butter?" For Chajka and her comrades in the radical youth movement, Boncie Schweig represented the traditional Jewish passivity and they denounced his character and his destiny. See Icchok Lejbusz Perek, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, book 2 (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1947–1953), pp. 167–172.

48 Polish landowners, as part of an evening's entertainment, would summon "their Jews" to the estate for a command performance of *majufes* [a traditional Jewish song/dance]. And the Jews, coerced and humiliated, complied, playing out for the *Pany* a travesty of devout song accompanied by dancing and extravagant hand gestures. Bret Werb, "Majufes: A Vestige of Jewish Traditional Song in Polish Popular Entertainments," *Polish Music Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Summer 2003).

and healthy. Our people volunteer. “No, you can’t. [65] You have to stay put.” Husbands abandon their wives and children; mothers, their children; children, their parents.

I want to save myself. Perhaps a wagon will arrive in the meantime and there will be a deportation? They’ll gain one, two days.

Poor, miserable people. Nothing can save them. The death sentence has already been pronounced. “But it might be revoked. A miracle could happen,” so the religious think. But I don’t believe in miracles. I don’t.

They interrupt my reflections. They’re calling us, Aliza⁴⁹ and me. We are about to be executed. It’s a certainty. “Farewell,” I say quietly and walk proudly with my head up. I’m strutting boldly. They stop me by the building of the former militia. Aliza walks in and I stay. They order them to watch me, because I could escape. I’m standing, thinking why are they dragging me to a closed building. They don’t want witnesses. But far away in a field they won’t have any witnesses either. The thought that they would torture me did not cross my mind. Why would they bother? What good would it do? Bidner,⁵⁰ whom I know, a former clerk in the *gmina*, walks past me. He has a frightened look on his face. “What are you doing here?” “Nothing really. They want to execute me.” “How come? What for? How?” “They have found something in our bunker.”

[66] He had a tray with apples. I take one in a most leisurely manner and begin to eat it. He looks at me as if I were out of my mind. Am I? I don’t know. Before I can finish eating they call me. I throw away the rest. “It’s the final moment,” I’m thinking. “I’ll shout out everything. I’ll tell them what I think about them.” I’ve already composed the sentence I would tell them. I hope that I’ll have the time. “*Mörder – euer Rache tag wird kommen – Für*

49 Aliza Zeytenfeld (...-1944). The second revolver was found in Aliza’s handbag.

50 Bidner – *Judenrat* official.

unser Blut wird man Rache nehmen. Euer Ende ist schon nahe” [Murderers, your day of reckoning will come. Our blood will be avenged. Your end is already near]. To shout, scream at the top of my lungs about that for an entire day — is this all that I can do before death? Interestingly enough, I was not the only one thinking about it. I had an exchange of thoughts with my neighbor, who was thinking about the same thing. And so were the rest at the same moment. It doesn’t seem strange to me at all.

As I was walking to the execution site, I wanted to scream, because nobody would hear me in that desolate area. But I managed to control myself. It even seems to me that I asked Cwi and he didn’t tell me not to. Besides, I didn’t want to for myself, for the sake of the others. Perhaps they will execute only us and leave the rest, who might escape and get away with it. But I felt such an urge to scream. [67] What do I care about the *chevra*? I want to die an honorable death. I care about nothing else.

I became silent and calm. Neither Cwi nor the *chevra* had ordered me to.

I went into a room. Aliza is standing in a corner, so miserable, broken, so severely beaten and covered with blood.

So they’re going to beat me. I was completely petrified with fear. Endure. Say nothing. Stand tall.

They order me to lie down. “*Totschlagen*” [beat (her) to death], they say. And they began beating me, beating me severely. They were hitting me hard without paying attention where the blows were landing. They injured my whole body. But the worst thing was when they began hitting me on the head. I wanted to show them what a lousy Jewess was capable of. I wanted to refrain from shouting, even at the price of death, but that was not my tactic. I was disclaiming so I had to shout, scream about my innocence. Let that shout pierce their ears. Let them be forced to cover them. “Say whose this is, and we’ll leave you alone,” they were shouting. “I don’t know,” I said. “I don’t know. I’m innocent. Mom, Mom,” I was calling.

Only those three words, again and again during the entire time I was being beaten. They got nothing else out of me. [68] He let me be and moved on to Aliza, which was even worse. I must be a vile animal because I didn't react. I only covered my face. Oh, how humiliated one can become. How could I not walk over and slap him in the face? How could I? But I was preoccupied with myself. Such a horrible pain and such fierce joy! I was already sure that I would endure. That I wouldn't give in.

And they started on me again.

He approached me — a tall, skinny greyhound. And those eyes — very familiar eyes of a snoop — green, cold, floating eyes of a fish, the eyes of a snoop. I gave him a cold, slightly derisive look. And it still seems to me that that was what he beat me for.

On the cheek, in the face, in my eyes. Blood gushed out. One more centimeter and I would have lost my eye.

He put his sinewy arms around my thin neck and began to strangle me. He was about to strangle me to death. I began to wheeze and he released his hold. I was about to find out at what point one can die. I'd always been curious when the process of agony began. But he stopped beating me. We were escorted out. I heard the word "Auschwitz" as I was passing. I didn't know then that it referred to us.

[69] In the courtyard I heard two Germans whispering and pointing at us: "*Sie halten sich. Ja, sie halten sich*" [They're holding up. Yes, they are holding up].

I was unable to walk. I barely managed to drag myself to our group. When they saw us they burst into tears and covered their faces.

How did I manage to sit down then? But it was no longer on bare stone, as those who had some towels or shirts had offered them for me sit on.

But my body was as hard — how should I put it? — as stone, as hard as rubber. And so black. Not blue, but black. Instead of sitting I curled up like a cat and was lying on Pesa. I had no coat, shoes,

or stockings. It became dark. The soldiers are preparing wood, old furniture for a bonfire. They're about to light it. Cwi whispers to Uncio, "Now or never." Nobody except for Uncio heard that whisper. He didn't say even as much as a word to the *chevra*.

And he suddenly sprang to his feet and rushed ahead so fast — so fast that your eyes couldn't follow him.

Your heart begins pounding so strongly again, that you think that it will pop out.

Commotion among the soldiers. Shots fired one after another. They begin to run. The commander⁵¹ comes, "*Was? Getürmt — Von diese[n]!*" [What? Escaped — Of those!].

He begins to shout at the soldiers. "How could you let that happen? Chase him and bring him back [70] dead or alive."

It's been only a couple of minutes. My heart's pounding, pounding. What will happen? Will he escape?

I'm quietly begging I don't know who, God perhaps, to let him escape and reach his destination alive. The minutes are dragging on forever. They're already coming back. I look at their faces hoping to guess the truth from their expressions. But it's already too dark to see.

But I can hear one say to another, "*Schon erledigt! Ich habe ihn erwischt*" [Already done! I got him], he brags. My heart stops and then I feel a contraction, a spasm of pain. We've lost our dearest one, the best of us all. Our companion and leader. And I've also lost a friend. "But it might not be true," I say quietly to myself. "He might just be bragging. It might not be true," I'm consoling myself. Vain hope. Deep at heart I know, I'm sure, that he's dead. I'm certain of that.

His sister and brother are sitting next to me. "What were they saying?" they ask me. "I don't know," I say.

I'm sitting, unmoved. Why, I know that Cwi's dead, so why am I not crying? Why am I not banging my head against a wall? I'm

51 A German officer. One of Chajka's interrogators.

sitting still and my insides feel empty and hollow. If you knocked on me there might be an echo.

Why is it so? Am I already incapable of any human feelings, emotions, pain?!

I don't know. Perhaps it's because I'm so wounded psychically and physically. Perhaps it's the conviction that tomorrow I'll be [71] where he is now. Yes, that could be it. Tomorrow I'll be gone too. A tragedy will happen, but there will not be anybody to care. We will be gone. There will not be anybody.

What is death? It's just a minute. The heart's pounding strongly and then more and more slowly, and then it weakens and falls silent. The end.

It's only a moment. It seems to me that it's not so frightening at all. Even death from torture, from beating — horrible pain, which intensifies until you lose consciousness and then it's over.

I used to fear death a lot. I was terrified of it. I didn't want to die not only because I loved life and because every fiber of my being [yearned] for life, but also because the process of dying was something frightening and horrible in my eyes.

Today life has already lost its sense to me and I've already come to hate it. I'm already so exhausted by it. I used to know a poem, which I often repeat now, "*Ich bin des Lebens müde*" [I'm tired of life].⁵²

And death is no longer an old woman with a rod in her hand, but a kind, gentle lady.

These might be our final hours, this night outside the barrack.

During my final hours I should be thinking about my life, about unfulfilled dreams, about a song interrupted in the middle.⁵³ I'm not thinking about anything. [72] My heart's so empty and hollow.

52 Unknown German poem. Probably a nineteenth century Romantic poem. There is a guitar fantasia by Adam Darr (1811–1866), entitled "Ach, ich bin des Lebens müde."

53 Perhaps a paraphrase of a Hebrew poem by Chaim Nachman Bialik.

I am only looking at the soldiers by the bonfire, thinking,
“So you’re heartless. What are you? A listless animal, a tool
carrying out orders.

“Your wife, lover, or mother is surely waiting at home...

“When you look at us don’t you see them, blind man, when
you turn your gaze away?”

It’s dark. And in darkness thoughts of escape are born. I’ll
escape. I won’t let them deport me. I won’t get into a wagon. Perhaps
my dead body will. Yes, my dead body but not me.

I do not believe in afterlife, to use a term popular where I
was from. I do not believe that Jews live in Auschwitz, only some
individuals at best.

I’m motivated by some mad curiosity to see, discover what
is happening there, in Auschwitz. I’m sure that it’s another
Treblinka.⁵⁴ There are the gearwheels nobody escapes from.
They’re destined for an oven — they see nothing except an oven.
They’re destined for labor camps — they see nothing except
for labor camps. The German soldiers who serve in Auschwitz
have no idea what’s happening there. No living man has left [73]
Auschwitz yet.

No, I won’t go to Auschwitz. I’ll jump out the wagon, even if
it kills me. I’ll kill myself, shoot myself. I can die like a dog. But I
won’t go to Auschwitz. This is a promise I’ve made to myself.

I still don’t have the courage. I’m still recalling Cwi. And this
bonfire is burning so bright. But tomorrow it might be too late. I
have to make up my mind. I’m still asking myself.

It’s morning and we are being tormented again — they’re
watching us, pointing fingers at us.

We’re murderers — we who only wanted to die an honorable,
human death.

We’re still sitting on all fours like yesterday. We haven’t had

54 No anachronism. Chajka was well informed about Treblinka owing to the
information that came from the Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB) in Warsaw.

anything to eat. We ask the Jews from the barracks to give us some water. Walking right by us, they can give us some water without being noticed. Besides, this German is a good man. I can tell by his expression, his face, and his treatment of the Jews.

But the Jews will not give you anything. Forget it. Why, they are afraid to look at us. They pass us at a distance without looking.

So you ask another. “For God’s sake, give us some water at least.” Forget it. Nobody wants to. Ha-ha... I’m afraid of a deportation. [74] Ha-ha... These guards — in an hour or two they could be gone.

I loathe them, hate them so much.

Your nation — this is who you wanted to die for, who you have sacrificed your life for.

It’s such a heavy load and I’m so sad.

I understand everything. They are innocent. It was the others who made them what they are.

But my heart’s hurting, hurting so much.

Finally that German took pity on us and ordered us to get up for a while. He also let the children be given food and us some water.

In the afternoon some dignitaries came over. Uncio and I decided to escape. We prepared a plan: get to the toilet, crawl to the laundry, wait there until it is dark and then sneak out.

But they were watching us. I go, but he’s [the guard] standing by me, watching. I get furious and scared.

I return to my spot. Some higher-rank military men approach us, call out four boys and order them to follow. It seems that it’s an execution — they’ll be executing in groups of four.

The minutes are dragging on forever. But no, they’re coming back carrying something. Yes, we had a hunch. It’s Cwi’s body. How perfidious they are! They took our people to march past us with Cwi’s corpse. They want to show us what they’re capable of. [75] They’re getting closer. His sister is moaning next to me. I want to shout at her to stop, sit quietly, and look proudly into

their faces. I won't shed even one tear. Moaning isn't how I want to honor Cwi's death.

But there's something yelling and howling inside me. All the skin on my head has gone numb. I've suddenly become stiff and numb with cold.

I think that my hair's about to turn gray.

And they, the boys, are carrying him — our dear companion. There is not another one like that among [us]. They're carrying him and it seems to me that their legs are giving [out] from under them. Later Abram told me that he had suddenly become so weak and pale when he saw him that he was unable to lift his hand. They didn't as much as moan. But Cwi's face was so horrible, his body so mutilated and as full of holes as a sieve. Our poor, beloved Cwi! Why poor? Perhaps he's better off than we are. That was Cwi's last *zchut* [privilege] for his comrades to carry him and they did. Farewell, our dear, righteous friend, as Mordechai [Anielewicz]⁵⁵ once wrote to you. We'll soon see each other there, where nobody is in a hurry to go. Yes, your guess was right — you're gone — the two dearest people I've known in our movement.

He didn't want to wait for others to bring him life instead of death as a gift. Oh, how brave he was in their eyes! They were digging pits after that, thinking that they would be our graves after execution.

We thought ten times a day that they were already coming for us, and that waiting was worse than death. [76] Afterward we sat like corpses for a long time. An order came in the evening. I'm to go into the barracks. We're to mix with all the other Jews and share the same fate. "A transport leaves tomorrow," I said at once. "The barracks will be empty tomorrow."

And I became so gripped with fear. What now? I think I'm going to break my vow and go to Auschwitz. I'm so scared, so

55 Mordechai Anielewicz (1919–1943) — the leader of the ŻOB.

terrified of Auschwitz. I already have regrets. Why did they put us in the barracks? Outside at night there might be a chance to escape.

Others are content. We blend in with the crowd so there might be a chance to escape.

But there's only fear in me. Herszel is consoling me, "Don't be scared. There won't be a transport just now."

I look around — so in the end my turn has come too. I am in a deportation barrack. Well, I thought that it would be worse. The barrack isn't so packed or stuffy. One couldn't suffocate here, yet. The people are perfectly quiet.

"Thank God, that you're here with us," they tell us. "Nice consolation!" I laugh. "What difference does it make what death you die: whether it's by execution or by suffocation in an oven? I prefer the former."

They wanted to peck me to death for having dared to say that. Everybody goes to sleep. It's perfectly quiet. Nobody's shouting or crying. I can only hear a child crying every now and then. [77] A young girl is flirting with a young boy in a corner. She's in such good spirits! I look at her with disdain. But why am I picking on her? Perhaps she just wants to indulge herself before death?

I lie down on the floor next to a married couple and fall asleep. Somebody puts a palm on me and moves it. Ugh! I shake it off.

Somebody's moaning in their sleep. A child is crying. The bloody red glow of the bonfire [can be seen] through the window. German voices. I fall asleep again.

It's quiet in the morning. Gray faces, gray people. They walk calmly out with their towels to wash themselves, comb their hair — just a normal life. Hey, you! What do you need all that for? Let them say that you're dirty, but stop doing everything so quietly, calmly, and obediently. For God's sake, revolt! Jump out of a window at night. Do something! You should be watched by dozens instead of six *Wachtmeister* [noncommissioned officers rank]. There are so many of you, so many young and healthy people!

What are you going to do? You'll say, "Why, it's *judenrein*, and they'll track us down, hunt us down like animals."

Good, but make it difficult for them. Yes, attack them barehanded, but let the world and these simple soldiers know that they are escorting you to death, because they are being lied to and told that it's to work.

[78] Good God, but you don't believe that you are going to die. We're talking in vain. You are clinging more than ever before to your stupid faith that you are going to work, that a miracle might happen.

Yes, pray and you'll be saved. And during that final night before death I heard words of faith and talk of a miracle.

Anxiety hangs in the air. The discipline is stricter today. They let fewer people out. I'm reproaching myself. Why didn't I jump out of the window at night? So what that there was a soldier nearby? So what that I would have died like Cwi? At least I would not be waiting so long for certain death. I was talking with Uncio. We are angry with ourselves. Why didn't we escape? "We have to today. Remember. I can feel that there's going to be a transport today. I'm sure of it," I tell him. "What are you talking about?" Herszel screams at me. "I've made up my mind. I won't get into the car," I tell Uncio.

There's a certain anxiety in me, but it's so quiet around me. The people are cooking, eating.

But the urine and feces from last night have not been removed. Animals.

And they can also fight. Suddenly I can hear screaming — somebody has had their suitcase stolen and they want to fight. Herszel's begging, pleading, "Calm down. It's a disgrace to fight now." They slowly calm down. [79] Food is brought and everybody digs in — like hyenas. The cooks cannot handle the situation. After a moment all the food is gone. Some have full pots, double rations, while others have nothing.

Why, it was the first time since we got here that we had a sip of coffee. They handed it to us themselves.

I look at the people again and I wonder again why they're so calm.

They are saying that a car is due to arrive at 10 A.M.

Among the deportees is a very young, resourceful boy, who goes out to work every day. He's going today as well. He wants to help us. I believe in him, because he has honest eyes. His name is Berek.

He wants to escort the girls into the kitchen. But they won't let me pass with my wounded face. They'll see that I'm one of the others. The boys leave for work. I push Herszel out. "Go." I don't know what happened — he stayed.

And I'm still scared. It is almost 10 A.M. I spot Berek standing with horses next to the barrack. He winks at Chawka, who passes by in a white apron and walks toward the kitchen.

I decide to go. I'm waiting for the right moment. A lot of them have just come. They're talking with one another. [80] Berek winks at me. I approach him. "Go to the kitchen *Bau* [building]." "Come with me," I say to him. "No, go alone." I go. A *Wachtmeister* is standing in front of the kitchen. He lets me through.

Aliza, Pesa, Sara [Kukeilka],⁵⁶ and Abram join me. We're talking with the militia regarding Herszel. They go there to bring him over.

He [the *Hauptmann*] comes before 10 A.M. He'll surely send us back now. He'll surely recognize us, particularly me because of my wounded face.

He'll send us to a transport. Aliza is hiding, but I won't. I can't take it anymore. What now? What now?

56 Sara Kukeilka (...-1944) — Kibbutz Dror member.

The *Hauptmann* [captain, the rank of the commander] comes in. He looks at me for a long time, shakes his head and slowly says, “*Neue Gesichter. Aber nein, sie sollen bleiben.*” [New faces. But no, they should stay].

A strange man. He must have recognized us. Abram is a *Degenhart* [idiot].⁵⁷ Why has he left me?

It was as I predicted. The transport left and the barracks were empty. Herszel⁵⁸ left with the transport. I know that he had been looking for a way to escape. They must have been keeping an eye on him, must have been watching him and pushed him into the car.

And he walked the Jewish path. It might as well be destiny.

Herszel has so much Jewish folk character in him. *Azoy, ful volkstumlichkeit* [So full of folkishness]. More than any of us. [81] He would find a way to communicate with anybody of common origin: a wagon driver, a caretaker, a tailor, a cobbler, or a butcher. He had lots of true friends of common origin. He could have an honest conversation with anybody, hit the nail on the head, and use the right expression. I often admired him so much because he could find a place and time for even the most trivial matters of people he didn't know. And he did so much for them, for those simple people whom he didn't know. He was happy to do someone a favor. There was so much simple friendship and kindheartedness in him. You couldn't cross a street in his company without him being approached, asked or consulted. And he rarely refused. When he couldn't help you, he at least heard you out. He also enjoyed great respect and love. A man of common origins, he came from the working class, worked for it, wanted to live for it, and went to die with it. Herszel, if you're still alive, do know that you are alive in our memory and hearts, in the memories of many, many people.

57 Chajka disliked Zylberstejn following the incident in the bunker. See Notebook II.

58 On August 23, 1943, Herszel was still alive. He managed to write a letter that was smuggled out of the liquidation camp in Będzin and arrived in Istanbul.

Perhaps we'll meet one day. Even if it's a delusion I want to live with it. Even though deep in my heart I know that it's just a delusion, I feel good with it.

Notebook IV⁵⁹

[82] Friday, September 2, 1943⁶⁰

I'm slowly breaking free of the fear and panic. When I came here I always had the feeling that somebody was spying on me, watching me. I was afraid of every loud word.

I was afraid of every bold, loud word; something was restraining my hand, stopping me from writing openly and boldly.

I'm slowly breaking free of these fetters.

Nothing can help us. I don't want to go into any causes or conditions. I have to forget about historical materialism for a while. But I have to note that the Jewish nation is a nation of slaves.

Various people have told me that Jews climb into the cars and wagons perfectly placidly. In Zawiercie the young even pushed their way in to get better places in the wagons. When somebody wants to open the window, they shout and fuss — "*Ir vet oif unz brengen das groiste Umglick*" [You'll bring upon us a major catastrophe]. When somebody wants to jump out of the window, they stop him by force. They're afraid of a draft. Isn't it silly? [We're talking about] convicts who are being taken to the execution site, where they'll die a horrible death. It's either a chamber in the form of a bathhouse filled with hot, condensed

59 Notebook IV is identical in appearance to Notebook III: a notebook without a binding and the pages do not have printed lines. Its content is a continuation of Notebook III. As in Notebook III, the handwriting is straight in the upper parts of the pages and the bottom lines bend diagonally downward. Substantial parts of the notebook were not included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*. The approximate dates of the descriptions on pp. 81–91 are August 10–24, 1943.

60 It was actually Thursday.

air where people die a most horrible death by suffocation, or a gas chamber — also by suffocation, or by electricity — high voltage burns.

Can death be more horrible than that? Afterward the execution site is a shambles. Just before death the people rush like mad and then the bodies become stuck and are lying on one another. [83] Which of the living nations would let themselves be escorted to death without resistance?

How great that a movement like ours has sprung from that nation and expunged that nation's disgrace with its blood. It is so good that there was [the Warsaw Ghetto uprising]. I'm slightly merciless in my evaluation of my nation, but so much in it causes me pain. I've sacrificed some of my blood and my Dawid for the honor of this nation so I can be strict in my judgment of it. It is my right.

The Germans began the liquidation of the Jewish nation in a perfidious and calculated way.

At first, they eliminated all the healthy elements of the nation: craftsmen, porters — in short, the masses in the pure sense of this word — simply all the healthy elements resembling *Noah Pandre*⁶¹ — those broad-shouldered peasants with strong bones, who would have attacked them with hammer and axe. Then it was the Jewish intelligentsia's turn. There was a whole series of campaigns aimed exclusively against the Jewish intelligentsia, for instance, the one in Cześćochowa, conducted under various pretenses.

The people left are from among the petit bourgeois and

61 Noah Pandre is the protagonist of a Yiddish novel *Noah Pandre*, (Warsaw: Yovel Komitat, 1938) by Zalman Shneur (1887–1959). Pandre is a strong young Jewish fellow, who attracts the *shtetl* [small town] girls, mocked the well-to-do Jewish merchants, fought with the Jewish coachman, beat the police officer and defended the Jewish community against a pogrom. Most of the Jews do not follow him and he is obliged to leave the town. The novel was most popular because Pandre symbolized the new Jewish model for many young Jews in Poland, leftist Zionists (like Chajka), right-wing Zionists (like Menachem Begin) and Bundists as well.

traders, who in the meantime underwent a “restratification” in workshops, plus every kind of scum. These are the last survivors — everywhere. They were the ones who conducted the liquidation of Jewish property, everywhere and always in the same way.

[84] Kitchen building [*Bau*]. The transports have left. We are still here. How odd. A two-minute walk from the barrack to the kitchen has saved me for now from Auschwitz, from death. How strange this whole life of ours is! In the kitchen building, they are cooking for the laborers from the *Stadtverwaltung* [municipality] who are liquidating property — Jewish apartments.

I’m peeling potatoes and sitting quietly because I don’t want to talk to anybody, but the people are curious and ask how it was. I don’t feel like bringing our pain out into the open. I wish they would leave me alone.

They’re so unkind! They think that the world is their oyster because they are here. They are so mean to newcomers. Unwilling to risk their necks, they don’t let me hide. They already think that they won’t end up in Auschwitz.

And this storehouse keeper is such a mean, disgusting boor. If you bring something good for the kitchen staff, he either eats it himself or takes it into the bunker for his family. And he’s always angry with me. I want to help him with the work, but he doesn’t want me to. He’s afraid that I’ll see too much. The kitchen director takes me aside. I know her. She thinks that I should get out of here for my own good, because they might recognize me and there would be trouble. She’s shaking all over while talking to me. I’ve seen that — she’s worried about herself. I reply in the most placid way possible, “OK, I’ll go. I don’t want to put anybody at risk, but in the condition I’m in, I can’t. I am injured, bruised, my face is wounded. I’ll go when I recover.” What a nice conversation at the very start! But it doesn’t matter. I’ll manage. And now I’m going to wash myself. I’m so happy that I’m about to wash my entire body.

[85] I undress and suddenly somebody shouts, “God, look at her!” They begin to [pity] and bemoan me. I cover myself up. I need

neither their tears nor their pity. “What good has it done you? What good?” they ask. “You fools! It’s you who make us miserable. Be quiet,” I shout. “Leave me alone. It’s none of your business. You fools, idiots, you walk like cattle to the slaughter,” I’m shouting. And then I immediately feel as if I’ve been banging my head against a wall. I can’t even wash myself.

But there were also people I could talk with, who respected me.

Suddenly, somebody approaches me quickly. Schröter⁶² — the one who had beaten me. Yes, this sadist scares me. I hide under the bathtub. I prefer to suffocate than to take even one look at him. Throughout my stay in the kitchen I hid whenever I heard his name. He was the only one I was afraid of. Various people stayed in the kitchen to carry out liquidation works. Most of them had strong arms and could cope both with their hands and their mouths. And there were also some random people and no shortage of scum.

They are liquidating Jewish apartments. I am speechless when I enter the barracks.

Yes, one can see the German pace and organization.

[86] One barrack contains carefully arranged blue kitchen utensils. They have been beautifully sorted according to quality. Another barrack contains enamel utensils as well as shining, bright ones, and pots arranged in a row — large, very large, smaller, smallest. And there is glassware, beautifully arranged on the shelves. Another barrack is packed with porcelain arranged in sets on the shelves.

And there is barrack after barrack. Silverware in one, tin and electrical devices in another, and canvas, wool, shoes, silk in other barracks. And this is how the Jewish slaves are working, assembling Jewish goods and objects obtained at the price of hard work and sweat.

62 Schröter — a Gestapo officer.

And my heart aches and bleeds. They become angry with me. I cannot work anymore. I am dreaming of taking all this glassware and porcelain and smashing it on the floor with a crash. But I need to place, arrange, carry, and move. And the inspector is watching and shouting...

And every now and then beautifully dressed German women come over. Wearing Jewish two-piece suits and fox furs, they keep selecting new beautiful sets, clocks, shoes.

And everybody wants to show that they can select the prettiest object and they snatch them from each other's hands, while I place them.

And in the kitchen they bake layer cakes and make *Bohne Kaffee* [brewed coffee] for the *Hauptmann* and his cronies.

