

Holocaust Testimony of Henry Silberberg

Pauline Rockman (abbreviated as PR) interviewing Henry Silberberg on 1/11/1994

My name is Henry Silberberg. I was born in Poland on 17 January 1921 in Ostrowiec Kielecki (In 1937 it was officially named Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski). My family consisted of father, mother, 2 sisters and I was the only son of the family. Naturally as with all families it was a very extensive family with numerous people, dozens, even to a hundred, and none of them survived except me and one aunt who left in 1933, at that time for Palestine. She was the only one from our family apart from me who survived after the war. Our families, from the great grand parents, from both sides were engaged in the timber industry with sawmills and we conducted the timber business until 1939.

I was going to school. I did not go to higher education because being the only son my father wanted to train me to take over and help in the very extensive business. Till 1939, I still studied but not extensively so that I had to could concentrate on the business, which I mastered quite well at that particular time. When the War broke out and the Germans came to our place about the 15th September, initially we did not feel the pressure straight away. We had certain restrictions. It was a kind of easy-going temporarily. Later in 1939...

Pauline: Can you tell us a little more about that early time, your mother and father's full names.

Yes my father 's name was Moshe Itzhak, my mother's name was Hudla Chaya, from home she was Fisz. My sister's name was Sarah Devorah. My other sister's name was Chana Breinel. They were older than me by a few years. My sister married Itzhak Teitelbaum; she had a child who was also killed by the Germans.

PR: You talked about your family being in the timber business. Did they employ a lot of people? Can you describe it?

We employed a lot of people. We had sawmills in Lipa. We employed a lot of people there and in Ostrowiec. In Ostrowiec we had the timber yard.

PR. The people you employed, were they Jews, non Jews?

At that particular time there were not many Jewish people working in this industry as labourers and there were 99 - 100% non-Jewish people.

PR. What was the relations like with them?

Well, I was too young to distinguish between bad and good. We were well respected because our people were well treated, though I came across anti-Semitism many times. My mother was hit once when I walked with her in a street on Aleja but this was kind of natural in pre-war Poland.

PR Talk about your schooling. What kind of school was it?

It was a Polish school but it was supplemented by religious school. I went to Yeshiva to study, I was never fanatical, I did not go for the purpose of strengthening my religion or my religious beliefs, but I went to study and I am glad I did.

PR So you went to school up till when? You said you were being trained for the business.

Yes up to 16 years. The Polish school I finished at 15 years and the Jewish School up to 16 years.

PR What language did you speak at home?

Yiddish and Polish, mainly Yiddish.

PR Did you or your family have any contact with non-Jews in your community?

Well, I was too young to be able to see the political point of view, There is no scope because particularly if one is Kosher (which we were) that naturally restricted dinners etc with the non-Jewish community, but it did not mean that we did not respect each other. This was the restriction, and the trend was like this.

PR Were there many Jewish people in your town?

Yes, there were 40% Jewish people. Out of 27,000 people there were about 10,000 Jewish people. Ostrowiec Kielecki had a factory, like BHP is making steel, but we also manufactured railway carriages for goods. This was the main industry in Ostrowiec Kielecki .

PR Was your family orthodox, etc?

I would say Chassidic but not fanatic.

PR The rest of the town?

Yes, that was the same. Naturally, we went to Schul, and there was religious study; Talmud study was natural, I want to emphasise I went to Yeshiva to study and I was tolerated with my not wanting to pray all the time and so on. Because in the end the aim was knowledge and to go out into the world and not stay in this narrow lane.

PR You talked about the antisemitism and incidents when you were growing up and that is how it was. Did you hear of the name Hitler before 1939?

I tried to follow the press and I tried to know about politics because it affects us greatly and I started to read fairly early. I think until about 1936 when the excesses of Hitler became to be known, and also they sent over to Bonshen, Polish Jews who were living in Germany. I then started to take more notice of what was happening. But we were always hoping that it would not eventuate what he threatened.

PR Was there knowledge about what was happening to the Jews in Germany?

