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Summary

Jakob Kozma was Born in May 1921 in Krakow, Poland. Father, Avrum and mother married when mother was 13. Nine siblings, including his brothers (Ignatz, Feivel, Millina, Max) and sisters (Fila, Gittel, Tzeczka Ruscha, Karola). Parents had food stores, a restaurant and a cheese factory. He grew up in a religious home in a Jewish district and went to a school with mostly Jews. They were brought up as Zionists. He spoke little Yiddish but went to cheder to learn Hebrew. His mother Hendla Kaminsky was a first cousin to Danny Kaye and one of 13. His uncle, Josef, was the "second richest man" in Krakow. Josef went to Palestine to join two aunts circa 1937. One aunt owned the first Jewish hotel in Rehavia. When Kozma met him later in a camp, he told him that his money should have been used to save the whole family. After the war started, Kozma smuggled cotton batting out of Krakow and sold it to Poles in return for food which he brought back. Sister, who was in Palestine, came to visit a month before the war and was promptly sent back father. Kozma had seen Jabotinsky in 1936 urging Jews to go to Palestine but out of 20,000 listening, only 500 went. Others, however did leave for South America, South Africa and Shanghai. Germans closed father's restaurant and brothers' hat factory. All Jewish owned businesses were "liquidated" in 1940. Jews were rounded up and put to work. He worked in a bakery and as a chimney sweep and set up a cigarette factory. Father, before he died, refused to go into the ghetto and went to another town. The ghetto was liquidated in 1942 and residents sent to Plaszow as well as other camps. Kozma was in Plaszow approximately one year. He says after the war the commandant tried to say he was good to the Jews but Kozma said he had Jews killed daily. He was beaten by a Polish schoolmate while there for allegedly stealing. When someone escaped from Plaszow, 40 people were shot as a lesson. At some point in 1942, his brother and wife escaped to Hungary from Krakow, one of the last to get out. Kozma was arrested by a Polish policeman for striking another Pole and was threatened with death but instead was released. He knew he'd survive because he was "lucky." He was tasked to go to Krakow twice a day to bring bread to Plaszow. He claims to have met Oskar Schindler who was upset Kozma was bringing bread for Poles because Schindler hated the Poles. Kozma ran away from the camp and ended up working for Polish potato farmer who did not care that he was a Jew. In mid 1943, he ran away again and was caught, along with other Jews by Polish police and was taken to ghetto in Bonja where his mother and 2 older sisters were also prisoners. He broke out of the camp and never saw his mother and sisters again. Somehow he walked to another camp run by the Wehrmacht where he loaded crates of ammunition until the end of 1943. The commandant was somewhat benevolent and was a "good man" and "better than Schindler." The commandant had no guards and allowed the prisoners to wash frequently. When it appeared the SS would take over the camp, he ran away, back to Plaszow. There, at morning roll call, every 10th prisoner was shot. Ultimately, Kozma passed through Auschwitz but ended up in Mauthausen.

TAPE ENDS AT A REST BREAK WITH NO FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE