

So easily one may be free from the misery of existence ...

Chapter 7. Agony, enduring without hope.

Whom God wants to destroy, He first makes mad. The Polish people felt happy about Hitler's attack on the Kingdoms of Denmark and Norway, if never wishing any harm to the population, but surely this was the act of a madman. Triumphant communiqués in the daily press changed nothing. Of course these small countries so near Germany had no chance of defense. Only, where was the sense in the attack? The experiences of WW I showed that during war correct relations with a neutral Denmark without military strength, turned profitable to Germany. Breaking the isolation, it allowed commercial exchange of goods and raw materials, some important for the war industry.

Invasion of Norway seemed impossible, needing pushing the army along a long, narrow strip of difficult terrain, mostly in high mountains, right at the seacoast. Often the sea came right between the mountains in form of deep gashes, huge gulfs between steep cliffs, called fiords. More than two thousands kilometers to go, the most easy and sometimes the only access and transport from the sea. And the seas, as everybody knew, were ruled by the British Fleet. At last, after half a year of passive waiting, in slavery and humiliation, not mentioning terror, the Polish people expected a quick calamity for the German Army.

This opinion unanimously shared all the greatest experts of strategy and tactics, standing with Angus in the queue for a free soup in the public kitchen and canteen for the deported people. It was temporarily arranged in the "bursa," the former boardinghouse for high school students. Even those who already had their portion, instead of carrying the pots home, joined the company and the discussion, if only carefully revealing their sympathies, because you never knew who might be listening. Anyway, between the Poles, all was clear.

Even Father, an expert of communication, shared this opinion. However, after several days it turned out that as before it became necessary to wait for the expected, development the fighting went not so, as it should.

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Capsule: War of intelligence, info and brainpower. Enigma, the code-machine.

Strange, how from the beginning of the Norwegian campaign, Command of the allied and especially the British Fleet paid no attention to how the

Germans seem to have all the luck. Any move outstripped the allies, sometimes only for hours, Germans found the English ships at will, or disappeared, landing just before English had to put mines in northern waters, approaches to Narvik. Similarly the English landing-party, despite the best commander of old school, could not engage in combat properly, they stroke at the emptiness, caught themselves suddenly unaware. Irregulars and over rest of Norway army fought more effective. This could be not coincidence.

During WW I, English intelligence topped on the German, which was decidedly worse. This was a cause of low efficiency of the German fleet, costly and strong, which hardly fought and has failed to fulfill its role. Germany had used traditional methods on the fronts, while the English have applied the method of breaking the codes, especially useful in the war at sea, and of course diplomacy. After the defeat, Germany, with radical control and limiting of the army, to renounce weapons offensive and dangerous, had also agree to liquidate the General Staff, including department III B (intelligence). But this was a blessing in disguise. There followed a process privatizing intelligence, secret service turned in private companies, agents involved in industrial and economic espionage. Only the most merited and great found asylum in the statistical offices of the Ministry of Defense. Young blood people have to prove the enterprise spirit, initiative, pull through or perish. The idea of encryption machine was already several years ago, but did not find recognition among General Staff coryphées. Private companies now offered on the German market first models, ensuring the protection of correspondence, private and business secrets. At the beginning without much success, but gradually launch of the production induced improvements.

After 1921, Germans learned, how the superiority of British cryptology affected the outcome of the war and Military Command decided apple Enigma to secure the communications. Several copies of the commercial type, rather primitive became sold to Poland and other countries (as Sweden, the Netherlands, also England for example). Exactly withholding of further sales turned on the Polish intelligence attention.

Right from the beginning Poland strongly developed the wireless tools and devices. After the Bolshevik war, when information about the enemy position gained mainly from radiograms (because in occupied terrain of Poland the phone network didn't work), the importance of modern methods increased. The emphasis was put on the Soviets, where codes weren't too difficult, although often changed. They created

many listening stations along the border and in several countries, neighboring with the Soviets, for early warning against surprise attack. Germany, however, has been less conscientiously supervised, until 1928, when German Ciphers suddenly became impossible to crack. So claimed both the existing as well as meritorious, former experts of the Cipher Office. Therefore, the Cipher Bureau decided to recruit mathematicians and turned in this matter to Prof. Zdzislaw Krygowski of Poznań University, asking him to select the best students and organize them for an extra course of cryptology. Study and training was a harsh selection, most candidates fell off, these who finished study, in 1932 became transferred as Poznań team to General Staff in Warsaw.

Rejewski, the best, who already earlier got academic degree and only now resigned from a most promising science career, in a separate secret compartment began to work exclusively on the Enigma. He got all the available materials including some knowledge of the principle of early action, commercial exemplar of machinery. However the military version had completely changed cables on three wheels turnover of machinery and added entry wheel, which increased the number of combinations more than 10 to a 114 power. But luckily, it turned out that a collection of random digits or letters is not uniformly random, there appear small islands in the state of chaos. Germany thought they have so perfect machine that does not exactly have discussed the procedures and instructions for use, posts marked the first key of entry, a few letters repeated twice. On this basis, Rejewski read the first post before New Year's Day. From now on the whole team worked on this tasks and by mathematical calculations and analysis found out links on the cables and wheels and designed a model of the machine, different in appearance, but acting identically. These successes resulted, the radio monitoring and Cipher Bureau received more funds, which enabled to create a supposedly private company to produce specialized equipment, including a copy of enigma and the so-called cyclometers and bombs. This speeded up the study of the characteristics of text. Even more, produce their own code machine, better protected thanks to the won experience. The firm AVA produced about 40 machines, called "Lacida". But they never came in use, it was need to destroy them in the first day of war to prevent they fell in German hands.

Only the programs, drawn like for the contemporary account machines or industry automats, on long sheets or rolls of special strong, perforated paper still had to be handmade by cutting. The so-called Zygalski sheets, named in honor of their inventor, needed a Benedictine work, but the method has proved useful over the years. With a catalog

of these sheets, placed in six boxes, seventeen and a half thousand pieces in each, the codes could be read in hours, with luck even in a few minutes. However, gradually and increasingly Germans introduced new improvements, frequent changes to the key. Worst, the so-called reflector (signal reflection) in the machine, made since November 1937 produced catalogs useless. Fortunately, Germany did not introduce changes in an organized way, for a time a part of mails was encrypted in the old, part in changed way. At the beginning of 1938 Division II, Chief of Staff carried out a test, two-hour exercises in dealing with captured radiograms. Cipher Bureau read of 75% text, an excellent result. The year 1938 was the best, but unfortunately since mid-December all the radiograms again become unreadable. The answer was to use the so-called Bombs, coupling several Enigma machines. But that exceeded financial means of Intelligence Department, building six bombs used the entire budget, and effective work needed sixty. Germany placed on the machine five rotors in place of three and an added set by hand crossover, which increased the number of combinations many millions of times. In these conditions, recognizing the pattern of innovation was a success, but not enough yet to read coded radiograms.

In the face of war, the most rational was to share the knowledge with allies and so the Poles did. After preliminary talks in Paris, invited the representatives of the French and English Intelligence Headquarters to Polish Radio Listening Station and the Office of Codes in Pyry near Warsaw. The Poles presented their achievements and gave to each ally one rebuilt code machine and a full documentation. Alas, a clear example that honesty and straight, fair acting to an ally immediately at the start, without charges, demands, long dealing and horse-trading, does not pay. Head of French delegation Gustave Bernard got mad and long held on a grudge to Poles because those treated equally France, longtime an ally and collaborator, with a new one, UK. (He had some foreknowledge, if only as he supplied many encrypted documents as working material, but up to now knew nothing about the success.)

Contrary, "Dilly" Knox called the information on the first day a deliberate false statement and deceit, considering it impossible and worthless, almost broke the conference. In fact he was a big dinosaur, coryphaeus of famous "Admiralty Room 40" from WW I, a scholar, linguist, Professor of Greek. Also a master of solving the cross-puzzle competition, mathematics he considered unsuitable long ago and gave the opinion previously in public speeches. But reasoned by his colleague Denniston, he appeared the next day for demonstration of the effectiveness of the method. He changed his sentence, sure it was not a

con-trick. In the future the great, old scholar has made a valuable supplement to the mathematical methods.

The main, on August 7th sent in a diplomatic baggage machines were in Paris, and in a few days one of them in Bletchley Park, in the long run, there sown the seeds of victory. But after the outbreak of war it become most urgent and removed all traces, destroy the equipment and evacuate people so that Germany has never learned about the work and consider their Enigma safe.

Cipher Bureau of the Polish team evacuated to France, but there placed at the disposal of the French Army. Bertrand usurped property of the men. He allowed not even a short trip of any of mathematicians to Bletchley Park. The British wanted it repeatedly but always in vain, all they managed to obtain was consent to a short working visit of Turing to Rejewski.

He brought with him a copy of "Zygalski sheets" from the received catalog and the news that they do not give a radiogram any sense to read. Alan Turing was a mathematical genius, but less experienced, Rejewski quickly spotted a small error (transfer case, everything else in order) and with Turing, 17 January 1940 opened the encrypted radiogram. Turing returned to England, bringing a message that hard work makes sense and results, which after many vain trials immediately raised the spirit of those teams. Bletchley Park developed into a huge cryptology center, hundreds of times larger than a small team of Poland (at its peak employed to ten thousand people). However, outstanding mathematicians also three, if including one the largest caliber, possibly leading genius of the world.

Strange how tragically developed the fate of these wonderful people. Poles died in oblivion, misery and persecution. Alan Turing despite his great merit and genius, also, properly hunted down to death, if, different because of unusual orientation in private life, also because it has always been an eccentric odd-ball.

Meanwhile, after transferring their knowledge and experience, the Poles remained on a sidetrack in France. Bertrand, referring to recent orders, does not allow for the evacuation, even if the French Army surrendered. He contacted the resistance movement, but it was only of local interest. Undoubtedly, cooperation of expert professionals with knowledge of Enigma machine would allow achieve the full efficiency earlier. Anyway, this did not depend only on the team. Even when Bletchley Park began to read German codes, during the Norwegian campaign the Fleet Command ignored them, unable to exploit. At the moment landing Germans for half a day before mining the approaches to

Narvik the ships without escort, had to flee. On the last, evacuation day ignoring of the warnings, cost a total loss of Aircraft Carrier "Glorious" and escorting destroyers.

The conditions changed only when Churchill came to power and not only changed the procedures for intelligence, but also ordered supply all materials from Bletchley Park, with an "Ultra" mark, every morning. He usually began to read this already in bed. He was well informed, and therefore decided not to move the government from England, he felt up to defend the island. "Ultra" had next a major impact on the campaign in Africa and the defense of Malta, and at the decisive Battle of the Atlantic and all following later. Without "Ultra" there would be neither the "D-day, 6th June 1944, nor even the "Operation Torch" 11th November 1942 in Africa.

For the first time, the war in ether, fast information and human intelligence meant more than the current ratio of forces. Although to be sure, first similar events, occurred in the war Soviet-Polish 1920-21. This was inspiration source for the Polish team.

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Meanwhile Angus' father did not want to stay idle for long and at the beginning took on a useful task, teaching the children, his own son and the daughters of the house-owners. The children did not go to school, which marked for them a big loss, but he, as a well-educated man had the qualifications, sure more than enough for elementary school.

To be sure the team was not convenient chosen, three different classes and three students. Well, it was necessary to apply a method, and as in rural classrooms all the students sat together and the teacher marked their work in turn, principally written work, or text read independently. Occasionally however resulted general discussions, in which all freely took part.

Father personally bought from a bookshop in the market, manuals of arithmetic and of Polish language. In the beginning, each was assigned two hours of figuring and one hour of Polish language, principally the writing of small essays, condensing the text read. Properly this was not in the program, but Angus father insisted, the skill of a fast summary of text, or making notes is important and useful. To this were added frequent short dictations for assimilating spelling, principally of u and ó, rz and ź. Something of the kind:

“Gdy zaświstał w orzech pusty, wnet świsnęło między chrusty.
Król miał służbę znakomitą, wiewióreczki z rudą kitą...”

and so on. The point was, many words were difficult to spell correctly. Of course, only Violet and Angus were assigned this task, Anisia with much effort and the help of her tongue copied a few verses from her book, or at times fairy tales.

The children sat at the large table in the dining room usually starting at nine in the morning and with the short breaks, continued lessons till noon. Then, sometimes again an hour or two after dinner, if the weather was bad. However, if the weather was tolerable, and with the spring coming it usually was, Father in the afternoon took Angus on a long walk. The goal was to become fit, but Father considered the girls would be only a nuisance and they would not be glad. Besides in fact, he and Angus usually returned quite tired.

Towards Angus Father was always more demanding, even ostentatious. Not only did Angus receive difficult tasks, he was now studying the final, sixth class, therefore this was natural, but also at least twice, often even three times more work. Hard task, never a break, he had to hurry in sweat.

After a few days, with surprise he felt Violet's leg attached to his. She repeated the maneuver constantly, if he tried to hold back she would seize his leg with both of hers and hold strong. No way to free himself without attracting notice. Could it be an offer of peace, the proposal of forgiveness?

From the moment of brief but furious conflict caused by the overheard conversation which had so disturbed Angus that he had behaved inexcusably caddishly, there had remained between them a bad atmosphere. Angus tried not to put together the broken contact, restore the fondness. However, and mainly without result, he decided to care, so the existing hostility might not infect more people and perhaps spoil relations between the two families. With mixed success, for on the side of Violet and against Angus declared strongly the girl's aunt – rather than her mother, Mrs. Misior, who kept always calm and neutral. With so much experience in running the student boardinghouse, she left the affair to mend itself between the concerned parties. She considered that any adult intervention would correct nothing. If however Violet offered her leg as olive branch, Angus did not react, anyway he had now much worse troubles.

Living (as he had been told) in deadly sin, he had first to concentrate on how stop this. However, with growing amazement and

next confusion and despair he saw that this was not easy, that he could not manage this problem. He had no time for trifles, with such a heavy load on his conscience. He tried to free the leg and to remove it, but without result, after a moment Violet renewed the contact. Not wanting to jerk, to draw the attention of Father, little Anisia or anyone, he had consent to. He tolerated the touch, but sat as if made of wood. Worse was to come, however, for he began to react, to feel the contact in another manner than at first, a temporary inconvenience.

With the coming of spring and warmth, Violet did not put on stockings and rarely socks. Angus also, he went mostly in shorts. Touch, skin to skin, direct flow of warmth or any energy, like radiance or invisible emanation which could be felt even before direct contact, circulating blood under skin and feeling of small, delicate motions of muscles, make an impression. Chiefly, because the skin was smooth and pleasant. Violet still dressed like a child or maybe grew too quickly, wearing brief, crinkled skirts to her knees and often disclosing the knees with any motion, either from front or from back, as well as light slippers on bare feet. Angus had to notice that she had shapely, long legs, with well formed calf and nice foot. The skin still better, although without any efforts, only soap and water, an excessive care would mean, at her early age, an inadmissible vanity. In short, though Angus still did not know what a bad boy can do with girl, this sight of the legs of Violet caught his imagination, and her touch began to push him out of equilibrium, to haunt him. With the eyes of his soul, he saw without looking, imagined the play of muscles, beginning from the raised, supported only by fingers, foot ...

Picture of perfect beauty. Without reasonable cause, he felt a sexual excitement – precisely that which he fought and he tried at any price to master. Alas, often he lost, mostly in the evening before falling asleep. He had then an impression as if in his body settled an autonomous, quick and unbearable creature which allured him, correct his position and if he did not rub it, this began again and again, each time still stronger. Sometimes he fought so for hours, without success he tried to fall asleep, dream did not come, finally he had to it somehow appease this creature. The longer this took, this more grew up a pressure, almost he lost consciousness, until at last it happened. The more he fought with this alien, independent creature in his body, the stronger became the exploding bliss when he was at last defeated. It was not a question of only a drop or two of urine. With spring, he become full of sap, like the trees in which the warm sun speeds up the

vegetation. The given away fluid was as before watery and transparent, it did not recall a substantial and thick sperm.

However at once, when he returned to consciousness, began the sense of guilt. Shame because of his weakness, a still stronger conviction about his extreme moral and psychic misery, remorse, condemnation and contempt for himself. At last he fell asleep in despair wishing nevermore to wake up, he fell in the abyss of defeat, catastrophe, with tears.

Mornings he awoke depressed, with disgust and expecting nothing good. He could not deal with this, that he could not manage, that he broke his promises, that he so utterly disappointed God, such scum of scum, worse. It would be better to be plain shit. He tried to begin afresh and to keep up at any price, he asked God for pardon, surely nobody so much asked pardon. He pleaded for support, for a miracle, help for his beggarly poor will.

Several times he went to confession, but heard still more severe admonitions, though never, to be sure, as harsh, as how he appraised himself. He had doubts whether he had the right to still go to church at all, but the priest told him that each felon can pray and he may and must. Also he should now more often turn to God and repent of sin and plead for forgiveness, as this would give him the strength to fight the evil spirit.

In the chapel he tried to find a place in the darkest corner, and if he glimpsed the priest he would cross over to the other side of the street. Of course he knew the priest was obliged to keep the secret of the confessional, but the consciousness that this man knew everything about him, while the others still carried delusions, was shattering. Other people considered him a not-too-bad boy, while indeed he was a scabby, lousy sheep, a rascal covered with moral leprosy. Unable by his own force to stand up from shit into which, admittedly unknowingly, he had dropped, but in which he now consciously remained. This priest could have only contempt, maybe a little mercy for the offender, but this would be the greatest calamity, mercy would be the worst of all.

As before he did not lose hope, anyway there was no choice but at any cost to tear out from chasms of sin and evil. He could not understand how this happened despite all his efforts, how he was unable to free himself from the disgusting sin. He had never supposed himself to be so beggarly feeble. Maybe this was a bad dream?

As we have seen, before he had gone to confession he had thought it too bad that he could not ask his father about his doubts. But now, when he heard how terrible a sin he was committing, he did not

dare to talk about this with Father after his return. His father was religious, straight to the limits of bigotry. Often he prayed for hours at a stretch, he encouraged Angus also to longer prayers, but this was encouragement, never an order. A choice of possible joining, if he had the will. Angus rarely agreed and often refused, he disliked long prayers. He treated this affair as a personal contact, brief, with a chief whom he should not bother for too long, unless he had something concrete; usually something he wanted. However at times it happened, mainly to please his father, or when wanting to made a deal with Mr. God, that they took the rosary together. Mother also, while certainly religious, did not like the "long patting of prayers" and show of personal feelings in public.

Now, during the long afternoon walks, Father told Angus that he was able to handle all the stress and did not break down mainly thanks to prayers. Often in the den, well, not of a lions, rather hyenas, in the waiting rooms of Soviet offices, he had prayed. Clearly Angus could not tell Father what a cursed sinner his son had become, how he got in Satan's power.

However the contact with his father raised Angus' mood. Too long they had been apart. Although these long walks were rather strenuous and he would have been glad to cut them in half, to sit a little in the forest – the conversation rewarded the effort.

To tell the truth, Angus found Father much changed. For example, back in Poznan, on walks he had often told his son not his own adventures, but stories from universal history (not Polish, because this Angus learned in school). Now, on Angus' suggestion, unexpectedly he said that these stories were largely lies, genuine history is full of human meanness and evil. For example, Richard the Lionheart, a favorite hero of Angus – when he left on crusade deserving there his famous nickname. But on the return journey, he was treasonably stalked and thrown in a dungeon by one of his former companions at arms, the Austrian prince Leopold, who had probably not profited enough from the war. The prince, everybody knows what expect from a German, not only robbed the captive, his comrade of the crusades, but he demanded for his life a huge ransom. He tried to spread the news the imprisonment was the deed of genuine robbers and he offered only his services as a go-between. One trying to help and to repurchase the victim from brigands. Richard's brother John, entrusted with the government of England, collected the money for the ransom all right, but did not repurchase Richard, on the contrary, he wanted to be king himself. He offered the gathered coins to murder and darkly bury the king. One of

the friends of the king, the famous poet Blondel, disclosed all. If he had not given the alarm in Europe and put the scoundrels to shame in all the great courts including the Papal, probably Richard never would have got out from the dungeons alive. That being so, Leopold refused the eighty thousand coins offered for murdering Richard and took the hundred and fifty thousand collected by Richard's mother, without scruple or shame. Anyway, the Plantagenets were a cruel family descended from the devil incarnate, Fulko Negra (Negro).

