

*Mur szkolny fui, fuisti powtarza po łacinie
a wielu z nas poznało śmierci prawdziwe imię.
Ostatnie przeszły tą bramą gruz i kamienie
zastygły w przejściu. I odtąd nic się nie zmienia.*

.....
*żyć nie warto dla siebie, dla siebie tylko się trudzić,
a los nasz nie jest ważniejszy od losu innych ludzi.*

*The school wall repeats "fui, fuisti" in Latin
And many of us learned the proper word for Death.
At last came through his gate brick, rubble and stones,
they froze in the passage. Since then nothing more happens.*

.....
*... life for himself only, is not worth the effort,
our fate is not more important than the lives of others.*

Chapter 15. Occupation change

31st of December 1944, about 9 pm. It was pitch dark, only on the tiles of the stove at times appeared dark red reflections. This caused the suspended on short hooks heating spirals, occasionally glowing for a moment. Three coils of resisting wires 400 W each were composed parallel and next jointed at the ends, the electricity (alternating current of nominally 220 V) connected to the joint ends and in the middle. This way, they appeared in halves, every of about 50% increased resistance, the whole construction may use about 560 W of power. But this happened only occasionally, in the seconds when the voltage in the network approached the nominal. In fact it changed most irregular, as a rule always lower, but occasionally a few, or even umpteen second nearly the 220 V and then coils glowed darkly. To lighting up the room it would not do at all, at best the twinkling glimmer of the bulbs could cause sore eyes. Therefore, the people in all the houses lit either petrol lamps, or the bright, but stinking badly carbide lamps. Use of electricity for other aims as electric bulbs was strict outlawed. The hanging on stove hooks, Angus' construction, was illegal, that was why Angus reduced the power and temperature of the coils so, they may glimmer hardly and only occasionally visible. Also, this way he could take them off and hide in a few seconds. Besides, with the lower temperature the coils lasted long. On the other side, they produced less heat and this with interruptions, in fact they flashed as cat eyes in the dark room and produced little more warmth. Nevertheless, without a fire in the stove the temperature in the little room of the wooden house, hold around the

0° C, despite the deep frost outside. Admittedly, the winter was not as sharp, as the former before, but still the fact, the water rarely froze in the room, could be recognized as technical success.

Beyond the closed shutters and the door of this room, with a window hermetically sealed on both sides to show no light, the furniture consisted of two beds, a small table, a wardrobe and a chair. Angus, in dress, only without boots, lay on one bed. Covered with quilt and with cushion on his head, he tried to fall asleep, or at least take a rest, because he expected an active night. However the sleep did not come, only before Angus' closed eyes appeared the pictures of last days.

The Christmas Day, frosty and snowy, they all spent in Jaruga house. Christmas Eve from need they fastened modestly, but the first day of Christmas become impressive, with a dinner from roasted hare with baby roots. Sincerely speaking, the duty of hare fulfilled Tom, a huge cat, the favorite of all staying in-house. Tom returned home so much wounded, he fell and froze to death by the doors, not one could help him. Anyway the death was for him a blessing and the animal set up stiff and hard on the frozen snow. Difficult to bury him with the high snow on hard frozen earth, so he remained outside covered with snow to the time, when it becomes warm. In this circumstances Angus' mother proposed that she will tear off the skin and bake the meat. In first moment all this appeared a shock, nobody from family of Jaruga wanted to give a hand, but finally famine turned the scales. The weight of already bound meat was almost 5 kg, this was an impressive cat indeed, almost a little, black panther and well nourished. So the holiday dinner was ample and good, though a little it had the character of funeral banquet, cat mentioned with a sorrow.

Matthew told inaudibly Angus, that now they may draw lots on future, a lottery who may be the next extra provision. Pretty macabre, for a joke. On this Angus, whispered to him he read that before umpteen thousands of years, the custom of funeral banquet rose from a ransom, which family of the dead offered to hungry funeral guests. All because the widow blinded by tears, burned the flesh of the dearest remains. From here next the custom of burials by cremation devised with a compensation for the disappointed friends. In guerrilla, Matthew and Angus, strictly private between boys, many a times tried to make disgusting the eating and invented and told even worse stories. Who could not eat, his loss. Matthew has a specific, a bit malicious humor sense, in use only in the first month, as long as they served together, now he topped the long pause.

At once after Christmas Angus parents came back to the apartment and pub by the roadway. Building was dully closed by shutters with irons staffs. Because the house lay by the arc of roadway, the exposed from this side premises encouraged to robbery and such in time of front change may be expected, father came on an unlucky idea. He decided to hide some valuable possessions. He had the experiences still from revolution in Russia and fresh from 1939 r, so he saw and knew, how this did happen. He chose beyond the second house and sheds a few meter of earth covered by thick spruces and not frozen, with a sandy soil, dug there a deep pit. Then with mother the chose better clothes, a warm fur laced cloak from Wilno market 1938 and mother fur (in fact, not used because Germans confiscated such on sight), as well other valuables. A few days, in sand and with the frost, they should not suffer damage. And in fact, there was not the time for this.

Already next day a group of savage, altogether wild stragglers in German uniforms broke by force into the shop of a neighbor, the mentioned die-hard, old miser and local shylock. He also held a beerhouse, but for years had almost neither clients, nor commodity, a proper wonder how he survived, as his greed developed with age into a mental aberration. They demanded alcohol, threatening him with shooting, but the recluse, rarely seeing people, put off by absurd, double prices, if mortally terrified, but would rather offer his blood than a drink without money. He plead mercy on his knees, but the senile avarice left him not even in the face of death, he swore, that he has nothing, but nearby live people, who buried treasures.

Then marauders broke in and took Angus mother and father, they may chose, either an immediate execution, or point out and dig up these treasures. Both parents, with shovels in hands dug up the hiding-place. The worst moment succeeded when the German disappointed examined the poor-looking booty. They expected something better after assurances of the old Wasikowski. They wanted to shoot the owners and to leave their corpses in this cave. They took furs and a part of warm clothes, others they did throw on earth and trampled, some destroyed. Final, the fluent German of mother and two bottles of spirit caused, they left parents Angusa with life. On the other side, next the shattered door and shutters with other damage showed this house as already robbed and further deserters progressing along the main road, passed around. Instead they smashed also building on the second side of road, but there was nobody. However, the panic somehow dealt off, the Germans still did not withdraw, the next day's elapsed quiet.

Angus returned home two days later. Thrilled by the narration he considered, what he may do to defend the parents, if he were home. Surely, something foolish which may turn much worse, probably fatal.

However, the townspeople around were concerned with another terrifying danger. Along the first house, short distance after the fence, on the little glade where he and other occasionally played ball, raised a huge pile of ammunition. Long some 20m, broad about 3m and high a little more as 1m, it consisted of mortar missiles like oblong bombs with a winged tail. Of course, Angus and everyone knew, they were all without detonators, which would be put in right before firing them, so now insensitive. But in case of direct hit, by heavy artillery fire or air bomb, the result may be disastrous. It must be at least fifty tons, many truckloads of them. By a distance of umpteen meters it would have no sense to hide in a basements, sure at least several hundred m. around buildings would fall in ruin. But Angus took most interest if it may be possible to demount the missiles and recover from them the explosive, probably TNT, which should be safe enough. Maybe, melt it away?

Anyhow, soon he heard that not faraway, by the Piaski Street situated a second, much bigger magazine. At once he went to see and check out and exactly opposite the house he stayed two years ago, on the brink of the forest, the enclosure for the church in construction appeared the place. Where he cultivated the potatoes and tomato plans, between the garden of Kawiorski and the Piaski Street the Germans additionally surrounded part of enclosure with barbed wires and set up a sentry. The prism of explosives, placed on boards and covered with canvasses, looked different from the pile of missiles. For a moment he dread going crazy, or his eyes delude him, when in someplace, the canvas cam a little apart and he saw a yellow wand he noted, from the soap-like bricks of TNT. All gold of Fort Knox never may made on him such an impression. It was, as he touched the feet of Good, almost impossible. If he ever succeeded with his plans, production of explosives, how much may make? A few Kg, with best luck umpteen? When he dreamed to join Gloomy squad, it may be enough for train, top on two. Anyway, with five, six Kg he would be accepted with all honors. Here lay tons, all the Polish underground had never such a treasure. The opportunity of life, he must do something.

He must find a way, plan a manner to get some. This day and night of 28/29-th December he devoted to collect more information. Still in the day he walked a couple of times along the Piaski Street and next inspected the ground from the forest side, all the way to fence of Kawiorski. After twilight also and at last in a deep night stalked away

from home in warm dress and sheepskin. He lay on the snow some three hours by the barbed wires from the outside observing a behavior and movements of the sentinel all the way to the end of his watch and still a time of the next. No doubt that guards acted careless. The sentries never inspect the ground about, at best they walked a little way on the path parallel to the street and then went in a little shed. At times they went in Kawiorski home, where seemingly they took lodgings, to warm themselves.

Next day Angus inspected the object still more, reminding each square meter of ground he dug with a spade and each stone he threw away. Also the trees, under which many a time he sat with a book, now his place took the explosives. All fenced with long-standing church enclosure, only from the street they added a wooden gate and barbed wire. Besides still a couple resistant impediments from the forest side, a makeshift against cars, no-good against pedestrians.

Next night, Angus again stalked from house, quickly jumped the road and immersed in forest. From tree to tree he came to the barbed wires. Snow was not friable and in puddles, but strongly frozen, in the daytime the clear sun started to melt it, and then it again froze on, creating a crust. Footprints would be inconspicuous, and indistinct, but such snow was "vocal" it banged, crashed and needed a careful moving. Some luck, that preceding winter, by forceful ski expeditions, Angus learned the basic knowledge about the snow structure and specific quality. But even so, it was necessary to test every step. Nonetheless, even without his motion in the forest resounded many noises, natural sounds of freezing soggy earth, moving twigs and trees with glacial crust, moist organic matter and so on. Going slow, he waited by the external wires till sure he located well the sentry and then he hooked up the barbs at the bottom and sneaked below. Snow in enclosure was much treated, there was none need care about left footprints. The second line of wires nailed straight to the trees, under which Wehrmacht hoarded the stuff. Though this line former unknown, after moment he found a place, with possible access. Before him mounted walls of one and a half to about two meters high, consisting from familiar little bricks, like to the pieces of hard soap. Each one had in center a round gap as if on a little finger in 400 g of TNT, they were also a halves flat tablets, of 200g TNT in boxes from thin slats. Candidly better as gold, how many deeds he could carry out in the past months, if he may have a little of them. And in the preceding year, my God's, Gloomy himself sure would accept Angus to the squad, with open arms. Gloomy would bend a sky to a soldier, who may bring along a bag of such "bones".

It was pretty bright, properly too bright on the snow, chiefly when often appeared the moon. However Angus managed to nip off a lot of TNT bones to both bags and withdraw home. This night he repeated the expedition. Temporary he placed the brought TNT in the room and wanted make a go again, but was so weary and teary, not mentioning the closes, that he dropped on the bed and got a little some sleep till the morning. Next for a temporary hiding-place he chose the cell which he used as a collector of garbage for the empty bottles and scrap-iron. Which he still held in decorative array aims, as a screen. Next night managed to bring still more, and besides he noticed a place, where separately lay flat disks mines to fight the tanks and heavy vehicles, however at the time de did not take any.

Next evening he early went to bed, but was too elated and dream did not come, so he began to recite verses from memory. He planned to go out about first hour of the night, this being the most sleepy and so most safe hours. But before him was still many hours to spent. Not worth to stand up and try at the occasional red flashes read the watch. If so he managed in two bags to bring about twenty kg TNT and do it second time, this would be enough for ... How many trains? He could put in the air the whole Gestapo, only they already ran away. And such a disk mine, it might, if some tank heavy and well armored may keep whole, at least destroy the caterpillar wheels. However, I there existed any way the Home Army may get it all, Poland may change again the history, like already once stopped the speedy Hitler attack, which in September 1939 could conquer the Western Democracy....

Convinced, he did never fall asleep at all, when from this dream tore him out the noise of rapid-fire. He tried tore off the closed window, but unable too, went out to the vestibule and opened the door. From all sides in the sky ran colored small lights, and from a time to time the bright glare of rockets. An air attack, or already break of the front? Not so, this fire appeared without substance, looking like a collective madness. Only after a moment it rubbed up to him: This front soldiers, enjoyed because of finishing the worst year 1944 , hoping the 1945 may be the last. Each shot up the sky all he had, they wasted all the owned reserve ammunition. Angus never saw something like this. So it could happen only in a demoralized army, without a discipline, next to a demonstration. Sure they hoped this already the last year, but even so, this appeared impossible and previously never could happen. Anyway today night he could never go, not a chance for expedition, he returned to bed to sleep. Germans embraced in an amok, it began well before

twelfth o' clock and the noise arouse constantly. This night probably they never go to sleep, they shall trail around and drink to the morning.

Next day was calm and quiet, a little foggy, less of frost, but an unpleasant cold. Angus left exceptional early and using the good chance brought two big loads, so again he have not strength to leave third time, even if there would be not gold, but even diamonds. Perhaps only primers and detonators may made him go, but nothing of this, primers and detonators never store with the explosive. Self-evident, as plain as a nose on his face, but he regretted this, without them it was only a half-success. With TNT cubes one may lit a campfire, and it have never right to explode (with exception, perhaps if it changed chemically in presence of metal). But he hoped, that he may conquer the problem. Either with the founding, others offer the additions, or he tries some new solution. At first interesting, if number 48a from his notebook, the mixture of zinc dust with sulfur, in may be satisfactory to detonate TNT. Can a bigger quantity take an effect? What a shame he thought about it so late, yesterday in the confusion, he could try this out.

Third of January the Germans disappeared suddenly, as if they never were there. People spoke that they ran away already on good and swore, they did already see the Soviet soldiers. But nobody went out from their house, only near midday Angus shortly tear out. He saw from far, on the parallel to road footpath, three soldiers in greenish uniforms and in the helmets of another shape coming form bushes towards the settlements. He preferred neither to show nor to approach, they went with ready weapon in hands and may react overhasty.

Ostrowiec had much luck, the front never rolled over the town. The Germans simply run away in the night and Soviets stepped on in the morning without a battle. At first with caution, only late afternoon and by night begun intensive movement on the roadway, there drove military troops. One of the loud explosions in the last days was demolition of the railway bridge, so the whole transport had to go by carriages and trucks. It was a welfare the fleeing German soldiers busted not in the air the magazines with the piled up ammunition. Sure detonating the massive pile of mortar bombs right opposite Angus windows would blew from the earth the houses of Szumilas and the next east and on the west the Gimnazium (high school) boardinghouse. Not to say the great magazine of explosives by the Piaski Street, would destroy all the houses and kill all living there people. Maybe by defect of discipline of the fleeing troops, but a reasonable chance the German officers left behind, recognized the slaughter of civil population and resigned, knowingly, from execution of their orders and many people lives. The news about the Soviet offensive

came unexpected and there would be not time for evacuation of the inhabitants. Angus had not a blue notion, who may be the German officers in charge in the least hours, but not long ago he met a proper man in German uniform and knew, even there some may be human.

The only visible dead were these German soldiers, who managed not run in time. Occasionally, Soviet soldiers found some Germans. If they killed them not in first moment, going with the gun ready to shoot, but conducted them to back troops, the German POW had a good chance for survival. Sure much better, as the Polish partisans, who by the Soviet soldiers may be meet amicably, but next, according to received orders, were escorted to special forces of NKWD. It was a rare accident, if after the war, anybody from these Poles got out alive from the Gulags. The Soviet who surrendered to Germans, had almost none chances. Anyway, by the roadway lay some dead bodies, who had the bad luck to go out from concealment before nervous Red Army soldiers, but others were escorted to town without pestering or bad treatment.

For a few days troops of Red Army soldiers traveled through the town, in all different conditions, better or worse. At the last, right by Angus' home stayed a very-special detachment. All the soldiers had no rifles, only spades, they were not allowed not only in, but even near the houses, they could never distance themselves from the others more than a few steps. They behaved most disciplined and obediently yet the ranks dealt with them harshly. Not as with beasts, but much worse. Because they could not approach the houses, people steadily gave them "kipiatok" (boiling water) and this was almost all, they had to live on nothing.

The civilians too, temporarily lived on almost nothing, food was scarce. But at least they lived-in houses, while these poor destitute fellows spent all their time outdoors, sleeping on the snow (at best, they had some pad, pallet, plank, well anything they could find, below them). They dressed, like all Soviet soldiers, in uniforms from two layers of fabric, packed with cotton like quilts. The former prison dress used in concentration camps of the deep north, especially Siberia, became one of the several reasons which decided the winter victories. These simple and inexpensive, rather poor uniforms allowed for survival in any deep cold. For example, the prisoners before this simple invention rarely lasted to the spring, but after it had a better chance.

In 1941 the last Red Army troops which arrived at the front consisted of prisoners. Whole detachments from prisons and camps were simply renamed to the military, the men got weapons, but still

went in the dark prisoners' dress they had on before. It turned out they had still the ability to fight, while the other soldiers froze to death in thousands. In the magazines of concentrations camps were still millions of such prisoner uniforms, they needed only dye not dark, but to a "sierogawienna odswieta" (shit color), or in the winter covered with white linen. The Soviets Gulags expected many more prisoners, it was enough for the whole army. Such a primitive arrangement, two tiers of waterproof impregnated fabric and between them a layer of cotton, become a matter deciding between life-and-death. From then on, between German summer offensives, in winter it was the time of Red Army offensives.

Not a worry with supply, such outfits produced Gulags on a mass scale. And meanwhile, on the other side of the front, the trains with frozen bodies and frostbitten cripples returned to Germany, where the Wehrmacht appealed to the people, about collecting any warm articles of clothing, furs. And in the occupied zone they simply took furs and warm clothing off the civilians on the streets, without further ceremony. The Red Army, if surely busy with robbery, did not need to concern themselves with any like this. In the cold period, all the soldiers used the quilted cotton uniforms which protected them from frost much better. The soldiers would at times take off their uniform and wash themselves, if rarely, and the ones from the penal companies would rather not. All wore alike, green military uniforms, but those from penal companies showed more dirt, more wear and tear. And if the cotton showed through, it meant a bad problem, because if water leaked into the padding, the dress lost its insulating ability. They rarely got any better dress, most they made repairs with electrician's tape.

In those few days, Angus never saw a field kitchen, the people never got any warm food. Only time and again, they dared to ask for hot water and then retired with shy, quiet thanks. Once a day they got some food and the top luxury was, if they could crumble the frozen bread and throw it in boiling water. Angus never noticed, if the ranks and maybe the watches killed someone, but saw them struck with rifle butt, or with boots, without a reasonable cause and always no one dared to protest.

Some admired the extreme endurance and immunity of these people. For example, saying: See, a Russian may sleep on the snow as we on the blankets and pillows. We, or also the Germans surely would perish in such conditions. Those who talked like this were unaware just how many Russians died before the uniforms came in use and

that it was just this hecatomb, which made the cause, need of them. Also, that only the strong, the sturdy had any chance of survival.

Several times in passing through, the Red Army kept the soldiers briefly in the people's houses, but each time they hurried onward. But once occurred an event which froze the blood in the veins. As mentioned before, on a small meadow or a glade behind the fence, directly opposite the windows, the Germans had stored up a large heap of mortar missiles. At first these were covered with sheets, but then somebody took away the cover and the longitudinal missiles, reminiscent of small bombs with a flight feather at the tail pointed down, the at first regular prism fell apart. It changed to a heap. Some driver of a military truck discussed this with two civilians, telling them missiles without detonators are full safe. As final proof he would drive with his vehicle right over them.

