

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Ceslav Mordowicz
October 24, 1995 and 30, 1996
RG-50.030*0354**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Ceslav Mordowicz, conducted on October 24, 1995 and October 30, 1996 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.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

CESLAV MORDOWICZ

October 24, 1995 and October 30, 1996

Q: ... first, some basic details, you know.

A: Uhuh, Uhuh.

Q: Be so kind as to introduce yourself and tell us something about your family and your life in early youth.

A: Well, then, my name is Czesław Mordowicz, born on August 2, 1919, in M³awa in Polish[sic], where I went to schools - meaning, the elementary and the gymnasium [secondary] schools, a Jewish gymnasium, which belonged to the type of Braude(ph) schools, whose central administration, according to my information, was located in Łódź. My parents, father Herman, mother Anna nee Wicińska; father born in Ko³o. near Kalisz, mother most likely in M³awa, and there were in our family I, and I had a three years younger daughter, whose name was Rachela.

Q: Sister?

A: Sorry, sister, whose name was Rachela. She also attended the elementary school and then the same gymnasium that I did. My father was a grain merchant. He had his own granaries in M³awa, of course, and was closely connected with all the manorial farms in the vicinity of M³awa, whence he would, at proper time of the year, of course, buy grain, on special sales, at local markets, and so on.

Q: Could you please tell something about family life, for example, was this family, your family, was it assimilated, what language

A: No, the family was not assimilated - normal, even, ... from time to time the father would go to the synagogue on Holy Days, and I, when I grew older would, of course, go with him, too. We had a grandfather in M³awa who somewhat controlled this. We spoke Polish at home, and Jewish with grandfather, and that is where my Jewish comes from, I learned it from grandfather and have it till this day. And use it from time to time. Father, in addition to his normal work, also was very active in the community. He was for many, many years the Chairman of the

Parents' Association at the M³awa gymnasium, and what is characteristic for that gymnasium is that it had its own boarding school, which was famous in all of Poland, and that's because there were many, many families who had problems with children, who did not want to study, et cetera - of course, well-to-do families, even very well-to-do. So they would take advantage of this moment[sic] of that boarding school in M³awa. And my mother was there an honorary, so-called, an honorary member of the patronage. So, this is more or less something about my young years and about the family.

Q: Your sister also went to that gymnasium?

A: Quite, sister also went to that gymnasium, but was three grades below me. I graduated from gymnasium in '38. It was my desire to continue my studies at a university, but because the universities were very far from M³awa, let's say, Warsaw, et cetera, this was connected with insane costs, which my family could not possibly afford. So, I took advantage of this time to tutor; I prepared younger students for their exams, et cetera, and this way I earned a bit, so as not to be dependent on the father.

Q: In what subjects did you tutor?

A: Everything, I mean all, all of the

Q: Subjects?

A: Subjects, which in the gymnasium were, ... needed. And this lasted till the outbreak of the war. A short period, a period of one year, more or less. And, as is known, on the first of September, Nineteen Hundred Thirty Nine, war broke out, and the first shots were fired on M³awa. M³awa was distant but thirteen kilometers from the border of East Prussia. I remember that I used to ride a bicycle to buy German cigarettes for my grandfather. I rode the bicycle and would return proud that I was able to get the cigarettes for my grandfather. And so, thus started the tragedy, the great tragedy of the second world war. I remember that a first, first rocket, or artillery shell, fell in the school yard of our Jewish gymnasium and killed a dog. I remember it, as if it were now, because I ran there to look; we lived then very close to the building and the school yard. Through two or three hours, terrible chaos, the town almost was engulfed in flames.

Of course, not the whole town, but the outskirts, mainly parts on the side close to the border, from where already German army units were approaching. ... Maybe I should mention one fact, which in the continuation, ... had some significance: My father was especially friendly with an owner of one of the farms, called Uniszki - I even remember the name of the farm and it was located towards the German border, about six kilometers from M³awa, which means that there was another nine kilometers to the border. And at the time, in those first few hours, telephone communication was still possible. So father got a call from the manager of that farm in which he described to father the situation there, where the farm was, and asked for advice what to do. So, I remember because I stood close to the telephone and was listening to what the conversation concerned, and why was it the manager calling, because the farm owner, who was of German extraction, named Steiner(ph), first name Micha³, Micha³ Steiner had been arrested two or three days before the outbreak of the war. So then father directed the manager to take a suitable cart with a pair of strong horses, put all of their necessities in and, meaning the manager and his family, and come to us; in fact, come for us; that we will join them and will be escaping together in the direction of Warsaw, and that we will stop by a brother of Micha³ Steiner, who also owned another farm and whom father knew very well and with whom he maintained business contacts. So, this moment came, within two or three hours, they came, we added our comforters, our pillows, - because what more can you take? - some clothing, and we started our trek together by these two horses and the cart, with hopes that in a day or two we will return to our house, to our home. And so we reached the farm of the second Steiner, can't remember whether he was older or younger than the brother who got arrested. There we waited a day, even more, maybe a day and a half, we slept in a bower in the garden. And we decided to continue on, continue on the road to Warsaw, because we have heard, even before the war, how well fortified was the city, how safe, how well it will be defended, if need be, how strong it is, et cetera, so we saw in it maybe some safety, which later turned out to be even more dangerous, but that will come later. And so, after perhaps about ten days, we have finally reached this Warsaw, having endured on the way very unpleasant moments, very unpleasant incidents; I remember a small picture, when

while searching in an open field for something to eat, meaning a potato or a carrot, something like that, we were noticed by one of the planes that were flying over almost non-stop; one of these planes dove down and opened machine-gun fire at us. Luckily, luckily, he did not get anyone and after a while we managed to crawl to the edge of such a small grove, to hide in it. That is, that is just one little vignette from that trip, from that journey, and that is how we reached Warsaw. In Warsaw we did not have anyone especially, even - maybe some distant acquaintances - but no family, so in that chaos when we broke into[sic] this city, where a part, a great part of the city was in flames, we saw many houses ruined, and such terrible pictures, among the skeletons of the buildings, in, ... house cellars, people with their hands raised, crying, begging for help, because they could not on their own escape through the burning parts of the houses. Terrible pictures, and maybe even more horrible for a bystander who looks at it and stands utterly at a loss, not knowing and not being able to help in anything. In one, in some small synagogue we found a little corner to stay. And there we had, for the first time, on bare floors, first respite, of course, but at least still having a pillow we took from the cart, leaving the cart and the horses to the decision of that farm manager, because he, however, wanted to go back, go back, go back. So I remember a discussion; how father was trying to persuade him that at this moment there is no way back, that he should wait it out here with us, but he would not agree to it anyhow, and so he took that cart and those horses and where he went, I don't know. We remained there. We survived in this manner, eating potato peelings, and car ... and carrots and turnips, et cetera, et cetera. [sigh] At the beginning, we still had some water from the pipes, because waterworks were not working, but whatever was still in the pipes, in bigger, wider pipes, we somehow were able to extract, until the moment when that ended, too. And that is how we survived that Polish-German war, meaning, ...

Q: Which means?

A: During the month of September, to the end of September, the year of thirty nine.

Q: And does it mean that all this time you all were in that little synagogue?

A: ... We moved to another part of the city, because that synagogue got some kind of a "zasiég"[01:19:00:02] [within range?], I don't know whether it is, ...

Q: Meaning, it was beyond Warsaw ... ?

A: ... whether it is , is it stated in Polish, because I have a bit of a problem with my languages ... at this moment, while sitting with you, alas, I do not command enough English to be able to freely converse with you like I do now, but I do have language I speak better, it is Slovakian, I lived for twenty one years in Czechoslovakia.

Q: Uhuh.

A: And the next language in which I can converse very comfortably is Hebrew, because I lived some twenty one years in Israel. But about this later.

Q: Now, once more, again, could you tell how it was after the capitulation of Warsaw, at the end of September; what happened next?

A: Oh, yes, we could see ...

Q: (?)

A: ... that there is nothing to look for in Warsaw, ... we were longing to go home, meaning to M³awa. By that time there was no means of transportation, no trains, no busses, nothing. So we had to start on foot, this, ... stroll to M³awa, it was only one hundred twenty kilometers. With these "batolki", is that how you say it?

Q: "tobo³ki" [bundles][Polish]

A: Bundles on our backs, including that pillow and that comforter. And that is how we reached the city of P³ońsk, and my sister suddenly remembered that she has in P³ońsk an acquaintance whom she met in M³awa a few days before the outbreak of the war and also introduced me to her. It was a young person, visiting her father in M³awa, because mother and father were separated. So she proposed that we find her in P³ońsk, maybe will find a chance to rest, because we were completely exhausted, dirty, even had lice and seriously, too. So, remembering from this young lady's stories that they had a wholesale grocery outlet in the market square, and remembering her name, we started to search in the square and, indeed, we found this family, then

still partially in that warehouse where the shelves were already bare, except a can here or there, meaning, all plundered by the Germans, of course. But, perhaps, it was more psychological for these owners that they were still able to move about that so-called store. Of course, they invited us and that we can, et cetera, but being afraid that in our condition we may bring [something] undesirable, or not welcomed guests, so we just asked that somewhere in the yard in some corner they give us a bit of kerosene, maybe more than a bit, so that we could conduct proper disinfecting. We asked for some shirts, some aprons, because, first thing, we always slept outdoors in all of our clothes. And it is this way, not the first time, maybe after the second time, maybe even after the third time, we liquidated that unpleasantness that we had to carry on our bodies, and then after a bath, a very detailed bath, after closed-cropped haircuts, we finally entered a tiny room that was given for us to occupy.

Q: How long did you all stay there?

A: Together we may have stayed there for a period of three or four days, with this that my parents and sister continued on their way to M³awa, while I, at the invitation of this acquaintance, whom I met, remained in P³oñsk.

Q: Could you tell more about that family with which you remained?

A: So, about that family I only knew that these were very kind people, very intelligent, people with intelligent background, I mean from their ancestors, I didn't know it so exactly, but cultured and very, very, very warmhearted. Mother, as I mentioned before, lived in separation from her husband, who lived in M³awa, and together with his brother the whole family's name was Perelmutter; in M³awa a family know for its Zionist activities. That's all I know about this family. Initially, without any intent, I was simply trying to be useful, especially because the mother of that acquaintance of mine was a very, very sick person. She seriously suffered from tuberculosis. In spite of that, they lived very closely together, and my friend, together with her sister, simply sacrificed themselves for their mother, not imagining life without her. But after the liquidation of such a store, or after the looting of such a great store and warehouse, there was a

lot of work, to find things, maybe find what was needed, to straighten out things, to put it up on the shelves, organized again, et cetera, et cetera; so this was my initial activity.

Q: Were you a witness to the looting?

A: No. I came later. Everything had been looted, only I knew everything from what they told me, I know well that it was a very important business, known in the whole countryside, in the center of town, very beautiful, large rooms, and that is all I know.

Q: ... Please, be so kind as to tell me, maybe about your life under occupation in the first moments when the Germans entered, when you were in P³ońsk.

A: Life, especially for the Jews, in cities like P³ońsk, M³awa, and similar towns, was more or less the same, but it should be stressed that it was very, very hard. We lived in constant fear, day and night. The Germans organized many "games;" - of course, they were called that way in quotes - when they would barge into Jewish homes, plundering, destroying, looking for valuables, under the threat of their revolvers and other weapons. And that is how we lived day and night. I cannot remember a night during that period that I could sleep all the way through. Our nerves were constantly strained. And not seeing any escape from the situation ... I mentioned earlier that after a German came from the Reich to Poland and took over quarters to organize a furniture factory for himself; he was a carpenter, I remember him first time in an SA uniform, that yellow-brown uniform. He was a rather primitive man, but he did not look like a dangerous German. In reality, he saw in it a break for himself, because he "aryzowa³"(ph)(?); took without permission, without asking, anything he liked; he just took it. And his benevolence consisted of his leaving us two small rooms in this entire complex which he took over or just took.

Q: He left these two rooms for this family that ...

A: for the family so that it could live. There were very serious difficulties in, in obtaining food, et cetera, but from these certain reserves that have not been looted, were not found, a little bit was left and these remnants helped us greatly to ease the problem, to diminish the problem of

food. Roundups and dragnets in the streets for a variety of forced labor, in such a chaotic unorganized manner, by means of chasing, beating, mainly with ..[gestures].

Q: rifle butts?

A: rifle butts, et cetera, et cetera. This part, of course, of these towns like M³awa and P³ońsk, was incorporated into the Third Reich, that was the Reich. The administration was 100% German, with the Gestapo, the Police, with the office, I mean town hall, et cetera, et cetera - all was German. Going back to that German who came to organize a furniture factory for himself, he did it by liquidating in the whole town all the Jewish and non-Jewish workshops and took over these people, these experts, to work for him. He even brought all of their instruments, their ... machines where there was some kind of a machine, understand, private, lets say some small "baumzega"(ph) or another type of a saw. And that is how he organized his factory up to forty first-class expert carpenters. Of course, he started production having no idea of how to run a place like that, how to, how to, how to pay these pennies that he did pay; because he paid not according to some regulations but according to what he thought they should be. But in a short time there arose those other questions, because some kind of books had to be kept, some, some, some kind of figures, and he just could not handle it at all. And he noticed in my person that I am able to do it, that I am someone who could do it for him; and it came to this that in a very short time, I became his chief manager in the shop and [manager] in the office in one person. By the end of my work for him I had learned how to cut glass and replace automobile windshields, which was unheard of in Poland at the time, because nobody knew how to do it. And I learned it, even how to disassemble and reassemble car doors. But it was just something additional.

Q: This was additional to his business ... ?

A: Of course, that it was for his business and an addition for me, primarily a physical addition. And that is how that business grew, and grew, and grew, and grew and grew.

Q: And at this time you lived just next door in those two rooms that that German left?

A: I lived in a small part of the workshop, to be truthful, in such a corner where, during the day, normal work was done, but at night this and that was moved aside and I would open such a little folding field cot, or, or, or, or or something similar.

Q: Did you live there alone or with ... ?

A: First, I lived there alone. But this was in one complex of buildings one tract; to get to, to, to the family's quarters, one had to walk maybe twenty or thirty meters. The lady friend, her name was Szulamit. I was then twenty years old, and she was maybe nineteen. And one beautiful morning in the course of an intimate conversation, I received a proposition from my lady friend to get married and this way to secure for her, as a member of (my) family, formally my wife, who, who, who married me, et cetera, from the danger of a threat of being deported sooner or later. So, this was, it was, it was a real problem among the Jewish youth, imagining that it may come handy one day. In addition, there were elements of sentiment because, ... yes, the young lady was very pleasant, a very beautiful miss with blond hair and blue eyes. I must admit one thing, that even though I still have, according to my acquaintances, a good memory, if you ask me about the details of this contact between me and her, I remember very little and I will prove why: fear, in which we all lived for twenty four hours of every day, and day after day. It destroyed everything, it trampled everything, it denies everything, it is, these are the conditions very hard to describe, but, alas, they existed. I repeat, I do not remember a peaceful night, that I would , could sleep all the way through during that period of time. This banging on the doors, these shots fired at the doors, at the windows, knowingly that, that, that there lives a Jewish family. Although in our case there was less of that, because it was somewhat connected with that factory, which had a sign on, in one spot on the building. But in the rear, where the actual workshops were located, they were empty and dark and German soldiers passing by, of course, drunken, in good humor, et cetera, would do terrible things, terrible things. The town was small, and everything was concentrated around that town square, exactly where we were located, so that this life was from the moral point of view unbearable, very difficult.

Q: Even where you were, when under the protection of that German?

A: No, not literally, so this drunken German on the outside could not tell what is happening in those adjacent buildings, where were the workshops, et cetera, which were basically dark; besides, everything was dark, because there were restrictions on account of possible air raids, et cetera, everything was covered, all the windows were covered, we were not allowed to burn any lights. At six o'clock was a police hour, et cetera; we were not allowed to walk out of the house into the street; so that all of that contributed to this situation that was very hard to take. And this situation remained until they organized the ghetto, if I am not mistaken, it was the end of the year nineteen hundred forty, or early forty one, that in P³o³nsk a ghetto was organized, Also a period very dif ..., very hard in every respect. I will say something about it in a moment. And so, about five thousand Jews who at the time lived in P³o³nsk - not all of them natives of P³o³nsk - from all around the area, small towns and countryside, they all sought refuge in a larger town - so it all concerned these five thousand Jews that had to, whom, that, who had to be somehow settled in the ghetto. Housing conditions were terrible, terrible from this point of view that the area which the German gave to our disposal, apparently, to create that ghetto, was very, very small, with very modest housing, rather such typical outskirts of a small town, so that all that was there were small, small, small, houses, small cottages, almost clay cottages and hovels. By accident, I met, at the time the ghetto was being organized, a so-called Judeneltestern(ph)[German], that is, a community elder from the Judenrat, by the name of Ramek, who came from M³awa. And one day, coming upon him on a street, I approached him and introduced myself: "I am Mordowicz, I come from M³awa and I heard that you are from M³awa, too. I know your family from M³awa. And if you had a younger brother, I knew him very well, because I used to play soccer. And this man rushed to me and took me in his arms and started kissing me. And he said, as follows: (Witness speaks through tears) "It is enough for me that I heard your name - I know your family and it will be an honor for me if I will be able to do something for you." To which I replied, "Listen, I work in such and such a place, I don't need work. Even though I don't earn much, such 'not much' is much. I need a corner where I can live with my family which I have here," and I explained to him that it concerns the candidate for my wife; - at the time she was not yet my

wife, but explaining to him the situation with a very gravely sick mother, who needs some air, and that is medicine for her lungs, because she is seriously sick, has tuberculosis. So, thanks to that, I got one little room where I could live with that family, because in such a room two or three families would [ordinarily] live together. Of course, he invited me to his house and, once, I remember, I paid him a visit with my future wife, he was happy and he introduced me to all of his friends who visited him, and he asked me for some details, details from the past, from M³awa, and this friendship, sort of friendship, because I, de facto, nothing needed from him. And if I needed something, I needed it for someone who got caught and was locked up in that ghetto prison and rotted there and waited for death. So, from time to time I needed something from him for such people. On the other hand, I was able to help people a lot in this manner that I transported finished furniture to destinations outside the ghetto. I drove this truck with these furniture, which were filled with food: flour, sugar, fat and even apples ... ,

Q: Were you driving ... ?

A: and this transport would enter the ghetto first, and after unloading that food, in a special agreed to place, would leave with the furniture to deliver it to the owner - and this owner was a sub-prefect of P³oñsk town, a German, from Germany, a real German, in a German uniform.

And such ...

Q: And where did this food come from, from ... ?

A: This food came from what I would buy. I would buy it from the villagers, which they would bring to the factory, or sometimes I would get it from such a villager who needed a piece of glass to replace in a window, in a cow barn or a house, and he could not buy such glass for any money. And cigarettes, for example, I smoked then, I would get from the chief of Gestapo, he would come, always ordered something, he knew what kind of cigarettes I liked, so he would bring them and leave a few packages - and I had them to distribute to others.

Q: But this Gestapo chief, did he know you were a Jew?

A: No. And it was a daily fear, because I, when returning home from work, I had to go through the, through the building where on the first floor Gestapo was located. And when the Chief sat at

the window and was looking out to see what was happening at the P³ońsk square, he would often see me and very nicely greet me with "Heil Hitler!", and would ask me how I was, and I would say "Excellent." And I continued to control my walk, of course, until the moment I reached the ghetto - I walked around without the strap ...

Q: The [arm] band

A: without the [arm] band and without the patch, but I had them both in my pocket, because the minute I entered the ghetto - not through the main gate but the back entrance, I especially would walk half a kilometer to enter through there - I would immediately put them on. Because there (was) one ordinary SS-man, who would stroll around, when he would meet someone without the patch and without the band, he would take out a revolver and shoot. There were a number of incidents that he would kill a Pole, not a Jew, many like that, that he would kill a German ...

Q: In the ghetto?

A: ... because officially, a German had no business being there, and neither a Pole, but if so, he had to be escorted by a Jewish policeman, who was to take him where he needed to go. I had such incidents, that I had to go at night down to a cellar-like place which I built especially as a hiding place in case of need, and it was called a cellar for coal and potatoes - I would get in there and wait out this time of German fun on the outside.

Q: How often such games would ... ?

A: Oh, quite often, quite often - and my daily fear and nightly fear not to meet face to face the Chief of the Gestapo, because he would, for no other reason than that, he for such a long time did not know, and on the contrary, he would, he did show respect to me like his equal, so he would for no other reason than this just tear me apart right then and there. And this was my daily bread.

Q: Please tell me, what was, ... what was in your opinion the motivation of that German for whom you worked, who also was a SA--man, right? What was his motivation that he kept , kept you as a ... ?

A: Because he needed me very, very much. I spoke fluent German. I did not look like a Jew. I did an excellent job representing his undertaking and his firm. The firm blossomed day after day. It reached a point that it was he who depended on me, not the other way around.

Q: And what was the situation of other employees, Jews who also worked for him?

A: The situation of other employees, Jews and Poles, was, relatively, not bad, only because I was running this factory for him and it was I that would persuade him not once that what he pays per piece of artistically made furniture by a first class expert was not a pay, that I was embarrassed by it - I asked him to increase the pay, add more, because he was deciding about it, how much to pay was his decision. How and what to make I decided that.

Q: When delivering these furniture did you ever have an opportunity to reach other ghettos?

A: No. No. No. All of this furniture was made for these so-called prominent Germans, who were sending it to the Reich, to their homes - after all, this was extraordinary precision quality work by first-class experts and this was taking place only in P³o³nsk.

Q: Does it mean that throughout this time you had no contact with your family in M³awa?

A: Why, yes, I had - from time to time I was able to visit my family. I was able to do it because my boss would drive me there, wait for me and take me back; I don't mean that he waited in the ghetto, he would wait outside but he would help me travel.

Q: And in connection with this, you knew, you were aware what was happening with your parents and your sister?

A: Why, yes, why yes, why yes! This contact was not frequent, but, nevertheless, nevertheless existed.

Q: And how were they managing in the M³awa ghetto?

A: Somehow, they were managing. My father was very well liked, quite. My father had a reputation of being a very wise man. All of the "Dineh(ph) Torah" took place in my father's apartment, even pious people, even very pious people, and not so pious, with all of their problems would come to my father, not to a rabbi - they considered my father smarter than the rabbi. Apropos, the rabbi's name was Seg³owicz, because I was married by him, so that I don't

forget his name when I will be talking about the marriage, which took place in M³awa, in Rabbi Segal³owicz's apartment.

Q: ?

A: O.K.

Q: You see, now I can now a little more ...

End of tape One.

Tape Two

Q: Please continue your story about the ghetto.

A: Maybe I will mention that my lady friend from P³oñsk and I got married. Her name was Szulamit, she was then maybe nineteen years old while I was twenty. And with the approval of my family from M³awa, meaning my parents, we decided to get married in M³awa, having there somewhat better conditions, at that time there was there still a pre-war rabbi, named Segal³owicz and indeed it was in his apartment that the ceremony took place. Present was only my family, because transporting the P³oñsk family with the sick mother was absolutely impossible. Under those conditions and at that time we stayed a day or two in M³awa and then returned to P³oñsk. And thus, in rather dramatic fashion, which was totally beyond our control, we lived maybe a year and a half until the liquidation of the ghetto. Maybe I will mention here a moment which may be more interesting: one day, it was at the beginning of December forty two, four o'clock in the morning, and the internal, Jewish police. A policeman came to my house and calls me out that my boss is waiting for me at the entrance, at the gate meaning my boss from work. So, I got dressed and went with that policeman; indeed, my boss came on a motorcycle and quietly disclosed to me that in about three hours, more or less, a liquidation of the ghetto will start, in this way, that the ghetto will be, meaning the people living in the ghetto will be transported out. I asked him: "Do you know whereto, why?" He said: "No, I only know that the ghetto will be liquidated, this was communicated to us at night during some secret meeting, but without details. I don't know where to, and don't know why and I don't know for what purpose. But I would like

to save you out of that." I ask: "How and by what means?" "Now you will come with me to my place and you will stay with me." "Well, what about the family, what about my wife, what about her sick mother?" "Eh, this is out of the question." "I cannot in any way leave them, because they need my help." He said to me: "Think for a moment, I will wait; if you decide, I take you right now, just as you are. You will continue to work for me, just like you did before and you have a chance to survive this situation." I thanked him, said good-bye to him, thanked him for the whole period, that he treated me humanely, and the fact that I treated him humanely twice, I assume that he, too, recognized that - tears appeared in his eyes and we parted. Ah, of course, they are there, in three hours the fun started. The Germans in uniforms, with Waffen-SS, of course, with dogs, with carbines. They started chasing people out of their houses, leave immediately, don't take anything, everything will follow us, everything will be collected, everything will follow us, not to worry about anything, just step out into the square; you know, there was this central square, from time to time there took place unpleasant spectacles; public hangings for smuggling some food, some attempts to leave the ghetto without permission - such scenes intended to discourage, and there were many, many such scenes. And that is how it arrived, in a chaos, in an extraordinary chaos - people were chased out into the square - I had to camouflage myself somehow, some dark glasses, some, some large cap which I pulled down to cover half of my face, so that, simply, I would not be recognized by these my good acquaintances, chiefs of the Gestapo, police, et cetera. One German approached me, not one that I knew, and asked me what time it was. I understood immediately what he was after, he wanted to know what kind of watch I have and I had at that time an almost new, beautiful "Eterna" with black face and fluorescent ...

Q: handles

A: handles and he liked that watch a lot and he took it of me without asking. I wondered if I should resist at all, or not, and I thought "there will be another watch." I just wanted this to pass in peace because next to me stood a sick woman and I wanted to have as little problems as possible. People who could not walk, the elderly, were loaded on trucks, there were a few of

them there, cannot tell how many exactly, and the rest of us, on foot, in the direction of the railroad station, where there was prepared for us "a luxury train," as they called it. We are going to work, work more productively, which the Germans need, need badly, to win the war, and we must in this help them...

Q: participate

A: participate in it and, simply, help. And that is how it was. We reached the railroad station, which was located from the point of departure some two kilometers, it was still quite dark, maybe it was seven o'clock, seven thirty. A few shots rang out, reportedly they killed a few people who were showing some resistance, not obeying the commands accurately enough. Crying, hollering, normal in such a situation - and so we , we reached the railroad station. Indeed, we saw that there was some kind of a passenger train, but old, old, old, old. An old German passenger train, where the entrance to the compartments was through the door, a normal door at the front , that is how one entered the compartments. They crammed many people into that train, some of them were sitting, tightly sitting, some were standing, some were sitting on the floors. We saw not a sign of any bottle with water, or any other container with water, not a slice of bread anywhere we could find, maybe it's lying somewhere We had no one to turn to, no one to speak to. They locked these cars - there at the front some guy in a uniform was shouting that we are not allowed to open the doors because they will use arms and will kill. I recognized my friends, in quotes, of course. The Chief of the Gestapo - good friend, town mayor - good friend and some others, others, others that I knew well, with whom I was in regular contact. But then still as a half-man, a man, not as cattle or an animal, locked in that railroad car. And the train started on its way, on its way into the unknown, absolutely unknown. After two days, more or less, we were able to determine the direction of the travel - there were a number of hypotheses among the people when talking. But it still looked like it may be we are going in the direction of Austria. The situation was terrible. People fainted without a drop of water, not to mention a, a, a piece of bread, not to mention our physiological needs, where we could take care of them, or could not. Crowded, and after another day, perhaps it was the third one, we have

reached a station, "Oœwiêcim"¹. And I will not forget that sign as long as I will live. When I read it, it was before it got dark, the sign was lit dimly by some light, it was hardly visible. From that station we traveled a bit further, not far. It appeared that it was some kind of a ramp, where we could see from afar approaching us masses of uniformed Germans with dogs - beasts not of this earth, with shouting, noise, barking of the dogs. "Alles rauss! Und loss, loss, loss loss, loss!"(ph)[German] Then I realized that we are in some kind of a trap, from which there is, there is no exit. And they started brutally chasing all from the cars. Women to the right, men to the left, in the center such a small group of Germans in uniforms. And the so-called selection was taking place. From that moment on, I no longer saw my trio. I only saw them when we were disembarking from that car, and they went to the right, and I went to the left. From that moment on I never saw them again, and I learned nothing of their fate. Men were formed into a column, five abreast, and then before each row came one of the SS-men, later on I learned that it was a doctor, who with a flick of a finger directed again left or right. In this transport, there were, together with women, approximately between two thousand and two thousand five hundred people. Men were a smaller half, maybe one thousand men. Out of that thousand, maybe six hundred people entered the camp, maybe five hundred fifty, something like that. And that is how they us "inlaufschrît"(ph)[German], which means ...

Q: quickly

A: quickly running, drove on foot for some two kilometers, more or less. And they walked us into one empty barrack, which only had cement [floor] and nothing else. Somewhere there in a corner a little table, or something like that, some kind a chair, because I saw from afar. There they ordered us to get undressed, in a certain place, which they pointed out, they ordered us to lay down all of our valuables, which we had on us: rings, watches, chains, et cetera, et cetera, money, we had to put down everything because they warned us that if they find anything on anyone, he will be shot. Thus, everyone came up to start putting things down. Then they said to

¹ In old Polish, the name means "we shall consecrate it." The Nazis renamed the town Auschwitz.

get undressed and I remember, that it was December, forty second year. This barrack was not heated.

Q: Was this a wooden barrack?

A: It was a brick barrack with holes, through which one could see stars, with holes through which one could see the barrack next door. And so naked, we were ordered to lie down on that cement floor. It is hard to describe this situation to understand it; with these moments, these deeds, we were robbed of the greatest treasure: human dignity. Man ceased to be a man. A question arises - what metamorphosis occurred here? What are we now like? And it is difficult to describe. One thing we knew, what I really knew that this is how the end of the world looks. We were all shivering from cold. After about two or three hours, some other prisoners, but under the control of SS-men, brought some cauldron with some liquid. It appears that it was tea for us. It was a bit warm still, because it was so freezing that during the time they brought that cauldron to the barrack, it got cold, and as to taste I can only say what I remember. Normally, one would not take it into his mouth, but then it was something so unusual, after three days first drops of some - some dirty, some filthy tea, whether already - if you could at all call it that, some dirty liquid. After that tea, came a command, we are going to be disinfected, that we have to get cleaned, because here the most important thing is cleanliness, and, God forbid, should they find on someone a louse, it's death. And to this add that we again march in the rows of five and walking.

Q: Naked?

A: Naked, to some distant barrack, cannot tell exactly how far, but even this shortest road, this shortest stretch of the road was without end, in such a situation, under such conditions. We were led to very primitive facilities, where from some pipes and such rosettes water trickled, God forbid it would be warm, no, rather cold and next to each one of us walked such a would-be health orderly with a bucket and a bat ended with a piece of rag. which he dipped in the liquid he had there. it stank so - and he would rub with this liquid one's body, especially places covered with hair. This was this disinfecting. After a further hour or so, we were led to a further barrack,

which was called "bekleidungskammer")ph)[German}. There we were issued clothes. I got my clothes, they were simply throwing them at us, I got mine thrown into my face; I got clothing for a maybe fifteen-year old boy. I tried to put that jacket on, the sleeves would reach no further than my elbows, more or less, trousers to my knees, more or less, which I could not button because they were too small, and as to shoes, I got a pair of Dutch wooden ones which I could not put on because they were too small. Seeing ahead of me an incident of a request for a change that was met with a strike with a bat on the head, I saw no chance to change. So I took, I decided to take these shoes and keep them under my arm, for sure there will be an opportunity, if it ever occurs at any time, in some way to exchange these here shoes for other shoes which I could wear. After this procedure, we were led into a residential block, where we were to live. The block like the others built out of brick which, it so seemed to me, must have been at one time for keeping horses, or, or, or some other animals, because it was so partitioned, I don't want to call them cabins, not to lead to an erroneous impression! And divided into three parts, so called bunks, that was, these were places to sleep. God forbid, they would be made out of smooth board - these bunks were built out of branches of trees, just as they were cut off, not trimmed ...

Q: Round ones?

A: Round ones, they were just laid there and attached to the beams by nails, and this was a place for six to eight men to sleep.

Q: Were there any kinds of mattresses ... or straw?

A: Nothing. These were our mattresses and this was all we were to sleep on. There was, indeed, thrown there some so-called blanket, which was not really a blanket but a piece of rag, one for two people. So, when such a bunk was intended for eight people, there were four blankets, full of holes, filthy, stinking, and that was this cleanliness, that, that, that, which was to keep us in good state of health and alive.

Q: Please wait a moment, sorry, ... back when you were describing the barrack. How it looked with these poles that were laid ... ?

A: Uhuh, Uhuh, Uhuh.

A: And I don't remember exactly the number of the block where they led us into. I only know it was an old part, adjacent to the part of the women's camp. I think, it was block number nineteen. After two days, after I a little, a little, came to, I had the honor to meet, although not personally, my block leader, who had a green square, which meant he was a criminal, a Pole, a Silesian, rather, Silesian, named Janusz, what was his last name I don't know, I have no idea. After another day, perhaps after two more days, I saw, I encountered and met his so-called assistant, who was doing the first man's administrative work, and getting to know him a bit closer, I realized that it was an acquaintance of mine from M³awa, even such an acquaintance that I recalled that we went together to school, to gymnasium. So I came up to him and ask: "Tell me, is your name by any chance Bucio Kac?" He looked at me and said: "Yes, and who are you, what are you ...?" so I introduced myself to him. This man simply started to faint, he says: "How did you end up here?" And I simply: "I am here with a transport, from P³oñsk, because I have never met you in M³awa after the war." And that is how a debate[sic] started between the two of us until he came to a certain point - he says: "I have heard that your father is here." To which I say: "Help me find him." "I don't know exactly where, I only heard." But this in... sounded to me that it is here somewhere near our barrack. He says: "Listen, My legs are bad, I cannot walk." Then, at this moment I thought to myself, "how can a man with bad legs survive here anyway?" So he told me: "Thanks to that block leader, I am still alive. But I will think and see if I can find out a little bit more, because if you start loitering among the barracks in your condition, barefooted, and dressed like this, et cetera, first kapo you meet will kill you with a club. So, watch yourself, better not walk around." So, I ask him, "and what will I be doing here, can you tell me?" So he says: "I cannot answer that question, because I don't know myself." And after this meeting, the next day, we were all chased out of that block, seemingly to work. They chased us to a certain segment where there were some wheelbarrows and order each one of us to take one wheelbarrow and with these wheelbarrows in "lauschrit"(ph)[German], which meant to run, reach some, a certain point, where there were laid bricks, a whole pile, enormous pile of bricks, and a little further enormous piles of gravel, and they ordered us to load up, and

they kept rushing us, the SS-men with dogs. Fill up the wheelbarrow and continue running with these full wheelbarrows, at a run. This was an out of this world massacre, people were dropping like flies, starved, of course, and it is hard to say how much such a wheelbarrow weighed, but it was enormous, you could barely lift it, and not run with it without end, I have no idea how long. Out of that group that was sent ... chased out to work, more or less about three hundred men, after finishing the work that lasted about two hours, maybe one half was alive. Whoever fell, was beaten to death with sticks, bats and the so-called kapos, whom they invited to this, to this performance and, of course, the SS-men. Maybe I was lucky then, because I either fell in or slipped off that road, left the wheelbarrow on the roads[sic] and slipped into a pit full of clay. And I tried to immerse myself as much as I could into that clay, so that they would classify me as dead. And so I remained there lying there till the end of this work. Then from there, somehow my strength remained so that I could get myself out of the clay, I reached the first, so-called latrine, where it was possible to find some water in some pipe, so that I could wash off that clay, to somehow look, look, somehow. And that is how I lived through this first, this first day of work survived. The same work was repeated after two days one more time. That is when with the help of some information from my acquaintance, who in this block was a "schreiber" - a scrivener - to describe some corner somewhere where I could hide. Not far from there was a so-called "leichenhalle"(ph)[German} where corpses were being collected. A simple shed nailed together, out of wood, and next to it, around it, a stack, even laid out, evenly, because they were counted along with the living, just as important as the living, because in this way they had to be accounted for at the so-called roll call, even these dead had to be counted, so that, God forbid, not one prisoner from the camp would be missing. And in this fashion I maneuvered for a few days. until I got from that acquaintance of mine the news that my father most likely is in block number fourteen, with foreman Jupa, and his deputy, a Jew, David Szmulewski. Told me: "you, you turn to that David Szmulewski, because it seems to me, I don't know, but that Szmulewski has some sort of a relationship with your father, but I cannot tell you anything concrete, because I don't know." So, I took a chance, I went in the direction of block fourteen and in front of it I

