

RG-50.120 #0210 5 Tapes
BERESRITZKI, ISRAEL

TAPE I

- 1.00 Talks about papers he is holding.
- 1.29 Decided to tell his biography so his family and friends would know more about his life.
- 2.16 When his friends would come, he would tell them details, but he never told his wife or children, and they wanted to know.
- 2.40 It was hard for him to talk about his past, and he was afraid he wouldn't be able to finish, or maybe he forgot some, or would forget to tell something.
- 3.49 His purpose in life and to tell story and
- 4.25 didn't know what language to tell story, in Russian, Hebrew or Yiddish. Will try Hebrew but he might need help. They should ask the fitting questions, and he will try to answer.
- 5.00 Wanted to say his story in Yiddish, but who would listen? The children don't know it, etc.
- 5.46 Story might be a bit different from ones who went through Holocaust.
- 6.00 Every person has a lot to say about their past.
- 6.10 Person who listens to history with patience, and learns from it, will see his purpose today.
- 7.56 Born in city of Lodz, in Poland. A big city. May 15, 1925. It was the biggest industrial city - textiles.
- 8.46 200,000 Jews living in Lodz.
- 9.00 Born in center of city in the square called Platzvonozhi, number 11, on the 3rd floor.
- 9.36 The house was near a Jew, but there were many non-Jews also.
- 10.10 Had small apartment on 3rd floor that was 12 meters. And they

- were 4 people. Himself, his brother Simcha, his mother Frida, and his father Yaakov. He was the oldest.
- 10.46 His neighbors were very poor. One of them had 3 girls and did different jobs. Another neighbor knitted sweaters.
- 12.00 Another neighbor had a balcony where all the children would look out to see the demonstration of the Polish army on 5/3. The family was part of the socialist party [Peulai Zion - workers of Zion] which was leftist. 5/1 demonstration of the left party, the Socialists and the Bund party, which were also the left.
- 13.00 They loved to watch the demonstration on 4/1 because it was closer to the Jewish nation. 5/3 was the fascist demonstration, and not a Jew was found on the streets. The stores were closed. They got candy on 5/1. Neighbors sang songs on streets.
- 14.00 Neighbor who sold cheap rags.
- 15.20 Had to bring own water to house - no plumbing.
- 16.30 Had neighbor who sold things on boats.
- 17.49 Liked to help them and was happy to be able to help his neighbors.
- 18.10 Loved to go play in the courtyard because they played with toys and games and sang songs.
- 18.40 They would collect money from people who threw it out the window, and would give it to a person who was blind.
- 18.53 Entrance to his house there was a coffee house and a bar. They would drink a lot of vodka and would sit until late. At night the Polish police would eat and also drink beer. The children would collect the bottles.
- 20.20 Children didn't go out at night and he didn't go to school.
- 20.39 All of the tenants were either Jewish or Polish
- 20.53 In the center of the city, across the way was the Magistry, to the left were many sotres, the square was separated into 4 streets. The first street was Beterchovska, second on, 3rd and 4th [? Can't understand what he said]. There were always a lot of people there,

- and he went to the first street which had the Israeli [Jewish] workers, Shomer Hatzaeer. He would go from school and listen to them tell stories, etc. It was very interesting.
- 22.39 On the street of Pormovska, the 4th, the Facist Polish would go into the street, and they would have meetings there.
- 23.20 There were many religious Jews on the street Pevlotzna. The whole street was Jews. Especially the chasidim of Gror. They kept Shabbat and holidays. There were stores, one with meat, one with fish, and one with dairy. They would go there because they all spoke Yiddish. They also sold Israeli [a big store] wine in bottles that were expensive from the family of Sheeker, known family in Lodz, so he never had any.
- 24.52 Father's family lived on Polotzna 7. Mother's family lived in a small town called Malch, betweek Pruznany and Kartuzbereza. It was 250 km from Russia. His mother came from a religious family of rabbis. Jewish tradition was significant . Lit candles before Shabbat, kept Shabbat and holidays.
- 26.30 Father was more to the Right. Grandmother was proletarian. They all worked in gold. They lived in a very small place. The floor was even a bed for the grandmother. They belonged to all different parties. They had all the different newspapers. It was interesting, the discussions between each other. They all wanted to show they were right.
- 25.38 Communist uncle, his job, etc.
- 29.52 2nd uncle was an officer for Bund in Lodz. friends [?] of Alter and Lichtenstein. Newspaper for Bund-Folkseiter.
- 30.20 Aunt who was there moved to Israel, was in different parties. She read 'Heindz' - famous newspaper in Poland for the Progressives.
- 31.15 The rabbi would go to synagogue and his grandmother would go everyday also to pray. In their house [?]they had 10 small synagogues 'shteibel'. He had to go to pray - Mincha and Maariv [evening prayers] and also learn Gemara [talmudic studies] in-between.
- 32.32 Father had 4 brothers and 2 sisters.

- 32.55 Mother's house was religious, where rabbis did many mitzvot.
- 33.15 Went to Jewish school - 'Faienhouse' on 26 Zavodska St. in Lodz, and after 'Katznelson' on 43 Zavodska St. It cost a lot of money, so not everyone could go.
- 33.42 Mother didn't work. Father was an accountant in a Putna chocolate factory.
- 34.13 Chocolate factory was his mother's family business.
- 34.21 Parents had married in 1920 and mother went to live in Lodz.
- 34.45 In 1936 when he was 11 1/2, his father died. His father was 36.
- 34.30 His mother worked in the factory then making chocolates and cleaning, and was paid 18 zlotzr per week. It was very hard to make money. The apartment and school were very expensive.
- 36.28 The 'Feinhouse' [his school] he got a Zionistic education. He learned Polish and some Hebrew, Jewish history, talmud, Jewish holidays, Bar Mitzvah preparations.
- 37.10 Collected money for Keren Kayemet.
- 37.28 When father died, they had no food. He ate by his grandmother, brother ate by aunt. He would take a sandwich [pumpnickel with garlic and salt]. He would also have from other kids. Mother tried to dress him normally.
- 39.04 Describes big synagogue he went to.
- 40.50 Story of when he got a lot of money.
- 41.58 Brother was born in '33 and was premature - died in '36, when he was 3 years old.
- 43.45 Talks about big shul [synagogue] called 'Ohel Moed', where many Zionists went: Jabutinski, Ben Gurion, Greenbaum, Bestritzki.
- 44.23 During Purim [Jewish holiday], all of the political parties would gather in the courtyard and chant and they were happy.
- 45.12 On Lag Ba'omer [holiday] the Shomer Hatzair would dance in the

- streets - many children, from 10-18 on the street of Beterchovska until the place called Zderovia where they would have a picnic.
- 46.28 Describes what happened to Shlomo Ben Yosef.
- 46.58 Remembers how Jabotinski came from the main station. They carried him on his hands and they would have a meeting. He could speak for hours in front of a whole crowd. He usually spoke Yiddish.
- 48.42 Father would read many newspapers and he knew what they were talking about because he started reading them when he was 6 or 7 in Polish.
- 50.00 They would collect money for Keren Kayemet because when a boy was Bar Mitzvah, they would plant a tree in Israel for him.
- 50.25 He was Bar Mitzvah at 12 instead of 13 because it was the custom in Poland, that if your parent died, you were more mature and ready to work at an earlier age.
- 51.00 There were times when his father's death was very hard.
- 52.00 Stories that happened to him. He would buy yo-yos and cigarettes. Many Poles smoked and he would sell cigarettes. He would sell other things also.
- 57.50 Sometimes the police would arrest them for selling on the streets.
- 58.50 They had gone on vacation before father died, in July or August. After, he was sent to camp in Toz.
- 2.00.00 Describes different schools in Lodz. When he was in Hashomer Hatzair, they would sing many songs about Israel, with very Israeli tunes.
- 2.06.09 Moved when father was still alive to a place, 50 Yidnastegerister Street which was next door to the..... Polish army store. Then describes different army companies near there.
- 2.07.58 Loved to see the Polish army gather.
- 2.08.25 Place in city for poor people called 'Baluti'. The children didn't go to school, and they needed a lot of help.

