

[INAUDIBLE] My name is Dr. Sidney Langer, and I'm the director of the Oral History Project in the Holocaust Studies Resource Center at Kean College. I'm very pleased that Mrs. Ulka Sommer is here with me today to share some of her experiences and insight into the Holocaust period. Mrs. Sommer, thank you very much for coming today.

You're welcome.

Can you tell me a little bit about the town that you were born in, when you were born, what the town was like?

I come from a small town which has a history of going from one country to the other. I was born in 1923, which was Poland at the time. My parents lived under the Austro-Hungarian rule, and now it's Soviet Russia.

The name of the town was--

Is Tluste.

Tluste.

Tluste. As I told you before, it's famous that the originator of the Hasidic movement, the Baal Shem Tov, lived in our town. And that's the reason some people say that we were lucky that in our town we survived, 100 people from our town and 400 people from all over Europe. We had even people from Hungary that survived in our town. The only thing is on the day that we survived that the Russians came back-- on March 23, 1944, the German planes came, and they bombed the camp that we were in, and 150 people died that day.

Approximately what was the population of the town when you were born?

The population of the town was around 3,000 people. Out of that, there were 1,800 Jews.

So it was a relatively small town.

It was a small town, but full of vigor, of enthusiasm, from Hasidim to Zionism. It was a beautiful little town.

What was the influence of orthodoxy in the town?

Well, it was changing in my time. As I told you, Zionism was booming in town.

What year now?

Excuse me?

What year are we talking about?

What I can remember, I can remember the '30s.

OK.

Of course, the '20s, I was a child. And of course, the older people were still strictly Orthodox. I mean, everybody was religious in terms of American standards. But the drive to be modern, to be Zionist, was of course the youth. That was the future of the Jewish young population. They belonged to the Betar and to the Gordonia. My father was in the [NON-ENGLISH], and I did not participate in any of those. But my Hebrew teacher instilled in me a great love for Israel, and I sang Jerusalem [NON-ENGLISH] without ever imagining that I'll be there and I'll see with my own eyes.

That's wonderful. Did you yourself belong to Betar or any youth organizations?

No, I'm telling you. My father was in the Aguda. He was [Both talking].

I understand.

No. First of all, I never had the feeling that I have to belong to a organization. Some children of parents like my father were rebelling. I wasn't a rebellious type. But when it came [NON-ENGLISH]. I went to the synagogue with the-- dressed in a blue skirt and a white shirt and all this from the Hebrew school. Everything was around the Hebrew school, where I participated in anything that had to do with Zionism. I did not belong to an organization because there were girls and boys, and my father would not have approved of that.

So you went to public school?

I went to public school from the Polish government, and in the afternoon I went to Hebrew school an hour and a half. We had a wonderful teacher in a small town. Most of the young population, especially girls, we all spoke Hebrew as well as we spoke Polish. And this is a credit to one man, and his name was Mordecai Spector. [INAUDIBLE].

What was the economic situation of the Jewish community [INAUDIBLE]?

The economic situation? I was a young girl. I'm sure that everyone will tell you that he comes from a well-to-do home. I am. I'm sorry to say, it's the truth.

What did your father do?

My father had a lumberyard, and the only one that was in the building business before anybody of our partners. But so we were well-to-do. Our house is still standing there. The maid sent me a picture of it yet.

And so I personally had no material worries. But I do remember my mother every Friday would make packages and sent around packages for needy families with a maid. But there were two families that I was sent personally. The maid should not know about, nobody should know about it, because not to hurt their feelings.

And people worked hard. I remember one man. He was-- The Jewish population mostly were merchants and artisans. The artisans fared better than some of those merchants, because the merchant, he bought a sack or two of wheat from a peasant, and he sold it for a slight amount to somebody else.

And I remember there was one of these big merchants. He would come every Wednesday and borrow a few zloty from my father, and on Friday would come back and give it back. Well, my father said, keep it for next week. No, he says. Over Shabbat, I want to feel that I don't owe money.

