

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Edward Klein**  
**August 16, 2010**  
**RG-50.030\*0580**

## **PREFACE**

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## **EDWARD KLEIN**

### **August 16, 2010**

Question: Today is the 16<sup>th</sup> of August, 2010, and I'm **Jacek Nowakowski**, conducting interview with Mr. **Edward Klein**, who is a survivor of the **Lódz** ghetto. And Mr. **Klein**, if you could state your vital statistical information, when you were born – you – you just mentioned different names that you were known, etcetera, so if you could just repeat that, that will make it easier to – to place.

Answer: Ah, yes. I was born as **Isaac Klein**. I'm still planning – trying to get the exact date. Was in contact with the relevant offices in **Poland**, and somebody who is doing research for it. Either in '26, 1926 or 1927, May the 30<sup>th</sup>. About May the 30<sup>th</sup>, I am sure.

Q: And you were born in **Sieradz**?

A: **Sieradz**, yes.

Q: Right. So, if you could tell us in a – little bit about your – what your recollections from the pre-war time you – you lived in **Sieradz**, or you lived in **Lódz**?

A: No, I have lived in **Sieradz**. Two older brothers. That I – I may be – and the out – onset, I am the only one of the family left, there was a large family. But at the end of the war, there was no one left but I. I know that because we have decided that whoever survives wherever, our contact is people we know, distant relatives in **Palestine** – at that time **Palestine**, **Erat Israel**, and there was – no one appeared

except myself. I learned about wit – what happened to the others here and there, through other people at one time witnessing.

Q: Could you describe little bit more th – you said that it was a large family, so –

A: Yes.

Q: – could you describe th – your family?

A: My grandmother, grandfather, it looked to me like my f-family have lived many generations in the city, but this probably is a child's perception. Maybe it was the first generation; to me it was people who were settled there from who knows when, **en** antiquity. Where my grandfather, my grandmother had **Alimarat**(ph) and **Hannah. Hannah** who had seven sons. My father was the oldest, **Shmuel**(ph), and – and then there were still two daughters. So, nine children all together, then older, extended family, the spouses and my cousins. And I am aware of many other names, from letters, photographs, occasional visits from out of town.

Q: Well, d-do – do letters that you still have today, or those are the letters that you remember from the pre-war time?

A: No, I think too many times I was, like I had to undress and throw all my – whatever I had and start from the beginning with – with nothing from before. I have a picture of my family, it survived – it survived in someone's hands in **Palestine**, and I think that I have it on me.

Q: Oh, oh, that's great.

A: Myself, there were two brothers, much older, and I. They perished as partisans, and a book depicts what they were doing, a book which was published in **New York**, that was “**From the Forest.**”

Q: So where – where were they, as partisans? Wh-What region?

A: Originally – well, I just know that it was – they were in an area which was a – a part of **Poland** once, taken over by the – by the Russians. The Russians put them on a train, that’s what I learned from others, because they register to come back, the Russians considered this a risky element of people, because they want to go back to **Germany**. They wanted to go back to **Germany** to fetch my parents and I. But all that train was sent to **Siberia**. Would they have stayed, they would maybe survived. As it is they ran away from the train, into the forest, hiding from the Russians, starting to fight the Germans, even before the – officially the partisan organization was – was known, or whatever – ever ge – organized.

Q: So someone survived, who co –

A: One person su-survived, consider that, and he was later able to write about that, and that’s – that’s how I learned that my brothers didn’t die in – in the conditions I experienced, that they were fighting til the end. And this is the one [indecipherable] that I can accept.

Q: So what – what is your recollection of – what was – what was your father and your mother doing, what were they doing before the war?

A: My – my father was a – a merchant, and my mother was home. We – I think my parents had to be careful with money, those were the times, and it was very often coming up when I heard that they were worrying about tuition to – for me to continue education.

Q: Well, he was – your father was a merchant?

A: Yes.

Q: D-Do you recall what was he dealing in?

A: Oh, he dealt for the area, I think, the soap **maida**, (ph) cosmetics of **maida** (ph).

At another – at another time, my grandparents had the wholesale grocery store, and for awhile my parents were running also a similar store on the same street. My brothers were – my oldest brother was in a **hafshara** (ph) in **Rovno**. And he was slated to go to – to **Israel**. Shell sided, lost his glasses in one of the battles and couldn't see any more, was one of the first killed as a result.

Q: Oh. So, he was already in that area, in **Volhynia**, in **Rovno** before the war, so this was –

A: He – he – he – he – yes, he was. But in the meantime he came to **Sieradz** during the time they – th-the picture which I had was taken, this was the occasion. And when the war broke out, the family was together in **Sieradz**.

Q: Mm-hm, so your brothers as well?

A: My brothers as well. This is – we were living **Sieradz**, as close to the German border. We were advised to go to a forest in **Zduńska Wola**, six kilometers away to avoid gas attacks, that's how World War I finished, and this was the big fear. But the Germans have advanced – this was supposed to be an outing of a few hours, daylight only, and at night we'll return. The Germans moved so quickly that we couldn't go back, only we had to continue and march to **Zduńska Wola**. We're there when – when **Zduńska Wola** was attacked by bombing and two of my grandparents died. We were just where they were sheltering in **Zduńska Wola**. My mother and I visited them, and we left, there was an alarm when we – noise, when we looked back, the house in which they were was demolished. They were in the basement, and it went all three floors, so they were the first dead in the family.

Q: And it – that happened in the very first days of September of 1939?

A: And – in days. I believe it was a Sunday and ah – I know that because somebody speculated that they probably wanted to catch as many civilians as possible in one place, and initially went after the churches or whatever. The roads were machine-gunned and bombed, and it was – they were – they were making the road impass – im – impassable. After one of those attacks, we couldn't find my brothers. Nevertheless, they – they survived that first period, came to **Sieradz**, left for **Russia** to – to create a way for us to follow.

Q: And do you recall it was, you know, they were going to – to the Russian zone? It was planned with your parents when they still were in **Sieradz**?

A: Yes, we came to **Sieradz**, but the Germans were living in – in our house. A – a relative left **Lódz** to go to **Warsaw**, family **Eckstein**(ph), I believe, from **Poganica**. And they have – we lived – we lived in their house. This was – the house was on **Piotrkowska** 82, which was the first street called **Adolf Hitler Strasse**, and the main street in **Lódz**. And the first street to be cleaned of Jews. So we were put into the ghetto at the very beginning, as it started, I don't remember the date, was it September, or whatever.

Q: I – I just have few more questions that want to fill up –

A: Specific, yes.

Q: – with – with the – with your pre-war time, and then please don't – because w-we – the point that we are at, it's very good. Your family was – what – what language was spoken in your family, if you remember?

A: It – it was Yiddish and Polish. I was the – the exception. I was spoken only in Polish. I had a teacher, I had Mrs. **Viner**(ph) **Tova**(ph) whose husband was a historian, and she was a known Polish poet. And she thought that I have potential with rhymes and – or whatever, I think. And she actually talked to my parents to – not to involve me in another language, **chayder** or otherwise, in order to keep my Polish intact.



Q: Do – do you still speak Polish, right?

A: Pardon?

Q: Do you s – you still speak Polish?

A: Yeah, I – I still s-speak Polish, yes. I don't have much of an opportunity.

Q: So, going back to – to the be – the beginning of the war –

A: Yes.

Q: – if – if I recall what you said, and i – just to summarize, you – in the beginning you were told – th-the family was told to go into the woods outside of **Sieradz** –

A: Yes.

Q: – because of the fear of the – the gas attack –

A: Yes.

Q: – and you landed close to **Zduńska Wola**.

A: Yes.

Q: And from there –

A: Six kilometers.

Q: And from – and then **Zduńska Wola** was bombed, your grandparents were killed, and then you went back to **Sieradz**.

A: Not my grandparents. I believe to – this was the sister of my grandmother.

Q: Uh-huh, the sister of your grandmother.

A: Yeah, I think so.

Q: Mm-hm. Who was in that house that was bombed?

A: Only them. That's – the people **Zduńska Wola** extended their hospitality to the people who came from **Sieradz**. So the family that came was in different places, depends who seen you, or who volunteered and so on.

Q: And from there you went back to **Sieradz**?

A: Oh no, not yet.

Q: No, okay.

A: From – from there we started to take ahead of the Germans. Terrible exposure, right away people killed, maimed, horses and the deaths – those are circumstance on which my brother and us separated and couldn't find each other. And we continued that way just ahead of the Germans, til **Warsaw**. And we went through the bombardment of **Warsaw**, at which point th – a German unit rounded up the men and – young men and men in general, and was starting to marching them back in the direction of **Lódz**. Who – already in that early date, who cannot – who couldn't keep up, was shot and left on the side of the road in a rainy ditch. My mother and I separated. She was on the left ditch, I was on the right ditch, in order to facilitate faster kind of search, if between the killed there is our father, you know, we – we met the father when we caught up with – with the main group of men. So – so, you know, it – it didn't finish with that first trek, to [indecipherable] if anything it was an – the beginning of a – a harrowing experience. The people in one of the places

were Jews who got the Germans somehow to agree to feed the people. I don't remember what – what town it was. A cow was slaughtered and – and everyone was fed, including us, children, family and so on. And we continued – and I don't know where we continued because I begged a German soldier to allow my father not to continue, with my few words of German. I went in the house [indecipherable] and – and he allowed my father to stay in one of those places as we move on, so I don't know what happened to the main group. But my father remained, and that's when we returned to **Sieradz** to find the Germans in our house. That's when we came to **Lódz** and found ourselves in – in a get – a ghetto life.

Q: In **Piotrkowska** Street.

A: Yeah. As a matter of fact, wh-what's happening now, I don't think that I – that I ever put it together in sequence, there – there are always scraps of memories.

Q: Well, you just put in sequence, so that's –

A: And – and – and here you – here you – you –

Q: – this – this is perfect.

A: – asked me in sequence, yeah.

Q: So that's – I – I-I think that this is very clear now that we have that in sequence –

A: Yes, okay.

Q: – cause this is important. So, probably at the end of September, you landed in the – **Lódz** in – in **Piotrkowska**, would you agree with that?

A: I didn't read, or I didn't read much at all, and they just gave me – so, I wouldn't know. I know that when the ghetto – when the people with the ghetto things started, and the Germans came, and to – and to speed up the process shot a number of people on **Piotrkowska**, where we were, we didn't stay around.

Q: Mm-hm. You were already in the ghetto, so that means –

A: No, no, we were – we were –

Q: Still on the –

A: – we moved to the ghetto, but we were between the first.

Q: Mm-hm. Because the – the creation of the ghetto was in – around March of 1940, so –

A: Ah, I – I thought in – I thought that maybe we were – we were there a little bit before, I don't know.

Q: Mm-hm, okay. And you do remember the moving to the ghetto?

A: I remember the moving of the ghetto, and things which emanated from – my very life was saved at one point because of us staying on **Piotrkowska** 82. But this is – this is further in this story.

Q: Mm-hm. So it's – so, around March of 1940, you are already in the ghetto, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you recall where you lived in the ghetto?

A: Yes. We first got the house on **Gnieznnienska**. It will be a handful for you, **Gnieznnienska**, yeah. **Gnieznnienska** – what language is my answer? **Gnieznni** – **Gnieznnienska** 29. This was near the wires. We were assigned – we were assigned a room, a one room not heated. Two beds, iron beds. And while the ghetto was being organized, and the houses were – were given – were kind of being distributed, which again played a role in my – another survival. Yeah, I was hesitant what I thought – whatever I would have, because it's – it's – it's like cinema, you know, like – like something is going to happen, and – and – and in the last minute something turns – turns it around. So only when I look at it I say, I would hardly believe so many things happening to so many people. Nevertheless, when I came to **Israel** on a – on a ship, we were maybe a thousand of boys, we were more or less, all of us had the similar story. Many instances of survival against odds.

Q: So, when you landed at **Gnieznnienska**, that was your father, your mother and you, right?

A: Yes.

Q: In this, and you were in that room. Do you recall whether you went to school at all when you lived on **Piotrkowska**?

A: I was vaguely a-aware that there was school, but I haven't been in – in the school i-in the ghetto. It's –

Q: Also, before the ghetto, you were not in school?

A: N-No, no, definitely not. There was only a very short time before –

Q: Right

A: – before the ghetto between.

Q: So, do you recall anything from the early days o-of your life in the ghetto on **Gnieznnienska**?

A: Oh yes. Yes, I do remember. This was not the only address. We had to move and move again. We were on **Zgierska**, right – right near the bridge. That's **Koscielny**.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But we were fortunate because on **Gnieznnienska** there was just a sidewalk and the wires [indecipherable] of the ghetto. And we had to be careful on this side of the sidewalk. Nobody was walking there, incidentally. Our window was [indecipherable] out, and also there was – there was ice on the walls, and I got something which they thought is – is tuberculosis. They checked me out, I didn't have tuberculosis, but we – we – we were transferred in some way to that other housing on – on, I believe number – **Zgierska** number maybe 40, I'm not sure. A small time, for a short period. My – my next address after this was **Rumkowski's** house. It was on [indecipherable]

Q: It was on **Lagiewnicka**.

A: **Lagiewnicka** [indecipherable]

Q: Right, yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, what – what were – were – were your parents employed, or were you employed in the ghetto?

A: My – my f-father was employed, but he was getting weaker, and

**[indecipherable]**

Q: Do you recall where was he employed?

