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# How Do You Explain Crazyiness? On the Germans and the Holocaust

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## HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN CRAZINESS? ON THE GERMANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

This is one of a dozen Year 2000 conversations between George Anastaplo and Simcha Brudno (a Holocaust survivor from Lithuania). Almost all of these conversations have been published either separately or as appendices to other publications by George Anastaplo. One of these conversations, from September 7, 2000, has already been published in the *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*.<sup>1</sup>

The first of these conversations, from March 23, 2000, is included in *Reflections on Life, Death, and the Constitution*.<sup>2</sup> The second conversation, from March 30, 2000, is included in *The Christian Heritage: Problems and Prospects*.<sup>3</sup> The third conversation, from May 4, 2000, was published in the *Oklahoma City Law Review*.<sup>4</sup> Another of the conversations, from October 5, 2000, was published in the *Southern Illinois University Law Journal*.<sup>5</sup> A conversation from May 25, 2000, is included in *Reflections on Slavery and the Constitution*.<sup>6</sup>

This conversation of August 3, 2000, has also been prepared for publication in the *Loyola University Chicago Law Journal*. The remaining Year 2000 conversations are being prepared for publication as appendices in *Reflections on War, Peace, and the Constitution*.<sup>7</sup>

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1. 44 LOY. U. CHI. L.J. 1282 (2013).
  2. GEORGE ANASTAPLO, *REFLECTIONS ON LIFE, DEATH, AND THE CONSTITUTION* (2009).
  3. GEORGE ANASTAPLO, *THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS* (2010).
  4. 35 OKLA. CITY U. L. REV. 85 (2010).
  5. 35 S. ILL. U. L.J. 401 (2011).
  6. GEORGE ANASTAPLO, *REFLECTIONS ON SLAVERY AND THE CONSTITUTION* (2012).
  7. GEORGE ANASTAPLO, *REFLECTIONS ON WAR, PEACE, AND THE CONSTITUTION* (forthcoming 2014).

Interview with Simcha Brudno  
August 3, 2000

**Anastaplo:** Let's start with something that can be called providential.

**Brudno:** But first, we have talked about three "selections." Now I have decided to give you a fourth.

**A:** Could you recapitulate the first three, for the record?

**B:** The first selection is when the Germans came. Miracles do happen. God is very clever. The first selection was about who [among the Jews] is going in the ghetto and who is not going in the ghetto. The second selection is on the 5th of November, when they took out all of the children, all those who are not able to work, which is a tragedy in itself. The third selection is of those adults who are capable of working and those are not, with the German doctor deciding who would live.

**A:** The doctor that you appeared before: what impressions do you have of him?

**B:** I think it was not the first time that he did it, because he did it very nonchalantly. He knew what he was doing. Anyway, now comes the fourth time, it is more complicated.

**A:** The third selection had been in Stutthof—do you remember the date?

**B:** No, but in Stutthof I was altogether one month, so it was between the 23rd of July and the 20th of August.

**A:** I'm just cautioning you, the tea is hot.

**B:** Very good, thank you. So, anyways, there now started the thing—no introductions as they say in Latin, "res ipsa loquitur." This starts exactly on the 30th of January, 1945.

**A:** At Dachau?

**B:** Yes, this is in Dachau. I am working a place which is near where *Mein Kampf* was written.

**A:** Munich?

**B:** No, it's near Munich. The work is not so hard, the ground is frozen, so we have to cut it with axes in order to make a hole.

**A:** To put up some kind of pokes?

**B:** Yes, but the ground is very frozen. You could say it's average work, not too hard. Anyway, this is one of the days that the open platform that is connected to the tractor didn't come to pick us up. I told you about this case, but I'll repeat it. We decide to go on foot back to our camp.

**A:** Ordinarily this platform would come?

**B:** It would take us to work and take us from work.

**A:** It's like a wagon without sides. It would be pulled by what?

**B:** A tractor.

**A:** You had never done before what you are describing?

**B:** We had done it ten thousand times, but I am giving you exactly what really happened this time.

**A:** Had you done it before in that town?

**B:** No, I was never there before or after. Anyways, so I go walking through the town, and the first thing is an old woman. She is boiling unpeeled potatoes. She has pity on us and so she gives us unpeeled potatoes.

**A:** Cooked?

**B:** Yes, she was boiling them. Why do you ask me these kinds of questions? Please don't do it to me. Then I went in another place, and here is a woman and she says they were all poor people and maybe her husband and her son are also prisoners now in Russia and maybe they also suffer so much, to which I replied, "But they are not being burned," and she says, "How can you say such a thing? Nobody is burning people," and she really believed it. Anyways she says she has got nothing to give us, and here she is holding two pails of milk because she had just milked a cow. So I say, "How about a glass of milk?" This is important to us. She gave me a glass of milk, and it was the only glass of milk that I drank in nine months. Then we came to a third place, and there right away the woman gave me a good piece of bread, and then we came back, the guy in charge of us had finished his tea, and we marched back to the camp. So, this is the whole point.

**A:** You were walking all the time?

**B:** At the camp entrance, we are told we are not to go out of the camp for anything, because we have a typhus epidemic, and we will be closed up in the camp for some time because the surrounding German population is afraid of typhus. So we must get rid of the typhus, and then we will be able to go to work again. So there was a typhus epidemic. That happened on the 30th of January. Later I found out that was the day my mother died; I found that out much later. It can't be sheer coincidence. Anyway, we come to the camp, and here we don't have to go to work for two weeks. They start by having us get rid of the lice. Lice is such a horrible thing that as much as I describe it, how ugly it is, those who did not go through it cannot understand. Just because I am a mathematician I'll give you an example. In one session of lice-crushing, I crushed twenty lice in my crotch, so now you know how bad it was. Anyway I'll tell you even worse. I want to vomit when I tell it, but it's true. There were people who ate lice. It's horrible even to

recollect.

**A:** You say they ate the lice?

**B:** Yes. So now we are getting rid of the lice. What happened is that we made a big fire, of course, and all of our clothes are defumigated: our clothes are put in all the bags which are gassed to kill all the lice. We ourselves are taken to a shower. It's true that the shower is cold, but it's a shower just the same. A great miracle happened: we got rid of the lice, and it's like a new world opened up, all of a sudden I could think more clearly, now that I am lice-free. I am exactly nineteen. All of a sudden, the muse attacked me, and I wanted to write poetry. I described how we had been taken out of our home town, everything of course is in rhymes and very nice, my block liked it and I got portion of soup for it. Then I went to another block, with another guy who had a fiddle. He was playing the fiddle, I was giving my poetry; again I got soup. But the main point is that then one of the heads of this camp, Leibovitch—later on he was an engineer in Israel, Yosef Levi—he came to me. His uncle had been the head of the ghetto since the ghetto came into being. His uncle got killed by the bombing of the night of 18th of July to the 19th of July by the Russians. The Russians bombed my home town; they bombed also the ghetto, and he got killed by one of the bombs. Anyway, Yosef Levi comes over to me, and he says, "I see that you are a guy who opened my eyes. I'll help you stay alive and you will be a witness after the war against the leaders of the ghetto that behaved very bad." When he promised me to help survive, this was worth all the money in the world. So meanwhile, on other days, I write limericks, all kinds of things, and everybody is happy. So, getting rid of the lice had a tremendous effect. And then, of course, all of a sudden I decided I will do mathematics because otherwise what is life worth living for? And all of those who know mathematics can follow exactly what I did, and they will believe me. I knew already how to develop something in the Taylor Series, so I decided I will develop  $\sin x$  in the Taylor Series,  $\cos x$  in the Taylor Series, and  $\sin x \times \cos x$  times 2 equals to  $\sin 2x$ . Therefore I have equality on both sides. This is true for every  $x$ . Therefore the coefficients of one side have to be equal to the coefficients on the other side. After we were liberated I checked it out, and it was a very good idea.

**A:** Perhaps we can talk about this later.

**B:** Anyway, time goes, and then all of a sudden they started talking about sorting out people to go to Schonung. Schonung was a place where people were sent, supposedly to come back to their health. At this stage, when they sent all the sick and the infirm to Schonung, we always assumed that that was the place where you can die in peace. All

of a sudden, I have to introduce something. I had bleeding wounds, it became three, which I think is miraculous. He did it not only to me, he did it to others also. Anyway, this helped, and I was very happy with this guy. Then he was kicked out from the camp. Another doctor took over. His name was Dr. Lunds, he was a woman doctor. He told me that all of the wounds will heal, but that I will always have signs of them. And sure enough I still have signs of the wounds to this day. You can see them right here, and here, and on the back.

**A:** Right.

**B:** He was a good doctor.

**A:** Was he Jewish?

**B:** Yes, of course. Don't ask these kinds of questions. All of those in camp were Jewish. Anyway, so here, all of a sudden, I find out that I and my friend, Yitzchak Lave, have been sorted out to go to Schonung, which was a very great shock because he and I worked very diligently. So I tried to escape from this fate. I went to this Leibovitch, and I say, "You promised me, and now is the moment that I need your help. I want to stay here, I don't want to go to Schonung." He says that it depends on Dr. Lunds. I went to Dr. Lunds, and Dr. Lunds says okay on one condition. I should never ask him anymore to make this blood transfusion. He did it only because he was lazy, absolutely no other reason. His helper wanted to help me, but he was scared of Lunds. So I promised. What choice did I have? I promised. Now, about my friend Itzgalaven, this is the point. He couldn't wiggle out of it, he just couldn't. The 15th of February, when we had to go back to work, he was separated from me, and I found a piece of paper and a pencil that I had given him so that wherever he goes he should tell me where he is, and of course nothing came out of it. You know I promised his mother in the concentration camp in Stutthof that wherever he goes I'll go, and now he was sent away and I didn't go with him. Among other thoughts that I have is maybe this way I will not have to carry him on my shoulders after I have liberated and go to America. Anyway all these thoughts are completely worthless because I felt at that time that I was committing a crime by not going with him. Also my reason was not completely sound because I assumed that the Americans are coming and that the movement from the Germans to the Americans will go through smooth. I had no right to assume it because all four years I also assumed that the Germans will kill us in the end because they don't want witnesses. All of a sudden I relaxed, maybe because I got rid of lice. All of a sudden I felt more like a free man, and basically I was dead-scared to go to Schonung. Now, why do I accuse myself? After all, some people survived in Schonung. I know a case where a son went

with his father. His father had been sorted out to go, he went with his father, his name is Leiberson. And then in our camp there was a guy, Shapiro, and the son was sick and the father went with him, and in both cases they survived. So that was not a camp specially to die. If I had gone with him maybe both of would have survived, maybe both of us would have died. It's a moot point. After the liberation, right away I asked about him. He was dead. Maybe he died even after the liberation. The reason that I doubt is that when they told me he's dead, they told me he died in the typhus epidemic. That couldn't have been, because during those two weeks we got injections against typhus. Of course because of my suspicious nature I would bet that the injections were to kill us, but as it turned out they were really injections against typhus. So you might think I shouldn't feel guilty because they had to send away twenty-five people. If I didn't go, some other guy had to go for me. Believe it or not, one of the Polish Jews that came from Luge volunteered to go. One thing we knew was that in Schonung you don't have to go to work. His reasoning was that not to go to work is better than to go to work, so he volunteered. All I know about Schonung is that they really did not go out to work. How much they got to eat is a matter of contention. One guy told me that they had exactly as much to eat as we ate. One guy told me they got half of it. But people did survive, so till this day I don't know what the best way was. After the 15th of February [1945], I assumed that it would go smoothly. But in the end I had to participate in one of these marches, and I was quite near dead when I was liberated. So I didn't gain anything by not going with him to Schonung. I went through a bad experience anyway. The only conclusion for me, till now, is to be very loyal to my friends. I am not ready to die for them, that much is clear, but I am ready to divide my last piece of bread, which I did.