The bet was made on a liter of spirit and from this moment not any force could restrain him, the stake was too serious. Clearly protesting would only earn a bullet in the stomach, but besides there was no time to organize opposition, or tell the other inhabitants what was going on, because the interested sides immediately complied with the action. Angus restrained Mother from the descent to the basement, there was no sense, no way she would be protected, could only twist a leg on the ladder. Explosion was rather improbable. However, if by some miracle it happened and such a mass of ammunition, many tens of tons exploded, this basement anyway would be crushed. There would occur a real earthquake, but for escape anyway there was not enough time. But of course Angus did not say so, only assured Mother, there is not a smallest danger and the truck as well could drive on a heap of stones. At the worst it might overturn, the driver might suffer some damage.

The large machine which, Angus noticed, made in the USA, with a roar threw around for a moment the missiles and finally topped the pile, driver was not too bad, he managed the difficulty. Proving his skill and style, he drove up to the end and back, throwing about more of the missiles and then jubilantly down on earth. There was not any doubt left, that he won and deserved the reward in full.

All this time Angus had few occasions for the night expeditions to the magazine of explosives by Piaski Street, could return only when the house did not hold Soviet soldiers. However the detachments of army pushed to the front and there remained a relative quiet, neither guard left by the shapeless heap of mortar missiles nor with the

systematically sorted explosive materials by Piaski Street. A small difference, this second had an enclosure of barbed wire.

Angus performed all in all dozens of such escapades. It was necessary to take advantage of the occasion, such a status could not last indefinitely. He kept it a complete secret, not once mentioning a word before any man, not only before the parents, but even Matthew Jaruga, with whom he shared almost all thoughts. He slipped out at night alone, like a ghost, keeping as before all of caution not to be seen, not to meet anybody. There was no need to worry about a sentry on this terrain. But he must beware of being seen from the windows of houses on the other side of the street, even of the neighboring dogs, which should not bark. Windows to be sure were dark and undoubtedly all people deeply sleeping. Yet it would be enough, if someone awaking by chance should notice, a dark figure moving on the terrain of warehouse. It would start gossip and after all in one of these houses lived the known, prewar Communist with his family, including a team of meddling, acquisitive children. Now their father had become a member of some important committee. When they did not fight between themselves, they took council how best to fight the "reaction," meaning any people with other beliefs. The authority of the PPR was not still not fixed and not recognized even by the Red Army. But surely all the more they would announce it as a plot against the safety of the Red Army, to reveal their own importance.

Angus applied therefore the same precautions as with the Germans and all went well. Only in the shed grew the heap of TNT "bones," screened from the front by used trimmings, old bottles, old metal and glass. By the end of January, Angus had assembled already more than six hundred of the 400 gram "bones" and much flat 200 gram tablets. Besides, nearly twenty of the disk antitank mines and as before tried hard, not sparing his strength.

To warrant his weary looks as well a low activeness by day, he began demonstrably to repeat the total high school program, redoing notes and as well essays, even exercise notebooks like in kind to antique rolls. To be sure, not of papyrus, but packing paper, in the absence of notebooks and proper paper. The packing paper, cut in long strips and rolled around sticks, with labels hanging on them, looked like specimens from the Library of Alexandria.

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The new occupation at the start seemed not too bad, anyway the people had too much to worry about plain survival to notice any more. The passage of the front and entry of the Red Army the people expected to be menacing but the fear seemed fortunately to be worse than reality, a lucky surprise. Later, experience was to teach that each new change initially brings relief, but after a while begins the period of tightening screws and pressure grows again. Besides, occupation by alien armies and resulting conditions, at the time looked like a temporary inconvenience which would improve only with the end of the war. The new occupant delivered next administrative authority in the hands of the PPR, only a small organization, full subordinated to the occupants, as expected. From the beginning, Stalin initiative created the PPR, by a group sent from the Soviet Union for this task and dropped by parachute. At first this did not appear of much importance, because this authority was inefficient. In the first weeks, the party organized itself creating many committees, trying mainly to bite and chew one another. The people took little interest, the comment was: "Just leave them alone, they may devour themselves, as spiders put together in one jar." Occasionally the new authorities made some gestures, arranging meetings or demonstrations, where the promoter in front of a silent auditorium tried to express his gratitude to the Red Army for the liberation. For sure, if this army after beating the Germans went away, it could rely on gratitude, even though it had come on its own business, which was not to help the Poles. The fatal past when they killed the Poles in alliance with Hitler should be forgotten. However, now such an ally induced justified fears. A better effect took showing Polish soldiers in accurate Polish uniforms, if in little details aping the Russians. If these soldiers, including specific also officers, could even speak Polish, this at times caused regular enthusiasm. Usually in such an event, in private conversation, quietly, they expressed their feelings, the same which had the people, hope for the arrival of a true freedom. Such news, heard from the soldiers, people secretly repeated.

The regime could not effectively act, because it did not have the personnel. The occupants appointed and held the main of the so-called Interim Government in Lublin, but did not have enough people for the terrain. Not to say well-educated, but at all prepared to perform public functions in the country. The PPR, fixed on the order of Stalin in the year 1942, had few members and not many more supporters. The old communists became decimated before the war on Stalin's orders. All the important active communist members received urgent call to appear in Russia (then, the Comintern still acted and the KPP, the Communist

Party of Poland, was a member), so they went there and found death. To be sure, they had some chance. If a communist by chance sat in a prison, or from other causes despite best will, unable illegal cross border, did not reach Soviets, thus he escaped with his life. Anyway, the tragedy of the KPP was incomparable to what happened in KPZR. On the Soviet area, all the personnel, first the high-ranking, next the middle, and at last any significant was exchanged. The point is, Stalin believed any downed communist could become dangerous. So the lucky were killed straight out, the less lucky died slowly and with pain in the Gulags (the concentration camps in the "white hell" of the ice and snows of North Russia and Siberia). No one had the possibility of salvage from the so-called purges.

A principal difference, the authority of Stalin did not reach to Poland. Well, by a criminal terror his shadow crept over all the world, a known example was murder of Lew Trocki, however he was not omnipotent here. That being so, the exchange of the managing personnel of KPP was not so easy to achieve. Besides, often in the place of the killed automatically entered their substitute, the old companions and friends. In this situation, Stalin ordered the full dissolution of the KPP with the justification the entire leadership consisted of false communists, capitalist agents and provocateurs to such a degree the repair of the party was impossible.

In result the KPP did not exist through the last three years before the war. Also could not act in the first two years of war. Even on the terrains under Soviet occupation, the old communists could at best only ask about membership in the Communist Party of Ukraine, or Byelorussia. (According to a twisted argumentation supposedly this did not determine the denial of Polish nationality, there followed a longer argument about internationalist consciousness.) But even then practice or seniority in the KPP was not a good recommendation, rather treated with suspicion. However, on the terrain of GG, the old communists were sometimes simply denounced to the Gestapo. As earlier mentioned, in GG existed and acted a mission of NKWD connected with the Gestapo. First a short time located in Kraków, then transferred to Zakopane, next to an unknown site. Four times occurred conferences of larger groups of Gestapo delegates with NKWD men, the first in Brześć, one day before the Friendship demonstration and common military parade and ceremonies honoring the common victory over Poland. The next methodological conference followed in November 1939, in Przemyśl. The most malicious one in February 1940 in Zakopane and March 1940 in Kraków, with the conclusion the Poles should become erased to 1975.

Not mentioning the visit of Beria to Himmler at "The Reichsjägerhof Romniten" (near Goldap, then East Prussen). Of course, all this was top secret and at the time neither Angus, nor any of the Poles had a blue idea on the matter. Well, some guesses were declared a slander, but even they were not half of the truth. Already mentioned is the fate of the members of Germany's KPD (Kommunist Party Deutschland), given away at Brześć to Hitler's underlings. So why restrict the giving away, spending the Polish communist? Anyway, it is a known fact, many outstanding underground members were treasonably pointed out to the Gestapo. The author does not know any firm evidence about the old communists, but it is nevertheless most likely too. The only objection Stalin might have would be if some connected with the Soviet intelligence, but there were not any such, as basic any intelligence agent should never turn a Party member.

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Capsule: Stalin allows reconstruction of his agency in Poland.

Only a longtime after Hitler's attack in Russia at the beginning of 1942, by Stalin's permission began restoration of the party, but without "Communist" in its name, now it was called "PPR" (Polish Party of Workers). For its reactivation Stalin ordered to take internal people devoted to him, and to Poland sent a pair of competitive so-called initiative groups, which advanced to kill each other off, so there remained only the few most obedient people. Probably it was arranged on purpose to fix such loyalty, by showing them they were exchangeable. Anyway, in the end full authority fell not to any of them, but to the Soviet intelligence officers who according to the bases never had any links with the Communist movement and many times declared as nonparty. Till the moment when suddenly one became the General Secretary of the party, without any seniority at all. Of course this concerns Bolesław Bierut.

Following a better situation on the front, with the Red Army's approach to Poland, Stalin actualized the plans for a permanent subordination and occupation of this country. Set aside for this purpose were larger means for developing the PPR and the so-called People's Guard, this name changed next to the People's Army. However, despite this, the human base was still too small. In the large guess it can be assumed that at the moment of the front passage the influence of the PPR encompassed about five percent of the population, a little more

from ONR and NSZ. Both these extreme movements had rather small character.

Therefore also, after coming to Polish territory ahead of the time, the new occupants and their previously existing branch organizations began to use the same pattern, successful in reconstructing a new communist party, to assemble other authentic parties. Stalin applied the same methods, rubbing out the existing leaders and terrorizing or bribing, well, buying body and soul more and more of the successors. In this way were first created alien branch parties, using old names, next put implants and then built a supposed majority, liquidating physically any opposition. The first known example was hostile overtake the honorable name of PPS (Polish Socialist Party), one of the main support of the Polish Government in Exile (in London). Stalin created a new PPS, first a branch organization using the same name, at the same time outlawing the management of the previously existing party, arresting and killing the leaders. The situation developed so, that much safer may feel people fighting the former Communism, even the extreme, applying violence. (This does not mean, modeling themselves on Hitler, in Poland were never any, rather examples like ONR copying Phalange). The active member of an extreme right may go repeatedly to prison if remaining faithful to his convictions. But if he decided to become a turncoat, could usually rely on a warm, comfortable place. Borejsza specialized in seeking the right opportunists. However, a known top member of the PPS as a rule had no right to survive. A tertiary only, if he abandoned his ideals and passed to the artificial false PPS made up by the Soviet intelligence and her PPR underdogs. Such renegades could even make a big career, for example Cyrankiewicz.

(A typical story. Józef Cyrankiewicz, jailed in Oświęcim, survived once the worst time with help of the Witold Pilecki (mentioned in Chapter 6) and joined created by him underground. Nevertheless, since he became the head of the Communists government, never tried to save him, on the contrary, gave a damaging evidence before the show trial jury and approved the death sentence. Sure, turned loyal only to Stalin and got full Stalin approval.)

The honest socialists awaited the fate of Pużak, but more often they had to eat the bullet without fatiguing the Court of Justice and superfluous petty formalities, simply buried darkly. Applying the methods of foul play, better erase the competitors quickly and suppress any news. The true, reliable socialists were treated exactly as natural competitors, much more dangerous than enemies. A known fact, also the Bolsheviks liquidated without mercy the mieńszewiks, social revolutionaries and

other competitors with influence inside the working class. Also Stalin could make a deal with class enemies, sit down at one table with a capitalist, but never for example with a Trocki'st. More so, he wrote in elaborate "literary" language, degenerated, bestial Bucharin'owiets, rotten Zinoviev's and however sounded his favorite, colored terms from his book. To finish off competitors is a business duty, later comes time for the enemies, a pleasure.

At the beginning the situation of the Peasants Movement (SL Party) seemed a little better. Here also the communists took the old, good name for a new agency, but here the price of the subordination at least saved many people. First there was created a false SL with addition of "Wola ludu" (People's will). Next the true People's Movement, mainly trying to save the people, the former combatants, agreed on the forced by communist cooperation. Anyway later, with comeback of Mikolajczyk, nearly all the people passed to the PSL (Polish Peasant Party) and then also paid heavy price of blood for heroic resistance. The mentioned SL (Peasants Party) before creating the PSL and after its destruction, took the role, according to the communist vocabulary, of a transmission from the PPR to the peasant masses. Speaking a normal language, an auxiliary agency subordinated to the communists, one of the three so-called "concession parties." However it is necessary to admit, it did always try to defend people. Even from opposition (in first line of the PSL). Thanks to this, they managed to save many former soldiers of the BCH, with this occasion also of the AK, because these organizations united (if incompletely). So the old partisans of the AK could often present themselves as BCH soldiers.

Maybe this seems not too large a merit. However, the Soviet security agency which captured the PPS, helping itself to the good old name, zealously tried to liquidate physically former activists even, or rather especially, when they had a known name, spotless reputation and social authority. The difference was such, for example Witos died a natural death in his own bed (in home arrest), while Pużak died a condemned person killed in Polish prison after he first served a spell in Soviet Lubyanka. Both committed the offense of following their conscience in refusing cooperation with the puppet regime. The PPS captured by Soviet agents recruited to leadership the highest of the activists disposable on the lower steps of local district management. The mentioned Cyrankiewicz did not have any scruples about dipping his hands in blood. He never swayed a finger, winked his eye, approving the murder of people whom he supposedly called his friends and to whom he had owed a great deal in the past.

Finally the occupational puppet regime created a third, using the red slang, "transmission of the PPR to the masses," or using normal language, a concession party, fully subjected to the PPR and managed by individuals designed for the task. This auxiliary bunch, also created by the security agency, had the odd name of SD, Stronnictwo Demokratyczne, meaning a democratic faction or league. This could falsely suggest, as if in contrast to the others, it had something in common with democracy. The SD was created for the accession to members descended the electorate of the old National Democracy and Christian Democratic Party (before the war, called SP ("Stronnictwo Pracy," roughly Labor Association, tied to emigration premier Sikorski). In short, from a right center. On the other side, they adapted a legend, starting from the prewar, controversial Democratic Clubs, which had a rather leftist character.

* * *

The news about political changes they knew from the press, which now cost more, but still cheap. Of course they came now from another kettle and a different source. Anyway, the long practice in reading the truth between the lines of the reptile press, edited by German propaganda, was now useful. Guessing information, because in fact the degree of mendacity was so similar, as if the newspapers edited the same people, only working now for another boss.

From this information appeared a clear picture: because the PPR was neither representative nor large enough to create a government, decorations were needed. Eventually the country saw new organizations with the familiar names of good old firms, taken illegally and by force. The leadership of these parties and all who encouraged protest, were simply rubbed out, in best-case suppressed mute. Next they nominated new leaders, carefully well-chosen people, obedient and servile. From this bunch the so-called KRN ("Krajowa Rada Narodowa," roughly Country National Council), which first declared the Polish Government in Exile petty and invalid. Growing from inside (the presidium had the only right to put up or dismiss members, being itself untouchable, in fact having dictatorial rights), it declared next taking the role of Parliament. Still under occupation and without a known site, this body issued a decree ceding almost forty percent of Polish territory (nearly all the Soviet occupation zone from 1939). The PKWN ("Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego," Polish Committee of National Liberation) and the manifesto of 21 July 1944 have already been mentioned in Chapter XII. Nominally this happened after the Red Army passed the so-called

Curzon line, or in truth the Ribbentrop – Molotow line. Yet Angus had discussed this paper already two days before, in the underground archive directed by Niedzielski. At the end of December 1944 the self-appointed KRL called the PKWN from now on an RT "Rząd Tymczasowy" (interim government). Of course, the KRN was an unconstitutional body and had no right to create a next, also unconstitutional body. More so, as there existed all the time the legal Government of Poland in Exile with a representation in the country. All the illegal action was an invention of Stalin, who as top leader with dictatorial power set up his professional spy and next agent, Bierut, controlling Presidium of KRN, this in control of KRN, the puppet government and so on. Anyway, Stalin always behaved so, kept up appearances and if anyone expressed doubts, the result was a quick death. If anyone dared not believe in Stalin, it meant he was an archenemy, deserving death.

These methods did not change after the death of Stalin, for many years the Soviet Union persisted so. Not mentioning Hungary and Czechoslovakia, even at the end of the Breżniew era first of all threw into Afghanistan paratroopers who rapidly suppressed and killed the old government and appointed a new. The chosen so Babrak Karmal immediately turned to the Soviets with a seek for military help. Surely, the sweetest dream of Stalin and his followers must look so: sometime in the future would come the great moment of dropping into the United States paratroopers who immediately would appoint a new President and Congress. They would plead for the brotherly help of the Soviets and the sending in of the Red Army. In such a case, the Soviets could not remain callous. They would fulfill this plea, motivated by the interest of all humanity and world progress...

However the Ostrowiec community for now was not much concerned with these questions, they seemed distant and of no importance. It was a interim and all expected, short time, so best to settle with all details involved. Soon enough the war would end, then would follow a peace conference and undoubtedly the Poles would be able to decide their fate. After all Poland had fought first, and both by politics and by war, used up Hitler's time, all the priceless year of 1939, which ruined his plans and upset his timetable. If Hitler already in 1939 had beaten France – and a then still unprepared England, or in some other way had neutralized that country, forcing some settlement, events on the world stage would have taken another course. Let us hope, the civilized world would anyway have survived, but anyway the war would have been longer and bloodier beyond comparison. Difficult to guess, what caused Hitler's pathological hate for the Jews, but an easy guess,

about the Poles. Exactly for this, that interfering with his plans, preventing the start and by delaying the battle, they had saved the skin of the English and next undoubtedly many others, including also Russia. Therefore Poland paid the entire time of the war a terrible price, despite the fact, they had more than filled their alliance duties, never for a moment stopped fighting. They had a deciding share in the victory, and it now seemed impossible that in effect they may drop right to the bottom of hell and defeat. Suffer a fate worse than that experienced by the Germans or any of the nations that fought on Hitler's side. That their Allies, so friendly in war, were to sell them down the river, leave them a victims to Stalin.

So the most important seemed news from the front, which pointed to, the end of the war being near. The winter offensive in the Ardennes was Germany's last try, a hopeless try to recover the initiative. Anyway, almost a miracle, Hitler never did achieve such outstanding results as the commander of the army. Perhaps the Western front he knew best from his own experiences. Perhaps he drew ideas from last German offensive in 1918. A time when the German army, dismembered and left to its own initiative and intelligence, patrols without top planning and command of experienced generals, had been able to penetrate the frontline in hundreds of places at the same time. Or maybe, the Germans introduced for the first and only time, some of guerrilla warfare into grand tactics and big strategy. Or simply, a remake of 1939.

Anyway the Battle of the Bulge (at one time popularly called in the US, battle of the bungle) began with a large success, beyond all hopes. But then repeated exactly such a situation as in the last German offensive of 1918: a lack of forces to continue the attack further. From the moment when the Americans succeeded in the desperate heroism of organizing a roundabout defense of Bastogne, Germany had only two possibilities. Best immediately to break the battle, when the moment of surprise had passed, and as quickly as possible tear apart from the enemy, whom they had shaken and who could not at once move in pursuit. Sure, for some time the foe would remain cautious. So the logical would be consistent application of the guerrilla war basics. The second eventuality would rely on the introduction in the breach of new troops pressing at all cost to the front, leaving only a few forces to block the enclosed Americans and simulating preparations for attack. But Germany elected to beat its head on the wall, besides it did not have any reserves which could take over and continue the attack. Hitler behaved like an irresponsible child who did not manage to finish build a construction from his set of blocks. He left the scattered toys and went

to bed. Still worse, because he did not let the mess to clean up by the generals, whom he had elected as best. (Mannteufel recommended breaking and pulling back already on the 24 of December, Model two days later. To this time the operation "Wacht am Rhein" would still be a success, inducing respect in further fight.) Only, Hitler would never behave reasonably, he gambled and left for destruction not toys, but the last disposable forces of Germany, all rest of a desperate offensive. After a week more it was clear the battle was lost.