A: He – he – he was that labor which they had, let's say at one time say they – they had to oblige people to dig in for potatoes for the winter and things like that, as it was arriving. This – this was a very difficult experience for him, for all of us, because he felt this was killing him, because he knew the swelling was going up and up, which is very characteristic of the way people died in the ghetto, as you know. And I – I got a job on a **kosa(ph)**, which means sewing leather things, or whatever, rucksacks and so on, on **[indecipherable]**. And – and this – this provided enough funds to buy – to – to – to pay for our rations or whatever, which was – didn't play around, but working – working I was – where I received the soup, which I was able to share with my mother.

Q: And your mother – your mother stayed home?

A: I – I cannot remember my mother being employed outside of home, I didn't even think about that. But was she ever doing something?

Q: So, do you remember any – any contacts with your peers there, other people your age in the ghetto, or – or you were spending most of the time with the family?

A: Yesterday I came here to show my family they – I have grandchildren. They are triplets, they are 14 years old now. And – and – and I was trying to get to – that's what it is, I am – I am being – my head is being kidnapped to – to memories as I talk to you, and all at once, where was I?

Q: We were –

A: I would – I am tal – talking about – about friends, and because I was here yesterday, and – and the magic happened all at once. I have a number from **Auschwitz**. It's the smallest number anyone ever seen, and there is a circumstance why the number is so miniature it's hard to read. And I say, is this the number, **B11104**. And it's one – because I couldn't find it anywhere when I looked for my presence in **Auschwitz**, and – and then – and the person who was – who was helping me just did her little magic, and my number jumped out from **Auschwitz** so **[indecipherable]**. And – and then I ask, my very next thing, to answer your question in a roundabout way, was that I was looking for a boy named **[indecipherable]** who was where I was working on a **kosa**, the son of – of a well-to-do family before the war. A small, a **haseek(ph)**, small but fierce, with a – with a sense of fairness, watching **[indecipherable]**. If he can help it, unfair things will not be happening. He came with me when my father was – when my f – mother sent someone to say that



my father is dying, he came with me, he stuck with me, I love him. I don't know what happened to him. He was smaller than I, that means I can't be sure that he was killed. I – I've had – I had more – more people, needless to say. In addition to that, I got very close to a group of pe – of youngsters. Those who were in a – in an orphanage in the ghetto, a small orphanage. [indecipherable] well, it was on [indecipherable]. It was somewhere in the **Marysin**, and those became my friends, those became the people I have spend my time on while I was with **Dora, Dora Fuchs**, as kind of protégée or whatever you call it. And have seen her – have seen them day by day, that they are – I remember them all, some of them I like.

Q: So this is the – so going back to the –

A: Yes.

Q: – sol – sort of a recap, your day in the ghetto in the beginning was yours and your father's, you would go to your respective works. You would –

A: Yes.

Q: – go to working on your sewing machine –

A: Yes.

Q: – in the –

A: Oh, it's not a machine, it's two – two needles.

Q: Two needles?

A: Yes.

Q: Oh, okay, cause you – oh, you said the **kosa**, I thought of the **kosa** was the –

A: **Kosa [speaks Polish]**

Q: So you're a man – you have quite a good recollections from that time, I can see.

A: I didn't know that, but you know, now there is nothing else but this team, so yes.

Q: So – and your father started – do you recall when – when that was happening, when you're start – your father started being very weak, and –

A: I – til today I don't have a – a good sense of days, dates, and things like that.

Q: Mm-hm. But was it in the summer, in the fall, in the winter?

A: Oh, wh-when my father died?

Q: Yes.

A: It was not winter.

Q: It wasn't winter.

A: I remember the clothing in –

Q: That's what –

A: – I didn't have to wear something, I just went off to **kosa** and – and hung with him, talked him **[inaudible]**

Q: So, wh-when your – when your father passed away, was he buried at the cemetery?

A: He was buried at the cemetery. Eventually my daughter **Vivian** here, she – she is practicing law in **Israel** because that's what she wants – so, where was I?

Q: That – about the cemetery, the cemetery, and you said that your daughter is practice –

A: Yeah, tha-that – that cemeter – the cemetery, my daughter came with me to **Poden(ph)**, and there was, I think, a Professor **Hirsch**, and he was supported by some outfit in – from **Jerusalem**, and the – the man in charge was **Noah Fluke(ph)**, I don't know if –

Q: Oh, I know **Noah**.

A: Oh, you – you know, you know –

Q: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, I know him.

A: So –

Q: He is – he is in charge of the survivors –

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: – organization in **Israel**.

A: Yes. Anyhow, so – so he was involved and my daughter and I visited for three days in **Poland**, just to look for my father's bones. At that time, although the – the Poles had an organization which they would find the bones and send, but most of the time those were just bones. And – but research was going on, and it was possible because when – when people were buried, th-there was – there was a little piece of wood put in. Right after the war, while the wood was still there undisturbed, some people came and put a standardized stone on this place with a name, which was a

stone or – or – or cement, or whatever. And now it was possible to extrapolate from this na – the – a me – by measurement, who was buried, the rest. What – what was the – very, very, very sad t-to – to me, because when we were looking at those books, the people who were entering the books, their handwriting was getting slighter and slighter. Not enough strength to – to – to write with the – with the right pressure. So, that's the time, yeah.

Q: So the – were you able to –

A: No.

Q: No. So you – you haven't found this? There is a foundation in the city of **Lódz** –

A: Yes.

Q: – that is – that put together the new graves in the cemetery.

A: I – I-I – I heard about that, yes, and I was in touch for awhile.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I took my daughter so he can continue the task, if I am not around.

Q: What – what – what was your father's name?

A: **Shmuel(ph) Klein.**

Q: **Shmuel(ph) Klein.** And your mother's?

A: **Hiya(ph).**

Q: **Hiya(ph).** Do you remember her maiden name?

A: No.

Q: Oh, okay. Okay, so that let's –

A: And my mother's, I think something like **Feinstein, Eckstein** or – or **Epstein**.

And – but she lived in anoth-nother city.

Q: Was she – was she also from **Sieradz**, or not?

A: She had a background in **Konin**.

Q: **Konin**.

A: But I don't know if she was born in **Konin**. I – I tried to find her name, and so far did not. May I ask you a question which may not relate to the – the particular thing that we – I am – I am looking, an-and in touch with someone in **Poland**. In order to get the – the birthdays, the birthdays of – of the members of my family, I can't – I don't know when they died, but they perished in the Holocaust. And I – and I want to – to engrave the names, since I am the only survivor and I will be the last there, but just what I would have done with my time during – and it's difficult to get it from **Poland**, talking in **Zduńska Wola** when I was looking at the **Yizkor** thing lately, then [indecipherable] said the **Zduńska Wola** people have an **Yizkor**. But there is also a mention that they had to go to **Sieradz**, which was the capital city, or whatever, district city, in order to get it, and **Sieradz** told him, okay, you – you can do it for your Jewish community, which was, if you also do it for the **Sieradz** community. So – so a **Zduńska Wola** book may now be at a [indecipherable] but it's slow digging, and I wonder –

Q: We – we – you know, all the **Yizkor** books are available online through the **New York** Public Library.

A: Yeah.

Q: We also have in our library here, our **Yizkor** books, and I know that there is a – if I recall, it's – there is a separate **Yizkor** book for – for **Zduńska Wola**, if I recall it well.

A: Y-Y-Yes.

Q: So, we can – we can revisit that, you know, aft – after our conversation here.

A: This – this is – this is my hope, and – and a big part of my motivation in coming here, that in one of your departments this will be possible. I went to the consul and – and – twice in – in **Montreal**, and they tell me that I have to fill it out in triplicate and it will take at least one year, a-and what is the exact spelling, cause they will not be able to find. All – all those things I didn't have available. And I met a consul in a social setting later on, I wrote it up, and he says, yeah, this is – this is like a big, big, big task. At the same time, **Enjay**(ph), a – a new Polish writer, got in touch with me about something, he wrote a book. **Enjay**(ph) **Vart**(ph), a new promising Polish writer and he said he – he loves **Sieradz**, and if I need something for – for him or whatever, he will – he will go, but I didn't want to impose on him, because there may be a – really a bit of work to sort it out. He's **[indecipherable]** book, I believe **[indecipherable]**

Q: Mm-hm, yes, yeah, he is –

A: It's on the way to **[indecipherable]**

Q: He is a – quite a well known author these days.

A: Yeah, I don't know if – he is so modest, like.

Q: Yeah. But I-I think that this is – it's quite possible to – to get that information

A: Yeah, that will – I will be grateful –

Q: And I would suggest – I would suggest that we deal with this when we finish our conversation –

A: Great.

Q: – here, and the – the – I'm pretty sure that we can help somehow, through whatever resources we have here in the museum, but also with – with – we have a very good contact with – with our colleagues in **Lódz** and the surrounding area, including **Konin**, etcetera.

A: I – I hope for it, to – to give you a picture of me now, I am a heart patient. I cannot get health insurance. But being a heart patient doesn't stop me from windsurfing –

Q: Oh.

A: – together with the youngsters, and so on. But at the same time, once you have a look at the number of operations or medications that I am taking that – that keeps me active, I'd say you don't want to insure. The only exception in 11 years, was to

come here. And that's – I did it when all my family was around me with definite instruction that no resuscitation, no de – no – bu-but I am here, and – and I cannot count on – on endless **[indecipherable]** endless unreliability of me, yeah. So, if I – anything I can get, I will be grateful. It's a special circumstance.

Q: Definitely we – we can revisit that when – when we – when – after our conversation here.

A: Sure.

Q: So the – this is the – but it – this is quite, I must say, uplifting, what you just said, that, with your windsurfing and all that thing. I wish that we all did such an active life – lead active life. Going back to the – to the ghetto.

A: Yes.

Q: So, when your father passed away –

A: Yes.

Q: – you still continued working in the – in that leather shop?

A: Sure.

Q: And you – you became the only provider at that time, right?

A: Yes.

Q: And your mother, how did she take?

A: My mother was like – there was unlimited good will, but – on her part, but – but she was frail. And – and when – when eventually the **aktion** of 1942 took place in



the ghetto, at that time we had to go to the – to the yard, and they were checking the apartments to make sure that they are empty. And – and once they – once they do – do that, and after separating children from grownups, taking away a number of the grownups, my mother wasn't to be found any more. So, but –

Q: So, she was taken during the [indecipherable]

A: She was taken, but we knew where she was taken and [indecipherable] to **Argenietska**(ph) 34 - 36, I decided to join her. Took our bread rations that we had, I ca – teared off a bread for the two of us, and ha – which was the possession you take with you, or – or to give it to her, or whatever. She was in the window on the second floor, I saw her. And a feat I couldn't duplicate ever since, whenever I see something that will be thrown directly on – in this direction, can I do it? I threw the bread and it came straight into her, and – and I [indecipherable] and she was worrying what will happen, talking to another woman, I heard every word. What will happen to **Adusha**(ph)? I was **Adusha**(ph), a diminutive. But what – what –

Q: At that time you were 16 years old, 16 or 15, right?

A: Yeah. I – I was –

Q: So you were not taken to – with – with the other children, right?

A: My – the – th-the wife of my uncle from **Poganica** was in the ghetto in – in the – in those listings of pop – and movements of population and so on. And I had a cousin my age, approximately, and I – we were – we were – we were changing

dates. He was changing our dates all over the place, til I – til I got complicated with those dates, and – and used the date which is convenient. And it bothered me, because you know, like sometimes you have to say **[indecipherable]** and I wish that I rather wouldn't be asked, and only after searching til I myself was this – searching, I – I – I knew that I can extrapolate, ho – wh-when did I go to school, and when did I this – so I narrow it down to 20 – 26 or 27, those – those two years, and – and then, because I – I also had the – a larger difference at the time which I was using, have – have documents, have life insurance on that and so on. And people told me just nobody is interested in your exact age, but – but I felt uncomfortable. So I am started thinking about now finally.

Q: Mm-hm. So, have you ever tried to find your birth certificate in **Sieradz**?

A: No.

Q: Or in the – I – I don't know for a fact whether any records of the Jewish community –

A: And it – it will – it will be –

Q: – exist there.

A: – I – I do – I don't even know if May the 30<sup>th</sup> is an invented date or a real date.

Q: Yeah.

A: It didn't help that at home somehow we didn't celebrate birthdays or whatever.

Q: Wa-Was your family religious at all, or completely –

A: In **Mizrachi**, a couple of times a year.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: My grandfather had a white beard. He was in the city, I believe, like for a time, counselor or whatever. Spoke Polish. It was quite a circus, because this is the obviously Jewish man with a **kippah** around head, opening up in the middle of Yiddish, and – and so on. And Polish to his different customers, and – and turning to me and – and talking in literary Polish, yeah.

Q: And you reme – tha-that's your recollection from the pre-war time from **Sieradz**?

A: Yeah.

Q: That's quite a – so, back in the ghetto, so do you recall how far before the **gaspara**(ph), the – the September '42, before your father passed away?

A: Yes. Do I remember?

Q: Yeah, how far before that?

A: Oh, all – all the time, but at – at the very beginning of – of the – of the ghetto, there was optimism. We survived the shootings and the **housings** and so on. There was enough food. Dark bread, very heavy, oil, enough oil. Some kind of a **kashatsing**(ph), and – and a biting optimism that the war is – is just about to finish. And ther – there were no work, no factories organize yet, nothing. There was leisure. But there were cultural evenings, and – and the cultural evenings, every

neighborhood – every neighborhood had the – had, you know, displaying whoever they can, someone on an instrument, or someone this. I was pushed to read my poetry, so I did. It's – later on, it saved my life.

