LIVING MEMORY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

RENA ZABIELAK

Interviewed by Devora Coutts

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

IMPORTANT

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F223 Side A

Could you please tell me where you were born?

I was born in Warsaw. On the 23rd of March l924. My mother - was - Mindla Litwak. Born Ponch? And my father was Chil Enoch Litwak. And they called him Henick.

Can you tell me about your brothers and sisters?

I had a younger brother - He was three and a half years younger than me. His name was Adek. Abraham.

Do you remember your grandparents?

Yes, I had - when I was born I had even a great grandmother. From my father's side. But I don't remember her. My grandparents from my mother's side lived not far from me. Where we lived. But the grandparents from my father's side lived over the river. Because Warsaw was in two parts. One was called Warszawa and the other side was Praga. And my grandparents, my parental grandparents lived in Praga. My grandfather, my parental grandfather, was a teacher, a melamed. And my grandmother was a business woman.

What was her business?

She was giving staff hire. My maternal grandparents. My grandfather had - was an antique dealer. Both grandparents were religious people.

Were they very orthodox would you say?

My - Yes. My grandfather - my parental grandfather was Radzyner chasid. But my mother's mother was a Mitnaged.

Was there friction?

There was never friction. I tell you it was - it was - a very - aware of and warm atmosphere between the families. My father had three younger sisters. And my mother had two sisters and two brothers.

And did they all live near each other?

My parental grandparents lived together with two daughters and grandchildren. One daughter didn't live with them. But my maternal, they lived also not far from each other. My father was a very well known man in Warsaw. He had all different kinds of businesses. And before the war he had an import and export of fruit. And he was here in England twice before the war.

So that's quite an unusual business, isn't it, for that time?

Yes. And he was a very special man. They used to - how is it called - the - how do you say it - the handle of - the golden handle - who came in poor and went out rich. He was a very unusual man. And a very good man.

Was he very orthodox as well. Did he carry on the tradition?

No. He wasn't so orthodox. He was - a matter of fact that he was a warden of a Shule. But sometimes he used to travel on Shabbes or to do things which he shouldn't do. But he was a very generous man. And a very good man.

Did he have a particular standing in the community?

Yes. I am telling you.

Apart from being warden of the Shule?

No. You see there were not things like this in Poland. I don't remember it. But later when we were in the ghetto he used to do quite a lot.

So really you were quite a well to do family?

Yes.

Was it unusually wealthy, would you say?

Unusually rich. And that's what helped me to survive the war.

So what were you children doing?

You see I went to school. To a very well known school in Warsaw called Zjednoczenia Nauczyeieli. And my brother went to a school called Askola.

And they were both Polish schools and not Jewish schools?

They were both Jewish schools. In Poland you used to go to school six days a week. And we never went to school on Saturday. But the school what my brother used to go they used to teach Hebrew and so on. In my school it was a Jewish school, but they never taught Hebrew. But they taught the Jewish religion.

So they taught you all about festivals?

Not only festivals, about all the Jewish - you know -

Jewish history?

History.

So you didn't actually learn Chumash?

No.

You didn't read Hebrew at all?

No, I didn't.

Was that a girl's school only?

It was only a girl's school.

Do you think it was because it was a girl's school they only taught you in general?

No, I don't know. And it was a private school. You see.

Tell me about your mother?

My mother had two sisters. Two brothers. She was a housewife and a very warm hearted lady. Everything had to be perfect. And she was very strict with the children. Where my father wasn't so strict. I sometimes used to say that I loved my father more than my mother, because he had a tremendous sense of humour. And mummy was more serious.

Did your mother cover her head at all?

No. No. She only covered the head, what I remember, on Yom Tou, when she put on the candles when she went to Shule. And to Shule she didn't go like they go here every Saturday. She only went to Shule on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. And later when she lost her parents she used to go for Yiskor.

Did she have any other interests apart from being a housewife. Did she do anything in the wider community?

No, she didn't. She only helped other people. You know. In the family she used to help a lot.

So she really was at home most of the time. Did she ever travel with your father on his business, or not at all?

No, she didn't travel with my father. But every year in the summer we used to go for a holiday for two months.

And where did you go?

We went to the seaside.

Where?

To Soppot. It was a very nice place. They used to take - a flat, you know, hire a flat. And breakfast and like supper in the evening, we used to eat in the flat. And for lunch, because the main meal was - we used to go to a restaurant, and only to a Jewish restaurant.

So you did actually worry about Kosher food?

Yes.

That was important?

Yes, it was very strictly Kosher.

So obviously at home as well?

Yes. And I keep to it today.

So that was one of the most important things that you had to keep Kosher?

Yes.

So there was a Kosher restaurant in that place?

Yes.

There must have been a lot of Jewish people going on holiday there?

It wasn't a lot, but it was quite a few.

So it was worth it for somebody to have a Kosher restaurant at that place?

Yes. It wasn't one, it was even a few Kosher. But I tell you something. I travelled since I came to England and I got married and so on. I travelled to all different places you know. I never saw such a fantastic resort like it was in Soppot. To be truthful you could enjoy yourself without spending a lot of money. It was completely different than it is for instance in France, Italy and so on.

So what did people actually do on holiday. I mean you went for quite a long time, two months is a long time?

Yes. We used to go to the beach. We used to listen to concerts. It was all done like this that - it was completely different.

A leisurely pace of life?

Yes.

So you stayed in that place for two months?

We used to go for an excursion. Not only to Soppot we went. When I was younger we went to Druskieniki or we went to Ciechocinek. Because we went to Ciechocinek and Druskieniki because my mother had trouble with her back, then she used to have mud, mud baths and so on. And we had a nice big home, we always had maids at home.

Did they also come on holiday?

Yes, she used to take. But when we went to Soppot we didn't. But when we went to Druskieniki and we were younger, and mummy used to take a maid, one of the maids.

Tell me a little bit about your standing in the community, your friends, your relationship with non-Jewish people and so on when you grew up?

I didn't meet a lot of non-Jewish people when I was younger. Til the war. Because when the war broke out I was l5 years old. You see then I didn't meet - the only people which I knew which were not Jewish, what I had contacts with, they were the maids which were at home. But like this I never had any contact with non-Jewish people.

You can say that the Jewish community was really so big that it wasn't ..?

Yes, you see you've got to understand that in Warsaw was 350,000 Jews lived. And actually it was a third of the community in Warsaw. And we lived in a very nice flat. It was very nicely furnished.

How big was it?

You see for Warsaw it was big. We had four rooms, kitchen and bathroom. That it was something really special.

And was it in a Jewish area?

It was, it was like a Jewish area. We lived on the third floor. We didn't have a lift. Because there were some flats which had a lift. Ours didn't. But it was a lovely flat. They were intercommunicating rooms, one into the other.

Do you still remember how it was laid out?

Yes, this I remember.

Did you live in that particular flat a long time, was it home for a long time?

Yes. We moved in there when I was l3. But before we lived somewhere not far away from there. There we had only two rooms, kitchen and bathroom. And funny enough I always loved children. And there where we lived, lived a poor family. And we lived on the first floor. And on the fifth floor lived a family in one room. A grandmother, grandfather, parents and five little children. And the children were always dirty and hungry that I used to take in always one child, wash it, dress it, feed it and send it to the parents. I loved children.

Were there a lot of poor people around you?

Yes, a lot of poor people. As a matter of fact that my mother was always telling about her grandfather who lived with them for many years, that he used to feed the poor children. The mother used to go out to work and he used to make like dummies from sugar and to feed the children, to look after the children.

And who were your neighbours there, apart from them. Do you remember any particular neighbours?

I can't remember.

But this particular family you remember?

Yes. I remember they were neighbours. Later when we moved we had also some very nice neighbours. But to be honest you've got to understand it is over 50 years.

Well, you still have a good memory of ..?

No, I tell you something. One day somebody said to me that I am a living chronicle of the Warsaw ghetto. But I don't think I am.

Well, you were very young at that time. I mean if you were l3 or l4 you were probably more involved with friends. Did you have lots of friends?

I had friends, but I didn't go out a lot. And funny enough, in one year, first I lost my maternal grandmother. I was 9. We were in Druskieniki. And my maternal grandmother died. And my mother at the time wasn't well. And she didn't know about it. My father didn't let her know. He came and took my mother back to Warsaw for an operation. She had - a boil on her neck. She had a serious operation. And then in l937 and l938, in six months, because I remember it was after Succot my maternal grandfather died. And he was - 76. But my grandmother died a few years before. And in '38 my paternal grandfather died. And here I am going to tell you a very interesting story. He was not a rich man. But my father was the rich son. The people came and said "Look, you've got pineapple, you've got everything to eat. And you should be happy". He said "If I will eat the same piece of bread as you do then I will be happy". And the night before he died he called my father and he told him what my father should do. Because he had two son-in-laws which didn't - didn't do a very good living. And he said "You've got to take responsibility over them". And then he told him where he wants to be buried. And that time died a friend of his and nobody told him about it. Then he said "If you wont be able to bury me in Warsaw next to my brother, then you may bury me next to Zeltser". You know, somebody there. And the same night he died. And my father went to the cemetery and next to his uncle was a big tree, and they took out the tree and they buried my grandfather there. And it is very funny, here women are not going to the cemetery and so on. Where in Poland not only women, they took all the grandchildren as well. And I will never forget, I remember my paternal grandfather said - because they didn't put him in a box. They buried him - in tachrichim.

How old were you then?

About l3, l4. I tell you something I remember like today the way how they make a hesped. I don't remember the hesped of my maternal grandfather. But my paternal grandfather I remember. And funny, my grandmother, my paternal grandmother, was always ill. And he died, she broke her leg in '35 and she couldn't walk and work anymore. But - she lived still, she was with us in the ghetto and so on. She was a most fantastic lady.

How did you celebrate festivals at home. The food, the cooking, getting dressed, tell me about it a little bit?

Yes, it was very - first of all for - you see my mother, she was a very wealthy woman. But she thought that children shouldn't be over-dressed and shouldn't have too much. And whenever they made me a new dress my old dress was given away. And every - for Pesach we used to have all clothes new. And the same it was for Rosh Hashana. And funny enough - that when my mother lived with me - because my mother survived the war -   that always for Yontif? she used to buy something new for my son.

It was the tradition?

Yes.

To have some new clothes?

Yes.

Tell me a little bit about the cooking, about the food?

You know - for instance every Friday she used to make Gefilte fish. Chicken soup. And in the summer they used to roast a goose. In the winter it was chicken. But they didn't roast chicken. They made it - they boiled it.

Did you cook it at all at home or did you also take it to the bakery?

We - my mother didn't - it was a very big festival if my mother made cholent. About cholent I - will tell you later. Because when we were in the ghetto we used to make cholent every Shabbes. And sometimes you gave the cholent to the baker and you brought it back and it wasn't cooked. They forgot to put it through the -

Can we carry on now with you a little bit. At that time you were still going to school?

Yes.

When you were l4. What about anti-semitism, can we touch on that now?

Yes, anti-semitism was very great in Warsaw.

And when did you start to feel it?

When I was going to school. I tell you what it was. You started school in - September. And Juda in Warsaw - you know we had to go to buy books. And the books were in the - you know the books what they used to sell, they were in the hands of Jewish people you know, Jewish people used to sell the educational books for children. And not far from where I used to live when I was a little girl, used to be the street called Swientokrzyska. And there you used to go to buy books. And outside the Jewish shops used to stay the - I forgot. I forgot. I don't know exactly. And they used to say "Don't go, don't go in, don't buy books by a Jew", and so on.

Who were these people, describe who they were?

They were - it was the - from the - they were anti-semitics.

Were they young people?

Yah, young people, they were students. And they used to say "Don't buy books from Jews", and so on. And they used to stay outside the Jewish shops and didn't allow - you see when they saw a Jewish person - you know, I looked very Jewish and they didn't say anything. And I was always scared to walk in the evening, that one of those wouldn't hit me. I had a friend which used to live on the Swientokrzyska. Hanka Boksenbaum. I remember her name. And she - when I used to go home from her when I used to go there, my heart used to beat like hell. I was only scared that they shouldn't hit me on the way.

And that was the usual thing that happened. That wasn't anything to do with the war yet?

No, it wasn't the war, it was before the war.

Any other occasions of anti-semitism?

Yes, my father once had a story that he went - we didn't have a telephone at the time yet. And he went to the Post Office to ring up somewhere. And an akowcy came and wanted to hit him and my father hit him and he came home, he was all shocked.
<u>End of F223 Side A</u>

F223 Side B

I wanted to ask you about education at home. Did your parents ever tell you what to do in cases of attack or people antagonising you?

I tell you what. You see I wanted to explain to you something. We went to school at different times the children go here. And always - you see we left the house about half past eight. School started 9 o'clock. And we used to come home after one, or after 2 o'clock, when it was more lessons. But in the afternoon when you came to our house my brother was sitting with the teacher, learning extra Hebrew. Yes, because my father used to say "Vie ist Torah dort ist Chochmah". And I used to have a French teacher and I used to have another teacher if I didn't do so well in school. And always was every afternoon in one room I was sitting with a teacher. In the other room my brother was sitting with a teacher. And - we didn't go out often to the cinema, very seldom. It was - or perhaps I don't remember. The life was completely different. But a family life was very close, you know, aunties, uncles. And my father was a very friendly man. He used to have a lot of friends. And they used to call him (SPOKEN IN HEBREW)

Will you explain that please?

That my father went out with all his friends around him. You know, he was a very well known person.

Did a lot of people come into the house as well?

Yes. The house was - and they used to come, two brothers, which were friends of my father. And one was a very - greedy, he wanted only sweets and chocolates, and one day we played a trick upon him and so on. It was completely different. Children were more satisfied from the life what they had then. And I see how children are pleased today. They live a completely different life.

But would you say that your parents influence in the way they brought you up was very strict. I mean if your parents said something there was no discussion about this I suppose?

There was no discussion.

If your parents said you have to study French now, you studied?

Yes. But today it's completely different.

What about these private teachers. Was that, would you say, a privilege. Was that unusual?

No, that was - you see when a person was wealthy and he wanted his children to study, then he always used to bring teachers in and so on, to try to give the children the best. They never taught about clothing the children so beautifully, they only taught what they should have in their heads. And funny enough - when I had my son - the first thing what I wanted him to do is to go to a good school and to study. And - because I knew you can take away everything, but what you've got in your head nobody can take away from you.

So education was really the most important thing. Was there any other connection or happenings, things that happened with non-Jewish people at all, that you can tell me about. You can't really remember?

I don't remember. I - listen, I can't say anything what I don't remember. Later I've got plenty to tell. When I was in contact. But not - you were looking later for somebody who wasn't Jewish, because of circumstances.

Can we then move on to l938, '39?

I tell you what I remember, something very interesting. My father went to England - in l939. Because he was an exporter of fruit. He exported from Poland onions to England. And he stopped in Berlin because he had a friend in Berlin, and he stopped in Berlin. And when he came back - he was very upset what was going on in Germany. He said "I only hope that things like this wont happen in Poland".

And he came back all right from that trip?

Yes.

Because he must have gone by train I suppose?

He went by train. Yes. He came back alright from that trip and he was alright.

And already things were happening in Europe. Did you hear anything, did you know anything?

Oh we knew something, but not much. Not much. Because we used to read a paper - my father used to read Jewish papers, Chaynt and so on. My mother and the children used to read the paper 'Nasz Przeglad'.
What does that mean?

It was what you are looking for - It was called 'Our Paper'. And Nakom Goldman's niece used to go to my school, to my class. And her father was the editor of 'Nasz Przeglad'.

Was that also a Jewish paper?

This was a Jewish paper but written in Polish.

And the other papers were written in Yiddish I suppose?

In Yiddish, yes. There was Hine?, there was Moment? in Yiddish. But 'Nasz Przeglad' was more - you know - how to say - you know, the upper Jewish classes.

And what I've got also to say - they were - two or three sorts of Jews in Poland. They were the inteligenzia like the doctors, the lawyers, the dentists and so forth. Then it was the business people. And then it was the very froom which used to sit all the time and learn. The inteligenzia didn't keep any Yomtovs. For instance when I saw in England that doctors don't work on Shabbes or solicitors or things, it was to me something what I couldn't understand. Because in Poland it didn't exist that a doctor wouldn't - they didn't even keep kosher homes. And I was going even to a school where the children were of parents which were not so religious. And sometimes I used to say "Why in my home is everything so strictly kosher", but I couldn't help it, my parents want it like this and -

Did you know any people who actually married out. Mixed marriages?

No, I didn't. I didn't know about mixed marriages at all. Till I - to be honest, till I came to England. But my father when I left him told me not to marry out.

So even though these people actually weren't orthodox, they didn't keep anything, that was still the most important thing. Not to marry out?

Yes.

What language did you actually speak at home?

Polish. I start speaking Yiddish in the Warsaw ghetto.

But your father spoke Yiddish?

I understood Yiddish. My father and my mother spoke Yiddish. And my second language was French. Because as a child I used to have a French governess. And then I used to have a French teacher which used to come - I don't remember - three times a week to teach me extra French, except this what I learned in school. And I spoke French very well.

So they actually taught French at school?

Yes. They were two languages you could choose. French or German. But I learned French.

So your parents spoke Yiddish, but not the children?

No.

But you understood?

I understood.

Just from hearing it?

Yes.

Do you remember when the troubles started. When the real anti-semitism started. When the official anti-semitism started. Can you actually give a picture of what was happening?

Where. In Warsaw when I was - I can't remember.

So how do you remember the beginning of war in Warsaw?

Oh, this I can tell you. You see when the war started this I remember distinctly. And what happened that time when the Germans came. This I remember perfectly. But before the war I don't remember. The war started on the lst of September l939. They start bombarding Warsaw day and night. And I was - with our family. Not where we lived in the Mariaska. But I went to stay in Bagna and I liked that place, because I felt safe there. Where my auntie lived, I liked to be there. The Germans came to Warsaw - on the end of September. And as soon as they arrived trouble started. The Polaks - used to - they wanted to have some things from the Jewish families and they used to come with Germans to a house - when the woman wore a nice fur coat, she said she wants the fur coat, that the German went and took the fur coat and gave to the woman. And also they used to come to a house and take out the nice furniture, the beautiful things and leave. You couldn't say nothing.

The Polish people didn't do it before?

No.

And suddenly the Germans were there, marching into Warsaw, and the Poles had no problems of joining them at all?

No. They were helping them a lot.

Was it obvious that really it was against the Jews from the beginning?

From the first beginning. As soon as they walked in they used to catch Jews on the street and Jews had to do dirty work and so on.

What about the businesses?

The businesses still somehow carried on, but they used to come and take out the goods and so on. It was dreadful what was going on. The Jews were prosecuted from the beginning. Left, right and centre. And schools were closed, you couldn't go to school. And I was young enough to study. Then some of the teachers used to make like classes. We used to go to other homes and we used to, for instance, the girls which were in my class, in my year, they used to go to the teachers and they used to have lessons.

Did you get together in groups?

Yes, in groups, and we used to have lessons. You know, privately. We had to pay for it. Because - and then - people used to prepare food. I don't know why, they were scared. And everybody used to - even there was a lot of food in Poland, but they were scared that they were preparing food and things. Like something - they expect something very - dreadful to happen.

It's a very Jewish thing though. The first sign of trouble you prepare food just in case?

Yes. And - one day - my uncle who later was my husband - came to our flat. And he said "You know what, you've got to make an order here with this furniture. Because I don't like it. The Germans are coming to all Jewish nice homes and they are taking away furniture. And they may dismantle the sideboard and dismantle the tables and they make it look like a revolution that day". And nobody would believe it that the same afternoon the Germans came. And we had a most beautiful chandalier hanging. It was a bronze chandalier, it was - on gold, it was burnt with gold, it was something very, very unusual. And my daddy put in there a couple of diamonds. Because always he used to hide some things at home. We didn't have safes like you've got here. They used to put stuff in walls and so on. But not safes, they didn't have safes. And they took off this chandalier and they - my mother had like canteens of cutlery they took away. And a typewrite. And they went. And then they used to - collect men on the street. And they used to do dirty work. And if they didn't catch them on the street - then they used to come to the houses. I was a young girl, but I was very cute. And I heard that the Germans are coming. I put my father to bed and next to the bed I put on medicines. And when the Germans came I said he'd got fleconfever. Typhus. And when they heard he'd got typhus they ran for their lives. Then one day they came, I knew that they are coming. Then I let him out of the front door, because the front door was painted exactly like the papers were on the wall. You couldn't see that there is a door. Then I let him out of the front door, I let him in with the kitchen door and then when the Germans left - from one side, I let in my father -   But they still - you know - they used to catch Jews which had beards. They used to cut the beard together with the flesh. And the Poles used to help them a lot. Because they also wanted to gain something from the Jews. They forgot about the poor Jews, they were only thinking of the few rich ones which were in the war.

And the Poles could actually show that they knew who those rich Jews were?

And - but when it was - funny enough, whenever was a Jewish holiday the Germans gave - how is it called -   you know I forget words -   They gave - they said what has to be done. How do you say it.

Orders?

Orders. And they gave an order on Chanukah that all the Jews have to wear an armband with the Magen David - Star of David. And you have to wear otherwise if they will catch you without an armband you will be shot. And then on Yom Kippur it was an order about the Warsaw ghetto.

This is l939?

l940.

Did you see people actually being killed in the streets?

Not at that moment.

They were just seizing them in the street, to clean?

To clean -

Did they make fun of them in the street, was that obvious then at that time?

No. But what they have done, what it was terrible. The Jews which had beards - they had some of them cut the beards. Or they didn't go out, they were scared because they cut the beard together with the -   They used to hit them. It was very - terrible, the way how they behaved with them.

Was there a panic. Do you remember people being terribly frightened of what is going to happen?

The people were frightened.

There was a panic?

There was a panic. My daddy tried we should leave Poland. But some people were leaving at that time. Yes, they were going to Italy. But our papers didn't come in time.

So he did try?

He did try.

Did anybody from your family actually manage to leave?

Not from the family. My father had a partner for 22 years. And he left with his wife before the war. He went - to Israel. His daughter was married before the war. And she left for Italy. In l939. And my mother's cousin was in Israel and his wife went through Rumania to Israel. Then quite a few people left. But they were very wealthy people those which left. My father was also wealthy, but it was too late.

It was too late, nobody could actually move out anymore?

No.

So you were there in Warsaw. How did it come about, the ghetto?

They gave an order on all the streets, you know, that all the Jews have to live in this part of Warsaw. Wherever they are. And funny enough that our flat was left in the ghetto.

So your flat was a part that was allocated?

Yes. And my father's sisters, my grandmother and my cousins, moved into us.

So they had to move out?

They had to move out. They lived in Praga. They had to move out.

It's very hard for people to understand actually what is a ghetto. People think maybe it is just one narrow street. I would like you to describe what it was like?

It was a part of Warsaw which they surrounded with a wall.

They built a wall?

They built a wall.

What sort of wall?

It was a wall like -

Was it brick?

A brick wall. And on top they put on glass with wire that you couldn't go over it. And it was built on a street. That - one side belonged to the Jews and the other to the Christian. You understand. And then they had some gates, a few gates, that the Germans were standing there. On the beginning they said that the Jews will be able to leave the ghetto. They've only got to live in the ghetto. And we had a business which was outside the ghetto. And they said "No, the businesses, everything can be left". But as soon as they said on that day "The ghetto", starts - you know, that the Jews have to be in the ghetto, they didn't allow you out anymore.

So they took out Jews who didn't live in those streets and they put them into the ghetto. So people who actually lived there who had houses or flats had to take in other Jewish people?

Yes, and they shared. We took our family to us. And funny enough my parents had a neighbour for many years. I forgot to tell this on the beginning. And this neighbour - lived somewhere else. It was a neighbour when I was a little girl. And they were always very friendly. He went to the war, he was a soldier. He was taken to the war. The wife was left. And their flat was burnt and bombed. And funny enough they had a lot of gold and she put in the gold into - like I told you there were not safes. Because he was a jeweller. She put in the gold into the kitchen somewhere, in the kitchen she hide it, and a bomb fell and they lost everything. Then my parents took them and they lives with us. And then the whole family came and moved with us. And we all lived together.

How many people?

About l4 people.

In that one flat?

No, I tell you it was -   l5 people lived in that flat. And believe me it was such a harmony that nobody would believe it. But this couple thought it is too many people and he start earning money and they moved over the road, and they used to come every day to us.

And all around you in the other flats people were also taking other families in?

And so on, because - it was very hard. You see the people had to look for a place, those which lived outside the ghetto, because otherwise they would be shot.
<u>End of F223 Side B</u>

F224 Side A

What was your father doing at that time. Did he still carry on with the business?

No, as soon as the ghetto started - my father made a lot of business in the ghetto that to be able to help other people. Now I - it was very interesting what he has done. First of all he knew that somebody can do weights. You know the little weights. From half a deka? to twenty deka? And they made a factory of it. And they used to send that later outside the ghetto and sell it. That was official.

Where did they get the materials for it?

I don't know. I don't remember. Then he - that fellow who was a jeweller, he started making gold cigarette cases. Then he opened a shop on the other side of the ghetto where they used to sell stuff - for the chocolate manufacturers and pastry cooks. And - and you know that it was a curfew in the ghetto. Only till 8 o'clock you could go out. After 8 o'clock you couldn't go out. Then people became very friendly in the blocks of flats. And my daddy saw that some people are dying from starvation. Then he called all the people to our house. And he made a speech. And he said that he is going to open a kitchen. And he will give money, as much as everybody in the whole - block would give. And every day the poor people have to get a plate of soup plus a slice of bread. To keep the people alive. And that's what happened. Then in the house of some poor people there was a poor family. And they made this kitchen and they cooked soup. And every day all those poor people used to get a plate of soup and some bread. And our - you see in Warsaw there were big blocks of flats. And when you arrive there is like a concierge, you know. And there was already a Jewish concierge, a Jewish woman. And the poor people all knew that in our house they can always come and they will get something to eat. And this concierge used to scream "You are all going to number four. Those people in number four they drive me crazy, because they give too much away and then it is - you come and you pinch and you do all kinds of different things". But as he was - a very charitable man he didn't care. And they knew that he got money and they start blackmailing him. And - I will tell you one story after the other. First of all - it was that they used to make chocolate which was called kuvertura. And this chocolate you sold to chocolate manufacturers and they used to make chocolate from it. This - if the Germans would find out that you've got kuvertura you will get - you will be shot. But they made the kuvertura during the night and they put it in all different places.

Was it some particular type of chocolate. Was it like raw chocolate?

Yes, raw chocolate.

Before it was made into proper chocolate?

That's right.

Like cooking chocolate or something like that?

Not cooking chocolate. It was chocolate what you make other chocolate out of.

So that was already illegal?

Whatever you've done in the ghetto -

Was illegal anyway?

Yes. Then - somebody saw what they put away, the kuvertura. And there was two kinds of police in the ghetto. The Jewish police. Some which were looking only what you are doing. And the other one which were keeping order. And they sent - it was called the green police, they found out about the kuvertura and they came. They start looking, but they didn't find any kuvertura. But they were blackmailing my father.

They were Jewish?

Jewish. Then - used to come to the shop a man. Who was very friendly with my father. And this man didn't live in Warsaw before the war, he lived in Danzig. And my father knew him and he used to come, he was very friendly with daddy. Then - my father - there was - how shall I tell you - there used to be a policeman who was, before the war, in the police, in the secret police. But he was Jewish. And this policeman came to my father one day and he told him that he knows of him. And he knows what a good man he is. And he wants to help him. But he wants to be paid to guard my father from bad things. In case somebody blackmails, he should know who does and so on. One day he came to my father and he said that this man, his name was Dziedzic, he came to him and he said "If you will put Mr Litwak into prison you can millions of zlotis". And this policeman said to my father "Dont come to the shop for two weeks and let somebody play that you are arrested. And he will be able to show that you are not rich anymore, that you lost all your money". My uncle, and that was my uncle who later was my husband, because my aunt got killed, was in the shop always. And Dziedzic came and my uncle turned round to him and he said "A tragedy happened". He said "What kind of a tragedy". "Litwak is arrested". He said "All right, I will help you". He comes back. He says "It will cost millions of zlotis to let him out". He said "I haven't got a penny. How can I give millions of zlotis". For two weeks he played about with him. And then he saw he can't get anything because every time the price came down. And they saw that Litwak hadn't got money anymore. And that stopped this thing. Then they used to do in the ghetto, if somebody had typhus they used to close the whole block. And they used to say that they disinfect the block. They used to come to every flat. In the meantime they looked what you've got there and they blackmailed you. One day they closed a block. They came to our flat. They went after my grandma. And they wanted to - my grandma couldn't walk. And they wanted to do harm to her. And I start screaming at them. And they said they've got to take me to cut my hair off. And I had to run away through the chimney. To the other block. And I found a woman who was - who didn't have hair - and I send her to the bath. I paid her. She should go to the bath and say that she is me. And then I came back to the block, otherwise I couldn't come in home. And I showed them the ticket that I was in the bath. But they blackmailed every time. They were special Jewish people which blackmailed the rich, the wealthy people. How good you were, how you helped - but still they always found somebody who was blackmailing. And that made you very, very - upset. That you are doing good and they -

Why did they want to cut your hair?

Because they wanted to cut my hair -   Whoever went to that bath they cut their hair. You understand.

It's hard to grasp the whole idea of what was happening?

But that's what it was.

What happened with money. People who had money, could they get more money?

No, first of all whatever you had, you had to hide. You see I can tell you a story of the money, how it was shifted from one place to the other and how it was done. First of all you never kept in Polish zlotis. We had money mostly in gold - in dollars - in pounds. And it was usually packed in tin boxes. And put under the foundation of houses. And you used to pay the people for keeping it. And those people which kept it, as they knew that they've got it, and every time the price used to go up. Then you used to shift it from one place to the other. And you risked your life carrying it.

But it was kept for emergency. That you really needed it to bribe somebody?

Not only for emergency, but you needed it to live. Even the money what they had from the -   from the shop and from the - weights and so on. But you still needed more because you used to help other people. You used to - have families you used to keep. Because people used to die from - they didn't have the food.

Some people didn't have anything at all?

They were selling clothes, they were selling the last things what they possessed. It was dreadful. You can't understand. You needed so much money to be able to live, that it is impossible to describe.

And in the meantime the ghetto was shut, the gates were shut?

You couldn't go out. And you see the food what you used to buy you used to buy from people who had smuggled it into the ghetto. And they risked their lives by smuggling it in. And sometimes the Germans used to shoot them. There used to be a German who used to go every morning, people were scared to go out on the street, and he didn't have breakfast till he didn't kill five Jews. They used to call him Frankenstein. It was a very - very hard life. And they put in - they thought that the poor die from starvation. They put in - they said that they put it in, but some rich people used to get typhus and die from typhus like - flies. And my cousin got typhus. We didn't want him to be taken to hospital and we should have closed the flat and everybody - they should take the quarantine. Then we had a friend, a doctor, and he used to look after him. But we knew when they will find out it will be trouble. Then we took from somebody healthy a blood test. And we put - say that it is him. You understand. And if you don't mind, one day comes the doctor from the district. He found out that he got typhus and he comes and he said "He got typhus". And they gave him the blood test and showed it. He said "All right" and he walked away. A few days later - somebody rings the bell and a woman arrives. She is going to take blood test from my cousin. I said "You better tell me what does the doctor want". She said "He wants money". And I said "You won't take the blood test and he won't get the money". She was gone. A few days later she comes, this doctor comes, another doctor, and this doctor goes to my cousin and he holds his hand, he wants to take blood. And I come in, I tell you I had the blood. And I said "You are not going to take any blood from him. You've got here the blood test and don't drive anybody potty and go". He said "What do you mean". I said "This woman told me that you want money. I won't give you money and you will go". And he got embarrassed and he left. And then they let us through. But what it was all the time it was money and blackmail and things like this. And life was very, very hard. But we still celebrated Yom Tovs. And holidays. Til they start sending to the gas chambers, but we didn't know. Then my - one of my uncles was a young man. And they started catching people on the street - and sending them to work they said. But nobody knew - heard from them anymore.

How did they pick the people. Who were the people. Just anybody?

No, they came to the ghetto, they picked there some people and they said -

Who picked the people, the Germans or the Jewish police?

The Germans. Then - my uncle - was employed - as a policeman. But he didn't do any police work, he only had to go in the morning to register that he is there. And - but as he had - this - how is it called - certificate that he is employed by the police, then the Germans wouldn't take him. Then when they start sending a lot and my husband went there also in the morning, you know, he was my uncle that time. In the morning. Registered, you know, to hear what the police say. And the Jewish chief of the Jewish police said "You've got to supply me today - 5,000 people. In case you wont supply the 5,000 people some of your family we will take. And he came back and he told my father this story. And my father "Die vart nisht zain a chaper". It means 'you won't catch people'. And we all got employed in a factory to work for the Germans. I never wanted to work for them. I didn't want to do anything. I was staying at home. But we had to leave that part of the ghetto what we lived. Because it was in June '42 when they start sending out, we didn't know where they are sending at the beginning. But we had to leave this part of the ghetto.

And where did you go from there?

We went to the other part of the ghetto. And we got a flat. But grandma couldn't walk. And we decided to give grandma to the hospital.

There was a big hospital in the ghetto, the Jewish hospital?

Yes, there was a hospital. When grandma was - she was staying with my auntie somewhere else and when they - an ambulance was to come to collect her, because she couldn't walk, to take her to the hospital. I went to say goodbye to her. On the way back - I saw - Janus Korczak walking with the children to the Umschlagplatz. And that scene I will never forget as long as I live. He was walking with two sticks, having six children with him and the rest followed him. It was the most moving - terrible thing that I ever saw.

What was this Umschlagplatz?

The Umschlagplatz was a place where the Jews they brought them there and there came the trains and with the trains they took them to Treblinka. And funny enough one day they catched my mother. My aunt and a cousin, to the Umschlagplatz. And we heard that they are still at the Umschlagplatz and there was a policeman and we told him how they looked and so on. And we paid a lot of money. And I went in the morning to bring them back. And I was walking over dead bodies. Because - they were - killing people - and it was very dreadful. The way how it happened. We saw lots of dead bodies. But as grandma was in hospital - I used to go - with food to take her to the hospital. And I risked my life every time going there.

It was really dangerous to be in the street in the ghetto?

Yes, because they used to - the Germans used to go out and catch you on the lorries, even that you work for the factory. And I used to go from one house to the other. If you saw this film - the other day, with that - what was it - that fellow from Austria - what was his name - the Polish fellow who was catching the -

Weisentahl?

Weisentahl. On the beginning how the people were running from one house to the other. Like this I was going with a basket of food to the hospital. And on the end the Germans poisoned the people in the hospital. They put them in the lorries and they burn them at the Jewish cemetery. You see I can't tell you everything properly because they are such terrible things which happened there - that I can't - they come - you know - I say one thing and then another thing.

But also you were very young. It must have been a harrowing and unexplainable experience that was happening. Was there something that you could understand, did you understand anything. Why was that happening?

We didn't know, we knew only because we are Jews. You see daddy employed us all in that factory. And we thought that we will escape. But there was no escape. Because gradually they were finishing one after the other.

Did people realise that those who were taken away were not coming back. That was already clear?

No, it wasn't yet. I found out about this. It was - you see - the ghetto - they started on Tisha B'av. It was June l942. And it lasted for two months.

End of F224 Side A

<u>F224 Side B</u>

Can you go back to the deportations from the ghetto?

The deportation in the ghetto started in June. I don't remember exactly the date, but it I know it was Tisha B'Av. And first they start taking the very poor people which came - which were - came from other towns. And they were in synagogues or in big places and they came and they collected them and they took them away. But nobody knew where they are sending them.

Who were the people who actually found them. Who was collecting them. Was it the Jewish police?

No, it was the Jewish police. Police. And later it was the Germans as well.

They knew where to look, they knew where they were?

You see, the Jewish police - I don't know if it was - if I told you - that when my uncle was employed. You know he used to work in the business with my father. And he was a young man and they were scared that they would catch him. My father said he doesn't want anybody to be sent away. He doesn't like it. Then they employed him in the police. And he had to go every morning to register to the police. And one day he went when it started the deportation and Lejkin, the chief of police, had a speech to all the policemen. And the people which were employed like my uncle. And he said "You've got to supply me 5,000 heads today. Otherwise you will take your family". Then he came back and he told this my father. And my father turned round and he said - I will say it in Yiddish. "Dievart nisht zain a chaper". And that time my father decided to employ us in a factory. That we should be covered up this way and we were all employed in a factory. But the whole family couldn't be employed in the factory. Then part was employed in one factory, part was employed in another factory. And my grandma couldn't walk. And we took her to an aunt who used to look after her. And she used to keep her in the basement. And she was taken and - to the - hospital. And when I told you the story of the hospital when I went to say goodbye. And I came back and I saw Doctor Korczak walking with the children to the Umschlagplatz. That was a scene what I will never forget.

Tell me about Doctor Korczak, because it is such a famous story. Did everybody know him there?

Everybody knew Doctor Korczak because he used to write books for children. And he was also a chairman of an orphanage. You see in Poland there were a lot of orphanages. I had an uncle who was a chairman of an orphanage, a great uncle. And people used to do a lot for orphans. And he was one of them. He was also a teacher. He was very well known in Warsaw.

So he was a chairman of a Jewish orphanage in particular. So in fact he stayed in the ghetto?

