

Memorial of the Sokolski Family

1898 — 2024

Seven acts · Two destinies · A European history

*Full text compiled from the family, administrative and judicial archives
by Claude Sokolski and Sylvain Sokolski, with the historian Monique Heddebaut.*

Foreword — a reconstructed history

This memorial is the fruit of long and methodical archival research. Hundreds of documents were gathered, digitised and transcribed: civil records written in imperial Russian in Warsaw, naturalisation files from the Nord Prefecture and the National Archives, deportation records, convoy lists from the Dossin Barracks in Mechelen, reparation files, administrative correspondence, oral testimonies and family photographs.

It is **Claude Sokolski** who stands at the heart of this work of memory. It was he who, with remarkable determination, set out to reconstruct the history of his parents — Adolphe and Thérèse. He worked closely with the historian Monique Heddebaut. The oral testimonies he gathered — from Georgette Liakhoff and former workers of the Couzineau factory — add an irreplaceable human dimension to these archives.

Several collections were brought together: a body of family documents kept for decades; a collection assembled from the French National Archives, the Nord Prefecture and the Belgian War Victims Service; a corpus obtained from the Arolsen Archives (ITS, Germany, reference T/D-702 424). Finally, Adolphe Sokolski's naturalisation file (French National Archives, reference 22959X33, seventy-three pages) made it possible to fill the great gaps in the story — his youth in Warsaw, the 1916 internment, the Belgian stopover, the first marriage, the first captivity of 1941.

A note on sources

Some documents were transcribed by optical character recognition; the most difficult pieces — cursive manuscripts, records in imperial Russian Cyrillic, administrative forms — were transcribed with the help of assisted-reading tools, then verified and cross-checked. Where a handwritten form conflicts with an official civil record, the civil record prevails.

ACT I

Two parallel destinies

Warsaw · 1898 – 1921

In Warsaw, at the turn of the twentieth century, two Jewish families live in the Mostowski district, where the civil register of the Russian Empire records, in Russian and Hebrew, the births of the non-Christian faiths. The Izraelskis on one side, the Sokolskis on the other.

A large family

Abraham was not alone. Examination of the naturalisation file revealed that he belonged to a large family, scattered by history to the four corners of the world. His brothers were named Buroch, a cobbler; Ménachem, a tailor, who emigrated as far as Melbourne, Australia; Aren; Major; and Isaac, also a tailor, who settled in Paris, at 96 boulevard de Belleville. The Sokolski family lived in Warsaw, at 7 Kozla Street. From that household, each brother followed his own road — one to the far side of the earth, another to Paris, Abraham to Lille.

The Izraelski family

Zelig Izraelski — also called Zelig or Chaim — is a merchant in Warsaw. His wife Chana, née Kulik, raises with him at least four children. Tauba's birth certificate (entry no. 1093) was translated from imperial Russian by Rostyslav Frishman:

“It happened in the city of Warsaw, at the registry office for the non-Christian faiths of the third Mostowski district [...] The father, Zelik Izraelski, thirty-two years old, a merchant, declared the birth of a female child [...] This child received the name Tauba.”

— Translation of birth certificate no. 1093, Mostowski district, Warsaw, 1904

Tauba was not an only child. Her elder sister, Ruchla — called Rose — would marry Lejb Nasielski and settle in Lille; it was she who, later, would bring Tauba over. The siblings also included brothers: Motel, called Max, who settled in Paris; Joseph; and Curla, who disappeared in Poland during the war. A cousin, O. Valitmann, would also intervene for Tauba during the years of administrative struggle. Of this scattered family, it was Tauba who, bound for Brazil, would finally stop in France.

The Sokolski family

Morzek Jankel Sokolski is a broker in Warsaw. His wife is named Chaja Tauba Blajszt. From their union, on 17 January 1898, a son is born, named Abraham. The table of residences that Adolphe would fill in himself in 1945 shows that he lived in Warsaw from his birth until 1916: his entire childhood and adolescence in the Polish capital under Russian rule.

