

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Herman Wajcman  
July 8, 1991  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Herman Wajcman, conducted by Jonathan Band on July 8, 1991 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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## HERMAN WAJCMAN

### JULY 8, 1991

Q: Would you please tell me your name?

A: Herman Wajcman.

Q: And can you tell me when you were born?

A: January the 10th, 1925.

Q: And where was that?

A: Kielce, a city in Poland.

Q: What part of Poland was it?

A: Middle of Poland.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about your family, your parents, your siblings?

A: My...I had one sister, a younger sister. My father's family came from \_\_\_\_\_, a town near Krakow. They were quite, you know, as you know Poland was a very...a few upper and the majority were kind of struggling for life through the hard life. My family worked. My grandfather especially was a self-made man. \_\_\_\_\_ was very prosperous in different type of business, but he was a self-made man. On my side, from my mother's side, they were a lot wealthier, but old money, like in the olden days, you know...old money coming from from the for generations, but my father's side was more strict. My family, as a child anyway, were...I always identified with my father's family because they they were more accomplished. They were more \_\_\_\_\_. That...in that time already I realized what it means, you know, upbringing...children. They were...even they had more money and everything but it was stricter that my mother's family was...we had grandmother, great-grandmother. My great-great-grandfather was the first Jew in Kielce which he got the permission from the Czar of Russia to live in Kielce. Jew were not allowed to live because it was a big city, and the grandchildren that they had so much money, they were a little bit spoiled and just like in America, they were not up to par. I see it now. I didn't see it then, but they...the the money spoiled them and it was too much money.

Q: Can you tell me about what your father did and...

A: My father...my father and mother, they were the oldest from both sides and they were I think the unique, the unique couple. They...in Poland they used to give dowries, you know, but the the girl had to have a dowry in order to marry. In my father's case, my grandmother was...she had a provision...at that time she was giving twenty thousand dollars. That was a

lot of money...1920...for to my mother, but my father gave the same amount. My grandfather gave the same amount and this was very unique, and sure enough, after two years they lost all the money because they gave it to an uncle, to the bank, and the bank failed, so they lost everything and...but my father started later a trucking business. He was very successful and I remember till 1939 we were in the trucking business. He had trucks all over Poland.

Q: Can you tell me about the the kind of schools you went to when you were growing up?

A: I was going to my...I...my grandparents and coming from my mother's side, very old \_\_\_\_\_, very famous rabbis which...going back which were known from the from all old kind, very famous. I mean not...I don't know if I can explain to you...it's not rabbis like we say here. It's something like \_\_\_\_\_ rabbis. You heard probably about that...that type, so naturally the family was very orthodox but as the generation go down, it was a little bit less, you know, and I went to \_\_\_\_\_. My mother was was so...my mother went to college. In that time for her grandfather to go to to college...this I remember that two days before she graduates since she supposed to encourage to go \_\_\_\_\_ for girl from my family, it was...it was a revolution, that my grandfather found out that she was dancing at a dance...you know, before graduation, with the boys, and she never graduate. It was forbidden. Alright. So that's how the type of \_\_\_\_\_. I went through school, but my my mother was very progressive and she wants...she took me out of school to send me to a private school...from the from a religious school to a private school but they taught religion too, and then they want to send me because I showed some accounting, they want to send me to Krakow to be...to a higher school of accounting and the war broke out.

Q: Can you tell me what happened then?

A: When the war broke out, the first day in 1939...as soon as the war broke out, the second day we had trucks that my father took the family, us and my uncle and another twenty people...whoever wanted to go...and we run away from Kielce to the Russian border to get away and I remember that my grandmother...this I saw with my own eyes...took out, at that time she had twenty thousand \_\_\_\_\_. It was a lot of money because it was...people never saw that type of money. She gave it to him, said whatever it will help him, keep it then. We went on the way to...we went on the way to the Russian border. It was about five, six hundred miles. On the way the German tanks were even \_\_\_\_\_. Killed two women on our truck. A truck...it was on the truck and in Europe at that time we had a General Motors truck, but the trucks were not covered. It was only a cover from canvas. You know, they didn't make trucks with the all all covered, so a few people were killed from the...from the Germans and we went to the city of Rovno and we heard that the Germans are coming. We wanted to go away to to Russia, and finally we went a few miles. The Russian army, they had a pact...the Russian army came in and we went back to Tuchin to a town of Tuchin that was about thirty kilometers from Rovno. People were very nice. They gave us a place where to stay and we lived there and the Germans...the Germans were, you know, they divided Poland between themselves but after a while my mother went back because we didn't

have...when we run away so fast we didn't no clothing, no nothing. We...when you live everyday...she went back and that time when other people went back to Poland to to come back but she never got to and she couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ because they closed the borders, the Russians did. So we stayed in Tuchin maybe a year.

Q: Let me just...let me just ask one thing, so could you explain again what what did your mother do?

A: My mother was a housewife, which was helping the business at the bookkeeping but she was...

Q: No, no. When she got to...

A: To...to...to...to Kielce. She went back to Kielce. She stayed there, her home, because we left the business, that we left everything, that she wanted to liquidate, to bring things and come back to us, but she never...I never saw her after that. There was a lot of people used to go through the...through the border because it was right in the beginning in '39 and we really didn't know what the Germans are, that you can go but you can't come back. Nobody really I can see knew what to expect. They knew it's going to be a hardship, but nobody expected trouble. They're going to beat up a few things but there was no question, even for the Germans, because I pondered a lot of times and I ask questions why, because I'll tell you, explain later the reason which I could till today I don't understand because we went back to Lemberg (ph), OK, after a year. Am I so far OK? My mother went back and we stayed in in Tuchin.

Q: And then...

A: Then Tuchin was too small for my father. We couldn't...we had to make a living so we went to Lemberg. It was a big town. It was in that time about twenty thousand refugees came from all over. Lemberg was the biggest town. You heard about Lemberg...Lvov (ph). But the living conditions and their hatred...not hatred but their disliking of the Russians with their lies, with their with their anti-religion, with their anti-...anti-behavior not against Jews but against everybody was so great that people registered. They were staying in line for three, four days, and they wanted to go back home, and I remember...I was at that time twelve, fourteen years old, and I remember that German officer, high officer came out because people were standing in the German Embassy because Russia in...had a pact at that time and I was there because we had to register to go back, especially...our mother was there. We want to go back to Kielce. And he said in German, Juden (ph), we don't want you. We don't like you. We hate you. Why do you want to go back? But I assume the dislike and the disappointment because who escaped...most wealthier people from from the people who had the means or like I say trucks and that and people were were anti-Communists. They they were not officially anti-Communists like we know later, but they just didn't like the system. In Lemberg we had it very good, and I like to point out this, to tell this story...it has nothing to do with the Holocaust but it has to do with the Holocaust. My cousin...we were

very extensive. We had over three hundred people in Poland, the family, very known from...the majority were well-off. It was so well-off that nobody came to America because we said we don't, we don't need it and we had it...they had a good life in Europe. Usually when people didn't a life, they couldn't make a living there, they went to America. That was the trend in Europe at that time. I had a cousin which was a son from a very wealthy family. They had a textile business, and he was the black sheep and he was the chief of the Communist Party and...not the chief of the Communist Party as such but the chief of Poland for the help NORP (ph) it was called, N - O - R - P, help for the prisoners of capitalists. Alright. He was an idealist and it just...it so happened...I don't know if this is something relevant to the case but attests a moral story to it which I would like to say. And he was put up the Red flag in the Polish parliament. That's how devoted he was, but he was an intellectual and he got ten years in there, \_\_\_\_ a real prison, Poland. When he was in Kielce and I was nine years old, nobody was in our house in Kielce and I remember he came...they let him out because they were helping him in prison. They let him out, and they said that he came in and four fellows carrying the books after him, you know. He had so many books from prison because he came...they let him out unexpectedly and he was grateful because his brothers came over to us to bring food to the prisoner. The prison was a dungeon. People were dying there from the wetness, you know, from...there were underground wetness and they they put them in there not to live. He was there ten years but being that they were rich, they bribed the authorities. They went out sooner. And this cousin came to to Lemberg and he became the director of the biggest textile store and at that time it was...you see in Russia you couldn't...if you worked, you could work a whole month and not earn for bread. You were hungry, but if you had a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, you could live two months. Do you understand? And he was the director of the biggest biggest...is this...is this relevant or not?

Q: Go ahead.

A: I'll tell you why it was relevant. You will find out if I...he he was so dedicated but he was so disappointed. While he was there, with the Russian system, with the Communists, while he was sitting that he went out of his way...he took us in, you know, it was a line...people stay there three days...he took us in because me and my father, without the line, without waiting, two times a day. That's how we lived. We got ten yards of material. We sold it, but this was against his whole principle. He went to jail for that. He would have never done before the war because he was through and through and dedicated. Why was he disappointed? Communism is \_\_\_\_\_. Because all his friends what were sitting in jail, the rations put to \_\_\_\_\_. They told him...this is not hearsay but I heard it when I walked with my father and I have a good memory and I heard it when he was telling my father this, that they told them that we don't need Communism from Poland. If you're a good Communist, you should have stayed there and fight the Fascists. See Communists at that time didn't want, they didn't \_\_\_\_\_ because they were too smart, too wised up. Western Communists are no good, see. In in Poland, in Russia...

Q: Why...why don't we go back here...yeah, go back here to your story about your your being in Lvov.

A: Yes...but I I was...he returned to Po...to Germany to...he was so...that's what I wanted to say. He returned and the Germans killed him in a month, a horrible way. That's was one thing what I wanted to...in memory to him because he helped us in death. That's was...he hated so much \_\_\_\_ that he returned to to...then the Germans hunt him right away and they killed him in a most horrible way and that finishes the story. OK. We were in Lvov. We registered. The Russians came, one day in 1941...sometimes I can...you understand the \_\_\_\_\_...and they took all the Jews what registered to go back. They had a list and they took them to Siberia because they they were disappointed. How can people go back to Germany when we are living in paradise already? My father and my sister and I, we had a friend was worked uh a district attorney and he was a Party man and we were in his house hiding and they came in to look for us. They asked him, are you...do you have any foreigners here? He said no. And he was hiding...he showed his card and they let...they didn't look. In a way that minute it was lucky but it wasn't because otherwise maybe they would survived. Of course you never know what's happening. It was a time that you never knew what is right and what is wrong, what you're doing is good, what you're doing is bad, so we left, but whoever was...after when they took away all those people in tra...in in in trains without food, without that...they took them to Siberia. Whoever was left and he was a foreigner, they gave him a passport. They couldn't live hundred miles from the border, so we moved back to Tuchin. That's how we stayed back to Tuchin. We lived in Tuchin till 1942. That's why...then the Germans came in, naturally in 1941 and my father didn't...in Tuchin was a factory. Should I go now to Tuchin? In Tuchin was a factory which by our standards was very small, but in 1942 the Germans were freezing already near Stalingrad that time. Their clothes...they didn't have prepared themselves and we were making...in that factory they were making wool. You know, they have the sheep. They took...then they were making heavy material, so the Germans grabbed those things and that factory was a was two engineers. One was Gros (ph) and they were \_\_\_\_, from Lodz, which they were textile engineers and they were running that factory. The Germans came and they made a big deal out of it to enlarge the factory. My father became friends with Gros. He didn't...he was religious. He didn't work on Saturdays...

