

# David Eichen

## An Oral History



Interviewed on April 2, April 8 and July 28, 2011, in Paris, France

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## **Interview Notes**

David Eichen was interviewed on three separate dates: April 2, April 8 and July 28, 2011. The first two interviews took place at the home of Danielle Eichen in Paris, France. The third interview took place at the home of Stephan Eichen, also in Paris.

Juliet Eichen, David's granddaughter, translated original questions provided in English by Sam Jonas into French, and also asked additional questions to help clarify David's responses. David's responses were in French.

In addition to Juliet Eichen, other individuals present in France during the interviews included David's wife Léa (née Ber), David's and Léa's daughter Danielle Eichen, grandson Jordan Adjibi (Danielle's son), and another grandson Stephan Eichen (son Gerard's son and Juliet's brother). Sam Jonas, in the U.S., was also present via Skype.

The interviews were recorded using a video camera and also a Skype video recorder. Juliet created a French transcriptions of the three interviews, and Katie Borthwick translated the French into English.

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## David Eichen – An Oral History

### Interview 1: April 2, 2011

#### **Background Information**

1. *Mr. Eichen, we will be asking you some questions about your life in Zurawno for this oral history. First, an easy question - can you tell us your full name?*

My full name is Eichen, David.

2. *Has your name been changed at any time? What other names have you been known by?*

During the war, well, I took the name of a Polish schoolmate.

*« Et quel était ce nom ? »*

*And what was the name ?*

The name was Stanislas Renkasowski.

3. *When were you born?*

Dec 20.

*« Quelle année ? »*

*What year ?*

1925.

4. *Where were you born?*

n/a - question not asked.

5. *What were the names of your mother and father?*

Hermann Eichen, Dora Eidler

6. *Did you have brothers and sisters? What were their names and ages?*

I only had one sister.

*« Son nom? »*

*Her name?*

Her nickname: Genia Holczak. I didn't understand why she didn't use the same name. Her name was Genia Holczak. She was two years younger than me.

7. *What is your earliest memory when you were a child?*

As a child, we went to a public school and were mistreated. At school, we didn't play with the Poles or the Ukrainians due to the pervasive anti-Semitism.

***Early Life in Zurawno, before World War II***

8. *You were present at the marriage of Berta Zins. Please tell us about that. Do you remember when she left for America? Were there other Jews who left before the war?*

Tell him that I went by chance, because when you wanted to go to someone's house, you didn't ask if you could go, we got into that habit, so me, I went over there; I especially remember her husband – I don't remember much of Berta but I remember the American, her husband, who came to take her to America, and I was at the marriage.

*« Y a t-i-il eu d'autres juifs de Zurawno sont partis avant la guerre ? »*

*Were there other Jews in Zurawno who left before the war?*

I don't remember the names but a couple... oh yes! My uncle! The brother of my father, he left for Argentina.

And then another family, I lived across from them, they also left in 1935 or 36. They left with a daughter – they only had the one daughter; they left for Argentina.

9. *When you were growing up, what was a typical day like for you and your family?*

Well, you tell him... tell him that when I was old enough, my mother took me to a Jewish place (school) to learn the religion. When I turned 6, I went to a free (integrated) school, with Polish and Ukrainian students, everyone together.

*« Quelle était une journée typique ? »*

*What was a typical day like ?*

We went to school, and after school I would go play with friends, but only Jews.

10. *What did you like to do for fun as a child?*

I played soccer, and I had to remove my shoes because if I spoiled them my mother would ground me. Because my father didn't make a steady living. I lacked everything; I didn't have toys. I wanted to make some skis out of some wood scraps that I got, because my father didn't have the means to buy me all that.

*« Et la foret Bakocin ? »*

*And Bakocin Forest?*

We went to ski there. And when I was little, the bridge wasn't there yet so we couldn't yet cross the Dniestr, the Dniestr was the river. We couldn't cross, so we had to pay every time to cross to the other side, and later, they constructed the bridge.

*11. What kinds of food did you eat for meals? What was your favorite thing to eat?*

Tell him every Wednesday the Ukrainians who lived outside of town came; there was a market. My mother, with the little money she had, she went to the market. And once a week, she went to a grocer to make the bread, cakes, everything. Because we never bought anything. Therefore, she did this all week. Once a week, there was an oven (not like these days); she made all the food from a potato base.

*« Tu préférerais quoi ? »*

*What was your favorite food?*

At noon we ate kosher meat with potatoes or beans, green beans.

When my mother would buy a chicken, we had to go to the rabbi right away to cut its throat.

*« Ton plat préféré? »*

*Your favorite dish?*

My favorite dish was shredded potatoes, latkes.

*« Avec de la sour cream ? »*

*With sour cream?*

She put something on them, I don't remember what exactly, to give them flavor, and browned them well in a pan.

And we also ate corn. Lots of corn.

*12. Where did the food come from? What was used to cook the food in your house?*

n/a

*13. What kinds of clothes did people wear? Who made the clothes and where did the clothes come from?*

I wore shorts until age 6 or 7, normally with a button-down shirt, but it wasn't fancy.

Once a year, my mother bought fabric from a fabric merchant; she had an outfit made for me for Passover, once a year.

*« Qui faisait les habits ? »*

*Who made the clothes?*

A tailor who lived nearby. I went to his house and he took my measurements and used them to make me an outfit. Once a year. I only wore it on Saturdays and once it got worn out, I wore it every day.

*« Tu étais fier quand tu avais un nouveau costume? »*

*Were you proud when you got a new outfit?*

Why yes! The first thing I did was go to synagogue, Friday and Saturday.

14. *Where did the Jews in Zurawno live? In what neighborhood, and on what street, did you live?*

In the whole city. 80% of the town's population was Jewish. In the center, it was all Jewish. Just outside Zurawno, there were mostly Ukrainians.

*« Dans quelle rue tu vivais ? »*

*What street did you live on?*

Walowa Street. We moved there from Cheroka Street. First Cheroka, then Walowa.

They were small streets.

15. *What did your house look like? What did people do for light, water, washing and other basic needs?*

Our house. It was my sister and my parents, we had two rooms, and the kitchen was bigger than the other room. At one time my father had a horse; we kept him on the side.

Otherwise there was no light; we had a gas lamp. Nor was there running water, we had to go outside, leave to bring back water from outside. From a well.

There were two doctors. Oh I forgot, there was also another doctor who left for America before the war. Zabler. I just now remembered.

*« Sam est ami avec le fils de Abraham Zabler »*

*Sam is friends with Abraham Zabler's son.*

Yes! He had an older sister?

Abraham left for America without his wife and children.

Zabler left for the USA. The wife and children stayed.

The sister was one year older than me...

Hanna! Yes! Oh yes! She must have passed away by now?

« *Elle est toujours vivante, à New York.* »

*She is still alive, in New York.*

Oh! She was one year older than me; she was a beautiful girl. Does he see her at all?

« *Sam connaît son frère.* »

*Sam knows her brother.*

Hanna Zabler, she must remember me.

Tell her that I didn't know there were so many Zurawno survivors!

« *Ils sont contents de partager ses informations avec toi.* »

*They'd be happy to give you her contact information.*

What else do they want to know?

16. *What were the names of some of your neighbors on your street? Can you tell me about some of them?*

My neighbors, all around, were Jews.

« *Tu te rappelles des noms ?* »

*Do you remember any names?*

Yes: Reichmann, Kemenson, Bartel (my mother's sister). Them, I know they're no longer there. Weidmann.

17. *I know that your father worked in the livestock trade. Could you tell me about his work, and what it was like in Zurawno on market days?*

Tell him that my father's entire family lived 30km from Zurawno, two sisters and a brother, and another brother who left for Argentina.

He bought livestock to send to his brother over there; his brother provided meat to the hospitals in the city of Lviv. When I was born, Lviv was in Poland.

« *Ton père vendait-il au marché de Zurawno ?* »



*Did your father sell at the market in Zurawno?*

He went to the market with his brother and bought livestock there.

« *Comment c'était, le marché?* »

*What was the market like?*

The market was mostly Ukrainians; when they had something to sell they brought it there. It was once a week.

« *Ton père faisait-il du business avec les Polonais et les Ukrainiens ?* »

*Did your father do business with Poles and Ukrainians?*

Poles, no. But Ukrainians, yes. It was the only thing we did with Ukrainians; otherwise we didn't spend any time with them.

« *Il avaient bonnes relations pour le business ?* »

*Did the Ukrainians have good business relations (with the Jews)?*

You know, they were all anti-Semites. The Jews in America knew that Poles and Ukrainians...there were pogroms.

« *Et quand ils faisaient du business ?* »

*And when they did business?*

I never went to see. But yes.

Furthermore, when the Germans arrived in 1945, they immediately turned against the Jews. Immediately. ...Ask him if he is from the Chemush family.

« *Il est de la famille Zobler et Spinner* »

*He is from the Zobler/Spinner family.*

Oh yes, the doctor.

18. *Did your mother work or have a job?*

Why yes, she lived with my father and sister.

*«Elle travaillait hors de la maison ?»*

*Did she work outside the house?*

She didn't work.

*«Elle travaillait dans la maison ? »*

*Did she work in the house?*

Well there were no comforts like these days. It was much more difficult; she didn't have an apartment like the one I have now, that's for sure.

19. *Tell me about the town of Zurawno. Do you remember it? What was it like?*

It was a small town where there were many disadvantaged people; most of them, 80%, lived in misery.

Sometimes we received shipments from America, clothes that the Americans sent to us. Used clothing.

*« De quelle association s'agissait-il? »*

*Who did the packages come from?*

They weren't delivered to me specifically. They would arrive at someone's house, and they would distribute the contents to everyone.

*« Y avait-il des voitures avant la guerre ?»*

*Were there cars before the war?*

Not at all... Oh yes, actually, just before the war, there was a Jew; he had a car. He drove between Zurawno and other towns. It was right before the war. Otherwise there were no cars. The roads weren't paved like in France. When it rained it was horrible.

*« Quel est le nom du juif qui avait la voiture ?»*

*What was the name of the Jew who owned the car?*

I can picture him in my head, but I don't remember his name. He (Sam) is going to laugh! Tell him that he had a maid, and he slept with her.

No, don't tell him that!

The lady that worked at his house, she was married, and he slept with her. Everyone knew about it.

He got away with it, too, because he was wealthier than everyone else.

*« Quel était le métier de cet homme ? »*

*What did this gentleman do for a living?*

He ran a café, and then after, I'll tell you, he had bought some sort of car, and he went from Zurawno to Stryy, Zurawno to...

*Ha les gens payaient ?*

*Ah, people paid him [to drive them]?*

Why yes, of course!

20. What kinds of businesses were there? To whom did most of the businesses belong?

In my town, there were stores, I know all of them by heart.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; in all, there were 8 shops. There were clothes, shoes, and then the cafés. It was mostly the Ukrainians and the Poles who came to drink beer [at the cafés], usually on market days.

Cafés; there were 1, 2..and the other, that makes 3.

*« Te rappelles-tu de Growl Store ? Le nom d'une famille. »*

*Do you remember the Growl Store? The name of a family.*

What kind of store was it?

*« Un peu de tout. »*

*A little of everything.*

Yes, that was there, yes, because all the stores were grouped together on a plaza. In Polish it was called Reynek, in Polish but not in Yiddish.

Reynek, and in the middle there was a big city administration building.

21. How old were people when they got married? Were marriages arranged, or did the couple decide for themselves? What was courtship like (before marriage)?

In general, tell him that all the marriages, they were, as such, not all marriages, but almost all marriages, they were arranged; that means that...

Oh yes! Oh! It's incredible what happened, when you were a hairdresser or a cobbler, it was not good. The parents of the girl or boy, they said 'you are not going to marry a tailor or a cobbler,' in spite of the fact that the tailor, the one who made my clothing all those years, he made 10 times more than my father, he lived comfortably, but that didn't mean anything; from the standpoint that he was a tailor – that was the lower class, so...

Only my father, I would have preferred that he were like that, because I was deprived of everything; I had nothing. Because I had certain friends who had bikes or skis, especially when there was snow 6 months out of the year, and I would go skiing at Bakocen with these scraps of wood in place of skis.

*« Tous les pères voulaient que leur fille se marie avec un rabbin ? »*

*All the fathers wanted their daughters to marry rabbis?*

Oh yes! There were two rabbis, and one lived by me. He had two sons. They left to marry girls in another town, but they were also rabbis. And they came back to Zurawno to see their parents; they had black hats, forelocks, and here they hung, they were pure, because you know all day, they did this (rocking motion); they practiced the religion!

Tell him that me, after all I've seen, I am not religious, you can tell him!

22. Where did you go to school? Can you tell me about your school? Did you go to a Jewish school? What language did you speak there? What subjects did you study in school?

When I was very little we would go, it wasn't a school, to a rabbi to learn Jewish history, to go to synagogue, and to become faithful. When I was a kid, I was a believer because I didn't understand when people told me things. The Jews too, they spoke badly of the Ukrainians. So me, since I was too young to understand, I believed.

*« Tu allais à une Cheider ? »*

*Did you go to a Cheder?*

Cheder! Yes! You see; he remembers! Yes yes! Ok, so after, when I was about 6 years old, I entered a free school. So we mostly learned Polish. Yes, because it was Poland. Well, after, it was Ukrainian. And once a week, the Jews learned religion.

*« C'était dans l'école polonaise les cours de religion juive ? »*

*Were the Jewish religion courses at the Polish school?*

Yes, we were in another class, and there was one teacher, a Jewish woman who came to teach classes, but in Polish, not in Yiddish.

*« Donc il y avait des cours de religion juive à l'école publique, données en polonais ? »*

*So there were Jewish religion courses at the public school, given in Polish?*

For religion, the Jews went separately. It was always Friday morning because we didn't go to school after 1 pm, nor on Saturday. The Poles and the Ukrainians, they went to school on Saturdays but not the Jews. Nor on Friday afternoon. That is to say: Friday afternoon and Saturday, the Jews didn't go to school. And the school was closed on Sunday. The Ukrainians didn't go to school on Sundays.

*« Les élèves juifs s'entendaient avec les Polonais et Ukrainiens ? »*

*Did the Jewish students get along with the Poles and the Ukrainians?*

No, no.... Oh yes, tell him, I don't remember how old I was. A Pole, the son of a policeman, he started to play with us. And the next day all of the Poles beat him up; he received so many blows! You can tell him, that even so, I told him exactly what happened, but in spite of that, fortunately during the war (I couldn't recount all of this over the telephone even if I could recall!) it was thanks to a Pole and thanks to a Ukrainian that I got here.

That was when a lot of the Jews had already been exterminated; some of the Jews who were left alive, like me, like him, Zobler, all of them. Otherwise, I tell you, they would have helped me all the same; they did not tell anyone that I was Jewish. And then then after, oh! Not that, that's for later...

23. *Did the Jews go to Jewish school or public school?*

Tell him, to the public school. Yes, the Jews went to the Jewish school, they went there, those who were truly faithful to the n<sup>th</sup> degree. So they went to the public school and the Jewish school. Certain parents sent their kids there. But my parents, if they went to synagogue, my father, it's because it would not look good for them [if they didn't go], but I can't say that they were truly religious.

24. *Did people learn Hebrew as a part of their Jewish education?*

Oh yes! Even so, there was a school where one learned Hebrew, tell him, but I never went to that school. Because I already had a difficult time learning at the public school. Because, as it were... when we.. you see, I was sick of school because I didn't do well with everything they...oh and tell him because I was in an organization, Trumpeldor, so one day there was a Pole and he said that I didn't have the right to go inside. So, a Pole who was in school with me said to the director of the

school that I went to Trumpeldor, so they called my parents, they said: "If he goes there again he'll no longer be able to go to the public school." So you realize how I was blocked and then it made me sad because I still played over there, I really liked going there... tell him that it was because of the right-wing.

*«C'est très connu Trumpeldor »*

*Trumpeldor is very well-known.*

Yes, there was Chomer Atzair and Trumpeldor. I was Trumpeldor. The other was called Chomer Atzair.

*« Et il y avait Betar ? »*

*And there was also Betar?*

Yes Betar, and Jabotinski was the leader.

*« Betar existait avant la guerre ? »*

*Did Betar exist before the war?*

Yes, yes, Betar and Trumpeldor, they were together. Yes Betar! Why yes! They were right-wing, and Chomer Atzair, for the most part, was on the left. Betar, yes, I remember them.

*« Quel âge avais-tu quand tu a été à Trumpeldor ? »*

*How old were you when you were at Trumpeldor?*

At Trumpeldor I must have been, when I went there the first time, between 7 and 8 years old.

*« As-tu voulu aller en Palestine avant la guerre ? »*

*Did you want to go to Palestine before the war?*

My parents couldn't go anywhere. In the house where I lived there were 5 children, and, well, there were two, the girl and her father, they left for Israel, for Petertaki.

*« C'était des voisins ? »*

*Were these neighbors?*

Yes, they lived in the same house.

*« Tu te rappelles des noms de ces gens ? »*

*Do you remember their names?*

Kessler. Him I know, the girl I don't know, she left with him, but him, I know that he went to Petertaki. Yes, that was in 1936.

25. *Did you belong to a Jewish youth group?*

n/a

26. *Do you remember the Tarbut Bookstore? Do you remember when they built the bridge over the Dniestr River?*

The Dniestr River, I remember when they built the bridge over the Dniestr River. I remember very well.

Oh yes, the Dniestr, yes!

« *Ce fut un gros événement ?* »

*It was a major event?*

It was well before the war. It's funny, before, you couldn't cross like that; you had to wait for a guy to come. Especially when we had horses. When you wanted to cross, you had to wait for a guy. There was room for a horse, but if there were too many people you had to be patient.

« *Il y eut une grosse célébration ?* »

*Was there a big celebration (when the bridge was completed)?*

When it was finished, I remember. Quite an event! I remember there were tons of people when it was completed. I don't remember a party, but I remember the beginning and the end of the construction as if it happened yesterday.

27. *Who were your friends when you were a child? What do you remember about your friends? (Do you remember first and last names?)*

My friends were around my age. We played soccer where we could, but not in the stadiums. Especially soccer. Those who had the means, they had bicycles, they had many toys that I didn't have. I quickly learned how to ride a bicycle; my mother's brother had a bicycle he lent to me sometimes. But for me it was a luxury.

« *Tu te rappelles de noms ?* »

*Do you remember any names?*

Poldek Welt, Kubuch Veidmann, Lonek Sondower (his father was a lawyer), Zulek Schperder, Laizer Reichmann, Heinick Eisler (his brother went to Israel but he was my age), Lonek Neimann, Kubuk Chneimann, Abba Burwalter, who else? Mushi Kessler...

*« Qui était ton meilleur ami? »*

*Who was your best friend?*

Poldek Welt, because he lived nearby.

28. *Were you friends with Yulik Schechter? What do you remember about Yulik and his family? His brother Tzvi Schechter?*

Oh my, yes, Yulik Schechter was a friend of mine! Yulik, he had a brother named Heniek Schechter. I knew his parents quite well and his mother's entire family, because they all lived in the same house. And you tell him (Sam) that Yulik was very adept with his hands. I talked to him on the phone and I reminded him, he made a kayak by himself and he would take it on the Dniestr and he did it all by himself.

*« Tu aimais nager dans la rivière. »*

*You liked to swim in the river.*

Yes. There wasn't just the Dniestr, there were two rivers. The Dniestr was in the town itself, but the other river was maybe 3 or 4 km from the town. ...Svipper! Yes! ... And yes! You see he knows! Oh my!

*« Te rappelles-tu du club de bateaux sur la rivière »*

*Do you remember the boat club on the river?*

On the Dniestr, yes, that I remember because, tell him, every Saturday morning the person in charge of Betar, in the summer, he would take us on walks along the Dniestr.

*« Ca faisait partie des activités des clubs du Betar ? »*

*Was that one of the activities of Betar's clubs?*

Yes, everyone who was a member of Betar. There was a photo at the clubhouse...it had Jabotinski and Trumpeldor. Because he was a hero, Trumpeldor, he died in Palestine when he was young; he was killed by the Arabs I think.

*« Vous rappelez-vous du club de jeunesse KulturClub Kulturfrein ? »*

*Do you remember the youth club KulturClub Kulturfrein?*

I don't remember... what was it... A group of young people. I remember a group for youth but I don't remember the name. There was a group between 18 and 25 years of age. The group I went to was younger. That tells me something but I don't recall what.



29. *Are you familiar with the Laufer family? What do you remember about them? Do you remember the brothers Haim, Yacov and Yosef Laufer?*

Laufer, yes, they were 3 brothers. They lived just outside of Zurawno I remember. I don't remember their nickname (?). I mostly played with those who lived nearby in the same town. But I remember Laufer, and I know where they lived.

30. *Do you remember the Spinner family?*

Spinner, he was wealthier, he was wealthier than most of the people. I know he had a sister. He sold all sorts of things, grain, everything... I don't remember exactly what.

*« Oui il était dans le business de graines »*

*Yes, he was in the grain business.*

I remember where he had his store, not far from the synagogue.

*« Ils avaient un magasin ? »*

*They had a store?*

Yes, yes

*« Tu te rappelles avoir été dans le magasin ? »*

*Do you remember ever having been in the store?*

I don't think I ever went inside, but the town wasn't large, it wasn't far from where I lived. I remember passing by the store. I remember, later, there was also another Jew who had a clothing store and later he had a café and then another café. He worked mostly in the business district, when the Ukrainians came from the villages surrounding Zurawno, to sell all sorts of things – fruit, live chickens... Then they would go eat, and after, they would drink tons of beer with dry bread.

*« Sam te dit merci beaucoup pour ces souvenirs »*

*Sam says thank you very much for these memories.*

Tell him that I can't remember all the details, now that so many years have passed. Although, I do remember the war, how I managed to stay alive...

*« Tu te rappelles de Yalus et Viktor Spinner ? »*

*Do you remember Yalus and Viktor Spinner?*

Yes, I remember there were 2 children, but they were much younger than me.

*« Sam te dit merci, de cela. »*

*Sam says thank you for that.*

31. *Tell me about other families that you knew in Zurawno. What do you remember about them? (For example, their names, trades, personalities)*

I remember, for example, their trades. Saunderwer, he was a lawyer. There was a judge, but they didn't let him stay long because he was Jewish...

*« Libermann ? »*

*Libermann?*

No, I don't remember his last name, I remember he had a son who was a violinist. Apart from that, you know, the Jews didn't have access to jobs like they do now in France. Tell him about when there was a soccer game between Zurawno and a Jewish team from Kalush. When the Jews won, all the Poles started fights because they couldn't tolerate Jews winning. Tell him that before the war, May 1<sup>st</sup> in Poland didn't exist. It was forbidden. You had to celebrate May 3<sup>rd</sup>, not the 1<sup>st</sup>. May 1<sup>st</sup>, the workers couldn't protest, otherwise the police would come and beat them. The holiday for them was May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

*« Y avait-il des batailles entre juifs et non juifs pendant les matchs de foot »*

*Were there fights between Jews and non-Jews during the soccer games?*

Yes, however, it was a Jew who sold the beverages in the stands; he was Jewish.

*« Y avait-il des matchs entre juifs et non juifs ? »*

*Were there games between Jews and non-Jews?*

Yes, it happened but not often. Usually they played against the surrounding towns. The club in Zurawno consisted of only Poles. In Lviv there was a Jewish team.

32. *When did you go to synagogue? What do you remember about the synagogue? What was it like inside?*

We went to the synagogue Friday night, and on Saturday until noon. The synagogue was beautiful; a beautiful synagogue. I saw it in the photo. I don't understand, however – it was a small town. There was a caretaker, I remember. 80% of the Jews were devout believers. But the Trumpeldors, or Hashomer Atzair, they weren't believers. For example, Chemush, he went very infrequently to the synagogue. Maybe for Yom Kippur.

33. *What was Shabbos like at your house?*

Nothing; we weren't allowed to do anything. We couldn't light a fire, so we had to go to a neighbor's house, which had a sort of old-style oven; we put our meals inside to keep them warm.

34. *Did your mother break the bread?*

I don't remember.

« *Quand on fait les Jallot ! (Danielle)* »

<<*When you had challot!*>>

No, I already told you that my father wasn't very religious.

« *Que faisiez-vous alors* »

*Then what did you do?*

Nothing. We had to do nothing. When the weather was nice, we went outside, we played, we stacked hazelnuts on the ground, and when the pile fell, we started over. Overall, life wasn't fun.

35. *What was it like as a Jew in Zurawno before the war?*

Everyone was familiar with the phrase, "The Jews in Palestine!," often heard at recess. And then, "Dirty Jew!," things like that. But it was known throughout the world, that especially in the eastern countries it was like that, the pogroms...

