

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Natan Gierowitz
July 27, 1995
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PREFACE

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NATAN GIEROWITZ

July 27, 1995

Tape 1

Q: Mr. Gierowitz, would you begin by telling me your name, where you were born and what year?

A: My name is Natan Gierowitz, and I was born November 27, 1907, in a little _____ called _____, which is not far from a larger Jewish community, Bialystok, in the vicinity of Bialystok. I was raised by a grandfather. When I was three months old, my grandfather came and picked me up. My mother was a student at the University of Warsaw and was arrested for socialist activities against the Charles (ph) regime. Since three months old, I was raised by my grandfather. I never saw my mother. I saw my father only once. That was in August, 1940. He was—he escaped from Serbia, some slave labor camp and stopped for a night. I remember, still remember some guy, some man asked me I should go to sleep with him that night. And I refused because I was sleeping—at this time, I was sleeping with my step-grandmother. My grandfather lost two wives, and that was a step-grandmother. I went to school, to the public school in the city, and I became a troubled child. By 12 years old, 13 years old, I was already smoking cigarettes. I would be after the girls in the high school. It was mixed. I remember I would go in the toilets, the partitions, I would go up and look over and kind of—so my grandfather was already widowed. He lost his third wife. So he had a friend—by the way, he was an attorney. He was an attorney. He was a very interesting human being, a big, heavy man. He was drinking a lot of tea, a lot _____. He had a friend, another attorney who suggested to do something with his grandchild. Germany has all kinds of institutions, which is a combination of school and _____. It's very strong discipline. You cannot go by yourself. It's like a military regime. And I was sent to Germany. I came to Germany. I was three years in Germany. I want to tell you that three years in such an institution where only rich children are there, it's a very elegant—show you how to do all your life _____ when you're invited to and so on. So I came back. After three years, I came back. I was about seventeen years old, seventeen years old. And then I went—I was sent to Krakow, and I attended the business school of

the University of Krakow. It's a very good university, by the way. And Krakow is a beautiful city. So I spent a year over there, and I came back, and I got a job at some _____. I met some little ol' boys and so on. I was sitting already with some young people, which I don't know if they're alive _____. We were very active at this time, and we are talking about the end of the '20's, '28, '29. It was a very strong movement _____. This was a group of us sitting and starting _____. I was doing this. I went _____. So then—and that was before service in the British army. Then I went to military service, two years. When I came back, I decided, because the regime and the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers, the relationship from the command _____, I started to think about myself as a Jew, and I joined the _____. It was a very active Jewish socialist democrat movement. I signed the _____ in a little _____ of 12,000 Jews and _____ grandson became _____. Tailors, shoemakers, lower class, that was the mentality of the Jewish community. And _____ grandson became—I remember I was _____. First, I was in jail because I was publicly somewhere making a speech or something. I became very—and after a year, _____ asked me if I would be willing to take the _____. I became an _____. First of all, one of the principles was that we are against any state or immigration _____, anti-Zionist. It was the trust, and we still believed to support together with the Polish movement, the Polish _____ movement. We were together _____. (Inaudible). But we were anticommunist because communists didn't believe in Jewish life _____.

Q: I have one other question, which is whether or not you were raised with a lot of religion and whether you experienced antisemitism.

A: My grandfather was an assimilated Jew. He was Russian culture, spoke Russian, spoke English too. He was a native of _____, so he was a _____ Jew. First of all, I was where it was a little Stetalburg (ph), 12,000 Jews in the 1920's. A Jewish home should be _____. And then in the Stetal (ph), you couldn't go without a cap. He was a Jew walking around without the cap. This was the symbols. So I had religion. (Inaudible). It was not something we should make a religious matter.

Q: Did you experience much antisemitism?

A: In the camp?

Q: (Inaudible).

A: I personally didn't experience, but I knew politics. I knew more or less what the Polish government policy was with the Jewish people, force us out of positions, business positions. My friends wanted to go and study medicine or engineering or something, couldn't be approved for studying in the university. I tell you, one time I had one of my friends who went to college to study medicine in _____.

(Inaudible). That was the policy. There was nothing to support—I tell you, I was sent to _____, which is a city, when the war started, I was there. (Inaudible). Then I came to _____. I functioned as an organizer. I was involved in a strike. There was _____ in the city, big factories belonged to Jews. So I became involved together with the Polish—the socialist and labor movement, and I was _____ six weeks in this factory. As a result, I was arrested, thrown in jail. After _____ about six weeks, I don't remember how much, first of all, I got an infection, a skin infection. I came out and I went to _____. And I became well again, and I continued my _____ and ultimately started the war. In 1939 the war started. The war started. The policy of the _____ was to support this war. This is a war against Hitler. We as Jews, as Pollacks, good citizens of Poland, we have to go. We have to go and fight. So I volunteered. I was not accepted because of my _____. Even then, when the war started, it made a difference between socialist Jew—I was a _____. But I know Russian. I know the language very well. (Inaudible). I was sent to the _____, which took care of me. They introduced me to some guy which was a _____. What the Russian said—what the communist said—the Russian USSR _____ was organizing cooperatives in the villages. (Inaudible). This time it was the USSR service. I knew Russian, and they needed _____. He gave me a job. But before the job, I was invited to the KGB. It's an experience. From 12 midnight I should come to see somebody, the KGB. So I come in at night. This building is a building for the courts, the Polish courts. Now came—and the jail was part of this building. (Inaudible). So you're coming in that big hall—I remember now—and you see the darkness, and you know what KGB is, and you know that you are a socialist, and you know the socialists are social fascists, the Bolsheviks. I said you are in trouble. And you hear

screaming people. These people are being tortured. And you see people are being brought in from the jail with guns this way. You know what the feeling it is. It's a special feeling. So you know—he came for me. After an hour, I was smoking cigarettes _____ and this was my agent for all the time. His existence was partly because of me, to watch if I behave myself or not. And I still was on the job. So I was on the job. I had a normal life, no socialism. I was sitting very quiet. I needn't open my mouth. Keep my mouth shut because, you know, KGB is watching you.

Q: For the record, was it call the KGB then?

A: No. _____ it's called. But we call it _____. KGB is the same as _____. So I was quiet until June 22nd, 1940 or '41, the Bolsheviks, 1941. Russia—the German attacked the USSR. Hitler started his March in Moscow.

Q: One question before you go on, life under the Russian occupation, was that any more difficult for a Jew?

A: Yes and no, because all the businesses were mostly Jewish, so the business people got lost.

(Inaudible). There were some people—Russia was so big that you send away people and you forget about them, especially Jews. It was antisemitism too, but this was the class, you know, especially in countries where they took over so you have to eliminate the class of capitalism. It was a little _____. He was already a capitalist. So basically, it was and it was not antisemitism. Basically, Jews were sitting very, very quiet. Then Germany, in three weeks was fully liberated. (Inaudible). But this part, this part was _____. The _____ was taken over very fast. First came in Hungarian troops which did the job for Russia because Russia couldn't spare any occupation. So _____ came in and Gestapo. Gestapo was everywhere. KGB is Gestapo. When the war started and Russians started to evacuate, it was a _____ publically. Whoever wanted to be evacuated to the Russians should come _____. I didn't know what goes on in Poland where the Germans were already because the policy of Russians at this time was the friendship between Hitler and Stalin. So they wouldn't let us in the papers which were published in this part of the world. There was nothing written about what Hitler is doing to the Jews in Poland _____. So I know German too. I spent three years in Germany _____. I know German well.

(Inaudible). And I know about what the Russian says, and I was right because those who went to the Russians went to live in Siberia and other places.

Q: You didn't know what was going on in Germany?

A: No, in Poland.

Q: But also, did you know what Hitler was doing in Germany?

A: Germany, there was no revolution. They were fighting, and they were winning the war. The Germans were fighting and winning the war. Do you understand? So I was called to answer who was after me. They were crying. The crying became like the family, their own police and so on. And we went through the _____ first, when the Gestapo came in after a week or two weeks, they called in, the Jewish had already—the Jewish had an existing Jewish community council, because according to the law, the Polish law, this was an expression of democracy. Jewish had the right to elect their own representatives and a council which would deal with education, _____ and welfare and so on and the right to tax the Jewish population. So when they came in, when the Germans came in, the _____ had already an organized group. They came to talk and demand. So the president of this council was called in and was asked to submit a list of everybody who belonged to the so-called Jewish intelligence, teachers, medical profession, law profession, a list of all these people to submit to the KGB, to the KGB. A list was submitted, and after a few days, each person who was on this list was called in to the KGB _____ the Gestapo. Those people never came back. (Inaudible). It was a liquidation of the intelligence, so there was no leadership anymore between the Jews. (Inaudible). And then came the night, the first night of Rosh Hashanah. At night, police, German police, was going from house to house. Before this, each house or each home which was Jewish, you had to put on your window a Star of David. So the non-Jew knew the Jews. If you were a Jew, you know where to go. So at night, they were going from house to house and telling them, you are going to labor camp, get your belongings and come out to the marketplace. There was a marketplace, typical Eastern European. So we went out. There was already a few thousands Jews. There was trucks already. The old people _____ were loaded in the

trucks and they left. The rest were walking into the Jewish cemetery. The cemetery was already prepared and the Jewish would come to this—

Q: Pit?

A: Uh-huh. There was a desk. They were about seven or eight Gestapo. (Inaudible). There was all kinds of litter. And a Jew would come from the desk, one of them talk back, down. (Inaudible). Over there in the back were people, about 5,000 or 6,000 _____. By 7 o'clock in the evening, they stopped killing. So everybody who was in the back was still alive. And they said, go home. And everybody went home. So this night must have been about 4,000 or 5,000 people. We left about 4,000 or 5,000 of our people _____. And after this, he gave an order to close the ghetto. 4,000 or 5,000 people less, you don't need so much housing for these goddamn Jews. So the Jews had to move out and live in places where they put people _____. So we moved out; the Gentiles moved in. They moved in. Okay. I happened to live in a building _____ with three or floors _____. A lot of Italians were working. They were in construction. So it was important labor. So this building belonged to an Italian. The rest—he lived by himself, was a young man, he lived by himself. (Inaudible). I had a room by one of the tenants which _____ was a couple and two young girls. So I lived over there. And after this _____, you have to get used to it. Somebody this time didn't come back. I don't take it so tragically. It happened. This was Germany. This was what we went through, and this is what we would still go through. (Inaudible). It's something which—first of all, I think it was—you're all of a sudden isolated from the _____. You're isolated. You always have in your mind that somebody will come and take you out. You don't know what or when. They will take you out, and you'll never come back. Your mind is being transformed into something which thinks of the most tragic way of dying. Because people were going to war. _____ we want 50 people to go to labor for tomorrow morning. There have to be 50 people. There are still rich people in the ghetto. The rich people are in the same ghetto that I am. But the rich people have something, a diamond or the gold or _____. (End of Tape 1)

Tape 2

Q: You were talking about the mentality.

