Boîte 16

BOMBA 1

C.L. How do you feel here?

BOMBA: It's all right here.

C.L. Yes? And how do you feel in the country?

B. In the country it was much better than here, especially in the summertime.

C.L. Yes? But do you like it?

B. Where? Here?

C.L. Yes.

B. In a way.

C.L. Could you explain?

B. I tell you, there are many good things and many bad things. The worst thing is when you come over as a new immigrant.

C.L. That's what you are?

B. There's a lot of trouble and a lot of pain; a lot of red tape to go through.

C.L. How long did you live in the United States?

B. I lived in the United States 29 years.

C.L. This means that you came to the States..

B. Around '50.

C.L. In the fifties.

B. Yes; actually, 28 years.

B. I came here a year ago next week.

C.L. You have been in Israel for one year?

B. Since 17th September 1978.

C.L. And why did you decide to come?

B. I did not decide; my daughter decided for me.

C.L. How?

B. We wanted her to go to Israel, to go to school, to learn. And then she came over, but she went to a school, to a Kibbutz and didn't like it. Then she got married here.

C.L. Yes, but you could have stayed in New York, why did you...

B. She is too young. She is not even 17 yet, so a girl of 17, even if she is married - now she is a mother - but she still needs somebody around her; especially, she needs her mother to help her.

C.L. And you are sure it's the only reason why you decided to come?

B. Yes. That's the only reason. Otherwise I wouldn't. I like Israel and I worked very hard for Israel.

C.L. Yes?

B. Yes. In organisations, in the Histadrouth, and even before the war. I was an active member in the organisations.

C.L. You mean before the war, the Second World War?

B. Yes, before the Second World War. I was active in the Zionist organisations.

C.L. And you were a Zionist?

B. Yes.

C.L. Where? In Poland?

B. Yes, in Poland; in Czestochowa.

I was active there, and I didn't go straight, but I would say Israel is a very, very nice country. It's very interesting, it's very good especially for Jewish people. Why? Because people from our generation, we went through so much, and through so many countries; in every place you go you hear the word 'Jew', 'What did you come over for?' As a matter of fact, even in the United States a neighbour of mine, an Italian neighbour, told me "Why don't you go back to Israel? What are you doing here?" It's the only good reason why Israel was create going through (I would say) blood and pain to get the independanc of Israel.

C.L. But why did you choose after the war to go to the States and not to come here?

B. I would say I didn't choose to go to the States; because I went straight to Israel.

C.L. You came to Israel?

B. Yes. I was here in Israel in 1949. My wife got sick and went to hospital for about 7 weeks, and the doctors told her the climate is not for her and she has to leave Israel. That was why we left Israel and went to the United States. Otherwise I don't think we would have gone to the U.S.

C.L. You would have stayed?

B. We would have stayed here. If the conditions were different, let's say like the conditions are now, because at that time

- in 1949 - 1948 - 1950 - it was a very rough time for the people who came over here.

C.L. Yes, it was very hard.

B. They stayed in places... 50, 100 000 people, there was no place to stay, there was no place to go, especially if you had no family and we had no family in Israel - we had no family in even the United States.

C.L. You had no family anywhere?

B. I have family in Paris; my brother's daughters and my sister's daughters are in Paris.

C.L. And your brother and sister?

B. My brother was deported to Auschwitz with his wife in 1943. My sister was alive, I brought her to the United States about 6 years ago. She was with me for about 3 or 4 months and then she went back to Paris; and she passed away over there in Paris.

C.L. She passed away in Paris?

B. She passed away! I never saw them. My brother I never saw, not even once. My sister I saw for the first time after the war.

C.L. You never saw your brother? Because he was living in Paris?

B. They were living in Paris. When I was born my brother was already living in Paris. My sister left when I was 6 months old that meant I never saw her. We wrote letters to each other but we never had the chance to go and visit them because the conditions weren't exactly as they are today, when you can travel from country to country. The financial conditions today are also different than they were at that time. We could not

afford to go out of the country to visit them, and I don't know but I think they could not afford to come to visit us. Or at the time when they left there was a difference (in the) countries and it was very hard to get permission, passport and visa, so they stayed all the time over there.

C.L. Now tell me about your life in Poland before the war. You were born where?

B. I was actually born in Germany.

C.L. In Germany?

B. At the time, yes. But when I was 2 or 3 years old my parents moved to Czestochowa.

C.L. And your parents?

B. In Czestochowa. My father was born in Czestochowa, my mother was born in a small town nearby.

C.L. And what was the profession of your parents?

B. My father was a simple worker, he did all kinds of work to make a living. It was very hard to make a living, especially right after the Second World War...

C.L. After the <u>First</u> World War?

B. I mean the First World War, excuse me... there was a crisis over there and it was very, very bad - especially in Poland, where Jewish people had no chance to work in factories or to get a job in an institution or the government. The Jewish people were really suffering, not only my parents but most of them. I would say there were about 10% of the people who made a good living - some had factories, some had shops - but the

majority of the Jewish people in Poland suffered a lot. It was very, very hard for them to make a living.

C.L. This means that you were (used to being ?) very poor?

B. Yes. My family was a poor family. Thank God, they were nice people. They were not poor people with bad characters, like we had in New York, people from a low class who went out stealing and other things, smuggling and hashish - that did not happen in Poland. In Poland Jewish people just suffered; it was very hard to make a living. They were working all day to bring home a piece of bread or something like that, to feed the family and their wife.

C.L. And this was the case for the majority of Jews?

B. That was the case for the majority of the Jewish people in Poland. I'll tell you the truth: there are a lot of Jewish people, friends of mine, who came to the United States or went to Israel and said how rich they were, what kind of institution or what kind of factory they had, but I would say that's full of baloney.

C.L. It's a myth?

B. They just want to play big - they were 'big'. But, like I said...

BOMBA 2 (Bobbe 17)

C.L. There was a big Jewish community in Czestochowa?

B. Before the war there were about 34 000, 35 000 Jewish people. Altogether, with the Polish people there were about 150 000 before 1939 (?).

C.L. This means it was big.

B. It was not small; for a city like in Poland it was quite big. It was also one of the biggest shrines for the Polish people, for the Catholic people all over the world.

C.L. Yes, it was very famous. Could you now describe what happened when the war broke out and the Germans entered Czestochowa.

B. Yes, that happened when the war broke out, on September 1st 1939. We didn't know anything about it because the Government of Poland proclaimed that they were organised, that nothing would ever happen, and they were not afraid of the Germans, they wouldn't give away anything from the soil of Poland. But, on a Friday morning, at 5 or 6 o'clock, something happened which was not normal - aeroplanes going through to the town of Czestochowa, not blasting but through the radio it was announced already that war had broken out in Poland. One thing I would say: it was very bad for the Jewish people in Poland, because the Polish people didn't care too much. They knew they would have their houses and everything in their possession, but for the Jewish people it would not be the same thing. Whatever the Jewish people earned, whatever they had, they knew that some time it was going to belong to the Polish people. Unfortunately we lived in a Government which was through and through with antisemitism. From the beginning, right to the end, when

Poland started in 1918 there was a pogrom of Jewish people in Czestochowa; a lot of people were killed. The same thing happened when the war with Hitler started in 1939. When the war started, on a Friday, we - the Jewish people - didn't know what to do. We were like in shock, in panic. Where to go? Where to escape? What to do? I could picture only about myself, my family and the neighbours of mine - we lived together.

C.L. Were you living in a Jewish quarter?

B. Yes, in the Jewish quarter - mostly Jewish people. On Friday afternoon everything was closed, people had started preparing to leave the city, to pack whatever they could and run away from the city. But where to run was a question which nobody could answer. The same thing happened in my house; we did the same thing, packed whatever we could and started running. On Friday night we left the city. We could not find my brother; I was together with my wife...

C.L. So you were married?

B. Yes. 1939.

C.L. How old were you?

B. No. I was not married at that time. In 1939 I was with my mother and brother, a boy of about 12 years old. At that time I was 20, I would say.

C.L. In 1939 you were 20?

B. In '39 I was 20, 21 years old.

So we started running away. But the places we went to, like we

wanted to go from Czestochowa to Radomsko but before we went there the Germans were in front of us. We didn't see anything we could do to survive in the long run, because we had nowhere to go. So we decided to go back to Czestochowa.

We came back that Saturday, and that Saturday night the Germans came in, already like the victors of the war. That actually was what happened. Sunday went through nice and quietly, they were running around the city, they started talking, nicely, and told us not to be afraid, nothing was happening, and this and that kind of story. That was on Sunday. On Monday morning, September 11th 1939, they took all the people, especiall from the Jewish quarters, to places: like to the Churches, and other big places. People who wouldn't leave their houses, they killed. In those places they put bombs and other things, and they killed as many as they could.

C.L. They gathered them all inside churches?

B. Yes, that was on September 4th 1939. About 2 or 3 days after tha they let the people go. They came in and said we had to behave, nothing would happen, and to go home. We went home, each to his place, went back to work, and it started already going not normal; when I say 'not normal' it was very hard to get food, very hard to make a few zlotys, because everything jumped sky-high. People who had merchandise, food and other things, started to hide it so they could take bigger prices. You know, in all those places where it happened like that, I would call it inflation. Every week there was a different thing ordered

by the German Government, until in December 1939 there was an order to put on armbands with a Jewish star. Any Jew who did not have an armband would be killed. So we put on armbands; we said 'let this be the worst'. But people didn't know that it was just the beginning. After that we had to give up radios, furs, all kinds of valuable things - jewellery - to the German Government. Some of them had a receipt, and to some of them they didn't give any receipt. That happened in 1940. In 1940 they started to take the Jewish people to certain camps; most young Jewish people they took to a place near Lublin where they worked very hard, in misery. It took a lot of lives over there from Jewish people, and some of them came back. The times got worse and worse, until they started to talk about the ghetto, and about other things, not going out; at night it was not allowed to go out at all - in summertime from 8 o'clock at night until about 7 in the morning nobody was allowed to go out. In winter it was up to 6 o'clock - from 6 o'clock at night until 8 o'clock it was not allowed to go out.