And the Jewish girls led by the director are smiling affectionately and flirting.

Jewish girls are working in the soldiers' kitchens where [87] they cook and clean. But not just any girl can work there — she has to be pretty, clean, and smartly dressed. And you'd better not approach a chosen one. Don't you dare! They want for nothing, neither beautiful dresses nor good food. They eat their fill of goose and layer cakes, but they will not share any with you. They have a separate room and sleep on three pillows, while you have to sleep on the bare floor because they won't give you even one.

They are our prima donnas. The world is their oyster. The *Leutnant* [lieutenant] has made them some promises.

Oh, you Jewish whores! I would strangle you.

Yes, give yourselves away to soldiers, German *Leutnants*. They'll save you, you idiots....You're as mean as it comes. It's good that your brothers are dead, if there are such women among you.

But why am I angry? Why?

Why, it would suggest that I'm a naive idealist who doesn't know life at all. Why, you know that there are scum and the dregs of society in every nation.

And at times like these, such dregs rise to the surface.

Yes, I know about it but I'm choking in this quagmire. I sometimes think about attacking the *Hauptmann* when he comes over. I won't stand being here any longer.

Another time I witness the following scene: the *Hauptmann* is beating an elderly woman who doesn't want to wash the floor.

[88] Another time the women are fighting and shouting. One is missing something. Yes, theft is something commonplace here. One robs another and vice versa, and again and again. You can't put anything down. They keep stealing. And it's so dirty that it makes you nauseous.

The buckets are full after the night. And the Germans keep coming and looking.

Trade is flourishing here. The people go for liquidations, and I also went once. They rush into the apartment like mad and rush to the wardrobes, [and] frames. It's a sacred procession now. They look for money and gold. And they do find them. And then at the market they are asked, "Is it gold? How much? I'll take it for 500 RM.⁶³ And how much are dollars?" "You want to buy?"

And the situation with rags is a real tragedy. Each day everybody brings new heaps of "rags," as we call them. Beautiful clothes, genuine silk and wool. The old ones are thrown out and the piles of suitcases keep growing. And the girls are simply in a frenzy. New outfits, new shirts every day. People, what do you need so many rags for?

63 Reichsmark — German currency. Zagłębie was annexed to the German Reich as part of the *Ostoberschlesien*. Accordingly, the legal currency in Zagłębie was German. By contrast, the General Government retained the Polish *złoty* as its legal currency.

Eroticism

The people are going crazy: the young and the old — everybody. They will not leave you alone. The same vulgar, awful words continuously spoken and heard. They're only looking for an occasion to kiss and perhaps...

Decadents, they want to seize the day because tomorrow they might be dead. [89] The militiamen are just looking for new victims. They can't understand that one might not want to. Why, we might be dead tomorrow.

No, I don't want to be with you. Besides, it's interesting that I somehow don't want to indulge myself before death. It makes me want to vomit. It makes me nauseous.

It's the same with food. The people are binging frantically. They steal, snatch. They just want to eat, eat as much as they can, and drink vodka and wine, whatever they can get their hands on. They gobble and vomit, gobble and vomit. Worse than animals.

There's no longer a center in the barracks. Whoever comes from a bunker is escorted to us. There is a selection. They segregate. The center is in our building. They make a selection, leaving the young and attractive and sending the old to Braun for deportation.

They sometimes leave the old ones selected a long time ago. At other times they select those to be deported from among them and leave the newcomers.

The old are protesting, shouting, "We'll teach these new ones." The director [the *Hauptmann*] comes out and points, *Das ist eine neue...das...das* [This one is new...this one...this one]. He points at the newcomers and a list is made of the old ones. Those who are not on the list will go. They do not let anybody hide in an apartment. They drag people out by their hair.

I was to be sent away because of the wound on my face. *Kranke brauchen* [90] *wir nicht* [We don't need any sick ones here!]. But

they left me without my asking. Others plead, cry, beg and they sometimes do take pity on them. They leave the husbands and wives and send the children for deportation. The parents remain. They rarely go with their children. You can often hear the piercing screams of children. Oh, these poor Jewish children!

The same selection every day. People are selected and sent to their deaths every day.

I will not stay here. I'll leave. I cannot be part of this effort. I don't want to.

And I cannot tolerate being in this quagmire anymore. In a little while this life will have me in its clutches.

The liquidation is proceeding at a slow pace. They take away heaps of pillows and eiderdowns. Everything is proceeding in *Ordnung* [order]. Later they will start transporting furniture.

The deportation is supposed to last until *Pessach* and the Jews, that is, those who have remained, are happy. I wonder how many Jews are in the bunkers and what will happen to them. A new *Wache* [detachment of soldiers] arrives. The soldiers who have been here for a long time are leaving for the front lines. New ones arrive, none of them young. I look at them, trying to guess what they're like. They have kind eyes and good-natured faces. I was not wrong. We go with one of them for a liquidation. Not knowing what the deal is, I keep my mouth shut. And he immediately tells me, "They've caused you plenty of grief but don't think that we [like it]. [91] I'm suffering too. Two sons of mine are at the front lines." And he begins to confide in us and complain. "*Das ist eine Welt von Tieren, wilden Tieren*" [It's a world of animals, wild animals]. I tell him what they did to us. I tell him about Auschwitz, but he does not want to believe [it]. I try to convince him again and again, but he does not believe, cannot believe.

Why, it is incomprehensible for somebody with a normal prewar mentality.

I had a long conversation with the soldiers. We found common interests and I'm happy that there might be many such German

soldiers, that maybe the misery and losses will finally make them see reason again. Perhaps they want the war to end already. Maybe they'll drop their weapons? Isn't it high time already?!

I [don't] want any more misery, war, or losses.⁶⁴

64 Additional sentence written in another pen. The meaning is unclear.

Part Three

Hashomer Hatzair and the Underground in Będzin, 1940–1943

Notebook IV (continuation)

[92] I'm still so stuck in what I went through not so long ago. What we lost causes me so much pain that I'm still unable to draw a line and separate myself from all of it and say that it's all over. I am still unable to treat it as history. It is so difficult for me to look dispassionately at everything that happened during those four years of war and make an objective judgment. My eyes simply can't see that far. I cannot forget the present and assume the spirit of that period, which seems so distant, already so unreal and unimportant.¹

[92] The war broke out. Disappointed hopes.² Everything interrupted in the middle. Some during *hachshara*, others just before *aliyah* [immigration to *Eretz Israel*].³

- 1 End of the chronological description of the deportation and life in the liquidation camp (August 1–24, 1943).
- 2 The beginning of the history of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Będzin during World War II. Pages 92–99 were not included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, owing to the second extended version, which Chajka wrote in Mandatory Palestine in the spring–summer of 1944 (Notebooks OGEN I, OGEN II). However, the short but concentrated 1943 version reflects more anger and criticism than the second version, which was softened by Chajka herself. The approximate time frame of the descriptions on pp. 92–99 is from the winter at the turn of 1939 and 1940 to the spring of 1941.
- 3 Differentiated from regular immigration to other countries. In Hebrew *aliyah*

The thread of life cut off right in the middle. What will the conditions and life be like? Nobody knows. At first all of us wanted to flee from here and follow the movement's route, go toward Równe and then toward Vilna.⁴ All *bogrim* [senior members, adults] of the movement followed that route.

But then an order came, "Stop. Stay put. Everybody stay where you are."

The *yishuv* of Polish Jews remained, was in Poland, the former *Congress Poland*, so our [*yishuv*] must stay here as well. It had to stay with the *yishuv* — live, grow, and die with it.⁵

[93] Then they came from Vilna to work in the movement in Poland. Josef Kaplan [came].⁶ And after a while he visited us in Zagłębie.

"I'm [...]";⁷ he said. "We've become stuck, we — the old-timers. There's no path to *aliyah*. We have to make sure that this [...] is worthy of our movement. We have to start work, rebuild the movement, the branches, and the groups."

means rising, ascending, climbing, advancing.

4 In the early days of the war, most of the *chalutzim* moved to the East. In late September–early October they were concentrated in Rovno (the Soviet part of occupied Poland) but afterward they moved to Vilna, which was annexed to Lithuania. About 2,000 *chalutzim*, organized into some 20 *kibbutzim*, had arrived in Vilna by the spring of 1940, trying to find a way to emigrate from there to Mandatory Palestine.

5 The command was given by the *Hanhaga Elyona* [supreme leadership] of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Vilna, March 1940.

6 Josef Kaplan (1913–1942) — head of *Hashomer Hatzair* in the Warsaw Ghetto until his execution on September 3, 1942. Following the German invasion of Poland, Kaplan fled to Vilna but returned to Warsaw in early 1940 as a member of the supreme leadership of *Hashomer Hatzair*. Other members of the older leadership stayed in Vilna and later (1940–1941) immigrated to Mandatory Palestine, leaving Chajka and other *chalutzim*, who obeyed the command "stop," in Poland. On the other hand, younger members of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership — such as Tosia Altman, Mordechai Anielewicz, and Shmuel Breslaw — also returned to Warsaw (early 1940). Other young *Hashomer Hatzair* leaders, including Abba Kovner, Chajka Grossman, and Mordechai Rozman, also stayed in Vilna and did not immigrate to Mandatory Palestine. All of them later became underground leaders in occupied Poland.

7 Unclear.

And I forgot what I once promised myself during *hachshara*, that is, that I would never return to being an educator.

Hatnuah doreshet [the movement demands] — it's so simple and obvious by itself.

A few of us — veteran *shomers* [members of *Hashomer Hatzair*] from before the war — assembled. We have to start afresh, organize *tzofim* [scouts], *bnei midbar* [children of the desert]⁸ and educate ourselves. I can't remember how many of us there were. Perhaps nine or maybe sixteen? Not more.

The young, particularly children, are suffering from neglect. Extreme poverty. All trade in is children's hands. They sell pretzels, rolls, sweets, corsets and stays, mercers' goods, and shoelaces. They travel, trade, smuggle. Dirty, neglected, they do not go to school. No guardians or teachers.

A new generation is growing up — children of the street.

Children must not be left on the street at the mercy of fate.

We won't let them become a generation of [94] *amei haartzim* [ignoramuses, illiterates]. The children must not forget the Hebrew language, but more importantly they cannot become illiterates. We shall not let that happen. We used to say that we cannot merely survive. We have to survive psychically prepared for the new tasks that will await us then.

We started work, eagerly, with a will and youthful zeal.

We focused on organizing children from the poorest strata. Without a plan, chaotically, but with devotion and zeal. (This was to be a feature of our work in Będzin from the very beginning until the end.) I still remember the first joys and concerns: How can we

8 *Hashomer Hatzair* was organized according to three age groups: *bnei midbar* (10–13 years), *tzofim* (14–16), and *bogrim* (17–19). The *chalutzim* were the older members (aged 19–25), who were supposed to immigrate to Mandatory Palestine. The name of the youngest age group (*bnei midbar*) was derived from the legend of the heroic battle at Masada (70–73 BC), which provided a constitutive narrative for *Hashomer Hatzair*.

teach children and play with them when they are hungry, dirty and barefoot?

We began trying to obtain shoes and clothes, and to ensure that the children would be clean and well fed — common funds, lunch eaten together. But all that was palliative medicine.

Będzin had broad prospects. Young *menahalim* [youth leaders] came to us. We have to work on a larger scale and with more momentum. Let us open a kind of day care center. But where can we obtain the resources, premises, and money? The only thing we have is teachers.

Let's turn to the *gmina*⁹ with a plan to open a day care center. A detailed plan was prepared, [95] specifying the premises we needed, the meals, the curriculum, and the games.

We went to the distinguished gentlemen and they liked the idea. Indeed, the children, the young population should be taken care of. But a more detailed plan was needed. So we prepared a plan that specified every tiniest detail. Initially, they promised that we would be in charge of all managerial and technical duties, but then they took everything away from us. They did open common rooms and day care centers, but without our participation. But we had no regrets. We were happy that we had initiated the idea of care for Jewish children. Even though [it was carried out] not in our spirit and not according to our wishes, it was still fine, because we supplemented those efforts in our *kvutzot* (groups). More and more *kvutzot*, more and more members. Our hearts are swelling with joy and consolation.

The first official and public *bnei midbar mesiba* [festivity of the children of the desert] in the orphanage — Purim.¹⁰

The orphanage has never seen so many children. They are wearing their best clothes. Irka is leading the *mesiba*. After the muster, they walk in a file, singing loudly. I look around anxiously

9 This refers to the *Judenrat*, which at the time was headed by Benjamin Graubart.

10 Probably December 1939 or January 1940.

to make sure that there is nobody who shouldn't be there. The children are playing, enjoying themselves and rejoicing. A Purim speech — few Israeli motifs but lots of scenes from the life of children of the street instead. Are all of these children ours? And they made up all these scenes themselves. [96] And the words are their own. I'm amazed and I can't believe it. Wet with perspiration, the young *menahalim* youth leaders are proud and happy.

It is their work, their achievement. And then the *asefa* [meeting] followed. Lots of *shomer* shirts, gray or white, almost everybody.

There're so many *shomers*! When did they come? When did they grow up? There are almost 120 of them.

A short assembly, memorial to the dead and those who perished for the current cause and a call to fight, to work. We shall not let ourselves be blindly led by fate. We shall go our own way. And a tone of yearning for the far-away *Eretz Israel*, for our brothers in *Eretz Israel*.

We — the *moetzet menahalim* [board of directors of youth leaders], the first of our *irgun* [organization] — are seeking new educational paths, because the old ones don't match the new war-time reality. Before a discussion on educational matters, we have to know where we are, our place in the world, how the war-time reality has influenced our ideology, and if our path is still the right one.

We discuss the influence the war has had on us — Jews. The annexation of vast stretches of our land by Soviet Russia. We conclude that the war-time reality has further highlighted the validity of our ideological path. We are talking about the struggle that is going on now (it's a struggle against imperialism), our

orientation and attitude toward England,¹¹ and the stance the working class should adopt.

[97] We change the subject to educational matters. New achievements in the clandestine education [program], a new form of scouting, and more importantly self-education — strict supervision of education. And now a general question: What is our educational objective? What [kind of] men and women do we want to bring up?

An old-school, prewar *shomer*, who believes that man is good,¹² that one should be moral and not deceive or steal!¹³

Why, nowadays one needs broad shoulders and has to know how to achieve one's objectives with all one's strength and how to deceive, steal, and survive in life.

In spite of everything, the old principles have not changed and we continue to believe in them. We just have to bring up men, but raise them to be more valiant, resourceful, and practical.¹⁴

- 11 Ideological attitudes toward Great Britain were considered a crucial issue by *Hashomer Hatzair* in that early period of the war. Great Britain's policies were denounced by *Hashomer Hatzair* on two grounds: (1) it was an imperialistic power; and (2) it blocked Jewish immigration to Mandatory Palestine. At that stage of the war (spring 1940), adhering to the Marxist interpretation of World War I (following Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin), the new war was conceived by *Hashomer Hatzair* as the "Second Imperialist War," that is, as a war between two capitalist powers: fascism (Germany, Italy) and imperialism (Great Britain, France). The USSR policy (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, August 24, 1939) was interpreted as a clever strategy by the Soviets — let the capitalists exhaust themselves in their own war — defeating socialism would come afterward. At that time *Hashomer Hatzair* in occupied Poland objected to Palestinian Jews being recruited to the British army. Chajka's comments about the Będzin conference are in accordance with the decisions of *Moatzat Hashomer Hatzair* [*Hashomer Hatzair* Assembly] in Warsaw in May 1940. See Notebook V, p. 102.
- 12 Paraphrase of the title of the novel by the pacifist German author, Leonhard Frank, *Der Mensch ist gut* [Man is Good] (Warsaw: Kochot, 1928), which was most popular in the prewar *Hashomer Hatzair*.
- 13 According to its roots in the Scouts, *Hashomer Hatzair* had "Ten Commandments." The first of them was: "*Hashomer* is a man of truth."
- 14 These decisions are in full accord with the decisions of the first *moatza* of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Warsaw held in May 1940. It is known that two delegates from Zagłębie took part in it. Was Chajka one of them? Probably not — there is no description of the visit in the diaries. One can assume two alternative hypotheses

We put forward the idea and the slogan. [Other youth] organizations are beginning to sprout like weeds. Work race, chasing after people. Commotion on the Jewish street. Here and there one hears Hebrew songs. “*Hazak Veematz*” [be strong and brave], children scream out loud on the street. Small groups here and there. You can already tell that *Hashomer Hatzair* is concentrated in this building, *Gordonia*¹⁵ in another, and *Dror* in the *kibbutz*.

We’re setting up an agricultural farm. On the initiative of the *gmina*, young Jewish people were given some 30 fields and gardens, which they are to plow and sow...[98] to set up an agricultural farm.¹⁶ We put so much effort and energy into that farm. Its construction began with so much enthusiasm. At first, we were working 12 or more hours nonstop and without food. We did get food, but there was no place to live. Finally, the living quarters were renovated. First nights on the farm. First clumsy agricultural labor. Peasants laugh as they pass by, “The Jews are going to work!” We’ll see who has the last laugh. They’ll see. And see they did — boys in scouts’ shorts, girls in shorts, with spades, hoes, and rakes. At first clumsy, awkward. Bruised hands.

Then operating plows and seeders and taking care of horses and goats.

concerning this report: (1) the decisions were the same in Warsaw and Będzin; and (2) Chajka is reporting here about the Warsaw conference, which she learned about from information that came from Warsaw after the spring of 1941 by emissaries and smuggled volumes of *Hashomer Hatzair* press in Warsaw brought by Anielewicz (summer 1942).

15 *Gordonia* — moderate Zionist socialist youth movement. It was named for Aharon Dawid Gordon (1856–1922), a Jewish intellectual who believed in redemption of the Jewish nation through physical work in the fields of Mandatory Palestine. *Gordonia*, founded in 1925, was part of the *chalutzic* movement, and its members immigrated to Mandatory Palestine to establish new *kibbutzim* (one of them, Mishmar Hasharon, is Ehud Barak’s *kibbutz*). Politically, *Gordonia* was linked to the *Hitachdut* party in Poland and to MAPAI (the party of the workers in *Eretz Israel*) in Mandatory Palestine. At that time, MAPAI, headed by David Ben-Gurion, was the largest party in Mandatory Palestine and controlled the *Histadrut* [labor union] and the Jewish Agency.

16 The farm was founded in May 1940.

At first, the harvest was meager. Empty fields. You didn't see cabbage heads, but only leaves; limp potato stems and a lot of wasteland.

The next harvest, the potato stems were stronger, the cabbages looked healthier; gorgeous cauliflowers and cucumbers. We put a lot of effort, sweat, and health into that farm.

A lot of arguments, conflicts, heartache, lack of understanding.

It's no wonder as the farm was an inter-organizational [99] achievement.

(But it was worth the effort. Something was created. The first *shaliach* [messenger] from Warsaw [was] Eliezer Geller¹⁷.)

We contributed a lot to the farm. We, the *shomers*, always supervised the cultural efforts.

We introduced a spirit of discussion into the life of young people. Heated discussions on nationalism, socialism, and [the] *Hashomer Hatzair* ideology began.

We offered our ideology to the young. The young people of the Zagłębie didn't know us. We stirred up a hornet's nest. People began streaming to us. They were leaving *Hashomer Hadati*¹⁸ and other organizations and coming to us, which was the cause of a lot of fuss and jealousy between the organizations. They were angry with us. They looked with envy at our growth, at our people debating proudly, at *Hashomer Hatzair chutzpa* [impudence]. Yes, our hearts were swelling with joy. We were forcing our way.

17 Eliezer Geller (1919–1944) — head of *Gordonia* in Warsaw. Later, he was the local commander in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and one of Anielewicz's deputies. Geller's visit to Będzin was in the spring of 1941.

18 *Hashomer Hadati* [organization of religious pioneers] — a religious Zionist socialist youth movement. *Hashomer Hadati* was similar to other Zionist-Socialist youth movements in terms of ideology, education, immigration to *Eretz Israel*, etc., but differentiated itself from the other movements by observing Jewish law (*Shabbat*, *kashrut*, etc.). In most parts of prewar Europe, this youth movement was called *Bnei Akiva*. They were linked to the *Mizrachi* (Zionist religious party) in Poland and Mandatory Palestine (later the national religious party *MAFDAL*), and established several *kibbutzim* in Mandatory Palestine.

The first *shaliach* from Warsaw: Eliezer Geller.¹⁹

We were so happy about his arrival. We were yearning for news about the movement in Warsaw, the world, and Jewry.

He came to our *asefat menahalim* [youth leaders' meeting]. There were already 40–50 *menahalim*.

The room was so full, the faces were so young, the eyes so smart.

He talked about Warsaw and our hearts are swelling. The largest and best movement, just like before the war — *Hashomer Hatzair*.

Notebook V²⁰

[100]²¹ 100/100

20 — butter

20 — milk

12.50 — eggs

1.70 — bread

3 — potatoes

1 — beets

kielbasa

Sausage

butter — 20

2 cheese packages

19 Repetition in the original text.

20 Notebook V is without a binding and has the same unlined pages as Notebooks III and IV. It seems to be another part of the same series of unlined notebooks. Notebook V documents the main events of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Będzin from the spring of 1941 to August 1942. It includes an exceptionally vivid description of Mordechai Anielewicz and an exact report of his attitude in the summer of 1942 (pp. 104–110).

21 Shopping list of the group in hiding.

bread
vegetables — cucumbers
bread — 1.70
eggs — 3
butter — 10 decagrams
chicken — 20
butter — 1
7 egg — 20
bread — (there was no milk)

[101] The best publications: *Iton Hatnua* [the movement's paper], *Plomienie* [flames],²² and others. The best education and supplementary education; a middle school established.²³ Beautifully developed mutual help, each *gdud* [group in *Hashomer Hatzair*]²⁴ has its own [soup] kitchen — *kibbutz*.

Despite the poverty, hunger, and cold, the life of the young is bustling and teeming to an inversely proportional degree. And we're talking about ourselves, about our growth, about how [...] and *un zal zein* became in a way a theme of our life — about our

22 Brzozowski, *Plomienie*. One of *Hashomer Hatzair*'s underground papers was entitled *Plomienie* [flames], following Brzozowski's book (two volumes dated 1940 were preserved). *Plomienie* and its romantic and revolutionary protagonists, the young Narodniks in late nineteenth-century Tsarist Russia, had a great impact on *Hashomer Hatzair* in Poland. Actually, it was a kind of "cult book." *Plomienie* was the first book to be translated from Polish to Hebrew as *Lehavot* [flames] (Merhavia: *Hashomer Hatzair* Publishing House in Mandatory Palestine, 1939), and the name of a new *kibbutz* in the Galilee (*Lehavot Habashan* — Flames of the Bashan) was homage to the book. The historian Israel Gutman was a member of that *kibbutz*.

23 A rare mistake by Chajka: the underground middle school in Warsaw was run by *Dror* and not by *Hashomer Hatzair*.

24 Organized according to age and sometimes also according to gender, "battalion" in contemporary Hebrew.

25 The first word is unclear. Maybe part of a traditional saying in Yiddish, "*im yirze Hashem*" [God willing]. Chajka, an atheist, omitted the *Hashem* (God) but still used the saying in an ironic way.

creative work, which brings so much satisfaction, and about so many plans and tasks.

The Soviet war broke out.²⁶ Great joy among all Jews. Could it be? Jews, our fathers, had been waiting for the day, the hour when Russia would invade our territory. For Soviet Russia was the only factor saving Jews from physical extermination. Migration to the Soviet-occupied territories began.²⁷ But there was also a large number of people who were coming back. Discussions, widespread discussions, regarding Russia. Many people became disillusioned, but many were enthusiastic. We assessed the situation realistically.

We saw both the good and bad sides. The reality of Soviet Russia was irrefutable, tangible evidence, that our theoretical prerequisites were right. For we had been saying only theoretically that Soviet Russia could save us. Fascist Germany meant physical extermination of Jewry, while imperialist England didn't have Jewish interests in mind.²⁸ [102] They were shocked — how could

26 June 22, 1941.

27 There was underlining in red pencil, which was probably done by someone else and not by Chajka herself. She repeated the same analysis in her revised diaries, which she wrote in Mandatory Palestine in 1944. In the Israeli political culture of the 1950s, this pro-Soviet analysis would have been most controversial. Chajka's original diaries were used without her consent as the basis for anti-Zionist papers in the communist press, written by Shmuel Ron (Rozenzweig), one of her comrades, and appeared during the 1955 election campaign. Later, while preparing the diaries for posthumous publication (1959), the editor, Dawid Hanegbi, omitted several "problematic" paragraphs from the original translation of the manuscript. At that time, three years after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR and the denunciation of Stalin's crimes by Khrushchev (1956), *Hashomer Hatzair* and its party in Israel (*MAPAM*) were quite cautious about their early adherence to the USSR. It seems that one of them underlined these paragraphs, aiming either to emphasize Chajka's sympathy for the USSR (Ron) or on the contrary, to omit them (Hanegbi).

28 As mentioned above, until the German invasion of the USSR in June 1942, *Hashomer Hatzair* viewed the war as the "Second Imperialist War." Once the USSR became involved in the war, it became a "just war" according to the *Hashomer Hatzair* interpretation, and the only real prospect for Jewish freedom. Again, Chajka's analysis is in full accord with the ideological thesis of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Warsaw (written by Anielewicz) and affirmed by the general movement

we say so? Jews living in Soviet Russia are totally lost for Zionism — that was of course what General Zionists²⁹ were saying, but the masses, Jewish masses were gravitating toward Soviet Russia.

I remember that day — it was Saturday or Sunday — when there was a rumor that the Germans were leaving the town, that they were already leaving the institutions and packing up. The troops had been seen marching away. They were said to have already been in retreat. The Jews of that town spilled out: the old, the young, and [the] children. There was such joy on their faces. The people were so happy. “We’ll welcome them with bread and salt,” they were saying. The rabbis and Orthodox Jews with sidelocks were saying so. Their gut instinct was telling them that that was their only rescue. And we were with the masses. Our ideology had sprouted from Jewish reality and had stuck to it ever since.

There was a commotion in our movement too. A *shichva* [age group] of *bogrim* was formed;³⁰ there was no way out. There was no *hachshara*. We were trying to establish a post at any price. We were unable to [do so] on our own, without Warsaw’s help. For we had no support in the local society or actually in the *gmine*. Our educational work had already become less satisfying.

We found an outlet in discussions. And there was no shortage of topics: Soviet Russia, our attitude toward it, and the relevance of Zionism after the revolution.

[103] War changed Jewish reality a lot. The abolition of classes and general dispossession of the Jewish masses brought about by the social revolution — this is what the Germans had wrought — plus a kind of proletarianization. I don’t want to be misunderstood — workshops were established, Jews didn’t make their living at that labor, which would have been nonsense. But something changed in the Jewish mentality. Young Jews were no longer embarrassed

assembly (*moatza*) held in May 1941, and with the enthusiastic identification with the Soviet Union and the Red Army after June 22, 1941.

29 *Zionim Klali'im* [General Zionists] — name of the mainstream Zionist party.

