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My name is Simon Spivack. At home, they called me Shmerke Spivack, Shmoel.

I was born in Lithuania, Kovno, in 1920. At the age of six months, my father went for Aliyah in 1920. I was at the age of six months old. I don't remember much. All I know is that at the age of nine, after the [NON-ENGLISH], which we were residing lately there, my father had his fill. And he took the family back to Lithuania.

I remember at that time we were laying in a basement by a friend of my father's. I don't know what we were doing together. But that Arab was a friend and a partner of my father's. Thanks to him, we really survived. And when we came back, I remember my mother being sick of TB. She got sick over here in the States-- here in Israel, at that time Palestine, and a year later my mother died.

Where did you live?

I lived in Kovno.

No but in Palestine, when you lived--

Just from conversations what my father used to tell, we lived in Rishon LeZion. We lived at the beginning in Petah Tikva. And I think I think if I'm not mistaken that Petah Tikva was second. Rishon LeZion was first. And from there, he went to Hebron. At home in Lithuania, he was a baker. He tried to bake. He didn't succeed at whatever he was doing. There was not too much for him to bake. As a kid, that's all what I remembered.

Then when we came back, I don't know if it's necessary to tell all, everything what happened, but one thing I could say is that as I grew up from the age of 12, I was a member of Hashomer Hatzair. That was my first, so to say, national education what I got. And then later I was older, I played-- I participated in all kinds of sport activities with Maccabi.

Can I ask you a question? Do you know? Do you remember why did your father decide to leave Palestine and go back to Kovno?

My father, the way I would understand it to be honest, by the way was a complex person. When he went to Israel, he didn't go like a halutz, like [NON-ENGLISH], dedicated. He was a Jew. He was a good Jew. And he was traditional learned. He wasn't Orthodox. His brothers were, but he was free and things. But he was more a businessman.

In those years, my father was very well off. The true story what happened, I don't know. Because I believe that he was afraid not to be arrested, because he was paying off government officials. He was doing business, delivering to the army goods, like flours, and cows, and horses. He was dealing and wheeling. And he decided that's not good for him. And that's when he picked up his family. That's what I understand.

Well in Israel, when it was tough, it was not going good. And he lost everything he brought with him, and he couldn't establish himself, . That was the reason that he left back.

Actually, as I was growing up, I haven't got a big education in public school or whatever it is. I had to fend for myself. The little education what I have is really from my club, from Maccabi, from Hashomer Hatzair, from reading from a

little bit. I finished public school. And I was growing up like the majority of kids in my stand, you know what I mean? With a dream for Hakhsara for aliyah. And then I got caught up in the war.

Did the time that you spend in Palestine before when the family went back to Kovno, did it influence? Do you feel that it influenced on you?

I don't know. I really don't know. I was a young kid. I didn't even remember what I learned. I don't even remember who taught me. My mind is blurry. I do remember, somehow I remember, that fear from my family for my mother, this [NON-ENGLISH]. That's when I remember good.

And I really don't know if my [NON-ENGLISH] a little bit when I speak came here from Israel, or it's when I grew up in Lithuania. Because my memory comes from basically mostly when I came from-- when we came from Israel, I remember very little. But I remember that we came by my Uncle Yossi in the watermill in Yanova. And this was our stop where we stood there maybe for two years, up until my father re-established himself. That is where my memories start getting better.

Then I lived in Yanova, my uncle, my mother's father had a watermill near the cemetery there. And I used to work with my older cousin, with his son. And I don't remember his name now, [NON-ENGLISH].

And my father used to run-- I know he was a peddler in the beginning when I was in the middle there, until later, when he established himself as a baker, a baker in Kovno. They took the family back in Kovno. And there is where I was till the war broke out. And those are my memories.

Well, under the communists when the Russians came in, there was not much for to be a Zionist to me, young or whatever it is. I was not with the youth movement. But somehow, I had some friends which they were left, and older than me before the Russians came in. And they were communists, and they went in and they worked with the Russian government. And the [NON-ENGLISH] and the NKVD or whatever it is. I had privileges to get better work through my friends.

All I remember, everything when we're talking to whatever leads up to the Holocaust, all I remember is the day when the war broke out. I was mobilized to be a helper to the police, auxiliary. And I standing on the bridge guard. Without anything, just staying guard. They put me there to control traffic.

