

## STANISŁAW BARANOWSKI (POLAND)

### CLIP 01

My name is Stanisław Baranowski. I was born on 16th November 1924 in Warsaw.

If the war had not broken out, I would have gone to Aircraft and Mechanical School to become a pilot. It was my dream.

In 1939 I was at the scout camp. In August we were coming back from the scout camp. We did not reach the main station in Warsaw where we were supposed to be disembarked, but we were disembarked at the east station. I belonged to the 42nd Warsaw Scout Team in Różana Street.

Our cooperation started in the scouts. Colleagues from the scouts, the same as me, I do not remember those names, it was Mietek Wiącek, Heniek Balas, Stefan Wojakowski, Tadeusz Jagier, Jozef Smółka, Leszek Janiszewski and many, many other scouts. We started at the beginning with meetings and organizing. At some moment, I do not know from where it came, somebody said that our team had been joined to Headquarters of Warsaw Defense, which was based in Myśliwski Palace, in Łazienki Królewskie, here, the entry from 29 Listopada Street. We got there, a few of us, from this team, those who I mentioned. More or less. It is hard to say. And we were classified as a runner, guider in Warsaw. Because the army units staying then in Warsaw, those were soldiers, who did not know Warsaw. And it was the beginning of my adventure with the war, We were brought up in a different way before the war. I belonged to the scouts from my twelfth birthday, so it was for four or five years at that time. And the scouts was shaping us, it was different from nowadays. There was a rule: love to your country, physical fitness, and sports, and some other things.

### CLIP 02

Just right after the war, after the capitulation in Warsaw, there was chaos, starvation.

Committees called SKO were established. The Committee of Welfare. We started our job there, in this Committee of Welfare, our team, the team of those scouts.

The reason for that was helping people, who found themselves in a very difficult situation. It meant starvation or something like that... Initially, there was no help. For cards people could buy only paraffin oil or household detergents. There was nothing there. We helped those people who needed this help. We were looking for those people, or they came to us as they knew we could help.. And I started my job there with Wanda Jaskólska. She was the French teacher at Jadwiga Queen, I guess. She was teaching French there. She was the manager of this SKO group, she was organizing everything. Later on, after a while, it turned into RGO.

But it started later on, when the printing house started working in Przemysłowa Street.

There was a big slip-up, exactly in 1942 in this printing house, they were printing meinlowki and wolfartowki cards. Those were cards for the Germans. Food ration coupons were there, too.

Germans had their own stores. There were two kinds of shops in Warsaw. Wolfart's stores were with meat and Meinl's stores were with food. And we were using those false coupons and going to those shops. Secondly, I do not know now from where they were taking money, it is hard to say, from there the Board of RGO took money for this help. But the help was really impressive.

I was just a typical, ordinary soldier, somehow a volunteer. It is better to say I was a worker or something like that. All was done on your own initiative. And we began ... At some moment Wanda, as it was her name, said: we have to take care of this Ujazdowski Hospital.

And there all officers, maybe not all, but most officers taken to captivity, came to this hospital. And she cooperated there with the welfare board and we started there. And we were helping there, finding food, clothes and started organizing escapes of our officers from this hospital which was closed.

Germans were guarding them, because they were somehow prisoners of war. That is how we can call those officers – prisoners of war. And as I knew this land because I came from this area, I used to live in Czerniakowska Street and then in

Holówki Street, yes, and this park, Agrykola, that is how we call it nowadays, I knew it as well as my own pocket. And the barracks were connected with this park Agrykola. Then we started organizing, apart from financial assistance, also clothes, food, escapes. But after the first escape which we helped with, the Germans realized that somebody was missing, and from then on strong repressions started. And then we decided to bring dead bodies from hospitals. And we took them... on the carriage we took dead bodies. At the same time, this hospital, it had to be repaired and my father managed to help with that and he was delivering building material. Bricks, cements, sand. And we took it, we took the dead body and then the amount of people was correct. It was important that the actual state of prisoners was correct. This one who was to escape had a number, prisoners did not have any photographs, were not catalogued, so we were putting those numbers to a different person and helped them escape.

