Mr Henry Wermuth, reel 7.

Were there any other categories of prisoner at Klaj besides Jews, Mr. Wermuth?

No, not in this camp. There were none.

How long did you stay at Klaj before you were moved?

Well, I would say-- you can calculate it yourself, from the beginning of August, roughly, to perhaps February of the next year, 1943.

And what was the first inclination-- inkling that you got that you were going to be moved?

Well, before I answer that, I'm thinking of the date. Don't always get me too literally regarding dates. Obviously, I can't remember this exactly. But it is pretty near. So now, to answer your question, inclination-- there's always something in the air which we cannot define. Rumors precede any happenings. But I cannot define it. And I cannot say that we-- well, we did not look forward to it because somehow, we felt, we were pretty safe. And it couldn't be safe. It could only get worse.

So how did you first get to know for definite that you were moving?

I think the definite part is when we were told, pack your things. And don't forget, at this camp, we still had our own belongings. And we went to a train. And off we went to the next camp.

What was the conditions like on the train journey?

Well, train journey is a chapter which should be written a book about quite on its own. It is so terrible. It is so-- I can't find the right word for it because not Holocaust or nothing really covers it, believe me. The only thing is you just triggered the thought. But this particular train journey was nothing special. It was only a very short ride from one camp into another, Klaj to Kraków. But if you look at the map, it's not very far.

And what was the name of the new camp? And where exactly was it?

Well the exact name was Zwangsarbeitslager Krakau-Plaszow-- Kraków-Plaszów in Polish-- which is an outer district of Kraków. Well, so Kraków-Plaszów-- Plaszów is the main word. And it ought to be famous for what has happened there.

What happened on your arrival? Was there any sort of induction procedure when you arrived?

Yes. I got it quite clear. We were marching in and, obviously, very, very nervous. We were guarded, I felt, by non-Germans in uniform, a sort of uniform with rifles over their shoulders, and possibly Ukrainians, I would say. And well, first things first for the Germans is delousing, cleaning you up.

And so we were waiting, standing in a row. And I got rather nervous. I didn't know what to make of it. There was no inkling. There was no-- as far as I'm concerned, like perhaps later on, Auschwitz, there was no-- nothing known about this camp. Although it should be, even at that time, because the Kommandant was-- of the camp was-- well, I should keep that for a little bit later. But he was the person who should go down in the annals of history.

But keeping to-- you were deloused, were you? How did that happen?

All right. Now, I have a little incident just before that. I have been-- as I say, we have been guarded. And so my brain was racing. And what is going to happen next? And I was thinking, possibly it's the time of bribing our way out of something. I didn't know what. I wasn't quite clear in my mind.

And when one of the guards came nearer, I was playing with perhaps my only possession I had-- a pocket

watch on a chain. Was neither gold nor silver, but still, at that time, a watch was something special. And as we have later learned, Ukrainians and Russians didn't know much about watches at the time.

Anyway, I was playing with it and hoping-- well, what I was hoping for, I don't really know, but perhaps to buy some favor. I'm not quite sure. When he came nearer, he snatched it. And I asked him a question, what's going to happen to us? And not even quite sure of his answer, but he snatched the watch. And that was it.

My father-- he wasn't scolding me for doing a stupid thing like that. Because you never know what's right or wrong. It didn't help. The watch had gone. And well, that was a little episode I remember.

Then we went to the delousing. And what I remember about that is what that-- there, we were-- what we wore has been deloused as well. And the stupid thing was what we had in our luggage wasn't. But that didn't worry us too much. The next thing--

How did it actually happen? What which method did they use to delouse you?

Well, it wasn't-- it was called delousing. This must have-- may have been-- just been a shower and taking the clothes away for possibly putting into an overheated oven or temperature to kill anything alive. And that's what I imagine. I haven't seen it. But the clothes we got back was warm. Now, the next thing I remember was outside, we were dressed.

Suddenly, somebody approached us with paint, with tins of paint. And humiliation number one started. We had our only suits on, whatever we wore at the time. And he proceeded with painting a letter, starting from the left shoulder down to the-- about to the hips, and then the right shoulder, and then a few lines across, then below your knee and above your knee.