Abraham, then Adolphe

His birth name was Abraham. Once in France, he decided to call himself Adolphe — an ordinary French first name in the 1920s. The tragedy of that choice is one of the darkest ironies of this story: Abraham had become Adolphe in order to blend into the French crowd. And it was precisely that name which would become, a few years later, the very symbol of what was persecuting him.

ACT II

Exile to France

From Warsaw to Douai · 1916 – 1936

The first captivity (1916–1918)

In 1916, Abraham is eighteen. He is interned as a civilian prisoner in Stettin — today Szczecin, in Poland — until 1918. His own naturalisation file bears, under the heading "conduct during the 1914-1918 war", the handwritten note: "civilian prisoner 1916/1918". This is his first captivity. He does not yet know it, but it will not be the last.

Why was an eighteen-year-old, neither soldier nor combatant, interned? Because he was caught in a vice. Warsaw belonged to the Russian Empire; in the eyes of the Germany that had occupied the city since 1915, Abraham was part of the enemy civilian population — a Russian subject. This is how Claude told it to his son:

“My grandfather was seen as Russian by the Germans, and as a Jew by the Russians. Both sides wanted him dead.”

— Adolphe Sokolski, as told by his son Claude, passed on to Sylvain Sokolski

A life marked by two captivities

Adolphe Sokolski is one of the few men whose archives document two internments by Germany, twenty-five years apart. In 1916-1918, a civilian prisoner in Stettin. In 1941-1945, deported to Auschwitz and Dachau. He survived both.

Return to Warsaw, then the Belgian stage (1918–1923)

Freed in 1918, Abraham returns to Warsaw, where he lives as a day labourer from 1918 to 1921. Then he leaves Poland. The naturalisation file reveals a stage until now unknown: before France, there was Belgium. From 1921 to 1923, Abraham lives in Charleroi, on rue du Pont Neuf, employed as a department head by one Franz Libot. The road of exile was therefore not direct: Warsaw, then Charleroi, then at last France.

He arrives in Lille on 10 April 1923. It is there, having become Adolphe, that he joins the Couzineau works, a maker of military clothing for the French army, at 125 rue Gambetta in Lille and 35 rue Giroud in Douai. He will stay there more than twenty years. The unskilled day labourer from Warsaw becomes a journeyman tailor, then a workshop foreman — a patient rise, climbed over thirteen years.

Tauba leaves Warsaw (1926)

Tauba Izraelska, for her part, leaves Warsaw in 1926, holding a transit visa for Brazil, where she meant to work as a milliner specialising in straw hats. She arrives in Lille on 27 April 1926, after two days spent at her brother's in Paris. Her brother-in-law Lejb Nasielski, a hatter who could find no one to help in his shop, talks her out of leaving: he offers her 550 francs a month, board and lodging. Tauba will never take the boat to Brazil.

ACT III

The fight to exist

The administrative struggle — and life going on · 1924 – 1939

Both Adolphe and Tauba came to France because it was, in their eyes, the country of human rights. And yet the France they wished to embrace kept them at a distance — residence refusals, expulsions, ministerial orders. They persisted. For Tauba the struggle lasted ten years, until the expulsion order was lifted in 1936. For Adolphe it lasted his whole life: arriving in 1923, he filed application after application for thirteen years, met with several adjournments, and was naturalised French only in 1947 — at forty-nine, after the deportation. The France he had chosen recognised him fully only once he had lost everything.

First marriage and early years

On 10 May 1924, in Mons-en-Baroeul, Abraham Sokolski — then a tailor, living at 41 rue du Prieuré in Lille — marries Denise Castelin, a machinist born in Mons-en-Baroeul on 22 September 1903, the daughter of café owners. It is this document, transcribed in 2026, that yielded the names of Abraham's parents. This first marriage did not last: the divorce was granted in the husband's favour by the Lille Civil Court on 26 October 1935, and transcribed in Mons-en-Baroeul on 21 March 1936.

