

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with David Klipp
July 24, 1995
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with David Klipp, conducted on July 24, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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DAVID KLIPP

July 24, 1995

Q: Mr. Klipp, will you begin by telling me your name, where you were born, and your date of birth?

A: My name is David Klipp, I was born July nine, 1905, in a small Lithuanian town called Skudy, S-k-u-d-y. Lithuania small little town, where we lived with my grandmother in their house, the -- all little houses were -- on Fridays, the baker -- there was a bakery open, on the Friday it was -- things so -- baked for the whole week for the family, and so on, so on. Anyway, is -- my father, and his brother married two sisters. This mean my mother's -- my mother and my uncle's wife were two sisters. Then there was another brother, too, but I don't have any recollection where -- I know he should only be in France somewhere, but I had no contact. My dad, when he was alive, kept all the contact with hi -- with [indecipherable]. No -- in 1907 -- you see, the -- all young men were rev -- educated in religious thing. Rabbinical preparation, all kind in these thing, there were no other type of thing. No -- and my father has a little bit older ideas, too, and he wanted to build up a better life for his -- for his family. So, when I was two years old, in 1907, he went to the United States. Was in the United States, the first [indecipherable] was how to -- peddling, like all the people do, and so on. But later on, he learned to make sweaters, and established himself a little factory -- factory -- they call it factory, all there was a couple machines to make sweaters. No -- he was very prosperous, very good, and in 19-0-10, he decided he is ready to bring the family to New York, and start in living. So he came back, but my mother didn't want to go. Her -- her parents were still alive, they lived all together, and what is in the United States? Where is it? What -- this is home, they knew only their world. So he had no choice, he had to give up the plant, and -- and he moved in 19-0-10. He moved to Łódź, Poland, where he established himself a little factory making sweater. The same thing what he had there. Same thing what he ha -- what they had there, and was a pretty good doing. Then the first World War broke out [indecipherable] Poland, 19 fort -- [indecipherable] 1914 in -- and we came to Łódź 1913. My father went 1910, and the rest of the family came 1913. The first World War got 1914, and Łódź was occupied by the Russian army at thi -- this is part of the Russian sphere of interest, or kind of the s -- Poland for -- the country was divided in three parts. It was the -- what they call the congers Poland, were Łódź, Russia, and all this thing. This for they -- they were -- they called the Poland under -- under Austrian supervision, and they're very compulsive education. And people had to go to school, and people had to learn. The third part were in the area of Fooznine, which was more anti-Semitic oriented territory, so -- and so this was wa -- 19 -- 1914, then the war broke out. Not -- the war broke out, the people gel prepared, Poland can never last five weeks, six weeks. So, what people did, they bought bread, put on cases of loafes of bread, this will keep us over the war, and so on. [indecipherable]. So the war lasted quite a bit, until 1918. Then, the Polish armies became alive, too and so on, and there were the Polish armies from the Russian territory, the Polish officers were from the Russian army, and is all kind of thing. But Poland became a -- a independent to a certain degree. No political, I don't recall too many things there, but it -- it changed the whole life, in -- in -- in the whole area. This went on, then the Russian army came into Łódź, I remember the Cossacks when they

came in. And naturally they did whatever they want, and when they were going over -- they were in Łódź, and they saw a German plane flying overboard, a Russian soldier picked up his rifle and shot in the air, he don't know what he is doing, what he shot, and this you can imagine. But this is the way, the level of the armies what -- of this time. In th-this, the war went on, and in 1920 -- 1920, Pilsudski came to power. And Pilsudski was more Socialistic oriented, and he was more cooperating with everything, and so -- and he was the one. The territory close to the German border what called the Posnine region was there, was General Halla, the anti-Semitic general whose soldiers were catching Jews from deflor, cutting their beard, and so on, all kind of things. In 19 -- I am going over fast, but there is not too many things sink. In 1926, I was called to the army. Yeah, until then, I was working, before, and I worked in a company where I did clerical work, and salers work, some small companies. In 1926, I was called to the -- to the army service. So I went in octo -- On October the 12th, 1926. I had to induct to the army, and I was assigned to the Fosnine region, where General Halla had his say, and so on. I went there, and then there was a very big limitation what a Jew can do, what a Jew cannot do. In the army, the regular probably hear the same thing. They need -- in the beginning they need young people to do -- at least to help, were write and read, and so on. So they needed people to the company office, to write. Who can read and write? Three people picked up their hands. I was one of them. I knew I will not make it, but I was one of them. So they called okay, there was one who was by profession a teacher in Poland. So they took him to the office, naturally. And he lasted about three or four weeks, and they get him out. Then there was another one who can read and write, some kind -- halfway educated. They took him in there, and he only last a few weeks, too. Finally they came to the point there are nobody else. So they decided they have to -- no choice. So I was taken to the o -- to the office, and this is not part of the military duty, of going through the military training, with all the [indecipherable] all the exercise, and so on, but in -- in spare time, day time, lunch time, evening, you do the -- the office work. No -- experienced I was, so they very fast decided that I can do the ho -- the payroll for the company also. Order was I get involved in many thing -- the -- the company payroll for the officers and all kind of things. And this way I get the contact with -- the battalion commander at this time, if I recall, was a majer -- Major Sheemak, in Polish majer, in English major. Sheemak was on this way -- he was a son of a very wealthy Polish landowner and so on, so he had his own horse, and all kind of things. But he was a little bit a nervous guy. When he went to the casino, and he drank a little bit, he took out his gun and shot at a lamp, shot at everything what [indecipherable]. So then what -- after this was over, the following day, he realized, and somehow he knew the battalion working in the -- in the company office -- battalion officer. So he calls me in, and tells me, "When I go to the casino, and I start to drink, you come with me and take away my gun." Order is order, I did it. And when I came in, he didn't say anything, just took out the gun and gave it to me. This was -- this was not nice. And this way was on -- I was in the army until I went to the -- exercise the records there and so on, so on. This part of Poland belong to the division per -- General Halla was in charge of the whole thing. And when it came to the examination after the -- the three months, and the commander of the infantry for the division came for the -- for the high ranking general -- came down, then naturally they -- they have the bas -- the exercises. So when they start to ask question atfil, whatever he asked me to do, and he right away picked on me. And whatever he

asked me to do, I did. I considered myself a pretty good soldier, and I knew what I am doing. And finally at the afternoon exams in the class, asking question again, and the professional -- one the officers didn't know all the answers always, so he picked on me. One of the question was, who did more for Poland, General Halla, or Pilsudski? And behind him, there was standing officers, and he which showed me to mark on the picture where -- where Halla is. I said, "No, in mine opinion Pilsudski did more for Poland than Halla." So this way we have a discussion and every question aired, I answered not to -- not to his liking. Anyway, this time were over, and then we had to come to the period of being sworn in. Being sworn in, they took, naturally, because swearing in for Christian one way, and then all the Jews from the whole area, they took to a Polish son of Kalish, and there they bought -- they ordered a rabbi to come there and swear it in. And then, in the meantime, waiting for the rabbi to come and so on, the officers made jokes. Naturally, anti-Semitic jokes were no problem there, so they -- they had fun. Finally there came the news that the rabbi arrived. So they had to send a -- a horse and buggy to bring him in. Came in a rabbi from the part of Baleetshia what was until the ouster -- occupation, all t - - Jew with a -- with a long beard, and so on, spoke a beautiful Polish. And they opened their eyes, how can he speak Polish like this? And he did his formal thing, and he di -- swearing in, and during this time they -- they get a little bit respect for him. They didn't expect him to be such a Polishist. Anyway this -- this went over, and we went back to normal duty. And I was in the army until March of 1928. 1928 I was released and I went home.

Q: Let me ask you a question.

A: Yes, ma'am.

Q: Was your family fairly religious?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Was your family religious?

A: My family was -- the background was a religious background. This is only thing they will -- learned. My father was a great Talmudist. But the goal for you went there is to be rabbinical educated, and what is much better than a rabbi, can't be much more. My father himself was not -- he looked for something else, he had technical thinking and so on. That's why he went to the United States. So he was -- he went -- he went to the United States, naturally taking all the religious books and so on, and he came [indecipherable] them. Was there he learned English a little bit. Was not a perfect English, but he learned, and he loved the United States. And he wanted to come back, but mother didn't go. So all the way -- our fath -- my father, and my family was the less religious of seven -- of the other brothers -- uncles, and so on, so on.

Q: What about when you were in school? Did you go to a Jewish school, or to a spec --

A: I go -- it was -- it was a public school, it is called the Yarrowcheeskey gimnasium in pro - in Skudy I went to the haider, to a religious school, to a rabbi. In Łódź when we came, we went -- there was a building, a gimnasium, there were a public school, and then they have all the -- a mechanical school for mechanical engineers. There was a big project, and there was donated by a -- by a wealthy family named Yarrowcheeskey. Well this -- their name was called to the whole thing, Yarrowcheeskey school. In the -- in the building of the school, they -- all they build -- they build it also a little synagogue, too. But they -- the headmaster of the school was not an observant Jew, he was more assimilated. And he was only the one thing, Yom Kippur, to say the high holiday, Kol Nidre, he has to be there. Thus he is only Jewish is what he displayed there. Not -- my father was -- he had a good voice, was a good singer, and knew how to run services before a group and so on. And he loved my father. So he want -- he wanted my father when he is there Kol Nidre, my father has to do it. At one time he was late, and the other people in the temple there, looked at the sun, cannot wait any longer. At san -- a certain time when the sun goes down, you have to do it. So -- and he wasn't there. So they decided not to wait, and let -- conduct the services. To another fellow, not my father, who was to be in contorial duties once in awhile, conducted the prayer, and serv -- everything. At the end the director came in. His name was Shweitzer. He came in and he find out Kol Nidre is over. So he insisted -- he insisted that the Kol Nidre will be said again, and my father has to do it. So there was a big rigamarole, it is against the lord, the religious [indecipherable] but finally my father said, "Look, for peace, it -- it will no harm than to say it again." So my father went up and prayed Kol Nidre, and he was really happy, and this is the way it is. Well -- well this is to show that my father was religious, observant, but he was not a fanatic.

Q: Did you have any Gentile friends when you were in school or growing up?

A: No, there were only Jewish boys in the school. The only Jewish boys. And on Saturdays you were going to the temple in the gimnasium, in the building there, and that's it.

Q: So you were part of a Jewish community in --

A: A Jewish community, that's right. And this way we were -- we were brought up. No -- my mother was born 1892, and she died in 1920, at the age of 28. And this time, children were not told what illness is, or what things this is. What do children know about? So, naturally we didn't [indecipherable] from observation. From this reached the doctor who is -- who was the main doctor to my mother, Dr. Rosenberg, he was in the ghetto also. Dr. Rosenberg was a neurolo, so I figured all by myself there is something to do with neurology. So -- and my mother was extremely religious observant, she didn't do -- at that time, the -- the doctor said you have to eat something fat, you have to eat not kosher meat, but eat what you need is fat. You could not convince her, there is no way. So my father brought in a rabbi who lived not far, to try to explain her that even by Jewish law, to save a life you can -- you can eat things what you are not usually do. But, it didn't work. There was no way. She died as a result of her illness as the Dr. Rosenberg was coming there, and so on, and she died on -- in Łódź, in her bed.

Q: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

A: I had a brother and two sisters. My two sister -- my older sister went to unise -- my father was later very much for sending the children to the United States. So, in the meantime my mother died, and my -- and my father was left with my older sister, myself, and the sister was born 1911, and the boy was born 1916. So my sister went to the United States in 1922, went to the -- to the United States, and -- and I rejected. And I said, "I am not going, I will stay with you. Whatever I can help with the family we will do together," and so on, so on. So it was not the easier time, but we survived. My father had worked on the job, too, so in the meantime he was coming home a few times to check what we are doing, and I was very helpful in raising the whole family, and so on. No -- my -- and then came the -- the war. The first war was 1914, 19 -- 18 - 19 - 20, we over this. The Germans started the war on September the first, 1939. This --

Q: Let me ask -- before we get to that, let me just ask you a question.

A: Please.

Q: When you were a boy, and when you were a young adult, were you involved in any political organizations, any Zionist movements, anything?

A: I was interested in Zionist movement, and I belonged to a group what was into Zionist thing. And I was attending their meetings and so on, and I was very much interested in Israel at this time. So this is the -- the way of life, what with the -- so I attended this as much time as I had. I had to work, too. And be a -- with my work, no matter what I did, I could help the family a little bit, which was very important.

Q: Were these organizations popular?

A: This o -- oh yeah, this was the well-known Zionist organization, a group called Yidaktout. The head of it was Dr. Takover [indecipherable] died in Israel. And --

Q: What was the goal of the organization?

A: The goal organization was for Israel -- for Zionist movements, and to be able to build up a -- a -- a -- a -- a -- a Israel in -- in -- in post-war. You see, this was the war effort. No -- at this time there were not too many people were -- were sent to Israel to -- to kibbutz and so on, to work. But my interest was with the family, to help as much as I could.

