

From the Testimony of Avraham Sadeh “It was Clear to Me that I Had to Reach Palestine, But How?”

Avraham Sadeh was born in 1918 in Tuczyn in eastern Poland. After the Soviets conquered the area in 1939, he was drafted into the Red Army and fought against the Nazis in its ranks. Sadeh later spent some time in a Soviet labor camp in the Ural mountains, and returned to Poland at the end of the war as a soldier in the Polish Popular Army. After living for two years in Poland, where he was active in the *Bericha* organization, he immigrated to Palestine at the end of 1947.

In this extract from his testimony, he describes his experiences after returning to Poland in 1945:

“I was demobilized from the army. I walked around the streets and didn’t know where to go. It was obvious to me that I had to get to Eretz Israel, but how?...

“I reached Lodz in the morning. I didn’t know a single person’s address and I didn’t want to know any addresses, I wanted to see Jews, that’s all. I was wearing a German air force jacket and carrying a rucksack, I was broken and depressed, and I thought to myself: ‘Why did I stay alive?...”

After some time Avraham Sadeh joined the *Bericha* organization and began to help in its work:

“They sent me to a group. They said to me, ‘We have to take some Jews from Poland to Czechoslovakia’. They didn’t give you any instructions. They said, ‘Go to Silesia and begin...’ At first it was hard, but we had a lot of successes. There was a feeling that everybody created his own job. The chaps thought of the *Bericha* as some sort of underground travel agency. The most important task was rescuing children, getting children out of monasteries... We managed to get hundreds of Jews across. At first they pretended to be Greek citizens... later on it was done legally.

“We weren’t obedient. We received orders from those in charge, but they were sitting about a thousand kilometers away from us... they were there, in the center, they were far away from the daily reality, and things were constantly happening at our end that couldn’t be reported.

“It’s interesting to think that people of all political parties worked with us, and nobody suspected anyone of pushing his own party; we didn’t take any notice of movement allegiance, it wasn’t at all important who was sent first and who second. For instance they would write, ‘We’re sending 60 people from *Hashomer Hatza’ir*, 50 people from Dror’ - the main thing was that they were all Jews, and what did it matter which party they belonged to? We had to get them through and that was the important thing, that more people should travel on...”

Source: The Testimony of Avraham Sadeh, Yad Vashem Archive 03/3975 (Hebrew).