**A:** May I ask you some questions now?

**B:** Now you can ask me questions.

**A:** You say you don't know that you gained anything by not going—

**B:** I was scared to go.

**A:** But let's start with the facts that you may have. I take it from what you have said that the proportion of people who survived among those who went was less than among those who didn't go.

**B:** There's no doubt.

**A:** So you likely did gain something by not going?

**B:** No, because I later participated in the march. I couldn't have known what would happen.

**A:** Now the Schonung you are talking about, how is that spelled?

**B:** Schonung. S-C-H-O-N-U-N-G—it's "to shun something."

**A:** It's not the name of a place.

**B:** No, no, no this means "schonung," to shun.

**A:** Is it isolation, sort of?

**B:** Yes. A rest supposedly.

**A:** And where was it supposed to be? How far away was it?

**B:** I don't know. It was called Lager 4, that's all. We were in Lager 10, and this was Lager 4.

**A:** You mean this was part of the Dachau establishment?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Now your friend's name again is—

**B:** Yitzchak Lave.

**A:** He had been from your hometown, of course.

**B:** Not only from my hometown, from the same courtyard.

**A:** From the same courtyard?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** His mother did not survive either?

**B:** No, his mother did not survive.

**A:** And you last saw her at Stutthof?

**B:** At Stutthof, yes. His mother and two sisters did not survive. One of the sisters got sick and the mother went with her, you know to be eliminated. I just want to tell you as a matter of record.

**A:** That's the Lave family?

**B:** The Lave family.

**A:** One of the sisters did survive?

**B:** No, a brother survived. He has been here. He was a watchmaker right here in Chicago for about twenty years, and then he emigrated to Israel. Now at this moment he is in Israel.

**A:** This typhus epidemic you talked about, that was among prisoners?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** In Dachau, was it?

**B:** No, no in this Lager 10, in this branch.

**A:** In your own branch of it?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And you learned about it when you came back from that work party?

**B:** Yes, yes. And they sorted out two blocks for those who were really sick.

**A:** One thing that I don't understand is this: they were going to send these people to Schonung?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Twenty-five were going to be sent there.

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Why twenty-five?

**B:** Don't ask me. That was the usual amount.

**A:** Twenty-five would be sent?

**B:** They did it several times during my stay there.

**A:** And did they ever come back, the ones that went?

**B:** Of course, never.

**A:** Never?

**B:** Never.

**A:** I see. So, the ones that went there you never saw them again?

**B:** I never saw them again.

**A:** Although as to this last contingent, the one that your friend was in, you did see one or two of them afterwards?

**B:** No.

**A:** Or you learned about them afterward?

**B:** I learned about them, yes.

**A:** I don't understand—but if you don't want to talk about it now we can talk about it later—why there was any crime on your part in not going with him.

**B:** Because I promised his mother I will go wherever he goes. Very simple. That is good enough. I don't need any more. You have to be loyal to your friends.

**A:** Well, did you and he talk about it?

**B:** No, no, we never talked about it because it was clear that we have to save ourselves as much as we can.

**A:** Well, did he ever suggest that you should not—

**B:** No, no, no, no.

**A:** —have tried to stay there?

**B:** No, no.

**A:** And if you had been selected and he had tried—

**B:** I don't know—

**A:** I'm sorry.

**B:** —we don't know, we don't know.

**A:** All right, all right.

**B:** He tried to wiggle out of going and he couldn't.

**A:** What do you know about the epidemic?

**B:** The epidemic was very serious. In the ghetto it happened before. One guy got typhus, and nobody talked about it because we all decided

if the Germans found out that there is typhus in the ghetto they will kill everybody. So this is why we were very surprised that they treated us like human beings at Dachau. The injections were a two-time affair. They injected us once and then a second time.

**A:** There had to be two?

**B:** Two separate injections. I was amazed that they were doing it for us, but they did.

**A:** And who did the injections?

**B:** The Germans.

**A:** The Germans or the Jewish doctors?

**B:** Truth is, I don't remember.

**A:** So sometimes the Germans did come in?

**B:** Oh yes, oh yes. I think it must have been German doctors.

**A:** Now you said something earlier about burning?

**B:** That was when I was begging—

**A:** Yes.

**B:** —when I went in this house, and this woman said, “Oh, poor people, you are making my husband and my son suffer,” and I say, “But they are not being burned,” because we Jews were being burned.

**A:** That's what you meant by that?

**B:** She didn't believe me, very clearly.

**A:** She understood it?

**B:** I don't know, but she says, “How can you say such a thing, nobody is being burned.”

**A:** You didn't say anything more to her about this?

**B:** No, no. There was no need.

**A:** Now, as to the two weeks without work. The primary activity was getting rid of the lice at that time?

**B:** Right from the beginning.

**A:** And you got rid of them by—

**B:** By fumigation. They really made a huge fire, and all our clothes went to it. They put gas in every barrack. While they took away all of our clothes and gave it to cleaning, we went to a shower. It was a cold shower, but it was a shower.

**A:** And you were convinced when you were doing this what they were primarily concerned to do was to get rid of the lice?

**B:** Yes, it was a great surprise to us, a great surprise, that they would take care of us.

**A:** And you heard about the same thing being said [about fumigation] when people were being killed?

**B:** No, no, I didn't know this.

**A:** No, I asked whether you had *heard* at this time—

**B:** No, no, I never heard that, never.

**A:** But you see what I am asking about—

**B:** Yes.

**A:** —and there were other people elsewhere, Jews and others, who believed they were being fumigated or being treated for lice and other things—

**B:** Yes.

**A:** —but who were really going to be killed.

**B:** Yes.

**A:** You didn't suspect that was going to happen this time?

**B:** I didn't trust the Germans at all, I was suspecting them of—

**A:** I know you didn't trust them at all, but did you—

**B:** It's a fact that they really fumigated us.

**A:** I know. I was just trying to see what kind of suspicions one might have at this stage. This was January, February of 1945?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** You had been hearing stories of what's happened elsewhere, hadn't you? To Jews?

**B:** Yes, yes. We had already been in Stutthof. Stutthof was already an eye-opener. We didn't need any more to be convinced.

**A:** And had you heard that people were being killed by gas?

**B:** Yes. People had been in Auschwitz.

**A:** Whom you met?

**B:** The people who came from larger ghettos went to Auschwitz.

**A:** I see, and you had met people who had been to Auschwitz—

**B:** Two hundred people.

**A:** —and who told you that people were being killed?

**B:** They told us that people were being gassed, yes.

**A:** Gassed there?

**B:** Gassed, crematoria, and everything, and I myself saw the gas chamber in Stutthof.

**A:** But you did not think, when you were being fumigated and showered, that this is what was being done to you?

**B:** No, no, no because a big unit came special for doing it, and their excuse was that they were afraid that people around us will get typhus.

**A:** The civilians as well as workers?

**B:** Yes. It might be that was not the real reason.

**A:** Now, the elder that you talked with—

- B:** Leibovitz.
- A:** How's that spelled—
- B:** How you want. Leibovitz is Leibovitz.
- A:** But I'm asking for the benefit of the typist. How would you spell it?
- B:** There is a judge here, Leibovitz.
- A:** But how would you spell it?
- B:** L-E-I-B-O-V-I-T-Z- or something.
- A:** Now he told you that he wanted you to survive—
- B:** Yes.
- A:** —so that you could testify—
- B:** Against the leaders—
- A:** —the leaders of the ghetto who behaved badly? Do you have an idea of what he was talking about?
- B:** Some leaders did not behave completely 100%.
- A:** I see.
- B:** But of course, I will not go to accuse them of anything, you know.
- A:** But you had known of some bad conduct on the part of—
- B:** I had only known what that Boogen confessed in Stutthof.
- A:** Who confessed?
- B:** Boogen. Boogen was the head leader in our camp. He confessed that he participated in convincing the Jews to go to Germany.
- A:** I see.
- B:** So in a moment of weakness he told it. That was the only time that he opened up and said it. Since then, of course, he never said it again.
- A:** All right. So that's the fourth selection?
- B:** That is the fourth selection.
- A:** Now you had the impression on this occasion, as on other occasions, that they wanted twenty-five, and they will get twenty-five, one way or another?
- B:** They will get twenty-five, one way or another.
- A:** Whether or not they were sick, or—
- B:** That I don't know. It was twenty-five.
- A:** So you have told the story about the fourth selection.
- B:** This is the fourth selection.
- A:** And then there is the final selection?
- B:** This is the final selection, unless you call the march from Dachau when all the weak died or were killed.
- A:** But that kind of selection you were subjected to all along?
- B:** All along.

**A:** Now we have to go back to try to pick up some things that have been recorded previously.

**B:** Now can I drink?

**A:** The tea in the thermos is probably still warm. Did I understand you correctly when you said that your mother had died?

**B:** Yes, the 30th of January. But this was far away, near Stutthof.

**A:** Partly because of her insistence upon observing—

**B:** I can't be sure; maybe she would have died anyway.

**A:** But as far as you know—

**B:** She definitely was religious, she definitely refused to eat the non-kosher meat.

**A:** But wouldn't somebody religious also know that there are exceptions available for people who are ill?

**B:** I just give you how she behaved. She died for her religion. That's fine. Everybody is ready to die for what he believes in.

**A:** Did you meet anybody else like that?

**B:** I don't know. They are dead.

**A:** Did you meet anyone else like that among the people who were—

**B:** Who ate only kosher?

**A:** Who were so religious they wouldn't eat what was available except for bread?

**B:** There was no doubt people like that, no doubt.

**A:** I'm asking you when you were in your barracks—

**B:** Everybody ate non-kosher.

**A:** Everybody?

**B:** Everybody ate non-kosher.

**A:** So, again, how many people were in your own barracks?

**B:** There were 600 people in this whole camp and in each barrack fifty people.

**A:** Now, as far as you know—

**B:** Everybody ate non-kosher.

**A:** Some of those people in that camp would not eat non-kosher food back home?

**B:** Oh, definitely. I would not eat non-kosher before.

**A:** You would not?

**B:** No.

**A:** Before the war?

**B:** Kosher was kosher. What kind of question! I never had any doubts.

**A:** There was never a question about that?

**B:** No, I never had any question about that.

**A:** So would you say, then, that no one who observed the rule completely would have survived?

**B:** I can't say it with certainty. I don't know.

**A:** Well, do you think it's highly unlikely?

**B:** Yes, yes, highly unlikely, as far as I know.

**A:** Because the only food you had was what the Germans gave you?

**B:** Yes, the non-kosher.

**A:** They didn't go to any trouble to make sure it was kosher?

**B:** That's right. About non-kosher I just want to add this on the side. I had great thinking to myself about kosher eating, non-kosher eating. The thing that clinched it, in Israel, for me was when I found out that Ashkenazic Jews don't eat rice on Passover. Rice is chumetz, I mean you don't eat it. But the Sephardic Jews eat rice. When I realized that such a basic thing can be so different, it means all these laws are man-made, and that's it.

