

RG-50.120*090

Lichtenberg, Uziel

Tape 1 of 5

- 1.01 Born in February 1916. Grandfather was a teacher in the village of Zoromin ???, north-central Poland on the border of Eastern Prussia. There were 6,000 inhabitants, half of them Jewish. Main occupation: smuggling, tobacco mainly, through the border. Also, in jobs for the farmers who visited the town. Some Jews were very well-off by exporting wood to England. Grandfather was born in Bendin and brought to the village by the Bloomenzweig family to marry their daughter. The Bloomenzweigs were Hassidim and the condition of marriage was that the grandfather would never work, but study. His wife had a store and she sustained the family. They were Gur Hassidim and grandfather traveled to the rabbi in Gur several times a year. Grandmother died young and the sons took over the business.
- 4.54 Grandfather looked for a match for his eldest daughter, a highly intelligent Jew as himself and found him in Lublin – 1,000 km away.
- 5.23 Uziel's father did not fulfill his obligation to devote himself to studying Torah only, and soon enough began his commercial undertaking with great success. In addition to his job exporting wood, he rented out houses in Danzig and Warsaw. He was also an active community activist and at age 28 he became the head of his community. He was also active in the Mizrahi religious movement. At the end of the First World War, he was chosen for the municipality of his town.
- 7.20 In 1926, when Uziel was 10 years old, the situation changed. Father fell ill with kidney and heart problems. He was taken to a hospital in Warsaw. During that long period, the family ate all of the servings. Upon his return home, the village doctor, Dr. Zaborowsky, came to live with the family and he treated Uziel's father until he recuperated.
- 10.52 About mother.
- 12.04 Two older sisters.
- 12.17 Uziel started helping his father to re-establish the business. He was 10, and given great responsibility when father could not accompany him.
- 13.13 Father was a Zionist dreamer who also loved nature. Acquired land nearby, planted an orchard and built a house for his family that he designed. Mother opposed moving the family outside of the village to the new place where the "Goyim" lived. Father then transformed the house into apartments and rented them out to the "Goyim."

- 14.12 In 1928, the family was better off, but a crisis hit Europe in 1929. The Russians “dumped” wood at an artificially low price in Europe and Uziel’s family could not compete.
- 15.07 In the village, every single Jewish child went to school: Haskda, a private school in Hebrew, and the Talmud/Torah for poor students.
- 16.03 Uziel began school at the age of 3. At 6, they started Mishnah and at age 8-9, ??? Uziel’s father decided that the child has to have a secular education as well, in a state school with the “Goyim.” Grandfather objected. The solution arrived that Uziel would study with his grandfather every morning from 5 to 7 a.m. on his Jewish subjects. Then, from 1 to 3 p.m., Uziel had to go again to grandfather’s house. They would do their afternoon and evening prayers and the two of them would go to the “Shtibel” (one-room house of prayer) where the hassids of Gur congregated and where the grandfather delivered a daily lesson. Uziel sat at his grandfather’s table and listened as well.
- 17.57 This period in the “shtibel” ended due to the jealousy of the other students. Uziel, then, studied at his grandfather’s home, again, at 9 p.m..
- 19.40 Grandfather as a teacher was completely estranged from the everyday world.
- 23.00 His life as a student in the Polish school. The Polish nanny. The first radio at Dr. Zabrowsky’s.
- 26.10 Polish friends of Uziel’s father.
- 26.53 Anti-Semitism was oral, not physical. Most difficult times were Mondays – market day. At the end, peasants would become drunk and pester the Jews.
- 29.07 In 1928-29, the youth movements spread through Poland. Hashomer Hatzair was the first one in Uziel’s town. He and his middle sister joined. Uziel left to another movement; Hashomer Halaimi, as he was enticed by the possibility of playing the trumpet in its band.
- 31.00 In 1929, Uziel finished the public school. Because of the terrible economic situation, father decided to move the family to Lodz, where they already had relatives.
- 34.15 Move to Lodz was hard on Uziel. First to Plotzk where he saw a movie for the first time.
- 37.31 The toad from Plotzk to Lodz.
- 39.21 Sisters went to work. Uziel could not get any schooling.