C.L. What was your profession?

B. I was a barber. I had a barber's shop in Czestochowa. I worked as a barber over there. The living conditions were also very bad, because before the war we used to take half a zloty or one zloty for a haircut, and then when the war started like in '40 or '41 we still took half a zloty or one zloty but a kilogram of bread went up from 25 groschen to about ten zlotys. So

naturally it was very hard in our profession to make a living because to make a kilogram of bread you had to cut 10 haircuts, which was a lot. Before the war we had to do only one. But it wasn't the worst. As long as we were together, the family. At that time, already before the war, I went with a girlfriend of mine, and we decided that running here and there, we couldn' meet each other at the hours...

Bolte 18

BOMBA 3

B. So that is what happened until 1941. In 1941 they erected the big ghetto, and took the Jewish people from all those places outside the ghetto and pushed them into the so-called 'big ghetto'. We could not take most of our stuff with us because there was no room for it. So people left everything over there and naturally the Polish people took over their apartments, their furniture and whatever they could. Living in the big ghetto we had a Jewish committee...

C.L. The Jewish Council.

B. The Jewish Council, as they called it; we called it the 'Ältes Rat'. There was a president, the elders, there were even Jewish police and other things. It was a very, very rough life for the people, especially the poor people. They were starving

C.L. Actually starving?

B. They were actually starving. But we still believed that in some way it was going to end and it would be all right. But this was only a dream. The dream ended when...

C.L. How do you explain that the Jews were able to dream and have some hope in such conditions?

B. In all the times and all the places wherever Jewish people lived; all the wars, even before the First World War, always in the Russian time, Jewish people always dreamed. That was part of their life, part of the Messiah, to dream that some day they were going to be free. That dream was mostly true in the ghetto, because in the ghetto there weren't such other things. People had to dream about it, every day, every single night I dreamed of other things that were going to be good.

C.L. You yourself dreamed?

B. I would say everyone. Not only the dream, but the hope conserved in a dream. Like one side was hope and the other side was a dream. What people hope about, they dream about. That was until 1942.

C.L. Can you describe how the people were? Were they still humans in such conditions?

B. Yes. In proportion to other people, other nationalities, I would say the Jewish people were human. When I say they were human, most of them tried to share with each other. People coming from other places, not only from Czestochowa but from other places, people took them in. We shared a room with them, and shared whatever we could with each other.

C.L. Were you living alone or with others?

B. No, I wasn't living alone I was living with mother. But in 1940 I got married with the girl I went with for about 7 years - we married and lived together: me, my wife and my mother.

C.L. You married?

B. Yes, I married in 1940.

C.L. Why did you marry?

B. Why I married? It's a good question. The reason why I married is because we couldn't see each other; in the day time I was busy working, and at night time we couldn't go out so we decided that whatever happened, let's take it together, let's be togethe. A lot of people got married in the ghetto. I got married that time. Maybe I was not supposed to, but this was order. You cannot go back. In 1942 I got a son - he was born in August 1941.

C.L. You had a son in 1941?

B. Yes. Just about 3 or 4 days before we were sent away. At the tim it was very rough. I just want to tell you a little thing; maybe it will not interest many people, but it will interest a lot of people: the condition was that my wife was pregnant with the kid. She was supposed to give birth but I couldn't go out at night, it wasn't allowed. She was in her birth pains until about 8 o'clock in the morning when I could go out and take her to hospital. There were no cars, nothing. I just dragged her to the hospital. She went to the hospital and had a son.

C.L. A son?

B. A son, yes. A nice kid, ~~I held the boy~~ and after 6 or 7 days

I took her home. We decided - like I said, we still dreamed that some day it would happen, it would be all right. But this thing went on until September 22nd 1942, two years to the day after I was married (I was also married on September 22). The day before that was Yom Kippur, and on the day of Yom Kippur I was going around. The situation in the ghetto was very bad, because people came around and they were talking about trains ready to take the Jewish people away, and there were Ukrainians around the city and that was going to happen tomorrow - 'They are going to take out the Jewish people from the ghetto and send them away'. Where to, we didn't know.

C.L. Had you already heard about the deportations from Lublin and Warsaw?

B. No, I did not. We heard about deportations, yes, but where to, we didn't know. We knew they also took away people from Czestochowa to Auschwitz, people like Communists or underworld people or other kinds, but to take a majority of innocent people, old, young, children and women and just send them away, we didn't know about this. But what they said was they were taking them away to a place where they would be working, but on the other hand, women, old women or pregnant women or a little child of one week, four weeks or five years, where is he going to work? That was a foolish thing, but still we had no choice and we believed them.

C.L. You did?

B. And the Germans were very smart also: in the transports, before

sending them away they took out a certain number of people and asked them to write a letter or postcard to send to certain ghettoes. When those postcards or letters arrived in the ghettoes they showed them="See! My family is alive! I got a letter from them. And they write very nice, because they are working over there".

C.L. But this day, 22 September 1942, was it the first deportation?

B. It was the first deportation of the ghetto in Czestochowa.

C.L. Can you describe this?

B. It happened, as I said, a day after Yom Kippur. It wasn't yet over; in the middle of the prayers in Yom Kippur they cut through the prayers and went home because it was already known that the cars were waiting for the people to be deported. With certain people, the Germans came in and took them out - like famous tailors, famous shoemakers or carpenters or other things - people to work for them. Just a few of them. So we knew something very bad was going to happen. At night, Tuesday night (the Tuesday was Yom Kippur) in the middle of the night, all of a sudden, all the lights went on. It was not dark like it used to be in war time when everything has to be closed - all the lights went on and at 4 o'clock, or even before then...

C.L. Everything was lit?

B. Everything. The whole city. It was like a carnival because all the lights were on. They told the people to go out, this street and this, the street of (*noms de rues diverses*), all the people had to go out, take with them a package of not

more than 10 kilograms and go to a certain place. At that time I was living, as I said, with my wife and kid and my mother and a little brother of about 12 years old.

Boîte 19

BOMBA 4

B. So the night after Yom Kippur they took the people out of those streets which I mentioned already and told them to go to a part called the Novarynek (?). Over there there was a selection, where they selected people...

C.L. Was it a station?

B. It was a place they had made where they had a man by the name of Degenhart(?). He choose who had to live and who had to die. The people who were supposed to live for a while, he told them to go to the right side, and the people who were supposed to be sent away, he told them to go to the left. At that time I was together with my family, and he told us to go on the left side, which meant that we had to be deported. We went to the station. Already over there it was full of people. Loaded. Who knows how many thousands?

C.L. Was this at night or during the day?

B. Daytime. It was already the afternoon. Going into that train there was no more room, they just pushed in as many as they could. They told us to go back home.

C.L. The train was full?

B. Full of people. I would say there were between 6 and 8 000 people already. That was the first transport from Czestochowa to a place - at this time we didn't know the name of it. So we went home. In the city there was a joy and there was a sorrow; the joy was because people came back, and they said "That's all they need, they need a certain amount like 6 000 or 8 000 people, they have them already and they will not send more people away from Czestochowa." So that meant I was one of the lucky ones.

C.L. And did you feel this joy yourselves?

B. I would say in a way yes, in a way no. When we got home we tried to find out who was sent away; my brother was sent away, his wife and their children... There was another thing: I would say it wasn't all quiet in me; the Germans surrounded the ghetto again, then the Ukrainians, the real murderers, who shot and killed a lot of people, were still around the ghetto, watching.

C.L. They didn't leave?

B. They didn't go away. That didn't leave us (feeling?) that every thing was finished. But, as I said before, at the last minute people think "Maybe I will stay alive", and that is what pushed people to stay alive.

C.L. Did you know at the time that the deportation meant death?

B. No. I did not know, and I would say the majority - not only the majority, but 99% of the people didn't know. Maybe some of

them had some idea, maybe some of the Jewish people had already been through that and had come to our ghetto, to Czestochowa and maybe they mentioned it. But I didn't know. Only in my heart I knew that something was not good, because if they take children and old people and send them away, that means it's not good. What they were going to do with them, I didn't know, I had no idea, but being back in the ghetto, going back to the same apartment we had and making pieces together - this thing was a joy and a sorrow just for 2 or 3 days.

The first transport was sent away the day after Yom Kippur. But the day before Sukoth there was the second transport. The second transport they took all those people who went back, and some from more streets, and I was together with them. Then they took us again to the place, where the same precision was going on - to the left, or to the right. I, with my family, was again sent to the left side to be sent away. People tried to run from one side to the other, because he was the kind of man who, when he saw a healthy, strong man and a wife the same, either he took away the wife or he took away the husband. Some people started to cry, that they didn't want to divide, they wanted to stay together - they killed them right on the place. Anyone who tried to cross the line from one side to the other, they killed him.

C.L. In front of you?

B. In front of everybody, because he dared to go from one side to the other.

C.L. Were you afraid?

B. We were all afraid. What could we do? There was nothing we could do. We were surrounded by the Germans, by the Ukrainians and also by the Jewish police. I, with my transport - and there was a lot of my family, we were about 300 in the town - the same day we were sent to the transport, to the station - it was not actually a real station, it was a station made specially for that purpose, to send away the people. We went into the cars - the wagons - I don't know how many, but there were at least 125-150 people. There was no room, not only to sit, but to stand. One stood almost on top of each other.

C.L. You were completely pressed?

