

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

## **William Helmreich Oral History Collection**

**Interview with Abraham Krakowski**  
**September 18, 1989**  
**RG-50.165\*0057**

## PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Abraham Krakowski, conducted by William Helmreich on September 18, 1989 as research for his book *Against all odds: Holocaust survivors and the successful lives they made in America*. The interview was given to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on Oct. 30, 1992 and is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

## ABRAHAM KRAKOWSKI

### September 18, 1989

WH: Where were you born?

AK: In Katowice. I can't understand how people today can go back to Poland. You can go to Germany or wherever you want, but you should never go back to Poland. It's a crime against Judaism, in my opinion.

WH: Why are the Poles worse than the Germans?

AK: Because the Germans at least believed in something. They believed in Hitler. But the Poles just hate the Jews. The nation should not exist. What they did to Jews after the war was unbelievable.

WH: Did you go to Israel after the war?

AK: I wanted to but it wasn't possible. The Poles said I would have to pay something like 80 times what my property there was worth to get permission to go with my assets. In the end I went to Israel in 1950 with three shirts and six pairs of socks. That's what the Poles are like. I stayed there until 1954. I went through hard times there economically. They were building a meat factory in Djibouti, Eritrea. So I lived in Somalia for two years. We produced meat for Israel in this factory. I had been working as a bookkeeper for the Jewish Agency but I felt this was an opportunity. I went with my wife and daughter and became the head kashrut supervisor. I went there in 1954 and stayed until 1956. I returned to Israel where I stayed until 1957. I went to Germany in 1957 and stayed until 1960 because I wanted to get my reparations money and I couldn't get it approved from Israel. Then, in 1960, we came to America. We had opened the factory in Somalia because the beef came from Ethiopia where the beef then was very cheap.

WH: (At this point Rabbi Krakowski shows me some correspondence relating to his efforts to get a manuscript published as well as a description of the work. He feels he could have had his story published. Rabbi Krakowski is an accomplished scholar who has had religious books published like the sefer, Birkas Shlomo, a collection of insights relating to the work of the Radomsker Rav (He himself is a Radomsker Hasid.). He has had articles published in the Jewish Spectator and the Jewish Observer which deal with his suffering in the war. He was also part of a large-scale plan that involved the printing of millions of pounds of false British notes, passports, and many other things that, according to him, he was not at liberty to discuss at this point. He has three children.)

Conclusion of Interview