

Zwi Golombek

Tape 1, Side A

August 22, 1998

RG-50.106*0097.01.04

Abstract

Zwi Golombek was born Chaim Hirsh Golombek in 1934 in Warsaw, Poland to Tauber (Tova) Tsukeh (?) and Benjamin Golombek and had an older sister. His father was a builder and Zwi always enjoyed playing with tools. When the bombing started in Warsaw in September '39, the four of them would go from one relative's home to another, wherever they thought it might be safer. First the Germans required the Jews to move to one area and the non-Jews to another. Then adult Jews were required to wear white armbands with yellow stars. In the Ghetto, the family lived in one large room with a separate bathroom. The family had sufficient food in the Ghetto as the father had a special permit to leave the Ghetto for his business and he smuggled food back in. Zwi witnessed people being shot in front of their home and saw a boy killed by being thrown against a wall. His sister did not attend school but a Hebrew teacher taught Zwi at home.

Zwi and his family are living in the Ghetto in early '42 when Zwi's father's sister's sack of potatoes have been taken by the German guards. Zwi's father hits the guard and gets placed in prison and then deported to Treblinka. Zwi's uncle takes Zwi to safety at his girl friend's non-Jewish family. The uncle gives the family money to take care of Zwi and visits him with clothes, candy and toys. Zwi's mother and sister have disappeared and were never found. Zwi stays indoors during the day. At night he helps the family with their bakery and hides either on the roof or in the cellar if visitors or Germans come to the house. Zwi brought some tools with him and plays with the family tools as he enjoys putting things together and taking them apart. The house consists of one room where the parents, six of their children (all older than Zwi) and Zwi sleep. They have 2 other children who live elsewhere. Later Zwi's uncle marries the daughter and they have 2 children.

Tape 3 begins with Zwi living with a Polish family during the Holocaust where he spoke Polish. After the Russians liberated Poland, his uncle helped him join the Children's Kibbutz, an organization funded by the Jewish JOINT and run by delegates from Israel, which helped him prepare to live in Israel. The group started in Poland and went to Czechoslovakia, France and arrived in Germany on January 15, 1946 where his stay was extended due to recovery from a broken leg. He met an adult survivor who reported that Zwi's father was shot and killed while escaping Treblinka alongside him. Zwi had realized that his mother and sister were not returning. He went by ship to Israel and arrived in Haifa on October 6, 1948 during the War of Independence. He was 14 years old and obtained a series of jobs through people he met. One was in a factory making armored vehicles in Tel Aviv and later a better position as a heavy machine operator until he was 18 when he joined the Army. There he met his future wife. After 2 and ½ years, he completed his service but served in all the wars and was discharged after the '81 war with Lebanon. He feels he got back some of his childhood by living it through his two sons.

Zwi discusses how memories of the Holocaust have affected his life. Sometimes noises at night bring back memories. He does not believe that his experiences affected how he parented his two sons. Although he still has close contact with the Polish family that hid him, he does not have warm feelings towards other Polish people nor to the Germans. He believes it is now too late to punish the Germans, but he cannot forgive them. Though he always responded to his children's questions about his Holocaust experiences, he generally does not wish to discuss it, read, see movies about the Holocaust nor speak to survivors. Zwi still remembers his parents and his sister. During the Gulf War, he felt that he was sitting helplessly awaiting other nations to stop it; whereas, he fought during all the Israel wars through '81. He brought up his children in Israel, a country where there will never be a Holocaust. He has 3 grandchildren and hopes for peace for them.