A: Mentality. And then there's a lot of—you are ready to—if you want to look and see what is the reality, what will be the end here. The end is you have to die here. (Inaudible). You should be able to sit during the war, and then you will come out. You have to die here, period. So it's now or later. So first of all, the people could buy something in the market, could physically _____ because there was no temple. There were no schools for the children. There was nothing, nothing. There was an order that each Jew, you know, they have this _____. After we shaved, the cynicism was so far that even they remember the beard after we shaved. You know that all the Jewish are very -- you know, they are—this is more important than _____. So what would become such an _____ a member of the Gestapo and walk around _____ of the ghetto and they'll see the beard _____. So that was the ghetto. Then there was a part of the ghetto was a place where they would bring in Jews from some other places _____. There was part of the ghetto. We knew what was going on. And then what happens, as I said, the poor people are getting—starting to revolt in the ghetto. Sure. They were hungry. (Inaudible). That was the ghetto. It was a nice president. It was _____. I was witness to a very nice person who was the president of the ghetto _____. Anyway, so I made up my mind that I have to go out. (Inaudible). I'll die of hunger or I'll die because _____. No. I have to go out. I want to go out and do something.

Q: How long were you in the ghetto?

A: The ghetto was closed in October, 1942, and I left in May, 1943.

Q: The ghetto began in October '41?

A: No. Yes. October, November, yes. I left in May. So I mention that this house belongs to the Italian. The Italian was smart. He wanted to buy _____. So he said to me, Natan, do you want to make a few bucks? (Inaudible). Buy me _____. Buy me gold. (Inaudible). Some people would come from _____. He would sell it and make profit. So I started in the business. I was always _____ few thousand dollars _____.

Q: It was easy to come and go from the ghetto?

A: I had a—if you got a job, worked outside the ghetto, you could go out, but you had to come in for the night. You couldn't stay overnight over there. This same _____ had his office, his construction office. (Inaudible). They knew that I want to go, and he knew that I wanted—he said, here is a Polish man from the Polish underground. He will sell you papers, a birth certificate. He will sell you a birth certificate for \$3,000, a birth certificate, and you can go. So I met this guy. I gave him \$3,000. I brought this paper. My name was _____. They told me, we are going back to Krakow. (Inaudible). I said I want to go to Russia. I told them, I have to be very careful at the station, the railroad station. They said, you know what, we are going to Krakow. We will be with you. (Inaudible). He was very elegant, nice suit. I had such _____ a special suitcase with pajamas. In case somebody looks, you should know that I'm just a regular—they went to Krakow. They said goodbye, and I'm on my own going to Warsaw. It was the worst idea. I wanted to find some comrades from _____. I wanted to do something, not just sit around. I'll die anyway. It's always you'll die anyway, so do something. I took a room in the hotel. I told you before that the hotel was _____ and at night, it was interesting. It was in my mind to watch through the window and understand, see how the soldiers _____ the movement. Anyway, one day, I decided how can I get in contact with the ghetto. Again, I met—no, I went to see the ghetto _____. The entrance was—one side was a Gentile, non-Jewish part, and there was a big, tremendous building which went—the entrance—it had two entrances. One was _____ and the other was _____. So you came in, you had a police on this side. You go in. Then you go out. He asked to bribe him. You have to pay him. So I went in and I went in and I looked at the _____. (Inaudible). What my attention was the _____, transportation. Do you know what _____ is? It's a Japanese—a man to get an erection. (Inaudible). Very elegant men and women.

Q: In the ghetto?

A: In the ghetto. The _____ is here. Have a good time. We would sit and wait. We have money. There is a beautiful restaurant. (Inaudible). It's daytime, 1 or 2 o'clock, I don't remember what it was. Full of people, music and dance and men and women, elegant dancing.

Q: Jewish people?

A: Jewish people.

Q: In the Warsaw ghetto?

A: In the Warsaw ghetto. This was sick. We will die tomorrow, so let's have a good time. That was the impression in the ghetto.

Q: What about the restaurant?

A: I am in this building where you're going in. When you come in, it's like—I don't know if you had a chance sometimes in the stock market on Wall Street to see _____. Business, business, non-Jewish, Pollacks, _____ and the Pollacks and business _____. You see some steps outside, a guy which I know very well. I remember him. He was the pianist in _____. He was a _____. It was at this time in the 20's and was the year the pianist was playing the music. So this guy was the pianist, and I knew him very well. He saw me, _____ he said. He called me by my name, my Russian name. _____ he calls me. He's a very nice guy, and I spent with him already a few hours, and I told him what my purpose is. So he made up he was trying to find somebody and _____ the time would come again. I left again. I left him \$10 and I left. (Inaudible). So let's see _____ occupy Poland. So I had friends who survived. He, his wife, two boys. (Inaudible). I tell you how close we are, if I told you I came back from after six weeks being in jail, I needed \$150 to go into—to be taken care of. I had nothing. I needed \$150 to pay in advance. Do you understand? We were meeting in the same restaurant. He was working and I _____. He said, what's new? I tell him the story and tell him it's \$150. He takes it out and says, here. This was the beginning of a friendship. When I was living in the ghetto in _____, he and two sisters. One sister didn't make it, but one sister survived, and he survived. In this same building, this lady with these two children was a widow, so they married each other. They are here _____. One is a consultant with Hughes Aircraft, big shot engineer. He gave me _____. His sister who survived was married to a non-Jew. (Inaudible). He had no right to be with a Jewish woman. If Gestapo would find out, he would be the same—he would have the same _____ as a Jew which lived with a non-Jewish woman. Do you understand? Anyway, they were a

very nice couple, and he was very nice, and he told me you want—the best way is you go to _____, if you know where _____ is. (Inaudible). This is a very long Polish phrase. Rich people would go to _____, beautiful country. I know this place. He tells me, you go to _____ and in _____ you have to find somebody. Somewhere in _____ there is a place called _____. The water eyes or something _____. There are three waters coming together, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The best way is to try to go to Hungary. From Hungary, a lot of people would go _____. So I went upstairs. I was thinking, you cannot move all of a sudden because of the dogs watching, barking. I just gave up. I said to myself, _____. I went back. For the first time _____. I saw the first time a guy who was in _____ in Poland. (Inaudible). He wouldn't say nothing. You couldn't provoke him to talking. He said, let me alone, don't bother me.

Q: This was around the summer of 1942?

A: Yeah. He was afraid. So I'm sitting over there going back to Warsaw. I'm going to visit some other friends who were over there, he and his wife and his mother-in-law. This guy was a guy who was an official of a bank in Warsaw before the war. There were a lot of Polish community _____.

(Inaudible). I told him, listen, I'm crazy. I cannot—I have to go. I wanted to go. I want to go outside. He made contacts with the Polish underground. In the meantime, there is a lady which was my first love somewhere far away from Warsaw. It was _____. When the Bolsheviks _____ as a doctor, M.D. (Inaudible). Beautiful woman, very beautiful. Looks like ten Gentiles, blond and very elegant and everything. I'm getting in touch, and I know _____. Come on out _____. I tell her who it is. (Inaudible). I said, _____. We are ready to go. (Inaudible). We would live together, _____, nothing special to sleep together but to be together because _____ doesn't come here in your mind. I want to save her. I want to save her. (Inaudible). I went and I brought her to Warsaw. (Inaudible). And she was a very capable lady. She wanted to do some shopping at that store. (Inaudible). My friend who had the Polish contacts. So I called him, and I said, I want to do something. You have to do me a favor. At the same time, you'll receive some money as soon as possible. He said _____ is the city when you come to Krakow, you have to change trains. You have to wait

_____. 4 o'clock in the morning we have to _____. (Inaudible). I should go in this _____ to be able to make small sacrament _____. Okay. (Inaudible). She said, please don't do it. Something happened, please, she begs me. I said, oh, women's intuition and ignored it. Anyway, I go and buy a ticket for round trip, and I'm going down _____. I go down _____ on the train and _____ special police to watch the railroad. I'm with my _____. He came to me and he said, Polish, Jewish. I said, what? Let's go to the police. We'll check. (Inaudible). I said, how much do you want? I had three 50's, \$150. It wasn't much. I didn't take money because sometimes the Germans would stop the train and look because all the black market was going to trains. So I didn't want to take it because I need money _____. And I gave him I take out, I said, there's my money. So he takes two 50's and gives me 50 back and said, go. So I survived. The second time, when I was in the Warsaw ghetto and I came out, I came out and gave the policeman _____ and I walked and I feel somebody's after me because you have the feeling like somebody is always after you. Some people aren't paying attention, but I think he looks at me. Somebody is after me. And you look and see a man _____ until he comes and says, you're Jewish. So I sat and talked to him, blah, blah, blah, and went into a bar, drink a bottle of Vodka. (Inaudible). I had a kilo. A kilo is two and a half bottles. It was in the chimney. So I had the money. And he asked me what I'm doing here. I told him that _____ and to buy saccharine because the Jews were so smart they were making saccharine in the ghetto with the factory. (Inaudible). No sugar, saccharine. I give him this story, and he said, here's my address. Go back to _____ in case you need something and you come and get in touch with me. (Inaudible). So I'm going and I'm going to Krakow. It's 7 o'clock at night. You almost don't see any people. It's October 4th-5th, which was I was arrested in October the night of 5th-6th. (Inaudible). I'm still 30 years old. Today I'm '87. It's 30 years old. Come on, what are you drinking, Pollack? (Inaudible). So I sit, and so I'm going to _____ with the baggage or something and ask him where there's a place because hotels are all taken. So he takes me to such houses occupied _____. Today it is bed and breakfast, something like that, but not as elegant and as nice. It's in Poland. And he tells me, _____. She gives me a room and a bed. I'm undressing and putting on pajamas and getting ready for bed. And

somebody _____. Open. He said open. _____ and right away _____. I knew this was not Gestapo. This was military police. So I knew already. Do you see what they're doing? They're taking him to the Gestapo. They're taking _____. (Inaudible). So I'm starting to think, and he hits me. As soon as he hits me, I said, yes, I cannot take it. I do not _____ and I cannot hit back. I have to give up. I'm ready for this. I was ready. Yes. I got arrested. He brings me to still not Gestapo, still military police who are stationed, the police station, the military police station. They put me in a cell, and I put up my collar, and I fell asleep. Then somebody wakes me at 8:00 in the morning. The sergeant calls me in and starts to ask—he had my wallet. I had some pictures. They didn't take it. And I started to talk to him. I said, I know _____. This time was already _____. I said, I need you _____ found outside of his place, this ghetto or places where he has to be, arrest and execution. So I know _____. But I start _____. And I tell him to send me to the Gestapo. I know what Gestapo does. (Inaudible). Take me out and _____. He said, what are you talking about? (Inaudible). He said, you will work and help us to win the war. Anyway, he gives me—after ten minutes, here comes an older soldier, and we start working, and I know that I work for the Gestapo. This I know. I go and I start talking to him in German and tell him _____ take me to the Gestapo. You know what the Gestapo is, what Gestapo is going to do with me and give him all the smear (ph). The street cars would come to a stop, and here come the street cars to a stop. (Inaudible). And he said to me, go. He let me go. I'm jumping inside. He's jumping after me. (Inaudible). I talk to him. He wasn't sure. Here are a lot of people. I could not talk to him and tell him to help me. And he brought me to the Gestapo.

(End of Tape 2)

Tape 3

So they brought me to the Gestapo. One man started asking me all kinds of questions. There are pictures in my suitcase. I had photos, my grandfather. It was _____. It was my mother's. We're funny people. I never saw my mother, and I was keeping her picture. It's something. So I said, they are already cremated, forget it. It was a bad excuse. (Inaudible). _____, he says, in the corner, go back. So I am going, and I'm standing this way. Turn around with your face to the wall. I turn around. (Inaudible). The first time that each male Jew was _____. I didn't know that Israel was _____. I think they are coming. I hear two voices, two _____. A conversation begins, what are we going to do with this Israel? (Inaudible). How will we kill the _____? With my legs up and head down. (Inaudible). So you hang me. So after some 20 minutes, 25 minutes, somebody—I know somebody came in. He said, turn around. I look, and I see two policemen from the Ghetto. I recognize them, the cross of David. (Inaudible). Everything is yellow, light brown. (Inaudible). They said to me, come on. I am going down, down, and there is a coach, and there was a horse. We sit down, and I ask him, where are we going? He says, you're going to go in jail. I said, jail? Yes, in the Ghetto, the jail, you go. (Inaudible). I said, you're not going to kill me? They said, we don't know nothing about it. (Inaudible). Only to put you in jail and that's all. And I'm coming to the Ghetto Krakow. The jail was one big room was for men, and the other big room was for women. And the men was about 50, 60 people. (Inaudible). And you're so confused. You don't know what's going on here. I said, what? He said, nothing. This is the jail. (Inaudible). I tell them who I am and what I am. They start to look at me different. (Inaudible). And they're all family. They're family. (Inaudible). There are Jews. (Inaudible). They share with me. They share a lot of things. There are a few older people. The rest was young people. I said, why are we separated? Why can not we be with the women and be with them together? (Inaudible). There was a policeman, a Jew. Gestapo will come in every day and look. If he will see somebody unshaved and say come and kill him. (Inaudible). Right away. Or he didn't like your face, he killed you. (Inaudible). Maybe you play a lottery, you understand? Maybe you will be next. Nobody knows. So I said to this Jewish policeman, I said, what are you doing? We are sitting here on borrowed

time. They are the same, and we are the same. (Inaudible). We want to sit and talk, to be able to talk like human beings. It will be better for us, for them and for us. We want this. (Inaudible). It was established a time 46 or 47, some two hours socializing. (Inaudible). Then it was a man who was a representative of the _____. Germany occupied Poland. During the occupation, the _____ had the right to exist _____ to bring some welfare to the Jewish people. _____ lived in Krakow in the Ghetto. (Inaudible). All of a sudden, I'm getting sent bread, half a bread for me. They find out my name. (Inaudible). He found out. Anyway, we were sitting one week, two weeks. Then came October and December.

Q: Did you learn much about what was going on in the Ghetto or anything else that you didn't know before you talked to these people in jail?

A: No. No.

Q: Did they know anything about the camps? You knew a little bit about (Inaudible).

A: No. Nobody knew. These guys, as I told you, _____. It was a non-Jewish person. (Inaudible). I think December 19 -- about two days, about 16, 17, should shave our heads. Why? I wondered why. This is a _____. (Inaudible). In the Polish, _____. This is a Jewish jail. I have my rights. Anyway, he said, be quiet. He said, we have nothing to say. We are not Gestapo. Gestapo will come and check and see if you are shaved or not, and if not, they will kill you. (Inaudible). So we are shaved. Anyway, the night came trucks, trucks. We are loaded in the trucks. The German occupation knew that we were being evacuated. The people came with bread, loaves of bread. Each one got a loaf of bread. So we're—so the Polish were sitting in Krakow. When the trucks moved, they said, we are going to the railroad station; and at the railroad, we are going to _____. We are going to the railroad station. The transport of thousands and thousands and thousands of men, Pollacks, Gentiles, not Jews. We are the only Jewish part of this transport. Supposedly, it was a transport of 7,000 from all kinds in the occupied Poland. (Inaudible). So they put us in. We are sitting already in the train, and the train moves. These are closed railroads. (Inaudible). Closed. In Europe, they are different. There is a window. There is somewhere a window, a window that a human body can go through. So all of a

sudden, there's every two wagons is a man with a machine gun. It's snow. We are going in the snow on the way from Krakow to _____, which is a few hours' drive by train. It's snow. All of a sudden, the machine gun. What happened? The women started to jump. So after four or five jumped, the train was stopped. And they came into the Jewish part. They said somebody was killed. They knew that there was women there. If at the next stop one will be missing, all of you will be killed. (Inaudible). There was a boy came in one night. One night came in a boy hysterical, a young boy hysterical. What happened? Only you can help me. I have to go. I cannot be here. They are after me. He is a politician. He was sent in the city to buy something or something. And they're after him. They knew. They are looking for him. So he came through the opening—supposedly this jail is on the verge of Ghetto. On the other side is the Ghetto. And in Ghettos there are all kinds of things going on. He said, I'll take you. Let's try to escape from here. But you have to go with me. I need people to go, and we will be on the other side. I'll find you a place. There are friends, comrades there and so on. Anyway, we didn't go, but he was so hysterical. I remember him a lot, a long time, this boy, and I'm sure he just _____.

Anyway, we are going and we are coming to _____. It must be already the end of the day, came to _____. This is a stop of trains. Trains were unloaded, and when you stop and they open the door and say, out, out, out, out, out, out, out, out. Everything is right away, you come. Right away. There are people saying up, up, up, run, run, run. Where do you run? You run. And some people with black and white uniforms, stripes, taking your suitcase away from you, everything from you and pull it away. You are out. You have nothing. And you feel, what happened? You have nowhere to go. Maybe somebody will get killed. And dogs are everywhere. Everything _____ that condition for fear from despair, not to encourage you to fight. Forget about fight. Fight is—you're right about fighting, but you don't do it. It's true. Do you understand? So here comes a _____ and then somebody comes _____.

This voice starts talking to you, Jewish or Polish or German. (Inaudible). You got to the camp. Part of you has been sent to the crematory. Right away. (Inaudible)

Q: Who was the voice?

A: (Inaudible). This commander has the name _____. (Inaudible). _____ is something that everything is all right and _____, kind of goodness and so on because they have it. They control how the _____. (Inaudible). And you're going and you're walking and coming _____. There is a _____, a fence, a big fence, and you see barracks, and you see the sign _____, labor makes you free. (Inaudible). They say you can become unionized, join unions. (Inaudible). We walk, and when you walk, I tell you about the time of the _____. There is an _____ in the mornings and an _____ in the evenings when the commanders come back from work. So there are people, and there are barracks. They are already made. They're already made and put them together already. It's kind of about 350, 400 people. (Inaudible). So each was separate. So there are the people look like _____. People lost everything, the weight and so on, become _____. I was a _____. And then people on the floor can be _____ dead because they have to be counted. You see? Hitler doesn't believe that somebody was—no, you bring him from _____. You bring him back here, and you have to bring him here. He should see him. He should count. And those people were not able to stay on your feet. (Inaudible). And you have bread and you don't know what happened. Hence, one man asking you for bread. They see people with bread, so they're asking you. Can you imagine? And everybody is close _____. They're back from the people who are being _____. (Inaudible). Germany. So what do you do with the bread? (Inaudible). What if you refuse somebody the bread? You don't know that tomorrow you'll be hungry. You don't think about it. They are people. What happens in some places is they go after the bread, 5, 6, 7 people. Right away somebody is there and starts—there is always somebody ready with something to hit you, always. This is the way how you're being greeted in _____. (Inaudible). In my case, we are being placed in a barrack, in about two or three barracks. No _____. Nothing. We sit in these barracks. No food. Nobody gives a damn what happens. We sleep all night. Then the next day, they start to call out people. Here is our transport, separate. So everybody has to stay around. There is a young man with stripes and so on, calls everything in German. Whose name is an A, starts with A, step out. A, B, C, you know. He comes to G, and he said, in Russian, my name in Russian is _____. He knows me as

_____. I look at him, and I am such _____. (Inaudible). His father was a good friend of mine. (Inaudible). He wanted to study medicine, so he couldn't in Poland, so he went to France, in France. In France, during the war, he went to the army, to the French army. This is famous, French attack the Norway, make a landing in Norway and lost _____. Do you understand? So he was between them, and he was a POW, a prisoner of war. When they found out the prisoner of war was Jewish, they sent him to _____. _____ was a camp where the Jews went to be _____. You never heard about _____? It was a _____. So he was in _____, and from _____ he went—in July '42, he came and he's one of the big people would give you the names and write your paper where you are and what you are and everything. You have to fill out a form. He knows everything. So he said—I said, what is going on here? Tell me what's going on. I'll tell you very shortly. A Jew, the life span of a Jew here is 14 days, but—there is a but—I'll try to do what I can, and you have to avoid. You will go to war. There are all kinds of people. There are Kapos (ph). And if you don't work, he doesn't like how you work and what you work, you will not be able to come. You should know this. Here you can beat somebody so long until he's dead and nothing will happen to you. These people who beat you with exception, some exception. Some people were intelligent people too. Some professors who became murderers. (Inaudible). I'll do something for him. So I feel better. I'm getting the name and everything, and I'm going, and we are in quarantine. Everything was quarantine.

Q: What happens in quarantine?

A: Nothing. You see?

Q: Had you already been tattooed and all of that?

A: No.

Q: Not yet?

A: No. We're still waiting. (Inaudible). It was late in the evening already. They started to do this. In the beginning, I tried not to hit my head. (Inaudible). It's so stupid. Anyway, he said to me, don't play _____. So after quarantine, then people were going to different commanders. Three of us from our group were going to _____, young boys.

Q: What's the _____?

A: _____ was a special commander who worked only in crematory. He did everything but _____ . The gas was put through a little window by a German. This was such a holy job. A Jew for sure not, but a non-Jew, a Gentile, no. A German has to do this to murder. So this was under command. What was this other commander doing? In the military, you go, it takes you—and they are talking about crematory. I tell you about crematory. (Inaudible). The crematory, more or less, is very simple. It's a big place with ovens. You go, there is an opening from the oven. It can be 2, 3, 4, 5. And the wagons to take out the dead people and put them in the oven and push. By the way, you start the fire with fat people because they burn better. The technique so far, the German technique and science is you need a fat man, a fat Jew. So push him in the crematory and he will burn. This is everything. When you come out and you have time to think, you think about what I mention. It's something unbelievable. Our children, children takes longer to die from the gas. When the commander guys, this is a big haul, there are all kinds of signs, a shower room. When you come in, you think _____ because you have to undress yourself. The commanders have to help you, men and women. Then you're being shaved, totally shaved, a woman totally shaved. Imagine what that must do to this woman. So this is what he is doing. Then they put them one, one, one in this big _____ which you can put in a thousand people, one by one. So tense, and you put the gas. After an hour, most of the people are on the floor. Children not yet. Children took longer to die. (End of Tape 3)

Tape 4

So children are still standing up. So again, the commander has to come. And I don't know. So the children have the gas already inside. Do you understand? But they are still not down. They would need another ten minutes' gas. So this problem was solved. I never asked. By the way, I am by _____ because I was inside. I was in the crematory. Sometimes in 1944, supposedly came a transport from Vienna, Gentiles, mixed Jews and non-Jews. Everybody went _____. The commandant _____. Then they realized a day later or something that in the group were Gentiles, not Jews. This is not allowed. So what to do? There's only one thing to do, that's tattoo them. Give them a number. That means that they are in that camp, that everything is all right and then something happens to them and _____ because they die, they go to the oven. So we went. So yes. I forget to tell you. (Inaudible). I'll come back to this.

Q: You could probably just finish this little story by explaining that that's how you were—

A: All right. So I volunteered. He asks people who were in the group which was doing registration was asked to volunteer five people and told us what to do _____. These people are dead already, but you have to give them numbers and so on. So you need more people because the dead men cannot tell you, take my hand. You have to do everything for him. So I said I wanted to go. I want to go. I wanted just to see, just to see. I'll die, so I'll at least know where I'm being buried. (Inaudible). So I went, and so it was dead people, and I made the numbers. So I saw more or less how the structure of it being built and so on because it was very scientifically done and everything. It was a genius.

