

## **RG-50.233.0035**

### **Summary**

*This interview with Charles Goldberg took place in 1992.*

Charles Goldberg (né Kalman Goldberg) was born in Tarnow, Poland on May 25, 1923. Tarnow had a population, Kalman estimated, of 100,000 with about 40,00 Jews. Tarnow was close to Krakow. He was the third of seven children. There were four boys and three girls. It was never made clear, but we can assume that all of his siblings and his father and mother were killed by the Nazis. Kalman's father owned a small soap factory where he, his older brothers, and mother also worked. The factory had four full-time workers, Poles and Jews, but when there was more business Kalman's father hired Zionists who were training to go to Palestine. His father was an ardent Zionist and had considered going to Palestine before the war, but eventually decided against it. The family was religious, went to synagogue regularly and celebrated all the holidays. Yet, Kalman and his father also had frequent contacts with non-Jews. Although Kalman described himself as a poor student he did have a religious education in addition to his secular education up until high school when the Germans invaded. Before the war, he liked sports and dressed in modern dress, which may account for his experiencing less antisemitism than many other Jewish Poles. He also had non-Jewish friends who defended him. And there was a Jewish defense organization among the Jewish students who fought back.

Germany's invasion of Poland had been long rumored, and the Jewish people in Poland knew about Nazi antisemitism from German-Jewish refugees who had been deported to Poland. Kalman also remembered a speech given by Vladimir Jabotinsky in a visit to Tarnow warning Jews to leave Poland. Kalman remembered little about the first two years of the occupation. His family apparently were protected because of the importance of the factory. But he did remember the burning of synagogues and that there were deportations before the establishment of the ghetto in 1942. Once the family was in the ghetto, Kalman's father was protected for a while by the local police chief. But the situation worsened when the SS and Gestapo took over. Kalman remembered that nuns from the local convent who did business with his father offered to take and protect his three sisters in the convent, but his father refused fearing they would be converted. As things worsened for the Jews, he and his brothers were able to get false papers. His father and at least one older brother escaped the ghetto and went east. They then asked Kalman to send his sisters. But his father and brother were caught and deported and the sisters returned to Tarnow, from where they, their mother, and other brothers were deported. Kalman was more fortunate. He was selected to work in the garage on cars and trucks that were going to the eastern front but had broken down. He lived in his father's old factory and hid 12-15 others there.

When the Tarnow ghetto was liquidated Kalman was shipped to the Krakow ghetto-concentration camp in Plaszow. Run by Amon Goeth it was even more brutal than Tarnow. Indiscriminate shootings, including by Goeth, who Kalman thought was a heroin addict, regularly took place. But, again, Kalman was fortunate. He worked on cars and for a while was a chauffeur for the Germans. There, he witnessed the massive deportations including many of his friends. He and other workers in the repair shop were beaten when one of the cars failed or when one of the Jewish mechanics escaped. Instead of these skilled workers being killed,

however, the Germans selected others from Plaszow to kill. Because of this Kalman saw escape as immoral. Finally, Kalman was rescued as part of Schindler's List and the Russian advance. He emphasized that survival depended on friends helping one another.

(The recording ends at 1:03:51.)