**A:** All of them?

**B:** All of them.

**A:** You don't observe them anymore?

**B:** No, no, no. Of course I'll not eat non-kosher on purpose, amongst people who eat kosher. I will not go on purpose and say, with a great decree, "Oh, I am ready to eat non-kosher." But in principle, I think this non-kosher business is something man invented.

**A:** So, for instance, just to give you an example, the cookies that are served to us weekly at the Physics Colloquium—

**B:** Yes?

**A:** You have no difficulty with them?

**B:** Why should I have?

**A:** I just want to make sure.

**B:** I don't know whether they are kosher or not.

**A:** You don't even ask that question?

**B:** Oh, no, no, no.

**A:** As far as you know, the people that were in the camps with you—

**B:** All of them ate non-kosher.

**A:** All of them ate non-kosher?

**B:** No doubt, no doubt.

**A:** Now let me ask again—I'm sorry if I am repeating things—

**B:** Go ask, go ahead.

**A:** —but that's because of our technical difficulties.

**B:** No introductions, ask.

**A:** I want to straighten out the possessions you had in the course of the year.

**B:** I told you.

**A:** I know you did, but it doesn't do any good to tell me you had told me when the tape may be gone. When you left the ghetto—

**B:** Oh, I had a lot of things.

**A:** You each had a bag?

**B:** Everyone had as much as he could carry. I had a small tea kettle. I had a lot of things.

**A:** You had your father's watch.

**B:** My father's watch. A lot of pictures.

**A:** You had a lot of pictures and bread?

**B:** And bread, yes. And more clothing.

**A:** So you packed as much as you thought you could carry?

**B:** As much as I could carry. I kept everything until we got to Stutthof.

**A:** And in Stutthof everything was taken away from you?

**B:** Everything.

**A:** Everything, really?

**B:** Absolutely everything.

**A:** Were rings taken away from you?

**B:** Yes, yes definitely.

**A:** Of course, jewelry of all kinds?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Earrings, for example?

**B:** They looked in your mouth if you have gold in your mouth. They looked in your asshole to see if you have something.

**A:** So they were determined to get everything?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** So when you left the reception center there, if you can call it that, what did you have?

**B:** We had clothes and—

**A:** The clothes you were wearing? What clothes? The clothes you'd come in?

**B:** No, no, no, no. It was a new bunch of clothes. We don't know if they were worn by previous people or—

**A:** They weren't uniform?

**B:** No, no they were not uniform.

**A:** They wouldn't be clothes that everybody had? When you were in Dachau—

**B:** Then we got uniforms.

**A:** After that all of you had the same clothes?

**B:** All the same clothing.

**A:** When you left Stutthof, after you had been stripped of everything—

**B:** We still had human clothing, but we also had this red sign like a Magen David.

**A:** It was a red sign, not a yellow one?

**B:** No, it was red.

**A:** A red star?

**B:** A red star.

**A:** That's the Star of David we are talking about?

**B:** Yes, the Star of David.

**A:** It was on the left breast?

**B:** Yes. There was one guy they put the Star of David on his head with red paint that he didn't get off very easily. They played around with us.

**A:** Who, the Germans did?

**B:** The local people. They weren't even the Germans. It was the local administration.

**A:** Jews?

**B:** No, no, no. Polacks in this case.

**A:** These would be Poles. That would be where, at Stutthof?

**B:** In Stutthof, the main ingredient of the populace are Poles.

**A:** The Poles were the principal administrative staff?

**B:** They were the majority in this camp in Stutthof.

**A:** Of the people running the camp, you mean?

**B:** No, of the camp inmates.

**A:** Of the inmates, as well?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** But who was running the camp?

**B:** Mostly the Poles, and the German criminals.

**A:** German criminals? How about the SS? Were they there?

**B:** No, the SS were high up in the hierarchy. They only came every day, twice, to check if we are there.

**A:** So when you left there, you only had the clothes you were wearing?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** The shoes on your feet?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** No change of clothes?

**B:** No change of clothes, nothing, and no socks—very important, no socks.

**A:** No socks?

**B:** No socks. We had hats.

**A:** And the only other thing you had was glasses?

**B:** Glasses and belts.

**A:** And when did you get your dish and your spoon?

**B:** We got them in Stutthof, too.

**A:** You got that also?

**B:** I think it was porcelain, I mean breakable.

**A:** But eventually you got a metal bowl?

**B:** We got every day a soup.

**A:** So after Stutthof you had no other possessions except those that you have just mentioned?

**B:** Except some people managed to sneak through possessions. I don't know their tricks, but some people did it.

**A:** A little bit got through?

**B:** They got pictures, let's say.

**A:** Now, the other thing which I think you have said is at no point were there any messages in or out.

**B:** In or out, absolutely not.

**A:** You were not able to send messages? You were not able to receive messages?

**B:** Never.

**A:** You never saw the Red Cross?

**B:** There was a visit of the Red Cross in the ghetto.

**A:** In the ghetto?

**B:** Yes, and there was also a visit in Camp Number Ten.

**A:** In Dachau? One visit?

**B:** One visit, yes.

**A:** Did they bring messages?

**B:** No, no, no, no. They just came to register.

**A:** Did they take messages?

**B:** No, no, no.

**A:** They didn't take messages out. Did you talk to them?

**B:** I didn't. I wasn't even present in the camp, but the doctor told me. You know, this doctor who recently died. He told me that he met them, and because he had been before in Switzerland and so on he recognized how many we are. What I don't understand till this

day is that there then was the saying that these are Lithuanian Jews. I couldn't understand why Lithuanian Jews should be sorted out one way or another. But the fact is that after they left we got packages, like CARE packages. And because by this time already half of us had died, each one got two packages instead of one.

**A:** This was a one-time delivery?

**B:** A one-time delivery.

**A:** And the package came from where?

**B:** The packages came from America. There were two kinds, one had sugar, cigarettes and—see, I forget.

**A:** This was where? You were in the camp or in the ghetto?

**B:** In Dachau, in Dachau.

**A:** But America was already in the war then?

**B:** So it's from the Red Cross. It doesn't matter.

**A:** The Red Cross brought it in somehow? But there were no messages in or out?

**B:** No message.

**A:** No one of your family—you didn't hear from any of them?

**B:** No, of course not.

**A:** You heard about your mother from somebody?

**B:** That's after we were liberated.

**A:** So you didn't hear from anybody during the time that you were there?

**B:** I didn't.

**A:** For instance, your sister in America?

**B:** No, I knew nothing about her.

**A:** She didn't know anything about where you were, whether you were still alive?

**B:** Since 1941, she could know nothing. I found later a letter by her, after I had been liberated, in which she says, "My brother has appeared all of a sudden in Dachau."

**A:** Now, while you were back in the ghetto, was there any mail in or out of the ghetto?

**B:** No, definitely not. We tried an illegal way.

**A:** Was there any telephone in your ghetto?

**B:** No.

**A:** In the town?

**B:** In the town, yes, telephones like everywhere else.

**A:** But you could never get to a telephone in the ghetto?

**B:** No, no, it was not allowed, not allowed.

**A:** And no one would ever go to the telephone for you?

**B:** That I don't know. I can guarantee that I don't know.

**A:** So while you were in the ghetto for three years during the German Occupation, there were no telephone messages?

**B:** No telephone messages.

**A:** No mail, no postal services?

**B:** No mail. Postal, definitely not.

**A:** So the rest of the world is gone. I mean you are cut off completely from the—

**B:** Cut off, yes.

**A:** You had news?

**B:** We had a German newspaper.

**A:** You had a newspaper, so you heard things.

**B:** Some people heard illegal radio also. And some people came over from other cities, you know, transporting letters, and some Jews tried to give them letters to the other ghettos. They were caught and beaten up.

**A:** Now, every day in the camp there was roll call?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Twice a day?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And it was not by name, just by numbers?

**B:** Only numbers, right.

**A:** It could have been anybody there so long as there were enough bodies?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Somebody from different barracks could have been in your barracks and somebody from your—

**B:** Oh no, this was all done under the sky. It was not a question about barracks.

**A:** I see. But there could have been some switching of people around?

**B:** I told you the case about checking who has golden teeth. They checked everybody who had golden teeth. I was already checked out and there was a guy that had—

**A:** Now you were saying that somebody who had golden teeth wanted you to take his place in the check-out.

**B:** Yes, I did it. We exchanged.

**A:** What would have happened if they had found him with gold teeth?

**B:** It was no good. Who cares what would have happened? It was no good.

**A:** What did he think might happen? What was he afraid might happen?

**B:** They might even knock out your teeth. I don't know. It was no good, that's all. But the guy who had the golden teeth, he knocked out his golden teeth, and he sold them to get soup from the kitchen to save his son. His son was in bad shape. He didn't save his son. He didn't save his son.

**A:** Occasionally one hears stories that there were people who actually got infiltrated into the camps to find out what was going on to report back home.

**B:** Not in my case.

**A:** You never encountered that yourself?

**B:** I never encountered that myself.

**A:** There was never an occasion when people said, "Well, that man there is somebody who has come from such and such an agency?"

**B:** No, no, no, no, no.

**A:** Or from such and such a government—

**B:** No, no. I heard after the war that there had been a messenger that was a woman, a Christian woman who was in the ghetto and left the ghetto. She was from the Vilna ghetto. But that's all for right now.

**A:** When the Germans stripped you of everything, the records they had, as far as you know, did have your names in them—

**B:** They didn't give a damn about our names—

**A:** —in their records of you?

**B:** Oh, in their records, yes, there were names and the appropriate numbers.

**A:** Did they provide any other detail?

**B:** The last address where you lived before.

**A:** Where you'd come from?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** No photographs?

**B:** No, no photographs.

**A:** No fingerprints?

**B:** No, no fingerprints.

**A:** Date of birth?

**B:** I think that they took birth, yes.

**A:** Did the people that were guarding you, the Germans know who

you were in any individual sense? I know that they didn't have any individual sense. But human beings meaning human beings.

**B:** So one guy, for example, was attending his garden, a Jew—

**A:** Where, at Dachau?

**B:** No, no, this is in my ghetto.

**A:** Oh, back in the ghetto.

**B:** He was attending the garden and one of the guards—he was a Romanian German, and he saw the Jew make a garden, and he stopped to give him advice, how to do it and what to do. You know, just like person to person.

**A:** The German did?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Did you learn the names of the Germans you dealt with?

