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Summary

Louis Kushinsky was born on January 12, 1939 in Łódź, Poland. His father was Henry, who served as a government official. His mother's first name is unstated, but her maiden name was Bornstein; she obtained a teaching degree in Kraków. Louis believes that his father's struggles as student in Belgium helped him survive difficult circumstances during the war. The family strongly identified as Jewish but were generally secular.

The family moved to Warsaw after the German invasion in hopes that they would be safer, leaving their respective extended families behind. They stayed in the Warsaw ghetto until close to the end when they obtained false papers allowing them to move outside the ghetto and live in the open. He related the final days of the uprising by the Polish resistance in Warsaw. After the rebellion's collapse, the Germans put them on a train for an unknown destination, but they escaped en route. They found refuge in a small village with false Christian identities until the Russian army arrived, the soldiers treated them well. His father soon returns to Łódź; he finds no relatives but does find discarded family photos. All the immediate members of his parents' families had perished, except one of his mother's brothers.

Louis described how his mother kept him occupied and stimulated during isolation and deprivation, as well as his difficulties with socializing with other children after liberation. His father became a senior public servant after the war improving their living standards. They maintained their Christian identity, while identifying personally as secular Jews. Around 1948-49, he is jailed for ten months by the more Stalinist forces within the communist leadership. On his release, the family secretly arranged to escape to Australia arranged by Louis's maternal uncle, traveling through Bratislava where Louis first witnessed Orthodox Jewish practices. Before he was taken on by a Jewish relocation agency, an inspection of an authentic Jewish upbringing via inspection of his circumcision resulted in a corrective procedure. The family then stopped at a displaced persons camp in Bad Worishofen near Munich. They visited Paris before traveling to Italy once their papers arrived, boarding the M/V Sorrento. He met some of his distant relatives from the Auerbach family.

They were met by Julian Lewet, husband of his mother's former student, Maria, and taken to Reservoir where they stayed for three years. Louis started formal schooling where Thomas Love and Harry Rigby were notable teachers. He continued violin lessons that he had well started in Poland. His dad worked for a silk screen printer, his mother did textile piecework. Though he was offered a Bar Mitzvah, he declined. His primary involvement with Jewish matters was in various clubs at University High School. His home was then in Brighton. He attended Melbourne University and studied law, joining a local Jewish firm upon graduation. His wife is unnamed, but they had a son and daughter, Benjamin and Sarah, respectively. He discusses his own Jewishness, the role of ritual, and his thoughts on antisemitism.