

Interviewee: GOLOMBEK, Genia  
Interviewer: Nora Levin

Date: August 24, 1981

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## SUMMARY

Genia Golombek, nee Fieman, was born on January 17, 1923 in Lodz, Poland into a religious middle class family. Her father was in the commercial wood-burning business. She attended a Polish state elementary school and then a private Jewish girls high school one of five in Lodz. In December, 1939 all the Jews of Lodz were forced into a ghetto. Genia describes life in the Lodz ghetto: the *Judenrat*, deeds of Rumkowski, its Jewish leader, Hans Biebow, German commandant, the round-ups and the inhuman conditions. Genia's father worked for the *Judenrat* but later died of starvation in 1942.

In 1944 the Jews of the Lodz Ghetto were deported to Birkenau/Auschwitz. Genia describes her life there and even being passed over by Mengele twice. In October 1944 she was sent to Lenzing labor camp (a subcamp of Mauthausen) in Austria to work making artificial wool and bomb shelters for the Germans. She mentions kindnesses by the camp commandant and two women SS guards. She was also helped by two non-Jewish prisoners (one a Frenchman) while building the underground bomb shelters.

She was liberated by the Americans on May 5, 1945 in Lenzing, received food and medical help from the Americans and was relocated to Kammerscheffling (also in Austria) where they set up more aid facilities. In June, 1945 she went to Santa Maria di Leuca, near Naples, to receive aid from the Joint Distribution Committee. She was helped by the International Refugee Organization during her travels to Italy. While working for the Americans in Caserte, Italy, near Naples, she met her husband. They married and had two children. The family emigrated to the United States in 1950.

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#### SUBJECT HEADINGS

Aid by non-Jews  
Auschwitz/Birkenau  
Biebow, Hans, German commandant of Lodz Ghetto  
Lenzing, Austria  
Lodz Ghetto, Poland  
Mauthausen  
Rumkowski, head of Judenrat of Lodz Ghetto