I don't know why it didn't make it in one line. It looked, really, more clown-like. Then on the kneecap itself, he made a dot, like if he had a bit of fun. I felt that I don't know I can remember. I felt it especially humiliating for no reason at all, looking like a clown. And he did some similar design in the back.

Well, it was clear that we were meant to stay and not-- and this would aid the others to keep it in-- keep us inside, meaning to say, well, if we have-- with clothes like that, who could escape? Again, I was thinking to myself, this is not quite efficient because we have-- well, I had and my father had other clothing-- our luggage. But well, that was it.

Was there any time-- did they record your personal details so that they knew who you were? Did they have any sort of filing system or record anything about it?

I'll be honest with you, I can't remember that. In Auschwitz, I think they did. And then we then we became numbers. But in this camp, no. I mean, when I say, no, I can't remember. Oh, I think they were most probably given a list accompanying us with our names. And we had just-- well, we're not so important to be-- we're just a group. You go-- a number of you go there. And that's the end of it.

Where were you sent after this painting?

Next thing I remember, we were sent to barracks, which were not our final barracks. And there were also no comparisons to the barracks of the previous camp. Perhaps I should describe the sleeping arrangements there, if I can. There were giant shelves-- I can't describe it otherwise-- in tiers, three tiers high, I suppose. And well, just-- it's just on bare wood where we slept there. And that was my initial recollection of this camp.

Were these barrack rooms where you slept-- were they very crowded?

Yes. Yes. They were always crowded. And as time went on, they became-- well, not the-- these particular barracks, but barracks on the whole became more crowded.

Sticking to this particular barrack, what-- how many-- what was the condition of the other inmates?

You see, when you asked me that question, I would say to you that my concern was very limited and it concerning myself, or rather, my father and myself, and survival, and well, whatever we regarded as being best. Now, give you an example-- we didn't know, but we selected immediately the top tier of the barracks-- not quite sure what reason. But perhaps, we felt just that minuscule little bit safer.

It was higher than the average person. And perhaps, if somebody comes in, wouldn't see us at first glance. I'm not quite sure for what reason we should try to avoid it, but it was an instinct.

And more or less, everybody looked after himself throughout the war, actually. I mean, you have close friends, relatives. You develop some sort of relationship. But you don't make a-- you don't really social-- I don't-- have got a lot of people because it wouldn't work.

Were the barracks heated in any way? Or did they have any facilities at all inside them?

I-- these particular barracks, you don't have to ask me, for reasons-- it was-- yes, of course. It was about February when we went there-- February, March. So it should have been cold. I can't remember that I was particularly cold because well, we had our own things, including even featherbeds-- our own. Well, in this particular camp, still, we had our own things. So we-- if there was lack of heat, we could dress warm and cover ourselves.

How did you manage to carry all this luggage?

Well, it was suitcases, suitcases. It was still not a time when we were taking-- when everything was taken away. That comes much later.

Were the barracks inspected at all, these first barracks? Would the Germans make sure that they were kept in order or tidy?

Well, I haven't seen too many manifestations of Germans inspecting barracks. I have a feeling this was done by-- they always had people doing things for them, even Jews.

Is there anything else you remember about the conditions in this particular initial barracks?

When you speak about conditions, something comes to my mind which perhaps I'm a bit reluctant to tell. But I think it goes with the story. And human beings as we were-- well, I'm coming to the point. It was cold outside. And sometimes, you have to go to toilet at night.

And this was a very dangerous affair for various reasons. Number one, it was icy cold outside. And you mustn't go down with ill health to-- well, you hear stories of roaming guards with dogs, whether true or not. But you lived in fear of it.

So what we did, we still, as I told you before, had our belongings. And amongst those, we also had some cooking pots. And we sacrificed one of them and used them as a night potty, which stood next to us, covered with something. And that was it. Actually, I'm telling you for the first time this story. And it only came about when you asked me for conditions. And well, I think it ought to be told.

How long were you in these initial barracks before you moved to the main barracks?