30 The term is still in use in Israeli youth movements.

to work as craftsmen or tailors. And that was already something. The young were already gravitating toward a life of work, dreaming about working in the Soviet Union.

And if the Soviets had come and at the same time there would have been a possibility of immigrating to *Eretz Israel*, they would have stayed in the Soviet Union. And that was why one could no longer answer “yes” as easily as before the war to the question of whether after a [world] revolution Zionism would be still relevant.

Discussions began. Long, all-night, theoretical discussions started anew, afresh — about nationalism, Borochovism,³¹ the Jewish question, the nation.

And the Trotskyites³² began to meddle. Negative consequences — the young, whom we valued the most, left us. Salek³³ and Sawek.³⁴

And then doubts in the *hanhaga* [leadership] itself.

Long, tiring discussions.

It was known that Idzia would leave. I planned to forbid her. [104] But a real blow came with [the departure of] Irka.

The branch, which had been built with such effort, disintegrated in our hands and that caused us so much pain. I simply had a feeling

31 Dov Ber Borochov (1881–1917) — ideologist of Zionist-Marxist movements (*Poalei Zion, Dror-Freiheit, Hashomer Hatzair*). Borochov analyzed the Jewish situation in Europe in Marxist terms, arguing that the economic structure of the Jewish nation in the nineteenth century was “abnormal,” that whereas a normal national distribution of labor had a wide infrastructural basis of productive occupations (farmers and workers) and a narrow superstructure of service and intellectual occupations (merchants, intelligentsia, etc.), the Jewish “pyramid” of the distribution of labor was upside down: a wide unproductive superstructure and a small productive infrastructure. Aiming to become a “normal” nation and to free themselves from anti-Semitism (which, according to Borochov, was an economic problem), Jews must immigrate to *Eretz Israel* and there transform themselves into a productive nation. The national liberation of the Jews could be achieved only by a social-economic revolution. Note that several of Chajka’s analyses of the Jewish situation in the ghettos were “Borochovist.”

32 The head of the Trotskyites in Będzin was a lawyer named Erlich.

33 Unknown.

34 Sawek Merin. Executed as a communist in Auschwitz in April 1943. See Notebook A, pp. 17–22 (the Duński affair).

that they were ripping a fetus out of my womb — my own child who had grown there. But perhaps it was more painful to Nacia [Klugman].³⁵

She was strongly connected — theoretically and emotionally — to the movement and even more to Irka.

They had been building together, had grown up together, learned, and developed [together]. They were so strongly connected with each other. Now they were to go their separate ways.

It was so painful. Once Nacia cried during an *asefa*. None of us wanted to leave. The fiercest oppositionists, for example, Idzia, wanted to stay with us. They were attached to the movement and they wanted to be convinced that they were wrong. We, the veteran *shomers*, Dawid and I, didn't feel able to do that (even though in his memoirs,³⁶ Mordechai [Anielewicz]³⁷ wrote that he didn't understand why Dawid hadn't convinced them despite his valuable contribution to the discussion). Somebody had to come to us and explain. Mordechai came. Such a tall, thin, expeditious boy emanating so much energy. Yes, he was still very young.

[105] And the discussions resumed. Mordechai had lots of information and was very intelligent. My doubts left me after his first lecture. I had doubted that he would be able to see the current reality from a Marxist point of view and fit our ideology within the framework of this reality. Mordechai was a theoretician of our movement in Poland during the war and he presented himself as such to us. He had broad perspectives. A new, grand

35 Chaja-Nacha (Nacia) Klugman (1922–1943) — *Hashomer Hatzair* activist and leading instructor and orator. In the 1944 version, Chajka wrote a detailed report on the ideological argument between the two of them (see Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 54–60).

36 This is the only mention of the fact that Anielewicz wrote memoirs.

37 Anielewicz arrived in Będzin in early June 1942, at the peak of the ideological argument. As a *shaliach* and member of the supreme leadership of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Warsaw he had the authority to end the argument and to make tough decisions, including the expulsion of deviant members from local branches of *Hashomer Hatzair*.

idea could have been born. Not lacking courage, he acted with a flourish and presented the matters of Jews and our movement in a global perspective, and that was how he impressed us. He got to various issues in such a nice, interesting, and, more importantly, unusual way.

And he did convince Irka, whereas Idzia stayed even though she didn't have explanations for some of the issues.

Mordechai played a major role in the life of the young people of Zagłębie.

It was a period of stagnation in the life of our young people. After that great blossom[ing] came a period of psychical dissatisfaction. Less activity. The educational work had come to a halt. Here and there you hear that everything is falling apart inside a given organization. Everything is resting on feet of clay — the slightest wind will cause everything to collapse. Narrow-mindedness has begun to creep into our ranks. What are the causes of that?

Every educator has to have his own [personal] aim he's trying to achieve as well as his own educational aim. [106] Toward what goal is he educating the children?

Toward [Mandatory] Palestine? It's ridiculous. Toward the Soviets? Or to be *stam* [simply] men?³⁸ What for?

It was already clear to us that a systematic, gradual annihilation of Jewry was in progress. So what was the education toward? Toward death?

The educators saw no concrete social task ahead of themselves and that was what caused the young [to become] idle and inert.

38 Chajka used the Hebrew term "*stam*" in two senses: a simple pioneering (abstract noun) and simple pioneers (a social group). The second was used for young Jews who aimed to immigrate to Mandatory Palestine without ideological background and with no clear affiliation to one of the *chalutzic* movements. However, those youngsters needed the organized movements for immigration arrangements (both legal and illegal), so they were classified as *stam chalutzim* [simply pioneers].

There was a need for a new spark, a current that would stimulate, invigorate the young and incite them to act, to fight.

And Mordechai came and told us about what was happening in the world, about the underground struggle for liberation in the mountains of Serbia,³⁹ about the grand deed in Czechoslovakia,⁴⁰ about the partisans in the Polish forests. And he asked where the young Jews were, for they had to participate in that struggle for liberation as they had always done in every epoch.

That was when we found out about the *Polska Partia Robotnicza* (PPR) [Polish Workers' Party] and about our participation in it. And about the importance of partisan warfare during that period of the fighting. And that with the opening of the second front in Europe the struggle behind the lines — sabotage of various kinds — would be of the greatest importance. The individual third-front lines of workers would now determine the course of the war.

Nowadays Soviet Russia is the only subject of socialism. [107] Any progressive elements of any sort not aiming at extermination of people, like fascism did [have to unite]. The only subject of socialism — of actual strength — is the USSR. You can't count on any proletariat. You can only count on existing strength. The titanic struggle that is going on now will settle the fate of socialism for many, many years to come.

Every proletarian willing to fight for socialism has to take the side of the USSR and aid it in its heroic fight. Those claiming that the right moment hasn't come yet are opportunists.

In Poland, the communists set up the *Polska Partia Robotnicza* (PPR) [Polish Workers Party], which was organizing partisan forces under the banner of an independent Poland. Why under the banner of a chauvinistic [slogan]. Because you couldn't come to the Polish

39 Yugoslavian partisans.

40 The assassination of Reinhard Heydrich by the Czech underground on May 27, 1942.

masses with other [kinds of] slogans. They hated Soviet Russia as much as the Germans and thought that the Soviet occupier was as hateful as the German one. Masses should be approached with popular slogans.

A delegate from the USSR, who arrived in Warsaw literally from the sky (we were so happy about that)⁴¹ turned to us — the Jewish faction. Attempts were made to form a certain political/theoretical base, but they failed. Even though he did change the orthodox view on the Jewish question, the change was only slight. He thought that the only solution to the Jewish question was a general revolution.⁴² A bloc⁴³ was formed on the basis of practical work in the political sphere.

The committee consisted of *Dror*, us, communists. The PPR was carrying out intense propaganda activity. [108] The life of the young acquired new meaning.

It spread to the Zagłębie area. The Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB) was established.⁴⁴ It was founded on totally different principles than the *Hashomer Hatzair* educational organization.

41 Andrzej Schmidt (Pinchas, Pinkus Kartin) (1902–1942) — veteran of the International Brigade in Spain. He was parachuted by the Soviet Army into Poland in December 1941. He established the Anti-Fascist Bloc with Josef Lewartowski. Executed by the Germans in June 1942.

42 “*Lu. Rev.*” in the original.

43 The Anti-Fascist Bloc (April 1942–June 1943).

44 The underground in Zagłębie was established in late August 1942. Anielewicz was the main speaker at the meeting that was held on the farm. The Zagłębian ŻOB included cells of *Hashomer Hatzair*, *Dror*, *Gordonia*, *Hanoar Hatzioni*, and *Hashomer Hadati*. Chajka took part in the first meeting together with Dawid and the Pejsachson sisters as the representatives of *Hashomer Hatzair*. It is interesting to note that Chajka did not record a detailed description of the meeting. It seems that for her, the establishment of the Zagłębie underground was more a process than a one-night decision. In any case, according to Chajka’s description, the Zagłębie underground was a branch of the ŻOB. Two other titles used by the Zagłębie underground are mentioned: OKW (only by Chajka) and *Lakrav* (by David and Arie Liwer). See Ronen, *Nidonah le-hayim*, pp. 190–195.

Iron discipline, strict military discipline, punctuality, and soldierly fitness.

It had already become known that the Jewish nation would be systematically liquidated. There was knowledge of Chełmno, Bełżec,⁴⁵ [and] the excesses on the eastern border of Poland⁴⁶ [and] in Vilna.

Mordechai told us about a gas chamber that killed thousands of Jews every day, that Warthegau was already *judenrein*, and how there were mass deaths by suffocation. We were terrified. Our hair stood on end. It was clear that the intention was the complete extermination of the Jews. [He also told us] about the participation of the militia⁴⁷ in the deportations and about the disgraceful excesses of some Jewish communities.

And he also mentioned Nowogródek⁴⁸ and how our young people locked themselves in and defended themselves with axes — all of them died, but they didn't walk like sheep to the slaughter. They managed to die a human death.⁴⁹ And he talked about Arie [Wilner],⁵⁰ how he went twice to ask what to do. "Set it ablaze." Everything was ready. They were waiting for an order.

Our path had already become clear to us. [109] *Hagana* is an inappropriate term. We don't want to defend ourselves because we didn't stand a chance of succeeding. But [we wish] to die an honorable, human death.

We took a social task on our shoulders of not letting it — [the nation] — sleep peacefully, of not letting it delude itself that not

45 Anachronism. Bełżec was not operating at that time.

46 Białystok was included in the Eastern Provinces.

47 Jewish police.

48 Today Nowogródek (Navahrudak) in Belarus.

49 There was no self-defense in Nowogródek at that time. However, the story became a kind of educational myth within *Hashomer Hatzair* in Warsaw and then a combat slogan: "Nowogródek is calling!"

50 Arie Wilner (1916–1943) — dominant leader of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Vilna and Warsaw. Later, he became the liaison between the ŻOB and the AK. He committed suicide in the bunker at Miła Street 18.

everybody would go, that they wouldn't exterminate the entire nation.

We had to bring the naked truth to it and terrify it with our stories about Vilna, Chełmno, Treblinka, Trawniki, Bełżec, Auschwitz — the sites of mass extermination of the Jewish nation.

We organized young Jews brought up on faith in man and his goodness. We, who [had believed] in a caring world and people, the optimists, had become black ravens, pessimists who predicted that the demise of our entire nation was nigh. Yes, we had to open its eyes, prevent it from sedating itself on opium, and show it the naked reality, however horrible it was. Because we wanted to trigger a reaction. No revolutionary movement, let alone [a movement of] the young, had ever faced problems similar to ours — [110] the single, naked fact of annihilation, of death. We stood face-to-face with it and found an answer. We found a path. We were still groping our way but we found a path and this is what was the most important — partisan warfare and *hagana*.

Mordechai was the pride of the movement. He had unusual, rare abilities — a man of theory and a practical leader. He couldn't stand people's lack of resources and *shlamazel* [incompetence]. He organized the organization. He fought and formed the "fives."⁵¹ A newspaper was published; a workshop was opened. Something was being done, built. And not only by us but also by all youth. Despite very strict conspiracy something changed among the young people.

Whenever the young, tall man with the open-collar shirt was spotted, people looked at him, saying, "It's him." (Unfortunately, this is what our conspiracy looked like.) We did not compromise. Mordechai was brave. Not because he wanted to be brave, but because he truly was brave. I remembered that during the deportation campaign.

51 Groups of five members.

Notebook VI⁵²

[111] I can remember Mordechai during the deportation days in Będzin.⁵³ He was extremely curious about everything. A crowd assembled on the street near the deportation center. The Germans were shouting, rushing people with whips, firing, and carrying a corpse. Everybody was fleeing, but Mordechai was pushing in the opposite direction, toward the Germans. He was curious about everything.

I could give thousands of proofs of his courage, genuine courage. It wasn't just pretense, but a part of his nature.

He enjoyed respect in the town, as the people could sense that he was an extraordinary man. And he didn't lack for moral courage either. He was able to criticize the Będzin *gmine* chairman Chaim Molczadski⁵⁴ to his face and pass judgment on him before the *Leiter* [director]. Even though representatives of Jewish communities were afraid of him, they still received and entertained him.

And he was content like a scamp playing a trick — that he

52 Notebook VI contains only two separate pages. These are similar to the pages in Notebook A (23 lines), and their content is clearly a continuation of Notebook V and the opening of Notebook A. It seems that these two pages were torn from Notebook A and then attached to Notebook VII, which deals with a different issue (the ŻOB in Warsaw). It also seems that this (mixed-up) combination was created in Istanbul (1944), because the notebook numbers fit the “Bader Photocopy.” In any case, the page numbers (111–112) are Bader's. However, owing to the printed lines or to the topics, the handwriting is steady and straight and it seems that the work of writing became easier for the author.

53 Probably the large selection in Będzin on August 12, 1942.

54 Chaim Molczadski (1910–1948) — active Zionist, a member of *Poalei Zion ZS* (Zionist Socialist) Right; he functioned in the prewar period as the head of *Keren Kayemet Leisrael* [Jewish National Fund] in Będzin. He survived Auschwitz, immigrated to Israel, and was killed in a car accident while serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) during the 1948 war. Molczadski was buried under the name Chaim Aharoni. Reliable evidence suggests that he was assassinated by veterans of the Zagłębian underground.

was eating in their homes, that they were throwing parties for him, and that they made the effort to visit him on the farm while he was printing anti-German fliers almost right under their noses. [112] He would always tell us, first of all, [to liquidate] the Jewish traitors [collaborating with] the Gestapo.⁵⁵

So how could his personal behavior be reconciled with the political struggle that he led? We frowned, but he [Mordechai] had an answer for that: he wanted to get abroad and they had promised him that.⁵⁶ He very much wanted to leave but not in order to stay there. He wanted to shock the world. Oh, he would have done that so well! He was the right person for the job. But it wasn't about to happen.

Mordechai left⁵⁷ and things happened differently. Every day work started and it brought very little satisfaction. The work was top secret and only [particular] individuals were engaged in it. The people were dissatisfied. There was also talk about taking action, but it was necessary to sit idly [by] and wait for the establishment of contact with the partisan forces or for the right moment for *hagana*. Colossal sums of money were needed for that.

55 There is underlining in Notebook VI, which was probably done by one of the editors who read the diaries.

56 During his long visit in Zagłębie (June–September 1942) Anielewicz tried to find a way out of occupied Poland. His aim was to deliver the information about the annihilation of the Jews to the free world. He hoped to get help from Moshe Merin, who had good connections with the Germans and, at the beginning of the war, was involved in a forced emigration program led by Eichmann. An emigration office was established within the Sosnowiec *Judenrat* in early 1940, and one of its officials was Kalman Tenzer, the head of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Sosnowiec. The program failed, but Merin earned the reputation (in Warsaw) as someone who could help in emigration matters. On the other hand, at that time he already had a notorious reputation as a collaborator.

57 Anielewicz left Zagłębie in mid-September 1942. The reason for his sudden return to Warsaw was the news about the death of his two comrades there: Kaplan and Szmuel Breslaw.

Notebook A⁵⁸

[9] We received news about the deportation campaign in Warsaw.⁵⁹ It was horrible news — apparently they were already liquidating ghettos as well. People had thought that the several Jewish centers where there were ghettos would be left intact.

First news about losses.

Sagan,⁶⁰ M.,⁶¹ and others have been executed. A letter from Josef [Kaplan]. It was a very beautiful, historic letter. He described the course events had taken.⁶²

A certain anxiety spread in Warsaw. There had been rumors that Jews would be deported east. People were

58 Notebook A should have been marked as Notebook VI. The two separate pages of Notebook VI (111–112) are clearly part of this notebook based on its form (23 lines) and content (the events of September 1942). The page numbers are again Bader's. "Bader's Photocopy" opens with eight printed pages of Chajka diaries, which contain three samples of her writings: *Reshimot* C, pp. 1–3 (Notebook B, pp. 1–11); *Reshimot* B, pp. 4–6 (Notebook A, pp. 11–24), *Reshimot* A (Notebook I, pp. 1–10). Notebook A is attached to it and its page numbers follow the printed opening: 9, 10, 11, 12, etc. It seems that this strange order was not arranged by Chajka, but by Bader or his assistants in Istanbul. The approximate time frame of the events described in Notebook A is September 1942–July 1943.

59 The great deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto began on July 22, 1943.

60 Szachna Efrayim Sagan (1898–1942) — *Poalei Zion* Left leader in the Warsaw Ghetto. *Poalei Zion* Left was a left-wing Marxist Zionist party that attracted radical Jewish intellectuals such as E. Ringelblum, Prof. R. Mahler, and others. *Poalei Zion* Left activists were in close contact with *Hashomer Hatzair* activists in the Warsaw Ghetto. Sagan was a very active leader, concerned with social and labor problems in the ghetto and took part in the early discussion about the establishment of the ŻOB in its first framework (July 28, 1942) but soon afterward he was captured in the "great blockade" and deported to Treblinka.

61 Probably Menachem Linder (1911–1942) — *Hashomer Hatzair* veteran, and sociologist who was active in *Oneg Shabbat* (the secret Warsaw Ghetto Archive).

62 This seems to be the opening of a long quotation from Kaplan's letter, which Chajka documented by heart. The letter has not been preserved.

afraid to go out. Panic. [Adam] Czerniaków⁶³ turned to the authorities for an explanation. They calmed him down saying that nothing would happen, and he was cruising in an open hansom cab, telling the people to be calm because they weren't in danger.

And out of the blue arrests of physicians and the intelligentsia began. Conferences with the authorities. An announcement was made that there would be a deportation *nach Osten* [to the east].

They demanded 7,000. The first two days they stuck to the quotas but then they demanded more and more: 20,000, 30,000, 40,000.

[10] Czerniaków can see that he's been deceived and he commits suicide. Czerniaków had a lot on his conscience but he died like a hero, and this is how people remember him. They pack all the people designated for deportation on the *Umschlagplatz* [collection point square] (the assembly site for the deportations from the Warsaw Ghetto) and then into wagons. On the *Umschlagplatz* the people lie down — feces, dung next to them. They lie down in the dirt. Wagons right by the square. The people are thrown in like herrings into a barrel. They suffocate in there and only a small percentage reaches the destination. And children are often thrown in like balls and very often their heads crash against the wagon walls.

A kilogram of marmalade and bread lure people onto the square. Children have simply begun to trade. They go in and out with bread and [marmalade] several times a day — many die doing that but so what? The people go out on their own initiative, motivated by hunger.

63 Adam Czerniaków (1880–1942) — head of the Warsaw *Judenrat*.

Josef writes:

The Jewish police are helping conduct the campaign. Remember that — it's the utter disgrace of our nation. [11] Jewish hands shouldn't have touched that. Beware of it and prevent others from [doing] it any way you can. The campaign is also being conducted by Poles and Ukrainians. The Germans we know have failed us. Don't ever count on them.

For now workshops are the only thing that can save us. Set them up and promote the idea of *szops* [the common name for workshops in the Warsaw Ghetto].

We — the *shomers*, our entire branch — are assembled in one place and we're waiting.⁶⁴ Do know that we won't go voluntarily. We won't go like sheep to the slaughter. We're waiting and we're going to respond.

And now I bid my farewell to you, my dear comrades. This could be my last letter to you.⁶⁵

How could he know, sense that those were indeed his last words to us? Soon afterward a terrible blow — Josef is dead, executed at Pawiak.⁶⁶ For me Josef was the last of the Mohicans,⁶⁷ the last *shomer* of the old school, from before the war, our last link [12] with the Palestinian movement, with the prewar movement. Why was

64 It was a tough decision for *Hashomer Hatzair* members; it meant that they had to leave their families to their fates.

65 Chaika quoted the letter from memory.

66 Kaplan was murdered on September 3, 1943. It was a “black day” for the young ŻOB in its primary framework (*Dror-Hechalutz*, *Hashomer Hatzair*, and *Akiva*), which had been established in late July 1942. Breslaw, another *Hashomer Hatzair* leader, was killed while trying to rescue Kaplan and the few underground arms (some revolvers and explosives) were captured.

67 A reference to James Fenimore Cooper's novel, *The Last of the Mohicans* (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & I. Lea, 1826).

he executed? I don't want to recall that because it's too painful and it makes me feel ashamed and furious.⁶⁸

He died as a result of a denunciation, given away by [Israel] Zelcer — a member of the *merkaz* [central leadership]⁶⁹ and *Gordonia* and one of our “allies.” The latter was just a mean, lousy man. He's dead too, but I don't pity him. Let his name be covered with shame. Josef wasn't the only one who died because of him. Many others died as well.⁷⁰

I didn't know Josef well. I only know that he was very popular and respected. When he visited a small town everybody was excited about him. He brought political news and talked about the fate of Jews in various provinces of Poland. Josef was held in high esteem and he could get a lot done thanks to his contacts with highly placed persons.

He was also a great organizer and he enjoyed prestige. It was a terrible blow to our entire movement in Poland. [13] His final letter was like a testament. Many people read that letter, which made quite an impression on all social groups. Even before Josef's death I had a feeling that we — the *shomers* — were being dogged by ill fate.

During the deportation they — [the *shomers* in Warsaw] — tried to get mostly those they wanted to save for after the war out of Warsaw.

Among that group was Rachel,⁷¹ a future genius of the *shomer* movement, who wrote beautifully, and other very valuable individuals.

They were captured while leaving the ghetto. The first victims.

68 Chajka was the one who reported to *Eretz Israel* (via Switzerland) about Kaplan's death. Chajka to Nathan Schwalb, February 13, 1943. See: Avihu Ronen, ed., “Saba Meir Yachol le-hiyot ge'eh be-nechadav: Michtavim me-Bendin le-Schwitzerland January–July 1943,” (Hebrew) *Yalkut Moreshet* 92–93 (2013), p. 320.

69 Israel Zelcer (1913–1942) was a member of *Gordonia's* central leadership.

70 A detailed description of the affair appears in Notebook VII, pp. 120–122.

71 Unidentified.

Then Josef, Szmuel [Breslaw],⁷² the leadership member, who was captured with a switchblade knife and was executed.

Josef [Szmuel]⁷³ dead. He didn't fulfill his dreams: he wanted to kill at least one German. And he wrote a letter to Mordechai right before he died. He wrote about deep hatred, about terrible, horrible revenge, by which we would make up for all the harm done to us. [14] And he asked him to give his regards to Josef Szamir,⁷⁴ if he ever visited him. No, Szmuel, Mordechai won't be able to give him your regards.⁷⁵

So much money spent on sending them away, on the equipment, and on just the shoes. There was a collection, the first on such a large scale. 100 to 200 Reichsmark per person. The people were simply stealing from home, selling their watches and clothes. Just a new *Hashomer Hatzair* morality. We collected 2000–3000 RM — an enormous sum at that time.

72 Szmuel Breslaw (1920–1942) — ideologist of *Hashomer Hatzair* in the Warsaw Ghetto, edited several underground papers, and wrote the editorials and political reviews. Breslaw was killed on September 3, 1942, while trying to rescue Kaplan.

73 Chajka mixed up the names here. She wrote Josef but meant Szmuel.

74 Josef Szamir (1916–...) — dominant member of the older leadership of *Hashomer Hatzair*, like Kaplan. Szamir was Anielewicz and Breslaw's instructor in the prewar period. As a philosophy student at Warsaw University, Szamir convinced the 15-year-old Anielewicz to move from the right-wing *Betar* to the radical left-wing *Hashomer Hatzair*. Szamir was the keynote speaker at the *Hashomer Hatzair* conference in Vilna in March 1940. In his speech he delineated the aims of the Polish *Hashomer Hatzair* during the war: immigrating (illegally) to *Eretz Israel* (from Vilna), restoring the movements in the Polish ghettos, and surviving in the Soviet part of Poland. Szamir himself was supposed to return to Warsaw (following Kaplan, Altman, and Anielewicz). He corresponded with Kaplan about this, but he never arrived in Warsaw. Instead, he immigrated to *Eretz Israel* and joined Kibbutz Ruchama in the Negev. During the 1950s he became the main ideologist of *Hakibbutz Haartzi*, promoting orthodox Marxism and Leninism.

75 Anielewicz was supposed to arrive in *Eretz Israel* from Zagłębie. See Notebook VI, pp. 111–112.

Mordechai had to leave.⁷⁶ He couldn't stay here. Josef was dead and somebody had to take his place. He had also left his large family without protection. So he had to return. They were growing restless in Warsaw because they needed him and needed his guidance, as he was their leader. He left.

And after some time we felt the void he left. But back when he was with us, we felt that what he was telling us about [15] the guerrillas and forests was more a product of his imagination, of how he wanted to see it, than actual reality.

It doesn't at all mean that we had our heads in the clouds and entertained excessively romantic notions of all that: distant, beautiful forests, heroic deeds, laurels, bonfires, affairs with girls...

It made us laugh.

We knew that it was a tiring, tough life of a soldier. Partisans of 1863⁷⁷ — ragged, dirty, and starving — stood before our eyes. Exhausting, long marches. Gray, tiny graves of unknown soldiers⁷⁸ with simple, black crosses.

But you felt a human being there, without the yellow patch on your chest — not a beaten dog with its head hung low, but a free man taking revenge, not with words but through action. And that was attractive.

We argued as to who would leave in the first group.⁷⁹ The boys began to think about the next step. But the girls were worried. "What about [16] us? Why aren't they taking girls in? Why, we have

76 Anielewicz left Zagłębie in early September 1942.

77 The partisans of the 1863 Polish uprising, *Hashomer Hatzair* and other radical Jewish movements in Poland adopted the symbols and myths of the Polish national struggle for independence. The 1831 slogan *Za naszą i waszą wolność* [For our and your freedom] was adopted by the *Bund* and later by the *ŻOB*.

78 Seems to be a free association of Andrzej Strug's book, *Mogiła nieznanego żołnierza* (Poznań: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Ignis," 1922).

79 Influenced by the Anti-Fascist Bloc's strategy, it is quite clear that *Hashomer Hatzair* in Zagłębie planned at that time (the autumn of 1942) to join the partisans.

such brave girls. They're good at everything: working in the field, propaganda, being messengers or paramedics.”

And then those long days of waiting for a letter from Mordechai, for an establishment of contact with the PPR in the Zagłębie.

Everything came to a halt again. And the people are whispering and asking about the purpose of all that empty talk when we can't bring ourselves to do anything.

Cwi arrived.⁸⁰ We prepared a plan of action. Large-scale propaganda on the Jewish, Polish, and German street. A series of fliers on doors, on the street, in the *gmine* [offices]. Letters to German companies — ours [our comrades] left the ghetto and went to the “Aryan” districts. The first walk with hidden fliers. The pounding of the heart, the contained joy — I'm doing something.

Workshops began [to produce] brass knuckles, daggers, knives — cold weapons.

The newspaper, fresh news every day [17] from the radio, a political article, news about the guerrillas, from Jewish ghettos, and about mass deportations of Jews. The newspaper already had a number of subscribers.

The struggle against the Jewish *gmine* — against the internal evil and the police. After the disgraceful behavior of the Jewish police during the deportation campaign a decision was made to blind [Romek] Goldminc⁸¹ and Procel⁸² with vitriol.

There was also Mordechai's secret order and a resolution of the OKW to liquidate [Moshe] Merin. The Jewish *gmine* was feeling

80 Cwi Brandes arrived in Będzin in September 1942, apparently as a consequence of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership meeting (with Anielewicz and Altman) in Żarki, which was held following the news about the deaths of Kaplan and Breslaw. Brandes functioned in Będzin as Anielewicz's representative.

81 Romek Goldminc — (...-1943), head of the Central Jewish Militia in Sosnowiec, born in *Eretz Israel*, returned to Poland with his family, had connections with *Hanoar Hatzioni*.

82 A Jewish militiaman.

the growing influence on the young and on the sober, defiant part of the society.

They began to fear us — hotheads ready for anything. They feared for their own heads, because they were aware that their kingdom resting on clay feet would collapse the moment our first act was discovered. They knew that they would be the first to lose their heads because of us.

They didn't want that to happen [and] no price was too dear for them to avoid that...

[18] And the most shameful struggle in Jewish history began — a struggle against the best part of the Jewish *gmine*, that is, the young (the case of Lipek and Cwi Duński).⁸³

Their plan was to push us to the wall. They called us to a meeting.

They criticized those who had brought over “foreign” pessimism and declared that the things happening in the General Government wouldn't happen here.

There's the *Leiter*⁸⁴ here and the local Jews play a vital economic role — the local *yishuv* will remain. They criticized the young for being *Philistines* [egoistic and narrow-minded persons] and unable to act.

They'd like to go hand in hand with us, as the young have to be taken care of. They'd open clubs, have choirs, singing, and lectures. *Hagana* — very well, they support it too and want to be ready, but we shouldn't do that on our own. We're hotheads, who'll bring ourselves and the *gmine* to ruin.

We answered them...

There was a time when we wanted to cooperate with them. Today, after they have undertaken the disgraceful deportation work, we have nothing in common with them. [19] There's too wide a gap between us and too much mutual distrust.

83 See Notebook A, p. 19.

84 Namely, Moshe Merin.

This is no time to educate the young generation when we are in danger of physical extermination.

There was a time when we used to say that we had to survive not only physically, but also morally. We were educating both ourselves and others back then, relentlessly, zealously.

Today, when we see no future ahead of us but only the naked, horrible reality — death in the ovens of Auschwitz — we have to prepare ourselves for something different — for *hagana*. Yes, this is the only plane on which we can reach an agreement. Sometimes we didn't want that agreement either. And we showed them our *partzuf* [face]. They had stopped deluding themselves and began fighting us.

The case of Lipek [Minc]⁸⁵ and Cwi Duński.⁸⁶

At first, the matter was entirely in their [the *gmina's*] hands. They knew that Lipek had been secretly listening to the radio and that a newspaper and fliers had been found at Cwi's.⁸⁷ Cwi's mother had been taken away with her child and they were [being] kept in prison to be deported. According to the German [20] custom, the parents were made responsible for their children's faults. They wanted him and all the young people to humble themselves before him [Merin], for us to come to him. We didn't and after several weeks he released the mother.

Lipek collapsed. He [Merin] took away his brother's police [Jewish militia] cap⁸⁸ and threw him out of the workshop. They found themselves without any means of subsistence. Lipek had a breakdown, cried before him [Merin] and confessed.

And when our underground activity didn't cease, he [Merin] handed the case over to the Gestapo. The boys were taken to prison. Before the Germans found them they assembled about half of our

85 Lipek Minc (1923–1943) — elder *Hashomer Hatzair* member in Sosnowiec.

86 Cwi Duński (1921–1943) — head of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Sosnowiec.

87 It appears that the conflict began in December 1942. The investigation was conducted by the Jewish police.

88 Minc's brother served in the Jewish Militia.

branch, the members and parents, and beat them to make them reveal his [Cwi's] hideout. Nobody gave him away.

In prison the boys found out that Merin⁸⁹ and Goldminc had signed a confidential document at the Gestapo, accusing Lipek and Cwi of membership in a secret organization that conducted sabotage against the Germans.

Merin and Goldminc had given those innocent boys into the hands of those murderers. The boys were imprisoned with PPR members.⁹⁰

They showed how people, revolutionaries, should hold on and behave, while those shady [21] characters and scoundrels were competing with each other in denunciations. Despite severe beatings the boys didn't breathe a word. Lipek rehabilitated himself completely. He turned out weak in the face of [Merin's] crooked ways and diplomatic speech. He wanted to play the role of a diplomat too, so they baited and caught him. But he proved resilient to the Germans and their [...].⁹¹

And Cwi, that simple boy devoted to the movement, knew how to be a hero. After every interrogation he would return covered in blood and unconscious. But as soon as he came around, he would take water and wash the others and console them, making them hardier and stronger. And when one of the prisoners who was sleeping in the same cell tried to hang himself, Cwi didn't try to stop him even though he would have been executed for that. But Cwi and Lipek enjoyed the most respect on the part of the Germans.

The Germans spat on Moshe Merin and told the boys, "*Sie sind doch soviel schuldig wie der Christus*" [You are as guilty as Christ].

89 Moshe Merin or his brother Chaim Merin, who at that time was head of the local Sosnowiec *Judenrat* and was involved in the interrogation.

90 A group of eight Jewish communists were arrested by the *Judenrat* at the same time, that is, February–March 1943.

91 Unclear in the original text.

Cwi was executed in Auschwitz, but Lipek purportedly is still living and working there.⁹²

[22] The case of Lipek and Cwi is a dark stain on the history of our movement in Zagłębie. Whenever I recall it I feel ashamed, even today.

There was no need for those victims.

We were still weak back then and not ready to react. So it was either of the two: react or go to Canossa.⁹³ Back then we could still go to Merin. We would have avoided the unnecessary victims and even that burning shame caused by their deaths remaining un[avenged]. The response of a fighting revolutionary organization, which we were, should have been either to rescue the boys or kill Goldminc or Merin, and go even more underground and intensify the conspiracy. Conspiracy was undoable — the locality was small, no apartments to hide in, and the *gmine* knew the top ranks of our organization very well.

So we could have taken action and then completely liquidated the organization, but we didn't want to let that happen.

[23] We took a step ahead: we “dissolved” the organization in order to completely “confuse” the enemy.

We already knew that we would never gain importance without firearms.

And Warsaw had already had a lot of experience. It had already gone through the January campaign and the first defense.⁹⁴

92 An official *Judenrat* document of April 23, 1943, signed by Merin's secretary, announced the execution of the eight supposed communists. The list included Sawek Merin and Dov (Bobo) Graubart, who left *Hashomer Hatzair* in the summer of 1942 over the Trotskyist affair. Cwi Duński and Lipek Minc were not mentioned, but it seems that Duński was executed at that time. See Ronen, *Nidonah le-hayim*, p. 231.

93 Going to Canossa (*Gang nach Canossa*) — an idiomatic reference to humiliating surrender in German and other European languages. It refers to the barefoot walk in the snow of Emperor Heinrich IV from Speier to Canossa to ask for Pope Gregory VII's forgiveness in 1077.

94 The Jewish resistance in Warsaw on January 18, 1943.

We were so proud: 40 Germans perished and only a few of ours. It turned out that those who defended themselves were the ones who didn't die.

A decision was made to send somebody to Warsaw: Ina [Gelbard]⁹⁵ or Idzia [Pejsachson]?

Idzia was sent as she would accomplish more, clarify our situation, demand aid for us, and learn a practical lesson in Warsaw as to how to operate. And that was another mistake. We shouldn't have sent our best girl, particularly as she wasn't so fit for that. She was shortsighted and shortsighted people are always scared.

Idzia perished on the way, while carrying arms, but she had done a lot for us: she presented our situation in [24] Warsaw and they promised to keep sending arms. Astrit [Zosia Miller]⁹⁶ arrived with the first pieces. Great sorrow over the loss of Idzia, but also great joy on account of those first weapons. We looked at them as though they were sacred objects. The first lesson. Baruch is⁹⁷ teaching us. I grab one, initially scared that it'll burn me, but then my hands began to move more confidently and stroke the piece. You feel more confident with it and you gain importance in your own eyes. The boys were making fun of us, "So you can do it too? It's not for you."

Astrit is a new type of member of our movement — a girl messenger. In normal times she would be a very ordinary type of girl. Yes, boys would always find her attractive. She's very pretty and shapely, but also flighty and vain. She was talking a lot about clothes, because one had to look neat and pretty on the "Aryan" side. New shoes, shirts, dresses had to be bought every time.

And you couldn't criticize her at all. [25] It had to be so. She was so brave, was such a daredevil, and had so much *chutzpa*.

95 Ina Gelbard (1921–1943) — *Hashomer Hatzair* activist from Zawiercie.

96 Zosia Miller, underground name "Astrit" or "Astrid" — a ŻOB (*Hashomer Hatzair*) courier from Warsaw, disappeared in late 1943.

97 Baruch Gaftek. He alone, of all underground members, had some military training.

They never stopped her for frisking. Once she brought [arms] in a large teddy bear — she looked so sweet and innocent with it — the second time in a marmalade tin, and the third time simply in her coat pocket. She went back and forth several times — bold, brave, and confident.

Every time she handed us the weapons she complained about feeling somehow sterile, empty, and barren of content. She deeply respected Mordechai and Arie [Wilner].

Astrit said that if Mordechai dared to leave now (rumors were going round in our organization that he was to go to The Hague),⁹⁸ she would slap him despite all her admiration. Whenever she came we threw a party and drank vodka — Warsaw customs had to be introduced.

When she was told that she would surely survive thanks to her appearance, Astrit would say, “When the ghetto is no more and our people have left [26] or perished, my mission will be over and I’ll have nothing to live for. I’ll finish myself off.” I don’t know if she’s going to do it or not, but I did see one thing: she was speaking from the heart, honestly. And even if she could bring herself only to say that, it was still a lot.

That was when we heard from abroad.

Earlier they had been sending us letters in which they wrote about the *moledet* [fatherland] and other things in that vein. Those letters made us laugh. How could we care about that while being engaged in a bloody, daily fight for survival? Was that⁹⁹

Those letters caused us pain, but at the same time made us laugh. The most explicit expression of our attitude toward the [*moledet*] overseas was a slightly vulgar saying — *Moledet, Y[ob].T[voyu]. M[at]*.¹⁰⁰

98 To the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague. Chajka, who was Anielewicz’s main hostess during his long visit, was most familiar with his ideas and plans.

99 Incomplete sentence.

100 A mix of Hebrew and Russian, this means: Fatherland, go fuck your mother.

But perhaps we were most irritated by Nathan Schwalb (*shvantz* [prick]),¹⁰¹ who was sending such bullshit in his letters, which were so full of Hebrew sentences that they could give us away ten times a day.

[27] A parcel delivery campaign was launched.¹⁰² Nathan was unjust, as he was sending disproportionately more to *Gordonia* than to us.¹⁰³ On what grounds? Had they been given a bigger share of *Hechalutz*?

We were angry. The money sent to us from *Hakibbutz Haartzi*, which Josef could receive in cash in Warsaw, was exchanged by him for parcels, which he then sent to various localities across Poland, with Warsaw not benefiting from that at all.

And then Geller¹⁰⁴ or somebody else wrote him that we had become communists. Nathan spread that news without first asking Josef if it was true.

He then received Josef's reply, in which he called him names, but apparently Nathan didn't get his statement straight, because long afterward we received a letter from Turkey,¹⁰⁵ asking us if we had forgotten about Meir.¹⁰⁶

How could we answer such a question? It was so painful and at the same time so strange to us. The parcels from abroad didn't bring us much [28] consolation or help. And later we didn't even have that, because the *gmina* began to requisition them.

101 Schwalb was the *Hechalutz* representative in Switzerland and the principal correspondent with the Zionist youth movements throughout the war. Chajka corresponded with him as a *Hashomer Hatzair* representative.

102 Humanitarian aid from the Joint or the Red Cross.

103 Schwalb was a *kibbutz* member (*Naan*) affiliated with *Gordonia* (and MAPAI). In *Eretz Israel*, *Gordonia* was linked to MAPAI, the largest socialist party. In Poland, however, *Gordonia* was relatively small in comparison to *Hashomer Hatzair* and *Dror*.

104 Apparently Eliezer Geller (1918–1943/1944) — *Gordonia* leader in Warsaw, who visited in Będzin.

105 The *Eretz Israel* delegation in Istanbul, established in January 1943, included Menachem Bader as the *Hashomer Hatzair* delegate.

106 Meir Yaari. Code name for *Hakibbutz Haartzi*.

Then there was the foreign passport affair.¹⁰⁷ Letters from abroad with requests for photographs began to come. Heini [Bornstein]¹⁰⁸ had already sent us a letter as early as during that period. His letters made us so happy; they were short but so warm. You could sense a dear, kindred spirit — he was simply our man.

But the most important thing was that his letters were concise, to the point, and not *auffallend* [conspicuous] at all. So what should be our stance on the issue of the *Internierungslager* [internment camp]? *Men hot gerufen an aseyfe un bashlosen* [A council was called together to decide] and a resolution was adopted against that [idea]. (Later on we learned that Warsaw also adopted such a resolution.) We were sending only a *shlichut*. The resolution was adopted by all the youth organizations.

But suddenly after several weeks we learned that some *Gordonia* members had sent [passport photographs]. Papers began to come. There was a commotion in the town. The older generation was outraged at the young [29] for their rejection of a chance to survive. Parents began to appeal to their daughters and sons, achieving partial success.

And the young began to change their minds. *Gordonia* members openly supported the idea of sending the photographs. There was a frantic search for ways of doing that.

The Kibbutz Dror was seething. Everybody was in favor of departure and some asked how come that after so many years of

107 Beginning in January 1943, there was wide-ranging correspondence between Switzerland and Zagłębie concerning a rescue plan using South American passports. Youth movement activists from Zagłębie were asked by Schwalb in Geneva to send him their photos and their personal details. In return, they received South American documents that testified that the document's holder was a citizen of Paraguay or Costa Rica, etc. Having such a South American passport, they were supposed to be arrested by the regular German police and be transferred as foreign citizens to an internment camp in Germany, where they could stay until the end of the war.

108 Heini Bornstein (1920–2016) — lived in Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan. *Hashomer Hatzair* member in Switzerland, who became active after 1942, keeping contact with *Hashomer Hatzair* members in occupied Europe.

hachshara they had not received passports, while people like Arie [Liwer]¹⁰⁹ or Motek [Krzesiwo]¹¹⁰ had.

There was almost no controversy in our movement. Perhaps the young did get some stupid ideas, but none of us said anything out loud. On the contrary, when that issue was discussed during a *Hashomer Hatzair asefa* everybody was in favor of a *shlichut*.

Our *hanhaga* went as far as being ready to resign from a *shlichut*, which I thought was wrong, just to avoid creating an impression that the leadership of the organization was leaving.

A horrible atmosphere ensued. We knew that we would face a fiasco and as a popular saying in Yiddish goes, [30] *Men walt nisht gehat — ani di welt [...]*.¹¹¹ We, the *Hashomer Hatzair* movement, would be isolated. Everybody would get their passports, and there wouldn't be any *hagana* anyway.

We were afraid of isolation and that was our mistake. We had strength, so why were we afraid to engage in *hagana* on our own? We were perfectly aware that the position of *Dror* would depend on our strong and firm stance.

A *shlichah* of the *merkaz*, Frumka [Płotnicka] couldn't be against *hagana*. We went through those matters many times and Cwi proposed a project suggested by Frumka to send everybody's photographs without their knowledge.

We were against even that and I don't know how Cwi accepted that project at the *yeshiva* [meeting] of the *Hechalutz*.

In the meantime papers for *Gordonia* members began to arrive. Others were outraged [and asked] what they were doing with the young. The initial enthusiasm for *hagana* of the first couple of

109 Arie Liwer — brother of David Liwer, ex-*Gordonia* member, dominant figure in the *chalutzic* movement, the manager of the farm. Survived and immigrated to Israel.

110 Motek Krzesiwo — *Gordonia* member. The first group (Nan Eck and his family) left for the *Internierungslager* (on March 6, 1943); Motek Krzesiwo was a member of the second group. Survived and immigrated to Israel.

111 The last words in the sentence are unclear.

[31] days had passed. I said, “It’s no surprise. I’ve never regarded *Gordonia* as an able organization¹¹² fulfilling a certain social task. It proved its inadequacy through its breach of the discipline imposed by the *hachlata* [decision] of *Hechalutz*. It proved its leaders’ lack of pride and narrow-mindedness.”

And I should also mention [Nathan] Schwalb’s swinish actions. There are no words to express our indignation. When we were soaked with blood and leading our exhausting lives, he still dared play prewar tricks. A number of passports for *Gordonia* were delivered, while we didn’t get any even for our *shlichut*.¹¹³ When they already had about 20 passports, we finally got one, and to make matters worse, a Honduran one. Well, I’d like to get a chance to get even with them.

Besach hakol [to sum up]. What good did help from abroad, which must have been surrounded [32] with an uproar, do us?

Nacia [Klugman], Jakow [Landou], Berek [Fruchtweig], and Hela¹¹⁴ were sent to Auschwitz.¹¹⁵

God, we are personally responsible for the death of those who were [supposed] to survive.

Making matters worse, we received a wire from [Yitzhak] Tabenkin urging us to use all means for immigration.¹¹⁶

Isn’t it funny and outrageous at the same time? The issue

112 The second group, including Arie Liwer, Krzesiwo, and five other *Gordonia* members, as well as another 12 Jews left Będzin on April 7, 1943. Letters that arrived from the *Internierungslager* (internment camp) in Titumning (Germany) gave assurance that the program was working. All of the 19 survived.

113 In a letter to Schwalb, Chajka complained that no passports were arriving for *Hashomer Hatzair* members.

114 *Hashomer Hatzair* member; her family name is unknown.

115 A third group of 34 Jews was supposed to arrive at the *Internierungslager*. The group included four *Hashomer Hatzair* members. However, a short time after the departure of the group it became known that they had been deported to Auschwitz. Merin and some of his assistants were also deported to Auschwitz on the same day.

116 The telegram arrived on an unknown date in late June or July 1943, but no later than July 31.

of the *Internierungslager* had one consequence: it dampened the enthusiasm and weakened the strength and the concentration of force on our one aim — *hagana*.

What was *hagana* to us actually? Our hatred of Germans was deepening as they were taking root in our territory, intensifying their oppression of us — Jews — and intensifying the *gzeirot* [oppression].¹¹⁷ Initially, that hatred was so intense and bitter. I remember that once as we were walking on a street, some whelp hit me on the chest as he was passing by. I seethed with anger. [33] Dawid clenched his fists and I had to take him by the arm. During the first period each of us dreamed about hitting or slapping them, spitting in their face, or killing at least one — it didn't matter with what: a knife, an axe, or bare hands. We were burning, seething. Hatred and desire for vengeance were blazing inside us like a red-hot iron.

Hagana was not only a compensation for the harm and our nation's disgraceful behavior. It was not only a deed for the sake of history, but in my opinion it was predominantly an individual need in each of us. It was born inside [of] us. We gave birth to that thought in ourselves. It was the best part of our existence. And only thanks to its presence within us could we endure all that [34] humiliation for so long without losing our personal dignity. For each of us knew that the day of reckoning would come.

And we cultivated the hate in our hearts. I didn't want my eyes to miss anything. I wanted to absorb everything, each and every harm, every brutality, every act of barbarity, and to comprehend, to grasp, the full picture of what was going on. So that my hate would be great and powerful, so that it would overwhelm me.

With the passing of time after the Warsaw campaign, which made a powerful impression on Jews, Germans, and Poles, and after

117 *Gzeirot* is a traditional Jewish term for oppressive orders of the rulers. Here it refers to the harsh (German) orders.

the incident in the Czechoslovakia Republic,¹¹⁸ it was the greatest achievement of the people oppressed by Hitler's regime.

It was a full Jewish compensation on a large scale. For could any of us dream that the Germans would be liquidating the Jewish ghetto for four weeks?

We knew that in the best-case scenario [35] *hagana* would last a couple of hours.

For *hagana* has nothing to do with logic or actual defense.

It simply comes down to dying a human death. But unexpectedly there was a feat that few people living in better conditions could find courage for. For me it was a sigh of relief that we wouldn't be so fiercely condemned. I wonder whether such actions in all the occupied territories would have made the Germans change their tactics in regard to Jews. I don't think so. It could even lead to an aggravation.

But aside from that feeling of pride and compensation, I was also feeling great pain, which was ripping my intestines apart. Everybody is dead, having died a tragic death, as it wasn't during combat.

None of our people is alive. There's no *zecher* [trace] of that powerful and beautiful movement that *Hashomer Hatzair* used to be. There's nobody left to objectively assess our part in that combat. [36] After the Warsaw feat, a small, minor act would have been meaningless here, and, in our own opinions, insufficient.

We had to bring ourselves to do something grand that would if not exceed [the] Warsaw [act], then at least match it.

We started work on a large scale. The workshop was operating at full steam. Ina was traveling to obtain arms. An "Aryan" group was formed. It was sent to places that it was to set ablaze in order for its members to get to know them well. We were frantically buying inflammable materials. The girls who were carrying those

118 The assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in Prague on May 27, 1942.

cans [with explosives] to the various groups felt so content and important.

And then we received a letter from Warsaw, which was a slap in the face that stunned us.

Very resigned and desperate, Yitzhak [Zuckerman] and Cywia [Zivia Lubetkin]¹¹⁹ had changed their minds as to the value of *hagana*.

They had come to the conclusion that it hadn't been worth [the lives of] those [37] victims and their tragic deaths.¹²⁰

This is how we explained it to ourselves: the events had overwhelmed them, they had become afraid of what they had started with their own hands, and the responsibility that had fallen on their shoulders was too great.

They were spiritually exhausted. After so many days of psychological tension, which had reached its zenith, they became depressed.

It's no wonder either that they felt devastated after only 40 of the few hundred members of the ŻOB had left the ghetto or that life had lost its value for them after they became the only survivors from the very many and beautiful hard core [of the organization].

But should we have learned a lesson regarding our objective duties from their subjective opinion of the events? No, and that is why their opinion — that after Warsaw's *hagana* there was no need for it here — had absolutely no influence on us.

[38] And one more thing, very important to us.

Were we supposed to live in the shadow of their glory? Were we supposed to live at the price of their deaths and peacefully rest on their laurels?

119 Yitzhak (Antek) Zuckerman (1915–1981) and Zivia Lubetkin (1914–1976), leaders of *Hechalutz* and ŻOB who survived the Warsaw uprising.

120 The letter or the message from the surviving leaders of the ŻOB in Warsaw was transmitted to Będzin by Rywka Glanc (1915–1943), a *Dror* member from Częstochowa, who visited Warsaw after the uprising and was in contact with Antek and Cywia. On her way back to Częstochowa, she visited Będzin and left a letter there for Geneva.

No, that would have been more than dishonorable. Besides, had any of the main reasons that inclined us to *hagana* changed? No. Not even one. While others were satisfied with the *hechsher* [kosher certification]¹²¹ that Warsaw had given them, we didn't give up our stance. And then we received Tabenkin's cable, "use all means for immigration," that is, quit *hagana*.

We were outraged: they hadn't contacted us for four years of war, hadn't helped us at all, despite having [had] plenty of opportunities, and now, ignorant of the conditions, they dared tell us what to do.

Could you kindly [39] tell us which possibilities to use? When we received the wire *Hashomer Hatzair* had already had three or four papers.

Plenty of possibilities of immigration!

But that was a way out for those who inclined to look for it. *Gordonia* members were openly against *hagana*. They were to leave as soon as all their people obtained papers.

Conflicts with the *gmina* began. Paraguayans, that is, those in possession of such foreign passports, were arrested, including my sister instead of me.¹²² The *gmina* wanted to exert pressure on us to take control of the passport affair.¹²³

How could we let that happen? How could we let those we had sentenced to death survive? The *gmina* was threatening to deport those people, but the final decision was in the hands of the Gestapo.

Then came a list from the *Polizeipräsidium* [German police headquarters in Sosnowiec] enumerating those whose foreign passports had arrived. [40] The six of us were on that list. Bleak despair. What now? This could break our discipline. If they don't leave, the campaign against *Hashomer Hatzair* will resume.

121 Chajka used the term as a metaphor for being legitimized.

122 The youth movement activists were arrested by the *Judenrat* on May 24, 1943.

123 Merin also sent a letter to Geneva (to Alfred Szwartzbaum dated June 2, 1943), demanding that all the correspondence with Switzerland be conducted solely by the *Judenrat*.

We wanted Nacha [Nacia] to go. It was possible that I wouldn't manage to leave, so she would be a *shlichah*.¹²⁴ Helena from Zawiercie¹²⁵ — that didn't depend on us. The *gmina* would inform her, and she would have to go. Ina's gone, so it would be good if Jankele [Landou] and Dow [Fruchtweig] went. They didn't want to. What now? Now also Cwi [Brandes]. A decision was made that Jankele and Dow would go in order not to reveal that we were keeping boys for *hagana*.

As for Cwi, his stance was firm and tough: he wasn't going regardless of the consequences. There was pressure on him in the *kibbutz* from Frumka and Herszel. But he didn't give in only because he was Cwi. The group left. Later on we found out that they went to Auschwitz. It was Merin's fault — he had said too much to the Gestapo.¹²⁶

[41] We lost four good, dear people. I don't want to accuse the [people] abroad, even though I'm not very fond of them. And then came the first deportation. The order had long been that we weren't going to the [deportation] center.

Another terrible blow:¹²⁷ Irka and Lea [Pejsachson], Mirka¹²⁸ in the *kibbutz*, Max, Joel,¹²⁹ Sara, and others. I don't want to talk now about what Irka and Lea had been for our movement. We were completely disheartened for many days. We couldn't get over their loss, but the most painful thing was that they, who had been on fire and had lived and breathed *hagana*, left quietly together with everybody else, with a transport.¹³⁰ They wrote to us with a request

124 Nacha [Nacia] Klugman and Chajka were the best Hebrew speakers in *Hashomer Hatzair*. As such, they were assigned as emissaries to *Eretz Israel*.

125 Unidentified.

126 Merin himself was deported to Auschwitz on the same day — June 19, 1943. The Jews connected his downfall to the passport affair.

