

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with George Dynin**  
**October 21, 2015**  
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## PREFACE

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## **GEORGE DYNIN**

### **October 21, 2015**

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. **George Dynin**, on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015, in **Athens, Georgia**. Thank you very much Mr. **Dynin**, for agreeing to speak with us today.

Answer: Very welcome.

Q: I'm going to start with the most basic questions, and from there we'll develop your story and your testimony of what you experienced and witnessed. So the very first question I have is, can you tell me, what was your name at birth?

A: The Polish name was **Jerzy**.

Q: **Jerzy**.

A: **Jerzy Dynin**.

Q: **Jerzy Dynin**, okay.

A: Nickname is **Jurich**(ph)

Q: **Jurich**(ph). And were you known by **Jurich**(ph) throughout your childhood?

A: Most of the family called me **Jurich**(ph), or **Jureczek**(ph).

Q: **Jureczek**(ph).

A: Yeah. It's a –

Q: Diminutive.

A: Yeah, yeah.

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Q: Okay. What was your date of birth?

A: March 19, 1925.

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

A: In **Łódź**.

Q: In **Łódź, Poland**?

A: **Poland**, yes.

Q: Okay. Did you have brothers and sisters?

A: Yes, I have sister. She was younger than me by – by nine years younger.

Q: Oh, so she was born in 1934?

A: She was – yeah [**indecipherable**] years, yeah.

Q: And what is her name?

A: **Aviva Marcela**.

Q: **Aviva Marcela**.

A: Two names.

Q: And did you have a middle name?

A: If I have middle name?

Q: Yeah. Or were you just **Jerzy**?

A: No, **Jurich**(ph) – oh, **Jerzy, jerz – Jerzy**.

Q: Okay, so you didn't have a middle name?

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A: No, I didn't have a middle name.

Q: Okay.

A: She has two names. You know, the reason that she has **Aviva**, because it was after my father come from visit from **Palestine**. It was not yet **Israel** then, you know, it was **Palestine**. British – British **Palestine**.

Q: And what does **Aviva** mean? What is the – the meaning of the name?

A: What's – pardon me?

Q: What is the viva – **Aviva**, what does it mean? What is the me –

A: Oh, fre – **Aviva** in Hebrew it means spring, yeah.

Q: So it was very appropriate.

A: Appropriate, yes, and – and she wa – she wa – also, there was city named **Tel Aviv**, it's still the same name, so altogether, makes sense.

Q: Yeah. What was the language that you spoke at home with your parents?

A: At home? At home we had actually two languages. The parents spoke between themselves in Russian, and sometimes in Polish, but with us they all spoke Polish.

Q: Always Polish, yeah?

A: Polish, yes.

Q: Did anybody speak Yiddish at home?

A: Thanks God, no. I tell you why I say thanks God.

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Q: Tell me.

A: Because Yiddish – people that spoke Yiddish, they couldn't survive. You don't know why. You see, peop – nobody will tell you this –

Q: Tell me.

A: – but I can tell you. The reason is that Yiddish left very heavy accent, and very heavy kind of m-music type of thing, you know. And people that spoke Yiddish, they can't get rid of it. So, you know, as soon as they opened mouth, you know, they – i-i-in Polish, they knew that they are Jewish people, and it means that they couldn't – they couldn't save themselves pretending to be Poles. So many thousands of people died because they spoke Yiddish. It's very unusual, but that's is true, I bi – nobody tell you because they say that it is offensive. It's not offensive, it's just actually, this is how it is.

Q: Mm-hm. Did –

A: Yeah, go ahead.

Q: Does that mean that most people who spoke Yiddish didn't speak Polish, or they spoke it with an accent?

A: No, 90 percent, I would say, spoke Polish. Some, maybe in the small sh – s-s – shtetls, you – like you know, the children, maybe they just spoke Yiddish only, but

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most people spoke both Polish and Yiddish. The ones that just spoke Yiddish, you know.

Q: Yeah, yeah. So, were your parents more assimilated, in – in that they spoke Polish and Russian, or –

A: Absolutely not.

Q: Okay.

A: They been – we [**indecipherable**]. It's better – my father, he preferred to have a kosher food.

Q: Okay.

A: But you know, from this you cannot – you change the type of food, and nobody knows who you are, you know. But the language you cou – you couldn't get rid of it.

Q: No.

A: It's just – it's – yeah.

Q: It's an accent, or it's a –

A: It's accent is kind of like a melody type of thing, Yiddish is. So that's – many people died because of this, but see, I am the first one that's not afraid to tell about.

Q: Okay. Tell me a little bit about your father and your mother –

A: Okay.

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Q: – starting with their names –

A: Yeah.

Q: – including your mother's maiden name. So let's start with your father –

A: Okay.

Q: – what was his first name?

A: Father is **D-Dawid** –

Q: **David**?

A: – and it was his original name, and – **Dawid Dynin**, yes. My grandpa, here's a picture hanging up here, he's **Mo-Moses**. And, as a matter of fact, I was – he was bro – is my wife had visited his grave in **Vienna**, because he was co – po – he was in **Vienna**. He died in a hospital in **Vienna**.

Q: How did that happen, that he died in a hospital in **Vienna**, and not in **Poland**?

A: Because in **Poland** at that time, they didn't have this kind of medical help like in **Vienna**. **Vienna** was a center of – of medicine in **Europe** at that time, you know.

Q: Okay. Tell me now, I'm a little bit unfamiliar, was **Łódź**, or **Łódź**, was that part of the Austro-Hungarian empire before independen –

A: **Łódź** – **Łódź** was a – a – n-no, it was not **Austria**. **Austro** and **Hungary** was a little south from **Łódź**, you know.

Q: Okay.



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A: But this was rather German, I would say.

Q: Uh-huh. So it was part of the Prussian empire?

A: I would say so, yes, generally.

Q: Okay.

A: I know there was also a lot of Russian influence too, you know. So it must be something to do with – with Russian, but I think it was absolutely that there be many Germans living in **Łódź**.

Q: Okay. Even before the wars?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: We'll come to that, in a little bit.

A: Sure, sure.

Q: Okay. Now, your father's first name was **Dynin**. Did he have any brothers in – **Dawid**, excuse me – did he have any brothers and sisters?

A: Yes, the brother was **Jona**. **Jona Dynin**, he was d – he was doctor of medicine.

Q: Okay.

A: And he, as far as – I tried to find him – what happened with him, but I know he was in ghetto, lo – **Łódź**. Apparently, he died there.

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Q: Okay.

A: But I couldn't find any – any more information about him. My uncle, he was my uncle.

Q: And you have memories of him?

A: Pardon me?

Q: You – you knew him.

A: Oh definitely yeah, definitely yeah.

Q: Okay. Did he have any sisters, your – your father?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: Just this one.

Q: So there's two boys.

A: Two boys, yes.

Q: And from your mother's side of the family – first of all, what was her name?

A: She had the brother and sister.

Q: Okay.

A: And the sister died in the – in ghetto also, as far as I know. The brother run away. As I say, he was in **Lithuania**. He was working in – and when the Germans

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come in 1941, I think that was, then he ran away to **Russia**, to **Soviet Union**, I mean.

Q: All right. So your mother's first name was?

A: Fi-Fi-Fir – I – I'm not sure exactly how it was written, but I know she was **Francisca**(ph) –

Q: **Francisca**(ph)?

A: – **Francisca**(ph) **Dynin**.

Q: And wa –

A: But her nickname was **Fania**.

Q: **Fania**.

A: **Fania**, yeah.

Q: And her maiden name?

A: **Glowinski**.

Q: **Glowinski**.

A: Yeah. **Glowinski**.

Q: **Glowinski**.

A: Yeah.

Q: **Glowinski**.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And so her sister's name was what?

A: Sister name **Rachel**.

Q: **Rachel Glowinska**?

A: **Glowinska**, yeah.

Q: And she died in the **Warsaw** ghetto.

A: Yeah, but she already was married, you know.

Q: Oh, so she had a married name.

A: Married, and she has a beautiful child, you know, **Maya**. It's in this book, her picture, you know.

Q: Mm-hm, the book that you wrote.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay. So her married – your mother's – what I want to do is establish everybody's identity.

A: Sure, sure, sure.

Q: So your mother's – your aunt's name was **Rachel Glowinska**, and her married name was?

A: Mar – yeah, he – **Chigryn** was her la – name of this, her husband, so her name last was **Chigryn, c-h-i-g-r-y-n, Chigryn**.

Q: **Chigryn, Chigryn**.

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A: **Chigryn**, yes.

Q: And your uncle who ended up in **Lithuania**, his first name was what?

A: **S-Samuel**.

Q: **Samuel**?

A: **Samuel Glowinski**.

Q: **Samuel Glowinski**.

A: Yeah, **Glowinski**.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you know your grandparents on either side of the family?

A: Yeah, I na – I knew, definitely, I knew. I mean, the – the grandfather, father of my father, I – I only met him one time in my lifetime, in – in **Łódź**, before he left to **Vienna**. And I never forget it, you know, because he was such a aristocrat.

Q: Was he?

A: So he – when I have – when I come to his house, he was in a – in a – laying in a bed, and give me hand to kiss his hand.

Q: Like an aristocrat.

A: Yeah, yeah. So this I never forgot. But his wife, **Mu-Musia, Musia**, she was very, very great lady, and she loves me unbelievable, and I love her too, but she –

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she – she died, I don't know on – how, because in 19 – when the Germans come to our – **Łódź**, we couldn't take everybody with this car. So we figured out we come next, after we will be – they de-deliver us in **Warsaw**, we'd send the car back. But it was impossible. We didn't realize the Germans already are –

Q: Are coming, yeah.

A: – close to. So she stays there, and I don't know what happened with her.

Q: So, so many of your family members just scatter and perish?

A: Perish, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Except th – except my father, my mother, my sister and me. So, basic family, so we survive.

Q: Well, that's also unusual.

A: Yeah, that's –

Q: That's also unusual that – yeah.

A: – we survive, whole family. But you know why they sur – why my – my father was such optimist, and this was exactly – would be very bad at this situation. Why? Because if he wouldn't be arrested by Soviets, then he will say, oh, we'll survive, we can go to ghetto, because he was such optimist. And it was great in a way – at

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that time which wi – this was terrible is th – is they took him and there was not yet  
as –

Q: We'll come to this.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: We'll come to this point. I understand –

A: Yeah.

Q: – what you're saying, but right now I'd like to get a better sense of your life  
before everything changes.

A: Okay, oh, all right.

Q: Okay? And – and who your family was, and what was your world, and so on.

A: Okay.

Q: So tell me a little bit about how – you mentioned that your grandfather was an  
aristocrat and –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and had a house and so on. So it says to me that he was probably not a poor  
man.

A: No, no.

Q: He probably was well-to-do.

A: It was well-to-do in **Russia**.

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Q: Got it. Okay.

A: Actually was – I think that he was in **Moheela**(ph), what was **Belarus**, you know, but it was kind of tsarist **Russia**. And we always having joking on his account that he has pony, and rides a pony in the house, around the table. So we have been joking on his account, you know.

Q: Your grandfather did?

A: Yeah, grandfather, yeah. So can figure out that there was money, you know.

Q: Yeah. So tell me, how did – how did your father support your family? What did – where was he – what did he do?

A: My father? Well, yeah, he – he come – he come with his parents, you know, I think was 1917 or something. He ran away from Russian revolution, you know, because you know, they have been kind of aristocrats, etcetera. Jewish aristocrat.

Q: Yes.

A: And I don't know what he did before – before he married my mother, but as soon as he come to **Łódź**, he was a d – a – they make him director of very big company in **Łódź**, the name **Eckingorn**(ph), you know.

Q: **Eckingorn**(ph)?

A: **Eckingorn**(ph), yes –

Q: Okay.



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A: – it was a – and he was director of **Eckingorn**(ph) for some – for a number of years.

Q: What was the kind – what kind of company was it?

A: This was textile **fabrica**(ph) – fabric of textiles it was, it's one of the largest in the world, as a matter of fact. But in – **Łódź** was textile city, you know, so that's was the right place for this, I think. Cause that's probably why he come to **Łódź**, you know, my father, because of this. And what can I tell you, this was in a – after she was – he work like a number of years, I don't know exactly how many, is there. But then he opened his own business.

Q: And what was his – what –

A: Under **Day**(ph) **Dynin**. **Dawid Dynin**. **Day**(ph) **Dynin**.

Q: **Dynin**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what was his own business? What was that?

A: Was import – import of these parts to textile machinery, because he already knew about the thing, so that's how it wa – it one of – it was – actually is the largest in **Poland**, you know.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, he was very well-to-do.

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Q: And so the – so he had a factory, or – or he had warehouse?

A: No, he didn't a factory, it was warehouse, yes.

Q: He had a warehouse.

A: Warehouse is place to sell a wholesale [indecipherable] and –

Q: Did you visit him there at the warehouse?

A: Oh yeah, sure.

Q: Yeah?

A: I was helping.

Q: Were you?

A: Of course.

Q: What would you do? What would you –

A: I was where it was inventory time, I was a – always a designated some of the things to come, because they have in some kind of parts. They call it needle-needs, type of needles, but they are not like needles to sewing, but parts to machines. And there even maybe thousands different types, you know, and each were in a pack of hundred, I remember.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. And I was counting and writing, you know, so who – what – what I –

Q: Well, you're learning things.

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A: Yeah, sure, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Is a very practical skill.

A: Yeah.

Q: An important skill to have.

A: Definitely. But you know, I am not always – I was not always so – so nice, because before I started to – before I started to a – to help in the business, I was making lot of problems, you know. It's – one problem is that I – there was one of these ladies that work in my father's business, was very heavy – heavy lady. And I remember was – name was **Ania**, and she has glasses, you know. And I don't know it, sh-she was ne-next to the typewriters, you know. So one time I brought a plastic bag, and fill it with water, and come close to her, just – just observing her, and the – before she was able to sit on the chair, I dropped it on the chair, this plastic with water, and she sat – she sat on this. You know, I – she di – you know – you know, it was – you know, but, you know, so they had [indecipherable] me, so they – they – they [indecipherable] they toss me out of the office, you know.

Q: Poor **Francesca**, she was all wet.

A: Yeah, so –

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Q: What was her name again? Do you remember?

A: I told you I already forget, you know.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: There was – what was her name? I just told you, you know?

Q: Yeah, yeah, I know.

A: Yeah.

Q: And I coul – and it slipped my mind. Doesn't matter.

A: Well, you see on the tape.

Q: Yeah. But – but at any rate, that means you were very mischievous.

A: Yeah, from begin – no, that's normal.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know.

Q: And how – about how old were you when that happened?

A: Oh then – then I was probably seven or something, something like this,  
something like six, seven years old.

Q: Yeah. And your father probably wasn't very pleased.

A: No, no, they just tossed me – I mean, they grab my hel-he-he – my hands and  
legs, and they – they carried me out, you know, out of the office, yeah. **Ania.**

Q: **Ania.**

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A: **Ania.**

Q: **Ania.**

A: **Ania.**

Q: So, **Ania.**

A: **Ania.** As far as a last name, was **Berenstain**. See, I remember, how about that?

Q: You remember. **Berenstain.**

A: Yeah. **Ania Berenstain.**

Q: Did he have many workers in the – in the warehouse?

A: Oh yeah, you know, they were in – the office was – was accountant, was a helper of accountant, there was – and a secretary. There was a the – we had all the chauffeur, of course, wow, you know. And as you see the – what kind of car is in the garage? **Mercedes**. You know why? Because we had **Mercedes**.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah. So I – I –

Q: You fi – you conti –

A: – I insisted that I have **Mercedes**, even after so many years, you know.

Q: So you continue the family tradition.

A: Yeah.

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Q: Tell me a little bit about home life. Can you describe where you lived? Was it an apartment, was it –

A: S-Sure.

Q: – a – a single family home? Paint me a picture.

A: Yeah. Well, when – as far as I remember, we had been already well-to-do. You know, I don't exactly was this before, you know. So, we always had a – we – we – in my lifetime we changed twice place of living, you know. And as far as I remember – remember, it was a – always well taken care of this, you know. In the last – last – last place, you know, there was – because Father feels that he – he has a lot of money, he can have something bigger, so we had quite a – quite an apartment, you know.

Q: So it was always an apartment, though.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It wa –

Q: And was it in the town center, or was it in the residential areas?

A: Residential, yes, yes, yes –

Q: Okay.

A: – residential. It was a – in a big house, like in **Europe**, you know, you have floors. We had the entire floor, you know.

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Q: Mm-hm, okay. And about how large was the building? How tall was the building, how many stories?

A: Oh, the floor – this – as far as I remember, it was like five – five –

Q: Five floors?

A: – five floors, you know, yes.

Q: And which floor was your family on?

A: This one, there was, as far as I remember, was on second floor.

Q: Now, when you say second floor, do you mean second floor –

A: One, two.

Q: – European, or second floor American?

A: Oh, this is like **[indecipherable]** you know, this lower floor –

Q: Ground floor?

A: – and then it went up.

Q: Okay, so that would be, the second floor –

A: Second floor –

Q: – in American size –

A: – American.

Q: – okay.

A: Yeah, yeah.

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Q: Cause in European it would be one more higher.

A: Yeah.

Q: Cause there's the ground, and then one, and then two.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Well I – as far as I remember, I think it was lift too, you know, but I don't remember exactly.

Q: Okay. So if it was a lift, it could have been a modern building.

A: No, it was not mod – see, there was not like here they didn't build so many, you know, they had the buildings forever, you know, they're staying and they renovate sometimes, you know, they paint it inside, sometimes outside, you know.

Q: Was it a stone building?

A: Oh yeah, yeah, definitely.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And tell me a little bit about the – about how its structure was, in the sense of, did it – did you have indoor plumbing, did you have electricity –

A: Oh, gosh.

Q: – did you have – I mean, these are just things some – they would –



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A: Oh, I understand.

Q: – I – I want to get a sense of the time –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you know, and what was considered modern, and what was considered, let's say, a luxury to have.

A: Yeah. This was everything what was available.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, there was no – not limits or they – there was some – something new, that was in this apartment there.

Q: Okay. So did you have a telephone?

A: Oh, of course.

Q: Okay. And a radio?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: No television.

Q: No television, I know. Not around yet.

A: Not around, was no television.

Q: But soon. But soon, you know, the Germans, I think, invented the very first one.

A: They did, yeah, but it was not in times that we are in **Poland**.

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Q: That's right.

A: No, no television, too.

Q: Did your mother have any help at home in taking care of the family, and the household?

A: Well, you know, there was not only help, but there was one – one lady that come for laundry, one – one that is – that was sometime coming in cooking sometimes, and – and one that is cleaning so much. Yeah, we always have bunch of people working for us, yeah.

Q: And did your mother have outside interests? That is, outside of the home, or was – if your father managed the factory, was her job –

A: Yeah.

Q: – managing the home?

A: She was – as far as I remember, she always have some books to read, and she wrote – she read benet – German books, you know. This was very ip – important for future – for future – our saving, because she was – her German was perfect. She went to German school. See, in **Łódź**, you know, as I – as I mentioned before, there be lot of Germans.

Q: Yes.

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A: So they have their own schools. And there was a German gymnasium, was just one, but was very on high level. And my mother was student there, so it – she finish there.

Q: So was her family from **Łódź** for many generations, as opposed to your family?

A: No, not many generations. Apparently – while her – her parents had been already in **Łódź**, but I don't know exactly when they come to **Łódź**.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't know, but at least two generations, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: But then he – she was born in **Konyin(ph)**. I mean, this was in – **Konyin(ph)** was rather closer to the German border, you know. Was in –

Q: So, to the west.

A: To the we – to the – to the –

Q: Western **Poland**.

A: – to th – yeah, to the western **Poland**, yes, **Konyin(ph)**, yes

Q: Okay.

A: – she was born there.

Q: Play – for those of us who don't know where **Łódź** would be geographically within **Poland** –

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A: Oh, I have maps.

Q: I know. But describe for me. Describe for me where it, when you look at a map of **Poland**, where would you find **Łódź**?

A: Okay. You know **Warsaw** is just in the center of **Poland**? And if you look this way, **Warsaw** is here. The – the **Łódź** will be like – wa – by car one – one hour and 15 minutes from **Warsaw** this way.

Q: So, to the southwest.

A: To the southwest, yes.

Q: To the south –

A: Not so much to the south, to the west.

Q: To the west, okay.

A: Yeah, to the west.

Q: To the west of **Poland**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And not so far from – not so far from **Warsaw**, actually.

A: No, not far at **Warsaw**, but –

Q: Okay.

A: – still, during war, it was very far.

Q: Of course.

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A: Because you know, as I – we'll talk later.

Q: We'll get – yeah. Describe for me the city. What kind of a ci – you've given me hints already, but describe what kind of a city was **Łódź**? What did it look like?

A: Okay, let me tell you this, very basic signs that I never forget in **Łódź**, is when – when we had been living in place – in **Listopada 11**. **Listopada 11** was historical date, and they make one of the street like this. And the – our home was on the corner of **Plac Wolności**. **Plac Wolności**, it means the place that is kind of circle in the middle of the city, you know. And on this **Plac Wolności** was a statue, historical guy, Polish historical guy from history, you know.

Q: Who would that be?

A: That's what I don't remember what's his name is, but it comes probably later. But wa – for me it was so huge. I was a kid, I come to him, and – and I always watch – **Kościuszko**.

Q: Oh, **Kościuszko**, **Tadeusz Kościuszko**.

A: **Tadeusz Kościuszko**. You see, I knew that it will come.

Q: Yeah.

A: Or **Kościuszko**, or **Pułaski**, I don't know, one of them. Maybe **Pułaski** was, maybe **Kościuszko**. I think was **Kościuszko**. And the – I look it up on this statue and I figure out, gosh, how big it is. Why I'm telling you this, but when I come to

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**Łódź** after, you know, just after the war, etcetera, I look – I went to this place to – to see, and I see the statue looks so small, you know. What happened, they cut it?

Q: What happened to the statue, yes.

A: They cut it? So that's what I remember from **Łódź**. And I tell you what was important from **Łódź** later, that the – the guy, what's his name, the famous – he's a Polish guy that was – that was born in **Łódź**. And I am very [indecipherable] good relation – he died, there was – he wa – he was a Polish, very well do par – after the war he was, let's see, let's – let's come to my mind –

Q: That's okay, it'll be fine.

A: – I don't remember his name. But I have a lot of material about. If you go with me upstairs, I tell you, this is enough for – for – for weeks of talking, what I have upstairs, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: Gosh, I forgot. It c-comes –

Q: Okay.

A: – eventually. So anyway, I – he was from **Łódź** too, you know.

Q: What was he known for, this person that you menti –

A: He was foo – he was in un – Polish underground, you know. Which one?

Q: Oh, well there's **Jan Karski**.

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A: **Jan Karski, Jan Karski**, yes.

Q: **Jan Karski**, uh-huh.

A: Yeah, we had even good relations. He – he comes – he – he was staying with us in **Savannah**, he comes to us, yes. And I – oh, I have even newspapers to show him –

Q: Okay.

A: – and me together.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, you see –

Q: We'll take a look later.

A: Yeah.

Q: All right.

A: But later they – there was somebody dealing with this – and I do – I didn't feel like to be involved you know, to – didn't have much time, but he ask me to give some materials, etcetera. But I still have his let-letters, I have his books that he autographed me, etcetera.

Q: Well, he was a very important person, very impor –

A: Yeah, but he lo – he di – he was – the last time I was in touch with him was – and he – then he went to **Poland**, and he passed away, you know.

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Q: Yes, yes, yes.

A: Soon after. **Jan Karski**. See, you just –

Q: **Jan Karski**.

A: **Jan Karski**, sure. But he was from **Łódź**.

Q: I didn't know that.

A: Yeah.

Q: I didn't know that.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Was **Łódź** an industrial city?

A: Very much.

Q: Okay. So when I hear the word industrial, I – I think of ugly, I must say.

A: You are just right.

Q: Was it an ugly city?

A: Yeah, yeah. There was only nice place, it was a **Park Poniatowski**.

Q: Uh-huh. And where –

A: And I – I tell you something, I always remember this **Park Poniatowski** because one of our maids, the oldest, t-took me for a walk in **Park Poniatowski**. And she – she was – same time she was dating somebody, and we always want to see him, and have in **Park Poniatowski**.



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Q: So she had an interest to take you for a walk.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me a little bit about the population of **Łódź**, a li – in a l – in greater detail. It sounds like it was not a homogenous place, but had many different types of groups.

A: Absolutely yes, you're right. They been basic – basic three groups.

Q: Okay.

A: Poles, Jews and Germans.

Q: Okay. And about how would you split them? That is, percentage-wise.

A: They do – oh, I would say that probably – I would say – total was, at that time that I was in **Łódź** was 700,000. You see, I remember. So, I would say probably was, I would say, something like 200 si – 50 Poles – 250,000, and probably equal number Jewish people, have a lot of Jewish people, and the rest have been Germans. And they – they live like Germans, they live in certain areas, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: What, in a way makes me – I don't remember if I wrote about it in book, or what, be-because I pretended to be **Hitler**.

Q: Oh my God.

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A: I make – I thought – yeah, I was making fun from them, because I – I knew as a – as a child was **Hitler** is doing. So I was in our car with a – without roof, so I was staying in the car.

Q: So you would stand in an open convertible.

A: Open convertible and go to German areas, and pre – making faces kind of just like **Hitler**, you know.

Q: Yes, you were mischievous.

A: Yeah.

Q: You were mischievous.

A: So, you know, and they look on me through the windows and said geez, what did this [**indecipherable**] you know that. But I know where they are living, the areas, you know.

Q: Mm-hm. What are they – do you remember the names of those neighborhoods?

The –

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No, no, no.

Q: And what about the neighborhood you lived in? Was it a mixed neighborhood, or was it a Jewish neighborhood? How would you describe it?

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A: Well, you know – no, it wa – it was mixed, but upper class.

Q: Got it.

A: I would say, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. The la – the last one, the – the one before, next to the statue, it was a – I would say was bordering with – with rather low class **[indecipherable]**. But this particular house was still very nice, and it was coffeehouse in the same building. The – the owner of the coffeehouse was **Punatowski**(ph), something like this, I remember, because they live also in the same building, but the coffeehouse downstairs, and around this – this square, you know. There was this – and I – I know my father was always sending me to bring some co-cookies for him. So –

Q: Down from the coffeehouse.

