

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Andrei Rosenberg**  
**November 7, 2001**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Andrei Rosenberg, conducted by Ina Navazelskis in Rockville, Maryland on November 7, 2001 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.

## **ANDREI ROSENBERG**

### **November 7, 2001**

#### Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Andrei Rosenberg, conducted by Ina Navazelskis, on November seventh, 2001, in Rockville, Maryland. This is tape number one, side A. Okay, Mr. Rosenberg, thank you so much for agreeing to talk to us.

Answer: Thank you.

Q: We'd like to find out a little bit now about what was like -- life like pre-war. You were born in Uszhorod, could you tell us about that?

A: Yeah, my name is Andrei Rosenberg, and I was born in Uszhorod, that time when I was born was belonging to Czechoslovakia until 1938. In 1938 was a deal between Germany, England and France, and they took it, Czechoslovakia as a [indecipherable] and Uszhorod, they give it to the Hungarians, who were there before. And [indecipherable] was -- it was Hungary this Uszhorod is ca -- the name of the city is [indecipherable] in Hungarian language.

Q: What was your native language? When you were born, what was your first language?

A: My first language was Hungarian. And -- because my mother was speaking Hungarian, my father not. Let me tell you about my close relative, this -- I lost them. My father was Herman Rosenberg. He came as a teenager, when he was 13 year old, to [indecipherable] trans-Carpathian, because it was a war in 19 -- with -- the first World War. And the Russian Cossacks made some anti-Semitic riots and other things, and they just decided to come to Uszhorod, which was Russian -- the Russians couldn't pass the Carpathian -- pass the mountains, so they came to start a living --

Q: Where did he come from? What city was your father born in?

A: My fa -- he was -- was a village.

Q: Uh-huh, which --

A: It was a village of -- of -- i -- i -- not far away from the Czechoslovakian and Polish border.

And that time, matter of fact, this -- it was belonging -- Galicia was it.

Q: So it was on the Polish side?

A: It -- it was in the Polish side, yeah.

Q: And the name of the village was?

A: Sokoliki, where he was born.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Besoke Sokoliki.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So my father was an orphan. When my grandmother got -- gave birth to a second child, she -- she got an infection, she died, she -- my father was one year old only, and that second child died, too. So my father, when he was three, four year old, he was already looking for her -- the [indecipherable] to be -- get --get feet in everything [indecipherable] child --

Q: He was looking to [indecipherable]

A: -- because he was a orphan. My -- my grandfather marry second time, so he got a new wife and five more children with -- from the second marriage, which got very good education, they all -- an -- and he, as an orphan, the stepmother didn't take care of him like she should. And my mother be -- come from a Hungarian Jewish family. She -- she was an orphan too, and she -- she became an orphan when she was 17 year old. She was the oldest daughter. And she got three

brothers and two sisters. And she was looking [indecipherable] how long she get married in 1923. And these children grew up and they start to take care of each other.

Q: Was she from Uszhorod?

A: She -- she was born in Uszhorod in 1903, yeah. And --

Q: What was your home life like? When you were growing up, what was your life like pre-war?

A: I was a happy child because I was very hel-healthy, and I liked to play soccer, and my parents take care very well of us, despite this -- was economically very tough that time, and we weren't rich, really.

Q: Did both your parents work?

A: No. My mother got, besides me, four more children.

Q: Wo-ho.

A: And she couldn't work, my father was working. W-W-What is different between me and usual -- usual ta -- people or occasions this happen -- this happens to be -- this -- my -- my father, he was born in Poland, and he couldn't get his citizenship.

Q: This would be in Czechoslovakia?

A: In Czechoslovakia and then in Hungary, the citizenship. And my mother, she -- she -- she was a [indecipherable] she got a citizenship, and they got already the five children, I was the oldest, this was in '41. So these people in my town started to suffer when -- in 1944 when the Germans occupied, and we got three extra years we suffered, because they took it -- my -- my father, and they decided -- they decided this -- we have no roof over our head. We have children, like the youngest was eight month old.

Q: And what year this was, 19 --

A: In 1941.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He was eight year -- I mean, eight months old. The oldest was -- I mean, the next one was three year older than him, and I not -- the -- the sister -- I got two sisters, one I still have it. The youngest sister, she was three year older -- she was about in -- in -- she was born in '34, and this was in -- in -- in '41, she was s --

Q: Seven.

A: -- six and a half, seven year old. And I will never forget, she said -- because my o -- p-parents got a -- an auction to -- to let all go with your father, or stay with your -- with the mother all together. If we would go with my father, we -- we would get killed in communist [indecipherable] in -- in -- in -- right away, in 1941.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Like my -- my father did get -- he -- he never --

Q: Yes, in 1941.

A: -- he ne -- yeah, he never returned. He -- he -- he -- they killed him. They just shot them and -- and -- and -- and throw them in -- 30,000 people in the Dnieper -- in the Dniester river, in the Dniester river. And so he never came back, my father. Economically it was very hard because he was the only one who was working.

Q: What was his occupation, what was his profession?

A: He was a mover.

Q: He was a mover?

A: Yeah.

Q: That is, he would move furniture, he would move --

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah --

Q: -- household goods and so on?

A: -- he -- he -- he got -- he got two horses and a wagon. He was a very strong man and they always made joke of him, they s -- nobody can compete with him because if somebody should charge for moving something, he should [indecipherable] another helper, and he could do for -- the job for two, he got so much strength. So he take it one side, and two other people the other side. And really was a physically very, very strong man.

Q: Do you have any favorite memories of your father, of your childhood growing up, seeing him work, seeing your parent's home and so on?

A: Yeah, we -- we got the ritual dinners, Friday and Saturday dinners. My father, he liked very much his children. He was very strict if you did something wrong, but he took care. God forbid if somebody, an adult or a neighb -- neighbor would touch you, he was in trouble, because he said, I have my children, I will punish them more than you do, but don't raise your hand in my children.

Q: So you felt protected.

A: He protected us.

Q: And you -- and --

A: And I was too, I -- I didn't -- nobody bothers me too much, because I -- I learned from him. And I couldn't compa -- co-complain to him. He said, you have no hands [indecipherable] why you do? He hit me. So hit him back. That time was a different time, no -- no -- nobody carry a knives and guns, you know, they said, oh, with -- with your fists, you couldn't kill with your fists other child, anybody. So my father stop at -- he -- he -- he went -- the horses left, and the -- the -- the wagon left and I was 14 year old and I took over these things. I quit school and I started to -- to partially f-feed my -- my family. Plus --

Q: This is -- you know, I'd like to come to this point, but in order for -- in order from someone in the future to understand what happened.

A: Yeah.

Q: They're not that familiar with both the situation in Czechoslovakia about the change of Czechoslovakia to Hungary and so on. So we'd like to talk a little bit about before 1941, what life was like, what the situation was like in Uszhorod.

A: Yeah.

Q: And a bit about the Jewish community in Uszhorod and then when all these changes happened.

A: Alright.

Q: That will make more sense. It will -- people will understand, because for them Uszhorod is a foreign, different place.

A: Yeah. So --

Q: So -- so perhaps we can -- you could tell us a little bit more about -- about what the -- was your family a re -- was a religious family? Did you observe -- did you observe religious --

A: Sure.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: The -- the thing is, this -- in -- in -- in -- in -- in -- wh-what are you asking me? This -- you would like to know, this what I said.

Q: Yeah.



A: You just stop it. My father ri -- liked the children. Always the smallest child, the ritual of F-Friday and Saturday [indecipherable] when I stop at --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- this way -- line.

Q: Yeah.

A: I crossed this line. And he -- took the children and he is --

Q: Clap?

A: -- [indecipherable] the smallest. And -- and he didn't look at the chi -- the children til three months, he didn't want to --

Q: He didn't want to see the child?

A: -- s -- s -- play with them, but like a -- but when the child start to smile and to tu dut dut, then he -- he -- he really become very close, and he always got one child on his laps, the smallest, who -- who -- but he should be at least six months old. How beco -- youngest become six month old, he got. And sure, that time everybody was re-religious. And jus -- Czechs -- Czechoslovakia was a democratic country.

Q: Mm-hm, and were there --

A: And the Hungarians [indecipherable] were fascist country. So we got a hard time with the Hungarians. They -- they started not to take to the [indecipherable] army and sent to camps, working camps [indecipherable] people. And this was a -- we feel the difference in the --

Q: You felt it

A: Yeah, because of his -- this was our fear, we -- we -- we -- we were ex -- except -- expecting this gonna happen.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Because, before they -- they didn't got this -- the newspaper there to -- there -- in -- in -- in -- in the people that, you know, hate people or something, or call names people because of his religious or [indecipherable]

Q: You would see that in Hungarian newspapers, that there were articles about Jews, about --

A: Sure, sure.

Q: Okay. And so you were a -- you were a --

A: We feel it.

Q: You felt it, yeah.

A: Sure.

Q: And when it -- when it actually happened, this was in 1938, how did your lives change?

A: I was only 11 year old.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So it didn't change too much. I -- I switch it to Hungarian school. My native language was Hungarian, so it di -- didn't affect me too much. Th-The -- th-the affection started in 1941, when I feel it.

Q: Okay. And your father, is that because he wasn't -- he -- as you mentioned before, because he had never had citizenship --

A: That's right.

Q: -- it's -- he was affected right away?

A: Th-That's what -- but if a -- a Gentile would live who didn't -- didn't got a citizens -- they didn't touch him.

Q: I see.

A: They -- they touched only the Jew.

Q: Okay. How did that happen? When the -- in 1941 --

A: Yeah?

Q: -- when -- when your father was taken, were there soldiers who came to your home? Was he picked up --

A: No, no, no --

Q: -- someplace [indecipherable]

A: -- they just tell him -- just tell him that you should come to the police station [indecipherable] of -- of things. I -- I was -- I -- like I told you, 11 year old, I accompanied him to the police station and I see it when they put him behind the bars, and he want to kiss me, and I run away, I couldn't take it. I run away. And he was crying and I was crying and that was the last time I saw him.

Q: I hear you. I hear you.

A: And until 1944 we got pr -- only economic problems, b-but in 1944 when the Germans came in in spring, very early spring, they put the Jewish na -- they made only [indecipherable]. They say e-every Jew should come to the factory of bricks, they made a ghetto.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was surrounded, and you were waiting your turn.

Q: Let me go back to your father's situation. When you said -- when you said the -- when you said good-bye to him, and it was the last time you saw him, I have a few questions about that.

A: Yeah.

Q: When did you find out what happened to him? How did you find out what happened?

A: I fi -- I fi -- find out this maybe -- maybe four or five months later.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It was suspicious already why they touched only the Jew like I told you, why they don't touch the other immigrants or some [indecipherable]

Q: And it was Hungarian forces who do this?

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm. Hungarian police, or Hungarian --

A: Hungarian police, yeah, yeah. And that's what happened.

