

Transcript of the Shoah Interview with Franz Grassler
Translation by Uta Allers - Volunteer – Visitor Services – Summer 2011

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German Filming

German Cassette II / Side A

Bobine No. III – Interview with Dr. Grassler

Grassler I

Q - ... Dr. Grassler, first a topographical... geographical question... What was the difference between the Bruehl Palace in Warsaw...

G - ... yes, yes, of course...

Q - ... yes... Such Avenue... Such...

G - ... I don't know about that... well, the Bruehl Palace was the one...

Q - ... S.C.U.C.H.... Such Avenue...

G - ... Schuch...

Q - ... Such...

G - ... we... I know Bruehl Palace well; that was the Polish Foreign Office after all... in... and the seat of the Governor... I myself did...

Q - ... so Bruehl Palace was the... eh...

G - ... the former Polish Foreign Office...

Q - ... yes...

K - ... then the headquarters of the Governor of Warsaw...

Q - ... Governor Fischer?

G - ... Governor Fischer... I was in the Palace Bruehl myself...

Q - ... you were in... yourself

G - ... Palace Bruehl...

Q - ... Palace Bruehl... yes...

G - ... but the other name is unfamiliar to me, or at least I can't remember it now, let's say...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... what does it mean?

Q - ... yes... and in Warsaw you were the aide-de-camp to Dr. Auerswald, yes?

G - ... yes... you really can't call it aide-de-camp... aide-de-camp was a military term in Germany...

Q - ... yes but deputy... what is it called?

F - ... representative of the...

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G - ... no, no, no... I was sent to his department...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... as an assessor

Q - ... assessor?

G - ... assessor...

Q - ... assessor?

G - ... so, maybe just to clarify....

Q - ... head assessor?

G - ... pardon?

Q - ... head assessor?

G - ... there's no such thing in Germany...

Q - ... there's no... such title?

G - ... I... so, just for clarification... I ... as a soldier, eh... with my unit before... after the campaign to France, I came to Poland...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... was in a small village near Warsaw... as (*part of the*) occupation force... and had some acquaintances in the Bruehl Palace... and I (*went to*) them... at one point on a Sunday and then they said... for God's sake, here's an attorney stationed... here in the village and has nothing to do, eh... and we desperately need attorneys and then I was asked to and was... as a soldier on a working vacation, that's what it was called in the Bruehl Palace... you know?

Q - ... ah yes...

G - ... so after the training I was an assessor... but according to the personnel structure in Warsaw as a soldier on a working vacation...

Q - ... yes, I understand, yes, but...

G - ... and wasn't there in Auerswald's department from the beginning, but later...

Q - ... only later?

G - ... yes, yes, only much later...

Q - ... in the beginning, what did you do?

G - ... in the beginning, I was in the Internal Administration Department, eh... also in the Department... I was the youngest assessor and was placed wherever a young attorney was needed, eh...

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Q - ... yes, yes, you were Doctor of Juris...

G - ... yes... yes...

Q - ... yes... and when did you start with Dr. Auerswald?

G - ... I don't know that now, for I... even at my various court hearings and so on... the question was raised again and again... I... I don't know anymore because my documents, my diary, they were all burned in Munich during the bombing raids...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes, we were totally bombed out...

Q - ... but approximately, approximately...

G - ... when was that... eh... eh... the Jewish residential area... when did Auerswald become Commissioner...

Q - ... I think you started in the summer of '41

G - ... no, no, no... at that time there was no Jewish... so...

Q - ... spring...

G - ... yes, maybe... yes, yes... yes, I was... in... in Nov... in November 1940... eh, I arrived in Warsaw...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes... it could be that it, let's say, was '41 or the fall of '41...

Q - ... yes, that's...

G - ... I don't think I was sent to Auerswald right away, rather as the department expanded a bit... eh... he looked for more help... an attorney for assistance and then I came to him... I was not his official representative... but... there wasn't even a deputy commissioner, but as the second attorney, of course, I had partially had these assignments...

Q - ... this assignment as representative...

G - ... as I said, it wasn't official, not called that...

Q - ... yes, yes... yes, yes...

G - ... not called that... not according to the personnel system, as it's called in Germany, eh... rather...

Q - ... I understand... and Dr. Auerswald... his exact title was Commissioner for Jewish residential areas...

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G - ... Commissioner of the Jewish residence area in Warsaw...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... that was... that was the title...

Q - ... and what kind of man was Auerswald? Can you describe Auerswald?... physically and psychologically?

G - ... yes, well he was... a Berliner, that's already saying a lot to a person from Munich, you know?... He was an attorney...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... eh... I think he had a Polish woman as his wife or an ethnic German woman from Poland... so, he was a...

Q - ... or a Russian wife or...

G - ... maybe even Russ...

Q - ... an Orthodox wife?

G - ... yes, that could be... I don't know anymore exactly, eh... and because he had a wife and an apartment in Warsaw... the contact with most of the... let's say, with the younger German staff of the department, especially with the younger attorneys, very minimal... eh... for he was in his apartment and we were... well, housed in barracks is overstating it, but everyone had a room in the so-called German House...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know? That was...

Q - ... how old was Auerswald at this time, let's say in '42?

G - ... I don't know anymore... but he was several years older than I... eh, but...

Q - ... several years?

G - ... yes, yes... eh, and...

Q - ... and you... how old were you?

G - ... let's see... I was (*born*) in the year '12... so back then, I was...

Q - ... you were born in '12?

G - ... was born in '12... yes, eh... and that's simply not a...

Q - ... '12... that means you were 30?

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G - ... no, not yet... no... no... that was 1942...

Q - ... so, you were 30?

G - ... yes, yes, yes, yes... that means that when I arrived there in '40, I was 28, eh...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... at 30 I was already gone...

Q - ... yes... and...

G - ... and Auerswald... so... my personal contact with Auerswald was minimal... it was purely restricted to the professional... because he was a completely different being, a completely different type of person... eh... no interest in mountain climbing, nature and such...

Q - ... nature?

G - ... you know, like...

Q - ... and Auerswald had no interest in nature?

G - ... I think we two didn't like each other much, eh... and because of that... there just wasn't any personal contact, eh, so... of course, professionally we had to be together, but... socially, not at all in the entire... not in the entire time that I... worked with him...

Q - ... how and when did Auerswald die?

G - ... I don't know...

Q - ... you don't know?

G - ... no...

Q - ... you have no idea?

G - ... no, no, no idea... that he was charged...

Q - ... he was... he died?

G - ... he died... yes, he died... that I know... from a... a judicial inquiry was undertaken against, eh, against Auerswald by the German Justice Department...

Q - ... yes?

G - ... eh... and eh... in the course of this lawsuit against Auerswald, I was questioned too... and from the disposition of dismissal, by which the case against me was dropped, it turned out that Auerswald, I think... died in 1970...

Q - ... 1970?

G - ... I think so, yes...

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Q - ... yes, where...

G - ... that I don't know, eh... I think that was in Berlin, but I don't know...

Q - ... and this...

G - ... I never heard anything more about him after the war... no contact... eh... I didn't try to look for him and he never... tried to find me again...

Q - ... and this judicial inquiry... when was that?

G - ... yes, against Auerswald it was dropped with his death, you know... one can't continue to carry out an investigation against a dead person...

Q - ... yes, yes, of course...

G - ... you know?

Q - ... but when did it start?

G - ... I think very early already, about 1960 or so...

Q - ... '60?

G - ... eh, that must have been a very thorough investigation, eh... in the course of which I was heard as a witness by... and then later, there was an investigation about me and that...

Q - ... ah yes?
G - ... yes, yes, that was...
Q - ... why?
G - ... yes, God... because of the department...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... you know... and it was then... dropped (*after*) very thorough arguments in 1971, eh...
Q - ... yes... in '71 it was over...
G - ... that's when, eh... the judicial inquiry against Auerswald took place in Dortmund...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... you know... after Auerswald died, the inquiry against me was transferred to Munich to the District Attorney's Office... then they worked through all the documents and dropped it with a very thorough justification because it wasn't possible to determine any guilt whatsoever...

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Q - ... there were no grounds...
G - ... there were no grounds for any inquiry...
Q - ... that's very clear...
G - ... I don't know if... against... what came out against Auerswald... eh... after all, he was the Commissioner in charge... but, I don't know... I don't know anything about the ST... eh...
Q - ... it was a professional issue?
G - ... yes, certainly, eh?
Q - ... yes, it is...
G - ... and, as per my personal opinion, as much as I didn't like him... I don't think that he... that he was guilty in the legal sense, but... I can't judge that...
Q - ... yes... and did you have... what was your relationship to Adam Czerniaków?
G - ... yes... eh, Czerniaków had, yes... had a permits to leave... the camp, the ghetto, eh... and had to, or... don't know if he had to, at any rate, eh, he frequently came to the department... and... as far as I can remember... you know how long ago this is... how many years... eh... he liked to come... or let's say, rather to me than to Auerswald... because of the personal contact...

Grassler 2 Cut

Q - ... but really... you have no memories of this time?
G - ... very few... very few...
Q - ... but why?
G - ... yes...
Q - ... you said... you have more memories of the...
G - ... yes, hikes in the mountains, eh... before the war more than the whole time of the war... and about this time in Warsaw, eh, and that is... somehow that was a depressing, a bad time... and eh, it's probably psychologically... clear that people forget bad times, you know, more easily than positive memories, eh...

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Q - ... yes, that means you pressed everything... pressed everything?

