

Smolar - translation

BOBINE

Smolar 1

Q: Ah, my son, You are my son.

A: You are my son.

Q: No, you are my son...

A: Soon there will be a fight. We will have to go to court.

Q: Why? No, no, no. But we have to warm up a little. I want this anecdote with the glasses.

A: With the glasses?

Q: Yes.

A: Now?

Q: Now. Right away.

A: Ich have, at the beginning of the war, while we were a German air raid. I remained lying on the ground, lost my glasses. And from that moment on, I had no glasses for all the years of war. When I came to the woods I had to

Q: Yes.

A: No.

Q: But yes. Yes. There is no other possibility.

A: . I will speak Yiddish. I will not speak German.

Q: I don't understand Yiddish.

A: You don't think....

Q: I don't understand one word of Yiddish.

A: I...You will understand every wordx that I will
speak in Yiddish.

Q: Good, I have understood this!

A: Understood?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes.

Q: Good.

A: From Oll...from the beginning?

A: Yes, from the beginning, yes.

A: In the first day of the war, when I was going from
Bialystok in the direction of Minsk....

Q: You are from Bialystok?

A: I was...I was the editor of the Jewish daily ~~paper~~
paper in Bialystok.

Q: Yes?

A: Yes.

Q: What name?

A: Star of Bialystok.

Q: Star of Bialystok.

A: Yes.

Q: But you were born in Bialystok?

A: No, but that is another story.

Q: Yes, but where were you born?

A: I was born 50...50 Km. from Bialystok in the town
of Sambrow,

Q: Sambrow, that is south of Bialystok...south Bialystok?

A: No, it is west of Bialystok.

Q: Bialystok.

A: I was...I was the editor of a Yiddish daily paper and at the same time the secretary of association of writers.

Q: Yes, association of writers.

A: All the writers who had come from Poland: from Warsaw, were put by us in a wagon and driven to the Soviet Union. All Jewish writers were saved. I remained the last with a gun...

Q: A gun? a weapon?

A: Yes. And when I wanted to leave, there were no more trains. So I went on foot for 400 Km.

Q: 400 Km...on foot.

A: Till Minsk.

Q: There are 400 Km. between Bialystok and Minsk

A: ...400 Km.

Q: Yes.

A: On foot.

Q: When was this?

A: Yes...this...this was in June...July....

Q: June July 1941.

A: Yes.

Q: That was beginning of Barbarossa.

A: Yes. I left, was in a German concentration camp and from there I finally escaped.

Q: Yes, escaped.

A: At night. I went to Minsk as I was convinced that it being the capital of White Russia there must be a possibility to get out. It was an illusion. There was nothing. The government

left, the party leadership left, and no one cared about the population. There were left in Minsk 70,000 Jews.

Q: 70,000 Jews?

A: 70,000 Jews were left in Minsk when the German came.

Q: Yes, and what was...

A: I came there. On the way, coming in to Minsk, I met an acquaintance, a White Russian. He said to me: come with me to a village, I will harbour you during the occupation, protect you from the Germans. I said: I was educated all my life to be a Jew. I was a communist, but a Jew.

Q: You were a communist and a Jew?

A: I came to communism as a Jew, with the conviction that Communism will solve the Jewish problem.

Q: Yes, but you were not a Bundist?

A: No.

Q: Never.

A: No. He wanted...the White Russian wanted me to go with him to the woods...to the village. I should save my body and my life, while over there were thousands of Jews. All their lives they were screamed at, hated....I cannot leave my people.

Q: Yes, I can understand that.

A: I will stay in the ghetto.

Q: You were in the ghetto...?

A: I left immediately. It was the first day. There was a big board in the streets with an order of the Germans that a Jewish ghetto is to be established.

Q: The Germans created the Jewish ghetto in Minsk immediately after the....after....

A: Before....there was yet no civil administration, there was still the army in charge. And they gave the instruction to establish a ghetto. I have the text of the German order in my book.

Q: In July?

A: That was in July.

Q: In July.

A: That was in July. Mixed Yiddish with German.

Q: Yes, yes, but....

A: A Jewish writer....

Q: But I understand all.

A: Good.

Q: Your Yiddish is very clear.

A: I came to the ghetto and looked for friends, trying ~~not~~ to avoid being recognized. They should not know. I went to the Jewish Council and met there many people I knew.

Q: There was of course already a Judenrat?

A: Yes. The story of how the Judenrat came into being: A group of Jews were being dragged away for forced labour. They were taken to the German military commander. The commander came out and

asked: who speaks German? - No one. None.

Q: Don't look at it.

Smolar 2

A: A group of Jews who were dragged away for forced labour were brought to the German military commander. The Commander came out and asked: who among you speaks German? Silence. No answer. - I ask again: who speaks German? Again no one answered. - For the last time. All will be destroyed. Who speaks German? So a Jew stepped forward, black, , with a slim body, and said: I understand a little German. But he said it in Yiddish. So he said: you will be the ^{elder} ~~wise~~ of the Jews.

Q: fantastic.

A: The Jew's name was Eliahu Mushkin.

Q: Eliahu Mushkin.

A: Yes, He...the Jew in the Getto could...He was

He felt all of a sudden that

He did not know how to deal with it. In the Soviet town of Minsk there was no community, no Jewish representative organization. And there he was responsible for all the Jews that were put in the getto. He took with him people he had in order to take care of it. He took the chief of police and a number of other people. the

central problem was

The Jews were living all over the city. And here they were squeezed into three or four streets.

The central problem was how does one

Q: Where were these streets, in the center of town or....

A: No, in the ghetto. The ghetto was not in the center.

Q: Of course. And the...the Russians were away? escaped?

A: The Russians left, and all, the whole population were called to dig trenches against tanks. But they did not say that the Germans had already arrived. One should.....one should . The population was left behind and they escaped like cowards....cowards. Tell him what cowards are.

Corinna: des lâches.

A: all.

Q: And the Russians gave no information to the Jews?

A: The government did....and the leadership of the party gave no information, not even to these who were communists. So they stayed in the ghetto.

Q: And what did the Jews think when the Germans came to Minsk?

A: One started to organize the life in the ghetto. one....

Q: Yes, but my question is: did the Jews know who Hitler was, what he stood for?

A: With... This is the difference between the ge^o of Minsk and the gettoes of Warsaw and Bialystok and Vilna and other places. They did not know what Hitler represented, what he would bring with him. At..... before the war broke out it was forbidden to write anything in the press regarding ~~the~~ fascism. Molotov came out with a speech and declared that fascism was a question of taste.

Q: There was a treaty... Ribbentrop- Molotov.