Well, when you ask me questions, sometimes, you seem to focus your interest on something that does not have a lingering effect in my brain. Say, for instance, it is absolutely immaterial for me in my memory whether I was one third, one quarter, one eighth of the time in these particular barracks and then changed over. Because it has no bearing on anything in particular. But I know we were changed. Because I remember later adventures from a different point. But as I say, eventually, we were changed.

Did the new barracks differ at all?

Yes, the later barracks differed in so far that we had beds instead of just boards. Also, was three-tier beds, but boards-- instead of boards. But yes, I was speaking again of the new barracks. And it triggers another memory for one reason or another. They were built in such a way that a top tier, if you would-- not-- you don't have to stand upright in your bed to reach the ceiling.

But there was a ceiling, an actual wooden ceiling, made of wooden planks. And somebody before me must have had the same idea because I touched some of the planks. And they were loose. And they would make a lovely hiding place.

Well, firstly, I was hiding a few of my belongings up there. Well, it goes without saying, again, I chose the top tier of the bed, of the so-called beds, and having in mind that it might serve-- and I'm quite sure it did at the time-- serve as a hiding place.

While speaking about the new barracks, perhaps at this point, I would say that any newcomer into a camp-- well, any newcomer-- I'm speaking for myself-- each time we came to a new camp, we were, of course, designated to the hardest work-- well, hardest work and the smallest amount of food. Because everybody in there who lived long enough to or whoever stayed alive had either-- or both easier work and more food. But it takes some sort of survival, luck, and, well, meeting the right people to get to this point.

So we were working about 12 hours, possibly even 14 on-- well, outside, building roads. Now, I'm speaking as memory leads me. Now, standing still was the danger point to be mentioned. In other words, if you rested for a while-- because no normal human being can work constantly without interruption shoveling earth-- you better watch out, for the simple reason it was a sport of the Kommandant, who lived not too far away in his village-- sorry, village, in his villa to look out in the morning.

And if he saw somebody idling, sporting man as he was, took a pot shot. And of course, this person who was idling was killed. Now, at that time, I developed an important lesson. I learned an important lesson and developed it to fine art, to work with my eyes. Because it would be impossible to work all day without having a slight rest.

Not only this, I also-- well, in combination with this, I did not stop-- actually stop. I moved my body, even to the point when I put in the shovel into the ground, scanning the horizon, seeing that nobody is near enough to see what I actually did, made the movement of taking the shovel out of the ground, made the movement as if I had-- as if I dislodged or carried some soil and put it into a-- well, mind the movement. But I had nothing on the shovel.

Well, you might ask, what is it for? And why this? Well, obviously, the weight of the shovel is what drains the energy. And an empty shovel-- well, you can move it much longer than full shovels with a result, actually, that if somebody did come and was spotted by me, I was the best worker because I had enough energy to take full shovels, whereas others already perhaps at one stage were lacking the strength of taking full shovels. So as I say, survival had become-- the game of survival has now begun in earnest.

You say you were working on roads and shoveling. What exactly did you do?

I'm not quite sure. I mean, I'm not a road builder. I'm not quite sure how-- what came after us. I only know that we had to dig. And how the road was finished, I don't know. I mean, this is just designated a job, and we did it.

Obviously, the guards weren't there all the time, or your ploy wouldn't have worked. But how closely were you guarded while you were building these roads or digging?

Well, now, there were, I'm sure, Kommandos who were working outside the camp. I wasn't. And well, at the later stage, I did actually work outside the camp. But we are speaking about the beginning.

I wasn't-- the guarding was not-- well, you see, guards are the prominent people. And prominent people don't stand around for 12 hours. They have already-- they know their routine, when they can leave off, and when they can come back. And they know when they themselves would be in danger.

I mean, we mostly were guarded by so-called Prominente people, who are-- made their mark as a bit of a career in this camp. I'm not quite sure how to put that. And there were not-- we were inside the camp. And we were not guarded by uniforms or rifled guards. But there is sort of a hierarchy of careers in this camp. And perhaps I should come to that now.

Keeping to the-- we're generally looking at the conditions now you're in the main camp, in the barracks you finished it. Could you describe exactly what food you got to eat while you were in the main camp?