But the traffic got so heavy and so chaotic, and I never knew how long I should stay there. Should I stay? Should I go? Should I what? Because bombs start falling over that bridge to [NON-ENGLISH]. I left my post, and I came home. And I grabbed my father and grabbed my brother Nachum, which he was three years younger than me. My father was sick at that time. I put him on a bicycle, and we ran from the city because we saw already that the Germans were coming.

Did you know something about the Germans before, what happened in Poland?

Well, naturally because there were a lot of Polish Jews who came in a year before that escaped from Poland, and they came over the Lithuanian border. And we took them in our homes. The Lithuanian Jews at that particular time could be proud of themselves. There wasn't a home there. There wasn't a person, a family, or a person, or individual because the Lithuanian community, the community used to go from house to house. They used to check how much clothes they have. They used to allocate, like a tax. You have to give away this from what you have for somebody who came here.

They took it, and we knew it. We were aware of it. As a matter of fact, we were talking to ourselves. Now we're taking them in, who's going to take us in? That's the way the feeling was in Kovno at the time, as I remember.

You were at that time, during that time, connected to the youth movement?

At that time, no. At that time, as a matter of fact, it fell apart when the Russians came in as for me. Maybe there were some activists, maybe real die-hards, maybe really individuals who held themselves. But there was no purpose, no reason. We never thought that Russia will fall apart. We looked that this is going to be our future or whatever it is. We

didn't believe it.

And when you're young, it's the first time we really felt free from antisemitism, the beginning when the Russians came in. They sold a bill of goods. We believed in it. And then a lot of friends we stuck with, well, the time will come, the world, the whole world get red and free, and who needs anything? That's a general feeling between the youth to whom I circled around.

And time proved different. What can I tell you? What I do remember is to make everything [NON-ENGLISH], we went out with my father and my brother running away from the Germans. We ran in the direction to Shavl, to the border, to Russia where we got caught up with the Germans.

Did many Jews escape?

The whole city picked us up on the road, anybody they could. There were thousands of people. I could write a book just in details what happened on that road in two days. But I don't know if it's feasible right now to do that even.

Well, say something about it.

Well, all right, I could tell you only one thing is at one time running on the road, we were very tired, and everything like this. Aeroplanes came and bombed, they came down with machine guns right from the top. And they were bombing the road. The people were running. And I got off the road, throw myself and my stomach. And somebody lay down on top of me. When everything was over and I asked him to get off, he didn't get off. And I pushed him off. And he was dead. He was killed, with a suitcase laying in his hand.

Me and my father and my brother came out without a scratch. Now stories like this, there are a lot of them. And then when we got caught from the Germans, before Shavl.

When was it that the Germans caught you?

We were not too far away from Shavl, from Shavl already on the road yet. We were two days on the road running. And they threw them parachutes, parachutists, and they surrounded that area. They cut us off. And when they cut us off, which generally was bad. They didn't bother us much, the front soldiers. But the Lithuanians attacked us on the way going back home, because we were returning. Each way we knew how in different roads, returning back home.

Then we had trouble from our compatriots, our Lithuanian citizens over there. They attacked us. And there was trouble with food and things, till we came home. And then when I came home, I find everything robbed out. We find an empty house, because well [NON-ENGLISH] let them know, because the Lithuanians today they want to clear the garbage where they made--

I had a friend. I don't remember his name exactly. I believe his name was Yorgis. But I don't remember. I worked with him in a factory for [NON-ENGLISH]. And we were working together as co-workers. And whenever there used to be a weekend, we used to go out for a dance. [NON-ENGLISH] what, he used to borrow from me a pair of shoes or a jacket. He and his friends came to rob in that block when we were living.

And he and his friends came because he knew where to go. They came to us. And they robbed us.

Where was your house in Kovno.

In [NON-ENGLISH]. This I remember, [NON-ENGLISH] 18. It wasn't our house. We had an apartment there. But it was like I don't know how to say it in English. [NON-ENGLISH] in Hebrew. You had to go in, in a big open gate to go inside. They were inside apartment dwellings. And we weren't too long there just like that, maybe a couple of weeks, when they start [NON-ENGLISH] to go to the ghetto. And they formed the ghetto in Kovno.

And it was experienced by itself. Whatever was left, whatever you had, and if you didn't had your own, you tried to help

bring things in relatives, friends, whoever, something you had to bring into the ghetto. And then we got locked in.