Q: Your father?

A: My father...so he talked to Gros and he said, you know, why don't you became overseer in the factory. The factory had also rooms and we moved in where the factory there has three rooms. You will be there the janitor and the overseer, everything. I mean...I don't mean the janitor but overseer. You will live there in the factory. So I...we got connected to the factory and we...and we heard what was going on already. That time already we knew the tragedy what's happening because they start...in 1942 they starting already to killing Jews all over around, except in our town because that was...was three thousand in the small town Tuchin. Three thousand people. And me being young and there, I was kind of engrossed day in, day out, and one day...that was in 1941, Gros went with the car because we had always business in Rovno. Rovno was about thirty-five kilometers, a mile...I don't know exactly. I was in the car with him...

Q: Excuse me. Did you work with Gros or...?

A: I worked, yeah, and I did certain things, but I was young, you know, so I...

Q: Like like a go-for (ph)?

A: Yeah. Right. The...I was with him every day because it was small and I...he talked to me and in there it was Gros and there was another engineer which he wasn't that active. Gros was a great personality. He...he was dynamic. He was \_\_\_\_ and he was uncorruptible which was very rare. He didn't want to get rich, because at other times we had in different places that whoever was on the ruler, you know, they tried to...he didn't care. He was through and through a genuine to help, to help. There was also a director, a secre...an accountant, the main accountant which was Jewish. He he graduate from Berlin and the German made him a false Deutch (ph), which the only time what I heard that the Germans made a Jew a German, because they needed him and he spoke beautiful German. They were so impressed with him, they told him you are a German. But through and through he...he stayed away from...he wasn't that friendly. It didn't change but he was natural you know, and actually he was a false Deutsch (ph). You know what a false Deutch is?

Q: Why don't you explain that?

A: A false Deutsch means that he was a German but he was not born in Germany but he was from the German nation. All the Germans what lived out of Germany are considered false Deutsch. That's what also the things that Hitler wanted to take all the land till Slovakia (ph) and that's wherever a German lived, he said they're false Deutsch. They belong to Germany. That's called a false...false is nation, a national German or in other words. OK. So we lived there. The city...there was over three thousand people because other people came from all over, from Tuchin, and we were kind of privileged, the whole city, because of that factory. We got more food, that the ghetto was not built right away, but I remember in 1942...I don't remember the date...Gros said Herman, let's go. We're going to...to Rovno We came to Rovno. Before we came into the outskirts of Rovno, five German SS...I'm talking about \_\_\_\_\_. I think it was...more or less I recognized, you know, came over and they stopped the car. It was a chauffeur, me, and Gros and somebody else. Are you Herr Gros? He said yes. You have behaved from \_\_\_\_ Fuhrer, from \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, you should go back to Tuchin. You can't get in to the city. He asked why, you know, because he felt with the Germans very, very open, very \_\_\_\_\_, because he knew the the top. So they said don't ask questions. Just go back. We got back and found out that that day they killed...I don't know exactly but to my knowledge twenty-two thousand Jews in in Rovno. That was the date and they wanted to save him, so they they turn us back. After that about a few weeks later, so we knew we were...the depression was going in already. We knew that...you see, it came gradually and like I mentioned before to the lady that in the places where the Russians were, this we knew and this I heard also from the Germans through Gros that there was not like in



Poland. In Poland where the where the Germans were from the beginning, they put people to concentration camps, to arbeits lagers (ph) but where the Russians were, they abused older Jews, all the Jews were ninety percent under Communist, they are Jews of the old Communists, and they they very rarely took them to camps or to work, but they were mass murdered. They not...not even crematoriums, but they killed them...the open graves. They took Ukrainians and the Ukrainians did the killings. We came back and about a few weeks later I was in the office in the factory and they said there's some high Germans coming in to inspect the factory. Well, I was there because, you know, I was young so I could get in any place and I was sitting in a side and he came in and he introduced himself. It was...Gros was there, the other engineer and that false Deutsch, their accountant, and I was there...nobody else. And came in and said Reichsminister (ph) Rosenberg (ph), Alfred Rosenberg. I knew who Alfred Rosenberg was. Everybody knew. I knew him actually from the Nuremburg laws because he was the one what started the whole trouble. I didn't know...there was another guy. Alfred Rosenberg was slim. I remember him just like now, and the other fellow was Erich Koch. Erich Koch was the \_\_\_\_\_ from Prussia. I don't know if you know what the \_\_\_\_\_ is. The \_\_\_\_\_ was the government and Erich Rosenberg said that I just got a promotion from the Fuhrer that I am now the minister (ph) of all the territories what we took and at that time Germans was the height. They were up to Moscow and to Leningrad. It was 1942. I'm the \_\_\_\_\_ of all the territories what we took from the from the Russians. Actually \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, east, OK. So he was the the main man, and they were talking what they can produce and how \_\_\_\_\_. Very, very cordial to to Gros and very...

Q: And you were there in the room?

A: I was there and sitting there, but I remembered what they did, what they do in \_\_\_\_\_. It's very hard to explain but as I'm sitting now, and I was fifteen years old, I thought and I was wondering if I would have a grenade, I would kill myself and I would kill Rosenberg and Gros and Koch and all of them in the house, if I could have it. This was just a childish way, but the bitterness what what I held from Rovno. They killed twenty-two Jews and and from Lemberg. You lived every day, but this was just, you know, something...a dream what a child can can dream, I would do that. It's even foolish to repeat but I'm repeating it what my thoughts were at that time, and while I was there, Gros said...this I remember...Herr Rosenberg, Herr Mini...Herr Mini... Herr Reichsminister...that's how they...I remember the word...Herr Reichsminister, \_\_\_\_\_. We are very productive Jews. This was the question...are you a productive? We thought at that time yet if you are a productive Jew, they'd let you live. If you're not a productive, they they will kill you. You see, the Germans, they were doing so systematically and I don't have to go into it because this was...a lot of people, everybody knows their system, you know, so I'm not going into it, but we thought...still thought that if we are so productive, if Rosenberg comes to a small town to us, we must be important, so he said, Herr Reichsminister, how's about to let us live. So for our town...you know we're only three thousand Jews. We're productive. We're working for the Germans. Let us live.

Q: Let me ask this. Gros was Jewish?

A: All the way. Yes. Jewish and Jewish. He had a Jewish girlfriend. He was married to a Jewish \_\_\_\_\_, and he never knew that he was going to be involved...he was a...the time put him in he was an engineer from from Lodz, that time put him in to made...to be a leader, to do, but he was from \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, you know to a Jewish cause. He was not just a Jewish but he worked for the Germans, but this is...he wanted to save and he he wanted to save himself too, but being that he was the the whole...the whole \_\_\_\_\_, you know, the the key from the factory and with the Germans it's if you went to the higher echelon you could talk to them. It was just like uh \_\_\_\_\_ said...whoever's a Jew, I I decide. You understand. So when you talk to them, even if it was Rosenberg, the biggest murderer, or Koch, but if you were sitting with them, you talked like I'm talking with you. But he also said, they said Herr Gros, and this was the true words what I heard, \_\_\_\_\_. I'm sorry to tell you...see he was...Germans were usually very polite, very nice. They kill you but they're very nice and very civilized. And they said \_\_\_\_\_. He didn't say you are Jew or death. No. \_\_\_\_\_, but I have a \_\_\_\_\_, I have an order from the...I'm I'm repeating in German because his words...I'm...in my in my mind...I have order from Fuhrer that the \_\_\_\_\_...that means that no Jews can be alive. Then I started to think about...see before I didn't, but then I started to think, now I can come to \_\_\_\_ and I had that grenade because I saw that there's no end. Once he said this and he was...he was the god. He was...he was the life and death. When they went, Gros, my father, the owner, said there's no solution for us. We have no time. And we started to dig a bunker in the factory at night, throwing out the ground and dirt and digging and putting away the ground nobody should know, and we did this and this was around August they opened the ghetto. The first time in Tuchin, they put in all the Jews in the ghetto and also in the ghetto was a synagogue with warehouses and all the wheat, the corn what they took away from the peasants, they were storing there. They were storing the wheat full tons of tons. We told later if you will destroy that, the German army will starve, you know. I'm talking about myself. I said we as a as a young boy, you know. We actually moved into the ghetto but we had passes to go to the factory where we lived half-time in the ghetto. The ghetto was an open ghetto. You could come in and out. It wasn't like ghettos that police was around surrounded. Again, through the factory and through Gros and also the commandant knew that if Rosenberg comes in, he is good with Gros. He was the nicest guy and tried to accommodate because they were...Germans were always scared about higher. Gros may say something that we're not treated right, so even they were scared, so they treated us like with...the whole the whole Jewish and he promised them that nothing will happen to us. He didn't hear...he didn't know. The commandant from the city didn't know what Rosenberg, what I knew, when I was nobody but but we knew through Gros and we didn't tell nobody. Gros said not to say a word not to put a panic. The only people...I think what Gros did he went to the Jewish leadership there and told them that there's no solution, no way. So we lived in the ghetto and it came August and my father was going, still stayed in the factory, you know, and didn't come home and two days before Yom Kippur, September I think it was...I can't remember the date...the Jewish community surrendered the Jews, came together. They gave whoever was young they gave bottles of acid, you know, sulfuric acid. There was a few guns, a few deaths, which I didn't...I heard but I didn't see but a few young people had some, but they said if the Germans will come in,

let's not die because we knew in Rovno they took them to the grave and they shot one by one. Let's kill as many Germans as we can. Let's burn the city.

Q: Had you or anyone uh seen these mass murders in Rovno or you just heard about them?