The Communist newspapers announced the Soviet Union, in reply to the desperate implorations by the Allies for help, began an offensive and saved the situation. Not a grain of truth. The Red Army attacked only when the battle in the Ardennes already decided, using the time when the eastern front weakened. First, because for months it did not receive any reserves or supplies, both the people and the equipment went west. Next, at the last moment Hitler pulled out everything was possible to pull out. Now with the first stronger pressure this front simply broke down and the Wehrmacht began a panicky escape, unable to stop in the remaining part of Poland, or on any land east of Germany. Undoubtedly the Red Army could immediately conquer Berlin, but stopped by Stalin's orders on the line of Odra (River Oder). He did not want prematurely to finish the war. This last was after his heart, as before he was an esteemed ally, arranged backing of the front, liquidating German forces hanging above by the Baltic and conquered along the Balkans. He had a free hand in plunder, got still the lend and lease. Both the Germans and the Western Democracies had better lose more blood and some courage. As before, Stalin strengthened the armies in the center, so, meeting with the Americans and English he had at his disposal a large supremacy of numbers.

From the moment of wasting on the West in such a suicidal manner the last forces which Germany still had at its disposal, Hitler could never dream of recovering the initiative. This already was not war, only agony, but the commander gave the orders to continue, if only to go out with a big bang and leave an impressive mark in history. If he lost and had to die, he strove that with him should die all the German nation. This already was full madness, psychotic disease, but fortunately he lost control of reality and or did not have a real picture, so more and more of his orders ceased to be executed. Even most of near collaborators and big dignitaries were unwilling to die together, which Hitler considered a betrayal. Also not anxious for death were all the Germans whom he had pulled into a war. At the beginning they had no wish for this, a majority wanted to avoid war.

The early successes were the worst that could happen, because Hitler won the obedience and full confidence of his soldiers. Nevertheless, when now came the bad time, Hitler never accepted his guilt, only stated that if the German nation could not prevail, it meant that all ought to die. It should be a tragedy, like the Wagner "Goetterdaemmerung" (dusk, or twilight of the Gods). Fortunately, his orders left behind only branded earth, nobody followed, at least on the west. Unfortunately on the east side, evacuation of the civil population to the Oder River was done in macabre conditions. Unimaginable tragedy, ghastly picture of hell on earth, even if the fleeing mob of women, children and the elderly did not become a target for aviation, like the Poles in September 1939. But anyway death took a heavy toll, because of severe winter, frost and snow. In fact, the German civilians were not much better-off, than the prisoners of concentration camps in their death marches. Well, a little better, because they were properly nourished at the start and therefore had more strength and the escort did not kill them on the way. Well, let's say not so often, but if escorted by SS-men, it happened. The monsters executed civilians just for support of discipline. On the way remained corpses of hanged or shot people with pinned white cards, announcing the judgment "in the name of Germany." It was enough the suspicion, that anyone maybe left behind, wanting to surrender.

Of course, this last information Angus got was not from the press, not then. Already in Poznań father told him this, much later. Father had it from trusted eye-witnesses, anyway near the German border, such executions on the way were common knowledge – more about this next.

Anyway this was only distant news, from the country and the world. In the town nothing of interest happened. Supposedly started some committees of the PPR, but without any authority, behind the front all still run the Red Army Command, the PPR's concern was still their home affairs. Well, they began to organize a so-called Citizen's Militia, but this only displayed its presence in the town center, not any activity. It should consist of former members of the People's Guard and the People's Army mainly, but at first they received all who wanted to join. They had not a good reputation and were not likable, as one of their first doings was reintroducing the "police hours" (curfew). Angus' only meeting was, when once passing their site on the sidewalk on their side of the street, stopped him the sentry. He spent several hours in the office, sitting on a wooden bench with some other, unknown people. Talk prohibited and in addition the guard, sitting opposite, took his gun out and amused himself with the lock and played at moving around the

barrel. If he expected a sensation, he must have been disappointed, but Angus formed a low opinion of the training and education of the personnel. In the guerrillas a sentinel never could behave so, even to a German POW, simply unimaginable.

However, at the end of January came two essential changes. First, news about opening the high school and the general schools appeared true. Second Father, who for some time past had often gone out and stayed out, declared unexpectedly that in the next few days he has to go away. Travel with a collective transport of former office workers and officials of railway management displaced in the war, back to Poznań. In Poznan the fighting still was going on. In fact it continued the next month, because the Germans began now to defend the big cities as preferable points of resistance. A tactic which thus far they had mocked, ridiculed and condemned.

In Poznań, the garrison used the strip of old fortification from the previous century. This new tactic was not a big success and did not slow down the advancing Red Army. The Russians at first took the unfortified municipal districts quickly enough. Next they restricted to blocking with small forces the citadel, not forcing the final storm till a moment convenient for them, when the Germans lost finally spirit and heart for the war. Of course, the Germans made raids and counterattacks and the city strongly suffered, more than half destroyed. But this did not especially worry, neither the Germans nor the Russian commandant. However, despite the lasting battle in the city, already returned the teams of railway men, to restore an organized management and in general the railway.

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Capsule: Heritage of a Polish underground state.

A wonder, how the new and weak party managed, with a minimum of social support and authority. At the same time they fought between themselves for internal control, even while trying to keep up appearances of unity. Lacking not only professionals, but in general any educated people, nevertheless it stayed in power. But unexpectedly, despite all, Poland began quickly to organize and set to work. What's more, a country most ravaged, punished and desolate, in parts inhabitable, in several years began to present itself best of all of destroyed Europe. Well, the conditions of life appeared decisively more tolerable than in other countries. This not only in comparison to the badly, if not half so much as Poland, ruined Germany. Also better than

France and other countries of Western Europe, even England. Never mind, Poland started from a great deal worse point. Only in year 1949 did this fast development stop, for a year. In 1950 Poland began to retreat, faster and faster, exactly when the free part of Europe sharply moved forward and began to develop. It was at that point the Communist authority conquered the whole country and got strong enough that it could start to turn the screws. The result was so bad the country needed a renewed introduction of food cards. Still, all during 1948 and 49 and well into 1950, contrast in comparison with other countries of Europe existed, but decisively to Poland's advantage.

This fast development and success in the first years after the war occurred because restoration automatically began and took place according to plans worked out during the occupation (the first one, German) by the Polish underground state.

To show how much importance an existing, detailed plan can have, an example from recent history. The case of the Greater-Poland rebellion in 1918, known as the only successful endeavor in more than a century of freedom fighting, caused between the wars for many disputes and comments. Controversy centered on why and how in general it happened, quickly and clearly spontaneous despite that in the first, decisive period nobody directed it. In fact, all organized structures of Greater-Poland society subordinated themselves to the leadership of the People's Council, which consistently forbade any armed action. For this strove a group of youth, consisting of the Falcons Society (adults), with a few youth organizations attached and the teenaged Scouts. One could say, the Falcons' annex, of a first and second generation. The scouts, considering their age, did not present a serious combat force, but they organized the action of welcoming the demobilized soldiers, aid and occasional recruitment of volunteers. This momentary improvisation called out unexpected enthusiasm, volunteers registered in improvised recruiting offices and took an oath in groups on the sports field of the Falcons. However, the authority of the NRL unquestioned in mid-November, also the command of the scouts and the secret internal circle which it inspired, subordinated to the NRL. This allowed only the so-called alarm plan, just in case Germany tried suddenly to change the present state and by force to smash the existing Polish social structures and organizations. However, nothing pointed to such a move and the NRL decided quietly to wait for a peace conference, at which they had to present the postulates of Greater-Poland society.

However the unexpected event did happen. On the day of the arrival in Poznań of the famous pianist Paderewski, the population

spontaneously organized a solemn greeting and celebration, at the same time decorating the city – as known the Poles just love such ceremonies and occasions. His arrival, greeted with decoration in Polish colors, caused an indignation of the Germans, the hardheaded, who at that moment tried a solution by military strength. They led from the barracks the Sixth Regiment of Grenadiers, in which reigned the most nationalist mood, and under this protection groups of Germans connected with an anti-Polish chauvinistic organization, began to destroy flags and decorations. Next also to make incursions into the decorated houses and vandalize them. The approach of this armed march to the market where Paderewski and the allied officers located, created a direct threat and automatically triggered the alarm plan. There was not any command, nor even a center, to which would flow information and who would appraise the situation, each acted according to the prearranged plan. All went so quick, that to the end of this day the city and citadel fell in Polish hands. Only after many days and troublesome discussions and disputes, did the NRL accept the facts and take military command. By that time the rebellion spread itself spontaneously also into the provinces. There surely such a plan did not exist, but the people followed the example, inspired by the first success. In fact, it happened haphazardly. If the leaders of the NRL on their own initiative had decided on a rebellion, they could have chosen a much more easy time, two to four weeks earlier. At that point because of the revolution in Berlin the authority and the German army were passive and helpless. Probably a rebellion in Greater-Poland would have been bloodless and even unnoticed, like winding a watch. However, despite the conspiring youth without success insisting on such a perfect occasion, the NRL determined firm: stay quiet. At the end of December the German government had already conquered in Berlin and strengthened forces in Greater-Poland. Therefore they tried from a position of strength test a solution, hoping rashly to smother the aims of the population and to intimidate it. Maybe to create a frightening example for the future. If not for this test and following rebellion, the Poles would orderly expect resolving the question of borders by the peace conference. Perhaps, that would have squared all amicably and there would not have originated interwar tensions between Poland and Germany. Though it is more probable that since the known unfavorable position of Lloyd George, the question went as in Śląsk, there would flow much more, not less blood... Difficult to guess what would have been – and not that's not the point, only this short and simplified digression an example explaining that a good plan may at

times be efficient without current leadership, settling the direction for changes.

So in the years between 1940 and 44, irrespective of war and other tasks, the civilian part of the conspiracy, meaning the structures of a Polish underground state, did a huge preparatory work. Cooperating with the social organizations, they planned the projects of the restoration and of development of country after the liberation. I mention only those selected small fragments with which Angus encountered personally, or at least came near to. However there is still a hope. Someone better oriented and knowing the subject inside out, may yet describe it comprehensively.

One part of this concerned the educational pattern. This means both legalization of existing until now conspiratorial schools and offices, creating added ones, unification and at last creating new institutions. There was a sudden run on the schools. An influx of masses of students, suffering from recent lack of access to the sciences and this hunger resulting not only from the years of war, but also from the change of atmosphere. Each student wanted passionately to learn and treated his education seriously. Maybe a reminiscence from the years when much sacrifice and risk was necessary to be able to learn. The tide soon began to turn. But as far as I know, for the next four or five years, never before or since did the youth learn so intensively. Almost as much engagement as in the conspiracy schools.

Obviously the existing educational departments at the national, provincial and district levels, of course could not continue now. Better not think, what would happen to the men if they disclosed all. So they acted as recently created, new teams of teachers with long experience, proposing immediately ready solutions and programs. In general they became accepted by the so-called Peoples' Regime, because it did not have any other action plan, or properly any notion of what it needed. Such was also the case in Ostrowiec but the question of the start-up of a high school was a problem. The first need was to recover the buildings formerly used by the Wehrmacht, which automatically passed to the use of the Red Army. Then it was necessary to put much work into the buildings' adaptation to new needs. Fortunately not much was in full destroyed, only strongly fouled up. Also with the end of January arouse temporary commission for administration of Poznan University, on the base acting in the conspiracy University of the Western Territories with site in Częstochowa, branches in other towns.

Nearly at the same time, drove away the first groups of displaced railway men from Poznan. With them Angus' father, to take part in the

restoration and reactivating of the railways. They started by making use of the previously existing pattern, although the range and the terrain of working was now much more extensive. Only after some years did the Communist regime abandon the old, rebuilt pattern and create its own. This caused much headaches, disorganization, interference and chaos on the railway.

A further example is the coal basin and the "Górnośląski" industrial center (of upper Silesia). A Polish Government formed a team of the most competent prewar specialists, set up an office for researching and planning start-up and further development of coal mining. Also excavation of other fossil fuels and a resumption of industrial production. These plans were so good and proper, they sufficed for dozen years to come and all this time the production functioned proficient. It happened that Angus met three engineers, in this case mechanics, who at this time suddenly received the call take the work to which already in the period of war they had prepared. Now they drove in haste from Ostrowiec. But in about 1950, he read in the communist press a reproach, the reactionary underground during the war, already anticipated and took care of good employment for its own people. This was of course an example of an unjust opinion, but in fact the underground possibly predicted competent people to concrete jobs. The best proof that such was the case is that precisely this office of research for coal mining and industry, born in the conspiracy, continued as before but under another name, with the same composition of personnel. Only for each specialist the regime added at least one or two officials of the Communist Party, to oversee them. Later, when they presumed that these added officials now got enough practice and experience to take over the management, matters worsened. The well developing industrial district became a desolate industrial refuse heap, where despite growing damage, production was forced at all costs. The government did not put straight the situation even when these party active members in an unclear manner began to gain professional titles, next scientific and academic (though for example E. Gierek satisfied with the modest title of an engineer).

Unfortunately, there did not exist any plans about the so-called Western Lands (recovered territories), because the Polish Government in exile never predicted penetration so deep into lands which once belonged to Poland, but had already become Germanized long since. The Poles of course expected a correction of borders with Germany. But they strove only for the recovery of such terrains which kept the Polish population, or at least had until recently a Polish majority and whose

population had changed only by force. Only extremists called for the return of historic Piast borders. Officially Poland proposed only Śląsk Opolski (Oppeln Silesia) Łęborg and Bytów territories (fief of Poland to Prussia). Also correction of borders where lands taken by Prussia after partitions of Poland were not recovered in 1918, with Piła and Wałcz, perhaps Drahim. However, unexpectedly, the victorious powers shifted Poland's border along the Oder and Neisse, at the same time obliging it to waive nearly the half of its old territory on the east. Poland became pushed to the west and this not voluntarily. However, never mind the sufferings of millions compulsorily displaced, the point is the big, unnecessary and stupid total waste which accompanied this. Because the forced change was unprepared for, it resulted with a loss of all goods. In practice all property of these lands became in part pilfered, in part desolate without a benefit to anybody. First the Red Army treated the whole works as its loot, free to be taken by whoever wanted whatever, with full anarchy. For every one part expropriated, ten more parts got destroyed. Then the interim government created a special ministry of recovered lands, but its role was not only badly organized and inefficient, but simply fictitious. The put up officials did not have a right to take any decision without prior coordinating with the local command of the Red Army. The Russians began now systematic collect so-called prizes and booty, take apart factories, carry of industrial equipment and machines. However, this took place in so chaotic a manner that it is dubious, whether the never-ending lines of trains and transport columns pulling towards the east, ever yielded much good. Here we may find a simple, classic explanation of a defectively fixed idea of value, which Marx did not consult. What was the value of this booty? Was this value, connected with work, production and a value, indirectly inherent in raw material and equipment needed for processing, plus technical thought and capital? Or only the work of dismantling and transport? Or only the value of scrap metal? But perhaps a negative value, of environment pollution, deadweight and more problems, left for future generations to settle?

This short remark intended only show a counterexample, this time of loss caused by the lack of a plan. The Upper Silesia center of mining and industry immediately began to work and brought large income. However, for the badly managed, unplanned restoration of the western lands, Poland had heavy work ahead, for many years carrying astronomical costs. This needed a huge contribution of capital, but easy to guess, from whom this capital was extracted. However, there remained only one benefit, though difficult to grapple with in the reckoning. Here in the western areas existed a refuge for the

persecuted, wanted by the Communist regime. For several years Poland had something similar to the Wild West, where at first no law reached, and later only weakly. Where a fugitive, a man without a chance could run away and hide, in primitive and difficult conditions sure, but anyway survive.

Coming back to the fruitful results of proper planning left by the Polish underground state, only one further example. There live now few who know, the design, construction and detailed plans of the so-called "Star," a popular truck, worked out an engineering team inspired and settled by the civilian branch of a Polish Underground State. They supposed, reasonably enough, that in restoration of the destroyed country, an important role would play the trucks. One of members of this team (not outstanding, rather like a younger aide of a senior assistant of a second deputy) staying in the house of former Angus girlfriend. Production of Stars started up in the Works of Starachowice, which in the war supplied arms. This excellent truck stayed on the line almost fifty next year's, becoming almost a living dinosaur, or a monument of bygone technology. If in the forty years (designed in 1943), it was a breathtaking project, far in front of contemporary technique, it remained ultramodern even in the fifties. Adapted to bad Polish roads, almost indestructible. No-fault of the designers, however, the interim government did not recognize the excellence of the project and postponed the decision. Next the preparations took a longtime with many bureaucratic obstacles; the vehicle was already none too fresh when it at last appeared on the market. Nevertheless it became an export hit and stayed so for many years, but its value in restoration of the country was beyond imagination. Yet with time the construction became more and more obsolete, the people joked, Star from "stary" (old one), not from stars nor Starachowice. Anyway with only small changes, this model has probably a Guinness record for longevity.

These are only a few examples, Angus knew of. The early successes in restoring the country after the war, despite the incompetence of the so-called interim government, a marionette agency of occupants, resulted from realizing earlier projects and plans of the Polish Underground State. Because the interim government did not have any programs of its own, nor the ability for elaboration, it allowed for a time carrying out of the projects the underground state, featured through the different social bodies. Of course, taking all credit for itself. The author does not know whether there existed a matching agenda for restoring agriculture. However this settled soon Stanisław Mikołajczyk who came from London to enter the newly created, so-called

Government of National Unity, taking the ministry of agriculture. It was the last try, to enable to Poles influence their own destiny, by some degree of moderate autonomy. Independently from creating the PSL, to which came over nearly all the People's Movement, resulting in temporary political relief, Mikołajczyk turned out to be a top organizer gatherin a group of excellent specialists. In result in a sensationally brief time the peasant granaries crammed with cereals, and after a couple of years in each farm, any country household, something grunted, cackled or mooed. From 1947 all the way through to sometime in 1951, famine was in Poland an unknown word. The population nourished here visibly better, than in the rest of Europe.

Alas, this good beginning had also its bad side. It allowed the Communist Party a propaganda of success, like that which began Hitler's reign. Some folks, chiefly young people, put in to this propaganda and remained in the circle. Anyway already in 1951 and full in 1952 the hoard of earlier elaborated plans exhausted. Tries of a new office managed by H. Minc, who received the full authority, dictator in proxy in the economic arena, caused a downturn. Despite the huge bureaucratic machine headed by the PKPG (State Commission of Economic Planning), the drop went so far it needed a devaluation of currency. The regime called it a battle against speculation. In fact it was a plain robbery of all citizens. However, even the temporary success with a noisy and stupefying propaganda, enlarged the social base from an incipient, marginal five percent, to ten or even twenty. This broke the till-now uniform and solid attitude of society. It is true that on the side of occupation regime came mainly opportunists as well as bad or dishonorable individuals searching a way for easy living. However some true idealists, who believed the propaganda which accompanied the early development and the improvement in the living conditions, became deceived. There overlaps an appalling thought that if Germany had acted more intelligently and craftily, with less inhuman behavior and better use of psychology, perhaps they could have won a better result. Maybe mental blindness or conceit, conviction that they need not do this, being on the side of angels, enabled the Poles to keep so beautiful and pure a record in the years of war. Anyway the author believes, the eventualities of creating a totalitarian regime in Germany before, and a communist regime in Poland after the war, became possible, after murder and terror broke the best. A result of negative segregation.

* * *

Morning, one of the first days of February 1945. Angus did not sit in a school desk; there were some in the classroom, but a little too small for his dimensions. But he could do well on a chair at a small table for two students, which he divided with a new colleague. They sat almost in the corner of the class, opposite the window, beside the door. Still one small table stood beyond them. Class I of the math-naturalist college was not too numerous, containing only twenty-six students, most of them boys. All in cloaks or short overcoats, because trying to heat the building was not enough. The cold was not as bitter as in the preceding war years, however it was well below zero outside. And at night suitably colder. In class the temperature was positive, meaning over zero, however the students could see their breath, and therefore a majority opted on a clear day for half-open windows.