No, the big tragedy was that the Jews were denied civil rights but there were no excesses as far as physical violence until Kristallnacht.

PR You talked about an aunt who went to Israel.

Yes this was in the spirit of Chalutzim. She went in 1933, her husband went before her, he went illegally, because at that time you could not get into Palestine. Then she followed him. Actually she went with her 3 year old daughter and she also survived because she was in Palestine.

Do you remember the day when Poland was invaded and World War II was declared?

We started to be bombarded, and the whole family escaped to the forest near some people we knew, not to stay with them, but just to get away from the city which was a strategic target because of the foundry there and the foundry created wagons and war materials, so we were worried that we would be bombed in the city. So afterwards when the Germans came in and collapse was inevitable and there was no more bombardment, then we came back to our town.

PR The people that you stayed in the forest, was a Jewish family?

We didn't stay with people permanently, we just stayed in the forest; our city was surrounded by forest, like the Dandenongs. We came back when the bombing stopped. Then the problems started, it was gradual. The first shock we had was when they sent Jews from Konin which was closer to the German border. The Germans gave them 2-3 hours to leave the place where they had been living for generations. And this was the first time where they used the term "resettlement" or "Umsiedlung". At that time the Germans had set up a Ghetto in our city. It started in December 1939 when they sent in the Jews of Konin to us. Later on when I come to think of it, it was the first method of deception. When you send people away from their homes, they are not going to death, they are still going to be alive and they were given accommodation with the families in Ostrowiec and they stayed with us.

PR So you were already having problems with the Nazis back then.

Yes and things developed gradually. The first issue was that everybody had to hand over their fur coats and this was for the German war effort because the German soldiers are cold. Everybody had to hand over these things at the threat of death.

PR Jew and Gentile or just for the Jews

Just for the Jews. Immediately when they said that, we hid things. However when we saw that one family who was found to have things, they shot the father of the family. For us, it was too late for us to hand them over, so I do remember that we cut them up into little pieces and we burnt them, just to get rid of it. And then gradually the restrictions came and you couldn't go out in non-Jewish areas. We were still living in our own house at this time but we had people from Konin living with us. We called them refugees and a Jewish committee Judenrat, was set up to manage our own affairs under the supervision of the Germans. Make no mistake, everything was under orders and supervision of the Germans.

PR What were the Gentiles doing, the non-Jewish Poles?

Nothing, they were doing nothing. And that particular time, we would say there was nothing to do because the excesses which happened later on, did not appear then. But they were acclimatised. "All right, the Jew is someone you can prosecute without any redress", but that was acclimatisation of the general population to denigrate the Jews and this was an ongoing process. Every time something else happened more and more things happened but it did not seem to come out in the open straight away.

PR So the Germans created a ghetto and you were living outside the ghetto?

No we were living in the ghetto, our place was still included in the ghetto. We lived in Ilzeckiej (Ilzecka) 13. The only part which was not included in the ghetto was our timber yard which was across the road in ul Ilzeckiej (Ilzecka) 10. We were already forced to wear armbands with a Star of David and if you crossed the road you were liable to be shot.

PR So you could not go to business anymore?

We did not have much stock in the yard at that stage so it didn't pay the Germans to put in a commissar to take over the business. The owners of businesses who were taken over were left destitute. The sawmills in Liepa was (unclear).

PR So by December 1939 you were already in the ghetto. Talk about life in the ghetto. What was it like for you and your family?

It was very very hard. Naturally food started to be rationed but the ones who had still some means, they were still able to get it through some of the Poles, acquaintances and so on, particularly when they were still able to get a certificate to go out to work outside. They still had to wear the armband. We were just all sitting and hoping, I think the hope sustained us, the hope that there will soon be a finish. Naturally - it's France, England and the other countries; they wouldn't just be defeated like that. We still hoped that the worst is not going to happen. However we didn't know what the worst was going to mean. Okay the war might last longer, we won't have anything to eat but it wasn't meant to be total annihilation.

PR Coming back to the ghetto, was it open or closed?

The ghetto was closed. They handed the guarding to the Polish authorities who were very strict and there was no letup from them.