Q: Is there anything more to explain about the structure? (Inaudible).

A: The ovens, especially done very efficient. Comes this little wagon which was being loaded from the bunker comes, and it's organized. The commander people organize which goes where and so on. It's not special. (Inaudible). It went so far that in July, in July or—in July, in July, they had to burn, gas, bodies outside of the crematory. So besides this, you lived in 19 -- we are talking about 1944. We are in the camp. Everything of the regime is changed. That means—what has changed, no beating.

Q: You're jumping around too much.

A: Huh?

Q: Don't you think we're jumping ahead a little bit too much here? I want you to talk about that, but I think we should go back to 1942, if you don't mind.

A: 1942?

Q: You told me what you were doing in the beginning.

A: 1942. I came December, 1942, to _____. All right? After a few days, my friend—my friend, which I told you, made arrangements, got my commander was my group _____. (Inaudible). Street cleaners, the camp. It was a group of people who are wearing _____ all day and collecting anything that you see, not _____ your hands. My finger is still—see? This was frozen. A frozen finger. (Inaudible). With your hands, not with _____. This is where I worked every day, and this Kopo (ph) was a French Jew. He hit me once. And I was in Paris the first time in 1945 or '46. (Inaudible). But I forget. (Inaudible). So I worked until February. February came, started the campaign for the gypsies. The gypsies campaign started February, 1943. Yeah. Right. Yeah, 1943. And they needed more people to registration, people who know a few languages, especially German and Russian and Polish. So French, a little French, I don't know much, but several French people do. So this group of 20 became a group of 40 because we were sitting day and night and working. I sit at night, and people are coming. We were very independent. What was good about it, first of all, I could organize myself _____. People are coming and you ask. Always somebody had something. He tells them, when you come in the camp, you go to _____. _____ is not a little _____. You go outside steps. This is a shower room, a shower. Usually, the water is ice cold. You want to enjoy a shower? Go. You go. You have to go. Some people—a cold shower is a terrible thing. Already somebody is there waiting and hitting. If you are already an old inmate _____. (Inaudible). So I went—when I came, I went in the cold water. Somebody was sending me this. You come. When you come, you undress yourself. First you undress everything. Then you go to the shower. Then you go out from the other door from the shower and there is two men. One stays and has shoes and gives you a pair of shoes. The other one gives you clothes, gives you underwear and a jacket or something. So when you dress, when you dress, when

you look at yourself after you have this new outfit and so on, you're not you anymore. You are depersonalized, dehumanized. This is—I still was—I was still everything—I was still going in my -- (Inaudible). But here, that's what you do. They do it when you come, when you're being converted with fear, with fear. You come here, and it was just to do something. This is scientific _____. A person changed a lot if he's so dressed like a clown. What happens? When you—five days, you get diarrhea. This is such a diarrhea that you cannot control yourself. You are still in quarantine. You cannot control yourself. So you have to go. On the block where you live, there's some big barrels for this purpose. 350 people can have bowel movements over there. But there are special _____ also. Old inmates, such a big block like 350, six men. These are former bandits, criminals. (Inaudible). Criminals. They see that somebody goes in this barrel because you will be later to clean up the barrel. He comes and hits you, out. This night in Birkenau is a very bad place. It's always wet. It's such a climate. You go. By now, you're going to the latrine, and it's usually _____. And it's wet. Still, you come over there. You are undressed already because you have filled your pants. So you're nothing. You're nothing. So you take off these pants. You leave them over there. So you're running around in this climate naked under this—that's the beginning. I saw some guys who would take their bread, put it on fire. It becomes coal. There is medicine too. Coal. It controls your—constipates you. There's even a special medical—I know in Europe, if you have diarrhea, you _____. So I ask him, what are you doing? He told me, this man. So I said to myself, I'll _____. I want to be well.

Q: So you ate the coal?

A: Yes, we ate the coal. Don't drink the water. Don't drink the water, because when you have the diarrhea, you are getting dehydrated. When you are dehydrated, it works a different way. I came with a guy. I came from Krakow, from jail. A young fellow which tried to get clothes to me. I don't know why. A former policeman in Ghetto police, a young man, he was all the time with me. He was _____. He was out right away, mentally out. He was already laying next to me, laying, nothing. His bread, he will get this person _____ because he would put it in his pockets. I was hungry, and here is the bread. (Inaudible). Should I take the bread or not? That was my problem because I was

raised that my _____, my grandma, told me, who goes in and asks for bread? The poor people who doesn't want to work or _____. That came back. So how can I take from him the bread? He doesn't know what's going on anyway. I took it. (Inaudible). Because you took him to the hospital and give him an injection and got rid of him because they didn't fool around with this. But some people under dehydration and temperature will go on the wire. Each camp was wired. It was a big special wire, and you would hear at night when people would go on the wire committing suicide, each night, every night. People couldn't take it. Some people could and some others couldn't take it. Some people would go and die. I couldn't do it. Never came to my mind to commit suicide. No, I want to fight. I want to keep me alive. There was always, always, always _____. So this was the weeks from _____, the first weeks. As soon as I came to this group—

Q: When were you tattooed?

A: Huh?

Q: When were you tattooed?

A: In the beginning.

Q: In the beginning?

A: Yeah. 3

Q: At which point?

A: It was still in quarantine, the first days, yeah. It's an old number, _____.

Q: What is your number?

A: 9047. It's an old European 7. There was a guy from Slovakia who was there. (Inaudible). Anyway, I won't blame him. He became so nervous because he had to—this is not something which you can take out. You have to cut out this piece and put some other—I know somebody who tried and they told him—so this is the beginning of Birkenau. I came here, entirely different. (Inaudible). First of all, personally, you take—you have the uniform. So you go in the uniform all the time. You can—I'm talking in 1943. It was very important in 1943. Then I had some—a shirt. I was washing it myself, but I could wash every day or every other day. Then we had ways how to get a clean shirt.

Q: The other people couldn't wash every day?

A: Not everybody, no, not in 1943, not in 1943. In 1943, the regime was the same. It was often, where are you going and what are you doing and you don't do that and _____. All that what I told you what I saw, that was every night and transports. But the situation changed in 1944. Came always so many people together. It was a transport of 600,000 Hungarian Jews. (Inaudible). It's day and night transports people, day and night, men, women, children, day and night. One transport. (Inaudible). Two transports or something. It was finishing liquidation from European Jews, remnants. (Inaudible). Young, beautiful people, men and women with children. The orchestra, the symphony of _____ came in to _____, the symphony. (Inaudible). Play a concert, a concert. They had to play in this _____. And so I came—the first _____ in November, 1943, half, 1943, not '44, '43. (Inaudible). In September was the riot of _____. The second part in March, 1940, they made a selection to _____ from the first transport men and women and _____. These people were already inside since November or September, 1942. (Inaudible). It's possible I was _____. On the way when they took them in trucks from the camp and had them on the way to the crematory, they knew where they were going. I had a letter from a woman which I helped. (Inaudible). After I helped her, I was helping _____ and I got a letter from her across the wire. You will take it and throw it and there was already somebody picked up and read it. She blessed me what I did for her. Because they knew they were going away. (Inaudible). This lady which I romanced with, I met with her after the war. She lost her husband over there. That's what they did. But the situation in the camp, people are good—I started to have—I started to have an erection again. Women started to have menstruation again. Our physically, physically, only it was _____. We had so much food that we didn't have to eat our food which we get from the kitchen. We had to buy everything. But this is what happened.

Q: This is at the end with all the Hungarian transports?

A: Yeah. There was already events from getting pregnant, a woman getting pregnant. You see? This is how it is. (Inaudible). We knew who and what. Do you understand? Because I don't know what happened to her, but usually she would be cremated. You see? Especially—you want to kill them, kill

them, goddamnit. What they do is bring them in the camp, bring them together and families, and you take them out and—there was a transport of children. It was _____. This was an orphanage which was evacuated from _____ and brought to _____. And from _____ about 600 children were brought _____.

Q: When was this?

A: This was in the end of '43. No. This must have been in April or May of 1944, possible. I think so.

(Inaudible). There is—I didn't see it, because I didn't want to go and look at it. But people

_____ say the teachers or the people who came with them, they _____ told the children to take their shoes and hit assessments. (Inaudible). That's the story. I didn't see it. Do you understand?

Q: They were all children?

A: Little children. 1944.

Q: You know, I have a lot of questions for you earlier on.

A: Come on.

Q: A while ago, you told me that you got this job in registration when they needed more help because the gypsies were coming in.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Why don't you describe a little bit the work in registration, what you did?

A: It was very simple. You took each person, had to have each person, his destiny was to come in the camp, and each person who came in the camp had to be tattooed. So this is you got a chance. You came in the camp. (Inaudible). A little bit about _____ too. There was a form which has all kinds of questions, birth and where you were born, and so on, family, where is your family, politics, what are you? (Inaudible). It's a big story. Then you get a number and you get such _____. It's a black and a yellow. So it's—you put the black and the yellow comes. (Inaudible). Because other people, non-Jewish, in red was Gentiles. (Inaudible). People who came from jails and gay people were also were marked. (End of Tape 4)

Tape 5

Q: You were talking about registration.

A: Yeah. So that was—

Q: Were you doing the paperwork? You weren't actually doing the tattoos? A: No. We had a form to fill out. We were filling out, not the customer. Do you understand? (Inaudible). So you could—the system was such there wasn't an assessment _____. (Inaudible). Nobody. There was an officer in charge of this department from Auschwitz, from the head, from the leadership, commandant. He would come and say, today at 6:00 will arrive a transport of Jews from where it will be, men and women and children. What? How is that possible? In Birkenau, together in one camp? (Inaudible). We didn't believe it. How was it possible? So he gives you instructions and everything, what he wants with the children, everything and so on. All right? So you're ready. At 6:00, you're there. You're there and you sit and it's tables, tables. And one, like my friend, calls them out, A, B, C, D. And they have to go. That's what it is. And you sit and you see people, all kinds of people. You talk to people. You talk what you want. Stands before me a Jew, a big Jew. His eyes, yes, what happened from the first Hungarian transport, the Jews, about 250 men, healthy men, 250, and put them to work on their own families, put them to work in the crematory. That was under commander because _____ already had 700 to Israel. It wasn't enough because so many transports were coming _____. Here they took and came in. Here stands this Jew, and I'm looking because we didn't know what else was coming. I ask him, serious, and I ask him, do you know what you are doing? First of all, I said, you can talk. He said, yes, I know. I said, are you married? It's possible that you buried with your hands your wife and your children. (Inaudible). Yes, I know. (Inaudible). I couldn't stand there. I hit him. Yes. That was my reaction. I asked him, do you understand? My reaction was to hit him. It was only my _____ when somebody brought me out from this. Because he did something _____. God wants him and not _____ his children _____. I told this story to _____. Can I tell you that, mention? I told him the story. He was here in _____. I told him the story of the guy and how I—he

asked me _____. I said more or less his physics, how was he physical. So I explained to him. He said, I know what it is. (Inaudible). To do something like that.

Q: He was right?

