

Interview with Sebastian Daniel

JUNE 17, 1997

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Question: Mr. Daniel, I'm glad that you came. It's very fine. Please, would you introduce yourself, and say something about when you were born, then about your childhood.

Answer: I was born in Zopi, in the Holesov region. I lived with my mother in Chvalkovice, with my parents that is. I went to a normal school eight years, and then when I was around 15 or 16 they took us away abroad. They took us away to the concentration camp.

Q: Did you go to a Czech school?

A: Czech schools, yes, that's right. I can write Czech and everything. But I make mistakes (smiles).

Q: Of course you do. Were you still living with your mother at the time?

A: With my mother, with my parents.

Q: And when you finished school?

A: After I finished school, after that it didn't take long until the Germans came. We received a telegram at the time. They took Daddy first, they did. The Czech police, you know.

Q: That was right after the occupation, or soon after?

A: The occupation, yes, that's right.

Q: So sometime in the year 1939?

A: Yes, it was around that time, about that time when they took our daddy. It was a long time until we heard anything, around two months maybe, where he was. Where he was, where he was living. And then we got a telegram telling us that our Daddy was dead, and asking us whether we wanted the ash --

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Q: His ashes.

A: His ashes, you know? And there was this one Czech policeman who knew our family well, and he told us (my mother): "Marie, just forget about it," so that she wouldn't take them. And she didn't know _____, that they were cremating a lot of people (there), and you wouldn't know if it was from our own father, you know? So we didn't take them. And my brother, Frantisek Daniel, he heard about that and he left, right then and there.

Q: Did they ever tell your father why they had come for him?

A: No, nothing, nothing. They took him, "Come with us!" and we never saw him again after that. Until that telegram came telling us he was dead. Nothing. And my brother, Frantisek Daniel, we didn't see him for three months. He had gone to Zlicin to look for our father. You know? So there he (our father) was in that concentration camp, and then we heard that they had killed him, that they had killed our father. He had started smoking too much, and then one day he was sitting on this kind of latrine, and a kapo, not the Germans, the kapos, started beating him and they killed him.

Q: Just for the fact that he was smoking?

A: That he was smoking, yeah. That wasn't forbidden, smoking, was it? And so they killed him, and my brother heard about it and he escaped from Zlicin, and he was gone three months. And then he came home to Chvalkovice. And they were there. They were looking for him, the police, the Nazis were looking for him. And he was there, with the family, around eight or nine kilometers from Chvalkovice.

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He lived there, you see? So the SS troops came for him, I can still remember that. The SS and our own police, and they took us to the cemetery. And then they told us that if we didn't say where he was, that we all knew where he was, that if we didn't say it, that they would shoot us. They took us all to the cemetery and were all ready to shoot, and my brother, well, he was hiding out there.

Q: A whole hour - -

A: A whole hour at the cemetery. Not far from where we lived there was a cemetery.

So they took us there, to this cemetery, and the soldiers, they were holding their rifles aimed at us, and they wanted to - - they had got the command to shoot. And he says: "Don't do it, I'm right here!" And so they took him and put him in _____, and 14 days later they came back and got us. (And so they took us) to Brno, and we waited there around a month or so. A month or two. It was some kind of _____, -slaughterhouse it was called.

Q: When was that - - in what year was that exactly, when they took you away?

A: It was - -

Q: Maybe 1942, or something like that?

A: No, no, well, it was at the end, at the end of 1942.

Q: At the end of 1942.

A: In March, I'd say, in March.

Q: And how many - - Who of your family did they take?

A: Everyone, all of us. I was in school, at the time in a Schule (German). I can't remember the word in Czech. So they took the whole family. At the time, a neighbor woman told me that the SS had taken the whole family. That I shouldn't go there, that I should stay home. So, I was, I swear, I thought to myself, what am

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I going to do here all by myself? So I went to Ivanovice. And there they were, at the police station there, and I went up there and said: "I want to go to my Mommy." And so they took us to Brno, to the slaughterhouse, and we waited there until they finally came. There were a lot of people there, and they loaded us up in train cars and took us to Osvetin.

Q: It was all Gypsies (Roma) there?

A: Just Roma, just Roma. That's right.

Q: Yes, continue.

A: From Brno, from Hodonin, and everything was on these big trucks and in trains, you know? And so we went to Osvetin.

Q: What kind of a train was it that took you there?

A: A freight train. Everything was shut up tight, everything was locked up tight. There were a lot of people, and it was really... . It was a long ride, and we weren't given any water. A lot of people died in those train cars. So when we got to Osvetin, not all of us had made it (had survived). There were men, women and children there, you see? So we all went to this kind of barracks, and the first thing they did was shave our heads, cut our hair and all that: "You report to this barracks, you go to that one." And I was there with my mommy, see?

Q: And where were you then? Some kind of a so-called Gypsy camp?

A: A Gypsy camp, a Gypsy camp. Block 'zwei und drei', Number 32. But we stayed there for around three weeks. With my family. And then the SS came, an Ober officer, and he said: "The young people that are here, (you) can all go home. Speak up if you are young." And they did go home, so they could send packages

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home, so the families could have something to eat. I didn't want to go, though. No, I wanted to stay there with my mother. And my family, you know? But they said to step up, to make ourselves known, and my mother told me "Go on, go on home, so you can send us a package so we can have something to eat. So I stepped forward, and the next day they took us to another concentration camp. And it was a big one.

Q: So it was nothing but a lie?

A: It was just so we would step forward and make ourselves known.

Q: Yes.

A: So we would be in that big concentration camp, in Auschwitz, in the big camp.

There weren't barracks there, there were these other kind of buildings.

Q: They were buildings made of stones, in German they're called Stammlager.

A: **Stammlager** in German, that's right. So anyway, we were young, and so they took us. I was in Block Sieben A, 7A.

Q: Could you repeat that?

A: Sieben A (German).

Q: Sieben A.

A: Block Seven A.

Q: Aha, Sieben A.

A: Well, so they took us there, and we learned a trade, mau -- **Maurer** (German)?

Wait a minute, how do you say it?

Q: Masonry school.

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A: School, that's right. So anyway, I stayed there about half a year, and they took us back, back to the Gypsy camp, and _____ Gypsy camp, but right next to it.

Q: Okay. Wait just a second. How did they (take you there)? Were all of you just young boys?

A: _____ there were older people, too. There were funf of us, five of us, and I was there at 7A. You understand? _____ upstairs, upstairs there were four others, and, and... . We learned the masonry trade, how to do the trade.

Q: And there were meister Nazis there, who really taught you the trade?

A: Yeah, there were those like that, kinds of meisters, there were those, and they were locked up in the concentration camp, too. You see?

Q: Yes.

A: And there was this kind of wall there, and they tore it down. So we had to put it back together again, and the bricks, and other kinds of stones, were divided up between us. So we kept learning, practicing, and then there were these assemblies (of the prisoners). And we would go swimming _____ they knew us, and it was about 100, maybe 200 meters, and we would (walk there) naked, to the water, this kind of a swimming pool. Infection, or whatever it's called.

Q: Disinfection.

A: Yeah. There, and that cold water, and all naked _____ towel and try (to find our way) back to the block. And there was this _____ on us.

Q: Frost.

A: Ice.