Well, yes, history is a heap of shit, and historians try somehow to cover this up. Most of the top people are vile indeed. A world without them could be quite another story, a beautiful one, but instead it went to the dogs. Simply nobody dared to tell the truth.

The historic narrations which Angus had previously heard had been optimistic and he had liked them, now Father was much embittered and the picture was dark. However they talked of many other affairs too, mainly current. First, Angus heard in detail more descriptions and reports from altogether another universe, the contemporary USSR. To his son Father disclosed many more details and facts than in his public narrations. So Angus could imagine it all clearly, as if indeed he was seeing it with his own eyes. But this does not mean to understand, for this was a world full of ghastly and absurd images, which came into focus only when Angus was to live there himself, after the war.

It was not a matter of crimes and horrors, Angus anyway considered both the Germans and Soviets capable of the worst doings, beyond the category of bad or vile, he never expected them to behave as humans. Terror, homicide they had long since used as an integral element of governance, any time they had the power. Already in the days of the tsars, they had murdered, displaced people to Siberia, robbed, if only not on so big a scale. Even "Muraviow-wieszatiel," the so-called hangman of frightful reputation, had pronounced merely several death sentences daily. A mere trifle in comparison with the hundreds and thousands now executed by the GPU. Whatever the Germans did, their occupation zone was now not nearly as bad as Russia (but they were only starting the terror). Well, the people had been running now for some time from the Soviet to the German Zone, not the other way.

So he asked Father, what are the prospects of freedom-fighting, but alas, he heard a negative opinion. Or rather a typical answer, Father said the time had yet not come and he would go again to war, when all went. If no longer young and strong, he had been a soldier once and would do his duty, but now an open fight would be suicidal and worse,

stupid and causing harm to other people. For the moment, the thing to do was wait and see how affairs developed.

In fact, Father had had enough for the moment, he had survived with luck but his experience told him, no luck holds forever. He wanted not to disappoint his son, nevertheless hoped the rest of war might be fought without him. Now the time had come for the others, at last the Allies might do something. It would be enough, if he kept correct as a Pole and a loyal clerk of the Polish State, clear of any work for the occupants, which would mean indirectly helping them. That was why he never went back to work on the railway, if never judging the people in need, who had to.

Now, the Western Democracies would manage without his further aid, would conquer Hitler. Poland would be restored, he might get some medal or reward, for carrying out his duty and keeping clean hands. Anyway, all would come back on the former track, in line for the deserved emeritus pension. This was only the judicious agenda, he demanded from life nothing extraordinary, if perhaps telling about his adventures in the quiet company of card partners. Maybe, there would be no further need to stick out one's neck to the bullets, unless all were to pitch in again. Then never mind such a fate.

Nobody anticipated then, that after winning the war, Poland awaited a fate worse than that of the countries who gave in to Hitler's pressure or even willingly took his side, actively helping the aggressor. Well, the Polish people suffered much worse than the Germans. Even this part of German country which after the lost war fell into the grip of Stalin. The future turned in an irrational, paradoxical manner, the victory caused the worst calamity in Poland's history. Exactly like in the fairy tale, between the cordial friends the dogs ate the hare.

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Despite better expectations, the campaign in Norway did not result in a German defeat. The first essay of intervening allies under Bergen, took merely a compromising course. Properly only the Norwegians continued the fight. After the first surprising attack and the defeat of the forces defending the littorals, never mind disorganization and betrayals, somehow the survivors gathered and with sacrifice braked the progress of the German Army. A handful of remaining soldiers fought as best they could, with not bad results, despite the inequality of numbers. But the allied forces were, piece after piece, thrown down into the waterfall – speaking delicately. Only at the far north, in Narvik, did the Allies after

an ineffective beginning in which they wasted their first and best opportunity, began to bite into the German position. It began to look as if Hitler might lose. Also the British Fleet began to act seriously, both sides suffered big losses, but for Great Britain still acceptable, though Germany never managed to build back its fleet.

Since then German oversee Fleet, their ships lost offensive ability (not so the U-boats!). Nevertheless the German "Alpenjager" –admitted even the military experts in the boardinghouse canteen – continued the persistent defense. Meanwhile their relief slowly marched along the hill roads over the littorals of Norway, braked by scratchy and irregular, but determined resistance of the last groups of Norwegian soldiers.

People wondered why Sweden did not intervene. Both countries, Sweden and Norway, had once formed a single organism and as before the border between them remained almost open, at least for the citizens. Admittedly the divorce at the beginning of the twentieth century did make some bad blood, but there was never a war or mutual ill will, all followed in a civilized manner. Both states collaborated closely and they conducted a uniform policy of complete neutrality with mutual backing. The Swedes, shocked by the attack on their neighbors, came across decisively on the side of the victims. The public opinion, as earlier in the Finnish war, postulated help to neighbors. In fact they mobilized the Army and put it on alert. In case of decided action for the defense of Norway, the German forces were not in a strong position and could be quickly pushed to sea. The Allied diplomacy did all possible to encourage Sweden, including promise of larger support.

Yes, but after the campaign in Poland, Allied diplomacy had lost any credibility. Besides, Sweden did not have freedom of motion, was placed in a deadly danger. From the end of the Finnish campaign, Sweden was directly and strongly threatened by a close friend and ally of Germany, the Soviets. Russia's offensive bases from the Hanko peninsula to the Aland islands, were a direct threat to Sweden. Stalin wanted as before actively help Hitler and considered this a gorgeous occasion to enlarge the Soviet territory at little cost. In this affair, several times he made matching proposals, but Hitler had no intent to let this ally, whom he distrusted, into Scandinavia. However if the German Army and his personal authority should be at risk, he might agree to this offer.

Everybody knew that for a longtime Scandinavia, like Turkey, had been the traditional goal and the most welcome object of Russian expansion, alas unattainable. Despite its giant borders, Russia felt the lack of a satisfactory exit to communication with the world. Bosphorus or

the Sund, this was the wanted way. The ports at the far North were surely not enough.

In short, Sweden with the greatest effort tried to prepare the defense of her own territory and keep neutrality, but her chances did not look good. Angus had his own idea. The best help for Norway would be a quick offensive on the west to break the main German forces. Hitler threw expeditionary armies at this distant and second-rate front. So they had to surrender – and then of course to remain in captivity until they had repaired all damage and harm. In conclusion, the campaign could turn profitable. The Allies fighting far from home, all the way somewhere near the arctic circle, with good result dealt with notable German forces. In this expedition Hitler probably engaged up to twenty divisions, probably more than a dozen, while the Allies engaged a smaller army, sure below five divisions. And assembled rather second-rate squads.

Never mind if they win or lose, the Germans could not pull back in time this part of their army, they would notice the lack later, in the main push by the Rhine. The Allies could more quickly and easily move about their army, ruling afloat, not to mention the heavy equipment. The Germans surely can't return in time, the English yes, with a finger in the nose. Angus heard also that by Narvik Polish troops were fighting, naturally beating the Germans good and proper. In this case, he thought of course it was an exception. They were not a second-rate squad but elite. Not many, the French had to add a few currants to a poor dough, the Allies at first performed badly.

Meantime, Angus with Father settled temporarily in a room on the second floor. There were three rooms; a central one with access from the stairs stood empty, substituting for a hall. The greater one beyond now occupied Slodek and his wife, but they appeared rarely, passing straight through and at once closing the door. The small room by the kitchen was not enough for three people, and remained now occupied by Mother only. Spring was warm, so on the third day after Father's arrival, they filled the newly bought mattresses with straw in the barn. In the former boardinghouse room stood two wooden beds with crosswise boards, on them now lay the straw mattresses. A mattress well stuffed with fresh straw was comfortable, if shaken well every day.

Instead in the room downstairs they opened the doors, leading direct to a little garden in front of the house, where the first flowers were bursting into bloom already. Through the exceptionally stinging winter, this door had remained closed and fastened from the outside with wooden shutters held by irons hooks, any space between being well stuffed with insulation, making it one of the warmest sections of wall.

But now, after opening the doors, there was a comfortable spot to sit on the three wooden steps. During the day Angus and Father spent most of their time downstairs, and ate there.

Meanwhile, Angus' mother after a couple of days voyaged to Radom and despite the expected quick defeat of the Germans decided to close the deal with the German clerk controlling the licenses on alcohol. Shortly afterwards, the value of the currency dropped further, and expeditions to Łańcut would assure a quick return on costs. Unexpectedly the local German authorities now demanded that each owner of a concession was to conduct personally a business on his premises selling liquor, no one allowed to sell this whole to another person. Because a restaurant could share a few associates, so formally one could evade the rule.

In this regard, Misior agreed to the proposal of Slodek that they should join a community of interest, open a gastronomic business, and share the profits. Next Mother too accepted the deal, both concessions should be connected. The building, a little separate barrack by the corner of Sands Street and the Roadway they rented quickly and cheaply, many shops and stalls came to a standstill and the places were empty. With joint force and funding, all could be arranged quickly. Already by the end of April and in the first days of May followed two expeditions to Łańcut (in which joined in also Angus' father, although still weak, he could not lift heavy burdens). However, they returned with ample booty, the commodity sold right away. It never came to the new premises which filled only a decorative role.

Now however resulted a conflict, namely Slodek and his wife declared they had formed separate partnerships with Misior and with Angus' parents, in each of which they had half shares. So of the whole business, they wanted a fifty percent profit, leaving twenty-five percent each for Misior and for Angus' mother. Misior at first protested but in the end inclined to give in, but Angus' mother said no, all equal or the deal is off. She thought the notion was ridiculous and wanted to hear no more. With the Slodek couple already in control of business affairs settling transactions and now not wanting to return any money, the partnership dissolved. Misior, uncritically listened to relatives, perhaps more intelligent and educated, but after all rescued from a bad crisis, without any contribution of their own, one could say bare and barefoot. Mother accurately appraised the people, decided better to cut the losses and break any further contacts. She had a wise caution, although then they were yet not Gestapo informers. Mother decided quickly, although Father had doubts and hesitated, at once she found and rented another free

premises, a little farther away, on Wspólna Street and settled as quickly and properly all the formalities.

Soon the conditions of the market changed, the factory in Łańcut stopped selling out its stock, the possibility of individual purchases there ended.

* * *

Capsule: The Łańcut golden apple – continued.

The heirs managed in the nick of time, just before the take-over by the Germans, to sell out the reserved beverages. Considering the contacts and the knowledge, the skill of managers, information as well as the disposable means, it was not surprising. There was a rumor that a large part of the stock was actually withdrawn from the warehouses and hidden, assuring the owners a smoother passage through the lengthy occupation with resources in-store, available for use as bribes.

* * *

So there remained only the possibility of buying alcohols here, in Ostrowiec, from the Farmer's Wholesale Cooperative Warehouse. However the Germans brought in maximum monthly allowances which gradually dwindled and in the summer of 1941 stopped altogether. After this vodka could be sold only in exchange when so-called "cornfield levy" or "," a coercive compulsory confiscation of food enforced by occupation authorities.

Although the source of sustenance and other affairs of life were important in practice and determined the family's fate, Angus nearly did not notice these immediate events. On the west the war was at last beginning, as all had expected with such longing. There is no need to describe here her course, anyway Angus did not have a blue idea of details. He never heard about the Mannstein plan's changed working and working design, nor about the Groups A and B of Field Armies. In fact he was unable to place exactly not only most of the mentioned locations, but even the Ardennes and Vosges, he had only the popular maps from the school atlas. A huge disappointment was that it was not the famous, powerful French army which began the offensive, Germany attacked first and with distinct ease moved forward. Admittedly father recounted to him again his favorite story, how some calm phlegmatic person had allowed to be attacked, let one hit and a second. Only when he had no other alternative, he struck back and the aggressor overthrown as many

times as earlier he had did hit. But here it did not look as if this story had found an analogy.

Logically the Allies should attack first and preferably at a moment when the Germans were busy elsewhere. They had wasted the first chance of quick victory in the autumn of 1939. After this in April 1940, they had still a second, although worse chance. Hitler engaged in Denmark and Norway only a small part of his large forces. However the preparations on the west he had to delay, anyway he budged only when he had finished concentrating the Wehrmacht. The French Army was ready long before. Besides, the moment had already passed when the French soldiers still wanted to fight. A long, idle and, let's be truthful, idiotic standing in imaginary readiness without any action would demoralize any army. However the unjust attack of Hitler on quiet and traditionally neutral, little countries without a reason agitated public opinion across the world, including also France. If the French Army moved at once, well, let's say within a week after this gangster attack which left no doubt about Hitler's goals. With the clear alternative of fighting or subjecting to his whim, the army would fight.

Great successes the French would not achieve, with such command as they had, impossible. Probably after some time the offensive would stick and change in positional war. It was however common knowledge the fatal experiences of 1914-18 had induced repulsion and apprehension of positional war, concerned not only in the French. Bloody stalemate, absurd slaughter, contrary to sound reason, impressed negatively all participants, including strongly also the Germans. Hitler had great difficulties to persuade the Germans to war, if only meeting no active resistance, at first just a striking lack of enthusiasm. Only leading them from success to success, he found a mass approval. If right at the beginning of serious engagement he presented a picture of long, hopeless position war, the German soldiers too would not want to fight. The generals' opposition at last would find an easy task. In a longer time, the weight of arms and people on the side of the Allies, not to mention better access to the world and to financial reserves would have to give results.

So not only the French did not want to fight, this referred to all. But the truth is, the French Army began to rot from the head and the soldiers are sensitive to such stink. The only rescue would be, proceed as in the time of the Great Revolution, to guillotine the top commanders and to appoint new able men, even if from the ranks. This of course was unreal and sounds like a bitter joke, however it concerned just a few people whose lives posed a threat to the lives of many thousands of

their subordinates and potentially the entire country. A community, like individual people, should also have a right for self-defense.

General Gamelin qualified as an excellent administrator, he knew all about budget, how to claim money, fight tooth and nail about funding and get it, to buy and invoice orders for more and more new toys. The army he considered a base of his prestige and influence. He hoped that overwhelming number of arms and men, a demonstration of force would do to frighten away the enemy. He never took seriously any distant possibility that he might have to fight. The thought paralyzed him with fear, not for his own person, in the time of war the Commander in Chief is the best protected man in the country. In all of modern history it has never happened that any such leader has been in serious danger. Probably he was clearly aware that he might prove inadequate for a serious task, in case of a vulgar fight he felt merely helpless.

Thus all the time he tried commit no act which could induce the enemy to unsuitable behavior. When however this enemy, altogether unjustly, committed the "faux pas" of naughtily attacking him, he did not see another way than to advise the immediate end of war, plead for armistice, peace, surrender. When the cursed politicians did not immediately comply with the competent opinion of the enlightened strategist, he threw all the blame on them and resigned from the command. From this moment he did not react to anything, leaving the army without orders, except paper plans prepared in case of proper behavior of the Germans.

Hitler, in accepting the Mannstein plan, took a big risk. The elite of his Army, the armored fist, could not only easily be cut off, but in fact for five days was not attached to the shoulder. The tanks acted without support and with an unprotected rear. Even small forces of French infantry could recreate the front and close over the break. In case of an organized counterstroke the tanks, bereaved of supplies and cut off from reinforcements, would exhaust the possibilities of battle and surrender, or at best try to return the people to their own line, abandoning the heavy equipment. But Hitler accurately assessed the enemy, knowing that if one wants to fight, and the other at any price tries to avoid, the proportion of forces has nothing to do with it.

In these days, but only after General Gamelin had in fact stopped to command, the French government appointed a new Commander-in-Chief. However, he had to come from Syria. Precisely these critical five days! The new Commander-in-Chief still did not come, the old one was formally in command but did nothing (as before, but now he could pretend offense) and the General Staff found no general with initiative.

Meantime, Angus seeing the war going badly and likely to be protracted, stopped seeking information and even reading newspapers, at least until as Germany should begin to lose. As before none of the Poles believed in Hitler's victory. Nobody wanted to believe, even consider such a possibility. The monster could not conquer, if this happened, this world would end to exist. Anyway, in Angus' conviction and that of all with whom he spoke, it would be over for them, because in this world would be no place for the Poles. Hitler treated word for word the Polish hymn (national anthem) "Poland Has Not Yet Perished as long as we are alive") and insisted he would not leave living Poles, so the rest would be of no interest to them. So better to wait, all the way till the great day – it must come in the end, and for the time being best turn to other affairs.

Angus decided to concentrate on his private war with Satan. Experience had already taught him not expect a quick success, but still he did not lose hope. Finally he could not forever live in deadly sin, impossible. Like his compatriots in this war, he had no choice, only to conquer or to perish. Now came the time when he had to muster all his forces and overcome, already for too long he had disappointed himself and God, unable to mobilize, had succumbed to the devil. If he was in a small part worth as much as he dreamed of being, he would never break down so miserably after each small improvement. Would never have sunk deeper and deeper in the hell of secret ungodliness. Who swims in sin, will sink in sorrow.

He therefore mobilized all his forces, nurturing the strong decision for improvement, the state of grace, the help of Mr. God, of Jesus and His Mother, sought to engage many saints with firm promises. Now only forward, in the name of all that is good and against satanic evil! If he now disappointed all the saints, it would mean that he was not and never would be a genuine man, would forever remain an outcast, something despicable, inspiring abhorrence.

Of course, with such psychic tension he did not have the least chance of success, this was genuine obsession. He tried too hard, overexerted himself, a clear path to defeat and the worst breakdown in his life. The world as seen by Angus was simple, even primitive, all took place in black and white, without indirect nuances, and this picture he treated radically and seriously. Still a child, his picture of the world built itself from theories and based on deductions. All resulted logically from the highest, the only just bases.

He took a decision which he was not in a position to realize, just as he would be unable, for example, to stop any of the physiological works

of the organism. Maybe previously he had too soon speeded up these functions by experimenting on his body. Doubtful, as he was growing and developing quickly. Anyway now, after his organism began to produce sperm, in the spring, under the influence of light and warmth it increased in a natural way. Hard to tell, maybe this process could have been delayed six months or a year. Maybe also, if he had not created the path in the nervous system, another mechanism would have kicked in first, for example nocturnal emissions. However, the worst was that now he had motivated his will and his mind so much that after his fated defeat, it led straight to an intellectual aberration.

When it became plain that despite the greatest effort, the full strain of mind and spirit, all the authorities and saints disappointed him, Angus credited all the blame to him. His frustration began to change to auto aggression. It began with dreams to pay for his sin by becoming a martyr for the faith, or to perish for any great cause. To resign from life for other people or best of all for the Motherland, in the last moment before death to arouse a candid sorrow and then to die. Gradually however he began to feel a still greater disgust for himself and to admit that he did not deserve God's forgiveness. Willing to punish himself, to choose out the single most cruel torture about which he had ever read, or rather had skipped over the places in books because they awoke repulsion and loathing. Unexpectedly he noticed that his aggressive dreams turned also against Violet, merely because she pleased him and, above all, made him aware of her, creating temptation. (Poor girl, she did not know how to do without that which had become the content of her life. She nearly withered without a boy, of course it didn't have to be Angus. But no other was in reach. Although as before they did not speak and she would have been right to feel resentful, she showed, or rather gave tangible signals, of her willingness to pardon).

In following dreams, he converted her as well, explained her collapse in the abyss of sin unless they sought atonement. First he comforted her and supported her spirit, when together they punished her body because it was beautiful and it waked sinful lust. Next they punished him, while she encouraged and supported his spirit.

