

OK. That was in November 1943?

That was the 2nd November, '43. They took us by trucks.

Open trucks.

Open trucks. They took us by open trucks to Auschwitz. And well, if you come to Auschwitz, there was already a few thousand people there standing. They called it Appellplatz, standing four or five in that. All the camps was around in that district. They are taking the same day to Auschwitz.

All labor camps were closed down?

All the labor camps, they liquidated, liquidated, closed down, and taken all the people to Auschwitz.

Up until that point, had you ever experienced a selection?

No. Selection was in that time-- the first selection what I have seen was in that time. I'm coming to that in a minute.

Sure.

There was about 20,000 or 30,000 people on the Appellplatz. And all the labor--

On the platform, you mean?

On the platform, yes. It was-- all the labor camps were liquidated on that day. And all the people had been there. But by about 12 o'clock, after 12:00, a few SS men come in. And Mengele was in top of them. He was the doctor. And he has got-- he is choosing who has got to live and who has got to-- who stays to live and who's going to die.

You knew that already that he was doing that.

We didn't knew exactly, but we have seen, it's very bad. And he took out beside-- he started-- he asked us to run a few meters. Left, right, left, right, left, right-- that's going on about two, three hours. [INAUDIBLE] it was about 4,000 or 5,000 went to the gas chamber, people from what-- a bit older, a bit sicker, a bit not strong enough went to the gas chamber. The rest of us were staying in the queue, been put on those numbers. They put on the numbers.

And your number is 160216.

Yes.

Was it in order? They did it in order.

They did all this, all that.

So you were maybe the 160,216?

That's right. And to give us the numbers-- matter of fact, just a few weeks here was a friend of mine who was in camp with me together. And he has got his number, 160208.

So he was eight before you?

Eight before me. He was here. I just asked him, tell me, show me your number.

Did you know him in the camp?

Yes, we've been together all the time. He was in Sosnowiec too. He was in the same town. We've been all the years in camp. Years and years, I know with the family. His brother is here. They put us-- gave us the numbers, and they send us-- put us into the barracks.

What was your impression when you came to the camp? Were you-- did you have any expectations of what it would be like? Were you just--

We been expecting the worst. They make us sitting on the knees for hours. They put us on a bridge on the five, six people together. They make different troubles. They took out one and give them 25-- how you call it in English?

Lashes.

Lashes and everything what they could to make miserable or alive. They didn't took us out to work at all. We were going out. In first place, they took away our clothes. They put maked us going into one room, undress ourself. We've been shaved. We're going under a shower. We went out with other room. They gave us wooden shoes, gave us a pair of pants like pajamas, and a coat like pajamas, and that's all.

It was cold winter. Was November 1943. It was snow and [INAUDIBLE], all ice things. We've been going around. And there wasn't any food, didn't gave us for three-- I've been there three weeks. They didn't gave us a bit of soup and lunch. They didn't give us any bread because they said, you're not working yet. When you start working, you will get bread. But at the moment, you're not working.

Anyway, by the-- by about-- I meet my brother-in-law there. He was there in Auschwitz. He come there in August, the 1st of August, '43 with my family together. And he told me everything what's happened. He was very, very down. He couldn't--

Depressed.

Not only depressed, he was very sick. He was a strong young man before the war.

There were two-- Auschwitz was the town, right? There were actually--

Birkenau.

Birkenau. Is that where you were at?

That was Birkenau. He was very down. He told me everything what's going on. When I come in, I've seen him. I got some bread from the camp. I gave it to him. I said, you hide it. Maybe I need a piece of-- you eat some. If I need a piece, maybe tomorrow, after tomorrow, you gave it to me.

After a couple of days, I meet him, I said, Motel, have you got a piece of bread left? And he started crying. Said, I've been too hungry. I couldn't save it for you. I have got to eat it. And I'm so sorry. But I said, don't worry. I can still survive. I'm still-- I can go on. Don't worry. You did the right thing.

By the 20, 21st of November, 1943, we been told that's going a transport to Warsaw. And they're taking only healthy, young, strong men there. I went into queue. I want to leave. I said, I have got nothing to lose. I stay here, it means death. To go away, maybe I will survive, maybe not. I don't know. But I've got nothing to lose here. I can't gain anything by staying here.

I went into the queue. And they selected me to go into the transport, into the transport to Warsaw. And they gave us some bread, gave us some soup, and gave us some bread. And they took us to the train. And they put us into the train like cattle, in the cattle time train, put about 500 into a truck.

Closed cars?

Closed, yeah. Yes, it was closed with small windows to look out. Even they took about 5,000 of us. And we been traveling in that trains about two weeks. I don't know exactly how long, but it was quite a long time. That was day and night, and day and night, and day and night. And they didn't give us anything to eat, nothing.

But by the end, we come. This train stopped. And they opened the doors. And they started letting out us. SS men have been standing there already. And they took us into the old ghetto, the [NON-ENGLISH] Warsaw, was Jewish section before the war.

Well, were these men and women that were in the train or just men?

