

--Minneapolis now, and is an accountant. But he will relate to you, and he asked that you ask questions, and you can interrupt him if you'd like to ask questions.

OK, thank you.

I don't know where I should start. Whether you are interested in just my experiences, or I usually try to give some sort of introduction, how I feel what happened, and why it happened.

I believe that the Holocaust was not just an incident that happened all of a sudden. It is my strong belief that it was building up, the anti-Jewish feelings and antisemitism, started out ever since the Jews were dispersed by the Romans. And I'm not going to dwell on that, but I just want to come to the point of the 1940-- '39 war.

We know about the Inquisition, where the Jews were persecuted because they were Jews. And not only Jews were persecuted at that time, also Lutherans were burned on stakes. And then we go on to Russia, where the Jews were persecuted just because they were Jews. And the Jews became sort of a political football-- whenever there was some trouble, that's an easy way to let some energy out, or hate.

We know of the pogroms in Russia, when the tsar felt that he is not secure with himself, he let go, so you can do what you want. And they were burning and looting and killing.

Well, I guess that the hate originated in churches. I don't want you to feel that I'm trying to offend anyone. I just want to express my feelings.

Even as a boy, I could feel that I was accused of killing Jesus, and I was always the outcast. Whenever we wanted to go someplace, play football, we were always armed with pocketfuls of stones and rocks to defend ourselves, in case we were attacked. But that was not the major part that was so bad about it.

It was that when individuals hate me because I am so or so, I am not Christian, it's not so bad. But when it became government policy, that's where the danger starts. And I believe that was when the Inquisition, the Spanish Inquisition, that was a government policy, that was also the tsar's policy-- it became-- it gradually became the Polish policy.

And of course, in Germany, we know what happened since 1933. And since I am here to talk about the Holocaust, about the war, of World War I-- World War II, I'm sorry-- I would like to just give you a preview of what I think why it happened in Germany. It could have happened in Poland, could have happened any other place.

After World War I-- incidentally, World War I, there were a lot of Jewish people that served in the German army, even as high ranking officers. But when Germany was defeated in World War I, the Versailles Treaty demanded quite a substantial amount to be paid back to France and England. And perhaps a few other countries, but mainly France and England.

And as far as I remember, the beginning of propaganda against France, against the other Western countries, was that, look, we are starving, we are freezing to death, while continuously, trainloads of coal is going to France. And that probably created a lot of resentment, along with when the Weimar Republic was, until 1933, it was a democracy then. But along with democracy, there was about 50% unemployment-- I'm not sure if I'm correct with the figures, could be 40, 45, was a lot of unemployment at that time.

And in such situations, it's very easy to find scapegoats. Of course, they pointed at France, mostly, with all these cartoons, that the French are taking away everything the Germans had, including mostly coal. Because I believe, it's the coal mines in Belgium and France were flooded before the end of the war.

But this is not exactly what I wanted to say. I just want to say that there are things that brought up, to the point where the Jews became the ultimate scapegoat. Adolf Hitler was active, I believe, since the early '20s. He was in prison and Landsberg-- was in prison, he wrote Mein Kampf in prison.

And knowing history very well, there is always a good policy to blame somebody else for what's happening. I believe that there were only 500,000 Jews living in Germany, as against, I believe, 80 or 81 million. It's a small percentage.

And yet, the Jews were responsible for everything that was happening, economically. They pointed out that the Jews are doing this and that, and they are rich, and they are feeding on the poor, and all that. It's easy. It's easy to believe when you are hungry, when you are unemployed-- that created a situation where the party-- there was a group of probably industrialists, and people that wanted to get rid of the Weimar Republic, they chose Hitler as a very outspoken person, as the one that could lead us to victory.

And as a matter of fact, even after the elections, the Nazi party did not win, its Hindenburg that won. But there was, in March 1933-- I believe it was March, I'm not sure-- but it was 1933, that by force that Hitler forces, or his group, took over. And ever since, the main motto was that the Jews were responsible.

And that led-- you'll excuse my English, you know, I'm not born in the United States, so-- that gradually led to such hate for the Jews, that it became government policy. And as I mentioned before, whenever its government policy, that's the biggest danger.

It began in 1938, maybe '37 or '38, where there was a decree in Germany that everybody that was not born in Germany, every Jew-- I'm sorry-- was not born in Germany should be evacuated. And I remember that most of those evacuees were from Poland. And that was-- as a matter of fact, Polish-- it was a little town here, Zbaszyn, I'm not sure it would be here-- that was the point where all the Jews from Germany, Polish Jews were transferred.

They were walking, or by cars-- not cars, but carts with horses, buggies, you know, whatever way they could transport them through the border.

And I remember at home, we were talking about it. Look, the Hitler government, the German government is expelling all the Jews, and somehow, we did not give it too much importance to it. So what? So they will live here, they're Polish Jews.

But when the war began, everything became more and more clear that the Jews will become victims. I lived in Lodz-- that is the second largest city in Poland. That's an industrial city. And industrial city is mostly textile.

And I would say, 90% of the textile factories were German, the Germans introduced the textile industry in Lodz about 200 years ago. And they actually developed Lodz's industrial city.

So the city of Lodz had, as far as I can remember, about 70,000 to 80,000 German nationals in that city-- out of 700,000. So there was quite an influence. And even before the war, there was a Freie Presse. There was a daily newspaper, and they openly wrote articles-- pro-Nazi, pro-Hitler, pro-German, even though the situation was so tense, it was leading to the war, that newspaper was openly printing pro-German articles, and against the Polish government.

There was a democracy in Poland. I don't know if it's comparable to democracy that we have now, but the press was free. And I remember walking by-- I always saw even displayed the swastikas, and the Freie Presse and everything. It didn't hit me very hard because I did not connect that with anything that might happen later-- concentration camps, or anything else.

Of course, Dachau existed already. Dachau was built not for Jews, it was built for Germans who probably millions of Germans died in Dachau before the war, because they opposed the Nazi regime. But then, of course, it was convenient place-- didn't have to build new concentration camps during the war.

When the Germans entered Lodz-- and they tried not to destroy it-- I remember just three artillery shells landed on the city of Lodz. And we were all running to see what happened. Was sort of excitement to be involved in the war. And I remember, I even tried to put on a uniform-- I was 17 years old-- tried to put on a uniform because there were some Polish officers they said, we have to fight for Poland.

And I was taken in, of course, I felt some patriotism. And I put on a uniform along with some other youngsters. Sort of a game, a nice war game.

When I came home, my father said, you must be crazy. What are you doing? You are not even of age to go to the war.

You see what is happening, because the Polish army unfortunately-- I don't know, maybe there are some Polish people here or not-- but I have to tell you the facts, Polish army did not last very long. About four weeks. It is because Polish army was strong in artillery, they were strong in hand-to-hand combat, but they didn't have too many tanks, or armored vehicles.

So that's why the German army was just walking over Poland. Nothing to it.

But when they entered Lodz, I remember the soldiers were distributing chocolate bars to kids, to other people. And then, we said what? They are writing so much about the German Nazis, it's not like that. Soldiers are nice people. It was sort of a conflict of, why do they write about one thing, when here, we see something else?

We did not understand that the soldier is just a soldier. He is not an SS man, and he doesn't run the country. He doesn't run the policy. He doesn't create policy. He is probably just as much afraid, sometimes, as other people were.

I don't know if I should tell you chronologically what happened to me. I think I will just tell you a few incidents, and maybe if you have some questions, I would like to-- would be easier for me to collaborate, or to talk about it, or explain, if you have some questions. But I will start a few incidents that happened along the five years. Maybe you get the picture, along with other pictures that you got from other people, how it was.

Unfortunately, some people still claim that did not happen. If it didn't happen, Germany wouldn't be divided in half now, if the war didn't happen. And of course, there are a lot of people, including the late President Eisenhower, that he came to Buchenwald and other concentration camps, and he, himself, saw all these piles of dead people.

So this is one evidence that it did happen. And I am also evidence it did happen.

Now, the first few months when the Germans were-- we were almost free. There was nothing, no restrictions. We could go wherever we wanted. I believe it was September, October, and then November started to be a little bit tight.

I'm talking about me, as a Jew, as a Jewish person. There were no restrictions to the Polish people-- where to go, and which streets to use and which not to use. But it must have been maybe six weeks after, or maybe four weeks after the German army entered Poland, and they occupied all the military barracks, the Polish barracks, and military places, or camps.

And as you know, Poland did not have a very sophisticated highway system before the war. They had the main roads before, between Lodz, Krakow, and Warsaw, were highways in a sense, like we understand now highways. But most of them were dirt roads, with some-- what do you call it-- cracked rocks covered and pressed in. How do you-- I beg your pardon?

Cobblestones?