You see, in some camps, you can ask me the question because I remember hunger. But in the absence of remembering hunger or great hunger, I do not remember details of food. But generally, it was a sort of ration of bread. And once a day, you got some sort of a soup. Only as war went on and time went on, it usually and progressively got worse.

But the absence-- there were other points which I clearly remember of this camp-- dangerous, deadly. But hunger wasn't-- hunger was there as well, I mean, insufficient food, but not to a point that I would say that this was the most crucial point for my survival.

How-- where was the food dished out to you? How-- did you have a special eating place? Or was it just brought to you?

Well, as I say, food in this particular camp-- I have recollections of-- if you ask me this question at later camps, I have better recollections. Food in this particular camp was not one of my main recollections. I do remember, if you are particularly harking on this particular point of food, OK, I will tell you what I remember.

I remember meeting a person-- actually, he was a policeman with two stripes. And that is why I say I'm stepping ahead too far off the story. But it doesn't matter because we are finishing the subject food in a few words and then come back to the main story of this camp. So well, I see a policeman with two stripes. And I haven't explained who the policemen were. But that's what we have to come back to.

And he was also-- I'm not sure if he was the head of the kitchen department. Anyway, from him, I got sometimes a bit of extra ration food. That is the one aspect I remember.

The second aspect of food, I remember that, at one time, we got a bowl of sago. And it looked like frog's eyes to me. And whereas perhaps if my wife would prepare it, it would be delicious, I'm sure, but they didn't do such thing. And it was, for me, inedible.

But the fact that I could give this ration to my father makes me think that I must have had not the greatest of hunger at that time. And I think, thereby, the subject of food in this particular camp is not what sticks in my memory most. I think we should really go over two very-- two other important points.

What about various aspects of sanitation, starting with latrines? You've mentioned the-- what you used during the night in the preliminary camp. What about the rest of the latrine facilities that they got?

Well, there, you touch a very interesting point. Because the latrines of this particular camp were the first shock, with regards to going to toilet. If you would have asked me in the beginning of our conversation what are the toilet facilities in the camps, I would say, I don't remember.

But I remember the latrines, the first shock I had when I saw latrines in this particular camp. Well, do I have to describe latrines? Well, if you want me to, it's a barrack with a very long seat, round holes, one practically next to the other, no cubicles, everything open. And you did your business inside of everybody else. These were the latrines.

And well, after this shock-- and of course, you get used to anything-- I mean, there is no way out. And what came later was not so-- didn't engrave itself too much in my mind. Of course, I must have gone to toilets in other places as well. But this first shock is what I actually remember.

What about washing, or shaving, or getting your clothes laundered-- or not laundered, but I mean, washed? What sort of-- were there any facilities for that sort of thing?

You know something? There must have been. And something in the back of my memory tells me that it might have been in the same barracks as the latrine, where there were perhaps washing facilities as well, perhaps a number of taps.

And we got to-- I think that it went into one. I'm not too clear about it. But there were-- there are in my mind no other washing facilities. And there must have been. You see, I'm not prepared for the question so I'll give you to the best of my ability. I think there were in the middle of the latrines. Actually, I mean, when I say in the middle of the latrines, well, in the middle of the barracks.

And that-- would you wash your own clothes? Or would they be collected every so often?

Oh, no, no, no. I mean, this is-- sometimes, you ask me questions which I'm not sure whether I should laugh or cry. One of your questions before was did we get paid? And well, you told me before, you were quite acquainted with the First World War. And you're learning about the Second. So I shall neither laugh nor cry. I shall try to be factual. No, no, no, we-- what we had, we had to look after or we rotted away. Well, it was a private thing that you kept yourself clean or not.

Did the lice get worse in this camp? You said you had--

No, funnily not. I can't recall lice in this camp. The previous one, which was a much cleaner camp, we were-- [AUDIO OUT]

Mr. Henry Wermuth, reel 8. Could you continue about the lice, please?

Well, we make it short, as we have already covered it. There were manifestations of lice. Well, I had some in a cleaner camp before, Klaj. And they will be mentioned in a much later stage in '45. But in between, I have had no recollection of being plagued by it.

