

Interviewee:	<u>LEIZEROWSKI</u> , Rabbi Baruch	Date:	May 4, 1981
Interviewer:	Josey G. Fisher		
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SUMMARY

Rabbi Baruch Leizerowski was born on August 1, 1909 in Selub, near Nowogródek, Poland. The Nazis murdered his three brothers and his father. His father was a Hebrew teacher and his brothers were rabbis. Rabbi Leizerowski studied in Radin under Rabbi Israel Meir ha-Kohen, the Chofetz Chaim, and was ordained there in 1935. He was a rabbi in Lodz. He gives a description of the Jewish education available to all children, including girls (Bais Yaakov schools). Rabbi Leizerowski describes the growing Nazism between 1935 and 1939, problems with *Volksdeutsche*, and the fear and anxiety of Jews in Lodz. Once the ghetto was built he had to abandon his synagogue and had to perform all rabbinic duties in hiding. Rabbi Leizerowski felt that Rumkowski did his best as the leader of the Lodz *kehillah*. He describes life in the ghetto: horrible hunger and lack of medicine. He led secret religious services and taught children. His first wife died in the Lodz Ghetto. Rabbi Leizerowski wrote a book answering religious questions entitled *Ta'am Baruch*.

In 1944 he was deported to Auschwitz by cattle car. He details his arrival, selections by Mengele, and the barrack. He was put in the *Zigeuner Lager* (the Gypsy barrack, after the Germans had killed all of them). After 23 days he was deported by train to Dachau to work on railroad tracks for the German army. He describes his experiences in Dachau, hard labor, sharing his *tefillin*, Pesach observance and maintaining his faith. He was evacuated by train which was bombed. He was liberated by the American army and brought to the hospital in St. Ottilien, Germany.

He began a new life in a displaced persons camp, where an American chaplain helped him acquire a Torah, *talesim* and prayer books. By 1946 he was living in Munich. There he organized a synagogue which functioned under American supervision. Rabbi Leizerowski became the chief rabbi of Munich and was a member of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Munich. In 1952, Rabbi Leizerowski with his new wife and two sons left Germany for the United States.

See also the interview with his second wife, Klara Leizerowski.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Personal Narrative, Jewish
World War II, 1939 - 1945
Volksdeutsche
Rumkowski, Chaim
Munich, Germany 1946 - 1952
Auschwitz Concentration Camp
Dachau Concentration Camp
Lodz Ghetto