No, cobblestone was good. That lasted more than asphalt. I mean, just roads, but all over the country. It was just--

And the heavy machinery the Germans had, just were-- there was a rainy season, they were all covered with inches of hardened mud. And the first experience that I had, that of the occupation. I mean, besides seeing German soldiers and talking to them. So was it suddenly a different kind of uniforms appeared, with a Volksdeutsche-- Volksdeutsche is a person that is of German descent but lives in a different country.

And the Volksdeutsche is a Polish citizen of German descent. I cannot say that all of them-- most of them suddenly had

the swastika here on their lapels. They were-- suddenly they were elevated to somebody more important, or with more authority than anybody else. They could do anything they want. They could go in anywhere they wanted, because they had the swastika here.

Well, I remember that I used to work in a company that used to sell some supplies, office supplies, and my boss saw him come in and he ran to the back. And I didn't know what was happening. I was 17 years old, and he comes in, [SPEAKING GERMAN], there was a couple others. You come with me, you come with me.

OK, we go out, there was a truck, there were two soldiers. And we were loaded on the top. Jumped up, or maybe there was a little where to step on. They took us to that camp.

And our work-- and not only Jews, there were Jewish people and non-Jewish people, too. Just anybody that was able-bodied was taken to help to scrape that big, thick mud, like cement, off the trucks. And we worked all day the first day, then we slept in huge hangars, or maybe some warehouses.

The next day, the same. And the third day, in the morning, I was so hungry that I almost couldn't see. And this is-- the reason I'm telling you that is that the fact that we worked is not as important, because that's a minor incident. But the next day-- I mean, the same day in the evening, they took us together, and they asked who is not Jewish, step out.

And they went home. And about 50% went home. And we stayed. So we worked the next day. And the third day in the morning, I was cleaning a truck-- it was like a big, huge, oversized Dodge, during the war, if you remember. It was like a pickup-- wasn't the most heaviest truck.

And I was scraping it. And suddenly, I see the driver of that truck was maybe 40 or 45 years old. He was a regular Wehrmacht-- Wehrmacht is regular army. He was not SS or anything else. And he took-- I don't know how you call it, we call it canteen, that's where you get your food. Is there any other name for it?

It's a container, container, sort of it fits sort of half shape. And he puts it down near the truck, and he slowly pushes it under the truck, with a piece of bread on top. Well, I didn't even think twice. I grabbed it, and I finished it.

But I left it there. But then, under the truck, I saw that there is an officer standing with a little baton-- baton? Or a little-- what you use for horses when you ride. I don't know all the words.

Yeah, and he had the SS uniform. And this occurred to me-- it's just at the beginning-- that he was afraid to show that he's helping me. The terror was so great, that the soldiers were afraid to show anything that is outside the official policy.

This is just one incident. The other incident, very shortly after that, was that we were also caught in the street to-- and that was already a common thing. We tried to avoid-- whenever we saw some trucks coming, we tried to hide. But no matter how often you try to hide, suddenly somebody comes, a civilian-- mostly civilians who told you to come. And then the soldiers took over.

And by civilians, I mentioned before, the Volksdeutsche had swastikas, and we were taken not far from Lodz. There was an airfield-- that's a military airfield. We were taken there, and that's a little humoristic ending. But I just want to tell you that how we were gradually sort of educated into that horror.

We were standing in front of a big hangar, and there is one German soldier-- that was the Luftwaffe, by the way, it's the air force-- he came out. And with a white apron, all bloody, up with a huge knife. And with another officer, or maybe he was just a sergeant, Unteroffizier, Unteroffizier.

He said, OK, who's next? And we saw him bloody with the knife, everybody started to fall behind. Nobody wanted to be first. Who's next?

Of course, he grabbed somebody by force, and had to go. Then after a few minutes, he comes back with more blood. OK, who is next?

Well, we automatically we were so scared. I mean, everybody was scared. But finally, they grabbed me. And I said, well, that's my last few minutes.

Then we went to the hangar, and then the next one, and the third one, I heard geese. And he told me to grab a goose, and hold the head and cut the head off. But the idea was to-- what is fun? They just had fun with us. But he scared the hell out of us. Excuse my expression, but that's-- I should say maybe something else.

Well, these are the incidents that were not as bad, because after all, we went home to our own homes. As far as the food situation was not so easy. Everything-- everything disappeared. Suddenly everything was-- there was no bread. But the authorities delivered flour to bakeries, and we could buy bread.

Anybody could buy bread. There was no rationing, yet. I'm still talking about 1939, a few months-- September, October, November. And so on.

And there was a line, always-- there was a line we had to wait almost all night. Some people came midnight, even though there was a curfew, we couldn't walk. But they risked it.

And most of the time we started at 5 o'clock in the morning and waited in the line. And what the tragic part of it is, that even if I waited all night, or even if I waited from the morning, and by the time I came to this, there were a few German-- these Volksdeutsche, and sometimes there were some special uniforms that I am not sure what they were. They were young people-- it was not the Hitlerjugend-- but I think that they were inducted into the German army, but they had some, maybe a few days leave.

Because he happened to be a friend of mine before the war. I happened to know him, we went to school together. But he had the uniform, and he recognized. I don't know if you would recognize here everybody that is Jewish, but the Polish people, they recognized the Jewish. Maybe because of our nose, or maybe our dark hair-- although, not everybody had dark hair and blue eyes, and I tell you about that later.

Well, he said-- and we were almost ready to get in, by pushing ourselves, get in and get the bread. He says, you come out, out, out. So at the end of the line. And that was continuously going on, and we many times we went home without any bread.

Until my brother-- who was older, he's older than I am, two years-- he knew where the bakery is. And that bakery happened to be a Jewish bakery, and they were still running it. They received the flour from the authorities, they baked it, they had to give it to whoever comes in. There was always somebody there watching them.

Of course, that's for money, it was regular buying bread, but you had a long line. And you were eliminated when you came close to the bakery. So he went to another house, and over the roofs, and somehow, he got into the backyard, and he got in. And he grabbed two big loaves and he ran-- he came home.

That lasted for quite a few days, those loaves. But these are the situations. Another situation was that we wanted to buy potatoes. And the price of potatoes was like 20, 25 times the regular sack of potatoes. We didn't have that money, because suddenly, we were cut off everything. All you could do is, if you had a watch, you could give a watch, or if you have a nice suit, we just traded.

At one time-- and now I am jumping a couple of years, because I'm on that subject, I'm jumping a couple of years where I was in the Tschenstochau ghetto, before they closed the ghetto and made it as a concentration camp. The food situation was so bad that I was standing there with the Polish money-- I had a bundle of money that we earned money by making envelopes.

I hope that you don't mind that I keep jumping back and forth. Otherwise, it's impossible, because I remember suddenly about something else, and it is easier to talk that way.

We were, the whole family, when we were deported from Lodz to Tschenstochau, we received only one room. We were eight people-- one room. We somehow managed-- every corner we had four beds, and a table, that was all. And maybe a little wardrobe, you call it.

We earned money by making envelopes by hand. We had-- I had a cousin that-- my mother's brother had a printing, a printing-- was printing off shop, he had printing machines. All the printing machines were immediately taken away by the Germans, as soon as they entered. Because they didn't want anybody to print any literature, or anything.

But the cutting machines, cutting the paper, was not taken away. So we cut the envelopes, and that was for a German firm, for a German company. And we had contact with the German company that was-- they were selling to the army and to the other authorities and factories, they were selling supplies, office supplies.

I had a younger brother, he was nine years old. And the law required that anybody under six does not have to wear that yellow star. And he was not so much developed, as you can see. I'm not developed, either. So he would not be suspected of being more than six years old.

And he walked out of the ghetto, into the Polish area, where the factory-- where that company was, the store was. And he got the money, and he got the letter from my father that he should-- they brought to our place in the ghetto, we used to call it bales of paper. They were that high, and maybe, oh, 36 inches by 48-- big.

I don't know if that's-- we used to call it libra-- libra is probably a Latin word. But at any rate, it was about 500,000 pounds of paper at the time.

And then we used to take this and cut it into envelopes, shapes. And we used to make the envelopes by hand-- a sponge with the glue, we used to fold it, and make the envelopes. And well, we worked a whole week making, I believe, something like between 10,000 and 20,000 envelopes a week, envelopes a week. Everybody was working.

I worked at the railroad that that, time because we had to work. My brother and I, we had to work, mandatory work. And we received 3 kilogram of bread a week. But that wasn't enough to feed eight people-- just the 6 kilogram. So we had to make the envelopes. Everybody was working all night and all day.

And the tragic point that I want to make, that we received payment in Polish money. And I had a bundle of Polish money, something like 500 or 600 zlotys. That was a lot of money, in official terms. Because if you wanted to buy a ticket, a train ticket, cost you about 10 or 20 zlotys-- so 500 is a lot of money. But not as far as food is concerned. You couldn't buy anything.