In short, he dropped into a trap of sadomasochistic desires, if unaware of the matter. This need got so strong, once when they had bring from the garden fuel for the kitchen-stove and she stooped to lift something, disclosing a neat fragment the back part of her knee, suddenly he hit her with a twig. Straight away he began to apologize and to assure her that it had happened involuntarily, that he saw a wasp or gadfly coming from a weed in the garden. Anyway Violet did not believe

him because his words were chaotic and unconvincing. However, she did not denounce him indoors, kept all to herself and changed into a longer dress so the red streak was invisible. Angus surprised by his sudden, impulsive aggression. And still more so when after a couple days, under-the-table at which they worked out lessons, he again felt Violet's leg adhering to his.

This event and his own behavior frightened him. Still more, when he noticed the dreams about punishment invariably led straight on to a new sin. Then he lost any hope. The matter was not only that he would have to suffer in hell for all eternity. It made sense that to answer for his guilt he must be damned both on earth and in hell, although the prospect of hell forever appeared a little harsh. But the most painful was that he was unable to keep faith with his God and turned traitor to all that he sincerely loved and in which he believed. And if so, also without doubt he would be unable in the hour of truth to keep faith with his Country. He was unworthy to fight for it. All former apprehensions about whether he might be only a worthless worm or some other lower form of life, alas turned now to certainty. He only dirtied and defiled the world, and this situation could not be allowed to continue. This matter he had already considered and decided. He could not let such a reptile, amphibian, or other monster stain the earth. He could not wait the contempt which he felt for himself to be shared by more people, and chiefly, put to shame his close family. There remained only one-way out, a quick suicide.

But how could his parents accept his suicide? Mother many times had told him what a horrible experience and pain it was for her, when his elder brother had died in early childhood. This was long before the birth of Angus and she did not want then to live, but next happened a miracle, God gave her an another child. This was why she fretted about him with her over-care, because if for the second time she lost a son, surely she would not survive herself. It was necessary to invent something, he could not tell his parents the truth about his situation.

He looked around him at his environment, as at something that already lay beyond him, as if he had prepared for travel. The only problem was, how should he do this? An unfortunate accident did not enter the reckoning, would not ease his mother. Could he rush at a German and be shot? But, to be sure, he must to at least threaten him with something, for example with a knife. However, he was familiar with the warning of the occupation authorities that for each manslaughter of a German, even an attempt, one hundred Polish hostages would perish.

He admittedly did not want to live, but he had not the right to imperil a hundred other folks who probably did want to.

The warning was more than empty threats. After relative calm, about half of May, during which maps of the western front covered drawings marking a success of German armies, in Poland, and especially in the GG began the mass extermination of the Poles. Measures were taken first against Polish intelligentsia and all those whom the German authorities considered potentially able to become natural leaders of the populace. The terror included a broad fan, from priests and teachers to former officers (even the dismissed). Any person with high education, if this appeared in earlier registrations, but also federal and other government officials, especially those known and held in esteem. But rather not the rich, usually they had a chance to buy out, as before in Greaterpoland (the Germans, if possible, turned still more money hungry).

In the whole so-called Action AB, as the occupants named the first wave of mass terror, perished over fifty thousand people. Although there were not such ostentatious executions as in Greaterpoland and other provinces incorporated into the German Reich, where mass terror began earlier, on the streets appeared many announcements of arrest and pronouncements of death. People knew also more grim news about murders than displayed the notices. Sure, all this came to public awareness with a notable delay, well after the planned and effected action.

All this, just like still worse information from the front Angus noticed poorly, because for about half of June he lost contact with the world and now only awaited the opportunity to end his life. In the last days he managed to disconnect and forget all problems, as he found books. Nearby, where Piaski Street united with the main road, about two hundred meters to the south, lived an elderly teacher, a person actively engaged in political self-government and social actions but years ago, recently emeritus. With luck, now little known, the AB action did not touch him. Mr. Grankowski all his life had gathered books, which now made a great library. In time, when public libraries closed, and collections of books perished by order of the occupants, he made his library accessible to neighbors. He settled regular hours and he noted the books on library cards, just as had been done in genuine libraries, although doing so free of any charge. Father heard about this first and he and Angus at once benefited from so solemn an occasion. Torrid days and warm evenings, except for the hours of lessons (now Father increased the tempo and usually added two hours after dinner), Angus

spent now in the room overhead, lying on his straw mattress with a book. He read no serious books, it was not worth the effort. Mostly he read now any nonsense of poor type, about gray and red eminences, secret expeditions, underground passages, and chases in the kingdom of France. In short, all sorts of so called "chaff" badly digested, which however allowed him to detach from reality and stop thinking.

The world's end came suddenly. At twenty-fifth of June, through widely open windows, erupted the sound of church bells from the town, to which gradually joined farther echoes beyond the horizon. Tenants went out in the yard to hear, but nobody knew the meaning. After hours came news: the war had ended, Germany had conquered, France had already signed the surrender and asked for peace.

This could not be the truth. Never, never!

* * *

However the next day's left no doubt. Newspapers continuously brought new reports, what a humiliation France had to swallow. The French asking for peace, how their soldiers tossed down their weapons and on bended knees begged for life and then how grateful they were to the Germans for good treatment. The victors treated the POWs to cigarettes!

Hitler from the beginning had declared his intent of washing off what he considered shame beyond reproach: the 1918 armistice and the Versailles Treaty. Now he achieved the aim, he could humiliate France and did so, sparing nobody and nothing. He even ordered the Foche railway carriage to be taken out from its museum to face the French legates in Compiègne. Next treated them not even like underdogs, but a lower form of life, without the right to a voice and unworthy to hear the voice of the great Fuehrer. Any further revenge he temporarily deferred as now he needed France to subdue the free world.

For the Poles, this became perhaps the greatest national tragedy, worse even than the lost campaign of 1939. Even after the loss of their own motherland, the depression, pain and despair had not been so great. For them, it was the end of every hope. In 1939 they set to work, outnumbered in men and armaments, however fought competently and with full engagement to the end and in so doing saved, for the moment, their allies. From inglorious causes, any help from the side of the Allies was impossible, they did not carry out the previously agreed-on plans and only therefore did Germany succeed. The Allies remained intact, although delaying support, but had plenty of time to prepare better and

now must easily beat the already weakened Germany. Instead happened something terrible , inconceivable – the best horse, on which they had bet all their fortune and future, did not reach the finish line.

For the others – (the first reasoning was primitive, shared by majority), but precisely they, an intellectual elite formed the public opinion – France was almost a second motherland and sister of Poland. True, this great and irrational love was never returned, and France took profit from the faith of the Poles. Besides a couple of kind words from time to time she didn't do anything for them in return.

When Poland lost her independence, in wars of 1792 and 1794, nevertheless she relieved by these the French Revolution. Short, she provided disturbance at the critical moment, sharing the ideals but pulling down on herself the army of foes. Next legions of emigrating Poles had the honor of being allowed to fight for France. Then Napoleon found a reservoir of faithful, though less clever, soldiers who persisted in his service to the end. In 1830 again, the Polish rising stopped the intervention of the Holy Alliance, when the tsar Mikołaj (Nikolai) had already begun concentration of the army which was to enter and subdue France (and Belgium). The Poles never received advancement in return, besides the saccharine voices expressed in private. Already one year after the revolt which saved the hide of the government, they heard officially from the mouth of a French speaker that "law rules again in Warsaw." Because the struggles of the Poles brought advantage for France cost-free, so occasionally they could hear a couple words of appeasing unofficial patronage. Only a few – but they needed them. France was the only country in the hard outside world where people took to the Poles, sympathized, showed interest, sometimes advised, if not always for the best. Where refugees from the homeland, especially in the time of Great Emigration, but also before and after, could find shelter – of course if they had coins and could pay.

Finally, progressive public opinion, admittedly wisely discounted by W. Wilson for earning large political advancement by throwing in a fair dose of popular motives with the political agenda, decided to reestablish Poland. France backed Wilson's initiative and judged it a profitable engagement. She gained a trustworthy and faithful partner to the insurance complex of European alliances. An ally who in fact pulled down on herself the first thunderbolt, in the decisive hour went before the guns and stopped with her own body the aggressor almost all of 1939. Much better investment than the Maginot Line – and hundreds of times cheaper.

* * *

Capsule: Paris and Gdańsk, who had to die for what.

Only later did the Poles hear an undeserved, twisted, dishonest war-cry invented by Hitler's propaganda, alas accepted and repeated by many French especially the communists: "We will not die for Gdańsk." How was that, why Gdańsk? If Poland had agreed to remain neutral, turning traitor to France, Hitler in 1939 would never have mentioned Gdańsk. He would left it in peace and never proposed to take anything, quite the opposite. In fact, he offered much in return, great territories to the Black Meer in the East, with Lithuania as appetizer right for start.

Hitler had an appetite for the rich-tasting occidentals bites, Paris and London, never mind Gdańsk. Only when the Poles gave "no can do" for an answer, did not accept his imposing proposals, proved willing to fight with France and to die for France, Hitler pulled out Gdańsk as pretext, center of pressure. Rather unconvincing, considering he had the town of Gdańsk already in full power and the formal approval of Poland had no importance.

In the most authoritative, the top circles of Poles ruled a fixed belief, lasting conviction that France was a traditional and eternal friend, in hard periods a vicarious homeland. Almost each Pole dreamed, sometimes in life to see France, and among the middle and upper classes the majority had personal connections with that country, friends or even relatives.

Lastly some part of the Poles thought France the motherland of all free people, light and hope for humanity, superior even to local loyalty. France, in their idea, created progress and culture for all humanity, without it would prevail the barbarous night. These people saw the France collapse as the defeat of universal values, like the collapse of Greece or Rome. The culture ended in which they had lived, and they saw now the beginning of a new dark age, or a stillbirth. Thus also, what happened was terrible.

"Indeed, above the world
Hung black doom, like a raven,
If the hero's wife (maybe paraphrasing Ramayana, better write sister)
Dares to lust for his foe."

* * *

The first reaction to the monstrous news was a stunned daze, like after a mallet blow to the head. A few days later, exactly a day before

his twelfth birthday, Angus asked his parents for a conversation on an important matter. Proposed, as best way out, a collective suicide.

"Anyway, we could never live in the world which remains. Our world exists no more. If Germany has won, this means for the Poles there shall never be a place on the earth. Why to continue a beggarly existence, held in contempt, suffer unnecessarily and so eventually die in despair and humiliation under German boots. Better die together, this may be nothing, merely we will arrange a pleasant day or two, and then we will fall asleep and no more wake up. Nobody shall hanker or despair after us. This is the best and the most judicious we can do," argued Angus.

His parents heard him out quietly, did not explode with indignation nor even interrupt. They glanced only a moment at each other, but Angus did not know to read this look. Although he had seen a look something like when, still a child, he expressed any unexpected, but perhaps accurate opinion. He could not tell whether it meant approval, or something opposite.

Pretty often Angus was ahead of the spirit of his time. Now also forestalling the future, he had already decided about his death earlier. He did so from other, quite personal reasons, but the thrust of his plans became right, the winds blew exactly in such a direction. Through all Poland flowed a genuine wave of suicides, committed first by people generally known and respected, of top authority. Also in Ostrowiec, some representatives of intelligence, creative and altruistic individuals, beyond reproach, now chose death. Mostly top intelligentsia and youth, in fact the less resistant psychically and the most susceptible, but not only these. In the grove on the opposite side of Piaski Street were found two hanged people. One of them Angus had seen, he worked for the local church, of which at the time existed only a chapel. A harmless drunkard with a rare name, Klemens, rumor would have it that he did not hang himself at all from despair after the collapse of France, but because of household misunderstandings. His wife did not want to tolerate him drunk. Even before the tragedy, people told a joke: when the priest turned round at the altar intoning: "O, clemens, o, pius!" The man's wife rebuked him: You see, already even the priest has recognized you a "pijus." (Polish: a drunkard).

Just this unlucky drunkard Angus ran out to see, when he heard he had been found. Telling the truth, it was an irksome, even a repulsive sight. Still more with a gang of children from the street who ran up to look and stood exchanging incredibly material and cynical sentences. The thought which later persecuted Angus was, maybe there was some

analogy. The poor wreck of a man might also be a victim of a habit, if indeed less sinful than Angus. Perhaps he hanged himself not because of the great calamity but because he could not stop drinking, and wished to cover up the true reason, so took advantage of the occasion to commit his deed. The memory of this view made him not want to see the second corpse and he decided never to hang himself, whatever happened. The other man was a professional soldier, a noncommissioned officer, a survivor from the Hubal squadron.

Angus planned another death. His former knowledge about poison gases pushed his thoughts in this direction; there were two versions possible, both easy enough. First suffocation, now admittedly it was too hot and there was no need lit a fire in the big oven, but in kitchen the fire kept burning all the time. One could manage to gather more left-over heat, to prepare a rich burning mixture and cover up the chimney. He deliberated also about other poisons or sleeping drugs, they could make for easy suffocation. In reserve he held still another possibility, certain easily accessible substances, if not strong poisons in themselves, ones which could become so, when the organism was stimulated by alcohol. He had memorized how under the influence of alcohol the toxicity increases by fifty times.

Now he wanted to present in detail these elaborate plans, but conversation somehow stuck fast. Words fell sparsely, stalled in his throat. With his parents as before listening in silence, he felt that his speech was being taken without enthusiasm and gradually he himself subsided into silence. After a moment Father, forestalling Mother who also opened her mouth, proposed to defer further conversation a little, so he could think this over. The matter Angus had raised was an important decision and he requested a couple of days for consideration.

Angus, prepared for discussion, expecting violent opposition, had prepared many more arguments on each eventuality. Sure he was right, he was ready to argue, to display the justness of his idea. Such an answer surprised him, but was rational and of course, he could not refuse. He agreed, accenting that he had strong arguments and had prepared to develop them.

The principal conversation took place the next afternoon, on a walk, only with Father. The preceding day, after midday, Father first went out to town and returned with a big parcel of books, still unpacked.

Now, from the moment when soon after crossing Piaski Street they turned left, and then left again to the ancient forest, began an intense exchange of words. Father was for Angus a great authority. The disappointment which commonly boys experience as they mature, at the

point when they learn that in most affairs they have other ideas than do their parents and become critical, still did not appear. It is not an easy task, neither in the critical moment nor ever at all, to share one's own experience with anybody, but especially with one's offspring. Father never sought Angus' attention unasked, except a few times when he felt it a duty, but to no benefit, one has to learn by one's own experience and in one's own time.

Yes, he liked to give good advice, remember similar examples, but expected people would continue to act as they wanted, not take advice, and regret it later. He never bothered to say – I told you so. Only twice in his lifetime did he seriously try to give his son the benefit of his experience, and only once with success. Now he took a position of judicious patience, preferring to wait and delay decision.

At first he admitted his son's arguments, did not contradict them but refused to accept proposals, did not try "reductio ad absurdum" nor toss thunderbolts of superior logic, never condemned the reasoning. Objectively, he agreed that a part of Angus' conclusions appeared logical, but most of the facts were so far unknown, so it was too early for a decision. The proper course was to wait and see the next development, too little data being the most frequent source of errors. In second place only (although exaggeratedly religious himself) he put the argument the Catholic religion decidedly forbids suicide.

Angus expected this second argument, prepared for this answered it first: "I do not want to commit suicide for pleasure, nor because I am bored with life. If I was, surely I would never so induce my parents. Simply, we are in a coercive position, without choice. Like this or like that, we have no chance other than to perish. Already in this moment practically we do not live, only to give satisfaction and pleasure to the Germans, or rather their professional executioners, we forestall them and we decide from our own initiative. Why watch horrors which will succeed and die knowing one's lack of strength, defeat and calamity. We are only taking action to speed up what anyway is irreversible."

Angus knew his father liked to put aside hard decisions, hoping the matter would clear itself. As well, the comment about inadequate data was surely true, but differently so, concerned the knowledge Father had. He never imagined his son had more reasons to die, that he stood before an impossible dilemma and was unable to solve it, nor continue life in despair. But this all he could not tell his father. On the contrary, he wanted to end the matter quickly before the parents should ever learn how deep into filth their son had fallen. He had already decided, wanted only to prepare his parents, save a shock and keep up the appearances.

So he asked if Father imagined any chance, no matter how slight, the conditions might change, when Germany conquered finally. Hitler never cared about the deed, had no scruples and used radical methods, all he had already done was only a little introduction. Before long the Poles would be only a memory, like the Western Slavs or ancient Prus. After all, Hitler praised as an example old methods of "Drang nach Osten," wanted to return to historic expansion and to colonize East Europe. So what did Father think, how could the circumstances after the victory of the Germans change – and when?

"This exactly I do not know," answered father, "I never told you, but I have already been in situation seemingly without exit. Even recently, and before, almost to the end of 1919 I experienced in Russia all around me a universal slaughter, much worse than everything you have seen and I very-much hope, ever see. Not without reason, I wanted never to remember and tell you this. Condemned to death, I waited for enforcement of the sentence and not only did I bid good-bye to life, but as you now, I decided it was not worth waiting any longer. Not to mention, a couple of times I stood before the barrels of the guns, sure that in a few seconds I would hear the shots. Or near me appeared people with bayonets, I expected they would use them, or push me in the river with a stone around my neck. But look, I am here and I live.

"No one can anticipate what will happen. I am not a prophet and I do not try to foretell the future, but precisely for that reason it is worth waiting. Interesting, what shall happen next. There are many possibilities, you may as well use your own imagination. At first, I could name two, most probable now. I think, if the worst comes to the worst, possibly we find a way to run away, to migrate. In the last hundred and fifty years, many Poles have had to, nevertheless remained good Poles and patriots. Also now, the Polish Army, beside the refugees, contains many longtime emigrants, or the next generation, who volunteered to fight for the old country. So you may do, too, if alive. At the next opportunity you may fight the Germans in a next war, there will be not lack of occasion.

"The second possibility is that in some moment Hitler stumbles. He is a typical gambler, the more he wins, the more risks he will take, unable to rest content with what he has gained. Always doubling the stakes, finally he will stretch his forces too thin, overdraw his possibilities and then will meet the usual fate of such people. I think there are equal chances, if you can wait, you may see him commit a suicide first.

"Anyway all this talk is simply speculations. Merely possibilities, which nobody may now anticipate. Let's take a serious proposal.

"Most probably we shall try to emigrate at any risk, but do not imagine it is a onetime risk. Even if we run away successfully, the most difficult is to get a setup in a new place. Not a nice adventure, you never realize (imagine) how hard till you take it on. I want deliver to you the skill thanks to which I always managed to stay with the wave even when at first hitting the bottom. I mean mathematics. I know you had always good results in school, managed the classes with no problem. But sincerely this is almost nothing and I plan to pass on to you so much of what I know, all of it. In a new life, in a new world, you will have an advantage.

"I foresee this is not an easy task, who knows if you may keep on. Heavy work as you never knew before. You had have an easy and pleasant life, I experienced a hard one. I propose a deal to you: for a few months we will work together seriously, not for entertainment, but like adult men. We will do all that we are able to and experience a big adventure, check our potential to the limit. From my side, if your expectation comes true, I will admit you were right and solemnly promise to consider your proposals. If the future evolves the way you think, I am ready, to back your proposals and will try explain to Mother.

"So what do you decide, do we have a deal? What you say may be sound, but still we shall see what we shall see. I propose an agreement: something for something. Try first my proposal, this way we can always correct the course for another one. If it turns disappointing, let's try yours. Possible you may be right, but we have still time, we must not hurry with dissolution. If we start with your proposal, we will be able to change nothing."