Q: Before the war began with the Germans --

A: Yes?

Q: How much did you know about Hitler, and what was going on in Germany?

A: I was very, very much aware. You see, I was interested in the anti-Hitler movement, and here now was a lady by the name of Iren Hairind, I-r-e-n Hairind H-a-i-r-i-n-d. Iren Hairind did a publication, monthly publication called Garaishdifite, which is justice. And there she reported everything what she knew -- what she find out from Germany, so on, so on. So I was a subscriber to this. I worked on the job, and I did very well, and -- and she -- and I was -- as -- a subscriber to this. I worked for a man by the name of Anatole Funkin. Mr. Funkin was a very well to do -- a Jewish family from before the war, and you know, Jews could not keep in Petersburg -- this is the capital of -- of Russia unless he was a -- big merchant. No -- my father's father was building railroads in Russia, so natural he was entitled to go. And his son graduated from law in Petersburg in 1890 - something. My father was born 1876. Somehow my father met Mr. Funkin after the war, I was back already from the Polish army. And I worked on the job, and yet, at one point there were in Poland three main factories of artificial silk -- the big ones. The most for the French capital. And in order to get the representation for this one, people paid money for it, and -- and gave deposits, and ba -- the guarantees, whatever they had. But it didn't work out with some of them, and at one point Mr. Funkin was offered , if he [indecipherable] to say yes, so he will get the representation of the one company, which was named the Hodakoof. Now, Mr. Funkin, he was us visiting, he was not leaving, he came [indecipherable] so on. He had suites in all major towns in Europe, mostly Switzerland, Zurich so on, Warsaw. And Mr. loo -- and at this time, when he was offered this representation, he happened to be in Łódź, and my father knew him, how I don't know, but -- and he wanted to meet me. And I was working on a job when I came out from the army. I was working there since 1928. So at one evening I went to meet him, and he told me what he has -- he was a very well educated elderly gentleman. And he -- and he told me he will only take it if I will work for him. So I told him I need a few weeks to [indecipherable] my [indecipherable] there. So I decided in four weeks I should be ready. When I came after four weeks to -- to take over the job, he was out of town. No -- the other man in the company [indecipherable] by the name of Vinerice. Vinerice was the president of the Cheskloveena lodge, and was in these areas. So I come in, and I -- they locate me, I say, "Mr. Funkin hired me to start." "Oh, he forgot to tell me." But when you told me he hired, you would do whatever you want.

End of Tape #1

Tape #Two

Q: You worked in this business for how long?

A: In this particular business, I sel -- no, I was start working for them for 16 years old. And different places were [indcipherable] town so on, so on. On this particular job we're after -- we were -- I -- I started in 1928, and I took over the -- yet -- Funkin job in 1932. So -- and then -- and I wot -- I established myself pretty -- really in the community too. I had a name, and my personal card opened doors to many places, and so on. There was at time that -- in Poland was very anti-Semitic, and [indcipherable] all over, and there were no -- as I said, we were -- we were married July the second in 1933, we went away for a few weeks, and then we came back to work. Had my apartment, and I'll even -- Mr. Funkin, his family from his life had two big buildings, where I was there managing, too. I had the [indcipherable] for tony for them, and so on. And I had there one apartment for myself. No -- the orderzite I married my stepmother's younger sister. She was a teacher. And then in 1936, she became pregnant. And so I ask her, "You don't need to work, it is already -- the school is end pretty soon, and now, no harm will ti -- be taken to the children if you don't finish with them. Let somebody else take over." In order to convince me -- and she wanted to be -- somebody might do harm to the children, judging wrong, whatever it is. So, in order to convince, she, without my knowledge, she went to the -- to the top doctor where all the big ladies were going, [indcipherable] and so on. And came back, and -- and brought me a letter from him, he didn't see any danger in her continue working. But it wasn't so. At one night she became very, very ill, and there was nowhere to go, nowhere to do. There was a clinic at -- kind of a hospital what was a mostly frequented by the poor part of the people, the rich didn't go there, and -- and there's a -- not far from my house, and I had to take her to a -- to a hospital [indcipherable]. So fi -- I -- I called up, and they told me yeah, I can bring her. So I went, said then call up the doctor. Cause there were no doctor and so on. So he says, Ooh yeah, if I -- if I get 20 zloty, I," -- so in middle of the night, "if I get 20 zloty, I -- I will come." 20 zloty was like hundred dollar here, at this time was money. I said, "Look you just come there, and the money is waiting for you here." He came in the middle of the night to that thing. It turned out my wife was in the seventh month of pregnancy and had to have a -- so that they [indcipherable] it was not easy, and she almost paid with her life for it, but survived. Naturally, we did everything, but what could be done? And after all she never regained her health completely. After a long time the doctor says oh, and we -- you are having a f -- a very comfortable job, and -- and she was conducting -- still teaching a little bit, [indcipherable] little for do something for awhile, then she had to give it up, too. So we were living the -- the l-life at this time was in -- in Poland at this time, the big meal [indcipherable] the evening. Lunchtime with the -- with the big meal is there, so usually people met on Saturday, Sunday in the café houses, which has a live band playing and so on, for a tea, whatever -- before they went out for -- for dinners, and this was our life, too. This was we were doing. Yo --

Q: So all of this -- you've mentioned several times that there was a lot of anti-Semitism.

A: Another what?

Q: You mentioned several times that there was a lot of anti-Semitism.

A: Anti-Semi --

Q: Did this concern you? I mean, you knew what was happening in Germany. You were experiencing problems --

A: No, this was -- this was before. You see, the Christian church in Poland blamed the Jews for Jesus' death. And in -- in Germany after the war, a Catholic priest, a good friend of my told me he knew, and -- and everybody knew this is not the case, but this was the cause the church used. And this -- so this was the anti-Semitism, was part of Poland's life. And this was really helpful to Germans when they came in, to -- to drag down Jews, and so every Polish little kinder, five, six years old, could show all, hey, Jew, so someone took him away to work [indecipherable] and so on. This is the way the life was.

Q: Tell me about the first day of the -- when the Germans came in.

A: The German crossed the border on September the first. And this time we didn't know -- we knew this they were [indecipherable] and so on. We were -- we were home sleeping at -- at one time in -- what four o'clock in the morning, five o'clock in the morning, a friend of my -- a -- a MD who was living a few houses away, knocked at the door and came in, and said, "Y-You are still sleeping? Everybody's running -- everybody's running away, and so from the Germans, the Germans are coming." I say -- running -- fighting is not my nature, I never went. So I say okay, I will get up, get dressed, I will see what the situation is over there and so on. And then the rumors for the women -- to women they didn't do anything, the Germans, but men they take away, either with the work here and there, and so on. So it was everybody were -- all men went -- tried to get away. Finally, I was talked into -- about eight o'clock in the morning, to go. So with my brother and a third man who worked for me, we were walking toward Warsaw. Nobody expected that Warsaw will be capitulated in a -- in a short time. I was living in Rosso at the time, in -- in the building on Aubushna six. Aubushna six I had friends of my, and we were stay -- and I was staying with them. And -- and Aubushna six was across the Polish theater, where the Polish police from towns were there staying, and so on, so on. So at one time they had to bomb the buildings, too. But everybody say there was a retired general living in the building you saw, every shot would hear, he said, the old people are being shot. And then finally at one night, this was on the 25th of September, a bomb hit the building. And we were on the -- on the fourth floor. The sixth, and -- and the fifth floor collapse. We were on the fourth floor, and everything was burning around, and we had to start the war. Had to start the war, and the [indecipherable] I don't know. So my brother and the three of men [indecipherable] we were walking. And the whole city was in flame, in fire. Everywhere we went you couldn't pass by. Dead people and animal on the -- on the streets lying, this was a chaos completely. And [indecipherable] we saw this way, the whole night until we find the hideeron. Hideeron so on, until the morning. And then there was no -- yeah, but this time the German already came in. there. And we were running toward Warsaw,

running to get away from the German, maybe they will just stop, maybe they will never stopped. Wherever we went, everything was burning.

Q: I'm a little confused. When you're talking about the building being bombed --

A: Yes.

Q: This is in Warsaw or in Łódź?

A: In Warsaw. The big building where I was the [indecipherable] floor. And so then we were run to Warsaw and everything was afire. So we had to s -- we had to start to go -- go to a -- Warsaw, what we thought it might be safe and so on. It took us more than a week, cause we couldn't -- daytime you couldn't walk, so we had to lie down hidden somewhere. And nights you could walk. And finally we came to -- shortly before Warsaw, we came on foot so -- and -- and -- and then the population, mostly the Jewish population ha -- had prepared drinks, and broth, and everything to try to help us to get [indecipherable]. But the main thing was, took us over the bridge. And this was the main part. So I put myself up further to the bridge and there -- and there is lying a Polish officer, waiting too. And I ask him how it is. He says, "Look, this is a l-long place was -- is constantly bombed. And here, if you don't catch the moment between one set of flares gets away, and -- and the other comes, you might make it." We did. I saw [indecipherable] let's fly -- with away, so I'll know whatever it is, we have to make it. So we on, and we crossed the long bridge, closer to Warsaw. There was a place called Majdanek if I remember right, and there the people were standing, helping us with food, whatever it is. Then, finally we -- we came into Warsaw, and the German came into Warsaw, I think it was on September the 25th. When I heard the s -- the German are already here and so on, so I -- so I approach the German column, and an officer was there, and I ask him if he can tell me if the way to Łódź is safe for me to walk -- to start to do. He looks at me for awhile, and then he say, "I on your place would go to Palestine." So, nothing we could do. We started to make our way, slowly different ways going back to Łódź and it took us a long time, and we had to -- walking and hiding and all kind of things. And we came to Łódź at one evening. We went in to the side of the cemetery there, and I paid somebody to go in and call up my wife, tell her that I am here. He took the money, but they never made the call, I found out later. The other fellow -- at the evening when it was dark, we took the freight car, we had no choice. And we went on, we made it home. Now then, from this one is -- life was different that the German came, and the German tried to take away every house where they can and so on. And I was managing the two big apartment houses for my bosses, too, but at this time there was no managing at all. I had -- I couldn't do anything. So just living there, staying there for awhile. I had, before the war, working at Funkin, I had contact -- they were in Poland, were at a lot of companies owned by people who came years ago from Germany, manufacture, so on. The young, when hi -- when Hitler came to power, the young generation, the young Germans went to Germany, and they became the Hatenkroitzer and this all kind of things. I had a conflict w-with -- with one company, who was very good, very -- but the experience was when you see -- they were paying a lot with backslip. Those were checks with a longer period of time, so on. 60 days, 90 days, and -- and I had

some from the company [indecipherable] checks from other people, other name. And one check came back from my exper -- and my practice was mail it to them, and they will send me back a check. [indecipherable] I mailed it, but I never heard anything back, because the young fellow was in head office, he was already away in Germany. And he wasn't -- so -- but he came back, as I was still in the building, leaving there. And I saw him through the window coming in, so I opened the door, and I approached him in Germany, and say, "You are coming to -- to collect a debt." And he said, "No, Mr. Klipp, I am -- I am coming to pay a debt." And apologized for this what happened, and so on. Now, he was a uniform with the arm band, with all kind German things. And that's the way it was until we were living in the apartments, I was at my father with his family, and [indecipherable] and then until January 16.

Q: Was your father able to continue his business?

A: Father was sick, and I couldn't get the medical help for him. There was -- there was no doctor who could go to a Jew, and there was no way, and he had the illness, and finally he died on January 16, 1940, in his bed. I was at his bed. And the only thing we do is that -- use connections to be able to bury him in the cemetery, and this was it.

Q: What other kinds of changes happened after the Germans took over, for Jewish people?

A: When the German took over there, they first of all, they -- they fight to get all the Jews to work. And then their main thing was to get the Jews out of central town. They establish -- it was already toward the end of nine -- of -- of '39. There was already rumors of a [indecipherable] assigned as a ghetto. And -- and they tried to force people to move there as fast as you can by their own and so on. But I couldn't [indecipherable] cause my father was still alive, but when he died, a day after, they came in, and gave me 10 minutes to walk out of the building, and take whatever I can carry, nothing else. So we took whatever we can and -- and we start to walk toward the ghetto. And -- and my -- my friend there empty a room, empty apartment on one street, on Zygilska 36. So I went in and listen, there was no question asked. They open the door, you go in, and you are there. And this was the main street, where they build later the main artery, where they separated with two halves of the ghetto. So then --

Q: Pri -- prior to this in Łódź, were businesses confiscated?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Could people continue going to school?

A: No.

Q: What was the life like for Jews?

A: People couldn't whatever, the life stopped. Everything was -- there was no more life. People just tried to get out, and they were encouraging with many ways to people to

move away f-from there. So people were constantly moving, going, and so on. For example, my mother's family carried f -- 40 jar, things with -- out there. I couldn't do it. I was told only whatever I can have on my shoulder, and go. So it was -- there was no life any more after this, until the ghetto, and then we didn't know what.

Q: What -- were there a lot of the -- were there attacks in the street, were the Germans around?

A: Oh yeah. Every Pole you saw a Jew here attack them or took them away, can't do this, do this, do this, and so on. And they were -- and the Germans were just -- they didn't care for this -- or wa -- they didn't care to -- to defend, whatever it is. They let them do whatever they want, this was helpful to them.

Q: So the Poles were attacking you?

A: Oh, yeah, the Poles, and the German was helping them. A little Polish boy had a German soldier, and -- and he told him, he is a Jew, and okay, and this [indecipherable]

Q: Was this something if you were walking the streets you would see?

A: I -- oh yeah, [indecipherable] from the streets. I had in the building where I was living, and what was owned by my -- by Mr. Funkin, by my boss. I -- I -- I had a tenant who was from Germany region, the family, many, many years ago. And these were good friends, always, and we still good friends. So at one time then I n -- I was in a jam, I went to every -- and advice, what should I do? I couldn't do this, I couldn't do this. So I decided to up to his door, he wa -- lived on the second floor, and go in and try to talk to him. The family knew me very well. And I come to the door, and his son opened the -- the -- let me in, and I see a German uniform hanging in sight. So he right away came out to say, don't worry, this is my nephew. Don't worry, you come in, and whatever I can do, tell me. So I tell him what -- in the meantime we're going in a conversation with the nephew. And the nephew, a young soldier tells me that we lost the war at this time. So I'm telling him, "Look, you are a member of a army who walks every day ahead, ahead, ahead. And you are tell me they lost the war?" There is a German word, zieg, zieg, this means that we get something, we ge -- com -- he says, "Herr -- herr Klipp, visignu stott." This means you are getting so much of this good, that we are die from it. And couple years later I was in the ghetto already, I received a -- he sent me in a communication by somebody that his nephew died on the front. Non -- at this time they -- okay, this was -- the German -- under the German occupation, there couldn't be -- naturally there was nothing. My father died, so I had to go to the ghetto. The ghetto I --

Q: Were you -- one question -- one more question and then we'll talk about the ghetto.

A: Yes.

Q: Were you aware of any Einsatzgruppen activities?

A: Of what?

Q: Einsatzgrup.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: In Łódź?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: What happened?

A: They were. The Einsatzgruppen were in the ghetto, in the part of the ghetto, and they all - all around. They made a fence around the ghetto, and where we get close to the fence, could be shot.

Q: And this was Einsatzgruppen?

A: The Einsatzgruppen with -- the Einsatzgruppen with the whole -- the -- I think there was some regular SS or regular army also, but mostly Einsatzgrup were the one who was marching with all thing. So it is -- it was no way -- again already the ghetto was established, and Roomkofsky was the head of the ghetto.

Q: How -- how did he become the head of the ghetto?

A: Pardon me?

Q: How was he chosen?

A: He was chosen because he had a big head of white hair, an older, which means he can be the altesta -- the oldest of the Jews. About --

Q: Was he the head of the Jewish community before?

A: Oh yeah, we did, but those were all Orthodox so -- and they were not acceptable, and there were no Jewish community, they were all gone. The -- the Jewish community before the war didn't exist any more. It was a new -- new life in the ghetto. There are mid -- there are different opinions of what -- Roomkofsky, I didn't judge him so bad, okay? No -- Roomkofsky's goal was to try to have as many possible Jews to survive. Naturally he was under orders from the Germans. Veego was the head of the ghetto ferbotten. His assistant was a fellow by the name of Bardfish. But we had in the ghetto a circle -- we had one fellow who was listening to the BBC news every day. And he was making up little notes that most political value for us, and I was getting such a note every day. I was -- there's not too many people hear that, but I was one who will get it. When somebody came in and gave me a piece of paper, I knew what it did, and is that. No -- this fellow eventually when they -- when they caught up with him, he committed suicide, hanged

himself. His name was Hayden Vidofsky. And was -- he didn't want to follow life in the Germans' hand. And dote -- the German head as you know, a krippo [indecipherable] side, there they were calling Jewish and tried to get away -- all Jews had to work, the Jews were hiding, the Jews did all kind of things they wanted. And from time to time the [indecipherable] they were brought to the krippo. There were only -- they -- there were also Jews who worked with the Germans in -- in the krippo. They used them to [indecipherable] to [indecipherable] to bring something, to some -- whatever it is. Now, I was the office manager of the fflagunsaftargum, in the ghetto. Which means the department where all the food to the ghetto, for the Jews, whatever the German assigned, came in to us.

Q: How did you get this job?

A: Mr. Roomkofsky wanted to get me in the beginning. I understood -- I found that out later. There was a -- a lady by the name of Jacobson. Hers -- her son was a lawyer, and she wanted to promote her son, and when she get wind that Roomkofsky would like to -- to see me, I never get called to see him, until there was a change later, Mr. Stalshi Jacobson, by way was related to my -- relation t-to -- I know you very well as a kid. And but she maneuvered him, and I was not notified until there was a change. Jacobson was at once to a different position, and somebody else came in to his office to be the office manager, and in the drawer they found my name that Roomkofsky wanted to see me, which I never knew.

Q: Did you know Roomkofsky before the war?

A: I met him one -- I knew about him, but I met him once, okay?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And he was -- Roomkofsky himself was under the -- into very big pressure from the Germans, naturally, and he tried to get as many people to survive, as many possible, so on. So his approach to the Germans was, we have people of every line of work, we can do all type of work for the German could use, and what a German population can use. And he establish working results for all kind of things. And the German were taking advantage of it too. They were using it and so on. So he was a couple time taken away by the German out of town again, but after a few days, I don't think -- you see, Mr. Roomkofsky's secretary was a lady by the name of Dora Fuchs. Dora Fuchs was o -- the family originally from Poland, and many years ago, like many, they went to Germany. They settled in Hanover, in Germany. And this Dora Fuchs became the secretary to Roomkofsky.

Q: I think we need --

End of Tape #2

Tape #3

Q: Okay.

A: Okay?

Q: Yes.

A: Okay?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah. Noy -- so he had to change of s-secretary, and he found so -- Jacobson to the legal departments, Jacobson was the lawyer. So, at this time came a new secretary to him, and opened the door and see a note to get me to see Roomkofsky. So -- and he knew me, so he -- the following day I -- I was told to go to see Roomkofsky. So I went to see Roomkofsky. I come there to a office, we are standing around, people everywhere. Rabbis, near rabbis, pela -- people, police, you name it, everybody was there. And he was meeting somebody in his office. Finally he came out, and he looked around, "I want to see you." Left everybody stay and called me in, I'm going in. He said, "Look, I have a big mess in the fflagunsaftargum,," in there. This mean where the all food can be in the aprovasultsia, the -- all the food came in at once [indecipherable] there was a big mess. "I want you to go right away there, take it over, and make order." No far I knew about him, that there is no -- if I -- I cannot go tell anybody what I'm going to do, I went right away over there, and I am working. He might think he's a -- he [indecipherable] I come by horse and buggy, but I have to walk. So I went over there, actually there, and there was a fellow the -- o -- who head his office by the name of Roderusser, and he was unhappy with him. And Roderusser was not a real professional, there's a different story. So I come in, and I said, "Roderusser, look, don't worry. We will go, put everything together. They will arrange it, and once you will [indecipherable] in the -- in the certain order we will, it will work by themselves, unfort." So, Roderusser was very afraid, because Roomkofsky got aggravate, he could send him away right away to -- to be transported out to -- to Auschwitz, whatever it is. And -- but, he didn't do it. S --

Q: Okay, I'm going to stop you one moment. Stop tape please. Okay.

A: Okay. What was there -- you see, the Jewish bakeries from before the war, that were there over on the ghetto, they were baking bread. And they had to come to buy flour to the fflagum sometime. So what they bought in their Polish money, they didn't get this back, because th-the German took away the Polish money, they didn't get the money. Anyway, when they -- this way he -- he came to transfer out the money and so on. I head the department with a head cashier. There were five people working with us, to get the money, sort it out, but -- and so on. The -- the head cashier was a professional cashier from before the war, from a big bank. From the same bank where -- becau -- the [indecipherable] Mr. Rosenblatt came. I knew about her, I didn't know her. So -- but -- and she was just as a -- before the war, slowly do it, one time, think of another and so on.

The ghetto was no time for it. So finally I saw the one day, it doesn't work. So I tells her, "Look, Mrs. Steinbeck, you sit down at the corner, I will operate the cashier's office. You sit down there and watch me. And then you tell me if you can do it or not." The following day, the old people got there, and counting the money, sorting out, and I was sitting there, and I was doing the same time, collecting while I am paying out money, collecting, what she say it couldn't be done. Circumstances are different, this is a war. So I worked there for a whole day. At the end of the day she came into there, "Mr. Klipp, I will do it." Okay, good. That's all I needed. And then the money -- what the Jewish bakers brought in, the following day, the Germans took away. There came a Mr. Schwinn was his name, a German from the ghetto Vivaldin, he came to collect the money and so on. So, from now on she was -- she was handling this, and I was to get myself back to the office, before the people -- and I had people whom I knew from -- from before the war, most accountants I knew, and they knew me and so on. So it's all cloc pretty well. We somehow man -- and Roomkofsky came after awhile, it didn't take long, I was there, and he was there. So I told him, Mr. Roomkofsky, mis -- [indecipherable] I think we called him, "It will be straightened out. Let me get to him orientity of what is, and I will assure you after I finish, I will be able to tell you that everything works." Turned around, went away. And I started to organize the things, organize the people to work and so on. And 19 -- going back to Roomkofsky as a person, as a character, what it is. In 1942, he sent us in 5,000 from Czechoslovakia, and 5,000 from Vienna, and 5,000 from Berlin. And then another transfer to 5,000 from Czechoslovakia. Most of them exsembly rich people. The lagers we told this what they had, this is the first time they had, they came in to the ghetto. So, had to find to do something and so on. Among them was a Mr. Hirsch. Mr. Hirsch was on the -- on the board of most of the heavy industry in Czechoslovakia, a great lawyer with a big legal office, and so on. And he was a sick man. Now, I tried to help him as much as you could. At the same time we were getting in potatoes. What happened? My [indecipherable] always. You know that from the farmer to get permission for one shipment of -- of -- of potatoes, with the same permission we get five, six, seven, eight shipments of potatoes. So the whole night we are working, and I was working with them. We are working with a little hand wagon what they pushed, what they pulled, and so on there, but they -- just to get away from the -- from the place where they are. At the same time, I had to watch to make Roomkofsky satisfied too, that -- that I am not problem. Among these people, as I say, was a Mr. Hirsch, extremely wealthy man, and Mr. Hirsch showed me, "Mr. Klipp, when the war ends, half what I have is yours." So I thought myself, first let's survive, and then we'll talk. Then, as -- so, what I do with these people? So, there was a little shack in the corner of the fiflagunsaftargum,, there was a little shack. I put in in this shack a long table with benches, and -- and there I -- I working five people, Mr. Hirsch was among them, who couldn't do anything else, they were not used to anything else. Everybody had their pencil with the pad and sitting there. And nobody knew about this arrangement, the [indecipherable]. Mr. Roomkofsky discovered it one time when he was down there, gwaiting to corner. "Hey, hey," comes in there, "what is this? What are the people doing here?" So I tell him, "Present, they are waiting for the soup." He looked at me, turned around, went out without saying a word. So, I had to -- so I am almost legal with them -- having them. So they were work over there, and were -- they sitting there hours, and waiting for the soup, then the soup came, then they went, and they sit -- went to their families, to the qualas, wherever they are. This was

going on for [indecipherable] Roomkofsky, his reaction, what a deal I told him they wait for the soup. This was for him -- and this told me a lot about him. He wanted to -- I knew about him more than I knew him, what I hear, these activities and -- in -- in -- in -- in the homes for children with their parents, all kind of things. In the part of the Łódź -- I was actually in the same place, in different part of town. So at one time he -- he called me, and he said look, here is a big -- here is a family what the father's going into the army, and he has a family of small children. If I take care of the smallest, he will take care of the bigger ones. He -- a deal. So I say, I'll put in the smallest children in the order of [indecipherable] and so on. Anyway, this -- this worked pretty good with him. This went on until -- and yeah, and -- and every day Mr. Shrink was coming, collecting the -- the -- the -- the Polish money, take away the order. At the same time Mr. Meemorf, who was before the war a coffee merchant, a big coffee merchant, and he created for himself, after the war he should have something too. So he was sending in to the ghetto things like cacao, tea, rice, something like it -- it was -- what he couldn't touch, and told not to touch it. And whatever a transport came in of his things, the following day he was in, and I had to give him a report what I have. Match a long paper, everything was beautiful. It always match. But, I had people with epidemia, dysentaria, all kind of, all kind of -- and rice was the only thing what I had. So I had the -- the man who -- who headed the [indecipherable] the magazine, a fellow Moshberg, he didn't survive, I -- he was a very nice guy, so I told him, "Look, let's opim a sacrifice, and when people call, they having dysentaria with the -- give them a little bit rice, so nobody should know that you were the only one who can give what they need." And this [indecipherable] for awhile. So finally the German collected all -- all the money and so on, and I s -- falsified Roomkofsky with the cash -- with the -- with the handling and so on, and it worked smoothly. So -- so the office worked, and I could award it to myself too, to taking care of [indecipherable] and all kind of things.

