

Jurek Orwovsky, tape one. Jurek, would you be good enough to tell me something about your family background in Poland before war broke out? For instance, if you start with your grandfather, what sort of family did he belong to?

What, grandfather? Taking father's line, lived in, before the First World War, for many, many years in Russia. In fact, in-- not very far from Volga river. His predecessors were given land by Polish kings for duty to the crown, and moved from Poland to the Ukraine, what was later known, and settled there, and, in fact, on the land. And I think that was about 16th century, and after Poland defeated the Turks and Tartars under Genghis Khan.

How long they were-- and in fact, they settled there and lived until Russian revolution.

So am I right in thinking he would have been a noble man if he was given these lands?

Yes. Well, he was given a crest, and should I call a forename, or a double barrel name.

And what was his name?

[? Lubitsch. ?] [? Lubitsch, ?] yes. And then he was more or less knighted by king. Belonged then to a slightly higher upper class of citizens. That permitted him to form his own private army with which he supported the king. Well, there were only perhaps 50 or 60 people. I don't know how many, but I wouldn't call it an army.

But that was at the time where king gained support from his noblemen who organized their own private units for combining in the wars against--

It is like the boyars in Russia, isn't it?

Yes, yes. Similar thing. While in Russia, obviously, they were very much assimilated there, second and third generation. They went to Russian schools and, in fact, one of my predecessors was taking part in the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway which, as far as I gather, was built by Russians by design and by Polish engineers in fact.

That sort of life carried on until the Russian revolution. That was 1905 or something, where my grandfather attended university in Leningrad. This being the pre-revolution period.

There were many student associations which were against tsar, but pro-revolutionary. Mostly, they were socialists. And during that period, there were quite a number of uprisings in Poland against tsar, against Russia. And father-- grandfather, in fact, I'm talking about-- returned to Poland.

As it happened, there were some differences between him and his older brother on political ground differences. Whereby my grandfather's father was pro-tsar, and my grandfather-- oh, I'm talking about one-- was totally against. He was trying to go with the go ahead movement of the day, and the socialism, and so on. And as a result of a number of probably quite heated conversations, my grandfather gave up all his inheritance in Russia.

And he says, I'm settling in Poland. Forget about what we own in Russia. And in fact-- in fact, settled in New Warsaw, where he met my grandmother. She was from a real socialist background. Her father's brother, named Daszynski, quite well-known socialist personality in Poland in those days. And they decided to start life anew.

Being educated in agriculture and forestry at Leningrad University, he thought the best way would be to start a new life in this environment. And hence, he accumulated and developed new business, acquired new property, which later on my father received from him.

What was your father's name?

My father's? That's the same as mine.

Orwovsky?

Yes.

Did this still have the sort of connotations of nobility then?

Yes. It's called crest, or in Polish, herb, H-E-R-B, which represents-- I show you. Like I have one here. Francine -- has a ring now from me on this. Well, that would be the grandfather's background.

Where were you born?

I was born in a town called Lodz. My father was in the army at the time.

What, fighting in the army?

No, that was after war. That was after war, obviously. And then-- but he was still serving. And then mother, at that time, did some teaching and singing. Playing piano, that sort of thing.

And she lived with her parents in Lodz. That's where I was born.

Where did you go to school?

Well, I didn't go to school until I was about 12 or 13. A good time, I should say. What--

Not at all? Didn't you go to any school until then?

No, not at all. We have a governess at home and a tutor. And apparently, as mother says, I was very keen myself to learn reading, and drawing, and writing. So I managed to read and write much before any time there was school.

But nevertheless, I didn't go to so-called primary school. The governess and tutor prepared me and my sister, who is one year and a half younger than me. We were prepared to go straight to the secondary school.

Was this quite usual for some families to do this?

No, it wasn't. I can't remember no more than two or three other friends of ours did that.

Were you a wealthy family by comparison with others, would you say?

I wouldn't say wealthy, but comfortable, maybe.

So were there just two children in your family, then?

Two, yes.

Yourself and your sister?

I have another brother, but he came much later.

I see. So you went to school when you were 13, and what was your father doing at this time? What was his occupation?

Well, he was educated in the same trade as my grandfather. That means agriculture. He attended, to start with, technical school, and then university, which brought him with a degree in agriculture. And he was connected, to begin with, with a number of large estates where he managed large estates for very wealthy people then with, say, thousands of acres. And eventually, he acquired his own land, and forest, and house where we settled permanently.

And that whereabouts was that?

Was near Pulawy, which is in central Poland.

And was that your only home, or did you have a townhouse, as well?

Well, townhouse, it was a quite big house. It was, what, four stories tall, a sort of town-- how would you explain? I wouldn't call it a block of flats.

But a big-- quite a big place.

There were, I think, about 12 or 18 separate flats in it, or four or five stories tall. And that was owned by him and his brother. And as it happened, both my father and his brother were educated in the same field. That means agriculture and forestry. And they both together joined their resources and knowledge to build up business. There was yet another uncle and two aunts.

And so when you were 13, were you sent away to school?

Yes.

To a boarding school?

I was sent immediately to boarding school, which I hated. And once I escaped, then mother had to come and stay with me for a period of time. In fact, I was simply ill with the lack of parents, and company, and so on. And on advice of a doctor, in fact, she came and stopped with me for about two months, I think. So she was also a lodger at a house next to the boarding school.

Well, could you tell me what religion you were?

Religion?

Yes.

Roman Catholic.

Roman Catholic. I see. And when you were at school, did you have any plans for your career when you left school? Did you know what you wanted to do?

Not really. Well, yes. I wanted to be a pilot, whatever happens.

How old were you when war broke out?

17.

Did you know anything about these sort of circumstances leading to war? Were you sort of politically aware at that time?

Well, to a certain extent, I was. In fact, about a year before the war, there were all these sort of clouds gathering over Czechoslovakia, and Austria, and so on. There was-- Germany invaded Latvia when they took the port of Klaipeda. I don't know if you know the name. And generally, people were aware that something is going to happen.

We also knew that Polish government was doing everything to avoid war, and at the same time, secure some friendship. Hence, we were aware that the negotiations with England and France about possible defense. And in fact, with that sort

of background, we were not afraid of war at all. We would say perhaps Germans would be so frightened they wouldn't attack. And even if they did, they would finish a couple of weeks time.

Can you remember the day war did break out what you were doing?

Yes.

Where were you?

I was at home in the country. It was very early morning, 4:00 perhaps, when there was an announcement on the radio that Germany attacked. Father brought the news. And in fact, it was so early that we all got up. It was still almost-- it wasn't sort of a bright day. That particular morning was foggy and cloud, but we heard all the German bombers going overhead.

Not very far, there was a quite large fortress and a complex of airfields on which defensive forces were gathered, and Germans were attacking it. That was about 30 miles from us. We heard bombing and so on.

How were-- how near to the border were you? Whereabouts were you then in Poland?

We were right in the middle of Poland. We were good 300 miles from the border.

And how far from Warsaw would you have been? 100 kilometers. That means 80 miles.

Can you remember how you felt?

Oh, very excited.

How about your parents? Did you get any impression of--

Well, I remember mother was worried. We had grandmother with us. She was, too. And we had one aunt with us. She was married to a pilot, and they used to-- they lived in Warsaw almost on the airfield. And about a week or 10 days before war, she was evacuated. Families were sent away from the area which could be possibly bombed, and she was staying with us.

So all ladies were a little bit agitated. Father organized local anti-air raid defenses, and I was running around excited trying to see first German.

How long was it--

And I was not [? alive. ?]

And how long was it before you saw your first German?

It was a good three weeks before I saw first German. What was happening, within a week, we realized that Germans were going ahead much faster than we anticipated or we dreamed about it. There was nothing happening on the Western front in France.