Q: Ice.

A: There was ice on us.

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Q: Yes, that's right.

A: God, yes, and then we would go upstairs, and there were these kind of bunk beds, there were five, three beds, and five of us slept there.

Q: That was... . For now let's stick to the, the - -

A: Sieben A.

Q: Yes.

A: The block, the block where we were. Right?

Q: Yes.

A: So we learned the trade, and that took about half a year. Then we started to work, in the concentration camp outside, and we worked there with some Pollacks. But they were civilians, you see? And they weren't allowed to give us anything, nothing to eat. So they would throw us something, like a piece of bread, and we would take it and scarf it down, eat it immediately so that no one would see.

Q: So they were nice to you, they treated you well.

A: Well, I, the, the - -

Q: The Polish - -

A: The Polish were good. **Trotzdem** (German), anyway, I can't say anything bad about them. It was forbidden for them to give us any bread. _____ they hid it, though, and said: "There it is. Now go and get it." And we would eat it and keep on working.

Q: And otherwise, there in that (Block) 7A, where you were? Was it a little bit better there than it was in the concentration camp before, in the Gypsy camp?

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A: Well, I'll tell you something. There were these, there were all these _____ and kapos were worse, than the, than the Germans, or SS, or the Wehrmacht. They were there, and they had these belts and _____ we would get a piece of bread, and the ones who would give out the bread, well _____ and in the middle would be this piece of bread.

Q: Yes. And who were these people, the kapos? Were they German prisoners?

A: No, no, no. They were there, just like I was there. And then I, and they would say: "You're going to be a kapo. And you're going to be the one who distributes the food to the outside. And I am going to be with you _____." And so they would take the bread, and _____ maybe 100 people, and (they would give) each person his piece, his piece of bread so they would have something to eat. You get it? And where there were the young ones, ones about 10 years old or so, or 11, they would take them and '**sexuels brauch die Kapos**' (German).

Q: So the kapos would abuse them (sexually), the young boys?

A: The kapos, no, sexually _____. They got a piece of bread, yeah, and for that they would leave them there. So, after about a half a year I left that place. And I went to that Gypsy camp, **aber nicht** (German) but not the Gypsy camp **sondern** (German) but instead right next to it. There was this kind of, these (barbed) wires. There was this Gypsy camp, and everyone was there, all together. Jews, Russians, and there was one Gypsy. And I could see, on the other side, across the way, my mother, not only my mother but everyone.

Q: So you weren't in the Gypsy camp anymore then? You were in some kind of a side camp attached to it?

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A: Joined to it, that's right. So I was out of that Sieben. And so I went to Osve - - no, not to Osve -- to _____ like that Gypsy camp. Right there next to it. There were Jews there, there was a Gypsy camp, and there in the back was a crematorium.

Q: Yes. That was some kind of camp for men?

A: That was a camp for men, that's right. And we would go to work in the morning, so we would work _____ half on building walls, and the other half would stand there, the soldiers, and make sure no one would escape or anything like that. What more can I say? It was bad, and they would have to take their caps off, '**Mütze ab**' (German), cap off. And so they took this one guy, and led him to this area, because he had wanted to escape. So they shot him, and he got an electric shock, this kind of **Strom** (German), this electric - - How do you call it?

Q: Current, or electric shock.

A: Wire, or current.

Q: Electrical.

A: It was electric. And he was dead.

Q: And that happened right, it happened right in front of you? It happ - -

A: Yeah, I saw that happen a lot, a lot of times.

Q: A lot of times.

A: Yes, I saw that sort of thing happen a lot of times. A lot of times. And I saw how it was, what really happened. I would see how a soldier (would say) **Mütze ab**, cap off, and it was over.

Q: Yes.

A: And there were these assemblies, they would call these assemblies. I was there **vieleicht** (German), maybe - - How long was I there? Two, three months.

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Q: Around three months.

A: And I got typhus, so I went to the hospital. I had **Bauchtyphus** (German) of the stomach, and I had _____ typhus. And I laid there, there where the corpses would lie, you know, there on _____. I collected this kind of _____ and went there under, under this cold water, and I just laid there. And then a doctor came, and he saw this triangle, this red triangle (sewn into my uniform).

Q: You had a red triangle?

A: No, I had a black one.

Q: Black.

A: So this man who came, he was a doctor, a Czech doctor, and I could speak Czech to him. "Oh, you're Czech." He took me and he hid me, there in the office where he was looking me over, there were these curtains with beds there, and I stayed there until I got better, until I recovered.

Q: You don't know what this doctor's name was, do you?

A: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. But he was a really good (man). He saved my life. I'm alive (thanks to him). You see? He was there - - I was there four weeks, maybe six.

Q: And then you went back to that camp for men?

A: No, there were three camps **nebeneinander** (German), right next to each other, and (one) was called **(Er)holung**, like when you were sick, that's what it was.

Q: Like reconvalescence, or recovery?

A: Yeah. And I stayed there **vielleicht** (German) maybe a week. A week. And then they asked us, whoever wanted to, to volunteer to go to a second camp. And I was one of the first to step forward, almost immediately.

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Q: But wait just a second. Let's go back to, back to Osvetim, because you know you were there a pretty long time. Talk about that a little more, if you would. What were the conditions like in that all-male camp?

A: Well, there were, there you had to worry about your own food, you had to work there in the morning.

Q: Where did you go to work?

A: Outside. We had to - - **wie** (German), **wie heißt es tschechisch?** How do you say it in Czech?

Q: You dug graves?

A: No, no. Wir waren als **Maurer** (German). We worked as masons.

Q: Aha.

A: We worked as masons, and we would always build half of what we built out of this special kind of brick, cige (ph.). And then the **Ober** (German) _____, and there were soldiers there.

Q: So you were building the ovens, the watchtowers, the - -

A: Around the concentration camp. See? And then at the end of the day, we would walk back home to the barracks, and the next morning **wieder** (German) again to work. You see?

Q: Yes.

A: When I was sick, that doctor saved my life, and for four, or maybe six weeks I didn't have to go to the camp at all.

Q: And another thing about - -

A: And that was called **Erholung** (German) - recovery or convalescence. See?

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Q: The German word is **Erholungslager**. Was it better there? Did you have to work there?

A: There was - - we didn't work there, nothing, no. And I was really lucky there, that I even said that I wanted to go there, to that camp. See? And we went there in these big transport trucks, and from there we took a train all the way to Buchenwald. And the next day, everyone that was there in that camp, the **Erholungslager** (German) recovery camp, they took everybody there away in trucks, and everyone was taken to the crematorium.

Q: To the gas chambers.

A: To the gas chambers, there.

Q: So you were saved at the very last second.

A: That's the way I saved my own life, I spoke up (to be transported) and I left and came to Buchenwald.

Q: Before you begin talking about Buchenwald, I would like to ask you something about the relations between the prisoners. How did you get along with them? Were there all nationalities in that all-male camp you were in?

A: They were mostly all Jews, Russians. Everybody there had their own shoe strings, and everyone was looking for something to eat, and it was all just a big whorehouse. See? There were women, even young girls for the kapos. And the **Blockengäste** (German) block guests. And we worked there, and they would throw us a piece of bread or something so we'd have something to eat.

Q: That was in the all-male camp? That's where this whorehouse was?