A: Down – same house, you know, so –

Q: Yeah.

A: **[speaks foreign language]** Bring it, bring it **[inaudible]**

Q: Tell me a little bit about home life.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And – and what was the – what were the activities that your – do – was your family very social, did they have many people come to visit? Did you – tell me a little bit about what would take place in – within the walls of your apartment.

A: Yeah, okay. Number one, the connection was family.

Q: Okay.

A: No question about it. But as far as – as I remember, the – they had lot of friends that they meet either at home, or they going to their homes. The most interesting for me was when the foreigners are coming to our home, because f-father connections with business. So they come from **Switzerland**, from **Germany**.

Q: Wow.

A: You know, yeah, and they – th-that's I remember, yeah. So basically this was kind of interesting for me.

Q: And did your father speak German as well as your mother?

A: Oh yeah, sure.

Q: So he spoke –

A: Oh no, with mother, no. She spo – she spoke German, yeah.

Q: So both of them did?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

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A: My mother spoke much better.

Q: Okay.

A: My mother was correcting him, you know, because he was just – but – but you know, I was th – see, I – look, I know five languages just now, okay? But I tell you the – in my school was a – two – at least two years of German, you know, in my sc – high school, you know. And the – the German teacher was German, period, she was German. So she didn't let us speak anything but German in school, so we really learned a lot of German, you know –

Q: It was intensive.

A: – from the school, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: But my – my mother, she – she went to this German gymnasium. So she – she knew German perfe – perfect, you know, and that's why was useful later, you know.

Q: Well, you know, from that part of the world, it was not unusual –

A: Not unusual.

Q: – in certain families, to have three, four languages.

A: In a – in a – yeah.

Q: And that, you know, everybody in the family would be able to speak –

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A: Yeah.

Q: – and communicate in several of them.

A: That's true.

Q: And it was – yeah, it wasn't an exception.

A: Yeah. They didn't – they didn't speak Yiddish, you know. They – they knew, because I have seen one time they talked to somebody in kind of – I-I – I don't know, I didn't have very big love to Yiddish altogether, because I didn't like the sound of it, you know. But as I told you, thanks God that I never learned Yiddish and spoke Yiddish because I wouldn't be able to survive. And that's kind of – I never read about it, you know.

Q: I have heard of – I have heard what you sol – told me about this, from a few other people.

A: Yeah.

Q: And these were people who were, I will tell you; a lady who was half Lithuanian and half Jewish.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: And she was talking about how difficult it was to rescue Jewish children in **Lithuania** because they spo – didn't speak Lithuanian.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And that it was a small percentage –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that could be rescued. This – so it's the f –

A: Yeah.

Q: – the second time that I hear this explanation.

A: No, it's either – see, I – I don't know what is a influence of Lithuanian.

Q: Okay.

A: But I know that in Polish, for heaven's sake, you know, they just immediately know who you are, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's what I can tell you though, it's just –

Q: Let's ser – turn back to family life.

A: Sure.

Q: Okay. Did – did you go to a public school, or did you go to a private school?

A: Oh, strictly private school.

Q: Strictly private.

A: You must be kidding. That's not for us was pub-public school.

Q: Okay. Tell me about the school. Was it – was it a Jewish school? Was it a –

A: Nah.

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Q: – a secular school? Tell me what it – what it's character was.

A: No, I started with first – first six years in **Poland** was kind of preparation school, so I – I went number of years from beginning, I think couple of years, or something. They call it **przed szkołą**, I mean, before the school. And – and name of this school was **Pordomska**(ph).

Q: **Pordomska**(ph).

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: It was not very far from place that we – that I was living on **Andrzeja** Street. So it's one, two, three. So now I – now I tell you where – I remember three different places that we have been living. Now –

Q: Okay.

A: – you remind me also the first one now.

Q: Okay.

A: It was very, very high ha – high class small kind of school. The teachers – you can have a picture in my book. There was dancing, was probably number one –

Q: Really?

A: – number one what they tried to teach us, all kinds of dancing. Shows, we're having shows, and they invite parents, etcetera, etcetera. And I think was singing



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too, but da – dancing was because the – the owner of this place was a famous dancer, you know.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: **Polanska**(ph).

Q: So there was a – an emphasis on the arts for children.

A: Yeah, art for children type of school, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: And then – then, you know, there was another four years, it was already in different place in different building, and the same building has already high school too, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: It was always – supposedly it was one – the best school in – in **Łódź**.

Q: Okay.

A: Polish.

Q: Was your family very religious?

A: Yo-You know, my f – my father w-was not – not much religious, but he – he was a – he – he always try to be kosher at – at home, you know.

Q: Okay.

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A: But my mother didn't care too much about it, so listen, I tell you this from me.

But we – we both – we love ham, you know. So you know, she – when Father was not at home or something, she ran and bought sandwiches with ham. And so we had – quietly eating, was tasting so good, because [indecipherable] you know. So we –

Q: So you broke a few rules.

A: Oh yeah, a few – many rules.

Q: Well, that's like a tradition. Did you get – did you go to synagogue, did you get religious instruction?

A: No. No, no, but look – but you see, in the book is written that in the – if you are 13 years old, it's something that if you don't do it, it's just who knows what – what. So I had a teacher that come to my home to teach me Hebrew, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: And I needed to – to – to read some kind of verse, you know, during this 13 years old –

Q: Do it – okay.

A: – business in temple.

Q: So does that mean your Bar Mitzvah?

A: Bar Mitzvah, yes.

Q: Okay.

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A: Bar Mitzvah. It's – I wrote about it because I am always looking for some funny part –

Q: Okay.

A: – and the way – and this place that it was Bar Mitzvah, there was all – this was place that they rented, you know, the – if – old Jewish people – ho-home for the old people.

Q: Okay.

A: And I – and I come there, you know, I have seen these old people, they're looking on me, and the entire place was stinking terrible. It was so smelly, I tell you, unbelievable. Well, you know, was too – too late, you know. And I was so confused that when they are supposed to read something, and I forgot what I supposed to do, so the rabbi [**indecipherable**] like this, let me know that it's my turn to read.

Q: Okay.

A: And I read, you know, something, you know.

Q: So you remembered?

A: I remember this.

Q: Okay.

A: So it [**indecipherable**]

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Q: So this was – this was your one kind of active participation –

A: That's –

Q: – that you were –

A: That's all, yeah.

Q: – that – that we – that you had a Bar Mitzvah.

A: Bar Mitzvah, yes, yeah.

Q: Tell me, what was the reason your father went to **Palestine** in – in the early 30s?

What was his purpose?

A: Well, you know, was – it isn't because we have, since – I never forget it, that since my childhood I always remembered there was a box, blue color box, **Keren Kayemeth**, that you should put some coins. This was for – for is – for – but **Israel** was not existing, but for pal – for Jewish –

Q: **Palestine**.

A: – Jewish people in – in the – in the kibbutzim, in the – in the – farmers, etcetera, etcetera. And the – oh, they had been buying land. Okay, this was **Keren Kayemeth** was organization that buy – that had been buying land, you know. And then, you know, these lands they give to – t-to – for – to kibbutz, or something else, you know. And I remember this push – they call it **puszka**. It was in blue color, and I always hold it and making noise, is –

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Q: You wanted to shake it to see how many coins.

A: – is [indecipherable] coins – yeah, there was – I remember this **puszka** was in the – in – in the – in the – where was my off – was office of my father, there was **puszka**, so –

Q: And **puszka** is a box?

A: Yeah, is a metal – metal box, kind of like a co – for collection money, you know.

Q: So it's like a sa – like a little bank, a little –

A: Yeah, yeah, you're right, li – little bank –

Q: – a little savings bank, okay.

A: Yeah. So the – since then, you know, I already have the idea about it, and it – it influenced me all my life, you know, because I always dreaming about that one day we'll have a country, our own country, you know.

Q: So –

A: And my father same way, you know, he was a – he – he – oh, we have a business in **Palestine**, actually business, you know. I mean fr – si – it – branch.

Q: Before the war?

A: Before the war, yes.

Q: Of this – of this machinery that –

A: Yeah, you're right, yeah, yeah.

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Q: – that is parts for textiles.

A: In – in **Tel Aviv**, yes, in **Tel Aviv**.

Q: So is that why he went to **Palestine**?

A: He went from time to time to – to kind of check [**indecipherable**]. Wa – see, one of the people, family, that had been working in – in **Łódź**, they sent him to – to this place in **Palestine** to be in charge of this – of this business –

Q: I see.

A: – they did – well, still they did it, yeah, yeah. Yeah, so we had this.

Q: S-So they – okay, let me tell you kind of the picture that emerges for me.

A: Yeah.

Q: Your family, in many ways, is very assimilated into society, insofar as you speak the languages.

A: Yeah.

Q: You speak Polish as a primary language.

A: Yeah.

Q: Your parents speak German and Russian –

A: Russian, yeah.

Q: – as well, and – and it's a multi-lingual –

A: Yeah.

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Q: – kind of household.

A: Yeah.

Q: You live in a neighborhood that is a mixed upper class neighborhood, and you go do a very good, solid Polish –

A: Polish, definitely, yeah.

Q: – school, but a private one.

A: Private, true.

Q: You're not very religious, but you have an identity that is strongly Zionist.

A: Yeah, right, yeah, very much.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So this is what I wanted to get a sense of. In many things that you say, is that you are as pole – Polish as anybody else. But you just said something interesting, you wanted your own country.

A: Yeah.

Q: Does that mean that you didn't feel **Poland** was your country?

A: I was not Polish patriot, per se, I always was thinking about our own country, yes. And I tell you something else what was nice, I am not sure if I wrote in a book or not, but I remember my mother, during these terrible times, she always told me –

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in Polish will be like this: [**speaks Polish**] It means, you remember, your son, that you will see that after this war will be over, we will have our own country.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: So there was something – there was an identity within your family –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that you are different from Poles.

A: Oh definitely, yeah.

Q: What made you different?

A: Well, you know, I was not so excited with Polish history, you know, I mean I read it, and I – I needed to know it, but it was not of much interest, you know, too much, to me. Well, you know, when the war broke with **Germany**, of course we – we have in fu – we hope that Poles succeed of course, there was no question about it. And, you know –

Q: Is this a hard question to answer? Is this a difficult question to answer?

A: No, no, no, you – you ask me what is this – our view on – on what, on –

Q: No, how – I'm asking more of an identity question.

A: Yeah.

Q: In which way did you feel different from a Polish person who is not Jewish?



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A: Oh, from a Polish person? Well, they never – a very simple answer, because they li – they never thought about anything else but **Poland**, you know, and we have in this the – always thinking about us also as a free country in – in **Palestine**, you know, there was – then there was – **Israel**, was **Palestine**, you know.

Q: So that was – that was something that was dear, and very, very important –

A: Oh yeah.

Q: – to the whole family, as a value.

A: Definitely. My father was going –

Q: Yeah.

A: – so – so frequently to – to – to – to seek his business, how it's going on, etcetera, etcetera. And I'll tell you something, this was very important in later even.

Why? Because he was able to collect – he – after – after the war, after he was already in – in Polish army in – in – in **Russia**, whatever, he come back and he thought h-he – yes, okay, he was able to buy different lots of – of – of ground, you know, in area of **Tel Aviv**, because of the –

Q: Land.

A: – money coming from this. And after he come, after the – after his service in Polish army in – back to **Palestine**, that he was able to see these lots, and both apartment for us. So we had been not yet in a – in a – **Palestine**, but we already had

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apartment. So we know when we're go – going there, after, you know, so we will have to – our own place to live, you know, so –

Q: Which was highly unusual.

A: Yeah.

Q: Highly unusual. Most people had nothing.

A: [indecipherable]

Q: And had no – there was nothing to go back to, nothing to go forward to.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: It was all **terra incognita**.

A: Yeah.

Q: And so we'll come to these parts of your story –

A: Sure.

Q: – to explain how all of this happens.

A: Sure.

Q: But thank you, because I wanted to get a sis – a sense of what were the important values in your home. What were the things that were dear to you, what were the – the outside things –

A: Yeah.

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Q: – not only personal values, but you know, the – where did you belong – how did you and your family see that where did you belong in the world?

A: Yeah, yeah. Well, all I can tell you that everything was very, very honest, you know – honest, you know. They wouldn't do anything that is dishonest, you know, and they did teach us to be this way. Everything was perfect, you know, and according to law, and according to law as a family, etcetera, you know, and things like this, you know. And I know that my father always was trying to help some cases that are – that are very vivid, that are very poor people, etcetera. They always try to help, you know.

Q: Okay. Did – did you talk about – when you were home, around the dinner table, the family.

A: Yes.

Q: What were the topics of conversation, usually?

A: The – ah, this was a – nothing serious, it was mostly as far as **[indecipherable]** they talking about friends that they knew some – some – some kind of news, good, or bad news, and things like this. There was kind of easy talk, you know.

Q: Social.

A: Was no-not – not politics, you know.

Q: That was what I was going to come up with.

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A: No, no, no th – not politics, no, no.

Q: Did – did you – did – when **Hitler** came to power in **Germany** in 1933 –

A: Yeah.

Q: – was that something that they noted, or paid attention to? Did that some – somehow or other, make its way – did it have an impact on your life?

A: Well, I tell you su – to be sure to tell you that it didn't have.

Q: Okay.

A: Absolutely. They did – they somehow didn't pay attention too much to this, I don't know. But not only our family, but look, why they sit in **Poland** waiting on this Nazi to come? They could run away. They had many years. They sit. They sit in th – no-nobody leave **Poland** because **Hitler** come to – to –

Q: Power in **Germany**.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: It's – it's amazing now. Now I am just thinking, gosh, you know, what it is? It's crazy.

Q: Well, who knew?

A: Yeah.

Q: Who knew?

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A: Yeah.

Q: Even Germans thought –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that – that he is such a joke –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that no one will take him seriously.

A: No. Well, you know, the only opening was th – the matter of **Palestine**, but very few people have any investments there like my father, so – but I am surprised what – no, my father mentioned few times – I remember that he did mention about that maybe – maybe we should move to **Palestine**, but not because of **Hitler**. Because – because period, because they have a business there, and it's kind of feeling toward their own country, you know. This way, you know. But nothing was told that we should run away because **Hitler** is coming. I never heard about it.

Q: Did –

A: Le-Let me tell you, however, I – I was watching this politics in the movie theaters, because they were not **TV**, but they always show this [**indecipherable**] you know, this **Chamberlain**, and this, and I was very much upset about it, you see.

Q: About **Chamberlain** in **Munich**.

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A: When they – yeah, that they – I – I – even now, that they had in this hand, this piece of paper, time in our times.

Q: It was peace in our time.

A: And I never forget about it, look at that, after so many years, I only see him, this is face, kind of smiling face with this paper that's time in a – you see –

Q: Peace in our times, it –

A: Peace in our time.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know. Yeah.

Q: **Chamberlain** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – coming back –

A: Yeah, I always remember.

Q: – after having signed with **Hitler** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that they give over **Czechoslovakia**.

A: That's true.

Q: And the Czechs don't have anything to say about it.

A: Yeah, yeah.

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Q: So that – that was something, even as a teenager –

A: That was –

Q: – you felt it.

A: – me – but – yeah, I felt it, yeah. I felt it, yeah.

Q: Okay. Did – it sounds that your father was successful in **Poland**.

A: Very much.

Q: Very much.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, many people have talked about examples of anti-Semitism, being Jewish.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you ever experience that? Did he ever experience that, or – or not?

A: Well, you know, the – 90 – 99 percent I didn't experience. Only one time I remember that in my classroom they been – they supposed to be Polish school, but they be mostly Jewish students. But they been four Poles. And they said that one of them is anti-Semite.

Q: And that's it?

A: I never ask him about it, but that's what they – the only one thing that I heard, and I remember this, but I – I didn't have any problem, you know.

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Q: Well, this is – you know, I think this is an important thing too, because it's important to distinguish between what a person has directly experienced himself –

A: Yeah.

Q: – or their – or their family, and what is in the general atmosphere, you know, those are two different things.

A: Yeah, okay.

Q: And – and – and so I wanted to – I wanted to see and make it clear –

A: Yeah.

Q: – if that was the case, or if that was not the case.

A: Oh, it was not the case for me.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, I never had any – any – anything that I – that I – that I was touched by this, or something on the – and there was –

Q: Did you have friends who weren't Jewish?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Did you have friends who were Polish, not Jewish?

A: That's a good question, I just thinking. Only – only this one when I on vacation.

On vacation, you know, the neighbors, so we just –

Q: You play together.



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A: – play together, yeah, play together. But otherwise, in **Łódź**, no.

Q: Okay.

A: My colleagues was having from school.

Q: Okay.

A: They come to me, or come to them, we play bridge, you know, and play chess.

And they – they been all Jewish, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: Even that they having, and I say, three or four in our class, Christian Poles, but we didn't have any socializing with them, you know, something like this, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: It was just like different, a different country, like.

Q: Different worlds, yeah.

A: A different people, a different world, yeah.

Q: Wi-Within the same city –

A: Yeah, yeah, that – yeah.

Q: – and the same country –

A: Yeah.

Q: – but a different world. Okay.

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A: That's kind of interesting.

Q: Yeah. And did your father, in his business dealings, did he have close Polish Christian associates? Or did he, in his business dealings, deal mostly with other –

A: Well, you know, mostly, you know, the business in **Łódź** there were mostly in Jewish hands. To certain degree, you know, Germans have in some few factories, but not much, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: But mostly Jewish hands in – in the –

Q: Okay.

A: As I say, we had people coming from abroad, there have been Germans too, you know. The – the ones that manufacture the things that he was selling, they come. You know, it's very interesting here because we had to do not some – not many years ago is grandchild of this guy.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Of somebody who had been a father's business associate?

A: Fa – yeah. He was a – he is now in **Łódź**, you know why? Because he – they have some small factory. The Germans opened factory in **Łódź**. And this guy, you know, he's living in **Freiburg, Germany** – I mean, his family [**indecipherable**] but

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he's – he's all the time in **Łódź**, and as a matter of fact, we – we – we have been in touch with him.

Q: How interesting.

A: Because he was very different, he was – he didn't sell – he's sounded like friend of Jews, you know.

Q: Well, that interest – I mean, it's important also to see this co – you know, it's not all black and white.

A: No.

Q: There are very many shades of gray.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: As the 30s are progressing, you mentioned that you saw in a movie reel, **Neville Chamberlain** holding up –

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: – this piece of paper.

A: Yeah.

Q: In the late 30s, you're a teenager.

A: Yeah.

Q: Are you getting more interested in things that are going on outside the home, in politics, in the wider world? What were your interests?

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A: My interests are – okay, I – I was – I was a stamp collector, and from this I learn lot about countries.

Q: Oh yeah.

A: It was always a bi – probably the best student in geography.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: Because you know, I had ki – I have, from all over the world, you know, stamps, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So this was my interest, kind of. I always liked books somehow, and I have big library, you know, even as a small kid, you know. And I have here, I – I have still one book, or books that – from those times.

Q: Really?

A: You know how it happen, because when we come back to **Łódź**, our maid, she brought us books with pain – with – with pictures, with photograph, pictures that she knew that she sh – that this would be important for us, so she grabbed – before the Germans, you know, come, she grab and hide in – in her house. And also, this book, you know, that was why – and I would –

Q: How amazing.

A: – I can show you later.

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Q: Okay.

A: But you know, these pictures, zillions of pictures, you know, I mean every single picture she grab and saved, you know, from the war, from different –

Q: So your – your c – was your – was your closest contact with Poles the – the maids – like the Christian Poles –

A: Yeah.

Q: – was it the maids and the people who came to help at home? You know, the –

A: Yeah.

Q: Were they like part of the family for you?

A: Eve – what?

Q: Were they like part of the family for you?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, I mean, they been good relations, yeah, particular the best relation I had was chauffeurs.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, because this what I say, like to go to these German areas, you know, so I told him – the – the name of the one guy was mish – **Mish-Mishchik**(ph).

**Mishchik**(ph) was the name of the sh – one of the chauffeur. They all have such nice uniforms, so I figure that looks so nice, you know. They all wear uniforms, you know. Yeah, chauffeurs have been my best friends.

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Q: So they were ju – so they were just as mischievous as you were, the chauffeurs –

A: Yeah, the chau –

Q: – because they knew what you were going to do.

A: Yeah, sure. You know, the chauffeurs, they – they be my best friends, you know, as far as I remember over there.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So tell me, when did – when did the wider world – how di – how did things start to change, from this very – it sounds like a very nice, happy life –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you know.

A: Yeah.

Q: Comfortable life.

A: Comfortable, yeah, yeah, that's a good point.

Q: When did it start to change for you and your family?

A: Well, you know, change abruptly. It's a – I would say as soon as – as a – as a – the German cross the border with **Poland**, you know.

Q: So, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939.

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A: Yeah, already start, you know, becau – I tell you what happened, very unusual things happen. And here again, nobody write about it. The first bomb that fall on **Poland**, fall not only on **Łódź**, but on the house on the opposite of our house.

Q: Really?

A: And this is the only bombs that fall on **Łódź**, because they didn't bomb **Łódź** any more. But somehow – maybe the pilot lost something, because I don't believe that they planned to bomb **Łódź**.

Q: Okay.

A: But we had been in the house, and I have hear and seen the big bombs and the dust, you know, and everything. But with – thanks God it was not in our house, but next to our house.

Q: Okay.

A: And then, you know, the people from the other house, injured, they come to our basement, to our house. But that's all what it was for **Łódź**. But exactly, you know, by the – did you ever read about it? No.

Q: September first. No.

A: You see?

Q: No.

A: So this was beginning of the war, the first day of the bomb – of the – of –

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Q: Did you hear anything over the radio, or was this bombing –

A: No, nothing. Oh, the radio, they talk to us before about – about things they never happen, you know, they said something, some kind of – oh no, the – the **Łódź** after this, yes, they said about since it never – is that it was not true. They said that there's – animal drop some – some gas, you know, gas – poison with gas, you know, some kind of nonsense, you know. And they said you should –

Q: Was this Polish radio?

A: – you sh – yeah, Polish radio, yeah. But – so you know, when I went from upper floor to the basement to hide, I had something in my mouth wi – before I figure out that I can breathe the gas, you know, or something.

Q: So Polish radio was – was broadcasting –

A: Yeah, broadcasting some –

Q: – that the Germans – okay, the Germans were going to –

A: Yeah. This was the fir –

Q: – gas – okay.

A: I – I see it was only in the first day of war, because they like it – they recognize it is not true. But it was enough for me, and as a kid, you know.

Q: Right.



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A: No, contrary, I went from the basement up. I was carrying my – this nap-napkin, you know, some kind of tha –

Q: To save yourself from the gas.

A: Yeah, to save myself from gas, I never forget this one. But that's was the – so next day was reasonable quiet, and I think we left **Łódź** after third or fourth day, because the Germans come already close.

Q: How do you know? How did you know the war had started? Was it through that bomb?

A: No, the – th-the – yeah, that's what I says. As soon as the bomb falls, we know that we are in b – in a – the – they never said –

Q: And you know it's a German bomb?

A: – they never said about this, they – they – I told you, the Poles, just like the – they have been – fall asleep, you know, they never knew that the Germans attack – attack them, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: But they plan already long time ago, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: But this bomb, you know, they fall the other side of our house –

Q: Yeah.

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A: – tell you we are in a – in a war.

Q: And so you say that you planned to leave lod – **Łódź** wi – between – in three or four days after that.

A: Yeah. Yeah, I don't –

Q: That's very –

A: – remember exactly. I think three days.

Q: That's very soon.

A: Yeah, very soon because they – they – they come very soon, they come very fast forward.

Q: But why would your parents want to leave?

A: Why?

Q: I know – I know. I'm ask – I know I'm asking that quest –

A: No, bu-but you know, I was very happy that it happened so, because was my father think it never happen to us nothing, but somehow – somehow, thanks God, you know, he ju – he decided that we should leave, you know. But I tell you something, we couldn't take our car. So – you know why?

Q: Why?

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A: Because my father said the car is extremely good quality, and we just check everything, and we need th – the Polish army will need this kind of cars. So we went with car of my Uncle **Siomek**, the one that was in **Vilnius**, you know.

Q: Yeah, ga – glove – bu –

A: But the car was smaller than the other one, so I was laying down on the floor, because there was no seat for me to sit. And somebody put the – the [indecipherable] the legs, you know, was [indecipherable] so that's how we left **Łódź**.

Q: So how – okay, I'd like you to fill in a gap in my – my – in my understanding here. In order for your parents to leave so soon, for your father to make the decision to leave –

A: Yeah.

Q: – so soon, he must have been aware that the Germans were bad news for Jews. He must have been aware of that.

A: Oh, definitely, yeah.

Q: All right. But what you've told me so far is that that didn't play in your everyday life.

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A: Didn't – no, no, nothing like that. But you know when – already the war started, so re-reality's come to him, you know, the bomb, and everything. Oh look, if somebody bombed you, so you know that it's not a fa –

Q: It's not so safe.

A: – a bouquet of flowers –

Q: Yes.

A: – you know. So well, he was completely, you know, in a way I was really surprised that he is going to leave her mother –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and everything, but was no room. They supposed to send the car back, you know, after we'll be already in **Warsaw**, because it –

Q: So tell me, who was in the car?

A: In the car was – okay, was me, my mother, my father, Uncle **Siomek** and **Vova**(ph). This was a guy that put my legs on me.

Q: Okay.

A: I think, so that basically what it was, five people, but it was of –

Q: What about **Aviva**?

A: Yeah, and **Aviva**, of course, **Aviva**.

Q: Okay.

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A: **Aviva**.

Q: So – and who was **Vova(ph)**?

A: **Vova(ph)** was – **Vova(ph)** was the guy that was friend of my father, and he supposedly find that – in order to get out from **Łódź** you need some kind of document [**indecipherable**] and he – he – he se – he said that for thousand **zloty**, he can got it, you know. So my father gave him thousand **zloty**, and he brought these documents that they were checking when he – when he leave the city, they check – check the documents. This document was, I don't know how – what the name of it. Maybe it was fake, maybe it was with thousand dollar may – thousand **zloty**, maybe it was one **zloty**, but anyway, my father gave him, in order to get out from the **Łódź**, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So that's how it was.