They escaped by carriage, sometimes they had to go through barbed wire or shrubs. We knew where the passageway was from Agrykola to the hospital. And it took quite a long, quite long till the time of hospital liquidation.

### CLIP 03

And the cooperation started, they said charity part. And at that time additionally, the news magazine - was coming out. The deliverer of this, in this first stage, for our group was Mietek Wiącek. Then our groups divided. I was left in that group which in some moment found the contact with the captain of the prewar `Dwójka` - military intelligence, Tadeusz Wasilewski. And from this stage our group started working for him.

And he, Mietek, at some moment, it was 1941 or the end of 1940, disappeared. I do not know what happened with him. We found out he had been arrested. And then he appeared to be a traitor. Because of him many people were arrested.

And this organization did develop by itself, our organizations were built up from the bottom. Yes, when we joined the scout team our group, including those ten or twelve people, was growing and got bigger and bigger. And then there were moments when I brought one hundred copies of this news magazine `Biuletyn Informacyjny`. I did not deliver it by myself, I gave it to some five, six, seven colleagues and they delivered it, too. At the beginning, it was silly, it was the beginning, we were scared while delivering it. We used to put it at the bottom of the door to inform Warsaw citizens about all the news. And if we knew somebody we gave it to this person and asked him to pass it to the next one after reading it. And it was the way everything grew, because the AK as I said to you earlier, was made of the consolidation of all parties. And me, later on, it was in 1941, started taking part in this contact field. That is how I would call it. I used to go to different places. To Grójec, to Radom.

Yes, as I said, I started my cooperation with Tadeusz Wasilewski. One day he says to me:

`We need to get to the airport in Wolanów.` It was before the outbreak of war with Russia. I think it was a few weeks before. Because the Germans built two airports at Grójec, there, where now a second-hand car sale is. I have forgotten the name of it, and in

Wolanów. So it was a problem to get there. The only way to get there was as a worker. I took a carriage and went from Warsaw to Radom and there I had a contact. In *śeromskiego* Street there was a flower shop, and there we had our liaison officer – Janka. She worked as a florist. So in *Seromskiego* Street we had a flower shop. And she had already organized everything that I disguised as a cart driver, could get to this airport. And there I was driving for three, or four days, not the whole week. I noticed what it was, that it was a huge airport, that they had planes, such planes, that two or three planes landed there every day. And I came back to Warsaw, with the same horse as from Radom. To Warsaw I was going for two days. Moreover, on my way to Warsaw, I established a new contact. It was a contact with a group from Kielce, and I even took part in one action next to Kielce. At that time between

Radom and Roszki a German general was killed on that train. I took part in this action. But not as a direct participant, just as a service. With the same cart I delivered guns, ammunition, other things. Then I took everything back. It was my role in it.

#### CLIP 04

At some moment, to establish a contact with the ghetto, I was working in a team of receivers. I got... I did not work, I just got an ID card from the Team of Receivers of Jewish Properties in Warsaw. It was the lawyer Jarczyk. It was based in 6 Królewska Street. I had this ID from him and on this base I could get into the ghetto. I helped organizing transport of food. I mean, my job went like this: they were supposed to come at this and that time, there and there. There were gates to get into the ghetto which were guarded by Germans. And there Jews were dealing with Germans. I do not know how much they paid them. Germans let the cart come to the ghetto with food and they even escorted it to the right place as the Jewish police was worse than the Gestapo.

And then a German escorted it to the place where everything was unloaded. Of course for bribe. They always took bribes in this or other way. I met people who had a right to enter the ghetto, who delivered firewood. Janek M., I do not want to say his last name, he delivered firewood to the ghetto. Coal, wood, in every cart. He also had a big horse company, a transport company as there were no cars at that time, so under every coal or wood there was food hidden. And if he had been kept for ... helping Jews... And when we were taking Jews. Yes, when they went at night, so they used to go to... how to name it... escape.