G - ... yes...

F - ... repressed...

G - ... repressed, unintentionally, of course... yes, yes, you can't even say that you consciously repress something... at least I think that you can't do that... rather that...

Q - ... and I will help you to remember...

G - ... hm...

Q - ... that is... engineer Czerniaków... engineer Czerniaków... (*looks at photo*)

G - ... hm...

Q - ... you remember...

G - ... now I remember... I remember that I always addressed him as "Professor" – I don't know if he had a professor title...

Q - ... engineer...

G - ... engineer? Yes... I, I know... yes, I remember... I think I remember that I said Professor to him... eh...

Q - ... yes, you... what did you say to him?

G - ... Professor...

Q - ... Professor...

G - ... yes, well, I don't know... maybe... maybe that's what he was, since I wouldn't have given him that title that... that he didn't have, I can't imagine... I mean...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... so, I...

Q - ... he was a very, a...

G - ... I certainly didn't address him as "engineer"...

Q - ... and in your opinion, was he an intelligent man?

G - ... very, very... I know that basically, I had a good rapport with him...

Q - ... yes?

G - ... yes... so... that's why he liked to come to me when he had to come into the Bruehl Palace at all, and didn't like going to Auerswald, who in his personal style... was very different... harsh, unfriendly... he wasn't any nicer to us either... and eh... I'll say, maybe it's the Bavarian way that one... treats people a bit differently...

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Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes, or it was just the way Auerswald was... eh... Auerswald that he just... you know, played the superior, eh...

Q - ... he did what?

G - ... played the superior, you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... and I tried... to help Czerniaków, who didn't, really didn't have it easy, as much as I could... and to meet him halfway, you know... to fulfill his wishes if they were doable, which wasn't always the case, of course, you know... to be sociable with him, you know... when he came to me, I said "Grüss Gott, Mr. Professor, sit down", and he sat down and...

Q - ... it was a very friendly meeting?

G - ... I was in a... good atmosphere, you know, you know...
 Q - ... a good atmosphere, yes...
 G - ... and that, I think, was missing for him with Auerswald...
 Q - ... yes, and he was afraid of you, or not?
 G - ... no, no...
 Q - ... no...
 G - ... no, no...
 Q - ... in which language did you speak with each other?
 G - ... spoke only in German...
 Q - ... German?
 G - ... German... I...
 Q - ... Czerniaków was...
 G - ... spoke good German, yes...
 Q - ... he spoke German?
 G - ... I... I didn't speak a word of Polish, eh, so...
 Q - ... yes, he spoke good German?
 G - ... spoke very good German, yes, yes... really...
 Q - ... but he wrote about you...
 G - ... yes, what?
 Q - ... yes, yes, he writes...
 G - ... and what did he write... I'd like to know...

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Q - ... yes, yes, I'll show you... he writes for the first time... this is Czerniaków's diary...
 G - ... oh, they are published... they exist?
 Q - ... yes, yes, he... a diary...
 G - ... hm, yes...
 Q - ... wrote... and it's... only now been published... and he writes the first time...and that is
 July 7th, '41...
 G - ... on July 7th, '41, it's the first time that I... it's a date I'm rediscovering myself, eh...
 Q - ... yes...
 G - ... _____ (*undescipherable*) eh... but I'm interested too, you know... for I
 never... so, then I was there in July already...
 Q - ... yes, and he writes on July 7th, '41... morning in the Federation... meaning the Jewish
 Federation...
 G - ... yes, yes...
 Q - ... and later with Auerswald... Schlosser...
 G - ... Schlosser was...
 Q - ... and Grassler...
 G - ... yes...
 Q - ... a routine matter... that's the first time that you ...
 G - ... that the name is used... yes, yes...
 Q - ... yes...
 G - ... but apparently there were three of us... Schlosser was... in the procurement
 administration... well, I remember that name... that he had something to do with
 finances...

Q - ... yes, yes, I think so... and the second time... that's July 22nd ... and...

G - ... did he record every day?

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes?

Q - ... yes, every day...

G - ... every day?

Q - ... yes... and that's very surprising... very impressive...

G - ... and that it was saved...

Q - ... excuse me?

G - ... it's surprising that it was saved...

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Q - ... yes, very surprising... and here... he talks about... do you remember Ganzweich?

G - ... Ganzweich?

Q - ... yes...

G - ... eh, a... that was probably in the ghetto... a... that must... was he with Auerswald or...?

Q - ... no, no, no...

G - ... ah, not with Auerswald, with eh, with with Czerniaków?

Q - ... yes, he was a Jew and...

G - ... well, the name doesn't ring a bell with me...

Q - ... he had a position, so-called against the black market...

G - ... yes, was he perhaps from...

Q - ... black market...

G - ... from the Jewish...

Q - ... and he worked with... eh...

G - ... well, yes, there was the Jewish Order Service, eh... a sort of Jewish police...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... that this Ganzweich... yes, the name... I can't remember that name...

Q - ... yes... and one moment... did you go into the ghetto?

G - ... rarely, but at the time, I was in... I was at Czerniakov, eh...

Q - ... and how was it... how were the conditions?

G - ... it was terrible...

Q - ... yes?

G - ... there, well, yes...

Q - ... terrible?

G - ... terrible, yes... well, there was... I didn't go into the ghetto... once I knew... when I didn't know, I was... in the whole time... I was there probably only a few times... well, that was so... if one were to (*fulfill*) the mission of the department, which actually... was to maintain the ghetto, also for the workforce, eh... and above all, to fight the diseases... prevent the outbreak of typhus, that was the big danger, you know...

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Q - ... yes but why... Czerniaków speaks about this typhus affair...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... yes, but can we talk about typhus?

G - ... yes, I am no doctor, I... I only know that , well... typhus is a... a very dangerous disease... which... well, then practically... is similar to the Black Plague, which... which kills people and which... of course, can't be contained to the ghetto, so if typhus had broken out in the ghetto... I don't think it did... but the danger was and the fear... then it would probably have spread to the Poles, and then certainly the Germans, eh, too...

Q - ... yes, but why was there typhus in the ghetto?

G - ... yes, I don't even know if there was any... it was the danger of typhus and probably also a... through hunger... eh, I mean, people didn't have enough to eat...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... that was the terrible thing, eh, and it could... that was, probably wasn't there anymore, eh, well... let's say the Commissioner Department tried where possible, to hold the nutrition in the ghetto at a pretty good level, so that... so that... eh... the ghetto wouldn't become a source of disease, eh, not even considering the human side, so for that reason... eh, disease, eh, reason, eh... it wouldn't have stopped at the border of the ghetto...

Q - ... yes, but I read... and Czerniaków too... writes that the set-up of the ghetto was the reason for the German fear...

G - ... completely, yes, yes, sure, sure...

Q - ... typhus...

G - ... typhus...

Q - ... the Germans always identified the Jews with typhus...

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G - ... it probably was that way, whereas I don't know if that could be substantiated... eh... let's say that because of the masses of people that were squeezed in together, there were always... (*more*) coming... not just the Warsaw Jews, but later also the others, eh... so the danger was always increasing...

Q - ... yes... but do you think it was a real danger?

G - ... yes... yes... yes... yes... yes...

Q - ... justified?

G - ... yes, yes, it was certainly a real danger, eh... well, I remember... one of the few memories I have of this time there, it was always about typhus... there were ongoing discussions with the... with the doctors, eh, well... the staff doctors of... of the district, you know...

Q - ... yes, but what, what was the... there was a German policy... for the ghetto in Warsaw... and what was this policy?

G - ... yes, you're asking me something beyond my knowledge... eh... the policy that ultimately led to the destruction... eh... the so-called "final solution"... we didn't know about that, of course... eh, our job was to maintain the ghetto... and the Jews, thus, as far as possible as workers... you know... let's say the goal of... of the Commissioner Department... was in the outcome very different from the goal... which later, then... eh... led to the extermination...

Q - ... yes, but that is a very interesting question and a very important question...

G - ... hmm...

Q - ... because... if one... we'll talk about that later...

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Grassler 3 Cut

Q - ... yes, you said that you had no idea... no inkling about the extermination...

G - ... none of us knew that... yes, the... probably the SS leadership or...

Q - ... Mr. Auerswald couldn't...

G - ... I don't think so... I don't think so... I don't know what Auerswald knew, but I don't think so...

Q - ... yes and the...

G - ... because...

Q - ... the people from the Gestapo like Brand, like Mende... do you remember these people?

G - ... I had almost nothing to do with them, thank God... whether, let's say the higher SS, head of the police... knew something – surely they were in the loop, eh... because they had to do... eh... but, eh, in the Bruehl Palace... I don't even know if the Gouvernor knew...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... I don't know, eh... at any rate... the little people like an assessor... weren't informed, of course, what the goals... of Hitler were or also... or also those of the Governor...

Q - ... yes, of course... but...

G - ... let's say, he was... for us, the responsibility was the ghetto... to maintain it... and not to destroy it... you know...

Q - ... yes, but

G - ... us too...

Q - ... meaning...

G - ... and as soon as... und as soon as, eh... it shifted, eh... that's when the SS took charge... then the Commissioner was eliminated...

Q - ... yes, but that is very complicated because... what does it mean to "maintain" the ghetto? With the knowledge of today and when you read Czerniaków's...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... diary... there are a lot of questions, for it's clear... that, for example, Auerswald... and you were Auerswald's assessor...

G - ... eh...

Q - ... he's always asking, not for an enlargement... but for a reduction of the ghetto... and why? Because of the many who died every day...

