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Then I come back and I stay here till the light is on. You, too. Take care. Yeah.

This is an interview with Arnold Zweig for the Oral Documentation Project of the Holocaust Center of Greater Pittsburgh by Rosalind Kent at 10:10 on June the 2nd, 1989 at the Holocaust Center. I'm going to start asking you some questions. Let me know if you have to stop, and we'll break any time.

Sure thing.

What you're saying is very important for all of us. Mr. Zweig, let me start by asking you a few questions about the city where you were born, what you remember of your very early life, where you came from.

I was born in Lódz, Poland. It was one of the biggest Jewish communities in Europe. The street where I was born was 99.9% strictly Jewish. It was next to the biggest synagogue in Europe. The synagogue was burned November the 11th, 1939. And we had to move out from our house because the fire was so strong that we had-- the police told us to move out. And the next day we moved back to the house, and everything was in ruins.

This was in 1939.

1939, November 11, 1939.

Tell me what you remember of your early years, how far back maybe that you remember.

I remember as I was a child. We had a bakery. My father-- I knew my father worked day and night in a bakery. He had to work day and night.

Did your mother work also?

No, my mother didn't work.

How many were in your family?

With were three in the family. I have a sister, and I had a brother that died.

And where were you in--

I was in between. My sister is the oldest.

Sister was the first, you were second.

I was second, and the brother was the youngest.

And your sister's name?

My sister's name is Maria.

Maria.

Kleiman.

And your brother?

My brother was Harry.

Harry.

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And there were no other people living in this-- was this a house, an apartment?

This was an apartment. 60 Jewish families lived in that apartment. In that apartment, you could live all your life not to go out from that apartment. We had-- in the back we had cows. We had chickens and geese. And in the front, in the apartment were a tailor and a shoemaker and a carpenter. In that apartment you could live all your life, not go out from that apartment.

All in the same apartment building.

All in the same apartment building. It were two buildings. One was in the front with a big tower, a big arch to go through. And in the back was another apartment, and the yards in the back. And it was like a little shtetl. Everybody was like one family.

Did you have grandparents, other relatives living nearby.

Living by about 10 minutes, 15 minutes walk, yeah, my father-- my father had 1 brother and two sisters. And my mother had five sisters and four brothers. And they all vanished. The children-- they were married already-- they all vanished. Not one survived. One aunt survived after the war. And she lived in New York. In 1973 she took a heart attack, and didn't survive.

Were you attending school?

Oh, yeah.

What sort of school?

I went to private schools up to gymnasium. What you call gymnasium, here is, I think, pre--

Pre-high school?

No. Higher than high school.

Beyond high school.

Beyond high school, yeah.

And you-- it was a Jewish neighborhood, so all your friends--

All Jewish friends-- I never had any kind of other friends except Jewish friends.

Was there any interaction in the non-Jewish world?

No, we never had. We lived in strictly-- like today we can call it a ghetto. In fact, when they closed the ghetto in Lódz, this was a part of the ghetto. Our neighborhood was a part of the ghetto.

And this-- the name of this town was Lódz.

Lódz-- L-O-D-Z.

In Poland?

In Poland, yeah. That was the second-largest city in Poland. After the capital of Warsaw, then it was Lódz. Yeah.

Did you read newspapers.

Oh, sure. I got the newspaper. I remember the Volkszeitung. The name of the paper was the Volkszeitung.

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It was issued by the Bund organization. In our house, everything was involved with the Bund.

The Bund was what?

Social Democratic.

Social Democratic.

Social Democratic organization.

And this is a form of a political organization.

A political organization.

What did membership in the Bund mean? You attend meetings?

My father attended meetings, yes. And compared to like here, the Democratic Party. It was like here, the Democratic Party. They were very involved in the life and in the operation of the Jewish community and the community of Lódz because they had-- my father was almost elected to the council of the city of Lódz because they had a big party. The Bund was--

It was strong party.

It was a strong party, one of the strongest in the Social Democratic Party, not like the Zionist or the other one. But this was a Social Democratic Party.

What's the date of your birth, Mr. Zweig?

November the 28th, 1924.

1924?

Yes.

So at this point, you'll

I'll be 65.

You will be 65 in November.

November, yeah.

All right. What language was spoken at home?

Yiddish.

Not Polish?

Not Polish, Yiddish. In school we learned Polish. And then when-- in the gymnasium, the language was Polish.

So you understood Polish?

Oh, sure. I speak Polish. At the gymnasium was in Polish language. The grade school was in Yiddish because it was a private school.

Oh, OK.

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It was a private school.

Was it connected to a shul, a synagogue of some sort?

No. The synagogue we had, like I told you, my father was a baker. We had a bakery. The bakers union had a little shul. Yeah.

But the school was not part of it.

At that time, you were not affiliated. In Europe you were not affiliated to synagogues like in here. You could go anyplace. There's no such a thing like affiliated to a synagogue.

To be a temple member or--

To be a temple member-- it didn't exist, this.

Were you a close family?

Very close, very close.

What was the difference in age between your sister and your brother?

Two years and four years.

Your sister two years older than you, and your brother--

Older, and my brother was four years--

Younger than you.

Younger than me, yeah.

What was the first word you heard of any problem with Jewish and with antisemitism.

Oh, we knew. We knew. I wasn't allowed to go out from the street because my mother always watched. Like, we went-- in the summer we went to a little village. And we always watched-- we knew. The Polacks, let me tell you something, the worst nationality-- Polacks worse than the Germans. Personally, I would say the Polacks were worse than the Germans.

They made life so difficult for Jewish people.

Our janitor always, when he was mad, he used to say, Jew, go to Palestine. Yeah.

Your janitor then was Polish.

Yeah. Only the janitor was Polish.

The storekeepers in the neighborhood were Jewish?

All Jewish. All Jewish. And Friday afternoon, like today, not the rabbi but the sexton, he used to knock Sechar Shabbos. Sechar Shabbos. Because--

To tell you it's time.

Because the people brought cholent. You know about cholent.

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Cholent, it cooks for a long time.

To put it the oven. And he used to scream Sechar Shabbos. Sechar Shabbos. This I remember.

So that they wouldn't do no more cooking.

No, no. Not to put it in the oven anymore because it was Shabbos. This I remember. And I remember one more thing. When Pesach, we used to bake matzos. And I used to go out and look for girls or Polish women to come because we all made the matzos by hand. All the matzos were made by hand. And I remember my father didn't sleep for two weeks when the matzos. At the Seder, he used to fell asleep. This I was a child, but I remember.

Because he was tire.

He was tired because he worked day and night. And this is something, when I came here, I thought, I have to do this the same. I neglected my children because I thought I have to work day and night.

This is all you knew.

I didn't know nobody to tell me you can't do this. You have to rest up. I worked 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

At what age did you become aware of problems?

Well, my teenage years were already got into the war. And we learned that we had problems. But you know, to recall it back, until we came into Auschwitz in '44, I never-- I never knew that we're not going to survive. I never knew that they're going to kill everybody. We didn't accept this. We lived--

In 1939, you were 15.

Yeah.

So you have some memories of that time.