Do you remember the order to go inside the ghetto? And can you tell us something about what did you feel, and your family, about this order to go inside the ghetto?

It's funny. I really don't know to express my feelings what I felt. I felt like somebody who is beat, like you can't do nothing about it. You can't decide nothing. You can't make a decision about your future. You feel down. And how to how to express then, I don't know. I was young. I was regretting that what had happened to me. Many times I thought even why did you return back from Israel as bad as it was. I never asked my father the question.

And when we came into the ghetto, we didn't get much.

Just a moment. I would like to ask you about the period before you entered to the ghetto. There was a pogrom of the--

There was a pogrom in Kovno. But I didn't witness this. I didn't see it. Because I ran from the earlier ones, who run out. The pogrom happened on a day before the Germans even came in. The Germans came in I think a day or two later, after the pogrom. Because the thing is, we're sure that we have to run. We're going to run with the Russians. We believe that somehow, somewhere the Russians are going to stop them. And I and my brother decided to run. A lot of people remained in the city.

And the pogrom was when the Lithuanians got free hand. What happens, that same day when we run, Lithuanians had machine guns in certain points in Kovno on the streets. And they were shooting at the and the retreating Russians. They were shooting at them in the back.

The way I understand, I'm not a scholar. But the way I understand there were a German corps. We had Memel. There were the Memel [NON-ENGLISH] in Lithuania, where there were Volksdeutsche. There were Lithuanian citizens, but Germans. And they had a fifth column. And they were organized there before the war started.

Now, they attacked the Russians. And then later they carried out further to make a pogrom on Jews. But when that happened, I was already on the road with my father. And when I came back, it was settled. Well, there was all kinds of laws right away. You can't go on the sidewalk. You can't work. You can't employ. Whatever it is, you can't. Anything there is to do in life where you need, you can't.

Well it's knowledgeable, and then we were driven into the ghetto. In the ghetto, there were people who had valuables. They had easier, because they had a chance to trade it for food. And since when I came in, I didn't find nothing in the house, when we came in the ghetto just with our clothes on our body. And I was the older, and my father was not such a big [NON-ENGLISH].

Then I became a [NON-ENGLISH]. I risked my life to go out on the outside, and speculate and get food. And I made friendships in villages, like in Delfa, close around to the city. I used to dress up and go out, and I used to take out things from the ghetto, valuables, and I used to trade.

You went outside the ghetto?

Yeah, like I take a pair of pants or a pillow or a cover or a quilt, took it from you. I agreed what I'll give you for it. And if I got more, it was my river. I used to smuggle it back into the ghetto. In a way, that's the way I maintained my family me going, up to the liquidation. I was the 12,000th Jewish [NON-ENGLISH] I don't know how to say it in English. It was, in English we used to call it was the [NON-ENGLISH].

It's a funny thing. We lived in the ghetto. We didn't believe in it. We knew it was bad. We thought maybe we'll survive with tenacity, with endurance. So my survivor things, there were all kinds of rumors. We were locked out from the world of news and whatever it is.

It's just a question of which end. But things started to happen in the ghetto. The very first face to face with reality was

when they made an announcement in the ghetto that they need 500 intelligent people for jobs, for office jobs, for executive jobs. Oh, and the Jewish intelligentsia was there. They came voluntarily to sign up. And they took 501 people.

Do you know persons that went to that aktion?

Personally, no, I don't. But I do know that it took 501 people. Why 501? That was the cutoff point. A lot of intellectuals they chased back. They plain says, we don't need no more. And that gives us a security that it's a kosher deal. And we never saw back from them. We heard rumors that some of them sent letters, that they feel good. I never saw it, but that they feel good and they work and whatever it is.

And then later it was another time when they took out people on farms. And that was also a lie. But we thought they took them. People were envious.

Did people in the ghetto, did they speak about-- do they ask themselves what are the intentions of the Germans?

You know, people talk about anything. People try to figure them out. Most of the time, people figure, well, they're bad. But how bad could they be? They're not out to kill us all. Maybe after the war, all the rules what they have are going to be different. Maybe they are wrong. But this is what they're doing because of the war. They hate Jews. Maybe, I don't know. Maybe they need us for propaganda for their goyim for their nation.

We are Jewish. We suffered through generations. We will survive that too. Mostly things like that happened. But a lot of things, the fear when people have fear, then they try to justify it. They try to find a cover up to cover it, otherwise you can't exist. They try to justify yourself.

