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Mr. Henry Wermuth, reel three. You were telling us how you got the resources to feed your family and your father, in jail, in 1940. Could you continue?

Yes. As I ended in reel two, we let a room, which we had to spare, to a young couple. And there was a little income. Then, after a while, this young couple or the lady had a brother. And he was a bit of a gambler. Now, you couldn't go on sort of gambling like in pre-war years. You had no venues of that sort.

So what he did is to invite a number of boys-- the boys for a bit of a gambling party. And they were playing for high stakes. Whenever the stakes on the table were high, before the winner was declared, in a game similar to poker-- it was called [NON-ENGLISH]. It was only played with four cards. Anyway, whenever the stakes on the table were high, he took a note off the top. And it amounted to quite a sum. Actually, we had more money, at that time, than before.

And well, this was tidying us over for quite a few months. Then, well, next, nothing is forever. This ended one day. And we had to leave that particular flat. Because the place was renamed after Adolf Hitler. And Adolf-Hitler-Platz surely wouldn't have been a place where Jews could live. So we had to move into a Jewish quarter.

Were you forced to move or did you decide to move?

Well, we were forced to move. But we could have moved just anywhere at that time. It wasn't ghetto time yet. But as I say, we moved into the Jewish quarter. There was a kind Jewish family. I don't think anybody else would have taken us in. And I think they had something of a grocer shop, small, small type of thing, because, as I say, there was nobody interested to take it away from them. Personally, I have never been in the shop. It's only that I, from here, say that I know that.

Well, again, in time, we were destitute. We were also starting to sell our belongings. And my mother got a job taking out bread in the morning. Well, whatever it was, we had bread. If you're dealing in bread, you have bread. If you're dealing in cars, most probably, you have got a car. I don't know how it-- that's how it goes.

Anyway, we had bread. But we had precious little on top of that bread. And perhaps, here, I will relate something which is not exactly glorious, but it would be the start of-- oh, I have to describe myself. Well, my shyness and my reservedness, as a young person and growing into manhood and becoming aware that danger is afoot, and my changing towards survival had started, perhaps, there and then.

Well, after that little speech, what have I done? I tell you, I went secretly to the larder, where the people, where we lived, had always small blocks of butter and cheese. Now, I have a feeling that they have marked the butter and the cheese on top. So what I did? I lifted it? And from the bottom, I took a very small slice-- not too greedy-- of butter. And so I had a bit of bread and butter and sometimes a bit of cheese.

But because it was stealing, I didn't dare to tell my mother and sister, which, somehow, is regretted, because I would have liked them to have, as well. But I didn't dare. Well, that's sort of my first admission of a misdeed.

What would you do, in a typical day, in this period? How would you get through the day? What would you do?

Nothing. Play cards with my sister. And when my mother came home, we had a little bit of food, together, in the kitchen. We had the use of the kitchen. We had a room and the use of the kitchen. And we played cards.

Would you go out on the streets, at all?

Well, we could go out on the street. I mean the restrictions, as I have, I suppose, described already, were a gradual affair. They didn't sort of-- they didn't come with a shooting right there and then. Shooting and gassing is something that came gradually.

First, it was-- I may have described it already-- just catching people to work, then registering people and take them to

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work. And then they had to come so and so often. And then wearing the armband, and then moving out of important places, taking away houses and shops. Well, it sort of was a squeezing. But each time, you heard people say, well, if it doesn't get worse, we might still survive.

Sp you wouldn't go out on the street, because, although you wouldn't be shot, it was--

No, no. There was no danger of that yet.

But it just wasn't very sensible to walk around the streets.

Well, there was nothing to do. There was absolutely nothing to do for me. I mean I may have gone-- may have walked. I wouldn't know where, you Know I had nothing to do. I was worthless. And well, my mother has just, as I described, a job, and a morning job. And the rest, we sort of sold things, from time to time, and everything was a limited affair. Because, obviously, you could see the time when you had nothing more to sell.

What about your relationship with the local Poles? How are you getting on with them, as German Jews?

Well, that I should have described earlier, because, from that time on, I haven't had much contact with Poles. Well, I didn't personally feel that they cared. I can't say neither pro or against. So I cannot describe anything which is of any drastic-- make any drastic difference to the story.

