

The following is an interview with Nathan Kalman. The interview is being conducted on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and is taking place in Rockville, Maryland on November 4, 1993 by Gail Schwartz.

Ready.

What is your full name?

Nathan Kalmonowitz.

And where were you born?

Łódź, Poland.

And what year were you born?

In 1909.

And what was the date?

5th-- October 5th. No, you have [? this right. ?]

Let's talk a little bit about your childhood. Who was in your family? Tell me about your parents, your parents' names.

I can't talk. When I'm talking about childhood, parents, it's very-- very choking me.

Did you live in the city?

Yes, in the center of the city.

Uh-huh. And what kind of schooling did you have? What kind of school?

I had a private school, like an everyday school. It was a school with [INAUDIBLE]. Half day school is religions and half like a school. But my father didn't like me to go that's in the -- to be without a hat, Kippah, you know? And so on. So he tried to keep me on this Hebrew day school.

So you changed schools? Is that what you're saying?

No, no.

You first went to a public school with other Polish children?

It's happened once, yes, something from the Inspektorat came, and I had to leave. So I had very big trouble. I had payos Not so big, but the children, they was pinching and attacking, hey, Hasid, Hasid, and so on. So I tried the best to leave there and go back to the school where I was. It was very hard to do it, because this was on the inspector-- from buildings inspector, this building.

You see, he wasn't-- all the schools, all the schools was under his supervision.

- He was like a superintendent.

Yeah.

Like a superintendent.

Yeah.

What kind of neighborhood did you live in?

Mixed, Poles and Jews, but there was some more Jews, I think. It was a nice neighborhood. I was there till the end, when then they came to the door, behind the shotgun. [NON-ENGLISH]

So what else did you do besides go to school when you were a child? What kind of things did you do?

Not too much, because I saw it was a harder life in Poland. It was a little harder in America. Father works hard. Mom helped him. So I feel I have to come home and help. I quit the school. I finished. I finished the school.

How old were you when you finished school?

16 years.

You were 16 years old?

Yeah.

Yeah. And then, well, did you have any brothers or sisters?

Oh, was five brothers and sisters.

Uh-huh. And where were you in the order of children?

I'm the youngest one. I [INAUDIBLE] from [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah. And so then you stopped going to school at 16.

Yes.

Yes. And then you said you started to work for your father?

Yes, helped out at home to make easier life.

What kind of--

We had--

--work did your father do?

In the beginning, he was manufacturing in a small amount, manufactured textile. But later on the time was changing, and Poland was the hard life. Very hard, very hard. So he went to work for somebody on this job.

So we had to try the best to hold up the family.

Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. Did you live near your grandparents, and aunts and uncles? Did you have more relatives, other relatives?

Yes, some, some of them was-- one of us from [PLACE NAME]. Like I said. In Łódź, was also a couple of cousins and so on. Yes.

And you said you came from a very religious family.

Yes.

Very observant.

Hasidic.

Very-- a Hasidic family.

Hasidic. It was not fanatic, but a very intelligent, knowledge man also.

And were your friends when you were a child, were your friends only Jewish children?

Mostly, yes. I had no feeling for Jewish friends. Later on, I start to come in the Zionist organization. I came in. This time I met Hannah. So God bless her. In Zionist organization.

Yeah, yeah. So you stayed in the same house from the time you were born to the time you were 16?

Almost, almost the same place. I was born a few houses in the corner. Then I remember like I helped the moving.

How old were you then?

I was then very young, 12, 13 years. I was less than this, but I helped out. I stood to help all the time.

Mm-hmm. And you said you remembered some of these anti-Semitic incidents as a child, being teased.

Yes, as a child. As a child, many times I was leaving. They beat me up. I was with blood. I remember like the [? stitches. ?] [INAUDIBLE] I remember the time like it was there. It was evening.

Yeah, yeah.

He came by with somebody and hit me with something or what. And I start yelling very, very loud. Came a [NON- ENGLISH]. Came up a policeman. And he came. [NON-ENGLISH] This means, what's the thing? Moishe is not killed. What's happened? Went away. That's it.

Many, many times it was like this. I went-- once I was going in the Christian [? pages. ?] In the stores, we had paper for paper and things.

Stationary.

Stationary and things. So I went, and my father, and the oldest brother. It was Constantine [PERSONAL NAME] was the name. Now I remember. I saw coming up three hooligans. We saw them coming to us. And they start knocking me and my father. My father starting yelling. He was how you say [NON-ENGLISH]. He couldn't talk.

Speechless.

Yeah. But nothing doing. No, it was no police. Nobody comes. It's over. There was many, many things like this in Poland. It wasn't news some Jews had some hits-- was hit. Yeah?

OK. Let's move along a little bit, then. And you said when you were 16 you left school.

Yeah.

And you went to work for your father.

Yeah.

And for the next three or four years, what do you remember of that time? Anything special?

Not special. Then I took over -- like I said. I went to the Zionist organization.

When was that? Do you remember what year, approximately?

This was in 1930, something like this.

OK. Uh-huh.

Yeah.

And what did you do for them?

Like an organization. You know, I start-- I loved Israel from being a little boy.

Mm-hmm.

So even a little later on, 1934 or five, I went to Krakow for kibbutz Hachshara

Mm-hmm. But at this point you were still working for your father and doing this--

It was really hard for me, very hard for me to leave home. Because I went to the Poles, they said to me in Polish-- I know, I know in Poland, you're have a krimka. Krimka was the Jewish-- Yiddish-- [NON-ENGLISH], this -- And here when you come, you're wearing different way. This is nothing, but I came wearing this [INAUDIBLE]. I went in very, very Christian region.

This is in Krakow you're talking about?

No, no, no. This is in Łódź.

Oh.

Out of Łódź, was a little bit Constantine, in a way.

Oh, uh-huh.

But when I went to Krakow, it was very hard decision, very hard decision.

You moved to Krakow. Is that what you're saying?

No, no, no.

You just went to--

I went in Kibbutz Hachshara.

Oh.

Only me. And I worked on myself very hard to say that-- to say this, yes, I'm going. I remember Mom [NON-ENGLISH]. She said the same thing. He was such a lover for [INAUDIBLE]. He said, go, go. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[CRYING]

So then you went to Krakow.

Yes, and I was there almost a year ago, but I make it fast, should be longer than this. But I had-- I was

there, and my head was at home.

Right.

My sister Hinda write me a letter. And she said, "Oh, the Polish was -- if you would see how our parents working hard." I went to the Christians, and I was with them good for the Christmas time. I gave them presents and things. It was good. Good turn [? out. ?]

But my head was at home. So I came home for-- I made for like the Jewish vacation. I was stood three months at home.

Mm-hmm.

And then I went back, because I liked to finish up. It was '35.

OK.

And then came in some political. Always politic in the kibbutz came also in politic. And the kibbutz has to be closed. So closed, I went home without work, me and another friend was there with me together from Łódź.

You went back to Łódź, with your friend.

Yeah.

What did you do there?

Well, I started working at home. When I came home, I started working right away. Yes, this was my goal.

Mm-hmm.

And then?

And from [INAUDIBLE] questions was nothing. It was another year, another year. Then came the war, was everything like salt, salt-- salt and water. Well, this one was the worstest thing when ti came.

OK, so you went back, and you stayed with your family until the war started.

Yes, yes.

OK. Can you-- what do you remember about the war starting? What were your first memories?

Yes, I remember it very well.

OK.

Very well. It was first day of war, I remember, Friday, 1939, the first September. Came big tragedy for us. But nothing was to do. We was lucky the town, Hitler picked Łódź, as a Stadt Reich Deutschland. Stadtreich a little later on he made it. But very shortly, two months, two or three months later. In the meantime, it was very bad time. Such impossible to stand. I don't know. I was the weakest one at home, the weakest one, the youngest one.

How I came by this other thing, I was put on the wall to be shot exactly.

What happened the very first day? Do you remember September 1st? What happened that day?

I called up my older sister. She had a Łódź, Koska three, the Main Street. He was at a saloon, he had. How you say it, makes it--

[WHISPERING]

And this was over. It was before. We did not know. The landlord was a admitted Nazi. A admitted Nazi man. And the war broke out. It's the second day or the third day of this tragedy. He sent in a letter, "eight days you have to leave. The keys has to be in the Gestapo." It was just something to avoid.

This is the landlord of your family?

No, no, this was the--

Of the beauty shop.

Of the beauty shop. My sister's--

Your sister's.

My older sister, she lived there. She had a very big--

I see.