And that's the way he made this-- I'm sure that he had a very tough time. And what I hear from other people, from older people, is that there was no industry. So the only thing that people made a living from is having a small store, small grocery store.

So the bigger merchants were like my father with the lumberyard. Some people had woods that they would rent out from landowners. I was too young to concern myself with that. The book has-- Now if I want to know something I open the book.

I was going to say--

I read in the book.

--I noticed that the book was written in, I think, 1965.

In 1965, he decided to put down in the book what happened during the Holocaust and what happened before. And we have I think the one this Dr. [PERSONAL NAME]. He was in the second Knesset, and he was from our town. And he

writes about his childhood memories about things that I've never heard of and about all kind of businesses that people had that in my time they were obsolete, you understand.

So no matter. I'm 60 years old now, but I was a child then. And being 16 before the war, it's not like today. I was still considered a child. I wasn't told everything, and I was too busy being young to ask things about my grandparents and things like that. I'm sorry now.

That's the reason I'm here now to tell. Whenever my grandchildren want to know something about my life, they should be able to know if I'm not around.

So the Jewish community then was a very vibrant Jewish community.

A vibrant Jewish community. There were Hasid and there were [NON-ENGLISH] Hasid and [NON-ENGLISH] Hasid, and then you have the Gordonia and the [? Zjednocznie. ?] And they obviously were having fights among them.

I was going to ask you about that.

Yes. I remember voting. I don't know. I was voting for the Senate in Poland. We had, I think, two or three Jewish senators before the war, and each one wanted to influence the Jewish vote and the Jewish parties somehow. I can't tell you, because I was-- I just remember the numbers 4 and 3 painted all over the town. So those are my recollections in town.

But I don't know if there was one person in our town that could not read and write. And the Jewish population was really all for education. The boys went to cheder and to yeshiva. The girls, we all went to Hebrew school.

I was honored for [INAUDIBLE] a few months ago, and I told him the story in our town. As I told you, all the girls went to Hebrew school. And I think-- I don't know, it was five zloty a month, or 10 zloty. I don't remember. I mean, I wasn't concerned with that.

There was a beggar in town. He was a beggar. He was a cripple. His cheek-- I don't know. He was burned as a child. They used to call him [NON-ENGLISH], because he had the burned cheek.

And he was married to some poor orphan girl. Beautiful girl, but she had no dowry. And they had a beautiful little girl. And when she was four or five years old, she had to go to Hebrew school. Of course he was going-- He was a beggar, going from house to house, and he didn't have enough to pay for the tuition.

So he came to our Hebrew teacher and told him, Mr. Spector, I want you to take my Hannalah. That was her name. She has to get her Hebrew education. And don't worry. I'll go to kahal and he'll pay you.

And then he went to kahal. He said, look, I cannot give her fancy clothes, a fancy home. Maybe that building-- if she grows up, she can have that. But her Hebrew education has to start now. And that little girl went with all of us, and she knew Hebrew just as well, maybe better than some of the rich kids. So that was the spirit of the town, whatever the politics-- politicking was going on.

In the synagogues, I used to come home. It was when Spain had their civil war. You knew in Tluste exactly what was going on in Spain. And some of them they mispronounced, like most of us here mispronounce English because this is not my native tongue. But while the civil war is going on, it wasn't backwards at all. So if not for Hitler, it would be still a vibrant town.

It's reproduced quite a few famous people for that small little town. There's Dr. Bernard [PERSONAL NAME] Did you ever hear of him?

No.

Look up in the Encyclopedia Judaica. He was a famous genealogist that went back to find out about Jewish roots. He lived in Vienna later on.

Education was the most important, so I did not feel deprived of-- I used to come-- My mother comes from Stanislawów. This is a big city. And my cousins were there, and they used to make fun. You come from a hick town. So their parents said, she comes from a hick town.