Everything was possible. Everything was possible for huge amounts of money. Those Jews from Łódź, from the Łódź factories, or others from banks, they were dealing with Germans, as all of them, maybe not all of them, but 70 percent of Germans could be bought. And the Germans quite often transported those... they were driving their car, Opel, and behind them was a car, a car from the Gestapo, and they would transport them so that nobody could approach them in the street. Yes, there were many ways of organizing this. But nobody was doing that for free.

We have to say that.

Little kids. With girls there was no problem, but with boys, if they were circumcised, then it was a serious problem. First of all we had to go somewhere to some village, to get a birth certificate from a priest, as it was when somebody died. We went there with the priest, in the province from Warsaw areas, somewhere in Góra Kalwaria or Grójec. There the birth certificates were given. Documents were made and then without any problem you could go out with a boy or...

And a lot of children taken out from the ghetto, went to the monastery.

Monasteries were very helpful. All monasteries in the Warsaw areas, I know about ten or fifteen cases, as me myself took part in it. Directly or indirectly, or I settled documents, or delivered the birth certificate or took one to the monastery one time.... Because it was not that I took a kid directly to a monastery, no. I took it to, let us say, to Karczew and there, in Karczew I passed this kid to somebody else and the next person took him to the monastery. That is why we have so many priests... When you look at them, you can see they are Jews.

It cost a lot. When you were going to this kind of priest, it was very seldom that... You had to, how to say... well, put money on the tray so that he could give you a birth certificate. Because it was a risk for him, too. If he had been kept, that he was a person who made out this birth certificate and that somebody died and the next birth certificate was made out, because he had to cancel the certificate of death. He had to change everything in books to make sure there was no disorder. All this needed time, organization and contacts... and cheekiness and wit. All advantages and disadvantages that a human being can have.

To get a birth certificate from a priest, you had to give a bribe. Later on, to make a 'Kennkarte', usually the price for it was about one thousand zlotys or more. Then photos, to find a photographer, who would do all these things... Everything had to be organized perfectly.

Differences were big. As here there were hungry and naked people, dead bodies were not in streets, and there they were. And then this horrible contrast. When I tell you, that in the ghetto you could get bananas and in Warsaw you did not have any chance to get them, can you believe that?

There was a restaurant, a Jewish one, in the ghetto, in 1942, where you could get everything. Even on the Aryan side you could not find it... And when you get to the street, only dead bodies, naked... And that police... If I was going into the ghetto, I was scared only of the Jewish police. Of nobody else. Because I had never seen that a German shot a Jew in the ghetto.

But I saw Jewish police killing Jews in ghetto, I saw it. I did not understand them at that time, when I was going there. When I got to Majdanek, then I understood what it was about.

This group of people, who were managing the ghetto, wanted to survive at all costs. It were not Germans who were preparing the long lines of Jews who were sent to Umschlagplatz. Jews were doing that, those Jewish policemen. They were told to deliver four hundred Jews, so they took four hundred Jews to the loading ramp, to the transport.

#### **CLIP 05**

The daughter of a lawyer, a Jew, his name was Holzkener, his daughter Maria, I took her out of the ghetto, when the ghetto was being built, when the wall was built, I took her to our place, so that she could live there, and for the whole time till my arrest, she was present when I was arrested, she lived at our place.

Loyalty was great. We were in touch, I mean my mother was in touch with Jews, so almost half people living there in Hołówki Street, knew about this.

Well, I know it from my mother, that after my arrest, she lived at our place for a while.

