

RG-50.120*104
MELER MOSHE

TAPE 1 OF 6

01:00:30 My name is Moshe Meler. I was born in Poland, in Warsaw in 4 Pavia Valova st., in 1922.

My father: Eliezer son of Ahron. My mother: Gitel Miriam Kunmaister. My sister Sara, my brother: Shimon Yosef and my little sister: Gitel Leah.

All of them died in the Holocaust. So did my uncles, my aunts and their children. I am the only survivor as well as one cousin from my mother side that I met recently.

It is very hard for me to tell my story, but I promised myself that if I would survive, I'd remember and tell everything so that others will know and remember.

01:03:05 Our home was Orthodox. My parents were middle class. I went to the "Heder" (religious elementary school) then to the school of the Jewish community, and then to a vocational school until the war started. The Polish were hostile, but they respected our religion. For example if they saw a Jew with a "Talit" (praying shawl), they would hide their cigarette.

01:06:10 My father manufactured umbrellas. Jews bought shops in the Christian area. They employed Christians and came in the evening to collect the money.

01:10:30 We had youth movements. People started to talk about "Aliya" (going to Eretz Israel). My father was in the "Hapoel Hamizrachy", but they sent only bachelors to Eretz Israel. After 1933, we saw Polish Jews who were deported from Germany. We didn't think we would be hurt the same way.

01:13:30 In 1938 the Germans got the Sudest area. The Polish still didn't know what was going to happen to them.

In summer 1939, most of the people went for vacation. In September the first, the war started. It was a big chaos.

We had to cover our windows, to stand on line to get bread. The Germans conquered Poland in one month. They bombed us. Our houses were made of wood and burned. People escaped from one house to the other. Our house survived.

01:19:20 A week after the war begun the men escaped to Russia. I was 15 years old. I was very attached to my family; I didn't think of saving myself.

01:24:30 There was lack of food. My sister and I went out of Warsaw. We brought from the fields potatoes and other vegetables. Before the war we were trained to defend ourselves against Gas war and how to give first aid. My sister volunteered to help a doctor as a nurse.

01:29:50 In Warsaw lived 350.000 Jews. Waves of refugees came to the city from little towns near by. They lived in schools and synagogues. The Germans decided to establish Yudenreit, in order to help themselves to organized the Jews. People with initiative opened shops. Those who earned money could eat and drink.

01:33:10 Gives a list of family members:

From my father side:

Aunt Gilblat Hava, Gilblat Israel.

Tennenboum Jacob and Hava.

Tzipora – cousin.

Sheindalle.

Shimon Yosef Meler, who lived in Israel. He told me: “ we were six brothers. I suffered all those year in order to get you. I didn't have enough money to returned to Poland. Your father didn't have enough money to come here”.

From my mother side:

Haya Gersten.

Sara-Leah and Moshe.

01:37:10 We had to work for the Germans. We fed the pigs and we brought some of their food we brought home and ate. Although we kept “Kosher” at home, we had to survive, so we had to eat non-Kosher.

01:42:00 On our way to work we went through the Christian neighborhood. We smuggled food from there for our families.

01:48:20 In 1940 the Germans ordered us to move to the Ghetto. They built a wall in one of the streets. All the Jews had to move to one side. Half a million of Jews lived in the Ghetto. We lived in very crowded conditions. Children 10-11 years old lived as men. They smuggled and lived with women that their husbands escaped.

01:56:30 I worked near Myelov(?) in road construction. I saw a small house with an old lady. She invited me to get in. I asked for food and she gave me. I came to her each day. Once she asked to wash my shirt, but I had only one, so she gave me a new shirt. I asked her: “ why are you doing to me, you know I don’t have money to pay you”? She cried and answered: “I have a son. He is in the front. I don’t know where. I never hear from him. Each evening I’m praying for him. I hope that if I’m doing good things for you, I can ask God to protect him. It doesn’t matter if you are Jew or not”.

02:03:30 The transition to the Ghetto was not nice. However, we didn’t have to move out of our home. We had Rickshaw, under the seat we had a box in which we could smuggle goods.

02:11:45 I remember the hunger. Some people snatched bread from others. Once I saw a child wearing dirty cloths, that snatched a bread from a man who had just bough it from a bakery. A policeman ran after him and beat him. An old man came and asked the policeman to stop. The child gave the bread to the old man. I found out that he was his father. The situation was so bad that fathers and their children had to make up terrible scenes like that. At the same time, you could find coffee shops and bakeries where people with money could go to have a drink and to dance.