Summary

- 00:00 Zwi's son is translating the English into Hebrew for Zwi and the response into English for this interview. He was born Chaim Hirsh Golombek in 1934 in Warsaw, Poland to Tauber (Tova) Tsukeh (?) and Benjamin Golombek. His mother's parents had lived in Poland. Chaim Hirsh was his maternal grandfather and Moshe was his maternal grandfather. He had a sister, Rainier (?) who was four years older than him. His mother had 3 brothers and his father had 2 brothers, both survived and one now lives in LA.
- 05:00 His father worked as a builder of foundations for buildings. Their home was 9 Greetzga (?) on the corner of Gevetz (?). He feels the family kept Jewish traditions as his mother lit candles and made cholla though they were not religious. They spoke both Yiddish and Polish at home and outside. He always enjoyed playing mechanical games involving construction and putting things together. Most of the people in his neighborhood were non-Jewish Poles. Most friends were Polish and he had a few Jewish friends. He had no problems being Jewish as his father's employees were Polish and liked him. .
- 10:00 Zwi does not recall the family talking about Hitler. He loved his parents, was independent and came from a middle-class home. Their house was large for the time. His first memory is of fighting with his sister. The War started in September '39 by the Germans bombing Warsaw. There was an airstrike so they left home and kept moving from one relative's home to another according to what they felt was safe. His parents told him that the War started between Poland and the Germans and each wanted to be the winner.
- 15:00 War meant destruction to Zwi because of the bombing as buildings were on fire. He got calmed by saying that his area is not targeted and they will be fine. At first he saw soldiers walking into the city and he thought soldiers were bad so he was afraid. His sister told him they would be all right. He did not understand the events but just lived with it. Life changed when they moved into the Ghetto. He does not recall seeing refugees coming to Warsaw from other areas. His family of four moved from place to place with whatever clothes and blankets that they could carry.

- 20:00 He held on to the tools which he considered toys wherever they moved to. They had a well in the backyard for water, used coal for heat and had gaslights. His first home was a duplex, a 2-family home. A neighbor lived on one floor and they lived on the other. They had a big yard with ducks which were stolen at one point. After 3 to 4 weeks of bombing, they left home. He remembers Yom Kippur '39 as it was his birthday and his father would put him on his knee and count how old he was.
- 25:00 They attended synagogue on all the holidays but not in '39 due to the chaos. Jews had to wear a white armband with a yellow star. Before that, the Germans had placed posters on the walls that required the Poles to live in one area and the Jews in another. Everyone ran around to try to find a home in the proper area. They thought the move was just temporary and soon they would return home. Their Polish friends came over and comforted them and hoped the situation would change. Zwi never had a chance to play with his Polish friends again.
- 30:00 His parents told him that Germany is taking over Poland temporarily. Zwi was frightened at first upon seeing the soldiers in the uniforms and weapons. Children disappeared in the Ghetto. His father's business continued as he got permission from the German Army to continue his construction projects. They understood most of the German as Yiddish is close to it. A teacher came to the house to teach Zwi the Hebrew aleph/bet alphabet. His sister attended school. They had sufficient food.
- 35:00 Many Jews were deported to Russia including his father's two brothers who later made it to the US. Non-Jews took over the empty houses. Then the Ghetto was built with walls and barbed wire which made an enclosed area with restrictions on entering and leaving. Since his father was a builder, he had permission to come and go. Food was not a problem as he could bring it in.
- 40:00 Later he smuggled it in and gave some to others. People did not walk out at night after a child disappeared one night. His first address in the Ghetto was Novalipia (?) Street across from the German-controlled Adler Factory where seamstresses made clothes. Adults wore the yellow star. Germans sometimes shot people on the spot. A few people got killed in front of the factory.
- 45:00 There was little food and no water so people got weak. Sometimes the Germans would close a street and remove the people and they never returned. He did not understand the meaning of "Ghetto" until he saw the walls and soldiers with machine guns. He was no longer free in the enclosed area. He felt independent so would follow his father to work but his mother no longer permitted him to do so when they moved into the Ghetto. He would sneak out and his mother would worry as she did not know if he would return. Once he witnessed a German soldier catch a Jewish boy by his legs and smash his head on the wall and he died. It took place in front of their home and everyone saw it.
- 50:00 Zwi talked and played with the other children in their house. Their first home in the Ghetto was a basement with bad conditions so they moved to their second home in Novalipia (?) Street

where they remained until the end. His parents were in their mid-20s to early 30s. He had a small celebration in September '40 for his 6th birthday with cake and presents. In the Ghetto, Zwi still had his treasure, his tools.