A: People...if you saw them, you didn't hear about them. You understand? We came...we came to...the closest I can say whoever worked with the mass murderers in Rovno was like me and Gros sitting there, two miles away from the mass murders, and he said they're killing Jews and then we saw the graves. And then we saw there's no...see we went to Rovno later. There were graves but there was no Jews, so if you saw them, you didn't talk about them. You understand? Because there was no way to escape. Does this answer your question? You couldn't...you couldn't be there and escape because they were surrounded. We were talked about it and there were...you see, there was not only Germans. The problem was the Ukrainians were worse than the Germans. They made sure that nobody should escape. You could escape from a wagon, from a train, but you couldn't escape if they surrounded you and they and they have mass...mass that you couldn't escape. There was no escape, not one to my knowledge. But we saw the graves later. I saw it where where they killed...it took place. We saw...this I saw before...the day before Yom Kippur that the Ukrainians were building right...not far. We could look...start digging graves. They didn't take any Jews to dig. Normally they took Jews to dig graves, but we, the three thousand people, very strong, very healthy because we had a good life till then, through the factory and through Gros' influence, we're not starving. Normally, the Germans starved that the people didn't have the strength to fight, to resist. They starved them out slowly, slowly that they lost their fight. We were strong and healthy, not hungry, so when you have strength, you fight. You understand? You don't...you do whatever you could because you still have strength. That was the only difference and we saw that they're building graves and the day before Yom Kippur I remember I went out and I and I opened...it was a beautiful day I remember and I said it's so gorgeous. It's so beautiful. I'm fifteen years old and I have...and I have to die in this grave. I kept...I...a day before Yom Kippur, my father came into the factory, to the ghetto. This I remember...they asked him why do you come back. Why do you come back? So he said, I want to be with my children. I...me and my...I and my sister were were in the ghetto and then that they surrounded. You couldn't go out already. Before we could. Took away the passes, you know, the last day we couldn't get back, but in...they let in, so he didn't have to come but he came back. Naturally some fathers, you know, a father is a father. He wanted to come back. So we were talking, the the \_\_\_\_\_. We knew they're digging graves and we knew...we didn't know how they're going to come, how we have to fight them, how you have to use the bottles and whatever and right after Yom Kippur in the evening when I I...around four...become dark, I fell asleep. What the Germans wanted to do was send in trucks and grab a few hundred people at a time and to take them out and to shot them and come back, slowly, gradually because they didn't want a fight because they didn't know...we were too too strong and too...they didn't have a division there, you know. They had...but they had the police and what I remember is I fell asleep and I woke up and I saw fire, more fire yet. You know, the ghetto in the small Polish towns were wooden...wooden houses. They were there. I woke up and I knew that it started. I looked for my father and sister.

Couldn't find anybody. It was already fire, burning, yelling, people were burning, and the the Germans used a wooden gate. They didn't have to build a strong gate around the ghetto because there was...the ghetto was only short time that they had it from wood, so we had to run, to run away. I kept the bottles and whoever was right there, the Germans were there. We start throwing, throwing. Then the Germans start...this I saw, the Germans start burning the face. You know, when you...ashes when you get in face, it's not so pleasant, you know, but we knew that we can't, so what they did, they regrouped, and they got in one side with the machine guns. They saw that they can't do it and and it was also the order the first thing to burn the synagogue, the corn and the wheat. This was...if you have to die, let the food burn. Let them not...let them starve, you know, and our mind this was the the whole salvation because if if you if you think you catch...they say a razor blade, you know, even if you cut yourself. This was so far what we were talking to burn the the...nothing we could do. We were...we were defenseless. So I remember that I walked...while they were shooting from one side I walked to the other side. I don't know if it's northeast...I I don't know...and I, with this arm yet I pushed...and the hundreds of people with me, we pushed the the gate. The gate fell down. Then the gate fell down and we had to climb it. We started running. People started running, but when we start running, there was a Jewish cemetery. Usually the ghetto was right and the Jewish cemetery was on on the hill. The Germans, they were shooting but the bullets mostly hit the stone. Whoever fell, fell. Mostly they didn't do much but because they hit the stone. You know, we were after that...

Q: So the gravestones gave you cover?

A: The gravestones gave us cover. Otherwise nobody would have survived because they were standing there and we were on top. The gravestones gave us cover and I knew when I...I can recall even now when I was running I knew every minute I would be hit from the back, but the stones...just you hear bouncing, you know, bouncing bullets. It was...and here the whole city was already...was burning. The whole ghetto was one, one big fire. Whoever could run, run. I was looking...my mother...while I was running...you see over there woods were...mostly wooded area. We were running to the woods. It was about ten kilometers, but I got in in in the place where we lived was a family Constant...from Constantinople...Constanople. A father...his name was Kagan (ph), and he had a daughter my age, a real pretty girl I remember, you know, and he said, while we were...they run away from their ghetto to us, so we knew each other and three other fellows what they knew Kagan. I couldn't find my sister and and father so I was with them, and we were running together, and we run into the woods. To the woods, it was very...not woods, you know, maybe two, two miles and those part, two mile woods was nothing because there were five hundred mile woods later, further up, you know. Big woods going into Russia. Those are still wild country, you know, with woods. In the morning...it was already in the morning because we started later. We woke there and then we saw that we were quite a big amount of people and we got Kagan...I was the youngest so with with the girl was Kagan and the all three but there were three brothers. Said this is not the place to stay. The Germans will come tomorrow and they will kill us all because there's no place here. I mean we're open here. The three brothers suggested they have about twenty miles away from there, thirty miles

away were the big woods. There were \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is like a lord. You know, in Polish a \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is German. \_\_\_\_\_. In the woods where he used to own that land, there were woods going they said up to Kiev. I didn't measure them but there were for hundreds of hundreds of miles woods, and each mile, each kilometer...I'm talking mile but it was kilometer...had a measure, a number, you know, not to get lose, and it had a little...for horses to go through because they cut...when they cut the wood, so they had...it was like a road, like a city from woods. But also was cut out pieces where Ukrainian villages were there, so he said let's run away. I...we are from that part and I know people what we gave away everything what we had, and they will help us. They would hide us. Let's go. We went. We went through a water that I remember. It was already late. Over there it's cold, and we came to that to that village. I remember they gave us food. We went into the people what they they were friends from that...they were from that village. They were very nice to them. They gave us...we were hungry. Hunger doesn't stop, no matter what, no matter how \_\_\_\_ you are, especially when you are young. And I remember I fainted. I fainted and I fell down and somehow I woke up and I said why did I...to Kagan I said why did I wake up. I didn't...so he said somebody will cry. This is a time not to be sorry. He wanted to give me...to grow up, I should grow up, you know. This is not a time to cry. If you...if you didn't get up, you didn't get up. We stayed there for two days I think and we found out that they killed the three brothers. The Ukrainians killed the three brothers. They came up to us, without...without shame and they said we don't have nothing against you, to Kagan, to his sister, to me. They gave us a lot of things, everything what they had and we were scared that they would want it back, so we killed them. Just plain \_\_\_\_\_. And you can run. You can go. We don't have nothing against you. We went away from there and we went to the woods, looking where going. We went to the woods and there was a small village and it was only one house. Before the village was one house, outside, out \_\_\_\_\_. Again we were hungry. When you have...when you are hungry, you don't care where you're going or the enemy because the hunger, starvation...the air is good. The air was fresh. When I...when I think about it now, why did we...you know, they were Ukrainians, enemy territory, just just like that, but there's no other place to go, and we knocked and there was...came out a young man. The man was in pretty good \_\_\_\_\_, had a wife and a little baby. Oh...stay with me. We're going...he gave us food, kept us. We stayed there three days or four days. He was very nice to us. Kagan, at that time he around forty years old. You know, when you are fifty and forty, you're an old man. He was wearing a chain. You know, in the olden days, you saw the double chain with a pair of boots. Boots, new, nice boots. When I run away because I slept, I put on shoes that...old shoes, you know, because I I got dressed quick because I saw the fire, but he probably didn't sleep. He was already to \_\_\_\_\_ so he put on whatever he had the best. I had here hidden diamonds what my father gave me from my mother and from my grandmother, you know, diamonds and things, but nobody knew about it. It was in a...you know, like you have in a sling, but he showed up there with a gold chain with the boots. That was enough. They took...the Germans was the love... salt was the very, very dear, very rare over there. If you brought in a Jew, the Germans paid a half a pound, a pound or half a pound of salt for each Jew. Plenty Jews were killed for that salt and if he had a gold watch with boots, was worth hundred pounds of salt. I remember it was Saturday night, and Michov (ph), he liked me and he said you know, you sleep. They had, you know,

very primitive houses with the the straw covers you had which you don't even probably saw in your life, but outside were for the cow or for...you know, the straw and the...whatever they had some land because it was woods so they didn't have too much land. He said that Kagan and the daughter should sleep there. It wasn't that cold. It was warm, and I should sleep inside. I slept Saturday night and Sunday morning I woke up and I see Michov walked in a little drunk and he was wearing the chain and the boots. \_\_\_\_ the dumbness, the stupidity...I don't know...fear I didn't have because there was nothing to fear. I asked him, Michov, where you take the watch and the boots. That's not yours. That's Kagan's. So he said I'll be honest with you. I killed him. He was an old man and didn't want to live, so I killed him. But you, I'm going to keep you for the whole winter here. Don't be afraid. You have nothing. That was his words, and I remember them just like now, so I said...

End of Tape #1

Tape #2

Q: OK. Why don't we...

A: How far...how we do...how do...

Q: I think time-wise we're doing fine. Everything's...everything's fine, and now the the camera's started again, so why don't we...so why don't we....why don't we start again. Uh OK.

A: Give me a chance...(laughter)...don't give me a break but that's...it's alright.

Q: We left off when you ran off into the woods again.