Q: So tell me, what was this ride like? When you left **Łódź**, what was – what did you see, what happened to you and – and your family? What did the roads look like?

A: Okay. I wrote very detailed about in my book, you know, and there was – there was – in one place, there was kind of shocking for me was that the sol – Polish soldiers told us that we should write to this left, or to the right, cause there are

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bombs laying on the – on the – on the bridge, you know? So we should be careful how we ride. So this kind of shocked me. But the worst place was name – in the city named **Siedlce**. There was – they – they went – there was all this problem with gasoline, you know, so my father and **Siomek** lo-look up for gasoline, and my mother and – and my sister were s-stay in the restaurant, you know, and waiting on them to come. But meantime, the Germans, the planes come, and they have been bombing. You know, the small houses like this, this is nothing beca – it was – if one bomb will hit us, we will not survive, you know. It was such a noise, and bombs, etcetera, was terrible, absolutely terrible. This I never forget. It was the worst part of this trip to **Warsaw**.

Q: And so that was on the way.

A: But we survive, yes, also.

Q: Okay. I-It was on the way to **Warsaw**.

A: On the way to **Warsaw**.

Q: So your goal was to reach **Warsaw**.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And nothing beyond?

A: Yeah, but – and nothing beyond, you're ri – no, after **Warsaw**.

Q: Okay.

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A: Because already they – they come closer to **Warsaw**, so we – we did it to – so we figure out where to run away, only to run away toward **Soviet Union**, toward border –

Q: Okay.

A: – on this lay – of the right side, you know. T-To the east, you know.

Q: To the east.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So you were trying to get towards the Soviet border?

A: Toward the Soviet – and we find a place, it was just on the border. I don't remember the name of this place. And that's how we come here and stay number of days, you know, until – until the Soviets [**indecipherable**] take, you know, the other part of **Poland**.

Q: So you experienced the Soviets coming in to the other part of **Poland**?

A: Til then we left this –

Q: Tell me, what did you see? When – when that happened, what did you see?

A: What I see? I se – I see the Soviets arrive the first time my life, and I was thinking, what a primitive army it is, they have the – I – I haven't seen many cars, but I see horses pulling the cars, or some artillery, etcetera, you know. And it was kind of interesting for me to see it, how's it – because I – I never know about how's

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it look like. And the – and then, you know, of course they – they already started to have their own police, it started to be kind of more like a – like a Gestapo driving other way, you know.

Q: Mm-hm. And th – and so we – you don't remember the name of this border town that you stayed –

A: Yes, I do, I – I wrote it, but same here again. I don't – it's in – in my book, you know. I don't remember at this moment here.

Q: Okay.

A: But it was a si – very small town.

Q: How long did you stay there, do you think?

A: Maybe a few days, because the Soviets dec-decided in few days that they take the rest of the – of the – half of the **Poland**, you know.

Q: That's right.

A: Half – just half.

Q: And – and then where did – where did your father think that you needed to go? Then where did he say where you should try to head?

A: Oh, we started toward **Vilnius – Wilno**, because the uncle of Father was living in **Wilno**. **Zlatyn**(ph) was the name.

Q: **Zlatyn**(ph).



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A: **Zlatyn**(ph), yes.

Q: Okay. And at this point, who did **Vilnius** belong to? Where the ci – who was – in other words, who was controlling **Vilnius**?

A: Okay now, this – this was in times that the Soviet decide that – Soviet decide that the – they gave temporary to **Lithuania**. You remember this time? Because you should [indecipherable] because you are from **Vilnius**. They – they give it, so that everybody was happy, now we're going to free **Lithuania**, you know, democratic country, you know, we know **Lithuania** from very plus side, you know, was democratic country, free, free. So there was just fantastic things to go there.

Q: Okay, so that –

A: And I never real – I never forget when we come to this Lithuanian, I've seen the – the guys, you know, big, with these hats, they have kind of long hats, you know –

Q: Tall guys with long hats.

A: Yeah, yeah. I remember this. And there was freedom, you know, it was lot of food. At one time peanut – peanut fla – **peanut satrous**(ph). I don't the names.

Q: **Peanut santros**(ph).

A: Yeah, nat – yeah. So was food and everything, just free, you know.

Q: So that – okay. But before you get there, you're still in this village in – or this town close to the Soviet border.

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A: Yes.

Q: And your father does not feel safe enough to stay there, because if you're in the Russian zone, you're not – the – the Germans don't come to you.

A: Don't come, sure.

Q: Okay.

A: Because they divided –

Q: That's right.

A: – **Poland** in half.

Q: All right.

A: At that time.

Q: Okay. Why would he leave? Why would he just not stay there, or go further into the **Soviet Union**?

A: Well, you know, because you know, the – we – we know the difference between **Soviet Union** and free **Lithuania**, you know, democratic country, you know. What – what the difference, like day and night, you know.

Q: Okay. So he decided to leave there –

A: Of course.

Q: – and go north.

A: Of course, yeah.

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Q: All right. How long did that journey take?

A: Probably couple days or something, you know. There was a – was also very complicated because on the way the Soviet police kind of catch a – catch

**[indecipherable]** requires a hou – the – the car, you know, the car was something.

So what they did, they diz – my father and – and my uncle disabled the car. So we hire horses to pull the car, pretending that –

Q: It doesn't work.

A: – it doesn't work. I tell you, everything is so unbelievable, huh? You – I tell you everything – and this is before is – the most interesting part that they told about the movie, that this is just a movie. But I – I was thinking something else, you know. I was thinking there is so much material that you sh – you cannot make one movie from this, so you know, like in – in the **TV** was one time like four different parts, or something? That's what it should be, because it's too much in one – one thing.

Q: There's a lot to – there's a lot of ground to cov –

A: This unbelievable.

Q: Yeah.

A: It wa – it – very kind of things that people are not familiar with, you know, and you can make like far – four or five, you know, parts, you know, and –

Q: Well, one of the things that we don't often hear –

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A: Yeah.

Q: – is what – for people who left and fled –

A: Yeah.

Q: – what did they see and experience while they're fleeing –

A: Yeah.

Q: – while they're on the road.

A: Yeah.

Q: So when you were on these roads, paint a picture for me. First of all, the roads themselves.

A: Yeah.

Q: Were they long, broad highways? Were they single lane roads?

A: Yeah.

Q: Can you tell me?

A: Yeah, they very primitive roads, you know, because in **Poland** in particular, this part of **Poland** in – in – in detail, they were very neglected, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So the road was single.

Q: Single lane.

A: Single lane, and it sometime –

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Q: One lane this way, one lane this way?

A: Yeah, not only this, but somehow we come to the bridge, and bridge doesn't exist any more. And – you know, so should –

Q: Okay.

A: – pull this – we should hire somebody to pull th – pull us, you know, out of the other side of the – of the river, you know.

Q: That's not easy.

A: No, you know **[indecipherable]**

Q: And what about were – were there many other people on the roads?

A: No, no, not really. I have – we haven't seen the – I – I don't remember seeing a single car, except the one which police had tried to catch **[indecipherable]**

Q: What about from **Łódź** to **Warsaw**? Was the road – when you first left **Łódź** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – to **Warsaw** itself, was it filled with soldiers, was it filled with other people trying to leave the city, or was that empty too?

A: Not really. I tell you the truth that for – as far as I remember we – I never seen any cars, so I don't know.

Q: Okay.

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A: That's a good question, but the – I never thought about it, but I don't remember seeing anything, no.

Q: And did you see soldiers, and army people?

A: Soldiers on the bridges, etcetera, I tell you –

Q: Polish soldiers.

A: – yeah, Polish soldiers, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: But I haven't seen the running people – they – they did things that is danger or something, you know, I don't know.

Q: When you got to the border of **Poland** and **Lithuania** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – what was that like? Wa – did you have difficulties getting to the other side?

A: Not at all. There was no problem to go to **Lithuania**. They didn't stop –

Q: Okay.

A: – they didn't stop us, they didn't – no.

Q: And there was – and you didn't see others going into the country?

A: I haven't seen it, no.

Q: Okay.

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A: But I tell you, I was very impressed by the local Lithuanians. They look so healthy, and so –

Q: Tall.

A: – tall, yes.

Q: When you – I had another question about the journey itself. There was – did you – on the way from – when the – when the Soviets came in –

A: Yeah.

Q: – so they – they replaced the sovi – in the first part, you saw Polish soldiers on the roads and on the bridges.

A: Yeah.

Q: And in the second part of your journey, when you were already in the territory that was taken over by the Soviets, it was then Soviet soldiers.

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that correct?

A: Yes, it's true.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: How long did it take, between the time you left **Łódź** in early September, to the time you arrived at your father's uncle's place in **Vilnius**?

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A: Oh, yeah, because you know, in between, I skipped certain part, you know, that we are having in city of **Lutsk – Lutsk – Lutsk**, lot – lots – **Rowno, Lutsk**. And I even went to school for couple – one month or something, you know. But it was not no – not interesting parts, I didn't mention this, you know.

Q: Mm-hm, it's okay.

A: But eventually we went how long? So all total, I would say like two, three months.

Q: So, before the year was out.

A: Yeah.

Q: Before 1939 ended –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you were in **Wilno**?

A: Where?

Q: Right? Before 1939 ended, you had reached **Vilnius**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that so? By Christmas, New Year's of 1939 –

A: Yeah.

Q: – were you already in **Lithuania**?



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A: Oh, in **Lithuania**, okay. Yeah, I would say so, **Lithuania**, yes. Yeah, it must be times that I si – when I stop – I started to go to high school in **Lithuania**, so it must be some – some – how it i – I don't remember when it – high school starts, you know, **Lithuania**, what – what months.

Q: Well, like everywhere else, it would be September.

A: But you know – but I know that it is that they didn't – because of the war situation, they didn't have exactly timing, you know.

Q: Uh-huh, okay.

A: So, but – but I know we – I met in a school, people – Jewish people from **Warsaw**.

Q: Okay.

A: Colleagues.

Q: Okay.

A: Colleagues of mine. You know, they were being colleagues, and that's what it is, but I do – I don't remember the – the timing exactly, who – how it was, you know.

Q: Okay. Give me a sense this way then. It sounds like you had many stops along the way.

A: Yeah.

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Q: Do – can you give me a list of some of the places that you passed through, and that you stopped for a while. We don't have to talk about –

A: Yeah.

Q: – what happened in each place, but just to get a sense of the complexity of your journey.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you start from **Łódź**, you go to **Seekacha**(ph), is that it? How do you pronounce that place?

A: Which one?

Q: **Seelicha**(ph), where the bomb fell on the little – what was it called?

A: Oh swil – oh, oh, **Siedlce**.

Q: **Siedlce**, okay, okay.

A: **Siedlce**, yeah, **Siedlce**.

Q: So there was **Łódź**, there was **Siedlce** –

A: **Siedlce** –

Q: – **Warsaw**?

A: – and the – the – no, the city on the border.

Q: Okay.

A: The – the – **Warsaw** was after city of the border.

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Q: Oh, okay.

A: No, no, no, wait a minute, you're right. **Siedlce**, it's **Warsaw**, and then was place at the border, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And then –

Q: And then after that?

A: – then after – well, I think so – that's what I don't remember. It was before we going to **Lithuania**, it was **Lutsk**, or there was a – sometimes I –

Q: Hang on a second. Can we cut? **[break]** Your book is right over there, and you have a map –

A: Yeah, the **[break]**

Q: So, Mr. **Dynin**, this is a map –

A: Yes.

Q: – of your journey from **Łódź** to **Wilno**.

A: Yes, the –

Q: So can you tell me, in the order that it occurred, all the places that you passed through, in the sequence that you passed through? Could you just read them out to me?

A: Yeah, okay, now from **Wilno** you – from –

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Q: **Łódź**.

A: – **Łódź** we – in direction to **Warsaw**, you know.

Q: So, you passed through –

A: We passed by **Sochachew**. And after **Warsaw** the – there was **Siedlce**. This was the place that was very heavy bombing, you know.

Q: That's right, mm-hm.

A: And then we – we went through **Luboml**. And I tell you something, lubom – I – I always remember is **Luboml**, there was very – kind of Jewish religious place, you know. And we stay – we stay, I think one night there, and thing like this. Then we went to **Włodzimierzec**, and then **Kowel**, and to **Lutsk**. And I think the **Lutsk**, that's what I mention is the school we had in – I was, short time student in the school in lu – in **Lutsk**, you know, short time. And then – then we went to – to t – direction to the Soviet border, to – to – to **Tuczyn**. **Tuczyn** was a place on the – on the border, **Tuczyn**.

Q: Okay. And then after that?

A: After this we went all the way to **Wilno**, to this –

Q: Through what places?

A: To **Kobryn**, **Białystok**, and **Wilno**.

Q: And **Wilno**.

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A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: [indecipherable] Wilno. But the things that are written here, this is already later, much later, you know, that – that – that we – that was in the book, but has nothing to do with this particular trip.

Q: Okay.

A: You know, this maybe was done by this guy, and he – he didn't do exactly what I said, but it's okay.

Q: Okay. So while we're – while we're talking about this, I'd like to ask you to close the book, and hold the cover in front of you, like that, in front of your face, so that we can focus on it.

A: Okay.

Q: And I will hold your glasses, okay?

A: Okay.

Q: Just hold it up, and tell –

A: I have just like this.

Q: You got it? Okay. And describe to me what is this book.

A: Oh, to describe what is in this book?

Q: Yes.

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A: Every page of this book is – is important. Every page is different.

Q: Okay.

A: There are almost what, close to 300 pages, like 300 you can say stories. It's just unbelievable how things are changing.

Q: This is a book you wrote, though?

A: Yeah, I –

Q: Okay, so this is a book of your memoirs, and this is what you're referring to when you often say what are – as I wrote in the book, or as I said in the book, and so on. This is describing what we're talking about now.

A: Absolutely.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, everything is described. You know, book is more detailed, you know.

Q: Of course.

A: And there could be some differences, very small on what I said, beca – I ti – I cannot maybe remember, it's a hundred years ago what happened, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: But basically – basically, if you like to – to know exactly, should read the book.

Q: Okay.

A: Because this is –

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Q: And you call it – what is the title?

A: The ti – the title here is “**Aryan Papers.**”

Q: And the picture is of whom?

A: My mother – my mother. And here is important – why I pick this picture, not only because my mother, but because this was her **I.D.** document, German document, when we have been able to – to inf – inf – to make this change of the letter from **Y** to **U**, which –

Q: In your last name.

A: In the last name, yes.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: And that – so that’s for – you know, here is a – I have a bigger picture of this to show you the difference.

Q: We’ll do that at the end. We’ll do that at the end.

A: Yeah.

Q: But I wanted right now, so that – so that – because you were referring to the book a lot –

A: Yeah.

Q: – I wanted to get a sense of people who will see this in the future, would understand that you wrote this book, it is about your testimony, about what

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happened to you and your family, and that you're often referring to i-incidents as we are speaking, that you describe in the book.

A: Yeah, definitely.

Q: Okay.

A: This book is very detailed.

Q: Okay.

A: It's nothing change, even they could be unpleasant something to me, but I wrote be – absolutely. For – th-there is – this book, some – some of this th – some was described very funny situations, some are very sad situation. But there is not – nothing is omitted. I didn't try to hide anything, and I wrote exactly how it was, it was something bad and something better.

Q: Okay.

A: And that's how it is, you know, therefore everybody who read it has said that it – this book is like a movie, you know.

Q: Okay. Thank you. Now we'll continue the story.

A: Sure.

Q: Okay. Thank you very much.

A: Yeah.

Q: Here we go.



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A: You know, this is the shape of **Poland** before the war.

Q: I understand.

A: You know.

Q: We'll take a –

A: You see **Lithuania**?

Q: Yeah.

A: You see it's **Lithuania**?

Q: Yeah, we'll take a – a photo, or film that a little later.

A: Oh, I have fantastic maps that I make myself, you know, inside. There's one in particular that everybody, did you make it? Sure, yeah.

Q: All right, so it takes, at any rate, some months until you reach **Lithuania**, until you reach **Vilnius**.

A: Yeah, definitely, yeah.

Q: Okay. When you get there, what does it look like? What does the place look like?

A: Well, you know, I – I tell you what, the f – the first thing what we did after we reached **Lithuania**, I went there with my uncle, to the streets, to feel the freedom, you know, that was just unbelievable, and all of those people happy in the – this

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unifo – these Lithuanian uniforms, and the police uniform, etcetera. Everybody was so polite and nicely. It's just great.

Q: Mm-hm. But it was a – but it also was a time that had tension from the pre-war years, between **Poland** and **Lithuania**, because **Vilnius** was this contested city.

A: Yeah, you – you can sing about it, but I haven't seen any tension.

Q: That was my question.

A: No.

Q: You didn't – you didn't sense that.

A: Absolutely not – not – not at all, no.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: No.

Q: So you went to the streets, you saw Lithuanian military, police, and so on.

A: Yeah, they were just like friends, sure.

Q: Okay. And what did your family do then? What – how did you – how did you try to get yourselves established?

A: Okay now, as I said that we had t – some family of my f – for my father, so first thing, we come to them, you know, and we stay with them probably a week, before, you know, my father found another relative that was on street, named **Wielka Pohulanka**, I remember was the name of the street. And she was – she was also

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relative of my father, you know. And so there th – th-this place we – we g – offer her some money, you know, to pay, because she was luf – without – she was without – now, she was a wife of a guy that there was uncle of my father that my father employ him in a new company that he opened. He opened companies that deal with yards.

Q: Where? In what pla –

A: In **Łódź**, in **Łódź**.

Q: In **Łódź**, okay.

A: So th – so this – he was a manager of this company.

Q: That deals with yards?

A: Yards, yards. You know, this – you know, wool yards –

Q: Oh, I mean like mi – fabric that is on – on rolls.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: But the – you sell by the meter, you sell by the yard.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah – no, you know, yards are – are – I know what you are talking, you're talking about measure, no, but this is yarns.

Q: Oh yarns!

A: Yarns, yes.

Q: Excuse me, I didn't understand.

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A: And because there was the factories, of textile factory in **Łódź**, there was a big demand for this kind of stuff.

Q: Okay.

A: So he was the manager.

Q: Okay.

A: So his wife was –

Q: In the – in –

A: – i-in **Łódź** – in **Wilno** –

Q: – in **Vilnius**, okay **Wilno**, mm-hm.

A: So that's we went to sa – to her, you know.

Q: Okay. And did you stay then with her?

A: We stayed there for some times in **Vilnius**, yes.

Q: Did you find your own place eventually? Did your father find your own place?

A: We – we d – we – towards – after certain times, we find another place, you know, yes.

Q: Okay. So you arrive in **Wilno** – **Vilnius** – **Wilno** around jan – December, January – December '39 – January 1940.

A: I think so, yeah.

Q: Okay.

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A: Yeah.

Q: In January 1940, it is still part of independent **Lithuania**.

A: Yeah.

Q: All right. And it stays that way for about six or seven months.

A: Yeah. Was enough time to finish the high school, fi – one grade of high school, yeah, I wa – I join – jo – this was –

Q: Tell me about the high school that you went to.

A: It was just like Polish high school, was not much difference. However, the one difference was the language that they told us that we must learn Lithuanian. It was a – a couple mon – two time or three times a week, Lithuanian language is the subject.

Q: Okay. So all your other subjects were taught in Polish?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, we talk Polish, but this was something that they demanded we be – not only that we should speak Lithuanian. It was kind of very difficult thing to ask because it was a very difficult – the language has no – not common sh –

Q: Roots.

A: – not – yeah, not common roots to the Polish language.

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Q: That's right.

A: But we didn't have a choice.

Q: Yeah.

A: So we learned, what can I tell you.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, you were able to finish your school year there.

A: One year.

Q: One year of high school.

A: Yes.

Q: Or at least half a year of high school.

A: Well yeah, but it was like one year. They just make for us easier, the one year.

Q: Okay. And that brings us up to about the – you know, May, June 1940. At this point, what is your father doing? What is – how is he supporting you? From money that he took with him? How are you living, how are you eating?

A: He was – he was starting to deal with – I don't exactly remember when he started, but he started to deal with – with jewelry, you know, because

**[indecipherable]** Polish aristocrats, that they leave from **[indecipherable]** selling jewelry.

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Q: So they –

A: So he was f – the one that was in between them, and –

Q: The buyer.

A: – buyer, yeah. So that's how it – that's how we made platters, the people that have been so prominent in our life.

Q: Okay.

A: Because he was one of the aristocrat, that he knew all of the Polish aristocrats.

Q: Were these local aristocrats, or people who had come in from **Poland**?

A: No, they come in cu – bur – they come – they run away from – from **Bolsheviks**, you know, they run away from Soviets, the Polish.

Q: Okay. So they're running to –

A: They didn't run away from Germans, they run away from – from Soviets.

Q: I see.

A: Because they – this was, for them the Soviets had been the worst enemies, you know, that can be imagined, you know. So – so they – but they –

Q: Can you tell us why?

A: Pardon me?

Q: Can you tell us why, for them?

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A: Well, becau – yeah, because you know, this was a di – you know, th-the **Bolsheviks**, they – they didn't like the owners of – of places, owners of – of farms, and things like this. You know it was called [**indecipherable**] etcetera, etcetera, but never any private – private area, you know. So –

Q: Are you saying that they didn't like wealthy people?

A: Yeah, basically way tip – was they didn't – they didn't consider them as – as real, they – they should go to pr – prisons, or they had kind of ba – cu – type of concentration camp, but not like German, but certain type, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: – kind of prison type of working.

Q: Labor camps.

A: Labor camps, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: So they run away. They run away to **Vilnius**, freedom, it's **Lithuania**, you know.

Q: Okay. All right, I think we'll take a break now, and we'll come – we'll take a break at this point –

A: Okay.



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Q: – we'll break for lunch and then we'll come to the heart of your story after lunch.

Because that's when all the difficult start – parts start.

A: No, ye – you know, it is not as difficult as this part because it's a – closer to these times.

Q: Yeah.

A: You say it's far – as far it is, the names of these places that we passed 1939, for heaven's sake, you know.

Q: Of course, of course.

A: **[indecipherable]**

Q: Of course. I know. That's not so easy, because –

A: Yeah.

Q: – it's in memory, but –

A: But this one is – it's easier for me –

Q: Okay.

A: – honestly, because you know, it's – first I – if I – when I am talking to people, I'm not talking about the way to **Vilnius**, you know, I'm talking about this Nazi occupation. So I remember better, because I repeat the things, you know, I'm –

Q: Okay.

A: – things like this.

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Q: Okay.

A: So I – if I have some problems the first **[indecipherable]**

Q: No, no, no, no, by – h-have we cut?

Q2: Not yet. I'll cut right now though. Okay, we're cutting.

Q: Okay, yeah. **[break]**

A: So I should repeat about lang-language etcetera, exactly.

Q: No, I'll ask a question.

A: Okay, you ask question.

Q: I'll ask a question.

A: Okay, okay.

Q: Okay. So before the break, we were talking about the first several months that your family lived in **Wilno – Vilnius** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – in **Lithuania**, while it still was quasi-independent. It was still an independent country.

A: Yeah, independent **Lithuania**.

Q: Yeah. Your father started to find – look for ways to support the family.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about that a little bit. How did he – what was he doing?

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A: Okay, let me explain it that during this time **Wilno** was the center of Polish populations that run away from the Soviet area, because they been afraid of – of Polish – communist police, etcetera, etcetera, you know. They didn't trust very much, Soviets. So the lot of aristo – Polish aristocrats [**indecipherable**] of this d – this big farms, etcetera, was – went to **Wilno**.

Q: So estates. Not only farms, but huge estates, yes.

A: Just – to **Wilno**, to **Wilno** – but they come to **Wilno**, you know, they didn't say – they didn't [**indecipherable**] the provinces. And in order that they should sustain living, you know, the food etcetera, food etcetera, they should s – have some funds and they didn't have it, so they sold jewelry. They had lot of jewelry with them.

Q: Okay.

A: And it [**indecipherable**] was well-known, that Polish aristocrats have a lot of jewelry. Diamonds, you know, they have here. So, Father used the situation, and together with another Polish aristocrat, Count **Plater-Zyberk**, that the daughter is in **Sopot**, isn't something? And you know, and so they – they had been buying this jewelry from these Poles, and my father was going to kol – **Kaulnas**(ph) – **Kaunas**, and selling to certain places there, with a nice profit, you know.

Q: And so, **Kaunas** was then the second city in **Lithuania** –

A: Yeah, second, yeah. Before **Kaunas** was main street of **Lithuania**, you know.

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Q: Correct, okay. And so do you – and so, he would be buying in **Wilno**, and going to –

A: Se – going to **Kaun** – because I tell you something else, that **Kaunas** was still a place with am-amber – ambassadors of different countries had been. And these ambassadors mostly had been very rich people, somehow. So they been the ones that they been buying this jewelry.

Q: How interesting –

A: This was the market for jewelry, ambassadors, and people that work in embassies, you see, from all over the world, you know, or whatever. Then, it was worth smaller than now, because not so many countries existed like now, but the ones that they been, they been well to do.

Q: Okay. So he knew the market of sellers, and he knew the market of buyers.

A: Yeah, right.

Q: Okay.

A: But the market of sellers he will never knew, because he didn't have any touch with this aristocrats. But Count **Plater**, that was friend of – of my father, he knew all of them. Some of them are even related, you know.

Q: Okay.

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A: So they – th – so was if you – if you went to these people they always say – o-  
offer you, how about you buy my diamond [**indecipherable**]

Q: Okay.

A: And that's how it was.

Q: And what was your mother doing – where were you living by this point, when he  
was starting?

A: This point, this point, this point, this point, this point was – were living on street  
mean **Zavarna**(ph). **Zavarna**(ph) 15 or 17, I don't remember.

Q: Did you have your own apartment –

A: Yeah, apartment –

Q: – or your own room?

A: – apartment, yeah. We rent – renting apartment, yes.

