

**Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000**

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is an interview with **George Kadar**, conducted by **Katie Davis** on April 24th, in the year 2000, at the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum in **Washington, D.C.** This is tape number one, side **A**. Can we begin with what your name was at birth?

Answer: At birth? **Krausz**.

Q: Your full name.

A: **George**. This is Hungarian, György, George, Georg, Georges -- Hungarian is George
—George Kior—Krausz is the same.

Q: And how do you spell your last name? The ori --

A: **K-a-d-a-r**.

Q: The original name.

A: **K-K-r-a-u-s-z**.

Q: Okay. So, when were you born?

A: The ninth of Ju -- of June, 1929.

Q: And can you tell us where you were born?

A: I was born in ~~Szekervar~~Székesfehérvár. Shall I spell it?

Q: Yes.

A: Oh. **S-z-e-k-e-r-v-a-r**. Well, this is a -- a small place, small town, between **Budapest**, which is the capital of **Hungary**, and **Lake Balaton**~~Belathon~~, which is the -- the lake.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

2

Q: Mm-hm. Tell us a little bit of more about the town. What was it like?

A: About what?

Q: About the city you were born in.

A: Well, the city, the city's quite beautiful, and I think made in the 1800, and the city has been totally destroyed during the war, and rebuilt in the old style now, so the city still exists. It is bigger, more traffic, more life than so many years ago.

Q: Can you tell us the name of your father, and then of your mother?

A: Yes. **Lászlo, L-á-s-z-l-o**. And my mother is **Ilona, I-l-o-n-a**.

Q: And what was -- what was your mother's maiden name?

A: **Huszár, H-u-s-z-á-r**.

Q: And how about your grandparents, on both sides?

A: Well, I never met my grandfather, because he died two years before I -- bef-before my birth, and -- and the mother of my mother, called **Vilma, V-i-l-m -- m-a Meisel**, maiden name, **M-e-i-s-e-l**. The other grandfather, **Krauth Theojef -- Krausz Theojef-József -- Theojef-József -- J-Joseph**, and his wife **Emma, E-m-m-a Kohn, K-o-h-n**.

Q: And what did you know about your father's father? Where was he from, what did he do?

A: Well, my father's father sold -- so he was a s-s-salesman, I think **[indecipherable]** salesman, coal and other mat -- other material to heat. And my grand -- my grandmother, who was angel, she -- she wanted to -- to somehow to -- together the family, and she was a very good point -- meeti -- meeting point, not only because she was so nice, but because

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

3

her cooking was so fantastic. And my grandfather was not very kind, so -- but, he was terribly religious. He went every day to the synagogue, and regularly, and **Yom Kippur** afternoon, the **mincha**, he was the **maftir**. You understand what I am ta-talking about?

You know?

Q: Explain.

A: Pardon?

Q: Explain.

A: Well, th -- you know that S-Saturday in the Jewish holy -- Jewish -- th-the mo --

Q: In the Jewish week?

A: No, no, no, no, no, not the Jewish week, no, no, no. The -- The -- The Jewish feast of a -- and I think this is one of the best sides of the Jewish religion. The **Torah** will be read, and according to the importance of the day, seven plus one, or three plus one, are called to the **Torah**. The last, or the plus one is the **maftir**, whose role is -- whose -- whose role is – beaucoup –{indecipherable} much more important than the -- than the rest. And, so usually he was the **maftir**, and he was ex-extremely proud of it. It's a pity that he lived private life, he was completely different. **William Blake** says somewhere, "Humble to God, haughty to man." And well, so was he.

Q: This is your maternal grandfather?

A: No, th-the paternal --

Q: Paternal?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

4

A: Yes. My -- My father was exactly the contrary, more than the contrary. He was a doctor, **M.D.**, and a very good doctor, and an extraordinary man. Absolutely honest and generous. And his story is a little bit the story of many Hungarian Jews. He was born in 1902, and -- and 1920, he wanted to start his studies, the university, but just in 1920 has been int-introduced the ~~findecepherable~~-~~clauses~~numerous ~~clausus~~clausus, so it means that, I don't know, three percent of the students could be Jewish, or four, I -- I -- I -- I don't know. S-So h-he had to emigrate, and he went to **Germany**, and in ~~Geeson~~Gießen [Giessen], not far from **Frankfuert**, ~~amineam~~ Main, he -- he became a doctor. And as he came back, the Hungarian authorities didn't recognize his diploma, and he had to start again.

Q: He left **Hungary** to study in **Germany** because **Hungary** had more -- at that time more restrictive laws?

A: No, the ~~findecepherable~~-~~clauses~~numerous clausus has been introduced, and there was no place, because they had I don't know how many Jews, and he -- he has been refused. So he had to -- he had to look for somewhere -- somewhere else. And -- And so he -- he made his studies-, I don't -- seven or eight years in Gießen~~Geeson~~, in **Germany**. I think he's -- he finished in 1928, yes, it was before my -- my existence, and -- and he ki -- then he went back to **Hungary**, and he tried to -- to use his diploma, it was no -- it was not possible. So for family reasons, because my grandfather whom I didn't know, he was a dentist, and this ~~cabinae~~-cabinet had to be continued, and he agreed to be -- to become a dentist.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

5

Q: Your father?

A: Yes, under the supervision of a -- of a-another dentist, who made his studies in **Hungary**. So I -- I -- I think it's very confused -- very confusing, but it is -- it was very confusing. He had a complete diploma -- doctor, **M.D.**, in medicine, from ~~Geeson~~Gießen. And as he came back eight years later, he couldn't practice alone because he had no Hungarian diploma, and he -- and so the family had to engage a Hungarian dentist -- a Hungar -- a dentist having a Hungarian diploma. Meanwhile, he started -- he -- he tried to organize hi -- this Hungarian, a ~~uh~~and ~~conification~~eognosrafiction ~~indecipherable~~. It wasn't possible, and somehow, I don't know who helped him, he has -- he obtained the authoriz -- authorization to frequent the Hungarian University, with ~~was~~ Pécs ~~indecipherable~~ ab-about 200 kilometers south from **Budapest**. So he started again, and he made all this ev-everything, so the -- all eight or seven years in ~~Page~~Pécs, and I think I was the -- probably the unique case. I assisted in hi -- that he was officially made doctor. And it was -- I think it was quite late, sa -- like -- something like '38. Two years, then he be -- he became independent of the other -- other dentist, because he had a Hungarian diploma. 1940, he has been called to the army, but the army -- I have the picture -- I have the picture for you. I don't know if you can reproduce it. This is the complete misery, this picture, the complete misery of a man who -- who was a double doctor, and -- and wear this horrible uniform. It took three month, his absence, and he came back, well 1940.

Q: Mm-hm.

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

6

A: And -- And the place where he was is ~~air-audonia~~Éradony although I do -- I don't think it's very important.

Q: Well where -- where in **Hungary**?

A: And today -- toda -- today it belongs to **Romania**.

Q: Okay.

A: And so he started to build up his own life as a doctor, but two years later, the -- I -- I don't know who made it, how, who decided, but the -- the four best going Hungarian doctor -- doctors from my native town, ~~Szekervar~~Székesfehérvár, have been ordered to go to the army again. But it was not, this time, without uniform, and we had to send cloth and coat, and -- and whatever, underwear, to somebody who was in the -- not in the army, but i-i-i -- called working -- I don't know what working, teams. All Jews, of course. And it finished by -- by the union -- the **Soviet Union**, the whole thing finished in the -- in the soviet -- the u -- **Soviet Union**. 1943 was the -- the big change in the **Soviet Union**, they started really to attack the Germans, until -- and then -- which -- which continued until May, '45, until th-the end of the **Hitler** regime. But he -- as I -- and I know him from one of his colleagues who came back, he didn't, died because he couldn't support¹ working for Ukrainian farmers in the -- as a prisoner, to be -- he didn't want -- accept better life conditions than the others. So ex --

Q: Y-You're saying your father refused to get --

A: Yes.

¹ Note from interviewee's son: "support" is meant in the French meaning of the word -> He could not stand...

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

7

Q: -- better li -- better living conditions --

A: Yes.

Q: -- than others?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Because -- Ok -- He -- He would have gotten those because he was a doctor?

A: I told you at I'm sure he could in the beginning, that he was an extraordinary honest man, and he didn't see any reason to have better food and better treatment than his colleagues, because the colleagues -- or just because he was a doctor. And so he -- he became sick, and his legs were frozen, and he thought that they could be amp-amputated -- amp --

Q: Amputated.

A: Amputate -- amputed -- but it -- it didn't take place, because he died. Very probably he du -- he didn't know how sick -- how sick he was, and he died. So this was -- this was -- means that practically, I -- I lost my father as I was 13, and [indecipherable] I -- I -- I never seen him any more.

Q: How did you find out, at what point did you find out what happened to him?

A: Because we received a -- an official paper from the Hungarian army, that he disappeared. [indecipherable] disappeared or dead, or -- but in this case, because they didn't find him, of course because he was a prisoner of war. On the other hand, he -- there was a -- there was a possibility dur -- that there -- the **Moscow** radio gave every day, messages. And my aunt -- [indecipherable] his -- his -- his sister received a visitor

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

8

who told her, that you are Miss ~~bess~~--- Mrs. Almásy~~Almash~~, yes. Because I heard in the radio that your -- your f -- brother is alive, and is a prisoner of war. It was quite at the beginning of f -- f -- '43, and according to this -- this friend, whom I saw later, he died probably May 22nd.

Q: I want to go back to when you are a young boy, and I wonder if you can tell me what your home life was like? What -- What did your house look like? What was it like to be inside of it?

A: Well, I think as nothing extraordinary. At the end of my peerin, before the deportation, I had two very good friends, both died, I will tell you about, as far as ~~allshees~~-Auschwitz concerned. And I have -- I -- I ha -- I was considered as a musical phenomenon. I had a very good voice, and -- and I -- I -- I could s-sing very properly. It went so far that I -- the accompaniment has been made by my mother. The executing of **[indecipherable]** was by **Mo-Mozart**. The -- The queen of the night, she -- who has two terribly difficult airs in the magic flute. And I could sing it. Famous -- Famous singers couldn't. And so they -- everybody was very, very **[indecipherable]** how. So, and I don't know whose idea it was, I went in September '37, to **Vienna**, to the Wiener Sängerknaben ~~eChor~~Veina-zinger klubenkore, which is the -- the little singers. I -- I don't -- I don't know how they call. The institution exists ~~there~~still today.

Q: The **Vienna** Boy's Choir?

A: **Vienna** Boy's Choir, yes, the **Vienna** Boy's Choir, yes. And the reception was very friendly from a certain ~~rektoshnit~~Rektor Schnitt, and a Hungarian ha -- did -- the

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

9

conductor was a **Hungarian** named ~~Gombosh~~Gombos. And they wanted to take me immediately, and then I try -- I -- I -- I sa -- I cried that I want to go home to my -- my -- me mum, etcetera. And the -- the bottom line was an agreement between them that I come -- I go home, I learn German, and in May '38, I come back. But in March, somebody else took the place, really, so in April we -- we received a letter that due to the events, of course, you understand that your son will not come to **Vienna**.

Q: If it was stated that subtly, that -- no more specific reference to what happened, just due to the events, your son will not come.

A: So you ask little bit too much. It was 1938. How do you -- How do you want me to know in which terms they -- they told -- they wrote to my mother that there was no place for me any more? Of course, because -- because I am Jewish, and howa -- you know what happened in **Austria**. So I -- I stayed at home, and I went to school, and -- and as I finished the -- the -- the ~~gronk-grand~~ -- the elementary school, I wanted to go to the -- go to the gymnasium ~~findecipherablelyceol~~ the gymnasium, eight years. The day I, by inscription, came, in 1939, the official dec-decree -- dec -- decree of the government, concerning the numerous clauses in the -- in the grammar school -- not grammar school in -- in the college, but the director of the school was eight year -- during eight years, the main professor of my father, and I had been in it -- I -- I -- I got my inscription immediate, without any question, so -- so I went to school, and I could continue until '44.

Q: Let -- Let me clarify. You're saying that when you were about to go to gymnasium, restrictive clause limiting the attendance of Jews --

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

10

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- were implemented. But you still were allowed to go, because of a family friend?

A: No, somebody else. I saw -- I -- I -- I imagine they had six places. They had six places, and they gave me one place without any -- any further examination, or whatever. I think the director was a very good man, and -- and --

Q: Was he Jewish?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. No, Jewish teachers have been prohibited, later. And -- And so he couldn't -- he couldn't do anything else, because he was in a -- a very honest man. And somehow he -- he -- he was not obliged to do it, but morally, yes. Because he knew -- he -- he -- he knew my father.

Q: I know that you were a young boy before the war, but I still want to go back and see what things you do remember. C-Can -- A-A-And now you're just mentioning your father. Can you talk a little bit about your father's standing in the community? Did people know your father, did he take on any community tasks?

A: Well, I don't know exactly his -- you want to know his social position, or something like that is your question?

Q: Social, or i-i-if people knew him in the community. If they did, what did they turn to him for?

A: [indecipherable] or the Jewish?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

11

Q: The Jewish community. Well, or the -- or your -- or your larger community, if it was a more mixed.

A: No, I think the way he -- so I -- I -- I'm -- I'm not sure -- I'm not sure to -- to be able to -- to give you a -- a correct answer, because this happened very long time ago, and as a child I never analyzed his social, or community, or whatever position. He -- He didn't want to live in a Jewish ghetto, and he -- he didn't want to -- to reduce his interest on Jewish interests. He -- He made his work extremely honestly, you saw the **M.D.**, and I n - what I positively know, that he treated people having no money at all, and he never asked them to pay, because he knew that they -- they was un -- they were unable to pay. He considered the -- this profession to do something necessary for -- for his -- he -- colleagues, for his -- not only for his friends, but for -- for human beings, and he -- I remember of a certain **Marinka**, who was a Gypsy lady, and who -- who didn't wear shoes, and -- but who had -- he was -- she had problem with hi -- with her teeth, and so she -- she knew that he will -- she will not pay, and my father -- my father knew that he had -- can -- he cannot require -- cannot ask any money because she hadn't. And so in -- she -- I think this -- this -- this was his -- his -- his exemplar -- exemplary, and extraordinary side, that he considered his profession as really a profession for human beings, independently of their social level. She had for in -- He had a -- a patient who couldn't hear at all. She was sewing underwear and -- and then these kind of things, and sh-she couldn't pay. She [**indecipherable**] a little bit underwear for the family, and you -- you couldn't -- you couldn't speak with her, because she didn't under -- she didn't hear.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

12

So her only answer was, "Jó van, jó van~~Yuvon, yuvon.~~" It's all right, it's all right. But she didn't know what was all right, and we didn't know what she underst -- wh -- what she understood. [indecipherable] it became a sort of phenomenon, a -- a part of the -- of our lives is a [indecipherable] time, she arrives to sew, to -- to repair, because she couldn't -- she couldn't pay. So, I think this -- it is a very good thing. I have been told that he -- he has stolen something, it is the once only, but he has stolen what her -- his mother --

Q: End of side A.

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: -- ition of tape one, with **George Kadar**, April 24th, year 2000.

A: He knows that his mother, every morning, went out looking for eggs, because she had chickens. And he went to see if there is -- the eggs are already here, and one egg was missing, and to not deceive his mother, he has stolen an egg from the -- from the kitchen, put in the place of the -- of the ch -- of the chicken to -- so -- so this is the only time he -- he is -- he has stolen.

Q: What can you tell us about your mother? What was it like to -- to be in the house with your mother?

A: She was a victim of the society. She was beautiful and intelligent, but her mother -- so my gr -- my -- my grandmother -- and I don't know which -- what was the position of her father, but they didn't want to -- they didn't want her to study, because a woman doesn't

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

13

need it. And -- And so she -- she spoke two foreign languages, German and French, and she read a lot, and she was very interested by plenty of things. And it -- it couldn't bring anything, because -- because she -- she had to finish ~~ed th~~ her studies at 18. What for, I don't know, because there was not too much to do. And I think that my grandmother was very limited. I don't want the -- I don't want any -- I -- I don't want to say anything bad of somebody who finished his -- his -- his -- her -- or somebody -- her -- she -- who finished his day in **Auschwitz**. But I think that she had a great responsibility for the family ~~indecipherable~~ what arrived², because my father was on the uni -- the **U.S.** quota, and I think that she didn't want to move because of the house. There was a house, built by her husband, the house was very beautiful, and -- and somehow I think that she didn't understand any problem. Meanwhile, she spoke very well, German, less well French, and she read and she -- she -- she -- she was a -- an accepta -- I think an acceptable person, was -- very probably she didn't understand anything from the world, but -- and I don't -- I don't know, seeing her example, how we could imagine th-the n -- n-n-north and east, south and west, the Nazi regime, or German occupation alre -- already has been made, and **Hungary** will remain independent. I think it was a very -- a very naïve e -- idea.

Q: Did -- Did your mother's mother live with you? Did you live together?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: So did you live in this beautiful house?

² Note from interviewee's son: Literal translation from the French meaning of "ce qui est arrivé" -> My father meant

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

14

A: Yes, she didn't -- she didn't have a beauti-beautiful place ~~in the - and a~~ beautiful house, because -- and particularly since my father started with -- went to the army once, and a secon -- a second time. So we had to -- we had to have money from somewhere, so we had a -- we took a small apartment in the -- in -- in the same beautiful house, and the two big apartments have been rented -- hired.

Q: So, are you an only child?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know why your parents didn't have other [indecipherable]

A: I think it is -- I think it's better not to -- not to imagine a second or a third chi -- child, because in 1944, I was 15, and I was just the -- the -- the category of age who had the possibility to survive. 17 - 18 year old boys have been sent to work, and particularly in a -
- in a mine in **Yu-Yugoslavia** ~~bor~~³~~border~~. And I think from this mine, nobody came back. So I think -- I-I didn't see anybody coming back from there. And younger brothers or sisters could have been eliminated immediately in **Auschwitz**, the first day. So -- So I have just the age -- just the age you were permitted to exist, to survive.

Q: Do you think that your parents decided not to have more children because they saw trouble brewing in -- in 1932 - '33?

A: I have absolutely no idea.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't know.

["What took place"](#)

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

15

Q: Can you talk a little bit about the role faith and religion played at home? Did your family observe the Sabbath, and in -- and in what ways?

A: No, no. It's -- I mentioned two friends, and religion was an obligation in the school, as mathematics, or physics, or Hungarian literature. And we had a marvelous rabbi, really a marvelous man, and -- who -- who died the first day in **Auschwitz**. He wasn't -- He wasn't old, I think he -- he was born 1906. So he was 30 -- 38, and -- and so somehow, he arrived to -- to invite us to the synagogue, and we went regularly to the synagogue, and we observed -- we really observed everything, even I think -- even the -- the day of **Gedareia [indecipherable]** thing -- thing of less importance. And my -- my parents didn't say anything, so ~~they~~¹ considered ~~that it~~ very probably ~~as we~~--- it's something which comes and goes, which really happened.

Q: By that -- What do you mean by that? Wa -- Were your parents not religious?

A: No.

Q: They were not?

A: No. No, no, no, no. No, not at all. And I think my -- my father had a very bad reaction against his father, who reg -- who went regularly to the synagogue, and on -- and on the same time, a man who -- who was quite brutal and tasteless. Very -- Very probably, but we -- we never spoke of this, so I -- I -- I don't know.

Q: What did your parents teach you about being a Jew? I mean, how did you learn about that as you grew up, or what things do you remember?

³ Bor, Serbia, where there is a large copper mine

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

16

A: Oh, I didn't need my parents, because to be a Jew, and learn in **Hungary**, in that period of -- of **Hhorthy, h-o-r-t-h-y**. It wasn't -- It was not very difficult, cause i-it -- it started with the fact that my father couldn't study, so -- so the -- and -- and in -- in the school, different remarks, that you have killed our **Jesus**, etcetera, and -- and to -- finally, the children in the s -- in the school were products of their parents, and -- and I think that if you -- if you are a -- if you are a -- a salesman, and -- and you are not honest with your -- with your clients -- they say that Mr. **Meyer** was not honest, but if the Mr. **Meyer** is a Jew, then the Jewish -- the Jewish salesman, Mr. **Meyer**, etcetera. So, to be -- to be a Jew, it belongs to the profession of the -- to the person, to -- to the imagination of people. And, you know, I don't know who -- who is -- who -- who said that the anti-Semitism doesn't need any Jews, and you can't be a ga -- you can't be an anti-Semite if -- if never, never in your life, you never have seen one single Jew. It's all -- I don't know if you remember, it happened long years ago, kind of a **Gallup** question in **Austria**, it was long time before the present regime ~~findecipherable~~ -- the actual -- regime -- how many Jews are in **Austria**, and people, certain people said 1,000,000, and in fact, I think 7,000, because the Austrian Jews have been -- have been killed in the meantime. Or, do you want a nay -- a Jewish neighbor? 30 percent said no. Or, do you want to shake the hand of a Jew? 30 percent or 31 percent said no. And they really, they ca-cannot know a lot of Jews.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

17

Q: So then how, as a young man, did you regard being Jewish? I mean, you didn't have a lot of input in a religious way, it was an in -- it was a burden in terms your father was.

How did you think about it as your identity?

A: As -- I -- I think I -- I told you what I could, because I don't know what -- what could have been added to -- to these outside remarks, criticisms, and -- and so I think you -- you can, and you must accept the fact. So, as -- if you see somebody who, he only has one leg, so he -- finally he accepts the fact, it vee -- to live with one leg, is still better than not to live at all. So, there is a s-simple fact for the --

Q: You've talked a lot about your father being very generous, and honest, and you've talked about your mother being very bright. Would -- What things did your parents teach you?

A: This~~isat~~ is extremely difficult to say, because as I lost my father, I was 13, my mother, 15. And -- And if you th-think of general teaching, I think that -- that my father was more important in this domain ~~than [indecipherable]~~ I think, even if he left earlier. My mother, it was -- she was different, because we did all the daily light -- th-the -- the -- the daily life. The preparation of the next -- the next -- the next day, to -- to ask questions of history or -- or literature, or whatever, because the next day, I had these lessons. And she learned with me piano -- piano playing, so she -- she sat down and spent hours at the piano with me every day. So, I didn't become a pianist, this is -- this is not the question, but -- but her participation in the -- in the daily life was l-longer and more important.

Q: So you had a piano at home?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

18

A: Yes.

