

T. Davies

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1 TINA DAVIES:

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INTERVIEWER: Good afternoon. This is
May 22nd, 1991. We're in England. The city of
Bournemouth. And we're doing an interview of
one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Q Would you please tell us your name?

A My name is Tina Davies.

Q And our maiden name?

A My maiden name is Aporchinska (phonetic). That's my
maiden name.

Q And you were born where?

A In Krakow, in Poland.

Q In Poland.

Would you tell us the date and the year?

A Yes. 23rd of March, 1921.

Q 1921.

And would you please tell us the name of your father
and your mother?

A Yes. My father was Izadore (phonetic) Aporchinska.
And my mother was Cecelia Aporchinska.

Q And her name before she was married, do you
recall that?

A Yes. She was Steiner was her name. Steiner.

S-t-e-i-n-e-r.

Q I see.

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1 A Steiner.

2 Q Did you have any brothers and sisters?

3 A Yes. I had sister, four years younger; and brother
4 about ten years younger.

5 Q I see. Would you tell us their names?

6 A Yes. Sister was Irene. And my brother was Rudovic
7 (phonetic). Rudovic.

8 Q I see. What type of work did your father do?

9 A He was a chemist. We had a chemist shop.
10 Apothecary. Chemist shop.

11 Q Oh, I see. And your education, what type of
12 education did you pursue?

13 A Yes. Grammar school in Lysyum. In fact, that was
14 only one year before entering university to study chemistry
15 when the war broke out.

16 Q I see. And what did your brother do and your
17 sister? What was their background?

18 A Just in school because they were younger. They just
19 went to school.

20 Q I see. And what was your hometown like in 1933
21 when Hitler came to power in Germany, although you and your
22 family were in Poland? What type of conditions?

23 A We were -- by then we moved away from Krakow because
24 my father bought his own business in Stary Songe (phonetic).
25 Very nice little town in the mountains.

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1 And that's where we were living when the war broke
2 out. And my father was fiercely against Hitler. Tried to
3 do everything possible not to support in any way, even the
4 products in our shop. He boycotted anything German. He was
5 fiercely anti -- against it.

6 Q And how were the other people in the community?
7 How did they feel, do you recall that?

8 A Yes, yes. Some were actually pro-Hitler. There were
9 some Polish Nazis. Quite a lot in Poland. And of course it
10 was all Catholic. Catholic country.

11 Q Um-hmm.

12 A And they were quite -- they were very antisemitic
13 always really in Poland. Quite a lot of it. We suffered
14 quite a lot because of it.

15 Q And how did they treat you and your family?

16 A Polish people? Oh, well, that was all right. I went
17 to school with Polish girls.

18 And we had this only one business there in this
19 little town. So we were fairly all right. But there was
20 this under -- undercurrent anti. Anti Jews really. Always.

21 Q I see. So then hat is your background then?
22 Is it the Jewish faith?

23 A That's right. Yes. From Jewish family I come.
24 That's why I lost all the family, and that's why I was put
25 in concentration camp.

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1 Q I see. When actually did things begin to
2 change in the area that you were in in Poland? When did you
3 see the big changes begin taking place?

4 A Before the war. About a year before the war.
5 Because we were living very near the border in
6 Czechoslovakia.

7 Already then there were things, you know, rumors
8 about war and all sorts of things like that. Uncertainty.

9 And, in fact, before war broke out, my mother took us
10 to Krakow to relatives, because she thought it would be
11 safer there for us, for children.

12 Q I see. Did any of the school children give you
13 and your family or your brother and your sister a hard time?

14 A Well, not really. I was quite friendly with them, in
15 fact. They used to say, "We don't like Jews, but we like
16 you." This sort of thing.

17 So I was quite friendly with them. And although I
18 really didn't have -- we didn't really have very strong
19 faith, Jewish faith, but I would always stick up for the
20 Jews. You know.

21 Q Um-hmm.

22 A Sticking up for the underdog, always.

23 Q Yeah. Yes. Okay.

24

25 Well, what do you recall happened when Hitler invaded

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1 Poland in 1939? Do you remember those days?

2 A Yes. Yes.

3 Q Would you like to tell us a little bit about
4 what happened?

5 A As I said, we were already in Krakow with relatives,
6 and mother went back home. She just took us there, left us,
7 and went back home.

8 And then the war started. And we had to have
9 black -- black -- you know, no lights on. Blackouts in
10 Krakow.

11 And mother then -- when the war started, she heard a
12 lot, and put some belongings on, and traveled back to Krakow
13 to us.

14 And on the way, she was told that Krakow was bombed.
15 Nothing left of it. And she was in terrible state when she
16 came eventually. It was not true, but that's what she
17 heard.

18 And meanwhile, father left. Because over the radio,
19 it was advised that all males go east. East, away from west
20 where the German's were coming from. So he went with the
21 Red Cross and all this, hospitals and all that.

22 He went east. And he ended up in east Poland, which
23 was then taken over by Russians. Because you know from
24 history that the Russians had agreement with Germans at the
25 time. And so the Russians took part of Poland, and Germans

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1 took another part of Poland.

2 So we were under Germans and my father was under
3 Russian. But we still had some -- afterwards, we had
4 some -- we heard from father. And then when things settled
5 down, Germans were in. And right away, they -- the Jews had
6 to put arm bands on with the star, and were restricted in
7 movement, the Jews. So mother took us back home.

8 Q Now, how did you travel back home?

9 A Oh, on a horse cart we had to go. Because there was
10 nothing else.

11 Actually, no. Mother took my little brother home.
12 And she left -- and the sister. And she left me because I
13 went to school there. Started going to school again. Just
14 for awhile.

15 Q I see. And how old were you at this time now
16 in 1939?

17 A I must have been about 17? 18?

18 Q 17 or 18.

19 A 18, I think. Born in '21. About 18.

20 So mother left me there to attend the school. But
21 then they closed the schools, so then I went back home.

22 Q Right. Now, at the school, did you have to
23 wear the arm band or --

24 A I can't remember that, but I don't think so. I can't
25 remember that really. Maybe I did. That's a good question,

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1 but I can't exactly remember what happened.

2 And I didn't go very long to the school, because they
3 closed them.

4 That was a high school. And they didn't want young
5 people to congregate together, the Germans, because they
6 thought it was dangerous. Students and all that. You see?
7 So they closed down the school. And then I went back home.

8 Q I see. Okay. So then when you arrived back
9 home, what actually began to happen in your hometown?

10 A They started -- oh, yes. We still had the chemist
11 shop. Mother was running the chemist shop. And she had the
12 chemist working there because she was not qualified.

13 And we were all right for a little while. And then
14 they didn't want Jews to have chemist shops. So they send a
15 chemist, and he took half of the house with the shop. And
16 we were allowed to stay in the other half of the house for
17 awhile.

18 Even what was in the till, he took right away that
19 day. All of a sudden.

20 Q He took the money?

21 A Yes. But he was assigned to be there to take over
22 the chemist shop.

23 He was a chemist with his family. He came.

24 Although -- some people we knew promised us that we would
25 know if anything like that was going to happen. But we

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1 didn't. He just same suddenly.

2 And it was good we were allowed to stay in half of
3 the house. He took the furniture, whatever, was his then.

4 Q So did you see your father at this time
5 anymore?

6 A From the moment -- from the time my mother took us to
7 Krakow, you know, before the war, we never seen our father
8 anymore. We heard from him, but we haven't seen him.

9 Because he just didn't want to come to be on the
10 Germans. You see? So he stayed on the Russians.

11 He could have survived actually if he let himself be
12 taken to Siberia like they did with many people. But he
13 didn't want to, and he was in hiding with several others.
14 And they were discovered, I heard afterwards, and they were
15 shot.

16 Q So who were the ones who discovered him; was it
17 the Russians or the Germans?

18 A The Germans then. Because then the Germans started
19 fighting with the Russians, didn't they? And so the
20 Russians went and the Germans took over. And then they
21 exterminated Jews that were there. You see?

22 Q All right. And so what began to happen to you
23 and your family then after they took over the chemist shop?

24 A Yes. Then they decided that all the Jews must go
25 into ghetto. And they give us little part of town. And we

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1 had to move there and live there. Leave all our belongings.

2 Q I see. And what was the town now again?

3 A Stary Songe. Stary Songe. In Carpathian Mountains.

4 Was only little market town.

5 Q Right. And how many people were in that town
6 approximately, can you remember?

7 A I can't really. But it was a small market town.

8 And also, we did not receive any food rations. And
9 we knew people from the villages, because they used to
10 always come every market day bringing food to us, before the
11 war. So they kept coming. And then we were giving them our
12 possessions. They didn't really want money anymore. They
13 wanted china and furniture and things like that. So we were
14 exchanging that for food because they didn't give us any
15 rations to buy food. So that's how we were living.

16 Q And is that when you were in the ghetto?

17 A That's even before the ghetto. But they also came to
18 the ghetto.

19 Q Right. Now, in the ghetto you were allowed to
20 exchange material possessions for food?

21 A I suppose it was done undercover a bit. Whether we
22 were allowed or not, I don't know. But I remember they came
23 and we still had food.

24 Q How was your brother and sister doing at this
25 time? Do you remember their reactions?

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1 A They were young. But my reaction was always, I was
2 always on guard. You know, whatever we were told, "Oh, you
3 will be all right here. You will be all right here," I
4 never believed it. I always feared there was something
5 wrong.

6 We didn't know about concentration camps or about gas
7 chambers. We didn't know. We just knew that thousands of
8 people were disappearing.

9 And people said they were taken to work somewhere.
10 But I never believed it. I always feared there was
11 something wrong.

12 And I knew that he wanted to destroy us; the Jews.
13 You see? And so I told my mother, "We have to do something
14 to save our lives."

15 And what I did, I asked the people from the villages
16 to bring us their type of clothing which they had. You
17 know, sort of peasant clothing. And I asked them to bring
18 clothing for all of us: Mother, myself, sister and my
19 little brother. So that if they want to do anything to us,
20 we dress up and run away to the villages. You see? That
21 was my idea.

22 And I kept this clothes in the suitcase under the
23 bed. And mother said, "Oh, you will bring us to ruin.
24 Because if they find out, what will happen?"

25 "Look," I said, "we must fight for our lives, because

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1 they are killing us."

2 And she didn't want to admit it. You see? But I
3 somehow knew.

4 And the funny thing is that I was reading a book
5 about destruction of Armenians by Turks in first World War.
6 I don't know if you ever heard about it.

7 In first World War, the Turks were exterminating
8 Armenians. And somebody wrote a book about it. And I
9 happen to -- somebody give me this book. It was actually
10 not allowed in Germany by Hitler. It was written by a Jew.

11 And when I read this book, I could see that Hitler
12 was doing exactly the same thing with us as the Turks were
13 doing with Armenians.

14 And that's how I got the idea that we were going to
15 be killed. You see? And this book really helped me to be
16 on guard, trying to save our lives.

17 Q Um-hmm. How were the other people -- how were
18 the other people in the ghetto doing? Were they beginning
19 to try to revolt or --

20 A No. No. It was only small place. You know, they
21 tried to live as normal as possible.

22 I still remember they used to play cards in the
23 evenings. And I used to think, Playing cards when our lives
24 are threatened. You know, I just couldn't understand.

25 Always all the time thought how to, what to do. How

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1 to save our lives. This sort of attitude I had. And I was
2 right.

3 I don't know if they knew, they just didn't want to
4 admit to us children. You know, it might be possible. But
5 they always said, "Oh, we will be all right. They will take
6 us to work." You know, old people, sick people, all kinds
7 there.

8 Q Do you recall approximately how many of the
9 Jewish community were there in the ghetto? Couple hundred?

10 A All of us, hundred maybe. No more than hundred, I
11 don't think.

12 It was such a small town and weren't many Jews there
13 really. Some managed to escape before it started. I don't
14 know if there were a hundred even. Very few.

15 Q I see. But the only way you were permitted to
16 get food is by exchanging material possessions?

17 A Yes. Because we had no rations. No food rations.
18 Because they said we have no right to live, to be alive.

19 Q Right. And how did the German guards, the SS,
20 treat you and your family and others?

21 A At that time we had no contact with Germans. They
22 used to have Jewish people police. You know, they used
23 Jewish men as the police. And some of the Poles, I think.

24 We had no contact with the Germans at that time.

25 No. Wait a minute. No, no. We did. Because we had

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1 some Germans living in our house. That's right. Before the
2 chemist took over.

3 That's right. We had some German soldiers living in
4 our house. That's right. They requisitioned part of the
5 house. And that was before the chemist came and took over.

6 You see? So I'm going a bit back.

7 And we asked the Germans, they were quite nice to
8 bring us food. Quite nice to us. And I asked them, "Why is
9 it that you hate Jews so much and killing Jews?"

10 "Oh, it's not you. You are innocent. But it's those
11 Jews in America who are in power. And they are causing lot
12 of trouble."

13 That's what they said. The Jews in America has
14 power.

15 Q Now, when these people came into your home, did
16 they pay you for being able to be there or just take it --

17 A Oh, no, no. They requisitioned it. And anything --
18 they were all right. But the superiors, sometimes -- for
19 instance, one day they told they need a piano for their
20 mess. So they took our piano. That's it. Just like that.

21 We just had no rights. You see? No rights at all.
22 No right to live. No right to possess anything. No rights.

23 Q I see. Now, how long did this continue on in
24 the ghetto? How long were you there, you and your family?

25 A Until they told us one day that we are going to be

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1 transported somewhere else, to a bigger ghetto. And we were
2 allowed to take certain amount of weight with us in ruke
3 (phonetic) sacks. In ruck (phonetic) sacks.

4 And we were to congregate in cattle market certain
5 morning. And we also had to pay, donate money for the
6 transport.

7 And so then, I said to my mother, "Now is the time to
8 run away." But of course she wouldn't. So we just meekly
9 went and took some clothes and some food. Some bread.

10 And they said, "You going to march now. Anybody who
11 can't walk, step out on one side." So of course some old
12 people step out.

13 And we had to march sort of in five. March out. And
14 they took us to nearby bigger town, Novisonge (phonetic).
15 And there they put us in ghetto. Bigger ghetto.

16 Q So you went from one ghetto to another ghetto,
17 a larger ghetto.

18 And what happened to the older folks who were left
19 behind?

20 A Afterwards we heard that they were shot. They were
21 shot. All of them. In woods there.

22 And we got into this ghetto, and it was crowded with
23 people. They just dropped us there on the street. We had
24 no idea where to go.

25 And I remember I said to my mother, "There. I told

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1 you. We should run away."

2 Anyway, one kind lady told us, "Come. Step in. Step
3 in. I got bit of room. Step in." So we went in there.
4 And we just sat on the floor. The place was so crowded with
5 people from other little places concentrated there.

6 And there there was this SS all around them. And
7 barb wires and all that, which we didn't have in the
8 previous place. And that really was nasty.

9 And there was curfew. We had to be off the street by
10 six o'clock in the evening. And I can tell you exactly that
11 was in Oggles (phonetic). 1940 or '41.

12 And they kept people there until -- and from there
13 they taking people to this extermination camp that we didn't
14 know. We didn't know that.

15 But I was very worried, because I could see that this
16 crowd of people, they couldn't go anywhere working because
17 some of them were sick. Bedridden. You know, I was going
18 from place to place trying to see what was going on, you
19 know, in that place. And you couldn't get out.

20 The food was coming in a little bit. But we ate
21 anything. Potato peels. Anything. You know.

22 And I remember, you know, I used to pray to God,
23 little Hebrew prayer which I didn't understand. But for the
24 first time then, I prayed to God in my own way. Please help
25 us to get out of here. This is terrible place. We not

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1 going to survive. I really prayed to God very much.

2 And, you know, we did get out of that place, which is
3 an absolute miracle. Because, you see, this ghetto was in
4 the middle of town. And one place in this ghetto was half
5 house outside and half of it inside. And somehow, I met
6 inside the ghetto a woman that I knew in our little town.
7 And she said, "Good, I found you." Because we had no
8 address or anything there.

9 Just "Good, I found you," she said. "Because your
10 aunty and my sister from Krakow, they send a policeman to
11 get us out of here tonight."

12 And I said, "Oh, that's marvelous. I've been praying
13 to God to get out of here."

14 "Well, come tonight. I tell you where." She took me
15 there. "And this policeman and my sister are staying there.
16 And tonight we going to get over that wall. And on the
17 other side there is a restaurant. Lot of people coming and
18 go. And we won't be checked. Get out to the station and go
19 by train to Krakow."