« *C'était dur pour un enfant?* »

*Was it difficult for a child?*

Even more than that, you had to learn Yiddish, and then you had to go to school, instead of speaking Polish right away from the time you were born. For the most part, when you got to public school, you had difficulty learning Polish. In other towns, there were wealthier Jews, with a better life – in Lviv, Warsaw, they had businesses, they had everything!

36. *What were the political ideals of your family? Did you ever talk about politics at home when you were young? Did you ever talk about the events in Europe, and did you ever ask yourselves if there would be any consequences in Zurawno?*

I don't even know if my father knew how to write. My mother, maybe not. They didn't ever go to school.

« *Tu parlais des evènements en Europe ?* »

*Did you talk about events in Europe?*

Before the launch of hostilities, we didn't know much, but even so, there were one or two newspapers. Two or three months before Hitler attacked Poland, he invaded Czechoslovakia.

And the Germans promptly gave a part of the region to the Poles. The Poles were proud; they shouted, "Fortunately they were our soldiers, and there was not a Jewish soldier among us. We made sure of it." Only that didn't last long. Hitler invaded us three months later.

*« Les Polonais ne savaient pas qu'ils seraient les prochains ? »*  
*The Poles didn't know they would be next?*

Oh no! That started with Dantzig. It was German by 1914. Two or three months after, they invaded Poland and split it with the Russians. I was on the Russian side.

37. *How were relations between Jews, Poles and Ukrainians in Zurawno?*

n/a

38. *Were there Poles or Ukrainians on the extreme right in Zurawno prior to the arrival of the Russians in 1939?*

Oh my goodness! Of course! And the Poles, and the Ukrainians! They were extremists.

*« Tu les voyais dans la rue, manifester ? »*

*You saw them protest in the streets?*

Before the war? Why yes, we knew that they were on the extreme right, especially the Ukrainians. Because a part of Poland had belonged to Ukraine. But that's another story. Fascists! From time to time we saw the Jews mistreated; they were unable to pursue an education. They couldn't understand the schools of higher education.

Were there boycotts of Jewish stores before the war?

Before the war, I didn't see very much of it, no. But on the other hand, it happened in the big cities. That, yes.

### **World War II: Zurawno and Stry**

39. *Do you remember the first time that you heard the news that Germany was going to invade Poland?*

Why of course, my goodness. Why yes, the first time, the news, in the newspapers. And there were planes that flew over. They knew already that the region I was in, the Soviets would occupy it. They stated that officially, especially when Germany bombed Warsaw.

*« C'était comment ? »*

*What was it like?*

What I didn't know was that the Russians would come to Zurawno.

40. *When did you find out that the Russians had invaded Poland from the East?*

n/a

41. *Do you remember the day that the Russians entered Zurawno, in September 1939?*

Yes I remember, as if it were today. I was sitting in a garden, and I saw a Russian tank. When they came, the Jews did okay. You could no longer say "Jew," you had to say "Jevrej" in Russian.

« *Ca voulait dire quoi ?* »

*It's better to say "Jew." I don't know.*

42. *How did the Poles and Ukrainians react when the Russians arrived?*

Well, the Ukrainians were unperturbed. But the Poles, when the Russians arrived, in the middle of the night, everyone who was Polish, almost 80%, they took them; the Poles had to leave everything behind, everything. And they sent them away in trucks; they took them I don't know where, to Russia, to Siberia...

« *Et les Polonais qui sont restés ?* »

*And the Poles who stayed?*

Very few. Later I returned to school, where I learned Russian. And there was a teacher who stayed because she was very capable of learning everything. Before that she was a teacher also. When it was Poland she didn't really like the Jews. But when this happened, she was different.

« *Et les Ukrainiens ?* »

*And the Ukrainians?*

The Ukrainians became okay with the Jews. You couldn't even imagine. But nobody knew what would happen when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union.

« *Comment étaient les Ukrainiens avec les Russes ?* »

*How were the Ukrainians with the Russians?*

They were officially pleased, they made like they were okay with them, but they were against the Russians too, because that region was part of Ukraine.

43. *Tell me what you did between September 1939 and June 1941.*

That was the period of time when the Russians stayed. I still went to school, and then we were okay. We were okay, I don't know what we lived in, but I remember we were okay. Only that lasted just a year. Not even two years. Yes, And after...So when the Germans invaded, so...

*« Et pendant l'occupation russe ? »*

*And during the Russian occupation?*

There's nothing to tell. And more than that, all the Jews, especially those between 20 and 25 years old, they worked for the Russians. They had confidence in the Jews – in us.

44. *Were you in Zurawno when the Germans invaded the USSR in June 1941? Do you remember the first day that the Germans arrived in Zurawno? What was it like?*

Why yes I remember when the Germans arrived. There was a Polish girl who saw them from afar; she went out to them; she gave them a bouquet of flowers. She stayed, that Polish girl, as the teacher. She gave them the bouquet, the German Soldiers, because she was against the Russians. As the Germans arrives...there it was. It was their turn. In spite of that, in 1945, there was a story of Stalin and the Jewish doctors, even so. The story of the "white coats."

45. *How did the Ukrainians react when the Germans arrived? What was the role the Ukrainians played during the German occupation?*

Straight away, the Ukrainians went out in the streets and they sang songs – "Death to the Jews!," "Death to the Poles!," like that, and they threw everything they could find at the windows of the Jewish apartments. That happened immediately at the beginning.

46. *What did you know about what the Germans were doing to the Jews in the other occupied zones?*

There, in 1941, when they crossed the border, when that happened there immediately was a massacre; it didn't happen in my small town, but...

*« Tu savais à l'époque ? »*

*You knew at the time?*

I knew, I knew. In Poland they were exterminating them at Auschwitz and everything. But there, in Russia, since the Ukrainians had done that, they knew where to find each Jew. Especially when they arrived in Cities like Minsk. They exterminated them by the thousands.

*« A ce moment-la tu savais ? »*

*At the time did you know?*

I knew but not at that point!

*« Les juifs avaient peur ? »*

*Were the Jews afraid?*

Well of course. My goodness! I knew it was going to go badly, but like that, no... Although they had already done it, but I didn't know. When it started it was in 1946, in July.

47. *What happened to you and your family during the first month, or the first year, of the German occupation?*

We were dying of hunger. To have something to eat, I can't even imagine now, but I could do nothing but to imagine myself eating some bread. We were famished. We got by however we could.

*« Vous étiez dans votre maison? »*

*You were at your house?*

Yes, until July 1942.

*« Tu allais à l'école ?»*

*Did you go to school?*

No, of course not. Nothing. I remember my father, because he was so hungry his legs were bloated.

*« La journée, vous faisiez quoi »*

*What did you do during the day?*

Nothing. What could we do?

*« Tu devais travailler? »*

*Did you have to work?*

Oh yes, I forgot to tell you... when the Germans arrived, maybe 3 months later, I had to go to work outside. It was strange, it was nothing but married men; I was the only one my age. However, they were my friends, and like me. I went to work 3 km from town, on the roads, we turned over the dirt.

*« Tu étais avec qui dans le groupe ? »*

*Whom were you with in this group?*

Jews from Zurawno. One was named Kessler. I don't remember the names. It was people older than me; well, they weren't old, but they were older than me.

*« Vous faisiez quel travail ? »*

*What sort of work did you do?*

We worked in the dirt, and later, during the month of June or shortly before, I worked, they took me, with the same people, 20 km from Zurawno, to a town bigger than Zurawno. I worked at the railroad. In the yard. I was young, but there were some who got sick, because we ate almost nothing. And I remember, there were two who were in agony, and nobody helped them. Both of them – they died that way.

*« Tu te rappelles du nom de la ville où tu travaillais aux chemins de fer ? »*

*Do you remember the name of the town where you worked on the railroad?*

Why yes, it's Yavoriv. It was a rail yard.

*« Tu as fait d'autres travaux cette année-là pour les allemands? »*

*Did you do other work that year for the Germans?*

No, that year I worked. It's because of that that I wasn't in Zurawno when they had the big raid in 1942. I was in Yavoriv. And over there they also conducted the Aktion; they rounded up all the Jews, and those who... I don't know... did they gather them all up just to kill them right away? I don't know... but one thing I do know, after the Aktion was finished, those of us who had survived, we had to collect the bodies, and especially in the hospitals, they had shot them all through, and they put a white substance on their bodies, I don't know why...

And tell him, when we finished work over there, they brought us to another place to collect. So there was an SS officer who was down below, because it was an apartment building, he wanted to kill all of us. Fortunately another SS officer arrived, who told him "No, no, not now, who is going to gather all of this then?"

*« Tu as failli mourir à ce moment-là. »*

*You nearly died, then.*

Oh of course, and that wasn't the first time!

*« Durant cette première année, avant l'aktion, est-ce que tu vivais avec ta famille dans la maison ? »*

*During this first year, before the Aktion, did you live with your family at home?*

Yes, the first year, yes. I went out at night sometimes. I know that there were fields where potatoes grew. I would have been able to make myself... it was just after Zurawno, because there were farmers there.



*« Durant cette première année, avant l'aktion, est-ce que tu vivais avec ta famille dans la maison ? »*

*Did other people move in with you during that year?*

It was the same people as before. I remember, one of the girls, we heard everything; it was the same house. One of the girls went crazy, she screamed so much, because she was hungry.

*« Dans la même maison ? »*

*in the same house?*

Yes, in the same house. In another room.

*« Vous avez du vendre des choses pour de l'argent ? »*

*Did you have to sell things for money?*

Sell things? No! Sell to whom? There weren't any... I still don't know how I managed to survive without food, and live like that. I just don't.

*« Qu'est-ce qu'il est arrivé en Juillet 1942 ? »*

*What happened in July 1942?*

Well, I was in Yavoriv.

*« C'était une aktion ? »*

*Was there an Aktion?*

Well of course there was an Aktion. In 1942, it was the biggest Aktion. Whether it was the Jews in Belgium, the Jews in Poland, the Jews in Ukraine, the Jews in Hungary...

*« C'était en juillet ou en Septembre ? »*

*Was it in July or September?*

No, no. For me it was in July. After, there was one in September too maybe. It was in July of '42, in France too, even!

Why, does he think it was in September?

Oh, well the main one was in July of '42. Tell him, even in France! Even in Belgium, in Hungary! It was in '42.

*« Tu peux raconter l'histoire de la première Aktion en 1942 ? »*

*Can you tell the story of the first Aktion in 1942?*

Yes, I'll tell you. I was in Yavoriv. In Zurawno, apart from the survivors, they massacred all of the Jews. It's because I was in Yavoriv that I don't know how it happened (in Zurawno). I experienced the same thing, but 20 km away from Zurawno, in Yavoriv. Tell him that Chemush would know how they treated the Jews in Zurawno, because he was there. And Yulek too!

*« C'était comment quand tu es revenu à Zurawno ensuite »*

*What was it like when you returned to Zurawno later?*

When I got back to Zurawno, there were the surviving Jews. I didn't see all of them, but they brought us to a small neighborhood of nothing at all. And then after, maybe 3 or 4 days after, there were trucks that came and took us to a ghetto in Stryt.

I know. There were 31 of us who left in that particular truck. Others, too, but I didn't... and when we arrived in Stryt, there were these empty apartments, because the Jews had been massacred. Ghettos. In that neighborhood there, like everywhere, they lived in the ghetto; you couldn't go any farther.

*« Combien de temps es-tu resté à Stryt? »*

*How long did you stay in Stryt?*

Until the end! That is to say, after August of '43 there were no more Jews. So in Stryt, we had to get by however we could...

*« Quand es-tu sorti de Stryt ? »*

*When did you leave Stryt?*

I left Stryt...it didn't happen just like that... I lived in Stryt all along. In 1943, I don't know if it was July or August, they had a raid but all the Jews had to be.. [we made it] so there would not be any more Jews! We hid ourselves! My first hiding place was with my father.

48. *Do you remember the Aktion of September 5, 1942? Do you remember other Aktionen?*

n/a

49. *How did you get to the Stryt ghetto? How did you escape? Do you remember anyone else who escaped?*

n/a

## **Interview 2: April 8, 2011**

### ***World War II: Stry***

50. *Tell us about the Poles who hid you. How long did you hide at their house? How were they denounced? How did you escape? Were you arrested after that?*

In the beginning, there was a Ukrainian family, with a man and his daughter. I don't know, I don't remember exactly how it worked. The man said to me, "If you want to stay alive, you must not be together, with your father, with anyone; you have to always be alone. Because with two or three you will not succeed." I listened to him and I had a lot of luck.

