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The Second World War broke out in September 1939, before most people knew about it. The Russians immediately released prisoners, gave them a red star and rifle and told them to sack houses for money and books etc. to obtain funds for the Russian Army. People had to give them their jewellery at gunpoint.

In February Vera (then Rutkowska, being married to Czesław Rutkowski, George's father) was returning from where her husband was a chief forester stationed in Białowieża in Eastern Poland, at the Białowieża Forest (now called "The Green Lungs of Europe, and a UNESCO protected site of natural beauty). Her father Tadeusz Karkocz was & had been a chief forester there too, but had retired.

Vera was travelling to her mother Zofia Karkocz house in Równe when she learnt of the war breaking out. She was told by her sister Anna at Anna's house in Hajnówka, which is near Białowieża. George, my brother, was 10 months old at the time, and was being looked after by Vera's mother Zofia in Równe. Anna told Vera that Russian soldiers had arranged for Vera's husband Czesław Rutkowski to go to Siberia with others in a cattle truck, part of a train. He had left her a note to confirm she was an officer's wife (he was also an Army Officer) and the note was to become useful to her (^{special} privileges). It was freezing cold and snowy, minus 40°. She was given some shirts, underwear and a duvet.

(2)

by her sister to take in a case to her husband in a cattle truck, as a soldier had left a message with Anna that Vera was expected by her husband and the soldiers to join him and go on to Siberia with him and other people that knew her. Her sister's husband Edward was away so she had clothes she could give Vera for Czeslaw. The soldiers tried to get Vera to get on the truck but she just put the case of clothes on the truck and ignoring her husband's requests to join him (and that of others on the wagon) she said she had to go back for George and wouldn't leave without him. She had no intention of going to Siberia with her husband and returned to her mother's house in Równo. She walked in -40° in the snow, back to her sister's house in Hajdówka, and then after that returned to Równo. Thanks to an Austrian law student from Vienna, Julius Faflik, she was able to travel via Krakow to Vienna, and escape Poland. He had lodged ~~with~~ in her mother's house in Warsaw at one time and when requested, wrote her a letter of invitation to Vienna, so that she was able to leave Poland.

After returning to Równo, Vera returned to Biakiewięza to her house and found a peasant and his wife in her bed. They were apologetic when they saw her assertiveness and she gathered

(3)

up her belongings and took her white dog "Puka" with her, and led her cow to sell in the nearby village. She took her dog to the local butcher because she knew the butcher would always have meat around and the dog wouldn't go hungry. She returned with a cart and picked up her bedroom suite from her house and hired a cart to take her furniture to a Jewish shop owner; he said he'd look after it at no charge as he knew Vera to be a good customer. He stored it for her in his shed.

Vera had no money left for the fare and got a free ride on a cart with benches because everyone was fascinated by her dog, Puka. When she got to Rzeszow she told her mother she would return to Biadlowieza to get their furniture and bring it back. Her mother warned her not to because it was dangerous, but she did it anyway, taking her dog with her, to give to the butcher. She brought the furniture to her mother's, but never got it back after the war. She has photos of it. When in due course Vera left Rzeszow with George, she went to Krakow in Southern Poland and then on to Vienna, to meet up with Julius Faflik and his wife Anna. (Their family still live in Retzbach in Austria and I correspond with Julius' niece Eva). After Vienna Vera travelled onto Bregenz where she met and fell in love with my father, Albin Makowski. There Vera co-incidentally met up with a teacher couple who lived ^{for a time} in another mother's: Warsaw. When the Bolsheviks came to Vienna, they went onto Bregenz

(4)

who had two daughters and used to come to Zofia's in Warsaw to pick fruit from the fruit trees there. They were very well off. Vera and George lived on a railway station for several weeks, sleeping on tables, in Bregenz.

They went onto Bregenz ~ as they had official refugee status they were on organized journeys which the Germans made sure ran from A-B as they were very efficient.

Everyone at that time wanted to get to Switzerland but people needed to get as near as possible to the border so they went to Bregenz, not knowing where they were. Everyone helped Vera and George. They had two suitcases, one with photos in it and one with a fur coat in it. All the suitcases were piled one on top of another like a wall of suitcases on the platform. The Germans in their efficiency had managed to get all the suitcases safely from the trains so that everyone could get theirs back. They used to return to the station for the nights.

It was February - the war ended in May - the soldiers told them all to go to Innsbruck in the daytime. They all went out during the day and returned to sleep at night. The soldiers had to give all the refugees ^{some} vegetable soup and bread, with an extra piece of bread for a child. All the restaurants had to give them soup and bread.

(5)

in exchange for tickets.