- 40.11 Attempt to reestablish business failed. Uziel went to work as a gopher first and made 8 zloty a week, which helped the family. He pined for his old village friends and read books instead of having friends. He read Polish literature. He read his home Hebrew books: Mapo, Peretz, P. Smoleskin. He did not read Yiddish, as the language was not appropriate for a cultured boy. He read Yiddish literature in translation.
- 44.35 Contact with cousins did not exist as they were Gur hassidim and Uziel was considered secular.
- 52.00 Studies in the Hebrew high school of Lodz. Difficult to adapt at first. There was no time for him to be involved with a youth movement.
- 55.00 Uziel went to work in someone else's wood business. Work left much free time for reading. His weekly pay was 10 zloty per week. A kilogram of meat was 1 zloty.
- 59.30 One sister was already undergoing training to immigrate to Israel. The other was about to marry. Father closed the failing business in 1933.
- 2.00.12 Father established a religious-Zionist school in Lodz together with Berl Mark (who had graduated from Tachkimoni school in Warsaw. First years, the plan was to start with the elementary school and then add on more advanced classes. Berl Mark was the principal and Uziel's father was the vice principal and pedagogic director.
- 1.23 The school had to raise its own money. As a private school, it did not have support from the government. Father also had a few private students, as the school's economic situation was precarious. Family's sustenance came from Uziel's work, for the most part.
- 2.40 Older sister immigrated to Israel at the end of 1934. Sister's life in Israel. Her name is Leah Adini.
- 3.49 The other sister immigrated to Israel in 1935 to Kibbutz Massarick. She left the kibbutz and the Hashomer Hatzair movement almost immediately.
- 4.41 Uziel was the only one of the children still at home in Lodz. The family adopted an orphan, Rushka Landan, and then another orphan, a boy named Uzi (who now lives in Kibbutz Lochamei Hagetaot – Ghetto Fighters Kibbutz).
- 6.19 In 1934, the business Uziel worked for went bankrupt. The owner of the business recommended Uziel to work at the building company of Herman Kalish (his brother-in-law). At first, he worked as a gopher. One of the engineers, Friedlander, took a liking to Uziel and started teaching him about construction. Also advised him to drop his Humanities school for trade school in the evenings,

- where he learned the principles of building. There were almost no Jews there and anti-Semitism was rampant. Uziel finished with very good grades.
- 9.58 Uziel became an assistant to an engineer and after two years was the director of building projects in the city, earning 100 zloty per week – a great income then. The money was given in its entirety to his father. Uziel received an allowance from his earnings.
- 11.10 He worked there until he was conscripted in the Polish army.
- 11.16 In 1934, Uziel was very active in the youth movement and became a counselor. This was called Hanoar Hatzioni.
- 11.52 Talks about youth movements in Poland and their influence on the young people.
- 15.05 1935, death of Pilsudski (???) in Poland, the liberal dictator who did not allow public expressions of anti-Semitism. His heirs immediately became public anti-Semites, causing consternation in public offices that employed many Jews. The Lodz municipality, for instance, was rid of its Jewish engineers and its laborers.
- 16.53 The Jewish community in Lodz was well organized; it employed up to the last Jew.
- 17.48 It was difficult to hire Jews because opposition of the Socialist unions of Polish workers except in the building industry (whose contractors were all Jewish).
- 22.00 Describes the Zionist youth movement (Hanoar Hatzioni), its history in Israel and Poland, and Uziel's work for the movement in Poland.
- 26.15 In 1937, Uziel had two options: "Hachshara" and agricultural preparation toward immigration to Israel or conscription in the Polish army. He chose the second option. Father opposed it and bribed the army so that Uziel would not be conscripted. He was, and was chosen to serve in the tank corps.
- 30.39 He joined the Polish army on February 1, 1938, and there were three Jews among the 90 soldiers in the unit. Uziel was sent to a commander's course but was dismissed for being a Jew.
- 33.58 Service in the army and anti-Semitism within the army.
- 35.23 In 1938, the Polish army tried to achieve an accord with Hitler's fight against Communist Russia.
- 38.00 Uziel was in charge of absorbing the new conscripts when the general mobilization order came in 1938.

- 39.00 Uziel's disappointment at the army.
- 46.25 Uprising in the entire Polish army a day after the national celebration of May 3rd. The cause was dissatisfaction of reservists.
- 52.00 Reservists were sent home. Jews had the opportunity to go to Officer's school. Uziel was sent and studied there until the war started.
- 54.00 It was a rare opportunity for home leave for 3 days. The atmosphere at home was tense because the war was imminent.
- 59.00 When war broke out, the Officer's school was disbanded. Uziel was sent to his old artillery division as the aide of its commander, Mayor Paienko (of Russian origin). When he finally found the unit, they had already crossed the German border.

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- 3.02.00 The Polish army destroyed and burned all of the farms on its way.
- 5.00 After 8 days without encountering a German soldier, the division was ordered back to Poland. They were back in three days, although, progress within Poland was impeded by fleeing refugees. The army's objective was to reach Central Poland.
- 6.37 The march is now under German air attacks.
- 8.28 Fighting the German army.
- 9.00 Approach to Kutno Gombin (???) and the counterattack from the Germans.
- 10.00 Organization to ease the crossing of the Visle Bridge to defend Warsaw. Germans destroyed the bridge. May Paienko ordered the tanks to be destroyed and then dismissed the troops and shot himself in the head. Also, before he killed himself, he ordered his soldiers to give themselves up to the Germans.
- 16.00 Uziel escaped, but is taken prisoner shortly thereafter.
- 20.22 Anti-Semitism of Poles in prison.
- 21.40 Polish army prisoners were taken to jail in Kalish then by train to Germany to Neubrandenburg, Stalag 2-A in Northern Germany. Describes the conditions in the camp. Poles requested separation from the Jews (about 250). Older German soldiers defended the Jews.