Angus still could not settle himself to the thought that he was not going to the same class as Matthew, his best friend. However no way to persuade him. Matthew enrolled in class IV of the Gimnazjum (high school), though they were nearly on the same educational level. Admittedly, he was not quite there in mathematics and physics, but all other subjects he was well up on. Angus already previously had begun to revise the lacking material with him and swore that in a few weeks he would make up every default, after all he had already learned the quadratic equations without any difficulties. Matthew was fast and learned quickly and Angus who in the past had successfully helped colleagues in math, now turned all his enthusiasm to the task of teaching his friend. But both Matthew and chiefly his father appeared to be perfectionists, surely this feature was hereditary or grafted. Besides, Professor Jaruga considered that sending his son to college without one hundred percent revision of all high school material would be abuse from a teacher of this school, improper. And the mother supported him, she wanted to have her son as long as possible at her side, at least so supposed Angus. Without success Angus argued that any small defaults he could help to overcome easily, so to say with finger in nose. Also that it was sheer nonsense to return to fourth class of high school, when more than ninety percent of the material was already known, excellent.

However Matthew agreed with the view of his father the son of a professor teaching in same school, has to be on top all the time, example of an example. It would do to him no harm, if he thoroughly redid the fourth class. Tough luck, but Angus even for his companionship did not want to turn back, on the contrary, he had intended to go ahead. He had redone and finished all the grammar-school curriculum, not a chance he would lose a year unnecessarily, this would be unpardonable

waste. So they would attend different classes, but after all it was the same school and as before they would be friends. And they were – through a certain period, however the contact gradually weakened.

Anyway because in January Angus met with Matthew almost every day he had high-speed news of current perspectives on opening the schools. First week after the front passed, the director of the secret high school as well as the old Department of Education renamed by the Delegate of the Ostrowiec-Opatów administrative district as the social committee, began work on the matter. The outcome and direct result was, Angus now sat here.

A few days ago Angus' father had left for Poznan. Sincerely speaking, for first time in his life Angus felt disturbed about his father and sympathized with him, but not because of the departure and any possible dangers connected with it. From some time he had saw again in his father the symptoms of approaching crisis. Already once he had seen such a crisis, actually experienced it himself first and then Father pulled him out, almost with force by the ears. Then he saw when it was the turn of Father himself, when he became apathetic, only played cards, or at default of partners played solitaires and lit his cigarettes literally one from the other. The war situation changed and hope returned. But Father bore the war years badly and grew old, recently nearly senile. Maybe because he felt unnecessary, lacking his work.

As his fundamental duty he considered never to work for the occupants, therefore he kept away from the railway, where his long experience would be valuable. Next from need he adjusted a little the bases and twice worked in a sugar factory, a simple hand in the time of campaigns. However Mother kept the initiative and upheld the family, while Father only helped. But this backing was not always to her liking, she keep reminding to him of errors, and sometimes belittled him. Perhaps he himself magnified his errors and gradually this spilled over to his wife. Anyway, his pride suffered, before the war he maintained the family and was the head, now a degradation. The robbery by German stragglers before change-over of the front did not result from his guilt, however he believed, it was he who had a foolish idea which indirectly caused this and his wife also shared the conviction. And to all this, added a prostate trouble. This disease of many elderly men, today not such a big problem, but then, there was nothing one could advise. And for a man, maybe not exaggeratedly chic, but used to pedantic behavior in order and hygiene (even if his stay in the Soviet zone of occupation partly freed him from "bourgeois superstitions"), this was tragedy.

However now the news about the freshly reactivated Poznan Railway Department, and even more that it was now to encompass all the western districts, a much bigger area, acted on him like archangelic trumpets. The team had to travel a difficult, uncomfortable way, possibly to a town which was still actively fighting with Germans, was of no importance. He had his work to do, precisely that work at which he was a respected specialist, maybe with some exaggeration he judged irreplaceable. Exactly this, he had expected all the war, so now life flowed back into his veins. He tore forward and would not consider any delay. Not for him good advice that it might be better to wait a little, because of existing dangers. His work was the top substance of existence, it changed him and all the world around him, every trial he treated now lightly and with humor.

Angus really wanted to go with Father. He argued that he would be useful, capable of better and speedier reaction, was more fit physically and finally he had been tested already in bad plight. But Father was determined. The family was to remain in Ostrowiec till he sent the word to come. First, the current delegation was of only railroad-men, with no outsiders nor hangers-on. This was not an excursion, they take with them only the most necessary and go and prepare the way for next groups. There was no way to know what circumstances they would meet and what progress they would make. He did not go there to take part in shooting match, for this there were others and better. He went, to do his duty, to perform competently in affairs which he had handled before the war. And in this precise task, nobody else could manage as easily, without experience. There was a saying, "navigare necesse est, vivere non est necesse," but railway track is more valid than navigation. So only the indispensable were to travel, end, period. No time to be spent on further discussions and no mere youth was to interfere. Angus would do best to recommence learning, also important now. Suppose he were to let pass the right moment, on which might depend his value.

There was nothing doing, Father left within a day, perhaps on January 25 or 26, nobody had an idea when they might reach Poznań. Meanwhile Mother and Angus stayed on in the old place. The shop was closed, if only because they had nothing to sell, no food, even for themselves. But anyway, who cared? So far they had survived the war, so now they would go on, anyway they had never intended to keep a pub. This was no snobbery, but only a need to maintain a living in wartime, such a manner of life did not agree with them. Angus certainly hated to stand behind the counter and pour vodka, he hated also the

liquor and drunkards. He felt as if in a bad nightmare he appeared in the zoological garden on the wrong side of a cage.

Mother as before lived in the kitchen, while Angus settled in the next room, like when he had been ill. The shop with empty shelves and empty cupboards, three small tables and a number of chairs, was too cold to sit down and read or write, so not worth opening the shutters and in the center was dark.

However, to their shop came two people, an "antispeculation" inspection or commission. Mother explained, since the liberation they had not been able to continue any commerce, because they had been robbed by the German soldiers, they had no commodities, not even food for themselves. As proof, she showed not only the premises, including the shop, but also her own cupboard, which in fact contained only some potatoes. Well, it was not so bad as this, in reality for breakfast they had bread and even milk. Expecting a quick return to Poznań, Mother sold one after another most belongings, the furniture and all, or just exchanged them for food. Admittedly they had to live modestly, but they were not hungry, anyway, at the moment material needs were of secondary importance. So the matter ended with writing a protocol, one of the gentlemen sat with Mother to write it down while the other entered the dark shop, opening all the cupboards. To Angus it was like a remake of a film, a "Faithful River," the moment when an officer searches the dark premises with the wounded insurgent. He went out to open the shutters and when he re-entered the seeker suddenly froze, next got away to the open door and stood there looking out at the sky opposite. Angus did not understand what it was all about, surprised by the tense expression of his face, well, body too. However, there was no further reaction, after a moment the man turned to his companion and told him to hurry up, they had more inspections to make and were already overdue at some meeting. Only after their departure, Angus remembered his last expedition and showed Mother the cupboard contents.

It was full of German aggressive grenades with wooden handles. A second drawer below contained the same. Angus had found a box full of them on the last night, or perhaps one night before, but with all the commotion about Father's journey, had almost forgotten about it. He had placed them temporarily in the least used and accessible drawer. He was aware that grenades can never be with any other explosives, the same for any detonators. The German grenades were rather stable, anyway there was never a full-proof grenade, nor a foolproof one. At the time, Angus had snatched many explosives from the magazine on Piaski

Street, but longed for detonators, without them explosives would be useless. Now, this problem was solved, in need it was possible from the grenade to take away only the detonator and put it into a round gap in the TNT brick. This not always guaranteed the best result, better to add if only a gram of so-called plastic in the hole by the detonator, or simply attach one to three bricks right to the grenade. The German soldier used as standard demolition charge six hand grenades around one central. (Also as antitank, but now the tanks had become too strong. It was only theoretic knowledge, more see in chapter XI, in the guerrillas there were too few explosives and what little they had, valued much more than gold. In fact, he had only heard about so-called plastic, RDX, was not affluent enough for a gram.)

About the storage of grenades, the German grenades were much better than those made in the underground, by Poles. The so-called "Sidol" grenade, produced in "Farbiarnia," has been mentioned in Chapter XII. The German grenades were not expected to blow up spontaneously, but accidents may happen in the best regulated families. One offensive grenade would only bust the furniture, more of them, at worst part of the house, but a detonation of several hundreds of kilos of TNT could destroy all the houses around. Angus had hidden the grenades separately until such time as he could find a better place for them. However, they needed a much better place than the TNT bricks, which, if only kept away from metal, are long lasting and resistant. Grenades are much more tender, for weather, moisture, warmth, general atmospheric conditions, some problem to find a right place.

"Do you at all grasp own stupidity," burst out Mother. "If they come for us, they shall never allow us to take any supper, nothing to eat, not even a pot with some war soup, any utensils at all, because they will suspect that we may smuggle something explosive!" (She spoke very practically, with experience from the concentration camp). Luckily, Mother did not know what the cell beyond the house contained, if she knew about this too, it would be worse!

"Somehow I will explain, I will say that I found it this morning and I had to carry it to the militia." This anyway was close to the truth, he had found the grenades really not long ago.

"Then better take them and go at once."

Mother pulled out his schoolbag and Angus filled it with some of the grenades, but instead to the militia, carried it to the Jaruga house. However Matthew did not want to keep them, and after much persuasion agreed only for a short time. Admittedly he himself kept a carbine and ammunition, he had for this project artistically excavated a

beam – he always had gold hands. But grenades were a different affair, he considered with time grenades would become dangerous, anyway such was the general belief. Probably he remembered the bad experiences with "sidol" grenades the conspirators made.

When Angus returned home, he saw that Mother had prepared a bundle of the most necessary utensils and some food, just in case they were sent to prison. He carried out the rest of the grenades and returned, but nothing more happened that day. Plainly the member of the inspection committee preferred to be silent. Maybe a proper man, or just reasonable, knowing the UB. If he reported what he did see, also to him would adhere some shit. Even years later it would be suspected that this man, though nobody knew for sure, may have mixed once in attempt against the communist authority. Maybe he himself would admit also this, under harsh investigation.

Next day Angus heard, that in the recovered building of the high school classes would soon recommence. Starting at once students might volunteer for repair and cleaning work. However, he only occasionally gave a little help, for an ordinary reason. It turned out, his clothes were so ragged and frayed that he just couldn't show himself. Chiefly the bottom, which Mother had already patched earlier, this time would not lend themselves to repair, having suffered a substantial loss during his night expeditions, creeping on the ground and pushing under prickly wires. Mother reviewed all of his wardrobe, but after the robbery, properly it was not much to look through. She did find a jacket from the from Father's old suit, navy blue double-breasted, long, almost a frock-coat. On a taller Angus it lay as if poured on, exactly the perfect length and looking just splendid. But the trousers were beyond repair and no stuff to sew new ones. At long length they found a couple of sacks of a thick dense linen from icing sugar. From this strong stuff Mother sewed something quite original. She modeled on the former knickerbockers, but simplified the cut, if afresh discovering something typical for American jeans with stitching on top and with sewn-on pockets. Only following the knickerbocker example she left strips with buttons at the ankles, or (in summer) below the knee. Anyway, it was a garment resistant to any wear and tear. However, the almost white trousers from the sacking with the dark jacket looked in the winter a little extravagant. The effect would be exactly right on a sailing yacht. Therefore Mother dyed it first a brown color, then a second time in the remainders of some dark steel dye, resulting in a variety of hazel. In just such an outfit did Angus began classes. But one can accustom oneself to almost anything, besides each person's clothes were different. "Ubralech se, w com tam mio" (I took

what I could, meaning beggars could not be choosers) – many presented a strange outfit. Anyway all sat in overcoats.

The bell's voice thrilled Angus, made him feel as if time had rolled back. Into the room came the strong, owlsh professor Mazzurewicz, he was to be the class supervisor. Most distinctly he was pushing on in years, and became touched by deep emotion, walked hesitantly, he wiped many times his spectacles and sometimes splashed with saliva. He had only one subject, biology, but first in this lesson came the re-unions. Besides Angus, he knew and had taught most of the others.

The next lesson went normally. Polish language was not to be taught by the already known Professor Jaruga, but a Mrs. Filanowicz, popularly called Philomena. Before long all knew the rumor, about her weakness and favorite hobby. She worshipped romantic poetry and it was wise to feel the same, or at least to say one did, this assuring a full harmony between disciples and professor. But this would come later, this lesson began from "Dai, ja pobrusam, and ty pocziwai" (the first sentence known and written in Polish) and "Świętokrzyskie Sermons," so probably the next class would come to "Bogurodzica" (Mother of God). It appeared that in college they would review the material known already from secondary school, only differently, by open discussion, voicing their own judgments and thoughts. They were to feel free to be controversial, even shocking, no limits.

However for Angus only the next, in fact, two next lessons caused a shock, astonishment and a bombshell of comfort. For the physics entered – not – so – impossible – and however – the second lieutenant "Forester". The commandant of Angus from the main and hard period of his guerrilla experience, when from an altogether inexperienced, full of dreams and nonsense pupa volunteer, he underwent a transformation into a soldier. From the day when the boys, still unarmed (well, not wholly, they had one grenade), got transfer from Potok squad, till the moment when infection of a lightly wounded foot compelled him to a few days' rest.

Angus first recognized the familiar figure by his boots with tops. For a moment his eyes misled him, the boots were not covered with dust, but were shiny from the riding trousers all the way to the floor. But no mistake, this was truly the "łóś łodciętych" (which means, saying "wou" instead "o," see Chapter XII), though different, smooth-chinned, plastered down, because combed hair was inadequate to say the least, not only in jacket but also a tie. Angus for the first time saw him so tense, a man known for his calmness, never showing the least appearance of excitement. Had he never taught in a school, this

presentation before the class being a more disturbing affair than standing up before the squad? Did he recognize him? Did he perceive a familiar face, in the second row near the left corner? But if so, never with one wink of an eye did he show anything.

"My name is Alfonse Wojszczyk," he introduced himself and next read out the students' names. If Angus had still any doubts, he now could hear loud and clear "Wourwowski" and "Woukoń." Still, when his turn came, Wojszczyk (Angus never knew the name, only the pseudonym) looked at him as at a stranger, the same way as at the others. Then without any other introductions, he began the class. Speaking rather quickly, stammering a little occasionally, but Angus thought competently and in a well organized manner. On mechanics, an uniform movement accelerating or delayed. Without the ideas of differential and integral calculus being familiar to the students, there was some difficulty to explain the basis for the formula $\frac{1}{2}gt^2$. He settled this differently than in the book and more clearly, applying a graphic drawing, next also the sequential counting. Another way, but more elegant, one might say. Next he came to an upward throw and a slanting throw, and again the problem was that they had not yet had a class on math and knew no trigonometry functions. So he had to explain the basic functions of sine and co-sine as they applied to physics first, granted, they would hear much more about all that in their math classes.

Still, he never looked at Angus, who after a time supposed, he should not either. All as before, under the German occupation, thought Angus, and there returned to him images from the past with feelings of gratitude and great respect to the man. And some black memories, never to be forgotten, as he pulled down a bad fate on people who in fact were not enemies and for whom he had no ill feelings, no wish to fight. He had even no idea, how many had died – and it was Wojszczyk who had put him again on his feet.

Meanwhile the professor (in fact, a contract teacher, the title inherited from the nominated professors before the war; Mazurewicz, Jaruga were professors, but to the teachers one also said professor just to be polite) stopped talking. Instead he attacked the blackboard with chalk so fiercely, in the classroom resounded a loud knocking. In the sequence of two hours they covered a big part of the course work, not mentioning the news about trigonometry, needed before the first lesson of math happened. For dessert he gave as homework the task of finding out the distance and maximum height of a few throws. Simple exercises, arranging four vectors and calculating, how on a table an asymmetrically put weight presses on the four legs.

He surely made a splash, an impression. The girls as usual moaned, it is too much and no way to learn it all – though all well know that usually girls study and learn best. Necessary to add, that in the first years after the war, reigned still the same spirit as during the war. An understatement to say, the students treated the sciences seriously. With much respect and enthusiasm, not an exaggeration to say that many a student would sell his soul for the opportunity. Anyway such was the case with the schools Angus himself viewed. The point was not that the youth wanted to learn, more that they lived for this and cared about it with all their might. From a time when education became dangerous, expensive and needed many sacrifices and contributions, those who had such an opportunity saw a ray of hope in the future and simply were beside themselves to do their very best. Then gradually the fashion changed. This first day there were only four lessons, but two of them needed a full intellectual effort. At first no one left the classroom, all turned back to the matter at hand, tried to grasp the examples to understand how to approach the homework. This was a big moment for Angus, for whom mathematics had never posed any difficulty. His position in the class was established from that point on. No matter what clothes he had, even if he came in these ragged trousers, from now on he was a somebody.

Nevertheless during the first days Angus kept his reserve and did not make new acquaintances. All was in good order, school uppermost, in general he confirmed again, that learning was what he liked most, mainly in a good group. It was simply a satisfaction as it would continue to be his entire life, but there was something else as well. None his new colleagues did he know previously, indeed no one of his acquaintance attended the class. He had concrete plans and not only for science, but they needed caution. Angus did not succumb to panic and did not believe in the black prognosis for what now awaited the Poles. However it was strange, needed thinking over, why all the so-far-existing organizations and conspiratorial structures stopped all actions, all the people known to him disappeared, went into hiding, even the less concerned became nervous, avoiding any contacts.

The explanation was simple: in war years just past, society comprised one-sided defensive reactions and camouflage only against Germans and German collaborators or traitors. A common front against the former occupant. Now the danger had changed, there was some portion of the populace who earlier had been fighting the Germans and who therefore had so far caused no need for caution. Now a part of the people collaborated with the succeeding occupant. Often before these

people were considered allies, if of different opinions, many times they shared open discussions. Now they turned collaborators with extensive knowledge of people and facts, nearly all the underground. Besides, there were also opportunists who appeared now on the top. There were those who panicked and did not want to take part in the new, hopeless war. Or on the contrary, considered the devil is not so black as he is painted and with the Communists it is also possible to negotiate. Or even in general to cooperate and this way gain influence, but then use it for the good task – but good for whom?

In short, the previously existing underground pattern ceased to be a secret, on the contrary all became clearly visible, causing unforeseen danger coming from the unprotected side and therefore resulting in organizational break-up. But Angus viewed this sudden fall and faintness as cowardly subordination to force and simply did not understand, could not settle with this. In his notion, it was necessary to accept casualties and go on fighting. Casualties happened always; however, earlier this had never paralyzed anyone. Germans were not less dangerous, there occurred large calamities, arrests, mishaps, even at times disclosures on a large-scale. Germans also were not fools, or maybe so, but not idiots, they had proficient investigation apparatuses and developed an agency of traitors and of provocateurs. However after a while the organizational structures rebuilt, new people replaced those who died and underground fighting continued. Why just now such terror?

Of course no way to fight now the Red Army, after all it was the enemy of our enemy, so automatically an ally, let's say temporarily, till the moment of a final victory over Germany. However it is necessary to hold and to rebuild one's own forces, both political organization and military pattern. Anyway after this war in which Poland played such an outstanding role, unimaginable that she could lose her existence and independence in result of victory. More so to the aggressor, who began this war with Hitler and after years changed sides, because his best friend unexpectedly attacked him. (Besides from the beginning it was clear that each was only awaiting a suitable moment to stick a knife in back of the other. A bandits' company, neither intended to divide the loot. The world would be too small for both Hitler and Stalin, if they were to conquer.)