Yes, he was Jewish. He was Jewish. You see we worked in a factory for the Germans - wait a second, I forgot the name - Hoffman. The director was a German. And the other people which helped him there, also directors, they were Jewish. And we had to give money to the Jewish people that they should employ us and we should work there at that factory. My father was a packer. He was packing the German uniforms. My uncle was in the hoffkolomne. He was doing the odd jobs. And the people which were doing the odd jobs, later they became the underground of that - you know - of that factory. I was working just doing the buttonholes. Three days I didn't go to work, I stayed at home and read a book. And one day I went that they should see my face. I never wanted to do anything for the Germans.

But didn't you realise that it was survival?

I did, but as long as they didn't come there to our block - to - to catch, I didn't - mind, you know.

So you spent your days really being at home?

Being at home not to do anything.

And where was your mother?

My mother used to go and she also used to come back. My brother worked in a different factory.

He was still a child?

My brother was - l5 years old. And he was working in a different factory. Then - my father's oldest sister had her mother-in-law and the family of her husband lived outside Warsaw. Then she with her husband and my oldest uncle and the son, went there outside Warsaw. I think it - I - I think it was called Volomyn. I am not - so sure what was the name of the little town. But we never heard from them anymore when they left. Somebody smuggled them out of the ghetto.

So they were already living in the ghetto?

They were living there together with us. But they left the Warsaw ghetto and they went there to the other town. And we never heard from them?

Do you know how they got out?

Yes, we paid money to Poles to transfer them there. How they did I don't know. Then I had my father's youngest sister didn't have children, and my father - came a friend of ours, Menderzycki, and Menderzycki is Mead. You know, it's one of the Meads. And he said that in Vegrow is quiet, there is no trouble and he got a Polak who can smuggle them in to Vegrow.

What was that, just a town?

A little town. And he smuggled my auntie with my middle auntie's older daughter, to Vegrow. This auntie - the middle - had a terrible dream one day, that they took away the little girl, this one which was in Vegrow. And she started crying. And we got in touch with the same Poles. And they took her to Vegrow as well. And then before Erev Yom Kippur it became - they were catching anybody. And then we heard that they took all the people from the hospital, they poisoned them and they took them to the cemetery and they burnt them.

How was that found out, that they poisoned the people?

That's what we were told.

Who knew about it, was that the Jewish police who knew about it or the relatives?

I don't know. I don't know. And it was very busy. And then came a woman to us, which looked very - she looked like a Christian. And she had a little boy. And she said she is going to leave the ghetto. Then my uncle's little girl was there, she was at the time - seven. And we gave her the little girl - and another niece of my uncles. And they left them in a house at Gesia.

What does that mean?

Gesia. It is a street. Gesia. And they supposed to leave the ghetto from there.

With that woman?

With that woman, with that lady. And then they took us on a selection the next day. They put us out like soldiers. Women seperate and men seperate. And whoever had a child they put - or looked older, they put on one side. And those which looked stronger for them, put on the other side. And next to me and my mother was standing a woman with a baby. She suffocated the baby. She threw it away, that she should be able to go through the selection. It was a scene that I will never forget.

You actually saw that?

I saw it, because she was standing next to me. We came back from the selection and it was Kol Nidrei. And they called people to go to pray. And they said "What, we should go to pray to God - to forgive us. We've got to forgive God for all those monstrosities which are done to us". And the action in the ghetto stopped that time. But my brother was taken away two days before to the Umschlagplatz and we couldn't bring him back. Because it was too late. And I lost my brother and -

So he was taken away then?

Yes, the day before.

You were telling me about the selection. All the people were told to come out and they were dividing them into groups. And then they were sent back home?

No, once they selected them, those which looked healthy they sent back to the factories where they worked. And those which were - you know - they thought that they looked old and they've got little children, they took on the other side and they sent them away.

Did you actually see them being taken away in lorries?

No, they took them away, they took them to the Umschlagplatz and they sent them away.

So you never saw these people again. Do you remember numbers of people?

It was - that was from our factory, from Hoffman. What it was from other factories I can't tell you, I haven't seen. I only saw what happened to us. And to be honest, they took us to a different - street, and somewhere much further, and I don't even remember where it was. Even that I've got a very good memory, but I don't remember.

We always have to remember that the ghetto was really like a small town I suppose?

You see, did I tell you about the Sefer and my father. That my father buried the Sefer. But this is - it was before. Then it was like this. My mother was given by my grandfather a Sefer.

A scroll?

Yes. Before my grandfather died. And my father was the warden of the Schule. When the Germans said that all the Jews - we were employed already in that factory, but we had to go every morning there. But then the Germans said that they are closing this part of the ghetto and nobody is allowed to live there. We had a lot of china and crystal. Then it was all in a big box, in a big trunk. And my father threw it down the stairs that it should better break than it should go to the Germans. And he took the Sefer with a few little possessions and we left our flat. And he wanted to get a rikshaw to go to the other side of the ghetto where we supposed we were going - they allocate us a flat on the Smocza. Yes, Smocza, Nowolipki. And when we left he was carrying a Sefer. A scroll. And he said "I wanted that rikshaw for the scroll". And the man from the rikshaw turned round and he said "You are going to save a scroll, when people are - being killed". He still walked with that scroll to the Smocza. And later he put it in a box and he went to a basement and he buried it, the Sefer.

He felt that maybe there was no future for it?

Yes. He buried the Sefer. You see when we came back from the selection - at start it was quiet in the ghetto. And then a Polak what we knew came over and he said that a woman and the children were arrested. And they are - in the Polish police station. The Polish police station. And they want so much money to let them free. And they gave him money. They let them free. And the little girl, our little girl - the woman went away somewhere with her little boy. The bigger girl went somewhere, pretended that she is Christian, went somewhere to work. And the little girl - was taken by this man's mother-in-law, who promised to look after her.

So you actually knew maybe a few Polish people who were quite prepared to help?

Yes. But for a big amount -

For a price?

A price. I was in the ghetto. And I was very unhappy. We had to go there to work. I didn't want to. My father decided I should also leave the ghetto and go to that woman. And that was outside Warsaw. This woman was a bitch. And I had made - they made me papers. And my name was Stefania Skwierczynska. And I was with that little girl. And they called her Janka. Her name was first Celina. And here was Janka. But what was the surname I don't remember. This woman used to leave in the morning and come back in the evening. And I stood with the child there and we cook us something to eat. And one morning came the police, the Germans. It was lucky, because this young girl she saw them, she run out and she hided somewhere in the toilet. And they ask me all different kinds of questions. I showed them the papers. And I decided to go back to the ghetto.

Why?

Because I wanted to be with my mother and my father. I couldn't stand it.

Was your mother upset to see you go?

When I left she was upset. But that time I wanted to go back, because I knew that this woman is so wicked she will do some wicked things. But it was something else with that woman what happened. Before I left to go outside the ghetto - one of the Menderzycki's came - I think it was a Przepiorka who came to the ghetto -

Can you explain this?

They are Jewish people. And then we found out that they are sending everybody to the gas chambers.

But til then you didn't know?

Til then we didn't know. Because some people run away from there and they came back and they said that they are - sending everybody to Treblinka to the - gas chambers.

Did people believe them?

Yes, they did. Then they believe and they start - how to say - that time they start organising. But it was after Succot - and there was a place where the Hoffkolomne used to meet, you know, what my uncle was there. But he wasn't at the time there, I was there. And somebody from that family Menderzycki came told me that there was an action started in the Wegrow. Everybody went to a shelter to hide themselves from the Germans. And my auntie couldn't catch the breath. Then my both aunts, with the child, went on the attic. And the Germans caught them there. And she took off a golden bracelet and she said "Let me go". Then he shot her. The other auntie starts screaming, and the child, and they shot the three of them. Then we found out what happened. But this woman, this Polish woman, when we came back after the selection to the ghetto and that Polak told us "I am sorry I am going back". But I've done a mistake that I didn't write it down. It doesn't matter. Then my uncle gave some dresses for my aunt and some money, that this woman should go with Janka to Wegrow, and she should save the other little girl. She told us that she went there. My auntie said - she gave my auntie all the stuff. And the next morning she's supposed to - she's supposed to bring the little girl, but it started the action there, in the Wegrow ghetto, and she was killed. It took three years, it was nearly after the war, when the little girl told us that she didn't go there even. And she made - she terrorised her. If she will tell anything she will give her up to the Germans. And this kid lived in fear all the time.

But she stayed with that woman?

She stayed. She had no other choice. Later I will tell you more stories, because I - that I went out from the ghetto -
<u>End of F224 Side B</u>

F225 Side A

I went back to the ghetto. And then they - my uncle used to - you know - the chief of our factory was German, Hoffman, and he had a radio in his office. To listen to the radio you could only get - you can be shot. But my uncle used to go in the middle of the night to listen to the radio. He didn't understand well English. But it was probably Polish as well. And he always used to come with the news and they used to print leaflets. And my daddy said "you've got to give money, we've got to buy guns and ammunition. We've got to start fighting the Germans. And also the Poles". You see the ghetto had a wall, surrounded. And the factories also were surrounded, but there were gates where you could come in. And one day they killed the chief of the Jewish police, Lejkin. He was knocking somewhere to the gate. Because he used to come every evening to check if all the gates are closed. He touched the gates and - he was shot dead.

Who shot him?

The Jewish resistance. It was called ZOB, Zydowska Organizacja Bojowa. And they were only in fives. Five or sevens, I don't remember.

What is the meaning of the name of the organisation?

It is Jewish Organisation Fighting. Fighting Organisation. This Hoffkolomne was actually a place where they were the fighters of the ZOB. And whatever they told them to do they used to do upside down. And they - sometimes they put them to prison there, you know, they locked them in a room. Then I used to go and give them food and gave them cards, they used to sit and play cards. Then they told them one day - one day they decided to make a concert. You know the Jewish directors decided to make a concert. And Arkadji Flatau supposed to play the piano. That was a famous pianist. And they had to take from one flat on the first floor to another flat, the piano. When the piano arrived there, the piano they couldn't play, because they broke the piano on the way. They said "When we've got such monstrosities, why should we let them make money on people which are - they should make money on it". They didn't want them to do it. Then they broke the piano not to have any concert. They said "We can't have concert now, we've got sorrows now, not song".

So the resistance groups didn't want any cultural activities?

No, nothing like this. They only wanted to fight. And they used to meet very often. And for instance in that Hoffkolomne they wrote 'What you've got to do today, do tomorrow'. Everything upside down.

Was that part of the resistance?

Yes, it was part of the resistance, because - and one part of the resistance didn't know from the other part of the resistance. Then they needed money for guns. And people in those circumstances they knew if they leave the ghetto if they will have money perhaps the Poles will keep them. But if they wont have the money the Poles wont keep them. And they were scared to part with the money. And my daddy said "We will have to put them to prison, somewhere in a basement, and blackmail the wives and they will have to pay the money that we should be able to buy guns and ammunition". And every pistol cost 20 gold dollars. Because the Poles didn't want to give it away for nothing. And they wanted only to be paid in gold. And it wasn't so easy to collect a lot of money. But they tried their best to do it.

Were there still people with money there?

There still were people with money. Funny enough that those on the end they were people which had money.

What do you mean 'on the end'?

On the end, those which were left in the ghetto. They saved themselves somehow. In the meantime - it started again, they heard they are going to make another action in the ghetto. And I think it was in January. My uncle decided that we've got to make a hiding place. Then one day he papered up a room. And they made - shelves in a cupboard. And the bottom cupboard they - on the bottom of the cupboard they made it like in a - frame, they put on bricks in there. And saucepans and things like this. And everybody went in on their stomach to the other room. And the Germans came, they looked, there was about 30 people in the room. They didn't find us.

So you actually crawled through a hole in the wall to another room?

To another room.

But didn't they go and look in the other room?

The other room was closed up completely, because he had papered the whole room, then you couldn't see that there is another room. At those times already they didn't start fighting yet. But they were hiding, because they knew exactly what is going to happen. And they didn't go to work, but whoever they found outside who was employed and so on, the Germans took away. At that time the Jewish police didn't catch. This time were the Germans, the SS came to the ghetto to collect the Jews. And this took quite a while. A few days. And my uncle left the ghetto to prepare for us a place outside the ghetto.

How did he manage to leave the ghetto at that time?

He left the ghetto - you see the people which came - took out the uniforms, the German uniforms which were made in the ghetto and they took it - you know, it was a wagon with two horses. Then he pretend that he is taking this wagon with the horses outside, out of the ghetto with the other men. And then when he was outside he took off his armband and he left. He said that he never knew how to take - you know - look after the horses. Then he nearly killed a German there, and then he left. And when he left - first of all he was doing in the ghetto prepared little children to send out from the ghetto. And he used to make boxes with holes, put on rubbish, because there was rubbish in the ghetto, and they send out the rubbish. Then the babies he covered with the rubbish and they made arrangements with the Poles and like this they send out. And when he left the ghetto he used to buy guns outside and send them to the ghetto. Also with those people. And they used to have like a double - specially prepared were those furgons to be able to put in the guns to send them into the ghetto.

Did you know at all which source the guns came from?

No, my husband bought them, but from where - through that Czerwonko, through that Polak, he used to buy. When he left the ghetto - he bought three flats. And then everyone fled. They made a hiding place. But my daddy didn't want me to be in the ghetto anymore. And he said I've got to leave. And I left the ghetto on the lst of February l942. When I left the ghetto he told me that I should never marry out. That he got one diamond, living diamond, left from the family, and this is the little girl Janka. And he told me that after the war I've got to make my way to England and my uncle's brother would be like a father to me. Because he doesn't know what is going to happen to him. He said "If they will prepare the places properly for us I will go out in time. Otherwise I don't know what will happen to me".

It must have been very difficult for a father to send away his daughter, not knowing if she will succeed, will she survive or what is happening. Because they still didn't know how long it was going to be, what was happening?

I came there - I left the ghetto. And the places were not prepared yet. But I was in the place that the woman was a caretaker. And we bought in her daughter's name a flat. And then we bought a flat for her brother-in-law. And we bought for Czerwonko's mother-in-law, which we bought a third flat. When the flat for the brother-in-law was finished he said "I am not going to let in the Jews because I can be killed". And he took away the flat. And that's it.

What was the purpose of a flat?

A flat. That we should be able to be in hiding then, to pay them.

But it had to be in a Polish name?

In a Polish name.

So he didn't allow anybody to be there?

No, he didn't let us in even. This woman - she was the caretaker - we bought a flat in her daughter's name. And there was a very good place and we made a good hiding place there. And the third place was - Czerwonko's mother-in-law, and that flat was always locked up. And it was under a padlock and key. Then - we moved into that flat where it was - you know, for that - for that - for that caretaker's daughter. My mother came out of the ghetto. And she was in the other flat. In the flat of the woman there.

So she managed to come out as well?

Yes. And Erev Yom Kippur they start burning the ghetto.

What year was that?

Erev Pesach. Erev Pesach. It was the l9th of April l943. It was exactly like this - this here.   This I remember distincly.

How did you find out about this?

You saw it. I went through - you see I look very Jewish. My hair was dyed blonde. But every Polak recognised me that I am Jewish. And I looked - if I would go - when I went out on the street I - funny enough, if I went out I was caught and I was blackmailed. The ghetto was burning. And every day I went behind the curtain and I looked. I cried my eyes out. A young fellow who knew this woman what we were in hiding came to her and he said "Mr Litwak is alive". Then my uncle went to Czerwonko, to the Polak, for help. And he said "How can we take out Litwak from the ghetto". He said he knows an SS man who will go to the ghetto to take him out. But he has to have a Jew with him, because if he goes during the day the Jews shoot to him. And he will go with a lorry to the ghetto. And this Jewish fellow, if he takes a Jewish fellow who knows where my father is, he will take him out. The next day he will come, in a specific place, and he will collect him.

Who planned all that?

That Czerwonko. With that SS man. And that SS man wanted a half a million zlotis. We said alright, we will give him. And if he doesn't find him then he will get 50,000 zlotis. We knew that there was a friend of my fathers, Adam Tenenbaum, who was also in the same place, and we said they should bring both out and he will get a million zlotis. He said alright. That young boy said he will go, my father is worth it to risk his life. He went to the ghetto. He broke out the walls of the ghetto with a hand grenade and he ran on. And I made all the preparations to welcome my daddy the next day. They came back and they found my father's body. And they found out how he got shot. The Germans went - were coming in the morning and they used to burn the blocks. Then on that particular morning my father, with a friend, with a Mr Flekel, went upstairs on the top of the house. And when they arrived with the big lorry - because they were burning the houses - they throw a hand grenade on that lorry. It exploded and a lot of Germans were killed. And when they came down one was safe and he killed them both. And this boy found out about it and the Germans brought him back, out from the ghetto. Where he went later I don't know, because I never heard from him.

Your father was killed at that time?

Yes. He killed 30 Germans before they shot him.

So this is already really the uprising of the ghetto at that time?

This is the uprising of the ghetto.

What was happening to your mother at that time?

My mother was already outside the ghetto, in the other flat. I was in the flat with my uncle. And then we decided to bring my mother to us. My mother came to us, with my other uncle. Which was the brother-in-law of my mother. And this uncle was, before the war, the bodyguard of Marshall Pilsudzki. And later Rydz Smigly. Also a Marshall of Poland. Because Pilsudzki died and then came Rydz Smigly. There were two Jews in that block of the bodyguards of the Marshall. One was my uncle, the other one was his brother. This woman, she was the caretaker of that block of flats what we had the flat in her daughter's name, she had a boyfriend and one day my uncle went out to change some - to get some money to pay to her. He stopped on the street and he start blackmailing us. Then my other uncle, who was the bodyguard, found a friend who was a high officer with this - also where my uncle worked for the - you know, a higher officer in the bodyguard for the Marshall of Poland. And he told him that they are blackmailing us, has he got a place for us. And he said "You know what, I've got two good places. But you can't be together". He said his wife is there on a summer holiday, in a village, and there are two places, and one place there are some Jews and in the other place it would be better like for me and my uncle to be. Where his wife is there on holiday. And him, with my mother, will go to the other place. Where there also are some Jews. We were there in an attic. The attic never had any - it just had sand. And they gave us two sacks of straw, and on this we slept. And the landlady used to come and bring us something to eat during the day. But in the evening, after the curfew, we used to come out and go in to that officer's place. One day he came, when we went out, and he was there. He said he doesn't feel well.
<u>End of F225 Side A</u>

F225 Side B

He gave us something to drink. And we slept 48 hours afterwards. And when we woke up all the money what we had he took away. But I didn't know that time my uncle, while he was working on the Hoffkolomne then he was building the wall there, in that place in the ghetto, came a man to him and he sold him a diamond. And he sewed this diamond into the fly of his trousers. He never told anybody. But that time he told me about this diamond. He said "You see, he took everything away, but this diamond he didn't -". Then he went to the wife and he said "Listen, I know that he pinched all the money. I can't live without the money. If he wont give me half of the money I will kill him". And he was sitting there in that - on that - attic, and he was sharpening a knife. And he gave us half of the money back. And we run away there, and that landlord put us to a shed where there were rabbits. But I think he prepared that all, because they threw out my mother with my uncle from the other place at the same time. And we decided to go back to that place where we were in the beginning. Pay the money to the blackmailer and to stay there, because it was a very good place. It was also trouble there. I also didn't tell you in a proper way this. Because while we were there and we had that very good place to hide. Then the woman who sold them the flat one day came up to the flat. And she saw that this shed, which was our hiding place, was closed in. She said "Why did you close in this shed". And they said "I don't know, we just closed it in, we don't need it". "Oh", she said, "It was lovely. I used to keep here all my saucepans and all my things for washing and so on. Why did you close it?" Then they came up and they broke open that hiding place. And we didn't have anywhere to hide. Then my uncle decided that they should empty an oven. Because in Poland they are very big ovens. And they emptied that oven and put in two boxes, one on top of the other, and we went and we hide in that oven. My uncle and I. But then when mummy came with my uncle it wasn't good enough. Then he used to have - because the caretaker is downstairs somewhere, and if the police comes for anybody, then they come first to the caretaker. And we had a bell from the caretaker to our flat. And we used to go in the loft. We made the loft shorter. And we went on our stomach into the loft there to hide. And as a matter of fact we have hidden there our money as well.

How did you manage to stay in this place. You couldn't go out at all during the day?

I never could go out. Because whenever I went out - But my uncle used to go out, because it was a very big block of flats. And people used to come in to sell stuff there and so on. Then we could go out because people mixed.

But you must have been very frightened to go out?

Everybody was frightened. You were under fear all the time.

And what about the Polish people who were there. Did anybody else know about you hiding?

Nobody knew. Only that family knew.

So apart from taking money from you they were quite good to actually find you a place?

No. They were good, but they were blackmailing us all the time. They always wanted more and more money. If they would know that we've got the money and how much money we've got, we wouldn't survive.

Was your mother with you at that time?

Yes. Then when we saw that it is not that she should be there where that woman was. Then mummy came over. But it was very interesting that it was later we had to leave that place again. But we came back and we paid money to the blackmailer and money to them, and we were there. And then she came that she wants to buy piglets. We should give her money she should buy piglets. And she will sell them for Christmas. Then we will earn money together with her. And we gave her money to buy piglets. Then she said "You know what, if you will make cigarettes, you sit here, you do nothing, you will make cigarettes, then we will sell the cigarettes and you will have something to do during the day". Then we were all sitting making cigarettes. And funny enough, I start smoking that time. And - we were - and in the meantime this little girl was with that woman. I've got to go back. I'm sorry. When he start blackmailing us we went to Czerwonko first. Before we went to the country. You know, to that high officer. When we went there. You know, Yanka was there, the little girl. And when I looked at her I had a shock of my life. She was thin. They didn't give her to eat properly. And she really looked ill. Then Czerwonko's wife was - this wife what he had at the time, was his second wife. That was his mother-in-law, that old woman. And from his first wife he had two children. And those two children were going to a summer school in the country. Then we decided that she should take Yanka also to the summer school. And we pay more money and she will be looked after properly. And that's what she's supposed to do. And she was there - she went with those children together to the summer school. Winter was coming. I think it was September or October, something like this. No, it was September. Because the children were coming back to school. And the children came back and she never brought Yanka back. Then my uncle went there and kicked up a big row. And she was bringing Yanka back. But I didn't have a coat. It was all very complicated. And I found a coat somehow. And I took it with that - one of the girls, to the dressmaker. And as I was coming back from the dressmaker they put up a blackmailer behind me. She took me everything away what I had on me. And we thought we've got to leave this place. And we went there to that terrible woman who had the little girl. But she brought back the little girl and the little girl looked sick. The place we went now, the four of us, under a padlock and key. We couldn't go out. Then the two men decided to go back again to that woman. And when you are under padlock and key you can't - when you go to the toilet you can't even pull the chain. Because people would hear outside. You can't cook. And if you cook - nobody is supposed to be there in the place. It was very hard. But when those two men left, that Czerwonko gave the key to the communist resistance. And the place was Twarda 22. It is very interesting, because there used to meet all the big-shots from the communist party. And he came one day - I was with mummy. And he told us to go to the back room, because they were having there a meeting. And we heard everything what they were talking about. And the next day they were coming back. We run away too late and they knew somebody is there. We were only scared that they will shoot us. But they didn't. And we decided to go back again to that woman who used to blackmail us to - and at the time we decided to bring the little girl to us. When we brought her back my uncle, not the father, the other uncle, took her to a paediatrician, and she had beginning of tuberculosis.

How did he manage to get to a doctor. Who was that doctor?

The doctor was a Professor Szenajch. And I - and she took her to the doctor. And the doctor said she'd got beginning of tuberculosis. And what it was then we found out, she didn't take her together with the other children to the summer school. She gave her to a beggar who begged by the church. And this beggar - she didn't pay her much. And this begger used to go to the market to collect some potatoes and pieces of cabbage and to cook this. And like this she used to feed the child. She didn't - how to say - she didn't feed her properly. She didn't wash her. When the kid put down her head on my chest it was full of lice. I had to clean her and she had fingers full of pus from - she was so much under-nourished. We kept her with us for a time. But we didn't want her to be with us in case something happened to all of us. Let her at least survive. Then we knew a woman who was also concierge - you know, caretaker in a block of flats. And this woman took her and she looked after her. And she was very good to her.

And you left the girl there?

And we left her there.

Could anybody check in the meantime if she was okay?