A: I don't know. I don't know. (Inaudible). That's what it is. When you are there, you accept from outside should do not for us, for themselves. The women were jumping from a rolling train. Do you understand? Life or not, but I'm not going to die by the _____. Natan Gierowitz couldn't do it. I'm sorry. I wasn't in Warsaw ghetto. I was in ghetto where there was nobody to fight and reason to fight. I looked for something. I couldn't make it. So I'm here, I found. But I didn't do it. I don't want to mention names. People became big _____ in this, what I told you today, what I showed you.

Q: When you were registering the new prisoners, were you registering men and women?

A: No, men.

Q: Men only?

A: Men only. It was a time when some men would go and do the women's registration. Sometimes they would ask to help them with a lot—when they couldn't make it.

Q: But usually just men registered men and women registered women?

A: Right.

Q: Was the numbering system different?

A: Yes. Yes, it was different. First of all, it was less women than men, you know? But the women camp, there was original camp, the original camp, the women's camp, which had about—I'd say about 70,000, if not more, women. It was an old _____. _____ was a military base. (Inaudible). There was the women. Then came more women. So we build new barracks. The construction of barracks was going on day and night. Work and work, we are building. I'm careful. I don't want to say something because it's _____. My first wife was a survivor of Birkenau. She was a Hungarian. I mention _____. I'll tell you later when we come to this piece of history. (Inaudible). It was a big—a lot of contacts with the women. It was _____. We transported a wagon. There was wagons on two wheels, a wagon of bread too. We could spare here or buy here and so on and send over to the women in

the women's camp. There were a lot of _____. They didn't go to work like the Russian prisoners of war or the German civilians who could buy and so on. (Inaudible). So we did and helped them a lot.

Q: You started to talk about the women's camp in Auschwitz 1. It moved, correct? It moved over to Birkenau?

A: No. I know the history. It was originally—all this was part of Auschwitz.

Q: There was a women's camp in Birkenau?

A: In Birkenau, yeah.

Q: Do you know when that—

A: I don't know the story of the camp. But it's possible. Wait a minute. It's possible that it was part of the _____ when this building—where the women's camp was did not exist when Birkenau was.

Birkenau was done in 1945 was built. 1945, '41 was built in Poles, Polish inmates.

Q: Your registration process, was it for all of the different camps within Birkenau?

A: Yeah, because you came first to Birkenau. Then you go to another camp, to _____ or _____, to _____. This is where a lot of people wanted to go, to _____, because there

were good conditions. From Auschwitz you were sent to _____. I meant to tell you later I was evacuated this group to a place called _____. _____ is a mine. _____ is a name.

Coal mines. We worked over there. There was—everything was Auschwitz. I don't know if I'm correct, but I think the total population at high point was 144,000.

Q: Including Auschwitz 1, 2 and 3?

A: Yeah.

Q: So everybody—

A: It's possible because it looked _____. It's possible it was, but I didn't know.

Q: Okay. But everybody came through Birkenau?

A: Yeah.

Q: And then later went to _____ or to Auschwitz 1. Auschwitz 1, the original camp, did they come through Birkenau to go there?

A: Originally, it was—Auschwitz was originally when they started building Birkenau. So they would come to Auschwitz.

Q: After Birkenau was open?

A: It was—Auschwitz had no inmates, only military. It was a commander, the command, all the camps. It was a big bureaucracy, military bureaucracy. But it was in all the camps.

Q: There were no prisoners there in the end?

A: No, maybe some that did some special work. I don't know, because there were all kinds of specialists in between the men, carpenter or electricians. There were carpenters and electricians who were going all over the place. As a place to bring inmates and do all of this, whatever it is, Auschwitz was by itself.

Q: So you were registering the men who came in who maybe later went to labor camps?

A: Yeah.

Q: Where were you living and where was your office?

A: We were living in the barracks.

Q: In which camp?

A: In D. There was tables, not in our living barracks. There was a special barracks where there were tables. That's where we were working. They would come and everything was done. That was a _____.

Q: Weren't you, for a certain period of time, keeping your offices in the women's camp?

A: No.

Q: Never?

A: No, not as far as I know.

Q: So your registration offices were always in Camp D?

A: Right. Right.

Q: How did you have contact with the women? How did you see them going by?

A: General, 1944 --

Q: It's later?

A: Yeah. You could go and say, I wanted—I had a date, make a date, so I would go as an electrician.

The electrician commander had to send three or four people to fix something. It was organized. So if you had a relationship with the guys, they would take you in _____. So 1947, _____. This was—5

Q: You didn't have to stay at your job?

A: No. When you're going and you get lost in the camp—in the camp, during the day, nobody from the SS is there. They come in the morning. They're coming in the evening by the _____. There are one or two walking around during the day. The rest is being run by inmates, by inmates. The block head stays ahead of the block which is responsible. The people are responsible for cleaning the barracks and doesn't want to have—you know—everything is being done under—we do it. We are responsible.

Nothing is being done by them. (Inaudible). He is always a son-of-a-bitch, by himself a criminal. Do you understand? So he and they report in the evening when they _____ and he gives the report.

Each block has a _____, which counts how many people are in and how many people are out and how many coffee do we need for so many people, food for so many people and so on. It's being done in each block by a man who is responsible for this. And over them was the head block who is an inmate. He gives the report to an officer which is from the commandant. He gives him the report, how many is housed and—during the day, it's quiet. Natan Gierowitz and some other people going and looking for pieces of paper. Only you're working. There's always somebody who gives—always somebody who will give you _____.

Q: Did each of the camps in Birkenau have its own—

A: Not camps, barracks.

Q: But there was A, B, C, D?

A: This was one camp, Birkenau.

Q: These are not considered divisions?

A: No. No.

Q: So all of the registration, the tattooing, all of that would be done at one place for the whole camp?

A: Yes.

Q: The men and the women's?

A: Right. No, women separate.

Q: Right. How many people worked in the registration with you?

A: When the gypsies had to come, it's around 35, 40.

Q: And then later in the year when these huge transports of Hungarians came in, were there more people that worked with you?

A: No, the same.

Q: The whole time, your operations were in the men's camp, in D?

A: Yes.

Q: I don't know. I had thought something else. Let me stop for a second, please. You started to say in registration, this was a pretty good job, you had privileges. Can you talk about that a little bit more?

A: Privileges are you can wash yourself every day. You can have soap. _____ from Belgium coming. They didn't know. They know they're going in the labor camp, but they didn't know where it is, so he takes everything. He takes soap and medication. He goes like that's it. He comes to the _____ where everything has to—everything was taken away from him, everything. So part of the heavy luggage is being taken away by the _____ when the train comes. Then he comes too. Everything is taken away. (Inaudible). So we are lucky. Sometimes there are so many people that _____ cannot wait. So the people coming still _____. (Inaudible). You have a piece of soap. (Inaudible). You have money. Leave the money here, and we will take care of it. Other people took money, in dollars, not just money, dollars and gold and so on. They never helped him. But most of us, we helped a lot of people, a lot of people because they left. So I had what to eat, and he had what to eat. The question was only to share. The means with what to buy it, but I don't have it. (Inaudible). So then—but you couldn't get _____ shirt. Everybody has with himself two or three shirts because he goes into the camp. You never know what people have. That was helping a lot of—first of all, I'm saying _____ the food. So I didn't want to eat. I had bread and I had—I don't remember what they

were bringing. Everything. Whatever you want, something with Vodka to get drunk. I got drunk and I was screaming and Stalin _____. It was stupid.

Q: So there was some pretty active trading going on?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did the Germans get involved with that?

A: No. They—sometimes they would. They knew. They had people who would tell them. You have to be watched with the dealings. But basically, general, in 1945, they were all corrupt, all corrupt.

Q: So you could bribe the Germans too?

A: Huh?

Q: You could bribe the Germans?

A: Yeah. In 1945, we had—not me, but my Kopo (ph) had some deal with our head, the assessment. He would give him the reports _____. 1945 was already the _____. (Inaudible). Few people would know. We would share it with a few people, information. That's all. But it was corrupt.

Q: So you had information about the war that was in progress?

A: Yes. Non-Jews could have newspapers. So if we knew something that we shouldn't, not permitted to give it to the Jews.

Q: In the camps?

A: In the camps, yes. (Inaudible). They were afraid. But we knew everything that was going on.

Q: Was there a lot of communication between the Jewish prisoners and the non-Jewish prisoners?

A: You know, you had to have it, to have contact. It wasn't to get together and discuss the relationship. But each of us had somebody between the non-Jewish, had somebody with whom you could meet sometimes, to meet some and share and talk, whatever it is. But special now, it wasn't—there wasn't interest for this. Do you understand?

Q: Did you trust each other?

A: I don't think so. I don't think so. I don't think so.

Q: When you first came to Auschwitz, did it take you a while to sort of learn the ropes? Did people tell you how to handle things?

A: The Russians. You're so knocked out that—I was just like, I don't know, Morphine. Morphine is a _____. I never did take Morphine. But like somebody's doped from where you are and what is going on around. And then it was—I forget to mention selections for inmates who are there already with numbers. There was a doctor. (Inaudible). When they say, block so and so, there will be a selection in the morning. So blocks everywhere. There is a doctor who is an inmate. (Inaudible). Looks in the eye. If he doesn't like the eyes, he said, go out, step out. I'm not going to a hospital or to a doctor's visit. They were going to the crematory. These are not hospital people. If he's not well—I had a problem with my leg. This man hit me here. Originally, when I was—your body cannot fight this and so on because you're hungry or you're undernourished and so on. I would try to avoid these selections. But I was helped. There was _____. A clinic was there, but not everybody could come _____. Only comes the Kapos (ph) and the _____. There were doctors who were inmates too. I had one doctor who gave me vitamins, took them and make a powder and put them _____. You helped each other. Cigarettes, if you have cigarettes, you can buy a lot of things.

(End of Tape 5)

Tape 6

A: That was the only time _____.

Q: While you were working in the registration, which is practically the whole time that you were there, were there ever reasons to manipulate documents to help the prisoners?

A: Yes. There was one—after the—there was two uprisings in Warsaw. There was a Jewish uprising, and there was a Polish uprising. As a result, we know what happened with the Jewish uprising. Now, the Polish was a lot of people which were taken out from Poland. Took Pollacks from Warsaw which participated or not participated and just deported them. One transport came to Birkenau. In between them was one which we knew very well from a Jew. First of all, he came as a Pollack, not as a Jew. Because if you were a Jew, he would not come, they would liquidate him. So he comes. We knew that the Polish wouldn't stay. We didn't have to give them numbers. It was temporary. (Inaudible). Some in German, some camps and so on. They were there three days or something. There was one which I knew very well _____ which mentioned my name. His son was killed in the 1967 war. He was in the army. He was a very—in Poland, he was a very famous _____. We changed his name. The only thing that we did, we changed his name. That's all. So he can go and he won't always be afraid that somebody will say, Jew, Jew. And he survived. That was the only time when it was important to change somebody's document, as far as I remember.

Q: Were there other times when it was important?

A: No.

Q: What about medical experiments?

A: No. It was—we couldn't do it. No. Medically, if it was already a medical situation, was such that he needs some help, some medical help, he won't come to us.

Q: What about the experiments?

A: Oh, the experiments, the experiments. We tried to—we were not able to do it because the paper in question, very few people which are interested to make them younger, and they won't take them. They weren't in our possession anymore. There were already some in Auschwitz 1.