In Bregenz Vera with George (who was then about 4-5 years old) went from one house to another, in the snow and cold, asking if people would take them in. She clearly remembers going to one house where ~~a~~ a woman opened the door to them but said they couldn't offer them room; she went away and came back to the door with a bag of dried fruit for Vera, but Vera was speechless and simply walked away with George. She said it was the worst moment of her life - what had she come to that she was being treated like an unwanted dog, although obviously not a poor, uneducated person.

A German soldier returning to the front at Bregenz offered to take Vera to a house in the hills.

They went to a hostel or hotel in the mountain and the Germans had commissioned it for the use of refugees. They went to the dairy every day to make cheese with the other women. They gave out the cheese. They stayed there a few months, sunbathing on mattresses in March.

Then May came and it was the end of the war. There were only women there. There was a

(6)

Russian lady with 2 daughters, 8 years old
difficult to get them to sleep. There were other nationalities and
German women too. On 8th May there were
fireworks, they saw them from the
mountains.

End of the war - now what? They went to
The Red Cross. The French had Innsbruck and
Bregenz. Vorarlberg. Europe was divided. The
Germans were defeated. My father ALBIN
MAKOWSKI came to Bregenz from Warsaw.
He had been ill after working in Nuremberg,
the Germans sent him to Bregenz.
He worked also in a factory making pumps
for aeroplanes; someone slept on a sack
of grain daily, and took it home afterwards.

Innsbruck belonged to Germany, Vienna to
the U.S.; Bregenz to France. Vera met her friends
from Równe (as already mentioned) and also met
Albin Makowski there. Everyone was invited to
choose where they wanted to go to. Vera
wanted to go to the Red Cross and went
alone on foot to a place in the mountains
to get a permit for Bregenz.

Vera said there was a French officer there who
was the image of her husband. Vera said
that her husband would be looking for her
and she wanted to get in touch with him, to
tell him where she was. She felt it wasn't
properly translated. She was the only one
to get a permit to Bregenz.

(7)

(Backtracking). Vera often remarks how everyone helped her, it was extraordinary, she had such incredible luck - "why me?" she often asks. She always got where she needed to be.

One occasion, she was very lucky — she was waiting with George on a railway platform during the war. Lots of refugees around. She noticed a German soldier, a youngish one come up to her — he spoke in German to her (how did he know Vera had learnt German?) and said that she ought to get a different train — the one she was waiting for may not have been going where she thought it would be, he told her. She quickly went to catch another, different train.

Not everyone in Poland knew German, her sister elected to study French, but Vera chose German at school.

At one time, travelling in trains with George during the war, the train came to a river in the night. The bridge had been blown up or destroyed. The Germans always made sure the refugees got to where they were meant to, and had a train waiting on the other side of the river. Everyone had to get off the train and wade through the river. Vera carried George and waded across with

MISSING TEXT - MAKE IT UP

(9)

refugees if they needed help. Women with children got priority. Once a 16-year-old German youth soldier asked if he could pick George up and took him and Vera to a safe area, where women and children could be assured safety.

— " —

(Backtracking)

When war broke out the Russians already knew about it in advance and had organised troops in that part of Poland. They then let out Polish criminals from the jails and made them into "soldiers" (knowing they would know the Poles and their language well and would be an asset). Some people were quick off the mark like a friend of Vera's who drove as quick as possible to get to the border, and so to the UK. When war was officially announced, Vera was staying with her mother in Równo on holiday, and found out from her sister Anna about it, when she was stopping at her house at Hajnówka, near Białowieża (where she lived with her husband Czesław). When Czesław was taken off in a train, the Russian soldiers came looking for Vera but she was in her sister Anna's house in Hajnówka at the time. There were 2 houses there with one courtyard between them ~~and~~ or front area, a "garden", and they accidentally looked for Vera in the other house, not Anna's. The owner said Vera wasn't there and when the soldiers left the neighbour came to Vera's

(10)

sister's Anna's house and asked "Is your sister here?" and Anna said 'Yes'. Then she was told that soldiers were looking for Vera. So Vera took George and ran to an Uncle's house where his wife was living and said she would stay there. The soldiers came but Vera ran out of the back of the house when she heard them, leaving George in the house. That didn't look to the soldiers odd as it looked as though George was the child of the Uncle's wife. It was the coldest time of the year and Vera was freezing cold. She went to the house in the night with George 10 months old - 40°.

* ANOTHER VERSION * - more detail - (23 Nov. 11)

(24?)