A: Yes. Because of this one knew that the realities between Russia and Germany were the best. One could see in Minsk how the trains went full with bread, with copper, with metal. Everything went to Germany.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: Minsk is the last station on the way to the west.

Q: And there was no information?

A: No information about what was going on. One only knew because of the people from Warsaw who came from Jews from the eastern territories who came from Bialystok, ~~in~~^{from} Vilna. They said things but little was believed.

Q: The people did not believe.

A: No one believed. They thought these were the Germans of 1915. Then one could talk to them, negotiate with them or. One could live.

Q: But it was a big, absolute surprise for the Jews.

A: One did not believe it even in the first days when whole transports of Jews were taken. One did not believe they were taken to die. They waited for a letter, believing they were taken to work. The first shock came on the 7th of November 1941, the anniversary of the October revolution. The Germans drove the Jews out of the houses and gave them flags of the revolution. It was provoked and then they started shooting. And thus they could prove their propaganda in Germany: the Jews are Bolsheviks. They were even demonstrating in the ghetto on the day of the October revolution. Then the Jews started to believe that the Germans went on , on provokation.

Q: provokation.

A: And one believed one should not yield to provocation.

Q: And what happened?

A: What happened was that a number of Jews were shot and the first transports were sent away. They saw they were being sent to work. That day five people gathered in a flat not far from the Judenrat. And we ~~asked~~ asked what should one do. The situation was terrible. In my life I lived , in the war, in 1927, and I believed the ghetto

W We sat there, it was August 1941, and decided to create an organization. The first aim of the organization was to combat the disinformation, to tell what fascism was all about. One should know that. We took one member and put him on a radio to listen to everything that was going on. And all those who come from....

Q: One moment, you go too fast.

A: Fast?

Q: Yes, who was the situation in the ghetto?

A: In the ghetto there was

and people were selling everything they had to get bread, potatoes, things to eat. then there were military groups in the ghetto who forced the men to go out to forced labour. In Minsk was the head-quarters of the eastern front of the eastern front Center Group. In Minsk was the head-quarters of the German . And the Jews in the Soviet Union were all skilled workers. They thought . We know from documents that there was a fight between the military authority and the Hitler Party, with the military authorities maintaining that the Jews should not be killed, they wanted to have them. They should serve the front . And the party

The difference between the getto of Minsk and the other gettoes is that in all other gettoes there were periods of quiet...

Q: Yes.

A: In Minsk there was no quiet. In Minsk people were murdered daily. There was....

Q: Who did it? the so-called Einsatzgruppen?

A: This was not only the Einstzgruppe. These were..

At the beginning it was the army...

Q: Yes.

A: At the beginning the Wehrmacht.

Q: Yes, can you de...

A: At the beginning there were yet no Einsatzgruppen

The Einsatzgruppen came later. There was not one day without shooting in the streets. Especially as daily the police came, it was the Schupo, other police, , one saw them shooting.

They took out many people, took them women on one side, and out on the other side men. This was the days of the fight between the military authorities and the party...the nazi authorities.

Q: Yes.

A: People were starting to xorganize their life.

bargaining with the White Russians, selling what one possessed to live. But one Aktion followed the other. In between individuals were being sho

In the Aktionen hundreds and thousands were taken, lead away like pigs not far from Minsk - we knew where it was- and there they were murdered.

Q: And where were the people shot at the beginning

A: They were shot not far from Minsk, not far from Minsk...

Smolar 3

Q: What is thisthis song...this Yiddish song with ? what is it?

A: (sings)

Q: Again.

A: No, it is not....

Q: Okay, but I have a question...

A: please, please.

Q: This....this story, this provocation...

A: Yes, of seven....of gendarmes....

Q: Yes, when the German took red flags...

A: ...gave the Jews red flags...

Q: ...in the ghetto. You saw it yourself?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: I was already in hiding.

Q: Ah, you were already....

A: I was already illegal. But I had of all the ghetto. That....

Q: Yes, I want a little....

A: On the first meeting we had, we decided to...
two things. First, combatting the disinformation
about the Germans. Present - and we were the
first to formulate the slogan: ghetto is death.
The population . And out of this
came the solution that existed in no other
ghetto in Poland: out from the ghetto. .

Q: Out from the ghetto.

A: Yes.

Q: When was this?

A: That was in September 1941.

Q: Only three months...

A: After three months we....

Q: After....

A: The population was very disoriented. They saw
the Germans dealing one blow after the other,
and they did not know what to do. So we started
to bring out small announcements with the sig-
nature: head of the Fighting Organization. We
warn all Jews that the ghetto is death. Take all
your strength to get out from the ghetto.

Q: But at that time you were already a member of
the Jewish....

A: I was the secretary of the Organization.

Q: No, of the Judenrat?

A: No, no. Of the resistance....

Q: Yes, yes.

A:organization.

Q: I understand, but I mean at the beginning....

A: At the beginning....

Q: But you were....

A: Contact? With the Judenrat? No. I sent people to the chairman of the Judenrat and....

Q: Eliahu?

A: Eliahu Mushkin...And we told him: you are the person ~~ix~~ responsible with his head for all that will happen. All you will do you have to do for the Jews and not for the Germans. Then he broke down and said: you know, I am banned. Then there was the first meeting between him and me. And I said to him: you,.....the Jews were ordered to make a large contribution, You know what contribution means?

Q: Yes.

A: A big contribution. 50% of the contribution was

Q: But it was impossible for him?

A: Possible. The Germans were unable to check the whole sum. They...they asked for 3 million "ube" "ou will give the 2 million. We will take one million....for the Partisans.

Q: And he accepted?

A: He only said: I do everything to send away to the woods. I said: I am also staying behind in my post. We are threatened with death, but first of all we have to do what is in

the interest of the community at the head of which he was standing. Then he brought to me other members of the Judenrat, the chief of police Serevianski Zalman. And he met me and said: I am g....

Q: Where? in the getto or in the woods?

A: Getto.

Q: You were in the getto?

A: I was in the getto. But....

Q: At that time you were not in the woods?

A: not at this time. I came to the woods....I came in July...July...not in July...in August 1942.

Q: Ah, yes. One year later.

A: I was in the getto for one year. When the chief

Q: This means the resistance movement was in the getto.

A: Only in the getto.

Q: Only in the getto.

A: But we had contacts with the Aryian side.

Q: Yes.

A: And it was so that on the aryian side....I have sent out a small Jewish boy. very handsome. His name was Jenei. I told him: Look for people on the aryian side who are willing to fight the Germans. One day he came and said he found people and he wants to meet them.

Q: Communists?

A: These were Communists.