[? Storefront. ?] And to do it also was placed there. A nice, nice woman. She had two lovely children, such-- I don't know where they got killed now.

Yeah. OK, so it's the first week in September, and--

First days, first days.

First day.

Yes. So I called her up. We didn't know what to say and how to act. I said, come over, let's be together. [INAUDIBLE] tomorrow. I'm sorry. I'm talking about this thing. I'm choking. So and came day after day, the troubles, the tragedy was growing more and more and more. they start-- they start-- I remember like it would be now, my sister, the oldest came up, and she-- "Dajczeszil brennt!"

This was the-- over there was once-- there was something. It wasn't in the paper in Europe. The Dajczeszil was called, very reformed. They brought some gasoline or what. And they were staying and making different jokes and things. And this was burning, burning, burning.

So this was the first one, but in Łódź, was many, many synagogues. And all of them got-- one by one, one by one. When I came back after the war, I went. I was going to meet somebody from the family. I was lived at the Polonjewa 60 was the name [INAUDIBLE] Polonjewa.

Over there was-- they made from a little synagogue was they made some place. Salt they keep there or what. This, this was not destroyed. This was the one in Łódź. The whole Łódź, synagogues how -- Was one- - [PLACE NAME], it was called. It was something, what the talk about it. And this was burned. And they were standing around and making the -- till this was the ground, everything.

And the trouble was such, where they-- each day after day, you had, how you say, all this, on the streets, on paper, written all this.

Like what?

Against Jews.

Saying what?

This one not to go after 5. We can go till 5. After 5, somebody will go out in the city, is a bullet in head. This was so. But in the meantime, it is now, she remembered-- she was from Novorobinsk. And this was like a resort or close to it-- [PLACE NAME] People came there for summer, summer resort.

And she was remembered for 1940, the Germans was very different than there. Mom went back and forth. She smuggled to help to keep up the family.

This is your mother you're talking about?

Yeah.

Yeah.

She went-- she-- 1 o'clock in the morning she came. And 6 o'clock in the morning she went to another train again to go back. Because she brought things, stuff over there. And she had work over there. She was very handy, God bless-- God bless her. Who knows where she's- she's [CRYING]

So are we still-- are we still in the first week of the war?

No, this was a little later.

A little later.

This was some-- a month.

A month, yeah.

Or six weeks, something like this. I had my-- I had married [PERSONAL NAME]. In 1939, January 1931-- 19th is-- January, 1st, 1939-- '8. When was the war? No, '9.

1939.

1939. So and I had a brother. He's died. He and the father from the whole family, I buried them. He was a very good carpenter.

What was his name?

David, Yacob David. And he was a premier-- a very good carpenter. He made for me furnitures. Like I didn't need the-- how you say-- [NON-ENGLISH]. But when this came on, the tragedy came, people start running to Russia. People didn't know what to do. They should run like crazy.

It took a little time. I remember, I was home like-- how it was with my wife. Comes in a German-- a [INAUDIBLE], limping on a leg. I don't know if someone sent him up or he didn't know before. He looked out--

He came to your house, you're saying?

He came to the house, yes. And he liked it so much. And he say to me, look, [INAUDIBLE]. For this-- this mean for a drink, drink vodka, I can have this everything. But no, look he talk with the hand. I remember it like now. I'm not doing this. Don't worry.

So we start dealing about-- I don't remember how much was it, a few thousand zlote. At this time, the bank was closed. We couldn't take the zlote to buy bread. And he had come. I said, you know what, everybody runs to Russia, maybe we run too. Let's sell. OK.

And we went down [INAUDIBLE] into with horse, and wagons and buggies. We go and drove in. And he has to give me some 5,000 zlote. And he was short in money. Not much, but a nice few hundred zlote was

missing, maybe 1,000.

My mother-- I taking one over the other one. My mother was at this time, she left to [PLACE NAME] to help us out. If she would be there, she wouldn't be able to stand it. But this time, we walked on [INAUDIBLE]. There was a snow, such a deep, frosty night. And he said, I take you with me, but don't talk.

We had to go by a Wald Constantino Wald was the name. I came in over there. He was such happy his wife, he Kissed her and kissed her. Look what I bought for you. And she was-- she saw what-- she was the same way.

Then he say, I have to go borrow a few zlote, a few hundred, how much is missing. He went out. And I went by myself to talk. I had nothing. But I went by me. If he would not give me the money, he wouldn't give nothing, it would be also good. Because they took much-- more valuable things than my furniture.

He comes, say, I'm sorry, I couldn't, they have no money. He opened up-- in Europe was a basement in home, such a big place. And start pulling out such big pieces, coal. This was like brilliance. It was so cold. It was freezing, cold, bitter cold was. Nothing to [INAUDIBLE]. If you knocked the wood, the [INAUDIBLE] and so on went.

So I say, OK. And made a big slit. Put them in our sack. It was there some rice, and red beets and things. At home, they meant well, God forbid, if I'm dead, [INAUDIBLE] to perspire wood. If my mother will be there, she wouldn't be able to send it. She had special off for me.

So I came home. I did what he told me. Don't talk nothing on the way, go quiet. So we came home. Oh, the [INAUDIBLE], how it was for my father. The family was only halfway. Halfway was who knows where. But there was-- the [INAUDIBLE] was such big, I came home. And I brought such-- some food, some coal.

And then the tragedy is gone away. It worked very, very, very-- very, very much. It was-- it was very-- day after day, it was new orders. Now I have to go back a little bit because the beginning, we had lived in this house some 26 or 27 years. And the landlord was a Christian baker. A bakery he had.

I remember how he built. He brought [INAUDIBLE] and built them up. Then he made the American [INAUDIBLE], the [INAUDIBLE]. So when it was the three days, four days well, four I went to bed. And I couldn't sleep. This is no news. But I couldn't lay on. And I say, I take a look what's going on. Something, I feel something.

I going down-- I was on the first floor-- on the second floor. But I see the bakery has opened the doors. With my heart start right away knocking, I looked in. It was empty. Bread was sitting in the oven, burning. And they have prepared-- like bakeries having such big-- I don't know the name of it.

I take up a few steps to the street. Oh, something goes on. In all the streets, people, people going massively. What's do? What's to do? They had mens [INAUDIBLE] to go to Warsaw to fight.

And here was, at this time was, and the day came, my older brother, where he was, came from-- he was living in Pabianice he lived. And the other one-- the other one, the brother-in-law also, and me, and my brother.

Your older brother's name was?

Older brother was Zuk.

Was what?

Zuk, [Zuken The brother-in-law was Moshe. Two Moshes. One of the sisters-- the two sisters' two husbands. And we was all together and had to leave. Dad and mom sat and crying. Only crying. What can they do?

The streets were full with people, marching, marching very worried. So we start to march Main Street from



the side street. More and more people. And called us such no -- God in [INAUDIBLE] hate us or what? Who knows how it was the whole story?

So we went and went. I was the youngest in this little group. When it came to the name Studenyanit I remember it. And I saw airplane then turns to fall down. He was shot down from the artillery.

And I say to all of them, you know what-- where we are going? [INAUDIBLE]? Are we going to [INAUDIBLE]? Come home, let's go back. Back was easy to go like home because on the other streets was little by little people. Many was out of already to the main march.

And they listened to me. We came home. You can-- each one can know how father and mother feel. They opened up the door. They cried, cried and laughed. Took a few minutes. We was [INAUDIBLE] there anti-Semitic peoples. Was a few minutes, they came to the door-- knock, knock, knock.

So hey there what you doing here? By ourselves was hiding. They hide. They didn't like to go to pay what they had. So mom saw this. She took the brothers, brother-in-laws and send them away somewhere, not to stay here. Because it was dangerous. They could come in and kill them.

And the landlord, the baker, was by a few days. He said, you know, Kalmonowitz you are the youngest-- my oldest tenant [INAUDIBLE]. Come down, you be a help in the bakery. I worked a few days. I was glad. I helped people. I helped them, the father, the brothers with the bread, which I could do. I did it. Thanks God.

But went by a few days, each thing-- Rumkowski was the manager from the ghetto, Chaim Rumkowski. So he said-- it was tragic jokes, but jokes. He said the jacket-- the ghetto [NON-ENGLISH]. Those words. And it was this way.

What does that mean?

The ghetto will be best form. Everything for work.

Had the ghetto been formed by that time?

What?

Had the ghetto been formed by that time?

No, no, this was in Łódź,, the first--

You're talking in the beginning, right?

The beginning, yes. First a-- it was two or three months, something like this, the three months it was some June, July-- it is January, February, March, I think. In the meantime, we had to go to work. Was the Jewish [NON-ENGLISH] the [NON-ENGLISH]. I don't know how to express it to you.

They had to send out-- there came a letter, you have to be at work this day. This, I could have sometimes work to go again and again. The work was nothing worth it. But you have to go to work.

What kind of work did you do?

They gave work to scrape together from the trees-- they fell down, things, different things. When we are going home, I remember I was with another-- still today when I remember it, I feel sorrow for it, because I was almost at home and he had to go to the ghetto place, which was way down. Valik was the name. Poorer section.

No gymnasium. [INAUDIBLE].

High school.

It wasn't a high school. Stays a German this way with the hand. Say, oh, now, what's going on now? I start talking. [INAUDIBLE] [NON-ENGLISH].

Can you translate that?

Mister-- mister, we are coming now from work, what you had to work, like [INAUDIBLE]. And no we have to go home. [GERMAN] this mean don't talk. Up on the truck. And we start running with the truck. He's driving.

I see-- I see something. I knew all the places, because I was born there and I went there late to the customs, Polish customs, storekeepers. And I say for them, two of them besides me, you know what, he goes here to take coals. I feel it. Was such big places.

And this was this way. He came to our place. He rode up very fast, the machine full with coals. And we have to go up. He goes back to the place where he catch up us. And at this time, I see some new thing, what's never I saw.

It meant we have to work now to shovel and things to this. But he took some button on the truck. He took some button, pushed. And the truck start to go up, up, up, up, up, such mechanically. Mechanic is very good. Even the gas chambers they made also good, very good work for [INAUDIBLE].

So this when we was free of it not to shovel the coals. [INAUDIBLE] was name. And fell down in the basement. So he let us free. I remember I did really feel sorry. I should take them to my place. Well, other one was closer to me. And one was in [INAUDIBLE] the ghetto, found later on.

But he left. [INAUDIBLE] going farther and farther. Forgetting the same Yiddish. If you're getting used to the tsuris [INAUDIBLE]. So it was very bitter, very, very bitter. In the meantime, mom went-- this was-- must be somewhere in February or what.

Mom said she can't [INAUDIBLE] anymore. She remembered the time when she helped us. She helped a lot. She took-- I [INAUDIBLE]. I don't know, my wife was sick. And I [INAUDIBLE] I couldn't take it, and my own to go to with her. She said no.

So in the meantime, I came back, maybe five minutes took. Mom was gone. I run down such fast the steps, maybe no second. The sleds was away. And I didn't saw her anymore. This was it. And the first time we had-- each one could write a postcard, a few words, something, for some-- till 1944-- '3, I think. It was possible to do. But later on, nothing [INAUDIBLE].

So we heard how it is over there. Our brother, the oldest brother, Zuken that I say, he was in Pabianice by Łódź. He came also to Łódź. I went down. He couldn't stay by us. We couldn't keep him. We couldn't feed him. For two we had [INAUDIBLE].

So I went down to the landlady and begged. Look, my brother-- she knew him. He was living with us, also together sometimes. She gave me two breads. I cut the bread such in pieces in a sack. And he was like a beggar. He had the sack and left in the way. We didn't hear from him nothing.

Later on, after a nice little time, he wrote. It was impossible everything to write what he went by. On the way was-- on the way was dead bodies. So many dead bodies, they had to bury them. They had to take them and [INAUDIBLE] with their hands-- their hands to work.

I reminding of things I have here a finger. It was 50 years and I have trouble from it by cutting my fingertip or the cold. It's terrible here [INAUDIBLE]. How this came to me to think, I worked with the coals. Was also a coal working job. I start the work, very hungry, very nervous.

That's the spring of 1940?

No, this was the winter. I would think--

It's still winter. It's still winter.

Still winter. It's cold.

Of 1940.

1940, yes.

OK.

And I shovel [INAUDIBLE] the coals. All of a sudden I feel something on neck here. Stood-- they came from Walne-- ] a region, Walne. This is the Russian world. They chased them out from over there. Not like us. They've chased them out. They took everything with them and everything. They had a life. But they was very excited.