Yes, later on, when there was something to gain by giving Jews away, that's a different story, but that comes later.

How long did this period last, then?

Well, my next recollection would be that, end of 1940 or beginning of 1941, my mother sent me to Bochnia. There were some distant relations. They had a bakery. Recollection is not too sharp. It is also not too important. I was there for three weeks. And then they sent me back to Krakow. My father was released. And very shortly after that, we all went to Bochnia.

How would your father have been treated while he was in prison? What was his condition on coming out?

No. Treatment in prison, at that time, was, I suppose-- well, nothing especially to tell about that, except that he learned-- he met other Jewish prisoners. And he learned a lot of very interesting Yiddish songs, which, by that, I required a new language at the time, anyway. And the Yiddish songs were very interesting and very often melancholic, very often longing, and, well, expressing a whole scale of a tradition and a culture, which, of course, is no more now.

And perhaps that answers the question of how he was in prison. But I think the next story, of course, is in Bochnia. And perhaps, we will make a few strides, here, because in Bochnia, itself, is also nothing dramatic for me to tell except the continuation of the German squeeze, the rumors you heard. But perhaps, for a while, we felt lucky, because Bochnia was nothing.

Well, it was not too pressed by the Germans. Why they left us till late? I don't know. We had already heard of other ghettos and other happenings.

Were you living in a ghetto at Bochnia?

No, not right there and then. Ghetto, of course-- the ghetto was, of course, declared in Bochnia at a stage sometime, I believe, in 1942. Don't take the month too exact. I mean this is 1941. '42 I believe is Bochnia, end of 1941, maybe.

Where were you living in the initial stage at Bochnia, at this baker shop?

Well, with relations, again. And then we soon got ourselves a room. And well, the people we lived were Jewish farmers. We had-- well, we did not really suffer at the time, yet, because we had things to sell. And people from the countryside

came in and brought us food against bits and pieces which we sold. There, of course, now is a new episode to tell.

At this time-- how we made it, I don't know. My grandfather arrived from Frankfurt. Now we had one more person to feed. But soon it turned out to be a blessing. And later on, it turned out to be not so much of a blessing. But I give it to you bit by bit.

My grandfather had an arrangement whereby a person in Krakow, who was the Treuhander of his own shop, the manager under a German owner, new owner. He was allowed to be the manager of his own shop. And apparently, he made money on the black market. And this money was-- well, my grandfather got money from him on the say so-- I don't know how they arranged it-- that my aunt, in America, would repay him should he survive. And he actually did survive, this man. And he was repaid afterwards in America.

Now, half of that money, we had. Again, we were lucky. But then, of course, my grandfather, aged 67, took himself a wife. Now we were six in the room. And perhaps, at a later stage, I would like to show you the sketch, how well I have to-- I suppose it's taped, so I have to describe it.

Well, imagine a room about 17 to 18 foot long, 12 to 13 foot wide, not a small room. His corner, the far corner, he had a double bed where he slept with his new wife. At the end of his bed was a four- to five-foot wardrobe. On the other side of the wardrobe, I slept. But where did I sleep in?

Well, I already said, my grandfather slept in the far corner. That means the other side of this far corner is the entrance door. Across the entrance door, my mother and father and sister slept in a double bed. The double bed had some kind of a compartment which you could take out from underneath. We arranged for a mattress to be put in and shifted it near to the wardrobe at night. So on the other side of the wardrobe or near side to the door, I slept. So that was the six of us.

Yes, and there was-- opposite my grandfather's bed, there was another corner, and that's where the stove was. Not a very big one, a very small one, just big enough for one pot. And that was our cooking arrangement. Anyway--

Was it very tense all cramped up in this room? Did you have any family internal feuds or were you able to sort of live happily together?

No. The inevitable happened. But it happened, perhaps, for a different reason. Now, I'll explain that to you. Well, we managed, with the bit of extra money, to have a little bit, well, extra, you would say so, because rationing had started already. And rations were very small. And already we heard that in Warsaw a kilo of potato peels were sold for five zloty. Can't give you an exact equivalent of that now.