**B:** I was not interested.

**A:** Did others?

**B:** Oh, yes, some knew everybody's name, this is such a guy and that is such a guy—

**A:** Of the Germans?

**B:** Yes—and who is worse-tempered and who is better-tempered.

**A:** So there were people who had some idea what—

**B:** Oh yes, oh yes.

**A:** I see. It's just that you didn't, because of your youth and your interests?

**B:** I didn't have any interest. I met only one German that had been evacuated in 1940, the only German who came back. Remember I told you that all the Germans had been kicked out under the Russian occupation. You don't remember?

**A:** Yes, I remember that.

**B:** One of those came back.

**A:** To your town?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And you saw him?

**B:** I saw him and I talked with him.

**A:** There?

**B:** I saw him in my town. I talked with him. He was interested. I told him that my father had died and everything. He behaved like a neighbor. Once I talked with him, I never saw him again. His two children were in the army. All of my age group were in the army.

**A:** Now these were Lithuanian Germans?

**B:** Again you ask me.

**A:** And again we record it, but we don't have the recording.

**B:** I don't know what you want. They talked about the situation, which was so bad. The craziness was accepted and that's it.

**A:** Well, you said they talked about food. I think I recall your saying that.

**B:** They talked about food, yes.

**A:** They talked about the war?

**B:** Yes, everybody was a philosopher about the war. Everyone could prove that the Germans had to lose, but it was not clear that the Germans obeyed these laws.

**A:** Well, did you believe that they would lose?

**B:** I told you, when I saw the airplane without the propeller I really got scared.

**A:** The missile?

**B:** Yes. I had good reason to be scared.

**A:** Now, when you all talked among yourselves, about what was being done to you, you talked mostly about the Jews, what was happening to the Jews?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** You weren't talking about the Gypsies, for example?

**B:** I didn't know anything about the Gypsies.

**A:** Or the Russian prisoners of war?

**B:** The Russian prisoners of war I knew.

**A:** You knew about them, but you weren't talking about them very much.

**B:** Oh, I was talking.

**A:** You were?

**B:** And others also talked. This guy that has written a diary says he saw the way the Russian prisoners were treated. He decided we will never be like them, but this is only talk.

**A:** Well, what was he talking about? What did he see?

**B:** He saw the Russian prisoners of war at the beginning of the war, when they had been starving. And he worked there as a Jew. We were in a much better situation, of course.

**A:** Well, he thought he was not going to get that desperate.

**B:** That was only talk.

**A:** But did it get very bad?

**B:** Oh, for me, yes. But it didn't for him because he was the official writer of the story of the ghetto. This is his book, he is the writer of this book. He says he will never behave like them. Bull. I told you

he was very arrogant, although he was my teacher. I told you that in the beginning of the war, when we didn't have anything, we stole potatoes.

**A:** You and he stole potatoes?

**B:** Yes. And after the war when I met him in Italy, when I told him, "Remember when we both stole potatoes?" He said, "Shush, don't tell anybody."

**A:** He was ashamed of that?

**B:** Yes, and he paid a tremendous price. His son went to a course for officers and failed the course and committed suicide. He couldn't face his father's image.

**A:** An officers' course, where?

**B:** In Israel. So, don't try to impress too much.

**A:** Now when you all talked among yourselves, as to what was happening to you—what did you say, all of you, and what did you think? What did everybody say were the reasons why?

**B:** Nobody gave any reasons. This is what I fight all my life, the acceptance of the Jews that they are really different and that they have to suffer. They say, "In all our history we suffer. It has all happened before. Since Pharaoh, it has happened."

**A:** Since when?

**B:** Pharaoh in Egypt. That it is our fate to suffer.

**A:** They would talk this way?

**B:** Yes, yes, an acceptance.

**A:** Where?

**B:** Everywhere, all the time.

**A:** By "all the time" you mean in the ghetto?

**B:** In the ghetto.

**A:** In Dachau, also?

**B:** In Dachau, too.

**A:** This is what they would say?

**B:** Yes, it's our fate.

**A:** Would they say that this is God punishing us for something?

**B:** That depends on who was talking. Those who are religious would say this.

**A:** What would they say?

**B:** God punished us for not obeying his laws.

**A:** And what laws were they thinking of?

**B:** All this kosher—

**A:** But most of you kept the kosher laws in the ghetto, didn't you?

**B:** God bless you, too. For example, my mother, when there was that law that Jewish women could not have children—

**A:** What do you mean, that Jewish women cannot have children?

**B:** Didn't I tell you about that?

**A:** There's no such law among Jews.

**B:** They made a law in the ghetto.

**A:** Oh, in the ghetto?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** You mean the Germans made it a law?

**B:** Yes. This is unusually important. They made a law that Jewish woman cannot—

**A:** How soon after they came did they—

**B:** I don't remember.

**A:** Well, the first year? The second year?

**B:** I think the second year. So my mother, who was very religious, says, "Ah-ha, God is punishing all the Jewish women because when we were free we had abortions."

**A:** Before the war, you mean?

**B:** Yes. So God is punishing us now. My mother had a very religious soul. What can I say?

**A:** So she explained in that way what was happening to the Jews?

**B:** Oh yes, she explained everything.

**A:** So when you are talking among yourselves, it was said that this is something that we Jews have always had happen to us.

**B:** Yes, yes, yes.

**A:** But at the same time, didn't they recognize that this was somehow of a different kind?

**B:** No, I'm telling you, no.

**A:** But it was a different kind of activity?

**B:** To me personally, of course, it was a different kind. I told others, "Passover, I didn't understand why you celebrate, because under Egypt it was better than the situation we are in now."

**A:** You mean when you in the camp?

**B:** No.

**A:** In the ghetto?

**B:** When I was in the ghetto.

**A:** You asked, "Why are we celebrating Passover?"

**B:** And, of course, I was considered absolutely crazy. Traditions, traditions. We have to celebrate Passover. We made matzohs the first year.

**A:** The first year? Under the Germans?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** The second year?

**B:** I think we got some more matzohs the second year. As to the third year, I don't remember. But we didn't eat chometz, I remember. Till I was in Dachau I remember I never ate chometz on Pesach.

**A:** And by chometz you mean—

**B:** Bread. Bread

**A:** Bread?

**B:** Bread on Pesach.

**A:** Oh, I see, you did not eat bread on Passover? So when these people were talking about it, did they not recognize this was something special?

**B:** No.

**A:** But it was obviously something special, wasn't it?

**B:** To me it was obviously special.

**A:** I don't mean just you. If you go back to the Pharaoh, for example, even to the pogroms and other such things, this was the first time you had just had this kind of systematic slaughter of so many Jews over a long period of time organized by authorities.

**B:** All this is true, but people took it that this is how Jews are treated. The ghetto had been in the Middle Ages.

**A:** They saw what the Germans were doing to them, didn't they?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** They did know that?

**B:** When the children were taken away, everyone had the illusion that they were being exchanged for German prisoners of war.

**A:** You mean all that time you were in the ghetto people did not recognize that the children were being killed?

**B:** They didn't accept bad news. They didn't accept the idea.

**A:** You mean that they did not want to accept that?

**B:** They did not want to accept it.

**A:** Well, they certainly knew that the Germans were very hostile to the Jews?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** What did they understand to be the cause of that?

**B:** Jews suffered in all ages from anti-Semitism, and this is no different.

**A:** But why was there the worst anti-Semitism?

**B:** Why, because of our religion, that we are monogamous.

**A:** Not monogamous. You mean—

**B:** Yes, the Jews are monogamous.

**A:** You mean monotheistic?

**B:** No, monogamous, please—one wife, and very loyal.

**A:** Well, the Germans believe in one wife, they weren't killing you for that? The Germans would have agreed with that. Most Catholics would agree with that.

**B:** Please, I'm just giving you what I saw.

**A:** The Jews were not being killed because they were monogamous.

**B:** The Jews accepted that the Jewish standard of life is so much higher, the moral standard is so much higher, the Jews' fathers are so moral, you know, their life is more involved with family, and they are not drunk. That is, we suffer because we are better.

**A:** And the Germans resented that?

**B:** I don't know about the Germans. This is our relationship with the Lithuanians.

**A:** Yes, you've talked the Lithuanians, but I am trying to think—

**B:** The Germans, they cared that all the industry, all the money, everything is in Jewish hands.

**A:** The Jews had the money, they had the control of the industry, is that it?

**B:** That's according to the Germans.

**A:** Yes, according to the Germans. So whenever the Jews saw themselves being brutally treated—

**B:** They took it as normal.

**A:** They not only took it as normal but they didn't ask themselves what it was about them that did this, that caused this?

**B:** We are better, and they are jealous, and that's it.

**A:** That we're better?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Well, they certainly were better in many ways, weren't they?

**B:** I give you only what they say.

**A:** But would you not agree?

**B:** They did have less drunkards. That is beyond any shadow of doubt.

**A:** Compared to Lithuanians, you are saying?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Not compared to the Germans? Germans were not known to be drunkards, right?

**B:** The Germans even sorted out Germans as to the kind of drinking they do. There was beer drinkers in Bavaria, wine drinkers in the Rhineland. But they didn't have as many drunkards as the Lithuanians.

**A:** And they were far more enterprising than the Lithuanians were, right? They were much more successful?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** You could say that when the Jews and the Lithuanians lived together, it was obvious that the Jews tended to be better off? It's fair to say that?

**B:** On an average.

**A:** That's what we mean by "tended," right?

**B:** Yes, because there were many poor Jewish families, you know, with many children.

**A:** But by and large, on the average—

**B:** The Jews cared more for their handicapped.

**A:** They tended to be better off than the Lithuanians?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** You could understand, then, why some of the Lithuanians may have been resentful?

**B:** Oh, yes, jealousy.

**A:** Yes, jealousy, but—

**B:** Why talk so much about what people thought then? Right here in Chicago I asked a friend, a Lithuanian woman, point-blank, why did you kill the Jews and she says, "Envy." Very simple. She gave me one answer.

**A:** That's an answer which makes some sense. But the Germans, why did they do it?

**B:** The Germans had many ghettos for Jews during their history—

**A:** But look, you cannot talk about the Germans and the Jews in the same way, as far as comparing standard of living, morality, and success, as you talk about the Jews and the Lithuanians.

**B:** Wait a minute. The Germans said very clearly that in Germany all the Jews took over everything, and after the first World War when Germany—

**A:** Was that true?

**B:** I don't know, please.

**A:** Do you have any suspicion of whether it's true or not?

**B:** I don't know. Hitler's speeches were all the time in his direction—

**A:** I know.

**B:** —the Jew is taking over everything.

**A:** What I am asking about is this: I'm really asking more about what the Jews then thought was moving the Germans. When one looks at what the Lithuanians envied, hostility would be understandable just by looking at census data, to put it in modern terms, you see.

**B:** And the Germans believed Hitler's propaganda that the Jews owned Germany, that Jews have everything, all the publishing houses are Jewish, all this, all that; bankers are Jewish, the Rothschilds are Jewish. So they believed that Jews are rich and we are poor.