And I went to the border line, you know, the ghetto ended at a certain street. On the other side-- on the other side you cannot go, because that's not ghetto territory. So the farmers used to bring potatoes and other foodstuffs, mostly potatoes, and they got as much as they wanted. Sort of like an auction-- everybody wanted to get the potatoes, and give them.

And it was in the morning, we didn't eat anything, my family was waiting at home, and I was supposed to bring anything-- potatoes. And I had a bundle of money, and I couldn't buy anything. It was 2 o'clock afternoon-- because whenever I grabbed the 25 kilo-- that's 50 pounds potatoes, there was somebody else that offered more money, or a golden ring, or something.

When people are hungry, they do a lot of dirty things. And I probably was not that aggressive. I remember I came home without anything. And we were all hungry. Then a day or two days later, we received our bread ration. Somehow we pushed through.

I will go back now to Lodz. Again, I see I'm doing it at a chronological sequence. But I just want to tell you a few incidents that happened to me.

When this entire territory here-- I'm not sure if I will have the right-- something like this here. Because before the war,

when the war began, maybe a few weeks before the war, Germany wanted a corridor through Poland, because they could have an access by land to Ostpreussen. That's East Prussia. And of course, Poland didn't agree.

And that was the excuse to start the war. Was here, because they wanted to get through here. I am not sure whether it's here, or maybe a shorter cut-- but then, after the German occupied Poland, part of it became the Third Reich. Was annexed to the Third Reich. And that included Lodz. That included this part.

Now, this was called the-- well, under gubernatorial territory, Generalgouvernement [INAUDIBLE]. When they annexed this part to Germany, there was an order that as many Jews as possible should be evacuated from the Third Reich. That was Third Reich, already.

And they planned a ghetto in Lodz-- there was about 300,000 people population, Jewish population in that city was 300,000. And the total population was 700,000. And they planned a ghetto, which was the old part of the city, and they designated so many blocks, so many-- quite a large territory. That this is the ghetto.

And they notified in newspapers and notices in the streets, that these particular streets will have to evacuate into the ghetto on this and this date, and so on. And it was planned. It was planned.

And the first few weeks, it was going by plan. So I remember my father said, well, our date is April 15th-- there's nothing to worry. We can just gradually-- we found one room that we rented, or paid for it, I don't recall how we got that. Maybe through the authorities. Because at the same time, Polish people that lived in that territory had to move out by that time.

So there were a lot evacuated, empty rooms or apartments. We got one room. And we started to put-- to take supplies to that room. I remember we had even something like 100 pounds of sugar, and flour, and everything, and potatoes. And we were continuously going and taking as much as possible, because we don't know how long the war will last. Nobody ever-- could ever dream that the end would be death. Or we thought, maybe we'll just live there, and wait till the end of the war.

Well, April 15th was our date. And there was the main street, which is Piotrkowska, was supposed to be something also like an April 7th, but at the end of March-- no, I'm sorry, it was the beginning of March, not according to the plan at all, there were the commandos came. That was the first taste that we had of the commandos-- the commandos are probably those that were responsible for all these atrocities. And but of course, the commandos were the arm of the government, of the policy, of official policy.

Well, they came, and they started to force people out before the time, before the planned time, of their homes. Just like they are. Get two minutes, out.

And at that night, maybe 80 people were killed, shot, just like that. That never happened before. That was the first time when we really heard somebody being shot just for being Jewish.

So March 1940?

Yes, that was in March 1940. It was at the beginning of March. Because we were evacuated March the 10th-- evacuated from Lodz. And then, suddenly, everybody was scared. I mean, if the Germans don't go by their plan, because normally the Germans, they had a plan, was going [GERMAN]-- was going everything according to the plan.

So everybody started to run. And we started to double our efforts to put supplies and food, and what have you, and something like coal.

And but suddenly, then, the March 10th, our streets were full of these commandos. And I remember, I will never forget that there was an officer and a soldier came in-- and we, go get-- raus-- often-- I forgot table, how is it in German? Money, silver, gold, everything on the table.

So my mother and father started to take off-- my mother had a wedding ring, my father started to take off-- but he didn't believe, evidently-- we had a very nice apartment. My father was an accountant, head accountant of a large firm. So we were sort of middle class, considered middle class. And because we had a few rooms, our apartment, most of the people lived in one or two rooms, so they must have thought that we have a lot of money.

And as a matter of fact, we had, in our-- we had small rucksack-- that's what the backpack, is called? We prepared the necessities, a little bit food, a little bit of clothing and soap, and I don't know what you pack usually in this-- but we had also silver coins, Polish money was 10 zlotys was 10 silver coins, as big as \$1.

And my father said, from experience from World War I, that silver money is always accepted. If you need to buy some potatoes or bread, they will always accept silver money, not paper money. So we had, I believe we had something like 50 or 40 silver 10 zloty coins.

Well, we had to take it out, and they found it, and we were beaten up. But the most-- the moment that I remember most is they didn't trust my mother. They asked her to take off everything, and to stand like this. So they thought perhaps she was hiding something. And that was the first time I saw that they do things without any shame, without regard of anything.

I was young-- I didn't understand that much, but of course, now I, looking back, I understand a lot more.

Well, we got a few minutes only to get out. And we had prepared-- we were prepared, actually, with this rucksack, and we had some bundles of bed covers, and bed spreads, or sheets, what have you. We had to leave that, because the reason we were packed is because they started to evacuate not according to the plan. That means that they could take us any time they want.

And we were sure that we are going to ghetto. But then, we were taken to a-- that was a factory, some kind of a textile factory that had trains, that they had rails, the railroad was coming in. We were sitting there for three days. And we were taken all the way to the Czechoslovakian border.

We didn't have any food. Yeah, the only thing that we could take, they gave us a bread for each family, a loaf of bread, and also molasses. And I thought it was very good. But we became so thirsty, that I remember when we came close to Krakow-- and I show it-- just we went from Lodz, to all the way to the Czechoslovakian border, not far.

Yes, and that is not far from here that we were. Well, we were in Krakow, which is here. And somewhere after Krakow, we never stopped in big cities. We were asking, begging for water, and nobody gave us water. There were people-- the Polish people that were watching, they wanted to give us water, but the guards didn't let them come close to the train.

And that was the worst thing, was water. We had something to eat, but we didn't have anything to drink.

We were taken to that camp-- there was an old refinery. And we had to work in the refinery, forced-- sort of forced labor. But it was not so bad, because we were still with the families together.

Then, when we went to that town, it's called Nowy Sacz-- we were free to go wherever we wanted. Was not yet-- the regime was not so bad yet, because it was not the Third Reich. As I said, all this territory was annexed to-- not Kielce, but somewhere along this territory, was annexed, something like this. So was Third Reich.

And we were somewhere here. So in these territories, there were no ghettos, yet. And it sort of was more free.

We took-- we hired a farmer with a cart and horse, and we were going to Tschenstochau, because my mother was born in Tschenstochau. When we came to Tschenstochau, as we received one room for the whole family. And we were immediately taken to work, because the Germans worked through committees-- they had always a Jewish committee in every town and every city.

And they didn't have to do the dirty work anymore. They told the Jewish committee, and they had policemen-- Jewish

policemen. And the Jewish policemen, when the Jewish committee received an order to deliver 200 people to the railroad every morning, well, they just-- the policemen went around, and said, you work for the railroad.

And the first victims were, of course, those that were coming in-- the strangers. Because if a policeman had a friend, Why should he take a friend's son to work? So we were always-- my brother and I-- were always the first ones to go.

And then, they knew us already. They came at night-- they needed once in a iron ore-- it's not iron, it's like mine, iron mine. In Poland, the mines, iron mines, the iron ore mines are not like here in Minnesota. You had to go down the shafts quite deep. I believe in Germany, they have the same kind of mines.

And they needed some people. And of course, my brother and I, we were always the first to go. But these were sort of short-term-- like a week, two weeks. And once, I remember they took us at night, and they-- I was sent to a camp to build-- there is a river, called Warta-- that's the river here.

And that river used to flood always. So they tried to build big banks, huge high banks-- and we were doing the work. And I remember that I, and a friend of mine, we wanted to escape. There was no guards, nothing to it. We had to walk at night.

And then, how do you get back? How do you get back into the ghetto? Where, as soon as you come to Tschenstochau, and you don't have a yellow star, then if they recognize you, you're in trouble. You go to Gestapo. And then, Auschwitz was already then.

And they sent-- this is the time when anybody that broke the laws or the regulations were sent to Auschwitz and other camps. And somehow, we went-- we came into Tschenstochau through a small-- an area where there weren't many houses, not too much traffic.

But this particular area, not far from Tschenstochau, there was a camp, a prisoners' of war camp. These were the Russian prisoners of war. And I will never forget that.

We happened to go over a bridge, and there were trainloads-- open boxcars. And there were thousands of dead prisoners of war that were going. Well, I don't know if it's thousands, but there were very many-- people tend to exaggerate. Maybe I exaggerate, too, but there were a lot of dead people. They died of hunger.

Because we were going by-- it was a huge camp-- they were asking for water, just like we were asking once. But we were afraid to even come close, because if we would be caught, then we wind up in Auschwitz, too. And we succeeded to get back into Tschenstochau.

Then, in August 22nd-- this is the date that I observed this date as the death of my mother's, and my sister's and brother's death. Suddenly, there there was a decree that this-- they evacuate all the people, gradually, by the streets. Everybody was evacuated. So that the city of Tschenstochau was empty, empty.

And then, they created the so-called-- we used to call it the small ghetto. They destroyed some houses around a certain area, and they erected barbed wires. Because there was no concentration camp or barracks already, so this served as the first concentration camp. But not until a few days later.

We were taken at August 22nd, 1942, we were taken to the railroad station-- to the railroad-- not necessarily station, there was the railroad tracks. And there were already trains waiting. And the way the SS man-- everything was SS, or maybe it wasn't SS. There was also SR-- which, I don't really know the distinction. They had black uniforms with the same Sturmabteilung, and SS was Schutzstaffel

They had both these dead-- what is it? The bones, and-- the skulls, yeah, and crossbone.

Well, my brother and I worked-- we were so-called good working people. I worked in a-- that was a textile factory. But I worked in that factory that we took out all the machines, textile machines and they brought from Germany different

machinery. And we used to make the [NON-ENGLISH]. It became later an ammunition factory, but gradually it was built that way.

The [NON-ENGLISH] were the ones that you put in-- there was a big tank, and with fire underneath, you burn wood. But not completely. So that the gas was transformed into gas, and trucks were running. And it was-- I think it was an excellent idea.

But we worked in that. So we-- I worked in that factory, but we worked that many hours. And we went home. We went home, not as single people, but in groups. And there were Werkschutz, mostly Ukrainian-- the head of every detachments of-- Werkschutz means guards. And it was a German-- either he was a corporal, or sergeant, or even a lieutenant.

And we were escorted, with bayonets and rifles and all that, we were escorted from and to work. It was safer for us, too, because we didn't want to be caught and sent to Auschwitz. But on August 22nd, as I say, 1942-- and my brother, by the way, my brother worked at the railroad.

By the railroad is we had to put in these new rails and these railroad ties, and I know that by heart. I even knew how to put-- and they had a special measurement, then you had to put in the nails. And then, there were special tools to knock the rocks under the ties so it would level. It would be steady. And we were quite experts at that. Otherwise, we probably wouldn't survive. I believe so, strongly, that because I worked very hard. And I'll tell you also why I believe so.

When I worked in that-- my brother had a Kennkarte-- Kennkarte is sort of an identification card-- that I worked at the factory recognized by the German authorities. And so did my brother. So at the beginning, we went through, and he looked-- oh, yeah-- [? I escaped. ?] I mean, I'm OK, because I'm working man. And so is my brother.

But then one of them said, well, come back. See, are you two brothers? Well, we said, yes. So he sent my brother on one side, and I was going the other side.

We didn't know what that means. But my brother went with my mother and sisters, smaller sisters, and a brother. And they were crying. They thought that they are taking me away. Because we were supposed to be evacuated to another place where we have work to do, everybody can work, and so on.

I think that during war time, the Germans were the masters of-- I don't know, I can't find that word-- of deception. They promised everyone that we will have a better place to live, and a good place to work. And that we have to work-- we must work. We accepted that we must work.

And in the meanwhile, they were sent to Treblinka. Treblinka is one of the few camps that were only extermination camps. Like Auschwitz-- in Auschwitz, there were two. There were Birkenau, and the other one was for extermination. The other was still for working, and they were-- people were going to work, to factories. They were even sent to Germany from the other camp.

But Treblinka was strictly a gas camp, gassing people. Well, it so happened that this group-- my mother and my family-- they went to the trains, and I was sent immediately-- because I had the Kennkarte, so they said, well, those that work in this factory can go now. And we were taken on trucks. I believe it was trucks, or maybe we walked, I'm not sure which is which exactly, but these details are not important now.

We went back to that factory, but never to go back to where we lived. And it so happened that-- I must mention that, because it is important. We didn't have much clothes, but during the war, they used to make slacks, paper. It was very strong paper, woven paper, and probably covered with some sort of chemical that was very strong. You couldn't tear it, you couldn't cut it.

Only when it became wet and fall apart. Well, we didn't realize that-- I learned that later. And that's all I had, is this pair of-- it was woven. It looked like jeans now. Looked like jeans, but it was paper.

And a shirt. And I worked there. And of course, we never knew what happened. We knew that they blew up the ghetto.

But we were only a short time until they built the barbed wires around just a number of blocks, enough to hold 5,000 people. All the rest of the people were already probably dead.

Well, we were there about three or four weeks. And I remember, I continued working at these [NON-ENGLISH]. And my job was to make rings. There's a number of rings that had to be welded on. And since I started out with the long bar, and the end of the bar had to be bent so that they could go through these rollers.

And I remember, I had just like a smith has to blow this fire and make it red. And then, I had something that I could bend it. So I had to roll these rings, and I found out that there are different diameters of rolling. And I did two at a time. Not that I wanted to say-- I just did that, because I don't know, maybe because I wanted to show that I'm a good worker. And good workers had a better chance to survive.

While I was doing that, there was one engineer, and his name was Fasold-- Fasold. He was a heavy man, a little taller than I am, but a heavy set man. He used to come in the factory just to watch how people are working, and he had a big wrench. And if he didn't like anybody, he hit him over the head.

He killed a few people, too. I'm not sure if I know exactly how many, but he was very dangerous. It was very dangerous. He opened somebody's head just like that, he didn't like.

And I was so scared when I saw him coming. My meister-- meister is like a foreman, or maybe like a supervisor of that particular department-- his name was [? Werbutz. ?] He was originally from Leipzig.

The reason I know he was from Leipzig because after the war, he asked a lot of people to come and testify, he was one of a number of German meisters that were against that regime. But he couldn't-- I believe he couldn't help it. He saved my life in a way.

That was shortly after that evacuation there-- it was in August, and I still had those paper slacks on me. But when I saw that Fasold, engineer Fasold, I was almost trembling. But I decided-- I decided to use the same tactic that I used when we had to make these banks on the river, river banks, is that for some reason, the supervisors believed that we don't know how to work.

Maybe it was true in 50% of the people, if they didn't work, they didn't know how to work. But I was young, I knew how to work. I worked before. I mean, beginning at the age of 17.

And when they were walking back and forth, usually, people see, they're coming. They start to work fast. And they knew that this is just a fake.

But what I did, is when I saw his coming, I turned my back to him, and I used to work real hard, and I felt when that supervisor's coming, he was a German, maybe an engineer, or something it was building. I used to stand on my-- what is it, shuffle, you call it? What is it that you throw-- shovel, right?

Yeah, and I used to sort of rest. And he never said a word to me. So I thought, maybe I'll use the same tactic now, with that engineer, Fasold. Because I was afraid he will hit me with a hammer or something.

And I really worked two at a time, and evidently he liked it. Because I could feel, he was behind me talking to [? Werbutz-- ?] that's the meister, Fasold talking to [? Werbutz. ?] And I didn't even look sideways. I just worked one after the other, and then he walked away. Evidently he liked it, or maybe he just assumed that's OK.

A couple of days later, the Gestapo was-- the head of the Gestapo was Captain Degenhardt, Degenhardt. They came about-- I don't know, we had two shifts, 12 hours each shift. And I remember, I was sleeping at the time, so it must have been after midnight. And suddenly, we were called to get out.

And I had to crawl out. We were sleeping on straw, straw mattresses, or whatever. I was crawling out. And I grabbed my pants and put this on, and we had to stand in line.

And then, everyone had to walk by. And there was Degenhardt, and evidently there must have been another one officer, SS officer-- maybe he was a doctor like Mengele, but this wasn't Mengele. There were a few that were watching us, sort of scrutinizing, is that the right word? Everyone had to walk by.

And it so happened that there were older people there, too, and maybe some people that were not physically so fit. Because it was-- that was the first wave that we came into that factory. In the meanwhile, I mentioned I had these paper pants. For some reason, we had to stand sometimes an hour, or half an hour, that we used to call it appell, so that we could be counted, each department.

And if it was raining, suddenly everything is open here. I was all the way open here. I started to use wires. And I put it with the wires, but the wires used to cut my skin, my flesh. Wasn't convenient.

[LAUGHTER]

And then, yeah, it wasn't. It wasn't, but I had no choice. And then, we had the shoes. And that was not only the shoes-- even before, that was almost impossible to buy shoes with leather soles. That was before August 22nd.

The shoes that you usually buy with leather tops and wooden soles, maybe an inch thick. And that was the-- everybody had that. Everybody who didn't have money to buy something else. Or maybe some golden rings, or whatever.

But it so happened that one of the shoe-- of the wooden, maybe it was the vein-- split and fell off. So I was walking like this, and this. And when I walked by, they took me out, because I was sort of a cripple. I looked like a cripple.

I worked all right, I was young. But I was a cripple, because I couldn't walk. The wires were rubbing on my skin, and the shoes were-- and they took me out-- I'm sorry. They took me out. I was already in the group was taken out, and that meister [? Werbutz ?] said, [SPEAKING GERMAN]-- he's a good worker. I need him.

And he took me out. And I realized that he saved my life, because the next thing they did, there was about 300 people, and among them was the father of a good friend of mine. One woman escaped-- well, this was inside the complex, then there was a gate which was outside the complex where there were houses, and the [NON-ENGLISH], and the offices, and the Germans lived in these houses.

She escaped. She ran away, because it was dark. And she was hiding-- there was the attics in Poland, the attics have small windows that are open. I don't know, maybe for ventilation. I think it was for ventilation. And she could see what is happening.

There was one, the Baumeister-- Baumeister is the building supervisor. We used to call him [NON-ENGLISH]-- he was probably from Bayern, because he spoke German that we couldn't understand. And if we didn't understand, he hit somebody. I'm glad I didn't work in his department.

But those people that worked for him, he was good for them. But except when he was in rage. He had the task, he had the big sledgehammer, and as somebody came out, he hit with a sledgehammer.

And I'm not exaggerating, because that was known. This woman survived, and she came back to us, because she was hiding. And the people were thrown on a truck, and then they were taken away.

And if I would be-- if this [? Werbutz ?] would not take me out, I would be dead now. This is one example.

There was another example, also, I used to-- after that, we started to work on ammunition. We had already enough machines, we started to work on ammunition. And because as I said before, it was probably difficult for the German authorities to work in every detail, all the way down to each individual worker, so they made-- they made people,

Jewish people, Jewish inmates, responsible for a group of other people.

Like they used to call them kapo-- kapos, I believe, what's that, the Greek word for something? I think it's something like a kapo. He was responsible for 30 people.

So how did they do it? We were standing in two, lines of twos. [SPEAKING GERMAN] He counted 30 people, you are the kapo. Means you're responsible for the rest of the people. And so on.

So there were 10, 15 kapos, depending on the group, and everyone was responsible. But at the beginning, we didn't really realize what the responsibility is.

Now, what is responsible, that everybody comes to work. We had to come to work. We were closed in.

But there was a period of time between converting that from [NON-ENGLISH], these big tanks that burned wood into ammunition-- we were sort of borrowed. By the way, these companies-- the ammunition company, and then the other company-- was owned, or I don't know how the arrangement was with the German government, but the name was HASAG, which means [SPEAKING GERMAN]. And these are like Krupp, but they are probably smaller company.

And they used to pay for us-- we never saw any money, but I don't know who got the money. They used to pay the German government for each hour for each man that worked. I found that out after the war, when we tried to get some claims. It's only one big concern that used to pay the people out was the-- I believe it's Farben, GI Farben industry, something.

Pardon me?

IG.

IG, yes. Well, you can understand I don't remember everything. But I remember-- yeah, these people received compensation from the company-- the company still exists. And if I'm not mistaken, they have some branches here in the United States now.

So coming back to that period of time between transition of one product, to ammunition, we were borrowed by-- we used to call Rakow-- Rakow is the name of the place. It's a suburb of Tschenschow. And was [NON-ENGLISH]-- that's [? heating, ?] that's ironworks. Means they are taking ore, making this pig iron, and from the pig iron, they are making big slabs. And we were making rails for the railroad.

Means from A to Z, almost. From the beginning to a finished product.

And at this time, at this point, when we enter there, there was-- and there again, I don't understand what-- I believe that was-- he had a yellow uniform and black trousers, or these breeches. And I believe there was a group that was, I believe, Todt-- these were the industrial whatever, army, or department.

They had swastikas, they had guns, they had just like SS. But it's a different uniform. And he was the head of the guards. He counted-- every day, he counted us when we came in, and we went out. And we had to give a report.

And after a few days, when he created the kapos-- and I remember the kapo of my group, there were two brothers. And there were one standing beside the other. And he was right in front of me, that he said-- because I happened to be the number 15, but I was behind. So he was in front of me, he was a kapo.

So he was responsible for us coming to the gates at 6 o'clock, or was it 5 or 6 o'clock, after work. And then we went 6 kilometers. I don't know what miles-- it's 4 and 1/2 miles. We used to go back, and in the morning, we used to get up 5 o'clock in the morning. And then come back, and have one piece of bread.

But the plant, or the ironworks, they provided soup for us. We could get the soup. But the soup was only given about

five minutes before the appell time, or the-- how do you call it?

Roll call?

Roll call, right. I always forget it. Yeah.

And people were so hungry. We worked-- just to give you an example what kind of work we had-- I happened to work at the place where the furnaces were blasting at 2,000 degrees-- I don't know, Fahrenheit, or what.

Well, we had those big slabs on hanging, of course, with rollers. And I had to-- with forks-- and I had to grab it, and put them in the oven. Pull some strings that opened up. And I had to put it in to get it red.

And then take it out, and give it to the next guy. Which took it over to the rollers. They were rolling it back and forth, until they had these rails for the railroad.

But my job was to take this, open up-- and the heat was blasted, the blast of heat was so great that normally, when the Polish people work, they work 15-minute shifts. 15 minutes, and then he went outside and get some fresh air. And then the other came in. One position, one position was worked by two men.

And I had to work alone. And you can imagine how hard it was. Probably luckily that I was only 18 or 17 years old, or I wouldn't survive.

But there was a silver lining on that. Because if somebody managed to steal a few potatoes, he couldn't eat the potatoes raw. So he had to come to me. He said, would you bake the potatoes? The sand was so hot, that if you put it on your finger, it was red, burnt.

So it took only a few minutes, and I put in the sand which was around these furnaces. It took a few minutes, it was baked potato. I said, OK, you give me two, you get only one back. So I had a supply of food for a while. That's the silver lining.

Now, one evening, some of us managed to get away from work a few minutes earlier to get the soup. Because when you work all day, it's hard-- you need to eat. And evidently, that person was too hungry-- excuse me-- he was too hungry, because he came back a little bit late. And he saw that they are counting us already.

And he was scared. I happened to see that person after the war-- he lives in Israel now. And because he was scared that maybe he would be beaten up or what, he didn't come. And we were 29. So that officer, with that yellow, maybe orange shirt, orange shirt with swastika, and he came up, he says, I give you one minute to get that person.

But what can you do one minute? He was running, he was shouting. If you are there, come. Well, says, the minute is up.

And I will never forget that. He comes out-- evidently he gave that-- there was a sergeant, an older person. By the way, he must have been maybe 50 or 60 years old, but he was called to duty, and he probably-- and he comes out, he says, is he here? No. OK.

He calls two [NON-ENGLISH], like the Werkschutz, the guards. Said, [GERMAN]. They didn't have any-- [GERMAN] means bring arms. They came out with rifles, on the [INAUDIBLE], and--

The only thing that I will remember that is, oh, a dying voice. Oh-- that's it. I remember, and his body was there for three days. Whenever we came by. So nobody ever missed that roll call. And that's the responsibility of a kapo.

There were some kapos-- I have to mention that, too-- and especially, and I did not experience that, but my brother did, and some other friends, that they took it virtually as they are responsible, so they are also people of authority. And they did a lot of very nasty things to the other 29 people.

Who was shot? Was it the kapo that was shot? Who was shot?

The kapo, because he was responsible. He was just a working man like I was. But because he happened to be the 30th, or the 15th in front, so he is responsible. And because the other guy didn't come back on time-- he came later, came later-- but he was hiding all night there. And the next day, he appeared. But it was too late already.

And I happened to know that man, because I met him in Tel Aviv, in Israel. He probably will live with that guilt, or maybe not, I don't know. This is one experience that I will not forget.

And well, then, one time-- I'm going back to-- yeah, OK. When this was happening, while we were going to work, to these ironworks, they built also the barbed wires all around, a certain area of the old ghetto. That we used to call it the small ghetto. That was a concentration camp, because you couldn't get out, and there were guards all around.

And we had to come to the gates every morning and go to work. And also, there were always-- every factory used to send out their own guards. And we were just walking.

When I came to that ghetto, and that is the only time-- they allowed a sort of a Krankenstube. That's sort of a sick room. And if somebody was sick, we could get help. But if somebody was seriously sick, then we probably wouldn't be alive anymore.