Q: Did they say that -- did they tell you anything about what happened to the people they put behind bars? Did they say they were --

A: They say they're going to deport them.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But they didn't say they gonna kill them, but they did.

Q: And when did you find out about the fact -- you know, that.

A: Some people run away and survive and came back.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And they said this -- what happened.

Q: And your mother was there, and she found out about that as well? She knew -- they told her, they told you?

A: Yeah, she knew it too.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: She was crying not one night, my mother, remembering that she lost her husband, and she -- she w -- she l -- she was left with --

Q: Five children.

A: -- five children [indecipherable]

Q: And what was my other question about that? You -- it sounded like your -- his life was very hard even beforehand. You know, even ju -- before the war, when he was -- he had a -- he had a difficult job --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- and he had to -- you know, to support five children, and he had come from another town, another city.

A: That different. He got a hard, happy life. He got a hard, happy life.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was -- once happened -- I tell you [indecipherable] this, you understand what this mean. At evening he should have a lamp in his -- his wagon when is -- was a -- a [indecipherable] the -- the light. And the Czechoslovakian laws were very liberal. And they send you a paper and they said, you have -- have a vio -- a violation like that and that, you can take 200 korun fine, or you can come and sit two days in jail. And 200 korun this was a -- he made it maybe in three days.

Q: That's a lot of money.

A: So lots of money. He decided that he go for two days to the jail. And we were suffering because we were [indecipherable] Friday and Saturday, the -- his chair empty, we couldn't find ourself a place [indecipherable] he -- he -- he -- he -- he was thinking over there, and when he came home, he said, I did a mistake. I -- I -- I pr -- better if I would -- would pay this 200 koruns fine, and I would then my family. I remember such a thing. I was maybe 10 year old, yeah.

There's a big different to have a hard time th -- I mean, hard life, to work hard, to -- to -- and come home and have a good [indecipherable] the respect of your children are they growing, this is one thing --

Q: Yes.

A: -- and there's another thing.

Q: Yes.

A: It's a big different.

Q: And -- and so when they took him in 1941 --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- your -- you say your life changed right away. You [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, I got to sc -- quit school and go to work.

Q: What did you do?

A: I s -- I ge -- the same thing he did, the -- the mover, with -- I got the horses and I got the - this -- the -- the wagon. And I go -- and I got my health. I was to -- I was 14 - 15 year old, I could lift more than another one. I -- I inher -- inherited this from my father. And I helped him when I was 13 year old, in summertime, on vacation, I helped him, I worked with him.

Q: You were the oldest son.

A: Yeah, I was the firstborn child.

Q: Yeah, yeah. How did -- how -- did your mother also then go out to work after 1941?

A: No. She -- she -- she -- she -- she --

Q: Stayed at home with the baby.

A: -- she got plenty work to do, with -- wi --

Q: Mm-hm. So it all depended on you?

A: Not only on me, but mostly on me. But th-they depended also -- not they -- they -- they didn't depended to use is as a source, her brother got a li -- a smaller business, he -- he give her sometimes 10 pengas, 20 pengas. Then my -- my -- my father's aunt, she -- she give it 10 - 20 pengas, and my salary, and this way we survived.

Q: Mm-hm. You said something earlier, that you had a choice. When your father was arrested --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- the children could -- ho-how did that happen? What was this choice?

A: They wouldn't mind if we go to -- to die with him.

Q: I see, so the -- the -- the soldiers who came to arrest your father, the policeman who came to tell him to go to the s --

A: No, I didn't -- I -- I didn't say police come. I said he was going.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we -- if we would go, they would take us too.

Q: Did they take other people's children? Were there other full families --

A: They -- they were -- I don't know a situation where -- where they didn't got registered marriage by -- civil marriage, not -- not by -- wasn't -- they were married, my father and mine god -- my wi -- my mother and my father by the religious, they got a wedding or so, but I don't know other [indecipherable] it was such a situation, this, the -- the -- the -- if my mother would take the -- the Polish citizenship with -- then sh -- we would go too.

Q: I see. It was i --

A: But sh --

Q: -- it was her Hungarian citizenship that saved you for the time being.

A: That's right.

Q: I see.

A: For three years, an -- an --

Q: And so the children had that, and she had that.

A: And -- yeah.

Q: Mm-hm. And if he had had that, he also wouldn't have been [indecipherable]

A: He would -- he would be killed three year --

Q: Later.

A: -- later, like my mother was, and my -- and my small -- small children we -- he would -- three -- not -- not eight months he die, he would die in three year and eight months.

Q: I see.

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Mm-hm.

A: This what happened in [indecipherable]

Q: What happened then, in 1944?

A: 1944 we were taken to this -- by now they said that every Jew should come in this brick factory, and -- and wait. They feed us over there, I don't know, maybe a week, or maybe 10 days. And then, by train, by freight train, closed train they put us -- first we walked from -- from -- from the -- from the s -- bricks factory to the station. It was about a -- I don't know, half a mile or a little more, maybe a m -- maybe a mile. And everybody took something wi -- wi -- what we took with -- with -- with old stuff, only clothes, and a pillow and such a things.

Q: Do you remember any of the other items? Did you take any of your own personal belongs -- a book, or a -- or --

A: [indecipherable] walks, who want to schlep books? No.

Q: No.

A: And my sister Rachel, who was only in '44, 10 year old -- nine and I half I would say, cause she was in -- born in November and this happened early spring, she was taking too a couple pillows or something, and the policeman -- she -- she couldn't walk that -- a nine year old like



others. He -- he -- he started to yell at him, this faster, faster. And I -- I see that she is behind, so I waited for him, and my mother wouldn't want to lose her. So the policeman -- something my mother said, can't you see she is a -- a -- a child, she cannot walk that fast. [indecipherable] she hurry up, and I said my mother -- I remember that I said, what are you expecting from an animal something nice? This the way I said. He hit me. I said, you are an animal. Hit me again, and I said, you are an animal. And he -- he didn't hurt me, because I got so many things around me, I was this -- this -- so he always hit no -- not the head, but he -- he -- a pillow or something, he [indecipherable] and this I remember, and this the way we went to the station in Uszhorod, then they put us in -- in -- in -- in the train with this face, a closed face. And --

Q: Did you recognize -- do you know who it was who was doing that? Did you recognize the man who -- did you know who -- what his name was?

A: Yeah, Adolf Hitler. That was his name.

Q: I mean the man who hit you.

A: He -- he -- he -- he -- he -- he puts them [indecipherable] in the head, and -- and he was -- his idea was it in -- in a couple of -- I don't blame for this the Germans -- well, mankind. I -- I -- later I can give you many Germans who saved my life.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And Polish people who saved my life, and other people so -- I don't -- in Hungary is people who helped me. But this fascist idiots [indecipherable] ideas, they -- they is about [indecipherable] trouble. They -- they -- they shouldn't be forgiven. Those who -- who -- who helped me, I [indecipherable] give him then right away in the space. I know it who is nice to me, and who is nasty to -- with me. I know it -- that. I couldn't change it, but I know it.

Q: But the soldier who was -- who wanted your sister to hurry up and who hit you --

A: It was a policeman.

Q: It was a policeman.

A: He was in -- in the top of a horse, and he come down, yeah.

Q: And was he someone who you knew, or was he a stranger?

A: No, I never see him --

Q: You don't -- never saw him.

A: -- not before things got -- not after.

Q: Okay.

A: No.

Q: So you -- they brought you to the train and they -- they --

A: And then -- and they said, get in in the train.

Q: And all -- the whole family was still together? Your family was [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure, sure, sure. Even aunts we got the -- we could go in -- in the -- in the train, but we got that much room, everybody was sitting in a [indecipherable] corner and somebody in -- in the center, but you couldn't lay down or something.

Q: Were there bunks, or was it just -- just flat floor and sides of the car?

A: No, no, it was a fla -- flat [indecipherable]

Q: There was no place to lie, there were no bunks on the --

A: No, no, no.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: No. No, and then -- then, from there, we went to Koshita, which is Czechoslovakia.

Q: Yeah, mm-hm [indecipherable]

A: And then we went from there to the -- to the ca -- to the Carpathian pass, Dukla pass, was it?

Q: Carpathian Dukla pass

A: Yeah. We -- we went to Nowy Sacz was the first station. I sat in the window, Nowy Sacz. But before that, we passed the -- this -- this -- between S-Sacz -- Nowy Sacz and Koshita were, we were going to north, the Carpathians are so beautiful, and so it was in -- in -- in -- in -- in March or April maybe, very first April, or the end of March. My mother was staying and looking out in the -- for the little hole, window and she said, how nice nature is and these all children have to go and die. She feel that. She feel that.

Q: Was that how it was --

A: And then, in Tarnów, one of my -- I don't remember which of my brothers or sister were asking for a little water. My mother was speaking German a little bit, and she ask in the window, would you hand us a little water? He took a -- a -- a stone and he -- he threw it in -- in -- in -- in - - I didn't see his face, even, but he weren't a nice person. In Nowy Sacz, they got a whole train with soldiers [indecipherable] Germans, when they saw us, they made a --

Q: [exclaims] Across the throat.

A: Across the throat. This mean -- they know it, we -- w-where we are going. Some of them didn't know it maybe, but not this group, this was an SS group, they know it. But just -- you know, we're -- they were very young. They were fill it up with -- with -- the head with -- with these fascist idea, and -- and they turn it from people to animals.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's all. Be --

Q: How long did the train ride last? Now you left in --

A: May -- may -- maybe -- maybe -- maybe -- maybe -- the men -- many places th -- th -- th -- this was -- they were stopping and they didn't got the [indecipherable]. But I -- I think no more

than for 24 hours from -- from [indecipherable] to Auschwitz which should, under normal circumstances it should make it maybe in 10 hours. But it's -- that take about 20 hours, maybe something like that.

Q: 20 hours?

A: Maybe 20 hours.

Q: About 20 hours.

A: Yeah.

Q: Not very long. I mean, terrible to be in the train, but as far not for days at a --

A: 20 hours in these conditions --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- I don't wish anybody to try it.

Q: Yeah. No, I don't mean to say that, I mean -- I -- I just [indecipherable] mean it wasn't like from Greece when it would take days and days and days for people -- you know --

A: No, no, no, no, no it's -- it's not that big distance, it's -- it's not far away from Kraków, aush -  
- Auschwitz. And from Tarnów not too far away. Yeah. No -- no -- no -- no [indecipherable] you can do this distance maybe for eight hours.

Q: Eight hours, yeah.

A: Maybe. But this take -- took -- took long, because --

Q: Well, ca -- remind me again, how old were your brothers and sisters you had? They were all younger than you were, and in 1944, how old were they when they were on the train?

A: Okay, my next child in my family is my sister who is still alive, she lives in Jerusalem.

Q: Mm-hm. And her name is?

A: S-S-Sarah Nimberger. A-After the --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with Andrei Rosenberg, this is tape number one, side B. So Sarah was born in 1929?

A: In 1929, in March. She was less than two year y-younger than I.

Q: Yeah. And then after that?

A: After that was born Rachel in 1934. So she was onl -- younger than 10 -- 10 year old. And then was born Alexander, Shoney we always call him in Hungarian. Now, if you would like, it would be Sasha.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He was born in 1937, 10 years younger -- younger than I, right?

Q: Mm-hm. That's right. So he was about seven --

A: And --

Q: -- years old when that happened?

A: Then -- n-no -- I was 16 and a half or so, he was --

Q: Six and a half.

A: Six and a half, that's right. And I -- and th -- was one -- we call him Lotty, it's like Lazlo, a Hungarian name, the youngest. He was born in 1940, so he was three and a half year old.

Q: [indecipherable]. And your mother, who you said was born in 1903.

A: Yeah. She was 40 year old.

Q: And what was her name again?

A: Huh?

Q: Your mother's name, what was her name?

A: Ethel.

Q: Ethel.

A: Ethel Klein.

Q: Did anyone tell you where you were going?

A: No. No, but my -- one of my aunts who was staying -- all night we are staying in the front of Auschwitz in that -- the -- the -- we were staying in the station for 24 hours after we're --

Q: Oh, really?

A: -- they didn't let us go out right away or something.

Q: So as --

A: They were waiting for our turn. They -- how much they can kill people in the crematorium. My -- my -- one of my aunts, she see the fire, and -- and the smoke from the crematorium, and she said, let's pray, because she said there was -- there are people. We -- we didn't believe her, we were thinking she have dreams. But she wou -- she see it. We were sitting at night and he -- she was looking out the window and she see the -- the flame and -- and -- and -- and -- and she see it, she said, pray. Then in the morning, I don't know which day, second day or third day, I don't know, they open that, and they said, get out. There was Dr. Mengele, who made the selection. And he -- he -- he did it, to right, to left, to right, to left. He -- he made that d-decision who he can use, the -- but mothers -- this -- the children don't be [indecipherable] chaos, so they give her a towel, they give her a piece of -- of -- of -- I -- I just know that not from -- later I figure out that, from stories. And they send in -- in there in -- in the gas chamber, and look like a shower.

Q: Mm-hm. Oh, I see, I see.

A: And this come -- instead the water, came the --

Q: Gas.

A: -- Zyklon or how you call this, and -- and -- and they killed the -- the mothers with the children. And if my mother wouldn't have any child sh -- at age 40, Mengele would set her between the workers, and maybe she'll survive, maybe not.

Q: So tell me about that, when the train opened, y -- and the -- and the -- and the car opened, the boxcar that you were in, do you remember what you saw? Do you remember looking --

A: I saw people around me, and I saw a German officer who was directing, you go here, you go there, like --

Q: And you knew it was Mengele?

A: Th-Th-This was -- I -- I read and th -- the -- he is -- he was the one who -- who made the selection. I don't -- I-I -- I didn't know Mengele personally, I just heard that.

Q: Right. Okay, okay. And when y -- when -- when that happened --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- what happened with your family?

A: So went a -- we -- we c-came out -- I remember again, like now, my mother want to kiss me. No, first she gave me a couple loaf of bread. And I said, mama, I'm young and I gonna work. If they gonna make me work, they gonna feed me. You going with two small children -- I don't know they going to die, so you will need a piece of bread better. I didn't took it for her, the bread she give it to me. And she was waiting I -- I kiss her. I -- I didn't come kiss her. I r -- run away like I did with my father. I couldn't do it. And they -- they disappeared forever, and I went to -- to -- to Auschwitz and they give me this number over there.

Q: What is the number?

A: A sic -- 6251. And then th-they -- they send us for work. They -- they keep -- that's why they kept us, to work.

Q: So everybody else -- what happened with Sarah, what happened with Rachel? They --

A: Sarah -- Sarah was going with her aunt too, to work by this woman. Woman go with women and man with men.

Q: I see, I see.

A: And -- and -- and she is the one only who -- who survived with [indecipherable] two of us.

Q: I see.

A: And we --

Q: So you were on one side with -- there was a -- there was a -- a group of men, and then there was a group of women who were --

A: A-And a -- a group of -- of children in -- in -- in -- in -- who was unable to work, they go together. They got three groups, workers men, workers women, and others th -- and the others, they're going to the crematorium.

Q: I see. When did you find out that? When did you know that for sure?

A: For sure I knew it in the concentration camp, and I bi -- I came because people knew it because certain people was working and they somehow get connected with each other.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And they told. I didn't see it, but I heard exactly from people who was working in -- in this crematorium, they killed most of them, because they didn't want to -- but sometimes they miss it or some reason -- some of them, very little percent survived in -- and then -- then anyway became no secret by then.

Q: Yeah, of course, of course.



A: And they send me to work, to [indecipherable] very close, maybe about eight kilometer.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: A coal mine from Auschwitz, the name of the coal mine was Janina.

Q: Okay. What was that like?

A: Huh?

Q: What was that like, working in this coal mine?

A: What? What?

Q: What was that like, can you describe it s --

A: What was that like? So, I was that time 16 and a half year old, and I got to -- to make the -- the way -- in the coal mine [indecipherable]

Q: Mm-hm, from concrete.

A: From concrete, and I got this to lift and to give it, and I got a friend --

Q: You had to lift blocks of concrete?

A: Yeah. Somebody could [indecipherable] somebody not, I could. I do it for my part and I do it for my friend who was my schoolmate. His name was Herscovitch, Gobby.

Q: And he was about the same age as you were?

A: The same age as me. He didn't -- I helped him later, I tell you, what I could, but when I decided to escape, I cou -- he was in a bad shape. I -- if I took him, I -- I -- none of them would do it, not him, and not me. And how -- small world, he has here -- he got here, I figure out -- I find out -- I didn't figure out, I find out, that's not the right word -- he got here an uncle in America, he was living in -- in -- in -- oh, what is this city's name? Washington state, big -- big city --

Q: Seattle?

A: In Seattle.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I got a family doctor, a Hungarian here, and I went, and he said, you know, here was a girl, and she said this -- her father is from Uszhorod, and his name is Berman. And only Dr. Berman I know, it was the uncle of the -- the [indecipherable], but I couldn't connect him because I -- he -- he didn't survived, I know, he was in bad shape. So --

Q: So you were in the coal -- so when -- let me go back to the day you were after -- you know, you say you -- you are split apart from your mother and the other children and your sisters in the women's group, and they bring you to a concentration camp.

A: Camp, that's right.

Q: Okay, what was -- what did that look like? Do you remember?

A: Sure.

Q: Okay.

A: Th -- you got blocks. In blocks you got the beds, one -- one second [indecipherable] barracks.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And this was what it was looking. And then you got a kitchen in -- and there you went for food, they give you some soup, a little and a little bread, you were hungry like a dog, with such a physical work. And not too many people were -- survived that. What I should tell you this, once a German engineer was coming down and he see it how I lifting these concretes, and he said, thi -- hi -- this is a young child, he said, can't you find him this, he takes a -- a [indecipherable] and clean it a little here, the places? Why are you let him lift?

Q: Concrete.

A: And he helped me. He got a heart. He was a German, an engineer, but he got a heart here, not a stone.

Q: So he changed your job?

A: He change my -- my -- my job for -- what -- was helping me, too, because I -- I needed less energy.

Q: How long were you lifting this concrete? How ma -- was it a number of weeks, was it some days?

A: About a month, maybe.

Q: About a month.

A: Yeah.

Q: About a month. And wa -- did they -- did you have a routine in the morning where they brought you from the camp to the coal mine?

A: Yeah, we're -- we were marching.

Q: Mm-hm. What hour did you have to get up?

A: Bi -- bi -- maybe eight, maybe seven, I don't know --

Q: You don't remember.

A: -- I ca -- I can't remember.

Q: It wasn't -- some -- well, there were --

A: The -- the clock -- bu -- we -- we were working three -- three day -- shifts, like morning, afternoon and night.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So I was in the morning.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So I don't rem -- it was earlier, maybe six o'clock, but we -- we did hour -- eight hours.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And -- and besides that, we got only a day off that -- the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month.

Q: Okay, so you worked 14 days --

A: Seven -- seven days and then six days and then you got a Sunday off.

Q: Okay, so 13 days straight, and then a day off.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Were most of the people about your age? Were they all young people?

A: No, no. Were -- people were different, from my age and up until 50 maybe. [indecipherable] but h-he was in a good shape. Let me tell you, a miracle happened to me over there. There was a Dr. Orlich, a Czech doctor, and he -- he got authority because the German's families were zi -- living in th -- in -- in -- in blocks over there, outside, and he was like a family doctor to them. So they --

Q: But he was a prisoner?

A: He was a prisoner, a Czech Jew, Dr. Orlich, and every three months approximately, they got a selection. They -- he came -- an SS [indecipherable] and he get over, he look at the muscles and how the n -- if somebody was too weak, he took them to the crematorium. Every three month. And when he meet -- missed me, I made a sour face. He said, what, you're not happy? You want to go? I said, sure. I didn't know -- they were [indecipherable] were telling this, they go for a -- easier work, for a better work. And this Orlich jumped right in the middle, He said, leave him, he said. This is the only Hungarian Jew who never ever attended the -- the -- the -- the hospital [indecipherable] or any -- and never was sick, he can work. And I was saying, what a son-of-a-

gun, a Jew, and he -- he -- he -- he -- he doesn't want m-my life make a little easier, and he saved my life. He knew it. He knew it exactly because he was an insider. He knew it exactly.

Q: When did you know it?

A: Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha, I find out later --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- much later. I don't know when, but I find out that he saved my life, Dr. Orlich. He would be hundred year old if he would live.

Q: Did you ever know what happened to him? Did he --

A: I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: I don't know.

Q: Yeah.

A: A small world. Again, I got something with my feet, and it was there a Hungarian s -- a surgeon, Dr. Krause.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And he decided to make me a little operation, right -- right here -- here is --

Q: I see, mm-hm.

A: -- and he clean it out, this, and before that I was washing the -- the hallway. So I -- I would wash the hallway and when -- in the middle he says, come on on the table. He give me some opium. He took so long to put me asleep, he said, what are you, a horse or something? And then, when I -- he finished, I jumped from the bed down, and I went to the hallway to finish to -- where you are going, he said. I said, I just -- just stopped to wash the hallway, I go finish it. I says, I have a job, that -- he said, you remember that? He said, you are a horse. In -- in this small

world what I said, when I was in Israel, my uncle got a surgery and I told this story, and the wife said, Dr. Krause, was he red-haired? He was red -- he was from this city? Yes. He said, he made the surgery in the 50's here, to your uncle. Small world.

Q: Very small world. Very small.