PR What happened for you, was there work or were you just waiting?

It was just a case of stagnating, there was no particular aim in life, the future was unknown, the present was bad, there was nothing, you could not go to a business, it was just stagnation.

PR How would you describe your day there?

I really can't remember. It wasn't so tragic yet so that for self-preservation I would have wanted to forget but I just can't remember. It was walking out in the street within the limited ghetto and meeting people. Naturally we met friends but at the same time everybody had their own worries about how to get more food and how to feed their family and so on.

PR Were you able to get food all right?

Because we were well off before the war and we still had acquaintances, we could get food which we shared with other people. We already had another family living with us from Konin.

PR Do you have any special recollections like being sent out on special work details?

I was 18, so being young, I was sent out to work from the ghetto under guard, I remember we had to build a new bridge over the river. At that time the work was overseen by Germans but not SS not Gestapo but Germans I suppose they were in the engineering Corps who wanted the bridge to be built, and so we were actually there for a purpose, not with the aim of them murdering the Jews. They still needed us. This was in 1940 and even early 1941. After the first resettlement, then we were working in the Ostrowiec Works (Zaklady Ostrowieckie)

After this bridge was finished, we sometimes worked at Zaklady Ostrowieckie. By the way we did not get paid for this work, just bread and some soup. Later on after this bridge was finished I also worked in the Zaklady Ostrowieckie in the Holzplatz which is the timber yard there, because of my knowledge of this and they needed me there. That gave me a work card, an Arbeit card, a worker certificate, and this meant that if I worked on different shifts, that when they came to the ghetto and the German said you have to hand us over 50 people to clean the snow or clean up a mess, I was protected from this because I was already working there. Consequently, when the 1st deportation occurred on 10 October 1942, this was already when Russia was invaded, and in Radom there were the Lithuanians and Latvians from the Sonderkommando.

They said that as the war broke out in Russia, they were going to supply workers to Russia to help the war efforts. I remember my mother prepared for me a rucksack which consisted of a small very light eiderdown, soap and things so that I would not be cold if they took me to work there.

But we did not know at that time that they had already started off Sobibor, Balzac and Treblinka. Treblinka was not yet in full swing but it already was having people sent to it. That was definitely just a death camp as there was no work there. Straight from the cattle railway carriage to the crematorium.

The 1st deportation in our ghetto was 10th of October 1942. Our family survived this because we had hidden them. My brother-in-law and myself had dug out a bunker in the timber yard and the entrance was through a chicken coop. It was very very well hidden. When they sent the other ones away, they were still intact because they were still living there.

I myself did not stay in the bunker except for one night but afterwards I was working at Zaklady Ostrowieckie at the foundry. I was so called immune at that time.

About one week later, the Gendarmarie, they had a list of all the Jews that should have been sent. They expected 5000 but they could not find the 5000 initially. They knew they were hidden in places. They started to look. This bunker which we dug out had a pipe about 5 inches in diameter, we built with the timber about 10 inches for ventilation so that there was enough air coming out of the bunker but because it was in November or late October 1942, it was already cold and so the gendarmerie could see steam coming out through the vents. They discovered them. I was present on the other side because I worked at night time and this was during the

day. So I was across the road in the timberyard and they were in the bunker which was just out of the ghetto although you could still have permission to go there to get some water because there was a well, not in this yard. When the German discovered them, and he yelled out "Raus Raus" "out out" and they all crawled out. I could see from across the road my father my mother my sisters and 4 other people, the Katz's, and also one aunt, they were altogether about 10 or 11 people.

I remember I stayed only there one night and they couldn't even light a match because of low oxygen. They survived there. When I saw them coming out, and I saw a German break a piece of timber over my mother's back. I felt the frustration that I could not throw myself at them at the German because they would have shot all of them. I was told afterwards that I became a zombie, you could cut pieces of me and I wouldn't feel it, I could eat sand and not feel it. This lasted about 3 months.

