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Summary

Meyer Rubinstein born on January 15, 1917 in Kielce, Poland to middle class family, religious & public schooling; age 10 joins Betar Zionist movement expectation of immigrating to Israel; age 18, joins father's lumber business then joins Polish Army 20th regiment, invading small part of Czechoslovakia; loaded on train to German front (1939), endures battle where 90% of regiment was killed, his horse also killed; Meyer/survivors flee to Warsaw then to eastern Poland, endure another battle, captured by Germans who ask "Who is Jewish?"; Meyer however receives some assistance to his injury; POWs loaded on cattle trains, unloaded in forest, 100 ft from train, S.S. open machine guns on POWs, Meyer survives, able to reach Kielce, does not recognize his town invaded by Germans, all Jewish businesses closed; Meyer's challenges developing bartering skills to survive; March 1941, Kielce ghetto formed, at time 26,000 Jews, many refugees; with no sanitary conditions, typhus, people die; slave labor; Gestapo enter ghetto to shoot all bakers, butchers to deplete food supply; Gestapo enter Meyer's home looking for valuables, Meyer's father claims he has none and is beaten; Meyer marries his wife "hoping for the better" life; Jews start disappearing; man offering free haircuts, provides meeting place where resistance plan is hatched; ghetto however surrounded by S.S. & Baltic states troops with armored trucks, grenades; Aug 1942 5pm Jewish police woke, ordering all Jews to get out of their houses or be shot; Meyer's father asks his family, extended family to grab hatchet, resist but family yield to S.S. commands; walking out of house, seeing neighbors had been shot; father makes Meyer promise that if he survives the war, that he will tell the world what he witnessed; arrival to field where S.S. with whips are beating Jews, 500 in Meyer's group; others had been placed in wagons, Meyer's group slave labor; placed in barrack next to synagogue, forced to destruct synagogue as Nazis looked for gold, valuables; Meyer slave labor in wood working; everyone with bachelor's degree shot, including their dogs; 4am, Police speaking Scandinavian languages & German Police came in with arm bands "JV" ("extermination of the Jews" acc to Meyer); 45 Jewish children taken away and shot, mothers who refused to give up their children shot along with children; Meyer convince S.S. he can work; Meyer's group placed in field surrounded by barbed wire, anything they had on them from home, they buried; S.S. order POWs to remove their clothes, placed in barracks, minimal food; Meyer with wife flee into forest, in the winter, wife develops high fever, Meyer steals food from farmers; Meyer & wife return to camp for medical help, threatened to be killed with ax, Meyer arrested, wife hears that Meyer has been killed, Meyer is hung by legs, beaten by S.S. with whips, when he awakes, naked on cement floor, thrown in jail, lays on cell floor for 3 days, accommodated space by other POWs; POWs loaded in railroads cars to Gross-Rosen; slave labor moving dirt from one place to another, in pajamas, in cold weather, many die; Meyer survives nine more camps; in last camp Neuengamme, Hamburg, making grenades, "kept like caged animals," with never provided any cleaning, dust from steel grows into skin, sees 4000-5000 prisoners brought in; placed in trains, American planes started bombing mistaking them as enemy trains; arrived in Bergen-Belsen; being only 80 pounds; warned that there was "Hell behind these gates."; saw prisoners by the thousands, three quarters of barracks were loaded with the dead-ordered to get on top of them; Meyer throws himself into electric barbed wires surrounding camps; ordered to different barracks with not as many dead, then ordered to field where prisoners had

made fires, were roasting arms or livers of human beings; ordered to move corpses to mass graves; Meyer goes 5 days without water, once receiving water, catches typhus & salmonella; shooting begins; seeing tanks with white star, hearing different languages coming from tank announcing liberation; in revenge, able to hit a S.S. with brick in his back; Americans placed POWs in S.S. officers' camp, provide them food; Meyer chooses to go to DP camp in Sweden, discovers wife survived; at liberation, Meyer was 75 pounds-took four years to recover; son born in Sweden – Harry (becomes a nephrologist), daughter, Sherry (becomes a pharmacist); Meyer ran a grocery store, then invested in a nursing home; Meyer ends with concern about Catholic Church's teachings contributing to the Holocaust.