Q: Di-Did you also have anything else. Perhaps a gramophone, or maybe--

A: Yes, of course.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Yes. ~~One Well. indecipherable variety~~ it was a rarity, but cause I -- I -- I had a very old gramophone, and later an electric one, with mechanic in it. And -- And I had a couple of -- a couple of records. The **Beethoven** Violin Concerto I remember. The **Bach** double Concerto i-in **D** minor. The **Eine Kleine Nachtmusik** by **Mozart**. I think this was -- I don't know what else, and a record by myself, because I have been **re**recorded ma -- by my parents. They wanted to -- They wanted to -- to her -- to ge -- to save -- safeguard the -- the -- my -- to -- my voice, and I -- I s -- I sung the second air of the **Queen of the Night**, and the **Halleluia** by **Mozart**, which was a very important thing. At this time, went the movie, were a hundred men, one girl ~~with Stokowsky Westakoffsky~~ and ~~Deanna Diana~~ **Durbin** sung the ca -- the **Halleluia**. And of this record, five examples have been pressed in five different houses, and all the five houses have been destroyed. I couldn't f -- I couldn't find my -- my voice. I -- I -- otherwise, I could prove that I really sung this very difficult ple-pieces. It's will play another -- another role, not the **Halleluia**, but the ~~Greek-Grieg Solveigsorvike -- sorvike Solveig sung song~~ in the concentration camp.

Q: What did you -- What were you thinking you might be when you grew up? Let's say when you were 10 and 11 and 12, maybe before the war seems very real.

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

19

A: No, earlier --

Q: Okay.

A: I -- bus driver. I -- I think it's, you know, my dream, or a controller of -- of -- on the bus, you know, who sell -- who sells the tickets, who is selling tickets. And then I wanted to -- to become a teacher of Latin and Hungarian literature. It was -- Which is a little bit more related ~~indecipherable~~. And so I really, I -- I -- I didn't know, exactly.

Q: You -- You mentioned Hungarian literature, and we've mentioned that once, and here's a -- a variation, I suppose, on a question I've asked you, which is what were your thoughts about being Hungarian? Did you know a lot about Hungarian history --

A: Oh, we learned it, of course.

Q: Did you feel Hungarian? Did you identify with it?

A: Oh, you know, this is a -- it's a very funny question, because I think of the answer, the first -- first three years of the elementary school, I made, in the Jewish elementary school in hu -- in **Hungary**, in **Budapest** -- in -- in Székesfehérvár ~~Szekervar~~. The first-fourth year I couldn't, because of my grandmother, maternal -- ma -- the mat -- on maternal side, and --

Q: She wouldn't let you?

A: No, no. At the -- At the end of the -- of the third year, a-and every year there was a -- a -- in the court ~~indecipherable~~ of the school, a gymnastic, and I don't know what series on music, upon music, organized by a teacher who called Köves báci ~~Kurasbaeci~~, and -- and this man was a gu -- big hero of the Hungarian army, a Jewish man, who had I don't

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

20

know how many medals from the first World War, and who -- who every year, I think December 10th or 11th, every year we had to listen to his history story in the first World War, beca -- the -- the -- the -- the Battle of LimanowaLimaonova. Nobody knows where LimanowaLimaonova, it's somewhere in **Poland**, or in -- and -- and he -- and then the year of the s -- the end of the s -- this school year, who he played his piece, a Hungarian resurrection. And in this piece, the end of the play, I -- I don't remember exactly what the -- how it was, because I know that the -- at the end of the piece, two angels -- two angels presented the -- the -- the -- not the **cart** -- the geographical **cart** of great **Hungary**.

Q: The map.

A: The map.

Q: Yep.

A: The map of great **Hungary**, before having lost two third of the Hungarian territories. This man, March 15th, arrive in the synagogue, which was the -- everybody went to this, according to his religion, to synagogue, or church, or Temple, because it was th -- t -- th -- the day of the Hungarian revolution, 1848. He arrived in Hungarian uniform, as a lite -- a ~~leert~~nunlieutenant, and -- and we prepared Hungarian flags with the **Magen David** in the middle.

Q: Really?

A: So this man, he was the teacher of you know, the gymnastic, and in the -- in this schoolyard, only three ranks of -- of -- of -- of chairs, and my grandmother sat down in the first li -- the first row -- line, or wh-whatever. And he started to cry that the first

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

21

~~ra~~ng is reserved, please take another one, and my grandmothers went out furious, and didn't tolerate that I continue this school with the Jewish ~~I~~~~ay~~ teachers. And well, I had goo -- good relationship with the -- with my old teacher, whose wife was my pi-piano teacher for a moment -- for a couple of years. And he was the religion teacher as well. And was the issue to -- to understand, so the example of this -- of this Köves báciKurasbaei, Uncle Köves, K-o -- double poin-point, v-e-s, he was a Hungarian patriot, and he tried to educate the -- this Jewish children in the -- i-in Hungarian patriotism, and of course it was grotesque. It was ridiculous, the whole -- the -- the -- the method of LimanowaLimagoneva, the Hungarian resurrection, so all these ils -- and the Magen David, there is this hor-horrible ideas, and he finished exactly as the others. Later, the Jewish officers lost -- lost their military rank, and on a -- every man had a militar -- a military book, and with an enormous stamp ZS, ~~zhido~~ zsido ~~---~~ Jewish: out. So of -- of course it was -- it was horrible that -- that the Hungarian authorities did it, because even i-if somebody who -- who -- plenty of enthusiasm, struggled -- struggled and -- and -- and wanted to -- and wanted to -- to -- to underline his first: Hungarian, second: Jewish si -- situation. So this perhaps the answer. My father and my mother, there was absolutely no question about that, but we had to put out the flag for several anniversaries, and then the -- and so on. Everybody did.

Q: Ca-Can you talk a bit about your family's political ideas? Did you know what they were?

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

22

A: The family's political ideas? My father had not -- I -- I don't think he had particular political ideas. My mother was more active. A great part of the Hungarian -- of the -- of the Hungarian Jews in -- in this town went to the -- to the left side. They thought that the situation is so horrible, it only can be resolved otherwise, not in -- to a -- just to leave, just to resort -- to have the opportunity to leave, to learn, to teach, to -- which, these opportunities have been -- have been slowly excluded. It -- In **Hungary** there was two series of Jewish -- so-called Jewish laws. In 1939, and then 1941, and many professions -- many professions, Jewish, were eliminated. And this will give you an example, the publicity. There was a -- a glass ~~mural~~mirror, I don't know what sales~~man~~a ~~findecipherable~~ big shop in **Hungary** called ~~Schnie~~tzler, and in -- in -- in -- in ~~Székesfehérvár~~Szekervar, in **Hungary**. And ~~Schnie~~tzler made a publicity in the movie, sh -- buy glass mirrors in the shop of ~~Schnie~~tzler. ~~Schnie~~tzler is the only non-Jewish salesman in this -- in this ~~robreek~~rubrique. Of course I wouldn't I-I wouldn't buy something fr -- because he is Jewish or not Jewish. The idea, to -- to make a publicity, these are the only non-Jewish salesman, is all -- it's -- in this profession, I think is horrible.

Q: You've talked about the two laws, and you just gave that story. Things begin --

End of Tape One, Side B

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

23

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is an interview with **George Kadar**, conducted by **Katie Davis**, on April 24th, in the year 2000, at the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum. This is tape number two, side A. I'll begin asking that question again, which is, can you describe how things began to change in your life, as the new laws were passed, and restricted the ability of Jews to be in professions, or -- and just as things begin to change in **Hungary**, and perhaps you were hearing also about other parts, other countries?

A: No, no, i-it is -- it i -- this thing -- I was not too much concerned, because I went to school before and after. What really happened, that in **Hungary**, there was so-called

Levente-mozgalom, Levanther [indecipherable] LeventeLevanther, old Hungarian name, and it was in **Germany** the old -- old names came -- came up with these different Fascist or semi-Fascist movements. In **Hungary**, LeventeLevanther, and -- and it meant that in the school, one -- once in the week, three hours of patriotism, or -- and the Jews couldn't be LeventeLevanther, because they were Jewish, and -- and -- but to -- to make certain works -- this is absolutely no -- no reason, just to -- just to have an occupation parallel to the Levente Levanther movement, with -- with yellow armband, because it was yellow, the Jewish colors, you know, and baptized Jewish who -- so who racially were Jewish, but administratively not, they had a white armband. And so it is -- it is -- this was diff -- it was different, because the -- this -- the sure friends of -- comrades did something completely different, so it was a -- the first -- the first place, the Jewish children were ousted.

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

24

Q: Ousted?

A: Yes.

Q: School-wise?

A: Yes. No, not from the school, from the movement, so they -- cause they -- the not Jewish peop -- the not Jewish colleagues made -- made something different. The second thing was deportations started from other countries earlier than in **Hungary**. And once, in Friday evening, the -- this famous rabbi made a great speech, and par -- and it was, I think, about -- about Christmas. Christmas -- the Christmas tree apparently has been invented by **Martin Luther**. And **Luther** propose also to send out the Jews to work. And in connection to this, he said that he positively knew that locked trains **trasversed** -- traversed the ~~gare~~ ~~ward~~ -- the railway station of our town. He didn't know where they were going, but he -- he knew that they came from **Italy**. And -- And he suggested that Jewish families forget about the Christmas tree this year. I don't know, I -- how we reacted in this time, but -- but we -- but he knew the deportation was in the neighborhood. He didn't n -- He didn't say that the next victim, ou-ou-ourselves, but he warned us against something. So this was -- this was nothing in relationship with the hung -- with the law, but it was in relationship with the time of the law, approximately.

Q: Do you remember what your thoughts were when you heard that story?

A: I think that we reacted as people who do not g -- do not want to -- to accept the fact of **Auschwitz**. It was a kind of -- of a fly away from the -- from the reality, and to unde -- and to understand that **Hungary** will continue t -- a-as I told you, as independence, as far

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

25

as -- as possible. I didn't hear any reaction, say that if it is so, then we have to go.

Everybody ~~findecipherable~~ should have gone.

Q: Was there ever earlier -- or ever, that you remember, any talk of your family leaving **Hungary**, perhaps trying to go to a neutral country, just out of **Europe**, let's say.

AQ: I see -- I told you that my father was in the quota, so h-he -- he knew why he did it, and -- but somehow, I think that in the family, he wasn't taken very seriously because -- because he -- he said several times that this is the train, which he will ta-take to go to see **Italy**. There was a dear -- a direct-train ~~extreme~~ between **Budapest** and -- and **Venice**, and I don't know where it -- I think **Buda-Budapest -- Venice**, with beautiful Italian cars, beautiful. And -- And he couldn't realize this dream because he had no money, and perhaps because he couldn't realize one project, perhaps the second project has not been taken seriously. I don't know, I don't remember, I -- I just imagine an answer on your -- on your -- on your question, I don't know whether I'm right.

Q: You mentioned that you heard the rabbi give a speech, and that was in synagogue?

A: Yes.

Q: I wonder if you can talk a little bit more. I know we've touched on this, but I understand that your father and mother weren't very religious, and you went, but what did you take from there? Did you have -- I mean, what was attractive about going, to you?