But, as I say, it was a tidy sum for potato peels, which, of course, nowadays you clean potato peels, and there's now a fashion to eat it, because they retain something valuable. But those days, we couldn't imagine it. And I sort of thought, if it comes to it, would I be able to eat it?

Anyway, coming back to our little room, we had a little bit extra, as I said. And then we caught our new mother or grandmother stealing or taking out, under her coat, rolls or pieces of bread for her brother and his wife and their two little kids. Now, under normal circumstances, what would it mean?

Well, you would happily give it. But there we were, knowing that, sooner or later, our resources would run out. We didn't know how much we could rely on the giver in Krakow. And well, that's where the real quarrels started.

Eventually, my grandfather actually moved out into a place not very far. I never visited it. Then ghetto was declared. And he lived a little bit just outside the ghetto. But they weren't very strict. And as I say, for one reason or another, well, we felt almost a bit safer than the others. I'm not quite sure of the other towns, because maybe we are such a small community. Although perhaps, at that time, as I say, it ingathered more and more people, and so we got larger and larger.

There were the Jewish councils. It was pretty organized, although we didn't have too much of anything. But yet the

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rumors were worse than the own experience.

What exactly happened when the ghetto was described-- proclaimed?

Proclaimed. Yes. Well, people, who didn't happen to live in this particular area, had to move into that area. And opposite us, there was a smithy, a blacksmith. What do you call the one who made-- makes iron shoes for the horses?

Farrier or blacksmith.

Farrier, yes, or blacksmith. Well, he didn't have to move. And we were at the edge of the ghetto anyway. And there was actually no fencing on our side. So we had the feeling that we could actually run away whenever we wanted to.

But now comes the big point. People would say, why didn't you? And the answer would be, where to? Because, more and more, the Poles got hostile as well.

How did that hostility show itself to you?

At the time, it didn't show. It was only stories that, if somebody ran away out of a ghetto, and some Poles were inclined to give the person away for reasons perhaps of gain. I'm not quite sure at the time. Later on, it was definitely gain. Because later on, when the real transportations to the East started, and Jews were in hiding, Poles would give away for reward of whiskey or sugar.

But there's one more episode, perhaps, I should relate, quickly. We run out of that money from Krakow. And there was no alternative but sending my little sister, who was then barely, well, 12 and 1/2 I would say, to Krakow to ask this man for some more money.

She was chosen, in a way, because she was speaking Polish best and the least Jewish features if you would say that. Well, I was dark haired and dark eyes, not necessarily very prominent Jewish features. But in a country who is on the lookout for people not exactly Aryan-looking, well, it was a fearful thing to do what I did.

I accompanied my sister, on the train, without the armband, out of the ghetto, to Krakow. Got the money. Got back on the same day. But it was something of an adventure, because you were looking, wherever you went, to, well, not to be caught.

How did life go on in the ghetto and how did the Jews organize themselves in the ghetto during this period?

I'm not quite sure if the Jews organized themselves or were organized. The Nazis gave the orders. And the Jews obeyed. And I suppose, like everywhere in a society, there are people on top. And the top of the ghetto was the so-called Judenraete, the Jewish councils. Now, I suppose the prominent people of the town became the Jewish councils. And they, I suppose, had to do what the Nazis told them, such as provide workers for whatever their need was.

And we are coming, later, to the point of real harsh slave workers and slave work. But at this point, yet, it was just so to say that everybody had to register. And the Jewish Council would say, well, you have to go there and there for work.

What did people think of the Jewish Council? I mean, was there a feeling that they were too much in the German's pocket? How did you react to them?

Well, you must remember, in 1941, '42, I was 18 to 19. And I went more by what I heard than my own opinion. And obviously, the Jewish councils were looked at as those who were dictated by the Germans. But, at the same time, you heard stories, very often, that the Jews sort of bought favors for the ghetto. And perhaps that was actually it, now, coming to think of it.

The Jews in Bochnia, at a time when rumors were rife of very bad things in other ghettos, were suffering just a little bit less. And I have, now, the feeling, in retrospect, that it may have been that the Jewish Council bought their favors from

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those in command. And there is corruption everywhere. And there was corruption, is corruption. And why not amongst the Germans? And there's a lot of stories, some to come even in the later part of this, where I can tell you about German corruption.

