

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Regina Hamburger Bomba
September 18, 1990
RG-50.030*0034**

PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a videotaped interview with Regina Hamburger Bomba, conducted by Linda Kuzmack on September 8, 1990 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview took place in Washington, DC and is part of the United States Holocaust Research Institute's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview cannot be used for sale in the Museum Shop. The interview cannot be used by a third party for creation of a work for commercial sale.

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REGINA HAMBURGER BOMBA

September 18, 1990

01:00:06

Q: OK. We're on. The tape has started. Will you tell me your full name please?

A: Yeah. My name is Regina Bomba, from home, Hamburger¹.

Q: Where uh when were you born?

A: I was born in Poland, Łódź, on the 5th of June, 1920.

Q: Will you tell me, Regina, what happened to you, please, when the Nazis came in to Łódź?

01:00:33

A: Yeah. When the Nazis came into Łódź, we were still on this place, a summer home. It was name Wisniowa Góra, and we decided that we going to go back home to the city. When we got into the city, our home was taken away by the Nazis, so we stayed in a house of a brother of ours, of my oldest brother, Rubin (ph), who at that time was in the Polish army fighting in Warsaw and his wife and a six-month old baby was with us. And after that we stayed with my brother in my brother's house, and I'm not going to say how it happened that my brother came home from the army and he took his wife and a six-month old baby and he said he wants to go to Soviet Russia. That's the only place he said where the Jews could survive, and he went. My father, my mother, my sister and one brother, sister younger one, a brother older one than me that were staying in this house until March 1940, 10th of March 1940 when the Gestapo came into the house. We thought that we're going to go to the ghetto. They already made it for the Jews, the ghetto. They took everyday from certain streets to the ghetto. The fact that my mother had a sis...a brother in the ghetto and he said uh bring every...all the stuff here because when you're going to go, all you can do take is a valise. This way bring over stuff to me and when you come to the ghetto you'll have everything. So that's what we did. When the the Nazis came in to take us down...it was during the night...one o'clock at night...my mother forget that she went down in the house shoes. And we went down...we thought we're going to the ghetto. And we said alright. We're going to have everything over there in the ghetto. For us the soldier said wouldn't you let me go back. My mother is cold and she would like to have some shoes. He said oh, it's going to be soon summer. You can go barefoot. She can go barefooted. So instead to the ghetto, they took us to a place and they told us that we're going to be going out from the city. They took away our money, our possessions. They took off a ring from my mother...she had a fat finger...and they couldn't take it off...with the flesh and they sent us to a small town near Czestochowa named Nowo Radomsko and they put us in a burned synagogue. That town that town Radomsko was

¹ maiden name

bombarded very, very badly and they had already a ghetto over there.

01:03:11

But I must say the Jews from the town, especial there was a man named Burger (ph)...he was the oldest from the town and he brought some food special for the children. I still have my little sister...was a still a small little girl and uh I always....I younger...I always looked older, and my mother said, well, we have to do something to make something to eat. What we going to do? My mother was washing floors for people, because my father got ill right away when...he was a very delicate man, long, very tall, and uh from the nature he was not...my mother was the stronger one, for everything for father, and he...from the beginning he said right away I don't want to live. I cannot live like this, and I don't want to live. From mine...seven children I brought up, from my home, for everything what I worked, I'm here in a burnt synagogue and strolling and a (indecipherable), and on the top of it, his foot got very swollen and very ill. So we decided that...there was no hospital, no Jewish hospital and in the Polish hospital, Jews were not allowed. In Czestochowa was a Jewish hospital, so we hired a Polish (indecipherable)...a Polish...that was a horse and carriage. Called in a Polish (indecipherable), a horse and carriage and we...I took my father and we went to Czestochowa and there we arrived in the Jewish hospital in Czestochowa. That's the time that I came...the first time in my life to Czestochowa. My mother was behind in that synagogue with my sister and my brother and I decided...my father was out out of the hospital...how...where is he going to go back to that burnt synagogue, so I was looking around a way to to remain in Czestochowa. I had 50 Polish zloty...what the Germans give...I took away...we...our Polish...our town in Łódź belonged to the 3rd Reich, Litzmannstadt they called it. So I...and that Poland and Czestochowa was Protectorate for us for that's where they give us the Polish money, so with that money I rented an apar...uh a room by a family, and I brought over my sister and my brother and my mother so we stayed together.

01:05:27

In 1942 I said I'm going to make a brief...before Yom Kippur, and that's the first time of our life that comes this kind of a holiday. The saddest time of my life. I guess all the lives from Czestochowa Jews, and maybe for other towns, that was a day that their Gestapo came and they took out the people for the liquidations. They call it the akti...the aktions. I don't know how it is...akt...aktion... aktion in Polish. And before that all it was the holidays and they took out from the ghetto and made another ghetto, so we did not have an apartment. We were the refugees so we didn't know so many Czestochowans, people...so many...you know, that protects you, how you say, that we should get an apartment. So the (indecipherable) rabbi from Radomsko invited my father with his family for the holidays, and I was left behind to wait for an apartment, so they went and I was left behind. I stayed there for a little while and I said no...I am going also going there, so I went back to Radomsko, just for a few days. Stayed with them and then I decided since I don't look so Jewish, I am going to go back on the train and I went into the train, bought a ticket, and I went back to Czestochowa to wait for the apartment. In meantime in Radomsko was judenrein...you know what that means,

judenrein. Clean of the Jews. Only a few I think were left behind because two of them came back, two sisters. They came back to Czestochowa later on, in a bunker. They were hid in a bunker. And I stayed there...I met a fellow in that hospital while my father was laying there in the hospital, and he took me into his house...he had a father and a mother and a sister, but the mother said it's not nice that a girl should stay in the same house, one room, with a fellow, so they decided that I should get married to him. He was much older than I was. He was fifteen years older. I got married by myself, and I even...somebody borrowed me a little veil and a dress and I got married, and if you don't want to have children, then you have them sometimes, and I become pregnant.

01:07:54

I called up my mother and I told her about it. It was May 15, 1942. And I told her, and she said I'm sorry. I would like to come, but I can't because we...they were not allowed, the Jewish people, to travel and that was the last time I spoke to my mother. I spoke to her by telephone through the Jewish komitet in Nowo Radomsko and in Czestochowa. Now after that, my husband was working in a hospital, in that hospital in Czestochowa, so he took me into that hospital. His parents were sent away with the whole family, sisters, two sisters and a niece and his parents, and we stayed behind. After that we were...I was washing the bloody wash from the people. I didn't know what else to do but I wanted to help. They left us for the next ones to go. After that they send us to a factory. The factory was named Factory Iskovitch (ph), and across the street was another factory...I don't know the name...where my husband was near the factory. All of a sudden when I was in the factory...I hadn't mentioned his name. His name was Shlomo Muskovitch (ph). And somebody say hey, Muskovitch (ph) is outside, and I looked it out and I saw him taking his rucksack and his head down...he didn't see me. I saw him through the window, and that's the last time I saw him. They were shipped to Treblinka because they needed another hundred men for the transport, so this they sent him away. And here I came into the ghetto...they sent us to a small ghetto and pregnant, alone, not from a strange town, without any family, without nobody. So everybody was making groups to take a room in the ghetto. It was rooms in the ho...in houses. That's what they give us...a few streets, and uh I was sitting outside on my rucksack and my things...I took a few things because I was thinking we weren't going to have some place the baby.

01:10:04

In fact the doctor wanted to make an abortion right away. And I said what, my father would...he was a religious man. That would be the worst thing that anybody could have done. It's a sin. So I didn't want to do it. But by the time we came to the ghetto, by the time think it was late...so we were in...eight people in one room and there was a wo...a lady...at that time to me she was an older lady. Maybe she was forty-five years old and she had a daughter my age and she said, believe me, Regina, you'll see...make an abortion. Otherwise you're not going to live because she said you're young. You'll get married again. You'll have children. And I went to one doctor to make an abortion. He he wouldn't do it. He thought it's too late. Then we went to another doctor. I even remember her name...her name was Dr.

Grunwald (ph), a woman doctor. In middle of abortion, she said I think you're going to die...the head is so big. You are very far...you must be having the fifth month already. I said yes I am. She said why I didn't ask you any questions. She said I've assumed that you're in the beginning. I didn't...I didn't show so much. I'm I'm tall, so I didn't show so much. I said no, I I...you didn't ask me what it is. And she said well...and the abortion was made on a small, tiny table, holding my own legs because there was no hospital or anything, and of course we they didn't want to wait any longer because it was pretty late and I listened to that older lady, what she said. She said if you don't go and make an abortion now, a little bit soon it's going to show and then they're going to send you away for the gas chambers. We want you to live, and that's what happened. I had an abortion and I was...after that had to go to work, bleeding, and go to work and I was working and uh after one year they made another ghetto. They made three streets. The young, the girls that we had no husbands like me, the men, and married couples where they also had a street, so there were three streets. Everything in Czestochowa in the ghetto. We were going out to work. What happened...a lot of things what with my husband even said I was listening there about uh that uh Vislovich (ph) that they killed him laying right before my feet. But like I said, we're going to make it short. They sent us to this...I was working in a place named HASAG². I worked...got up in the morning, five o'clock appel. Seven o'clock we went to work and seven o'clock we returned, and we worked there until June 1943.

01:12:51

That day we didn't go back to the ghetto anymore. We prepared to go back to the ghetto like every day and all of a sudden and to this day I don't know how that happened...all of a sudden we looked around by the gate of going out from that HASAG, from the factory...it took us an hour to walk to the ghetto. All of a sudden thousands of Ukrainians with their machine guns to us and from where they come from until this day I don't know how that happened so quick and they said, halt. And a table was put up and at that table went up a man...he was some kind of director from that factory and he said...this this was exactly his words, because I was there: "In eure gewesenem Lager geht ihr nie mehr gurück." That means in the ghetto you don't go never back again. You're going to stay here until we're going to let us live. That was exactly his words. Women were fainting because they had children, mothers...the ghetto still had, you know, a lot of people and I had...knew Abraham...I had him and I (inaudible). What I'm going do? So my uh two cousins of mine, two sisters...there were three but one of the sisters was working by sor...sorting buttons from the people from the stores who left behind, so they had a thing, the job was to put buttons to buttons. They found a sock with buttons for a Pole...for a Polish man, and he said that the people from the Garibaldi street where they working with the buttons, they give him the buttons. So they took my cousin, a first cousin, my mother's sister's daughter...the two sisters have survived. They're here in too in America and living in New York, and took her...her name was the beautiful Paula. She was such a beautiful girl...I I cannot ex...there's pictures

² Hugo Schneider Aktiengesellschaft-Metalwarenfabrik, Leipzig

from her too. The sisters have pictures from her, and they took her and other eight people, nine, and a child nine year old because there was a couple with a child...and other seven...nine people. They took them to the cemetery and they put a ditch and they killed them and she had a ring and she had a little uh how you call it...a chain, a golden chain, and there was a German standing and he said she was so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off of her, and she said listen. You're looking at me. Do me a favor. I have two sisters in that factory HASAG. Could you give this to my sisters? I'll give you their name, and he came back and he gave it to them. They still have this. My husband saw this girl...you ask my husband what a beautiful girl she was and uh we we come in and he came on the table and he told us that we don't go no more to the ghetto. My cousins said to me, the two sisters said you talk pretty good German. Why don't you ask him what's going to happen to the people in the ghetto?

01:15:53

From nature I am not a shy person like my husband. I walked over to him and I got my courage and I said I would like to ask you, do me a favor. Please Mr., what's going to happen to the people in the ghetto? He said they're going to come tomorrow to that to that place here. For a minute we were very happy that that he said that but we didn't know. The next day...Abraham came and another couple of people came...I don't know how many exactly but quite a few young people came in. Was no children, not older people, plenty of young people didn't come in. When I left that day in the morning...I saw Abraham at night and I told him, Abraham, you know I had a pair of earrings of my grandmother's put it on on me when I was only three days old. I said I'm going to give you these earrings. It's very dear to me, and I had a watch and I had a wedding band and I had pictures. That was the most important for my family, a lot of pictures and he...I said I'll leave this with you after and you take care. He said oh, of course I'm going to take care of that, but when they took them out from the ghetto to the to the uh market place, they told them to put all their valuables...they didn't know they're not going to go back, so everything was left in there.

01:17:07

But I was so happy and pleased and that he came to the place, and we told him look, they made a place for all the women, one on top of the other, and a place for the men. And then they stopped making barracks and they made for about...we were about six hundred in each barrack and what I wanted to tell you that the police...my husband mentioned it already...that the police were taken with hammers over the heads, knocking them down and then taking them to the cemetery for burial, and the wife of one policeman...her name is Mrs. Kohn (ph). She lives now I believe now in Israel. She was left alone with a young baby sixteen months old. Her name, his name was David. We called him Doodoo (ph), and she came in to that HASAG, in that factory with him. She put him in a sack, give him a sleeping pill, put him in a sack, and how shocked she was, and she brought him over. But later on when she sit down on the chair, in that HASAG, she could not talk and she was like you