- 2.10.55 Father's family was very progressive and he loved them.
- 2.11.55 There were chasidim and orthodox Jews and there were arguments between them.
- 2.12.20 Describes Passover, and what his family did.
- 2.13.50 They would pray and look into the cup of Elizjah, and look for him and he should come and save the million and a half Jews. Nobody came to save them.
- 2.15.38 By 1939, life was very hard. Mother sent him in the summer to his grandmother in Malch, small town with 125 Jews amongst 500 Belarus families, for 2 months. Brother stayed with his mother.
- 2.16.32 In Sept. 1939, the situation was tense, and children from Germany came to his camp in Poland because their parents sent them.
- 2.17.45 They talked about the situation in their house a lot but didn't know or even think it was possible there would be a Holocaust.
- 2.18.00 Mother helped people who came to get money and passports to leave.
- 2.18.40 Talks about Yitschak Kaplan who moved to Israel and others who moved, aunt, etc. to Israel.
- 2.20.15 Aunt Rivka also moved to Israel and they got letters from them. They lived in Tel Aviv - name was Avner - famous family, they had a factory. Her husband was David and they had 3 children: Igor who is the head of the factory now, Israel who was killed in Israel and Miriam [who they now call Mickey].
- 2.21.55 Then in March sent them to Avener family in Israel with tomatoes because they didn't have any in Israel then, and they sent to Poland oranges and people who were sick were allowed to eat the fruit.
- 2.22.30 Father loved to listen to Kosniski, who was a cantor who came to Lodz. He would sing in the Ohel Moed, large synagogue, or the Philharmonic. He was a fabulous tenor and he sang very uniquely.
- 2.23.25 He grew up singing and making a beat, and would sing the songs

of the Polish army and would sing like a cantor. He would do that for hours. During the war he wasn't able to sing, and it was very sad.

2.25.45 Before Passover, people would go to make their dishes kosher for Passover.

2.27.15 Would do different things to help the community that nobody knew about.

2.28.00 Different kinds of people lived in Lodz.

2.30.00 From 9/1/39, Germans started to come into the Polish area. The news came to them that Germans were coming, and many Jews left to Russia - very far away, past the borders. The rest of the Jews were left. Everyday the Germans would bomb the Jews in Lodz. He and mother and brother had nowhere to go and nothing waiting for them, so they didn't go. Everything was closed, all the stores.

[Page missing?]

this mother was sick and he had to run to a pharmacy in Barutishaya to find something that would help. She had Dyzynteria [?]

2.33.35 The Germans would put gas in the streets and nobody had masks. People would cover their mouths and noses with handkerchiefs.

2.34.33 Didn't go out of house because they were afraid. Looked out the window and saw the Germans were coming.

2.35.00 There were parties against the Germans and when the Germans caught them they would bring them to the street Livamisk and lash them.

2.35.30 Germans stood on the roofs and would tell the others where to bomb. Even before the war there were Hitler followers who wore swasticas on their arms and would jump on the Jews. It wasn't allowed to go out after 9:30 or 10 bcause they were afraid of pogroms and other things.

2.36.36 At last minute there was a Polish party but they were watched very closely by the Germans.

2.36.52 On the morning of 9/7/39 [?] Germans came into the city from

- every side. The army was large and they were singing. He remembers even their song. In the beginning they came in on motorcycles with clothes which caused fear and panic. Their faces were like gangsters. After, the regular German army came in singing, and made their hearts afraid.
- 2.39.00 When this happend, he was only 14 years old. But as a boy, all he looked for was a line to stand on for bread. That was a precious thing. They came with cards that allowed them to. Before the Germans came they were allowed to just come and take bread, but when they came they organized everything, and people needed cards.
- 2.40.03 One day they took Jews out from the line and they took them to the army camp and would do bad things to them. This started happening in October and first half of November.
- 2.41.05 They knew what was happening in Russia. They knew Russia would fight and not be captured. They didn't have many details. Germans were bombing Russia - that's all they knew.
- 2.42.25 They would take Jews and would fiercely lash them and make them take everything out of their pockets and thake their watches. They made them take poop out of bathrooms with their hands. They would also take Jews from the line of where they grabbed them from the streets, mostly men with beards. They would make them bring their talit and tefillin [things men use to pray with] and they organized them and told them if they didn't bring these things they would catch them, and that would be it.
- 2.43.55 All Jews had tdhe yellow star on them on the left side of the chest, in the front, and right side of their back.
- 2.44.20 When the German soldiers would march on the sidewalks, you would have to nod your head to say hello but you didn't walk on the same sidewalk as them.
- 2.44.32 There were many new laws.
- 2.45.15 They brought many Jewish men with beards to the large synagogue that could hold 2,500 people. They made them take out the Torah scrolls from the Ark, and they had to open the Torah scrolls and then they would bomb the synagogue. This was in November.

- 2.47.15 K Germans made people gather the rubble and put it on trucks. They closed all the synagogues and stores and schools, and his chocolate factory. And they had no way to live.
- 2.48.50 In their apartment they had 2 beds. He slept with his father in one bed, and his mother slept in the other with his brother. They could have left Poland and his house, but his parents had worked so hard to build their lives there that they couldn't bear to leave. His mother told him this.
- 2.50.47 All of his uncles on his father's side left. Only his grandmother was left. They all went to the Russian Soviet side. Lodz was under the third Reich and Poland was under the Protectorate. Soviets only came until Brestitufsk.
- 2.52.00 Talks about Russia and Germany relationships.
- 2.54.37 Chocolate factory was closed. Mother sold it. She also sold all her gold, so they could all live. Many Jews ran to Russia, and his mother could have. They city was near Russia and the Russians tried to come in, and there was always something going on. They were very afraid all the time because the German gestapo were in the city and they knew every corner of the city. They organized the Judenrat and they made restrictions on them.
- 2.56.58 T They would cut off the beards of Jews in the streets with scissors and they would laugh at them. They would also kill them. They would also lash them until they died.
- 2.58.20 Mother said that they must separate. He has to save himself. He must run to Russian Soviet side. He took off his yellow stars and his mother gave him 5 dollars and 3 pairs of clothing because it was already 12/11/39. He separated from his mother and grandmother at the train station called Kanski, which was the main station in Lodz. He got a Polish neighbor to buy him a ticket to Russia. When he was 14 1/2 he had to run to save his life and separate from his mother. He didn't know he would never see her again. He never forgot what she said to him, there. The train was not a passenger train; it was full of selling goods. It was filled with Polish people and they all sat on the floor. More than 100 were in each car. The whole time he was thinking of his family who were still in Lodz. On the way, the Polish people were talking about what the Germans were doing to the Jews and how

the Jews don't know how to work. They were drinking and smoking and it took the whole night to get to Russia.

- 3.06.04 Got off the train and just followed the people so he wouldn't be noticed. He also looked down so nobody would notice he was a Jew because Jews weren't allowed to travel at that time.
- 3.07.21 On the 12th or 13th of December, he we off the train and asked how to get to Nalevki St. Jews lived there. When he got to the right apartment, he asked where his uncles: Shayik, Abraham and Yadya [aunt]; they said they went to Bialystok, occupied by USSR, in the large synagogue. So he asked they to buy him a ticket to the train, and they did, and gave him 2 sandwiches. They knew his family and were very nice to him. They brought him to the train station and bought a ticket with difficulty at the Malkinia station, a hundred km from Russia. It was the last station in the German borders at that time. There were many many people waiting and most were Jews. They were pushed inside the train car and he was so smushed, he was like a sardine. He had to put his backpack by his feel so there would be room. He stood for 3 hours. It was already dasrk when they got there.
- 3.13.00 Tried to go with a group called Novick, but when they realized he was Jewish, they told him to leave them.
- 3.15.10 He did hear about a neutral area between Russia and Germany. There were 1,000 Jews there who couldn't cross the border.
- 3.166.40 He was walking near a group in an open field who knew how to cross the border. But then Germans came and asked why he wasn't with the group. He said he was a Jew and they made him show everything he had . They took his _____ powder and were very happy. They then told him to run, and he lost them and also the Novick group.
- 3.22.40 Came and met another group and they said they were by the border and they let him come with them any everyone followed the train tracks. Groups and groups of people. They got to a station Chichuf. Many many people were standing on the platform holding bagels and there was an army man selling them. He didn't have any money but the man gave him a bagel anyway. The man asked him what time it was. He told him the time. He got water at the station. He was like an animal who was very confused. He didn't know where he was.

- 3.30.00 At the station, he found out the border was closed and they were very slowly letting people in. Before December it had been open.
- 3.31.00 At the station there was a guard man standing and he started crying and begging the man to save him, his family and the Jews. People saw this and told him to stop crying, and then the train came.
- 3.32.10 People piled into the train, and they didn't have tickets. They even sat on the roofs. They traveled for about 2 hours. Everyone was happy to leave Poland. When they got to Bialystok, it was full of people but it was a beautiful station. There was a bridge over the train, and people were waiting there for family, and looking for people they recognized. He asked on the bridge, where the synagogue was. While walking through the streets in the morning to get there, there were many people buying things in the streets. It was a very nice day. Around the synagogue there were many Jews of all typed. they didn't know where to go.
- 3.335.50 He yelled out 'who is from Lodz?' Finally someone said they knew who his family was. They all went to Malich except for Shayik, who was still in Bialystok. He should now go to Malich, the town of his grandomther. But how do you get there?
- 3.37.00 So he went to the station but he only knew Polish, but they still understood him. He told them his story, and that he wanted to go to Malich and they found it on the map that it was 18 km between Prozany and Kartuzbereza [Russia]. They let him go for free. Told him to go from Brest then to Boronovich, then to Pavlovich. The whole time he only thought of his family and mother.
- 3.40.00 When he arrived from Pavlovich, nobody was there and he asked how to get to Malich and there was a mailman from malich who might bring him. He said he would and on the way he asked him what happened. They stopped at a Jew's house named Matis who had a daughter and son-in-law. They said his grandmother was 1 1/2 km away.
- 3.42.55 Got to grandmother's house and was met by grandmother, aunt [mother's sister] and mother's brother Simcha. And his daughter was Gittel. 2 other Jews were there. Son of the brother of his grandmother and the second was her nephew. They called him Leib [Yisrael Leib]. In Polish it was Lolic. They were happy he came

and said it was okay his mother stayed.

- 3.47.30 His family in Malich had a store where they sold cheap cloth. His uncle Yaakov had a much nicer cloth store [grade A].
- 3.48.00 There were 125 families in Malich. Grandmother had a very large garden, with vegetables and fruit trees. She would sell fruits and vegetables. She had a field and she had people plant tomatoes and grain. Malich had 3 synagogues and 3 cemeteries. It had been in existence since the 1600's by the Prince Zavaliski. Jews did all jobs there. There were 2 very big schools [yeshivas] under the head rabbis of Russia.
- 3.52.00 Describes aunts and uncles.
- 3.53.00 He went to school. It was Russian and Belarus. There were no Jewish schools, so some would go to Vilna. And that's where he learned from a year and a half.
- 3.55.00 Tried to tell his family there about the situation, but they didn't have patience for the whole story. They only knew Yiddish and Belarus. They didn't want to believe that soon bad things were happening and that all the stores were closed.
- 3.57.00 There was bread for anyone, and you needed a card for sugar.
- 3.57.30 Got first letter from mother, but the address was different. It didn't say Lodz; it said Lietzmanstat. On the letter it said the ghetto of Leitzmanstat, Ch[aim] Rukovski, the head of the ghetto, and it said her name and address.
- 3.59.00 She wrote that his family there was all staying in one room [her, aunt Leeba and grandmother, and uncle Simcha. Their situation was getting worse. When you left us, it got better, but now it is bad, but we hope for better things. The important thing is that the letter will find you whole, and not to worry.

TAPE II

- 4.01.00 Family in Malich were pretty religious. All the people were on his mother's side. Letter from his mother gave details of what was going on. He would wait every morning to see if he got mail from his mother. Nothing was important except how to save his mother and what was going on with her.

- 4.03.35 Lived with grandmother - they had lots of food, etc. Only bought from people they knew so they wouldn't get in trouble.
- 4.05.25 When Russians realized that there were Germans [they were Polish, but it was now under Germany] they made a list of everyone who was living there.
- 4.07.20 Got second letter from mother in January and it was bad. He cried to grandmother that he could send a package to his mother because it was [blank]
- 4.08.30 There was an order that anyone living near the border 100km, they had to leave within 48 hours. If they had come from the other side, some of his relatives had to leave, but he was able to stay.
- 4.10.50 Story of how he went through a lot to send package to his mother.
- 4.15.40 While sending package, saw many people standing on line and they said they were waiting to go back to Poland and other places where they lived. And he couldn't believe it. There were Nazis helping them come back. He said to them - what are you doing? Why do you want to go back? Don't go! I just sent something to my mother who doesn't have bread: you are going to the angel of death! They went anyway.
- 4.19.40 Russian soldier was very poor and asked him if he could buy him a watch.
- 4.21.00 Always thought there would be competition between the Germans and Russians. There was always 2 separate worlds - communists and fascists.
- 4.22.00 Back to story of sending package. Lucky it got sent.
- 4.24.30 Family wasn't sympathetic toward situation of his mother.
- 4.26.09 Grandmother died of Dysentheria [?] in ghetto. Back there was an epidemic.
- 4.26.35 Mother wrote to him to say they had a few things to sell, and then that was it. Never got an answer whether his mother got the package, but did know the situation there was very bad. His mother didn't want to tell him everything. His relatives on father's

side, who had to move, were now living with an uncle. He went to tell them that his grandmother died, and they were very upset. They wanted him to stay with them. They lived in Sonin - which was a very small town, 30,000 people. But then 30,000 Jews came and there was no place to live, so there were fights between the Jews and the people who lived there, which was normal. It was like that in Bialystok, also.

- 4.30.00 Got letters from family in Slonim, but not from Lodz.
- 4.31.40 Tried to tell Russian army about what was going on in Lodz and other places, but they said it wasn't their problem.
- 4.32.50 Had to go to school and do work on Shabbat. They were upset about that.
- 4.34.35 There was no electricity in Malich and they had to use lamps. There was only one radio in the whole town. It was the general of Russian army's. They used to listen out the window. In 1941, they heard the Germans were capturing Holland, Denmark, and over Paris.
- 4.38.00 Russia was preparing to go to war with Germany.
- 4.39.50 May 1941, they gathered the rich, aristocratic people and took them away. Yaakov, his uncle, who was rich, was taken to a jail in Przany and stayed there until the war was over.
- 4.41.25 In his school, there were 4 Jews in his class, Simcha Applebaum was one of them.
- 4.43.07 January 21, 1941, in the morning, the war started between Germany and Russia. They heard Prozany was captured. All the officers left their families and went east instead of west - towards the Germans.
- 4.45.00 There was a bridge over water in Malich and Jews would go wash there before Shabbat. They wanted to let the tanks go across. The communist parties tried to help the army who had run from Prozany to fight, but it didn't help because the army left their posts and kept running.
- 4.47.15 He asked the soldiers where they were going to any they said to Boranovich. Many citizens also left with the Russian army. The

- soldiers who were running asked people for water. It seemed like there was panic. The Germans were coming. Some people left.
- 4.50.10 On Thursday or Friday the first German soldiers came into Malch. It was the same fear as when they came into Lodz. They were on motorcycles, etc.
- 4.51.35 In the morning, everyone stayed inside.
- 4.51.50 Instead of the local committee, there were new people there. They were against the Russian police, and they managed their own new police. The people in the jail in Prozany [including uncle Yaakov] were freed. There was a man who came back with him. He was a police officer, and he was called Sanik and he was short and fat. He had a big store and _____[illegible].
- 4.54.10 They started to organize a Jewish committee, which his uncle was a part of [names other people also].
- 4.55.00 This was like the committees which were organized in Poland under the ghettos and were called 'Judentrat'. Jews started to work more.
- 4.58.45 He tried to run away with the Russian army, but only got as far as Kabaki, a cemetery, which was 4 km from Malch. The army told him to go back because the streets were watched by Germans.
- 5.01.55 Things were bad. It was like they were in Poland.
- 5.02.35 When the Germans wanted money, the Jewish committee had to gather it for them and hope everything would be okay and quiet.
- 5.03.20 Uncle was close with the police clerk. So he was able to solve some of the problems quietly. He was connected also with important people in Pruzany. The police though, started to gather the activists who were with the Soviets [communists] to Pruzany and got rid of them. The Bolarussians told them this was happening.
- 5.05.20 Sonya Lubinski was one of the first people taken from March. They took him also even though he was only 16. Yerachmiel [?] Rabinowitz was also there. The local police took them, not the Germans. They took them to a Soviet jail near Pruzany. They gathered everyone from their houses. Some of his friends who were

older ran with the army . His uncle Yaakov Applebaum saved him from the jail because he knew tghe head of the police.

5.09.35 Not everyone taken was Jewish.

5.10.10 A bunch of people got together that were his age - Sima Poromonovitz and Elka Rutenberg and others to decide how to run and save themselves and how to save their family. When he told his family, they got worried. There was a problem _____ with bread. _____ and knew German also because there were a lot oif Germans who lived in Lodz.

5.14.00 They all lived in fear because they knew the Germans were going to come and take them. Everyday the fear got greater. He was always ready to run. His backpack was packed. There were no more letters from his mother, and he knew he would be in a ghetto soon. It was the beginning of the end. In October of 1941, the Germans came in the morning, and surrounded Malch. They made a shooting camp at the cemetery.

5.18.10 Told his family that he was going to leave. They said 'you left your mother, and now you are leaving us?' This influenced him. Gathered all the Jews into the streets and he decided he had to run.

5.19.40 Jumped out the window and went down a very narrow road and came to the Jewish bathhouse made of red brick. Went onto the field and ran. Went right from Jichia. He ran zigzag. He ran and then fell, etc. He had figured out before this that if he ran like this, they wouldn't find him. There were no towns, only scattered houses. Ran towards Brest Kartuzbereza to the right and Boronovich to the left. Prozany was behind him. Many of his friends ran, but not together. Only 3 of them lived.

5.23.37 In Malch, they brought many people together and shot some of them in front of the others. Thanks to his uncle, his whole family who was there were allowed to flee by foot to Bereza.

5.24.45 Back to his story - He got to a house, and askef for a covering. Said he was the grandson of Etle, who was loved there, so they said they would help him. He hid inside a pile of wheat. He sat there for 10 minutes. He didn't trust these non-Jews and he was right not to, he left his backpack there and ran towards a river that he saw. It was cold outside. He had nothing without his backpack. But when

one wants to live, they have great strength. He hid under tomato bushes and drank the juice of the tomatoes. Soon, he heard voices of Germans: 'Jew!, Jew!'. And he heard the non-Jews telling the Germans where he had been. It was his luck they didn't have dogs who would smell him. The Germans looked, but didn't find him. It was dark and they couldn't find him with the flashlight. It was around 1:30 in the morning. He heard shots from all sides. He thought this is the end of Malch, they will all be shot. He started to crawl away from his hiding place and got to a place on the way to Bereza which was the house of a non-Jew. The guy said to him to go, and that he didn't want to help him, and that he should run. He showed him the way to houses of Jews in Svalhich. It was night when he got to the house of Jews. He came inside and he didn't look like a person. He was dirty and smelled. They told him to go wash himself. He told them what happened in Malch, and said he was on his way to Bereza. He told the family to run right away b/c the Germans were after them. They told him to wait with them until morning and he said he couldn't and was leaving right then. He was going to his grandmother's sister's house there. It was only 12 km to Bereza. He left but not on the road, b/c Germans were on the road. He knew there was an army camp on the boundary, and he luckily got past it. Then he got to the main road of Bereza - came on the back of a truck.

- 5.42.15 Knocked on door of family Tuchman when it was almost morning. They had a son Moshe Tuchman. He told them the story of Malch and they told him that the Judenrat had set up where everyone from Malch could live in Bereza. The family cleaned him up and told him his family's house had burned down, and they were living in a Russian house, and they didn't know exactly where, in Bereza.
- 5.44.10 Map of [Kartuz] Bereza - shows things on map. Moshe Tuchman made it. He lived on the road that could take you to Borenovich.
- 5.48.35 Cousin had 3 children, Chinka, Mizka, Lebel. One moved to Israel. In Bereza describes house he lived in there. He worked for the Judenrat. His family from Malch lived in different houses that were prepared for them. They all were in apartments. They had brought some food.
- 5.52.45 Family of uncle went to Pruzany, which didn't have a ghetto yet. Others from his family also went to Pruzany. Grandmother, aunt, etc. They said he could come with them, but he didn't go - he knew

- he was one more mouth to feed.
- 5.55.37 For the Judenrat, he went to work on the main street. At this time the Germans would make Jews work.
- 5.57.25 Dug ditches next to the train tracks.
- 6.03.28 Judenrat - 9 people were in charge of the ghetto. One of the biggest concentration camps in Poland was in Bereza. People would gather wheat in sacks. It was very hard for him to do all that work, but he was always thinking of better times.
- 6.05.50 They organized 2 ghettos: A and B. A was full of skilled workers and B was full of old people and sick people and people who couldn't work.
- 6.06.27 KThey had heard a lot about Jews around them who were being killed. Before the war, there had been many political parties, but when they organized the ghettos, asll thast was missing, and everyone only thought about their own problems - how to stay alive. Individuals were sometimes taken, and sometimes they came back.
- 6.08.00 All of his family went to Pruzany which was 40 km away. Also, many people from March. Why? B/c Berez was near Ukraine and Puzany was near Prussia, which was freer with their ghettos than near Ukraine.
- 6.09.25 In January and February of '42 they started to look for ways to survive if the Germans would start slaughtering. He saw a group who started working on a spot near the bathroom outside, which was made out of wood. He saw people leaving with sacks full of things, but he didn't know what. He found out that they had built under the bathroom a ditch [well] under the boards of the bathroom, a meater and 1/2 deep. One exit was on the outside of the ghetto, and one was on the inside. They were doing a test of how it would work for people to live inside. It was possible to live with 18 people if everyone sast. There were provisions for the people. At first, there was a couple with a boy who was 2 1/2 who would cry when they went in, so they had to leave. It was dark, and they finally got a lamp inside.
- 6.20.46 January 14th, Germans surrounded the ghetto and on the 15th they took all the Jews out in groups and brought them to the train

- station [Bluden] and then to Beronagura - 14 km away. They told the people, though, that they were going to Bialystok and they would work and be free. The Judenrat, connected to police, knew about this and didn't say anything. He didn't know anything about Beronagura.
- 6.23.40 Germans started taking people out of ghetto and he went into the hiding place; there were 12 people. According to what they heard afterwards, they brought these people to beronagura, undressed them, lined them up and killed them next to ditches when they fell into. Some Jews fell right off the train into the ditches. Other Jews would have to straighten out the bodies so there would be others. Then, at night, they would bomb and the graves would be covered with dirt. Some people were able to escape because they had fallen into the ditches and were still alive. These people came back and told them what happened. They stayed in the hiding place for 8 days and 8 nights. Dogs didn't find them b/c of the smell of the bathroom. There were different opinions of where the 12 of them should go b/c they didn't know the best thing to do.
- 6.30.18 They decided to go to Pruzany. They left at night on the 24th or 25th one at a time. They were very afraid. He was the youngest - most people were in their 30s and 40s. They went in the direction of Malch. They got to Tzeregoff, which was a Russian synogogue. The whole time, they heard shooting. They knew they had killed 1,000 people and in ghetto A there were 3,000 people left. They travelled the whole night. In the morning, they got to the ghetto of Pruzany. There were people going to work. They went on the inside following others so they wouldn't get caught, and he asked about his family Applebaum who were theyere and they were living on 226 Rozki St, which was inside the ghetto.
- 6.36.47 When he got to this house [grandmother's] they were not very happy. It was a very bad situation there. Everyone would get only a little breadthere. Yerachmiel Rabinowitz was there, his brother Shnlomor, and Israel's aunt Gittel, Uncle Simcha, grandmother, and 2 children of Shlomo. They were all in one room. There was a little place where he slept with Yerachmiel. They had killed Yerachmiel's father in Malch, and he didn't know where his mother and sister's family were. He didn't go to work.
- 6.39.00 Describes Judenrat and the people who worked for the Judenrat and what their jobs were and the relationship with the Germans. This

was July-January of '42-'43.

6.40.37 He would go to work. He worked for the head of the city [mayor]. He would plant trees to insulate the house when it was cold. His second job , he would clean the area outside the ghetto, and he would also clean the houses of the gestapo. The houses were near the train, there were also houses for the Russian officers and the SS. Cleaned houses for a month. He saw the gestapo men were living with Russian Soviet women. Theses women with children would clean and cook for them to make a living. After, he worked in the parks and gardens and then in a factory that made winter books called Valini, for germans. In Sept. and Oct. they sent him to work in an army camp 6 km away called Slobodha. It was near the Pruzany train station. At the beginning there were many people working at the army camp. It was a very big camp and there was a lot of ammunition. Yerachmiel was part of the secret communist party. There was a headquarters of the Soviets within the ghetto and there was a Russian Jew as the head of it. They wanted him to bring ammunition to the ghetto from the army camp.

6.49.10 He worked in the kitchen in the army camp, cleaning tomatoies. During breaks he would look for places where there was ammunition. He had other friends there who helped also [names friends]. All his friends had different jobs.

