

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

ACCESSION NO 10592/5

DEPARTMENT OF SOUND RECORDS

NAZI EUROPE, 1933-1945

J GARLINSKI

COPYRIGHT: IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

UNRESTRICTED

ACCESS CODE: A

RECORDED 1989

CXW Where were you born, Doctor?

JG I was born in Kiev in 1913.

CXW Not in Poland?

JG No, I tell you why, because Kiev belonged to Poland for a century between 1569 and 1658. As Kiev belonged to Poland at that time Polish families moved towards the east for better life . The land was open, the country was empty, lack of people but not lack of land. My family was settled there at that time. Therefore I was born in Kiev. Later on we lost Kiev to Russia but Polish families remained there.

CXW So your mother tongue was Polish?

JG Polish, yes, of course.

CXW Did you speak any other languages fluently?

JG At that time, no. Because it was a rule not to speak Russian at home. I should speak French because young generation of that time of educated people normally spoke French , but revolution..I was born in 1913 , First World War. Right on the revolution all my family life was destroyed. But finally at my school I started to speak German. At Auschwitz you would be surprised I started to speak Russian because there were many Russians and I wanted to use my brain. Later on when I met my wife I started to speak English.

CXW What was your father's profession?

JG My family had a piece of land, they were landlords. But my father was educated. He was a lawyer in Poland after the war.

CXW When the revolution came your family was dispersed to where?

/My

JG

/My parents were divorced when I was two but my father was mobilised first into the Russian army, the White Russian army. Later on during the revolution he left this army and joined Polish units organised not far from the Black Sea because during the revolution a national group started to develop. He was in the Polish army just organised. My mother was in Kiev. But we were, with my older brother, were together with my grandmother because the parents were separated. We stayed with father. Therefore we were at that time in the flat of our grandmother, the mother of our father, in Kiev.

CXW Where were you educated?

JG Later? In Poland. After the revolution, after the war between Poland and Russia in 1920 we returned to Poland separately, with members of my family. Not with my mother, not with father. Father was in the Polish army. It was the end of 1920. Problem was as I said my family was broken so we stayed with members of the family, not with the father, not with the mother. Later on I was in many schools before I matriculated. Then finally I entered the university in Warsaw.

CXW What did you study there?

JG Law.

CXW Then you became a practising...

JG No, I didn't manage to finish before I was - I lost a couple of years because of lung problems. When I was in secondary school I lost three years because of that problem. Finally I was alright. Firstly I went to the - we had national service so after I had the secondary school behind me I had the right to go to the officers' school but in reserve. I finished this before I entered university. I had still one year to go and Hitler started his war. Therefore I was mobilised. Oddly enough I was in cavalry. I was mobilised. I took part in the campaign
/against

against Germans. I was wounded, taken prisoner by Germans, sent to the hospital under German supervision but Polish hospital, when that part of Poland was occupied. Later on I managed to escape from this hospital when I was well enough. Returned to Warsaw, met my wife because we were already married with my present wife. I met her in 1936.

CXW Could I interrupt you there and could I go over some of the ground you've talked about? Can you tell me what you remember about the 1st September 1939 when the Germans invaded, what are your own personal reminiscences of it?

JG I was in the regiment which stationed in Warsaw. First regiment of Lancers, Polish Guard roughly speaking, like the Guards here at Knightsbridge. The first lot, I should go with the first lot immediately but I got my card at my old address, the mobilisation card, I got this card at my old address. I didn't get this at once, I get this too late so I joined the second lot of the regiment because during the war there was Regiment No1, No 101, No 201, so on, because the whole country was mobilised. So I was in Warsaw at that time and joined my regiment.

CXW What was the morale like in your regiment?

JG Very good. Let's tackle this problem, Poland became independent after the First World War after five generations that we were fighting for freedom. No compromise was possible. Hitler offered conditions. No Polish government would manage to accept them. There was also a proposition from British and French, allow the Red divisions to enter Poland and circle Hitler. Out of question. Poles were ready to fight and spirit was fantastic. Of course we didn't know what's happened. We were very optimistic.

CXW What about the equipment which your unit had?

JG Equipment? Well, cavalry. So remember that the principle

why we had forty regiments of cavalry, because we had horses and no money to build cars. It was a kind of transport. It was obvious from very beginning that when we had to fight German infantry or , say, German panzers, one third will keep the horses and two thirds will fight as infantry. But because of this our equipment was poor, not enough machine guns. The power of the cavalry regiment was much lower than the regiment of infantry. First the one third had to stay with horses and secondly the rest had not enough machine guns and all these things. But the spirit was very high, which is also essential.

CXW In fact we hear these stories about Polish cavalry charging German panzer divisions.

JG This is only a good story for the papers. Because I went through the military school. We were trained to fight. It was always the same problem, 'You fight as infantry. You use your horses when you have, when you're patrolling, when you're collecting information, when you're moving as fast as possible.' After all, after sixty, seventy miles of marching on foot you are really not ready to fight. But when you do it in the saddle you are still perfectly alright to fight. You can do in the saddle seventy, eighty miles in 24 hours, by night - and by day you can fight. But we were never trained to charge infantry or with machine guns or panzer divisions, no.

CXW What do you personally remember of the German so called blitzkrieg tactics which were employed then, what are your own personal reminiscences of it?

JG Very successful. Firstly the air cover, air cover, most important. They finish Polish air force mostly on the ground. Polish air force was one to ten if you take the Polish power and Germans. So we had no chance, we had no air cover. They had fantastic air cover and panzer divisions. So they split the front and move as fast as possible. We've even - enemy behind - because they had all chances you know. They had all chances. One problem which people don't understand, Poland

was completely open. Germans were on the north, on the west and on the south because of Slovakia. We had to defend over a thousand miles of the frontiers. Of course logically we should immediately withdraw and try to fight on the Vistula River or something like this. But from the psychological point of view for the C in C was almost impossible. I know interview with him in Rumania when he was interned there. He said, "From the psychological point of view I had to defend the whole Poland."

CXW With whom?

JF With the Polish C in C, General Smigly -Ridz, Marshal Smigly-Ridz. There was an interview with him in Rumania. He said, "I had to defend the whole Poland. It was obvious to me that we will not win this war but at least the whole Poland had to be defended." The conception was that the Russians will not move. But finally in the south east Poland between Rumania and Soviet Union that finally Polish forces will fight as long as necessary for the Western Powers to move. They promised to move in two weeks time. Why Stalin did not attack Poland before the 17th September, he was encouraged by Hitler to attack Poland at once. He waited what the West will do. If the West will move as promised in the first two weeks and will be successful Stalin wouldn't move, as far as I know as an historian.

CXW Do Poles of your generation feel bitter about the failure of France and Britain to attack in the West at that time when Poland was trying to handle the Germans alone?

JG Yes, of course we are bitter because this was fixed before. That was one of the reasons, not the only one, but one of the reasons why we were encouraged to fight Hitler. We were promised help.

CXW Were people saying at the time, 'When are Britain and France going to move'?

JG Definitely. I tell you more, It was 3rd September. I

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

was still in Warsaw because next day my regiment moved from Warsaw - together with my wife, we were engaged. We were married on 4th September. We were waiting for the declaration of war from Great Britain and France. When finally Great Britain first declared the war 100,000 people marched towards the British embassy showing our approval, our hope, our - that we will win the war, that we will have fantastic allies on our side. A couple of hours later France declared the war. We didn't know that these two countries are not ready to fight, especially France, we didn't know this. Remember that in Poland France after the First World War had a very high opinion. Also we had historical, cultural links with France. So these two greatest power, Great Britain, greatest power in the world, and France, also great power, that we hoped they will attack and we three will finally win the war. Quite frankly this would happen - Hitler had only 33 divisions there.

CXW How did you come to be wounded, can you describe it?

JG We were fighting Germans, we were in a circle. It was 22nd September 1939. Already far to the east.