They were announcement on radio that already Germany is being bombed by RAF, and that the Maginot Line didn't sort of remain silent. And French are attacking from the west. So we thought, oh well, perhaps another day, another day. And that kept going on and on until Germans were reported within about 20 miles from us, and we were evacuated. That means all family, all aunts, and granny, and everything else, dogs and cats.

And you took your things with you, did you-- furniture and possessions?

Only on the light sort of cases-- traveling cases and clothing. Mostly food. And we had three large horse-drawn carts loaded with belongings, and people sitting on it. Some other people also joining us. And we went east. We went east to start with about 30 miles, stopped.

Did you have anywhere to go to in the east? Why did you go in particular--

Not really.

You were just fleeing?

Idea was to go beyond the river Bug, B-U-G, which was apparently a dividing line agreed between Russia and Germany. as a division of the country-- between those two countries, those two powers. And we are trying to get as near as possible to this line. Well, this line of Bug, so-called Curzon Line in international language, provided division between Russia and Germany. And because Poland had a peace treaty and non-aggression agreement with Russia. 20 or 25 years, well, it was.

Everybody imagined that that part of the country would be peaceful enough for people who flee, or who are bombed out, excuse me, to be able to settle over there. As it happened, unexpectedly, and completely contrary to any imagination of various people, Russia attacked from the east. And we found ourselves between German and Russian armies. And we had to take the decision then of father, Where do you want to go? Who is better friend?

And we decided that we have to go back. And it was quite an extraordinary arrangement because we were already on the east side of the border. And German army was standing on the west bank of the river. There was a bridge. In fact, pontoon bridge made by the army. And there were a number of people going back from the eastern territories back into Western Poland.

And Germans were very interested. Why did they return? Who are they? Because I think at that time was agreement between Russia and Germany that all refugees who were in the Eastern Poland should stay there. And we were afraid that we may be turned around, turned back by Germans.

And father, while approaching German post, ask this German in German language, does he want us to go left or right? Which means left will be to return to Russian-- excuse me, I have a bit of cold, excuse me-- Or right, which would allow us to proceed back home. And this German sentry, when he heard German language, said, right, go to, and we went to home.

Because your father spoke fluent German, did he?

He did speak German, yes.

Yes. Did you speak German, as well?

No. Well, I learned about four years at school.

Had you had any English then? Did you have any English language?

No. No, but there was optional tuition in English, which I attended several times. But not having immediate use for it, somehow was neglected by me.

So going back to this occasion when you said left or right to the German, was there the first time you'd seen the Germans?

That was the first time I saw German, yes.

What did you think when you were going back across the bridge? How did you feel when you were approaching these

Germans?

Well, I didn't-- in fact, I didn't have any sort of-- there was no fright. There was-- rather, I was inquisitive to see what they look like. And I was very impressed by the equipment, by the quite well tailored uniforms, steel helmets. There were plenty of tanks about, which were very interesting.

Had you seen any actual fighting when you were going east? You know, what signs of the war had you actually seen or heard?

Only bombing-- strafing on the roads by German bombers.

Did you experience that yourself?

Yes, yes, yes. At least twice we had to scramble off our vehicles, and run into fields, and lie down while we were strafed. And on one occasion, we met a German tank. It was a funny coincidence because we didn't realize Germans went as far as that. We're still going east. That was before river, before we crossed the river.

And we didn't realize Germans were going ahead so fast, and there was a tank standing in the field narrow field road. And father was rather dubious. Shall we go, shan't we? And I noticed this black-- sorry, this white cross on a black background on the turret. And, you know, in my big naive, I said, oh, that must be Swiss. [LAUGHS]

And in fact, we went then-- in fact, I went myself to start with just about to clamber on it. And appeared to be nobody inside. To my recollections, this tank wasn't damaged. It was in perfect condition. But if there were Germans, they were inside, and they didn't look out. I didn't see them at all.

So I said to my father, I said, Daddy, don't worry. He is Swiss, perhaps, or Red Cross, or something. And we just passed this tank, went ahead. And about half an hour later, there was a lot of shooting going on, and quite heavy artillery fire, which we later were told that the Polish infantry attacked that tank. And there was a battle in the area. But that was the nearest to the battle we've been.

Did you have any idea yourself of the strength of the German forces compared with the Polish?

No. No. I thought they were much stronger.

And you-- what did you feel about Britain and France at this time? You said earlier on in the war that you thought immediately-- you had reports that they were coming to your aid.

Well, we were-- personally, I had quite an admiration to the RAF. Being aviation minded, I read a lot of books and magazines which were available before the war. And the RAF, in my mind, in my imagination, was the top mighty service where there were thousands of bombers, thousands of fighters. And if they start moving, nobody will stop them. So this aspect of being defeated never came to my mind at all.

It became more dismal when Russians came in. Because at that time, I didn't realize how wicked the alignment between Russia and Germany was at the time. In fact, I didn't realize Poland was divided already before the war started between Russia and Germany.

Do you think most people felt that-- most Polish people felt that when Russia came in?

I would certainly say so, yes. It was quite sort of-- how shall I explain-- depressive news that was. There was something which wasn't happiness at all. Although Russians were saying that they invaded only because they didn't want Germans to take whole Poland so they could have something themselves.

How did you personally, as a young 17-year-old, how did you view the Germans as a race, as a nation? Can you remember?

Well, I knew, and I was told by many people, including at school, that they were quite hostile to Poland. But I, on a personal basis, I have no reason to view them that way. I was more or less waiting for my experience and then judged them from that sort of point of view.

And how about the Russians?

I didn't see Russians then. And in fact, I didn't see Russians until the end of war.

How did you feel about Russians then?

Well, the dislike of Russians were more or less born within me. All my family suffered most because of Russian occupation-- because of Russian persecution by tsars, and later, by communists. So that was very deeply, you know--

This is going back to your grandfather's time that you told us about?

Yes. Whatever happened to my family, it was caused by Russians. And I mean in a big way.

Jurek Orwovsky, tape two. Jurek, could you please tell me some of your experiences during the war? What, for instance, did you do when you returned home from Eastern Poland in 1939-- September 1939?

Well, upon return home, that was middle of October 17-- sorry, 1939. That was normally time to go to school. In fact, month and a half past since school supposed to start. And upon return home, we found that schools are being closed permanently by German authorities who already settled in our area.

There was no alternative, just to stay around at home and find if there are any other means of continuing education. In fact, around Christmas that year, a number of teachers who taught me before outbreak of war organized a number of small groups of children who call on teachers at their homes. And a number of hours daily were spent either recapping previous year or advancing ahead with the material.

That lasted for about six to seven months, and then it had to stop because Germans apparently found out that this is taking place and demanded closure.

You were living outside Warsaw then in your country home?

That was out in Warsaw, yes.

What other evidence was there of Germans? Did you have Germans billeted in your village or near you at all?

Well, in fact, they were billeted in our house. The house was divided into more or less half. And we were living in one half. Another half was taken up by Germans. It was not a front line unit. Equivalent of a transport command, about 180 German soldiers.

They were not all in our house, luckily. [LAUGHS] But they were billeted in the area. And officer and a number of other ranks were stationed in our house. And they had a office. There was a telephone station and radio communications set with the high command. And in fact, life went on with the Germans much easier than many people imagined.

I was going to ask what your relationship with them would have been. Did you speak to them?

Well, as a matter of fact, yes, quite a lot. They were quite elderly people who were in their 50s, and they were really second line of German army. A number of them were invalids from the First World War and people who couldn't be 100% fit.