I have memory, yeah. But we moved in in the ghetto. And we didn't--

Well, how did this happen, that you moved into a ghetto?

In 1940--

Tell me what you remember.

In 1940, we got up in the morning one day, and we saw big notices hanging, that May the 1st, 1940, every Jewish family has to move into the ghetto, to the area.

This is the first you heard of this?

This was the first we heard of it. And between, they already-- before the ghetto, they made-- they came in and took the stores away, took the merchandise from the store, hit some Jewish people in the street. And everybody thought, oh, it's going to go away. It's going to go away.

Who came in? Were they soldiers?

The Germans. The soldiers.

German soldiers came in--

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German soldiers.

--to your town?

Yeah, German soldiers came in. They were there already.

So they took merchandise from the stores.

Yeah, from the stores, and the beet Jews in the street, shaved off the beards from old Jewish men. And it was bad. It was bad. But it wasn't-- the first month-- it was worse for people what had the-- had to move to the ghetto area because they had to leave everything. We lived in the ghetto.

You were in the ghetto.

We were in the ghetto area.

If these people moved, into what did they move?

They moved to other families. Like my youngest brother's teacher moved in with us. They moved in, the teacher moved in with us.

And this is what all the Jewish families did. They took in those they took in those that [CROSS TALK].

They took in few-- they have to take it in. Yeah.

And then what happened? You saw these notices about--

Yeah. And we had to move into the ghetto, and everybody tried to get an apartment. And families moved together, and friends moved together. And May the 1st, 1940, they closed the ghetto. And they closed the ghetto, and we started to open up factories.

In the ghetto?

In the ghetto-- everything was in the ghetto.

The Jewish people opened up factories?

The Jewish people opened up. I started May the 2nd-- May the 3rd, I think, right after I went to the Tischler resort. They called the factories resort. And everybody started to work. And you had to have a work permit. If not, they started to take out Jews to go-- in at that time, when they send away people, we didn't know where they send them.

People were being sent away, out of the ghetto?

Oh, yeah. Right away out of the ghetto. Right away.

Which people? How did they--

They grabbed the people in the street.

Did you have to stay indoors?

Yeah, we stayed indoors. Yeah.

No school?

No school.

No school.

No, the first two, three months, I remember it was still school because in May was vacation. And then in September, it was no school in the ghetto anymore. No, no school. Then they started already to take out the sick people from the hospital. And we never knew. But then we started-- then we found out they threw children from-- through the windows.

You saw this?

Yes. And that started. And that started. Then we opened the bakery.

The bakery was still functioning?

Yeah, the bakery functioning. Yeah.

Now what were you three children doing during this time? There was no school.

We worked. Everybody worked.

No, you had to go to work. And I worked in the Tischler resort, in a mill, in a wood mill. And my brother worked in a metal resort. That's a--

Metal of some sort?

Metal-- metal factory. And my sister worked in a factory. From schmattas, they made rugs-- weaved.

From rags.

Yeah. And my mother worked in that factory too, fictitious because we knew the president. Fictitious-- she had a card, and she worked there, but she worked a little bit and then she--

Not using her name.

Using her name, but as working in the factory and she stayed home as much as she could. And my father worked in the bakery. And everything was rationed. And it was bad.

There was still food.

Not too much, no. It was no food at all. It was food, but no meat, no butter, just essential things. And everything was on coupons, rationed-- everything rationed.

Then this was being--

In the ghetto.

German soldiers were--

Watched the ghetto.

--watching the ghetto.

Yeah. It was fences all around. The main street-- the ghetto was two parts. The main street was the streetcar was going through with the Gentile people. And they--

Went through the ghetto?

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Yeah, through the ghetto, through the main street. The streetcar was going through. But it was fenced on both sides, and we had a wooden bridge to go over. And soldiers were used to watch that bridge. And whenever they liked it, they shoot the people on the bridge.

This was a bridge that led into the ghetto?

From one part of the ghetto to the other part of the ghetto.

You were able to go over.

To go over that street.

I see.

Yeah.

And normal transportation went through the ghetto, the streetcar.

No, no. Not through the ghetto.

How did the streetcar go?

The streetcar went to the ghetto, with the Gentile people, to that area because the main street-- to get, they cut through the main street in Lódz. And the people went through the ghetto, but you couldn't go in and you couldn't go out from the ghetto. No.

So you felt that the non-Jewish people were aware of--

Oh, yeah. Sure.

--this ghetto

Sure they were aware. Sure.

Knew the Jewish people had to stay here.

Sure. Sure.

What happened if you left the ghetto?

You got killed. You couldn't leave. It's like being in a prison. You escaped, you got shot. And they shot people in the ghetto.

For what reason did they--

Anything. No reason at all. Whatever they liked it, they killed, they shot. And they made razzias, what they call it. They closed up a neighborhood, and they picked so many people, and sent them away.

What was the talk at home? When you were with your family, what did you talk about? What was going on?

How we going to get-- how are we going to survive, and how are we going to live through this. In fact, when they closed the ghetto-- that was a little bit before the ghetto, a gentleman came in and told my father to go out from the bakery. He want the bakery. And that was the first time I saw my father crying. And my mother said, oh, Fischel, don't worry. If we live through the war, you're going to make a dough in a wooden barrel. Don't worry.

But nobody survived. He got killed by the Germans in the ghetto in 1940.

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They took the bakery away.

Before they closed the ghetto.

Before they closed the ghetto.

Yeah, a German came in and wanted the bakery. But he didn't make a success because they closed the area right in May. It was only three months.

So what happened when the ghetto was closed?

When the ghetto was closed, we had to do all, everything. And they made a government. The Germans made. We had a president in the ghetto. We had police. We had fire department. We had everything in the ghetto.

It was self sufficient?

Self-- we had our own money in the ghetto in Lódz.

So the Jews managed their own lives right there.

Their own lives, yeah.

How long did this go on?

This went down till 1943, until they start liquidating the ghetto.

Then what happened?

Then we went to Auschwitz.

They took your family? They took all the people in the ghetto?

And during the three years, they took a lot of people out from the ghetto.

People were just being-- leaving all the time.

Sure. Took a lot of people out from to ghetto. Yeah. And I worked in that Tischler resort. I was one of the last people to go out from the ghetto, 1944.

And you worked in this factory.

I worked in this factory from May 1940 till '44.

And your father and mother?

The father was at home, and we had the bakery. And the father worked in the bakery.

Mother was still working.

1943-- The Kripo, that was the [INAUDIBLE] Gestapo took my father and--

Were you there when they took your father?

Yeah, sure. They came in from the house. And they asked him to give everything what he has.

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Yes.

He gave it, and they beat him so much that they got his kidneys, and he lived about two weeks. And--

Was he already taken from the house at that time?

Yeah, he was. And he lived about two weeks when he came back. And he died in March 1943.

They took him. They took him from the house at that time.

Yeah. Yeah.

Where did they take him?

To the headquarters in the ghetto, for the police. Yeah.

Were you able to see him when he was there?

No, no, no. When he came back.

And then they permitted him to come back?

No, he was already in bad shape. They threw him out, and we picked him up. He lived two weeks.

Was he able to talk to you?

Yes.

What did he tell you?

That they beat him. They want everything, to give the gold, and give the--

To give whatever you have.

Yeah. And he died.

Were you with him when he died?

Yeah. Sure.

He died at home?

At home, yeah. At home.

And it was from the beatings.

And he's hurt bad. And I buried him. That was March the 5th, on a Friday. And he was a kohen, you know. I'm a kohen.

This is a--

And a kohen has to be buried by Jewish tradition in a casket. And we didn't have wood. Then we took a barrel, and we made a casket from the barrel.

You made the casket from a wooden barrel.

And I remember, I was a child. I remember, a good friend of his came to the funeral and had a little speech

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at the grave. That was in March. It was spring already. It was nice. And then we lived together with the mother, and the mother took it very serious. And we took it very serious. But it was-- well, what could you do?

Yes.

And I worked inside that factory.

And you remained in the house with your mother, with the three children.

That's right.

Well, how did she manage? How did she manage?

We managed because it wasn't rationed, everything. We managed. We managed.

So that you had food to eat.

Yeah, we had not much, but we had. And clothing? Clothing?

And clothing we had, I remember. Mother made a suit for my younger brother from my father's suit.

I'm going to take a break. Let's go on Mr. Zweig. I know this is difficult for you to discuss. After father died, he was buried. Mother and the three children lived together with other people in your apartment?

No, at that time, we were--

It was just your own family.

We had one big room, I would say maybe bigger than this room. We lived all four of us. Yeah.

And were you still working in the factory?

Yeah, I was still working in the factory.

What was your older sister doing?

Was working in a factory too. She made rugs, you know.

And your brother?

And my brother worked in the metal factory. I didn't see him very often. I saw him-- because he worked at night, and I worked in daytime-- very, very little, but I was very close.

And there were friends and neighbors, they were supporting all the time.

Oh, yeah. We had friends. We lived in the building for 30 years. And all the neighbors lived there. They knew each other.

Were you still going to shul, to your synagogue?

No. No.

No, not at this time.

No, it wasn't a shul anymore. It was closed.

Was there any thought about resistance to what was happening?

No. In the ghetto you couldn't resist because it was something-- you couldn't-- you know that you don't have nothing with what to resist. You don't have-- hopeless. To escape, you got shot, and that was it. The only hope was maybe, maybe we're going to live until the war comes to an end. That's all. But to escape, to resist, no.

The resisting started when they start to liquidate the ghetto, not when the ghetto was in-- like normal life, nobody resisted.

Then what was the next thing that you remembered?

I remember when they started to liquidate the ghetto.

What did that mean?

They said that we're going to evacuate to different places, each individual. In fact, I was one of a group, they took us from our factory, and they said they going to set up our factory in a village.

They took everyone in this factory?

No, just a group.

A group. Men? Women?

Men. Men. Young boys.

Young boys?

Young men. And I was with that group. And we took a part of machinery, and we dropped it in a village, in a big place. And he said that we're going to come back and work there.

Was this one of the soldiers that--

Yeah. No, that was civilians. But they're in charge of that factory.

Polish civilians?

No, Germans.

Germans.

German. And I came back and I said to the mother, Mother, we're going into that village and everything.

Was it a village that you knew?

I didn't know. No, but I said this is a village, and this is a big barn. We set up the machines. And we're going to go there. And I came home.

That's what you were told.

Yeah. And I said to mother, Mother, we're going to go to that village. We're going to work. And she took candlesticks and took tablecloths and took everything and--

Things for you to use.

To use, yeah, because she said we're going to live there. We're going to live in the house. We need this.

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And--

But you were going with a group. Your mother was going too?

No, no. We came back.

You went to the village--

To the village.

--then came back.

And we came back. And I told mother, Mother, we're going into that little village, and in that barn we're going to worth there, and we're going to live there. And instead we went to Auschwitz.

How?

They took us to Auschwitz.

On a train?

By train, yeah.

You and who else?

My-- we were 14 people on the last transport-- mother and my sister, my brother and myself, and three neighbors.

Others from the village?

No.

From the factory?

From the factory and from the same house where we lived.

The same house.

Yeah.

How many people?

14 people. That time, that was the last transport. If he wouldn't-- if we would have stayed two more hours, we wouldn't left.

You would not have left?

No. But that was the last transport. Bread was laying already in the street. Was no people to pick it up. I was the last to go out from the ghetto.

How did that happen?

Because they took every day a different--

A different group.

--a different group until it was no people. And I remember when they took the fence already. The Polish

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people start to take the fence apart. Bread was laying in the street. There were no people.

There was no one left to eat it.

No. No one's left.

So you and-- you were 14 people, were taken on a train.

Yeah. And that one--

And you took with you whatever.

Yeah. In one train, it was a lot of people, maybe 300 people there on that transport. And we arrived in Auschwitz.

Can you describe the conditions on the train?

Very terrible, terrible. We didn't have-- whatever we had--

You carried with you.

--we used up. We carried with us.

Some food and candlesticks and--

And when they opened the door from the train, we thought that we're going to be in that village. Instead we were in Auschwitz. And in Auschwitz--

You knew nothing about where this train was going?

Knew nothing. No, nothing, nothing, nothing.

No word came back to came back to you in your village?

No word came back, nothing. Nobody knew it, nobody.

So you had no contact with the outside world?

No. No. Nothing whatsoever. No. And when we came down in Auschwitz, right away they took my Mother away and my sister.

How did that happen?

It was soldiers, were staying, said right and left, right and left.

They separated the families.

They separated family.

You were taken away from--

Yeah, I was taken with my brother.

Was your brother you?

Yeah. My brother was with me all the time.

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All the time?

All the time.

And your mother and sister went together?

Went together. No, they took my mother away, and sister was--

Did you understand anything that was happening? Did anyone say anything? Was there any--

No, they took us in-- then they took us into Auschwitz. And they call it Zigeunerlager. That was a Gypsy camp. And about a week before--

It was called the Gypsy camp?

The Gypsy camp. It was a part of Auschwitz. And then we found out, that time-- we found out that about two days before we came, they had to make room for us. Then they killed the whole, the whole lager, the Gypsy camp. And we found out it was not Gypsies. It were political. They were the only thing-- that was the only place they had the whole families were there. In one night, they killed everybody to make room for us.

How did you know this was happening? Someone told you?

Someone told us, yeah.

Someone who had been in Auschwitz?

In Auschwitz, yeah.

When you came here, you were shocked by what you saw.

Sure. Then we left already. We know, oh, we're going to get. Oh, we're going to go-- and we saw the fire burning, the ovens.

You knew what this was?

Oh, sure. Then we knew it, yeah. Then we knew it.

You were with your brother.

Yeah.

You did not see your mother and sister again?

No.

That was the last?

This was the last time. Then five months after the war I found out that-- I found my sister-- that mother perished in Auschwitz. She was only 43 years old.

Can you tell us what was life like in Auschwitz, in this camp? What do you remember? How did you live? How did you sleep? The food--

Dead bodies. We saw more dead bodies in Auschwitz than living people in-- We were in one room, about-- a little room like this, maybe smaller, about 50 people.