A: This is what I told you, that these -- these three friends went everywhere, and -- and it belongs somehow, the -- to the daily life, and I don't know if they are more or less

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

26

convinced, as I was, I don't know. But we were together, we wer -- we went together, and we liked the rabbi. And -- And we had a -- so -- so common moments, reactions of happenings in the synagogue, and so kind of -- of complicity. There~~it~~ was a very old man, he's **Goldberg**. And Mr. **Goldberg** was very old, and very sleepy, and -- and everything went I th -- I think th -- slowly for him, because he -- he knew everything by heart, and -- and then he -- he manifested in a very funny way **aaaahhhhh, aaaaaayy**, and a -- and of course he -- he was -- the rabbi was smiling, and we smiled together, because -- because the poor -- the poor old man expressed his -- his -- his sentiments very f -- very curious way.

Q: What were the names of your friends?

A: beide, ~~findecipherable~~ two, both — hieß Pista, ~~findecipherable~~ **Stefan**, Stern~~Shtan~~ and **Hermann**.

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Q: So three friends, and you made four?

A: No.

Q: Oh, three together.

A: Three -- Three -- Three together.

Q: You were the third?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. That's what I --

A: And -- And then the two ~~pishtol~~ Pista -- the two -- the two **Stefans**, **Steves**.

Q: Do you remember when you first heard about **Hitler**? Nazism?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

27

A: No.

Q: How about the war?

A: The war, oh I think we didn't understand too much of the war, and -- and we didn't understand particularly na -- the general ~~eatastrophy~~catastrophe of the -- of -- of the attack against the **Soviet Union**. And the war was [~~indecipherable~~] was fascinating, because they advanced, they went until **Moscow**, and it is a ~~phenomenonal~~, it was extremely -- plenty of tension, and -- and -- and -- in-interest.

Q: H-How would you hear about it?

A: Oh, oh, I don't -- I don't understand the question.

Q: H-How would you keep up with the news? Was it through newspapers or other ways? Was it the radio?

A: Newspapers, radio, and then -- and simple -- simple human beings.

Q: Mm-hm. So -- So was sitting around listening to the radio something that your family did?

A: Yes, a wa -- ~~so~~, the radio has been confiscated by the police, because we were supposed to listen to the -- to the **BBC**, and -- and -- which we did. And one day I came from school, a policeman was sitting in our apartment, radio control, but th-the radio was not open, so nobody -- nobody listened to anything, which didn't change he -- and th -- to -- in his attitude. You know, you don't need the Jews to be an anti-Semite, you don't need to listen to something, or to not to listen to something to be caught with that, that you did

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

28

it. And so the radio has been confiscated, we had to -- to give the radio to a -- kind of a -- a radio shop.

Q: Do you remember about when this was?

A: I think '43, I'm -- I'm -- I'm not sure.

Q: Can you just talk a little bit about how the town changes, if it does? Is there any more open anti-Semitism, you know, in addition to the story you just told, and to -- to other things you've mentioned, but is the atmosphere in your town changing?

A: The atmosphere in **Hungary**, there was an excellent German paper, which called **Pester Lloyd**~~sterloyd~~, a paper which has been made entirely in **Hungary**, and entirely by Hungarian Jews, who -- who knew German, who knew really German. And it went so far into parliament, an **interperlation** happened, or happened li -- has been done a question to the government, how is possible that this paper is still -- i-is still made by a Jew? So nobody was interested to know why, why, really why, becau-because -- because he s -- he -- he -- he spoke German. He was perfect in German, a Hungarian journalist re -- making a German paper. You know, to these extreme events belong -- belongs the reign of ignorance, and it happened after the war, just to illustrate it, after the war, a couple of years after the war in **Hungary**, the -- the Soviet regime has been introduced by Hungarians, and it has been declared a -- th-the -- the worker's class should take over the main -- the -- the most interesting, the most important places. And so, they found a tramway conductor who the m -- who's a very nice man, has a beautiful voice, but he wasn't a good announcer because he -- he has not the necessary culture, and -- and they

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

29

announced, ladies and gentleman, you are listening to the excerpts of “**The Miserables**,” by **Hugo**, the fifth. Because **Victor Hugo**, the V point **Hugo**, and **Hugo -- Hugo** the fifth wrote this piece. And for me, it is a -- it is after the wa -- it was after the war, but this kind of -- of solid ignorance, I know that my -- I -- I -- I -- I called them since I knew this -- this tramway conductor. This is also **Hugo** the fifth. And **Hugo** the fifth arrived every time when a -- when a regime changes, and the old -- the old professionals -- professionals h-have been changed by people knowing nothing, and which -- which -- which always meant a kind of **Hugo** the fifth.

Q: As things began to really tighten up, and as you said, as ignorance arrived, a solid ignorance re-emerged --

A: This is hopeless.

Q: I know you were young, but --

A: It is hopeless. This is hopeless. So the -- the end of the Hungarian regime I didn't see, because I wa -- I was in **Auschwitz**, but this is exactly, you know, somebody -- somebody's trying to -- to burn the Jewish -- the synagogue in **Lubbee-Lübeck** for instance. What do you do? You -- You go to these people and say, “Listen, this is not correct. You shouldn't burn the synagogue.” So this is -- this is not possible. How do you want to -- to speak with them? About what? Based on what?

Q: So what happens, though? Do you just become --

A: Nothing. We waited. We -- We had a very good newspaper, who -- in this paper, you could read very interesting things, a little bit hidden, of course. And until the -- until the

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

30

very day, the March 19th, '44, when the -- when the country was officially occupied by the Germans, and it was the -- and that was the end.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about the days leading up to that? Did you expect the country to be occupied by the Germans?

A: No, we didn't expect. The -- The Prime Minister who called ~~Hokuv~~ **Kállay**, **K-áa-** double **l-a-y**, he wanted to establish a certain balance between -- between east and west. And I think they played with the idea to -- to -- to jump out on the whole thing. And **Kállay** announced a great speech, for the 19th of March, in the evening. On the 19th of March, the Germans were pris -- were there. So the -- the -- the speech did not happen, and the Germans were in **Hungary** March 19th. On March 22nd, government has been formed, and the first -- the first Prime Minister was the -- the ex-ambassador in **Berlin**, of the Hungarian kingdom. We didn't -- We didn't have a king, but this is another ~~indecipherable~~ question.

Q: Do -- How do you remember seeing Germans arrive into your town?

A: This was horrible. This was horrible. This is something where my -- I -- I really remember. I was sick, and -- and the news, I -- I -- I heard the news, by my mother, grandmother, paper, etcetera. And -- And we knew that it was somehow the end.

Q: Can you -- Can you describe what happened on the street?

A: On the streets, nothing. More German soldiers. But they-they-they didn't happen on the street, it happened everywhere. The street -- The street didn't react, nobody reacted hor -- but the critical position of the new government was quite clear, and the extreme

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

31

right government, with this prime minister, it was absolutely evident that they -- they will do what -- what the Germans command.

Q: Did you have any face to face interactions with German soldiers? Can you tell us about that?

A: No, no, no, no. No, I couldn't -- I couldn't speak German, and I -- I had no reason to speak to the German soldiers.

Q: You know, I wonder if you could just describe what was going on. Did -- Did you stay in the -- the home for a little bit? Was -- Was your mom still going out to go to market?

A: What ay -- ay --

Q: Was your mother leaving the house to buy food at all, or what was going on in those first few days?

A: A few days -- in the first days, nothing so it was indecipherable March 19th, but they worked very, very quick, very fast. The main person in charge was **Eichmann**, and it went so fast that he -- within two weeks, the -- the yellow s-star was oblig -- oblig -- ob --

Q: Obligatory?

A: Obligatory, yes.

Q: Can you tell us how you learned about that?

A: By decree, the papers, radio, of the April 5th on. April 5th was the last day the school, the -- the year has been shortened, and then the --

Q: At this point, what are your mother and grandmother saying?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

32

A: Nothing. They probably ~~indecipherable~~ -- They manufactured the yellow stars for -- for the coat, for I don't know whatever things, we had a couple of yellow stars. But without inscriptions, so not as ~~indecipherable~~ in **Holland Yud**, or **France Ju-Juif**, nothing. It happened so quickly that probably they had no time to -- to manufacture the letters.

Q: A-Are there any preparations going on in the household of your -- is your mother hiding anything? Are you talking about the future in any way?

A: On the future, you know, I think was better not to notice, not to think on the future, and the events came -- the ~~indecipherable~~ ones after the others, so we were -- we were very occupied, and it then appeared the -- the -- the menu of the whole thing, first that we had to go, end of May, in the Jewish house, the s -- with the star.

Q: T-Tell us what that is.

A: Fr -- Fi -- In certain houses, you only had Jewish people, with a yellow star indicated th-the Jewish house, until June 6. June 6 is, you ~~indecipherable~~ remember, the sh -- the -- the day of the invasion.

Q: C-C-Can I stop you before -- I'm wondering if you could tell me about leaving your home, your apartment, and going to the Jewish house, h-how did you know that you had to do it? How did you get there, what did you take?

A: By feet ~~indecipherable~~ So, we had no choice, we learned it by papers, posters, radio, and -- and it a -- it i -- it i -- it happened, so we had to follow it.

Q: But, can you describe the day that yo -- that you actually went?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

33

A: I think it was May 30th, or -- and the -- the house was not too bad, the house was unfinished, but habit-habitable somehow, and of course, I don't know how many -- how many square meter has been done to -- by -- by person, I don't know. Later, two, but here, I -- I don't know, so it was quite -- it was not -- not so horrible. But it did -- it had only a week -- e-existence of one week, until June the 6th, and the June -- June 6th we had to go, it was the first march, this was no-not the Death March, but something very ~~lugubrac~~ ~~—lugibra~~, horrible, because you had to go to the -- to the **brikfabrik**, and the **brikfabrik** was the camp, on the railway, waiting the deportation. But we didn't know, of course the deportation was coming, but we learned it in t -- on time. And we have been a c -- supervised by Hungarian **gendarmes**, and this was an only -- their only human movement, and a young man went to my -- say to my mother, and said, "Madame -- Madame, if something horrible will get you way -- you -- you arrive, it -- it -- it -- it will be our end as well," said the Hungarian **gendarme**, a very nice man. And -- And during this march, we traversed th-the -- the whole town, and in every di -- tow -- in every door, people. Nobody said anything, nobody -- nobody said hullo -- hello, and nobody asked why. It was normal, it is the end, or the -- the transportation of Jews. **Point.** [indecipherable] to the **brikfabrik**, there we had two ques -- square -- square meters by - - by person, until June 14th. On June 14th, the train was there, and we had to -- to take this train, and this train went to **Auschwitz**, arrived June f -- 17th, in the afternoon. Beautiful weather.

Q: Beautiful?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

34

A: Weather, beautiful weather, blue skies, sunshine.

Q: What had you been able to take with you on this march?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: What did you have?

A: Oh, whatever we wanted, luggage or whatever we wanted.

Q: [inaudible] family?

A: Because they -- they perfectly knew, which we didn't know, that whatever we -- we -- we're carrying, it -- in a couple of days it has di -- completely disappear, and go there -- and goes right into **Germany**, and we didn't know it. We got -- We could take a luggage and sa -- bag or -- or whatever, but the -- and which we used in this **brikfabrik**.

Q: Did your mother pack anything particularly valuable fr-from the family house?

A: No, no.

Q: [indecipherable]

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

A: -- stamp collection of my father, oriental rugs. I thou -- Everything remaining in ou -- in our original house. So we didn't -- and -- and completely the pe -- nobody wanted to know about, and I think they were very surprised as I arrived, and I -- and I came back, and wanted to know what -- what remained. Of course, nothing.