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G - ... yes, yes... people died... from disease and from starvation...

Q - ... yes, starvation...

G - ... you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... eh, that was the terrible thing about the ghetto, you know...

Q - ... yes, but do you know the...

G - ... but let's say...

Q - ... the number of deaths per month... do you know how many people died every month in the Warsaw ghetto in '41?

G - ... that I don't know, eh, at any rate, I don't know it anymore today... whether I knew it back then...

Q - ... but you knew because there are exact statistics...

G - ... probably I knew that, eh, that...

Q - ... 5000 per month...

G - ... 5000 per month...

Q - ... yes, and that's a lot...

G - ... that is certainly a lot... on the other hand... there were... a lot... a lot of people in the ghetto... eh... lots, too many, that was the...

Q - ... yes, far too many...

G - ... far too many, that's just the point...

Q - ... there were a lot...

G - ... so... when I got to Warsaw, the ghetto had already been built some time ago... it was considerably smaller then... eh... and wasn't... there was no Commissioner then, eh... the Commissioner was... established much later than the ghetto, eh...

Q - ... yes, the ghetto was...

G - ... was already...

Q - ... set up in...

G - ... right... right after, probably...

Q - ... end...

G - ... in '39...

Q - ... end of '40...

G - ... no, think earlier...

Q - ... end of '40... the Warsaw ghetto end of '40...

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G - ... I don't believe that, it was...

Q - ... yes... the fall... the fall of '40...

G - ... well, when I came... at any rate, there was already...

Q - ... and the wall had also been built... at the beginning...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... in the spring of '41

G - ... you're the one who knows... in my recollection, it was already finished when I arrived there... just that there was no Commissioner... eh... rather there... there was a Mr. Schoen, I think...

Q - ... yes, Waldemar Schoen...

G - ... Waldemar Schoen, right, yes...

Q - ... yes, yes...

G - ... the man who, well, was in charge of the ghetto... before the Commissioner, before Auerswald...

Q - ... yes, yes...

G - ... I remember that, yes, yes...

Q - ... yes, but...

G - ... and when I came, eh... as I said, in November... '40...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... the ghetto had already been built...

Q - ... but my question is a philosophical question... what is a ghetto, in your opinion?

G - ... yes, God... ghettos... exist in... in history... as far as I know... for centuries, you know... and the question of the persecution of the Jews did not, after all, start with the Germans and not with World War II... you know...

Q - ... yes, yes... that's true...

G - ... eh...
Q - ... that's true...
G - ... and the Poles persecuted the Jews too...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... you know...
Q - ... yes, but a ghetto like the one in Warsaw in a very large city... in the heart...
G - ... hmm... that was probably unusual...
Q - ... yes, the city... yes, it was... unusual..
G - ... yes, of course, you know, so...
Q - ... yes, yes...
G - ... it was terrible...

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Q - ... and no – you say that one wanted to maintain the ghetto?
G - ... let's say it was the responsibility of the Commissioner... not to destroy the ghetto but to keep the ghetto alive... it was, after all...
Q - ... but does it mean "alive" with such a...
G - ... that was exactly the problem... that was exactly the problem, eh, which, eh, they were supposed to work there, there was work going on there...
Q - ... people were dying in the streets... there were corpses everywhere...
G - ... of course...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... you know...
Q - ... what is that...
G - ... that was the paradox of the whole matter... eh...
Q - ... do you believe it was a paradox?
G - ... yes, definitely...
Q - ... yes, but why? Can you explain that?
G - ... no... no...
Q - ... why not?
G - ... yes... what is there to explain? eh, that it was a fact, that on the one hand...
Q - ... yes, but it wasn't maintenance... all these people who died in the streets... Czerniaków writes...
G - ... yes, he... to really maintaining them could only have been done with substantially higher food rations... no, and not with this crowding...
Q - ... yes, and why were there no human rations? Why weren't there any? There was a German decision, yes?
G - ... yes, only, let's say... the decision was probably not to starve the ghetto... rather... this big decision to exterminate the Jews... that came much later, after all...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... only at the beginning...
Q - ... yes, that came later... that came in '42...
G - ... yes...
Q - ... yes...

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G - ... just so, just so, eh... whereas back then...

Q - ... one year... one year later...

G - ... whereas back then... as far as I know... our job was... to tend to the ghetto... whereas it wasn't possible to prevent... that with these insufficient rations and with these... with these masses... there were, eh... deaths... eh... many, too many deaths...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... eh...

Q - ... yes, but what does it mean to maintain a ghetto under such nutritional conditions?

G - ... yes... we...

Q - ... sanitary conditions and so on...

G - ... I know...

Q - ... what could the Jews do... against such... measures?

G - ... the Jews couldn't do anything... you know... we always tried to... get more rations... but...

Q - ... Czerniaków writes that he always asked for an increase in rations...

G - ... yes, of course... that...

Q - ... for better conditions...

G - ... that...

Q - ... but...

G - ... that's clear... I know, he came to me too...

Q - ... he never got anything...

G - ... no, that... for that, we didn't have it in our power, you know... no, that, that...

Q - ... Mr. Dr. Grassler, we won't (*talk*) about you and your personal activities...

G - ... no, no, it's just that... I can only...

Q - ... I am not even interested in that...

G - ... but in general...

Q - ... I can only say what I... still remember... and I didn't carry out the policies of the Third Reich... I didn't carry out the policies in Warsaw, thank God, or I would have been hung by now...

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Q - ... yes, but excuse me, you were the assessor for the Commissioner of the Jewish residence area...

G - ... yes... what could the assessor do... what could the Commissioner do?... even his power is...

Q - ... the Commissioner was a very strong man...

G - ... he could simply...

Q - ... he had a lot of power...

G - ... yes, but he couldn't do anything either... you know...

Q - ... yes, indeed, yes, indeed...

G - ... no, no...

Q - ... yes, indeed

G - ... no, he couldn't... he was able to just as little as, eh... because he simply, eh...

Q - ... I think that Auerswald didn't like the Jews much, did he?

G - ... I assume so too, that he didn't like them much...

Q - ... pardon?

G - ... I also think that he didn't like them very much, but... I don't think that he... eh... that he wanted to exterminate them... I don't think so, eh... after all, he is...

Q - ... but...

G - ... after all, he was removed from that post...

Q - ... excuse me... these Jews were being destroyed every day... in the ghetto... from starvation... from terrible...

G - ... diseases...

Q - ... conditions...

G - ... yes... yes...

Q - ... from many causes... eh... and there were also a lot of Germans who... went into the ghetto to shoot people... and that did happen...

G - ... yes, but...

Q - ... he writes that...

G - ... yes, I can believe that, but not all of it on the orders of the Commissioner... he... he could neither give us orders nor did he order us... rather, there was always the SS, who on their own... eh...

Q - ... no, not just the SS, there were also civilians...

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G - ... well, that German civilians came in,.. I don't think so and anyway, I don't know...

Q - ... but during your visits...

G - ... they couldn't get in there, you know... it wasn't just that the Jews couldn't get out... they couldn't...

Q - ... that's part of history today...

G - ... yes, of course that's part of history, eh...

Q - ... yes, but during your visits in the ghetto... you personally, what did you think... what was your impression?

G - ... that it was completely inhumane what was... eh... that one should help... but... it didn't help at all... and I left Warsaw then because of that... in a sense, escaped... you know... I... was given leave to Munich... where I went to... the Wehr... Wehrmacht and told them that I wasn't going back to Warsaw... reinstate me, I'll go back to my unit...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... I... eh... well, I... left on my own accord, because I couldn't bear to see that anymore...

Q - ... no... I understand...

G - ... no, because you...

Q - ... you have to excuse me...

G - ... yes, alright, I can describe my situ... eh... situation... because I found it so incredibly awful, that I said, I can't look at that... and I never went into the ghetto anymore...

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Bobine No. 114

Grassler 4 Cut

G - ... yes...

Q - ... do you remember the story with the sheep skins?

G - ... I think there was an operation where the furs were collected, but that was probably not only in the ghetto... that was probably in the Russian winter, where we were in the cold winter... for the Wehrmacht... I have the impression...

Q - ... no, no, it was in the ghetto... because the Jews had to... their furs...

G - ... yes, that was in this... in this cold winter '41-42...

Q - ... yes, they had to give up their furs and it was a very cold winter...

G - ... yes, yes, there... there was a fur coat collection in Germany too, just like the collection of skis... I remember that... that wasn't restricted to the Jews, but... eh... and that's because in Russia the German soldiers... suffered from the cold, eh...

Q - ... do you think that the Jewish furs were for German soldiers?

G - ... yes, what else... for what else?

Q - ... yes, no... that is...

G - ... no, no, I think...

Q - ... that's just a...

G - ... I think so...

Q - ... that's just a...

G - ... yes, yes... I remember that it, especially... not only in the ghetto, but that there was a fur coat collection in Germany too... and there was a collection of skis in Germany too... I remember it well because I brought my own skis... that is, my wife back home... had to bring my and her skis...

Q - ... yes, but I don't think it was the same in Germany...

G - ... yes, I don't know about that...

Q - ... because the Jews had to give up unconditionally all of their furs and... gloves too... and if they refused – that was their death...

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G - ... that could be, I know... but I know that this was an operation that wasn't just restricted to the ghetto... whereas it was surely pushed through more harshly in the ghetto than in... than in Germany... eh... but I remember this collection campaign in general, not specifically as a... eh... only in the Jewish residence area...