[INAUDIBLE] say, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. I showed with the hand works. And here it was blood-- blood, dark blood from the coal, the dust coal. And one telling to me, you know what, he watched me. Work. Come [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

This mean [INAUDIBLE] or you can't. Work, [NON-ENGLISH]. None of it, arbeit, work. You know what you to do. I don't have even a handkerchief or what. Rip up something from the shirt and take some [INAUDIBLE], not to let through. I hardly [INAUDIBLE] did it. I couldn't-- he watched me very well.

I came home. I washed with a little water. There wasn't too much water also. And at this time was, but this was not in Łódź,. Was a little different. But was very hard. I feel such pain. Hold the hand. Here is no doctor. What can I do? What here to do?

In the morning, somebody send me talk to a doctor. How was the name, the street? So, no difference. And I came in. He asked me, do you have pain here? You having pain here? I say like-- he know what's going on. And he took me. There was no-- there was nothing to do. No, what can you do?

He did what he could. He cut the bone and things. I had very long-- long-time trouble. Till now, almost 50 years. And still trouble. I can't use this finger, broken this way. This was this thing.

Now comes a time, they day's moving. Comes further. And people start packing old -- They were building ghettos. All of us will go to the ghetto. We have to wear wooden shoes and stripe clothing. But everything came true. Everything came true, like people said.

And this was this way. It's almost February, close to March, or what. This came a-- if you're going down in the morning, it's on the walls. [NON-ENGLISH] in ghetto. Everybody have to leave to the ghetto until two days. But I think two days they give.

Over there was pictures. I think Picasso wouldn't be able to make-- to write pictures like this. People all made this museum. God bless them. They did a very big thing. People will know something, the future, children. But it's impossible-- [INAUDIBLE] what is impossible who wasn't there never in life can know how over there was. Terrible life, terrible life.

People start running again. You saw pictures. Somebody took a table, turned over upside down, and push it under the floor with a string on the snows was-- God himself was mad at us. I don't know what was in there, something.

So we're at the ghetto. We are going to the ghetto. Was me and the sister. Hinda is her name, with the little child, a year and a half I think. Her husband was the one who got sent away. [CRYING]. So we started to go. Father took-- the sister [INAUDIBLE] such a-- on the back to take, to take it.

Not where to go, even where to step in. People at least [INAUDIBLE]. But people selfishness also. I had to step in. I remember my wife's, somewhere her family was living over there. [PLACE NAME]] was the name.

What was your wife's name?

Masha.

Masha?

My wife-- my wife-- my wife, I heard a very [INAUDIBLE]. They took hundreds of girls, took in a ship and drowned them in Stutthof-- Stutthof, Germany. This was then. But after the war, I met somebody, a girl. She said she know her. She talked to her. But she was [INAUDIBLE] behind dead people. [INAUDIBLE] She went out. So [INAUDIBLE] that happened like this.

So I went in. Over there was [INAUDIBLE]. I remember this and -- 19. And my father went in. The sister, Hinda, had her father-in-law living. This was in the ghetto, the place. She went-- she took in my father there. And over there was [INAUDIBLE], a kitchen, not called-- over there was a room in a kitchen. This was the whole--

Arrangement.

Arrangement, yes. Came in the evening. Maybe 15 people came in in there. Each one like to step in. And children included. At nighttime was, you saw only bedding. The whole thing was burning in the middle of the night. We can hear-- wake up, wake up. I couldn't stop [INAUDIBLE], papa, papa, [CRYING].

In the morning I remembered, who could sleep? My father came. And he looked up finally. He start-- he [INAUDIBLE] crying. You're not crying, papa. Please stop crying like a baby. What can I answer? I answer him with crying also. So I brought him over back to the in-laws from my sister.

And my brother, which has died-- the younger, David, he died. He was working with friends. Those friends has to leave. He was a Polish-- Polish man. And he had to leave his place. So he gave him the room. But the room was four walls and that's all, nothing else. Cold, and was behind the street, the that's how you call it.

And father was there. I had-- oh, I forgot. In the meantime, I had already a place also. Rumkowski came out and said, go ahead in this place. [PLACE NAME] was the name. Open up the rooms and go in. Each can take a room.

So I went there. I took a little ax and something else. I opened up a room. I have a room already, four walls. And opened up even for my in-laws over there also. So I opened up some-- three rooms I think. And they had rooms already.

And here is bread, no bread, no heat, nothing, nothing, nothing. When we was there, start to get to working. I remember, he said, Rumkowski the ghetto will act-- we'll be working like a good watch, a good clock.