Now, were you registered for work by the Jewish Council?

Yes. I was, actually. And one day they called me. And I was going to do a job. Obviously, it was unpaid. It was hard work. And gradually, my astuteness grew. And I said, no, I'm not going to work for the Germans for nothing. And how do I get out of it? And well, by now, I'm describing the progress of the shaping of my character, which perhaps helped me later to survive. Maybe not quite-- not a very nice thing. But it is absolutely, in my estimation, it was the necessary ingredient of survival.

Anyway, I'm coming to the point. I went to a Polish doctor to get a certificate that I couldn't work. And the reason being-- I read up on tuberculosis. And I went to the doctor, and I told him all the symptoms I had, which I, at that time, invented not knowing that, later on, after the war, I really would have tuberculosis. But I'm jumping a bit.

At that time, I don't think I had it. But he then gave me a certificate that I don't have to work. And he looked very sad-- sadly at me. And he gave me that certificate. And proudly, I went to the council and showed them that I'm exempted from work. Now, the irony of all of this is, because, later on, I was scheming the other way around to get into work. But I'm coming to that soon.

Now, Spring 1941, rumors, bad rumors. There were Einsatzkommandos or Sonderkommandos, or whatever they were called. I mean I don't have to translate Sonderkommandos into English, because it almost translates itself. And they went from ghetto to ghetto. And at first you heard-- well, I forgot the names of the towns. It doesn't really matter in sequence. And they said, 50 killed there. Just went through, killed 50 and went. That's bad, very bad, we thought.

But somebody says, well, you know still chance to survive. And each time you heard that word until about end of '42, '43. By then, of course, nobody ever repeated that little sentence anymore-- if it goes like this, we've still got a little chance to survive.

The Sonderkommando or Einsatzgruppen, SD, as they were called, got bolder. And the next we heard were 100 people shot, then 150, 200, 300. And still, if you make a calculation, there were between two and three million Jews, some say over three million Jews in Poland. The most populated, per capita percentage, per non-Jewish capita, I think, was in Poland.

So well, even then, it wouldn't be-- I mean percentage-wise, it wouldn't kill us all. And unfortunately, the same thoughts must have occurred to the top Nazis. Although we didn't know it at the time, the famous Wannsee or Wannsee Conference, whereby Eichmann was one of the 15-- well, Eichmann everybody knows-- who decided the "Final Solution," well, the dispatch to extermination camps and into gas chambers.

Now, soon, we heard of transports for resettlement of the Jewish population somewhere in the East. Well, we didn't know what to make of that, because nobody leaves the place where he is. And whether it's relative safety or whether it's fear of the unknown, nobody really wanted to go onto these transports. And you have heard that they have started in other places. And well, one day, they will come to Bochnia. But it didn't seem, really, that we were badly affected, as yet, by the harsh, the harshest of the Nazi laws. Maybe, as I said before, maybe the Bochnia, while a military rule or whatever it was, was bought, I don't know.

So you never had any-- at this stage, you still hadn't had any indiscriminate shootings or suchlike.

Not in Bochnia. Not in Bochnia. But we heard constant rumors of other places. Well, it wasn't exactly a happy atmosphere. Because we were waiting for something to happen. But it didn't happen. But waiting daily for the arrival of such a Sonderkommando is not a happy way of living either. But they didn't come. There is--

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--Wermuth, reel four.

Could you take us through the next development of what happened next to you, Mr Wermuth?

Well, perhaps the sequence is this. As I mentioned in the previous reel, people were transported to the East. But for us, this was rumor. Bochnia was not in line yet-- apparently not yet. But waiting for things to happen, either a shooting or a transport, well, perhaps, if you put yourself in that position, you know that life was not very happy.

I would like to come, next, to the point where I-- whereas I previously tried to get out of a job, it suddenly was prudent to get a job. Because the time got nearer-- I don't know whether I felt it, that it was safer to have a job.

That was just a feeling. There was no factual reason?

I'm not quite sure. My father, I think, was there first. It was 10 kilometers away from Bochnia, called [NON-ENGLISH]. And I'll translate that. It's a camp, ammunition camp. And my father worked there first. I believe he worked there first. It doesn't really matter whether I make him stay here or not. Anyway, I was going to work there. And I got to work there.