Their behavior was much more correct than we expected even. And while sitting at home doing nothing, watching

what's happening around, I learned to play chess. I was taught by one of the Germans, and they taught me how to play mouth harmonica, in fact. [LAUGHS]

So as you see, relations were not terribly hostile. Generally, people kept apart from soldiers. There were no sort of fraternization of so. But relations were correct. Not until later on, SS unit arrived and police-- German field gendarmerie they called them, field gendarmerie. When these people started coming in and checking everything, you know that things became a little bit more difficult.

And when was that? When did they start appearing?

That was, I would say, about middle of 1940.

So you would have been at 17, 18 at this time. Were you doing any work?

Yes. In fact, father's objective was to see that I don't go around and do nothing, and in fact, helped around father's work. In fact, I had some sums to do in his books. I was very interested in engineering then already, and I got myself involved in stores and stores of material for mechanical workshops which were on the site. And I made myself generally helpful around the estate.

Did the Germans attempt to recruit you at all to help with their war effort?

No. No, there was no attempt whatsoever. Later on, or maybe similar at the same time, but not in our area, were efforts to persuade farmers to work on German farms in Germany. But at that time, that wasn't forced. It wasn't forceful persuasion. This came later on in the war.

But towards autumn 1940, I decided to go to Warsaw, to town. Although father wasn't keen on that. He preferred to have me under his own supervision and general care, but something urged me to go and see what's happening to Warsaw. We already knew that there is some sort of resistance against Germans growing. There were underground printed papers already distributed, and they all sent it from Warsaw.

And generally, Warsaw appeared to me quite an exciting place. So hence, I decided to go back there.

Were you free to go to Warsaw? You were allowed to sort of move from district to district?

Yes. And at that time of the war, movement was quite free. In fact, my uncle occupied the whole house where we used to live in Warsaw, and father decided to remain in the country. So I went to Warsaw, and I lived for quite a number of months with uncle and auntie. And in fact, my grandmother was there, too, so we're quite a little family.

And very shortly after arriving there, I met two of my ex-colleagues from my previous school who were already, should I say, learning further education. A not exactly clandestine arrangement, but semi-clandestine because German authorities allow a number of technical schools to carry on the existence under the understanding that people who learn trade-- engineering, for instance-- they will be later useful to the German. And in fact, I joined one of the schools, which basically brought me further in my education with a definite specialization in engineering.

Did you still have Polish teachers?

Oh, yes. Yes, yes.

But was it under German-- it was under German supervision, the syllabus?

Not entirely. Not entirely. It was all checked-- it was checked by Germans obviously, and the teachers and the principals were told to stick to it possibly. They did. I don't know. But there were definitely German supervision from quite above, though we didn't see Germans coming and checking things. They were run as outlined.

Now, one of the drawbacks of this school was that at least 50% of time spent at school had to be devoted to actual practical work. And the practical work was employment at German factory. So there were three shifts at school, and three shifts at factory which were interlocking. For instance, one morning at school, afternoon, three at home, night in a factory. Next morning, three at home, afternoon school, and morning in the factory again. So that sort of sequence.

OK, what was your relations with the Germans like at that time? You met Germans in the factory, I imagine? Supervisors and--

Yes, on the supervisors at a fairly high level, not immediately above me, I had a foreman and possibly a plant engineer. And then he was responsible to Germans. Though Germans were in evidence, obviously they were all the time around, but there was no direct contact with relation to work with Germans.

The fact that I had to go out to this factory at night meant that I had to have a night pass. Incidentally, there was a curfew all the time. I think 10:00 was curfew, and there was no traffic-- nobody was allowed on the street. Only German patrols already then in 1940.

And in that period of time, I was approached by one of my colleagues who said, you have night pass? You'd be very useful to us. We have to move some items which during the day could be suspicious for German police and their patrols in the street. But they could be quite easily transported or carried at night. Because at night patrols were not too frequent, and the only people who had really 100 percent strong case to be on the street had papers supporting this were seen on the street that were very few, indeed.

