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HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

ZENEK MAOR

Transcript of Translation of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Sylvia Brockmon
Date: October 20, 1987

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ZM - Zenek Maor [interviewee]
SB - Sylvia Brockmon[1] [interviewer]
Date: October 20, l987

Tape one, side one:

SB: Be good enough to tell me where you were born.
ZM: I was born in Poland in the town called Wloclawek.
SB: When?
ZM: August 9, 1923.
SB: Tell me some details about your family.
ZM: My mother and father were born in Warsaw, and in time they moved to Wloclawek, after World War I. In World War I, my father was in the Russian Army, and was taken prisoner by the Germans. After the war he came back, first to Warsaw, and then back to Wloclawek, and we continued to live there all those many years, until the Germans entered in 1939. Here they remained until January 1940. And then we figured that the Germans would not attack the Jews in such a big city as Warsaw. So we rushed to Warsaw, the whole family, except my brother who was already married, with two children, remained in the town; he was well settled in, so did not want to run away.
SB: Tell me what was your life like, prior to World War II, before Hitler came?
ZM: My father had a factory of cardboard boxes for packing.
SB: And your life was comfortable?
ZM: Very much so. His factory was well-known.
SB: Did your family suffer from antisemitism prior to the war?
ZM: In this last period we were aware of the upsurge of antisemitism. Jews were exposed to antisemitism and some anti-Jewish laws had been passed in their Senate.
SB: Even before the time of Hitler?
ZM: Yes, even before the time of Hitler.
SB: And your family suffered from these laws?
ZM: Yes, we suffered; but as far as the factory was concerned, that continued normally until the arrival of Hitler, more or less.
SB: Were the members of your family involved in Jewish organizations, and you yourself?
ZM: Yes, I myself, since the age of 10, was a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*. My father was more religious, leaned towards the *Mizrachi*. He didn't approve of my membership in *Hashomer Hatzair*. This was a clash between the two ideologies. But it was good, and it was a fine atmosphere in our home.
SB: Were there members of your, or extended, family in the Polish Army?

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[1]This interview was conducted in Yiddish in Haifa, Israel and later translated by the interviewer, Sylvia Brockmon.

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ZM: Yes, I had a cousin who was a soldier in the Polish Army.

SB: Can you tell me more about your life in Poland before the onset of the war?

ZM: I attended school, and in the *Hashomer Hatzair* we carried on an intensive cultural life. We met a few times a week and carried out many activities among the youth. We made many trips to the countryside, to the villages. And we worked in the fields of the Jewish farmers. We wanted our youth to become accustomed to work; this was the approach—since we were children. When Hitler came to our town, I was 16 years old; and I am telling you now about our life here of five and six years before that, until the advent of Hitler. Yes, we had a varied, rich cultural life. We had a trial of the "Golden Youth," etc. Our activities were on a high level.

SB: How many Jews lived in your town?

ZM: I'm not sure—20,000 or more.

SB: Were there a lot of Jewish cultural organizations?

ZM: Yes, from all parties.

SB: Was there a *kehilla* [organized Jewish community]?

ZM: A very large *kehilla*, well-organized. Even here in Israel, the *kehilla* is well-known, and were leaders.

SB: And is it your opinion that the *kehilla* was working for the benefit of the Jewish community?

ZM: Yes. It was all on a high level.

SB: What happened to you and your family in the first few weeks after the arrival of the German in your city?

ZM: After the Germans came—our city was close to the border—they immediately began, right away, the first thing, they burned the synagogues. We were the first to be identified as "Jew" with the yellow rag, not the Jewish star, but we had to wear a yellow patch on our chest, and we were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks, but had to go, like horses, on the street, in the gutter. Later they arrested several hundred Jews who were influential in the community, among them my father. They were held until "ransom" had to be paid. They were freed. From then on the Jews had to work by assigned work. I, myself, at 16 years, worked with sewage, deep underground, right from the beginning. We believed that in a large city like Warsaw, (my whole family stemmed from Warsaw) that they, the Germans, would not do such evil things, in such a large city, to the Jews. We set out for Warsaw. In several weeks, the Jews were confined to one part of the city, that's what the Germans enforced quickly. In a period of time they set up the ghetto, and somewhat later they fenced in the ghetto all around, and Jews were forbidden to leave, except for forced labor. I worked, in forced labor, in an airport in Warsaw for a number of weeks; and also in the German military base, to clean it up, and this is how thousands and thousands of the Jews of Warsaw were drafted into forced labor.