On 29 June 1936, at Lille Town Hall, Adolphe — now a workshop foreman, aged thirty-eight, living at 47 rue Malakoff — marries Sosia Gruszka (record no. 720). Sosia is only eighteen; born in Siedlce on 17 May 1918, she is the daughter of Abram-Icek Gruszka, deceased, and of Rywka Jochweta Czerniewicz. From this union three daughters are born: Jacqueline, on 26 July 1936 in Lille; Arlette, on 17 May 1938 in Douai; Francine, on 20 December 1939 in Douai. The family settles in Douai, at 4 rue du Champ Fleuri.

Tauba's fight to stay in France (1926–1936)

In Lille, Tauba met Boruch Kurower, a hosiery merchant at 46 rue de la Monnaie. On 3 October 1926, they marry in a religious ceremony. But that marriage has no legal standing, and Tauba, who entered on a mere transit visa, becomes the object of an expulsion measure. There follows a decade of administrative hell: repeated residence refusals, forced departures to Poland then to Brussels, returns, an expulsion order. Throughout those ten years, Deputy Jean Montigny intervenes on the couple's behalf. The civil marriage is held in Paris on 19 November 1927. Residence permits are then granted only by reprieve, renewed year after

year, until 10 August 1936, when the expulsion order is at last cancelled.

“Miss Izraelska is today the lawful wife of a Polish tradesman established in Lille, against whom nothing can be held. The expulsion order forces the husband either to give up a position he built in Lille through years of work, or to abandon his wife.”

— Jean Montigny, deputy for the Sarthe, Chamber of Deputies, 27 December 1927

Enlistment in the Foreign Legion (2 September 1939)

On 2 September 1939 — the day after the invasion of Poland, the very day war was declared — Adolphe Sokolski signs up as a volunteer in the French army, "for the duration of the war". It is a deliberate act of patriotism toward the country that took him in. Yet he will not join the fighting unit: his work as a workshop foreman at the Couzineau works — which made clothing for the French army — was judged to be, in itself, his contribution to the war effort. He would have this certificate of enlistment authenticated on his return from deportation and use it, for twenty years, in all his reparation files.

ACT IV

The horror

The war · 1941 – 1945

Adolphe's first captivity — an internment in Belgium (June 1941)

As early as June 1941, Adolphe Sokolski is arrested for the first time. He is interned in Belgium, where he spends nine months in captivity. The certificate issued by the Douai Gendarmerie on 27 June 1945 states it plainly: "Deported in June 1941 (for 9 months)". This episode, more than a year before the Douai round-up, shows that the persecution of the family had begun early. Freed, Adolphe returns to Douai, to his family. But that return was only a respite of a few months.

A man who followed the rules

Everything indicates that Adolphe Sokolski, scrupulously respectful of the laws of the country that had taken him in, had declared himself Jewish to the French authorities when they ordered it through the 1940 census. Others did not, and thereby escaped deportation. His very uprightness, his trust in French legality, marked him out to the persecutors.

The Douai round-up — 11 September 1942

On 11 September 1942, at four in the morning, German gendarmes and four French policemen arrest the Sokolski family at their home at 4 rue du Champ Fleuri in Douai. Adolphe, Sosia and their three daughters are given the numbers 148 to 152 at the Dossin Barracks in Mechelen. On 15 September, Convoy X departs — 1,047 deportees, including 229 children.

“That 11 September the weather was fine. I remember it as if it were yesterday. They were so beautiful and so sweet. We could have got them out without any trouble... But no parent would be parted from their children... they said it was just a little trip... If only we had known...”

— Georgette Liakhoff, neighbour of the family in Douai — testimony gathered by Claude Sokolski, 30 July 2013

Official document — 22 March 1946

"Madame Sokolski and her three children have not yet returned from deportation." On arrival at Auschwitz on 17 September 1942, Sosia Gruszka and her three daughters — Jacqueline (6), Arlette (4), Francine (2) — were gassed immediately. Adolphe passed the selection and was given number 64095.