Q: Do you – do you remember, or do you – were you able to recreate any of your poetry?

A: I – I – I was asked so many – there was be-bef-before – before the war there was **[indecipherable]** or something, a newspaper, which also has a section for the young, and for teenagers, or whatever. So I was a couple of time published there. And – and I remember this better, but in – in the ghetto, I didn't know what I was writing, but the adults made the **[indecipherable]** to what I was writing, and they made – th-they made like that they were thinking about that, as simple as there is, there is a peasant and – and he – he seed – seeds of all kind of things. When those seeds grow up **[indecipherable]** this particular evil, a gardener and – and that – well, you know, it's – it's things like that.

Q: Do you recall any of your poems from that time? Can you say –

A: Oh, I'm – I'm –

Q: – I – you can say it in Polish.

A: – I am glad to forget them, because – because this was my ticket, that's what – what kind of separated me from – from whatever, you know, like in school still, just – that's what it was. At – but I – I wrote spontaneously, I read and wrote before the

age of five, the age of five, just not learning formally, only reading – reading whatever I could on the street, or wherever. So, there will be expectation. It was getting quiet in the house when I was writing. **Skindis(ph) schiven(ph)**, you know, I-I am going to this. And – and I – I – I wrote for to make an impression. And – and – and I thought the time just I don't feel much, and that it's phony and – and later when – when a language had to be changed, I once, twice, three times, I – I seized – I seized writing. But I have a – like everybody, sometimes everybody who is not educated, I have a creative streak, and that's how I made a li-living. And – and design of automation systems, things which don't exist yet. So – so I say yes, we – maybe every child is creative til public schooling knocks it out of him.

Q: But you – do you think that any of your writings survived in the – in the published form in the pre-war time you said about this **Zev(ph) Nuardik(ph)** –

A: Yeah, yeah –

Q: It's the –

A: I – I – I don't know if he – I am coming from a town where people were born, they had s – they grew up, they had children, they had grandchildren, with an unfulfilled ambition, lifetime ambition to visit **Lódz** 60 kilometers away. You know, so some – some of that thinking, can something be taking out from a stack of newspapers which were – which – which was done – it would be nice. I – I wonder

how I would feel about – no, at that time, I was – I was writing because I felt like it, and the results were there. But later on I – I –

Q: In the ghetto you were writing just to please –

A: Y-Yes. In – in the ghetto that's how I survived, because of that. I will be able to relate to you –

Q: Can you be more specific about this, cause i – you referred **[indecipherable]**

A: Y-Yeah, and it will also – i-it will also maybe fit the narration of – of what happened. On **Piotrkowska** 82, there was a – there was a family, their name was **Krikos**(ph), and she was a fashion designer, a known one, with international ties, travels to **[indecipherable]** and so on. Her husband was taken away and killed in a prison. She remained alone and my father and I, my mother, were there helping her with anything we could. I was – I was making sure that she has enough wood for the fireplace and things like that. Although it – it was just the beginning of the need of the wood. In the – in the ghetto, we met at the beginning and – and then all at once everything got to be a problem, distance was a problem, time, energy mostly was a problem, and so on. But she maintained – maintained contact with us, and aware to what's going on in our lives. She herself worked as one of the fashion designers or manager in a **Beschen**(ph) – **Beschen**(ph) **Kleider** factory, one of six **Beschen**(ph) and **Kleider** factories. Now, when – when I brought the bread to my mother and I gave it to her, a Jewish policeman grabbed me, took me into – into an entrance of

the house across **Lagiewnicka** and he beat me up. I was not supposed to be outside on the street. And now I think maybe he saved my life at that time, because if I would join them, I would be gone. But anyhow, it's – I was very humiliated. I think this what hurt the most. And in the middle of the night, I went to – to M-Mrs.

**Krikosava(ph)** where she lived in **Marysin**. A-And I told her what happened, and can she either li – arrange for me to join my mother, or – or get my mother out of that transport. I didn't hear much – much about that, but when my mother was taking away, this was – this was my – oh, I t – I didn't feel that – that I want to go on, especially. I wouldn't spend energy, I didn't have ener – I didn't go for my bread ration, which is once in 10 days or something, which means death, dying, not – no – and di – she appeared. And she took me to her office as a runner, in order to have a soup a day, and to survive – to survive on that soup or whatever til – til the – til the time comes for the regular allocation of food. And now – now my story gets interesting, because as I was there, there was an inspection by the chief engi – by the chief of the **Bescher(ph)** and **Kleider**. To tell you also that when we came to the ghetto, there was somebody who was distributing the apartments. The one who was the manager of our area was a name by the name of **Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch(ph)**. **Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch(ph)** was now – was now in charge of those factories, and – and **Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch(ph)** is the one who entered, and he stopped near me, and kind of, I thought accusingly, he is ask me how do I – what do I know you f-

from? And I say, from the cultural evenings, because he was attending. So he – he went ahead and I thought he is going to throw me out, he knows that this is fictitious, me being there, and eating the soup. But **Krikosava(ph)** followed, and together with other people, the manager, and she smiled to me, that me said nothing bad happened. And this continued for, I don't know, two or three days. After – after which, the **droshka(ph)** firm with **Rumkowski** with the white horse, stopped in the front of the building, they called me out and they took me to **Balucki Rynek**. And **Balucki Rynek** was sitting **Rumkowski**, and on both side female secretaries and people, and so on, and – and a – and they kind of – **Rumkowski** a-asked me a few words, and the other people, and I z – I saw **Anodinka(ph)**, the head, and I am being taken to the house of **Rumkowski**, which was divided into four apartments. And in apartment number one, was the apartment for **Dora Fuchs**. That's the first time I learned about anybody like **Dora Fuchs**. **Rumkowski**, everybody sign – sings – **Dora Fuchs** was very often doing the things that they complained about, and that **Rumkowski** fought against, but this wasn't known publicly, this I learned later. And **Bernard Fuchs**, her brother, who died in **Connecticut** just a few years ago, his wife is still alive, **Irena**.

Q: We – we do have an interview with – with him. You know, we conducted – he – he went by the name **Bert Fleming**.



A: **Bert – Bert – Bert Fleming**, yes, he found me. He found me when I was in **Florida** at one time, an-and ...

Q: Okay, I'm sorry.

A: He – he married **Irena** at that time, and a place became available for me. And this was in **Dora's** – in – in – in **Dora's** apartment. So, although the house was – it was a small house, **Rumkowski, Jusef(ph) Rumkowski, Eric Jakobovitch** downstairs, **Dora** downstairs. **Eric Jakobovitch** had another house in **Marysin**, so did **Rumkowski**, or whatever. So, I was given the place, my clothes were thrown away for a good reason. And people came to take measurements for my shoes, for my pajamas, for my this, and so on. And all at once there was a – a – there was a – food, and – and – and – and books. And that's how I came, because of **Bolek(ph)** being this – **Rumkowski** has given out a di-directive, I think, to the ones who are well-off in the ghetto should – should adopt one of the – one of the children, orphans, who remained orphans at that time. **Dora** was very much – very much aware of what's the tone to give to herself and to her persona, and I was part of it, except I was in the house. In reality, I was mostly upstairs with **Rumkowski**, because there was a boy there, **Stanislaw Stein(ph)**, not many people know about him, and when I heard the story what happened to **Rumkowski** when he went to the camp. They say that he – a brunette woman, younger woman, and a teenage boy,

black hair, was on that open wagon, so I know yes, this must be the right version because this was **Stanislaw**, who wanted to come with **Rumkowski**.

Q: Who was – who was **Stanislaw**, who was he?

A: **Stanislaw**? He's a – he's a – his parents were dead, he – he was – he was a very quiet guy –

Q: Was he your age?

A: – I was his only friend, I think. Pardon?

Q: He was your age?

A: He was younger.

Q: Younger.

A: And – and he had the Bar Mitzvah, as a matter of fact, at the beginning of 1944.

Q: '44.

A: But things happened – happened in the meantime, and I – I did – that's not the first time that I did a self destructive thing, but I also did it at that time. It's – it's – it's a small item, but it's important because it took my train sideways towards not surviving. And this was when I – the first time when – when **Dora** came home from work, the same day, she passed without looking, she passed into her room. The housekeeper brought a box of bonbons, and she said that I am a very nice boy, but she wants – she wants to note that she's a very busy person, and she doesn't have any time away from her work. So it was – that means this – I didn't understand

exactly what it was, but there was food, and there was – and later – but – but I had my idea with her moral –

Q: So –

A: – more – more because she was such a good pretender. I'm sorry?

Q: So you – she – officially she was the one who adopted you, right? **Dora Fuchs.**

A: It – it was never clear. It was floating in the air.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: It was not – officially, I was sleeping in her place. Our – our lessons, the teacher, lunches and so on, were – were in upstairs in **Rumkowski's** study. When years, years later I was in **Tel Aviv**, and there was an exhibition of things from the ghetto, and – and I recognized some of the things, and I said, I have never been to the **Tel Aviv** University Museum of – of whatever, so how can it be that I say I have been here? No, I haven't been there. So – but then I remember. Every time **Stanislaw** and I, we had to have our lessons, he would – he would – we would have to take off the table all kind of gift that **Rumkowski** was getting all the time. Ta – they sang [**indecipherable**] to him, he – he – he was the greatest man in history. I – I think that there are very few people in the world who can withstand endlessly that kind of flattery. With engravings, with here and there. We had to take off that things almost en masse, and put it – put it on the side to have place to do our lessons in his study. And we don't know if somebody put it back for his attention or not. No, it was – it

was a job by itself just to follow – a – a portrait of his would hang on the wall, and – and a little item would be there, and the – the rest was a big accumulation. So our – our teachers were Dr. **Rabiner**(ph) **Berliner**(ph) from – from – from doctor – Dr. **Rabiner**(ph) **Berliner**(ph) from – a – a place in germa – **Hannover**, maybe. I'm – I'm not sure. Dr. **Rabiner**(ph) **Berliner**(ph), he said that his wife has her dates til this from the Spanish Inquisition still, his wife has a – this is – there was somebody from the –

Q: So what – what was he teaching you, the – the Dr. **Berliner**(ph)?

A: Logic, math, German, things like that. They were – they were a – a calibr – a caliber which is th – which is that they should have the graduate students there. What we are studying was very – he was applying himself like to everything. He was applying himself, he was solid.

Q: So **Stasiuk**(ph) was – was he – he was adopted by **Rumkowski**?

A: He was eventually adopted, because in my case, my mother was taken away, but couldn't say that my mother is dead. This – in the ghetto we didn't know, and the people who knew, knew. This is number one. Number two, I will get it off my – my mind, but there was when – when Mrs. – when the **Fuchses** – the father **Fuchs** was a tailor, when – when the **Fuchses** came – came to – to **Lódz**, to the ghetto, a family took care of them. And th-the family, this was **Fryman**(ph), and they provided work, lodgings and so on for them. When they moved to the ghetto, Mrs.

**Fryman(ph)**, Mr. **Fryman(ph)** and **Dora Fuchs** and her father were there, and – and those were the people who came with them, and were part of the people. And to – just to be converted very, very quickly and forcefully into being the housekeeper, into being like the maid and so on. She often cried, and I often talked to her. I was still not to familiarize with the help, but Mrs. – Mrs. **Fryman(ph)** went to a doctor, and she had to go to a doctor maybe because she didn't want that **Dora** should know that she went to a doctor at all, you know. And there was a louse, and she was bitten, and she had – and she had **Fleck** –

Q: Typhus.

A: – **Fleck** typhus, yes.

Q: Right.

A: Now, what happened at that time, said – this had t-to be announced to the Germans, and it was – when it was told to **Beebow(ph)**, **Krieger** was their mark, **Krieger** was there, and – and he tried to remodel it and says, oh, this is Mrs. **Fryman(ph)** from [indecipherable] or something. He says, she's [indecipherable] for Frau **Fryman(ph)**. And now many people were working Germans on the boats here [indecipherable] and they were – and they were **Baltic** Germans, they were not very clean very often. And **Dora** was afraid if anybody [indecipherable] sick, that will get back to her. And she started an orgy of dressmaking. All kinds of dress – ever – everything had to be crisp, crisp, white colors and so on, in order to project

that meticulous, meticulous, meticulous freshness and – and cleanliness. People didn't understand what was the whole thing, but I knew because I from inside the house. Not the end of the story because Mrs. **Fryman(ph)** was getting worse and worse, and – and eventually was dying. And **Dora** says that God had her **[indecipherable]**. God – God – God punish her for the problems she – she did – she – she did to me. And I – I couldn't look at her after that. This was – I was pretending, but – but I was defensive.

Q: So Mrs. **Fryman(ph)** and – and her husband, they were in **Lódz**.

A: They were in **Lódz**. Mr. **Fryman(ph)**, I once saw him in a bus passing by in **Tel Aviv**. He wouldn't be alive now. He married the housekeeper of **Eric Yakobovitch**. **Eric Yakobovitch** was in charge of all the – all the industry in the ghetto.

Q: So Mr. **Fryman(ph)** survived.

A: Mist – Mr. **Fryman(ph)** survived, yes. Nice, quiet man.