A: That was in Auschwitz, and in Osvecim.

Q: In that first camp.

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A: That's right. You see?

Q: Yes. And about the kapos. Were they able to move about the camp freely, or what?

A: We were only able to move about as we wanted when we - - when it was the end of the workday. Then we could move around pretty much as we wished. See? We could go **spazieren** (German), go walking. There was one chapel on a **platz** (German) square, and there were - -.

Q: The music.

A: No, there - - there were two of us, two of us who escaped and they caught - -.

Q: Two or 12?

A: Twelve.

Q: Twelve people tried to - -

A: Twelve people escaped. They were working somewhere outside (the camp), and they escaped. And that evening when the usual assembly was called, there was this kind of shina (ph.), and then _____ how do you call it?

Q: An execution of sorts?

A: No, no. Wait a minute, it was this kind of - -

Q: Would you be able to say it in German?

A: Just a moment. It was a shina (ph.). See? And there was a small table, and they stood there, and there were these ropes. See? And one (of the prisoners) stood there with his hand and _____ we had to , when the assembly was called we had to all look at him. You understand? How they were hanged. Those were Russians. And then there was another one hanged - - from _____ he had these

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kind of wooden shoes, and they found some rubber there, and he had (put it there). And they hanged that guy, too. He was a Russian, too.

Q: You mean he didn't (try to) escape, and they hanged him, too?

A: They hanged him. So we had to, because we were at that, at the assembly, we had to watch, watch him being hanged, watch that (Russian) being hanged and (he?) went free. And he went from a tent to a block? See? There was a lot of hunger in the night, so he had nothing to eat and he went (looking for something), a piece of bread or something. And just at that time a new transport came, of Jews. See? So they took everything they had _____ cakes, bread and gave it all. There was even gold there, that we had found, teeth and everything, and it was in the food. And so we left that camp and went to Buchenwald.

Q: I want to ask you something else. When you were in Osvetim, were you afraid? Did you ever feel as if something like that could have happened to you in that period of time?

A: I was the kind of person, that fear - - I had lost my mother, and I don't even know, I don't know where my family is. See? So I was there, and I volunteered (to leave the camp). I was in Buchenwald, and my brother was there, so I was more - - I stayed in Buchenwald _____ months.

Q: You saw your brother there?

A: Yep.

Q: In Buchenwald?

A: In Buchen - - he was in Buchenwald. And I was in Buchenwald, I was **vielleicht** (German) maybe there four weeks or so. And we worked, with those stones.

Q: In a rock quarry.

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A: A **Steinbruch**, in German.

Q: **Steinbruch** (German).

A: We carried stones, **vielleicht** (German) two or three kilometers, and those who didn't have the strength, they were beaten and everything. See? And they hanged one Gypsy, right there in the barracks.

Q: In the barracks?

A: Right there where we were, right where we lived in the - -

Q: In those barracks, in the place where you lived.

A: In the barracks, yes.

Q: And what did they hang him for?

A: There was one block _____. See? And they knew each other. They were from the same city. And they from this other Gypsy what he had done to him, and now I have you. So he gave him this work in the latrine, that he had to do there, he had to go to the latrine and work there, and he had to carry the largest stones there, maybe a week, two weeks. This, this Gypsy, that is. This Roma. And then one day we woke up and he was hanging there.

Q: You mean he had hanged himself?

A: I'm not sure if he had hanged himself or if he had been hung.

Q: Aha. So you think they arranged it. Those two Gypsies, or Roma?

A: No, no. This one was, this one was, he was, he was, but they, these other people, the ones who had a green triangle - -

Q: Yes, they were all murderers.

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A: They were all, they were all **Kriminalität** (German), criminals, the biggest ones, they were given the worst punishments. But those who had those green triangles (sewn on their prison uniforms) up top, those with a green triangle at the top or even near the bottom (of their uniforms), they were - - they got the best work. Like kapo or something like that. See?

Q: And that was in Buchenwald, too?

A: That's right, that was in Buchenwald.

Q: Yes, I see.

A: Yeah, and there was this whorehouse _____ and there was this whorehouse just behind the kapos and there. And so I was there in Buchenwald **vielleicht** (German) maybe two months.

Q: So it was better there than in Osvetim?

A: Well, I'll tell you something. In Osvetim, those who left, well, they could expect that - -

Q: They would go to the gas chambers?

A: Not to the gas chambers, no, but that he would live.

Q: So (those who left) knew that when they left they had saved their lives?

A: Saved their lives, yeah. So I was there in Buchenwald, and my first wife's, my first wife's father was there. And he didn't recognize me, and he _____: "You're a young kid," and things like that. See? "Here, have a piece of bread." He worked there where they washed clothes. How do you call a Wascherei (German) in Czech?

Q: Wascherei (German), yes.

A: See? And if you were a younger kid, you got a piece of bread sometimes, something like that. And there was this kind of **elceko** (German). You know her,

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don't you? She was the biggest one in all of the camp. And we _____ up until the very end. There were five _____. See? (She would say) All of you step forward, forward, and whichever one she liked, she would call: "Number 12 _____. Because I had a number. See? **Sofort** (German) immediately, she would say in German, in the German language. So we would _____, we thought, now he's lucky, he's going home. When the war ended, when the war was over (we found out the truth), that she would have him - - she gave him something to eat, slept with him and then had him killed. And the number was posted on a door, and she would make bags, purses and other things from the wallets (she collected).

Q: You mean she used the tattos, the actual skin - -

A: The skin where the numbers were. See? And I _____ this American came, and it was the end of the war, at least that was what we heard. See? And she was _____ around two years, that she had been convicted by the Americans, then automatically she was back after those two years. And one of the high officers married her, and she's in America. So long locked away (in prison), she was in Ajchách (ph.), in Germany, the largest prison there in Germany. For women.

Q: I see.

A: And she was there around two years, and (then) she got married to an American, and she's in America.

Q: So she survived in the end.

A: She survived in the end.

Q: She's probably no longer living now.

A: That's not important now, anyway. We only saw later, when the war, when the war was over, how this one and that one did what with the others, that with the

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numbers, and with the wallets and the luster. Everything came out. And then one day I volunteered to leave Buchenwald, and I went to _____ there was one Gypsy and 12 Jews. See? And I was in Dora (ph.).

Q: You were in Dora (ph.), too?.

A: I was in Dora (ph.) S. Ehrlich (ph.), which was a camp. _____ Ehrlich (ph.) it was called. And there was **ein Ofizier** (German), this one officer in Berlin, an **Oberstumpfier**, and he looked at me and he said: "You're a Gypsy." And I say: "That's right". "And you Jews, off to the other side." And then, straight to work. They worked in that Steinbruck, these kind of _____ this **Munizion** (German) a munitions storage area. You know how there - -

Q: An underground factory.

A: Underground. No? They worked there. "And you, bring some food, and (you) bring the soldiers **immer** (German) always their food." And there were soldiers there watching over us. But I had it good then. I ate that camp food most of the time, I even got the same food that the soldiers did. And they would even clean my shoes, too.

Q: And why did he call you out? Did he know you?

A: Well, it was just that I was a Gypsy.

Q: Yes.