No, we couldn't check it. We knew that she will be alright. It was already - it was summer '43. And I didn't feel well. Then they decided that I can't be in hiding. I will go and look after Czerwonko's young children. Because from the young wife he had two little babies. And I was looking after those children. And sleeping - But that concierge, where the little girl was. But the concierge went with her into the country. If you don't mind, one day I left to go to that concierge and I saw that there was the old woman following me, because I went on the tram and she showed the Germans me. And I ran off from the train. And when I off from the train, who followed me - the blackmailers what my - you know, from that house where I was in hiding first. What they sent me - the blackmailer, when I went to the - you know - to the dressmaker. Then I became very friendly with her. I pretend that she is my best friend. And I said to her "You know what, perhaps you will find me a place where I could be in hiding". And she said to me "Yes, I will". But I was scared to go back where my mother was and my uncles. Because she lived there, the woman. I don't know how, I let them know and I went to somebody who was one of those people which came to the flat there to Czerwonko. You understand. And I was there and she told me she wants to keep me. And she was - one was the mother of somebody who later became Minister of Defence in Poland. And they were in the partisans at the time. The men were in the partisans. And the two women were there in the flat. Then I went back somehow to the flat to tell them what happened. And I made with that woman an appointment for Sunday. Then Saturday I went to Grochow to be with this woman, with the two women, with the mother and the sister-in-law of the Minister of Defence. And I was there for two months. But the sister-in-law's sister had a flat. And in the flat she had two ladies, Jewish ladies, hiding with a child. One day as I was there, the Germans came. And I hidden in a wardrobe. And when they opened the wardrobe I start laughing, I thought it was my boyfriend to them, that he is looking for me. And I knew that this is not a place, and I went where the two ladies went. I was there for about two, three weeks. And the Russians start bombarding Warsaw. And I was liberated there.

I would like to go back to life in the ghetto. Because there is quite a lot of details that I would like to ask you again. You were telling me before about the families that were living together, quite big numbers of them. Can you tell me a little bit about the facilities and how they managed to share them?

Yes, I will explain to you. You see some people which had a big flat. For instance, in our flat we had four rooms, kitchen and bathroom. It was a luxury. Even in Poland under normal circumstances. We lived there. It was my parents, my brother and myself. And we had always a maid or two. But here we didn't have maids anymore. This was forgotten. We had to do the cleaning and - and cooking and everything on our own. And the family moved in, then it moved in. My father's two sisters. My grandmother. A cousin who was bombed out. And every inch of the place in the flat was occupied. We cooked in very big saucepans, because it was a large family. And we tried to have a piece of meat every day. Or it was sometimes hard, because it was expensive. And you used to buy the food on the blackmarket. Because what you got from the government on the rations it was very, very little. But this what we got from rations we used to give it to the poor which used to come and knock to the door for a piece of bread. And like I told you, the caretaker was annoyed because they all were coming to our flat to get the food. I had an auntie, my father's oldest sister, and she used - if children came and knocked to the door she always used to give away even her last - her plate of soup to give to the poor. She said "I will have something else to eat. Let the poor children have it". But the people in the block were very close together. They lived like one big family. Because in the evening, after 8 o'clock or 7 o'clock, it was a curfew, you couldn't go out. And they used to meet. And they used to have social evenings and so on. Or they used to organise some things like - like a little dance. And then collect some money to have it for the poor people. It was always - all the time they tried to help those under - which didn't have. And people used to sell everything from themselves to be able to buy that piece of bread to be able to survive. But I've got to tell you something, it is very interesting. My father had this business which was on the other side of the ghetto. And it was quite a way, because the ghetto was in two parts. The big ghetto and the little ghetto. And through - and to join the two ghettos it was a bridge, which joined the two ghettos. They built a bridge and people used to go through that bridge to the ghetto. When he went and he opened that business, he bought a thousand pounds of little mint sweets. They were in boxes of kilos. And they were as big as the Smarties, but they were mint. Then when people used to come to the shop, you know, begging. Then they used to start giving two sweets to a person. And when my daddy used to go home he used to fill up a pocket of those sweets, and on the way he used to give all the children on the way, he used to give those sweets.
<u>End of F225 Side B</u>

F226 Side A

And my father said he still didn't take enough sweets. And he was very upset. He said "How many I take, I never take enough". And he will never believe because - when in l942, when they start - First of all they start cutting the sweets because it was getting less and less of the sweets what they gave through the counter in the shop, and daddy was distributing. But when it came - first they gave two sweets, then they gave one sweet, then they cut it in half. But daddy gave whole sweets to the children on the way. But when it started this thing, there were no sweets left anymore. From thousand kilos of sweets, which were so tiny. They were left - was left nothing. And the life was very difficult. Because people were selling clothes. First jewellery what they had. First of all the Germans said one day that all the Jews which have got fur coats have to give away the fur coats. Then they gave away the fur coats, they asked for jewellery, they asked for money. And you had to hide everything what you had and whatever you've done it was crooked, it wasn't legal, because the Germans wanted to take you everything away what you had. Then it was the people were so poor then some they came like muggers. But they were not muggers like they are muggers today, that they mug you to take your money away. When they saw you walking with a loaf they run on the loaf, cut it in pieces and throw their teeth in it. Because they were so poor that they needed a piece of bread.

What were the children doing at that time. Was there any school at all for children?

No, there were not classes, nothing. I went - I was still a young girl, I wanted to finish my - We used to meet - you see from my school the teachers make like five or ten. And we used to meet and we used to learn this way. But there were no schools, nothing whatsoever. Not at all.

So the children were in fact in the street. Or did they stay indoors?

Some were indoors, some were in the street. But some they used to make little - you know only privately you know, you used to send the children that they used to meet. The circumstances were so difficult that it is impossible to describe.

What about the festivals. You mentioned once before that you still managed to have a festival. What about Pesach for instance. Was there any facilities to get anything at all?

I tell you something. I remember like today - we were preparing for Pesach. And my grandmother said - we said you can't get fish. And my grandmother said "Don't worry, I will make fish from some meat if I will get". But it was very lucky, somebody came to the shop and brought some carps. And my daddy brought the carps and he put them in a bucket, because they were alive. And he brought the carps home and we kept them in the bath. And every day we looked after them that they shouldn't die. And we had a most beautiful Seders, two Seders. And the wine my uncle made from - I don't remember - it was from raisins, because it was from our business what was left a box of sultanas. And they made wine. And it was - and I don't remember with the matzes how it was.

Do you remember actually having them?

We had matzes. I think we had matzes. Because there were bakers. And you see even before the war we didn't buy like we buy today, matzes in the boxes. My mother used to go to the baker and to take a very big basket and they used to bake the matzes and put it to the basket and you brought it home. And I think that was in the ghetto as well. There were still bakers, because I remember that we used to take cholent to the bakers. Because when the family was so big then we used to make cholent every Saturday. And we used to take on Friday the saucepans, not even one, two saucepans, and you used to get a ticket and the next day you went with the ticket and you collect your cholent.

How did you manage with all these women. Did everybody want to cook. Or did they let each other have a turn in the kitchen?

Everyone done something. And I tell you something, they got on so well. You see and they were very close. When I can see how the families were then and I compare to the families here in England, it is completely a different kettle of fish.

Did people not row with each other, or did they make a special effort not to row?

No, they never rowed. They used to - one used to help the other. One hand washed the other. But - it became very cold. And we prepared - and the pipes used to burst. And it was very difficult to go to the toilet. This was the biggest tragedy that time. We hardly had water to cook. We had it in the bath. We couldn't wash properly. And to go to the toilet, where you had somewhere a toilet you were lucky.

So you just had the one toilet there?

We had the toilet but you couldn't use it.

It was frozen?

It was frozen. Nobody would believe it. You used to make in a parcel, in newspaper, and throw it out somewhere on the street. And there we had a shop. The toilet worked, but then in the shop it froze. And there lived a doctor. And I knew that the toilet works there, and I pretend that I am going to see the doctor and I went to the toilet and I rushed out from there. It was something fantastic, because I could go to the toilet. To go to the toilet was an experience.

What sort of heating did you manage to have in that place?

The heating it was - you see we didn't have central heating, nothing like this. We used to cook with - with coal and wood. You used to make a fire. And we had big ovens and you warmed with those ovens.

What about the bedrooms. How did you heat the bedrooms?

Look darling - sometimes if you didn't have enough coal and you went to bed and you covered yourself with - not with the eiderdown, with the perina.

Would you explain what it is?

It was - it is like a -

It's a quilt. It's a down quilt?

A down quilt.

And did you have enough blankets for all the people?

Blankets we didn't have. We didn't use blankets in Poland. We had eiderdowns.

But did you have enough of those for everybody?

Yes.

What were the children doing at that time at home?

They always - you always found something. Some were studying. In our home was - we were -   Five children. The two boys, my brother and my cousin, they were studying all the time. They had even private teachers which used to come. The two little girls used to go to a private kindergarten. And I used to go to my school lessons. And then in the evening -   And you didn't have enough electricity, you sometimes used to sit by a candle.

Did you know if the Rabbis carried on with the Talmud Torah, with the Cheder, which were little schools for the boys?

This I don't remember.

And you said that in the evenings people got together and danced and sang?

Sometimes danced and sang.

Did they have any other cultural activities. Did they sit and read stories?

No, this - you see they read a lot. But they never wrote the stories. Some wrote, but I don't think -   As far as I know, I don't know who wrote stories in the ghetto.

And where did you get the books. Were they your own books or did you manage to get them from somebody else?

No, they were - when you read books then you used to - one person lent to the other.

Can you tell me a little bit about the beginning of the resistance. Were you still there at the ghetto. Because you told me about the person who used to buy the guns. That was before you were sent out?

No, he had to go out from the ghetto to buy the guns.

Was it already a feeling that something is going to happen ...?

Listen, it was - the resistance started when I told you, after we all find out, after that famous selection. And when the Germans went somewhere else and they stopped in the Warsaw ghetto, then - they started already make meetings. And the meetings were in fives I think. Or sevens. They were not a lot of people. One lot didn't know from the other lot. I am surprised about that story with Ani Levitz? That they said he was the chief. He wasn't the chief. Because they were in everyone's shop. They were in fives or sevens. What they used to make meetings and discuss the things. I knew about it, but they were also scared that somebody shouldn't slip the mouth. Then they were very careful not to tell anybody.

You don't think they co-ordinated with each other?

I don't know. I don't know. I know only this, that my daddy decided to put some people in a basement and to ask the wife to give the money. Because otherwise we wouldn't have any guns and ammunition. Because people didn't want - when they knew that the clothes haven't got any value. The furniture is no value because you gave it away. Did I tell you that when we left the ghetto we had a big trunk. Not a trunk, it was a box, of china and so on. And my father threw it - You see and then we sold to a Polak. Told the Polak what kind of furniture there. And he gave a kilo of butter, with three kilos of bread, for all the furniture what were in our flat. You see they were very difficult. You see nothing had any value. The only value what it had it was the money.

And those who had money were more lucky than others?

Yes.

Just another point about health care. You told me about people who had typhus. Do you remember any other illnesses that people had that wouldn't be treated. Or how could you manage to get a doctor to help?

There was plenty of doctors. They used to come. You had to pay them. And they were the block doctors, what I told you what they used to give you trouble. And it was dirt, because people didn't have enough money and sometimes in the winter when it was no water, you could hardly wash yourself.

So that caused illnesses as well?

Yes, that's right.

And what about the hospital. I know you took your grandmother to hospital. What sort of hospital was that. Was it a big hospital with lots of beds?

I haven't been inside. But it was a - it was - I don't remember. To be honest, I have never been in a hospital in Poland.

So you didn't actually go to visit grandma?

No, I just brought the food there and gave it that they should give it to her. But I couldn't go in to see her.

They didn't let you in?

No.

And did they let other people in, other people of the family?

No. No.

We'll go back now to the Russians bombing Warsaw?

The Russians were bombing Warsaw. In the flat what I was with the two ladies and the little girl - it was an attic. It was on the second floor. And I stood behind the curtain watching how the Germans were running away.

You were watching the Germans running away. The Russians were bombing. Did you think that you can be killed as well?

No. I never expected that I would be killed. And I stood and I watched. And the Germans were running without shoes. Their rifle was on a piece of string. They were rushing. But a bomb fell outside our flat. And I got - and then I told myself we've got to leave and go to a shelter. And I told the ladies "Listen, if we all will go in together, the Polaks will recognise that we are Jewish". And then we had to part, everyone has to go in a different place there in the shelter. And outside the shelter was sitting Germans with a machine gun. And they were shooting to the planes which are passing by, to the Russian planes. We went into - it was getting a little bit dark when we went down. And the next day, it was about l2 o'clock noon, a Polish officer walked in and told us that now the Germans are gone. I burst in tears for joy.

He knew that there were some Jewish people in hiding. Or he didn't know you were Jewish?