The big shock, I don't know how other people size it up, but me to myself, the big shock where we got when we saw things are not good when the first rumors, really rumors came that it's bad, is when they liquidated the first-- I think they call us the first [NON-ENGLISH].

The ghetto was broken up in sections. There was one section closer to the gate. I believe they call the first [NON-ENGLISH]. And then there was another section over [NON-ENGLISH] where there was a bridge to go over the little ghetto. And then they liquidated the little ghetto. When the [NON-ENGLISH] came, when they really split the ghetto in half, they took out 12,000 people. They took us out to the little ghetto overnight.

And then they took us to the Ninth Fort, and that's a story worth telling for me. I will not be so easy. What happened is when they liquidated the first section, rumors start coming in that really they're taking people to kill them, and never come back. After that, I don't remember well. Was the [NON-ENGLISH] ghetto liquidation first? Did the children aktion first? I don't remember. I'm sorry.

Because it happened there was no question later no more what's happening. Because after the children aktion, they came in they took away the old people with the children. And they just took them away from parents, threw them in trucks with big German shepherds and things like this. And if a mother didn't want to give a child, they killed her. They threw them like garbage in trucks. It were obvious already what they're doing. There was no more question what the Germans have in mind.

Then we really let our hands down. And then people started to build what they call malinas in order to hide. Whenever there's an [NON-ENGLISH], so to say, we call this an [NON-ENGLISH]. And that means when they surround us when they catch, to wherever to hide. And that's the time when all kinds of movements started to move around in ghetto.

I really don't know where I belonged. Because there was remnants of the Zionist movement, and they tried to organized to go out from the ghetto. There were later remnants of the communist movement. And they started to organize. They were split between each other. And then the religious youth, and so to say the Betar and things, they build bunkers.

And then in return, I'll tell you a big part of the ghetto was against all of us. Because they were afraid that we we're going to make it worse for everybody. And how can you sort out feelings, what's right, what's wrong, who feels what?

Actually, I think we were all-- I don't know the word, how to use it. We were without feelings. You don't feel nothing, just trapped mice.

What happened with you and your family? My family was me and my brother. I come to the [NON-ENGLISH], where we call it the big aktion. It means the big, the big kill. They had placards, like made of earth, like you would see in Hebrew on the walls, that they really don't know. The Germans really don't know how many were here, and how much provisions they have to send in the ghetto. They want to make, what you call an investigation and count us how many we are in the ghetto, they should know how to provide supplies.

And everybody must come out on a big place over there by the blocks. I don't even remember that place they call it today. There was a big, open big space. And they were like--

[NON-ENGLISH]

[NON-ENGLISH] Now I got. [NON-ENGLISH]. And we should come out there. And over there, if I would have to see him, I would see right now, I wouldn't remember him. But his name I remember, Keke.

There was a German over there where he made a selection by the name of Keke. And the usually, left, right, left, right. Me and my father and my brother went left. And we went over. They took us from overnight in the Kleine ghetto. In the small ghetto. At that time, we were thinking we are the fortunate ones. Because if they put us here for tonight, and what's going to happen to the other ones? Because if they would have something in mind for us, they would take us away like they took away everybody up till now.

Did you understand that it was a selection for death?

We didn't understand anything. We thought that we are the lucky ones. And the other ones, we don't know what is going to happen to them. And the most unbelievable thing started. People started to fight, 12,000 people started to fight. Because that Kleine ghetto, that little ghetto was unoccupied, I don't know for a year, a half a year. I don't know how long. I don't remember the time from liquidating that thing. It was open. There were a lot of housing. We started to fight for a room.

We were killing each other to grab who's going to get better quarters because we left to live here. It was just I don't know if anybody could describe it, that night, all night, till in the morning.

During the night, I met a friend of mine, Hirski Bedrovski. I remember his name, because I used to play soccer with him in Maccabi. And we used to run. I used to run 100 meters, 200 meters, 400 meters. We used to run 1,500 meters, 3000 meters. And we were good friends, then we met. And he says to me, Shmoel, I don't like what's happening over here. I says, me neither.

In the meantime, the Germans started to take us out in groups. By daybreak, about 5 o'clock, 7 o'clock, 6 o'clock-- I don't know, but in the morning they started to take out from the ghetto groups.

After one night?

One night, that's all. All night, we were fighting where we were going to stay. But in the morning, they didn't let us to stay anymore, because they start taking out. They used to bring 10, 15 guards, take out a couple hundred people, and take us away. [NON-ENGLISH] to the Ninth Fort. But we did not know exactly what's happening yet. All we know that was the direction. By foot, without trucks, taking columns.

I want to ask you a question. Did you know before something about when you heard the rumors, was it about the Ninth Fort?

No. I did not know. I'll tell you when I find out that something is not right. We saw that they took out people in groups and take it away. Some people stayed back, and some people got so unpatient that it's so bad over here that here can't be

good, might as well we'll go. And people went. And I remember Hirski was older than me about three years or something. And he says to me, Shmoel, he says, I'm going. If you want to come with me, he says. Where? It doesn't matter.

And I says, well, I got a brother and a father. He hasn't got nobody. Let's find out. We start walking around. We came to one spot in in the fence in back. In the back part of the little ghetto was a fence. And there was a Lithuanian guard, a Lithuanian soldier. [NON-ENGLISH]. Only he recognized Hirski, and he says with [NON-ENGLISH]. What are you doing here?

And he says to him, I'm a Jew anybody else was. You see what I'm doing here. And he said to him, I thought you're a [NON-ENGLISH]. And he said to him, because you used to play in a Lithuanian sport club soccer. We used to play against each other.

He says, I thought that you what's happening. And Hirski says, what's happening? And he said, you're being killed. You're being slaughtered. He didn't tell us Ninth Fort or nothing. We were being taken to the slaughter. And Hirski says, then I should run. And he says, if you can. Then he says move away. Give us a chance to get out of here.

And he says, over my dead body. You go here, and I'll kill you. But if you could go, go. I won't sacrifice me for you. Now, this is the first time we heard definitely something is taking place.

To make the story, we laid back, as far as we can. I hide it from my father. I hide it from my brother. I said, let's see. Let's see. Till night, let's see whatever it is. Maybe with Hirski we're planning to get dark, maybe we'll run.

I remember he talk to me, Shmoel, everyone is for himself. I'll go. I would not sacrifice my life for you. And you and father and brother has no right to ask this from you. Each one is right now on his own. He says, you want to come with me? I said, I don't know. Halfway somewhere going up [NON-ENGLISH], the street where it was houses from both sides. When the city ended, where there were no more houses, there was more like greenery and field. When it was a higher spot, like an embankment. All of a sudden, without telling goodbye to me, he just took off.

And I saw him being shot as he took off. He didn't manage. He rolled over the embankment, and he went. He didn't manage to run out. In a way, it helped me, standing back for so long. I didn't run with him because I couldn't leave my father and brother. Maybe that was my savior. Maybe a split second thought, because all of a sudden, we became there I find myself in front of a big dug-out ravine. I don't know, 100 feet, 200 feet, 50 long. I don't know.

And they tell us to take off our clothes, the upper clothes. And without the clothes they put us by that hole. And I saw there was a German commander. I didn't know what that guy is. I don't know. All I know he was a German from the-- I when he lift up the hand, and there were three machine guns from three directions. I threw myself in that hole, and I had everybody on top me.

I don't know how long I was laying there. Not everybody was dead a lot of them were thrashing and screaming. I heard some revolver shots over there. I heard some talking. And somebody said, leave it over here. They wouldn't run away. We'll finish it tomorrow. I understood later they could not say it in English, they had a [NON-ENGLISH]. And they used to cover the holes with [NON-ENGLISH].

It's a white-- a chemical acid, which you're using for painting. And then they cover oil over it. And they didn't close that hole. We were the last ones there. There is when I climbed out.

How long? How long did you-- I don't know, a half hour, an hour, an hour and a half. I don't know how to count time. All I just know I got out. It was dark and there was evergreens, [NON-ENGLISH]. And I ran away in the fields with my underwear, the way it was. And I was really running in a direction which I knew close to [NON-ENGLISH].

[NON-ENGLISH] was a summer-- where people used to come for the summer. By the [NON-ENGLISH] over there, [NON-ENGLISH] we used to call it. We used to rent bungalows there. And then afterwards it was [NON-ENGLISH]. It was all lined on the [NON-ENGLISH] and the river.

But I knew a family over there, a goyim with whom I used to deal when I used to come from the ghetto. It was-- I don't know, maybe five miles away from the city. I really don't know, not too far. I used to deal with them. I figured I'll come there for the first help. But I didn't come there. I saw some-- on a line I saw some clothes. I stole a pair of pants and a shirt.

And without shoes, with that it was maybe two nights it was in the fields hiding out and then I knew the house, and I smuggled myself in the ghetto. And I came back to the apartment where I was. That apartment where we were in ghetto near the blocks, we were really not too far from the selection where our little apartment, I remember when I lived, we shared with a teacher from [NON-ENGLISH]. I don't remember his name. He was there with two daughters.

And one daughter went away in the [NON-ENGLISH]. and he remained with one daughter to the right, because one was limping. They took her away, and him with the older daughter. And he was younger that was. And I came, and I told him what happened. I remember, he took me to the Altstenrat to tell the story. Nobody wanted to listen. They were confused.

They said, there were [NON-ENGLISH]. it was two days after the aktion. They didn't know where to start, where to finish, what they were doing. And I didn't even remember to who I was talking. And he was, why don't you listen to him? And that man says, one more story, one less story, nothing changes. What is there to know? That's [NON-ENGLISH]. Please, leave us alone. Nobody won't even listen.

Maybe they listened to me. Maybe they were just painful, hurt. I don't know. I'm not a psychologist. I can't tell.

Do you remember how many of them sat there, what they ask you something?

They didn't ask me nothing. I just came I want to tell them, I came from Ninth Fort, and what I knew. And nobody wanted to talk to me.

Can you can you tell us? I know that it's very difficult for you. Can you tell us what did you want to tell them? I mean can you tell us more about the Ninth Fort? What happened there when you were there?

All I could tell you what happened is with us.

But you were the last--

The last group. I don't even know how many holes, and where it was. All I know is that we were the last group who were coming out from that Kleine ghetto they took us. And I only saw what they did with us. And all I know is I climbed out from there. And my brother and my [NON-ENGLISH], my brother my father was there.

What I felt, I don't know. How could not describe you what I felt. I can't even describe it right now, how I feel right now. I don't know. It's 50 years after this. I'm trying to calm my life every day, don't try to think about it. It's just when you get nightmares, there is where it puts you back. Otherwise, you don't want to think back, or you can't get out.

Well, I can go on with everything. I have to skip a lot. I can't tell you. All I know is I speculated later, to survive as much as I could. My lifetime with Michal, Yitzhak in Yanova we got in the woods over there, is probably he gave me so many [NON-ENGLISH] that it doesn't even pay to talk about it for me now. All I know is we knew already. The ones who survived, we know already we're not for too long there.

That's the time when there was a real big movement not to fight out in the ghetto, there was a big movement of going away from the ghetto. And when that ghetto was liquidated I got caught up in it. At that time, I was in [NON-ENGLISH]. The ghetto was here but on the other side from Kovno, on the opposite side from Kovno, I don't know if it was north, south. Probably south of Kovno there was, where the Seventh Fort was, not far from there, the other side, there was a working place, [NON-ENGLISH]. But they kept it in a small area.



I came there. I was dragged away there for a short time. And from there, I tried to go away. And I remember under [NON-ENGLISH] I organized myself a border. It was even from, Holland [NON-ENGLISH], a revolver. And I organized myself a group of people to escape from there. And it's a long detail to tell you, but I shot my leg to myself. I had accidents.

There was the head of the group, whoever the eldest are the head of the Jewish sons. I don't remember his name. He was a little guy and he was an officer in the Lithuanian army before, before Hitler came. He was like a Jewish assimilated elite, who served for the Lithuanian army. And he got a job to be the-- then he came in the hospital because there was a German doctor, a German Jew called him in.

Of course, when he noticed what I did, the bullet went in, and went out there. I told him the story. He came in, and he says, I have to give me from the Germans. Otherwise, we're all go to perish over here. And I said to him, I can't. He says, I have something. There are a lot of people who have something. We're planning something. If you give me away to the Germans, your life is not worth to [INAUDIBLE] the camp.

Somehow, it didn't bother me. For over a week, I was there in the hospital. They covered up for me. And I was sent to [NON-ENGLISH]. And I was there, maybe for two weeks. But at that time they were liquidating everything in Lithuania. That what was it? '43 I would say. I don't know. Couldn't be '44. I must be '43, because I was a year in concentration camp.