Angus never expected such a surprising conversation. Rather supposed he might be persuaded, convinced, directed, coached maybe with harsh insistence, both parents together might outvote him, he would need to stick with his decision in defense. Whatever, he had firmly decided to commit suicide, because he saw no way out, hated himself and considered his life a shame to him, his family and so on, to all humanity and the entire universe. He had wanted in fact only to prepare his parents, so the shock would come less unexpected.

The matter-of-fact tone, as between equal partners already flattered him. He felt how someone who has a full right to his opinion, to say his own sentence and stay with his own judgment. On the other hand, he could not refuse the logic in Father's reasoning. And finally, sincerely examining the different possibilities aroused his interest, incited his imagination, always rich developed. He imagined already, how they would sneak across the border, despite many dangers, travel to America,

perhaps to the USA – but no, better chose Canada. Not only because it was now an ally, but there he could become a lumberjack, work in the forests. As everybody knows lumberjacks are big (he hoped his stature would be acceptable, it progressed well) – and awful strong. In this way he would develop his strength, and then on the first occasion war with Germany might come to pass anywhere, put in as a volunteer. He would relieve the remaining Poles to recover freedom and independence, this would be a gorgeous aim, worth living and dying for.

So he could defer his original design for a time, to devote a little work to Father, whose authority he accepted and under whose influence he was and as before wanted to be. He could at least see what Father had in mind. The affair presented like this, he could not answer with no, he felt obligated to agree. And if even, at the price of a few months' delay, the worst problem, how to get his parents to accept his suicide, became solved, this was worth any amount of time.

An agreement reached by clever engineering.

* * *

It turned out the books Father had brought home were textbooks. Arithmetic to the seventh class as well as another, older, a collection of accessory exercises and still a few different textbooks of arithmetic, all used in professional schools and with collections of exercises to go with them. Father had made a thorough search of bookshops buying many textbooks, also on geometry, but chiefly arithmetical calculations. And as well, a bunch of notebooks.

They began with this plan, that besides the continuing lessons, Angus got another, a little bigger task of doing math after midday. As before they went together on a walk, but now they picked any spot in the forest or on the edges of it, unrolled a blanket and for three to four hours Angus started calculating. Father did not interfere, only checked, meanwhile reading a book. After a couple of days Angus judged this to be wrong and of little interest, also undeservedly unequal in comparison to the others and then Father doubled the task. Already Angus had felt hard done by at the lessons, because not only did he have more difficult tasks, but Father also assigned to him much greater portions than to Violet. Now he had a second duty, and when he complained – Father again doubled the load. Now he did even up to fifteen pages daily, occupying every moment from morning to evening. So much that only half an hour, scarcely an hour before darkness he could read a little, to fall quietly asleep. But even in the night, he counted in dreams.

In the first days of July, Father ended regular household lessons, began the time of normal vacation. But not for Angus. Now, if the weather allowed (and almost all summer long it did allow), they went together to the forest and Angus without interruption performed calculations, with Father never satisfied and increasingly speeding up the tempo. Seventh class was not radically harder than the sixth, only more focused on speedy methods of calculation, almost constantly applying the rule of three, even several times in one exercise, so gradually they became longer and more labor-consuming. In geometry, Angus for the first time met with letters applied instead of ciphers in the formulas. Anyway they were not genuine formulas and the student did not transform them, only simple algorithms, after substituting the letters with figures, computing them, got a solution. The idea was, at once prepare the students for math, starting from simple arithmetic, without long theory, in a practical way.

When they finished the textbook for the seventh class, but still had a few exercise-books in reserve, Father again visited bookshops and bought arithmetic to class one of the high school and a few new collections of exercises. Angus began to calculate like a machine, but still too slow and not on time, so he tried to do the simple partial calculations quickly in memory and remember them, without writing.

In this period he achieved and happily remained in a dazed state, a stupor, working as an automaton, with only brief interruptions for eating and physiological need. Even with washing, he had to hurry. Only after dinner Father allowed, even encouraged a brief easy pause, a closing of the eyes. For half an hour, anyway some time after a meal, mental efficiency always fails, better to take a break. Sensible, clever – but a little inhuman, heartless, gradually it turned into a genuine nightmare, the outside world nearly stopped to exist. Angus felt like a slave chained to wheels and constantly driven on. He set to this and with time regarded a new exercise with one blink of the eye, imagined a scheme and calculated still quicker, often skipping the middle phases mentally. Besides, while continuing to calculate with one part of his mind, he became able to, simultaneously entertain other brief reflections or thoughts, something like a divided consciousness. It happened also that he felt satisfaction, if he succeeded in doing some particularly elegant or quick simplification, managed some exercise better than usual. Father also had more work, with time even he needed to check on paper fragments solved by his son mentally. He had now less time for reading books, nevertheless constantly pressed for increased tempo. Angus reached and in gusts crossed over thirty pages from the book daily,

filling the same number of pages, or less, in the notebook, thickly scratched with pencil. For the more straightforward exercises he noted only a result. Father as before scrupulously checked each exercise. For the more complicated ones Angus had to explain how each had been solved. If there were more ways than one, why he chose this one specifically (of course, it had no influence on the final result). Father principally demanded that he write down at least the results of all partial calculations before the total, also there be no mistakes, not even small ones, accidental like a reversal of digits. Every error was always equally bad, the result had to be right, no exculpations.

At the end of August the madness reached the bottom, no way it could be any worse. Now the father could not keep up with the checking, had to be busy all the time. Not a chance to read any book now, unless a little before sleep. They managed forty pages of the textbook daily, the reserves ending. Properly Father could not coach Angus any more, he had delivered all he had to deliver. The younger mind was more elastic in adaptation and was now at an advantage. Anyway the crazy effort lasted some days more.

The exercises from the program of the first classes of high school demanded planning, designing the idea first. Sometimes an essay led not to a solution, but to identifying a further question. The exercises were complicated and knotty, often one page demanded more work than several pages done earlier. The end of August brought distinct shortening of the day.

* * *

The first day of September 1940, the anniversary of the war's eruption, Angus spent not in the forest, but alone (till the afternoon) in a bright, sunny and calm, rectangular room. Inside stood four small tables and fifteen chairs, and by the opposite walls, the door next to a big picture window and counter with cupboards beyond. There was nobody else and nobody expected, so on one of the tables Angus placed books and a notebook, instead of a pencil, inkstand and a pen. The hectic days had elapsed, still from the momentum he calculated a few hours daily. It remained to complete fragments from the high school textbook for class one, as well as one or two collections of competitive exercises, indeed complicated. More puzzles than exercises, in each too many data, some unnecessary, misleading. To get a solution, the student had to hold in mind the aim, otherwise after many calculations, he could find a dead end, or a true but useless result. Many were deliberate traps. After much

work, he could discover that some number equals itself, or instead of arrival time of some ship, got the balance of its cargo, number of sailors, or the even the proverbial age of its captain.

Two months ago, when Father had undertaken to save his son by the mad but efficient method of making world records in counting, Mother acting as head of household, had rented and arranged the premises where he was now. They framed only a decoration, needed by license rules. From July, Mother dissolved the partnership with the Slodeks and stopped using their premises, arranging her own. Meantime Moshek and his family had to settle in the ghetto, no way and for no price could he stay on Piaski Street. The last transaction he made was to put Mother in contact with the alcohol receiver in July – and for future. This buyer turned out to be one Mrs. Róźdzkarska, who run a prosperous restaurant opposite Piaski Street and vis-a-vis the barrack with the Slodek beerhouse.

Mrs. Róźdzkarska had a unique talent for arranging a good atmosphere, and her excellent lead awoke the envy of Slodek and that of a third competitor Mr. Wasilkowski. Three buildings in close, two always empty, the third full and cheerful, bursting at the seams. Under Mrs. Róźdzkarska rule, all went there like to family, natives as well as travelers on the road. She have no concession and officially was not allowed the sale of alcohol, but in fact consumption and demand was high. By the agency of Moshek, Mother became a steady deliverer, the entire alcohol allotment went there directly on the purchase day.

The place in which Angus now worked lay on Wspólna Street, parallel to the highway about one kilometer north. All August it stood closed and empty, only from the beginning of September, in cupboards and on the counter they put out a few packs of acid candy and bottles of lemonade. In case there should appear any client who wanted to buy vodka, Angus had to tell him the supply had just run out and the new delivery still had not arrived. But clients did not come, anyway Angus never saw any. Angus came at nine in the morning to hold the fortress, which nobody besieged, till afternoon. After dinner Father came and checked the exercises, now it was he who did not keep up, the son calculated quicker than the father. While Father gradually lost enthusiasm, they continued enough not get out of practice, but without overworking. The best proof was that they finished that set of books, and Father did not buy more. Yes he sought out and brought home other textbooks for the seventh class, a fairly interesting bunch of reading, biology, geography and the like. Some purely excellent, destined specifically for the student who was finishing his education with

the seventh class, not going on to high school or other schools. Therefore the program was to set up and create an opportunity at least to taste independent work, to widen the horizons and at least to show the sources of information about the world and where to search. In sum, to give a short look at all the pupils were missing in life, education and general information. Next to compose a framework possible to complete by independent work. In short, all the matters students would learn if they continued to high school, if from need condensed.

Mother wanted now also, after the effective work of Father, to coach something to her son, but alas, this something had to be German language. Angus however stuck in his boots and would not budge. He declared that he had already with Father a definite contract, had done his part and now came time for the other side, discussing the suicide. To tell the truth, this was no longer relevant, neither he nor others felt so inclined anymore. Great Britain and Poland had declared a mutual intent, to continue the war and the alliance up to the victory. So not all was lost, hope remained. Also, with much work and some success his private distress seemed not so urgent, maybe there was some way out from the sin.

Yet the idea of learning the German language was for Angus, not only disgusting, but an introduction to the worst, black scenario, submission to the Germans. Besides, he did not see, how such a skill could ever be useful to him. Either there would be no more Germans here, or he and parents would try to emigrate, probably illegally.

After fierce discussion, Mother had to resign herself to defeat, after trying to explain that a knowledge of the enemy language is precisely the most necessary. She used also as crown the argument that bees even from poisonous blooms are able gather a good honey, and the German language was not only the language of Hitlerites, Germany had created also many universal human values. Angus did not deny this, but for him learning the German language now had a horrible taste and awoke associations better forever forgotten. Finally they make a conditional peace, Angus agreed to learn some, but only to write and read German and never to speak it.

So Angus' duty was to open the family business and keep watch there just in case, any client came and wanted to buy vodka, but lucky this never happened. So Angus had little to work, but a pretty easy time. Now the father began to lower in depression. He would arrive after midday and remain till seven o'clock, beginning with checking the exercises. But backlogs grew and today would grow more, because after an hour or two Mr. Buczkowski would arrive to play cards, the old game

of preferans. Mr. Buczkowski was not a client, but only a cardplaying partner and besides a retired official, a doctor of law at Krakow University. Mother admittedly not gladly saw "the Galician doctor", but Father found companionship and chiefly a partner in cards, the game which he still liked most. Of course, he played only for satisfaction, never for money – just as before the war. Distinctly, Father lately had begun to settle into a deep depression, later than Angus, but catching him too. He aged and declined, even stopped noticing his looks, about which before the war he had been so pedantic. Angus began to commiserate with him, he understood him fully. At the time nothing announced the potential turns of events which Father had foreseen, on the contrary, the future still looked dark. The game of cards was a way of recalling the relaxed and comforting memories of the time before the war, allowing him to disconnect, to forget.

When they spoke after playing, Mr. Buczkowski tuned pessimistic. He considered that England had no chance to put down the Germans, although surely they would be able to defend the island for some time. The English would show that were capable of defense only to start peace talks under the best conditions. Maybe, as in Napoleon's times they would hold out a few, even several years, but for us, the Poles, this means no help, we don't have much hope. Father did not answer, although with stubbornness he repeated, no one can anticipate the future, all is possible and we will see what we will see. He did not want to take part in detailed discussion and tried to return to the game.

Angus was the third in play, and if once he had loved to play preferans, considering this a honor, now he played only out of regard for father. Playing continually in trio, soon they knew one the others, nobody committed an error and the game became uninteresting. However not for Father, who analyzed each possibility and each far-fetched eventuality. This was the only about which he wanted to talk, besides he smoked much, as did Mr. Buczkowski too. After they closed the shop and returned home, Father continued to speak only about cards, remembering each arrangement. From any another subject he steered clear.

Mother, on the contrary, functioned efficiently. Because of her, none of them ever felt in want, and as everybody knows, it is easier to suffer the greatest calamity with coins than without them. The concession every month brought a stable and good income, although the value of money value continued to fall. There existed two parallel prices, an official one upheld artificially by orders of the invader and with savage punishments, but impossible and quite unreal. And a second market,

which it was necessary to use, although theoretically they could be sentenced to death. In fact, the Germans did not act according to the rules, was this only a convenient pretext for robbery in majesty of law. Any German could take away food from any Pole and threaten him with death if he protested. Taking away the goods as evidence and letting the robbed people go free became a blessing in disguise. Throughout coercive levies and constant robberies, the Polish land remained the greatest producer of food and this pattern held all through the war. There was trouble and for many reasons the poor nourished badly, but the food never was missing, only the communists were able to deliver the wonder that Poland had to import food.

Angus and his parents had through this period no material troubles. Feeling therefore the reproaches of conscience, he reminded Mother of her promise and supervised as she composed a handsome gift for the Help Council and free canteen and kitchen for the displaced. The one which they had used now received a full value with matching surplus. Mother recognized the need of leaving the Misior house and arranging their own living quarters, the prepaid term had reached the end. Admittedly the farmer as well as his wife behaved correctly and perhaps would have been inclined to a longer arrangement, but Angus shared her feeling. After all, he was responsible for the first irritating, silly and noticeably ungentle behavior for Violet. After dissolving the partnership there also remained hostility with Slodek. Although Misior never interfered in this, they were however close relatives.

Slodek and his wife changed their stance, accepting equal shares, but now Mother, who had already settled all the problems independently, needed no partners and did not want to hear any new proposals. She decided, better cut the losses, keep away and take care in contacts with people of dubious honesty, only too true (alas, later they delivered Misior to the Gestapo to take away his concession). When Slodek tried to persuade her, coming by force to her new site, she called the house owner, who was a constable (of the so-called marine-blue, former Polish police). This individual threw out the unwanted guest and threatened, if he ever comes here again, the treatment shall be harsh. Anyway, Slodek tried to hook Mother on his way out, but she reacted sharply and Slodek, at the core a coward, withdrew.

Their first quarters, properly one room with the use of kitchen, Mother rented on Żeromski Street. This was a small side street coming down from the highway, about five hundred meters from the crossing with Piaski Street on the right side (the next after Traugutt Street). On the treed plot stood a smallish, modern style wooden cottage, occupied

by a single, emaciated and friendless old man, badly needing money. He remained in the little cell and kitchen, and rented the great, empty room. The payment at the beginning appeared high, gradually about the motion of prices became restrained, anyway was enough for him to buy food. He lived with a white dog, vocal if small. "Ciapek" (Spotty) quickly took to Angus (like most dogs). Besides this he had, nobody knew what for, an ill-looking and feeble mare which could not pull even a light wagon, she hardly went herself. Either the old man had a good heart for animals, or he became whimsical in his old age, surely both.

As already mentioned, for Angus and his parents it was a time of relative prosperity. Nevertheless, one could notice quickly, the father declined both physically and intellectually. He stopped taking interest in anything, rarely read or took voice, he ate what Mother put in front of him and only tried to organize a card game. After some time, Mr. Buczkowski came every morning and then after dinner. If he was absent, Father played with Angus and an imaginary partner, so-called Grandpa. If this also was impossible, he alone played solitaire. Practically he never let go of the cards from morning to evening. Mother could do nothing, Angus, from a strong sense of compassion and solidarity, tried as much as he could to be agreeable and played although he was beginning to hate this game he had formerly worshipped.

News about the war limited to references to the heavy bombarding of England. The reptile press of course announced great successes of Germany. The underground press Angus never saw, but of course heard rumors, reporting big losses for the Germans and that Polish pilots were making a leading contribution in battle and were among the best. However, rumors always were good, Angus too had made some up. Most people appraised the situation pessimistically, taking these to be the last preparations for invasion of England, also the English might not persevere much longer and would ask for peace. After former experiences, many believed that all by itself England would not keep up the battle. And after all it was a last, frail thread of hope where before there had been strong cables. Hitler had conquered opponents with many times greater and stronger armies.

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Capsule: The essay of an invasion of England?

There spread some news, the Germans had already performed trial invasions which had proved a total defeat. People said the German invasion fleet embarked with its army burned, when the English poured

out on the sea petrol, kerosene or some other fuel and set it alight. Strangely these reports spread wide, not only in Poland, but were repeated in other countries, even in England and nobody could confirm such an incident happened anywhere, even on a small-scale. Neither in underground newspapers, nor in broadcast news (possession of radio was punished like possession of a weapon, or underground press, with death) ever appeared such a report. Angus was surprised when already after the war he spoke with people who during that time lived-in England, or France or Norway. Everywhere they heard the same report. Never he did find any explanation.

* * *

Removal to new quarters broke some of this gloomy tune. Much to do, but not with transport, because anyway they owned nothing, all had to be bought. After all, they were deported only with what they wore on their bodies, almost without baggage, allowed to take away from their home nothing, if only a few light trinkets in their hands. Father still worse, even his clothing it was necessary was to throw out. Previously they lived at furnished rooms, now they rented an empty. They began by buying a small table, a couple of chairs and three mattresses they stuffed them with straw and laid directly on the floor. The kitchen they had to use was in such a state, that Mother after looking round sighed, the farmer did not sin with too much purity. Lucky, on nearby Traugutt Street, Mrs. Godniowski prepared homecooked meals. Mother right away paid for a monthly subscription on dinners and later renewed this.

The house of Mrs. Godniowski, built and arranged with the best taste, was the property of an officer in the Polish Army, a lieutenant colonel, now in POW camp, and his resourceful wife. Now, she didn't break down, left never her hands hanging idle, but managed as best she could. All of Traugutt Street occupied the former Polish military-ranks. At one end stood the house in which lived the woman Angus had met in the winter in such unfortunate circumstances. He tried to pass around this place from a distance.

At first Angus and his parents went together to dinner, then Father began to drop into the bad depression and dejection, wanted solitude, nowhere to go, nothing to eat, only shuffled the cards. Mother also often remained indoors and Angus alone brought the dinners home from Mrs. Godniowski. He did not enjoy sitting down to the table by himself, so began to take away his dinner also. Alas, with regrets, because the house and the people pleased him much, most impressive. On the other

hand however, he felt strong setbacks, oppressed by the thought they might know about the fatal misunderstanding with Mrs. Wybylski, who after his tried contact suspected him, as a boy trying to accost an older woman.

Bad luck indeed, because here and now he could find what he had so long searched for, a hotly patriotic circle. Alas, he had started out badly. Although whether he had any gift to present the case, was another matter, with the contempt he felt for himself, he had now grave doubts.

A small personal success of Angus which restored to him a little belief in himself, occurred by buying the beds. In the first days there was need to deal with many matters at once, and Angus took on seeking out a carpenter. His parents doubted in his skill, but he found first the place where not long ago had lived a Jewish carpenter, compelled to move to the Ghetto. Angus followed this trail, timely admission to the Ghetto was allowed in daylight hours. He found the joiner, but in the beginning he met with disbelief. A young boy, what does he want, can he compose an invoice?

At last he managed to convince the carpenter, a bearded Hebrew, who with his tools looked so deceptively like the holy Joseph from a picture that used to hang over the bed in Poznan, that Angus pinched himself. He confirmed the deal with a small payment on account, the man agreed. Angus should start so at once from this beginning. Then, acting as an employer, accompanied him to the gate to get a temporary pass written for the craftsman and his helper. He didn't know exactly what paper, nor even what office it was, again was regarded dubiously. But again some small money talked better than he did. Finally all was settled and he brought the carpenter home. The man quickly and competently made simple beds, wooden, provisionally painted brown. Next he made a few more of the most necessary pieces of furniture which served well to the end of the war, some even longer, back in Poznan. The parents were so satisfied that again they sought out the former foreman, when the following year they moved to another apartment.