CXW Where was this?

JG Not far from Polish town Zamosc. We tried to break the German circle, as infantry, of course. Two thirds were fighting. One third was with the horses. Fighting the German infantry I was wounded, I was shot through my right foot. Lying on the ground my foot was like this and the bullet was through. It's alright now but I spent a couple of weeks in the hospital. I was taken prisoner by the German infantry at that time, sent to the field hospital with the Germans and Poles together.

CXW What were relations like between German and Polish soldiers as man to man?

JG In the hospital?

/When

CXW When you met face to face.

JG Firstly my watch disappeared, but it is a very common thing. They were not very brutal. I was sitting I remember because I my leg was no good . So I was sitting on a stone. A German soldier came to me, he was from Silesia, from German Silesia. He spoke a bit of Polish but I spoke German. He asked me, "Why not with us? Why against Hitler, why against the Fuehrer? Why not with us?" I was not ready quite frankly to start with him a political discussion. They were not brutal at that time, no.

CXW Could I ask you about the so called fifth column because when Hitler attacked in the West there was in existence, or there was a belief that there was a strong fifth column supporting his troops in places like France and Belgium, was there any fifth column in Poland in the autumn of 1939 to help the Germans?

JG Colossal, because we had 900,000 Germans in Poland, not only in west Poland but also in central Poland; colossal.

CXW How did they help?

JG Plenty of things, for example in Polish town Bydgoszcz, they started uprising. Therefore there was later on, they had not massacre but some of them were killed by Polish army which returned to Bydgoszcz. It was a very known case. Signalling, intelligence, sabotage, all these thing.

CXW Did you see any evidence of a fifth column yourself personally?

JG I know that in my regiment one German was shot down because he was captured by soldiers giving by night some signals to the German planes. Of course I was fighting to /the

the east of Vistula River because my regiment immediately crossed to the east because here they had already Germans moving. So this was not as bad in that part of Poland as on the west near Poznan, Silesia and Pomerania. There was really very bad. Fifth column was everywhere but only Germans. The same happened in Soviet Russia. Volga River Germans.

CXW What about the Ukrainians living in eastern Poland...

JG Very bad, absolutely the same. Byelorussians were completely quiet. They were good citizens. But Germans, Ukrainians and Jews. I saw Jews - when I was captured by Germans and sent to their field hospital - later on I was moved with my hospital to Zamosc. For three days Germans surrender Zamosc and the very big hospital to Soviet Russia, for three days only. During this three days, my wound wasn't very bad. I was working. I saw, I'm sorry to say this, Jews with red bands working with Soviet soldiers and denouncing officers in the hospital. That's the fact. Of course they will not make a film about this because nobody will accept this film but that's the fact.

CXW Do you think the Jews knew what kind of treatment they were going to get from the Germans?

JG Not really. Remember that Final Solution was decided in January 1942. They started to kill Jews when they invaded Russia. Before the German attack on Soviet Russia Jews were in Poland in ghettos. Before the war we had about 300,000 Jews, during the war before they started to kill them there was almost half a million because from all small towns and villages they were sent to Warsaw Ghetto. But they were not killed. They started to kill Jews in Russia when they moved forward. After this there was the decision of Final Solution, Auschwitz was changed because first Auschwitz was only a concentration camp for Poles only. The first Jewish transport arrived at Auschwitz in spring 1942, after the decision of Final Solution.

/Before

Before this it was very hard, very bad, but only concentration, not a death camp.

When I arrived at Auschwitz it was May 1943, only two big gaschambers, crematoria, were in operation. Other two were just finished.

CXW We'll come on to Auschwitz later but let's pick up the story of what was happening to you in the autumn of 1939. When you went into the hospital what kind of medical treatment did you get, was it adequate?

JG Good one. First two injections against obvious things which can happen. It was a field hospital but there was only one - lack of salt. Food was a bit... but otherwise medical treatment and nurses, everything, was alright. Although it was field hospital not really ready for longer stay of wounded people therefore we were moved later to Zamosc. But in Zamosc it was a very big, very large Polish military hospital. There everything, medical care, food and everything was alright.

CXW How long were you in the hospital?

JG From Zamosc I was sent to another town in the district Chelm. There I stayed till the end of October. End of October I was walking already. We had there a Bavarian German division. Nice people. Because German from Prussia and German from Bavaria are different people. They were nice people. I said at the beginning I escaped from that hospital but it was escape with the help of the Germans.

CXW Can you describe how?

JG I spoke German. They were plenty of others, about sixty other soldiers and officers who were ready to move, already good enough to move, strong enough to move. I went to the office
/of

of that division because hospital was under the supervision of that Bavarian division, 2nd Bavarian Division. They had the office in the hospital. I went there, met a captain and told him, " I'm still walking with the stick. I'm no good. I can't fight you. Why not to give me permission to return to Warsaw. I'm a married man. I have my wife there." He said, "I'm not allowed to do it but here's a blanket, a pass. Do it yourself. And signed for me. Forget it." I have done this. We made a copy of this. About 68 of us left the hospital, went to the station and by the goods truck went to Lublin later on, not directly to Warsaw because the Warsaw was still completely ruined and trains ... Warsaw.

But we managed to move this way. So it was a kind of escape with the help of Germans. I must say now that to generalise that all Germans were bad is very wrong. The difference between the Wehrmacht and the SS was colossal. Wehrmacht, they also made some atrocities but in principle the Wehrmacht tried to observe the Geneva conventions, with prisoners of war - no, it was roughly speaking, not always, but roughly speaking they observed the Geneva convention.

CXW So, at this stage, with the Germans victorious in Poland temporarily and you having got out of the hospital, what were your own thoughts about the future personally and as far as Poland was concerned, what was your strategy?

JG Remember we are already partitioned because Russians moved on 17th September and Poland was partitioned by two powers. Our hope that we will win the war, that France will never collapse, that British and French, they will win from the West. Our belief was, our trust in these two powers was hundred per cent. We listened to radio although Germans later confiscated all radio sets but at that time at hospital we listened to radio. It was known to us that there was new Polish government in France, that Poles are fighting, that the Polish army is there. My plan was to reach Warsaw, to see my wife, to fix with her what we will do and decide, "Do I stay /in

in Poland underground or do I try to go to Slovakia or Hungary to France?"

When I was in hospital I said to myself, " I have first to see my wife and fix with her." She had British passport but it was not very useful at that time although American embassy remained in Warsaw. Not with the ambassador but with small staff. Through a clergyman from the Church of England chapel - small problem but perhaps it's essential when we're talking about the Second World War. I'm Catholic. My wife is Church of England. In the west part of Poland which was during partitions under Germans we had also an office where you could be married without church, without all these things. But in that part of Poland which was under Russia there was not a possibility of doing this. You had to be married through your parish. I am Catholic. My wife is Church of England. When I got five hours of leave to marry my wife 4th September the same night my regiment there in Warsaw I got five hours to marry. We went to my parish. They said, "Sorry, you're Catholic, your wife is Church of England. Here is the form, fill up this form. We will send this to the local bishop and after two weeks you will get your answer."

I look at my watch I said, "I give you five minutes. If in five minutes you cannot decide that I marry here we go to the Church of England chapel and I marry there." Because there was no other chance to get the document. Of course the man said, "Alright." So we were married the same hour, there. The only obligation we had to sign that if we have children they will be brought up in the Catholic religion. We have done this. Our son is Catholic. We never discuss this problem with my wife, we are very happy. If you start discuss religious problem with your wife you will be divorced. Never do it. In the situation like we were. My wife is half Irish, half English. Her family lives in independent Ireland. It's Catholic country. There Church of Ireland and Church of England are in /a

a minority. Because of this they are very aggressive people. She's not but her mother, she's dead now, but...