B. Pressed like each other. We didn't know what they were doing. All of a sudden they closed it, and after about 3 or 4 hours inside without water, without anything, the cars started to move. I would say I was a little lucky because I was near the little window, because the cars were not the sort where they take people, they were trains for animals. You know, where they take animals from one place to another to slaughter them. That kind of wagon. I was looking through it, and there was a funny thing; maybe it's not nice to say, but I will say it. Most of the people - not only most, but 99% of the Jewish people, when they saw the train going through, we looked through really like animals in the wagon, just our eyes looked outside - and they were laughing, and they had a joy because they took the Jewish people away.

C.L. Who had the joy?

B. The Polish people.

C.L. Is that true?

B. It is true. It is true, I was in it. There was only one woman, I will mention it. I know the woman because she was working in the same place as I had my barber's shop. When she saw me, she said "Oh my God, you are going to Treblinka". That was the first time I heard the name of Treblinka. I didn't know what Treblinka was. So we left, and we went with the wagon. What went on in the wagon is a story, another book. What went on in the wagon between the people, and the pushing, and the screaming, 'Where is my child', and 'Where is my this', and 'A little bit of water'. People were not only starving, but they were choking. It was hot. It just happened, Jewish luck, that In September at that time usually it is rainy and cool, but there it was hot like hell. We had nothing inside. A child like my own, about the age of 3 weeks, had not a drop of water; there was not a drop of water for the mother, not a drop of water for anybody else.

We were in that wagon, it was rolling, rolling on till we got to Warsaw. When we got to Warsaw it was already night; we saw a sign that it was Warsaw. We stayed there for about 2 hours and then the train was rolling on in the direction of the East, where we were sent through. At a place called Malkinia, on the route from Warsaw to Bialystok there was a little station by the name of Malkinia, over there we were stopped, waiting for what at that time we didn't know. On the other side...

Boite 20 7/X

BOMBA 5

B. On the other side of the tracks I saw more trains, or wagons, standing there. I was watching through, I saw about 18, 20, maybe more wagons going away. After about an hour I saw the wagons coming back but without the people.

C.L. This was where? In the station at Treblinka?

B. In the station at Treblinka.

C.L. Did you see signs in the station, the name of Treblinka?

B. There was a sign, a small sign on the station of Treblinka. I don't know if we were at the station or if we did not go up to the station, but on the line where we stayed there was a very small sign which said 'Treblinka'. That was the first time in my life that I heard the name Treblinka, because nobody knows it. It is not a city, not even a small village.

C.L. How long did you wait?

B. We arrived in the morning, about 6, maybe 6.30, and I saw 3 or 4 trains coming in with people. I would say each one had at least 20 wagons, maybe 22, going in. My train from Czestocho stayed there until about 12 o'clock.

C.L. Did you see people on the platform - Poles? Did people try to talk to you?

B. No. We didn't see anybody, only Germans. No Polish people, just Germans. When we stayed there at that station, waiting to go to Treblinka, some of those German SS came round and asked u

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what we had. So we said some of the people have gold, and have diamonds, but we want water. So they said "Good, give us the diamonds and we'll bring you water". They took them away and didn't bring any water at all.

C.L. How long did the trip last?

B. The trip from Czestochowa to Treblinka lasted about 24 hours, with interruption waiting in Warsaw, and also waiting at Treblinka and going in to Treblinka. The last train, we went in. But, as I mentioned before, I saw many trains coming back, but the trains were without people. So I said to myself "What happened to the people? We don't see any people, just trains coming back." Until we had the order that our train went in also. From Treblinka a specially-made truck was going into Treblinka camp, extermination camp or whatever it was - at that time we didn't know. When we got into Treblinka extermination camp, all of a sudden we heard screaming people, and hollering "Men to the right and women to the left". When we came out, we didn't go out we just flew out. The pushing by the people who were wanting to get out of the train because they were one on top of the other. Some of the people coming were already dead from cracking because there were too many people in the train.

C.L. Where there dead people in your wagon?

B. Yes. When we came out...

C.L. How was your child?

B. My child was alright. My child was alive; coming out my wife was

holding the child and my mother was with her. Coming out, over there we didn't know who the people were. Some had the armbands, some red, some blue, and they not only told us, but they were hollering "The men have to go on the right side". So we went, me and my brother and others of our relatives, to the right side.

C.L. All this was in a hurry?

B. It was in Treblinka.

C.L. But was it in a hurry, in a rush?

B. We did not even have time to breath. The women went to the left side, to the barracks. And that was the last time I saw any of my female relatives. I can say of the men, because I was there. We were sitting over there, and we had orders from the 'red COMMANDO'; that's what they called them, the 'red COMMANDO'.

C.L. Jewish COMMANDO?

B. Jewish COMMANDO. To take off our shoes, put them together, take off our clothes, put them together in bundles and sit and wait. We did this. In the meantime they took out people and pushed them, after they were through with the women, pushing the men into the gate, which actually we called 'the last road from life to death'.

C.L. But at the time you did not know this.

B. No, of course not. We did not know.

C.L. I want you to describe the situation at the time.

B. At the time the situation was that we were waiting until our

group should go into the gas chamber.

Boîte 21

BOMBA 6 C. IT'S DIFFICULT, I know. MX

B. IT IS.

B. ...because, you know, we have to go through this thing all over again, and it is very painful.

C.L. Yes, but you have to do it. You have no choice.

B. Yes, I am doing that, like here, now, I am doing it just for the history of it.

C.L. So start again. Describe the arrival. in the camp

B. The last wagons, when we came in, which I was in, entered Treblinka. We didn't know at the time what it meant, 'Treblinka', we didn't know where we were going or what we were going to do. But going in, the hollering of the commands, the people with the red armbands and the blue armbands. Falling out from the train and pushing eachother out, and over there, losing each other and the crying and the hollering. Coming out, we started one way to the left and one way to the right - the women to the left and the men on the right.

C.L. Did you have time to say goodbye to your wife?

B. We had no time even to look at each other, because they started hitting us over the head with all kinds of things. It was very, very painful. It was You didn't know what had happened, you had no time to think. All you heard was the crying, and all the time the hollering of the people. With my transport I was waiting,

HX

already naked, took out all the clothes, and still, around, the ~~couples~~ (= Kapos?) and the other people, beating for not staying right in the line ~~or not~~ sitting right or getting up or talking to each other.

We did not see the women at all any more because they went into the barracks on the left side.

C.L. What did one see? Barracks, trees, what?

B. There were no trees, there were barracks; one barrack on the left side where the people went in, and on the right side there was another barrack but we didn't go into it. What we saw was a well, where they used to take water out to drink. So at that time there was a well, and some of the people from the transport had an idea what was going on, because you could also smell it a little bit, something was wrong with the smell, like burning meat or the smell of chalk or other things. It happened that people jumped into that well. It happened also in my transport. It could be that people were oriented more than I was, and knew already that it would happen that they would not stay alive. They went in, and the next group was mine. A man came over and asked, "You, you and you step out." We stepped out, and they took us a little bit on the side. The hollering, and the crying, the shouting that was going on over there, pushing the people - they didn't want to go or they knew already where they were going, through that big door. It was impossible - the crying and hollering was in your ears and your mind for days and days, and at night the same thing. From that hollering you could not

7X

even sleep a couple of nights ~~later~~ (?). All of a sudden, at one time everything stopped, like by a command.

Boîte 22

BOMBA 7 7X

B. It was all quiet. Now they took the bunch of people - we were about 20, maybe 22.

C.L. Can you describe it? It became quiet suddenly?

B. All of a sudden, quiet, as if everything was dead. The place where the people went in, just like on a command to be quiet - that way everything was quiet.

C.L. It was like this after the arrival of every transport?

B. After the arrival of every transport it was almost the same thing. There was screaming and hollering from those places where they went in, especially the women, because it was impossible to have your mind straight, because all the hollering was in your ears and in your mind. But, ~~as~~ I said, in one second or one minute, everything was quiet. Then they told us to clean the whole place. There had been about 2 000 people, who had undressed outside, - to take the whole thing away and to clear up the place. That had to be done in minutes. Some of the Germans and other people who were there, Ukrainians and so on, started shouting and hitting us so we should do it faster and to carry the bundles on our backs, first to the main place; it

HX was big places of clothes, of shoes and other things. And in no time this was clean, just like it had never happened, and people had never been in that place (again).

C.L. There was no trace?

B. No trace. Not at all. Like a magic thing, everything disappeared. At that time we started working in that place which they call Treblinka. Still, I myself couldn't believe it, and not one from my transport believed what had happened over there on the other side of the gate where the people went in, disappeared and everything went quiet. But in minutes we found out, when we started to ask the people who worked before us what had happened, they said "What do you mean, what happened? Don't you know?" I said "What do we know?"

"They are all gassed, all killed". It was impossible to say something because we were just like stones, we couldn't mention what had happened to the wife, what had happened to the kid?

"What do you mean, 'wife', what do you mean, 'kid?'. Nobody is alive any more."

"What do you mean, not alive? How could they kill, how could they gas so many people at once?"

But they had their way of doing it; and that is how the day went through, without anything - no drinking, we were 24 hours without water, without anything. We couldn't drink, we couldn't take anything into our mouths, because it was impossible - just meaning that a minute, or an hour before we were part of a family, part of a wife or husband and now, all of a sudden,

7X

everything is dead. We went into a special barrack, where I was sleeping right next to the well. That night was the most horrible night for all the people, because the memory, all those things that people went through with each other, all the joy and happiness, the births and the weddings and other things and all of a sudden, in one second, to cut them through without anything, and without any guilt of the people, because the people were not guilty at all - the only guilt for them was because they were Jewish people.

We were all up at night, trying to talk to each other, which was not allowed. The commandant was sleeping in the same barracks. We were not allowed to talk to each other, or express our views or our minds to each other. In the morning, at 5 o'clock, we started going out from the barracks. In the morning, when they had 'Appell' to go out from the barracks, from our group I would say at least 4 or 5 were dead. I don't know how it happened, they must have had with them some kind of poison with which they poisoned themselves. Some of them, I would say at least two, were my close friends. They didn't say anything, we didn't even know they had poison with them. They had poisoned themselves. We dragged them out to a place called the 'Lazarett' actually means a hospital or place where people go to be healed, to be nursed or have a doctor. But over there they called the place the 'Lazarett' because they took all the people to be burnt. We threw those corpses into a big place where there was a fire burning, and we burned them.

Some of the men there were wearing white dresses with a band around them, looking like doctors, but they were not doctors, they were nobody. Then we went to get some coffee. We didn't have any coffee either - we couldn't have it because the smell at night of the burning corpses from that place, the so-called Lazarett, when the wind came to our side - the burning flesh was in our noses, in our hearts and in our bodies. It was impossible to touch anything.

They took us to work at the 'Sortierenkommando'(?).

C.L..And new transports arrived?

B. We were working till about 9 o'clock, 9.30, then all of a sudden there was a whistle and everything stopped. A new train with people arrived. We didn't go there because it was not allowed to go from this place, where we worked on the 'Sortierenskommando', to the place where the people came in. This was not allowed for people wearing the red or blue band. But we saw some of them which they took out, like they took us out, to take away their clothes - we were almost, I would say, the first of the lucky ones because most of the transports who went in to remove the clothes from that big place, after the had cleaned up the whole place, they went into the gas chamber and they gassed them, as with the other ones. And that was how we worked in a certain part. They found out I was a barber and asked me to do some kind of job for the Jewish commander, who was over there.

One day we had an order to get together a certain amount of barbers and go and cut the hair of the women. They took us to

the place - we had never been over there, no one from Treblinka where we were, at our place, ever went across that big door going in to what we knew already was the gas chamber. They took us over there and we cut the women's hair. That was another thing that was horrible. Unbelievable. They took the women in, they undressed themselves and we were supposed to do a job. They didn't know they were going into the gas chamber. They didn't know they were in the gas chamber. They knew there was a little place called the barber's shop where they would have their hair cut, afterwards they would have a shower and everythi would be finished and they would be back to work.

Boite 23

BOMBA 8

C.L. I am not talking about the revolt of Treblinka. I want to know do you know how many people succeeded in escaping from Treblinka during the time that the camp was in action?

B. I wouldn't say that I know. But I know a lot of people tried to escape, and a lot of people did not succeed, meaning they got killed in Treblinka - some of them by the wire, some on the gates, and a lot of them outside because outside Treblinka was surrounded by a camp of the Ukrainians. The Ukrainians had their camp over there, and they had watchtowers. But I would say there is a number of people who escaped before the

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revolt.

C.L. How many?

B. I would say 15, 18 of them.

C.L. It is not known?

B. It is not known, but I know a number of people escaped.

C.L. How did the idea of escaping come to you, and when?

B. The idea of escaping from Treblinka... everyone in Treblinka had the same idea. Because, over there we knew for sure that we were going to be dead. Outside there was something like a 'maybe'. Maybe we could be safe. Groups started to organise ther selves. I also had a group.

C.L. You were not alone?

B. No, not alone. A group of people - we were about 8 or 10 altogether - and we had the same idea of escaping from Treblink But escaping from Treblinka meant a lot of things. First, you had to have money, a lot of money, because when you got outside the Polish people would do everything for money. But they would not do anything to save you just because you are a Jew or a nice man. What we did was: we tried to get as much money as we could from the people arriving on the transports. A lot of people took their belongings with them, and had with them as much as they could. In the clothes we would find some money, diamonds and gold; when we were working in Treblinka, where we selected the clothes, like suits and shoes - a lot of people had their money in their shoes - and we tried to get tha money and hide it so that the Germans, and not only the

Germans - but even the Jewish people - shouldn't know, because to let anybody know that you are going to escape was horrible. It happened at a time when I was there: They caught some people escaping and brought them back as far as from Alken(?), even further, and they brought them into the camp and hung them by the legs. Some of them, I remember just like now, they were hanging for hours and hours until we begged the Germans they should kill them. They went over, before the day ended, and killed them. Their heads were full - the whole thing from the inside went to their head. That is why we were afraid even to mention to our closest ones - a brother did not tell his brother - that he was trying to escape. Or a son did not tell his father, because if the father knew that his son had a plan to escape and would try to get out from his father, it could be that his father would tell the Germans "My son is trying to escape". That was the way we tried to escape; as I said before, we tried to save money, we tried to get some clothes because it was winter...

C.L. How long did you stay in Treblinka?

B. I stayed almost 3 months in Treblinka.

C.L. And you escaped after 3 months?

B. After 3 months I escaped from the camp.

C.L. How did you do it?

B. How I did it? We were a group of people. The group divided into 3 parts (we were a group of 10 people): 3 of them were supposed to get out, let's say on Thursday, 3 of them on Sunday and 3 on the following Tuesday. I was in the second group, and I was supposed to leave on a Saturday. Escaping wasn't simple.

I can say about my escaping: my escaping was like this: we were supposed to hide ourselves in clothes, big bunch of clothes in the barracks. There was one barracks; we put some clothes there which were supposed to go to Germany by train. We were hiding, 3 of us: myself, a cousin of mine by the name of Kaufmann, and a friend of mine by the name of Berkowitz. After the 'Appel' the work was over, around 6 o'clock, and before that - 2 hours before - we disappeared, we hid inside the clothes. We were lying down for about two hours until the people had finished their job. This was a dangerous thing to do, because if a bundle of clothes moved from the place, then we choked. In the same place where we were hiding, during the time I worked there, we took out over 30 people who had choked, because the people tried to escape but couldn't, the bundle move they had no air to breathe and they choked to death.

C.L. It was a big heap of clothes?

B. Yes, it was a big heap. It was a big place where the clothes were.

C.L. And you went very deep inside?

B. Of course, we went very deep inside, because at night, after the 'Appel', Ukrainians went with bayonets to cut through in cas somebody was hidden in the clothes. And they were on top of us too. We heard them. After they left - the 'Appel' finished at 6 o'clock - at 8.30 one of us went out to see how it was. So the one called Berkowitz went out to the barracks, walked around but nobody was there. He signalled to us that we should come out. We came out. The only place to escape from Treblinka, the

safest place, was to the Lazarett, because otherwise you had 4 or 5 different gates to go around, where it was very dangerous. There was barbed wire, and it was almost impossible to get through. Coming out from the barracks we didn't see anybody, all we saw was a huge place for burning, burning clothes, paper and people. And we had to go through that place to get to the wire fence, where there was only one fence to go through.

C.L. You mean you went...

B. Through that fire too...

C.L. Through the ditch of the Lazarett?

B. Through the ditch. We wore some clothes on top so that we wouldn get burned, and we just went through.

C.L. You went into the ditch of the Lazarett?

B. Like a fire. We went through there. One of us in the third one, when we came to the barbed wire fence, we put some clothes on top of it and went through that fence, one on top of the other. It just happened that Saturday night that the Ukrainians were all drunk, and nobody was in the watchtower. There was no-one around. When we got to the other side we didn't see anyone. We tried to run and run; we ran for hours. This was in winter. About half an hour from the...

C.L. Was it cold?

B. It was ice-cold.

C.L. Was there snow?

B. There was no snow, but it was very cold at that time. When we

got outside, it took us about half an hour (to get) from the barracks to the fences and through, we ran from about 9 o'clock until about 5,30 in the morning.

Boîte 25

BOMBA 9

C.L. But how did the Germans fail to notice that 3 men were missing?

B. They could never notice. They only noticed if they knew the people.

C.L. Why didn't they notice?

B. Every day they took out a number of people.

C.L. From the workers?

B. Not from the workers, but from the people who arrived on the transports. It was like a magic circle; they took them out, they worked for a day or 2 days and either they took them to the Lazarett to kill them or they sent them to the gas chamber. But they very seldom sent workers to the gas chamber - most they killed on the spot, or they took them to the Lazarett and killed them there. So they couldn't know exactly how many they had. They didn't have a list of so many and so many. At the time they registered people by name, but everyone had a funny name. My name over there wasn't Bomba, I didn't give them that name because I had an idea that maybe I would escape and I didn't want to be known by that name. So I had a different

name. Everybody else had a different name also. They could never know how many people they had each day or how many people they (nearly) killed.

C.L. So they didn't notice the number.

B. No, they couldn't notice. But when we got to the other side and were running from 9 o'clock until about 6 o'clock in the morning, we made so many kilometres. In the morning we were at exactly the same place as we started, in the Ukrainian camp!

C.L. You were running in circles?

B. We were running in circles, because we didn't know where to go. We thought we were already at least 20 kilometres away from Treblinka, but we were not even one kilometre away. It was greyish, for the day was coming. It was daybreak. Then we saw where we were, we heard the voices of the Ukrainians, drunk, all kinds of things. So we ran across until we came to the ~~Book~~(?) (Bug). It took us about an hour and it was already daytime. We lay down under the bushes at the ~~book~~ (Bug). One of us saw a little place where people lived, not even a house but a little - nothing. So he went in and said "Where are we?" They said "My God, you are about 5 kilometres from Treblinka, what are you doing here? The Germans... Run, run, escape!". But where could we escape to? We had nowhere to escape to and we couldn't stay there. In the meantime we saw a man going with a barrel, so I went over and said "Where are you from?" He said "Not far away, a small village", so we asked him if we could go ...

C.L. Was that Poniatowo or Volga?

B. No, it wasn't Poniatowo or Volga. It was a little place, maybe 5 houses in the whole thing. So we asked the man, "Can we go with you? We have a lot of money". But he said he was afraid, and this and that.

C.L. Which language did you speak with him?

B. We spoke for a few minutes.

C.L. But you spoke what? Polish? Yiddish?