That was where you lived?

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Yeah.

And what kind of sleeping did you have?

In the floor.

On the floor.

On the floor. And everybody lived in-- then we turned. Everybody had to turn because it was so crowded. And Thank God.

You had [INAUDIBLE]

I was only there for two months. And then they took us away.

What were the days like during the two months? Were you working at anything?

No, just beating us and--

You had food, some kind of food.

No. Food we got only one meal a day.

And what was that?

A soup.

A soup.

That's all.

And clothing?

No clothing. They took all the clothing away. We had only the clothing--

Just what you wore.

--what we had left on us.

And the things you brought from your home?

It was-- we weren't allowed to take it. When we left the train, everything had to be left on the train. Whatever you were on this-- and then they took us in, and we didn't get our clothes. You had to change, and you got clothes what they gave you.

Special clothing that you wore?

Yeah.

This was-- who headed this up? There were Germans? Polish?

Germans, all German. Germans and Polish people.

And Polish.

German and Polish.

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Soldiers in uniforms?

Soldiers-- the Polish were civilians, but the soldiers were in uniform.

Was it winter, summer?

It was September. We came in in September. It was cold already. And they woke us-- we had to go out on Appellplatz to count us.

What was that?

That, we stood from 5 o'clock in the morning till about 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

Just standing?

Just standing there. And people dropped like flies.

What about medical facilities?

It didn't exist there.

If someone got sick?

Sick, you died. They took him away.

You stayed in the same room?

Sure. Sure.

Was there disease?

Yeah. Diarrhea disease was. Everybody turned into an animal because we got up in the morning, and we looked who was dead. And that's it. You grabbed-- you looked in his pockets if he had something--

Something that you could use.

--that you could use. And that's it.

Did they remove the bodies?

We removed the bodies, the prisoners.

And you brought them where?

We took them outside, and then other people came in a little wagon. And they took them away to the crematorium. I was only two months in Auschwitz. That was '44. And some of the Pollacks came in and start asking-- they need carpenters, they need tailors. And everybody tried to get out because we saw this is dead.

So you said that you could do something.

Then you could do something. And one day they said they need metalworkers. And everybody said, yes. And we went away. And--

You and your brother?

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My brother and myself and other groups, about 200 Jew-- from Lódz, the people.

Mr. Zweig, what were the toilet facilities?

Nothing. No toilet facility. It was a ditch.

You went outside of the room?

Yeah.

And that's where you took care of yourself.

And were you well during this two months that you were in Auschwitz.

Yes, I was, thank God.

You and your brother were all right?

Yeah.

So after two months, this is already about November.

November, yeah.

1944.

'44.

Then you went to work because they needed metal.

Yeah, they a transp-- They said we're going to a metal factory. And from there from there, from the-- they gave us a piece of bread, and we didn't know how long it's going to last. And they said that we're going on the train. Before to go to the train, I had to lift up, about 10 times, my arms. Who had a number was not allowed to go out from Auschwitz.

Oh. Why?

Because that was the jurisdiction of every number was in Auschwitz. And who had a number wasn't allowed to go out.

Why didn't they put a number on you?

Because at that time, when we came in Gypsy camp, we transit. They knew that we were going--

You were in transit.

--to go in transit.

So you were not permanently in Auschwitz.

In Auschwitz.

Whoever they considered would be permanent--

They gave a number.

--was given a number.

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Yeah.

So they knew they were going to ship you someplace else.

Yeah. We were in Gypsy camp, in Ziguenerlager. And we were transit. And finally, when I lift my hand, and my brother, we didn't have a number, we went into the train. And we arrived-- about three days we went on the train.

You were on the train for three days. They gave you something to eat?

Nothing. Nothing. This one piece of bread what we got. And we arrived in Silesia, in Sudetenland.

Silesia.

Silesia, in Sudetenland. And when we arrived, we thought that we're going to be killed. Soldiers with bayonets, with guns and dogs, and we marched from the train, and we saw the camp. The camp had electric wires. And we came in, and we looked at the camp. And they started talking. We were only over 200 people. That was the first camp.

And they gave us food.

Electric wires? You mean around the camp?

Around the camp, all electric wires.

Not to escape?

No, not to escape. And the soldiers were Ukraine.

Ukraine?

They were not Germans.

Russian.

Russians-- spoke Russian, in German uniforms. And we were there for about a week. They gave us food. They gave us potatoes and beets, they gave us. That was in November, they had beats. They had potatoes.

And the oberscharfuhrer, the head of the soldiers, had a speech that we're going to survive by working. And we're going to be good, treated good.

In what language?

In Germany. In German.

In German.

And that we're going to a factory work. And we make propellers for B-57s, for the--

Airplanes.

--airplanes. And we went to that factory.

And you're still with your brother.

All with my brother, yeah.

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Did you make any other relationships there?

Yeah.

Did you have friends? People?

I had a friend, which we were like brothers. And after the liberation, I lost him. And I never found him, never. And--

Was there much interaction among the prisoners?

Oh, yes. Yes.

All Jewish?

All Jewish. And then in that-- about a month later, a transport of Hungarian Jews came in. Hungarian Jews.

So these were all Polish Jews?

We were Polish first, and then Hungarian Jews came in. And it was--

All ages of men?

All ages-- young, not--

And only men in this camp?

Only men. Only men, yes. But it was-- the camp wasn't bad. In the beginning, they taught us how to make the propellers. And it wasn't bad. The camp wasn't bad. The oberscharfuhrer, the head, was an elderly fellow, maybe in his 60s, I would say.

He was not cruel?

He was not cruel, no. We didn't get beatings. No, it wasn't bad.

This was in Silesia?

That was in Silesia. But about the first week, when we didn't work, a friend of mine died. And I didn't know. Then a soldier comes into the room, picks up four people, said we should go down in the basement and take something. And I didn't know we go down. We didn't see nothing.

And then we went down, and I saw the body. The body was naked, and written the number here and the number here. I had-- my number was 56595. And he had--

This was your prisoner's number?

The prisoner's number.

And this was your friend?

This was my friend, yeah, from metal-- from Tischler resort.

What did he die from? Do you know?

If I recall it, he died-- I think he had something. I don't know what he died.

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But they took you down.

And we took the body out. And we took him to a little-- to a cemetery. But it was a Gentile cemetery. And two soldiers watched us. And we dug the grave all day. And it was very tough to dig, like stone. And the two soldiers were talking to each other.

In German.

In German, yeah. And one man came from the Russian front. He was wounded. He had bandaged the whole arm. And the other soldier just went into the service. It was a young fella and an elderly fella. And it took us, to dig that grave, all day. And they talked, and the Russian what came-- the German soldier what came from Russia talked to this old man, said they're going to lose the war because, they said, what the Russians can-- if they want to take something, people, it's nothing. They can throw millions of people.

And they talked to each other all day. And that elderly German that was-- he was a little soft, and we dropped the body in the grave. The body was hanging like this on the grave. And he said-- and he noticed who's a little bit harder by character. And he said to one of the foremen, you go down and straighten him out.

