

Preface

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Antonin Daniel
June 22, 1997

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Interview with Antonin Daniel
June 22 1997

Question: Mr Daniel, please introduce yourself.

Answer: Yeah, yeah. Daniel

A man: But sit down

Q: You may sit down, but ...

A: OK, good.

Q: There. All right.

A: Yeah ... yeah

Q: Tell us something about your childhood, where you grew up, how many of you were there.

A man: Sorry, but you'll have to introduce yourself again, OK.

Q: Yes. Once more.

A: There were five us. My father worked as a blacksmith. And my grandfather. And I learned a bit of the trade, but I did not finish my apprenticeship. And when we returned they had shared out our houses, had stolen them.

Q: We'll get round to that.

A; Yeah

Q: Did you have a chance to go to school?

A: Yes, I did go to school.

Q: You went to school?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: And when you finished you learned a little of ...

A: I did not finish the apprenticeship.

Q: But a little ...

A: As an apprentice ...

Q: Yes.

A: Training ...'cos there was no longer time

Q: Yes.

A: They took us and ...

Q: And your father managed to keep you by working as a blacksmith.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah,yeah.

Q: Yes

A: Yeah.

Q: And you mentioned something about when the Germans came?

A: Our houses were like gone. So we like did not have them, yeah.

Q: You lived in a house of your own before?

A: Yes, yes. We had houses of our own.

Q: Yes. You built it yourselves?

A: Yes, yes, yes, yeah. We still have the land there. The garden like.

Q: When you went to school -- do you remember --did you have friends among the boys from your class?

A: Yeah, yes, yes, yes.

Q: Yes, did you make friends among the Roma children and with the other children?

A: Yeah, not that.

Q: No.

A: They came back, but they died. They have died.

Q: Well no, when you came back, by then ...

A: Well, there were more of us, but they ... have already died.

Q: In the meanwhile, yes.

A: They died.

O: Also -- so what happened when the Germans came? How was it when they came to fetch you? Did you get some kind of summons ...?

A: Well ...we got a kind of summons. But we were sent to a labor camps -- there was some kind of German official. And he was -- he was called --- that is all I remember. The whole village like called him Jindra -- him like -- well in short a policeman. And there was a Mayor like Becak.

Q: And where -- where were you sent to forced labor?

A: It was Hodoninek, beyond Brno. There were about four of us, but they have died. Well and I like came back. So I was the first ...

Q: Four Roma?

A: What did you say?

Q: Four ... four Roma?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I was the one in that Hodoninek. But

that was in the year 40. That was in the year 40 -- but there were not only Roma -- it was mixed. And we worked there on the road and in the quarry -- I worked there.

Q: How did you get there? Did you get there on your own, or did they take you there?

A: They took us. They sent us call-up papers and we had to go there. And that's where we were --- I did not know where -- where I was going. I then came there, you see -- and then I knew what and how, what ...

(some voices)

Q: What did you say, there were Roma and non-Roma, who were ...

A: There was a mixture.

Q: Yes, and who were those who were not Roma? Who did they call up?

A: There were all kinds of nationalities.

Q: Really.

A: Yeah.

Q: And what was the reason ...

A: There were about -- I don't know --- 500, I think.

Q: About 500?

A: 500; there were 500 of us there.

Q: Only men or also women?

A: No, no women. Only men. In 1940 all of us were only men.

Q: Yes.

A: There were older people, and were like young men.

Q: Where did you live there? Was it a camp?

A: That was a camp, camp. camp

Q: Was it fenced off with wire?

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes. Camp, camp, just by the road ...

Q: And were there huts there? Where did you live?

A: Huts ...

Q: Where there many of those huts?

A: Wooden huts. Yeah, wooden huts.

Q: Did they build them for you or were they already there?

A: Well, I -- when I arrived there, they were already built.

Q: And were there already some [people]...

A: There were

Q: There were.

A: Well, they were ... they released some, and ...

Q: They also released some, did they?

A: They also released. They stayed there perhaps -- I don't know -- six months, or five months. It depended. And some longer, according to how they behaved, well and ...

Q: And before one already -- you knew beforehand how long you were supposed to be there? Did they not tell you in advance ...

A: No, they did not say

Q: No

A: They did not say how long we'd be there

Q: Later then, when they ...

A: Maybe five months, six months, as I told you. Well, even one year. So there were some young boys with me -- they did not want to work well -- so they were stuck there and those who, as it were, worked well, they were released like earlier

Q: And could you give us a little description of the daily round in the Hodoninek camp ...

A: So.

Q: In the morning -- when did they wake you?

A: I think it was -- I don't remember that well anymore -- but I think ...

Q: Probably early.

A: At half past five, I think, sure,

Q: Yes.

A: Or five. Well, I don't know exactly any more. Well, certainly, but -- and we worked till about like six o'clock in the evening.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: Was there a roll call in the morning?

A: Of course a roll call. A roll call and numbering, counting, see, and then off to work.

Q: You went to work.

A: Yes.

Q: Did you get any breakfast?

A: We got very little for breakfast. Some dishwater coffee and ... that

wasn't worth much, it ... we did not even drink it. It hadn't seen sugar or anything else. So we did not drink much of that. Well, and then for dinner we got some kind of soup, a piece of bread and ...

Q: And what sort of work did they take you to do?

A: Well, as I told you on that road. That road is there to this day ... finished. If you go there you'll see a quarry, it is a little way beyond the road. It is -- like we worked on it there. That quarry was fairly large.

Q: So you worked sometimes on the road and sometimes ...

A: Yes, and ...

Q: ... in the quarry?

A: In the quarry, yeah

Q: Did you have any foremen there? After all work on the road is ...

A: No, no.

Q. No.

A: No. I think there was one foreman there who gave directions -- he ... guard, but he was not

Q: Was he a civilian or also ...

A: What?

Q: Was he a civilian or also one of you prisoners?

A: No, no, no, civilian -- a civilian.

Q: Sure.

A: Oh yes. Civilian. So he supervised so that -- so that the work got done. So that we are careful and so on like. Persuaded like. Well, and we pushed these trucks, we transported stones, that ... for that road. Well and then they blasted the stones in that quarry, see. We loaded those trucks and we wheeled them to that road.. It is still there ...

Q: Was it very hard work for you?

A: I should say so. Hard work. Yeah.

Q: All -- did all the boys manage? Were there not some weaker ones who did not manage the work?

A: Well, you bet there were. There were weaker ones and ---- Some worked as loggers -- they felled trees, see, then the road over there -- beyond that forest -- all the trees there ... they had to fell them, see. Sometimes one bunch, well and -- as I for example -- they put me in

that quarry. Yeah.

Q: And you say you worked until about six in the evening?

A: Yeah.

Q: So that was probably in the summer, wasn't it? When there was still light?

A: In the summer, summer.

Q: In the summer.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: And then you went back to the camp and only then did they give you some food?

A: There, they counted us again ...

Q: Yes.

A: ...well and then we got that supper. We were not allowed to sleep.

Q: You were not allowed to go to bed immediately, is that so?

A: Not to bed, we could not go to bed yet ... could not. Not until ten o'clock or so. Then there was -- that order. No sleeping.

Q: And what did you until then? Were you in your huts?

A: In the huts, yeah. We sat there ...

Q: And chatted.

A: We chatted.

Q: What were the huts like? How many people?

A: It was a wooden hut. Wooden, long. There could have been -- I don't know -- maybe there were ... three hundred ... or four hundred ... people in that one hut.

Q: Did you have ...

A: When I ... when I was there in '40 then there could have been three or four such huts. But when ... when my father and my wife were there -- now she has died -- and she was there too -- there were probably more of those huts, 'cos there were a little ... more, you see, and so -- I no longer know exactly how many, but it could have been two more huts, like.

Q: And what did you have in those huts? Only some bunks, or a table as well, or there was something there ...

A: No, there there there there ...

Q: ... to sit on ...

A: That, nothing of the sort.

Q: Nothing. So we had to sit on those bunks.

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Were they stacked three on top of each other?

A: Yes, yeah yeah yeah yeah. There were three high, yeah. Otherwise there was nothing there. Just ... a small washroom. That is -- that was not at all special -- that that -- so some washed and some did not wash, according to how ... how one could get there, see.

Q: And that was right in the hut, that washroom?

A: Well, that was next to the hut.

Q: Next.

A: By the hut. That was like behind the door, immediately, just a small room and that was the washroom. It was not a bathroom at all

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: There were sort of troughs and there were some taps there?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Two taps and that's how we washed.

Q: Is that so..

A: Yeah.

Q: And the lavatory was something similar?

A: The same goes for the lavatories .

Q: Also something...

A: Yeah, yeah, lavatories ...

Q: And the food, you used to stand in some line leading to the kitchen or did they bring it to your huts?

A: No, no, no, we used to go to the kitchen. We went to the kitchen. We had military-type mess tins and so we used to stand in line and ... we used to go for our food.

Q: Did the prisoners do the cooking?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you think they cheated you a little, or ...

A: Well, you know, I did not have ...

Q: Were you hungry?

A: Yeah, you don't say! All the time! I was young

Q: And did you have the chance -- could someone bring you something or send or ...

A: They could. They could have like sent a parcel from home. But there was no way for someone to come to see us ... no way.

◀: No way.

A: There were no visits ... were there

Q: No

A: Not that

Q: Yes.

A: But it was difficult -- when my father was there and only Roma, then it was possible to have visitors.

Q: And later. When it also became a camp for women?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah that was in the year 41, 42. My father was there maybe in 42, and my wife in 42. And they were the ones already transported with us ... to that concentration camp. So that we went there as it were earlier-- than those to Hodoninek. They arrived after us, about five or four months later

Q: Yes.

A: 'Cos we were there like ... earlier.

Q: Yes. And who -- when you were there -- when it was that labor camp -- who guarded you?

A: Prison wardens ... normally ...

Q: Were they guards? Did they have uniforms? Czech guards?

A: Yes, of course, yes, yes, yes, to be sure. They were, they were ...

Q: And did they have ...

A: ... it was guarded.

Q: Yes. Were there many of them?

A: Well ... I can't tell you how many of them there were. Cos I didn't count them.