Like son, now father, from despair, apathy and denial restored to life by simple work, this time chopping the wood. The room, the family rented, had never been heated all the preceding, heavy winter. Although the house was wooden, still it froze through and was damp. On the walls and chiefly the corners appeared damp patches, lucky still no mold, but if a fungus started to grow the house would come to ruine. Necessary quickly to dry the room, in summer this was left undone, or

inadequately. Besides, it was already cold and surely unhealthy. The oven was cleaned and mended, but it was necessary now to light a fire, and do it intensively, to get the house in a proper state before the winter. This was a masculine affair, Father bought a wagon of wood, then a second and a third and he set to work. Angus helped as much as possible, chiefly by sawing, because chopping went badly for him at the beginning. Father did not allow him to continue, saying he might cut off his leg, and meat lights a fire poorly, stinking horribly. Father chopped efficiently and gradually he taught the rudiments to Angus. The physical work and movement in the fresh air, put them wonderfully on their legs. The lack of comforts, the simple housework, even only carrying the water and then carrying out used dishwater (this duty fell to Angus), might seem tiring to begin with, however after awhile it animates, healthy mode of life. It is similar to how these days walking the dog is high valued, everybody knows the owners of dogs are healthier and live longer.

For Angus, chopping wood had the most attraction, as he expected that it would be a useful skill in earning work as a lumberman in Canada. So he tried to help Father. They stacked the chopped wood in high piles along the walls. Lighting a fire in the oven twice a day kept the room aired and warm, nevertheless the moisture remained, the soggy, damp patches did not disappear.

At last Father bought some fired lime, put it in boxes and spread it around the room. After a week, the lumps of lime grew and powdered, then they tipped it out in garden-plot and between the pines. The parents felt disappointed, proclaimed the lime did not become moist at all. In reality, it absorbed water and bound it chemically, restoring a healthy atmosphere in the room.

The most important, the psychic atmosphere improved by two events: at the end of October it became clear that despite imaginary victories in aerial war depicted in reptile newspapers, Germany would not be able to capture England. For an invasion it was decidedly too late. The second news some delayed, was word of the first field victory in this war.

The release of Abyssinia and the conquest of Addis Abeba may have seemed to many folks something distant and without much importance. But not to Angus who already in the second class of primary school was enormously thrilled by Abyssinian war. He sent letters to Negus Negesti and remembered own indignation and anger, when barbarians from Europe attacked the country of primeval civilization, of queen Saba, contemporary to the Pharaohs and next the legendary

Christian king Jan. Did they assail? They assassinated, the maybe a little wildly (in our idea) and impoverished natives, with full right defending their earth. They exterminated using the most inhuman, loathsome and diabolical weapon man had yet invented. Therefore Angus went with Father, of course informally and in private, on the curse of antigas defense, Angus secretly hoping to offer his services to the Abyssinian Army. Alas, the squads of imperial guards, regularly educated and in arms, and dressed in English-style uniforms, but barefooted and because of this susceptible to Yperite, applied to poison the earth, couldn't wait for his help. They perished in the first mass genocide.

Besides, this military success was not a trifle. The Italians, expecting the possibility of a closed Suez Canal, extended their Army to three hundred thousand, with assistant services to five hundred thousand people. Also, they gathered great hoards of supplies needed for prolonged war in isolation. It was a big danger not only for the Suez canal zone, but also for Mombassa and the whole British East Africa. (This effort caused the remainder of Italian armies to suffer a chronic lack of equipment in the following campaigns.) True, this colonial army stood as on red-hot coals, with a cat in the pants, constantly jerking and scratching in local war. Thanks to this, the English could pass excellent, model operations with a small force, adapted to the conditions of modern war, mechanized and with plenty of machine weapons. Besides, they delivered weapons for native guerrillas.

Psychologically, most impressive was breaking bad luck. It make clear the English were able to fight and would do so – indeed. Starting right now.

The papers of course praised the prowess of retreat of the Italian armies to Addis Abeba, heroic later defense and so on. With much obscure and tangled reports, Angus inferred a likeness to the campaign in Poland, also competition between walking soldiers and the motors. However, different proportions, here and there one motorcar with a machine-gun hung on gimbals, chased hundreds of walkers, some difference indeed. It was the last news, after several months, already in 1941 the brave garrison of Addis Abeba and troops coming from all sides exhausted all possibility of fighting, as well as ammunition. So they went to last a desperate attack with bayonets on, finishing this right in POW camps.

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Somewhere during this time, one cloudy and dark November morning, Angus, opening the pub on Wspólna Street, found stuck under the door a thin leaflet like a letter. At first he judged this an underground newspaper (at the time, he rarely viewed underground press), so he rushed for it eagerly. With surprise he saw it was a letter dated from 1938, supposedly edited by some unknown medical association, however without address, neither the full name of the publishing company, nor authors, just nothing. The matter concerned onanism (he still did not know the word). The pamphlet addressed to the parents, but Angus, considering it might be seen as a bad influence (Mother's words) decided keep it secret, reading alone.

Principally it was an argument that for young people (the pamphlet mentioned only sons), what is destructive and even ruinous is not onanism itself, but a psychosis associated with it. The only, if rather poor, illustration was the face of a young man covered dark stains. It was accompanied by a typical comment: "Glancing at this young boy his leaden look, sunken eyes, confused motions, blunt and obtuse behavior (and so on, continued), I guessed at once what ate his brain...." There followed descriptions of terrible effects, including the "decay of heart, permanent brain damage, debility..." etc. The author or authors explained, the huge damages may cause not onanism but the psychosis of fear, depression and lastly humiliation and desperation. Angus read on that normally onanism is a mere need for the young organism, admittedly not all, because of course there occur individual differences. On average around 90% of boys before the start of their sex life, begin with onanism. Naturally every excess can be bad, including normal sex and all the other work of the body, even eating in excess or cultivating too much sport. But ordinary, normal onanism causes no damage, not to mention devastation. Instead the mad fright, driving into neuroses many naive and credulous beginners of sexual life may surely suffer badly, and with time fatally influence their health and mind.

Some parts of the medical terminology Angus did not understand, but there was no need. He was not afraid of the horrible results for his mind and body, this was a second-rate affair. The most important was the deadly sin and betrayal of religious ideals, as well as his lack of strength. The weakness of spirit, sure not reconciliatory with the standard of strong man, the hero he once, long ago, wanted to become.

However if the affair was so widespread, possibly he might not be an exceptional base reptile, outcast, renegade. A dirt heap on the surface of the earth who should be removed, making the world better and more beautiful. He was not an exception, many others had also

dropped into the satanic trap. Many of them, maybe even the majority (he did not know if the data were true, but never mind if not 90%, only for example 75%, or 65%, even 55%). A clear majority, meaning this can't be a rare event, but normal, though this did not change the fact he should make efforts to cross over to the better minority. Needing correction, but not necessary to kill himself therefore.

And so the motives for suicide, at least temporarily, vanished. There remained the bad calamity in the country, however war continued, maybe Father was right to wait and see. Surely he owed his father that much, he had helped him to survive the crisis, although in so harsh a manner.

Of course, Angus as before wished for and put effort into trying to be free from the sin. He was as before religious, like Father. Mother, although also believing and practicing (but without exaggeration), reserved the right to her own judgment in affairs of faith. Sometimes even expressed doubts, for example on the dogma about the Pope's infallibility. From now on, Angus treated religion differently, with some reserve and perspective, not all the way to self-destruction.

So, he persisted in his tries, but still to no help, the best he could achieve was some moderation. Earlier, he had decided to go next time to confession only when or if he managed better. However now, he went to the town church, to another priest, to present his doubts and results. Told him straight that it became impossible to promise improvement, because he tried many times and never succeeded, surely so it would happen again. But it happened, he met a more human priest, who answered, all people are weak, no one may guarantee the effect, but he should have goodwill and try again and again, never give up. So Angus tried, admittedly did not overcome, but at least experienced much unexpected relief.

All the best to Christian morality and culture, more luck, they have become fundamental, first in Europe. However, a paradox, the forbidden fruit tastes best. The excessive morals of Victorian type, the sanctimonious ethics, hypocrisy, whatever, added much pleasure and attraction to the sexual sins, increasing delight to ecstasy. People grown on other traditions, in another culture never knew how much they lost, not a chance to learn. Never mind, if a virtuous boy is rewarded for his longtime virtue, or Satan to catch a resistant soul raises the offer and pays more. Anyway, the difference between what feels a causal culprit committing an easy sin and a poor soul, yielding after long, dramatic battle to overwhelming temptation is shattering, just unaccountable.

Angus managed to hold temperance a week, sometime a few days more, but then came a lure, temptation best described by Saint Anthony. However, Saint Antony overcame, Angus never.

The pattern was predictable and after a time it was easy to recognize the symptoms. First, a mental importunity, after he managed to turn his thoughts, nevertheless the erotic fantasies returned many times over, next an over-tenderness of the flesh. The need of one short touch became just unbearable. The ejaculation happened even as he walked, or when he was studying, or only read a book, once at the table before the meal. When he waited for his parents. Startling experiences, alas impossible to keep in memory.

Anyway now Angus never fell into despair after the fact, did not break down or continue chain-onanism, because considering all lost, anyway he deserved hell. He tried clemency, but if the strain was too much for him, gave in. In short, he tried to sin only when he had to, but this way, the temperance beside morals, allowed optimal pleasure.

To close finally the matter, it is necessary to add that although Angus did not find then a solution to the problem, it existed and pretty simple too. He was to discover it a couple years later. Namely, great physical effort quenches sexual potential. Perhaps, when the body is in a coercive crisis, the make of hormones takes a choice, either of sexual or anabolic. The need of regenerating muscular tissue for upholding life overwhelms the sex. Of course, this applies in case of great effort and full engagement, a little training from time to time does not do.

* * *

Lighting a fire, heating the ovens, were common everyday jobs, nevertheless demanded a skill and knowledge. This important matter belonged to Angus' duties. To get the ovens hot does not depend only on proper rituals, competent burning, right opening and the covering up the access of air, etc. It starts with the fuel used. The wood must dry well and thoroughly, needing a few months' seasoning. Best if chopped, because in logs it dries slowly, should be put in heaps and left covered, but so as to assure circulation of air. Best to do this still in summer, but now it was already too late. A great part of the wood they had bought he and Father sawed into rounds about thirty to forty centimeters in length and then chopped. Or they split blocks straight from the wagon, into long rails above a meter long and then cut them with the ax. Most of the work was done by Father, and in the instruction course also Angus. Every day, if only the weather allowed, he chopped and arranged

piles around the house. And so in October and November, and even in the beginning of December to the sound of chopping he heard some distant echo, or another replica of sound, as if struck down from the forest.

The house in which he lived, one of the two on Żeromski Street, stood in the forest, both of them. The street went from the highway towards the south having on one side the young forest, on the other a great square, covered with sports fields, and the ample three-storied building of the high school, now taken by German soldiers. Angus sometimes could watch straight out of a large window, behind the curtain, teams or whole platoons of infantry training on the sports field on the second side of the street throwing hand-grenades. Some aimed in the shallow sections of trench, others sitting there jumped out quickly from the trench, when a dud grenade fell in, occasionally tried to catch and return it. "Interesting, if they would have had enough guts, to seize so a genuine live grenade," commented Mother.

Żeromski Street went down from the main road to a wooden bridge on a ditch taking water from the river to Iron Works, then after a few hundred meters crossed the Kamienna (Stony) river, next leading to Szewna village. The house where they now lived, hidden in the forest between tall young pines, had beyond it a little square, with wooden shed and stable to the left. On the right blank earth and a couple of stumps used precisely for wood chopping. The plot ended steeply, with an almost vertical precipice of three or four meters. Below, also grew young forest, trees maybe twenty or thirty years old. No enclosure, only on the boundary a line of bushes, now naked rods without leaves.

When Angus stopped chopping and approached the boundary, he heard more distinctly the sounds. Moving still farther right, he saw below a ball shooting upward, the sounds proved to be slaps of hands on a ball. He could see foreshortened from above the silhouettes of volleyball players covered up by branches and twigs. After that, many times he approached and studied from the hill, the game began to attract him. Mainly, as they played well he saw and distinctly felt the rhythm of the ball. Although he was not familiar with the sport and had never previously watched volleyball, this rhythm he began to feel not with only the ear, but the entire body.

He had then no idea the boys and girls playing below made up the heart and brain of the second Ostrowiec Company ZWZ (The Association of Armed Combat), next a detached Diversion Squad of the Home Army. To be more precise, the heart beat there often, the mind appeared sometimes.

The mentioned Traugutt Street, at the beginning parallel to Żeromski Street, turned next through the forest, branched and finally, before the canal, reached Żeromski Street and bridge. A footpath set off in the opposite direction along the canal, ending at Romanów bridges. The road through the forest plunged in a ravine or valley which below the house where Angus lived formed a medium-sized square, beside the road. This square was being used as a sports field for volleyball, it was enough to sink two wooden posts and to level the ground.

Grabbing trees and bushes, Angus descended the precipice to the valley bottom. He could more easily have used a descent cut in the sandy slope a dozen meters beyond the little shed. Angus several times viewed the game from a distance, at the time he did not approach any closer. Formerly he was never bashful and in such conditions would take advantage of the first occasion to form an acquaintance, but this year he had taken a turn for the worse. He lost all confidence, became a misanthrope and invariably viewed himself hypercritically, with disgust. Too weak a word. He was on the bottom and suitably so he felt.

Anyway, the weather worsened and soon began the winter, the opportunity of meeting the players elapsed. However, now ended also the worst year, most shocking, nauseating in Angus' life. Of course, compared to the calamity which fell on the country and its people, not to mention the whole world, quite meaningless. Nevertheless, this amount of beggarly, unwanted vegetation managed to survive only thanks to the support of Father, properly held back with force by a collar, head over the water.

Unkind fate reduced the foolish, naive boy, stuffed with paper theory and ready receipts of behavior, but enterprising and always full of optimism, to a heap of calamity, a soggy rag. Almost a form of weed life: admittedly he remained alive, but almost without thought, a weed passively allowed to transplant and water itself. Angus in fact stopped to suppose himself a human being, in his own view lived-in humiliation, resigned from self-respect and all plans. Even from dreams, because though they arose in the head independently, he treated them now like fairy tales which he would never be able to realize. He resigned from each act, because he considered himself the worst possible candidate, he could only bring calamity, in a crisis a sure one to break down. He was already broken. Joining the underground could mean only creating a danger for better people. This was the deepest bottom and even in this bottom he was deeply trodden below, till at the end, now he could only rise. And in fact, if unaware of this, he stood already at the beginning of a new world, life and new horizons. The path leading to success had

soon to restore his equilibrium and some part of his former individuality. Although he never recovered even half of the force of convictions, self-belief and energy, with which began this year.

* * *

On an end of another November morning, dark and cold too, his parents held with Angus a conversation about their plans. Suicide had become out-of-date. But they decided their son must systematically further his education. Father did not pick up the leadership of the affair, he had found the passage of time since his high school days was already too long. Also the curriculum had changed, not to mention what he had forgotten of subjects which he did not use and had not needed at work. Using the textbooks, he could get by, if he had to, but he had doubts about the quality of results. This was not a matter of frame of mind, he already had left behind his depression. But better to start this so: the mother had found a good coach, anyway so all say. Lessons can begin from today, three times a week for two hours. Then we may think, what next.

On the northern side of the main road, opposite the line of forest stretching to Żeromski Street and then opposite the grounds of the high school, exactly between Piaski and Pieracki Streets, was a large area of grassland, called pastures. Facing across the main road the old high school, the grassland rolled up to an equally great, but modern building of the primary school, also taken now by the Germans. Next to the school, in a little cottage of red brick, lived a family of displaced people, some of them working in the German kitchen. Next came a new, one-storey house in a large garden encompassed by a high fence, the property of a worker in the Ostrowiec Ironworks.

A couple years after the Great Crisis, construction began in Poland of so-called "COP," a Central Industrial Development Area. The aim was to assure producing armaments and equipment for the country's defense, as well as other goods and strategic products. Almost full success, modern factories with high, fine technology were built, but not in time to supply the necessary modern weapons of top quantity. All the COP zone became a stable area of prosperity, with specialist workers worth their weight in gold. The so-called workers aristocracy, for example a qualified blacksmith, machinist, an employee attending a more complicated machine tool, often received a greater wage than the director of an average firm or institution. Several times more than an average clerk. One thousand złoty monthly was not too much, and it

happened that a top specialist won several times higher payment. This compared to the roughly three hundred złoty pension of Angus' father, on which the whole family lived comfortable.

Admittedly Ostrowiec Ironworks were not new, on the contrary, had a long tradition. But the prosperity did not pass them by, their employees also earned well. Tomasz Moranowski, a qualified turner, built this house, assuring himself and his family provision for old age (at least so he expected) and the leftovers were enough for the education of two children. The son studied at Lwów Technical University, a Mechanical Engineering College, and at the start of the war had finished two years. The daughter had won a year before a high-school certificate, wanted to begin University study too.

Already at the beginning of 1940, Angus and Mother had made acquaintance with Mrs. Moranowska, living on Piaski Street, a widow with a handicapped son. A few years older than Angus, he learned music and had ambition to be an organist. His mother mentioned to Angus' mother that her brother's son, the technical college student Eryk Moranowski, already in high school had been considered an eminent talented mathematician and most valued coach. She agreed to talk with him. Eryk did not give lessons at the moment, but agreed to make an exception, in fact for a good price. The high expense agitated Angus' scruples, a similar case in his view to the private and expensive school in Poznan, but his parents convinced him that now they could manage this. Besides, this good use of money, if even wasted on him, would be available to another young, able man, who was bound to use it well.

Next day, a brief walk of several minutes took Angus to the house in question, he went up the stairs to a high first floor and rang the bell. It was opened by a lean and long fair-haired man in spectacles. The first impression was not exactly the best, it appeared the new guru was displaying a pose, either wanting to underline his superiority from the start, or by nature cocksure. They had no textbook for algebra, nor geometry, and the teacher assured that although he did not remember agenda, this is anyway a blank outer form, something we will reinvent on short notice. He prefers to learn mathematics in a natural manner, programs, curriculums and text have a second-rate importance. Between algebra and arithmetic is a basic difference and better in time to repulse all former bad habits. In mathematics all that is necessary is the satisfactory vision of the problem and the skill of logical thinking, all the rest, and above all learning anything by heart is superfluous, and even harmful. If one does not know something, one may, and even should use one's own reason and solve the problem for oneself.

As first try Angus was given two freely dictated polynomials, one long and one short and had to divide the first by the second. In both occurred only one letter in different math powers. Angus did not know how to start, he had never performed math with letters, if only substituting the letters with numbers in formulas and only then calculating. The master showed him, arranging the letters after the powers and then performing normal dividing as in case of decimal numbers, the powers answering the places of decimals in the number.

Angus blinking, suddenly caught on, surprised and then thrilled. Instinctively he understood and felt admiration. Of course, the division resulted in a pretty complex remainder, the teacher gave the proposed polynomials off the top of his head and they did not simplify as nicely as in textbooks. Anyway, the basis of the procedure appeared clear and bright. For the next exercise, the teacher first multiplied on his page two polynomials and only then did he have Angus begin the division, now of course there was an outcome without remainder.

Then he explained the idea of equality and equation as well as the difference, gave the principle of possible procedures with equations. This also was quite logical and self-evident and the basic definitions should be memorized word for word, with the necessary precision of wording. This was necessary because of a trap: Performing with infinity and of course consistently division through zero cipher, lead to an absurd. This limit seemed to Angus illogical, he accepted for a time the explanation that such doings lose substance. But after consideration he inferred the idea of infinity must be inaccurately taken, there distinctly must exist many infinities, all different. Because we are unable to define them, we employ one collective idea for many different values, just as children say "many" for all above ten. Someone must think over this matter to the end, perhaps he would turn up a new area of mathematics, calculating infinities. Alas he did not have the time, there were so many new ideas, he had to hurry.

On this first experience he accepted there would be revealed to him much that was pleasant, and the teacher considered every law to be conceit. New and surprising also was the quality of demands, for example: The most important is the manner of coming to the solution, well arranged and always elaborated to the most simple shape. Instead, one can only complete the transformations and earmark the future result, delay total to the end, if the method is in accord with the rules, the final outcome is surely less important. As an example he said that Newton, one of the greatest mathematical geniuses, who added so much to the progress of the science, never managed to memorize the

multiplication tables. Therefore he improved logarithms, because determinedly he felt better at addition than at multiplication.

Father demanded from Angus quite another fundamental base: A calculation had to be precise from beginning to the end. Well, if one is able effect any phase mentally, he allowed the jumps, however error was intolerable, no matter where and in which manner it arose. The outcome would be either wrong or right, he did not recognize "almost right" calculations, period.

Here the main was an understanding of the method, and if one committed some small error, chiefly in numbers, this was a common oversight, a trifle without greater importance. In comparison with what he had previously learned a genuine heresy. But what a beautiful heresy! He returned home thrilled.

Already at the next lesson, Angus had occasion to take some revenge with his coach. The teacher was talking about Kepler and his tries to employ mathematics for practical purposes. His calculations of the capacity of barrels (for liquors) were unsatisfactory, but many of these same techniques he used later for calculating the motion of planets. Here he mentioned, a curved barrel is hard to figure out and the task was never satisfactory solved. On this, Angus surprised the teacher with the claim that he knew the formula for the capacity of barrels and could write it out at once. It was by chance he had had to do exactly this in the last collection of arithmetical exercises, he memorized the formula without trying, involuntary, usually being against the habit of learning anything by heart. Now, many years later the author has clearly forgotten it, he remembers only the beginning. Something like this:

$V = \frac{4}{15} \pi h (R^2 + Rr + \dots \text{some fraction, whatever})$.

Angus had no idea, who and when reached the algorithm, the teacher too had never heard this, he had doubts, tried to do examples of a sphere and cylinder. In both cases, the formula simplified to a universal accepted shape. This of course was not enough to pass a judgment, if always it works according to rules. He could see only roughly the outcomes in extreme events, but at least it seemed probable that Angus had not invented it on the spur of the moment, but some formula exists. Logically, there should follow checks with examples of an ellipsoid, but for now too complicated, so the teacher decided to check this later.

On the same day Angus succeeded a second time in surprising the teacher, when at the end of class as an addition to the homework exercises he told him to count the sum of all numbers from 1 to 50.

Angus answered, "Just a minute, just a minute," but instead after a second answered: "It is either 1275 or 1225".

How did he come up with that? Angus did not have the least idea about arithmetical progresses. However already in primary school he noticed that pairs of numbers on both sides of a ruler always have the same value, for example $1+20$, $2+19$, $3+18$, etc. So now he explained: "If we include the final 50, this is 25 pairs of numbers equaling 51, and if we count only up to 50, this is 24 of 50 + the remaining 25.

After the second lesson, father found and bought textbooks for algebra and geometry needed for the second class of high school. Father probably was disappointed, having no solemn occasion to explain anything nor to give any help. However, he wanted Angus to solve all the exercises in the book, even if they are not a part of his homework, do these extra in a separate notebook. This anyway was no problem, in comparison with the past Angus had much time, and too little work. More so, now learning caused pleasure, indeed!

Training in geometry was another, but also unusual experience. Rational thought and logic not in the form of formulas, but visible in drawing. Subtle forms fixed through the ages, argument, proof and claim. Abstract ideas. Drawing not as reality, but a graphic approximation, existing only in the brain as an immaterial idea.

This caused some trouble, Angus always drew badly, now he had to try, his figures appeared only half correct. On this occasion he tried to correct his alphabet as well, sincerely speaking, he scrawled. He gained progress, great, now often managed to read his own writing.

Lessons began to protract, from the initiative of the teacher. After the paid time, used according to plan and admittedly intensive indeed, Eryk Moranowski started a custom of free conversations. They used up one to a couple of hours of his own unpaid time. Anyway he could allow this, first because the lessons, on which he had initially decided with hesitation, were high profitable, second the tempo had increased terrifically. It seemed they would exhaust the entire curriculum of the second class and finish the textbooks in two to three months instead of a year. This despite never missing one exercise, with many additions and supplements which the teacher sought out, trying on each lesson to prepare something interesting to avoid monotony. He never praised the disciple, but outside told a few people that he had never met such a student, who caught on as if it came to him naturally. Angus for years never knew this, but anyway noticed at the time that he could calculate and solve exercises quicker than his teacher, but thought this of no importance. He was now up to a stage the tutor had long not recently

dealt with, now at higher fights, so for him it was returning to the half forgotten past. Nevertheless, quick mental calculations, induced by his father, were some advantage, but this was a skill that surely anybody could pick up with enough practice.

A few days later, Moranowski demanded a change, all calculations should be written out properly one after another, not several marked on the old formula, not to mention do anything only mentally. More so, the record on paper should be distinct and transparent. A sound principle, especially for Angus, but he suspected the real purpose was to slow him down. Also, he decided checking of all the homework was a loss of time, it was always OK, so it would be enough to inspect only a part, selected at random. Chiefly, as Angus insisted on more homework, never mentioning that it was the father who repeated over again that he should do all the exercises provided in the text. Angus feared such remarks might meet with an unfavorable reception, so he made up, as if he asked solely for pleasure.

In fact there was a satisfaction, still greater when the teacher, besides exercises from the textbook, prepared for him a few special cookies, written on a sheet, with more complicated general problems. Commonly with algebra Angus managed without trouble, which he met only with geometric problems.

Besides, in general they widened the curriculum for each lesson. For example solving equations on two and next on more unknown factors, Moranowski trotted out, expanded and delivered to Angus the method of solving by use of determinants, quick, convenient and universal solution of equations with any number of unknowns. Admirable, like the Columbus egg.

On other currants added to the cake of the lesson, Angus after a year, reading the book "From a blackboard to the differential" by Egmont Colerus (Lwów 1938), discovered many of the interesting and successful data in it. So for example: Elements of the probability calculus, with factorial, permutations and variations (with or without repetitions), calculations, Newton symbol. And simple differential functions with graphic display.

However the conversations and discussions which took place after the end of lessons, were at least one grade higher up. They began with divisions of mathematics and their practical uses, when by the solemn occasion of the numeral axis, which could not pass without reference to imaginary numbers. Quickly however, the conversations widened first to physics and chiefly cosmogony, which naturally brought up astronomy, and thence outwards, from philosophy of life, even to religion. And then,

there were no limits, absolutely none, even the history of people on earth (natural), the genius of time, contemporary affairs of the last year's, language, the universe, all overlapped without exception, even the theory of chess.

[It was at this time that Angus picked up somewhere an annual set of "Illustrated Weekly" from the beginning of the century, of course he read this from cover to cover, omitting nothing. At the end, in the chess corner were published the most interesting matches, between Alechin, Capablanca and other contemporary masters, and a brief analysis. Angus tried to memorize one match and to play it with Moranowski, but it turned out his partner surpassed him so much, the that game had no substance left. Even at his best life-form, Angus probably would never be a worthy opponent, also in the years to come he never met a player of like grade.]

Thanks to these conversations, Angus at least superficially heard about matters which at his age, even despite extensive reading, were to him terra incognita. Never mind relativity theory, about this admittedly he had heard and read, but only enough to know that this was accessible only for a few. There was a joke, that when somewhere gathered experts on the relativity subject and one of the famous names told Einstein that in all the world maybe three persons understand this, the surprised Einstein inquired who might be the third.

The theory of expanding, or of cyclically expanding and drawing in universe, the so called idea of Big Bang, of course was still less developed, lacking the proper math models. With poor knowledge of elementary forces and particles of the mater, analyze of the first time, well not of first seconds or minutes, as we (or rather the computers) try now, but hours and days of the happening, was impossible. Nobody seriously discussed, even speculated on the subject any earlier, as when from the hot and dense plasma began forming atom nuclei. All before a sensation, deep mystery.

Not so deep however, as the affair of black holes. The ideas and mathematical model for these are much older than is commonly imagined by the present generation. And the idea of mini black holes, the little particles of matter which crossing some terminal density and border of minimal dimensions (Schwarzschild radius or sphere), theoretically disappear, ending by seeming as if they had never existed.

Still more difficult to come to terms with, the results of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle which in Angus awoke a resistance, altogether incompatible with his conviction. Not about the experimental part and mathematical interpretation. This anyway he could not

understand. Mainly because of the result, which eluded his grasp. He might agree, that some data we cannot and may never know, so is established the world. But first, there is no way to anticipate the future, many times happened the impossible and second, does this mean there actually exists only that which we can note? According to this logic, one could be sure that bacteria exist only from the time of van Leeuwenhoek, atoms not even so long ago. However, some subatomic particles only now are coming in existence by human doing (research). The main is not, if something was or not observed, but if such observation is possible. Not only now, but also in the future. So what about black holes? At the time were not any sure observations, only guessing and mathematical models.

Moranowski did not pull pleasant tales, but at each occasion proved ignorance and errors in Angus' reasoning, often straight-out ridiculed his opinions and strongly accented his own superiority. But he did not have an easy time of it, Angus, accepting of course his lead and supremacy in the knowledge of facts and information, but feeling no thrill. He tried to use the delivered ammunition, to repulse the grenade, to turn round the arguments, to find holes and possibility of another interpretation, doubts and possible inconsistency, often from another angle. He believed nothing on hearsay and molested each detail which he doubted or had cause to suspect.

Mostly it truth unfounded, but sometimes just the opposite was equally possible and probable, at least theoretically. Logically no way, to reduce it to absurd. It happened of course, not with the actual facts and observations, but about their interpretation, having therefore to do with logic and maybe wisdom, the way of reasoning. Especially in affairs connected with people's outlook and religions, the philosophy of life.

Because the object of experience can be only matter and energy, natural science draws a limit there. That being so, Moranowski never expressed a word against religion, but accented that basing on science, one cannot infer the existence of God. That God, as first cause, or an unilateral force propelling the universe, is neither necessary, nor explains anything. This is only pushing the unknown further away, onto another degree. The many stories, legends and even written records given in different religions, have a mythical character and in reality they could not take place. This had been proved many times and above doubt, no one can deny such examples. Finally, the idea of all-power and all-knowledge is an empty concept, "contradictio in se" (with inner conflict), logically nothing of the sort does exist or can exist.

Angus answer was funny, but not bereaved of sound sense, besides strong engagement. Something like: "Well, maybe it is, not more or less, like the infinity idea in mathematics. When there is something we do not precisely know how to define, or even understand, we employ a word symbol. Just like a man unable to count uses the expression "many" instead of a number which he does not know and understand. Such a term suggest not so much an inconsistency in itself, but rather the poor development of our minds. Same as with the mathematical infinity, where probably the problem concerns the infinite quantity of different infinities. I hope that at some point we may be able to think this over and apply proper rules.

"A power and knowledge, exceeding our ability of cognition – may by the inferiors be named all-knowledge and all-power, although in fact these may be somewhat limited. But we say so, not knowing any better.

"The legendary records about creation, all now accept are not to be taken verbatim, but as a figure of speech, or deformation of events which happened, becoming the object of legend. Simplification adapted, or even resulted from the primitive minds of folk who first repeated this for generations, before developing the skill of writing. Anyway the great explosion of the Big Bang can perfect well fit what is recorded to have happened, in form deformed, presuming some knowledge received from higher sources.

"Now, on time, we may accept or not the Einstein theory. However, if one said A, he should necessarily also say B.

If in one case we accept a model, we need also to consider the possible effects of employing the same model in other instances, not only accept it where it suits us, and turn the eyes when it does not. If we accept the relativity of time, for example in the Big Bang, the minutes or hours, (unknown at the time – now exist interesting models), could for differently positioned observers become years, ages, millions of years. For example, at the forehead of the explosion the time is different, than in the center. Of course all this would be blank speculation, but some places must have speeds comparable to the speed of light. So it could be possible to find observers who would notice nearly any times, any value. Paraphrasing the saying, the point of view would depend on the sitting point, relatively. Of course also some, for whom the times of the creation would fit, for example, to the Biblical description.

"About the existence of God, we can suppose that it goes about most powerful intelligence. We have not the faintest idea, what is an intelligence, in which conditions it exists and if at all connected with life,

about which we also know nothing. Maybe connected with matter, or energy, and maybe could occur also in other shapes, places, space. It may have a wave or even quantum nature, or a multidimensional harmonic oscillation, in short all is possible, nothing known. One could imagine a scenario in which even human beings develop with time more intelligence, becoming powerful and at the same increasing the chances for survival, which again makes it possible to magnify intelligence – a self-propelling process. If some folks survive a few thousand years more, they would appear to us as omniscient and omnipotent. With time if they get great chances, surviving even a cosmic cataclysm, in the next hundred millions of years, developing intelligence would surpass our understanding. Omnipotent and omniscient equally to the Gods.

“I think if we can't define or explain intelligence and consciousness, if there is a connection between them and life, or if they are a form of the organized composition of matter, or a fundamental, primary event, independent and equal. There is no reason to exclude their existence as ancient as matter, space and energy. Intelligence may be something universal and aboriginal, existent from the beginning of the universe. Or possibly such intelligence developed and is developing now, of course inaccessible to us. Even several kinds of intelligence. And if so, there exist the possibility that such intelligence can manage to survive all the way to the universe's end. Some of it might evolve to such a degree that it will survive the universe's end. So in this way humans, having enough time for development, can survive the end of our sun. If one admits theoretically that even humans can have time for such an evolution, so on another level the suitably higher form of intelligence can manage to survive the end of the universe. Maybe then to re-create it, or to produce a new universe. Well, maybe this already happened and any remaining intelligence in the universe, survived from the preceding one and recreated it.”

“These are merely fairy tales without any evidence. We did depart from serious conversation, only losing time”, he irritated Moranowski.

“Of course these are fancies. But in these fancies is nothing that would stand in conflict with the contemporary state of science. The idea of the existence of God does not stand in conflict with human knowledge. Maybe the idea of the existence of God is a fancy, but the contradiction is equally a fancy. There is not enough data, neither positive nor negative. One idea and the other stem not from knowledge, but from imagination. We can fancy a world without God, but just as well one with God, based on the present science nothing is corroborated.

“And in such cases, one must rely on one’s own instinctive conviction. Possibly this results from bad construction, errors of my mind. But while I have better nothing, I hold what I have named my own belief.

“To end the subject, still a few more funny fancies. If one can theoretically accept the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg, with which I personally cannot agree, because I take this only as capitulation before difficulties, it levers the base of the determined universe. This creates for the higher intelligence, if such exists, the possibility of subtle intervention in everything. Also in running the future of the world and its people? It means, it would be enough to change for example the pace or the position of some electron, to a degree impossible to observe, so it could in future push some atom. Next some particle should effect another zigzag and in result after time some delegate hurrying for a conference may stumble or a commander leading a campaign. A simple way to change the history of the world, seems child’s play.

And still another fancy. If there exists a possibility that sometimes the density of matter can reach such extreme values, that so to say it enters into itself, cannot be perceived, practical for us stop to exist, maybe this can happen partially, too. With middlevalues some of the matter can contract so much to become imperceptible. Some part may still stay above the horizon of Schwarzschild sphere. If such happens with a black hole or black minihole, or a group, if need be many such holes groups, might the result not be like, what we call a supernatural occurrence, spiritual emanations, spirit or astral bodies? Changing a little the radius and density, from unknown causes, we could view sometimes materialization or dematerialization of objects, which nature we could not explain. I do not argue for an immaterial world, wonders or miracles, whatever term we use for lack of a better word. I want only to suggest that we are deep in the forest. We still know little and science leaves the possibility for much unexpected.”

Angus thought of a higher intelligence, because he precisely met one, in human shape. He knew, that Moranowski absolutely surpassed him, not only in knowledge, this would be possible to make up, but also in the speed and logic of his thinking. This discussion was like a battle with an enemy twice as quick as he, who as a rule already effected motion about which Angus still deliberated. But although he accepted without reservation the information given and altogether new perspectives the existence of which previously he never suspected, he have no plan to change his outlook on life, the world and the universe. Thus he dug in his heels, with truthfully asinine stubbornness. But

simultaneously he tried to find arguments of equal weight to those he heard. Because his acquaintance with facts did not do, as a rule he tried to use the received information, with the sole difference of his own interpretation. No way to deny, his arguments were as just as logical and possible, or twisted and artificial, as those of the opposite side.

Right up through this time of his life, Angus continued to be religious. One could tell he was a deep believer, because he was such a bad offender and sinner that he felt he had to stop practicing. However this discussion allowed him to think over and form his own opinions. Really, it was in this period that formed his world view ("Weltanschauung", "Cosmvision"), from which he never defected. Even later, when he went through a normal development of his age, the period of violent mutiny and opposition about religion, and next corrected his position several times.

The discussions broke off, as with a notable delay, the Poles read about important new events. Confoundingly, the reptile press wrote first about Abyssinia and only later about the earlier and more important battles in North Africa. Anyway, both pieces of news decidedly changed the perspective of the war, letting the belief that England would fight.

Forestalling the beginning Italian offensive in Northern Africa, the English took their army around in a white arch and rolled the front with a bump from the back and from the side. Admirable attack, without a doubt better than the German Blitzkrieg, gorgeous. In the newspapers appeared names of previously unknown locations, Benghazi, Sollum, Sidi el Barani. The English almost conquered, it wouldn't take much to push the Italian armies out of Africa. But they didn't quite get it, because in the crucial moment they had to stop and send troops to Abyssinia, where the war went badly. On the remaining terrain landed German Africa Corps equipped with the excellent Czech tanks, adapted to German armament standards.

The war in Northern Africa was conducted from that point on in the new type of campaigns named later by Poles "train maneuvering on a railway." There was never any railway line, but belligerent armies with speed pushed as on tracks back and forth over a long route, running along the littorals of the Mediterranean Sea. But this followed later, at the time it was the first genuine and splendid victory. Previously there had been news of Abyssinia, announced first though it happened later, Angus noticed this mainly because of his old fondness. Abyssinia was too faraway, and exotic too. But already Northern Africa indeed counted and had a serious military importance. Best proof was the quick German relief.

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Capsule: Jealousy pushes Mussolini to catastrophe and defeat.

Anyway, if Hitler at the beginning met only success and his popularity rose, his ally Mussolini had distinctly bad luck. Admittedly Italy strained the army in the Abyssinian war and with then mass intervention in Spain, where Hitler sent only a small representation, although provided with modern armaments. Probably he found there a good opportunity to gain experience with technical improvements and training in genuine war. The Italian army was still not ready for a new war, but when France had already fallen, Il Duce was irritated he might arrive late at the victory ceremony. French left almost no forces on the Italian border. But for a time only the customs officials and guards, supplied with some guns, long and machine, managed to stop the Italian troops, and might have held hold on, if France had not surrendered to Germany. Il Duce was embittered, developed a genuine complex, more so, that his contribution in trophies was small, only the claims referred to as the war cause. It was as if Hitler instead of taking all of Poland, had to confine himself to Gdańsk and if need be, the corridor. The most painful, Hitler left intact the French estate (colonies) in North Africa, reserving it as an auction card either for Spain, or eventually for the marionette French government in Vichy.

Then he began to behave like an irresponsible idiot. Earlier, with a great effort, he had expanded his army in Libya, which had to conquer Egypt and take the Suez Canal. Now, this army ceased to exist, a genuine catastrophe. But, as if there were too less of bad luck, though Italy anyway could not cope with the effort in Africa, in 1940 he hit on Greece, expecting there an easy booty. It is difficult to tell where he got this irreversible need of immediate success, whether this was an inferiority complex towards Hitler, or just plain jealousy.

The Italians first stopped extension of the Metaxas line where properly did not yet exist as strong fortifications. Even the main line on the Bulgarian border consisted of a row of bunkers well placed in mountainous ground, but without heavy defense, not mentioning armor-plated domes (or turrets) nor any more investments. Greece did not have the money, even this moderate expense solemnly shook the government, much complicating the internal crisis. Before the aggressors broke the border obstacles, the Greeks managed to arm the mountaineers from the border regions. One can say that Greece is made up of marine people and those from the mountains, the latter being true

descendants of Hercules and born warriors. Now it was mostly they, aided by families and indeed the whole civilian population who took on their backs the burden of supply, in the most difficult conditions, raging a cruel winter in the wilderness. It was these mountain people who managed first to stop, then to suppress the aggressors. The most exclusive divisions (one armored) shown as the prime bloom of fascism, escaped back to Albania, but there returned only a handful of survivors, who had abandoned all heavy weapons. Next the front pushed in and the Greeks impounded a good part of Albania with the second former capital. They could take all, the population in the south was friendly, though in the North part felt ties with Italy. Anyway the Greeks wanted only to assure their own territory.

For Il Duce this was not only defeat, but also unheard-of discredit, and Hitler had something to do with this, he could not leave the south flank of his conquered territory in such a lamentable position. After the expected surrender of Italy, Germany would remain vulnerable on the south, more rational to now give relief to its poor ally, than next to fight alone. Therefore he sent the "Afrika Korps" with one of his most able generals. Earlier, Rommel had commanded Hitler's "Leibstandarte" (personal watch troops) and from that time Hitler knew about his persistent trend for offensive. Also he made available to Italy a significant air support, even though he much needed his air forces against England and, in the days to come, in yet another, new direction. At last, with Italy, he began diplomatic efforts for gaining Yugoslavia to his side.

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From the news given in the reptile press, these efforts brought better results than a similar move once tried on Poland. The regent and the Yugoslavian government, if without enthusiasm, gave way under duress and engaged in so-called friendly relations and collaboration. Soon it was announced that Yugoslavia was to join the "Tripartite Pact". With the Soviets now a partner of Hitler, the old name Anti-Comintern Pact fell out of use (the Soviets agreed to join too, on conditions, but Hitler's proposal was a deliberate deception). In this manner almost all the states of the Balkan region, sooner or later, had to submit to Germany.

The first victim became Romania, recently an ally of Poland and France. Although she did not take part in the war, she was in a bad position between the USSR and Germany which in turn from opposite sides pulled down the quilt and violated her. The Soviets gathered with a

sweep of the armed force Moldavia and Bessarabia, and Germany compelled her to return Transylvania to Hungary, and the southwestern part of the country to Bulgaria, bribing both these states. Then what remained had to subordinate to Germany, officially accepting their protection. Also developed coercive friendships with Hungary and Bulgaria. The newspapers commented there arose a powerful continental block, including Germany, Italy and Russia, with friendly Japan on one side and with Spain on the other, as well as many minor allies. England was in a hopeless position, never before had she fought against such a big force.

Somehow however this did not terrify the English, who not only held on, but even started a limited offensive. Simultaneously appeared the advancement and material aid of the USA. Reviving the hopes of Poles, the war continued.

Thus also the discussion after lessons descended from the universe to the world, although earlier Moranowski and Angus had avoided this subject. Moranowski presented a most extraordinary opinion, the war still had not properly begun. All until now had been only a prelude, taking the best position and collecting little points. The genuine contest would begin only after the Soviets' access to the war.

Angus heard an unusual interpretation of how, supposedly, the war had erupted:

"From the beginning, the Soviets were the main aim of attack, of Hitler and of the Western Democracies, equally. Both the French and English from the beginning carried much greater hostility to the Soviet Union than to Germany. For example, they gave to Poland no support, although obligated to, but at once they wanted to organize help to Finland, although they had no contracts with her. Only because the enemy there would be Russia."

Such plans in fact existed, but only on paper. Besides, during that time the Soviets were the nearest friend, and from September 17th, an ally of Hitler. So this was either misrepresentation of truth, in a pattern so well learned later, under Stalin's rule, or a clear paranoia.

"When at war with Hitler, the French and English in their own countries left in peace the organizations and known fascist individuals actively engaged in politics, and persecuted and fought only the communist party and its members engaged in politics. So did Poland," continued Moranowski. "Also in Poland the government and authorities tried only to bring down communism, fascism they left intact. Communists were chased, put to Bereza, persecuted in every manner. To acting public fascists, no one paid any attention."

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Capsule: In Poland, anyway among the Poles, there never was any fascism.

Moranowski's remark was most inaccurate, even the most extreme and small chips of the radical right organization of the young, originated from the ONR, modeled the pattern after Franco, never on Hitler or on Mussolini. Besides, these people also were arrested and put in Bereza, often with communists.

With German fascists, Poland was hampered by international commitments about keeping the rights of minorities, besides she tried not to irritate Hitler. Therefore really often she did not react, though she should have. This of course does not mean that Poland was an exemplary country, in which nobody ever broke people's rights. Yes, it happened, but for such minorities about whom nobody would rebuke the officers, for example Ukrainians and Byelorussians. But violation of laws protecting German minority groups would be unthinkable. An official who should do so, would cause a lot of trouble to his superiors, no life chance for a warm place. Just like in the case of the Jews.

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But the most absurd, even shocking was the claim that:

"In 1939 the Soviets presented to Poland the proposal of understanding and ties which would obviate the German attack. But this of course demanded coordination and allowing entering of Russian armies to Poland and on this, the governing class did not want to agree."

This of course appeared to Angus paradoxical, if the matter were not so serious, it would be funny. He nearly laughed saying. "It would be an alliance with a fiend against the devil," and bit his tongue in time, not to add that Hitler proposed precisely such an understanding and alliance which also had to prevent aggression, only with turning the sides. Well, but what perspective later?

"Precisely so reasoned the people placed in authority and preferred to squander the country to Hitler, than to form an alliance with the Soviets."

Angus heard then for the first time the monstrous lie which later, in the years of Soviet occupation, was at every point repeated, appearing a stable feature in Stalin's twisted edition of history. It was not only dishonest but also idiotic. Anyway the people who had to listen had been

the first in the world to fight Hitler. If they, the whole governing class concerned in the reproach, had wanted to turn their country to Hitler's arms, they could have done so taking profit from the betrayal of their nation and country. They could, easily, by simply accepting his offer. Instead Poland and her governing class threw on scales all that they could – and lost all. It was not any simulated activity, but the maximum effort, though they committed many errors, the first and greatest being the trust to allies. No need to repeat that if the Poles had met fair and honest, or only smart and clever partners, Hitler would have not had a chance in 1939. Nor, that Poles fought, never trying to change side not to say collaborating with Germany, from the beginning to the war end. Also, that in this governing class so bad slandered by Stalin, could be found no one who like Stalin collaborated with Hitler, if only for a short time. No doubt, such cynical reproach prepared Stalin to justify the exceptional bad treating of Poles, mass extermination and worse pressure, than in countries which in fact, though under duress, followed Hitler. Stalin without restraint falsified the foreign affairs and war history inventing the most self-evident, absurd lies on the assumption that nobody would dare to contradict him. Believing, objective truth as such did not exist. One can say this was his standard method. Both, he and Hitler, had to the Poles the same blame: That they stood in the way of subduing the world, and that instead of helping they kept on, not even like saints, but simply honest men.

Biting his tongue second time, Angus held back from repeating what he knew and heard from the narrations of an eyewitness, his father. About how and when his father managed to run away from the "paradise," better keep silence and after the first weeks, father himself realised this and stopped the tales. But it was generally known, the terror on lands taken by the Soviets was much worse, comparing with German occupation. So he said:

"Not a big surprise. After all, Russia is a terrible country and each one who can, runs away. This is a feeling, shared by most of Poles, not only the old governing class."

"Every revolution is with terror. So it happened during the French Revolution and earlier for example in England. Anyway, despite both Robespierre and Napoleon whom we Poles remember with great fondness, but other nations not always so, who also was a bloody character, some compare him to Hitler, the French Revolution left large, lasting values. True, Stalin kills all around but the revolution would not keep on without such a strong and, let's admit it, ruthless ringleader. Stalin shall pass, the stable values will survive him. One can't make an

omelet without breaking eggs. Also the Communist Party of Poland was unjustly accused and suppressed on the recommendation of Stalin. Her leader, and anyone actively engaged in politics perished. For higher aims necessary to forget even such mistakes and wrongs. This is the price for which grows and develops a new world. Stalin is not eternal, and when the worst threat has elapsed, communism shall change and revive. No one should fight their own people, even the misled. These affairs already were considered not only in Poland but also in the rest of Europe. The most rational turned the course of the Austrian Party and even created a name, "Austro-socialism."

Angus, listening to all this, gradually took suspicions which seemed far-fetched. Was he speaking with a communist? Till now he had never met one. In fact, on Piaski Street lived a man about whom some said he may be a communist, even the priest said this, but he warned, never repeat it, because the Germans should not know this. On the whole, most people held a distance, maybe just because the comrade never attended the church, and lived and had children with an unmarried woman. On the other hand, it was rumored that he was a good father and took care of his family. Difficult to tell for sure, if this gossip was genuine, Angus never had any occasion to speak with him. Anyway, supposedly he did not want conversations about his convictions.

Instead here was his teacher talking straight and in a manner so shocking, almost unbelievable. Angus could not decide if he was speaking seriously, or making fun of him, or just wanting to provoke discussion. In general all that he said was colored with irony or mockery and always with the distinctly marked accent of superiority. Even if making fun, such conversation seemed imprudent, even though Moranowski had had time to get to know him well.

However, all this was serious. Still more, because the presumptions of Angus did not cover even half of it, indeed.

Eryk Moranowski born in family of a worker, well situated. His father earned excellent money and could assure his children every possible education, not mentioning good conditions of life. He had leftist traditions, of strong patriotic PPS. He was an active member, not an ordinary sympathizer, but became embittered because of "betrayal of socialist ideals" by Piłsudski, also with the next direction of the politics development in the country.

It often happens the children at first start from the point of the father, from his world view, but then begin to think still more strictly and radically. Eryk and in his footsteps also his younger sister, still in high school connected with the young communist movement. At the Technical

University, Eryk became involved with a branch of the communist party, which precisely then ceased to exist. After the executions of leadership and people actively engaged in politics, who obediently on call went to Moscow for their own death, the way of Stalin's punishment escaped few. Only those who agreed to accuse their former comrades before "judgment" of the GPU, making up imaginary indictments with the accurate color of details and to underpin it. Or add to the fantastic accusations a little authenticity and invent new denunciations. But even these informers were prohibited any action, when Comintern officially dissolved the KPP (Communist Party of Poland).

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Capsule: Communist Party of Poland (KPP).

It is necessary to explain here the party was not only small, but merely tiny, at its peak numbering umpteen thousand members, and at its ebb a couple of thousand. Properly never a political mass movement, it did not have much influence, at least from the time of the Polish-Bolshevik war which of course deeply impressed public opinion. For state authorities, it created a problem not by a reason of importance or inner authority, but as an organization controlled from outside, behind the borders by enemy power and according to his recommendation.

However despite this, a part of her members and leaders were outstanding people, dedicated to ideals and engaged, also uncommon minds. Therefore precisely this party was particularly suspected by Stalin, who principally did not like nor trust thinking folks. So now short and knotty he ordered to kill all such, which was done quickly and efficiently. However this did not discourage nor frighten Moranowski, who of course had not reached a high enough position to be in danger zone. On the contrary, he took still more to extreme, imagining himself on well-founded and rational ground, in reality artificial and abstract positions. Thanks to the vacuum in the party, or rather loosely tied circles of former communists, he had an open road and quickly got authority there.

Now, at the beginning of 1941, the communist party did not exist as before, but was again forming contacts. One such unofficial group was the Society of Friends of the Sickle and Hammer and Moranowski was one of the local leaders actively engaged in politics. Simultaneously he helped with technical works for a group of Soviet intelligence. Next he became a top PPR leader in Ostrowiec with a chance for a career during

the following Soviet occupation, quickly climbing upwards, but in one of the alternating purges he was cut down with most of intellectuals. After end of the war and founded by Stalin, the until now minor PPR became a new political force, ideologically engaged communists became useless and unwanted. The most sought human stuff were the scum, who had no convictions, and only did this for career reasons. Such people about whom all said: This was never a communist, but knows to arrange affairs, make a career. Exactly like the fellow Heniek, Angus had met in the concentration camp, who dreamed then about turning a German informer and now turned one for the Soviets.

Maybe it is a normal way, that when an opposition party comes into power, the ideological personnel is replaced by new opportunists. When attachment to KPP did not assure any profit, but on the contrary, what was necessary was courage and resolve, to enter this way. In the first, German occupation, Angus four or five times met communists. Usually they were people on the level and although he did not share their convictions, he felt a personal respect for them. But also happened genuine human garbage, whom nobody wanted and in result, acceptance even by the communists they considered some status and social advancement. Or an easy way, making possible unpunished realization of low aims. Not many such he met, because not many communists lived in Ostrowiec, despite its reputation as a "red" town. Surely it would difficult to count a full hundred. Only after the war began the influx, mainly people of the second type.

Moranowski admittedly never committed to his orientation straight on, but the tone of his statements and his perfect knowledge of the subject soon left no doubt. At the end of one lessons, perhaps in March, he even mentioned that an initiative group was coming to Poland and soon one could expect disclosure of a new communist party. Stalin at least changed his mind.

Further details became known only years later. With this initiative group, first, second and third, affairs were obscure. Corpses fell thickly, like in gangster films, but details remained unknown. Most likely among the coteries of Polish communists actively engaged in politics, the Soviet intelligence intervened directly, both military and GPU. Anyway, in definitive outcome authority came to Bolesław Bierut, who never was a member of the communist party (even at first declared officially as no-party). Instead he was a professional employee of Soviet intelligence, straight speaking a permanent plainclothes Soviet resident in his own country.

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However, if Moranowski told much, in fact too much, there were no definite details, and this talk he explained in unconvincing manner:

"Your ways of thinking, grasp and reactions interest me merely because never until now I have I met the such a complete specimen of bourgeois upbringing. Therefore I listen and speak to you with curiosity, I have occasion to watch an unusual rarity."

This properly one could recognize as an arrogant way of speaking, but Angus did not feel offended. He valued the cargo of knowledge he had received, but on the other side he too was viewing a rare specimen, if never saying as much to Moranowski. Besides, he always reserved the right to his own interpretation of facts. What he felt to be of lasting value, he wanted to keep and defend, even if at the time reasoning naive. He was open to reasonable arguments, but that which one can interpret in different ways did not appeal to him. Being well-read himself, he detected also Moranowski huge erudition, not restricted to professional merits, but general. Well systematized, while he knew only a multitude of loose facts.

Although the lessons did not include physics, the conversations very-much did, at the beginning exclusively, giving him at least general orientation in the chaos. Of course mainly in the most recent accomplishments, from cosmogony to the spherical standing waves of Paul Dirac (without equations), but consequently also of some elementary bases. At this occasion Angus finally buried his own plans and schedules, admittedly a construction of his busy imagination. At last he realized where a major error lay: All his ideas and less or more complicated theories had been based always on one vague, false notion. This was, that one body can act on a second with some force and the second on the first not, or at least that these forces can be relatively uneven.

Or, that one can so divide the forces and chose their points of application that in outcome results a spontaneous rotary moment. By sheer luck, he held this in secret, what a discredit if anybody know his imbecile illusions. Only now he saw the most self-evident basics. However alas, what a sorrow so much thought had been a false effort. On the other side, now opened before him new perspectives, so huge that they were difficult to embrace. At least he sensed now his ignorance. Only now he understood the basics, the law about conservation of energy as well as the equilibrium of action and reaction. But the idea of entropy was to him alien, as was the base of spreading

energy. More so, a thermal death of the universe, unbelievable, he understood the idea, but instinctively did not want to accept it. Anyway, now necessary to fill the gaps with all haste, to learn as much as possible, and then to open the infinite area of possibility.

About matters of philosophy, difficult to tell, whether the guru supposed the "chela" shared uncritically all his convictions, or rather that for the educated intellect exists only one, comprehensive and consistent, materialistic opinion. Whatever, he stopped the propaganda, surely disappointed with his pupil's stubbornness when Angus never backed, neither from religion, nor from national convictions. Properly it was a strange cocktail, from one side he grew in Poznan, one could say a fortress of the national democratic party. To this took father and mother, also most of the family. On the other side picked up in school the worship to the "grandfather" Piłsudski. His own critical opinions were still forming, but anyway on communist ideas he was full resistant.

Nevertheless he greedily absorbed all new facts, also historic and general news, even if inconsistent with former knowledge. For example in rightist slang, all leftist bearings were called a product of Jewish freemasonry. Moranowski brought to his attention the absurdity of such description and showed easily on sources, the freemasonry was a motion which embraced the most educated, and in the case of Poland the most patriotic part of the upper class. Most including the old nobility, just like the new created Polish bourgeoisie. Instead towards communist motion, freemasonry was its natural foe (alas, therefore next the communist regime fixed her harsh and cruel). They did not knew another alternative, a need in defense of the proletarian revolution, for which the freemasonry was much more dangerous than any religion.

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Capsule: The Nordic type, frequency in Germany or Poland.

Another example was the racialist theory. Under the influence of Nazi propaganda, Angus properly accepted the bases of this theory, only of course just opposite: Germans he considered a breed worthless and bad, wiping out would serve them right. In the Poles he detected imaginary best features. Now from Moranowski he learned for the first time about the works of the outstanding Polish (and in addition with Poznań connections, if primary Lwów), University scientist, professor Czekanowski. This man began explorations of graves of different ages and historic periods with the aim of discovering the physical changes in the population. Unexpectedly there resulted the basic conclusion that on both sides of the Polish-German border there was not a distinct

difference, just like in the great area of central Europe. Neither racial differences nor different breeds, this refers not only to Poles and Germans, but also Jews, the accidental scattering of physical features and aberrations are in all cases almost the same. What more, paradoxically and despite theories proclaimed by the Nazi, the addition of former Nordic race grows a little, coming from western side of Germany to the east of Poland. The ancient population of western Slavs assimilated a larger quantity of these genes, still a little more the Poles, where the quantity of fair-haired people with blue eyes is in average some higher, than in Germany. Even some more appears between Belorussian, however none significant differences, preferably marking of some tendency in the mixture. Among the Jews settled in Poland, there are more of the bright-haired, although differences are minimal, because practically all Jews came from Poland, others rarely survived. Now the small differences rely on whether they left one, a few, or say, umpteen generations ago. Anyway, Czekanowski applied math especially statistics to his study, the methods maybe were too complicated, too many data, often unnecessary, but exactly this grabbed the interest of Moranowski. In Lwów, when studying, he saw the professor, the theories made an impact, he probably understand this better, Angus poorly, listening to Moranowski only about conclusions. But even without details, the basics were enough.

This of course lay down all idea of racialism and for the Nazis amounted to a heresy, therefore the outcomes of works and publications of Czekanowski become most severely forbidden. The results proclaimed, after all, that present nationalities have nothing common with race and breeds, are affairs of consciousness and choice, also surely of traditions, but absolutely not so-called "blood". (After the war, these explorations were widened precisely about the statistics of groups and the subgroups of blood, now also of DNA. Outcomes similar, but additionally better supplied by excellent documentary evidence. What's more, straight and simple, with bones only, the was need for much more data and the math methods were much complicated).

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To Angus it was a shock, alternating the stereotypes. A bigger shock to come.