Then she hid me, after there were no more Jews in the ghetto.

They gave me places to hide. At that time there were no more Jews in the ghetto. If there were, they were hidden like I was.

*« Tu allais chez eux quand tu étais dans le ghetto? »*

*Did you go to their house when you were in the ghetto?*

Yes, at night.

*« Tu t'échappais du ghetto la nuit ? »*

*Did you leave the ghetto at night?*

Yes, oh, there were so many things, I don't know where to start. I'd like to say... did you tell him there was also a Polish girl? Anything she could give me to eat, at night, it was very good, I would go to eat at her house and I went into my hiding place outside of the town. I had a hiding place. But then, the neighbor lady who lived on the first floor ratted me out, because she waited for many days, and she always saw me through the window. While I was eating, someone knocked on the door, and two SS officers entered.

And then, this I didn't see, if they executed him, but I suppose they must have executed him. She was with a little girl, I suppose they executed them.

I told them (the SS officers – a Ukrainian, the other a German), where there was some money they could find, but it wasn't true.

Since it was the middle of the night, I was able to jump from the first floor and I ran to my hiding place and I saw that my arm was broken, and I stayed for a few days without doing anything.

*« C'était quoi la cachette ? »*

*What was your hiding place?*

The hiding place was outside of the ghetto; the Ukrainian family told me where it was. Immediately I decided to go to Zurawno; I was all alone.

*« C'était quoi comme cachette ? une grange ? »*

*What was your hiding place? A barn?*

Yes, it was outside, where nobody would have the idea to go rummaging around.

One day I told myself, "I want to go to Zurawno." I was on the road, I don't even know how I got there. And all of a sudden, there were these Germans who were driving these Russian prisoners on foot, and when they saw me they took me and put me with the Russian prisoners. And they didn't ask me if I was Jewish. As if I didn't really have the head of a Jew. And I was in that situation until Austria.

*« Ca c'était avant le train ? »*

*That was before the train?*

Oh I forgot to say. I was in a train; the train had to stop because the Russians were bombing, so I took advantage of that and got away.

*« La rencontre avec les prisonniers russes, c'était après le train ? »*

*The encounter with the Russian prisoners, it was after the train?*

Yes, yes.

*« Et chez la polonaise, tu étais où quand les SS ont toqué à la porte ? »*

*And at the Polish lady's house, where were you when the SS knocked on the door?*

I was at the lady's house eating, at her house, in the apartment.

*« Dans la cuisine ? »*

*In the kitchen?*

Yes, at her house.

*« Tu as été te cacher? »*

*Did you hide?*

I stayed. I wanted to hide under the table; they told me no, it wasn't worth it; they would surely see there was someone under there. When I saw, under the table, the boots, I went immediately for the window but they trapped me. Tell him that I can't even tell everything, there was so much.

*« Et la polonaise ? »*

*And the Polish lady?*

I know they surely must have... I don't know... but in principle...

<<Do you know who told on you?>>

It was the neighbor lady, the one who lived upstairs. Every day, I came at about the same time, of course when it was dark outside. She saw me, became alert, and she warned the police.

« *Tu en es sûr ?* »

*Are you sure?*

Why yes of course! Listen; it was someone upstairs who told me, I went to her place often, and often, at night.

Listen, tell him that it's impossible, I can't tell anything more, because there's so much. Tell him, though, in Poland we were 3 million, and after, we were 30,000, so listen...

« *La polonaise avait de la famille ? Comment réagissaient-ils au fait qu'elle cachait un juif ?* »

*Did the Polish lady have a family? How did they react to the fact that she was hiding a Jew?*

I don't know. I knew the Ukrainians who were fine with her, and then her mother-in-law. Because the husband of this lady, he was taken to Germany for forced labor. So she stayed with her little girl and her mother-in-law.

« *Et la belle-mère ?* »

*And the mother-in-law?*

She wasn't mean. For two or three days, I went to her place to sleep in the beginning but later, she was afraid because she was afraid of the neighbors and everything...

« *Après avoir sauté et cassé ton bras, tu t'es caché. Que s'est-il passé pour te faire arrêté et avoir été mis dans le train ?* »

*After having jumped and broken your arm, you hid yourself. What happened that you got arrested and were put in the train?*

Tell him that it's so complicated that I still don't believe it, the more I think about it, the more I remember things like, for example, the train, it was there to take us I don't know where.

« *Comment tu es arrivé dans le train ?* »

*How did you end up on the train?*

I'm mixing it all up, there's so much. They discovered me, now I remember. I wanted to hide one day, and because I didn't have time to go to the other hiding place I went into an abandoned house and what did I find there? A Jew who was there, and we stayed like that for a few days, and as he was from other there, this Jew, he left with me; he said, "I'm going to look for some bread," because he had a Ukrainian who had given him some bread, and... and they trapped us too.

*« Dans la rue ? »*

*in the road?*

No. Over there.

*« Dans la maison abandonnée ? »*

*In the abandoned house?*

Yes, listen. It was the Ukrainians. They kept us until the police arrived.

*« Dans la maison abandonnée ? »*

*In the abandoned house?*

The Jew who was there, hidden also, he knew a farmer who gave him something to eat, from time to time, but at night. And when we returned... wait.. we returned, there were some Ukrainians, they saw us, they kept us.

*« Ils vous ont vu quand vous alliez chez le mec prendre du pain ? »*

*They saw you when you went to the guy's house to get bread?*

I don't know exactly... there are so many things that aren't coming to me...

<<Did you go out many times to look for bread?>>

He went out many times before, but me, I don't know. I believed that they would kill us.

*« Mais comment les Ukrainiens vous ont découverts ? »*

*But how did the Ukrainians discover you?*

It was some kids! They came up to play and they saw us. So they went to find their parents. There were 3 people and they kept us until the police arrived. I told myself "Great, they're going to kill us," and you know what, this too is going to be impossible to believe. The guy came...and imagine! He was a Jew! A Jew! SS! I swear on my life! I swear! So he only told us, "Don't do

anything; we're going to take you to Borislav to a work camp where you are going to work."  
Woooooow!!! It's impossible to believe!

I can't remember everything, but there were about 20 or 30 times where I could have been killed, but I always escaped. Tell him that I had so many instances in 4 years that passed, that I can't even believe it; it's impossible!

*« Ça a l'air d'être pleins d'histoires extraordinaires. »*

*You have many extraordinary stories.*

Tell him that is someone told me that, I wouldn't even believe it myself.

*« Sam te croit. »*

*Sam believes you.*

Yes, oh yes! That, we know well! You can't hide yourself when you have things in common!

### **World War II: Leaving Ukraine**

51. *Tell us about the train that went to Auschwitz. How did you meet the Russian prisoners? Did you meet anyone that you knew? Do you have any memories of your lucky day?*

The train. I can't exactly know, I don't know, they surely brought us there to exterminate us. In Belzec I think. I think that that train went to Belzec. Only it stopped after 50 km, because there were Russian planes bombing, and I took advantage of that in order to leave, but I was soon recaptured all the same. And that begins another story. When they arrested me with the Russian prisoners.

*« Tu marchais quand tu as rencontré les Russes »*

*Were you walking when you met the Russians?*

Yes. I was walking, and they arrived, and they took me and put me with the Russian prisoners. I went like that until Hungary.

*« Ils pensaient que tu étais russe ? Et pas juif ? »*

*They thought you were Russian? And not Jewish?*

They didn't know whether I was Polish or Russian. Although, when I arrived in Hungary (It was I don't know how many kilometers), I saw a Russian man who had worked with me at Stryt when I was in the ghetto. He told me immediately, "Don't worry; I won't tell that you're Jewish." And yes! So, then, I was in Hungary. And in Hungary, the Russian prisoners and everyone... just imagine... we all took a shower there. And I was so troubled that someone would see me,

because I was circumcised; you see, I was very lucky. And it's because of that that I tell you, It was nothing but luck that I came to be there.

*« Tu as dû refuser de prendre des douches des fois ? »*

*Did you ever refuse to take showers?*

No, that only happened once, taking showers. We stayed in Hungary for a few days, and then they brought us to Vienna, in Austria, where I worked. They didn't know I was Jewish. I worked for a few weeks, and then they brought us to Germany, to a small town near Aix-la-Chapelle – the actual name of the town was Meyenheim. There, we worked; there were Poles of all sorts, and at the end of two and a half months, as the Germans were losing the war, already at that time, it was the Americans who liberated me when they arrived.

*« Tu as réussi à cacher le fait que tu étais juif tout ce temps ? »*

*Did you succeed in hiding the fact that you were Jewish this whole time?*

Yes, during the whole time I was in Germany. I also worked for the farmers over there; I wasn't guarded once while I was in Germany. We went to the farmhouses. – And he asked me if I wanted to marry his daughter! Yes, yes!

*« Il savait que tu étais polonais, mais pas juif ? »*

*He knew you were Polish, but not Jewish?*

Yes, Polish.

*« Donc dans le groupe que tu as croisé en Pologne, il n'y avait pas que des russes ? Il y avait des russes et des polonais ? »*

*So in the group that you met in Poland, there weren't only Russians? There were Russians and Poles?*

No, there were only Russian prisoners. But when the Americans arrived, I was with some Poles. With them I even wanted to immediately make arrangements. They asked who wanted to go back to their home countries, and who didn't want to. And since I didn't want to, they brought me to Reims in France.

*« Et quand tu as rejoint les prisonniers russes en Pologne, ils croyaient que tu étais russe ? Ils t'ont demandé ? »*

*And when you rejoined the Russian prisoners in Poland, they thought you were Russian? They asked you?*



No, no. Nobody asked me anything. Of course, it would have been extremely bothersome if they had known that I was Jewish, you realize!

*« Il n'y avait que des Russes ? Ou des polonais aussi ? »*

*There were only Russians? Or Poles as well?*

No; at that time, there were only Russian prisoners. Later, there were Poles when the Americans arrived. I was with Poles and Americans. Most of them left; returned to Poland, and I went to Reims.

52. *How did you hide the fact that you were Jewish?*

n/a

53. *How did you end up so far west at the time at the Liberation?*

n/a

### ***Liberation and the Post-War Period***

54. *Do you remember where you were the day of the Liberation? Were you still with the group of prisoners? Do you remember the date? Do you remember any American or English soldiers?*

We already knew that the Germans had lost the war. Where I was, in Meyenheim, when we heard the American tanks arrive, there were no more Germans.

*« Tu travaillais dans les champs ce jour-là ? »*

*Were you working in the fields that day?*

No, I was working at a farmer's house. And when the Americans arrived, they gathered us all in a camp, where I stayed 3 or 4 days.

*« Tu étais avec les même prisonniers Russes que tu avais croisés en Pologne? »*

*Were you with the same Russian prisoners that you met in Poland?*

They asked us who wanted to return to their countries.

*« Il y avait autres que des Polonais avec toi? »*

*Were you only with Poles?*

There were only Poles. Only Poles who were prisoners and who worked.

*« A quel moment as-tu quitté le groupe de Russes ? »*

*At what point did you leave the group of Russians?*

It was when I was in a stalag (prisoner camp) in Austria. The Russians, I didn't know where they had taken them; there were some English people as well, but the English, they had a good life, because they were fed by the Red Cross of Switzerland. Then they brought me to Germany in Austria near the town of Meyenheim.

*« Les russes étaient là ou ils sont restés en Autriche? »*

### **France**

*Did the Russians stay there or did they stay in Austria?*

They stayed there. I was with the Poles after that. They asked me, and I said that I didn't want to return to Poland, because I knew that everyone had been executed; that there was nobody left. So. That's how the Americans, without asking me, took me to Reims – about 7 km from Reims.

*« Les Américains sont arrivés à quelle date ? »*

*What day did the Americans arrive?*

Wait...it was the beginning of April 1945.

*«Tu te rappelles la première fois que tu les as vus ? »*

*Do you remember the first time that you saw them?*

Two or three days beforehand I stopped working; we already knew... We also had to pay attention to not get ourselves killed by the Americans when they advanced. It was war.

*« Raconte le jour où la ville a été bombardée »*

*Recount the day when the town was bombed.*

Oh yes! That town, in the morning there was nothing, and when I returned...! That happened a few days before the arrival of the Americans. It was near Aix-la-Chapelle. That afternoon when we returned, everything had been bombed.

*« Tu te rappelles des soldats qui t'ont libéré ?»*

*Do you remember the soldiers who liberated you?*

Americans. Yes.