- 27.12 Jewish soldiers began to organize. Thirty young people had been in the youth movements. Requested work in the potato fields for an additional portion of soup. Then, volunteered for agricultural work elsewhere.
- 32.40 Lectures and other activities.
- 33.35 Visit from the Red Cross. Permission to send a post card, which never arrived.
- 37.44 Jewish group was split 20/10. Uziel was among the ten sent to a village (Tzashendorg???) and never reestablished contact with the other 20. Talks about work and life in the farm.
- 53.20 End of February and the Jewish prisoners were returned to Poland, supposedly to freedom. The Red Cross gave them the freedom certificates. They had arrived in Lublin, 50 Lipova Street. It was a death camp.
- 58.06 Uziel was told that those from Lodz did not have a chance to leave alive.
- 58.27 Taken to forced labor during the day and returned to a dark barrack at night. He was given no food.
- 4.00.29 Jewish prisoners were not considered soldiers any longer. Their guards were Ukrainians.
- 1.15 Uziel's friend, Szike
- 2.05 Natives of Lodz were sent out from camp through Biale-Poolask (???) and never heard from again. This was the end of February – beginning of March 1940.
- 2.51 Uziel stayed a little over two weeks in the camp and continued to leave during the day and return in the dark.
- 3.36 Describes the camp and compares it with the soldiers' prisoner camp in Germany.
- 18.20 Returned to Lodz on a train with many female passengers who smuggled food to sell in the large cities.
- 20.41 Arrived in Lodz after midnight. Szike and Uziel were greeted heartily by the station manager.
- 25.01 Reunited with Uziel's parents in the ghetto that was not yet permanently sealed.
- 27.00 Uziel searched for friends who led the youth movement who were still active in the community (but limited in their activities). The head of the community was Chaim Rumkovksy.

- 29.36 Uziel knew Rumkovksy well – he was an insurance agent who was childless and volunteered to work with children.
- 31.24 Decided to stay in or leave Lodz.
- 33.24 Uziel’s opinion of the Judenrat: he defended them after the legitimate heads of the community fled.
- 34.53 More about Rumkovsky.
- 39.10 Decided to leave Lodz and met with Rumkovsky.
- 42.00 Uziel joined the nucleus of a kibbutz in the ghetto and left home in the direction of Warsaw.
- 45.00 Uziel’s opinions about the high level counselors of the youth movement.
- 50.00 Escaped from the ghetto.
- 52.00 The Kalish enterprise fate.
- 5.03.10 The road to Warsaw. Love of Poland.
- 4.32 Arrived in Kolushky and talks about the border and train station to Warsaw.
- 7.00 Short trip on train. Decided to make the rest of the way on foot from Skernievitza.
- 9.47 Took one week to walk to Prushko on the outskirts of Warsaw. From there, by train to Warsaw (at this time, the only place that had a ghetto was Lodz).
- 10.40 Arrived in Warsaw in Zamenhof 49 where the “kibbutz” of the Hanoar Hatzioni was functioning. Met with a group of Uziel’s “landsmen” from his village of birth, Dzeronim ???, a border town by Eastern Prussia and one of the first to be “cleansed “ of Jews in November 1939.
- 11.43 Crowding of Jews in Warsaw after the beginning of war. There were maybe 340,000 Jews before, and with the closing of the ghetto in October 1940, there were 600,000.
- 12.37 Uziel arrived in Warsaw in the middle of March 1940.
- 13.00 Uziel’s opinion of community leaders in Warsaw at the time who, together with the rest of the leaders, either fled or hid during the war.
- 17.06 Resumed friendship with Bluma, his future wife.