Already in January it became clear the math program comes quickly to end. Angus' parents then persuaded Moranowski, to make the exception also of teaching Latin, although not his choice and liking, he

still remembered the subject well enough. However, he agreed – but only the beginnings. This changed the conversations after lessons, to history and the development of culture, in first part the Mediterranean. But occasionally, the discussions referred also to Germany, one can tell the development, the traditions and political independence fighting in German countries. This last without reference to communist traditions, from ancient free colonization, through farmers' wars all the way to distinguished traditions of political independence and broad-minded liberals in the 19th century. The peak appeared of course with the Spring of Nations (People's Spring, 1848-9), but not only, the size of important events took place earlier and much later.

Admittedly already Mother had tried to clarify for Angus, that formerly many Germans were altogether different from the Nazis, they created and added to the universal possessions many abiding values, but she talked to deaf ears. Like when she tried to induce him to learning the German language, and Angus felt sick at the mere thought of such hideousness. Now it appeared in this was some truth, but he took less notice of mother words, than of the coach. Chiefly through about a century, from the Napoleonic wars all the way forward, except the new Prussian militarism resulting in the German Empire, the heart of freedom, progress and tolerance one can tell, beat strong in German countries. Not to speak about the abiding literary heritage and splendid intellectual tradition. German people merely had not had luck, finally always remained saddled and pressed in a heavy yoke. This motif had repeated already many times in their history. But this did not mean they were unable to feel human emotions and needs, no bad luck, might stay forever.

* * *

"Madame, please: I am not saying I do not want to teach Angus further, especially on such good conditions. However the best for him would be to change the teacher now. He must go to the normal, if secret, underground high school, attend the regular classes, if only because in future he will need the certificates. All of this the regular underground school can assure him, it is free, a normal one-year cycle. However, if you can stand the expense, I would advise private classes with the same professors. Teaching in little groups is more effective, goes without comparison more quickly, besides the professors will learn better the disciple, and this assures a better start.

"I allowed myself already to get introductory information from Professor Mazzurewicz, who remembers me not too badly. I told him, I

know a boy with a natural ability in math, after me, in Ostrowiec was nobody alike. I will give you his address, you can make a direct appointment, either to set up private classes, or to have Angus accepted to the secret high school.

"If I were going to go on teaching Angus myself, first I would not have much to teach any more, anyway not in mathematics, not in the high school course. A couple of problems especially I did not touch, for example the quadratic equations, therefore he didn't implant mannerisms, in own conviction he already knows all. I could train him up in one day. But such unilateral learning is not right, anyway the boy already has a tendency to vanity, is getting cocksure. Therefore I insist do not repeat to him this conversation. You have two possibilities.

"Either Angus shall prepare for the secondary-school certificate as extern (extramural) student, because I can't assure him a certificate. If so, then surely he will meet with dislike and who knows if he will pass the examine first time, even if he knows more than the examiner. This a straightway, to become a familiarized genius. Or you may take my advice and contact with Professor Mazzurewicz, who already knows the problem. If you stand as before on private lessons, this would be best. Angus it is not only able, but has a natural talent, such investment would be well-founded. But please, remember this is only the beginning and necessary to go careful to waste not the chance. Therefore please again forget this conversation, do not tell him any."

This council took place at the Moranowski home, where he invited Angus' parents halfway through March. Angus' mother did not need a long persuasion, she had always been convinced that her son was the seventh wonder of world and nothing was good enough for him. A private, best available education was her "fixed idea" already in Poznan. Thus, soon Angus was informed that when there should convene a complete group, he would begin classes at the home of Professor Mazzurewicz, who was to teach him mathematics, physics and chemistry, the third class of the high school course. His daughter, Dr. Piesewicz, might give Latin language and Polish courses for the second class. So far he had completed the first high school class in humanities, and with father completed the other subjects of this class, in fact repeated material already learned, history, geography and chiefly zoology as well as botany. Mazzurewicz was actually a naturalist and agreed to examine him some time later.

About this conversation his father told Angus many years later, when he gave to his son, for the second time ever, good advice, this time about his planned marriage. His mother mentioned never one word,

although then and always she spoke much and quick, in fact she jabbered. However then, unexpectedly she bought him his first "adult", genuine suit of marine-blue wool, with a tie and all other suitable additions as well as a high quality eternal pen, a genuine "Mont Blanc." Specifying neither reason nor occasion, only that he after all had somehow to be presentable, when introduced to the professor. But after all the small-format camera (35 mm), a not too bad if not exclusive Retina, was not perhaps therefore necessary.

Angus until now had never noticed clothes, just that he had stopped wearing short trousers and wore, now and the years to follow, knickerbockers. Now as commonly, he criticized such prodigality, but sincerely speaking felt well, inspired. New clothes, a new man. It was only now that his sense of being good for nothing, of inner emptiness, of dejection and multiple complexes began to vanish, he began to recover belief in himself and wish to live. He very much needed a little success, and now it seemed it was about to come.

Better to tell it straight, now, that never he became a mathematical genius. He had no extraordinary talent, he happened on distinguished teachers. First, his father directed him, one can tell good craft, quick and effective work, precision and perfection from beginning all the way to the outcome. Only here, as if in binary pattern, counted either one for a good outcome, or zero, without regard for how small or accidental a mistake might be. The next coach, on the contrary, demanded quick seizing of understanding and explanation of the procedure, and in the details, the result, already took little interest. He was unwilling to continue work to the end, also to care about a small error from a momentary absence of mind, if the initial idea was correct. Chiefly, if there were several possibilities, he choose chic. By preference a math artist, anyway he had flair, which speaks of the "artistic soul".

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Winter this year was, like the whole war, stingingly frosty, but ended rather early, and after great cold, the near-zero temperatures of March appeared warm. When the snow melted, Angus again, coming near the bottom, heard the thudding of the ball. He approached the boundary and he saw down, on the yard in the forest which was still wet, but sandy and without puddles, the shapes of plain young people. As before in autumn, from now on, they appeared every day, if only the weather was fair enough. Angus began more often to go downwards and to like the game. Did not know how to play volleyball, but began to feel

the motions and the reactions of the players with his own body, even the flight of the ball – volleyball fascinated him.

A couple of players he knew, they lived nearby, up Traugutt Street. One of them, tall, muscular, with negroid woolly though shortcut hair, the other surely his brother, altogether unlike, though also tall but lean and quick in motions, long straight hairs, on the sports field behaving sometimes like a clown. They lived up in the house of Mrs. Godniowski, where he went once for dinners – and probably were her sons. A few of the girls also lived near. Other young people came on bicycles.

Mostly played groups of three or four people, rarely teams of five, but the most moving and spectacular were the games of pairs. Angus at the beginning looked on from a distance, then he began to approach nearer. He knew most of the people by sight and exchanged brief greetings or nods of head, and couple times got even the honor of counting the points. But on occasion invited to play, he displayed badly. Always he was pretty awkward, and now continuously depressed, with a strong sense of inferiority, too many complexes. Always presuming he was bound to discredit himself and in fact this was what happened. So he preferred to keep a distance, though enormously wanting to be part of the gang. Still, he looked on himself as leprous and surely not deserving the companionship of these splendid youth, who surpassed him in every regard. Not mentioning his ugly, dirty soul. Besides his elder by a good few years, some adult. Formerly, for sure he would have been much impressed, but he would have been able to form an acquaintance. Now, a boy with broken spirit, he was only beginning to recover, never fully reaching his earlier devil-may-care attitude.

In the second half of March, the newspapers announced Yugoslavia would soon join the Rome-Berlin axis. The ceremony of signing the pact was proclaimed for the end of the month, followed by friendly relations and collaboration, including military alliance. However two days after the declaration, right before the expected fact, the news caused a violent revolt of the population, with impromptu expansion to the army. The government fell, the regent Paul resigned, into authority stepped the young King Peter. The same reaction of society which would have happened in Poland in 1939, if the contemporary government had accepted Hitler's proposal, tried to change the alliances. And probably, as the Polish people with their own bodies shielded and saved England, though did not so manage with France, because France resigned and wanted no saving – so now Yugoslavian with own bodies shielded Russia in the timely moment. If according to primary plan Hitler hit the Soviets midway through May (he chose the timetable talking with German pilots

trained by Soviets, who informed him the mud usually dried in May, see H. von Below's memoirs), events would be different. No way to tell, if he would reach the Ural line, but sure he may be in time to take Moscow, and probably to cross the Volga. Yugoslavia became precisely a handful of sand in the wheels of a machine already overloaded because of tense time-limits. Yugoslavia with Greece bought priceless time for the Red Army, all the way to June 22. Nothing that happened later, the most terrific victories of the Germans, could make this up.

At first Germany reacted officially by only declaring hypocritically that neither Germany nor Italy should mix in the inner affairs of neighbors, and the affair of a government is its sovereign decision.

However then, on all roads in the neighborhood swarmed the military vehicles. Not enough place in the previously taken buildings, the neighboring high school and the edifice of the primary school opposite, nor on the sports fields round. Many trucks stood under bare sky in groves around both sides of the road. Full of motorized infantry, in the vicinity parked none armored vehicles. The soldiers, young people, jested that it was a tour, free-of-charge around Europe, like a free grand excursion. Altogether another tune than in 1939. And even still a year before. Now fully satisfied, some just plain happy, boundlessly trusting their leader and Commander in Chief. Straight from France they brought and sold now, top class cognacs and wines, coffee and tea, silks, chiefly triangular neckerchiefs and many others – almost half free. For example good cognac exchanged for two, and the best for three bottles of common vodka. Fluently knowing the German language Angus' mother went to buy coffee normally unattainable, then more to hoard and still more. Father and Angus carried the buys home. When soon the income from the concession ended, the hoards of coffee and tea set up a reserve which enabled them further survival.

In these days happened an exceptional international match. A few of these young soldiers approached the young people playing volleyball and asked if they could play. Some sets smoothly lost, they ran for help and pulled down their obviously best volleyball players. All agreed on just one more set, because the Poles had about this time to finish and return home. Such a match Angus did not see neither before, nor later. From both sides players rushed to each, even quite hopeless ball, made down-cuts and defense one would have sworn impossible, a regular circus, and the players did not save themselves, hurtling to the ground. Or suddenly jumped out like tigers and from the second line, cut down, often after a preceding feint. The game lasted a long time and at the end both Godniowski boys, the best on the field, literally were dripping with sweat.

In the end, however, the Germans won. True, the Poles, already tired to begin with, had no replacement, Germany had greater reserves, but necessary to admit that they played tops.

The sudden transfer of troops many people took as a measure of immediate attack on the Soviets, but in time nothing like this occurred. The motorized infantry suddenly disappeared, the quarters almost emptied, with few soldiers left. Germany, as before never caring about declaration of war hit on Yugoslavia and Greece. Like in Poland, this was not such a pleasant touring excursion, as on the west. However solely the technical superiority quickly decided the war. In his 1939 campaign Hitler engaged three tanks and three armored divisions against one Polish brigade, not one tank left on the French front. At the time, France had a big superiority, probably twice as many tanks in all (the whole German force on the Polish front). At the end of 1939 the French superiority grew, probably to six times. Because of the German toll in Poland. Only none of these superior tanks did France use. At the beginning of the French campaign, Germany doubled its armored forces, creating three new tank divisions on Czech equipment, either changing the armaments or using the chassis of Czech tanks with standardized turrets of German construction. Also, they repaired the tanks damaged in the 1939 campaign. Despite this, they still had fewer tanks than the French, who besides had an uniform equipment.

After victory over France, again Germany more than doubled the number of tanks, using those they had captured, mainly in magazines, some on the battlefield. Largely fixed only chassis, also the industrial potential of French institutions, beside the high technical excellence of Czech and Austrian armaments works. It is either an error, or a purposely false supposition that Hitler began the war armed to his teeth, most of the heavy equipment, especially the armor, he won as he went along. Only thanks to this, in the progress of war, grew his huge superiority. At the beginning of 1941 he had already dozens of divisions of tanks, many armored and motorized. The defenders of Yugoslavia and Greece had nothing to defy.

* * *

The Germans overcame Thermopile, soon would reach Athens. The Balkan campaign was already decided, support could not change this, despite all sent by Vavell with the impossible task of keeping if only central Greece and Peloponnese. At least he did a decent motion, but alas, weakening the English army in Northern Africa, on which already

soon had to fall a strike of Africa Corps tanks, mainly Czech, partly also French-made. The only possibility to turn the tide would be if the Soviets chosen to help Yugoslavia, who took a fatal risk to save their skin.

But like Poland, Yugoslavia acted on sentiments, not sound reason and similarly was sold, down the river, by an imagined ally. Stalin didn't give a damn about Yugoslavia's fate, satisfied by keeping Hitler busy, he prepared his own detailed plan, attack first the supposed friend, take all the bounty for himself. The decision to keep calm a little longer was extreme stupid. If he acted in time, right after the elite of the German army crossed the Carpathian Mountains, he could have had a chance. Poland was half empty of German soldiers – as before on the Western Front, Hitler, a natural gambler, left behind only a weak shield. Besides, Stalin could pretend to act honest and proper, like a true freedom-fighter, defending the people. Sure the Poles and Czechs, the actual victims of the Balkans, probably France and some small states or communities would take his side all the way, the world public opinion too. Even if the worst came to the worst, he would be in much better position, compared with what happened next.

* * *

One sunny April day, Angus went out from the last classes, without long talk, earlier than usual. Instead of going home, he directed his steps first to the sports field in the forest, where the boys and girls were just arriving. A couple of people sat on stumps or right on the ground, on folded down overcoats, after midday it was becoming warm.

From the nearby house ran down the elder Godniowski with a strangely changed face, and greeting nobody, he began disorderly to speak, deep moved: "Listen, just now, this I got, listen!" -

The group concentrated around him, Angus too approached, he did not know if he could join the group. But after moment it turned out that he would have to, if he wanted to hear anything, because Godniowski spoke quietly, and his voice at moments broke down. He understood only occasionally, the stanza:

Dziś w nocy puszysty śnieg dach ubielił,
a potem ponury poranek grudniowy
gdy zajrzał do wnętrza naszej ciemnej celi,
nas zastał jak zawsze na wszystko gotowych.-
Ludzi, co mają na czołach wyryte
zaszczytne przezwisko "Polnische Banditen

in Sonderabteilung".

.....

Czasem nadzieje fantazje mą pieścżą,
że może tu po nas ślad jakiś zostanie,
że może nam wdzięczni rodacy umieszczą
tablicę tu białą na szarej tej ścianie.

A na niej tu będą te słowa wyryte:
tu byli więzieni "Polnische Banditen"....

.....

... to słowo, co boli, jak otwarta rana
Oświęcim.

This very night a fluffy snow whitened the roofs
And then a gloomy December morning
When he looked within our dark cell,
It found us, as always, ready for all –
(What was it about? Which snow, why December? A little late now, he
thought. But already there were more verses).

People who have on foreheads engraved
The honorable name of Polish Bandits
In "Sonderabteilung" (special detachment).
(Now he caught on and a thrill sped through him like a jolt of electric
current.)

A timely hope fondles my phantasy
Something of us may remain here,
Maybe the grateful compatriots will place
A white board here, on the gray of this wall.
And on it shall be these words engraved :
Here were imprisoned the Polish Bandits
In Sonderabteilung

(Such simple, straight primitive words, why did he feel the sudden
contraction of throat, compress the eyes, stop seeing and hearing)

...This word, paining, like an open wound
Oświęcim (Auschwitz)...

* * *

Capsule: First news about and from Oświęcim.

Angus heard then for first time the name Oświęcim (Auschwitz). The trademark of a huge factory of death built on grounds included in Germany, but near the new border and the basin of raw materials which, according to German plans, the remainder of occupied Polish land was to become. The concentration camp had existed already since November 1939, but in time continued there the technological trial and the period of experimental production. Elaborating now the most economic and effective methods of killing of prisoners as well as processing the remains.

The news about this still didn't spread widely, Polish society, with the word concentration camp did not associate the meaning of a "death camp." Angus, and surely most of Poles, knew such names as Buchenwald, Dachau and a few of long-standing, one may say, traditional camps (for the Nazi; Poles would consider such an adjective inadequate). Here rose a new experimental center, which should from now on assure quick remake of human bulk with industrial, modern methods. Well, for some time it functioned as a "classic" concentration camp, where prisoners died only after a time, on average between a half to a full year. From so-called natural causes, meaning expiring of the organism, caused by too weak nutrition simultaneous with too heavy work, maltreatment and bad general conditions. In short, spending too much energy, more than delivered with food, a disproportion with the needed calories. According to the individual resistance and the stores of the organism, the time of expiring could be different.

The first information about new experiments, research and development, modern methods, delivered the officer of the former Polish Army, then the Secret Polish Army, later united to AK Captain of Horse, W. Pilecki. He volunteered for arrest for a minor misdemeanor, which usually was not punished by death on the spot, but by concentration camp. During his six-month stay he gathered information about Oświęcim and organized there secretly the prisoners. Next he ran away from the camp to deliver information and to form contacts for the newly created conspiratorial commando. Precisely on his evidence and info support, of course after necessary shortcuts, abridgment of the earliest news about Oświęcim appeared in the underground press. Soon the information became delivered West, where as usual, nobody believed it.

In Oświęcim (Auschwitz) the Germans experimented with different methods of killing, such as famine, cold and others, but the most advanced was death by injection of various substances. The best, almost decisively chosen as the most promising, was injection intravenously or near the heart of phenol, cramped nervous shock caused heart failure.

Death immediately followed even a dose of one gram, but for certainty they recommended four to five grams of phenol. Explorations were also conducted on killing by gas, but employing preferably internal-combustion gases. According to the expertise of specialists, the method of injection was recommended, because was more elastic, in comparison to output in charges (batches or groups). However, so well elaborated technology wasted, did never come in use, as sudden, a great Chemical Concern (IG Farbenindustrie) recommended cyclone, till now insecticidal poison which for this aim turned out particular profitable. Inventions often are a work of chance, but only then, when exists a need of application.

Pilecki took for a second time an impossible mission, returning to the death camp, where he could be identified as a recent refugee. After composing his report, he came back to the camp to deliver the contacts of the set-up organization of resistance, and for more proofs and information. However even then his report delivered by the Polish underground courier never published the western centers of information or public news, like the one of Karski about the Jews. These reports got a muzzle, never allowed for publishing, censored, and even many times defined as "Polish lies." Pilecki, honored twice with *Virtuti Militari*, was next murdered by marionette authorities of Stalin's regime, in Warsaw, soon after the war.

* * *

For the rest of his life, Angus many times remembered this moment when he felt that a few sincere words would assure the success of what was his greatest dream, contribution in freedom fighting, joining the resistance. At this unique moment he felt sure he would be accepted. There are such moments in life, when long and futile efforts suddenly become possible. In a single moment, opened the closed door, fell down screens. Angus knew where he was and in what company, felt and shared the hot patriotism, embracing all spirit, gust of feeling.

He never opened his mouth. He did not react, because still his spirit remained crippled. If already he did not look on himself as on a shit better cleaned from the world, then at the most like a worm without backbone, who would be a hindrance rather than a help in emergency. He was unworthy and worse, probably would break down in a crisis. Probably not so bad as to turn traitor. These fears now appear surely exaggerated, but anyway, he could pull, bring a calamity. He never recovered the belief in himself, the force of convictions, the inner heat,

fiery spirit, which marked him before. The doubts, the inferiority complex remained. The somehow crazy, hotheaded, admittedly foolish boy, however brave and smart enough, who threw his heart in front and then ran after, forever ceased to exist. He only vegetated now, disabled and learning afresh to live, mend his soul.

„.....z grobuś nieraz wyrżał w górę, czując dreszcze zmartwychwstania,
jam wciąż tylko patrzył w chmurę, która Boga mi przesłania.

“...from a grave you looked upwards, feeling thrills of resurrection,
I constantly only looked at a cloud, shielding God from me.”