Angus of course judged it all wrong. What he felt as stagnation and break-up, resignation from freedom and independence, was in fact a necessary step in returning to a deep conspiracy in an effort to save the organizational cadres. The structures of the Home Army and others still survived and tried to keep on; however, in the long run this minimum

did not succeed. The leadership of the AK and the delegates of the Government in Exile, also the leadership of other organizations were arrested and deported to Łubianka. The recreated structures also did not survive for long, one succeeding the next and then the next, in two years the Soviets destroyed five successive centers. The organization still existed despite this. Changed its name, from AK to NIE (short for "Niepodległość," meaning independence), next WIN, "Wolność I Niepodległość" – roughly freedom and independence. New people replaced the perished, "like stones tossed by God on the ramparts." Despite repeated defeats, the military organization survived and always regenerated, until after many years Communist investigation services managed to introduce agents and provocateurs to the center. That was a remake of the history of the January 1863 rising, by the end of this last also the enemy information took over leadership of the conspiracy.

On the other hand, the so-called ground organization, the simple members and soldiers, did not understand what was going on. Chiefly this concerned the youth, still tender to ethos of freedom-fighting, which happened right before their eyes, with taking part in by some. But even the remaining part which was unable to take an active role in the war, despite their best wishes, all the more wanted now to share the experience. Not understanding the situation, they determined to fight even if, some judged, their leadership failed. In almost every high school, spontaneously originated new secret organizations. Often with fantasy names, as for example "Defenders of Maria," or beliefs, or most exaggerated, like the Insurgent Polish Armed Forces, the Liberty Army or of Freedom and so on. At tops these armies contained between twenty and ninety members, usually less.

At first, the so-called Citizen Militia and Ministry of Public Safety (what hypocritically attractive names, simply "the devil dressed in the chasuble and with a tail rings the bell for Mass") did not have an idea how to act successfully. The apparatuses of violence with their attached offices, fulfilled now only an auxiliary role. The really dangerous one was the NKWD, renamed shortly the KGB, and a little less so the Soviet Army Information. They took the leaders of the Home Army, Polish resistance movement and necessary to admit, in a deadly efficient manner. However the MO (Citizen Militia) and UB (Security Office) took still severe primitives, only material for further training. Of this took care the Soviet "advisers," in great quantity, because there quickly arrived more new helpers and after a while they took command over the offices and trained and elected outlaws and criminals without any conscience.

From the beginning, the cadres were constantly on the move, but gradually they got rid of people having any moral standard, also of former partisans of the People's Army and honest, ideological members of Communist conspiracy. However there principally remained people on whom there was a so-called "hook," meaning those on whom weighed dirty stains and offenses. Who, if they did not follow orders, it may be possible to sentence for old guilt. Naturally this way into the service came a high percentage of former German agents and spies, first those already professionally trained, second the most zealous, who wanted to produce evidence at any cost to avoid their own responsibility. Some years later, came a queue suffering on the school youth, the prisons filled often by small children who joined the secret societies, believing it a patriotic duty. Many thousands of young people had, as the saying goes, a splotched life. If with luck they survived and came through, they came out from prison on the first thaw in 1956, because then left free never mind the judgments. However even those released, often had ruined health. The mortality after the confinement was high. Also the majority had protracted illness and prematurely died. The prisons were so "improved" that even the Germans would have something to learn.

No need to add that Angus had the same, typical, designs. To make any contact, or better to re-create an old one, but this up to now, remained unsuccessful. If that proved futile, then create a new organization and then together look for more recruits, and in the worst eventuality, act by oneself. He had tested this a couple of times previously, and now he had already training and experience, knew how this worked. At the beginning it was necessary prudently to learn the ground, to survey the close environment. As already mentioned, the atmosphere was right, favorable, anyway he was cautious with making new acquaintances. Better safe than sorry.

Maturity does not agree with hasty doing. His leisure time after lessons Angus spent with Matthew, as before they visited almost every day and held close. Because Matthew's father was a pillar of the pedagogic body, was among the prewar appointed professors with an outstanding reputation, he now carried out various roles connected with organizing and re-creating of Ostrowiec "Gimnazjum and Lyceum." The director was the man who had held that position in the conspiratorial high school during the German occupation. Jaruga, when asked to take on the post of vice principal, declined with thanks, agreed only to a short period of assistance. The pedagogic body consisted of prewar personnel, completed in the war time by assistant teachers, now contracted. The school needed more, seeking candidates with academic education, who

were not readily accessible considering the Germans had tried to kill first all intelligence. One of these new and valuable support personnel was precisely Wojszczyk. Matthew affirmed the bunch consisted of orderly, proper people, best with training from the underground during the occupation. Almost all, because there was one inglorious exception.

Alas, it concerned the prewar teacher of German language, Furmanek. In Ostrowiec high school there was not a large choice of languages, because in default of other teachers there remained only German. Angus had met Furmanek already in 1940, when he began the mathematics with Egon Moranowski, as Furmanek lived in this house. Occupied two rooms, or rather a room with provisional kitchen on the upper floor. Strange impression made this elderly man of less than average stature, with powerful drum-like form, his great head covered almost uniformly by gray bristle, on his face just like on his skull, three millimeters throughout. The house was warm, however it does seem odd in winter to see a man wearing sandals on his bare feet, clearly visible when he descended the wooden staircase. He held himself straight, almost stiff.

In a couple conversations with Angus he stated the world did not interest him, because it all was one great shit, he tried to spend his time in the spheres of genius, loftiness and beauty. In young age he had belonged to "Eleusis" and he avowed and still believes as before in the base of threefold moderations which Angus may not understand, being a boy of less than twelve years. Talking about the upward flights of soul in the land of perfection seemed to Angus turbid and uninteresting. It came to him though, that sitting as a philosopher in a stoic place, may save on washing and a reason for using no socks and short trimmed hairs may allow a simple toilet too.

Furmanek never taught in the underground high school. He gave private German lessons, but preferably sparse, there was a low demand. Instead with surprise Angus noticed that Moranowski counts with Furmanek opinion and treats him solemn. Distinctly something united them. Only now, when Moranowski began his career as ascendant star of the communist regime, the affair cleared.

Matthew shared with Angus what he heard from his father as well as what he saw. So Furmanek in the teachers' room moved at the center of a void. All feared with him to speak about politics and even about current news, almost anything except weather and health. The previously mentioned unreasonable distaste Angus felt towards the German language continued. Anyway he was no exception, it must be said that his perhaps foolish bias shared many other students. This was

also the case in Matthew's class, probably in others as well. However Furmanek never tried to teach his real subject, instead he proceeded with something like political educational (as named later), bluntly speaking ideological propaganda. Matthew by that time had already composed a short piece of poetry which he read to Angus:

Furman idzie, okiem błyska,
głowa w górę podniesiona
ze szczeciną. Widać z pyska,
Gęba z tydzień nie golona.
Brzuch ogromny przodem niesie,
gdyż się kaszy objadł rano,
tej na rzadko, bo już wiecie,
że słoninki mu nie dano.
Wszedł do klasy, spojrział dumnie,
który z AK się zapytał
i wywodzić jął "rozumnie",
czym w ogóle polityka.
Łotrze stary, renegacie
poza naszym tyś już progiem
czyś zapomniał,
precz z Ojczyzną i precz z Bogiem.

.....

Furman enters, eyes flashing
Head upwards raised
With bristle. The mouth jutting from
The mug this week unshaven.
Abdomen carries huge in front,
As with cereals gnawed round all morning,
This on sparse, because already you guess
That nobody gave pork fat to him.
He enters the class, looks proudly round,
Which with AK he asks,
And begins his lifework,
To untangle our politics.
Scoundrel long-standing, renegade
Except our threshold you came already
Did you forget, filthy comrade
Away with Motherland, away with God.

Furmanek began his studies in Krakow a couple of years earlier than professor Jaruga. But they did never meet there, as the university to him, or he to the Academy somehow tasted not too good, even today he kept a bad remembrance. He settled in Vienna and studied philosophy. However although he studied thoroughly, some years longer than average, somehow held back from earning any academic degree. In these times the degree of doctor was typical, but this title Furmanek did not use and added no collection of letters after his name. Also nothing became known about his theories, systems or intellectual contribution.

Instead he spread a rumor that he had met with Hitler, although about either closer contact or conversation he never told. Coming back to Galicia, he stayed for some time near Lutosławski, then in Eleusis followed a break, or confusion, difficult to tell, as his references like his ideas remained rather unclear. During WW I he became an Austrian officer ("ein Man, der doch studiert hat" – the study, if still unfinished, was enough). But reasonably he avoided the front and he confined himself to the degree of Lieutenant. He recalled the Austrian army as the best period of his life and maybe therefore carried himself so straight, even stiff. Surely therefore to write more on the subject the pen of Haszek would be needed (Jaroslav Hasek, the Bohemian author of *Sveik*).

From 1918 he began to teach German language. Although he had studied not literature but philosophy, Vienna University made up enough qualification. It was first in private, next on status of contract teacher, because the default of university degree framed an obstacle for permanent nomination, and on the philosophy score he remained inglorious. In a word, the life of a bungler who however had about himself an exceptionally high idea – and about others a low one. A man arrogant, swollen-headed and believing himself wronged by fate, the world and mankind.

Maybe not without grounds he mentioned Hitler, the beginning of the two lives perhaps a little alike. Who knows, if he had not similar ambitions as a dictator, though let's say, about one or two horizons lower. Also descended among the common folk, but choosing the communists. By preference, however, he did not create own branch of the movement and he did not assume a steering role. He contented with a position as a well-educated man set up as an exception and treated with respect by the bunch around him. It was similar to how, earlier in the army – "ein Herr, der doch studiert hat ...," he surpassed people in the majority primitive, half-educated.

Much strange, he never believed in materialism, neither the common, nor more so the historic, preferring to live in the imaginary world of the privileged ones. Of genius, a jumble of Plato with a small addition of Pythagoras, more of Lutosławski. Because however this land was accessible only to most excellent minds, there was no sense in speaking about it with common people. It was a matter of indifference, what thought the simpletons, and unworthwhile to contradict their opinions, any one neither better nor worse than others, all equally mistaken. Anyway once he tried to enlighten them, but nothing went right. So it was easier to consent for a price of recognition and respect. Short speaking, the self-styled stoic in reality became a cynic, and if what he felt for his comrades was not actually contempt, the difference was subtle, hard to notice.

In discussions, which he arranged instead of lessons in German language, he did not try to bleach the communists, nor to present them as did primitive writers of the stupid, noisy press. With words similar to those he had used earlier about the Nazi, he called them the only just, equitable and beautiful party. He argued that all politics is one stinking cesspool, in which all parties dabble similarly. If so all are dishonest, why should communists employ other methods, when to do so would threaten them with ruin from the reason of an excess of scruples. Short speaking, each meanness is a justified act, because all act similarly, and morality is hypocrisy, necessary to the blind the eyes of the naive.

Next, he patiently many times explained there exist two categories of people, the first being those who know the inner machinery, the wheels within wheels, know, how the world is arranged and deceive and guide the simple fools. Members of the AK are precisely those naive folk, misled by beautiful words and endearments. Manipulated, steered and sent to death by politicians, intriguers without conscience carrying out their own businesses. His reason for wanting to discuss the issue was to save the still-inexperienced, although well-intentioned young people, before they should commit the same error. It was his responsibility to save them from themselves and to direct with sensibleness. Soon, Angus also heard this text in the class. There remained only one-way. To keep silent, even with a lightly bored expression listen to the words, like a self-evident truth, without discussion. Nevertheless, Furmanek repeated his monologue without change again and again.

Of course, the error was obvious at first glance: these boys and girls had no need to be induced by anyone or anything. On the contrary, they themselves with all their might tried to take part in freedom-fighting, pleading to God it did not elapse without them. And this was

not easy at all. Admittedly there were some who happened onto the chance comparatively easily. Others, like Angus, tried long with all their might, however hardly faced any valid contribution. (As visible from this book, describing the years of efforts, with minimal result. A little above two months with the guerrilla, almost nil.) There were some who wished and treated this as the most important aim of life and a holy duty and despite this did not manage to hook in. No wonder therefore they felt diminished, unworthy and tried do better now.

To be exact, nobody manipulated them and did not have to steer, except maybe from birth their parents did so, the house where they lived, next school, books, possibly cinema, in one word all which they met. Perhaps they were fools, the sons of fools, time and again grandsons and the great-grandsons of fools. Former fools from generations, but also fools nobody knows from where, born from the "sound reason, judicious" families. Among these young people, fools were in the majority, prime for catching the freedom-fighting virus. Despite intensive selection through special forces under directing leading Soviet specialists, new fools constantly born. Even when parent-fools kept silent, and the children processed in schools to "judicious" reasoning, suddenly after access to independent thinking they also contaminated with like foolery. A genetic flaw, or infectious virus.

Of course, as always there were also the "reasonable" egoists and cautious souls, in the time of the preceding occupation also. Anyway, gradually quantitative proportions began to change, the "efforts" of authorities made the difference. Also more opportunists, always ready to obey whoever was on top. The altruists perished, the number of egoists grew. After umpteen years one heard at times: "The so and so, is an orderly man, disadvantage to nobody, but alas, he had to sign on to the party, not from heart need, merely for career."

* * *

"Simply we use the same old pattern as the Filarets, Filomats and Radiant (a temporary legal annex) and other secret societies known in history," – proposed Gienek Forlański.

Angus blinked his eyes, thunderstruck. He had learned thoroughly about Mickiewicz, could as easily single out all complicated trends in Mister Thaddeus, engage in intelligent discussion about Wilno, Kowno period. About Maria Wereszczakówna, next Russian society parlors, about the background of Crimean sonnets or emigration poetry. Knew at least theoretically, what is a multilevel conspiracy, learned the

application of its bases during creating the ZSZ. How the devil was it possible that he had not associated all this earlier? After all, how self-evident, secret relations in the Wilno university, was simply a classic case, therefore Nowosilcow so long led investigation, tried hard, but even so did not reach the essence. This explains the matter, the low sentences, the moderation because of unproven suspicions and the mysterious mentions in the poems and curriculums. He knew all the data and yet did not tie them together, what an ass.

"I suppose it will be best if we create the center, from which to devise the methods of an active struggle and work out tactics and prepare the methods of achieving freedom and independence for Poland. Next we will take to us the bunch of most trusted and certain colleagues, with whom we will create an organization. Maybe after a while, when we better understand one the other, we take more to an inner circle, one or a few. But in principle the organization will have its own leader and act independently, not realizing it is inspired from within by us. Temporary, we do not mention an open fight, rather a free discussion, exchange of ideas, without mendacity seen in the newspapers. No illusions, the mendacity soon will grow up even more, also strength of censorship, for certain when the communists become more powerful, they will start to turn the screw. So maybe in future an underground newspaper with some truth, if we may manage. At first discussion in groups, cultivating the tradition, national and especially of independence and freedom, staying by rational thinking by our own judgment. It means the skill of opposing the propaganda trumpet, the right to one's own view.

"Next the lower grade, the motto we must take, something like the Radiant "Homeland, science, virtue." Press on a mutual help in education, because the worst that came from the war is a lack of well-educated people. All Poland's intelligentsia paid a terrible toll, because determined as the primary target of the occupant, actually both occupants. Probably a majority perished, therefore now, to rebuild Poland, most important is the delivery of well-educated people. Best also wise and proper, however the science does not guarantee any so far. We try for the maximum cooperation in this task, a help to itself and to others. Only so much, at first." This was a good proposal and ought to work, during the war originated a huge queue for education, science and this trend continued, never so many volunteers wanted learning.

"Besides none of our tasks is simulated, all are genuine and much needed, also these early forays may be considered as individual outreach for education. However the care of patriotic spirit and tradition favoring independence and freedom of thought can with success work

irrespective of the degree, a preparation for active freedom-fighting later."

The two remaining participants in this conversation, Angus and Bobek Sójka, agree fully. How did it happen?

From the end of February, there happened already warmer days, snow melted, then again froze. The winter of this year was shorter and easier. One day, the high school classes had to share in some demonstration or mass meeting, they went out from the high school in a column of fours and of course with singing. Right off the bat, started to sing the march of "Gloomy" troops:

"Hen z dala od naszej rodziny i bliskich
my AK żołnierze od Gór Świętokrzyskich..."

next -

"Hej, po polach dmie wichura,
słota, błoto, ładny kram,
lecz co znaczy dla piechura
choćby nawet diabeł sam ..."

Next Mokotów march, followed by:

Hej chłopcy, bagnet na broń..."

"Faraway from our family and nearest
we AK soldiers from the Świętokrzyski mountains ..."

Not all knew it, but they went through all the stanzas and at once next:

"Hey, on the fields blows a stormy-wind,
rainy weather, mud, nice stall,
but what means for infantry
even the devil itself ..."

Next was Mokotow march again, then:

Hey boys, bayonet on the weapon!

A long way, distant before us ...

An extraordinary experience, Angus for a moment was as deeply moved as first in the guerrilla (they sung rarely). Had to close his eyes and to compress his hands, wanting not show contracting tears on the face. Felt united with the colleagues and the delusive feeling, as if a bunch of close friends started again towards an enemy, never caring for the devil himself. Surely many felt the same, other boys also embraced extreme passion. From that time the Gloomy march they sung, sure on each occasion, became the unofficial hymn of the school.

This was the right moment and after return, Angus began the long-planned conversation with two sometime chosen candidates, proposing founding a secret organization, at least temporarily, till finding a serious

contact. Both agreed without a second thought, because they also had the same plans and now eagerly discussed an action plan.

Bogdan Sójka, Bobek to his friends, was the most energetic person whom Angus had ever known and the reserve of his vigor simply astonished. Two older years than Angus, he was a son of a schoolteacher, missing since 1939. But according to last news the father still lived, as an officer of reserve in captivity in Stalag (POW camp). They couldn't know at the time, but it came about more or less a year later the man happily returned to the family. Then however Bogdan, just as Angus an only child, lived alone with the mother, who turned religious and was always asking God to saved her son. In fact she had good cause to be afraid for his fate. Bobek with his character was unable to sit quietly, besides was a Scout and during the war a member of "Szare Szeregi" (roughly translated, "Gray Rows", the Scouting Underground Resistance). Never in the guerrilla because of faulty sight, without spectacles he saw no more than two steps away. But in the conspiracy fulfilled the role of a runner and this not only in Ostrowiec, managed even long routes by bicycle. Beyond eyesight, simply jet-propelled by health. Well and strongly built, if about half a head shorter than Angus, never knew weariness, an iron man. If he still had smart vision and penetrating look, one could nearly say, like to Gloomy himself. Also he never swore, for the entire time of their acquaintance Angus heard maybe once or two times, surely accidental, "a mean trouble."

Eugeniusz Forlański on the contrary, was an over-bred intellectual. Much older than the others, over twenty-one years and not a single child, the youngest of several who already had left home. Descended from so-called "better sphere," at home they kept the portraits of ancestors and a signet-ring (which he never put on, just as he never mentioned the ancestral property, already lost before World War I).

The father, active member of the National Democratic Party, murdered Germans in the first massive, so-called action AB in spring of 1940, next the mother opened a dry-cleaner's, largest in Ostrowiec and managed well, above admiration. Many women discovered during the war unexpected abilities, she did not have any professional experience and it was not a piece of cake by any stretch of the imagination. Employed several people, the son also worked and did not have time for education. He was undoubtedly intelligent, smart, also well-read and knowledgeable, but weariness got him more easily even than Angus, could not very intensively do something, for example work and still learn. Now he learned perfect, but did not make extended efforts. His mother, on the contrary, had the excess of energy, but did not direct it towards

politics or conspiracy. She took to religious circles and parish to such a degree that poisonous tongues united her too closely with Mlynkowski the parish priest. Angus hoped this was only gossip, because about this priest he had a poor opinion.

