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A LIFE IN THE ACADEMIA UNUSUALLY SHAPED BY WAR  
AND EXILE. AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I

Having been honored by an invitation to submit this autobiography for publication\*, I had to reflect on the overarching influences which affected my life and professional outcomes. That reflection did not come easily since the product had to be realistic as well as well-balanced. I came to the conclusion that the manner in which my life evolved was affected not only by my profession but was also heavily influenced by my upbringing and events which had a profound impact on me, my family, Poland and the world. In retrospect that fickle entity, *Fortuna* also played an important role in my life: first in surviving in events in Poland during World War II including the Warsaw Uprising in 1944 and later in the decisions I made in the midst of the powerful social and political currents which dominated its aftermath in Europe. Along with many others, War, the Occupation and Polish Resistance during the War; the Uprising of 1944; being a POW of the Nazis; and service in the Polish army in Italy and England were among the most formative influences of my life along with the decision to emigrate to the United States.

I was born in Warsaw on June 27, 1928, in a very patriotic, committed and duty-conscious intelligentsia family. My father, Tadeusz, was an agricultural engineer working in the Bank Rolny. My mother, Irena nee Grabowska, was a highly idealistic intellectual who after being widowed in 1930 decided to get a college education in order to support her family. My father had died when I was two years old and my mother then had the responsibility of raising her two sons on her own. She became a public school teacher, engaged in small business ventures and rented rooms out to support her family during the years of the Depression in Poland and continued this during the German occupation of the country. These activities to make economic ends meet were outside the normal experiences of Intelligentsia women in Poland at the time. However, necessity can define character and despite our relatively poor living conditions during the 1930s and during the Nazi occupation, my mother was

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insistent that my brother and me not drop out of school to work. To accomplish this, she worked two jobs to support the family.

Despite these difficult times, she was able to inculcate in my brother and me a profound regard for a Humanistic world view by exposing us to the Esperanto Movement to which my family was deeply committed. This Movement was based on the idea that an artificial language – Esperanto – imbued with the idea of the essential fraternity of all people, could serve to overcome or at least reduce the tensions and divisions created by various languages and cultures. It is a tragic irony that my family's commitment to this Movement had later to confront an ideology which also sought to overcome differences but through conquest and murder: nazism. Antoni Grabowski, my maternal grandfather, a chemist and linguist by profession, became the first Esperanto poet. In 1888 he had the first recorded discussion in Esperanto with the creator of the language, Ludwik Zamenhof, and became his life-long friend. Later, he translated leading world poetry into Esperanto including the Polish literary epic *Pan Tadeusz*. In 1933 he was commemorated by a plaque on our house which was destroyed by the Germans after they captured Warsaw on September 27, 1939.

The ideals embedded in Esperanto, along with the spirit of service to community and country, are the most important elements of the legacy of my mother. Her commitment to a humanistic approach to life; her respect for learning; and her resiliency of spirit with which she dealt with economic hardship and the barbaric challenge of Nazism were fundamental to my development as a person and how I was to deal with adversity in the future. Sorrowfully, her humanity led to her execution in a Nazi concentration camp for having pleaded for mercy for her mother while earlier she had provided housing for a Jewish student since 1939 until shortly before the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 in which the student died as one of the military commanders of the Uprising after graduating from a clandestine Polish officer training program. For having sheltered the Jewish student, she and the rest of her family would have been subject to immediate execution.

My early education, along with that of my brother who studied engineering, was through the system of clandestine schools established during the Nazi occupation because the occupiers had abolished all middle and higher education for Polish citizens. After the German invasion of Poland, the *Secret State/Resistance Movement* set up by the legitimate Polish government-in-exile in London with a number of ministers still residing underground in Warsaw. This government organized a parallel Polish state system which included clandestine high schools and three universities as well as an underground judicial system and a number of socio-political activities implemented to reinforce Polish identity and foster cohesion as a strategy with which to resist the occupiers. I pursued a curriculum in the Humanities which was aligned with pre-war educational programs. The penalties for participating in this clandestine educational system included imprisonment, outright execution and Auschwitz.

At the *Czacki* high school from which I graduated in June (*Mala Matura*). I was privileged to have been taught there by first rate professors, some of

whom because of their quality, joined the faculties of the Universities of Warsaw, Cracow and Lodz immediately after the war. I was, however, too young to finish the Lycee in order to be ready to enroll in the University before the end of the Occupation. Consequently, my mother's educational plan for me was left unfinished at the end of the war. I would later achieve the future she had envisioned for me and in this way I continually honor her memory and the ideals which she represented.

## II

The second set of circumstances which irrevocably affected my life – was the invasion of Poland in 1939 by Nazi Germany. Although War and the Invasion were not unexpected, the fact of it actually occurring was met with a combination of fatalism drawing upon Polish history and a fierce patriotic desire to defend the country against the invaders. Poland had expected to resist the Nazis with British and French help which was to have come via an attack by British and French forces from France in the west on September 15, 1939. This attack never took place and we had to fight the Germans alone. The *shock and awe* of *blitzkrieg* (*lighting war*) and the carnage and devastation which ensued overwhelmed the Polish ability to resist despite a fierce patriotism and many cases of heroism. And on September 17, 1939, the Soviets entered Poland from the East. The *devils bargain* between Germany and Russia of the secret Ribbentrop – Molotov Pact had sealed the fate of Poland in terms of what was to come.

The occupation of Poland was horrendous: for every German or traitor executed by the Polish Resistance 100 Poles were executed and their names placed on posters throughout Warsaw. People would simply be rounded up at random, e.g. at bus stops, and taken off to be executed. There also was a strict curfew. Violating it often resulted in summary execution. For providing a Jew with a piece of bread, water or any such help people were executed. The occupation of Poland was unique in its brutality. In no other country of occupied Europe was there such a sustained effort by the Nazis to eliminate entire classes of people: the Intelligentsia, secular leaders and members of the clergy were among the highest priority groups targeted for elimination. By way of contrast, in occupied western Europe the strategy of the German occupiers was generally to use the local elites to govern in their name. The contrast between how German forces occupied west European countries and Poland is stark. In the former, population control was the objective. In the latter elimination of significant segments of the population was a key element in occupation policy. The cynical brutality of this policy and the intensity with which it was implemented is reflected in the execution of Janusz Kusocinski, a 1932 Polish Gold Medal Olympian who had become a role model for Polish youth.

Patriotism and resistance was the response of the overwhelming majority of Poles to the German invasion. My mother, though caring deeply about the well being of her son, supported my decision at the age of eleven to volunteer to serve as a Scout in the Fire Alert Units which posted members of the Unit on the roofs of houses during the siege of Warsaw to warn of spreading fires

during the bombing of the city by the Luftwaffe. Later in 1939 came the terror and horror of the German occupation of Poland. This inevitably led me to join the scout resistance movement, Szare Szeregi (The Grey Ranks) of the Armia Krajowa/AK in 1943 at the age of 15. We were trained for *small* sabotage: painting anti-Nazi graffiti; destroying Nazi traffic signs; and spreading tear gas during the Nazi propaganda films; and providing communication services between elements of the Polish Resistance. By 1944, just prior to the Warsaw Uprising, I was put in charge of 100 boys my age as a scout master (Hufcowy). At the end of July 1944, days before the Uprising began, my units were spying on the movements of the German Army withdrawing from the East. Each day we reported to AK Headquarters about the identity, condition and morale of the enemy.

The Warsaw Uprising which began on August 1, 1944 found me at 5:00 pm in the middle of the Poniatowski bridge over the Vistula. Being on the bridge was part of the Scout assignment to track the movements of the German army. My boys were located at bus stops along the some 3–4 miles of Jerusalem Avenue which crossed the city in an east–west direction. I was rotating the boys every hour in order to avoid arousing the suspicion of the Germans. I decided to go West from the bridge and joined the Krybar group of insurgents in Powisle. We were tasked with defending the ruins of the Art Academy against the German tanks on August 2. Only about 15% of us had weapons. The rest had bottles filled with gasoline – called Molotov cocktails – which were thrown at the attacking German tanks. We also collected weapons from the Resistance fighters who had been killed in the fighting and from dead Germans. By an inexplicable twist of Fate, I was one of the very few Polish survivors of this battle that day. After a week on the frontline, I asked to be transferred to the scout units. However, because of the reversals in the battle for *Wola*, the Scout Headquarters sent me to participate in the organization of the Field Post Office Service – an important civic morale–builder. During that time, we also tried to save the Prudential Building, the tallest in Warsaw, which had been shelled by Nazi railroad artillery and heavy mortars and was on fire. We had organized bucket brigades to combat the blaze but it was a futile effort in the end and we helplessly watched as the building burned out and became an immense pile of smoldering rubble.