Adolphe's path through the concentration-camp universe was long. Registered at Auschwitz on 17 September 1942, he remains there about a year before being assigned to a labour detail tasked with clearing the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto — that same Warsaw where he had been born forty years earlier, and which he found annihilated. On 6 August 1944 he was transferred to the Dachau concentration camp, then to the Mühldorf sub-camp, where he worked in the underground armament factories until liberation.

In the naturalisation questionnaire he fills out on 18 June 1945, barely back, Adolphe describes his fate in a few administrative words of shattering plainness: "deported as an Israelite from 1941 to 1945". And he adds that he is "at present without news of his wife and children, who were also deported". At that date, he still hopes.

The arrest of Tauba and Bernard in Cahors (March 1944)

Tauba and Bernard Kurower, refugees in the South, are arrested in Cahors in March 1944, after being denounced. Bernard is taken first; Tauba is arrested on 28 March, accused of hiding resistance fighters. The denunciation is said to have come from a neighbour, Mme Larmaudie, who coveted their lodging — and who, in a tragic reversal, would herself be arrested by the Germans and die in Toulon. The couple is interned in Saint-Michel prison in Toulouse, then transferred to the Drancy camp on 15 April 1944. On 20 May 1944, Tauba and Bernard are deported together to Auschwitz. Bernard dies there. Tauba survives — at the end of a full year of ordeal.

At Auschwitz, in the spring of 1944, she witnesses the mass arrival of Hungarian deportees. Then, at the start of 1945, as the Red Army approaches, the Nazis evacuate the eastern camps. Tauba is driven onto the roads: the "death marches", those columns of deportees forced on foot, in cold and hunger, into the heart of the Reich. She passes through Buchenwald, then is taken as far as Bergen-Belsen — a camp with no gas chamber, but where thousands died of hunger, exhaustion and typhus.

On 15 April 1945, the British army liberates Bergen-Belsen and discovers the unspeakable. Tauba is among those found still alive. Stricken with typhus, she is hospitalised and placed in quarantine at the British military hospital Glyn-Hughes. The registers, for a time, count her among the missing. But she lives. She recovers, and returns to France, to Arras, on 30 May 1945.

ACT V

The miracle

The return, reparation, Claude · 1945 – 1967

Adolphe returns to Douai in June 1945. His wife and his three daughters have not come back. His back bears the marks of the blows — scars of the Schläge suffered in captivity. Without a home of his own, he is taken in at Lille, 30 rue des Fossés, by Mme J. Blatt, who officially attests to lodging him "since his return from captivity".

"I saw him again when he came back to work in 1945. I was crying because I had just learned that my niece was going to have a child at under sixteen. He came and asked why I was crying. I told him. He replied:

"Having a child at any age is nothing — they killed my three children." In 1942 he had a handsome face. In

1945 he came back with an aged face.”

— Former Couzineau factory worker, Lille — testimony gathered by Claude Sokolski

Surviving together

Adolphe Sokolski's name appears in a body of archives far wider than the family file alone. The historians Nicolas Mariot and Claire Zalc, in *Face à la persécution. 991 Juifs dans la guerre*, studied the fate of hundreds of Jews of northern France caught in the machinery of deportation. Their work sheds light on what the administrative pieces, alone, do not say: how some survived. Several factors weighed — employment, languages, but above all the bond between people, mutual aid, the keeping of collective ties.

Adolphe possessed several of these assets. He was multilingual: Yiddish and French, but also Polish, Russian and some German. The archives show him assigned, throughout his deportation, to work posts. And when he was sent to clear the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto, the fact of having been born in that city may not have been irrelevant. Behind that single word — to return — there necessarily lay acts of mutual aid, ties forged, and a stubborn will to survive.