20 I thought that was marvelous. I ran to mother. "We
21 can get out. We can get out. Aunty send policeman. Come,
22 I show where it is."

23 Oh, my mother was already very broken. "Oh, no, no.
24 Look, you always about this running away. We'll be shot."

25 "Well", I said, "well, we will be shot. If we don't

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1 run away, we'll be killed anyway. So at least I die
2 fighting for my life".

3 "No, no, no. No, really. You must stop all this".

4 Well, anyway, "All right," I said. "We just go to
5 this place. And I'll show you where it is".

6 We went, and I -- the policeman was there on the
7 balcony on second floor outside ghetto, you could see. We
8 could see them. And this woman who told me about this in
9 there. "And here tonight we going over," and all that.

10 I said, "That's marvelous."

11 So we went there; my mother, my sister, myself and my
12 little brother. And we just took a bag. You know, nothing
13 to be conspicuous. Left everything there.

14 And then suddenly they started shouting, "Curfew.
15 Curfew. Everybody in." So my mother said, "Oh, we have to
16 go back to our things."

17 "What things? We stay here and we going tonight."

18 "No, no. We must go."

19 I said, "Look, what does it matter where you sit, on
20 which floor, here or there?"

21 "No," she's going.

22 I said, "Well, I'm not going. I'm staying here."

23 And my sister said, "Well, I'm going with mother."

24 And my little brother stayed with me. And I just couldn't
25 stop them. They went.

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1 Anyway, once they went, of course I cooled off and I
2 thought, Well, I'll go back there in the morning. I can't
3 now because of this curfew.

4 And I just stayed with my little brother. He was
5 about ten years old. And he fell asleep. You know, it's
6 getting dark.

7 And this woman who told me all about it, she said,
8 "Now, we going now." She and her cousin. "We were going
9 now."

10 And I said, "I can't go because my mother couldn't
11 stay here. Couldn't come. Wouldn't go. Wouldn't come. I
12 can't leave my mother here, and my sister."

13 "Well," she said, "all right then. We are going."

14 And so I stayed with my brother and on somebody's
15 doorstep there. You know, just fell asleep. And suddenly,
16 some men came and said, "Are you Miss Aporchinska?"

17 I said "Yes."

18 "They are waiting. Please come."

19 I said, "I can't. My mother, my sister wouldn't
20 come. Wouldn't stay."

21 "Where are they?"

22 "Well, they went back where we been days. Have the
23 things and all that."

24 He said, "Now look. You come. And the policeman
25 will come again and get your mother and your sister."

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1 I said, "No, no, no. No, we not go."

2 "Now look. You got a chance. If you don't want to
3 go, I'm taking the boy, the little boy."

4 I said, "He won't go with you."

5 "He will. You can stay. I'm taking the boy. You
6 got a chance. And as I said, the policeman will come and
7 get your mother and sister."

8 And he simply dragged me. Dragged me over that wall.
9 You know, there was a ladder there. And so I went.

10 And we -- that was the two men, her sister and this
11 policeman. And they said, "Now we split. We go -- you go
12 with the policeman and the little boy." Not to be
13 conspicuous. You see? "And we go three together."

14 And we went to the station and we went to Krakow.
15 You see? And no documents, nothing. But the policeman had
16 the uniform. Polish policeman. You see?

17 And we got near Krakow. And we got off the train in
18 a place before Krakow where he was living actually. And he
19 took us to his wife. And to bed right away. We were
20 exhausted.

21 And then later on, aunty came from the ghetto and
22 took us to ghetto in Krakow. You see? And there I found
23 out what was happening about those transports. What they
24 were doing with people and all that. And I was absolutely
25 horrified.

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1 And of course he couldn't find my mother and sister.
2 He went back, but he couldn't. So I knew what happened to
3 them. So imagine how I felt.

4 Q So was that the last time you saw your mother
5 and your sister?

6 A That's right.

7 Q Last time. All right.

8 Then what actually happened after this then, to you
9 and your brother?

10 A Then we were in the ghetto. And I said to my aunty,
11 "Well, what's going to happen now? They will start on us
12 again in here."

13 "Yes, I know," he said. "But I have a place for my
14 son." She had a boy, not much older than my brother. I got
15 a place for the boys. And if we hear anything, they will go
16 to the village and they will be looked after.

17 And I will get you and my daughter and my older son,
18 I will get you work, work permit to work. So you will be
19 protected by working. Because she had a baker, and she new
20 people and all that. And she got it all planned. You see?

21 So that's what she did. Her daughter and myself, she
22 managed to get us work in cable factory near Krakow. And we
23 used to be taken every morning from ghetto to this work and
24 brought back in the evening. And that was sort of
25 protection for us.

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1 Q And how about your brother, what did he do?

2 A He just stayed in ghetto at home with the family,
3 with aunty. And I was forever worried about him.

4 Anyway, and then they made -- they made action.

5 Because gradually they were getting rid of people. You
6 know. Few thousand this time, few thousand another time.

7 So first time since we were in the ghetto, something
8 was going to happen. And this policeman rushed in and said,
9 "they are going to have action here. I'm taking the boy."

10 "Take the boys back. Take the children. Take the
11 two boys, but I can't take anybody else," he said. And so
12 we stayed in.

13 And then this -- they said, "Everybody stays in."

14 No. Before that happened, I tried to look where I
15 could hide. You know, the boy was safe so where I could
16 hide. And I found some men who had horses. And I said to
17 them, "Could you hide me here until this is over?" He said
18 "Yes. Give me so much, and so much money, I will."

19 So I rushed to uncle. I said, "We could hide there
20 for the money."

21 He said, well, we couldn't, but maybe their little
22 grandson. But he wouldn't go with me. He gave me the
23 money. He wouldn't come. You see? Uncle. He said, "Maybe
24 it would be safe here."

25 Well, anyway, I hid there with all these horses. And

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1 we could hear there in the stables, "Everybody out.
2 Everybody out. Anybody hiding will be shot."

3 And I was just sitting there. And I could see from
4 little window the people hiding behind tall, and behind
5 places. You know? They didn't go. And they stayed.
6 Nothing happened. But they took people who listened to
7 them, took them away.

8 That was my uncle, his wife, his daughter, the little
9 grandson, and many, many, many people. And so, well, once
10 more, we survived. Once more.

11 Q Now, was your brother --

12 A All right. He brought him back afterwards. Back
13 again.

14 And then I said, whatever, whatever I was staying
15 here for. Where shall we go? Under only the children can
16 go.

17 Anyway, then the factory where I was working said
18 that we are going to stay -- they were building huts, you
19 know, for the Jewish workers there. And they said, "Now,
20 you are going to stay here now. You're not going to be
21 taken to ghetto every day. You are going to stay here and
22 work. "

23 Of course then I thought, what about my little
24 brother. You see? And -- no, no, no. No. No. No.

25 I'm wrong. It was -- it was another action in the

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1 ghetto. And all the people who worked, they were taken to a
2 concentration camp near Krakow. And from there, I managed
3 to get a pass pretending I was going to go to the doctor to
4 see what I could do about my brother. You see?

5 We sometimes got permission to go to ghetto. I don't
6 remember how long we were there by then.

7 And then I said to aunty, "Now, what on earth is
8 going to happen now with the children? "

9 "Don't worry. They will be all right."

10 However, Typhoid fever broke out and my little
11 brother got Typhoid fever and was taken to hospital. And so
12 I got permission again to get to ghetto and I went to
13 hospital and all that.

14 And they said, "He's not too bad. He will be able to
15 go home soon."

16 But I didn't like it, so I didn't go back to the
17 concentration camp. I stayed. You see? And that was
18 terrible. You could be hanged for it. You know, not going
19 back.

20 Anyway, I don't know how they find me. I just can't
21 remember. They found me. And I had bad finger; and I said,
22 "I'm still under treatment. That's why I didn't go back."

23 And they -- "Well, we excuse you this time. You
24 going now."

25 So I just had to go. And I was just hoping that

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1 would get them out before it's too late. You see?

2 Of course, she didn't. And her daughter got Typhoid
3 fever as well and was in hospital.

4 And while we were at work, we heard that there was
5 action in the ghetto. Liquidating it completely.

6 Liquidation of the ghetto. Completely liquidating.

7 Q What all were they doing? Shooting --

8 A Some they were sending to concentration camp where I
9 was already. And children, old people, they just shot with
10 machine gun.