Only men.

Did some people die?

Was a few that people on the train, not many. Was no-- was about two or three. It was quite-- maybe 20-30 people dead. But all of us reasonably could keep up. They took us into [NON-ENGLISH]. And it was all houses, just skeletons, just empty houses burned down, ruins only.

They took us into one section. And it was only white guides-- white fences around a big road. And they put us there. Wasn't anywhere to go in. We've been staying overnight in the street. We didn't know what's going to happen.

The next morning, they come, stood us on the Appellplatz all together. And they called out, whoever wants to go back to Auschwitz can. If you don't like it here, you can go back. There was about 200 or 300 people, they decided again, oh, we have got nothing to lose here. We going back. They took them into the trains. At the moment, we didn't know what's going on-- what's happened with them. We didn't know anything. But they took them away.

And after that, trucks has come in with ready-made barracks just to put them up, and beds, and the mattresses from straw. And we start building the-- about two guys took us. And we built up barracks, and beds, everything-- kitchens.

And we got where there was water there. We washed. We got the showers, we made. We been like-- we made a home for ourself. After everything was finished, they took us to work, took us out to work into the ghetto, to clean the ghetto.

Warsaw ghetto?

Outside ghetto, yeah.

The Warsaw?

The Warsaw ghetto.

OK. Were you aware that there had been an uprising there?

Yes, we knew that even in-- we knew that even in Arbeits-- in the camp, in the labor camp.

You had gotten word?

We know everything what has been going on. They took us out. And when we went to work, we have seen the trains standing with those people ride around with one SS man been standing with-- we still could hear some people, oy, oy, like that. Some of them have been still living. And they have been standing there.

We pass every day that train. It's been about three weeks they've been standing there, on the cold and everything. When they've been all dead, they took them to Auschwitz to burn them, those people who said, they want to go back. But

when we go out into the ghetto, start working there, we start getting--

So you're saying, that train never left? It stood there with people inside the car until they were all dead?

Yes, yes, until they were all dead. And when they were all dead, they took them to Auschwitz to burn them there. That trucks have been there over three weeks. After three weeks, we haven't seen them anymore. Didn't know why.

Did people-- did you talk about it with other people?

Yes, we talk between us. They knew about it. We talked about it. Of course, of course, we talked about it. What is the time?

11:30. Is that OK?

Or like when we start working in the ghetto, things start picking up a bit for us. Horses come in with wagons and the horses to take away the wood and everything what we allowed to take. And we could find something-- in the old, burned-out houses, we could find some potatoes, sometimes a pot of food, find some food.

What was your job exactly? What did you do?

Cleaning. They've been springing dynamite, the burned-out houses, and cleaning it up, putting bricks to bricks, wood to wood.

Rebuilding it?

Not rebuilding, making it clear.

Just tearing everything down?

Tearing it everything down, like you said. And we've been working there for quite a while, going to every day to work. And we organize some food there in the ghetto. In that way, it's been going on for a long time, till about July 1944.

So you were there about a year?

We been there about 10 months-- 9-10 months.

Did you feel that-- in retrospect, did you feel it was a good decision that you decided to go there?

It was the best decision what I could make under the circumstances. Everybody feel that way.

Right. Obviously, you didn't have much choice. But given the options--

That's right.

--that was, you felt, helped probably to save your life?

That's right. Yes, of course, it helped save us.

As opposed to staying in Auschwitz.

Oh, yes. No, no, Auschwitz was definitely to be lost. And there, there wasn't any selections after that. Selection was only in Auschwitz. But there wasn't any selection. People died. Quite a lot of people died, all the time. What's happened? In November-- in December 1943, people start getting sick, it broke out a typhus.

Typhus?

Typhus broke out. And they make one barrack at the--

A hospital?

Hospital, make it a hospital. And they send there the sick people. They send there sick people. And they took over dead people. But they never brought out healthy people back. We have seen that. I was sick too. It was in the end of December 1943. I was very sick.

But I have got to go to work. I couldn't say, I am sick. Because if I would say, I am sick, they put me into the hospital. Into the hospital, that means death. I've been going every day to work with temperature about 40-42, big temperature. I couldn't work, really. But my friends who been healthy, they helped me a lot. And we been going up there.

When we come Saturday morning, they've got to go all to work. But we worked only till 12 o'clock. When I come home on a Saturday morning, I went straight on my bed and lied down. And some of them brought me something. If they got something, some soup, or anything, I took my ration, brought it to me. And I been lying.

About 2 o'clock or half-past 2:00, one friend of mine come to me. You see? There is the doctor there, the German doctor there. And whoever goes to him and says that he is sick, he gives him Schonung. Schonung meant that you have-- you staying in the barrack. You don't have to go to work. You are sick, you staying home. And you will be better, you will go to work.

I hear that, he said, you have-- means a big to you. If you go, you stay in the barrack, You don't have to go to work. Maybe you will get better. I went down too. And I went to him. And he gave me Schonung too. He gave Schonung about 300 or 400 people. He took the numbers and gave us Schonung.