02:19:30 Once a policeman caught me when I smuggled. I took off my pants pretending as I was doing my “things”, and he left. We had Youth movement, but we didn’t have leadership. Every one was thinking only of him. I’m asking myself: why the “Etzel” (an underground organization in Palestine) did not bomb a German headquarter in order to wake-up the world.

02:25:05 A friend of my father suggested I should work in his Batteries factory. I gave the Rickshaw to my brother. My sister worked as a nurse with Yanush Kortchak and his children, so we were three people working in our family.

02:31:00 People with money could save themselves.
I started to work out of the Ghetto. My mother wanted me to try to save myself. My father wanted us to stay united.

02:36:25 I heard that each day 1000 people died in Warsaw. I decided to come back to the city. I took the train. I was caught and was put in a prison in Lublin. We heard about Auschwitz. We knew it was a horrible place, although we didn't know what really happened there. After 2 weeks a German officer came and send us free. He told us: "I am a Polish from German origin. When the WW1 ended and the Russians entered Lublin, I knocked on a door. A Jewish tailor hid me till the Germans came. I asked the Jew how could I thank him. He told me to help or save any one from his people if they would be in a trouble. You are the one I want to save".

02:47:10 I came back home and met my family. I didn't see them for 1/2 year. It was a sad and a hungry home.

02:51:50 The beginning of the extermination:
On Wednesday, (Tisha Be'av) we saw on billboards that Tcharnikov, the head of our community, killed himself. Every Jewish policeman was told to bring 5 people to be executed, and if he won't, the German would take him and his family. We heard that a lot of Jewish communities were destroyed. We decided not to go, and hid in a bunker. The Germans didn't dare to enter into the bunkers.
A friend who had Rickshaw and was employed by the Germans told me that if I would do the same I could save my parents, because I would know when the Germans are coming to our area.

03:04:15 We were 1/2 a million in the Ghetto. Many people got Typhoid. We had gangs of smugglers.
I cannot picture my family members. I mourn the dead and live with the living.

03:13:00 I remember two incidents:

1. A Jewish policeman saw his parents in the UM-SHLAG-PLATZ. He asked a German policeman to help him rescue them. The German called his parents and shoot them in front of him.
2. A German policeman saw a three years old Jewish girl with her family. He asked her to approach him because he wanted to give her a candy. When she opened her mouth, he took his gun and shot into it

The Germans were animals. They humiliated us and acted as sadists.

03:20:10 Two phenomena happened in the Ghetto since the extermination had started:

1. Whole families decided to suicide. They open the gas, closed the window and died.
2. People decided to document their life, and wrote diaries.

We knew about the extermination program of the Germans from the BBC radio, from Christians and from the fact that those who went never came back.

The Germans tried to fool us. They told that those who would volunteer to go in the trains would get 4Kg of bread and 1Kg of jam. It was a death trap.

03:29:20 A Jewish fighting organization raised in the Ghetto.

Once I came home, I didn't find my parents. My sister told me that they were taken to the UM-SHLAG-PLATZ (the place from where people were deported to the train). I went with my Rickshaw (as I was on duty), and my sister in her nurse uniform. My father was dressed as a sanitary worker in the clinic and my mother as a nurse. We rescue them back home.

03:40:30 Once, when I worked at the batteries factory, there was an "Action". I was brought to the UM-SHLAG-PLATZ. I knew the place. I was in a group with 600 people. They took us in trucks to 109 Leshnov St. It was a school. I was asked what was my profession. I said I'm a locksmith. I had an option to see my parents again.

03:51:45 From the Dulag (transition camp) in the school, I was moved with 40 more Jews in a truck to Zalibush and started to worked for "Opel". It was a big garage.

04:00:55 We told the Germans that we don't have cloths and asked permission to go back to the ghetto to bring some. They gave us three hours.

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04:04:55 We travel through the Christian streets of Warsaw. Life there was normal. In the ghetto was a big fire. Only a wall separated the two communities.

I ran home. It was six weeks since I last saw my family. We hugged and cried.