55:00 Being in the Ghetto did not affect him too much as he still had food. He noticed little children in the street selling newspapers and matches for food. Zwi and his sister did not attend school when they lived in the Ghetto. At first the Hebrew teacher continued coming to his home. The family did not have any health problems. Their apartment consisted of one large room which included the kitchen and a chimney in the center. The bathroom was separate. They had no privacy as the entire family was in the one room.

60:00 Zwi was the youngest so privacy was not a concern of his. He would sleep with his sister or his parents. When he saw frightening sights on the street, he felt that it was not going to happen to him as he did not do anything wrong. He spent his day following his father to work or playing with the children in their courtyard. Children did not wear the yellow star nor carried ID documents. He wondered why Jews had to leave their homes.

65:00 He could not understand why the soldiers pulled the beards of Jewish men or shot them and left non-Jews alone. His mother was a housewife and stayed at home. She never left the Ghetto. His sister would read a lot and help their mother.

70:00 Zwi did not think that his father was in the underground but he did help people who belonged to some organization. He hid food under his equipment and gave it to these people. Zwi did not try to leave the Ghetto. Those who labored daily outside the Ghetto, would try to smuggle things back in. If they were caught, the soldiers would beat them up; even if they were children. He saw the beatings as they lived on Leshner (?) Street near the entrance to the Ghetto. After awhile it became normal to him as he saw the beatings every day.

75:00

Zwi Golombek

Tape 2, Side B

August 22, 1998

RG-50.106*0097.02.04

Abstract

Zwi and his family are living in the Ghetto in early '42 when Zwi's father's sister's sack of potatoes have been taken by the German guards. Zwi's father hits the guard and gets placed in prison and then deported to Treblinka. Zwi's uncle takes Zwi to safety at his girl friend's non-Jewish family. The uncle gives the family money to take care of Zwi and visits him with clothes, candy and toys. Zwi's mother and sister have disappeared and were never found. Zwi stays indoors during the

day. At night he helps the family with their bakery and hides either on the roof or in the cellar if visitors or Germans come to the house. Zwi brought some tools with him and plays with the family tools as he enjoys putting things together and taking them apart. The house consists of one room where the parents, six of their children (all older than Zwi) and Zwi sleep. They have 2 other children who live elsewhere. Later Zwi's uncle marries the daughter and they have 2 children.

Summary

- 00:00 Zwi's son is translating the English into Hebrew for Zwi and the response into English for this interview. The sides are reversed with side B at the beginning and side A starting at 40 minutes. At home Zwi was called Chaim Hirsch and outside was called Henyik (?) as it could be taken as a non-Jewish name. He was told that he would be taken to a place with people so he would not be alone and meanwhile his father would search for Zwi's mother and sister. If he finds them, he will come and get Zwi. Zwi took his tools with him and also played with the tools of the foster father's brother who worked for an electrical company. Sometimes the foster mother yelled at him for using the tools. The family was Catholic and did not try to convert him or talk about religion. His Uncle Meirtek (?) visited him frequently, about every week or two, and brings him chocolates and other goodies so he was happy to see him. During the day, Zwi walked around the house but not into the garden as someone may come unexpectedly and report him to the Germans.
- 05:00 If someone did come unexpectedly, Zwi would be shoved inside a cupboard which squeaked so the family had to make excuses for the squeaking. It was hard to understand why he was hiding. He had to live that way and get used to being afraid of German soldiers. He did not analyze the situation, just did it. He comforted himself by knowing that his father was in Treblinka which he thought was a forced labor camp and did not know when he would see him again. but hoped that he would. He knew that his mother and sister disappeared and hoped to see them again but never did.
- 10:00 If visitors were expected, Zwi would go up to the rooftop pigeon coop. He might sleep there all night if they stayed late and return inside the home when he woke up. Neighbors would stare at him when he was in the coop. If they knew the Germans were coming to search the house, he would hide in the underground cellar with a rug on top where they stored potatoes so it was the safest place. In an attached house, the family would bake bread at night when it was dark and Zwi helped them though he was not forced to do so. He did it as he felt part of the family. Early in the morning they ran to the train with the bread and ran home.
- 15:00 He felt comfortable with the family and liked them and accepted the situation. He felt no less Jewish or more Polish when he lived with them. He had no time to feel one way or another. The family treated him nicely. The children treated him like a brother and he feels he owes them for that. He was a good child to begin with and they did not usually discipline him or treat him badly. He was not a wild child except he liked to play with tools. One day he tried to fix the

