

OK, go ahead.

I don't believe that people had cyanide or arsenic. I don't know whether they could have got it from, but this was a matter of just saying these things. I don't think meant anything. It meant more something that they wouldn't want to live under the German domination, but I don't think it was serious the whole thing. People don't just commit suicide and take their lives or the lives of their children. It is more of a phrase than reality.

Did the family you live with treat you as one of the family or as a guest or how did they treat you?

They treated me very nicely. Well, the scheme was to take in children. The scheme was financed by the government. They received some money for it. And they felt maybe their patriotic duty to do this. But they were very decent and very nice and, decent people, very solid, simple people.

What did you do for recreation?

Oh, I used to belong to the Boy Scouts. And then we had these outings from time to time. And sometimes, we used to go to the cinema. We used to roam the streets and maybe what all children do. Nothing out of the ordinary. I don't think there was much recreation in those days in England. Everything was towards the war effort. And whatever occasion there was maybe cinema, not much more than that.

Were you in touch with your parents?

I received two letters from them through the Swiss Red Cross, and that's why I knew where they were. That's why I had the address. And later on, I was able to go there when I came-- well, while I was a soldier, I went to Belgium to try and find them. And I went to the address which I have through the letters I received from the Red Cross. But otherwise, not, I had no contact with them at all. Because it was a war, you had no contact.

Did you experience much anti-German prejudice in the village?

Well, in the beginning, they knew that we were from Germany, but then soon they realized that, of course, we were Jewish. And there was a difference being German and being German Jewish. And I don't think there was any kind of enmity towards us, they were fundamentally good people. Except of course after the war, oh, no, during the war even when the British were attacked by the Jewish underground, then there was some feeling. They didn't like that. But not really-- it wasn't bad, it was OK.

Did you remain in touch with family after the war?

No. I lost complete contact of them. I don't think they are alive today. Maybe their children, the grandchildren might be around, but their children already must be very old now. Because they were then, maybe, in their 30 or 35, close to their 40s, so they must be 90 now or maybe close to 100, their children.

Did you and the family that you lived with, did you got to love each other?

No, I don't think so. I don't think there was this kind of relationship of love. There was just a decent affectionate, but love you give to it solely not to strangers.

You were in the Jewish Brigade?

Yes.

Can you talk about that?

Well I think the Jewish Brigade was formed in 1944. And who ever wanted to, Jewish personnel, Jewish soldiers could

opt to join it. And of course, I immediately opted for it, and I was transferred. I was sent to Italy where the Jewish Brigade was. I came to Napoli, and they were already there in the north. And I joined them there. And it was almost towards the end of the war. There were a few small battles which we took part in, and then we were sent to Belgium and Holland.

And then, they were suspended. They were sent back to Palestine. I went to Germany when I went back to my British unit, and I stayed in Germany another year and a half. That was my first contact with Palestine with the Palestinians. It wasn't Israel then, of course, in those days. So I saw the first time people from Palestine, from Kibbutzim and Moshavim and so forth.

In your first interview that we did in March, you mentioned that when you were a kid that children recited anti-Semitic verses to you.

Yes, yes.

Do you remember any of those and tell us about that and what they contained and so forth in those situations?

They were cold and lewd kind of things and terrible words. They still exist today, I think. And they used to chant them all the time about Jews being dirty and filthy and being pigs and what else? It was terrible things really.

What were the kinds of situations in which you would hear this? Was this after school?

Yeah, after school, they would-- any time they used to see me. They used to chant and they used to sing them and so forth. And it really doesn't affect me anymore. In those days, of course, it was terribly humiliating because I was in a different situation. Today, if anybody would call me even a dirty Jew, I wouldn't even care. It would just kind water off a duck's back. Makes no difference to me.

OK. I had one other question. You mentioned again in your first interview, you said that when you were a kid, you knew a fellow who was a Polish communist. And then last year, you met him and he had changed his views about communism and politics dramatically. Was this Jonny, the person that you--

No, no, no, no. These were my--

Tell us a little about this person and this change of political views.

No, these were my cousins.

Oh, your cousins?

My cousins in Paris. They were all communists. They were fervent communists. Communists could do nothing wrong. Russia could do nothing wrong.

This is back in the '20s and '30s?