6.51.00 Jews had differenmt purposes in the ghetto. Some wore white swastikas on their arms and were involved in transport. There was a Jewish jail in Pruzany, but they had connections with the Jewish police, and they got news of what was going on. He got most of his news from Yerachmiel about what was going on with the Judenrat.

6.54.00 How they smuggeld ammunition into the ghetto. [Brought it in trees.] Describes places where they hid the ammunition.

TAPE III

7.01.00 Goes back to conditions of secret hiding place under the bathroom. It was extremely scary for all of them. They heard afterwards when they were in Pruzany, that ghetto A had been destroyed on October 15th. When they had been in the hiding place, they didn't know anything. The people hiding were from both ghettos.

7.07.00 Goes back to Pruzany. Talks about man who they brought the ammunition to. They hid the ammunition in a pile of grain.

- 7.09.00 They would bring Jews back and forth from the Bialystok to Pruzany ghettos.
- 7.09.40 They slowly taught people how to use the ammunition. They would always look for places they could escape if they needed to.
- 7.10.35 There was a man in the Judenrat, Goldberg, who knew about what they were doing, and he would help them. He was the only one who knew [maybe Janovich, who was the head of the Judenrat]. They didn't always go to work. All this organization started when he, Yisrael, got to the ghetto. There were 10 or 15 thousand Jews in the ghetto.
- 7.13.10 The first group of people that fled, went to the forest. Afterwards, they found out that they were ambushed by the Germans, but there were some who made it to the partisans and they were able to get back to ghetto.
- 7.16.00 Germans decided there were partisans in the ghetto, so a German car came on January 28, '43 and asked the people in the Judenrat to stand for them who were in the partisans and tell and they didn't, so the Judenrat were shot.
- 7.17.22 After this, they said that everyone in Pruzany [Jews in ghetto] would be evacuated to Bialystok. There was a lot of panic. They were trying to figure out how to escape. The Germans were doing this b/c they were trying to find the partisans.
- 7.20.00 The whole time he was in the Pruzany ghetto, they [Germans] didn't take any transports because when the Germans asked for money, the ghetto would pay it, and the Germans would leave them alone and there would be quiet.
- 7.20.45 At this time, there were people who were murdered or put in the Russian jail.
- 7.21.28 There were many rich Jews in the ghetto who could pay so they didn't have to work.
- 7.22.55 Yisrael had help with food and where to go and where not to.
- 7.23.26 Didn't have good relations with family because the whole time he

- wanted to run away. Some of his family agreed, and some didn't.
- 7.24.00 Went to his cousin, Simcha Applebaum, who is now living in Israel. He was from March. Father was brother of mother. Simcha had a sister, Elka. Their father had some money and had had a factory in Malch. Israel knew the ghetto would be liquidated, so he wanted to run and he asked if Simcha and Elka would come with him. Simcha was 2 years younger and Elka was 2 years older. Elka, 19; Israel, 17, Simcha 15. Their parents didn't want their children to go and they told him to leave.
- 7.27.20 They distributed papers through the ghetto in other languages, saying they all must organize and leave before the ghetto was destroyed. It didn't say who gave out the papers but people knew who to go to. There were a few hundred people to go to. People organized into small groups, take ammunition and run to forests. There were very small groups. But there was a headquarters where they organized. There were a few groups who knew they were leaving first.
- 7.30.25 Shmuel Linkovski wanted Israel to save his children.
- 7.33.15 Ghetto was destroyed in 3 groups. The first day groups of families were sent to the train station from a certain group of streets where they lived. They were told to take very little.
- 7.33.53 Israel and his group looked for a way to escape. The first night, they weren't able to. People were trying to escape from all places that weren't central. They were killed.
- 7.36.00 The women and children really thought they were going to Bialystok. They didn't want to believe they would be killed.
- 7.37.15 2nd night, a large group gathered with Israel and he couldn't tell everyone to leave them. So they cut the fence, and everyone started to run like sick animals to the Aryan side. They ran towards the Russian cemetery.
- 7.41.28 Right before they ran he had gone to Elka Rotenberg to ask her to run with him. He knew her from Malch. So when they all left, he grabbed her hand and started running. She separated from them. The Germans realized where they were, but it was snowing very hard [Jan.30] so they couldn't catch them. On the 29th the first people were taken. 30th main road people taken. 31st anyone left

was _____.

- 7.43.08 Each day they would take about 300 families on sleighs to the train. Station Orachse. Many people on the way were killed. Waiting for them at the train station were cattle cars. They put in around 250 people and sent them to Auschwitz. He knew this from Jews who fled and told the partisans.
- 7.45.10 Israel and people fleeing were shot at from all sides, but they kept running. Somehow, he was separated from Elka but kept running because there were people running around him. Finally, he couldn't run anymore. He had run 20 km and was now in the forest. He wasn't shot at and he still had a small pistol. Slowly, groups from Pruzany started gathering. He had no food, but other people did. He only had a backpack with a knife, a little salt that his mother gave him for luck that he would stay alive.
- 7.49.30 Came to a group of Jews that were very happy he had a pistol. They said he should come with them. Yaakov and Rosenbasum and his family told Yisrael not to go with the group because they would take his gun and leave him. Israel believed them and went with the Rosenbaums who had a little flour which they said they would mix with snow. They went further to the middle of the forest. They came to a small hut that had Jews from all over. There were 20 people there. They gave them food.
- 7.53.02 Within a few days, the local police found out there were people there. Everyone was sleeping in the hut, and they threw explosives into the hut, and they were all killed. Yaakov Rosenbaum's 2 children were killed. He was only 40 meters from there, and when they heard the shouting, they started to run. He ran with Yaakov Rosenbaum and his wife. He traded shoes with her so she could run. They ran towards a much larger forest. There was a man who knew where they were going. The man had a bunch of people with him and they were all stronger and knew where they were going. They took his ammunition but gave him a little food. He then came to people he recognized and they knew the way. They came to another hut where there were other Jews, including Brezeritzki, who is now one of the big judges in Israel, and is a friend of the head of the kneset [Shianski]. But he said he had no room for them in the hut because he had women, children and sick who needed his help. They were from Kosov and other places. Elka Rotenberg was also there. They stayed there until they said that in Janina [Yanina?, a small town]. Partisans are coming and they could make a

connection with them.

8.02.00 Went to look for partisans in Yanina and Israel worked in the street. They found the house because there were sleighs outside with horses. They knocked on the door and found the partisans were drunk. When the partisans realized who they were and Pruzanians told partisans they were interested in a relationship with them. Partisans had revolvers. They showed them then, where the partisans were staying. After a while the partisan officer came and divided them into groups of people with and without ammunition. Israel was amongst the ones who didn't have ammunition. They came to a place with a bunch of huts and they gave the people ammunition who didn't have any, and they said that they were now the partisans called 'Keerov' - your officer is Phizienko. In his hut, there were about 15-20 people. They were 1 km from the edge of the forest. The town of Liskovo was 3 km from the forest. They had to stay there. He got hot real food there, and was very happy about it. They only lit the stove at night so the smoke wouldn't give them away. They would all smoke from the same cigarette. He was happy to be amongst Russian friends. People made connections to how they knew each other in the political parties in Pruzany.

8.12.35 The Russians in the group would shoot people who were outside the framework of Zionism. They would take off their clothes and shoot them. They were like a continuation of the communist party, and anyone outside would be shot.

8.16.50 They stayed there for a week, then got an order to leave there. They ran into the forest because the German army was coming. The Ukrainians and the Belarussians were coming too. There were always guards watching out. When they heard shots, they knew the Germans were coming. This was at the end of Feb. '43. They organized, and Israel was given a revolver and a grenade and everyone was given jobs. They were standing in the west. They divided into groups on a street. They hid behind a bush, and when the Germans came they would shoot them. They all called him 'Lofka', not Israel. They had to wait for hours, and it was snowing. They knew the Germans were in bunkers near there.