- 18.00 Talks about Samy Kaplan and other youth movement activists who became leaders in a leaderless movement.
- 21.00 Movement leaders were now also heads of the kibbutz.
- 23.00 Distribution of scarce housing in Warsaw; the famous refugee housing.
- 25.00 Freedom of movement in the streets; wearing the yellow armband; fear of forcibly taking people to work by grabbing them in the streets.
- 26.39 Chermiakov became the head of the community. They began to get organized with the help of the Joint (which was working as a local agency).
- 27.30 New leaders.
- 29.50 Organization of soup kitchen and daily occupations.
- 33.33 Moved to 27 Deluga Street, to a building that used to be a girls' high school.
- 33.59 There was room for some educational activities.
- 34.20 Recollection of Passover Seder there.
- 35.12 Established workshops to expand income.
- 35.35 Arrangement with Germans to organize labor squads so that the Germans do not kidnap workers from the streets. The community pays the worker's wages.
- 38.00 Uziel was in charge of the labor brigades.
- 39.00 Established the first workshop for producing brushes on 28 Leshna Street.
- 40.00 Later, cobbler and tailor workshops were also established.
- 41.15 Established an inter-movement council to renew the youth movements and reestablish contact with Israel.
- 42.00 Cooperation with Toporol (Joint) and establishment of a carpentry shop.
- 46.06 Trained for agriculture in Klosuv??? And Grokhuv. The latter was bombed and razed. Reestablished Grokhuv as a kibbutz. It was located near Prague, by the Visle River.
- 51.25 When the Jewish police was set up, everyone in the movement sent a delegate.

- 53.25 Defense of Cherniakof and others. Also, greetings from Hauptman Von Volenmach, a Gestapo officer in charge of Poland's agriculture.
- 54.27 Jewish police were a great help for the community to know what was going on.
- 55.20 Comparison with German Police in L13.
- 57.16 May – June 1940, more grabbing of Jews for forced labor when crossing the bridge over the Visle.
- 58.0 Agricultural training, marketing and organization.
- 6.00.45 Decided to build housing on the kibbutz.
- 1.30 Unexpected visit from Volenmach who inquired about workers ("are they really Jews?") and asked what the problems were (no horse or cows, grabbing Jews on the way to work). Volenmach provided for and solved the kidnapping problem by distributing ID cards for the kibbutz workers.

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- 6.30 The population at Kibbutz Grokhuv and cooperation between different youth movements.
- 11.20 Involvement of the movement – Hechalutz's leaders from Warsaw (Tziviva) made others feel as second-class citizens ("guests").
- 12.45 Contact with the leaders of the movement in Warsaw.
- 13.00 Access to news obtained from the Polish underground.
- 18.30 Close to the high holidays, the ghetto was finally closed in Warsaw. Kibbutz members hoped to stay outside of it and become the liaison between the ghetto and the Jews living in other parts nearby. They were not allowed.
- 19.30 By the summer, the management of the youth movement was restored.
- 20.33 End of October, the ghetto was closed. Two weeks later, the kibbutz was ordered to close and its members were summoned to Warsaw. The order came from the Jewish community.
- 22.10 Nazis allotted too small an area for the ghetto counting on high mortality rates from illness and epidemics (typhoid fever).
- 23.00 The famous parade of the former "kibbutzniks" as they entered the ghetto in a wagon and brought vegetables with them (already unseen in the ghetto).

- 24.39 The residence on Nogolipky Street (before the war was the site of publication of a Zionist newspaper in Polish). One hundred and fifty people moved into that home with the hope to leave soon and that the Germans will be destroyed. The situation was bleak: blitz over England, the fall of France, and Russia befriends Germany.
- 26.29 Source of news “YVO (Yidn Vilu Azoy – the Jews want it this way)” – rumors are based on unknown sources and “mediums” that guessed.
- 27.27 “Kibbutz” life better than rest of ghetto: discipline site of soup kitchen, delegates busy going to 5 Klomatzka (???) Street, to obtain rations.
- 28.32 Youth movement people are the ones providing the work force for the Germans.
- 29.45 Kinds of work Germans provided: dismantling of factories and sending them to Germany, cleaning of ruins, and sorting of debris for re-use.
- 30.30 Uziel organized the workers according to the Nazis demand for work, woke them up, and took the people to their jobs.
- 31.22 There were places where the only work done was to torture the workers. The supervisors decided whether to torture or not on that particular day.
- 32.47 Workshops had also been organized in Warsaw.
- 33.13 Aid to elders.
- 34.26 “Kibbitz” life not organized for immigration to Israel, but only to survive the war. Decided to assign a percentage of the kibbutznik’s in come to aid their parents in need. Each worker worked according to his capacity, but received according to his needs.
- 36.54 Curfew begins at sundown in the ghetto. Need to organize cultural life in the evenings - speakers, writers, etc. are invited to lecture and Hebrew learning is a must.
- 37.50 Escape from the ghetto. Pavia prison – each ghetto gate was guarded on both sides. Open only for work brigades, the trailway ???(whose rails were fixed), or for German motorcades that sped through while shooting without consideration of the crowded streets. This resulted in many casualties. Image of Jews running for their lives, and trying to escape through the gates opened for the Germans. Trials at escaping continued, even when the gates were already locked again.
- 41.42 Another image: dead bodies, victims of typhus, thrown in the streets.
- 42.38 No epidemics to speak of.