**A:** If he had said that the Greeks owned Germany, what would have happened?

**B:** If the Turks had said—

**A:** No, if Hitler had said that?

**B:** He would kill the Greeks.

**A:** No, no, no, no.

**B:** No?

**A:** The Germans wouldn't have believed it.

**B:** Don't be so sure. Don't be so sure.

**A:** Wouldn't it have been a much harder argument to make?

**B:** I don't want to deal with iffy statements, because to me it's clear that the Greeks would put up more resistance. The only thing that I agree to is that the Jews did not put up enough resistance. It was too easy to kill Jews, that's all.

**A:** What I am saying is that obviously there were various other people that Hitler could have spoken of as the villains, and it would have had no effect.

**B:** I don't know.

**A:** Suppose he had said the American Indians owned Germany, what would have happened?

**B:** Look, he picked on the Jews and it worked.

**A:** And that's what I'm trying to figure out.

**B:** It worked.

**A:** Sure, we know "it worked."

**B:** The Jews, I'm sorry to say, they just believed Jews have to suffer through all the ages and God is trying them, that they will be loyal to God. The great difference from other times was that once they could change their religion and stop being persecuted. But now, changing

their religion did not help, for there was a new kind of anti-Semitism which said that Jews are a race. There was one place where some Jewish women went into a church, because they didn't want to be killed, and the priest promised them they'll not be killed, and then they were out and they were killed. And then there's another place where the Lithuanians came to the Jews and said, "Either you become Catholic or you are being killed." Are you listening?

**A:** Yes, I am listening.

**B:** And the part of them decided to be killed and part of them became Catholics, and then next day the Germans came and said, "No, no, the Jews are not killed for being Catholics, they are killed because of race." And so those who become Catholics were also killed.

**A:** Now you have also told me, not in an interview but on the phone, if I recall correctly, that you learned one lesson from Hitler.

**B:** One basic lesson definitely.

**A:** Which is?

**B:** Who is a Jew.

**A:** And what did that lesson teach?

**B:** That the enemy decides who is a Jew. The enemy decides who is a Jew. It's not definitely your decision; we can say to doomsday that we are not Jews and it won't help. That's very important for all those Jewish people who say, "I am not a Jew. I am not a Jew." That doesn't help here. You can shout this today until doomsday.

**A:** The Germans didn't just call anybody a Jew, right?

**B:** Only those who are circumcised.

**A:** But what about women?

**B:** Women they couldn't find out, therefore more women escaped from men.

**A:** But many women were killed. So there is the question. For the Germans, who were the Jews?

**B:** Victims, that's all.

**A:** Yes, but who were the ones who were going to be victimized? What did you understand?

**B:** The Jews want take over the world. Don't you know it, for God's sake? The Jews have an International that plans to take over the world.

**A:** I'm just trying to see what it is you understood at the time that Germans believed a Jew to be. Who were the Jews?

**B:** A villain that wants to take over the world.

**A:** But they're killing children who hadn't taken over anything,

right?

**B:** Hitler said this was a genetic defect.

**A:** Okay. Who the Jews are is genetically. So it was simply racial?

**B:** According to him, racial. But then came the Nuremberg Laws, and they said that if a guy who is blond and blue-eyed, and whose parents are blond and blue-eyed, and whose grandparents are blond and blue-eyed, if he claims he is a Jew, he should be treated as a Jew. But Hitler joined the Japanese against the Americans. In one second, racial differences disappeared. And the same with our friend Stalin, he was a communist and everything but when the Germans attacked he dropped Communism and everything and all a sudden he became a Russian patriot.

**A:** That's right.

**B:** Thank you.

**A:** But, however willing Hitler was to align himself with the Japanese, he never gave up on the Jews as the enemy.

**B:** No, he never gave up on the Jews as the enemy, because it worked. He personally hated Jews, I don't know why you need so much to explain it.

**A:** And he was talking to people that were receptive to that hatred?

**B:** Yes. Why do you look so far? Our friend, Mugabe, in Zimbabwe, he hates whites with all his heart, he really hates them like Hitler hated Jews. And he's accepted by all the blacks and they voted him into power. I don't know why you think that is all in the sky. Now in the year 2000 they voted Mugabe into power and he hates whites exactly like Hitler hated Jews, and the blacks like him and they vote him into power.

**A:** That's not true, that's not true. He does not hate whites the way Hitler hated Jews.

**B:** Who told you it's not true?

**A:** Well, for one thing, Mugabe makes distinctions among whites.

**B:** Hitler made distinctions among the Jews in the beginning.

**A:** In the beginning?

**B:** Yes. Everyone tries in the beginning whatever he can. Mugabe tried whatever he could get away with. Hitler said, "The Austrian Jews are not to blame, the Jews that came from Russia, they're to blame. Our Jews are good, you know, nice and friendly? It goes step by step. It's a continuous process. Mugabe hates whites as much as Hitler hated Jews. I heard it in his voice. I heard him talk. You cannot assume that Mugabe is different. There are many blacks who hate the whites exactly as Hitler hated the Jews, even right here

in Chicago. If a black man comes and says, "We have the opportunity to kill all of the whites," he will have a lot of followers.

**A:** But what is interesting here is Hitler and those closest to him made distinctions among the Semites that they are going after.

**B:** God bless you, Mugabe made a distinction between white settlers and other whites. He hates only the settlers, he says. The other whites he is ready to accept. He says so, but I know he hates all whites.

**A:** But that's not the case with Hitler, he never did hate all of the Semites. He didn't hate the Arabs.

**B:** Who told you he didn't hate the Arabs?

**A:** Because he allied himself with the Arabs. He was willing to make accommodations with the Arabs, and with the Japanese, in a way that he was not willing to do with the Jews.

**B:** What accommodations has he made with the Arabs, tell me?

**A:** There were all kinds of activities in the Middle East, with Arabs even coming to Berlin, to organize activities against the Jews in Palestine, you know about these matters better than I do.

**B:** He also organized the Indians against the English.

**A:** That's precisely it. So the question becomes, what is there so special about the Jews?

**B:** Nothing special, they are easy to kill. Don't look for anything else. I know you want something special, I'll not give it to you.

**A:** And I say that they're not something special only because they are easy to kill.

**B:** Why did the Turks kill the Armenians? Because it was possible. They would gladly kill all the Greeks, too, but they couldn't. I know, I know, it's hard for you to swallow such a thing. The Armenians were Christians, the Greeks were Christians, and the Turks would gladly kill all the Greeks but they couldn't, but they could kill the Armenians, so they did it. Line of least resistance. It's hard for you to accept this and I don't blame you.

**A:** Why didn't the Germans go in and start killing the Italians?

**B:** How did the Germans treat the Italians? Now I will ask you, after Italy surrendered, how did they treat them?

**A:** Well, they certainly didn't set out to slaughter them all.

**B:** They took all the Italian soldiers that they could take prisoners, they took away their arms, and they sent them to Germany to work.

**A:** You're a scientist, you don't explain things only to be identifying one of the conditions when something happens. You have been stressing the fact that the Jews didn't resist. But that is not the

reason for what happened to them; that's only one condition for the killings.

**B:** But this encouraged—

**A:** But that was not the cause of the killings.

**B:** This was a catalyst, a catalyst for the killings.

**A:** It gave the Germans the opportunity, of course, but it didn't give them the motive.

**B:** What motive did Hitler have to kill all the Gypsies? Go ahead, tell me.

**A:** Oh, he hated them.

**B:** Thank you.

**A:** He hated them for some reason.

**B:** He hated Jews, too.

**A:** Why? That's what I'm trying to find out. Why did he hate them? And it wasn't just the Jews in Russia, he also hated the Jews in Germany.

**B:** In the beginning, in the beginning he said that—

**A:** Whatever he said, we know that it was not just the Jews in Russia—

**B:** I swear to you Mugabe hates all the whites, I swear to you.

**A:** Well, don't go off on Mugabe again.

**B:** Why shouldn't I?

**A:** Because he doesn't—

**B:** Because you don't want to see—

**A:** The criterion you are talking about is whether or not someone is vulnerable.

**B:** Yes. If the whites were vulnerable, Mugabe would go all the way.

**A:** But the point is that Hitler never tried to kill all the vulnerable people that he had contact with.

**B:** Why did he kill the Russian prisoners of war? Give me one rationale. There was absolutely no rationale. And he himself regretted it two years later because they could all have been put to work.

**A:** That's right, and do you think at the end of his life he regretted killing all of the Jews?

**B:** No, no.

**A:** He could have worked them, too?

**B:** He did.

**A:** No, no, he killed off many more than he could have worked.

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Do you think he ever regretted that?

**B:** No.

**A:** Why?

**B:** It worked for him. What kind of question is that?

**A:** No, because he had—

**B:** Why did Goebbels kill his own children? Goebbels did kill his own children.

**A:** Yes.

**B:** Crazyness has no limit.

**A:** But he didn't kill them because he hated them; he thought he was saving them from something.

**B:** Who cares?

**A:** There's a difference.

**B:** He killed his own children.

**A:** I'm not excusing it, I'm just distinguishing it. I am really pushing the question of what it was that the people in the camps, that you talked with day after day—and that you talked with in the ghetto for years—what was it that you all understood caused the horrible things that were being done to the Jews and probably to no one else except maybe to the Russian prisoners, and maybe (some of you had heard) to the Gypsies. You knew that there was this systematic campaign against the Jews.

**B:** And there was a systematic campaign against the Russian prisoners as well.

**A:** And there may be a reason for that, too.

**B:** No reason. I will not let you get away with murder.

**A:** Can't you see the distinction that you have to ask yourself about? So, I ask you again, what was it that the people in the ghetto and the camps were saying as to why it was that the Germans were doing these horrible things to them?

**B:** In all the generations the Germans hated us. Finished! I'll ask you point-blank, do you think there was a special reason?

**A:** Well, one possibility is—

**B:** —go ahead—

**A:** —something you've touched upon in talking about the situation with the Lithuanians. But we're talking about Hitler now: he sensed and resented the superiority of the Jews. That is, he hated them for their goodness.

**B:** Goodness?

**A:** Goodness.

**B:** Goodness?

**A:** Yes, is that an unfamiliar word to you?

**B:** Goodness?

**A:** Goodness, yes.

**B:** How can the Jews be good when they exploit our Germans, when they get rich by squeezing out the blood of our German workers? That's not the definition of good—

**A:** That's right.

**B:** —to drink our blood.

**A:** That's right, that's the way he put it.

**B:** That's very important.

**A:** And the question is—

**B:** I don't know that he didn't believe it really—

**A:** Yes, he may have come to believe that, but at the same time, what I have suggested is possible if you started thinking about this, and you press this far enough, and you ask what is there that moved Hitler and other Germans to think the way they did about the Jews. Because obviously, if they had wanted to, they could have looked around in Germany and said that the Jews had made a great contribution to German society, to German culture.

**B:** But they preferred—

**A:** They could have found considerable evidence for that.

**B:** —they needed a scapegoat. Listen to me. It's very important why the Germans were so frustrated that they did such a thing, why the Lithuanians were so frustrated that they did such a thing. First, people are frustrated, then they find a victim.

**A:** We have touched upon this before in our conversations. Do you find what you call anti-Semitism in the United States?