In mid–August, I volunteered to carry AK H.Q. ciphered–orders across the German front lines to the partisan units in the Kampinos Forest. On one of these missions, I was caught in Wilanow by the Nazis and treated as a liaison/spy. Normally, the Nazis executed Poles caught doing this. But through another ironic twist of fate, I was being held under guard by a German soldier who warned me of my impending death by execution and allowed me to escape. Why? I'm still not sure. Maybe he was anti–Nazi. Maybe he let me go because of my age. Maybe he had seen enough of killing. In retrospect, it led to an epiphany later in my life: it is necessary to recognize that even in the midst of violence and death, individuals can retain that quality that makes them distinctly human: compassion. I crossed the front line several times as a courier, using the sewer system for a distance of 3 to 5 miles to get from location to location in the city because the Resistance Units were scattered in

different enclaves. Returning through the front lines to the AK H.Q., I was assigned to the BRADL company of the Milosz battalion. There I continued to report on the movements of the German forces as well as those of the Soviet and Polish military units which had already crossed the Vistula: too late to have any impact on the outcome of the Uprising. Altogether during the Uprising I had close encounters with death five times and was wounded one, luckily, only slightly.

On October 2, 1944, the Uprising ended tragically with the capitulation of the armed Resistance to the Nazis after 63 days of fighting. The toll in lives and property was horrendous – 18,000 Resistance troops died and approximately 180,000 civilians. The damaged and burned buildings were blown up by the Nazis over a two month period along with all public buildings. The city of Warsaw was destroyed. The fact that during the Uprising the Soviet army was encamped across the Vistula and did nothing to stop or mitigate the death and destruction to which Warsaw was subject was a source of bitterness at the time. Only later was I able to understand these events in a broader context.

### III

On October 5, 1944 I was taken prisoner by the Germans and taken to the Ozarow Cable Factory outside Warsaw. All of us were very emaciated and weak. Along with others, I arrived at Wehrmacht Stalag XB in Sandbostel near Bremen on October 11, 1944. Again, I had been fortunate: had I become a prisoner of the Nazi SS it is likely that I would not have survived the war since their usual practice was to execute prisoners immediately. Another important factor was the British/American Decree at the end of August, 1944, which declared that the Polish Resistance fighters of the Uprising were considered by the Allied Powers as soldiers of the Republic of Poland. Mistreatment of these Resistance Fighters would result in measures taken against German POWs being held by British and American forces. Whether or not the Allied Powers would have actually retaliated in some fashion against German POWs is problematic. What can be said with a fair degree of certainty is that without this Decree, Nazi retaliation, to include summary executions, against the Polish fighters the Warsaw Uprising would have been much more probable.

Conditions in the Wehrmacht camp were bad. Rations were meager – bread and cabbage – and totally inadequate for the work off draining marshes which the Germans had the POWs doing. There were POWs in the camp from different Allied countries with Soviet POWs constituting the vast majority. Many years later I visited the camp and walked through the cemetery among the 30,000 graves, mostly Russian but including thousands of French and Polish ones too.

I was able to endure – my youth had a probable role in my survival despite the meager rations of bread and cabbage in the camp. I remained a POW until April 29, 1945 when the camp was liberated by Canadian forces. I had wanted to contact the International Scouting Headquarters in Amsterdam after liberation. But again, Fortuna, entered my life. By chance, I encountered elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> Polish Armored Division who were then occupying

Wilhelmshafen, a German naval headquarters. An attempt was made to enlist me into their ranks but instead I asked them to facilitate a trip to England where I wanted to finish a Polish Lycee.

However, I could not at that time reach England since the Allied powers who had defeated the Nazis had on July 5, 1945 recognized the new Communist-dominated Polish Government instead of the legitimate Polish government-in-exile in London that had coordinated the Polish war effort during WWII. Not wanting to return to a Poland under Communist control, members of the Polish government-in-exile, former Resistance fighters and members off the Polish forces opposed to Hitler as well as other Poles in Europe became, in effect, refugees. Nevertheless, we retained a strong sense of Polish identity even as we fell into the de facto status of being *stateless persons*.

Unable to continue schooling, I joined the Polish forces in France. Soon, however, in early July of 1945, the Communist-led Polish Government in Warsaw demanded that the French hand over those of us who were veterans of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising – as war criminals. I was at that time in a Polish military camp at Sorgues near Avignon in South France. To prevent this from happening, those of us who were thus endangered were clandestinely whisked out of the camp in groups of ten per day, by Polish Counter-intelligence in cooperation with British Intelligence and taken across the border into Italy.

There I was assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> Podolski Lancer Regiment of Monte Cassino fame. After a few months of service, I asked and was permitted to enter one of the Lycees run by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Polish Corps and later finished its' course of study. It was to the great credit of its commander, General W. Anders, and generally unknown, that he authorized the opening in Italy of a dozen high schools and allowed some 5,000 soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to continue their studies at Italian universities. This activity of the Polish Army in exile is probably unique in the annals of military history and deserves a brief explanation. Even before the end of WWII, the tensions between the Allied Powers in the West and the Soviet Union had become evident. These tensions were exacerbated by Soviet activities in Eastern Europe and the Allied concern that given conditions in post war western Europe, the specter of Communist electoral victories in those countries was very real. Consequently, many gave credence to the possibility of World War III breaking out between the Western Powers led by the United States and the Soviet Union and her satellite states. In light of this possibility, the Polish Army in-exile realized the need to provide educational opportunities to Polish soldiers who would become the officers and noncommissioned officers in any potential conflict with the Soviets since the Polish officer corps had been decimated by the Katyn Forest Massacre in April-May, 1940.

While in the Polish army in Italy, I began to learn English (I studied other languages while in high school in Warsaw). This endeavor was greatly handicapped, however, by the fact that there was a severe shortage in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Polish Corps of English language teachers and textbooks. As an example, we were taught by a non-professional teacher, a Polish-American from Chicago,

and studied the English language from Italian textbooks not fully knowing Italian. The results were thus far from perfect!

#### IV

After a year of the service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps (and studying in the meantime) we were transferred to England to be demobilized and integrated into civilian life and jobs. The venue for the demobilization was the Polish Resettlement Corps which we had to join in England. Britain had been under pressure from the Soviet Union to demobilize the free Polish armed forces in exile and it is ironic that as members of the Polish military, we were required to join the British army in order to be demobilized as Poles. The arrival in England also enabled me to systematically study the English language – reading daily newspapers and listening to the BBC radio constantly. I graduated with the *matura* from the Polish Lycee at Cawthorne, Yorks (Kursy Maturalne #2) in March, 1947. This Lycees was *shielded* as Pre-OCTU course #2 [OCTU: Officer Cadet Training Unit] to camouflage its civilian education character and was a continuation of the schooling which had begun in Italy in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Polish Corps under the command of General Anders. The purpose of these Polish Lycees was twofold: first, to rebuild the Polish officer corps which had been devastated by the Nazis during the war in anticipation of *World War III* against the Soviets which we hoped would result in the liberation of Poland from communist rule. And second, to rebuild the Polish intelligentsia cadres which had also been decimated by as a result of the war.

After graduation as a member of the Polish Resettlement Corps, I was supposed to find a civilian job for which I was ill-prepared having only Polish academic high school. The jobs offered under the Resettlement Plan were almost exclusively in mining and steel mills in the area. I wanted to live in the city to be able to pursue my education and avail myself of cultural opportunities in order to reintegrate myself into a normal lifestyle similar to that I was accustomed to back home in Warsaw.

Hence, I took a short leave from the army unit and went to London to find myself a job, any job. Initially, I started working as a dishwasher in a pub; then as a pastry chef and finally as a London Transport Executive employee—a subway/underground rail worker. While working in a variety of menial jobs which were typically available for the foreign immigrants, I tried to fulfill faithfully my mother's goal-setting regarding my career pattern.

Hence, I enrolled in evening courses in one of the City of London Colleges to try my hand at higher education in the English language – to test my potential survival chances. But I soon realized that college work at that time was for the rich: evening studies could not give you any good chances for graduating in anything approximating a reasonable period of time. And for the first time since the war I took full advantage of the London cultural scene within my financial means: opera, theatre and concerts as well as a variety of lectures provided by cultural and social organizations. This complete immersion allowed a relatively rapid adaptation to Anglo Saxon society.

England is where I began to understand and develop a better understanding of how Democracies function and the social and institutional roots of

democratic governance. I was also able to see how humanistic concepts such as tolerance and a sense of community can thrive in the midst of diversity. This does not mean that there were not difficult challenges in postwar Britain – there were. However, witnessing how these challenges were confronted through democratic processes is one of the most memorable impacts of my British Interlude.

Looking back at this period in my life I realize that I had ended up in a very peculiar situation which was characteristic of many refugee exiles in the immediate postwar period: being very young and without any family or role-model support with which to deal with basic life decisions. A large number of younger Polish ex-servicemen without families found themselves in the same situation: being completely isolated and lonely. Everybody was on his own and had to succeed or fail individually. Although seldom described nowadays that situation ruined many lives. The lack of social support mechanisms for the younger members of Polish community in exile was one of the basic failures of the Polish *emigre* authorities. In retrospect, I think that I was able to avoid the tragic outcomes of some of my Polish compatriots in exile because of the resolute and steadfast example of my mother. Her humanity and ability to persevere through the most difficult of situations has always been a beacon for me in the midst of uncertainty. Largely because of this family background, I managed somehow to adapt and choose a *right* course although it often was *pick and choose* with no guarantees of the outcome.