At first Angus had at times though, that Forlański could access in their bunch on the similar base, as the four took to the organization, an inspiring influence, for example from the National Democratic Party. However, nothing confirmed such a supposition. It was Angus who first, began conversations and took the initiative. Forlański needed sometimes to be pushed, but then, of course, thought well and proper, but must take his time.

But Angus' third choice was not so smart. It is necessary first to mention, that for some time since Angus had decided to take an interest in girls. As before he worshipped and honored one beloved woman, but gradually reconciled to, this love was hopeless, might not and would never return. However, he did not want live only by recollections. Also, could not exclude some organic needs, if he did sometimes seriously think how good it would be, when his male organ would dwindle away and stop to oppress him, with age. Therefore he determined to seek a girl. But because he judged such cold calculation cynical, he determined to look around for such one, with whom it would be possible to fall in love and try for the perfect love. He would give from him all and want nothing in exchange, anyway as long as the selected did not answer with exactly such a feeling. In short, to follow the example of the former knights before their dear lady. Give one's heart and strive only for her happiness, never mind one's own person.

In the class were fewer girls than boys, therefore they could choose. Two among them pleased him at the beginning, but after several days he concentrated on one, the second treating only as a charming appearance. Hanka Zbiżyński was a little older than Angus, but without comparison less ripe and experienced, he considered her still half a child. The youngest daughter, dear apple of the eye of the father, it was a terrible calamity when he got arrested in 1942 and sent to the camp. Zbiżyński was an engineer mechanic and before the war set up a handsome shop employing from twenty up to ninety workers, producing agricultural equipment. The firm developed perfectly and the owner made good. Beside the workshop he built a beautiful big house for the family. During the war to be sure the company fell in the hands of a "Treuhaender" (German proxy). But Zbiżyński was a top specialist and nobody could replace him, therefore in fact as before he led the firm. As a patriot and specialist he naturally took to the weapons and on this he

stumbled and fell, with several his collaborators. To be sure, the Germans found only such parts as could serve to different tasks and he presented a reasonable defense. Nothing was proven, but even so on the basis of suspicion he hit the Oświęcim camp. This was one year earlier than occurred the known bad luck in Suchedniów. But Zbiżyński never made a machine handgun Sten, still upgraded through the genius of Korebko. He made some parts, the charges concerned coils, surely to the Polish Vis pistols, on which he fervently explained differences and told of other tasks, without success.

After these arrests, the workshop produced as before agricultural machines, employing less than forty people. Theoretically it remained always the property of Zbiżyński and his family, but in practice they never recovered anything. Still during the occupation, the wife could feel itself an owner. The "Treuhaender" had neither experience nor knowledge and professional questions were left in the hands of a young engineer, whom still engaged Zbiżyński. This man stayed loyal and tried to consult with Mrs. Zbiżyński on all matters, and even taught the children, Hanka and her older brother, as before living in their house. After the war however, even though the workshop never employed a full fifty workers as marked by the statute, it was taken over by State management and the technical manager was dismissed. The efforts of the family and of an oldest son, of age and with a good professional practice, did not bring any result, except they became banned entry and heard a serious warning not to ignore the threats. They might lose also their home if they did not stay quiet. For the regime, a private enterpriser was simply a bloodsucker.

But still they had hope on return of the father. The news was, he survived through to the end in Oświęcim, next seen in the column of prisoners forced by SS men. They approached on the west, to Germany. Some prisoners luckily saved, now began to return and brought reports or only hear-say. They said that Zbiżyński was seemly alive. So his family looked out, each day and night, in each returning group expected to see a familiar face – without success. It was a longtime, still there arrived none next news or sign of life.

They later learned the man indeed left the camp alive, but already in poor physical condition, having lost about half his weight and being on the edge of exhaustion. A terrible death march many did not manage, the forced prisoners fell thick on snow and frost. Zbiżyński died already by the end of the first week, but because died with many around him, first news of his death reached only in summer. For now, the possibility always fed hope and expectations. Hanka's father became predicted, for

the planned action of Silesia restoration to be the manager of the mechanical department in Gliwice steelworks, and his aide, the engineer Stachurski also had to appear there, as is assistant. The family considered a possibility, that first he traveled there to take new duties and had sent news, but the letter vanished, because the mail was unreliable. This engineer Stachurski, anyway dismissed as trusted man of workshop owners, drove to Silesia to the new workplace, at the same time promising to seek news of his former boss. It seems that Hanka was of this guardian of the family platonically, rather childish enamored and felt distress at his departure.

Exactly therefore, Hanka was often thoughtful and distant, just such distant looks and dignity at times (he did not know then the cause of her sadness) made an impression on Angus. He wanted to put straight her mood, to cause a smile more often and see her enjoy life. Besides there happened only moments of such melancholy. She was a young girl, spoke brave, laughing with her friends, reacted and thought quickly and according to the rules, one of the best classmates. Seated in the neighboring row at a small tables, one place to the front, near the middle of class, exactly on Angus' line of sight with both the cathedral and the teacher. Also the board, which placed not exactly on the middle of the wall, but a little shifted toward the windows.

Usually the nice girls take to more ugly ducks as friends, but Hanka seated with another, maybe still nicer and at first Angus took interest in her. Marysia Okoń looked to be a rich-flavored Polish girl, bigger, blue-eyed and with golden hair, alive, happy and a little scatterbrained. In fact these were appearances only. She most brave, having lost her mother already during the 1939 campaign, in fact she took care of her father and the younger sister, or perhaps all took care of each other. But it was her disposition, the always smiling flibbertigibbet. She seemed even prettier, anyway at first glance, because Hanka had a beauty more subtle but the longer he looked on it, the more he found beautiful details. Angus soon adopted a fixed position turned to this side, simply could not stop looking.

Needy to iterate, in the earlier period and still at the time, Angus estimated himself critically, had about himself a poor opinion. First, nearly anything in life he bungled, always tried and rarely succeeded. His colleagues did not face so many obstacles, received more easily, first to conspiracy and then to the guerrilla. He considered himself a failure. Did not take into account that usually he had thrown himself on a difficult task. From the start had poor chances, small chance of success, nevertheless he gave it everything he had and despite all, often came

near target. However, because he mimicked the paper heroes from books, the contrast was striking, all them were invariably successful, irrespective of the difficulty. Anyway, he believed that into account goes the only the end result, just as in mathematics, a result is either good or bad, cannot be in part good, such a notion told only to comfort children.

Mother rebuked him often, too often, in the best intent, for his own good, she said. Angus however unconvinced, last believed he deserved the fixed criticism. Only later noticed, many women apply this method. Mothers, sister, wives, lovers (meaning these already fixed, at the beginning usually not) and even daughters want us always to improve to perfection. Usually they do not have principle fixed conditions, but they notice each detail wrongly made. For example: good, you passed the examination, but how could you go looking like that, the edge of your collar twisted, what did the professor think about your looks? Over the long-haul this reduces men and finally may cause an inferiority complex. On the other hand, such training from early years had also good result. In the future, Angus became immune to these well-meant attentions. More or less just as a stay in the guerrillas had immunized him to unsavory food, already nothing could make disgusting the food. Simply he caught the remarks with one ear, and as the saying goes, let them go out the other.

Lastly he did not have experience nor manners with the girls. To be sure he once survived the unbelievable feeling and the moment of a heavenly happiness and of exaltation, but this of course could not go on. Such moments in general occur to people immeasurably rarely, probability less than one in a million times, like first winnings on a lottery, no way they can repeat in sequence. It would be like praying to God that he might repeat a miracle again and again. The exceptional does not give any experience. Quite the opposite, may induce to mistakes, for usually matters do not happen in such a way between a woman and a man. In this case it was so, the hand of God touched them for one moment and then disappeared. It was not their doing, nothing one could learn and repeat. In fact, Angus tried to copy the experience all his lifelong, but futilely. So probably it was better, that because of conscience and beliefs, let's say the truth, of one side only, not his, the affair ended. If they had tried to continue it, it would have ended anyway, but with a hell of a disappointment. Anyway, this was not a sexual, only maybe a mental or spiritual experience, no information left. Onanism itself gave more experience, he could at least observe and know some reactions, if only those of one person. Summarizing, one

may assume. that Angus was not in a psychological range, did not know even how to approach a girl and to make an appeal.

However his appraisal was exaggerated, too pessimistic. For sure Angus had achieved only a poor minimum in that, which he considered the primary goal of life and patriotic duty, but anyway fate did throw in a few consolation prizes. Good results in education, chiefly science and he learned quickly, easily overtaking colleagues. Even the failures were not a total loss, thanks to them he learned more, found out and developed. Properly, the reduplicate tests, tries and essays had a decisive influence on forming the individuality and inner character, a quick excuse teaches less. And finally, Angus was not until then so unattractive as he imagined, even with looks. The youngest pup in the class, he was nonetheless the tallest, let's say an equal to one more colleague mentioned, Felsenstein. (A Pole despite the German name and even once his ancestors used the addition "von," they came from Saxony, at the time of King Sass August, just as the Beks for example. He served in the AK, but not in the guerrilla because of a disease, tuberculosis from which he subsequently cured.) This colleague sat close by, they both overgrew the rest of the class by a good half head, 185 cm so-called military measure, without boots. Angus was the younger, however more massive, a little above 80 kilos. Properly too much for a boy of his age, a tender problem, but without exaggeration.

However the main was the study; how well or badly anybody learned and there, the class opinion was more important than the censures and gained degrees and sentence of professors. But in this range, Angus ranked in the short-listed top. Maybe not always exemplary and conscientious, but by many lengths first in math and most speedy. Even the long calculations he could instantaneously solve in his head, behind closed eyes could faultlessly contain half, sometimes a whole page of exercise-book virtual recording. In other objects, memory also was an advantage and fast thinking also. However not so good with the humanities. To be sure, ancient history had always excited his passion, today we would say a hobby. His knowledge exceeded the compulsory program but the overall picture missed the truth, falsely idealized. But with the languages, well, mistakes in Polish he sure did not make, but lacked the ability for precision and short condensing, his thoughts carried him away, the tendency to unwrap too much at a time. However foreign languages, the only choice being German – he was at full zero, any censuring impossible, at best one could write in: unclassified. But this was the case for the entire class, for all the classes. Classes of German language with Furmanek were a fiction.

The first contact, which Angus at first expected to be difficult, went unexpectedly smoothly. As known, any look fixed on herself, a girl will feel instinctively, as do the birds (well, starlings and mynahs do, sparrows seem not to care). But then, they began conversation on school subjects, beginning with physics applying math as a tool, and the practical execution of calculations. Conversations, of course, referred largely to the matters at hand, but ran off sideways, and Angus surprised, how interesting appeared the talk for both sides. Soon enough, inspired by a sensation of the intellect and the philosophy of life of the girl, which was on the level, Angus proposed recruiting Hanka and this straight to an internal circle. Induced with the full conviction, that at minimum one girl would be needed, for better understanding the characteristic view and sensibility of the better sex and as representing girls in general. Justified the fact so persuasively, that he convinced the colleagues.

This was a principal mistake. Hanka was not suitable either as a manly Amazon, nor as the dramatic heroine, nor as the fanatical intelligence agent, iron-lady or Mata Hari. This was a delicate girl already heavily experienced through bad fate, management work did not agree with her, but turned to overload. Despite this however, as proper Pole and patriot, she accepted the proposal and she tried do her best.

And it must be said that in the long run Angus also did not fit for her, a good beginning only complicated the future. He turned only the girl's head, having nothing to offer. Beloved and a little coddled daughter of a lost father, she needed not only consolation, also care and support. Angus however imagined love following the example of books, which properly was an empty word, without concrete significance. He had decided on many years of a dangerous life, impossible to agree with the care for a second person. Not to mention this, any stabilization in general was impossible, even in the distant perspective. If she now fell in love, this could end fatally. For the second time to lose a near-connected man, repeating a similar crisis, this could break her down. Angus firmly brooded it all wrong, simply did not understand other people, being an egocentric. In this case he ought for example to have been thinking about an unbinding flirt with another person, never about big love with a serious girl.

Already the idea, to mix feeling and serious job, was simply moronic. It does occur sometimes, that sharing in the conspiracy or underground warfare persons meet and fall in love, because simply they cannot change the fate. This is a serious complication, unfortunate. They might succeed, however as a rule tragedies occur. But to propose to a

person one is fond of, to share the danger and risk side by side, would be more or less so, as to take away a girl with oneself to the war. Never mix duty with pleasure, it must be either/or.

With luck, this love never realized, but for now it was rather a sympathy and friendship from the side of the girl, from the side of Angus also, with adds infatuation. However Hanka unexpectedly made a good start as member of a secret organization, about which see next.

In the first councils, which took place in the former beerhouse, closed, inactive and empty, therefore ideal to this, they deliberated the first plan of action. For the time, they chose four new candidates to a proper organization, as many as those contained in the internal circle. Thanks to this, acting with solitariness they had ensured control and could fix bases and the choice of the leader, for whom they elected Forlański. He was representative and thoughtful without any doubts, best suitable, if as already explained, all more important decisions had to be made in the internal circle, in which all the four had equal voices and rights. In fact, the leadership had to be collective.

Angus proposed two candidates, the previously mentioned Felsenstein and sitting at the same table Garbalewski. The latter was an already fully grown, well, not a boy rather a man, not large, lean and mustached, if not half of Angus, about two thirds. Garbalewski was a full orphan and had only a distant family, towards the end of the war landed in the so-called Junak company (young, hardworking plucky fellows), name of a compulsory work detachment, the men used for construction work. For enrolling, Germans promised to the men never displace them to Germany. The Junak lived in barracks, a provisional camps, usually near construction work and heavily supervised. With the first news of the beginning of the AK concentration, with five colleagues he ran away to the forest, followed by other groups. The next found it much more difficult, the last were caught. Always better to be the first, Angus had long since concluded so. Those left in the camp, sharply controlled now, remaining Junak's were soon taken away to work in Germany. (Irony of fate, the service in the Junak company should exactly have protected them against displacement). Garbalewski carried on in the guerrilla the same time as Angus, also in II division (Swietokrzyska), but till the demobilization they never met.

Forlański held the recruiting conversation with Orłowski, along Angus the youngest student. The one of few, who had the luck to have both parents alive, if the father still did not reach home; threatened by arrest, had to hide. The next, Begier had only a mother, besides siblings. Both the proposals received without any proviso, after which according

to the agreed scenario Gienek Forlański became elected the first commander. For a time, the organization should not grow, but according to the plan they came over to creating education self-service circles.

At the same time Angus proposed the first weighty action, possibly a preparation for the next war: it was necessary to take care of the amassed reserve of explosives. Already they had remained too long in the cell behind the house, it was inadmissible. However until now nothing could be done.

* * *

"A year and a half ago, in autumn 1943 I came here often, it was a place where I could cry quietly. From the moment when they took away my father, for a longtime we kept hope, they may let him free, maybe money does it. However, then came this terrible news, they sent him to Oświęcim, where no one returns from," spoke Hanka Zbiżyńska. "I therefore went to the cemetery, so no one should see me and first I cried for my father, until I did not know properly what happened. I thought that he already does not live and then I imagined, that I also had already died, but Mama and my brother together were crying over us. I wanted already to die and to see and to hear after death, that they missed us much. After a while, when I woke up, I was not sure, whether somehow I fell asleep, or lost consciousness. Several times I returned home late, but never wanted to tell anything. I did not speak, until the time, already in November, Mother found me at the cemetery. I was cold and wet, because it had begun to rain and I didn't notice, Mother led me home, but I could not go. Then Mother forbade me to come to the cemetery, shouted and even threatened she would apply a good thrashing home if I went again, though for sure she would never do that. Besides, I could not anyway because I fell ill and I had to lie in bed. Mother said that hysteria never helped anyone and that if Father were there, he would disapprove. However, at times I returned here, if for a short while."

Hanka, Bobek, Gienek and Angus went by one of the paths in the cemetery, in the old part of it now strongly overgrown by trees and shrubs. A large and for a longtime disused part, occupied tombs prevailing still from the 19th century, magnificent, bricks, large and often neglected. The fourth inspected in turn different crossings, lanes and passages, as if they sought a secluded place for a conversation. What were they doing?

Bogdan Sójka and Hanka Zbiżyński lived by the neighborhood, on Garden Street. Far enough from the high school, returning home, they went to the end of Pieracki Street and still straight on about four

kilometers, properly this already was the outskirts of Ostrowiec. Angus benefited from each occasion, to go with them part of the way, sometimes to the end. Gienek Forlański usually went a short ways in company and then twisted home, he lived on Wspólna Street. Angus and Gienek lived at rented lodgings in somebody's houses, Bogdan in a wooden house with annex, three rooms and kitchen, placed in a large, overgrown garden at the intersection of Bałtów and Garden streets. Hanka in the big villa opposite, with towering tall silvery spruces visible from afar. To the parcel of land on which was fixed the villa, adhered a large area enclosed by a link fence where was located the mechanical workshop. Now, the owners did not have the right of entry there. But from the back were some disused annex's and knowing the terrain, it was possible to slip in. When they thought what to do with the explosive materials, first came the proposal to look about, probably on the terrain of Bogdan. However, better to look over all the possibilities, to select a place for the hidden and safe magazine. Anyway, it proved not such a good idea.

However nearby, where already the town's buildings were dwindling into countryside, was founded a municipal cemetery and close by, a little closer to town, on a hill, a Jewish cemetery, "Kirkut", awchich the Germans had near the end destroyed. Right in the last month's they blew in the air the tombs, graves and even the brick walls around. Properly strange, why this action without a sense and why they tried to wipe out any trace of the Jews. With all the troubles they had on the front, these "Demol"-commando (for demolition), were surely more needed elsewhere.

When still existed the Ghetto, both these cemeteries were important transport points on the supply route of both the Polish underground assistance, and the paid private enterprise, for smuggling of food. Usually loads first came to the Polish cemetery and next at night were transported to appointed places at the "Kirkut" (Jewish cemetery). This not much guarded because, though near town, beyond lay a Ghetto enclosure and Jews could go there only during the funerals, under heavy guard. On such occasions they found usually some means to take the deliveries.

Not only the cemetery served to this task, anyway concerning the private business. Also some nearby houses belonged to the smugglers and they chose a direct path through the Jewish cemetery. This was a business earning good money, but could also earn a bullet, because for any help to Jews was no other punishment, only capital, death. Other neighboring inhabitants knew about this too, so of course tried to turn

away the eyes, when in the dark as a rule after police hour (curfew) appeared the mysterious shadows.

"Some time after the Ghetto perished, in spring 1943, there were already green leaves," Hanka told them, "in the cemetery appeared as growing from the earth three young people with some baggage. They noticed me and they said they were partisans and I should never mention this meeting to anyone. They said also, that they spent the nights at times in one of the tombs and they tried to induce me, to see how this looks, that they will show me all. I made believe as if agreeing, but at suitable moment I ran away, managed to reach the street and somehow nobody chased me."

Angus, hearing this, thought that if it had been him he would have gone to see the hiding-place, if only out of curiosity, and only then escaped. After a moment he grasped, well, but he is not a girl, they had to take more care. Anyway considered, this was an exaggeration.

However the longer they went on the cemetery, all the more Hanka could not to show the places, where this was, any concrete tomb.

"Simply I cannot say, now without the leaves, there protrude some bushes, but all looks different. At times it seems to me, this may be it here or there, but then I am not sure."

