

--under a bush. And it was foggy, very, very foggy. But I could see in the distance the black shape. I realized that must be his stable at the end of the village.

So I thought, all right. I'll wait until it gets dark and then I'll make for this place. And as I'm waiting, sitting there, a rabbit hops right in front of me and stops. He goes away and stops, comes back again. So I was a little boy. So what do I do? I start following the rabbit. I forgot my danger. And I think, let's try and catch the rabbit. And every time I nearly catch him, he runs away.

So I stop and sit down, and he comes back again. And this went on for between 3/4 of an hour to an hour. And this went on. And he would not let me catch him, but he would not leave me alone. He would come back if I stopped. Eventually, I realized it's dark. So I went closer to this black thing. And it wasn't a stable. It was-- I don't know how you call it in English. In White Russian, it was [RUSSIAN].

It was a big lorry that the Germans just used to carry Jews mostly. They would reverse the exhaust, so it came into the car, into the van. And by the time you go to your destination, you were dead. And they obviously stopped there because it was foggy. So they stopped until the fog clears.

So I quickly run away from there. I found her stable. It was about 200 yards away. And I told her this story, whatever. So she said to me, somebody up there is watching you and somebody sent that rabbit to bring it to my house, and not to that place. I can never explain it. But that's a fact.

Who told you that this was the [RUSSIAN]?

Well, I could recognize it when I got close to it.

How did you recognize it?

It has a big, big exhaust, and it's movable. I was close to it.

Did you ever see such a truck driving around?

Yeah, I so such a truck going past from Koldychevo way towards Baranowicze. Because our house was on the crossroads. And I remember my father telling somebody in the house, he said [RUSSIAN].

So you recognized it only by the exhaust or were there other signs?

No just from the exhaust. And I saw it when my father noticed it. Right? He said, look this is [RUSSIAN]. I saw what it looked like. It's a big, square, black van, lorry, with the exhaust that was big. And you can turn it around and it goes inside the bus, inside the van.

So that was a lucky escape.

Windows?

No, no windows. No windows at all. And it's got two big boilers on the side of the cabin, where the drivers are. It's got one on left, and one on the right. I don't know what they were for. But that's how I recognized that it's the same as I saw going through. Now that was one of the times that I went there back to Mrs. Tereza. I stopped at her place.

Just a moment. Let's talk for a second, please.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

No, he-- Jelizaveta [NON-ENGLISH]

Oh yeah. I'm talking Hebrew.

OK. It doesn't matter. Switch to English.

If we had to cross the town, I used to get dressed in Elizabeth's clothing. And we would go out together. And I would be on one side of the street, and she would be on the other side of the street. And we had a ball we used to throw to each other. I would throw the ball to her, and run forward. She'd catch the ball then throw it to me, and then she'd run forward.

Now, if the ball dropped you had to go down on one knee. So anybody looking at us, there were two little girls playing ball. And we'd get right across the street. And from there onwards, there would be somebody waiting for me at the end of the village. And they would take me further. And Elizabeth would go back.

And this particular time when I came back to Tereza, this is the part where Fedorenko comes into it.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

If somebody looks at too much, what are they doing? They're playing ball, two little girls. I had a babushka. And we used to play that. And this worked more than once it worked.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

That's right. And then somebody would take me further to another place and stay there maybe two weeks. And what happens was I didn't show myself a lot. But you can't be closed up all the time. And somebody would notice me, and they'll ask the person, who is that? My cousin. They sent their son for a couple of weeks from the town.

And then I would have to go back to Mrs. Tereza. And when I got back this time, I said she had the piano. And she used to play the piano. And this Fedorenko who was an SS man, and he was especially trained this man. He wasn't just an ordinary. They sent him to Germany for training.

He also-- he thought he could sing. So since she had the only piano in the town, he came to practice singing. Now that is when I was under the bed. The piano was there. The bed was here. And I was underneath right at the edge.

And Fedorenko used to come and sit on the bed, his boots in my nose, and he used to sing. Now I can even remember what he sang. I can remember the words of the song he sang.

Please, please can you?

Can I sing?

Please, please. Can you sing the song?

Can I sing?

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

So what was the song.

He used to sing a song called Zelenyi dubochek. Zelenyi is green. It's green. And dubochek is an oak tree.

It goes [RUSSIAN SINGING]

And I remember this. There were several parts of it.

Can you translate for us the words?

Yes it's Zelenyi dubochek it's a green oak tree. Why aren't you greener? Are you afraid of the drought? There's no water. Or are you feeling sorry for the earth? And that dubochek answers, draft I'm not afraid of. The earth I'm not sorry for. But where you don't plant me, there I can't grow.

And Tereza was--

Playing the piano.

--playing the piano for him. And why did he come there to practice?

Because she had the only piano in the village.

Yes.

Nobody else had a piano.

But what-- did he have any plans concerning his singing?

No. He didn't think of it. I mean I don't know if he would have killed me or not. But I couldn't take the chance. No, no, no. He was a friend of my father's.

I understand. I'm asking something else. What was his motivation?

For coming there?

For coming there and singing.

Several. Number one, as I told you Mrs. Tereza was a very attractive woman. Number two, he thought he could sing, but he couldn't. He was nearly as good as me. And he wanted to show off his uniform, his jackboots. It's a big step for them.

Anyway, he came twice I think when I was there.

So you were under the bed?

I was under the bed. And all I had to do was to sneeze and that's the last of me. And not only that, he was so heavy that he was squeezing my head.

But that's all past. And then afterwards, she sent me to another place and another place. She sent me to one place in Baranowicze. It was a family, a husband and wife and a little girl.

Now, what I didn't know, who they were. She obviously knew. So when she sent me there and I was there, where I came first week. And she said, oh, this evening my father is coming to visit me. So don't worry. He'll know. He knows who you are.

Her father was the first commandant of the police station in Stolowicz. So you can imagine my heart. But of course, he couldn't do anything because it was his daughter. If he said anything, his daughter would be shot as well.

Anyway, after about two or three days there, they got a little bit afraid. And they took me. He said, I'm taking you to a place at the end of the town. And we have to go when it's dark. Of course, it's very dangerous. Baranowicze is full of police and Germans. And after 7 o'clock, 7:30, when it gets dark, there is a-- I've forgotten the word.

Curfew?

Curfew. But then we made our way all the way to the end of the town without anybody stopping us. And now, even in Baranowicze, although it was a big town. There was no toilets inside the house. The toilet was outside. So he said to me, you go and sit in the toilet. And I'll tell the people you're here. Anyway, I'm in the toilet. He goes away. Half an hour, an hour. He went home. He just left me, abandoned me.

He didn't take me to the Germans but it just left me. Anyway, the way the men came out from the house. He said, you are to get out of here. If you don't get out of here, I'll call the police. So I think he told them that I was in the toilet.

So I was thrown out of the toilet in the middle of the night. It was already dark. So I'm looking for a place where I can go. And I found one farm. There was a farm. There was a stable there. I went in the stable. And that there was horses there. But I couldn't find another door. In other words, there was a way in, but there was no back door. And I never stayed anywhere where there was only one door. Because if somebody comes in you, you've got nowhere to run away.

So I went out. In the middle of the yard was a haystack. You know what a haystack is, big haystack. I climbed up on this haystack, and I went to sleep. In the middle-- it must have been-- I don't know-- 3:00 or 4 o'clock in the morning, there was terrible noise. There was cars. There was lorries.

I woke up. I noticed two things. I had a hole in my-- I had a coat, a heavy coat. There was a hole right through. And I looked with the stables. And there's police everywhere there. They emptied the stables, took all the horses out and everything. Obviously, somebody saw me and reported it to the police. And they came looking for me. And they didn't find me because I wasn't inside. I was in a haystack, and what was in my that hole, the Germans were poking it with a bayonet. And it went right through my coat. I was asleep.

They got tired of searching. There was nobody there. They went away. And the right next to me was the pavement where people were walking. They were walking right past me. And I slipped down. And I walked away. And nobody saw me. Nobody looked at me. Nobody stopped me. I just walked away. And made my way back to Mrs. Tereza. Again, I cannot explain it, how they didn't see me. There is no explanation.

And it was only a miracle that you weren't punched by the bayonet.

Only a miracle. As a person said to me was before, somebody upstairs is looking after you. So I decided somebody was looking after me. And I said to Mrs. Tereza, enough of this hiding. I am going to go away. This is me talking. I was about what? 10, 11, maybe.

I'm going to go away, a long way away from here, where nobody knows me. And I mean that's not difficult in Russia, because there was no transports or anything. So if you went 20 kilometers away, it would be a miracle if somebody recognized you.

So we sat down and we wrote a story that my name was Henry Rzdanjuk. Rzdanjuk is a typical sort of goyish name. Right? That my parents were killed in the bombing. And I'm on my own with no family. And I'm looking for somewhere to sleep and something to eat. And I'm willing to work.

So I went to a place called Zalesie. Now the first one was Zaosie. This was Zalesie. It means after the forest.

How did you get there?

How did they go there?

You went on your own?

Yeah. I was ready by then what you called streetwise. I knew my way about. I learned not to be afraid. I was terrified,

but I wasn't afraid. And I knew never to run away from somebody. If you see a German, don't run away from him. You go towards him, like I did to a German SS man. He was standing, a sergeant, on the corner of the street. And I went up to him and ask him for a cigarette.

Now, if I was to run away, straight away I would have been gone. But I went up to him. And no SS man in his right mind would think that a Jew will come to an SS man and ask for a cigarette. So he said to me, does your father know you are smoking? I said, not yet. But if you tell him, he will.

It was called chutzpah.

Real chutzpah. And he gave me a cigarette. And he gave me a light. And I said, thank you very much. And I went away. And I went to Zalesie. And there must've been about 40 or 50 houses in the village, old Belarusians, which wasn't such a good idea. But I had no choice because Belarusians and Poles don't mix together. In fact, nobody mixes them together.

And I found a farmer who had three daughters and no sons, and he wanted a shepherd boy, somebody who would take the cows and the things of the field, and then bring them back at night.

What do you mean you found? How did you find?

Knock on the door. Do you need a shepherd? So we made this deal. We shook hands on it that he would give me to eat, and he would give me a place to sleep. And I would look after his cows. Now after about two or three weeks, and by the way I wasn't Jewish. I was a goy. I was Henry Rzdanjuk. I used to go to church every Sunday. And every time I pass somewhere, I used to cross myself.

And I thought, this is easy. I mean he's got three cows and five sheep, nothing. So I went to the neighbors, about six or seven neighbors, and I made a deal with them. I will look after your cattle you'll give me a sack of wheat or a sack of potatoes, two chickens or something like that. I made six people, I got them. The stuff I got from them, I took to the [NON-ENGLISH], to the market, sold it. And bought cigarettes.

Now cigarettes, factory-made cigarettes were like gold in Russia. Because everybody used to grow their own tobacco and make it in a newspaper. There was no cigarettes as such. I would take two cigarettes every day. I would find a [NON-ENGLISH], a Christian boy. Give him two cigarettes, and he would look after all my cows. And I would do nothing. I was the boss.

So the fellow who originally took me said, you know, if I didn't know better I would say you're a Jew. So I realized that that's dangerous. I mustn't do that. And I was accepted. This is the most strangest thing by this Belarusian village as a Catholic boy. Because I knew the whole thing. I knew all the prayers. And lucky for me, there was no Catholic Church there.

So I used to go to the Protestant-- not Protestant.

[NON-ENGLISH]

[NON-ENGLISH] service there. And they didn't know that much about the Catholics. So I was never found out, what I mean.

And this was the village where you were accepted by the other children and played with them.

And I was accepted by everybody as one of us. Now the cigarettes had something to do with it. Because I had plenty of cigarettes.

So I asked you before about the method you developed in order to cope with dangerous situations. And you gave the example of-- of asking a cigarette from this German person.