No, he didn't know. No, he didn't. Because there was a lot of people in that shelter, there was about 70 or 80 people. And when I went out, next to that machine gun was sitting a Russian officer - soldier. And I went to that family back to their flat. Where I was there where I was found - But I stayed with them for a few weeks. And they made me - and I wanted to do something. And I got a very important job. Because they sent food from UNRA to be distributed between the Polish people. And I used to look after it. And one day came there a man and his name was Sawicki. He was later the - how do you say - prosecutor later. You know when it was the case. And I turned round to him and I said "You are Jewish". He said "No, I am not Jewish". But later when I was in Lublin, a few months later, and he was prosecuting the Germans, he said "I don't only accuse you that you are Germans what you've done, because I am Jewish and you killed my brothers and my sisters". I was very hurt about - you know, when I was there and then Warsaw - that part of Warsaw where I was, was bombed. And the wife with the mother went to Otwock. It was outside Warsaw. Where the Germans were not bombing. And I went there with them. And all the high officers used to come there because this fellow - you know - this family had two sons. One which became Chief of Police of district Warsaw. And the other one they sent to Lublin. And he was there working like - he was also an officer, captain. And he was - had also a very high position. And all the officers used to come there and so on. And I didn't like it. I was very shy. And as I walked on the street in Otwock I met a lady who was - what I knew her husband's family. And she said "I haven't got money". I said "I've got a little bit of money, let us go together to Lublin and we will live together and we will get a job there".

That was a non-Jewish lady?

She was a Jewish lady. And her husband was in Warsaw. The same like my family was in Warsaw, but I didn't know where they were. Because there was uprising in Warsaw. And we went to Lublin. And we got a job in Osobtorg.

And what was that?

It was a Russian - a big Russian firm what they used to bring food from Russia and they used to sell to the people. And I had a very good - you know, I was - a cashier there. And this friend was - she was a manageress of one shop. And I was a cashier. And as I knew - as this officer worked there in the police. Then they found out in Osobtorg that I know all the big-shots, they were a little bit scared of me. And they wanted to get rid of me. But they knew if they will get rid of me they will have more trouble.

You saw the ghetto was burning and you didn't know if anybody at all survived. You didn't know what had happened to your family. You knew your father was dead. Did you meet any Jewish people at all?

Later, when I came to Lublin, there was a committee. And there was a list of people who had survived. And all the Jewish people used to meet in Lublin.

Was there a ghetto in Lublin as well?

Yes. A ghetto was in everywhere. And funny enough we still had to hide that we are Jewish. Anti-semitism was great. And there was going from Otwock to Lublin a young fellow who was a journalist. And he was Jewish. And the Poles killed him on the way. And it was the first funeral, a Jewish funeral, in Lublin. And all the Jewish people from Lublin which survived the war, even the ministers from the government, went to that funeral. And there were speeches and so on. But the Germans digged over the whole Jewish cemetery and cows were all around there. And there they buried this fellow. It was a very, very moving experience. But when I was in Lublin I didn't know what happened to my mother. What happened to my uncles. And I was living from day to day with this girl, with that woman, because she was a married woman and we slept in one bed. And she wasn't very nice to me. Because you had to be back - we used to go to work early in the morning. And we used to come back in the evening and then it was curfew. You couldn't go out. Then she had a boyfriend, he used to come to her. And when it came Saturday we worked. Sunday was the day of rest. Then she used to go out with her friends and I was left alone and I walked on the streets and I cried. And then when I met some friends I used to - you know, people which knew my family. I used to meet them and so on. And it was a very sad life for me.

What sort of place did you live in?

No, what it was. She had a friend and this friend found us a room in a house where the Germans used to live. And we had one room there. But the Germans left and there were two rooms. In one room we lived, in the other room somebody else. And we stayed there for a few months. And it was a very difficult time for me. Because I was very young and very naive.
<u>End of F226 Side A</u>

F226 Side B

When we - it was very sad. And from the beginning it was quite difficult. When we arrived to Lublin on the beginning, we stayed by some of her friends, by Mr and Mrs Szenberg. They had a large flat and they gave us a mattress I think, what we put on the floor and we slept on the mattress and we covered ourselves with a mans fur coat what I had. And then we found this room which cost us 200 dollars. Somebody gave us the room. She didn't have the money, I laid out the money, and I gave her a bed. And she had a friend who knew quite a lot of people in Lublin. And he found us the job in Osobtorg. She was the manageress and I was a cashier. And one day she came to me and she said "Do you know that they arrested Davidson?" I said "Why?" She said "The gendarmes arrested him".

Who was Davidson?

Davidson was the friend who found us the flat. And he also found us the job there. And I said "Leave it to me". I went up to Jurek, because he was working in the police. They called over the chief of the gendarmerie.

Was that the local police. Was that the Polish police?

Yes, there was the Polish government at the time. And they called the chief of the gendarmerie. I forgot his name. And when they found out what happened, that those people which put him to prison they moved into his flat, they arrested the lot and they let Davidson out. And they said "Stepha" - because my name during the war was Stepha. They said "Stepha can do anything here". And they all laughed. But I wasn't proud of it because I was very upset I was left alone. And my little cousin at the time was with that woman not far from Szemberg.   And my friend had a nephew in Szemberg.

Was there any way of being able to meet?

No, it was quite a long way. You had to go by train. Then we both decided to go to look for those children. She had an address, I had nothing. She arrived to Szemberg. She saw her nephew. And I didn't know where to look for the kid. And we came back to Lublin. And then I went again and tried. I went again to Szemberg. On my own. It was still before we start working in Osobtorg. And I still - and I couldn't find her. But when I was at the station in Szemberg there came the Polish police. And they asked for everybody's documents. And I gave them my documents which were the false documents. And they said to me "What is your name". And I said "Maria Jaworska". Because I had twice changed my name because of the false papers. And what was the date of birth. And I gave the wrong date of birth.

You had two different dates of birth on the two different documents?

Yes. Then he said "You are an intelligent woman. And you look to me. Why did you give me the wrong date of birth". Then I said to him "Because I am Jewish. And my real date of birth you don't know". And I said "If you want to find out ring up to

Colonel Korczynski and he will tell you who I am". And he was at the time chief of police of district Warsaw. When he heard this - because all the trains were like for the cattle. Then when the train stopped he put me in the train and he told the conductor to look after me. Because I am - if something wrong should happen to me they all will be in trouble.

You weren't frightened anymore to say that you were Jewish?

No. I wasn't frightened to say to the police. Because the communist, okay. But I was scared for those ....? But funny enough I've got to tell you - I've got to go back. You see the Russian propaganda was very great at the time. And when we went the first time to Lublin, we were coming back. When you went into a train you didn't know who it was there because it wasn't - you didn't have windows. And it was like for the cattle. We walked in and there were just Russians. Twice - I had all the time when we travelled I was scared already to travel. Because the first time when I went with my friend she turned round to me and she said "We are hungry, it is far away from home, it is cold". And there was sitting a Russian officer and he said "That it is cold I admit. That it is far away home I admit. But that you are hungry I don't admit". And he took out a very big loaf of bread, I never saw such a big loaf. He cut it and he cut butter like cheese and gave us a piece of sugar and he said "Eat, now you are not hungry". But when I went the second time on my own, I was in trouble. Because I had trouble on the way back, what I told you, with that officer. But I had trouble on the way there. Because there was sitting a Russian officer and he start talking to me. And he said he is going to take me to Kiev. He is in love with me, he wants me. Then when the train stopped I run out from the train. It was dark. He start shooting after me. And I was lucky, I got into another train, because it was open, and he missed. But I was nearly shot that time. Because when they saw somebody intelligent - because they talked to you all the time. Then I was so scared, I said I am not going to look for the kid anymore because I will lose my life. And then when I came back to Lublin I worked in Osobtorg and she used to work with me. But on a Sunday, when we could be together, she had boyfriends, she went out with them. And I was walking on the street on my own, crying.

Did you find the little girl?

No. Later. Then after - when Warsaw was taken. No - it was Christmas. And that Korczynski came to Lublin. And there his brother was also a big-shot in the police. He was a captain at the time. And they came to the director of the firm. They said I am their cousin. And he should let me go with them for Christmas. And I went with them to Warsaw, to that part which was liberated by the Russians, for Christmas. And they were very nice to me. And then he gave his car, a Buick, with the chauffeur, and sent me back to Lublin to work. And I wasn't looking long, about three weeks, when Warsaw was liberated. And when Warsaw was liberated I went with Jurek, with that chief of police, he took me back to Warsaw to their flat. And in the morning he took me to Warsaw. And I went to the house where my mother and my uncles were supposed to be. When I arrived there the house was bombed. But it was the address of the woman what they were in hiding by. And I walked there, it took about five hours. It was - walking. And it was a long way.

So it must have been outside Warsaw?

Outside Warsaw.

How did the town look at that time?

Warsaw was bombed and burned. You had only skeletons of the houses. And it was - there were mines as well, the Germans left mines and it was very dangerous to walk. When I arrived to that woman - I know that she was a very big crook and so on. She told me that my mother is for sure dead. But my uncles were sent as prisoners of war to Germany. I took her - I said to her "Let us go to a fortune teller". And I wanted to see what the fortune teller will tell us. I wanted to see the expression in her face - what will be if they will tell us something that she's done something wrong. We went to the fortune teller. But she was such a crooked woman you couldn't find anything, find out from her face. And when I left I cried all the way back to Warsaw. Because I thought my mother is dead. And what I have got to tell you, that I had from the police a pass to go to Warsaw. Not anybody could go into Warsaw. But as I had a pass from Jurek, I could go to Warsaw. And I came to the house of the woman and this house wasn't bombed. What that little girl was in hiding by. And she said "The little girl is all right, but she hasn't got what to eat, because nobody brings any food to Warsaw". And I knew that my uncle hid there some money in her basement, under the foundation of the house. And the next day, after that whole terrible experience that I lost - you know - I thought I lost my mother. I slept in her flat. She was also a caretaker and she had just one room. And I slept with her on one bed. Because the Poles took us everything away. I had just a little basket with some clothes. And I left this basket with her and I took the money with me what I had. I went to Warsaw. And the river was - when I went with Jurek the day before, they took me with a car. But when I went this time I had to walk. And the river was frozen, we walked through the river. And I came to Praga and I bought sausage and bread and vodka. But I don't remember, I know I bought a lot of food. And I came back to this woman, because she was very nice to me.

Was the food rationed at that time?

No. No. You could get as much as you want. But in Warsaw you couldn't get anything. Because it was just - the Germans left. And when I came back the next day I took a man and I asked him to dig me out this money. And while he was doing it and I was standing next to him, the woman called me that my mother arrived. Can you imagine how I felt. My happiness was great. But she was ill. And she was tired. And I took out this parcel with the money and we went back to Jurek's house, to his wife and mother. Because they were in Otwock, now they moved back to Warsaw. To Krakov. We came there. And they gave us back the flat on that attic where I was with those ladies. But we had a bed and the bed didn't have a mattress, just springs. And my mother bought a blanket and we put on the blanket on the springs and we covered ourselves with coats and like this we slept there. And I used to go out and bring some food for my mother. But in Warsaw was a committee. And - not in Warsaw, in Praga. And we were in Grochow. And there was a committee. And to that committee came all the Jews who survived and so on. The excitement was great. Because when you met somebody it was very sad. It was nice to meet somebody from the family. But at the same time you cried for joy, for meeting them. I met my mother's two cousins. One of them came later to England. And I met my cousin.

Where had they spent the war?

My cousin was also on the outskirts of Warsaw. And the other one was - she used to have a housekeeper. And the housekeeper used to look after her.

Did they have false papers as well?

Yes. They all had false papers.

Did anybody come back from the camps at that time?

Not yet. Not yet.

So really you were meeting people who were in hiding first of all, and who had false papers?

False papers. And then I met somebody and I decided to go for business, I've got to earn money, because we can't live like this. Then I was going to Lublin to start doing business with a gentleman. And we went by train. It took forty eight hours to arrive to 60 kilometres from Praga to Lublin.

What was happening on the journey, why did it take so long?

It stopped every minute. When we arrived there I came to some friends and they told me that my uncle is back. When I heard that my uncle is back I left that partner of mine and everything, and funny enough Jurek was going to Warsaw and I went with him to Warsaw. And my other uncle also came. Then my uncle then told my mother he wants to marry me. Then my mother said "We've got to go to England and ask your brother if you should marry her or not". But we were already in love. And a few weeks, about three weeks later, the little girl arrived, they brought her back. And my uncle went to Lodz. He found a nice flat. And we all moved to Lodz. And then we went into business.

What sort of business?

My uncle, who was my boyfriend at the time, he was collecting rags. It was a very big firm. He was the tenth partner. They were ten partners, they were collecting rags. The rags they were selling to the Polish government and they've got material for it, what they sold. And I got a shop in Lodz, with some partners, and I used to sell textiles and stockings and shirts and things like this. Then I got pneumonia on both lungs. And I thought I am dying. And my mother went in the middle of the night to the doctor. And the doctor came about l2 o'clock and brought some smuggled penicillin from Berlin, and they gave me injections and I got better.

Was that winter still?

Yes. That was l945.

He didn't want to send you to hospital?