The fight for reparation (1945–1965)

As early as 27 June 1945, Adolphe asks the Douai Gendarmerie for a certificate of his 1939 enlistment and of his deportations. He has his status as "looted/despoiled" recognised by the Nord Veterans Office: card no. 17954 attests to the loss of 11 September 1942, rue du Polygone in Douai. In the early 1960s, while living at 7 boulevard des Défenseurs in Lille, he builds two reparation files in parallel: in France, under the Franco-German Agreement of 15 July 1960 (reference C.120); in Germany, with the Landesrentenbehörde Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf (BEG file 3.S 1883 B/R/). A decision of 13 November 1962 grants him, from 1 January 1963 — his 65th birthday — a monthly Wiedergutmachung pension of 300 DM, for the damage to his health suffered in deportation.

Claude — Ward of the Nation

We do not know how Adolphe and Thérèse met. But the community of camp survivors was small, and it is no surprise that their paths crossed after the war — two survivors who had lost everything, and who recognised each other. They married. They were not seeking to have a child; but Thérèse became pregnant. It was, for them, a true surprise: they were already old and bruised. They were people of exceptional strength.

Claude is born of this union on 7 February 1954, in Lille. Thérèse is fifty; Adolphe, fifty-six. He grows up in a community of survivors, raised in French, steeped in the Yiddish he understands without ever having formally learned it.

“She told me that on the day I was born, my father took the photograph of his three daughters out of his wallet and replaced it with mine.”

— Claude Sokolski, recounting his mother Thérèse's words

That gesture says everything: neither forgetting nor replacement — but life which, despite the irreparable, consents to resume. Adolphe had hidden from his son the existence of his three first daughters; Claude learned of it only after his father's death. Adolphe dies on 2 April 1967 in Menton. Claude is thirteen. Thérèse, old and ill, undertakes the process that leads the Nice court to declare Claude Sokolski a Ward of the Nation on 3 November 1967. She seeks for him a protection more lasting than herself — the French Republic. The same Republic that had hounded her with residence refusals for ten years.

Thérèse — Tauba — dies on 14 July 1985, France's national holiday. She cried out in her sleep to the end of her days. The camps had never left her.

ACT VI

The child after

Claude Sokolski, Ward of the Nation · 1954 – 2012

Claude Sokolski is born in Lille on 7 February 1954. He is born into a family that has lost everything and which, in spite of all, begins again: a child, after the horror. His very existence is a kind of victory over what had been undertaken against his family.

But the shadow does not leave him. Claude grows up beside two parents marked forever: a father pensioned at one hundred percent as a civilian victim of the war, a mother who cried out in her sleep. He also grows up in the shadow of three little girls he never knew — Jacqueline, Arlette and Francine, his half-sisters, murdered at Auschwitz aged six, four and two. Later, it is to his own daughter Sarah that he will give their three names — so that these children keep being named.

“The Nation adopts the minor named above. — Whereas the said minor's supporter, Sokolski Abraham, died on the second of April nineteen sixty-seven from illnesses for which he was pensioned at one hundred percent as a civilian victim of the 1939-1945 war.”

— Judgment of the Nice Regional Court, 3 November 1967

The meaning of a status

For Claude, being a Ward of the Nation was never an administrative formality. It was an identity — the proof, inscribed in the registers of the State, that what his family had suffered had been seen, named, recognised.

The keeper of memory

As an adult, Claude became a journalist. That is doubtless what prepared him for the task he set himself: not to let this history die out. He gathered testimonies, assembled documents, worked with the historian Monique Heddebaut. He spoke in schools; he took part in the ceremonies held in Douai in memory of Jacqueline, Arlette and Francine. In 2012, for the seventieth anniversary of the Vél d'Hiv round-up, Claude wrote to the President of the Republic. The Presidency replied to him on 24 October 2012:

“Be assured of the deep emotion with which the Head of State learned of your testimony recalling the tragic fates of your three half-sisters and their mother, who perished in Deportation, as well as those of your parents who survived the camps.”