10592/5/2

So finally I decided to return to Warsaw to see my wife and discuss the future. I was not very keen to leave her behind me although once she married a Polish officer in active service she automatically became a Polish citizen according to Polish law. But from the Germans' point of view it was nothing. She was British.

The American embassy, through a clergyman from the Church of England chapel who was in touch with my wife before, they managed to approach my wife and ask her to go. They offer her help to go, to leave Poland and return to England but she said, "No," she's married, she will stay with me. Once she said this I said, "Alright. I will stay in Poland." I was already approached by the underground activists. I decided I would stay in Poland. I will go underground. We will stay together. Otherwise if I be not married I would try to go to France.

CXW Can you tell me how you got organised in the underground, how did you go about it?

JG I was approached by an officer from my regiment who was already in underground. First remember it was very spontaneous. Just after the German occupation we had in the first months about a hundred military organisations. The Home Army which was official Polish underground had to absorb them. But it was not so easy. So firstly I joined not the Home Army which called at that time ZZ, Union of Armed Struggle it was called. It had different name, not Home Army but Union of Armed Struggle. But I joined a separate underground organisation which was devoted to intelligence against German occupation force. I joined them. I started to learn intelligence because I never had any knowledge of this. I was actually in counter intelligence

/to

to fight German occupation forces, to Gestapo penetration, penetration of Polish underground, penetration of Polish social life, Polish society.

My job was to protect Polish underground, our organisation from that German penetration. Let's be fair, no occupant is successful without co-operation, collaboration of - some people will always betray the whole nation. It's always like this. It's impossible. Without co-operation of occupied nation occupants are losing. They'll always find. There's no nation in the world who say 'no.' Always find scoundrels who'll co-operate. So the most important job was to protect ourselves from other Poles, from minorities, from people who will co-operate with Germans for thousands of reasons. So that was my job.

CXW How did you go about it?

JG Look, Germans decided to keep Polish police, for order. So the problem was to have people everywhere, in hospitals, in Polish police, in Warsaw central office, in the Warsaw transport, everywhere, get information, what Germans are doing. What ideas Germans are trying to use. What they are going to do. What kind of people they are. What political plans they have, because it was not completely clear. How Germans will behave. How they behave. How they recruit people from Polish side, from Polish nation. Some pretext, some blackmail, money, girls, thousands of methods. I used the same methods later. That was my job for almost two years.

Finally my organisation joined the Home Army. I moved to the headquarter of the Home Army which was in Warsaw to counter intelligence. I was offered a very good job. I published a book about this, unfortunately it's in Polish. Secret liaison with people arrested by the Gestapo who were in prison in Warsaw called Pawiak. There was a political prison. There are also some other prisons. There were also Gestapo headquarters in Warsaw. My job was a secret liaison with them because

/when

when somebody was arrested and he was interrogated he was asked questions. It was from the very beginning clear for him what they know or roughly speaking what questions are they asking. So secret liaison with him and get information from him, what questions Gestapo are asking him were very essential. Who is in danger, who should be - leave Warsaw immediately. Which flat should be emptied. All these things were very essential.

As Germans occupied already big part of western Europe, the whole Poland, and it was already the war between Germans and Soviet Russia, they occupied a colossal part of Soviet Russia, there was lack of people. So from the very beginning they left Polish warders in prison. There was men department and women department. They had Polish warders under Gestapo control, but of course it was easy. But in spring 1942 they arrested Polish warders but left the women, because of lack of people. Instead of Polish warders they send Ukrainians from the Soviet Ukraine. But it was easy to co-operate with them, much easier than with pure Germans.

This was done under Gestapo control with a few Gestapo men in the prison and the rest were Poles and Ukrainians or Polish women. Polish doctors had to come from town for the day, Polish dentist. Through them - of course it was death penalty for this but forget it. It has to be done. I even had a man in the Gestapo headquarter, a Volksdeutsch, a German from Silesia who lived in independent Poland. He was a Volksdeutsch but he, through a girl.

CXW He must have given you invaluable information?

JG Very valuable information. I tell you how it happened. He was deported from Silesia to Warsaw and was one of the warders in the Gestapo headquarter because they had also some cells and some people were kept there for months even. They were not sent to the prison for the night but they were kept there all the time. They had some warders. He was one of them. He was very lonely in Warsaw. He was a Pole with German background /but

but brought up in independent Poland with perfect Polish. He met a girl. She was a woman. Her husband was a Polish soldier. He was in the prisoners of war camp in Germany. She was alone in Warsaw, no money. She opened a small washing business. The man approach her in this capacity. She was young, he was young. He started to come to her frequently more than usual. With her there was already in the same kind of touch a man who was under my command, Polish non commissioned officer who was under my command. He had to penetrate a part of Warsaw.

He reported this to me, the Volksdeutsch from Gestapo headquarter who is in touch with her and she doesn't know what to do. She ask my man could she be of help. I said, "Yes. Ask her to be as friendly as possible to him." Of course she started to be more friendly to him. He was frank. He said several times he doesn't like his job. That in his opinion Germans are treating Poles very badly. That he after all, half German, half Polish, that his salary is very poor, that he is not happy, the job is bad, but what to do?

Once he said that he has not enough money I sent money to her to offer him. Once he accep^eted money, once he accepted the money he was in my hands. On the beginning you had to wait for about three, four months before she ask him the first question about the headquarter, not directly but just she said, "Somebody of my family was arrested, would you mind, his name is , say, Kowalski, would you mind to tell me what happened to him, is he there or was he sent somewhere else?" He brought this information, and so on, step by step, without telling him that he is working for the Polish intelligence but giving him some money. Sleeping with him, let's be fair.

I got from him the most valuable information when the delegate of Polish government, the first person in underground, was arrested. Because Polish government had a delegacy in Warsaw. The man, Professor Pielkalkiewicz, was officially the first man in the Polish underground, above the commander of the Polish underground army. He was arrested in February 1942

/two

two months, three months before I was arrested. Through this man I got a very very very valuable report, what's happened with him, how is he treated, what is his physical condition, how he behaves. I didn't ask him to bring a letter, it was too dangerous. But I got a lot of information because that delegate was kept in the headquarter for about three months.

CXW How long did you have this agent working in the headquarters?

JG Till I was arrested. I don't know what happened with him later, but till I was arrested. He worked for me for about nine months, very valuable man. This is the way to obtain the co-operation of somebody who is not really a traitor. But, unfortunately I'm sorry to say, blackmail is very useful method.

CXW Which area were you responsible for, just for Warsaw?

JG The whole - only Warsaw. But remember Warsaw was the headquarter of the Home Army, all Polish political parties, all political movements had headquarters in Warsaw. Warsaw was the heart and brain of Polish resistance movement so my job was, I had about 300 people working for me. It was a colossal job.

CXW Where were you located in Warsaw?

JG We had a small flat, one room, bathroom and kitchen in the suburb of Warsaw. Lived there with my wife but I also had several flats, several rooms in Warsaw under different names. Very often I used different name and different documents. Germans introduced so called kennkarte. It's a kind of pass_port. 'Kenn' is knowledge and kennkarte is a kind of police certificate, something like this. Also I remember there was a curfew from eight to eight. I was too busy to return home at eight o'clock in the evening so I had also the night pass forged, good enough, for several names. I also sometimes spent a night in Warsaw,

not in my flat but, say, in another flat.

Also I had my secret office which I had to change each two months regardless to German observation. I had about seven offices in private flats. They didn't know what I'm doing, the people. I paid. I said business or something like this. They guessed but they were never informed what I'm doing, what I am. I had different codenames to different people. You work for me, another man work for me. You met him sometimes but you didn't know that I'm your commander and I'm his commander. That was the underground technique. For you I was, for example, John and for him I was Steven, and for you I was completely different person and for him different person. The secret of underground is to know as little as you can and to know as much as you must. Don't ask real names, don't ask addresses, don't write them down. Don't have them with you, on you, don't do it, forget it. Remember. Now I don't remember but that time I was 25, 27.