know not herself. She didn't know she had a child, like you call it crazy. Mishkoiradich³ (ph). Regardless of how you say it in English, like like...not like crazy running around but quiet, very quiet. We had a doctor and he said that nothing he can do for her, so we gave her a broom in her hand and that she is the one who cleans the barracks and that...with that broom she was sitting all the time in those barracks. What we going to do with the child? We made it a little bunker on the bottom under mine where I was sleeping on the first one. Then there were three like the bunk beds, and this child they made it a little draw...drawer...door and inside they made for him a little bed. He got very tiny and he didn't grow and he was there. Whatever we could, you know...everybody from us gave him a little tiny whatever we got from bread or a spoon of soup. We had enough. He was so smart and so quiet. He didn't show himself. He didn't...he knew when he saw Nazis or Germans, he knew. He run away. Opened like a little door and ran in there, and one day he couldn't make it. That Nazi saw him and they called the...Mr. Kurlon (ph) I think was the man from the Jewish uh elders and he called him and he said what's this. He said listen. I lost my family but I cannot, I couldn't have the heart to give this child. I'll do with him whatever you like. He said you know what. Give him a portion bread and a soup. Let him stay. You know, it...like who knows tomorrow what's going to be with all of you, and would you believe it or not, he stayed with us until 1945 when we were liberated. The only child. He didn't grow. He's in Israel today. Uh his father had a brother there in Israel and she's met...she's married. She got well in Israel and she got married. I don't know exactly how at this moment it is with them. You're not interested in everyone but this is the episode that I wanted to tell you that I thought it was interesting.

01:20:11

We stayed in that HASAG. I was working very, very hard. I was working so hard because they took away...every time a couple of hundred of people and they send them to the Auschwitz or Tre...I don't know wherever they sent them away from us. We didn't know exactly where they were sending people, so like I had one machine...we were making ammunitions. Then I had to have three machines, so if one machine made Schmelz⁴...Schmelz means when the Rohstoff⁵ did not come out too good, so he...it was punishment, so I I I couldn't be at once on all the three machines, that was for three people. Abe called me I'm a dancer, I'm dancing from one machine to the other, and at the top of it they made it very hard for us. Why? We used to take the Rohstoff, put it in a very high, big machine inside and that machine was going this way and it came out at once in a big box, the Rohstoff, and this was only uh we called it Matrizen⁶. That means that the the bullet goes in

³ in a stupor (Yiddish)

⁴ melted metal (German)

⁵ raw material (German)

⁶ mold (German)

in that. I don't know how you call it in English. We call it in German the Matrizen. And the bullet goes in in that. The bullet was a different place where people were working. So one day I had Schmelz down but the work was not done. He said why did you do that? I didn't do it, nothing. I said I have for this machine then that happened. You've got to call up Heinrich (ph). That means the man who's fixing the machine. I said I did but I couldn't do it while I was on this machine, so I got 'strafe...punishment. Punishment...it was my twelve hours work regular. The other twelve hours was the 'strafe and then it was again my time to work and it was at night time. For thirty-six hours without nothing, eating, standing what we got to eat, so I was so tired so I sit down. I don't know a German walked over... where he got such a foot I don't know. I was not such a little girl. I'm tall. He picked me up with his foot and he he...I I got up, with his foot, while I'm sitting and eating. I'm not going to tell you how many times we got beaten up for things that was...a minimum we got beaten up. As long as we were not shot, and then on the top we had a very bad time. What happened? There was another camp uh Skarzysko. They had liquidated that camp and they sent the people to our camp in that HASAG in Czestochowa. With them came the Meisters. Means the the German Herrschaft⁷. They came and they were the...if ours were very bad, theirs were ten time worst. They didn't talk. They went with the guns like that. There was special one man...his name is so good for him...his name was Bartenschlager⁸, and he had...he didn't go...he didn't talk to nobody. If he did see something he didn't like it, he shot you. And I had the pleasure once to see him next to my machine. I figured that seven o'clock we're finishing and at five to seven I made my accord everything was finished. Five minutes before I'm going to clean up my machines. Everything had to be spotless. They're very clean, the Germans. That that you can't take away from them. I cleaned up my machine and he came over and he said, "Wieviel spät ist es?" What time is it now? And I said, Herr Meister. Seven. He said seven? He looked at the watch and it was just maybe a quarter second after seven. He hold that gun, "Pass' mal auf."⁹ Because he saw my machine was clean already, and I was so lucky that he didn't shot me. He must have liked my face. I don't know, because he didn't do...he didn't talk. He'd have shot right away. That was another luck I had. And then again, I had a cousin and she was working in a place named Augenschein (ph). That was the bullets...they had to make the bullets so nice and so clean cause any tiny little scratch, the bullet doesn't shoot out, so it had to be done very...and she was a very beautiful girl, a face like a doll, with with big lashes but when she looked up the lashes went until here and if you looked down the lashes went until here. So she couldn't see so good. Every day she went...there was Wache¹⁰. There was a Wache...but the Germans took you. Somebody signed it for you and the Ukrainians beat...resumed the beating on the behind. They take off everything. Bend down

⁷ control, mastery (German)

⁸ Bartenschlager, Georg, SS# 77325. Sources: Berlin Document Center's List of SS Officers; *Churban Czestochow* by Benjamin Orenstein, p. 271-274.

