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I was born in 1919 in a small village in Poland, the third child of a family of seven children two boys and five girls. My parents were orthodox Jews: we had a strictly kosher household and we children a very religious upbringing.

There were only twenty Jewish families in the village and they could not afford a synagogue. Needless to say we were all poor. However, in our house one room was designated for prayers. There, in a wardrobe, was a Sefer Torah and next to it a table for a pulpit, and every Saturday or on Holy Days the men congregated in this small "shul" for a service. My grandfather and later my father read from the Torah, but actually most of the men could do it. They were usually well prepared for their Bar Mitzvah's by their fathers, or sometimes even a rabbi from the nearest town.

My father was a baker. He learned his trade in New York, where he lived for a few years, but he was lonely there and came back to Poland and married. He used to bake delicious bread: challahs, beigels and pretzels and sell to the shops in the nearest small town. It was a hard life, but we were happy.

However, the children needed education and the village had only a four year school after that we all had to go to a big town where there were schools and colleges. First my eldest brother and sister and then I and my younger two sisters. There in Brzozow I attended a commercial college, but in the meantime my parents decided to sell everything in the village and move to Krakow, where my sister and brother had found work. My parents wanted the family to be together and to give the younger children a good education and a possibility to find good jobs. I stayed behind to finish the last term in the college and then joined them. It was summer 1937.

Soon afterwards I got a position in a bank, where I worked until the war broke out. My eldest sister married in Spring 1938, and my brother in autumn of the same year. In August 1939 I went on holiday to Lwow, (Lemberg), which was situated in the east of Poland, (now in Russia), and I was there when the war started. I have never again seen my parents, sisters and brothers, except the eldest sister who survived. The others died in Belzec gas chambers, (the Treblinka of the south of Poland).

The east part of Poland was taken over by the Russians and they made a register of all the refugees from the west of Poland, asking everybody if they wanted to stay there or go back. I wanted to go back to my parents, not knowing what was in store



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for them. One night the Russian police came to my lodgings in Tarnopol and told me I was going back to Krakow. They took me to the station where there was a very long line of cattle trucks and a multitude of people in them, mostly Poles and some Jews. The Russians called us "undesirable elements" fit for resettlement and hard labour only. We were standing there for three days and on the fourth morning the transport started to move to the east. It was June 1940. I did not know then that this journey would save my life. If I would have returned to my family I would have died with them.

We were travelling for two weeks, stopping occasionally in some stations, but always at night. It was very difficult to buy anything to eat and we suffered great hunger. A few times the guards provided hot water and small pieces of black bread. After two weeks we reached our destination ♦ a labour camp in a Siberian forest in the district of Swierdlowsk. Next day, after telling us "who doesn't work, doesn't eat", they sent us into the forest in groups of three or four to fell trees and remove the roots and stumps. It was very difficult and heavy work, not only for the women, but for the men also. I was a young and strong girl in a group of three others, but we only managed to do a small part of the necessary norm of work and accordingly only received a small part of our food ration. Fortunately we found lots of berries and mushrooms in the forest and that helped us to survive, but many died.

However, the worst plague in that camp, at least for me, were the bugs in the barracks and the insects where we worked ♦ I was their beloved victim. Luckily in 1941 Germany attacked the Soviet Union and the Russians became our allies. They made an agreement with the Polish government in exile in London to release Polish prisoners of war and all the other Poles from labour camps, to allow and help them form a Polish Army in Russia and an exodus started from the camps, everybody with a certificate naming the place where one was allowed to settle.

In our camp almost 90% of people decided to settle in Dhambui in Kazakhstan, (I was with them), hoping that perhaps one day we might manage to escape to Persia, (now Iran). We joined a big convoy of cattle trucks going to Dhambul and travelled south. The journey lasted over two weeks because it was war time and there were a lot of Russian refugees on the move. Food was scarce, but at least one could sometimes buy from the peasants some fresh fruit which tasted like ambrosia. I did not like tomatoes before the war, but on that journey they became my cherished fruit!

At last we arrived in Dhambul but the authorities did not allow us to settle there,



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although we had our permits, because there were too many refugees already in this town. They sent us to the Aral Sea but somehow we managed to avoid reaching it, which was our luck. We heard later that many people died in the Aral camps. Our convoy was travelling again  from Alma-Atah to Tashkent and back, and then we came back to Dhambul. We did not ask the authorities any more but one night we all left quietly, everybody for himself. A Polish family took me under their wing; I was young, they much older, and together we found a room in a Russian house. The woman who owned the house was a widow and had many men friends who sometimes used to bring ration cards for bread for her and also for us.

The Russians did not know that I was Jewish. The Polish couple warned me not to tell them, because they were frightened what they might do to us. The Russians-hated Jews very much, saying that the war started because of them. We were there two months, trying to sell the rest of what we had, or trying to get work. I once succeeded for a week, looking after a child while the mother was working, but when I asked her for a certificate stating that I was working for her, so that I could get some bread, she said she didn't need me any more and that she would deny that I ever worked for her. She was frightened because the Russians were not allowed to have servants.