A: Very -- I ra -- I give you more small world later.

Q: Okay, okay. So --

A: So --

Q: When we go back again to when that -- when you say the German engineer found -- told them to give you another job.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was that? What was the -- what were you --

A: Just clean the -- with a [indecipherable]

Q: But you were inside the coal mine?

A: Yeah.

Q: Inside the coal mine.

A: Yeah, what else in the coal mine. The coal -- the -- from the coal mine is raining.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And you become so wet in January and December and how long you march to the -- to the camp, it was a half a mile is -- is like bones, is frozen. I never sneezed. [indecipherable]. You become sometimes, you know, so s-strong that you wouldn't believe it. Many people just came a -- and once -- once a Russian --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- a Russian prisoner of war, he was in this camp too, he escaped.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: With the civilians. So they were -- they -- they -- they -- they were looking for him and counted us again and again and again. I was thinking a -- in this cold place, in [indecipherable] they call them appelleplatz --

Q: Mm-hm, oh yeah, appelleplatz, mm-hm.

A: And in the appelleplatz, in --in the -- I wa -- I was staying and then I just survived.

Q: It sounds that first of all you had very strong health.

A: Yes.

Q: That that helped you.

A: It helped me a lot.

Q: And --

A: Besides that --

Q: Mm-hm?

A: Besides that, they -- they did love me, people. I was lovable to them, because anything they asked me, I did it. I never argue, and I didn't got enemies, it is very important. I -- I go -- I -- I afraid we gonna miss a very important parts.

Q: This is a very important part.

A: We are still in -- in -- in -- in -- in -- in the concen -- in the concentration camp. Then remind me how did I escape, how did --

Q: Oh yes, oh we come to that, yes, we will. How you escaped.

A: How I escaped and --

Q: But this, what you're talking about now, I think, is also very important, how somebody survives. It's -- also depends on how others react to them.

A: Yeah, but beca -- well, for example, was a -- was there a Pan Traibush.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I w-want to come to him later. He -- every day he brewed for himself, he was about 60 year old man, he brewed him two pieces of bread with -- with schmaltz.

Q: With fat?

A: With fat.

Q: Yeah.

A: And when he sit down to eat he always handed me one, and he eat one.

Q: Wow.

A: Every single day for months. And he's a second one like Dr. Orlich who saved my life.

Q: So he was the second Dr. Orlich for you.

A: That's right. And I didn't forgot when I c -- escaped and I c -- was going home, I made five [indecipherable] five extra miles to meet this, and tell him [indecipherable] and kiss his hand.

And he said, Andrei, here is a bread, he said, got how much you want. I said, I ashame, I can't eat all this bread. You give me better a b -- you give me a bi-bigger piece than I ha -- I will take it. And he got me -- he gived me the -- the bread to eat, and I got more bread with -- from another resources and I went to the concentration camp, and I left with him and I told him thank you.

Q: This Pan Traibush, was he a prisoner?

A: No, he was a civilian.

Q: He was a civilian, he was a Polish civilian?

A: A Polish civilian, Pan -- Pan -- Pan Traibush. He got a big family. I was in his home when returning home.



Q: So what was his job in the -- in the camp?

A: He -- he -- he was a coal miner, a real coal miner.

Q: Oh.

A: He was a real coal miner.

Q: So in a way can you say -- i-is it what you're saying is that he kept you alive by giving you that piece of bread all the time?

A: Definitely.

Q: Okay.

A: Definitely. And when I was coming back, a German prisoner of war, 17 year old guy like me, he see it -- he was in the same camp and I was, but they divided the camp in two. In one, I was -- I was going for the first one, certain people was sick and they didn't go with us for the march when [indecipherable]. I want to know what happened to them. They survived, nobody touch them. And -- and -- and -- and the Germans lo -- run away and they were alive. And th-the other [indecipherable] the other half, they were German prisoners of war. And to the fence came a German 17 year old boy like me and he -- he gave his hand, he s -- ask me for a piece of bread. I break it and I give it to him. And people was telling me, some people, that you're crazy, he just killed [indecipherable] your people and -- and [indecipherable] not he. He didn't kill. I don't know what he did, you don't know what he did. You can't s -- you can't say what he did or how long, you don't see it. I survived with help of Germans, Polish people and others, so it was my due to make him survive. I -- I didn't know that he is a murder or something. Was a kid, who was drafted to the army. He couldn't say Hitler, no I'm not going, he would shoot him. You can't judge -- you know, you got people like that, you got people -- you know, you cannot unify people, th -- ba -- or go by -- by nationality or by religious. That's not the right way to do.

Q: I want to ask you something that's a little harder to ask. You -- you're mentioning people who helped --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- and who helped you survive and how you helped somebody else survive. Did you also experience people who betrayed you? Did you, either in Uszhorod before 1944, or afterwards when you were in the camps, did you also see that?

A: No -- no adult.

Q: No adults.

A: A -- children I -- I -- I -- I -- I didn't blame because children are children, th-they don't know what -- you know, no adults.

Q: No adults?

A: No.

Q: No. Okay, okay.

A: [indecipherable] happen, not me. I was even -- but I was always a good Jew.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I see it once, a -- a young man was beating up an older Jew. I was maybe 12 year old. I took a couple of stones and I threw it on him who was attacking a-and I knew it he won't catch me, he was trying to, but I was -- know I-I-I'm faster. And this o -- that -- that time this Jew escaped. I bring down -- that's the way I could bring down, you know. But if somebody -- to me, most of the people I would say, schoolmates and others, we -- we got strong relationship, even when I returned and before, bec -- I got friends.

Q: That was another question that I wanted to ask about your pre-war years. Were you -- when you grew up, did you grow up in the Jewish community, or did you integrate with Hungarians? Did you go to -- did you have friends who were not Jews?

A: My best friend was that time a Jew guy.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: His name was -- he didn't survive, he was in Janina too, in a coal mine. He -- he was a [indecipherable] intellectual. He was -- he got a big library and he -- he gave me all the books I read, I read a lots of books when I was very young. Overnight I -- I read books. And I was his model, role model. He wasn't -- he was a si -- scientist. He was [indecipherable] h-he was -- he says I love you because I would meet many people like you, Andrei, who can play soccer, who can fight, who can that -- do that, who can -- I can't do that. And he -- h-he -- and he share with me everything -- I mean, his secrets [indecipherable] was 14 year old [indecipherable] alike in something --

Q: Those are important things for 14 year olds.

A: Yeah, and he was a close friend and other friends I -- I -- I got. During the war, I didn't got too mu -- too much time during -- when I was working and supporting my fam -- my -- my sister. But after the war, I -- I got a lots of mixed friends.

Q: Okay. Sorry. I interrupted to go back to Uszhorod, but we were -- we're back in the coal mines.

A: I went -- go to Uszhorod, too once.

Q: Yeah?

A: I was in Uszhorod once, yeah.

Q: We were back in the coal mine, where Pan --

A: Pan Traibush.

Q: -- Traibush would bring bread every day.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you then were -- for how long was it that you had that easier type of job, where you didn't have to lift the concrete but you were shoveling -- you were shoveling the coal there --

A: I -- I -- I think I got it al-always -- all -- all -- almost all the way [indecipherable]

Q: Oh, from -- okay. So that last time --

A: I got the -- got the other things to do, but that heavy like concretes, I didn't got that.

Q: Okay. And you were working in the coal mine for how long?

A: Well, it's from -- from March or April until January.

Q: Oh, okay, so almost nine months --

A: Nine months --

Q: -- nine months.

A: Ja-Ja-January the 18<sup>th</sup>, they [indecipherable] I remember that too, because th-that -- th-they liberated Budapest or something, I -- I -- in Hungary, or Kraków.

Q: Mm-hm. Were there peop -- were the people who you worked with, was it all Jews, were there political prisoners in th --

A: Where? In -- in -- in the concentration camp?

Q: Mm-hm, and in the coal mine. Was it -- were there Soviet prisoners in there --

A: Yeah, yeah -- no, no, no, they -- they got --

Q: What kind of a group was it?

A: -- they got most of them Jew.

Q: Most of them, mm-hm.

A: Most of them Jew. The majority.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: They then got Polish and German, you re -- is no time to -- to -- you don't miss your daughter? Okay, this is important, this is important, too.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Then in -- in 19 -- what a -- but -- what I was telling, the last one, you know. The --

Q: Oh, oh, we were talking about January 18<sup>th</sup> when there was a liberation --

A: Right.

Q: -- and then I asked about who else was in the coal mine besides --

A: Ah, okay, okay. There were Jewish majority like that.

Q: Jewish majority.

A: Yeah. Then y-you got Polish political prisoners.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And pole -- Polish criminals. The same German --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- political prisoners and criminals.

Q: Were they treated differently?

A: Definitely.

Q: Okay. How?

A: Well, the -- when -- when we evacuated they give it to -- to the Germans -- to the Germans prisoners, they give it, the -- the weapons to -- to -- they -- they -- they were German. It's like now you're wearing something [indecipherable] but in the first place I'm that, you know. Some people it's like that. Yeah. And they got -- they got Russian prisoners of war, too.

Q: And did they -- when you talk about this, were they all -- were you in the same barracks, or were they split apart in different barracks and they had different jobs?

A: Usually they were -- they were to-together -- together groups, Jewish with Jewish, and --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- y-yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Right.

Q: And in your group was it -- were -- were most Jews also from Hungary, or were they from [indecipherable]

A: From Hungary, from Greece, from France, from Italy. That's what -- from Holland, from Czechoslovak -- from Slovakia, from Czech. So we got -- from Belgium. We got them, lots of them.

Q: Besides -- besides --

A: But there's only [indecipherable]

Q: I see.

A: The most of them were Polish, and -- and the Hungarians, and the Polish.

Q: Besides your -- your -- besides Mr. Pan Traibush, who would share his bread with you --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- what was the daily diet? What would you get to eat, and when did you get it in the camp?

A: Oh, we got -- we got soup every day.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And a piece of bread. And that's all we got. That's not enough calorie to work in a coal mine.

Q: Did people die?

A: They ba -- not in the place, they took them away.

Q: Uh-huh. Did that happen often?

A: They -- every three months they made selection.

Q: Oh yeah, every three months they made selection, but during those three months, di -- would it be that people would --

A: No, no --

Q: No.

A: -- I didn't see it. Th-They -- they -- they got -- they got always that much time to send him in the crematorium.

Q: Mm-hm. So you were there for nine months, so you were there to see two selections, or three selections?

A: I don't remember exact -- exactly, maybe they missed me.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But this I remember.

Q: Mr. Orlich. With --

A: Dr. Orlich --

Q: -- Dr. Orlich, yeah.

A: Yeah, this I remember.

Q: This one -- remember. Okay, you were telling me about January 18<sup>th</sup>, when those --

A: Yeah.

Q: What happened then?