04:13:40 A young man suggested giving me 20.000 Zloty for my working card. My mother shouted at him: "Aren't you ashamed to buy life"? She encouraged me to go back to work and to try to rescue myself. She said: "We hardly live; you would be another burden on us. Maybe you would be able to help us from outside". It was 7:00 P.M. I ran back to the truck. I saw my sister. I didn't approach her; I just wanted to save myself. I can't forgive myself for that.

For years I saw her image in front of my eyes...

It was the last time I saw my parents and my sister.

04:23:55 I got a letter from my brother. He wrote: "Moshe, I am left all alone. I work in a labor camp for immunization". I wanted to bring my brother to work with me. After the war I heard that in January 1945, he was killed.

04:31:45 We worked till 11:00 P.M. and then in some other works during the nights.

04:34:20 Once in a while we were allowed to visit the ghetto. The ghetto was reduced in its size, only 50.000 people out of 1/2 a million were left. I met a friend from my childhood. He told me he is in the fighting organization.

In Valova St. I found my uncle Barbanel and his two sons, and my aunt Haya Gestren and her daughter.

I met some other friends. I had to return to the factory.

04:50:45 I met my friend again in the ghetto. He was a member of “Gordonia”. They decided that we would try to get guns, and when we would get a sign from them we would act. We succeeded to get three guns.

05:01:30 There was a rumor in the ghetto about a young man who succeeded to run away from Treblinka. He was hidden in a train wagon full with cloths of those who were exterminated there. He told us what happened there. The road to the crematorium was called: “The lane to the sky”. People were asked to take off their cloths. Barbers cut their hair. They were pushed to the showers. A Nazi sprayed from the ceiling Cyclone 2. It took 1/2 an hour for the people to die. When the door opened the Germans found the bodies piled up hugging each other. Their bodies were moved to the crematorium and the ashes were dispersed in the fields.

The Germans didn't succeeded to exterminate us physically.
I promised not to forget. It means to tell my story!

05:14:22 We continued to work in the factory. Once in a while we got trucks full with cloths from the killing camps. I remember 7 Christian men who didn't dare to take those cloths. When we found a piece of “talit” (praying shawl) or “tzitzit” (fringed garment (for orthodox. Jews), we buried it into a grave.

05:18:20 Next time I got a permit to go to the Ghetto, I didn't think twice, I took the train to Remtov, and went to see my brother. I went into the grocery shop and asked the woman if she knows: “Yosef Meler”, my brother. She promised to send him my regards. I never saw him. I went back to the factory.

05:36:20 Every Sunday we were allowed to go to the ghetto. Sometimes we could stay over night. I went to my friend and asked him if I could sleep in his house. A young girl was there, she invited me to sleep with her. People lost their moral behavior in the ghetto. A father 45 years old could have intimate relationship with a girl with whom his 17 years old son had slept.

05:46:52 Around Purim I went to the ghetto. On Mila St. I saw a 13 years old boy who was in the underground, and was by a German. Some of the Jews shot the German and killed him. Everybody hid in the bunkers. However, a little girl crossed the road on her way to the bunker and that's how the Germans discovered the bunker. The Germans bombed the place.

05:53:15 Next time I went to the ghetto was on Passover evening. It was the last time I visited there. On the next day the rebellion of the Warsaw Ghetto erupted. The Germans decided to destroy the ghetto, and we knew we would be next.

06:06:30 We told the Gentiles whom we work with, that we want to escape. They told us that there is no way, since we would be handed over immediately.

My only cousin who survived the Holocaust died yesterday. (30.9.1992) his father was with me in Sekarsezko(?) camp. He was 50 years and got weaker from the work. He asked me to keep his bread for him when he will feel better. I took the bread and ate it. My friend told me: "this bread is your inheritance, with that you could buy your life". On the 7th day, my uncle died.

I didn't have the courage to tell this story to my cousin. I told it yesterday on his grave for the first time.

06:17:40 Back to the burning ghetto: The Germans decided to burn all the houses in the Ghetto. We got the information from Christians who belonged to the Polish underground.

06:25:20 On May the first a truck entered the factory yard. Soldiers with weapons and bayonets shouted and ordered us to get out of our barracks. We tried to gather our beds against the door as a barricade. They shot and we had to go out and to go to the truck.

06:36:10 On the way we saw the Ghetto. It was like a cemetery. We arrived to the headquarter of the S.S in Leshnov St. We were pushed into the school where we saw many other people. One woman told me that the Germans threw gas bombs to the bunkers.