About 5 o'clock, one SS man come in, and called out all those numbers, and took us to hospital. It was a trick. Well, I could see, that's the end of it. But I haven't got any choice. And we stayed there in the hospital. They brought some food. But I got-- been so sick, I didn't even that what they gave me. And I've been there in that hospital till March 1943.

So when did you go in there, in December?

End of December.

So you were there for three months.

Three months there.

OK. Wait one second.

Over those three months, arrived I don't know how many. At least 2,000 people died in that hospital. But by early March 1943, a few people still lived, maybe 20 or 30.

So they didn't really kill people, they just let them die. They didn't give them any medical attention?

No, no medical, no doctor, nothing, just lie down two in a bed. And gave them-- brought them some food. And whoever eats is all right and whoever not. Was a toilet inside the room. It was dirty. You can't imagine the conditions there.

The filth. By March '43, the typhus stopped. People didn't get anymore sick. And they liquidated that hospital. They took us out into the barracks, back where I had been. I was very, very--

Weak?

--weak.

Did they feed you when you were in the hospital? They must have given you something to eat.

I'm telling you, they brought some food. I don't remember if I eat or not. Maybe these people who brought you, they took it back. When I been a bit better, I eat some, got some water, some soup. I got enough what they gave me because I couldn't eat anyway. But I can't remember.

How do you think you survived? Was there anyone there that helped you while you were in that hospital?

Wasn't any help for Anybody

I mean, like a guard, or a kapo, or something that helped.

Was only the people, the Stubendienst, they called him, the people who delivered the food. They come in. They been there. They cook the food. They brought in. And they put it to the bed. Ever could eat, ever been feeling a bit better, I left my head and eat when I could. When I couldn't, I had sometimes-- I've been in-- I got a temperature for about day or two, I didn't do it. I really don't--

You don't remember.

--remember much about those three months. I remember-- what I remember, every morning, they come to the beds, and took out the dead people. Not-- those prisoners did it and throw them out through the window. Every morning, I hear those bangs with the bodies over the window. That I remember very well. And I've been thinking, oh, there's no hope for me either. Come to die. Didn't think about living. You been thinking, it's finished. But anyway, as I told you, I survived.

You survived.

I survived till March '43. And they liquidated the ghetto. Apparently, torn-- they took us out and burned it down completely. They took us into the barracks. In the first time and took us into the barrack, we stayed in the barrack, gave us food. We eat slowly. They took us out, make us working at the coals to bring coals into the kitchen.

I've been with a friend of mine. He survived from the same district where I come. He was a few years older than me. In the middle, when he standing and working, he said to me, you know, I can't stand any more on my feet. I have to sit down.

I said, you can't do that because here is the SS man. He will kill you. He will hit you. You will die. Said, no, I can't. I can't. I can't. He sit down. As soon as he sit down, he was dead. He-- just I tried to touch him, I said, come on, stand up, and I could see, he's already dead.

Well, at the afternoon, I come back to the barrack. And people come back to work. There was quite a few friends of us. And one man was-- he was the kapo. And he was quite a good man. He was the couple from a company who went to work. And I told him, you seen, he was a good friend of me and of him. You know what's happened? He died there at work. He was very sorry.

And after a few hours, he come to me. He say, you know, Pinchus, you come with me to work tomorrow morning. Don't stay at the barrack. When they call Appell, go tomorrow morning. And I take you under to my command. And you will be all right there.

I said, all right. I went out. And he took me into his command. And they been working on the [? Gesia ?] cemetery. There was the Jewish cemetery there on the [NON-ENGLISH]. And they had been working there. They brought-- the Poles brought the iron bars from the houses there. And they've been unloading there, been stopping there. They got work to there.

When we come there, he said to me, you see, you're not going to do anything. You go here at the office. You sit down. There's paper and a pencil. If you see somebody, an SS man passing by, you make you it-- you write a card to take. Well, if you see-- not see anybody he has a fire, keep up with the fire.

And there's potatoes. There's different food. Cook it. Eat as much as you can, as much as you want. You make sure that when we come back, we have got something to eat too. And you sit there and make hot tea. We come in there, tea. I've been sitting there for about three or four weeks. And I got back on my feet like anything. I was healthy.

You got your strength back. I got my strength completely back. And I said to him after four weeks, put somebody else here, somebody else survive. And I can go out to work. I don't mind. And that was--

So he really saved your life too.

He saved my life, yes. And that was till about the middle of April '44. And I went back to the camp.

And this was still in Warsaw?

Warsaw, yes. We been going every day to work. We organize some food. And I could keep up with those things, what has been going on. We been there till the end of July in Warsaw, working till the end of July of '44. By the end of July '44-- was by the 1st of August '44, the Russians has been moving into Poland. The fighting has been going on on the Polish border. And we could see the red--

The flag?

--flags on Praga. That was a war-torn suburb of Warsaw. The Russians were already was. They took us into Appellplatz. And they said, you coming with us. We have been left-- we have been there about 4,000 people. How have you been there 4,000 people? I'm going back. I'm going back to April '44.

In April '44, they brought another 2,000 people from Auschwitz, Hungarian people, into Warsaw, and gave them the numbers what the dead people what was. We've been left about 2,000. And they put up the numbers again back to 4,000-- Hungarian Jewish people, they brought.

Why did they do this?

They needed the people there to work. They wanted to have the people there. And by August '44, took us on the Appellplatz. And we were standing there. And they been going to evacuate us. We didn't know where we going or what we're going to do. We kept standing. The meantime, they come out.

And they said, anybody is sick, anybody is feeling he can't work, we're going to go far-- a long way. Anybody he can go into Revier or stay there. And the rest of us will-- we have to work for-- need at least a fortnight till we come to a train station. About 300 people went outside. They said, they can't work. They took them into Revier, put them in the bed. And was there about 100--

Into where?

Into the hospital. And there was about 100 of-- 150 sick people already. And after a few minutes, they went in and shot them all out. We hear the shooting. We hear the cries. We heard everything. And when all were dead, they took out about 50 people from us and asked us-- they took-- made them take out them and burn them.

Burned them?

Yes, burned them in the back of the camp. After that, by the afternoon, they marched us out. And we start walking. We walking. When it come the night, we been sitting down on the--

Ground.

--on the ground. And we been sleeping there like that. And next morning, he gave us some food every day, every morning a piece of bread, a bit of butter, a bit of soup. And we had to keep going. After three or four days walking, I've been working with my friends that were there. It was 100, 100 people with a kapo, with an SS man, all together. And we keep together.

That friend what saved me, who put me into that office, and he took me on, he come to me, he said, you know, Pinchus? They are not going to let us live. What am I going to do, they got trucks behind all us with horses. Whoever says he is sick, they put on the trucks. And they moved on it.

When the nightfall-- when the night will come, I'm going to tell them I can't work. And they put me on the truck. When the night will come, there is coming a forest. We will run from the truck into the forest. We will try to survive that's way. Otherwise, we haven't got a chance.

I said to him, you know, Chaim, I don't care what happens with me. But I'm not going to run. I don't know where I run, and what will be, I haven't got any money, I haven't got any clothes. The Poles will know exactly who I am. And they won't help me. I'm not expecting any help from the Poles. What I have-- whatever will happen will happen. But I'm not going.

He said, goodbye and good luck to you. And I said, good luck to you. And he went with a few friends into those trucks. When the nightfall come in, they took the trucks with the people into the forest and shot them all down.

The SS?

The SS. They shot.

Was that the first time they had ever done that?

On the way, that was the first and the last time when they did that. Because there wasn't any more sick people. We didn't hide anything.

What you called one-trial learning, right?

That's right. And when we were sitting down, an SS man coming to the-- and we sitting in the hundreds, as I told you. And they called all the numbers. Whoever called-- answer-- when they called my number, I called, yes.

When they called the numbers who have been killed, nobody answered. After that, they say, was from our camp, 400, was missing about eight or 10 people. And he said, those people trying to run away. And we killed them. Whoever will try it again, he will have the same--

Same result.

--the same result. You know where you stand. Well, we knew exactly where we stand. And we've been walking quite a while. That's interesting to know too. We come to a small town in Poland, which was very known in Poland, Sochaczew. It was a rabbi there before the war. It was a Jewish town.

And we walked through the town, from one end of town, through the marketplace, and through all the Jewish streets, into the other end of this town. And it was-- by the other end of the town was a bridge. We walk over the bridge. It was a lawn there, a big lawn and a big water going. And they put us for the night there into that lawn.

And it was-- we were thirsty like anything. We didn't need food, but we need water. And people start running. It was a lot of Hungarian people. They start running to the water. But whoever's got his head up, he's been waiting a minute to

see, what's going on? Whoever come to the water are shot. And they fall into the water. They have been standing up there up on the bridge. I never come to the water. There was killed about 40-50 people. And the water was red. We could see, we can't do it. We can't run for the water.

40 or 50?

Yes. And we sit down on the ground. The night start falling. And every prisoner has got with him a spoon, a plate, a wood--

Utensil of some kind.

Yes. And he picked always with him. And some people start digging with the food. And they dig too long, the water come out. And they start drinking. But we could-- from that only, from that hole, you couldn't get water for 2,000-3,000 people.

But in the morning, there was about 500 water holes there. We got plenty of water. We drank. And we washed ourselves. They didn't know up there what's going on. We been sitting around, 10-15 people. We dig so deep that one went in and started getting up this place with water. It was dirty. It was--

Mud water.

--mud but we standing there for half an hour, it was clear water. Behind was mud, it was clear water. We start drinking, everybody in the queue. In the morning was about, I don't know, 50-60 holes like that. And they come in, and they have seen what's happened, they just rounded us what we did. But they didn't say it anything. They moved us out. And we going, further going. This walking was-- took us about a fortnight. We come to a little--

When you walked through that town, was it empty?