Vera was in her early 20's and staying in Hajnówka near Białowieża at her sister's house. Her sister 'Nina' (Polish form of Anna) had a daughter Irena "Ircza" ^{1/2} a year difference in age to George. Her husband was an educated officer in the Polish army and had been taken to a German work camp ^{Edward also had family in Germany} in Germany. At that time some Communist Polish "Bolsheviks" had come to her family home in Poland to tell her to come to Białowieża where her husband Czesław, an officer in the Polish army and also a high-up employee in "Lesznictwo" as a forester (in the Białowieża Forestry) was being taken away - as he was "intelligencja" and a threat to the Bolsheviks - to Russia to work in the forests there.

That's what he and his ~~other~~ fellow workers had been told but it was just a way of removing potential trouble-makers out of the area, to end up possibly in Siberia, maybe never to return. This was a few years before war officially broke out. Nina (Anna) worked in Białowieża for the forestry because she was a trained architect and was employed drawing up plans of the forest for the foresters for when it was being managed by them. She got the job because her father Tencofert Karkocz (my grandfather) was the Chief forester and she helped him by her work. But he had retired by then and at the same time my Great-grandmother had died leaving a lot of money, some of which had been inherited by Zofia Karkocz, Vera's mother and my grandmother. They wanted to buy a house and my grandmother Zofia liked the house in Równe in "ulica Lubickiego" which was available to rent, and when it became available to buy, they bought it, with her inheritance. Zofia especially liked the fruit trees - there were plum trees lots of them there, fruit lay all over the ground at times.

Once, before the war, a Russian family in Równe was being harassed by the Russian Bolsheviks and the parents and two daughters (16 and 22) simply walked out of their house and walked down the

street to get away. Their father was wanted because he was the headmaster of the local school, and "intelligencia". They were sheltered by Zofia in the top room of the house in Równe and the soldiers couldn't find them.

My Grandmother Zofia was by chance with my mother at Nina's house in Hajnówka. Nina said to Vera "did you know the Bolsheviks are rounding people up, along with your Czesław? They want to cart them off to Russia. They'll come looking for you to go with him!" Vera refused to go with him as she suspected there might be a catch and also at the same time their marriage had not been lately very happy. So when Vera learnt that, she knew he would have no clothes with him, or bedding, her sister gave her a suitcase of her husband Edward's shirts and things and also bedding and Vera took the suitcase to the station at Białowieża where the animal wagons were assembled. It was the coldest night and deep snow. She found the truck and told the Russian soldiers she had Czesław's things but she was only a friend. She was shown the wagon he was in and was shocked to see inside the wagon all the forester company she knew, workers who worked along side her husband, and their children. Czesław saw her and said "my wife" = "Zona". The Russian soldier said "Zyna"? (Russian for

(13)

wife) to Vera and she had to admit she was his wife. But she said she had a baby in Hajnówka and had to go back to fetch him, she was not going to go with her husband without her baby - her sister already had her own daughter and wouldn't be able to look after them both. Vera felt the young Russian soldier may have had a wife and child of his own and so sympathised with her, saying she could fetch George and meet up with the train when the train passed through Hajnówka later, so she could join Czesław when Czesław was annoyed and didn't want the case. The soldier said to just leave it in the snow on the platform, he'd change his mind later and decide he wanted it.

Vera went back out in the freezing snow, luckily wrapped up well in thick fur coat and boots and went to get George. Nina said Vera would have to go or else she'd get tracked down at Nina's house. So Vera went some way off to a house of "Aunti Julcius" wife of her uncle. Zbyszek was her little son. This auntie's house had a front and a back door so they agreed that if the Russians came for Mum, she and George would run out the back. They stayed up all night in the kitchen and in the morning Vera left and went to Równe to her mother's house. A few years later war officially broke out.

(14)

When Vera went to Krakow en route for Vienna, she stayed in Krakow thanks to the Russian family who had sheltered at Zofia's house in Równe, and she stayed with them. She met them again in Bregenz.

Vera went on to Italy from there, with Abram ^{Makows}, with whom she had fallen in love, and stayed at a refugee camp in Barletta, which is why they went to Italy.

~ Back tracking to Vera's childhood ~

When she was 16-18 she was sent to Bielsk - Podlask; as where she lived at the time in Białystok. There wasn't a secondary 'higher' school and her mother Zofia wanted her to continue her education. She went to lodge with a respectable family there who had 2 daughters and when together once in a room the girls stopped talking and said that Vera had rays of light emanating from all around her body. They were amazed and didn't know what they were.

The house in Białystok was at 11, ulica Eurowska. Zofia's sister (Vera's aunt) lived at no. 12, her name was Valeria. The house was demolished and turned into a workshop or factory. Her grammar school "agymnasium" became a place for training medical students. There used to be a brook running by the side of the house.