Q: We will stop for a second –

A: Sure

Q: – to change. **[break]**

Q: It's quite a story. I-It – we are – we are okay now? Oh okay, we can continue.

A: Well –

Q: So what – if – what was your, if you can recall to put it in some kind of a frame after – this is after the **gaspara(ph)**, right?

A: Yes.

Q: So it would be probably in the what? October 1942 or some – somehow like this, right?

A: Yes, '42 was –

Q: That you started living in – in **Rumkowski's** apartment.

A: Yes, in – in his house.

Q: And were you – at that time you were not working any more in the – in the leather factory, are you –

A: Not in the leather factory, but this was ac-across from – from dev –

**Dewczewska(ph)** was **Lagiewnicka [indecipherable]** the – that's where – where you will – as yesterday I got my **Lagiewnicka [indecipherable]**

Q: Yeah.

A: And with **Vivian** –

Q: We – we – you – you noticed probably that we have a door, original door from that building in the exhibition.

A: No-no – no, no, no, I didn't notice. I – I haven't explored yet, and I – I doubt that **[indecipherable]**

Q: Oh, so we'll have to – after the interview we'll go downstairs and I'll sh-show you.

A: And the – the – the next – the – the next thing is the – the television is quite successful with the lives of the rich and the famous and things like that. Well, there were the rich and the famous in the ghetto, but they were not exactly the people that one expected they were. Even it was **Stasiuk(ph)** and I, and **Marisha(ph)** **Mazur(ph)**, a daughter of – of a doctor, would be – would be coached by Mrs. Dr. **Eliasburg(ph)**, in things like rhythmic. Like, she would play the piano and we would go with sticks, and things like that. This was – this was in the ghetto as part of – of they considered the – the – the right thing to do and so on, and it was – it was kind of mindless, but what may be a surprise is that **Rumkowski's** house was modest. His – his wife was – was nice, intelligent. Well, no matter how she was coming through, I only saw with – not from **Helena Rumkowski**, who was a battleaxe, but she was a – a – she was – I th – I think that they were going to the dentist, Dr. **Smolowicz(ph)**, or **Stolowicz(ph)**, who was a man who had a – a radio in the ghetto, which I didn't find out til **Bernard Fuchs** have – have to located me, and said – said an interview here, a kind of, you know, people didn't understand. I – I told him, what do you expect? You kick people. So he went ahead, run ahead of his wife and I, you know, to live with that, that I came. He wanted me to say that he was a nice person. He had nice – some of the nice qualities, some of them not, and I wasn't shy in telling him, he shouldn't be surprised why people saw what they saw and reacted to what he saw. And he better lives with that, he did.



Q: Going back to **Marisha(ph) Mazur(ph)** –

A: Yes.

Q: – the third person, she was – how did she get into that apartment? She was adopted by someone as well there, or she was just –

A: Oh, that – that **Marisha(ph) Mazur(ph)**? No, she was – she were – only came for the –

Q: For the tutoring.

A: For the tutoring, yeah. And of – of – of this – of this thing. N-Not tutoring in anything else. Her father was a known specialist which was brou – brought into the ghetto from **Warsaw** in order to take care of **Rumkowski's** conditions. Something lara – laran [indecipherable]. There – there was – **Dora Fuchs** was doing like big dinners where I had to read my poetry, that I didn't feel like writing, and I didn't feel anything; but this was it, now it was me, I was sitting next to her, and the time was coming traditionally to me. And of course, I didn't matter at all. At one time – at one time, and – and I say it because m – because it – it – it will be so uncharacteristic of what people think. In the evening, one evening, **Gertler** is coming. Strutting **Gertler** was the head of the police. And he is strutting in and the two people – the three people outside, because there was already **Gingka(ph)**, who was also coming to help out in the household. There were only three people in the household. There were – there were only at – most of the time, two people, **Dora** and I. And he comes in and

– and he – they started to bring in chocolate, and or-or-oranges, newspapers, cognacs, and all kind of drinks like that. **Dora** is going, **Eric Yakobovitch** and the – the brother, **Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch** wouldn't fit, he wasn't on the right level. So **Beebow(ph)** comes in, and meantime, while waiting for **Beebow(ph)**, **Dora** is asking – asking **Gertler, Dawid**, how did you manage it? And he opens this, and he says, inspector for the Gestapo. This was – this was **Dawid Gertler**, he was going around giving people something to eat, or whatever, and he was considered like an extraordinary fine person. But I know that people were killed all the time because of him, and he knows what's going on here. I know about what was written on his papers, because he [indecipherable] a very valuable, or extraordinary valuable Jew, something like that. He had a nice wife, he adopted two small children, and he tried to be a **rubaszny**, that will [indecipherable] of **Europe**.

Q: The **rubaszny** [indecipherable]

A: Y-Yeah, ki-kind of. A-And – and so he – it – h-he said [indecipherable] it was a – the din of out – and he said that he has a **balia**, a container for water, for a tub, a tub for th – with swimming fish outside, okay, but this he didn't bring into the living room. And **Beebow(ph)** was feeding me pieces of orange and – a-and so on. So, this was – this was the – all those things were heard upstairs, because there were only a few stairs. Windows were open, a truck pulls up, **Rumkowski** is in the house, and all this was done under his nose. Having nose to – to **Rumkowski**. And **Dora** raised

her voice and said **wir werden – wir werden dem alten gar nicht geben.** We will not give anything to the old one. Anyhow, he says that all this is mine, all this is mine, everything is mine, and so on.

Q: So –

A: This was for me an illustration about a – a – **Rumkowski** part of the time was helpless, and the things were done by a clique. And they allowed him to go around and – and get the darts thrown at the people who make hunger and everything. But he, on the contrary, I – I – I know from hearing, because even if there was – there was a [**indecipherable**] **Rumkowski's** courage, y-you know, in situation which were dangerous to him, very dangerous to him, and – and nevertheless, he followed through, he put his life on – on line.

Q: So, cou – could you explain little bit more about that truck that came, so that was a – a – while the – the party was going on in the **Rumkowski's** apartment, the truck pulled to take the patients out of the hospital, or – what was the –

A: No, no. Oh, you – you – with the truck?

Q: Right.

A: No, the truck was brought by **Gertler** from **Warsaw** –

Q: Uh-huh.

A: – with things which were not available even for the Germans.

Q: Uh-huh, oh, okay, mm-hm.

A: This was probably his bonus because he brought many rich Jews probably to their deaths, you know, and [indecipherable]. So – so, **Rumkowski** was excluded. To me, I didn't have to – at – at one time, and this I will not forget either, there was – there was – people were saying at the table, said, the Germans have left a ghetto, maybe **Kovno**, maybe **Rovno**, I don't remember exactly, and they left the Jews intact. Now, we kind of had a feeling, I had a feeling that I'm not going to live, around the corner there is death. I couldn't get rid of that feeling, that death is waiting around the – but – but probably the – that means, like they killed the Jews before they leave the ghetto? One way or another, it – it – it was – this what came around. And people were talking about that, and continue with their dinner, with their **galareta**, with all those things that **Dora** was preparing; preparing – that she made to be prepared.

Q: So – but **Rumkowski** was not part of that feast?

A: He was – he was – he was not a part of it, but in this case, in the afternoon, I waited outside my house because **Gertler** said that he is going to buy me a bike. According to the historical book nobody had a bike. I had a bike. It – it's – so – so the room – yeah, **Rumkowski** comes in and gets out of his **dorożka** and he grabs me by – by the [indecipherable] and he swirls me around him. He – he is radiant with happiness. He – he – he walks straight. He – he shed 20 years off, when I saw him at that time. Later in the evening I heard about – about the Jews remaining –

remaining alive, following which days later, we knew that it was – it wasn't true, that the Germans didn't leave Jews alive, but at that time – but **Rumkowski** was del-de-delirious with happiness that – that the chances that the Jews were – and the other people in the ghetto –

Q: Tho-Those were the Jews who were departed during the **gaspara**(ph), right?

A: Pardon?

Q: Those were the Jew – he was happy because he learned that the Jews –

A: No, it said – said – said the Germans are likely to leave **Lódz** ghetto alone, okay, and not kill the people, okay. That was the big thing. But the people who were sitting at **Dora's** dinner, with me in attendance as well with, th-they – they – they – they didn't – they were not – y-you know, th-they were not moved. No – no one was happy that they were talking about the ranks within the ghetto, the – the different levels of career, res-res-resonsi – responsibilities and – and this, they – they did not care. **Rumkowski** cared. Okay, there was no doubt in my mind that he cared. There is no doubt in my mind that he – he was a demigod. There was no one that – that he was – that he was on a extraordinary ego trip. Most of the time he pretended. **[indecipherable]** because you know, you – you had to throw the fear in th – into them. What – but actually he was – after the – the – the **[indecipherable]** there was a situation that people had to say to – who worked there, had to say send less food because there are less people in the ghetto, because they were already – well,

Rumkows – and no one wanted to sign, or whatever, which had to be signed. And **Rumkowski** volunteered, and he signed, and he was beaten up for that, but he survived just the same.

Q: So do – do you remember instances when **Rumkowski** would come from the meetings with the Germans and be beaten up?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Re – because in the evening, I wasn't any more [indecipherable] ask me about what they ate on Friday, I forgot about that ...

Q: Wh-Wh-What did someone ask you what – what they were eating on Friday?

A: The **Rumkowski** – on Friday, I said usual, only to remember later, to remember that actually I wasn't there on Friday night. This is – the distance is kind of telescoping and – and [indecipherable] so actually, I wasn't there at night, at night I was ac – ac – exhibited at **Dora's**, so – now – but –

Q: Oh, so tho-tho-those were the evenings where you had to recite her poetry.

A: Ye-Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: On Friday evenings.

A: Poe – po – poetry, yes. I wa – I was – how much time has passed? Pardon?

Q: One hour and a half.

A: Oh.

Q: But it is quite interesting what you are saying, so if you don't mind?

A: Yes.

Q: It's –

A: Yeah, sure, sure.

Q: Let's continue.

A: I will – ye-yeah. It's – it – we are –

Q: Would you – would you like to take a break, because if – if you would like to take a break, we could –

A: No, I – I am fine. If you – if you see me kind of losing my think, it is because –

Q: We don't.

A: I – I want – I want to tell you that, I – I don't have an opportunity to talk about it, I don't.

Q: I will definitely extract every opportunity.

A: It's – it-it – yeah, th-the i – the idea is that I – I – I don't even – I don't even try. I belong to a – to a book club which exists 50 years already, and whatever in **Israel**, and – and – and I – I thought that they are Holocaust deniers. They were Holocaust deniers. I-I changed that one perception there, because they read some books and so on. But – but gosh, you know, it's – they say there was nothing special about the Holocaust and this. Those were leaders of the communists at one time, and they were – they were kind of thinking in a global terms to include everybody, and the –

so – so – actually, and I don't have friends who were – with who I can kind of rehash it. I-I know that in **Israel** people meet, and – if they were in the camp. I – I think that I would like to – to – to save an insider's view, because I am actually – I have to be grateful to **Krikosava(ph)**, who died in the ghetto on tuberculosis, despite everything. I have to be grateful to **Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch**, who was the fiancé for **Dora**, h-he – he saved my life by pulling me out from there, you know, and putting my ca-candidacy as – as the one. It's a – it – it – it is – I – I would like – I would like as – personally that – that **Rumkowski** should be seen – should be seen no-not only in terms of – of being – what – what is th-the word, like that he – he – he tried, he tried. H-He – he tried. He was misguided lots of times. He tried his best, also most of the times. The – **Gertler** was bringing death to many Jews, he wound up as a hero after the people were writing letters that he saved their life and things like that. The – the people who died, almost at his hands, which may count to hundreds and thousands, they cannot write letters that he saved them – their life. I think that there was – there is an injustice in this one. There was a – **Dora – D-Dora Fuchs**, they were locating me after the war, I – I wanted to go to the camp with my friends. We were very – we were very, kind of connected. The [speaks foreign language here] those 12 – 12 or fi – 15 [indecipherable] 12. Wa – wa – wa – over – over 10 children who were there, some of them alive, **Miraka(ph)** is a writer, a writer in – in **Sweden**. There is **Majel(ph)**, there is **Benek(ph)**, there is **Chaim Kamalowski(ph)**



from **Wilna** who – who died and so on. I – I was with them, so I wasn't any more participating on the daily things that **Dora** is doing or not doing. Neither did I know –

Q: But they were – they were – all those people whom you just mentioned, they were part of the orphanage?

A: Yeah, but **Dora** and 500 other people, less than 500, I think, left later on, this – this I already heard from – from **Bernard**, okay? And the fact is that they were left, they were left under the tutelage of – of the **Beebow**(ph). And – and they were – and they were – they had good condition. **Eric Yakobovitch** had a son, **Mula**. **Mula** was five years old, and there were some – a few hours, they were not – they were not delivering food, or whatever, so **Mula** says that he want chocolate, and **Eric Yakobovitch** was raging. This was in the camp, in a concentration camp, for the privilege, raging, my son is hungry, where is the chocolate? Where is the chocolate? My son is hungry. The – the chances for survival in that group, I think that very few have died. The father of – of **Ita Salomon**(ph), which is the wife of – of **Bernard**, and she is still alive, but with the – with the **Alzheimer's**, which I seem to be getting, maybe.

Q: Not – not a chance.