11 And I remember that place where the work was, was the
12 same place as the policeman was living. And they were
13 Polish people working there. They usually worker -- you
14 know, because we were just slave labor.

15 But the usual worker, factory workers, we had contact
16 with them. And I sent frantic letter to this policeman.
17 Save the boys. Save the boys. And he tried. He tried. He
18 went there. Couldn't find them. You see?

19 And that was -- that was the first time that I gave
20 up the fight. You know? I said, I don't care now whether I
21 live or not. And stopped working. I just sat there. I
22 wouldn't do any work. I had sort of nervous breakdown.
23 Couldn't wash myself. Oh, terrible. Because I felt
24 terrible, you know, losing the boy.

25 Q Now, what year was this now, by now?

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25

1 A What year?

2 Q Was it 1942?

3 A Must have been, I think. Maybe even '43.

4 And so, of course people who wouldn't work were put
5 on a black list, whether they were sick or whatever. And
6 they were taken to this -- back to the ghetto to be shot.
7 You see?

8 Because by then, we were already -- the time of the
9 ghetto liquidation, they took us from the concentration camp
10 to stay in the factory to live there in those huts that they
11 were building. The same time. You see?

12 And I even was thinking of running away to ghetto.
13 You know, to see about my brother and all that. But we were
14 just SS on both sides and all that.

15 Q Okay. What we're going to do is stop here for
16 a moment. I have to change batteries.

17 * * *

18 Q I'd like it pick back up where you were.

19 A Yes. When I lost my little brother and I got nervous
20 breakdown and refused to work because I just didn't think it
21 was worth it anymore to fight on.

22 So being put on the black list, we thought that
23 people who were really sick couldn't work, we expected to be
24 taken away and shot, sooner or later.

25 And we had to work 12 hour shifts. Day shift 12

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1 hours or night shift 12 hours, with about half an hour --
2 couple of half an hours in between.

3 Q And how much food would they give you during
4 this period of time?

5 A A bowl of soup and a little bread. But we had
6 contact with people who were working there. And they used
7 to bring us food. Very kind people.

8 And so when I was on the night shift asleep, I was
9 woken up in the morning. I just went to bed actually.
10 Woken up at night. I was told that they are collecting the
11 people on the black list. So I got dressed and ready to be
12 collected. And they collected everybody and they forgot me.

13 And I thought, Never mind, they will soon come. But
14 they didn't. And I began to think to myself, Am I glad or
15 am I sorry actually, that I was left. And I had to admit
16 that I was glad.

17 So from then on, I started working again. And then I
18 wanted to find out why I was left actually. And the
19 director of the department said that I started working again
20 when the SS asked about every person on the black list. She
21 started working again. So they left me.

22 But I didn't work. Apparently some of the workers
23 were putting their production on my name, and that's why.
24 And we were -- by the way, we were making cable coverings.
25 Cable cartons to cover the cables. And so that's how I was

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1 left.

2 And gradually I begin to feel quite glad about it,
3 that I was still alive. Being young, I suppose, you want to
4 live.

5 And we stayed there in this factory until the
6 Russians started -- started winning. They were pushing the
7 Germans.

8 Q Now, what was the year then, approximately?

9 A Must have been '44. '44.

10 So we were really quite fortunate to be there.
11 Contact with outside and working. And left in peace for
12 awhile.

13 And then one day they told us we have to go back to
14 ghetto, to this bigger ghetto there.

15 Q And the bigger ghetto was in Krakow?

16 A Where we were before. Outside Krakow.

17 Not -- no. Not ghetto. Sorry. Sorry.

18 Concentration camp. To that concentration camp where we
19 were after the ghetto. From ghetto, concentration camp.
20 Not ghetto.

21 And we were taken back there. Lot of people there
22 again. And as the Russians were coming near, they wanted
23 to -- not to leave trace of what they were doing, because
24 they were -- this ghetto was on hills. You know, on rocky
25 hills. And they were throwing the dead down. Down the

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1 hills. Down.

2 And so they started digging all the dead. Burning
3 them, night and day, the smoke, to obliterate any signs of
4 what they were doing. You see? Because they knew Russians
5 are coming near.

6 Meanwhile, we were in this ghetto just doing nothing.
7 And it was terribly dirty. Not much food. But we would
8 still be better off because we were in this cable factory.
9 You know. And had showers and what we needed really. Not
10 much food, but a little bit. So we would be better
11 condition there. And they kept us there anyway.

12 And one day they said that now this is going to be
13 liquidated, this camp. And they segregated people. You
14 know. And they sort of took us, this factory people. And
15 we were about 2000 woman in that transport. And we didn't
16 know where we were going. But there was a rumor that we
17 were going to Auschwitz. That camp.

18 Q I see.

19 A And that's a terrible name. Nobody ever got alive
20 out of there.

21 Q You had heard about that?

22 A We heard, yes.

23 Q Now, at this time, what type of clothing were
24 you wearing? And was your head shaved or --

25 A Well, no. Not yet. Not then. And we were wearing

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1 clothing, I think we were wearing the striped clothing then.

2 Yes, yes. I think we were wearing those striped
3 clothing. And stars.

4 And in that camp, there were not only Jews, there
5 were others as well.

6 Q What were some of the other groups that were in
7 that camp?

8 A That's first time in my life I heard about Bible
9 Students. Because I wanted to find out why people were in
10 concentration camps. What have they done. I have done
11 nothing.

12 So I thought, all the good people were in
13 concentration camps. Innocent people. You see? And I --
14 and we were wearing different color triangles on our -- on
15 this striped clothing we were given. So I -- everybody with
16 different color. I wanted to know what they have done.

17 "And this people," now I said to my friend, "what
18 have they done?"

19 And she was older woman. And she heard about Bible
20 Students in Poland. And she told me, "They are Bible
21 Student. Bibel Foshier (phonetic)."

22 And I said, "What have they done to be here?"

23 "Ah, they are religious fanatics," she told me, "and
24 they sort of go to people with the bible."

25 "What's wrong with that?" I said. That shows you.

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1 Innocent people.

2 "And why are they here?"

3 "Because they go to people with the Bible." She
4 didn't know anymore. Anything else. You see. And that
5 stuck in my mind. This Bible Student.

6 But we were not together. They were in different
7 part. But we could see them. Could see us. Sort of wires,
8 you know.

9 And then from there, they took us one day. And I
10 heard that in those concen -- in Auschwitz they were shaving
11 heads. So I cut my hair very short, hoping they won't shave
12 me. You see?

13 But some girls, they were so vein even then, they
14 wouldn't cut their hair. So they were shaved, shaven when
15 we got there.

16 Anyway, they put us on trains. How did -- was it
17 trains? Yes. Trains. Such closed goods trains. Not
18 passenger trains. On goods trains.

19 And they took us there. Wasn't very far. And at
20 night I think we got there. And it was November. Terribly
21 cold in Poland, you know, in November. They took us there.
22 This train went backwards and then we saw "Auschwitz." We
23 got in there.

24 Q And what was the first thing that happened to
25 you when you arrived in Auschwitz? That probably was toward

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1 the end of '44?

2 A Yes. November '44, it must have been.

3 Q Okay. And what was your first impression?

4 What was the first thing that happened to you?

5 A They loaded us off the trains. And it was written in
6 German, "Work Makes You Happy." Or something like that.

7 Ar bit marc (phonetic German)-- something like that.

8 Some propaganda was written on that gate. "Work Makes You
9 Happy" or something like that.

10 Anyway, they took us in. And that was a part of
11 Auschwitz where there were this gas chambers. And we were
12 there during the night. And the people who worked in gas
13 chambers came over to us and said, "If you segregated, some
14 of you will get through. But if not, then you are all going
15 to gas chambers." Imagine sitting there all night.

16 Anyway, ovens. Ovens. You know. Gas, and then
17 burned. And in the morning, we were segregated. And all of
18 us get through. Except there was one woman who saved her
19 little son right until then. And of course they wouldn't
20 have children. They killed all the children.

21 And they wouldn't let the child through. And she
22 went with the child. Lovely boy and a beautiful woman she
23 was. I remember like today. Tall and lovely. And she went
24 with her little boy.