⁹ colloquial translation = "Hold on" (German)

¹⁰ guard, watch (German)

and with those pages whatever it is..beatings...she got twenty-five everyday on her behind.

01:24:40

And then I also remember one thing. It didn't do to me, but it did it such a thing to me that I'll never forget as long as I live. There were five brothers Leibermann (ph). Four of them survived. I don't know if you ever heard of them. You did? And one took away...I don't know if he...from where he had a piece of leather because those those big belts from the machine, it was from leather, so he must have, you know, cut off a piece because there was something wrong with it and another piece and they found a piece on one of the brothers. And they beat the one of the brothers two hundred...he had it...until he died on to under that thing and didn't say it was his brother. He didn't want...he knew they're going to kill me maybe anyway. I don't want to to in...implicate my brother. In fact I had something to do with the liberation of his brothers. I said something in in like a novi¹¹ ...you know what a novi means...somebody who knows to say it something is going to happen. What I said in it and the four of them survived. I always meet them when there's a gathering, uh memorial for the Czestochowa people. We're always there so we always meet.

Q: You...

A: Yeah, and that was...

Q: ...slow down a little bit.

A. Yeah. No, it's OK. I I can go on. I'm strong. I can go on.

Q: You had a story about the woman who fought with the Nazis? You had a story about a woman who fought with the Nazis? Was that interesting?

01:26:05

A: This girl...you want me to tell you about her. Yes. That was uh still when we were in the ghetto. That was not in the HASAG. We were working in a place named Ausbahn (ph). Ausbahn (ph) means the the trains were going to...out of the country to like to France or other places, and I remember trains passing by with Jews and there must have been Litvak Jews because they were talking Jewish in Letish (ph)...must be from Latvia some place. They begged us to give them a little bit snow so the train...while the trains were rolling, not standing, we were making very hard uh balls from snow and throwing. They were killing each other to get that piece of that snow. They must have been very very thirsty, and they also asked us where they are and we screamed it's Czestochowa, so I was working...I don't

¹¹ prophet (Yiddish)

know to say that English...but in in German we call this a kilof¹². It's like a big hammer with a stick that you cut the ice with it, with a spit. This...I was working like a man and we were cutting the ice from the train, near the train but the train should, you know, could pass by and in the summer we were making uh uh ditches. So one day we were working by the ditches just like that and that one of the foremens...actually he was from the uh train...a foreman, from train. He was a tall man. I believe that man must have been seven feet big. Such a tall man I never...we had to look up. I am not so small...had to look up looking like that to see him. His name was Lajzer (ph). I don't know the second name...the second name was Lajzer (ph). I know he had a wife, no children, because she had a home right next to the tracks and she used to take in two blond girls, you know...friends of mine also from Czestochowa, two sisters to warm up a little bit and they...she used to give them socks to mend that they should rest a little bit. I never had that uh luck to go in there. I used to go in to the little booth sometime from the uh uh conductors from the train to warm up but they had a fire going and it was bitter cold in January, February, but working outside and we didn't...we were not clothed so uh all of a sudden he he said uh he opened a tent and he took in our...one by one asking questions. When the people came out, each boys and girls, we asked them what did he say. What did they want? They said we're not allowed to say anything, so until I didn't go in I didn't know what was going on. When I went in he asked me a question. He called me by my name Regina. I don't know. For some reason he liked me. He said Regina, you tell me the truth. I said of course Herr Meister, I'll tell you everything...in German. He said, did Paula said something about me. I said oh no. Never. You walk with her to the ghetto everyday in five...we were walking five. I said we're walking every day but she never said one word and the woman was sitting with him was a Jewish woman, and I said to her...Rosa was her name...Rosa, what do you want me...you better tell she said. I said what do you want me to tell? I don't know what it's all about. She said well, they're talking that I am in love with Mr. Lajzer (ph) and that I am have business with him and they took him to the Gestapo. She told me that and that they're making a big uh investigation about him, because this is not allowed. A Jewish woman with a German is not allowed. So I said believe me that's the honest truth...and all of a sudden they told me to go out. When I went out, they called her in. She was the next one to go in and as she went in, she went out. That same minute. And he behind her with a gun, just like that. Shooting. And she did like that...and all of a sudden he grabbed her and she grabbed him and they were twisting. I don't...like I said she was a small woman, not a big woman like me. A girl, a young girl, maybe sixteen or fifteen. She threwed him down, that big man, fat man. He throwed down...she was rolling with him...he was all...his his clothing, you know...the German was full with sand and with mud and she didn't let herself killed. All of a sudden, like I said...we walked over. We begged him, and then there was a like man who used to be a neighbor of his in in Germany. He was sent to the Lódz ghetto, the Litzmannstadt, and then from there to Czestochowa and he walked over to him. He grabbed him by his arm and he said listen Mr. Lajzer (ph). You're such a good man. You've been my neighbor. Please, you're going to be sorry later on. She's a young kid. Maybe she didn't mean it. Don't kill her, please. About that time she ran and she ran away.