SB: During the time you were living in Warsaw did the non-Jews give you, the Jews, any assistance?

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ZM: Very little, very little. The Poles helped Jews very, very infrequently, almost never. And for us personally, never.

SB: And when were you forced to work in the ghetto?

ZM: At the very beginning. The moment we arrived. We were immediately taken to the forced labor.

SB: And what date was this?

ZM: 1940. There was already forced labor.

SB: And this was forced labor in Warsaw Ghetto?

ZM: Yes, forced labor in Ghetto Warsaw. Even in the town we came from, we were also forced to work.

SB: Did the majority of people from your town also go to the Warsaw Ghetto?

ZM: No, only a small part of the Jews came to Warsaw. Only those who had a connection in Warsaw went there, family, or other. Most remained. When we escaped from Ghetto Warsaw, we returned to that town, and a ghetto was also set up there and we were sent further into other concentration camps.

SB: At the beginning, it was possible to leave the ghetto for work?

ZM: At the beginning; it was still possible. As I said earlier, the designated area for Jews—it was possible to leave. At first as I told you, when a specific area was set aside for the Jews, it was still possible to work elsewhere, and to go in and out, but then when the ghetto was enclosed, then Jews could neither enter, nor leave.

SB: When was the ghetto set up?

ZM: After a few months. And then it was shut tight.

SB: And in the ghetto did you meet refugees from other areas?

ZM: Yes. At that time there were already half a million people, refugees from all over Poland, all with the same thought—that in a large city like Warsaw, the capital of Poland, that the Germans wouldn't have the nerve to do something against the Jews.

SB: Can you tell me something about the *Judenrat* in Warsaw, or in the other city you came from?

ZM: When we left Wloclawek there was no *Judenrat*, just the normal *kehilla*, the Jewish leadership, and they carried on, life went on normally. Upon our arrival in Warsaw, we saw immediately the Jewish Police and all other services in the hands of the Jews.

SB: When you left Wloclawek, and came to Warsaw, how did the Jewish inhabitants of Warsaw react to your arrival? Do you understand what I'm referring to?

ZM: Yes, I understand. My family had good ties with the extended family, and I as a child—no longer a child—I was 16 years old—we were well received.

SB: But I am asking about the general Jewish population; so many Jews escaped to Warsaw.

ZM: There was no antagonism. There was none.

SB: During the period that you were in the ghetto, did you and the younger children attend a *cheder* or other educational...

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ZM: I was in "middle" school. And I had a cousin, who was older than I, tutored me somewhat, privately.

SB: But I'm talking about in the ghetto.

ZM: Yes, in the ghetto.

SB: But I mean organized schooling for the Jewish children.

ZM: Yes, there was organized education; a whole network of schools had been set up. People studied. It was partly underground and illegal. And the movement, the *Hashomer Hatzair*, it's understood that when I came to Warsaw I sought out this tie. And there were members who later became very famous—Mordecai Anielewicz. We were in the same group. We met in a definite place in Warsaw, but this was very, very, we were very fearful, it was all conspiratorial, underground, this movement.

SB: And where did children study, in the schools?

ZM: Yes, in schools. There weren't many places. Not many were studying.

SB: During this period did you hear any news about what was going on in the world? Did you read any newspapers, or listen to the radio?

ZM: Yes, news was heard, that the Germans were fighting, and acquiring and occupying land. This was when I was in the Warsaw Ghetto. When I escaped from the ghetto, and was on the way, I learned that the Germans had attacked the Russians.

SB: But newspapers did not get into the ghetto?

ZM: Seldom; very few papers ever came into the ghetto. And radios, Jews did not have radios. The first thing the Germans did to Jews was to make them give up their silver, gold, valuables and radios to the Germans. If they didn't give it up, the penalty was death.

SB: And the news you heard from people, refugees, who came to the ghettos?

ZM: Yes, people who were escapees, refugees. But it was thought that it was hearsay, rumors. It wasn't believable. It wasn't believed.

SB: In the ghetto was there any resistance, an underground?

ZM: There was an underground. Our movement there, the *Hashomer Hatzair*, had an underground. We met, but we had no connection with the *goyische* [Gentile] side. At that time we did not yet have a connection with the other side.

SB: Were you aware of Poles who hid Jews, who helped Jews?

ZM: We did not know then of such deeds. After the war this information came out, but we did not know.

SB: You did not know of Poles who smuggled in food to the Jews?