25 But the rest of us, nearly all of us, got through.

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1 And they put us in part of Auschwitz which was called
2 Bilkenow (phonetic). Bilkenow. Near those gas chambers.

3 And --

4 Q And what did they do? Did they tattoo you at
5 that time?

6 A Not yet. They just put us there. We had to sleep
7 five on a -- five on a --

8 Q Bunk?

9 A Bunk. Bunk. Yes. Blanket and a bit of straw.

10 But before they took us there, they shaved some.
11 They shaved the girls.

12 Q And how about yourself; they shave you?

13 A No, they didn't. I just had short hair. And also,
14 they took this striped clothing away from us. And give us
15 things from the people that they burned. You know. The
16 clothing. Dirty sometimes. Real rags.

17 And it was so cold. November in Poland is terrible.
18 And rags. We looked decent in those prison clothes. Not
19 decent in these rags. Look at one another, we really had to
20 laugh. We couldn't help laughing the way we looked.

21 Q What was the condition of the other prisoners
22 that you came across that had been there already? What was
23 their body conditions?

24 A That's very good question because they were already
25 skeletons. Walking skeletons there.

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1 And they put us into this barrack. And there was
2 this one of those SS men. They came with their -- what you
3 call it when you hit horses with?

4 Q It's called a whip?

5 A Whip. Whip. And they were shouting us, "Do this.
6 Do that." Leave us in peace.

7 And then we had to go in the morning to be counted
8 every morning, every evening.

9 Q What time in the morning did your day start?

10 A Oh, quite early. Hardly daylight.

11 Yes. And not long after, they told us again to get
12 together and start marching. And there were many wires and
13 gates. You know, huge place that was.

14 And they told us, the whole lot, come marching. Go
15 on. And so we started marching. And I could see we were
16 getting, again, near this gas chambers. You know, this
17 ovens. Because this -- they were burning so many people
18 there. They were bringing them from all over the place.

19 You know, the fire was coming out of those chimneys.
20 And the stench. It was just a nightmare.

21 So anyway, they told us to march. We were like that,
22 shivering, it was so cold. And I could see we're going
23 near, near this, this again. And I thought, Now what?

24 Anyway, just in time, suddenly they told us, "Turn
25 back. Back. March back."

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1 And as we were marching back, we could see a
2 transport of skeletons walking. You know, the ones that
3 were longer there. They made a mistake. They made a
4 mistake. They were going to march us there, discovered in
5 time, told us to go back, and got these skeletons marching.
6 Could hardly walk.

7 So that was another escape.

8 Some people would commit suicide even. They had
9 electric wires around. You know.

10 Q So when were you tattooed? Did you receive a
11 tattoo?

12 A Now, from there, from that place, they took us to
13 Auschwitz part. That was Bilkenow. They took us to the
14 main camp. And that's when they tattooed us.

15 And actually, logically thinking, that was quite
16 good. Because they wouldn't tattoo us if they were going to
17 put us in the ovens, would they? That's how we were
18 thinking. You know.

19 And, well, what were they going to do with us?
20 Because we were fairly, you know, still well fed by then,
21 not skeletons, they took us into sort of model camp they had
22 there. Everybody had their own bunk, showers. All
23 spotlessly cleaned, everything.

24 And they counted us and all that, and gave us quarter
25 of a loaf of bread. And a little butter or sausages or jam

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1 or something every day. And a bowl of soup. And the water
2 they was called coffee, first thing in the morning. So we
3 were clean. You could keep clean.

4 Q Could we see your tattoo, please?

5 A Yes.

6 All right?

7 And I think they give us back prison clothing or
8 something better to wear, because they used to take us to
9 the fields every day to dig cabbages. Things like that.
10 And we used to eat raw cabbages, you know, because it was
11 food, wasn't it? Good idea. I didn't know about these
12 things then.

13 We used to eat these raw cabbages. And they brought
14 us soup midday. And I remember our hands were so frozen,
15 that we couldn't even -- could hardly hold the bowl of soup.
16 You know. And that soup made us warmer. No spoon or
17 anything. We just had to drink it from that bowl. Get
18 slightly warmer.

19 And in the evening, they would give us this bread.
20 Quarter of bread. And what they did, they give us loaf of
21 bread for, say, five. Between five. And of course there
22 were terrible fights about cutting this bread. Who got bit
23 more, and all that.

24 And I thought that was absolutely dreadful. And I
25 said the ones I had the bread, I had to share bread with, I

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1 said, "Look, let me cut the bread and I have the last piece.
2 You choose. I'll have the last piece. All right? Because
3 we were not animals." And we did that.

4 And so then all of them started coming to me with
5 their bread. "Cut it for us and you distribute it."
6 Because they trusted me, because I said, "I'll have the last
7 piece." It's smaller. Things like that. You know.

8 And it was from then on, it was peaceful. I cut the
9 bread. Everybody started saying, "You take first. You take
10 first." So I thought that was --

11 Q Now, were you with other groups or just with
12 the Jewish people at this time?

13 A Just with the Jewish people.

14 Q All right. Now, what began to happen to you?

15 A Then from there, that's when the Russians started
16 coming nearer and nearer. And they -- one day they said,
17 "Oh, yes. We have bombs, you know, around." Bombs falling
18 and all that. But never on the camp. They knew where the
19 camps were. Never on the camp. All around. Fire.
20 Villages burning. All sorts. But never on the camp.
21 Although sometimes we thought it would be good idea, you
22 know, the way we felt.

23 (End of first tape.)

24 A But anyway, they told us -- that must have been
25 January '45. January '45. They told us Russians are coming

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1 and we are getting out of Auschwitz. And I thought, getting
2 out of the Auschwitz. Nobody ever got out of Auschwitz.

3 Isn't that good, I thought. But we were a bit weak.

4 Anyway --

5 Q So by this time had you lost a lot of weight
6 now?

7 A Oh, must have then. Yeah. Must have then. I don't
8 remember.

9 What did we eat actually there? Well, this bit of
10 food we had. And occasionally when we were passing the
11 bakery, they would throw out a loaf of bread. But that was
12 at the risk of their lives. And if SS found it, sometimes
13 they would not show that they seen it. But some of them
14 would take it away.

15 Anyway, we congregated there in Auschwitz, and they
16 give us a tin of meat for the way and a loaf of bread to
17 everybody. And they said, "Now you have to march." Deep
18 snow. And our clothing was not adequate. I remember I had
19 some wooden boots with wooden soles or something.

20 And they told us, "Well, march. March." SS on both
21 sides with the guns and all. And people started crying. I
22 said, "Look, we actually getting out of Auschwitz. Let's
23 get on. Holding one to another. Let's march and be happy."
24 And we just supported one another and carried on.

25 And at night, they used to get into some farms and

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1 put us in stables, you know, whatever they could. And in
2 the morning, marching again.

3 I had a great temptation to run away then again, you
4 know, but I was just too weak, and I didn't know the place.
5 Didn't know what to do.

6 Anyway, we were just marching. And who couldn't walk
7 was short. You see, that give you more incentive to march.
8 March, I think, about three days. And then they loaded us
9 on open goods train. And took us to Belsen. But on the
10 way, we passed Buchenwald, and lot of dead bodies were taken
11 off -- taken off the train.

12 Q You were on a train at this time?

13 A That's right. On the goods train. Open goods train.
14 Snow falling.

15 And we went to Buchenwald. And in Buchenwald they
16 unloaded lot of dead bodies. Because apparently they didn't
17 give any food to the men. Mostly men died. You know. And
18 then they took us to Belsen.

19 Q Did they keep all the men together and all
20 the --

21 A Separate. Separate.

22 Q Were you on the train just with Jewish people
23 or were there other people?

24 A All Jews. All Jews. As far as I know, they were all
25 Jews. And --

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1 Q And then what happened in Belsen?

2 A In Belsen. They took us to Belsen. We didn't know
3 where it was, what it was. We didn't know the name even.
4 Just the camp.

5 And they took us in some showers again. And we
6 thought they were gas chambers, but they weren't. And that
7 was at the end. That was already about February. Or
8 January, was it? January or February.

9 And they put us in bunks again. Lot of us in bunks.
10 Lots of people. No food. It was hardly any food there.
11 Bowl of soup they give us.

12 And Typhoid broke out there. And people were dying
13 like flies. No treatment, nothing.

14 Q Now, in this camp in Belsen, did you come
15 across other groups? Or once again --

16 A Yes. Yes. There were Ukrainians there. And they
17 were very violent people.

18 Q What do you mean by violent?

19 A They would snatch whatever little bag we had with
20 whatever we had. They would snatch it and get away from us.
21 They were strong. Violent people. So we had that to
22 contend with as well.

23 Q Now, once again, when you were there, were you
24 segregated from the males and the females?

25 A Oh, yes.

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1 Q Always segregated.

2 A Always. Always.

3 And as I said, Typhoid fever broke out. And only
4 people with strong hearts survived really. So it was such
5 a -- dead people lying in, you know, heaps. And sick.
6 Nobody buried them or anything. And oh, terrible.

7 And then, the British liberated the camp. And that
8 was in April.

9 Q In April of 1945?

10 A April 1945.

11 Q How did you feel? What were your feelings at
12 that time?

13 A We stood there and we could -- first of all, all the
14 villages around were burning. Bombed and burning. Fires
15 all around Belsen. And we were told that they put mines,
16 that we will be all blown up. They won't let us survive.
17 You know. So we heard that.

18 Q How did you feel the day when you saw the
19 British troops coming?

20 A But before the British troops came in, when we saw
21 this fire burning, we also saw the SS with suitcases trying
22 to run away.

23 So we could see -- we could hear good. Good thing.
24 Where would they run away? They couldn't. They came back.

25 And they put white arm bands on. Surround there.

T. Davies

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1 You see? The SS there. And we could see the tanks with the
2 bridges coming in. And we thought, It can't be true. They
3 must be dressed up Germans, we thought. So we never cheered
4 or anything. Just stood there.

5 We just couldn't believe it. That it could be true.
6 Something like that.

7 And they couldn't -- they had to be careful because
8 of this Typhoid fever. They couldn't come and mix with
9 people. But they opened some store rooms and distributed
10 food.

11 But of course we couldn't eat it. We couldn't take
12 food, such food, after starving. We all got sick, anybody
13 who tried to eat it even.

14 And then they rounded up the SS. And they had to
15 clean toilets. Try to bury the dead. I don't know how they
16 did it. I don't know. Because the day, next day, I got
17 this Typhoid fever. Just when we were liberated.

18 And people were even throwing stones at the SS, you
19 know. But I didn't think that was right. I wouldn't. No.
20 Couldn't.

21 Anyway, they also opened the men's camp to come, you
22 know, maybe some relatives or something like that. And I
23 found a relative. My cousin's husband in all them. And he
24 really started looking after me. Because I started being
25 quite ill with Typhoid fever about couple of days after we

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1 were liberated.

2 And they made a makeshift hospital, and he managed to
3 get me to hospital there. And I survived.

4 Q Now, at this time, toward the end of the war or
5 at -- right after the end when you were freed by the
6 British, did you come in contact with the other people in
7 the camps, the other groups that were there?

8 A In Belsen I have only see the Ukrainians. I haven't
9 seen anybody else really. Only Jews and Ukrainians, as far
10 as I can remember.

11 I don't know whether we (inaudible) were in Belsen as
12 well, or only in Auschwitz? They were in Belsen as well?

13 No, I didn't see -- I didn't meet any groups. One --
14 how long were we there?

15 Q So how long did it take you to get well?

16 A I was unconscious for a long time. And some of the
17 prisoners actually, they were doctors as well. And they
18 worked. Everybody could, worked.

19 And I even remember when I was taken on a
20 stretcher -- by the way, we were full of lice. Absolutely
21 covered with lice there. Just dreadful. And couldn't do
22 anything about it really.

23 And when they took us to hospital, they would clean
24 us. You know, shave hair and clean us. Powder and all
25 that. You know.

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1 And I remember that one of the women said, "Shave her
2 hair."

3 And "I don't think it's any need. She won't last
4 long." Skeleton I was. "She won't last long." About me.
5 I heard that. I remember it. You know. I was sort of half
6 semiconscious. But I remember that.

7 And then they were carrying me somewhere. And I
8 thought, Oh, I was falling off the stretcher. And that was
9 it.

10 I was unconscious for quite a long time. But I came
11 around. Somebody was treating me, you know, things. And I
12 came around. And, you know, just -- that was May, I think.
13 Had to learn to walk even and all that. Felt very depressed
14 actually then.

15 And I remember as soon as I could get out of bed, I
16 tried to get to the garden. And there was lilac in bloom.
17 And we had lovely lilac at home. And I thought, How
18 wonderful. You know. Always remember that lilac.

19 Q So how long did it take for you to get back on
20 your -- how long back to good health?

21 A Yes. I can tell you my legs were like my half of
22 wrist now. Just skin and bones. I couldn't recognize
23 myself.

24 And this cousin, this cousin's husband, he came to
25 see me and all that. And he said he would like to go back

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1 to Poland.

2 Well, I didn't know what I wanted really. But still
3 I just was alive. That was the main thing.

4 And afterwards, we were put to displaced persons
5 camp.

6 Q Where was that camp at?

7 A In Belsen. Belsen. No longer concentration camp;
8 displaced persons camp. It was another part. Because that
9 was full of dead, Typhoid fever and all that. That had to
10 be closed all that place.

11 And from there, we were taken to another displaced
12 persons camp in Linnerborg (phonetic). And that was quite
13 nice. We were being fed by British Army. They were very
14 kind to us. Although they were on rations as well. Their
15 food was rationed as well then. But they always saw to it
16 that we had enough.

17 And after Typhoid fever, we were terribly hungry.
18 You can eat an ox. Terribly hungry. So we just, more food
19 we could get, we did.

20 And that's where I met my husband actually in that
21 place. Because there was British Army there, as I say. And
22 we were getting little stronger. And even came once and
23 asked if we would like to come to a dance in the mess. And
24 that's how I met my husband.

25 Couldn't speak English then. But my friend could.

T. Davies

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1 She could speak English, so she interpreted.

2 Q I see. And what languages at that time did you
3 speak?

4 A German and Polish. Not very good German.

5 Q And how old were you at this time then at the
6 end of the war?

7 A Oh, I must have been already 23, I suppose.

8 Q Um-hmm. About 23 years of age. I see.

9 And then after the war, what happened to you? So you
10 met your husband, and did you get married right away or --

11 A We met in July in '45. And we got married in
12 December '45.

13 And when we were in this camp, we had clothes given
14 by the Red Cross. Some new things, some donated things from
15 England. So very kind people were. And --

16 Q So afterwards, what did you do? Did you move
17 to England with your husband?

18 A My husband was in regular British Army.

19 Q Okay. We'll stop here for just a moment.

20 (Pause.).

21 Q Then you and your husband went where then?

22 A We -- there were several of my friends, which were
23 also in ghetto and concentration camp with me before, and we
24 lived together. We had some lodging.

25 And, oh, yes. And then we got married. And we

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1 stayed in Germany because he was in regular army, British
2 Army. We stayed in Germany.

3 And then we were given army quarter, which was
4 requisitioned German house. And I just couldn't hate the
5 Germans, you know, once I was living among them. I
6 couldn't. I thought they were very nice people.

7 Q But up to that time, you --

8 A Well, up to that time I only had contact with the bad
9 ones, didn't I? Even some of them were kind. Even SS tried
10 to help.

11 Q So how did you come in contact then with
12 Jehovah's Witnesses?

13 A That came later. Because then we -- as he was in the
14 regular army, we started traveling. And we went back to
15 England. We were posted back to England there. First time
16 I went to England.

17 And we were living with my husband's parents. And
18 then we went to Scotland as well. And then we had our son.
19 And we were posted to Hong Kong. We were posted to Hong
20 Kong. And then we were posted to Germany.

21 And that's where I learned the truth, in Germany,
22 from German Jehovah's Witnesses. Isn't it lovely?

23 Q Uh-huh. So what all did you think about what
24 you learned from the Bible?

25 A Because of the troubles we used to have from the

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1 Catholics, and because so-called Christians were killing the
2 Jews, I thought Christianity is definitely not for me.
3 Because I thought they were Christians. You see? I didn't
4 know anything about all this religion, except that they were
5 no good.

6 And when we met, I said to my husband, "You know that
7 I'm Jewish?"

8 "Yes, of course."

9 And I said, "What are you?"

10 "Oh, I'm free thinker," he said. "I am born Church
11 of England, but I don't believe all this."

12 I said, "Well," I said, "I really don't believe any
13 religion. I just believe in God."

14 And he said, "I am the same."

15 And we didn't bother about any religion or anything.

16 Got married in registry office by army judge. You
17 know, that was '45. That was all. Everything just war
18 ending sort of. Everything simple.

19 And that's how we just carried on.

20 And the boy was born. And I didn't want him to
21 suffer, you know, because of religion. So I didn't want him
22 to be anything. But I thought, maybe he should be the same
23 as the English people to have easy life.

24 You know, because I was always different as a child.
25 Always different because I was Jewish. I thought, No, I

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1 don't believe in it. I don't want him to be Jew. What do I
2 want him to be? My husband said, "Nothing. Leave it
3 alone."

4 But I said no. I want him to be -- to have
5 comfortable life.

6 And I even had him christened in the church. You
7 know. In English Church of England. Nobody asked me what I
8 was or anything. Just to make his life comfortable. You
9 know.

10 But I would never -- even when -- yes, when we were
11 in army quarters, my husband was sent to Korea. To Korean
12 War. Once a priest came. Padre, you know, Church of
13 England, and said, "You are Church of England? Your child
14 is Church of England?"

15 I said "Yes."

16 "What are you?"

17 "I am Polish Jew. Jewess."

18 "Oh. Oh, Polish Jewess."

19 I said, "I was thinking about that." I said, "You
20 know, if my child is Church of England, don't you think I
21 should be as well?"

22 He said, "Well yes. If you decide, let me know and I
23 give you few instructions and you can be Church of England."

24 So I thought, no preaching to me or anything.
25 Nothing. So I thought, Oh, well, seems easy enough, but I'm

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1 not going to be Church of England, I thought. I would be
2 disloyal to my parents, I think. Although I don't believe
3 in Jewish religion, but they died because they were Jews, so
4 I die the same. And that's that. That's what I thought.

5 But then, when Jehovah's Witnesses came, our son was
6 already ten years old. And he was quite interested in the
7 Bible as a child. Even asked us to buy him one, which we
8 did. Went to Sunday school. All on his own idea with his
9 friends. We never pushed him or anything.

10 We never went to church or anything. Nothing. And
11 if he said he didn't want to go, he didn't go. Just like
12 this.

13 And so when Jehovah's Witnesses came, this pioneering
14 little sister -- she was actually doing return visit on
15 some family that used to live there before. Because army
16 always on the move. And I said, "Mrs. Smith is not here
17 anymore. We moved here."

18 She didn't waste much time. Started witnessing right
19 away to us. Offered us two books. Read God Be True and New
20 Heavens and New Earths. And I thought, I said to my
21 husband, "Let's buy this book about God."

22 He said, "Yes. Buy, buy."

23 And I said, right. We bought these two books. She
24 was ever so pleased. And she said, "Can I come and see you
25 again?"

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1 I said, "Yes, of course. If we have nothing else to
2 do, you're always welcome."

3 Didn't have an idea what was all about. But one
4 thing stuck in my mind: The Bible. Bible. Bible Student.
5 What is it?

6 So when she came back, right away ask her, I couldn't
7 wait, ask her, "Are you the same as Bible Students?"
8 Because she said she was Jehovah's Witnesses. Never heard
9 of it.

10 "Are you the same as Bible Student?"

11 "Yes. We used to be called Bible Students."

12 "And why were you in concentration camp? What you
13 done?"

14 She said, "How do you know?"

15 "Because I was in concentration camp, because I was
16 Jewish."

17 So she said, "Oh, and you don't mind me coming, a
18 German woman? "

19 "No, no. Not at all. But tell me, why were you in
20 concentration camp?"

21 "Because we wouldn't say hile Hitler. We couldn't go
22 with Hitler. We wouldn't fight. We wouldn't war. We
23 wouldn't kill."

24 "So that's why you were in concentration camp.
25 Because I've seen you, your people."

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1 So she was quite moved about it. And she came again
2 with an English Jehovah's Witness, one sister.

3 And she -- and they left me little booklet. Good
4 News of the Kingdom, I think it was, to read. And I did.
5 And that made me quite interested. Because I tell you which
6 scripture interested me right away. Ecrisiastis 9-5.

7 Because it said, "The living are conscious that they will
8 die, but the dead are conscious of nothing at all."

9 And that I always wondered about. And there I had
10 the answer. And it was in the Bible. And it was this Bible
11 Students, they were in concentration camp. And all that,
12 you know, it was just a good connection.

13 And when she suggested -- when she came back to study
14 this booklet together, I said, yes. There are things in
15 there that I never heard and they are true. And why didn't
16 I ever heard about it. I knew Catholics. I knew
17 Protestants. I knew Church of England. And nobody ever
18 said these things that you are talking about. Why?

19 "You study and you will learn." And she said, "Have
20 you got a bible?"

21 "No." Then I suddenly remember my son has got -- my
22 son has got a Bible. Got and found it. And started
23 learning all these things.

24 And I was nearly 40 then. Never in my life I heard
25 such wonderful things about Jesus. All these things that he

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1 was teaching. Wonderful.

2 Once I remember ask my mother, "Who was Jesus?" When
3 I was at home still.

4 "Oh," my mother said, "he was a very good man, but he
5 was no God. There is only one God."

6 See? She knew something about this trilogy probably
7 and all that, which I never heard of, never knew anything
8 about it.

9 But I went to Catholic school because that was the
10 only school there. This little town. And these girls
11 always Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. That's why I asked my mother
12 who was Jesus? But that's the only things I ever inquired
13 about.

14 Q I see. So then that's how you became one of
15 Jehovah's Witnesses?

16 A So when we started, of course I could see that that
17 was very good. But I think -- of course I couldn't believe
18 right away that it was all true and that was the only
19 religion. And things like that. That took time.

20 But I could see that was something quite different.
21 Quite different.

22 And went to the meetings. They took me to the
23 meetings. And we had watched in English there in somebody's
24 house. And I started learning.

25 Q I see. Now, after all these years, have you

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1 met others who were in the concentration camps also who are
2 Jehovah's Witnesses and --

3 A Yes, yes.

4 No, I didn't -- oh, yes, I did meet them in Germany
5 when I went to the meetings there. Some of them said they
6 were in concentration camps. They lost hearing. They were
7 already a bit older than than me. They lost hearing.
8 Some -- one was in a wheelchair.

9 Q I see. Would you like to tell us now where you
10 and your husband are at in England, your address now?

11 A Address. Where we live.

12 We live in little village called Ashgreen (phonetic).
13 White Lane, near Oldashot.

14 Q I see. Well, United States Holocaust Memorial
15 Museum would like to you thank you very much for taking your
16 time to share with us your experiences in life. We
17 appreciate it very much.

18 A That's a great pleasure. Thank you very much.

19 Q Okay. Thank you.

20 (Pause.)

21 Q To conclude, evidently, we'd like to show a
22 few pictures.

23 Would you like to explain who those are in the
24 picture?

25 A Yes. They are from about year 1938. Just before the

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1 war.

2 My younger sister. My father. Mother. Cousin.

3 Myself. My little brother.

4 Q Um-hmm. Let me just get a little bit closer.

5 Okay?

6 Okay. Now you have a few other pictures there?

7 A Yes. Well, the old pictures first.

8 Q Yes. Why don't you show the older ones first?

9 A That is my young brother just before the war.

10 All right?

11 Q Um-hmm. Okay. Fine.

12 A That is my kind aunty.

13 Q Would you hold it up a little bit?

14 A That's my kind aunty and her daughter and son who
15 tried to help and save many people, but she also died in the
16 war.

17 Q Now, did she die in Auschwitz or --

18 A No. She died in Krakow ghetto when she tried to take
19 her daughter out of hospital. And it was at the time ghetto
20 was liquidated. And they were both shot.

21 Q I see.

22 Okay. Thank you.

23 A That's very old picture.

24 Q Could you hold that up a little higher, please?

25 A My parents and myself when I was a child. And a

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1 relative.