saw a group that was sweeping and cleaning the entrance to the block. And I recognized one of these working there that it is my father. And that is how this first our meeting took place, which was horrible. Crying, embracing each other, I pulled out of my pocket a little piece of dry bread; my father did the same - he was giving me, I was giving him, and neither one of us wanted to accept. And my father only said that mother along with the sister went straight to the gas. And he says: "Come, enter with me into my block, I want to introduce you to Szmulewski." I heard that name from my acquaintance Kac, and my father knew that name also, very well. And he says: "Listen, if not for him I, too, would not be alive anymore." "So what is he, who is he?" "He is a deputy block foreman, comes from Ko³o, from the same town as I. And he knows the Mordowicz family and for him, the Mordowicz family, from the times before the war, was something, was really something important." And he promised my father that he will take care of my father, that he will try to make sure that he doesn't go to do very heavy work. And when he [father] introduced me to Szmulewski, so Szmulewski asks me: "What can I do for you?" And I say: "Do nothing for me. You just keep your word you promised to my father." After two or three days, I repeated my visit, to see my father again. And I did not find father in block fourteen, he was not there. So I started asking for information, I asked Szmulewski: "Where is my father?" "You know, I was not here in the morning, I was somewhere else, and they took him to work and that day father did not return from work here any more." [pause - tearfully:] I thanked him [shaky voice], I said good-buy to him and I saw him no more - meaning, I would see him, meet him, but I did not want to see him anymore [eyes fill with tears]. One day, the block foreman Janusz took inventory of his "tenants" and looking at me he asks: "Do you know German?" I say: "Why, yes, I know German." "Do you know how to write German?" "Why, yes, I know how to write German." "That's good, I want to try you, and you will be my scrivener, because that scrivener I have needs to go to the hospital, because of his legs." And that is how I took over the function with that Janusz and became the schreiber on his block. It turned out that from that day on by him, because he sent me with a note to the chief of bekleidungskamer(ph)[German] to get me dressed. To get me "dressed" meant to dress like a so-

called part-prominent in the function of a scrivener, so that I could represent this block, even when reports were made to the central (sigh) schreibschtube(ph)[German]. I received clothing, which more or less, more or less.... I received shoes, which was most important to me. And I had an opportunity to get a bit more food, as well. From time to time, Mister Block Leader would slip me a cigarette, because I smoked then, but I smoked dried leaves of that bitter, bad tea, which I would roll into a piece of old newspaper, that I would find somewhere outside blown about by the wind, et cetera, et cetera. And in this way I somehow survived till the summer of forty three, when this camp was being liquidated, this part of men's camp was being moved to a new part on the other side of the highway, on the other side of the railroad tracks, into wooden barracks, which meant, into much, much better conditions.***** That Janusz did not go over to the new block; we were welcomed in the new block number eighteen by a new block foreman, a Polish Jew, a Jew from a French transport, named $\bar{\acute{o}}$ ty, a primitive yokel, who most likely could not even sign his name, but had healthy paws with which to murder and kill. And I was recommended to this $\bar{\acute{o}}$ ty by Janusz that he is sending him a good, gifted and trained scrivener. And so this $\bar{\acute{o}}$ ty accepted me and received and with him I continued in the same function. From the first time of my arrival at this camp, in those worst moments when my weight dropped to forty, forty two, maybe three kilograms, where I suffered so from hunger and winter, I kept going around with that idea, you might say, "idee fixe," that from this place I must get myself out - but I had no idea in what way, had no idea when, had no idea where to, and in what, what manner, simply, because I saw the hermetic nature of the whole complex, and I know that with bare hands I cannot face machine guns, and I know that with bare hands nothing can be done, one cannot touch a wire, loaded with high voltage. I had no idea but with that thought I lived. And until the day I realized that idea, which took place a lot later, and under different circumstances, I comprehended one thing: That it constitutes for me and is for me maybe something more than food, something more than clothing, maybe something more than hunger. It was the strength that kept me somewhat going. And it may have looked a bit naive, but because I experienced it on my own hide, on my own body, I came to a conclusion that this

moment will keep me alive. I continued to think: "How will I do it?", but I reached nothing concrete. I only heard of instances of various attempts to escape; I witnessed the scene of those who were caught whose escape failed, who returned to the camp and were either hanged publicly, or were shown killed, shot up, whom they sat in chairs at the entrance gate, heads propped up with shovels, waiting for the columns to enter, so they would know "ich bin weider da"(ph)[German] - "here I am again", but killed - as a warning, that it is the fate that awaits everyone who tries to escape from here. And this did not scare me! And I continued with my thoughts further, but did not gain anything concrete, to know how it can be realized. I knew a few among the block scriveners, with whom, with whom, with one of whom I was even more friendly, and that is Alfred Wecler(ph) [**shows a small poster with a photo of a man**], who escaped together with Walter Rozenberg on the seventh of April, nineteen hundred forty four. I would meet Wecler every day, as we were walking to .. to make a report to the main shreibschtube(ph), meaning to report the status of the block - he for his, me for mine. He was the scrivener on block nine, I was on block eighteen. But there was not instance, we spoke about many problems. To mention even in one word, that he has in his horizon a plan to escape from Birkenau. When it came to the seventh of April, forty four, when the sirens started wailing, and I found out that they are looking for an Alfred Wecler, I was flabbergasted, I could not understand that out of such friendship I could not find out the fact, the intent, the plan, the thought, and on the other side I was happy that it happened. I was only waiting to see if the escape succeeds, or, God forbid, fails. This was what counted. Wecler was a very gifted man, very intelligent, and during his two years' stay in Oæwiêcim, in Oæwiêcim he gathered lot of material which he knew. So that I was certain that if he succeeds, so finally this great secret of this cursed place will be uncovered before the world. (Pause, with witness crying quietly.)

End of tape Two.

Tape Three

A: When, ... maybe it is known, or less known, [when] every day, after the work day was finished, the so-called evening roll calls of individual blocks would take place, when they were controlling the numerical status of a given block, whether it simply all was there. In such a case as I mentioned, that we are talking about an escape, or about an attempt to escape, because in a given moment when the sirens sounded it did not mean that the defector succeeded, that he managed, ... that he managed to get out beyond the camp perimeter, but it was known that he is hidden and, of course, it is known, that he must be searched for. Of course, at that roll call it would be determined who is missing. And it was known exactly who it is. I anticipated that there would be some repressions, which always took place after each attempted escape, and especially, when it concerned Jews. whose escapes were very rare, the post-war history maintains that the escape attempts by Jews from the entire Oświęcim complex reached a number of twenty six. Out of that number, twelve prisoners were not brought back, meaning, they did not catch them. But, continuing, the post-war history maintains that five remained alive, five survived. What happened to that small remainder, nothing is known till this day. Did you understand it

Q: Yes, of course, of course.

A. Such a comparison. So, repressions were awaited, and especially I who, as one of such functionaries, where, of course, ... of Jewish origin. And there were of us, of Jewish origin, if I remember well, only eight, only eight of us, and a majority of them they were Jews, ... German Jews. It turned out that the partner in Wecler's escape was Walter Rozenberg from another, from another part of the camp. Wecler was from B 2 D, while Rozenberg was from B A 1. But the relationship between these two; I did not know Rozenberg in the camp and did not even see him at any time in the camp. The relationship between them, must have been this - that both came from Slovakia and both, if I am not mistaken, from the same town, born in the same town. Wecler came from Trnava(ph) and I have an impression that also Rozenberg came from Trnava(ph) This is in ninety-nine percent based on truth. That is how I saw the relationship. So, now came time for the roll call and it was accurately determined who was missing. Everyone

was silently rejoicing, because an escape of a Jewish prisoner, not only for the Jews but for the whole camp was something more, stronger, accentuated, because everyone knew that for a Jew to escape was very difficult, because on the outside a death penalty awaited anyone who would help such a Jewish escapee from the Oœwiêcim camp; a death penalty awaits such a person. All the Poles knew about it, all the volksdeutchers(ph), who - volksdeutchers who lived in the area, et cetera. Also, this same, ... and this very fact, was classified in this way when seeing this unusual courage of this Jewish prisoner, who knew what he can count on and what he cannot; that he will not get help on the outside, he will not get it. At the evening roll call an order was issued by the lagerfuhrer(ph)[German] Schwartzuber(ph)[German] that all the Jewish scribes are to be suspended from their functions. And all of them are to march out the next day for hard labor, for the external work groups. This was called in German "auserkommand"(ph)[German]. At that very moment I knew what awaited me. He also demanded through lagereltest(ph)[German], who was a volksdeutch with a green square, a criminal prisoner from Silesia, that all the Jewish scribes, the "schreibers"(ph), be brought up to the front. This was the second part of the punishment, namely, twenty five lashes with special truncheons, specially made truncheons. It was claimed that they were dried tails, ... of bulls. It was claimed that these were specially made bamboo sticks, but specially prepared for hardness and elasticity, and, and, simply - pain, which cut flesh very easily. And such twenty five blows I, too, received. And it was done this way, there was a specially constructed, for this purpose, table, sort of such a bench, a table, where as you put your legs there they were blocked on the bottom so that a person could not move and the body, with the front part of the body, would be lying down on this small bench, on this bench, or table, of course, with your pants dropped and on both side two SS-men would strike with full force and with full effect the body, or the buttocks - let's say it in Polish - of the condemned or one who was to receive this punishment, and when the blood would squirt then they stopped. And that is how it was with me, I fainted, because I only know that afterwards they poured cold water on me and I came to. And then came to me - this is such a special little story - one of the kapos with his work group - he had a little group under his command, more or

less fifty people of Polish prominence, that means judges, lawyers, former officers of the Polish Army, he had this group and he was their kapo, and in a moment I will show and tell what personal goal he had in mind. So he came up to me and helped me get up from the ground and everyone in the camp knew him. At one time he was one of the most dangerous bandits, as a prisoner, in the camp, and with all the SS-men, et cetera, because of his unlimited possibilities [would deliver] vodka, sausage, salt bacon, cigarettes, in this he was the main supplier, so that the SS-men had respect for him. And so he thus came up to me, so they stopped paying attention to me, and he came up with me to that block where I was a scrivener, but at this moment, as I walked with him, I was scrivener no more, but he had become a friend with me, this bandit. Because this was time when he was looking for alibi for... for his past times, where he was known as a murderer, this very kapo. His name was Adam Różycki and his number was ten twenty, one thousand twenty, which meant one of the first prisoners who arrived in Oświęcim, when it was created; that was in the year one thousand nine hundred forty. And on the way, he helped me... he spoke to me a few words and he said: "Don't you worry, tomorrow morning you will come with my work group. I will take care of all of this with Danisz; that was that lagereltester. Don't look for anything, don't ask anybody, and I swear to you this one, this one thing." He put his hand on his heart: "I, Adam Różycki, swear to you that you will not have to work hard with me, and you will lack nothing." At this very moment I saw a possibility of realizing my old plan which I kept inside since the first day I came to this camp, meaning, that one day I will get out of here. I saw a greater possibility, because being [working on the] outside I would have other opportunity than being [working] inside, where I was absolutely hermetically sealed in by the wires charged with electricity and guards in the towers, et cetera. So, I was very pleased with this and it did happen that the next day I walked out with the work group of this Adam Różycki. Indeed, I started looking around for concrete possibilities and my fantasy started to transform itself into certain reality which had to be, at any price, realized. So, one day, he calls me to himself and he had such a shack, this was his office and there he would sit sipping vodka, or coffee, or eating a piece of salt bacon. He was lean but healthy, to get smacked in the

snout by one of his paws was no joke! And, and, and, one day, when sitting in his shack - he invited me to talk, and this is the way he asked me this question, whether there was anything concrete he could do for me? He knows that I am in danger, meaning, in danger in this sense that I am a Jew, and walking out of here for a Jew is - he showed me from afar the chimney of the nearest crematorium, I think this was "number three," if I am not mistaken. So I said: "Adam, I know this very well. I know very well that it can occur any moment. I consider it." So, he says: "Think a bit. Perhaps I can be of some help to you." So I fought with myself all day and all night, did not close my eyes at all, and thought should I divulge to him this my desire and this my plan, is this perhaps some sort of a trap on his part? But finally I thought: "I have nothing to lose. Absolutely nothing to lose." So, after the night, I decided to continue our little talk the next day and I said this: "Adam, I want to escape from here." Says he: "Good, but how? Do you have a concrete plan?" I say: "No, I don't have it but I am thinking about a plan." So, I asked him one thing. I say: "Starting tomorrow, give me your - your 'OK' so that I, with a couple of selected people from your work group, that I will select myself, [can work with] a dump-car." It's such a little handcar that travels on rails, used to transport sand and gravel for construction, because his was a construction work group, and they were purportedly building something. Today they would build, tomorrow they would tear it down, the day after tomorrow something else again, and so on, so that there would be some kind of work. Please note that after the Wecler and the Rozenberg escape, whom they did not bring back, therefore did not catch, the security at all the guard points was tightened, all the watch points, even in the back, so that this guardian SS of each work group who brought them out and brought them back again would get at an appropriate time more help, SS, of course, so that they could take count [of prisoners] every two hours. They increased in general the number of the guards in the entire Oœwiêcim camp complex and the number of dogs was also increased, simply, to guard us. So, after that little talk, Adam has agreed to my plan and I told him this: "Listen, in this 'keisgrube'(ph)[German]," that is its name in German; "it's such a, such a, such a, such a ravine..."(?), where they would dig that sand or that gravel, enormous, big, and there, after the first and the second excursion to collect

with these two - these were officers of the Polish Army, people who seemed to me to be clean-cut, cultured, et cetera, et cetera, but you could not look through them thoroughly, and everything was connected with risk, and at times with great risk. And that is how we started going for that sand and as I observed the object, I selected a certain steep wall that was, ... in a part of the ravine that would be the best to construct this, this bunker. But it was a lot of danger in this, since all around us soldiers of SS would always go by, would look at us, would, look around and would, would search, et cetera. They always searched for something in the area. So, all of that had to be done very, very carefully, which means that one would remain on the top and was a lookout and the two with spades, which we had at our disposal, would start to dig. And we dug like this a little bit at a time, it lasted two weeks, maybe even a bit longer, fourteen, maybe fifteen days and we constructed that bunker. This bunker was, simply putting it, but a grave, for two people, where one could enter only in lying position and remain in that position, without a chance to change the position. I prepared there some can with water, put in there two loaves of bread, prepared two pairs of overalls that I procured. I got all of that through my old contacts from the so-called "bekleidungskamer"(ph)[German]; that is where there was a warehouse with clothes. Now, my - Adam demanded of me to divulge to him who will be my partner. Well now, I had selected for a partner a friend from the same transport from P³ońsk, as suitable physically, because it was very, very important that he be, ... physically strong, because along the way we could find many obstacles, and we had to be prepared, if need be, to overcome them. Of course, physically. I had no weapon. I could not get it and, besides, I did not want it, and, and, I also gave up another moment[sic] which for escapees is very important and very popular: get hold of any valuables, money, diamonds, gold, et cetera. I gave up on these things, because I knew that escapees that were caught with what I just described faced certain death, or one of the worst tortures there could be. And that I wanted to avoid, so I gave up on that, although, when we come to the point when I was saying good-bye to my friend, Adam Ró¿ycki, maybe everyone will be surprised that I declined. I established the deadline of May twenty-seventh, forty-four. And Ró¿ycki only said this to me: "Remember, this date cannot be changed. This is one thing to

which I will not agree." I say: "I also do not agree to change the date, because it is costing me too much health and too much nerves. How many nights can be spent sleepless? I have not slept for a week already, and we still have a full week before the twenty-seventh arrives." So, all right, I agreed to that. But returning to the camp and looking for my chosen partner, whom I did not find, I learned that he was selected as acceptable recruit to a new sondercommando(ph)[German], that was formed almost today and he has already been isolated, they have already taken him to that place and I lost contact with him. Now I thought that I will go insane, that my nerves will break down, that I will not be able to take it. So, then I returned to Adam the next morning with this and told him: "Listen, such and such has happened." Says he: "I don't care, find another partner and quickly and introduce him to me, tell me who it is going to be." I started looking, now already in total darkness and found no one who would be able, ... physically capable [to escape with me], but trying to go over in my memory and, and, and visually, I paused over Arnoszt Rozin, that is a Jew from Slovakia, who then, at that time, was the only Jewish block leader in Birkenau, if I am not mistaken, but I have an impression, that this is truly so, that there was only one then. So then I visited him in the evening, called him outside, I had not had any contacts with him before, I almost, I almost did not know him at all. But I risked even that, I came up to him and said to him: "Listen, I have something I want to talk to you about but this thing I need to talk about on the outside, not here inside, so, please let me, if you want to, or not if you don't want to." So I approached the matter by asking him: "Do you intend to escape from here?" So I say: "Listen, everything is ready. You will not have to take care of anything. Everything is thought through, everything prepared. If you tell me 'yes' I will explain everything in detail, the whole technique, et cetera." And he says: "Yes, I agree - I want to do it. And..." he says, "I trust you." "Very nicely, we almost don't know each other at all, but, perhaps, you know something about me, because I also know a bit about you." And that is how I presented to him all the - all the details, all the technical and non-technical details, and he agreed to that. And we agreed that on the twenty-seventh day of May, it was, it seems to me, a Saturday, if I am not mistaken, at twelve o'clock, two people whom I will send, will be waiting

for him at such and such a point. He, as a block leader, had a possibility of individually walking out of the gate, reporting - I know - to, to to the hospital, ... to visit some prisoner from his block, to see him, et cetera, et cetera, and he gave his number, and stated that he was going for an hour or an hour and a half, and when he would get back he would report it and they would cross off his number that he got back. That is how that procedure worked. So this couple that was helping me was waiting for him in a designated place, and that place was at the water center, it was called "Wassersongung"(ph)[German], there worked mainly water pumps, dippers, dipping the water. There they waited for him and brought him to the place where the bunker was - there I was already waiting for him, I pulled out of the bunker those two [pairs of] overalls, I put one on me, he put the other one on himself and we crawled into that bunker. That bunker was closed from the side, with such a specially built wooden trap door, camouflaged with grass, such a piece of grass [sod], and pulled in through an opening [was] a piece of small pipe that was to supply us with air. And this was the beginning of our entry into the bunker. In the bunker one had to last three days and three nights. This was a rule from the moment when it was determined that someone escaped. Only after three days and three nights they would recall, the so-called big "postenkette[?]"(ph), in German "die grossen postenkette"(ph)[German], which guarded [beyond the wires], only guard towers, spaced in various ways, according to the terrain, from, let's say, more or less, twenty five meters up to fifty meters. If such a prisoner was caught earlier, these "postenkette"(ph) would be liquidated sooner. If he was not caught, such a "postenkette"(ph) stood three days and three nights, of course, not the same guards, they were rotated, but the ... this chain so-called, stood on the positions.

Q: Interrupt ...

A: Uhuh., ...

Q: ... in overalls?