As a girl, Vera and Nina (Anna) ~~had~~ needed to go to school and there was a school in Bialystok so my grandmother Zofia had the old baths in Bialystok* made into a house - a sort of flat which was a bit damp. They had nice rooms though and Zofia employed a housekeeper who had a room by the kitchen and this woman looked after them both whilst they went to school in Bialystok. The housekeeper only knew one soup - Barszcz - beetroot soup, and after some years of eating ~~the~~ barszcz so often, Vera did not have barszcz cooked when she married, for quite a long time. In the holidays the girls went back to Bialowiezy where their parents lived in a house by the forest. Their father used to manage and supervise the cutting down of the trees in the forest; he used to check each tree, ordering which had to be cut down and allowed to sprout again, and transferring all this to drawn plans, in forest sections.

Vera remembers looking after a fox who used to come to the house, they used to feed it. She remembers how they used to yearn for the bright lights of the town as not much went on in the countryside. Vera did enjoy nature though and was popular with her friends. She would go for lengthy bike rides with her friends, often boys, but not "boyfriends" - she could ride and talk with them for hours.

When Vera was born it was a very cold January day and when her mother went into labour her father had to leave Zofia with the maid while he went to find the midwife and bring her. It was deep snow and by the time the midwife came, Vera had nearly been born. She was such a small baby (her sister was only 1 year older and much bigger) that they were afraid for her and gave her some alcohol to fortify her just after birth (or whilst a very young baby).

Her sister Anna was always bigger than her and considered prettier but Vera was livelier and her father called her "czekanai", a nickname for her as she was always running here and there. When she was older she used to have a chest complaint and have to spend time by the sea.

* The old baths in Białystok were built by Anna Starosiecka, Vera's maternal grandmother, who felt it was shocking that the people of Białystok didn't have baths. So she had the first public baths in Białystok built.

Vera loved art and craft and enjoyed making clothes for her teddies and dolls even as a teenager. She won a contest of Ponciki (Donglum) making once as she accidentally made a huge one, it grew and grew in the pan! She loved painting in oils and on glass, and dancing - the polka; going to balls, swimming in the lakes and countryside walks. She wanted to study interior design at university but after her sister went to uni to be an architect, there wasn't enough money left to send Vera to university too.

When she met Czesław Rutkowski, he was a trainee forester with a University training and was working in her father's employ (as he was Chief Forester at that time, at Białowieża Forest). ~~They got married~~ She married in her early twenties, but she always regretted not going to University.

Her life was always comfortable, housekeepers and servants, before War broke out.

When she was small she went to a governesses' school. There were just a few pupils, all girls. They would learn Polish "unofficially" (that part of Poland was within Russia at that time.)

When she was born, her neighbourhood was "in Russia" and the law was at that time that children had to take the father's religion (Tysenfant was Eastern Orthodox - or "Uniąt" - (Ukrainian?)) so she was christened Eastern Orthodox. When the border moved and her neighbourhood was back in Poland, she was christened into her mother's religion, Roman Catholic, her father didn't mind it.

In Hajnówka, there was a great industrial tree-cutting - machine shops for tree sawing. This is where Anna ('Nina'), Vera's sister lived when married. The British bought this area from the Białowieża Part to 'Centuri' (see map) Centuri was where Vera's family lived in a house (rented) for some time. England had a big hotel for the

(18)

British workers and English bought also houses for the inspectors to live in.

After the war the houses were sold to the Polish. They were like hotels. The Inspector had a real "English house". There should still be 5-6 English houses, looking like real English houses. A little railway was built especially for them. At Białowieża there ~~were~~ was a large station like a cattle carriage (Backtracking).

On the 2nd of February when there was news of the war, trams were stationed at Białowieża. In one night, unexpectedly all down the East of Poland everyone was told to get out of their homes and get into the trams. They had two hours to pack.

"Take what you can!" In stuck some people just took bedding, no time to think. Vera had really thick skiing clothes which helped her bear the cold.

First there was the big forest, then Białystok was built. The church of St. Roch was there a long time. The road going from the church & cemetery was built after the church. That was my mother (Vera's) family church, her grandmother & grandfather Anna and Piotr Starosieki were buried there. Vera doesn't like the church as it doesn't seem to suit the area. There are 2 cemeteries, one either end (side?) of the road. In the Bolsheviks time a young man "Popieluszka" was made a priest and started to talk against Russia. He

was political and the Russians didn't like it. Certain people told the Russians and he was taken away, put in a sack and drowned (it was said). He had come from a monastery. They took him out of the river and built a statue to him. When the Russians took Poland they didn't like Polish people being religious and they built a church on "Freedom Square", a Bolshevik Church, opposite the railway station. No-one liked it. The Polish people out of spite took the beautiful statues down and ruined them. Now it's a museum, all in marble. Many marble things were thrown out and spoilt.

