

RG-90.047.0028

Summary

Egon Brill, born in 1926 in in Koźle, Poland, discusses his mother Rosa Nebel, daughter of Samuel and Miriam, and father Erich Eliahu Brill, son of Leo; having two siblings, Gert Horst who was 4 years younger and a sister, Marianne who was 6 years younger; his father being assimilated, feeling German having fought in WWI; his mother being very religious, Orthodox; keeping Kosher; his parents having a textile store; living on Bahnhofstrasse 1; German employees stealing from store 1934-1935, knowing Jews could not report it; his father selling the store in 1936; moving to a smaller town, Beuten, living off savings; his father feeling the political situation would pass; after the invasion of Poland, moving to Katowice, to his maternal grandfather who was well off; staying until 1939; all men between 16-60, including his father and grandfather, being sent to camps; last seeing his father when handing him apples for on the train; his mother selling their silver; his mother finding out there was a labor camp close to Krakow and the family going there; staying a few months on Ditlowska [PH] street in Krakow; moving to the ghetto; the situation not being as bad as in the Lodz ghetto, the relations between non-Jewish and Jewish residents being better; he and his mother working in a factory braiding straw for shoes; sleeping four people in one bed; SS and Wehrmacht cutting off beards of Orthodox men; working at the airport of Krakow; air men being more kind giving him food; in 1943, walking to the labor camp in Plaszow together with everyone else from the ghetto; an SS man grabbing his siblings on the way and putting them on a truck, never seeing them again; he and his mother being separated but being able to wave to her from the men's camp; working at the electrician's workshop and learning from the chief electrician Enek Landau; being taken in a razzia and shot in the leg in a mass execution of 20-30 men; falling into the trench of dead and dying; bleeding; being covered with chalk and dirt; staying until dark; walking to the hospital where his mother worked; the wound being superficial; returning to his barrack, no record of him being shot existing; the camp commander Amon Göth shooting prisoners for fun, with a rifle from his balcony or at random in the camp; Göth being killed by Poles after the war; working in the garage; a Jewish mechanic teaching him about cars; getting some extra food, saving his life; Latvian guards being the worst; Oscar Schindler's representative looking for qualified workers for his factory and trying to recruit him, but choosing to stay not knowing Schindler saved Jews; his mother getting third degree burns in Plaszow when a SS man kicked boiling water over her legs; not being able to work, his mother being sent to Auschwitz; his mother passing Dr. Mengele's test, running without her crutch, overcoming her pain; his mother believing God helped her; working as an electrician running high voltage electricity wires to an underground factory being built for Messerschmidt; SS turning on the electricity sometimes while Jewish workers were up on the poles mounting the wires, killing workers; being sent to Dachau in a group with other electricians; the Dachau camp having many German political prisoners and better conditions; getting two kinds of typhoid, one from lice and the other affecting his stomach; his boss, Landau bringing him an apple in the hospital; the gesture being as valuable for his survival as the nutrients; being very weak; on April 24-25, 1945 not getting food or water anymore, but licking up rain water; on April 29, lying in the yard hearing English, understanding he was liberated; SS guards being forced to carry the sick prisoners to trucks taking them to the Feldafing displaced persons camp; waking up with sheets, pillows and

a duvet, seeing nurses, understanding he was saved; staff being American; meeting a woman who had met his mother in Bergen-Belsen; getting a travel document from the American commander in Dachau; walking and hitchhiking to Bergen-Belsen in May 1945; finding his mother on a list over the dead in Bergen-Belsen; walking back to Dachau because his friends were there; another woman arriving to Dachau from Bergen-Belsen claiming she had seen his mother; returning to Bergen-Belsen and finding out his mother and her cousin Leni Kempler had gone to Sweden with the Red Cross White Buses; staying in Bergen-Belsen for three weeks; getting on a transport to Sweden; still wearing his striped prisoner's clothing at arrival in Ramlösa Brunn, Sweden; staying in quarantine; calling his mother; staying with his mother in Malmö, Sweden; his mother working as a maid in a Jewish home; getting a job at a bus trailer factory, Molins in Eskilstuna; his mother moving with him and working in a glove factory; studying in Stockholm; meeting his wife in a group of Jewish refugees; getting married in 1951; not believing in God but still trying to believe in the good of other humans; the best thing being not thinking about the past at all.