No, that was in '45 when the war ended.

Oh, I see.

That was in '45, and I met them in Paris. I think I have recorded this entire recordings. I said when I met them in Paris, they expressed their views on communism, and communism was going to save the world and so forth. And then, of course, everything changed. Even the state was created and slowly, maybe in the '70s, they all came to Israel to visit me, and they came every vacation. We occasionally spent in Israel. They were very pro-Israel then.

In those days, they were against the establishment of the state. And the state wasn't then founded. But when was talking

about creating a Jewish state and they said, no, Jews shouldn't have a state of their own, Jews who live in France are Frenchmen and Jews who live in England are English and so forth. But thank God, later, they came to their senses, and they became very Jewish and very, very zionistic.

Can you tell us anything about the changes that they went through personally?

I have no idea. I hadn't seen them in the intermittent years. Probably, it's kind of an evolution. You get disenchanted with communism. After all, they came from a kind of a bourgeois family. They were not employed people, they work for themselves in textiles. And so we all go, every one of us goes through these phases. We all are rebels when we are in our youth. And then slowly, we evolve and we develop and we come to our senses. We look at things different. Even now, what is happening in Russia, it's becoming hopefully a democracy.

People change their minds about communism. It's really not a system which can work. I mean it's a good idea and saying the quality of the classes is a wonderful idea, but maybe not meant for human beings.

When you were in England, were you allowed to talk about your experiences in Germany? When you were a kid?

I never spoke about them. I didn't have anybody to speak to about them. Besides, all the kids have these similar experiences. And as I explained to my landlady where I lived with them, I never spoke to them about these things. I don't they would have grasped what I was telling them.

And nobody asked you?

Nobody asked. Nobody asked. I never spoke about that.

Would you have liked somebody to ask?

No, but you see, when I was that age and that at that stage, I thought that was a natural thing to be treated like that. I didn't think it was out of the ordinary. I think Jews had to be treated that way. I didn't rebel. I thought that was the order of things. I didn't know any different until I developed and evolved and so forth. And then I knew different. But as a child, I grew up with this kind of treatment, this kind of attitude that we Jews were always treated in such a terrible manner. But we never rebelled, we didn't know any different.

So when I came to England, why I tell such a thing? You don't talk about natural things. And slowly, it takes time for your mind to grow and see things in a different way. And then, of course, I became a completely different person.

Were there any sayings or beliefs that surprised you or customs when you went to England?

To England?

No. England it's an island, it's isolated. It has different customs altogether. Many things surprised me. For instance, when I came to England, I saw many children in torn clothes which I never seen in Germany. I saw slums, which I really never in Germany. I thought England was a rich country. It was an empire, and I saw poor people suddenly. I never realized that.

And, of course, the language and of course the mannerism, everything was different than I was used to Germany. But then I was a child. You get used to these things, and they were not things which were harmful. They were just different, and they weren't bad. So you get used to these things and you accommodate yourself to these things.

There were no slums in Germany?

Not that I remember. Not the way I saw in London. It was dreadful.

Can you describe it?

Yeah, well, one day, a boy, a schoolmate of mine took me to his home. And bare walls and water was running down the wall and the floor was broken, the steps were broken. I've never seen anything like it. Poor, poor home. Rickety furniture, very dirty, and the kitchen was awful. I'd never seen it ever before.

How come you were sent to England and your sister wasn't?

I don't know. Maybe, my mother wanted to keep one child. I can't really answer that. I don't think she realized or anybody realized what their fate was going to be. So she kept the girl with her. And then hopefully, when the war's over - there was no war in 1938. After all this has blown over, and then we would be meet again, and we would be a family again. So she kept one child with her. She was the only girl. But it's a difficult question to answer. They sent all three of us away and the girl she kept.

Because you were boys?

Because, I don't know, she was the youngest.

What trade school did you attend in England?

It's the ORT School.

Old School?

ORT, O-R-T. And it's a Jewish technical school. It's all over the world. It's financed and organized by the ORT. It's a Jewish for the habilitation and training of children for trades. It was in Leeds, in Yorkshire. And I went there for two years and I learned metalwork, like on a lathe and turning and filing and whatever.