06:47:20 We were among the people to be deportated. Suddenly I heard: “where are the people of Opel”? We gathered and a German soldier took us to a train wagon. It was full. It went to Maidanik(?) and not to Treblinka. We tried to cut the floor of the wagon with a knife. The guard heard the noise and shot. Some men were killed. We arrived to Lublin. We were selected. I was among those who marched to Maidanik.

07:05:30 On the right side of the camp were the Gas Chambers and the Crematorium. In the middle, were the buildings for the S.S. and the Ukraine. On the left were 5 separated camps with lanes made out small white stones. In each cabin we were 400 people.

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07:08:55 We were pushed to a big hat. We were told to give our money and jewels. We had to take off our cloths and to get into the showers. No soap, no towels, but it was water and not gas. Then we got cloths. We entered camp no. 4, cabin no. 21.

We had three appells: at 5:00 A.M., at noon and at 6:00 P.M. We got very little food.

We had to stay all day long in the appell if the number of people was not the same as the one before.

07:52:00 We worked in all kind of works like: moving a pile of sand from one side to the other. Cleaning bricks. Moving bricks from one side to another. Paving lanes or we were sent to work out of the camp.

08:05:00 The punishments were: There was a stool on which a man would lay and would be hit with a whip.

They hang people for small things, like: if you didn't take your hat off, if you didn't make your bed properly.

One of the victims who were about to be hanged said: “Jews, I believed we will stay alive. I don't know how many, but those who will survive must tell what we went through”! He was taken down from the rope, was beaten and then hanged.

A little child who passed some messages to his mother in the women camp, got a punishment in which he had to hold for 3 hours the hand of the dead hanged man.

People who didn't come to the appell had to stand at "attention" 3 hours every day for 2 weeks.

08:30:34 I met Avraham Blatt in the camp. We were friends like brothers. I don't know what happened to him.

I remembered the Germans urged us to enter a hut. I heard noises and saw a barrel. I got into. I found two other people in the barrel. My friend didn't enter. I asked him later why? He answered: "I wanted to protect you". That is a real friendship.

08:46:20 One day the kapo shouted: "out"! He spilled the soup on the floor. People licked the soup from the floor. Outside we saw more groups. We found out that one man was missing. With the aid of a dog they found his body. The kapo got 20 hits.

08:50:30 I was moved to camp 3. There I met my uncle, Pinchas Barbanel and his son Moshe. Another son was in camp 2.

My cousin died 10 days ago. He never told his children about the past. I promise them I'll.

Children: Your father was born in Warsaw in 1922. He lived in Chaloda St. in a small apartment. Your grandfather name was Pinchas, whom I met in Maidanek. Your grandmother name was Dvora. My mother and your grandmother were sisters. Another sister was Chaya Gestren, whom I met in Maidanek.

The house was a hospitable and with warm atmosphere. Your grandfather had always a smile on his face. Your father had 2 brothers: Mordechi and Chaim. They had a small workshop for frames for umbrellas. When the war broke out, your uncle Mordechai volunteered to the Polish army. When he came back, the Germans shot him. Dvora died in the ghetto. My parents moved to Treblinka. Your father was in Maidanek where I met him. He moved with a youth group to Hungary and from there to Palestine, where he was deported to Cyprus, and from there to Palestine. He took part in the Independence war. He married Berta from family Levi. Moshe Levi, who was the chief commander of the Israeli army, was from her family.

Give a list of the names of his cousin's children; promises to be their father now.

You were not there.

You didn't see the horror and the extermination.

You were born free.

You live in a free country.
You don't have to be afraid of humiliation.
More over, you as the second and third generation of the Holocaust need to hold the flag of freedom and peace.

Back to the camp:

09:06:45 Once we worked in a quarry. We had to blow up the rocks, those who died – were left there. We had to take the stones on our back into the camp. Women did the same job.

Once I entered to the women camp where my aunt was. I brought her some food. We didn't talk, just hugged and cried. It was the last time I saw her.

09:12:50 On our way to work from the camp, we smelled sausages. Only after 2-3 days we learned why. [Smell from the crematorium]

09:18:05 It was fairly clean in the camp. We had to shower and we didn't have towels.

In one of the appells they looked for smith-lockers. 80% of the people were smith-lockers. We were told we would have exams. Only 10% remained as smith-lockers. I passed the exam. I knew that, because I was not beaten.