B. Polish. How could we speak Yiddish when he was a Pole?

C.L. Did you speak good Polish?

B. I speak beautiful Polish. It was my second language. My first language was Yiddish, and my second was Polish, only Polish, because we went to Polish schools, the place I worked was always Polish. I spoke to the man,...

C.L. But he knew you were a Jew? And that you had escaped from Treblinka?

B. Of course he knew we were from Treblinka. They knew because they lived around there. He said to us "I am going with the wagon and the horses. You follow a couple of hundred metres behind me and when I stop you will know this is the house where I live. Go into that house". So, after walking with Him for about an hour we came to a small place, maybe 5 or 6 houses. He told us, "At the first house you go in and go up, not in the house but where they have straw, all kinds of things". We went there and stayed there. It was dark. The man came up and said "Juden?" We thought "Now we are finished", because the Germans already know we are here." But it wasn't so. The head man from that

little community came up, and he was a very good man. He said "Don't be afraid. At night I will take you through to a place where you go to the railroad." Our idea was to take the railroad and go back to Czestochowa.

C.L. You wanted to return to Czestochowa?

B. We wanted to return to Czestochowa, because at that time I thought maybe some of our relatives were still alive, maybe my brother was alive. Because I did not know what had happened to him. He went away with the first transport, the first selecti They told me he was alive, but when I got back they said "I'm sorry, we told you that to make you feel happy that your brother was alive," - at that time I didn't know, and that's why most of us tried to go back to Czestochowa.

C.L. To find some of your family?

B. To find some of our family, our relatives.

So the man took us to a place, another little village by the name of Zagrodiniki. We went over there, and it was already another night. We were hiding in the woods. We heard a lot of rumours in the woods around, the Germans and other people, but we stayed there and in the morning we tried to pass from on side to the other. It was a little village, Zagrodiniki. A woman came out in the morning, and she was just looking around. This friend of mine, Berkowitz, went over to her and said "Can we go to your house and have something to eat?" She said "Yes, come in". So we went in, she made some coffee for us and said "Yes, I know you are from Treblinka because we can tell the smell from Treblinka even though it is about 8 or 10 km away.

"At night, when the wind blows our way, we can smell the smell of flesh".

So we stayed there during the day, and then in the night they told us to go at the back of their house. It was ice-cold, we were freezing. People, some neighbours, came in and didn't know we were there.

This friend of mine was a tailor. They found out he was a tailor We had money, and we sent one of the women - they were 2 sister-in-laws and a husband - she went to Warsaw to buy some material, and the tailor friend made clothes for them. We stayed for a week at that place. The next week a brother-in-law of theirs found out that 3 Jews from Treblinka had escaped and were at this place. So they came over, and he said to the tailor - (they didn't know that 3 of us were there, they just knew of the tailor) - so he came in and said "I want the tailor, I want him to make some clothes for us. I want him to come over to our place". So he said "I've got 2 more friends".

"2 more friends? That's not good, What am I going to do with them?"

"Let them go with us". He took us into the house, made a meal for us, and we slept in the house, finally not outside like in the first place.

Boîte 26

BOMBA 10

Boîte 26

BOMBA 10

B. So, going from that place - Zagrodniki - we had 2 men. We paid them to take us to Warsaw. In Warsaw we couldn't get a ticket to go direct to Czestochowa, because you had to have permission from the Government. If the Governor gave you permission you could go that far, otherwise you were only allowed to go 25 km. The man paid some money and we got the permission, we got the ticket to Czestochowa.

C.L. What sort of money did you have with you? Zlotys?

B. There were zlotys, dollars, a lot of things.

C.L. Did you have much?

B. We didn't have much, but we had enough to go through. In Warsaw on the main station - there were only 3 of us, and the train left at 11.30 at night. Polish people - not only Jews, but Polish people - were not allowed to go after 8 o'clock. We 3 were walking around the station, and they were all Germans, all SS and Germans, and nobody bothered us. At 11.30 we took the train and got to Czestochowa on a Sunday morning. Once there we were afraid to walk out of the station, through the city and into the ghetto. So we hired a horse and wagon which took us to a place outside the city of Czestochowa. We stayed there for a while until it got dark - in winter by 4 o'clock it was already dark - and from there we smuggled into the ghetto. A

lot of people tried to smuggle themselves out of the ghetto, but we paid the Polish police a lot of money to allow us into the ghetto. We went into the ghetto. The first people who saw us couldn't believe it. I myself was known, I had a barber's shop in Czestochowa, I was in certain organisations, and they knew me. They came over: "Where have you come from? We know that you were sent away." I said "From Treblinka". They said "Treblinka? We have heard about Treblinka. Some people have come through and told us about Treblinka. But how?" I said "Yes, we are from Treblinka".

"What happened to my wife over there? What happened to my father?"

I said "What do you mean, 'What happened'? Nobody is alive!"

"What's the matter with you? Are you crazy or something? That is not possible. What are you trying to do? Make jokes? Or are you trying to make a panic here in the ghetto?"

I said "Look, you want to believe it or you don't want to? I went with my wife and my mother and all my family. Do you think I would leave them there if they were alive, and come back? I want you to know that they are dead and your family is dead."

For a while, some of the people couldn't talk. They couldn't, they didn't believe it. They went into their houses, and we went to some places where I had friends and a man I worked with in the barber's shop. He came in, "What are you doing here? What happened to my wife?" - the same questions. "Something is wrong with all of you. Either you are out to get something here,

or you want to do something. We don't believe you. You must be crazy. The way you look, the way you behave, you must be crazy, because that is impossible."

We told them "Look. You believe it or you don't, but that's the way it is. You will never see your people again because your people are dead, and they are dead for ever."

C.L. Were there still many Jews in Czestochowa?

B. Yes, at that time there were about 5 000 of them left. When the small ghetto started there were around 50 000. They took around 45 000 to Treblinka, where they killed them. The 5 000 that were left in the small ghetto were working in factories.

C.L. For the Germans?

B. For the Germans. In Czestochowa there were 4 factories making ammunition, all kinds of ammunition for the German army. They were working there.

C.L. Yes, because the Germans never entered the ghetto at once.

B. Not at once. No, at once they never entered. The following day, all of a sudden, we had the Jewish police. They came in: "What are you doing here?"

We said "What do you mean, 'What are we doing here'? You are the police, but if you think you are going to touch us or do something to us, be prepared because we will kill you. We are not afraid of death anymore, because we know what death means, and we know what is going to happen to us, we know what is going to happen to you, even though you are policemen in the

ghetto. Don't think you are going to stay alive, because we saw many policemen, many big men coming into Treblinka, also with their heads up, stars - 2, 3 or 4 stars, and they went straight to the gas chamber. Don't think you are going to be different. If you try to do something with us, we are going to finish you, we're going to kill you." The fact is, they never touched us.

Then we had to do something in the ghetto. I was a barber, and they took me in to the barber's shop. They took me in because I was known, and I had money with me and they were starving and I tried to get all kinds of food for them and feed them because, as I said, I had money. But we had a lot of trouble, from all the people, especially the women. They could never believe their husbands were dead, that their pare were dead. There came a time when the man who made all the selections, a man called Degenhart,

C.L. A German?

B. Yes, a German, the commandant of Czestochowa, the one who se out the 45 000 people. They went to him and told him, "We know there are people from Treblinka who came over here, and they are making a panic and telling everyone that everybody is dead."

C.L. Jews went to Degenhart?

B. Yes, Jews went and told him. And do you know what he said? ' they have run away from Treblinka, let them stay as long as can." We were not sleeping 2 nights in the same place, beca

we were afraid. One night we slept here, then there, most of the time outside the ghetto, because we were afraid they would come in and denounce us - even Jewish people - and say "He's from Treblinka". We tried to stay outside, in places where nobody knew us. We went to Christian people, one of whom was a friend of mine - we stayed there a couple of nights, and then we came back - until it quietened down, and they didn't mention it any more. But one thing: they never touched us, how bad or how good the police, and all the Jewish committee which worked together with the Germans, they tried to hide a lot of things, they tried to save their families and their children...

C.L. In your opinion, did the president of the Judenrat know the truth about Treblinka?

B. Yes. He knew everything, because I spoke to him. He came into the barber's shop and I cut his hair. Not only him, but the secretary and all those people from the 'Ältesten Rat', they came into the barber's shop and they knew everything about it. They actually knew what was going on. They knew it, but everyone wanted to have a chance to save his family on account of somebody. To send away somebody's family so that his family could stay there. But this thing didn't happen, and we knew. We told them "As long as you are Jews you are going to share the same thing as the other Jewish people. Even you, who are in command, big men today, tomorrow or in an hour or 2 days, you are going to be nothing. Just like anybody else. You are

going to be killed just like anyone else." And in fact this is what happened. All of the Czestochowa Judenrat, or the Ältesten Rat or whatever they called them, the President and the Secretary and the Jewish police, they finished them off in time by time - especially then, because they knew too much.

C.L. They were killed in Treblinka?

B. Some of them were sent to Treblinka, and some were taken out to the Jewish cemetery and killed. They shot them at the cemetery and finished them up. Even though they thought they were going to stay as long as they could.

Boite 27

BOMBA 11

C.L. How do you explain this blindness of the Jews who didn't want to listen to you? Because it is a very important question.