How did your general health hold out?

Well, this is the marvel of it because I was actually not a very healthy child. I meaning to say-- and even after the war, I developed several colds during the year. But it seems to me that I don't know. I cannot-- in Auschwitz, I remember having been-- having had an illness for a short while, a dangerous thing to have. But in this particular camp, I cannot remember any health defect. And it-- I don't know. I think work outside makes you strong and healthy.

How about your father? What was his health like?

Well, I would say that he was the stronger of the two. He always was a sportler. All his life, he was a tough guy. And as a matter of fact, if I was thinking of if survival depended on the strength of the body, he was the stronger one.

Was there-- we've discussed the work. But what-- did you have any recreation at all? I mean, it's the wrong word. But how did you amuse yourselves?

Well, again, this would come under the heading of laughing or crying about the question-- recreation, amuse ourselves? Well, just-- I want to say, forget it. I mean, of course, we talked to each other. Nobody forbid us that.

But recreational music? We were-- well, how-- what is the recreation of animals? What is the amusement of animals? Do you know it? Well, I don't know. I don't know it there. But anyway, we were animals. We were slaves. We were nothings. We were not provided for with anything. We were not in a POW camp. We were slaves.

What about-- was it just men? Or were there women present at the camp as well?

Yes, there were women present, although-- present there-- well, I would say, well, they were completely separate, separated from us, meaning us, our little group where we were. They were in separate barracks, except, perhaps, for the Jewish police, a point which we come back later to, who, I believe, could sleep with their wives.

There's no opportunity for you to have any relationship with any sort of-- any woman?

Well, I-- at that time, speaking about myself, I had never had a relationship at that time yet. So I didn't think it would be-- I would be able to manage it. I'm sure, and I've read later, that some did. But no, I was also with my father. No, no, no. As for me, no such thing-- for my father, neither.

What was the daily routine you had in this camp?

A daily routine? Well, as far as I recollect, it was 12 hours work. And well, let me now tell you the continuation of my survival scheme. Well, firstly, I told you how I worked. And the next thing I did was the discussion. Well, speaking about our recreation, discussion with my father-- it was our recreation that we have to scheme to get easier work and, possibly, more food.

And how to get it? Well, it's not like by working harder or perhaps hitting other Jews, like perhaps in some cases that might work to endear yourself with your superiors. But we were looking around, and hoping, and trusting, and succeeding in finding somebody with you in possibly a higher position.

And in this case, I have to come back to the subject which I want to cover later in full. It was a Jewish policeman-- actually, a cousin of my father. And well, through him, we changed our work. And also-- well, I think the person introduced to us by him gave us some extra food from time to time, although the rations itself were not as bad as in later camps-- I mean, starting with Auschwitz, et cetera. Anyhow, we found ourselves a better job-- or a better job, easier job, and a little extra food.

What was the new job?

Yeah, well, it was perhaps the next subject. The new job was-- we were designated to some other barracks, an inside job, also inside barracks jobs. And it was called Metallverarbeitung-- well, metalworks. And the better translation would be making something out of metal-- in other words, outside these barracks were enormous heaps of metal of all kinds.

I was thinking that it must have been scores of rag and bone men to collect that metal. But I also found out later, through a book called Schindler's Ark, that it came from a nearby works, which is called the Emalia Works, Emalia Works of this famous fellow, Oskar Schindler, who produced kitchenware and later ammunition-- or so he purported to produce.

Anyway, the metal was there in heaps outside the barracks. And well, my personal job at the time was to collect suitable pieces, bring them in. And there was a machine-- was going to look it up what it's called in English-- [GERMAN] in German. It stamped out the shape, which later could be made into a dustpan.

The dustpan then was brought to the table. And my father painted it. So there were-- those were the jobs cut out for myself and then my father. It is perhaps, at this time, when you could actually ask me something about recreation, which is not-- were not-- there were not recreations provided for us. But they happened.