And that's how I was recruited to the underground movement. Because one or two nights later, I was given a parcel with a clandestine printed newspaper which I had to bring from one point to another point. And in fact, I was doing that for quite a while-- for quite a few months to come.

So that would have been fairly well organized at that time. Would it have been late 1940?

Yes. I was only one little cog in the big machinery.

Did it have a name, this organization?

No. I didn't know then. I know only two people, one who gave me parcel, and the one who took from me. They didn't know my name-- possibly only one, that one who recruited me because that was my personal colleague.

Did you know what its aims were?

Well, yes, yes. Because this type of press we already seen while in the country before I came to Warsaw. But that was the center where this everything was distributed, printed, possibly edited, and so on.

And what were these aims at that time?

Sorry?

What were the aims of the organization?

It was called small sabotage, which means simply being a bit awkward towards Germans. Not doing what you're told to do. There was, obviously, German printed newspaper. I think there was only one that I remember, and the aim was to contradict all the propaganda and other lies which were in this paper by printing our own paper. Particularly, this was in reference to what was happening on the Western front, how the Allies are getting on.

How did you feel then about the course of the war? Did you get much real news of the Western front, what was happening to Britain and France?

Yes, yes.

And, you know, later when you were able to check it after the war, were you getting accurate facts?

Yes. Yes, in fact, many people, hundreds of people, I knew they were listening to BBC every night. So that's no problem.

And how did you feel at that stage? How long did you reckon the war would last?

Well, the saying was until next spring, no longer. So there was months after months, and so on. But as time went on, we realized that Germany was very strong, indeed. If you consider the swiftness with which they conquered France, went to Greece, and Crete, and then in Africa, we thought that the British and American really have to get to grips with this rather dreadful prospect.

If Germans, for instance, as they aimed at would conquer Egypt, and then Middle East, and get to the oil, the war could be prolonged for many, many years. Because as perhaps you know, Germany was very short of fuel. And that was one of the things which made them hurry up and get their hands on some sort of oil, either through Africa to Middle East, or through Russia to Russian oil fields on the Caspian Sea.

And what was your view of the Germans at that time? Did you hear of any sort of atrocities or ill treatment early in the war?

In 1940, yes, we already heard, should I say, terror from German side. At that time, German police, criminal police, so-called, and secret police was already in operation. There were one or two incidents where soldiers were still in hiding after September 1939, and in fact, one or two cases, they fought their way out from encirclement by Germans. And there were battles.

And Polish citizens were taken as hostages. And they were told, if this happens again, a number of these hostages will be shot. And that then snowballed further and further. Resistance grew, and German reprisals followed this up.

And did you witness any of this at first hand? Did anyone you know, were anyone you know taken, people taken?

Not at very close quarters, but from a distance of several hundred yards, yes, I saw one of these instances. And in fact, the procedure was that German police drove in the lorries from two ends of the street. So heading-- those two lorries were heading to each other.

And on a certain point, it stopped. German police jumped out, and there was a lot of shouting, halt, halt. Shooting in the air, that sort of stopping people. And everybody had to stop immediately with hands up, and it depends. It was busy day. There were 100 people, maybe 200 people, maybe 500 people stopped in this manner.

And everybody was told to go against the wall. First of all, women were allowed to leave, children until about, say, 15, 16, or something like that. Anybody who was, perhaps, very old or infirm. But rest of it were kept against the wall, thoroughly searched, and then, say, 50 of these people were put in the lorry and were driven off. The rest of it was allowed to go.

And, say, in two or three days, names of these 50 people were on the notice boards-- displayed on notice boards. And there was a warning from the commanding police chief of the town of Warsaw that these people were being held as hostages. And if any acts against German army, or German personnel take place, these people will be liquidated.

Obviously, there was no day passed if something happens somewhere. The train was derailed, or a German soldier was shot somewhere, or a German shop was put on fire, or something like that, and these people then were brought out to the street in the same manner as previously described. That means everybody was stopped, and everybody had to go on one side of the street.