This was just drop the body into this grave.

Just drop the body in this grave, and we covered this. But it was on a hill. And we had the body laying down. And we couldn't carry that body up. It was so bad. Then in come that-- it was a shed next to that cemetery. And he said, take the door off. Then we took a door off.

The door of the shed.

Of the shed-- we took-- we laid the body on the door, and we carried it up on the hill. And I remember that it was the fence, and we counted the sticks on the fence because we had to flatten the grave. No grave-- just the ground has to be flattened out. He said, if we live, let's remember where, that I was liberated there. And after the liberation, we made a cemetery there.

So this was still in Silesia?

This was in Silesia.

And how much time were you there?

We were till May the 8th, 1945. We were liberated-- I was liberated May the 8th, 1945 By the Russians.

Do you remember-- you say at this camp they were kinder.

Yeah, they were kinder.

They were not as cruel as--

The German soldiers were not as cruel, but the Ukrainians were very cruel.

The Russians?

The Russians, yeah.

They were working for the Germans?

Yeah. They were the Vlasov army. They were-- the Russians what went over to the German side. General Vlasov went over with two divisions on the German side. And they were very bad. They beat us all the time.

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Now you heard the Germans talking at the grave, so you learned something about what was going on in the war.

Yeah, we knew it.

But did you-- before that, did you know anything, any word from the outside world?

No, we never, never had anything. No. No. Three months before the liberation, a friend of mine escaped from that camp. And he told me to go with him, but I said no, I have my brother. And when we went to work--

Did you know about the escape?

Yeah, I knew because I carried for him a package of bread. And he escaped from the factory at night.

Why did you not think about escape?

Because how could I leave my brother? I couldn't escape.

And the two of you could not do it.

No, the two of us couldn't go. No. And then sometime we spoke to a soldier, like sometime he was friendly, and we used to ask him what happened to-- three escaped in the same time. And he said they didn't get caught. And when you talk sometime to another soldier and you say, oh, these [NON-ENGLISH].

Dead a long time.

Dead a long time. When we liberated, they came back. They survived.

So some of them would communicate with you.

Yeah, in fact, let me tell you a little story in the camp. It was a vote about in January what to do with us because the Russians started to come back closer. They were already in Breslau. Breslau is now Poland, but it used to be in Silesia. And they voted what to do with us.

The Germans were discussing--

The little village.

How to handle the prisoners.

How to handle us. And 90% of the village voted to kill us. And we were scheduled to die May the 12th.

You mean the village people?

The village people voted to kill us. Yes.

To kill the prisoners?

To kill the prisoners because they couldn't take care of them. They had to evacuate. They had to take. But we had a soldier, he was very friendly to us. And he told us this. And this is something-- he gave us a machine gun. And he said to put up a fight.

This was a German.

That was a German.

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Not a Polish?

No. That was a German, a master soldier what worked with us in the factory. And he said, whatever happens, you put up a fight. You're going to get killed, let them get killed. May the 6th-- and this was about three weeks before the liberation. And we put a watch. In each room, we had one man watching. If he didn't go to work in the morning, he was up at night to watch if-- we were afraid of them to come in. Then we would--

To fight.

To fight. May the 6th--

To defend yourself.

To defend. May the 6th, May the 6th we got up in the morning, and we stayed outside to pick us up. And the masters didn't come to pick us up.

To go to work, this is.

To go to work. Because we had to walk for about-- from the camp to the factory was about three miles. And we used to walk through that village. And May the 6th in the morning, we didn't go to-- the masters didn't come and didn't pick us up to work. And the oberscharfuhrer, the head soldier, came in and he had a speech. And he said, that they're waiting for the Russians to come in. And who is escape is still the todesstrafe-- who escapes still gets killed, the tode.

So that you should still not try to escape.

Not try to escape. But when he said so this, and the head, the kapo from our camp-- we had a kapo. A kapo was--

A kapo is--

A man what was in charge from our prisoners. But instead saying fluechtlinge, prisoners, he said "men." And when he said "men," we all said hurrah. Hurrah. But he said right away be quiet and to go back to the rooms because--

The kapo, the man that was in charge was a German?

No it Jewish.

It was a Jewish man.

Jewish [CROSS TALK].

Someone was made a kapo.

Was made a kapo, yes.

I see.

And when he said "men," we made hurrah, and he said go back to the rooms and be quiet. Instead go into the rooms, we ran to the kitchen. We blocked the door from the warehouse. And everybody grabbed a piece of bread and a handful of brown sugar.

Hold. I'm going to have to turn this around.

You grabbed--

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We grabbed a piece of bread and a handful of brown sugar. And the kapo, the alteste, said how long is this going to last, we don't know-- to save it. But I can assure you, nobody saved it. Everybody ate it in the same time. That was May the 6th. And our camp was on the highway. May the 7th, the English-- no, the French and the Italian prisoners, they were in a different camp. They came in and said that we should escape from the camp because the soldiers, the Sprengkommando, that was what bombed the bridges, they will see a camp. They will throw a couple grenades. And--

These were prisoners of war.

Oh, yeah. They were prisoners of war.

In the same place where you were?

In the same village, but not in the same place. The Jews were separated.

I see.

And they were in prison, but they could move around free. They could work in farms. And they said that we should escape in the woods because they can kill us by throwing a bomb. Then May the 7th, we didn't know-- we had about 30 sick people. And we didn't know what to do with them because we couldn't carry them. And we said-- we took the doors off from our rooms and nailed on in their room, put buckets of water in their room. And whatever we could have spared food, we left with the sick people and said-- and we escaped in the woods.

And we went through in the morning, till 7:00 in the morning. And we went through the village. And I ran into a farmhouse, and I grabbed three eggs. And I ate it, and I didn't take sick.

And when we came in the woods, in the mountains, we saw Germans from the village. They escaped too.

How many people were you?

Our camp was about 150.

And that many people were with you?

Escaped in the woods, sure. We were in the woods. But when we went through, we went to the farmers and told them, if they see the Russians, they should whistle. But between the 7th-- when we got in the woods, the Germans were afraid of us and we were afraid of them. And we moved deeper and deeper in the woods, in the mountains, in the woods.

They had machine guns. The Germans--

No, they didn't have the machine guns. They were the Germans, the German people from the village escaped because the Russians came in. And they were afraid of us, and we were afraid of them. But from May the 7th and the 8ths, the whole mountain, they bombed that village all night. The mountain shook. We were scared to death because they bombed all night.

And in the morning, they--

These were the Russians that were bombing.

The Russians, yeah. The Russians were bombing. The Russians came in. And May, in the morning, we start moving closer back from the woods, closer to the-- and we heard screaming. We didn't know what was going on. But between the screams, we heard whistling. And we start moving down, moving down.

What was the screaming? When the Russians came in to the Krankenstube, to the sick people, they were

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screaming. And we didn't know. We thought they--

With joy. With joy.

Yeah, with joy. We thought that they were killed or they're doing something. And we--

So they never-- then they never bombed that camp.