Remember, Polish underground army was based on young people. Only top people were over fifty. I had 300 people under me and I was 27. Reserve officers, students, young people. If they are not married, better. Like pilots, the best pilot is young, stupid, unmarried man. If he start think he's no good. If he is married with children he's no good. So underground was based on young people, full of life, full of activity.

CXW Full of idealism?

JG Yes, and I tell you, full of unorthodox methods. Because they were something new. Professional officers were no good because they were never in the situation like this. Also civilians very often spoke foreign languages. For example in SOE - I publish a book 'Poland, SOE and the Allies' - in SOE here, not profession^{al} soldiers, no, civilians were the best. Civilians because foreign languages, education, knowledge of other countries, all these things. In underground, young people.

CXW Did you ever suspect that any of the agents that

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling/you accuracy.

you placed were also working for the Germans?

JG It was possible. Most unlikely but it was possible. You never trust people. The first rule is you don't trust yourself, don't say, "I will resist any interrogation," because it's wrong. You have to trust other people but you have to check everybody. You have to be sure that the man is not lying. You have to ask him questions which are perhaps not important. "What happened to you yesterday?" It's a small large world but in principle you don't trust. For example when somebody was arrested our theory was that he will resist for 24 hours. After 24 hours if he is tortured he will start speaking. In 24 hours we had to cut all connections with him. Women last longer.

CXW Why?

JG Very difficult problem. I know from my own experience women last longer. Women are stronger mentally. Perhaps exultation. Perhaps women are more one sided. If a girl loves you she will offer you everything but I don't believe that the man will offer everything to the woman if he is tempted. If he is tempted by something which is very strong. In this respect women are better. That's my opinion. I know my wife, I know the people who worked for me. I know what's happen with them. I know some of them were arrested, my people. I know how they behaved. Women behave better.

CXW So if someone was arrested and you knew you had 24 hours how did you cut the contacts?

JG For example there were several departments of the head-quarter of the Polish Home Army. I had secret contacts with all these departments. Some through telephone, some through the people. I had the network of young people, mostly scouts, who had meetings. For example in the front of this house at 3.15. In the front of another house 4.20. In the staircase of another house. One the post office, You had to be there exactly at that time. If there was a message from a department

the man or the girl will come and deliver him this message. They didn't know the names. They didn't know the addresses. He didn't know the address of my office because the head of this network met me outside my office. They got all possible mail from him. If somebody was arrested say in Department 2 and my girl or my boy brought me this message the same day, say, in couple of hours, this message had to give me the police name of the man arrested. Not his code name but what kind of documents he had in his pocket. If they didn't know how he looks what age, how he was dressed. They had to cut all his connections immediately. I had to find where he is. Not necessarily arrested by the Gestapo. Firstly, killed in accident, heart attack, blackmailed by somebody, arrested by Polish police, arrested by German criminal police, sent to headquarter of the Gestapo but perhaps somewhere else. Perhaps he is in hospital. So I had also a network of the people who work in the whole Warsaw bringing me reports what's happened. Somebody was arrested there, somebody was killed there. In the Hospital X some wounded people were brought by the ambulance. All this information very valuable for me because I had to find this man.

Once he was in prison and his police name, certificate name, was known to me it was no problem. But he had to be there. When I was arrested I was firstly taken to the Gestapo headquarter and stayed there for 24 hours. So the problem was to find the man. And people who co-operate with him, they had to cut all connections. They had to do it. Immediately after my first contact with him and first secret letter from him this department was immediately informed by me. What question they asked him. For example I was arrested for somebody else, my interrogation was easy. They didn't know who I am. So sometimes people are arrested and the Gestapo have difficulties to know who they are. Sometimes they arrested a group of people. Sometimes it was round up in Warsaw, they arrested 2000 people. If somebody was arrested in this way he himself was not in danger. He was in danger to be sent to Auschwitz but not in danger to betray others.

/So

So the most important thing was to know what's happening the man. Like the commander of the Home Army, General Rowecki , was arrested after my arrest. Some people said, "Why Home Army didn't help him, why didn't attack headquarter of the Gestapo, didn't make him free?" He was sent to Berlin after three hours, before headquarter realised what's happening. He suddenly disappeared, what was happen to him? To organise an attack in underground in occupied Warsaw, organise an attack on transport or on the headquarter of the Gestapo was a colossal problem. Can't do it in two hours, three hours when you don't know where the man is, firstly. Some people said after the war they would do it. They wouldn't know where he is. It was a matter of three, four, five hours before it was obvious what's happened to the man, with plenty of people everywhere , in all hospitals, in all offices of Polish police, in Warsaw transport, everywhere had my people.

CXW In some of the other countries on the continent which were occupied by the Germans there was political rivalry between different groups of the resistance like in France between communists and non communists...

JG The same in Poland.

CXW What was your own experience of that?

JG Very bad because you have to be united. Political rivalry, political fight for power, for influence is very dangerous because people are very unscrupulous. They can even denounce each other. This happened in Poland, it happened in other countries as well. You have to try to be united when in trouble.

CXW What were your own political opinions then?

JG My? I didn't belong to a political party. My opinion was we had to be united, we had to fight for free Poland. After the war we will sort political problems, we will have free elcetions and see who will win the elections. But now we

/are

are fighting. Like in this country. This country is the best example that four nationalities can co-operate, political movements are forgotten, you have the war. After the war you will have election, you will decide who'll rule the country. But this country is the best example that this is possible. In France it wasn't possible. Even in Hitler's Germany it wasn't possible. Hitler had opposition in the so called Schwarze Kapelle, the Black Orchestra. Even in Germany, though totally ruled, there was underground opposition against Hitler. His own people, his own officers.

CXW Were you personally in contact with communists in the underground?

JG No, although I was responsible for the security of the delegacy of Polish government, when the delegate was arrested. He was arrested and I was responsible for the information for security, all these things. But I never was in touch with the communists because they started to be really active when I was already arrested.

CXW Who were the important leading figures in the underground whom you personally came in contact with?

JG The head of the intelligence of the Home Army. The highest person I met personally was the head of the intelligence of the Home Army who was arrested after I was arrested and disappeared.

CXW What was his name?

JG His name was Colonel Drobik. He was arrested in November 1943 and disappeared. Nobody knows what's happened with him.

CXW Were you in any rounds up yourself where you were in danger from the Gestapo before you were arrested?

JG Once, I was ⁱⁿ the tram in Warsaw. Germans organised /a

a round up but demanded, the driver of the tram when he saw this he accelerated and we just managed to...

Another time I was in the Warsaw railway station but managed to escape in the last second. I had very good documents in my pocket.

10592/5/3

Just in case I'm arrested in the round up or just by mistake I had very good documents in my pocket, firstly the document that I'm an invalid, secondly that I had a night pass that I'm allowed to walk in Warsaw after curfew because I'm invalid and sometimes is too difficult for me to catch the last train. So I had good documents. These documents would perhaps help me if I would be arrested together with 2000 other people but not when I would be arrested as individual. No document would help you even if you would have the Gestapo certificate in your pocket, they will interrogate you before they will trust you as a Gestapo agent.

Although my experience is that Soviet NKVD was better than Gestapo in this respect.

CXW In what way?

JG Because in Auschwitz I met a Pole who was arrested later by the Germans but before he was arrested by the Germans he was arrested by the Soviets. He was in the prison in Minsk - Litovsk - Minsk - but ^{when} the Germans attacked suddenly in 1941 Minsk was evacuated by Soviet, the Russians. All the people were killed in a wood. Shot there.

CXW Shot in the back of the neck?

JG Yes. But he escaped with three others. They jumped into the wood. It was dark. He managed to escape. Later on Germans arrested him. Was in underground, in intelligence. He was not

killed. He survived like me, closest friends and we talked very often about these experience in Gestapo hands and NKVD hands. He said, "Gestapo is like children against NKVD."