Q: Estelle -- it -- we're hearing it --

A: So, and this was -- the ghetto was goin -- going like it -- like this until they -- they started to liquidate the ghetto.

Q: Okay, then let's -- I want to ask you questions --

A: Well now [indecipherable]

Q: [indecipherable] if that's okay. You were talking about Roomkofsky.

A: Yes.

Q: I think that he was controversial in many ways.

A: He what?

Q: Was controversial.

A: Yes.

Q: People felt that there was a lot of corruption with the officials, and the police, and do -- was that something you were aware of?

A: Oh yeah. In cases like this, without corruption, nothing can be done. You see, what is, there was more -- most people who were involved there -- he was the head of the ghetto for about -- of the ghetto, Roomkofsky, but then the other department, who could make all those deals with the Germans to duplicate or triplicate potatoes, shipments, all kind of this. Somebody who knew the underworld a little bit. And there was -- and fellows who were active in the more advanced under-underground thing, they came to power, and they were -- would they know how to handle, how to buy, whom to buy, what to buy with, and so on. And there was -- and this was the main thing, was nothing what they could do to it. You see, he thi -- this is the way we are getting in potatoes much more than we -- than we should have, and all the food items, and so on, so on. But all lead to their activities, it was a means for us to get it.

Q: So you got more than -- than what you were officially allowed?

A: Oh yeah, no question about. You see, the -- whatever they officially send in, that the ghetto can afford, it was divided by the corporation, by so many, and we have distribution points, and we gave out, whenever this [indecipherable] what is the number of people in this area, and we gave them as much people a -- a -- as much food as was there. But nothing officially came in. The unofficial we couldn't touch. So it was a -- there is -- in a case like this there were no normalities, forget about normality at this time. Everything -- most people from the -- I would call them underground for this. But most people came to power, came to di -- let's say we created a sondercommando, was created in ghetto. The purpose of the -- of the sondercommando was to -- to try to get from the Jews the jewel, their values, whatever this is, and so on, and give them to the German. Now those people are involved in it, they are people too. So they knew how to handle who could work, no -- the -- the head of the department was a fellow by the name of David Yeelgla. He himself has a background, what I don't know. He became a big man in the ghetto. His assistant was a fellow by the name of Mark Kleeger, whom I knew. And Mark Kleeger was the educated fellow, and -- and no other one was the -- doing, the connection, the bribing, the all -- the all kind of things. And this ghetto -- how they, if they collected something, what they did, they give in to the German or not. Naturally there were [indecipherable] and you couldn't expect -- if they had to bribe German, they had to take it from somewhere, so they took from the [indecipherable] and buy the German whatever it is. It is in -- in such a time there is very hard to -- to talk about legal, and with lawyer, with problems, and this is the way they get the [indecipherable] it.

Q: But was it a situation where the people who had some power, their families were much better taken care of --

A: Yes, there was --

Q: -- while people were starving?

A: -- there was. Mr. Roomkofsky had a group of people who used to get what they call talons. The leader of the department was a Miss Ivershitz, yeah Ivershitz. And she gave -- and people of those families were in charge of something, who were -- who were considered helping Roomkofsky run the whole thing, they were getting talons for their families. Was --

Q: Will you just explain what a talon is?

A: A talon, there was such a coupon to go and pick up some food, whatever it is, to different departments. That's a -- but --

Q: Well I -- yeah -- explain that again, though, there was a car honking.

A: Oh-oh. A talon, what you call that this thing was a piece of paper what Roomkofsky department gave out for those people to go to a meat department, get some meat, to this to get some these, and so on, and he -- no, we had in ghetto the -- another thing, too. Those Jews who worked [indecipherable] krippo, and those Jews who worked with the krippo, they were going to town with the krippos, and so on, so on. And they were always coming in and he need a loaf of bread for a German, [indecipherable] for themse -- this the way it went. I gave it to them. Those people that are going, and there was we -- we have no medication, for example. And medication was a very important thing for a lot of people. The most thing, B12 was a very -- why tha -- those people who were working with the Germans to ghetto, they could get it if I contact them. So, there was a fellow whom I knew, some wa -- he came to ask for something, and I used this connection. The name was Wortman, he was old. [indecipherable] to talk with them, and so on, so on. And I always told him I have a request for these, for [indecipherable] for other thing, and he tried to get me, because he wanted something in return, bread, or whatever it is. And this way -- and this was my contact with the -- with the unofficial [indecipherable] department [indecipherable] to use them as much as I could. And -- and when I get medication, I had the problem who to give it. If I had a secretary to the fflagunsaftargum -- Dagushensky, Yelsi Dagushensky, her father was before the war the -- the cormeister for the Jewish temple. And he was a sick man, a elderly man. And I get one medication what she needs for her father, and then was a young mother who need it. Who should I give it to you? I give it to the young mother. And -- and I became a -- a enemy of Dagushensky because I felt a y -- a young mother with a -- with a little baby, if you couldn't help her, we are in -- we are in a pievin to a certain way, we have to make choices what are not normally done, but has to be done. So this way -- this way it works.

Q: Were you able to help a lot of people in your position?

A: I did. As much as I could. Every time this Mr. Wortman went to town with a krippo, I give [indecipherable] and I was sitting and waiting, and finally I -- get me these thing, get me these thing. Whatever I get, I get away, I think I helped, because I didn't need anything for myself, I gived everything away.

Q: Did you have a lot of -- did you get special privileges because of --

A: I didn't use them. I never accepted a regular -- what I called talon before, a little slip to go and get milk, and I had contact with it. You see, if I wanted, if I would -- let's say the head of the meat department -- and there was mostly horsemeat, there was nothing else -- so if I wanted to get meat, I could give him a loaf of bread, he would give me meat. I didn't do it. I felt that this is dishonest, and I am not in the position to be able to use dishonesty just to -- to -- I didn't use it, except when I came to a point when my wife was very ill, and I did get a different type of food. So I talked to -- I was [indecipherable] say I need a special talon for my wife, certain food and so on, and I get it. But this is the only time I was using it for my own. Never did.

Q: You know, well, let me ask you, were your contacts mostly with the administration within the ghetto, or did you also have contact with the German authorities?

A: With the German no, nothing whatsoever. Only the Jewish army station in the ghetto, and -- and the main thing was, everything what came about from Kofsky. The manager of the -- ferfling of the food department where I was working was Roomkofsky's ex-partner from years ago, friend of his. And he put him in charge of the department. Then every department had a commissar also. A high police ranking officer who was assigned to, and he what -- had to handle. In my case there was a fellow by the name of Reingold, Sigmund Reingold. So this is the way it -- it operates.

Q: But this Reingold was part of the Jewish administration?

A: Part of the Jewish administration.

Q: Maybe you can explain s -- how complex the Jewish administration was in the ghetto, it was pretty large, wasn't it?

A: The Jewish administration was fully well organized. We had the departments, we have a kitchen department, who was responsible for cooking soups and so on. And we have all kinds departments for -- for a different specialty for different work and so on. And the most what I was connected with was -- was the -- the department wa -- where the food came through. And they were very well organized. There was a -- let's say there was a what you call meldinkovi -- registration of people, of vadiserobun, which was headed by a good friend of my, Naftali, a lawyer [indecipherable]. And let's say when somebody needed a job for somebody, he went there and asked for an assignment for a job. And one time Mr. Shinsheevy, my manager comes up to me, and say, "Look, Dave, I know you know everybody, I need a job for two girls. Can you get it for me?" I said, "Sure, I will try to do it." And by this -- okay -- Estelle was one of the girls who he gave her the job. And this is the first time I met her there. When she sa -- heard, or saw that sh -- he asked me for jobs for the two girls, she came up -- and she graduated the same year from -- from -- from high school, and I saw her diploma, everything excellent, she was a good student. And the other girl was another girl there whom I didn't know it. And so I went to

the department and came with the assignment -- with those two jobs. And they -- and they were both employed. Estolle originally was with the department where it was near the [indcipherable] everything was going ups and so on. And -- and Estelle I assigned to the department where the soup talons were given out, in [indcipherable] department. Everyone who works here the Jew, [indcipherable] me the Jew. The soup --

Q: Are you saying Estelle your wife now?

A: Yeah.

Q: You knew her then?

A: Yeah, we married -- at this time she was not, but we married in 1946 in Germany.

Q: Oh. Let's change the tape

End of Tape #3

Tape #4

Q: Sorry about that.

A: Okay. So, he ask question, I will answer.

Q: Okay. Well, back to what you could do in this position. The food all came in from the Germans, they controlled how much you got?

A: That's right. We have a special department who was the distribution department, and the head of it was a fellow by the name Shisheesky, was a engineer, he didn't survive. And then they will figure out how much food to give to each point for the people leave, and so on, and -- and people came with their food carts, what they have, to go to pick it up, what is assigned to them, and so on, and pay for it.

Q: Now, was there a different amount of food that could go to classifications of people, like people who were working, or women, or people [indecipherable] officials --

A: Every -- everything was for working people, there was no provision for not working.

Q: So where did they eat?

A: So, we divided f-for the number of -- population. You couldn't do it otherwise. So everybody gets something.

Q: So that was up to you?

A: This was up to the department was with doing it, n-not me personally. I was busy with the office downstairs, operations, so on. But we -- we knew how much people there are in the ghetto, how much people, so we figure out. Mr. Sheesheestio was on top of his -- he - - and he, with the -- the -- be the management came to the conclusion this why -- this is how much we can give to everyone and so on. And people were going to the distribution point, and picked it up.

Q: So the food the Germans gave you was only for the working people?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: And then you had to figure out how much you could allot to other people who were not --

A: This for the department to figure it out. We have so much food, and so many people, so we can give only the -- that much.

Q: Now, were you able to kind of manipulate the statistics to show that there were more people who needed food, or --

A: No.

Q: Like, if people died you wouldn't report them, or --

A: No, this wa -- th-this was not in my hands at all. This was not my part.

Q: Was that being done?

A: We saw the li -- we saw this -- how many people there were, were report from every day. This is how many people to get ahead. And people were dying, and people were getting won too. Get ready and so on. We -- we tried to run the ghetto with normal life, with musical concerts, with performances, with all kind of things. To make as much as possibly we will -- young people get married, and those thing happened. So this is with -- tried to ode a active life what it is.

Q: Did you -- did you provide soup kitchens and things like that?

A: We had soup kitchens, was -- especially kitchen department, who was responsible for the soups, and sent the soup for every department. And the head of the -- the office manager of the office, head of this was a fellow by the name of Boller, who at one time at a meeting, Roomkofsky ask him, "How much cost us this soup?" He says, "I don't know, because I'm getting free everything from Dave."

Q: The soup kitchens were -- now, or -- originally were they privately run, and then the government took them over?

A: No. All g -- run always by the ghetto. There was no private an-anything.

Q: So the -- so the ghetto government controlled every aspect of life?

A: Every aspect of life, the ghetto was under control.

Q: And there were no independent --

A: No, no.

Q: Even the theaters, and the schools, and everything?

A: So the schools were under supervision of the ghetto, and everything. There were -- school department what took care, and they had to report to Roomkofsky, I'm sure, and so on. But -- but everything was run from the top.

Q: Was it efficient?

A: Yeah. Fully efficient under the circumstances.

Q: What were the living conditions like in the ghetto?

A: Pardon me?

Q: What were the living conditions like?

A: The living conditions were not good. We were camped in small apartments, mostly. Let's see, we had to occupy the -- the place where prior was the Polish underground, the Polish -- not underground, but the Polish volespart. They moved their mouth to a -- to a different area so the Jews can take over their quarters. For example, the office where I worked was on Droska six. My room -- room with a small kitchen was Droska 15, across the street. I want to be close if something happen, I can always communicate and so on. So it -- it was very cramped, was me, my wife, and my sister. And there is a lady here whom I knew, who works with my sister in that department where the jobs are assigned to and so on.

Q: I thought your sister went to the United States, no?

A: My older sister, I had two.

Q: Okay.

A: My older sister came in 1922.

Q: Okay. So this was your -- another sister.

A: Yeah.

Q: And did you have -- did you have plumbing, did you have sanitation?

A: There was water inside, but you had to go to sanitation outside. Was a faucet for water was.

Q: Did you feel -- I mean, you worked in the food department, so you had enough to eat?

A: Not necessarily, I didn't take anything more than I had. This was my thing. I didn't use my job for personal benefit, until I needed help for my wife. Until then, no. I ti -- I could have it easily, I could go to any department and get meat, for bread, and this for thi -- I didn't feel this is the right thing to do. You see, as a matter of fact, the war there's -- before there war there's so many political organizations, Jewish, Zionist, Bund, and you name it. And -- and I was active in the Zionist movement before the war, so after the war they came in, oh, this organize, I said, "No, I am a Jew here. I am not a Zionist, I would not, and I am a Jew here." And they see the way it is. I didn't -- went away from it.

Q: Were these organizations active in the ghetto?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Were these organizations still active in the ghetto?

A: Oh, the many -- the -- all organizations were active there.

Q: The Zionists, and the Bund?

A: Yeah, they all had groups. I never attended, I never was interested. What I di -- feel this is the proper thing to do.

Q: Do you -- were you aware of efforts to sabotage work in the factories, or for people to try to get out of the ghetto, any kind of resistance?

A: Not to ob -- not to [indecipherable] no. I'm no -- people usually works in the different resorts somewhere. I di -- nobody was there was happy. Everybody had thousand complaints, probably, but the circumstances were different. The si -- the interest of Roomkofsky was t-to -- all those resorts work, and operate. So there was not much. It could be done if you -- if the -- some people did dishonest things, I'm sure they did. For example, some people did things where they were not informed -- where they had no right to do anyway. I found out after the war mainly a few cases like it. So it is -- but in doing the ghetto, and in the -- during the life on it, was a different story. I considered myself a member of the ghetto, and I have to live like everybody does. I didn't vote any special privilege for myself.

Q: When you said that you tried to make life as normal as possible, were you shut up from the outside world? Did you have any communications? Phone, mail, radio?

A: No. At one time -- at one time interesting, I -- I had a communication. The company who represented votie -- represented from Estonia, and so on, their offices were in Berlin. A company [indecipherable] exterior export and import [indecipherable] shaft. And they had problems. At one point they had a problem with a bank. And somehow, I don't know how, a letter was delivered to me from this company, in the ghetto. And they're asking one simple thing, if I could help them with this particular bank, to straighten it out. So I wrote them back, and I told -- and the letter was delivered. I wrote them back, and I told them with the circumstances we are, that I have no way of getting contact with anybody, and there nothing what I can do, because I am in such and such conditions here. In the [indecipherable] I get a letter the -- they didn't know it, and they are very sorry for it. So, this whole was my contact with them.

Q: Did anybody have radios?

A: There was a fellow what -- Haim Vidovsky was -- was his name. He listened every day to the BBC. Nobody had radios officially, no shu -- shu -- should have radio. But he listened to the BBC, and they made the reports, little reports, and a number of people get them. I was one of them who get every morning, a little slip of paper, was he picked up from the BBC a day before, and so on, so on. There were not too many people who get it, but I

was one of them. So this fellow, one day finally came, and how they came across that he is the one who is having the news, and the radio and so on, and when he found it out, he hanged himself. His name was Haim Vidovsky, and he said he didn't want to fall in life in the Germans hand, but if you break down you might s-say something. So he took his own life.

Q: What kind of information did you get on the radio?

A: [indecipherable] from the BBC news as far as the war is concerned, what the Germans are doing and so on. They're -- that they're not doing so well, and so on. And then when they -- it was when the front came near to the ghetto, the Russian stopped, they didn't want to move in. The Russian didn't want to give the Poles the honor of doing something for themselves. So they -- they didn't go in, and they stopped ahead of time, and this cost many lives, naturally.

Q: Did you have any idea what was happening in the camps?

A: No. We were kept under information of the -- everything voozes -- voo -- who -- who were sending out, townswas people, that going to the cities to work, the German need people to work, and they can't afford to, and we don't have the work here, but they have the work in Germany, and so -- but nobody knew -- I wouldn't say nobody, I didn't, maybe some people guessed more than they knew. And I came to Auschwitz with the same transport what Roomkofsky came.

Q: Were there -- were there a lot of transports into the Łódź ghetto from differ -- you mentioned a few.

A: In 1941, they transport -- they -- they were from the little ghettos, they di -- transport the liquidated -- the able bodied people to work, send into the ghetto, there were not too many, they were little, small ghettos. But in 1942, there came in the 5,000 from Vienna, five from -- five from Berlin, and 10,000 Prague. And this was the new -- the newcomers that were came in.

Q: Had they cleared some space for these people?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Had they -- had the authorities cleared some space to allow for the new people?

A: They had to take [indecipherable]. They had to assign quarters for them, and so on.

Q: But did they have to move certain residents of Łódź out to make room?

A: No, no, no. They were not group, these persons, wherever there was a place available to put them in, and -- and so on.

Q: Were you aware of the Gypsy area?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you provide food for them also?

A: The Gypsies were on the Jewish cemetery, they had Gypsies, and they was hanging them there. That's all we knew from the -- some people who worked in the Jewish cemetery, who came by and saw that the funeral, something like it, somebody get the word, and they were spreading, gave it to somebody else. They are not official knowledge, but you knew what they are doing to the Gypsies there.

Q: The Germans?

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Q: So when you mention the cemetery, if somebody died in the ghetto, they actually had a proper burial?

A: They take him right away to the cemetery, and bury them, sure.

Q: Did you -- did the Jewish government provide food for the Gypsies?

A: I don't know. I don't know.

Q: Were the Germans in the ghetto, or were only the people -- the Jewish police in the ghetto?

A: The Germans?

Q: Did they come inside the ghetto?

A: They w --

Q: The SS?

A: What kind they were? They were mostly people belong to the -- to the SS, and criminal politsi what the German call and so on. But there was no military units as such. Maybe there was some stationed not far, I am sure. But in the ghetto, no.

Q: So the -- the uv -- the SS, and the criminal police, they stayed outside of the ghetto, and they let the Jewish police handle?

A: They were outside, yeah. In the ghetto, they have certain a number of military, I don't know which corps and which ranks, who were just to help keep order in it. And they send [indecipherable] to the fences, or on the fences. If somebody went close to the fence at

evening, they could be shot without asking questions, no problem. But there were cases, for example, my own experience. I had a young lady working in our department, her mother was ill, never get out of bed. But in order for her to get the soup, she had to be registered as a working. Now they lived not far from the fence, at a part of the ghetto. And there was a time when -- when -- when [indecipherable] knew arbuscard, what they called, for people who working [indecipherable] card. So, then -- and I want to help her, she was begging to help my mother. So what I did, I went up as close as I could to the fence, and showed her to the German soldier there, that I'm here on a mission from the ghetto, go to this and this building there, just to check on something, and I am coming out right away back. So he said, "Okay, go ahead." So I went, and I went in there, and I gave her a pass, a working pass, [indecipherable] I never saw her. And -- and this was the end, then I went out, and I say thank you to him, and I went back. F -- th -- only -- I was only a couple times when I went so close to the fence, but I -- I want to help her something, and I -- it's the only way I could do it.

Q: So you had a certain amount of these passes you could distribute?

A: No, only for these particular names. For these particular names [indecipherable] with anybody else.

Q: But you had one for this lady?

A: I th -- listen, if she was in -- in my department, I want to help her mother, so --

Q: But you were -- but -- but I'm asking is, you were able to get a pass for her -- a work pass?

A: Yeah, that's what I delivered to her, a pass for that she's working.

Q: For you?

A: For -- yeah, what I deliver to her, a official passport from the -- from the department who gave her the passport, that she is a working member.

Q: Right. I was just asking if you were able to get these passes for people, and say they were working for you.

A: No, no, no.

Q: Did you ever go outside the ghetto?

A: Never, never.

Q: So in -- in four years you never went outside the ghetto?

- A: No. The ghetto was, in other words, inside a bridge over the main road to the other side of the ghetto. You have to go up and go down on the other side. The main line what was Zleerska Street, what goes through, went all the way down. And the Germans were using the roads, but we couldn't pass it. So in order to go on the other side, you had to go up on these stairs and go down the other way.
- Q: So the ghetto was cut up, divided?
- A: Oh yeah, it was divided, it was divided. The ghetto was both sides. For the old, and for the good.
- Q: And you couldn't cross at the street because that was --
- A: No way, no, no. There was no way, it was a barbed wire. There was no crossing.
- Q: Did some of the work groups go outside of the ghetto, or did everybody work inside the ghetto?
- A: If --
- Q: The workgroups.
- A: The work groups?
- Q: The work commandoes.
- A: The work groups, they went outside the ghetto to work. They took them in the morning -- not all of them, I'm sure, but this ones what I know, they picked them up in the morning, take them outside the ghetto there to work, and evening brought them back.
- Q: And there were also a lot of factories inside? Inside the ghetto, a lot of workers?
- A: Back inside the ghetto, yeah.
- Q: Now, were there regular actions, or deportations inside the ghetto that ha -- did that happen a lot?
- A: Oh yeah, that happened quite a bit. The German required from Roomkofsky, they want so -- so many people out. And so -- so he took people out to varian -- and get people together from [indecipherable] from everything they were, and they made groups wherever they get them, made groups to send them out. But they send them out and we never knew where they send them, if they send them, and so on. So we never heard from those people. Was at -- at -- at one time in '42, they decided to take children away. And then they came up with the idea to take the children to a orphan house in Germany. And there is the mothers, [indecipherable] the children, very nice, and give it to -- give them anything, toys, what they can have, and so on. So when they come to Germany, they can

play in the other kindergarten with all kind of thing, he says oh. Those children were taken away, we never heard, and never saw them, yeah. After a long time, some children clothing and so on, came in to be washed in the ghetto. I never saw it, but this what I was told.

Q: When these deportations happened, did you get any advanced warning?

A: N-not advanced warning, but they decided they will come and they will [indecipherable] street maybe they had against -- I didn't know it, but maybe they gi -- of course [indecipherable] I am not sure, I don't know.

Q: Were there certain groups of people who got deported first, or -- how did they choose who would get deported?

A: Who would get deported? They choose for -- where they took the people [indecipherable]. Mostly they try to get rid of the -- of people from the underworld and so on. But they just shoot -- they had to have a number of people. And some people were [indecipherable] some people were there, I don't know where, but they had no -- there are no special selections, or choose who. If somebody did -- did something wrong, he was included in [indecipherable] shipment.

Q: They didn't take the women first, or the old people?

A: This was a -- we arrived at Auschwitz. From the ghetto, no. They took everybody who was -- not able to do something, whatever they could.

Q: So they took people who were not able to work, is that what you say?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Now, my understanding is that after this big aktion with the children, and when they s -- sometime after, I guess 1942, most of the people in the ghetto were working people, is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: Did -- wa -- did -- did the administrations change, did the mood change around you?

A: When you say administration, you mean Jewish administration? No, it was going on the same way. The Jewish --

Q: They still [indecipherable] everything?

A: The Jewish organization tried to keep all -- all the factories working. All the factories were doing something to -- for Germany, what they needed. And this was the interest. And one time the German came up with an idea, they -- to -- to build -- frame build

houses. So they start with a special department to build houses what can be built and transferred to Germany. But this was a big thing. And when an inspection came, and I happened to be there when an inspection came -- everybody had to be there, so they show, so all the people, from the officers, and the [indecipherable] saw group of people working on it. So when one of the Germans tried to pick up such a piece of thing, so it's - - it is heavy, how can we do it? So there's a what we are -- the [indecipherable] must help. And this is the way [indecipherable]

Q: Did they -- when they wanted to make deportations, would somebody come to your office and say, can you spare so many workers, or --

A: No.

Q: That didn't --

A: They -- they simple -- they gave orders to their departments, give me so and so many people. And then this was a matter of the insight, relation, or fanshee, whatever it is, I don't know. I was confronted with this quite a few times, and I'm -- I most cases get away, not having to -- to comply, but in one case, [indecipherable] needed a name. The reason? I knew her sister's boyfriend was a bigshot in the -- in the Jewish police there, and he will get her out. And he did. But somebody else went. So if you helped anybody, you put somebody in. So it was such a -- I mentioned wa -- a ex-coworker Mr. Vinerige long time ago, he was coming in the morning into my office, sitting in the corner. Was his, nobody else. And finally -- finally he was on one time when they came, and they took him away with everybody. Yeah.

Q: So these deportations, they were pretty regular from 1942 on?

A: Yeah, they were going on mostly regularly. They want to reduce the number of Jews in the ghetto, and the liquidation were going on.

Q: You knew people who were taken away?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Did you know many people were -- who were taken away?

A: With what?

Q: Did you -- you knew many people who were taken away?

A: From -- from the ghetto?

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh sure. Every time they took away somebody, is -- everyone is a world for themselves. And -- but it was -- it was part of the ghetto life. And people who were -- somebody was taken away from the family, whatever it is, after awhile they -- lot of people, when somebody died, they kept the body at home, they didn't report it to died, in order to get the food ration card. [indecipherable] cases like it. Although it came to a point where death didn't mean a tragedy. It -- somebody's tragedy was somebody else's benefit. The morale, sentimentality went through quite a big change.

End of Tape #4

Tape #5

- Q: I think before we stopped you were talking about sort of a strange -- sort of a new morality, because people had unusual choices, so that people dying might be a blessing to somebody else. Any -- any other thoughts you have on that? Any other examples?
- A: People just kept the bodies at home, they didn't -- they didn't get them buried, in order to -- they would -- to get the food ration, whatever it is.
- Q: From your office, your food distribution was to centers, not to individuals, is that right?
- A: Yes. From my office, you see, we had distribution of food, was -- was special department, Sheesheesky, what I mentioned to you before. And he figured out we have so much food, we have so many heads, this we can do. And this is the way it was assigned. Although this was not exactly what the German thought we should give everybody whatever it is. Did we have more, we have more potatoes, so we give more. If we -- was a time, whatever get, we get a lot of shipment of potatoes, this was helping, naturally. This way people could get a little bit more. But the [indecipherable] plants, the -- the -- the season, how much to give was based on the available food, and the number of heads in the ghetto.
- Q: But toward the end, towards 1944 --
- A: '44.
- Q: -- the ghetto was much smaller, wasn't it?
- A: In '44, the ghetto was smaller. The ghetto opened up, I don't remember exactly, with 160,000 over there with the -- I th -- remember how much it came to the ghetto. Then, lot of people went to Warsaw, and -- because there they were relatives, whatever it is, and they hoped Warsaw will not have such a tough time like Łódź, so -- so they went. So it was -- fluctuated, and we never knew exactly how many people we have. The food department, the Sheesheesky department knew how much talons he's giving out. But that's about all.
- Q: Okay, so what -- so what happened to you next?
- A: Well, next what?
- Q: Well, is there anything else you want to tell me about the ghetto, or do you want to tell me how you happened to leave it?
- A: And what -- and with the ghetto, do you have any specific questions I mi -- I think I know quite about the ghetto. There were the department of working, and lot of people who after the war immigrated, gave different recollection, different thing. And this mostly cut in in my period from after the war in Germany. When we were liberated from the camps, my

idea was I knew at this time the [indecipherable] 19 people, whatever it is. Anyway, and I thought I will try to do what I can to help. This is what was -- what it is. Not having an idea how many there are. There were a lot of -- more people than we expected. And different people came to work with us, and so on, so on. And some people -- but in a case like this, in a time like this, not in a case, the people who have more experience with doing illegalities, are better active doing something. For example, we have -- we -- I organized the office to help people from concentration camp in Germany after the war. What you call vicasette Auschwitz. Officially I am with hauptaushus [indecipherable] with a haftlinger. And this -- came in a fellow, and then there wa -- in the concentration camp, there were green winkles, and red winkles. The green were criminals, red was political. No -- nothing -- he had a man working with us by the name of Geerob Ganda he passed away. And he was a green winkle, criminal. But he belonged to a youth organization who worked anti-Hitler, and they made -- they rob banks, and some of whatever they could. And one time he [indecipherable], he was in the [indecipherable] and he was stamped with the criminal winkle. But his explanation, I have it from him, his explanation was he did it for the group, what tried to help the -- [indecipherable] other people. He did -- after the war he had to run away, had to -- went to Israel, he went back, came back. He died in Hanover. And so this fella knew how to handle those cases. Was a -- even -- Ge-Germans basically would like to benefit, and when they have connection with a -- with a office, with a consertoes, and they were able to get a little bit different food on certain occasions, they went all for it. So -- but all those people who were in the camps as -- as political, they were actually from political activities. A lot of people who were from the criminal thing were political in whatever their actions. So, is the -- the [indecipherable] they forget to take the bot for. And for this Geerab Ganda, he knew so much from the [indecipherable] that I was inclined to believe him. He was able to manage the German's authorities to give us more food, more this, more this. He was able to do it.

Q: Well, let's go back.

A: Yes, ma'am.

Q: We've jumped a little bit to after the war. You stayed in the ghetto how long?

A: We -- I went to the ghetto in the beginning, after my father's death in 17th of January.

Q: 1940?

A: Then I was t -- 1940 -- then they came in and gave me 10 minutes to leave the house, and only take what I can. And I left the ghetto on the 28th of August, 1944.

Q: Can you tell me how that came about, you leaving the ghetto?

A: Oh yeah. They were -- we were [indecipherable] getting out of the ghetto, they were setting transport every day to send out. And there -- there was -- they decided to liquefy

the ghetto, and just leave about 50,000 people to do the cleaning wa -- to clean up, or something like it.

Q: How many?

A: 50,000. This was at this time they estimate 50,000 Jews to leave there to do the cleaning job after everybody left. And so they took -- if the numbers are right, but this is the numbers we were given. Not 50,000, but 50 people, pardon me. Skip the thousands. I'm sorry. And so it was at this time they were organizing transports every day, and it came to this, my transport left on the 28th.

Q: Did they tell you where you were going?

A: No. They loaded it in the -- close the transport cars, no windows or nothing, put us in as many as they could, pushed in, lock the door, and that's it. And we didn't know anything. I didn't know where we are going. Nobody knew. Had a lot of people -- not lot of, but a few people suffocated there. And they died there, in it. No, we came after, and I don't -- at this time I lost the count of time, if it was a day or two, when they finally -- when it came to a point and they opened the gate and let us out. So then, this was Auschwitz.

Q: What did it look like?

A: Was [indecipherable] was a reception, a big field. And we had to go down from -- from the cars, leave everything in the cars what we are left -- what we have left, just go down and form two lines, mens one side, women to the other side. And then, on the head of it stood the German, the famous -- oh boy, and he make selection, with the finger. Right, left, right, left. The right what he assumed were good to work. To me he hesitates for a little while, but put me to the right, to the working. And to the -- and the -- they -- they did the same thing to the women's line, too. And the one who were taken to the left, never heard about them, I don't know.

Q: Who -- who else went with you?

A: When we came to Auschwitz, was my sister, and my wife.

Q: Who else went with you to Auschwitz, to this --

A: To Auschwitz? My si -- my wife and my sister, Rachel.

Q: And what happened when you all lined up, what happened to them?

A: They lined up -- I was in one line, and the women was in the -- in the other line. And this here the last time when we -- when we saw each other. We looked at each other, but we had to move, move, move, move. And this the way it was. And never saw before, never saw after. It's the last time.

- Q: Were there other prisoners around when you arrived?
- A: No. We didn't see it, but later when we went in, and we were taken through the halls to wash, to be shaved, to clean our [indecipherable] then there were some prisoners working, who were there before, working in a establishments there.
- Q: What were you thinking this was all --
- A: Pardon me?
- Q: What did you think this was all about?
- A: What was?
- Q: What did you think of all of this?
- A: What I think this? Yeah, no thinking at all at this time, you don't think. You following the certain way of life, and thinking -- no, I don't think anybody want to think, and nobody was thinking. We knew this is nothing pleasant for us, and what will happen, who knows? Roomkofsky was with the same train. They took him off, his father and adopted son, and so on, and they put him in a van. I saw them take it into the van. He came to Auschwitz with letters of re-recommendation from Veevofe to treat him well. So this way he was taken to a van. This is a van, when they start to move, gas comes in, and they suffocated. I don't meet -- I didn't meet anybody who ever saw Roomkofsky afterwards. So, this was the answer to me about Roomkofsky.
- Q: When he went in the van, though, you didn't know it was a gas van at the time, did you?
- A: No, but I saw a special type of van, and so my assumption was this is the end of it.
- Q: So after you were chosen to go to the right, what happened next?
- A: Then we were taken to Auschwitz and given numbers. They -- in 1944 was the last time they tattooed numbers, they didn't have any time to do it. My number was 52962, a little metal tag, and it was a sh -- painted on on this uniform, 52962, this is my number, under this number I was known, there no name. And -- and then we were sent, the first transport what we were sent was a thousand people what were sent to continue [indecipherable] worker to the rubber factory.
- Q: So how long did you stay in Auschwitz?
- A: In Auschwitz? I would say the most five days. I don't think any more.
- Q: So you didn't work or anything there, any [indecipherable]

- A: Oh no, in Auschwitz I didn't work at all. Just trying to get out of there. The smell in Auschwitz was not bearable.
- Q: Why?
- A: Burned flesh, burning everything. Came on from Birkenau, where the -- where the gas chambers were.
- Q: And you knew what that was?
- A: Yeah, and they know about -- there was us people what they take to work. And then when they called -- when they call who is a -- for example, a carpenter, everybody was a carpenter. When they call whatever it is, everybody is a specialist. For this arrangement, some people made it, some people, I don't know.
- Q: So how did they choose you to go out?
- A: Oh, to work?
- Q: Wait, let me just ask a question, what --
- A: They sent a group of thousand people, and I was in the area count a thing -- a thousand people, it was not a individual choice, it was a count of thousand people, you were there.
- Q: Okay, so what happened, what did -- what did --
- A: And then we were sent to continue [indecipherable] work, as I said, continue [indecipherable] work -- employed people from -- from concentration camps. And the SS get paid for, they didn't do it. So we were sent there, but they need -- there was a camp set up not far, three miles, maybe two miles, so we could walk every night home, and every night go back to -- and every day go back to work. There were 12 Polish, they did -
- Q: Okay.
- A: -- they couldn't tattoo any more, I think the last time they tattoo was '44.
- Q: Okay, so you got to [indecipherable]
- A: Okay, then we wer -- then we went there, in the -- in a [indecipherable] they have set up a camp not far, to be the barracks for us, and we had to work in the factory there. Now the factory was -- was producing all kind of rubber goods for the Germans, and the -- and the main thing was to produce [indecipherable] for tiles. So the rubber was coming down from the third floor, liquid, and came on the current floor, and there were big machines turning the thing, and -- and they get harden, and we had to carve them with knives to make pieces of them, so they can go through again, and so on. Now, they were mostly --

they were civilian workers too, who worked with it, mostly Poles. The Poles were coming into work every time, in shift. They leave [indecipherable] far, but they were brought in to work, and so on.

Q: Let me ask you where was this factory?

A: In Hanover. It's a big, big territory.

Q: Was it a sub-camp of a larger camp, or not?

A: What, the camp?

Q: Was it -- this -- the -- the factory was separate, it was a German factory, yes?

A: A German factory.

Q: Was -- were your barracks part of any -- you need to sit back, please.

A: Oh, pardon me.

Q: Were -- were your barracks part of any larger concentration camp, was it a sub-camp?

A: No, no. We were all part of Neuengamme, all the camps around the area belonged to -- they had -- the headquarter of Neuengamme, in the area. So -- and we were part of it. So we were there, and we had to work two shifts. Now, working on the shifts, cutting the rubber with the -- the Poles who were coming there, the Poles, they were volunteers to work, and so on, they get gloves, and things to protect themselves, we didn't get it. So we have to somewhat burn the finger, burn the finger. So when he will cutting it, try to do the best of the thing like this. And this time, somehow, I attracted the attention of a German master, who was going around see how everybody is doing, and he spoke German, and I know German, so we get in -- in a little conversation, and -- and he became interested, and visit me as often as he could. At one time, th -- and then he comes in one time and tells me he -- he is being transferred, and if I need anything what -- what he can help me, I should contact him. I said, "Okay, who are you, where should I contact you?" So there was a running sign around in the office there, Herr towans commarada edisnow pay. The -- the man who the -- the trusted men from the National Socialistic Party is he [indecipherable] me. But later on he confide to me he was never a Nazi, he never belonged to coo -- but this was his job with the factory, he worked there for many years. So then one time, during, I think, yeah, then in seven -- we worked on machines -- they were special machines to make amon, and this happened with -- and I finished my shift, and we were taken back to the barracks. After a little while, a SS man came to the room and called my number. So, come. So I go. Followed him back to the factory. And turned out to be they had a few machines working upstairs, and the machines jumped somehow, they couldn't make them go. There was a -- a German master, and his assistant, and they couldn't make the machines go. I was working on this type of machines five at a time, and I knew the machines. Because the Poles came, and they were