Yeah, yeah.

But what you now was showing is something which is written in your memoir. What was it?

When you were a group of children, boys, mostly boys, you got to be one of them, right? Now we used to go to the fields with the cattle. And in the fields are big, with the turf is taken out, it fills up with water. But the water is black. And of course they all go swimming there. They've got no water at home. So you don't have a bath at home. You swim there. Now how do I get around this point?

Because once they see me, there's no swimming costumes. So once they see me--

They swim naked.

They swim naked. So I always made sure I was the first one in the water. While they were all busy taking their things off I was already in the water. Now if I said, no, I don't want to. I knew exactly what would happen. They would tear my clothes off me and they will throw me in the water. And of course then they'll see I'm a Jew. So I was the first one in and the last one out. While they were getting dressed, I would sort of creep out quietly, put my trousers on, get finished.

So I got away with that. And once you've done it once, then you're accepted. Nobody's curious anymore.

Now on that sort of thing, I won their confidence. And of course, with the lady of the house where I was living in, her husband used to go once every two weeks or something, sometimes more, to the market to sell any product that's left over-- eggs, milk, chickens. But being a Russian peasant, whatever he sold, and he never sold it all. He always sold half. He used to go and have a drink in the bar.

And she would get very little money for it. But when I went to the market, I never brought anything back. I sold everything. And not only that, I didn't go to the bar. So I used to bring her a lot of money.

For breakfast, we had a rule. She goes in the kitchen and she makes blinis or whatever it is. And the husband goes in first. And he has what he wants. Then the rest of the family, I was last. But being as my performance at the market was so good, I got second place. After he finished, I was next.

So you see, he did a lot of good for me. The other things we used to make a living on, was I think I mentioned it before, stealing was a way of life in Russia. If you don't know how to steal, you can't survive.

Now I got a little, I think I got too [NON-ENGLISH]. Because our house where we lived was right near a main road. And German lorries used to break down. And they used to always stop outside our house.

So while the owner, while the owner used to help the Germans fix their lorries, I would go around the lorries to see what I could steal. And in one case, I took the bullets out of a German's rifle.

And whom did you give it?

I gave it to the partisans.

You were in contact with the partisans?

They were at our house every night. Because we're on the main road. And right next to us was a forest. And this forest was, I would say about 60 or 70 kilometers long. So there was plenty of partisans there. But to steal the bullets, they couldn't get over it that I got inside this lorry. And I looked what is that thing. And his rifle was just above his head there, clipped on. So I took the magazine out. I took the bullets out and put the magazine back again.

The other thing I used to steal was tools, whatever tools I could find. In the winter, it was the best time. Because in the winter all I would do is to drop them in the snow. And the snow was about that deep. And just cover it up and when he's

gone, we would uncover it and take them out. So I was a good source of income for this man.

But of course, every time that-- oh yes, and the other thing I used to take out is petrol. Petrol we used to take a pipe, a rubber pipe, put it down in his tank, and siphon it out. But never siphon it out too much. Always leave enough so he could get away about 20 kilometers from you. And this is what you learn so quickly. It's frightening. It's frightening.

I mean I used to go into Baranowicze. And there would be cafe, people sitting drinking coffee or eating soup this happened once. I walked up to this fellow sitting and eating the soup. I said you've got a fly in there. And I put the finger in to get the fly out. He said, I'm not eating it. You had your finger in it. So he walked away. I drank it.

And my best one, my best one was, I hope you're not showing it to the police.

I am.

You are the police.

My best one was this was already the Germans were gone. We were back under the Russian regime. That was late 1945. In Baranowicze, there was a market, big market. And what you're allowed to sell in Russia is your own produce. Whatever you make yourself, you can sell it. But you mustn't sell ready-made products-- shoes, jackets. Anything that is made in a factory means you are benefiting by somebody else's work.

So I came to the market one day. And there was a fellow who had a little table. And he had shoes, about 20 or 30 pairs of shoes he was selling. So I went past him. I came back again, only I came running. I said quick, quick, quick. The KGB is behind me. They're taking everybody away. So he left his stall, and he ran with me. And we were on the other side of the thing. I came back, picked up his shoes, and-- I tell you really I was lucky. I was lucky. I was never caught.

I used to break into the dairy. There was a kolkhoz. You know what a kolkhoz is? It's a collective farm. And they had a dairy, where they put these big jugs of milk. And they turned them sour and make cheese. And I used to like sour milk. Sour milk is like our [NON-ENGLISH].

I used to break in there. I used to take one of the big jugs, drink as much as I could. Then I used to turn it over and let it spill, and put a cat in there. The cat would be eating the milk. I used to go away, because the cat got blamed for it. What else did I do? Eggs.

Eggs.

You know how to steal eggs without them knowing? You take an egg, you make two pinholes, top and bottom. And you sit drink it out, you drink it. It all comes out leaving beautiful egg like that. So you take a mouth full of water, and you fill the egg up with water and then you put it back in the henhouse. [LAUGHS]

You were an were--

I was an expert.

Expert [INAUDIBLE].

Yeah. Richard, I would like to make a stop here. OK?

Yeah.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Richard, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

On my life in Zalesie.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

OK. So I started telling you a little bit about the life in Zalesie. I was living as a Christian, a Pole, a Roman Catholic. And I was accepted by the people as such. Life in a little Russian village is an experience in itself without the war. We lived, our house was as I said, on the main road. And about 100 meters, 150 meters from where we lived, began the forest. The forest ran for maybe, I don't know, 80 or even maybe 100 kilometers. It was a huge forest.

And when the war moved on, the shooting, and the army's disturbed the wildlife in the forest. There was thousands of wolves, literally thousands. And in the summer, it wasn't too bad. But in the winter they were hungry. And they used to come to the houses. They'd steal chickens. They'd steal sheep and goats.

And I learned one or two things about wolves. For example, one wolf will not attack you. But two, you're finished. And a wolf, although it looks like a dog and it barks like a dog, he can't smell like a dog. A dog can find you because he follows your smell. A wolf can't.