They were liquidating. They were liquidating all the ghettos. There was only one ghetto. And they were liquidating a couple of small camps in Lithuania. They took them all to [NON-ENGLISH]. From there, they took us all to Stutthof.

I remember, I couldn't even describe it coming into Stutthof. I thought I'm coming right to a crematorium, because they took us off from the train. They put us in small little-- you know when you build something, those little-- little wagons and tracks where you take dirt. They shoved us on those tracks and it was foggy. And there were big projectors to come in. And we thought it's smoke. I can't describe it what happened over there on those wagons.

People were tearing their hairs out they thought it going straight into it, and a lot of people got unruly and they started killing a lot of people, shooting them right in the spot, things like this. And I remember that I came in with my piece in my pocket, and figured I'll go to last minute. When I see that I have to use it, I'll use it to kill myself. I never had to. We came into camp and then they put us start delousing, and then I threw it in the toilet.

And then when I came out from entlausung on the other side, I came out with my striped clothes. And I had a new chapter in my life.

From one segment to the other, there are a lot of torturing things. I skip a lot of things because a lot of things to handle, a lot of other people talked about it. I was almost a year in a concentration camp, from place to place, and I became a Muselmann. Do I have to describe everything I did? Do I have to talk about my hunger? Do I have to talk about friends who nearly killed me because they accused me falsely, I stole two potatoes from somebody, which I didn't.

No, but I'll tell you something. I'll tell you a very unique story, which not too many people could tell. I was taken to a lager. From Stutthof I was taken to Lager 2. There was Lager 1, Lager 2, Lager 4, Lager 11. In Lager 2, from Lager 2, as a matter of fact, it was a happy time in my life. Because I fell in with [NON-ENGLISH], with a group of 20 people to work in a [NON-ENGLISH].

It's a [NON-ENGLISH] place, where they used to give out food to all the camps and also to the Germans. We worked there. It was a picnic over there. We used to steal food. We had what to eat. But I was not too long there. They took us from Lager 2. I went away to Landshut. In Landshut I became already a Muselmann.

You probably know what a Muselmann is. I was [NON-ENGLISH] already by the time I was there. And from Landshut they took me to Muhldorf. It was a camp near the city Muhldorf. And there was Muhldorf Waldlager. That was a camp in the woods. And if the war would have lasted another month or so, probably I wouldn't have told you the story. Because I was at the end of my--

But in order to tell you another story, here is the story I would say two weeks before the liberation, two weeks before the Americans took us over. They were liquidating in various ways the camps. And they took us from Waldlager in a train.

I believe-- I don't know-- over 3,500 people. They tried to take us to [NON-ENGLISH]. I don't know it's a fact, but from reading other stories. They tried to get us into [NON-ENGLISH] to liquidate us. Because a lot of people they brought into [NON-ENGLISH], and they put them in mines. But our train, they never took to [NON-ENGLISH]. They were riding up and down, up and down, for over a week without food, without anything, without a glass of water, without nothing. They tried to get us out. It was closed, and coming back, on another track.

And I'm not sure. I think it was April the 24th. Because I remember seeing on the column there a date. The train stops on the embankment. And there was villages below and field, but that was like you like you build up a high spot on the road to keep the track straight. I don't know how to describe it, you know where it's high. The train stopped. And the Germans opened up the doors. And they said everybody could go out, to relieve themselves or whatever, gets fresh air or whatever. Food we haven't got.

And that was approximately a week before the Americans took us over. And whoever could climb out, climbed out. And a German inspector, some kind of nachalnik from the German, Eisenbahn from the German railroads, climbed up on the locomotive and he said, Hitler is dead. You're all free. You could go wherever you want. And the German Wehrmacht which they were older people, threw away their guns. And they start running, and everybody start running.

We spread over the fields. The stronger ones start running forward and robbing German homes. And on the other side of the fields, was I don't know what kind of group of SS, on motorcycles with machine guns. They were in the woods there. And they surrounded the area and they killed whoever was in the fields running. They slaughtered everybody. And maybe it was my luck. I couldn't run. I couldn't go. I was so weak, that when I go from the train, I go into the first house. And I sit down, and asked for food.

I said to them. You have hunger [NON-ENGLISH]. I want food. And they gave me food. And outside, people were getting killed and I was sitting eating. And then later, the survivors, they picked us up and they made us drag everybody in the train. We loaded them like logs of wood, one on top of each other. We loaded up the half of the train with all the dead. It was over 1,000 people. Just every day just-- the train took off for another two days.