Q - ... yes, and Czerniaków asked for... said... yes, we'll give up everything...

G - ... hmm...

Q - ... we have no choice... but he asked for the release... of old people who were in prison... do you remember?

G - ... hmm... yes, why should just old people be released from prison?

Q - ... yes, there were a lot of people in this Jewish prison...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... in the ghetto...

G - ... yes, of course...

Q - ... lots of little children...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... and he wanted to... these people...

G - ... save them?

Q - ... freedom for these people...

G - ... oh, well, I don't know anything about that...

Q - ... and he asked for it and he never got this freedom...

G - ... maybe...

Q - ... you don't remember this matter?

G - ... not in connection with... with Czerniaków and with the ghetto, rather... something in general with the fur coat collection...

Q - ... and this... there was another drive with sheep furs...

G - ... sheep furs...

Q - ... sheep furs... you have no memory?

G - ... no, no... it... we were talking about the fur coat drive... yes, you're saying there was another one?

Q - ... for example, here... and it's January 30th, '42... and you came with Auerswald... and he writes very precisely that you asked... (*shows him the page*)

G - ... that sentence... that's been tampered with...

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Q - ... these sheep furs, they weren't enough... they wanted more...

F - ... in the mornings, I went to the Federation... -18°C. cold.... later with Grassler and Auerswald... ehm... Auerswald is to get together with the Governor about the sheep furs...

G - ... now, here...

F - ... mh...

G - ... yes, those were matters, of course, that... that... Mr. Auerswald himself had to do...

F - ... about that he didn't inform us... where those had to be brought... but except for that... as usual, he had no time for other things... for many other things...

G - ... that was true of Auerswald... yes... and what was the date?

Q - ... yes, that's January 30th, '42...

G - ... mh...

Q - ... yes, and after that the Jews were completely naked... after this fur drive?

G - ... yes... they didn't just have furs...

Q - ... no... but it was very cold...

G - ... it was very cold, yes...

Q - ... it was very cold...

G - ... I know that it was a very cold winter...

Q - ... and... they were sick and many died... after this drive...

G - ... yeah, yeah... I can imagine that ...

Q - ... that's my ongoing question... was it maintenance? I think it was extermination already... that's the question...

G - ... I will tell you, nevertheless, the function of the Commissioner's Department... was not the extermination... but of course it had to do, as a priority, what was ordered... and ordered in this case was... for the German... the troops on the eastern front, which... were freezing... there to get... furs... everywhere furs... eh... of course from the ghetto, eh... by force, more or less... and there was also, that I still know... in Germany too... a fur collection... of course not as forcefully, not with violence... eh...

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Q - ... but yourself... were you anti-Semitic?

G - ... no, never...

Q - ... no?

G - ... never... on the contrary, I was... eh... drawn to, eh... let's say, eh... Jew-Jewish literature... at home I read... Heine... eh... a lot, and eh, quoted... Wassermann... all the... let's say... the Jewish authors... who... you know...

Q - ... during this time... do you mean?

G - ... eh, as a... a youth, eh, so... at that... at that... not in Warsaw, of course, but... there was no such literature, eh, but... let's say, but to the question about being anti-Semitic...

Q - ... you weren't anti-Semitic?

G - ... I wasn't anti-Semitic... neither was I... let's say... Semitic... rather... let's say that I was indifferent, but still in awe ... of... eh... this German-Jewish literature...

Q - ... yes... but you weren't philo-Semitic?

G - ... I can't say that, no... yes, God, let's say rather that I was different... you know... but more philo than anti... that happened through my doing so much reading of the literature, eh... books were always part of my life and mountains... so it was more about that, eh, and... so there was, let's say, a real love ... for German-Jewish literature, you know, so...

Q - ... yes... do you remember, there was... in Warsaw, I think, a case... a number of cases in the Warsaw Ghetto... of cannibalism?

G - ... now, when you say it... so, the question that you're putting to me... so... I don't want to... let's say, say that I... eh... that I have no memory ... more I don't know but... I consider it possible that it... was talked about, you know... that maybe Czerniaków told me about it, I don't know...

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Q - ... yes, but please try to remember...

G - ... yes, yes, I...

Q - ... try...

G - ... I'm trying... well, I'm telling you that I think it was possible... for thinkable... that it was talked about at some point... I surely don't know anything specific...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... eh... maybe Czerniaków told me about it...

Q - ... yes, yes...

G - ... because I liked coming to me and got some of his troubles out... with which, unfortunately, I couldn't help him or only in the rarest cases... you know...

Q - ... yes, of course... he writes that he talked with you...

G - ... oh, really?

Q - ... about... yes... about these cases of cannibalism...

G - ... aha... eh, that...

Q - ... a mother ... ate a part of her dead child...

G - ... hm...

Q - ... and she died too... from hunger, of course...

G - ... I do remember that there was a terrible hunger...

Q - ... yes, you know... that is my constant question... is that maintenance?

G - ... yes... that is... perhaps hard for you to understand... eh... but I would like, nevertheless... separate the work of the Commission... and eh... which didn't

consist of extermination... and the actual extermination, which wasn't carried out by the Commissionership either... rather by others... you know...

Q - ... do you remember when Auerswald went to Berlin on January 19th, '42?

G - ... for what?

Q - ... you have no memory of it?

G - ... no, no, no...

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Q - ... Czerniaków was very afraid about this big trip...

G - ... no, I don't know about that...

Q - ... and January 20th, '42, that is the exact date of the Wannsee Conference...

G - ... oh, that was the Wannsee Conference, yes... of which I only heard long after the war...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... no... and there was... Auerswald was present... no...

Q - ... he was in Berlin...

G - ... well, that he was present at the conference... I don't think so, because, because we all read about the conference over and over...

Q - ... but he was in Berlin... he wanted information...

Bobine No. 115

Grassler 5 Cut

Q - ... yes and... do you remember the suicide of Czerniaków?

G - ... that I remember because I was very much affected by it, you know... and that was part of the motivation that I said "I want to get out of here"... eh... and after that... eh... I... I went to Fischel... the governor and I said... "I want to get away from... from Warsaw or the Commissioner Department... eh, no... I want to leave Warsaw"... not either... and then there was... what I said earlier, that I took vacation... and on my own accord... went to the military and said, "This is it, I'm staying here now... I'm not going back"... eh, and I still had my belongings in Warsaw... which were sent to me only months later... you know...

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Q - ... so, you didn't return to Warsaw...

G - ... no... I didn't go back, rather... rather I went to the Wehrmacht and was able to... there... eh...

Q - ... when did you leave Warsaw?

G - ... I don't remember exactly... anyway in '42... but...

Q - ... yes, but it was after the death of...

G - ... after the death of Czerniaków...

Q - ... how long after his death?

G - ... do you know when he died?

Q - ... July 23rd, '42

G - ... July 23rd, yes... yes, it wasn't immediately thereafter but it was... let's say... in me... eh... the motivation for it... it must have been maybe September...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... after the big resettlement?

G - ... yes, when that started, you know, so... but... when that started I tried to get away as soon as possible, you know and after that, eh... since it wasn't possible to do it legally, with permission...

Q - ... but do you remember this massive resettling campaign in Warsaw?

G - ... yes, back then, they called it the...

Q - ... what do you think... why did Czerniaków commit suicide?

G - ... probably because he realized that eh... eh, there was no chance for the Ghetto to survive and apparently, he... before I realized it... that the Jews were to be exterminated... you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... I, I assume that, let's say... eh, eh, the, eh, the Jews had a pretty efficient espionage... eh, they knew more... than they were supposed to know... and they knew more than we knew ...

Q - ... do you believe that?

G - ... I believe that, yes...

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Q - ... the Jews knew more than you? ... and you...

G - ... yes, yes, I'm sure of it... I'm sure of it...

Q - ... that's hard to...

G - ... but it's true, it's true...

Q - ... to accept...

G - ... for the German departments were... never informed about what... let's say... was supposed to happen with the Jews... you know...

Q - ... yes... when were the first deportations to Treblinka?

G - ... I... yes, I think before... Auerswald's suicide...

Q - ... Auer...

G - ... eh, no, but, that was Czerniaków's suicide... excuse me...

Q - ... July 22nd...

G - ... that was... those are dates that I no longer... eh... so July 22, '42, beginning of the deportations...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... to Debe... to Treblinka...

Q - ... yes, and Czerniaków killed himself on the 23rd...

G - ... yes, yes, then that's...

Q - ... one day later...

G - ... one day later then, he... eh... must have realized that... his, his idea... I think it was his idea to work in good faith with the Germans... and through that... to do the best by the Jews... that that was not to be... this... this idea and this dream...

Q - ... yes... he realized that this idea was a dream...

G - ... yes... yes and when the dream died, I think, he came to that conclusion...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... eh, that's my view of it, I don't know the book... I don't know if... if he writes something about that... does he give a hint of his suicide... in the book... in the diary?

Q - ... no... the diary ends abruptly...

G - ... abruptly...

Q - ... 2 hours before his suicide...

G - ... and he doesn't write that he will kill himself?

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Q - ... no...

G - ... no...

Q - ... no...

G - ... well, so, that, so that later nothing...

Q - ... he says that Glowotz was...

G - ... was the SS, yes...

Q - ... yes... SS Hoefler... eh, asked for the children... the children had to go to Treblinka...

G - ... hm...

Q - ... had to leave... and that... he couldn't... eh, accept... he didn't want to let the children go...