CXW In what way did he mean?

JG Methods, accuracy, precision. You normally believe the Germans are very precise people, the Russians are not, and you are right. But when secret police is concerned, for example I was arrested - it was half past five, afternoon. I was betrayed by a man who was a Gestapo agent, a Jew, who was with me in the same secondary school. We matriculated the same year. I don't even mention his name. I'm sure he was blackmailed by the Gestapo. He was fighting for his life. The Gestapo was looking for a man of my surname but different Christian name. Garlinski is not a very popular name among Poles, not very popular. They were looking for the man with Christian name not Jozef but Tadeusz. He was electrical engineer. He was connected with the secret production of radio sets in Warsaw. His group was arrested. He managed to escape. During the interrogation he was betrayed by one of his friends under torture. They were looking for him.

That man from my school betrayed me as Garlinski but he didn't know my underground activity. I was arrested half past five by two agents who spoke Polish as well as I, they were Polish. They brought me by tram to the headquarters of the Gestapo in Warsaw. At six o'clock it was roughly speaking, they arrested me half past five, it was roughly speaking six o'clock when we were there. The guard was changing. Day guard was going. Night guard was taking the job. I arrived exactly at that time about five to six. I was not interrogated. I was not searched. They said, "Alright we do it tomorrow morning. We are going home. Other people will come."

I spent the night in so called tram car. There were four small rooms, no door behind, behind corridor and a Gestapo warder is walking all the time. You are sitting with your face front

/to

to the wall. There are bunks like in a tram therefore we call this a tram car. During the night I had in my pocket three secret letters. I just received from the prison from one of my men who was in touch with... I had these three secret letters written on scraps of papers. I had the document, not Garlinski but Leskowski. But first questions, when I arrived, they didn't search me. They didn't interrogate me. They only mentioned my name. When it was obvious to me they know my real surname I decided to be Garlinski not to be Leskowski. So I decided to destroy this false document.

I have done this on three o'clock in the morning, chewing them. It's very difficult because you are dry there, you are very emotional. And you don't know who's sitting round you, who these people are. Perhaps agents, perhaps they're watching you. So I had to wait till three o'clock in the morning but everybody was too tired and started to chew this document. The floor was like in the, in barracks. Not dirty but very rough. I started chewing. And later on rolling this on the floor. This, the night pass, the kennkarte for the Leskowski and all these three secret letters were destroyed by me. My friend, my Auschwitz friend, who lives now in Germany, he said, "In NKVD it would be impossible." Once you were arrested you will be searched, you will be interrogated immediately, everything will be searched. You had to be completely naked. They looked everywhere, your clothing, your jacket, your trousers, your shoes, everything will be checked. This is a matter of five, six hours, doesn't matter what time it is, in NKVD it will be done. It was not done by Gestapo in Warsaw.

I know why, because Germans occupied almost the whole of Europe and not necessarily the best people are everywhere. But Poland was important for them. Warsaw Gestapo was important for them. But that was the Germans' mistake, from their point of view it was a mistake.

CXW So after you destroyed those documents what happened to
you next in...
This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.
/Next

JG Next morning about seven o'clock, half past seven, they started interrogation, who I am, Tadeusz Garlinski?"No, I'm Jozef Garlinski." "Why you have no documents?" "You can check," because it was my real name, "you can check this in the central Warsaw office. I'm university student. I live in Warsaw for eight years. I'm registered there. You can check this if you like. I'm Jozef Garlinski." "Why you have no document?" "Somebody stole them yesterday from me. It's not important." "But you should have your kennkarte." "But I haven't, I'm sorry, it was stolen. I'm Garlinski. I can prove this."

They had nothing against me. They were brutal but not too brutal. My problem was my wife, that was my problem. This is different story but most interesting story as well. She will tell you this story not me, what happened when two agents came to our small flat. That was my problem. Another problem was that easily somebody can betray me. In this prison I had some people because the women, Polish warders, women, they were Poles, they left them, one of them which I met personally several times, was in the men's prison in the small room when we had to leave deposits. Each prisoner who was arrested had to go this small room and leave his rings if he had, his wallet, his money, his watch, because the Germans returned this to the family. It was a rule. I was afraid that the ... she will see me. Not willing but just by a gesture, by emotion she will betray me. Fortunately this didn't happen.

CXW Did she see you?

JG Yes but I had already a shaved head because they shaved me immediately when I arrived at the prison the same evening. This deposit business has to be done next morning. Secondly I pretended I don't know her. She look at me, it was a very difficult moment, she looked at me. I was completely impassive. Immediately I sent a message because of course this was easy for me. So send a message to my superiors that they should inform my people that for some reason I had to leave Warsaw, in a hurry because in the gossip all these things - my problem /was

was that I was in the Gestapo hands. They didn't know who I am. At that time I was the head of the security office of the whole Warsaw. That was my job. I was in their hands and they didn't know who I am. If they would know I would never survive this of course. I have no illusions I would survive this business.

So my job was to be nobody from their point of view. One of these arrested people, thousands were arrested for no reason, so one of them. I didn't hope to be free again. I expected to be sent to Auschwitz but I hope that they will never to the end of the war discover who I am. That was my most difficult problem in German concentration camp because I was always afraid that somebody will be arrested in Warsaw and will betray my name. There were cases that people after two years in concentration camp they were brought/^{back} to the Gestapo where they were interrogated first time and they start interrogation again. That was possible. But fortunately that didn't happen.

But at that time at that Pawiak prison when stayed there two weeks and was interrogated by the Gestapo was the most difficult. Not to be betrayed by somebody else. After first interrogation it was obvious for me that they have got the wrong man, that they're looking for Tadeusz Garlinski. And his case was known to me of course. So from this point of view I was extremely lucky. It was a fantastic luck that I survive that business.

CXW So what did they do with you?

JG Sent to Auschwitz after two weeks. I was young, I was reserve officer, I was university student, I was a perfect prospect from the Germans' point of view to be sent to Auschwitz. If I would be sixty at that time, having nothing against me, perhaps I would have a chance. But not at my age, no - Auschwitz.

CXW How were you sent there?

JG By transport from Warsaw.

CXW With others?

JG Yes. From time to time, once per month roughly speaking, there was a transport of men and women from Pawiak to Auschwitz. It was 13 May 1943 when I was sent to Auschwitz in the transport with about 500 people. I tell you something more. I was arrested on 20 April 1943. Jews started uprising in the Warsaw ghetto on 19 April, day before. Political prison, Pawiak, was inside the Jewish district before the war and was inside the Jewish district during the war. So I was 24 hours at the Gestapo headquarter, on 21 April I was already in Pawiak. After a couple of days I got a function. I was a trustee because a friend of mine arrested before me was already there so he helped me to get a job just distributing food, cleaning the corridor. So I was a witness of the Jewish uprising in , at that time. Because my prison was inside this.

CXW Could you tell me what you saw?

JG I saw Jews brought to the yard of our prison and killed. The buildings, from the prison as far as these houses were burning. Two fire brigades were sent by Germans to protect the prison against these fires which surround because fight was going on around Pawiak. They started this uprising on 19th - Germans decided to finish the Warsaw ghetto. And attacked Warsaw ghetto on 19 April 1943. Jews started resisting. They were fighting to the beginning of May. When my transport was sent to Auschwitz and firstly there were trucks ... from the prison to the railway station. Ghetto was already ruined, burnt to the ground, quite empty.

CXW What had been the relationship of the underground with the Jews in Warsaw before you were arrested?