And perhaps I tell you how. It was mainly on night shift. I met another fellow, a young fellow-- I don't know whether it's possibly true that with the age of 25, 26, or 27, he was a professor. And his name was Springhood. And I remember the name, although I'm bad with names, because I think he was-- his parents were friendly with mine. He had a nasty cough.

But he was working next to me at the table. And at night shift, we felt a bit safer. I don't know why. But well, we hoped that the others were busy with something else.

So I remember, one night, unbelievable, but we were whiling away our time, although we were working as well, by playing games. And one of the games was start a song, and the other one had to continue it. And there were points the other couldn't. But each song I started, he could continue. And each song that he started, I could continue.

And it went on all night through, and even perhaps a few days later, when I met him again at the same shift, we started it again. I don't know if it went through a second night or we invented another game. But that was just something which I don't forget. And yet I have a feeling he didn't survive. Because one day, I didn't see him anymore. And thinking about his bad cough, I have a feeling that he might-- well he might not, or might have died of it, maybe tuberculosis. Who knows?

I'd like now to look at the way the camp was organized. What-- could you give me any idea of the basic layout, verbally, how-- what the camp looked like?

Well, I have got two memories-- a real-- my memory from the time of when I was there, and later on, it was my wife who read the book Schindler's Ark first. And suddenly, she came across names which I have mentioned, like the Kommandant of the Jewish police, again, mentioning him without going into the details yet. The name was Hilowic. And when she read about it, she has shown me the book. And I read it afterwards.

But in the front of this book, there was actually a map of this camp. And of course, there were new things which I discovered. Because I didn't know there was a whorehouse as well. And the exact position of the Kommandants' village-- well, why do I say village again? Villa-- and well, a few other things which I didn't know.

Because for some reason, I had a recollection that in the latrine, there was a wall against which we sat. And I had a feeling that on the other side of the wall were the ladies' latrine. But on this map, to my surprise, I could see men's latrine and, at quite a distance away, ladies' latrine. Whether this was the second one or not, I don't know.

Also, in my memory, I was thinking there were more barracks than shown on the map. But now, I speak to you-- I will speak to you of the layout as I remember it. Well, I actually-- it's very similar to the map.

It was a huge camp. I do not know the exact diameter, but I could say-- you could walk from one end to another. Could take you about 10 minutes. Well, I suppose so. I cannot recollect it too well. But it was huge. And it was surrounded by a wire. Now, if you speak about the layout, there were-- I've got so many things to say, actually.

Well, there were separate barracks for practically everything. There were-- the kitchen was surrounded by barbed wire. The working parts were surrounded by barbed wire. The sleeping parts were surrounded by barbed wire. And I expect there were more barbed wire fences which I didn't even know. And my memory was then corroborated by the map I saw.

And on this map, actually, I was missing something which I have to come to later, a very interesting part-- the end of my stay in the camp, another barbed wire compound, but to that which will come a bit later. Now, this was-- the outlay of the map of the-- well, the camp. And we had to go from one to another, in other words, during the daytime or during the time when we worked. We could not go backwards and forwards at will.

What was the wire like around the camp?

Well, barbed wire, of course. And although I'm trying to relate to you chronologically the events, but by your questions, I sometimes have to go out of step. Because at a later stage, I was planning to escape-- not, perhaps, that we really would finalize a plan like this because it was too much of a risk. I'm not sure which one was greater-- to stay in the camp or out.

But I remember, just when we were thinking of it because the Metallverarbeitung, the metalworks, was the last barrack to my memory in a line of barracks. And stepping outside it, on its right, I could see, not too far away, the-- one of the-- well, the fence.

And I observed the distance of the watchtowers. And there would be perhaps no-- wouldn't be too difficult to get through it, I thought. Only if we were caught, the imagination then being shot at or followed by dogs. It's not an easy decision.

But funnily enough, in this camp-- in this workshop, we had the means, the-- to cut through wire. And that helped us to think about it. Funnily enough, a little while later, another fence outside the first was created, as if they had read my thoughts and forced all-- everything. There was a second fence. In other words, you could be caught between the two fences. Well, more or less, that's the answer of the layout of the fence.