Earlier, in one of our interviews, you talked about a story. A friend told you about people in Lithuania? And they also said something about the Lublin ghetto?

Yes.

Can you tell me more about?

These are two different things. I think that a schoolfriend I met, the only one I met, I think he was in Lithuania, and he had to dig graves for the dead. And the ground was so hard, they had to be given dynamite to blow up to make graves. That's about Lithuania. I think that's the only thing I mentioned about Lithuania that he was in a camp in Lithuania and that was his task to bury the dead. And it stayed with me because this idea of digging the ground with dynamite, they couldn't open the ground because it was so frozen.

And Lublin, I went-- I was in a home in Stettin, in Szczecin. And the whole population of the town was sent to Lublin. And from there, they were sent to the concentration camp. But the whole congregation of Stettin was sent to Lublin. That's what the same person told me.

Why don't we get the spellings and then we can come back.

OK, OK.

Well, might as well start with Stettin.

S-T-E-T-T-I-N. It is Szczecin today. I don't know how to spell it in Polish. It's become part of Poland, but it's in Pomerania, and I spelled it for you.

Thanks.

What town were you in in Britain when they evacuated you to the village? What village was that again?

It was Hemel Hempstead.

Hemel?

Hempstead.

How do you spell Hemel?

H-E-M-E-L and an apostrophe and then Hempstead, H-E-M-P-S-T-E-A-D.

And the town that you were taken to in Holland?

Hook von Holland.

How do you spell that?

H-O-O-K V-A-N and then Holland, H-O-L-L-A-N-D.

Now, when you were reading the first story, you mentioned that it was dedicated to your four grandchildren.

Yes.

How did you spell their names?

Rotem is R-O-T-E-M and then his sister Tamar, T-A-M-A-R. And there is Natanel, which means given by God, Natan, N-A-T-A-N-E-L, Natanel. And there's Gal, G-A-L.

You also mentioned something that sounded to me like Schumer?

Shimon.

And that's?

S-H-I-M-O-N.

Now, in the second story, you said a phrase that sounded something like guards in [Personal name] [Personal name] something like that.

I mentioned [? Elohim? ?]

I'm not sure, that's what it sounded like, but I could wrong.

Did I say the name in Hebrew?

Possibly. It's what it sounded like. It was guards in then this word.

If you make it clear, maybe, I know exactly what you--

Elowen maybe?

I didn't mention [? Elohim. ?] I don't think so. Did I quote it from the Old Testament that one?

No.

Ephraim?

It was near the beginning. That's OK. We'll just skip that one.

OK.

Now, Uzi is spelled?

Pardon? Uzi?

Uzi is spelled--

I think U-Z-I.

U-Z-I. And that's the gun. Then there was town that you arrived in your story.

Birgafgafa.

That's spelled?

B-I-R-G-A-F-G-A-F-A, Birgafgafa. And Elarish, E-L-A-R-I-S-H.

Were there any others?

Gaza, G-A-Z-A.

Then Shuafat?

Shuafat, S-H-U-A-F-A-T. I got it you remember Shuafat.

Now there is a phrase that was something like, proceed to-- sounded to me like--

Kiriya, Kyriya. That is the headquarters of the army. That's where all the officers are. It's K-I-R-I-Y-A, Kiriya.

And IDF?

Israeli Defense Force.

Golan Heights?

G-O-L-A-N and Heights you know.

Mihail?

Mishael, Michael, exactly like Michael.

Oh, OK.

Michael.

It is spelled? M-I-S-H-A-E-L, like Michael.

Thanks. Now, there was also something that sounded like gildfish from the-- and I didn't get the word.

Pardon?

There was also--

Oh, gildfish.

Yeah, what kind of fish is that?

It's kind of is a something fish in the kinneret.

Can you spell it?

I've forgotten. Something grilled, to grill a fish.

Gild fish?

No, grill. G-R-I-L-L-E-D, to grill a fish.

Oh, to grill a fish.

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I have a problem with my r's.

OK. So it's grilled fish the what?

From the kinneret.

And that's spelled?

K-I-N-N-E-R-E-T. Kinneret.

Thanks a lot.

Good. It really helps the transcribers.

I'm going to conclude the interview for today and continue it another time.

But these stories don't really belong to this or do they?

Yes, they do.