Q: Can -- Can you describe the days where you are at the brick factory, and you are waiting. D-Do you know what you're waiting for at that point?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

35

A: No, no. What we -- My mother had a -- a cousin, **Oswa Endei**, who worked in -- in -- in the univer -- university in **PécsPage**, so the same place where my father made his studies the second time. And -- And she said to my mother, "**Ilonka**," -- **Ilona** -- "if we survive this, then it will be good." So she -- she had a very solid feelings of the -- various **solid feelings** of the end, and it happened she disappeared **as well** -- she was a marvelous person.

Q: Had you -- you yourself, or perhaps your mother, had you heard anything besides what the rabbi had said about Jews being loaded and deported?

A: Yes, so far that people from my town, wanting tha -- to take the train, have been arrested by the Hungarian police, before the deportation. And nobody -- nobody knew what happened. The day arrived a post -- a postcard from **Am Waldseeam Vahlzee**, and **Waldseeam Vahlzee** this is the **Forest Lake**, and **Forest Lake** was **Auschwitz**, which I learned later, because I -- I -- I had the same card in **Auschwitz** to -- to write home. It called **Waldsee Vahlzee**, so, you can imagine a -- a German sanitorium with the sun, and -- and -- and beautiful water. This a -- This has been made with such a **cynism**, which is - - which **were** I think, which was at the ex -- at the same level as the -- as the -- the ki -- the killing organization. This is **Waldsee Vahlzee**, it -- c-called **Waldsee Vahlzee**, there is such a place, oh yes. So we knew that they disappeared, we didn't know where they were. And we knew -- only -- only knew that it was **Waldsee Vahlzee**, but nobody -- nobody knew what is **Waldsee Vahlzee**, we learned it later.

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

36

Q: In the factory, did you have any -- ho -- what did you do for food and water?

A: There was food and water. I don't know -- I -- I -- I don't know which kind of water we had 56 years ago. I -- I don't know, but I -- but I -- I do know that we are no -- we are not -- we -- we are not starving. The problem was not this, the problem was this -- the -- it was very, very hot, and -- and -- and this is a very little place, very hot, and nobody knew what -- what -- what is happening. Of course, we had different informations that the -- the committee of I don't know what decided, and the committee, and the -- the -- the -- the president of I don't know, that the -- you know, in -- in -- in -- in such a situation, you have a lot of -- of news, gossips, and the fact was, was I -- that I -- what I'm telling you about the dis -- of couple -- a couple of days in the -- in the brick factory, we had the -- we had -- we -- we came this train, and 76 person -- no, no, 67 -- 67 persons were in one -- this car for -- for animals, locked and of course we -- during the -- the travel, the Germans tried to blackmail, and if -- y-yeah, you can get water, if you give -- if we -- we can get a -- a -- a gold watch. Or, you can get, I don't know what, if. So -- And it has been known by the SS, [indecipherable] by the SS, because they know, they only knew -- they also knew that in **Auschwitz**, they d -- they -- they won't get anything. They didn't get anything, **Auschwitz** was a complete different organization.

Q: S-So, when you were in the train, and it's locked, are your mother and grandmother with you, or were you s -- had you been separated?

A: No, no, families were together, generations were together, and you can't imagine, for instance, the -- the toilet situation between people of 10 weeks old, or 73 years. So -- So

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

37

organizes with the -- with the towels, and I don't know, this was ve-very, very, very difficult.

Q: Do you remember any of your thoughts at that time, or conversations perhaps, with your mother?

A: No. No. On there -- there -- you know, I o -- I wouldn't say that I -- I was a child in the -- 15 is a little bit more, but I was always terribly interested by trains and bus. You know, it bi -- I wanted to become a bus driver, and -- and I -- for instance, I al-always wanted to go to a certain Hungarian town which I never seen, and -- and when -- when the -- this -- the train stopped in this ware -- in this -- this town, and behind the station there was a -- a tramway, I was very interested by the tramway, the color of the tramway in this town, and -- and I learned, for instance, the water, drink water in s -- **Slovakia**, which called **pit_nawo~~da~~**, and I learned this word dur -- in this -- in this locked train, because it -- because it di -- it was also interesting. Or the -- in the blue light of trains, or of other trains, or all the -- in the -- the -- the kind of -- of running, it was is als -- it was very interesting. So, you -- you cannot consider it like a death march, pure -- pure death march, **A**, because we didn't know it, **B**, because the life is so colored. And so if you -- if you -- if you -- if you are in a horrible situation, and you see something else, you hear a bird whistling, or what, so the -- you -- your attention is spread.

Q: C-Can you remember what it sounded like to be in that car?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

38

A: A car? A train. A train. But, of course, you're right, because it was a train only of two **axis** and a -- and a -- an express train had **Pullman** cars, four **axis**, and -- and it -- it goes more smoothly than this two **axis** animals -- best -- an-animal trains.

Q: What about the people inside, were they quiet or noisy?

A: Oh, I think it was a mixture of -- of -- of sadness, history, fears -- well, you can imagine that 67 people during three days in such a car, I think there is -- it -- itself very disturbing, but it was not that bad, it -- later, because we -- in the -- we had -- we could eat before, and the starving period ex -- started later, and the deaths -- the deaths in this quantity, this -- this started much later.

Q: Co-Could you sit down in the car?

A: Sit down ~~on~~ in what?

Q: Or were you a -- were you standing or seated in the train?

A: [indecipherable] Well, of course we can sit down everywhere, so we -- th-they didn't give beds and then the -- well, you know we had to -- we had to sit on -- on -- on the luggage, or -- or stand a little bit and sit down later on, so what you can, and what you can't do if you are -- if -- if 67 persons are on co -- a couple of -- of square meters.

Q: Can you describe arri -- your arrival at **Auschwitz**? I mean, what does the train do, and how are you let out of the train?

A: Jumping. Jumping. And men and women have been immediately separated, so I never -- I never s -- I never seen any more my mother. I don't know what she wa -- what happened. I didn't know, I ma -- of course I know. But, I went to the man, and -- and --

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

39

and we saw that the women went with the women. And I suppose that she didn't want to leave alone her mother, and as I understood later, the doct -- Dr. **Mengele**, you know who he was, Dr. **Mengele** didn't care if somebody wanted to die, he was much more nervous if he selected somebody for death, and -- and the **[indecipherable]** tried to -- to get out. This is -- So if he -- she wanted to follow her mother, okay. One -- One person more, or less. The first day was quite terrible, because -- at first because we didn't know anything, and then we had to go to the -- to the -- to different places, disinfection, barber, shaving, the shower, and -- and this uniform, you know, this -- for prisoners, which went approximately. So we had a -- a jacket, pant, a h-hat -- hat, and shoes. Shoes, wooden shoes, with some textile, and -- but th -- but you are -- you were marching on the -- on the -- on the wood -- on -- on the wood. I -- This my -- One of my most horrible souvenir, the shoes, because of -- because of the death march, between January 18th and 21st, day and night, on the ice, and the snow. I think this was one of the most horrible points of -- of the -- of this time.

Q: And in fact, when you arrived here today in **Washington**, before this interview, we went to the museum, and you wanted to see a pair of those wooden shoes, and a -- I just wonder if you could explain why that that was so --

A: Because I went to the **ShoahShaw** Museum in -- in **Los Angeles**, and -- and I was frightened by -- everything was very clean, and everything you know, in boxes. So if you go to a normal museum, and in the box you see a **Rembrandt**, or a **DürerPoderer**, and here you said -- you f -- you saw, I think, **My Kampf** -- "**Mein Kampf**," by **Adolf**

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

40

Hitler, and -- and in another box ~~was a~~ oks, or the shoe. And -- But the shoes, yo -- on ya -- on one hand, you cannot expl -- you cannot expl-explain what they were, and on the other hand, you should do it, because -- because shoes -- shoes is not very beautiful, but - - but your -- but si -- approximately 60 kilometers, so nearly 40 miles in these shoes, under those circumstances, in -- this is -- these -- something so horribly inhuman, and if you -- if you want to understand this -- this story of -- of **Auschwitz**, then you -- and this is one of the main points. So, you know, the whole thing is so that I'm sure that the time - - time will make its job ~~[indecipherable]~~ and it -- and y -- if the -- the -- the exhibition of these objects is not convincing, ~~[indecipherable]~~ enough, in -- in -- in a couple of years, people will speak of these horrible things, as they mentioned today, the history of the three year -- th-thirty year war, 1618 and '48, between Protestants and then Catholics. And everybody knows that it was horrible. A great German writer,

Grimmelshausen~~Grimashausen~~, wrote a book calling simply ~~Simplicissimus~~ simus.

S -- It means the most simple one. And if you read this book, this is not ma -- he is not better or worse than the deportation. I think the huma -- humanity always found fantastic things to -- to make suffer other people. Unfortunately, we had such a treatment, with much more perfection, weapons, and possibilities. Da -- In the times of **Grimelhau** --

Grimmelshausen~~Grimashausen~~, there was no gas, and they couldn't kill as many people they wanted. But now, the technique was at a very high level, and the organization permitted to kill so many people.

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

41

Q: Do you remember when you -- how did you realize that people were being killed with gas at **Auschwitz**? When and how?

A: It's not the gas, but the -- the -- the fire. Because the fire came out, and very often you heard a horrible -- you smelled something horrible, which was between burned meat and fat, and so which was in fact, a human body. And this -- it came out, this fine, black rain. So it -- it was n-no doubt that people have been killed.

Q: Did people talk about it? The pr -- other prisoners?

A: Yes, of course. In there we had nothing else to -- yes, we had, because the -- the food was very poor, a kind of artificial jam, and margarine, and we always -- we had a dream, this -- with the three, that after the war, when it will be~~indecipherable~~ finished, we will mix margarine with this kind of jam, and to eat it together. Never happened. They died, and I never did it.

Q: Go back a little bit. Are -- You're saying that your friends were with you in **Auschwitz**?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, where did you meet up with them, were they on the same train with you?

A: Yes, yes, of course, because they -- they were ~~indecipherable~~ they were from the same town, the same town had the same train.

Q: Were they in the same car?

A: Yes, pardon?

Q: Were they in the same car?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

42

A: No, not necessary, in the same train. The train had I don't know how many cars. So --
And -- And we -- we -- we met [indecipherable]

Q: Do you remember where you met?

A: After the shower. And where we meet together.

Q: Were you in a -- Were all your towns -- Were all the townspeople from your town, the men, I guess, let me rephrase that. Were the men from your town housed together?

A: ~~Awful~~ What for the men? I don't understand the question.

Q: When you were given bunks, were you housed with other men from your town?

A: [indecipherable] I think yes. I think yes, but it di -- di -- didn't bother us, and no-not necessarily in the train. The train all -- all in **Auschwitz** we didn't know about.

Q: Okay. So you met up with your friends, were you able to sleep in the same space?

A: I don't remember if we slept in the same place. Maybe yes, or from time to time.

Sleeping on the same place, it was very adventurous because we had nothing, no -- no beds, and absolutely nothing. We had only a - how do you call the "planche"? ~~article de planche.~~

Q: Mat? A plank?