PS Did they take your family away

No not yet. My brother in law was still able to get them across into a place close to us, Ilzeckiej (Ilzecka) 11, it was an old soda water factory. And they were temporarily interned over there, together with other people who were discovered, awaiting the next transport. But with the next transport, before it happened, we were able to get them out of this holding area, together with our brother-in-law, the Germans didn't keep guard of this area so we got the family out into the normal ghetto again. That would have been in early November 1942. The other people were still interned in that factory awaiting the next transport. The Germans worked methodically. They did Radom first and step-by-step to the other places. There was no escape. We were still in the ghetto. Then the Germans came out with an idea. They said the ones who are working who have got their Arbeit cards, or work certificates, can stay, but the ones who are not working, the families and the children, we will arrange for them to make a Judenstadt, a place where they will be able to live out the war there. This was Sandomierz. It was about 100 km from us. They said that these people will be gathered together and will be able to survive, whoever does not have food, we will be able to feed them and so on.

PR Did you believe them?

We still could not believe that they would be taken to death. This was one of the biggest deceptions in the history. Because it was step-by-step. When we found out it was too late. So my family went to Sandomierz, my father, my mother, the sisters and they had a nanny, who did not look Jewish though she was Jewish and the little boy who was already 3 who had blonde hair and also didn't look Jewish. They went over there too.

My brother-in-law and I started talking about escape. In the meantime time my brother-in-law arranged for Aryan papers for the nanny through an acquaintance. Aryan papers could be arranged though I did not know about it and I didn't ask any questions. My brother-in-law sent the nanny and the baby out on the Aryan papers. She was recognised by a Pole, started being blackmailed not only for her body but everything else and so she had to go back with the baby to Sandomierz.

In December 1942, we received information in Ostrowiec through a Jewish girl on Aryan papers. I sent a message through this girl and sent some money to my parents either I go to you

or you come back. But it was too late. Because in January 1943, they took them to Treblinka. All of them.

In January 1943 the ghetto in Ostrowiec was closed, and we were taken to live in the Arbeitslager which was just outside the works, We were stationed in barracks there and every day we would work shifts.

PR Can you tell me a little bit more about the ghetto

In November 1942, after the 1st deportation, we sent out a group from the ghetto, 13 boys and one girl to make contact with the Polish Partisans, called AK or Armia Krajowa (Home Army). The young people in the ghetto organised it. They risked their lives to buy revolvers and made contact with the commandant of AK and they went to the forest of Kunov, the Kunovski forest. Kunov was a village near Ostrowiec. I was going to go with the 2nd group. When they arrived there in the forest, they gave the right password, they were greeted "you must be tired, so go and eat and then go into the bunker but before you go, as you weren't able to test your weapons, we will test them to see whether they are suitable". When the young people went to the bunker, they shot them with machine guns and grenades were thrown into the bunker. This was the Polish Partisans who did that to our first group who also went out with the idea that we will fight the Germans together with the Poles.

PR How did you hear of this?

Thirteen were killed and one person, Shlomo Zweigman crawled back to the ghetto. He was wounded and the others fell on top of him and the Poles thought that he was dead. When he woke up, he crawled out and crawled back to the ghetto with shrapnel wounds, he was saved only by a Feldshuh (paramedic) named Altmann, he was very ill but he recovered and he eventually died in America from his wounds. He told us the story.

As a consequence, I might be jumping, after the Kielce pogrom, Leibish Rosenblatt who is now living in Toronto, he survived the camp, came back, and at risk for his life, he pressed very hard and he gave the names of the people who murdered the partisans to be prosecuted by the prosecutor. They were sentenced to death, Novak, Balarski were sentenced to death and Perzinski was sentenced to 15 years of jail but I believe their sentences were commuted from the death and then they were released. I can't confirm this as I left Poland before that. This was the story of the Partisans so we could not anymore go out into the forest. There were I believe, but not in our district, Armia Ludowa, which was more left wing and they did not at least murdered the Jews.

The AK also murdered Jews after the war.

So in the ghetto, there was no escape, even if we knew already, the Latvians and Lithuanians were coming. Radom and the surrounding districts had already rounded up the Jews in carts from the outline towns and transported them to Ostrowiec. That was so that they can all go into the same cattle wagons, there were no train stations elsewhere.

PR What was the role of the Judenrat in the camp?

It is difficult to say: we were all human, but at the thought that it is either them and their families or somebody else, if they said we have got to make a list of 500 people and so on, they tried to protect their families and themselves. That naturally created a terrific cruelty. We were treated like animals and we started to behave like animals unfortunately. I remember one young man who was a policeman and when the deportation order came, he was in charge, he took off his police hat and went in with his parents into the train to death. There were a lot of these cases, it was already too much. They created a jungle where the fittest will survive and everybody thought I will be the fittest and I will survive. That was the psychological effect, firstly make people appear like sub-humans to the neighbours, so for a subhuman, they don't have so much sympathy, so it was systematic policy which worked to perfection.

PR And what were you hearing about the war outside, about the Russian invasion?

Some people had radios at the threat of death if they were found. We heard things were bad. France was defeated, the Allies had to withdraw, the Russians as we know from the beginning were falling back and they were close to Moscow. And we have seen for at least 9 to 10 months, day and night, German convoys carrying guns and soldiers in trains to the Russian border. Apparently the Russians did not advance over 9 months but we could hear battle sounds. We hoped the Germans will be defeated, we knew, they will be defeated, but maybe we won't survive.

So in 1943, the ones who had the Arbeit cards, my brother-in-law, and a cousin were still with me,

PR How did they move you?.

"You're going to go to this camp", it has been built for a while. The Germans organised together with Polish police and Ukrainians, there were maybe 200 of us in this camp before they divided us, some went to the cement works at Bozechuv, under a German named Jaeger. He had his quota of workers, and that helped us as some of them were non-Jews so they could buy certain food and we could bring it in at the threat of death.

PR How did you get to this camp

You are under guard, this ghetto is going to be closed, and all you can take with you is what you can carry (we didn't have anything in war) you take a blanket but there were no blankets but only what we were wearing.

PR What did you take?

I took what I was wearing and I had 150 -\$200 sewn in. This was 10th of January 1943. We went by foot. Every day we used to walk 2-3 km in the ghetto. From the ghetto we marched under escort, the Jewish police did it, it was not for guarding you, he could not hold you back, but where would you escape? If you escaped, he would be shot. Every door was closed. So they said okay, they took us down and made an Appel or a rollcall.

Before we went to the camp, to the barracks, there were Ukrainian standing beside, and they said give us everything you have, they took a couple of blankets. I remember I took out the

money I had, and threw the money because they did before, they took out 2 people, who threw in their first money, and they said you still have money and you didn't give it to us, and they shot them on the spot. The Germans gave the order and there were Ukrainians under them, that was a warning. I remember saying to my brother-in-law, we were in a row 3-4 people away, "for heaven's sake, Itzhak, give them the money".

That was the 1st show we know what's happening then they cleaned us out and then they put us into the barracks. There were bunks of top of each other, it would been about 100 people or more because it was 2 storeys high and long. There was nothing else, just hard boards and a blanket.

There was no heat or anything. It was just a barracks. And then when we went to work, and there was soup given to us, in the camp itself, they arranged for a kitchen and soup and some bread. There was nothing else.

The distribution was under supervision of the camp administration, the Germans arranged that camp should be administered by the Jews and the police there.

It was a normal distribution because if they wouldn't have given us any bread we could do the work; the work was hard.

PR What with the Jewish police like to you.

I don't know, To a certain extent I was privileged because the Jewish police knew my family but afterwards it didn't matter.

PR What was privilege?

I wasn't sent out twice to work on the same day, I only did one shift and not 2 shifts. How long were the shifts. The shifts were 8 hours.