Who was I at this point in my life? The consequences of the war and exile had been profound. Now I was in England ... but with what identity as a person and what legal nationality could I claim? Poland was under the control of the Soviets so there was no going home for me. I had no passport and, along with others, could be described as a *stateless person*. Again looking back on the trajectory of my life, it has been the influence of my family and a strong cultural identity as a Pole which, despite the role of *Fortuna* have given my life purpose and direction.

It is no surprise then that the wartime heritage of intensive political, military and social activism in the resistance movement mandated for me other goals as well after the war – those of deep involvement in Polish cultural, political and social life which I had craved but was deprived of by the end of the war and its aftermath in Poland. I also started utilizing all the opportunities of the well-developed Polish cultural activities in London because of a correct decision to take any job, but in London. I started attending Polish lectures, movies, concerts and joined several Polish organizations driven largely by the commitment that such activities will enable me later to contribute to the future re-building of Poland after hoped-for collapse of communism. That was not to be but gave me almost normal pre-war exposure to Polish arts, culture and politics.

I was able finally get a British Treasury scholarship for day-time college studies. Unfortunately, the British – mindful of the thousands of their own returning veterans – allowed the several thousand Polish ex-servicemen in the country to enter the college – but only in *practical* job oriented programs unless you were in the final years of university studies. If you fell into this

latter category you were funded to finish regardless of the *practicality* of these programs. Under these conditions the choice of a university program of study in England had to be in-line with my desire to remain in London where I could continue participating in its energetic Polish community as well as take advantage of the rich cultural life which existed in the English capital. As a result I chose to continue my university studies in Business. As events later unfolded, this decision enabled me to get a good job start when I emigrated to the United States.

At the time I was undertaking Business studies in London. I felt a great urge to enroll in the evening Polish college program in London. The opportunity was offered by the Polish School of Political and Social Sciences. It was staffed by Polish university professors, former high ranking Polish experts and government officials as well as faculty members of the pre-1939 Polish East European Research institutes. During my studies there I was active as a student-leader and had the opportunity to work in concert with some very well-known professors and military experts such as Professors Sulimirski, Wielhorski, Swianiewicz, Sukiennicki, Paszkiewicz and Wraga as well as Generals Kukiel and Kasprzycki. The Polish School also allowed me to get to know almost all the leading Polish pre-1939 politicians.

During my *English Interlude* my awareness and understanding of Polish society and government in the pre-war period expanded dramatically and contributed to my emerging political perspective which was based on expounding democratic and federalist ideas for the future reorganization of East Central Europe and in opposition to pre-war authoritarian tendencies in Poland. For these reasons I became a young member of the N.I.D. (*Ruch Wolnoscowy "Niepodleglosc i Demokracja"*). At the same time, apart from being active in the Polish Scouting Movement Abroad, I was also active in the Polish Federalist Association and the Polish Ex-Servicemen Association (SPK).

The years 1946-1951 provided me with invaluable experiences which was to facilitate my acculturation into English-language society. However I perceived that there were finite limits to what I might possibly achieve if I remained in Great Britain. The immediate post-war years were difficult in England: exhausted and impoverished by the war – recall that food and other scarce products were rationed until early 1952 – there were limited opportunities for immigrants. England did give us exiles a relatively good life and jobs after the war. However, apart from what I perceived as limited professional opportunities I also felt that there was only a slight chance of real integration into overall British society.

## V

My mother's ambition for me to become a Professor or a diplomat was as yet unfulfilled. And I was determined to make her dream for me a reality. But where to go? And on what basis was a decision to be made? The practice of English democracy had made a profound impact on me and I immediately thought of emigrating to one of the former British colonies: Australia, New Zealand or the United States. *Fortuna*, by presenting me with possible opportunities determined the decisions I would make in the following way.

Initially in 1948 some of the far-sightedly determined and realistic members of the Polish Ex-Servicemen Association (SPK), led by Mr. B. Laszewski, organized an ambitious program to allow young Polish veterans to study in the United States through University scholarships offered by a number of U.S. schools. This seemingly logical proposal offered potential professional upward-mobility for hundreds of young men. Unfortunately it met with a negative response from the London-centered Polish authorities, including the highest Polish military commanders. They were expecting relatively soon a conflict with the USSR and hoped to retain the bulk of the Polish ex-servicemen in Europe to recreate the new Polish Army with which to fight the Soviets. However, through the determination of Mr. Laszewski and his colleagues, several hundred Poles were able to receive scholarships and left for the United States and a potentially much brighter professional future. This same Mr. B. Laszewski was later in the United States and was one of the founders of the *Nowy Dziennik* of New York – the best Polish newspaper published abroad. He also initiated a series of cultural initiatives on the U.S. East Coast.

Thus opportunity beckoned. In 1948, I applied and was admitted to the University of Iowa. But now *Fortuna*, which had until then looked favorably at my efforts until then, became mischievous. I was refused an American visa on the rather flimsy grounds that I had [...] *no compelling reason to return to England after graduation*. Thus for the next four years I was to remain in England.

This period had a major impact on the formation of my future world view. Studying the successful workings of British style parliamentary democracy; observing social class structure; and immersing myself in the cultural life of London to the extent possible given limited means. At the same time I was active in the Polish community in Great Britain which was quite significant at the time with a population of approximately 150,000. This is not to say that there were no differences within the Polish community in England. One of the more notable of these internal differences was in fact generational. Older Poles who had been in Britain for a number of years did not feel accepted by the larger British society and there was a lingering resentment concerning how Poland had been treated by the Allies during and after the war. My perspective was somewhat different. I was young, impressionable and, due to the influence of my family background, open – minded. In this I was most fortunate: some of our compatriots were so deeply scarred from the experience of war, exile and resettlement that their worldviews were overly tinged by bitterness and cynicism.

During this *British Interlude* I also attended Polish university – level classes in the evening. The professors were largely drawn from the pre-1939 Polish academic community and as a consequence, I was able to meet and know many of the senior Polish leaders, generals and intellectuals from the pre-war period. As a result of these contacts, I acquired a deeper understanding of Polish governance and society before the war as well as encouragement for my commitment to continuing my education with the purpose of becoming a member of the intelligentsia.

Throughout my sojourn in Britain and, in fact, ever since having to forcibly leave Poland as a German POW, I have retained a strong sense of Polish identity. Circumstances had put me in a position in which a decision, consciously or unconsciously, had to be made while I was in Britain: being young would I focus on assimilating into whatever national culture I decided to establish roots in? Or would I continue to view myself as Polish even though this identity would be hyphenated depending on where I would eventually sink new roots? As a practical matter could I reconcile the necessity of pursuing a future outside of Poland with my sense of Polish identity?

In a word, the answer to this last question has been *yes*. Having the good fortune to reside in societies such as Britain and the United States has permitted me to evolve an identity which has its roots in a Polish upbringing whose impact was intensified by World War II and its consequences followed by immersion in the liberal democratic traditions of Europe and North America. This identity has been reinforced by my chosen profession as a political scientist.

The next opportunity to finally pursue a full-time program at a university came in 1952. It came about due to the intensive lobbying activity conducted by the Polish American Congress (led by K. Rozmarek), an umbrella organization serving as the political lobby for thousands of Polish American social, charitable, fraternal and political groups since 1944 with some 8 million members. The Congress had been successful in amending the Displaced Persons Act (1948) to permit Polish veterans fighting under the British during WWII to obtain permanent immigration status in the United States. A total of 18,000 former Polish servicemen were allowed to immigrate under this amendment to the U.S.

I was one of the 18,000. But where to go? Again, *Fortuna*, made its' presence felt. In retrospect it is interesting how major life decisions are sometimes made on the basis of chance contacts. In a conversation with the Economic Attache of the U.S. embassy in London prior to my departure he had said, *there are 10,000 factories and 10,000 warehouses in Chicago so if you lose a job there, you soon find another.*

When I informed my British and Polish friends that I would be going to the U.S. they were totally shocked – in a negative way. American society was perceived to be brutal and coarse without the social and cultural refinements thought to be a proper by the European intelligentsia. The perception they had of America, a somewhat distorted one, was that a brash, individualistic society as represented by the U.S. did not embody the most beneficial relationship between the individual and public life. They tried to dissuade me from going to America, pointing out that I had no family, friends, contacts or money and would be taking, in their words, *enormous risks without any job assurances*. At the same time they were concerned by the distance – 5,000 kilometers. For Europeans who are accustomed to relatively short distances between cities and countries in general, the idea of being so far away from what is familiar and comfortable was somewhat daunting.

My friends also pointed out that at time, the United States was the only country in the world which drafted foreigners/immigrants without U.S.

citizenship into the Army. And at the time I was planning on going to the U.S., the Korean War was in its second year [it had started in June, 1950]. Would I be drafted and sent to Korea? I was not afraid to fight the Chinese Communists but was really frightened that I might be captured by them as a POW. Nor was it possible to know if I would get a deferral as a WWII veteran after I arrived in the U.S. I decided to take the risk ...

## VI

After securing a pro forma sponsor, I arrived in the United States in January, 1952, as a permanent immigrant and headed for Chicago. At the time my total savings amounted to only \$51. But the door was finally open and the opportunity for upward mobility beckoned. I had three priorities at the time: find a job, continue my university – level education and obtain a military service deferral.