- 44.10 There were places of entertainment in the ghetto, and some Jews prospered there, trading with the Germans. Coffee houses were open and kept supplied mainly from smuggling and dealing with the Poles (who arrived with their merchandise in the trainway???) The ghetto was not hermetically closed.
- 45.32 Youth movement participants were opposed to and did not take part in the smuggling.
- 46.33 Contact with Uziel's and Bluma's families in Lodz, through correspondence. Lodz was closed hermetically. Both post offices were open, but there was censorship. Uziel's letters continued to get to his parents even after he left the ghetto so that they would not know he left.
- 48.45 Workers outside the ghetto used their money to obtain products to feed their families.
- 50.10 Contact with Switzerland continued through correspondence with Nathan Schwalbe. He received packets of letters from all of the youth movements through the cooperative council formed before closing the ghetto.
- 52.00 The Hechalutz movement has information that Hanoar-Hatzioni did not possess. For instance, they were still working on sending their members to immigrate to Israel, via Slovakia. They did this in secret.
- 52.41 An answer is demanded.
- 53.32 January 1941, Hechalutz accepted other movements for immigration to Israel, but only according to the percentage of membership. Members were decided according to participating members in agricultural training before the war. Hanoar-Hatzioni received 5%.
- 55.32 A struggle began and a change is requested with no avail. After the first person to leave in chosen he changed his mind. It was Itzhak Goldshteyn, whose family had special privileges as his relatives had a pharmacy.
- 57.56 Back then, no one was expecting the complete annihilation of the Jews. Therefore, leaving the ghetto was much more dangerous than staying in it.
- 59.23 Uziel was chosen to immigrate and he agreed immediately, and reasons for it.
- 7.07.38 Uziel had to get to Slovakia where he was to stay in his position at least a year until a replacement is sent. The parting from the kibbutz.
- 7.06 Exit from the ghetto, through a neighboring house in ruins. The different stations. Meeting with Weichert in Krakow to receive monies for the immigration to Israel of those in the youth movement.

- 13.14 Arrival in Tarnow. Meeting with Laban, of the "Hechalutz" from Krakow.
- 15.43 Next station Noviasontz (???) the last village closest to the border where Jews live. For the next 25 km. there were no Jews..
- 17.00 The village had a busy connection with smugglers who brought things to and from Czechoslovakia.
- 18.00 Rumors are rampant that crossing the border is almost impossible.
- 19.17 All this happened at the end of February – beginning of March 1941. For two nights and a day, Uziel and Ruth Smulevitz, a woman from Hashomer Hatzir, walked through the mountains guided by a smuggler. The trek was through the high Tretters ??, which are so high that the German patrols could not climb them.
- 23.11 Arrival in Slovakia in a village near Poprat.
- 24.00 Departure for Bratislava, via Poprat, to the family of Rafi Friel.
- 32.51 Friedl was in the Hashomer Hatzair, and Uziel was not. After one night, the latter was transferred to the care of the Zionist movement that was sponsored by Maccabi, a sports organization allowed to function.
- 33.30 The Slovakian government then.
- 34.50 Uziel was expected there, his arrival reported by Natan Schwalb. The general Israeli office knew of his arrival as well. The office was still active in Slovakia under the leadership of Leo Rosenthal and Oskar Krasniansky. Oskar Neuman headed the Zionist movement with Dr. Vinteshtein while Zinger led Maccabi with Yehuda Fleisch??
- 35.23 Zevi Zilezi headed Hashomer Hatzair with Rafi Friedl, Benita Rosenberg, and Yoshko Baumer. Dr. Rosenfeld headed Maccabi Hatzair with Eli Shaio and Peretz Revis. Hashomer Hadati was headed by Itzhakk Roth and Dov Vais. Haoved was headed by Moshe Kraus, and Hanoar Hatzioni did not have a parallel movement in Slovakia so Uziel went to the General Zionists (Zionim Klalim).
- 38.08 They referred Uziel to Maccabi, which was (in their eyes) the closest to their movement.
- 43.01 Meeting with Yosef Korniansky from Hechalutz.
- 44.00 Together, they decided to organize the arrival of the Polish Jews to Slovakia. For that, Uziel had to travel to Bardiov?? to make the acquaintance of Shlomo Tzegelnik. He was a forester by profession but also had a hotel for the use of refugees from Poland.

- 45.44 Uziel receives the refugees in Preshov ?? not in ??? where there is a narrow track railroad.
- 54.00 Seder, Pesach 1941.
- 54.59 Decision by Maccabi to institute training farms in Slovakia for the General Zionist movement, from age 18 on.
- 56.00 In the Maccabi convention that took place on the intermediate days of Passover 1941, Uziel was chosen to be part of the management of the movement and also moved to the building. He also received a salary.
- 58.07 Uziel's duties were now to visit Slovakia and to organize the youth over the age of 18. There was a need to retrain the youth for productive work in the society. Uziel pushed for agriculture in preparation for immigration to Eretz Israel. Jews, in Slovakia, owned many of the richer and larger farms.
- 8.01.37 The last transport to Paliestine from Bratislava was in 1941. Uziel informed Warsaw of this fact. As a consequence, not many people tried to immigrate.
- 15.57 Bluma, Uziel's girlfriend, decided not to stay in Warsaw despite it all. She was the last to leave.
- 24.00 The training farms.
- 32.10 December 1941, rumors started spreading about sending refugees to Poland to "work camps." No one came back from them. Therefore, idea was to flee again.
- 43.59 Deportations were discussed to the work camps. Attempt at convincing the local youth to flee to Hungary with the Zionist youth: for their salvation, and also to facilitate the communication in Hungarian (which the Jewish Polish refugees did not speak). The local Slovakian Jews were not convinced.
- 49.08 All of the youth movements were ordered not to go to the work camps, but to get ready to steal the border.
- 53.09 Local gendarmery ?? listened to the phone conversations of Uziel to Bratislava in order to know when to begin the escape.
- 53.49 The first to be deported to work camps were the single women.
- 56.00 Gypsy camp was near the border.
- 57.13 Two women and three young men got ready to cross the border with the help of a Gypsy leader.

- 58.03 Training farms were liquidated in the winter.
- 9.01.27 Crossing border was easy because the limit with Hungary was long, almost along the entire of Slovakia.
- 3.22 On the eve of their departure, the local gendarmes showed them the orders of deportation, but did not intend to arrest them. The order was for midnight. The group left the village at 10:30 p.m.. After a few days, the group crossed the border to Hungary with no problem. They arrived to the house of the Barterer family in Koshitze ??? They were egg merchants.
- 9.06 The objective was to arrive in Budapest.
- 9.36 Hungary was a police state. Every foreigner had to register at the Police station.

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- 13.00 They made their way in stages. First, they went to Mishkoltz and then to Budapest in two different cabs.
- 16.17 Food was rationed and could not be smuggled from village to village. Many times, they were stopped and asked if they were smuggling food-stuffs. Searches were greater as they were approaching Budapest.
- 26.00 Sara Friedland, secretary of the Keren Kayemet, offered them a night in her office after the representative of the Jewish community office in Budapest refused to help the group. His name was Moshe Krauss.
- 26.53 Local Jewry did not help at all. Each movement helped its own people. Hungarian Jews were not Zionists, in general. They were Hungarian, foremost, and then Jews.
- 30.43 Shmuel Fisher helped the group. Geza Samoshi (Shimshi) and Sara Semiklosh were a great help.
- 34.05 The group arrived just before Passover in 1942.
- 39.00 All the time since he left Poland, Uziel did not receive news from his parents in Lodz. He sent letters, but did not get replies. Uziel and his group knew of the deportations from Lodz to work camps, but not to concentration camps, death camps, or "actions."
- 41.26 Group in Budapest started learning the "rules" of the town vis-à-vis the Jew registry of apartment dwellers administered by the local police.
- 43.00 Both the Hungarian Prime Minister and the Secretary of Internal Affairs were protective of the Jews despite the Nuremberg Laws.

- 45.00 Refugee committee of the Zionist youth movements began working to find living accommodations for the Slovak and Polish refugees. First order of business was to falsify documents for living arrangements.
- 58.30 Each refugee had to find employment by himself. Difficulties of life in Budapest. Lack of nationality of Jews and Carpatho-Russia. Names of heads of the different Zionist movements. Conflict between local youth movement and the Israel office.
- 0.23.03 Head of the latter office was Miklos Kraus.
- 27.00 Kraus did not immigrate to Israel after the war, but went to live in Switzerland. The youth movements had threatened to sue him for his role in Hungary.
- 29.00 The situation for the refugees in Budapest worsened from day to day. Jewish community in Hungary was not helpful to refugees (except for youth movements); contrast to Slovakia.
- 33.00 Uziel and Bluma decided to move on. Through a contact with the Romanian consul, they tried to receive fake passports. The consul had them arrested (Uziel and a friend of his, Mandy Goldstein). Uziel is taken to the Hodik military fortress in Buda as a suspect of espionage. Describes the interrogation. He was there for six weeks. Germans were in charge at Hodik and the interrogation was conducted in German. The time was June 1942. After the war, Uziel was invited to testify on behalf of the Hungarian Jews suing for reparations. Uziel's testimony was instrumental in proving to the judge that the Germans were in charge then.
- 11.02.00 The historical ties between Poland and Hungary. The Polish committee in Budapest.
- 5.13 The Baroness Weiss.
- 10.00 Uziel and Bluma were freed.
- 15.37 They were sent to a prison where illegal immigrants were held (Slobodz??) and also petty criminals. Jews were kept separate.
- 22.44 Many illegal immigrants also came from Slovakia and, therefore, sent back. The role of ONJA.
- 43.13 Transfer to Rombach after a month in prison. Describes the schedule in the new prison.
- 45.06 Role of OMJA – among its duties, judicial help to the Hungarian Jews.

- 47.40 Rombach camp awaiting return to Slovakia. Gobi, a Slovakian Jew, is the head of the camp together with Pollack and Fierst. The Hungarian intelligence decides on the members to return. The three leaders exploit their position, steal and conduct orgies with full knowledge of the Hungarian intelligence.
- 52.10 For the most part, those deported to Slovakia returned immediately to Hungary.
- 53.39 Uziel's contingent has about 30 refugees. They go by train, but are given immediately and directly into the Slovakian hands. Singer's story.
- 56.42 The group is entrusted to the Slovakian border patrol.
- 12.00 Uziel and Bluma decide to identify themselves, as Polish and the Slovaks do not accept them. They stayed with the Hungarian intelligence, which hit them. They crossed the border of Slovakia under heavy guard.
- 2.50 With the sun up they start going back to Hungary on a northeastern direction. The next day, they were caught by the border guard. They are sent back 17 days the exercise continued.
- 5.07 They needed to find a way to cross the small Danube, which they did through a cow pass. Then, they found the railroad that would take them to their place. They were found.
- 16.18 They were taken to a village police station by the gendarmes and the judge punished them by sending them to the prison in Budapest (which is what they wanted).

Tape 5 of 5

- 20.27 Interrogation at the prison and advised to leave Hungary (through the offices of OMJA and Klein).
- 23.00 Uziel is appointed as the translator by the interrogator (Ibor – a Jew). Ibor destroyed Uziel's file.
- 30.20 Worked in the carpentry of the prison until October. The train station was bombarded.
- 34.00 Jews were mobilized to the Hungarian army to serve as cannon fodder in the camps at the front (to find mines). Everyone until a certain age (40 years old) was mobilized and told to gather at the hippodrome. In the work force there were mainly political prisoners and also condemned criminals (Uziel was in the latter group).
- 37.00 Acquaintance with Dr. Artur Reicher. This was October. The prisoners were held in stables and made their beds on the bare cement floor. A third prisoner

joined Artur and Uziel – his name was Herzl Gottinger – and the group stuck together in this camp.

- 42.11 Transfer to Jansvering?? In the center of Hungary where training was given to the new recruits prior to being transferred to the Russian border.
- 48.00 Bluma is freed from jail when she convinced the authorities that her husband was a soldier in the Hungarian army and that she does not belong in jail. She was transferred to a camp in Budapest (Sobovich???) to await her husband's release from the army. There, she befriends a four-year-old orphan girl who turned out to be the niece of Artur Reicher. There was more freedom of movement there. Contact with the youth movement members and one of them informed her that there was still immigration to Israel.
- 53.02 Bluma immigrates to Israel after a month under the auspices of "youth Aliya."
- 56.00 Request of Uziel to be considered a Polish Catholic man.
- 13.00.00 Returned to the jail in Toloncz ??? with Artur Reicher. Transferred to a temporary work camp where Bluma had been (in a Budapest suburb). The Jewish community managed the camp with KEOG supervision (March 1943).
- 5.08 Transferred to Makdolna camp ??? after two weeks. Similar management to the previous camp.
- 10.31 During Passover, Uziel and Artur (the "non-Jews") are asked to guard the camp while the rest of the population celebrates Passover with a Seder. They go into a room to listen to the clandestine radio and for the first time they heard of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto and the ensuing destruction of the ghetto by fire. No one in the Jewish community in Budapest knew of that.
- 13.00 Uziel was uncovered as a Jew by the KEOG and sent with Reicher to Goren, a refugee camp many hours by train from Budapest. This was a former farm whose owner lived in a castle on top of the hill.
- 14.18 The population was from Slovakia and Carpatho-Ruse. Families lived in the castle where the police force and the kitchen were. Most of the people lived in the stables and other structures of the farm. Describes the police regime. There was no self-organization by inmates.
- 16.31 There was a daily schedule.
- 21.12 Requested to work a parcel of land to grow vegetables.
- 29.30 Encounter with Gobi, director of the Rombach camp, known for his cruelty. He was Slovakian born and appointed by the intelligence to manage the camp. He

- was also sent to Gobi when inmates recognized him and beat him up. He was saved by the police and isolated for his own sake.
- 32.35 Intervention of the baroness Rosze Weiss who came to visit Uziel and Artur in the camp. She came as a public persona to check on the refugees.
- 36.18 She managed to free them from that camp on the guise that they were non-Jewish. Transferred to a camp in Riche??? Closer to Carpatho-Ruse. This was a camp for refugees only. There was a police regime. The commander of the camp was very liberal and, therefore, the atmosphere in the camp was as well.
- 39.40 Artur was appointed camp doctor (he was a dentist by profession) and Uziel was the camp engineer
- 39.58 Uziel's duty was to map out the camp. He had the freedom of movement and became the unofficial mail deliverer. Lectures were organized in the evening as well as chess.
- 43.06 Once ever 6 months, a government committee checked that no one was held there unjustly. Some took the opportunity to declare themselves as non-Jews.
- 46.51 Rumors spread of deportation to the Ukraine by the assistant camp director, a function of the KEOG and an avowed anti-Semite.
- 53.00 Letters arrived continuously with depressing news. However, no one knew about the liquidations in Poland. Uziel found out that Bluma is already on Kibbutz Mitzanim.
- 58.58 The Jews decided to declare themselves Christians when the governmental committee visited the camp next. 90% of the Jews passed the interrogation including Uziel.
- 14.03.25 They were all told that they would be sent to Budapest in a week (there were about 30 people).
- 5.14 Hungary began siding with the Allies and they wanted to show that they did not have anything against the Jews. The group was taken to the train station accompanied by one policeman. They were taken to Budapest where the Polish committee would decide the group's fate (October 19. 1943).
- 8.17 Meeting with Rod Siegfried to plan Uziel's future. They went to the Department of the Interior to obtain identification papers. In order to stay in Budapest, the Polish committee had to give a recommendation.
- 11.03 Uziel indeed received I.D. papers as a Christian Pole.

- 12.00 The different committees of the Jewish community with the names of the people in charge.
- 14.30 Uziel and Reicher rented a room in Budapest. Talks about the Polish committee and gives a severe critique of it. Gives examples.
- 24.18 Budapest changed in the time until Uziel returned to it. More refugees were arriving at this time from Silesia; Leon Blatt was at the head of the group. Names of the people in the group.
- 27.00 Efforts were concentrated in finding the Jews who were in hiding or in camps in Poland.
- 28.51 From meeting with Blatt, Uziel found out about what was happening to the Jews in Poland – that Polish Jewry had disappeared. The word Shoa is not spoken. Slovakian Jews fought to stay and survive.
- 33.22 They heard about Chelmno and Auschwitz, however, they did not know they were death camps. Uziel thought that the liquidation would come from “natural” death due to the conditions with murders here and there. He did not know about massive killings. They knew that the conquering army in the East killed or sent people to camps. Nothing about extermination was known despite the fact that letters to Turkey and Israel already mentioned it.
- 41.57 The activists requested money from Constantinople in order to save the refugees that were arriving. Many of them were elderly and were non-Zionist Jews.
- 48.08 The Zionists wanted to disperse the group of Jews from Budapest in an effort not to be caught by the KEOG.
- 49.11 Poles had the right to settle in any city of Hungary. Once there, they could not move more than 30 km from that city. There were 500-600 Polish Zionist Jews in Hungary.
- 15.00.00 The role of the Rescue Committee (Va’ad Haatzalah) and the leaders of the Slovakian Jewish community.
- 3.20 Role of the Hungarian Jewish community.
- 11.00 In July-August 1943, there were no hard facts about the fate of Polish Jewry; however, there was a feeling that it was disappearing. It could be through neglect, but he did not know then about the international extermination.
- 15.03 In December, there were rumors that Hungary was getting into conflict with Germany and there may be an invasion of the Germans. What would the role of the Zionist youth movement be? Camps or deportations were out of the question.

- They decided to contact the leaders of the democratic leadership in Hungary to clarify their help. It was decided not to go to that group for help.
- 27.10 Refugees did not hide from the Hungarian Jews their knowledge of the fact that Poland (for Jews) equals death. Talked about ghettos, deportations, etc.
- 34.00 Options were discussed in case of a German invasion of Hungary. Armed struggle was not considered. Self-defense with guns was considered, though, in order to avoid deportation to camps. The other means considered were escape, hiding in bunkers, or hiding among the population.
- 41.19 February 1944, before the German invasion, Uziel and a group of friends took the train on their way to Israel.
- 41.30 The Polish committee in Budapest established instead of Embassy in 1939, its role vis-à-vis the Polish Jewish refugees.
- 43.49 Reflections on the ties between the Polish Jews and Poland.
- 55.00 The camps in Hungary, open camps and comparison between camps for Poles and camps for Jewish Poles in occupied Poland.
- 16.05.00 Uziel's role in December 1943 – January 1944.
- 7.16 Leon Blatt assumed Uziel's role upon his departure.
- 16.00 Fate of Uziel's parents in Lodz.
- 21.51 Uziel's road to Israel through Constantinople. Meeting with Israelis. Talks about the encounters between refugees and leaders of the Israeli Aliya. Uziel's duties in Constantinople.
- 25.00 Uziel's role upon arrival in Israel.
- 29.02 Uziel's exit from Budapest by train with a contingent of 14 people.