A: January 18<sup>th</sup> then they decided to evacuate us because the Russians were already in Kraków which is not that far away from Auschwitz, and they put us together, we were marching.

Q: Yeah.

A: First we were marching to Auschwitz.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In Auschwitz they gave us some food. They gave for three people two bread, and two  
conserves. And one-third, it should give it to the third one.

Q: Conserve -- by conserves, you mean little cans of food.

A: Yeah, yeah, something like that. And they said, you -- you take one third, you will have two  
third and you give him one third so we will have everybody two third. And I was --

End of Tape One, Side B



Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Andrei Rosenberg, on November seventh, ni -- 2001, conducted by Ina Navazelskis. This is tape number two, side A. So you were --

A: Why you so open?

Q: This has to be on each tape. We have to be --

A: Oh.

Q: -- able to identify each tape so that if ever it would get lost in the sequence, we would know what it --

A: No, I'm just that -- it's so little tapes, you know, we were --

Q: The reason -- oh, why the tapes are so short?

A: Yeah.

Q: Because then they would be stronger.

A: Oh.

Q: If they have longer tapes there's more chance that they would break, that they would deteriorate.

A: Mm.

Q: They use 60 minute tapes.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: 30 minutes each side.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And they've tested and seen that these are the strongest that can stay for a long time.

A: Okay.

Q: So --

A: You j --

Q: -- sorry for interrupting, but --

A: No, okay. So what was the question?

Q: Oh, th -- we were talking about Auschwitz and how the evacuation --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- was happening and how you didn't get any food. You were hungry.

A: So -- any food, yeah. I was hungry.

Q: Yeah.

A: Then we got over there, we were marching to the -- to the west, and we reached f -- af -- a -- after Auschwitz, city Mikolów.

Q: Mikolów, mm-hm.

A: And there they take us to a movie theater just to sit up or [indecipherable] or something because we were hungry marching already, I don't know, maybe 24 hours. Then we s-slept somewhere after that in a -- slept i-in -- in -- in a brick factory, too, like in -- over there we were. And they took us further to the west.

Q: Mm-hm, further west.

A: And they didn't -- they were hoping they will find some maybe s -- train or something, but they didn't find anything, so we were marching.

Q: So this was still under der -- under guard?

A: Under guard, sure. And people if felled, because he couldn't walk any more, it was older than I am -- I -- I was marching with those for three days. He -- he -- he -- he -- he wouldn't be able to make it [indecipherable] somebody. This sim -- pa -- pa -- pan -- I got some -- some from Pan

Traibush in my body. And they -- they started to shoot por -- people who couldn't -- who couldn't walk, they shoot him right in the -- in -- in -- in the highway, right? In the highway, and they le-left them behind. And we were going -- Gliwice is a city.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: There was too a -- a camp, this all is sil -- Silesia, and we were there overnight. People -- we went, break the door, took some raw potato seed and everything, we were --

Q: Hungry.

A: -- hungry. I didn't eat too much because I was still in a condition. But I feel that this not for long. The next day they put us again in the train in Gliwice, and they were taking to us more. But we were standing more than -- than we was going. They needed for somebody the -- the -- the train, they say, get out, get in, you know [indecipherable] they took it, what is first for the army, then for that, then for that.

Q: It sounds like chaos.

A: It was, yes, it wasn't in no -- they -- they didn't got a plan like that, it just turn out that way. And [indecipherable] this was the main point, what I'm telling you now. I heard these people were screaming, they can't go, and they [indecipherable] to the Germans and they said get out in -- in -- in -- the train was in the middle of a forest. From one side was a forest, and for otherwise a [indecipherable] he was going the railroad. And certain people -- [indecipherable] jumped to the forest.

Q: At the back end of the tra --

A: At the back end of the train, and I was in the middle and I was thinking I should escape too, because I want to make it. And I came up with an idea this, I gonna play dead. I laid down near the -- the railroad, and I s -- s -- was waiting when somebody will come, I stop my breathing and

everything. And they came, two German SS, and they ask the -- the guys in the -- the train, w-  
would you walk? They said no. He took down his automatic weapon, and he shot them right  
there. And I was already in the process to escape, but I was waiting they say leave.

Q: That is that you were standing or you were lying down?

A: Lying.

Q: You were lying down.

A: Lying down, lying down. And the SS -- he came, he turned me over with his feet. He said,  
this a young guy [indecipherable] kaput. This guy is kaput, too.

Q: This young guy is also dead, basically.

A: He is dead, yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And then he went to the other side again to his friend, and he -- he didn't go down and up  
from the other side of the train, he sent two bullets in my direction. And, because he  
[indecipherable] lay down, I could see with one eye, the ricochet. And then he la -- they left, and  
I was thinking, that's all -- all takes to die? I'm not feeling like I'm dead, I started to move. I'm  
not dead.

Q: Did the bullets hit you?

A: No. No, I wasn't even --

Q: Yeah, uh-huh

A: -- nothing. And then I get up, and when I heard noises, they -- they -- they are shooting in this  
direction, I moved a little to the left, or to the right. I was oriented [indecipherable] orientation  
where the SS, who -- who hunting people is.

Q: I see. So they were -- what -- if I can understand the -- the vision, the picture of how it looked.

A: Yeah?

Q: You had the train --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- in the -- in this forest, a forest to the one side --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- forest to the left.

A: Yeah.

Q: People from the back of the train had already tried to run, and escaped?

A: Yeah, this -- this was they were hunting them.

Q: This was who they were looking for. Then there were all the prisoners who were outside of the train --

A: They went to the other s --

Q: -- and they were on one side --

A: -- on the other side who an -- who -- who -- who -- who did -- did -- did -- some of them surviving [indecipherable] too much.

Q: And they were continuing, and so they were telling them march. And if someone didn't march, they shot them on the spot?

A: If somebody said he can't march --

Q: No, if he can --

A: -- he's unable march, then he --

Q: -- if he's unable to march then they shoot them on the spot.

A: That's right.

Q: And -- and you had laid down to pretend to be dead, and they walked by and they saw you, and just to make sure --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- they -- they shot two bullets in your direction.

A: That's right.

Q: But they didn't hit you.

A: No.

Q: And then you heard that they were shooting in various directions and so you would always move away --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- from that direction.

A: In the f -- in the forest already.

Q: Okay, in the for -- so you were in the forest --

A: I went to the forest then.

Q: You then got up and you ran?

A: I ran to the forest.

Q: Okay.

A: And then I heard voices in the forest.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Just far away like from here to -- to there were marching two SS. It was a big, big tree, and I -  
-

Q: So about 10 feet, 15 feet?

A: -- yeah, and I was standing behind these big -- and -- and they didn't saw me.

Q: Okay.

A: They didn't saw me, so they just -- when they walked away, I continue to go. And I came out -- came out to the -- to the highway where German cars were marching [indecipherable]

Q: Did you know where you were?

A: No. No.

Q: How -- what happened?

A: So, the -- the cars were coming, so I -- I got -- first I -- I always was hiding in between the trees. When the car was coming I was jumping. Then I get tired. How long can I do these exercises without having food and other? So I decided -- I took my pants and I tie it here, and my coat was looking like I'm an old woman, I fix, I got a collar, and I was walking like an old woman, like that. How long I did, the first window with light I find. So I knock at the door. I decided this, I'm -- I'm a lucky one, I already -- they -- they -- they tried to kill me by -- not -- they didn't try to kill me, liquidate me by the railroad. The s -- in the forest they were passing, two Germans, they didn't heard me, they didn't see me, so I -- I was thinking in the lucky [indecipherable]. So I knock at the window and they open the door. I came in, see the Polish Catholic family, so I came in and I car-caress my heart. They said, who are you? I said, I'm a half a Jew, and a half a Catholic, I said. Cause I know it's a very --

Q: Suspicious?

A: No. They very religious.

Q: Ah.

A: So if I am a little Christian, they be nicer even to me like they are. But they were very nice people anyway. They feeds me, they give me some civilian suit. And they told me, you know, you go just down the way, then you make a left turn, you will see over there a shade.

Q: Like a shade of a tree?

A: No, a shade.

Q: A shed?

A: A shed.

Q: Oh, excuse me.

A: Okay

Q: A shed, mm-hm.

A: A shed. [indecipherable] they got the hay there.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And you -- you go -- go in, I -- here is for you food for 24 hours. And at evenings you can come out, the shed belongs to the -- to -- to the school. Nobodies. In the evening come out to people, you're gonna go in and ask them for [indecipherable]. In a couple days maybe the Russians will arrive and you will be free.

Q: Did they -- did you tell -- did they tell you where you were? What the town was, or what the village was where you --

A: The village I remember, it was [indecipherable]

Q: Shegenza?

A: Yeah, [indecipherable] or something like this. And -- and this was about maybe eight - 10 kilometer -- it's -- it's only about five, six miles from this little town of Rybnik.

Q: And is that what you did?

A: And this what I want to do, so I went to this, and there were two sheds, one belonging the school, the other one to s-somebody's private property. And I s -- I don't know how I -- I find that doskat -- doska kalboit.



Q: A board?

A: Board what was missing, and I went in -- in over there, always down to the -- the -- to the bottom of the -- the siano.

Q: Hay?

A: Hay.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And I was thinking I gonna wait until tomorrow evening. It was cold, this was January, like I said, maybe this was the 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> January. And I was sitting all day long over there. Then I decided this -- I see it's dark outside, I have to go out. I couldn't find the place when I get in, where --

Q: You didn't find where the board was, you didn't find how you got in?

A: No, I didn't know how I get in. I want to get out, I don't know how. And then they got a place over there for the -- for the h -- chickens, for that they come out. This was a so small place [indecipherable] I could get out too. I get out, I was skinny. And then again, the first light, I'm the lucky guy, knock at the window. Wer ist dort, the question was.

Q: What was the question?

A: Wer ist dort, in German. Who -- who is --

Q: Oh, wer ist dort, yeah, mm-hm.

A: Who is there.

Q: Who is there, mm-hm.

A: I said, einer from yesterday, I said -- in German, I forgot how was -- from gestern

Q: Einer von gestern.

A: That's right.

Q: One of those from yesterday.

A: From yesterday, and they know they got over there marching and some people

[indecipherable]

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And she open it, come on in.

Q: Okay, so you went to the same place?

A: No.

Q: No? A different place?

A: It's a different place, this was a kilometer from there.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: Where they send me. I didn't go. I go right next to who belong this, in the same -- same territory.

Q: I understand.

A: I came in, I -- and there were a woman and three children, ages -- the children were ages maybe 12 - 13, her name was [indecipherable] and the one girl was Maria and the boy was Joseph. He was the [indecipherable] lesnic.

Q: What -- what --

A: Forest man.

Q: Forester?

A: Forester.

Q: Forester. He was the forester.

A: He was the forester.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He was the forester. And he -- she -- she w -- she said -- I -- I said her this, I am from -- one of these people who was yesterday here and I --

Q: You spoke to a man or a woman?