B. Yes, I know. This is not blindness. We cannot call it blindness It is something which nobody in the world could believe was going to happen. That is not blindness. I would not say that. The Jewish people - and I want you to know this - is a strong nation. No nationality would have survived if that had happened to them. Take the Polish people, the French people or any other people - they would break down like flies. But the Jewish people have a will, a will to live. I mean to live even in suffering. They were living. You would say 'blindness' of

a people which does not believe in anything. The Jewish people believed that they were going to live through. Not all of them, not even 10% of them, but some of them.They believed in it. You have a fact that people like myself and more people working in the gas chambers and doing all kinds of work which they would never believe - they are going to be free people and they are going to be outside those extermination camps, or outside Poland or Germany - they are going to live that through. They only thing they have is hope, and belief. Why didn't they believe in me? Or in other people coming back from Treblinka or other concentration camps or extermination camps? Because in the 20th century nobody could believe something like that was going to happen. Because we are human beings - Jewish people, Catholic people, other people - we are human beings. To eat each other(?) Nobody believed that this thing was going to happen. But it happened. Jewish people in the ghetto couldn't believe that their parents, their wives and their children were dead. They still had hope in believing it wasn't true - until they themselves found out that it was true. But what could they do? What they could do is to go on. Even we, in the ghettoes, where every day people were killed, we had a school for children, we had a theatre and all kinds of things, so that people who for the moment are still alive should remember they are not cannibals, they are people and they are Jewish people. It was a very bad thing, what happened - especially in the ghetto, fighting every hour, every moment of

their lives to stay alive, fighting for a piece of food to eat, fighting over a place to stay the night and not to get sent by the Germans to be killed - that was part of the Jewish life, the Jewish fight to survive. No other people, whoever they were, started a revolution against the Germans, or an uprising against the Germans, but the Jewish people. It happened in the ghetto of Bialystok, in the ghetto of Czestochowa, and finally it happened in the ghetto in Warsaw, where the first uprising against the Germans started, only from the Jewish people and not from others. All people were free - the people of France were free, the people of Yugoslavia, the people of Czechoslovakia, other people - they were free, they could walk around from place to place, they were not afraid, because they had freedom to walk around, freedom to talk, freedom to eat, freedom to stay with their family and they didn't do anything to have an uprising. But we, the Jewish people, in all those small ghettoes, we knew that every day there were going to be less and less of us. But we had something from our history just like the Maccabees at the time of their uprising, we had ours. And we had to do it not for us, because we never thought that we were going to stay alive until today, or end up free in Israel or end up as a people free from the Germans and from slavery and other things. That was our belief, belief in the Jewish people: it doesn't matter how we are, it doesn't matter how we slave, and it doesn't matter how many of us get killed - we Jewish people will survive, and we Jewish people will

stay alive because of our belief that (the) Jewish people will never die, the Jewish people will always be alive, in all circumstances and in all conditions. It doesn't matter what happens to them, they will. And that was the surviving of the people in the ghetto, and that was why we stayed in the ghetto, why we had organisations, why we had fighters in the ghetto and fighters in the woods and everywhere. From our ghettos we sent out people to fight. Some of them - not only some of them, but 99% of those people got killed. Some of our people, especially from Treblinka - in January 1943 our man, by the name of Vizleivitz(?) and a few more who came back from Treblinka and had seen what happened - when they started liquidating the ghettos and started to take out people from the Czestochowa ghetto, Vizleivitz was the one, and a few more who had guns, who tried to rise up at that time. They tried to kill the Germans, they tried to kill some of the SS men in the Czestochowa ghetto because we knew we had to do something. We had an obligation for our people, an obligation to tell history that the Jewish people will survive, the Jewish people will stay alive, it doesn't matter when, or in what condition or how, but they will stay alive for ever. That was the start of the uprisings all over, the same as we had in the Czestochowa ghetto. We had men, good men, men such as you will never get, fighting and giving their lives to show the world the faith of the Jewish people.

Some people now (say?) today that the Jewish people went to

the slaughterhouses like sheep. That's not true. The Jewish people didn't go like sheep to the slaughterhouses. I would say that if that had happened to any other nationality, they would be more frightened, more behind the Germans to kiss them and do something for their survival.

Yes, we had bad people in our life, we had people in our ghettos. We had people - I have to mention - who worked togethe with the Germans, in the Czestochowa ghetto too. We had organisations there, and they denounced it. They told the Germans "In Czestochowa ghetto you have an underground who are going to make an uprising". But we did something for them. We took them away and had a Court, we had judges and lawyers, and we decided that those people who worked with the Germans and denounced us, who were fighting against the Germans, they were not Jewish people. They were not even human beings, and the end of them was that the judges decided they were found guilty and they were killed. They actually were killed, choked to death by our Jewish underground so that the world should know. We had good people, we had bad people, but the majority of us, the majority of the Jewish people all over were good people, honest people, fighting people. In every nation, in every country there are good and bad ones...

Boîte 28

BOMBA 12

C.L. How did the religious Jews behave? Because you talked about the will to survive, and this is deeply connected with Judaism.

B. I would say the religious Jews had a big part of surviving, because they believe the Messiah will come sometime. In all kinds of circumstances they believe in that. It happened that the religious Jews suffered most of all the Jewish people. Other Jews could get by, like shaving or other things, but religious people couldn't do that. They suffered a lot from the Germans. I have seen with my own eyes that they went after those religiou Jewish people, with their beards and their earlocks and cut them off - they tried to rip off the hair from their beards. They suffered a lot. Even coming into Treblinka they suffered a lot because most of the time they took the religious Jews and made a kind of circus with them, to sing for them or dance for them and give them all sorts of pain. That was especially true of them.

I remember a time when they brought in a transport of Jewish people from Warsaw, including religious people. I don't know who they were, maybe Rabbis, maybe other kinds. Before going into the gas chamber they suffered a lot, going through a whole kind of inquisition. And they always believed in another life, they believed in the Messiah because going into the gas

chamber they never once stopped (to say) the 'Ch'ma Israel'. (saying)

Even in the gas chamber you could hear loud the call 'Ch'ma Isra

One time they brought in some people from a little village called Kossov, and there were a lot of religious people. It was a Sunday afternoon and they brought them in not by train, but by foot, walking and pushing them. At that time there was a kind of fight(?) arranged by the Iolka. He arranged on the main place...

C.L. Iolka was the SS man Kurt Frank.

B. Yes, an SS man. Kurt Frank, but we didn't know at the time that his name was Kurt Frank. All we know was that his name was Iolka.

C.L. The 'doll'.

B. A doll in Polish, or whatever you call it. He organised that thi On one side there was a big sports arena, and on the other side were the people from that little village, Kossov, walking into the gas chamber without any clothes, nothing, just covering their heads because they had nothing on their heads, not the almuce, nothing - covering their heads with their own hands and calling 'Ch'ma Israel' because they knew, they were from a place only a few kilometres from Treblinka and they knew already what would happen. So they went in with that call of 'Ch'ma Israel' because they knew it was the end of them. As religious people they knew also that their life does not end in the gas chamber; the life is taken away from their body, but religious people believe in another life after death. Maybe

that was the one they went into, not hollering and not with a big cry like some of the women, but believing in that other world, believing that the human body parts with the so-called 'Ne-shama', in which they are alive after death, which makes them strong. It happened like that.

After they were gassed the spectacle had already started, and the people from the other places, the gas chamber, worked already taking out the people clamped one to another, because even after their death they clamped to one another to be close to one another, not to be apart from each other, in life time and also in death. That is how they took them out of the gas chamber and to the places where they put them for a while; they dug a big trench and put them there, but that was not the end. After that they dug them out and put them on top of each other, body by body, and burned them like an 'auto da f in the time of the inquisition in Spain. They burnt all those bodies one on top of another.

But to go back to the religious people: I would say if somebody is religious - I'm not too much of a religious person, I believe, I am a Jewish man - but all those religious people believed in all their hearts and all their minds in a world to come, in a God and all those other things, I would say they were very, very happy people. I admire them, what they are, really with my whole heart. They go through all those sufferin and never mention a word against their own religion or against God - the God which did the good things, and did also the bad

things, the God which created Hitler, the Hitler and the Germans who created gas chambers and all those bad things for the Jewish people, for they believed that's the way it should be, that's the way it's supposed to be. And they are happy if they can give their soul, their 'Ne-shama' for what they call in Hebrew 'Kidusch Hachem'. If a religious man dies for Kidusch Hachem that means he has sacrificed himself like Isaac sacrificed himself in the name of God and in the name of the people. And that's the way they believe. And I really think I admire them, because they believe in something. Some of our people, who did not believe too much and some who didn't believe at all - there were all kinds, especially in Czestochowa where we had all kinds of organisations, Socialists, Communists and others. They thought they were going to get killed just like animals, and all of them is finished; their suffering and dying was a lot worse than the suffering and dying of the religious people, because the religious people had a 'Moona', a belief that this is God's will, they do something in God's name and they sacrifice themselves in God's name and God's word and for the people of God.

Often today there are a lot of people in a lot of places, and I would say it keeps the Jewish people together, only the thing they believe in, their belief in God. Coming from one country or another, one place or another, if Jewish people didn't believe in their religion they would disappear from the face of the earth, just like any other people in any other time.

Boîte 30

BOMBA 16 (Chez le coiffeur)

C.L. Abraham, can you tell me how it happened? How were you chosen?

B. An order came from the Germans to take out all the barbers they could get; they needed them for a certain job. We didn't know at the time what kind of job they needed them for, but we gathered together as many barbers as we could.

C.L. How long after you arrived in Treblinka?

B. I would say about 4 weeks after I came to Treblinka.

C.L. When was it? In the morning?

B. In the morning, around 10 o'clock. A transport came to Treblinka and the women went into the gas chambers. They chose people from the workers - they asked who was a barber and who was not. I was a barber for quite a number of years, and some of them knew me, like people from Czestochowa and other places. Naturally they chose me and I selected some more barbers I knew of. We gathered together...

C.L. Professional barbers?

B. Professional barbers.

... and waited for the orders. The order came to go with them, with the Germans, and they took us into the gas chambers - the second part of the Treblinka camp.

C.L. Was it far from the first part?

B. Not too far. It was all covered with gates, barbed wire and tree

covering the gates so that nobody should see there was a gate or a place going in to the gas chambers.