And the most important thing I found that when a wolf is frightened, when you scare him, he goes to the toilet straight away. He shits himself. Now, we were the first house next to the forest. So naturally, we used to have a lot of visits from wolves. And they used to take chickens and so we would lay an ambush where well, [NON-ENGLISH], the owner and I would hide somewhere near the chickens and wait for the wolves to come.

They would come one or two, not more. Well, one day we were laying in ambush, the two of us. It was in the winter. And there was a big sledge. You know the sledge is, right? And it was standing next to the chicken house. And we went, both of us covered ourselves with straw, and we were laying there waiting for the wolves. And suddenly, we both fell asleep.

But I woke up I felt something rubbing my nose. I woke up. And it was a wolf's tail. He was in front of me and his tail was-- [LAUGHS] So what do I do? I can't speak. I was afraid. So I woke up the owner. And he woke up. And I says, wolf in front of us. So he did, without thinking, he grabbed the wolf's tail. And wrapped it around the sledge. And he held on to it. Now this frightened the wolf, scared him. And what was behind him, me and him.

So this wolf gave a pull. He left his tail behind. The tail was left in our heads. And he went away. But of course, we were both covered. So that was the light side of the thing. I mean there were light moments. We were having laughs.

Another time, we had the cow, one cow. And this happens quite often in the farms. That you train this cow to fight wolves. How do you train it? On dogs. You take a big German wolf dog and you train the cow from little not to be afraid of him, and to go for him. And this works. The cow is not afraid of a wolf. And you keep her horns sharp. You sharpen them up with a file.

And when this cow sees a wolf, she goes straight for him. I had a cow like that once. And she got the wolf and she pinned him to a tree. And she wouldn't let go until somebody came and killed him. Then she let go. Well, this same cow I was asleep in the corner. She thought I was a wolf. She picked me up by my coat on the horns, and threw me over the top. Of course I wasn't as heavy as I am today. I was a bit smaller. But that was just one experience with the cow.

The other experience, if a wolf attacks a horse, now this is very, very interesting. If there's a lot of horses which we use to have sometimes at night. And the wolf comes, the horses form a circle with the hind legs outside. So a wolf cannot come, can cannot get through there. Because if it does, he gets a hind leg kick. Well I went out once with just one horse.

So what you do when you have one horse? You tie its front legs with the rope. But it's loose, not tight, so he can move a little bit. But he can't go too far. And I must have fallen asleep or something. And suddenly, a wolf came. And it came to my horse. And the horse was very clever. He stands there with his head down, so he can't get at his throat, till the wolf was next to him. He jumped up, put the wolf between his legs and the rope. And he held him there all night until I woke up. Until the wolf was dead. So that was also an experience with animals.

So how long did you stay there?

Well, that was about the last year or year and a quarter of the war. I was in Zalesie.

And when you were there, did you have any contacts with--

Nobody. Nobody, in fact, I was so brainwashed that after the war when Mrs. Tereza sent somebody to fetch me back, I wouldn't go. Because I said I wasn't Jewish. I wasn't Richard Vanger. I am Henry Rzdajuk. And you don't know what you're talking about. It took this person three days to clean me out a little bit. And I remembered that I was really, she showed me pictures of my parents.

Who was this person?

She was a friend of Tereza's.

Tereza sent her to the village.

To the village to fetch me.

I see. And she had with her some materials.

No, I knew the person.

I know, but you say that she showed you.

Yes, she had some pictures of my father. And I recognized it. And eventually it all came back to me. But when she first came, I said, you're crazy. I'm not Jewish. Now, while I was there in this house, they had a wedding.

And one of the daughters got married. And there was a little group came to play for the dancing. And the man with the accordion used to work for my father. And he knew me very well. And I could see that he was looking at me trying to remember where he knows me from. So I thought if I give him too much time, he will get that answer.

So I took a bottle of beer, went down straight to him. And I said, good evening, [NON-ENGLISH] how are you? He said, who are you? I know you. He said, who are you? I said you've been drinking, haven't you? I said three months ago you played at my sister's wedding. And I gave him the name of a village. He said, that's right. I knew I knew you from somewhere. But I just couldn't. And it went over. And he didn't look anymore who I was. It was a close one.

I had another couple of meetings.

Why was he dangerous?

Because he would call the Germans straight away? They got a kilo of sugar or something like that for every Jew they gave up. So we were money to them. I met once or twice people who should have recognized me, but they didn't. Because every time I did that, you can't be Jewish. And I got away with it. And I say, after the war, I went back to Mrs. Tereza.

And in the meantime, she picked up two more boys, not Jewish. They were Russians whose parents were killed. One was a young little toddler, and the other one was about my age. And she was looking after them. She took them off the street. She was a sort of person who couldn't see somebody else in trouble. And we would lived there. I used to take the cows and the sheep out. And she had the goats, big goats.

Because every time I used to bend down, they used to hit me from the back. And then one day, it was in '46, my auntie and uncle with my cousin were coming back from Siberia.

And see, then you were staying with--

With Tereza.

Tereza and Jelizaveta.

Yeah, it was already there was no danger. Nobody looking for me.

And how were the relationship between you and Elizabeth then?

Fine. She tells me now that she used to resent it because there was no food. And she said, why does my mother have to pick up all the kids from the street to feed them? But of course, we would do it, at least I was working for my living. I was looking after the cows. And I used to go to the market for them.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Oh, not too bad, not too bad. And my auntie was coming back from Siberia. And they stopped in Baranowicze. The train stopped in Baranowicze. And it's about 10 kilometers from Stolowicz. My auntie knew that we were somewhere in that area. So she started asking. And eventually, she found somebody who knew Stolowicz. And she said, no, all the Jewish people were killed. And their family Vanger was killed. But there was Richard is alive, is somewhere.

So she said, where will we find Richard? They said, there's only one place in the market you'll find Richard. So she came to the market and she found me. Did she recognize you immediately?

Yes. She recognized my face she. I recognized her as well straight away.

What was her name?

Bain, Bronka Bain. She's the one who was married to a Belgian.

Yes.

And so anyway, she came over to Mrs. Tereza's house. I think she gave us some materials and some things for being so nice to me. And my father, by the way, didn't pay her anything, nothing at all.

Your father?

Some people think that maybe she was paid for, nothing at all, nothing.

How do you know?

I know. I know everything.

And my auntie took me back to Poland, to Warsaw.

How was it for you departure from Tereza

And--

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

The parting was easy, well easy. I had no more tears left in me. I couldn't cry anymore. And nothing bad could upset me. You know what I mean? From what I've been through and the amount I cried at the beginning, I was dry completely. So things like emotional about things or things didn't mean anything to me. Because I was used to seeing you today, and tomorrow one of us is dead. So it didn't really register with me that I was leaving them, not until I got to England.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

All right?

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Not until--

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

OK.

Not until I got-- but I'm jumping over one part. When I got to England I started thinking about what she did for me. Did I realize what it was that she put her life and the life of her family for me. And I used to write to her. But then I got a letter from one of her relatives asking me not to write, because I was making trouble for her with the KGB.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Tereza.

Tereza was still alive?

Tereza was alive until '52. She died in 1952. Now I stopped writing. That was about '52. When I had this letter and I stopped making contact. And I didn't have contact with them again until in 1990, when it became easy. I wrote her a letter to the same address, hoping that she's still there. And she was there. And she got my letter. And I got a postcard reply.

I immediately bought a ticket to Warsaw. And I met her in Warsaw, Elizabeth. We went there to the Russian embassy, and I got a visa straight away. Everybody else had to wait. I went in and she said, just go outside and have a coffee in the restaurant. In half an hour it will be ready. The reason was there was about 10 or 15 American people there, who tried to get visas.

And they were told to come back next week, to come back in 10 days. And I had a British passport. And I spoke Russian. And they was so pleased to hear me speak Russian that they took to me and they said, come back in half an hour. Your visa will be ready. And straight away, we got on the train the next morning. And we got to Baranowicze. I recognized the station a little bit at, the railway station. But the rest of it I didn't recognize. It had grown tremendously.

And I met her husband, her son, her daughter, two granddaughters, and one grandson. And she lived, well, you've seen their apartment. So I asked her if she is renting this or is it hers. She said, it's not mine. I couldn't afford a thing like that. I get whatever she was getting something \$25 a month or something. She said, we can't afford things like that.

So I said, can you take me tomorrow morning to where the owners of this apartment. It was a government. So we go to the next morning, and I said, how much does this apartment cost? So we worked out all the papers, 7,000 rubles. Now this was still when Russia was there, not separated. The Russians wanted to show that the ruble is better than the dollar. So for every ruble you had to pay 1 and 1/2 dollars. So it was \$10,000.

But what they didn't tell me in the office, which I found out for myself, that on the black market for \$1 you got 35 rubles. So I took \$200, went to the black market, changed it. And came back and I said, all right. When can you have

this ready? Well he said, it usually takes about a month. I said, forget it. I said, I'm going back in three days. If you can have it ready by then, you got 10%.

The next morning the telephone, Mr. Vanger, you can come around. It's all ready. So I bought this apartment that you've seen and next door there is another apartment where her son lives. Did you see that one?

No. Well it's in the next-- I bought that as well. So for \$400, and \$40 for the whoever dealing with it, I bought the two apartments. She was as pleased as anything. And I mean, I've been in contact with her. We ring her every week. And I've been there I should think three or four times. I can't remember. And I opened her an account in Warsaw, because in Belarus, she is not allowed to keep foreign currency.

And she gets approximately from me \$100 a month, which is double the pension which is getting from them. And on that, she can live there like a queen.

OK, now let's go back. You went from--

Zalesie.

No, no, from Stalowicz.

Ah.

With your--

With my auntie.

With your aunt.

To Poland.

To Poland.

OK, we go to Poland. There was, of course, nobody there. Everybody was killed, that whole family. Grandparents, uncles, cousins-- everybody was killed. And they had no home, no house, nothing. So she had a daughter which is my age, a little bit older than me. They live here in Hod Hasharon. And so her daughter and myself, she managed to get into an orphanage. You know what an orphanage is? For all the Jewish children that were left after the war.

The American Joint was financing this. And they hired some big place outside Warsaw. And this is where we lived, maybe a couple hundred children. And I was in not the oldest, but one from the oldest groups. And gradually from there, children either found somebody abroad, or they found family maybe somewhere else.

I found family in England, my father's father had a sister who left Poland in the 1900s or something like that. And she went to England. And she got married there. And she had a big family. She had children, grandchildren. Do you know England at all?

A little bit.

You heard of the Tesco stores.

Yes. You told me on our last meeting.

Right, so he-- I found out he was my uncle. So they got me over to England. I left the children's home in Poland and I came over to England living with my family. I got married there. We had two children. And now, of course, we have 10 grandchildren, and 12 [NON-ENGLISH]. So we've got a clan.

You must feel very rich. But you didn't tell us anything about the children's house in Poland.

What is there to tell about the children's house? There were all broken children. Everybody went through the same thing. In fact, there is about 20 of them living in Israel now. And every year, and we had one last Saturday, on Sukkot, we have a get-together, and we meet. And it really is like a large family. We don't have to explain anything. Whatever we tell them, we don't have to explain what it is. Because they all went through the same thing.

And the only trouble is that each year now it's getting less and less. But it's one of the nicest days that I look forward to every year, Sukkot, where we meet and we get together.

I'm holding the transcript of Jelizaveta's testimony. And she says here, that occasionally there were occasions when my mother agreed that he could go to the village. She would dress him with my clothing, and take him to the village nearby Stolowicz. [NON-ENGLISH]

That's right. I told you about, we used to play ball and get out of the town. But that was at the beginning. The last 18 months, I wasn't hiding anymore. And I didn't see Tereza anymore. And I didn't see Elizabeth, not until the war was finished. I didn't want to go back. I didn't want to have anything to do.