Empty. We see a few Poles, maybe, but it wasn't any Jews, no. We could see it was a Jewish town.

OK. So you knew which town you were in?

Yes. They moved us from that town. And we been going another few days. We coming to a small station. They put us into the trucks. I don't know how long we've been traveling, maybe two, three, or four days. And we arrived to Dachau. We arrived-- oh, usually, into concentration camps.

The trains went into the camp. We arrived in Dachau. It was about the end of August '44. Some of people were very sick. Some people were-- a lot of hitting was going on. The kapos, was German kapos who were gangsters, murderers. They were our bosses. They tried to kill us all way.

But when we come there, we meet new kapos. And these kapos were political prisoners. They were very good to us. The sick people, they put into the hospital. And the healthy, they kept us into the barracks. And they gave us a lot of-- quite of food, milk, and that to help us. Was not too bad in Dachau. I've been staying in Dachau about-- I've been in Dachau about two months.

OK. So you were sent to Dachau?

Yes.

OK. So in fact, you walked to Dachau?

Pardon?

You walked to Dachau.

I told you. We went--

I'm sorry.

--they took us into a small station. And they took us into trucks. And from that station in Poznan, we've been traveling to Dachau with the train. When we come to Dachau, the train went into the camp. And from there, they let us out. And we been in Dachau.

Had you ever heard of Dachau before?

Yes. We knew we going to Dachau. The kapos told us, you're going to Dachau now. We knew we were going to Dachau.

Was that a concentration camp?

It was a concentration camp like Auschwitz, like Treblinka.

Was it a death camp?

It was a death camp. But at the time when we come to Dachau, wasn't any more gas chambers going on, wasn't any more killing going on. It was just the Germans had been feeling that the war goes to end. And they haven't been doing any more gassing, or in Dachau anymore those things. I been staying in Dachau over two months. I been from that fully recovered, feeling very well. They sent me out into a labor camp from Dachau.

OK. What month was this?

It was about end of November '44. In the labor camps, was a bit hard work-- bit hard work. and the food, what they give the rations, 250 gram of bread, and the soup, and all those things what has been going on. And I've been in two camps-- one was Allach. And one was MÃ¼hlhof. And that was going on until about-- till about middle of March, middle of March 1944-- 1945.

Right. Why do you think they shut down the death camps, the gas chambers?

Well, I don't know. But that's what was.

Was that to you a sign that maybe the war was going to end soon?

They been thinking the war is going to end. Yes. And they needed those people for work. They needed it. Was all younger people, till about 40s, middle 30s, middle 40s, not older people. They need the people, keep them as long as there is. That's why they took us there, to make us work for them.

Dachau was in Poland?

No.

Where was Dachau?

Dachau is Germany.

OK.

That's near Munich. That's a long way from Warsaw to Dachau. That's a very long way. By plane, you can go in a few hours. But the way we been going--

Walking and trains.

--took four weeks.

Were there selections? So there were no more selections in Dachau then?

No. There wasn't any selections. And those kapos, those political kapos helped us a bit. They tried their best to save us. Then we went out. They took us to the labor camp, Allach and MÃ¼hlhof, been working there.

What did you do there?

Carrying cement, mixing cement. They been building, still keep building some factories, transport, a lot of it-- there was what to do.

Did you prefer to work?

Yes.

As opposed not to work.

Yes. I prefer to keep working.

Why? I keep that will save me. I believed that that will-- if I keep working, that will save me. The first place, you couldn't watch over the SS men. He has been watching me. And if he-- he could see who has been working and who not. He could find-- he feeled it. And he could see it. And if he has seen somebody is really working, he wouldn't hit him. I prefer to work than to get hit. And I haven't got much hitting. Some people died from those-- they preferred not to.

Beatings.

Beating. The beating killed them. And I prefer to work hard, as much as going-- and not-- I haven't been thinking, he's standing there or not standing there. He's there or not. Even he hasn't been there, I kepted up doing what I been told. And I think that that was the right idea to do there. Got to do it, to keep doing it.

By the end of March '43, they sent me to another labor camp. From there, there wasn't much to do. The war was going on there. In that camp, they didn't give us much food.

OK. I'm going to-- OK. So you're talking-- you were in the labor camps.

I was-- by the end of 1943, they sent us another labor camp.

'44, you mean?

At the end of-- by the end of March '45.

Sorry. OK.

It was near the end. Wasn't much to do. And they didn't give us much food. They hadn't got themself. The war has been going to end. And we been there about four or five weeks.

About 24 the 25th of April '45, they brought us back into that camp, into MÃ¼hlhof, where I come-- where I come from, from then the death camp. And people have been talking between us. They haven't been eating too. They haven't got any food to eat. We knew they hadn't got. We knew that the war was to end.

They took us to the trains and put us into the trains. It was about 40-50 wagons, put about 300-400 people into a wagon. And the train start moving. But we knew, we moving up and down in one direction.

You're going back and forth, you mean?