Q: Yeah.

A: So that -- so you know there must have been -- must ... it had to be staffed.

Q: Yes. And did you have somebody in every hut, say from among the prisoners -- or actually they were not prisoners -- from those workers, who would act as a kind of liaison officer with them?

A: Well, like no one did that.

Q: No.

A: Nobody was an officer.

Q: No

A: When I was there in '40 there was no one.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: Simply at the roll call in the morning when they counted you.

A: Yeah, there, there was somebody.

Q: So they gave you orders.

A: Yes, yes, yes. They counted us and then ... to work, from work and so on, yeah. But that we should have someone [telling] on us ...

Q: No

A: ... a supervisor or something, not that.

Q: Did you ever fall ill there, were you ...

A: Not me.

Q: No

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: And when it happened to somebody, ...

A: Well, that was worse. They either took him to hospital -- or if he had an accident, then they normally took him to hospital. To Brno.

Q. Did you have a sickbay there or did they not have anything of the kind.

A; No, there was no sickbay there

Q: No.

A: When someone had an accident -- then there was like somebody -- and he would do something about it, -- some bandage or something like that in short. But there was not much ... not much

Q: Yes.

A: They took them immediately.

Q: How long were you there?

A: I was there quite a long time. About seven months, I think ... or something like that. Well ... Then they released me. And hardly had I come home and -- it did not take a whole year and away.

Q: About in a year, not even a whole year.

A: Not even, and off we went to that ...

Q: To Auschwitz.

A: To Auschwitz. Yeah.

Q: And did you know in advance, that there will be, that you ... will still be ordered to go?

A: No.

Q: Was it suddenly -- it came [suddenly]?

A: Yeah, suddenly. We did not know at all. They came and said that we were like going to a state farm. Like to work.

Q: To a state?

A: Yes.

Q: There was no summons as you received to Hodoninek?

A: No, there was no summons at all, they just said that we're going to work on a state farm. So we like believed them. Otherwise we would have run away (laughter). And there was a kind of boss, that's what they called him. A kind of elderly chap from the police, but ...

Q: Did they come for you to your home -- excuse me -- did they come to your apartment, to your home.

A: Yeah. They came there, yeah. And we ourselves reported.

Q: Policemen?

A; Yeah, we ourselves reported.

Q: You yourselves reported.

A: There a bus was waiting and they took us in that bus to the Old Town to the station. And there trucks were ready for us and there was a whole train of trucks that took us to [that place].

Q: Auschwitz.

A: Auschwitz, yeah. So we did not know where we were going.

Q: And there were only Roma or were there already others as well

A: No, Roma.

Q: Only.

A: Roma.

Q: And which of your family did they take that time?

A: All of them completely.

Q: All of them?!

A: All of them.

Q: The others -- all the brothers?

A: Everyone, all -- also a little child, everyone.

Q: Was your mother still ...

A: Not mother. Mother died like at home -- but father -- they took the lot. In short the whole family. Not a single one stayed at home, at all. They shut the houses and ... finito.

Q: So that you answered the summons to come to that bus and they took you to the Old Town and there they immediately loaded you, or were you -- did you wait for anyone?

A: No, there is -- there is a gym [belonging to the Sokol [Falcon] movement] and that gym is still there --well and there were --they had us sleep there like, over night, had our hair cut, yeah, well and ... in the morning ... we like set out. They woke us, and took us off to that -- train station.

Q: Yes. Were you allowed to take any luggage with you?

A: Well, yeah, we were. A small parcel or something. Well, whatever someone had. Who had something, took it, whoever had nothing, had nothing.

Q: Did you have any food or clothes with you?

A: Well, so we had, I told you, whoever had something took it along and who did not have, well ...

Q: Did you go just like that.

A: (Laughter) That's how it was -- never mind.

Q: Yes. So they took you, they took you to that station and loaded you?

A: Into trucks, into trucks.

Q: Were they goods trucks, or passenger coaches?

A: Goods trucks, goods trucks

Q: Goods trucks.

A: Goods trucks. Goods trucks and ... in them they took us directly to that ...

Q: About how many of you men were there -- or number of people in that truck?

A: Well, there were lots of us.

Q: Were there men and women.

A: Yes.

Q: And children?

A: There were seventy or eighty of us there, I no longer --. In short it was full, we couldn't even move, it was so ...

Q: Could you sit down?

A: We couldn't.

Q: No.

A: No. Stand.

Q: Do you remember how long you traveled?

A: Well--three hours I no longer remember. Certainly three hours, oh yeah.

Q: Did you have a little water there?

A: They had some with them. Whoever had a bottle with them with drink, then -- but they did not give us anything.

Q: Was there a bucket where you could go ...

A: No no no no no no no no. There was nothing, no no, there was nothing of the sort there.

A: No no no no.

Q: Nothing.

A: No there was nothing, I was, there was absolutely nothing.

Q: And you still thought that you were going to those farms:

A: That's right. Otherwise we would have run away, because that boss, as I, yeah I already told you, so he knew me very well, that boss, he was like very good, he was an elderly man. So he was the one who called me Mr 1: "Boss, please I would ..." Now cigarettes were then sold for tobacco coupons, so I said: "I would like to go to the tobacconist." To go --- for these cigarettes -- that was that ration - - rationing -- for cigar -- cigarettes. So, so like yeah, so like go, here with this brother, run along. So I went off for those cigarettes -- I paid for mine. And he winked at us and waved his hand for us to be off, for us to like run away. Only he had a wife, so we went back.

Q: That was the boss?

A: Now that was the mistake. And he touched his forehead because we returned.

Q: That was some sort of a chief policeman?

A: Yeah, no boss, a commander!

Q: The commander in charge of the train, or ?

A: Commander of -- Guard. As in a prison. Guard. Not that. So he actually -- as I told you -- was a very big, very good chap. And he was the one that told us to go for those cigarettes, to run away. For us

like not to come back. 'Cos we were young, that -- he knew us.

Q: So that he knew ...

A: He knew, you know he did, yeah. He knew. He knew, only we did not know.

Q: Yeah.

A: (Laughter). Well. That we are going to the farm ... to work. So we thought -- so we are going to work, so it will still be all right, we will all be together, well and ... But meanwhile it did not work out that way, (Laughter). That was the trouble.

Q: Yes

A: Otherwise we would have run away. Well, there were young boys there --what -- that how -- they would not stand it. If they began to even shoot .. that would not have helped. We would have escaped, oh yeah.

Q: So you arrived in Auschwitz. Was that during the day, or at night?

A: Yeah, that was in the evening -- I think so -- yeah in the evening. I think it was, about at four or five o'clock in the evening. They opened ... the trucks and out ... whoever fell, fell, they beat us and whoever wasn't, well ... And then we saw the gate of the concentration camp, see. Well, only already ... already it was too late. It was too late.

Q: That was in the year '43 ?

A: In the year I was ...

Q: You were 40.

A: Two, two. When they took me off. They like took me -- I tell you -- that mayor and that, that ...security SNB [State National Security was the Czech Communist police force. He probably means SS]. So they shoved about three of us there like earlier. And then they like arrived ...

Q: Wait a moment, I did not understand you now. Three of you arrived earlier, or how was it ...?

A: Not earlier, not earlier. We like -- how should I say -- they took us to that concentration camp -- but they -- I was there -- how many I -- can't tell you exactly now -- three weeks or a month or six weeks. And they picked three of us and they ...

Q: I see, they sent three of you elsewhere.

A: Sent us elsewhere, yes.

Q: So let us stay for the present where you were at that moment.

A: Yes, that's how it was, so there.

Q: Describe your arrival a little. How you said, that you had to get out of those trucks quickly, quickly?

A: Yeah.

Q: Could you take your things with you?

A: We could take, yeah. And whoever did not manage, then ... they immediately began to beat. They immediately began to beat us.

Q: And did they lead you somewhere on foot?

A: On foot, on foot. From that train, out and then along a road to that concentration camp. There I saw that main gate, yeah but -- so that from that the lads began to fall down more -- they couldn't get down from the trucks, so they finished them off there and ... and I no longer know what was after that . I no longer ... know.

Q: Did you pass through any shower or -- you said you had already had your haircut.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeahyeahyeahyeah. We already had our hair cut.

Q: And now when you came, so you went into some kind of bath?

A: No way.

Q: No.

A: No way, nono.

Q: You all ...

A: To those -- to those -- they were -- they weren't finished huts and we only began to build and ... and do.

Q: You built that ...

A: So there were no lavatories, water -- well there was nothing.

Q: You ... that Roma camp ...

A: Yeahyeahyeah.

Q: ...you built it?!

A: It was called Rajsko. Yes, yes

Q: Rajsko?

A: Rajsko. And immediately next door -- I was also there -- wait -- what was it called ... Bergenu. They called it ...

Q: Birkenau?

A: Birkenau, yeahyeahyeah. Yeah, that was the one we built ...the huts ...yeah.... So that there was nothing at all, at all.

Q: There were only bare ...

A: A clear meadow, otherwise nothing at all. There was a sort of table, it had kind of planks from boards and we slept on them. And there weren't even mattresses or anything, nothing at all, not even blankets. They gave us nothing, nothing at all.

Q: And what did you build with? Was it only from timber?

A: From timber, from timber, yeah. Well, we built it. Well an then more came, of course -- well later.

Q: So that now there were only -- men came in that first transport?

A: Women as well.

Q: Women as well. And did they build too?

A: No, not women.

Q: No.

A: Only us guys.

Q: Only you guys.

A: They chose -- they chose who they wanted -- those women, the old ones -- those like not. Not at all.

Q: And how many of those huts did you build?

A: Well lots, lots. I think about -- I don't know -- five, six or 15 or 20 .. I no longer know. Lots ..Well, 'cos one -- one district came ... rather. And then perhaps another district -- Brod or Zlin or _____went three weeks later.

Q: Yes.

A; First we like at the same time.

Q: And where, during the time you were building the camp -- where did you live?

A: Well, in that hut.

Q: In that hut which you were building ...

A: In that hut, yes, yes. We had those kind of plank beds. boards. They were ready in no time. Well and we slept on them. I was not long -- as I told you -- I wasn't there for long. I was there ... three weeks or a month.