A: Yes. And so, as it was agreed beforehand, we entered into this bunker, it was after twelve o'clock, when the work group was after, meaning, when they had taken the roll call. As I warned, when building this, the whole bunker was like a grave, dug or built. It was inside, it had

supports of boards and such other wooden supports, so that it would not cave in under the weight of this gravel, so that it would not suffocate us, that is how, as much as it was possible, it was this way secured. Now, these two, who helped me in the construction of this bunker, after we entered, closed that bunker, that trap door that was ready and that, that grass to camouflage the trap door, and that pipe installed so it could deliver air to us. I must mention one very important moment. The search was done with the help of dogs, specially trained, so this problem had to be solved as well, and it was solved this way that I had prepared turpentine in a container and it was poured by these two friends who buried us, in order to chase away the dogs. It was known to me that from the smell, from smelling turpentine dogs run away, and, secondly, that turpentine combined with dirt, sand, smells for a long time. So, we were prepared even for that and we were even prepared that if in spite of all these, ... efforts and safety precautions, we may also be discovered. After another three, maybe four hours, somewhere around four o'clock, the sirens wailed . It was clear to me that it was the siren that is looking for me. Well, not so much the siren as the searchers after me, because they may not have known yet about Rozin, since they had no registration of his return, so they still may have been waiting for him, although, in ... accordance with the report he was to return in about an hour and a half, having left at twelve, or a few minutes after twelve. So this way he, too, had to be back. But it was difficult to, to, to establish, to establish. And so, ... we understood that it was a siren for me, looking for me. Of course, in such a case, a report goes to lagerfuhrer(ph)[German], who issues an order to bring back the work groups, because normally the groups would come back from work around six o'clock; this was about four o'clock. So we heard the return of the work groups, generally speaking, the voices reached us underground very clearly and quite loud, and quite strong. And then was, took place, that roll call, the normal roll, that evening call after the groups were pulled back. Well, then they verified that I am missing and by then they verified that Rozin is missing, so the sirens wailed again one more time, and this also was a sign for us that this is the siren which signifies that he is gone. The search started and we could hear very clearly the voices that came closer in our direction and were going away from our direction, barking of the dogs, I

mean, search by the SS with the help of the dogs, and they also used for the search these kapos, these block leaders, these were, as if, such, this was the element that, which was subservient ...

Q: worthy of confidence?

A: confidence. Also these were helping in the search. To find us they multiplied the number of the searching SS and a number of dogs and it lasted till it got dark. When it got dark, they stopped search..., stopped searching, stopped searching, but it continued the next day in the morning, and the next day was free from work, so that all of that, all of those voices, all that has been taking place on the outside, these were all the forces that were looking for us. And it came to a certain moment when we heard the scraping of the dogs' paws, as if in our heads, inside our heads. These are reflexes impossible to describe, these are reflexes which are difficult to define, simply. This was, to be sure, digging in the sand, in spite of that turpentine, but quite short, because finally these dogs ran away from this place, without results. Now came a moment when we started running out of air. We started lacking air because this bunker was small and it seemed to us that this little pipe got plugged up, maybe purposely, maybe not purposely, these are all, you know, hypotheses ...

Q: ?

A: ... which are difficult to to understand, difficult to describe. But they are logical, they are, however, logical. Most likely, during this covering up, or during the camouflaging with this, that grass, in a hurry, under such conditions, it may have happened that they simply plug... plugged up that hole, because that whole opening it was, do I know, the size of maybe, ... an inch and something

Q: Uhuh,

A: four centimeters, more or less, something like that. So, we started getting impatient, we simply started to squirm around a bit, or at least try to squirm. This occurred rather quickly because our bodies started to swell from the lack of air. Touching my head at a certain moment [it was so swollen that] I had an impression that ... I put my finger into butter and [could] not [have] touched my head. And how long to the end? The end was far away, because we were to

sit out there Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and most likely, because it was Saturday around dinner, it would have been Tuesday and not until Tuesday at night to come out, if it were possible. But we knew one thing, that we would not make it till that time, there was nothing, there was nothing to talk about, we were suffocating, we started simply to suffocate from the lack of air. We dragged on into Sunday evening and we started to dig, ... by various means to bring in a bit of air, to make any kind of an opening, to make any kind of a small hole. So, it did not go to the outside, so we started pulling in the sand on ourselves from, ... we broke off a piece of that board and in this way we were pulling the sand in, in order to stick at least a finger outside. This was macabre, macabre, impossible to describe up to this moment, we started saying good-bye to each other, arguing that they have deliberately buried us alive, so that there would not be one foot [print?] of us left, because these people who were helping us were scared that if they catch us we may betray them and this should be taken into consideration as ...

Q:

A: a logical moment, as a moment which is possible. So, we decided that Sunday at night we will get out, leave that, that bunker and to try to get through between two towers at a certain moment I selected because I used to work nearby in that work group, so every day I would try to learn with my eyes closed how [to do it] in the dark and in the right direction, et cetera, et cetera. Simply, each detail was remembered by me, so that I would not make any error, any error, not to turn too much to the right, not to turn too much to the left. So I selected such a point to pass through in any case whether they will be standing there or not. If they are not standing there, this will be, ... much easier, but just in case, if there is no other choice, so that to the extent possible not to commit any error. Now came a problem how to open our bunker. We had no strength, we were all swollen, our hands were swollen, our heads were swollen, legs swollen, we were digging that sand without end; we did not gain any air and to open it we had no strength, it was simply not possible. So we saw death before our eyes, and a tragic one at that; death from suffocating. In a certain moment, I remember it so accurately, I managed somehow to poke one finger outside, as if I had stuck it into, into, into, into a burning steel, hot, not cold, such was my

first impression when I touched, when my finger touched the air. And slowly the air started getting in. So I warned[sic] my friend Rozin to use his hand to dig in my direction on himself, as much as he can. And that is how we got out, I my hand and he his. And the hands were in the air, and the hands were, as it were, in freedom but we were still buried, in danger that we will not have enough strength to be able to open this bunker enough to be able to get our bodies out of it. In absolute resignation, after a couple of hours of sheer toil, simple torture, we succeeded in moving that main ... or enlarge the opening in such a way so that one could stick his head out. And in this way, slowly, slowly, we got out. Stretching our bodies and standing already outside we both simply fainted. We just fell to the ground like two cadavers. But our nerves, ... which, which, which were working so strongly, so very strongly, got us up to our feet and an approaching motorcycle in our direction with a glaring headlight forced us to take some kind of steps. Ignoring, without thinking about that can with water which we spilled during these our manipulations, not thinking about that piece, that loaf of bread, which was full of sand and was not usable, and that is how we started. Now it was crucial to determine whether the guards were at their towers or not. Well, this can be [inaudible] verified in a very simple way, these are after all people, who, who, occasionally, someone will cough, or sometimes someone will sneeze, and that is enough for [inaudible], and at such a moment we had to wait, and, indeed, one of these guards coughed. That is how we determined that they were standing guard. Closing our eyes we approached these towers, and it was some three hundred meters, more or less to the place of our bunker. So, walking on our legs and holding hands, because it was, it was very terribly dark, and after such hours in the bunker, this darkness was darker, like in reality. On the horizon on the left, we could only see the flames from the crematorium chimneys, and it was a sign, and through... and for further travel to orient ourselves by how far and in what direction we must go to leave these flames behind us, or from these torches, I don't know how to call them in this case, in our case. When we have come closer, more or less some hundred, hundred fifty meters to these towers, we closed our eyes, clenched our teeth, plugged our ears and we crawled forward waiting every second for a stab of a search light, or a fire of a machine gun. This crawling lasted

a long time. We were not trying to find out how and what and where and in what direction; until after a good hour, I remember, I allowed myself to sit up just a bit, turn my head around to see, perhaps contours of that tower, or these towers, between which we have crawled. It ought to be mentioned that before the towers there was a deep ditch dug up which also had to be crawled through down and then up again. How they have not discovered us, it is difficult for me to answer such a question. But that in such a situation, that it does not matter, let it be what will be, it is the only answer to such a question. I determined ... in accordance with a contour of one of these guard towers, I could see that I am beyond it. I grabbed my companion's hand and told him: "Get up, let's start running." And, indeed, we started running away, and we ran, and I know that we had to reach a river, called So³a, because Oœwiêcim is located between So³a and Wis³a [Vistula], and that we have to swim across So³a to the other side. And in this fashion, after maybe two or three hours, still at night, we have reached this river So³a and when we were swimming across that So³a river one of our pairs of boots drowned[sic], and that was a terrible tragedy. Not thinking too long, but with a heartache, we ripped up our shirts, I mine and he his, and we made such puttees to substitute for one leg[sic], because each of us had one boot and the other leg was wrapped in that puttee. We now reached such an iron fence, well, simply a fence that ran along the railroad tracks. And we had to get over it. I remember that at a certain point I got stuck, hanged on that barbed wire and blood..., bloodied my right hand, on which I have a scar to this very day. There was not much to do! I had to, with this blood, this bloodied hand, continue to run away. And that is how we were escaping until we reached a little town whose name was Che³mek, which was known for the fact that there was a factory making Bata shoes. I knew this from history before the war. Although this was less known, but somehow I knew about it. It started to dawn. And that is how it ended, ended our first, first phase of our way, because we have decided to walk only through the forests and especially at night, and if through the forests, so, also in the day, but in any event not during the day along a free, open road, or through the fields - that was dangerous. And so we reached such a place towards daybreak, when it was already getting light, that we had to cross over a wooden bridge and there was no

way to stop at any other place because all of that [area] was pretty open, only after we would cross that bridge we would have a chance to enter into such a small grove and there was our first opportunity to hide. And fate would have it that from the other side of that bridge comes barreling towards us some company of German soldiers. There was no opportunity to turn around, there was no chance to do anything and, for sure, there was no possibility of running, because they would start chasing us and shooting. So we just stood at the corner of that bridge, at the beginning of the bridge; we wore our overalls, we looked a bit like workers and we were not interested at all in that company of soldiers, but we were looking up at the electric poles and explaining one to the other how those lines have to be changed, improved, et cetera. And in this way, that company just marched right by us and we then also marched right to the other side and marched right into that grove and there, we grabbed a first turnip where, somewhere on the edge of that grove, and, so dirty and tasty, we started eating it for our first breakfast.

Q: ?

A: Yes, are we leaving?

Tape Four

A: After crossing the bridge to get to that small grove, which we saw from afar, we felt hunger, in a very serious way, that we must put something into our mouths, even if it is a bit of grass. So while walking already at the daybreak - it was getting quite light - and we knew we were not careful enough, but there are such situations in which one has to make a detour. We noticed earlier in the direction of that grove, we noticed such a single, small house with a fence and we approached that house thinking that maybe we can get a piece of bread and some water to drink. But we waited to learn what is happening in that house, who lives there. And suddenly, such a lady comes out, aged maybe fifty, fifty-some, and starts hanging the laundry. So I approach that yard and, of course in Polish, greet her and ask her not to be afraid that I don't want anything from her, I only ask for a piece of stale bread. And she, as if she realized that we are from that holy place², she only said: I will give you a piece of bread and I will even give you some milk, but I ask you, please, run away from here." "Good," we promised her. And we ask for the direction to Kraków, that we want in the direction of Kraków. Then she says to us: "Although I am not going to tell you that, because I do not know the way, but if you want to hide in this grove and wait till four o'clock till my husband comes back from work, he will explain it, clarify it." This I did not like a little, and besides, so many hours, that is too much of a luxury to waste. So I only asked her how big, more or less, is this forest, how far can we go on the road through the forest. She said only this: "Boys, be careful, because last night in this forest was a German raid, even with tanks. I don't know what they were looking for but they searched the whole woods, searched, searched, by that German army." "OK." We thanked her for that piece of bread and for that bit of milk, that was for us, ... like a piece of life itself. We entered that grove and, indeed, we noticed very fresh tank tracks, that can be spotted very easily, and not having that certainty that the woods are empty, that they have left this forest, we decided to go a bit

² [04:03:07] Witness is engaging in a play on words. The etymological root of the name "Oświęcim," which in Polish, as noted in footnote 1, means "we shall consecrate it," is "cwięty" or "holy;" thus, witness's reference to the "holy place." [translator's note]

deeper and ... and hide ourselves under shrubs, leaves and wait, so that we could orient ourselves better if the road through the woods is free, or not. And so, out of our tiredness, we both fell asleep. After two or three hours we woke up and we started our trek, half blindly, getting our direction a little bit from the sun. in what direction to walk. We reached Wis³a river where that Wis³a was already quite wide and that was a distance of a dozen or so kilometers from Kraków. There we saw that in such a small boat was transporting[04:06:42: **Here the Polish transcription has a gap. The following italicized part was translated directly from the video recording of Mr. Mordowicz's testimony**] *some guy was transporting to the other side, so we needed [to get to] that other side. There was no choice, it was rather wide there, there was no way to swim across, so I came up to this character and told him to take us across, but that we have no money to pay him. So he just [Polish transcription resumes here]* looks, looks at my hand and says: "But you have a watch." To this I say: "That is too much of a price for you just to take us across. But you know what? I will give you this watch after you have taken us across and given us your pair of boots, then I will give you my watch." He says: "Agreed." Because each one of us was still with one boot. He took us to the other side, took off his boots, gave them, I gave my watch. It was not a cheap watch, it was the only valuable we took with us, because I remembered in this case a moment when I was saying good-bye to my Adam, when he invited me to his shack to drink a glass of vodka, and I refused him. I said that my head must be sober, I can drink with him, he vodka, me a bit of water, and then we will say good-bye. So he says: "So at least take this from me as a souvenir." And he pulls out of the pocket a handkerchief and lays it on the table. Says: "Want to see what is there? Please, go ahead." He opens that handkerchief and my eyes reeled. Diamonds as big as a fist. And he says: "This is all original. There is nothing here that is false. I checked it out and I am a very good expert, I became one in Oœwiêcim." Says: "Take it as a souvenir." And there was a lot of that, a lot of that. But I got scared of it. I explained to him: "Adam, listen, each escape in which they found on the escapees such things, et cetera, ended in a big tragedy, and I don't even want to touch it. I thank you from my heart, I know you wish me well, but do not be angry at me, I will not take it."

I just remembered that moment in connection with that watch. The only watch, that was the only valuable that we had with us, because it was very necessary, as a practical thing. It was not gold. That is how we crossed over to the other side of Wis³a and started our march along the edge of the woods and through the woods, following certain information we got from that guide who took us across to the other side. We kept following these instructions in the direction of Kraków. After two or three hours we noticed again some single small house. While waiting, we saw some woman and I again came in and asked for a piece of bread. Then this woman says: "Why yes, I will give it to you, I will even give you some soup but cut this wood for me which needs to be chopped." "Gladly." We rolled up our sleeves she gave each one of us an ax and we started chopping. We earned good soup which she brought us into some corner where we were hiding, and she asks: "And why don't you want to step inside?" "No, no, we'd rather stay in the fresh air, we, we are so sweaty, the work was quite difficult, we will just eat here and continue on." She added a few eggs, additional pieces of bread and into some empty bottle some white coffee. And that is how we continued to walk on. And we continued to walk through the woods and again we came upon such a single little house. An old lady comes out and says to us: "Young men, run away from here!" "Why?" "There is a terrible raid by the Germans here. Last night they took my son away, they dragged him out of bed. They grab young people to dig trenches on the Eastern front. Run away from this direction[sic]. Run away from this area!" "But where, in which direction we must run, 'Babciu?'" [vocative in Polish for Grandma] How, I don't remember what was her name. "Only South, never North." And we were going North! So, we took this very seriously, only asking her to let us rest in the barn maybe an hour, we were so exhausted from these kilometers, from this walking. She let us and in that barn we made a decision to change our direction. "We are not going towards Warsaw, we will go to Slovakia." This was proposed by my, ... my colleague Rozin, that there are still some Jews there, that they are even organized there, in spite of the fact that Slovakia belongs to, to to the German camp. But because there are still Jews there, because it is South, maybe later further, to Romania, and maybe then further, more to the South, and all of this looked pretty realistic. And more or less

she told us how, in what direction to go. And that is how we walked in the direction of Nowy Targ. On some small station still before Nowy Targ, quite a ways before Nowy Targ, we observed that the passing trains were so overcrowded that people sat on the roof, mostly highlanders. I say to my friend: "This is a very good way. We, too, will get up on some roof and will travel part of the way. What can go wrong? If only they would not catch us somewhere before the arrival of the train." So, I proposed that we enter a toilet and lock ourselves together in one of the toi ... and wait until we hear a train whistle. And that is how it happened. We waited about half an hour, we heard a train whistle, the train rode in loaded, overloaded, roofs full of highlanders. So we climb straight to the roof and I ask first of these highlanders in what direction this train is going, is it going to Nowy Targ? But these are such people that it is hard to get a word out of them. Unthinkable. I could not find ways to drag out of that highlander one word of reply. Finally, when he answered, he answered [in dialect] "I dunno." In the meantime we arrive at one station and from afar we see a cordon of German military. I don't know if it was a regular army or SS, seems that it was SS. And first thought - our friends, I wonder who they are looking for? - only us. You know, Sir, out of all these emotions, all these experiences, already while we were making our escape, it was a terrible moment, because we did not have a chance even to move, because, naturally, we would fall into that trap. So there was nothing to do but wait it out, what will happen here, what will occur? It turned out that this train, after changing the engine, left back in a different direction. We were on the border between the Government-General³ and the Reich. And to prevent anyone from getting off the train, they surrounded this train with this mass of soldiers. And thus we left and finally, there, from some half-a-human, we finally dragged out the information that we were moving in the direction of Nowy Targ - what we needed. And to a question how far, how much time, he answered that more or less in half an hour we will reach Nowy Targ. And before Nowy Targ, when the train started from far away slowing down a bit, we decided to jump off, not to enter the station,

³ German occupied part of pre-war Poland that was not incorporated into the Third Reich. [translator's note]

because Nowy Targ was already for us, it was for us too big of a station, and too dangerous a station, so we preferred not to reach it, but jump off the train and run into the woods and there to rest and to stay overnight.. And it was a fact that we did that, we jumped off the moving train, rather luckily. We rushed into such a grove, but out of being so terribly tired we did not notice that we lied[sic] down in the water. And so we buried ourselves in that water and in that water we fell asleep and so slept throughout the night till the next morning. Next morning we started the walk towards the mountains, to the mountains. We walked around Nowy Targ and we walked a bit in the direction of Zakopane, according to some distant sign on the road, we knew that this was the direction. We encountered the highlanders who worked in the fields. Again, I turned to one such highlander asking for the way in the direction of the Slovak border. The answer was like speaking to someone who turns a deaf ear, he knows nothing, he, he, he doesn't know. No information could be obtained from him, from another one a bit further, none from a third one even further away, and even further, and we were walking, like half-blind, through the meadows and hills, meadows and hills, until on one hilltop, rather high, we noticed what looked like a river which was splitting into several branches and we understood that this may be Czarny Dunajec. And sitting on this hillock, observing right and left, we noticed moving about in uniforms patrols. We understood that this may be border guards, that we may be, that we are on the border of Slovakia. Now, it was necessary to cross over that Czarny Dunajec. So, we decided to wait out one more round of these patrolling around border guards, or border patrols, and between one round and another we slipped off the mountain and started crossing that Czarny Dunajec, which seemed to us to be endless, because all the time nothing but water. water, water, water, water without end, and it was swirling and it was swirling, and before we got out of that water, it, it, it was a disaster, because it lasted a terribly long time. We keep on walking and we entered into some meadow, completely opost... upost ... upost, ... upostusz ... how do you say, ...