JG I had no contacts at all because my job was security of the headquarter of the Home Army. It was impossible for me to be involved in secret hiding of Jews. It would be extra risk, completely forbidden. I met a couple of Jews, my friends , from

my school, from university who were hidden in Warsaw. If they didn't look too Jewish it was possible to help them with documents, with money. It was death penalty in Poland. If for example in a block of flats a Jew was hidden and if Germans will discover this all men will be killed and women sent to concentration camps. So very often the porter, who was even a good Pole, he was against this, he would go to the family and say, "Send him somewhere else because if you don't do it I have to report this to the police. I'm responsible for the security of this house. I cannot risk the life of , say, 300 people for one." It sounds very brutal but that was the situation.

CXW Let's pick up your own story now with you going off to Auschwitz and can you tell me what then happened? Did you know what Auschwitz was?

JG Yes, as I was the head of the security department of the Home Army headquarter in 1942 I got a report of a young man who was released from Warsaw, from Auschwitz. In 1941 in spring about 80 young men were released from Auschwitz, sent back to Warsaw. Later on they stopped this but why it was done is a different problem. One of them has written a report what's going on in Auschwitz. I had this report in my hand in 1942, end of 1942. Believe me or not I didn't believe in this report although I spent already two years under German occupation.

CXW You mean because it was so horrific?

JG Not horrific, such a colossal nonsense. For example let's imagine that you're coming here from the Imperial War Museum to make recording with my speech and finally we are not doing this but we are playing poker or doing gymnastic or say - that was Auschwitz, a nonsense. What Germans wanted to achieve? Cruelty to people, starving them to death, doing thousands of idiotic things without any sense and without any advantage for themselves, without achieving anything. In the second part

of the war in each concentration camp there are armament factories. They started to use prisoners as workers. This had sense. But to be cruel to thousands of people asking them to do idiotic jobs, behaving like animals, starving them to death, sounds rather nonsense. It was a mental asylum. When I arrived at Auschwitz I didn't believe my own eyes this is possible, what for?

CXW What was the view that Aus^hwitz presented to you when you first arrived?

JG It was night. We started from Warsaw early in the morning. It was about twelve o'clock in the evening, complete darkness when we arrived at Aus^hwitz. It was May 1943. Firstly the ocean of small lights, small bulbs, fences with electricity so you cannot escape and colossal, colossal. Because there was Auschwitz, central camp and Birkenau sub camp. I was sent to Birkenau. In Birkenau there were plenty camps inside, plenty inside. Unfortunately I can't offer you my book 'Fighting Auschwitz' because I have only one copy. I publish a book about underground in Auschwitz, that was my Ph D thesis.

My first impression. Second impression absolutely incredible brutality of the guards. We were tired, exhausted. It was a hot day, transport - people like sardines in the trucks. And here we had to run to the camp. There were SS round us with dogs, dogs were biting us. They killed couple of people because they were not fast enough. It looked something quite frankly incredible, for what for?. Finally we entered the camp, no food, no water, nothing, nothing, absolutely till next morning. We had to spend the night in a barrack in which was only wet sand, nothing else, not even a latrine. That was the beginning.

Next morning the numbers were ~~tattoo~~^{tattoo}ed, you have seen my number?

CXW No.

JG This is the...

/I

CXW I see the number, it's 121421.

JG I remember this number in German, ein hundert ein und zwanzig vier hundert ein zwanzig. You started to be a number. No Christian name, no name, just a number for yourself. They tattooed the number. They started to sort us, sent to barracks. After three days I was selected to the penal company. Why? Nobody knows - 78 men from my transport were selected for the penal company. Till today I don't know why. Penal company in Auschwitz was a group of about thousand people. We had a chance to live no longer than about three weeks. We survived, some of them are survived but it was a long business and perhaps it's not time enough to explain why. Should I?

CXW Yes please.

JG For some reasons as I said 78 men from our transport was after three days in Auschwitz selected to penal company. Penal company was separated from the rest of the camp by a wall. People from penal company were not allowed to meet other prisoners because after the final role call during the evening we had about half an hour of free time so people from one barrack were allowed to go to another barrack, meet friends and so on , for about half an hour. But not from penal company. We were separated, about a thousand of us. We had to work after the final role call and the only piece of bread which we get by day. We had to work two hours extra. This work was of course a farce. We had to run from one end of the field to another taking three or four bricks, running there, leaving them, three other bricks and run. The SS were left and right hitting us. I was fortunately young. I was 28 at that time, still full of life, so my running was fast enough not to be killed there. But many people were killed just doing this so called - German called sport.

Altogether the regime was so brutal in the penal company that people lived really two or three weeks. They didn't manage /to

to resist physically. But 78 of us they selected even inside the penal company. Everybody who was sent to penal company had the black circle, here and also on his back. That was the symbol of penal company. But we got these black circles and also red circles.

CXW For political prisoners?

JG No, because each prisoner had green triangle if he was criminal and red if he was political. So we all had political triangles with P inside it, P - Polish. But red circle. Why? From the Gestapo point of view people with red circles were the most dangerous. I tell you what's happened. In 1942, a year before I was brought to Auschwitz, the first people got red circles and Gestapo started to kill them, that's SS, started to kill them. Send them from - penal company was in Birkenau. They started to send them to the main camp, Auschwitz No 1, to the political department. They interrogated them and killed them. They started to kill them, each day couple of them. So these red circles, there were about 150 of them, they decided to try to escape.

By day they work outside the camp near Vistula River building a canal. Theoretically it was ...

10592/5/4

Theoretically it was a chance to escape. Any way trying to escape there was a chance that some of them will be save. Otherwise they all be killed. They try this. Unfortunately unsuccessfully, only nine escape. All others were killed. It was 1942. When we arrived and when we got this red circle it was obvious for everybody in the penal company that we are condemned to death. That our future finally will be the same. Because of this two things happened. Firstly our group, because we worked together, red circles, in German they call this working group 'commando', so our commando were not allowed to walk outside the camp. So we didn't work at that canal

/at

at Vistula River which was very hard, very heavy work. But we had to work inside the camp.

Because of this our physical problem was not as bad as ... First. And secondly, which is most important, all these German trustees, prisoners, mostly criminals, who behaved terribly towards other prisoners in penal company, because there was the privilege of them to be cruel, they behaved properly towards us. It's just one of those things. We were condemned to death and because of this other prisoners - this is a criminal tradition. For example in prison, now the death penalty is cancelled here, but here was death penalty, a man condemned to death had certain privileges in prison, from other prisoners not necessarily from warders. In concentration camp it was like this. Once we got these red circles the German criminals who were running the penal company roughly speak they behaved properly towards us.

That was second reason. And third reason we were allowed to get food parcels. After Stalingrad, January 1943, when Germans lost the first battle, after Battle of Britain of course, but first land battle, when they realised that they can lose the war and when they decided that they should use prisoners as workers, not kill them in mass for no reason at all, we were allowed food parcels because they had not enough food for us. Even in penal company we were allowed food parcels. I got my first parcel from my wife there. Food parcel, it was not only the food for yourself but kind of money. If you offer a piece of bacon say to your foreman, your kapo, a German criminal, he behaved better towards you.

So three elements saved us.

CXW So you were able to receive parcels from ^{private} individuals outside the...

JG Yes, from mothers, from wives, from friends. The number of parcels was unlimited. There was one day, of course /the

the post, this delivery was a matter of - it was not always regular. For example my wife sent two parcels per week. There was one day when I got five parcels the same day, in another camp, not in Auschwitz. Of course all my friends used these parcels because you had to use your parcel the same day otherwise it would be stolen by night. So you organised group of people, three or four friends together and we share everything. This is a different matter.

But suddenly there was information after four months in penal company that there will be transport to Neuengamme, to another camp. I was selected from penal company and sent to Neuengamme after six months in Auschwitz.

CXW Do you know how you were selected?