I spoke here with [NON-ENGLISH] [? and David. ?] They went to a gymnasium there. And I lived a better life than they lived in the big city. So I did not feel deprived of that.

Of course there were poor people, but Shabbat everybody was dressed neatly, and the parents did their utmost to get for the holidays a new pair of shoes. And some came easy, but everybody that I know--

And I don't think that there were really people starving, and that must be-- the reason must be that the part that we come from is the breadbasket of Europe. Hitler wanted it. So there was bread and potatoes and things like that. So you did not feel the hunger maybe as in a big city, a poor big city. It's my opinion. And worse, if you didn't have food-- you didn't have food here. If you had a little plot and you planted a few cucumbers and a tomato, something, you had some food.

What was the relationship between the Jewish community and the non-Jewish community before the war broke out?

Very good. That's what hurt most.

I'm sorry?

That hurt the most, that when the war started the girlfriends that I grew up-- did my homework together with them, all of a sudden didn't know me anymore.

And how old were you at the time?

When the war started? 16.

You were 16. So there was a total separation then at the time between you and your friends?

My Christian friends? Yes and no. It's very hard to--

I know there was a very peaceful coexistence before the war in your town.

There was a very peaceful coexistence. There was antisemitism, but in a town that predominately the population was Jewish. The Christian population was around the town, but in center of town there were all Jews. So actually in the schools we had a few. You can say that 60% of the children in school were Jewish in town. In the villages was a difference there.

And there was another factor there. The part that we come from was Poland, but the majority of the population was Ukrainian. And the Poles hated the Ukrainians, and the Ukrainians hated the Poles. And we were in between, and everybody hated us. This is the difference there.

But not publicly. In school I was a Pole, but my religion was the "religion of Moses." This is strictly translated. It's just translated. [NON-ENGLISH]. That means that I was a Pole with the Jewish faith, of the Jewish faith. And I remember before the war already there was like the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, which Jewish children were not-- for the same, the Ukrainian children were not taken into.

And we had a teacher. She must have been some anti-Semite. The Jewish children were good students. What can you do? We're good students. And some of the Poles were very weak. So she would teach them privately, give them private lessons that we did not.

One of the girls was my good girlfriend, best girlfriend and neighbor. So all that what taught-- she would give them, then she would give me. So I would read it, and then I was even better than I was before. She yelled at her. So it's not enough that this and -- you still give the Jew to read what I help you out. [INAUDIBLE] But you lived with it.

Now another thing. There was no high school in our town. It was small. So you had to go to [INAUDIBLE]. A Jew had to be the best student, so you had to be A student, and the father had a lot of money to pay [INAUDIBLE]. If you want to go to high school, they would tutor him and You have to pay and things like this. We knew that this parent and the Polish people had priority. So discrimination was accepted.

This kind of discrimination we learned how to live. So we took private lessons. You had Hebrew high schools in bigger cities if you could afford, and the mother wasn't afraid to let you go. It wasn't only to be able to afford, but to send the child to a big city by himself.

So we went around that. We had our Jewish doctors, Jewish lawyers in town. We had Jewish pharmacists. They had to go to Germany to study. Isn't that--

Interesting.

All the doctors and the academicians had to go out of town to get their degrees, and then they would come back and practice in our town. Again, I was too young to know where exactly everybody studied, but I heard they went to Vienna and Berlin and then they came back.

Can you describe some of the other changes that took place when Hitler came to power? We talked about the relationship between you and your friends, for example.

I told you the relationship was-- They did not do-- They did not live up to the democratic way of life that they try to picture themselves in the world, that Poland was a republic, a democracy. They were not.

But I have to give credit where credit is due. In the book, you read about it. I remembered it, but I did not put down in book. 1965, I was still very bitter, and especially my husband was even more than I. And raising children and making a living took up most of our time. But those people that wrote the book, most of them were my parents' age. And there's a Mr. Blick, and he recorded what I remember.

The war started June 22. For 10 days, in our town you did not see a German. But the Christian population in the villages around killed all the Jews in their villages, and they were going to our town to do the job on the Jewish population.