A: To a woman.

Q: To a woman, okay. She wa -- she was --

A: The -- the man wasn't home.

Q: Okay, so was a wo -- a lady forester.

A: N -- ha -- she wasn't do --

Q: Her husband was the forester, that was the wife.

A: -- the h -- she was a housewife --

Q: Okay.

A: -- and he was the forester.

Q: Okay.

A: So I said this, look, I would like to stay in your shed. She said, I can't make a decision like this, this is up to my husband. And I ask it where he is. He said -- she said, he has a meeting, he is a member of the soca -- of the fascist party.

Q: [indecipherable]. Oh dear.

A: I said, that's even better, I said, he -- at least he will have something to tell when they liberate your place, they s -- y-you were saving a -- a person, this will be good for you. No, I-I can't d-do it, let's wait for him.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And he came, and I told him, he said, you know, I -- I think better if you go in the school's shed.

Q: Shed, mm-hm.

A: Because it's -- you know, if you get caught, they can't blame anybody, this is nobody's and stay there and then the evenings come out. And I look at him, I said, I'm young, and much younger than you are, but I think [indecipherable] if I stay in your shed. He said, why is that? Because if you gonna -- you said you gonna feed me. If you gonna go in th -- in -- in every day in, three, four times in, or more in -- in the sh -- i-in this shed, this will be suspicious. If you go in yours 10 times a day, is normal, nobody gonna suspect. If they catch me, I said, why I gonna kill your family? I -- I will tell I -- I get in and you don't know anything, then they kill me. And he agreed with me. He agreed with me and he was bringing me food twice a day, three times a day some ho -- thing hot to drink, and then, after three, four days they get stopped, the -- the s -- the Soviet. They couldn't take over Rybnik, they get stopped over there, and then --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- a-an -- and they were afraid. They thought I have bigger chance of this I can get caught if I will [indecipherable]

Q: You mean the family became afraid that [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, the family.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So he said this, you better go to the direction, the [indecipherable] come from the direction, in the evening go [indecipherable]

Q: He knew you were Jewish?

A: Yeah. I told him.

Q: Okay.

A: I told him, this is -- you will at least have a -- a -- a -- a -- something good if you saved a life, you are not a fascist, you -- in -- in -- in heart, you just --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- you know, your face is fascist. And he said it's better if -- if -- if you move because it's becoming tough here, they can't move. And interesting, this is unbelievable, and I don't know how I -- I can make you believe, but I swear in God.

Q: Okay.

A: I got a dream. My mother came in dream and she said, no -- g-go nowhere. Stay here and you will be liberated here.

Q: I believe you.

A: It's up to you.

Q: I believe you.

A: I was thinking, obviously, a-about her all day long, and -- and -- and -- and -- and I -- I just -- you know, ma -- [indecipherable] I made myself believe in -- in it, and -- and I -- I still can hear it well, she said, don't go anywhere, you go -- we're gonna liberated here. And I told him, I got this dream and I go nowhere. You don't want to feed me, it's fine, I said. I will die here, but I -- I'm not going nowhere. And he said, if you are so stubborn and you want to stay here, I will bring you extra two foods, hot. He [indecipherable] me. Sometimes in the fifth, sixth days, it -- it was a such a freeze.

Q: It was so cold, yeah.

A: Yeah, it's changed, the weather, that this is in January in Poland, this -- I feel the pain everywhere, and I decided to go in in his house at night, to ask him for another tea or something. He said, you know, you -- you know -- don't know how lucky we are and how lucky you are.

They just left, Germans, they were here. He said, I'm sorry, and he started -- he -- he gave me something -- I put in my -- my legs in a bag -- I don't know how this is -- they -- they cut hays in -- in -- in [indecipherable] in small pieces.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Well, not -- when -- I don't know for what, maybe they feed the --

Q: Some straw, some -- yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And -- and this was warm, I put it in [indecipherable] but my -- already my both legs were frozen. And he -- he -- he really came and bring me these things. After they ate, they -- maybe something like this, he came to me and he said, you know what, the Russians were here this night. He said, he stole my -- my watch. [indecipherable] what they were collecting -- they liked it, the watch.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yeah, I said [indecipherable]

Q: You had a watch, or it was his watch?

A: No, no, his watch. I don't got no -- I [indecipherable]. I got to watch myself. And he -- he said, they were here. So I decided -- I was so happy this, I can go out I went then to this place where -- where I was the first time.

Q: The shed by the school.

A: No, no, no, this -- the railroad worker.

Q: The first place that you had gone to, yeah.

A: Yeah, the railroad worker. And he said there's -- across somewhere, somebody has a-another Christian pair [indecipherable] husband, they ha -- were hiding a Jewish kid who was -- I didn't know him, he was escaping to this -- this group, and they want adopt him. They have no children. So I didn't say anything because -- comments -- I -- I was thinking that they wanted, but I just always ma -- imagine it to myself if they would want it, to s -- do for me something like that, I would turn down. I would turn down if I never stayed and I [indecipherable] escape. I don't know what happened to this guy. I didn't see him before, I didn't see him then, and I didn't see him after. But the man, he said this, he was only a dis -- dis -- dissant.

Q: A patrol, or a --

A: Yeah, the --

Q: -- a sort of scouting party?

A: -- things and some -- is not the who -- the whole -- whole unit, the whole regiment.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You have to wait for the regiment, then you can tell this place is occupied. So I went b-back and I -- I hided until evening and then he said, come out, the regiment is here.

Q: The forester. With the forester?

A: Forester said the regiment is here.

Q: With the forester -- is here.

A: So I came out, and there was a soldier, a -- a guy from -- from my region, a volunteer, obviously. And he th -- he wasn't that -- that nice.

Q: From Uszhorod?

A: Not from Uszhorod, from the Carpathian region.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And he -- he was looking for something to steal from him, and to take it. And I -- I -- I was there -- I heard between they were speaking be -- they sa -- they mention it, a name, the commander of the regiment was Rothcarriage, a Jewish was -- a Jewish guy, Rothcarriage. And I told him, if you want take your butt from here right now, I go -- I -- I gonna tell to Rothcarriage what you -- you know, I didn't know what -- who is Rothcarriage, I didn't see him. And he buy it. He -- he run away. He run away. He wa -- he booted. He run away. And then, the next day, came a soldier in a horse -- with a horse -- in a horse. They tooked my -- the for -- for -- for -- fore --

Q: The forester?

A: Forester --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- for questioning. They uncovered that.

Q: Oh yeah, mm-hm.

A: They know that he's a fascist, so -- he -- but he wo -- I don't know, I can't -- he was [indecipherable] in the same time, he -- he didn't look to me like -- he got a good position obviously in -- and he become a member. And he took them, this -- this captain for questioning him, and he said you were that and that, and he says, how? I -- I'm not a bad man. I-I'm hiding a Jew in my -- in my house in -- now, right now I hiding a Jew. Do you -- yes. He took hi -- this -- this man with the horse, a soldier and he send -- send me -- send him to the apartment, he took me and the horse, we both -- with this one horse we went to this commandant -- commander. And I see that this is a little [indecipherable] he's a Jewish guy, and he asked me, do you stay in his place? Yes. For hour how much? For eight days. You have anything -- everything what you need for food or something? Because I can arrange this for you. I -- I said thank you. He -- he -- I



-- he share with me the food very well, he shares with me very well, I don't need food. And he let them go home. He let them off the hook, I don't know what happened years or months after that, and he said that, I saved your life, you saved my life [indecipherable] said. And we were staying there another couple days. I couldn't walk very much because my both legs were frozen a little. But how weak I was, they give me that much beer, the Russians. They were very friendly.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: This much beer, I was drunk, I couldn't get up. From beer, that much beer, that weak was my organism. And they get stucked again in Rybnik, the couldn't take Rybnik.

Q: Really?

A: But then they took it by this time, and they got an order to evacuate the whole region. And then I was taking [indecipherable]. We went in one direction with him, he packed something with his family.

Q: The forester.

A: The forester. Then we shake hands, he went the o-one side and I went to the other side. And from there on until Czechoslovakia I was walking without any transportation, by myself, what I already told you. So --

Q: How long was that now? You said in the very beginning, but tell me again.

A: What? How long I was walking?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I walked every day approximately 20 kilometer, which is about 10 - 12 miles, and after that I was looking for a place to ask to stay over, and a little food. And people didn't deny it in the villages. In city, in Kraków they didn't let me use the toilet without -- b-because I didn't got

money to pay. In the villages, people are good. Everything they got a little pat -- katorshka, was potatoes or something.

Q: Potatoes, mm-hm.

A: They share it with you. They give you a place, and you were staying overnight. Kraków, I -- I just get by by Kraków, because -- I told you, I th -- I -- I couldn't find -- nobody will let you [indecipherable] city in your apartment, or -- or nobody will open you the door. And I did -- and I understand that, and I did it in th -- in the villages. So I would say, if I walked about 500 miles - - I mean, kilometers, I was walking maybe about -- close to -- I would say close to about three -- almost three weeks. Two and a half til three weeks maybe.

Q: And your goal was to get to where?

A: Uszhorod. I took the direction to Uszhorod. Bef-before I told you during this march I -- I met Mr. --

Q: You went off to meet Mr. Traibush, yes?

A: Mr. Traibush.

Q: And he lived where, near Auschwitz?

A: He lived in -- in the same place, I don't remember the name, where was a coal mine, Janina. I -- I -- my orientation was to look for the coal mine Janina, cause a -- over there I was working f- for months, I knew it already a little bit. In -- in -- is a ru -- a -- a Russian proverb, [speaks Russian here]. Your tongue will take you to Kiev. Ask. And this what I did, I use my tongue. And I needed -- and I -- I -- I just [indecipherable] a couple -- this mik -- mik -- Mikolas, or Mikolów.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Then Tarnów, then s -- Nowy Sacz. These places where I see it from the train and where I was walking by [indecipherable], I -- I knew it, th-these places, and I asked people. Twice, three times.

Q: And it's funny, you know, it's less than a year later.

A: Yeah.

Q: It's -- not even a year has gone by and it seems like the world has -- upside down. Everything chan -- everything had changed. You know, it was March or April 1994 -- 1944 when -- when you were taken from Hungary --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- and now it's January and you're walking back and nothing is the same. You had lost everybody.

A: And then I came to my hometown. So I, when I passed the -- the Dukla Pass is a place for skiing, for other things. Interesting --

Q: For skiing.

A: -- in one village, small world, they said, here is a Jew. Jew family. I said, inter -- how is he here? Somebody hid him. He paid for them, for a Polish family. Money, they were very like this -- were gray. No s -- no -- no fresh air, no nothing, they were sitting, a family. And then came a boy over there, about at --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Andrei Rosenberg. This is tape number two, side B. So you were in Dukla Pass and you say a boy came?