8.28.00 All of a sudden there was shooting from all sides. They couldn't see them because it was snowing. He had never had to shoot before, and he didn't shoot. Everyone went back after it was over to tell what happened. Everyone was cleaning their guns, and he didn't. The officer asked him why he didn't shoot and Israel said 'But I didn't

- see any Germans'. It was snowing. They immediately took him to the headquarters to watch him, and he said he was sorry. He they prayed, and went to sleep.
- 8.34.50 In the middle of the night, they called for him. There were many well dressed men there, with stars on their belts. They asked him his biography. They, they asked why he didn't shoot. He told them it was because he didn't see the enemy. So the man, head of the communist party, from Bresofsk then rebuked the head of the partisan group for not telling Israel what to do. He then told Israel that if others are shooting in the direction of Germans, he should also because the purpose is to make the Germans panic, not to kill them. They gave him back his gun.
- 8.38.05 Next to this leader was the Doctor Smolenski, who was the head doctor of the partisan brigade. There were 4 sections to the brigade. In every group, there were 253 men. Describes more asbou people in the room.
- 8.39.35 Living in forest was like living as an animal.
- 8.40.18 One day, the whole group of soldiers named 'Kiruf', stood in one line. Fisienko, the head, told them to take the bullets out of their guns.
- 8.42.00 Stories of people who were shot by the partisans because of things they did wrong. Commander etc. They would remove their official things - belt, medals, etc.
- 8.47.50 Because of this, they felt they were living with the Soviet police under a lot of discipline. But Jews were treated equally. People who could help were put in places no matter who they were [Jews or not].
- 8.49.27 He was in 'Kiruf' for half a year, and then he was put in 'Dimitriyov' [Talked with him, commander, after the war - head of 'Dimitriyov'].
- 8.51.28 There were groups of partisans who didn't fight - they were groups of families, and doctors, too.
- 8.52.00 It was very hard for him to watch Dr. Smolerski do operations on the wounded. They didn't have real anesthesia, and they would have to have operations without it.

- 8.53.40 Some people who were really heavily wounded would be brought to the airport. The airport was on a field in the middle of the forest. There were partisans guarding it. they got a plane to come - it was the property of the Russians and it would come in the middle of the night, and there were markers to show it where to land. Only flew in good weather.
- 8.56.13 THere were many different groups of people who tried to come and harm them - Germans, Hungarians, local police, Ukranians, Belaruusians, Kroatians, Slovakiens, Romanians, Latvians and Estonians. They knew because they captured them. They would bomb the partisans. Israel was often part of getting rid of spies and enemies who came. They would bring them to the headquarters.
- 8.57.55 The hardst thing they had to do was bring a train off the tracks. There was a big mine. Germans knew where bombs were coming from. The Germans had cut down all trees close to train tracks, so they could see them from far away.
- 9.03.00 Brought with them 8 kilo of explosives. They only got to the place where they had to at night. At the last minute they got orders but it was vey hard to get to the train tracks because they were elevatged and there was a gate. They had to dig a hole to get in the middle under the tracks. They put the explosive in and covered it. They didn't set it off yet becuse the Germans would always send a train car ahead to make sure everything was fine. It was always watched very carefully.
- 9.07.30 KThey were alwasy concerned about who would get hurt from this because they didn't want the people of the village near there to be harmed. The Germans would burn the village if they thought they were responsible.
- 9.09.46 The train tracks were a very strategic place to hurt the Germans. Many groups of people tried to do it. They sometimes would sit for two days in horrible weather waiting to bomb.
- 9.13.25 Because the forests were pretty far from the tracks, they had to figure out a place where they could run to. They had to go throught areas, and pass houses.
- 9.14.33 They had to wait til a specific time to bomb, and it was very scary. Some people would panic if they heard Germans but the real problem was the dogs. They had to destroy the string thast was

- connected to the bome becuse tghey didn't want the Germans to know which side they came from. To leave, they had to run 10 km. After, they could rest and find a village that would give them food and drink. People would drink a lot. They never knew the outcome of their bombing.
- 9.18.50 There were times when people would drink a lot and people would realize they were partisans.
- 9.19.45 They would always go to villages to get ammunition from villagers who had hid it when the Soviet army left it behind. Sometimes they had to threaten the villagers to give them the ammunition and clothes, boots and work things.
- 9.22.20 Once they would do a big thing like boming the trains, they would come back and rest.
- 9.25.00 KThey would also try to bomb the train tracks [not just the trains]. There were little bags of explosives they put between the track. The first bomb would set off the rest.
- 9.30.00 S[ecofocs pf tje explosives they used.
- 9.34.00 Describes specifics of grooups of soldiers.
- 9.35.04 They went back to Malch [Germans had killed Matis] amd waited for an olrder. Head of police in Malch was Vasili. He had a Russian man working for him who had been captive until May '43. This man would give them details of things.
- 9.38.35 KThey would make Israel guard the village because they knew he wouldn't drink and he could help others.
- 9.39.10 They had a job to free people who had been traitors to the Germans.
- 9.40.10 Withe the partisans, there were no laws and justice. Your friend or enemy could shoot you.
- 9.40.30 Their clothes situation was very bad. In the beginning, they had nowhere to wash themselves and their clothes had lice, and they were in their clothes and it would kill people.[?] They would have to burn their old clothes. There were always living things on them.

- 9.42.45 After, there was a siege of all their enemies and they had to hide in the trees. It was a miracle he stayed alive. The families had a harder time. This was at the end of the summer in '43. He stayed in a tree for a day and a half.
- 9.46.00 The main people who were part of the partisans, from summer of '43 until the end were: captives who fled, locals who didn't want their children sent to Germany, Jews, Polish who didn't agree with the Germans.
- 9.47.20 The situation of the Jews at that time was interesting. They would use skin of birds for the boots. they almost had a factory for this. There were skilled people who could make clothes from lambs and birds.
- 9.49.00 Describes how they built a washhouse.
- 9.50.45 There were bakers who were able to bake bread in the forests.
- 9.51.45 There were many Jews in the family groups. There were many ages in these groups. Israel's group would have to go hunt for food, but the family groups would watch and guard a lot. Throughout the whole length of the camp, there were people guarding to see if Germans were coming. There was one guy with binoculars and others guarding. There were many wild animals around them but they were afraid of fire, so the partisans chased them away. Horses helped them a lot because they would go through the forests easily, through far distances, even in the dark.
- 9.58.15 This was how everything stayed until July '44.
- 9.58.33 There were many complaints sent to the Americans, English and French because it was so late! Why weren't they doing anything to save the Jews in the camps?
- 9.59.30 He would go tell the family groups what was going on and he would love to sing with them.

TAPE IV

- 10.01.10 In the family group, French, there were 30 Jews. They would always gather and argue, but they would never hate each other. They would sing together. They would also make food for everyone. They also knew when the holidays were. The family was in the middle, and the rest of the groups were around.

- 10.04 Names people with different jobs in the groups.
- 10.05.40 They also had some Germans with the partisans whom the partisan had taken captive. They would help the partisans do things in German.
- 10.07.45 Some partisans were brought to the Russian army to be trained how to fight the Germans.
- 10.08.20 Nobody ever left their ammunition. It was always near them.
- 10.09.18 In July there were many fights between Germans and partisans in the west.
- 10.10.31 Only July 14, '44, they found the Russian army. They were in the forest for a few more days and Maxim, the head of the anti-fascist committee. He gathered everyone from the groups and divided them into what kind of partisan they were - he was in the 3rd group.
- 10.13.10 They told everyone who lost their loved ones to raise their hands. Israel did, and they were being sent to fight with the Russian army. The rest of the people who had families, went to find a place to live.
- 10.15.50 He got to the Russian troops and they were organizing to add people to the army. There were 3,000 people. They all got new clothes and ammunition. There were many Jews he met. He said he was from Lodz, and they said maybe he should join the Polish army instead, and this caused problems.
- 10.18.00 The person in charge of the reserves [battalion] was Jewish said they needed some of the people to go to the Polish army but people didn't want to because the Russian army was bigger and safer. They thought they wouldn't die.
- 10.19.38 They traveled thousands to T_____
- 10.20.25 Tells his exact position in the army.
- 10.21.08 They got to the city of Prague. Their battalion was full.
- 10.21.50 Their battalion was almost gone by the time they got there. Each battalion would take care of a specific place, but they were

- hungry and waited for food. there were all different troops and groups trained for different things. All of this was in October and November '44. Their job was to wait in their place on the borders of Russia.
- 10.27.15 They were brought to Vishkuff for a while, in the north. They were trying to go through the water. They looked on maps to see which places they could pass through. Couldn't stop in water while crossing because it was like quicksand.
- 10.29.00 They had to cross at night, and it was very hard because you can't see where you are going. Around 50 people crossing with their ammunition and food reserves. The different groups crossing were connected by telephones with with wires and they would call to tell the group behind them their situation. They didn't hear shooting. He went through by foot with his ammunition up by his head. Many people didn't make it across.
- 10.33.25 The banks were very high, and it was hard to get out. They were supposed to capture the trenches of the Germans, and the Germans put up a big fight - sent rockets [?].
- 10.34.22 Story of friend dying next to him.
- 10.35.00 The mainthing for everyone, was to keep their heads covered; that was the important part.
- 10.36.39 They saws the shooting camps and heard the shots of the Germans. The Germans thought there were a lot of them coming, and they ran, so the Russian armyh was able to take their palces there.
- 10.37.25 Germans tried many times to get them, but could never penetrate the front line.
- 10.38.20 Sometimes his gun would shoot and sometimes it wouldn't.
- 10.38.40 Finally, help came in the morning from another battalion. Everyone was praying in different languages. Israel said in Hebrew what he remembered from his mother.
- 10.40.00 Stayed there for 7 days. 300 people came who had been in jail - people who stole, etc. They joined the front line and they were just bodies. They were a group of convicts.