*«En quelle langue vous parliez-vous ? »*

*In what language did you speak to each other?*

I couldn't speak with the Americans. At that time I could only speak Polish with the people who were with me, or Ukrainian with difficulty, because I also had gone to the Ukrainian school.

*« Au camps de Reims, il y avait d'autres juifs ? »*

*In the camps at Reims, were there other Jews?*

No, there were no Jews. Actually yes, I was with the Americans; we were guards. I had never held a rifle, but even so, they gave me a rifle and we guarded the German prisoners. They tore up the grapes (you know in Reims, there are grapes). So us, we guarded them, and we slept in the camps; we ate with them. I remember, all the food was on the same plate. Potatoes, with the jam on the side...it's true; ha!

*« Il n'y avait que des polonais ? Il y avait des polonais de Galicie comme toi ? »*

*There were only Poles? Were there Poles from Galicia like you?*

Only Poles. No, Poles mostly from the Warsaw side. I was from the Russia side. They were from big cities like Warsaw.

*« Il y avait des juifs ? »*

*Were there Jews?*

No, no Jews. I saw two Jews, it was when I was with the Americans; I saw two American soldiers. They were Jews. They were always together. And I will tell you something. There was a soldier of Polish origin, but he was Catholic. He spoke badly of the Jews to me. He didn't know. An American.

*« Tu as parlé aux soldats juifs américains ? »*

*Did you speak to the Jewish American soldiers?*

Yes, them I told, but you know... I stayed 8 months with the Americans, from April until February. 8 months I stayed like that; I didn't even say I was Jewish. I lost 8 months in place of going immediately to Paris. It was the Jew who was at Reims, it was he who gave me the address so that I could leave for Paris.

*« C'était qui ? »*

*Who was he?*

A Jew who had a clothing store. One day, a Polish man said to me, "Do you want to come with me; I'm going to buy some pants?" And that's how it happened; when he bought himself the pants, and I left, but the encounter stuck with me. I returned. And when I told him that it had been 8 months, he reacted with shock; he said, "What!? We were exterminated and you're staying like this!?" And he gave me a paper with which I was able to get myself to Paris.

*« Une organisation juive ? »*

*A Jewish organization?*

Yes, a Jewish organization. I didn't have any papers. Nothing. I had to go and organize papers and everything.

Tell him that I saw it in their face! (That the American soldiers were Jewish).

55. *How did you get to the camp in Reims and how long did you stay there? When did you know that it was no longer dangerous to tell people that you were Jewish?*

n/a

56. *Did you think of returning to Zurawno? When did you decide to stay in France? When did you meet your future wife Léa?*

No, there, no. But one time, many years later, maybe in 1970. I thought of going there. They told me that it was still part of the Soviet Union. You know, the wall. They told me that it was dangerous, that it would be better to go with a group. But I wasn't interested in going with a group. I just wanted to see... Oh yes, I wrote in 1946, I wrote to a female friend who was in the same class as my sister. I wrote to her. She must have been astonished; she responded, "There are no more Jews," and told me not to write to her again, because of the regime.

*« Elle a dit que tous les juifs étaient morts ? »*

*She said that all the Jews were dead?*

She said "There is nobody." Survivors, yes, there were some, but they were in Israel, in New York...

*« Quand as-tu rencontré Léa ? »*

*When did you meet Léa?*

Tell him that, in spite of everything that took place, all of this unhappiness, the fact that they had exterminated us like rats, and everything, and as long as we were young, not only me, but the other survivors like me (who weren't from the same town as me), we would go to dance, in spite of the fact that we had nothing; we were in a dilapidated hotel. All the same we would go to dance, to have fun.

*« Et Léa ? »*

*And Léa?*

Tell him, it was a society ball, organized by some former Jewish fighters. She was there, dancing, and that's how I met her. Tell him, it's nothing like when I was a kid. In my little town in Poland. The girl; her husband was designated for her, you know. Arranged, that's it. And there is one, in my town, there is one; she paid to have a husband found for her, or the opposite. And back then;

oh! The marriage I went to, Berta, it was arranged! It wasn't... He came from America; he had never seen her before that, and the same for her!

Tell him that when I was young, it wasn't... We were very old-fashioned, I don't know if at that time in America it was like that, but we were truly old-fashioned at that time; we didn't have any comforts, no water – we had to go get it ourselves, we didn't have a sewer system. It was really... compared to France, it's...

*« Ca fait combien d'année de mariage avec Léa ? »*

*How many years have you been married to Léa?*

Wait... 61 years! Tell him that I have a wonderful old age; I have everything I need!

*« Sam comprend pourquoi tu es heureux »*

*Sam understands why you are happy.*

57. *Who was the person who had the biggest influence on your life while you lived in Zurawno?*

I don't know. My sister, yes. The only person, really. I can think of others, but I never stop thinking about my sister. Really, it was... She was two years younger than me. A beautiful girl. It's her. My parents of course, but you know, I had a father who was not capable of making a living. I lacked everything, whether it was toys, things like that, and even clothing.

*« C'est ta sœur à qui tu penses le plus ? »*

*It's your sister whom you think of the most?*

Yes.

*« Elle était plus jeune que toi ? »*

*She was younger than you?*

Yes, by two years. But she only spoke Polish. She spoke very little Yiddish. Anyway, she was better in school than I was. But that was a question of luck. There were schools of higher education, but Jews had difficulty getting into those schools. Because you know well, how the Poles were, the fascist government...

*« Elle était très importante pour toi ? »*

*She was very important to you?*

Well, she was my sister. If she had stayed alive in Poland, I would have brought her to France, it would have been... But they exterminated her along with my mother, immediately. With the other Jews from Zurawno.

*« Lors de la première Aktion ? »*

*During the first Aktion?*

Yes, in 1942.

Tell him, my sister... Look, I've gotten by quite well, see. She could have too. My sister didn't physically look like a Jew. But since she didn't want to leave her mother...I don't know if she would have gotten along as well as me, but...

*« Sam te trouve courageux de partager ces émotions »*

*Sam finds you courageous for sharing these emotions.*

Tell him, when I arrived in Paris I didn't have anything. I didn't speak the language or anything at all. I was about 20 years old and I didn't have a job. Tell him, later, from the moment I was married, I set to work and then I succeeded in making a good living.

*« Lea et toi furent de bons partenaires de vie pendant 61 ans »*

*You and Léa have been good life partners for 61 years.*

Yes, of course. Tell him that I only wanted to marry a French woman. I didn't want to marry a Polish woman, or... I wanted to marry a French woman.

*« Pour mieux t'intégrer? »*

*In order to integrate better?*

Yes, maybe.

58. *Is there anything else you'd like to say about Zurawno?*

Zurawno... your father, he said that he might want to go there. Maybe we could go there, but even so, at my age, it's not easy, despite the fact that I feel relatively good, but even so, after all these years. Well. I would really like to go, if it's not complicated, because I don't want to worry about anything.

*« Tu serais content ? »*

*Would you be happy?*

I would be happy...you know...Yes. But it also makes me very sad. When I think of all those people there that I knew, they're... Well, when you die when you're old, or because you're sick... it's nothing like knowing that all of that was exterminated... you can't even realize... you know.. but all the same, I would still like to go there, if only just to see it.

I would like also to ask him, how come he is doing this only about Zurawno; it's a small town of nothing at all. There were much more important places than Zurawno. Why Zurawno?

Sam: "When I was a child, my grandmother told me many stories about Zurawno. It's one of the first words that I heard as a baby. Lottie Spinner."

Because I was astonished. It's like me, the first time that I went to Israel. There was the YadaSheim, do you know what that is? There was Stryyt, everything, but there wasn't another Zurawno. And then the year after when I went to Jerusalem, I went to see the YadaSheim. And when I saw it, there was the stele marked Zurawno, I lay down on it, and I cried like I don't know what.

59. *Looking back, what was the best memory of your life in Zurawno?*

I don't know if I can say...

*« Quelque chose qui te fait sourire ? »*

*Something that made you smile?*

We were surrounded by rivers, so during the summers we went to swim in them. That gives me good memories.

*« Avec ta sœur et ta famille ? »*

*With your sister and your family?*

Yes, with the people who were my age. We had just enough to eat, but I didn't permit myself to have toys like many children... Otherwise it was calm...no...what am I saying...tell him, I can't say that I had...

Oh yes, when there were meetings there. I was in Trumpeldor. Every Saturday morning and Sunday morning we had a boat, we walked along the Dniestr. And then they told us that one day there would be a state of Israel. Because it was on the right, for the most part. We were on the right, you see. So we talked about that, on how one day there could be... Tell him that when we went to synagogue, when it was Yom Kippur, you know Yom Kippur, the holiday where you don't eat, we always said, "Next year in Jerusalem!" Yes, yes.

### ***Postcard Pictures of Zurawno***

*Synagogue*



Tell him that I remember incredibly well. Oh my... look, it's the synagogue.

« Tu as des histoires à ce propos ? »

*Do you have any stories about the synagogue?*

My father, when I was a kid, he took me there. Apart from the synagogue there, there was another building across the way for saying prayers. When we entered here (*the entrance of the synagogue*), it was the entrance, the synagogue was big, and there was yet another room where they said prayers. That is to say: there, the synagogue, inside there was also another room for saying prayers, and across the way, there was also another place where Jews said prayers.

I remember, I lived about 50 meters from the synagogue. And past the synagogue, you could walk along a little street where Spinner's store was. It must have been demolished by now.

*(Questions to locate the shop precisely)*

That way (to the left). But the streets were very small. Yes, yes. Just to the side. We saw the windows of the synagogue. Through there. Tell him, immediately before that, there was a woman who owned a butcher shop. There. And then after that there was Spinner's store.

Oh and one night, you can tell him that I had a dream. Oh! I just remembered, tell him! Oh my. And inside there, there were only Jews that I didn't know. Tell him, often I dream about it, but just this night... because I had to do that. No-one but Jews. And I even said, "I live in Paris, I can't live outside of Paris." Oh! All of that I dreamt!

*Marketplace*





What year was that? Oh 1902, oh yes. It wasn't like that when I was born, you see. When I was born, it was.. I don't know; I don't remember.

*« La photo date d'avant la première guerre mondiale, ça a été détruit et reconstruit entre temps. »*

*The photo dates from before WWI; it was destroyed and reconstructed since then.*

Oh yes, so it's changed. My father was born in 1895. He was there when he was married. He lived with his family about 30 km from Zurawno until he was married.

*Dniestr*

That's the Dniestr I think. There are no photos with the bridge.

### ***Photos of David After the War***

*Photo of David Eichen (left) and two other young men*



Oh! Look at that! You see! Could anyone tell I was Jewish? How could they know? You see! Wow!

*« Qui sont les deux hommes avec toi ? »*

*Who are the two men with you?*

Two guys who were in the same camps as me. This is already with the Americans. Near Rheims; about 7 km from Rheims. There you go, tell him, I stayed 8 months with some Poles.

*« Quel est leur uniforme ? »*

*What is their uniform?*

They were officers, I don't know what sort.

*« C'est les Américains qui leur ont donné ? »*

*Did the Americans give them their uniforms?*

I don't know, I don't remember.

*« La photo date de quelle année ? »*

*What year was the photo taken?*

That was in 1945.

*« Ces hommes étaient soldats dans l'armée polonaise ? »*

*Were these men soldiers in the Polish army?*

All the Poles, there, they believed they were... their general, his name was Handers, he believed that the Americans had gone to war so that Poland would have the same government as before the war. They were extremists.

*« C'était des soldats pendant la guerre ? »*

*They were soldiers during the war?*

Oh I don't know; I met them after, we arrived in Rheims together. I only saw those men there one time when the Americans arrived.

*« ils savaient que tu étais juif ? »*

*Did they know you were Jewish?*

They, no! And I would have been able to tell them already, but I was all alone. And tell him, too, that I could have maybe stayed Polish, if that thing didn't happen, one of the soldiers who wanted to buy a pair of pants. Otherwise I would have been able to stay...and especially because I was seeing a girl there. Fortunately I didn't do it. In Poland maybe there are some of them who were converted, who became Polish, or I don't know what.

*« Quel nom utilisais-tu à cette période ? »*

*<<What name did you use during that time?>>*

Stanislas Renkasowski.

*« Sam penses que tu ressembles plus à un David qu'à un Stanislas, et que tu es beau. »*

*Sam thinks that you resemble more of a David than a Stanislas, and that you are handsome.*

*Photo 2 – David Eichen (left) and a Polish Man*



Look at that! You see!

*« Qui est cet homme ? »*

*Who is this man?*

A Pole. I don't know why I was photographed with him, you see.