They had-- they start tearing up houses. In the Jewish section, there was four-five stories houses. They stripped the stone. [INAUDIBLE] why they did it. What they did it. People they had for nothing. So they did it.

In the morning, when we went in there, stood a an SS man, by the door and Jewish policemen also. The ghetto was full of police and post office, money even was. Who has some money like this? Very wonderful now to have something like this. So when we start working, I said I will go there and take a look. In the ghetto you couldn't work like you like here, to pick what you want. They sent you-- the [GERMAN].

So I worked. Went by a-- I going by. It's straight, but this took time. But along came tsuris and troubles. And he started calling, who is a [NON-ENGLISH]? This mean a carpenter, a [NON-ENGLISH]. And I had them my mind, went by, here is only demolition. I don't have to be a carpenter to do it. I said I'm a [NON-ENGLISH]. But he said right away, he said, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

What's that?

Don't, don't lie, if not this, hanging. So this was the way it goes. So I worked there some-- a nice few months. It was very hard. In the morning, I went into the-- I went in hungry. In the lunchtime, they came with a wagon, some soup, grass water, something. Very, very [INAUDIBLE], very, very [INAUDIBLE].

So I worked maybe seven, eight months there. But over there was one boy. He made himself like a foreman. And he put an eye on me to put me out. Because each one liked to be worked up behind the roof, not in the outside, cold.

But I was very afraid for it. But went by [PERSONAL NAME] and he caught me. And I said, now-- now is the end. Now is the end. For I'd have to go. And they put me up on the fourth floor. The roof was only ripped up. But the rest start knocking down the bricks. And I was one, some like me, he told me, sit like on a horse and knock down one by one.

Many fell down and was killed. They was already liberated. There was many falls like this. But I saw this. Everything I went by about this, I don't know if I can do it. I don't know how I did it somehow. I have good luck. I came back to the work, to the [NON-ENGLISH].

We made such-- the targets was called, to carry the -- from place to place. They worked like horses. But later on, not long time, they took people [PLACE NAME]. [PLACE NAME] was a-- taking people. They brought in people from all over the world, Jews.

And when they brought, we would know right away they will be sending out us. They looked all of over for people. Was not enough for them. If I would be there, I don't know, I wouldn't be alive. For two, three times they came. And the first was maybe 1,000 people working over there. But then was such lower, lower, lower.

And I said, no, I will wait to the last. Is no good. I have to stop it. I went out from there. And I don't know by this everything, had a little luck maybe. I home my parents, helped me got some.

So I went out. Where to go? A job to look for myself is very hard. And I went in to the [INAUDIBLE], it was called. They made-- was over there so many woods. They cut out woods. Was the [NON-ENGLISH], the [NON-ENGLISH] this had.

I worked there. And I saw the group got smaller, and smaller, and smaller. But they gave three quarters of liter grass soup. If you're not going to work at this house or not. So I said-- I went like a dummy in many ways. I come to [INAUDIBLE], where the house he worked was something like this. I went like a dummy. I went. So what can I do? I had no other choice.

Once they came. The first people, which was, I don't know-- they forget or they didn't know better. They stood by the big, big door. Trucks was moving back and forth. They looked in. And went away. When they was outside, they could do it. From inside, they couldn't do it.

And I was in there. Because it was a very bad situation. I will not be no this little glass what else also not. Come the day which they came and they took me out. They caught me. So I went.

They put us in a barrack. They give a piece of bread, each one, and this little soup, earlier. And thinned out. Nobody was killed, no barrack you can find a live from those people. And I was there.

I had a brother-in-law. He worked over there. I don't know, he had some connections. He was there. And somebody went to him, look, look, I saw your brother-in-law going over there in the barrack. They send him in. He run and he took me out from there. I can say God-- God helped. And he was the one who did it. If not, I would be who knows where.

But this happened after you were hurt?

No, no, no.

You hadn't gotten hurt yet from the--

Oh, yes, the hurt--

Why don't you tell us the story about that.

The hurt is before.

Tell me the story of that.

About the [INAUDIBLE].

If you're going out-- if you're going out. even some toilet, has to be five together. Out from work, five in line. And we steal a little food, you know. [INAUDIBLE] but he stealed it back then. But later on, we saw what's going on-- the hit, almost dead. So they threw it out.