127 The deportation from Będzin was resumed on June 22, 1943.

128 Her family name is unknown.

129 Joel Springer — Herszel's brother. Herszel was also deported, but he escaped from the train to Auschwitz and came back to Będzin.

130 In the 1944 version of her diary, Chajka wrote a full (and more empathetic)

for bottles [Molotov cocktails] — they wanted to start inside, while we were to start on the outside.

A decision was made to carry out a retaliatory campaign in various spots in the town. The workshop was to be set on fire should the campaign continue. It subsided [42] and the plans were changed. Instead of the attack, two expeditions for arms were organized.

The boys went dressed as Germans. The first [expedition] failed. Two pieces were obtained. A boy, a careless *Hanoar Hatzioni* member, fell during the other expedition.¹³¹ At first, he held up bravely but then he started squealing.

We benefited little from those expeditions. *Hanoar Hatzioni* members borrowed the pieces and failed to return them.

And Irka and Lea left embittered by the fact that we had not brought ourselves to act. They couldn't have taken the beaten track. They might have jumped out the window and been shot, or more likely they took cyanide because they had it on them.

Those two matters — of the *Internierungslager* and the deportation — depressed us greatly.

That was when we received news from Częstochowa: [43] A

description of the loss of Lea and Irka: “Together with their father — an extraordinary man and former *Bund* activist — he was one of the most popular people in town. Actually it was because of him that they were to be deported. He refused to hide in a bunker. ‘I don’t want to,’ he said. ‘I’ll go with all the other Jews.’ They argued with him for so long that in the end the German police came and took them all. Owing to the pressure exerted by various personalities, the *gmina* managed to obtain exemption for one person from the Pejsachson family. They were to decide among themselves who that would be and they chose their father, because ‘There’s going to be another roundup tomorrow and they might take the elderly. You can still survive. We’ll jump out the wagon and return home,’ they told him. The father left, while they stayed, thinking that they would act on the inside, that they would in the end jump out the wagon” (Notebook C, pp. 16–18).

131 Hari (Arie) Blumenfrucht (1924–1943) — member of *Hanoar Hatzioni*. Blumenfrucht was executed later.

campaign against our people had been carried out there and the bunker had been discovered.

Mojetek, Heniek, and Rywka¹³² had perished, some had managed to reach Koniecpol, others had vanished.¹³³ And there was no *hagana* in Częstochowa. They had been so well prepared — so many grenades, bombs, and handguns. But all of that came to nothing. Marek [Folman]¹³⁴ came to us and inspired us with the idea of partisan warfare.

We had had a different attitude toward partisan combat. In fact, during that phase of the war partisan combat was of cardinal importance to the Soviets and it had only now begun to assume its importance.

But at the same time at that stage of the liquidation of Jewry, when the Jewish *yishuv* was no more and when the Polish street ceased to regard us as a separate group, partisan warfare had lost its significance to us Jews.

[44] No, it was not historically significant at all whether 10, 20, or 100 Jews participated in partisan warfare. What was important was [that it was] the last act of the dying Jewry. *Hagana* was now more essential than partisan combat, which could be a way for individuals who survive *hagana* to continue to fight. But Marek had an influence on us, especially because, as I have noted, various groups were seeking a way to avoid dying in *hagana*. Consequently, his plan was adopted.

He established contact with a PPR representative.¹³⁵ The people were happy that long-sought contact had finally been made. But

132 Rywka Glanc (*Dror*) (...–1943), Mordechai (Mojetek) Zylberberg (1915–1943) — the leading activists of the defense organization of Częstochowa, *Hashomer Hatzair* Heniek (unknown).

133 The failed uprising in Częstochowa was on June 25, 1943.

134 Marek Folman (1916–1943) — member of the Warsaw ŻOB. Folman took part in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, survived the battles, joined the partisans, moved to Częstochowa, participated in the failed uprising, and then moved to Będzin.

135 According to other sources, his name was Socha. See: David Liwer, *Ir Hametim* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Twerski, 1946), pp. 125–126.

there were secrets in our movement, so even I didn't ask who, what, and how. I only knew that he belonged to the same group as Marek.

The boys began getting ready. Breeches were being sewed frantically. Alter¹³⁶ was bringing us a pair of high boots from a shed every day. [45] Plus fours were being stolen. Windcheaters were being made. And there was so much joy when we learned that girls would also be able to go with the second group. And then there were arguments as to who would go.

Dawid was to go as the commander of the first group. I wanted to go with him and share my fate with him, but they didn't let me. Perhaps I'd still get to go as a *shlichah*. (Perhaps) I was [still] too weak physically to go. Dawid was to convince the boys to let us, a couple of girls, stay with them.

I didn't want to be petty and say that either we'd go together or none of us would go. Others, the girls in the *kibbutz* said so, but I didn't. He left. I knew that I would never see him again.

The first group was very well equipped, our boys in particular. Everybody had high boots, pants, windcheaters, and jackets. Dawid had a red raincoat. *Kommissar*.

Ten young, hunky boys. Then another group: another eight boys and two girls. Our Hela [Kacengold]¹³⁷ looked like a young, [46] flirtatious *Komsomol* [youth organization of the Communist Party] member — a soldier. They left feeling quite happy. And we were also very happy. Everybody was getting ready for the next groups. The atmosphere was so joyful when we were bidding farewell, but without unnecessary formalities so as not to detain them.

They left, but they didn't reach their destination. Their leader, with whom contact had been established and who was supposed to be a PPR member, was [in fact] a Gestapo informer. They all perished after whole detachments of German soldiers surrounded them in the forest. Their dreams didn't come true, as no German

136 Probably Alter Goldblum (...-1943).

137 Hela Kacengold, *Hashomer Hatzair* member from Będzin (...-1943).

died at their hands. Ajzyk, who managed to escape, told us, “We were so happy in the forest. We were free without the word *Jude* on our chests. Our souls were singing. And he [the guide] was very good to us. He told us stories and joked with us.

“Suddenly he went to fetch water and we stayed on our own. A number of soldiers surrounded us and there was such a horrible [47] fusillade from the machine guns. Boom...boom...boom. I pretended to be dead. They approached me and boasted, ‘*Ich habe ihn erledigt*’ [I’ve finished him off]. Then I fled. They were shooting after me. I can’t believe that I escaped.”

Twenty boys perished that way. Dawid’s death was so painful and it seems to remain an ever-open wound. But the second group almost made me furious. I asked if they had a password. They said they did. But then I found out that it was either not top secret or that there was none. Cwi wanted to commit suicide. He was justifying himself, saying that Marek had given him that idea and that he had trusted him blindly.

And Marek simply fled.¹³⁸ Later they passed a death sentence on him [Socha, the traitor]. I don’t want to suggest that the fact that he was captured during that journey was a punishment. No, because he hadn’t wanted the boys to die. But how could a responsible organization [48] member have been so naive. Why, I feel ashamed just talking about it.

I bear such a deep grudge against him. I still can’t forgive him. We were completely devastated. Our workshop had been closed the moment we had decided to dispatch our major forces into the woods. The reason was that we had been afraid of a search since Hari’s [Blumenfrucht] capture. We didn’t know how much he had revealed.

We spent many days in the bunker. We had lost our best boys and most of our weapons, which they had taken with [them]. Who could we begin a campaign with now?

138 Marek Folman was captured and killed near Częstochowa.

Wasn't it too painful?

We've sacrificed so many victims, so many valuable people perished, but we had been afraid to take a risk for *hagana*. Twenty such boys, of whom almost everyone was a commander of a five, might have constituted a hell of a force. That healthy core of our [49] movement had left. But those who remained knew that they wouldn't let themselves be taken for deportation alive.

But there was an intention to rescue a group of people — *shlichut*. Some were to go to Warsaw to the “Aryan” side. Ina arrived and said that there was a place for me in a bunker. I don't want to go. I won't go as long as there's somebody here. I won't sit there idly growing fat. Nobody from the hard core went. Nobody was in a hurry to go and nobody went.

Besides, there was the issue of Hungary,¹³⁹ which cost so much money — 10,000 per person. And it turned out to be a scam. This was the situation we were in when the things I described at the very beginning happened.

139 On July 31, 1943, a delegation of four representatives of youth movements went to the Hungarian border trying to find a way of escape and rescue via Hungary. Their Polish guide disappeared in a closed railway station, so they returned to Będzin and arrived there just a few hours before the last deportation began. The group was funded by money that was brought from Istanbul by a German courier, who was sent by the delegation from Mandatory Palestine in Istanbul.

Part Four

Supplements

Notebook A (continuation)

[50] Supplements¹

Tosia Altman²

I have completely omitted Tosia's [Altman]³ *bikur* [visit].⁴ Tosia paid our branch a visit when we were in our prime.⁵

But our branch was characterized by a lack of orderliness and healthy arrangements. Our expansion was not going according to plan. For instance, there was a *kvutza* [group] of girl *tzofim* but a *kvutza* of boy *tzofim* had not yet been organized. Everything was

1 After finishing the chronological history of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Będzin, Chajka turned to addressing various issues. Some of these are written as necrologies and some seem to be short essays or outlines for essays, perhaps for a book that she would write some day. Pages 51–61 of Notebook A were not included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*.

2 The subtitles were added by the editor.

3 Tosia Altman (1918–1943) — member of the *Hashomer Hatzair* leadership in the Warsaw Ghetto, its principal *shlichah* and Chajka's good friend (they both belonged to Kibbutz Galon). While writing, Chajka was uncertain about Tosia's fate. She mistakenly reported her death to *Eretz Israel* on April 27, 1943, but later learned that Altman had survived the battles and had been captured by the Germans following the fire in the hiding place of the ŻOB survivors on May 24, 1943. It seems that Chajka believed at that time that Altman was still alive. Chajka wrote much more about Tosia in her revised 1944 version. See Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 38–44.

4 Actually, the word is closer to *bezuoh* (German).

5 Sometime in the autumn of 1941.

proceeding erratically, impulsively, which was why our branch was unhealthy and badly structured. Numerous *eidot* [intimate groups] of *bnei midbar*, a small one of *tzofim*, and a large one of *bogrim*.

Tosia introduced orderliness, planning, and organization into our operation, organized *asefot* of *menahalim*, conducted a seminar for the leadership and organized a *tzofim*'s convention of the *shichva*, which she wanted to cement and strengthen. But she did not do anything about a *plugat hachshara* [training group] on the farm. Although she did fulfill her tasks in a timely manner, she did not [51] solve the ideological problems as she postponed [dealing with] those until the planned convention, which had serious consequences for us.

Later, during the war period, both Tosia and Frumka [Płotnicka] were no longer fit for work. The times had overwhelmed them. They were fit for normal times, when you could sit in the *Hanhaga*⁶ and deal with the *Machleket* [department of] *Bnei Midbar* — that was the only thing that existed for them. There were many such instances.

The war-time reality required everything from a command member: he had to rise to challenges, know how to control a *Hechalutz yeshiva*, present himself on the outside, and be able to find solutions for all the theoretical and ideological problems that arose at the time.

[52] **Kalman Tencer**⁷

I do not know if now, today, when those times and particularly their spirit are so distant, I can penetrate the essence of that man and his significance to our movement in Zagłębie.

Kalman Tencer was a *shomer* with every inch of his being.

6 In this instance, Chajka means the seat of the leadership (in Warsaw).

7 Kalman Tencer (1916–1942) — *Hashomer Hatzair* leader in Sosnowiec. His comrades made *aliyah* but owing to his movement duties he had to stay in Sosnowiec.

For a certain period he was the soul of our movement in the Zagłębie area.

All the bulletins and conventions were Kalman's achievements. Kalman Tencer developed the Sosnowiec branch. Our branch in Będzin was an ideological hotbed, where papers and operational plans were prepared and discussions were held, whereas the Sosnowiec branch was a model of orderliness and healthy composition. All their *gdudim* [groups] had a normal structure. [There was] a solid *shichva tzofim*, which retained the prewar *Hashomer Hatzair* values. One could simply say that the Będzin branch was the head, while the Sosnowiec one was strong hands ready to work and would do everything neatly and well. If you gave the Sosnowiec *shomers* [53] some work to do, you could be certain that it would be done well and promptly. As for Będzin's punctuality, the Sosnowiec branch laughed at us and criticized us severely and rightly so, but they had less flair and intelligence. Yet everything was in order there.

It was Kalman Tencer's achievement. He was also so meticulous that it bordered on pedantry. "You were supposed to come at this or that hour. How could you not come?" He worked quietly and placidly, but incessantly, nonstop — no excesses, no hesitation. The path ahead of him was clear.

Genetically predisposed, he suffered from a pulmonary disease, and if he had not been a *shomer* and had not devoted all his soul to our work, he would not have died so early.

Even when it was raining or very cold he still rushed to a discussion, to the *gmina* for an intervention, or to save somebody from an *Einsatz* [(forced labor) assignment].

And when he was taken ill, all the affairs continued to take place in his room. [54] No important matter could be settled without him. He continued to take care of our affairs even on his deathbed.

He died in the same way that he had lived, that is, quietly and placidly.⁸ His loss was felt long after his death.

Conferences in Zagłębie

From time to time, more or less every four months, a conference was held.

First, there was the *bogrim* conference, the restoration of our movement — our ideological path. The convention was held in the cellar and each person entering had to give the password.

Those keeping guard outside — young *shomers*, with bated breath, were watching for any *Schupo* [member of *Schutzpolizei*, state police] entering the building.

Another conference of the *menahalim* — our educational path — our educational aim remains unchanged. The *bogrim* conference on the farm — the first major *Hashomer Hatzair* convention.

It was a long, cold winter. Snow lay all around. The farm⁹ was far away from the town. The road [55] went across fields. White snow lay wherever one looked. Whiteness all around.¹⁰ One could not see the roads. White snow lay all around, about half a meter deep. And the *shomers* were streaming across the fields from all directions, from Będzin and across the main road, from Dąbrowa¹¹ via Zagórze, and from Sosnowiec via Środula.

I can clearly recall standing outside the barrack, my heart swelling. The people passing were covered in snow and when they took off their coats they emerged completely transformed, so festive in their white shirts. The farm kitchen also looked somehow different that day. The pots on the walls sparkled as if in a festive

8 Tencer died in 1942.

9 The farm was worked by the youth movements and functioned as a central location for their activities. See much more in the 1944 version and its Hebrew translation: Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 32-41.

10 Probably the winter at the turn of 1941-1942.

11 Dąbrowa Górnicza.

way. Everything had been washed and scraped clean and lined with white paper.

None of the strangers went into the kitchen. They only peeked in to see what it was like at the *shomers'*. The atmosphere was so festive and formal.

Singing started — loud, uninhibited by [56] anything in this desolate area — the singing was coming from young, strong chests. They were singing about freedom and liberty. That conference was the first time that our attitude toward the USSR was discussed at length and in detail. Idzia took the floor then. I can still see her standing by the wall. She is pale, but there's fire coming from her mouth. She is becoming more and more enthusiastic. This is what Rosa Luxemburg¹² must have looked like while talking about the revolution and the international proletariat.

Then there was the conference of directors in the orphanage. An enormous hall, so big, clean, and light. So many windows and so much sunshine and joy coming through each of them. Joy was reflected on all the faces — young, concentrated faces expressing comprehension and intelligence. Educational issues, but unfortunately I can't recall the content. Nacia covered all the basic issues in one paper. Frumka was at the convention.

[57] She is content with our strength and the sight of so many young people. There were 80–100 of us from the entire *irgun* [the *Hashomer Hatzair* movement in Będzin], and some had even come from Zawiercie.

That was the culminating point of our growth. It was during the period of rivalry between the organizations, the period of constant discussions and “attraction” of people. That was when we asked ourselves a question: Should we be guided by stupid

12 Rosa Luxemburg (1870–1919) — Jewish revolutionary Marxist. Luxemburg was born in Poland and was most active within the international workers movement in Germany. She was a consistent anti-nationalist, anti-militarist and a great believer in workers' solidarity and the prospect of a world revolution. Luxemburg was murdered during the failed Spartacus uprising in Berlin in 1919.

sentimentalism and not break up the organizations? Should we live in harmony and peace? We decided that we had to disband *Hanoar* [*Hatzioni*] because we pitied those young people, who were wasting their potential there. But it would not be bad either to reduce *Gordonia's* membership. Let it be said. That was when we strongly emphasized the difference between us and them, both orally and in writing. It was a very tense period. What was at stake was simply prestige. There was simply a struggle to win over Salek¹³ and Heniek, who talked and debated with representatives from all the organizations, but [in the end] joined us.

Everybody hated us then, but we cared little about that.

We were growing stronger, acquiring valuable individuals every [58] day. During the convention in the orphanage we outlined our future work plan and decided to look for roles for the growing *shichvat bogrim* — build a *hachshara* post.

When we wished to say something about our conventions it should be clearly stated that our growth was reflected on those occasions. Growth was evident in the steadily increasing number of members (20 at the beginning, then 40, 60, and 80), and in the content and style of the discussions on issues.

Each convention brought us strength, joy, and fresh enthusiasm for work.

Breakthrough: Internal Transformation into a Fighting Organization — *Hashomer Hatzair*

Every breakthrough in our movement comes consequentially, together with the maturation of certain new conditions and a new reality. Consequently, it should be imperceptible.

But in our movement we have a habit of calling various [59] periods in its history by name. Once in a while we stop and ask ourselves the question: Where are we?

We theoretically identify and determine our stances in life

13 Salek became a radical. See the Trotskyite argument.

and the world. When Mordechai came to us and told us about the PPR and our participation in it, when he established a fighting organization, he talked about two bodies of *Hashomer Hatzair* and about that new organization. Back then we sensed and told him, as he was, awkwardly, trying to prove to us the necessity of further educational work, that in fact the educational role of *Hashomer Hatzair* was already over. What should we educate the young *shichvot* [for]?

That education was to become, particularly with regard to the older strata, broader rather than deeper. I would say, like propaganda, closer to *Dror's* education.

Education needed for a short-term objective and a specific [60] purpose. Education preparing one for life in an army, for combat, but also for sacrifice. Education according to *Man's Fate*.¹⁴

Organization of new educational *shichvot* was out of the question in our area.

I still have the impression that it was then that *Hashomer Hatzair* became a political–military organization.

Formally speaking, there were two organizations, but when the one became more active, the other withered.

This is how current needs alter the [organizational] forms too.

[61]

Saturday		2.50 ¹⁵
20 RM	kielbasa	20
20 RM	¼ butter	20
0.60	1 loaf of bread	0.60
0.60	6 rolls	0.60
29.00	pears	9.00

14 The protagonists of Malraux's novel, *La Condition Humaine* (1933), are completely dedicated to the coming revolution and ready to sacrifice their lives for it. See more in Notebooks VII and B.

15 Shopping list of the group in hiding.

Monday – 27		0.60
0.60	bread	5.00
5.00	duck	2.20
2.20	cellu-cotton [bandages]	1.50
1.50	essence	1.50
1.50	vegetables	22.00
22.00	butter	1.20
1.20	coffee	6.60
Tuesday – 28		5.00
0.60	bread	2.20
5.00	eggs	10.00
2.50	stamps	7.00
10	onion	2.50
7.00	electronics	1.20
2.50	porridge	0.60
	Water	116.80
1.20	daily	115.80
		200
		315.80

Notebook E¹⁶

The Girls in the Underground¹⁷

[1] The atmosphere on the farm has become sad. Lea has been deported to a camp.¹⁸ We had become so used to her and we miss her so much. Always the first to get up for work (as early as 5 A.M.), she would wake up the rest (of the girls). She was the first to start work. Lea knew how to work — it was in her blood. She was strong, with broad hips and strong, nimble legs. She had a good-natured face, particularly when she was smiling and two dimples appeared on her face. Lea knew how to do every kind of agricultural work: walk behind a plow, sow using a seeder, cultivate beds beautifully, bring in hay from the field, and look after flowers and mushrooms

16 The integration of Notebook E as a continuation of Notebook A and ahead of Notebook VII is the only editorial change that has been made here that is not according to the order of Chajka's writing, but is in accord with its content.

It is unclear when and where Notebook E was written. On the one hand, it seems to be a late manuscript, because it has the same format as Notebook D, which was certainly completed in *Eretz Israel* after March 8, 1944 (see Notebook D). Both of the notebooks are without bindings, their pages have 19 printed lines and they are the same color. It seems that the two are both parts of the same original notebook. On the other hand, Notebook D, which was written in a fragmentary style, seems to be a continuation of either the short essays or the obituaries.

Notebook D focuses on the subject of girls in the underground. However, the descriptions of Chajka's friends (Lea, Irka, Idzia, Astrid, Hela, and Nacia) are not connected to make a coherent picture or argument. These appear to be incomplete outlines for a long essay concerning the role of the girls in the underground. This notebook was translated into Hebrew and published as an article entitled "Girls in the Ghetto." This publication does not solve the question of the circumstances under which Notebook E was written. It might be the translation of an early essay that was written in Będzin, or a later essay written (in Polish) for the magazine to celebrate the second anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It contains some new material about Lea and Nacia, which had not been included in the previous notebooks. As such, it was also included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 140–144.

17 The title was added by the editor.

18 Approximately mid-1941.

in the greenhouse. Her singing could be heard everywhere all day long. She sang beautifully, her voice quiet, peaceful, and very sweet. It spoke of spiritual balance and spread such peacefulness all around. When you heard her singing, your heart became so light.

[2] Perhaps her singing was why she was likened to [Shalom] Asz's¹⁹ or [Maxim] Gorki's²⁰ mother. Maybe it was her full, rotund figure with protruding breasts, or maybe her constant readiness to serve, to dress wounds, to listen to somebody's grievance or complaint and to offer a word of consolation or help.

She was always calm, smiling, and composed. Nobody had any idea [of] what was hidden under that calm. How many unfulfilled dreams (how much longing for somebody far away, how many storms, how much anxiety).

"I miss you, but I'm fine," wrote Lea.

It's no coincidence that Lea is in a labor camp. There was a roundup. Approximately 2,000 girls were assembled in a great hall. Lea did not panic. She assembled the children and walked with them to the Commission, to the *gmina* representative. All of them were released.

[3] Everybody approached with his or her ID. The girls who were working for the *Wehrmacht* were released. Lea was one of the first to leave. She waited for the girls who came out, took away their IDs, and sent them back onto the square. And that was how a large percentage of them were saved. Lea continued bustling around outside the building during all that time. When they finished work they were a few girls short to fill the quota, so they organized a roundup. No ID could help then. Lea was deported.

"I miss you, but it's good that I am here," Lea wrote from the *Lager* [camp]. She works half a day in the kitchen and the other half as a nurse. Even though the Germans are watchful, she can smuggle some food for a pale boy who is going to lose his

19 Shalom Asz, *Di Muter* (Warsaw: Kultur Lige, 1925).

20 Maxim Gorki, *Di Muter* (New York: Di Tag, 1915).

strength soon. She knows that that the broad-shouldered one won't be hurt by a smaller ration and that he'll get by anywhere, whereas this one from the *yeshiva* [Orthodox institute for Talmud studies] who doesn't eat meat needs to have more meat.

[4] She's very much loved in the camp. When her soft hands touch your wound, you feel better. And her smile has such a positive influence.

She doesn't dare enter the command office to intercede on behalf of the sick who can't go to work after she was told a couple of times to go to a German physician. But Lea's terribly afraid of that, as he's threatened to remove her from the position of a nurse.

Nursing is hard work, but she can't resign — she has to stay there.

“I will end up in prison, but I must do it.”

It was no easier in the kitchen as there was dreadful corruption. The women cooks were stealing, giving better rations to those they knew, accepting gifts, and eating their fill.

Lea began to appeal to their consciences, but it had no effect. But it [can't] go on like that.

Perhaps.²¹

[5] One day they announce that two cooks have taken ill. Nobody knows what happened, but Lea's smiling under her breath. They were severely beaten up and they know perfectly well what for. The corruption in the kitchen must cease.

But she's not the only one who's fighting in the camp. Rachelka [Rosenkier],²² Hanka,²³ and many other girls in the labor camp are doing the same work and playing the same role.

They are in a difficult situation there and yearn for a

21 As in the original.

22 Rachel Rosenkier (Schwartz) — *Hashomer Hatzair* member, survived and immigrated to Israel.

23 Her family name is unknown. Perhaps another *Hashomer Hatzair* member or Hanka Bornstein, a *Gordonia* activist.

word about us. And things are getting worse and worse here. Deportations have begun.²⁴ It remains unknown where the people are being taken — perhaps to work or to a concentration camp. We know one thing: the number of those who depart must be as low as possible. As many of the Jews who are to be deported as possible should be saved, snatched from German hands.

The people have been locked in the orphanage building. We need access, no matter what. We give the Jewish representatives the idea that nurses need to be [6] there. They have to obtain passes for the nurses from the Germans. They succeed. Girls in white aprons enter the building, disperse in all directions, and reach every corner. They console the people, calm them down, and bandage the wounded, but that is not their main task — they must remove as many as possible. One of them takes off her apron and says to one woman, “Put it on quickly, take the ID, and leave, straight away, without fear, past the guards, and send [the apron] back.” And every couple of hours somebody disappears in a white apron. They have to watch everything: Which guard is by the gate? Is it the one who was promised a golden watch? Has the *Leutnant* come? And first and foremost one has to smile beautifully and play innocent. Irka directs the work there. She’s Lea’s sister. Even though she’s younger, she has a lot of [7] experience.

She is tall, shapely, and fit. The Germans find her attractive. She smiles beautifully at them, but hates them bitterly. She would have strangled them with her own hands. “The time for that will come. I will pay you back for this smile I am forced to give.” A passage to the adjacent building was found — through the attic — and a hole was made in the wall. Every now and then a nurse disappears with a man who has fainted while being escorted

24 Chajka moves here to another event — the rescue operation of the youth movement activists during the large selection on August 12, 1942. Chajka wrote about this in her 1944 revised version. For a full description of the selection, see Avihu Ronen, “Ha-Punkt ha-gadol: Ha-gerush ha-gadol mi-Zaglembie, August 12, 1942” (Hebrew), *Massuah Year Book* 17 (1989), pp. 102–147.

to the emergency area. They sneak into the attic on their way. Everything has to be organized: guards by the attic, messengers. So much fear and anxiety caused by sending off one person, while approximately 2,000 people were saved that day. Officers rush inside and begin to check IDs. This nurse does not have an apron, another lacks an ID. They make them join the deportees. There must be victims.

[8] But that effort of ours is not enough.

Idzia says, “We have to prepare ourselves for a *hagana* like the one in Warsaw. I will go.” We can’t convince her otherwise.²⁵ Idzia is as if forged from steel — tough, curt, and stony. There’s nothing feminine about her.

“There’s no time now for sentimentality, girls’ stories or love,” she used to say. The times when that was one of our major problems are long gone. She has torn that out of her heart. I have never heard of her being involved with a boy either. “But you can’t go,” we are trying to convince her. “You’re short-sighted and don’t have a good appearance. They’ll capture you.”

“I need to be the first. First of all, because I have to see how they are operating in Warsaw. Secondly, to embolden other girls to do the same.”

She [Idzia] was stubborn and left. “I have learned a lot [9] from them. I am not going empty-handed.” Astrid²⁶ came without Idzia. I can see her [Idzia] standing during a meeting, pale, her eyes burning. She’s talking about Jewish dignity, about *hagana*. Her eyes are sparkling. She can analyze events soberly, rationally. Having an intellectual’s mind — at the same time she can attract, inspire, and make people follow her.²⁷ It is utterly silent and everybody is staring at her. I will follow her through fire and water.

She is a revolutionary. Perhaps her father’s blood is running

25 Again, Chajka moves to February 1943, the approximate date of Idzia Pejsachson’s trip to Warsaw.

26 A courier from Warsaw. See Notebook A, p. 24.

27 The Trotskyite argument (early 1942).

in her veins — the blood of old Pejsachson, a 1905 revolutionary.²⁸ There is a future ahead of her, a broad horizon of thought, where there is a place for new ideas.

Idzia was captured in Częstochowa. She will never come back.

There are many versions of how she disappeared. Some say that a snooper appeared close to her on a street and that she saw him and began to wander [10] in the area. Rather unfamiliar with Częstochowa, instead of walking toward the “Aryan” area she was heading toward the ghetto, which seemed suspicious. The snooper began chasing her. She started running and that was when a revolver fell out of the loaf of bread she was holding. They caught up with her and shot her on the spot. In another version, the snooper began to follow her every step and she began flirting with him. He then invited her to his home and she went because she had nowhere [else] to go. The messenger, our man, who was to approach her in Częstochowa, left when he saw who she was walking with. The snooper wanted to rape her, so she took out a revolver and fired, but he managed to escape and bring the police.

Astrit had nothing of the intelligentsia in her. She was only skilled in her craft of being a messenger. She used to smuggle people and arms. She knew all the railways, roads, and paths [11] leading from Warsaw to the provinces. She traveled in a different outfit every day: once dressed as a village boy, another time as a teacher with a big hat. She distributed arms, money, letters, news, and false papers.

She performed her function well not only due to her “Aryan” appearance, but predominantly because of her extraordinary audacity and courage. She looked snoopers in the eye with a puckish smile and it was she who asked them whether they wanted to see her papers. She was very lucky, but she still often ended up in German prisons.

Many such girls often traveled by train. In the end they were

28 Icek-Mordke Pejsachson. See Notebook A.

all caught. Many died in concentration camps as Poles because they had not confessed to their Jewish identity until the last moment. People received letters from them and sent them parcels. The girls wrote about their friends who had been deported. [12] And even there they kept standing guard and sending food to Jewish prisoners, because their situation [as non-Jews] was much better.

Girls participated in *hagana* on a par with boys. They knew how to handle every kind of weapon, but most of the time they were ordered to set fire to buildings on the “Aryan” side or act as messengers or paramedics, but they participated in active combat as well. The numbers of girls and boys who took part in combat were equal.

A new type of girl was emerging during the war, that is, one ready to serve *hagana*. Its symbol was Hela,²⁹ who left with the first group of partisans and went to the woods, wearing high boots and trousers — few people would have noticed that she was a girl.

[13] The nights were full of anxiety. People couldn’t sleep and were waiting to see what would happen. Every night whistles ordering people to go outside, fusillades, and footsteps.³⁰ We knew those marching steps of military men. They arouse fear. Perhaps they will skip our house. They enter and start pounding on the gate. They’re cursing and want to tear the superintendent into pieces for not opening the door for so long. You hope that they’ll skip your apartment, but they’re already inside. They check every corner and bed and order me to dress. Mother is crying, begging the Germans to leave me alone. “Be quiet!” I shout. “Don’t you dare beg them or humiliate yourself in front of them. I’m going. Be well.”

It’s dark on the street. (I can barely make out the dark

29 Hela Kacengold. See Notebook A, p. 45.

30 These pages appear to be an opening to some narrative or the alternative opening to this section. The page numbers seem arbitrary and it is quite clear that they are not the continuation of the previous pages.

silhouettes of girls surrounded by a convoy on the corner of a street.) I can only hear the grate of opening gates.

A group of girls walks out of every gate surrounded by a German convoy. The Germans arrange them in rows on the corner of the street. [14] There are so many of them. We are escorted into the enormous building of the municipal school. There are already so many of us — approximately 2,000 girls. I've cooled down from the initial feeling of panic and I look around the rooms.

There must have been a roundup for girls for labor camps. I am looking for my friends and I come across Lea. "How have you ended up here?" "They came to us too." The roundup has been going on since midnight. There's Nacia, Dora, and Hela — almost all girls from the organization. What can we do? For now, nothing. We are on the second floor. It makes no sense to jump out as there are guards in the courtyard. There's going to be a classification in the morning. They won't deport everybody. We'll see what can be done then. Now let's see what's happening here.

It simply feels like a market square — crying, shouting, and laughing. It's so stuffy that one could suffocate in here. There are also young girls, little girls [15] under the age of 13. The Germans won't send them, but the girls are all in tears. We shall assemble them, take care of them, and ensure that the Germans check their age. Nacia escorts these children into a corner. She smiles at them, dries some of the girls' eyes, strokes them on the cheek, and brushes one girl's hair. She also hands a piece of bread to another. "They shouldn't see our tears. It's a disgrace. Besides, you will be fine. They will send you home." "Really? They will send us home?" They begin to hug her, dry their tears, and smile. And Nacia's happy. She forgets that that fate may not spare her, that she will bow her proud head before it.

Part Five

The *Hagana* in Warsaw

Notebook VII¹

[113] The *Hagana* in Warsaw

Just as before the war, Warsaw during the war — or rather the Jewish ghetto — remained the center of Jewish political and social life. The headquarters of various organizations were located in Warsaw and it was still a hotbed of new ideas and enterprises.²

1 Notebook VII had a blue binding in 1985, which it no longer has. It contains about 30 pages of 18 printed lines each. The numbering is Bader's. Notebook VII, which follows the essays and necrologies, seems to be a special one dedicated to the ŻOB in the Warsaw Ghetto. The handwriting is well shaped, steady, and straight. The approximate dates of the events documented here are September 1942–May 1943.

2 One might ask why Chajka wrote some 30 detailed pages about the ŻOB in Warsaw, although she had no personal experience of it and her report is based on second-hand information. There are two reasons: The first is the great impact of the Warsaw uprising on her and on her comrades in Będzin. The second is anchored in her documentation duty. While writing in her hiding place in September 1943, she was painfully aware that she was the only *Hashomer Hatzair* leader to survive. She already knew that all of her comrades in Warsaw were dead. Actually, she was the one who had to report this to *Eretz Israel* via postcards, which were sent by regular mail to Switzerland.

Although Chajka did not visit Warsaw during the war, she was fully informed about the events there by several emissaries who arrived in Będzin from March 1941 to June 1943 (Geller [twice], Anielewicz, Altman, and Płotnicka). She could have also read some items in the underground press from Warsaw, which were delivered by Geller, Anielewicz, and others. Other sources of information were the Będzin-Warsaw couriers: Ina Gelbard (*Hashomer Hatzair*), Sara and Renia Kukeilka (*Dror*), and Astrit (Warsaw *Hashomer Hatzair*). Folman and Zylberstejn. ŻOB fighters from Warsaw who arrived in Będzin in late June 1943 could give firsthand reports about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Chajka also

Various people came to us from Warsaw when it was suffering the worst hunger and the coldest frost. Yet they kept returning there in their thoughts and could not stay here in the provinces for too long. They needed to go back. They felt somehow drawn there.

For Warsaw was the Jewish center, home and heart. Both the political and the social life were very active there. Books were being sold for next to nothing. On a street one might hear Beethoven's Ninth Symphony played by an old beggar [114], or see paintings by the best modern painters in a tiny room in an attic.

On a street every other passerby would shove an illegal newspaper into one's hand. Clubs, meetings, concerts for a few pennies — those were the cheapest things in Warsaw.³

And Warsaw remained that center of Jewish life until its death — until the liquidation of the ghetto. The Warsaw organization operated on a larger scale and we always looked up to it. That was also where the concept of *hagana* was proposed, but in fact that idea was born in Vilna, in our movement in Vilna. That was where a brutal retaliation, predominantly against Jews,⁴ was first launched after the Bolsheviks' retreat. It was also where [the resistance in] Nowogródek⁵ took place and where some Jewish *gmina* chairmen

mentioned several letters from Warsaw, which arrived in Zagłębie after the great deportation in July 1942, during the preparation for the uprising (January–April 1943) and its aftermath. Last but not least, it is known that in the summer of 1942, there was still telephone contact between Warsaw and Będzin, and perhaps it also existed later: Chajka and Frumka Plotnicka reported to Switzerland about the death of Lubetkin, Altman, Anielewicz, and others before they had actually died (letters to Schwalb, April 27–29, 1943). It seems that they had received some mistaken information by telephone from the “Aryan” side of Warsaw. See Avihu Ronen, “Saba Meir Yachol le-hiyot ge'eh be-nechadav: Michtavim me-Bendin le-Schwitzerland — January–July 1943,” *Yalkut Moreshet* 92-93 (2013), pp. 162–184.

- 3 These vivid descriptions are seemingly based either on the Warsaw underground press or the emissaries' reports (Geller, Altman, Anielewicz, and others).
- 4 The famous call by the Fareynigte Partizaner Organizatsye (FPO) [United Partisan Organization] on January 1, 1942: “Jews, don't go to your deaths like sheep to the slaughter.”
- 5 A footnote in Notebook A relates that the Nowogródek uprising was a myth rather than a true story.

were forced to submit lists for deportation, [115] but refused to do so and instead wrote their own names and the names of their wives and children.

It was from there that Arie [Wilner] arrived with a question. “Everything’s ready. We are waiting for your decision. Should we set fire to it?” The order wasn’t given because the situation in Vilna had improved.⁶

The deportation campaign took Warsaw by surprise, even though they knew about Chełmno.⁷ A detailed report had even been prepared [about] the operation there.⁸

The entire [population of] Warthegau was exterminated and experiments on Jews were conducted there.⁹ The strongest men and women were resettled from a certain small town to a *Landwirtschaft* [agricultural farm], where they cultivated some special plants.

Then all those people were loaded onto trucks. They were allowed to take [116] all their baggage.

They arrived at an estate manor with a few poplars growing in front of it. An old man looking like a nobleman gave them a very polite welcome, helped the elderly alight, and asked if there were any sick persons for him to escort to the hospital to see a doctor.

He ordered the people to put down their baggage. Some didn’t want to, so he let them take it with [them]. He then escorted them to a certain building and ordered them to undress because they were about to enter a bathhouse. There were already lots of clothes

6 Arie Wilner came from Vilna.

7 In her 1944 revised version, Chajka documents the Chełmno events according to another source: Michael Laskier’s report. Laskier was a Zionist *Judenrat* official from Będzin, who got the story from a Jew who managed to escape from Chełmno.

8 The report was written by Szlama Ber Winer (1911–1942), who had escaped the death camp in Chełmno, under the pseudonym Yakov Grojanowski. The report described the entire extermination procedure. It was recorded by *Oneg Shabbat* in Warsaw in early 1942.

9 A mistaken conclusion by Chajka, owing to the Chełmno story.

lying about and inscriptions: “*Fon dan geit men, shoin nisht arois*” [Nobody will leave from here].” Then [he said] they were escorted to another building where they boarded a truck, which did not leave. It was a hermetic gas chamber, where death ensued from suffocation. Swift steps and shouts, “*Shma Yisrael*” [Hear O Israel], were heard from the inside.

[117] That was the beginning of the experiments to find a perfidious way to kill Jews.

It was some consolation that the chamber could kill only a few hundred people a day and that consequently the Germans would not achieve their objective. In the meantime, other more perfidious and efficient death centers for Jews were established, such as Treblinka and Auschwitz. Then it was Warsaw’s turn.¹⁰ Josef’s letter, which I have summarized, clearly shows the course of that campaign.¹¹

At first a few thousand a day, then tens of thousands, finally a few hundred thousand. Our people were concentrated together (everywhere). According to Josef’s letter, a campaign could be expected. There was no *hagana*.

It was a total disappointment. The people were let down. They were still waiting for a response by the Warsaw youth.

[118] There was no *hagana* in Warsaw at that time. It was not long after the formation of a bloc with the PPR, with the intention of waging partisan warfare. The first groups had not yet left.

Consequently, all the energy was put into preparing the people for the woods. That consumed not only much energy and effort, but also and predominantly a large sum of money. The people were ragged, short of clothes and lacking boots. It was the period of the most extreme hunger in Warsaw. But to go into the woods they needed proper equipment. They were leaving the ghetto despite that unfortunate timing. A couple of

10 The great deportation from Warsaw, July 22, 1942.

11 Josef Kaplan’s letter arrived in Będzin in August 1942.

groups were removed from the ghetto and this is where the tragic story of people from the first period of partisan warfare began. Some ended up in wagons [119] with deportees. There were a few instances of suffocation. The people who were perfectly healthy and ready to join the guerrilla partisans ended their lives there. The case of a certain girl was particularly tragic.

Another group in Międzyrzecze was betrayed by their messenger and handed over to the police. As that group of young people was walking on the streets of Międzyrzecze, evidence was found on them, and they knew they were being taken for interrogation. They didn't want that and preferred to die on the spot, so they decided to provoke the Germans into executing them.

Shouts burst out from the young chests, "Away with Nazism! Murderers! Long live socialism and the USSR!"

It didn't work, so they attacked the soldiers, who finally shot them. The young people died [120] on the spot. They didn't denounce their comrades. I do not remember your names, but perhaps somebody who knew you is still alive and will tell the future generations about you. Or perhaps your young lives will be our small contribution to the tomb of unknown heroes.

Other groups did not reach their destination either. As there were no messengers who would escort them to the PPR groups, they had to seek contact on their own. Almost all of the groups perished and the girls were raped. That was the bloody price paid for our first attempts to participate in partisan combat.

And there was also the case of Zelcer.¹² Heading for Lublin (I don't remember exactly), Zelcer and a group of boys [121] were captured on a [train] station and they were to be executed, but Zelcer managed to convince the Germans not to execute him, of course at a certain price. He survived.

He [Zelcer] escorted them to *Dror's* post on the edge of the

12 Chajka returns here to the "Zelcer affair," which she mentioned briefly in Notebook IV.

woods from where there was to be contact with the partisans. Those who were with him quickly rushed in to give a warning, but not everybody managed to escape, and 14 people were executed. Zelcer was released. He arrived in Warsaw, where he was captured for the second time. A (false) pass was found on him and when he was asked who had made it, he offered Josef's name.

They drove to Lande's¹³ factory to collect Josef [Kaplan], but he wasn't there. The owner of the factory — I will mention him later — did not realize what it was about [122] and Josef was sent for. And he went, despite all his caution.

He was put in a car, where Zelcer was already waiting.¹⁴ Purportedly they did everything to save him. Every single day prisoners from the Pawiak prison, where Josef was imprisoned, were escorted to the *Umschlagplatz* from where he would have surely been removed. But that day no prisoners were escorted out and Josef was executed in the Pawiak courtyard, where he was supposedly buried.

Josef's death was a terrible blow to the entire movement. We were grief-stricken for a long time.

The words from his last letter, which became our beacon, lived on in our memories for a long, long time. As I have already mentioned,¹⁵ during that period we lost a group of very valuable, [123] young *shomers* who were supposed to survive on the "Aryan" side.

During the first deportation there were very heated *asefot* in the Warsaw branch.¹⁶ All the young people without exception demanded action against the deportations. They wanted *hagana*.

13 Lande (Landau) was a Jewish businessman who managed one of the factories in the Warsaw Ghetto. His daughter, Margalit (1926–1943), was a *Hashomer Hatzair* activist in Warsaw and her father functioned as the patron of the movement.

14 Yitzhak (Antek) who undertook the post-factum investigation, wrote that there was a man in the car who covered his face with a coat.

15 Chajka wrote the first three letters of the name of the person she suspected to be a traitor (Z[e]lc[er]), but she changed her mind and crossed them out.

16 There are underlines in the original that were made by an editor.

Very embittered about Josef, the people were waiting impatiently for Mordechai [Anielewicz].¹⁷

The deportation campaign in Warsaw was discontinued. Everybody working in the workshops and “Aryan” companies was allowed to stay.

Our people were working at Lande’s workshop, which had been opened especially to employ them. Lande, whose daughter was a *shomer*,¹⁸ was an extraordinary man, privy to all our affairs [124] and very devoted to us.

The Small Ghetto was established.

Jewish property was lying discarded on the streets. There was no more hunger or frost.

Walking on the streets was forbidden so everybody was walking on the rooftops, to where whole arteries and streets had been moved.

When Mordechai returned to Warsaw,¹⁹ they [*Hashomer Hatzair* members] resumed their previous activity, despite knowing that its scale was minute. As I have already written, the idea of partisan combat had already lost its importance for young Jews. But *hagana* was still an act of historical significance, which was also important for its own sake.

Mordechai became the commander.²⁰ Their main intention was to fight the inner evil, the Jewish scum. A series of death sentences was passed on [125] the Jewish police commander and Jewish *moiserim*. [Jacob] Lejkin²¹ and Szrebniakow²² were finished off. The plan was to get the Jewish *gmina* to revolt. Those acts of

17 Josef Kaplan was older than Anielewicz and took a more moderate approach toward the issue of Jewish resistance.

18 Margalit Lande (Landau).

19 Late September or early October 1942.

20 The ŻOB, with Anielewicz as commander, was reestablished on October 30, 1942.

21 Jacob Lejkin – second in command of the Jewish Militia in the Warsaw Ghetto. Assassinated by a *Hashomer Hatzair* group, which included Margalit Landau on October 28, 1942.

22 Unknown. Probably a mistaken spelling of the name.

terror were of enormous significance for the Jewish society as they awakened its spirit of defiance. We also participated in a series of anti-German terrorist acts carried out with PPR members.

The first, historic — figuratively speaking — shot was also of great significance for our movement.

Szmuel [Breslaw]²³ had long been dreaming of killing Lejkin and that was why he was caught on a street with a switchblade. He wanted to do it in a very childish way and had long been contemplating it.

Looking up to Chen,²⁴ he sought consolation in acts of terror.

Initially, the biggest concern of the Fighting Organization [126] was money, and it needed a lot. But that problem was solved too.

Rich Jews were attacked and had to pay a contribution. “You have to pay such and such an amount of money for the Fighting Organization.” The attackers were armed and masked. Sometimes shots were fired.

The money had to be raised.

The enterprises undertaken needed arms, without which the game was not worth the candle.

The first expeditions were carried out with an old, faulty pistol. In one district a boy and a girl attack a soldier, taking out the revolver, which fails to fire, but the soldier “shits his pants” anyway. The couple managed to run away.

The subsequent expeditions were more successful.

[127] When the deportation campaign began in January they had only a few guns. The people were divided into several groups. The order was not to let oneself be taken alive.²⁵

23 Szmuel Breslaw (1920–1942) — Hashomer Hatzair leader and co-founder of the Jewish Fighting Organization. Breslaw was murdered on September 3, 1942, in the wake of Kaplan’s arrest.

24 The protagonist of Malraux’s *Man’s Fate*. A Chinese communist who tries to fulfill his revolutionary mission by blowing himself up with his enemies.

25 The first act of resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto, January 18, 1943.

Soldiers walk into a flat and order the resident to dress and follow them. The man leisurely puts on his coat. Suddenly — boom! He takes his hand out, shoots, gets the arms and flees.

In another apartment the entering gendarme is attacked with a torch, as if with a gun. The man puts a sack on his head, disarms him, and throws him out of a third-floor window.

A different trick in every apartment: blinding boiling water, an axe, and a hammer.

[128] 40 dead Germans and a few wounded, while on our side there were only a few victims, who didn't even die in combat or defense but by accident, as happens during every deportation. The ghetto was on fire. It happens that those who defend themselves, those who are not empty-handed do not die, that *hagana* enthusiasts, who would rather die on the spot than be deported, are those who stay alive.

They had been preparing [the uprising] since the January deportation.

They acquired arms and the Polish "street" began to take them seriously. There was a special issue of arms to the ghetto and a place to buy arms was found. They were gaining strength and importance. Propaganda was conducted on a large scale and in three languages for three nationalities.

[129] The workshops were operating on a large scale. They had chemists and engineers, who kept designing new formulae for bottles with incendiary "cocktails,"²⁶ grenades, bombs, and mines.

They were reluctantly sending us pistols. Greedy, they needed everything for themselves and refused to take our needs into account. The movement became somewhat Bohemian. The girls and boys were smoking and drinking vodka. Each expedition or arms purchase was celebrated. They were partying a lot and eating good food.

26 Homemade bombs made of glass bottles and a mixture of chemicals.

When the possibility of internment came up it was turned down. [Instead, they] opted for a *shlichut*, which they wanted to preserve. Mordechai, Cywa,²⁷ and Geller were forbidden to leave, not even to go to *Eretz [Israel]*.²⁸

[130] At that time Mordechai wrote several letters.²⁹

He succinctly described their operation, which we were to emulate. He told us step by step how to develop our organization and how to prepare for action. He demanded action, threatening to stop sending arms.

A fragment of one of his letters:

Lots of work. Our arms are dropping off owing to the excess of work — difficult, hard toil.

When you collapse exhausted after a hard day, sad thoughts beset you: that we'll soon see each other there, where none of us is in a hurry to get to. Few of us, veterans, are left. Farewell, dear young friend.³⁰

[131] They've been expecting another campaign in Warsaw for many weeks.

Anxiety. The atmosphere is different. You can already feel that something's up. Patrols keep walking outside our bunkers.³¹ The organization has been mobilized and it's waiting, ready for combat.

Final, frantic preparations. Twice a day a roll call of the entire organization. It has a few hundred members. Everybody's armed, everybody's holding some arms.

27 Cywia [Zivia] Lubetkin.

28 See Hirsh Berlinski's diaries. It seems that Frumka Płotnicka, who was already in Będzin, was appointed as the *shlicha*. See Notebook B.

29 The letters were not preserved. It seems that Chajka, who took an active part in the correspondence, was familiar with their content.

30 Chajka, Cwi, and Dawid were three years older than Mordechai. It is unclear to whom the letter was addressed.

31 Chajka, identifying herself with her comrades in Warsaw, switches to first-person plural.

Orders have been given. Mordechai is the commander-in-chief. None of us can go into the bunkers. The Germans enter the ghetto. There are [resistance] groups in various places.

We're in combat. We're fighting [132] mostly with grenades and bottles of incendiary material. Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Poles are participating in the campaign. 80 German victims and many wounded. They didn't expect such a resistance and they're retreating toward the ghetto gates. The next day they return with tanks, two of which are seized.

A mine was planted at the brush makers' workshop. It was so skillfully prepared and planted that the Germans thought that it was from the other world war. The battle lasted for two days. Who among us would have dared dream about that? Why, our wildest dreams didn't exceed several hours.

The ghetto has been tightly sealed and there's no access to it.³²

[133] Mordechai writes in his letter that he's happy to have lived until that moment.

The Fighting Organization is spreading terror in the ghetto: the Jews who don't want to fight or threaten *museruf* [informers] are to get a bullet in the head.

After two days they retreat into the bunkers. The Germans are appealing to them to not be afraid to come out. The *gmina* tells the Germans that it has no authority in the ghetto. The Fighting Organization is asked to assume power.

The Germans set out on a rougher course and drop incendiary bombs from aircraft.

Frightened Jews who want to save their lousy lives reveal bunkers by walking into a courtyard and screaming, "*Yiden geht areus es iz schin nach der akzia*" [Jews, go out! The *Aktzia* has just ended].

And this is how they're liquidating the ghetto. [134] And now begins the most tragic period of the Warsaw *hagana*.

32 The details are in accord with information known at that time.

Not many people died in combat. Nobody had expected that. No way of retreat had been prepared. Our people descended into the sewers. Without food, they were up to their waists in water.

On the “Aryan” side, Yitzhak [Zuckerman] was doing everything he could and sought help from the PPR to get people out of the ghetto. Finally, access to the canals was organized. The entire street was cordoned off by our armed people. Nobody could get through the cordon. 40 people in very bad condition were removed. In the meantime, the Germans discovered that there were fighters in the sewers [135] and they sent [poisonous] gas in.

Can you imagine a more horrible death for our people? Death by suffocation.

Some, for instance, Arie Wilner or Bareł [Berl Brojde]³³ were still strong enough to commit suicide by shooting themselves in the temple. Mordechai didn’t manage.

The next day, after an inspection of other bunkers Cywia descends to her comrades and that horrible [scene] unfolds before her eyes. Later there was a lot of talk about our people’s heroic stance.

About Szymon [Heler]³⁴ covering a retreating group armed with a rifle. He let everybody through and in the end perished there.

About the accident that happened when a group of “brush makers” were [136] planting a mine.

One more group, including Tosia [Altman] and Szyfra [Sokółka], managed to get out. They were in an apartment with a barrel with gunpowder. Somebody accidentally dropped a match, causing an explosion. The people were fleeing from the burning building. Everybody was captured. [Eliezer] Geller had some

33 Berl Brojde (1918–1943) — *Dror* member, company commander in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

34 Szymon Heler (1920–1943) — *Hashomer Hatzair* member, the ŻOB’s best sniper.

address and survived on his own. Quite a feat. Wasn't he supposed to rehabilitate himself in action?!

The echo of the Warsaw *hagana* on the Polish street was strong. People were saying that Pawiak had been seized, that there were three flags hanging there: white and blue; red; and white and red, and that all the prisoners had been freed. But they didn't want to believe that the Jews had accomplished that. "Eh, Poles must have participated in that," they were saying.

[137] What was the Polish aid?

The PPR deigned to donate 40 short arms³⁵ and helped take people out of the ghetto. The Sikorski people³⁶ didn't help. But they sent a report abroad claiming that they had delivered arms and food and that they had been supporting us in combat. But in fact we learned about a secret order that if the Jews and the fighting had spread to the "Aryan" side, the Poles would have had to suppress the Jewish uprising hand in hand with the Germans.³⁷

Forty people got out of the ghetto, of whom 12 were ours [*Hashomer Hatzair*], 6 were members of *Dror* and the PPR, and all 10 *Gordonia* members — there were as many there now as there had been [in the fighting]. They were escorted to a ranger's cabin near Warsaw, where they were in mortal danger [138] of starvation or discovery.

But a local peasant, who was a Sikorski man, went to the command to inquire what to do with them. In the end, he took care of them, brought them food, and presented them with an old shotgun as a token of respect. The people were given three options: the woods, internment [for foreign citizens], or departure to Zagłębie. They chose the woods. One of the main reasons for that was that they didn't want to part with their arms. Today, most of them are dead. Oh, how I'd love to see at least one of them again!

35 The guns were supplied by the Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, AK).

36 The Home Army.

37 The source for this rumor is unknown. It seems to be an exaggeration of the AK's attitude toward the ŻOB.

The *hagana* and [the uprising in] Warsaw are among the grandest acts of the conquered people living under the Nazi boot. [139] They rehabilitated the Jewish nation in its own eyes and in the eyes of others, but that did contribute to the speeding up of the liquidation of the remains of the existing *yishuv*.

The Sikorski people reported abroad that 80 Germans had been killed and 400 wounded,³⁸ which agreed with the facts. The history of the Warsaw *hagana* is the history of another *Musa Dag*. It's another *Man's Fate* by Malraux. It's Brzozowski's *Płomienie*.

The people of *hagana* are extraordinary individuals, men of the cause, which was closer and dearer to them than life. These are not meaningless words or empty phrases. They gave their lives for them. [140] So young, so young, they loved heroic death unflinchingly.

There was Chen among them, and Kyo, and both a young and an old Gisor.³⁹

Will anybody be able to depict our unfathomable tragedy and the heroism of the final days like Malraux rendered China's heroism or like Werfel rendered the tragedy and heroism of the Armenians?

Can a reasonable, sane person comprehend that the Germans have been liquidating the Jewish ghetto for four weeks?

They mined and blew up building after building (even after the campaign). [141] Shocking scenes were taking place there. People were burning alive in the buildings. A mother dropped her children from the third floor of a burning building and then jumped out herself. Our hair would stand on end and our hearts would stop from the pain.

That was why there had to be a bloody retaliation — so that the

38 Today it is known that only 16 Germans were killed and 93 were wounded.

39 Chen Ta Erh, Kyo Gisors, and Kyo's father "Old" Gisors are protagonists in *La Condition humaine*.

nation wouldn't be disgraced. Tabenkin's telegram was ridiculous to a grotesque degree.

The reaction of the people who survived in Warsaw was human, understandable to us even more now than then. But it was subjective.

An outsider witness will be able to evaluate the historic significance of *hagana* in Warsaw, and so will we many years later. [142] There were certain outstanding individuals in the ghetto who might have grown up to be extraordinary people, but a social movement doesn't busy itself with philanthropy or humanitarianism. Having certain tasks to fulfill, it can't be concerned with victims.

If Mordechai had survived, I'm sure he wouldn't have regretted *hagana* even for a moment.

Part Six

Eulogies

Notebook B¹

The Fall of the Fighters' Bunker

[1] One building in the ghetto attracted popular attention. Pilgrimages of Germans — high military and civilian dignitaries — went there every day. Strangers would wonder what was so attractive about a low, modest building, rather uglier than grander than others, but we were well aware of what the attraction was. The Jewish deportees would also like to go and see that building, or actually the bunker that used to be there, but they were afraid and dared not pass by it too closely. They walked around it with fear and anxiety, as if it had breathed the plague on them. They passed by it quickly, afraid to look back. In that building, or actually in the annex to the large mechanized laundry, there used to be the [Kibbutz Dror] *kibbutz* bunker.

I remember those nights when the boys would sneak out of

1 Notebook B has a yellow binding, with 23 printed lines on a page. The handwriting is steady and the letters are rounded. There are only a few corrections and additions. According to its date (November 1, 1943) and content, Notebook B seems to be one of the last notebooks written in Będzin. It contains three eulogies, the most poignant parts of which were included in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*: “The Fall of the Fighters’ Bunker,” pp. 104–109; “Dawid Kozłowski,” pp. 128–135; “Cwi Brandes,” pp. 136–139. The eulogies are written in a literary style and their content is a mixture of facts and fiction. Chajka is mourning her beloved comrades by telling their stories and imagining their last moments.

the house dressed [2] in working clothes with spades in hand. It was obvious that they were going to construct the bunker. They used to return tired at dawn and collapse on their beds. Many had to be dragged out by their legs, “Get up, man. Wash yourself before going to bed.”

“The bunker by the laundry will be the best. Even if the Germans bend over backward they won’t discover it.” “Is there going to be another entrance?” I asked. “No, it can’t be made.” “So I don’t believe in that entire enterprise.” They were angry with me that I dared criticize them, as if I knew better. Why, the purpose of the bunker was not to survive the war in it. It was made for us to sit there until we understood the situation, organized everything and then commenced action. We never discussed that subject again. The boys were so exhausted and they still had so much to do [as] our bunker was not ready yet.

[3] That bunker by the laundry needed two more days of work and they also had to help the *kvutza*. Dawid assigned the workers every day. Today, Alter and Dow go to Baruch — upstairs to finish up; Szymcha² and Szmulek [Finkelsztajn]³ to the *kibbutz*, and the rest to work here. The boys were on their last legs.

When it was finally finished, they sighed with relief. They talked secretly with one another about various bunkers, but they still stubbornly claimed that the one by the laundry was the best. “We’ll make a bet with you, Chajka, that you won’t find the entrance.” “We’ll see,” I smiled ironically.

The next day I went to the laundry and into the adjacent room. I looked around curiously. Everybody was watching me, hiding their smiles. They already knew what I was looking for.

“I won’t ask. I don’t want to know,” I say to myself out loud and everybody bursts out laughing. “So why are you looking around?” I’m laughing too, “I really can’t find [4] the entrance.” Several days

2 Unknown.

3 Szmulek Finkelsztajn from Kibbutz Dror.

later Baruch finally shows me the entrance. You slip out a small board, fixed inside, through the window. The wall is hollow and you slide down the wall. There is electricity, water, and an electric heater inside. It is indeed a first-class bunker.

But it was the first of the bunkers to be discovered.

The cause of that remains unknown: was light coming out of a crack because the board had not been closed properly? Or did the Jew from the AK living in that courtyard squeal?

There were two of them — the Germans who approached the bunker: a *Leutnant*, purportedly a kind-hearted, good man and a father of two; and the other, a young one.

They tear off the board. A shot is fired. The *Leutnant* jumps back. Then another [shot]. An alarm. Noise. Panting Germans come running. They're afraid to approach the bunker. They carry away the corpse of the *Leutnant* and the wounded [5] soldier.

They emit a cry of fury and vengeance, but are afraid to approach. And it is deathly quiet underground. It was Baruch who fired that shot. He takes out arms and distributes them.

We have been taken by surprise. We won't have time either to communicate with our comrades or to send them at least some of what we have.

"These are our final moments. We will not be able to organize anything. There's nothing in the other bunkers. We have to die an honorable death after killing at least a few," Frumka says.

"Should we go out?" "No, on the ground, we will not be able to fire even a single shot. We'll stay here."

There are a few of them, all young. Our hearts are pounding. So this is the end. If only each of us would manage to fire at least one shot and avenge our deaths! [6] Dead silence. Baruch has turned his back on the others and is staring at the hole. Somebody embraces him from behind and cuddles up to his side. He's so big and broad-shouldered. He fired the first shot. Maybe he'll defend

her. It's Frumka,⁴ his girlfriend, who is so beautiful. She resembles her surname — Polna Róža.⁵ She looks so much like a rose, red and blooming. And he embraces her so tightly that you can hear her bones crack and says, “You see? I returned to you this night (he was supposed to go to Hungary)⁶ to die with you. I was a *hagana* leader and apparently I have to fire the first shot.”

And the other Frumka, Frumka Plotnicka, is standing pale and tall, taller even than she usually seems, smoking one cigarette after another despite the ban in the bunker. And she's holding a revolver ready to shoot. “I told you that I'd perish with you, that I wouldn't survive.”

“Be quiet!” they tell her. “You could have already been on [7] the Aryan side.⁷ Your death here is unnecessary. You should have survived. Who could tell our story better than you? Apparently you wanted our names to sink into oblivion.” They're angry at her. They hate to lose her, because she could have done a lot. Frumka knew

4 Frumka Polna Róža — Baruch Gaftek's girlfriend.

5 Polna Róža's surname means “wild rose” in Polish.

6 A delegation of four underground members (including Gaftek) tried to find a way to save themselves by getting to Hungary, on July 31, 1943. The delegation failed and its members returned to Będzin.

7 Frumka Plotnicka was appointed as a *shlich*a by ŻOB headquarters in Warsaw in January 1943. One of the reasons for her arrival in Będzin in late 1942 or early 1943 was the repeated and recurrent efforts of the ŻOB to send an emissary to the outside world (see Anielewicz's visit to Będzin and his contact with Merin, Notebook VI, p. 112). Plotnicka unwillingly agreed to escape from occupied Poland (see Plotnicka's letter to Schwalb, February 1943), but the planned mission failed and she stayed in Będzin. She had another chance to leave Poland when a German courier from Istanbul arrived in Będzin on July 17, 1943, just two weeks before the last deportation. The courier, who brought with him letters and a large sum of money (50,000 RM) from the *Eretz Israel* delegation in Istanbul, suggested that Plotnicka return with him, but she refused. However, she wrote a detailed report to Istanbul, which was signed by the leaders of the Zagłębian underground: Plotnicka herself, Cwi Brandes (*Hashomer Hatzair*), Azriel Kozruch (*Hanoar Hatzioni*), Herszel Springer (*Dror*) and Shlomo Lerner (*Gordonia*). At the end of the letter, which was written on July 17, 1943, Plotnicka noted, “When this letter reaches you (in Istanbul), we will probably no longer be alive.” See Ruth Zariz, *Mikhtev chaltzim mi-Polin ha-kevushah, 1940–1944* (Hebrew) (Ramat Efal: Yad Tabenkin, 1994), pp. 200–202.

the most about the history and fate of the individual provinces, as she had traveled all over Poland. She should have survived.

And she's standing there, tall, taller than all the others. She is tough and cold, with an ironic sparkle shining in her usually dead eyes.

Suddenly they hear a rattle, a horn, many nimble steps of soldiers — it seems that there are hundreds of them, but there are only a few dozen. They're shouting and calling loudly to one another.

The Germans drop a bomb. It suddenly gets dark in the bunker: the smoke and haze make their [the fighters'] eyes smart. They begin to suffocate. These are *Nebelbomben* [smoke bombs].

The people grab their throats. [8] It is dark before their eyes. They cannot see anything, but they're still fully conscious. A cry of pain comes out of their throats. It's a cry of despair that their weapons won't be put to any use, that they won't be able to avenge their deaths.

They are not afraid of death because they are ready for it. But the pain and the despair of not being able to do anything makes them furious. They feel like breaking the wall with their heads. "Mörder" [barbarians]! they shout, but to no avail. The Germans are trying to muffle their cries with their own shouts. The cries of vengeance and anger are soaring high up into the sky. "They'll soon stop," I say to myself, but suddenly they scream with terror — a grenade is skillfully thrown out from the bunker. But the Germans manage to jump aside and only a wall is shattered into pieces.

"We'll show them!" they [the Germans] shout in anger and pump water into the bunker using a special vehicle brought [9] from Auschwitz. Loud shouts and cries can be heard from the bunker again, yet quieter and sparser.

And the Germans are triumphant, "They're already dead. We've finally finished them off!"

They call the Jewish Militia, their lackeys, and order them to descend into the bunker.

They're carrying the people out. Almost all of them are still alive, breathing with difficulty and wheezing. Frumka Plotnicka is carried out first. She lifts her head high and proudly in an attempt to talk, but her head droops. They dash to her and a shot is fired at her head and another in her chest — heart. She's already dead, but the German keeps firing again and again as if totally berserk. Making matters worse, others dash up to her and kick and maltreat her naked corpse in a barbarous way. And they kick them all, one by one, shooting at the dead people, at the corpses. They pounced on them like hyenas on carrion.

[10] This is what a witches' Sabbath must have been like.

Armed, healthy, tall, and strong, they maltreat this handful of dying people.

Another kick in the stomach, one more, don't stop, fire again until the face is but a sticky, red pulp of blood and flesh.

These are no longer people lying on the ground. These are maltreated, blue, bloodied, smashed pieces of humans, pieces of flesh.

And the Germans are already satiated; they have quenched their savage lust. They have had enough of the sight of blood.⁸

They have left but for one, who is still standing there, looking.

He looks somehow different from the others. His face did not redden with raging blood. He is not laughing. On the contrary, he seems sad, appalled, and repulsed.

[11] He's looking at one body in particular. It's a woman. She must have still been very young and she had a beautiful body. It seems to me that this body is screaming at him, "Remember, I will take my revenge and you shall not escape me alive."

And those eyes are laughing so. And those teeth, so [white] and large, are bared in anger at him and they're calling, "I will have my revenge. I will come and take you!"

8 These were the known details, according to Abraham Potasz, who cleaned up the bunker (see the Potasz testimony, Notebook P).

He flees from there as fast as possible, but that image is still chasing him.

He turns back, stops, and suddenly looks around to make sure that nobody is watching him and he takes off his cap. He calms down and slowly walks away, pensive.

Dawid Kozłowski⁹[12] To My Dear Boy¹⁰

Nobody paid any attention to him when he first visited our *Hashomer Hatzair* office. A tall, slim boy. I can only remember that all his pockets were stuffed with newspapers.

I glanced at him once in the library, where I was with a group of my schoolmates. I asked the librarian for a book, but she refused me for the first time, saying, “No, I’ve promised this one to Mr. Kozłowski. You must excuse me, but I have to give it to him. He’s in a privileged position because he’s our first reader.”

Discontented, I turn back and he’s standing behind me, smiling mockingly. I turn around quickly to avoid the risk of my friends jeering me, “Oh, it’s your *shomer* friend.” I pretend that I don’t know him. He never forgave me for that.

He had a stutter. I never had the patience to hear him out.

I was carefree, joyful, and loved to smile and frolic, while he was [13] serious. He didn’t exist for me.

I didn’t know him. They were saying that he had come for Esterka,¹¹ that as a matter of fact he was a communist and that he would not stay.

Esterka left for the *hachshara*,¹² whereas he stayed. We were publishing a newspaper, of which I was the editor. He gave me a poem — a beautiful one with a wonderful rhythm and composed with artistic taste. It was a song filled with sadness and longing,

9 Chajka married Dawid Kozłowski in the spring of 1943.

10 In Hebrew handwriting.

11 Ester (Esterka) Zborowska (born in 1916, now Ester Shushan) was Kozłowski’s first girlfriend.

12 The *hachshara* of Dawid Kozłowski and Chajka was in Kalisz. Kozłowski arrived there in early 1937 and Chajka several months later.

about a lonely, lost soul. So much emotion and lyricism emanated from it and so much sadness and pain.

Everybody was wondering who had written it and I was the only one who knew that it was Dawid. And that was the first time I noticed him. The first time I saw his eyes, brown and deep-set. They were so beautiful, so velvety, brown, and oblong. So much unfathomable sadness was apparent in them.

“Those are the eyes of a dreamer,” I said to myself. [14] I wanted to know him better. He intrigued me. He used to read a lot. He simply devoured books, each leaving its imprint on him, each depositing something in his soul. Once it was *Jean-Christophe*¹³ speaking through him. Another time it was *Antoinette*¹⁴ or phantoms¹⁵ that caused unrest in his soul. Another time it was Shakespeare who made a tremendous impression on him.

He was consuming books chaotically: ancient classics, poetry, and Celine’s *Voyage au bout de la nuit* [Journey to the End of the Night].¹⁶

Consequently, he often shifted from a fine mood into sheer depression. One minute he wanted to embrace the whole world and everybody and love them in his heart, and then he thought that the entire world was one big mess,¹⁷ men — degenerates, women — whores, muck, corruption, and decadence. He didn’t want to live. He wanted to fall asleep, die, commit suicide and not exist.

He was in need of a kindred spirit and support. [15] I offered him my hand. He was like a young tree, blown by winds yet tall, slender, and growing up toward the sky, the sun. To bloom and

13 Romain Rolland, *Jean-Christophe* (Paris: A. Michel, 1931).

14 Romain Rolland, *Antoinette* (Paris: A. Michel, 1931).

15 Probably Tadeusz Jaroszyński, *Zmora* (Warsaw: W. Jakowicki, 1914).

16 Louis-Ferdinand Céline, *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1932).

17 Chajka used the Polish word “*burdel*,” which denotes a mess and a warehouse at the same time (translator’s note).

grow he needed strong, down-to-earth support — also a sun, a kindred feeling, and spirit and love and caresses.

I saw his soul in his speech, which was emerging with such difficulty.

He suffered greatly on account of his speech [impediment]. Few people realized it as he didn't have a fixed *Minderwertigkeitsgeföhle* [inferiority complex]. Nonetheless, he did suffer for he had to remain silent when so many beautiful words during ceremonies, or so many factual arguments during discussions — for he was very knowledgeable — were springing to his lips too late.

And that was why in his heart he dreamed about writing. Talented, he wanted to continue learning and to excel, to learn more and more. He wanted [16] to fathom, absorb, know, and comprehend everything. His heart was insatiable too. He wanted to embrace and absorb every feeling, all pain, longing, joy, sadness, and love in all their shades.

His heart was so insatiable.

Dawid could love madly for he knew no half measures and gave his entire self. He loved with all his senses and his passionate soul.

One minute he was passionate, the next moment delicate like a most affectionate friend.

Dawid could not live without a girl, could not live without love.

He had a difficult life — away from his family home and having experienced neither warmth nor protection.

His father came once a year, collected his annual salary, and left — he [the father] was selling a servant.

Dawid didn't complain and was happy to support his family. But rebellion was welling up within him, [17] rebellion against his father. He did not want to follow in the footsteps of his father, for whom money was the greatest power. He had all the predispositions to work his way up and earn a fortune, but was unwilling to become a servant of money.

He was talented and lucky as hell, but he despised money and was careless with it. When the *kibbutz* purse was empty, he filled it. When somebody fell deeply into debt, Dawid would provide some secret help.

All of his friends owed him money, but he kept forgetting about those debts. He would only wave his hand.

He was criticized for that, but that was how he was. “You can even strip him of his trousers,” people used to say.

He was so kind that it bordered on gullibility.

[18] Dawid went to the *kibbutz* without paying attention to his father’s protests and his empty promises that he would give him money to go to *Eretz [Israel]*. The first days were difficult and full of disappointments.

Dawid had imagined and dreamed of everything differently in his mind. He had expected that the people would be ideal, that there would not be any petty, stupid, and trivial issues. That life would be bustling with new content and that it would sweep him away with its fullness. But there were days that were monotonous, dead, and horribly empty.

And the labor was strenuous and hard. It was difficult to transform from a Jewish intellectual [and] a merchant into a laborer. Dawid had to be taught that the collective was yet to be created. That he had to first shed the small, petty things to be able to sprout and grow.

That in order for days not to be [19] monotonous, he had to put his soul into them. That he must invest his labor and effort.

He must become completely engaged in the work and sacrifice his sweat and blood in order for the work to become a part of him. And only then — much, much later — would he suddenly realize that he could not live without it and that he had come to love it.

He had to be taught life like a little child. And he needed to be brought down to earth from the clouds again and again.

A stupid incident made Dawid want to leave the *kibbutz*. He was denounced once. He did not want to, could not continue to

live with those people, because they did not understand him. They said that he was angry that food was brought to him too late when he was working. They accused him, for whom food was completely unimportant and who was always ready to give it to somebody else. [20] Dawid wanted to leave the *kibbutz*. Being sensitive, he did not wish to live among people who did not understand him.

It was a major shock in the life of our *kibbutz*. His leaving was averted. He was already respected and very popular.

He was already nicknamed “*Chamele*.”¹⁸

This is what he had once called one of the young *kibbutz* members. They gave the nickname to him instead and it stuck.

He was just a *Chamele*, an ordinary stutterer, *Dawydka* in unkempt clothes. Trousers without creases and baggy like two sacks, particularly at the knees. Holes near the elbows. And he used to pick his nose. On familiar terms with everybody, including the stupidest and the worst. Guileless and candid. A simple, ordinary *Chamele*.

What was both touching and beautiful about him? It was the fire constantly burning in him, the fire of emotions, the reverence for heroism and that constant [21] readiness, that readiness to fight for liberation.

At first [he yearned for] vague, *Weltschmerz* [world pain], liberation of all mankind and then [for] liberation of the proletariat based on a thorough knowledge of Marxism.

I remember him talking beautifully about Malraux’s *Man’s Fate*,¹⁹ the revolution in China, Chen, and Mary.

One could feel that he was standing by them, that he was ready to go with them, and that he was one of them.

When Dawid was speaking long and inspiringly, one forgot his stutter.

18 Probably a Yiddish nickname.

19 Malraux, *La Condition humaine*. The Hebrew translation was published in 1935.

And then during the revolution in Spain²⁰ he wrote an excellent article, and once again you felt your soul reaching out to them, to those fighting for freedom.

There was no posturing or insincerity in him. One felt that he was ready to join them on the barricades that day or the next.

[22] His words were not idle chatter, platitudes, nor were they dry, Marxist populism. He was a revolutionary.

Dawid kept abreast of the times and was always on the side of those who were fighting for liberation.

He kept moving forward. He was not like a young youth movement *menahel* [leader] who eventually will pump out all his knowledge and become empty, finally realizing that his students have outdone him.

Dawid kept developing and learning, constantly saying, “I still can and [I] know so little.” He was still capable of admiration, inspiration, and excitement.

I had always envied him that freshness of emotions, because in me that fire had long [since] turned into ashes, and my mind was completely occupied with making decisions. While he had remained emotionally youthful.

[23] The war began and foiled our plans. Dawid had wanted to leave for *Eretz [Israel]*, build a *kibbutz* and participate in the laying of the foundations for the new life. It was his wish to take part in that first *Sturm und Drang* [storm and stress period] when everything has to be built with one’s own sweat. But he did not have that chance.

The war had a negative effect on him.

Dawid pined away and lost weight; his skin became sallow and a cough began to rattle his lungs more and more often.

His *Weltschmerz* disappeared, [giving way to] an outlook

20 The Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939.

well-grounded in Marx's philosophical and economic theories. Dawid was becoming a supporter of Stalin.

When everybody was condemning Stalin's treacherous policy, Dawid was talking about his genius.²¹

When everybody was throwing stones and dirt at the Soviet Union, Dawid was talking about the Red Army.

[24] Oh, he loved the Red Army more than life.

Totally fixated on it, he would be literally taken ill whenever it suffered defeat — he couldn't eat, sleep, or live.

And when it was victorious, he revived, shone with joy and embraced everybody out of happiness.

"My brother," he would write to the Red Army soldier, "I'm with you. I offer you my hand. Take it."²²

And the day came when he went to them, reached out to them.

He was the commander of the first group that went into the woods to join the partisan forces.

Joie de vivre [joy of living] died out, giving way to deep, bitter hatred. He wanted to be a GPU²³ man, a Dzerzhinsky.²⁴ He wanted to take revenge, [to] brutally avenge his people, beat and murder, and expunge our absolute disgrace, misery, [and the death of] the innocent victims and of the Jewish children he loved so [25] much.

He lost everybody on one day: his father, mother, and sister — the child he loved so much — and brother, whom he adored and worshipped. He did not shed a tear, but hardened and toughened up instead.

The PPR and the *hagana* organization were established and he

21 The Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact — on the *Hashomer Hatzair* attitudes toward communism and the USSR. See Notebook V.

22 Similar attitudes toward the Red Army were typical of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Warsaw.

23 See footnote 24.

24 Felix Dzerzhinsky (1877–1926) — the head of the Cheka, which later became the GPU (Soviet State Political Administration).

was its soul beside Cwi. He did not sleep, but forged and created. Omnipresent, he dreamed about action.

Harsh times came. Our loved ones, our comrades — Jankele, Lea, Irka²⁵ — were taken away. He did not want to live. Who for? What for? For action. Yes, this is what life is worth living for. But will there be any? Yes, there must be!

The *shlichut* to be sent abroad was selected. Dawid was chosen but did not wish to go. He did not wish for cowards to take shelter under his name, happy that they had to go too, that they had been selected. “Besides, since Dawid is going,” they’d say.

Dawid refused. He did not wish to go.

How could he leave the boys whom he had prepared for action, to die, to [participate in] *hagana*? [26] He had to stay to perish with them. He knew that he would not survive and did not wish to. “This is where my role ends,” he used to say.

But sometimes, in moments of weakness, he would dream. He dreamed about the new world that would be born. He dreamed about seeing somebody from the *Hakibbutz Haartzi* and telling him, “Brother, it’s high time you dropped the *turiya* [hoe], put on a helmet, and joined the ranks of the Red Army.”

“If only I could take at least one,” he would say. “Chaj,” he would tell his girlfriend, “you must survive. You must tell them all about us.”

He was fixated on her survival. I don’t know if it was because he loved her so much, or because it was necessary.

And she didn’t dare oppose him, so that he wouldn’t accuse her of cowardice.

And she would have loved to go with him, even to die, for she could not imagine a life without him.

[27] They had spent many years together. Never seen apart, they seemed like one person. It’s rare for people to

25 See Notebook A.

complement each other to such an extent, [despite being so] oddly matched.

They were simply comrades, friends, and lovers. “Do you remember, Didia,” she used to say, “the time when during our wandering we looked death in the eye when bombs were falling all around us and you lay down on me and I kicked you to get off of me.”

“And do you remember, Chaj, the time when you protected me with a knife against that cutthroat?”

He was carrying her in his arms during the fatal illness²⁶ and he did not wish to live without her.

And when he was about to go to the forest without her, they cried together for a long time at night. But he did not say that he wouldn’t go without her and she did not tell him to stay.

He left.

There were ten of them.

Like peas in a pod — ten tall, [28] strong, young men — the best we had.

They all wore high *Stiefel* [boots], trousers, windcheaters, and jackets and they had haversacks.

The farewell in the packed room was quiet: a firm handshake, a hard kiss. “Farewell, comrade.”

Their eyes were sparkling with joy and happiness. They looked like groomsmen going to a wedding and Dawid seemed younger. My eyes couldn’t get enough of the sight of him — a Red *komandir* [commander]. His dreams had finally come true. He has never worn such trousers, *Stiefel*, a windcheater, and a jacket all at the same time, while today he’s wearing an officer’s *Stiefel* made of the best quality cord and *Gämse* [suede].

He keeps looking at them and his eyes are laughing. He’s always dreamed about *Stiefel*.

Finally they leave and everybody’s looking at them with joy

26 Chajka was very ill in the winter of 1942–1943.

and concealed jealousy. “One day I’ll go too,” everybody’s thinking. “But will I manage? Won’t there be a deportation first?”

Happy, they leave the town, discard the *Jude* [badges] and breathe with relief. [29] Initially, they’re walking slowly, scared, their hearts pounding. Then their steps begin to get bolder and more resolute.

They enter a forest. Their hearts are swelling with joy and emotion, wanting to jump out of their chests.

“We’re finally free. We can hold our heads really high now.” They feel like singing but they cannot, because the one walking in front doesn’t let them — it’s Dawid with the guide. The two men are talking about the Germans, guerrillas, and the life they’re about to start.

The man [the guide] is working his way into Dawid’s confidence. Dawid is becoming more and more trusting and his answers are bolder and bolder.

The other man [the guide] wants to take his weapon — “It will be safer this way” — but Dawid refuses to surrender it. “No, I won’t part with it,” he says.

They walk on, talking calmly with each other. They enter a forest again. The guide leaves them. “Sit,” he says. “We’ll eat here. I’ll fetch water.”

They sit down and look at one another, happiness [30] and joy emanating from their eyes. They’re making plans for the future.

They want to have a German on their conscience as soon as possible. “We’ll get down to it right away,” one says. “But there has to be discipline,” adds another.