— Letter from the Presidency of the Republic to Claude Sokolski, 24 October 2012

ACT VII

Transmission

Memory, recognition · 2024

In 2024, Americans — descendants of the Izraelska family — contact the Shoah Memorial in Paris. Claude Sokolski was already in touch with them. The family then brings together a considerable body of documents, made accessible by the great campaigns to digitise the archives of the Shoah. It is Sylvain Sokolski, Claude's son, who carried the archival inquiry to its end, completing what his father had begun.

Claude Sokolski had two children: Sylvain and Sarah. Their names already carry the memory of the lost. Sylvain received, as a middle name, that of Adolphe, his grandfather. And Sarah bears, as middle names, those of Jacqueline, Arlette and Francine — the three little girls murdered at Auschwitz. Sarah Sokolski married Rhian Andrew Hudson; from their union were born three French-American children: Kylian, Amaya and Liam

Hudson.

From Warsaw in 1898 to these children growing up today, the line has not been broken. That, perhaps, is the last word of this memorial: the family that History had set out to erase is still alive. To remember the lost — Sosia, Jacqueline, Arlette, Francine, Boruch — and to name those born after them, is the same faithfulness.

On 4 December 2024, at the end of Claude's long campaign, the French Republic officially recognises Thérèse "Died for France".

APPENDIX I

Family timeline — 1898 to 2024

17.01.1898	Abraham Sokolski born in Warsaw, son of Morzek Jankel Sokolski and Chaja Tauba Blajszt.
29.05.1899	Boruch Kurower born in Warsaw.
1904	Tauba Izraelska born in Warsaw, Mostowski district (certificate no. 1093).
17.05.1918	Sosia Gruszka born in Siedlce, Poland.
1916–1918	Abraham, 18, interned as a civilian prisoner in Stettin. First captivity.
1918–1921	Return to Warsaw; Abraham lives there as a day labourer.
1921–1923	Belgian stage: Abraham in Charleroi, department head for Franz Libot.
10.04.1923	Adolphe reaches Lille and joins the Couzineau works.
10.05.1924	Marriage: Abraham Sokolski × Denise Castelin, Mons-en-Baroeul.
27.04.1926	Tauba Izraelska arrives in Lille, at Lejb Nasielski's.
03.10.1926	Religious marriage: Boruch Kurower × Tauba Izraelska, Lille.
19.11.1927	Civil marriage: Boruch Kurower × Tauba Izraelska, Paris.
26.10.1935	Divorce of Adolphe Sokolski and Denise Castelin (Lille Civil Court).
29.06.1936	Marriage: Adolphe Sokolski × Sosia Gruszka, Lille (record no. 720).
26.07.1936	Jacqueline Sokolski born, Lille.
10.08.1936	Expulsion order against Tauba cancelled.
17.05.1938	Arlette Sokolski born, Douai.
20.12.1939	Francine Sokolski born, Douai.
02.09.1939	Adolphe volunteers for the French army.
June 1941	Adolphe's first captivity: interned nine months in Belgium.
11.09.1942	Round-up at 4 rue du Champ Fleuri, Douai. Numbers 148–152 at Mechelen.
15.09.1942	Convoy X departs from Mechelen — 1,047 deportees, incl. 229 children.
17.09.1942	Arrival at Auschwitz. Sosia and her 3 daughters gassed. Adolphe: number 64095.
March 1944	Arrest of Tauba and Bernard Kurower in Cahors.
20.05.1944	Tauba deported from Drancy. Bernard dies at Auschwitz on 25 May 1944.
06.08.1944	Adolphe transferred to Dachau, then Mühldorf.
15.04.1945	Liberation of Bergen-Belsen. Thérèse survives.