Q: I thought you had said that there were people who tried to alter their birth dates so that they won't be taken by _____, that there were people who wanted to change their—A Right. There were people. We wanted to change them too and we couldn't because we didn't have the paper. We had only _____. It's like you go to a department store and you check your eligibility and they have the little cards. (Inaudible). He was taking his information from _____.

Q: So after you filled out the forms, they went over to Auschwitz 1, that central administration?

A: Right.

Q: Tell me a little bit more about the life in the camp. Was there any—you had mentioned an orchestra. Were there any other kinds of activities other than working and—

A: It was _____. We didn't work seven days as a rule. Basically, you got drunk. That's all.

Q: You got drunk?

A: You had a bottle of Vodka and you drink. (Inaudible). So you get drunk and you're screaming. And then I remember when I got drunk, I started to -- I don't know—Stalin and Hitler. It was all this. So the Polish took a blanket and put it over me and kept me this way. I shouldn't stand because they were afraid would come somebody. But that was only social event, you got drunk. That's all. Not everybody has the money to buy it. (Inaudible). What was stolen from the Germans, taken, we had it, Vodka.

Q: Were you aware of the medical experimentation that was going on?

A: Yes.

Q: How did you know about that?

A: We knew it. We knew it because we knew because we were concerned about some people they shouldn't to change their—it was known. Because these people came back anyway. Women and men came back.

Q: What did they tell you?

A: Nothing. They told us what happened to them. You cannot hide it. One guy is still alive. He's not alive. He was older than I am. It was after the war. He survived. It was after the war. (Inaudible). He was a very handsome, elegant young man.

Q: You had mentioned that you had contact with women in the camp. How did that happen? Were people actually dating or having any kind of a social life?

A: It's very simple. I don't know how it came out. I was in the _____. I think we were in some—a few of us went to the Czechoslovakian—a civilian camp where men were together with women. So we did the registration. Then I met this person. Then I was already trying to _____. One of the good things you felt was that if you are somewhere in an elegant -- she was a very intelligent lady, very attractive, very intelligent, very social. Nothing could happen, that sense. It's a block of so many people. There were girls that knew already. They would tell. We would come spend an hour or two hours, and we would bring something. She was in with her sister. They survived too because we got together after the war.

Q: She was from _____?

A: Yes, she was from _____. Haas, H-a-a-s.

Q: Did you know Helen _____?

A: Yes, I know. (Inaudible).

Q: How did you know her?

A: Because she was very—she was such a delivery boy. She was such a little thing. We were walking and passed by and said to each other something. (Inaudible). You know her? No. Her husband was a chief of police in the ghetto where I was, not in the ghetto, in the camp, in the _____ camp.

Q: What do you mean she was like a little messenger? What kind of messenger?

A: From one block to the other camp. A few girls were _____, delivering, sending papers. I don't know. She and another one was also. When we would pass by and she would always say, you men, we're ashamed you are still here. Why don't you run away? This one which run away with her friend which was a Pollack, and he helped her to go out and she was arrested in Kattowitz on the street. They were looking for her. She was hanged publicly. They're famous, very attractive lady and was a very—she run away. (Inaudible). It's like that jail. Some people that sell and you go outside. (Inaudible). I

don't know what they do with them in the United States. This moment when you can change something—

Q: This is when you were in Camp D?

A: Yeah.

Q: And she would come by there?

A: Yeah, they would come by.

Q: She could go by all the camps?

A: Right, yeah.

Q: So you saw her often?

A: No, but _____. I didn't know _____ because she was not in Auschwitz. I think she was in _____ some because she was a German Jew.

Q: Was she passing information that would help people in a resistance?

A: I don't think so. No.

Q: More with who was there and messages?

A: No. I don't know between women what—

Q: Do you remember someone named Pinkas (ph)?

A: Pinkas (ph)? (Nods head).

Q: Was he a Kopo (ph) maybe?

A: Yes.

Q: Pinkas (ph), you know?

A: An older man?

Q: I think so.

A: Yeah?

Q: I don't know too much about him. I know there was a Kopo named Pinkas (ph).

A: Yeah.

Q: Who was he?

A: Pinkas (ph) must have been a _____, something illegal, a man which deals with not legal things and so on, in my opinion. That's what he was, good humor, and he was very famous in the camp. (Inaudible). Pinkas (ph), yeah, Pinkas (ph). The Germans were making fun with him. _____ was such a swimming pool or something, man-made. It was how we put water in there. The Germans, I remember they would make fun with him. They would tell him jump because he was Pinkas (ph). Pinkas (ph) was such a humor, a lot of humor, a lot of jokes, but he was such a character with the underground people and so on. It was Pinkas (ph), yeah. He was heavy. (Inaudible). I met him some in _____.

Q: I just heard about him. Where was he from?

A: From Poland. I don't know where from.

Q: He was a Kopo (ph)?

A: He was a _____. He was not all the time. There was a time—because was in general time. It was a time when the majority of the heads of the blocks were Jews. All of a sudden, out, non-Jews taking over. Do you understand? There was such a policy not to get—they were changing. That's all. Q: So Pinkas (ph) was a Jew or not?

A: Jew, yeah.

Q: Was he in your block?

A: No.

Q: Now you had also started to talk a little earlier about this friend of yours who had been in France, _____.

A: _____, Benjamin, yeah. He was in France. (Inaudible). The fact that he came from the French, he was a prisoner of war. France is occupied. They were occupied already. So they didn't cover him up, the French, because they knew he was Jewish, and they sent him to Drancy. He survived too. We visited him, me and my wife, in France, and he had his office in Metz.

Q: Did you work together in the camp?

A: Yes. We were all—most with him and another guy, which I don't know what happened to him.

Q: In the registration?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you aware of resistance activities underground in the camp?

A: No.

Q: Not at all?

A: Not at all.

Q: Attempts to escape or keep diaries?

A: Attempts to escape was individual, but not Jews. Any Jew—because if a Jew—any Jew who escaped and they got him was hanged. (Inaudible). There was a big fiesta. All assembled, a few thousand inmates, and look what's going on. There was one Jew I remember was only hanged. They got in Budapest or something. I had—I became befriended with the Russian prisoner of war which by the way was a Jew. But the Russians, they didn't say, he's Jewish or something. So now we knew he was a Russian prisoner of war. He was a very smart, very intelligent man and so on. He was _____. He was in the _____. We kept and we never, never—anybody knows that he is not a Gentile. He planned escaping. I talked to him, and he let me know. I shouldn't have said, I'm Jewish. When you escaped to the road through villages and forests to get to the Russians, _____, it's very far. And stuff. You have to eat and so on. You go. It's already one of us _____. If I go myself, I know I'll make it. He went and he left, and they never brought him. Russians, a lot of people, run away. It was almost every week one of them. They worked in conditions. They worked that big field, acres and acres, where shot-down airplanes were brought, and they would do to this landing job so they were commander, a thousand people, healthy and so on because they had the civilians, German civilians that were coming. They would make them business, make the dollars and everything and so on. So what they do is they would work on it and make like a _____, work and work until _____. After 6:00, all the _____ would come in 40 miles and 40 miles distance from the camp, from Birkenau. On the _____ 40 miles was the exit. (Inaudible). Every two blocks, somebody was there. During the day,

they would get off and they would go back so far until where the commanders were working. If they would say five kilometers, ten kilometers, ten kilometers. The same. So you had to—

Q: This is the only place?

A: Where he was already there, he had already some _____. So he would go in. (Inaudible). So what happens is the commanders are coming back from the war and _____. _____ is right away a signal like we have here the alarm. So when it started this, we knew somebody was missing. In 48 hours, because of this, this was sitting 40 miles going down closest to the place where this happened. After 48 hours, it's over. So he has to be able to be inside 48 hours. He has covered himself with grass and dismantled planes. Only one or two people know. They got food over there. So he should be able to survive. I'm sorry. I don't know. There are many _____. Not me. This was a way out, you make it. They did it very good. They had military training too. (Inaudible). So they had an experience.

Q: Did you know people who kept diaries?

A: No, I did not.

Q: What about the uprisings of the _____? Were you there at that time?

A: I was there.

Q: What happened?

A: You know what happened.

Q: Tell me.

A: Some girls from _____ brought explosives, explosives, and came to _____ for a special purpose. I didn't know who was organizer and what was organizer. I didn't believe there was an organized political communist and literature. I didn't believe it. In there were single individuals. (Inaudible). The _____ went up and they were hoped that we would help them, that we would _____, especially the women. Nobody. All of a sudden, September first was from September first, until cremation. It was the order from _____ not to cremate anymore to the crematories, didn't do nothing. So they put—they used the explosives and put two crematories _____ during the day. More or less, between the afternoon, it happened. So put _____ right away came the _____

from _____ came with machine guns and cars and _____. So they pushed them. They were running, running, running. They came some 20 or 30 kilometers farther _____. _____ is a big river. When they came to the _____, there was no way to go. It was worthless. But the assessment came already with the machine guns, and we never knew how many were killed. That was the end of the uprisings. That was all the uprisings.

Q: Which lasted a short time?

A: Very short time.

Q: A day, a few hours?

A: A few hours.

Q: So these women—

A: There was no more resistance. Nobody helped them. They didn't know _____. Nobody. It was September, 1944. It was after Stalingrad (ph). It was after Moscow. It was after Linengrad (ph). We knew the Russians are going. In Auschwitz, we heard artillery fire from Krakow. Do you understand so far? (Inaudible). Two years, three years, and all of a sudden, you go and put everything for history. I want to leave. I don't want history. Nobody was going, and it would be crazy. (Inaudible). But if somebody makes such a big deal and so on, the movement, _____. (Inaudible).

Q: You started to talk earlier about how the camp changed towards the end in 1944.

A: The change was relationship between the military, the uniform, assessment with the inmate, with the inmate. It wasn't any case somebody was beating him or the Kapos (ph) bathed themselves. The food was different. The influence from the Jews, the Hungarian Jews and so on, brought in a lot of goodies, which the old inmate doesn't have to eat what he gets from _____ and so on. So all together, for me personally, but I think a lot of _____ because I more or less knew what was going on and so on. The most important thing was what to eat, food, and cleanliness. And this we had. Not only us, all the camp. Every second week, another block was going to the _____. In 1943, forget it. (Inaudible). This was a must. You have to go to _____ because manpower was very important. They needed people to send them to labor camps.

Q: So they treated you-all better?

A: They treated everybody, yeah. We were _____. And I belonged to the class—I was looking for a job. I didn't have nothing to do. In September, we had nothing to do.

Q: No more people to register?

A: No. This transport and there was an old man.

Q: Do you know what? I'm going to stop you because we need to change tapes.

(End of Tape 6)

Tape 7

Q: Toward the summer of 1944, the camp was getting very crowded. Were there accommodations for everyone?

A: Yeah. It wasn't so crowded. It wasn't actually—a lot of old inmates were taken to other camps. So it was Hungarian. It was Dutch. It was still part of the Czechoslovakian, and it was transports, normal, not special campaign, not special campaign, a community or something. So it wasn't so crowded anymore, no. But the living conditions I said for women, the women. Old women in the camp, wasn't any room. So they went—this was skeletons from blocks because this is already made. You put together _____. So they didn't have the parts. (Inaudible). So this I know for sure, that most of these poor women, first of all, was half-naked. Their clothes were taken away from them when they came, dresses, because originally, nobody, no male has the right to go over there. So officially, it's not for—the men cannot go. But there were coming men. The same as I could ask somebody to take me as an electrician, somebody was going over. These people took advantage of these poor girls. It was very, very—for bread or something. They were hungry. This is a fact. This was done by inmates because, with the inmates, not everybody was a Natan Gierowitz or _____. There were _____.