door and it fell and hurt the foster mother's toe. That made him feel bad and uncomfortable. He called his foster parents aunt (Babushka (?)) and uncle (Papka (?)) in Polish and called the children by name. The foster father died before the end of the War. He was the only child they took in.

20:00 The Germans did not allow the Poles to have a radio to learn about what was going on but the family had a radio. One day the father got drunk and took it outside to blast music so they hid between the pots. . Zwi did not know what went on in the village so did not know if other Jews were hidden there. His uncle brought him toys, games and books and knew he liked to do things with his hands. He had sufficient tools so did not need anything else. There were no changes in the foster family's lifestyle while he was there. He first saw German soldiers in 1939 and later saw them in the village where he was hiding. As the years past, he found out that they were evil, took his parents away, and hated them more.

25:00 He knew that he was too young to do anything about it. They heard on the radio that other armies were advancing against the German army. He hoped the German army would soon fall. He did not bring any objects from his home where he kept a photo of his father that his uncle gave him before he went to Russia. As he grew, his uncle brought him larger clothes and everything he needed and Babushka (?) cooked his meals. The family did not speak about the Jews or what was happening to them. .

30:00 The only Jews in the village were those who rented a vacation home before the War. He was envious of the children who he heard playing outside as they could play outside and he could not. He tried to go outside and it was forbidden so he behaved. Sometimes he walked around the outside of the house at night. The house consisted of one large room where he slept with the parents, the six girls and any visitors who came. He did not think to leave and be on his own. He felt to survive, he had to stay.

35:00 During the day, he had the house to himself so had some privacy. The parents worked at the connected bakery and the girls took the train to Warsaw to work or attend school. He knew to survive, he had to remain there and it was a good place to stay. He did not know how to write so he did not write and he was not good at drawing. He was good at putting things together and taking them apart. He made a chain of rope for the dog. Tape 2, Side A.

40:00.The entire family lived in the Ghetto. His father had a permit to enter and depart from the Ghetto to his construction business. He was friendly with the guards at the checkpoint and they permitted him to smuggle things through the gate. One day the father's sister came to the house all shaken and crying and asked Benyamin, the father to help her. The German guards had taken away her sack of potatoes as that particular guard did not know her family. His father went with his sister to the guard post and argued to return the potatoes but the German did not know him and told him to leave. Zwi's father would not take, "no" for an answer and hit him so the German soldier called the SS. He was arrested and taken to Gensher (?), a prison within the

ghetto. The aunt told the family that the father was arrested and they visited him a few times but after 3 weeks he was deported to Treblinka.

- 45:00 It was around early '42, close to the end of the Ghetto. Zwi visited his father in the small prison and could not touch him as he was behind a metal door. His father's situation was better than others as he demanded things. His father was 80 meters tall, almost 6 feet, strong with light brown hair and green eyes like his son. Zwi's mother was left with sufficient money and food in the house and was supported by friends. He just felt like himself, did not know if he felt older than his years though he went through so many circumstances.
- 50:00 His mother's brother, Uncle Meirtek (?), was a smart man and prior to entering the Ghetto, he made false papers from a non-Jew, Tsukeh (?) Abramowicz(?). One day a Pollack visited the family in the Ghetto and when he heard the father went to Treblinka, said he would take Zwi out of the Ghetto so he would be safe in case something happened. The mother agreed and the two walked out with the lines of people leaving for forced labor outside the Ghetto. After they were outside the Ghetto, the two ran away and he brought Zwi to a single friend, a non-Jew.
- 55:00 After two weeks the friend went to the uncle and said he can't take care of Zwi any longer as he works. Uncle Miertek (?) had a non-Jewish girl friend whose family lived in Zouzeftz (?) , a vacation village on the River Zefata (?) where Jews went on vacation before the War. He asked the girl if her family would take care of Zwi. Uncle Miertek (?) was a hair stylist for men and women and made a good income so the family accepted Zwi. Zwi's mother said he was going to a safe place. He was fooled as was told that he was only going for a couple of days and then return home.
- 60:00 In the original plan, the uncle would first get Zwi out and later get the sister and mother out but when he returned to the Ghetto, they were no longer there. To this day, there is no information on the two. Each time the uncle visited, Zwi would asked what happened to them and the uncle would reply, "Don't worry." He left the Ghetto and saw people living freely outside but he could not live a normal life and walk outside. Some people would tell the Germans that they saw Jews who were Spies or hidden. At the new home, Zwi had two hideaways. One was a small rooftop room, like a pigeon home.
- 65:00 He used it until it got cold and then he hid in a hall inside the house where they kept potatoes from freezing. The foster parents opened it and put him inside on two occasions: once a neighbor went to the Germans and reported that he was hiding and the Germans came over when only the grandma was home. She said that Zwi is a cousin. The second time, Zwi went underground and the Germans came and he saw one over his head. The German stared at him but only saw the dark floor and asked questions and left. The foster parents were older and the father was a retired train worker for the train that went through the town. They had 8 children: 6 girls who lived at home and 1 girl and 1 boy who did not. To support themselves, they made bread in a small bakery attached to the house. They took the bread by train to be sold in Warsaw.

70:00 They viewed Zwi's uncle as a future son-in-law as he went out with their daughter and made a good living. The uncle continued working and gave the foster parents a lot of money that supported them and they kept Zwi until the end of the War. Some people knew the situation so the uncle had to bribe them to keep quiet. Unfortunately, the uncle got leukemia and passed away in the late 50s or early 60s. He had married the daughter and they had two children. The daughter and children made it out of Poland to Sweden and can contact them. The foster parents who sheltered him were the Abramchuks (?) and the uncle adopted that name for his false papers. Some of the children were Marta, Bishik (?) and Yola (?).

75:00 Yagie (?) is the name of the daughter that the uncle married. The youngest daughter was five years older than Zwi so there was no one close to his age. He used his regular name, Henyik (?), which could be non-Jewish. He was non-existent as had no documents and did not go on the train.

76:00

Zwi Golombek

Tape 3, Side A

August 22, 1998

RG-50.106*0097.03.04

Abstract

Tape 3 begins with Zwi living with a Polish family during the Holocaust where he spoke Polish. After the Russians liberated Poland, his uncle helped him join the Children's Kibbutz, an organization funded by the Jewish JOINT and run by delegates from Israel, which helped him prepare to live in Israel. The group started in Poland and went to Czechoslovakia, France and arrived in Germany on January 15, 1946 where his stay was extended due to recovery from a broken leg. He met an adult survivor who reported that Zwi's father was shot and killed while escaping Treblinka alongside him. Zwi had realized that his mother and sister were not returning. He went by ship to Israel and arrived in Haifa on October 6, 1948 during the War of Independence. He was 14 years old and obtained a series of jobs through people he met. One was in a factory making armored vehicles in Tel Aviv and later a better position as a heavy machine operator until he was 18 when he joined the Army. There he met his future wife. After 2 and ½ years, he completed his service but served in all the wars and was discharged after the '81 war with Lebanon. He feels he got back some of his childhood by living it through his two sons.

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Summary

00:00 Zwi's son is translating the English into Hebrew for Zwi and his response into English for this interview. This tape starts when Zwi is living in hiding with a Polish family. He hoped that one day his family would be together. It became easier for him to be away from his family as time passed because his hope got stronger that they would soon be together. Zwi still remembers what his family looks like. Zwi spoke Polish with his own family so it did not bother him to stop speaking Yiddish.

05:00 He still remembers Yiddish and can speak it. Although he stopped his Hebrew studies with a Rabbi, he continued to recite aloud his studies. Zwi would put Hebrew alphabet together to form words and sentences. He stayed with the Polish family until the end of the War. The Russians came to Warsaw to fight the Germans. From his foster home, Zwi could see the Russians fighting on one bank and the Germans on the other bank. He could see shells falling close by. When the War ended, Zwi's uncle came and told him he was taking him to a Kibbutz where there were other children and they would end up in Israel.

10:00 He knew the War was over when there were no German soldiers, only Russian soldiers. He thought he would be together with his family but time passed and it did not happen. He was 11 years old and realized that his life would not be the same again. He knew that his uncle saved him. His uncle took him home where he lived with his married daughter and her daughter.

15:00 Soon his uncle told him to join the Kibbutz. The Russians looked messier than the Germans. They acted more barbarian than the Germans but since they liberated them from the Germans, the Russians were looked upon with favor and love. While living at his uncle's, Zwi visiting the Polish family and they would visit him. The connection between them was broken once he went to the Kibbutz. After the war, he tried to regain his childhood by climbing trees and riding the bike that his uncle gave him.

20:00 Their plan was for Zwi to go to Israel first and later his uncle would follow him. His uncle explained that Jewish children from all over Europe would join the Kibbutz and go to Israel which was a country for Jews but not yet a Jewish State. It would be a positive experience for him to get an education and grow up in Israel. He did not cry or make problems each time he moved. The first Kibbutz was at Falinicia (?) near Warsaw.

25:00 Next he went to Zabrze (?), a coal mine town in Poland. Then they went to Czechoslovakia. When they crossed the border from Czechoslovakia to France, they were told to only speak Hebrew or, at least, fake it. From France, the group went to Germany. European Jews led them and those in control were delegates from Israel. Some delegates from Irgun and some from Haganah. Their money came from the Jewish JOINT. The first time that Zwi met adult survivors was in Rheinfenberg (?), Germany. They asked the children where they were from. One survivor was from Treblinka and Zwi knew that his father was sent there. He told Zwi that his father was shot next to him at the time of the uprising. They tried to escape and his father got shot running away.

30:00 There were no dramatics as Zwi learned this so much later than when it occurred. He was not surprised but kept asking for details. He was told that it was at the end of Treblinka as the prisoners tried to burn it down. The Germans machine-gunned the prisoners. Zwi realized there was no chance of his mother and sister surviving. By that time, he knew about ovens, concentration camps and

deportations. He kept in touch with his uncle by mail and by the time he reached Israel, the uncle was sick with leukemia. He sent him oranges and grapefruits as was told this would help make him healthier.

35:00 He was not upset that he lived in Germany because he had no contact with the Germans, only contact was with the Jews in the Kibbutz. When he heard of his father's death, he lived with Jewish children and adults. It was a temporary place on the way to Israel. He got injured on a ski trip where he broke his leg and was two months in a hospital. His friends went to Israel first. He felt no evil in Germany. There were stories of Germans helping Jews and some Germans not participating in the evil. Tape 3, Side B.

40:00 The Kibbutz organization was not prepared to deal with such things as learning of his father's death. There were a lot of children and a lot of stories. Once they got news, they tried to deal with it. None of the children in the Kibbutz were friends from Warsaw. On January 15, 1946 he arrived in Germany and arrived in Israel on October 6, 1948. From Germany, they went to France where they took a ship to Israel. This was after Israel's independence so it was easy to secure passage. They arrived in Haifa during the Independence War so it was dark with bombs everywhere. They were taken to a train. Everything went fast and there was no time to think. Zwi arrived in Israel with a certificate indicating that he was a mechanic.

45:00 It was summer time and Zwi went to the agricultural area to cut weeds. It bloodied his hands and was not a task for him so he went to Safad. On the boat to Israel, Zwi met a father with two children who were friendly so he went to see him. He worked for two weeks at a time at different tasks. Then he met a woman whose son worked in a factory, "Hal Gaz" (the box) in Tel Aviv so he went there. The factory made armored vehicles to transport the military to Jerusalem. He told the director his work experience and was immediately hired. He did not have a Bar Mitzvah when he turned 13 as no one thought of it.

50:00 Zwi realized that other children survived under harder conditions than him. They were hidden by partisans in forests where they lived in makeshift homes without heat. After May 1948 when Israel declared its independence, there was no problem going there. The Kibbutz celebrated by decorating the dining room with flags and serving good food. It was a more emotional experience than what is celebrated today.

55:00 Now it is a more routine celebration and taken for granted. When he arrived in Israel, Zwi learned that he needed to work to earn money for food. He knew that he was in a new place and did not understand its safety at first as he arrived at night while a war was going on. When he got the job in Tel Aviv, he immediately started working and at the end of the day, everyone went home and he realized that he had no place to go. Abraham, an acquaintance from the Kibbutz in Germany worked at the factory and invited him to spend the night. There was a military camp nearby where he met Moshe, a cook, another friend from the Kibbutz in Germany.

60:00 Zwi was 14 at this time. He would either sleep at the friend from the factory or the one at the military camp as there was food at each place. Later he rented a room at someone's house in Tel Aviv. After awhile he found another job with a better salary and chance of advancement as a heavy machine

operator. He had experience operating tractors. He helped build roads and highways in the Negev in southern Israel. He kept changing apartments and sometimes rented with friends until he was 18 when he joined the Army. There he met his future wife. After 2 and ½ years, he completed his service.

65:00 Uniforms meant to him to be a soldier in his own country. A soldier must defend his country. It was a matter to kill or be killed. He did not associate being a soldier with his pre-war experiences. Later, he was active in all the wars. He became an Israeli quickly as he worked there, lived there and had friends there. He felt comfortable there. His future wife was a Sabra, as she was born there though her parents were from Europe. They got to know each other in the home where she was born and still live in the same house. They were married in 1956. They have 2 sons. He took part in the war in summer '56, the 6-day war in '67, the Yom Kippur War of '73 and the Lebanon war of '81. Then he was discharged.

70:00 He did not feel bad about leaving his children while serving in the Army. His father was taken away from him by force. He went away on his own desire to protect his country. He believes he would have been a different person if he did not go through the Holocaust. He had an abnormal life and childhood. He feels that he would have achieved more if he had more academic education. Whatever he achieves was with his own hands.

75:00 He feels he got some of his childhood back by living it through his sons' childhood.

Zwi Golombek

Tape 4, Side A

August 22, 1998

RG-50.106*0097.04.04

Abstract

Zwi discusses how memories of the Holocaust have affected his life. Sometimes noises at night bring back memories. He does not believe that his experiences affected how he parented his two sons. Although he still has close contact with the Polish family that hid him, he does not have warm feelings towards other Polish people nor to the Germans. He believes it is now too late to punish the Germans, but he cannot forgive them. Though he always responded to his children's questions about his Holocaust experiences, he generally does not wish to discuss it, read, see movies about the Holocaust nor speak to survivors. Zwi still remembers his parents and his sister. During the Gulf War, he felt that he was sitting helplessly awaiting other nations to stop it; whereas, he fought during all the Israel wars through '81. He brought up his children in Israel, a country where there will never be a Holocaust. He has 3 grandchildren and hopes for peace for them.

Summary

00:00 Zwi's son continues translating the questions into Hebrew and Zwi's responses back in English. The tape begins by questioning whether Zwi's memories were brought back when his own children were the same age as when he went through the Holocaust. He thought of it but it was not a problem to Zwi. He was happy that his own children would have a better future and a better life. He feels that he has accepted his own history. There are some situations at night where sounds and noises bring back memories of events that he does not wish to repeat. He reads about disasters in the world or genocides like in Cambodia that remind him they were a nation that went through the same thing.

05:00 He feels more sorrow for children who go through such misery but feels he has the ability to have more feelings for such things than those who did not go through the Holocaust. He does not believe that he was more protective of his children due to his experiences. He tried to give them normal freedom and a normal childhood. Zwi does not believe that he is more vigilant or suspicious of people's actions. You should not be willing to accept everything because of today's society and not forget that the human race can be evil. He has mixed feelings towards Poland and its people. He owes his life to those who saved him but others were not trustworthy as they were willing to sell a Jew's life for very little.

10:00 He does not have a good feeling toward many Poles he knew. He has no feelings toward the land of Poland and its people. During his visit two years ago he had no feelings when he was there. He cannot forgive Germany as a people or as a country. Maybe he is unfair but he cannot be objective although people say the Germans have changed and are different today. His feelings are unchanged and he has no forgiveness. His son, Benjamin, was born in 1958 and named after his father and his son, Sharan (?) Pinchas was born in 1963 and named after his father's grandfather

15:00 When his children asked him questions about his experiences, he responded with stories of events that he remembered. Benjamin went with him to Poland and made live video of places where Zwi had been including the house where he was hidden, the Kibbutz in Germany and the place where he got injured. It was interesting that they actually saw those places, not merely talked about them. His children grew up in Israel, a Jewish State so they have a connection to Judaism. They grew up with a father who went through all the wars to help a Jewish country. He explained to them what it means to live in a Jewish country.

20:00 He was young when he served in the Army and not aware of the dangers. Perhaps a child can be more oblivious when going through danger as does not understand as much as an older person. A psychologist might understand. Zwi never forgot what he went through as a child. He still wants to remember his parents and his sister. He does not feel comfortable around survivors as does not want to discuss the Holocaust. He rather keeps the memories to himself. He does not view movies, read books or talk about the Holocaust until today. Rather than feeling anger about the Holocaust, he just accepts it. He gave great thought before coming for the interview. His memories are his alone. He is not angry about his experiences, just accepts it.

25:00 He was able to lead a normal life and start a family as he wanted to survive. This gave him the strength to continue living and to start a family as he wanted sons to carry on the Golombek name for

generations. He does not feel like one person on the outside and another on the inside as he learned to live with what he went through and go forward. He had no political views as a child so there were none to change. His political views are based on what he went through. He feels that politicians are not taking care of their nation or their people but taking care of themselves so the people are suffering. That is the same now as took place during the Holocaust.

30:00 He frequently thinks of the Holocaust and his family. He usually has such thoughts when he is not active. He had a different attitude about the Gulf War from those in Israel who did not go through the Holocaust. It was the first war in Israel that Zwi was not a part of as he sat home helplessly awaiting other nations to stop it. He was home as he had completed his military service and reserves. It brought back memories of when he felt helpless during the Holocaust.

35:00 Being in Israel at home during the Gulf War was similar to being in Warsaw during the bombings as he was not a soldier in either case so could not fight back. In the other wars, he was a soldier and could fight back and control his destiny. Tape 4, Side B. There were no bomb shelters in Warsaw so they just ran from one area to another which they thought was safer. They would go to the banks of the river as they thought it might be safer than the center of the city. Zwi does not feel that Germany can be punished now for what they did earlier. He still speaks German. He works part-time.

40:00 As he ages, he thinks more of the Holocaust. When he was younger, his thoughts were mostly of daily events and how to achieve his goals. Now he associates his past with his family and children. He looks to Israel as being his own country where another Holocaust will never happen. Zwi is still in contact with the Polish family who took care of him. He looks at them as his real family, real cousins. They are the blood of his uncle who saved him so it is important to keep in touch. He went to Sweden to meet them when they escaped from Poland. They came to Israel twice and also to his younger son's wedding and visited the older son in the US.

45:00 In Warsaw he saw a wall next to the Ghetto and the railroad station where the Jews were loaded with names of Jews who perished. One name he saw was Taube, his mother's name. He has 3 grandchildren: Avery is named after his grandfathers Abraham on both the mother's and father's side, Oren, the "R" and the "N" from his sister's name, Rainier and his son's grandmother, Braunerie (?), and Julian after Yosef, his son's father-in-law, Zipan Sheleen (?) who died 2 weeks after his birth. Zwi hopes his grandchildren will not have to be familiar with uniforms, wars and killings.