How much would I could take to a [INAUDIBLE], a little [INAUDIBLE]. So we walked us out, five. And he was standing and came such a big, fat pig. Folkes was his name. And I don't know what he saw of me.

He took the key He stuck on the tip of the key And so looking on the other side. And over the five, I was to the right side. And he over-- he hit me on the head. I don't know, I was closer to the outside, to the exit at this time. But I don't know how I made it to come back out. So this was that the production of them.

Once I was-- my brother, who's died, he was working also by the what workers was called. This is Polish. Demolishing houses. He said, you know what, come bring me a little soup. And you will take home some wood. So I went. Was a little child at this time. Had a little child. He was hungry and cold. Flies was in the millions maybe. I told him, I made for him a little mattress.

This was your child?

Yeah, this was my child. He was born in 1940-- 1940-- yes, 1940, he was born.

What was his name?

Yitzak.

And what can I tell you? He didn't recognize-- he didn't recognize in his life to even be satisfied with a piece of bread. Papa, papa, he start crying, papa. [INAUDIBLE]. The neighbors from the other side [INAUDIBLE], [INAUDIBLE] papa, papa.

I made for him this was. How could I do it? I made for him in a corner a little mattress and a little curtain. There were so many flies, because was garbage and things was-- millions of flies. So I went to the brother to bring a piece of the wood.

And this was a strange, strange [INAUDIBLE] at all. I wasn't there never. In my soul, I had Jewish -- The kids was over there, [INAUDIBLE]. He has over there kinderplaces, kindergarten, or something like this. He kept them there and they were singing and dancing. They learned and teach them some.

And I see a policeman. a Jewish one. He say, go straight. And I went out fathers. [INAUDIBLE]. In my hair already. [NON-ENGLISH]. Oh, I say, no I am finished, [NON-ENGLISH]. I start talking to him, he take a little [INAUDIBLE], and something, in a paper, what?

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

What does that mean?

Comes [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH], kick them out. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. And so [NON-ENGLISH]. So he

showed me to raise the wires and to go by. And the big-- the shotgun, he takes down right away.

So I went other side of him. What can I do? I went by, two hours. If somebody say gehennem there's nothing alike. He has-- he has-- hours, was two hours to stay longer. Comes out, the engineer from the work.

I say, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH], help me, help me. [INAUDIBLE] some soup. And sometimes-- and this was a Volksdeutsche. This was the worstest thing. There was such murder on Jews, terrible. Volksdeutsche was the name.

He tried to talk to him, give him a cigarette. Nothing-- he say, two hours somebody will change me. He has to stay. And he goes back and forth, back and forth, watching me. And I had-- I had a good time. The two hours was years. The time went by.

Comes [INAUDIBLE] two meters high, for sure. [INAUDIBLE] commander, death commando that was named. They had a dead skeleton on his head. He goes to him. Salute. [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

He said something, that I was to escape, he say. But he said some word. I don't know if alive. i first wish him or what. So he doesn't think nothing. I'll take him to [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. He told me not to [INAUDIBLE], not to talk when he came down [INAUDIBLE] to change him. Don't talk, nothing, quiet. But if I heard-- he told him to schlag to kill me, here.

Salute and goes away. And he goes with the shotgun. [INAUDIBLE]. I'm going never to [INAUDIBLE] with nerves. The pot with this little soup. In the meantime, I don't know, news, runs away. Goes out of wires.

My brother hear from people they caught somebody, so and so. But he didn't know this, I am. So when I came, he brought me over some [INAUDIBLE] and [INAUDIBLE] and things. I remember a little kapichka a church, a little church, red bricks. I remember like now.

He put me to the wall. Not by the side, but in the front. He take the shotgun to shot. And I don't know, he did want kill me. He did not want to kill me. Something wasn't there, so good luck or what.

But he gave me-- he came back a few steps, and -- back and forth, back and forth. I was such like a drunk, like I would be a narcotic. He threw me down a little head. I had such a rag on my head. But he hit me so much, this woke me up. Showed me to pick up. And this was in wires also. But the other side wires was the Jewish office.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH], Go forward, But I fell down and took the wire, raised the wire a little bit. But the rags which I had on my dressing was hanging. And he hit me, hit me, and hit me. But for I was on the other side, I say, oh, I'm alive. I didn't know, but I'm alive. So when I was outside, I saw I am alive.