going hiding, and I worked for them. So they gave me a piece of bread once in awhile. So -- then -- so I come there, and then -- and they're stuck in the work, and they couldn't make them, and the master comes up, and his eyes, you could see right away, he's not a friend of mine. And he told me, "You know how to work these machines?" I say, "Yes, I know." "Do you know how to work one machine?" I say yes. "Go work." I went, put up a machine. After I let the machine go, I didn't ask any question, put up another machine. I was working, and they were looking, and they work with their machines, and trying to fix it. I had it that this night I am working on three machines the same time, some [indecipherable] and they couldn't make their own machine go. So this -- this aggravated them very, very much. Okay by then the morning, we had to go back and come back, I had to wait -- no, I didn't go back. They told me you stay here, lie down for a couple hours, then you're back to your shifts. Okay. This was [indecipherable]. So then I didn't see him, this friend of my, I seen him for a long, long time. One time I go -- daytime, an SS man came in to the iddel, and called my number. And I was working. Come. I had to follow him. So I followed him to a big, big office, a long table where there sitting maybe 12 or 16 people around the -- around the table there. They were probably given a positive information about me, that I can help, and they were trying to set me up for a good job for -- for after the war. So, first of all they give me a chair to sit down, and had a little conversation in German, just to check my German. So we're talking. Then finally they came to the point, that is my knowledge of German, and with my experience in this work, I can build up myself a great career for after the war, and work with them, and do it -- help them [indecipherable] and so on. So I was very pleased, I was -- thank you for the acknowledgement, and -- and polite conversation, and I was dismissed not knowing exactly what there is [indecipherable]. There is [indecipherable] they wanted to train me as a knowledgeable man who helped to run the machines, and all kind of things. I was transferred to the upper place where all the rubber were mixed. I was very little [indecipherable] but many other things. And there with was everything what you put in in the cooking machine was -- made me -- I wa -- black up and down, I couldn't wash it out for weeks. See, the question there [indecipherable], but at the time this -- and when this was going on for -- for quite awhile until November 30. November 30, 1944. November 30 they came up and told us the department is not happy with all of you, so we are going to transfer you to -- to a different. And the office was a walking distance, probably an hour. We walked to a place called Ahlen. Ahlen was a -- a ex-asphalt mine. There was not acting -- nothing there. They wanted to create a factory in this asphalt mine, so it has to be dynamited, put hole to dynamite, explode it, take out all the junk, all that, and so on, so on. And make it clear, which [indecipherable] this. And finally they came to the point when is clear enough, and they wanted to set up -- so we worked with dynamite, with all kind of things for the Germans. And [indecipherable] and every time to -- to take out, push up, blows up, and so at one time there was -- I am pushing up and I'm -- and I'm trying to go back, with pushing oh -- not by myself, with a few other people, and the German watch man was -- wa-was saying, give it back to me. [indecipherable], so I say, "Gere shtatin zeebeeta." Gere shtatin is a nice German expression for please, excuse me. He tells, "Oh, bitte, bitte." From this time we became buddies. Every time I pass by he want to have a conversation with me. And we were talking a lot, and he was put in -- he was out of the army, service a long time, but they needed a young people for the front, so they took all the -- all the la -- people, put them in the SS to guard the camps. This is the

way it was. And this was going on until we cleared the outside mine, made floors, made a factory, and then -- and put in machinery, so they started to work, for this daily, daily hard work.

Q: This camp Ahlen, this was also a sub-camp of Neuengamme? Also part --

A: Yeah, oh yeah. Every -- all the camps were, they were part of Neuengamme. Neuengamme was the head camp for the whole territory, for the -- all the a -- other. The Neuengamme h-head office was in Hamburg, I think.

Q: How were your living conditions?

A: The living condition were excellent. We had the coffee pot in the morning to -- in -- in the rag -- the -- they brought in a big jar with coffee, and made sure that everybody receives coffee. Then they turned around the whole cage on the floor, and we had to scrub the floor with the coffee. Sometime we get the coffee [indecipherable], sometime not. But this the way life was. And then this -- and then we went to work, on these floors.

Q: Where -- did -- how many people were in your barracks?

A: In the -- in each barracks there were -- there were a few barracks. In -- in -- in each barrack there was about 30 - 32 people, and so on.

Q: You have beds?

A: The wa -- yeah, there was a bunk you could lay down. Two story.

Q: All by yourself?

A: But -- but you could lay down, yeah. And --

Q: You get food later on?

A: And food then -- then -- at work we -- we had to go for lunch and get food, and so on, yeah. The soup -- this -- the -- mo-most of the food was of a soup. Could hardly find a piece of potato there, but listen, this is the one we have, and this -- we have to survive, to go on with.

Q: Was this camp only men? Only men worked here?

A: Only men, only men.

Q: About how -- how many men?

End of Tape #5

Tape #6

A: Talking about the Germans, I knew Germany from before the war. Etiquette is nice, excellent people, and so on. This type, let's say for example, the -- the cassette Auschwitz what we organize was th -- to help people from concentration camp. One day comes in a German farmer, and gives me a bill, and want me to pay it, for potatoes he delivered to the SS. So I tell, oh, and what happened to the potatoes? You people ate it, so why shouldn't you pay for? This was their mentality. Basically, they were jealous people. If somebody had something, they want and so on. I had one time -- I --

Q: Are you talking about after the war now?

A: Yeah, after the war.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: I had -- one time, I had no car, and there were no car to get somewhere. One time comes to me a German, and say, "I know where a car is," and tells me of a farmer that he has in his thing hidden, covered up a car. The following there I went over there, a few people, and we took home the car. But this is characteristic for them, they were jealous of another, and if somebody had something, they liked to have it, too. So it was a --a different type of experience with Germans between these two groups of German. I cannot tell in -- tell the different groups that different people out of different groups, whatever it is, but this is the way it is.

Q: So let's go back a minute to Ahlen.

A: Yes.

Q: And also I know you had -- you seemed to have conversations and contact with Germans there, also at continental [indecipherable]. How much information were you getting about what was happening in the war?

A: What was happening in the war? Nothing. This is a point I never touched. I was only interested if he could help me to find out what will happen next to us. So he told [indecipherable], tomorrow I will let you know. And next time when he came to lead us to the toc, he told me the -- the -- the camp is to be set for evacuation on the sixth of April. But from the outset what happen, I never went in with any German, no matter how friendly, in politics. Was a dangerous area, and I stood away from it. I j -- so this is -- the only thing was that I find out for him when the camp will be evacuated. And the camp was evacuated officially on Friday, April the sixth, 1945. And then when -- then you see, the -- the camp was in the middle of a field. People were going by Sundays for walks, and so was going on and so. There were nobody who didn't know what's going on. But when the camp was evacuated on April the sixth, the evacuated, I mean that the marching people went, and we were left who -- who couldn't walk, or couldn't march. Then, people from all sides came in, disconnected electrical wiring from -- from -- from the

fences, and trying to be nice and help us, they brought in coffee. We says, okay. But then our young people, very unpatient, run out, start to go around, look. And I begged them don't go, the German are still around somewhere. What happened we don't know. No, we know we are here tomor -- and on the following day, Saturday, came an SS man with a truck, and loaded us on the truck, we were 19 people from this camp. And these 19 people, [indecipherable] drove us to a place called the Shizenplatz. The Shizenplatz was a place where the German SS were leaving their officers, and everything and so on. So, he drove us there, and there before the gate is a general, a professional, looks almost gray, standing. And here Plotsam and I was on the truck. Here Plotsam, he get that here was some 19 people for execution. And the general told him, "Look, we are killing people in a war, but we are not killing people who -- who -- who we're not fighting. Your friends left already." So he told us to go off the truck, and he told the [indecipherable] and he's all off. So's the last I saw about him -- of him. Not far away was a French POW camp, and they motioned to us to come close to them. And this was a big -- a big help to us. So we went over there, and they told us, "Look, you never know if the German come back or not. This uniform is not good. You have to go change uniforms." I said okay, how, where? So, "This is a little building there, break in. There are the uniforms what we are wearing." So I took my people, and we walk in there, and we took uniform, changed the uniforms, and put them in and joined them. They would be very -- they were very helpful. They were trying to help us with little bit what they had, but they didn't have too much either. So -- it was a -- a certain type of a good experience in bad times.

Q: What happened next?

A: Next this was -- this already was the next ist day on Wednesday, the 11th of April. A lady comes running in, and say there are Americanos in the areas, be the American [indecipherable]. So, naturally I got the courage to go. So we went to center of the town, and there I saw the American tanks, first time I saw them, saw on the -- the lemt. And so I up -- I approached the officer in charge there where it was, and I told them as far as I knew we are 19 people, and we need some assistance, we don't know what to do. So he -- talking a little bit German, a little bit -- he must have been Jewish, too, or -- or he -- or he knew a little bit more [indecipherable]. So he told me to be the liaison, that he cannot talk to all 19 people, but a be -- and he appointed me -- gave me a piece of paper, so I can walk after the time where is walking not permitted. And so then try to keep informed. Then we went to a place there were people there sitting down, that we were actually housing. Still, ours had benches and so on, so on. And there we were sitting, and evening American soldiers came to visit us. And there -- pardon me -- and there where it was -- thank you -- and there where it was, my first disappointment, what it is? We are sitting, black soldiers, white soldiers. Comes in a white soldier, shakes hands with every white, not with the black. No, it didn't slide good with me, but there's the way it is, I don't what to think. That's the way it was. And they -- the black people didn't see anything abnormal in it. This was the life what they had. Then, among them was a fellow asked me if I have somebody in New York, I say, "Sure, I have a sister in New York." "Do you remember where she live?" I gave him -- yeah, gave him the a -- the address. His wife lived a couple blocks from there. He notified his wife, and he went away, I never saw him again. But he notify -- later, I found out when I came to the States, he notified his wife, and she

contacted my sister. I never saw even the mo -- the units went off, so [indecipherable]. And this was -- we were sitting there, and trying to house the -- and we had to eat something, so we found them whole rice, cages of rice. I never cooked rice in my life. I didn't know when you put in a little bit, it grows up, [indecipherable]. So I put in a little bit, and I got plenty of it, but this is -- the first time you learn, next time, do better. And this is where life is -- slowly went back until we were able to resettle from there. We settled in -- in -- in -- in Hanover himself, in the town, and so on.

Q: Did they find you housing in Hanover?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Did the military find you housing?

A: No, no, no, they were -- we sa -- went into town, and wherever apartments available, we get in. And there were many apartments available. And we were not -- we were only 19 people, so was not a big deal. And some of them are still live in Germany. There was my experience in camp, the doctors. There was a -- a sickum, what they called, and there was a doctor, a fellow who I knew from ghetto, who -- he did one year to graduate medical school from -- from Italy, but he was only a shop. In the ghetto, he was working as a doctor. He was very smart, and very knowledgeable. Dr. Faglovitch, his name now is Fago. And the -- the order -- yeah, was a -- then there was a Dr. Vondaykunt in Belgium, picked up on the street, send him away to the camp, his family never knew where he is, what he is. This I found out after the war when they came looking for him. So -- but he was a doctor, and he became ill one time, himself, to the Jewish Dr. Faglovitch, who was not a [indecipherable] doctor told the German he had typhus. What are you talking, what di-did you know about typhus? So, not -- they went away, it's not typhus. Then he get worse, so I called [indecipherable] they -- they brought a doctor from outside, a German doctor from outside, and he says, yeah, that was typhus. It was too late already, couldn't save him any more. Later on I find out more about him because the family came to look for him, and somehow they were directed to me, said maybe I knew something more about, but I was in the same group, and so on, and so on.

Q: Okay, well let's -- tell me a little bit about what you did with this freedom you finally had.

A: What --

Q: What -- what were you doing at this point? You were --

A: When?

Q: After the war.

A: After the war --

Q: -- you're in Hanover.

A: I organized the -- the office of the cartsertosious. This means to help -- to help the contact with all people, with the Germans. There was no way that th -- a survivor and a German could get together without a fight. Never happen. And I had to avoid this. And what we did at this time, the German authorities had orders from the American, then from the British to help us towelon to look for people. So everybody had to get a -- 10 mark, and a [indecipherable] to buy food and so on I get this. And tried to tasser. She was one of them, she was going looking for -- for her mother.

Q: Estelle?

A: And -- and pe -- yeah. And people, they are going. So I saw the -- how do you do when they have to work to the Germans, sign for the thing, get a card. It didn't work out. I saw this would be murder. So I told them, "Okay, look, why don't you give me the cards, the money, and I will deliver you the following day [indecipherable] complacent." And this - - and this work this way. So I was every day what I was paid ousen to. I gave them a list with the signatures, and they replaced me the money with the things on it, [indecipherable] looking, couldn't even. So this way we -- we had the cardset office working to help people as much as possible.

Q: Now, were you in a -- you were in a central office in Hanover, and people found out about you?

A: We -- we -- yeah, we organized [indecipherable] office, in middle of it on -- was a empty few rooms, and -- and this is well known, if I -- the way I'm all people [indecipherable] they are. I [indecipherable] if there was -- if there is time for it, for a little episode. The British relief -- first were American, came in from HIAS, from the other groups, and Joint help. Then came the British relief in, who took over. And they were -- in the British was a rabbi Dr. Monk, who kept with me a contact, mostly of religious things, what he want, where anybody needs something, so on, so on. And one time he comes for me, and says - - I take away your time with it? Am I take away your time with it?

Q: It's okay -- it's okay.