*« tu te rappelles de lui ? »*

*Do you remember him?*

Yes of course.

*« Son nom ? »*

*His name?*

I don't remember anymore. Do you have another photo?

*Photo 3 – David Eichen*



Do you realize... oh boy...my god you realize! They grew up?

« *Quand est-ce que ça a été pris ?* »

*When was this taken?*

Yes I remember, all that was in 1945, or the beginning of 1946. Tell him, well it's over, it's been years and years, but I don't know how I was able to survive all that.

« *Sam dit heureusement car tu as une belle famille* »

*Sam says fortunately, because you have a beautiful family.*

Why yes, otherwise you (she) wouldn't be sitting there! So you wouldn't miss anything.

« *Sam dit que tu es génial, et voudrait te rencontrer un jour.* »

*Sam says you're wonderful, and he would like to meet you someday.*

Who's coming in July?

« *C'est Ted le cousin de Sam* »

*It's Ted, Sam's cousin.*

Ah, his cousin.

« *Ted te passera ses meilleurs vœux* »

*Ted sends you his best wishes.*

To me? But if he comes to Paris, tell him that I would very much like him to come, and I could give him my address.

Tell him that I never expected this after so many years. And to myself, I say, oh my, that I'm going to disappear, and I'll never see anyone from Zurawno...

### **Interview 3: July 28, 2011**

#### ***Early Life in Zurawno, before World War II***

Bonjour David and Juliet! Thank you for your time and effort in our interview process. We have a few follow up questions. We are going to try to go in the order of the original questions. Therefore, while the questions are in sequential order, they will have a notation indicating the original question to which the new question is a follow up.

1. [Q.8] Regarding Berta Zins, was it a big deal (did it attract a lot of attention) that a local girl was marrying a man from the United States of America? Do you know if the marriage was arranged? Do you remember anything about the groom?

Dis lui que tous les mariages, quand j'étais gosse, dans ma ville, pas spécialement dans ma ville, mais surtout quand les gens ils se connaissaient tous, ... ils avaient du mal à se marier, tu sais, parce que tout le monde se connaissait. Et elle, Berta Zins, elle avait jamais vu son mari auparavant. Et il est venu, il avait dû recevoir une lettre pour (dire que) si il veut se marier avec une fille, il peut venir à Zurawno. C'est comme ça que ça s'est passé, et dis lui que sa femme Berta Zins, elle ne l'avait jamais vu auparavant.

*Tell him that all marriages, when I was a kid, in my town, not just in my town but especially when everyone knew each other... they had difficulty marrying, you know, because everyone knew each other. And she, Berta Zins, she had never seen her husband before. And he came, he must have received a letter saying that if he wanted to marry a girl, he could come to Zurawno. That's how it happened, and tell him that his wife Berta Zins, she had never seen him before then.*

« Le fait qu'il était américain, est-ce que c'était une grande histoire à Zurawno ? »

*In Zurawno, was it a big deal that he was an American ?*

Oui bien sur, nous comme on était la plupart des pauvres gens... alors l'Amérique, c'était quelque chose, le paradis pour nous.

*Yes of course, we were, like most poor people... so America, it was something, like paradise for us.*

2. [Q.9] Have you been in contact with your uncle and his family in Argentina since the end of World War II?

Non non. Alors, je vais te dire comment ça s'est passé. J'avais 4 ans. C'était un des frères de ma mère, le plus jeune. Il est parti, je ne sais pas comment il s'est débrouillé, pour partir en Argentine. Et comme c'était un joueur, il avait un peu d'argent, il a perdu l'argent, il a écrit à ma mère. Pourtant on n'était pas riche elle s'est débrouillé, elle lui a envoyé l'argent, pour pouvoir prendre le bateau pour l'Argentine. Ça a duré trois mois le voyage. Et quand il est arrivé là-bas, on n'a jamais eu de nouvelles. Lui il n'était pas tellement tellement sérieux. C'était le plus jeune, il y avait deux sœurs et trois frères et lui c'était le plus jeune. Et il est parti, je me rappelle pas, vers 1930. On n'a jamais eu de nouvelles.

*No no. So, I'll tell you how all that happened. I was 4 years old. He was one of my mother's brothers, the youngest. He left, I don't know how he managed, to go to Argentina. And since he was a gambler, he got a little money, then lost the money, he wrote to my mother. Even though we weren't rich she managed, she sent him some money so he could take the boat to Argentina. The trip lasted 3 months. And when he got there, we never heard any news. He wasn't such a serious person. He was the youngest, he had 2 sisters and 3 brothers and he was the youngest. He left, I don't remember, around 1930. We never heard anything from him.*

3. [Q.14] What do you remember about the Poles in Zurawno? What do you remember of the Polish nobleman Czartoryski? He had a car crash in 1937, and was treated by Dr. Zabler, but died of his injuries.

Czatorinski! Czatorinski! Ha oui alors que je te raconte ! Alors chez Czatorinski, tout était entouré avec des murs drôlement hauts, et ça donnait sur la rivière. Il y avait un château, au bord de la rivière mais on ne pouvait jamais rentrer. Et quand Staline (ça veut dire les russes), ils sont arrivés en 1939, il est parti avant et il a tout laissé. Et je me rappelle on a ouvert les portes et tout et on a visité tout ça. Parce que les polonais, quand les russes sont arrivés, ils les ont tous déportés en Russie. Pas tous, mais la plupart. Cstaorinsky, oui. Ha le fils il s'est tué en voiture !

*Czatorinski ! Czatorinski ! (sic) Oh yes, I'll tell you ! So at Czatorinzi's estate, everything was surrounded by very high walls, and it looked out over the river. There was a castle along the river but nobody could go there. And when Stalin (that is to say, the Russians), arrived in 1939, he had left beforehand and he left everything. And I remember they opened the doors and everything and we visited all of it. Because the Poles, when the Russians arrived, they deported them to Russia. Not all, but the majority. Csatorinsky (sic), oui. Ah, the son was killed in a car accident !*

« Il a été soigné par le docteur Zobler? »

*He was cared for by Doctor Zobler ?*

Oui, j'ai assisté à l'enterrement, et pourtant c'était un enterrement catholique. Tu te rends compte ! Dis lui, jusqu'aux russes, Staline, en 39, il était parti déjà, et on lui a complètement... le château ... On a tout pris et tout... ho et je me rappelle, j'étais même à l'enterrement. Oui c'était un enterrement catholique.

*Yes, I attended the funeral, even though it was a Catholic funeral. Do you realize ! Tell him, until the Russians, Stalin, in 39, he had already left, and they completely... the castle.. they took absolutely everything, oh I remember, I was even at the funeral. Yes, it was a Catholic funeral.*

4. [Q.21] Tell us more about the rabbis in Zurawno. Why were there two rabbis? What did people think of them? Were they effective teachers or not so effective? Can you tell us about the one rabbi's two sons? Did the other rabbi have any children and do you remember anything about them?

Ha oui alors écoute ce que je vais te dire.

Il y avait un rabbin, qui avait son fils, qui était comme son père. Et quand le rabbin est mort, une grande partie des juifs ont désigné le fils. Mais il y avait une plus petite quantité de juifs qui ne voulait pas accepter, qui voulait prendre un autre rabbin. Alors tu vois c'est resté comme ça, entre eux ils se chamaillaient. Ils avaient une autre pièce pour faire la prière. Ceux qui ont voulu le fils, ils faisaient la prière à la synagogue, et ceux qui étaient contre eux ils avaient une autre pièce. Et jusqu'à la guerre c'est resté comme ça. Ils étaient déportés forcément..

*Ah yes, listen to what I'm going to tell you.*

*There was a rabbi, who had his son, who was like his father. And when the rabbi died, a large number of Jews designated the son. But there was a smaller number of Jews who didn't want to accept him, who wanted to have another rabbi. So you see it stayed like that, they squabbled amongst themselves. They had a separate room for prayer. Those who wanted the son, they prayed at the synagogue, and those*

*who were against them had a separate room. And until the war it stayed like that. Then they were deported...*

*« Et le deuxième rabbin il avait été choisi par qui ? »*

*And who chose the second rabbi ?*

Par la minorité, c'est pour ça, je n'ai jamais connu celui qui était dans la minorité. Il ne voulait pas accepter le fils de l'ancien rabbin.

The minority, and that's why I never knew anyone who was in the minority. They didn't want to accept the son of the old rabbi.

*« Donc la population aimait soit l'un soit l'autre ? »*

*So the population preferred either one or the other?*

Oui il y avait trois endroits pour faire la prière... Alors que c'était une petite ville. Ils étaient drôlement pieux les gens. Et encore, pas chez moi! Il y a d'autres villes où c'était horrible. Et moi aussi à cette époque la, je me disais « tiens y adieu, il faut pas que je fasse du mal. » Quand on apprend... jusqu'à 5 ans et demi, et après j'étais dans une école libre, ca veut dire catholique.

*Yes, there wre 3 places for prayer... even though it was a small town. The people were very pious. And yet, not at my house ! There were other towns where it was horrible. And me too, at that time, I told myself «Stay faithful ; I mustn't do any wrong. » When you learn... up until age 5 and a half, and afterwards I was in a free school, that is to say Catholic.*

*« Et les rabbins enseignaient ? »*

*Did the rabbis teach?*

Tu sais, quand il y avait des trucs à demander, des conseils, les gens ils allaient chez les rabbins, demander des conseils. Mais je te dis le deuxième ils ne l'ont pas élu, c'est resté comme ca

*You know, when there were things to ask, advice, people would go see the rabbis to ask for advice. But I tell you, the second rabbi, they hadn't elected him ; it stayed like that.*

*«Le rabbin avait deux enfants ? »*

*The rabbi had 2 kids?*

Oui il avait un garçon et une fille. Ha oui, le rabbin malgré le fait qu'une partie était contre lui, il avait une fille et un garçon. Et c'est pour ça qu'ils ne le voulaient pas : Il n'avait pas les papillotes, pas la redingote noire... Voila. Il était un peu plus moderne son fils.

*Yes there was a boy and a girl. Oh yes, the rabbi, in spite of the fact that there were a number of people against him, he had a girl and a boy. That's why they didn't want him : he didn't have parchments, no black frock coat... There you go. His son was a bit more modern.*

*« il ne voulait pas porter tout ça? »*

*He didn't want to wear all that?*

No, he didn't want to.

« Et l'autre rabbin il avait des enfants ? »

*And did the other rabbi have any children ?*

L'autre je ne sais pas. Ils ne l'ont pas élu. Ils sont restés comme ça, ils faisaient la prière dans une autre pièce.

*The other, I don't know. They didn't elect him. They stayed like that ; they prayed in a separate room.*

5. [Q. 24] You mentioned a family who lived with you (maybe next door?) who went to Israel. Do you remember any more details? Were they HaShomer HaTzair or Betar? Did they go to Petah Tikvah (not 'Petertaki', as written in the translation? There is no such town).

Ha oui: à petertaki ils sont partis. Mon père il n'était pas assez riche pour acheter une maison. C'est la famille Kessler qui était propriétaire d'où on habitait. Il y avait deux trois quatre garçons et une fille. Le garçon il s'appelait David, lui il est parti en Israël. Avant. Et après sa sœur elle est partie aussi en Israël.

*Oh yes, they left for Petertaki. My father wasn't wealthy enough to buy a house. The Kessler family owned the place we lived. There were 2, 3, 4 boys and a girl. The boy was named David ; he left for Israel. Before. And after, his sister also left for Israel.*

«Il vivaient dans la même maison que toi ? »

*They lived in the same house as you ?*

On avait une location. La maison elle contenait deux.. et nous... et les tailleurs ça fait trois, trois familles dans la maison. Et David Kessler il est parti a petertaki. Et après c'est sa sœur. Ils étaient Ashomer Atzair.

*We had a rental. The house contained two...and us... and the tailors, that made three, three families in the house. And David Kessler left for Petertaki. And later it was his sister. They were Ashomer Atzair.*

6. [Q.27] I want to ask you about some of your friends as well as other families in Zurawno. As we ask about each of them, please share anything you can remember about the individual or their family members.
  - i. Poldek Welt (your best friend):holala lui alors il avait exactement , non il avait un an de plus que moi. Mon meilleur ami oui. Seulement quand les russes sont venus en 1939, son frère qui était plus âgé, il s'est mis dans l'administration russe. Ca s'appelait **N Kavidé ( ?)**, un truc du régime. C'était un régime dur : quand on arrivait 10 minutes en retard au boulot, on était emprisonné. C'était comme ça. Et quand les russes sont partis, ils sont partis aussi car ils avaient peur qu'on les assassine. Parce que quand les allemands sont arrivé. Mais n'importe comment ils étaient tous rattrapés car l'armée allemande elle allait tellement vite. Donc il voulait partir avec les russes, mais ils les ont tous encerclés les allemands on sait bien, Hitler a cette époque-là il faisait tout ce qu'il voulait il était tellement fort, il avait toutes les armes et tout ça, beaucoup plus que les autres pays. C'est pour ça qu'il a envahi l'Europe.