No, they never bombed the camp, but they bombed the whole village because it was all a lot of factories of airplanes. And in the mountains, when we came into that village, we dug the hole in the mountains by the clothes. I had the coat. We had the reverse. And the people, like ants, we were in the line day and night with a shovel and dirt to dig out that hole we made there from the factory in the mountains. We made it.

So it was hidden?

That was hidden and it was--

And protected.

Yeah. And when we ran down, we saw them screaming. And we saw Russians with a gun. He was scared of us. He didn't let us close to him.

He realized who you were.

Oh, sure. He saw we were shaved out. He realized that was the camp.

Your head was shaved?

Yeah, here it was two inches shaved out in the middle.

Why is that?

To recognize that you're not a civilian. And we start, and right away a few people started talking, this one was bad, and this one he want to kill these people. But he took control.

This was a Russian?

The Russian, yeah. He was wearing a full hat, I remember with a red cross on top. He was a Cossack.

Were you able to communicate with him?

We talked a little bit, but they were afraid. But we were in the camp. That was May the 8th. And about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, a Russian soldier came in on a horse. And he spoke Yiddish.

A Russian Jew.

A Russian Jew, he came in and he spoke Yiddish. And he said that we should go to the German homes, take clothes and go home. That was 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Go home?

Go home. He said to go home from where we come.

To go back where you came from.

To go back where we went. But Everybody started to run into German homes, took clothes. I looked--

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Now the people were not in the home not anymore. They had left.

They had left, yeah. It was empty. And I ran, and I got a pair of pants and a shirt. And the next day, a lot of boys couldn't get up, took sick, diarrhea and everything.

The boys that had run out with you.

Yeah. And they took them to the hospital. They took us to the hospital.

The Russians took--

Yeah, they had a hospital. They did. And they took us to the hospital. And I had a friend-- two miles from us was a women's camp. And we knew about it because we had a good doctor in our camp. They took him to this camp. And some people took sick. And he came back and he told us that some Polish women are there and Hungarian women.

This was a German doctor?

No, that was a prisoner.

From your group?

From our group. And we knew it. And I grabbed a bike, and I ran down. I thought maybe I'll find my sister. And my-- I found two girlfriends of my sister.

Now your brother is still with you?

Yeah, my brother was still with me.

So you went-- this was already when you got back. You went on bicycle to that other camp.

My mother died in [PLACE NAME] in a car accident, to go to everything. In 1950--

From this camp, from the women's camp.

From this camp. I said, come with us. Come with me. They were my girlfriends, my sisters girlfriends from school.

Did they know about your sister and your mother?

No. They didn't know.

You had no news yet.

No news. No. They didn't know. I found my sister five months after. My sister escaped from camp. And she lived with a German lady. This is-- I'll tell you this is something else. In January of 1945, a transport of 10,000 women, the Germans took, and they walked. And they walked to Konigsberg, to the Ostsee. They throw them in and shot them all. And nine girls survived. And one of the nine girls was my sister.

From how many girls?

From 10,000, nine girls survived. And--

How did she survive?

Then by three girls survived. And they were laying in morning in wet clothes in the winter, January. A lady came down to pick driftwood for fire. And she heard them crying.

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A German lady?

A German lady. She heard them crying. And she took the three girls in. She took the three girls in, and she had a shack. And they stayed in the shack. And she gave them food. And she saved their lives. They were [INAUDIBLE]. Yeah.

I call this lady Mutti, mother, after the war. Yeah.

You know who this lady is?

Oh, sure. When I found my sister, she started to write to her. And I went to see her. In fact, one girl went to Israel, and two girls from the three--

From this group that survived.

From that group. Yeah. And we want to bring her to the States. And one girl want to bring her to Israel. She didn't want to leave because she was an elderly lady.

So your sister was with her friends, stayed in the shack.

As Germans. After about three weeks, she took them into the house. She took them into the house.

She took a chance.

She took a chance. And one day the husband goes up to pick up driftwood.

This is the German lady's husband.

The German lady husband. She didn't have children. They were the two. He went to pick up driftwood. A bomb drops and kills him. And the lady's left with--

This was right near the house?

In the backyard. And the lady's left with the three girls.

How did they manage?

She managed until she went up once to that little village, to the Rathaus, to the city hall, and said she has a a hello from McKeansburg. I give you an example, say McKeansburg. She has a hello from McKeansburg. Who is here from McKeansburg? And then nobody said a word. Then the next day, she said she has three nieces.

You mean she was giving regards and meanwhile trying to say something.

Yeah, who is there. Then the next day, she went up and she said her three nieces came from McKeansburg. They were bombed out down there, to give them cards.

She was trying to give a message.

And she saved their lives. Yeah. And let me tell you that the two girls, they live in New York in one apartment for 30 years in the same apartment. Where they go, they live like one family.

Your sister's friends?

Yeah, my sister and my sister's friend.

The three women.

The three live in New York. And my sister has already four grandchildren. But they're so that they don't go nowhere. And the two girls, one girl was a granddaughter of the biggest rabbi from Lódz.

All right, let's go back now. You went to the camp. You found the friends of your sister.

Yeah.

You went back to your village.

I went. And I went to pick clothes up. And I said-- and I picked clothes for the girls. And I said, this is for you, Tela. This is for you, Hala. And this save for my sister. I didn't know my sister was alive, but something told me. I said, this save for my sister.

You gave to the friends to hold.

I gave to the friends to hold. Five months later, my sister went home to Lódz. And I went after the liberation.

You went back to Lódz?

Yeah, two days-- my mother said, wherever you're going to be, remember you have a home. Come back. And I went back.

How did you get back?

By horse and buggy.

A horse and buggy.

By train, we got back. When I got back, I didn't find nothing. The house was all bombed-- not bombed out, but the Polacks went into the house, to the bakery, grabbed the steps, the windows, the doors.

They took whatever they wanted?

They took whatever they can because I didn't find a picture in it. And we had big ovens, from tiles, made ovens. And my mother said-- they saved something. They covered. And [INAUDIBLE] said, when you come back, whatever you see, you come back.

They hid something.

Yeah. But we didn't find nothing. And two days later, I went back to Germany. But I went to the committee.

Which committee?

To the Jewish committee.

In Lódz?

In Lódz.

There was still a Jewish--

Lódz was liberated in January of '45.

And you were liberated--

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In May.

In May.

When I came back, was life already.

People had already returned. Your neighbors?

Very few-- didn't come in. No, very few. But I got to my-- I went into the federation, and I said that I'm alive. My brother is alive and everything. And when my sister came back, she found out that we are alive. Then when we start to write, she was in Poland and I was in Germany. And I said--

Wait. You left Lódz then, with your brother, still with your brother.

Sure. All the time with my brother.

Where did you go in Germany?

Back to the village where we were liberated. We lived in that village. I lived in that village for six months because this was like the home. The village-- the camp was like home. We concentrate all the--

The same camp where you all were.

The same camp, yeah.

Where you had worked.

No, but we moved into homes. And the camp was abandoned. The camp was destroyed.

This was the camp near Silesia.

Yeah, in Silesia, Friedland. The name of that little town was Friedland. It belongs now--

And there were German people there?