Q: But were there at the time russian....communists
russian....gen...gentile partisans?...

A: Parti...

Q: ... in the surroundings of Minsk?

A: There were yet no partisans.

Q: There were none?

A: Not yet. That was....in 1941 there was not
any partisan movement. It started to exist as
of the beginning of 1942. Then we met on the
Aryan side - we got out of the ghetto over the
fences - on the Aryan side...I had my hair
growing, looked like death
and we were taken into a room which looked as
if there had been no war. They looked well. I
was given food...

Q: What?

A: They gave me to eat because we were hungry.

Q: You were very hungry?

A: Very hungry. I was....People who knew me did
not recognize me because my whole body was
swollen...

Q: Ah yes.

A: ... He gave me to eat, and the first
question was: who gave you the right to create

an organization? That is
in the Soviet Union no one can create an
organization unless he got the permission of
the Central Committee.

Q: Yes? Unbelievable.

A: He asks: Who gave you the right to create an
organization? So I answered: My conscience and
my duty to the people

getto. - What do you intend

to do?

Q: What?

A: What do you intend to do? to do? I say: First
of all, to give a perspective to the people.
they should not feel the end has come, that
they are cut off from the outer world. Not

the situation has not got a way

out, but one should . Give us the
means to get the people out of the getto. Create
a base in the woods, so that we can get out
first of all the women and children and the
old people....

Q: But wait a minute, there were many small towns
in the Minsk area, not...

A: No, they were already liquidated.

Q: liquidated?

A: All were brought to the getto in Minsk. in the
Minsk getto meanwhile there were 80,000 people.

Q: Ah, yes? so those...those small towns were either
liquidated or the people were in Minsk---?

A: There was....

Q: ...in the...

A: There had been a big Aktion to liquidate the
le area of Minsk. They came....All were brought
....not all....A large number were killed on
way. But the were brought into the getto. If
you want, I will give you a man who came to
Minsk this way. He is an artist in Tel Aviv.
also wrote a book in Hebrew.

Q: But you had no weapons?

A: We could...That not. This is the second stage.

Q: Yes, but in the....

A: That...

Q: ...in the first stage...

A: At every stage the question was
lead out the women and children. I sent away
a woman. Her name was Mina Uliess. He did
not look Jewish but Aryan. I sent her to the
big forrest on the border of Poland and the
Soviet Union...

Q/ But later?

A: No. September 1941. And she went around and
searched. In all the forrests there was German
artillery and German tanks.... We got.
we got in touch with....

Q: But one minute, one minute. In Minsk there
were liquidation every day. This is true.

A: Every day, but small liquidations.

Q: Small.

A: Till March 1942, Purim, the day of purim there

an action all over Europe. They made it special-
ly on Jewish holidays, Jewish feasts. The day
of Purim 5,000 Jews of Minsk were murdered.

Q: Jews of Minsk.

A: Yes. At that time they already took the people
from the ghetto to a place which was called
Tuschinka. There were big ditches and all were
shot there.

Q: Einsatzgruppen.

A: This was already done by the Einsatzgruppen. One
of the people in charge of this was a German
whom we used to call the murderer with the white
eyes. His name was Ruebe. He murdered in the
streets of the ghetto. He took 12 Jewish girls,
, had them undress, lead them through
the ghetto and to the Jewish cemetery. There he
shot them one after the other.

Q: You saw this?

A: No. We knew it.

- On the whole there was a lot I did not see. I
was hidden of the Organization.

Q: Yes.

A: But I had everything reported to me. I was
informed by the ghetto police. I was informed

Smolar 4

A: The Purim action brought an end to the illusion which some Jews still entertained, that there is still hope for the ghetto. Our solutions of leaving the ghetto, of buying guns became significant. People took to selling there last thing to buy a pistol. Where did they buy it? They were bought from the Italians who came to the ghetto. They did not know about the racial ~~xxx~~ attitude to the Jews. They went around with Jewish girls. And the Jewish girls used this to buy guns from them. We had our man in the labour office ~~xxx~~ where Jews were taken out every day for forced labour....

Q: Yes.

A: So we sent people of the organization so that they would go where there are Russian guns - the Germans didn't use them, they didn't count them even. So we brought the Russian guns into the ghetto. It went so far that we brought a maxim into the ghetto. A maxim is s....

Q: Ah, yes.

A: So we...

Q: machine gun.

A: Machine gun. We brought it into the ghetto.

It became in the getto with guns.

Q: But this was before Purim?

A: After Purim.

Q: After Purim.

A: After the action. They were convinced that it would...the Germans only bring death. And our solution was: the getto is death, one should leave it. On two...

Q: How many people were shot in this Purim.....?

A: 5,000 Jews were shot in the Purim action.

Q: 5,000.

A: 5,000 Jews.

Q: Yes. This means, how many people were....

A: There were left....

Q: ...Minsk getto...?

A: There were 60,000 Jews left. But people left the getto every day. The Jews in the Soviet Union had knew many people in the villages. There were mixed families. And had the contacts. The question that faced us was organization.

Q: But how many...many members.....?

A: I will tell you this at the end. This will be one of the greatest sensations. We are the only ghetto that lead out such a large number of Jews And I will say it later.

Q: Yes.

A: But we knew the characteristics of the ghetto: that there is terror every single day; there was shooting every day, but that big actions are

planned in Berlin, were planned in Minsk in the Generalgouvernement and only there. It....

Q: In the Generalkommissariat.

A: Kommissariat. Purim there were Actions. It was just at the date of the Jewish holidays. But with the exception of this, they made only small actions. There was a n action where they killed Jewish children. There, behind , where I showed the picture are buried Jewish children. And the Generalkommissar Kube came out and

Q: Yes.

A: ...and the children were thrown alive into a large trench. And Herr Kube was standing and threw them to .

Q: Kerkes.

A: threw them . And the children screamed: Daddy, don't shove the sand into our eyes.

Q: Kube?

A: Kube stood by. But all those of the SS buried them alive....

Q: And he did what? Konfetti to the children?

A:threw.

Q: Yes, in the grave.

Q: The children had already been shot?

A: They had not yet been shot.

Q: Not yet.

A: They were still alive. They screamed: Daddy, why are you shoving the sand into our eyes?

Q: How many children in this....

A: There were the children....were....I do not remember the number exactly, but they were brought from a children's home. And with them went....the story of Korczack repeated itself. With them went a wonderful Jewish woman who lead them, took them by hand and went together with them to her death. As much as the Korczack story is a collective

Q: Yes, you are right.