She also said, there was another family in a village further away. She was talking first about Mezinski and Nesterovichi, Mezinski and Nesterovichi. You remember these families?

No.

It's possible. But I wouldn't know names. And I wouldn't remember them, unless there were people who I had particular interest in.

And Staraya Mysh?

Stara--

Staraya Mysh, a name of a place.

That's the name of the place, the old mouse.

Yes. Then it was a village.

Yeah. But I was there maybe one week or something like that with somebody and then they got frightened and they told me to go. But by then I was already, as they say in Yiddish, a [YIDDISH]. I could go anywhere myself and there was no problem.

At the beginning, that was very-- that was the most frightening thing. When I used to have to come from A to B all by myself. You don't know who you're going to meet by the way. You don't know anything. And you've got to make your way there. But I got used to it. You get used to everything.

I got used to walking in the forest at night, when there are wolves, when there are all sorts of things. It didn't bother me. Because outside was more dangerous than the wolves. And you get used to it. You get used to everything. A human being can get used to everything.

There is something else that Jelizaveta is saying, and I would like to know if you can identify when this took place. She says there was another family in a village farther away. And we went there. Richard recognized one old lady, and started telling her, remember, I stayed in your house when I was a child.

OK, yeah. This is now, when I came from Israel. I went to visit her. And this is Zalesie. Zalesie. We went to this village.

And this old lady was-- is about eight years younger than me. She was a little girl of about, I don't know six or seven. And I stayed with them for about six months. I looked after their cows. And she wasn't well. She wasn't well now when I saw her.

And she said, oh, you can go and see my brother. He lives down the road. Well, I remember when her brother was born.

So this was?

In Zalesie.

After--

This was in-- no this was later in '91. This was about '96.

And she didn't recognize you?

No, she wasn't well. She didn't recognize anybody.

I see.

But I recognized the village. I recognized. The only difference in the village was they had telephone wires and electric wires. When I was there, there was nothing. You wanted telephone, you had to go five miles.

At the beginning of this conversation, you said, you will say something about Ukrainian, that was in the SS. This is--

Federov. Now what was strange about it. When I came to Israel in 1970, we came to Haifa with my car. We got off at Haifa, and I was driving to Lod. We stayed in Lod. There was a [NON-ENGLISH]. There was an emigrants club. And on the radio news, suddenly, I heard that in America Fedorenko was arrested because he went into America illegally, didn't tell them he was an SS man. And when they found it out, they stripped his citizenship, and sent them back to Russia.

That was in 1970. And apparently when he got to Russia, they took him off the plane, put him up against the wall and shot him.

How do you know this?

It was on the-- it wasn't the Russian news, so you can't tell. But that's what they said. Now this is the same Fedorenko who sat on my head with his boots in my face. It seems strange that when I get to Israel to start my new life, that is the time I hear about his downfall, it's poetic justice.

Yes. There was a short period that you were in the hiding in the house of Tereza.

Yeah.

At the beginning, very beginning. And you were together with Gittel and Jelizaveta, the three of you. Can you remember this period?

Yeah, I remember we were all three. Except that Gittel and I were usually in the stable, and Elizabeth used to bring in the food into the stable.

You were not the three of you together in the house?

No, not really.

Because Jelizaveta remembers.

But Gittel was killed within what? Two weeks, three weeks? Two weeks, I think.

Yes, but this short period Jelizaveta remembers that the three of you-- no, I wasn't there anymore.

Before she was murdered.

I wasn't there. When we came, after the first aktion, she asked us to come back in the evening when it's dark. When we got back, me, she sent straight away with Mrs. Babachynski to the Zaosie. And Gittel stayed behind. And the following day when they came for the second aktion, Gittel got killed, but I wasn't there. I didn't get back for about a month.

I see. That part, Litka got wrong. I told you she got a couple of things wrong there.

OK. You mentioned in your memories a woman that took you to a relative who was a widow with a little girl. And you say, she lives not far from the ghetto. Because I remember each morning, we used to see the lorries going out with the Jewish laborers, and then we used to see them coming back at night.

Yeah.

It's not clear to me.

The widow was Mrs. Tereza, with the little girl was Elizabeth.

This was Mrs. Tereza?

Yes.

You didn't mention her name here. And from her window, you could see the lorries with the Jewish laborers going and coming back at night. Something is not clear.

No, this is not--

The chronology doesn't make sense.

No, from her, when I was in her house there was no more Jewish laborers. No. What I could see from her house, it wasn't the window it was the crack in the stable, I could watch part of the ghetto. And I saw one or two, as I told you, I saw those two kids killed.

Yes, but--

That's from her house. But after that, there was no more Jews. You couldn't see any Jews.

Yes, but this is what you write. So something here doesn't make sense.

I can't-- this is the only thing I can think of. Because I wasn't in anybody else's house. So maybe I just said from her place I could see. I didn't say from where, from stable or from-- it wouldn't be from the house.

No. You don't say from where.

Also, even after the ghettos were finished, I used to come back to Mrs. Tereza. I would be in the loft, you know loft on top of the house. Again from a window there, I could see the ghetto, but there was no Jews there. There's no more Jews. There was you could see the Germans used to come usually on a Sunday, when people used to come out of church. And they used to take all the young people for work in Germany. I could watch them through there, no problem. But there

was no Jews.

You see, when these things, with all this writing. No, this is not for that. Sometimes I give more details and sometimes less. I can say that I've been watching through a window. But that didn't say that I was watching from a window in the stable or from the loft.

You didn't say through a window. You just said that you could see the lorries, the lorries with the Jews going to work and coming back. But this probably you saw before from some other place, not from the stable of Tereza. Because when you were the stable of Tereza--

It was already the end.

Yes, it was the end. Well, I'm going over your written memories. There are many other small episodes which we cannot go one by one.

Exactly, things come one by one. They come short little things. I mean some of them can take five minutes or even less.