JG They selected young, strong people because Auschwitz was always overcrowded. They decided already they will do factories in each concentration camp. Young and strong people had a chance, even Jewish. Remember the Jewish people, they started to select Jewish people in the middle of 1942. Young Jewish people, men and women had a chance to survive and some of them survived and others as well. I was at that time only 29, 28. I was still strong and fit and selected me to Neuengamme. That was only a concentration camp, not a death camp. Therefore I survived Auschwitz, bit of luck. I tell you I had the inflammation of the ear inside there. My temperature in Auschwitz in penal company was about 102, 103 for about a week. I survived this. I didn't try to go to the hospital because from penal company it was, first, almost impossible. People said you have to bring your head under your arm before you are accepted from penal company. Secondly there was terrible typhus in the hospital. So I survived this. My friends helped me. It was July. I survived this.

CXW How did Neuengamme compare once you got there?

camp but run like a concentration camp. Concentration camp is not the best place but Neuengamme, Dachau, they were run like concentration camp. Terrible discipline, lack of food, certain brutality, heavy work but we were not killed on purpose. You were not killed on purpose. You had a chance to survive and, which is very essential but people don't know this, inside German concentration camp there was a struggle for power between political prisoners and criminal prisoners. In Auschwitz, till the end of Auschwitz, criminal prisoners were on the top. But when I arrived at Neuengamme political prisoners were running the camp. They were mostly communist, Western communist, not sympathetic to Poles. They consider us nationalists. But they are better than criminals. That was a colossal difference.

CXW Were these German communists?

JG German, Belgian, French, some Poles. But they were better than criminals, from two points of view. They were more human and they were better organisers. So from this point of view - because remember the camps were run by prisoners. There were thousands of prisoners who were trustees between SS. If they were brutal they were much worse than SS because SS after all didn't stay with you all the day. All the day, yes, but not all the night. But other prisoners were with you all the time. If a senior block prisoner, say, or kapo in your commando, if he was brutal, if he was a murderer, you had it. Remember that they counted - there were firstly three roll calls, later only two, morning and evening. They counted prisoners. If one escape, doesn't matter how important the work was, it was a roll call and they look for him. But if they will find his body it was alright. If kapo will kill you and bring his body - your body - together with his commando that was alright. If the body will disappear that was a problem. But if, say, 20,000 people had to be there, 20,031 and if there are - 20,000 alive and 31 bodies it's alright. That was the problem.

CXW So was there a struggle between the Poles and the communists in Neuengamme?

JG There was. There was two groups. One group which was organised by the Belgian communist. I remember his Christian name, Andre. He was the most important trustee in the offices of the camp. The distribution of work. If you got good work, if you worked say in the kitchen or in the (beds?) you have a chance to survive. If you had to work outside during the winter you had no chance. So he was responsible for this. His group there. And the Polish group, mostly architects and engineers, in a special office which built a new factory, a huge factory inside the camp. They were also very powerful people because they were professionals. It was no good to kill them because Germans wanted them. So they are powerful, even more powerful than Andre. There was a struggle between them.

CXW What form did the struggle take?

JG What form? Jobs, distribution of jobs among prisoners. They're essential as I said. All depends what kind of job they will offer you. If outside during the winter you'd had it. If in the kitchen, if in the hospital as a male nurse, even in the factory, good job, under the roof.

CXW Who won the struggle?

JG Nobody. I left Neuengamme, sent to the branch camp, sub camp of Neuengamme. The struggle was still going on. I don't know what's happened to the end.

CXW How long were you at Neuengamme?

JG In the sub camps of Neuengamme I remained almost to the end of the war. But in Neuengamme I arrived there it was September or October 1943, I stayed there till March 1944. I was sent to the sub camp in Wittenbergen. I stayed there till February 1945, work in factory. It was a good camp. But finally was lack of coal, factory stopped. We were returned back to Neuengamme and immediately to a sub camp in Schemdelah. From Schemdelah to Ludwigslust and finally American army arrived one day before Bolsheviks, before Russians. It was 4 May/1945

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

1945 when I was a free man again.

CXW I'll ask you about the liberation later but can you tell me about the question of resistance in the camps and what possibility there was of resisting?

JG I published a book, 'Fighting Auschwitz'. Try to find this book in a library because I have only one copy. It is the only book, only documentary book about underground resistance in Auschwitz. This book gives you the best possible information about how it was done. You can get this in British Library, your local library, 200,000 copies were published. In this country there were five editions. It's sold out completely. They don't want to publish again but you will get this.

My very short answer is that you organise underground. Open resistance is impossible. If you don't resist mentally and physically you are killed like an animal. In a mass of people there are always some people who will not accept this kind of death. Even in the most impossible conditions some people try to resist. Only an elite of course. Only cadre. Not 95 per cent of them, no, few per cent. This happen in Auschwitz, in all other concentration camps, everywhere. That was the secret of resistance of Jews in Warsaw ghetto and other ghettos. Of course only young people, of course only people who are still full of life but that's a normal thing.

How you organise this? Small cells. You know me, I know somebody else and there are three of us. In Auschwitz there were cells of five. Peter ... was commanding this cell. He was in touch with another cell. They didn't know each other. His four people didn't know each other. Have they met today but they didn't know that they are in the same cell because they were betrayed, they were arrested, some people were killed. But they had some successes. They send reports outside to help
/each.

each other. They had influence on the working groups, all these things. But you have to remember - 'Fighting Auschwitz', the title of my book.

CXW You personally participated in this, did you?

JG Not in Auschwitz because I was in penal company. I was in touch but in my book there's not a single word about my activity in Auschwitz. But I was in touch with this underground activity in Neuengamme. Myself I organised a group in Wittenbergen. Because remember one thing. The most essential aim of that underground was to save our lives until the end of the war. Because there was a Himmler order to raze the camp to the ground and kill all prisoners, everywhere. In Neuengamme it happened. So we were ready to fight on the end of the war, just there when it would be a critical moment, couple of days. We were even in touch with some SS. Remember that on the end of the war, first the SS was elite, only volunteers etcetera. On the end of the war I met SS men who didn't speak German. In Neuengamme I work as interpreter between five SS and officer of SS because these five didn't speak German. They were mobilised in Polish Silesia. They were Poles. They were very nice people. They were mobilised to SS. They didn't speak German. I was helping them and this officer to speak with them.

So we were in touch with SS. We hoped that if there would be an order to kill us we will manage to start fighting and perhaps escape... That was the most important aim of all these underground groups in German concentration camp. Of course reports outside, help to each other, etcetera. You feel differently mentally when you know that you are doing something, that you are resisting, that you will finally fight for your life and you don't wait for your luck. You don't depend on your luck but you also co-operate with your luck. I had about two hundred lectures about Auschwit^hz all over the world under the title 'The retrospect on Auschwitz concentration camp.' In this country, in United States, in Israel, in Canada, in Scandinavia, in Switzerland, in Italy, in this country

/at

at universities, at secondary schools, it's a most popular lecture. How we managed to resist, how we managed to survive, what's happened. Not atrocities because this is known. For atrocities I spent about three minutes. I'm talking about life there - how it - from all points of view. Medicine, religious - friendship, nationality, all these things.

CXW We were talking earlier about a television programme you did called I think 'Survival,' and in that they made the point that those in charge of the camps used policies of divide and rule between different groups, do you remember that?

JG Yes, that was the most important activity from the SS point of view. First to spilt nationalities. Secondly splits educated people from ordinary people. Split them offering some of them privileges. They will survive (if?) they will be brutal to others. The best example is this. First time Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, visited Auschwitz in I believe April 1941. He inspected the camp and later on talked to the camp commander Rudolf Hoess. Different spelling, not that Hess who was in Spandau, not the deputy of Hitler but Hoess. He spoke to him and said, "Look here, Mr Hoess, people are not dying in your camp. This is a concentration camp, we haven't food for them," it was April 1941, "They have to die. You not organising properly this." He said, "Mein fuehrer I'm sorry I haven't enough good SS. I haven't enough facilities. I have only one small crematorium built in old peasant's house. I haven't facilities to organise this better."