Backwards and forwards, in one direction. By after two or three days traveling, we come back to the same place where they put us up. And the train has been standing there. They've been standing around and watching us. Few people died.

Were you being given anything to eat?

No, no, no food, nothing. Wasn't any. It was war. The war was ending. The French and the US soldiers were on their back already. By I think it was about the 29th of April '45, there was-- the war was to end. The doors opened from the wagons. And we start running out.

We couldn't see any SS. The SS ran away already. But we could see it's not finished. We couldn't see any foreign soldiers. But What we could see is we hear there's shooting. And we could see some German soldiers running like mad with guns in the hand. We been afraid that in the last minute, we could be killed. It's only a matter of hours or minutes.

And we-- I was with about a dozen people, about 15 or 20 people. We running into a shed where the boys-- that was the country, with farmers. We running into a shed where they keep the-- all those what they take from the ground, all those weeds and everything. We went up there on the straw. We lied down and listen, what's going on? Just wait up till we'll be sure that we can't be killed.

Was it the Russian soldiers?

No, it was-- we been expecting the US.

The American soldiers.

The American soldiers, we've been expecting the French and the American soldiers. We been there about a few hours. And a moment, a German soldier come into the gate of that shed. And they said in German. Come down. Everybody has to come down with their hands up. If you won't come down, I will shoot up there. And you will come down, nobody-- nothing will happen to you.

The war goes to end. But it must be-- you can't stay there. You have to come down. We could see, we haven't got any choice. We went with the hand up. Was-- are there two German soldiers. They were-- that was not SS. It was the army.

And they say to us, the war goes to end. We lost the-- we losing the war. But you have to go back to the train till the US Army come in. And they will take it over. We can't let you run around. Well, we went back. Went back, was already a few hundred, maybe a few thousand people back there, put us back into the trains. They been standing outside. But there no end. It was the next morning, the war plans come up and start bombing those trains.

Which planes?

American war planes come up and start bombing those trains what we've been there. It was quite a lot of dead people.

The Americans bombed the trains?

Americans bombed the trains, yes. It was quite a lot of dead people. Blood has been flowing like water in those trains. What's happened? I don't know what's happened with me. I woke up. it was a big rush and a big, big noise. And I don't know, after maybe an hour or two, I woke up. And I didn't know I'd been unconscious or I'd been asleep.

I could see some people still fully decide. They been still lived. And I say to myself, Pini, if you will lie down like that, you will die too. I will die too. I have to do something myself. The doors were open. Light is coming into the trains. I

tried to stand up or sit up. I couldn't. I was so weak that I couldn't even sit up.

I turned on my tummy. And on my fists, with the hand, I crawled to the door. I looked around, couldn't see anything, couldn't see any soldiers, not Americans, not Germans, nobody. Street was empty.

But I lifted my head. I could see far away was a old horse or whatever was standing and a few of our people, in those [NON-ENGLISH], in those-- been standing there. And that German give them some-- they call it-- they give them some potatoes. And I tried to myself, if I could come there and get a potato or two, I will be saved. It will be like a million. Well, I thought--

Had you been wounded?

No. No. I was weak. I was very weak.

I turned with my head into the wagon with my feet outside and start let myself down. When I come down, I start walking at the fence. It was a wired fence, all the wires. I walk-- I left-- I walked, just left, that's why like that. I walk till that house. When I come to that house, nobody is there. I could-- I didn't look at what's going on there. Nobody is there.

But I say that-- I still see the German's been standing there. And I knocked on the door. And a tall German come out. And I said to him in Germans, can I have a potato or two? I'm hungry. I haven't eaten for a few weeks. And he said to me, in German, you see, I give away everything. I haven't got. You can come in. You see, I haven't got.

But what for do you need it? Look here. There are the American Army. Look here. And I turned up, it was a marketplace and quite a few tanks, and quite a few prisoners running around, and quite a-- maybe a few hundred American soldiers are there.

And I could already run-- not for walk, I start running. And I been running there, a Russian-- an American soldier come to me. He brought me pot with warm milk, a couple of blocks of Cadbury chocolate, and a carton of cigarettes.

And I pulled in that milk in a minute. And I said in German, more, more. And he ran away. He brought me another pot with that milk. Sit down on the-- then I got time. I sit down on the floor. And I opened a block of chocolate. And I start eating chocolate with milk. And I been already healthy.

You didn't get sick from eating?

No, that was not much milk. With chocolate, you can't get sick. But after a few minutes, I have seen my friends. And I said, why didn't you took me with you? Why did you let me there to die? And he said, we didn't know. We thought you are dead. But now the Red Cross is going there. They taking the sick to hospital. They taking that away. This only-- he said to me, It's only half an hour that we--

Had left.

--were free. It took all where they going there for them. You come here, it's all right. And I got already my friends.

The Red Cross hadn't come there yet when you were there?

When I been there, wasn't anybody. When I been already in the marketplace, the Red Cross was standing there. And they had been moving out with soldiers there to take out the sick and the dead people from the trains. By a few minutes later, the American soldiers brought some prisoners, German prisoners already, with a big-- how you call it, rucksack-- well, carry it around--

Oh, the--

--bags.