A: After Purim the situation changed. We received from the state committee....In town there was already an organised committee. We brought up the question: You have to give us the means to bring out more Jews. We have military people we have guns, we have to lead the people out. The Organisation wanted to help us. And so something happened, that happened nowhere else. A military organization with soviet military people was established in Minsk. A contact was maintained between the two organizations. The military people said....

Q: In Minsk meaning the aryian...

A: In the town, in the aryian side. But I was in contact with them. So the state military council said: Why should we take the Jews..

of the war. We have a number of officers and soldiers of the Red Army. They should be sent first. This was the first anti-semitic

conflict with the head of the military organization.

Q: Yes, could you describe this in detail?

A: I remember....I cannot.....

And they said to me: there is battle out there, first of all we have to take out people who can fight. One has to lead them out. We have captains we have majors. They sit around here. One has to save them. But in this was also ^{an} anti-semitic notion. I could feel it. I felt it with the state organization. I told them this could not exist with parallel organizations. Everything should be concentrated on the fight against the Germans. I had a conflict with them, several of them. And the end of it was that they fell into the hands of the Gestapo and they turned over everybody. Not me. Bieloff was the name of the head of the soviet....

Q: Bieloff.

A: Bieloff.

Q: And he was an antisemite?

A: He didn't say it...did not talk. A soviet man spoke. Said that it was more useful to send military people. And that he is against Jews, as we do not set out to save. If we want to save, we should save the whole town. But I could feel that he is an antisemit talking. And....

Q: "nd what...what have these people said? That the Jews were cowards....

A: The Jews should give because they are rich. The Jews should give medicines, the Jews should give a printing press. And we gave it. We sent medicines from the ghetto to the farthest. We put together a printing press and sent it to the forest.

Q: For Russian partisans?

A: Yes. we did...We took telephones to send them to the forest. Everything. Together with Jewish people....

Q: Yes.

A: ...who went. But the Jewish people were in small groups. We did...we sewed in the ghetto workshops warm clothes for the partisans. There was a case when partisans were wounded....

Q: But I do not understand. How was it possible? The Germans did not control what they....

A: Control they did, but we had means that were secret. A number of people were caught during this, but before anything else....

Q: Has...This means that there was liberty in the ghetto?

A: It was not liberty, but we knew ways which were not frequented by Germans. There was no

.....

Q: But I would like to understand, why did...did these things happen in Minsk and not in Warsaw?

How did....

A: In Warsaw....

Q: ...Are the....were the Jews of Minsk different?

A: You see, this is the difference between the Soviet situation and the situation in Warsaw. The Soviet....In Minsk we we have defined our goal clearly that one has to leave the ghetto. Warsaw never declared such a target. In Warsaw there was a man who wanted as a solution to break down the walls of the ghetto. Hundreds would die doing it and thousands would be saved. But the solution was not accepted. In Warsaw they lived in illusion until the very end, till 1942. With us it was the slogan of the Jewish organization we fought illusions.

of the ghetto. Get a gun. This is what we did. This was possible because of this. These were different ways. We sent out children Jewish children, who could not be recognized. They were Jewish....They led the groups to the forest. They knew the routes. We had a whole organization of Jewish children, small ones, 12 years old. And they led to the forest. I can tell you of one instance, a funny one. We were

going...A group was going in the forest and suddenly they saw that in the

Q: Ah, this means there was absolute collaboration between the resistance and the Judenrat?

A: The first Judenrat. This was till March 1942. Then there was the Purimpogrom. They claimed that the Judenrat is a resistance movement.

Smolar 5

A: At the time of the Purim Action the Gestapo claimed that the role of the Judenrat in Minsk is such that the council is actively an organization of Jewish resistance. And so they arrested everybody and hanged them in the streets of Minsk together with russian and white russian partisans.

Q: All the members of the...

A:the members of the Judrat.

Q: Hanged?

A: Hanged.

Q: In the street?

A: Muschkin, Serebianski, All those left were arrested and hanged in the street. And over them was a writing: Bandits, Stalin's bandits.

Q: Stalin's bandits?

A: We lost contact with the Judenrat. A new head

of the Judenrat was nominated. His name was Joffe.

Q: Joffe.

A: He was a Jew from Wilna. He was the director of a radio factory.

Q: Yes.

A: We had no contact with him. But I knew that he was an honest man...

Q: Honest?

A: Hone...Honest. That he was not an agent of the Germans and that , not directly of the organization, because with the organization he could not be like Muschkin, but in order to discuss with him what could be done. In his time there was an announcement made, that whoever brings Jefim Stolarewich alive or dead will get a reward of 30,000 Mark.

Q: You.

A: Yes.

Q: Your name was...

A: In the ghetto I was Jefim Stolarewich.

Q: Jefim Stolarewich.

A: Yes, ~~you~~^{they} knew already. And maybe....

Q: The Germans knew.

A: The Gestapo knew because maybe someone of the Judenrat told them. Then they knew where I come to, and at night they took out 72 Jews including

my contact, Mina Liess, who had a child on her arm.
And they were all asked: where is Jefim Stolarewicz? All of them were shot.

Q: 72?

A: Yes. All shot. And I were three houses further away. I heard all of it, but did not know what it was. In the morning I went out to the street. The Jewish police told me: come, you will take killed people to the cemetery. I went and one of the Judenrat gave me the warning: go away, ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ they are searching for you. I went away and into the Jewish hospital of the ghetto. There was a doctor there who had connections to our organization. I knew that the Germans were afraid to enter a hospital where there were patients with typhus. So I went to the ward of typhus and put my self in a bed like a typhus patient. And I did not catch the disease. The Gestapo took Joffe and said: If by 12 o'clock tomorrow Jefim Stolarewicz is not in our hands, we shall murder the whole ghetto.

Q: like Wittenberg in ^Wilna?

A: So he said:..(and that Jew was clever). He took and repeated the story of the sale of Josef.

He took a document of the ghetto and wrote on it: Jefim Stolarewich. He went to the and dipped the document in blood. And he said: Among the killed ones in this document was found. The Gestapo immediately took out the guards. Thus he saved me. He said nothing to me.

Q: This means that the Gestapo believed....

A: ...believed...

Q: ...that you were dead....

A: ...were murdered.

Q: murdered.

A: Till....@x

Q: no?....

A: ...till the month of July. They believed it till July that I was not alive any longer. There came a time when we had...the state committee of ...on the Aryian side fell into the hands of the Gestapo. The one who had met me, they pierced his tongue, took it out and said: tell us with whom you had links in the ghetto. He surrendered no one. Then we sent out our people to the Aryian side to help them recreate the organization. And we knew that we would never receive any help from them. We took the first decision to establish a Jewish partisan base for Jews only. Then we took out...