Night shift was 12 hours. That was what we call the privilege. I was probably able to wash a shirt. I was very particular not to let myself go because I knew that could mean death. So when you ask again how was it, I don't know, I might have, as an afterthought, after the events, you look back to things that were initially you call brutal and heartless and without mercy and then they start not to make sense and they started looked different. This man was afraid for his own life and for his family I'm not trying to find an excuse, I wasn't a policeman but when I look back in hindsight seeing what happened, it didn't help them either, because the deception was even applied of them, "your family safe as long as you give us the quota" but it's hard to say from my perception, I could not really describe it exactly what my feelings were. They created a jungle, wild beasts around and it affected us, some people prefer to give their lives rather than behave like animals, some people were stronger and said I will survive this jungle, a lot of our said we will survive so that we will tell the world. And I feel guilty now that I haven't told it for a long time.

In June 1943, the Germans sent to our camp 150 Jewish people from Piotrkow and in August they were followed by 540 people from Plaszow; we called them the Krakowa. Plaszow and Krakow were the same. As an afterthought, I realised that they were confusing us by sending us from one place to another; it did not mean death. It was a scheme of deception.

Now I am coming to why we did not do something drastic. Firstly when we know about it, it was too late.

END OF PART ONE TRANSCRIPTION -UP TO 1 hour 6 minutes and 20 seconds

PART TWO

We went to Sandomierz which is on the other side of the Vistula and which was already liberated. I started to make inquiries. I met several Jews who were living there. We stayed there together. Isser left because he was going to Lublin. I stayed because I wanted to find out if any of my family survived.

I found out that all my family were taken from the 10th to the 12th of January directly to Treblinka. That was death.

I stayed there for about 3 weeks. In the meantime I don't know if it is relevant, one day a Russian soldier comes to our place. He would have been about 50 years old. He said I'm Jewish. I've been assigned to the punishment unit, Shtrafnozevod, (because something must have happened) and we knew that meant 99% certainty of death. For instance they were sent to see if there were mines.

This man started to cry. He had a family back in Russia, and the captain in the Russian Army who was Jewish said to him, "Look I can't do anything for you" but he knew he was a violinist and he said, "If you can arrange for an orchestra, and put together a few musicians, I will put you into an orchestra unit which means that you don't have to fight", but he said to us that he did not have any money. I said, "Come back tomorrow." I think I had \$150, and I started to inquire who has got a violin and I came across a violin and when this man came back I gave it to him. Well, I've never seen this man again. I don't know what happened to him but I think he had a good chance of surviving.

Afterwards I went to Lublin. I had family also in Zawichost but nobody survived.

PR How did you find out that no one survived?

You asked people, "Do you know, has she or he survived?", because every survivor was unique. If you asked this question in Melbourne, it would be difficult, but if there are 3 or 4 people, then it is easier."

I found out that a cousin was in Lublin and I met her there. Anka or Channa, Her husband died and her children died and she she was living there as she had lived before the war. I said to her, "Anka or Channa, we are going to get the sawmill back" from the commissar, a Pole, who got everything handed over to him. I did not realise at that stage the danger of what we were going to do. When I come to think of it, that was foolish to do. The mill was in Lipat (? Lipsko). I arrived with her there at night time. We knew the watchman before the war and that night we stayed with him. During the day I had a conversation with the Polish commissar, and I said I came to take the mill back. He knew that meant taking everything away, so I made an arrangement for him to send some timber to Lublin, a railway truck of timber which was valuable and we left

straight away. Fortunately there was no time for this watchman or the commissar to advise the other Poles. I realise now that we would have been killed like others were.

So I went back to Lublin. I stayed in Lublin for a while with the cousin and then I was privileged to see that they hung 3 SS people from Maidanek after a trial by the Russians and Poles because in Lublin they set up a temporary Polish government in exile. And then as every body knows, on 18 January 1945, the main offensive by the Russians started and they liberated a large amount of Poland. I found out that they also liberated Ostrowiec. So I was rushing to get there to see if maybe somebody there survived and where would they go? Back to the roots. I arrived there in early March.

We were living together, several of us, in Lederman's house, Faivel Greener, Spielman, an elderly lady who survived with Poles, and 3 other people. My house was taken over by Poles and I didn't dare go into it. We survivors assembled there to find if we knew of anybody else who had survived and for human warmth. Every night a curfew started at 7 pm. In the house were the following people.