A: OK. I ran off in the woods again and I met three...three horses, three people on horses, and they asked me in Russian, \_\_\_\_\_. See, I was already torn up. My clothes were torn up so they looked...I knew already that I looked...even I didn't look what they called the Jewish look. You understand? I never looked, you know, but when you are depressed, when you are turned up, at that time you you looked strange, you knew that you are a Jew right away. You understand? In a normal society maybe they wouldn't...they wouldn't recognize because I didn't have...I didn't never looked typical. You understand what they thought in Europe. You understand...to be short and then I was tall. You understand? So I didn't have that...the typical look so they told me \_\_\_\_\_. So I said you must be Russian partisans. So I said how do you know, they asked. I knew if they would say \_\_\_\_\_, they are Ukrainian partisans or Germans, but if they say \_\_\_\_\_, this was...that much I knew but I couldn't tell them that so I said Germans look so fat because the Germans in the villages, you know, what they had...what they call...we didn't see the Germans in the army. They were fat, you know, from the peasant...peasant German. You understand? And you look skin...slim so they were laughing and they liked me, so I said to them, look that he killed. I I told them the story and I'm here alone and I would like to fight in the partisans. So they said sorry, but we don't take anybody. The Germans have to come in here. We are living the territory and the Germans supposed to come here. You better run away from here. Run where? And I...to me I thought there's no help for nobody. Even I met already Russian partisans, already I thought they have certain salvation, there's no end, there's no help for nobody. You are alone. You you feel like you're in a cage and you're fighting to get out but all the doors are locked. But what they did, they gave me a horse, see, because this was deep in the woods. I didn't know if I'm in the moon or on earth. It was woods...dark around. They gave me a horse which they took from a peasant. You know partisans took whatever they needed and they said take this horse and run away from here because the Germans have to come here, the army, and your life is not \_\_\_\_\_. I asked them what type of partisans are you, because there were two kinds of partisans. So they said we are the elite, the \_\_\_\_\_. You know, we are sent from Moscow to organize. We are from...they didn't mention the name and you don't even know that you saw us because they were scared that if the Germans catching me, they starting to ask questions, I would tell them that I saw partisans, where and what. They didn't want. They gave me the horse and they left and I was here in the woods

with the horse. I got in on the horse and I let it...I knew how to ride horses before so I...the horse took me to the owner. It was a few, few...quite a few mile away in the woods...took me to the owner. The horse, you know...and I didn't know at that time that horses have a sense that they take you where you come from like like dogs. I went to the owner. It was a Ukrainian. He was very nice to be. He was happy he got the horse back. He gave me food and he said but don't stay here. Go further in the woods there and there. He said I heard that far away, you know, about ten, twenty miles, there's some Jews hiding. That's what he told me. I don't know where, but some Jews hiding in the woods. This I won't be alone. I went and I went in the daytime and I went through a village. See, from every few miles, five miles, ten...ten kilometers were villages cut out in the woods, what they have corn, land...they they're living...living three hundred, four hundred people, Ukrainians. I went in this village and I went into a house. I was hungry. I knocked on the door and I remember somebody said, in Polish, \_\_\_\_\_. Jew is here. That he was a policeman before the war and he was the only Polish family what lived in this village. He was scared to death to be there because they hated him, but it was...he didn't know yet where to go and what to do. He stayed there and he told me that I must be born under a lucky star that I came to him because if I would walk into any other house, I would be dead immediately. This is the headquarters from Bulbas (ph). There were two partisan organizations, one \_\_\_\_\_ and Bulba. Should I...?

Q: \_\_\_\_\_?

A: OK. Bulba was Teras Bulba (ph) of \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ was Ukrainian...Ukrainian leader what was killing Jews in World War I and a Jewish fellow killed him I think in Paris and they built...they had a...under his name \_\_\_\_\_. He was like \_\_\_\_\_. I don't know if you heard of \_\_\_\_\_. He was one of the biggest murderers in World War I what was killing Jews, pogroms. There were also Teras Bulba. They were a little bit more lenient because the Jews didn't kill him, Bulba, but they were both working with the Germans. They thought that the Germans will give them independence. They were anti-Communists under Russia, not under...the Communists went under Russia but they were killing Polish people and Jewish people and helping the Germans. And this was the headquarter from that organization. So I picked...came to the right. He gave me some food, whatever he had and he kept me till dark but he told me that...exact...he gave me an exact that over there and there are Jewish families, in the woods hiding, from another city, \_\_\_\_\_. From another city are hiding Jewish families. But I should wait till it's dark and I should be very careful and get out from this village as soon as possible. I did and I was walking, walking. Next day...I was getting already a little bit weak, you know. Always hungry, always cold already. It was getting cold on that trip. I saw in the woods, in the woods a Polish person like an oversee house. Used to live the overseer from the...from the prince what held there. There he was the overseer. There was a pretty nice home. I saw a house. I knocked and I went in. A woman came out, Ukrainish woman and she grabbed herself. She saw...saw a Jew and she gave me I remember...the first time she gave me milk and bread. She was very nice and she feed...fed me. This was Sunday and about...I was there about an hour. She told me to rest. All of a sudden she got pale, pale and white. She looked out and she saw that German



soldiers and Ukrainian police are coming in and this was her son. Her son was the leader. He wasn't the chief of the police but assistant police but he was the murderer of Rovno Jews. He...they claimed that he was sitting with the machine gun by the grave and he by himself killed most of the Jews. This was the mother.

Q: What was her name, or his name?

A: His name was Weinka (ph). So she said my son is a bad boy. Even they come in, if they see you here you wouldn't live two minutes, but she had a back door and the back door was leading to the out...outhouse. She says when they come in on the horses, you run out and when they come into the house, I give them drinks and you run away. I did. I did and I walked another two days and I came and I found Jewish, maybe twelve families living in the woods. It was already cold. It was snow over there \_\_\_\_\_. They had built up from wood houses. They had a fire in the back. There was no chimney and the fire was going out through the outside. You couldn't stand up because the smoke was killing you. You could only lay down and crawl, but it saved you. It was made...built...they did it cru...you know, made out of...from the leaves. Everything was made out of leaves from the woods, and there were maybe five or six houses. And then I met a fellow which was a barber. He...he was at my wedding in New York. I don't know where he is now. He was from Poland so he...the other people were from the small...from the other towns. They were...I was a...you know, Poland considered \_\_\_\_\_. He was with his wife and daughter and another girl and he said he would take me into his house. I should stay with him, because I was alone and I was from Poland, and he was actually the rich man because he had a profession and he went in to the...there was also a Polish village there from the people what Poland put in, there was a whole village. So he went in there and to cut their hair. He was a professional barber, and he had food he had brought in. But he had food for himself. We had to go at night or in daytime and to beg for food. My shoes were gone, so I had from wood made, you know, rags and that and around and we were every...once a week we were going to the villages and to ask for food. The Polish village was too far and it was cold but the Ukrainian village was closer. One day I went into a village with another girl. The girl which was theirs. She later died, and we knocked on the door and the la...my feet were already swollen because from the cold the shoes fell off. She took something rubbing it should go away. She gave me food and start knocking at the door. They knocked on the door, came in Ukrainian \_\_\_\_\_. You knew that the \_\_\_\_\_ who come in, they'll see a Jewish fellow They'll kill us. They came in and one man was from Tulin and he knew about my father, about Gros, so he said today we don't kill Jews. That was his word. I remember when they knocked. They came in, about five, six men, so I asked him how come. You see, because it was...I asked questions which normally, in normal time you don't...you don't ask, but there was a question that I knew they do, you understand, and I asked him that question how come you don't kill today, so he said because we are now negotiating with the Russian partisans to fight against the Germans and it will take about another three days, and we better not catch you. If it doesn't go through, we better not catch you in three days. They gave me the best food what I had in months. They treated me nice and they told me to go, so actually it's just like you were in the lion's...in the lion's den and you escaped in the right time. So

you see, I...so I start asking myself questions, how can luck bring you because he told me if we would catch you yesterday, we would have killed you because this just came out. So I went back and I stayed there in the woods, you know, but I was hungry. You had to go again to eat. What did we get? We get potatoes. Boiled potatoes without salt, the stomach can \_\_\_\_ but that was the only thing what they gave us and some...we had places. One time I went into a Ukrainian house for begging. I didn't know where I'm going, and the man took...you know, for a fork what with they cut hay and he he threwed at me. I jumped out. I was young still and I jumped out. I was alert and it went through the wood. Otherwise it would went through me, and I run out because he didn't...he didn't like me, but somebody else, the same Ukra...the Ukrainians gave me food. They gave me a few potatoes and some told me come over \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. This I remember because I I learned Ukrainian or even if I wasn't a native there, I was a stranger, but this was \_\_\_\_\_. Some have a war and to some people, there's a war and to some it doesn't matter (ph). You understand? For them, it's the matter (ph). They live good now. But a month later I went again with the same...I I walked with the same girl. There was other places but she lived in the same...in the same house so we went to back together. You had to go about three, five miles. This was...already the snow was very high but we always tried to go when it's snowing that the Germans shouldn't come back and find out where we are, so when the snow start falling, we walked and then it fell back so it shouldn't leave any...you get...when you live in the woods, you get very smart. You...you learn. Though I never lived in a small town or small village...I was born in a big city, you get to learn like \_\_\_\_, you know. You get to learn how to live with the nature and I remember we walked out to a village and maybe thirty people, Ukrainians, surrounded us, both of us and they said where should be kill them. Here or in the woods? The woods was like from here to next block, two blocks so they...the others said why should we kill here. We'll take them to the woods. There nobody had to bother with him and while I was talking, the leader was talking to me, an old lady, an old woman, came out and she happened to be the mother of the leader.

Q: You're saying that the same old lady you'd seen before?

A: No, no, no, no. This was different story. The mother of the the other one was a police Ukrainian...a German Ukrainian policeman. He...this one was a \_\_\_\_\_. They were partisans. See, it's different...between working for the Germans as police and being, you know, like like a like SS. Those were partisans. They were fighting. See, the Germans, the Ukrainians worked for the Germans, were German helpers on the German payroll. This were Ukrainian partisan which wanted a free Ukraine. They were nationalists. They killed Jews the same way. It has nothing to do but with the nationalists, their aim was not to so much love to the Germans but love to the country, to to Ukraine and to have a free...and they thought the Germans would give them which they would never do, but they thought the Germans would give them a free Ukraine. Right. You see, you know, politics was involved in that, but that was a different...but the old lady, the mother from the leader, from that Ukrainian run out and she grabbed the gun from him. I remember a small lady and he was a tall guy, a strong guy. Somehow he didn't expect because the mother, she start to to hug him and she grabbed the gun and she was holding the gun to him, and she said those are two