30.05.1945	Thérèse returns to Arras.
22.03.1946	"Madame Sokolski and her three children have not yet returned from deportation."
15.03.1947	Official disappearance record of Boruch Kurower (file no. 41,560).
07.06.1947	French naturalisation of Tauba Izraelska, widow Kurower.
26.09.1947	French naturalisation decree of Abraham Adolphe Sokolski.
07.02.1954	Claude Sokolski born in Lille.
13.11.1962	German reparation pension of 300 DM granted to Adolphe from 1 January 1963.
02.04.1967	Adolphe Sokolski dies in Menton. Claude is 13.
03.11.1967	Nice court — Claude Sokolski declared Ward of the Nation.
14.07.1985	Thérèse Sokolski, née Izraelska, widow Kurower, dies.
04.12.2024	Thérèse recognised "Died for France" — following Claude's campaign.

APPENDIX II

Family portraits

Abraham — Adolphe Sokolski

17 January 1898, Warsaw — 2 April 1967, Menton · Survivor

Son of Morzek Jankel Sokolski and Chaja Tauba Blajst. Civilian prisoner in Stettin (1916–1918). After Warsaw and Charleroi, he reached Lille in 1923 and joined the Couzineau works, becoming a workshop foreman. Army volunteer in 1939. Interned in Belgium in 1941, then deported to Auschwitz (number 64095) and Dachau (1942–1945). Father of Jacqueline, Arlette and Francine with Sosia Gruszka; father of Claude with Thérèse. Naturalised French in 1947.

Sosia Gruszka

17 May 1918, Siedlce — murdered at Auschwitz, 17 September 1942

Daughter of Abram-Icek Gruszka and Rywka Jochweta Czerniewicz. Wife of Adolphe Sokolski (Lille, 29 June 1936). Mother of Jacqueline, Arlette and Francine. Gassed on arrival at Auschwitz with her three daughters, aged twenty-four.

Jacqueline, Arlette and Francine Sokolski

Jacqueline: 26.07.1936, Lille · Arlette: 17.05.1938, Douai · Francine: 20.12.1939, Douai

Daughters of Adolphe Sokolski and Sosia Gruszka. Six, four, two years old. Gassed on arrival at Auschwitz on 17 September 1942. No grave.

Tauba Izraelska — Thérèse Sokolski

1904, Warsaw — 14 July 1985 · Recognised "Died for France" on 4 December 2024

Daughter of Zelik Izraelski and Chana Kulik. Milliner, specialising in straw hats. Reached Lille in 1926 though bound for Brazil. Ten years of administrative struggle to stay in France. Survivor of Bergen-Belsen. Widow of Boruch Kurower, remarried to Adolphe Sokolski. Mother of Claude. She cried out in her sleep to the end of her days.

Boruch Kurower — Bernard

29 May 1899, Warsaw — 25 May 1944, Auschwitz

Hosiery merchant, 46 rue de la Monnaie, Lille. Arrived in France in 1923. Enlisted in the Polish army reconstituted in France in 1939, taken prisoner of war (Stalag XI A, number 3954), then freed. Linked to the Resistance.

Arrested in Cahors in March 1944, deported on 20 May. Died at Auschwitz.

Claude Sokolski

7 February 1954, Lille — Ward of the Nation (Nice court, 3 November 1967)

Son of Thérèse and Adolphe Sokolski. A journalist by profession. Worked with the historian Monique Heddebaut and the researchers of the journal Tsafon. Campaigned to obtain the "Died for France" recognition for his mother — granted on 4 December 2024. Father of Sylvain and Sarah.

Sylvain & Sarah Sokolski · the Hudsons

The next generation

Sylvain bears, as a middle name, that of Adolphe. Sarah bears those of Jacqueline, Arlette and Francine. Sarah married Rhian Andrew Hudson; their French-American children — Kylian, Amaya and Liam — are the youngest generation of this story.

APPENDIX III

Sources and archives consulted

APPENDIX IV

Pieces and areas still to be documented

In full transparency, some points remain incomplete:

In memory of

Sosia Gruszka

Jacqueline · Arlette · Francine

murdered at Auschwitz on 17 September 1942

Boruch (Bernard) Kurower

died at Auschwitz on 25 May 1944

"She told me that on the day I was born, my father took the photograph of his three daughters out of his wallet and replaced it with mine." — Claude Sokolski