A: Came -- came in this house.

Q: Yes?

A: And they said this boy is a Jewish kid that the -- the parents get shot, killed, and he -- the German officer who was the commander of this -- this little town, he took him and he kept him for two or three years. And when they evacuated he left this child in here -- this child moved into this family.

Q: My goodness.

A: Yeah.

Q: Now that --

A: A beautiful little child that the Germans, they j-just -- when they were killing people, they -- they -- they -- he -- they were just felt sorry for him, they didn't want to see him dead, and they -- they raise him for -- for two years. Yeah. And th-then, when I passed the -- passed the first village was Hanushofser, in Slovakia.

Q: Hanushofser, mm-hm.

A: Yeah, in Slovakia. This was already Slovakian territory, after the Dukla Pass. It's close to Bargairwa and these places. And again small world, yeah, interesting, when I was going -- it's -- it's not -- I shouldn't miss it, I was going from Kraków in the villages, I knock at the door to a woman. She let me in, she feed me, and then her husband -- husband, her son, a 25 year old strong guy, came in. He ask, who is that? He said, a Jewish guy who escaped [indecipherable]. He took the -- the butcher knife and he want to stab me. The mother was standing between us and she said, run. I know him, he -- he -- when he -- he -- he is drunk, he is crazy. He was crazy, but not that crazy. I did not [indecipherable] too much, he was stronger than I am, he could kill me any time he want to. I -- I just, without hurry, I just walked out. And I see the next -- across

the street is another house, a celebration. I came in in this place, they didn't know where to put me. And [indecipherable] th-the best for me, they give me an -- a separate room. The woman was -- was a daughter of a -- a Polish diplomat, who -- and she was born in -- in Budapest, and she knows a couple words --

Q: Hungarian.

A: -- Hungarian. And she -- she -- she give me a separate room, a separate bed. The next day she said, here's the train going about 20 kilometer. I gonna buy you a ticket and put you in the train. She came with me, she buyed me a -- the ticket, she gave me some zlotys [indecipherable] but I couldn't use it then, no more train. [indecipherable] was 20 kilometer, and I continued to walk. And what -- what -- what -- a different --

Q: Why is it that you couldn't use the -- the -- the train?

A: Because they didn't run.

Q: Ah, sorry. Of course. There were no trains that were running, of course.

A: [indecipherable] doesn't run.

Q: Of course, mm-hm.

A: [indecipherable] Kraków was running 20 kilometers. Then I didn't find anyone.

Q: But you say, what a difference between the one and the other.

A: Between peop -- one -- one didn't know where to put me, and he -- he was ready to -- to do anything for me, and the other was kill me, so how -- how will we put this together? It's hard to put together?

Q: It's very hard to put together.

A: And this what I -- I was thinking when I give this piece of bread, and this come from my mother, too. My mother was a religious woman. A woman came down from the mountains when

my father was still home. And she was frozen, she was looking for somebody. On Saturdays the Jewish don't make fire, they hire somebody, they sta -- make the fire. My ma -- my mother didn't a -- wait for somebody, just put in the fire and made her hot tea, and I ask her, Mama, wh -- hi -- higher -- Saturday is a high holiday. She said, in this case no holidays, you have to save the person. And I learned that from her.

Q: Tell me again, when you fe -- se -- found that German soldier and you gave him some bread, where was that? Remind me once more.

A: This so -- this so -- th-this was i-in the concentration camp --

Q: Concentration camp.

A: -- when I came to -- with -- see this Traibush and Janina.

Q: When you came back.

A: Yeah.

Q: After you had escaped.

A: That's right.

Q: I see. And you found him in the concen -- th-the soldier was in the concentration camp?

A: I-I-I -- yeah, in -- in this camp, they divide it in half, half [indecipherable] for the -- were -- were liberated, and half were imprisoned.

Q: I see, okay.

A: Th-Th-That happened this.

Q: I see, I see, that's where it goes, okay.

A: And --

Q: So when you got to Slovakia --

A: To Hanushofser.

Q: Hanushofser, yeah.

A: I came in in a -- the place where it was closest to the -- to the border, and to -- you know, to the Pass, and I heard some noise. I thought, I like noise, I went in. I go -- have to go back after that. So, our Russians s -- s -- [indecipherable] I don't know how -- like [indecipherable] or something, he was sitting with this Slovak, they were eat -- having dinner. And he was waiting to go to Uszhorod. And this guy, he knew it who -- who -- who invited him, he said, you [indecipherable] you go to Uszhorod, he is going to Uszhorod, will you take him? Let him come. And this, I saved them 80 kilometers in Czechoslovakia, right from the border to Uszhorod, and they -- they -- they took me, this guy. And what I ho -- want to tell you, in the miko -- miko -- Mikolów, where they give me the bread and other, they give me an apartment to o -- sleep overnight. This apartment was belonging t-to a high ranking German officer who run away, he didn't took anything.

Q: Mikolów is -- you must tell me again where. Is that the village near Kraków that you're talking about?

A: Mikolów is -- is not as far away from Kraków, is closer to Auschwitz.

Q: Okay, what incident were you -- were you --

A: I --

Q: -- referring to when you had talked about Mikolów? The diplomat's daughter who lived in --

A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: No, I talking about this -- they give me the key --

Q: Mm-hm.

A: -- [indecipherable] who was -- who shoulds have re -- refugees in. And I went in, beautiful costumes, in -- in hats, in -- in so many things, and I didn't touch it a needle. Not because I -- I was sorry for the German or somebody, I was thinking. If I'm here now i-in -- in clothes, like a -- no [indecipherable], was -- who asking for a piece of bread, who -- who --

Q: Like a beggar.

A: Like a beggar. Then everybody help me. If I gonna take o -- one of these suits, they gonna tell I'm a German fascist or something, they gonna kill me. I don't need it. And I them to back, and I -- I-I -- I'm -- all my life, I never was greedy. Never touched anybody's belongings. And that's worked for me. In this case, specially. No -- oh, what -- what else we got over there I said?

Q: So -- mm-hm.

A: About this, yeah, so I sat in the -- in the car, and he took me to Uszhorod.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

A: Took me to Uszhorod by the restaurant [indecipherable] he stopped, he wa -- he -- he -- I know the city, I was born in the city, was -- he -- he made a left turn and he said, here, this is the center. He knew it. He said, g-get dow-down and find yourself where you're going. So I went down. So where I going i-in the night, nobody is -- and I remembered we were renting apartment.

Q: You didn't own your -- your parents di --

A: They own it in 1937, but until 1937 we were renting. And there was a family who they got killed, and about many as we, and the same age. And I decided this -- she was friendly with my mother, the lady, so I knock at the door --

Q: She wa -- they weren't Jewish?

A: No.



Q: No.

A: No. If they were Jews, they would be deported, too. And I said, Aunt Marishka, I -- I came back and I don't know where to go. She only question asked me, are you clean? You have nothing -- you change clothes or something, [indecipherable] and I should give you some other things. Yes, I'm clean, I know that I'm clean. And she fed me, and was spending with her overnight. And the next day I went to the city and I see one Jew, something -- a couple came back already, not from Auschwitz, from -- they got some -- the elderly people they got some -- some kind of service, they -- they should serve -- help the -- for the regular army. And I got back one of mother's cousin, who was already close friend to us, closer than a brother or something. And he took me care for -- for -- for maybe one and a half year.

Q: So your mother's cousin was there, and -- and that's who you were with for about a year and a half, when you were back to Uszhorod.

A: Yeah. And --

Q: What about your old home, where you had been in --

A: I never -- I went over there to look for photograph -- for photo -- pictures. And I didn't find none of them. I -- I know where I hid, they clean it out. And I never went there again, never. Never ever. I don't want to see this house, and I didn't want to inherit this house. My father was working hard, he was crying when he was leaving. But I don't know -- I don't want to see this house. I was in Uszhorod for years, and I never went to -- to this house, never, ever.

Q: So, but if you wanted to, you would have a claim on the house. You'd have a -- a right -- you'd have the property right to be able to go --

A: Yeah, it was a little house, not a big [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah, but it was your family home.

A: This was our home, but I --

Q: And you never saw it.

A: -- I never -- never applied.

Q: How did you find out about your sister?

A: She come home in July, I came home in -- in -- in -- in end of February or something like that.

Or beginning of March, I don't know, very close. And she come home in July. She was in Bergen-Belsen in the concentration camp. And she was in Hamburg something, too. I don't know her -- her -- all I know she came from Bergen-Belsen home.

Q: And di -- and -- and that's when you knew she was alive? You didn't get any letters or any word or anything like that?

A: No, no, no, no, then I find out. I was working in -- in the city, and -- and she was already over there in -- in -- in this place.

Q: Which place?

A: In my cousin's -- Mama's cousin's place.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And they said, is Andrei in the city, and she came in, she ha -- she met me, she hugged each other and then she take care of me for a long time, cause was younger, she made to me the laundry, she cooked to me, she -- she -- she took care of me. The wa -- there's only two of us left, from a big family.

Q: What did -- what did you start doing when you --when you came back to Uszhorod, and you at least had a place with your mother's cousin, how did life proceed?

A: I -- I -- I didn't -- I didn't got plans to sit over there. I was thinking of -- to come to the west. But how long I was thinking, they closed the borders.

Q: Oh.

A: And I made a -- a try to -- to go to the border [indecipherable] and they caught me and they gave me one year probation for that. They left -- let me off of the hook.

Q: And this was in what year?

A: In '46.

Q: In 1946 already?

A: Yeah.

Q: Because you know, between East and West Germany, there was the border, I mean, for years.

A: Not there.

Q: Not there.

A: No.

Q: And how is it that -- when did it become part of Ukraine? When did it go -- be taken away from Hungary?

A: In '45 -- in 40 -- no, in Ukraine, the Soviet Union, Soviet Union --

Q: Yeah, okay, Soviet Union, Soviet Ukraine, mm-hm.

A: -- Soviet Ukraine. It -- it was sometimes in August, I think, or June or August 1945. And they still kepted the border open for a half a year, something like that.

Q: Mm-hm. How did that happen? I mean, how did you feel it? As I asked before, when -- when it went from Czechoslovakia to Hungary in 1938, how did it affect your daily life? When it went from Hungary to Soviet Union --

A: No, I -- I didn't -- was thinking to stay in Hungary. I just needed to get out from the Soviet Union --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and then from Hungary I would go to America, to Australia, to anywhere.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I didn't -- I didn't -- I wasn't planning to stay over there. So they -- they -- they got me, and -- and they holded me f -- until 19 -- four months, maybe, they were questioning me. It was [indecipherable] too, when they gave me this year probation. And then they draft me to the army in 1947, where I was more than three years, more than three years.

Q: That's a long time.

A: Yeah.

Q: And where did you -- where did you serve, in the same area, or in different places?

A: What?