When did you start work there, roughly?

Well, it was sometime early summer 1942. And we went by train. We had permission to go this 10 kilometers, to work, to this ammunition camp. And in the evening, we came back. Now, well, I'm not going to speak about the camp just as yet, because there are more important developments.

The ammunition camp was in the middle of a wood, well hidden. And well, there was a lot of wood about, which we gathered and we took home, because we were preparing for the winter. And already, I was in my mind very proud that I was the provider-- my father also took some, but I took most-- provider for the winter warmth.

Well, man decides-- man proposes, God disposes. It wasn't to happen, of course. But let me tell you one or two episodes that happened to me on the train.

I was getting a bit greedy. And I had big bundles of wood, which I couldn't put on the train. And with 18 or, by that time, just about 19, actually, you are of a different disposition towards danger than at later age. I was actually riding between the wagons. At the end of the wagon was a little ridge of about six or eight inches. And in order to hold myself in position, I put the bundle of wood across the buffers, pressing my feet against the bundle, and, thereby, holding myself on the ridge of six or eight inches.

And well, it went all right a few times, until one day, I didn't tie my bundle well enough. And one of the pieces, of medium size, got loose. And it danced on the buffers. And I looked at it, fascinated. And I said to myself, if it falls down, well, will it be a train derailment caused by me?

And well, these things seem to have a soul of its own. It jumped to the left. And just before falling off, it jumped to the right. Anyway, I had to make a decision. I caught it, with one foot, and held it against the bundle. And it worked, except that a few smaller pieces I lost. They went harmlessly under the train. And well, I didn't tell the adventure to my parents, although I was very proud, actually, of my-- well, anything adventurous makes a young boy proud, obviously.

Was this just an ordinary civilian train?

Yeah, that was ordinary civilian trains. Yes, cattle trains is a story for much later. Well, perhaps one more little funny story. One morning, I went to get to work. And there was, like usual, no room inside the train. And in those days the train had running boards on each side. And well, there was just a bit of room left. And well, that's how we went to-- that actually was the usual journey outside the train. It was only 10 kilometers and holding onto the handles provided, you know, near the doors.

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At one time, I didn't get any place. I just managed to jump on the train, with one foot on the edge of the platform, holding myself with one hand and luckily reaching out, with the other hand, to the other door of the next wagon and spread-eagled and spreading out my legs. Yes, that's the way I went.

Well, this was good enough when the train went straight. When it made a turn inwards, to the left, my feet got closer. Lovely. But also, it made a turn to the right, and my grip went sort of-- it loosened itself. It slid down on the handle, down, down, down, until I thought, now, I had to let go somewhere. Well, mercifully, the train straightened out again. Well, just there's another adventure for you.

And now to the serious business. It wasn't before long that we were told there is going to be a transport from Bochnia. Or a transport to the East, of course, into the unknown. The Germans called it resettlement. And they always used words. And they must have fantastic psychologists. Because between not believing and knowing the truth, there lies the difference, why it happened, what happened.

People could not imagine that at the end of these transports lie death. They believed the Germans. Maybe they had no alternative. But they had to go. Well, now, let me describe to you what happened in our family.

By that time, there were four of us, because, I told you, grandmother, the new one, and grandfather moved out. We had work, father and I, so we could be out of Bochnia at the time of the transports. But what to do with mother and sister?

My little sister spoke Polish practically fluently. I noticed that. And I'm digressing a little bit. And I said the younger you were, the quicker you learned. I spoke Polish quite well. But I thought the best-- the best chances of survival would be, if I would have had to choose, I would say my sister had, because she was looking the nearest to an Aryan person and with a fluent Polish. There's a "but--" her age. She was only 13. Had she would have been older, I'm sure she would have made it or more sure.

Anyway, I'm coming back to the story. I decided that they should not go on a transport. They should try to hide. But that is easier said than done. I wished I would have advised them to hide outside in the field. But we were afraid of possible tracker dogs. You know, the fantasy goes. It works one way or another. You don't know what to decide. You don't know how long it will take, whether they would have to wait there, in the field, for a few days.