I remember that I had-- when we used to come back-- now, I have to go back to when we used to go to the works, the iron works, when we used to come back, it was already dark. And then, we got our daily ration of bread.

Of course, I remember the first time when I came back, I couldn't find anything, because I had a few shirts with me, I couldn't find anything. Everything was gone. Had probably stolen by some other fellows-- not necessarily by guards or anything, they didn't want to touch it.

So because of that stealing among each other, everybody ate the bread right away. Because nobody can steal it from your stomach. But that created situations where-- we had only one men's room, or one toilet. One toilet. And there was a long line-- we were on that, I would say, maybe 350 people, in this particular group. Because others worked on building, and building, and transporting machinery.

I happened to be in a group that was borrowed by another company. And you can't imagine a line of people standing, and they had to relieve themselves, urinate. But some people just didn't want to wait, and they just urinated on the walls. And finally, we were almost sleeping in urine. It was terrible. There was nothing--

And we were just like cattle, you know. As soon as we came from work, just inside. Go inside. And then, it was horrible.

But then, it was a little better later when they built barracks. No, I'm sorry, that was even later than that. And I'll come to this. When they finished the barbed wire around that particular area in that city, we were taken back. And we received-- everyone received a room. Four people a room.

Not normal apartment buildings, no, we got a room four people. We had to come to the appell every day. I still call it appell, that's the call roll. And go to work. And everyone had a different time, 6, 5 o'clock, 4 o'clock, depending how far we have to go.

Until 1943. In 1943, there was-- I don't know, you probably know about the ghetto, Warsaw ghetto uprising. And the special commandos starting to send out-- I mean, special commandos came to almost every place, every bigger town that had these situations, these ghettos, to see if there isn't something going on.

As a matter of fact, I was instructed by the Jewish underground-- I don't know how you call it, partisans, or resistance-- we had a very small resistance group. And I didn't know who belongs to that, except that I knew one person. And since we were going from that small ghetto, which I called, it's also with barbed wire, it's a concentration camp, in the area of

the former ghetto-- they said, today, you take a cartridge or two with you-- cartridges.

We made ammunitions in 792 ammunition, and we had to steal. And if they would catch us, you know what would happen-- just like that. Just like one woman worked in [NON-ENGLISH]-- they used to call it [NON-ENGLISH]. It is the department where they filled the cartridge cases with powder, and they put in the primer, or anything that is explosive was in a special area and was guarded.

All the other machines were not guarded, because what-- you have this other machine punches, that's not important. But anything that had to do with powder, explosives, like the primers, it was guarded, inside and at the door.

And there was a guard, and the bathrooms for the women-- mostly women who worked, and they were checking machines-- and they had very interesting machines, checking the cartridges. Was going around, and if something was wrong, it was just dropped into certain places. And she had an apron with pockets here.

Evidently a cartridge fell into that. And when she was checked, they found-- and the guard called the meister and he took out a gun. And within two minutes, she was dead. Just outside, in front of everybody.

It was very serious. People were afraid to have. But when I was told to take home one or two cartridges, I was afraid not to take, because the underground, or the resistance group, they had guns, too. We didn't dare to resist any one of them.

I didn't belong to that group. But I did what they told me to do. And one time, when we were standing to get out of the gates, somebody was going around-- evidently, he had some connection with maybe some of the guards. Because you can probably get somebody to tell you, if you pay enough.

And he told me, throw everything out. Throw everything out. Don't take anything. And we emptied.

But then, they became-- the Germans became suspicious. So many cartridges found in all that place, among the grass. Probably we were watched very carefully.

There was one particular-- one Jewish policeman that after-- well, I come to that later, because it's no connection now.

After the Warsaw ghetto uprising, they became suspicious. And they came-- sort of watched our ghetto, which is just-- I still call it ghetto, but that's a concentration camp. And in order to continue that terror, so that we would be so horrified to do anything, they took out 600 people-- we were about 5,000 people-- they took out 600 people, just at random, you, you, come out.

And I was among them. They took us to the trains, and we were supposed to go to Treblinka. I'm not sure if it was Treblinka, was that direction. I just show you where Treblinka was.

Treblinka was outside Warsaw somewhere here. And we knew we were going this direction. That's somewhere where Treblinka was.

So we pleaded with some people that was-- we were lucky that there were the boxcars had barbed wire. Evidently, it was because of the war-- it was sort of torn up, or what. We could break the barbed wire, and we tried to get out. There were six of us.

And the other people that were there, they didn't let us. Because they said, with chalk, the guards used to write, [SPEAKING GERMAN]-- means heads, like cattle. [GERMAN] is actually piece, but the meaning was so many heads.

And they said, well, they know how many we are. If we'll be missing, if there will be some missing, then they will kill us. And we said, we are going to be dead anyway, so why not run?

Well, at any rate, we had a fight with them, but we still got out. And there's a special way we were trained-- I don't even know how it came about-- that we were trained how to jump from a train. And we were told that if you want to jump

from the train, as soon as you see the telegraph post, jump.

Because if you wait, hesitate a second, you will jump into the post. And a lot were killed that way, too. There were a lot of incidents that people ran, or jumped from the trains.

Well, we escaped. That was in February-- February-- no, must have been-- maybe it was February or March. I don't know. It must have been shortly after the Warsaw ghetto uprising, which was in March, or April, I don't remember.

Well, at any rate, it was a winter, it was still cold. And we jumped out. And when we were walking through the woods, six of us, we were free, supposedly free. We were not in a concentration camp. We were not in any jail, or anything. And we walked.

And then, we saw in a small village, we saw a poster that, for hiding a Jew, it is death penalty. For delivering a Jew, that's appealing to the Polish population, for delivering a Jew, to get 20-- that means 20 pounds, 10 kilogram of sugar, and the clothes. Which meant a lot, because for a shirt, you could get a lot. Because everything was in short supply.

And my God, that was a price for life, for a human life. And now, we didn't know what to do. We came into one farmer, and he says, for heaven's sake, just go away. I don't want to have anything to do with you, because I don't want to die.

And we understood. He is honest, at least. I do would probably the same, if they would catch me. And there were a lot of people that were hanging.

Not necessarily in this particular village, but in order to spread terror, these commandos, they usually picked up a few people in every small town and bigger town. In Lodz, there was a big-- the center of Lodz, there was a [NON-ENGLISH], we used to call it-- there were eight people hanging for weeks. Two weeks, they were blue, black-- the bodies were black-- just to spread terror. So I'm not surprised that the farmers were afraid.

But at least, when he was afraid-- here's some food, and just go away. Don't come back. And we used to sneak into the barn, and we used to sleep.

And that was three nights like this. We came to one farmer, says, oh, yeah, come on in here. You will give you soup. And the meanwhile, he said something to his daughter, and she ran out the back yard. And we go, she's going to notify the police. And we better-- or we had--

Finally, we realized that there is no way we can survive this way. There's nothing-- and we couldn't join the partisans, because this part of Poland, there was no partisans. There were no woods. There were a lot of woods here, forests. But nothing in here.

It's mostly industrialized. Almost every few kilometers, you had another small town or village. There were no-- there was no-- not enough security for partisans to be there. So we realized that we have to go back into that small ghetto that I call.

And we had to-- there was one that used to work for-- that's the name of the company was Vulkan. Also there were-- they made also iron works, but smaller. They made these kind of cast iron, for some other, for the German industry. There was a specialized, they were considered professional, or trade people, good tradesmen.

And he used to work there, so he knew exactly where they are passing by, since 5, 6 o'clock, It was already dark. So he used to stand there behind some one of the houses. And when they came, we used to jump out and pretend that we are relieving ourselves. So the guard said, yeah, get in, get in the line, get in the line.

That's how we had to get back into the ghetto in order to survive. We couldn't survive outside. We were free, we escaped from the train, we couldn't survive.

Well, then, shortly after that, we were all taken to the factory where we worked. They had barracks prepared, they

brought the barracks from Germany, I believe, and they erected them. There was some of us erected them.

And then, we never came back to where we used to live. And then, after a short while, we used to-- they prepared for us these striped-- but we never wore them. Because for some reason, there were some delays, and we were liberated in January, January 1945.

And just to illustrate how-- the policemen that worked with the Germans, Jewish policemen, because they couldn't handle all this. That was the art that the German had-- they gave some privileges to some people, so that they could help them. And there are unfortunately-- there are a lot of them that were willing to do that. Even to the extent that they were beating us. And those that were really bad, they probably-- they didn't survive. And if somebody survived, I think he was taken care of after the war.

As an example, we were-- there was one that-- I cannot say that I consider him a friend, but we were in a group. We were always talking together, we were sitting together, discussing things, if there was something to discuss. We even didn't dare to discuss politics, or anything, because there was no time. Either 12 hours work, then you have to stay in line-- stand in line for an hour to get some soup, food. And then, you get in, you're so tired, just sleep, and then get up again. And that was how it was, seven days.