- 10.41.20 They went to 'Lita', which was in the north. They got to the first German town Austpraisen. They waited there for 3 months. Their job was to bring Germans to their side - dead or alive. This was what they did before the big conflict.
- 10.43.07 There was a person who stood watch on the whole front that was an open area of a few kms. The area was filled with mines, and the ground was covered in snow. To pass, they had to uncover the mines. They also wanted to find where there were the most Germans.
- 10.44.50 On the 13th or 14th of January '45 they went into Prussia on the east side. They all got some provisions to take with them.
- 10.46.15 They all knew they were going to attack. They got the order to go in. They went in with tanks, but it was slow because they had to first uncover the mines. Every km, there were 300 cannons. Going in, they thought nobody would live. They were firing!
- 10.48.35 The Germans fired at them like nothing you have ever seen. Everyone was fighting for their lives. There are stories of great strength and heroism, but he didn't see any of that. An order is an order, so they all had to fight.
- 10.51.40 Names all cities they were able to penetrate, and the Germans were fighting with all their might.
- 10.53.00 Talks about how they were organized in going to war.
- 10.53.38 He was always with the commander of the battalion. The commander had connections with others and he knew they were in a dire situation because the Germans were fighting so hard. The Russian army were throwing their ammunition and running as soon as they could. So, because of this, Israel was given the order [along with others] to stop the men from running at all costs. People who ran would have to be killed, so others would see and stop running. So they had to kill many soldiers to keep the Germans from breaking the front line. The commander of the battalion was killed. The Russian army had tanks with them. The Germans would shoot the tanks. Officers would come out of the tanks on fire.
- 10.57.00 Despite all this, the Russian army was successful in strengthening the line. But after this, the Germans wouldn't give another inch.

- Why? IN Auspreizen they got many people to help them.
- 10.58.00 Germans killed Gernerl Chernikovski - story of him killed on way to Vilna and how Israel went back there where he died.
- 11.03.00 [Before they had gone into Prussia, Israel was appointed to be a translater from Russian into German. So when they had German captives, they could interview them, etc. He would translate and also yell at the Germans to stop shooting, etc. They were getting orders to go inside, and sometimes tghey got confused and killed each other.]
- 11.06.55 Israel was on the front line, very close to the enemy because he knew German but he had to be careful because they might shoot when they heard him.
- 11.09.00 There was no order or justice on the front. Only when the backup came was there order.
- 11.09.40 Israel was against all these things, immoral behavior, that weren't right. For this, he suffered. They would torture women who were captured. They wanted Israel to talk to these women and Israel didn't want to.
- TAPE IV
- 11.13.40 Israel was injured. How? He was sitting under a tree, and the Germans fired and he was hit in the back on his right side. It felt like a hot place, and he didn't think it hurt. When people told him he was bleeding he ran to be halp. They sent him quickly back.
- 11.15.00 Explains who and when they would torture women, and raid houses.
- 11.17.00 The people who were captured were all different. They got orders to capture whoever was in their way. They went into houses and took whatever they wanted. People took things but Israel didn't. He only wanted to stay alive.
- 11.18.45 Talks about his wife's family and what happened to them during the war.
- 11.20.00 They always wanted to avenge and retaliate but Israel had Jewish blood and it was hard for him because he knew it was not allowed to kill people, according to the Torah. But when he was

- with the partisans he got used to it.
- 11.20.45 In the Russian army there was a lot more discipline. Your commander was like your god.
- 11.21.12 The order was to fight; a lot of times they needed to retaliate. He killed people when necessary.
- 11.22.50 Describes beauty of Baltic Sea when his battalion reached it. There were strong platforms and families trying to run from the Soviet army onto boats. There were piles of dead people from the bombing the Soviets did, and that made them happy because they had been revenged.
- 11.27.00 Tells all the places they went through to get to the Baltic Sea. They didn't meet any Germans but the ones they did meet, they killed. But if families came out with their arms in the air, they didn't kill. They kept going forward. They didn't differentiate the kind of person they were killing. If they were German, then they shot them. He was looked at as an enemy. It was out of revenge. They were responsible for his family. Where were they?
- 11.309.20 There were Jews who had escaped the Germans who tortured the captured Germans for revenge.
- 11.32.00 When they captured Germans they would ask them who was collaborating with them, and the Germans would point them out, hoping to stay alive because of it, and they were kept alive.
- 11.32.22 Most of these collaborators wanted to escape the Russians by way of the Baltic Sea.
- 11.34.00 Israel was responsible for making sure his battalion got where they needed to go.
- 11.34.30 Names different commanders who were in charge of different groups.
- 11.35.30 Israel's group of 54 men was sent to Berlin and they were called 'Berlinskaya'. They got to Breslau in April of '45. They got a lot of opposition there, and many soldiers were killed on the way to Berlin.
- 11.37.06 On April 14, when they first attacked Berlin, his wife's brother was killed. They haven't been able to find his grave?

- 11.38.16 On May 3, '45, he got into Berlin. They saw it was the end of the Germans. There was a huge attack on them. There were planes, tanks, etc. from 3 sides. He went by foot into the city. He went to the main street [Friederstrasseff?]. The houses were rubble and filled the streets. Nobodyh knew anything. They raided and sent things to their familis. Berlin were captured. They then went to Prague. On the way, there was almost no fighting. They were greeting with singing and food. This was on the 8th of May, and it was the last day of war.
- 11.42.26 There were still lmany groups who had to deal with the collaborators of the Germans. They had been running toward France, England and America, where nobody was waiting to kill them. The Russians captured them, but Israel didn't know what they did to them. [Smirsh - people in army who dealt with traitors and collaborastors.]
- 11.47.28 As a translator, he was sent to speak with the other allies. But he wasn't there for long, and soon he went back to his battalion, which was 18 km from Prague, in the woods.
- 11.48.30 There were still problems because some Russians were robbing and stealing from people and it was a disgrace to the Russian army.
- 11.50.05 He was there for a month. Some of the Smirsh would take women into apartments. Once Israel went and actually slept in a bed, and he had nightmares. The officers around him had to wake him and tell him the war was over, and not to worry.
- 11.51.46 He wanted to go to a diplomatic school in Leningrad to study foreign languages. There were representatives of all kinds of things there. However, the Smirsh ran after him because he was against bringing them women to force who were collaborators. He tried to speak to the women, but they wouldn't talk. This was a very bad time for him.
- 11.55.05 They also captured citizens and Germans from Lodz. [At that time he was 20 years old.] Smirsh got him not to go to school, so he had to continue with the Russian army. The army wopuld now have to leave and go to Belarus.
- 11.56.45 He got a letter from Dr. Smolenski, who was the head doctor of the partisans. He was in Brest-Litovsk with Elka Rutenberg [Israel's friend]. They were going to try to cross the border into Poland. They

said they were running to Lodz.

- 11.58.37 When they were on their way [Russian army]. they had to cross Czechoslovakia and they would go 40 km a day by foot. One time, a motorcycle came and called him to the headquarters. He knew this was bad. Why?
- 12.01.00 There were many cases of people leaving the Russian army to join the English or another army, and they must have thought he was a traitor.
- 12.03.00 This motorcycle brought him to a place and made him take off his uniform and give in his guns. He had to give his medallions from all the places he was - from every attack and battle they had gotten things.
- 12.06.35 He asked why they were doing this, and they said, 'if you don't know, we will tell you'. This man was one of the Smirsh people he recognized. They interviewed him and asked him what he had done and asked him where he thought he would go now, and what political parties he was a part of when he was little. But what he said to them didn't help. They made him stand and they said he would sign a couple of things, and he said he would stay and live in Poland. He didn't know how he all of a sudden became a traitor or when; he had never said a word against the Soviets.
- 12.14.25 They took him to a place after walking for a day with others they thought were traitors and they made him dig a trench, and then investigated him thoroughly and wouldn't give him anything to eat or drink. They wouldn't let him wash, either. This was so bad, it made him not want to live. Everyone else was singing and dancing and free and he was chained. His friend Shayik asked him where he was going and Israel didn't answer him. They made him do the same thing again the next day. He would have to dig a trench again and go through an investigation.
- 12.17.50 They asked him questions. There was a Jewish man who asked him questions, and he was more comfortable with a Jew, so he told him all about his family. This Jewish man didn't want to fight, so he stayed with the investigators. His family was in Kazakhstan. The other man investigating him was very nice to him and they spoke like friends. These people seemed to be just asking questions; it didn't seem like they were looking for a basis to blame him. But they were. There were two other people along with him being investigated.