C.L. Is it what the Germans called the 'Schlauch'?

B. No, the Germans called it 'the road to heaven'.

C.L. the 'Himmelweg'?

B. Himmelweg, yes. The road to heaven. We knew about it because we had worked for quite a time before we went to work in the gas chamber. Going in they had put some benches, where the women could sit so they would not have the idea that this was their last way, the last time they were going to live or breathe or know what was going on.

C.L. Can you describe how the gas chamber looked?

B. It looked like a simple room, closed from 2 sides with an opening on the other 2 sides, like a door from this side and a door on the other side. But on these 2 sides there was no door, nothing. At the ceiling there was like a shower head, to give the idea that the women going into the gas chamber were taking a bath - not that from the shower head poison gas or chankali(?) or other things were going to come in.

C.L. Was it a big room?

B. It was not big; I would say the room was about 12 by 12 feet, but they pushed a lot of women into that room, almost one on top of the other. As I mentioned before, when we came in we didn't know what we were going to do. Then one of the capos(?) came in and said "Barbers, you have to do a job: to make all those women who came in believe that they are just having a haircut and

going in to take a shower, and from there they are going out of here". But we knew already there was no way out of this room, because this room was the last place they went in alive and they will never go out alive again.

C.L. Can you describe precisely?

B. Describe precisely: when the transport came in, we were waiting there. The transport came in. Women with children, pushing in to that place. We, the barbers, started to cut their hair. Some of them - I wouldn't say all - some knew already what was going to happen to them. We tried to do our best... the most human..

C.L. No, no, no. How did it happen when the women entered the gas chamber? Were you already in the gas chamber?

B. I said we were already in the gas chamber; we were waiting there for the transport to come in.

C.L. You were inside?

B. Yes, inside the gas chamber. We were already in.

C.L. So you saw the women come in.

B. Yes, they came in.

C.L. How were they?

B. They were undressed, all naked, without clothes, without anything

C.L. All of them completely naked?

B. Completely naked. All the women and all the children.

C.L. All the children too?

B. The children too, because they came from the undressing barracks that was a barracks, before going into the gas chamber, where they had to undress themselves.

C.L. What did you feel the first time you saw all these naked women come in?

B. I felt I had to do what they told me: to cut the hair in such a way that it should look as though a barber was doing his job for a woman, to give her a nice haircut, but to take off as much hair as we could because they needed the women's ha to be transported to Germany.

C.L. This means that you didn't shave them? for image

(cassette n° 2)

B. No, we did not shave them. We just cut it very short.

C.L. With scissors?

B. Yes, with scissors.

C.L. You said that you didn't shave them.

B. No, we didn't shave them. We just cut their hair to make them believe they were getting a nice haircut.

C.L. You cut it with what? With scissors?

B. With scissors and a comb. Without any clippers. Just like a man's haircut, I would say. Not taking off all their hair, but just to have them imagine they were getting a nice haircut.

C.L. There were no mirrors?

B. No, no mirrors. Just benches - not chairs - where we worked,

about 16 or 17 barbers. There were a lot of women - every haircut took about 2 minutes, no more, because there were a lot of women to come in, and to get rid of the hair.

C.L. Can you imitate now what you did?

B. We did as best as we could, we were quite a number of professional barbers. We just cut this, and this, like this, (etc)... and the head was all finished.

C.L. With big movements?

B. Naturally with big movements, because we could not waste any time. The other party was waiting outside already to come in and do the same job, the same procedure.

C.L. You said you were about 16 barbers.

B. Yes.

C.L. This means you cut the hair of how many women in one batch?

B. I would say that in one batch going into that place there were between 60 and 70 women in the same room at once.

C.L. And after that the doors of the gas chamber were closed?

B. After that we were finished with that party, and another party came in, about 140, 150 women. They were already taking care(?), they told us to leave the gas chamber for a few minutes, about 5 minutes, while they put in the gas and choked them to death.

C.L. Where did you wait?

B. Outside the gas chamber. On the other side was a group of working people who took out the dead bodies. Some of them were not exactly dead. They took them out, and in one minute every-

thing was clear, it was clean, to take in the other women, to go through the same thing as the first ones.

C.L. Did these women have long hair?

B. Most of them had long hair, or they had short hair, but we had to do the job, to gather the hair. As I mentioned, the Germans needed the hair for their purposes.

C.L. I asked you, and you didn't answer. What was your impression the first time you saw these naked women with children arriving. What did you feel?

B. I'll tell you something. Over there it was very hard to have any feelings. Working there, day and night, among those people, those bodies, men and women, your feelings disappeared. You were dead to your feelings - you had no feelings at all. As a matter of fact, when I was chosen to work as a barber in the gas chambers some women came in off a transport from my town, from Czestochowa. I knew a lot of those women.

C.L. You knew them?

B. I knew them. I lived with them in my town, in my street, and some of them were my close friends. When they saw me they started hugging me. "What are you doing here, what is going to happen to us?" What could you tell them? What could I tell?

A friend of mine, who also worked as a barber - a good barber - in my home town, when his wife and his sister came into the gas chamber...

(silence)

C.L. Go on, Abe. You must go on. You have to.

B. It's too hard.

C.L. Please. We have to do it, you know we do.

B. I'm not able to do it.

C.L. You have to do it. I know it's very hard. I know and I apologis

B. Don't kid me along with that, please.

C.L. Please.

B. I told you today was going to be very hard.

C.L. I thought the hair of the women was wasted(?) in the gas chambe

I thought it was (...?...)

B. It was put into bags and transported to Germany.

(inaudible)....

B. Ok, go ahead.

C.L. So what did he answer when his wife and sister came?

B. They tried to talk. Also the husband of his sister, they could not tell them that was the last time they would be alive, becaus behind them were the German Nazis, the SS men, and they knew th minute they said a word, not only the wife and sister (who were to die already) but also they would share the same path with them. In a way they tried to do the best for them, to stay with them a second, a minute longer, just to hug them and kiss them because they knew they would never see them again.

It also happened that a woman came in from the same place, a very close friend of the Jewish commandant by the name of Galewski. Galewski was the commandant of the Jewish part of Treblinka.

C.L. Galewski himself was a Jew, a Polish Jew.

B. He was a Polish Jew, but he was actually a convert. He converted from Judaism to Christianity. His girlfriend came in, and when she saw him walking around (because over there he was a big man, the commandant of the camp of Treblinka) she was motioning to her friends and relatives...

Bo1te32

BOMBA 18

C.L. Go on with the story of Galewski.

B. He was the commandant of the Jewish brigade in Treblinka, by the name of Galewski. He was converted, but I would say he was one of the finest men. In fact, after the liberation he received the highest award from the Polish Government because he was involved in the uprising of the Treblinka revolt.

C.L. And he was killed.

B. He was killed during the uprising. But working in the gas chamber, his girlfriend came in to the gas chamber where we cut their hair. She saw him, walking around as a big man like a commandant. So she thought, also telling her friends and relatives who were together with her in the gas chamber, that her friend was there and not to be afraid - nothing would happen to them because he would not allow something wrong to be done to them. He came over. He motioned to us not to say a word. He went to them and kissed them, her relatives too, and

said to her "Don't be afraid. Nothing will happen to you. I will be back in 5 minutes." But she didn't last 5 minutes. After 5 minutes she, and the other group with her family and the group that came in from the ghetto of Łódź were already dead. It happened many more times like that, that people working - barbers with us - they met their closest relatives. The worst part of it was that even at the last minute where you shared joy, you shared sorrow and other things, you were forbidden to tell your own wife or your sister that it was the last time you would talk with her and the last time you would see her. After we were through with the women's transport they took us out from the gas chamber, back to Treblinka n° 1. That was the first time that somebody working in Treblinka 1 came into Treblinka 2, where the gas chambers were, and walked out from the gas chamber alive and not be carried out as a dead man.
After a while we went back to our work, but it wasn't for long because after 1hour or 20 minutes the whistle sounded again and the barbers were called again, going through the same thing we had been through from the beginning. It was a very hard thing to do. It was very hard for us, and it was very hard for the family we parted from. But human life has something in it: at the last minute, when they know already they are going to be killed, something tells them maybe, maybe there is a chance they will survive and go through all that suffering and live to be free people. It happened to me, and to a few more. But it didn't happen to millions of people who went through the gas

chambers and concentration camps; very, very few of them really survived to tell the story of what was going on, and what actually happened to the Jewish people. But none of the nations - it doesn't matter how you call them: France, or America... they don't want to believe, they don't believe up till now that something like that happened. But not only witnesses, the Germans themselves have filmed all those places, they have photographed all those places which took in the people, where they were gassed and the corpses of the dead people were taken out, which they cannot deny. The Germans themselves know they are guilty of this thing that they did to our people and some others, because some people besides the Jewish people went throug almost the same as the Jewish people.

C.L. You told me yesterday that most of the women did not know what would happen, and you said just now that some of them inside the gas chamber knew.

B. Yes. A small majority (=minority?) knew. How did they know about it? The way we looked at them, the way we felt about them and what was going to happen to them - we didn't have to put words in their minds because they could see what was going to happen. But very, very few of the women, especially the women from Poland - they had a different feeling. We had some transports coming in from other parts of Europe, not only from Poland, and those people did not believe at all that something like that was going to happen to them. Some of the women couldn't part from their luggage, their clothes or even their hats, trying to drag them into the gas chamber because they said they

were going to need them. Some of the people working there said to them "You will not need it". "What do you mean 'I won't need it'? I will need it! How will I walk around without these things?" They didn't believe what a part of the people in Poland ~~knew~~. They had the feeling they would not get out of those gas chambers alive. It didn't matter that we didn't tell them; they looked in our eyes, the sorrow in our faces, and they knew exactly what was going to happen to them.

C.L. Did they try to resist?