How many Jews were killed in the surrounding towns [INAUDIBLE]?

A few hundred people. How many? Two, three families in a village, and there were 32 villages around our town. It was a very centrally located town.

And so the Ukrainian priests-- I just want to tell you how important a small leader. If the Jewish people have a grudge against Pope Pius, here you have an example.

He called his people together, and he told them that he wants a Ukraine. I mean, they want an independent Ukraine. But not on Jewish blood, not on blood of our God's children. We're all God's children. And he sent out young Ukrainian boys that he had influence over around the town and they would not let in the murderers from the villages.

I knew of a fellow, [? Bruno, ?] a Ukrainian boy, that the other guys cut his-- shot off his finger that night. And the same-- and the Polish priest also kept the people from committing murder. Because if not for those two priests-- especially the Ukrainian, because he was more energetic-- I don't think that I would be here today, because that before you saw German soldier yet in our town.

And just as a epilogue, you say, Sam Halpern just came back now from Russia, and he went to our town because he went with people which were a friend of ours, but she lost her parents in our town. And they went to the cemetery, and he said that in the whole area-- he went to his hometown and other hometowns-- the Jewish cemeteries are destroyed but in Tluste. And I give credit to that Ukrainian priest. I'm sure that he told them don't touch that holy ground.

So when one person can have an influence I'm sure if he would tell them look, go out, kill, they would have gone and killed. He told them not to. Our maid used to tell us all the sermons. Every Sunday used to keep sermons and telling them that we are all children of the same God. If we don't take care of each other, if they kill-- today they kill one, tomorrow they will come and kill us. Don't do it.

And they listened to him as a whole. But there were greedy people. If he thought if-- he'll kill-- I'll be killed, and he'll take the furniture out of the house. He did it. He did not protect me.

I don't know how I look to you, if I look to you Jewish or not, but in my town with the Ukrainian population I could go easily as a Ukrainian with their-- put on their costume. And nobody, and especially a girl, a woman, there was no way to tell. But I was afraid.

Did you discuss this with your family at the time? Did your father, did your mother talk about what was going on in the villages nearby?

Of course. We knew right away, because some people survived. A couple of people survived and came running to town and said what happened. Of course. We knew it right away.

And what was the response in terms of your own future, in terms of your family's future?

What could -- But now whenever we listen to the news, the bad news-- I don't know. Maybe there was a will to live. You always heard good news. Hitler got in [NON-ENGLISH]. You know what [NON-ENGLISH] is?

Sure.

Things like that won't happen. And if somebody came in and said that in this and this town there was an Aktion-- oh, because somebody killed a German.

In other words, there was an excuse.

They could not believe. They could not believe. You could not believe that things like that do happen. We are a civilized people. The German people-- I mean, this is the cradle of civilization. They don't do a thing like that. Kill innocent children?

And a lot of people ran away in the woods. Our part, as I told you, was the breadbasket of Europe. But the woods were like a park here, so you could not survive there because they found you. Some people would go and pay some peasants money to save you to keep-- or someplace in the field to make a bunker or something. Some of them did and the people survived, and some of them as soon as they got your money went and killed them themselves. They didn't wait for the Germans. Or they would go and tell the Germans where you are. So as I told you, we were not in Auschwitz, but the end result was the same.

How long did you live in this particular town? Until what year?

I was there all the time.

The entire time.

No, I was in a village next to Tluste. It was [PLACE NAME]. I mean, I was interviewed in Washington by a correspondent for the UPI, I think. I told him I was three years with the Nazis, and if I had to tell you how I survived, I'd

need three years to tell you, because every minute I was exposed to danger.

Just to give you an example, the town, as I told you, was mostly occupied by Jews. So when they made an Aktion-- You know what an Aktion is. I don't have to explain to you.

So they made a ghetto. In this small town, they made a ghetto.

In your town.