A: Yeah. So, an-and say the survival – the survival was almost, almost complete, of those people. Where I went, what I went through had – had very little chance for

survival. I came together very romantically wi-with the boys and the girls, and – and we thought that we will live together, all of us, like a group of youngsters, but not men or women yet. That we will share everything, that once we come to the labor thing and so on, we will support each other, and we will be strong and – and so on, so – w-we came to be **[indecipherable]**. So, you know, in **Birkenau** right away, right away part of us didn't make it. I ma – I made it, I was small – I am small. And I don't know how I went through – through the initial selection. I think that I went through the initial selection because I couldn't believe I saw – we already knew, as we were undressing, they already told us. When we went one way, already people told us, you go to life. And – and I believe there were only maybe a hundred or 200 from the whole train, and the rest – the rest went right away to – the train which came a day before us, everybody went, the day after us, everybody else. Us, had a small – a small contingent of survivors. But then there was the selection, and this time the selection was undressed. So, I have a white jacket, because see, it was custom made still. I had from that time, so maybe I looked a little bit stronger. But then we were – we were undress, and there was that figure in black going back and forth, and it really fascinated me, like that – that – that situation of a man deciding that or – or – and I was – and I was looking at – at that – at that assessment, a-and I was – I was staring. When I came there, there was kind of a movement of resignation that he – he put me there to – li-like he kind of o-okay, put me to, and I

think was it, did my staring do it? My physic simply wasn't – I wasn't like a person for work yet, never – never did I see [indecipherable]. I will never know, nobody would never know, but I had other occasions that I remained alive because of something unexplainable, some – somebody did something, somebody had – had a moment of compassion, or – or – or – or whatever, again and again and again, because I came to **Mauthausen** later on. And – and **Mauthausen** was – and later that it was [indecipherable]. And – and then there was – then there was the hospital, I went on the hospital. And – and the war finished for me, not on the fifth, the war finished for me, I – I know when. On – I – I must have, in my delirium, I must have in the hospital in – in **Austria**, in the basement of the hospital, I must have, being delirious, and I remember talking del – del – delirious. As a matter of fact, I remember that I was doing some – that I was e-engage and ar-articulate whatever speeches. That's what I remember from my – from my be-being in a high delirium. But I must have mentioned that – the 30<sup>th</sup> of May. That's what I was so – so the 30<sup>th</sup> of May must be my date, and – because in delirium wa – it came through. And – and a nurse brought me – there were two nurses, one Ukrainian, one – one – one was Austrian. They brought me a – a – a card with birthday. That's the first time during the war that I cried. I never cried during the war, not once. And – and – and the war finished, and the things started from that point on.

Q: So, going back to –

A: Yes.

Q: – to we – we were still – we – you gave us very nice, very educating run-through what happened. But I just want to go into little details.

A: Sure. S-Sorry, I think that I was –

Q: No, no, no, it was very good, but th-th –

A: I-It –

Q: – I just wanted to –

A: Yeah.

Q: – if you remember any details from the time, cause we – we are getting into 1944 and your deportation.

A: Yes.

Q: Right? Do you remember any circumstances which were around it, cause you were in this privileged part of the ghetto, and how did that work?

A: Oh, it – in the ghetto?

Q: In the ghetto, when – when you were deported to **Auschwitz**.

A: I – I was – I was not any more – I place myself outside the magic circle, okay? I was – I wanted to go with my – with my friends and – and I didn't want to say that I don't want to be with **Dora**, I – this would be crass, or whatever. And even more under – I just said that I want to be with this – **Gertler**, just knowing that I have friends, **Gertler** gave me – gave me a bike. Oh, incidentally, someone called me a

couple of months ago, and his name is **Walter Kelly**(ph). He was one of the three men who was sent from the **United States** by this organi – by your organization to – to review, receive the – the – the rec-records, 18 kilometers of records.

Q: Ideas?

A: Whi-Which were – n-n-no – re-recor – rec –

Q: Records were in **[indecipherable]**

A: – German er – the records in **Germany** –

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

A: – which – which was open, **Walter** was one of them. So, here a – here is some – somebody from there. And I say, **Walter**, do you remember something about a bike? And he says, sure, you were coming on a bike, and every time you were giving me a chance to – to drive around. So – so here is **Walter** the first person who says never mind what the historians write, there was at least one bike in the – in the ghetto.

Q: Mm-hm. So you – you got – you got that bike, and were you riding your bike in the ghetto?

A: Sure, sure. Yeah, that's the idea. To **Marysin**, because this was the other end, going **Lagiewnicka** 63 was **Radigosz**(ph). Goes to **Radigosz** and I would –

Q: So you were constantly, de-despite the fact that you lived in the **Rumkowski's** apartment, you were constantly in touch with your colleagues, with your friends, in – in **Marysin**, in the orphanage.

A: Ti-Til I created the situation that kind of things were dissipating and I was spending more and more time with my friends, and it was kind of accepted. And – and **Rumkowski** from time to time, he would call me to see how I am making out, how I am doing. So –

Q: D-Do you remember ever, the **Rumkowski's** visits to the – to **Marysin**, to the – to the orphanage there?

A: To – to the orphanage – every day s – every second day to that orphanage, to the small t – orphanage. An interesting thing, that somebody looking for an orphanage like that, there was a twin orphanage with some 12 – 12 youngsters, which were chosen by – by **Rumkowski**, and she was looking for people from her group. Her name is **Lucia Ailmer**(ph), I think. And – and instead of finding her people, she found the people in – in my group. So, we are – we are in contact act-actually now. So somewhere there was that secret, second – like, there were two. I thought til now that there was only – only – only one.

Q: And there **Rumkowski** was taking care of – of the – o-of – of – of those youngsters who were in those orphanages, right? He was –

A: Oh, the orphanages? Yes. And he was pushing for schools, and he was pushing for – for young people who have a chance to survive, to – to have a – a better chance to survive through food or good work, or something. He was not God, he didn't have a right to decide who is, who isn't. But he probably thought that he is doing exactly

the right thing. Oh yes, when – when he was twirling me around about what – what he thought history will say about him, he will – he will say – he – he s – he will say that after the war, you – no, I and you will go in **America**, and I will give a **referaten** – just the f-first time that I head the – the word **referaten**, which means lectures or something. So – so his – there – there was no question in my mind after that little thing, that he was not afraid of – of – of history, but that he – he has done – that he has done his best.

Q: And your – your feeling is among the – the people that **Rumkowski**, w-was he aware of the fate that is awaiting everybody, including himself, or – or he was in denial of that, or what – what would you think? How – how did he treat the – the tr – the truth, that he must have known, right?

A: If – he – he – he mu – he must have known, even because – even – he's twirling me around, and being happy. Was – I learned the same evening, was because the Germans have left the ghetto intact. This means that if he say intact, not killing everybody, this means that he must have known the alternative to leaving intact.

Q: Mm-hm. And how – how were the others, th-the **Fuchses**, the – the **Gertler**, they were als – also aware?

A: The **Ge-Gertler** was not only aware, he was a perpetrator. This is **[indecipherable]** was a smart man, nice man, gentle man, but he was the second kid to – to get – at one time in the ghetto, **Krieger** – after they took away **Gertler**,

**Krieger** and **Dora Fuchs** and **Eric Yakobovitch** were deciding everything about the ghetto. No matter who was being blamed, they were deciding. I saw it, I saw the process, I saw the meeting, I saw them – I saw them say so that I am a fly on the wall. I didn't think that my memories will be historical in some way, but – but you know, I also, you know, sometimes – sometimes they would – they would hush a little, and the child is there or something, you know. And – and we go back and – and there was no way, the apartment wasn't very great. There was – **Dora – Dora Fuchs** had her – her room with – with blocks of ice like bricks from ice, so you couldn't see the counters. There was my room with – with a bed where **Bernard Fuchs** was using, and that's what became available for me. I-Incidentally, another thing which bothered me; there was – the-there were two – two machines in the ghetto. They were called the **diathermia**. This is a word from that time. **Dora** had some occasionally stomach cramps. And this was – this was prescribed for people with **diathermia**. It was – it was said to me, I didn't count, that there were two **diathermias** in the ghetto. **Dora**, for herself and the rest of the 160,000 or 100,000 people who had only the use of one **diathermia** machine, because **diathermia** machine was in her room, just in case she feels like it on this is the date that she wants to apply the **diathermia**, and so –

Q: What – what was that machine? What – what was – can you describe –



A: Th-They're doing something good for her – fo-for her intestines or whatever, I didn't go deeply into it. There was a cow in the ghetto, you were probably not – you didn't hear about that, about the cow, possibly – I don't know if there are two people in the world who know about the cow. There was a cow in the ghetto. There was – there was an orchard in the ghetto. And everything very hush-hush, , but it was there. But it was every morning, almost every morning, the chief of police, **Rozenblat** or something, would bring eggs. At one time he forgot to bring eggs, and **Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch** was sleeping over, he was sleeping over, af-after all, she – she was his fiancé, **Bolek(ph) – Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch** was eating breakfast, my father died of hunger, this was early in the game. And I was eating breakfast, I – I finished my breakfast, **Dora's** father, Papa was invited for breakfast. So he was eating breakfast and – and he was – he packed lunch, a beautiful sandwich or something with an egg and sp – it was with, not egg, sprouts and things like that. And he unpacked it after I finished breakfast and says, would you like to eat my lunch? I didn't give it a second thought, I ate his lunch. But he was sending me – I also got the message, you know? We – we – we – we measure – we – we measure, somehow, you know, what we – or whatever. At – **Bolek(ph) Yakobovitch** said, because the eggs were not delivered for – for breakfast, he says, you see? You can – you can live a day without eggs for breakfast, he says to **Dora**, or something like that. You see, you can eat – the chil – children were born and died in the ghetto

without ever seeing an egg, without knowing what it is, or what it tastes. And he says that it's possible to survive. **Yakobovitch** wife, **Regina**, dropped in just to have a talk with me. Dropped in and she had a sandwich and she started over with her s – she started to – to eat the sandwich and – and wrapped it up and put it back. She says, the doctors say – said the best – the best way – said, th-the – the best way to eat, is to stop eating while you are still hungry. This was in the ghetto where – which hunger was – was giving everybody an unendurable pain, just the – the feeling of hunger. The doctor told her that it's the healthiest to stop while she is still hungry, and exercise and a diet, or something like that. And I – I – I couldn't – I couldn't stop, my father just died of hunger. My mother was – must have been very afraid of being – being taken away, as a person who cannot work any more, or whatever. And then, okay, but then I – I prefer to be – to eat – which means, like I have my principles that I have to compromise with, but – an-and ne-nevertheless, it was – it was good to – to eat that. At the same time when I went over to the other children, there was less food and less **[indecipherable]** but, at that time it wasn't a question of hunger or no hunger, and it didn't make a difference.

Q: So, it – and that was the basically everyday life after the **gaspara**(ph) –

A: Yes.

Q: – and d-during 1943, up until the –

A: Concerts, reviews, theaters, th-there was e-entertainment, dinners. **Dora Fuchs** was a big – was a big th – kind of dinner arran – arranger. She was very inventive. She wasn't doing it by herself, but she was very, very inventive.

Q: So who would be coming to those dinners? The – the Germans?

A: No, th – but, they would – the people were coming who were always heads of departments in the ghetto. It – it was a – **Dora** was able to pull out – in – in a setting of home, she was able to pull out anything, anything she wanted, without the people – without th-the people wanting or not wanting to say. She – she was a genius. She – she could draw out, people couldn't stop themselves, only blurted out, an-and she was – she was the puppet master [**indecipherable**]. She – she was a much more, let's say a – say, her job description. As a matter of fact, I-I saw it, **Eric Yakobovitch** was sitting on a chair. I remember lying on the corner, and – and she was standing over him, and she was shaking a finger at him, and – and she would say, remember with some things, one German closed all the – all the food in the ghetto, this, and no one is – was allowed to touch the food. This means punishing the whole ghetto because he got angry about something. And it was a question of hunger and people dying and whatever, and things getting rotten at the same time. Well, **Dora – Dora** spend the night, and – in **Lódz**. She came back and – and she was proud that she got the – she got that this was an example of **Dora** being able to do some things, which amb – anyhow, she was shaking her finger at **Eric**

**Yakovovitch**, who promised her that he will never do anything without first running it by her.

Q: Do you have any recollections from that time of any of the Germans? You said th – at one point, that **Genovine(ph)** – not **Genovine(ph)**, th-the **Beebow(ph)** came.

A: Yes.

Q: What are your recollections of **Beebow(ph)**? How did he behave there, how was –

A: **Be-Beebow(ph)**? **Beebow(ph)**, I think that **Dora** – **Dora** admired **Beebow(ph)**, because number one, she was changing his shirt every day.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: Number two, she saw what's written about him, that he is an extraordinary organizer. This was his freedom from the eastern front, needless to say.

Q: Right.