**B:** Let me think. The fact that I have to think means it is not rampant.

**A:** It's not rampant?

**B:** Not rampant. But the Lithuanians right here in Chicago, they are anti-Semitic.

**A:** They are?

**B:** Oh, yes.

**A:** Even though the Jews are not doing anything to them, are they?

**B:** No, no.

**A:** I mean there are no Jews taking anything away from them?

**B:** There was a time they caught here a Lithuanian guy that had

been a guard in some concentration camp and all the Lithuanians knew that he was innocent, while all the Jews in Chicago knew that he was guilty.

**A:** And who was right?

**B:** Please, listen. So I came to the Lithuanian community, and they asked me, “What is your opinion?” I say, “I am a citizen of the United States. And he is innocent until proven guilty. The facts should talk. Not because I am a Jew, not because I am Lithuanian.” That’s very important.

**A:** And what happened to him?

**B:** I don’t remember him, but I know that all the Lithuanians knew that he was innocent, and sometimes Lithuanians talk with me and they forget that I am a Jew.

**A:** When you talk to them what language do you use?

**B:** I speak Lithuanian.

**A:** I know. Is that what you use?

**B:** Yes, of course.

**A:** You don’t use English?

**B:** No, no, Lithuanian. I speak Lithuanian like a Lithuanian. I know the history of Lithuania better than most Lithuanians. This is a true statement.

**A:** Yes.

**B:** I really know.

**A:** I believe you.

**B:** I can give them a lot of their history that they don’t know. I am a very good Lithuanian, a very good Lithuanian. But you have to be real frustrated to kill children. Instinctively for all human beings: you see a child, you want to pet him.

**A:** The problem here is that you put it in terms of frustration, but there’s something about this murderous activity and the determination behind it, and the evil of it, that seems to me to require something deeper than frustration to explain it.

**B:** Fine with me. Call it by a better name if you have it.

**A:** One suggestion I have made, which I didn’t find you accepting, is that there was a sense that the Jews were simply better, that the goodness of the Jews—

**B:** I never heard about it.

**A:** Ah, that’s what I mean. You heard it the first time here, is that it?

**B:** Yes. That the Jews were better, nobody even mentioned it. I never heard that from the Lithuanians.

**A:** That's right. They wouldn't put it that way.

**B:** No, the Jews are rich because they exploit our Lithuanians. Our Lithuanians work, and the Jews are drinking blood.

**A:** That's the way the Lithuanians would put it? That the Lithuanians do all the work and that the Jews are the beneficiaries of it?

**B:** Right. And the Germans also say this. Wait a minute. Because you push me so, I have to say something more. I read a German military newspaper. This is when the Germans entered Lithuania. They said that we met the first time another kind of Jew, a Jew that works—that is, a smith, that is, a cobbler—something that we don't have in Germany. They write it openly. But when it comes to cheating, they also said, the Lithuanian Jews are as good as our German Jews.

**A:** The German Jews that they knew were not laborers?

**B:** No, blue collar.

**A:** So the ones they knew back in Germany tended to be businessmen.

**B:** Businessmen.

**A:** And academics to some extent, probably?

**B:** Academics, yes, and business.

**A:** And that was resented?

**B:** Of course, they resented that. Look, when I go to the Lithuanian community, they say, "Ah, you Jews, you are clever." I say, "Lithuanians have the same behinds like the Jews. If you will sit and study as much as the Jews do, you will be as clever and as successful as the Jews." I give it to them very openly.

**A:** So the Jews were superior?

**B:** The Jews were studying more.

**A:** They were superior in that they studied more?

**B:** They studied, they took studying much more seriously.

**A:** They controlled themselves more? They disciplined themselves more?

**B:** Yes, I explained to them the difference. Yesterday I met a Lithuanian guy who came from Lithuania, right now, I'm not talking about history. The economic situation in Lithuania is bad.

**A:** Right now?

**B:** Yes, right now. And I told him, "Listen." I gave it to him very clear: "Look, the Jews are thieves and the Lithuanians are thieves, but the Jews remember that they still have to do thievery next year, so they don't kill the chicken that lays the golden eggs. Lithuanians

grab everything.” And so he’s laughing and he says, “The Lithuanians are more in a hurry to get rich.” He himself admits that this is a true statement. What’s going on in Lithuania is beneath contempt; don’t kid yourself for one moment. The world doesn’t know about it. A guy makes an enterprise, gets money from the government, gets raw material, produces a product, sells the product, then he stops paying people their salary, then he stops paying for material, and then he goes bankrupt, even though he has enough money.

**A:** And of course, he doesn’t pay his taxes either?

**B:** Oh yes, not paying the taxes is included. And every day in the Lithuanian papers are the names of people who behave that way, and it’s not a shame anymore in Lithuania.

**A:** Well, it does appear from what you say that the Jews were superior to the Lithuanians.

**B:** Look, if I say that the Jews are thieves and the Lithuanians are thieves, I put them both on the same—

**A:** You do say that, but when you start looking at details, you point to differences that are significant for the community at large.

**B:** But on the principle of stealing, they are not so far away from each other. It’s written in the Ten Commandments, “Thou shall not steal.” My father, for example, was very much against stealing, so much so that for two years I didn’t steal anything under the German Occupation. And then I went to the pit mines and I saw the other people, my age group, they are full of pep, of everything, and “Hey, now, each one of them is stealing.” Then it dawned upon me that I can steal, too. That’s one of the things, when my father died, that I regretted very much. I thought if he were alive, he would allow me to steal. Then I would have started stealing much earlier. My father’s life was so that he would not allow me to steal. He never paid a bribe, never stole. He led his life this way and therefore he would demand it from me too. My mother compromised. She allowed me to eat non-kosher. She realized, you know, that that was necessary for survival. I told you I laid on my phylacteries every day for her sake.

**A:** Well, we are almost at the end. But I have another cassette here. If you want to tell me about the man that you had told me about last time on a tape providentially mishandled.

**B:** Yes, maybe we should. I can have some more tea?

**A:** I have some more. Some other time we have to talk about the ways that the Jews are superior.

**B:** I'll not—

**A:** You will not grant that?

**B:** No. When I got to Israel and I saw what the Jews had done to the Arabs, I had to lose all things about superiors. It's true they are not out to kill all Arabs. But when it comes to stealing property, they are as good as anybody else. They loot, as bad as anybody else. I'm sorry, this is my experience, I have to judge it. I had to change a lot of my opinions since I have been liberated. Before the liberation I thought the Jews were cowards and the Germans all daring and brave, because this was the example I saw. I came to Israel and I saw daring and brave Jews, and it gladdened my heart. Okay?

**A:** Okay, now, I just want to make sure for the record, the name of your town, the home town, would be spelled S-H-A-U-L-I-A-Y, is that it?

**B:** The S has a little—

**A:** —wobble under it?

**B:** Yes, what do they call it—it's a bird. And not under it, over it.

**A:** We return to the fundamental differences between peoples. You keep putting it in terms of statistical differences, whereas I think there may be some fundamental differences between peoples, for one reason or another, however they develop. For example, you see, with respect to the Germans—the Germans particularly are the immediate problem here—the question is to what degree was their policy, with respect to the Jews especially, rational?

**B:** No, it was not rational.

**A:** And to what degree was it simply insane?

**B:** It was insane.

**A:** And what was there about the Germans that made them susceptible to that kind of insanity? What was there about the Jews that made them regarded by the Germans the way they did? For instance, in all your dealings with Germans, in the ghetto for three years and in the camps for a year, when you came in contact with them, what justification did they ever give for what they were doing to the Jews?

**B:** Juden, rast kreiger rast. That's all.

**A:** Excuse me?

**B:** "Jews, you wanted the war." Very simple, I have been accused of this all the time.

**A:** That you Jews wanted the war?

**B:** Yes, we organized the war. And how did we organize it, because we organized the Russians, the Bolsheviks, they are Jews, and the

Jew Rosenfeld. I don't need anymore. Do you remember the Jew Rosenfeld?

**A:** Yes, I remember him [(that is, Roosevelt)].

**B:** And they believed it 100%. Also, Rockefeller is definitely a Jewish name.

**A:** So the question is, what was there about the Germans that made them think this way about the Jews?

**B:** What is there about the Jews that make them think so negatively about the Arabs? I ask you. When I came to Palestine I saw that the Arabs are exactly the same human beings as Jews.

**A:** Well, they are obviously quite different in many ways, in some important ways. One is with respect to the status of women. There are fundamental differences between the Arabs and the Jews.

**B:** In Jerusalem the majority of Christians are Arabs. They are monogamous, like the Jews, they are the same. The Christian Arabs are like Europeans.

**A:** Christian Arabs are like Europeans, you say?

**B:** Yes. And the Muslim Arabs, who have many wives—

**A:** Very few Muslims have many wives, that's not the real problem.

**B:** The treatment of women is horrible.

**A:** The status of women is certainly different. It's obvious from the way you talk about all this that you're really an anthropologist.

**B:** Don't give me any names because I don't—

**A:** No, that's part of your scientific inclination. You're an anthropologist.

**B:** I don't know what anthropologist means precisely.

**A:** An anthropologist is someone who does not recognize fundamental moral differences between peoples and thinks that the explanation for differences between peoples should be put in terms of forces or passion and so forth.

**B:** If a Jewish boy is brought up by Lithuanian parents, he will grow up an anti-Semite, that's all I claim. You know there was a case in France, after the war—

**A:** That's the anthropologist talking again. But the question is still as to what extent are the Jews what they are because they are the people of the Bible? The Bible—the Torah and all that's come with that—to what extent does that shape the Jews? And to what extent did this lead to the hatred of them by people such as Hitler? That's what I am talking about, that goodness, the fundamental goodness, of the Jews which Hitler somehow sensed and hated.

**B:** That's what you are talking about?

**A:** Yes. But anyway, let's put that aside, we can come back to it.

**B:** That's philosophical.

**A:** That is a philosophical question, but some philosophical questions are worth pursuing.

**B:** Fine, fine, fine. I don't think that I am going to change you too much, and you are not going to change me too much.

**A:** But you had this important story you wanted to tell.

**B:** So we can start the important story.

**A:** All right, tell me the important story.

**B:** There was a Jewish guy named Rochkind, R-O-C-H-K-I-N-D.

**A:** His first name?

**B:** I don't remember. I did business with him. I forgot his name.

**A:** He was older than you?

**B:** Oh, yes, much older.

**A:** How much older?

**B:** Ten or fifteen years older.

**A:** And he was in your town, of course.

**B:** He was in my town. He was a very strong, physically built guy, very strong. I have to underline it. And he had a rope-making factory. And also a rope outlet, which sold ropes and everything.