Q: a pasture?

A: No, not a pasture,

Q: deserted, deserted

A: deser .. deserted; not seeing a trace of life, not seeing nothing, so it looked like a rather safe way to continue. And that is how we walked into some kind of a grove. Looking at, at, at the ground, I see some kind of a small box, it looked like a match box, or matches, something like that. So, I pick it up and my friend rips it out of my hands and reads "Slovenske zapalki" [Slovak matches]. He says: "We are in Slovakia. I am home." So, I say: "Only be careful so that we don't get into some, some misfortune. We are not yet." "We are." "What do you mean?" "Don't you see? Look, a box of matches, it reads 'Slovak matches' ". I say: "Arnoszt, I propose that we wait it out until it gets dark and then we'll go further. Remember, we cannot take chances and, God forbid, lose all of that we have put behind us." "I must have a drink of beer, I must light up a cigarette. I am home." Says: "Look down below, this looks like a little store in the village, a village store. I want to go there. I say: "After all, you don't even have anything to pay with. Who is going to give you anything for free?" "They'll give it to me, they'll give it to me, they'll give it to me. I'm going." I say: "Arnoszt, no. I don't agree to that. I see danger. Remember, Slovakia is the same as Germany today, it is in the same camp. You cannot do it." Alas, I received a very drastic reply, which hurts me to this very day: "If you don't like it, you go your own way." I say: "Arnoszt, I am at a loss for words. I don't know what language to use. How are you behaving?" Not listening to anything he goes. Not having any choice, I follow him. But I did not enter the store, he entered alone. After a few minutes he comes out and I ask: "Well, was the beer good?" "God damn him, he did not want to give it to me without money. "and what did I tell you, and why would he give it?" "Oh, let us walk on the road, let us walk comfortably, let us walk on the road." "We cannot do it. We cannot do it." And immediately comes along a horse cart, a farm type, with a peasant, and he asks him in Slovak if he would give us a ride. He says: "Today, sure." "And why today?" "Don't you know it? You have not heard? "You have not heard?" - in such a peasant Slovak dialect - "what they were saying on the radio, from London what they said? Today is the day of the great invasion." It was the sixth of June, nineteen forty-four. And that is how we got a ride on that cart and he says: "Boys, today I invite you for a beer, we are going to the tavern. And I am wagging my finger at my friend and

saying: "We cannot." He says: "Oh, don't you bother your head about it, he is inviting us. We are going, we will drink beer." We reach the tavern, I, of course, without a choice, I am forced to enter. When we showed up in the tavern, the whole place jumps to its feet and starts welcoming us: "Friends, come, I'll pay," more than one says, "this round is on me, let's drink!" All are drunk there, let's see, cigarettes, stinks like hell, [one] can barely see, and at a certain moment I turn my head and see two uniforms at the entrance door that I have never seen in my life: Green with wide, red stripes. I knew these were not Germans, but I did not know who they were. And straight to us: "Papers!" I have not a piece of paper on me, not even toilet paper, what can I show you? I point to my friend: "Well, better start talking, I cannot, I don't know Slovak." And then he: "I, this, that, duhh." "Papers!" "Don't have any." "Why not?" And so on. "In the name of the law, you are under arrest and must come with us to the command post - he told us the name of that village, Medeca(ph) - and the commandant will tell you what he will do with you. Only remember: you are walking three steps in front of us, our carbines are loaded. If you try to run away, we shoot to kill." So, I say: "See Arnoszt?" - and then quietly - "this is the beginning of our freedom." As it turned out later, our arrest came about because the store owner, the one that my friend wanted to get some beer from, had denounced us to the Slovak gendarmes, that in the area there were lurking two suspicious, I don't know how to call us, but two suspicious types, and describing that friend of mine a bit what he looks like, dressed in overalls, most likely they rode to that tavern, suspecting it to be the direction - he told them in what direction we were later walking, and that is how this arrest came about. And that is how they escorted us to the post of the Slovak gendarmes in that village that was, that was called Medeca and the commander invited us for an interrogation. Of course, my, my friend boasted that he is a Slovak and speaks Slovakian, and that he comes from Snina and that he went there to school, et cetera, and that recently he was in labor units, he is not sure where. So he brought a map for us to show him on it where, maybe some city, only what to show? So, I remember

putting my hand, my whole hand on that map and pointed out here, here, here, here, here, here, here and here, so that I would not utter that one holy⁴ word. And so he says: But you did work for the Germans?" "Yes, we worked for the Germans. They would not feed us. We got nothing." And I keep silent, so he asks what about this one, what is with this your colleague? Says: "I have become with him very good friends, we both worked together, and I proposed that he join me and that we come to my house, so that I can take care of him, he is a Pole, who speaks Polish." And so, asking a few questions, separately me, separately him, he came to conclusion that he must escort us back to the border and [re]turn [us] into German hands. At this, "there is no way," we warned him that we will not go alive. Dead he can turn us over, but not alive. And he saw our determination, our resolve, so he wondered what to do with us. He locked us up in such a cell and called a special guard to watch us, to take care of us, and he, during tomorrow, will attempt to find some solution. So, one more time, before leaving his office we repeated to him that he cannot in any way turn us over into German hands. He can turn us over to any Slovak authority but in the opposite direction. And so he saw there is no way out and he did want to get rid of us, so the next morning he escorted, well, he ordered us escorted to Spiska Stara Wiec before that court that was there located. It was a lower rank court, I don't know, it was not a circuit court, maybe I don't know, I don't know the organization of the Slovak courts. And, indeed, they put handcuffs on us, not he but the one who escorted us. We were protesting this: "We are not criminals, we are not killers, we have not murdered anyone." But, that was the order. On the way when talking with the one who was escorting us, he, too, warned us not to cause him any trouble, that in any attempt to escape he will be forced to use his weapon. And this was unpleasant to them and to us. So, we said: "Agreed, we will be obedient, we will do everything you want us to do, but one thing, before we reach the town, before you escort us into the court, you will take [off]our handcuffs, so there would not be an impression that that here he brought, he led" He agreed to this and he did it. And that is how we entered and while

⁴ See footnote 2, above.

standing in the corridor of that court, a door opens to some office and at this my friend stands on his toes and says: "Oh, I see an acquaintance of mine there. I say: "Well, then call him, let him come up to us." And we ask our guard to call that one that he described that it is his some kind of friend and, indeed, this man comes out and wrings his hands and says: "Arnoszt, what are you doing here?" and then quietly in whispers to him: "After all, they deported you in forty-two." So he says: "True. But I came back now and I am in such and such situation, so help me, do something, so that we can come out of here." It turns out that this was a clerk who he knew from before the war, they both came from the same town, from Snina, in eastern Slovakia. So he say: "Listen, I can only do this one thing. There is still here a small Jewish community and I can somehow let them know that you find yourself here." So, they led us to this prison, adjacent to the court. There was a prison with bars, et cetera and after two hours under the cell window a short fellow appears and introduces himself: "I am Mangiel." And asks of Rozin: "Where did you come here from?" So he quietly replies: "I come from such and such a place and this is my colleague who is Polish and please try to do something so they would let us go free, because if the Germans stumble into our tracks, they will find their way also here." So he says: "I will return here this evening still and will tell you what I can do for you." He came back to us and to each one of us he gave to stick into our breast pockets, but to be visible, out of that pocket, so it would be sticking out a one-dollar banknote to each. And he says: "Tomorrow morning you will be at a hearing before a judge from this court and he, when he sees on you, he will ask you where did you get these dollars, what are you doing here and it will look as if you had been milling near the border with foreign currency and that you are ordinary smugglers. And then some kind of an order will be issued, or ..." And, indeed, that is what happened. On the next day a hearing and the judge says: "This is a financial matter. I must transfer you to Liptowski Saint Mikulasz before the Finance Office and there they will decide what to do with you, how to punish you." Well, that is a larger, larger city, a district city. There they put us also into, into, into such a prison, also next to the court and they heard us, and gave us a hearing and, again, the same story: "Why were you loitering, loafing around the border, what were you doing there?"

"Oh, we wanted to sell a few dollars." To this we admitted. Well, the verdict was given. They kept us a few days, and came to us a delegation, specifically, one man, a delegate from the Jewish community that was larger than the one in Spiska Stara Wieś. And we gave him an ultimatum: "If we do not come out of this place by tomorrow, it's no problem for us to free ourselves from here. But many unpleasant things await you and we do not wish it upon you. So, act quickly, so that we can get out of here." We found out later that they quarreled about the amount of penalty to pay for us. So they finally agreed to five thousand crowns at the end and they let us out of that prison. And that is how our freedom started. They brought us into an old-folks home, is that correct?

Q: Yes.

A: And there took place first so-called confabulation with the representative of the Central Community from Bratislava, a Mr. Krasniański, who, in turn, took us to a home of another leader living in that Spiska Stara Wieś, whose name and surname were Bobi Reich, and there they heard us, each separately, in a separate room, in order to compare our stories and verify the history of the first two [men], whom they took over from them in Ľylin a couple of weeks earlier. After hearing us, they put down in writing what we told them and started taking us around to various, known, as I think, rich factory owners. It was a city, known for its tanneries, leather factories, et cetera. I remember one visit and conversation with an owner of one of the richer, such a leather factory, a Mr. Has(ph)

Q: Was this Liptowski Mikulasz, yes?

A: Yes, that was this Liptowski Saint Mikulasz. With whom occurred, took place, an unpleasant, an unpleasant discussion, because he did not want to believe what we told him. He argued that we are not normal, and I remember telling him in Jewish, I told him: "Remember that you will be recalling us with a different intention, from another, another aspect[sic], that we wished you, and that we gave you advice so that you could save yourself from the threatening situation." And that is how we left his house, not even extending a hand to him. Finally, all four

of us⁵ finally met, because we were all taken to Bratislava and there we met together. Great, great, joy, great joy, and then started this exchange of words and information, et cetera. We talked about - we recalled, and that was still in the apartment of that Bobi Reich, that the Hungarian transports started, and that we were the first ones who saw these transports, from the fifteenth of May of this year, and we had the opportunity to see that every day until the day of our escape, which means, for almost two weeks. How the selections looked, how there were conducted, what was more or less the percentage of those selected for the camp and what percentage was selected straight into the crematoria, and so we made such a balance sheet of the number of people who during this period of two weeks were transported from Hungary into, to, to to the camp, to Birkenau. A visit was proposed with a known rabbi then, Dow Weismandel(ph). He was an orthodox rabbi, and it was decided that I would go to see him, because I speak fluent Jewish and he, of course, as well, it is his, it is his mother tongue, mother tongue, he should be especially pleased that he will be able to speak in that tongue. And the second partner in this visit with me was Rozin. And that is how we paid a visit with Weismandel who was very pleased with this visit, but was also hap ... unhappy from these - from this report which we made to him in connection with the transports of the Hungarian Jews. And he advised us that he has a certain plan and he would want absolutely, because he has connections, that we meet with the Papal nuncio by the name of Józef - Josef Budg ... Burzio(ph), or Giuseppe Burzio, Burzio, he was an Italian, and he proposed that this meeting should take place in the ... his presence, mine and Vrba(ph) as a young, to show how very young he was then, because Vrba was nineteen years old. And that he will organize exactly the date and the place of that meeting. The meeting took place, it was more or less about the twentieth of June, forty-four and the meeting was to take place in the Cloister of Saint Jur, it is about five, six kilometers not too far from Bratislava. Although the road was very dangerous because there, in that area, was the headquarters of the Gestapo for the entire Slovakia, and, and army staffs, so that the terrain was

⁵ This is a reference to Rozenberg and Wecler, a/k/a Vrba, the first two escapees from Oświęcim, mentioned earlier. {translator's note}

for us particularly very dangerous, but for the good of the cause, for the good of the matter, we agreed to this meeting. And to lead us there was that very Mr. Krasniański, on behalf of the Jewish Community of Bratislava. And so we reached that Saint Jur, I remember exactly, as we entered the cloister grounds we walked into a huge garden. We approached a gate. The gate was open to us by some priest who knew about it that we are to come for that visit, but he warned us that Burzio will not be here until two hours from now, he will be late, because he is attending an audience with the President of Slovakia, Doctor Tiso, who was, who was a priest. But that there is someone here who can welcome us in his stead. I, especially I, protested that I am to meet and to converse with Joseph Burzio, and that on this ... I cannot, I cannot change my position and we will wait. So each in a different direction, because we did not stay together. We waited over two hours, maybe two and a half hours. Pulls up a black limousine, Skoda, large Skoda with "CD" plates - "Corpus Diplomaticus" and out of that car comes out a very handsome fellow, young, whose age I estimated at the time at thirty-something, it was difficult for me to determine it exactly. And as he approached the gates of the cloister, we, too, approached and almost at the same time we were entering inside. He realized that we are this delegation who he is to receive, apologized for the delay and reached out with his hand to me and introduced himself that he is Josef Burzio. In connection with this, to this day there are two versions. Of which, one maintains that it was Burzio, and the second one which claims that it was Mario Martilotti(ph). It got so far that [much later?] the Vatican contacted Vrba and Rozenberg and requested a clarification of this matter, which for the Vatican was very important. Vrba did not know how he was to extricate himself from this situation, so he proposed that the Vatican should turn to me, giving them my address in Israel; that I am five years older than he and that I will remember it better and that I will certainly give better details. And, indeed, I received a letter from the Vatican with questions, to which I responded and they received this my letter, they received this; my reply. Quite, I maintained my position that I conversed with Monsignor Burzio. One part of the meeting took a good several hours, between five and six hours. It was very difficult, especially for me, because I was that older one; Rozenberg was merely nineteen years old and

his behavior was quite cynical, which generally characterizes him to this very day, and quite childish, one could say. As a detail, I give this, that this nuncio smoked cigars and he offered one to me and to him ... that we light one up. I thanked him for the offer and told him that I don't smoke - I smoked cigarettes then. Of course, my co-visitor grabbed that ... grabbed this cigar and then looked to see what that nuncio was doing with the cigar: he took such a small little knife and started cutting off these ends of that cigar, so he did the same and started laughing. I was sweating, because I was exerting myself terribly to persuade that man that what I was saying was the truth, because I knew that he listened to that with some reserve and with some doubts as to the truthfulness of my words.

Q: In what language did you converse with the nuncio?

A: Well, he understood German, so he understood, but what he did not understand I told him in French, because he knew perfect French and he maintained that he understood everything, that everything was clear to him. But he did not agree with the approval[sic] of our, especially my words, because Vrba did not treat it so very seriously, he treated this in ... rather childishly, this whole matter. I realized that things are getting very difficult, a very serious matter, therefore, in order to persuade him, I got this idea and I said to him: "Monsignor, listen to me - not only Jews were being murdered there, Catholics were being murdered there also, and they also murdered there people who wore what you are now wearing [here witness gestures to his neck suggesting a priestly collar] - priests, in various hier ... hai ... hiar ... hierarchies[sic], which I don't know exactly, but that is what is happening." "And how were they being murdered?" I say: "Not like the Jews. They would transport them at night. Tens, maybe hundreds of trucks would come from different areas of Kraków, Katowice, Sosnowiec, et cetera, with boxes and in the box ... in those boxes were corpses of priests whom they shot and brought to the crematorium only to burn them. And a witness who saw it, named Filip Miller, I am sure is still alive, and I hope that he survives to the end, so that he can verify it as a witness of what he saw. I received this information from him, for that reason I needed for the purpose of my escape from Oświęcim." This man grabbed his head and started shouting "Mein Gott! Mein Gott" and fainted and fell to

the ground. And this was a moment of a turning point in this man, for him to believe everything that he heard from the beginning for six hours. When he came to, he asked: "What is it that I can do here in this matter?" I told him: "You have to do one thing, because during those hours we are here sitting with you and speaking with you, thousands of people die in this manner, that they don't bring them in boxes -- , but they rush them into bunkers where they gas them with Cyclone and after twenty minutes throw their corpses into ovens to be burned. You take these sixty pages of our protocol, which was written by us four, four escapees from Auschwitz, and immediately leave Slovakia, I don't know in which direction, but I think that the best direction would be Switzerland, and from there you send it to all the statesmen, to America, to England, to Sweden, to the International Red Cross, et cetera, et cetera. Besides, you will know exactly, and, of course, to the Pope." "I promise you - I don't know whether I will do it tomorrow, but I will do it in the nearest few days." And, indeed, that came about, because after a few days we heard a report from the English radio that a delivery took place to such and such places, for which we have specifically asked for, of a concrete matter verified by the Papal nuncio in personal conversation with escapees from Oœwiêcim. **[At this point, Witness, no longer seen in the video, shows the poster with a photo, noted earlier]** This is a photo of my friend, who, alas, is no longer alive, he died in eighty-seven, at the age of seventy. The name, name and surname are Alter ... Alfred Wecler, who escaped in the first couple together with Rudolf Rozenberg ... with Walter Rozenberg , presently Rudolf Vrba. He is the chief init ... initiator and the main ... who planned that escape. This is the brain[s] of the escape of Wecler and Rozenberg. This picture is taken from the Vatican newspaper where in the lower part, in Italian, the paper also mentions me, as the third escapee. Does not mention Rozin, I am not sure why. But it is a fact that this took place. And I received this newspaper from the Vatican at one time and made a copy of it and this way I have perpetuated the memory of my friend Wecler, having developed about him, **[Here the Polish transcription ends. In the video, Witness continues to testify, as this and another picture are shown on the video. The italicized part that follows is translated and transcribed directly from the audio portion of the video, recording the conclusion of Mr.**

Mordowicz's testimony.] such a, such a short memento which currently may be found in the Simon Wisenthal Center in Los Angeles. **[Another picture appears.]** This is a picture of an enormous poster which was put together according to my plan and my proposal by architect Fatran(ph) from Tel Aviv. And the poster was hanging at the Hilton Hotel at the conference of the former prisoners of Oæwiêcim on the 40th Anniversary of the existence[sic] of Oæwiêcim. On the left first is Walter Rozenberg, next is Alfred Wecler, next is Czes³aw Mordowicz and the last is Arnoszt Rozin. The lower portion of this poster represents a map on which are shown the routes of escapes of the first two and then the next two from Oæwiêcim to Bratislava in Slovakia.

End of tape Four

SECOND INTERVIEW WITH CZESŁAW MORDOWICZ

OCTOBER 30, 1996

Q: (English) We're rolling and we have speed. (Polish) With reference to previous, to the prior course of your tale, be kind enough to tell us, give us as if a chronology, how the Oæwiêcim protocols came to be.