In my town, yes. So they said that from now on Jews are allowed to live just on this side of the main street. I mean, it's a small town.

Is this in 1939?

No. No. As I told you, That's Russia. I'm sorry to tell you. It was 1941, because when the war started Hitler made a pact with Stalin, and we came under the Russian rule from 1939 till '41.

Through 1941.

As I said, June 22 the war started, and 10 days later, the Germans came. But before the Germans came we had already killings. Total annihilation of village, Jewish people that lived in the villages. So we were on one side of the town, and the drinking water was on the other side of the town. We were not allowed to go on the main street, and there was no other way to go it's to get water, I mean, there was no canalization.

We didn't have faucets or water. So in order to go and bring a parent water, you endangered your life. If they caught you walking, crossing the Main Street that was a violation, and they had the right to kill you. A lot of people got killed just going to fetch water.

How did the people survive?

How do you survive? There's-- everybody has a book to tell you how we survived. I went to-- I was lucky, I went to get water and they didn't see me and they didn't kill me.

But you were living together with your family this entire time?

I was together with my mother, my sister-- my sister was [PERSONAL NAME] I had a sister, she was 14 years older than I. So she had already a son that was nine years younger than I. I was an aunt at the age of 9. And we were together because we're from the same town, you know, because they were making Judenrein the whole area and sending the people to our town. And as long as I was in my town in my house, although it was not in the house that we lived til the war, you're still home. If you are home, you're still not misplaced. You are not displaced in this place. If the peasant did not want to hide me, but he would give me a loaf of bread. I'd say something like that.

Or because my father was an honest man and the men that remembered him, they would look away if not see me, if I came in. It's very difficult to describe how you survive. I don't believe it myself anymore, how I could survive that, how I could live like that from day to day. That was-- the first Aktion was Sukkot, now. That was in 1943, and before that they took away people to Belzec. That was another thing. They caught people, and they sent them away.

You knew where the people were being sent, of course.

No.

You did not.

They were being sent abroad. Then, you know, the pessimists said they'd been killed, and the optimists said, what do

you mean, killed? Why should they kill them? They need-- The German army is under Frank, and they need workers so they took people. We never heard of them anymore. Nobody survived. Those people that were sent away, nobody survived. Nobody came back. Some people from other transports would jump the train and come back, but from the first one nobody jumped because nobody knew what's going on.

Did you yourself observe some of the actions that were taking place in your town?

I'll tell you, I told you before that May 27, 1943, 3,000 people were killed in our town as I told you. Before the war there were just 1800 Jews. The cemetery has 5,000 Jews killed during the Holocaust. That was 5:00 in the morning, 5, 6 in the morning, the Germans and Ukrainian police surrounded the town, and then they went from house to house taking out the people.

People-- everybody tried to make bunkers. You know what a bunker is? To hide ourselves. In our house there was-- going back, the day that the Russians left, they exploded some ammunition that they couldn't take with them in the train station. And the worst of the houses had plaster that fell off. So that was like a camouflage.

We made our bunker in the attic, and the door to the bunker was-- I mean, the whole ceiling, all over the ceilings were the plaster fell off so like you could not see that it's a door. It was a camouflage. But the attic was made out of wood, and I could see through the-- what was going on. We were maybe 30 people in that bunker in the attic.

Your whole family was still with you in the room?

Yes. My father wasn't alive anymore, but my mother, my sister, my nephew, and my husband's family. He was in a camp already. We weren't married, but I mean, his family, their house burned down in the explosion, so they lived in our house. His aunt and uncle and his cousin and his brother-- there were 30 people. And among those 30 people there was a young woman with a baby that came from a different town, Horodenka. The town became Judenrein. And they-- she came Wednesday afternoon with other people. And she was put in our house to be with us. And she was with a tiny baby infant.

And when we heard the shooting, we all ran up to that attic, and we had to take her too. We wouldn't leave her alone with the infant. And my husband's father did not trust that bunker because it was very flimsy. And next there were Hungarian soldiers. And they were very friendly with him. He spoke a little Hungarian.

So he was going to hide with the Hungarian soldiers. And it was maybe two meters from house to that house. And they caught him. He never reached-- again, the Hungarian soldiers were very friendly toward us. So over 30 people, I think, 32 people in one bunker. And I saw people, how they were taking out people from different houses in the center of town. They collect them, then they took them to the cemetery.

The baby starts crying and this is like a shack, you know, an attic that has just those [INAUDIBLE]. And the baby was crying and sat down to the mother. Do something. And she had no milk to nurse her.

And so she started taking the baby and pushing to my brother-- to all the men. Do whatever you want with the baby. I cannot kill my own baby. And the baby was crying.

And as soon as they know-- they hear a baby cry, they know where we are. I was saddened to hear the Hungarian soldiers whistling, and singing, and running up and down the stairs. Was like, my god, they're killing us. How can people be so cruel?

Well, anyway, next morning, the Germans were very efficient. They started at a certain time, and they finished at a certain time. 4 o'clock, the whistle blew, no more killing. If they saw a Jew coming down from a bunker, they wouldn't kill him anymore, until the next time, of course. But for that day, it was-- we did not come down.

We came down the next morning. Found out that my husband's father is not alive. My aunts and uncles-- I mean, 3,000 people. And then those Hungarian soldiers came over and said, how dare you take a child with you-- a baby. We heard a



baby cry. And whenever we saw Germans and Ukrainians going by, we started whistling and singing not to hear the babies cry. That's the way we survived.

So you asked me how I survived. If not for their thinking, 32 people, out of those people that survived that day, we are still three alive. My husband's brother survived the Germans. Then he went to the Russian army and was killed in the army. I don't let you ask me any questions, I just tell you stories.

What happened after that?

After that, they made the ghetto even smaller, yet, after they killed the 3,000 people. As I've told you, my husband-- was my husband then-- was already in the camp, in a forced labor camp. This is a village, 7 kilometers out of our camp.

The Germans needed rubber badly, so they want to grow artificial rubber. They called it [INAUDIBLE]. So some of the Jews were working in those fields trying to raise artificial rubber plants-- rubber plants, [INAUDIBLE]. So he was there. And the able-bodied people could go and work, so he was there. And in the other villages, there were also people. I mean, you could also work in the fields producing food for the German army.

So I went to another village [PLACE NAME]. We had the people that worked in our lumber yard. They have two. They were two brothers in law. One, the last piece of bread that he had, he would share with us. And the other one knew where my sister and brother were hiding.

He went in, and did him up, and took away whatever they had. So you cannot generalize. This one, I still send-- he is not alive anymore-- I sent packages to this family. And the other one, [INAUDIBLE]. So I went there, and I worked in the-- the landowners were gone, but then there was a big-- what do you call this plant-- It's not a plantation, but the equivalent of a plantation.

And then, the local population would take, sometimes, a Jewish girl to help out in the house and to knit sweaters. I knitted sweaters. I was an expert knitter. So they would take me from house to house. And they would feed me, let me sleep in the stable. It was something-- they were afraid to do it, but just because I was, I told you, Herr Spitzer's daughter, so they treated me nicely.

And I used to make sweaters. And I'd sleep in camps. If they came, and they made an Aktion in the camp, I would survive that. So that was going on all winter.

Another little story, I'll tell you. How much my life and the life of other Jewish people was worth, then. I was knitting for people that still have some sense of being a human being because they were older, and they remembered. The young people-- which maybe it wasn't their fault-- they saw what is done to the Jewish people, nobody objects to, so they thought it's what was coming to us. I was once working for one woman, knitting a sweater. And when you run away when Aktion. If you suspect there is an an Aktion, you put on your best clothes that you have yet, and the best pair of shoes so it will last longer.

And I was knitting the sweater and wearing my best dress that I have. My only dress and my best dress. This girl wanted that dress, so in order to get this dress, she didn't come out and say, give me the dress. But she brought her girlfriend to read cards to tell my future. She says, she told my future. Would you like me to-- I said, I'm not interested. And she said, no. Let her tell your future. Of course, my objections didn't mean anything. She foretold my future. In two weeks, you will be killed.

You didn't have to be a genius to tell a Jewish girl that she'll be killed. If that's God's will, I'll be killed. She comes in with [INAUDIBLE], schmatta and she tells me, let's trade. I said, why? She says, you'll be killed anyway. So I said, I would like to have the dress. I said, wait two weeks. You have it. She said, well but it will be full of blood. It's a pity. Such a pretty dress.

You mentioned that your father passed away. Did he die of natural causes?

My father of natural causes. That was another thing that worked hand-in-hand with Hitler. If the Aktions stopped, typhoid took up. This is another story for typhoid. Typhoid was claiming 30, 40 people a day. And how did typhus come to Tluste? One of the Aktions, they caught maybe 20, 30 people from our town. And they took them to Czortkow. Czortkow was 20 kilometers from us. So everybody thought that was the end of them, because when they just came, the Germans, they took the whole intelligence, all the doctors, lawyers, rabbi and they killed them. They took him to Czortkow and they killed them to take away-- in case there's some brains to resist.

So we thought that these people are dead. After two weeks, there would be no more killings. They were put in jail, for some reason, and they sent everybody home. Isn't that good? They infected them with typhoid lice. And they all came down with typhus. And they spread typhoid all over the ghetto. And they put out big posters to the Christian population not to have anything to do with Jews because they are carriers of typhoid.

Can you describe the ghetto a little bit? There was the Jewish community council in the ghetto.

This is a very touchy subject. Some, like my husband, he blames the people that participated in the council because when his father and his brother were approached to be under council-- in the beginning, his brother was concerned obviously, I mean he had to have some kind of rule. So what was the rule, go call to work. He was a young boy, too. He was 20 years old.

So he came into my house. He said, your husband has to go work. So the woman says, [NON-ENGLISH]. You understand Yiddish? So he says, you know what, you're right. Next day, he says to the father, I'm not going to call somebody else. So I'll go myself.

But some people did it to protect their families. They thought they'll survive. Of course, they didn't. They helped only Hitler. They didn't help themselves. But why should I blame them. They were nice, fine, outstanding citizens, pious people. He mixed them up. They wanted to live. And the will to live is so bad that sometimes you don't know what you're doing.

Maybe they wanted for because some people didn't participate. They said, if he wants to do the dirty work-- first he said, Jews have to give all the furs away. You're not allowed to have a fur. Of course, it's not gold, diamonds. You give that, and they want furniture. All the material things, fine.

But it came that you had to send to [INAUDIBLE], boys. And instead of sending my son, I send somebody else's son. But being a mother now, I can understand it may be better but still not right.

So the book has all kinds of things, which is it really-- there's a reason I want you to have it. I do have a few copies, so I can-- before, I had just one copy. I was in Israel and the people-- the committee gave me some. I said that I need-- I want to give it [INAUDIBLE].

Were there any religious, cultural activities in the ghetto?

In the ghetto? It's not worth it. It wasn't worth it. We weren't-- here, he describes, Rosh Hashanah. We fasted on Yom Kippur, Passover, we still wouldn't eat bread. We found out that we can have beans. We prayed. We kept the Sabbath as much as we could. I still studied Latin because the war will be over, and I have to take exams.

We still live to the last minute. Everybody was living with the hope. If it wasn't for hope, nobody would have survived. That I told you. Turkey was coming to us. America is going to fight with us. We were looking always-- maybe some planes will come and-- We were dreaming of Entebbe.

Nobody cared. Nobody cared. Because as I told you about the priest, he cared. He could not fight the German government, but he could keep his people. And if he wouldn't keep his people, the few of us that survived, wouldn't have.

OK. I think we're going to take a break for a few minutes.

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