No, no, no. I don't know even if there were hospital. And on the beginning of '46 Arnold got papers with Sylvia to go to England.

That is your uncle and his daughter?

Yes. And I was left with mummy in Poland.

But you weren't married yet?

We were not married. I came to England in - the l8th of September l946. But I was liberated by the Russians on the l8th of September '44. And when I came to England I stayed with one of his brothers. And he stayed with his other brother.

When did these brothers go to England?

One brother came after the First World War. And the other brother came before the war.

So you really didn't think of going anywhere else?

No. My father left money here before the war. And we had something.

Was it difficult to get the papers to go to England?

I tell you what, it was very difficult. The papers what they sent me it was alright. But all the Polish people - you know, the Jewish people, to get a passport was very hard. But me, because I was in hiding, you know Korczynski and his brother, and our flat was - you know, for the communist party there. Then it was very - I got it in two days my passport. And when I went to the passport office they said "We will give you money if you will be able to -"   -   how is it called -   "Make passports for somebody else". I didn't want to do it because it wasn't my business. I wanted to get out from there as soon as possible. I didn't want to stay in Poland. And then when I came to England it was a very severe winter, very cold. And we tried now to bring my mother over. And we tried to buy a house.

Did any of the organisations about help you at all?

No. Nobody. We didn't need to ask because we had money. The money were blocked. They were under the enemy custodies. And I brought some money.
<u>End of F226 Side B</u>

F227 Side A

You see, I told you that Arnold, my uncle, bought a diamond. And he sewed the diamond into the fly of his trousers. And when we were in hiding and they gave us something to drink, they took the money away, but the diamond was still there. When Arnold left for England he gave me the diamond. And he told me - and then he wrote me a letter I should send the diamond and this will be my engagement ring. When I was leaving Poland I got permission from the Polish government to take out a diamond ring. When I came to the customs they ask me for the diamond, I showed them the diamond. And they said "I'm sorry, it is much too big, you can't take it". I took off the ring and I gave it to my mother. And later my mother smuggled it into England. And I never take this ring off from my finger. My husband wanted once to sell it and to buy me a nicer ring. I said "No. This is something that it got a memory". And funny enough most pieces of my jewellery what I wear and some what my daughter-in-law wears, every one piece got a story.

I want to ask you about the English authorities when you arrived in England. Was there any difficulty at all in getting into the country?

No. It was very difficult to get - you see I came as a domestic.

That had to be arranged in advance?

Yes. I came as a domestic. Later my mother came as a domestic. And Arnold came for a Zionist conference. And we were here for 2 years - 2 years more, because when Henry was two - that I took Henry to the Home Office and he said "Don't throw my mummy out, I am British". Because he was born in England.

That is your son?

Yes.

Did you actually ever work as a domestic?

No.

Did any check on you?

I tell you something, I had trouble here, because somebody was here who didn't like us, and sent - wrote to the Home Office and the police came. It was after we were married.

Did you get married as soon as you came?

No, when I came I waited for six months. I stayed with my husband's other brother. And six months later I got married. And when my mother arrived.

So you waited for her?

Yes. And when she arrived we got married. And we moved to number 3 Holly Park, where we lived for l6 years. And Sylvia was with us. You know. Because her name was - during hiding she was Yanka. And her name was Celina. And here they gave her the name Sylvia. Then with her it was a lot of trouble because when she was in hiding they didn't give her to eat, what I told you before. And then she - you know - then when she was with the other woman, the woman looked after her very well, the other caretaker. And then we took her home. And she came here with Arnold. But her auntie wasn't too nice to her. She sent her to a boarding school. And when we got married we took her out from the boarding school and she went to Hasmonean grammar school. And when she got her O levels I wanted her to study further and she didn't want to. And she became a shorthand typist. And when she was l8 she was working on a job and she met a fellow we didn't know nothing about. And one day she run away from home. We were looking for her. We couldn't find her. We went to the police. We said she disappeared. And the police told us she is in Scotland. We went to Scotland. It was like on the pictures. We found her. She wanted - she wanted to marry somebody who wasn't Jewish. And she married him. And the way how she done it all it was very sad for us. And for 5 years we didn't know where she was. And when she run away from home and my husband was so hurt he lost his head. And all the money what we had he lost in - you know - because of anxiety over the daughter. That it was very hard, we start and I opened a business. And then one day came in a woman to the shop. And she told me she knows where Sylvia is. And I found her, that she said "If you want me, come to me". I never had a car, she lived in Enfield. And I went to Enfield to her. I saw she looked very nice. And then after a few months I decided she should come to us, to the house. And my husband said he doesn't want her. Then I said "If you don't want her you will lose me". I specially said it to him. And he accepted that she came.

Did she come on her own?

No, she came with her husband. And they used to come ever since. She couldn't have children. And one day she came that she wants to adopt a child. And I said "Take a girl, not a boy, you don't want to have any complications". And she - when my mother was very ill she came with that little girl. With the baby. And then my mother was in hospital. And it was my mother's birthday, my mother was in the private wing in the Finchley Memorial Hospital. Because she had cancer. Then she came with the baby. And then two days later I rang up and her husband answered the telephone. I said "What you are doing now at home". He said "Didn't Sylvia tell you that she bathed the baby and she found a cyst", you know, a lump on her head. And they took the child to the hospital and they operated on her and they took out a cyst pressing on the brain, which was as big as a grapefruit. Then my husband said to her "Sylvia, forget about this baby, leave it". She nearly went berserk. "It's my baby, how can you talk like this". My mother died. And three weeks later - because first when you take a child for adoption it is - you are fostering it for six months. And they took away the child. And they used to go every week to see this child. And in the meantime she got a very good job. She became a secretary to a managing director of a building company.

Did she get on with the English language?

No, nobody would say that she is - yes, that she is a foreigner. And then one day she rings me up, she said "I've got to speak to you and daddy, it is something very important and I don't want Ron", that is her husband, "to know about it". And she came. And she told us that now they want to adopt this baby. But she doesn't want it. And I said "Sylvia, perhaps you will get pregnant". And she didn't say anything. And four weeks later she was pregnant. And she gave birth after l4 years of marriage, to a little boy. And then my - and the boy used to come here, they all used to come and I used to make terrible fuss of that boy.

Did she bring him up as Jewish?

No, she didn't. He knew he is Jewish, but that's it. And then one day she didn't behave - then my husband got ill. My husband got ill. And my husband died. But I had shops. I gave up the shops. Because when my mother got ill and when I found out that she'd got cancer, I said that my place is with my mother, not in a business. Because she looked after my son when he was little. Now I've got to look after my mother. And I sold the shops. And we sold the house in Holly Park. I bought a house here in Arden Road. And as I had two rooms upstairs we made a flat. Two rooms, kitchen and bathroom. What we let. What we had a income. And I bought a house in South London, not far from the business what my husband had. That we could let it and to have a income from it. And when mummy died and she left me some money, we bought another house, to be able to educate Henry. Then we didn't have luxuries, but we lived quite comfortable.

How did you get on with the local Jewish community. Did they help you in any way. Did they make you welcome in any way?

Not at that time. But after my mother died and Henry had some friends, they took me to the Wizo. And when it was the Six Day War, I worked very hard for the Wizo, and I liked the people very much round me.

What about when you first arrived?

When I first arrived I didn't have any contact and they were not nice to us.

The local Jewish community didn't go out to look for the refugees?

No, they didn't. They couldn't care a hoot.

So you were actually lucky because you had some means?

We had some means. But I know only that when my husband came and we had some friends here, and my brother-in-law knew a lot of people in the Welfare Board. Then it came here a couple from Poland which are now very wealthy people. Then he went with the wife and with the baby to the Welfare Board and they helped him. Later they paid back that Welfare Board. But he helped him to get money from the - We also helped some other people which came here, which didn't have, we helped them with money and so on.

So your friends were really other Polish Jewish people?

Yes. Oh, but I never told you. When I lived at Holly Park as soon as I got married. Then we - my husband didn't have permission to work. And he used to go to Hatton Garden and he used to earn money there, you know, just from hand to hand. Nobody - you know, he used to deal in Hatton Garden, not even knowing what he is dealing with. And he used to earn some money and we had quite a lot of friends here. Then we used to invite them, they all used to come to us. My house was the open house for all the Polish people. And they used to - like we didn't have in those days mixers or - or anything like this. And I used to cook with mummy and bake, and we used to entertain them all the time. But unfortunately, when Sylvia run away, it was completely different. They start talking behind our backs. And we lost all those friends. But some I've still got. And later I became very friendly with the community here. I didn't need anything. We only help, you know, to give charity and so on.

Did you meet any people who actually survived the camps?

Yes. Yes. Funny enough, when I came to England and I was here for the first six months before I got married, I used to go to school to learn English. And there I met some girls which also survived. And we are friends to this very day.

So really was it only then that you realised what happened. Or did you know before. I am talking about the death camps?

No, I knew about the death camps when - in the ghetto already. But we didn't know about the concentration camps. The concentration camps I knew later when I was in Lodz, when the people started coming back. But they never told me much about the things. My best friend was in Belsen. And she told me a few things and it shocked me.

When Henry was a little older did you tell him about your experiences?

I told Henry since he was a baby. And now he doesn't want to hear.

He certainly knows the history?

Yes, he knows the history, but he doesn't want to know.

But you feel it is important to tell the story?

Yes. Not only to him, but I wanted to tell it to my grandchildren.

What do you feel about Israel?

I feel a lot. First of all I feel that Israel came about because of the destruction of 6 million. And I feel that if we wont have Israel, all the Jews will be killed all over the world.

It's like an insurance?

Yes. That's right.

You had a relative in Israel. Is that right?

Yes.

Did you ever think of actually going there to live?

No. In l949 we didn't have permission to stay in England. My husband went to Israel because his brother was in Israel. And it was very hot there. And I can't stand very - the heat. And he knew we wont be able to live there. But I was going quite often to Israel. When I went first time to Israel Henry wasn't four. I went alone with Henry.

Does Henry feel very much Jewish?

Very much.

You gave him a Jewish education?

That's right. And my grandson is having -   Not Sylvia's son. Henry's son.

So what happened to Sylvia?

Then Sylvia - when my husband died she used to come here as usual. And I used to see the little boy. And we were very close. When the boy was eight she got cancer. And she died in a very short time.

That must have been a terrible tragedy?

It was terrible. But I wanted to keep the boy and I invited them and I gave them presents and things. I didn't know how to keep him. But I tried to bribe him. And three years ago somehow they moved from the house what Sylvia bought. And my little grandson Anthony got a card from Steven, from Sylvia's son. With £l0 in it. And they wanted to ring up to say thank you. When they rung up the people say they don't live there anymore. Because they moved. And I rung up and I didn't have any response. Then the fellow told me "They moved out but they didn't give me the address. Ring up to the estate agent and he knows where they are". I took the address of the estate agent. But I told myself if they dont want me to know, why should I bother. But it still upset me. One day, it was like on the pictures, I rang to that estate agent. And while I was ringing came a letter through the letterbox. A letter from Steven. Which wasn't nicely written. "If you dont know our address, here is our address, and contact". And the telephone number. And I rang up to my daughter-in-law and I gave the telephone number and I sat down and I wrote a letter to Steven. Tell him that I am shocked at the way how he writes to me and so on. And on a Thursday Henry comes here. That was on a Wednesday. But I didn't post the letter, I wanted to show it to Henry. Henry said "The boy got enough troubles". Because Anthony spoke with him. "You don't send him this letter". Then I went out and I bought a card, because he said he is going to have his A levels. I wrote him a card. Wished him luck. And if you've got a chance give me a ring. And I never heard from him. But he told me one day that if - that he is going to work in a bank. And Henry said "If he is going to work in a bank let him work in the City, then he got more prospects". But a few months passed by, I couldn't stand it any longer, and I rung up there. And his father was telling me a lot of lies on the telephone. And things which upset me. And he said "If he wants he will phone you". And I never heard from him. But he was 2l this year. And I bought him a beautiful gift. And I wanted to send it to him. And Henry said "Dont send it. Write him a letter. Let him come here to collect it". I wrote a letter and I didn't hear. Then I rung up to the council and they said they don't live there anymore. But they had the same telephone number. When you ring up this woman which used to be his nurse she is still living there. She answered the telephone. Then I didn't say anything. Then I told this to Henry that they dont live there and - but the telephone they've got the same. It was Friday evening, Henry said "You ring up there and tell them that you want to speak to him. He should phone you". I rung up and I said "I want to speak to Steven. And let him ring me". He never phoned me. And I never heard from him.

Do you think they want to keep him away from you?

Yes.

<u>End of F227 Side A</u>

<u>F227 Side B is blank</u>

<u>End of Interview</u>