Yeah.

The danger is passed and finished.

And now you are a guide in Yad Vashem. Right?

Not a guide, but a lecturer.

Not a guide, a lecturer.

Yeah.

And how often do you meet groups and tell them your story?

Whenever they need me. There's quite a few of us. They need me a lot because I've got a few languages. I speak to Polish, to English, to Hebrew. I speak Hebrew in schools in Netanya.

And what is it for you to do this lecture, you are telling about yourself?

Yeah.

And well not so much about myself. I'm telling them about the times.

But through your eyes, what you went through.

Through my eyes, sure. But it's my story. But it applies to a lot of children. You see the question that I have in my mind and had for more than 60 years, why me? Why have I been chosen from the whole group of Stolowicz Jews to be the only survivor?

You are the only one?

Now, why? I could never-- there is no answer. Except that when I look at the picture of my grandchildren and great grandchildren, maybe that's the reason. But I don't know. Why not Yankele? Why not Moshele? All my friends whom I knew there?

So what are you trying to tell them, those groups that you lecture?

How bad people can get. How bad other people can get, what they can do to others. And trying to tell them what we can get through, what we can get over. I mean, I'm lucky. Because I'm reasonably normal. Don't say normal, no one is normal. But I've met people, Holocaust survivors, who were vegetables, nothing left of them. But I, the way I overcame it, I said to myself, this is a game. I am playing a game with the Germans. I am hiding and they're looking for me. And I am better than they are. And they won't win.

This is what you thought then?

I've said that I'm going to win.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Listen, I'm not going to attract any more women. So what's the point? [LAUGHS]

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

You see, I said to myself, I am going to win.

You said to yourself.

To myself, that no matter what they do, I will win. I am better than they are.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

So I said to myself--

I said to myself that this is a game that I am going to win this, playing hide and seek, and I am better than they are. I could always laugh no matter how bad the things were, well, almost always. Laugh it off. I can always see the funny side. And this saved me because otherwise you could go crazy.

I mean it's-- when I hear people saying, Holocaust never took place, I can understand it. Because although I went through it, when I'm talking I think, did that really happen? Is it possible that such a thing happened?

And I have to think about it. Yes, it did happen. But that is one of the things that's saved me from the Germans and saved me from going mad.

I mean you imagine 10-year-old boy in the middle of a Russian forest. I can't see it. I look at my kids, my grandchildren.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

You say you can't see it.

I'm looking at my grandchildren. That's it he could he possibly survive?

They are now the same age that you were then? And you ask yourself, [NON-ENGLISH]

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

OK, I explained it to myself that is because of my sense of humor, because of my obstinacy, that I am better than they are that I survived. I mean I was afraid. I was scared. Sometimes I was terrified. But I didn't show it.

Desperate?

Yeah, I must go up and speak to him.

Were you ever desperate?

Desperate, no. I never lost control. You understand? I was always in control of myself. I could be scared. I could be shitting myself, right? But I didn't show it. As far as the German in front or the Belarusian policemen was concerned, I was just miserable kid in the street, doing what miserable kids in the street do, being awkward.

And I would always say if I saw a miserable looking bastard standing there, I would say, good morning, or how are you? Now that is the most dumb thing-- you wouldn't think of a Jew doing that to a German. This is what I thought to me, he'll never take me for a Jew. He can take me for anything you like, but never for a Jew. A Jew won't go up to a German policeman and say, good morning.

And I did the things that they did not expect me to do. And that's the only way I got around it. And I think I also had some help from upstairs.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Yes, he was good in a difficult situation. He could always get out of it. He was in the Polish army. He was a boxer. You know what a boxer is. He was a boxer. He was a big man. But I mean he was a young man. He was only 30 something when he died. And I must have got it from somebody, obviously. But the sense of humor, I put down as 90% of my survival.

That I could laugh at the worst possible thing.

You were laughing then during this period?

Yeah. Whenever I was in company of Poles, Russians, Germans, I always laughed. That shows that I'm happy, that I'm contented.

And it was an authentic laugh?

Yeah.

Not playing?

No, no, no. Not playing, it was really a laugh. I mean even today all my friends they probably heard my jokes 20 times over, right? But I can't help it. If somebody says something, I always make a joke of it.

So we were discussing your activity in lecturing about the Holocaust.

Right.

And there was a request by the museum if you can address teachers who are now studying how to teach the Holocaust? What do you think about such work? What should it include?

What they teach is not exactly the same as what I'm talking about because. I think I'm one of the few of a group of us who tell the stories who gets a laugh. You understand what I mean? I can make people laugh, even when I'm telling them about things like the Holocaust, terrible. And this is my savior. And yet if you are teaching young people, you can't make a laugh of it. It's not possible.

Right.

And I'm also not sure if it's-- really wanted. Because you want them to realize how bad it is, and not the fact that you can make a laugh of it. I do it because if I don't, I'll probably go crazy.

And you are allowed. You went through this.

Yes, but I don't have-- exactly, I don't have to tell myself how bad it was. I know how bad it was. But if I'm teaching it to children, you mustn't make it too bad. You mustn't give them any details like I gave you the details about the twins, because that can give them bad dreams, can send them you know off the rails.

But this was the Holocaust.

Now, I went to a course that was given by the Yad Vashem, how you tell the story to different audiences. And I agree with them. When they're talking to small children, if you start telling them these things, they'll have nightmares. And I don't think that's right.

They should know it. They should be told that such a thing is not acceptable. But to frighten them, to already make them feel that there's something abnormal which there is, they can't understand it yet.

So we are not talking about what not to say. But I would like to switch it. What--

What can to say.

What is to say. And to say, I'm repeating the question, to say to teachers in Poland, in Lithuania who are coming from the local background, and--

Well, I know very well. But I mean that is not the correct thing to say. I mean if I was having a private discussion with a group of teachers without a record, I would tell them.

Tell them. The camera is a group of Polish teachers. And you want to address them and tell them something from you.

OK. Now I can do it now, because I live in Israel.

OK.