My sister, actually, knew the outside much better than I, because the people, where we lived, they had a cow, one cow. And she took that cow out sometimes. But I couldn't make such a suggestion. And I was breaking my head where to provide such a hiding place. It would be easier to draw than to describe. But I'll try my best.

Imagine a house, a small house, with a porch. The porch has a normal triangular roof, very small, of course. And the roof has also a-- well, if you stand on the street, it has a ceiling. And if you are inside that little triangle, a cubicle, which you cannot stand upright. You had a floor. You already have a picture? Right.

To reach that part of the roof, you had to go inside the house, into the attic, and then you go into that triangular, little hiding place. But the Germans could go upstairs, look. I wasn't a carpenter. I found a few odd pieces of wood and cardboard and tried to shape the inside of the roof so it would halfway, as good as possible, match, as if it was-- if there was no extra little compartment. It wasn't very good. But what I was hoping for is that somebody goes up the stairs, to the attic, puts his torch around and sees nothing, and would go. That's the best I could hope for.

Well, we went to work. And we stayed already. I don't know whether it was already-- that the management of the ammunition camp knew already what was going to happen. We were asked to stay in the camp. So a day or two before, we were asked to stay. And we were waiting and hoping that my mother and sister would use the hiding place at the day when it would happen. And the day was the 24th of August 1942.

The work at the ammunition camp, I'm going to describe at a later stage, because, at the moment, I'm with that story. And I'll stick to it for a little while. The day came. The day went. Of course, there was no communication. We could only hope that my mother and sister were amongst the remainders of the people who were left in Bochnia. Because we

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were heard that they only take-- well, of a bigger ghetto, they take a trainful, which is 4,000 or 5,000 people. I'm not quite sure, perhaps a little bit more.

We didn't know at that time. We didn't have the imagination, what we've learned later, about cramming into cattle wagons. That wasn't-- we only knew about trains. And the train is a passenger train. The truth, we haven't learned, at that time, yet or not for a long time. So in our imagination, we hoped that, when we get back, we would find them there. There was no way of other communication.

The management of the ammunition camp-- perhaps at this time, at this moment, I should say that there are three types of camps, of people we had to work for. There were SS camps-- managing the camps. There were the Wehrmacht, the Army. And there were camps under civilian administration. Well, obviously, civilian is the best, the military worse, more disciplinary, and the SS was, of course-- well, we all know about that.

Now, this camp was ruled by the Army. And I would say, although very strict, but, again, I think, personally, I did strike it lucky. After 10 days, 8 or 10 days after the transport of people from Bochnia to the unknown, we were allowed to go, to march. I don't know why they didn't allow us to go by train at the time-- to march back to Bochnia. Was quite a largish group. I think more than 2/3 of the 150 in the camp. We went 10 kilometers.

And I saw other people taking off their shoes. So I did the same, but I shouldn't have. Because where other people may have hardened soles or may have people who were grown up in villages, I was a townie. And soon, I got blisters. I hardly made it to Bochnia. Eventually, I did. And if I have had pain, at that time or not, I don't know, because what awaited me was worse than anything that was hurting me at the time.

Because when I first went into the hiding place-- and the story becomes very human. There was a potty with something in it. And that was all that was left. Oh, no, no, that wasn't. And two postcards-- actually pictures, postcard-sized photographs, with a very, very shaky hand, written by my mother. I can't remember the words. But these pictures, I will come to, in a later stage, bit by bit.

First, of course, they had gone. And then I reproached myself for overlooking one thing. This porch was to the front of the house. The station wasn't very far from us. My imagination went thus. The Germans went around, perhaps with loudhailers, saying everybody assemble at the station and who won't be there will be shot. That means my mother and, sister if they had ignored it, if they had played cards, if they had done anything, it would have been all right, because nobody actually did come into the house and search it. Most probably, they had enough people to fill the trains.

Between the crevices of this hiding place, they could see others, with their luggage going to the station. It could have been an hour. I'm only imagining this. My mother saw people she knew going there. And whereas I'm a little bit of a-- not a loner but a man of my own decisions, my mother was a person who would very much go with the majority. I mean, I'm only analyzing it. And perhaps, it was the reason why she went.