^{one of}
On ^{the} main streets in Bielsk Podlaski there's the Eastern Orthodox Church (the Cerkiew) where Vera was christened. It's very lovely. Opposite it is the Roman Catholic Church where she went after being baptised Catholic, it's also beautiful with a lovely icon of Our Lady there.

- Backtracking -

When Vera was looking for Czeslaw on the train, the soldiers went from carriage to carriage looking for him - "is Pukanski there?" until they found him.

Each train was destined for a different place - Czeslaw went to the gold mines. Others to Archangelisk. In Czeslaw's carriage people recognised Vera and called out "Hi - Czeslaw's wife!" Vera said she shouldn't go - they said "come on, get in!"

(20)

She knew anyway that she couldn't leave George and if George went he wouldn't survive the journey.

Sometimes babies were thrown into the snow. The trains took weeks and there was no food. When trains stopped people gave food away to them at the trains - Russians would give food and milk "for the children", "dzieci" even though they didn't have enough for themselves.

(Bialowieza again)

The wood-cutting industry was called "Tartaki". After the war the British were owed money by the Poles. They couldn't pay, instead they paid the British in wood and railway sleepers.

(Bialystok)

The Puszcza was given to Lithuania because of the Lithuanian Queen (marriage). So the Czar built the beautiful palace there and the first Catholic church at St. Pech where my great-grandmother is buried (ANNA STAROSIELSKA)

When Vera came to England, she travelled with George to Maghull, where there was a refugee camp. (Maghull's near Liverpool). Albin Makowski went straight to London to get work.

In Maghull Vera learnt various sewing skills, she went to lots of classes, for tailoring, millinery, other things like that. They had dances and parties for the children too. Because her life in Poland had been very privileged, she had no work skills. After a time there, she came to London and rented rooms with Albin and George, sometimes sharing houses with others.

They lived in ~~Ealing~~^{Fulham}, then Chomley Road in Highgate and finally in Muswell Hill. They didn't have much room in their small flat.

Albin found work in the General Post Office, the 'GPO' as a telephone operator, in the section to do with foreign calls as he knew French and maybe other languages. Later he got a post in the Civil Service, where he was very well regarded.

He did later on suffer from Angina Pectoris and had to go to hospital once for a liver or liver stones/gall stones? related problem. He used to smoke which was thought to be a factor in the heart problem.

They married once Vera's divorce was complete (about 1950) Vera used to work in a basement sewing shop near Oxford Street where she was popular although often late

(22)

for work! There were many other foreign nationals working there, mainly Eastern European, or Russian. She met my godmother there, a Polish lady who had lived in Russia. Her name was Jadwiga (Jadzia) Adamczyk and her husband was Leon. They had no children and lived in Linzee Road in Crouch End where we often used to go for meals and grown up parties; the meals were fantastic - lots of courses, and vodka. Vera cooked lots of meals for guests and no-one went away hungry. The meals were often elaborate ones despite the income being modest.

During the early years in England Albin and Vera decided to live in Argentina. They filled the forms in and went to the bus stop to go to ~~get~~ the Argentinian Embassy with them but changed their minds and came back, having decided it was best to stay in England.

They ~~bought~~ bought the lower part of No. 40 Grand Avenue, Muswell Hill, the upper part being ~~occupied~~ owned by a British couple and their children, Edna and Leslie Ward, Julie and Clive, who was near my age. We played together a lot. Vera and Albin bought them out so that was how they got the whole house and in the 60's finished repaying the mortgage.

(23)

Vera worked very long hours, and very hard, and when I was born she worked from home, making beautiful clothes for wealthy clients. These clients, titled ladies, would come to our house and I would watch them being fitted for clothes by my mother. They really liked Vera and felt they could confide in her and talk on any topic, thanks mainly to her background in Poland. She received gifts from them such as real pearls.

In 1960 her mother, Zofia came to England for a visit - she called me "my gold" "moje złoto".

My father, Albin died of Coronary Thrombosis in 1964
In 1966 Zofia died.

PTO



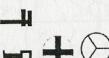
Cerkiew



Baza noclegowa



Kościoty



Ośrodek Zdrojowy
Warsztat samochodowy
Stacja benzynowa



Nadleśnictwo



Muzeu
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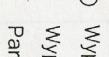
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A
wypożyczalnia kajaków
Parking, Kemping



Schronisko stałe, sezonowe



Parking, Kemping
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