Two years later, it was the middle of 1943. I was already in Neuengamme, end of 1943. Himmler arrived to Auschwitz again, inspected the camp. There were factories already built inside the camp. He had this talk to the same camp commander, Rudolf Hoess, and told him, "Too many people are dying here. I gave you the order that now they have to be fit enough and work in factories and are dying. Forget what happened two years ago. There are too many people dying." He said, "Mein fuehrer, I haven't enough SS, I haven't enough food. The same moral problem

for Hoess. Order. Order must be obeyed. "I have to kill people? Alright, but give me chance to do it. Give me people to help. They (have?) to survive? Give me food." But moral problem is the same.

Remember that in German concentration camp from SS point of view the moral problem was to obey the order. In 95 per cent of them they had to obey the order. That was the moral problem. For prisoners it was a different problem. But once SS, on the beginning to the middle of the war, had the problem to kill these people, to let them die, they have done everything possible to do it with the help of other prisoners. As I said on the beginning occupation cannot be successful without co-operation of occupied people. Some people will co-operate. At Auschwitz for piece of bread.

CXW Also on the same television programme to which we've referred there was someone talking about the Jehovah's Witnesses there. Did they stand out as a particular group from your memory?

JG Fantastic. I met them in Neuengamme. Fantastic people. Majority of them very ordinary uneducated people. Very ordinary uneducated people. But believers. The best people I met in concentration camp, the best people, no question. Only German. They refused to take arms. Hitler jailed them. He sent to concentration camps. On the beginning they were treated like Jews. They were not killed but they were treated with extreme brutality. They survived. They had their own commando under their own kapo. I was in the same barrack with them in Neuengamme, in Wittenberger. Absolutely perfect people, believers. From one angle fantastic people, from another angle very lucky people.

CXW Lucky?

JG If you believe - the most unfortunate people are the people who believe in nothing, no patriotism, no religion, nothing. They had to die. No background, nothing.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy. /Nothing

CXW Nothing to sustain them?

JG They hadn't the mental power to resist, no. They were believers. Look, I'm an old man, I'm 75. I'm very sorry that I'm not a religious man. It's easy to die when you are religious. You are young so you don't think about this but I have to think about this. Very soon I will die and I don't believe in God. Of course you understand that there must be a power which organise all these things but my Catholicism is very theoretical because it is very difficult for me to believe really, for thousands of reasons. In this respect I'm very unlucky because some people of my age are believers.

CXW So as far as the Jehovah's Witnesses are concerned did there seem to be any joy in their lives, even in the concentration camps?

JG To a certain extent, yes. I talked to them very often. I admired them, very nice people. Fantastic people. They believe God decided they have to suffer. They obeyed orders of God so they will suffer. It was impossible to see them to be brutal to others, to steal bread or something like this, no. And they obey orders. They obey SS orders, they were good workers. They believe that they have to suffer and that's all. They were the best workers in the camp although everybody tried to do nothing because for what? You are losing your energies. Better to do nothing if nobody is watching you. But they worked.

CXW What was the attitude of the guards towards them?

JG Finally good. You know they impressed them finally. There was a case in Neuengamme. There were two brothers, Jehovah's Witnesses. SS tried to break them. They said, "If one of you will not go to the army the other one will be hanged." So one older brother decided to go to the army as volunteer. After two weeks he returned to the camp. He was alright in the army as long as they didn't offer him a rifle. He said no and returned

to the camp. The SS didn't hang his brother. After this case there was an order that they should be accepted as a people who will not, obey any order except fight. And they got good jobs. They were working in the kitchen. SS finally accepted the fact that these people will not be broken. They were Germans. I must say that till today I...

10592/5/5

CXW Could you describe to me how you came to be liberated?

JG That was the beginning of May. I was in a small sub camp of Neuengamme. It was to the north of Berlin on the Elbe River. The name of the camp was, not Ludwigslust but a small place not far from Ludwigslust.

It was obvious it was almost the end of the war because we heard artillery from the west and from the east. From the east from the Soviet army which was not far away and from the west from the Americans. Finally, it was the 4th May, morning, when we realised that the SS had disappeared. Suddenly there were no SS around the camp. A couple of minutes later we saw the first American tank. American negroes, infantry, and white people as well. In five minutes Americans were there, suddenly.

The planes were flying very low. It was obvious that that was the end of the war but who will come first, the Americans or the Russians? The Americans were there. I joined them as interpreter. My English was bad but good enough to be understand. And I speak Polish, German, Russian. It was useful because there were millions of people deported to Germany for labour. All these people were moving, end of the war. Last days of war. So I joined, it was 7th American Armoured Division. I travelled with them for about two weeks and got typhus. Fortunately I was a free man already. But that was the day.

CXW Was there any temptation for people to take revenge on liberation since they spoke against guards or against other prisoners?
/Guards

JG Guards disappeared. In my camp nobody wanted to take revenge of other people. When we were free already and we were walking towards the nearest town we met German prisoners of war, pilots, marching like this and guarded by Americans. So we said something, my friend and I, we spoke German, we said something what we think about the Germans and them. But I wouldn't myself hit the man who is helpless. There were cases like this but I wasn't there. I haven't seen this. Also against German civilians. Altogether the bitterness was terrible. But I fortunately I immediately joined Americans and avoided all this confrontation which is very unpleasant.

CXW How do you think that your period in the camps changed you

JG Mentally not physically. Now, when I survive the war and I survive so many years after the war I'm not sorry that I was in the camp. I understand the war better I think than ordinary people. I also understand human nature than I would be there. In principle human nature is weak, easy to compromise and not really should be trusted really. An ordinary person will break under difficult conditions. People who are talking about themselves as brave people they are normally cowards who will betray you at the first opportunity. But, on this background, of very ordinary people, on this background, suddenly you can see an example of extreme almost nonsense brutality and selfishness, and suddenly you can see a fantastic personality of somebody who is above of other people, not because of education, because of background, because of family connections, but just because mentality. It's a very rare case but this kind of case helps to believe you in human beings, in human nature. Few, very seldom and only only when it is very difficult.

When you are say watching good picture and have drinks and friends with you you are normal person. Put the same person into difficult situation and you can see who is a man and who is not. Very few resist properly. Very few. But /we

we should remember that only very few run this world, only an elite is running this world. Doesn't matter, white, red or black. But only elite is running this world. Not everybody, democracy - alright but in democracy you have a free vote but you follow somebody. You normally follow. You belong to a party, you belong to a union. You follow somebody. That's roughly speaking even in democracy. Democracy's not anarchy. Because of this, influential people are so important. One person can change the picture of the world, Two clever people, one in United States, one in Soviet Union, can change the world situation, can save people from another war or can start another war easily.

CXW Did your experiences in the war change your attitudes to the Germans?

JG Frankly saying, no. I tell you why - because we have a long experience, historical experience with Germans. It's our historical enemy, Russians on the one side, Germans on the other side. So I never had better opinion about Germans from the political point of view, what they would do if they had the chance against us. Of course what Hitler has done it was extreme end of brutality towards Poland and Poles. Quite frankly if I changed the opinion about Germans I was astonished that Germans, such a clever people, managed to make so many blunders during the Second World War. So many political blunders. That they started the war against Soviet Russia without a political plan, like Napoleon. That they tried to conquer the colossal country without political plan of offering freedom to nationalities who waited for them. It was an elementary mistake. Having fantastic power they make, fortunately perhaps, this mistake.

Also this senseless cruelty. In each nation there are cruel people. But it is a sin. Hitler advocated this sin as a privilege, as something for which you will get a medal. That was again for me something astonishing really. From Polish-German history

/it

it was known to me that they had people, even cruel people, but they do it because it has a sense, political or military or economical sense. They behave in the Second World War sometimes senselessly. That's what astonished me. But Germans were not unknown to me, we had the history.