Now, comes the saddest of this part of the story. My father-- I couldn't walk anymore. My father went across to the [POLISH]. That's the Polish word for smithy or smith, blacksmith. And he asked him what happened.

And I say it in Polish, first, because it's important. My little sister had come to him and asked him, [POLISH]. Take me to the station. Take me to my father. I want to live. But the man was afraid. And my sister went.

Well, there's something which only very, very recently I thought of. In all his years, I had the illusion that they were living on for a little while. Because, at that time, I had the illusion they went into a camp. And for months and a year or two later, even, whenever I saw the sun or the moon, I was thinking that is our only contact point. If you just look there, dear mother, our eyes meet. And because of this, I'm analyzing myself, now. Because what is the reason for me thinking that they carried on living?

Because at that time, I didn't know of these camps. And for some reason or other, I carried it on in my mind they were still living for a time. Even after the war, I was looking for them already knowing that 99.999%, there is no chance. But only now, just very recently, it occurred to me that at the time we went to Bochnia to search, to look for them, they were

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probably already dead.

Because. What we have learned later, people died in the overcrowded wagons, where people were crammed in. And the first one to sit usually had the other one sitting on top of him. And that was the end of that. And whether you want it or not, you killed somebody. And if you kill a stranger, that was the easier of the terrible thing. I suppose the worst one was if you fell on your own kind, if there were families. Somebody else possibly fell on top of you and, in the end, was too weak to move. And you killed your own.

Well, whatever it is, I don't think anybody survived it. I later learned-- I'll perhaps come to the point when I learned it, also, at a later stage, that they went to a little known extermination camp called, in Polish, Belzec. In English I heard people call it Belzec. It's not important. It's just a spelling.

What I also heard is that this extermination camp was just at its beginning. So I had the choice of thinking that they were not gassed. They just had to undress and were shot like the others, like so many others. Or possibly, they had to suffer the gas death, in a mobile gas chamber, of which, perhaps, you have heard as well. These were the vans, hermetically sealed, with the exhaust pipe going into the inside. A death, of course, of this kind was worse even than in the Auschwitz chambers, because it took that much longer.

Anyway, I think we are perhaps finishing the interview soon, because this is the type of story where I feel it takes, you know, energy and is drained. And it takes it out of me. We'll finish the reel.

And I would just say that I couldn't go back to the ammunition camp, because I had blisters. My father wanted to stay with me. We didn't enter our room anymore, where we lived. We were sitting in the corridor. Our feelings, I cannot describe. Well, in a book, perhaps, I will, but not here. Well, perhaps I don't have to. Everybody putting himself into such a situation would know what it feels when the father says, you will never see them again. And I still expressed hope that we might.

I slept in another bedroom. I had the whole house for myself. My father, the next morning, I urged to go back. I'm sorry. I urged him to go back immediately. We had to be back at the same time, same day. Because if we, two, had gone we would have perhaps looked as deserters. But if he goes back, he can explain that I will make my way back to the camp. But I couldn't at the moment, because I couldn't walk.

I bathed my feet in cold water. They were full of blisters. I had plenty of sheets about. I bandaged them to a ridiculous size. Then I went to the back where the wood was prepared for the winter but not for us to enjoy, for somebody else who may not give it a second thought. I took one of the rods. Next morning, of course, supported myself. Raised a few eyebrows and perhaps a bit of laughter, as well, because I went on the sides of my feet, of my soles, not in the middle of it. And the size of the bandage, that must have been a picture.

Anyway, I managed to arrive at the camp. And the German was even kind enough to give me part of a lift in the car. And I was then resting, for six weeks, in a bed. Well, a bed is perhaps described-- the description is in a bunk bed. Also, when I come later to describe our sleeping accommodation, it will go from bad to worse. But that, it wasn't too bad. 152, the barracks, as against 600, later, in Auschwitz.

Did you have to walk all the way back to the camp or did you get on the train?

No, no, no, I did get on a train. And I was just-- well, I have had my excuses ready, that I was working for an important job. But nobody bothered me. And there was no trouble. No, no, the train journey was uneventful. Although I was prepared for trouble.

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