A: Yes, a plank. Not a plank, but planks. And on the planks, we couldn't -- we couldn't lay down, because y -- so many people, and no place. So it's called this sitting -- **marine** sitting. You know what it is? It -- It -- I was sitting so, so the -- the two legs -- in between the two legs, another one. Between his legs another one. Six or seven persons, so -- and -- and so -- so if you -- it was -- I don't know where it -- where it -- why it called **marine**

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

43

sitting, or sitting ~~à~~ la **marine**, or I -- I don't know. And the planks became more and more rare, because the commander of the -- al-also a prisoner, who distributed the food, has stolen a lot, and he needed something to make fire, so not only has he s -- stolen a part of the margarine and the -- and the -- and these things, but he has stolen also the planks, and the -- the -- as the planks were -- became more and more rare, and you -- you found yourself between two planks, it was very -- very ~~dolorous~~~~delerous~~. So -- So --

Q: Uncomfortable.

A: Very uncomfortable, not uncomfortable, really bad. And the situation was so that I -- I will try t-to show you something that you can describe. Wait a second, I -- it needs time.

Q: You're taking off your shoe.

A: Yes.

Q: And your sock.

A: Where is it? Right the -- I think it is here. Here, do you see it? **[indecipherable]**

Q: Yes, I see a deep scar, like a puncture wound almost.

A: Somebody -- Somebody -- Somebody went on my foot with his ho -- wooden shoes, and -- and in **Auschwitz** the situation was so, you have the -- the -- if you was -- if you were hurt a little bit, it couldn't -- it -- it -- it couldn't be healed, because of the -- of the -- of the extremely poor quality of the food. I had a **[indecipherable]**

Q: Oh, it wouldn't heal.

A: No.

Q: Yeah.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

44

A: So it is just wa --

Q: How was your health in **Auschwitz**?

A: You know -- thank you -- it's a good question. You know, as e -- I'm still here, I was quite resistant, but I was very surprised, it was quite -- oh, it was quite at the end of -- of this deportation time, I s -- found somewhere a piece of mirror, and I looked in the mirror, and I says how, that's it, completely a kind of a -- a goat.

Q: A ghost?

A: No, a goat.

Q: Oh, goat?

A: A goat, a goat. And so I -- I was very surprised. Nothing, absolutely nothing on, just bones, and -- and is this very funny expression, not funny, but a very -- there's a new expression in the eyes, with fears and -- and astonishment, and some kind of not understandable way ca -- for -- way of -- of looking. This is -- This was a sur -- a very big surprise. Well, the food is -- makes no sense, e -- I -- I think you -- you heard this several times. The food was always and everywhere the same, and the f -- there's nothing to say.

Q: Except for that you f -- you did remember dreaming about good food, that was something you thought about a lot?

A: No. I don't think so, I -- i-it only concerned the margarine and jam. I don't know why.

Like the b -- the bus driver shipule~~indecipherable~~shipule, I don't know why.

Q: At this point are you trying to find out about your mother? Are you trying to contact people on the women's side?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

45

A: Contacts were not possible, so you --people ~~were~~ leaving the camp to make work somewhere, and having met women, of course they sto -- th-the -- they so -- Mrs. So and So, and Mrs. So and So, but my mother never had been mentioned. And my mother, after the war, when different lists circulated in the camps, I never seen the name of my mother, so I -- I think the -- this -- my supposition is correct.

Q: Wh-Which is what?

A: Th-That she followed her mother, and -- and disappeared the same day. The day of the -- of the arrival.

Q: Wh-What do you remember about the guards, and any contact you had with Germans?

A: Now, there are different forms --

Q: I think I'll stop -- end of tape two.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

46

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is an interview with **George Kadar**, conducted by **Katie Davis**, on April 24th, in the year 2000, at the **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum. This is tape number three, side A. I was just asking you, at the end of that tape, about what you remember about the guards that guarded you, and also about interactions with Germans.

A: So, you were asking -- I -- I don't know, 10 questions. It is -- It is not so easy. I think that the -- the social order of **Auschwitz** of the time -- of this time, was that of course the **SS** commanded, executed by a lot of horrible Polish people, absolutely horrible, and I don't -- this is not a question of racism, because they had a position, and they were s -- horrible. Then, Gypsies, who had the right to -- to run with the -- with the ~~ga~~ stock, and -- not the stock, the --

Q: The livestock?

A: Mm?

Q: The animals?

A: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, with the baton, fr-from French, ~~bâ~~ton.

Q: A baton?

A: A baton, yes.

Q: Okay, mm-hm.

A: Yes. And then came the Jews at the end.

Q: Were the Gypsies Hungarian Gypsies?

A: I don't know, no matter. I remember of a scene ~~[indecipherable]~~ I -- I went

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

47

somewhere, between two barracks, and behind me, a Gypsy with a baton. And instead of avoiding me, he struck me on -- on my -- on my back, because he wa-want -- he wanted me to go out of his way. This was the Gypsy, later he died, very probably. Then came the Polish **kapos**, an absolutely horrible, horrible part of humanity. They had the right, for instance, to -- apparently, because they did it, to exchange people selected for the -- for the gas, because they knew somebody, or -- in the meantime, I profited somewhere off this attitude. And -- And then the -- the **SS**, it was -- the contact with the **SS** was not direct. The contact was every day, the so-called **appelle**, you know re -- what it is -- what it was. And -- And so, if -- if one person was missing, they had to start again, to count again, but it took hours, and you can imagine then, it happened to me, that th-the food was so horrible that I became a very gr-great diarrhea, and I couldn't go out, because we had to stay there, and I -- I -- I had no solution, so it went. And very bad sign, flies were coming -- is wa -- by the way, flies were the only animals we saw, plus the **SS** dogs, but there was no butterfly, nothing, no birds, just flies. And -- And so i-i-i-it was a extreme -- extremely bad, the **appelle**, and the -- but this has been ordered by the **SS**. I -- What I don't understand, the logic of the whole thing, because if somebody was missing, it was not sure, and there never was one -- plus one, only minus one, and -- and they had to find out where it -- where he was. So it -- it took time. The Jewish commanders, or the sous-commanders~~[indecipherable]~~ were also quite bad because -- because they -- they -- they regularly stole the ~~midare~~ -- the -- the food. You know, I had a couple of times, contact with **Mengele**, because he came several times to select. And the selections,

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

48

which, ~~if~~ you know what it was, first the -- the **cynism**, because the first selection took place on September 15th, which was **Rosh Hashanah**. The second for **Yom Kippur**, so they -- they apparently knew the Jewish calendar. And then I -- I think that nobody spoke of the smiling side of **Mengele**. **Mengele** could smile, and he selected the deaths smiling, with rapture, a little bit. And if somebody didn't obey, then he became very angry. But he -- But otherwise, he was smiling, and -- to make this job. You know, there is something very perverse in the whole thing. For instance if the -- the Gauleiter~~gauleiter~~, or I don't know, the commander -- not commander, was something like that, commander -- I -- I -- I don't know **[indecipherable]** the military, or **[indecipherable]** the man who -- **Frank**, a very, very famous and a horrible man of **Hitler**, who was the commander of **Poland**, after having finished his job, he went home to play **Bach** on the piano, because this is German culture. I could tell you something else, which is perhaps not a direct answer~~[indecipherable]~~ but the -- to understand this mentality, a -- a -- excuse me, but I -- I think I -- I will say it, if you don't want it, leave it out. I had a -- I have a sister-in-law in **Berlin**, and we -- we went very often to **Berlin**, and I know a -- a -- a good friend in north **Germany**, who is a chor -- chorus -- choir -- choir conductor, and a man who -- with incredible knowledge. And his first wife, or the daughter of a lady who is living -- the lady lived in Bielefeld~~Vi-Vidafeld~~, and the daughter said, "You know, Paris and ~~[indecipherable]~~ **Berlin** is so far. Go to my mother, the house is big, and you can -- you can take a rest -- ~~at~~ night." And we did this several times. In 1977, when our si thi-third boy was born, I -- I examined the boy, of

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

49

course, as a good father, and I considered that his ears were a little bit different of the other ears of the family. It wa -- He was born in September, and a couple of months later, we went to Christmas, to **Berlin** with this station, she -- Madame **S.Ess**. And do you know, after dinner, kinder -- the children went to bed, and after dinner nobody in **Germany** will sit down with a -- with white wine to gossip, and to [indecipherable] and on this day, Mrs. **S.Ess** said, "You know, it was in the period with my -- my husband was in prison." "Your husband in prison? How?" "My daughter never told you?" "No." And, "He was in prison." "Why?" "Because he was a very high **SS** officer, and his ~~speciality~~ **specialty** was to examine Jewish n-noses and ears." And Madame -- Madame **S.Ess**, when we arrived, I told her that this is very different from the others, and she examined very carefully the ears, but I don't know why. And after dinner, I learned that not only her husband was a high officer for racism, but his brother as well. In the meantime, this friend and -- divorced. And it was 1988, I -- I made recordings in **Israel**, with the **Israel** symp -- Philharmonic Orchestra, and we called ~~to~~ each other. "Now what di -- what -- what did you do the last time?" "Oh, ~~I#~~ was in **Israel**. I went to do recording, I -- **Mozart** ~~fluteroof~~ concertos." "Oh, I know very well the **Mozart** ~~fluteroof~~ concertos, because my -- my father-in-law played it very often." "Who?" I said, "The -- The Nazi?" "Yes." And he said, "Yes." Uh-huh. He called **Martin**, a very, very, very nice man. I said, "**Martin**, how is it possible to -- to -- to examine Jewish rac~~iesm~~ **iesm**, and -- and -- and **Mozart**?" He answered with one word. "**Deutsch.**" German. So this **Frank** played **Bach**, they played **Mozart**, and in the meantime they killed millions. Isn't it

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

50

beautiful? Of course, it happened after the war, but the -- but I think that you -- you should examine all these problems in da -- in the -- it's totality, and not -- not only the margarine ~~[indecipherable]~~ in **Auschwitz**, because it was bad ~~[indecipherable]~~ in then -
- in -- in -- in -- in -- in -- in -- and very little. But they -- the -- there is something more. Well, to come back to the --

Q: When **Mengele** came in to do a selection, did you have a strategy for not getting selected? Did you try to --

A: Of course, of course, because I had to -- I had to present me as a strong man, and in the first selection, I made a mistake, because we had twice five lines, and as he came in smiling, he selected only for the gas, but then he -- he had enough, because it was too long, and -- and had -- had not enough patience, and for the five others, he took -- he -- he made the contrary, he selected for life. And I yi -- And I remained, you know, in my place, to -- si -- thinking that it was the same matter, and then I went to the -- to the selecting -- to the selected barrack.

Q: You were selected?

A: I -- I was selected, of course, I -- I -- I auto selected myself.

Q: Oh!~~[indecipherable]~~

A: In a very stupid way. And one of the Pistaspishtars is a -- was -- he was selected, and this is something else, something which you cannot reproduce, on a -- in a picture or describing, this is the -- the last days of young people waiting for the death. And there was a -- an -- an incredible ambiance, very slow, pianissimo everything. Nobody --

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

51

Nobody -- Nobody s-spoke loud. In the meantime, of course, we said yes, we will be transported, and we will make something light. But there was a b -- there was a big quantity of hi -- of prisoners, strong, who didn't do anything at all. So, it was a same -- the same human reaction that **Hungary** will be an exception, that -- that it was **inimaginable** that they -- they choose the -- the -- the -- the -- the weak -- the weak prisoners to make something light, which means the others don't do anything, so it -- it didn't correspond to any logic, of course. Three tin -- days later, **Mengele** returns, and selects the selected, and I ra -- "Oh, you are healthy, come out." And so **Mengeles** -- **Mengele** saved my life. So you know, so the second selection, it was more cynical, because with the second selection, plenty of -- of Polish prisoners arrived, Polish Jews from Polish ghettos, and they knew that -- the food was so bad that they all remained small, very small. And then they put I don't know what it is, a kind of no -- I don't know, I don't know the n -- I don't know what it is, so -- gymnastic, you can use it if you -- if you -- if you spring two -- two feet, three feet.