Looking further into the organization of the camp, into the Germans or the people who ran the camp, was it run by the Germans? And which section of the Germans ran it?

Yes. Perhaps I should have mentioned it even earlier. When we arrived at the camp, the first thing we asked-- I tried to find out, was it Wehrmacht or SS? And then we found it was the SS. And of course, our heart sunk. The Kommandant, which everybody called Goeth, a huge fellow, and only later-- again, I have to revert back.

When it comes to this camp, I shall revert back quite a few times to the book Schindler's Ark, where I read his name. For the first time, I wanted to write about my experiences. And I always thought, how do I spell Goeth? G-E-T didn't sound right, but that's how they call him there because they couldn't pronounce the German G-O-E-T, Goeth-- or even, E-T-H, I believe-- yes, G-O-E-T-H, Goeth.

So Goeth, similar to the very famous poet, Goethe, and the fellows there just simply called him Goeth. And that's the only name I knew. And I am not referring to his name as Goeth in future-- I mean, in the story of this camp. But I will just call him Goeth. Right.

Goeth was described to us-- I mean, to me and my father-- as a monster which-- well, difficult to surpass. His sport, morning sport, was killing people. I think hardly anybody else killed people in this camp. I think it was a privilege, it was his privilege.

I mean, I don't say there weren't. Of course, there were, I mean, when there were executions ordered by him in fifties, and hundreds, and all this business. Then, of course, I'm quite sure others had to shoot.

But those single executions a day-- one, or two, or three death a day, they're entirely his business. And well, was morning sport for him. Or if he sees somebody idle or if he catches somebody out, and he was-- it's not difficult to catch somebody out, one way or another, he just didn't like somebody face, anything. He was-- well, that was-- if you came to his attention, you were-- well, you've just been-- coming to the attention was-- it was-- you were practically dead. Anyway.

What would he actually do?

Well, take his revolver and shoot, like somebody who does, correct the-- corrects-- somebody corrects something, put your tie right or something straight. It was an action which is in passing. No, he didn't make a big ceremony of it. And in the morning, it may have been his sport if he sees somebody working from the distance and the odd shot. Well, I'm coming to the point where I was one of the victims. But that comes later.

How about the rest of the German officers of the SS? How did they behave?

Be truthful, I haven't seen much of them. The art of being not being seen is part of the art of survival. And there are other things to report. But this is not one of the most important ones because I'm going to come to the point where I have seen quite a few of them. And I say quite a few, sorry to say-- about three or four of them together. But that was the maximum. Guards were there. But we were mainly supervised-- it was an

internal organization.

We'll come now to that internal organization. What was it?

Well, the-- as you say, the camp was run by the SS. And that means it was a murderous camp. The organization was such that the-- there was-- there were Jewish policemen. There were clad in very similar fashion to the Polish police-- all-black uniform, similar hat, and even ranks.

There were ordinary ones, there were some with one stripe, with-- well, fewer with two, and one, the Kommandant of the Jewish police, with the name of Hilowicz. He had three stripes. Now, they all play part of what I have to tell now. Because this camp is quite a bit to tell about. Because in my book, it is worse.

And I have to give you an explanation for this as well-- worse than Auschwitz. This is a tall word to say, worse than Auschwitz. But the reason for that, please, remind me later to explain why. But one of the reasons I can give you right away-- this Goeth actually boasted that he had killed 80,000 human beings with his own hand.

Now, we know of people who sit behind desks and dispatch people to their death into death camps. We read all about it. But very few people-- most people say, oh, I was ordered to shoot. But he was boasting the unimaginable amount of 80,000 people killed by his own hands.

Well, so-- and in any way, you-- by that, you know that life has no meaning to him. And as far as I'm concerned, I was calculating, if he kills about one, or two, or three a day, what are your chances amongst the 10,000? And again, when you say-- when I say 10,000, I read there were 20,000 in the camp. But when I was there, the figure 10,000 was mentioned. And that's what I carried forward.

Was there any other inmate organization besides the camp police?

Well, there were the so-called Prominente. I'm not quite sure what they were. I suppose they were the equal to what you later have heard, the kapos of the concentration camp. Well, they were head of a group or leaders of a group and even Prominente-- that's a word for them. I don't know who invented it. But it fits.