Chaya Spiegel, Feija Krongold, both of these women had survived on Aryan papers, but they came back because Ostrowiec was liberated, also 17 year old Israel or Srulek Lustig who came back a few days earlier from Gleiwitz concentration camp together with his father, a young lady who said she was a doctor who said she was from Lemberg, or Lvov, and she came to enquire about her father who had been hidden in a village, Potzehuv, close to us. She hadn't heard from him and want to know if he survived. She had only been with us for a few minutes. There was also Faivel Greener and the elderly lady whose name I cannot now remember.

35 minutes in second MP4

On 12 March, just before the curfew came in, 2 Poles came into the house where we were living. We had potatoes dug and spades inside. These soldiers were in mufti but had machine guns. Apparently there was one outside also. They said, "Give us what you have got", and they used the words in Polish, (it didn't hit us at that time), "You won't be needing it." And then they started to ask "Who are you?" Spiegel gave her Aryan name, and he said in the familiar tense (rude), "No, you are Spiegel". The same with Krongold. They said, "Turn to the wall". I did not turn to the wall. I was standing close to the corner where there was a spade which we used for digging. I thought about it but I did not get the spade. And they started to shoot. The old lady said that they shot with blanks. She wasn't hurt. They shot to death Spiegel, Krongold, Lustig, and the young lady who only came a few minutes before and she was shot right next to me. I got the bullet here on the top of my leg and here is the bullet. It ricocheted from a pocketknife which I had in my pocket and apparently from what I notice now it got distorted and went into me. So I fell, I was still able to run to the doctor who lived near my uncle's place and I collapsed there. They took me to the hospital on a carriage with iron wheels and the trip probably caused further blood loss. They x-rayed me and they saw the bullet and the surgeon who operated on me couldn't find the bullet, it was black-and-white on the x-ray and he sewed me up again. This was in the Ostrowiec hospital. I had an anaesthetic, there were no antibiotics in those days, and

it was just a case of sitting and waiting for death. I asked some friends to bring me some poison, I didn't want to be a cripple, leg cut-off and so on. I didn't want to live that way.

They also shot Spielman, he also survived the camp, he was a musician, and got shot in the elbow and it was a superficial wound and he left the hospital about 2 days later. He recognised the shooters in the street and they were arrested by the security. When they were interrogated they said they had an order from the AK, to murder the rest of the Jews, the survivors. I was in the hospital lying there, and there was no hope.

Then something happened again with dreams.

Chava Adler, one of the people who had survived on Aryan papers (and is now in Israel), came to visit me. She was a friend of my younger sister. She came to visit me and said to me, "Henry I was dreaming last night that I went to visit you, I met your mother and Hannah your younger sister and your mother said to me, where are you going and she said Heneck (Henry) is in the hospital, she said, yes we are going to take him out from there." When she said that, I burst out crying and I said "Well, I think I am going to live." We had one non Jewish surgeon called the Golden Hand who came initially from Poznan and he was at the Ostrowiec Hospital by chance. I remember it was a Friday. He sat down by my bed and took out the Xray and he said nonchalantly, "We're going to take out this bullet". Well, he took me on the operating table, I do remember that he took this bullet which I have just shown you, I was still after the anaesthetic and he put it on my forehead, "Here you are". And then I started to recover. As soon as I started to recover, I wanted to leave this hell. I was still able to get documents to take back the properties that my parents had, I put an administrator in, I still have those documents here, and I left.

I wanted to leave Poland. I went to Lodz, late in 1945. There was an organization for making Aliyah to go to Palestine. It was illegal to go to Palestine.

We were part of a group. We went to Kraków and we stayed in a place for a few days. We stayed in a place where also there were some Kraków people and there was a lady and her daughter. I got acquainted with her daughter. Her father was an officer in the Polish army and he survived the war but he had a heart-attack on returning and he died. They also wanted to leave Poland. The mother of Dola who is my wife now, had 2 sisters and 2 brothers in Australia.