children. If you kill them, I'll kill you. I remember that the other Ukrainians, you know, they they got they got kind of shocked, you know. She was a good woman. She meant it just why should they kill us. And they said run. Run to the woods. We start running and every minute, even the the five hundred or thousand yards was like miles because I thought somebody from them would shot me, but she would have killed him probably. They would shot me in the back. We run in the woods and we were free already. We were saved. Again things like that doesn't happen, but it happened. But we realized...there were about five boys of us and my age...we realized that there's no life to go and beg and to to be killed, you know. Someday the luck will run out and the same time we we dropped the Polish, the the Ukrainian villages and went further to the Polish villages, but the Polish village, the Polish people...there were three hundred and eighty people there. They were very nice to us. They gave us food. They were working with the partisans and one day they were surrounded by Germans. The Germans sent in the army, the regular army and they took all the men and they shot them. Three hundred and eighty people they shot. The women, they shot and they killed them. They they poisoned. They didn't shot them but they gave them some some injection, something. Nobody, not one survived from that the whole village. That was a few villages, Polish villages, where they shot everybody. They did the same thing what they did, claiming that they are sympathetic to the to the partisan, to the Russian partisans. So we...the roads to beg or to eat were cut off, so we decided, five of us, that we are going to look for the partisans. We knew that the Russian partisans, there was a Russian partisan by the name of \_\_\_\_\_. That's Colonel Niewiedow (ph). Niewiedow. They were the lead partisan organization in the whole Ukraine which eighty percent were sent out from Moscow. Normally there were two kind of partisans, the Russians. There were partisans they organized, natives, whoever wanted but the Ukrainians were against the Russians, so they didn't have much to organize. They had a very rough deal because they were against them, so they had to bring Russian people to fight the Germans, and those were the the true partisan uh \_\_\_\_\_ to send out, you know, from \_\_\_\_\_. Later I found out seventy percent were Spanish people, not for Spanish but Spain, for Franco (ph), the ones what were in the civil war. That was a real intellectual...the real...the war that's coming in was were fighting Franco. When Franco won the war in Spain, they went to Russia and Russia didn't play much. They trained them and they they...Russian always was like England, fighting to the last Eng...to the last Indian soldier. The Russians did the same thing. They sent them out because it was a very dangerous mission, to send out the Spanish Communists. Again, they didn't want them in Russia because they had enough Communists there. OK. As you can see, I'm not such a great lover although they saved my life, you know, but that's the truth. That was Spanish...very fine, very fine people, very...very...they were not the average Russian partisan, the average soldier. Each one was with a personality. We met some Ukrainian...some partisans and they told us sorry, we don't take. What did you do? See, without without ammunition. We said how we get ammunition. Go take a stick and kill a German, take his gun or his rifle and come to us. Then you'll fight. It's easier said than to do because the Germans were twelve feet tall in our eyes. We were young and anyway the Germans were the the the rulers there. How can you go and kill? I I stayed away as far as I can from a German and they told us to take a stick and kill a German. Again, the same story. Everybody was \_\_\_\_\_. So we decided, four of us, four or five young boys...there's only way

how to get to the partisans, cause we knew we can't survive. We didn't know when it's going to end and the woods was cold. It was forty below zero with no clothing, no food, no nothing. The older people stayed there. We're going to see how the the horses with the with the sleds, and we're going to follow and it happened that we saw a partisan with a sled and he happened to be Jewish. We went over to him. We told him who we are. He said I can't take you, but follow...don't say a word but follow my road and you'll get there. That's all he said. He went away. We waited for an hour. It wasn't snowing, and we followed. We followed maybe five, six miles, and once we we were going, they came out and said hand, you know, raise your hands. And they took all five five of us separate places. How did you get here? So I said we saw...we were looking for the partisans. We want to fight. We are against the Germans and we saw a road. We want to fight. Where are your guns? We don't have any guns. We're going to send you back and we made up, if they told us they send back, what we have to say. We have to say two things we agreed. We want to be killed by a Russian bullet, not by German. That was appeal (ph) to the Russians, and if they...if we'll see they don't want to take us, they should be aware that if the Germans catch us, we don't...we're not responsible what we're going to say. We had to use threat. To use threat to the Russians was pretty desperate, but we had no other way. They they took each one because they thought they didn't know.

Q: And these these were the parti...the partisans?

A: These were partisans.

Q: The the Russians?

A: Yes. They didn't know if the Germans sent us. They didn't know how we got there and they were...had to be careful too so they took each one separate and start asking questions, how we got to them, because if we can get to them, the Germans can get to them. You understand? So we didn't blame them. They heard one saying we want to...we want to fight. We wanted this, and they decided to take us in because...decided not because we want to die for them but they were afraid that if the Germans catch us, they would...we will say...I mean they would say or something...they will they will force us, you know, to to say where they are. So the Germans were not close, but they were afraid to go in because they didn't know how strong the partisans are, and they also didn't know...you can't attack somebody in the woods because a division can't do...they didn't have that many divisions but they can't send in because they don't know where they're going to be hit. You can hide, you know, three people, ten people, a hundred can keep up a whole a whole brigade if you don't know where you're going to be hit. Soon as they took us in, they took all our clothes because we were in a horrible stage. They burned everything what we had. They gave us new clothing. It was like a paradise. They gave us...they had the same thing made from wood, but they had I remember \_\_\_\_\_ uh uh Persian carpets were laid down. It was something like a new life. Next day came out. They took us to the commandant, you know, to the chief took us there, starting to ask the story, and who was sitting there...Gros. Gros saw me. Start hugging. The commandant looked...start hugging and kissing me. He said why didn't you say something.

How would I know? We would have taken you in right away and I told him. He took me away. He was the engineer, the \_\_\_\_\_. He was the...this this partisan specially was sent in to break, to undermine bridges. The Germans were sending trains to the front and they also cut the woods in order to be safe because they had machine guns on top because the partisans were...their mission was to destroy all the trains because if you less ammunition will go to the front, the less the Russians will be killed and that was their mission. They were \_\_\_\_\_. In Russian it is \_\_\_\_\_. Their mission was to to...very dangerous there because about twenty feet, thirty feet they cut out all the woods so you had to take off the train and they were standing on top watching, so what did we do? We undermined and we were staying there and we, you know, like...how to explain to it...turn off the trains when they were shooting us, we had to run away right away and it was a quick...a hit and miss but the train had to go. So they had to train us. It took time, but in the meantime I asked Gros what happened and I was telling him the story because I didn't know what's happened in Tuchin, what has...so he was telling me and I found out the truth, that after when they burned the ghetto, my...when I was running through the woods, my father, my sister, they were stayed together and some twenty other people what worked in the factory and Gros himself went to the bunker. They were there for three days because there was enough prepared food, everything. And a Ukrainian told the German and they shot everybody except Gros. They pulled Gros...he should train...Jews (ph)...he should train Ukrainians in the factory they should work. Naturally they didn't they didn't do nothing to the false Deutch, so they had there and Gros. Gros told me that he was in contact with the partisans. He was working all the time...from the beginning he was in contact. He was working on both sides. He knew what the Germans, everything was told to the high echelon, to the partisans, so he was like like a double...you understand. But so Gros realized there's no more Jews. Why should he train them. Next day they send in partisans and they took George, and they took Gros with them. He became the assistant from the comman...from the commandeer (ph) for he was an engineer. We had to build bridges. We had to do that. He was...he was very high up, you know, almost the second in command. I told George, Gros, he kind of felt kind of in a way that I'm the only survivor, that special...you know, watch. I I told him, first of all I told him about Weinka. See I knew only...deep down at that time I had the worst hatred to Ukrainians because I saw what they did, and the Germans came in. They went knives and they were cutting than to Germans, because I didn't see with my own eyes any atrocities from Germans, but I saw from Ukrainians what they...whatever your eyes see, you understand. From the Germans I heard, I knew, but Ukrainian I saw with my own eyes, so I told them about Weinka. He's dead, and they took care of Weinka with with the family, but I asked one question. I asked a favor from the chief, from the from the few people what they sent to Weinka. They caught Weinka on a Sunday...to save the mother because she gave me food. In the state where Weinka lived in the house, they digged out maybe thirty to forty graves, pieces. They found chandeliers, all the Jewish from Rovno, gold, silver...not pieces but I would say tons. You know, great big big things what Weinka with their three brothers, what they had over there put away and mostly silver things. You know, mostly religious silver things which which...he definitely didn't have it when his father. They took care of Weinka with the family. Then...

Q: When you said they took care, they...what did they do?

A: I don't want to even go into that what they did to him, but he didn't die a nice death. They hanged him but they burned him also. I mean whatever he did to twenty-two thousand people was not enough, but that's all what could be done and and Gros told to the commander that they should listen to me what...I was I was...you know, I was a new recruit, but I had somebody behind me. Again, and to \_\_\_\_\_ and they they did to Weinka things which in a in a normal society, you don't do, OK. But the mother...I said not till she run away. I was sorry for her because she she gave me food. You know, it wasn't there, but she had children like that what they they were murderers. Not only murderers but but they they they were the known...Weinka...I don't know if anybody else...I never mentioned Weinka before until now and I don't know if if...but this is the Weinka what what was sitting...people from Rovno mentioned he was sitting near the grave with the machine gun and he was shooting people, so how could I...you see, the funny thing is that I always had even now feelings, blood, that I can't see blood. I faint. I used to faint when I was a child and I even faint now when I see blood. I didn't faint when I saw Weinka's blood. My heart turned to stone and I had only lived for revenge and revenge makes you an animal. You know, it doesn't...it takes away all humil...humility. It takes you...it makes you wild, a beast and and I knew that I'm only a few survivors. I didn't know how many people survived, you know, in that time, but I knew I'm the one and as long as I'm alive and I have the power, I have to do to take advantage. OK. (Crying)

Q: Just take a moment. It's OK.

A: I also wanted to take care of Michau (ph). Michau killed Kagan for no reason, for gold, but the wife and the child didn't do anything. Michau was a different case. He was an individual murderer, you know, and I always lived not to hurt things, to people what they didn't do nothing, only what they did and not by association. I didn't want to kill Michau. I didn't want to do anything to Michau but I told again through Gros to the partisans what Michau did and the funniest thing is I forgot one thing to mention. In the partisans, I found Kagan's daughter. When she run away in the woods, the partisans caught her. Being a girl, they took her. But I was very disappointed. She fell in love with a...I saw her...a matter of fact, in the partisans she was sick. She had some cold. They had a little hospital for...they had doctors there. It was a whole...it it wasn't just a few...a few partisans. It was a whole like a battalion, you know, people, hundreds of people. I saw her and I told her that, you know, Michau killed your father and that and she was kind of indifferent. I don't know if what happened to her, what her mind was...I really don't know, so I realized that with her I can't do much. I told Gros and Gros gave an order. They shot...they they throw Michau to the to the...they took him to the woods and they shot him. They shot him also because they are afraid that he will be a traitor. If he could do like that, he will be a traitor to the Germans, and the partisans didn't play in that time too much with human life. Human life was very, very cheap. So we went with the partisans. We stayed there for a long time until one day...

Q: Let me assess this. When you with the partisans, did you participate in in raids?