¹² pickaxe (note: "kilof" not found in German dictionary, rather in Polish dictionary)

She ran away very, very fast, far as she could and she walked into the ghetto. She's all been to a different group from people working also out but they walk into the ghetto and she got in back to the ghetto.

01:31:03

The next...she had a husband this one young lady. But she got married a short time before and his name was Stefek (ph). I don't...cannot remember the second name but my husband has a picture in uh the mountains from his grave because there's massen-grave¹³ there. They called them they called them twenty-seven at once and he was working in a different place and she took him to this place because he should have easier for him, but at that time she didn't know that she's going to be in love with this. One thing she did tell me when I asked her...I said your husband is complaining that you're going out to dinner. Not...I didn't say with Paula. I said your husband. And said that you're going out to dinner with a German and he is jealous. So she walked over and she said to that to that German, you know Herr Meister my husband is eifersüchtig. That means he is jealous, and and he said no, you pass my love. I have nothing to do with your wife. He was very very jealous and she told him that and she didn't think anything, you know, and he didn't think anything, but when we went back to the ghetto and he said Regina, she's not coming home to sleep anymore. She cannot say that she is not going out with him. Of course I...my mouth was sealed, not allowed to say anything. I said oh don't say that. Maybe she is working with him. Maybe, you know, there's a lot of things to work...she's a foreman. She's a Jewish foreman. All of a sudden when we come back the next day for work, they send us a different job. He didn't come back, the German, and not did Rosa. They disappeared, both of them. What happened...later on when we were working this husband of hers...I remember Stefek (ph)...that I remember. He was a blonde, fairly young, maybe twenty-five, twenty-four. Beautiful, good looking, tall and he went to work with another twenty-seven I think or twenty-eight or twenty-seven boys...or men. The women didn't work on that Saturday or Sunday or Saturday, and he went to work, and that man, that Lajzer (ph)...came and that partisans, a lot of partisans, walked into that group to go into the ghetto. All they wanted to go into that HASAG. They needed uh ammunition, so I guess they must have wanted to go in to get some ammunition. They were taking big risks, and somebody from the Gestapo noticed it, or they were informed from the Polish partisans. We don't know. Somebody there informed the Germans that partisans are with this group, and they took that Lajzer (ph), the one that went away with her, with that Rosa, to take out every second to be killed and he took him out too. That Stefek (ph), and they were all shot and killed and they made a massen-grave in the Jewish cemetery in Czestochowa and when Abraham was now in Poland he took a picture of that grave. He he knew that I was very interested in him.

01:34:14

¹³ mass grave (German: Massengrab)

I saw her once. I saw her once, this woman, after the liberation and then I saw her again a couple of years later. I saw her first in Poland. She came back with her seventeen month old child and when we asked her what happened to him, she said he took her to the woods and in the woods, there is like...you know, in Polish they say (indecipherable)...I don't know how we say it in English...a man who takes care in the for the woods, and he was with a wife and he went in there with a gun to his head he said you must take care of her. She is pregnant, and this is my first child. I never had children before and I want her to have this child and I want her to be safe, and that's the way they survived in there. But in 1945 when the Russians liberated that place, that Polish Gayoua (ph) told him who he is. He knew that he is a Nazi and on the spot they killed him and her with the child...

Q: Who?

A: ...the German, her husband, her lover, whatever he was at that time and they send her back and let her go. She's a Jewish woman with a child. She come in. She had a uncle and a aunt. I lived here and I saw through the window and the uncle lived on this side, and I saw her walking with the baby on the end and then I know very well that that aunt, she still is alive. The uncle not, but the aunt. And the second time I saw her was at the Ischor¹⁴. That means when we had the Ischor after our six million departed, she came. I walked over there and I said like that I am not going to do nothing to you. I would not even open my hand to touch you because you're too dirty but I'm going to tell you one thing. Whom do you come to cry for? For your husband Stefek (ph) or for Lajzer (ph), for the German, and I said you have no right to come here whatsoever. And my husband says she has two brothers, very nice, fine people and she came from a good family, but that's what she told me during the war. I'd do anything to survive. That she did tell me once. He wants to help me, that she told me. He wants me to survive. She was not afraid for me to tell me, but that he's going to kill her husband I don't think that she knew that. I don't think so. I don't think she would allow that. He...he he was really lovely and good looking. She loved him but I guess she was so...wanted so much to live that she ran away with him. That that that is what happened. That's why he wanted to shoot this girl. That's what I said, but I told...just show you the pictures to show you that that's her I met after so many years and she knew then who I was and she, you know, that all the time we were not eating at that party...it was a New Year's party. We were just standing together holding hands and talking and she wants to find but her husband said no. She has in Baltimore a restaurant. I think she's very well off. She has one daughter who is married to a very, very nice uh educated man and uh...