Q: Non-Jewish inmates?

A: Non-Jewish, yeah, no question about that.

Q: I had heard that there was some sort of bordello at Auschwitz. Do you know about this?

A: The only bordello what I called was a gypsy camp. All the gypsies—a lot prostitutes are between gypsies, a lot. (Inaudible). There was some beautiful women. I don't know.

Q: Who was allowed to go in there and take advantage of these—

A: You can always get in. Everything, you go out to work, you got something to do, all this. I think the SS took advantage of them too, outside them, yeah.

Q: Any episodes of abuse of young boys in the camp?

A: Not as far as I know.

Q: Is there anything else you think we should talk about in terms of Auschwitz and the life there and what you learned that we haven't talked about yet?

A: I think this story doesn't end with Auschwitz. There is a continuation of other camps. There are two other camps which have evacuation.

Q: I wondered if there was anything else to cover to talk about before we—A Auschwitz. That's what I'm going to talk now is Auschwitz 2 or 3, other Auschwitz, but it's a labor camp. They evacuated us, the beginning of 1945, in January, the beginning of January or end of December. I think it's January, the beginning. (Inaudible). This is a coal mine. It is a place, an industrial place which is producing coal, and this coal is being developed from _____. It's a special such pieces. It comes up. It's a platform, a big platform, a railroad platform. Here comes railroad wagons, empty, and this side _____ fire and coal. And then you take this out and put this in, and you have to _____ the coal and put in this and the empty railroad wagons. This was after _____ Auschwitz when I did nothing but sitting _____ come here and stay every day and work. So this was January, almost in February. February, this _____ city was _____. American or British or Soviet _____. We were all taken out and brought to a place which was called Lidice. Lidice is a big center, a railroad center. They are coming in trains from all parts of Poland, from Poland around from Germany and _____. Everything is _____. There were a few thousand of us, at least 5,000, 6,000, _____. We were waiting for a train to be able to pick us up and take us away. But the SS was so scared of the _____ that they were standing. The assessment took us, about 350 people.

Q: All men?

A: 350 people and said, let's go. And then we left Lidice, and we started to walk, and we walked, and it's mountain area, and it's February, and it's cold, and you go, and this assessment, they had luggage we should carry for them up. So the head of this group, which was a sergeant or something, we called them the _____. Do you know what _____ is? No? The angel of death. It's Hebrew. He knows, right? You know Hebrew, do you? I forget that _____. So if he would see me one day not shaved, he would take me to the end of the group and shoot me and leave me on the road. So there were four of

us. We have to go four, like military. I was always between the four. I was shaved. We had this shaving cream from maybe a hundred years old, but you rubbed your face. You rubbed, you rubbed and dry, only to look like—on the road, we met Russian prisoners of war, alone. They left already. (Inaudible). And we came—the first stop was that school, a village, that school. There's an empty school which is _____ with military. It's no school anymore. So it was Slovaks living, Slovaks. They brought us soup, _____. There was steps up, and so the soup was upstairs, and someone would give it to everybody. I don't know so much. So going up, one hit the other one by coincidence, and this other one lost his plate with the soup. So this guy said, who did it? He said, the sergeant, he said—I talk about somebody which I'll tell you a story about, a guy by the name _____. That was his name. (Inaudible). He was my age. He said, come. He said, not me, him, you know, by impulse, not me, it was he, because he was a good man. He took out the other guy and killed him, and he survived all the way. The story with them I told you about after September 9, the September first or the second came a group of people who were found that _____. So here was this man, his wife and a child. The registration of this group was not done. The group was brought to us. We shall register. (Inaudible). A few senior people usually would go to the crematory because of age. You have women with small children who would go to the crematory because of the small children. We have them here. So you can talk to them. You can tell. So I started to talk to—not to him, but to his wife and tell her, tell her. I said, when he would come, a doctor, which is a military man, and I would suggest he will ask, is that your child? Don't say it's yours. Don't tell them it's yours. It's possible they would take away the child, but you would survive. If you will keep the child, you will not survive. You will go and the child will go. So it's a question. I said according to my feelings, you have to give away the child only to survive because the Germans want to kill you too. So they did. And she did it this way. She let the child go, and the child—and this couple, both of them, after the war, met and went to Israel. But he had on his conscience that somebody—he meant—he couldn't—he gave away the child. (Inaudible). He put her before a dilemma.

Q: A lot of difficult choices?

A: Sure. Sure. So we walked so long, from the assessment with us. He had civilian clothes under his uniform, and this son-of-a-gun found out, and he killed him. So the mayor from the village notified the army, German soldier, the sergeant _____. The morning came, the military police came, got us all together and said, now you are not anymore under _____ jurisdiction. We will take care of you, the army. The army took us to a place called _____. It's—what is it? It's another camp. We worked over there underground. They were making parts for tanks. This is already February. The Germans are still making parts of tanks. Here are sitting people underground. This was murder. The Pollacks, they were beating us up, because we came as old inmates. I had such a career of three years already. They just gave us a hard time and so on. Also, one day, must have been an order not to make any tanks anymore for the army, so we were all assembled in the morning. All from the 320 remained some 80 or 70, because the rest are somewhere on the road.

Q: They died along the way?

A: They died. They were killed. He shot them. So no more Gestapo, only the army. (Inaudible). All the Jewish step out. When he said, Jews step out, I said to myself, I am not a Jew. I also—my friend—I had a friend with me. He said, you will go with me. Let's go. I made a mistake. I know. So the non-Jews were taken to a transport, a transport which was on its way to _____ mountains. Auschwitz, the liquidation of Auschwitz inmates, that we found out later, but this transport was standing and waiting for more people between _____ the non-Jews over there. The others were taken to 3 _____. It was only ten kilometers from _____. _____ was a Jewish and we didn't know about the history that the commandant of _____ refused, which was an assessment, refused to kill the people. He didn't want to do nothing. We were on our way to _____, but this transport never came to _____. It was some Americans got them and freed everybody. This man and his friend and 18 other people, this transport, after two days on the road, seven kilometers a day the train was going, we came to a place and I said to my friend, even if this transport was stopped some in Czechoslovakian territory, I'll jump. I'll not go to the end. They not take us to sanatoriums or something. They take us for liquidation. It's only ten percent. We have ten percent a chance. We have

already 19. We have ten percent. (Inaudible). The local population was a big railroad station, a lot of empty railroads on the tracks, railroad wagons and so on, and I see people jump, jumping and running, jumping from the train. (Inaudible). There were hills, and they're running up. So I said to someone, the SS was busy with soups. The local community brought all kinds of soup and fed and, you know—so I jumped, and my friend jumped, and we went in one of the railroad wagons, empty and was there as long until about an hour or two hours later. The transport moved, and we stayed here. And came in some local miners it was mine territory—and said, wait here. We will bring you clothes. Some men will come, and we will pick you up, and we will bring you to some other place. After an hour, we had clothes. We had normal clothes. And he was going, the men, taking. There was a group of 20, took us down a few kilometers and came in an underground. It was underground mines, not deep enough, not an elevator, but you could go down. There already was straw, clean, was a doctor on premises. They did it like it was _____. They felt _____. So we were there until about three days, three days, and then we went—then we—yeah, three days, no more. I'm already in May. I'm in May. So there were no Germans anymore. They took us to villages, put us in different families, and we were living and doing nothing. Food was provided. We were free to leave and to _____ and everything. There was everything available. It was everything normal until one day—it was about the 7th of May, 7th of May, yeah—came KGB and took us all, took us to a place where it was about a few thousand Russian former prisoners of war, that big villa with a big backyard. People on the floor. I knew right away that we were with KGB. I saw the people were shot down. These were Russians with the big suitcases. They robbed from the Germans and so on. I saw we were in a bad place. We stayed overnight underground. The next day came out an old—brought a little desk and started to make a list of people and the names and so on, and I saw right away—I knew Russian. I knew what it is. It's written list of arrested people or something like that. So anyway, they took me another 24 hours. When it came to _____, I said, I'm not Russian, I'm Polish. I'm from Warsaw, and I want to go home. You want to go home? Go to hell. Go. Now I want to go to Prague. I didn't go home. I went to Prague. Prague is a Jewish community, and I'm sure after the war, they're taking care of—maybe Suzy is back. That's this woman. So here is another—so

there was not a railroad station. The train goes normal to Prague. It was not far from Prague too. May 9, May 9, yes, we were still in the mines, and they came, Czechoslovakians, so happy you're here. Go. So I, again, with the Russian language, come to him, and it's a major, military major, tanks, big tanks. This was on the way to Prague. It was an agreement between General _____ and General Eisenhower. You take Prague; we will take Berlin. So I come in, and I'm going to this major, and I said, _____. I tell him there is a group of about 100 people. He doesn't know what I want from him. I said, what shall we do? He looks at me and said _____. Take a cane and go and screw your mother. I understand from Russian. (Inaudible). That is the meaning. That's what he told me. (Inaudible). I said goodbye to socialism, because I was waiting for him. We were waiting for _____. We were already disappointed in the allies after the famous offensive of the Bulge, _____ and so on. We weren't helped anymore. The Soviet army would come here and liberate Auschwitz. So he tells me I should go screw my mother. To hell with you, with your socialism, with your everything and no more. Whenever I would see a Russian, I would run away from him. And I came to Prague. Do you know what was in Prague? When you went to go somewhere, street car or something, you show your arm. Wherever you will show your arm in Prague, hotel. (Inaudible). Not to pay, nothing. That was Czechoslovakian. What else?

Q: How long did you stay there?

A: I think about—the lady wasn't there. I asked around. I went to the Jewish community. They told me to go to a displaced persons camp. And there is an underground and the _____ taking care and so on. I went to Munich. When I came in Munich, there was already an organized Jewish council of Jews from Poland. I came up, and there was _____. People from Birkenau. One comes to me and said he was in Birkenau too. He was from _____. He said, I'm the chairman of the _____. Come to my camp. I was sick from the _____ from the underground. I got infected, my eyes. I had no time to go to doctors. He said, come to my camp, we'll take care of you. And I went with him. He was driving a car already. I went with him, and he placed me that place where people were too from Birkenau. And I was three weeks.

Q: What camp was there?

A: (Inaudible).

(End of Tape 7).

Tape 8

Q: So you arrived in Feldafing?

A: So I came to Feldafing. Feldafing is a place where it was a military _____ before the war. It's not far from Munich, very close to Munich. About three weeks I was down. Then I became—I started to open my mouth. It was under the supervision of this now famous General Patton. He said it was about 25 kilometers from _____. (Inaudible). I was warning him from _____. I didn't speak English. The guy who was my translator was _____ which _____ told me that he died. He was—he came—he was living in Los Angeles. He didn't want nothing to do with me because I was against—I felt and I shared the opinion that his wife wasn't on _____. So I started to talk, and I started to say—there were already all kinds of organized groups, communists, survivors, like nothing had happened, like nothing happened. (Inaudible). All the goodies which we had before the war and the ghetto which is called Poland. It's a ghetto. But we played all these games. (Inaudible). They knew me from Poland because my name _____.

Q: Let me ask you something because you're sort of joking about this. Do you think this was good that people were getting back to their life?