Well, they were amongst the elite. They were better-dressed, better-fed. And well, they were ruling us, so to say. Do this, do that. They were actually the leaders of the group.

What did the inmates think of the camp, the Jewish camp police, and of the Prominente?

Well, I can give you a little tidbit of that. The Prominente and the police were, of course, feared because they would not-- they were all under suspicion, whether true or not, that they have reached that position by being either traitors or, well, in some way have ingratiated themselves.

Well, I can say that-- which perhaps I should have mentioned before-- in Bochnia ghetto that I have heard that you could-- when they actually were looking for people-- or in other ghettos-- that the Jewish police or the Jewish Council were told, you can save your family if you betray some hiding places of others. And whether they did or not-- and I'm quite sure, amongst a lot of people, there were those who did.

Well, the Jewish police, then called OD for short. And that is the German word for Ordnungsdienst. Was-- or well, never mind. I don't have to translate it. Ordnung means order, dienst means a service.

We all had and-- a suspicion that they have done something naughty. I didn't actually ask my father's cousin, Sygmund Rosenblum, he was too nice a guy, if he did anything naughty. But he was in that uniform. And obviously, at one stage, he saved us.

Now, as I say, your questions should be answered, of course. But as long as you know that they also put me out of the chronological tale of what happened in the camp. And I'm trying to do that in between. So you were asking me about if they-- what we were thinking of them-- well, if we feared them.

There was also a tale that-- of one specific case, of a Jewish policeman-- I think he had two stripes. His name was Finkelstein. He apparently was so bad that the little story went-- and let it be said, we even had humor in those days-- that a prisoner was leaning on his shovel-- in other words, when Goeth passes by, this prisoner would be dead. But he was leaning on his shovel. And Goeth passed by and warned him, shh, you better move, Finkelstein is coming.

You understand? So the Kommandant warned the other fellow of this Finkelstein. Well, that was our type of gallows humor.

What sort of thing would Finkelstein do?

I don't really know. But he was terribly, terribly feared because, you see, the moment you knew somebody was bad, or did bad things, or whatever he did-- I can't quite remember. But he had a terrible name. Maybe beatings? I'm not quite sure what he did. But I kept out of his way. And I managed to keep out of his way.

Was there any underground organization, i.e. not under German supervision, run by the inmates?

I'm sure it-- this sort of thing, everybody's thought, but equally was the thought that if you get your circles of trustees a little bit bigger, the masters, there's bound to come the time when you let somebody in who would become a traitor. And it wouldn't work.

What prisoners were present at the camp? What different categories of prisoner? Or was it just Jewish?

Well, I think we were all Jewish in this camp, yes. I'm reading about Ukrainian barracks and Polish barracks in the-- I was seeing it in the map, which I mentioned just before. But I still don't know whether there-- whether the Poles were prisoners or not. I had no contact with them. That's quite a different part of the camp. So I can't tell you about them. But as far as I know, there were at least 10,000 Jews there.

Having looked at some general factors about the camp, the conditions and the organization, I wonder if you could take us through what happened to you there in a chronological order. I realize this involves some repetition from when you got there.

Well, OK. First thing I remember was, for some reason or other, Goeth, the Kommandant, ordered the shooting of 150 people, a group, usually done for some reason given. I didn't know the reason. Perhaps somebody escaped. I'm not quite sure. Something displeased him. 150 was quite a sum. Usually when somebody escaped or tried to escape, 50 were shot. So I can't give you the reason.

But obviously, it went like a wildfire through the camp. And everybody was running for cover. I've already mentioned to you that we have found this cousin of ours. And so we made straight for the police barracks, the Jewish police barracks. And inside the barracks, we met his wife. He wasn't there. And they soon stopped other people coming in because it seemed to be filling up. And you heard people outside running, shouting.

And it was pretty in the beginning of the camp time. So I couldn't say that I knew any of the 150 or missed anybody because I just heard 150 shot, gone, finish. That was the first major incident in this camp that came to my mind. But there were plenty of others to follow.