A: Now, then, the protocols were created in three phases. Be it quite close, if the time period is concerned, but not at once. As you know, the first two, who escaped in April (nineteen hundred) forty four, to be precise on April 7, forty four, finally reached a town in Slovakia by the name of Zilina (ph). This name of this town and the town itself exist to this day. There during a meeting with the Central Jewish Community, and ... even a delegate of the Red Cross, ... the Czechoslovak, that is, let's say, Czechoslovak, ... from Prague, and ... I don't know if anyone else was there, this I don't remember. However, before the forum statements were made by Alfred Wecler (ph) and Walter Rozenberg (ph) later known as Vrba. That is the first phase of the protocols, which were written down by Kraœniañski..., he was one of the Jewish leaders then, at that time, who represented this Central Jewish Community. He also translated these statements

by Wecler and Rozenberg into German language. Of course, after writing it down, after finishing this part, they were sent, especially in the direction of Hungary, or to Hungary, because then, during this period, a deportation, a massive deportation of the Jews from Hungary was expected, so it was to be such a memento (sic) for the Hungarian Jewry, what is awaiting them in the nearest future. So this is the first phase of the protocols, the beginning of the protocols. Shortly afterwards, a copy of this part of the protocol was delivered to the papal legate, of the then Pius XII, in Bratislava, with a request that he study carefully the text of that report and that he distribute this protocol to the various places of the free world, to the leaders of the countries of the free world, including the Vatican. So, all of that was done. From the post-war literature about this period of the holocaust, one could claim that the world reacted to these protocols with some reservations; there were even varied discussions on this subject, that people who survived such a long period of time in such conditions cannot be completely normal, and the result of this argument, or this fact, is also this that the text of these protocols should be treated with certain reservations. Indeed - I will come back to this maybe a little later - the holocaust literature after the end of the war argues and is of the opinion that as soon as the world received the second part of the protocols, from the subsequent two escapees, that is me and my colleague Rozin, the world then assumed a bit more concrete attitude. But I will return to that. That is, for the time being, as far as the beginning of the protocols is concerned..., maybe it should be added, that a copy of these protocols after their translation into German, was received by the Vatican Nuncio in Bratislava, Josef Burzio, who represented the Vatican during that period in Slovakia.

Q: And the second part, the second phase, huh?

A: It is maybe more like the first phase...

Q: Uhu.

A. But the second phase, it is..., a certain evolution in the events, which, simply stated, brings further facts. Of course, ... when our escape..., meaning the escape of Rozin and me, we, too, wrote down a protocol.

Q: Uhu.

A: We wrote it down also in Slovakia, in Liptowski Saint Mikulasz, that is how this, this little town, was called. After the confrontation (sic) which was conducted by the Jewish Central, which was represented at that time by that Kraeceniański, whom I had mentioned, and one Bobi Reich, who at that time lived in Liptowski Saint Mikulasz. That was, de facto, that second part, which rendered (sic) that first part in a more concrete manner.

Q: Do you know what happened to that protocol, was it also, like the previous one, translated into German language and attached to....

A: That's right. That's right, and the proof of it is the fact, that in November forty four, all of these materials, that were prepared, were accepted by the office for the war refugees in Washington and verified as a concrete and the principal document of the events in Oœwiêcim. This means, that the world had changed its, its mind with respect to the first witnesses, as normal people, based on an argument that the second two had verified, de facto, the first part with the addition in this way that by that time the transports of the Jews from Hungary were already an accomplished fact, ... by us, that means us two, two, confirmed in this manner that we saw it with our own eyes. ... at this time, this maybe would be all....

Q: You started talking about three phases. So, if you could, please, continue, this...

A: There is a third phase, which, resembling the second phase, by this I mean that the third phase was, de facto, the work of all four of us, who, under the circumstances of semi-peace decided to prepare their own protocol, based, of course, on the previous ones, and ... this protocol is most accurate when it comes to details, it was received by the world, meaning the world, it was distributed to, to, to many countries of the free world, and one of the serious doers who was taking care of this protocol, and distributed it to many places, was Doctor Jaromir Kopecki, who, at that time, represented Czechoslovakia, ... of course, in Exile, beyond, beyond, beyond the territory of Czechoslovakia; I don't know if he had a ministerial rank, but as a political person, well known. So, this our work, of this general protocol, which was prepared by us, with absolute accuracy, because, as I indicated a while ago, it was prepared, in the so-called "peace;" so this

would be classified as the third phase of the protocols. In any event, this is how the Oæwiêcim protocols came into being.

Q: Still, if you please, there is a question concerning the third phase in time. Was the third phase created before your and Vrba's meeting with the Papal Nuncio, or after...?

A: Afterwards.

Q: After?

A: Yes.

Q: And it was written down in Bratislava.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So, then...

A: It was not only written in Bratislava, but in Wecler's and my apartment. Here there may arise a question, eh, how did it happen that I with Wecler, because, ugh, he, he, I did not escape with Wecler. I escaped with Rozin. But in response to general request, we switched a little. This had its reasons. We lived separately, two and two, not in one apartment, not in one building and not on the same street. But then, it was decided this way that I will reside together with Wecler, because, my face and my appearance could, or could have, in the event of some kind of situation, provide with a cover. I don't know if you grasp the sense of it?

Q: Ugh-huh!

A: See, Wecler looked partially, maybe even more than partially, like a Semite. I looked like a, like a, like a real German, wearing that leather, that leather overcoat, with that green hat and a feather, a feather, so it was all meshing very well.

Q: Ugh-huh.

A: On the other hand, Rozin went to live with Rozenberg, with Walter Rozenberg, as I indicated, in another place,, so that this main, or that detailed, or the most detailed protocol we have developed in our apartment, meaning in the apartment in which I lived together with Wecler.

Q: In what language were you writing this....

A: Yes. Then, we were writing it in the German language.

Q: Immediately.

A: Immediately. Yes.

Q: Ugh-huh. Good, can you say something about some, more, a bit of details on the subject of that apartment of yours in Bratislava and how it was taking place?

A: It is, it is (laughter) maybe less interesting, in any event, we took up residence with a Catholic family, a working class, on the periphery of Bratislava, with this that, naturally, we had to play a certain role. In the morning at seven thirty we would leave every day to work and we returned home around five, five thirty. (laughter) I remember, one time our hostess welcomed us with "Gentlemen, how nice you look, you are so nicely tanned. So, you have an opportunity at work to suntan yourself?" Why yes, it was a proper question from her point of view; from ours, of course, it was a bit naive. But we played this comedy for a long period of time, that we would leave for work and come back from work.

Q: What were you doing all day long at that time?

A: What did we do? We were sunning ourselves in the woods. I mean, we hid in the forest, not in town, we would not walk around in town, because we avoided that town, but we walked around various places which looked, or seemed to us that these are safer.

Q: Over how long a period of time did this last?

A: Well, this (laughter), this seemingly independent life, we, we started that some time in the middle of June forty four till, more or less, the end of September, or the beginning of October, when the first one of us, based on an agreement (with the others), undertook to find his way to the Slovak partisans, which became active at the end of August forty four, while the remaining three waited for the news. It was Vrba, who was that first one, as the youngest then, he was designated to determine the situation and quickly send us some reliable information, whether we are to come, or follow him, or not. Alas, for quite a few weeks we received no news. So, this plan of eventually joining the Slovak partisans, became less immediate. That is the answer to your question.

Q: Did you, did you gentlemen know what was happening with Vrba at that time, or whether, simply, you had absolutely no contact?

A: No, no, we did not have any contact, we were very anxious, we were searching for many ways, in order to something..., in order to learn something. We were also searching for an opportunity and a decision, for each one to decide, without the news from him, either yes or no. But a combination of circumstances, or coincidence of events skewed this line for us a little. I will get to it perhaps a little further, not knowing your next question, but, nevertheless, this was connected in large measure..., with the effort, with our rescue effort or help for the family of Wecler, who, at that time, lived with his family in a town of Nitra, which is one hundred kilometers from Bratislava, meaning his wife and then a nine years old daughter.

Q: You mean, when Wecler moved out of that joint apartment in which you both lived?

A: Wecler did not move out. He moved out from the second apartment, together, when he started living with Rozin, Rozenberg moved out because he joined the partisans. I remained with Wecler in this apartment, and Rozin alone in his apartment.

Q: I understand.

A: Yes.

Q: Just a moment ago you said that Wecler lived in Nitra.

A: That was a brother of Wecler.

Q: Oh, a brother of Wecler.

A: Yes, an older brother of Wecler lived in Nitra. That was a town in which he worked as, it seems to me, a high school teacher. I do not know exactly what he was teaching, but it seems to me that he taught history, if I am not mistaken.

Q: And, about that action of helping Wecler's family.

A: Yes?

Q: How would you exp..., please, place it in time, if you could tell us about that action.

A: That action was even quite complicated, and for us very dangerous. In spite of everything, I want to tell you so much, that, from my information, you will reconstruct a certain picture, how,

de facto, looked that freedom of ours. I mentioned earlier that during the day we would hide in the woods, and so on. To be exact, not hide but spend time. AS soon as the general situation changed, and we saw on the horizon what the Slovak fascists are preparing to follow for the Jews, we passed into the so-called offensive in this sense, that we, whose every step meant danger, maybe even more than danger, we decided to help, wherever we could. And we also saw danger for the family of Wecler, because they lived in a little town, in a relatively small town, in Nitra, as I would characterize that town. So we decided to give them a certain proposition, that we will move them to Bratislava, to a large city, where maybe nobody knows them and so they will be able to move about safely, because in Nitra, after living there for so many years as Jews, they were know to great many people. So, one day, with Wecler, we decided to go to Nitra. "To go to Nitra" that means go by train, because, after all, it was one hundred kilometers. And here I recall in connection with this trip, such a (smile), I don't know if to call it an episode, or not an episode, but, but a rather interesting little story, which shed light on a few moments of..., behavior, by, let's say, the Germans, a behavior of people who were hiding, hiding, and our behavior, just as well. So, two briefcases, each one of us takes a briefcase in hand, in each case a pistol, and not a little one. And that is how we took off for that excursion of ours to Nitra. When traveling to Nitra, one has to pass through a town, called Trnava. This is Wecler's place of birth, where on the poles, before, before, when we were hanging about for some one hour, in Trnava on the poster poles, we would see the warrants posted for us, and Wecler was especially mentioned, who was a native of Trnava. So, passing though such a town, or such a railroad station was not a pleasant thing. The train was packed. We had only room to stand. Of course, one on one end of the car, the other on the other end and the briefcases thrown up on the baggage shelves above us. Who do they belong to? To nobody. The train stopped on the station in Trnava, surrounded on all sides by the Germans and the Slovak fascists in uniforms, those are the members who belonged to the "Hlinkova Garda" organization. I do not know exactly for whom they were looking, what they were looking for, but it was the so-called "razja" (ph). They were

searching. They entered each passenger car and the first what they would ask for was the documents. I remember that I stood next to some man, more or less about forty years old.

Q: Oh, it ended, I am sorry, that so....

A: OK.

Q: You know, but....

A: OK.

Q: The tape has ended.

A: OK.

Q: And it was just such a moment...

A: Good, _____, uhuh.

Q: " stood next to a man, some forty years old and.... "

End of tape One.

Tape Two

Q: (English) We're rolling and we have speed. Anytime. Ready.

A: So, then, standing next to that man, whom I described a minute ago, one of the uniformed soldiers approaches him and demands his document. So, this man answers in German: "I am a Volksdeutsche, I did not take any documents with me." Then, turning to me, he demanded from me my document. I, of course, had a document, but it was not worth much, because it was false. Only this soldier, who was asking me for my identity, or is asking for it, does not know that the document is a forgery, because of its looks. It looks very good and very pretty. And he takes my document in hand and tells that man "I want a document like this (pointing his finger) from you." And I thought what I thought, "A document that is not worth anything." But it's all right. So then the man one more time defends himself, that he is a Volksdeutsche and begins to speak German. Looking at each other from afar, it meaning, Wecler at me and I at Wecler, we did not know what they were searching for; maybe they are searching for Wecler here, as a native of Trnava, an escapee from Oæwiêcim? So we start winking at ourselves, what to do, but we decide not to

move. The briefcases were lying there peacefully, nobody touched anything there and after about a half an hour the train started to move again. Of course, pleased with the outcome, we continued our way to Nitra. We came to Nitra. From the railroad station to ..., to the town was some two kilometers, more or less. We arrived, I do not recall exactly the hours, but it was getting a little dark and we only knew so much that the police hour is approaching, where (sic) it is prohibited to move about the town any more. So we reached, we still managed, still during the daylight, we reached the apartment of Wecler's brother, who, of course, was also named Wecler, Vladimir Wecler, while my friend was named Alfred Wecler. We found nobody at that apartment. Hanging around the doors for a few minutes. some woman neighbor came out and informed us that the family left in the morning and have not returned, as yet, and she doesn't know what's with them, what happened to them, or what is going on with them. We waited another half an hour, but we knew that we must hide somewhere, so that we would not loiter during the night, because that would be very dangerous. Loitering with weapons, it just doesn't add up! So, then, we decided to return to the railroad station and there wait till the morning, to find out something about the Wecler's family. Out of tiredness we were sitting so in a little corner of that railroad station and dosed off a little, but so, that we knew about each other, one like the other. When, a man walks by us and quietly calls out "Joœ Kolanik." (ph) This was an adopted name and surname of my colleague Wecler, which was so entered in his forged document. So, we got scared, in..., in the first moment, wall what can it be? But my colleague decided to speak up. Came up this one what was calling and says to him: "I am Joœ Kolanik." "I have salutations for you from your brother. The family came home and asks that you two, because I believe you are a twosome, that you return or came back to the house." So, we understood, that, most likely, the neighbor woman after their return described how we looked, so they realized that it is the brother, that it is Alfred, and they sent this fellow to the railroad station, I don't know where they got him from, where they found him, but the fact is a fact. We, however, decided not to return, because it was too late. Meaning, in accordance with the police orders, and so on, it was late already, and we decided to wait till the morning. This railroad station looked to us a bit safer.

Early morning we..., from six o'clock one could move about. So we, after such a night, waited for that six o'clock like for salvation, to be able, to move around a little and to wake up a bit. We left the railroad station in the direction of my colleague's brother's apartment. And here, I will permit myself a little, such a little description of the layout: the street which was leading to a park, a giant park of the town of Nitra. The street was short, give it some three hundred meters, the whole street. And the hour was early, we did not want to attract attention to ourselves, we decided to go straight to the park. Again a place that is safer. So, we managed to enter that park. From behind a giant tree two figures in uniforms emerged. We knew the uniforms, those were uniforms of the "Hlinkova Garda," of the Slovak fascists, with carbines on their backs - and straight in our direction. (deep breath) well, what is going to come out of that here? At that time I still did not speak Slovak. So, the discussion with them was conducted with them by my colleague Wecler. "What are you looking for at such an early time in the park?" "Oh, we just came by train from Bratislava, we are clerks, and we are waiting for the office to open at eight, so we decided to get a breath of fresh air and then go to our work." Without much debate - "documents!" Well, here, the documents. Again four true documents. One asks me: "What are you so quiet?" Why aren't you saying anything?" "Oh, my throat hurts." That is all I managed, nothing more, it would have been (laughter) too dangerous. One word leads to another, they turn to Wecler and say: "Well, we have stopped maybe bigger fish than you are and we must take you to our post and there verify your documents. [If] everything will be in order, we will let you go without..." So, then, we knew, that we have gotten into a nice trap. Without much thinking, French fashion, only to the corner, not a step further. Because in the left direction was the Slovak Police, on the corner itself was a Courthouse building, so the place was not very comfortable to do anything. But there was no choice. Not a step further. To the corner. So, we have agreed in a word, quietly, that we will draw our pistols and start shooting in the air. We had on us trench coats, such light raincoats and we will start running away; I to the left, he to the right. The road to the left led uphill, even steep hill, to the Nitra cloister. On the bottom was ... on the bottom was such a church and higher was a residence of the priests, I know, who had the care of that

cloister. So, in that second, when we decided to do it, which means to shoot in the air, I managed to notice that one of these two was scared enough that the carbine fell out his hand. And the second one was shooting left and right. The bullets whizzed by the ears. I threw off my coat and started running in the direction of that Nitra cloister. I barged into the church, where at that very moment a mass was being finished.. Quiet, idea; quiet. A crowd of people, and I, like such a mouse, into that crowd of people I knelt and, and I wait what it will be, not knowing absolutely anything what happened to me colleague. Sid, that moment has remained with me till this very day very vividly, very emotional in every respect. I knew that much that such a mass must end, it doesn't last all day, but what am I to do? Where to find some safe place? Because, after all, they noticed in what direction I was escaping and where I got. Because I had no idea what happened here. In this situation, I was forced to throw away the pistol, while running away, into the bushes. I quietly walked out of the place where that mass was being said and I look up how to get there, because, theoretically, theo..., theoretically, I know the structure of that cloister. I knew that it has a mighty, tall tower, from which the bells ring for the time of the mass and so on, and even hours are struck during the day. So, taking the steps in the direction of that tower, I noticed a rope, a cord, very thick, which was attached to powerful bells. I pondered for a while, how to touch such a rope, how it will ring it will again (laughter) be very unpleasant; they will start searching who is ringing, because it was not the time for the bells. I did not hesitate very long, I only knew that much, that I must get to the very top of the tower and there, somehow, wait further. I pulled that rope very carefully, lest it, God forbid. doesn't, doesn't, doesn't, doesn't, doesn't ring! And along that rope I forced my way into that part of the tower, which was very narrow. it did not have any steps anymore, only with my legs bracing myself against the sides and with the help of that rope I managed to get to the very top. But I had no comfort at all. I had to hang on to that air. How long can one last? The legs go numb. almost faint. But in such a situation, a person is very strong, a person is very enduring - and he waits. I heard single voices only "here, there, here, here," meaning, they were near that place of mine. ,of my concealment and are searching. And then, out of a little window, sort of on the side of that tower, I noticed

that people are leaving the church, meaning, the mass has ended. So, I say to myself, I must take advantage of that moment and quickly get down..., slip down, mingle with the crowd and forward. And that is what I did, what I did. I managed without the bell, without ringing the bell. I returned to my place, where at the beginning I assisted the priests in saying that mass. Walking, I reached such a steep descent from that mountain, on which on the other side I was running away and got up the mountain. I noticed on the ground some kind, some old newspaper. I say to myself: this may come handy. I picked up that paper, I covered my face, I changed my hair, I dropped my coat, so that I looked a bit different. And like I am reading and nothing bothers me, I see nothing. And that is how I got of that mountain, until I heard the first sounds of the local radio, which announces, that a couple of partisans slipped into town and, not knowing what is the mission of that pair, they surmise however, that some serious encounters or incidents may take place, so that the populace should help identifying this pair, one looked like this, the other one like that. And they started to describe. And I, not thinking long, again chose a way to the railroad station. It is the safest place. And, secondly, I wanted as soon as possible to leave Nitra, but not on foot but by train, as I am at the railroad station, and return to Bratislava, to meet with the other duo and tell them what had happened. At the railroad station, I found out that there are no trains. Everything is dead, nothing is moving. Without thinking too long, by foot, - to reach the next, nearest railroad station, that was to be a junction, it was called Leopoldów and from that Leopoldów, for sure, there should be a train to Bratislava. Only to Leopoldów, it was twenty some kilometers. It was not a little stroll.. There is nothing to do. I take to my legs and go. And so I reached that Leopoldów, tired, devastated, not to mention my hunger, not to mention a drop of water, because every minute was very precious. Get to Bratislava, as soon as possible. So, I won't talk about the details. I waited for the train. I jumped on the first one; of course, did not have any ticket. I had the money for the ticket, but, but..., to loiter around the ticket counter, and so on, in such a situation, that they may be looking for me? So, I decided to ride as a stow away, as we used to say it in Poland. And so I reached Bratislava and first dash to the apartment of Rozin and Rozenberg, Walter Rozenberg. I told them briefly what happened and I told

Rozenberg, Rozenberg: "Listen, take to your legs and run to Nitra. Maybe you can find out what happened to Fred." Meaning, Alfred Wecler. And he, of course, did not think long, got on the train and went. One day passed, second day passed, the third day. I had described to him in detail the place where we got separated, where he started to run, in what direction, and so on. And after three days he found Wecler in the mountains. I do not recall whether it was a phone call or a..., some scrap of paper. Something reached us with this: that Fred is alive. This was the most interesting part. And that is how this little episode of our freedom ended.