Q: Excuse me...at this point, when...just briefly...when were you liberated?

01:37:17

A: I was liberated in January 16, 1945 in Czestochowa.

¹⁴ memorial (Yiddish)

Q: By then you were married...?

A: Yes. Of course with Abraham, yes. We were together and like Abraham told you, we ran away from the...the night before. That was for itself a thing that we could have been killed just like that. There was Offensive. The Germans were fighting with the Russians, and wherever we went, the Germans told us don't go here. They didn't know who you are, when we ran away from the camp. But they told us to go in a side, over the side. Then all of a sudden I said to my husband, Abe, if the Nazis did not killed us, they they the bullets are going to kill us. Let's go in to any place we can, so we went into a place and there was Polish people standing outside and I went over and in Polish...I speak a very good Polish...and I said to them, please, couldn't you let us in just for one night. We are going home from work and we don't seem...the Nazis don't let us go home, go past. There were Germans all over tell us to go this way. So I said you know what? Go in here, on the ground floor. There's a Polish woman. She has only one son and she has a big apartment. So we did. I walked in and I said in Polish, "Niech bedzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus."¹⁵ It's the truth. It's the honest truth and I said please, we cannot go home. Would you...oh she so (inaudible). She said of course, of course, come in. In fact she said to me if we're going to have to run, if they're going to bombard our house, you take...grab anything because you don't have anything. She was sewing on a machine rucksacks, you know, to put in stuff. She put a lot in stuff and she said you can take something and go. She gave us something to eat and to drink. Abe was so frightened with Jewish face that he all the time was holding his head down and like sleeping and uh there was another woman running after us, a blonde woman. I don't remember her name but she was a blonde, older lady and she was together with us and she went into the same house with us and she was sitting also straight and she looked all the time at my husband, this woman but she didn't say anything. Uh there was another woman from the sixth floor with a son, a daughter-in-law and a baby a couple of months old. The son had no hands...Polish people...because in in Warsaw...they were from Warsaw...but the bombardment...the bomb it dropped into the house and cut off both of his hands, so he was normal only he had no hands, so uh I looked at him and she says that she lives on the sixth floor and with a baby that during the bombardment she is afraid to be in the sixth floor. That's why she came down to that neighbor where we were sitting also.

01:39:49

About five o'clock in the morning she said she's going to go up and make a bottle for the baby, the older lady, the grandmother, so she went up. She made a bottle. She came down with the bottle. And she said in these words. In Polish she said there's so many Jews outside on the steps and they're all shivering. It was cold, in January...such a cold in Poland January...even here in January it's cold in America, but in Poland it is ten times that much colder, and and they didn't have...they were not clothed. They didn't have too much clothes

¹⁵ "May Jesus Christ be blessed."

on and she said this in Polish. She said maybe people from that concentration camp ran away because the bombardment is like that, so I said to myself let me go out and look on the steps, so I opened the door and I went out on by the first floor and I see people that I was together in the camps. And I said what happened? What are you doing here? She said what are you doing here? I said well we ran away the night before and we were hiding in this home for the night, and they said we don't know but all of a sudden, about three o'clock in the morning, we didn't see no Germans, so we were afraid because like I said there were (indecipherable) my husband says bombs, it was not bombs. It was hand grenades in a in a uh cover, a cotton cover. They were holding hand grenades. That's what they did in a lot of camps, so when (indecipherable) you poisoned food, so we didn't eat that day and for the hand grenades we were afraid. That's why me and Abraham went out from the camp. It wasn't so easy but we we left and uh so so they said we were afraid that they should throw the hand grenades so we ran away, and when we went to the to the gates, nobody was there. The Germans knew that the Russians are coming, so they ran away, so my...Abe said three o'clock in the afternoon, Abe's sure that the Germans are running to the trains and the trains that are going fast, where they could drop. I said you know my father said 1914 there happened something like that, 1916, when the war was, you know, that his father told him that the Germans are running up. The Russians came in, you know, 1st World War...it looks like 1st World War, but the Germans are running away. But he wasn't sure.