**A:** What had his father done?

**B:** I don't know, and I don't know I will never say.

**A:** You don't know what his father had done?

**B:** I have no idea. But he saw me in the synagogue while I was praying, as a small boy. And he says that he liked me the way I pray. Fine. Anyway, he had a wife and three children, three sons. And he was a very strong guy physically. He told me himself that sometimes, when he had nothing to do, he would just take a whole shelf of ropes and drop them on the floor in order to have to sort them out again. He was really physically strong and he looked very strong. He looked very Jewish, you know, brown eyes and everything. Anyway, Rochkind, when the Russians came, they took over his rope factory, and he is the only guy that I talked to personally who told me that he felt much better because he did exactly what he did before but he did not have the responsibility. He was not responsible anymore. He also had, near the smaller factory, an orchard of apples. He liked very much to eat apples. If you would see him you would know this is a guy who likes to enjoy life. So Rochkind and I, in the ghetto, became friends. We would buy in the morning from the farmers all kinds of food and then sell it during the day to the Jews in the ghetto.

**A:** This would be the Lithuanian farmers? There would be no Jewish farmers then, of course?

**B:** No. We are already in the ghetto. The Jewish farmers have already been killed, don't worry.

**A:** Killed?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Killed?

**B:** Killed.

**A:** Not moved into the ghetto, or something?

**B:** No, they have been killed.

**A:** Why killed?

**B:** Why are you asking me? I give you just the facts.

**A:** Well, who killed them?

**B:** The Germans, in their goodness. You don't know that the Jewish—

**A:** No, I didn't know that they killed the farmers instead of moving them into the ghetto.

**B:** No, no, no.

**A:** So, at this point there are no Jewish farmers?

**B:** No Jewish farmers.

**A:** The Germans had killed them all?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** All right, then what happens?

**B:** I'm telling you that's what we do for a living. We would buy from the farmers to sell to the Jews.

**A:** What were the Jews paying with?

**B:** Money, it was illegal completely. The whole operation was illegal from beginning to end.

**A:** But there was money?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Lithuanian money?

**B:** No, German money, ostmarks.

**A:** Marks?

**B:** Marks, yes, like in Germany.

**A:** Did the marks become the money of the Lithuanians?

**B:** Yes, this was the money of Lithuania.

**A:** So the Lithuanian money was no longer any good?

**B:** The Lithuanian money had lost its value under the Russians.

**A:** Already?

**B:** Already. The Lithuanian money became one-eleventh of its

worth.

**A:** And then when the Germans came—

**B:** Then ten rubles was one mark.

**A:** You'd be paid in marks for your—

**B:** Oh yes, of course, everything goes in marks.

**A:** But it was illegal to have marks?

**B:** Of course, it was illegal.

**A:** But you did it, anyway?

**B:** See how it looks, to behave illegally? Yes the whole life was completely based on illegality, just like our existence was illegal.

**A:** What do you mean your existence, you mean as marketers?

**B:** As Jews, as Jews. I mean that the whole thing was crazy from beginning 'til end. All the laws: a Jew is not allowed to have money; a Jew is allowed this; all this is completely unusual, and obviously it had nothing to do with reality. So of course, I was in the business. Also, he would sell some of his things, and we became very good friends. I told you that the little thing that clinched our matter is when he asked me, how many times do the two hands of the watch overtake each other in twelve hours?

**A:** Yes.

**B:** And you remember the answer?

**A:** Yes.

**B:** Eleven.

**A:** How did he know that?

**B:** What are you asking me? It's a fact.

**A:** How did he know it, do you suppose?

**B:** It was one of the riddles that was going around.

**A:** You don't think he ever figured it out?

**B:** Why shouldn't he? Is it hard for you to figure out why eleven times?

**A:** I'm just trying to see what kind of a man he was, whether he had thought about it, or was it he had just heard that—

**B:** That I don't know.

**A:** But you knew the answer?

**B:** He asked me, and I figured out the answer.

**A:** You figured it out?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** But was he the kind of man who would have figured it out?

**B:** I don't know. I don't know about all his games. He was a physically-oriented person.

**A:** Please go ahead.

**B:** Great thoughts, great philosophies did not enter his mind. So we were very good friends, and he would tell me everything that happened to him, and I told you about his sex life. He said that he used to have sex every night, but since he is in the ghetto he is weak, he can have it only every other night (laughs). So, of course, I didn't say anything. The guy was really strong.

**A:** But he was weakened because of what?

**B:** Because of being in the ghetto.

**A:** No, that doesn't help me enough. He was weakened because?

**B:** Because of being in the ghetto, nothing else. That affected him.

**A:** He did not eat less?

**B:** No.

**A:** It wasn't the geography of the ghetto that did it?

**B:** The general—

**A:** No, no, tell me.

**B:** No, of course not.

**A:** What made him weaker?

**B:** Just being in the ghetto made people feel bad, automatically. Just being in the ghetto, you didn't feel like a whole human being. It's obvious, okay?

**A:** Well, I ask you to spell it out because it would not be obvious to everybody.

**B:** Yes, there were some people that enjoyed the ghetto. They say that this is a Jewish government, which I never understood.

**A:** You mean that had a Jewish community?

**B:** Yes, a Jewish government, a Jewish state.

**A:** They did say that?

**B:** They did say it. In fact, people would dress up for Sunday and walk along the only street in the ghetto.

**A:** Sunday or on Friday?

**B:** Sunday.

**A:** Or on Saturday?

**B:** Bless you, who observed the Saturday? The Germans didn't, the Lithuanians didn't. The only day we got free was Sunday, like the rest of the population.

**A:** All right.

**B:** They would go out and dress as if this is a normal thing. I couldn't understand them completely, but many people accepted this as a Jewish state. A Jewish court made decisions, I found this in a

book.

**A:** In other words, for the first time they were living in a Jewish city?

**B:** Yes, yes. It's a Jewish government and they liked it.

**A:** This is related to something else that I wanted to ask you about. Was there ever talk that we are on the way now to a country of our own?

**B:** Oh, Zionism was very strong.

**A:** Because of these experiences, I mean?

**B:** Because of these experiences, I don't know. But Zionism was very serious, and of course, many people regretted not having emigrated to Palestine when they could have. Also, there were people who had been in Palestine and who had come back to Lithuania.

**A:** Was there talk among them that because of these experiences—

**B:** No "because."

**A:** It was not that simple?

**B:** It was said that we cannot build our future in the Diaspora. We can control what is happening to us only in Palestine.

**A:** All right. So this man is weaker because he's in the ghetto?

**B:** Because he is in the ghetto.

**A:** Unlike a few who were feeling better because of it?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** But that was the exception, those few.

**B:** They were the exception. Another series of people who felt better in the ghetto were thieves.

**A:** Why was that?

**B:** Because in the good times a thief is considered a nobody, a dreg of society. Now, in the ghetto, thievery became a normal experience. They knew how to be good thieves, so they were accepted in the society.

**A:** Who were they stealing from?

**B:** From people outside the ghetto.

**A:** They were stealing from the Lithuanians?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And from the Germans?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And they would bring what they stole back to the ghetto?

**B:** They were bringing things back to the ghetto?

**A:** So they became sort of heroes?

**B:** Not heroes, but they were accepted.

**A:** Accepted?

**B:** Yes. Before they had been nothing, no Jew would associate with a thief. All of a sudden, they are acceptable. The stigma of stealing had disappeared. I told you I had the stigma of stealing for two years, and then being a thief stopped being a stigma.

**A:** You mean you yourself resisted stealing until—

**B:** Yes, my father said, “Thou shall not steal,” and I really believed him.

**A:** All right. Anyway, here’s your friend who is weakened by—

**B:** Supposedly weakened. I don’t think it is weak to have sex every second night, but he thinks this is weak.

**A:** All right.

**B:** Anyway, so he tells me the story. The Russians, when they nationalized property, they let the owner be the administrator because this is the pragmatic thing to do.

**A:** Right.

**B:** And this was the way those people avoided going to Siberia. The great capitalists have not been sent to Siberia, amazing enough, because they were needed to run companies. But each one of them got some other guy that he has to teach, and in due course that guy will take over. Now the Germans came, and you know this is the beginning of the ghetto. Now he is working in his own factory under the Germans. The owner was supposedly the underling, which had happened already under the Russian times. So he would do his work, whatever he had. This is still the beginning of the ghetto when Jews still had money; that was still legal. And I gave you the date that something happened in 1942.

**A:** What happened in 1942?

**B:** The story that I am going to tell you. I think in August. But it was not August. Oh, damn it, stop and I will look it up.

**A:** Now you have a date for me?

**B:** 29th of August, 1942.

**A:** What happened then?

**B:** The law was that no Jews were allowed to bring any food into the ghetto.

**A:** So the only food is what the Germans bring in?

**B:** What they give to the cooperative. So this guy he brought over apples from his own orchard.

**A:** One apple?

**B:** No, apples.

**A:** Apples from his orchard.

**B:** Now his name is not mentioned here, but it is mentioned that he brought in apples. Then he has been caught with the apples.

**A:** As he was coming into the ghetto?

**B:** Yes, he has been caught. Now, how can a Jew have apples? So the only thing he could say is that he stole the apples.

**A:** Truth was—

**B:** But the truth was they were his apples, for God's sake.

**A:** But he couldn't say that?

**B:** No.

**A:** Because?

**B:** Because no Jews are allowed to own anything outside of the ghetto.

**A:** So the orchard was outside of the ghetto?

**B:** Of course. There was no orchard in the ghetto.

**A:** He could leave the ghetto to go work in the rope factory?

**B:** He went to work, we all went to work every day. So he brings the apples, and he has been caught with the apples. So, not only is he caught with the apples, but when he has been caught and he said that he stole them, he tried to put the apples back into his bag, you know?

**A:** Yes.

**B:** Anyway he got reprimanded and he has to appear two days later in some office, I don't know. So he appeared two days later in the office, and they gave him a thrashing: "You shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that."

**A:** It was all oral?

**B:** Oral. So he went and waves to his wife, "I haven't even been beaten up. I haven't even been beaten up."

**A:** He was celebrating the fact that he had not been beaten up?

**B:** Yes, not beaten up. He had been sure they would beat him up. So anyway, what then happened is that the Germans came to the Jewish heads of the community, and they said, "Look, there are criminals among you. We caught a thief." The Germans said they can't stand that there are criminals among the Jews.

**A:** Now, do you think they meant that?

**B:** Oh, stop that.

**A:** No, I'm asking you.

**B:** No, not for one second.

**A:** They were using this as an excuse?

**B:** An excuse, of course.

**A:** Why do they need an excuse?

**B:** Because the Germans don't do anything without an excuse, they don't do anything.

**A:** All right.

**B:** There's always an excuse.

**A:** Go ahead.

**B:** So anyway, they came, and they want a list of fifty people that should appear on Monday at 7:00 in the morning. So the Jews sent—

**A:** A list for what purpose, did they say?

**B:** Nothing, the fifty people—

**A:** They just want a list of fifty people?

**B:** Fifty people.

**A:** They didn't say fifty thieves?

**B:** They say, "All are thieves in the ghetto."

**A:** I'm sorry, but I don't understand. The Germans tell the heads of the ghetto, whom they had dealt with for other purposes too, is that right?

**B:** Oh, yes.

**A:** These are people the Germans dealt with all the time, is that it?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And they tell them they have discovered there is criminality there?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Thieves, particularly, right?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And they have to deliver the names of fifty thieves.

**B:** Yes.

**A:** By when, the next morning, or how long?

**B:** This is the 21st of August, and they gave them an ultimatum.

**A:** What page is that in this book?

**B:** 104.

**A:** 104 of the book you have previously told me about?

**B:** The book is by my teacher, Yeruzalinski. So, the Germans want fifty people who are bringing food in the ghetto, and they have to be at the jail on Tuesday the 2nd of September at the time of 12. And the leader of the ghetto says he cannot provide these people because he doesn't know who are the criminals. Then the head of the police says, "You can put in any fifty people, maybe old people, sick, children, whomever you want." And then the head of the ghetto

says, "We cannot do it. Therefore all of us will appear at 12, and you do what you have to do." And the head of the police says, "We have nothing against you. And we can do nothing because the one who gives the order is the head of the whole system." And then the heads of the ghetto had a meeting with very important people in the ghetto all the night. And they wanted to change this punishment into a money punishment.

**A:** Who wanted to change it?

**B:** The Jews wanted to change it.

**A:** When they consult among themselves at night?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Is that what you are talking about?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** In other words, the German had told them, "We want fifty names."

**B:** Yes.

**A:** We want fifty names of people who have been bringing food into the ghetto?

**B:** Fifty criminals. And then he said, "If you cannot provide those names, we don't mind if you put in old people, or sick, or children."

**A:** Right, right.

**B:** Fifty people.

**A:** Fifty people, yes.

**B:** So this is a very short version. Now comes how the meeting went through.

**A:** It's on page 105?

**B:** 105, yes. And because the ghetto people are not obeying orders about bringing food into the ghetto, and once it was learned on the 29th of August that they had a lot of people, that is forbidden, you have to write the personal names and the family names of fifty people. The representatives are responsible for them being here. The representatives knew what it means giving Jews to the jail. They say they cannot do it but they themselves will be there. And the head of the police says he is interested in only one thing, that fifty Jews should be there. And then he said he got the order from the commissar, and he can do nothing about it.

**A:** Well, when did they turn the names in?

**B:** They were there one hour before the deadline, and the head of the police told them to wait, and they waited. Then the head of the police came in, and he said, "This time we changed it. You have to pay us 20,000 marks, and you have to pay it the 1st and the 15th of

September, 1942, and the 2nd and 15th of October.” That’s the whole story. It didn’t come to giving him a list, it didn’t come to that stage. The leaders said they will come, and they appeared.

**A:** They said, in effect, “We can’t give you a list, but here we are.”

**B:** Here we are.

**A:** How many of them were there, do you know?

**B:** They had to make a list of fifty people.

**A:** How many of them actually came?

**B:** Only the representatives, the two representatives came.

**A:** Just the two of them?

**B:** The police force of the ghetto also put in their names.

**A:** Put whose names in?

**B:** Their own names. There was a police force, a Jewish police force in the ghetto.

**A:** And they turned their own names in?

**B:** Yes, their own names.

**A:** All right, so the Germans changed it into a fine instead of a number of names?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** Even though the Jews were not supposed to have any money?

**B:** This is early in ’42. I think the Jews were still allowed to have money.

**A:** Ah, so they can still use money?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And in the meantime, did you discuss all this with your friend at that time?

**B:** No, he was very happy that he got away.

**A:** But do you remember talking to him about it?

**B:** No. He was very happy, and that’s all. He didn’t feel guilt or anything. He got away with it, that’s all. That’s all.

**A:** But eventually he lost his children?

**B:** He lost three children, eventually he died himself, too.

**A:** And his wife died, as far as you know?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** And he died of what?

**B:** I don’t know. Dying was natural. If you worked hard, if you did what you have been told, and didn’t get anymore to eat and so on, you had to die. What’s the problem?

**A:** Now you’re saying that the Germans said to these people, to the Jewish leaders whom they worked with all the time—

**B:** Yes.

**A:** They didn't deal with the other Jews directly?

**B:** No, no, the leaders only.

**A:** —and the Jewish police force?

**B:** Yes.

**A:** The Germans dealt with these leaders. They told them, "We want the names of fifty people who have been bringing food into the ghetto."

**B:** The leaders say, "We don't have their names."

**A:** The Germans then said, "Any names will do."

**B:** Any names will do.

**A:** Old people?

**B:** Old people.

**A:** Sick people?

**B:** Sick people.

**A:** Children?

**B:** Yes, they say it very openly. Therefore their intentions are very clear.

**A:** Now, why do they have to do it that way?

**B:** Why are you asking me? I don't know why you don't accept craziness as a thing. It was crazy.

**A:** I do think it was insane.

**B:** From the beginning 'til the end.

**A:** I also think it was insane. But I am trying to get a sense of how the Germans were thinking.

**B:** They just wanted to be mean and nasty, brutal, and to destroy the Jewish morale.

**A:** What were they thinking this time?

**B:** They were thinking that they will force the Jewish leaders to behave like pigs and turn in fifty people. And therefore the moral power of the Jewish leaders disappears in two seconds. Yes. I'm sure they did it in other ghettos also.

**A:** You suspect that they did the same thing elsewhere?

**B:** Yes. I'm sure they didn't invent it special for my ghetto.

**A:** So they used whatever excuse they had for doing something, like the apples in this case—

**B:** Yes.

**A:** —or something else somewhere else—

**B:** Yes.

**A:** —or maybe no excuse at all sometimes?

**B:** I don't know that. There is always an excuse. Just think: they gave an order not to bring any food in, which is horrible. Then people disobey.

**A:** They didn't just come in and say, "We want fifty people"?

**B:** They always needed an excuse.

**A:** Why?

**B:** Because we Germans do everything by law. There's a law that no food should be brought in. The law has been disobeyed. Provide fifty people. Everything is by law. Do you think they have done anything to us without the law? Everything is by law. Everything is by law. Anyways, Gunter was interested in the working force, and he explained to the other Germans, "Hey, stop playing games. The work will suffer."

**A:** Yes.

**B:** "We are at war, and it's no playing games," he explained to his fellows.

**A:** To whom?

**B:** To his fellow Germans he explained, "Hey, gentlemen, don't play the game."

**A:** You mean, "If we are not going to have this work done here, we have to go—"

**B:** Exactly. There were not enough Gunters in this world. There were not enough people who were ready to stand up.

**A:** Gunter was his name?

**B:** Gunter was his name.

**A:** Now this was not the commandant that you—

**B:** No, this commandant was a mean nasty bastard. He did it only for the bribes that he got, that's all.

**A:** Wait a minute now. This letter you told me about, this German letter said, "I can't kill these people because I need the workers."

**B:** That was in '41.

**A:** Now, who is he? That's not Gunter?

**B:** No, no, no. No, Gunter is a later development, someone else who resisted the killing of the Jews in my hometown.

**A:** Because?

**B:** Because he claimed that they were all good workers. But I told you what was the true reason, for God's sake. Didn't I tell you?

**A:** No.

**B:** Because this is a leather factory, which provides the Germans with boots.

**A:** You did tell me that.

**B:** He had a very good golden hen. Why should he destroy the hen which lays the golden egg?

**A:** It wasn't because of any decency?

**B:** Bah!

**A:** You're sure of that, right?

**B:** Because, in the rest of the same district, all the Jews have been killed. He had no problem about killing Jews. It's just that some Jews were needed.

**A:** So in this case here, the Germans get the notion this is a time to get fifty more Jews killed?

**B:** They don't get the notion. They all the time have nothing to do but to make Jewish life miserable. That's not a "notion." They do it all the time, continuously. They have done it in other ghettos. I am sure our ghetto was not anything special. They destroyed the heads of the other cities. They tried to destroy everything. That was sheer, pure craziness, meanness. You have to accept that these things do exist.

**A:** Is there anything else you want to say about all this or about your friend who, although he was very strong, did not survive?

**B:** Strength was not enough.

**A:** Chance would also play a part?

**B:** Even the strongest person by working hard, if he does not have enough food, has to—

**A:** But you survived partly because of your strength?

**B:** Even when I was young, I went down in strength.

**A:** But it seems there were choices one could make that would make your opportunities better. Let's go back for a minute to the Zionist talk.

**B:** Yes, by all means.

**A:** Did you ever hear any talk like this: "All this is going to be good for the Jews someday because it will contribute to our developing a state of our own"?

**B:** Oh, no.

**A:** You never heard of that?

**B:** No.

**A:** There was no sense that somehow this was God's Providence preparing for a new state?

**B:** After I was liberated, many years later, this theory did come out.

**A:** What was said then?

**B:** That that was one of the ways God forced the Jews into having their own government. The longer I live and the older I am, these things still look to me more improbable. At the time, when it happened, I took it as a natural occurrence. It looks more crazy, not more explainable but more unexplainable, more incomprehensible.

**A:** Well, that's really how we began our conversations many months ago.

**B:** Yes. I told you it's a negative miracle.

**A:** I had begun by saying to you, "I've looked at the Holocaust for many years and I find it simply unbelievable." And you said, "Well, I was there in Dachau, even there I couldn't believe it."

**B:** I couldn't believe that people can go that crazy. Also, I couldn't believe how my own Jews closed their eyes and didn't want to see what was going on. I couldn't believe it. "The children are taken away to be exchanged for German prisoners of war." Now we had to be absolutely crazy to believe that.

**A:** Yes, but see, I think one difference between you and me is that you insist upon seeing all of these events, such as the Holocaust and Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, as essentially the same.

**B:** If Milosevic could kill the Albanians, he would do it. I have no doubt.

**A:** If he could get rid of them without killing them, wouldn't he prefer to do that?

**B:** Hitler would have preferred to get rid of the Jews without killing them.

**A:** No.

**B:** Yes.

**A:** No.

**B:** Because he exported all of them from Germany. He wanted only that Germany should be clean. And he did not kill them. He sent them to the ghettos in the east and elsewhere.

**A:** With a view to killing them eventually?

**B:** No, no, at first no.

**A:** That's the issue. Wait a minute. Even when he exported them, he hoped eventually to kill them all.

**B:** Ah, how did you know that?

**A:** That seems to be what the evidence indicates.

**B:** At first, in Germany, they did everything to make the Jews emigrate.

**A:** That's right.

**B:** To emigrate, not to kill them. To emigrate.

**A:** Yes, but after a while they started killing them.

**B:** But at first, Jews in Germany could take their property and invest in Israel.

**A:** After a while, didn't the Nazis set out to try to kill all the Jews they could get their hands on? I don't think Milosevic would care about Albanians if they got out and just left any place he was interested in.

**B:** We are talking about theoretical questions now.

**A:** Still, the question is whether there is something special about what the Germans did with their systematic long-term program of killing Jews.

**B:** That's horrible, crazy, we both agree.

**A:** Whether there is something about the Nazi program that makes it distinctive, that makes it so different that it must somehow or other be explained—and explained in terms of what the Jews—

**B:** How do you explain craziness, go ahead?

**A:** That is the problem.

**B:** Very good, we agree.

**A:** Yes, we agree on that.

**B:** I refuse to accept any rational explanation for this thing. I refuse. It was craziness. Sometimes craziness even wins the day. It's hard to accept craziness, I know. It's very hard. But craziness does exist.