One didn't want to use a gun, and the other was suspected of collaborating with the Germans.

- 12.22 He told them his mother was in a ghetto in Lodz and they asked him how he stayed alive. He told them, but they didn't believe him and kept looking for incriminating things.
- 12.23 These people in the Smirsh [investigators] had a daily quota of amounts of people they had to put in jail.
- 12.24 In the middle of the night, Israel decided that he had to either choose to live or choose to die. He couldn't manage where he was if he wanted to live, he had to run. They were in Poland and it was 210 km to get to Lodz. He decided to run. He ran towards the forest, which was close. It was beginning to be daylight. The forest, like in Belarus, was not very dense and he ran between the trees. Very quickly, they realized he was gone and they ran after him. They saw his tracks and his lantern, and caught him. They started to lash him. They slammed a gun on his head. But then a general came and said not to kill him. They brought him to a carriage with horses and tied his hands to it. Like this, they got to Russian territory. He tried to talk himself out of his situation but it didn't help. They brought him to white Russia on the same road that led to Bronovitch, Brest, Goren - where the 54th division's tribunal was. They were judged and Israel didn't have a lawyer. They asked him questions like he was a traitor. There were 2 witnesses there [his investigators]. They told him to sign and he did because he didn't have the strength to fight them. They told him he was guilty and gave him his letter of guilt. He has it now because he called the institution to get a copy.
- 12.39 Reads his letter of guilt.
- 12.42 Then they let him wash himself and then brought him to Sludsk, which was 80 km from the border of Poland. He was a Polish citizen, but they didn't care. He had made a promise to the Russian army, and that was it. They threw him into jail where there were about 30 other people. He was still wearing his soldier clothes and they knew he was a soldier. There was a small window, and he saw a bird and was jealous of it because it was free. He thought he should have already gone back to his mother in Lodz. All the people around him were really traitors! Why was he with them? He also saw an old man walking and was jealous of him.
- 12.46 After a week, they brought them to a much larger jail with 1,500

people, called Orsha. They brought them in train cars specifically for prisoners. The jail was full of people who were robbers, and had done horrible things. Some of these people, jail was there home. It was fine for them because they were brought food and clothing, etc. He had to do work outside. These robbers had rules, and things had to go their way. There were 300 prisoners in one room. The precious thing was bread but they had other foods there. Everyone slept sitting. He would hide his bread under his shirt so nobody would steal it from him. He would save his bread and the people who ate their bread quickly would steal other people's so he had to be very careful. If someone stole bread, they were not considered a civil person. Everyone was hungry. [During the attacks a civil person would help the wounded cover their wounds and find a safe place, and then they would be regarded as friends, but there were very few civil people like this.]

12.55 There was one Jew there who helped him a lot. He was the head of the food warehouse and he let Israel work there with him a year and a half. This Jew had more rights than a regular prisoner. But then his extra rights were taken away, and then they brought Israel back to the room with the 300 prisoners.

1.57 They then sent Israel to Novosade which was like a hospital camp where there were wounded people close to dying. It was a big room with many sick people in beds. There were 200 sick people. He met there the brother of someone famous, who were thought to be traitors.

12.59 One time, the son of someone he knew in Russia brought him a package of things, and they said they were doing everything they could to get him free.

TAPE V

13.01 The boy told him that they had tried to go to many institutions in Russia and had tried very hard to get him out. Everywhere, they got very negative answers.

13.02 He would have conversations with the Jews in the hospital about the Jewish nation and other things. It was very sad because everyday, about 40 people died. His job there was to watch over a bunch of men, but he wanted to be sent back to Orsha, and he was. He was there for a month. From there, they were sent on train cars to many places. Names places.

- 13.08 Finally, they were brought to a huge camp full of prisoners. This was already in '47. He had been in Belarus in prison for 2 years already. This camp was in Boday Bo. Everyday they would have to work - worked in mines, mining gold. He did this for a half a year. Describes his jobs. 300 men did this. If you did your job very well, you got extra food. If you did really well, they gave you a day off.
- 13.18 He worked in mining until '52 - a bit less than 5 years.
- 13.20 He knew somewhat what was going on in the west because they did get newspapers. He also heard about when Israel became a State and it was like a holiday. It encouraged them because they knew their nation was alive.
- 13.22 Story of one of his friends.
- 13.24 He told his friends there that he learned a lot of Hebrew learning [Mishna, Gemorah, about the holidays, etc, as easily as he could.
- 13.25 Everyone he knew in the camp helped him leave the camp by giving him money. He then used a lot of the money to buy them things.
- 13.26 He got to Boday Bo, and they said he could work in mining if he wanted to as a free man, but he didn't. He then went on a plane and a train to Moscow, and he was watching around him because he wasn't allowed to have as much money as he did. He didn't want anyone to notice him.
- 13.28 He got to Boronovich, but he wasn't allowed to live there, and he was told to leave. He had to figure out how to get the rights of a citizen. He didn't have a passport. Whenever he tried, they wouldn't let him. He then found a Jew who wanted to help him, who was in charge of passports. He said if you get your birth certificate and that you went to school in Malich, you can get a passport. All this occurred over a year and a half. He had to live in a different place every night so they wouldn't catch him. [He wasn't allowed to live in Boronovich.] Once, they caught him and he told them that if they think he should be put in jail, they can, and if he should be a citizen, then let him live like everyone else! Finally, he got a new passport for 5 years.
- 13.36 He met a girl, Miriam, who worked at a bank and they got married, and he finally felt the love he had had with his mother and family

before the war.

- 13.37 When he got his passport, he decided to move to Botroysk [a city] and start his life anew. He bought a small apartment with Miriam and his mother-in-law.
- 13.41 He always wanted to hear about the state of Israel. Miriam had brought a radio with them and he would listen to the news in Yiddish and he would list it all in Russian to bring to Russian Jews he knew there. There were many different kinds of people in this city because it was new.
- 13.43 On his 30th birthday, he had a party for all his friends and he taught them 'Hatikva' - the Israeli anthem. He stayed up for a long time listening to the news about the war in '56.
- 13.44 He always still thought people might be after him, but he was already accepted into this town, so he was okay.
- 13.46 He heard from 2 people that they were from Poland, and that they were going back. Israel wrote a letter to the city of Lodz and they sent him his birth certificate so he could go back to Poland, but his wife and mother-in-law were Russian. His wife and mother-in-law were able to go on as Russian citizens and they all went to Boronovich to go to Poland. When they got to Poland, they went to Lodz and found the records of what happened to his family. His mother and brother [and father?] were brought to chelmno and gassed. He then went and found the graves of his family, even his grandmother who had died of Dyynteria in the ghetto. He then found out he had an aunt who survived and was living in Israel. He then realized he wanted to move to Israel. They traveled to Vienna, then to Italy, where they stayed for a month and then went on a boat to Haifa. It was especially hard for them because his wife was pregnant at the time, but they got there in October '57. First place they went to was Ramat Yeshay. Saw that this was the place to stay and bring up a new generation of Jews.
- 14.12 Wasnts to remember all the children and people who died and the strength of the partisans and Soviet army. You cannot erase the sacrifices of the Soviets.
- 14.16 Worked his whole life in Israel. In Tel Aviv and worked for his Uncle Avner. Worked until '94. Tells were he lived and worked in Israel until today.

- 14.18 Has 2 children: Yankele who is in the army and did other things until he married and had 2 children and describes his job now. Daughter Aliza - talks about her.
- 14.21 Talks about what his wife has done. Right now they are both retired.
- 14.22 Last year, he went and visited the places he fled and was with the partisans, and had a reunion with them. Went back with 11 people. Talks about Malch and how they died, and what they did to remember them.