There was a concentration camp in Minsk which was created. There were Jews and Russians, military people. There was a commander, an officer, an Ukrainian. His family were Denzenko. In the camp worked as secretary a Jewish student with whom I had had contact. And he gave us

So we organized... made...the garbage was being taken out of the concentration camp, so they put a man under it.

Q: One minute, the Russian who was tortured,... yes, the one who was tortured gave your name, he said 'he is alive'?

A: One of them. I don't know who. The army peoplebut the army people did not know that my name was Jefim Sotlarewich. They knew my name as Skromlin. Skromlin means modest. Do you know what modest means?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: But they did not know. They knew several members of the Judenrat. Perhaps they got it from them.

Q: Yes, but can you repeat this story about a Jewish...a purely Jewish partisan....

A:...base....

Q: ...base?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes.

A: We did...

Q: Who took this decision?

A: We alone. Three people. Three people...Three people whom I gave . We decided: There is no organization in existence any more on the Aryan side. We have no one to turn to. So we have to go to the forest alone. So we send one of us, Feldman, to the forest. And we sent with him a military specialist. We brought the officer Demzenko out of the camp under the garbage. He was a lieutenant. We brought him out and sent him to the forest. With Feldman they created a partisans, a group. And there we lay down the principle: It should not be only a fighting organization, it should also be a rescue organization. Do you understand?

Q: Not only fight but rescue.

A: Not only fight - rescue. This is the difference of the ghetto of Minsk. We kept all along to our goal of rescue. we fought from the....

Q: But what Jews were to be rescued? Who? the Jews of....

A: The Jews of the ghetto.

Q: Of the ghetto?

A: Yes.

Q: Of the Minsk Ghetto?

A: In the first place the Jews who had guns.

Q: What?

A: The Jews who have guns.

Q: Yes.

A: ^But not only. There came old Jews. There came mothers with children.

Q: Of course.

A: Whoever could get out of the ghetto went to a special place where our representatives were. They were received there and sent further into the forest. There had been the old Jewish partisan of the times of the civil war. There was already a partisana in 1919, a Jewish partisana, Stolerarbeter, Zorin. He was made the commander of a Jewish partisan detachment. 600 people of the ghetto arrived there, small children. I will tell you an episode. A group of Jews are led to the forest . corn...corn wheat, something is moving. We immediately sent a person to see what was going on, whether it is not police. A small boy was found. we did not know him. Who are you? we asked an Russian. Where do you come from? So he said: I come from that village. But I could see that his face was not of a country man. I ask him . So he said: a little. Do you understand?

Q: Yes.

A: A little. So we took the boy with us. He was one of those children who just ran away from the ghetto to.

Q: But you decided to take all the people from the Minsk ghetto....

A: Not all. That was impossible. We said...we have said to the Jews: run into all directions where there is forest. To the east, to the west, to the north, where ever there are forests, go. We will give you the pass word. Do you understand?

Q: Aha.

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A: We sent special people to join the Jewish police so that on the days where in the morning or the evening out people would lead groups to the forest, our confidential people would be standing at the gates. Our own policemen. So that we could....

Q: Policement of the ghetto?

A: Of the ghetto. In order to enable me to move about more freely, a false passport was prepared for me with the signature of Generalkommissar Kube, saying that I am not to be touched, that it was forbidden to arrest me.

Q: For you?

A: For me. People of the police prepared it for me.

Q: How many people did you save?

A: How? from the police?

Q: No, no. Of the ghetto?

A: That must....

Q: In your partisan....

A: I have to say this at the end.

Q: Good.

A: I will say it. At that time we sent people not only to that special Jewish place. Russians came to command the Jewish groups in order to take out men who could hold guns. Thus we created at that time other groups where the Jews of Minsk were among the first organizers. In this way 7 detachments of partisans were created by the Jews of Minsk.

Q: 7 detachments.

A: 7 detachments of partisans took people of 11...

Q: That means how many people?

A: 7....7 detachments means we can calculate that is more than 2,000 people.

Q: And there were big forests around Minsk?

A: We sent people into a forest that was of 7,000 square Km. This was the forest of Naliboki.

Q: Naliboki.

A: Yes. There were 20,000 partisans in 1945. we sent there the Jewish children because the partisans established there a camp for the Jewish...for the Jewish people. And that was like a Jewish town. I once dreamed of writing a film script by the name of the last Jewish staedtlele.

Q: the last Jewish...

A: ...staedtele. And it was a staedtele.

Q: There were houses?

A: What?

Q: Did you build houses?

A: No, that was in the forest.

Q: Yes.

A: But there was everything. Even a madman.

Q: Why a madman?

A: He also came to the forest. That is another story....another story. Yes. So we had the contact with the city, and sent people also to other...not only to the west but also to the east. There were already our Jewish people of the ghetto who had established a ~~xxxx~~ camp of their own. We trained about 20 youngsters and they became the guides. They did not look Jewish, with curls, and they took the people. But there were Jewish speculators who asked for money claiming they would lead to the forest. The

most popular wish in the getto was to have a pistol and get out of the getto. That was all: old and young, women and children. All. There was business in the getto, trading guns. one traded with them. There was a price for every weapon.

Q: In the getto?

A: Yes. There were even people who made fictional guns out of wood. Hoping to get away with it and be able to frighten the police if one met them pointing the wooden gun at them and...

Q: With false pistols.

A: Yes, there were such cases. This way it went on till June 1942. There was one of the biggest actions then which lasted three days. (interruption on tape) What happened to me? The Gestapo was looking for me. I was in the hospital.

Q: You were still in the getto? You were not in the forest?

A: Not yet.

Q: Not yet.

A: Till July 1942.

Q: Yes.

A: There was I? A Jewish builder had an attic... Do you know what an attic is? ...had it built. A second wall where one went up, I was walled in between two walls. There was a brick that could be taken out, through which my food was

given to me. But from that roof I could see everything that went on in the getto. I was there. The Gestapo was looking for me. They spread tobacco and other chemicals so that the dogs could not smell...

Q: One moment....

A: I stayed there for two months, walled in.

Q: After June....

A: They were looking for me....

Q: Yes.

A:all over the getto. But then it happened. For three continuous days in June there was a terrible murder. The whole getto

Q: How many people?

A: How many people? With the exception of those who were at work, (there were thousands and thousands of Jews at work) there were left alive in the getto 9,000 Jews...They shot them. Shot about 20,000.

Q: 20,000.

A: 20,000. More.

Q: More.

A: They were shot and lead out. Only then, after three days the Jewish workers were brought back to the getto. And the...the screams were

such in the room between
the two walls.

Q: Terrible.