They also could not notice any tomb, looking like used for an extra task. Anyway this was self-evident: if someone or other set up a hiding-place, the users had to see to it that it should not draw the eyes. Besides, since liquidating the Ghetto had passed almost two years and the old line of transfer had long since ceased to work. -

However the idea was good. "If we cannot find any old hiding-place, let us try to find a new one, something fitting," - proposed Sójka. This day still they decided nothing, they selected most carefully. This was surely a serious and difficult mission, not to mention dangerous. But after consideration, on the second day Angus was sure, this was the best possible solution. In such an old, forgotten tomb, the explosives could wait safely till the moment when would begin a new, universal "war for the freedom of all nations" (meaning the World War III). The more he know of the new occupants and the regime created by them, more obvious it became, they had no intent of leaving or giving up any of what they had conquered. Never respected any borders, if not at point of a gun. Estimated, it had to end with war, over what they had taken. Estimated, the occupation would never end without a war. But this might happen only after the surrender of Germany.

Supposedly, the Allies would realize just in time that they and the entire world are in deadly danger and they would take a lesson from

history, remember how it was with Hitler, and decide on a relatively easy preventive war. If nothing happened then undoubtedly Stalin would choose the best time and throw himself at their throats, as he wanted to do with Germany. He would surely not rest till he had conquered the entire world. Anyway, Poland would fight on the side of the Allies, probably alone in Europe, because the French would rather brawl between themselves, if the many Soviet influences there did not tip the balance. About the Germans, probably the Allies would create some auxiliary army from the prisoners of war, but needing to keep caution. But when the war began, such a mass of explosive materials would be invaluable. In the old tomb, they could safely remain many months, bah, even years. One of the four of them would survive till the moment when it should become possible to deliver the treasure to the Polish partisans or insurgents. Even if they were able to contribute nothing more than that, with worst luck it would be worth more than their lives.

Next day with new energy they continued the exploration, so they searched on and finally found a few possibilities. They chose mainly for size, this needed to be a large family tomb, something like a brick basement, of course old, neglected, a location last used many years before and to which nobody ever came. Two of them closed by strongly rusted padlocks and one without any padlock, shut only by heavy stone. The padlocks they simply cut and exchanged for new ones which Angus artificially aged with help of an acid on the outside, and properly greased inside. One of these graves showed the traces of somebody's presence, undoubtedly long ago, but they preferred to leave it alone. The second contained eight coffins, four on the left and four on the right, arranged in twos, one on top of the second, with a narrow passage in the middle.

The wooden coffins kept unexpectedly well, however inside were already only a few bleached bits of debris and bone. The contents of each two coffins they placed in the one on the top, so this at the bottom became free. This was properly a macabre shock of a job offending the quiet rest of the deceased, but it was necessary. They all prayed for them and requested an anonymous Mass for the souls. In fact, it was much the same as when ancient hunters begged to hunted prey, sorry, but there is a need to kill and to eat. During the war it repeatedly happened that cemeteries and graves succumbed to destruction. Here this was not an easy or hasty decision, but the higher need. If there existed the spirits of these people and they saw this, they would undoubtedly understand that it was for the good cause, and they would forgive. If not, with all respect for the deceased, however, more important are those still alive.

Anyway there remained still the daily heavy work. It was necessary to transport more than four hundred kilos of TNT "bricks" and "bones," not to mention the antitank bombs. All in all more than half a ton to carry, in full secret and without attracting attention, not an easy job.

The transport went on gradually, anywhere up to twenty kilos in two bags at one time, carried usually by two people, taking turns: while one carried, the second simulated animated conversation, in fact looking around carefully. The luggage was carried first from the home of Angus, who prepared the bags in the cell behind the house, to the Sójka garden. At the beginning they made use of an old bower or shed for tools at the back of the house. However, they soon decided on a secluded spot in the front garden, in a thicket of currant bushes growing there. The bags, when covered with a piece of old roofing, were nearly invisible.

This way they avoided winding around with the bags on the property, which might arouse the interest of Bogdan's mother. Of course, she was a person fully trusted, but in nearly six years of occupation some basic rules of behavior had been implanted. Mainly, never tell even the most trusted people about anything which they do not need to know. She had also accepted already, that her son conducted various activities about which he never spoke. Angus' own mother also, knew and suspected nothing of the project, except of course the matter of the German grenades, which however had long since disappeared from the house and about which they never talked.

The final transport of explosives from a temporary shelter in the Sójka garden to the neighboring cemetery and hiding-place in the tomb, they did usually after dark. Because it turned out the four coffins could not contain it all, they arranged out of TNT bricks a new section of wall in front of the original, and lightly painted it a similar color. The antitank disk mines were packed in one coffin, most of the TNT in the tree left.

March (also April) 1945 was the best time in all Angus' life. That towards which he had striven with all his strength, but never succeeded, now at last came true. He lived intensely as never before, in continual effort, a full life. He carried out the work of many people, slept little and ate also in haste, but this was not excessive effort, in comparison with the guerrillas quite comfortable conditions. He felt he was riding the crest of the wave, floating on a cloud, with his head in the sky and all going marvelously.

Unlikely, but even something he had tried to do throughout the whole war, never able to, namely cycling, also suddenly became possible, without any visible reason. As we have heard, Angus and

Mateusz went to separate classes, but as before remained friends. But with the intensive engagement, Angus had less and less time at his disposal. The Jaruga home was far enough away that going there and back used up a good hour and a half. Because he was always in such a hurry, Angus one day got on Matthew's bicycle – and unexpectedly cycled away, without any problems. This of course may raise a smile of pity on the lips of the reader, a mere nothing. Let us remember however, that so far the bicycle was for Angus as inaccessible as, let us say, the flying carpet and slowly had even become a complex. But simply enough, by this time the ear contusion, which had occurred in the 1939 campaign, had healed and his sense of balance recovered. Nevertheless Angus felt as if there had suddenly vanished one more of the barriers restricting his possibility. Besides, who knows whether this period of success, high spirits and sheer euphoria, did not influence also a faster convalescence. In fact, the troubles with equilibrium and the defect of the labyrinth still at times returned, usually just at those moments when his failures caused depression.

Of course this doesn't mean that Angus began suddenly to bicycle superbly. As is usual at the beginning, he had a great attraction for trees, fences, particular those made of barbed wire. Besides was not too good going up a hill, but riding downhill was still worse. After some falls he rode and braked with excessive caution (on the way to the Jaruga house were two steep up and down rides). Matthew tried to help, towing one bicycle by the second on a long string, which however did break with the unavoidable jerks. However Angus made fast progress and already after several days rode more or less like most of his colleagues and friends. No need to say that in a small city without a public transport, bicycles were the basic means of travel, especially for youth. Most students, at least those living at some distance, arrived at the high school by bicycle. When after class the four of them started off for home in conversation – at times in a larger bunch – usually Angus and Gienek, who also lived relatively near, went on foot, and the rest did also, but leading bicycles. Usually they passed through "Błonia" (Pastures), after which Forlański said good-bye and turned off onto Wspólna Street. Angus also said farewell at this point and turned back, but Hanka and Bogdan got on their bicycles and headed off. If however Angus was coming along to Bogdan's house, they led the bicycles the whole way.

They began transporting the TNT on foot, carefully and in pairs. However, it soon became clear the bicycles would allow a marked speeding up of transport. It was at this point that Angus also figured out how to cycle, if usually he did not transport the load, but only rode along

as a guard. Thanks to the bicycles, they made it faster than originally planned, somewhere around the middle of April.

"I propose, this matter shall have nothing in common with the secret organization we are creating, it may be too dangerous and there is no need to have the matter more widely known." Angus had had time to think it all over. He now took confidence in himself and in his plans, even excessively so. He would give a matter some consideration, if he had time to think it over – the best was to sleep on it – and believed that usually decisions were best taken according to the rules. However when was a need for fast decision, he had to trust his instincts. In this case he recognized that, even though without the help of his colleagues he would sure be unable to carry out the plans, nevertheless it was he who had picked up the explosives. On him lay the principal responsibility. Besides, supposedly he had the best knowledge, both professional, also in the general matters, because he had longtime access to all the underground press and drew much information from that source.

"We have done this ourselves, from the beginning to the end, nobody knows the secret and let it so stay so. It would be best, if from now we forget all about it. Only when there begins a rebellion or war for freedom, we will deliver this deposit to the Home Army, Polish Army, or however it shall be called. I do not know when this may occur, or if we will be able to meet and communicate, but one of us for sure will live to see the day, even if something happens to the others. We resolve therefore, that each of us has the full right to decide according to his own conscience, when the time comes. Till this time, let it be our secret alone and even let us try to forget the memory."

"Do we swear an oath?" - asked Forlański.

"There is no point. Let's shake hands and from now we remember nothing. No oaths, because nothing happened here," - said Sójka.

So they did, with one small difference: Bogdan and Hanka, living nearby, received one key each. They were now and then to check whether anything unusual seemed happen with the graves, for example if the family reappeared. They had do this rarely and occasionally, as only passing by. Properly, the key had only symbolic meaning, because if need be (when the hour came), it would be possible to act without a key, cutting the padlock just as they had done in the beginning.

* * *

Capsule: "When the hour shall strike..."

A specifically Polish term. The description may be incomprehensible for a reader who is not a Pole, or is not familiar with the tradition of freedom fighting. Wars which continued (with short breaks) for a century and a half, many times lost and then taken up again. (If never before resulted such a desperate struggle, not only for freedom, but for sheer survival in the physical sense, as during the recent war and occupation.) In fact, the tradition and hope for the next occasion, of succeeding by a sudden effort, went down in many families from the father to the son and from the grandfather to the grandsons. One of the symbols of this tradition were clocks, usually swinging, large and old, with the inscription "O kiedyż wybije godzina..." (When the hour shall strike...) In Greater-Poland such symbolic clocks keep in many homes and Angus had seen one such in the possession of his family. However this and similar symbols rather could not be kept during the Russian partition. Simply, the former Prussia despite the oppressing and compulsory denationalizing of a Polish population, however remained a lawful state. The police were unable to destroy or to forbid owning souvenirs, never mind the suspicion. But in Russia, as Angus knew from his parents, one may be arrested and condemned by a special Court of Justice on suspicion. For instance, the police assuming of an act of bereavement on the anniversary of a tragic event, if one simply went to church in mourning clothes. More so in the case of discovering such souvenirs. To be sure, the sworn citizen Courts of Justice functioned within the borders of decency, at least in the heart of Russia. Alas, in the so-called "Kraj Prywiślański" (Over-Vistula country), there often reigned an exceptional state, then the police and administration had free hand. There remained only a phrase: "when the hour shall strike..." It originated from this time, preserving the old sense. Anyway, the storage of a hidden weapon, besides these ancient traditions, had become not long since refreshed, first 1939, when the beaten Polish Armed Forces sheltered with the civilian population and buried the weapons. Next, they added to the beginning of the partisan war. But also once more, not long ago, on the dissolution of the AK, also a large quantity, probably the major part of weapons went to secret warehouses and various caches. The preceding chapter, presented a tale of a German soldier, who discovered the hiding-place of Matthew and Angus, but instead of revealing them, came for chess and chitchat. Occasionally he told them about a mission he took part in, which found a hidden warehouse of weapons. Also this, that now happened, was natural and according with the tradition. Simply a typical conduct, national habit.

It should be explained, that when Angus went to the guerrillas less than a year ago, five kilos of explosives were equivalent the worth of a rifle. A rifle esteemed more or less on par with the life of the soldier. Then, in the further course of the war, weapons became easier and incomparable with human life, but on the other side exactly the lack of explosives was the worst. Increasing the toll. Therefore it may be assumed, this hidden warehouse would have value equivalent to a minimum of eighty carbines, or the lives of as many people.

* * *

In April, a long awaited message from Father arrived. He wrote brief, that he was working in his old position, and the Railway Direction in Poznań was trying gradually to bring the chaos under control. The situation on the Railway was at the moment difficult, and Father had his hands full from the morning and often duty at night. Fortunately the Direction had organized a canteen and he was eating there. He had got a promotion twice, after turning up to work and then one more time, so he was in the so-called fifth group (before the war he had been in the seventh). But in practice he wasn't getting any salary, if some advances, still it amounted to nothing at the crazy market prices. The canteen and the fact that they were occasionally given foodstuffs was at times a live-saver. He had managed to regain their flat, which happily had been rescued during the warfare. The adjoining block to that in which they lived and where the caretaker of the house, Ratajczak, lived, was destroyed all the way to its foundations by a big air bomb. Therefore a sizable lawn had come into existence next door, but the food shop on corner of the family's block had survived and was functioning. It means, sometimes it was possible to buy something there, if one could afford it. The flat was ruined, shreds of wallpaper were hanging from walls and better not to talk about the parquet. The windows had some panes, the rest he provisionally curtained with wood and cardboard, everything empty, no furniture. Instead there were swarms of bedbugs, which it wasn't possible to conquer. He had managed to get only one bed, one table and a few chairs, so it would be necessary to bring furniture from Ostrowiec. He hoped to arrange a wagon car or at least half of one, for the transport of everything, already it was promised, but the matter was difficult and it was necessary still to wait. If they prepared for departure, as soon as some car was ready to go from Ostrowiec to Poznań, somebody would notify them.

"Mum, I will help you with packing and I will load the wagon, but I need to stay here to finish this class. You have always said education is most important, and it is all going well for me here, I will manage a few months alone."

Of course a hypocrisy, but arguments that he was doing an important mission in the underground organization and as well having a girlfriend here, most probably would fail to convince. Anyway he didn't lie, only didn't say everything. It looked as if Mother bought the argument, good luck continued.

With such a good run, Angus decided to talk to the girl. He was on the crest of a wave and he felt luck could not fail him, however his success was limited. Hanna accepted him as a friend, in fact this had already happened earlier, but she would not hear about love now. She suggested that at the moment he treat her like a sister, a shocking association, because some time ago he had already heard it and had indeed already gained one older sister. Oh well, this was the way it had to be but time passed. Of course, he could not forget, but also never mentioned it, to anybody.

Hanna didn't allow a kiss, only on the cheek, a consolation prize. However it caused him much private satisfaction, when she asked him to stop smoking. Students of high school could already smoke, only not in the school building, and smoking became increasingly popular as one's ennoblement, privilege of adults. Angus had already smoked long ago, if rarely, now he started chain-smoking like a locomotive, rolling fags of tobacco and paper with one hand, like the cowboys of old. He rose to the occasion: took the Bakelite box with raw materials out of his pocket and the cigarette lighter and ostentatiously threw them away. It didn't occur to him the stench of tobacco and yellow fingers could be repulsive, only supposed her to be worrying about his health, or wanting to change him for the better. Both eventualities augured well.

He didn't expect this declaration would cause as many problems as it in fact did. In the following weeks, the lack of the cigarette teased him ungraciously. There were many moments when the lack was hard to endure. Mostly in the morning, after waking. But oh well, the word was said...

Frankly, he satisfied with what he had achieved, exactly what he planned in fact, the status of a knight with his lady. He had the right to adore her, to keep company and return small services. Speaking more modern language, accepted as permanent errand boy. He didn't think about a sexual intercourse, she was not that kind of girlfriend, what's more from the beginning he had decided to treat her with full reverence

and even didn't afford concrete wishes. Only what he might willingly be given, perhaps a real kiss, but after all if they decided on the great love, it means both ways, he would either gain reciprocity, or altruism if not. This included waiting.

At first for Angus it was an artificial love, but gradually he started to feel true emotions, the prospect of meeting gave the typical reactions, the heartbeat, the flow of adrenaline and so on. To see and converse with her, he was ready to rush to the other end of the town, or wait long hours. Practically, nothing more happened, but sometimes they held each other's hand, and sometimes he could kiss her on the cheek, but before his yellowed fingers and mouth got clear, their time together ended. However, something more worried him: he never experienced that flow of some secret electricity or vibrations, feeling close contact, the unity and uniting. He remembered that earlier the touch of the beloved woman had literally acted like touching live electric wires. Now, he sensed the nice, smooth skin and it was all.

For the organization they accepted the next four and then the next, for once from other classes, at the moment they didn't intend to develop more. Time to stay waiting for till the hour should arrive, in well-kept secret form, staff cadres. However, the self-help education clubs developed quickly, with a strongly patriotic accent. They were supposed to promote future recruitment, when the right moment for the advance to a mass movement should come. A fitting moment never came, but in turn the organization never collapsed and its members missed the prisons.

Self-help circles included both first Liceum classes and in Gimnazium (secondary school) most of fourth classes, however somehow didn't enter the II Liceum class. Perhaps the pupils no longer considered themselves to be pupils, they prepared for serious academic study. They were about to leave and thought for the future. As for the elementary schools, they were at the moment terra incognita and more education was necessary first.

Matter of fact, in April an impasse started in developing of the underground. The organizational staff existed, however for beginning the active fight it was still too early, so they needed to decide, what next. The mass movement could start only when the management could reasonably expect a concrete action. On the other hand, inactivity always corrupted every underground organization, like a standing army (as happened indeed with the French army standing, doing nothing, in 1939/40).

In this circumstances, Bogdan Sójka found a solution, applying himself and some other members to restoring the Scout movement. This widening the self-help education circles to younger generations and the elementary schools, so far not included. But soon it turned out the extent and the scope for were much broader. They had happened on a void which was ripe for filling, restoring the Scouts gained unpredictable size, it became a mass movement on its own. Unfortunately, from the initial four Bobek was the only one fit for the task and indeed, had awesome achievements. Neither Angus nor Gienek were Boy-scouts before the war, they didn't have neither experience nor the training. They could not be useful and would have had to start from scratch, Hanna too. They could only with jealousy watch, how the group with Bobek at the head, in a short time formed the Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski Scout Troop Group anew with enthusiasts, literally hundreds of new members. In fact, they wouldn't have been able to achieve so much, had not there been so much ready energy among the young people. The details mentioned earlier about the mobilization and Angus' effort were in comparison a small beer, chicken-feed. Bogdan and the older boy scouts from the organization worked miracles. It is necessary to remember that old, experienced activists and old Scout staff were missing. Even the ones who survived the war (for example a few from the mentioned Diversion Squad, most of these were scouts, the older staff), could not now act, because they had taken part in the resistance movement. They automatically became high suspect to the regime. They didn't come back so as not to harm the Scouting idea.

Perhaps, there was some principle: when an organization can't develop, it reproduces by budding and if the new offspring comes across a fitting base, it outgrows its parent. Similarly as in Greaterpoland, at the beginning of the century, from the Falcons, through the Spark, the Link, the Dawn and different annexes for young people, born the massive Scout movement. The evolution and further development of the ideas.

Then, two shocking events happened. The appeal to soldiers of the Home Army, calling them to come out from underground, to disclose and lay down their arms, and promising amnesty in exchange. They were supposed to report to the closest MO individual or UB, but it was obvious the UB, the security office, was most suitable. Amnesty applies to criminals, how could it relate to those, who devoted life and property to their country? This appeal would have been ignored if it had not been signed by Radosław. The legendary commander of the capital district of AK and the Warsaw Uprising in fact could never turn a traitor. At the beginning people suspected the signature Radosław on these posters

was a fraud, however there came information proving that this was not provocation but truth. For many a shock and tragedy, not as bad as the surrender of France in 1940, but equally incomprehensible. Hard to believe such a great authority took this responsibility on itself.

Now it became known that it was a shared decision of the entire command, if signed by one, for salvage of their soldiers' lives. A course of action which probably they would not have taken themselves but rather died, in any event such would be true for many of them, if about only themselves. The Home Army tried to survive, but it intended to reduce to a close staff and return to work in quiet conspiracy. No chance to keep underground half a million people. Release of the ordinary members and ranks would give them a chance of survival. Some of the more famous commanders, Radosław and others, anyway could not continue their role, carry on, since they became exposed. Therefore the members of the current Headquarters took on themselves the odium, changed their task, if even so, unable prevent all the tragedies. Already there leaked through news from the Kielce prison (not the only one, but special ill-glorious), filled with AK soldiers. Disclosure, disgraceful amnesty did not guarantee the survival and stop the UB, but at least created some legal defense posture for the victims, tracked down bitterly, but fortunately at first ineptly.