Q: And what part of town was this street in? Was it in the cent –

A: This was a – you know, it was – it was close to the center of the par – to the –  
you know the **wielka**(ph) **polkalanka**(ph), I don't know if they changed the name,  
or –

Q: They changed all the names.

A: They changed names, so it's difficult to tell you.

Q: Yeah.

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A: Okay, but – but it – it's the same kind of – not exactly center, but almost center to the – to the right side, you know, of the city, if you see on the map, you know.

Q: Mm-hm. Was it more in the northern section? **Antakolni**(ph), there was a section near – near a river, or you don't remember?

A: No, no, I remember, there was no river there.

Q: There was no river, okay.

A: No, vil-vil – **Vilaika**(ph), yeah, yeah.

Q: No, it wasn't there.

A: You see, I remember.

Q: Okay. In your book you mention **Wola Compai**(ph) – **Wola Compiere**(ph).

A: **Wola Compiere**(ph), yeah.

Q: Okay. It was not in that direction?

A: I think we – th-this was not very far from **Wilno**, but I don't remember it was direction. Probably south of **Wilno**.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Okay, so at any rate, not quite in the city center, but close by?

A: Yeah, qui – yes, yeah.

Q: Close by. And was it again, a 19<sup>th</sup> century type of apartment building?

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A: Something like this, you know, was –

Q: All right.

A: – not a luxury building, but was not – not very big one.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Were there – did you have the same standard of living as you had had in **Łódź**, or was it different?

A: No, we – we didn't have the same sto – we didn't have any servants, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So –

Q: Okay.

A: – but we didn't suffer from hunger or something like this.

Q: All right. And as the summer of 1940 was unfolding –

A: Yeah.

Q: – do you remember anything that was going on with you? You had just finished school, your father was now working, you were in this place. What was happening?

A: 1940? 1940 was exactly this **Lithuania** in **Vilnius**, isn't it? There was –

Q: Okay, there – but do you remember anything from that summer?

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A: From that summer? Well, you know, it was socially very busy, somehow, for me. Why – you know why? Because just like us saving many people, Jewish people from **Warsaw** – ma-many from **Warsaw** somehow, that they come to – to **Wilno**.

Q: Okay.

A: It's very – here's something that come to my mind; that one of these families, I am still in touch with them, and h-h-he – this guy was good friend of mine in – in school, it's a Jewish school, **Epsztajn** gymnasium. You see, things come [indecipherable] **Epsztajn** gymnasium.

Q: In **Wilno**.

A: In **Wilno**, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: **Epsztajn** gymnasium. But his sister, I didn't know there, but somehow later I knew her so well that I marry her.

Q: Really?

A: Already in the **United States**. They come eventually to **United States**, so – and – but she pass away.

Q: I see.

A: Yeah.

Q: What was her name?



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A: She was a doctor of medicine, yeah.

Q: What was her name?

A: **Lipschitz**(ph), last name.

Q: And her first name?

A: Fir-First name – first name, oh gosh. Wait, this is **[indecipherable]** you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: My memory is working poor. **[inaudible]** No, let's see. It will come.

Q: Okay, okay. And –

A: **Mika**(ph).

Q: **Mika**(ph).

A: **Mika**(ph).

Q: Okay.

A: **Mika**(ph).

Q: This was – this was your colleague at school?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, his brother was my colleague in school.

Q: Oh, so he was – this was your –

A: **Boris** is his name. And I am in touch with him, because he is –

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Q: Okay, **Boris**.

A: – he is living in **Israel**.

Q: All right. So he was your brother-in-law?

A: In a way, you're right.

Q: Yes, okay.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: And **Mika**(ph) was your wife?

A: Yeah, **Mika**(ph) was my wife, yeah.

Q: Okay. So you –

A: She was – she was doctor of medicine.

Q: And – here in the **United States**?

A: **United States**, yes.

Q: Wow, wow.

A: Yeah.

Q: We'll come to your life, you know, afterwards as well, we'll talk about that in more detail. Did you meet her in – in **Wilno**, or not?

A: No, no. Not at all. That what I was surprise.

Q: Yeah.

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A: That she was – she was in one grade lower than us in the school, and somehow – somehow the socializing wasn't – was not accepted to be socialized with somebody below, or something.

Q: Yeah.

A: So that's how it was.

Q: How interesting.

A: Yeah.

Q: Really. So there were a lot – there was a lot of movement, it sounds like, a lot of you know, things were not settled, they were up in the air in some ways. People had come from **Warsaw** –

A: Yeah, right, yeah.

Q: – to escape. They were – they were in **Lithuania**, they were in **Wilno**, and they're getting settled in a new place.

A: Yeah. I don't know if they had been settled per se, but they have a living –

Q: Okay.

A: – meantime, you know, and – but nobody talk about war, even the war was around, but nobody just somehow talk about it.

Q: Okay, so it was right outside the borders.

A: Yeah.

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Q: It was still – there wa – the war was in **Poland**, but it hadn't reached **Lithuania** yet.

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: Okay. Did anybody know why it hadn't reached **Lithuania**? Did anybody speculate?

A: Well, you know, they probably say that's an independent country, they don't care.

Q: Okay.

A: Because look, before – before the war, whe-when I learn history in the school, **Lithuania** was like, in a way, enemy of **Poland**, you know. That's – that's true, you know. I don't know why, but see, there was one time was king and queen, kind of **Lithuania** and Polish –

Q: Back and forth in the Middle Ages.

A: [indecipherable] you see was –

Q: Yes, yes.

A: [indecipherable] yes?

Q: Yes. In the Middle Ages.

A: You know better – you know better than me, the – yeah. And – but nobody was talking politics at that time, for – in my age, you know, somehow in that –

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Q: Was there any knowledge –

A: Yeah?

Q: – of the **Molotov-Ribbentrop** Pact?

A: Yeah.

Q: People knew about that? Or they knew –

A: Well, they don't – they didn't talk about it.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: All right, so were there any political events that happened in the summer of 1940, that you remember?

A: No, the – the next item that I remember, there was – that was when **Germany** attack **Soviet Union**, and attack **Lithuania**, of course, because this was part of **Soviet Union**.

Q: Do you remember when **Lithuania** was incorporated into the **Soviet Union**?

A: In the **Soviet Union**? No, I don't remember the dates, no.

Q: Okay, but do you remember not so much that, but did life change?

A: Did life change?

Q: When – when – when **Lithuania** saw – stopped being –

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A: Yeah, the life, definitely yes. It was – we had been starting to worry about my father occupation.

Q: During – okay.

A: When the Soviets come, you know.

Q: And how – when did they come? Or how did they – when did you first see them?

Paint me a picture of when you saw life changing in the streets.

A: Yeah, then – we didn't see any particular movement of – of military, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: They just – they just start to announce all kinds of announcements.

Q: On the radio?

A: On the – yes, on the – on the – on the radio and on the walls, etcetera.

Q: Posters?

A: Post – posting, yes, there are so – was something that was completely different.

In time of **Lithuania**, there was no announcements, was just – was normal life, you know.

Q: And was there a currency change?

A: Currency change – **litas** – **litas** had been not in circulation any more yes, yeah.

Q: Okay, so the ruble came.

A: The **litas**, yes. You see?

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Q: That's right, the **litas**.

A: Hey, how about this?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So the ruble came.

A: Ruble, yeah, ruble, yeah, ruble come.

Q: All right. And did this – did this change happen before your school year started, or afterwards?

A: After the first – after first year.

Q: Okay.

A: Because remember, I have two years in schools in – in **Vilnius**.

Q: Okay.

A: The second one was already in Soviet time, you know.

Q: And tell me about how was school during the Soviet time. What ca – what kind of changes was it?

A: This was actually – I must say, there was not much change. This was school just with Poles.

Q: Okay.

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A: **Polska** gymnasium. The only one difference is that in time of **Lithuania**, there was no Russian as language esp – as – as language.

Q: Okay.

A: But when the Soviets come, Russian was part of that cu-curriculum, you know.

Q: As long – along with Lithuanian, or –

A: No, Lithuanian is no –

Q: – that was dropped out.

A: – drop, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Could be some schools they had it, but in this particular – there was Polish gymnasium.

Q: Okay.

A: But they talk us about Marxism, this kind of stuff, you know, kind of propaganda kind of things like this. And ye – in – in th – and, you know – and Poles always hated Russians. So as such, they didn't like to speak Russian. But now Russian was like Lithuanian before; they push Polish la – Russian language as subject. And in the entire class there being two people that spoke Russian. One was me, and one was a guy that actually he was Russian, you know.

Q: Okay.



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A: But we were – you know, bu – so we have been –

Q: You were studying, yeah.

A: – teasing people that we spoke Russian, they – they should ge – learn Russian, you know.

Q: Yeah. Was – were – were there any changes amongst the teachers in the school?

A: No, they have Polish teachers the same –

Q: Wa – the same from the first year?

A: – same, yeah, same thing, yeah.

Q: So no – no new teachers came in, no old teachers –

A: I haven't seen any new ones.

Q: Okay.

A: Look, I don't know because previously pi – previously, I haven't been in the school, but the students in this class, they come from class to class, they say the same teachers.

Q: Okay, okay. And how did – how did life change for your father? Cause he was trying to make a living.

A: Let me – let me reverse some about these teacher, because there was one – one te – one teacher that was physics, and after I come back to **Łódź**, after all of these

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disasters, he was in poverty, and I was beca – I was baking bread, so I was bringing him bread.

Q: In **Łódź** after the war?

A: No, in **Vilnius**.

Q: In **Vilnius**.

A: In **Wilno**. So I was bringing bread, he was – he was so – he always cried to me, yeah. It's written in the book, I think so.

Q: Okay.

A: But you know, I had such a satisfaction because he was so nice. So I figure out I – I can just give – help him. He was having some kind of place – I don't know what he was doing, but not much money, you know, but so he – after I brought him bread, he was always do – doesn't know how to – how to thank me. He – he tried to pay for me with – with wood. I said no, no payment. I just gave him bread. But, you know, the – the baking in **Vilnius** – this was another story, but maybe y-you like to talk [**indecipherable**] something, or I can talk about this.

Q: If it's after the war. Is it –

A: After I come back to – to **Wilno**, you know, I mean the –

Q: Mm-hm. Then let's leave it for later on.

A: Okay, okay.

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Q: Okay, but bring it up then.

A: Was very interesting, too.

Q: Okay. So – okay? So, tell me about, was your father still able to continue the selling of this jewelry?

A: He was, but we – it was very painful to us, you know, to worry about him. We were worry all the time, and we see we have very good idea, that it was – this end very bad. It did end bad, however it was great, because they arrested him.

Q: Who arrested him?

A: The communist police come to our house one time.

Q: Okay.

A: They been one Russian, one Lithuanian and one Jew.

Q: Okay.

A: Three of them. And they start to look around, you know, and – and fi – an-and look at – and took our own properties, our own jewelry that it was nothing to do with father, but also they took – they found something, piece of gold or something, you know, and arrested him, and he went to the jail.

Q: And this was in the middle of the day? Was this in the nighttime?

A: It was in the daytime, yes.

Q: In the daytime.

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A: Yeah. But as I said, on – on the way it was great, because they sent him out of, etcetera, etcetera.

Q: But that will be – will explain – so, walk me through the process. In the daytime they come, they look, they search the apartment, they find incriminating gold.

A: For them yeah, it was incriminating.

Q: For them incriminating.

A: Yeah.

Q: And they – three people; a Russian, a Lithuanian and a Jew are – are this – this group, this –

A: Police, yeah.

Q: – police. And they take him –

A: **Siedl** – **Siedlce**, they didn't have uniforms, they just –

Q: They were in civilian clothes.

A: Civilian clothes.

Q: And they take him away.

A: **KGB**, you know.

Q: Yeah. So where did they – where did they take him? Did you know the location?

A: Yeah, **Lukiškės**, **Lukiškės**. Some prison in **Lukiškės**.

Q: Okay, it's called **Lukiškės**, yes.

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A: Yeah, you see, you know.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Hey we – this is great because how many you have people that can talk about this –

Q: That's right.

A: – and it's amazing, you know?

Q: Yeah. So, this prison is very close to the center of town.

A: Yeah, yeah, I – I know.

Q: Okay, did you know that they were taking him there, or did you know –

A: No, there was no other place, you know, there was oh –

Q: Okay.

A: – only one prison in **Wilno**.

Q: Okay.

A: And sent to prison, it was **Lukiškės**.

Q: Yeah. So, what happened then? What happened? Did you – did they release him, did your mother go to try and get him out, what happened?

A: No, we – we try many things, we went – is – my mother, she went to the – some kind of high officer, Russian officer in **KGB**, etcetera, but it didn't help. So he was put – he was in this jail, you know.

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Q: Did you ever s – did you see him again?

A: No, no, th – I don't believe they allow to see anybody in this jail, as far as I remember.

Q: Okay.

A: But then, you know, from the jail – before the Germans come, you know, not long before Germans come, they transfer him to the tr – railroad station in the – I tell you what place, **Nowa Wilejka – Wilejka**. You must know it, too.

Q: **Naujoji Vilnius**, yeah.

A: Yeah, you must know.

Q: Yeah, it's – okay.

A: It was train station and when they come there, this is – this is part that could be movie, because I tell you what, I look it up ahead of me, and I see the line of trains kind of parallel to each one, it just was maybe like six or seven line of long, long trains, you know.

Q: Wa – oh – each with very many wagons.

A: Yeah, each many wagon, yeah.

Q: Okay.

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A: It's kind of da, da, da, da. And you know, and – and when I come to look for him, I didn't know which one I should start to look, because who knows where he is. So I started to scream –

Q: What did jus –

A: – **Dawid Dynin, Dawid Dynin, Dawid Dynin**. And I – when I was screaming, I was walking, you know, in – after each one here, you know, there was –

Q: Okay.

A: And in one is that they answered me, it's here, it's here.

Q: And so you –

A: So I had with me food and drinks, you know, for my father.

Q: How did you know that he was being taken to this train?

A: Because there was only possibility t-to – to – to take out from **Wilno** to – to whatever it is in this particularly station, **Nowa Wilejka**, you know. That was –

Q: But how would you know that he was even not in the prison any more?

A: Oh, we know, we know, I – I don't remember how I learn about it, but we learn somehow.

Q: Okay.

A: We learn somehow. I don't remember, that's true, I don't remember.

Q: Okay. And the oth – on all these trains, were there people in them?

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A: Yeah, there always is, yeah, sure, they're in – all – all the trains having people in. Some of them even children, you know. Because they – they arrested not from – without any reason. They tried to send them out to **Russia** somehow.

Q: So this was – this was – it sounds to me like this was in June 1941.

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q: Okay, there was a –

A: Before – just before Germans come to – to **Lithuania**.

Q: All right, so –

A: Couple days before.

Q: Yeah. It's June 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, this is when the Soviet deportations start taking place

–

A: Yeah.

Q: – of various elements from society.

A: Yeah, that's true. But you know, the elements society, this is wrong term, because they been [**indecipherable**] they been regular families. But see, for them there was crime if you have been living in **Warsaw** before, you see, and living in oth-other part of **Poland**. That's what, for them, was enough to grab them and send out, you know.

Q: And send them to **Siberia**.



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A: [**indecipherable**] craziness, you know, this is communist idea, you know, so there – that's how it was, you know. They decided they are enemies, that's it.

Q: Did you have a fear that your mother and yourself will also be taken?

A: Yeah, by all means. We have been many times walking on the streets in order not to be in the house, because how they can find on the streets. They will go – they know where are living, so they will come. So we didn't sleep at house. We have been sleeping in some other place, you know.

Q: Because of this fear that –

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: – like the people from **Warsaw**, they could take you, too.

A: That definitely, yeah.

Q: How long was your father in jail in **Lukiškės** before he was taken to the train station?

A: Well this a – this is – I don't know exactly, but it was at least one year, or something, because later they – they declare amnesty, if you remember, it was amnesty for prisoners.

Q: We'll talk about that in a minute.

A: Yeah, okay.

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Q: But right now, so he had been arrested probably then, soon after **Lithuania** was incorporated into the **Soviet Union**?

A: Oh yeah, sure, sure.

Q: Okay, so while you were at school, during that school year, your father was in jail.

A: Yeah, this was – yeah, definitely yes, he was in jail. However, it was – maybe it was already during summer, there was no school. This I don't remember exactly, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't remember. But I know that I didn't have any – anything else but this in my mind, just to find him and bring him food and drink, etcetera. But I didn't have anything to do with school, so that probably was – was time that was no school. I don't remember what month it was.

Q: Well, the month you – when you brought him food and drink –

A: Listen, I know it was hot, because I needed to bring some drinks to my father, so probably was no school. Yeah, it was summer, probably.

Q: Okay, that's when he's first arrested?

A: That was arrested – he was not long ago in the jail, before they send him.

Q: I thought you said it was a year? He was in jail for about a year.

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A: No, in the jail, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, in the jail, but after his arrest, yeah, he was in jail, and then –

Q: And then taken away.

A: Yeah.

Q: Deported.

A: Wait a minute. He was in jail in **Russia**.

Q: I know.

A: Not –

Q: But when he's arrested in **Vilnius** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – my question to me – to you was, how long was he in **Lukiškės** before –

A: Oh.

Q: – he was taken to the train station?

A: Well, I think maybe – maybe months, or so.

Q: Oh, not very long, okay.

A: Or maybe one and a half months, something – something like this.

Q: Okay.

A: Because he was not very long in this –

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Q: In this **Lukiškės**, okay.

A: – in the prison, and – but they – if not this that they – he probably would sit forever there, but if not that they decided evacuation of – of this Polish element, you know? So, they grab him and all of those people from the jail, you know. It didn't matter was Jew or Pole or whatever is they be in jail, and plus it comes from Polish part –

Q: That's right.

A: – this is good enough to be sent out – are enemies.

Q: Okay. Now it's clearer to me. Now it's clearer to me and – and you and your mother are – a-and ya – and your sister, you're in fear and nervousness cause they could be coming for you. If they come for people from **Warsaw**, why wouldn't they come for people for **Łódź**?

A: Definitely.

Q: Okay.

A: Definitely. Plus, you know, we also have a fear because Father was arrested. So there was kind of double enemy of – of the country, you know –

Q: Yeah.

A: – double enemy.

Q: Not only is he from a –

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A: Yeah.

Q: – **Poland** itself, not the Soviet part –

A: Yeah.

Q: – but he also has been arrested.

A: Yeah.

Q: So now tell me, why was this a good thing? Why did this end up being a good thing?

A: Great, great, absolutely great, it save our life, you see, uh-huh?

Q: Okay.

A: Because, you know, because he was, as I say, he was very big optimist. In case he was not arrested and let's say that the Germans come and he was free from jail. And then they open the ghetto. So, you know, even my mother sometimes said, you know, maybe we should go to ghetto. I – if you read it, it says that I said no way.

Q: Okay.

A: My father would say yeah, because we'll manage somehow. He – he was optimist, you know?

Q: So he would have been – had he been released –

A: He wa – he would – he may – yeah, he would ga – he would go, I'm sure about it.

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Q: Okay.

A: Because he figure out with his ideas, etcetera, you know, he will be okay. But you know, because he was not there, it was my idea, and we survived.

Q: Oh.

A: Yeah.

Q: So, your father leaves on this train ya – on – you know, one of these six or seven trains that are going eastwards.

A: Yeah.

Q: You – were you able to hand in the food that you brought with you?

A: Yes, I hand – I hand him, I think twice or at least one time, but the – see, last time where they come, le – I look for the train, and I have seen one train leaving. It was his train. And I have a ca – things with – with food, etcetera that I couldn't – couldn't deliver him.

Q: Can you tell me what it is – what did this train look like, what did those wagons look like? Can you paint a picture for me?

A: Sure, sure.

Q: Okay.

A: Say – the one – look, I – I don't know about all of those train, but the one that my father was, this was – this was just like regular transport train, and the windows

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have in – on the upper part of the window is small opening like, kind of. So in order to bring the food, they throw some kind of wire, so I should tie it on this, the basket, or whatever it is, and they lift it.

Q: They lifted it.

A: They couldn't o – there was no window, you know, or door was locked, you know. So this way, you know, I could give them the food or drink, or whatever, you know.

Q: And did he say anything to you while he was –

A: Yeah, of course, you know, he was just a – enjoyed that I was there, he was – it was no words, you know – you know, things, situation like this. And, you know, and all of them have been very happy in the same ca-car, because the – he probably share with them whatever I brought, you know.

Q: And so when he left – when he – his train left –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you were left there with the food.

A: I left with the food.

Q: And you didn't know where he was going to be going.

A: No, we didn't have slightest idea.

Q: Did you have any idea that the Germans were coming?

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A: No. That – we didn't have any idea because the Germans, they come like second day later. Yeah, one and a half day later, as matter of fact, because they come very early in the morning.

Q: Tell me about that.

A: Well, you know, that's – it was big surprise to us, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: But some – I don't remember if I was on the street then, but – but a – but you know, I – I've seen already the – through the window the Germans ca-car, you know, cars – it was the sil – soldiers. But the one thing that changed my mind and made me what I was, was pictures that I have seen through the window.

Q: What did you see?

A: I have seen group of religious Jews with the beards, you know, and looks like older people, you know. Bunch of them, I don't know how many of them, but maybe like a hundred or 200, something like this.

Q: That's a lot.

A: Yeah, big bunch. Surrounded by Lithuanians with the Lithuanian flags, and the Lithuanian flags and si-si – and guns, put like this, you know.

Q: Upright.

A: Not – not hi – not pushing them, but just like this, guns around them.



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Q: Like guards.

A: Yeah, like guards, and screaming on them. And they – an-and just this picture like this, I figure out this is – just shows that we should run away from here. This was so clear to me that they like to kill them, you know, I mean, what they did, they brang them to this place, I don't remember what was the place, what was some kind of not very far from **Vilnius**, woods, etcetera, and they kill them, you know, we learn later.

Q: I – I think it's **Paneriai**.

A: **Ponary, Ponary**.

Q: **Ponary**.

A: **Ponary**, yes.

Q: **Ponary**.

A: This was the first killer of **Ponary**. And it happened so they passed **Nova(ph)** **Polkalanka(ph)** was the name of the street, new **pokantel** – that's where I was living, the new pok – nova pokal – everything comes something. And I looked through the window, by chance that I've seen them, because how it ta – I was not looking at the window looking, was on the – but just I look on the window, and I have seen them, you know.

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Q: How do you explain that – this difference between when you first arrive in **Lithuania**, and it's a democratic country, and it feels free.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then – and you see the soldiers with top hats and –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and – and so on. And then the next time you see this, the same symbols, same soldiers, and it's so different. How do you – did you have an explanation for yourself?

A: Absolutely I was shocked. I couldn't understand it. I was figuring they such a nice people, you know, and I never had any problem except language was difficult, but this is not the – nothing to – to – to hate somebody for it.

Q: Yeah.

A: No, I did not. And besides, you know, it was prosperity in a way, because it was lot of food, and Father was working, and I went – I went to school, that everything was perfect. I never, never ever would figure that the same people were – were – were deal like this. They – they have it in **Wilno**, they – they had been ones that killed Jews, you know. The German supervisor, but they have been killed. It's just terrible. I couldn't believe it, you know, but that's how it was.

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Q: Tell me about when – after you saw this, did you go talk to your mother about what to do?

A: Oh, of course, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: I – I – I tell her what I've seen, and I said we should [**indecipherable**]. And you know, this was – this was one day after the cur – the Germans come. But two days later, you know, the **Plater** come to our home.

Q: Who?

A: **Plater**, young **Plater**.

Q: Okay.

A: This – this is the one that my father working with with jewelry, if you remember.

Q: Okay, yes.

A: And he offered us – he told us that they had been hiding from Soviets –

Q: Okay.

A: – in one place named **Bukiszki** – no-not **Bukiszki** – or maybe **Bukiszki** anyway.

And this g – this guy that he was, the farmer, he agreed to take us too, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So he told us about him, and – and this is – and he said that – he advise us to – you better run away from here.

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Q: Okay. And – and did your mother then take that advice?

A: Yeah. Yeah –

Q: All right, tell –

A: – we took that – yeah, thi-this was time that he was a definitely, yeah. Or after, you know, wha-what I have seen and I tell her, she figure out, you know, that – yeah.

Q: And by – by – by this point, this is, let's say probably, you know, the second half of June in 1941.

A: Yeah.

Q: Had you already gotten the – the news that you have to move into a ghetto? Had that news arrived yet?

A: I think so, yes, it was – it was – they opened ghetto, but it was not that they forced anybody. I think that this was kind of – I – I don't remember exactly what was a – but I know that there was already a ghetto, you know, but I am not sure exactly how – how technically it works, and I did not know, I don't know.

Q: Okay. So you may not have been around for when everybody had to move into the ghetto.

A: Sa – si – yeah, there was – there was something that everybody should way some – wear some kind of yellow patch here.

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Q: Okay.

A: And on the back.

Q: Okay.

A: And this was, I know was rule, you know, I mean, but I never wear it, you know. There was one that they told me if I don't wear him, so – but even my mother said they wou – they can catch me and kill me. So I put one and cover it with something in case – in case I – but I di – in case I would be on the street, if they said that I don't have it, I said oh yeah, I have it, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: But I – I never went with the street with this, period. I never wear it outside, this patch. And it was – nothing was back, I absolutely said no way that somebody putting some on the back, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: The yellow patch, you know.

Q: Yeah, the yellow star.

A: Yellow star, yeah, yeah.

Q: So, you left with Count **Plater**, did you say?

A: Count **Plater**, yes.

Q: **Plater**.

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A: I didn't leave with him, but to him, you know.

Q: Okay, you left –

A: I join – joined him.

Q: You joined him?

A: Joined him and his wife, and this small girl –

Q: Okay.

A: – that my sister was playing with and that I am calling – as a matter of fact, yesterday I see – I talked to her.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, I told her – I told her that there is possibility they would like to talk to you.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: I mean [indecipherable]. So she says that it's okay. But remember [indecipherable] I only speak Polish.

Q: Okay. So anyway, you still have contacts with –

A: Yeah.

Q: – someone whom you met when you were in hiding.

A: No kidding.

Q: Amazing, amazing.

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A: No kidding, isn't it something?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And her – her sister, you know, she was born already a couple years later, when the **Plater** left – left toward another place, not far from **Warsaw**, but another place, so she knows me from – from the pay – pe – from the parents and also I am in touch with her, you know.