A: And one time he -- he comes to me, and say he has to go for two weeks to London, and gives me a telephone number, if something -- I will need something with a religious thing, to call this number. So a fella came up a couple days later, a Polish dressed officer, a doctor on -- on a motorcycle, and say he's actually a Jew, and he want to go back to Judaism. So, "Look, I cannot help you, but I have a number I will call." So I call the number, and the following day, a tall Britisher came, like the British, with -- he was driving a Jeep, and the driver with him was sitting next to it, like the British officer, with a shpitzel, with all kind of things. And he came and he said, "Did you call for me?" I say yes. And he didn't look to be Jewish whatsoever, I don't know. And he looked ver -- there are -- there are no such things like the Jewish look. And then he came, and then he says yes, and I told him what the problem is. He told him have the fellow come in

tomorrow mor -- tomorrow evening, and this time I will be here. So I made an arrangement, and they came the following day -- afternoon. And they were sit down, and th -- and -- and I told them, "Look, I don't have to be with you at this time, this is a thing with you to -- with himself. So when you go, just make sure the door is locked." Nothing important of -- I find out the following day that they will sitting until late in the night, tolnote that the Polish captain who came was a scion of a rabbinical family, and the British officer was a scion of a rabbinical family. His name was Herzog. And I think this is the fu -- this was the future president. And people tell me, why did they call him, why did they contact him? Look, I am not looking for glory, for acknowledgement. I did my job, and I thought I am doing the right thing, and that's it. [inaudible]

Q: How large of an operation did you have in Hanover?

A: Pardon me?

Q: How large of an operation was this in Hanover?

A: In Han -- the operation, how long it was? Until I left Hanover.

Q: Well no, how big was it?

A: Oh, it was -- we had an office, we had a few people with different departments, legal department. People came with a -- problems to register, and so on. And then a lot of people who came in, and had to register as -- you could only help people who survived camps, or some -- something like it, but you couldn't give help, by law, to anybody else. And there were -- and there were a lot of people who needed assistance or whatever in the camps, because they were -- they were hidden, they were this, they were all kinds, a-all -- all kind of things. So we try to accommodate, help them as much as possible.

Q: Were you under the supervision of the military?

A: It was under the supervision of our office, over the [indecipherable].

Q: But did you have to answer to the military governments, or anything?

A: No, not at all. I only had to do the legal things, nothing to do against the [indecipherable], so we confiscated a big building, a big house which was empty, and the transports, and the Jewish brigade was bringing in people from the outside, over the border and so on. So, to make it either [indecipherable] came up and ask me for -- for passports -- we had documents what we signed with the stamp, and this is a legal document. So I gave them 200 such ve -- different things what they wanted, and with these papers they were transferring people forth and back. It was a -- a thing, and a time hard to imagine now, but it worked.

Q: But you got the money from the government?

- A: And the government paid for the 10 dollars for each one and so on. The government didn't pay anything -- yeah, we get salaries from the government. I would a -- salary --
- Q: From which government?
- A: From the German authorities. The German -- they -- they had to pay our salary. We had a office that was five, six people, so -- so we get salary from them.
- Q: And the American and the British were not involved in this?
- A: In this operation, nothing whatsoever.
- Q: How long did you do this? How long did you do this work?
- A: Until I left Germany. I left Germany on the 28th of April, 1950.
- Q: Is it --
- A: Th-the whole time when I was in Germany, I did this work.
- Q: Did you ever try to find out if your wife and your sister were still okay?
- A: I knew, and I find out people what my brother was the only thing what I thought might -- then I found witnesses who told me about him. I knew he was not alive. And the German were -- there was -- there was, in the town of Kovno, Kovno is in Lithuania, and was going over from her -- there that few times, and everybody who came knew I was always interviewing, I want to find [indecipherable] come. I find out very soon that when the German came in the second time, they took all the men and shot them out. So I know I div -- didn't have anybody.
- Q: So you never went back to Łódź?
- A: What for? Poland? No. No.
- Q: So in 1950 you decided to come to the United States?
- A: 1950 we came to the United States. We arrived in the United States --
- Q: Wait, wait, now you're saying we.
- A: E-Estelle and I, and my son was born, Philip.
- Q: Well, how did you meet -- where did Estelle come into the picture again?
- A: Estelle came into picture in Bergen-Belsen, [indecipherable] information to you. One time came to me in Germany an American officer, and said his grandmother is from

Lódz, Poland, and she looking for relatives, and he told me the last name. I said I don't know anybody here with this name. But there is not far from here is a big camp, Bergen-Belsen, and there might be people there, I don't know. If you want, I will get a jomon diver and he was take us there. And this I called up and diver came in to us to there, to cross to Bergen-Belsen. And we parked the car in the middle of the yard, and I get out of the car, I heard her voice, Mr. Klipp is here. In Polish, naturally. And so this -- then -- then we saw the first time after war, and we were in the ghetto, where she was working for the department, and this the way it was, this is the first encounter after the war.

Q: Now, I know that you had testified at some military trials in [indecipherable]

A: I -- I testified in 1947 before a military tribunal, British. There was one judge with there, correct like the British and the rest were officer. The -- the accuser were the commandant of my camp --

Q: Which camp?

A: -- German, from one of the camp. He was the commandant from -- from -- from Ahlen, and for thing -- what of them. He was [indecipherable]. He was a well known German soccer player, and this why he get the job there. So he was one of them, and then there were others, some SS men, some from Ukrainian region, some other, so on. And there was one for -- especially from the Ukrainian region, was a terrible guy with a big dog and so on. Anyway, I came to this, and the point was to get the testimony to find out. And this fellow by himself, the soccer player, to my knowledge, didn't do anything personally wrong to anybody, which I witnessed. And they ask me the question, I told them no. I didn't see anythi -- him doing it. But he was responsible. And this why he's get the sentence. The fellow, the SS man from Ukrainian region, with the big dog, he get the death sentence, and some other people get sentences, years and so on.

Q: What was the name of the soccer player?

A: Of the?

Q: Soccer player.

A: Soccer player? To -- Todd. I think Todd. He's a good person, you know, never [indecipherable]. It will come to me. It will come to me, I think, Todd, I don't -- I don't remember any more, don't remember any more.

Q: So you came to the United States in 1950.

A: I came -- we came to the States -- we l -- we left Germany on General McCrae, a vessel, on the 12th of April and we went to Canada, first to our lord people there, and from Canada went to New York. We arrived in New York on the 28th of April, and there we were -- went to the relief, and so on, so on.

Q: You didn't have any problem getting a visa to come over?

A: No, the vi -- there was a mass visa, there were no individual visa. That was for the whole group of survivors. We were a full ship of people like me.

Q: What do you think gave you the strength to get through all of this in the way that you did?

A: For this -- to get through all of this was a terrible thing. You see, we had to -- everything worked on bribery in Germany. I tried to get to the States before Philly was born. Didn't make it, so -- people say oh yeah, they can help, they can do, they can do. People who was -- who were survivors, who w-worked in the different embassies, and they just made money. To get money they say they can do everything, didn't. It didn't work. Philly was born in Germany. And -- and we finally made it here. Yeah, Philip was born June 8, 1947, in Germany. Then we came here. I came to New York, to my sister. I didn't like the life in New York, and right away I -- the life, everybody's running, rushing on the [indecipherable] from New York, I don't mean to offend you, but everybody's running, and nobody walks there. But it is -- and when I ask my sister why I [indecipherable] I look. And that's the way it was. And I stood there with my sister for a few weeks. After two weeks we decided to go away from there. And California was the biggest choice. I made a friend that says I -- I met some ex-German businessman who resettled there, and so on, and everybody tells me, "If I would came, no I wouldn't stay here, I would go west." So, Los Angeles was the choice to go to west. Says so, this is decided to do it. It was a tough time to convince my sister that I want to go, but I had to take care of my family and myself. And at the same time, there was no jobs available in New York, and I had to look for, but I prayed not to get it for me, because I didn't want to stay there. I -- I never had to [indecipherable], never had a problem. So we came to Los Angeles.

Q: But during the period of the war, and the Holocaust --

A: Yes.

Q: Did you think about your religion at all?

A: Religion?

Q: Mm-hm. Did you think about being Jewish?

A: Be? Oh yeah. I was aware of it, sure, absolutely. I was aware and I was brought up this way, and I felt Jewish and I -- I was not religious observant, but I knew I was Jewish.

Q: Were you able to commemorate any of the holidays, or were you able to act out your religion at all?

A: We tried even in the camp. We didn't know the exact dates, but we tried, we went through Yom Kippur, for example, fasting day. We fasted, [indecipherable] the right day,

but I fasted a day. It was not too much to be able to fast. But I tried to do as much as I can, and religion, it was not a issue that make me a different man. Yeah, tough times.

End of Tape #6

Tape #7

A: And we had that declaration made, and everybody signed, my signature is there too, and this is buried inside.

Q: Okay, wait, we -- we have to start from the beginning of the story now --

A: Oh, okay.

Q: -- because we don't know what you were talking about.

A: The Zalost treedahoff was a big cemetery where they -- in some cases where they made their own soffages and so on, and what we take out to what [indecipherable] the 319 dollars. But there was a big cemetery, and we later to establish there a permanent monument.

Q: Okay, but what is not on the tape yet, is your story about when you went to the cemetery -- the mass cemetery, and exhumed the bodies. We don't -- you need to tell me about that.

A: No, I did not personally exhume the bodies. People were brought in goat, pulling goat, and we found so the bodies [indecipherable]. I personally didn't dig, I didn't exhume anythings.

Q: I understand that.

A: Right. But this was all done by people organized, and we transfer the Jews to the Jewish cemetery and so on. In zalo -- in montezalo freedhouse is a permanent monument built, and all the papers are in the ground, with signatures and my signature is there, too. And I was attending all kinds of things [indecipherable] lots of different occasions and so on, with all kinds of people who were in immigration, who were Communist kept in Russia for awhile, and so on. And the all -- the all kind of political ac -- activists, they were there. And --

Q: What I was asking you is that when you explained to me about the cemetery, we were not recording a tape. So I needed you to tell me where this was, and what happened.

A: Oh where the --

Q: Yes.

A: Where the cemetery was? Yeah.

Q: When you were working in Hanover, yes?

A: When -- yeah, this was in Hanover. It -- it called the Zalehorst freedorf, this was the name for the cemetery. They have a -- they had a crematorium there and so on. The Zalehorst freedorf cremated lot of what they had, whatever bodies were sent in with IDs, they -- they cremated them, and it was our job to pull out later -- we had people pull out all the names of Jewish, so they could transfer to the Jewish cemetery. But this was part of the Zalehorst freedorf, and -- and when we build there the monument, all this information is on special paper buried in with our signature. However -- on -- on top of this is a big monument for the survivors and so on. But we were attending every time with certain observances of ceremonies, and so on, so on.

Q: During the war years, did you think that you would get through it, and that --

A: During the?

Q: During these war years. Do you understand -- heard me?

A: No, no, you not -- I couldn't hear you, that's why I'm listening.

Q: During the years of the war --

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you think you would survive?

A: No. I didn't think of it at all. What happened will happen. Nobody could do anything. There was no -- okay, there is the [indecipherable] in the camps, and so on, there was the will to survive the Germans, just to show them that we can be -- stand it, but seriously, nobody could think of it. A matter of luck.

Q: What did you think about?

A: Hm?

Q: What did you think about?

A: What I think? You see, I am a very different thing, I don't give too much thought where I cannot help it. If I am in a situation where I can do something, I will do every possible thing to get help. If I [indecipherable] where I have no influence whatsoever, I don't think at all. What will happen, will happen. I wasn't sure if I will survive. Happened to survive. And -- and happened to survive mostly because I could do something -- thing what -- what the German needed, and I could help on -- with the machines, with all this. But there was the will to survive, no question about, but not -- not too much attention paid to it.

Q: Now, 50 years later, when you think back, are there certain images that stick with you?

A: [indecipherable] again.

Q: When you think back about this period of time --

A: Yes?

Q: -- are there certain images that are very strong, stick with you?

A: The images is trying whatever i -- comes -- whatever comes, there were problems [indecipherable] to try to [indecipherable] as much as I can. I have two sons, and I have grandchildren, and I love to be -- and I love them, and they love us. And nothing -- but okay -- everybody wants to survive, there is no question about, but there is no such thing what you can say I will survive, or I will not survive. Life is life, and what life brings, you are trying to do the best. I had plenty of surgeries, and all kind of treatments, and so on. I had radiation, and I -- you name it and I -- and I had it. But when -- I went through with it. And I have a lovely family, and my children are very attached to it, and that's the way it is. I know nothing is forever, so -- but no way to choose at the time. At least I didn't choose the time.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say before we finish?

A: I don't think I have anything special, I thought the only thing was I can say, I thought to - - to apply to the question as good as I can. I didn't try to pull it any personal stories to make him be a hero, because I am not a hero. I did what I felt it is the right thing at any time. And I couldn't be any more. I try the best, that's all I can do. And I sure will try the best again.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay?

Q: Thank you.

A: Thank you very, very much. It was a pleasure having you interview me.

End of Tape #7

Conclusion of Interview