01:41:58

Then uh when I saw that I went out and what I saw...I saw...that picture I'll never forget as long as I live either. I saw Russian tanks coming up to the city, waving to us and we asked them how are you. Thank God that you liberated us. They said, "Na¹⁶ Berlin, na Berlin, na Berlin." They were so happy, so like like not to go for war...like it was a party. That hit me so hard. I said my God, look at those young boys how they're running na Berlin. And I went back to the apartment, and I said to Abraham in Yiddish, Kim¹⁷. He opened his eyes. He said what what are you saying? I said baby, the Russians are here. We are free. We are liberated. He said I cannot believe it. I said believe it, believe it. And the woman took it up and all of them got up and all went out, but what I still cannot forget, the last minute because she said you don't have too much time but I'll tell you that anyway.

01:43:00

The Polish woman, the one who had the son without hands, came over and said like that, and the other Polish woman, the the owner from that apartment. He said what's your name, and I told him. He said to me, listen to me. Go to the Holy Mother and the Holy uh Hill...that's the

¹⁶ to (Russian)

¹⁷ Come on

Matka Boska Czestochowa¹⁸...they're coming from all over the world, the Christian people by foot, walking and pray to her because she liberated us because you see when we were liberating this apartment, that place was right nearby. Abe was now there when...he made a lot of pictures also uh from that place. That she told me. And with that we left. I want to tell you one more thing. When we left, we didn't know where to go. Nothing to eat. Nothing to drink. Nothing to wear. No place where to go, so we decided that we're going to go and see where is more Jewish people, so we found somebody that my husband took out in Treblinka. He told you that he had this eyes, like, that didn't want...three times he took him out and said they wouldn't let him out but finally...he still...my husband just saw him. Of course he's very ill...he's eighty-five, eighty-six years old. He's in Israel. He lost a wife and four children but he remarried a couple of times after that. He lost another two wives then but he has two sons, very very fine sons. One is in a kibbutz. The other one has a business in Tel Aviv. They're like my own children because their mother was very very dear to me. She died when one was eleven and one was six.

01:44:37

And uh when when we went in to her apartment were Christian men that my husband knew, an older couple, and he said...name was Gornik (ph) I think...and he said, oh Abraham, you survived. Come in to my house, come in. We went in. He give us his bed and he gave us food and we eat. The next morning we looked out to the window and what we saw one Katyúsha¹⁹. I don't know what you name...it was like the bullet small what we made in the camp, that was a big one. Very very big. Bright like that and big one like that, very big one. I never saw such a thing in my life but he's looked at that that Pollack and he said, oh the Germans are coming back. Out Zydy, Jude. Jews out. And he threwed us out. So he took us in. He knew Abraham. We went out and we're walking to a street named Garibaldi. And there we met this man that is in Israel I told you...that old man. He took us in. The kitchen was only free. Only the kitchen. So I had a toothache, all this time in that concentration camp. After the abortion, that toothache started and I didn't stop after the liberation. And I was afraid to go to a dentist because we didn't have nobody. If you go to dentist, they just didn't give injection or just to take out alive, so I was afraid. So finally Abe said we have to go. And I went once to the dentist in the concentration camp and it was a woman was then. She took out a good tooth. Just like that. Without anything. I screamed and that's when the tooth got out, and that tooth was by...I told her...the other tooth. But exactly maybe I didn't know myself which one, so she took out the good tooth, so that explains. So my husband goes in the street, and he meets a young man, a Jewish boy. He said I'm a dentist. Oh my husband...oh my wife has such a bad tooth. Couldn't you...he said I'm a barber. I'll cut your hair. So they made an exchange, and while taking out my tooth...he didn't take out the tooth. He broke a vein and at night...I'm lost that that two days after the liberation almost all my

¹⁸ The picture of the Black Madonna in the Jasna Gora church in Czestochowa

¹⁹ lorry-mounted multiple rocket launcher (Russian)

blood. I had uh hemorrhages...and Abe was such a shy man that when I I saw what's going on. They give me a pail and the pail was full with blood, so I said to him, please call on for the dentist. I don't know what to do. He figured my God, how can anybody wake somebody out at night. I said I think I'll never forgive him that, but he did. Finally a woman called the dentist. He come back. He almost killed my husband. Said why didn't you call me right away. He give me a tampon and three times that tampax and three times I took that...the fourth time the blood finally stopped, but I was anemic for many, many, many years. After such a condition I had to lose all all this blood, but little by little we uh...it is another story from 1945 until now which you can write a big book...

Q: OK.

A: Maybe I should write a book.

Q: Regina, thank you.

A: You're welcome.

TECHNICAL CONVERSATION