B. No, they did not try. I want to come to a little thing that happened in Treblinka. It happened in Treblinka that a woman coming in with a transport from a town near Warsaw - I don't know how, but she knew what was going to happen. She took out a razor and cut the throat of one of the workers.

C.L. One of the Jewish workers?

B. One of the Jewish workers. One of them tried to rescue him, and she cut his throat with the razor. The other one - as a matter of fact he was the 'capo' of the barbers - she cut his throat too. He survived, but the other one, who was what I would call an 'Over-capo', died. The Germans took him to the hospital and tried to do everything they could to rescue him but they could not succeed. The only grave of a man dying in Treblinka was his, in which he was buried, a natural grave like any other human being's all over the world.

Boîte 33

BOMBA 19

C.L. Go on.

B. It was the only time it happened in Treblinka that somebody was not killed by the Germans, and somebody was not gassed in the gas chamber but was killed by a Jewish woman coming into the extermination camp in Treblinka.

C.L. And it was the only time somebody was buried, you say?

B. It was the only time, because she killed him.

C.L. A jew was buried?

B. She cut his throat with a razor. And they tried to do everything they could to save him, because he was like a hero for them - a Jewish hero for the Nazis.

C.L. And he was buried? He had a grave?

B. But they couldn't save him. He was buried right next to the Lazarett, and that is the only grave in the history of the Jewish people in Treblinka that somebody was buried and given a funeral. All the Germans went to the funeral, all the people working there in Treblinka had to stand at 'Appel' and they had to salute the body going through to be buried.

C.L. Tell me one thing: the Jewish women, when they arrived in the gas chamber naked in front of you, what did they feel? Were they not ashamed to be naked in front of this row of barbers?

B. Most of the Jewish women were ashamed, because the Jewish

women - maybe they are different from other kinds - were more religious and more forbidden to do a lot of things which other nationalities do. They did cover with their hands the main part, the woman's part of their bodies. All they could do was cover up with their hands.

I want to mention one little thing that happened to me: I was cutting the hair of a woman - not a woman, more a girl of about 17, 18 years old. This girl was a teacher in her home town, young as she was; I asked her name because she was so outspoken and so nice, and she told me her name was Sara Livinson. She came from a little town by the name of Konskie, in Poland. She told me like that:"I don't want anything at all. I know I am going to be dead, and I know that they are going to gas me..."

C.L. She knew?

B. "... But please do me a favour that I am telling you you could do. Try to escape here from this place, and please go back to the places where you and I come from and tell the people what is going on here."

I don't know how, but this girl was always in front of my eyes whenever I moved and wherever I turned. Whatever I did I had her picture in front of me. Maybe it gave me some power to do what I did, to organise the escape for myself and more people - to get out of the extermination camp and go outside and tell the people what was going on over there in Treblinka.

C.L. When they were already inside the gas chamber and the room

was closed and the gas was sent, did you hear anything?

B. It was not the sort of thing you ask to hear. It was not only that you heard it, but people from outside, the Polish people for kilometres around could hear the screaming and choking that was going on for a number of seconds, even 1 or 2 minutes, until everything was quiet.

C.L. It was so short? No more then 2 minutes?

B. No, that is as short as it was, because when in Treblinka they stopped giving in poison or other kinds of poison things to gas them, they had a pump pumping out the air from the chamber. Naturally, without air the women had to be choked and fall on each other to catch the breath from each other. But it was impossible, and in a very short time, maximum 2 minutes, they were all quiet until the other door opened up; because the Nazi was looking through a little hole to see what was going on, whether they were still alive or dead, to give the order to take them out of the gas chamber.

C.L But I thought the Jews were killed with carbon monoxide gas from a motor.

B, That happened at the beginning. After that they stopped it becaus it was expensive. It cost money and it was very hard to get through to them. At the last time they pumped out the air from the chamber.

C.L. You are sure of this?

B. I am pretty sure. And I know about it, I was there and I saw it. I was inside, and not many people alive - maybe 2 or 3

of the people who worked in the second part of Treblinka are still alive. I was one of them, I know, I was there and I saw that.

C.L. How long did it last that the barbers cut the hair inside the gas chamber? Because it was not always the case.

B. How long was it? Not too long. A group came in, as I said before...

C.L. No, that's not my question.

B. Maybe I don't understand your question.

C.L. I thought that the time when the hair was cut inside the gas chamber did not last very long - that afterwards the hair was cut before the gas chamber. You told me this yourself.

B Whenever they locked the door they took out the hair from the gas chambers. They packed it in big sacks, put them in a special place from where they transported them to the wagons to take them to Germany.

C.L. No, you don't understand what I mean. How many weeks did it last that the hair was cut <u>inside</u> the gas chamber?

B. How many weeks? It didn't last even an hour. For every transport...

... which went in

:ass. 2b)

Boîte 34

BOMBA 20

C.L. How many weeks did you work inside the gas chamber?

B. Inside the gas chamber we worked for just a short period of time, because they decided not to let the people working in Treblinka 1 to go to Treblinka 2. So we worked there for about a week or ten days, in the gas chamber. After that they decided that we would cut the hair in the undressing barracks, where they divided the barracks with a partition. A small partition where we did the job in the undressing barracks.

C.L. But professionally you are a barber for men or for women too?

B. In the old country I was a barber for men and women. Over there we did not have special (shops) for men, we had for ladies and men. I was able to do both, men and women.

C.L. And today you don't work any more with women?

B. No, today I don't work any more. I worked for a while; I guess I have worked for plenty of years, so I'm just doing a little bit of work, not exactly a lot. Once in a while I go into the place.

C.L. What did you feel when you started to cut the hair of women after the war?

B. After the war... That's a really good question. When I came out of the extermination camp in Treblinka and went to work in a barber's shop, when a woman was sitting in the chair dressed it was funny for me because I had been cutting the hair of so many hundreds of women, all naked, without any clothes. At the beginning I didn't know how to start giving a haircut to a woman sitting dressed as a woman should be. Emotionally I couldn't get used to the idea. It took quite a time until I got used to myself cutting the hair of a ~~lady~~ dressed with clothes on.

C.L. You said something was missing - or not missing.

B. Something was missing. I tell you something, if you work in a place like that you get so used to it that you feel something is missing, that the normal thing is un- ... you are brainwashed, and you don't figure out what you are doing. Just the thing you are supposed to do.

C.L. Is that true? Is it true that the people like you, when you are cutting the hair of the naked women just before their death, you looked like automatons?

B. I would say mostly, yes. The feeling that we are men and they are women - at that time we had no such feeling because we knew that in an hour, or two hours, or the day, we were going to be together with them, dead ourselves. So the feeling was not as between a man and a woman, it was to stay maybe another half hour, or maybe another day ... because most of the people didn't stay there too long. If they stayed a day, 2 days - if somebody there in Treblinka worked for a week he was called an old worker, which was not that simple because he had already worked there for a week.

When I was working there - a short story, maybe it will interest you or maybe not - it happened that I got sick. I got very, very sick, I thought I was going to die or something. I went over to the head man, they called him 'Akiva'(?). That's what we called him. What his real name was I don't know. I went over to him and said "Please can you take me down to the Lazarett because I want to be killed. I can't take the pains any more" because it was not possible to go through those pains.

I had an attack of the kidney, and without medicine or anything they said 'It isn't possible'. So when I went over to him I said 'Please take me down to the Lazarett and kill me'. He looked at me as if I was crazy. He asked me "How long have you been working here?" I said "I've been working here for about 5 or 6 weeks already". "5 or 6 weeks!" he said. "Go to the kitchen and tell the man to give you some whisky. When you've got some whisky you will feel better."

I went over to get some whisky, but I didn't get it. I got a little bit of tea, and the Akiva told me to go to the barracks and stay there. But to stay in the barracks meant that you were dead. It never happened that somebody went into the barracks in the middle of the day and they didn't take him out and kill him. I didn't know what had happened. I went into the barracks, lay down and some of my friends working there tried to sneak in to see if I was still alive. They saw me, and talked to me, and saw that I was really alive and said "My God I don't know what has happened!" Even the capo, even the over-capo - "What's happening here? That's never happened in Treblinka!" I was there, lying down, until the night. When the night came some people came in - I will never forget the name, Kapitan Zello (?). He was the Kapitan, we slept together, and he was even the head man of the uprising at Treblinka. He was together with a man, a cousin of Dr Masari(?). He was a doctor himself, and he came over to me...

C.L. Jedo Bloch(?)

B. ... and said "What is wrong with you?" I said, "This and this is wrong". So he took out a tablet and said "Abe, take this. If you don't feel better in an hour, just let me know." I took the tablet and got up in the morning just like a new-born man. Up till this day I never felt what it means to have kidney trouble or kidney attack. That actually happened. But I don't know what had happened to the Akiva, that he didn't take me down just like he took down hundreds and hundreds of people to kill them. It meant that somebody who worked there for quite a number of days, he was something. He wasn't like somebody who came in. To this day I really don't know how to imagine what happened there. It happened many many times when a transport arrived and I tried to sneak out some men. I tried to sneak out a cousin of mine and I told him "Lie behind the clothes. Nobody will look at you and I will take you out." But from nowhere they came across and said "What are you doing here?", took out a gun and killed him. Most of the killing was done by the guy with the hat, we called him the 'Krumme kopf' - I still don't know his name even though I was at his trial.

C.L. Mieter.

B. Mieter! Yes, that was his name. That's what they called him. With him, or with the Lalko, to kill anybody - or the guy 'Zuck zuck(?)' - to kill people was just like playing a game. The biggest pleasure for them was to kill / to shoot at a special place they had in their mind - to shoot the bullet in. When

they succeeded they were just happy. Like the guy Lalko - his speciality was in taking out the nicest, healthiest men and without saying anything just going over and taking out his gun and killing them.

(fin de l'interview BOMBA)