A: In everything. There was no, no...nothing was Gros should try to save me or nothing. He wouldn't do that. He wouldn't do that. He...Gros was a very principle...he had a principle and he didn't...he...I...in raids and burning and and dangerous thing. He he was like whatever has to do with death, my my luck, you know, and he would never go against, you know, because they knew, his chief knew and everybody knew that he is my protegee, so he wouldn't save me for for anything. It would be something serious. If I would do something wrong, probably he would try to save me, but to go...missions had nothing to do with him because he was not a military leader. He was only their assistant to the \_\_\_ but he was mostly building bridges, preparing how to do things, but he was not the one what told them how to go to shoot, to break up the bridges, so I participate and not...all of us, all five of us...there was no difference. After a while they told us, they spending...spent day and night. They told us how to do and what to do and how to break and how to put the dynamite and how to escape and how to death (ph) and who was wounded, just like anybody else, and it was going around for six months I would say. One day...and I didn't know why and when...it was already '43. They send us...they took us, all five of us, and they said you are dismissed from the partisans. Never happened...nobody is dismissed. You...only you you you die or they shoot you, you know. We didn't do anything wrong. We didn't do anything. I was...we were disappointed. What do you mean you're going to dismiss us? But we cooled off a little bit. Gros came out, not to them, to me. He said we are going on a very serious mission. We're going together with Kovpak (ph). Kovpak was the biggest partisan...was a whole army, and we're going to fight with the German army, playing (ph) very serious mission and you are five young boys. I can't dismiss you alone. I want you should be alive. The war is going to pretty soon end, and I want you should survive, somebody should survive. I can't do it to you alone. I have to do it to all five of you, so don't feel bad that you didn't fight good, that you are not good soldiers, but I want to do that thing for you. He took in clothing, regular clothing, you know, to barter, to to live something. They send us out. We felt...even all that, we felt kind of disillusioned, as a child, you know. We found out two months later that they they killed sixty percent of the of the partisans. The whole German army when starting...the Russians starting coming back, they had an order to fight the German army and the partisans had no heavy artillery, nothing heavy and how could they survive. They they they...I never knew what happened to Gros. I later heard that he was in Poland. He was a minister of something of...but I never was in touch with him, but in his own way he tried, I felt, to save my life and he didn't try to save my life because it was like a symbol. Somebody...see, because he didn't know either who survived. It was such a time that we didn't know if there is anybody survived. You understand? In his eyes, I was the only one what survived to be to tell the story, so I took...we got back to the same place where we were and we're waiting and three months later the army came, the Russian army. And at that same place with us was the Polish family, the one what told me, the policeman...he was hiding there too because the Ukrainians wanted to kill him. And the Russian army came in. We heard that the Russian army on Rovno, you know. It was around thirty kilometers, thirty-five kilometers, forty, where we were. I don't remember how many kilometers...it's not important. He told me, you know, Heinrich (ph), let's go back now. We are safe. And I said you know, I want to go back with the soldiers. I wanted soldiers. I wanted to see Russian

soldiers. I don't want to go back, and it so happened that a day later, one day later, came in a column of Russian soldiers, the Russian army. All of us what we were there \_\_\_\_ went with them to go to the city. And about fifty miles, we fell on him. We went to a Ukrainian town. We saw him and his family. He he had about five, six children, young children, Polish people, cut in pieces, directly in pieces, all of them killed by Ukrainians. So you see it was again...I didn't go with him. If I would be go...gone with him...it was something hold back I shouldn't go. There was no reason, but something...I don't know...no wisdom, no no no shrewdness, no smartness told me not to go, but after then they...the Ukrainians killed them because they were again against the Russian. They were fighting. They lost...their bitterness was they lost their independent Ukraine which they never had in a way. You understand? But their their hatred was so great, so they figured...they...he was against them. He was a Polish. They would kill him. We came back to Rovno, to town. This is a new chapter starts. Do I have to...I would like to stop for a minute.

Q: OK. OK. Why don't you...yeah, we can stop now. Why don't you take a...

A: I I I am thinking I'm doing better than I thought.

End of Tape #2



Tape #3

...town, small town, to kill not so much individual Germans but to kill the livestock, to kill the food, to kill what they...you know this Ukraine, that was the best gift from there, so they had a hit mission to kill, to burn livestock and and corn and wheat...food for the German army. This was what they did. They avoided Germans. Naturally where army was they were too big because we were too small, but our main mission was to sub\_\_\_\_\_, to cause the Russians to un...uh explosive train, train with ammunition or what every...every train went with soldiers or with ammunition, so what happened the trains are going to the front. They had to go through the woods because everything was woods there so wherever the train went, we had missions to destroy the trains, to burn the trains. Once you are...in the beginning was very easy because we went through \_\_\_\_\_. The train...the train came and we put in uh explosives. Then they cut...they took Ukrainians and whatever Germans and they cut down paths and it was very hard, so we had to hide. We had to put...the Germans never knew where it's going to hit, but they knew more or less where the partisans are so we put...what they did they they they started to use empty wagons in the front. When it...the ammunition will go up, the empty train should come and the train should stop and they should go further. Fix it and go further, so we had...our mission was harder so we had to wait and let the empty trains go through and when the train came, the real train came...it was right after and they had on the top soldiers with machine guns, with heavy machine guns and if they saw any movement, they stopped and they had their very, very...they had hundreds of soldiers in in in the big trains with this heavy ammunition to the front watching them, so the minute they saw any movement, they stopped and they were after us, so we had to stay there, watch, put in the explosives and stay in the back in the woods, one side and the other side and when the train came in to detonate. Once they did, it was a tumult and they start shooting. Partisans were hit. Partisans were killed, but we didn't have no mission to fight anybody, any Germans. To kill a German or \_\_\_\_\_, this was not our mission. Our mission was to escape. This was because there was no reason to...the only...the mission was to do that much damage that the train should not...once they start burning, it was ammunition then \_\_\_\_\_. Especially we were looking for oil and gas. They had to...every train had also a lot of gas, you know, for the tanks. That was the main thing because once it started burning, the whole train went and it also interrupt...interrupted the...everything for the war effort. This was the \_\_\_\_\_...and we had also every few days planes came, throw us in ammunition because we didn't have it. We couldn't build it, but planes came in. We had torches and they came in and and the Germans were there. Plenty times the Germans came with planes and they were shooting us down. We had to be pretty careful because they were strong. They were powerful and we were under the ground, but this was the main mission is to go in there...but they were also watching. Planes were watching, flying through to go in and to detonate the trains. I didn't do...we didn't do it every day, not everybody. It was organized. Some people did that, some that...we didn't do every second day. That was not...our mission was very nerve-breaking, very very dangerous and it was I would say I went twelve, fifteen times to do that all the time while I was there in the partisans. Because they had also more experienced, older...they were also...we were young, you know, especially me. There was more experienced people what had through (ph), and they wanted...they didn't send me just

out to to to do it to get killed. You understand? So...but they did send out and we went out just like anybody else, but not as often as the experienced, older soldiers. They were...they were trained...more trained than I. They had schooling. They had...you understand? But we went as helpers. I was not as the prime, the prime soldier, but we went just...the bullets cut us just like them. That's uh...that's what...that's the story what I...what I remember.

Q: OK. Let's go back uh to where you were before, how you returned to Rovno with the Russian army.

A: Oh. How we returned? We saw the soldiers who went to Rovno. We went with the...

Q: OK. This is...this is uh what year...just to back up, so this is what, in 1943?

A: I think it was already the beginning 1944. I really don't remember the date.

Q: But it was winter?

A: Winter. The Russian came in. They took Rovno and a few weeks later we came to...we saw a column, you know...not the main army but just one part of the of the army, you know, on horses. It was not tanks, not the big...the heavy...because it was the woods and they just happened to go through. We went with them, and we went with them. We went to Rovno and Rovno was already free and we actually went...all what they survived went to one house, and we stayed there two, three days, not longer. And they surrounded us. After three days...

Q: They?

A: The Russian army and they took every young, able-bodied man to the army. They took us to the army. There was not too many, you know, but whoever...see, whoever didn't live in that building what we we came because people...there was other people, survivors, which we didn't know. Whoever they didn't know, they didn't...they didn't...but we knew. We were like naive and came. We thought that the war is over for us. If we meet...the war started. You understand? Under normal circumstances, the war should have been over. The Russians came in. We came back. The war should be over. All of a sudden being Russia was Russia, they took us. We told them we fought...we fought already. We were partisans. There was nobody to talk to. We still have...that's what they said. The Germans are not finished yet. We were not in Berlin yet. So they took us to Russia, to deep Russia. They send us to school to be to be preparing for the army. They knew already with us that we knew what we're doing. While I...starting a very...a very tricky story with the army. While I was in the army, they also took thousands of Ukrainians which they...and they...and they...Russia had a policy at that time which I knew and and later I found out that they don't take Ukrainian and send on that front where they home but they have to send them to a different place because they were in strange territory because they didn't trust them. **And the Russian didn't care that I'm Jewish, that I am...I'm not a...I'm not running for the Germans.** They were all one. The Russian policy doesn't mean anything but their policy

was that all the people from Rovno, to take to a strange front, to the opposite, not to...not...to strange territory, and I wind up with a division what ninety percent were Ukraine, from Rovno, from \_\_\_\_\_, which the biggest nightmare for me. Why? Because I knew that they all enemies. They all Fascists, just like the Germans. The same Ukrainians what...you understand the \_\_\_\_\_, and the Bulbas, this what what they were killers are here in the army with me together, and I knew that I would be shot every minute in the back. Who will know? Who will care? One night I was on the front. For me it was one nightmare. On the front was already a different story. I was with a heavy machine gun and maybe sixty to a hundred feet...you know, the front is here and the Germans were on the other side, and I always kept two grenades with me in case the Germans catch me not to catch me alive. You know, it was a a fear which it was in me. Dead was not a ques...there was no fear. That itself was nothing because I went through so many times that it really became like a like a play...suffering. I was scared. So instead of the Germans should catch me, I better kill myself, so I kept two grenades in case of something happen, and one night I was standing with my machine gun in the front. On the other side were Germans, and five Ukrainian from my...I heard noise. Five Ukrainian tried to run over to the Germans. Four I wounded and one I killed, you know, because I thought the Germans are coming to me. They send out Russians in the morn...in the morning and they caught the four and they said they wanted to go to the Germans. They were not the only ones. The whole division would have gone over to the Germans, because their heart was not in Russia. Their heart was with Germans. I was a hero. Next day they took twenty thousand...the the the headquarters from the army made a big...see Russian like propaganda. In order to give heart to the army, they are experts in propaganda, and they had to...every day was hours of propaganda and hours of inter...you know, to fight was something because there was no other belief. There was no food, but they had to give something so they gave propaganda, you know, to bring out, to fight until death for the...they didn't say they're fighting for the father...for the Communism. In that time the policy changed. They're fighting for their fatherland, also for the motherland. \_\_\_\_\_, the motherland for \_\_\_\_\_. The motherland everybody understood, what the motherland. Communism was not too many takers, so this went on...there was probably was twenty, twenty-five thousand soldiers. It was a general. It was...it was the whole..whole few divisions together after that deal, and they asked me I should give a speech. I was never a speaker. My Russian wasn't too good, but I remember the speech what I gave. I gave a speech that we have to fight. We have to go forward, you know. I wrote one of the \_\_\_\_\_ speech, but I remember it by heart, that every step...

Q: Repeat the speech, if you say you can remember. That'd be...

A: Yes, I remember. Friend \_\_\_\_\_, you know, this friend...I was under the Germans. It's true. And I saw...I didn't talk like a Jew. I talked like a Russian. And I saw what the German doing to our brothers and sisters, Ukrainians, Jews, Polish, that they're killing them. They destroy them, that nobody except the German race is important. But deep down I heard that the German...the biggest mistake, we were talking in the army, that they're killing prisoners, Russian prisoners, in that time already that the Russians knew that the Germans are killing thousands of Russians and you have to fight not for...we're not fighting against Russia. We

have to fight against Germans because they're killing us because we are sla...we are under...under \_\_\_\_\_, sub-human. We...now I'm talking as a Russian. You understand? We are sub-human...not as a Jew but as a Russian...and the Germans, if they catch us, they're killing us because we are not the German race. They are the high race. So I had to talk to them in the same language and I said that I saw what they're doing to us and I was there and I came back and I'm fighting now with you together and every step what we're going forward, closer to kill the beast, we are helping humanity. We are helping ourselves, making short and sweet. And there were tremendous...tremendous...you know, they they were happy with my speech, you know, and I and I talked to it what I meant with my heart because \_\_\_\_\_. I knew that they are the only ones what they can kill the Germans. See, that minute there was no Ukrainian anymore, but I was scared that the thousands of Ukrainians were there and they will hear this speech and I wouldn't live. The following night while I was there came over to me a man, an officer. This is getting a little bit very...and he said are you...are you the in the partisans. Yes. Are you a Ukraine? Are you Jewish? Yes. He didn't have no insignia, no nothing. Do you know who I am? I said no. He said how were the Ukrainian behaving? I said they were behaving...because I already shot four, you know, wounded so they knew that I'm not from them. He knew already. How did they behave? They were anti-Russian, anti-Polish, anti-Jewish and for everything they were for Germans. You know a lot of them here? I said I know people here what they killed Jews during the war. And I know one what was a \_\_\_\_\_ but he...this one was there too. The one...he was a teacher, but I found out that he was leaning for Communism what what...in the \_\_\_\_\_ what told me we don't kill Jews, he was dead too. He became friendly with me. Again, he saved me. He told me that. I was friendly with him and I was telling him everything, and I said there's hundreds of them here what what from Tuchin, from Rovno, what... Do you...can you give us the names? I am from \_\_\_\_\_. Yes. I heard the name but you you don't repeat that name.

Q: Can you explain what it is?

A: \_\_\_\_\_ is uh CI...CIA. Contra...what is the the CIA...\_\_\_\_\_ is contra...uh what is it?

Q: Central Intelligence Agency.

A: Central Intelligence...contra...central intelligence \_\_\_\_\_. In that time I couldn't understand Russian good. I though bad. \_\_\_\_\_ is bad. And this...but it's spelled different. The name is \_\_\_\_\_. That's a very secret, top secret organization which they had a right...they were above everybody, above the \_\_\_\_\_ which was very scaricy (ph), very fearsome, but they had a right to go to any any officer, any general, anything. They were the upper, upper without question. It's not...even here I think uh don't have that much right that they had a right to check everything. They were the top \_\_\_\_\_. He is from there, and you are working for us from now on. I really didn't know what he is telling me, what did there...and I want to have...you should check out everybody what was against for the Germans. We know that this division has a lot of traitors and a lot of Ukrainians which killed...did a lot of atrocities and I want you should give me the names. In a way I was very thrilled, to be honest with you, because again we're going back to my main enemies. I didn't know what they do...from

the other side I knew they're going to kill me because even without knowing, but secret, nobody should know. Nobody \_\_\_\_\_, that I should...I know a lot of things, but this man, he knows more names than I do because I really don't know the names. I I can't point out because I...you understand? I wasn't their friend. I only knew what they did. We can't talk to him but you should talk to him that he should give you, and and we gave him a list. Three hundred people...two hundred people, from...all from Rovno, from Tuchin, all the people what were involved what when the police he knew...because he was in the in the \_\_\_\_\_. But after a week there was no names anymore. We we couldn't find any more whom to give. What they did with the people, with the Ukrainians, I really don't know and I don't want to know. I didn't see them what they did with them. They used me and I wanted to be used. After a few weeks, they start coming to me. I said I'm sorry. I don't know anybody else. He start pushing and they can persuade and there was nothing to do, nothing to...you can't get out nothing and I was stubborn. I said no. I found out later they want to get rid of me, the Russian. How to get rid of me? They sent out twenty-four people to catch a German in daytime and I suspect it was organized. I mean they used to it from time to time, but I suspect the main culprit was organized through them. So I don't know...for a few years ago with Russia I would talk like that even, but now I can say it. I suspect they organized to get rid of me because they didn't want to have any witnesses. We were here and the Germans were three...in three ways surrounded so they told us to take...a \_\_\_\_\_ means a tank...a German to find out their position. In the daytime was suicide. It was no much suicide that from twenty-four, twenty-two got killed. One was cut his legs off. He was inside of and I was wounded in my arm and my leg inside off and I was only one what survived in that massacre (ph). Again, I was cut off from my my legs here. My...here I was bleeding from my from my...near my heart. I thought my heart was hit, was bleeding. And I was laying and I throw away my machine gun and I run back. I run back while I was wounded and bleeding because they started for an hour to...the the...they thought that we're going in from the front to fight them. They started for an hour to bombard, you know, to...our position. Didn't mean nothing in the army because one did that, but it didn't happen too often. Meantime I was bleeding and I thought I'm dying (laughter) because the blood was coming so strong that I thought my heart is wounded. Came over an officer. I don't know who it was. Again, without insignia and he said where's your gun. I'm going to shoot you. Why did you leave your gun there? So I said....you see in Russia one thing...if you gave your blood for the \_\_\_\_\_, for the country, the minute when your blood runs, nobody can touch you. You are a holy man, you know. Later they can do whatever they want, but the minute when your blood runs, you can say anything. So I told him why don't you go there and catch...take my gun. You understand? In the meantime, while they stopped shooting, the general which not a political, which didn't know, heard that the guy what gave the speech is wounded, and he gave a special order (crying ?)

Q: Take your time. Take your time.

A: Immediately they bring me to a hospital. It was a very dangerous because you had to go up hills but the the Germans saw it, and they \_\_\_\_\_, but he said without...you know, once you get an order...I want to bring him alive to the hospital. Came an order from the general, right

away was help because I was laying there and bleeding. Nobody touched me. Nobody came, and this is not normal. You know, usually they would send somebody. They were dead. But there was nobody to talk and now I'm talking that for the time out of it. They brought me into the hospital. Luckily...I remember they put me to sleep and they operated on me and a Jewish doctor \_\_\_\_\_. You know, \_\_\_\_\_ because everybody knew me. They knew me from the speech. The nurses said look at this. The boy what gave those...this speech is already wounded, you know. Not that I was such a great hero, but they knew me from this speech and that I was I was there, you understand. Normally, a plain soldier didn't come and gave speeches for for for an army for twenty-five thousand people, so they gave me the biggest care and everything and I went to the hospital. After after three weeks I I recuperate and I was recuperated and the Russians were not too great lovers of my nation too, my...at that time, everybody...and I I I remember...I I recuperated already and I was still \_\_\_\_\_ a little bit and I had...I got already two medals. I got a medal already in the partisans. I got a medal because I was wounded. I got, you know, a few things. Came over a captain and he said why aren't you on the front. Why don't you fight? And I was a partisan and I went though much and I hit him once and twice. To hit an officer, a different story. He called me Jew too. Why don't you fight? And again, at that time for me, to tell me I don't want to fight and all from a Russian...I expect it from everybody else, you know, but from a Russian I...in my youthfulness, in my \_\_\_\_, I expected some compassion, something what I went through. You understand? So when I hit him, I didn't care what's going to happen, so he said \_\_\_\_ why don't you fight, again. And I recognized that he didn't have any medals. He was not a army officer. He was not in the front. You see, there's all kinds...there's there's field commander officers what they're fighting and to fight on the front, in the Russian front, you didn't last more than a week or two. Either you were dead or you were in the hospital. If you were lucky, you were in the hospital because human life was not very much cherished, you know, in the army. If you were on the front and fighting, you didn't last long. Either you were wounded, you were lucky, and it was a wound you could be healed, or you were dead, because they put masses, you know, they gave the order and they went, they went masses of people. People didn't count. So so I saw that he wasn't there, so he put me into the they call me to the higher and naturally they call me to the political, the assistant. And the political heard me speak, my speech. Political every...in every army...in the army, the Russian army, every battalion, every thing has a...has an officer of the army always and they had a political officer. The political officer in a lot of cases has more to say than the army. Not in fighting but everything else because he is the political officer. The political officer knew that I am a friend, that I am...they took away...they kept me...they took away the...they didn't take away me. I don't think they kept the \_\_\_\_\_ anymore. You understand, because again I had somebody watching over me and he knew that what I went through and what \_\_\_\_\_. Anyway, I was there and then they, they discharged me and they asked me what...what I wanted to...should I go further?

Q: Sure.