--back-- backpack.

On the back. They brought in prisoners with the-- they still got the rifles with them. They start asking them to put away the rifles there. And they took away those bags from them. And they gave it to us. But it was too heavy. We couldn't carry it. Well, what we did, took a dozen--

Were these SS or just German soldiers?

No, that was soldiers. SS men ran away. We didn't know where they are, where they ran away a day before. They ran away. When we ran, start running, the war was still going on. But they ran away. They changed clothes. And we don't know what's happened for them. We didn't see them anymore.

But from there, we went into a street. And we went into a-- there was an empty house. The Germans ran away. We opened the doors. We opened the windows. We make ourselves a home there, put the bags away.

OK. So you were, in fact, liberated from Dachau?

I was liberated, it was a small country town, they called it Zasm³w, a small country town in Germany, in Bayern. We went to that house. We make ourself a home. We settled there.

Was this with the permission of the American?

We didn't ask anybody any permission.

Was it abandoned house?

Yeah, it was abandoned house. Even some people ask the Germans to go. And they moved in. And we start-- they took a big pot. And they was checking outside. It was potatoes. And we took out those sardines, everything from our rucksack. They cooked a big pot with some soup and everything to eat. And we start eating.

I didn't eat much. I couldn't eat anymore. After that milk with the chocolate, I got enough. I eat a bit of soup and that's all. At night time, put some straw on the floor. And we lie down. We were very tired.

Of course, yes, we make showers. We make a bath, make a showers. And we change into new underwear from that what we got from the Germans. Was new, completely not used. We changed into new trousers. And we put on a khaki shirt from the Germans. We been-- we all got those things. And we lie down to have a rest, sleep. We slept till the morning. I slept till about 8 o'clock in the morning. But will come out about four or five of us are dead from that food what they eat.

They were?

Yeah.

How come?

They eat too much. They eat too much there from that till they have been eating. Nobody is looking what he-- other is doing. I told them, don't eat too much. It's no good. I didn't need any more. I eat a bit of soup. And they eat too much. Was, I think, four people completely dead. And one was taken to hospital.

And we've been going around for a day or two. And the American soldiers come to us. They took us in the trucks into Munich. They put us into the Funkkaserne. It was a camp for the German soldiers, very clean, very nice, very nice beds. Was a kitchen there from the UNRRA, from the Joint. Was plenty of food, plenty of rest.

What were-- did any Jews try to have any revenge on any of the German soldiers? Did they try to?

We couldn't do anything. We couldn't do anything. I tell you a story what happened, even in that little town where had been living. The next morning, we've been there still in Zasław. I went with a two or three friends of us to find some food cook ourselves. We didn't want it from the kitchen at that time. We went into a farmer, we're looking for chicken. We couldn't find any. We looking for eggs. You couldn't find any.

The German was there. We when I went out, I heard chicken voice from the war. And I said, have a look. Something-- I put my ear there. And we took away a wooden door. And there's sitting plenty of chicken there. We took some sacks and put in some chicken, little bit of chicken and start walking away. When we walked away, that German, he could speak English. And he went to the Russian-- to the US.

The Americans.

And the Americans ran after us. And he told us to-- he spoke with them in English. And he told us in German, we not allowed to take anything. There is the kitchen if you're hungry. Go there in this. We have to give back the chicken. We throw out the chicken on the street from there on the sack.

You go get them.

You take them. And we went back this. But after the two days, they took us from there into the Funkkaserne. And we stayed there. I haven't been there long. I been discussing with my friend, it's time to go home. We will go back.

What were you feeling during that time? I guess during the war, you didn't let yourself feel very much because just to survive was the--

Yes. We had been very happy to survive. But we had been discussed before we left home that we come home to my home, where we living. We have to meet each other.

In Sosnowiec?

In Sosnowiec, yes.

Did you have any idea what had happened to your wife and two daughters at the time?

Yes, I knew. I knew from Moshe. My brother the one who told me they had been-- they died. But still, I didn't-- I keep my promise. I come back to that place where I left. After the war, we said to each other, whoever will survive, he has to come back here into that-- in to [NON-ENGLISH], was the street where I lived, the house where I lived, the block of flats where I lived. We have to come back there and look for each other there, whoever will survive.

You had heard from your brother-in-law that your wife and your two daughters had been killed?

Had been killed, yes.

Did you hear how they were killed?

Yes.

Did you feel--

They were gassed and then burned to death. Yes. Not only that--

In Auschwitz?

Yeah, in Auschwitz. And my wife's sisters and their children. She has-- my wife has got one, two, three, four, five sisters, married sisters. And they all have got children. They all went together. They all been killed. From the whole family was left only that brother, the only man. His wife and her child was killed there too. Only he was.

Brother-in-law, so he was--

That brother-in-law--

--survived.