G - ... well, Treblinka... it existed already... you know... but as a work camp... so, for us, the German Department... knew about Treblinka as a work camp where the Jews were supposed to work... and were to have better conditions... than in the Ghetto... because of that there was... eh... if my memory serves... many volunteers who said to themselves, better go to Treblinka to the work camp than stay in the Ghetto... eh... and I do think that in the beginning Treblinka really was a work camp... and that the exterminations were only carried out... much later, that is, with the mass deportations...

Q - ... yes, he...

G - ... but I don't think that was absolutely so... if I remember... rather more... the information we all got later... you know... it's hard to keep it straight after of many years, what one knew later... what did one read about this period of time... and what did one... remember, you know... after such a long time...

Q - ... yes, but that's very clear... if one reads this book ... at the end, the two months June, July - May, June, July... it's very clear that the Ghetto is coming to an end...

G - ... hm... yes, well, that, let's say, here...

Q - ... and Auerswald knew very well...

G - ... I think... it must have been so...

Q - ... he knows, and he knew what Treblinka was when... and you knew that Treblinka was an extermination...

G - ... no, no...

Q - ... site...

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G - ... no, no...

Q - ... but someone in Poland knew... all the Poles... knew...

G - ... yes, I'll tell you... I also think that the Jews knew more than we... you know...

Q - ... yes, that's very surprising, because you're the only one who didn't know...

G - ... I wasn't the only one, that was... let's say... not, eh...

Q - ... I mean, in this circle...

G - ... hm... he...

Q - ... then... the book and such activities...

G - ... then... let's say...

Q - ... the Commissioner for Jewish residence... residence... that is amazing...

G - ... he was... he was not informed about these matters and conversely, that Treblinka was a work camp before... that I know from my own information documents because there were various proceedings written in the available documents about the deportation to the work camp Treblinka, about the deportation, eh... by the German Justice Department for those Jews sentenced to death, who were to be executed in Treblinka, you know... there was a very clear distinction... Treblinka... work camp... for those not sentenced to death... and... for not (*sentenced to*) death went to the... let's say... went to the execution site... for those... eh... eh... for those who weren't sentenced to death, eh... I don't know anymore from back then – rather because that... because that was... eh... stated in the dismissal of my case...

Q - ... yes, but there were executions in the Ghetto too, weren't there?

G - ... maybe at the very beginning, I don't know... later, at any rate, there weren't supposed to be any executions...

Q - ... oh yes, oh yes, there were...

G - ... yes, they weren't supposed to take place... that there were some... that's possible...

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Q - ... there were... many in this prison... in this prison...

G - ... hm... yes... who carried those out?... the Jewish security staff... or the Polish...

Q - ... the Polish police, yes...

G - ... no... the... hm... eh... let's say... the army, if we can say it like that... the Commission was for all practical purposes the same as the... the, eh... the head of the Jewish council, so in practical terms, the Jewish security detail...

Q - ... excuse me?

G - ... eh... the Commissioner had to... rely on... the Jewish security detail... just as Czerniaków did, you know, you know... and the Jewish security detail... was militarily very strict... you know...

Q - ... yes, with weapons?

G - ... I don't know that but... well, I don't think firearms, but... I don't know...

Q - ... no, they didn't have weapons...

G - ... had no weapons, maybe they had truncheons or such...

Q - ... yes, rubber...

G - ... rubber, rubber truncheons...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes, yes that... it was impossible for them to have firearms... you know... in the Ghetto to have someone armed that would, let's say, with... with firearms...

Q - ... the Germans, you mean?

G - ... yes, that, that the Germans... would have given the Jewish security detail firearms, I take that to be impossible, you know... but on the other hand, they were responsible for order, and so somehow...

Q - ... when you were in the Ghetto... were you armed?

G - ... no, no... I never had a weapon... eh, because I left my military firearm... eh, at home when I came to Warsaw and... I wasn't afraid of anything... you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... and later, I never went in there anymore anyway, you know, so... when it might have become dangerous...

Q - ... yes...

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Bobine No. 116

Grassler 16 - Cut

Q - ... do you remember Mr. Hans Galuba?

G - ... no...

Q - ... he worked in the Auerswald's office...

G - ... what?... in Auerswald's office?

Q - ... yes...

G - ... then I should have known him...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... Galuba?

Q - ... Galuba...

G - ... no memory of that... what did he do?... is that... was there...

Q - ... he also had connections with Czerniaków...

G - ... Galuba... no... can't remember...

Q - ... and do you remember too... you made a special offer to Czerniaków?

G - ... I?

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes, what?

Q - ... you had... and that was at the very end... May 28th, '42...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... you had the idea... that the Jews in Warsaw should wear an armband... like they did in Berlin... exactly the same...

G - ... I have no memory of that...

Q - ... no?... he writes...

G - ... yes, of course, he can write... maybe I had the order that... it certainly wasn't my idea, you know... what was the sense of that... in the, eh... the Jews in Germany wore the star... the yellow star...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... and an armband... well, if I...

Q - ... yes, here...

G - ... yes, yes... no...

Q - ... yes... on the...

G - ... that in the Holocaust, isn't it...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes...

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Q - ... and in the Warsaw Ghetto... where did they wear the Star of David... on which part of their clothing?

G - ... I don't know anymore...

Q - ... oh yes...

G - ... hm...

Q - ... you never saw it...

G - ... yes, certainly I saw it, but I don't know anymore, you know... back then, that was the normal thing, that... that one saw it... I assume it was somewhere on the chest...

Q - ... excuse me?

G - ... I assume on the chest, but I don't know...

Q - ... no, no, it was on the...

G - ... arm...

Q - ... arm...

G - ... ah so, that was supposed to... the...

Q - ... and your suggestion was...

G - ... the... the star... to replace the star...

Q - ... to...it on the chest...

G - ... but the armband...

Q - ... to wear...

G - ... you were saying... said before... an armband...

Q - ... excuse me?

G - ... you said earlier they should wear an armband...

Q - ... no, no, no, no...

G - ... as in Germany...

Q - ... no... here on the chest...

G - ... excuse me, so... Czerniaków must know if he wrote it...

Q - ... yes, yes... he had...

G - ... but I had... but it was certainly not my idea, rather maybe Auerswald...

Q - ... that's a Berlin idea...

G - ... maybe Auerswald... well, I mean, if... then it could only have come from Auerswald or from Fischer...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... got eh... an order, you know...

Q - ... he wrote every day...

Q - ... yes, aha...

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Q - ... and of course, that's a... you never... a diary?

G - ... no, how?

Q - ... wrote?

G - ... yes, I kept a diary... but it was burned... in Munich...

Q - ... did you write in Warsaw?

G - ... yes, yes... but not a big diary, rather just a calendar every day...

Q - ... and what did you write?

G - ... as I said, it all... all of it burned up, I don't know anymore...

Q - ... but what did you write in this diary?

G - ... yes, well... certain... certain events, you know...
Q - ... yes, privately?
G - ... just privately...

German Cassette / Side B

Bobine No. 116 Continuation of Interviews of Side A with Mr. Grassler

Q - ... yes... privately?
G - ... just privately...
Q - ... just privately?
G - ... just privately, yes...
Q - ... you didn't ... about your activities...
G - ... yes, I imagine, for instance, that I wrote in my diary, "today in the Ghetto"... that... was probably what I did, because that was such a rare occurrence...

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Q - ... _____ sauntering around in the Ghetto...
G - ... yes, that... that could be, you know... probably not sauntering around... you didn't go into the Ghetto to saunter around, rather it was a work obligation, eh, so I didn't saunter around in the Ghetto... rather, if, I... went in there to (*do something*) there... for instance, to go to Czerniaków, you know... so, as I said, those were rare occasions, you know...
Q - ... and do you remember these events... there was a propaganda company... and these people went into the Ghetto at the end... to make a film...
G - ... hm... no, I don't remember...
Q - ... or it was even a propaganda film... for Goebbels...
G - ... yes, yes, I know that there were propaganda companies who made films... but that they were ever in... in the Ghetto, that I don't know...
Q - ... and Auerswald knew all about it...
G - ... yes, of course...
Q - ... yes?
G - ... maybe I knew it too, but...
Q - ... but you have about it...
G - ... no memory at all, you know...
Q - ... but I don't understand that... your memory is so weak...
G - ... because it's 38 years ago... and because in the meantime so many other things happened... and because I told others about it already... let's say... these... the experiences that were worse, they don't have to do just with Warsaw, they have to do with the whole war experiences... they are... repressed...
Q - ... yes... but I think this period is especially repressed, isn't it?
G - ... probably...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... probably yes...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... because it was among the worst, you know...

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Q - ... yes, but it was...

G - ... not the worst in my... let's say, the bad things that happened to me... rather a time in my life where I saw... the worst... the worst...

Q - ... it was the worst place... but not then... not during...

G - ... oh yes, otherwise, otherwise I wouldn't have... eh, left voluntarily for the front, because I said I just can't witness this anymore... you know...

Q - ... yes, but you stayed there more than a year, didn't you?

G - ... yes, yes... in the beginning it wasn't so bad after all, you know... and I tried several times to get out of there... it wasn't so easy in the war... to get away, you know...

Q - ... yes, but do you think...

G - ... just in the beginning...

Q - ... do you think that this Ghetto wall was a protection for the general population, the German soldiers, etc... was a protection against typhus, typhus (*uses two different words for "typhus"*)?