Q: Sure. So let's go back to this time.

A: Yeah.

Q: How – how far was this place from – from **Vilnius** – from **Wilno**?

A: Oh, **Lukiškės**? Oh, it was, I would say, maybe 20 kilometer.

Q: Did you drive there, did you –

A: No, I walk on this.

Q: Okay.

A: He took – he took – this guy took a suit – a few – number of suitcases, because then it became we could take suitcases, we don't need to schlep it. So we gave him, and he took up, and we have been walking.

Q: Okay.

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A: Walking, and – and we're supposed to meet him certain place, you know, so and so many kilometers we'll meet him, and then he will take us on the cart, and bring in to his place. And that's how it happened.

Q: And – and that's how it happened?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what was this place that you were taken to? What did it –

A: There was a nice looking house, you know, it's kind of farm, and he was – he was kind of sk – half har – far – half farmer, because his main job was bringing – moving from one house to another, you know, kind of like a –

Q: A mover.

A: Mover, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: But with horses, not with cars, yes.

Q: Okay. So some of – he farmed some of the time –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and he also used his – his cart to transport goods or people for –

A: Yeah.

Q: – a price, okay.



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A: Yeah, so he was familiar with the plan of city, etcetera, so it was no big deal, he find us one, two, three, it –

Q: Okay. And how long did you stay there?

A: We stay there probably something like about maybe – maximum of two months.

Q: Okay.

A: And then after – the **Platers** left – left to th – to go to his previous place, that – because he figure out that – because he was before, so Germans make him responsible for – for this farm – farm. It was a big farm, you know.

Q: You mean, his estate?

A: In **United States**, yes.

Q: No, no, no, his estate. That is, his farm.

A: Yeah, it was not exactly his estate, but something to do with him that he was responsible of this estate of his fa – it was his family, okay.

Q: Family, okay.

A: It was his family. So, he was sure that this will be just like being – because Germans like aristocrats, you know. So you know, at that time at least. Later, maybe not. So the – he was thinking that this will be a good po-possibility for him. But when he comes there, it was already somebody appointed, you know. But anyway, we didn't know about it, and we went to join them, you know.

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Q: Okay.

A: Because we had enough of this guy was starting to ask some more money, and who knows. Kind of unpleasant, so we just had enough of him.

Q: Okay. So, you more or less follow Count **Plater**.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Okay. And tell me –

A: Count **Plater** and – and this girl.

Q: Okay, so tell me a little bit about the – about Count **Plater**, his – his family and – and who was he? Who was he?

A: Oh, you know, they – he was a – his wa – his wife, as I say, and there's two other brother that I was in very good relations later with them too, you know. And just like the Polish aristocrats they – of the – of the west, they had been all in – in agriculture, you know. So he was – he was a si – his spe – his specialty, he was a – he was something to do with agriculture specialty really.

Q: So he was a landowner?

A: Landowner, yeah. He was landowner, or maybe not the owner, but he was working for his family that are landowners, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: [indecipherable] You know, **Rosa** probably know more about that family.

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Q: And – and what was his first name?

A: **Jan**.

Q: **Jan**?

A: **Jan Plater**, and **Halina Plater** was his wife, **Halina**.

Q: Okay, and a –

A: By the way, listen, I have a, probably full box of letter of **Halina Plater** wrote to my mother, you see. You know, I – I can prove myself just like that.

Q: Of course.

A: Yeah.

Q: Of course.

A: I have a lot of letters, you know –

Q: Those are interesting, and –

A: – that she wrote to my mother after the war. Because don't forget that I was always – it was my in-in-incentive, I was – was sending big parcels to them when it was very poor in **Poland**, you know, and I was sending –

Q: Yeah.

A: – big parcels.

Q: And so they were th – corresponding about those things.

A: Yeah, yeah, corresponding, yes.

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Q: So what kind of a person was he? Since he was somebody who played such a role, tell me about his personality.

A: I tell you what, this was almost like you – your – like you read in the – in the books, fantastic. He was so soft, soft talking and soft dealing. It was fantastic, it was very pleasant. The – and **Halina – Halina Plater**, his wife, was too ve – very n – very nice to us, actually extremely nice. But he was specifically nice. He was – I don't know if you can make it to be so soft like he was. He was just like – like poetry, you know, he was talking. He was fantastic guy.

Q: So he was a gentle person?

A: Yeah, very gentle person, yeah, very gentle.

Q: Okay. Did you have many conversations with him, you know?

A: Oh yeah, oh yeah, he teach me how to – different thing he – because when la – when I come to him, he said, oh, fantastic, you can help me. Because it was time when they collect things from the fields, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So it was different things that – that I did not know about. How can I, you know – so she – he – he explain me different things, you know.

Q: You mean what –

A: It was very interesting.

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Q: You mean, about agriculture and a –

A: About the agriculture of this particular area, you know.

Q: And tell me, what was this area? Tell me the name of it.

A: This was – no I don't rem – this in re – **Sw-Sworotwa**.

Q: **Sworotwa**.

A: **Sworotwa**, yes.

Q: And that's where his estates were.

A: This was a – was estate, yes.

Q: The family estates.

A: But there was already somebody else, I told you in **Sworo** – yeah, yeah.

Q: I remember you said, yes. So, how long did you stay in **Sworotwa**?

A: Oh, I stayed for s – a few months maybe, maybe three months or something.

After, you know, this – my work was kind of like ending, because it was end of this particular stretch, then I moved to another place not far from here, in order not to disturb them, and – and – and then you know what happened? I tell you. There was a – Germans sent to all of these places like this, German officer that was specialist of – of agriculture, plus translator. And this translator was Jewish translator, because who knew German in **Poland**, you just tell me. So, you know, so this translator was in – in the – he knew **Platers** too – I don't know if they knew him f –

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because of this, or some other – and si – and Mrs. **Plater** talked to him and told about us to this translator. So, i-in a way, I would say this was terrible, but it was very positive, you know why?

Q: Tell me.

A: Because this was – this translator was very nice guy. He didn't mean to use this against – for him, you know.

Q: He wasn't going to take advantage of your situation.

A: That's – yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: But he said that because he – he come from **Baranovichi**, so fr – because the – the German office was in **Baranovichi**, because this was like a secondary place, you know –

Q: Were – I want to stop just for a second again –

A: Sure.

Q: – to get a sense of geography. When Count **Plater** went back to his family lands –

A: Yeah.

Q: – those family lands were in **Zava -- Zavatska**(ph), you said?

A: Pla – ee – what – what place it was?

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Q: Where he – his family is –

A: **Sworotwa**?

Q: **Sworotwa**?

A: **Sworotwa**.

Q: Okay. Was this not –

A: **Sworotwa** and another one was **Swojatycze**, where we – two places.

Q: Okay.

A: **Sworotwa** and **Swojatycze**.

Q: Were these in **Poland**, or in **Belarus**?

A: **Poland**. Oh, it was Belarusian the – yi – they call it – they consider **Poland** – consider it like strictly **Poland**, you know.

Q: Got it.

A: But it was actually Belarusian.

Q: Okay. So it's in this part of the – the world which is the borderlands –

A: Borderland –

Q: – it's borderlands –

A: – Polish borderland, **Belorussia** –

Q: – borderlands with **Belorussia** –

A: Yeah.

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Q: And it's sometimes called the **Kresy**, I believe.

A: **Kre-Kresy**, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And – and so it's in this area, that is now occupied by **Germany**. It's no longer **Lithuania** –

A: No.

Q: – but it is – but it is in the **Poland** be – Belorussian area, and it's where his fam –

A: Belaru – **Belorussia** to occupy by **Germany**, too. I don't know if all **Belorussia** – I think all –

Q: Yeah.

A: – they all **Belorussia**, because they also took part of **Russia**, too.

Q: That's right.

A: Small part, but they did took, so – and **Minsk**, this was in German hands.

Q: Yes.

A: You see, **Minsk** is part – is a main seat of **Belorussia**.

Q: Okay.

A: So it was definitely in German hands.

Q: Okay, so this translator, how did he figure in your life? What did – what was his role?



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A: I tell you what was the difference. He didn't do anything by himself, but he gave very good advice.

Q: Okay.

A: Now, because he was – he was a translator in the main office in **Baranovichi**, so he learn, by chance, that the Germans are desperate in looking for translator – German translator to – to **Belorussia** with Polish – non – non-Jewish to German translator. Because they all have in Jews, so they like to have non-German translator. So he told – he tells them about it, the – these **Platers**, you know. That's how we learn about it, that there is opportunity in th – i-in the German –

Q: In the headquarters.

A: – in the headquarters, that they are looking for – for translator. And my mother, she knew German perfect, you know.

Q: Did – but it's – in a way – so, she's thinking of going to work as this translator in the headquarters, which is controlled by the Germans.

A: We did not know exactly what place, but it – it – in the main office, they thought that they are looking for, but they didn't mention the word place, because this was main office for – for **[indecipherable]** you know, Belarussian, you know, I don't know her – how – how they get –

Q: Yes, but – the German run, in other words.

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A: Yeah, German run, yeah.

Q: German run.

A: Yeah.

Q: All right. And why would – why would your mother do that, given that these are Germans, and that they are rounding up Jews?

A: Well, you know, this was a – this was exactly to – to start to be like a Polish aristocrat, you know, pretending to be Polish aristocrat, and looking for a job – a job. That's what it is, you know.

Q: So this is the point where you stop being who you are –

A: Oh definitely, already long time before, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: After we left this guy that took us from – he knew about us.

Q: Okay.

A: As soon as we si – we went one meter from his house, we stop to be Jewish, you know, we start to be **[indecipherable]** you know –

Q: Okay.

A: – or whatever, you see?

Q: So you started –

Q2: Can we pause right now real quick?

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Q: Yes, mm-hm. [break]

A: Do you know it's so –

Q2: We're rolling.

A: – funny how –

Q: Okay. So at this point, I'd like to pause a little bit, because this is a crucial moment.

A: Sure.

Q: The moment from when you stop being who you normally are, and you start pretending that you're somebody else.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you say this started for you right after you left the farmer's house that was so close to **Wilno**?

A: That's exact.

Q: All right. Did you have any documents with you until that point, that said you are **George Dynin**, and this is your mother, and this is your fa – you know, all of that, and your sister. Did you have such documents?

A: Yes, I already had, you know, because look, as I say, we can talk here days and never finish. But there was friends – friends of – of my dis – the one boy that I went with him to school.

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Q: Okay.

A: **Tadek**(ph) **Whidenfield**(ph).

Q: Okay.

A: Is – he and his father and mother, they look very much Jewish, you know, but they didn't say they are Jewish. They said they are **Karaims**, because **Karaims** look like Jews, but the Germans didn't kill them because they are not Jewish.

Q: Who are the **Karaims**, can you tell –

A: **Karaims** is the people that live s-some area in the southern **Europe**, you know [**indecipherable**]. So they – they bought those documents, and they pretended they are **Karaims**, cause they lived in **Jerozolimka**. This is – do you know this place, do you know the –

Q: Mm-hm. A part of lithua – a part of **Vilnius**.

A: Yes, southern – there's a – the border going on the river, past **Jerozolimka** and to – so you remember **Jerozolimka** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – okay, you see.

Q: Yeah, it's a – it's a section on the outskirts of the city of **Vilnius**.

A: The **Bukiszki** –

Q: Yes.

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A: – is exactly halfway from – between **Wilno** and eur – and – and **Bukiszki**.

**Jerozolimka** is in between. So it's like about four, five kilometer from **Bukiszki** that we have in **Jerozolimka**.

Q: Okay.

A: So we went to them vis – to visit them and see how they're doing, you know, and they told us that they have somebody that can correct these documents that we have, and remove the letter **Y** to letter **U**.

Q: Tell me, why would that be crucial to no – **Dynin** does not sound like a particularly Jewish name.

A: Very much. The only Jews are **Dynins**.

Q: Ah, okay.

A: But **Dunin** is aristocratic Polish name.

Q: Is it?

A: **Dunin, Dunin**.

Q: Is it? I didn't know that.

A: Yeah, yeah, **U, u, Dunin**.

Q: Okay. **Dunin**.

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A: Aristocratic Polish name. There are **Dynin Borkowski**(ph) and **Dynin** something else anyway, but **Dunin**, you know, it's – it's well known – it's well know pole – Poles know **Dunins** are aristocrats, you know.

Q: So this is – by – by complete coincidence, your name, which is **d-y-n-i-n**, with a change of the **y** to the **u**, you – you go from an identity that is –

A: Here – here it is.

Q: Okay.

A: This is – you see, here is **u**, do you see?

Q: We will do this later.

Q2: Yeah, I can't –

A: You see?

Q: Excuse us, we will do that later.

A: Yeah, yeah, but I like to show you –

Q: Yeah.

A: – just – just to –

Q: Yeah.

A: – you know. That my mother, so she's [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah.

Q2: Do you want to pick that up again then [indecipherable]

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Q: We will – no, no, no, no.

Q2: Once he – once he – I mean, once he leaned out of the shot, he leaned out of the shot –

Q: No, no. I want to du – I will – we will talk about this – hang – hang on just a second –

A: Because otherwise this is difficult –

Q: When we start talking like this, I want to cut.

Q2: Okay.

Q: Okay.

Q2: I'm sorry.

Q: So we're gonna – so I'm ga – **[break]** Okay, so we were talking about this transition. Your – your friends or acquaintances, the **Wajdenfelds** –

A: **Wajdenfelds**, yes.

Q: – they ended up getting papers that identify them as **Karaim** –

A: Yes.

Q: – and – and you, because you have a last name with one letter that changes you from an identifiably Jewish name in Polish –

A: To – to – to Poles.

Q: – to – to an identifiably aler – aristocratic –

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A: Aristocratic Polish name.

Q: – aristocratic Polish name. And that letter was the letter **y** to the letter **u**.

A: Yeah. No-Not only this, and also there are two dun – **Dunin**. One is **Dunin Wąsowicz** –

Q: Okay.

A: And **Dunin Borkowski**. So there are two group of – of **Dunins**, you know.

Q: Of this family.

A: But while – yeah, but we didn't change the rest because not everybody was using **Poland**. But I learned from others later, that they are two different groups, and they ask us, are you from **Dunin Wąsowicz**, or **Dunin Borkowski**. We decided **Borkowski**.

Q: Okay. But you – did you ever meet any of the real, authentic **Dunins**?

A: No, absolutely not, no.

Q: Okay.

A: But I know they are.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So – so was it while you were still in **Wilno** that you changed papers, that you changed your identity documents?



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A: No, this was not in **Wilno**, this was – this was not very far from – from the place when the farmer brought us to.

Q: Okay.

A: This was – then we went to this – to this **Jerozolimka**, there were like four or five miles we went –

Q: Okay.

A: – kilometers, not miles, we went to see the **Wajdenfelds**, these people, and they told us – we didn't answer, and they told us look, we have somebody that can do it for two golden chains. So we – we – we brought in next time two golden chains what we have, and on the – on the next trip, I think was second trip or third trip, they brought us – they gave us this documents. So we figure out, now we have documents like – without photograph, cause it was not picture of a –

Q: Okay.

A: But there was good in there, you know, we – we didn't look like Jews, you know, and we had these documents in case somebody asks us from – that's what it is.

Q: So now you are **George Dunin**?

A: **George Dunin**, yes.

Q: And **Aviva** is – what is –

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A: **Aviva** – **Aviva** didn't have any documents because they never bothered children.

Q: Okay.

A: And – and I tell you the problem also that with men is very easy to find who is a Jew or not – in **Poland**, not here –

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: – because here they don't use it. But in **Poland**, you know, this was every Jewish man went through this thing, you know, this – what can I tell you, that's how it was.

Q: I know, it's difficult to say that –

A: Yeah.

Q: – or it's – it's – it's a delicate subject matter.

A: Not – not a delicate, it was – was very important in Middle Ages, you know, but what – what is it doing now, I have no idea. But that's how it is, you know.

Q: Okay, and we're talking – just for the camera, and for the future reference, circumcision.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So i – and your mother became – tell me what her new name was.

A: She was – she was a – she was **Dunin, Francisca(ph) Dunin**.

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Q: **Francisca(ph) Dunin.**

A: **Francisca(ph) Dunin.**

Q: Okay. All right. And – and so you had these new documents –

A: Yeah, and –

Q: – from usa – **Jerozolimka.**

A: Yes.

Q: There was – outside **Wilno**. And when you left the farmer, you now were  
**Dunins.**

A: We're – we're **Dunin**, and we feel so much safer.

Q: Okay.

A: So we – we kind of – I don't know, maybe it was not so safe, but we felt very  
safe.

Q: Okay.

A: We felt very, very safe.

Q: And so your mother didn't have any worries.

A: No.

Q: If she were to apply for a job –

A: No, absolutely not.

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Q: All right. So what happened, after this translator lets the **Platers** know – Count **Plater**, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. About this opening that they're looking for translators from German to Polish, who aren't Jewish –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and what happens then?

A: Because he even mentioned name of the office.

Q: Okay.

A: And some – so we knew – my mother knew exactly if – that she should apply to this office, etcetera. But before she's – she was still hesitant to do it, you know, from reasons that, as a woman, you know, going to some German office, etcetera, etcetera. So she tried to find another place to work, in another farm, that also

**Platers** told them the name of the farm that she can apply for. But she went – I – I make it short – and she went through all kind of farms, and she didn't find anything, etcetera, had come back. So eventually they found for – for – the **Plater** found for us place – in place name bor – **Burdakoszczyzna**(ph).

Q: **Burdakowszczyzna**.

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A: **Burdakowszczyzna**. This was some big farm that they needed house – kind of housekeeper, you know. So we went there, and we went in this place for about a couple months or three months. And I don't think about the details, was not interesting. Eventually we went to **Baranovichi** and she went – sh-she went to this officer that he's a German officer. That was a [indecipherable] officer, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: And they – this was – they immediately had – they hire – they hear her German, and they just, they didn't know what to do with her, you know, there was a such a unbelievable – because Poles didn't speak German, so they didn't have anybody but Jews, you know, and here was somebody that comes, you know –

Q: And she did not look Jewish?

A: No, she didn't look, no.

Q: She did not – she did not raise any suspicion.

A: No, she didn't – she didn't look Jewish, absolutely.

Q: Okay.

A: I cannot suspect that – that her mother has allow her – you know, because her – because her – her mother was know that she has many friends.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay. So you know.

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Q: Your grandmother had an interesting life.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay. So –

A: So anyway – so I profit from this, no – you know, I'm – I'm telling you, this is kind of interesting. But you know, so – so this German, you know, he was very, very nice, and etcetera, and ask what – what he can do for us. So of course transportation, they provide us some kind of – some kind of transportation with a cart, you know, by Polish people, you know, they supposed to bring us to certain place, and then the certain place should switch us to another one, and eventually we – we – we come to the **Horodyszcze**.

Q: **Horodyszcze**.

A: This is the place that she was having the job –

Q: Okay.

A: – **Horodyszcze**.

Q: And what is **Horodyszcze**? Is it a town, a village –

A: It's a small town. Small town. I have a plan of the city of the plan – of this middle of the city. And then, when I spend a number of very interesting years for a movie.

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Q: Okay. Well tell me – tell me, what did it look like, when you were there in **Horodyszcze**?

A: **Horodyszcze**.

Q: **Horodyszcze**. Where was it in – geographically lo – you know, in relation to where you'd been before, and what – how large was the town?

A: Okay.

Q: Was it militarized? Tell – paint me a picture again.

A: Okay. As – **Horodyszcze** is – you know, **Baranovichi** was in center of this particular part of **Belarus**.

Q: Okay.

A: And from – between **Baranovichi** and **Lida** – **Lida** is another – **Horodyszcze** is on the way from **Baranovichi** to **Lida**.

Q: Okay.

A: From **Baranovichi** is maybe 50 miles, maybe less.

Q: Okay.

A: In direction is the highway is going to **Lida**.

Q: So is it going north?

A: Going north, yes.

Q: Okay.

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A: To **Lida**.

Q: Okay.

A: So that's basically geographically – and the – as far as number of people, I – I don't think it was too many, but it was something like maybe – total maybe 5,000, or maybe less.

Q: Okay. Did it have ma – did it have a main square, a main street, a ma – you know –

A: Yeah, it was definitely main square that our – the house that we are living, it was facing on the – maybe you can see it, it was facing main square.

Q: Okay.

A: And the view from my – from my window on the main square was not very pleasant. The Germans make place that they hang people in the middle of main square.

Q: Oh my gosh.

A: So we – one time I looked through the window, I see hanging people, you know, in the main square.

Q: So was this something that – that happened on a regular basis, that –

A: No, thi-this time it was a – i-it is regular basis, of course a – the – but this time it was hanging some people that they been rel – relative to supposedly partisans. But



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you know, by mean relative doesn't mean too much for – from Nazis, like they maybe a piece of bread or something, they give, you know, something. So they hang them.

Q: And who was the population in the town? What kind of people were in the –

A: Population in the town – as I said, this population total was number of thousands, maybe four or something. Half of them were Jewish. Half of them were Jewish, the rest were **Belarusian**, and there been Poles – few hundred Poles. That's –

Q: Okay.

A: – not much. It was one church, Catholic church, and was **[indecipherable]**

Q: A – a – a Russian Orthodox church – dox.

A: A Russian Orthodox, basically for Belarusians. And that's – that's what I say, these two churches, you know, the church and Belarusian **[indecipherable]** that's all – that's all, as far as I remember.

Q: So did you – did you see the – the Jews in the town, or were they gone by the time you arrived?

A: No, when – when the – when I – when we arrived to this **Horodyszcze**, that was after big killing of Jews. After big killing of Jews, you know. They kill something like 2,000, and they left some very – few hundred, yeah, yeah.

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Q: And you – how did you learn of this?

A: Well, the –

Q: Were people talking about it?

A: Yeah, they talk about, you know. We know about it because – when we come we didn't know about it, but I tell you what, when they come, that was very unusual, I never seen something like this happen; people walking on the streets with – with Jewish clothing, with – with things from the houses, that they took th-the – the – the Nazis didn't – they didn't let them grab, you know, the Belarusians, you know. It's – it's terrible.

Q: So you saw the looting.

A: Looting –

Q: You saw people walking around –

A: – yeah, looting, but was not – nobody was against it, you know, so you just come to the houses and took whatever. And they have some kind of magazines that they – whatever was not looted, they put this as magazines.

Q: Magazine means store.

A: Stores.

Q: Yeah. There were some sort of shops and stores?

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A: Shops yeah, but they didn't sell it, they just gave away things, you know. Of course, gave away for people, there is bottle of vodka, bottle of alcohol or something. There was all corruption, you know. They ask us if we need something, they give us without payment. You must be kidding –

Q: Was this the German authorities?

A: There were – yeah, we were – we wouldn't touch it, you know, we were so – it was so terrible for us.

Q: Of course.

A: But you should be very careful what to say or not, because if you are too much [indecipherable] suspicion, you know, how it is you don't like to take things f – of the Jews, you know? It was plus to – to – to rob them, in their eyes.

Q: So, did you feel – did you feel this mask that you had to wear, did you feel a – a kind of tension for having to pretend that you were not who you were?

A: Well, of course that – with time I got used to it and I know how to deal with this, but from beginning I should be very, very careful, you know, because I didn't yet have the experience, you know, to be supposedly Pole – pretending to be Pole, and not Jewish, of course. But I learn – in time I learn what should I do, and how should I do, and it takes time, you know.

Q: Yeah.

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A: I remember that when I should – you know, the – the Poles in these areas had been absolutely religious. They went to church [indecipherable] once a week, Sunday church, that's it, that's not nothing. So – so I went to church, because it – i- it must be, I must –

Q: It's what a Pole does.

A: Yeah, I me – I knew.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I – and this was first time that I walked to church, I was very careful that I don't make any mistakes. So the way how I do, I do very slow, and I look on others, what they are doing, you know. And – and you know, this [indecipherable] kneeling, you know, and I do th – a little later than they, because it takes time to figure out. But I think that I did okay, you know. But I looking on my mother –

Q: Yeah.

A: – and she makes so many mistakes, I was so afraid, you know. Eventually she learned too, but you know, first time she went, so many mistakes, you know. But eventual I was perfect, you know. I just do perfect. It would have been perfect, the priests, they loved me. The priest, you know, they – they asked me to – to – to help with the mass, you know.

Q: So you – they asked you to be an altar boy?

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A: Yeah, altar boy. Yeah, I was –

Q: Were you an altar boy?

A: Oh yes, yeah, I was altar boy.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: Because they love me, and I tell you something well [indecipherable] listen – listen. I was altar boy one time to – to the – to the guy that was terrible guy, and he was married. And I was supposed to give the marriage with the – with the priest, you know, to him, you know. And I was thinking under my – I hope that he will kill that, I hope that he will [indecipherable] and I was – I was – I was praying for his demise, you know, you know.

Q: What was – what was about this man that was terrible? Can you tell us?

A: He was a sup – he was a – we knew about him that he was also participating in some kind of terrible thing, you know. That's what it was. I don't remember exactly what, but I knew for sure there was something wrong with him. Wrong, I mean in his eyes, he did great things, you know.

Q: Was this anti-Jewish, or was this in general –

A: Anti-Jew – not only anti-Jewish, but th – anti-partisans, and the – she was – for us, the partisans had been our friends, you know, in not knowing – nobody know about it, but we figure out that just from [indecipherable] you know.

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Q: Well here's the irony too, your father is arrested by the Soviets, but the partisans are Soviets, and now –

A: No, because – you know, because he listen.

Q: Yeah.

A: In the relations to Nazis, the Soviets had been angels, you know. There's nothing to compare, you know, with – when we didn't know Germans – I mean Nazis, not Germans, then they have been terrible. But as soon as we learned the Nazis, the Soviets have been great.

Q: And that's all part of what the – what people in this part of the world –

A: Yeah.

Q: – went through, you know, that it is –

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: – that it is –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that it's complicated.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: It's complicated. And then again, it's very simple, you know –

A: Yeah, that's true.

Q: – who your enemy is.

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A: Yeah, that's true, yeah.

Q: So – so at any rate, you end up being an altar boy.