09:25:50 Our group of smith-lockers were put into a hut without beds for 2 days. Then Germans soldiers took us to train wagons. We were 40 people in a wagon. We got food. We couldn't believe it was true.

09:36:25 The "Yishuv" (people in Eretz Israel) didn't know how to accept us. In the independence war I was in Latrun. I saw new weapons: guns from Czechoslovakia. I thought to myself, I who was in Maidanek and

wanted so much to have a gun didn't have it, and here, I have a gun in my hand and I didn't use it. We were brought from hell to the front war. For 40 years I was ashamed to tell what happened in Latrun.

09:40:15 The Orthodox Jews said that in such days there was no more "Kidush Hashem" (scarified God) but Kidush Hachaim" (scarified life). You can even eat pork in order to remain alive.

I was asked in my lectures if I don't want to take revenge?
I said: no. My revenge is that I'm alive and that I have a country and a family.

How come I'm still Orthodox after what I went through?
In spite all the researches no one can explain what happened there. I don't understand why it happened. When a person gets ill with cancer and dies, does his family stop to believe in medicine? I can't blame God for what happened if I didn't understand why.

09:52:00 Our train arrived to a place named: Hassak. On the gate it was written: "Hugo Shcnieder: Weapon factory". The Jewish commander in this camp was Yirmelov. He asked: "Who is weak?" We are among Jews, so you would get easy jobs. He choose 20-30 and all of those Jews were killed by machine guns.
On every Sunday they made a list of the weak people and executed them.

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10:05:10 We got to a camp called: Skarzichko-Kamyena (?). It was divided into 3 parts: A - the biggest one, where they produced weapons. B – where they produced bullets and C – where they filled the ammunition with explosive materials.

People became yellow because of the material they used.

At the beginning the camp was a Labor camp, when the extermination started, they hid in the camp women and children.

10:14:55 I saw a group of people near an oven. They dried peels of potatoes. I offered my coat for some food. They refused, because my coat had lice. We looked in garbage cans for food. We found a treasure: peels of potatoes. A woman came out of the house and gave me every morning some food.

10:18:40 One man, Epstein, escaped from Maidanek. He was caught, arrested and was about to be executed. We came to visit him and asked him what does he want. He asked for bread. We asked him if he could pay for it. He said he has 2 gold teeth. A Jewish dentist took his teeth for three loaves of bread.

10:26:20 I was moved to camp Vankolone. We had to clean coal wagons. I was ill and had to be in the “hospital hut”. I shared a bed with another man to warm up. In the morning I saw that the man is dead.

10:32:45 I moved to camp Vergbe. It was a smaller camp. In addition to the weapon factory there was a factory for potato flakes. The director of the factory was Laskovski. Those who worked there didn't suffer from lack of food and they could trade with food.

One day a young woman named Lola Veinshtok, approached me and asked if I recognized her. She was a friend of my sister. She told me that she is the concubine of the head officer of the Judenrat. She told me that tomorrow we would be sent to the factory. Please tell them that you are a carrier.

When I was asked for my profession, I told them: a carrier. I was beaten and sent out.

10:41:10 I moved to a big factory in the woods. I said I am a smith-locker. I worked in a group that provided services. We were 7 Jews.

10:50:45 We had lice all over. Our cloths were made of paper. We folded the pants as a pillow, the coat we put on our legs and body as a blanket. With the hat we covered our toes. We slept three men together.

10:55:30 We had two David Stars on our shirts. We were allowed to get around in the factory without any restrictions.
My director was Shtanko. I worked at the night shift, and one day he asked me to work at the morning shift. He saved my life, because during that night the Germans made an Action.

11:03:05 I became a mediator, and traded with everything I could.

Meler tells here some anecdotes of the work.

11:32:05 One day on my way back to the camp a woman followed me. I told her I don't know her. She said she doesn't know me either, but she invited me to the women hut. She wanted to be my friend. We called it: "to be my cousin". I was 19 and she was 24. She was married but her husband was killed and she was left all alone. She prepared food for me and I enjoyed it.

11:40:50 It was the end of 1943. I stayed late in the factory and stole "Jepak oil" (unpurified oil). On my way out I met the director of the factory He was German, named: Shcmidt. He called me to come with him and told me this was my end.