G - ... well, at least that was the official reason for the construction of the wall, you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... whether you... let's say... I think not just officially, but it really was the reason... later there were probably... other ideas in addition to that, you know... but the fear of typhus, that was the deciding factor, at least toward the outside... how we... as we ourselves believed... eh... if back then already... Berlin... eh... said, eh... took that as a pretext for the extermination – that I don't know... I don't think so... you know, you know... as far as I... not from my memory, but know from the literature..... it's written up in the Wannsee Conference, so first in '42...

Q - ... yes, but...

G - ... was recorded officially...

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Q - ... you know that in the Nazi worldview, the Jews and typhus and pestilence were one and the same...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... the Jews were completely...

G - ... the...

Q - ... identified...

G - ... it...

Q - ... with...

G - ... of course, there were such... people like that in the Nazi Party, Streicher or... you know, maybe even Rosenberg too, I don't know, you know, that pushed these... theories so far... the average German... the average German too... eh... who was in the Party... never believed that, rather... you know...

Q - ... you yourself were a member of the...

G - ... yes, yes... I was...

Q - ... NSDAP....

G - ... yes, I mean that was, you know... that was after all at my age... actually everyone or almost everyone, you know... I was not a resistance fighter, rather I was a normal, young German, who...

Q - ... almost everyone?

G - ... almost everyone, not everyone, there were... there were resisters, but... eh...

Q - ... but that means, that this ideology...

G - ... but I was never... I was... I was never, for instance, anti-Semitic... even though I was in the Party... and I would say... the majority of the Party members were not anti-Semitic at the core, you know... rather...

Q - ... who destroyed the Jews?

G - ... well, probably only... let's say... an ideology... a certain small segment which then, of course... eh... had the tools, of course... the big ... eh...let's say, the SS and such (*illegible*)... they were ideologically so carried away...

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Q - ... and do you think it would have been possible for the SS to destroy the Jews alone? I don't think the SS was alone... there were a lot of people with...

G - ... yes, of course, you know... the SS were... the tools, you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know...

Q - ... but there was a whole consensus...

G - ... yes, of course, there was... like the... eh... these ideas, however... the majority surely didn't have them...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... the majority was indifferent...

Q - ... the majority was indifferent...

G - ... about the Jewish question...

Q - ... yes... I knew that...

G - ... you know... and... let's say... if I think back on my own motivation... eh, why I went into the Party... that was... actually... not the fight against the Jews... rather... eh, against the Treaty of Versailles... that Germany could again... again stand up and not be enslaved and such; that was a terrible time, after all... when Hitler came to power because of... let's say... this... Treaty of Versailles, which is a humiliation... it was called a peace of shame and an agreement of shame, you know...

Q - ... were you also in the Waffen-SS?

G - ... no, no... no, no, no... I was neither in the Waffen-SS nor in the SS itself...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... no, no...

Q - ... but... you said that you arrived in Warsaw after the... eh...

G - ... as a soldier...

Q - ... as a soldier...

G - ... as a soldier, you know... not as a Waffen-SS...

Q - ... you were in a small village...

G - ... yes, yes... Blonje was the name...

Q - ... what?

G - ... Blonje...

Q - ... Blonje?... where is that?

G - ... I don't know anymore, but I still know the name...

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Q - ... yes...

G - ... eh, that was... a little village, but... pretty close to Warsaw, you know...

Q - ... not far?

G - ... not far, no...

Bobine No. 117

Grassler 7

Q - ... but maybe you remember that the destruction of the Warsaw Jews happened in July... but the destruction of the Jews of Lublin and Lvov-Lemberg... that was much earlier... that was already in March...

G - ... yes, but I...

Q - ... it started in March...

G - ... in... in...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... yes... in Lublin...

G - ... well, that...

Q - ... and there were rumors in the Ghetto... rumors... in the Ghetto about this extermination campaign...

G - ... hm...

Q - ... and people were very afraid...

G - ... yes, I... said that earlier, I think that the Jews knew more that we... for we were kept...

Q - ... that's very surprising...

G - ... yes, yes, but, but that was certainly, so, well, that is not my hypothesis... rather, I'm convinced... for they kept us, after all, in a state of ignorance... about these things...

Q - ... but...

G - ... because they didn't...

Q - ... I don't agree that the Jews were better ... and in many cases were steadily disappointed with the Germans...

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G - ... deceived...

Q - ... deceived... excuse me ... there was always a...

G - ... it was certainly the case that the Jews were deceived...

Q - ... yes?

G - ... yes, but we were deceived too...

Q - ... how?

G - ... well, in the sense, that we were told what was really going to... what was going to happen and... what later did happen...

Q - ... you believe you were deceived?

G - ... yes, yes, yes...

Q - ... for instance, what do you think about this matter... for me it's surprising... the Jews were supposed to pay for the construction of this wall...

G - ... I don't know anymore... you know...
Q - ... oh yes...
G - ... yes?... could be...
Q - ... yes... and why?
G - ... yes, I don't know about pay...
Q - ... please, you knew it... that is...
G - ... probably I did know it...
Q - ... Auerswald's responsibility...
G - ... that could be... but, even with that, I still don't know it...
Q - ... and they also had to pay for a... there was a bridge...
G - ... that I can't remember...
Q - ... on a street...
G - ... I can recall, yes, that there was a bridge was built at one time...
Q - ... this Ghetto was always... there was always a reduction of it...
G - ... hm...
Q - ... because there were many deaths and of course...
G - ... yes...
Q - ... in Auerswald's estimation there was too much room for the Jews... and he wanted...

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Q - ... always a reduction in size of this... this Ghetto...
G - ... well, I think... eh, I can remember the construction of the bridge... I don't know if Auerswald really believed that... that there was too much room... if so, then came... he was ordered to make the Ghetto smaller... eh... that he would have done that on his own accord... out of the crazy idea that the Ghetto was too big... I don't believe that, you know...
Q - ... but why? He repeatedly asked for plans of the Ghetto...
G - ... hm...
Q - ... and maps too... and he always said... "okay, tomorrow and the day after, this street has to be emptied because we need this street for the Polish residents"...
G - ... hm, yes...
Q - ... it was always like that, he... all year...
G - ... yes, well... I have to say again... I don't think these matters started with Auerswald... rather that he got an order to do that...
Q - ... an order?
G - ... yes, I'm sure of it... eh... whether it came from the Gouvernor... or...
Q - ... but he couldn't say no?
G - ... no, I think you're overestimating... the leeway that Auerswald had...
Q - ... yes, do you think...
G - ... yes, I believe that, yes...
Q - ... I think he was a very...
F - ... powerful...
Q - ... powerful man...
G - ... I don't believe that...
Q - ... oh yes, oh yes...
G - ... no... I mean... so little...

Q - ... and he was very proud...

G - ... yes, that...

Q - ... of his power...

G - ... that... that he wasn't... I mean... I said that I didn't like him, but... that he was a powerful man... at most, he acted like a powerful man...

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Q - ... but why did you work with Auerswald... and you didn't like Auerswald...

G - ... because I...

Q - ... and you had a profession that... you say you didn't like this profession... why did you stay in Warsaw for a year?

G - ... yes, because I... because I was a soldier... and because I had to...

Q - ... no, there was no order to be a soldier...

G - ... yes, yes, I was a soldier, I was never... discharged... I was in... on leave as a soldier, I went there and stood down there, just as... eh... well, eh... in a military commando down there... on orders of the Commissioner...

Q - ... yes, because he had...

G - ... I couldn't just...

Q - ... he recognized a Party colleague, of course...

G - ... he...

Q - ... you were a Dr. of Jurisprudence and a member of the Party...

G - ... yes, yes... yes, that... all of us were that...

Q - ... it was a big gift... I think...?

G - ... what do you think was the gift?

Q - ... to get a man like you...

G - ... no, you're overestimating me, for I was... well... an assessor just after the exam, who... eh... well... was not a big man, rather, only a co-worker... who was an attorney, of course, you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know... but... I think we're touching on things now that won't go anywhere...

Q - ... yes, I'm afraid so, yes...

G - ... you know...

Q - ... and...

G - ... eh, you... I don't think... that... that I don't know, for example, how old you are and if you were in the war... that surely you could figure out... where you were in the war... you know...

Q - ... in your opinion... the Jews were human beings or sub-human creatures?

G - ... humans... humans... humans...

Q - ... humans?

G - ... humans...

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Q - ... without a doubt?

G - ... without a doubt... without any reservation... back then too... not just today...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... not just before...

Q - ... yes, but what were you thinking if these people were humans in your eyes – in your opinion... what did you think of this treatment?

G - ... I tried... and it was almost impossible to help but... you know... well, I don't know if Auerswald somehow ever...

Q - ... what did you try? What were your positive actions?

G - ... eh... they...

Q - ... in this...

G - ... they... they didn't help anything, actually... you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know... when Czerniaków came to me, we had to start all over again, eh... we need this and that... then I could... either tell him right off the bat that it's not possible or I will try to help you and if it... and when I said that... I did try to do that... at least with Auerswald, you know... but the results, I don't think I could help a lot... you know...

Q - ... your connection with Czerniaków... it was like today... like it is between you and me?

G - ... yes, I would say so, yes...

Q - ... yes? It was this friendly?

G - ... I asked... him to have a seat... I was... I was... I...

Q - ... he could sit?

G - ... of course...

Q - ... yes?

G - ... you know... yes, as I said, I had a really good connection... with Czerniaków...

Q - ... yes?