A: So, he had like a – a very high thing. I think – I think that **Beebow(ph)**, a – a drunken, who probably attack anyone if he drinks, and he was very careful what he does publicly. That means that he wasn't – wouldn't engage in any – in any beatings or this or being angry. He wouldn't – he – he was spending more time with

**Yakovovitch, Eric Yakovovitch**. A friend who was in **Lódz** after the war was telling me that he attended the – **Beebow's(ph)** trial, and **Beebow(ph)** all the time said that they should ask **Erici Yakovovitch, Eric Yakovovitch**, like what **Eric**

**Yakovovitch** will say, would – would – would have much importance after the war.

Which we said **Beebow**(ph) was naïve in some – in some respect. I know that

**Beebow**(ph) had lots of money, siphoned off from the ghetto, because I heard and I heard again, and it was obvious, and it was always kind of that we understood. I

think that **Gertler**, who all at once after the war was – he was the head of the underworld before the war. So – at – it – I think that **Gertler** all at once, gets to be a

big manufacturer in **Munich**, and I think that he knew where **Beebow**'s(ph) – where

**Beebow**'s(ph) stash of monies and [indecipherable] away, this is my wa – thi-this

is nothing, this is just a feeling I – I have. But there were pilgrimages going to

**Gertler**, the murderer. This was un – unjust – he didn't deserve an-any of it.

**Rumkowski** didn't deserve all the contempt that he – that he encounters by subsequent historians.

Q: Mm-hm. So, do you remember any other Germans coming there for – o-only

**Beebow**(ph)?

A: No, I remember – oh, I re – I re – I remember that tough talking, that they were talking with Germans, but th-the names didn't – didn't dis – there was – somebody

was protecting – was protecting **Rumkowski**. **Beebow**(ph) – **Beebow**(ph) had to be careful with **Rumkowski**. Any other Jew he could kill, he probably couldn't kill

**Rumkowski**, he would – he would – he would have to answer to – to some. I

remember some name –

Q: And you don't know who that person was?

A: Who that pers – after the war, it came to me – aft-after the war **Dora – Dora** was working in **UNRRA** in – in – in **Brooklyn**. The **Yakobovitches** were there, **Erik** and this – **Mula**, meantime, got to be super-duper si – rich in – in **Kissimmee**, near **Kissimmee** in **Florida** with horses and vintage cars and all kind of things. And he did it at – at the record – the record speed, and guess where the money came from? A **Krieger** son, **Malachi**(ph) was in the – he was in **South Africa**, I think.

Eventually – eventually in – in **Miami** as well. We are talking about riches. Those are – those are old things of monies which accumulated in the hands of a few. There is no doubt in my mind that this – this was on – on different scales. Those monies didn't just happen.

Q: So when the time of – th-the final deportations in 1944 came, when did you learn about that? Do you re – do you recall anything? What was the sequence of – you know, of – of th – of the events in – at the – at the end of the liquidation of the ghetto?

A: I would say the liquidation of the ghetto at that time was not that the – that the second shoe has fallen, only that the second shoe is falling. So, it was something that everyone wanted to avoid. People complained about the ghetto, but were doing their utmost to avoid deportation from the ghetto. The – the worst dates that they ghetto had, probably when **Rumkowski** was missing for two days. There was despair

throughout the ghetto, everyone's nerves were this, because with all the complaining, they felt that at least there is some kind of a hand at work on behalf of survival. Must have felt it, because otherwise, why curse **Rumkowski** and be so terribly concerned when he is missing for two days? So, e-e-everybody knew, and – and the rush was to resource which are likely to be needed by – by the Germans. Resource means the factories.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: So, let's say **Himowicz**(ph) fac-factory, which is metal [**indecipherable**]. Then **Zatlersort**(ph), where I was working, this had a chance because it was for military rucksacks, it had a chance to continue as a group working together. And this is the transport that we have chosen to go with. We probably got advice also, which to get of – of course, all this was nothing, the only group was **Beebow's**(ph) group that he brought to **Flossenbürg** and – and whatever, divided. So this – this was the only – the rest, the rest, the moment – the moment people came into the camp, they were – they were just meat for grinding. So this was the atmosphere of the ghetto, that people hoped to be lucky and be at a place where their work will be needed.

Q: So y-you were deported how – when the deportations started, how many days, if you remember at all, you were still there before y-your own deportation?

A: How – how – how long? I – I know that **Rumkowski, Rumkowski** came a week after we arrived, our group. When did I learn about that, I don't read many books about that or anything, but some – sometimes, here or there I notice a – a note, which rings a bell. So he – he came a week later. The story was that – that **Beebow**(ph) didn't want to release his brother to go with that select group. So **Rumkowski** decided to – to – to be – it's the – the – the other part of the story.

Q: To go with his brother?

A: Mm, yeah, it's – he didn't – and – and – and **Rumkowski** put many – just means **Beebow**(ph) put, after giving **Rumkowski** and his family, his very small family – incidentally, **Stanislaw** looked like the brother of – of the – of **Rumkowski's** wife, Mrs. **Rumkowski**. They say that she married **Rumkowski** in order to save her brother, tuberculosis. And she couldn't save her brother, but **Stasiuk, Stasiuk** was – looked and was like her brother. It looked to me that **Rumkowski** kind of talks to me more than he talks to **Stasiuk**, maybe because **Stasiuk** was – **Stasiuk** was so very serious and measured, I don't know. Nice, nice guy. You could build a house on whatever he said.

Q: And **Stasiuk** went together with **Rumkowski**, as far as you know?

A: With **Rumkowski**, yes.

Q: And so he didn't survive?

A: He – he – he did not survive the first day.



Q: So, when – when you were going to – to **Birkenau** –

A: Yes.

Q: – to this, did you have any clue where you were going? Did you know anything about it, did you –

A: Abso –

Q: – did you know what to expect?

A: Absolutely nothing. Abso – the – the ghetto lived for – for four or five years on a what we called **kaczki**(ph). **Kaczki**(ph) means just something which flies by –

Q: The rumors.

A: Yeah, and builds up a rumor into, like, something that they know. From my – my personal story, the ghetto may be of interest, my real war, and you can say luck in survival, started actually at – at that time. Coming – coming into – into the concentration camp, and – and winding up in – in **Mauthausen, Braunkirsche**(ph) and so on. If – if – if I would, and the war would be finished, at – at – at the times that we talked about, I think that I would have suffered a quarter or less of a – of a risk of death and an ugly story of cannibalism, ways to escape – to escape sexual advances, and remaining alive. Luck connected with it. And I don't know if we have a – and I could – I could probably condense it in – in a number of sentences, but I don't know if we still have – have place for that story. But this was – this was the real war, and this was – I – my life was saved, because of different good people. At

least on three occasions, my life was saved by German **SS**. On one of the occasions, by a – by a – a enthusiastic killer, a young **SS** man, who turned out to be a killer once we were on a forced march. I shared his bread with me. Hard to understand.

Q: So when – when you – when you got to – to **Auschwitz** –

A: Yes.

Q: – in – in – in '44, this is the – you – you never – you never heard of – of that name before, or you never –

A: **Auschwitz Birkenau**?

Q: Yeah.

A: N – ab-absolutely not.

Q: No.

A: I – I – I – i-if there would be two people who knew about that, it would be – it would be **Gertler**, **Krieger** and – I think, and – and **Dora** knew – **Dora** knew – probably she knew everything, who knows? But no.

Q: Cause you mentioned also that someone had a radio, and – but not even from that source –

A: Do – Dr. **Szwalowicz**(ph) had – had a radio. Of course, he will be killed if – if it would come out.

Q: Right.

A: **Bernard Fuchs** was saying that **Szwalowicz(ph)** was giving him the news. There were only a few people who were doing it. **Szwalowicz(ph)** was the – the dentist of **Rumkowski** and [indecipherable] and **Beebow(ph)**. **Szwalowicz(ph)** was the dentist of **Beebow(ph)**. He had to get a special permission from the Gestapo to go to a dentist, to a Jewish dentist in the ghetto.

Q: Mm-hm, mm-hm. So, you arrived in – in **Auschwitz** and you said that you didn't go through initial selection.

A: I didn't.

Q: Your sel – selection happened when you were already naked, and –

A: Oh, no, I – I – there was – there was a selection right away.

Q: Mm-hm, on the ramp?

A: On the ramp. There was another selection in the shower, and the hiring – hiring.

And – and – and – and then – do you have some time? Because –

Q: I'm sorry?

A: I was just wondering if you have some time, because I am – I am cruising around what happened at that point, and – and – and it's not clear.

Q: We do ha – we do have all the time that is required for that. It – it's – th-this is quite important, if you recall – if you could recall what happened when you arrived to **Auschwitz** in a-as detailed as possible, you know.

A: Well, I – I arrived at **Auschwitz** at – a few of us, the ones who were not taken to this, we came to block 14, and block 14 they would chase us from place to place with sticks, and just to have an occasion. A – a man came up on the chimney, saying that there is only one way out, through – through the chimney, you know, so that we would be – the – the old stories, horror story. **Walter**, of **Russia**, I have the name here, I go – I have a calendar here – **Walter** himself was – was hit here with a stick, and he started to cry, not because of the stick, only because he didn't give us food the whole day. And even at that point I found it like a – you know – you know, like a little bit, you know, funny. He doesn't remember it. So the – at that certain point, the – and a large man comes in the middle of tha-that speech, and so on, give up money and so on. A l – a **[indecipherable]** came over, and he was a butcher, I learned from **Pionki**(ph), a nice person, from what I have seen. And – and he says, can somebody peel potatoes? And everyone started to peel potatoes. I knew I have no chance, I – I was squashed by the people. I remained where I was, near the wall, and he pointed at me. And – and people started to pass me o-overhead to – to him, like – and – and they say, oh you will survive, you will survive, like this would be, you know, like peeling potatoes would mean survival. And I peeled potatoes, they cooked. What happened that – that night, the **blockalteste**, the **blockalteste**, which means the leader of the block, at the entrance to the main block, th-there was a little – a little place which – which was the kitchen and also the **blockalteste**. In this

particular place it was not only the **blockalteste**, but also the **lagerfuehrer** – the **lagerfuehrer**, this means the main – the main **blockalteste**, whose name was **Willie**. **Willie**, nobody had anything against **Willie**. He – he was going to **Familienlager** very often. He was released early for – an-and sometimes people on a transport saw **Willie**, and – and it was like a friendly thing. He was a captain of a ship which sold the load because of some romantic entanglement, they said. And – and – and he was well known by – by the people. And the **Familienlager** who came from **Theresienstadt**, who were in the **Potenkins**(ph) village, feel it wasn't necessary any more to – to present that theater to the cro – Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross. And th-that **Willie** on one side. And now I – I was working in the kitchen, doing whatever they were telling me. It was getting late, but nobody told me what – what to do with myself. At one point, a – a German – th-there was an **SS** invited that – into to those festivities. Somebody there was a **kapo** who played on – on an accordion, or the – and that officer comes, an officer, it looked to me like an important officer. But he came over to the kitchen, and he is drunk, and he is asking for water, and I gave him water, and I answer him in – in – in German. So he says, oh, I know German, how come that I know German? I must be a **Mischling** or something, and I said n-no, but at home, this means at home, this means **Dora Fuchs** and so on, we spoke only German. My first book, [indecipherable] in **British Columbia**, I – I read there, you know, the first German book. And – and I did the most stupid thing that anybody

can do in one's life, because I was embittered by – I saw the smoke coming out from – from the chimneys, and because he asked me, do you also speak English? And I say, what for, so I burn better? A-And I showing this a – I thought, i-in a moment I will – my head will be under his boot, or he will shoot me, or he will

**[indecipherable]** I – I **[indecipherable]** already on – already this second day, I have seen people killed all over the place. So he says – he kind of sobered up, and he says, oh no, not boys like you. We will – we will teach you a trade, and after the war you will be working for the **Reich**. And – and that's how it finished. The next – the next day, didn't finish – it didn't finish, I didn't tell to anyone that. And this is – then I don't know what to do. **Willie**, who – who occupied a cubicle, says – says **[indecipherable]** there is a bed. A bed? People were lying on the floor all over. But I went bed, and he sidles up in the bed, and I am petrified, completely. I don't move, I am frozen. He talks to me and so on, and – and I am – I am petrified. So he started to talk to his little dog, and he says that he is not a good **burschak(ph)**, he is not this, and so on. He – he kind of turned around and I s – I – I left the bed, and I didn't have where to sleep. I didn't know if to go into the block if somebody will beat me up. So I remained in this section in the kitchen, a-and I slept there. In the morning I was woken by the din of giving – giving the – giving bread – bread and something **[indecipherable]** or whatever, to the passing people. So I helped. It was – this time it was some cheese, and the one from **Pionki(ph)**, the – the butcher from **Pionki(ph)**,

who was also the cook, was very nice to me and so on, so he also gave me some potato from the day before, which made a big difference. And later on, the boxes, the crates remained with – with the – for – with some cheese gl-glued to it. Can I take it and – and – to find my friends and give it to them? Well, my friends was – **Walter** I didn't know so – so well yet, but other, **Benek**(ph) and **Chaim** and – and so on. **Benek**(ph) in **Maryland**, here, nearby, he lives nearby. It started to – I went out with the box, and people absolutely attacked me, to – broke the box into little pieces. I never found him, and there was like between the blocks, you – you had like a promenade. There was a time that you were in between things, and you could walk back and forth. And I don't know if it was the same day, or the second day or the third day or the fourth day. After a very short time, all at once, everybody on one section of the – of the – of the promenade is being like taken – taking in a gauntlet, and put into a block, and some – some people, like stronger people would be put aside, but small people, and old people, who – who somehow – some of them were **[indecipherable]** for some time – I was new – were pushed into – into that block, op-opposite the 14 block. Now, thi-this – this was – it – it was so tight that it was like – it was difficult to breathe, because everything was squeezed. No sitting, no this, you know, just trying to sit in each other's lap, fighting for breath. I remember my chest hurting the way it hurt now, with a – with heart disease, like empty, empty hurting. And – and it was in the middle of the night, middle of the night or whatever,