We had one day a year, we had free-- I don't know when it was. Maybe it was some special holiday.

So there was one that we would never suspect-- he was going for one year, or two year college. And for us, for younger, like when I was 17-- the war began 17, I didn't even finish high school. I was going high school, was sort of small business college here. And I was supposed to finish that in one year.

So he was sort of the educated one for us. And he spoke a nice German, too. Because he could-- in Poland, you could take any other language, foreign language. I took English. Maybe that's why I knew some English when I came here. And he, evidently, he took German.

And when one time, we were counted, like the call roll, and evidently he didn't have where to go. There was a [NON-ENGLISH], he was a sergeant. And he was sort of a little bit crippled. And for him, it was paradise, because he could do anything he wanted.

I think that he was gay, too, because couple young boys, 15, 16, they suddenly they had these-- that was the symbol of having some privileges. He had these high boots, you know, polished boots here. And he was kicking, and he was ordering around. Say, oh, my God, he probably is some sort of a special to that [NON-ENGLISH].

[NON-ENGLISH], was a sergeant, he was in charge of the guards. And the leader was a lieutenant, and I forgot his name, [? Lederer, ?] or something. Where he brought that fellow that I was talking about, he was sort of a college boy. He did not belong to our group, because at this time, I was in transport, group transport-- which means loading and unloading. Ammunition and what have you, unloading all machinery.

And he brought them in, and the meister said, but he doesn't belong here. It's OK, let him stay here. We became suspicious.

Because special treatment is not coming for nothing, you know. Nobody gets special treatment if he doesn't do anything for it. So because everybody started to shy away from him, he was no more useful for the authorities. Whoever he was working for.

And one day, there was a hospital-- surprisingly as it may sound, because this was a forced labor camp. It was not a concentration camp as we know it, like Auschwitz, or Buchenwald, or Dachau. It was for the only purpose to work as much as you can. You cannot work anymore, than you are not [NON-ENGLISH] anymore, and go.

And people were sick. And they were sick, and they had just some fever. Then it's OK. But if they were there more than a week-- every week there was an inspection by some officers, or some special insignia. And I assume it would be some

doctors there.

Now, they used to go through-- this, I know, because I had pneumonia. And the doctor wrote-- and that's how I learned the name of it, otitis. Otitis probably is inflammation, ear inflammation. I never had anything with the ears, but he plugged it up. And that's not the dangerous sickness, and I can still be a good worker.

But pneumonia is something more serious. But somehow, I survived that. So what happened, if somebody was sick, or couldn't work anymore, they used to take them out every week and go to cemetery. And they used to pick up from our group, six people with shovels, and go with the truck and come back without those people.

One time, that [NON-ENGLISH] took that college boy-- I have to call him college boy to identify him-- that he was an informer. And he took him, together with the sick people, and they dug a hole, and he told him to sit near-- for some reason, some people in Europe believe that Jewish people are buried like this. Which is not true.

He told them to get into the hole, and he plugged six bullets-- he shot him six times. And I think this is probably like-- this is how every informer wound up. Whenever he was not needed anymore, or not bringing any information, he just got rid of him. They got rid of him.

There's one more thing that I wanted to tell you about this, and I keep jumping back and forth. Maybe we can start a few questions, and then I can continue. Would you like to ask me a few questions? Anybody?

How long were you in Tschenstochau?

Well, I was liberated at Tschenstochau. And it was in January 15th, but I got out January 16th. And I came, as I said, in early '40s-- 1940.

All of that you ---

Yes, during the whole war. But I went through all the periods of the gradual, gradual incarceration--

Did you understand? Did you perceive yourself as a slave laborer, or a prisoner?

No, slave. That was no prisoner. Prisoner for what? What crime did I commit? I was born Jewish, that was my crime.

I didn't commit any crimes. We knew what was happening. We knew what was happening in other places. And we were fortunate.

The reason we knew is that they were continuously bringing from other places people, because that factory needed-- we had to work continuously to supply ammunition. And as a matter of fact, this was probably the only factory, or maybe more like this, they made ammunition, the cartridge cases, were made of steel. Then we covered it with shellac. They didn't have enough brass, evidently.

When we were liberated, it was also a situation where it's sort of bizarre, I don't know. We knew that the war is going bad for the Germans, but we didn't know when-- it takes only one second, politics. Because there was an uprising in Warsaw-- so that was the uprising by the AKA-- The Armia Krajowa, the Polish patriots. Was an uprising. And there was a lot of fighting in Warsaw.

And they were hoping that the Russians will help them. They were just across, on the other side of Warsaw. But evidently, Stalin figured that these people that were fighting were very much anti-communist. So they just let them die and let them be taken prisoner.

One of my good friends was a lieutenant. She is Jewish, but she-- by the way, it was easy for women to say that they are not Jewish because there was no way of identification. She happened to speak Polish all the time. She never spoke Jewish. And she has blue eyes-- green eyes.

That's why I said, it's not always that the looks are-- that she was a lieutenant in that Polish army. So she was taken to Ravensbruck. And by the way, these people did not get any better treatment as Jewish prisoners of concentration camps. She was taken to Ravensbruck, and she had experimented-- she was experimented on, on tuberculosis.

They injected tuberculosis, and until today, she has such a big-- what's it-- I don't know how you call it-- it's a big apple on it. She was a-- but she was taken not as a Jew, she was taken as a lieutenant of the uprising party, of the uprising army. And the Russians didn't do anything to help until it was all quieted down, then they started to move. And they started to move in November-- I mean, in January 1945, was the big offensive.

And I believe it took them two or three days to get-- sort of a blitz, a counter blitz. They came to Tschenstochau. Tanks and everything. And here is the time-- the moment was so bizarre that they were taking out groups by the departments-- with the machines. I was lucky that I was in the loading and unloading.

So I had the right-- not the right, by design, I had to be to the last minute to load the machines and equipment. So they didn't touch our group. But other groups were taken to the trains, and they were taken to Germany.

What happened Germany? Five-- [NON-ENGLISH], Flossenburg, Buchenwald, all kinds of different places. I met some of them, only just a few that I met. I don't know how, if a lot of them survived or not. But chances were very slim.

But the night of the 15th-- the 15th-- the day, the 15th, we saw the German soldiers going the opposite direction. That means they are retreating. And we were happy-- well, now maybe the war is over.

And then we suddenly-- we see, on trucks, troops going the other direction. So that's bad. It's very bad. But then, some planes started to bomb the plant. But maybe it was just a single plane-- maybe they didn't have-- we couldn't know what it is.

So at noon, about noon, we were all gathered in one big place where we usually gather for the call roll. And they said to take with us all the belongings that we have. They are going to take us to the train.

OK, then we waited. There were no trains available-- no boxcars available. So we waited, and then after two or three hours, they said, OK, go back to the barracks. Don't [? go ?] up, stay in the barracks. Stay in the barracks. And we could hear artillery guns from away, I don't know how far, I couldn't judge.

We knew that it's now the final day, day or two. And then, late afternoon, we saw that all the brass-- I learned this word here, the brass, the high-ranking officers, and all the others-- they took-- they didn't have cars, even. They took these buggies, beautiful buggies and horses, with their suitcases, and they were running out to some sort of maybe other places where they could be transported away from the front.

And only the guards were left, mostly Ukrainian guards, and a few German guards. Among them was Stieglitz, that I said, that sergeant, and also the lieutenant, the head of the guards. He was a good person-- he never hit anyone, he never beat anyone up. And sort of, we trusted him.

I can't explain how it comes about that you trust one and you don't trust the other. If he doesn't beat you, and you know that he is not doing it in spite--

You see, when somebody has power, authority, he can use the authority only what he has to do. But if somebody is abusing the power, he will beat you and kick you, and try to show that he's powerful, right? He was not that person. But still, he was the head of Werkschutz.

So at 5 o'clock, 5 or 6 o'clock, was late. It was getting dark, and it's very dark. We were in the section where the barracks were all barbed wire, and there were two gates. One gate was always locked with heavy chains, and everything, we couldn't get out. And that was the gate-- was very close to the railroad.

And the main gate was to the factory. So we were gathered, and there were maybe eight or 10 Ukrainian Werkshutzes and two or three German guards, including the lieutenant-- the head of the guards. And he said, well, we have to get out to get to the trains. Let's start moving.

And nobody moves. I can swear that we didn't talk to each other. It was so quiet. We didn't know what-- we didn't make any strategy, we didn't plan anything. But nobody moved. Just there.

And because the first few seconds nobody moved, it spread like lightning. We don't move, we stay here. There were about 3,000 of us.

Well, we were standing there. But they had machine guns, pointed like this, all the time. I think-- now, when I analyze after so many years, I think that they were more scared than we were. Come to think of it, they were more scared. But nobody wanted to face machine guns-- you know, submachine guns they were pointed at you. Not at this point, when you hear artillery guns.