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G - ... you know... and to this day, I'm convinced that Czerniaków liked coming to me... you know... whether he was allowed to sit at Auerswald's, that I don't know, with me... I (*called him*) Mr. Czerniaków or Mr. Professor... somehow I have the professor in my head, I don't know...

Q - ... Mr. Professor, but that irony, wasn't it?

G - ... no, no... it was not irony, rather I considered him an especially educated man... no, no, that was not irony...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... I think... I still think to this day that he was a professor...

Q - ... because, for example, Auerswald... Auerswald writes here that... he complains... that when the Jews come into the Bruehl Palace...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... they come are too near to him...

G - ... they come too close to him (*Grassler corrects Lanzmann's awkward German*)

Q - ... yes, they come too close to him...

G - ... yes, yes, I can believe that, for Auerswald preferred distance, you know... just as I always greeted and bade good-bye to Czerniaków with a handshake... you know... that was... I think not generally the custom... you know...

Q - ... yes, (*motions for interpreter*) maybe you could translate that for Mr. Dr. Grassler... that's Czerniaków... Apr. 22 '42...

F - ... the whole thing...

Q - ... no, this paragraph...

F - ... I went to Auerswald... he reprimanded me here because Jewish personnel were standing too close... while speaking with him... a habit that according to him, made a bad impression of his subordinates... the transports in the truck from Pawiak to the Jewish prison...

Q - ... that's enough...

G - ... yes, yes, that... that... eh, coincides with the image I still have to Auerswald...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know...

Q - ... yes, with you it was very different...

G - ... I'm still convinced about that to this day...

Q - ... it was really friendly?

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G - ... yes, yes... that, that I remember that we greeted each other each time with a handshake and... you know...

Q - ... and when you... when you were in the Ghetto for a stroll...

G - ... I did not stroll in the Ghetto...

Q - ... did you not have any ... about these...

Bobine No. 118

Grassler 8 Cut

Q - ... was there a black market in the Ghetto?

G - ... certainly... you know... I... I'm sure of it...I, I don't remember it, but...

Q - ... you have no memory?

G - ... no, I had... eh... let's say, I also had... no insight there, but I'm convinced that it was so... there was a black market outside of the Ghetto too... it existed in Poland... it existed in Germany... I think in Germany after the war, a lot of black markets...

Q - ... yes, that's true...

G - ... that's a general life experience...

Q - ... but there was a big black market...

G - ... I don't know about that... if you think so... I don't think that the Jews or Czerniaków told me personally about the black market... but I'm convinced... that it was known that there was a black market in the Ghetto... there was a black market outside the Ghetto...

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Q - ... children participated in the black market in the Ghetto...

G - ... that could be, yes, yes, you know... the children were more active, after all... went outside too, I think, regularly...

Q - ... they got outside...

G - ... yes, yes, yes, yes... but... please...

Q - ... and were there cabarets and were there...

G - ... yes, it did, yes, yes... there was, well... I think a pretty active Jewish entertainment program... that was the really surprising thing... the life force in this Ghetto...

Q - ... life force?

G - ... yes, yes... it was amazing...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... why?

G - ... well, goodness, in the... in the misery that prevailed there, with the hunger, eh... to produce cabaret, produce music... eh... I mean, I was never there, but I know that it existed, that I remember, you know...

Q - ... which people died first... the poor people?

G - ... yes... you're asking me more than I know but usually the poor people die first because the rich ones have the money, you know... to buy more food or better clothes, or... you know...

Q - ... that's true...

G - ... those are general life experiences too...

Q - ... and do you remember when the educated group died?

G - ... no, I can't say especially...

Q - ... no?

G - ... no...

Q - ... and you remember too that there was a night raid...

G - ... what kind of a raid?

Q - ... carried out by the Gestapo and they went into the cabaret... and they took many people... about 50 people...

G - ... took them along or...

Q - ... yes... and they shot these people suddenly with a shot in the back of the neck...

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G - ... no, I don't know about that...

Q - ... Mende and Brand did that... led this raid...

G - ... well, Mende, that name I don't recall... Brand, I have that somewhere in my memory, that there was an SS leader named Brand...

Q - ... yes... and you couldn't do anything against this raid?

G - ... against the SS? They were the rulers...

Q - ... you were powerless?

G - ... yes, yes... you know... against the SS... the Wehrmacht could hardly undertake anything... and civilians least of all...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know...

Q - ... and what did you think about the religious Jews with these huge beards, etc.?

G - ... what did I think?

Q - ... yes...

G - ... personally...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... well, goodness, that... they just, let's say... contrary to the... eh... German-speaking Jews, whom I treated as Germans, seemed foreign...

Q - ... foreign?

G - ... foreign... foreigners...

Q - ... total strangers?

G - ... yes, in a pinch, yes... I mean that... it's...
Q - ... your first impression of these religious Jews?
G - ... that I don't know anymore, you know, but... I can imagine that they must have seemed very foreign to me – whereas Czerniaków... those were people of a similar education, you know, with whom one had a conversation... just as, as we are talking now...
Q - ... were these people dirty?
G - ... you're asking me for too much... that I don't know...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... I... whether these religious ones were dirtier, eh... I mean... in the Ghetto many must have been dirty because simply... there were misery and poverty, and that is usually associated with dirt, you know...

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Q - ... yes, misery and dirt... of course...
G - ... you know... and the educated group would have understood that better... to protect themselves... and again for... eh... health reasons... you know...
Q - ... but I saw many photos, where, for instance, German soldiers... simple soldiers... cut the beards of these religious Jews...
G - ... yes?
Q - ... did you... that?
G - ... no...
Q - ... never saw it...
G - ... no, no...
Q - ... but that happened everywhere in Poland...
G - ... yes, probably especially during the invasion...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... I can see that... I mean, after all, I'm... it's really beyond my comprehension that anyone would do that, but...
Q - ... how do you explain such behavior?
G - ... indoctrination... eh...
Q - ... maybe these people were too foreign...
G - ... maybe, eh, well, maybe they thought about... I don't know, but it might have been a chance... that, eh... in the beards there are lice... that there was even a bit of ... health reasons there... I don't know...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... maybe...
Q - ... yes, maybe... yes... yes...
G - ... because, let's say... lice live in hair...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... you know... so, that would be one possibility...
Q - ... and were there a lot of lice?
G - ... I assume that the lice were the carriers of typhus, you know, and... the fight against lice was at the same time a fight against typhus
Q - ... and for example, when Czerniaków was in your office, were you afraid...
G - ... no...
Q - ... of lice?

G - ... no...

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Q - ... for he writes... Czerniaków in this diary... today I found a louse...

G - ... yes?

Q - ... yes...

G - ... of course, I had lice too, though not in Warsaw... rather in the Balkans...

Q - ... ah yes?

G - ... you know, that was ... that was on a transport in a... in a, eh... eh... a kind of train car for the unit, well, where you didn't... for those were former cattle cars in which we too were transported, eh, all the soldiers... you know... we too got lice there...

Q - ... and during your stroll in the Ghetto or your visits, did you not feel disgust with...

G - ... yes, I have to say again, I went... into the Ghetto very rarely... and I felt safe there, that is, to be in closer contact... with, eh... the residents, because... I can imagine there was some fear there about... about the contagion of typhus... you know... well...

Q - ... you were afraid?

G - ... I think possibly so... I don't know anymore, you know, but... we were all... the fear of typhus was strong, you know...

Q - ... yes... no, but this photo that I showed you... that's terrible... and this disgust is completely normal, isn't it?

G - ... hm... hm...

Q - ... bitterly...

G - ... as I said, I...

Q - ... all these...

G - ... didn't go into... because of that, never went into the Ghetto after that, and right after the first visit because it... wasn't disgusting but rather terrible...

Q - ... you made only one visit?

G - ... no, no, I wasn't in just once... I don't know, but very seldom, you know...

Q - ... and did you...

G - ... maybe twice, maybe four times – I don't know anymore...

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Q - ... did you personally see corpses in the streets?

G - ... no, no, certainly not that but... but total misery, you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... no... corpses I don't think so, that... that I would probably remember... but that it looked very, very bad, you know... to see the misery and poverty, you know...

Q - ... yes, that's terrible...

G - ... people in rags and such, surely I had to see that... I mean, during the war, I saw a lot of corpses...

Q - ... maybe the Final Solution was the only solution under such condition, don't you think?

G - ... yes... in my opinion, such conditions should never have happened and no Final Solution should have happened, you... those are...

Q - ... why did the Germans choose this solution... I mean the Final Solution?

G - ... you say "the Germans"...

Q - ... I think it's true... that's my theory...

G - ... yes...

Q - ... and I'd like your opinion... I think it was easier during this time with such circumstances... to kill the Jews than to save the Jews...

G - ... that could be, you know, but, I think... the Germans... of course, were... were all guilty too... that is... but the Germans didn't want to exterminate the Jews, rather, that was, after all... a small group which had the power... personally, I think, you know... and with power you can do anything...

Q - ... yes, but you say that you... feel some guilt?... a personal guilt?

G - ... a collective guilt... not a personal guilt...

Q - ... a collective guilt?

G - ... a collective guilt...

Q - ... what exactly is the meaning of "Mitschuld"?

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G - ... that... that it happened with the Germans or the German people, this extermination of Jews and such... I consider that a guilt that we all have to bear... not because I was in Warsaw, I personally am not guilty, I didn't... to any Jew...

Q - ... in your opinion, more guilty than a Munich resident?

G - ... well, I... that is a... very difficult to answer... the question... eh... I mean... we're getting into the philosophical, you know... I always... had a cross to bear about this time in Warsaw...