German people, they came back. Yeah. They came back. yeah.

How did they treat you?

They treated us nice. Yeah. We took a house with the two girls, my brother, and another friend. We took a house. And we found in the house about 20 rabbits. And we killed a rabbit every day, and we ate. We made-- we lived like this.

This was just an abandoned house?

No. That was a house, but they went out. The people left the house.

People had left there.

We found out later, it was the police chief of the village. But five months after, my sister found out that we are alive. And she, with the two other girls-- they were like sisters.

Came to the same place.

Came to the place. And she said to the girl, come with me. You'll live with my brothers. Wherever we live, you're going to live. And when we went to the train station, she came. I had a friend staying with me,

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watching. And this was his sister. He didn't know that this was his sister.

And we lived until-- and that was-- the Russians were there, and they occupied. And we stayed.

They occupied this German village.

This German village. They made a hospital for the Russians.

For Russian prisoners.

No, for the Russian soldiers. And the head of this hospital was a Jewish doctor by the name of Fishman. This I will remember as long as I live. He was from Kyiv. And when we recuperated, we were-- I was healthy already, not undernourished. We worked in that hospital.

You had built up a little bit.

And we worked in the hospital. One day, the Polish government comes to that village and said that we the Polish citizen, we have to go to physical to go to the service because we were young boys. That was 20, 21 years old. We have to go to the Polish army. And he couldn't say no. He said, you go.

This is Dr. Fishman.

Dr. Fishman. You go. And when we came back, we told him. He said in Yiddish-- this I remember-- he said, for I is America.

For you is America.

And two days later, we escaped to Czechoslovakia.

How did you do it.

He helped us.

He helped you.

He helped us. He gave us five guns and two canisters of gasoline because the Czechoslovakians didn't have gasoline. And he said to go through the border and watch for the Polacks because you put a fight up. But thank God, they watched us in here, and we crossed in here. 70 people crossed the border.

70 boys?

No, no, girls and boys.

Girls and boys.

In between this group was a man what was-- he was the mayor of that village, and we didn't know him. He was Polish, but whatever we went to help us because we were Polish, because this was Russia but the Polish territory. He didn't want to help us. We didn't know. He was Jewish.

And we found out, when we were in that room at night to escape, when I walked in in that room, I thought we got caught. He double-crossed us. He escaped with us.

And he went with you.

He went with us. And it was a cousin in the boys, which they given each other away. He knew it. But until the last minute didn't tell us. Nobody knew about it. And he was so--

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Why do you think?

He was afraid.

He was afraid.

He was so rude to us, when we went to ask him for something, he didn't want to help us. He was afraid he's going to give himself away. He was living as a Polish boy.

He was protecting himself.

Protecting himself. He is in New York. He's a pharmacist. And when we escaped and we crossed Czechoslovakia, we gave the guns and the gasoline to the soldiers. And they took us to Nachod. That time already, transport of Jewish halflinge, displaced people, went already to Israel. That was '45. the Haganah at that time started it.

And they were able to go to Israel.

Yeah. And they made camps--

This is from Czechoslovakia?

In Czechoslovakia. And they made camps working. And they took us to--

In preparation for going to Israel.

To go to Israel. And we went from the Russian side, from-- because Czechoslovakia was still Russian. We went to Austria, on the American zone. And from Austria, the three boys who I was so close, my brother and that other boy, we went to Salzburg. And we lived--

From Austria to Salzburg.

Salzburg is in Austria.

It is part of Austria.

But we went.

So you moved to Salzburg.

We moved to Salzburg. And In Salzburg, I stayed till 49, till I came to the States.

You were working and living there till 1949.

Yeah.

What were you doing in Salzburg?

I went to school. I went to school.

And your sister?

And my sister took care of us in the house.

You and your brother-- the three of you were living together.

Yeah. And then I met my brother-in-law.

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This is your sister's--

Husband.

--husband.

And when they got married, they moved to Munich, and I remained in Salzburg with my brother.

So at that time, your sister was not worried about moving back to Munich.

No. No. No. When she moved back, it was a displaced persons camp. I lived in a house in Salzburg because I came into that little village next to Salzburg, Freilassing. It was a little village. And I went into the warning sound that the, like, the [NON-ENGLISH], that was the housing authority to ask for an apartment.

They told me they don't have apartments. And then that girl, the receptionist, said, oh, down their lives a big Nazi in that house. Go to him. Maybe he will give you an apartment. And I went over to that house and knocked at the door. He opened up, and he said-- I asked him for an apartment. He said, no. In Ainring is a camp, a DP camp. I said, you go to the camp. And I kicked the door, and he let me in. And I lived with him until I came to the States.

With this man?

With this people, yeah.

How was that?

He was a big Nazi, but we lived in--

You were able to live there.

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Did you find religion helped you in anything here, your faith? Had you had bar mitzvah? All of this was happening when you were 13, 14.

We had bar mitzvah, but not in a way we have it in here. We went to the shul, had bar mitzvah, and that's it.

This was already 1939.

Something-- before-- during the year.

'37, you would have been 13 years old, 1937.

Yeah.

So you had a bar mitzvah before.

Yes. But religion-- in our house, religion didn't play a big role.

It was not strong.

No. Father was a Bundist. He was revolting. And he was-- in fact, I have the only one picture from an aunt from Israel. She found out, and I have when he was a yeshiva bocher in school in the yeshiva. But when he was-- he revolted against religion. He was very educated in Hebrew and Jewish, but he revolted.

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But not religious.

Not religious.

So during all this time there was no religion. There was no rabbi that tried to help--

No we.

--services of some sort, when the holiday came in--

In the beginning, yeah, we kept the holidays. But after the war, as boys, some became very religious.

More religious.

More religious. In fact, the second day after the liberation, a boy of us turned kosher. He didn't eat in the restaurant. Because we were young boys, we only could eat in the restaurant. And he got a hotplate and made food. He became kosher the second day after the liberation.

So he turned to religion.

And some walked away from religion. Some revolted against religion because the anger was so big that you couldn't-- it was nobody to answer you why. And then you look for the scapegoat. Then you turned against-- to blame it on somebody.

Then you're angry, angry.

Oh, yes. And the anger never left me. The anger never left me.

This is what it means to you today to be a survivor.

That's right.

Anger.

The anger and, a survivor, the hope. I saw boys they lost their hope, in two days they were gone. In two days they were gone.

So you needed to have hope.

Yeah. But not religion.

Yes.

Religion didn't--

Hope for the future.

--didn't play a role because you revolted against religion. If you would say, why should this be so. You revolted against it. You didn't deny that you were Jewish. You suffered so much that you revolted against it.

How did you happen to come to America?

Through the federation.

And you were living in Munich.

From Salzburg, I came to New Orleans.

From Salzburg. Oh, your sister was in Munich.

My sister was in Munich. My sister came six months before me. She came here to Pittsburgh.

So you were communicating with her.

Yeah. And I came with my brother to Oklahoma City. In Oklahoma City I met a lot of German Jewish people. But they spoke German. And they spoke English. And when we came, my brother and myself and another boy, and we couldn't speak English. And we spoke very little German.

Why did you come to Oklahoma City?

They assigned us Oklahoma City.

It was not your decision?

No, not my decision. I didn't know where Oklahoma City like I don't know where Yukon, Alaska is. But when I start to write letters to my sister, she said, oh, in Pittsburgh you have people. You can speak Yiddish in the street. You have Jewish this. Then we came to Pittsburgh, to this.

How did she happen to come to Pittsburgh?

My brother-in-law had an uncle in here. And he requested that they should come to Pittsburgh.

So then you moved from Oklahoma City.

Then moved from Oklahoma and moved to Pittsburgh.

With your brother also.

With my brother. I never went without my brother.

You married in Pittsburgh.

I married in Pittsburgh, yeah.

How do you feel about Israel?

Oh, I feel I will die for Israel. This is the hope of our future.

So are you, today, a religious person?

I believe in God. I'm not a religious.

But you don't practice.

I don't practice.

You have children, Mr. Zweig.

Yeah.

Two children?

Two children. I have a daughter and a boy. The daughter is 33, and the boy is 30. They both live in Florida. And you see, this is something, till today I never talked to my children about this. And this is something,

when I start talking to my children is when they show the show the Holocaust a few years ago. My children didn't know because I--

They didn't know your history?

No.

They didn't ask about my grandmother.

They asked, but I deny this to them. And this is something which I should have told them. I denied it. Like they used to play in the street with other children. On holiday grandmother used to come. They used to run in, Daddy where is Grandma. How could you tell him Grandma was killed by German. You couldn't-- you couldn't put hate in them. You understand?

From one side, I feel I should have told them because they were already-- like, a few years ago, my daughter said, Daddy, why didn't you tell me this? I said, how could I tell you to hate people? Or--

They live in the United States.

I denied them. I hid by working because I missed my parents. I couldn't give them as a parent, and I hid this, which I know I was wrong. But I took it out. This was my--

That's how you took it--

I took it out.

Yes.

And this was-- that's something which it will never leave you. It will never leave you.

And then it was at that time told about what happened to their grandparents.

Then I told them that I'm a survivor. I was in camp and everything.

What was the effect?

It was a little bit-- it affected them. It affected them because they realized where the grandparents and the uncles and aunts--

Because the had no family.

They had no family.

Maybe they guessed something about this.

Of course, they're older now, they understand now. But they missed this part of life. I can see they missed this because the other children, they had friends, and when holidays came, uncles came, grandparents came. And they missed this. They missed it. They kept to themselves because of this. They missed this.

Do you have grandchildren?

No, they're both not married yet. No. My sister has four grandchildren already. Yes.

How do you feel about the future?

For me, I don't give a damn because life is a [INAUDIBLE]. Life is nothing to me. I don't care if I die tomorrow or something because I don't see nothing. I accomplished everything and nothing. I have nobody,

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nothing to show. If it's far as a holiday or something--

To show it to your family, you have mother and father. and--

That's right. It's nothing.

You really have only your sister.

Only my sister. It's life that's-- I'm angry. Inside I'm angry. Outside I might laugh. I might do this. But inside, I'm very angry. I'm not angry at nobody, but I'm angry at everybody.

The situation.

Because they denied this. And my children pay for it. I pay for it. My wife pays for it and everything.

Was your wife a survivor?

My wife lived in England, but the Elton, the parents died in Auschwitz.

So you shared that with her.

Yeah. And you know, it's something. When I came to the States, when I was alone, I always had in mind to marry a girl with parents. And fate, she doesn't have parents. Because my grandmother lived with us. I never-- like people started talking, oh, grandmother or this-- I never realized. I never believed that it can be a dispute between something. I wasn't born-- I was born and raised in a family where love the family was. And I couldn't understand that was in me. I always said, oh, I wish I could have a mother or father.

It was very important.

Very important. Very important.

All right, Mr. Zweig. I want to thank you for talking about this. Would you like to tell me anything else?

I can tell you stories from now till next year.

Tell as much as you can.

What we left-- what we left. What I went through.

Yes. If you'd like to add something.

Oh, it's so much to add. It's so much it never ends. It never ends.

You have some friends that you--

Friends. But you see, even till today--

Friends from that time.

Even friends that time, the home vanished completely. When we come together, like in Florida--

You are still seeing people from--

Yeah.

--from the camps.

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We always ask from what camp you come, not from what home, from what camp. When you say the camp, you know who you are. The home vanish--

That's the way you identify yourself.

That's the way we identify. The home doesn't exist anymore. The home doesn't exist anymore. In fact, I had, till last year, I was so-- I wanted so much to go to Poland. And my wife talked me out of it. Finally, my friend went. And he came back and said Arnold, forget about it. Don't go.

This is someone from your hometown?

From my hometown.

And he told not to go back.

Not to go. No. He went back. He went to my father's grave. He said don't go. Don't go. The Polish are still the worst, and don't go. They went to the grave, to the cemetery. It's like a jungle. Took them about two hours to cut the bushes from the grave. He said, Arnold, don't go.

Is this all Polacks living now, Polish people living in that town?

All Polish.

No more Jewish town there.

No, no more. Maybe 2,000 Jews. They even don't say they're Jews. And it was before the war, 300,000 Jews lived in Lódz.

So you still see some of these friends?

Oh, yeah. And we get together in Florida in general, in general all the time. Maybe from 300,000, maybe 6,000 Jews survived from Lódz.

Anyone in Pittsburgh aside from you?

Yeah, a couple from Pittsburgh, what we were in the ghetto together. Yeah. Yeah. Konsky, you know, the daughter works in here.

Oh, yes. Yes.

Her father, she comes from-- the father comes from Lódz, from my hometown. Yeah. You forget. You run, you go here, you go--

Life goes on.

Life goes on, but still inside is still the page didn't turn. The page didn't turn. Page didn't turn. And on top of it, I go to the cemetery to my brother. Made a home.

What a tragedy.

I made that monument. I made the top for him, and on the bottom for my father and my mother. This is something.

Can you tell me, Mr. Zweig, a little bit about your early family, whatever you remember?

Yeah. My family was a very close family. My mother, my father, my sister, myself, and my brother, and we were very close-knit, very. We didn't go, like, out. It was something when the family was so close. And

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Saturdays, I had to go to the aunt. I had to go to visit. If you didn't go and visit, was like a sin.

The family tie was so close that it's still missing till today. You know, it's a pleasure to see Shabbos in Square Hill, when you see a Hasidic Jew with children go to-- it brings back so memory that I go away, and I go there.

Can you recall any antisemitism in the town?

Yeah antisemitism was always-- prejudice was always there.

You were aware?

I was aware all the time, yeah.

Tell me a little bit about your being deported to Auschwitz.

From the ghetto, we were deported to Auschwitz in '44. That was the last transport from the ghetto.

And your feelings today, how do you feel about what you lived through?

Angry. Very angry. Very angry. Material things don't mean nothing to you. You go, you chase one thing after the other to get away from it, to hide. But you cannot hide from nothing.

It's fine. Thank you very much.

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