

## HOLOCAUST ARCHIVE PROJECT

Name of Interviewee	PHILIP GREEN		
Name of Interviewer	Sara Weinberger	Date	8/27/84
Name of Abstractor	Esther Potash	Date	9/13/87

### NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Philip Green was a boy of 14 when his family was forced to move from their small Polish town due to the escalation of Polish anti-Semitism. Their dry goods store was vandalized and boycotted, so the family decided to move to Lodz, where the large number of Jews afforded some protection.

Lodz did provide them a comfortable life for a short time, but in 1939, the Germans created the ghetto, and Philip's life was drastically altered. The family was moved to cramped quarters in the old part of Lodz, and there was rationing of minimal, poor-quality food. Philip and his sisters were forced to work in factories to support the German army. His father was attacked by the Gestapo in his home and died shortly thereafter.

Philip, his mother and sisters managed to survive in the ghetto until 1944. Philip returned home from a food search one day to find a note saying that his family was taken. Discouraged and alone, he surrendered himself and was taken to Auschwitz.

From Auschwitz he was transferred to a truck factory, where he worked under deplorable conditions and near-starvation for over eight months. He was then moved to an airplane factory for a month's work. By this time, the Germans were suffering defeat. In their panic, they began to move the remaining starved, weakened prisoners randomly, with no concern for their survival, since their work utility was ended.

Finally, on May 5, 1945, the Russians liberated Philip and his group of near-dying men, who were too weak to move at this point. They were taken to a hospital for treatment and slowly began to recover their health and their lives.

Philip tried to locate his family in Lodz. When he could not find them, he decided to go to Munich, where he joined a displaced persons camp, and later worked in the office of an American aid organization.

He met his wife, also a survivor, and when she planned to go to America in 1948, he decided to join her. He was married in 1951, lived with his father-in-law, who had come to the U.S. before the war, and began working for a plumbing supply company, where he is currently a manager.

<http://collections.ushmm.org>  
The Greens had a daughter and a son, and began to build a happy life around family, Jewish unity, and an intense interest in the state of Israel. Philip is a strong supporter of Israel, believing it is the key to Jewish survival.

## ABSTRACT

### VIDEO 1 OF 2

#### INTRODUCTION

#### EARLY LIFE

Born in Poland to an Orthodox family. Had one older and one younger sister.

#### CURRENT LIFE

Has son who made an "aliyah" to Israel and performs social work on a kibbutz. Has a daughter who is an attorney. Wife was also a survivor. Has worked with the same plumbing supply company for 35 years. Is very happy with rich life, which includes family, friends, Kol Israel Foundation, temple, travel.

FAMILY MOVES FROM A SMALL TOWN IN POLAND TO LODZ IN 1938 TO ESCAPE SEVERE ANTI-SEMITISM AND BOYCOTTING OF THEIR DRY GOODS STORE

LODZ GHETTO FORMED IN 1939

Younger sister forced to work in shoe factory, older sister worked in clothing factory, Philip worked in tire factory.

FATHER BEATEN BY GESTAPO WHILE IN GHETTO AND DIES ONE MONTH LATER

VERY POOR NUTRITION IN GHETTO

Food ration was one pound of bread per person per week. People were dying in the streets.

LIVING QUARTERS CONSIST OF DIVIDED APARTMENTS IN OLD SECTION OF LODZ

SOCIAL LIFE IS NON-EXISTENT IN THE GHETTO

There was no school, no temples, no social gatherings.

DISCUSSES LIFE IN POLISH TOWN BEFORE THE MOVE TO LODZ

Family was religious. He attended Hebrew school because he was attacked by Poles when he tried to attend the public school. Town's population was approximately 30,000.

PHILIP FIRST EXPERIENCES THE HEIGHTENED ANTI-SEMITISM IN 1938 WHEN POLES THROW ROCKS THROUGH HIS FATHER'S STORE WINDOW, WRITE "JUDE" ON THE FRONT OF STORES, AND BOYCOTT JEWISH MERCHANTS

Philip urged his father to leave the town immediately. Father was reluctant to leave and start anew.

JEWS TREATED FAIRLY WELL IN LODZ BEFORE 1939

AT FIRST SIGNS OF GERMAN TAKE-OVER, PHILIP VAINLY URGES HIS PARENTS TO MOVE TO RUSSIA

Father worked in a sweater factory, felt comfortable and safer in the larger city.

DISCUSSES GHETTO DAILY LIFE

Worked ten hours a day at the factory located within the ghetto. Tried to avoid trouble. Was isolated from news of events outside the ghetto.

RESISTANCE IS NOT POSSIBLE BECAUSE POLES OUTSIDE THE GHETTO WILL NOT HELP AND GROUP GATHERINGS WITHIN THE GHETTO ARE FORBIDDEN

PHILIP TALKS ABOUT THE PERSONAL CHANGES IN HIS LIFE, EMPHASIZING THE CONSTANT SICKNESS AND HUNGER, AND THE IMPACT OF BURYING HIS FATHER HIMSELF

ASSERTS THAT THE JUDENRAT "TOOK CARE OF THEMSELVES."

WHEN THE GERMANS BEGIN TO DEPORT PEOPLE FROM THE GHETTO, THEY SAY THEY ARE TAKING THEM TO WORK. HOWEVER, SINCE THEY ARE TAKING THE SICK, THE VERY YOUNG AND THE ELDERLY, THE JEWS DO NOT BELIEVE THIS

PHILIP AVOIDS BEING TAKEN BY HIDING IN HOLE IN THE BASEMENT OF THEIR HOME

Most people created hiding places in their attics and basements. The greatest majority of Jews were taken from Lodz in 1941 and 1942.

IN 1944, UPON LEARNING THAT HIS FAMILY HAS BEEN TAKEN, HE SURRENDERS HIMSELF AND IS TAKEN TO AUSCHWITZ

Ghetto was liquidated soon after his departure.

## ARRIVAL AT AUSCHWITZ

Went through sorting process at entrance to Auschwitz. 200-300 people were crammed into buildings that had been designed to house horses. Was given striped pajama prison uniform, hair was cut off.

PHILIP IS SENT TO WORK AT BRAUNSCHWEIG, A PRIVATE TRUCK MANUFACTURER

Food consisted of one slice of bread per day, a little soup, and rain water. Factory was bombed daily by the U.S.

HIS PHYSICAL CONDITION IS TERRIBLE, WITH HIS WEIGHT FALLING TO 75 POUNDS

## VIDEO 2 OF 2

AFTER EIGHT MONTHS OF WORK AT THE BRAUNSCHWEIG FACTORY, PHILIP IS TRANSFERRED TO THE HERMANN GOEHRINGWERKE AIRPLANE FACTORY

Conditions at this factory were also very poor, with very minimal food.

TRANSFERRED TO RAVENSBRUCK, AN INTERNATIONAL PRISON CAMP

Holding location, where conditions were somewhat improved and there was no forced labor.

PERIOD IMMEDIATELY BEFORE LIBERATION IS CHARACTERIZED BY CONFUSION, RANDOM MOVEMENT ON TRAINS AND NEAR-STARVATION

Was supposed to be part of prisoner exchange with Sweden, but this did not materialize. Survived through this period by slowly consuming hoarded chocolate distributed by the Red Cross.

PHILIP WAS LIBERATED BY THE RUSSIANS FIVE MILES FROM LUDWIGSLUST ON MAY 5

HE IS TAKEN TO HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT

Could only digest milk and farina. Tells of others who died by attempting to eat meat immediately.

RETURNS TO LODZ TO SEARCH FOR FAMILY

Returned to the ghetto home, to find only two pictures among the rubble.

AFTER FINDING ONLY ONE COUSIN IN LODZ, HE MOVES TO MUNICH, WHERE HE WORKS IN AN AMERICAN AID ORGANIZATION OFFICE

Met wife in 1946; wife decided to go to U.S. in 1948, so he joined her in the move.

PHILIP IS MARRIED IN CLEVELAND IN 1951. LIVED WITH FATHER-IN-LAW FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE MARRIAGE UNTIL FATHER-IN-LAW DIES AT THE AGE OF 93, 32 YEARS LATER

DISCUSSES THOUGHTS ON HIS SURVIVAL

Did not think he would survive. Maintained a belief in God, but was shaken by acts he witnessed against rabbis and religious people.

PHILIP ASSERTS THAT ROOSEVELT AND JOSEPH KENNEDY KNEW ABOUT THE NAZI ATROCITIES, BUT THAT NO ONE WANTS TO HELP THE JEWS

Stresses importance of the existence of Israel for Jewish survival.

HE DOES NOT TELL HIS STORY WHEN HE FIRST COMES TO CLEVELAND BECAUSE NO ONE WAS INTERESTED

People thought he was crazy when he first recounted his ordeals.

FEELS COMFORTABLE AS A JEW IN THE U.S., BUT BELIEVES THERE IS EVEN MORE FREEDOM IN ISRAEL

THE LASTING EFFECT OF THE HOLOCAUST ON HIS LIFE IS THAT HE WANTS TO GIVE HIS CHILDREN THE BEST LIFE HE POSSIBLY CAN

PHILIP ADDRESSES NAZI PROTESTERS AT A HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL SERVICE

HE BELIEVES SURVIVORS ARE NOT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER JEWS

Survivors are willing to help others, and are especially generous with their time and money in aiding Israel and Jewish organizations.

NEARLY ALL THE SURVIVORS HAVE SOME RESIDUAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AS A RESULT OF THEIR STARVATION AND DEPRIVATION

DECIDED TO SHARE HIS STORY SO THAT PEOPLE CAN PREVENT THE HOLOCAUST FROM OCCURRING AGAIN

SHOWS PICTURES OF CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN