

Today is Thursday the 21st of April, 1994. I'm standing on the south side of what used to be Ulice Rogow--

Rogowska.

--Rogowska with people in Sokolow Podlaski. And there was a lady here. How old is this lady?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

75.

She's 75 years old, which means that she was born in 1919. And she remembers that there was a Platner family living on the north side of Ulica Rogowska. And she also remembers that the daughter of the rabbi from the synagogue on the corner of Piekna Street is still alive.

In the ghetto there was a lady. There was a--

There was a woman, who was responsible for office in ghetto area. His name was Milobedzki.

Milobedzki-- A Jewish man or a--

No, he was Polish man. And he lives now, still in Sokolow Podlaski. And still, the Jewish people who survived by him in some way pay a visit, visit him.

Oh, so he helped to--

He helped. He was the, like, official in the-- representative of Germans. But in fact, he helped Jews.

Oh. Was he a soldier, a Nazi soldier?

No, he was not a soldier. He was not a Nazi soldier. He was just a man who was like a chairman of the office in the ghetto.

I see.

What this lady remember, she-- only through him Jewish people were allowed to send letters outside the ghetto.

Oh, I see. I see.

And if somebody wants to send a letter to Warsaw ghetto, he had to give this letter to Milobedzki. Next the German censor look at this letter and next was sent to Warsaw. He was this kind of man.

I see. So he-- where does he-- lives still in Sokolow?

He lives still in Zochowo He lived in Zochowo. And just this daughter of rabbi survived by him still visits Sokolow together with her granddaughter.

Where does she live?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

She lives in Great Britain.

Oh, really?

[POLISH]

She's married. She's married to rabbi from Siedlce.

Oh. Do you know her-- do you know her name?

[POLISH]

Yeah. [POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

They read in the book.

So is this a history book?

[POLISH]

It is a story of liquidation of the ghetto in Sokolow Podlaski.

Yes.

They have just--

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

It is about this region. And it is extermination of people.

Do you remember the names of the people, Platner, what their first names were?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

She remember of only these, who attends to school together, to school, to school to help her.

Do you remember their names?

[POLISH]

But not Platner family. She was born on this street. [POLISH].

What about--

[POLISH]

But they live a little farther because then--

Who, the people that she went to school with?

A few blocks away was already Polish district.

OK. So this was mainly the Jewish district here.

Yes, during ghetto. Yes. Everything was-- belonged to Jews.

Do you remember, they had a grandmother with a wooden leg?

[POLISH]

Very old.

[POLISH]

She remembers this very old woman. Her name was Feiga.

Was Feiga.

That wasn't the name of this older woman with wooden leg.

No it was Sara.

[POLISH]

But she says the name of that was [POLISH] Sara.

[POLISH]

So you know, maybe another woman, invalid, and her name was Feiga.

[POLISH]

And she stays that they-- she had a daughter Sara.

Sara [POLISH]

Sara was not an invalid. Only her mother was invalid.

OK. Feiga and Sara.

[POLISH]

She was only one who had wooden leg, and her name was Feiga.

OK.

She lived at the corner.

On the corner over there?

[POLISH]

If they worked as a tailor, would they have had a tailor store there or in--

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

She talk, only say this is a lot of Jewish--

A lot of Jewish were tailors. But would they have worked in their house, or would they have had a store somewhere?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

No in a-- no in a shop. No.

Just in their house?

Just in the house.

[POLISH]

If you want to imagine how the house, this house looked like, it was like this.

It was like this one. And also there was a slipper factory. They made slippers.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

No? No?

[POLISH]

But this town was famous from two professions-- shoemakers and people who make furs.

Furs? Oh, furriers. Yes.

[POLISH]

The most-- the [POLISH] the most riches family, furriers, were Cepelewicz family.

Yes.

[POLISH]

And the richest tailor in this was-- his name was Rybak.

Rybak.

[POLISH]

So she remembers them mostly.

And they lived in this area, or they lived somewhere very, very--

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

They live in a long street.

A long street.

[POLISH]

Still their house standing.

[POLISH]

Because they had big house made of brick.

I see.

[POLISH]

So she does-- do you remember when this was made into a ghetto and when the Germans--

[POLISH]

I will smoke. I am not smoker, but-- [POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

It was like this. Before the war, they lived, mostly Jews, but there was also Polish people. But when the ghetto was founded, Polish people were moved out.

And the Jewish people had to move.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Which is the Długa Street? Show me Długa. Oh, it is Długa Street.

Oh. [POLISH]

Długa. Długa.

Oh, really? Długa, with an L?

Długa. We say Długa. Długa. [POLISH]

[POLISH]

Długa. And it is a--

[POLISH]

Długa Perecka. Perecka? Perecka?

[POLISH]

That's this [POLISH] Piekarska, maybe?

[POLISH]

And you see, and it's Długa Street what divided ghetto into two sides.

Yes. Yes. You see the Długa Street. It goes like this.

To the synagogue.

[POLISH]

What is number three?

[POLISH]

It was the new synagogue.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Just over here? [POLISH]

[POLISH]

Yes. [POLISH]

There was two. Then could you go from one side to another?

[POLISH]

[POLISH] No, the one gate was allowed to enter, was this guard--

Between the two sides of the ghetto. OK. Was there a difference for the two ghettos? Was there any reason for having one ghetto or the other?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

No. It is only from communication reason. Because it was a Polish district, Polish district. And Polish people have to go from one district to another, so they go through Długa.

I understand.

Only communication, only communication is the same.

[POLISH]

Oh. But before the war, it was-- Długa Street was a street of really Jews and a lot of shops.

A lot of shops. OK. And so that's the street that's just over here.

[POLISH]

Rosenzweig. Yeah. I have a picture in somewhere else of Rosenzweig in America, a big family, the Rosenzweig, in America.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

They were-- the Rosenzweig family had the power station. They owned a power station. Very rich family.

They're very wealthy. Yes.

[POLISH]

Still this building [CROSS TALK].

[POLISH]

Zayde-- Zayde means grandfather.

Oh, Zayde.

[POLISH]

Zayde-- he was an old man? He was a very old man?

[POLISH]

Because where they lived, the Germans started to live. So they were resettled to Jewish district. And they started to live together with Rosenzweig because they were forced to live--

You lived with Rosenzweig?

Yes. They lived because their house was occupied.

By the Germans.

The Germans.

And so when the ghetto was liquidated, they took all the Jews to the square. And then they put them on the train to Treblinka?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Say that once again.

[POLISH]

But they didn't want to--

[POLISH]

Didn't wanted to be reported-- he refused to be deported to Kosow.

So they shot him?

[POLISH]

She told, I don't know. I heard, I want to die here.

[POLISH]

They killed-- they killed him on the courtyard.

They killed him. They shot him.

Yes. Because he refused to leave.

[POLISH]

She was-- she was just son-in-law from Warsaw.

I see. I see.

[POLISH]

They live in one room and another room. The whole family, they were forced to live in one room, and they live in another.

[POLISH]

So at the beginning, they refused to get food for-- they don't want to have food from Polish families.

Because it's not kosher.

Yeah. And next day, they--

And when they liquidated, there was a battle for the ghetto. And then they took all the Jews to the-- to the--

To Kosow.

To Kosow.

[POLISH]

To Kosow. And next to Treblinka.

Was there a battle or a fight in the ghetto?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

There was no any battle. They went very quietly.

They went very quickly in one day, and they took-- and they took them--

No any battles. No. They don't defend themselves.

[POLISH]

It is a recent story.

Do you see this book? This is a very good book.

Yes, the story of this area.

Can you buy this in the store here?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

It is all--

In the library.

It is only available in the library, this old book.

[POLISH]

It was edited only in a very few copies.

They made a few copies. Yes.

[POLISH]

And she used to take-- [POLISH]

It is possible to make a xerox copy if you wish.

Sure, where is it. Is there somewhere close we can do this?

[POLISH]

Oh, it's still open.

What is this lady's name?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Janina Werozemska.

Janina Werozemska, hello. How do you do?

[LAUGHTER]

[POLISH]

And this is her son?

[POLISH]

And her grandson?

Grandson.

Grandson.

And this is your wife?

[POLISH]

And this is your mother?

Yes. She's sisters, two sisters.

Oh, your sisters. How old is your sister?

95.

95? Wow. She's 20 years different from you.

[POLISH]

She looks alike. They look very similar.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

So we'll make some xerox copy of this [INAUDIBLE].

[POLISH]

Would it be-- would it be possible--

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

20-- 22.

Former Rogowska 22.

[POLISH] say the name of the street again.

[POLISH]

[POLISH] 26.

The old name is Rogowska.

And the old name is Rogowska. [POLISH] is spelt W-Y--

OK. I'm meeting on the 21st of April 1994 with-- say the gentleman's name.

Kazimierz Milobedzki.

Who is 74 years old. So he was born in 1920. And Marco was going to explain what his function in the ghetto was.

He was just in-- work in the office for administration of Jewish the property taken by Germans. So he knows everything, what property belongs to whom. He remembers. He worked in such administration office for Jewish property was taken by Germans from Jewish people.

I see. Could he point on the map where the [? platz ?] was.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]. OK.

[POLISH] Długa.

No, no, no Rogowska.

Piekna, Długa, Rogowska.

No, no. The other way around-- Piekna, Rogowska, Długa.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

His office-- their office was at the Długa Street.

OK.

[POLISH]

But it was such building that one entrance from Jewish district and another entrance was from Polish district.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

But it was between--

[POLISH]

But it was between the two halves of the ghetto.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

So [POLISH] it was just-- it was in front of the synagogue. So his office was--

He's pointing to the [POLISH] number 3 on the map in Sokolow job site book.

It was-- it was somewhere here.

Was this a slaughterhouse at all or anything like that?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Oh. According to him, slaughterhouse was at Magistracka Street. It was somewhere-- somewhere here.

[POLISH]

Where is the river? Where is the river here on this map?

I can't see a river.

[POLISH]

Oh, there's a river?

Oh, it is--

"Cetrina."

Cetynia.

Cetynia, Cetynia.

That's the name of the river?

Yeah. Yes. It is the name of the-- it is the name of the river. It's Cetynia.

Cetynia, OK. Where is 6-- it's 6. One second. [POLISH] There's a bath. This is a bath house.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

She told that a slaughter house was the next to bath.

The bath house, OK. OK. That's the bath house.

According to him.

[POLISH]

OK. And do you do you recall from here where the Platner house was near here?

[POLISH]

OK. I can give you some names that might jog your memory.

[POLISH]

OK. Platner Don, Platner Aaron.

Aaron.

Platner Sara.

Platner, Sara Platner, Aaron Platner.

Hania.

Hania Platner.

Rachela.

Rachela Platner.

[POLISH]

Zevulun.

Zevulun Platner.

Szimon.

Szimon Platner. No.

He doesn't remember.

He doesn't remember.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Zelig Morgenstern.

Remember, we saw that in the book.

Yes.

So she's the daughter of Zelig Morgenstern.

Or she's the granddaughter.

Or his granddaughter.

Granddaughter of Zelig Morgenstern.

Morgenstern.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

The last rabbi of--

[POLISH]

OK. So the name of the granddaughter is Perla Neuman. Perla Neuman.

And she comes from England?

[POLISH]

Mr.-- Miss [? Lowski. ?]

1918.

Perla Neuman was born in 1918.

[POLISH]

1918.

Perla Neuman was born in 1918.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

What is this?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

It's a what?

[POLISH]

What is this?

[POLISH]

I will tell you because it is very-- I'll just tell you the story in a minute. OK?

You told me the story.

All right. Just was taken to labor camp.

Who was taken?

Perla Neuman.

Yes.

To Szczeglacin, to Szczeglacin.

That's the name of a labor camp.

To labor camp. And close to Szczeglacin is a Korczew nad Bugiem. And she had a--

What is this, a name of a town?

Yes. And she pay a visit from Szczeglacin. Yes, from Szczeglacin to Korczew nad Bugiem. She pay visit to her friend.

How could she get out of the labor camp to go to--

It was probably this kind of camp where people were still-- just she was-- had to make some job. And when she stayed a longer with her friend. And her friend told, stay for a night. And the next day, they learned that all these 400 people from this labor camp was murdered by staff from Treblinka. And this way, Perla Neuman survived.

Survived.

Survived. And now she's telling about another woman, Golda Holberg. She was a manager. And she was one of his employees.

Employees in the office?

In the office, at the office.

So there was the office of the Jewish property.

Yes.

And this lady worked--

Golda worked for him in this office. And when he just hidden herself when people were deported to Treblinka.

So he hid Golda Holberg.

Yes. First he had-- she hide herself. And next, when people were deported, she secretly went to his house. And he hidden in his house, already after deportation. She hid in the-- you understand. Golda Holberg.

And where is she now, Golda Holberg?

[POLISH] Golda Holberg? In United States. In United States.

[POLISH]

[POLISH] Perla Neuman or Golda Holberg.

So she doesn't know her?

[POLISH]

So these are all people that you helped to--

Survivor. It is a survivor. It is his friend.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Perla, Perla Neuman?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Officially it was not allowed. But she had some connection. And it was extra things that she was allowed to visit
[INAUDIBLE]

So that was just-- Perla Neuman, what was your connection with Perla Neuman?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH] the Golda Holberg?

[POLISH]

Now I [POLISH]

[POLISH]

It was it was like that, that usually Jewish people ask him to arrange Polish papers. And the best idea to hide for Jewish people was not to stay in Poland but in Germany. So the Germans organized aktion to take Polish working power to Germany to work on farmhouses and factories. So they arrange Polish papers for Jewish people, and they send them to Germany.

OK. Because the Germans thought that they got rid of all the Jews from Germany. So they wouldn't--

Yes. So they were safe.

They were safer in Germany than they were in Poland.

In Poland because nobody searched for Jewish people already in Germany.

In Germany-- because they got rid, so--

He organized the Polish papers. And these Jewish people were sent--

So you did it. So you did it secretly.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Just people ask him. She told about visitors. Can you arrange for my niece Polish papers here? Can you arrange her deportation to Germany as a worker?

Oh, as a worker.

Worker.

And he was able to--

He arrange because he was the-- he had office, which was under German supervision.

Oh, I see. Did he ever almost get caught by the Germans?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

The main chief was the German. Deputy chairman was German. And he was employed, employed, by Polish employed. There were some Jewish and Polish employees.

But the Germans never suspected, and they never caught him?

Yeah. [POLISH]

[POLISH]

All of them, they were friends.

[POLISH]

OK. So you go to--

[POLISH]

All these Jewish names what you see here, they were his friends from pre-war times. And he arranged their Polish papers and had to send some to Germany.

So in other words, Perla Neuman, who went to this [PLACE NAME].

[POLISH]

This was a labor camp in Germany for Polish workers.

No. No. [CROSS TALK]

It was an unusual story. She was taken to a labor camp to Szczeglacin.

How did he help her to get there?

OK, no. She was taken in spite of him.

OK. So she had nothing to do with him.

Nothing to do with [NON-ENGLISH].

And that she had made a friend.

Made friends, she survived, and she came later to him. And she asked arrange her [INAUDIBLE] and send her to Germany. You know?

Oh, later. Oh, I see.

Later. Later.

She already had one lucky time.

Yes. She survived. She already helped people who were hidden. She didn't-- she'd hidden people themselves. Already people were hidden herself.

OK. So she was hidden here, and then she got-- then he got her the papers. Oh. OK.

Already it is easier because it was dangerous, very dangerous to hide people.

Of course.

It's better to work to arrange them Polish papers and send to Germany.

I see.

For slave work.

I understand.

That was much safer than in Treblinka.

Than going to Treblinka. Of course. OK. And so-- So you managed to help 10 people, 20 people?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

What's that, the name?

The name, the name of another woman.

So there was Rachele, and then he arranged Perla Neuman, and Golda Holberg.

Yeah. [POLISH]

What were these names?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Oh. Oh, yeah, I know. Because-- he was saying that just a woman from the country came to him. My daughter was ordered to go to Germany. And do you have a Jewish girl to send, the Jewish girl, in place of her. You know, Polish girl.

Oh.

It came order.

Oh, so she didn't want-- so the Polish girl could stay in Poland, so a Jewish girl could go instead.

OK. You know. Because usually it was the order given by local German authority for Polish girls to go to work for Germany. So Polish families say, we keep-- we give these papers of our daughters to Jewish girl. And we hide--

You hide their own daughter till it's safe.

Daughter. You understand.

Yeah, I understand. Like a swap. Yeah.

[POLISH]

[POLISH], change.

Like a change, yeah.

So actually, Polish come to him, and he sent, instead of Polish girl, he sent Jewish girls to German.

OK. So, in other words--

[POLISH]

And give them Polish papers. Yes.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

These are other names?

[POLISH] Perla Neuman [POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH], the real name of Jewish girl in Germany. But she was in Germany under the name of Anna Michal.

OK. So this was a Jewish girl.

And she was in Germany.

False name.

And as Anna Michal she corresponds to him. And all these Jewish girl writes the letters. They live here.

And in Germany, and the Germans think it's a German-- Polish girl writing back.

And they correspond with him.

So that's how you knew that they were--

They knew the story. They knew what they did, what they did was they didn't. They know. They saw their fate.

So Rachela-- [POLISH]

As Anna Michal correspond with him from Germany.

I see. Where is she now? Does she--

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Now she's married.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Oh. And now she didn't came back to his old name. As Anna Michal, she married a Pole from France who is called Paulo Stefan. [POLISH]

[POLISH] Anna Michal.

Yes. I know. Even in America some-- I know--

That people did that.

Some Jewish people, he didn't came back to their Jewish neighbors. They keep these false names from occupation time. It is I know even such stories.

Paulo-- and they live in where?

In France. He told me--

[POLISH]

Say that story again. He's now telling the story how--

Half of Sokolow was the Jewish property. So after the war, after the war, some Jewish people come for short time and sell to local people. But one man, he was named Gutman, he came in the name of all Jews. And he had the papers from them. And he saw sold to local people half of Sokolow-- one man.

One man on behalf of the others.

On behalf of other Jews who didn't come and never. [POLISH]

[POLISH]

He can't remember the lady with the wooden leg?

I asked her for the lady with the wooden leg.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH] Rosenzweig [POLISH]

How is the grandfather?

Zayde.

Zayde. Zayde.

[POLISH]

About 5,000 Jews in just--

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

German concentration--

They put more people in the ghetto.

So just in the ghetto was more than 5,000.

Yes. Yes.

They were taken from other places.

Like in the surrounding area.

[AUDIO OUT]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Were you ever afraid that they would find you out, that you had given the papers to the-- [POLISH]

[POLISH]

All Jewish documents exist.

[POLISH]

Birth and death certificates.

Sorry. They were where? Where are they now?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Office-- register office for marriages and deaths.

In Sokolow?

In Sokolow, yeah.

[POLISH]

All the documents about death and birth for the Christian people were in the church.

In the church, yes.

And all documents for Jewish people was in a rabbi office.

Yes. And where is that now?

And all the documents of Christians were burned down because the parish house and-- burned down. All documents about Jewish people survived and still exist.

And where?

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

In [INAUDIBLE] office for marriages and deaths in Sokolow.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

And you can, if you know a name, first name, [INAUDIBLE], of the Platner family, he give-- he'll make the-- all these documents and send it to you [CROSS TALK]

Oh, very good.

[POLISH]

Treblinka crematorium

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

The smell was so strong that in [NON-ENGLISH], the people sometimes couldn't breathe. And even sometimes you could smell in--

Sokolow.

In Sokolow. In Sokolow.

From the smell of--

From Treblinka. It depends of wind.

Wind.

It depended of the wind. And they just-- they executed thousands of people just here, on Piekna Street. And she was not sure. According to him, some people were buried alive because they were not killed but wounded.

And they were buried at that site on Piekna Street.

Yeah. In this site. But a few months later, prisoners of Treblinka come and took all bodies to Treblinka and cremated.

I see.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

I read in that paper that you have a copy of that, when the Jews found out that there was going to be roundups, some of them escaped to the forests nearby here.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

He's telling that it was a revolt in Treblinka. And some people from Treblinka escaped to forest here. He don't know if people escape-- escape because the whole ghetto was surrounded by soldiers just before execution.

I see.

[POLISH]

And they were rounded up into this square here, where we're standing now.

[POLISH]

And he is saying about this story that all people were killed. But usually they-- these guards was not Germans but soldiers from Latvia.

Latvia.

From Latvia. And he heard such stories that one girl escaped but she was caught by Latvian soldiers, raped, and for that he saved her life. He didn't kill her. He allowed her to escape.

[POLISH]

They remember after the war, this [CROSS TALK]

[POLISH]

And what-- who were the 1,000 people that they shot in Piekna Street? What was different about them? Why weren't they taken to Treblinka? Why did they shoot them on--

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

They started with the execution. And next, what's left, they're taken to Treblinka. So maybe they recognize that it is--
Too hard, too difficult to shoot them all.

To shoot them on the spot, and they take to Treblinka. But probably at the beginning, they are thinking about execution, to kill all people, all Jewish people in Sokolow. But finally, they decided to send the rest to Treblinka.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

He said they walk. They walk to Treblinka-- under guarded groups taken--

Only 30 kilometers to Treblinka.

30 kilometers.

And not on the train.

Not on the train.

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

[POLISH]

Oh, no, it is-- they-- no. They just, they head to railway station and next--

They walked to the railway station and then-- and then--

And then by train to Treblinka.

I see.

[POLISH]

Oh, really, I can't translate anymore. OK.