Q: That doesn't matter -- this here. The beginning there -- what was there ...

A: At the beginning there was ...

Q: Yes. And what were conditions like at the beginning?

A: Good gracious. Not even water, well nothing, nothing at all, nothing, nothing at all.

Q: No.

A: Nothing. Nothing at all.

Q: And were you guarded by some ...

A: Yeah, well you know, of course. It was already -- after all it was a concentration camp! Already before ----it was guarded. Did they _____ wires, everything. It, it was no longer possible. We tried to escape, but it was too late.

Q: Too late.

A: Unfortunately.

Q: But you were still allowed to go out because you were building, so you ...

A: That was inside, inside!

Q: Inside in the camp?

A: It was inside. Yes, yes, yes. So there we were like able to move around, oh yeah. But otherwise run out, that ... that was no longer possible.

Q: And you were still building and already ... already there ... already other people arrived.

A: Yes, yes, yes. We built it for them. You're right, so. And they -- And they ... it was a little like ... built, wasn't it. The planks for sleeping ... well then ... And they were just arriving, weren't they.

Q: Yes, and that ...

A: Transports!

Q: Transports?

A: Transports. Yeah, yeah, yeah, transports.

Q: And did you live together, women and men in a single hut?

A: Well, yeah -- in the beginning, yeah. In the beginning yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, in the beginning, yeah. It took some time before -- I don't know, about a month or six ... weeks, or about that.

Q: That work ...

A: That officer ... then moved us, then moved us -- when we had done the rough construction -- I then worked as a tiler -- tiler. And so I went on working there. Because I had it good there -- well -- they

gave me a little more soup than to the others. And then there came a sort of order -- that SS gave an order for them to send the young ones to Radin (ph). And they selected -- and then they took us to those barracks.

Q: Yes. to that main camp ...

A: Right, yeahyeah.

Q: Already in that camp.

A: They were Polish barracks. And they dumped us there.

Q: How many did they select?

A: Well, there were lots of us there .. about 200 or 300, I don't know. It was something like that.

Q: Only men?

A: Only men, only young ones.

Q: Young men.

A: Young, young. ... not old ones. They did not take the old.

Q: So after about three weeks you left that Roma camp ...

A: I got into those -- as you say -- into those barracks after three weeks.

Q: And your brother also?

A: He was in that -- in that Bergenau also -- he was. Well, and he then followed me -- they chose us -- him, he had a wife ...

Q: Yes.

A: He had a wife. Well, and he did not want to go because of her.

Well, so he like ...

Q: He stayed on there ...

A: Yeah. Then he also followed me. Later, like.

Q: Yes. Where did you live there, in -- later when you _____

A: Well there were, there were barracks

Q: Yes.

A: There were barracks.

Q: And there the rooms were smaller?

A: No. There were large rooms, large. There, I think there were -- I didn't count them exactly -- 400, 500.

Q: And you were again only Roma or was it mixed by then?

A: Well, we were there like Roma, and there in the other barracks -- I was there in number five and opposite was number seven -- so there

it was mixed. And in ours -- like in that number five, where I was -- there we were all Roma. There were few like -- then -- mainly.

Q: But then there were already some capos and those in charge of blocks ____.

A: Well, that yeah, that yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: And they selected those from the people in that barrack?

A: Yeah.

Q: From among the prisoners.

A: Yeah. I no longer knew about that. Probably yeah. I no longer knew that.

Q: Do you not remember how they treated you. If they were ...

A: Badly.

Q: Badly, all of them.

A: Yeah, yeah. By then -- no. Badly. Did they even beat you, kill and so ...

Q: For example what did they beat you for?

A: What?

Q: For what? What?

A: (sighs) If you did not speak German, or something, or called a number -- I learned a bit of German -- but now I have ____ forgotten a little -- so for example at that moment he forgot and then they went for you. Well, but then it was too late. _____.

Q: Did you catch it sometimes -- were you beaten sometimes?

A: (sigh) Indeed, ____ they beat us.

Q: The Czechs beat you, too?

A: Yeah.

Q: Can you remember how -- on what occasions it was?

A: They beat us -- they lined us up. or for example I used to know one -- he smoked -- so he hit me, when we did not want to own up -- for example. Or we refused to betray somebody.

Well then he had us all lined up ... and he then beat all of us, yeah.

Q: Did they lie you down somewhere or ...

A: Well, so _____. So they hit us with whips instantly ... they instantly thrashed us.

Q: I forgot to ask you where they tattooed you?

A: Immediately when we arrived there.

Q: Immediately when you arrived?

A: Immediately.

Q: Show the gentleman your number.

A: _____ 1254.

A man: They also ... show me ...

A: They ... me. they ... me

A man: Wait a moment, show me again.

A: Yeah. And he had 53, this one and he went from _____. And my brother went to _____. We were ... third in the line. Do you have it, yeah?

Q: And the two other brothers? They also went with you.

A: Well, also, also. We all went into that line.

Q: And here, how did you ...

A: Well, they were with me too. They ...us -- all three of us _____. Fuersten (ph) selected us.

Q: So apart from that brother, who was here, you all three were in that _____. And you lived in one room?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. Only one was with me. He has now died. He was with me until the end ... like ... in that concentration camp _____. We two stuck together and so ...

Q: Could you ...

A: And the others were for example in those other huts.

Q: Were you able to help each other a little?

A: That wasn't possible.

Q: No.

A: That was impossible. No way.

Q: For instance help him at work ...

A: Not that, no, no, no, no, no.

Q: No.

A: Each had to do his own work and ...If not -- then --you know what they did to them.

Q: There you used to go ...

A: They threw him into the furnace and that was it. Well, it was impossible, it was impossible.

Q: There you went to work, when you were ...

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: There?

A: Yeah.

Q: What did you do?

A: I worked at the train station there -- it was called Bauf. They called it. There we took trucks -- that is to say cement -- huts and ...

Q: Did you load or unload?.

A: ... bricks. We unloaded. And there -- I was there for about -- I don't know -- a year or there about. Then I got myself working as a tiler. That capo chose me, because I knew how to work. There the water poured directly on their heads -- and so we patched it, see. So there. And so I got to and ... Yeah, but again I was not there for all that long, 'cos after a little while they transported us further away.

Q: Yeah. Let's talk about this a little while longer, in Auschwitz. Did you see anything -- did you have any further connections with the Roma camp?

A: Where?

Q: When you were in Auschwitz, in that State camp ("Staatlager") (ph) ...

A: Yeah.

Q: ... so you still had some connection with that ... original Roma camp where you were?

A: No.

Q: You did not know at all what was happening?

A: No.

Q: Not even later when they liquidated that camp, then you did not get to know?

A: Nonononono. They transported us off to Germany to another concentration camp.

Q: But you say you were there for about a year, so ...

A: Yeahyeahyeahyeahyeah.They transported us off. And that was called Edrich (ph).

Q: Wait a moment.

A: Yeah ... to another concentration camp.

A: Yes, yes.

A: Actually they selected us.

Q: But you were otherwise -- as long as you were in that ... in that other camp, in that -- in Auschwitz, then you were in the same hut all the time?

A: I was in the same hut there all the time.

Q: Were there slightly better conditions in that camp than before?

A: No, no.

Q: No. Neither food, nor accommodation ...

A: No, no, no food not at all.

Q: ... treatment ...

A: No, nonononono.

Q: No.

A: No. In Auschwitz there was -- like -- you had a little certainty, and that way it was still the best.

Q: There was more certainty?

A: Better, better. We could choose shirts, or in short change ... the clogs or trousers, yeah. According to how it ...

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Q: And when you arrived in Auschwitz -- when you arrived for the first time -- did you get any clothes or were you in your own clothes?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: We got ... clothes. Those striped ones ... yeah. Not that.

Q: And then when you arrived in that permanent camp ("stamlager") (ph), did you get new clothes?

A: Yeah. There we got different ones again. There they were like civilian clothes, only they had those colors. Well ...

Q: And you say they sometimes changed some ...

A: Well, yeah, yeah, yeah. A shirt, see.

Q: Yeah.

A: Underwear, for instance.

Q: So it was a bit better after all?

A: After all it was -- yes, just so, just.

Q: Yes.

A: But there where we were at the end -- last, there it was worse.

Q: And in what -- in what state were you. Did you still hold your own?

A: Yeah. I held out all the time.

Q: Yes.

A: But already ... _____ if it lasted a fortnight, then that would be the end. We were already finishing, 'cos there was no longer -- they, they did not give us ... neither work, nor food, nothing. Well, then we found a kind of -- beet, the red beetroots, the short ones and that we ate.

Q: Yeah. Well, now we have got to -- we are still -- we have got further. When they probably -- when they sent you further on, to that next camp?

A: Yeah, that was in the year ... 44

Q: And how did they select you? Who did they take to the next transport?

A: They already -- for the time being they picked the young, -- the ones that were stronger.

Q: And was -- did you have to parade before an SS, or ...?

A: No.

Q: No. Just like that ...

A: They just chose us and -- and we also did not know where we are going ...Until we arrived at the spot, then we knew.

Q: Was you brother also with you?

A: Yeah, he was there, he was there.

Q: So you were all together ...

A: Yeahyeahyeahyeah, he was there also.

Q: ...boys.

A: Yes.

End of tape 1 of 3

Tape 2 of 3

Q: Now Mr Daniel let us go back for a while to Auschwitz. I would like to ask you, did you know that in Birkenau thousands were going to the gas chambers?

A: Yes.

Q: You saw ...

A: Yes.

Q: ... or did somebody tell you -- or according to what?

A: No, we saw, we saw.

Q: How did you see it?

A: I was sick with my leg, as I told you the -- that was that consultant, doctor (a man now interrupts his speech but I can't identify what he's saying), but ...

A man: You can go on.

Q: Yeah. So I asked you whether you knew about the gas chambers in Birkenau.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: How did you know? Tell us about it.

A: Well, I was like sick, then. I had a kind of spot on my ankle, so I went to see that doctor. He let me like stay a week in the sickbay. Well and an SS came, well and that "brokerfyr" (ph) stood us in a row and now he selected. According to like, how, what state of health or how disabled. And as far as they saw that we were like -- it was not serious, they then chose us and ... they put us in that bathroom -- there was a bathroom -- and ... and when the Jews like came, see, well they -- we had to undress them ...

Q: You helped to undress them?

A: Undress. And gold -- earrings from women, rings, everything -- there were wooden boxes and we had to throw it into them. Everything. Then clothes -- we had to throw everything -- we had to like put it ... there were such tables there. Yes, we had to sort it. Well and ... they also were afraid already -- young people, women also. So they told us where they were going, what they are going to do and we like had orders, that we were not allowed to tell them anything. In that case they would shoot us. Well, so --so, so we did not tell. I said, look you'll be in the same way as we. You are going to work here. You'll get the same kind of clothes as we, you'll go to the blocks and you'll go on like us. That was the only thing I could say.

Q: But you knew that this was a gas chamber?

A: Yeah, I knew -- yes, I knew. 'cos we dragged -- the corpses -- there. That lasted at least 15 minutes -- when they sent them there,

into that gas chamber, they turned on the gas, well and in 15 minutes it was over. But some of them were still alive, they still breathed.

Well, so they finished him off there and -- well and then ...

Q: And you then pulled those people out of the chambers again ?

A: Yeah, they put us there, so. They gave us kind of belts -- we had to tie them to a leg -- and pull -- that was -- I no longer know exactly how far -- 40 or 50 meters -- to that cremation. Only Jews were selected, two -- well more, more, on top there were also -- well, they were very strong lads, see, young. So they had tongs -- that was the way - 'cos that's the way we pulled. They gave - they caught them like this, and by the nose. And there was a belt. A normal belt, which moved -- into the furnace. They threw them onto the belt and then they moved on the belt ... on top. And there was one --stood there again --he had a hook and he just caught the bodies, pushed and then I no longer, no longer, no longer know.

Q: And their golden objects -- you already (took) from them in that -- while undressing ...

A: Yes already there. Yes, yes. We had to collect that first thing.

A: And tell us how -- what did it mean to you, when you had to do this terrible work. Why, there were naked -- there were women.

A: That was nothing to us, 'cos we were already used to that.

Q: You had -- you had done it before several times?

A: Well then ... we saw it like that -- it was nothing. And only legs fell -- that, that was nothing -- no way, it did not move us at all ... Even families perished, that, that was nothing.

Q: And weren't you -- weren't you one of those that they called "Zondokomando" (ph) ?

A: No. There was no commando. Nothing.

Q: No. only -- and you say you did it before -- this ...

A: They -- they caught us -- say at work -- they caught us, the capos _____ they were like, as you say commandos. You're right. They shoved us there, they wrote down your number and ... and that was it. And the next day -- or so -- we had to go there. I went to that second commando again.

Q: You were there only once?

A: Twice ...

Q: Twice.

A: ... I was there twice. Well, and they gave -- that's why I went there, because I heard that they give you more to eat. They gave, they gave more. They gave more soup. Instead of a liter there they gave two liters, see. Well, and also a piece more bread.

Q: I would still like to know -- when you dragged those people from that chamber -- what did they look like?

A: Like ... like -- like corpses, see. You get -- gaping eyes, so -- each -- we did not look at them.

Q: Were they bloodstained?

A: No way, no there was no blood, no.

Q: No.

A: Not that, no blood. There was none. Well, like a corpse, in short. We tied -- we still selected -- I mostly went for the women, who were light. And when they were fat, so then -- I could not manage to drag them. Well and then we got a beating.

Q: What did you get?

A: A beating.

Q: Beating.

A: _____ he was appointed for us -- that's what they called him -- he was also a prisoner, but he was appointed like ...

Q: Capo?

A: ... yeah, something like a capo, yeah. "Forarbeiter" (ph) they called it.

Q: Forarbeiter.

A: Yeah. He beat us. Schnell, schnell, schnell, schnell, (laughs) he said it in German. We couldn't pull when it was heavy, so in the beginning we picked the ... the weakest. and left the heavy ones until the end. But it was no good. We had to carry them as well. All.

Q: Do you remember anything else about it? About how many people there were in that chamber?

A: So there could have been there -- depending when, depending when -- 200, 300. According to how --it was not always the same. It was not the same.

Q: And they were from the Jewish transports?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: Only?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And there were women and children together?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: And men?

A: Men as well, oh yes.

Q: Together in one -- they were all in the chamber ...

A: Whole families, well yes, yes.

Q: Whole families?

A: Yes, yes. Yeahyeah. They did not put Roma there. They -- when they died -- then yeah. But just like that -- that they would throw him into the furnace -- not that. "Cos they worked well, didn't they. Well then -- that law like was not for that.

Q: So you say you did that work in the chamber only once and then ...

A: Twice ...

Q: Twice, excuse me.

A: Twice.

Q: And then you did other ... that was the ...

A: Yeahyeahyeah, then I no longer went

Q: But ...

A: Then I did not go anymore.

Q: Then you did not go anymore.

A: I did not go anymore. I went to the other commando. That capo got hold of me ... -- he knew I could do tiler jobs, so he pushed me into it and ... and I worked as a welder.

Q: And those ...

A: And the time passed more quickly.

Q: And the people who did this work at the furnaces and the crematory -- they lived somewhere else?

A: Yeah, that I can't tell you now -- I no longer, no longer, I don't know that. I just know -- those guys, the two or three -- they were also of Jewish nationality -- strong -- they were sturdy guys. There could not be weak ones there. They would -- they would no be able to carry. They were -- they got more to eat. So there could have been there at most three, four months. And fi .. finished. Finished.

Q: How did they finish?

A: Well .. they killed them, or sent them into the gas chambers -- they threw them into the furnace. And again others must ... they again put others there. So that -- I know of one time. But then I learned that after every four months they shifted the people. Well. So this is the truth.

Q: But you were not in that commando. You only -- helped them a few times. Or how was it -- I did not understand that.

A: They took us ...

Q: I know ... they took you --

A: ... he was in charge -- do you understand -- of say 50 people.

Q: Yes.

A: Of that cremation. So he -- whoever he caught, he picked -- that capo -- so he had first claim. And he wrote down your number and then it was impossible to escape.

Q: And meanwhile you still lived in your block?

A: Forever, and ever, and ever, and ever. And in the morning there was the roll call and immediately I ... I had to stand in his commando.

Q: Yes.

A: Well, that's how it was. He could not -- or he found, found, because he had the numbers written down, see, so he ...

Q: Were you glad when they then put you to work as a tiler?

A: I wasn't there for like long either. But I was there for about six months. _____ it was better. But again from that -- as I told you -- we were _____ we worked on those underground tunnels.

Q: No, we've not got to that yet.

A: There it was worse again.

Q: And still -- I would like to go back to that gas chamber. Those people -- you d-i-d say that they did not know exactly where they were going, but for all that I'd like to ask you -- how did they behave. Did they weep or cry out?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Were there also ...

A: They said to me: "Where are we going?", I said: "Nowhere. You are going to have a bath."

Q: Were there also Germans with you? Or only you prisoners -- in that chamber?

A: Well. Prisoners.

Q: There were no Germans? In uniforms?

A: No, I didn't see -- that is to say only the capos and those sorts.

Q: Yes.

A: Well, they were there. They kind of supervised us. How we were doing it and so on.

Q: I see. So now we could perhaps go on to -- after that, to the transport.

A: Yeah. So they put us into -- I told you that. They like selected for "Buchevald" (ph). Well it was best there.

Q: To Buchenwald.

A: Yeah. Yeah, that's how it was -- it was best there. That concentration camp.

Q: It was the best.

A: That president was there -- wait, who was ...

Q: Zapotocky was there.

A: Yes.

Q: I would also like to ask you ...

A: Yes.

Q: ... were you afraid ... that something could happen to you there. Were you afraid of death while you were in Auschwitz?

A: Yeah ... yeah.

Q: Did you think that you might also go into that chamber?

A: Yes. When we were sick or something like that, then ... off you go. They would have also thrown us into that gas chamber or taken us directly to that furnace.

Q: So when they chose you for that transport ...

A: We were not ill.

Q: You weren't -- certainly, that was a condition.

A: We were strong, we were strong. That is why like ...they put us into (that transport).

Q: We're you glad that they chose you for that transport?

A: Yes, yes. You bet we were. They threw us into that Buchvald and there it was better. It was better there. There we like -- well, I was not there for long, I was only there -- as I told you -- over a week. My brother was there about six months.

Q: That transport to Buchenwald -- was that a mixed transport? Or again most of you were ...

A: Here it was already -- yeah -- mixed.

Q: It was already mixed.

A: Mixed. We went there and there it was better. Only they did not let me stay there. They chose the stronger ones and the younger ones and they went to that -- "valley" (ph) and ...

Q: Did you at least recover a little there -- since you were there at least one week or ...

A: A week! That -- what's that! That was nothing. My brother, yeah. He looked very poorly, but he put on weight, got well and then they shoved -- then they -- put him there ...

Q: Also to that "valley" (ph).

A: Yes, yes, yes. Whereas we -- not us.

Q: Did they allocate you to the blocks among the other prisoners when you arrived? Or were you in that ...

A: _____ they shoved us into one block. They shoved us into one block.

Q: Yeah. So that you were still in quarantine probably.

A: Yeahyeahyeahyeahyeah. Quarantine, yes.

Q: You did not go to work there?

A: Well, I was there one week so that I didn't go to work. But he said that he went into that stone quarry or whatever there was there, too. Well and ... they carried stones on their shoulders and so on. They did that for ever and ever, that is .. I was there ...

Q: Did you know that in Buchenwald there was some sort of a self-administration?

A: Well, that concentration camp was -- was supposed to be -- -- like - - for Czechs. Exactly, that was there -- yeah, and that president.

Q: What? Zapotocky?

A: And he rode -- like -- a horse, a horse.

Q: What did he ride?

A: A horse.

Q: A horse?

A: On one of those -- those mine -- he was like the highest (ranking) in the whole concentration camp. The prisoners had to obey him.

“Lagester” (ph) -- they called him.

Q: Lages?

A: “Lagester. lagester”. (ph)

Q: Lages ... lage ... _____

A: He was like the highest -- the highest ...

Q: The top in that self-administration.

A: Yes yes yes. In charge of the prisoners. He was like the highest, see, and when he gave an order, well then -- or he acted as “dolmecher” (ph) [interpreter] -- when Poles were there for all I know, yeah. I did not see -- except Poles, Germans and from Czechoslovakia and Slovakia see. No Hungarians, not they. They weren't there.

Q: Well, then they selected you ... again for the next transport to Dora (ph). Did you go by train again?

A: We went by train.

Q: Was it far?

A: Pardon?

Q: Was it far to Buchenwald?

A: Well ... well it was fairly far. I think about 60, 70 or 80 kilometers.

Q: Did you go again by freight train?

A: Freight, we went by freight train, yeah. By freight.

Q: And there you able to have a wash or did you get some ...

A: We could have a wash. Yeah, there we could. There we had a wash, right. _____ It was not good there. It was bad there.

Q: In that Dora? Describe it, please. Without my questions.

A: It was bad there. There we had to work only at machines, see. Drilling, hammering, steel, see. Then we had to ... those stones ...

Q: Transport.

A: ... transport, yes and ...such work. Then they built from that -- well, so that they had -- I didn't see it, that they worked there, that they built a hospital -- like -- like a subway -- I saw that. And they put there Bau 1 and Bau 2. [F 1 and F 2] I know that also. I was there. Once I was there ... dragged a sick person, he had an accident, so I like saw it there.

Q: When you arrived, was there already a camp there?

A: Where?

Q: In that Dora.

A: Yeah, yeah, it was already there.

Q: Yes.

A: That already -- that must have been there a longer time already. That must have been there. 'Cos judging by that tunnel -- it was already equipped.

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Q: And what was the worst? The work or ... or the food?

A: Work and food. They gave nothing. They gave us nothing to eat. They gave you three or four small potatoes. Some kind of beet soup. They did not give us anything to eat, well. That's true.

Q: And did you do terribly hard work?

A: Hard work. hard work. Yeah. That was true.

Q: And you lived -- you traveled somewhere to work or was it on the spot?

A: Well, we traveled by train to work.

Q: You traveled to work?

A: Yeah, by train. Those trucks -- they transported us ... there. And Germans guarded us. And when we came to that tunnel, then we went inside and again -- there was no escaping from there. That was the end. And the guards were outside, those that guarded us -- like this --we couldn't do anything, nothing.

Q: Nobody there ...

A: We could not escape, we couldn't do anything. Only work.

Q: Nobody there tried to escape ...

A: No-o!

Q: ... don't you know of such a case?

A: No, no, no. And if, they caught them at once, and hung them on the gallows.

Q: That happened?

A; It happened, yeah.

Q: During the time you were there?

A: Yeah, yeah. It happened. One escaped ...

Q: In other words you lived ...

A: ... yes, yes ...

Q: ... sorry.

A: One escaped, they brought him back, hung him and we had to crawl under the feet of that man hanging.

Q: Who had to do that to him? You prisoners?

A: Prisoners, yeah!

Q: And you yourself had to?

A: He was like a warning. They made him -- gave us a warning and we had to crawl under his ... under his feet. Well, that was ... so that we'd be afraid, see.

Q: Yeah, crawl under his feet.

A: Yeah, as a warning --- like warning, yeah.

Q: And this took place in the camp? You were -- he ran away while at work and in ... the camp they ...

A: They didn't tell us that, I don't know, I don't know.

Q: You don't know.

A: Probably, certainly from work. Otherwise it wouldn't be possible. From work and they caught him, dragged him back.

Q: To the camp.

A: Yeah. That happened like that ... typically. Somebody always ... hid, tried to escape, well and it didn't work out, so that they dragged him back, either shot him or hung him on the gallows. There was a 12 meter-long gallows. They could hang 12 people at one go. That gallows -- I saw it -- the gallows is not there and that "klacetr" (ph). I saw it. Well, and that crematory is there too -- in Poland. It's a small one. While, in _____ it is huge, but it was here -- and so -- and it is written there that they executed 70,000. So if you were there, well then you must have seen it.

Q: At that Dora -- or in that camp -- did many people die?

A: Yeah. They died also, like normally in the concentration camp, they died. Only there were no longer transports. No longer.

Q: No further transports arrived?

A: No-o no no no no ...

Q: You were the last to come there.

A: Yes yes yes ... There were no more transports there.

Q: Did you know a little about the situation outside the camp?

A: How?

Q: Were you able to speak with any civilian?

A: Yeah. Yeah, they said that the war was going to end.

Q: They said that?

A: They said that. And we kept waiting and still nothing. One said: "Don't worry! The end'll be in a month." No way. Now, the rumor spread throughout the camp and we waited a month. Nothing. They were so overjoyed that -- and they ...

Q: Could you hear the bombing?

A: Those Negroes bombed in Buchevald. In the airplane.

Q: Americans.

A: And that ... and that exploded on the ground and how -- everything flew, only we were not standing there. We were away, well and there ... and there they like bombed. It seemed to me that they shot them down ... then the Germans and they dragged them there -- I don't know what they did with them. They hung them, shot them for sure.

Q: The pilots or the ...

A: That was in Buchevald.

Q: In Buchenwald? Was it?

A: That was in Buchevald. Once it happened, once. Otherwise ...

Q: And also in Dora it continued in the same way?

A: Yeah. On and on. On and on in the underground ...

Q: You -- you were still building it ... those underground workshops?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Or did they make those holes, did they excavate.

A: Yeah, we -- we did a lot there --- there were -- I don't know ... 300 people. We went in three ...

Q: In three shifts?

A: ... morning, afternoon, night. Yeah, right.

Q: So that you probably worked eight hours.

A: Yeah, eight hours, right. There only eight, yeah. But the morning -- I tell you -- morning, afternoon eve -- at night.

Q: Were there still punishments there?

A: Well, there were punishments everywhere. But the prisoners themselves -- did that. They punished each other among themselves. The Germans ... like ... did not beat there. They did not beat anyone.

Q: And did they punish among themselves, say if you stole

something, or ...?

A: Yeah, yeah, you're right. They even killed each other. But Germans like were not there at the time. Well, nothing happened to them. For instance a capo could kill. Nothing at all happened to him. He could kill as much as he liked. He said that "You don't want to work!" and that was it.

Q: Were there roll calls every day in the camp?

A: Roll calls every day. Counting. That was in the morning and in the evening, like. Every day, every day, every day. If somebody was missing or if somebody had escaped again. So that -- the numbers had to be the way they ought to be.

Q: How long did you stay there?

A: Where? What do you have in mind?

Q: There, in Dora.

A: There we were -- that was in '44 -- and we were there, I don't know , -- it was in winter, at least it seems like that to me -- yeah in the winter, or in the spring. Well, we had the death march, as I told you, and they lugged us off to Bergen, Bergen Bergen.

Q: Yes. Did you go the whole way on foot? Or did you travel?

A: We first went by train and where -- I no longer know what it was called -- there they dumped us, and then we went on foot for about 50 or 60 kilometers to that Bergen concentration camp ...

Q: Belsen

A: ... Belsen. And there were again barracks, there were like barracks, like ...

Q: First describe the journey. That was certainly very grim.

A: Well, I no longer remember that at all, because we had to march and not lag at all. We had to keep going. And when -- I say -- if anyone fell, they threw him into a ditch, they first wrapped him up, well and then a cart came, which like ...

Q: Collected.

A: ... collected.

Q: You were in good condition?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: You managed the whole journey.

A: I walked right ... right to the spot. Well, and there was the end.

They did not give us anything to eat, as I said, we ate that beet. That saved us.

Q: You found it in the fields, or how did you manage to get it?

A: It was there. It was there.

Q: It was there somewhere in storage?

A: Yeah. It was stored there. In such very large _____. The Russians found it. Well, and then the American came -- and liberated.

Q: Do you by any chance remember what happened when -- it was the British who arrived. The army.

A: Well, it's all the same. I call them Americans.

Q: Well O.K. Do you remember what happened?

A: Yeah, they arrived in tanks. A flag _____. We saw it -- and that was it -- we began to jump for joy!

Q: Were the Germans still there?

A: No, they ran. They ran. But they laid on ... as guards -- I can't remember their nationality now -- they had kind of black suits. Well, and they were stationed in those sentry boxes, and ...

Q: Were they not the Vlasovs?

A: Well, I can't say. I no longer like came into contact with them ...so I don't really know. I no longer ...

Q: When they ... arrived -- that army -- how did they treat you, what did they do?

A: Well. That was the mistake they made, they gave us a lot of food. They gave us ...

Q: Some cans.

A: ...cans. Yeah yeah. And some of them ate them -- 'cos they were hungry, they ate the lot, and got ...ill, did not survive.

Q: It didn't happen to you?

A: And -- not me -- and dropped. By the morning they were dead.

Q: Were you all right?

A: I also ate ...

Q: Yes.

A: ...I also ate. Well and so it went -- well like -- out of me, like.

Q: And you went together with your brothers?

A: Yeah.

Q: The whole time you also kept -- together? The entire ...

A: I don't think the other brother was there. He went elsewhere -- they died and he went with them elsewhere, and I again went with a group ... again like elsewhere. We like went wherever we wanted to in short.

Q: Afterwards, when they had liberated you.

A: Yeah yeah yeah.

Q: But somehow -- did they give you new clothes or did they ...

A: No, we -- we already got clothes, it was nothing, they gave us.

People already gave us. So we went wherever we wanted to. Or we got hold of bicycles and went by bike and we didn't know which way.

Q: And when you say "we" -- you have in mind yourself, your brothers?

A: What?

Q: When you say "we went, we traveled" -- you -- you were ...

A: One other brother, Josef and also others, but I told you those guys had died. There were about six of us, a group as it were, so we went on bikes -- bicycles. And so we rode wherever we pleased. I say, "We're going away, we're going home, to Czechoslovakia," and no, no way, we did not have _____. So there was a kind of house -- it was like a wooden house -- and they put us there. Well, and we were there in that house.

Q: Was that a kind of repatriation camp?

A: Well, yeah, that's it. Right, it was good. There we got food -- as much as we wanted. It was now good there.

Q: And how did you get home?

A: Well then, a lieutenant came .. a soldier -- and he came to fetch us, asking if we want to go home. I said, "Yea!". "So after that." _____ and they put us on a train and ... we went o Plzen, Well, and that soldier took us there.

Q: And how did you get to Bilovec after that?

A: We lived there.

Q: I know. You came there via Prague? Or how?

A: Via Prague. Right. Via Prague.

Q: What about your house? What state was it in?

A: Exactly, that was bad. People had taken it to pieces -- stolen, so that was bad. That was bad, all that is still there is the land, a garden. That is there still. _____ only he sold it. We are not going to live there

since we have this here. We wouldn't go there -- no -- not to like live.

Q: So which of your family came back?

A: Nobody.

Q: Well -- your brothers.

A: Only us brothers, otherwise nobody.

Q: And your father didn't come back?

A: No-o. I don't know where he is. Well, no. I don't know where he died, nobody at all. Nobody knows.

Q: And of the extended family? Which of your other brothers?

A: No way. Not at all -- they -- they perished. Most of them in '44. A terrible lot perished. I no longer know how many thousands, but many, many, many perished. They perished... they died all the time. In the morning say 50, 100 people were gone. They died like flies.

Q: Did you stay in Bilovec?

A: We then stayed there.

Q: Yes.

A: We stayed there and we patched up the houses a little. Well, and then I came here -- the town -- sold me the house -- like (vacated) by the Germans -- a kind of small house.

Q: Here in Olomouc?

A: Here, here. Well and each of us -- we got like apartments and so we lived here.

Q: What did you do after the war?

A: Well .. we did all kinds of work. We worked on "amelioration" (ph), we worked in steel mills.

Q: What was going.

A: Yes, what was going.

Q: Did you marry?

A: What?

Q: When did you get married?

A: Yeah, that was -- wait -- in the year fifty. It was in the year fifty, like.

Q: And by then you were here in Olomouc?

A: Not yet.

Q: No.

A: I was

Q: Still in Bilovec.

A: Yeah.

Q: How many children have you got?

A: I've got children -- two boys and six daughters.

Q: Eight. Well you've got enough.

A: Eight, eight. Enough, enough, enough. But they're grown up, well, so ... they are all right.

Q: Have you retired?

A: Yeah, oh yeah. Long ago. In '50. I was like an invalid. Well, and then in 57 I went ... I retired completely.

Q: Mr Daniel, have you ever told your children or your wife about this whole experience, or at least part of it, at any time ?

A: No. They don't believe such a thing at all! Only my daughter -- she was there on a tour --so she said she would get a bus and ask people who would like to see Poland to come. Well, and I said "If you have something wrong with your heart, then don't go there -- nerves. "Cos it's terrible there -- that's a fact, still -- also to look at it. That is, that is something impossible" It is unbelievable. So many shoes and ... and on the ground, the huddled ... the sleeping and so on. They -- the wires -- it's all there. Normally. There was -- there were live wires. Someone threw this cap onto the wires and it burnt immediately.

Q: Did you by any chance see anyone taking his own life?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: No.

A: No, I didn't. Not that. Everyone was afraid. everyone was afraid ... not that. You see.

Q: For the present, I'd like to thank you very much ...

A: Yeah.

Q: ... but Jana -- I think I'll want to still ask you about something.

A: Yeah, yeah.

End of tape 2 of 3

Tape 3 of 3

Q: So when you were in Hodonin, in that disciplinary and labor camp, did you have any free time, say after work?

A: No.

Q: Well, what did you do when you returned from work?

A: We sat.

Q: In that block?

A: In the block.

Q: And what did you talk about.

A: Each as -- as he pleased. We were free to do that. There it wasn't like.

Q: What was the atmosphere like there?

A: It wasn't exactly strict. Not there. It was relaxed there. Not that -- no.

Q: Could you, for example go outside that block?

A: We could go out of the block. Only in the camp to eat and again come back. We couldn't ...

Q: So you could not go outside the confines of the camp?

A; Out? No way! That was closely guarded. So that you could not escape, yeah, yeah.

Q; And who guarded you?

A: Well ... I thought -- it seemed to me that security, those prison wardens kept guard.

Q: Czechs?

A: Why, yes.

Q: Do you by any chance remember the name of anyone of them?

A: No, no, I don't know. I remembered -- that superintendent, as I said, but --from Hradiste -- I no longer know what -- I've forgotten his name. I don't know any more., I don't remember.

Q: Well and try to remember who else was working with you there. What sort of people were they?

A: We were a mixed lot. In that quarry we were like mixed.

Q: about how many Roma were there ?

A: Lots. I think there were -- I don't know -- about 50. There could have been 50. There could possibly -- maybe there were more. I didn't count them.

Q: How did the supervisors behave toward you? Those wardens as you called them.

A: Well, there it was not that strict. There it wasn't. Normally ____ to

make us work.

Q: And you could chat with them normally?

A: Well, if he talked to us, otherwise not. If he talked to us, then we chatted, yeah. Otherwise ...

Q: And did they sometimes beat you?

A: No, nonononono, not there, no.

Q: You never saw any punishments there?

A: No no. I didn't see anyone being beaten. I --- not that --- and they then began to fight among themselves.

Q: Who?

A: _____, well the rest. They did something -- he did something too -- well and so they began to fight, see. It was tough. But I was out of it. It was they that like bashed -- like each other, yeah.

Q: And why did they fight?

A: I don't know. There was like -- well, it was not that strict there.

Q: And those guards let them fight, they did not intervene?

A: Well, maybe they gave an order. Gave an order -- perhaps they gave an order to ...

Q: What do you mean by giving an order? To do what?

A: He told them to beat him or so.

Q: I see. You want to say that from the ranks of the prisoners some had a higher position? He was like an additional supervisor.

A: Well there were some guys the ones that beat others up -- like yeah -- there were, were.

Q: And how did they treat others, those that did not have this privilege?

A: Well, they like did not try it out on me, so I don't really know. Only I do know they had it out between them there.

Q: And how come they did not try it out on you?

A: They couldn't try it out on me, because all the wardens knew me -- those ... also those _____ the superintendent, see -- knew me from Uhersky Hradiste, so ...

Q: So you got a bit better treatment there.

A: Well, well, that's true, there yeah. It was better there, except for the food. We were very hungry there, so ...

Q: And the others who did not enjoy such a better position, so did

the prisoners who were above them punish those ... those?

A: Well ... they did not punish them at all otherwise. The prisoners sometimes among themselves -- when something happened or so, well, but to like beat them or so I -- that did not happen there.

Q: And what happened there, 'cos -- what could be the reason for them fighting each other?

A: They quarreled about something and immediately they fought.

Q: Could they perhaps fight over food?

A: Yeah for that, yeah for that. Or they stole something. For example they stole something from someone -- a piece of bread -- and immediately he got a hiding. Otherwise I like -- I don't know -- I did not see anything.

Q: Did you experience there in Hodonin that someone tried to escape?

A: Not until the end they escaped, it seems to me there were two. But that was when they knew they were going to concentration camp, so they ran for it.

Q: And how did they escape?

A: So, it was possible there. It was possible to escape there yeah, there yeah.

Q: How? Describe it to us. I can't imagine how?

A: They didn't guard us so closely here. We were not so guarded there as -- there weren't such wires, that were electric, there was nothing. So that at night one could easily escape, see. One could chose a moment when it was raining or so, then escape, see. But it rarely succeeded, they didn't escape, at least, as far as I know, two escaped.

Q: And what happened to them? Did they catch them?

A: The caught one of them, they didn't catch the other.

Q: And what happened with the one they caught?

A: So they beat him there, they thrashed him and ... he continued to be there. Then -- not -- then he escaped again. They did not catch him this time. He escaped again (laughter), well, he again escaped. He ran away a second time, but they did not catch him a second time. It did not happen again. Well.

Q: And was he a Rom?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what was his name?

A: Kaspr (ph). He's already died. Only two escaped and otherwise I don't remember. Well.

Q: And then I'd be interested to know how they released you from Hodonin -- How did it happen that they released you?

A: Well, for good work. For good work, see, so they released. Otherwise from -- immediately they sent them to concentration camp. All of them, the entire ... the entire camp.

Q: And how did they organize the selection, who was to go to concentration camp?

A: No, no, there was no selection. The entire lot.

Q: Well, but you did not go straight to Hodonin.

A: No, not me. But the others all went -- like -- there, to the concentration camp.

Q: And who else did they release together with you?

A: They only released some. Either there was some bribery -- I can't remember how it was. They released about two families or however many there were there. The superintendent released them. But I can't remember for what reason,

Q: So you managed to get home again to Bilovec?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: And then you said they came again for you about a year later.

A: Yeah.

Q: And there you said that the police superintendent wanted to signal to you to escape.

A: Help, help, help.

Q: What was the name of that ...

A: I don't know. That's it I don't remember. (Laughter). I, he was a good fellow, he was, yeah. If we had done as he told us to, then it would have been good. Only we did not know and that was the mistake.

Q: Well, and before that ...

A: When we ran away to Slovakia, that was nothing. That was a short way, 50 meters -- 50 kilometers.

Q: And in the village -- say the mayor or the neighbors -- did nobody

warn you?

A: No way, no, only that chief. We called him chief. He was like the commander, see -- so then -- only he, but otherwise no. Otherwise no. Otherwise nobody knew. That was all done secretly, yeah, we didn't know that. If we had known then certainly we would have been gone. No fear, many of us would have escaped! Many of us would have escaped. We escaped to Slovakia, that's a little way from Brod and we would have been gone. Well, and where -- where would they have searched for us? They wouldn't have found us.

Q: Good. So then you got to Auschwitz. You said that you built those blocks.

A: Yeah.

Q: So since you built them, then you must know what these blocks looked like and what parts they consisted of -- could you describe them?

A: They were wooden huts. Wooden, absolutely long -- I don't know exactly how long -- I think 50 meters -- or 40 -- well, I don't know that exactly. They were wooden huts. Just as the wooden huts you see here sometimes.