One day we met some Polish people and they told us that not very far from Dhambul, in a place called Lugovoy, there was a Polish military camp and they were enlisting men and women. We left Dhambul immediately and three days later we joined the Polish Army. The men got a uniform but we two women had to wait until we reached Persia. A week later we boarded a boat and after an awful night of sailing we reached Pahlevi in Persia. I thanked my protectors, the Polish couple, as they were sent to a different unit and I joined a younger set. There I met six Jewish girls and we became good friends. However, after the war we slowly lost touch with each other.

We were in Persia for a little while, then in Iraq, Syria and eventually we reached Palestine in spring 1942. My camp was in Rechovoth where I went through some rigorous military training and, after that, started work in the financial unit of the Women's Corps. We were part of the 8th British Army  the Polish Brigade under General Anders. I was in Palestine until autumn 1943. During that time rumours started to circulate that some terrible things were happening in occupied Poland. Nobody knew exactly what, at least not in the circle I was in.

One night I had a terrible dream, repeated three times. I was in a corner of a cable car going up the mountain side. In the other corner was my eldest sister. I asked her



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"Where are the others?" - she did not answer, but only put her head down. But the significant point of this dream is that she was the only one who survived, the rest of my family perished in Belzec. My unit was moved to Egypt, where we were stationed for a few months, and in 1944 we moved to Italy and our camp was not far from Bari. There I met my future husband, Maximillian Moor. He was an officer attached to a field hospital, as he was a pharmacist by profession.

We were still in Italy when the war ended and then I started to seek information about my family. I wrote letters to many associations that had lists of survivors, but I did not get any answers. It was already 1946 and I was very unhappy. Then I remembered that I had two aunts in Mexico City, but I did not know their address. So I decided to write to the Jewish Community in Mexico City without an address, hoping that the letter would be delivered to some Jews and they may find my aunt for me. And it was like that three weeks later I received a letter from one of my aunts. She had already had news from my sister and she told me that my sister would be writing to me soon, and she left it to her to tell me the terrible news about our family. I cannot describe the sorrow and pain which I felt when at last I got the letter from my sister with the dreadful news.

She and her husband survived with false papers as Poles on hard labour in Germany. I wanted very much to see them, but there were no permits for soldiers to go to Germany at that time and my sister and her husband were in a D.P. camp in Jordanband, not far from Ulm in the French zone. However, I lied and said that Jordanbad is not far from Strassburg in France, and I got a permit and all necessary documents.

After a very adventurous four day journey I reached Jordanbad with the help of an UNRA official, and was reunited with my sister and her husband. We were together for four weeks and then I went back to Italy to my unit. Just then the Polish Army was transferred from Italy to England and we started to prepare ourselves for civilian life learning the English language, etc. I married in March 1947 and was immediately released from the army with the rank of corporal. My husband was demobilised a few months later.

We moved to London and lived in a furnished room in Notting Hill Gate. My husband worked first in a private pharmacy and later in the Co-Op. In 1949 we managed to buy a little house in Golders Green. We let one room to a student to help us with the mortgage and I started work in a hat factory, but when my English improved I managed to get a position in my profession with the Jewish Welfare



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Board (now Jewish Care).

In 1950 my husband's mother came from Poland and lived with us until her death. She was a wonderful person and I loved her as I would my own mother. Our financial situation slowly improved ♦ we bought a car and managed holidays abroad. However, fate was not kind to us: in 1963 my husband died of a heart attack at the age of fifty. There followed for me a long period of misery and loneliness. My mother in law was a great support for me, although it was her only son who died, but she also passed away two years later. However, I had very good friends, who lived in the same street, and they helped me a lot.

I advanced in my work at the Jewish Welfare Board and earned a very good salary for that time. I met Max Abraham, a retired rabbi, in spring 1969 and a few months later we were married. I had to give up my job because Max did not want to live in London. In the beginning I missed London and my office very much, but slowly I got used to Bournemouth. We joined the Reform Synagogue and soon after I became the Hon. Treasurer of the Women's Guild.

We had a pleasant and enjoyable life, with many good friends, but again fate intervened. Max died the same way as my first husband ♦ of a heart attack, in 1977 and I was once again alone, but I had many good friends and this helped.

At that time I did a lot of charity work, as well as being treasurer of the Guild, and this was good for me. I went a few times to Mexico, where my sister lived after the war and where she died in 1973. She had one daughter whom I visit from time to time.

At last, after 25 years, getting old and a bit decrepit, I decided to retire as the Guild's treasurer and I passed the job with my best wishes to another member. I am now a lady of leisure, and have plenty of time to think about my various aches and pains and enjoy the view of Bournemouth Bay from the window of my flat on the East Cliff.