Q - ... about the...

G - ... about this time in Warsaw...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... even though, I know... whether you believe me or not... that I personally... let's say... was not guilty... I personally never caused any Jew harm; on the contrary, I tried with insufficient means and without results... you know... to help a little... but whoever saw that has "Mitschuld"/collective guilt, you know... and that is the difference from the Munich resident, who never saw it...

Q - ... yes... and you saw it...

G - ... exactly and... that's why... I say, I feel it more acutely... you know...

Q - ... yes...

Bobine No. 119

Grassler 9 Cut

Q - ... but I think the goal of the Ghetto and the purpose of the Ghetto was to create a slow death...

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Q - ... that's very clear...

G - ... yes, maybe among the leadership, you know... but I'll say again... our assignment was not... to kill the Jews... rather to ... the Jews...

Q - ... to maintain them...

G - ... yes, let's say to keep them together, so they... let's say... there was the recurring typhus danger... so they wouldn't... everywhere... now... be able to spread themselves all over the country, so please, that... that...

Q - ... why not?... why around the whole country?... why not...

G - ... yes, because during the war...

Q - ... you said that these people were human beings...

G - ... of course, you know, but there wasn't the... let's say, ... there's no freedom of movement anywhere during war, you know... even the Poles probably couldn't move about as they wanted...

Q - ... yes, but the Poles didn't... in a ghetto...

G - ... no, no, that would have been impossible anyway... in an occupied country... the... to lock the native people up in a ghetto, the Jews that was... at that time in Poland, you know...

Q - ... but that means that you personally thought that the Jews posed a danger?... back then?

G - ... yes, the danger was ... to us... when I came to Warsaw and when I... because of the danger of disease, you know... we were told...

Q - ... danger of disease...

G - ... because of the danger of disease, you know... not because they, eh... are Jews or another religion, rather... because of the conditions under which they lived from the beginning, probably, you know, well... yes...

Q - ... but do you think there's an inherent connection between Jews and typhus?

G - ... today I probably don't believe that, but back then we were... all convinced in Warsaw or at least it was... this conviction was impressed on us... that this connections exists...

Q - ... but that's very hard to understand...

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G - ... yes, yes... certainly that's hard to understand today...

Q - ... but you had...

G - ... probably because, probably because of the sanitary conditions...

Q - ... it was the same with the German Jews?

G - ... you know... but certainly not, you know... because the German Jews they were, you know, eh... they... in... eh, they... there... there were no ghettos in Germany, you know, I mean, they were persecuted too, after all, and had to wear the star and such...

Q - ... that means that only the East Jews...

G - ... the East Jews were considered dangerous, you know, so...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... you know, it's clear that the German Jew, you know... that...

Q - ... and the typhus danger was the main danger... or were there others?... in your opinion back then?

G - ... my...

Q - ... that I can believe, please ...

G - ... yes, yes... well...

Q - ... and comprehend...

G - ... in... they had at least... I have to say again, sometimes it's only possible with repetition... we should keep in mind... convinced that, well... eh, the danger of typhus... eh... came from the Jews, you know...

Q - ... but what does...
G - ... probably the sanitary conditions, that they...
Q - ... what does one do against typhus?
G - ... well, yes, the... there were medical things, I'm not an expert and that... and the idea behind the Ghetto construction was simply to keep them together...
Q - ... I think there was a very strong identification between Jews and lice... and one...
G - ... that could be...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... yes...
Q - ... and one kills lice...
G - ... yes, I mean, if they spread...
Q - ... yes, one kills lice...
G - ... one kills lice, one kills...
Q - ... that means, one kills the Jews...

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G - ... you know... yes, I mean...
Q - ... I think it's the same...
G - ... in... in the end result it was probably was... not in the ideology or at least not... maybe even in the ideology... of the Jew haters... you know...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... not in the ideology of the German administration, which... eh... had the assignment... to keep the Jews... eh... unto themselves, you know...
Q - ... yes, but "unto themselves", what does it mean "unto themselves"?
G - ... that's the construction of the Ghetto... which... I have to say again, that wasn't an invention of Warsaw...
Q - ... but you believed back then that this ghetto idea was a good idea... it was self-administration, wasn't it?
G - ... yes, it was self-administration...
Q - ... a little Israeli state...
G - ... it actually functioned well... the Jewish self-administration...
Q - ... yes, but it was self-administration for death, wasn't it?
G - ... yes, in... in the end result and today we know... back then we didn't know...
Q - ... oh so... back then too...
G - ... no...
Q - ... Czerniaków writes that... we're puppets... we have no power...
G - ... yes, that...
Q - ... no power... we have no power...
G - ... yes, of course... I mean... certainly that was...

[No video]

Q - ... you were the rulers... you... the Germans...
G - ... yes, of course, were...
Q - ... and Czerniaków was a... tool...
G - ... a tool, yes, he was, after all...
Q - ... in your hands...

G - ... yes, but... a good tool, well... the Jewish self-administration worked well, I still know that...

Q - ... yes, but "worked well" for 3 years...

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G - ... yes, they wanted...

Q - ... and that was 2.5 years and in the end...

G - ... in the end... there was...

Q - ... worked well for... for what... for what purpose?

G - ... be, eh... well, for the self-administration, so...

Q - ... no... for death...

G - ... yes, I mean this...

Q - ... self-administration and self-preservation for death...

G - ... that... that's easy to say nowadays...

Q - ... but you told me that the conditions were inhuman, terrible...

G - ... yes, of course, they were...

Q - ... terrible...

G - ... yes, yes, yes...

Q - ... and it... that means... it was clear during this time already...

G - ... no, that... let's say, the extermination was not clear... you know... that... that, let's say, the end result...

Q - ... the extermination, that's not so simple because there was a small step... and another step and a step, step, step, step, step... and that's extermination... but about these...

G - ... there...

Q - ... to understand little steps, you have to...

G - ... you know... the... eh, the extermination, eh... at least in the beginning, eh, didn't start in the Ghetto, rather by means of the transports... eh... otherwise one would have... the Ghetto itself...

Q - ... which transport?

G - ... the transport to Treblinka, you know...

Q - ... ah yes...

G - ... one would have destroyed the Ghetto, God knows, with weapons or whatever... you know...

Q - ... yes...

G - ... what happened later, after (*illegible*)... long after my time (*illegible*)... Mr. Lanzmann, we're talking in circles, you know... we won't come... we won't come (*illegible*)...

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Q - ... no, no, but I think it's impossible today to ... conclusions...

F - ... reach

Q - ... reach...

G - ... what I know today... I didn't know that back then... you know... and of course...

Q - ... and you were not a small man, you were...

G - ... I was just a small man...

Q - ... you were an important... important man...

G - ... you are overestimating the... this role, you know, you know...

Q - ... no, you were the representative of the Commission for the Jewish Residence Area in Warsaw and that means...

G - ... but... but without power...

Q - ... that is something...

G - ... hm...

Q - ... you were a part of this big German might...

G - ... correct... but just... a small part... you know... you... you are overestimating what a... at the time, 28-year old assessor...

Q - ... 30-year old...

G - ... 28...

Q - ... 30...that's more... that is maturity...

G - ... not so... for an attorney, who at about 27 years takes his exam... that's the beginning... you know...

Q - ... yes, but you were a doctor?

G - ... yes, but that doesn't mean anything, this title...

Q - ... Auerswald had a doctorate too?

G - ... no, but the title didn't mean anything... you know...

Q - ... Dr. of juris...?

G - ... hm,, hm...

Q - ... and after the war... what did you do?

G - ... I was... in an Alpine publishing company – I did mountain books and mountain magazines...

Q - ... ah yes?

G - ... yes, yes... wrote books and published books about the mountains... an Alpine magazine...

Q - ... and that's your main interest... mountains?

G - ... yes, yes...

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Q - ... yes, mountains and air and sun and fresh air...

G - ... no Ghetto air...

[Video resumes]

Q - ... yes... no Ghetto air... yes... I understand... that's very... and what was Ghetto air like?

G - ... oppressive...

Q - ... yes?

G - ... yes, I mean... I don't know anymore...

Q - ... that was because...?

G - ... it was surely... let's say, for the nose too... I don't know anymore, but...

Q - ... stink?

G - ... I think so...

Q - ... yes?

G - ... I think so, yes...

Q - ... it wasn't good for the nose?

G - ... no... but please... I think that without knowing it anymore... you know...

Q - ... yes, but I don't understand... you said that you read poems by Heine with pleasure...

G - ... not just read... recited... memorized, memorized them...
Q - ... with pleasure... that's one thing and the other thing is that you de-liced the Jews... that's the same... that's impossible to...
G - ... the one is my own free will... the other is...
Q - ... force...
G - ... force... force, orders, however one wants to call it... war, you know...
Q - ... orders...
G - ... you know...
Q - ... yes... did you hide to read Heine?
G - ... no... no...
Q - ... no?
G - ... we read to each other, that's what...
Q - ... in Warsaw you did...?
G - ... not in Warsaw... not anymore in Warsaw... but I keep saying, as a young man before... you know...
Q - ... but in Warsaw...

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G - ... I wouldn't have known where to get Heine...
Q - ... yes...
G - ... you know...
Q - ... it was forbidden... to read Heine?
G - ... forbidden...
Q - ... yes, yes...
G - ... probably, yes, yes... yes, I mean, that's just an example, you know... so, I want...
Q - ... yes, yes, I understand, it's only an example...