*Oh my, so him, he was exactly... no he was one year older than me. My best friend, yes. Only when the Russians came in 1939, his brother who was older, he entered the Russian administration. It was called N Kavide ( ?), something to do with the regime. It was a tough regime : if you arrived 10 minutes late to work, you were imprisoned. It was like that. And when the Russians left, they left too because they were afraid they'd be killed. When the Germans arrived. But anyway, they were all recaptured because the German army was so quick. So he wanted to leave with the Russians, but the Germans knew and encircled them ; Hitler at that time did anything he pleased and he was very strong ; he had all the weapons and everything, way more than the other countries. That's why he invaded Europe.*

- ii. Kubuch Veidmann: Je lai vu au ghetto. A stry en 1943, il a été déporté. A chaque fois ils faisaient les Aktions, à chaque fois ca se rétrécissait dans le ghetto, jusqu'à ce que tous les juifs soient exterminés. Dans les ghettos il était à Stryy comme moi, mais il n'habitait pas à côté mais je sais, après, quand l'Aktion était terminée, on pouvait sortir, et il était plus la, il était déporté.

*I saw him in the ghetto. In Stryy in 1943, he was deported. Each time they had the Aktions it shrunk the ghetto ; until all the Jews were exterminated. He was in the ghettos at Stryy like me, but he didn't live nearby. But I know, after, when the Aktion was finished, we could go out, and he was no longer there ; he had been deported.*

- iii. Lonek Sandauer: Lui je me rappelle holala, son père était avocat. Il travaillait bien à l'école, mieux que moi, mieux que n'importe qui. Et ils avaient déjà beaucoup plus de moyens, que mettons mes parents à moi. Alors lui, je ne sais pas, il a été déporté, quand il y eu la grande rafle en 1942.

*Him I remember, oh my ; his father was a lawyer. He was a good student ; better than me, better than everyone. And they were much wealthier than my own parents. So him, I don't know, he was deported, during the big raid in 1942.*

- iv. Laizer Reichmann: C'est celui qui avait 4 sœurs et 3 frères. Alors ils étaient sûrement tous... (déportés)

*He's the one who had 4 sisters and 3 brothers. They were surely all... (deported)*

- v. Heinick Eisler: He had a brother that went to Israel. Also, his name is very close to your mother's maiden name of Eidler. Je ne me rappelle pas tellement de lui.

*I don't really remember him.*

- vi. Abba Buchwalter: Il avait deux frères et une sœur. Ses parents avaient une épicerie.  
*He had two brothers and a sister. His parents had a grocery store.*

- vii. Kubuch Chneimann (could this name be Schneimann?): Je ne peux pas me rappeler.  
*I can't remember.*

- viii. Mushi Kessler: Un des frères de celui qui est parti en Israël. Là où j'habitais. Lui c'est un fils, il a été déporté à Zurawno. C'est où j'habitais, ses parents. Et on a même dit que ma mère.. je n'ai pas vu, mais comme c'est une petite ville... on a dit que ma mère elle a eu une liaison avec le plus grand des frères. Et comme c'est une petite ville, alors on m'a emmerdé pendant un certain temps, on ma dit « ho toi t'as deux pères ».

*One of the brothers of the one who left for Israel. There where I lived. He was a son ; he was deported to Zurawno. That's where I lived, his parents. And they even said that his mother... I didn't see, but since it's a small town... they said that my mother had had an affair with the eldest brother. And since it's a small town, well it pissed me off for a while ; they said to me « Oh you, you have two fathers. »*

« Il était jeune? »

*Was he young ?*

Elle est née en 1902, Si ça s'est passé en 1936, elle avait 34 ans, lui il avait peut-être 28 ans. Si ça s'était passé dans une grande ville...

*She was born in 1902 ; if that happened in 1936, she was 34 years old, he was maybe 28 years old. If that happened in a big city..*

7. [Q.28] In an earlier interview we discussed the Schechter family (Yulik and Tzvi). Do you remember what their father did for a living?

Oui il est en Israël, justement je lui ai téléphoné. « Je vais te téléphoner... » Comme il m'a dit qu'il était fatigué, il ma dit que sa fille reviendra à 6h du soir. Et quand j'ai voulu téléphoner, le téléphone était fermé.

*Yes he is in Israel, I telephoned him. « I'm going to call you... » He told me that he was tired ; he told me that his daughter was returning at 6 pm. And when I wanted to call, the phone was disconnected.*

«Quel était le métier de leur père ? »

*What was their father's occupation ?*

Ils avaient un magasin de chaussures. C'était deux frères. Celui a qui j'ai parlé en Israël, c'était le plus jeune. L'autre il avait trois de plus que lui. Je me rappelle, il fréquentait une fille...

*They had a shoe store. It was two brothers. The one I talked to in Israel was the youngest. The other was three years older than him. I remember, he dated a girl...*

8. Regarding some other families, what do you remember about:

- i. The Liebermann family? Father was David, son was Tzvi? Oui. Ils habitaient un peu en dehors de la ville de Zurawno. Ho je me rappelle, il y avait un fils il était grand comme ça. Ils avaient une épicerie en dehors de la ville.

*Yes. They lived just outside the town of Zurawno. Oh I remember, there was a son who was tall like this. They had a grocery store outside of town.*

- ii. The Reiter family? Father was Hermann, sons were Frederick and Mundek
- iii. The Prinz family? Son was Moshe. Je connais aussi. Oulala. Ils avaient un magasin de tissu. Le fils s'appelait Moshe oui. Et puis il avait une sœur aussi.
- I know them too. Oh my. They had a fabric store. The son was named Moshe, yes. And he also had a sister.*
- iv. The Reiss family? Father was Israel, daughter was Fanka. She worked for the pharmacist Kro. La pharmacie Kro je me souviens oui. Je me rappelle de la pharmacie. C'était dans des boccas comme dans le temps. Et je me rappelle de la femme et du mari, ils étaient drôlement bien ho oui. Ca ça frappait. La famille Reiss, et oui...
- The Kro Pharmacy I remember, yes. I remember the pharmacy. The medicines were in jars like they were at the time. And I remember the wife and her husband ; they were very nice, oh yes. That's what struck you about them. The Reiss family, and yes...*
- v. The Seliger family? Son was Irving.
- vi. Dr. Ashkenazi and his daughters, Sida and Misha (Miriam)? Ho oui. La fille, holala, Sida. Alors elle, c'est vraiment comme si elle était devant moi. Lui il avait le droit, son père, comme il était médecin, il avait le droit d'aller en dehors de la ville, où il n'y avait que des polonais ou des ukrainiens. Il avait le droit de prendre son cheval pour aller voir les malades. Moi si j'avais fait, ça... holala, il n'y avait pas pis que d'aller le samedi. En Amérique, c'est sûrement comme ça, de pas allumer le feu le soir. Et qu'est-ce quelle devient Sida ? Elle est mariée ?
- Oh yes. The daughter, oh my, Sida. So she, it's really like she was just in front of me. Him, he had the right, her father, since he was a doctor, he had the right to leave the town, where there were only Poles and Ukrainians. He had the right to take his horse to go see the ill. Me, if I had done that... oh my ; it wasn't worse than to go on Saturday. In America, it's certainly like that ; to not light the fire at night. And what became of Sida ? Is she married ?*
- SAM « Elle est morte mais ses enfants vivent en Israël. »
- « *She's passed away but her children live in Israel.* »
- Ha... elle était pas plus vieille que moi. Elle avait un an de moins que moi. Je me rappelle d'elle.
- Ah... she wasn't older than me. She was one year younger than me. I remember her.*
- vii. The Groll family? J'ai oublié.
- I've forgotten.*
- viii. Are there any other people that you remember? Ha oui. Shperber, la famille Shperber. Ils étaient deux frères et je crois qu'il y avait une fille. Trois frères et une fille. Ils étaient déjà mariés ces gens-là quand je les ai connus.

*Oh yes. Shperber, the Shperber family. They were 2 brothers and I think there was a girl. 3 brothers and a girl. They were already married when I knew them.*

9. Yosef Laufer was one year older than you. Do you remember going to school or to synagogue with him?

Je ne me rappelle pas. Ils étaient trois frères. Ceux que j'ai connus, ils habitaient au bord d'une petite rivière, à Zurawno. Ils étaient trois frères.

*I don't remember. They were 3 brothers. The ones I knew, they lived along a little river in Zurawno. They were 3 brothers.*

10. Do you have any other memories of the Spinner family, their store near the synagogue, or their two sons Viktor and Yalus? Also, the last time we spoke, you remembered that Dovid (Dudje) Spinner had a sister. What do you remember about her?

Ils avaient un magasin juste à côté de la synagogue, où ils vendaient des produits alimentaires, des choses comme ça.

*They had a store just next to the synagogue, where they sold food products, things like that.*

« Il avait une soeur ? »

*He had a sister ?*

Il avait une sœur. Elle était mariée, elle avait deux gosses, un plus âgé, et un moins âgé. Le plus âgé il est allé jouer au football, moi j'étais là. Il a attrapé je sais pas quoi. Et pour une bêtise pareille il est mort de ça. La fièvre a monté jusqu'à plus de 40. Ce n'est rien maintenant un truc comme ça. Il est mort. Il avait mon âge, peut être un an de plus.

*He had a sister. She was married, she had two kids, one older, one younger. The older one went to play football, I was there. He caught something ; I don't know what. And terribly enough, he died of it. The fever rose to higher than 40 (degrees Celsius). It's nothing now, something like that. He died. He was my age, maybe a year older.*

11. [Q.31] You mentioned there was a judge who was dismissed because he was Jewish. What do you remember about that incident?

Il était juge, mais quand je l'ai connu il était assez vieux. Il avait plus le droit d'exercer. On a fermé le bureau, il ne jugeait plus. A cette époque-là, il habitait la même maison que moi (parce que ça changeait de locataire). Il avait un fils qui jouait du violon toute la journée. Que de la grande musique, Beethoven... que des grands musiciens, au violon...

*He was a judge, but when I knew him he was rather old. He no longer had the right to practice. They closed his office ; he was no longer a judge. At that time, he lived in the same house as I did (because we changed rentals). There was a son who played violin all day. Only the great masterpieces, Beethoven... only the great musicians, on the violin.*

« Est-ce que le fait qu'il n'exerçait plus était lié au fait d'être juif ? »

« *Was the fact that he no longer practiced linked to his being Jewish ?* »

Ho oui. Apres c'était de plus en plus dur pour un juif de faire les grandes écoles.

*Oh yes. Later it was harder and harder for a Jew to go to the schools of higher education.*

« C'était officiel »

« *He was an official* »

Officiel tu sais que non ! Mais tu sais bien, dans tous les pays de l'est c'était comme ça. Même il y en avait qui était dans l'administration, mais de moins en moins

*Official, no ! But you know well, in all countries it was like that. Even those who were in the administration, but less and less.*

« Et avant, quand il était juge ? »

« *And before, when he was a judge ?* »

Je ne me rappelle pas parce qu'il était déjà assez vieux quand je l'ai connu. Je l'ai connu je me rappelle de sa femme et de son fils, qui était toujours habillé en costume cravaté et jouait au violon de la grande musique.

*I don't remember because he was already so old when I knew him. I knew him ; I remember his wife and his son, who were always dressed formally and played masterpieces on the violin.*

12. [Q.40] When the Russians came to Zurawno in 1939, did your parents or your neighbors discuss what would happen. Were they worried? Were there any meetings of the Jewish community?

Dis lui, justement comme on a tellement souffert, avec le régime polonaise. Quand les russes sont arrivés (et crois moi après on a payé cher pour ça), tous les juifs... ! On n'avait pas le droit de dire « juifs » « Yevrey » en russe ça s'appelle « yevrey », on n'avait pas le droit de dire « Toi tu es un juif ! » on n'avait pas le droit de dire ça. Et forcément les juifs ils ont été dans toutes les administrations quand les russes sont arrivés. Ca a duré comme ça de 1939 en juin 1941. Et après quand les allemands sont arrivés ce qui s'est passé, ça tout le monde sait.

