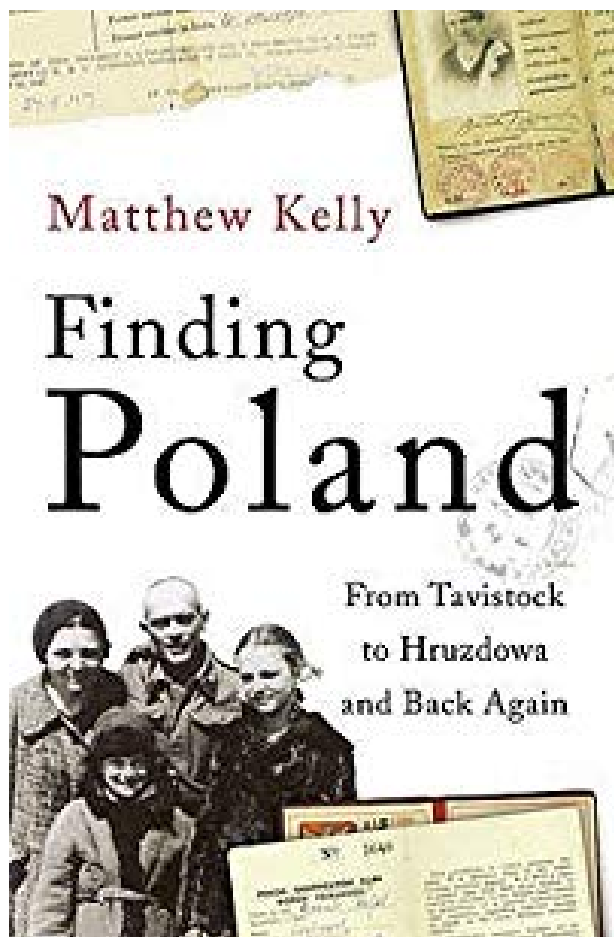


Finding Poland



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Following the partitioning of Poland by Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939, Matthew Kelly's great grandmother and her two daughters were deported to the East. Thus began an extraordinary ordeal that took them, and many thousands like them, on a journey stretching from Siberia to Pakistan, and beyond. Their male relatives endured a parallel journey; arrested, exiled, and held as prisoners of war. Count numbers were summarily executed by the Red Army. They saw the steppe, they were put to work in labour camps, they built sections of the trans-Siberian railway, they cleared forests, they toiled on collective farms. They knew hunger, exhaustion, disease and death. Persecuted by the Soviet Union, Poland was to become its unexpected ally following the German invasion in 1941. A new Polish army, 'The Anders Army' was assembled in Palestine.

For a brief moment, in Kazakhstan, families were reunited, before being evacuated; to India, to Britain, to Mexico and East Africa; and from there, across the world. The experiences of these Poles had consequences far reaching and enduring, both to Poland, to Polish identity, and to the families that survived; reverberating through generations. These incredible stories remain largely untold. In Finding Poland Matthew Kelly embarks on a journey through his ancestor's footsteps, travelling through places they lived, and landscapes they survived, to provide an account of these extraordinary people and their unique history. Part memoir, history and travel book, it is also a profound meditation on the experience of displacement and exile, of the

impact of such seismic disruption, and the deep legacies such trauma bequeaths.