there are cries, the lights go on, flashlights coming to – to my row, showing no this, this, people started to try and make space. I was taken out from that bunch of people, brought to the door. At the door was the German officer, **Willie**, the guy who wanted me to – to – to do sexual things to him, and **Karl**, which was the – the main **kapo**, or – aft-after **Willie**, a man – a man – a lame – a lame person with a stick. And they pulled me out and they put me into block number two. In block number two there was a bunk to sleep, and – and this was the first block near the **SS stuba** entrance. And the **Canada** commando were there. **Canada** commando were actually the people who were – not where they do the – I – I read something, clothing and so on. Some of the things with the **Canada** commando, yes, those were clothing, things to sort out. But the people who were working at the **receival** – at th-the – re-receiving the people on the train and emptying this and so on, this was the – the real **Canada** commando. Most of them at that time were from **Holland**, where – where I was. They had food and all kind of things. I was brought there, and they pass without any resolution where I belong and what's my name, or whatever. And – and then I am told that I will be – I will be the runner for the **SS stuba**, which was the next, and the **SS stuba**, th – it means, like if there was a **raport(ph)**, an **appell**, and everyone had to be in front of the block, and later they would make a tally of – of the people, and – and I would – I would have to run along it, and bring the pieces of paper. The **raport(ph)** **pier(ph)** is standing in the middle, would correlate if th – all



the people are there. If not, the thing has repeated itself. Sometimes it repeated just in order to show people, you know, to be punitive, or – or whatever. And that what I was doing, and jobs were being piled up on me. One of the SS men had the rabbits, and he wanted me to bring greens. The greens were – were growing near the electric wire, where nobody would go. But I got a number, for the first time, I got a number, which yesterday here I was in the file with my number, which is already not visible, almost not visible. It – it was a small – a small portion of that. You – you probably haven't seen a number that – and – I'm sorry, yo-you said something?

Q: W-We have to change for a second, just a moment. **[break]**

Q: Yes, are we? Yeah, okay, it's done.

A: This was – this was my life from that point on. I was vacillating between being on the edge of – of death, to – to all at once being – being either better off than everybody else, or being worse than everybody else. And I was positioned **[indecipherable]**. So, that's what I was doing. I met there **Dina Gottliebova**, she fought about – about her paintings. So she was coming – she was coming with **Mengele** in order to kind of paint characteristics of – of – of the twins in – in the ghetto. When – when **Mengele** came to make a – a **raport** – a – that means just a selection, she would remain where I was, at the entrance to the block two, near the – near the **stuba**, and – and we talked. And we were in contact later – later on. I –

what coincidence, many, many years later. I think she is not well now, she wa – she is in **California**, and –

Q: She passed away.

A: She passed away, yeah.

Q: So when the – the block 14, both 14 and the block number two –

A: Yes.

Q: – were in **Birkenau**, and those were the brick barracks, right?

A: No.

Q: No. They were on the other side.

A: No – they – they – the – the brick barracks were in **Auschwitz** proper, and those were – and those were the – th-the barracks built for horses.

Q: For horses.

A: Yeah.

Q: So how far – you mentioned before th-the family camp, the **Terezin** family camp?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you in touch with that, or di – were you observing it, were you – what –

A: I – I – this –

Q: Do you have any recollections of that, other than the – what that **Willie** would be going to?

A: Ah – at that time, yeah. I – I – I heard talking, **Karl** and so on talking that the – also something else happened that – that I know. Once somebody came to me, that's means – those people were in – in **Theresienstadt**. Somebody came to me and says, I heard that you were in **Birkenau** at that – that time, and she said that they saw my brother, from – from **Theresienstadt**, from **Familienlager**, there. Is it possible that – that he – that he was there? And – and I told her, yes, it's possible. Somebody passed on the same circumstances saying you shouldn't give people false hope. I – I felt insulted. I didn't, but it was possible, why was it possible? On the last night, when – when they were taking out all the people from **Theresienstadt**, it was **Willie**, and his friend **Karl**, and probably contacts that he had, which allowed him to bring approximately a hundred – hundred people – hundred young men from – from the **Theresienstadt** out into our end. And so they avoided being th-th-they – th-they remained alive. So yeah, her brother could have been – her brother survived this particular person. But so – an-and then there was a dispute with those people. What hundred people, what are you sa – talking about? Only 22, we were the only ones who remained, 22. My friend, he's a psychiatrist, and he was in this. And I said, no, there were a hundred, I was there. **Gilbert** wer – wote – wrote a book, the – the boys of **Birkenau**, or something like that. A-And he writes about those – those children, and – and he – and he writes about those hundred and – there is a page for – for every one of those hundred, and they are still in **England**, the ones who are alive,

most of them are alive, and they are still in **England**. So this was – this was what I knew, that little, in the – in the camp, and – and the later, because I just met people from there and we were comparing notes on some occasion. Just how I learned, I thought that **Dina Gottliebova** is a – a – a – I said that the-there was a – once, I said [indecipherable] I said – somebody sa – oh, I see you have a number from **Birkenau**. I said yes. So I say, I see you have a number, too. So, yes, yes, I was there, in the **Familienlager**. And I said, there is someone on my mind that said, I will probably never find out what happened to her. She was sent, so I thought she is going with – she is going with **Mengele**, she probably knows much more than the rest of us do. And probably – and – and she was sad. This also – this also doesn't allow me much hope. She – she [indecipherable] to – had a husband, **Rudy**, and – and she says he is talking about **Dina Gottliebova Bobbit**. I was in contact with her later on, and **Bobbit** – **Bobbit** is a – is – is her husband's – her husband's name. And she was fighting to get the – to get some – she was also somebody who not – admired her boss. And this is – she admired things about **Mengele**. Things were coming all the time. When she talked about – about **Mengele**, some kind of pride came into her voice, you know? Like she would make an example. She says, I made his portrait, she says. She was doing many portraits for his friends as gifts. And – and then six or seven of those Gypsy paintings, and the wall, which is probably in **Israel**, in **Yad Vashem**, the – the wall – the wall the seven dwarfs, that's what the

children wanted – wanted once they were there, in the **Familienlager**. They were in a room, and she painted it. And – and, so the seven dwarfs. And actually, she married the man who was the author of one of the seven dwarfs, which is **Bobbitt**. So, we are now with the – so I thought that there is no survival. There is absolutely, there is absolutely no survival. And –

Q: Were you – were you the witness of the liquidation of the **Terezin** family camp?

A: I-I – I was there when – when they took them, but this is the – this is the night that they brought the almost hundred boys into – into the camp, into the **Zigeunerlager**, the Gypsy camp. But my friends were there, and as a matter of fact, they are in **Montreal** and now he re-retired as a – an – and he is writing his third book in Czech, about those times, about a re – reminiscences. He is – their children are – were from childhood, with what happened, involved writing poetry on those sa – things. My children, I protected them as much as I could, especially since I lost her – their mother at the age of nine and 12. This is my daughter, she was nine when my – when my wife has died. So, the number – I said this is a telephone number, and so on. Til today they don't know. Part of the fact that the family is meeting together here and I am giving the testimony and will try also to leave the testimony for my family out there. This is the same, this – thi-this is part why we are here. But just an aside, that it's good for the children to know rather to not know, because they – they know anyhow, but in some dark and untouchable way. What – what happened –

what happened later on, I was lucky again. There was a – they were supposed to – to e-empty the **Zigeunerlager**, and I don't know – I don't know the – how – how those minds worked, but **Willie** was interested in my survival. **Karl** was nice to me. I-It's – n-nobody bother me. I – I could help others. I knew two boys, and their father was put in – into a – into that – the same block where I was, and they wanted to get the father out, and they gave me a – a diamond, I didn't want the diamond. And I went to – to one of the Dutch people that I knew, and I ask him for a couple of sardine boxes, so they can bribe the – the **blockalteste**. They went, they bribed, they got the father out. Later they were – they were all going from some – on some assignment to work, hopefully. I gave him back the diamond and he accepted it. And – so the idea is, if I could, somebody was in the **krankenbau**, in the hospital, I will bring in a metal container, food. But at one time the guard shot down the line. I – I was startled, and I got electrified, and – and fell out while – while this happened. I also was [**indecipherable**] flowing back, and disconnected, but it – it was a fe – quite a feeling to – to be the – I was going to – to look for Mrs. **Feldman**, who was the head of the orphanage before, that – the same orphanage. And she was not – she is an artist, a known person in my life, felt fine. Mrs. **Feldstein**. And I – I found other people. They asked me for warm underwear, and – and I would be bringing to the people warm underwear. One of them had the relative in **Montreal**, who said that her underwear that I brought saved her life. Whatever. It – it's – it's probably

misconception with some people that it was dog eat dog and only dog eat dog. It wasn't. People were doing things when they could. I did too. It was almost something pushing me do something good, since, you know, like – so – so this was the time, and – but I don't understand why **Willie** was so nice to me, after – after trying to – to – to get me to be his plaything or whatever. He – he wasn't rough, or he wasn't this. Talked to his dog that I am not a good boy. And – and later he is – and I am – as the camp was going to be emptied, I am getting a letter from an **SS**, probably the same officer, who I never, ever saw again. And that letter – with that letter, I was sent to **Sosnowice**. And in **Sosnowice** – in **Sosnowice**, I arrived and I gave the letter to the commandant of the camp. And he says, if you were look – you were good enough to be a runner in – in **Birkenau**, you are good enough to be a runner for me. One of the strangest things happened; if somebody would make a film, I would be the first one to say this is impossible: I was – I was running, stoking the fires in all the **SS** have their barracks, I was stoking the – stoking the fire and – and all that; ea-eating sometimes from the – from the **SS** kitchen. Everybody knew me, it was a small camp. I said that I was interested to see the machinery, always interested me, machinery **[indecipherable]**. So I went for one shift, commandant praising me that I am interested. So I – I went to – to the factory. I liked what I saw. Poles were working together with the Jews from the camp, the relations were this. I didn't see a Pole for years, five years, well, at that time. And it was very nice, I ti – I

fell a little bit in love with one Polish woman who was in the center of the factory, writing things down, reading poetry, so we have something – something in common. She was talking something, so the youngsters that I said are running away they say, to – to the **[indecipherable]** to **Warsaw**, actually go into the forest, talking that maybe I can go into the forest, but I will have to avoid the – the Polish partisans and go 30 kilometers. It's – I made a little reading lamp in the workshop of the camp, for the commandant, an **SS** man, a young **SS** man sees me and he says, oh, did you do it? And I said yes. So – so I say, take it. So he says, no, I will – di – you made it for the – for the commandant, no I will not take it. So I say okay, so I will make you another one. I – I make him – I made him another one later on. This is the young one, who was later killing people on that – on that road and sharing the bread with me, and other things, which – which help me to survive. There was another **SS** man there from **Austria**, who was crying his head off because he didn't hear from his wife, and he thought maybe they were bombed, a-and – and I – I put my arm on him, saying that the – maybe the post doesn't work or things. He shared with me some sugar cubes, also on the trip, on that long trip where so many people were – were – were killed, **per** we –

Q: The trip west from **Sosnowice**?

A: From **Sosnowice** to **Mauthausen**, yeah. Part of it was by train.



Q: Do you – do you recall any – anything in the – in the – where did you walk on that –

A: No, to **Gliwice**, because –

Q: To **Gliwice** now.