Suddenly — boom, rattle, noise. They want to get up. Shots. A submachine gun. Grenades. A few dozen armed Germans on horseback are surrounding them.

The men jump to their feet but don’t manage to stand. One, two, three of them collapse, dead.

Only Didia [Dawid] managed to take his grenade out and throw it. He didn’t know what happened because at that very

moment he clutched his chest. He only managed to think, “Farewell, Chaj,” and died.

It is good that they died so quickly, that they didn’t suffer, and that there was no time to think.

It is good that they didn’t realize that the one who was leading them was not a leader, [31] but a Gestapo lackey.

It is good that they didn’t realize they were being led into a trap.

It is good that they didn’t know that they were handed to the enemy owing to [their] leaders’ incompetence.

It is good that they did not even have the time to curse.

Cwi Brandes

[32] To Cwi and Dorka

I don't know why but when I think about him I see the image we often used on the cover of our newspapers: a man with a raised fist.

Can you recall that cover?

I don't know why my mind makes that association!

It might be because he had thick, sinewy, muscular arms. It might be because his features were coarse, as if chiseled from stone or granite — stern, sharp, and simple. Thick, bristly eyebrows standing out on his face, appearing to be grown together into one. They testified to his energy and strong will.

Cwi used to step heavily and clumsily, yet confidently. His feet were firmly on the ground as if wanting to press into it.

And that was also how he was in life.

He took life as it was and was never beguiled or disappointed. No depression or hesitation.

Cwi looked at the world and people in a wise and reasonable way and he knew what he wanted and where he was going.

He was rarely angry, irritated, [33], or upset.

“I always know the motives and reasons pushing people to particular actions and that is why I am rarely angry.” That was also why he was very respected and popular. In the *kibbutz* they nicknamed him *Chaszele*.

I remember when he first visited our farm in Zagłębie. There was a shortage of laborers.

In the morning he grabbed a hoe and went with everybody to dig up potatoes. He was working like any other man, even though he had come to do different work in the *galil* [district].

He had won everybody over.

And the ordinary members of the *kibbutz* flocked to Cwi the most [and] confided in him about all their injuries and injustices.

He had time and understanding for everyone. They trusted him.

They could see that what he was saying about working and living in a collective was not empty words. They knew that he had worked in a *kibbutz* for years and that he knew how to live [34] with people in a collective.

Cwi hated words spoken to impress or lectures given for the sake of lofty words. His every sentence was replete with content and information.

He had an excellent grasp of international policy and the problems troubling the working-class movement and the USSR.

He would assess a situation soberly, wisely, and rationally and also disliked “building castles in the air,” whereas we were hotheads, whose ardor he frequently had to dampen.

On the other hand, during the *Hechalutz yeshivot* he had to push those [members], with their pedestrianism and tortoise pace. Oh, he had a difficult task.

There was lots of talk about *hagana*, but there was more chatter than actual work.

They kept procrastinating, postponing, debating.

We did not have time to wait. “We are yearning for even a most insignificant act because we really don’t want to wait anymore.” And he’d say, “[If we act,] it would be our end, which we cannot let happen.” [35] For as a matter of fact *hagana* would have long been given up had it not been for *Hashomer Hatzair* and Cwi’s firm stance. Almost everything depended on his stance. They wanted to win him over and send him to the *Internierungslager* almost by force. But he didn’t want to go and did not yield to the temptation. [...].²⁷

When he said that something had to be done, it was not right

27 Two illegible words. Perhaps the militia came to take him to the internment camp.

for them to oppose him, but in fact they were hampering his work instead of helping him.

Everything had to be his responsibility: the purchase of materials, work in the workshop, collections, *smalim* [symbols], newspaper, leaflets, conversations with Böhm, grenade tests.

Consequently, he often woke up in the middle of the night, at 4 A.M., and disappeared.

At other times he would wander all night long and return to sleep at dawn.

Cwi would often spend entire nights by the newly constructed radio.

He was persistent — he would sit in the bunker, constantly turning the dial in order to find an underground radio station.

The next day he'd tell us the news and everybody listened to him attentively.

"We have to do something great, huge." [36] We would impatiently wait for Cwi's return and feel somehow safer, happier, and [more] secure when he came home.

We loved him dearly.

But his visits were becoming less and less frequent because of the growing number of duties falling on his shoulders.

Cwi was the spirit of *hagana* and the *Hechalutz* movement in Zagłębie. While it was disputable whether many others really wanted *hagana* and were ready to die, nobody had any doubts about him. He would always take the most difficult tasks on his own shoulders.

"I'll kill Moniek [Moshe Merin]. I'll go," he used to say.

I will never forget the day that we received the first two guns. Happy as a little child, he was smacking his lips. And when he grabbed them, his hands were shaking with emotion and joy.

And when harsh days came afterward, when it turned out that the groups he had sent to join the guerrillas had fallen into the Gestapo's hands, he wanted to take his own life.

“I’ve sent them to die. I killed them and Dawid, my dearest friend. I don’t want to live anymore.”

[37] I had to persuade, beg, and threaten him for a long time, “You are needed here. Without you there won’t be anything here. You have to stay.”

In the end I managed to convince him. He said, “If I thought even for one second that I’d survive, I’d finish myself off but I’m sure that I shall die.”

There was so much confidence in his words that it scared me. It was like gravitation toward death or some strange fate. Those of us who talked a lot about death died.

And he died too. His dream did not come true.

Once he dreamed out loud, during the day, “We’re going to construct a plane and go far away, abroad, to *Eretz [Israel]*. I’m going to go and ask, ‘Why are you still sitting here as if nothing were happening? Why do you still sow and enjoy your harvest? [38] Why do you continue to build your colonies as if nothing was happening in the world? Do you not see how the power of the USSR grows every day? The time has come that you manifested your affiliation to it. That you completed your mission in the Middle East.’

“But I would not stay with them. I would come back to you with a cargo. Bombs, grenades, Submachine guns.

“And we would begin to work – we here and they there.”

His dreams were not fulfilled.

He perished because he did not wish to patiently wait with everybody for a death sentence. He did not wish that they, the enemy, would decide his fate, his life. He knew that he would die but he still ran straight into the arms of death.

“And what if I succeed? I might notify someone and save my comrades.”

He perished because he was the bravest of us all and he wished to determine his life or death himself.

Part Seven

The Potasz Testimony¹

Notebook P

[143] **December 17, 1943**

As a member of a *Leichenkommando* [corpse unit] I was witness to all the bestial murders that took place in the Kamionka *Judenviertel* [Jewish district] in Bendsburg. I saw corpses and numerous murders at every step, and all that became engraved in my heart with letters of blood. I was utterly confused. That inhuman brutality deprived me of all human reactions. One tragic fragment of that

- 1 This is the only testimony that was clearly recorded by Chajka. Potasz was a member of the Jewish Militia who joined Chajka and her underground comrades during the preparations for crossing the border to Slovakia. It was a strange cooperation of two extremes of Jewish institutions during the Holocaust: the Jewish Militia and the underground. However, it was four months after the last deportation and the surviving Jews in the liquidation camp were close to having completed their forced labor of cleaning up the empty ghettos. A weekly transportation vehicle traveled to Auschwitz, carrying the unnecessary Jews (see Notebook II). The others were afraid that their turn was coming. Under those circumstances, old hostilities no longer mattered and new connections were established — intended to support the survival effort. The new relationships were instrumental: Chajka and her comrades had the “contacts” to Polish border smugglers, and the Jewish Militia men had a lot of money. The two groups needed one another. It seems that during the preparations for crossing the border (in late 1943) Chajka met Potasz and recorded the story of the fall of the fighters’ bunker.

The Potasz testimony was included as the last part of the “Bader Photocopy” and the numbers are in accord with it. In its Hebrew translation, it was included in the memorial booklet *Chajka* (1958), mistakenly attributed to Chajka herself, and in Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 141–143.

one great chaos has stuck in my memory, particularly that these were my brothers from the *kibbutz*, who died a heroic death, having dedicated their young souls, full of vitality, to an idea.

These are the names of the heroes who, despite their considerable effort and sacrifice, unfortunately did not take even one gasp of the air of *Eretz [Israel]*, which they loved so much.

Two men: Tojwija Dworski and Baruch Gaftek.

[Five] Women: Frumka Płotnicka, Frumka Polna Róza, Cipora Bocian, Pnina Jakubowicz, and Hedwa Bernad.²

And now I will describe in great detail the scene that took place in the *kibbutz*. While sitting at my post I heard a cannonade of shots, which lasted nonstop for more than half an hour. Then two Gestapo chiefs, *Kommissar* Bäuke [Baucke]³ and *Kommissar* Dreyer,⁴ rushed in and took me to the place where the rattle of the machine guns had been coming from. Having reached the destination, I was happy to spot dead Germans of the Waffen SS from Auschwitz who had died at the hands of our *chalutzim*.⁵ But my joy was short-lived. I was [144] suddenly approached by *Kommissar* Bäuke [Baucke], who put the barrel of his revolver to my temple and ordered me to enter the bunker. Normally, one entered it through the window, but I had to enter through the hole made as a result of the hail of machine gun bullets. I squeezed through the hole and fell in. A horrible, bloody sight unfolded before my eyes. At first I saw *chalutz* Tojwija Dworski, his skull smashed and his brain spilled out. Lying next to him was Frumka Płotnicka, who was squeezing a six-shot revolver. The bottom half of her body was burnt. An inhuman moan resembling a hum of a whole

2 All of them *Dror* members.

3 *Kriminalkommissar* Walter Bäuke [Baucke] — head of the Gestapo field office in Sosnowiec. In addition to Sosnowiec itself, his field office was responsible for the districts of Będzin and Olkusz.

4 Dr. Hans Dreier (Dreyer) (1907–1945) — head of the department for Jewish Affairs at the Gestapo in Katowice.

5 The police president of Sosnowiec, in his final deportation report, mentions only one German dead and one German wounded. See Yad Vashem Archives.

aircraft squadron was coming from the mouths of the prostrate *chalutzim*, both the corpses [sic!] and those barely alive. The inside of the bunker looked awful after the fusillade. The eiderdowns and pillows had caught fire and choking smoke was rising from them.

With my teeth clenched and my heart bleeding, I personally carried the seven corpses out into the garden by the bunker. The murderers ordered me to lay the corpses face up and to strip the women naked. When I had carried out that repugnant task they told me to return to the bunker and bring as many revolvers as there had been people, that is, seven, under threat of death as they put the barrel to my temple again. I brought the required number, but aside from those seven guns I found five more, which I buried in the wet dirt in the bunker. For the dirt had become soft from the water used to put out the fire. I also spotted a dynamo lamp, which I wanted to hide as well, but one of the sadists noticed that and shouted, "*Du Schwein, komm heraus und nimm die Lampe mit*" [You swine, come here and bring the lamp with you]. When I came out of the bunker he gave me all of the revolvers to clean.

[145] The commander then ordered me to turn all the corpses face down. Having approached them, I noticed that one of the women, Frumka Płotnicka, lifted her upper body and opened her mouth to say something, her look horrible and blind. One of the Gestapo functionaries suggested letting her be, hoping that she would say something and perhaps give away the *kibbutz's* secret, but another one approached her and kicked her face with his heavy boot with perfect, stoic, sadistic calm. Frumka collapsed, unconscious. When everybody was lying face down he gave an order: "Fire!!!" And shots were fired from seven machine guns. The bodies of our best ones were as full of holes as sieves. But it was not enough for those sadists as they stepped onto the corpses' buttocks and jumped and swung as if those were not people but the ground or a swing. The sight was so appalling that I only stared, feeling as if it was some horrifying dream and not bleak, macabre reality. The murderers left and I stood there looking blindly at those

barbarians' accomplishment. I was weeping, each tear a drop of blood spilled in the mourning for those comrades. The voice of one of my friends roused me from that daze and I returned to my post with that ghastly image in my heart and collapsed senseless onto the floor. The next day a vehicle came and took away all my brothers, who had died a heroic death.

And this is how our brothers, our *chalutzim*, died at their post. May their suffering and blood compensate all the torment suffered by Jews in the entire world and may their heroic names be passed to future generations.

Abram Potasz

[146] This tragic incident took place on the third day of the *Ausrottungsaktion* [extermination campaign] on Tuesday, August 3, 1943.

Part Eight

Epilogue – Like Leaves Detached from Their Old Mother Tree

Notebook D¹

[1] The war was a terrible blow to the entire generation of our century, which had to endure that historic cataclysm once again. But it had even more severe consequences for the Jewish youth, particularly the *chalutz* youth.

All plans, thoughts, and efforts had been directed at *Eretz [Israel]*. All that was interrupted in the middle [of preparations]. In Poland it happened at the beginning of the war and in other countries during the subsequent years. Some had to return from their path – unpack their suitcases and give up hope of swift arrival at the *kibbutz* in *Eretz [Israel]*. Others were packing their things on

1 Notebook D is the same as Notebook E: without binding and containing 17 pages with 19 printed lines per page. Apparently, they are two parts of the same notebook. The circumstances in which this notebook was written are unclear. It is certain that it was completed in *Eretz Israel*, after Chajka arrived in Haifa on March 6, 1944, and the meeting in Kibbutz Galon two days later, events that are mentioned in the notebook. But it is uncertain when and where the starting point was: it could have been in Budapest in January–February 1944 while awaiting her certificate; it could have been on her way to *Eretz Israel*, in Istanbul (late February 1944) or on the train, or in Israel. The content of Notebook E is a painful introspection about her personal conclusions and the ghetto generation. Selected parts of it served as the epilogue of Klinger, *Mi-yoman ba-getto*, pp. 145–148.

hachshara [posts], which were being liquidated [one] after another (but that was done mostly by others).

They had to return home, with which most of them had already severed all relations and ties. We were neither physically nor spiritually prepared for that.

[2] Usually without an occupation and absolutely unable to fight for survival, our people also took up various shady *luftgeshefts* [street vending jobs]. The ideals of becoming productive (the *hachshara* years) were cast aside when difficult living conditions forced one to take any job. Former ardent opponents of taking jobs in shops during *hachshara* could now be seen working (in a shop) in a stall and arguing with their father's clients, who smuggled meat or even traded gold or dollars. And that was how the many years of becoming used to physical, productive labor during *hachshara* went to waste.

But the actual warping of the young people's souls, souls in which we had invested so much work and effort, began with the German occupation.

The entire older generation (on which I want to fully [3] concentrate today), which should have been in *Eretz [Israel]* long ago, was stopped in its development, which should have gone on with the construction of a *kibbutz* in *Eretz [Israel]*. Those people had no opportunity to form a cohesive group, a social unit.

There were only some individuals and some small, detached groups here and there. They once again became engaged in managerial tasks and clandestine educational work. And they once again began to teach the *shichvat bnei midbar*, read books on psychology, and organize the *tzofim*. They were regressing instead of developing, particularly when it came to social life, as many years of associating with younger people had left a permanent imprint on them.

They couldn't fully devote themselves to that work either, as they had outgrown such tasks. Their places began to be taken by younger people with more calling.

They had no lives of their own.

[4] And this was the beginning of the tragedy of the older generation of *shomers* who stayed in the *golus* [diaspora].

That constant state of being torn between tasks they had been prepared for but could not complete — the tasks in *Eretz [Israel]* — and the reality that contradicted their upbringing, which had loaded entirely different tasks on their shoulders.

And the reality was becoming ever more appalling and frightening. The Nazi regime was becoming more and more oppressive, the noose around the neck was becoming tighter, and life was increasingly harsh and difficult. (We also were becoming tougher and hardened. Time was doing its job.)

Our only weapon that could keep us afloat was to make the entire movement one big, strong family. What used to be our most important activity — papers, lectures — [5] became of secondary importance. [We] focused on material aid, real help in looking for work or accommodation. Somehow the *tzofim* always knew who would be evicted on a given day and they went and looked after their things or carried them from one street to the other. They always managed to acquire a cubic meter of coal or potatoes for winter for this or that family. Those were not isolated cases — every two *shomers* in three needed assistance. We were bound together for life or death. But as we were caring for everyone, human life lost all its importance. Thousands were perishing on the front line and dying of starvation.

We learned not to cry when even our nearest and dearest were dying.

We were persistent when it came to fulfilling our tasks.

Old problems, once so vital and [6] important, ceased to exist for us. Things like leaving one's girlfriend or boyfriend, love.

The criteria for evaluating people changed. Education and intellect² — qualities so esteemed in our movement — ceased to

2 Intellect was quite important in *Hashomer Hatzair* as a selective (and elitist) movement.

constitute criteria. Readiness to perform any work, fulfillment of a task. There were no discussions or persuasion. You were either ready or not. That was the deciding factor. The glory of being a veteran *shomer* became totally insignificant. The *vetek* [seniority] [no longer] played any role either. A member of the *hanhaga* could lose his status in a day. Many people disappointed us. Many people broke down. We became pessimists. We began to doubt the value of our education. The harsher the times, the thicker our armor had to be to fend off resignation and surrender. [7] First of all, [we had] to learn how to control ourselves and not cry or wring our hands. The deportations were reaping a bitter harvest. It was becoming emptier and emptier around us.

How could one not cry when one's mother, father, and sister were no longer at home? How could one stop oneself from going and joining a transport when one's family was already gone? How could one leave one's old mother at such a moment? We obtained arms and became cynics. Our cynicism beggared belief.

We're passing a shop window with soap and somebody says, "It's my grandma, but they'll make toilet soap out of me, because I'm younger and fatter." If you heard that, wouldn't you think that she had a heart of stone?

[8] But there was so much sorrow behind that.

But it was necessary to refrain from crying and moaning. One could not respond to the old sentiments and report for deportation with one's parents either, because other, more important tasks were awaiting one there — a retaliation in the name of those who had left.

But cynicism knows no bounds. It wreaks havoc in man's spirit and laughs at what used to be sacred. And this is what happened to our attitude toward *Eretz [Israel]*. They left us for the five years of war without any sign of life, without any help. Neither the *mosdot* [institutions], the *Hakibbutz Haartzi*, nor the *chaverim* [members] of the *kibbutzim* [helped us]. We were receiving letters that they were thinking about us, loving us, embracing and kissing us, but there was no actual help. Long letters about setting up a new colony

or the fact that this or that *kibbutz* reached a *hityashvut* [settlement] on the eve of the deportation. We laughed at those letters and did not even wish to read them.

[9] We began to doubt the power and potential of the *yishuv* [in *Eretz Israel*]. We, a handful of youths and greenhorns, were capable of even great achievements, while they, our directors, from whom we had learned everything and who were our role models, grew silent. We did not even want to hear about *Eretz [Israel]* anymore, because they did not want to hear about us. There were some who found it easy to completely dismiss *Eretz [Israel]*. It was the young generation that matured during the war, but those old ones who grew up in the love of *Eretz [Israel]*, the Hebrew language and culture, and close ties with the *kibbutz* and *chaverim* found it difficult, particularly now, with the spreading cult of the USSR.

And young Jews wanted to participate in that titanic, ongoing struggle between fascism and socialism, which negated the peaceful development of a colony while historic events were taking place in the world. The settlement period was over and it was time for a revolution.

[10] They saw their place in the ranks of the partisans fighting at the Red Army's side. And they did go, without any reservation and with all the zeal of Jewish youth. They did not worry unnecessarily about the fate of Zionism. They knew that their fate was connected with the fate of the Red Army, which was the only one that provided actual aid to Jews. But they knew, in any case, as if logical reasoning did not convince them, that there had been many changes in the Jewish reality: the obliteration of Polish Jewry, the possibility of a socialist political system in certain European countries, the doubts about emigration from Soviet territories and America. All those doubts undermined our Zionist worldview, but they did not undermine our emotional sphere, our attachment to *Eretz [Israel]*.

And we again encounter that state of being torn, which I have already mentioned.

[11] Between logic and feelings. Torn between the old upbringing and the new reality. But all those problems and doubts soon ceased to bother us. Our days were becoming numbered. We were waiting for a death sentence, knowing that none of us would survive, that there was no way out, that the Jewish nation was destined for complete extermination. We were preparing for *hagana* and at the same time for death. We did not think even for a moment that any of us would survive. Life ceased to play any role whatsoever. We were rushing to our doom. As for our lifestyle, we became somewhat Bohemian. Did it matter that some [of us] were smoking? We even began to drink enough vodka to relax and become quite free in the sexual sphere. I noticed the same symptoms. That spirit of *carpe diem* [seize the day] [12] had an impact on the nation, on the life of emigrant *shomers* in Slovakia and Budapest. That provisional lifestyle left an indelible imprint on them.³

And then came the final days. All of the best individuals in the nation and the movement had left. Only individuals — unextinguished embers — remained, owing to some coincidence.

They were not strong enough to “finish themselves off.” Perhaps they could not because of the long-enforced rule that suicide was not our path, or perhaps because of the will to live they felt deep in their hearts.

And the people start coming from all directions: from Poland, Slovakia, Transylvania, and Hungary. Each of us has been through something terrible: immigrant life, prison, bunker, deportation, or a sinking ship.

These people have a lot in common. Everybody is haunted by the same thoughts — *yeud* [destiny]. People from a different epoch — that epoch and those people are already dead. Perhaps they should have died with them. They are like leaves detached from the tree on which they grew, their old mother tree. Swirling in the air,

3 Chajka was a guest of *Hashomer Hatzair* members in Slovakia and Budapest.

they are unable to find their place. They cannot attach themselves to a new tree, and the old one has been cut down and no longer exists.

[13] Five years separate them from the *kibbutz* — five years, which opened a chasm between them. Can they find their own places? Will not life seem too confined, petty, and bleak to them? Will they be able to sit in one place? They have always been drawn — [to] somewhere or someplace. Will they be able to satisfy that internal drive? They have been constantly on the move. Always some issues, tasks, or problems. They did not expect that they would arrive in *Eretz [Israel]* like that — individually, on their own. But they did not come alone — they brought baggage, heavy baggage that they will have to discard. They had grown into the hate. It was not only that life was forcing them to hate, but that they also cultivated that feeling in themselves. Each image of horror, of the German brutality, of their inhuman attitude toward man, of the Jewish plight — we wished to absorb all that. We did not try to avoid images of horror. On the contrary, [14] I did not close my eyes when a Jewish child was being beaten. Quite the opposite, I was looking with my eyes wide open. I went to look at the transports departing to the *Konzentrationslager* [concentration camp] and the *Arbeitslager* [labor camp], [as well as the] deportation transports. I took off the tarpaulin from the carts transporting corpses from the deportation square. I looked at suffocated children. I wanted my hatred to increase and become blind, because it should be the source of a savage, merciless act. Will such a man ever again be capable of loving and building? I very much doubted that. We will be incapable. We will only be capable of destruction and ruin. I arrived in *Eretz [Israel]* [and] I saw. There were moments when even I hated the Jewish nation, when I regretted the youth [who] sacrificed for it, while those sentenced to death did not even deign to bring us water then in the deportation barrack. Not even to us, who wanted to conceal their [15] disgrace with our lives.

I arrived in *Eretz [Israel]*. I saw the tears in the eyes of the girls who came to welcome me in Haifa.⁴ And I began to melt. Those were the first drops that caused my hatred to begin to melt.

I saw a group of elderly Jews in Ness Tziona.⁵ Arms in hand, they were training. I felt overcome by a strange emotion — so not all old Jews were cowards. Perhaps these would not go to slaughter like the others.

And love, buried deeply under the layer of hatred, which had been intensifying over the five years of the war, saw the light of day again. For I really love them the way they are, only that pain had dimmed my eyes.

I saw young people who were and still are ready to go to those who had stayed there. I could see in their eyes that they were ready [16] for anything to reach their goal. And my heart trembled with joy. So they really had not forgotten us. And I believed again in the man of the *yishuv*, in the man of the *kibbutz*. But I still do not believe in the *yishuv* as they were able to spend 2.5 million pounds on the election and another 1.5 million pounds on the *hatzala* [rescue] matters throughout the war. I am still worried about the fate and future of Zionism, but I saw so many beautiful *mifalim* [projects], *kibbutzim*, and old love renewed that the belief in the internal potency and potential of the *yishuv* is becoming stronger again.

When I first saw the children, the young, they made me angry about those little, innocent Jewish children who had been murdered, deported, strangled — about the fact that these ones were too well off. But how can one not love the children in *Eretz Israel*? And once again that old concern about the young population. [17] We gradually became absorbed in educational matters.

What about the *kibbutz*? There are many petty, trivial things

4 Chajka traveled through Istanbul, Syria, and Lebanon, and finally arrived in Haifa.

5 The closest town to Kibbutz Galon in those days was Ness Tziona.

in the *kibbutz*, but this is what life is like. It consists not only of great matters. Sometimes, however, these small matters obscure the horizon and one forgets about those other matters. There is something happening outside the four walls of our house. We must not forget that.

One often hears the opinion that we have not integrated the new *olim* [immigrants] yet, but has everybody who asserts that asked themselves whether they have contributed to their integration?

Hatred begins to wither in our hearts, because we were brought up in love, in belief in one's neighbor, but the cynicism, pessimism, and inner anxiety have not passed. The horrors of those days keep disturbing our peace. It is your responsibility to uproot it from our hearts.



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Glossary

Aliyah [Hebrew: immigration to *Eretz Israel*]

Arbeitseinsatz [German: work assignment, labor group]

Asefa, asefot [Hebrew: meeting(s)]

Bau [German: building, construction]

Bnei midbar [Hebrew: children of the desert]

Bogrim [Hebrew: senior members, adults]

Bund [socialist Jewish movement]

Chalutz/chalutzim [Hebrew: pioneer(s)]

Chaverim [Hebrew: members, comrades, friends]

Chevra [Hebrew: group of comrades]

Chutzpa [Yiddish, Hebrew: impudence]

Eretz /Eretz Israel [Hebrew: land of Israel; also country, homeland]

Gmina/gminy [Polish: community/communities; also: *Judenrat*]

Hachshara [Hebrew: training]

Hagana [Hebrew: defense]

Hanhaga [Hebrew: leadership]

Hakibbutz Haartzi [federation of the *Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim* in *Eretz Israel*.]

Hashomer Hatzair [Young Guardian]

Hatzala [rescue]

Hauptmann [German: captain, director]

Hechalutz [Hebrew: pioneering (movement)]

Internierungslager [German: internment camp]

Irgun [Hebrew: organization]

Judenrat [German: Jewish Council]

Judenrein [German: purged, cleansed of Jews]

Kriegswichtige [German: important for the war effort]

Kvutza [Hebrew: group]

Leutnant [German: lieutenant]

Merkaz [Hebrew: central leadership]

Menahel/menahalim [Hebrew: youth leader(s)]

Moatza [Hebrew: assembly]

Moiserim [Yiddish: traitors/informers]

Mörder [German: murderers]

Shlichah/shaliach [Hebrew: missionary, delegate, messenger]

Shichva/shichvot [Hebrew: age group(s)]

Shlichut [Hebrew: mission]

Shomer [Hebrew: *Hashomer Hatzair* member]

Tzofim [Hebrew: scouts]

Wehrmacht [German Army]

Yeshiva [Hebrew: meeting]

Yishuv [Hebrew: settlement, community]

Zchut [Hebrew: privilege]

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