A: I realized then I had enough. The war was going on. They were dying, people what I knew every day so...and I also realized my love for the Russians...you understand...was not too

great because I don't really fight for something, so I said I want to go to school. I was very good in politics. In Russia, politics is very important. Like I told you, I had a very good in history, so when they heard, you know, the division or \_\_\_\_\_, they asked the general who came in there, they asked how the political...everyday you had indoctrination of policies, you know. The Russians didn't know from day to day...they didn't even know there who is Stalin, so they said he is a great man, but you had to answer to Stalin as \_\_\_\_\_. You understand? This was the true way. The Russians, the average Russian...he's a great man. Everybody knew he's a great man, but they didn't know what position, whether he's chief of staff...you know, so they always pushed me out I should answer. So they want to send me to political school. I didn't want to go to political school because I didn't like the system, and I didn't want to be...to stay there. Once I knew I'm going to political school, I stayed there and it's not mine home. It's not there. I want to go back, so I went to tank...to tank school and became...that's what it is...I became a...tank school took three months and they taught how to fight a tank and that was a dangerous ar...this tank tank the Russians, they took the toughest guys, and I was very tough. I was very strong \_\_\_\_\_ just at home I was raised very weak, you know, with Monday, Tuesday sick. All of a sudden I became very tough. All that \_\_\_\_\_ from all this life, and tanks were scarce. \_\_\_\_\_. You know, the the the...it's just like the red...Red Beret, you know, tough guy. I went there and I was there once...there we're fighting in there and this was when after the war when Lvov (ph) and we came to the \_\_\_\_\_ and I rode the tanks when they surrendered. We got an order and we were fighting different fights. Different tanks were burned and out. I was burned once in a tank, but this is just in the army, what you do tanks. I was told that...they they told us to go in...even the Germans surrounded, to go forward and shoot and go to the the ocean because we didn't trust \_\_\_\_\_ and we surrounded them, but they didn't shoot back anymore. I came back. We came...you know, it started but before evening, before evening, going back before, I hid myself. A few months before, there was the chief...I was one day standing guard by the general. The chief of the front for the whole front...you know Russia in that time had five...the front means...you know, what the front...do I say it right in English...five different divisions. They needed maybe twenty-five or a hundred...fifty divisions on one front. This was the Leningrad front, on that side. And the chief from the tank co...from the tanks...I was standing in the near his car. The wife came out and start talking to me and I found out that she is Jewish. The only general in the Russian army, a four-star general, so the wife had a daughter, again my age, and I start...they took me in. They start asking me questions and I was telling him all the stories what I went though because I had...even for him in the army, to tell him from the partisans what the Germans did, he wasn't aware. So he said I should be adjutant. I should work for him. I was very \_\_\_\_\_, getting away from the from all the...\_\_\_\_\_ gave me beautiful clothes, \_\_\_\_\_ and I was on staff, an adjutant and I was...he had a higher ranking adjutant than I am but I was the one...orderly I would say. You understand? But I had...I was more than that because I had an insight to him. I could go anytime the wife, the daughter. He was considered four-star general. It was very, very high up. And I was to him until actually when they started the division from April because over there the front was not moving. They didn't do nothing because there twenty-two divisions, they didn't want...it was not so important. They knew they wanted to take it, but they wanted to take first Berlin, so the Russians didn't put in too much. You know, sometimes one side was was standing,

just like in the American army, and they were putting more to push to Berlin because there there only was the ocean with twenty-two divisions and they knew they there's no way for them to escape, so it was dormant \_\_\_\_\_ so there was no real fighting, and while I was not fighting, I was his adjutant. They were preparing, ready, but there was no no danger, no fighting until a few days before they took me to the tank back when they gave the orders to fight. That's how I went into the tank and I wrote that letter that I was sitting in tank. Before I I didn't sit in a tank. I was far away from it. I was in there in the headquarters.

Q: This is just a few days before the end of the war?

A: A few days before the end of the war. Oh I was before fighting there, but until when I became the general's adjutant, I didn't go to a tank anymore, and actually there was no need for it because there was no no fighting, but then they...everybody had an order to go. There was nobody...no no exceptions. When the war...when it ended, when they gave in, I came back to the general and I start thinking about living in Russia. I didn't want to be there. The general told me he'd send me to his Prussia, to get \_\_\_\_\_, you know, they start living it up and he he knew that I know...I'm from Europe. I know about \_\_\_\_\_, to fix him up with a German estate, you know, and I told him that I wanted to go back. My...it came an order in that time an order from Stalin in the paper I found, that all the Polish nationalists can go to the Polish army, so I went in...through the general I went in to the the...actually to the higher, to the political, the higher political from the army, from the whole army and I asked him I want to go to the Polish army. They told me you are a Jew. You are not a Polack. All of a sudden, I became a Jew. And you can't go back. I realized that I'm in trouble. I can't go...all of a sudden I became a Jew and I'm not a Pole but I'm a Pole. Officially they said...but Stalin said in this paper, what he said is good but what we do is a different story. I had enough confidence to the general to...it's only a few minutes more and I will finish...to tell him the truth, and I told him that my mother is is Polish, not Jewish and she is in Kielce and I want to see her. I didn't see her for five years. I want to go back and if they don't want me to go back, I escape. I run away back. I desert. So he said if you desert, they'll shoot you. I said I would like you should help me out. He took me to Moscow when it was a parade, you know. There, after the war was the greatest parade there. I went with him. I had pretty good, good life. He wanted me to send me to university. I had all the privileges what but one thing what I didn't want to is to be there. That was more than anything else. When after when they they told me I would never go back and they will put me...they will put me to jail if I if I talk even about it and you see in Russia if you talk too much, because I was...anyway \_\_\_\_\_...and you ask too many questions, you didn't survive too long. I asked...there was once a meeting from from the division, our division and they asked us...I asked a question, a very naive question but a very normal question to me as a westerner, you know, and even if I was young, but I learned it and I read about it and I asked a question how come that in before Hitler, the \_\_\_\_\_ was the chief of the Communist Party in Germany...wanted to make with the with the with the Socialists, they wanted to go together against the Fascists. That's a fact. Morris \_\_\_\_\_...I read about it and I thought it's a normal thing to ask. If if you're not raised in a in a Communist country, you don't know what you can do and what you can't do. Being naive, I said why, if the if the \_\_\_\_\_, if the Communist with the Socialist would have



gone together, they could have won the Fascists and Hitler wouldn't come to power. The truth is...I found out later that it is true...but Stalin said no because he didn't want any Comm...any Socialists should win in Germany. He wanted Fascists. This way he thought there will be a revolution and they...I don't want to go into politics. They will kill and they will...the Communists would take over. But the question...they told me I will get ten years if I wouldn't have political inter...help in knowing...they also realized that I didn't know what I was talking, but mostly the political...if a Russian would ask, he wouldn't see the sun anymore because this was a no question. Something what Stalin did that that was enough. Anyway, the general told me...I had to put in something from political. I couldn't I couldn't help it. You can cut out. I don't care, but this was a naive question which had a very...actually the whole...I'm sure historians are thinking about it and talking about it and it was...it's a true thing and a sixteen year old boy asked that question, and he could have gotten ten years jail or never see the sun, but that was their their system. The general told me he can do one thing for me. He wants to help me, but I take my life in my hands. He can give me a pass, you know, in Russia in order to travel to Moscow. And from there I'm on my own. If I escape, if I...you know, from Leningrad...I was in Leningrad in that time...to Moscow was already as a as a soldier. So I said fine . And also he can help me in Bresk (ph). He can get me to Bresk that I want...he wants something there himself. In Bresk was the border between Poland and Russia. He can give me a passport to to Bresk, that he needs something for the army. He found out something is there what he needs for the tanks, some factory. He can get me there. From there, to get over to the other side, if they if they catch me, I'm...you know...I went to Moscow. I was very grateful. I had a pass. I was very grateful. This was the greatest miracle to me which all the stories what happened, and you see I was already...while I was working for a general and my outlook, my mind \_\_\_\_\_. I saw once a general and I didn't salute. So he said and how come you don't salute to me. You're a soldier. You don't...I said there's so many you are like dogs. Why should I salute. A young general...he looked at me. Where do you...who are you? I said I'm working for General so and so. He let me go. \_\_\_\_ once you get used to them, you know, to the higher echelon, it was much easier than with the lower. The lower Russians are very tough, very indoctrinated, very...

Q: Why...why don't you tell me about how you got into Poland?

A: OK. This I want to tell you now. I went on a train in Moscow. I was dressed very nicely because I was adjutant. I wasn't dressed like every soldier, and while I was sitting in the in the...I was looking where to find a place and then I saw a general sitting there, a four-star general from the \_\_\_\_\_. I never saw in my life before a four-star general \_\_\_\_\_. There was only \_\_\_\_\_...you heard about...I don't know if you heard about \_\_\_\_\_...Marshall \_\_\_\_\_, the Chief from the \_\_\_\_ over there, and after him was four-star general and he had a wife and he had a very pretty...I was lucky with with girls. He was...he had a pretty young daughter, you know, sixteen year old but the wife was very nice and there was room. Normally a soldier would never dare say can he sit there. It it's just unheard of but I was used to be around generals. You understand? And I asked the general if I am allowed to sit here. I was sitting. The train was going for four days. It was a long trip to Bresk. I had

money, a lot of money, in my purse. In comparison, a lot of money in rubles to buy food, and even he was a four-star general, some surprisingly he didn't have any adjutant, anybody with him, and they didn't have enough food. You see, even even the high...so I run out on the station...brought milk, brought chocolate, bought for money. Gave it to the daughter. Gave it to the wife. He didn't...I wouldn't touch him because I was too scared, but gave it to the wife. After that day or two, the wife start to like me, \_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_ ...

Q: We're we're we're running out of time, so you have to, you know...

A: OK. OK. We're running out of time. He asked me...she asked me what...where I'm going. I said I'm going to Kielce because my mother's Polish and I want to...so she said, you know, this spoke to husband in Russian, this Pole, I like him. Do you speak Polish? I said yes, I was Pole...actually I forgot already Polish because I spoke Russian already, so she asked me where...where...what do you do, and I said I'm adjutant to General... He's my friend. You know, the big shots know each other, so I said to him...so he said to me I want you should be for me, work for me. So I said how can I work for you, that I'm... Don't worry. I am from the \_\_\_\_ over there. That's what he said. You know, \_\_\_\_ over that, that's the main. So I said do me a favor. Let my general know that I'm working for you, and I was already helping. I was already officially working for him. We came to the border...can I have five more minutes.

Q: Well, three...three...three minutes.

A: We came on the border. Everybody had to move out and get stamps. This was my question of life and death. Everybody had to move out. When they came in the \_\_\_\_ over there, a major and a captain and they saw him. He said who is this. This is my wife. Who is this? This is my daughter and this is my adjutant. They didn't ask me for passport, and I went through to Warsaw. Because he was too high up they wouldn't dare. We came to Warsaw. The whole government was waiting for him. He was the chief, General Smirnoff (ph), the chief of the Warsaw government from Moscow, and that's how I came. By accident I came through. I didn't have to run or or then I came legally. Then he gave me yet a tank with people to go to Kielce and to see my mother and I changed my clothes and I run away.

Q: And your mother wasn't there?

A: I knew my mother...I I did it secretly but but...and that was the Kielce Pogrom a day later.

Q: Were you...were you there during the pogrom?

A: No. I was there but I wasn't in that house?

Q: So you didn't see...you you you heard about it afterwards?

A: If if I would be there...if I would be in there later, if I would know, I was there with a tank

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with soldiers. It's it's ironic but no, I wasn't there. I was there in in my house where I used to live, but not...the pogrom was in a certain house.

Q: OK. We're going to have to stop right now. Thank you very very much.

**TECHNICAL CONVERSATION**

End of Tape #3

Conclusion of Interview