The Germans were starting to withdraw, and the Russian were getting closer, I was after Auschwitz and Maidanek, and here I am to die!

He asked me how come I am not ashamed to take Machine oil when they don't have enough supply. I told him it is food oil. He ordered me to drink it and so I did. (Nothing happened to me). We went to his office where he wrote: "Moshe Meler will be execute at 5:00 A.M.

He sent me back to the camp. I was afraid that he would shoot me in my back. I entered my hut and told my story to my friends. It was 6:30 A.M. we were called to an appell. I had to remain standing for 12 hours. My maister saved me. He said I am a good workingman and he needs me.

12:07:50 On the next morning, 100 people were called in the appell. My name was among them. We went to the factory. We had to take apart the machines, because they were sent to Germany. We were moved to Radom into a prison, only for the night. From there to a place near the Felitzia River

(the second river after the Visla in Poland). We had to dig trenches against tanks.

12:23:35 I was moved again to a transition camp: Schentechov. Later I found out that my brother in-law was in the same camp. I met there my friends: Nathan Gluksberg and more. The Judenrat called us to an appell. They told us that here, we are among Jews, and we are all equal. Then they asked if someone hurt us. Some people gave names of some Jewish policemen. Then these Jewish policemen were beaten. Later the Jewish policemen killed those who gave their names.

12:40:10 It was the end of 1944. I was in Schentechov for several months. We worked with Polish people; we got half a loaf of bread each day. Once they gave us 20 Liter of soup. We were 4 people and we finished it.

12:50:25 On November 1944, A German came with a list of 4 people. My name was on that list. He was a representative of Hasak Company. They looked for skilled workers. He took us on a train to Germany. We traveled in a regular train for the first time after such a long period. We saw people, children, fields and birds. The train stopped and we started to walk. We arrived to a place with a fence. He asked us to wait for him and entered the place. When he came out he told us to say that we took a shower. An S.S. man came out and asked us if we took a shower. We said yes and continue to walk.

After 20 minutes the German told us it was Auschwitz. He explained to us that he got an order to bring us clean to Germany and to have us take a shower in Auschwitz. There they would allow us to shower, but without guarantee that we would come out from the shower.

13:00:50 We arrived to Moizelvitze in Germany, where the Hasak factory was. The camp was in the city. We worked men and women together, but had separated camps. In each hut we were only 30 people. The head of the camp was a Jew from Holland. He was an example how you can be an officer and to behave like a human being.

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13:09:55 We moved again to Buchenwald and to Schlitz. I met in the camp Polish women who participated in the Polish rebellion in 1944.

I worked in fixing machines. I refused to fix the machines of the Polish women. They didn't help us in our rebellion in 1943, so why should I help them now? They explain to me that their education and background caused them to be anti-Semitic.

13:22:50 Warsaw was destroyed like its ghetto was. The Germans took 1 million Polish people after the rebellion and sent them to concentration and labor camps.

13:33:20 Most of the people from the camp worked in the factory who was 2 Km away from the camp.

We got one loaf of bread for 4 men. We divided it to 4 equal parts.

I remembered two brothers, they asked for half a loaf of bread and said they would share it. They had scales to weigh the bread...

13:45:50 Once we got several tons of potatoes. We were ordered to peel them. 20% of the people peeled them and the other 80% were busy to hide them.

The Germans made us a special haircut. They shaved 5cm of our hair in the middle of our heads. So we want be able to run away. The director of the factory didn't like it and asked the Germans to shave our hair completely.

The bombings had started in the region.

14:05:50 At the end of March 1945 the Germans ordered us to go into the factory. We were told to clean train wagons from the coal and to put bread instead. I took some bread, cut it to small pieces and hid it in my cloths. We were so hungry that we risked ourselves for some bread. We entered the train and went to the Sudet area in Czechoslovakia. Two persons from each wagon were told to get out and to bring some food. After our people came back to the wagon, I went out without permission with one friend to take more food. It was a big risk. At midnight we got an order to get out of the wagon and to walk. After 200-300 Meters the Germans ordered us to disperse. We were a group of 10 men. We stood near a mountain. We started to climb on it. We heard shouting in German to come back and to get in order; 1/3 of the people came back, we continued to hide. We entered one village and we learned from the people that the front is closer so people are running away. We moved from one village to another. We were told that the Americans were 8 KM. from us.