A: Yes. It's just communists, and I don't know. Russia wasn't nice to them. My wife, I cannot mention nothing USSR, hate, hatred. Even they gave her an education. She finished, went to school and everything, but _____. The situation is such there are 6,000 people in this camp, young people, no old people. Old people didn't make it, the tragedy. Young people. Already pregnant women, children. And it's a lot of problems. So I'm fighting, and I said to not to rely on the army, very nice and so on. And Mr. So-and-so is the president, doesn't do his job. He wants to complete them. (Inaudible). We have to demand this and this. We have children. I developed a program, what we need. (Inaudible). The feeling is you owe us for something. You have to give me something. It's not right. Nobody has to give you nothing. I went _____ because I miss something, some I miss. (Inaudible). And I survived, not because I am a big _____, not because I'm a big hero. I didn't fight. I only tried my belly should be full and my health should be all right. Oh, yes, it bothered me when I saw children was going to the—but at the same time -- (Inaudible). When you went to make a summary, it's—you cannot _____ and say you have to give me like some people are involved in the American situation of the holocaust. I don't want to mention names because they know me and they don't like me. But we spend—I make them possible to come. I help them to come to America because—this is another thing. I was sending out people to the United States. I was involved in _____ for members of the _____, of the Zionists, from Bundists (ph). I was involved in such. That's why I was sitting two years _____. So that's what I started to do. And we decided to have elections. We had elections, and we elected a board. There was meetings, everything. Little by little, we are—understand and it was _____. It's—I couldn't—I got involved with immigration because Jewish Labor Committee was on my back and international _____ committee. Anyway, but I never, never, never used—somebody said, you have to do it. In America, they didn't go through what we're doing through. They're not. (Inaudible). If I didn't want to go to _____, there are other choices. If I would have _____, I wouldn't be here. I would go over there. If you are a Zionist here, that is the place. I was raised that different _____. So _____ to the United States. (Inaudible). So I can talk to you. (Inaudible). This is something which happened. The meaning is that somebody wanted us to

liquidate, and they couldn't do it, and nobody could do it. They couldn't do it. We were too intelligent and too everything. We had something to—in the family of nations, we have, in my opinion, a very important place. We're contributing a lot to them. So then came the joint. There was a lady I remember, the social worker. She was a native American. When you speak English, you translate from English to _____. You say _____. (Inaudible). You do not say "you." I just met you. I say _____, in the third person. He said to me _____. He tried to speak to me in _____. I didn't know English. I still don't know, but then I knew less. So she said to me—I took it because I'm a _____. (Inaudible). _____ was on the black market and had to make a living. So I said—she misunderstood. (Inaudible). I said, because I'm a European. She's an American. She cannot talk to me like I'm nothing and so on. So then came to me—one day came to me a man in uniform. He said to me, I'm so-and-so; I'm the translator to Judge Jackson. Jackson was a head judge in _____ trial. I am friends with him. _____ from French and from Russian. What was his name? He was a journalist by profession. He volunteered. Told me when the war started, he volunteered, and this was his assignment. (Inaudible). He said, here I have a list, a list of names. Jewish Labor Committee sent to me. I should go and find. I cannot do it. (Inaudible). He said, between you and me, I'm under surveillance. I'm that job where they say, what is this man doing? I have no right to do this, to get in touch with people in the camps. Please, will you take it? And I took it. So I got involved. So I got involved in helping people to immigrate. And in the meantime would come all kinds of commissioners to take people who want to go _____. There are all kinds of professions who were ready to go and work some _____. So International Ladies Garment Union was my customer, in Canada had customers and so on. And I got involved, and I would serve this committee when who would come and select people. It was a continuation of my work. (Inaudible). I was married. I'm sorry to say my wife, a year after we came to the United States, passed away. She had to be—they decided to remove one of her lungs. (Inaudible). So this was my beginning to the United States.

Q: This was someone you met at _____?

A: Yeah. This was some person who lost her parents and lost her brother. This was from the transports. She was a gorgeous little girl, very gorgeous and nice. (Inaudible). People will think that I want to provoke some feelings or what. I don't know. (Inaudible). Just tell them whatever you want.

Q: So you worked in Feldafing for three years?

A: I left Feldafing. I went to Tusing (ph). Tusing (ph) is a—it's part of Munich is Tusing (ph). I was living over there in an apartment, and I was American. They were the Germans. The owner of the villa was a German, and I was an American. I don't know if somebody knows cars. (Inaudible). So I had (Inaudible). I was a big shot. But I helped a lot of people to immigrate.

Q: And you lived there for a few years?

A: Yeah. And I came to the United States in 1945, which one agency wanted I should be with the first _____. I flew. I had to fly in because I was afraid she will not pass _____. So arrangements were made by somebody in the consulate, an American. And so we took a plane, and we knew. Besides this, in 1947, in February, I was invited to _____ convention of the Jewish Labor Committee in Atlantic City. It was a general situation too. I made a good speech. (Inaudible).

Q: So when you were working over there for the labor committee, were you coordinating with the other relief organizations?

A: We had special people. We would get names from New York. This was—it was people who were active in the movement, the union movement especially. (Inaudible). They give us names of people to find them and to help them to immigrate. _____ came to the help of this man because they had _____. (Inaudible). She didn't like me because she had dinner—it's not important anyway, but—

Q: So did you go to different camps to find people?

A: Yes, Russian camps.

Q: Did you get involved with helping people find families at all?

A: Families, sure.

Q: You helped with that also?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you work with the _____?

A: Officially, I was an employee of the _____. That's the way—so everywhere I was—yes.

(Inaudible).

Q: So you helped people immigrate mostly to the United States and Canada? A United States and Canada and Australia too. It was all countries which came in to take who had a special interest in Jewish _____. Also, the _____ after the Jews, after the war had almost “X” amount of thousands of Jews in Germany—after '47, after the program in _____ came 100,000 Jews from Poland, came over to the American occupied zoning of the army, 100,000. (Inaudible).

Q: Was it at all difficult to start over, I mean, after all these years of being in camps?

A: When I came to the United States, I had friends in high class, in the _____ movement. They came over there, and I spent _____. He was a big man. I had a jeep. My transportation was a jeep. He came with his wife, and I drove around with him in all kinds of places and so on, which he wants to see, this kind of guy and so on. When I came here—I had a telephone. Telephone is important.

So I came here. I have no profession. I was an organizer forever, the _____ big profession, was making \$150 a month. So I came and was a guy, he's not alive anymore, was a very interesting man.

(Inaudible). He was a _____ clockmaker. I came to visit him because I knew him

_____. He said to me—took me for lunch and said, what can I do for you? I was already—so I said, I heard that a cutter in garments is a good profession. He said, you want to be a cutter? I said, yes.

He said, you go with me. He takes me back from the restaurant and took me to the manager of local _____ which is cutters' union. (Inaudible). And they already knew about me. They knew

about me because they come from—German would tell about me. So this is Mr. Gierowitz. He's a very important man, you know, this bullshit and so on. He said he has to become a cutter, period. So he took me and introduced me in the shop. It was a one-man shop. The guy who did was an older Italian. He did stretching, the cutting, everything from A to Z, only sewing he was going out. I was six months --

(Inaudible). He didn't want to retire or be forced to retire and to teach me. Do you understand? So once

I met this _____, he said, how it goes, Gierowitz _____? I said—I tell him the story. He said, what? (Inaudible). So another business agent takes me. He took me to a line of ladies' underwear. He said it's mostly nylon in 1947. Nylon to stretch and to cut is murder. It shrinks. The material shrinks. So you really have a good feeling in your fingers how you should stretch it out. The first—but anyway, I was a cutter, was working overtime and coming in Saturday and the morning and making overtime money. \$150, \$160. What I need? My second wife—this is my third wife. When my second wife, the history was she was a slave back in the Soviet Union. There was such a lady called _____, a famous lady in the Zionist movement. She helped a lot of children, and she had a boy with _____. I was alive with a family again and everything and in this place six years. I would from time to time speak on the Jewish Labor Committee. Not now. (Inaudible). I would be on the program. (Inaudible). Then I took off a year absence and was driving around and addressing Jewish groups, all kinds, all over the United States. This way I almost saw everything in the United States. I saw almost everything from a nature point of view. I was driving. I had my car, a Roadmaster. I had my car and was driving around and speaking.

Q: For the labor unions?

A: For the Jewish socialist _____, such a group, old-timers. (Inaudible). It was fun too. I met people, a lot of people. People were nice to me. And then was the opening of the Jewish Labor Committee here. So I applied for this job, and it wasn't so easy, and I got the job. So I worked six years for them here.

Q: In Los Angeles?

A: In Los Angeles. Then I saw, for \$127 a week, you cannot make a living. So let's go out from this. I went in the nursing home business, and it was successful.

Q: Do you think that your early activities with the _____ and organizing in any way prepared you for getting through this whole experience?

A: I think so. There's no question that it had an influence and a lot of things were done because I was _____. I was very militant (ph). When you are militant (ph), you go to jail in Poland. You go to

jail _____. The central committee would start calling all sorts of _____. It's not a big thing. But the school, it was something—I was not interested in just only to be after a girl running around. I was—and I got concerned with Jewish life. I became Jewish. Do you understand? Yeah. I knew that I lived only—that's why I'm going through this. I knew it. I was seven times in Israel, seven, seven. I loved it every time. _____ because I have problems with walking. I was in the Soviet Union two times and talked about the Soviet Union, about the movement.

Q: But you think this helped you through Auschwitz and everything?

A: I think so. I want to give some credit to my _____, what I experienced and what I was thinking before. Because you couldn't get any—it was impossible in Auschwitz to become a philosophy, to use somebody's philosophy. There was no philosophy because there was death. There was—existence was a human being to die, was brought to die there. We were lucky. The war started _____. (Inaudible). I was two or three years in Germany. I didn't shake my hand with the German, no. I still won't buy a Mercedes Benz. I think a Cadillac is better than a Mercedes Benz. That's my principle.

Q: Did you ever find out what happened to your grandfather?

A: My grandfather was killed. He was one of the first seven or eight Jews which they took out.

Q: You didn't hear anything more about your parents?

A: My parents, no.

Q: When you think back now—and I know you go around and talk—are there certain images that stick the strongest in your mind that you lived through or saw?

A: I don't think so.

Q: Nothing that you dream about or—

A: I still at night sometimes cry or talk. It doesn't make any sense. My lovely wife thinks that it is still something which is from what I went through during the war, which I don't know. Maybe she's right. Maybe. But this is _____. Sometimes I'm very organized. Sometimes I think I'm doing well. I'm fighting with myself. I want to be—I don't want to die. (Inaudible).

Q: Any other thoughts in terms of long-term impact of these experiences on you?

A: I tell you I am not involved—you know, Los Angeles has two memorials. I am not involved in none of them. One is a business, which _____ is _____ because of politics by state legislature for \$5 million. _____ the Jewish federations. And I am not involved in these two. (Inaudible). I don't know. I understand the museum in Washington. First of all, the location is important, from my point of view. As a Jew, I am proud. It's important. Location is so important. It's unbelievable. Really, it's unbelievable that the book is about. Supposedly, in Washington Post was a write-up of the book, and that is mentioned _____. I know he run away because of this American situation. (Inaudible). But I'm proud. Everybody shouts something, something. Good. (Inaudible). No, not me. This is already business or something _____ or whatever. You see? But basically, -- and I think _____ has an influence over me as a Jew. That's what's important. I think this is the positive. Something positive came from Auschwitz.

Conclusion of interview.