I remember the time. That time I remember it stopped. Of course, we came in a little town when the train stopped. And that was the end of them. The train stopped and they made us come out. And somebody held a speech. We shouldn't worry. Whoever survives will survive, we'll get for [NON-ENGLISH] we'll get food. And unbelievable, there must have come 10 wagons with German loaves of bread on platforms, with horses, and field kitchens. They give us food.

And I had a can on my belt. And I came down. I was from the first group who went down. I got a half a loaf of bread with a bread for two, and a full can of thick noodle soup with meat. I didn't see it through the war. Only as I was going back, I don't know how many, but dozens of planes American planes came down. And they dived and they cut us to ribbons.

I was looking at the American insignia, that right American star. And they cut us to ribbons, and they cut us to pieces. I just got myself onto a under a car, and I was just eating or looking. And when that ended, there was another massacre, bigger than the Germans. And that was first [INAUDIBLE]. That must have been a day or two before we were liberated.

I managed to escape from that train two days before liberation, because there was no use. They made us pick everybody up, put back on the train. That train was just a butcher shop. I was, it was at night. I was laying in that cabin. And all of a sudden, I hear speaking Hebrew. It was two Greek Jews. From Saloniki, my age a little. They were talking in Hebrew that we have to get away from that unlucky train, otherwise we'll never leave that train. We really did not know it, how close the Americans are or they aren't.

How do we speak? That's unrecognizable. There were three of them. They should go over there. There was a cattle train. There was a little window, with barbed wire. I says, I have a plier. We'll cut it out and we'll climb out. And one said, I'm

weak. I can't climb. And one said, well, I'm strong. See, they worked in Muhldorf in the [NON-ENGLISH], in the kitchen. They were working in the kitchen from the camp. They had a chance to steal bread. They were stronger.

He said, one will bend down, and one will climb up. When I'll get on the roof, I'll put my hands on the window I pull up the other one and I'll pull up the other one. And they were planning it. I understood Hebrew. And I didn't say nothing. And they were strangers to me. And I didn't have strength. And I pulled myself away to that window and I was laying there for 20 minutes waiting for them. When the first one got out, and the second one got out, the third one I grabbed by the feet I says, you're not going. You push me up. I'm going before you.

And he started to kick me. He says, I'll holler. Everybody will get up. Nobody will go. And the guy upstairs says to him, push him out. And that's what happened. They took me out of there. And then later we ran away from the train. It was night. And we came to a German house, a farming house. They wanted to leave me on the road, because I couldn't walk as fast. And they said we better drag him, because if they find him, they'll find us.

And they took me to that German house. And they walked in, and there was a woman and an old man and a few kids. And they took knives from the kitchen. And they said to them, if you bring Germans, you'll never see the kids, the Greeks. And they opened up like most of the houses over there, they have cellars. Like it's a trap door, like on the floor. You open up the floor, and there we keep food. We took the kids right in that cellar and we closed ourselves.

We knew that sooner or later the Americans would be here. I said, if the Americans comes first, we're all going to leave. And if you bring Germans, they'll die, we die. We were there maybe not even a night. They came in they brought two American soldiers. And that was it there, the liberation.

Well, I could tell you that American officer saw that train, he lost his mind. And he started beating up everything with the club of a gun, whoever came, a soldier, or who it was. He just got berserk. They took him away to the hospital. He couldn't stand to see what he saw in that train.

From there, I couldn't walk anymore. I was out. Everybody went to Waldheim. There was after [NON-ENGLISH], there was a bigger city, Waldheim, where we had to register with the Red Cross. And me, they took away, me and a couple other people, they took away in Heidelberg, in a hospital. And over there, they fed me back to strength.

I guess that's all I could tell you. I didn't know where I should go from here. Because I gave you-- I gave you the smallest preview, a little flavor of in between, it could be filled out with anything. Because the stories of hunger and working and being beaten still are here. It's not important anymore. I gave it the highlights of what I remember, what happened, what took place.

There are some things that are very important.

If you have something to ask, I don't know what else we want to--

[NON-ENGLISH] what I think is we have to go back.

All right. Please.

But we are going to have in one minute the cassette change. OK. Because--

I'll tell you everything I know.

But if you can tell more about it, about more what happened--