Then they were picking up a fence, or a wall where there were no windows or something like that. And these people, all they arrived with the eyes blindfolded. I mean, they were blindfolded, and their hands were tied behind their backs.

And people say they were already [INAUDIBLE] because they sort of behave as the moments where mechanical. There was no resistance absolutely. They were like little bunch of sheep simply. They were put against a wall and machine gun.

And did you see this yourself?

I saw that from a distance, yes.

What sort of effect do you think that had on people? Do you think it frightened them?

Well, to start with, yes.

But then?

To start with, yes, and particularly in older generation. They said, oh, why do these silly things, or why causing these things? Because this only brings reprisals, and the war will finish anyway if you do something or don't.

And in certain instances, we were scolded by certain age group of people as being called as hotheads, or a bit around the corner, around the bend. [LAUGHS] But for us, then it was quite fun. I mean, was nothing else to do more or less.

Perhaps I could give you an example of a small instance which affected me personally and really introduced me to proper work in underground movement. This happened at a factory where we were employed as students from the school which I attended at the same time. Not knowingly, I went one morning to work when suddenly, within half an hour of commencement of the shift, the electric power was switched off in the whole works area.

Machines stopped. Everything went quiet, and we thought perhaps fuses went somewhere. How nice, and we sat down, have a little chat. [LAUGHS]

But suddenly, one of the managing German personnel walked into this area we're sitting and ordered everybody to move to the center of the aisle where people already were gathering from other branches of factory. I would think in all, 500 to 600 people were gathered there. And the managing director, a German person in company of one or two works foremen and quite a number of police appeared, and in German language, told us that one of the foremen was killed last night at the gate of the factory.

A German foreman?

German foreman, which was act of sabotage. And those deeds were to be punished severely. We're listening to it, but it was-- personally to me, it was surprise. We started talking about who could be killed, and so on. Somebody perhaps said, oh, that must be a particularly nasty character, and good for him.

But then we realized that police started looking at us quite closely, marching up and down, and they ordered us to form four rows of people, and then were counted. And every 10th man with three men behind him-- that means four together-- had to move forward out of the lines already formed. I would think it was about 100 to 120 people put aside.

And without further word, Germans walked off, and police marched this 140, 120-- sorry, 120 people, say 120, to the yard where lorries, police lorries, were standing. And these people were put in the lorry and driven off. And we never saw these people again.

What do you think did happen to them?

We learned later on, a year or later on, we learned that they were taken to a concentration camp. They were not killed

immediately, but they were put into camp-- detention camp or something like that.

Well, that made us think twice about working for Germans. [LAUGHS] And a previous incident which happened, say, a number of weeks prior to that date, when put together with the current happenings, made me decide to leave the factory altogether. I mean, don't come anymore. And then that means also leaving school-- not going to school. Because we were all registered, and our names were known at school, and our addresses. And there was no point not coming to factory and staying at home.

So you left the factory then and left school?

I left school.

After that incident?

Yes.

And did you do any more work when you left the factory? What did you then do? What work did you do?

Staying with my family, that means my uncle, was quite convenient because my uncle was then in timber business. And in fact, his business was recognized by German government as legal because a lot of timber was exported from Poland to Germany. And my uncle had connections before the war in this field, and continued doing so.

I must mention here that timber was one of the very important materials for Germany. There was very little timber in Germany itself. Timber used to come from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, but most then came from Poland. And Germans were trying to find people who could help them by either sorting out, grading up, sawing.

And uncle knew many people in this trade where there were sawmills where was good timber, bad timber. And that was the work which I started learning from him. And in fact, I was relegated to go to one or two forests in the area to see how timber is being felled how it's being transported to sawmills, how it's being sawn, how the sawmills is being run, how to grade the cut up trunks, and how they being dried, or seasoned, all the things. How to learn the age of the tree trunks.

It was very interesting for me, something new. And I think in all, I worked in this line for about 2 and 1/2 years.

Until when would that have been?