--Motel was his name. He survived. He didn't survived. But when I been in Auschwitz, he still lived. I left Auschwitz. And he didn't come back anymore. He died there, when I left for Warsaw.

OK. So you went back to Sosnowiec.

We went back through--

The Americans let you go?

No, the Americans didn't say anything. They said to us, you can sit here as long as you want. And there, you will get food. You will get help. You get everything till we can send you-- you can make up-- till they make a decision what to do with you. It could be a year. It could be two, could be three, we don't know.

So they kept you in the camps?

Yes, yes. We came. It was good. We was free. We could go anywhere we like and do whatever we want. But we got a room in the camp. We could sleep there, and wash there, and eat plenty of food, everything, get everything. Can go wherever you like. But we make our own decision. I said, I don't want to stay there and live on charity. I go home. And I will see, maybe I can start a new living there. Maybe anybody survive. We will see.

And it's been going a train to Budapest, to Hungary. And I with a couple of friends went there. And we went, there wasn't room in the wagon. So we went on the roof. And we been traveling about two or three days, we come to Budapest.

And in Budapest, the train stopped. We went to the town. Was the Jewish committee there with the Joint. And there, again, they gave us-- told us, go there. There is a room for you. You can sleep there. Get food. You get-- they give us some money.

Are we going?

And we start there a few days, a few days, a few days. And we went to the train again. It was a train again to Czechoslovakia. And we went to Czechoslovakia. In Czechoslovakia, we straightaway changed the train to Poland. We come to Katowice. That was in the middle of May, middle of May '45. Come to Katowice. We went to-- by train to Sosnowiec. I come to Sosnowiec.

A friend of me has been living for-- it was a suburb of Sosnowiec, old Sosnowiec they call it. He said, come down here. I been living there. Maybe you meet somebody. We will come down. We meet a cousin of his. And he said-- they told us, many Jews come back, only a few. Come with us.

Since it was nighttime already, we come in his room. And he was sleeping on the floor. And there was some food. Next morning, I went to the [PLACE NAME], where I been live with my friend.

Was a Jewish community. In the street, I meet your father. And I meet some other people, who I knew before the war. I really went. I really went to-- he got a room for himself. And he said, if you haven't got where to go, you come with me.

But I haven't got a bed. I went on the market. I got--

You knew my father, who was Sam Gutterman. You knew him before the war?

Oh, yes, we been quite-- we been good friends. And he'd been a customer of mine. He's been dealing with me-- he lost his first wife and child too.

He had a son or a daughter?

I really don't know.

Yeah, right.

I took-- I bought a bed on the market. And I took it into your father's place. And I went there to stay there overnight. The next morning, I went to where I had been born, where I lived. And I seen the caretaker. I went to his room. He lived in the biggest unit, in the biggest flat, where the best people have been living before the war. Before the war has been living in the basement. I went in and I asked him, haven't you meet--

He was a Pole?

He was a Pole, yes. Haven't you heard anybody of my family? You know them. And anybody of my cousins, anybody of my brothers-in-law? No, nobody was there. Nobody has been asking for you. I went to the kitchen into my flat, where I've been living. I went outside.

I've seen the blinds. And the garden is still there. The kitchen furniture, my kitchen is still there. I knocked on the door. And I opened the door myself. A woman come to me and asked me in Polish, what do you want? I looked around and I said, oh, no, I thought a friend of mine is living here. I don't want anything. I went-- and I never went there anymore. I never went back there.

Were you afraid to?

No, I haven't been afraid. But I just was not-- there's been no sense to discuss with her, to ask her when. She wouldn't give me anything. And I didn't wanted anything from her. Was no sense. I couldn't ask her to leave. I couldn't throw her out. I haven't got much right there.

But the next day, that woman, from that where I lived, the caretaker's wife, meet her on the street. And I thought, oh, I will ask her again. And I meet-- seen her. And I asked her, have you seen anybody again? I called her by name. I have forgotten her name. Have you seen anybody from my family, anybody?

Yes, she said, a small woman here was in January. She was asking of you. I said, was that my sister? She said, yes, she-- it looked like your sister. And it was your mother. She was there in January. That was already in the end of May. She was there in January. She was freed in January '45. And she went straight away to find out what's happened with us.

And I didn't know. I went up to the Jewish committee. And I meet some people. I said, haven't you heard anybody about those people from Vayslitz, where they are, if anybody survive, where I can find them? And somebody told me, there is some in Kraków. I think you should go if you want to find somebody. I know. I said, I know my sister is alive. And I don't know where she is. I can't find her. I don't know where to look for her.

Wasn't-- couldn't-- wasn't there a committee where you could write down?

Yes, but she-- when your mother was there, the committee wasn't then.

Oh, I see. Wasn't formed yet.

Later on was formed the committee. I asked them, look in that book. They says, nobody has written down here. Nobody was here, nobody has asked. But I went to Kraków. And I been going to Kraków to find out if anybody from our town, from Vayslitz. But when I come with the train, when I went with the tram from the station, to the town, on the train, a man come to me. And he started kissing me.