Q: Well, and what were they like inside. How were these huts designed inside?

A: Right, like this -- that was worse. There was absolutely nothing there. We had to do that ourselves. There were ... those -- those wooden parts and we built things from them. We had to do that ourselves, see. The younger ones. But there was nothing to sleep on, nothing at all, there were _____. There was nothing at all. ... nothing _____ and so -- nothing.

Q: Well and was the door a direct entrance into the room, or was there a hallway before that?

A: You went straight inside.

Q: And where were the lavatories?

A: The lavatories were inside. We had to build those too.

Q: In that block?

A: In that block.

Q: And what did it look like?

A: Well ... woo -- wooden. Wooden lavatories ... wooden ...

Q: Kind of latrines?

A: Yeah, latrines. That's right that was in Buchevald. It was 50 meters long and three meters deep. Man, the number that fell in ! Lots fell down. They could not keep their balance, they fell down inside and they did not pull them out!

Q: Did you see anyone like that?

A: Yeah, one fell in -- I saw that.

Q: Could you have helped him perhaps?

A: We couldn't do anything anymore. That was impossible, impossible. He was so weak that he fell in and that was the end. He drowned immediately. Well, that's how it was.

Q: I'd like to go back to talk about Auschwitz. How many lavatories were there in that block -- those latrines?

A: Yeah. There, it seems to me -- I don't know -- there were two or three of those lavatories. Three or maybe four lavatories. Well, and those showers were there, too.

Q: Directly in the block?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Not the showers! Those, those -- for washing ...

Q: Those troughs?

A: Yeah, yeah. There was a kind of trough and taps. Well, and there were also about five, or so. So that conditions for cleanliness were better there. That was like, I don't want -- I don't want to like. The lavatories were sort of clean. It was impossible not to keep clean. There that man supervised. It had to be like ...

Q: And who was the supervisor?

A: Prisoners, prisoners.

Q: He was assigned only to supervise the lavatories or also ...

A: Well yes! That was -- it had to be clean, like in the army. No fear, it was clean. Everything clean. If someone did not keep it clean -- and he told on someone that he was making a mess he immediately got it. He got it a lot _____

Q: And from whom did he get it?

A: Well, from those prisoners _____ they fought among themselves. Well -- Not the Germans, no.

Q: And how -- how did they punish?

A: With a whip. with a whip, yeah. The Germans did not hit at all.

Purely prisoners among themselves. Otherwise not, otherwise not.
Otherwise , oh no.

Q: And can you remember who served as these supervisors from the ranks of the prisoners. For instance in your place, in your block?

A: It's difficult for me to remember that. There was a Pole there. We used to call him "brokester" (ph). Well, and as for the capos, I don't know what were their names. One was called -- also a Pole -- was called Nowak. But otherwise ...

Q: And how did those capos behave as far as you were concerned?

A: Well, that depends on how badly. Those were the ones -- those were the ones -- who destroyed the nation. And then there were also that "lagester" (ph). He was like the top one. His name was -- I know - - I also remember -- from Prague -- and he was called Lada -- they called him -- and I don't know his second name.

Q: And he was a Rom?

A: No. He was a "dolmecher (ph) [interpreter], he could speak Czech.

Q: And he -- those capos slept with you in the block or elsewhere?

A: They had special rooms. Not with us. They had special rooms.

Q: And where?

A: In that block.

A: In that block.

A: Yeah.

Q: And that is exactly what interests me. How many rooms were there in that block? In one of them you like prisoners slept.

A: Yeah. Well, they had a kind of room, like this one for example. They had nothing in common with us in that way. No way. They -- those capos, see, they were independent, see. A wake-up call in the morning, and off to work.

Q: And were you ever in their room?

A: No. I _____. Not that.

Q: And how did the capos behave toward you? What kind of a position did you hold there?

A: A bad one, that was it. A bad one. By then -- by then it was bad.

Q: What, for example, did they do to you?

A: For example they'd call out a number. Like that you did not have a name, you were a number. Well, and the guys that were there who for

example did not hear _____ well and they -- checked up -- right, move forward from the line and immediately he was done. Immediately -- immediately they beat him -- until they beat him to death. That's how it was. It was -- they beat each other up there. There was no appeal there -- at all -- there was no way of appealing.

Q: You also said that somebody in Auschwitz made an attempt to escape. How?

A: That -- now that's another question. Nobody knows now how they managed. They escaped, escaped.

Q: And who for example escaped?

A: Roma also escaped, like. I imagine, in my opinion, they dug under the wires.

Q: And what makes you think that?

A: I -- well, otherwise they couldn't have managed.

Q: Yeah, so that -- you weren't there to see it.

A: No, I wasn't there to see it! But I just think that they dug under the wires and so they got out.

Q: And did you come across ...

A: There was an artist, in short, well among -- among that bunch, who was the leader of the group. And there was one there, one. I knew him. He was there.

Q: What was his name?

A: He was. I don't know anymore. He was like -- he -- yeah, he -- he also escaped -- my wife's father. He was one of them. He -- Vaclav was his name.

Q: Ferda?

A: Vaclav -- Vaclav Ferda. Yes, yes, yes. Well, he escaped with that bunch. There were five of them. But how they escaped -- I don't know.

Q: And did they catch them?

A: In Ostrava, they caught them in the forest.

Q: How did you find out that they had caught them there?

A: The game keeper with binoculars and ... he phoned the Germans and ...

Q: And how did you find out?

A: ... they occupied -- occ-- occupied the forest. He -- that game

keeper saw them. He betrayed them. Well and ... then they dragged them back and onto the gallows. Well and we had to work instead of them -- well, in short they had a roll call -- in short, all out -- and we watched what sort of -- what sort of sentence they got. So one of them gave the order, see, well and -- 'cos they ran away and so on, and they were condemned to death. So that -- I saw -- the one case.

Q: How many of them were there?

A: About five. There were five of them, yeah. So they must have been very, very, very ____ skillful. It was almost impossible to escape ____ not that.

Q: And you know what I'd be interested to know -- how did you find out -- when you were actually in that camp -- that that game keeper saw them? Who told you?

A: In Ostrava -- they escaped to Ostrava.

Q: I know, but how could y-o-u know? Or who told you?

A: He was in the forest and he saw them. He had binoculars and he found out that the prisoners were there, see. Well, he called ____ the Germans surrounded them and that was already the end.

Q: Probably the rumor went round the camp how they were caught.

A: Well, you bet, that was clear. We knew that, yeah. That they like made a run for it and they'd be hung. Yeahyeah, that's how it happened, so. And there it was impossible to escape. Only in that way. They must have dug under the electric wires.

Q: And -- do you know by any chance what kind of work they did, those who escaped?

A: Normally -- they went normally .. to the building site and so, see. There had to be one clever one, who ____ -- a clever one who gave orders and

Q: Can you describe ...

A: What?

Q: Describe what kind of clothes you wore. What did they ... consist in.

A: The stripes -- those kind of striped. Like what is shown .. in those ...

Q: And what were they ? Shirts?

A: Not shirts. The shirts were normal. Trousers and that -- trousers

and ... well and jacket, what d'you call it, well, They were the same ...those -- those stripes. They were the same.

Q: And you said that you could -- that they changed the -- those clothes.

A: Shirts?

Q: Yeah.

A: Shirts, yeah..

Q: And how often?

A: Well ... say shirts once a month or in a fortnight -- that is to say underwear, underwear. But those -- those -- when they were torn, then they also gave us trousers too. _____ just to show us, they also gave us trousers.

Q: They brought them to you to the block?

A: That was in the block, yeah. They brought them to the block. We used to go and ask, see, and so he gave it to us. Or clogs when they completely fell apart, well then he gave. Gave.

Q: And who gave them to you?

A: Well, there were those sort of people appointed.

Q: Directly in the block?

A: Directly in the block. Yeah.

Q: They were those capos? Or somebody else?

A: Well, something like that. They called it _____. That _____ only the underwear and stripes and such things -- they gave us.

Q: And how did those "stupidynst" [room duty] (ph) treat you?

A: Badly. They behaved badly. It was they who made life a misery there. In that concentration camp. The prisoners. Not Germans, not they, that's not true. Not Germans, I didn't see them.

Q: Did you ever come across a German there at all. Like with some ...

A: With what?

Q: Not directly with a prisoner, but from that camp -- with some ... worker.

A: Well, not with us -- at all _____

Q: You did not come into contact at all.

A: No, no. They did not come into contact with us. That was hard. There was a kind of gatehouse, see. The main entrance. And there was that commander. So that if we had gone to him to complain,

maybe it would have turned out well, well but who -- who -- who --
there was nobody who had like the what-you-call-it. And if perhaps ...

Q: And what sort of injury did you have on your leg? That you said
that you had something ...

A: There was something on that -- that is on that ankle -- that I had.
That was just a tiny hurt.

Q: And what --why -- what -- how did you get injured?

A: From that timber. It was just a trifle. He bandaged it and ...

Q: And who? Describe how it happened in the first place, how you
went somewhere because of it.

A: It was such ... such a bruise. It was ...

Q: And where did you go because of it?

A: To that doctor there. There was a doctor there.

Q: To what kind of doctor? You haven't mentioned him before.

A: Yeah, there was a doctor there.

Q: And what sort of a person was he?

A: A consultant, I don't know what his name was.

Q: What nationality?

A: A Czech (laughter)

Q: Well, you didn't say that, tell us about it.

A: Yeah, yeah, Czech, Czech.

Q: And what did you ...

A: I just told you that he was like from Hradiste ...

Q: Well, you said that, but before. But say it now.

A: Well and so he asked me, you know, if I'm from Hradiste. I says,
"Yeah." Well, he didn't know that ...I says, "From where?", see -- I
ask "Budejovice." -- and I then knew. That is why like -- because I told
him the truth, so he believed me and let me stay in the sickbay. Well
and then they like chose us, so ...

Q: Wait a moment. You still -- let's stop here. How did it go -- the
selection?

A Man: Go on.

Q: So, Mr Daniel, in that sickbay ...

A: He came there -- that SS came to check up, in that sickroom. Well
and they dragged off those that were very sick and carried them to
the furnace. Probably. If he was really very sick. But I was -- I wasn't

sick, see, just -- he said to me what -- what's wrong with me, so I showed what, "That's nothing! Out!"

Q: Well, tell me how did he -- did he examine you at all?

A: He didn't examine. He recognized it according to -- he thought so. He knew it wasn't -- that it wasn't a serious illness.

Q: And did he speak with you?

A: Well yes.

Q: And what did he say?

A: Nothing. "Out! Fall out of line!" He pulled us out of that row, because there were -- I don't know -- 20 or 30 of us there. Those sick ones. Well and he pulled out, for example, 10 or 15. And he left the rest to stand there and he pulled us out. And we didn't know at all where we were going. And we went.

Q: So describe each step from that moment onward, from the moment they selected you.

A: Well, to the block, the block.

Q: They put you in the block?

A: We were in the block. And he stood us in a row and then he only selected. Directly in that block where we slept.

Q: Well, I thought that, but you were in the sickbay.

A: Well yes -- that was like the sickbay, see. Like a normal sickbay, of course, because we were not working. Nobody was there to look after us. We had tickets and nobody could do anything with us.

Q: Well, and so what happened after that, when they selected you? Where did you go? Try to describe it step by step how it occurred.

A: Well, and we didn't know where we'll go, where we were going. We knew nothing at all. Not until they took us there, then we knew.

Q: And where did they take you?

A: Into the "koplety" (ph) [showers], like I said. And then immediately there was the gas chamber. Well I saw that, well ... There were showers ... they turned on the water -- we went to have showers there too.

Q: So that running water was there normally?

A: Yes water was there. Sometimes cold water, sometimes hot. Or they let run hot-cold and then again hot. And again cold, well. That was terrible. That was -- we jumped about there like -- good gracious!

Q: So they showed you where you were going to work. And did they tell you anything -- what you were going to do there?

A: Yes.

Q: What did they say? Try to repeat it.

A: Well, "You'll collect gold." We say, "They don't want to give it!" "They must, must!" They had a kind of water there for -- for those rings. I cut earrings with pliers. And like that.

Q: Wait, what sort of water?

A: They had to hand it over. They had to.

Q: And what sort of water? What was the water for?

A: Well, to grease the fingers when it wouldn't come off -- when the ring wouldn't come off.

Q: I see.

A: It was some kind of soap, or whatever.

Q: And what kind of pincers?

A: Well, kind of pliers. Small ones. You caught hold of them, I snipped earrings, see and ...

Q: And how? -- with the ear and all?

A: They didn't want to give them. They didn't want to give them! They didn't want to give them up. That was obvious. That was obvious. They knew it was already -- but we couldn't do anything about it. We couldn't say anything.

Q: Did it not hurt those people when you pinched them with those pliers ...

A: No. What can hurt? A finger -- I rubbed the finger first, pulled off the ring and threw it into -- into the box And they told us, the moment you take something -- we like --take a ring or something, he'd immediately -- take out a pistol -- and look. Immediately ... dead.

Q: All right. They told you to take off jewelery, but did they tell you what would happen to those people after that?

A: We also knew, but we were not supposed to say. We were -- weren't allowed to speak to anyone. At all. We had to keep it to ourselves. 'Cos it was -- they would have killed us. So that we did not dare say anything. I had to say that -- like -- that they would be in the same way as I am. That they will get the same kind of clothes, and that they were going to work, well and go to the block.

Q: Did they believe you?

A: I can no longer remember that. They either believed, or they didn't, I no longer -- that no longer interested me. Only the main thing I was not allowed to take like ...

Q: And what happened after that, when you had taken off that jewelery?

A: Clothes as well, everything.

Q: How did you take off their clothes?

A: Everything, everything. Stripped them naked! Naked, we had to -- undress them. That was what made them -- that like made them suspicious. Well, and that was worse.

Q: And they themselves undressed?

A: Well they knew, that they were going for showers, well but ... it was difficult to say so.

Q: And they undressed themselves, or you directly ...

A: They undressed. They had to undress. I told them, "Undress and -- and if you have rings, gold or money, then put it here," So, some handed it over and some didn't. They didn't want to give it up. Didn't want to. They didn't believe it anymore. By then it was ...

Q: And when they were undressed?

A: Well, then they went into the showers. Into the gas chamber.

Q: And did you give them something for the shower, or ...

A: A towel.

Q: You gave each one a towel?

A: Towels, little towels. They were old towels. That was nothing. Well and they couldn't do anything! They did not know anything about it. We did not tell them anything and ... and they went into the showers - - like a shower and then it was locked. Until there were lots of them - many, see. They switched on the gas and that was the end.

Q: And you were able to see? Could one see inside, into that chamber?

A: We -- there was a sort of -- such ... a peep hole. Well, we were able to watch it. Well, we could.

Q: It is rather unpleasant, but for the future -- can you say what you saw?

A: I saw, I saw. I watched one of them. but if that capo had caught us (ph - the whole sentence), then he would have beaten us to death. That was not -- that was not permitted. We were not allowed at all, not even ...

Q: Well and what happened when you were looking?

A: What?

Q: What happened when you were able to look?

A: They fell like flies. It took 15 minutes. And some -- and many of them were alive. They were still breathing, see.

Q: Well, and when they opened the door of that chamber?

A: We opened it all up.

Q: So what happened to those who were still breathing?

A: We let the gas disperse, to make the gas go away and then we dragged them out.

Q: And what about those who were still breathing?

A: They beat them to death.

Q: And who?

A: Those -- those capos and so on.

Q: And in what manner?

A: _____ he kicked them on the head, until -- by then.

It was tough there.

Q: And what about the hair? Did they not cut their hair?

A: Everyone of them had their hair cut off.

Q: That was before, before they went into the gas chamber?

A: Yeah. Actually that transport. ~ No, no, no . We did.

Q: So let's go back to that.

A: They cut off our hair, they cut our hair. Yeah -- oh no, I think, or I can't remember any more whether they cut the hair or not. That like -- I can't remember. I didn't see that. Maybe -- I don't know, well -- maybe they didn't cut their hair.

Q: You don't remember that they cut the hair of the dead ones?

A: But -- no, I can't remember. But maybe the women's -- may be yes, the young girls.

Q: Well and what about ...

A: 'Cos they needed the hair. Maybe.

Q: But you did not see that they ...

A: But the guys' hair, or -- no, no, no, I didn't see that.

Q: And what about -- did they not take out the gold from their teeth when they were already dead?

A: I don't remember that anymore either. I no longer ...

Q: All right.

A: I didn't have the ... the opportunity, to see such things. I don't remember any longer.

Q: You were ...

A: Maybe the Jews who were appointed did it themselves, and they put them in the furnace. So they maybe also took them.

Q: You, Mr Daniel, were one of the few who was at close quarters with this work, who could see it, so that your evidence is very important. Could you for instance try to recall what were your feelings or what occurred to you when you witnessed this?

A; I had already learned my lesson. I had grown accustomed to it. It did not do anything to me. He died, he died. Nothing at all! It did not touch my feelings in the least. I had grown like immune to it.

Q: Were there for instance children among them, too?

A: Well, right. Yes indeed. Small children -- they threw them into the car -- took them by the leg and threw them out like ... Oh yeah. They carted them off to be cremated. Children, yeah. I saw that, I saw that. For instance one-year olds, or so. So yeah ... so that, yeah, I did see that. But otherwise I no longer know, see.

Q: Did you not perhaps get some extra food?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what?

A: For example we got salami. That was on Tuesdays and Fridays. But only in those barracks.

Q: How much?

A: 10 decagram of salami, and a kilo of bread in three or four portions.

Q: So when you were here -- when you worked in that chamber, so they gave you salami?

A: There -- there it was better. There we got still more. There was more food there in that ... in that chamber at that ... crematory. There we got more. But the rest of us, the entire camp, we got regularly,

once a week -- twice -- on Tuesday and Friday. They called it "culaga" (ph) [additional ration].

Q: Still in that chamber ...

A: Yes still -- that was what kept us going. That.

Q: Still in that chamber, while you were working -- you received there ...

A: Yeah, there yeah, there yeah, There, there was more soup and bread.

Q: Did you, for instance, also receive alcohol?

A: No. Gracious alcohol! That they would give us alcohol! No way.

Q: And, Mr Daniel, what about trafficking, black marketing. Did you, for instance, have access to cigarettes?

A: No. I didn't have a chance. But those who worked with civilians, they had a chance, because the civilians helped, gave, see.

Otherwise I think -- I don't know -- otherwise ... how could they have managed since they did have cigarettes -- they smoked.

Q: Otherwise you ...

A: ... get issued, we were not issued, see. Only if the civilians must have somehow ...

Q: You did not experience that there was any trafficking, a black market?

A: No, no, no, no, no no no no no. Yeah with the civilians, when they were working on the building site for example, see. 'Cos they learned there to be bricklayers ... the prisoners, see. Yeah.

Q: Mr Daniel, how do you explain that they actually let you live since you saw that gas chamber and you said they exterminated the others after four months?

A: Not us. You must understand. They in the crematory -- they burned them. So those ones.

Q: Those that were in that crematory?

A: Right, right. They only burnt those. They were not allowed to be there longer than four months. Those guys. Probably only those guys who did the burning. They changed -- whether they changed them -- I was there for two days, so it's difficult for me to say. I only heard, you can do it for four months -- perform that work, but then _____

Q: Well, and how come that you were there only two days? Who

decided on that?

A: I went there on my own accord. Then I ran away from there. I went like to the other commando. I ran away. For instance I escaped to the building site, or the like.

Q: Well, and they allowed you to do that, just like that?

A: But he chased us! That capo. Well, but there -- there were many of us there!

Q: How did you manage? I can't imagine how.

A: Normally. I went to the other commando and he wrote down my number -- "Come on!" -- and I immediately stood there.

Q: And how did that capo chase you?

A: Well, they couldn't, they couldn't any longer.

Q: You were already registered, so he couldn't.

A: I was already registered, so they couldn't. There was no chasing you. I again went to that other commando. And we kept doing that.

Q: And what did you do there, in that second commando?