Q: Do you (clears throat) know how..., about what happened to Alfred Wecler? _____ .

A: Of course, of course, that we later met again . He, he, he got back home. He managed to still meet with his family...,

Q: Uhuh.

A: ... which came with him then after, after, after two more days; they came to Bratislava. Our goal was to find an apartment for that family, so that they could start living in Bratislava. So, then, this is, ugh, maybe a certain moment, or a precedent (sic) of the further little story, connected with the little story about our freedom. We were able to ascertain one thing, that they never found out anything about us. We only knew that we lost our documents. But after the first conversation with our landlord, where we lived, we learned that much, that nobody was looking for anything here in the apartment and nobody was looking for us either. So that then we returned to our apartment. In the matter of hours we obtained fresh pistols, since those were our pillows for the night. We on those...,

Q: What about the documents?

A: With documents it was a bit worse, but because we knew the data from the first documents, going along this line we received copies, meaning same kind of documents with the same names: Joœ Kolanik and Petr Matusz, it was my false first and last name.

Q: Weren't you, Gentlemen, afraid that so, that having the same documents...?

A: We had no fear, and there was no, simply stated, there was not much possibility ... of any philosophy. All of that went on further up to a certain moment when, eventually, we would have to take out from under the pillow ... (nods his head sadly)....

Q: A half an hour has passed _____. Now we finished very nicely, I'll say, because, exactly (laughter) your tale and this tape....

End of tape Two.

Tape Three

Q: (English) Standby. I'm recording. We're rolling and we have speed. Anytime.

A: So, then, perhaps maybe I will for a moment return to..., to the problem of our delegate whom we sent to the partisans, meaning Rozenberg, who was to provide certain information, and a certain amount of time has passed and we had no news [from him]. We could not understand it, of course, and we could not know what was causing it. So, we decided to take some kind of an initiative to contact him. I recall some of the action we took in that direction. So, one morning, having agreed with Rozin that we will go to a certain person, where we were ...summing (sic) that we will be able to receive some help in this direction. (sighing) So got on a streetcar - we lived on the city's periphery - and were riding towards the center. Along the way there was a stop near the police headquarters in Bratislava. Basically, we would ride in such a way that never together and never next to each other; rather away from each other. So, I was located at one end of the car and my colleague Rozin at the other end. And while passing the police headquarters, I noticed that one of the policemen, who got into our car, is coming to Rozin and is starting to pat him (gestures) on the arm. So, in that very second, to the door and try (coughs) - sorry (clears throat), so I am trying to jump out, because I did not know what was going on, the policeman comes up to Rozin and (gestures) taps him on the shoulder, so he must be trying to stop him, maybe wants to arrest him. So, I jumped out of the streetcar in motion and, and, and was looking after the moving streetcar to see what will happen next, how it will be, and we had agreed to go two more stops and get off in the very center and there talk further what, what, what needs to be

done next. So, I speeded up not to miss that streetcar with Rozin and with that policeman and towards the end I even started to run a little, to get there on time and I neared the stop where we were to get out together. And suddenly, I see that Rozin from the moving streetcar is looking to the back, searching for me and starts waiving (gesture of waiving to come closer) with his hand: “come on, don’t be afraid.” So, what happened? It turned out that the policeman who got on at that stop recognized Rozin and was his colleague from the school years. Well, I couldn’t know that, of course. So, at the stop, which was called Manderla (ph) in the very center of Bratislava, the three of us met together and he introduces his friend to me, his colleague from the school years. I do not recall his last name but his first name was, I think, Joæko, or Joꝥo, something like that. And he begins to explain to me who this his acquaintance is. So, of course, we took advantage of his, his, his acquaintance, his that..., and we sought his advice how to make a contact in the mountains. In the direction of Baňska Bystrzyca, because we are looking for our another partner Rozenberg - and we told him the whole story. I would like to add here only one thing. That day or that encounter was a historical moment for my colleague and for my Rozin, because from that day on, all the serious problems and matt..., and, and, and matters fell on the shoulders of that policeman Joꝥo, who was not just an ordinary policeman, he was an officer, who started *to take care* of Rozin. He took such care of him that he took him home with him and let him live with him together. And we also had benefited from this, because we were informed about all the important actions, which were to take place then in Bratislava and about all the dangerous moments, during which one had to hide well, or go into hiding. And, now, I return to my friend Wecler and his family. From that moment on, that Joꝥo policeman started taking interest also in finding an apartment for Wecler’s family, meaning unbelievable help! So, we had agreed to meet in two days, in three days, I cannot remember that, with the..., the brother’s wife, or sister-in-law of Wecler, in a certain place in Bratislava, at a certain time; it was an early morning hour, nine o’clock, and there we met. At a certain moment my colleague Wecler says: “I ran out of the smokes,” because he smoked and ran out of the cigarettes. “I am crossing the street and you wait for me here, don’t go anywhere.” And as we wait for that Wecler, we are

approached by a civilian guy, tall, skinny, slim and demands our documents. I am not allowed to speak much, because I am still without the tongue, meaning (laughter) not speaking Slovak (shrugs his shoulders), I only knew a certain number of words, and so on. But his attention was directed more to that wife of Wecler's brother than to me. And she shows him her ID and gives it to him and he seemingly in a delicate manner apologizes that he must take her to a certain place to verify her documents. We knew this song, because we have gone through something similar. And to me he turn simply with a question what in today's times do I have in common with the Jews? I realized that it was a denunciation of that Wecler woman, someone has denounced her on the street, and that was a period of renewed deportations from Slovakia. The month must have been the end of September, forty four, or the beginning of October forty four, I do not remember it well. And he apologizes to me, too, that he must examine this situation in a certain place. I grasped what that certain place means, so I ask him, the hour is early, I still did not have my coffee, I'm without breakfast, would he let me step into a cafe across the street, to have some coffee. So, he called from the other side, and in the meantime Wecler still has not come back, but was observing from the other side of the street what is going on here and how it will end and what is it all about? So this civilian guy called a uniformed fascist soldier of Garda Hlinka, Hlinkova Garda, who had a carbine and demanded that he go with us into that cafe and keep an eye on us all the time. The cashier of that cafe, who was sitting at the entrance, in the perspective, at the exit, and collected money, we knew her. I turn to her and I tell her: "Listen, in a moment here may come Fredo, Alfred Wecler. Warn him that something stinks here, that he should not go deeper inside, that he should scam." I somehow managed to tell her that. And, as for myself, not losing a lot of time, I tried to get out of there in some way, so, it came to my mind, that the best way is to the kitchen of that cafe, and there, there must be some rear exit through which I can scam. So, I enter that kitchen and that uniformed policeman with the carbine behind me. And he is no longer behaving calmly, he starts shouting and screaming: "help me catch that partisan!" Just like that. I did not get to the rear door because it was locked, it was not being used at that, that time, or on that day. And that is how he stopped me and threatened

me that if I only want to..., or try to run away, he will shoot to kill and without, without mercy. In the meantime, that, that, that, that plainclothes, that detective recruited another uniformed one, to somehow help the first one, so he would have an easier time handling us. And that is how I got stuck in that trap with that sister-in-law of my friend. That detective, that some kind of plainclothesman, in civilian clothes, was whispering something into the ear of one of those two in uniforms. It must have concerned an address, where to escort us. And that is how we walked out with these two soldiers back into the street. It was about ten o'clock, maybe ten-thirty (clears throat) and they inform us that they are leading us to the headquarters of the Hlinkova Garda. This was a place that was theoretically very well known to me, and I knew that this was hell into which one should not be allowed to enter with one foot, because leaving it is very difficult. So that soldier, one of those two soldiers, was warning us, that if we should only get an idea - and especially to me, he turned to me - to run, they will shoot to kill without mercy, so that we should be careful and cause no problems, because we are at the center of Bratislava, and he even shows me: "Here, you see, is the President's Palace," and in that President's Palace must be not hundreds, but thousands maybe (clears throat) of soldiers, police and everything else possible; major concentration for the whole of Slovakia. But there was no other possibility but to pass by that place. So, I [speak] in German to that woman partner of mine and say: "Listen, I'm running away, I have no other choice. Maybe nothing awaits you, but you know what awaits me." And I say to him..., to her: "I will do it on the corner of the street" which was called Drewniana, I remember that, so on that street corner. It was such a connecting street between two others, but it also led to that President's Palace. And that is how it was, in a certain moment, I take to my legs. But seriously. It is difficult for me to describe what occurred in that place in the next few seconds. They started blowing their whistles, those who were escorting us and started hollering: "Catch the partisan!" She remained with them, because they would have shot her. And they started shooting after me, only, luckily, they were shooting but did not hit me. So, I, seeing what mass of uniforms is swarming out of that President's Palace, I started running in the opposite direction. And it was through streets and lanes. Suddenly, I noticed on the other side of the street,

that they are blocking me, that there is no chance to run straight, so I reached a gate of a certain building and thought that through there I will somehow get lost from them, but the gate was locked. And so, helplessly, I just stood there until hundreds of uniformed policemen, soldiers military, reached me. And every one of them wanted, this is best to say it in Hebrew “to do his mitzvah,” to touch me, but not really touch me, but to really slug me hard. For the next few seconds I remember only that I passed out. I simply fainted and I don’t know how, in what manner, I came to in some cellar, on the cement, in a puddle of water and blood. It turned out later that the cellar is in the headquarters building of the Hlinkova Garda. And then the door opens, some uniformed type enters; has a bucket, I didn’t know whether it was water or something else, but I thought, maybe it’s water and he pours that water on me. And orders me: “Get up! Stand up! I am taking you to the commandant for listening to, for an interrogation.” I was maltreated for three days and nights. I did not believe that I will leave that place alive. There was not a centimeter on my body that was not black or blue from the blows, because they hit me with everything possible. With shovels, belts, ugh, rather...

Q: Belt buckles?

A: Belt buckles of those big military belts. And that is how they brought me for the first interrogation to the chief of the Slovak Gestapo - it was the Slovak Gestapo - who demanded from me the truth, who am I? Because they have verified from my apartment, from my literature which I had, and other documents which (clears throat) establish that I am not Slovak, I am probably a Russian spy. If..., if I don’t tell them the truth, then..., here will be my end, here in this place. I thought to myself: sooner or later, it will come to that anyway, and I did not want to suffer anymore, because I could not suffer anymore. I knew only one thing, that they did not find anything on me, to learn where I live, what is my address. So, all of what they told me I did not believe a word of it. But, in my head, the only thing I have is what is under the pillows. On the other hand, I did believe that could not have found either the address or the apartment. So, many different, different, different questions were being asked, where I myself..., where I live. Not a word. “I don’t live anywhere, I have no address, I sleep mostly at the railroad station, that is my

apartment.” They brought an expert to me, to determine similarity of my language to some other language, because somehow things did not look right to them. Of course, there is not a chance about my speaking Slovak, but is it more Polish, or more Ukrainian, or more Russian language? After the next interrogation when the beating continued, because the interrogation looked like this, behind a table sits that commandant, I even know his last name, this was the commandant, one of the main commanders of that Hlinkova Garda, whose name was Vozar (ph), and he personally questioned me, because such a fish, who doesn’t want to divulge the secret, it happens once in a long while. So, they finally knew that they will not manage to get anything out of me, but I did not want to suffer anymore. Always, in the tiny pocket of my trousers (gestures reaching to the right side), in that little one that at one time used to be for a pocket watch, I had a piece of paper, folded in tiny little squares (gestures) and that paper (clears throat) was a birth certificate in the name of Koloman Altman. It’s a name of a Slovak Jew, who did not exist anymore, but the name, the place or birth and certain data, etcetera, all of that was true. So, I tell him that and give it to him and say: “Listen, don’t torture me anymore. I am no longer able to take it. I have nothing, nothing more to say, only this, that I am an ordinary Jew who is hiding from the Germans.” He speaks to me, he takes this paper, looks at it, looks it over, and says: “We will find the medicine to get out of you the true information.” I say: “This is the truest one and I have no other one to give.” “We will invite here the Gestapo, who will get everything out of you, whatever we do not succeed in getting.” And so they dropped me down the stairs all the way to the cellar, where I fainted again and was lying a long time, without a drop of water and unable even to breath. Uhuh.

Q: _____

A: Too early....,

Q: The next half an hour, no, the next half an hour _____ .

A: Is it too early?

Q: No, no, no. Good. He showed me already, that _____ .

A: Yes?

End of tape Three

Tape Four

Q: (English) I'm recording. Are you...? Yeah, hold on...

A: (Polish) Now...

Q: (English) Hold the roll. _____. OK. We have, we're rolling and we have speed.

A: (Polish) So, the same day in the evening came to..., at an invitation, of course, the Gestapo came to me. Two high [tall?] Gestapo officers and started a discussion with me, if it can be called that (Deep sigh). First thing, they were asking me who I was and what am I hiding and why I don't want to tell the truth. So, I repeated my claim, that I am an ordinary Jew, which is hiding, moving from one place to another, and that they should not, please, maltreat me physically. I was simply asking them to take advantage of the opportunity to verify that, what I, what I am telling them, what I am saying. At this moment I unbuttoned and dropped my pants. SO, they ordered me to take all of my clothes off. I only had one place which I could not show them, that is on the forearm of the left hand, where I had my number tattooed, covered with leucoplast (ph). When taking off my shirt, I left it hanging on my left arm - hanging. I was waiting for them to rip it off. So then I spoke, asking them to, please, let me put my shirt on; that I am very cold. So, then, one of the two, after searching my whole body, and so on, told me to put the shirt on. And then I felt a bit of a relief, because the danger of the discovery of the tattooed number at that moment passed. And that is how they played with me to some hour, almost two o'clock at night. Afterwards, they put me in a car and started driving with me around Bratislava. They were driving from one prison to another. They were looking for a "hotel" for me. Nobody wanted to accept me; all the places were overcrowded. So, finally (clears throat), I concluded that they, too, had it up to their teeth (sic). And that is how they drove up before the building of the Jewish Community in Bratislava, where was concentrated, or rather being gathered a transport of people, a transport of the Jews to be deported. The whole story, which was for me from that moment on very uncomfortable, it was this, that I was being handed from hands to hands. This means under the care of some higher ranking officer, who watched, or was responsible for his charge. So, that I had my own guard. I even, pardon me, to the toilet went

with a special guard. For two days lasted the search to find an appropriate place for me and in the end they decided to include me in that transport, which they gather and before sending it of in an unknown direction, this transport was being put together in a camp for Jews, which was called Seret, that is in a town of Seret. And it was there that they turned me over into the hands of a Commandant and made him responsible, personally responsible for, for me, for my person. And so I was guarded day and night. I had no possibility to make any move. That is why I was not able to do anything, that is why I was not able to beat it from there. And so they led me to the transport which in a day or two left in an unknown direction. I warned the people in the car, in which I was traveling together with them, and I told them quite openly: "Listen, you are going to your death. I will open this car, I will open this door and you jump out with me." Terrible shouting started, they started banging on the door and calling, they were calling the German guards, who were escorting our transport. Then they attacked me, they started beating me terribly. They beat me up to such an extent, that I was not capable, almost completely, to do anything. In that situation, I remembered that I have that tattooed number, that I have to do something with it. I had nothing at my disposal, only my own teeth. So I started slowly to bite that place. I bit it so long that I created an enormous painful wound, which in the span of a few hours filled with puss. And so, simply, without any strength, totally exhausted, as I determined later, because at the beginning I did not know exactly in what [direction] we are traveling, but in the later part of this travel I concluded that after all, we are going in the direction well known to me, in the direction of Oświęcim. So, here, I decided to end my life in the following way: When leaving the car I will approach an SS-man who does the selection on the ramp in Brzezinka. If I manage, I will pull his pistol out and there I will drop him and then myself. That is what I determined. At a certain moment a prisoner approaches me who says my name. I did not even recognize this prisoner well (sic), even though he told me that he is from Grodno, he even told me his name, but he says: "I know you very well. I have been observing you for the last several minutes and I can see that you want to do something here. Don't do anything. You will get out of here with my help and the help of somebody else, and nobody will ever know that you were even

here,” and so on. His words seemed to me to be a bit exaggerated and I could not imagine that, what changes is this man talking about? But in such a situation, I said to myself: I have nothing to lose. And he never left my side anymore. He walked after me step by step and led me in such a way that I did not even go through the selection and he put me in a group - is that how you say - a group? - of selected ones, the selected people and there he told me to wait. He told me in what direction we will go, that we will go to Sauna (ph)(G) and in the Sauna there will be one of my good acquaintances, who will lead me further and will take care of me. And that is what happened. I will say it briefly, I will not make a big story, without special details. While in that Sauna, I asked that acquaintance, whom I indeed knew very well, and he knew me, too, to get me a pair of dark glasses to somehow mask myself, because he told me that I will be there twenty four hours, for sure, and maybe a little longer. That is how I tried on my own to somehow disguise myself, because they could recognize me there very easily. And what was I afraid of most? A denunciation. And suddenly, I remembered Adam Róçycki, who in such a situation would be capable of finishing me himself, to better his lot, to cover the tracks, which I could possibly betray, that it was he, who helped me in my escape. After two days came to me two prisoners, whom I knew, they were from Slovakia, and led me in the direction of the gate. There stood at a ready a transport of more or less fifty people and they only told me this: “From this moment on, your name is Peter Reichmann (ph), remember that name well, do not speak your name in any situation and under no circumstances. From this moment on, your name is Peter Reichmann and that is all. You are from Slovakia, because you are going with a Slovak transport a bit deeper into Germany. And, indeed, in about a half an hour this transport got out, and I in the middle, meaning that they must have taken someone out of there and in place of that someone they slipped me in. And that is how I reached with this transport, which was in 99 percent a transport from Slovakia, meaning Jews from Slovakia, to a small camp which had all in all some five hundred people, mostly Jews from Poland, from ŁódŹ, especially from ŁódŹ, and this transport of fifty people from Slovakia. That lager was called, it was in a town, a little town called Friedland (ph). So, I, when I realized that where I am, this looked to me somehow very

optimistically. This could not be compared with the hell of Oœwiêcim. And I also imagined my nearest [chance to] escape, which I already started to plan, while looking over the countryside, so, everything looked pretty rosy to me and easy to accomplish. I worked in a group called Schubert; that is the name of the owner of a factory making things out of wood, among others they make those chests for the Wehrmacht in various shapes and sizes and there life became a little easier for me. I befriended Doctor First, a physician, who came from Topolczany in Slovakia. I befriended Doctor Schtern, an attorney from Prague. And after a while I introduced myself to these two trusted men who I was. And during work, I befriended one Volksdeutscher (ph) from one of the Scandinavian countries, I cannot remember whether it was, whether he was from Sweden, or some other kind of place, but we became very good friends, I considered him a very decent fellow; he helped me a bit with the food, he would bring me cigarettes, and so on, until it came to a certain moment when I asked him for a revolver. I that revolver I got from that man. In a double bottom of such a kettle which - it was airtight anyway. It wasn't really a kettle, it was actually such a..., such a giant thermos. With the help of that thermos, I smuggled the revolver into the camp, the lager and I kept it in a hiding place in the block in which I was located. And at that time, it was designated just in case. But in the plan of escape, I continued to plan not only my escape but a mass escape, because the location of that camp was very advantageous to permit freeing the whole camp, not to wait for the end, the end of the war. From that Volksdeutscher I received very accurate information about the state [of events], situation on the fronts, and so on, and so on and in the factory, in which I worked, working for a few minutes every day with a file, I managed to cut through..., in a smaller window...(gestures to indicate the size)

Q: The bars?