I was able to find a job in Chicago on the fourth day after there as a junior accountant in a tool-making company. I had to pay an agency fee (finder's fee) for that job which was deducted from the pay packet. But I did not have any reason to be dissatisfied – I was working in what I considered to be record time. The decision in England to get a business education certificate at a London college had paid off. A series of jobs followed from accounting, sales, as a stevedore loading ships, cold storage attendant, etc. I managed to accumulate saving of some \$700.00 which at that time allowed me to finance my ultimate goal: a University Education.

Another priority, getting the military deferment, had to be dealt with as well. As Americans say: *I grabbed the bull by the horns*, and contacted the Selective Service Board in Chicago to convince them I was eligible for a deferment and should get one based on my Polish/British military record. I prepared an extensive presentation which I rehearsed, with anticipated questions and answers and translated all my documents into English (from Polish and German) and submitted them to the Board with an assertion that my call-up was a mistake. It worked. I was classified VA (a veteran). That victory took off a burden from my shoulders and I could plan my professional and academic future, but all such successes have a negative counterpart. I found out much later when I enrolled at the University of Chicago that hence, I had to decide on the alternative and try to convince the Selective Service Board in Chicago that I should be classified as a veteran. Subsequently, go that I was ineligible, because of my VA status to get a GI Bill of Rights, which under U.S. Congress Act would have given me free university education for as many years as my army service! Hence, I had to finance the studies out of my own pocket. But if not classified as a veteran, I might have died on the front in Korea, if drafted. That's Life!

The third priority was to further my professional education. I was fascinated by the University of Chicago which at that time had one of the leading American programs in Political Science. It also offered a rather unusual opportunity for WWII veterans: direct admission to the MBA program in Business Administration, provided the applicant pass a series of

entrance exams in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences. I managed to pass the first two at a very high level but fell short on the third because of my background. The University suggested that I do some remedial study at another college so I enrolled at Northwestern University at my own cost and, after getting top grades, reapplied and was admitted into the University of Chicago School of Business Administration MBA program with a scholarship and with access to a University Loan offer. The latter enabled me to obtain a \$15,000 loan to help finance my graduate education. I finally paid off that loan with interest in 1972 when I was already a full professor at the University of Texas at El Paso.

The business education and experience I had allowed me after some effort to be admitted at the graduate level to the University of Chicago. I was in one of the finest universities (actually, the finest!) in the United States and among the top schools in the world. However my professional interest was not in pursuing a terminal degree in Business. My upbringing in Poland and the intensity of the experience of war and its aftermath as a Pole in political exile had a profound effect on my outlook on life. It was no longer enough to simply be successful in economic terms although this is always a factor in choosing a profession. Whichever profession I entered must allow me to incorporate my identity so as to embody my cultural heritage as a Pole as a reflection of the humanistic values which molded my youth and were challenged by the personal and national agony of World War II and the self-imposed exile which followed.

## VII

In 1955, after two years as a graduate student at the University of Chicago, I entered the Graduate Program in International Relations which the University had pioneered in the United States and received the Ph.D. in 1967. Initially, war and exile had delayed achieving my educational and professional goals much earlier in life. Later, in America, my involvement in the Chicago Polish American community enriched both my private and academic life and facilitated my integration into the larger American society without compromising the personal heritage which had sustained me through very difficult times. Not surprisingly, this also had an impact upon me as to when I would ultimately receive the Doctorate from Chicago.

The intellectual standards and expectations at the University of Chicago were, and remain, extremely rigorous – especially at the advanced post graduate level. Students who expected to graduate had to meet them. In my experience at Chicago, advanced degrees were not conferred on the basis of social class or how much was contributed by a student's family to the University endowment fund – awarding degrees was based solely on intellectual excellence. Graduate seminars were typically small and conducted in what in Europe would be considered a very informal manner: students sit around a small table with the professor who would make remarks on the assigned readings and invite questions. Students can *challenge* the professor but woe be upon the student whose challenge is not well grounded both theoretically and empirically. Critical analysis and independent thinking were

not just expected, they were demanded. We were also expected to attend classes and seminars in related disciplines to expand our general knowledge and increase our abilities in seminar discourses.

I was extremely fortunate in the quality of my professors at the University of Chicago. Intellectuals such as Morgentau, Easton, Wright, Von Hayek, Hoselitz, Harris, Waples, Schultz, Kaplan, Friedman as well as others equally distinguished, greatly influenced my intellectual development. Three of these were, or would become, Nobel Laureates.

The University had rather quickly involved me in research. I was hired, as a Ph.D. student, to write political and historical chapters on Poland for the *The Slavic Area Project* at the University of Chicago. The Project was an outgrowth of the Human Relations Area Files (H.R.A.F) based at Yale University with research and analysis contracted out to leading universities by the Department of the Navy and the Department of the Army. We were tasked with preparing within one year an up-to-date, in-depth book length analyses of each East European country. The University of Chicago picked up: Poland, Czechoslovakia, all three Baltic Republics, Belarus and Ukraine. The Division of Social Sciences had recruited experts on each country (native and American born). In 1954–55 the *Slavic Area Project* was established in the basement of the Social Science building with a team of at least two dozen scholars. The project was directed by the American economist, Professor Bert Hoselitz, and the Polish sub-team was headed by a University of Warsaw and Columbia University sociologist, Dr. Alicja Iwanska, who had an established reputation as a scholar. Her contributory chapters on Polish society were among in the best in the series. Although initially we were not quite sure about the contributions of the American-born scholars, we were quickly dissuaded. They were fast learners, good researchers and also and foremost kept our *national* biases in check. The whole series of books bringing the latest information on the region were published by University of Chicago in 1955 and some were later again republished by H.R.A.F. at Yale University. Later, as a consequence in part of this experience, I was permitted to teach as a Ph.D. student in a University of Chicago graduate seminar on East European Society.

Working in the University of Chicago's President's Office as a post-graduate student, I had the opportunity to be with a number of foreign leaders and dignitaries from different parts of the world to include Indira Ghandi as well as representatives from Russia and the Soviet bloc of states in eastern Europe. I was selected as their escort while at the University and in Chicago because of my Polish/European background and by then, familiarity with American society. It was thought, appropriately I believe, that a person with my non-American heritage and exposure to American society would be more effective in conveying information to *foreigners* about the U.S.

In the early 1960's, my Ph.D. dissertation research topic and writing was approved. I was fascinated with the post-Potsdam 1945 westward shift of the Polish national borders. I managed to convince my Ph.D. committee in International Relations, headed by Professors B. Hoselitz, M. Kaplan, and S. Wellisz, that there was a great need for independent research on the consequences of the Polish shift of national boundaries westward to the Oder–

Neisse Rivers. That topic was approved subject to field research in Poland which was funded by the Kosciuszko Foundation. At that time, 1959–60, very few Polish dissertation topics were approved at American universities. A significant factor in getting the Committee's support for my dissertation topic was having published academically on the Communist takeover in Poland as well as selected themes in Polish government and history in the University of Chicago publication, H.R.A.F., edited by A. Iwanska, Ph.D. [later, this pre-Ph.D. publishing was to be useful in getting a full-time University teaching position]. My research was subsequently published by Praeger Press in 1972 as *The Oder-Neisse Boundary and Poland's Modernization: the Socioeconomic and Political Impact*.

It was at that time the first Western publication on the topic by a major U.S. publishing house providing independent western perspectives from Polish-originated sources. It was critical of the Communist regime in Poland and the consequences for Polish society and democracy of communist rule. An unforeseen result of the publication of the dissertation was the denial for me of a Polish entry visa because a Polish Communist Party Central Committee member, A. Werblan, who had written an anti-semitic article had been referenced in one of the footnotes by the author in the published version of the dissertation.

## VIII

In retrospect, the *Chicago Period* was in marked contrast to my past for more than the obvious reasons concerning WWII and having been a Displaced Person (DP). During the war I had been defending my country in terms of the values instilled in me by my family background and as a DP after the war I labored to redefine my identity as a Pole and humanist in terms of the present. In other words, I was reacting to situations imposed by outside influences and events. After I arrived in the U.S. I consciously found myself in a position in which actions that I took – that I initiated – could perhaps influence outside circumstances. This was exhilarating and gave me a sense of direction and purpose. It also explains to a large extent my active role in the Polish American community and the interest in as well as involvement with Polish affairs I have maintained throughout the years since.

The Polish American community in Chicago had approximately 800,000 members – which had the incongruous result of making it the second largest *Polish* city in the world. Some 600,000 members of the Polonia of America spoke Polish going back four generations and ninety percent of this American Polonia were U.S. citizens. The majority of the Polish community in America firmly believed in, and were willing to act on behalf of, Poland's liberation from Communism. The political strength of this Polish American presence in the U.S. was witnessed by the fact that 4 out of the 12 members of the Illinois state Congressional delegation to Washington came from the Polish American community.

The arriving Polish veterans from England, educated in Europe and largely from the middle class, were a welcome and invigorating addition to the Polish community in the U.S. in general. And these veterans were important to

the political and social activities of the Polish American Congress (PAC) which had its' headquarters in Chicago. Not surprisingly, the Illinois Division of PAC was the strongest and most influential of the PAC Divisions. I had the opportunity to meet the President of the Polish American Congress, Mr. Charles Rozmarek, during my first few weeks in Chicago. Through Mr. Rozmarek, who was a practicing American attorney, I was offered a voluntary position as the Secretary of the Political Committee of the Illinois Division of the Congress. It was an important and influential position: the Committee was largely responsible for preparing speeches in Polish given by the President of the Congress as well as for Polish American members of the U.S. Congress which were broadcast by Radio Free Europe and The Voice of America. My background and academic goals were significant factors in being offered this position since I was a *newcomer* to both the U.S. and the Polish American community.

As I carried out my activities in the Political Division of the Polish American Congress, I also joined the U.S. Branch of the political movement N.I.D. which was based in London at that time. N.I.D. was a post-WWII Polish political party aimed at establishing the intellectual and practical bases of a democratic Poland in a post Communist era. They were opposed to the authoritarian, intolerant practices of the pre-1939 II Polish Republic and were looking to the future which came later than desired but ultimately came nonetheless. N.I.D. organized a large, informal network of cooperation among some 16 East European minorities which had strong support in America via organizations in Illinois and the Mid-West more generally. During the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, it became a formal fund-raising and political propaganda organization.

Apart from my political activities in the Polish American Congress and N.I.D., I was involved in setting up a national Polish student organization, PZA (Polski Związek Akademikow) which was particularly active in the Mid-West and in the East, with a number of units in different U.S. cities. It was active between 1950 and 1975 and later provided, especially in the Mid-West, a cultural venue for organizing lectures, plays, concerts and meeting place for visiting intellectuals from Poland or living in the USA (e.g. Milosz, Janta, Terlecki, Kuncewiczowa) among several dozens others.

I became P.Z.A. national President and continued in this position for many years. PZA activities focused on trying to establish and maintain intellectual contacts with Polish culture – initially aimed at younger generations of students who had been too young to enjoy those contacts before they left Poland. Later this program was applied successfully to the whole Chicago Polish Community as a result of which PZA became the major venue for such activities. For political reasons this program did not obtain the outright support of the older Polish, highly-politicized generation. Many of them wanted to cut off intellectual and other contacts with Poland because they were afraid establishing them might lead to exploitation by the Communist propaganda apparatus. Nevertheless, we were generally successful in sponsoring these linkages for many years without the Communists deriving any propaganda value.

In the mid-1960's, during my tenure as PZA president, I was invited to a world Congress of Polish Students Abroad in London. It was the first such international meeting ever held. We had contact with practically all anti-Communist Free Polish politicians and activists from dozens of the countries of the World. Although the meeting was culturally-oriented, it was at the same time highly politicized due to the Communist domination of Poland.

PZA also organized and scripted a radio program for the Chicago and Detroit metropolitan areas. Ironically, the program was censored by the station owners out of a fear of *politicized* content. The owners demanded to review the written program agenda for every broadcast. Despite this burdensome constraint (in democratic America) we broadcasted for over three years.

While president of PZA, I was involved in organizing the first meeting of the Polish American professors and researchers in Chicago, which resulted in the formation of the Mid-West Branch of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences (P.I.A.S.A.) which was initially founded in New York 1942 by the leading scholars from Polish universities (Professor Malinowski was the first President in 1942). The Institute was conceived as a Polish American scientific association. Its' Canadian Branch (now independent) and the Mid-West Branch still continue their scholarly activities. After consulting with P.I.A.S.A. President Wandycz in 1962, I suggested using our student organization PZA to begin preparing a comprehensive list of Polish American professors and lecturers. In the Mid-West alone we generated a list of 800 professors and lecturers and altogether P.I.A.S.A compiled a list of some 1200 others. As a result, the first Polish American Scholarly data bank was published in 1963 by P.I.A.S.A.

At about this same time, I made contact with Mr. K. Rudzki of the Free Europe Committee in New York. After a relative relaxation in the late 1950's in East Central Europe (especially Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia), the Free Europe Committee was providing funding for a large, ambitious and very important project, both culturally and politically. It was a clandestine operation which very few people knew about (and still, after so many years not at all researched and documented!!). It was a plan to send hundreds of thousands of scholarly books published in the West to Eastern European schools and universities which had been cut off from the broader academic world by Communist censorship. I offered PZA as a *donor* organization with the support of other PZA leaders. As one can realize for obvious reasons, it was necessary to keep knowledge of this activity very circumspect and unfortunately it was not possible to inform the general membership of PZA of what was taking place. For two years, my wife June and I were addressing and sending out 50-100 books each day to the schools, libraries and universities all over the East Central Europe. Each book had a label *gift of the Polski Zwiasek Akademikow* with our logo. The cost of mailing the books was borne by the Free Europe Committee.

Most of the books were confiscated by the Communists with some ending up on the *black market* behind what was called in the West, the *Iron Curtain*. Thousands, however *joined* the collections of college and university libraries in the countries of Eastern Europe. Irony enters the scenario when I was

finally allowed to do Ph.D. research in Poland in 1959–60: I saw many of *our/my* books in college libraries. I especially remember the astonishment of the visiting East German scholar in Wrocław University in Poland: my guests were showing him *our* gift book in the University Library. He retorted that they (in Potsdam at the Political Science Institute) did not have a ny post-1940 Western scholarly books! This undertaking was of great satisfaction to my wife and myself as it possibly opened many minds in Eastern Europe to the western intellectual tradition in the Humanities and Sciences. One can only hope that this undertaking had delayed yet positive consequences for Freedom movements such as *Solidarity* in the 1980's and thereafter.

Looking back at the period of the 1950s from the perspective of scholarly research in the West on Eastern Europe, it is difficult to imagine how few good books existed in U.S. Libraries. We discovered in our collection of approximately three million volumes at the University of Chicago only a few totally outdated travelogues which provided superficial and descriptive accounts – normally of quaint peasant societies – and some histories which were woefully inadequate. Due to generous funding by HRAF it became possible for the University to expand its' East European collection of books, research materials and documents from sources in Germany, England and France. The current and veritable explosion of books in English on any East/Central European theme occurred many, many years later and mostly after *Solidarity* in 1980!

In early 1962, noticing that the Slavic Department of the University of Chicago did not have Polish Literature courses, I decided to enter into *partnership* with that Department. Being rather well-known because of my sociopolitical activities in the Polish Community, I offered that I could secure financial support from one of the very active organizations in the community, The Legion of Polish Young Women. The idea was to secure a matching fund commitment from the Legion to help establish and sustain the salary of a professor for the University Chair in Polish Literature. The Legion, which still supports the chair created in 1962, had donated a total of over one million dollars (\$1 mil.) to various Polish and American cultural causes since September, 1939, when they were organized in response to the German invasion of Poland. They are mostly Americans of second and third generation.

Since the university did not have any specific candidates in mind, I was asked to suggest possible candidates from among the exiled elite of Polish scholars with *top drawer* literary or scholarly credentials who had found refuge primarily in England. I had discussions with Mr. Wierzynski – a leading poet, M. Wittin – a writer, and M. Janta – also a writer. But all of them declined the offers for variety of reasons. Finally I approached in London T. Terlecki – a scholar of drama and writer. However, he was not able to accept the offer since his book, *History of Polish Literature Abroad*, was in the final stages of editing before publication.

However, the offer was accepted by Maria Kuncewiczowa – a well-known literary figure. She was among the best known of Polish women writers in the pre-WWII period and had been President of the Polish PEN Club in exile. Kuncewiczowa was full of charm and made a great impact on

the campus and the Chicago cultural mass media as well. Thus, the *Polish* city of Chicago had established a Polish Literature chair. Her successor was the same Professor Terlecki who I had approached earlier and who I assisted in his successful appointment. He remained in this position until his retirement in 1979 when he returned to London. Subsequently, Professor S. Sandler filled the vacancy. The Chair in Polish Literature at the University of Chicago is still in existence today. The current holder of the Chair is a former University of Michigan professor.

Academic life and political action came together again in 1963. German *Expellies* from Poland planned to counter the Polish American Congress' championship of the western border of Poland on the Oder–Neisse line established at the end of the war in 1945. They organized a well funded, large scale congress/meeting in Chicago. Invitations were sent to all leading U.S. politicians from the Mid–West as well as the consular corps representing numerous Western countries. Their intent was to plead the German case against the Oder–Neisse border and they were going to do this in the heart of largest Polonia in the U.S. (Chicago) which also was the headquarters of PAC. However, the Polish American Congress was not invited to attend, much less participate, in the proceedings.

The key–note speakers were to be two Chicago Polish–American congressmen from both parties: one Democrat and one Republican. When I found out about this impending meeting organized by the leading German revanchist politicians, I alerted the PAC leadership and advised the German *Expellies* that we planned to picket the meeting to be held in a Chicago Downtown hotel unless we were given the opportunity to present the Polish American perspective on the crucial issue of the stability of the Polish Western border and its importance to Poland's modernization. The organizers of the revanchist meeting relented and added me as a speaker, allotting eight minutes of podium time for my remarks representing the PAC point of view. The PAC assigned me the task of summarizing our perspective and I formally participated in the meeting as a representative of the Polish American Congress.

Five minutes into my presentation at the meeting I was cut off. However this was not the end of the matter. I contacted Roman Pucinski, a Democratic congressman and native Chicagoan, who had been one of the keynote speakers at the closing ceremony of the event mentioned immediately above. In 1952 he had been the chief investigator of the U.S. Congressional Committee investigating the Katyn Forest Massacre. He had interviewed witnesses throughout Western Europe and the Western Hemisphere. The Committee came to the conclusion that it was the USSR which was guilty of the 1940 killing of some 14,000 Polish officers and POWs. As he had demonstrated through his role with the Congressional Committee in 1952, Congressman Pucinski was again willing to defend the interests of his Polish heritage and agreed to support the PAC position on the western border of Poland.

An event at one of the prestigious private clubs in Chicago was being sponsored by the *Expellies* to generate support for their position on the Oder–Neisse issue. I contacted the Congressman and the night before the event he

invited me to his home where I developed the major talking points for his presentation at the Club the following day. Congressman Pucinski opened his remarks at the event with the phrase [...] *standing up for human rights and the freedom of Berlin – we Americans are absolutely united and ready to defend the city and its people, provided that Germany recognizes the Western border of Poland on the Oder–Neisse!!*

The response to this assertion by an elected representative to the national Congress of the United States was one of stunned silence – the organizers and the highly placed political guests simply did not know how to react. The meeting was reported in the Warsaw press by the Polish journalist, Z. Broniarek, who had transcribed the meeting.

Events were eventually to favor the position advocated by the PAC and the western border of Poland defined at the end of the war remained unchanged. Our organization had participated in a successful political effort within the framework of a functioning political democracy to achieve a political objective. Democracies have their challenges. But only in a democracy can political views be voiced publically and non-violent political action embraced. This would be anathema to totalitarian regimes of whatever stripe.

Exposure to western democracies had demonstrated to me what could be possible in some non-communist future in Poland. Throughout the years to come I would continue to focus a substantial part of my scholarly activities (publishing, teaching and special projects) on Poland. This focus always has served a twofold purpose: to encourage, directly and indirectly, the spirit of open inquiry in Poland which, after WWII and until quite recently, had been under anti-democratic, authoritarian rule. The other was to promote, primarily through teaching, the humanistic values inculcated by mother during my youth.

## IX

In 1955 I met and married June (Jadwiga) Sadowska. She was an actress in the Polish Repertory Theatre of Chicago, *Nasza Reduta*, and worked for the Polish Daily (*Dziennik Zwiazkowy*) and later had an administrative position at the University of Chicago. *Nasza Reduta* (1950–1970) produced legitimate Polish plays for the Polish community in Chicago and traveled to other cities with large Polonia concentrations. The Theatre directors, Mr. & Mrs. L. Krzeminski, themselves pre-war professional actors and, along with the other actors, volunteers who rehearsed in the evenings after work.

June's story is another microcosm of Polish experiences before, during and after World War II. It is also an American immigration story – but in reverse. Her mother was a Chicago-born Polish American who married an immigrant musician in the 1920s. After WWI, her husband-to-be had served as a Polish captain on the staff of the Hoover [later President of the U.S.] Committee to Rescue Eastern European Children which succeeded in rescuing thousands of children in the turmoil after the war, especially in Eastern Poland and Russia. Julian Sadowski was the representative of that committee in northeast Poland. Unemployment was high in eastern Europe after World War I, and he was eventually offered the opportunity to emigrate to the United

States. There he opened a music school in Chicago and married June's mother, Maria. However early in the Depression years, they both decided to settle in Poland with the intention of returning to America in the future. Shortly after their arrival in Poland, June was born.

Then the Nazis and the Communists arrived. As an officer in the Polish army, Captain Sadowski was called up and was to disappear as a Soviet POW, with June and her American – born mother stranded in Warsaw during the Nazi occupation. They managed to survive as many Poles did during this time of severe food and other shortages under the shadow of possible Nazis retribution due to the relationship June's mother had with the Resistance in Warsaw. Meanwhile Capt. Sadowski had escaped en route to an eastern Soviet POW camp, was recaptured, and would have been taken to the Katyn Forest in 1940 as one of the approximately 14,000 Polish officers who were then executed by the Communist. But he didn't die – *Fortuna* intervened and, wounded, he was rescued by a Russian peasant, treated for his wounds and given rags as clothes to aid in evading capture by the NKVD. Luck had seemingly abandoned him because he was again captured and sent to a Soviet labor camp. But *Fortuna* was not finished with him yet – the Soviets never recognized him as a Polish officer. He was later released to the Polish army of General Anders and sent to Iran where he was classified unfit for military duty due to his Soviet capture experiences. But they could use his musical talents.

As a consequence of the war, there were many thousands of Polish orphaned children. The British Empire took in a significant number of these children. Two thousand of these Polish orphans with the Anders army in Iran had also been accepted by Mexico and Capt. Sadowski was assigned to accompany them to teach music to Polish children. Travelling via India and the Southwest Pacific to the west coast of the U.S., they reached San Diego having avoided Japanese submarines during the long trans-Pacific crossing. From San Diego they journeyed to the U.S. border with Mexico at El Paso and went south to Colonia Santa Rosa, near the city of Leon in the Mexican state of Guanajuato where he stayed from 1943–1946. Capt. Sadowski believed his wife and daughter, June, had died in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. At the same time, they thought he had perished in the Katyn Massacre.

Capt. Sadowski's wife, my future mother-in-law, was advised by Bliss Lane, the new U.S. ambassador to Poland in 1945 that as a U.S. citizen it would be best if she returned to Chicago as soon as possible because it was uncertain how long exit visas would be granted. The Communist government of Poland would allow my mother-in-law to leave Poland but that June, as a Polish citizen, would not be given an exit visa. The American ambassador assured June's mother that he would arrange for the departure of June within the next six weeks and urged her to leave while there was still time. Six weeks turned into three years and it was not until 1950 that June was allowed to join her mother in the U.S. At that time in NY harbour she asked her Mom: *who is that man with you?* – *It's your father* – she responded. She has not seen him for 11 years – since September 1939!!

Wartime experiences such as those that befell the Sadowski family and my family are in no way unusual. There are thousands of such stories.

Unfortunately not all these stories have endings which are as fortunate as ours. And even in our case, there was much pain and anguish. It would be well if all would remember that hate, intolerance and war always exact too high a price in terms of our common humanity.

## X

I entered the college job market in the mid-1960's and I discovered that what was attractive to potential university job providers included what letters you had behind the *Ph.D.*, i.e. what University awarded the doctoral degree. After years of effort I was able to include the following in any application for a University teaching position, *Z. Anthony Kruszewski, Ph.D. (University of Chicago)*. I felt a profound sense of accomplishment and with it came the realization that a university professorship was not merely a job – it was a vocation. And I had been fortunate enough to attend one of the finest universities, certainly in the United States and perhaps in the world – The University of Chicago. More Presidents of American universities have come out of the University of Chicago than any other university in the country as well as many Nobel Laureates.

After interviews concluded on campus at the University of Chicago, I received a number of offers from various parts of the country. In 1966, I selected the State University of New York system and accepted an offer to teach at its Plattsburgh, New York campus on the Canadian border. I was attracted by the proximity of Montreal, just across the border in Quebec because of its cultural environment and big city opportunities. The contrast between the English and Francophone cultures of Quebec province and Montreal in particular were also major factors in my choice. This last justification of taking the SUNY position in Plattsburgh needs some clarification.

Exposure to the diversity among peoples is an aspect of humanity which enriches the human experience through an awareness of our commonalities and at the same time the variability of cultural, social and political beliefs and institutions. Simultaneously, borders are a symbol of what unites and divides us and have fascinated me since the late 1930s when I had vacationed with my family at an estate in Pomerania which was at points a mere two hundred and fifty meters from the border with Germany. Borders represent differences among people – geographically, but more important culturally, socially and politically. These differences can be the source of expanding awareness in a humanistic sense, or, as is the case all too often in the world of politics and international relations, they can and do lead to conflict when associated with perceptions of group self-interest. My family life and upbringing in Poland had always emphasized building on the commonalities of the human experience and attempting to resolve potential and actual conflict on the basis of these commonalities. On the other hand, World War II had taught me that under very specific circumstances it is just and proper to defend by military means a country and a way of life.

The SUNY system was very well funded and included some 60 campuses with approximately 60,000–70,000 students. The appointment there as an Assistant Professor primarily involved teaching a range of courses in Political

Science. Within a year, I was appointed chairman of the Political Science Department. Although the department was rather small – 5–6 professors – it was young, dynamic and well-prepared with faculty Ph.D.s from very good schools. Appointment as department chair which offered me new challenge such as academic leadership, budgeting and recruiting. I welcomed those challenges as they broadened by academic administrative experience and was good preparation for future opportunities.

In this first formal academic assignment, I began submitting scholarly articles for publication, attending professional meetings, and participating in Political Science panels. In conjunction with these professional activities I joined the American Political Science Association (APSA) as well as the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS). I participated as well in regional Political Science organizations. Being on the East Coast, I also joined the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in New York (PIAS) and attended a number of Polish scholarly meetings in New York and in Canada. These meetings at times were of an interdisciplinary nature but primarily dealt with themes and issues in Political Science.

Being interested in more challenges and greater academic opportunities, I accepted an offer from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) on the border with Mexico. UTEP was much larger and the opportunity to participate in creation of a rapidly expanding program were additional attractions to relocating to what is referred to in the southwestern U.S. as *The Border*. The El Paso/Border region fascinated me as much as the Plattsburgh/Canada region had and the cultural contrasts in the former proved to be much greater than what I had experience on the *northern border* with Canada campus but and was to grow more rapidly. Another factor favoring a decision to move to El Paso was that I was given a relatively free hand programmatically and in creating *academic structures* within the University. This latter was important because it represented an opportunity seldom given indeed to new faculty at any American university – normally, you start at the very bottom and very slowly move up in the University organization. At the time I joined the Department, it had 17 professors (three times larger than the political science department up in Plattsburgh) composed largely of relatively young, energetic and somewhat idealistic faculty committed to the mission of bringing the best academic standards to the southwestern border region which was in great need of good teachers at the University level and who could also serve as role models for aspiring students. In historical terms the Border Region had been economically and culturally neglected with Minorities (Hispanic, Black) subject to varying forms of discrimination until the 1960s. The Border Region was also predominately bilingual (Spanish/English) with Hispanics comprising at least 70–75% of the local population in El Paso and with Spanish being their first language.

The Political Science Department at UTEP was attractive in what I observed to be its internal governance and democratic practices. For example, newly hired professors were immediately fully involved in all departmental affairs, except obviously, those dealing with promotion and tenure. Given the overall growth trends looking into the future of UTEP and what I believed (in

retrospect, accurately) to be a collegial and opportunity laden Department of Political Science, it seemed a *good fit*. Looking back, *Fortuna* had smiled upon me when I decided to make the move to The Border and I still think this way today. Personally, and reflecting the attitude of a number of my colleagues both in the Political Science department as well as other departments at UTEP, I developed a very special commitment (life-long in my case) which has shaped my professional goals in academia for several decades now: that of bringing the higher standards of education which I had the opportunity to take advantage of here in the U.S. as well as in Europe to marginalized student populations (mostly immigrant or first generation and with Spanish as the primary language) of the American Southwest. The diversity encountered in the U.S. has been one of the country's strengths over time. But this diversity has not been without its challenges individually and socially. I could readily identify with this immigrant/first generation student population of the Southwest as it endeavors to attain their personal goals through more advanced education. In academia I could make a real contribution to an ethnically diverse American society which embodied the ideals I had absorbed as a child and which also reflected to a substantial degree my own life experiences. This *mission* and the activities it has involved over the years have been and continues to be sources of great satisfaction to me.

I began publishing, bringing in grants for research and became involved in creating a series of the European-oriented courses as well as new University programs. One of my initial observations concerning the El Paso border region was a bunch of programs across the University with sufficient Spanish cultural and Latin American educational input. UTEP, by the very nature of its location across the river from Mexico with some 10% of its students crossing the border daily to attend University classes, was very much oriented towards Latin America. UTEP needed other perspectives and courses which I could provide and was actively encouraged to offer.

Teaming up with my senior distinguished colleague from the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics, Professor Jacob Ornstein-Galicia, a Jewish American with Polish roots, we organized the Cross-Cultural Ethnic Study Center under a grant from the Spencer Foundation as a venue for the study and research of the Southwest Borderlands. Being recipients of the prestigious foundation grant, we also applied and received a very large grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) of the federal government to develop and introduce ethnic and Spanish language programs across several university departments.

This Center was an innovative approach in the Southwest as well as in the country more generally at the time. The broad field of ethnic-oriented studies across academic disciplines was not common and few, if any, people believed it could be done in Texas in which Hispanic culture had to contend with a *Tejano* heritage going back to the time of the Republic of Texas. Our Spencer/NEH Foundation grant of \$400,000 was matched by the University and for that time (1970) the largest in the College of Liberal Arts. We were assured the cooperation of dozens professors in various disciplines and over the next few years had introduced parallel bilingual education at UTEP. For

the first time in U.S. colleges, introductory courses were to be taught in both English and Spanish in some seven departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences were developed and offered to students (Political Science, Sociology, Music, History, Chemistry, Communications and Mathematics). The program we established still exists today in which entering students can select from courses offered in either English or Spanish and using English language textbooks for first two semesters of study.

When the program was fully operational, the NEH in Washington, D.C. delegated me to offer seminars on other college campuses along both the Canadian and Mexican borders to acquaint them with our achievement in designing and implementing a bilingual program model. Whereas such programs were normal in countries like Canada, here in the state of Texas, it was not just unusual – it was totally unheard of. When presenting the model at conferences colleagues and academic administrators found it difficult to believe we had actually succeeded in implementing this bilingual approach to advanced education.

This initiative had far reaching consequences for my future long term research and publication output. Much of my subsequent books and articles written and published as well as publications edited (three books on U.S. Southwest Politics & Issues) were on the topic of Southwest Politics and Border Studies. As an outgrowth of this professional focus I became one of the five original founders of the American Border Studies Association (ABSA) which began publication of a scholarly journal at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico. In March of 2006, I initiated and co-organized an International Border Studies Conference at three local universities in Mexico, Texas and New Mexico. It was a successful first such conference which was attended by some 650 participants from 54 countries on 4 continents. As of 2012, it is the only association of its kind in the United States.

The forgoing is not to suggest that my commitment to Polish/East European studies had fallen by the wayside. I felt that a university the size of UTEP with 8,000 students in 1960 (21,000 in 2009, over 22,000 in 2012) should have an interdisciplinary program in Russian and East European Studies. Although I had been teaching several courses in this area of concentration, I believed that it was necessary to cross discipline lines in order to provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of reality in that part of the world. Soon after my arrival at UTEP I was able to create an Interdisciplinary Program involving various departments in the Social Sciences and Humanities such as History, Modern Languages, Sociology and of course Political Science. I have been coordinating this program for over twenty years without having had to create a separate Department. Since its inception The Russian and East European Studies interdisciplinary program has attracted the best students from each of the disciplines participating.

Although I planned to stay at the University of Texas only some 5–6 years, the opportunities, challenges and general academic conditions motivated my decision to stay at UTEP permanently. The Department climate was favorable; I was involved in a number of program development projects,

teaching large and small classes, as well as seminars in International Politics, Comparative Politics, Russian and Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Border Studies and Developing World Politics.

My academic career at UTEP was developing in promising and challenging fashion. Apart from the programmatic and teaching freehand, I was also able to rapidly make up previously lost time and move up the career ladder. By 1970, I was promoted to Associate Professor and became a full professor by 1972. I was also active in UTEP academic affairs including the University Senate. Twice I was elected as Chairman of the Department of Political Science: once in 1974 and again in 1984. I served as a chairman of the department for nine years, altogether. In 1980, I was elected Chair of the Graduate Council of UTEP and served for two terms until 1984. Each year since 1968 I participated on at least a twice yearly basis conferences held by the American Political Science Association (APSA), the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) and the Association for the Study of Nationalities (ASN). I also travelled extensively between 1967 and 2003 as a guest lecturer and visiting professor/scholar to universities and Academies of Science in Poland, Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary, USSR, Brazil, Japan, Israel, Germany, Ukraine and Russia. I was also privileged to have taught as an exchange professor at the University of Texas at Austin, the University of London and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

During my teaching career, I was honored to receive the University of Texas System Chancellor's Outstanding Teaching Award in 1988 and the UTEP Vice President for Academic Affairs Award for Academic Excellence in 1982. I also took part in the cultural activities of the El Paso community as a member of the Board of Directors of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra (two times) and a member of the Board of Directors of the El Paso Holocaust Museum and Study Center (HMSC) (2006–08). To my knowledge, the El Paso HMSC is the only one in the country officially stating that the Nazi camps killed 6 million Jews and 5 million Gentiles.

In order to leave a more permanent mark and legacy at the University of Texas at El Paso my wife and I funded a Kruszewski Family Endowed Professorship in Political Science and 3 endowed scholarships named after the Family, my mother and mother-in-law to be used by Polish exchange students and U.S. students. To honor my wife's work in the *Nasza Reduta* (1951–1966), legitimate theatre in Chicago, and her 15 years teaching Spanish at El Paso's St. Clements School, I recently established the June Sadowski Kruszewski Endowed Professorship in Theatre Arts at the University of Texas at El Paso. And to honor the memory of my maternal grandfather, the first Esperanto poet, I established the Antoni Grabowski Endowed Memorial Professorship in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Texas at El Paso to commemorate the Centennial of the University in El Paso.

## XI

The return of Poland to the family of democratic nations in 1989 exerted an exceptionally strong attraction upon me. After fifty years it again became

possible to envision a Poland which could be both democratic and prosperous. I was simply elated at the transition of Poland from a communist state to a functioning democracy. I realized the path to democracy and economic growth would not be without its challenging moments, challenge and instances of divided opinions. But my outlook was one characterized by hope for a better future.

During the years of Communist domination of Poland, my interest in Polish and East European Affairs has never waned. I visited Europe quite frequently and kept in touch with Polish academic institutions overseas and was appointed professor of Political Science at the Polish University Abroad, whose seminars and conferences I regularly attended as a presenter and conference panel organizer on specific topics.

Poland's bid to become a full member of NATO in the late 1990s was an especially significant moment. Apart from the reality of trade and economic development which meant for Poland facing the West which had been forbidden during the years of communist rule, membership in NATO would position/identify Poland as a *western nation*. Poland's bid to enter this essentially military alliance of western nations was readily understood by Polish Americans. Polish foreign policy, as is the case with all nations, is to a significant degree defined by history and geography. In the case of Poland, Russian and German territorial ambitions had resulted in invasions and occupation and in the case of WWII, with tragic results for the country. After WWII, the German threat was no longer a significant concern. However, even after the liberation and independence of the east European nations (including the now united Germany), Poland was historically justified to be concerned about Russians intentions on its eastern border.

At this point the nexus between Poland's bid for full NATO membership and my own life was formed. Having been a member of the Polish American Congress in the U.S. since 1952, I was mindful of its potential role in lobbying for Poland's admission to NATO. PAC at that time represented 9 million self-identified Polish Americans and as mentioned earlier was a political lobby to be reckoned with in the United States. The Vice President for Polish Affairs at PAC for some twenty four years, Mr. K. Lukomski, died. Under PAC rules, the vacancy was filled until the 1992 Annual Meeting of PAC by Mr. Jan Nowak-Jezioranski. The Executive Council of PAC encouraged me to run for this position and in October, 1992, was elected to be the next PAC Vice President for Polish Affairs. I served in this position for a period of six years (1992-98). As Vice President, I was able to visit Polonia communities in many countries, many of them within the former Soviet sphere of control not visited by Poles and outsiders since 1917. Those were the exciting and motivating visits. At this time PAC also embarked on a major project of charitable support directed primarily at Polonia schools and cultural activity in the former USSR. This was an exciting and memorable period for me as a Polish American.

One of key projects PAC undertook at this time was to lobby the U.S. Congress in support of Poland's entry into NATO. I will always remember the tension and excitement of that campaign. Letters, phone calls and telegrams

flooded Washington, D.C. originating from all corners of the United States. At one point the White House asked us to desist since their telephone exchange was being blocked. During visits to Washington, D.C., surprised was expressed at the geographic diversity of support enjoyed by PAC. I need to proudly add that all members of the Political Science Department faculty at the University of Texas at El Paso signed and sent out a petition supporting the Polish NATO initiative.

Soon after Poland regained its independence and was able to introduce Market Economy and Democracy as the twin pillars of her rebirth in 1989, I was able, indirectly, to contribute to her post-Communist stability. In the early 1990s when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was establishing its formal contacts with the Polish government and establishing its office in Warsaw, I was approached by its Director to act as a consultant. I was asked to provide an analysis of the Polish security situation along with a *wish list* of likely training and equipment requirements if Poland was to effectively confront the threats to a peaceful and stable society posed by organized crime (the *Mafia*) and *Narcotraficantes*. And during my visit to Washington, D.C. following a trip by the FBI director to Poland in the early 1990s, he informed me that the recommendations I had made were made available to the appropriate Polish security authorities as a gesture of U.S. friendship.

## XII

Post communist Poland gave me the opportunity to play my part in undoing the damage done first by the Nazis and then by the Communists to Polish society and culture. Keenly aware of a sense of personal responsibility for restoring the memory of the Polish Esperanto Association which was part of my personal heritage, I first began in 1988, even before the Berlin Wall came down, by restoring a plaque commemorating Antoni Grabowski that had been destroyed by the Nazis in Warsaw along with establishing new ones in Torun, Wroclaw, Malbork and on the campus of the University of Warsaw. Streets in five Polish cities were named after him and I funded two yearly awards in his name at the University of Warsaw beginning in 1995 for excellence in research in the field of Chemistry. I also was involved in UTEP signing a student exchange agreement with the University of Torun. The first Polish graduate students arrived in El Paso in the Fall of 2013 with Teaching Assistantships arranged in the Department of Political Science.

Academically, Poland after the communist yolk was removed became and has remained an exciting environment characterized by an intellectual ferment which had been suppressed for many years. I was able to participate in this intellectual reawakening in different ways through linkages with the East Central Europe History Institute in Lublin, the Northern European Institute in Szczecin and the Mianowski Foundation for Scientific Development in Warsaw as a member of their respective Boards of Directors, aiding in the subsidization of scholarly works of the Mianowski Foundation as well as the Eastern European Studies Center at the University of Warsaw, and as a consequence of my relationship with the Jewish communities in the U.S. over many years, provided funds for the publication of books suggested by the

Center of Jewish Studies of the University of Warsaw. Having noticed the lack of scholarly textbooks in English in a number of Polish colleges, I was able to send some 3000 volumes to the library of the University of Szczecin which had the greatest gap in its collection of English language books.

Since 1993, visits to Poland during the summers has allowed me to teach every year at the Eastern Summer School at the University of Warsaw. The junior scholars from previously Soviet controlled states had been coming to UW to be instructed by an international faculty of East European area experts. The seminars and course themes at the School focused on East European Area Studies. Having been subject to Communist domination for more than four decades, there was a *gap* in the development of non-Communist intellectual perspectives in former Soviet bloc countries in a number of areas important to the understanding the evolution of democratic societies since the end of World War II: Civil Rights, Recent Political Developments, The Role of Great Powers in Shaping the Contemporary World, Feminism, Political Democracy & Market Economy, Globalization and The Politics of Minority Issues. Hundreds of the alumni of this Summer School Program are now professionals in academia, the diplomatic corps, the media and the cultural institutions of their respective countries

The opening of Poland to democracy had the impact of stimulating greater interest in the country in the West. The Smithsonian Institute began offering lecture tours of Poland and between 1993 and 2005, I was lecturing to these groups of visitors sometimes as much as 2–3 tours per year. The groups represented a cross-section of American intellectuals to include academicians and retired diplomats. They were excellent students/listeners and I also arranged to introduce them to selected East European leaders such as Lech Walesa in Gdansk.

Poland's return to the family of democratic nations and its' progress thereafter have been a source of tremendous pride and satisfaction to me. The fact that this transition to democracy has been peaceful is a reflection of the practical wisdom of the Polish people in absorbing the lessons of the past. The flourishing of intellectual life in Poland and the energy visible in Polish society and the economy are clear demonstrations that over four decades of communist domination were unable to crush the spirit of the country. I ardently hope that within this context of a Polish *rebirth* that the ties between Poland and Polonia will experience its' own form of renewal in which Polish identity and culture will be further enriched

### XIII

The journey thus far has been an eventful and fascinating one. And it is by no means over. I plan to continue teaching full-time at my University and to maintain my commitment to and participation in those activities which have defined a large part of my professional and personal life for many decades now. My Polish heritage has been the core of my personal identity. This heritage has commanded my unflagging loyalty. I have been fortunate enough to experience this heritage from different perspectives: directly in terms of my

early youth and through the tragedy of war; as a political exile in the early post war period; and as a Polish American.

People are not often given the opportunity to publically reflect on the trajectory of one's life. As an educator and scholar this reflection can reasonably be viewed as a responsibility – a *mitzvah*, as my Jewish friends and colleagues would likely describe it.

To the best of my ability I have attempted to keep faith with the values inculcated by my mother, to act upon an on-going commitment to the best interests of my native homeland, and to fulfill the responsibility as a scholar/educator fostering the development of humanistic perspectives with which to realistically confront the challenges facing contemporary societies and the international community.

The early years of my life in Poland produced the values and ideals with which the challenges of life would be subsequently confronted. World War II was the proving ground of these values and ideals, also revealing the necessity of action if they are to maintain their relevance outside the world of academia. The *British Interlude* as a Pole in self-imposed exile from his communist-dominated homeland was crucial in the formulation of a *post war, Polish expatriate identity* sustained by my involvement with the Polish community of Britain and through exposure to the workings of English style democracy. Permanent residence and later citizenship in the United States provided the opportunity to achieve professional goals and the ability to actualize my values and ideals through teaching; scholarly research and publication; as an active member of the Polish American community; and through my activities as a Professor of Political Science at the University of Texas at El Paso.

In conclusion, I can only offer the following observations to students as well as others:

ALWAYS remain faithful to the humanistic ideals which are the treasured legacy of the western intellectual tradition despite what all too often seems to be a world in which conflict – internal and external – appears to be the norm.

Recognize that a strong sense of identity – national, ethnic, religious – is in no way incompatible with these humanistic ideals.

Active engagement by scholars in issues of importance within and between countries. Remember that as intellectuals we have a responsibility to the societies of which we are a part and to Humanity in a broader sense. The *Ivory Tower*, a pejorative term sometimes used to describe the *other worldliness* of higher education apart from the natural sciences and engineering, does not obviate the responsibility we have to be relevant from a humanistic perspective in our teaching, research, as well as related activities outside the University environment.

AND ALWAYS REMAIN TRUTHFUL AND FAITHFUL TO IDEALS,  
GOALS AND DREAMS.