Q: Just asking, post-war, what happened after --

A: I -- I -- I -- I was -- I was serving first in -- in Lvov.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Then in Wladimir-Wolynsk.

Q: Where's that? Was that far east? No, th -- I'm thinking --

A: No, that's here.

Q: Wladimir-Wolynsk, mm-hm.

A: This is very close to Belarus from -- from Poland.

Q: Ah, mm-hm.

A: And Lubomol, in the same area. From the beginning to the end I was over there, yeah.

Q: And then you came back to Uszhorod.

A: Then I came back to Uszhorod. I was -- in '53, I -- I met my wife, in '55 we get married. In '56 I got Natasha, in '58 I got Uri. No -- then I got --

Q: And -- and your job, what was your job? What was your profession, your occupation that you --

A: I was working the inven -- different -- i-inventory cloth, other things.

Q: I didn't hear that? You were --

A: Inventor -- tor -- inventory stock.

Q: Oh, inventory stock, excuse me.

A: Yeah, and -- and merchandiser, something like this, in -- in wholesale. Then I w-working as a deli man for 23 years.

Q: And you lived in Uszhorod until 1970 --

A: Three.

Q: 1973. When did you give in your application to leave? Was it in 1973, was it a few years before?

A: No, what, to leave?

Q: Yeah, to --

A: 1973.

Q: Oh, so you didn't have to wait very long.

A: If you would ask --

Q: You had to wait -- you had to wait 50 -- you know, 20 years or so, but no --

A: Yeah, yeah. I was applying in '72.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was applying.

Q: That's what I was asking.

A: And then they would let me in '73, in a six months, something like this. They didn't let me go too easy too, but they let me go. But I -- I was very pushy. I said I have to go. They ask me why, I said because I don't like anti-Semitism. Said, we don't have here anti-Semitism. I says, you tell me? And he said, if you think here is such -- th-the -- the chief of the -- of it, he said, if you think here is anti-Semitism, I can make you a Ukrainian. I can change your name, your passport, everything. I -- I -- I -- I asked him, who are you, a Russian or Ukrainian? He said Ukrainian. If somebody would offer you to change to a Russian, would you do that? He said no. Why you -- why you make -- offering me something to do while you wouldn't -- wouldn't do it?

Q: And what was his answer?

A: He -- he -- h-he --

Q: He had no answer.

A: He swallowed that. And then they let me go. [indecipherable] I'm -- I'm not coming down and pushing and pushing, they let me off the hook.

Q: Now we come to questions that are a little bit harder to phrase, but the ones -- we've talked about them in some point. You went through -- you went through so much and in a short period of time, but as I said, your world turned upside down. What would you want Uri or Natasha, or your grandchildren to understand about what you went through? What would you want them to remember?

A: This I know, this life is not easy and they got a father who was thinking about them, to make their life a little bet -- better than he got one. And why -- why -- why I -- I -- I wanted that they know, because if I won't let them know, nobody gonna give [indecipherable] nobody would -- her -- heard this, and nobody would -- would know this. And this was my decision.

[indecipherable] I'm almost 75 year old, it can happens some -- something with me, and I take with me in the grave. What don't make too much sense. We should learn by history.

Q: What would you hope people would learn?

A: Hm?

Q: What would you hope people would learn?

A: What people have to learn, if they have a hard life like I did, they learn. I'll give you an example. I told you that they liked me, many people from this, I was very -- open up my heart. [speaks foreign language here] I don't know. You don't know? [inaudible reply] No, staff, chief of staff or something.

Q: Yeah, mm-hm.

A: Correct? Chief of staff and -- and -- where I was working. And he was a nice man.

Q: Chief of staff in the -- in Soviet Ukraine now, you're talking about?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: He was a very nice man, really. Very kind. In -- in the Soviet Union wasn't that easy to talk, cause you never know who -- who -- who gonna report you or something. But I was open with him, and he was naïve in some cases. Was a colonel but he was naïve. When he retired, he -- he came to me, he said Andrei, I would like to see you go and help collect -- bring in -- buy some potatoes for wintertime for the organizations. I said, I -- I -- I go, but can you give me the order this -- and name of my -- my boss? He said yes. And what makes you -- this different? Said, you are paying here. I -- I said, depending how much you have save [indecipherable] for -- for business [indecipherable]. If you give -- give it his order, then I will have a day 10 dollars, if you give it to mine [indecipherable] you have five dollars. He said you are so smart, I even didn't

think about it. I said, because you don't need it. You would need it, you would think about it. He swallowed that too, but he w-was a very nice guy, really he was a very wonderful guy. He was smiling [indecipherable] he had very -- he says, I went thinking on about that, he said, because you don't need it. This was -- will teach people.

Q: That was what I was going to ask you, is this --

A: He -- he -- he --

Q: -- is -- that -- what you went through, is that what it -- it -- it -- is that how it changed you in some way?

A: Affect me.

Q: Yeah.

A: If not changed me, affect --

Q: Affected you.

A: -- affect. Sure. Sure did.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because people who have it very easy don't appreciate it. And hard -- hard working people turn out better than people who lives -- the money the -- the parents earn it, or the grandparents. This -- this doesn't make you a better person, only worse.

Q: You know --

A: Mostly.

Q: -- as you were talking before when you -- when you had to lift the concrete blocks in the coal mine.

A: Yeah.



Q: I was thinking that in some way maybe -- maybe when you were helping your father move things when you were younger --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- that could have helped -- helped you to survive as well.

A: Definitely, definitely.

Q: You know.

A: I wa -- I was so strong when I was 13 year old, I could take a bag of -- of 150 pounds and -- and go up with in the steps. I got always very strong legs. The legs make the difference. When you see boxing or something, a boxer, when his leg is gone, he is gone.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And I played a lots of soccer and -- and -- and running around a lot with children, and this what made me strong. I want like -- now children are living differently. I -- I -- I could go away for all day long, my mother know I will be at home at -- at -- in time, she never looked for me, she was glad she got an extra place in -- i-i-in -- in the room. One request was I can't -- I couldn't come home later than when the light i -- i -- [indecipherable] I know, evenings no -- no streets for children.

Q: To go back to your parents, who you've talked about. What do you -- you've mentioned it in - - in certain places in the tape, but what do you think they gave you, that helped you to survive? What were the -- what were those elements, lessons?

A: I -- I -- I -- first of all, everything. Because you inheriting brain, you're inheriting legs, you inheriting muscles, you know, i-i-i-i-if not inheriting, they give it to you.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: You know, this what it helps. I -- my father was always my role model, because what -- what he -- he could do, you know, made me proud o-of him that he -- he cou -- he - he was that strong. He -- he passed away he was 40 year old, so like -- just like Mother. She was born in 1901, and he -- he died in 1941, exactly. My mother l-lived from -- a wa -- 41 year and he 40.

Q: Young, very young.

A: Very young.

Q: Very young. Is there anything Andrei, that I have not asked, that you have -- that you wrote down, that you would have liked to talk about --

A: You helped me a lot.

Q: Well, I really appreciate your sharing your story. It's a real --

A: You know, one thing you will always forget in an interview like this, and if you forget only one thing, you're very, very good. I'm telling you. Ya -- don't -- I -- I -- I thinking this in -- two y -- two year later I wouldn't be able to do that.

Q: Why?

A: Because the brain getting older, aging.

Q: It's funny though, you said before you -- it was something that happened five years ago --

A: That's --

Q: -- you --you don't remember, but 50 years ago you remember.

A: That's the way it is.

Q: Yeah.

A: Most of the people.

Q: Yeah.

A: Ifs, God forbid you forget these things too, then you have to worry about Alzheimer.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I remember things, you believe it or not, since I was three year old.

Q: Really? What's your first memory?

A: My first memory was I never dranked milk. I -- I -- I just hate milk when I was a child, now I like it, but that time -- and these cousins got a sister what -- who -- who take care of me.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: She came visit us, and my mother was complaining, you know, Andrei don't drink milk at all. And she said, ah, that's not so, cause I bet I will count until 10 and he will finish it, this glass of milk. Said, never. And she -- she started to count and she counted to five, the glass was empty.

Q: She was smart.

A: Yeah.

Q: She was very smart.

A: Yeah, she -- sh-she [indecipherable] it. This I remember. I remember I didn't want to go to the bed, my father was -- he says, let's run faster, who will be the first. And he -- he stepped first in the bed. I went down to the floor and I started to cry, I was crying. He said, what is it? I said, I lost! So he took me in his hands, he put me in the bed, he said, is a tie! I said, that's good. Yeah, such a things, I -- many things. I remember when I was about four year old, I took my sister by the hand to the kinder --

Q: Kindergarten?

A: Kindergarten, and we were going home, came a man, he catch m -- he caught me, took in the hand, and he said, I take away this boy. She said, that's my brother, you can't take him! I remember that, too. But --

Q: You were going to tell me how many languages you spoke. We had not gone into that.

A: No, I -- I -- I -- I started -- I -- I -- I --

Q: You went to Czech school --

A: -- something [indecipherable] Czech -- Czech a little, Ukrainian good, Russian good, and Hungarian good, that's three. And Polish I lost.

Q: But you learned it during the 10 months you were there?

A: The Germans I learned, and the -- and the Polish I learned over there --

Q: Mm-hm, in the camp, yeah.

A: -- both, in the camp. And the Yiddish I learned when I got the religious lessons, like Sunday school or something. And Hebrew I learned when I was in Israel for a couple month.

Q: Did you emigrate from Ukraine to Israel and then from Israel to here?

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So I learned, but not too much. I told you this, my daughter made the -- I -- the bag -- I mean [indecipherable] I said this in Hebrew, [indecipherable] the grad -- she graduated -- diploma, she got --

Q: The secondary school diploma?

A: No, the -- the -- no, the ha --

Q: University?

A: -- the -- no, the -- the high school diploma.

Q: High school, mm-hm.

A: She made it in Israel, she made it in America. In Russia she was [indecipherable] three months, so she made in three other countries.

Q: That's an accomplishment.

A: He -- he -- he -- he emigrated, he was in the eight -- eighth grade, and he jumped from 10 to 12, he [indecipherable] the 11<sup>th</sup>, and he gradu -- they both graduated in time, I mean, age 22 they were out. He -- he said this, he did that for Mama.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. He said he want [indecipherable] he want -- he was thinking that Mama was hoping that he gonna finish it, so he di -- he dedicated. But he use it, not Mama.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: It's true or not. Sometimes --

U: Sometimes I use it.

A: Okay.

Q: Well, Andrei, thank you very much.

A: Thank you.

Q: We appreciate it, it's been a --

A: It's a pleasure. You better than Larry King.

Q: Oh ho ho, what a compliment. Thank you.

A: How about for one year you his salary take?

Q: I wouldn't mind his salary for one year, let me tell you. I wouldn't mind his salary for one week. Yeah.

A: Yeah.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Conclusion of Interview