A: The bars. The bars, and it was a place and this was a possibility, in the event, where the situation should deteriorate so far, as to threaten us with danger, liquidation, so that we could, on moments notice, run away. That is, while being on the outside of the camp. And in the camp I had preparations, the tools to, to cause a so-called "Kursschluss (ph) ["short circuit"] in the wires

which were charged with electricity. I had prepared a pair of insulated pliers; I had prepared some other stories. And I had taken into my confidence those friends whom I befriended in the camp, that is, that Doctor First, whom I mentioned, and that lawyer Schtern from Prague, and in addition two more I drew into, into this action. Indeed, some three days before the liberation, that camp in Friedland was freed by the Red Armada (sic) on the ninth of May, nineteen forty five. So, not waiting for the very end, on the sixth of May, with certain organization, and drawing into, into, into, into this action some more people, also trustworthy, at night ["Q" coughs] - short circuit in the wires and whoever wanted - with me. That is how we walked out of the camp. Surprised Germans in the towers thought it was the Russians, because we started using Russians pass word and "hurrahs" and so on. So, a part escaped from those rescue towers, ugh, to those towers. uhu

Q: Guard towers

A: Guard..., and the camp, people from the camp - into the woods. And is how the freeing of Camp Friedland looked, which I - led - yes? And that is how we lived to the date of the ninth of May, forty five. One plan did not succeed for me, [in] which I planned to help the Italians, former soldiers of the Italian Army, who were stationed not too far in such a camp for prisoners of war, in order to capture alive Doctor Tilo (ph), a doctor know from Oæwiêcim, who immediately before the end of the war was shifted from Oæwiêcim to the camp at Friedland. And his first visit, at the roll call, I received with a terrible, simply, fear, because he knew me. So, from that moment, when I noticed him, I had to change my appearance a bit - as much as I could, of course. And I had this action agreed to with those Italians, but, alas, he was more clever. He escaped out of their hands in the last moments before the liberation of that camp. That is how it looked, my subsequent situation, more or less, this, this, this my one more arrest, and, and, this, my , my, my return to Oæwiêcim, and then to the Friedland camp, and that is how I (emphasizes the word) managed to live till the liberation, or the end of the war, the ninth of May, forty five, when I welcomed with bread and salt the first Cossack, who charged in (sic) on a horse into Friedland and his, his whole, simply, his whole eff..., his whole will and desire [was]

so that he be shown or pointed out where the Germans are, how he can them..., where they can be caught, and where he can them.... (here start long pauses every few words) This is, simply, the part, which I completed, or I wanted to complete my history, full of drama, full of tragedy and full of... facts and scenes not to be believed in.. But, alas, those were facts which were true, remained true and continue to be true.

Q: Half an hour gain....

End of tape Four

Tape Five

Q: (English) _____ OK, I'm recording. _____ We're rolling. (Polish) Please, because..., it seems to me that this tattoo, which you have on your arm, is a very important thing. Please tell us about it, because you ended only on the moment when you, essentially, chewed out that tattoo. Please tell us what happened with that further.

A: (sigh) So, I had from that a very unpleasant wound caused by the fact that I chewed threw it, not having any other means, and not knowing the situation, what will happen, if they want to tattoo me again, because they have not changed the spot, it was so decided that it is done on the left forearm, on the outside, on the outside, that is how it, of course, remained. I had to have it covered at any price, because even if the possibility of the second tattooing was no longer a possibility, what also turned out to be true, there were other moments, I know, a bath, and, and, and all sorts of selections and different visits of the doctors, SS-men, and so on, and so on, so I could not allow myself to leave it like this. So, on the day, or the day before my transport to that aforementioned Friedland, came two of my acquaintances from Slovakia; one of the was this, so called professional, who did the tattoos, I even remember his name - Lali Sokolov (ph), his name was different then, but Sokolov and he lived in Australia, whether he is still alive I don't know, because I am not in..., I have not been in contact with him during the last years. So in this way then they made me a tattoo, which I have to this day and which covered up in this way my number.

Q: Please show it to us, with your permission.

A: (slowly struggling to pull up the sleeves of the jacket and the shirt) eh, they were claiming that it is - after the war, of course, that it's a fish, that it is a leaf, that it is a flower. In any event something unsuccessful (here he shows the a big tattoo), because it was being done live, on the wound, from which blood and puss were oozing. Besides, nobody cared, including me, that out of that come out some nice flower. The number which I had, which is presently also visible, if I show it, was covered by that, and that was the major achievement of that whole... So, here (he uses a thin pointing stick) I show "eight," next I show here "four," and show here "two," and next "one," and finally a "six." eighty four two hundred sixteen, that was my number. When the wound healed, there remained what is visible now. There are no changes in it. That is with regard to that tattoo of mine. Later on, it turned out that they did not tattoo any more numbers in Oœwiêcim at that time.

Q: Please tell us about what was happening after the liberation.

A: Well then, after the liberation, in short, I will not elaborate on it, being (sic) for a few days in Friedland, where I was invited there by these, my new acquaintances, among them that Volksdeutsche from Scandinavia, in order to, in those circumstances, with this that from that moment on I am a free man, or a man, generally speaking, to spend with them a few hours, or a few days, so then I remained in Friedland after that. In view of the fact that, at that time, there was no transportation at all, I decided to return to Bratislava, because, after all, I was curious in not knowing anything what happened to my friends, with Wecler, with, with, with Rozenberg, with Rozin, this interested me, drew me there badly. To my native country, to my native town, and so on, I knew that there was no reason to return, because I had very accurate information, that, alas, I lost my whole family (sighing). So, after a few days of journey, I reached Bratislava and there, indeed, I met the whole trio, about whom I knew nothing, who was very happy to see me, because they did not know anything about me either. (long pause) That is how we lived, more or less together, until the time when one had to start thinking, to become independent somehow, to get organized somehow, start doing something, simply speaking, change, even if it was very difficult, to the, so called, normal life. That was not an easy task, because a person felt

broken down, completely broken down physically and psychologically and mentally. Life was very, very hard. In forty eight I married (a long pause) a lady from Łódź, who also went through hard life, Łódź ghetto first, then a certain time in Oświęcim, then a certain period in a complex of camps which also contained the Friedland camp, in which I was. In fifty one a little daughter was born, whom we saw here not so long ago, and in spite of the fact that I was well off, I was even very well off, I could not see the future for that my only daughter in a foreign terrain, meaning in Czechoslovakia, and so, in such a bit of fantasy, I was searching for something else. I occupied a high position, even after forty eight when the Czechoslovak state underwent conversion to Communism. I continued to be in a high position, I performed a function of a derek..., Director of an important enterprise, but all of that did not give me this complete satisfaction, when I thought about the future of my daughter. So, one day, I decided to emigrate to Israel. I realized that migration in the eightieth..., no, in sixty five and we emigrated for real to Israel. I came there, as my acquaintances explained to me, in a very uncomfortable time, during an economic crisis, so that it was difficult to get a job, it was even difficult to find an apartment then, and so on. And that how I slogged through a difficult period of time; summa summarum (ph)[Latin][in the final result] to the year eighty five, where, at the time that I retired, I decided to leave for Canada. It was also a fact, (a pause) that my daughter, Adasha, chose to study architecture, which was a very difficult curriculum then, which was very difficult, ugh, to get into, to conduct, and so on, at Technion (ph) in Haifa; she did not want to hear about another trade, she only wanted to become an architect. So, she struck out on her own, with the help of Canadian acquaintances, and left for Canada and here, in Canada graduated from the university and, as you know, is an architect, a successful architect to this day. It came to be somehow that I lived in Czechoslovakia for twenty one years after the war, and twenty such years or similar twenty one years I lived in Israel. (a pause)

Q: Would you - returning a bit back..., Would you in a few words tell us what happened, as if to finish that story about Rozenberg, Rozin and Wecler. What happened to them after that moment when you parted company with them in Bratislava, during the arrest?

A: Ugh, Wecler remained in Bratislava. (clears throat) Alas, he died in nineteen eighty.

Rozenberg stud..., studied biochemistry in Czech Prague and went abroad officially to deliver some kind of a speech from which he never returned to Czechoslovakia and remained, according to my information, in London. From London he left for a certain period of time, he left, besides he left with an intent of a longer stay, but I don't know what was the cause, he left for Israel, where, after a year, a year and a half, he gave up staying there. Most likely, because he could not get the type of work or have an opportunity which he wished. Rozin left for Israel and after a year returned from Israel, returned to Czechoslovakia, where I even helped him to find , to find a job. Then, he left Bratislava and went to Czech Prague. Presently, he lives in German, alas, in Germany and I stress that. (sigh)

Q: Continuing, returning to that

A: ah

Q: What..., because, - in the last moment, when we left that war story -

A: Yes.

Q: Rozenberg had contacted the partisans; there was no news from him...

A: Ah, you are returning to ...,

Q: _____ exactly.

A: To the period...

Q: Yes. What with this, with this, it interests me, what happened then. Why didn't he send you any sign and...,

A: All right. I, in the meantime, I had the misfortune of the second arrest. So, I don't know the details. I know that some kind of news came back, and in connection with that news Wecler went to the same place where Rozenberg was. And there, both of them, managed to remain till the end of the war.

Q: One more time, returning to another matter, I know that in nineteen hundred sixty four, while you were still in Bratislava -

A: Yes.

Q: An employee at the time of the archives of the Museum of the State..., State Museum in Oœwiêcim-Brzezinka ...,

A: Yes.

Q: a Mister Tadeusz Iwaszko...,

A: Yes.

Q: conducted an interview with you.

A: Exactly.

Q: May I ask you, if you please, to describe that interview. How did it look?

A: So, the visit, not only of Iwaszko, because accompanying him were two other persons. Alas, I did not remember the names. They visited me in Bratislava, unexpected. I only remember that much, that I spent..., I spent with them quite a bit of time, because they were demanding from me a report about Oœwiêcim, using questions, answers, and so on, and so on. With this, that this interview was never finished. We parted company with this [understanding] that I, at the invitation of the Museum in Oœwiêcim, will visit the museum and on location, with certain illustrations, with certain terrain details, and so on, will finish this interview. My travel never took place and the finish of my interview from Bratislava did not take place either. I did not receive a copy of that part which..., which exists, which you showed me yesterday, and I can only add one thing, that it was put together by Mr. Iwaszko on the basis, ugh, of certain details and notes, which he made for himself in my presence. Eh, I remember very well that, in spite of, that it has been a problem of thirty years, that it was written with an ordinary pencil, so that it would be easy to erase something. to correct something and to add something. [But} everything is accurate, except for two small details, which there are not as precise, but perhaps they are not important enough, so I don't want to, I don't want to simply take my position, but only to ascertain the fact, that it is so. Eh, so this is, this is, eh, where is where a half a sentence about the girlfriend of Adam RóŹycki, who proposed to me, later, when I failed to organize my escape with my selected friend, colleague Borensztajn (ph), who in the last moment before the deadline, meaning before the twenty seventh of May, forty four, was drafted into the newly selected

Sonderkommando (ph), so that I absolutely lost contact with him. At that time, I already had a second one chosen, because Ró¿ycki gave me an ultimatum that I am absolutely forbidden to change the date. To this I gave him a reply: “I am the person, who is first of all interested in not changing the date, because my nerves are shot. So, then, he said: “So, you know what? I will go with you.” That is how our chat began on this subject, on the subject of that community of interests (sic). So, I tried to explain to him: “Adam, true enough, you are normal man, and so on, but, however, your leg..., your prosthesis, betray you kilometers away, from afar. And, secondly,” I say, “You are not threatened with what I am threatened with. You are not doing too badly here. So, then, why would you want to run away? And thirdly,” I say, “You have here such a girlfriend who, maybe, what do I know, in a week, in a year, two, three, will be your chosen wife. So why would you, would you do it to her?” In that..., that report, although Iwaszko writes that she was that catalyst to lead him away from that thought. But this is not true. On the contrary, I still..., I still warned him, that he should not say anything to her, because this may mean danger for him/. “This is a woman who may be in love enough, so as to not to want to lose you. So, she can betray you, simply, like this.” So he started to understand in these intentions (sic) and said: “All right, then, so you select for yourself another partner and tell me who this partner is.”

Q: Second question, besides, from this interview, ugh, in those notes, ugh, of Mister Iwaszko, was written that this bunker had been used before.

A: No. This bunker was built by two workers of Ró¿ycki’s Kommando, and I conducted that work. I was that architect of that bunker and implemented the construction of that bunker. So, that this bunker disappeared in these circumstances, and no other (sic).

Q: Thank you very much.

A: I thank you. Well, we managed to reach the end.

Q: (English) Ah, this is room tone. Thirty seconds. Thank you everyone.

A: Ah...,

Q: (English) Is everybody standing by? No? We are ready to roll. Were recording. We are rolling and we have speed.

A: eh, I mentioned before that I married (a pause) my former wife. Generally, [placing it] in time, I wish to, however, a bit more concretely say. So, my wife, named Esta, came from Łódź. Our wedding took place in Bratislava on the eighteenth of August, forty eighth, and our daughter was born on November nineteenth, fifty one. Eh, together we have reached, reached Canada, where my wife, Esta became gravely ill. She had, had a few operations and, alas, we were not able to pre..., we were not able to, ugh...,

Q: save...,

A: save her and she died in Toronto (sigh) on the tenth of February, ninety..., ninety three (clears throat).

End of Tape Five

Tape Six

Q: (English) _____. You can tell us what we're looking at.

A: (English) OK, a little bigger, eh, is..., is..., imp...(picture of a map of Birkenau-Brzezinki)

Q: He'll... (Polish) Please tell us what it is, if you please?

A: Now then, this is a map of Birkenau-Brzezinki, divided into parts. Part B-2-D, B-2-d is that part in which, more or less, from the beginning of the year nineteen hundred forty three, was a part of the camp for men, having two rows of barracks, blocks, wooden blocks in which, eh, wooden blocks, beginning at the gate - entrance, which is not visible here. One side is even [numbers], the second one is odd [numbers]. On that even side is also located block number eighteen, in which I lived, from the year nineteen hundred forty three to my escape from Oświęcim, from Brzezinki.

Q: (English) Can't get this left hand the full wording in the red box, it's too..., Oh, Jer, I don't care about the top. OK? Yup. (long silence as the camera closes up on the general map of both camps)

A: What would you like to know about this?

Q: (English) _____. Please tell that this is the place of work of the, eh, Kommando, gravel removal, where the bunker was built and which was located near the, eh, Wasserfersongung (ph). I'm recording.

A: So, this is a position map, as a work place of a few groups in the area of the so-called "Grossen postenkette" (ph), that is a large chain of guards, which is not designated here (shows on the plan?) but it is an area which was, simply, guarded from the towers by the SS, and specifically I am talking about the place of work, more or less here, in this, in these spots, where the group of Adam Różycki, to which I belonged, worked. On this little railroad we would transport the gravel to the construction site, from the so-called gravel pit, which was, more or less in this spot (points?). On the left sides..., side of this here gravel pit, was constructed the bunker, by two members of the Różycki work group and by me, from which (he points with a pointer stick) the escape was launched. More to the north from this..., that gravel pit, there was a building, so-called "Wasserfersongung" (ph)(German), which was simply a concentration of pumps, water pumps, dippers, which drew water for the whole area of the sections which have been marked here ABC. That is all.

Q: (English) One second. Just watch your squeaking on your chair. OK. (a drawing of a cross-section of the bunker is shown)

A: (Polish) This is the location of the bunker built in the gravel pit. As I have mentioned before, we took advantage of the side..., of the sloping wall of the pit, where it can be clearly seen in the drawing AB. The entry into the bunker..., the bunker itself was lined with boards and supports, in order to support the weight of the gravel from this point down. And the entrance was through a wooden trap door, in such a way that one could only slip (sigh) one's own body in and remain in the lying position during the required period of time. (a pause and another drawing is shown) One can imagine the positions, mine and of my partner Rozin, of course, in a lying position, both of us, in this bunker, so constructed. The drawing is showing an opening, not too large, more or less, not even two inches (clears throat), maybe two inches, more or less. That was a small iron

pipe, pushed in, which carried air to the inside, with this, that the outlet of the pipe was masked with an appropriate piece, or a piece of turf, connected with the sod in the set up of this whole entrance wall. (shows with a pointer stick)(English) Yes.

Q: (English) _____ no problem. Just give me ten sec..., fifteen, ten, fifteen seconds. Minute and a half? (a photograph of a monastery appears)

A: This is a picture of the cloister in the little town which was called Saint Jur, near Bratislava, and in that cloister came about the historic meeting between the papal nuncio, Josef Burzio, Walter Rozenberg and me, Czesław Mordowicz, around the twentieth of June nineteen hundred forty four.

Q: (English) That's good. I have one....

End of Tape Six

Conclusion of Interview

Translation from Polish by Wallace A. Witkowski, J.D.

USHMM Volunteer 1998

Conclusion of Interview