And he used to tell us, well, we have to go-- we have to leave. Open the other gates. Because everybody was sort of pushed into that corner where the other gate was. Which was the other end of the whole complex of the barracks. And to open the gate that leads to the train.

And he said, he told us to open the gate. We said, it's locked. We can't. Bring the hammer, or whatever. Well, somebody brought it, you know, and we couldn't open it.

And it was, of course, on purpose. Whoever was on purpose, could not. We can't open it. So he said, let's go the other way. Nobody moves.

And there was a silence of-- I don't know, probably wasn't 100 years silence, but it was probably more than five minutes silence. And nobody moves. Suddenly he says, [SPEAKING GERMAN]-- children, don't be afraid. It will be much, but we are going to Germany, it will be much better for you than with the communists, with the Russians.

And he started to plead with us to go with him. And it's just like a lightning struck-- when he said, [GERMAN], we started to run. But not to run to the trains, but to run to the place in the factory where everybody knew where to hide. And I knew a lot of places, because I worked almost every place in the factory.

The first thing I did is I was hiding among the empty boxes, you know, that they loaded ammunition. And everybody.

Well, but somehow, they managed to get through the gate and stop everybody. And they managed to get out most of the people, except for there was one group that they managed to load on trains, a train came by. And there was another group that my wife happened to be in that group, that they were taking 300 people, were taking also to the other train.

And there was one person that happened to live in born in -- He says, if you want to save yourself, just jump. There will be a little bridge. Jump from that bridge. And maybe 10 or 12 people jumped, including my wife, her sister, and they jumped. Nobody would look-- I believe that even if the guards would see, they wouldn't do anything. They wouldn't probably shoot.

But we were still scared, a lot scared. But they survived this way. What happened to the 300 people and all the others, we don't know. We met some of these people later. So probably a nice percentage survived, because it was the end of the war.

But the ones that we were hiding-- oh, I don't know enough, maybe it was 400, 500 people, that we were hiding, different places. And then, of course, we could see, we could hear the tanks running through the city. We knew that it's the end. There are no Germans anymore, and no.

And there was one person-- he was a principal in a school, a Jewish prisoner, prisoner-- inmate, concentration camp inmate. He organized a group, he says, OK, now we are free. Let's go out.

But the Polish resistance had already occupied the factory-- the plant. They had guards already. They were, most of them were firefighters. But of course, the firefighters were automatically resistance fighters. They had already rifles, everything, they were manning the gates. And they didn't let them out.

They said, they pleaded with them, the war is going on outside. There is shooting in the streets. You'll be killed. And I remember, he said, because I also wanted to get out-- he said, what do you mean? We were five years, we were in prison, or four years in prison by the Germans, now you want us to keep it? No, just open it.

Of course, they opened the gates. And out of the 12, they found quite a few dead outside, not far from that plant. Because I believe that if I would be a Russian soldier, or even a German, anything that moves, you shoot it. It's just at night, fighting.

So that's how we-- I remember, we went into the houses where the Germans-- we left all the complex where we used to be for two or three years. We left and we went to the outside-- not outside the whole complex, but outside the factory, where the Germans officials or meisters used to live.

And I got drunk because there was some vodka, and I got drunk. And I was sleeping off all the way to the morning. The morning, I got up-- already tanks, Russian tanks here and there.

I want to tell you one thing that-- I told you some atrocities of what some individual Germans did. And that's maybe 1,000th of a fraction of what I could tell you. But I must mention that, also-- the director of HASAG was Lidt-- his name, L-I-D-T. The reason I remember is because sometimes there were some announcements, and he was the [INAUDIBLE].

I remember, they brought-- when they liquidated that small ghetto, and we were brought in, there were maybe 25 youngsters-- 13, 14 years old. And according to Degenhardt, which was the captain of Gestapo, or SS, Gestapo, I really honestly don't know, he was in a uniform, was Gestapo uniform, I don't know. But he was the one responsible for the evacuation, for everything.

He says, he wanted to take the 25 kids with him, because they are not at the age, they are not-- he told him, he happened to be that Lidt was a member of the Reichstag, like congressman. And he said, [SPEAKING GERMAN]-- I need these youngsters, I need these men, or [INAUDIBLE], the [NON-ENGLISH]. And he saved these boys. Many of them survived.

And normally, they did not allow anyone that is 14 or 13 years old to survive. They were sent to Treblinka, or other places. But in all this mixing up, mix up some 25 got through. And then, the Gestapo came, or SS, they came, and they wanted to get them out. And he didn't let them.

This is one incident that, at least, that-- I don't know that you-- I don't want you to accept it as I'm not defending anyone. I'm accusing. But I want to be honest with myself, is that not everyone was a Nazi. And I could feel it. I had demonstrated that before, with that soldier, and this is a man that defied the authority of SS and he said, no, I need these youngsters.

At one time, when we were so hungry and they were-- of course, that was an everyday occurrence, but he happened to be there. There were two big-- how do you call that? Big pots, huge pots, like-- it looks more like garbage cans. That's what-- pardon me?

Cauldron? Kettle?

Yeah, kettle, but no, big, huge ones, they were cooking in that. We used to get the soup.

Now, everybody wants to be the first. Because if they didn't have enough, you just didn't get anything. So it's natural that it was chaos, they were pushing each other.

So he, that Lidt, that particular person, he was the director, he started to yell and to shout to stand in line. Nobody listened. If you're hungry, you don't care.

He took out a gun, and any other person would shoot at people. He was shooting at the floor, at the-- well, at the ground. He didn't shoot anyone. He didn't shoot anyone.

I don't know if that was true, but somebody said he committed suicide at the end of the war.

There was another incident when I was loading-- loading and unloading some machinery and equipment. And I was always watching-- that was a gate that usually opened, that led to the quarters where the guards were. And at this time, SS took over, already. The last six months, the SS took over the camp. Before, they were the Ukrainians, and then the SS took over.

And they had a big, huge dog, nice German shepherd. And they used to-- they used to give him food. And they used to give him-- they had two or three pots of food. And he was eating, and probably he had enough. And I was looking at that food, and I worked so hard, and I was so hungry, I couldn't think of anything else but food.

Finally, I decided-- we always carried, by the way, we always carry that can with us, a little can. Because when they give soup, can't take hot soup in your hands. So that was a must, otherwise you can't live very long without it.

So I always carried it. And I was ready. And once I decided, what the heck, I'm going to die anyway. I don't want to starve dying. Let either the dog or SS man will stop me.

And I grabbed this ready, and I jumped, and I emptied it, and came back. And nothing happened. And I had food. And you know what else? Meat, and barley, and meat, and such good food. Probably that lasts for about a month to keep me going. My God, was-- you didn't realize that you risk your life, but I had food.

How many of your family survived?

Pardon me?

How many members of your family survived?

We were eight. We are three now. Right.

When did you realize that Treblinka and Auschwitz were serious death camps that they turned out to be?

Well, Treblinka, there were always some people that managed to escape. I don't know how. But I can tell you another escape that I made-- there is Skarzysko-Kamienna, there's also a suburb somewhere from Warsaw that belonged to HASAG, too. And they used to make ammunition with some-- they used to call it [NON-ENGLISH]. I'm not sure, that's an explosive that is yellow.

Everybody looked yellow. It's-- what is it, TNT? Would it be, or maybe a different? [NON-ENGLISH].

And when I was taken there-- I remember I told you, there was a period of time when they used to order so many people, when I was in Tschénstochau before the ghetto, and I was taken to that camp, to Skarzysko. And I came there, and I saw people are yellow. I say, what's going on?

That was in early 1941. It was still-- it was still as bad as it was. I mean, a lot of people were in concentration camps, but there were still ghettos that somehow if you managed to be within the ghetto, not to get out, you didn't face any danger. Except maybe hunger.

And I got in there. And they said, I had to-- I don't know, the cartridge cases were that high. I think it's 20mm--

whatever that material was, it was very bad. Because people were yellow. And I started to look for places to escape, since I had some experience of escaping from the first camp, I found a place in the fence and I got out.

And to my surprise, I didn't have any difficulty to get to a train and to get back. And I didn't need money. People didn't need money for it-- you just-- I was under, over, I used to ride on one locomotive. Or where they have the open locomotive, and they have a little place in the back where the coal-- used to just lay down on it until I came to destination.

It was no problem to travel by train. You are hiding. I mean, up to a certain point, I think in 1940, or '41, it was not so bad. But later came all-- no place where Jews officially could live, except concentration camps. So it was a little bit more difficult.

Well, I don't know. I think I could--

We've potentially run out of time. I'd like to thank Jacob for coming and relating his experiences with us. We do have time for more questions, but some of these people are in the class, some are not, and I know they have to drift off to other activities. And thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Thank you.