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: And you know your prayers? You know what –

A: I learn everything. Listen, I know **[indecipherable]** but priest – the priest was just in love with me. He just liked me very much. **Jurek(ph), Jurek(ph) [speaks Polish]** As soon as was holidays we went out to the country, and going to different farms, and the – because they gave us foods and kind of, and he pray something a little for them. And w-we come with the horse and either – I – I was probably driving the horse. And you know – and then you know, after we come back, you know **[speaks Polish]**

Q: What's that?

A: Would you like to have it, if – ev-everything that you like, you lukko – we have plenty of food. Because they gave us, you know, kind of nice. This is very nice gesture, that if you went to some farm, they – they gave us whatever we like to have, and whatever didn't like to have, they just full – cart was full.

Q: Because the priest – you were taking the priest to visit them?

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: Okay.

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A: So – so he gave me whatever I like to have, even he gave me with plenty of food, you know. And each time was a – things like this he – he called me to come because he likes to – to – to go with me.

Q: Okay.

A: But – but I'm just telling you, I was in good relation not only with him, you know, but the Poles that know me, they like me very much, you know. But I don't like to jump on this because maybe we –

Q: Okay.

A: – can reach it

Q: We can reach it, we can reach it.

A: Yeah.

Q: So let's go back and – and talk a little bit about what your mother's job was. Tell me a little bit about she – because it's because of that that you end up moving to this place.

A: Yeah.

Q: All right, so –

A: With th – his – Mother job was to translate basically – she come to translate German – German printed things that they send letters to – to **Bürgermeister**, to the mayor of the city. Mayor of the city was **Jakimowicz – Jakimowicz**. He was



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Belarusian but he was before the war living in – in **Łódź** somehow. You know, but h – she didn't – we never said that we are from **Łódź** because saying from **Łódź** it sounds Jewish a little.

Q: Okay.

A: So we never said. We said we're from **Warsaw** or who knows where, but never mentioned **Łódź**. But – so th-the letter that had been sent from – from German officers – office – officers or office in **Baranovichi**, mostly in **Baranovichi**, th-this was not from **Minsk**, because **Minsk** was top, **Baranovichi** was second. So from second –

Q: A subsidiary, yeah.

A: Yeah, sent to – to them. And my – and the – my – my mother supposed to translate them to Belarusian, and she – somehow she knew Russian, and you know –

Q: So she managed.

A: So she managed, and the – she knew German, so that's how it was. It was basically her job.

Q: Did she have daily contact with German officers then?

A: Not ger – no, see – no, she didn't have contact with German officers because they come to talk to the ber – to him.

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Q: Okay.

A: Not to my mother, yes.

Q: So she – her contact was with the civilian administration.

A: Civilian administration, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: But it was – it was cases that – that she – I – I will tell you later, it was very funny how they tried to – how the Gestapo tried to catch me, you know, and that how she – she acted fantastic. She acted like best actor in the world, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So she went to **Germany**, because she insisted – she insisted to go to the – to the t-top of the battalion chief, you know. It was f-fantastic, anyway.

Q: Well okay, so let's – let's finish explaining –

A: Yeah.

Q: – a little bit about where – what her role was. She translates letters from German into Belarusian –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that are sent from the **Bürgermeister** to who? To farmers? To –

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A: Well, from **Bürgermeister** – he hardly wrote back, but he – he likes to know what they telling me, because you know, the rolls – what they wrote in the letters to him, you know.

Q: Oh, I see, so she was translating what the Germans were writing to the –

A: German, yeah.

Q: – **Bürgermeister**.

A: Yeah.

Q: So it wasn't that she was translating letters that then get distributed to the population, or to –

A: No.

Q: – other people. It was like she was his personal translator.

A: His personal kind of like secretary.

Q: Okay.

A: This was the reason that she can read all of the correspondence what comes to him, and that's how she was able to spy on them, you know, because she have – she knows what they asking him, you know. And then how I see – I could save people because she told me what's going on, and I told them. So with – this way I – I save not only Jewish people, I even couple Poles.

Q: So tell me about these things. Tell me about how this – how this developed.

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A: How –

Q: She had this job, she had – she held it for how long?

A: Well, you know, couple years or something. Whatever we had been in –

Q: It's a good long time.

A: – **Horodyszcze**, yeah.

Q: Okay. So –

A: It wer – wasn't couple years. We had been '40, '42, '43, '44 – something like about three years maybe.

Q: That's a good long time.

A: Yes.

Q: So all right, so she's – she reads this correspondence.

A: Yeah, the correspondence, that's how she learned many things.

Q: So tell me about the first instance when she reads something about what's going to happen, tell me.

A: Well they – they told her e-exactly ze – in the – to the **Bürgermeister** that she – they tell him exactly what they are going to do.

Q: Okay.

A: And that's what we need to know in underground, you know [**indecipherable**] to do what to prepare themselves to, you know. So she said, like for example about

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– said they're going perp – she – they – they give the date, exactly date what they come and kill the Jews from the gi – left the Jews in the ghetto, for example. They did exactly, the date.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: And I say – date and hour too probably, yeah. I – well, with Germans, they put hour, too. So, knowing this, she told me, and I – I – I, in a way, was – wer – have been able to – to tell to the Jewish people somehow, you know, not the – not to all of them together, but th – and one time I was walking on the street and I've seen him walking someplace –

Q: Who?

A: The Jews –

Q: Okay.

A: – you know, walking someplace, so it was very stupid of me that I did it what I did, because I – I went to them and I tell them about this, that so and so date you should run away, because they come to kill you. And then, second time was more clever because they have been – not far from my window I've seen him – seen through my window, they – they have been staying next to the water well. And it was a little – water well was a little higher than – than the rest of the thing, so I – I somehow went out to the street and [indecipherable] and I tell them exactly – say it

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was two days later, you know. And I tell them exactly, you know, what day exactly should run away. So know what they told me? They told me that everybody it – is afraid to run away because there will be not – nothing to eat, you know. But you know, this was something that they didn't trust me, who I am, because they did think about run away, you know. Because 18 of them run away, and I know exactly how many because the police, when – the Belorussian police have been the ones that killed them, and they been complaining that 18 didn't show off, you know, that somebody must tell them – tell them, you know. So they did run away, you know, 18 of them. And the Poles, you know, there was something else I say to Poles – you know how?

Q: Okay, tell me.

A: Be-Because the Germans, the Gestapo come to him, and tell hi – this was already Gestapo –

Q: Come to whom?

A: To the bear – mayor.

Q: To the mayor, okay.

A: And they told him that the two underground Poles coming from **Baranovich** to **Horodyszcze**, to be confidence with – with Poles here. And the mayor of the city see, he wrote these names on this piece of paper. And when they left, he left this

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piece of paper on his desk, you know. So when ma – my mother was in the other room – they didn't let her having together with this, but she will – she had waited til they all left. So they s – they said, you can come inside. So she come inside, but she found this piece of paper on the desk, you know, and was two names.

Q: Okay.

A: So she figure out, there's two names, must be something very important, and she told me about this. And I ti – I – I t – I went – I was running. I went to this [indecipherable] supposed to be – they said something about [indecipherable] yes, they supposed to come here, you know. So we let them know, and nobody come, and they – therefore they saved two la – lives. They will kill them, you know.

Q: So – but this is also very dangerous –

A: Yeah, very –

Q: – because the –

A: – of course was danger.

Q: – because the – the thread is very easy to find.

A: Look, I mean the – you know, you – you pro – being underground under circumstances, small town? Boy, this is very dangerous. But what can you do, you loo – should do something –

Q: Okay.

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A: – you know.

Q: But were y – when you say you were underground, does that mean you were part of a group, or this was just your own initiative –

A: No, no, they – they applied to me. They ask me, because they knew that my mother is working in the office.

Q: Who would – okay, we must – we must then discu – who is they who came to you? Who were the people who came to you?

A: Okay, now, my mother looked for job for me, okay?

Q: Okay.

A: And the only – and then not – I don't know if the only, but the most kind of thing not to be outside, was to work in the woods.

Q: Okay.

A: And they – they said that they need defer – des – desperately people that can work in the woods and cut trees.

Q: Okay, this is the – the civil in –

A: So she said, how about my son? So I went to this job, and then this job actually was big fake because was a little cutting woods, but mostly was underground. And when th-they come to me, **Kazik** come to me, you know, one of the

**[indecipherable][speaks Polish]**



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Q: What is that?

A: You like to be with us.

Q: Okay.

A: So [**indecipherable**] what it is, and he explained me what, and he gave me underground newspaper, and said, do you read about it? This is – this is one of the newspapers that we – there been two – two newspapers.

Q: And this was in Russian?

A: No, that was in –

Q: Or it was in Belarusian?

A: – Polish, in Polish.

Q: This was Polish.

A: Polish. Polish underground.

Q: So this was the **Armia Krajowa**?

A: **Armia Krajowa**, yes. **Armia kra** – yeah.

Q: So the Pole who was working – that you were with the priest and so on, and he was working there, was this the –

A: Yeah, but priest didn't know about it from beginning, but I st – I told to priest later. I told him that I am in this armia – in this underground. So he said, **badź ostrożny**. Be careful, he said.

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Q: Okay. So – but the – the man who – who you didn't like, who he was marrying –

A: Yeah.

Q: – was that man working against the Soviet partisans, or the mo – **Armia**

**Krajowa?**

A: This was a – mostly because not sa – partis – I don't know, he was against this – he was something cooperating with Germans, that's was only good enough for us, you know, there.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: You know, I don't remember exactly –

Q: Okay.

A: – his ec – experiences, but it was very bad one for us, you know.

Q: Okay. So, here's another question. Again you are in hod – horo –

A: **Horodyszcze.**

Q: **Horodyszcze. Horodyszcze.** And there are anti – there is the **Armia Krajowa** –

A: **Armia Krajowa.**

Q: – and there are the Soviet partisans.

A: S-Soviet partisan, **Armia Krajowa** and the Germans.

Q: And Germans.

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A: Germans. There was battalion – police battalion, there was terrible

**[indecipherable]** can figure out what it was.

Q: Tell me. Tell me what it was.

A: There was a – there was mostly Ukrainians. There's very few others, you know, but it's funny, Lithuanians have been not in this battalion, but Lithuanians come separately sometimes, but – but Ukrainians – the Germans have been just officers.

Q: Okay.

A: And they been few – some Belarusians.

Q: Okay.

A: And supposedly was few Poles, but I never met them, I don't know. But they said the – the **Armia Krajowa** said there are a few Poles –

Q: Okay.

A: – in this whatever – I tell you, could be there be a few Poles, because one time they decided to – to just surround all of this you – ji – Poles from the battalion, so it means they have been – that they knew exactly who – who was in this battalion. But I di – I didn't know.

Q: Okay, so tell us what is this police battalion? What was – so we had talked about the different groups that were there.

A: Yeah.

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Q: There was the – the Soviet partisans, the **Armia Krajowa** for the Poles.

A: Yeah.

Q: There's the German army, and then tell me, who are these police battalions, and who do they work for?

A: Police battalion was very much German.

Q: Okay.

A: I mean, German management, you know, the officers have been German. Top of a – on top was German general, or official, I don't know exactly his rank. I think he was higher rank – high rank.

Q: Okay.

A: And they – they had been making mass borders of population. Not Jews necessarily.

Q: Okay.

A: It was not against Jews, is against population.

Q: Okay.

A: They said – they decided that this village, or that village is for partisans, for example, from some reasons. They come and they burn this and kill everybody, etcetera. This was a police battalion.

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Q: This is – so, these were battalions that were used, formed by the Germans, used by the Germans –

A: Yes.

Q: – but they were made up of others, non-Germans. So in this case, Ukrainians and Belarusians.

A: Ukrainian, Belarusian. I – I don't know about Lithuanians, I – I never had the Lithuanian languages, so I don't think so. Because Lithuanian only spoken in **Lithuania**, you know.

Q: Yeah. And did you ever have any direct contact with these police battalions? Did you see them, did you –

A: No, they had been there – I know they had been there, but I didn't have any – no, I –

Q: Did they live – did they have like a separate barracks?

A: They – yeah, they have – they have a – they – they – they require for them big area, you know, so they have it. Yeah, they –

Q: Okay.

A: It's like a camp, you know, they have a camp.

Q: Okay. And was – and you said earlier that there was no German military presence.

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A: They had been seven Germans – gem – gendarmerie, you know, seven of them.

Q: Okay.

A: One of them was extremely nice.

Q: Really?

A: And he likes me.

Q: Okay.

A: **[indecipherable]** But I was very careful not to – not to involve with the – because it was very clever, because later they arrested all Poles who had been good relation with Germans, because they suspect them, that they are spying on them. So that was very clever, because I was thinking about it, you know, but he was trying to push – come – come for dinner to us, etcetera, but I – I said, we are too – too poor, we don – we poor –

Q: You can't, yeah.

A: – we can't, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: But – but he was actually nice guy, you know, I know it, yeah. Because he never – he – he was kind of like against the killing, etcetera. But who knows? I figure out, don't touch, you know. So **[indecipherable]** you know.

Q: And –

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A: There was seven of them.

Q: So there was –

A: And I tell you something else, there was a line – kind of like a small fortification, because they bi – they had been afraid of partisans, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So they – where was the gendarmerie, they had a kind of few bunkers, you know, from the – one side of the road. On the other side was Belarusian police, you know. They had been just terrible, just like unbelievable, yeah.

Q: And why – and how is this so – why were the Belarusian police also terrible? Were they – yeah, tell me about that.

A: You know, I think that this is – they – they been terrible not just against Jews, but against the partisans, you know, etcetera, because apparently every – every group of people, if ye – certain – certain situation, it change, you know, something.

I have no idea why they did it so – there was no reason, because they been all people from farms, you know. So why they should be so – so mean?

Q: Well, what would they do? Tell me, what is the things –

A: Well, they been – went to the farms, and they been killing people, you know, that's what – that's what they did, you know?

Q: To – the same way as the police battalions?

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A: Y-Yeah, the same way, but you know, not so organized like police battalion, was more military type of things, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So the – the – but they had been bad too, you know, yeah. But I tell you something, listen.

Q: Okay.

A: They – they been – I told you I was working in the woods, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: And after some time, the guy that was working in a – in-in – in the woods, you know, from this forestry, he was afraid to go to the woods, anymore, because of partisans. He was Belarusian, you know. So they told me, **George** da – I mean, **Jurek**(ph) [indecipherable] if I like to have his – his job. So I figure out of course, why not, you know? So you know, I inherited not only his job, but his horse, you know. So you know how it is. So one time this Germans said that they need wood – wood for fire, because they were – they don't have any wood. So they said, of course, you should go to – to me, and they organized – they organized for me some line of police –

Q: Escort?



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A: – escort [indecipherable] can you figure? You know, to go to the woods and – and grab some woods, you know, because they have been afraid of partisans, you know? And I was never afraid of partisan, I figure, what can happen? They talk to me, I said look, look at up here.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: You know? Yeah, I tell you, this movie unbelievable. I-I tell you, I'm not kidding, you know –

Q: Yeah.

A: – so I'm not kidding.

Q: So that's way, you were – with the safety patrol –

A: Yeah, I had my –

Q: – you go to the woods –

A: – safety pa – yeah, I [indecipherable] yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: So, you know – so, but lu – this u – the problem was, when we come there, half of the wood, or more than half was either stolen – ei-either sold by me to – for food, you know, for us, because I was taking that. But there was some of them, some of them they took very few, and they come back and say – they had been very eager to shoot because it was how it is. So they started to shoot just in the air.

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Q: Because they're looking for partisans, they don't find them, and they shoot them in the air.

A: Yeah, they – yeah, something to do, you know, and th – so that is – oh boy.

Q: Okay. Now, it sounds to me like there was no question of going to school. Were you –

A: Are you kidding? No, of course not.

Q: No school.

A: No.

Q: What happened with **Aviva**? Your mother is work –

A: **Avivka**(ph)?

Q: Yeah.

A: Went to school.

Q: She went to school?

A: Yeah, she went to school, a-and she has a girlfriend about her sa – her age. This was not the one from **Plater**, because they – they move from this place. At that time she – she is there, but not in the area any more. But she went with – with another girl to school, and they mostly dance, and singing, you know, this kind of things like this.

Q: Now, her name was **Aviva**?

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A: **Aviva. Marcela** was – we didn't use **Aviva** name, for heaven's sake.

Q: Okay.

A: **Aviva** in Hebrew [**indecipherable**]

Q: Okay. That's why I was –

A: **Marcela**.

Q: **Marcela**.

A: **Marcelka(ph). Marcelka(ph), yes, Marcelka(ph).**

Q: **Marcel – Marcelka(ph).**

A: Yeah.

Q: So the whole family – we have – your mother is **Franciska(ph)**?

A: **Franciska(ph).**

Q: **Franciska(ph) –**

A: **Marcelka(ph).**

Q: **Jurek(ph).**

A: **Jurek(ph), Marcela(ph).**

Q: And **Marcela(ph).**

A: Yeah.

Q: **Dunin**

A: **Dunin**, of course –

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Q: **Dunin**.

A: – yes.

Q: And so, with **Aviva** there is no –

A: Oh, you kidding?

Q: There – no, okay.

A: [**indecipherable**]

Q: But – but **Marcela** then –

A: **Marcela**, yeah –

Q: – she's too little – was there any danger that she would ever say anything that could get anyone in trouble?

A: Well, you – she was so clever, you kidding. She would never – no, of course she was hero fantastic.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: How old was she at that point?

A: Well, she was just like – like **Roza**, you know, she was her friend, you know.

Was five or six, something like this. They went dancing together. I remember, **Roza** an-and her. Can you figure that she living now? Isn't it something?

Q: This is the lady who knew you who is the relative of the **Plater**.

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A: Yeah, of course, their parents, you know, **Plater**, they were **Plater**.

Q: Yeah. So, how did li – how did things go with your mother? Your mother knew you were in the underground?

A: Oh definitely, she was part of it. She was a – she – she was the one, the source. I didn't have any source for underground, you know. She told me what the thing that has any meaning, you know. No, there's some things like do this, or that, it doesn't make any sense. But there are certain things that they have meaning here. But I tell you, look, if you like to know more about it, I – this was a – something that is – how they tried to, in spite of it, they – after they – they arrested many Poles, you know, there was times that they arrested Poles not only in **Horodyszcze**, but all over bara – **Belorussia**. And th-this group of for – forestry, you know, this was forestry, they – they run away to – eventually they couldn't stand it the most, they run away to – to woods, you know. And I –

Q: Okay, so this is the **Armia Krajowa**.

A: **Armia Krajowa**. But they run away because they figure out that they cou – they – they are in big danger, and they have been in big danger. They pretend that from beginning they are friend of Germans, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: It was just a fake, you know.

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Q: Mm-hm.

A: And the Germans give them weapons, you know, to fight partisans. One of the weapon what they give them was machine gun. And guess who – whom the Polish **Krajowa** teach how to use machine gun. Me.

Q: You?

A: Yes. I told you this is – as well I told you, it's [**indecipherable**] movie.

Q: Well yeah, you're an altar boy who knows how to operate a machine gun.

A: Yeah. Can I tell you, I'm not kidding, I – I tell you that – I never met anybody who had this of –

Q: Okay.

A: – you know, so anyway – so, I didn't know what to do because they told me, we're running away, you go with us. He – they ask me because they figure out that I am too – too – oh, listen, they – they said that I am not too good to – to go in the woods, etcetera because ma – I don't ride horses as good as they are riding horses, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So th – so they told me to stay here and we'll be in touch, you know, give us some new – if there is some – some news, we'll somehow send somebody –

Q: Okay.

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A: – you tell us about it.

Q: Okay.

A: But then, you know, that is – no – I tell you, this is just unbelievable, I don't know when to stop, because there is [indecipherable] you know, this is just unbelievable. It's just something like –

Q: Okay.

A: – hundred movies, not just one, you know. Well, anyway, so – but still the – the Gestapo still figure out that this thing, something, that I didn't run with them, I didn't go with them to woods, that I staying here, that's something not in order. They tried to ti – to try me. So you know what they did? This I should show you the picture, in order to that you understand how I found out that this is something fake. Anyway, I will show you later. I look at right through the window, and I was at home, and there was a small room that we had. But the window shows street left and right, and ahead of me. So I have seen one guy that – going from the area of police and Gestapo, you know – there was some – always somebody from Gestapo too, you know, from this gendarmerie, he was staying with gendarmerie.

Q: Okay.

A: And then somebody comes from this area in direction – in my direction, but I recognize him from his head, because he –

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Q: Okay.

A: – he always wears this kind of old-fashioned hat, kind of long kind of hat.

Q: Civilian clothes.

A: Yeah, civilian clothes. And – and he's – he was going to the street

[**indecipherable**] apartment – of apartment – our apart – our house. Our – our room. And then, you know, I didn't expect it, but he come to me to – to my room, and lock the door, and say hi, and he said his name. I figure out I did his name. I know he is from police, because he comes from the – who is going to – and I have seen many times, so he – I figure out immediately, uh-oh, there's some kind of trick, he's coming up.

Q: Okay.

A: And what happened, he said look, I have a message from **Kazik**. Well, **Kazik** was in underground, the one that he run away with – with horses, etcetera. And he is asking me, said you write – write – write him back.

Q: That you write him back?

A: Yeah, he said – he said, he ask him to write back you know, he – he pull out – he pull off from here big kind of envelope, or something. And this is a letter from **Kazik** to you, and **Kazik** asked me to give you, and you should write him back. Well, you know, I figure out immediately that **Kazik** will never send somebody



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[**indecipherable**] you know. But you – what – what I couldn't pretend that this fake.

Q: Okay.

A: So what I did, the – listen, the – the –

Q: Okay.

A: – to what I did. I said oh, son of a gun, I said, I write him back – okay, I will write him back. I wrote him, kiss mine ass. I tell you, when I told this in the public library, they all started to scream and [**indecipherable**] it's something unbelievable, you know. And I – I mean, if you like, you can bring it to Germans, to this guy, you know, who was in [**indecipherable**] and show him. So he said, oh yeah, I said, I must, because I don't have a choice, because every letter that come illegally, I should give them.

Q: Okay.

A: So he – he wro – he wrote this letter. In meantime, my mother come from work, and I told her, kind of discreet, what is going on. So you know what he said? I bring this letter to the commandant of the battalion. You know? And so – so as he –

Q: That's what your mother is saying.

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A: No, wait a minute. So he wrote this letter to the commandant of battalion told me – battalion told her, look, if you've got more letters like this, please bring me too, you know.

Q: Okay. So, in other words, this was a provocation.

A: Pr – yeah – no – was provocation. This is something how they operate, you know?

Q: Okay.

A: This is typical for Gestapo. They just make fake documents, and kind of see that you answer something, and they uh-oh **[indecipherable]**

Q: You're part of it, yeah.

A: Can you figure if I ask greetings even, I say – I will be killed, and my mother will be killed, and my sister will be killed.

Q: And was this a Belarusian, or a rush – or a German?

A: This was a Polish.

Q: This was a Polish?

A: Polish.

Q: Ges – who was working for the Gestapo.

A: Yeah, of course, somebody, yeah, somebody. Because letter – letter was written in Polish. Letter written in Polish. Good Polish.

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Q: And the man with the hat was a Pole?

A: The hat – the hat, I don't know who he was. He was speaking bylo – Belarusian.

Q: Okay. But not German.

A: No-No, not German, no, no.

Q: Okay, so, was somebody –

A: But he was kind of informer, you know, police informer. But you know, I have seen him many times, coming from the same area. And who can be in this area of police, coming all the time? Somebody that's connected with them, you know.

Q: Who feels safe there.

A: Yeah, you know, I mean – so, you know, and – and his hat he never changed, so I recognized him immediately from far – oh, he's coming, you know. But I didn't know was he's coming to me. But let me tell you something sad.

Q: Okay.

A: I told you that the priest liked me very much. I like him too, because he was very nice to me. I – I never told him who I am, never.

Q: Never?

A: But when – there was times that they arrested – starting to arrest Poles, you know, and I didn't expect they would arrest him because, in my opinion, and I – I – I know for sure, because when I told him that – that maybe I should run away with

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them to woods, so he said it, by all means, don't do it, you know, he told me don't. And – and if I would do it something – so even if I was safe too, they would kill my mother, you know. So I figured out that he's right, and I d – you n – I – I hated the Germans so much, figure I should run in the woods, you know, etcetera. But then, after he told me this, and I figure too, was that, so I've – I am not going to run away. But I will stay and do what they ask me. They ask me to be a – to be the contact between them and – and the city, you know, if there is something that I should [indecipherable]. But one time, when they started to arrest Poles, and I was in the house, and I – this window was so important for me. I look it up, and you ca – you can see on the map that his **plebania**, you know, where this priest was living, he was on the top of this small street going up, and visible from my window. And I look it up, I see that the one – one German officer, and – and one Belarusian that I knew him, because he was – his family was living next to our apartment, you know. They come to his house, to this a – when this was a –

**Q: Klebonija.**

**A: Plebonia(ph) – plebania.** He – the priest was living – it was a housekeeper and her daughter, you know. Polish, you know, very nice. We always having good relations in. And then ar – I look it up, it wa – why they come to his house, you know? My God – very scared to death. Well, few minutes later I see they c – they

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come, and he comes. And he keep in his hand prayer book. So I figure up, terrible. Something very bad. And he – they arrested him and brought him in – in the – from upper, down toward – toward – in direction to this o – to this – you know, I told you, gendarmerie and for police, etcetera, the direction, but they need to go next to my window, you know. And then they come, and they stop next to my house. And I figure, well, they going to ki – ki – kill me. But the guy that was with the German officer, he was an – our neighbor, he come to the German just like this; leave him alone. You know, I figure out leave him alone, that's what this means, like this, don't – don't –

Q: Not to bother you.

A: Not to bother me.

Q: Okay.

A: Not to bother. Because, you know, maybe he was afraid that we can say something against him, or something, being a neighbor, or some reason, some reason, whatever it was, i-i-it – it saved my life, you know. So – but – but this priest, you know, eventually they kill all of the Poles that they arrested. Was only hundred – 150 Poles, they kill them.

Q: All of them?

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A: For no reason. Just because they been Poles. They tu – in **Koldyczewo**, you know, they didn't kill it in **Horodyszcze**, they brought them to **Koldyczewo**.

There's this gu – this is concentration camp maybe 15 miles – 15 kilometers from **Horodyszcze**, maybe. No more than 15. And there been already Many Jewish people killed in **Koldzyczewo**. And some Belarusians, some partisans and now Poles. And the – they arrested – they arrested almost all Polish population. I-I-It's just amazing, isn't it something? It just – they didn't touch us, you know, it's just ama-amazing. It was su – ha – just miracles, you know.

Q: What was the priest's name? Do you remember?

A: His name? Not really, I don't remember.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't remember his name. I don't remember. But he was – he was such a mellow person, you know. Such a fantastic guy, you know, was just unbelievable. I even now think about him –

Q: Really?

A: – you know? Yeah, because I remember him, **Pani Jurko(ph)**, **Pani Jurko(ph)**. He don't – he always telling me too, **Pani Jurko(ph)**. And he told me, don't go with them, don't go with them. He was one of the reasons that I didn't go. I probably won't go either, but he was even enforce me, you know.

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Q: But that also shows that you had a relation with him, that you could go to him for advice.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: You could – you could – up until the point where you tell him you're Jewish –

A: That's a good point, bere – yeah, I was –

Q: – you could –

A: – drinking – I was thinking that he will – I was kind of eager to know what he's going to tell you about it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because I told to him – say, as a goodbye –

Q: Okay.

A: – oh, this'll – he told me, don't go there. He told me very clearly. Because he told me, did you hear about thi-this a – if this ga – happened a lot in **Warsaw**? Is – there is uprising in **Warsaw**? I mean no, I didn't. So don't go. You see, if you'd – it would be like a general uprising, you know, of Poles or something, he won't say so.

But because this was very individual down pla – on this place that they joining some groups there, and some groups there, because this was so –

Q: So, well – so many people, you know –

A: Completely innoc –

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Q: – lives were – lives were lost for no reason.

A: For no reason.

Q: For no reason.

A: Yeah, but I'm tell you, they kill ou –

Q: Yeah.

A: They – okay, from the ki – from the Polish population in the city who survive [indecipherable] then there was – one guy there was name **Martuzczuk**(ph), he was photographer, and then was Dr. **Rowinska**(ph), this was th – he was actually doctor with his – with his daughter. Six people, six Poles survive – survive with Polish population in this town.

Q: And the **Dunins**.

A: And the **Dunin**, yes.

Q: And three **Dunins**.

A: And – and thi – three **Dunins**, three.

Q: Three **Dunins**.

A: Three.

Q: Yeah.



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A: How about this? You know? Ho-How about this, yeah. Where do you – where do you have such a people that you talk to **[indecipherable]** you know. Because that's just unbelievable.

Q: And during these three years –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you did not feel like you could be identified, you could be – someone could discover that you were Jewish?

A: No. No, absolutely not, you know, but I was mo – more afraid to be ki-killed as Pole during this time.

Q: You were in more danger becau –

A: Yeah.

Q: – being – okay.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: But, you know, there was – they didn't – they didn't have any more Jews to kill, so they killed Poles, you know.

Q: Well, you know, there were many – this is – **Jan** – I mean, I'm sure you – you know of **Jan Nowak-Jeziorański**, who was also in the underground, who went to **Britain**?

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A: Yeah.

Q: He was in the – very high up in the Home Army.

A: Yeah.

Q: And his message to the British government is, first they're killing the Jews, and then they're going to come after us.

A: Yeah, listen, **Jan Karski** talked to me about these things that –

Q: Yeah.

A: He knows about me.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. But he died.

Q: Yes.

A: I wish that he didn't, but yeah.

Q: So, are there any other moments that stand out for you during these three years, that you would like us to know about, that you know, that show about something of your life there, and what you were experiencing?

A: Well, you know, everything else was not dangerous of life, but was certain danger – like, for example, that's what I was starting to talk about, the bakery in **Vilnius**, because se – I was utch – **uczeniek**(ph), **uczeniek**(ph).

Q: Is it –

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A: It means I was – they call me **uczeniek**(ph), it means that I am tra – learning the trade of bakery, you know.

Q: Okay. You're an apprentice.

A: Op – yeah, apprent – yeah. So, you know, but – you know. And my mother was working some office. Now, the payment in the office –

Q: Okay then, if we're talking about **Wilno** again, take me from horo –

**Horodowice**(ph) to **Wilno**. When do you –

A: Okay.

Q: – finish living there?

A: Oh, okay, oh.

Q: And, you know, how does things wrap up in – in **Horodowice**(ph)?

A: Okay, know how it was – okay, know – you know, then – then the – okay, okay, we'll talk another couple hours, no problem, I can –

Q: Oh gosh.

A: No, you know, because listen, everything is miracles, you know. Everything is so unbelievable, because – because I am very not everyday person, honestly. Let me tell you something, look, when the – when the Russian – Russian offense started from in – from direction of course of **Minsk**, and all of this, direction toward **Horodyszcz**e, and farther, you know. But then we knew this according how's it

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going, according movement of this German military, because we have seen pushing by through the main highway. We have been next to the highways that going to **Baranovichi**, you know, so we knew the transport was going somewhere. We look it up and then we see lot of German cars going from di – in direction to **Baranovichi** to – to this way, and down.

Q: In other words, they're going from east to west.

A: Fr-From – yeah, to – yeah, to way –

Q: They're retreating.

A: Retreating. So – but we didn't know how long it will take, but one time they – they – they stopped it to – to walk by foot, you know? So I figure out uh-oh, this mean already is closer, you know. And they – they declare – same time they declare evacuation of **Horodyszcze**. This was fantastic because evacuation is mess, nobody knows anything, nobody cared to arrest somebody, you know, the evacuation, it – it absolutely fantastic in our case, you know. But how to move, and where? So they decide we – we – they dec – dec – they decide ts – look, our – our ho – this place that we're living had not far from police department, you know. I will show you on the map how it is. And they – they said – I ask one of policemen, where are you going? We going to **Warsaw**, he said. But this is not – this is just – it was – was not true. Later, I figure out that's not true because I knew geography, and I know the

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way how we going that it's not **Warsaw**, but **Königsberg**. So you know, but they – they lie that they going to **Warsaw**, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: Just to fool around. So – so – so we figure out **Warsaw**, fantastic, here, let's go – let's jump – jump on one of the cars what everyone's – was empty car, nobody staying next to the car. We come to this cart, and with horse and everything. And they decided to – to leave, and they left and we had been living together with them, you know, nobody check –

Q: And this is German army?

A: No, this was not German army, this was police, it was.

Q: Oh, it was the police, okay.

A: The police. Was not German army, no.

Q: Okay.

A: There was – I don't know if it's ge-gendarmerie, maybe. I am not sure about. I think that the –

Q: The Belarusian gendar – the Belarusian police, or the –

A: The Belarusian. Belarusian police.

Q: Okay.

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A: So, you know, we went with them. And then, on the way, you know – on the way they decided that this cart, they liked to have **[indecipherable]** cart, so they – they gave us another cart, you know. That's fine, so we got another cart. So we have anything left, because this means that they used to us, you know, that we – we are okay, you know what I mean? We – they figure out they can question what we're doing here, you know.

Q: Right.

A: – but several – such a mess of disorganization that they didn't – didn't have a time to – to check –

Q: To think, yeah.

A: To see – yeah, okay. Well, we didn't realize that in this cart, under straw, there are guns, ammunition, uniforms and everything, you know? But we didn't – I didn't check what's underneath, I figure I just – you know. And so we went in one place, you know. Here again, we have to do with priest, how about this? We went to one place that we decided we should run away from them because they are going to **Königsberg**, and not **Warsaw**, we better get out from here – this place.

Q: Okay.

A: So I went to this church, and the guy, this priest was ver – was very ir – understanding, and he said yes, by all means, don't stay with them. So, I mean, but

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where we going? So he got – he – he told me exactly where to go and where I should s – make a left turn, you know, th – I have it here, this what he told me.

Q: Okay.

A: Go to [indecipherable] I gave you letter to the **soltys**. **Soltys** is the head of the village.

Q: Okay.

A: I – I will give him letter that you say should accommodate you, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So this is something we should do. That was easy to say, but difficult to do it, because they watching us. They started to watch us somehow, and they put horsemen on both sides of our car.

Q: Well, you have the guns.

A: Ye-Yeah, but – but we – I didn't know I have the guns, you see –

Q: Okay.

A: – I didn't know. But then, you know, so after sometimes, you know, the guy on the left side start to be tired or something, and he disappeared from this, I don't know what happened. And the other guy, just before we – we cut – we come to the ci – to the town that we should go, he still was there, but he has close eyes, and he was sleeping with the horse, you know. But – but – but you know – but we went a

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little farther, and I figure out he sleep very well, and le – we can come back, you know, we can turn back and turn this place that he [indecipherable]. And then was – then th – the problem was, it was German camp next to this, and I figure out they will see that somebody's running from this thing, they can run after us, you know. But this horse, just like we understand something, he start to run like crazy, you know, and I didn't say anything. And we just went up so fast, you know, that they f – I figure out even if they will see that we're something, will – it will be too late for them to catch up with us, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So they – eventually we found the **soltys**, the guy who was in charge, and he accommodate us. So this was one part.

Q: So now you have a horse and a cart and weapons and guns and everything.

A: Yeah, yeah, but the hor – the horse we gave better to these guys that accommodate us, because we didn't – what are we going to do with this horse, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: But how do I know about the guns? Because – because we left this cart, you know, after the – they – they took this horse, they too – they left the cart, and we went to these woods, you know. They were big woods, you know. So we figure out



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this is safer to be in the woods with other people. And he told us that Ukrainian partisans had been there, and they found guns, ammunition. But they left uniforms. So we took the uniform. Later, we sold them. What kind of guns, they took guns and ammunition, but uniforms they sold it, you know? So the – okay, there was a – you like to farther? Everything is there.

Q: Well, what I want to know is – is did you – did the cer – **[break - technical interruption]** Okay, so when we stopped before, we were – before this break, we were talking about how you and your mother turned off to a little side street with a cart that had guns, and se –

A: Oh yeah.

Q: – and – and uniforms, and that you sold the uniforms.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And was this – did this mean that the Soviet army was not far behind, because you were evacuating?

A: Absolutely you're right.

Q: Okay. So what happened then? Where – where did you –

A: Okay.

Q: You – there you were, no horse, you're someplace –

A: Yeah.

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Q: – you know, you have the sol – the – the uniforms that you sell. What happens?

A: Okay, first, you know, when we come to this place, we have seen – there were no Soviets, but there have been Germans – German officer, and three guns, something like this – couple guns, you know. And they been shooting in direction to Russian. And each time they shoot, it was so noisy, you know, was just terrible. But the problem was not what they shoot, but they shoot against them, because we have been there. So this – after some times, we didn't wait too long, they started to shoot in the – in our direction to hit this –

Q: Germans.

A: – Germans, you know. So can you figure what it was, it was big, heavy artillery, was not just small artil – and we – so there was one place I don't remember, we dig ourselves, so it was already dark, and we have been in some kind of hou – place in the – in the ground, you know, to be safer, you know. But, of course if this will hit us, it will be terrible, but it didn't, but was hitting all around us, you know. But one of them hit very close to us, I remember very much, and we had been shocked, you know. But this was – after – after this, we had enough of this area. We had come to the woods – inside the woods, you know, because in big part of the woods, you know, and they – not only us, there had been other people that run away from the villages too, because there have been bombs and [indecipherable]. Now, what –

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what was a – the very unusual things happen again, you know, that first, you know, in this woods here was very nice, but was nothing to eat, of course, you know. But was lot of berries. So we coll – I – I collected – we have been some safe – relatively safe place, and my mother and my sister, and I said let me – I will go out and collect some berries, you know. So I went out and brou – and I way – I – I haven – I didn't have any – any dish to collect them, but they been very big leaves like kind of leaves. So I use a leaf to collect the berries, you know. And I already have maybe like half of the leaves with berries someplace, and then somebody call me. **[Speaks Russian]**. In Russian. **[Speaks Russian]** Come here, please. Come here, here. And I – I – from beginning I got scared to death because I figure out maybe this is **[indecipherable]** maybe this is – Russians they work, they are with Nazis together.

Q: The Ger – the na –

A: Yeah.

Q: – the Russians who work for the Nazis, yeah.

A: And so I was very careful **[indecipherable]** I come closer, very careful, and then I see the epaulets. I figure out, oh, they are actually Soviets.

Q: Soviets.

A: So I was so happy, I was – I come to them and I – and – and a – and I come them and hug them, and they – and I give them the – the –

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Q: The berries.

A: – the berries. And –

Q: And what hap –

A: It was still somebody

Q: Yeah?

A: This wa – it's there – like **Russia**, yeah, suddenly at this point we already – this was the border between life and death, you know.

Q: So, at that – do you know where in **Belarus** you were?

A: Where I am? I am safe, you know, it could be lack of this, lack of that, but I'm safe. Nobody's going to kill me because I'm Jewish, you know what I mean? No, not only this. The s-soldiers have been happy too. They have been – they told us in Russian [**speaks Russian**] So I –

Q: What did they ask you, to write something?

A: – I tell you what, listen, do you know – look, look, do you know how many years ago it was?

Q: How many?

A: You figure it out. How many years? I remember still the name of the soldiers, **Stanov(ph)**, **Madzianov(ph)**. I – one was on the **velosiped**, you know, on the bicycle, and one was on horse. **Stanov(ph)**, **Madzianov(ph)**, I remember the names

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of the soldiers that saved – that I met them in the woods, you know, can you figure?

This was so important for me, it's – okay, you know.

Q: Okay. And – and yet, your mother and your sister were not far away.

A: No, I call them. I call them, because they been – they been not very far away, where there was the woods, but – but you know, in woods you g – the – the voice is going very good, you know.

Q: That's right.

A: So I call them, hey, come here. I – I – I call them in Russian so they know that – that they are friends, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: I call them. **[speaks Russian]** come here, come here. Yeah, I say.

Q: So this was – wa –

A: This was a –

Q: This was a – a moment in time.

A: Moment in time.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, right. Yeah.

Q: Do you remember about when this was? Was this in 1944?

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A: No, it was in summertime, the late summer, you know, where the offensive, the Soviet offensive was. And then we go to **Wilno**.

Q: Okay, so this is –

A: Now you know it.

Q: Okay now. So there – you're still in **Belarus**.

A: Still in **Belarus**.

Q: This is late summer '44.

A: No, this was – wait a minute, this was already – no, it was **[indecipherable]** this was already – not far from the border was **Belarus**. It was already **Poland** of today.

Q: Okay.

A: This was **Poland** –

Q: Okay.

A: **Sokółka Sikulani**(ph)

Q: Okay. And – and so your sister and your mother come, and at this point you still don't know what your father – where your father was.

A: No, no, we don't know if he alive, nothing.

Q: Okay.

A: No.

Q: So you're with this – these two soldiers. Were there more soldiers with them?

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A: After short time we started to come. And I remember one officer ask me – there was a kind of like a big group of soldiers – what direction the Germans left.

Q: Okay.

A: But here I can tell you something very interesting. During night before, we have been laying down and sleeping on the bushes someplace, and it – and – and you know the Germans have been living, apparently. And I have seen his boots next to me. Because you know, in woods you know, you don't see very far advanced **[indecipherable]**. I have seen this line of soldiers coming and stepping kind of just – this is the **[indecipherable]**. I've seen that's na – the Germans leaving, you know, running away, you know.

Q: And you're down in – in the ground.

A: Yeah, around – around – around yeah, and the – and I've seen this.

Q: And just the night before.

A: Just night before.

Q: So you – did you point the – the Russian soldiers in the direction of where the Germans were?

A: No, this one I ga – I didn't **[indecipherable]** after he – after already these people – I met these people, then I have seen the German office – it's a Russian officer in very group of soldiers. I told them that honestly, I honestly don't know, because I

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was hidden at that time, you know, I was – I didn't know exactly they come left or right, you know. There was only two possibilities where they run. They run away.

Q: Okay.

A: That's for sure, you know, they run away, because they didn't go like some kind of fighting, but they ran away.

Q: Okay.

A: But saving – saving – very understanding, he say [indecipherable] we understand that you couldn't see it, you know.

Q: Okay. And so – and so what happens then?

A: Okay, now, after we're already having free of [indecipherable] then, you know, we come back to **Sokółka**, to place named [indecipherable]. We have been one day there, and then, of course, our thoughts were every – to go to **Wilno**. You know why?

Q: Why?

A: Because we figure out that my father somehow – somehow will look us in **Wilno**.

Q: He will look for you there.

A: In **Wilno**, yeah, he – they – it was right, he was, yeah.

Q: Okay.



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A: When we come to **Wilno**, we went to si – very – it was not ki – family, but the – the – the sister of – of a girlfriend of my aunt, they're living in **Wilno** and si – we found – we – we knew exactly [**indecipherable**] and we come there and there – she was there. And somehow we knew that was a family – Russian family **Dynin** in **Russia**, my father was there, you know. Because they sent – they sent the email somehow, or the telegraph, or telephone, whatever it was, telegraph, that he's s-s-safe and alive, you know.

Q: Okay, this –

A: We learn – we learn in **Wilno** –

Q: Okay.

A: – as soon as we come almost, as soon as ra – somehow – I don't know how they send it to – to – but anyway, we got this news that he is okay.

Q: Okay.

A: And one – one – one day later, we got cable from him too, you know.

Q: Was he still in **Russia** at that time?

A: Right, in **Russia**.

Q: In 1945?

A: Yes.

Q: 1944 –

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A: Yeah, still in **Russia**.

Q: 1944, 1945.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So the war isn't over yet.

A: No.

Q: But – but – but this part has been liberated from the Nazis.

A: Yeah, that – yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay. So, at this point, tell me – you will learn – you learn all this later, but tell me, what happened to your father? What was his destiny during the war years?

A: Okay, now after he was arrested by – by the **KGB**, or whatever, was encav – **NKVD** was the – he was in this camp for I don't know how long, but not – not a – more than year, maybe. And then there was amnesty, you know, so the amnesty was rather sh – soon – sooner, maybe sm –

Q: Explain to us why there was an amnesty – what would – what –

A: Why is they do? Because – because they – before they been allies with – with **Germany**, remember? They divided **Poland** because they been allies with **Germany**.

Q: The Soviets

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A: The Soviets. But then they decided they're their enemy. The German attack them, you know. So they s – **Poland** such was part of the allies, you know. That's – and there was even Polish army in **Russia**. There was not the ones that my father was being – my father was in Polish army **Poland**, you know. I – General **Anders'** Army.

Q: Okay.

A: But – so they declare amnesty, you know, f – because –

Q: For all the people who had been –

A: For all the Poles – for all Poles they have been in their prisons. Everybody. So, it was –

Q: So what happened with your father?

A: That there was – so then – then wa – after this he – he went – I go – I think that wa – then he joined the Polish army.

Q: He joined General **Anders'** Army?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And did he stay in the **Soviet Union**?

A: No, you know general gi – **Anders'** Army was moving around. I don't know exactly what place, but he was in so many different places, I don't know, some in **Tashkent**?

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Q: Okay.

A: In **Tashkent**, and some other places. I don't know exactly how they – but I know that he was in few places there was war going on, but –

Q: Did he leave the territory of the **Soviet Union**?

A: Way – apparently yes ap – yeah, the ge – ge – after he free from the Polish army – after ze – he got – he – he was – yeah, definitely he pul – he re – the **Soviet Union**, or – in the Polish army, I think yes, they did – the **[indecipherable]** was not **Russia**, no?

Q: **Soviet Union**.

A: **So-Soviet Union**. So I don't exactly his-history how **[indecipherable]** I know that he arrives somehow to **Palestine**. That's I know, you know. But I don't know exactly details –

Q: Okay.

A: – how he reached there, but –

Q: But when you got the cable from him, when you and your mother and sister go back to **Wilno** –

A: Yeah.

Q: Is the cable coming from **Palestine**, or from somewhere else in the **Soviet Union**?

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A: No, the cable ke – cable come from **Moscow**.

Q: From **Moscow**.

A: From **Moscow**, yes.

Q: Does that mean he was in **Moscow** at that time?

A: Very possible, I think so, yeah. Looks like that he was with his family, **Dynin**.

There was family **Dynin** in **Moscow**, you know, so he –

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: So – sure.

Q: Okay, so your father's story isn't quite – isn't very clear.

A: I don't have exactly the details one by one, you know, but I know that he was in this army, Polish army, and he was oka – I have his document, military document someplace here, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: And eventually he appear in the – in **Palestine**.

Q: Okay. But you and your mother and sister, you are now back in **Wilno**, and where are you living?

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A: In **Wilno**? I told you when – in **Wilno**, in **Wilno**, in **Wilno**, we – the just exactly – we live in this – in this relative of my Uncle [**indecipherable**]. At that time I think he was still [**indecipherable**] was not married, you know.

Q: Okay. Were they Jewish?

A: Yeah, Jewish.

Q: So they survived? They survived having –

A: They survive, yes, they survive that, so yes.

Q: Okay. And how did the city look to you when you came back, since when you left, there had – was no ghetto yet –

A: Yeah.

Q: – there was no bombing yet.

A: No, no.

Q: Do you remember, do you –

A: Just – I don't – I don't see any bombing a-after it – after bombing things. It looked to me like in one piece, you know.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: In one piece. It was not much of damages, you know. But let me tell you, this – that looks kind of like this ghetto area, was so empty. You know, it was so – the feeling was such a – nobody walking there, I – nobody was there. It just – there was

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only bakeries there. You know, one bakery that I was – my mother found it – job for me, and I went to this bakery. And bakery was the best job could be, because then the bread was on weight of gold, you know. And – and being in bakery, you know, I learned all kind of tricks, you know. We make – we make high class bread from really terrible –

Q: Flour?

A: – flours. The terrible flours we make cheap bread, that come to the coupons, you know. And then we – we shake, you know, the thing, so there was a – that fantastic, pure – pure –

Q: Flour?

A: – flour, and from this pure flours, we make bread that we sold for a lot of money.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: Yeah. So –

Q: So you learned to –

A: Y-Yeah. So, you know, we learn this trick and my sister was selling this on the **shuk** – on this market. We were a – and we had everything again, because, you know, I mean, for a short time we didn't have it, but then after I worked in the maker – but it was terrible, heavy work. Gosh, I mean, it was 24 hours work,

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something endless, you know, it's just unbelievable. Day and night, you were one time day, one time night, you know?

Q: Was this still private bakery?

A: No, there was no fi – private, it was a number – bakery number so and so.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, so it was all state-run?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And what did your mother do?

A: Mother working in a weather station.

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah. She got job in weather station.

Q: All right.

A: So she was a – but she had the **[indecipherable]** it means she got once – she got food, but it was enough for both of us for one day. But the rest, you know, I supply, you know.

Q: So it was rations. They were –

A: Yeah, ra – yeah, rations –

Q: – they were – they were rations.



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A: – yeah, just, yeah, ration. Well, you cannot blame them, because there was nothing there but –

Q: Okay.

A: But you know, the bread business was – you should know how to deal. Was dangerous. If they will catch you with this in Soviet, they can put you to jail, you know. So I could – I have my bread all over, you know, tuck around, you know, things [**indecipherable**]. But we found somebody that come and pay us and take exactly from bakery, so we don't need to carry this.

Q: So you don't have to sell it yourselves.

A: Yeah.

Q: So how long did you stay in **Wilno** this time?

A: This – until they declared it the – after they took the rest of the **Poland**, you know? They took – we – we – we look on the newspaper waiting on this moment they took **Łódź**, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So, we figure out now is a good time to move out, you know, but meantime also, they been – they – they decided that Poles that are nay – they never left – lived in this area, they can go out by evacuation trains – they call it too, evacuation train, throughout middle – throughout **Warsaw**. Throughout **Warsaw**.

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Q: So because you were not native to **Wilno** –

A: They give us documents.

Q: – you could leave.

A: Yeah, we could leave. There was Polish committee –

Q: Okay.

A: – committed. Committed. And they – there – there – I went there, and they gave me all of this pass –

Q: Documents.

A: – pass, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: And this wa – you know, it was very difficult trip, you know, many days, you know, it was quite a – you know, quite a trip in – in a ca – this was not passenger train, this was –

Q: Yeah.

A: – kind of who knows what it is. Was terrible. But a – but anyway, in a – we just – I tell you that every da – there was another place that we needed to change trains, so was terrible too, you know. And one was – the most terrible was one from **Warsaw** to **Łódź**, because there was no place to stay, even. It was just unbelievable.

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Q: You mean in **Warsaw**, or – in **Warsaw**?

A: In war – in **Warsaw**, to train to going to **Łódź**, you know, there was –

Q: Yeah.

A: – there was [indecipherable] you know, and there was no place, I – I – everybody had some kind of big bunch – big suitcases. You know, everybody was moving, this moving population, you know, from one end to another. And probably the one that live in **Łódź**, just like us. There was many people like this, you know, probably, you know. Not nes – not necessarily Jewish people, but any, really. So – so we a – eventual we reached **Dworzec Kaliski**.

Q: **Sworzec(ph) Kaliski**?

A: **Kaliski**, it's a station **Kaliski**. The name ka – from **Kalisz**, you know –

Q: Okay.

A: – **Kalisz** was a city, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: **Dworzec Kaliski**, yeah.

Q: And – and then did you go back to your old home?

A: To old – yeah, to old – they didn't let us in because somebody comes and said that this is not yours any more. Why, you know, this one – this was only one day

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because next day my mother went to the ch – the guy that was in charge of city was still so – Russian officer.

Q: Okay.

A: And she – so she said that he just – he said the order – he gave order to the police department that they are actually owners of this place, that they should – they should be absolutely accepted to this, and the others, they should leave, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: So, they did it, and we come to our home. Was fantastic.

Q: Unbelievable.

A: Unbelievable.

Q: Was there anything left of your things?

A: No, but I tell you, one day [indecipherable] my – one of the servicewoman come and brought us so many things that they saved for us to coming, that – I told you the – all photograph.

Q: That's right.

A: Photograph. But only this a – she brought different things that – that she save for us, you know. Is fantastic, you know.

Q: Which is – which is a happy story.

A: Yeah.

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Q: Because so many people lost their things, or others would steal their things –

A: Yeah.

Q: – or take advantage of – like you talked about the looting that went on.

A: Yeah, that's th – tha – yeah.

Q: And so this is an – an instance of the reverse happening.

A: Yeah, but these people have been Germans, not Poles, you know, the – they still – I don't know – they didn't let – so we figure out we – we are even learn what city in **Germany** they are, but from beginning figure out let's go and find them and see what th-th – they took many paintings, you know. My father was collecting paintings.

Q: Mm-hm. So the servants that worked for you were Germans, is that what you were saying?

A: No, no, no –

Q: No, they were Poles.

A: – they're Poles, Poles –

Q: They were Poles.

A: – was – they have – they somehow living there, yeah, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: No German, Poles, yes.

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Q: And – but – but by this point you knew your father was alive?

A: Yeah, definitely.

Q: You knew that?

A: Definitely.

Q: And was the war over? By – by the time you got to **Łódź**, when – back in your apartment.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was the war already over, or not yet?

A: No, not yet, but there was – I remember exactly, I think I have the pamphlet that say, war is ended, you know. So I found in **Łódź**.

Q: You found that in **Łódź**?

A: Yes, yeah, I found in **Łódź**, war is ended, yes. I have someplace this pamphlet.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So how long did you stay in **Łódź**?

A: Ah gosh, how lot – how long in **Łódź**? I think until the d-documents arrive. Oh, I – I – I tell you, the **Łódź – Poland** is – I was going – yeah. There was Jewish organization there for people like us, you know? And I took part – active part in the

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organization. There was that – they tried to bring people to – to **Israel**, to **Palestine**, you know that.

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: And so I was on the list already, you know, and when this list come, you know, to the – there's a certain date, which I been ready to go. Yeah, and it was – it was not so simple, you know, because it was winter – wintertime already. And I remember the border was full with snow, you know, and border guards, etcetera, you know, so can you figure? There's no such thing. But was British zone on the other sides, so –

Q: So, in other words, you traveled overland –

A: We went to **Szczecin**, to **Szczecin**.

Q: Okay.

A: Was – from **Szczecin** was not far from the border, just – just walking, or something, from the borders.

Q: **Szczecin**? I thought –

A: **Szczecin** – **Szczecin**, pole – in **Poland**. It was part German city, but Pole-Polish –

Q: That's what I thought. So you went to **Szczecin** to go where?

A: To go to British zone.

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Q: Ah, in west **Germany**.

A: We – this – yeah. It was –

Q: Okay.

A: – west **Germany**, but for – but first we should cross the east **Germany**, all right, yeah.

Q: Got it, okay, I understand. Cause I was thinking, how do you get to **Palestine** through **Szczecin**, that does – not the right direction.

A: No, no. No, no, no, listen, this was – we went to this British zone –

Q: Okay.

A: And then we went to actual German – this was – I don't know that was British zone or American zone. Someplace we have been, something like six months in **Germany**, until these documents arrive that allow us to go to – to **Palestine**. And then from **Germany**, we went to **France**, to **France** to **Marseilles**, and **Marseilles** by boat to the **Mediterranean**, you know, and past number of places, you know, and to **Haifa**.

Q: What an adventure.

A: Yeah.

Q: And your father was there at the other end.

A: No, he was not there, because he was on a business trip in **Italy**.



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Q: Oh God.

A: We have been so upset.

Q: Oh dear.

A: Yeah, but he come, of course, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: A way – a week later. But my mother will never forgive him.

Q: Oh.

A: How – how is that you ask us [indecipherable] you know, yeah.

Q: So –

A: But – but – but I tell you, but – about the guy that was waiting with us, brought us to this place that he bought. I tell you that he bought apartment.

Q: So you had a home to go to.

A: Yeah, we have go – not anything, very nice apartment, and paid – paid off, you know, by my father, you know.

Q: No mortgage.

A: No mortgage, no. Apartment. Then we know, we – we could sell the apartment and buy the – another place, you know, and that's how it was, you know.

Q: And it had been how many years; four years, five years, since you had seen him?

A: Fi – fi – since when?

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Q: Since you had last seen your father in the ca – in the train at **Nowa Wilejka**.

A: Oh yeah, oh gosh, you know, you know, figure out, you know, gosh, I mean, this was probably like five years, you know, yeah.

Q: And when you did first see him again, anything changed? Did he look different?

A: Oh, that's a good question. I don't know if we ever think about it, you know. I don't believe – I cannot tell you because I didn't think about at that time, if he looks differently. I don't believe –

Q: Did he feel different?

A: – he did change much.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: Did he talk much about what – what his experiences has been?

A: Oh, yeah, you know, he said about it, yes, he was – he wa – he said about he was helping other people in – in the camp, you know, and he did. And he mentioned a number of people that – that we know, too, you know. So that's what it was, you know. But it wasn't – it was – it was in Polish army, you know, and here's my picture – I still have a lot of pictures of him from the Polish army. So here is one pictures – oh, I'm sorry.

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Q: It's okay. It's okay. So, did you mother – did you also tell him what you had gone through, what your experiences were?

A: I – I don't think so, because you know, at that time, you know, this was too fresh to talk about it. Not really, I don't think so.

Q: Okay.

A: No, no, it's a – it's a good question, because I never thought about the question like this. No, I don't think so.

Q: Okay.

A: Is – is closer to this time that we arrive, as less question was. As Father, more question. Just now I wouldn't – I ni – I would never say to anybody all of these s-stories that I told you, for example. But look, it's so many years, and I am 90 years old, you know, so I am telling you. But it's a good question. How it is that people didn't ask – nobody ask anything at that time. Tell me how did you survive. No. You survive – survive, you know.

Q: That was the important thing.

A: That's the important thing, but nobody – because everybody has some – some story to tell, you know.

Q: Was he still an optimist?

A: Huh?

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Q: Was he still an optimist? Your father. You said he was a very optimistic person.

A: Y-Yeah.

Q: Was he still, after all this, in his nature an optimist?

A: Oh yeah, yeah, he – yeah, he was optim – yeah, he was very optimistic. He was – you know, h-he – he died by accident, he just fall in some – some – oh, some flooring, I remember, and he hit himself in the head or something, was – he was accident, you know. He didn't have some bad sicknesses or s-something, you know, so I didn't inherit anything from him, you know.

Q: How old was he when he – when he passed away?

A: It's not very hot – no-not very old. I – I really – I – **Marlene** will know.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: I d – I really don't know, but she will figure out.

Q: So you – you have yet a new life, in **Israel** now – well, it's not yet **Israel** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – it's **Palestine**.

A: **Palestine**.

Q: And you were –

A: In 19 four – '46 – in 1946 I arrived to – to **Haifa**, you know.

Q: Okay.

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A: And they – and I tell you, I started – I think I started to write the book in 1946.

Yeah –

Q: That's very early.

A: – because I tell you what ha – what's happened. But this I should show you something, you know?

Q: You will later. You will later.

A: Yeah, because that was very interesting how it happen.

Q: Tell me.

A: Very – typical **George**, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, tell me. Tell me, how did it happen?

A: Okay. Now it was something that – I think it was something to do with **Haganah**, it was something to do with this, because I don't know why I – one day I was in place named **Sarona**, it's next to **Tel Aviv**, but at that time it was next to **Tel Aviv**, it was not part of **Tel Aviv**. Now it's – it's like a suburb, you know. And what was so wrong on this was a – this was a village, a – that was built by not – by Germans, before, you know – probably in the – in 19<sup>th</sup> century, or something like this, you know. They had been there probably from religious point of view, I would

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say probably. But when the war started, and there was fight between Nazis and no Nazis, the Germans run away from this place, evacuate it, and left everything – this village as it is, you know, didn't take anything from the – from the houses either. And I was there, you know. I was very curious to see how – the houses, nobody's there. So I must see what's inside there. So, you know, so I pick one house, it look kind of nice to me, and I don't know how I come inside it, if I opened the window, or s – or somehow I sneak inside. And I look it up, and what was – I was not interesting in clothing, you know, but I needed to see what – some kind of literature, what they do. And I found in one place they have been bunch of fives – five books or six, to – to write – writing schoolbooks [**indecipherable**]. And on one was a – was a picture of Nazis walking with swastikas. So, do you know what I did? I took it. And I have here to show you.

Q: No kidding.

A: No kidding.

Q: Wow.

A: And then figure out that this is something like this, I cannot stay – I cannot wait too long with my book, I should write about. So, you know, you know. But I – I tell you, I – I – so I – this was one of the things that pushed me to write, you know,

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because I figure I – after these things and these son of a bitches, you know, I – even – even on this area here, sh – they have [indecipherable]

Q: They've left something.

A: – they left some swastikas. Can you figure? I have it here, I have, I will show you.

Q: And so, did you write the manuscript then, all of it, or part of it?

A: No, no, no, no, I just started, you know.

Q: Okay.

A: I just started. I wrote it here and there, you know, it just – I just –

Q: And then – and then you're growing up, you're now over 20 years old, you know –

A: Yeah, I am over 20 years old.

Q: Do you feel like you've come to your country? Do you feel like this is now, we're in our own country?

A: Well, you know, listen, I – I did, from one hand, I did – I said – I was thinking to myself, I did everything I could, you know, to – to do whatever I could to Jewish people. And on the end I even f-fought for – for the country, you know. And I talk to my mother, just like mother said, did you assist them? Did I told you that she said that we were for our own country?

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Q: Yeah.

A: I accomplish everything what I decided, but I still figure out that I should still live in **Israel**. However, my first wife, you know, come here, because of – of learning more about psychiatry. She was a psychiatric doctor, you know. And then I met **Marlene**, etcetera. It will be very difficult for me at – re-restart my life again there, you know. And here already, I – I – I love this country very much, because –

Q: You're talking the **United States**.

A: – it's free – yeah –

Q: Yeah.

A: – I love very much this country, you know. It's – for me, this is just like another **Israel**, you know.

Q: But when you were in **Israel** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – was it home? Did it feel like home?

A: Oh yes, yes, definitely, yes, yeah.

Q: Okay. Tell m –

A: Yeah, I di – leek – look, I [**indecipherable**] home, but I liked to dig archae – some old thing, I just – I just found all kind of coins, you know –

Q: Okay.



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A: – as tha – ancient coins. And I – I look whatever I could, you know, drive here – you know, no, I – I did okay, you know, in **Israel**, you know. I mean, is no question about it, you know.

Q: And tell me a little bit about your army service in – in **Israel's** fight for independence.

A: Oh, there was a – you know, it's a – first, you know, there was ex – there was not original army, there was kind of like a beginning of the army, was kind of semi-legal – illegal. The ha – ha – ha – that was not completely legal because the – the briti – Brits didn't arrest anybody in the **Haganah**, you know. So –

Q: You were in the **Haganah**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: So, you know, but I was – I have even the newspaper, there was many my picture still, but I don't know where it is. I was looking for it, I couldn't find it, you know.

Q: Yeah, okay.

A: But you know – then you know, the – of course if they call people to **[indecipherable]** of course, you know. And – and I tell you, I was proud, you know, I was proud, you know, to ho – to hold this small gun, you know, this – that –

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we had some kind of semi-automatic gun, you know, that's – I ju – I just feel that – that it belongs to me, and there's something, you know, there's just – you know, I feel very good, you know, to be in **Israel**, very good, you know.

Q: When did you leave **Israel** for the **United States**?

A: Oh boy, this was a – I told you, this was me – my first wife, I told you that we – we – we have – sh-she – she got this – she got this possibilities to – to – t-to – to work more in her department, you know, and s – in **Israel** at that time, psychiatry was not such a high level, you know. But what year it was, I really don't remember what year it was, you know, but –

Q: Was it in the 1950s?

A: It was 1957, was – 1957, yes, right.

Q: 1957.

A: Yeah.

Q: And so you've been here since 1957, in the **United States**.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Well, you know, we're coming to the end of our interview today. I know that there's a great deal that we didn't touch on, that we didn't cover, that there are many, many incidents that we weren't able to go through, but is there anything that you would like to add to what we've talked about, that you would want people to

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know about? About what you went through, about your experiences, what they mean to you –

A: Yeah.

Q: – how you think about them now?

A: Well, I would – I would like to – to show you few things, and just kind of give you some ideas. This is from pictorial point of view.

Q: We can do that.

A: And definitely I look it up, what the **[indecipherable]** h-how people look on – on these things, it's just fantastic, it – they – they just unbelievable how they –

Q: Okay.

A: – they evaluate my book, you know. It's –

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So that – we'll do that.

A: Yeah.

Q: But then for the formal part of our interview, I will conclude it with an ending statement, and then we'll film some of the other items that you have –

A: Sure, sure.

Q: – and then you can explain what they are.

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A: Yeah, by all means.

Q: Okay.

A: So what you like to do now?

Q: So right now what I'm going to do is end our interview by saying, this concludes

—

A: Okay.

Q: — the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview —

A: Okay, okay.

Q: — with Mr. **George Dynin** —

A: Yeah.

Q: — on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015 —

A: Okay.

Q: — in **Athens, Georgia**. Thank you.

A: Thank you very much.

Q: Thank you.

A: I appreciate very much.

Q: I do, too. Thank you so much. Okay, so now wi — now wai — maybe you can s —

**[break]**

Q: Okay, Mr. **Dynin**, tell me, what is this photo, and what is the significance?

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A: What the significance, number one, that's my mother. It's mostly –

Q: Beautiful lady, yeah.

A: [**indecipherable**]. And from practical point of view, like to show you that we change the – one letter in our family, it was **Dynin**, **d-y-n-i-n**, we change to **d-u-n-i-n**. **Dunin**, here's **u**.

Q: We see it.

A: See this is **u** here, okay?

Q: Yeah, I see the **u**. I see the –

A: And this is a – this is original document, German document –

Q: I see.

A: – with – with name **Dunin**.

Q: So it allows – this was a di –

A: Allowed to be Polish aristocrat.

Q: And this was your mother's **I.D.**

A: Is my mu – that's part of **I.D.**, yes, this was in my mother **I.D.**

Q: Okay. Thank you very much.

A: You're welcome. [**break**]

Q: So, Mr. **Dunin** – de – excuse me, start again, I did the wrong –

A: You see?

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Q: I did it, didn't I?

A: Aha, that's working, that's working.

Q2: Should I stop and roll again?

Q: Stop and – stop and roll again. **[break]**

Q2: Okay, we're rolling.

Q: So, Mr. **Dynin**, please tell me, what is this photograph, and what is its significance?

A: Well, significant this, in my eyes feel that this is my mother.

Q: Beautiful lady.

A: Beautiful lady, thank you very much. But I like to point here of something, that we change the name, **Dynin** to **Dunin**, **d-u-n-i-n**, rather than **d-y-n-i-n**, because **Dunin** is very Polish aristocratic name, and **Dynin** was a not very frequently used, but still, it was Jewish name. So this way, she is Polish aristocratic lady.

Q: By one change of one letter, from –

A: By one letter, yeah.

Q: – from a **y** to a **u**.

A: To **u**, yes.

Q: Okay. Thank you. **[break]** Okay, Mr. **Dynin**, tell me what is this map of?

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A: Oh, this is pre-war **Poland**, before World War II **Poland** borders. And see, the most important for me have been, of course **Łódź**, that's was when I was born and living. And we went all the way – before the Germans come, we went this way toward **Warsaw**, and eventually we went to the **Wilno**.

Q: Okay. And **Wilno**, by that point that you got there was no longer **Poland**, but was now part of the independent **Lithuania** you were telling me about.

A: Independent **Lithuania**, you're right.

Q: Okay, okay. So that's the journey that you took trying to stay ahead of the Germans.

A: Yeah, you know, here is another place that I was during this time, because it was close to this Russian border, and I figure out when I need to run away, if Germans come I can run to **Russia**. So it was close to the Russian border.

Q: Okay.

A: But I didn't was long time here. Couple days, just.

Q: Okay, okay, thank you very much.

A: Yeah. [break]

Q: Okay, Mr. **Dynin**, tell me – tell me about this map, and what does it signify from your journey?

A: Oh, this map show the area that we are enduring World War II –

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Q: Okay.

A: – most of the time. Now, here is a place named **Horodyszcze**, that we have been number of years, and somehow we save our skins from – almost miracle.

Q: So that's the – that's the place you stayed for about three years.

A: Yes, three years, yes.

Q: And what's right below it?

A: Below, you know, this is **Baranovichi**. This is a – at the time of the German occupation, this was the center of German occu – occupation in this particular area of **Belarus**.

Q: Okay. And what's up there toward – yeah, right by your finger there.

A: This one?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: This is **Minsk**. This is the main city of **Belarus** during the German occupation.

Q: And up there to – in the cor –

A: Up there is **Wilno**, **Wilno** we have been many times – a number of times we have been during the World War II. And eventual, from here we went to **Poland**.

Q: Back to **Łódź**?

A: Back to **Łódź**, yes.



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Q: Okay. So this shows us the general area. In this area is where you spent your war years hiding with a false identity –

A: That's true.

Q: – as – as **Dunin**. Okay.

A: That's true, yes.

Q: Thank you. **[break]**

Q2: I am rolling.

Q: Okay, so this looks to me, Mr. **Dynin**, like your rendering of **Horodyszcze**. Is that correct, the town center?

A: Yeah, this is probably – in my eyes, this is the most important map from all of the maps were here, because I was here many years, and I have seen life and death here, in this particular place, and also I have seen safety – safe of many people here again.

Q: So let's point out some of the places that you mentioned to me in our discussion, and in our interview.

A: Okay.

Q: First of all, show me where was your – your living quarters.

A: Okay, here those – from beginning we have living quarters in entire part of this building here.

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Q: Okay.

A: But then later we have been in one place here.

Q: The room.

A: And here was somebody else that was eventual very important in our safety.

Q: Mm-hm. And who was that?

A: This was a – one man that bela – that joined Belarusian police, and – and actually save our life by saying not to arrest us.

Q: Is this the man that you – that was taking the – you know, was involved with the priest being taken?

A: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Q: Okay. So, from that window, I see that you have a – from that green square, there's a window going out.

A: Yeah.

Q: Show me where – where the hanging area was.

A: Yeah, okay.

Q: Where they hung people.

A: Were hanging exactly from here, I have seen them when they hang, but I've seen them already hanging.

Q: Okay.

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A: It was quite a picture, you know, during my life I've seen something like this.

Q: And then the other important parts of this square: where did your mother work?

A: Oh, Mother work here, this place here. She was – she was secretary of this

**Bürgermeister**, may-mayor of the city.

Q: Okay. And you have also – you have the barracks of the Belarusian police. Show me where that is.

A: Here on this side having – having Belarusian police, and some of – some German police, etcetera –

Q: So –

A: – from this side.

Q: Okay.

A: Here, and farther, here.

Q: And that was on the way towards **Baranovichi**, right?

A: You are right, yes.

Q: Okay. Show me where the church was where you saw the priest being taken from, or where he lived.

A: Okay now, this was the place for the rev – for the priest leaving, as far as I remember, yes. And I have seen, as I mentioned, from my window, that they arrested him and brought him this way, down, down, down there, and I have seen

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him [**indecipherable**] stop next to my house, and I was afraid they were going to arrest me too. But somehow the guy that was living here make a sign with his hands, don't bother him. And they – they – therefore he save us, because if they would arrest me, I would be killed, you know.

Q: Because that's what happened with the Poles that were arrested.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: The – everybody – they collected them, we have seen them from my window here, they put them, 150 of them, Poles, and they kill everybody in **Koldyczewo**, what was this way here.

Q: Towards **Baranovichi**.

A: Towards **Baranovichi**, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Now here also is important part of it that I've seen Jewish people staying next to this place, and they – I – they doing some kind of – some kind of work with this ar – with this water well. And I was able to – to talk to them, and tell them about this, the date that they decided to kill them.

Q: Okay.

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A: And therefore they, after this – this date come, the poli-police have been very angry that they missing 18 Jews, you know, because they run away.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

Q2: We're going to pause again.

Q: Okay. **[break]** Okay, Mr. **Dynin**, now tell me about this particular illustration. Is this after you are in – evacuated from **Horodyszcze – Horodyszcze?**

A: Yes.

Q: Okay, so tell us about that.

A: Here is my cot here, you see?

Q: Okay.

A: This is **[indecipherable]**. And from – from – from – at this time already, from one side was some kind of – right there, police, or German. They was watching us that we wouldn't run away from this place. But when we come we – before – before we move, I went here, to this church here, and ask priest, what place I should run away from them. And he told me that, you should go next to the hill, and when this – and just before the hill, there's a road that – that going this way to the **Kozi Lug**, and he gave me letter to the manager of the – of the village, somebody in charge of the village, Polish in charge of village. And he's accommodate us, you know.

Q: So this is the village of **Kozi Lug**?

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A: **Ko-Kozi Lug**, yes. Now, when we come here, I was going to – to turn, but then, I was afraid that this army camp is here, the Germans can see me – see us, and start to run after us. And then another guy that was riding next to us, h-he can pr – he probably will see that we are running away here, and was going in – and alert the rest of the people. But I look it up – up through the window – to the window – to this fr-from the cart, and I've seen that he was sleeping. He was riding on the horse sleeping. So I – I kind of s-s – go a little farther here, and stop the horse and wait until he pass by –

Q: Okay.

A: – then I turn back. And around here is – is – first is the ki – the horse came, you know. And that, before you know – and I was afraid about army come, but they – nobody was running after us, because he was running so fast, this horse –

Q: Yeah.

A: – that he was probably already here someplace.

Q: So this is shortly before – shortly before you're liberated by the Soviets.

A: Yeah, shortly before, yeah, because from the village of **Kozielice**, it was – here was woods. All – all the area was woods.

Q: Mm-hm. Okay.

A: [**indecipherable**] woods, you know, and –

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Q: And that's where you were picking the –

A: Yeah –

Q: – the fruits.

A: – by two s-soldiers.

Q: Okay. Thank you.

A: You're welcome. **[break]**

Q: Okay Mr. **Dynin**, tell me about what's in this photograph.

A: Well, here are actually one, two, three, four, five in bo – in booklet like this. This is the notebooks that I found in the German house, that was left before the war started, you know, it started – war started. And I found out they had been, and – the people that had these books, they been Nazis, but they left – they been German Nazis, you know, because this was in the area **Sarona**, that was German colony before – before 19<sup>th</sup> century. And I use these books for my notes, and one of the notes probably refer to my book, you know. So this is kind of looking at what I used from them, and I have part of this cover of the book with – with big photographs and Nazi s-standard Na-Nazi kind of –

Q: Flag.

A: – flag, yeah.

Q: Okay, so this was taken in **Palestine**; you found this after the war?

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A: After the war, yes.

Q: Okay, we – I remember you referred to that in our testimony.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, thank you very much. [break] Okay, Mr. **Dynin**. Then, I see here a whole series of photographs, and the words **Jung Deutschla(ph) Tagebuch** ar – **Jung Deutschland Tagebuch** up top, which means the diary of young **Germany**. Tell me what this is.

A: Well, this was a cover book of some notebooks that I found in the **Sarona** German colony I went –

Q: In **Palestine**.

A: Not very nicely way, but I opened someplace in a – one of the houses, there was nobody living there. And I come inside and I si – and I found these **tagebuchs**, and particularly the one that I like very much to have it, was one to show the swastika here. And it kind of pushed me even more to write my book, because I was so angry on them that – not enough what they did there, they tried to do in **Palestine**.

Q: Okay. That you even found a swastika in **Palestine**.

A: Yeah.



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Q: Okay, thank you. [break] Okay Mr. **Dynin**, this is the front page of the **Savannah Morning News** from July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Tell me – it's the – it's the top story on the front page, what is this about, and who is in there?

A: Well, **Jan Karski** was – was actually – he was a famous American hero, and –Q: Polish hero.

A: – he was – tried to – to save many, many Jewish people, and he was in Polish underground. And I was with – touch with him long time, you know, and – and eventually he come to visit us – to vi – in – in the – in – in **Horodyszcze** – not **Horodyszcze**, in the –

Q: **Savannah**?

A: **Savannah**.

Q: Okay.

A: And he was staying in our home for – for a week, and we have been in – in contact with him all the time, but after his – after his coming back home, he went to **Poland**, it was his last visit in **Poland**, and he passed away, and we – we always remember him.

Q: So this is from 15 years ago.

A: Yeah.

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Q: And it features the both of you, and as you mentioned in your testimony, he, as well as you are from **Łódź**, and – and then you meet up here as, you know, both having been part of the Polish underground.

A: Yeah.

Q: And – and having so much in common. And that's the story that the newspaper wrote about you.

A: That's exactly it. We have a full – full newspaper about him, you know, I didn't bring it here, but –

Q: Okay.

A: – but this is kind of first page that have both pictures –

Q: Your photo.

A: – you know, when I was in the **Israel** army, and he was in the army.

Q: You were in the Israeli army –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and he was in the Polish army.

A: Polish army, yes.

Q: Okay. Thank you. And now we flip that one. **[break]** Okay, Mr. **Dynin**. So I see that this letter is from the White House.

A: Yeah.

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Q: Tell me – tell me about its origin, how it is that you received this letter from President **Barak Obama**.

A: I don't know how, but he send me before some letters, and I had – have no idea. I am not in politics, or – I am neither a Republican or Democrats, but I'm American. But I figure out that – that people told me after read the book that the president should read it. So I did it, and I send him book to **Washington**. And after some times – took some times, you know, because it – sometimes to read it takes time, you know. And he send me this letter, I think it's a beautiful letter.

Q: Well, it's quite a tribute.

A: Quite a – yeah, quite a tribute, yes, so what can I tell you?

Q: Okay. What a –

A: I am very proud.

Q: – what a wonderful note to end on.

A: Ye-Yeah. I am very proud of it, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Doesn't matter if he's pol – he's Republican or Democrat, but he's president of **United States of America**, so that's what it is.

Q: Thank you.

A: Yeah.

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Q: Thank you for sharing this letter.

A: Yeah.

Q: And all the other items that you –

A: Thank you.

Q: – shared with us today.

A: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Q: Thank you. All right.

A: Thank you, yeah.

Q: That's it.

**Conclusion of Interview**