Q: Oh, like --

A: What is this?

Q: Sort of barricades?

A: Ah yeah, a kind of barricade, and if you pass below, you are selected, because you are n -- you are not -- not -- not big enough.

Q: Oh, so -- okay, so they -- they put some wooden bars, and if you pass below --

A: Bar, bar, bar --

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

52

Q: Okay, mm-hm.

A: But this was -- this was the -- the highest degree of **cynism**, to let them starve, and because they were starving, and th -- and -- and remained small_{er} out.

Q: How -- How was your mental health at this point? What -- How were you staying strong, inside your head?

A: This a bad question, I cannot answer, I don't know. I don't know, it happened. I don't -- I really don't know, because I had the same -- the same food, and -- and everything the same, so it's -- I don't know.

Q: W-Was there anything that you were able to do that allowed you to at least mentally escape, with your friends, perhaps?

A: No, I really d -- I -- I really don't know. I -- I don't know, and finally nobody escaped. You have to -- Did you -- Did you read sri -- **Primo Levi**? Did you?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So, his descriptions is goo -- are correct. And if you want -- If anybody want to understand the -- the human side of -- of the concentration camp, ["it's just a cramp" George telling Katie about a cramp somewhere]~~[indecipherable]~~ camp, then this is the -- this is the literature number one, from an absolutely honest man who by chance, is a great -- a great writer, and who -- whose view is so interesting, and so diverse, and so colored. So this is -- whether -- whether -- whether "he is still a man", or something like this is the title, se questo un uomoquestro normale, in Italian. And I don't know the answer. I

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

53

don't know the answer, if -- if he remained a man or not completely, or just a little bit. I don't -- this is your question, but I can't answer ~~it~~.

Q: What did you do all day? At this point in **Auschwitz**, are you working?

A: Nothing, nothing, nothing. Absolutely nothing. We -- We played **mil**. It's a -- a play. We can -- We couldn't -- Absolutely nothing. We had to stor -- stand up very early, either five or six o'clock, for no reason, and then came this so-called breakfast, which was some coffee or tea, but anyway the same taste. And we could use it to wash our face, and then waiting time, lunch came between 10 and one, and supper, approximately six o'clock. But I -- I -- I don't want to come back, because you -- you -- you've heard several times how we ate, so I -- I think it -- it -- there's no interest, to repeat it.

Q: Can you tell us, were you tattooed?

A: Yes, yes. Oh, yes I shall show you. Yes. But don't ask if it means **[indecipherable]** I don't know. I don't know. So.

Q: And the number is?

A: The number, **B -- B14715**. But I don't know why in December, '44, re -- and why not before, and why not after. I don't know the significance, and very logical German explanation, that a couple of weeks after, we landed in **Dora**, which was another concentration camp in **Thüringen-T-Terian**, and we became completely other numbers. So nobody **cared off**. Here I had a number, and I had another one here. So, don't ask, because it is -- it is terrible, so they -- the lack of logic is terrible.

Q: Ha-Have you ever considered having it removed?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

54

A: No. No. Why? It is so beautiful, and I -- and this is something that you really -- which -- which is an excellent thing to -- to remember. Well, I -- I could remember without, but is very aggressive~~indecipherable~~ it is -- is pertinent.

Q: What -- When you were in **Auschwitz**, were -- were there any ways that you had sort of clandestine cultural activities, maybe telling stories, or singing?

A: N-No. No, no. No, really, it was a year lost.

Q: What did it sound like to be there?

A: Sound?

Q: What did it sound like?

A: Now, I t-told you there was no birds, and -- and nothing, so is a kind of desert. You ca -- I were -- Imagine a concentration camp in -- in **Arizona**, what does it sound. Cactus. There were -- There are no cactus there, nothing. Nothing, really nothing, so it was in the -- there's a Hungarian word, like the back of God. It is -- It -- It is behind the back of God.

Q: That's a good expression.

A: Isn't bad. The expression is good--

Q: I mean it's -- it's -- it's a good expression.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah, yeah. And -- And this is another sense, but what -- what did it smell like? You were all so cramped together.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

55

A: Well, from time to time this -- this black rain. And we had a soap also, and I don't know, because I ha -- I have been told the soap has been prepared with human bodies, of a certain parts of human -- human bodies, I -- I don't know. Maybe. Why not?

Q: Di-Did you ever pray, or thing about God, at -- when you were in **Auschwitz**, at all?

A: Yes, yes. But there was a split between Orthodox and ~~Neologues~~ ~~[indecipherable]~~ because we accused each other to be there, because ~~the ones~~ ~~[indecipherable]~~ of the pious ~~pe'otpayott~~, and -- and Yiddish, and all these Jewish appearances. Meanwhile, they said that we were not religious enough, and now this is the punishment of God. So, I don't know. I'm sure that I was in the same camp as **Elie Wiesel**, but we didn't -- we didn't know each other, and nobody knew that in this camp was somebody later noble. So, this we didn't know. But he -- he was ~~a-deportated~~ ~~deported~~ ~~potage~~ from **Hungary**.

Q: Was anyone who was in a position of power over you, a **kapo**, or an **SS** man, or even a Gypsy, was anyone ever kind to you?

A: No. No, and ~~finaly~~ ~~finally~~ ~~himely~~ relationship with these persons, human relationships couldn't exist. Could exist between -- between other p -- other people, and I like to -- I'd like to, if you -- if you agree, I -- I like to -- to speak of a couple of people who -- who were really excellent, particularly doctors, Hungarian or German doctors. For instance, there was a hospital, which is a -- which was a barrack, of course, but in this hospital, he knew that the selection will start in the camp, and the next day in the hospital, and he told me, today you come to the hospital, you are sick, and tomorrow, I -- you are -- you'll go out. So, meanwhile, the selection, I was not available, because in the hospital. And for the

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

56

-- the selection in the hospital, I was -- I was out. So, there were a lot of excellent people
di -- the, di -- the -- during the --

Q: What was his name?

A: I don't know.

Q: Okay.

A: During the long march -- the long --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

A: During the march, I -- in the shoes, a German prisoner, I think it was a German
Communist, who -- there was a kind of -- of -- of -- not an -- not an **alto**, but something
which is a kind of a **coach**, and he gave me, during the longest hour -- long hours, place
in the interior of this coach, which I -- this wa -- not -- not only that I didn't march, but I -
- I -- I -- I didn't -- I -- I -- I wasn't si -- not frozen any more. So they were excellent
people, and as far -- I -- I -- I want to jump a little bit. After the liberation, **Bergen-**
Belsen, I was together with a German Communist and two German, y -- Witness of
Jehovah, who --

Q: Mm-hm, **Jehovah's** Witness?

A: **Jehovah's** Witness, yes. The situation was ~~stH~~⁴Helle, ~~that~~⁴as a writer, as
Dürrenmatt~~dermatt~~ for instance, should have written a piece. You can't imagine
German Communists, resistant number one, German **Jehovah's** Witnesses, who didn't

⁴ such

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

57

fight because they do -- be-because they -- they don't fight, and a Hungarian Jew, 16 year old, and all this conversation, because they accused each other, of course, because the -- the Communist said that there is nothing, what you are doing, and they were -- they were convinced if they refuse -- refuse to say **Heil, Hitler**, because **Heil** only concerns **Jesus**, and not **Hitler**, and because they didn't want to -- to take -- to -- to -- to take weapons in their hand, in either hand, they -- so as it was -- it -- it was not a serious resistance. They -
- They didn't kill anybody, and they wouldn't ha -- they wouldn't have killed anybody, so it wa -- in no danger, but they have been in -- closed down, and the Hungarian Jewish -
- Jewish boy, 16 year old, knowing little of the world, having lost his parents, and with these three other men, there's -- the **Jehovah's** Witnesses were fantastic. You -- You -- This is something which is -- there -- which I -- I -- I really cannot forget, that in these very hard times, when we recognized after all that, what happened, and what have you -- what it lost, who is lost. And I -- I went with **Villy**, I think he called, **Villy**, one of **bothpose**, went out to collect blackberries. So, what a contradiction. Well, I -- I'd like to tell you about **SolveigSolveig**.

Q: **SolveigSolveig?**

A: Yes. **Greek-Grieg Solveig's LiedSolveig's lead**, the -- the **schant -- daehon** -- the **chansonausant** of **Solveigrg**. You do with -- You do with it what you want, but I think this is a special -- very special thing. At the end of **Auschwitz**, you can read in this -- in **Levi, Primo Levi**, that the Germans didn't realize that the war was in **Auschwitz** for -- before **Auschwitz**, and a British plane [**indecipherable**] it went around -- he wanted to

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

58

open a -- a factory, on February first. They did everything ~~to but~~ open the factory, so they -- the prisoners organized cultural evening for the 21st of January, Sunday. And one week before, I arrived from **Auschwitz** to ~~Fürstengrube Fierstengrule~~, ~~wich is ath the~~ coal mine, and I don't know why, but I arrived, and the first day I was in the mine, it was fantastic. These small electric trains ~~-- it's the trains -[indecipherable]~~ again, you know -- ; and this activity, it was absolutely fantastic. But I said that I was a musician. "Oh, you are a musician, yes, so you can -- you can clean the -- the room -- the music room." I did it, and we started to repeat the ~~Solveig's Lied by Grieg's Lead by Greag~~, you do remember it?

Q: ~~[indecipherable]~~ verse?

A: **Da de de de de de de [sings]**. Do you know it? And we started to rehearse, and this is something which I -- this is a -- a question of me, and I never will have the answer, because I wanted to know who should be -- who should have been the public. **SS** people, with or without wives and dogs. How th-the room should be arranged, and -- and anyway, how was such a -- such a cultural evening? I didn't -- I never her -- I n -- I never knew it because three days before, the 18th, started this death march, and so I lost it completely from my -- from my life, from my life. You know, this is the same. One day I was in ams -- and in ~~Den HaagHague~~, in the ~~Mauritshuismoretses house~~, where is a fantastic painting of **Rembrandt**, the painter, th-the person is **Homer**. And suddenly arrives a Hungarian group, four persons, and apparently one who led the whole -- the whole group. And the lady asked, "Ah, could you tell me who is this man?" And he said, "Oh, very

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

59

probably a --an old Jew.” And I couldn’t bring out this gentleman, this is not an old Jew, this is an old Greek, and -- and [indecipherable] these is the -- the same human problem, something which I -- which is -- which is lost for the ~~vee-vie~~ -- for the life. Well, just for -- in brackets.

Q: Just for chronology, so you were transported to **F-F-Firstenburg**?

A: ~~Fürstengrube~~**Firstengruber**.

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Q: **Firstengruber**. And then, very quickly, that --

A: Very quickly to ~~Gleiwitz~~**Glivitz** by this march.

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Q: So look, s-so maybe you can tell us --

A: Date~~y~~ by date~~y~~?

Q: -- about the march, a little bit about the mar -- I mean, more than a little bit, cause it’s --

A: Okay. January 18, Death March. 21st, arrival and start by train from ~~Gleiwitz~~**Glivitz** to

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~~Nordhausen~~**Northhausen** Dora -- lager dora. 28th, arrival in

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~~Nordhausen~~**Northhausen**. I, right away ra -- you -- you know that we have been

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transported by -- in -- in January, in opened coal cars.

Q: H-H-How are you able to remember the dates so well? Didn’t things get fuzzy when you were in **Auschwitz**?

A: No, I can -- I can -- I can give you other dates. So if you -- if -- if you -- if you ask me, my profession obliged me to learn dates, and I learned dates.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

60

Q: Can you describe what you were told when we you were taken on the beginning of this march, and --

A: Nothing, nothing. Nothing, really nothing. So just go.

Q: Were your friends with you?

A: Who?

Q: Were your friends with you?

A: No, he was dead, because he -- he -- he -- he disappeared, th-the second **Steve** disappeared in the second selection.

Q: Oh, you -- can you tell us about that?

A: So, he wa -- he wa -- he was not more available.

Q: Was this the selection that you escaped through the Hungarian doctor?

A: No, no, no, no, no, the wa -- the Hungarian doctor was the third ~~indecipherable~~ selection, and the -- and the -- he u -- he u -- went with the second selection, and the **Steve** one, the first **Steve**, went with the first selection, so we -- we were together for a moment in this barrack, during -- I selected myself, and many others told me that you are healthy.

Q: But not your friend?

A: No. No, no, these -- he was my friend.

Q: No, I mean --

A: No, no, no, no, no, no.

Q: -- but he didn't say that he was healthy.

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

61

A: No, no, he was not -- he was not very famous as a -- **caza** -- his body was not very strong, but in -- in norm -- in normal life, he never was so healthy and strong as he could have been. Of course, he -- he became -- he became much worse in the camp.

Q: So by now you've lost both of your friends?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And can you describe what the march was like?

A: So the march was what it -- what it was, it's not about how the march was ~~indecipherable~~ like -- I never seen such a march, other -- so -- like, this is -- this is not the word. So, the march was one of the -- of the deepest point of -- of -- of human misery, and not comparable to any other phenomenon. Perhaps in **Cambodia**, perhaps **Pol Pot**, or something like that, but in normal life I think this is -- this is -- this is really a -- a Premièrepremier.

Q: Were people collapsing during the march?

A: I think yes.

Q: How did you keep going?

A: ~~I the~~ Also -- First, I have been -- he and I have been helped by this man, but not the whole time, he couldn't do it. And -- And so I -- I made a great part of this march with -- in the shoes.

Q: Speaking about the shoes, and we were talking earlier that you really wanted to see them, have you seen a pair since then?

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

62

A: Here not. I went to the ~~Shoah~~Shaw Museum in **Los Angeles**, but I told you. And I think that this is the comment, and the exposition of this whole thing, too smooth, too delicate for this -- for this horror, which has been represented by the shoes. So therefore, I think that what ~~you~~we are doing -- what you are doing, I am doing now, is finally, this is hopeless, and th-th -- it is not -- because I cannot tell you -- you -- you ask what was it like. The question is -- has been made in such a way that I understand that you will -- you cannot imagine what it was. In -- In no -- I -- I -- I know -- I know no human being capable of imagining such a horror. So this is -- this is not a -- this is not a normal level, you know. So this experience is not transferable. I made this experience, and now I -- it belongs to me, and -- and I -- it is one of my -- my greatest experiences of -- of -- of -- of life. But I cannot transfer it -- it -- it -- is the -- is the film of shi -- of **Schindler**, cannot be a -- a realistic film, because you cannot find ~~200~~two hundred actors, and to -- to lock them, and let them lose the weight. So this -- you can't -- you cannot do it. So if you can't, the pictures you will see will be wrong, and will not correspond to the -- to the reality. So this is not feasible. Only if somebody organized a ki -- a camp, and you went into the camp, but I d -- I don't wish you to go there, so these a -- it's an initial contradiction in the thing, and -- and I think that what we can, we have to do to -- not to live with every day, but to think of it, to do -- to know that this is not a normal museum, this is a museum of the death, and -- and this -- the whole story is the story of the death, and the death is -- the death -- death is horrible, it's horrible to die with 15 or fi -- 16. It's horrible to die, to -- I -- I knew a lady whose child, I don't know, three or four weeks old,

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

63

have been -- have -- have -- have been taken away and killed, and not the lady. And the lady came back from the camp during this -- during her entire life, hi -- she lived with this -- with this dead baby. So, this is -- So this kind of atris -- of atrocities, if I tell you, and you -- you -- you write it down, somebody read it -- reads it, but it's still a piece of paper. So this is not imaginable, you -- you are -- you are asking concrete questions, and this is okay, but as I am not -- you -- you see that I was not able to ex -- to -- to -- to speak of the ambiance of the selected, because -- because it is -- it is -- it is horrible. Imagine 200 people in a -- in **America**, waiting on the electric chair together. What will they say? Who would cry, who would shout? So, but this is -- this is -- it cannot happen.

Q: I think you just said a lot.

A: So that's it?

Q: No. I'm just saying --

A: -- who did it is **Primo Levi**, but there's no more **Primo Levi**. Well, I think I could go at six.

Q: What time is it?

A: Hm?

Q: At the end of the march, how -- what kind of state were you in physically?

A: Ho, I cannot describe you. We have been sent to a building, completely dark, and from this building, of course by feet to the ~~gareguar~~ -- to the -- to the s -- railway station. Once more, I remember of the tramway in ~~Gleiwitz~~**Gleiwitz**, and I was very interested by this tramway, and the whole atmosphere, because i -- the ga -- the war was before

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

64

~~Gleiwitz~~~~Glivitz~~, and the people -- people wanted to go away. So it was a s -- fantastic movement in the -- in the -- in the town, to -- to -- to escape, not -- not only the -- not prisoners, but normal civilians.

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Q: S-So you were in ~~Gleiwitz~~~~Glivitz~~?

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A: Yes.

Q: And you're saying that there's a sense that the -- the -- the -- that there's a lot of movement, and -- and -- and really maybe that the war is winding down, or -- or going to peak, I guess.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah. D-Did you begin to start imagining that you might be liberated?

A: Not there. It was impossible. Of course, everybody li -- to liber -- to be liberated was a dream, but we didn't know how. And what the Germans did, it was -- it made no sense to transport Jewish prisoners, and to lose the war. To -- To use the rail for -- to transport people somewhere, I didn't -- I didn't know exactly where and how, between

~~Gleiwitz~~~~Glivitz~~ and ~~Dora Nordhausen~~~~Northhausen~~, I think his number is five -- five hours of driving, and we did it in one week, in this open -- opened, coal cars. It made no sense, so they paralyzed for one week, a train, the rails, and whatever, to transport us, and they did the same two month later to transport to **Bergen-Belsen** on April -- we arrive on April 10th, and the British army, the 15th. So it made no sense to send ou -- to send somebody from the Americans, who they -- this was the American territory, I think well

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

65

we're -- where we were last time were, to the British territory. It made no sense. So what is the advantage to be liberated by the British instead of the Americans? So -- Or -- I --

Q: Can you describe the moment of liberation?

A: Yes. Th-The German there, the -- the HakenkreuzHaakeneroise has been put by -- put down, but you know, I was in a very bad, then I was ~~{indecipherable}~~ in very bad health, and a couple of days are missing, so you know that I remember of the days, a couple of days are missing, because very probably I was in a kind of coma, and instead of -- I -- I -- I didn't die, ~~{indecipherable}~~ a had a big chance, because on perhaps the 10th or the 11th of May, I asked a -- a ge -- a German soldier, who became prisoner in the meantime, "How about the war?" And he said, "The war? The war is finished." And then I understood that I felt out for a -- a good couple of days.

Q: S-So you don't remember the British soldiers coming in, and --

A: Yes, the British soldiers coming in, yes, but it happened later. The British soldiers came on April 15th, the end of the war on May eighth, and the -- and for me the 10th or 11th, so something is miss -- something was missing, and then I gi -- went out and met people, they said~~says~~, "Oh, you are still alive." We didn't -- We -- We didn't think that he -- we are alive.

Q: What was that like when the -- can you just describe what it was like when the British soldiers came in to **Bergen-Belsen**?

A: Yes, I think this is the HakenkreuzHaakeneroise, and the fact that we realized ~~{indecipherable}~~ that it is finished, that this was finished, but the health was bad. So the

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

66

liberty was there, but the British -- not the British, nobody -- nobody knew how to handle
th-this kind of -- of -- of -- of living -- living death people, so you can imagine that i -- I -
- if -- if you lose 50 percent of your weight, approximately, how do you want to oblige
your stomach and your body to work? You couldn't. And they gave fat and meat, and --
and plenty of things, they -- they gave what they had, but what they -- what they -- but
what they di -- they didn't, couldn't resolve, this -- this -- the -- the -- the health situation.

Q: What was wrong with you?

A: I thi -- I think that I had typhus, I think, because the typhus is provoked by -- what's
the name of this small --

Q: Mosquito?

A: No, no, no, no, no. No, no, no. Very small insects.

Q: An ant?

A: Hm? I -- I don't know --

Q: Oh, tick.

A: Y -- No.

Q: Lice?

A: Yes, perhaps.

Q: Lice. In the hair?

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q: Uh-huh.

Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

67

A: Yes. And I didn't realize, because I -- in ~~Bergen -- Dora, Bergendora~~ -- we were working -- I was really working on the weapon miracle of **Hitler**, the ~~V1Fee -- V2Vee~~ ~~one-vee-two~~. And I -- I wore these glass bands, glass tapes, and of course i-it provoked my -- my ~~[indecipherable] -- we were~~. And I didn't -- I didn't realize that the position between the glass and the -- and the insects. It was horrible. I -- Imagine one sh -- one shirt you had 200 - 300. Well -- Well, so I think we could continue this conversation eternally. I think the most important thing is that I don't know if the Jewish are really the chosen people, maybe. If it is -- If it is so, our experience concerns the huma -- hu -- the entire humanity. This is not only a Jewish problem, because people are very inventive, and new methods of killing will arrive. And I think that -- that we cannot be -- we cannot agree with **Serge Klarsfeld** ~~Klassfeld~~, you know him, a very important journalist, and -- and especially of Holocaust and the -- and war criminals. I met him once in the air -- the air -- at the airport, and I told him who I was, that I was also in a concentration camp, etcetera, and I see -- and I ask him, what do you think, w-wouldn't it be better to -- to try to share this experience with other people having the same conditions, or similar conditions? And he said, "They have to find th-the right solution. This is our problem now." And I think not -- I don't think that is our problem. I think that is of course our -- our problem, but if such a horror arrives to a -- to a people, and you see that something similar, and more cynical arrived in **Cambodia** when the -- the head of the state started to kill his own population, and -- and you -- we -- we see everywhere where we -- in hoot -- in **Bu-Burundi**, and the hoot -- **Tutsies** and **Hutus** and -- and the -- **Kosovo**, and

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Interview with George Kadar
April 24, 2000

68

whatever. So I think that this experience should be -- must be strong enough to go over -- to let understand by other people, that these experience should serve to somehow -- somehow to immunize hum -- huma -- the whole humanity, to -- to try to think before they -- they s -- they start such horrors. I think this is -- this must be the message of everybody having survived this -- ~~indecipherable~~ this horrible period of ya -- of -- of human history. Thank you very much, thank you for your patience.

Q: End of third tape.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Conclusion of Interview