

## **RG-50.488.0328**

### **Summary**

Adam Gajda, born August 20th, 1931, in Lviv, Ukraine, describes his life during and after the war and particularly his experience with the Resistance (Polish Underground Army "AK") and the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs).

Before the war, his father worked as the supervisor at the Cemetery of the Defenders of Lviv and they lived at the cemetery caretaker's residence until July 5th, 1946, when the NKVD arrested them. Right before the war, his father joined the Polish Army and Adam never saw him again.

Before the war, his mother stayed at home and took care of the children. During the war, she sewed clothes to earn money. Adam had two siblings, a sister and a brother.

In 1939, under the Russian and German occupation, Adam went to school with other Polish children, but he doesn't remember any Jewish children attending the same school. He remembers the Jewish store (Hajvas) that he would visit sometimes. He describes antagonism between the Polish and Jewish communities but he does not relate any detailed stories.

He remembers seeing a bombed-out building and soldiers on the streets from the first day of the occupation. After the Soviet invasion, their neighbors were arrested by the NKVD for supporting the Polish Resistance. He remembers hearing that those responsible for the arrests and further deportation of Polish citizens to Siberia were members of the Jewish community who had joined the NKVD. His family was also on the list because of his father's activities in 1918. To avoid arrest and deportation, they hid at their neighbors' place for a couple of days.

He remembers that the Russians were deporting people by cargo trains, and the winter of 1940 was frigid. His mother was delivering warm food to the train station, which put her at risk of being deported as well.

At the cemetery, Adam remembers two gravediggers, Serenko and Galen, hired by the Soviets to bury bodies from Lviv's prisons. Their assignment was secret, however, one of them admitted their work to Adam's mother.

After the German invasion, life in Lviv changed. Jewish community members were required to wear a white band and later had to report and move to the ghetto.

He remembers a Jewish woman who asked him to hide her 8 or 9-year-old daughter and offered him gold for it.

Adam describes trucks full of Jewish and Soviet soldiers, which the Germans transported twice a week to Lesienica Sandpit and murder the prisoners. Every time, after seeing the trucks, he could smell the scent of burned bodies.

He joined the Resistance in 1943. At the age of 12, he was recruited by his friend Felicjan Zagłobicz.

He remembers Jewish members of the resistance. He describes an order from commander Dragan Sotirović "Draža" to help Jewish community members if required, accept them to the organization; however, protect sensitive information from them, and do not involve them in military actions to prevent arrests.

Adam was involved in supporting resistance members, and with his mother, he organized a shelter at their home.

He describes the Lviv Ghetto and the Ukrainian and German guards, but he wasn't involved in any resistance military actions inside. After the war, they were helping and give shelter to members of the resistance members.

Adam's grandparents had a farm in Sokolniki village, and he was traveling to visit them on many occasions for food supplies. He remembers the work camp at the town but no further details.

After the war, one of the resistance, Bolesław Wójtowicz, betrayed Adam and his mother. They were both arrested by the NKVD on July 5th, 1946. After two months of interrogation and torture, Adam was forced to sign a cooperative agreement and work for the organization, and his mother was deported to Siberia.

Thanks to support from a former member of the AK, Adam escaped to Krakow under a new identity, where he joined his younger brother.

Using his new name, Władysław Wolski, he attended high school in Oświęcim and later attended and graduated from the University. He returned to using to his real name in 1955.

He visited Lviv in 1951, for his sister, and they moved together to Wrocław. His mother came back from Siberia in 1956.