A: – because the commandant, a porky man, good-natured, but I never forgot that he reached his [indecipherable] in **Dachau**. Okay, he got to be a commandant in **Dachau**, so he is not a gent-gentle – as a matter of fact, so gentle, his family, like, they adopted me. I was running around the camp, I had the movement. The telephone was ringing in the – in the office, I would pick it up and say, this is Camp **Sosnowice**, so and so, and take a message. And – and now it looked to me – show it to me in a film and I don't believe it, you know? That – so this was the true. But – but that's how it was, that was the thing. I – I was a – a – decorating the – the Christmas tree. I took every candy out, as a joke, and – and have only empty candies there, I didn't need the candies. But it was a joke, and it was accepted as a joke, but where did I come to do this [indecipherable] but I did survive. The – the gift that I brought to the commandant that I made, was packed as a gift from – from me. The family had gifts – gifts for me for Passover. It's a – it was a crazy time out, a-at crazy times, crazy places. **Sosnowice** was different, separate from – from anything else you – you – you can say. Nobody was –

Q: What – what kind of a factory was that –

A: They were – they were in – in **Sosnowice**, they had to march a certain distance, and oh – oh – oh yes, I – when they started to **tear** with running away to – to the partisans, I – I asked the – the commandant to be – to – to – to free me from my duties, because I want to learn a trade, to be useful. And he stopped the whole column and praised me, because – and I actually wanted to see – to give a chance to run away, and – and to see her more often. She was much older, with knowing eyes, she knew exactly what it's doing to me. I was the hungry. I was rested. It's – so, that was – that was – so one morning – one morning, everything is packed. I didn't have to worry any more what choice I am making, it was a difficult choice to be courageous, to run away. I didn't know if I had the courage. And we started to – to **[indecipherable]** at **Gliwice**, the commandant unloaded his stuff, his furniture, and – and it occurred to me that I will ask him that – maybe to hide in the furniture and I will help the family later on. But I chickened out on that as well. After – after that, that young **SS** man was crazy, the – going around and shooting people; he had so much energy. He brought me – at the end of the day he brought me his coat, spattered with blood, to wash out the blood. And I was washing out the blood, and felt sick over it, brought it to a place where – where they – where the **SS** were sleeping on the floor with – with – and there was a **panzerfaust** or something, you know, a grenade, and I thought – I thought if I will grab the grenade and throw it, maybe we'll change our – because we could hear the Russians in the back. And –

anyhow, I didn't know how to actuate it. It's – I s – I saw a movie only recently where – about a school for SS, and said that you unscrew the bottom. So for half a century I didn't know how I could have done it, but I saw the movie, right, yeah, now, now. So, and – and that way we came to **Mauthausen**. **Mauthausen** was – was – I had, from sleeping on the ground, I had four large furuncles. I couldn't bring it down. I went through the selection, because it was in – in two days it swelled up more and more. We had the – the – that thing written, that's me – somebody was going around writing down the names of the ones who have to go to the hospital. The hospital actually was the Russian lager, and actually it was a place where they kill people. Put people in, and bottles of chlorinated water, phenol injections, al-all kind of things. So, on the way – and this might be of interest, on – on the way there, there is the **lageralteste** from – from **Sosnowice**, and the **lageralteste** was – was a – a delegate to the – to the **Reichsdeutsche's Reichstag**, wha-whatever the na – the name was. And – and he was held in very high esteem by the **raportfuehrer**. I heard what's going on, the bombing, because the two of them talked, and – and later I saw this **lageralteste**, but he was hiding his – his red – red triangle, because the – the **kapos** in **Mauthausen** were criminals, and not political. And – and this **kapo** criminal was actually in charge of the Jehovah Witnesses. They have some tailoring blocks, or whatever. So he talked – he talked to – to that **kapo** as we pass. My group was halted, and – and they'd say talk to the Yugoslav, and I was brought to that – to

that hospital, which I didn't know, only that it's not a good place. I didn't know that I will go to death. And some SS put me on a table from – from stone, and he started to cut and I started to faint. He sprayed something and I fainted again. And I was brought to the block. I was brought to – I don't know when and how I was brought to the block.

Q: But it was in **Mauthausen**?

A: It was in **Mauthausen**, and –

Q: Not gunski – **Gunskirchen**?

A: No, it – it was **Mauthausen**, it was – it was the – the quarantine, two – two –

Q: Uh-huh, the quarantine.

A: – two – two blocks were quarantined.

Q: Right, yeah.

A: So – so I was – I was lying there, I didn't have to stand up for a – to be counted.

Before that, she helped me to stand and I was collapsing the moment. But that – they let me recover, I wrote poetry again. There were some Poles there again. And again I was helped, and – and I wasn't – I – I didn't take myself the luxury that actually what I write is empty phrases, you know. It's a – it's – was good to have their support. And – and then – then, one – one – one evening, I'm sleeping inside there, an-and somebody gets to me and signals to me to go. This is the **blockalteste** of this block, the quarantine, an Austrian. And I heard that two days before, he killed a

Hungarian boy in the washing – washing – where y – where you wash hands of – you know – you know that? And he – and he tells me to go to his cubicle, also a cubicle with – with clothes. And I made – I made noise to wake up people and he retreated. And the next morning everyone goes to the **appell** to – to that count, to the – we knew that we are going to the count to the big square, not the – for counting everyone. And as I am passing by, he is waiting with a milkmaid's stool, and he throws it straight on my head. A-And I managed to sneak out from under it, and run out, but – but this was – this was my last – last day of life. I was standing there for hours, and – and I knew it's the last day of – of my – my life, and I was making peace with it; everybody died, everybody died, and – and now I'm going to die, and – and that's it. We were standing, and later separated Jews from non-Jews. We were some 300 Jews. They brought us down to lager number – number three, which is a **[indecipherable]** lager. We were there maybe a couple of days, I don't know, it was very, very cold, freezing at that time. And later they brought us over to a – to a **[indecipherable]** lager. This means there were so many people coming from the front, Hungarians mostly, and many **Mischlings**, with families, w-women and children, that they brought those o – those **[indecipherable]** in those tents – tents, circus tents, and tha – they were overflowing. There were **[indecipherable]** and –

Q: But it was still in – in **Mauthausen**?

A: It was still in **Mauthausen**, but just the temporary **[indecipherable]**

Q: Right, right.

A: – all around. And then a small plane comes. And – and the plane – those people were working at the front, and – and this hit them, the hunger and everything, and with the families they were, the families were lying in front of their families – of the other member. And a small plane comes and it shoots up the towers in **Mauthausen**. Some wer – somebody must have written about that, I don't know.

Q: It was a Soviet plane, or –

A: A Soviet plane, they think. They think that one Soviet was there, and he says, I will be here later. This means like he's going to run away. It was a Soviet – a Soviet plane, shot on the towers. And later, through two rooms on the – on the **SS** barracks. What he didn't know, he couldn't have known, that near the barracks now are those tents, and the bombs fell into the tents. So, there was that all over, and pieces of flesh. There was no place for everybody in the tent. Flesh on the wires around that. The next day there was – there were cooking fires, that the people still had utensils from their trip. **Kaduk(ph)**, a **raportfuehrer** from **Auschwitz** was going around. Wherever he saw something in a pot which was suspicious, he would kick it over and shoot a few people. Other fires were going, people were not exactly running away. It was extraordinary, it was not like from living people running away, scurrying away, and him going and sh-shooting people. Later on, there was no – there were no bombs, and you could see missing buttocks on people still alive, still

the – the mouth is still moving. I didn't tell it to anyone. And when I wrote I only wrote that those were – well, from – from – from **Mauthausen**, from this place, we were sent – and we – we were – we – we had lice right away. The ones from the camp didn't have lice, but the ones from the trip never had a chance to – to wash them – wash themselves. And we were taken over to – to **Gunskirchen**. **Gunskirchen** not – not far from **Linz** and so on. Th-The weather was better, we – we – we ate grass. We ate some escargots from the grass. Came to **Gunskirchen**, **Gunskirchen** was – was the place to die. I was dying. There was no place to lie down inside, outside it was rain. So people went on and use – use the belt to remain on the rafters. I did, too, but you couldn't go out, if you go out, they would not allow you to come back. Some people didn't care. I crawled down, I couldn't come back. Remained there near the – near the dig-out, which was from before, with feces and so on, and – and in the rain. And – and the Americans came. Hesitated a little bit, what they will do, whatever. And that's how I wound up in the hospital. And th-that's – that's – I – I – I have never – never had a chance to – to say all the things that I am saying now. It is – like, people don't know – don't know, and it – and – and it's – and it's probably hard on everybody. I am glad I had a chance to – to say what I did. I – I have more, but this would take up too much time.

Q: No, no, no, no, it's – do you want to take a break now?

A: Well, it's not a question of – of a break. I could be more concise, but it was in – in a way I don't know how noticeable it was, but it was like a – a stream of – of consciousness. I never thought about – about the – the **willu** – the **Willie**, the one who probably saved my life, o-or wanted me to – to be a s-sex – must have been drunk, because he had a woman, and – and this. Maybe he felt bad because he even – he even created that little situation to an innocent, obviously. You really don't know where – where you get the – who you'd get your bikes from, like **Gertler** gave me a bike.

Q: That – I – I – I think that we should stop for the moment, and we will most likely have some questions or so, but that can come later. But I – I think that you said enough during this time on this –

A: Is it possible to find out who was – who was the delegate to the **Reich**? Who was the **blockalteste** on **Sosnowice** at that period of 1945?

Q: To do the **Reichstag**? The –

A: Yeah, **Reichstag** delegate.

Q: **Blockalteste**.

A: It – it – it – **Reichstag**, he – he was not a **blockalteste**, he was in charge of all the **blockalteste**. He was **lageralteste**.

Q: So, he was like **lagerfuehrer** – **lagerfuehrer**.

A: **Lagerfuehrer**, right.



Q: He was **lagerfuehrer** in **Sosnowice**.

A: Later in **Mauthausen**.

Q: Later in **Mauthausen**.

A: Yeah, because I saw him in **Mauthausen**.

Q: So – so I take it that he was a – he was a prisoner, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: So he – he must have been the member of **Reichstag** –

A: Yes.

Q: – before 1933, before **Hitler** got to power.

A: Yes.

Q: And it – would you know wh-what – what party was he?

A: I – I be – he was – he was political, he had the red – the red thing.

Q: Right. So he probably was from –

A: Yeah.

Q: – social democrats or – or something like that.

A: I – I – I have – I have no **[indecipherable]**

Q: And you – you have no idea, no hint on what – what even his first name was?

A: Yeah. I knew, but –

Q: You don't remember.

A: Yeah, well – well, I don't remember.

Q: Fair enough. But maybe we'll be able to. We have to talk to – to – to someone who was doing research in that camp. And that would be the –

A: Oh, in what camp? In –

Q: The **Sosnowice**.

A: **Sosnowice**, yeah.

Q: Right.

A: The good camp.

Q: The good camp. And that was – you think that when you get to **Sosnowice**, that was already in 1945, or – or – or you were in still – was it winter, or –

A: 1945.

Q: 1945.

A: It was winter, we slept in the snow most of the time.

Q: So that's the – and then it is really difficult to – for you to remember anything for – what was happening after the quarantine in – in – in **Mauthausen**, cause it seemed to me that you were half time unconscious.

A: Ah, that – that means like a-after the war?

Q: Af-After the – you were liberated, that's –

A: Yeah – yes.

Q: And so – so when the – you spent, just to finish up that portion, you spent time in the – in the American hospital in **Gunskirchen**, right?

A: It – it was an Austrian hospital, as far as I know. The upper – the uppist – the third floor was for wounded German soldiers or **SS**. The second – the – the – the second – the lower floor from that was for the – for the citizens of **Linz**. The ones from the concentration camp and the hospital, around by an American captain or something, but with the old crew of doctors and nurses, or whatever, the wa – the ones in the – in the lowest thing, this was the basement, this was us. The Ukrainian nurse and the – was going around to give injections, she had a basket with injections. There was no time to go around the bed, there was no place to go around the bed. She was – she was giving injections the same thing. I had a black spot on – on my – this, for years in **Israel**, I had the black spot from the injections deadening the – that – the flesh at that area, for years, til – til one day I – I look and I see she is all gone, you know. So – so that was – that – that was – I don't know who it – if people were informed to – to the highest degree. Maybe the captain wanted to be nice, a nice occupier and we were an unknown species, whatever, we had the worst treatment. The least treatment, I'd – I won't say the worst treatment, only the least treatment.

Q: And from that – from the camp, you – from – from the hospital, when you were released from the hospital, where did you go?

A: There was either **Lin-Linz** or where else I don't know, although I remember the name of the place, **Alpenjäger Caserne**. And I don't remember how long I was

there to – to continue a story just a little bit beyond, is when I could, I got a paper from the – from the city hall, by an American, and who wa – who was there in city hall, to – to afford me a assistance as I look for my mother, because there was still time for illusion about her right away then. So, I-I – I-I was – I was going around with that paper, and then I see a group of people [indecipherable] you have to sleep over, eat something. They were going to **Switzerland**, and they told me to – to – to lower my age, because they were supposed to take youngsters to – to – to **Switzerland**, about the school – school level, a certain school level. They didn't know much either about what was happening. School level. So she told me, just put – put less [indecipherable]. And I was later on those – I was stumbling over those dates. Once you have a piece of paper, everything starts to emanate from the piece of paper, and – and then you leave it alone, and then you find su – as I, that I was going around with a – a incorrect date, which, it shouldn't matter much.

Q: So, did you go to **Switzerland**?

A: So I – I registered to go to **Switzerland**, but a little bit further, there was another legation, English. Okay, and – and they were – and – and some of the English are the ones that jer – **Gilbert** is writing about from the boys of **Birkenau**. Now, th-the next legation was American. As – so I had to sleep over, and so on. They were encourage – they didn't have enough – enough youngsters. They all came out with a goodwill gesture, but they didn't have enough, at this area, there, they didn't have

enough young people survivor that they can – that's why they say – say – say that you are less in age. And then I saw a soldier, a soldier surrounded by people, speaking Yiddish. A pole that here was written **Palestine**. And then I rem – then I remember how I talked to him at length, or where – when there was a chance I waited out a – the crowd and so on. He told me the best way to find relatives is to go to **Israel**, once they have a specialized – a specialized facility, they call it **mabrodliki(ph) puskravym(ph)**, the Institute for Finding Relatives. And – and then, you know, you don't have a telephone, you don't have this, you don't have communication. You – it – it really, it has to be a chance once to a thousands that you touch base with someone who knows something. As – an-and then, I remember that during the war we also said that if we separate, then – then those people will be our contact. So I went to **Israel**, and that's where I was for 11 years. I was there a student, I was a volunteer in the **pel-mah(ph)**. I was later a – a teacher, for some three years. My wife was from **Canada**, we – we were not sure where we will be, but decided to give one year to **Canada**, which with the birth of my son and so on, turned into a permanent thing. So – so that – that's what happened after the – the – that means the fact that – that I found myself in **Canada**.

Q: And in **Canada** you always lived in **Montreal**?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. So I guess that we can cut. Thank you very much. It was quite informative.  
We probably will have tons of – of questions still.

### **Conclusion of Interview**