Later on, she was scared, I do not know, I do not know the exact reason, but at some moment she moved from my mother for a short time. And then, it was in 1943 I guess, the Germans announced in Warsaw, that Jews who will come to Polski hotel, Polski hotel is the first in Plac Bankowy now, so if they come they will be sent for exchange to Turkey. As exchange for German prisoners. It was the version from my mother. And she, my mother, she said that everybody advised her against going but that she agreed, because she was scared as it became harder and harder after 1942. After the uprising in the ghetto in 1943, it was really hard, and this was before the uprising in the ghetto, it was in 1943. And she agreed. None of the transports went to Turkey. It took some time when other free people, and in Warsaw there were a couple of thousands of Jews on the Aryan side, realized that those transports were not going to Italy but to Treblinka, but it was too late, as most of them had already been sent. And she was sent, as I know, probably either to Belzec or to Treblinka and there she terminated her life.

#### **CLIP 06**

I just came back. Then we were next to Radom, at Radom areas. I came back home at 8 in the evening. And while coming to the action we were given different 'Kennkarten.'

And at the railway station I was supposed to get to the Central Station and in the last minute, in Radom I guess, they changed their mind, and told us to get off at the West Station to give back those Kennkarten and take our Kennkarten. And I came.

My ID, how to say nowadays. I came back home. I had a cold, was ill. I went to bed.

Doctor Chojecki lived above us as then we lived in 3 Hołówki Street.

This is the street where the poet Baczynski lived. In the same house. He was living on the third staircase and I on the sixth. Later the famous editor Tomaszewski lived there.

As I said, these names are famous until now. The house is still standing. This is like the Nazareth monastery where the Czerniakowska monastery is.

So between Gagarina and Bartycka Street there is Holowki 1, a very big house, 100 flats. All flats with four, five rooms. Very big flats.

And at 10 the caretaker knocks. My mother goes to open the door. Six SS men get into our flat.

Search, they search through the whole flat. Nothing is found. But you will not believe it, there were two entries to our flat, and above the main entry there was an alcove covered by curtain. Just an ordinary curtain. And there was a radio. And they searched through the whole flat,

everything, but did not check this curtain. Yes, it was somehow, a miracle. Yes, Szucha Avenue, Pawiak and from Pawiak to Majdanek. It was a road.

From November I was a prisoner, in investigation. Investigation finished, I will not tell you how it looked like, as everybody knows about it. When you were going to take part in investigation, when you could not walk any more you were taken to the cell. The best proof is that I am deaf on my right ear, some other little injuries. And on 17th January there was a transport from Pawiak to Majdanek. In 1943. After coming at night to Majdanek, it was 17th January 1943. It was winter, when the frost

comes to twenty, thirty degrees minus. Enormous frosts. They took us to the field, put us in front of the bath house. First, we were taken in those cattle vans from Warsaw to Lublin, then were unloaded, we walked from the railway station to the camp. There, at night, all of us had to strip naked.

Searched, and we were standing in the snow. They were searching our clothes. And then, after the search, we got dressed. It is good some of them had some warm clothes, as some others, like prisoners from Pawiak, some of them were arrested earlier, in summer, so some of them had only light clothes on. Fortunately, I wore a good cloth, because when I was arrested and taken from home, my mother had given me warm clothes. And additionally, she sent some to Pawiak. It was very good that she sent also warm clothes. It helped me a bit. They took us to the field number 3. I got to block X. There were two blocks, our transport took block number IX and X. At night, nobody knew anything, it was empty, cold, we were hungry. But we managed to survive till morning.

We get up in the morning, open the door and there, in front of us, were four transports of Czech Jews. We came on 17th January, and those transports from Czech I guess, I do not know when, but definitely came earlier before us. They were, I can say, close to death.

After the first night, one of our colleagues died. We took him out and waited. We even did not manage to put him down and those Czech Jews jumped on him like vultures, yes those Czech Jews and everybody who only could was taking from him clothes or whatever. I will never forget this sight. Even now I have it in my dreams when they jump on him, all of them, falling down because of starvation, they are Muslims, in the camp language. So the next dead body, next day there were two or three dead bodies, so then we undressed them.

You see, during one night our mentality changed. Those who did not have warm clothes started undressing dead bodies to have something better, we had to get used to new conditions immediately.

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