Anyway, it was difficult to explain it all to the young people, whom only the enormous moral authority of Radosław held back from loud accusations – and who only later would come to realise the vast disaster and emergency.

Here the second matter came, which in combination with the first, made a terrible impression. New posters appeared beside the first set, in the dirtiest words libeling the Home Army, abusing and maliciously insulting her soldiers.

The posters started with the well-known: "AK, spiteful dwarf of reactionary..." but were full of similar epithets and accusations. Too ugly to mention. A campaign of polluting the noble tradition of freedom-fighting and patriotic ideals, dishonoring people who tried to fulfill their civil and soldierly duty. Even Germans didn't use such a dirty dictionary, limiting themselves to calling soldiers and Polish guerrillas bandits. If these dirty posters had hung alone, they would have been treated as the German posters had been in their day, with contempt. But when they hung next to Radosław's appeals, the impression was shocking, appeared as if he were siding with them. The posters never hung long beyond dusk. Then were torn down, along Radosław appeals, difficult to

distinguish after dark. But morning after morning, more posters appeared, the walls soon covered as if by tapestry.

The inner circle (the four creators) pondered whether to mobilize the secret organization for tearing down posters, copying acts of small sabotage from 1939/40. Angus voted against, arguing the tearing down was already happening spontaneously, without any directing. It was better so, because in acting out of their own convictions, the people were expressing their feelings and he who once declared himself thus, probably would keep on so in the future. Any organized, directed action doesn't provide the same effect, uniting the hearts of the community. More so, if one of their members were to engage and become caught, this might disclose the secret organization. Angus convinced his friends. But next, stupid, reading the posters for the first time in full, he lost control of himself, forgot his own words and rash and hot, not even waiting for cover of darkness, at once tore down all the nearby posters. In fact, the action met with approval and some people joined in. But Angus in the most stupid way drew attention to him. He surely should keep a low profile. He behaved like an idiot or a snot-nosed pup, not a reasonable man (he continued to tear down posters, but after dark and with no witness). Still, his rash act couldn't end well.

Next day the first of May became celebrated with great fanfare. There was nothing new in that, this was the traditional Labor Day before the war. But this time the whole school had to go in mass to the rally and then for hours listen to propaganda speeches on a pitiful level. The next day, the school went to see a Soviet film. However May 3 also formed a holiday, but no celebrations planned. So the Boy-Scouts decided to organize solemn celebrations.

On May 2, the students gathered in the secondary school and then marched to the cinema for the Soviet film. Since the movie theater could never contain them all at once, for the first showing the upper classes went and for the next the younger. The impression from the beginning was a bit strange, for six years he had never gone but once, and this for a specific purpose, by the site of the tragic accident near the "Amor" Sweets Factory. It was like a pilgrimage to the Stations of the Cross in memory of the Diversion Squad.

The film, intended as a special reward for the students of Ostrowiec for their presence at yesterday's rally, was a bald-manner try of recruitment to the other side. Yesterday they had stood at the rally disciplined and motionless, but filled with restraint and dislike, clenching their teeth. On the way, both parties sang only partisan songs, of course repeatedly: "A long way from our family and dearest, we Home Army soldiers from the

Świętokrzyski Mountains." This song, of the "spat all over reactionary dwarfs..." became an anthem. They sang it at every chance, also now.

However Angus was curious, of both the cinema and the Soviet film, so far never having seen one. Especially the so-called "propaganda films" meant for improving production and this was a unique masterpiece of this style, titled "The Swine-maid and the Shepherd." The whole time through he could not believe, the film had already begun and to the end expected, some action may follow. Nothing of this, all the time a happy life of pigs and rams in the Soviet regime, without any metaphor. The animals repay this honor, trying to deliver the maximum quantities of meat and skins for sheepskin coats. People were there too. The good cared about the flock and took effort to provide it to a slaughterhouse in excellent condition, the bad disturbed the slaughter and didn't care about the dead. The swine-maid and the shepherd started with the intense Stachanow competition, intending to increase work productivity in the superior Soviet economic routine. Both got the best results in their category and then decide marry to keep the tradition, like the animals.

From the cinema, the students returned home in small groups. They recalled many good and poor films, but never one so unbelievably primitive. Many still sought some veiled meaning, some allegory or second bottom. These were still not these years, when not only for criticism, but even for lack of understanding of leading Soviet art, one could suffer.

On the way back, Angus saw suddenly a ghost; one for whose soul he prayed. He left his colleagues and came closer, not trusting his eyes. He cried – "Stach!" – Standing there and looking towards the "Amor Sweets Factory", a figure turned. It was Stach Konar indeed.

"Stach, we have been saying a mass for your soul! Everyone knows you are longtime dead! Say, what happened to you?"

Angus had a feeling that he wasn't welcome and Stach would like as soon as possible to get rid of him. He was not so much hurt by this as amazed, because this was his best and old friend.

"Well now you can see, it was a little exaggeration. Don't bawl this way and don't tell anyone, I ask you."

"I... well. OK, but still my word is worth nothing. You have no idea, how big a sensation this will cause. Everyone shall talk about it."

"I am just moving away from Ostrowiec for good. Keep to the wind."

Angus did not yet know that he, also, was on his way. When he reached the end of this street, where almost two years ago, in June 1943 he had said good-bye to Stach Konar and now, an unlikely story, met him

again... Now, approaching the Sójka house, from a distance he saw Bobek waving his hands. Right away behind the gate he got a note.

Mother wrote: "Angus, for mercy of God don't come back. You are wanted, Security keep waiting for you here, they arranged a "boiler" (or "kettle," meaning an isolated trap). When I can, I will send another message, but meantime be on your guard!"

* * *

That morning, just one hour after Angus' departure, someone started violently hammering on the house and closed shop. Mother, after opening the door, thought the three men, one older one with a file and the others younger, were some next control or inspection. To begin with she said bluntly: "The people already have been on control recently and nothing has changed meantime. We have no goods and we don't have enough money to buy any, because the German soldiers in walking away, robbed us of everything. One can still see the traces. Therefore I am not opening the shop and shall not run it anymore, I am simply unable to."

"Yes, but we must see and check it ourselves," answered the older man, "so please, citizen, let us into the house."

Mother moved back and they went inside, looking over the whole interior, the narrow corridor, the addition, where one opened the door to the small larder. They looked also, through the kitchen and the passage-room all the way to the shop. Next the man said:

"No, please don't open either the window shutters or the door, first we will talk. And where is your son?"

"What does it have to do with my son? Anyway, it is I who am the owner and I managed the company, my son isn't of age, he is only 16 and he cannot appear in my, not even in his own name." Mother didn't yet grasp what was happening.

"Your shop doesn't concern us, we did not come for that, but to fetch the citizen's son."

"Why on earth? He is still a child!" This was, a matter of fact, her sincere conviction, regardless of circumstances, also years later, always.

"A petty child and nicely brought up and educated. Now citizen, it is our turn to teach him some more. It may take around three years, maybe five or more, whatever the sentence."

And one of the silent companions burst out laughing, adding, "Or else, perhaps we will send back the dry skin home, because this is happening now, with the ones in Kielce prison, they simply dry up, like desiccated

frogs." Anyway so Mother later repeated this conversation to Angus, word for word.

Unlike Angus, Mother never asked for trouble and frankly gave little credence to the so-called common good and ideals. She didn't exploit her possibilities and experience, trying to leave this topic touched. She cared only about the family, especially her adored son, she worked for them all to survive and Angus accused her of a lack of commitment and the patriotic spirit. She didn't even say she had contributed her share of duty, when he was yet unborn and once in a life is enough. Probably she had some negative experience from this period and she avoided the underground activity, a big loss, because she could have been of much use.

But now, particular when she heard threats towards her only child, it changed matters. Also she was unique in that she didn't enter long discussions and analysis, but responded well to stress and threat. In crisis she kept a remarkably cool head, became most efficient, such was her instinct. Now she also thought, these people don't appreciate her and it is well so, no need to set them straight. She had been in difficult dangers before. First she survived the revolution in Russia and got out of there alive. Then for some time she went on secret travels to Germany, when there lasted internal fighting, both sides were tough with the other. More so with outsiders, at the lightest suspicion put forward, they may push their noses into German matters. Since then she had become older, nevertheless in this war she was able to travel through closed borders on personal business, both ways with ease in a style that would not shame an experienced courier.

"Two of you, stay with the citizen and guard her. When the son comes back, arrest him and then leave her. I will go now to the city, and if I find this birdie, I send you a message."

Mother seemed paralyzed with these words, as if struck by lightning. She begged for sparing Angus' life, assuring them that if he had done anything, clearly he did so without thinking, because he was an unusually good child. Anyway, she talked rubbish, about the "child," repeating the words endlessly. Apart from that, the poor, desperate old lady felt ill and bad. She needed right away, immediately go to the toilet, because shock and stress worked this way on her. Alas, the plan to pass a message to Angus, this time failed. They did let her go, but in the company of guardian angels, well, not quite angels, who escorted her from both sides, and then they stood next to the tiny building letting nobody approach. At the end they checked, whether she had left nothing

additionally. She hoped the neighbors, inhabitants of the property might notice something, but that wasn't tantamount to warning Angus.

So next she got a mad pain in the head, migraine, palpitation of the heart, perhaps so-called vapors and a few more sufferings besides, had to lie down for a moment and rest in solitude. There was no reason to worsen additionally this troublesome state. So one of the guards sat down in the room beside, and the second in the narrow corridor by a side door, while she stayed alone, but closely guarded, from both sides. Then she just wrote on a sheet of paper a note to the neighbor, asking her to tell Angus she was imprisoned in her own kitchen and a so-called "kettle" set up in the flat.

As described, the suite of rooms began at the front with the shop apartment, behind that came the little room where usually Angus lived, next the kitchen in which the mother slept. Entries were two, at the front to the shop, now closed, the shutter bolted and from the side into the kitchen through a little entrance hall to which the small larder adjoined. The cellar trapdoor was in it but this was of no importance.

All ways of escape appeared expertly checked and blocked. But before the family moved in here, all the alongside rooms of the house connected, there was also a door leading from the kitchen to the more distant part of the house where lived the owner. Now this door was closed, curtained and covered with paint, but formerly, all formed one string. Next to Mother's kitchen was the big room of the house-wife and her daughters, then the smaller one of her two sons, behind a second large kitchen combined with living-room and the sun lounge.

However, with the transition door permanently closed and invisible, there remained still some narrow slit under it, by the bottom. Through this slit Angus' mother slipped the sheet of paper, in fact two little sheets, one with text and separately one with a vague address, where hopefully Angus might be found. She added a plea to burn this second page direct after reading. Next she regained life and force, offered the guards to make them some hot tea, as she anyway needed some for herself. So, what with bustling about making a fire in the stove, set against the wall on the side of the houseowner's room and boiling the pot of water, she had the chance to knock on the wall. She noticed with satisfaction, the small, barely visible corner of paper in the slit disappeared, so the plea was noticed and taken.

She could not of course predict, how the neighbor would react, if willing to take the risk. Anyway, the matter would become clear in short-order. If in sequence of fifteen or so minutes nobody knocked at the door, bringing the incriminating paper to the agents, the sensible

assumption would be, the neighbors intended to act well and properly. If all turned for the worse, the agents would laugh in her face and comment, "Ah so, the citizen had no clue, where the son may be, no idea of any address," or take her directly for examination. Also, she could suppose, unless Angus were to appear within the next few hours, probably he got the warning just in time, and the imminent danger would decrease.

With the passage of time, her mood improved, but still she took care to exude deep misfortune. Towards evening, the poor old lady, wronged by fate, already felt secure. She took no notice of the unfriendly supervisor, nor of the fact one guardian, clearly fed up with waiting, took out his gun and set it before him on the table, by the clock. All the day she said never a word more, neither did the agent. But before the night, when the third, probably superior officer, looked in briefly, she complained that her son often returned home ever so late at night. Sometimes not at all, by this war such a good child goes to waste. The men exchanged a few sentences aside and the boss left them again, the two stayed. Well for them this way, only wasting time, because Angus never came back late, so she already felt sure he would not appear.

The trap got removed in early morning, at dawn. Of course, the UB officers – or whatever they may have been, because the people showed no ID, nothing apart from insolent behavior – most certain left some informer nearby. This one had to keep an eye on the house and immediately to tell his principals, if Angus appeared. Also in case the mother went out, she would pull a tail behind her. It may lead to Angus. One should first keep quiet at that place, and next do nothing.

* * *

The next day a second, more detailed message, delivered Adam Szumilas. He left for his work at a technical laboratory of the Iron Works as usual on a bike, but in the city turned and by a roundabout way cycled to Ogródowa Street. He hoped not to be late and if he was, to excuse this with some defect of the bicycle, suitably "corrected" near the gate.

The mother wrote the "boiler" ("kettle", trap) had been taken off, but the house sure surveyed, if Angus was thinking of coming there, why not take the initiative and give himself a firm knock on the head. She was sending him a warm sweater and as much money as she had, about 300 zloty. He should immediately go to Poznań, to the father. She would

never send him alone on so distant a way, but if he stayed here, sooner or later they would catch him. So she would trust that he would get through safely, and recommend him to God. When he may reach his destination, let her know by father's letter, better two, because the mail sometimes comes or not. Of course not to the home address, only to some trusted friends. She would wait alone for the wagon which thanks to Father, the railways supposedly shall assure and would arrive as soon as possible. Let Angus not be upset, she would get by without him even better than with him.

Despite everything, Angus decided to stay for one day more, to go to the celebrations organized by the Boy-Scouts. He realized it was a reckless stupidity and decided to keep away from acquaintances and all the time stay in the crowd, keep his eyes open and himself out of sight. Avoid any vacancy – in short to keep a low profile. So straight away he could not decide on the escape. First, Bogdan Sójka had almost wriggled out of his skin, preparing this ceremony, infecting with this virus all around him. Second, Angus wanted to see his friends and to say good-bye. Honestly, he meant the girlfriend mainly. They met briefly before the ceremony, happily she promised to wait, hoping fate would let them meet again.

Indeed something to see and to hear, the Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski Scout Troops surpassed itself. Hard to believe they managed to organize such a superb program. Also the numbers of spectators, many thousands, simply outshone the official, compulsory celebration of the first of May. After a Field Mass followed the artistic performances, topped by Moniuszko songs by the one later called the Ostrowiec Nightingale, Angus never imagined it was possible to have so clean and strong a voice. Even from faraway, in the open-air it sounded more thrilling than anything he ever heard later, in any opera. A fine girl, besides the Moniuszko, as an encore took some songs from the war, patriotic. As far as Angus could tell, Bogdan this time seriously fell for someone, enraptured as never until now.

After the end of the celebration, most people stayed, when an appeal of the Scouts took place. Strange, but he thought it resembled identically the last such appeal before the dissolution the guerrilla unit, in the Ilza forest. Of course, of boy scout figures there were more, if smaller. Bogdan Sójka, in the company of ranks inspected the troops, placed along three sides of the rectangle, one by one the leaders appeared and called patrol leaders to report, everything done with pomp, ceremonially and long as a funeral. Precisely like the funeral of the Home Army which he saw months ago. He felt cold and dark, he

shivered and called himself an old woman. He already had omens, any further in this direction soon might have dreams which come true. Yet from the three hundred scouts here, at least fifty to sixty had ahead of them the punishment camp in Jaworzno. Not right away, they hit there only after a few years, when the communist authority strengthened and clamped down on the Scouting movement. Admittedly a year to two of "socialist reeducation" in the camp was not so bad as in prisons, the fate met by students detected in any underground organization at school. But if not a real hell, anyway some hell.

* * *

Angus didn't want to expose Sójka any longer, staying overnight in his house. Besides this day, it was impossible to talk with Bogdan, the world milled around him, every couple of minutes somebody entered or left, and many others waited with urgent matters. So as soon as it became dark, he moved by a roundabout way along Wspólna Street, through to Sands Street, next the forest, then crossing the way to the Workers' Colony. Next the route he and Father used to follow in 1940. He reached the Jaruga home and told, how it all looked.

Professor put him in the cubbyhole over the attic, in which once he spent longtime hiding with Matthew, now he regarded this an exaggerated care. The Jaruga professor advised Angus' mother after a few days to go to the school. Next, depending on conditions, either make a show, seeking her son, or if there would be peace, tell of his departure and ask for the certificate from the class, needed for moving to another school. Tomorrow Matthew should supposedly tell her, whether at school somebody searched for Angus. The professor promised to deal an antedated certificate, however he thought it necessary for Mother to make a personal appearance at school and best ask at once for a copy just in case and take it.

Angus at first intended to go the next day on foot all the way to Starachowice and there to seek the possibility of further travel. But here he learned that supposedly people were jumping the trains, military transports, on the Romanów bridge. The railway bridge, blown up by the Germans, was provisionally repaired and patched up, trains passed through slowly and cautiously. Of course, no one allowed to enter on the bridge, guards with weapons stood ready to shoot, but it was possible to jump a train either before the bridge, or after it. On a bright day, the rail and bridge were visible as far, as from the edge of the forest by the

roadway. Much better start there, than wait around the station, where a control could happen.

Early on the morning May 4, well-fed and supplied by Mrs. Jaruga with a small but rather heavy bag with food for the journey, Angus moved to Romanów. Firmly he disagreed with Matthew wanting go with him, no sense him sharing the risk. On the spot behind the bridge a few people already squirmed, Angus stopped a certain distance from them and this manner waited around two hours. The train finally passed the route through and started speeding up. Angus watched how the others jumped onto the train, needing to first note techniques. It turned out that he had stood a bit too far-off, the train managed already to increase speed. Angus jumped and not having experience didn't find the right place. He fell on the ground, but fortunately not under the wheels, but rolled away on the embankment. When he pulled himself together, the end of the train had already passed him, so he ran sharply and he threw himself on the last stair of the end car. This time he caught hold, and after a moment a few hands pulled him up. He was on a long, flat platform, the middle filled by something covered with tarpaulins and wrapped in ropes, people sat on both sides. One of them told him, that when a Russian soldier comes, he should pay twenty zloty, not less and not more. It didn't guarantee the travel, on the way a control could come up, in such an accident passengers must drop off. If so, they had to seek a next chance, but in general it was possible to go until the end of the route. How long actually? Nobody knew, but surely as far as Skarżysko-Kamienna, next the matter would become clear.

The ride resembled to Angus the evacuation train from 1939. And when he paid the soldier, something got in his head and he asked, whether he might seat himself in front, before the locomotive. The soldier shrugged his shoulders and said "możno" (you may). So when the train stopped at the signal, Angus ran ahead and sat on a projecting, a passage on a small bench in front of the pot of the steam engine. When the train moved, it turned out that it wasn't too clever an idea, the wind was fierce, at the front cold, and the back unbearably heated, but the discomforts were worth the view and impressions. Like flying above the track put forward, the eyesight aimed far ahead. He moved away with every moment from Ostrowiec, now he was like an anonymous drop in the flowing river. He was making his way towards a new future and he decided on the way not to seek new trouble. He would surely appear in Poznań, he already had the now-familiar sensation of a stone falling by the shortest route to the target, a feeling which usually didn't disappoint. Returning home. What awaited him there was unknown, whether he

would stay in Poznań as the circle closed, or whether he would have to fly away farther on. People did. Many runaways sought asylum in the wild, far West, the so-called "recovered lands" or "Piast earth." A few weeks ago, the temporary contract professor and former commander of Angus in the guerrilla, Wojszczyk, got the expected appointment in Silesia. For just a few minutes, they had talked: Yes, he had recognized Angus all right on the first day in class. But thought it reasonable to make no visible contact, tried to know no one and nothing. Only now, he had to say good-bye. If Angus ever had have to run away, he could seek him in, rather a funny name, no need to write anything, roughly "Hercules under state management," near Gliwice. He could find there a place to live, if he had to.

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