I feel different. When I lived abroad, I had to be careful not to upset the Christian majority.

But now you are free.

Now I don't have to do anything to prove to them that I'm their friend. I'm their friend if they're my friend. If they're not, I don't care. It doesn't worry me. But where the trouble starts and I'm sure they know it, is when the four and five-year-olds go to Sunday school, and the priest tells them the Jews killed your God. Now you tell that to a five-year-old child. You've poisoned him for life, because he only gets it again and again and again as he grows up.

And then he hears maybe one of his relatives say something about the Jews. And it's there.

So you are describing the way antisemitism develops.

That's right.

It develops from there.

But this group of teachers whom I'm asking you to address are going to deal with the Holocaust subject in Poland, and to educate people, students, on this subject. And what would you tell to a teacher, a Polish teacher, who is going to deal with the Holocaust subject in the Polish educational system? And she would come to you for an advice. Can you give her or him an advice?

I can, more or less repeat what I just told you. You've got to teach the children the truth, the truth, and nothing but the truth. The Jews did not kill their God. The Romans killed their God. The fact that Pontius Pilate washed his hands [NON-ENGLISH].

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

Yeah, I understand that. It is not the teacher who tells it. It is starting at Sunday school from the very youngest, when they teach them their religion. And it's finished. From that on, it's finished.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

It's almost impossible. It is almost impossible. Why do you think that the most Jews were killed on the East European territories-- Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia? Because up there, A, church is very strong. And the church is where the children are educated really, where they start. And that is why the Germans tried out the very first few weeks in the Ukraine.

There was Babi Yar, correct? Now, that was to test what the world is going to do, whether they will all go up in arms, aye, aye, yi, yi, yi. Or whether they all go up, where shall we go for holiday this year, to Cannes or to Monte Carlo?

And when they saw that the world did nothing, then the Germans were free to do what they like. When they saw America sending a boat full of Jews from Hamburg back to Germany, back to Germany and to the camps and to the finish, it was obvious that the world wasn't against it.

And unfortunately, the lessons of history are not being learned at all. Because you look after the war, in '46, there was a pogrom in Poland. 76 Jews got killed in Katowice.

Kielce.

Kielce. Kielce. My friend's mother, the one that was with me in the children's home, she was killed in that. This was after the war. And why was it started? You know why it was started? A little Polish boy went missing.

And the rumor got around that the Jews have got him, and they taken his blood for matzah. And now this boy, he appeared on television since. He's an old man by now. He had a row with his parents, and he ran away to see his grandparents in a village some 10 kilometers away from where he lived. Now there was no telephones in all the houses. So they couldn't find him. So they believed the story that the Jews killed him. And that is when they went for the Jews.

But this man was found afterwards. Nothing was said. It is so complicated. It is so inbred. And the teachers can-- teachers are one of the only people who could put it right, by getting the truth out. Never mind the Burgermeisters. And nobody cares about, they can believe in what they like. Everybody can have their own religion. You can believe in a donkey being God, it doesn't really matter. It's a private thing. But don't tell them that the Jews killed your God, because that is one way of making them anti-Jewish straight away from that age.

And I think most of the thinking teachers know this. But it's a losing battle. What can you do?

Richard, [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

It's not a case of what we didn't talk about. It's what we didn't achieve. You will not achieve anything. Because people don't want to hear good things about Jews. They don't want to. They're not interested. They only like to say, these poor, Jews. They're poor. Well, we're not poor anymore.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

In England, is a different anti-Semite to Polish anti-Semite. In a way, it's worse. Because in Poland it's in the open. I know. He's an anti-Semite. He doesn't like me. But in England, it's different. It's underground. But it's still there. It's still

there.

And in what way did you feel it?

Well, it didn't worry me. But you can't join a certain club because you're Jewish. You can't belong to my golf club because you're Jewish. So my uncle went and bought the golf club. And he filled it up with Jews.

That's the only way you can fight it. But it's there. Now since I left, it's even worse, because you've got some 5 million Muslims there which you didn't have before. And--

This is political anti-Semitism.

What's the difference? There is no difference. It's anti-Jewish, anti-Semitism, anti-Israeli. But what they don't know is anti-English, is anti-French, anti-Italian, because they are finished. They are finished. Another 50 years, there will be-- what's her name? A Muslim sitting in the Buckingham Palace. And they've only got themselves to blame for it. But we shall win.

We shall win because we're better. How many Nobel prize winners have you got? How many percentage are Jews, 25% right? Of Jews are Nobel prize winners, which means that there is something about us that is good. Not everything is bad. And as they say, Am Yisrael Chai.

It's very easy to get from that side to that side.

Yes. Well, I'm only--

I know. I know what you're doing. You cannot, you cannot change. I mean I've been to Poland now. And they've definitely changed. There's less anti-Semitism because there is a lot less Jews. But there's still anti-Semitism. When they can still turn around and say, Jew, go to Palestine. I say, you don't have to tell me. I live there. That's the difference. Because I couldn't care less what he thinks of me.

I was with a group in Warsaw, and they were all educated people. I'm not a very educated person. But they were all educated-- doctors. There was members of Parliament. And they asked me-- no, I asked them. Why don't you like Jews? What have you got against the Jews?

So they didn't say what I thought they would say. They said, most of the Jews, most of the communists were Jews. I said, and that you don't like? No. So I said, why are you praying to a Jew three times a day? All the Christians were Jews. Not just one, all of them. All the early Christians were Jews. And you're praying to the Christians. So you don't hate us for that, do you? They couldn't say so.

It is purely it is in their blood. It's in their blood. You can't reason with them. You cannot. There are bad Jews. Of course, there are bad Jews. There are bad Poles. There are bad Englishmen. But there are good Jews, and there are good Poles, and good Englishmen. So let's look for the good and forget the bad.

Everything is fine except, for the Jews.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH], Richard.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

[NON-ENGLISH] Jews are not only the people who killed Jesus. There are good Jews. There are bad Jews. Same as there are good Poles and bad Poles.

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]