A: See? And they were all Jews. You get it? And he said: "Why were you sent here?" "Well, they called out, 'Who wants to volunteer?', so I volunteered." Someone worked there _____ work _____, in order to save my life. And he smiled. He liked me a lot. See? And then he said: "You stay here, you're free, go and clean

up my room.” And I said “Yo”. So I cleaned his shoes and all that, and when the food

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came at noon, I took it to him, to these Germans. They were older people **schon** (German) already. _____ by then it was near the end of the war. See?

Q: And you worked there the whole time?

A: Nein (German) no.

Q: So you didn't work at all in that factory?

A: I didn't, I didn't work in that factory, I worked _____ in a **Malerschule** (German), a school for painters. In Buchenwald I worked in the **Steinbruch** (German), the stone quarry, and whenever I was with that officer, I brought him food, food for the Wehrmacht. And _____ and he said: “You know it's a shame, I have to go back to the war again. And I don't know what I'm going to do with you.” So he spoke to a cook, the highest, that he would take me into the kitchen. That was in Ehrlich, in the camp Ehrlich. That's what it was called. So then I was in the kitchen, and I would distribute the food outside. I helped a lot of Roma, I would give them more food (than their share). There were five people, and I distributed 50 liters of that food they had prepared, that food and a kind of fish. Potatos, or whatever, I would put it in that thing and I gave it _____ German and Gypsies, so much that they praised me like today, and I gave - -

Q: (So you were praised) because you helped them?

A: Helped them a lot, a whole lot. You see? I was there, and there was hunger in Ehrlich. There were these French there, these French people, and they were dead, and I was walking right out in front of the barracks, and I see this dead person there, and they had him cut up.

Q: Yes.

A: You get it?

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Q: Cannibalism.

A: Jo. And they ate it. They had these cans there, and they were labeled, and they would cook it up and just eat it. See? And then they came to the camp, and they heard that (human flesh) was being eaten, all together with the bones and everything, all mixed together. We were in the back _____ at the time. So this one SS officer comes up and he says: "This is impossible, that here - -". That was at the end, at the end _____ at the end of the war. So those Germans told us _____ we have to end this and start walking. At that time it was only Wehrmacht, not SS, they weren't there, it was **schon** (German) already Wehrmacht. And so we started walking and this one was driving a car in front of us, towards a village, and he cooked up some potatoes at this one villager's house, in preparation for this huge transport. With peels. So we marched on, and there was this kind of, how do you call it? Like a **Sandgrube** (German, ph.). You know what I'm talking about?

Q: Yes, some kind of a sand, well a hole in the ground, of sand.

A: No.

Q: A kind of quarry or something.

A: Anyway, they let us sleep there. Everyone had their own blanket, and the soldiers, well, they were there _____, and they were guarding us, so that no one would escape. That lasted maybe two, maybe three weeks.

Q: And you were still on the road then?

A: On the road, yes, walking.

Q: And those people, those who were starving - - they couldn't make it.

A: Well, what were they supposed to do, stay there? So they had to, they had to want to _____

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Q: The Germans.

A: The Germans, the soldiers, they were (too) old **schon** (German) already, the Wehrmacht, to carry their rucksacks or whatever they had. And they were, I can say - - there was this one soldier, and I carried his on my own, because I had regained some of my strength during the time I was in the kitchen. I could still go, I still had some strength. And this German, he gave me something to eat, in exchange for me carrying his backpack. See how it went? So we were there in that Sandkrube (German, ph.), that hole in the ground. And then one day I woke up, and they were all gone. All of them.

Q: The Germans.

A: Everybody.

Q: They were all gone.

A: They were all gone. I was just lying there, and it was cold. Sometime around March, or maybe February. January, February. Yo, it was in February. Or was that at the end of March. Anyway, it was cold, so I made a fire. I made a fire. So I could stay there. I took an ash out of a fire myself, and I laid right by it to keep myself warm. And they thought I was dead. See, that's why they left me there. Or **vielleicht** (German) maybe it was that German _____ who left me there. So I was there for maybe about three weeks. And then I hid, for about four weeks, in the forest. And I ate these, these things, what are they called?

Q: Pine cones, or something like that?

A: No, no, no. But something from a tree, these puk, puk - -

Q: Nuts, or berries?

A: Yeah, nuts from some plant.

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Q: Yes, yes. Bukvice, in Czech, or acorns.

A: That's right, something like that, that's what I ate. And then at night I would go walking, and I found a villager's well, and I stole a chicken, too. And I cooked over an open fire. I made a big hole in the ground to cook in. And then I hear this car. All these Germans were standing in the woods, they had left their car there, their cooking utensils, and had just left. They left their uniforms, too, and dressed in civilian clothes. See? And so I call out: "So what now?"

Q: But you had gone your own way, you weren't with them anymore, with that group of Germans.

A: No, no, that's right, I was in hiding. I was hiding in the forest, see? I waited there until, until I saw what it was all about. So I finally walk out of the forest, and I see this white flag. You get what I mean?

Q: Yes, I do. A white flag.

A: A white flag, so what does that mean? I was afraid, still. So these cars were in the forest. There were cooking utensils, and ammunition, everything was there. See? And so I took a couple of blankets, ones that I needed, and I got out of there fast. .

Q: So what was it all about? What was that army? Whose stuff was it?

A: Germans.

Q: They were Germans. And they thought that the Russians were there, maybe three or four kilometers away.

Q: And they (the Germans) had already surrendered.

A: That's right, they had given up, escaped and clothed themselves in civil clothes, and just left everything there in the forest. And I didn't know, I had no idea what was going on. I was just a kid. I know what war is? Or that it's the end of the war?

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Or what? I stayed **noch** (German) another week in that forest. And it wasn't over yet, I still hadn't found any peace. I didn't have any water, everything was so dirty, dirt everywhere. And I was still wearing my prison uniform, the one from the camp.

Q: Your stripes.

A: Yeah. And there was this kind of road, this road, one that was called, one that the villages would use, to go to the, to the - -

Q: To the fields.

A: To the fields, right. And there was one house there, just one house. So I walked up to it, I didn't care. And I said to myself, let them shoot me, I don't care. I'm going there anyway. And they were eating. It was noon. "Please," I said, "Don't do anything to me." And he said, "We won't." They had this kind of soup. Hrachova in Czech. Pea soup.

Q: Pea soup.

A: "Come and have something to eat," (he said). And so I ate, and I ate so much that I got sick. And then they bathed me, and I laid there for what had to be three or four weeks, **vielleicht** (German). You understand? And then after that, they said: "Here, take a horse and a carriage, and go wherever you want."

Q: Those were German villagers?

A: Germans, yes, German people. You know? So I really can't complain about them. I really can't. _____ What does that mean? So that one man said: "It's the end of the war." Here, two or three kilometers (away) are the Russians. You get it? So I

was able to understand a little bit, and I could speak a little Russian. And then the Russians came and told me I had to go to Pres -, Presl- -, Breslau (now a part of Poland, German Breslau, Polish Wroclaw - translator's note).

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Tape 2 of 2

Q: Mr. Daniel, you know that the Gypsy camp was liquidated in one fell swoop, in a very short period of time, almost all of it, with all of the women and children. What do you know about that?

A: When we first came to the camp, the very first time we were brought there. See? We were all together, children - -

Q: Yes.

A: Mama, the whole family. (We had been there) about two weeks, maybe three, when they told us that whoever wanted to go home - - the young ones could (go) home. And they could go home to eat and send packages from home.

Q: Yes. You said that you went to the - -

A: That's right, _____ we were three weeks (at home) with our mother.

Q: Yes. And when you returned, that Gypsy camp was already - -

A: It was still there.

Q: It was still there.

A: It was still there. My mother was **noch** (German) still living.

Q: Yes.

A: She was **noch** (German) still living.

Q: And so the Gypsy camp was dismantled, or liquidated, when you were in the all-male camp?

A: I was - - well, it was the time just as I had finished that **Maurerschule** (German), the masonry training. See?

Q: Yes.

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A: So I didn't come (back) to the Gypsy camp, (but instead) to the one next to it.

See? The one next to the Gypsy camp.

Q: And that was the all-male camp, the **Männerlager** (German), the male camp?

A: That was the **Männerlager** (German), the all-male camp.

Q: And how was it there? Were conditions there better than in the Gypsy camp?

A: It was all - -

Q: It was the same.

A: It was the same. The food was the same.

Q: Yes, go on.

A: And the misery, squalor and hunger were everywhere.

Q: So it was the same.

A: That was in the Gypsy camp, the way it was in the other. See?

Q: Yeah. You experienced something in that camp, some kind of unusual event at one of the assemblies. Because of an escape or something like that?

A: Well, I told you that they escaped, and they hung those people.

Q: Yes. You were still in that - -

A: I was there - -

Q: In the ethnic camp.

A: The camp that was next to the Gypsy camp.

Q: Yes.

A: And in the Gypsy camp, they didn't hang anyone.

Q: Were you able to see the transports, how they arrived, and how they went straight to the gas (chambers)? Did you (prisoners) know about that?

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A: A train would come, and the people who could work, they were taken off to the side, and the other people went to the - -. At the time I came to the camp, there was one crematorium. Aber (German) But what they did there, how it burned all night, during the day and night. We saw the fire, how it would rise up above the top of the chimney. We knew that - -

Q: They were burning people.

A: That they were burning people, and we cried out, and we saw. We could hear their screams, because that Gypsy camp was not far from there, around the corner, there was there in the forest was the crematorium. See? So we could hear that there were people screaming. And they would collect the ashes. There were 12 or 13 people working there, and they would gather up all of the ashes, there was this kind of **Keller** (German), a cellar of sorts. How do you call it?

Q: Sklep, in Czech. A cellar, or a basement.

A: A cellar. And _____ so they would (put the ashes on a cart), then carry them off on those kinds of carts they had. At that time, at the time, when I was still in Bohemia, Czechoslovakia, they had these things, _____. How do you call them?

Q: Wait just a second, I'm not sure what you mean. Some kind of trucks, or something like that?

A: Some kind of trucks, yeah, and they would put the dust (ashes) on (the trucks), and they would throw - - they would spread it on the fields everywhere. They would spread it all over the fields.

Q: They were fertilizing with the ashes. So you spoke up, you volunteered to be taken on the next transport, because you - - you wanted to get yourself out of there, out of Osvetim?

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A: Yeah. And I saved my own life.

Q: Yes. Do you remember any time, any event or place, where the prisoners helped each other, while you were still in Osvetim?

A: I'll tell you something. The ones who were locked up, but were kapos, or **Vorarbeiter** (German), they were the worst.

Q: Even worse than - -

A: Even worse than, than the Germans.

Q: And you had more contact with them.

A: No. They would get beaten if they let you smoke. You get it? So they beat you so long, 25, the _____ the ones who were in the prison. The Germans were just glad to be left alone. Because the highest officers that were there, they had these, these - -

Q: The ranked officers.

A: The soldiers, and they were all old, the Wehrmacht. And the Wehrmacht, they were better than the _____ and they would guard us, so no one would escape and that was everything.

Q: Did it ever happen to you that you were ever punished for something?

A: Doch (German) yes. I was also beaten a good amount of times.

Q: Yeah.

A: I got beat a whole lot.

Q: For what, for example?

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A: Well, when it got out that I was distributing too much food, the time I was working in the kitchen. Then that Markytan (ph.) told me. They were doing an inspection. There was bread, margarine, salami. So I was given work, work - - how do you call it? Bad work, I had to dig ditches. How do you call that? In Czech?

Q: Some kind of hole, or cavern, or ditch?

A: A canal, a canal underground.

Q: Yes.

A: Three meters belowground, and everything there was there, and in the evening everything had to be clean and everything. I was there for four weeks. You see?

Q: That was in Ehrlich?

A: That was in Ehrlich. Right.

Q: Yes. And some - - you had some kind of controversy with one of the kapos?

A: **Nein** (German) no. I can't say that it was because of him. I was the kind of - - I was always the kind (of prisoner) that did what he could not to get beaten. I worked, I had to work, so I worked. And it was so that if they saw you working, then you were okay, they left you alone. Whatever was forbidden, well, I didn't do it. And I knew that smoking was prohibited. And (another) **Beispiel** (German), another example, in Osvecin. In that camp, we got these kuloas (ph.) cigarettes, nothing to eat, **aber** (German) but these strong cigarettes. See? That's what we got. And we had to smoke all of them.

Q: You received them?

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A: Yeah, these kuloas (ph.). See? We could smoke all of them. I was glad. We ate for our hunger, we ate those cigarettes.

Q: You did - -

A: And these - -

Q: So you were all given these cigarettes, as a kind of ration?

A: Odkyl got them, Odkyl, he gave them to me, he gave them to everyone - -

Q: So you got them from some kind of - -

A: No, we were given them. A transport arrived. You see? The French and they brought cigarettes. and everyone was given a share of them: "Na, here you go. Smoke however many you want." And as I said before, Kautabak (German).

Q: What was that?

A: Kautabak (German). I'm not sure what it's called in Czech. This kind of tobacco that you - -

Q: Oh, Kautabak (German), chew-, chewing tobacco.

A: That's right, and we chewed it because we were hungry. You understand? We _____ the juice, we were so hungry. You got two, three potatos, and that was all. And this bread type of soup. A half a liter of it. And that was it.

Q. Did you have any close friends there? Who were you close to, who helped you when you needed it, if anyone?

A: Well, I'll tell you, I'll tell you something. There in the camp, it was all the same where it was, it didn't matter where it was. Osvecin, or in that Gypsy camp where my family was, my mother and my sister. And I didn't have contact with anyone,

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with any of them. **Weil** (German) because there, everyone was alone, everyone was on their own, and was looking for something to eat. There, where they would throw the potato peels, (the prisoners) would look for them, pick them up and eat them. There was real hunger there. Great hunger. You see? So being friends with someone, doing something with someone like that, you just couldn't, it didn't work. (Other prisoners) just weren't - how do you say it - interested, in any kind of **Freundschaft** (German) friendship. You just didn't think about it. Everyone was just thinking about survival, about finding something to eat. You get it?

Q: And how did you - - At the beginning did you still get to see your mother or other relatives, maybe, across the fence?

A: I came from that big camp, and here was this all-male camp, here and here was the Gypsy camp. And my brother was there. See? And there was that electric fence there. Then one day my mama came over, and we talked through the fence. And **vielleicht** (German) maybe she lived another two months (after that). And then she got **Bauchtyphus** (German), typhoid fever of the stomach, and she died.

Q: How did you find out about it?

A: My sister told me. My oldest sister. She came home. See? And now she has died on me, too.

Q: So she told you after the war ended? Or did you find out when it was still - ?

A: No, no, no. I was still in that camp when she told me that Mama was dead. I had asked her where my mama was. And she said: "Don't do it, Mama died." That was

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- - I'll tell you something. In order to find that something in his heart, _____ everyone had to gather his own courage - in order to survive.

Q: To survive.

A: To survive. You see? It hurt, Mama was mama, of course. **Aber** (German) but everyone was still in that camp, me and all the others. It was either me or them. It was cold, heartless. Do you understand?

Q: I understand.

A: Now, when someone would die, it would hurt you in your heart, and it was a shame that that person had died. But no one was really thinking that. There, everyone was thinking about how to - -

Q: How to harden themselves.

A: No, no.

Q: Yes. Did you ever get into the kind of desperate situation where you doubted that you would make it? Where you stopped believing that you would survive?

A: No. For me it was all, I had all, I didn't care about anything.

Q: Yes.

A: I didn't care about anything at all. I said to myself, that's the way it is, when you die, you die, what can you do.? **Man findet sich ab** (German) - You find ways to deal with things like that, to come to terms. **Also** (German). You understand what I'm trying to say?

Q: Yes.

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A: **Wenn sie so das sehen und der ist Tod _____ Schrift eine _____** (German) -

When you look at it that way, and there is death... . You see? And he's dead.

See? And there's a piece of bread, there, in his pocket, well you just took the bread from him. He had good clothes. See? Take his sandals.

Q: Shoes.

A: Sandals or shoes, (everyone) was stealing something from the next guy. See? I would take that piece of bread (another prisoner) had hidden that morning, and I ate it. _____ and he was dead. That was in Ehrlich.

Q: Yes. That doctor who saved your life - did you ever see him again?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: He let me go from that camp, _____ **Erholungs** (German), the convalescence camp, that's what it was. **Erholung** (German). We had it good there, at least as far as typhoid fever is concerned, there you would get really hungry. And you were weak. Nur (German) only fever, fever, and then as soon as you were a little bit better, you would get hungry again, and you can, you can eat that soup. He gave me good food to eat. _____ How is it called? **Auf** (German), **aufgebaut** (German) built back up, or healthy, recovered.

Q: So you had recovered, yes.

A: No. He was a real good doctor. I knew immediately that he was Czech. He even spoke Czech. And he said: "You're Czech?" And I tell him: "Yep". _____ They had this kind of doctor's office, and they had this kind of bed and curtains, and that's

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where he hid me. **Normalerweise** (German) He risked his life, his own life as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

Q: (He risked his) life.

A: You see?

Q: Mr. Daniel, you said that at the beginning, when you arrived, there was some kind of a division. One side, the other side.

A: What do you have in mind?

Q: When you arrived, at the beginning.

A: With the car.

Q: With the car.

A: Well, we came there, to this kind of building, and all the women, men, and everyone were together, with hair being cut and everything left behind. You didn't know if it was a man or a woman. They cut everyone's hair, and - -

Q: Yes.

A: You go to this block, you go to that block.

Q: But no one had been sent to the gas chambers. You all went - -

A: No, no.

Q: Everyone went to that camp.

A: Everyone went to the camp. Yep.

Q: And then later, they were still in the camp somewhere. Did you ever have to go through some kind of selection process, when you were divided, those who had to go to the gas chambers and those who stayed?

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A: It was, it was - - I can't really tell you anything, because I didn't see it myself. They didn't take anyone from the Gypsy camp. See? For there to be - - The people who were sick, those who were sick and couldn't work, they took them and put them there. And where, we didn't see that. Because you were a number, they didn't say names. They would say Number 1200 or 450 _____, like that. And after that we saw _____. See? Whether they took him to the crematorium or shot him, we didn't know. No one knew. And in Buchenwald it was the same. There the **elsekoch** (German) would do it. See?

Q: So all together, how long were you in Osvetim? You said you got there in the spring of 1943.

A: In March.

Q: In March of '43.

A: I know.

Q: And - -

A: And all in all, I was a year _____ in Osvetin.

Q: About a year.

A: And three months there. Two months there, until the end of the war.

Q: Did it ever happen to you in Osvetim, that you, as a Gypsy, were looked down upon by some other prisoner? Did you ever experience anything like that?

A: Nothing like that ever happened. Jew, Russian, it didn't matter. Everyone was alone, by himself.

Q: Did you know that the Jews, most of them, were being sent en masse to the gas chambers? Did you know that?

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A: We knew, we knew that. When a long transport would come, it wouldn't come to the camp if it was Jews. They would take them to the crematorium immediately. You see? But we all knew it. And that train, it was up to the front, this car there, that car there. And we knew, the children said it. There were so many of them, so many (at the) crematorium, and the crematorium was so small that they couldn't burn them all at once, so the smaller children would take the Spielzeuge (German) toys, balloons and other things into the **Sandgrube** (ph.) (German) sandy area. And they would throw everything down and shoot the children and throw them down and burn them outside, in that area where there was sand.

Q: Yes. They burned them outside.

A: Yes. That was in Osvecin, there.

Q: Yes. We have already asked your brother about this, so I wanted to ask you.

What is a moosman (ph.)? Your paths certainly crossed at one time or another.

A: Yeah, those were muzelmen (ph.), those who had - - it was, well _____ skin and bones. And (their) eyes were. He was already half dead. So they would take them, and because they could barely stay alive, (much less) work, they took them. And when there was an assembly, there would be inspection, they would look. To the side, to the side. What they did with them no one knew. We didn't see anything. One minute you saw them, and the next minute they were **schon** (German) already gone.

Q: Yes.

A: No, we saw it, that they burned him.

Q: Again in Osvetim, did you ever see any SS officers there?

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A: There were some. At the beginning there were a lot of SS officers. There were a lot of SS officers in Osvecin.

Q: And would they come over to the barracks sometimes?

A: There were - -

Q: Or to the camp?

A: When there was inspection, there was an assembly. See? And they would come there, and do their inspection, and there was this **Kamin** (German), this furnace, a big one and it was heating, heating from the sides, because it was cold. So we sat there, on it, and they came, they looked around and then they left. See? **Aber** (German) but the worst were those, I'll tell you the truth - - I have been living in Germany for more than 50 years now. And I don't feel any hatred toward the Germans, none at all. I'm just another person, like you, like the other guy. I'm just a person. The person, the one who did something to me in the camp, I recognize him. You see? I recognized one. He was on business _____, no, wait a minute, yeah, **partnergetain** (ph.) (German?) He was just one. He was from Berlin. And he was, he was a kapo. **Blokrevidosta** (ph.) (German?) in Buchenwald. And it was he who had had that Gypsy hanged. (Gave him) the worst jobs, the latrine, slapped him around. He fell, and he had to clean and carry the heaviest stones. And I saw him (the kapo). Follow? And I said to him: "I recognize you. You are this and that. He was 57. 57. In Buchenwald. See? And so I told him: "I know who you are. I wanted to - - how do you call it?

Q: Hit him or something like that?

A: No, no, no.

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Q: To turn him in to the authorities.

A: Turn him in, yeah. And then I read in the newspapers that he, and he - -

Q: He hung himself?

A: No, no. In the garage, he let the gas and - -

Q: And he killed himself.

A: He committed suicide.

Q: Alone.

A: **Bildzeitung** (German), the newspaper. His name was written, and _____. His name was Albrecht. And he committed suicide. With gas. And his wife was there, **vielleicht** (German) maybe she was 65, 70 years old **schon** (German) by then. And I knew him immediately. See? And I worked in, when I was younger I worked with old things, I was in the antique business. **Antiquitäten** (German). So I went to his place, and I wanted to sell him a cabinet, a cupboard. **Also** (German) that's the way it was.

Q: Sorry?

A: I recognize this one, I know this guy. And that got in his head. The whole time.

You see what I mean? And he didn't buy it. And I walked up to him and said _____ "You were a blockgestapo soldier in a camp there and there?" You see? _____ but he killed himself with gas in that garage.

Q: Could you try to remember something else of interest, something you haven't said? Another story or something like that?

A: I'll tell you something. At that time, at the end of the war, we were in Breslau

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(German). And he gave me to _____ and he was really good. "Take a horse." He gave me a carriage. How do you call that? That - -

Q: A kind of individual carriage.

A: The kind they use in weddings. How do you call that kind of carriage? Know what I mean?

Q: I don't know.

A: And he gave me a horse, and I stayed with them four weeks, and they helped me recover. I was sick. But I got over it. They gave me fruit, and this stuff they called Eingemachtes (German). See? And the men told me they wouldn't hurt me, and - - it was true. They didn't know. At the end of the war they knew something, (like) what the SS soldiers did, and others. See? So they gave me a horse and that other thing. And they packed some food for me, and I rode around 200 km. And there was this one Czech woman. She had a backpack, and she was walking alone. She had these clothes, she had a - - "What's this? Why are you walking?" And she says: "Come with me. I have to go to the camp." There were Russians and Czechs there, and they were waiting on those who had been in the camp.

Q: Yes.

A: And that was the end.

Q: (And then came) some kind of repa - - some kind of repatriation.

A: Yeah.

Q: Some kind.

A: And then we waited on some buses, and so we went back to Bohemia in buses.

Q: What came?

A: Bus. Autobuses.

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Q: Buses. Yes.

A: Buses and this transport went there. How many of them could there have been?

To Prague. And from Prague everything was broken down. Trains, and then we took a bus, and then walked. And so I went home. To Chvalkovice. And there was my brother. He was alive.

Q: Your brother was already there?

A: Jo, jo.

Q: And your sisters were already there, too?

A: (My) sisters were the first home. I came home last.

Q: Yes.

A: You see?

Q: So what did you do?

A: Well, I - -

Q: After that kind of experience?

A: Well, I went home alone, to Chvalkovice, I came to Chvalkovice, and my friends (were) there. See? "You're alive." A telegram came that you were dead. See? "Well, here he is," said Stana. You see? "He's dead, but he's alive!" And so I said "And who's still alive?" "Well, your brother is, and your sisters Máňa, Štefka and Rozárka, all of them are alive." And thank God. I had this kind of house, the kind they call a homely house. There was one room plus. But they shot it up, and put ammunition there. And at the end of the war, they shot it up and it was all damaged. See? So I was home. How long was I there? Ach, **vielleicht** (German) maybe a year or so.

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Q: So you were all together in that one room?

A: One room, that's right.

Q: Yes.

A: So anyway, we moved to Prostejov, and we received an apartment there, in Vodni Street. And there he was, he was married to his first wife then. And now she's dead already. And I lived with my sisters. See? And I worked at Chvatal. Mostly I worked in the linens department, specifically with cotton wool. I would commute to Ostrava everyday, in a big truck to the factory, and I had - -

Q: Some kind of small one (factory)?

A: That's right. I would do the heavy work, carrying things. They manufactured from all kinds of fabrics.

Q: From old rags and fabrics.

A: From old rags, and there were these machines.

Q: Yes.

A: And on the other side came the cotton wools, which were made by the - -

Q: Right. Linens filled, in Czech vycpavky.

A: Right. And I would ride to the factory with Czechishvarem (ph.), there and back. I had a good job. Good. But I didn't like it. So I left.

Q: In what year did you leave?

A: I left - - let's see, I've lived in Germany now for more than 50 years.

Q: Okay, 97 - 50 - -

A: No, no. Wait a second, just a second, I'll tell you when.

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Q: 97 – 50. 47?

A: Seven. Isn't that right?

Q: Were you still single?

A: No, I was already married, I had a wife and a young son. He was, he was around 18 months old then.

Q: So you got married just after the war?

A: When I returned home from the ca - -, I wasn't married yet, because _____.

Q: Yes.

A: At the Gypsy _____ I was married. You get it?

Q: Yes.

A: _____ no. So after that I just left, I went over Pilsen.

Q: With your wife and son?

A: No, Mariánske Lázně, Marienbad in German. We were eight people together. We just got out of there, and came to, to Germany. What was that place called? What was that place called?

Q: War?

A: No, no, no. Not that. At the border. Houf - - that's where they make that porcelain.

Q: Well, it doesn't matter anyway.

A: So from there, we got these papers so we could take the train, and we went to Würzburg, Germany, where I live. _____ place. And then I wanted to go to America, and I got the papers, there in Nuremberg. See how it was? And so I said "No, I'm here _____ and that's the end. Here I can visit Czechoslovakia." And I

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didn't know, where I _____, my papers all of them were here. They stayed _____
my - - How do you say Geburtsurkunde (German) in Czech?

Q: Rodny list, your birth certificate.

A: Birth certificate. So what are we going to do with you? They didn't believe me, that

I was who I said I was. So they gave me Staatlos (German) status. I don't have
any citizenship.

Q: I see.

A: You see? And I wanted to see my family, so I called home (to see) how they were
doing, back to Hungary where they were living. They had gone to Hungary, I went
to Hungary, but they wouldn't let me through, so I went to the Czech consulate, I
just wanted to go for a visit. But they wouldn't let me in. At that time there were
Russians in charge. You follow? Nothing. So I called again to Hungary, and this
time (I talked to the right people). I stayed there a couple of weeks, maybe three.

Q: You just wanted to see your family again?

A: See my family.

Q: In Hungary.

A: In Hungary. They could go to Hungary and were allowed in, and me, too. Because
they wouldn't let me back into Czechoslovakia. I need, wherever I went, I needed
a visa.

Q: Yes.

A: You see? I arrived in Juni, that's - -

Q: That's June.

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A: Right, that's June. And then I did, how do you call it? I applied for financial aid, so I could get some money. Filled out forms. See? In Munich. And Munich wrote back, Munich wrote back that 'You don't have any, you don't have the right - -

Q: Your papers?

A: Papers, documents, no, that wasn't it. That I had applied too late. It had ended in May. You see? **Und ich habe gar keinen Anspruch auf die _____** (German) - And I had no legal right to any financial aid. So back then it was that Schmidt, Bundeskanzler Schmidt (Helmut). You know? And he said: "Whoever doesn't get any money should petition Cologne. Köln in German. So I filled out another form, and all of the papers that showed proof of my (illness or handicap), and that I was 80 percent handicapped.

Q: Go on.

A: So I have all my papers. I've filled everything out and it's all sent in. And I waited three years. Then they wrote me that I should come there. So I went to Cologne and they told me, "Mr. Daniel, you are a man without a country. **Staatenlos** in German." You see? "If you want, you can have 5000, 5000 German marks." But I didn't want money, I wanted help, support. **Rente** (German), a pension. I'm sick, I'm not taking the money. I want to have a regular pension. And so they told me that if I didn't take the money, I wouldn't have the **Anspruch** (German), or the right, to any pension. So I took the money and set a court date at the high court, the **Verwaltungsgericht**. So they came from Bonn, the finance minister, you know, and he said "If you were German, you would have the right to retirement

benefits, but you have no citizenship, so you're not getting anything." But we talked

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a little longer, and I told him: "They asked me at that time if I was a Gypsy, or a Jew **oder** (German) or what nationality I was, when they (the Germans) came to Czechoslovakia. And then they took us, and they put us in a concentration camp and you burned _____, and then all the people were gone. They didn't ask us about - -

Q: Your nationality.

A: And now, and now I had to be a German, so I could get my papers. So I said, what can I expect, and I put those papers in the _____. Maybe you know it. She is a Gypsy, and he does the, the negotiations. You have to know him. The one who speaks German, English. You know?

Q: Yes, Mrs. _____. Right.

A: Yeah. So I _____ he gets, I went all the way to Bonn. Bonn, at the ministry, and I said: "You _____ get the money, every year, 350,000." So he would give those people, those poor people who don't have anything _____ something from (what he could) after that. _____ and I grabbed him around the neck. "You're the one who gives the money out. And you get 350,000 per year, and what do you do _____. You give it to your family. And what about those poor people? You don't give them anything? You've had my papers for three years, and you haven't done anything about it." "Well, I have a lot of lawyers. I have to pay." So I say "That money you get, it's not yours. That's (from) Hannover, they have an office there,

and from Hamburg, and from Heidelberg.” And he gets every month, I saw that he gets 350,000 every year, illegally. From Bonn. You see?

Q: Sir, yes. Do you want to say anything more about it?

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A: No. Why would I want to? _____ doesn't care. And don't get angry. Don't get angry. Now to my brother. I know, that he won't get a single crown out of Germany. See? I know it. _____ if he were German, he would get some money, like I was in the camp and got some money. And just take a look at my brother. He's old, he gets very little money, around 5000 crowns as his pension, and that's not enough for anything. He doesn't even have enough to buy food. And no one cares that he get his money, the ones who were in the camps, so they can live a little, so they can have something, in the last few years of their lives. So they can have something. No one cares about him. Everyone just wants - - Don't get angry. Everyone wants an interview, interview, Holocaust. Like you hear, 1,000,000, 1,000,000 go there to the _____. And the Germans are going to pay for it. And television. **Nur** (German) only Jews, Jews, and no one ever talks about the Gypsies. The Gypsies were locked up for racist reasons. You know? And you don't hear anything about it.

Q: Yes. You should definitely get your share. Definitely.

A: See? You haven't heard a word I've said. That Gypsies were in the camps like - - they called Gypsies arbeitshuj (German), not fond of work.

Q: Jo, I understand that some think that about them and work. Yes.

A: No. Yeah. See? And you don't hear a word of it. I know that I won't even get the little (I'm entitled to) while I'm still alive. I'm pretty sick. I (just) had my third heart attack, and thank God I'm still alive. You know?

Q: But you know, all of these interviews and things like that are supposed to point out what you and others like you had to live through.

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A: Yeah, but what do we have to show for it? What do we get? Tell me what we get from it. You do an interview, that's all good and fine. I can accept that. **Akzeptiere das. Ne? Aber man kann, man kann _____ nicht in Deutschland, aber _____ hier leben. Ne? _____ Krieg vor dem Staat** (German) -Accept that. See? But one can, one cannot _____ in Germany, but _____ just live here. See? At war with the state.

Q: Well, I agree with you. They should get it. Yes.

A: Yeah? But get what? Nothing. They get 5000 for their pension and pay _____ and nothing is left over.

Q: Yes. Can I ask you something else? What did you do (for the rest of your time) in Germany?

A: In Germany, I worked, I learned how to _____ today.

Q: So you're still working today.

A: Yes, I get my benefits, my social benefits, I get welfare.

Q: In Germany, is there - -

A: My first wife died, now I have my second. You know that woman.

Q: Yes.

A: She speaks 13 languages. She was here. She spoke with that younger guy who speaks Eng - -

Q: English.

A: English, yes. They talked about the - - I heard it. I was. Do you know what that's like? **Normalerweise** (German) I can't go anywhere.

Q: Yes. Aha, you want - - I understand.

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A: I have to _____. The doctor has to see me everyday, if there's something wrong with me. See? **Aber** (German) But I travel, I have to (spend) some of the money. I get 900, 900 marks for food with my wife, and my apartment is paid for. But what's 900 marks? Everything is expensive. That's nothing for nothing. You know?

Q: I wanted to ask you something else. In Germany, are there any (problems with racism)? Do you ever feel that people are against Gypsies? Can you feel that in Germany?

A: It is that way. In Germany it is that way. I've seen Gypsies who wanted to go camping, but they wouldn't let them in.

Q: They wouldn't let them in.

A: No, they wouldn't let them in. And they have a Grund (German), a reason, and everyone there buys and sells old things. They have things in their cars. And there there are people, people like you, or that other man here. See? And you stand there, and they don't want it. They don't let Gypsies in to camping grounds. **Aber** (German) but in Munich, in Munich they did this big thing **nur** (German) only for

Roma. I don't know how much - - 1,000,000 it cost. See? A big Roma camping place. And they have to pay, too.

Q: Yes.

A: Daily, around 15 or 20 marks. See?

Q: Have you ever personally, you personally, ever been confronted with something, like someone said something to you or - -?

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A: **Also** (German) I have my people. You know? I ride in a caravan. I have a caravan at home. And I go for example to Munich, I have my place there.

Q: You have a way aro - -

A: I have a place at, and for **Beispiel** (German) example _____ **Garmisch** (German). I have my **Platz** (German), my place, and I, I, wherever I go, everything is clean, I settle into a place, I _____ with the mayor. See? And I stay there maybe eight days, maybe a couple of weeks, and I say: "I need to make some money, this and that." The state leaves me alone. And (when) I go, because everything is clean. And the Gypsies, the Roma there, they just leave everything lying around, they buy **vielleicht** (German) maybe 50 chickens and leave everything just lying there in a heap. And then you come, as a Gypsy. See? "No, no, no. You can't stay here. Here is a lot of, too much **Umweltverschmutzung** (German), pollution." That's what they say. And it's true. I'll give them that, that it's true. But I, I am, I can't complain. You know? I'm **normalerweise** (German) normally - - This region pays for me.

Q: Yes.

A: See? I get my benefits, and if I want something, I have to go to the **Regierung** (German), the government, and they give it to me, what I need. They give it to me. So I really can't complain.

End of Tape 2 of 2

Conclusion of interview