ZM: Very, very seldom. We alone smuggled in food. Since I was working outside the ghetto, I smuggled in a few potatoes, something, whenever I could, in order to help the family. This happened a lot. In my book, my two books, I write about all these happenings.

SB: When you worked in a group at forced labor, was it outside the ghetto, and if so, tell us about this work, how it was organized.

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ZM: As I said before, one of the most important places was the airfield, where I worked, Okecie. Even until today it's called the Okecie airfield in Warsaw. So a few thousand of us Jews, in groups, about 500 in a group of men, at work, and on the way the Germans beat us, whipped us. No day ever passed that we did not have to drag the half-dead and dead men, on the way to work. I myself on many occasions loaded explosives on airplanes. About ten of us would lift a bomb weighing over 500 pounds and loaded it onto the plane. With such a weight to lift, there would always be some wounded ones, because the Germans would beat us mercilessly.

SB: When you were deported from the ghetto to a concentration camp, which camp, Auschwitz?

ZM: No, from the ghetto I ran away back to...in the ghetto we were so starved. My father, not only my father, but my whole family were starving, and were all already swollen from hunger. So we decided, in the family, that who was still capable should run away. So I ran away, and a couple of weeks later, my sister ran away. My brother had written to us that as of that time, everything was all right; there was enough to eat, and the Germans were not making things too difficult and they wouldn't punish us too much. So I decided that my brother (who now lives in Baltimore and is 15 years older than I), I decided that I would go to my brother. I stole away from the ghetto. I ran away, and that was no simple matter, this stealing out of the ghetto. So I ran by foot tens and tens of kilometers, until I arrived in the town of my brother. Two months I remained in that ghetto...the ghetto...when I came back that ghetto was already closed. And then they sent us out to the forced labor camp—that was named Brezno, a city in northern Poland. There in a few months they sent us out to a new camp, Poznan-Dempsen, [phonetic] and then, a half year later, to Poznan-Gutenblum. [phonetic] And the conditions were horrible, and then, at the end of summer they sent us to Auschwitz.

SB: And where was your family during this time?

ZM: My sister, and all who were left in Wloclawek, they were sent to the crematorium. All who were left—the women, and the older ones, all the younger people were sent to other camps—as I've told you. And the women and children without exception, all were sent immediately to die. They were all cremated. You can see by the photos, they were all burned to death.

SB: What kind of work did you do, after you were deported?

ZM: We were building the railway that was to go from Berlin to Moscow. All, everything was by hand, terribly heavy work. Hundreds fell at this kind of work. One day we even saw Hitler himself in the camp. A portion of the railway was completed, and he came to see it.

SB: Tell me about your forced labor work, the hours, the other workers, etc.

ZM: We worked ten hours a day. And when we returned there, we had to do work in the camp. And very often if some of the completed work was not just so, we were not given any food. We were taken out to the field, and told that, "You're like an animal, so

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eat the grass." And often some of the people ate something poisonous in the grass, and got horrible cramps, and died, after a few days. And from this, a great many times, the illness returns, and they suffer.

SB: Did you know that at this time there were many groups who were anti-Hitler?

ZM: No, this wasn't known. But one day I was working outside the camp, and a German came to me and said, "You are living here and eating and working here, and in the Warsaw Ghetto the Jews are fighting against the Germans." That's when we learned that there was an uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. And that was only a short time, before we were transported to Auschwitz, from the Guttenblum Ghetto, in the camp that I told you about, just a short time before that. In the summer we were taken to Auschwitz, and the uprising was in April.

SB: You were a member of a conspiratorial group in the camp?

ZM: In the camp, no. I did not even know that such a thing existed. Very few did. And in the camps where I was, there also were no such groups.

SB: During this time that you were living through such horrible times did you ever feel any religious urgings, or that as you were a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*, you were hoping that others would come who were against Hitler? What were your feelings?

ZM: All during the time that we were in the camps, there were a few comrades, and never for a moment did we feel that we would not survive. All the time we were making plans, "What will we do, after all this is over?" And perhaps, because I had such confidence in this, that this might be the main reason why I was able to survive.

SB: You were never a religious person?

ZM: No.

SB: But you were a member of *Hashomer Hatzair*.

ZM: Yes.

SB: And that gave you hope?

ZM: Very much so. We met, the young people, and among us, I wouldn't say that we laughed at them. We were there for six years, and I can't remember one day when I didn't dream that I would be able to sit at a table and eat a piece of bread; that was my greatest dream, to sit in freedom and eat a piece of bread. That was for six years. But now, this was something interesting, this was characteristic of what I've told you already. I told you: We came back from work, and they made us pull very heavy stones to carry them from one place to another, back and forth, back and forth, just to keep us working hard. So, we hid ourselves, and one time, did not put the stones in place, because this time we hid ourselves. And this the camp commandant noticed, as he was standing on the side, and observed; he caught us and punished us by "doing sports." What does "doing sports" mean? We had to—with our bodies—to dry out the latrines, with our bodies "shave" the latrines, to stand up and run, to stand up and run. That's how he held us for an hour. We couldn't stand on our feet any more. He saw that we could not stand on our feet any more, so he

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freed us. So we gave a signal one to the other. With our eyes we smiled, and gave an oath. Very quietly, very quietly, "We will survive them." When he saw this quiet smile, he took us and made us do another half hour of "sport" and then he said, "Do you still want to laugh?"

SB: During the time that you were suffering so, did you think or dream of running away from the camp?

ZM: Until Auschwitz, it was not possible. One was, Auschwitz was surrounded by high lookout towers, and high-intensity electric fences, and it was impossible to get close to it. While a lot of the people did not try to escape, to try to escape, maybe one or two tried, and the Polish conspiratorial underground got them out. They ran away. But otherwise, there was no possibility whatever, alone, to escape was not possible. What was with the electrified fence—every morning when we arose in the morning, people were seen lying on the electrified metal, half-burned. That was—you could run up to the metal fence. With us, in the camp there was absolutely no possibility and no one in our section escaped. In the coal mines where we worked, one day, very shortly before the Russians came, and before they forced us on the death march, one very righteous Pole, it was told to us, with half a mouth, he was pushed deep into the mine, and he was smuggled out and freed. What happened to him later is unknown. This was the *only* time that we knew of an escape, and that was a very righteous person, in the resistance.

SB: What can you tell us about what was being taught to Jewish children *before* 1941?

ZM: Only in our organization, as I told you before, we were involved in cultural work. We were in a group of about twelve, and we had meetings, young people. We had a guide, who was two or three years older than the group, and he led us in our cultural work.

SB: But among the younger children was there any organized teaching?

ZM: Nothing.

SB: Nothing?

ZM: Nothing; nothing. In Warsaw there was a kindergarten, for little children. But for others there was no serious thing to organize classes. Privately there was a group here, a group there.

SB: And later, in the camps and in the ghettoes, was there any organized teaching for the children?

ZM: There, absolutely not. I love to read, and for the six years the only book that I read, that was in Auschwitz, it was smuggled, some pages were smuggled in at different times, from the book by Emil Zola, *The Germinal*. That was the only book. If the Germans ever found any of the pages, they would have killed everybody in the group, no matter who brought them in.

SB: During this time, did you have any contact with any one of your family, or friends, during the years 1942-1945?

ZM: Nothing, nothing.

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SB: Maybe you can remember when was the first time that you heard that Jews were murdered in huge masses, or they were gassed in gas chambers?

ZM: When we first arrived in Auschwitz, and saw the writing over the gate, "Work Makes You Free," I said to my brother, "Look what's taking place here: 'Work Makes You Free.' If we work here, we will be free men. And secondly the people here are wearing pajamas in the middle of the night," because we saw something we hadn't known before, the blue and white striped clothing. The third thing was that as soon as we stepped inside the gate in Auschwitz we smelled meat roasting. I said to my brother, "Look, here people are making a living; they eat meat, they sleep in pajamas. If we work here, we will work; it will be good for us." In a few minutes more, we understood the whole thing. One of the people came close to us, and I asked him, "What's happening here?" "Oh, what's happening here?" He answered, "You go into here, through this door, and you go out, like the smoke goes out of a chimney." Then we understood everything. As we went a few meters farther, we saw not only the dead people, but as we were shown the crematoriums, one of them, I don't remember which one, but one was not working, so they were burning the people, and that's what we had smelled—the roasting flesh. The second thing, also, in all the transports, at the selection, they took all the children, and the older people, and the younger ones were taken for work. And with me, the something happened, they took me away from my brother. The selection was made by Mengele, and he threw me over to the children. So I ran over to him, stood straight in front of him, and I said to him, "Listen, I've always been together with my brother." I took my hat off, and said, "Let me be with him." And he said, "But your brother will be digging in a coal mine. And you as a child can be left here with the other children and to make a living here." "But," I said to him, "I'm used to doing hard work, so let me be with my brother." And this must have convinced him. And then he shouted, with a laugh, and in German said, "Go up to your brother." And in about ten minutes later we heard that all the children and the older ones were taken directly to be gassed and then to the crematorium. And that was how we realized that this was the place that here was plan to annihilate all Jewry, in this area.

SB: Were you ever sick and had to be taken to a hospital? If so, tell us what happened there, how they treated you when you were ill?

ZM: In Auschwitz, there was an infirmary, they called it a hospital, a small one. There were some instances where they did help. Among the doctors there were a few Jewish doctors too, and a lot of times they helped. With me, one day, it occurred that I had an extremely high fever, and I could not stand on my feet, and one of the doctors—an acquaintance of ours—he accepted me. And I lay there one day or two days. And in a day or two, he came in very early morning, and began to shout, "What are you doing here?" This was in front of all the people. "You're faking illness. Quickly, get up, get out, and get back to your work. Get out, or we'll force you to." My brother begged him, "Listen, we know each other; he is sick, he can't stand on his feet." He began to shout at my brother, "Take him out of here at once! I don't want to look at these lazy people." Well, two people

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took me to work. I could not stand on my feet. When we came back, after work, to Auschwitz, we found out that all the sick people who had been in the hospital had been taken out and gassed, and no one was left alive.

SB: And that's how he saved you, and you were left alive.

ZM: Yes, and that was indeed a miracle; we can call it that.

SB: He undoubtedly knew that everybody was going to be killed.

ZM: He knew, but he could not tell us. He, too, could have been liquidated. That's why he played the "mean guy" and that's how I was left alive.

SB: Tell me, you were in Auschwitz; were all the guards German? Were there others than German, or were there both?

ZM: All were Germans. All were from the S.S. group. All from the commandos and the S.S. Towards the end of the war they took some from the military. Those were just a few of the guards, and one tiny bit more human than the rest.

SB: How did the *Kapos* treat you?

ZM: In the camp they treated us very, very badly. They constantly beat us, terribly. No matter what took place, there were beatings; constantly there was punishment, with cudgels, and whips, from those *Kapos*. But in the coal mines, the eight or ten hours that we worked there, no *Kapos* meddled in the work there. We worked three hundred meters underground. Every morning we rode down the 300 meters, and worked the eight to ten hours, and were brought up. And no *Kapo* had anything to do with us during that time; but on arrival, they counted us at the gate, recorded the number counted, and permitted us to enter the camp.

SB: Can you relate to me the daily routine in the camp, and what the food was like?

ZM: We woke up very early. It was still quite dark. Everyone received some brown water which was called tea or coffee, and a piece of bread, and the bread was supposed to last for the whole day. When we came back, after work, we got a bowl of "soup." The soup was water, and a little piece of potato was swimming around in it. That was the soup. In a few hours later, we got the same kind of "coffee," and this was our food. On a holiday they added a little piece of margarine. And the bread we broke into portions to last the whole day.

SB: In your opinion, how many people do you judge to have been in the camp?

ZM: In my camp, we came—we built the camp—with all the strength of our coal-mining group—we were the pioneers; the first group of 300, and later an additional several hundred were added, and over a longer period there was a total of 1,000 or 1,200 men. That was a branch, a section of Auschwitz, not far from the camp.

SB: At that time you were aware of how many people there were in total in Auschwitz?

ZM: Yes. At that time there were 40,000.

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SB: You didn't know the number of people, but later you found out that there were 40,000 people in the camp?

ZM: No. The whole camp was full. We all met at the latrines; they were always over-filled. There is where the whole cultural life took place, on the toilets. Often the guards did not let you sit on the toilets too long. It was a whole long *Block* of toilets, and everyone sat together. And the guards beat us with sticks. But we found a way to communicate. There were always long lines of people waiting to use the toilets, hundreds. And there is where we talked and got the latest news, what happened in the camp, and politically what took place. And this was "the heart" of Auschwitz.

SB: During this time were there still children in Auschwitz, or not?

ZM: No. Mainly no. What age? From 12 year-15 years. That was the youngest.

SB: Were you aware that there was religious activity?

ZM: At the beginning, no. There was nothing. There might have been a person who said prayers, but two or three persons together, praying—if the Germans would have caught them, they would have shot them instantly. At the beginning the religious kept kosher—what's kosher—they drank the water with us, they may have made blessings before eating, but after a short time, all that stopped.

SB: Were there among you special people, heroes who gave you hope that you will survive all this?

ZM: No. No one had that kind of courage. Now, in 1986, a book has come out telling of the Polish underground had done heroic work—but we did not know of any of this.

SB: Did you all feel abandoned, lost—the people felt that all hope was gone, that they would not survive?

ZM: The older people who had lost hope, committed suicide on the electric fence. The camp was surrounded by a wire fence, electrified. When we'd get up in the morning we'd find those who had lost hope on the wires. That was a quick death. We did not accept the idea of "no hope." We young ones, we took it much lighter. Our motto, determination, was that we would survive them. We were certain that we would survive them.

SB: Where were you when the camp was liberated?

ZM: We were liberated by the Russians. It was near Driesen. That is a small village, and there, they—the Germans—took stock of us. And from 5,000 only 120 of us were left. We did not know whether we'd be left alive, because the night before there were discussions among them whether to shoot us all. We came to a place, and we wanted to go through and...

SB: This was on the death march?

ZM: All of this on the death march. The death march started on the 17th-18th of January, '45, and we were marched from then until the 10th of May.

SB: This was the 120 people?

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ZM: That's what was left of our group of 500. [He refers to 5,000 above.] That's how the groups were divided. Now, the S.S. group wanted to take us over to the American side. They wanted to show the Americans that there were still Jews left alive. But the Russians were making quick progress. The same day we arrived at a place where we wanted to get out of the forest, when German police began to shout, "Where are you going? On this side the Russians have already arrived." So we were turned around by 90°, to another opening, and again the police showed up, and shouted, "You can't come out this way either. The Russians have already come here, too." So it was understood that the Russians were already everywhere. And that was the 10th of May. The second of May Berlin had fallen. On the 8th of May, the war ended. And the S.S. men wanted to break through the forest to the American side. That's why we were liberated on May 10. The liberation took place this way: The few S.S. men who were marching us, had us march five abreast, holding on to each other underarm. When my group of five saw the forest thin out, we jumped back into the forest, and saw, from a distance, a little house and we decided to go there. We arrived there, and in it there were Polish and Russians, who were already liberated, and were traveling home, from Germany. They would not let us in, because we were still wearing our prisoner blue and white stripes, and they were afraid that through us, the Germans would also kill them. All at once we saw an S.S. man, with a rifle, and he approaches us, and we decided that we would attack him in the forest. But behind us was an outhouse, and the S.S. man, instead of coming to us, he went to the outhouse. And in a minute, he comes out without his rifle, and dressed as a civilian. So we understood that this was their very end. But we weren't sure. We were still fearful that the Germans would come looking for us. One of us was left to watch; I was on the lookout to see what was happening. Suddenly I see that on the path in the woods some soldiers are coming, but in different military dress, similar to the technical military, the death group organization of the Germans. But I saw something interesting taking place. In that moment when this military group dressed differently passes by, the German guards throw away their rifles, and tear off their military insignia. I remembered that once a Russian soldier told me that when a soldier wants to surrender to the enemy, he throws away the military equipment, and tears off the insignia. So I understood that something was happening, but I was still fearful, maybe these were still Germans. But quickly I see that these soldiers are wheeling cannons, and I go close, and see that on his cap, there is not a swastika, but a red star. I shouted to the other men, "Come, these are Russians." The Russians saw us, and the whole brigade stopped, and we embraced, and we were liberated men.

SB: Where did you go after this, to recuperate physically, to convalesce, and to rest, to come to be yourself again, and how long did this take?

ZM: Not long. I didn't have a long cross over. The Russians, in two, three days, took us to work, and we worked for them. In two, three weeks, we were freed, and they sent us home. And all five of us started out for Poland—partly by foot, partly by train, partly by wagon. We were on our way to Poland, in good health.

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SB: And when you arrived in Poland, did you find any one from your family alive?

ZM: No, not a single one did I find alive. But about a year later, accidentally, I found out that my brother had survived, that he had lived in Germany, and later immigrated to America.

SB: And the rest of your family, they were all killed?

ZM: Not one. *No one* was left alive from all my family—70 people.

SB: And after that, what happened to you? What did you want to do with your life? Where did you decide to go?

ZM: The very first thought, the most important thought, was that as soon as we could get organized somewhat, that means that we'd meet with some young people, then we would, rightly so, travel to Israel. [Palestine] And that is what we did.

[End of interview.]

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