A: Then came a Russian woman who had met
Her name was Maria Gorgochowa. She demanded
to be put in touch with me. She gave the pass
and I went out for the first time after the
slaughter. She gave me an order to leave the
getto. That was....

Q: An order of whom?

A: Of the state organisation. organization

Q: Yes.

A: I left two people in my place, two women, and
she took me out together with workers from the
getto. I went out and tore off the patch on the
way. She led me to a place which made me think
she was a provocator. She took me to the place
of the tube head quarters.

Q: A Russian woman.

A: Yes. I was about to withdraw when she gave me
a sign not to move from her for a second. She
took me into a house near Generalkommissar Kub
That was her flat. She worked in the General-
kommissariat. In this flat I lay under the
and wrote a lot of documents and

proclamations to the German army and proclamations to the ghetto. Every couple of days a messenger came there, a contact man with the ghetto. I was in touch with him. They asked me: give us new contacts to lead people to the forest.

an order that I should go out and a man would come to take me out to the forest. No one came, and I remained alone. I could not go back because there were German guards which came in. When I went out with her I was let out. Then I went to a Russian of the State Organisation. I talked to him. At night

the two of us jumped out of the window - it was the first floor . It just so happened that the Gestapo came. I went out with only my underwear and lay on a small roof. He did not manage and was taken away with the whole family. And the Gestapo was looking for me from one window and from the second, and I was lying there in the back in my underwear and they did not see me. From there I went back to the ghetto.

One of those who were supposed to go to the forest, dug a pit, put me inside and covered me. He gave me a pipe so that I could breathe.

I told him: get me 4-5 men with guns. We shall leave the getto on our own. I knew none of the routes because I had no contact. Thus we went around for two weeks till we arrived in the town. And we, the five, established two new detachments and immediately sent people to the getto to bring others out. And it was like a stream of people that came from the getto. This lasted till September 1939 (?) The only getto of soviet Jews that lasted so long. And it lasted so long....

Q: Till september what? 39?

A: September 43...43.

Q: Yes.

A: 1943.

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Q: But how many Jews?

A: I will say this at the end. We didn't know. We knew ~~max~~^{then}, after the end of the war, when we came to the partisan parade in Minsk. We didn't know exactly. But I will tell you.

Q: Yes, but aproxiamtely.

A: Aproxiamtely? I have to say it already? We knew exactly.

Q: Why not? Yes.

A: We know exactly.

Q: Yes. How many Jews did you save, and how many

Jews were murdered in the ghetto?

A: We will reach that right away. After the pogrom which....which lasted for three days, there were left in the ghetto, as I said, no more than 9,000 Jews.

Q: Out of 70,000

A: Out of...all...all the people were not there any more. Those who had gone to the forest and those whom were led away by the Germans to be murdered were not there any longer. The German Jews were not there any more. I have not yet mentioned them. They brought from Hamburg and from different cities in Germany....

Q: From Hamburg, from Fran...from Frankfurt...

A: Von Frankfurt...

Q: Von Berlin.

A: Yes, they brought Jews....

Q: Hanover.

A: Yes, a part of them were Czechx Jews. They were in a second ghetto in the ghetto.

Q: A German ghetto?

A: A German ghetto. They had certain privileges. They had better work, better food. I wanted to get in touch with them, with an engineer. He said: I will do for you whatever I can, but to go to the forest - that is for eastern Jews. And he suggested we should go to the German army. We should go with the Fighting Organisation

There are many young.... young people. They left with the help of German officers. There was a German officer Schultz who worked in the Government House of Minsk with the Aviation. On one day he took a group of Jews, put them on a car - there were many German Jews and took them to the partisans.

Q: This Schultz?

A: Yes. That was . On the whole, the German man.....

Q: But how were the relations between the German Jews and the Minsk....

A: It was only a relationship of trade. The German Jews demanded: give us Speck...

Q: There was no fraternity?

A: None. There were only contacts of trading. The worst thing was: the German Jews were not murdered like the eastern Jews. They were taken in cars and choked to death on the way. The gas of the cars was led into the cars. How do we know that? There was a doctor there who.... when they let in the gas, he covered his face with urine. So he survived and came back to the ghetto. He told us about it. But that....

Q: This means the German Jews were murdered in the

A: The...

Q:the gas vans.

A: They were called Duschekubkes.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Duschekubkes. The Ostjuden were not....The Ostjuden were lead away, shot and burned. And they were put in. And how they went! Dressed in their best clothes, with...with hats. Holding the hand of the ladies. And went in...in...in..

Q: The German Jews?

A: Yes. The ~~xxxxxxpk~~ most terrible picture I have of that time.

Q: You saw what?

A: I saw it.

Q: But please. Describe.

A: I saw it, how they were standing with their whole family and going. The ladies holding onto the arm of the men, dressed in black, with hats. And the policemen helped them get into the vans.

Q: And how were these gas vans?

A: There were already gas vans. Cars. There were gas vans. Because the gas that one should let out of the car, was led inside. Then they left.

A: Yes. But could you...could you describe how...

S: The process was...

Q: Yes, but...

A: ...I don't know all...

Q: Yes, but we have these gas vans....

A: They were normal gas vans, but...

Q: Normal lorries?

A: They looked like lorries.

Q: Yes.

A: and the girls
were taken in. They were very elegant. They
talked to them and were not brutal to the
German Jews.

Q: But how many German Jews came to minsk?

A: I don't know exactly.

Q: But many?

A: Up to 20,000.

Q: And I think all...all....

A: With the exception of individual cases who went
to the forest.

Q: Yes.

A: ...all...all finished,

Q: All finished.

A: All finished. They went

They believed till the end. One night I had
a scene. I was at the hospital as I have already
told you. But I wanted to breathe a bit of air.
It was night, late at night. So I went out and
to the border between...with the German Jews.

At midnight I heard military steps. That was a miracle. No one entered the ghetto at night. He was going, stopping at the door of one of the German Jews and shouted: Hans, Hans, come here. I saw that immediately a Jew went out the door in his night dress, in a pyjama. He stood there for a long time at the door. I heard nothing. Later, when I heard the steps of the officer, of the army man, going away, I started shouting: Hans! Hans, come here. I heard him approach. And I ask: who was that? - That is a major. He is my neighbour in Hamburg. We lived in . - why did he come? - He brought me bread with Speck. Brought me. So I said to him: Hans, and tomorrow? When they order him to murder you, what will be then? Will he save you? So he said: Oh, man, an order is an order.

Q: Unbelievable.

A: Yes.

Q: I cannot believe it.

A: That was what he said to me, the German Jew: an order is an order. They were such...

Q: I cannot believe it.

A: That was with me. It was with me. It was so.

They behaved this way all the time. They separated from us. They maintained: these are Ostjuden.

They were torn up and they were dressed elegantly.

They considered themselves like the Germans.

Germans going into the forest, the screams. We screamed a lot. The Jews, the German

Q: But one says that the, , , , the Germans killed the Ostjuden in order to create place for the German Jews....

A: No.

Q: ...German Jews.

A: No. They were killed just like that...they killed every day. And they created a big place for the German Jews. They had....

Q: Did the German Jews live in the same ghetto or in a

A: In the same ghetto but fenced with another fence. With their own police...

Q: It was impossible to....

A: contact?

Q: Yes.

A: Only we were standing at the fence. We from one side and they on the other side, and one would trade.

Q: But is it true that Kube protected the German Jews?

A: privileged.

Q: privileged.

A: He was of the opinion that one should treat the German Jews...German Jews differently. They

are of the German culture.

Q: Yes, yes, He said that, and he wanted to sa...
save the German Jew.

A: Yes. I have not talked all this time about what
the fighting organisation has done besides....

Q: The German Jews did not go to the forest to be
with the partisans?

A: Few.

Q: Few.

A: Few. They did not want to.

Q: They did not want, but why?

A: They said...

Q: They did not understand?

A: That is for Ostjuden. They had the illusion they
would survive.

Q: They were old people?

A: They were different kinds.

Q: There...there were also young ones?

A: Also young ones.

Q: And the young ones were not with you either?

A: Few. With us in the forest was one of the
German Jews, but he lived in Czechoslovakia. The
father was a member of the government in London,
the Czech. He was with us..

Q: A Czech. And he was in the....

A: Yes, yes. He was in the German ghetto ~~xxxxx~~ and
in the forest.

Q: Yes.

A: Few. I want to say one more thing. What did
the fighting organisation...

Q: Yes.

A: There was a conflict between us and the military council. We had Jewish workers in a big factory where Vodka was produced, ^{distilled} ~~stilled~~. And this went to the Stalingrad front. We ordered. we had a laboratory, a chemical. We produced a poison....

Q: Poison?

A: Poison. And intended to poison the whole shipment. I had to tell the military council about it. He said

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Q: What kind of a poison was it, this...?

A: In the laboratory they prepared a liquid which was to be put in when it was being brewed. He even tried it on a cat in the ghetto, and it immediately....immediately as if its head was turned. But before this was done, we brought it up at the military leadership. Bilei called me and said: you know we do not do it. It is that one does not use chemicals in the war. I told him: Perhaps I should tell the Germans no to poison the Jews? He remained silent. When I wrote about it in my book, the censor in Moscow

wanted to take it out.

Q: Ah, yes. This is amazing.

A: They were afraid that they would be accused of chemical warfare. But I will talk about the Jewish Humanism. And it was . The council treated the question of a big meeting of the Hitlerjugend in the theater. It was the Hitlerjugend of the eastern population Russians and others. There was a proposal to put mines around the theater and blow it all up. Do you understand?

Q: Yes.

A: The Jew was the only one to say: we are not fighting small children. We can blow up the stage, where all the Hitlerjugend leaders would be sitting. The proposal was rejected. Most of the children were saved, and a large number of Hitlerjugend leaders perished. A different tactic from Yasser Arafat. Mine was a Jewish tactic. . They were astonished that a Jew talks this way. We carried out a number of operations in the factory. Jewish workers worked at sewing . They took all the things from the Jews, took it all, and

ordered them to sew warm things for the German aviation. So we gave an order: sew the right sleeve to the left side, so that one will not be able to wear them.

It was sabotage, sabotage all time long. These were our ways. We did not have an uprising, because with us it was rescue, rescue, rescue...

Q: Yes.

A: ...of our people. . I went to the forest and became the leader of a Jewish partisan group....

Q: ~~xxxxxxxx~~ purely Jewish?

A: This was purely Jewish, but in the framework of a whole brigade in which there were also others. There were different conflicts, anti-semitic conflicts, different other things. But we had the possibility to be our own masters. We sent people to the ghetto, children. On September 1, 1943, a young girl came, the daughter of a Jewish doctor. She came back while I was far away at a distance of 80 Km. I knew she was coming so I took a horse to come back. I didn't recognize her. She was pale. She said that there was no more a ghetto in Minsk. And the feeling was

that there was no more a Jewish people in the world. I made....called all the partisans. They were all lined up and told about it. And the solution was: if there really is no more a Jewish people in the world, we will be the Jewish people. It gave us courage, because the wives of all those standing around had been killed in the ghetto. This was the end of the ghetto of Minsk.

What came afterwards was that in 1944 in the month of July the last beaten German soldiers escaped through our forest. This was the most dangerous moment. They wanted to break through with force. I

They thought they would go till Brest-Litovsk and surrender there to the officers of the Soviet army. They decided to break through with the guns in their hands, bad luck wanted it that they ran right into a Jewish detachment. And in the last moments, when we were already free, Jewish victims fell. The commander of the Jewish detachment, Zorin, lost his foot. He stood there like Israel. This was the last bloodshed of ours. Several partisan detachments were left in the forest so that the Germans could not escape,

But we with one person who was a writer were sent to Minsk, because there was a parade with the partisans of white Russia. And I and this ~~writ~~ writer were given the privilege to be on the central tribune together with the staff, with the generals, with all. This was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life. The first detachment to march by was of the ^{Jews.} ~~Jewish~~ of the Minsk ghetto with Chaim Alexandrowich at their head. And I could not restrain - next to me were all the generals, - so I shouted Chaim! All of them turned round to look.....

A small part survived. And so the moment for us came to count how many of us were left. All the partisans who were killed were buried in the fields around Minsk. To a parade went out to the fields. And we took a large number of the people of the one time ghetto and took upon ourselves to count how many survived. There were 5,200 Jewish partisans of the Minsk ghetto. Together the number of those who went out in an organised way to the partisan - not counting those on the Aryan side, whom we

could not count - was 10,000 Jews. There was no precedent in Jewish history. And that was in Minsk. This did not happen in Vilna, where a partisan commander, a friend of mine, told me that (unclear.)

Q: Yes.

A: But there there was another question. I should not talk about it. With us it was such a stand because of previous experience of the civil war, when ~~xxxx~~ Jews organized special military groups, of Berel Borochov, when the Bundist leader Bronislav Grosse lead whole groups of Jews in fight against the bandits. This was experience. Like Zorin, the people were once partisans. Thus we already had experience. This was not the case in Vilna and Bialystok. We never raised the question of an uprising. We knew there were two things to do: rescue, and pushing out the Germans. We did those two things.

Q: Yes.

A: And this is in short form the story of the only ghetto of Soviet Jews.

Q: Yes, you are right. Yes. But I have a question.

A: Please.

Q: Yes, you said that you saw yourself when the German Jews with....

A: dressed in black....

Q: ...clothes...black clothes and hats. How...
Yes, how they went in the gas vans....

A: They did not knowl...

Q: You saw it?

A: I saw how they were led in. How the Jewish...

Q: But how was it possible for you to see...?

A: I was on the roof. I saw the whole area around
from the attic window.

Q: How many cars were there?

A: I could not see that. There was a long line of
them. But not how many. I only saw the Jewish
police take.....They went

And I saw how they were taken by the arm and
helped in. The police helped them in. It was
all in perfect order as if they were going on
a trip, a regular trip. And we did not ~~xxxx~~ know
until the Jew, the German Jew came, a doctor who
had saved himself. Till then we did not know
what happened to them. We thought they were led
to Duschenska like the Jews of Minsk...of Minsk

like our own, the Minsk Jews.

Q: Yes. that was unbelievable.

A: A lot of things during the time of the German occupation were unbelievable.

Q: Yes. That is true.

A: If there is a good ending, everything is good.

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Q: Yes. And my last question: what do you think today. Do you still believe that communism is the solution to the Jewish question?

A: I wrote about this. In the 20's there was an alternative, the soviet one, which aimed to solve the Jewish problem. This alternative does not exist any more. There is one alternative and that is the existence of the Jewish state, a Jewish national state. Therefore I, a man who has been in the rows of the communist movement for 50 years, have decided that a revolutionary is one who can recognize failure. It has been killed. But it was not us who failed, we have been

. There was a concept which I wrote about in my book that has appeared in Hebrew and in Yiddish. The concept was finished with in

1927. People don't know about it. They think it happened in the 40's. I write about it in detail. There is no more a possibility of solving the Jewish problem anyway but through the national sovereign state. I had enough courage to admit this. I did not go to America, I could have stayed in Paris. I wanted to be together with my Jews, with whom I also went into the communist movement. Therefore I went to Israel.

I was in Paris in a very bad state. I did not write about it. I only tell you it was a very bad state. My son begged me: stay with me. We will help you. But I want to be there even in my worst moments. I cannot live without a Jewish surrounding.

Q: Without....?

A: "Without a Jewish surrounding. Cannot. This was my whole life long. This was my position in the last war when I did not escape. As soon as I came to Minsk, I met a Russian friend who offered me to go with him to his village to save myself. It posed the problem of personal rescue.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: I wanted to be together with my brothers. At that time when I came to the ghetto I did not

what would happen. I knew nothing whatsoever. I did not understand because no one of us had been in the gettol And I told....

together we found
a solution.

Q: Yes. Could I see you decorations?

A: Ah, one who knows. OH...I don't know what to do with them. The ~~biggest~~ ^{highest} decoration is a Soviet one. It is given only to someone who had distinguished himself in battle. The others don 't get it. This is the Order of the Red Star. I have....

Q: Order of the Red Star.

A: ...Red Star...

Q: This is the highest?

A: This is the first and not the highest Soviet decoration. That is the Lenin Order. But the Lenin order was established after Stalin. And this was created ~~in~~ during Lenin's life in the civil war. That is a battle decoration. I got it....

Q: One minute.

A: That giges one big privileges in the Soviet Union. One can sit up in front in the trains, one can , different ones. That is the Order of the Red Star.

Q: Order of the red Star.

A: The second one is with Stalin. Whoever does not know...

Q: Stalin?

A: with Stalin. Should I show it? Show it?

Q: Yes, of course.

A: Yes, yes, yes. But that...one will laugh of me.

Q: No. Never. No one will laugh.

A: The... . All.....

Q: Fantastic. What...what is this?

A: That is the partisan decoration first class. That is for the victory over Hitler Germany. That is for big achievement, work in the time of the war.

Q: Ru...Russian....?

A: Russian. That is Stalin

Q: Stalin.

A: That is Stalin. We in the forest were told: this is the first time that Stalin, the modest Stalin has given permission to have his ~~pr~~ portrait put on a medal. Only for the partisans. This is what we were told. Next....

Q: Next.

A: Next. Twice the partisan cross.

Q: Also Russian?

A: No. That is Polish.

Q: Polish.

A: Twice.

Q: Twice.

A: That is the Officer's Cross.

Q: Polish?

A: Polish.

Q: What exactly is it?

A: Officer's Cross.

Q: Officers....

A: Officers ~~xxx~~ Cross. Polonia....

Q: Aha-

A: Yes. ^{The} Russian is still here. (unclear)

That is the Russian...No, that is Polish. That
is also a Battle Cross.

Q: Battle.

A: Battle Cross. That is forest.

Q: Ah....

A: The Gurnwald Cross. That is a special battle
decoration. That is....the Labour ~~xxx~~ Flag.

Q: Labour flag?

A: For this decoration one gets a large pension
retirement pay. 25% . what I get...

Q: in Israel you are without pension.

A: I am in Israel. But they sent me a person to
convince me to leave. I would receive 100 dollars
in Paris every month. A pension. After 50 years
of work I deserve something. And others....My
son in Paris has a son. I will give him my
toys.

Q: Why?

A: But there are rights of sons...which go from
father to son, and on only....for these decora-
tions. The others have to be put in the grave.

Q: When did you leave Po...Poland?

A: 19....in December 1970. I could not....I did not
get the permission. Gomulka said: you will never
leave Poland. but it was possible via Paris.
The representative of Gomulka was in Paris, and

the ~~wix~~ writers, the Paris writers...the Ca...
the Catholic writers.... How is it called? I
have the document. They wrote me that I have to
come to Paris to write an anthology of Jewish
poetry in French. And this man came to Warsaw
and said: You cannot refuse it. And Mo .
You know who Mo is?

Q: Yes.

A: Mo said: Smolar will not come back. He was
against it. But Gomulka's man said: We....we
have to agree. I did not come back. But the
Prefecture in Paris also made things difficult
for me. I had my Polish passport, and when I
had the permission to go to Israel, they

. And five minutes...when I was
about to go, a policeman said to me: come back.
And they told me: you have no right to go....
you have to go east. So the Jewish agency, the
Israeli representatives prepared a document for
me and I could leave. And with a student before
and a student behind me, we
How does one say it? in order to get away fast.
And the French policeman yelled: what is going
on there? And mechanically he put the stamp in.
And that way I got to Israel. very illegally.
Yes.