2 Q Which is your mother and your father?

3 A Mother and father.

4 Q Okay. Thank you.

5 Hold it up a little higher, please.

6 A That's myself as a teenager.

7 Q Okay. Thank you.

8 Hold it up a little higher, please. Thank you.

9 Who is that?

10 A Myself and my sister. As children.

11 Q Okay. Thank you.

12 And who is this?

13 A My mother and myself on a holy day.

14 Q And in what town was that?

15 A That was 1938.

16 Q Okay. Thank you.

17 And who is that?

18 A That's myself outside our shop. Chemist shop.

19 Q The apothecary?

20 A Apothecary, really.

21 Q Okay. Thank you.

22 And who is that?

23 A My parents.

24 Q Oh, yes. All right. Thank you.

25 And that? Hold up just a little higher.

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1 And that's who?

2 A Myself and my sister.

3 Q Okay. Thank you.

4 And that is?

5 A Myself.

6 Q And what year was that?

7 A That was not -- 1938.

8 Q 1938 also. Thank you.

9 A That's the little market town where I used to live.
10 Stary Songe.

11 Q Thank you.

12 A That's my little brother.

13 Q Just a minute. Okay.

14 And what was his name?

15 A Ludovic. Ludovic.

16 Q All right. Fine. Thank you.

17 A And that's my sister, Irene.

18 Q Uh-huh. Thank you.

19 And now the other picture?

20 A This is my family now. Myself, our son and my
21 husband.

22 Q And your son, where does he live?

23 A He is nearly 42 now, and he lives in Leeds. And he
24 lectures at the University of Leeds teaching Russian
25 language.

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1 Q Uh-huh. And does he come back every so often
2 to England to visit?

3 A It is in England. Leeds is in England. North of
4 England. Leeds. The town of Leeds.

5 Q I see. Very good. And it looks like a very
6 happy family.

7 And how many years ago was that picture taken?

8 A That was taken when he was about seven. So that was
9 taken when we were living in Hong Kong. And that's was from
10 '53 to '56. Between '53 and '56.

11 Q Well, once again, I want to thank you very much
12 for taking the time to share with us your experiences and
13 the information. Thank you very kindly.

14 A That's pleasure. Thank you very much, too. I hope
15 people enjoy it.

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DAVID DAVIES:

Q Would you like to introduce yourself, sir?

A My name is David Davies. And I was born in
Cholchester, in the county of Essex on the 4th of July,
1922.

Q 1922. And what relationship are you to Tina?

A I'm the husband of Tina. And we were married in
1945.

Q And how did you happen to meet her, sir?

A I met my wife when she was one of a number of people
in the German barracks in Belefeld (phonetic).

MRS. DAVIES: Linnerborg.

A Sorry. I must correct that.

MRS. DAVIES: Displaced person in
Linnerborg.

A Linnerborg.

MRS. DAVIES: Displaced persons camp.

A Shall I say that again?

As far as I was aware, she was listed as a displaced
person having come from a concentration camp.

In the same barracks were many thousands of other
people, displaced persons who were actually ex-slave workers
of the German war machine.

After meeting Tina at a dance that was given in one

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1 of the messes, we got to know one another and were married
2 in the December of the same year.

3 Q All right. Perhaps we can regress just a few
4 moments.

5 What branch of the service were you in?

6 A I was in the royal electrical/mechanical engineers
7 section of the British Army. And we were repairing all
8 types of motor vehicles like tanks and general equipments.

9 Q I see. When did you join the military?

10 A I joined the army as a boy soldier in 1937. And
11 served an apprenticeship in the mechanical trades leading up
12 to 1940 at the outbreak of war. I was then on man service
13 at the age of 18 and started my military active career.

14 Q What type of action did you see during the
15 course of the war? What front were you on?

16 A At the beginning in the war, I was in the north of
17 Scotland was my first posting on anti-aircraft offenses.
18 Did a lot of traveling in the north of Scotland, the various
19 positions, sites.

20 And from there I was drafted overseas, 1942, and
21 ended up in Egypt. And took part in the battle of Alamain
22 (phonetic) and the north African campaigns, when eventually
23 the Germans were pushed out of north Africa.

24 And my unit then, after a refit, went across the
25 Mediterainian and we landed in Salerno in Italy and fought

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1 with the American Fifth Army for sometime. General Mark
2 Clark's side of the war.

3 Ended up in northern Italy. And I was then
4 transferred to southern France, and went from Marsailles,
5 southern France, up through France, Belgium and Holland into
6 Germany.

7 And at the time of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen,
8 we were, oh, 30 or 40 miles south of Brayman (phonetic).

9 After the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, some week or
10 ten days later, we were moved to our final camping place,
11 one might call that, in Linnerborg, near the Elb River. And
12 in Linnerborg we occupied a German cavalry barracks. Very
13 large barracks area. Many large buildings.

14 And we found tha many of these buildings were
15 occupied with the displaced persons from camps,
16 concentration camps, and from the German war factories as
17 slave workers. And it was there that I met my wife.

18 Q Well, what type of health conditions did you
19 find the people in? What was the state of their bodies and
20 so on?

21 A The actual Russian, Ukranian peoples there, and there
22 were many thousands of them, seemed to be reasonable well
23 fed. And very active. Very noisy. Singing and marching
24 and dancing.

25 And from those that I saw as displaced persons of

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1 various nationalities, they are subdued. Rather ill fed and
2 ill clothed. But were clean and doing their best to get
3 back to normal.

4 Medical conditions were improving. International aid
5 was pouring in at that time. And many medical teams and
6 health teams were there on the premises. And I think they
7 did a lot of very, very good work indeed.

8 Q How did you become attracted to your wife?

9 A Well, as I say, we met at a dance which was given by
10 one of the British units inside its mess of the British
11 unit. And they invited a number of the young girls to the
12 dance.

13 I think principally to dispose of a lot of cream
14 cakes and pastries and delicate things such as chocolates,
15 which the girls hadn't seen for an awful long time. And I
16 think some of the men were a little bit fed up with.

17 But as I say, we met there. And after two or three
18 meetings and walks, you know, we got to know each other
19 reasonably well, despite the difficulty in conversation.

20 Q Because she evidently didn't speak the English
21 language?

22 A She couldn't speak the English language. And I could
23 only muster up a few words of German. And a small
24 vocabulary of Italian.

25 But with the aid of a friend of Tina's, we spoke very

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1 good English really, we managed quite well.

2 Q What all did you think of some of the horror
3 stories that you probably heard?

4 A Well, we had been a little bit prepared for them
5 because in advancing up to Germany, we were told of what had
6 already been discovered. And in lower Germany where they
7 opened one of the camps, I think Dachau was one of the first
8 opened. And we were rather prepared for what we were soon
9 to see ourselves.

10 I saw Bergen-Belsen later on, some, I think, a year
11 almost afterwards the liberation. And I also visited Dachau
12 on a holiday trip some years later. Bergen-Belsen was a
13 desolate, miserable situation.

14 And all I distinctly remember about it was that
15 somebody said, "Look around you whilst you're there, and
16 tell me when you come back what you found rather startling
17 about the place."

18 And when I met him again, he said, "Well, what were
19 your recollections of Bergen-Belsen?"

20 I said, "Well, apart from the mounds where the masses
21 of bodies were buried and burnt," I said, "Uncanny silence
22 over the whole area."

23 He said, "What do you mean by that?"

24 I said, "There were no birds to be seen or heard
25 whatsoever." He said, "Yes." He said, "And that's a known

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1 fact." No birds.

2 Q So then when you retired from the military,
3 your wife already mentioned that had you traveled all over
4 the world. When you finally did retire, what was the year
5 and what was your position? Or your rank?

6 A Oh, I retired as a warrant officer class one in the
7 royal electrical/mechanical engineers. And well, that was
8 many years after the camps were liberated. And we toured
9 overseas to the far east. We seen other troubles in other
10 lands as well.

11 And I then received a post in the defense ministry of
12 the British government. And eventually I retired from that.

13 Q I see. What all would you say to a person who
14 said the holocaust didn't take place or it was just an
15 exaggeration?

16 A I've heard that statement on many occasions. And I
17 can only say that I feel very, very sorry for the people
18 that make the statements like that. A great pity for them.
19 Because they either are dismally ignorant or they just don't
20 want to know.

21 Q Well, sir, I want to thank you very much for
22 taking the time to bring your wife up here to be
23 interviewed. And I want to thank you as well for sharing
24 your experiences with us.

25 A Thank you very much. Been a pleasure.