15:00:40 In one village I heard people talking in Polish, I told a fake story, that I am Polish who fought in the Polish rebellion and I was taken to a concentration camp. I asked for papers and pen, so I can write my memories.

One evening I heard noise, I looked out, it was Americans Jeeps. We saw an American soldier and told him: "Consentrata Lager". He came back with Chocolate and gums. It was 5.8.1945, they told us: "Hitler is caput, the war is over". We didn't tell them we were Jews. We wanted to find relatives.

15:24:00 I was with my friend. We went without knowing where to, so we moved from one place to another. In Pilzen we found local community officials whom gave us documents. For the first time, we got a name and not only a number to identify us.

We came to Prague. A Jew came to us and asked: "AMCHA"? We didn't respond. He started to speak Yiddish and explained that it is a slogan between the Jews to recognize themselves. If somebody say to you: AMCHA, you should answer: "AMCHA ISRAEL".

We wanted to go to Poland. We took a train. The train stopped in the middle of a field. We were told it was Warsaw. I remembered a fancy train station. Warsaw was all ruined. All the bridges over the Vislla were destroyed. We went to the Jewish community to look for a list of names in order to find some relatives. We found nothing.

My friend who was from Ukraine wanted to go to his hometown and so we did. He met there a friend that told him that his father lives in Russia.

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16:17:50 I decided to go again to Warsaw. I looked in the list of names of people and found the name; Barbanel Moshe (my cousin) in a children institute in a small suburb near Warsaw in Bodfors(?). When I arrived they told me they don't have a child with this name. I insisted to see all the children. I didn't find him.

I met a policeman who said to me: AMCHA. I answered: AMCHA ISRAEL. He told me to go away and gave me an address where to go. It was after the war and Jews had to be afraid.

16:24:50 I arrived to the place. There were one woman and two men. They asked me who freed me? I told them the Americans. They told me that

they were from the “people army”, but if I was met by the “National Army”, they could have killed me.

I promised my friend from Ukraine that I would come back to him.

I departed from my friend who found his father and with my other friend we went to the border of Czechoslovakia.

I left Poland on 6.20.1945, the day they signed the treaty with Russia.

On our way I met my friends: Natan Gliksberg and Menachem Markovitz. We arrived to Austria. Natan went to Germany, Markovitz and I went to Udenna(?) in Italy.

16:55:30 I saw a truck with the inscription in Hebrew: HACHAYAL (The soldier). We met Jewish soldiers from South Africa. We arrived to an American camp Grolyasiko (?) near Torino.

We had money from: UNRWA, the JOINT and from the local Jewish community.

17:04:20 I decided to write a diary. It was in Yiddish. In it I discuss with God, with my parents and myself. I brought the diary to Israel. I never finished it.

Back to Italy:

I was in Italy for more than a year. I heard that my cousin, Barbanel was in Hungary.

In summer 1946 I arrived to Palestine on the ship: “Katriel Yaffe”. We were two weeks in the sea. The British caught us. For two weeks we were in the port. People from the “HAGANA” smuggled some people from the ship into the country. British soldiers came on the ship and they moved us to a British ship that took us to Cyprus to camp 60.

17:22:55 We were in tents. I met their friends from Poland and Italy. We had lottery for getting certificates for ALIYA. I got one and came to Palestine to Atlit where I stayed two weeks. From there to Kiryat-Shmuel, where I met my cousin Shimon Yosef Meler, a son of my father’s brother who lived in Palestine. On 1.1.1947 I came to Petach-Tikva. My uncle who lived in Tel-Aviv invited me to live with him and his second wife.

(He gives the names of the children of the uncle).

17:40:30 Israelis love the ALIYA (immigration) but not the OLIM (the immigrants).

How did the Israelis think they could make us Israelis after what we had gone through?

They asked us how come you didn't resist the Gernams? Our resistance was our survival.

I started to work in a factory "HA'ARGAZ". I wanted to get a tenured position.

I had to become a member of the HISTADRUT (workers organization).

When I was 21 I entered the army. I was one of the first to be recruited.

17:50:30 My aunt asked me to pretend as if she and my uncle were my parents so they could get money from the army, 18 IL, each month. On my wedding day she gave me all that money back.

17:57:30 My wife was from Sosnovitch. (He gives a list of her family members).

He thanks all the people who work in this important project of documentation.