*Tell him that we suffered terribly with the Polish regime. When the Russians arrived (and believe me we paid dearly for that), all the Jews... ! We didn't have the right to say « Jews » ; « Yevrey » in Russian, it's called « Yevrey », we didn't have the right to say « You're a Jew ! », we didn't have the right to say that. And really, the Jews were in all of the administrations when the Russians arrived. It lasted like that from 1939 until June 1941. And later, when the Germans arrived, everyone knows what happened.*

« Tout le monde était content quand les polonais sont arrivés ? »

« *Was everyone happy when the Poles arrived ?* »

Hé oui ! Et comment ! Puisque je te dis, c'était.....

*Oh yes ! And how ! Since I told you... it was....*

« Comme une libération ? »

« *Like a liberation ?* »

Oui . Seulement quand ils sont partis en 1941, ils ont commencé à nous exterminer.

*Yes. Only when they left in 1941, they started to exterminate us.*

### **World War II: Zurawno and Stry**

13. [Q.43] When the Germans came to Zurawno in 1941, we know people were worried about the Nazis and the Ukrainians. Do you remember any conversations between your parents or your neighbors discussing what would happen? Were there any meetings of the Jewish community or its leaders?

Tout de suite, on n'avait tout de suite rien à manger. Les ukrainiens, ils descendaient dans les rues, ils criaient « Mort aux juifs ! Morte au laram ! » « laram », ça veut dire polonais. Tu sais les ukrainiens et les polonais ils ne pouvaient pas se sentir. Parce que là où j'habitais, d'origine, ce n'était pas la Pologne. Enfin bon, quand ils sont arrivés les allemands... Comme c'est une petite ville, j'ai vu juste trois allemands sur des chevaux qui sont arrivés. Et après dès le lendemain, écoute, on ne pouvait pas sortir dehors. Tout de suite il n'y avait pas trop à manger. Je me suis débrouillé, j'allais la nuit dans les champs, je ramenaient quelques pommes de terre avec la main. Et j'amenais ça à la maison pour manger. Et après quand il y a eu des assassinats dans la ville, j'ai été obligé d'aller travailler au dehors de la ville. Sans être payé ! Du matin au soir, sur les chaussées, à casser des trucs, enfin des trucs que tout le monde sait faire. J'avais pourtant faim. Au bout de quelque temps c'était insupportable. Mon père il restait allongé toute la journée. À force de ne pas manger, ça a enflé, là, la cheville. Le pauvre. Et puis c'était comme ça jusqu'à... On en parlait, mais on ne voulait pas croire entre nous, on a dit quand même ça arrivera pas comme ça de nous exterminer. On savait qu'on aurait des époques horribles..

Mais à ce point-là... Et ça a duré comme ça jusqu'en 1942. Au mois de juillet. Moi j'étais à 20 km. Et mes parents étaient à la maison. Alors ma mère et ma sœur ont été prises tout de suite. Je crois même qu'on les a exterminées. Parce que la gare elle était à 11 km, alors moi je sais pas, je te dis, j'étais à 20 km. Mais je me demande si elles n'ont pas été assassinées comme ça sur place par les ukrainiens. Et après c'était horrible horrible. Quand je suis arrivé, après ce massacre-là, je suis revenu quand même à Zurawno à pied. Et quand je suis revenu, j'ai vu que personne n'était là, à part peut-être une cinquantaine de personnes, on nous a fourrés tous dans le même coin et un camion est venu nous chercher et nous a emmenés dans le ghetto à Stry.

*Right away, we didn't have anything to eat. The Ukrainians, they took to the streets ; they shouted « Death to the Jews ! Death to the Laram ! », « Laram », that means Polish. You know the Ukrainians and the Poles couldn't see eye to eye. Because where I lived, originally, it wasn't Poland. Well ok, when the Germans arrived... Since it was a small town, I saw only 3 Germans on horses who arrived. And a few days later, listen, we couldn't go outside. Right away there wasn't too much to eat. I got by ; I went to the fields at night ; I pulled up a few potatoes by hand. And I took them back to the house to eat. And later when there were executions in the town, I had to go work outside of the town. Without being paid ! From morning until night, along the roads, breaking things up, stuff that everyone knew how to do. I was so hungry. After a while it was intolerable. My father stayed prostrate the whole day. By force of hunger, his ankle swelled. Poor thing. And it was like that until... We talked about it, but we didn't want to believe it amongst ourselves ; we told ourselves that it would never happen to us that we would be exterminated.*

*We knew that they were horrible times... But at that time... and it stayed like that until 1942. Until the month of July. I was 20 km away and my parents were at home. My mother and my sister were taken immediately. I think they exterminated them. Because the train station was 11 km away, so I don't know, I tell you, I was 20 km away. But I wonder if they weren't killed on the spot by Ukrainians. And after that it was horrible, just horrible. When I arrived after that massacre, I came back to Zurawno on foot. And when I came back, I saw that nobody was there ; partly because they gathered about fifty of us all together in the same corner and a truck came to pick us up and take us to the ghetto in Stryy.*

« Ces 50 personnes s'étaient cachées pendant l'Aktion? »

« *Did these 50 people hide during the Aktion ?* »

Oui après la guerre quand j'ai écrit à la fille, à l'Ukrainienne qui était à l'école avec ma sœur, elle m'a écrit « il n'y a personne, personne de juifs n'est plus là. » Alors moi dans mon idée je croyais que tout le monde était exterminé, mais si j'avais su qu'il y avait quelques juifs en Israël tu penses bien. J'avais 40 ans quand je suis arrivé la première fois en Israël. Ils n'avaient même pas 50 ans. Mais seulement il fallait savoir. J'aurais été tellement content. Ca m'aurait drôlement fait plaisir.

*Yes, after the way when I wrote to the girl, to the Ukrainian who was in school with my sister, she wrote to me « There isn't anyone left ; none of the Jews are there anymore. » So in my head, I believed that everyone had been exterminated, but if I had known that there were some Jews in Israel, it would have been better. I was 40 when I went to Israel for the first time. They weren't yet 50 years old. But I had to have known. I would have been so happy. It would have really made me happy.*

“Juste avant que les Allemands arrivent, vous saviez qu'ils arrivaient? »

« *Just before the Germans arrived, did you know they were coming ?* »

Juste avant l'Aktion, je savais que ce serait pour nous exterminer. Moi j'étais à 20km quand il y a eu cette grande Aktion. Une fois l'Aktion terminée, tu peux déjà marcher de nouveau, on était obligé de ramasser les corps morts.

*Just before the Aktion, I knew that it was to exterminate us. I was 20 km away when the big Aktion happened. When the Aktion was over, you had to walk around again ; you had to gather the dead bodies.*

« L'Aktion, ça se passait comment? »

« *What was the Aktion like ?* »

C'était mettre les gens dans un wagon et les envoyer se faire gazer... à Aushwitz, à Maidenek. Les gazer... C'est horrible...

*They put the people in a train car and sent them to be gassed... to Auschwitz, to Maidenek. Gas them... it's horrible.*

14. What do you remember about the *Judenrat* in Zurawno?

Non il n'y en avait pas, le *Judenrat* c'était à Stryy. Je m'en rappelle drôlement mais pas à Zurawno. Parce que dans les petites villes comme ça, tous les gens, dans les petites villes, les petits villages, ceux qui n'avaient pas été pris, on les ramassaient pour les amener dans le ghetto à Stryy. La

plupart était fusillée comme ça dans des bois, dans des trucs pareils. Surtout en Ukraine. Pas en Pologne, à Varsovie. Tu sais à Kiev, la principale ville d'Ukraine, en une journée, ils ont ramassés, ça a été fait par des ukrainiens (ils avaient l'autorisation), c'était que des jeunes de 16-18 ans, on leur donnait des carabines, ils ont fait sortir 30000 juifs à Kiev. Ils étaient tous comme ça, assassinés.

*There wasn't any (In Zurawno), that was in Stryy. I don't remember very much about it, but it wasn't in Zurawno. Because in the small towns like that, all the people, in the small towns, the small villages, the ones who hadn't been taken, they gathered them up to take them to the ghetto in Stryy. The majority were shot just like that in the woods, in similar places. Especially in Ukraine. Not in Poland, in Warsaw. You know in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, in one day, they gathered up, this was done by the Ukrainians (they had the authority), only young people between 16-18 years old ; they gave them rifles ; they made them take out 30,000 Jews in Kiev. They were all killed, just like that.*

«Ils ont fait sortir ces 30000 juifs du ghetto ? »

« *They made them take 30,000 Jews out of the ghetto ?* »

De Kiev, il y avait énormément de juifs à Kiev. C'est pour ça, les juifs ukrainiens, ils sont morts la plupart assassinés sur place.

*In Kiev ; there was an enormous amount of Jews in Kiev. That's why the Ukrainian Jews were mostly killed on the spot.*

« Il y avait un Judenrat à Stryy ? »

« *There was a Judenrat in Stryy ?* »

80 policiers juifs avec le bandeau jaune ici (autour du bras). Ils venaient chercher des juifs pour les déporter. Et tu sais quoi, quand il n'y avait vraiment plus de juifs du tout, j'ai assisté, j'étais caché : tous les policiers juifs sont passés à la mitraillette. Par les Allemands ! Qu'est-ce que tu crois!

*80 Jewish policemen with the yellow band here (around the arm). They came looking for Jews in order to deport them. And you know what, when there weren't really many more Jews at all, I witnessed this, I was hidden : all of the Jewish policemen were passed in front of a submachine gun. By the Germans ! Can you believe it !*

15. [Q.46] After the large *aktion* of the summer/fall of 1942, you were in Khodoriv and you said you had to bury the bodies. Do you remember where you buried the victims of that *aktion*? Do you remember hearing where they buried the victims of the *aktion* in Zurawno?



Je travaillais dans une gare. On m'a emmené là avec beaucoup de juifs de mon village. C'était une gare de triage. Tu sais, il y a beaucoup de marchandises pour la guerre qui passaient par là pour aller en Russie. Pour la guerre.

*I worked in a train station. They took me there with a lot of the Jews from my village. It was a triage station. You know, there were a lot of war supplies that passed through there on their way to Russia. For the war.*

«Tu as dû enterrer des corps ? »

« *Did you have to bury bodies ?* »

Oui. Il y avait un truc avec deux roues pour poser les corps( charrette). Ils étaient blancs, tout blancs. Ils avaient mis un produit, blanc comme ça.

*Yes. There was a thing on two wheels to place the bodies in (a cart). They were white ; all white. They had created a product, white like that.*

« Certains étaient assassinés sur place ? »

« *Were some killed on the spot ?* »

Surtout en Ukraine. Où j'étais, c'était énormément sur place. A chaque fois quand j'étais caché avec des juifs, c'est toujours moi qui restais vivant. Et ceux-là ils étaient exterminés tout de suite. Tu penses bien qu'ils ne vont pas prendre...on était par exemple 21, ça fait 20, la première fois qu'on a été découvert, et bien ceux là ils passaient à la mitraillette. Ils ne vont pas faire venir des trains pour 20. Les trains étaient bondés.

*Epecially in Ukraine. Where I was, it was overwhelmingly on the spot. Each time when I was hidden with Jews, it was always me who stayed alive. And the others were killed immediately. You know they didn't want to take, for example, there were 21 of us ; that made 20 ; the first time that we were discovered ; they passed most in front of the submachine gun. They didn't want to have to bring trains for 20. The trains were packed.*

« Tu as enterré des corps ? Où ? »

« *You buried bodies ? Where ?* »

Dans un fossé qui était creusé en dehors de la ville. Et si il n'y avait pas eu ça, je ne serais pas là non plus ! Tu vois ! Quand l'Aktion a été terminée, ils sont venus parce qu'on travaillait dans une gare ; Et comme on est retourné, ils nous ont pris pour ramasser les corps. Parce que s'ils nous avaient pas pris, il y avait un autre SS qui était là à côté qui a dit « Je vais les tuer maintenant ». Il a son copain à côté qui a dit « Mais non, sinon c'est qui qui va ramasser les corps ? » C'est ce qui nous a sauvés.

*In a ditch that was dug outside of the town. And if that wasn't there , I wouldn't have been there either ! You see ! When the Aktion was finished, they came because we worked in a train station, and since we returned, they took us to gather the bodies. Because if they hadn't taken us, there was another SS who was there standing on the side who said « I'm going to kill them now. » His friend next to him said « No, if so who is going to gather the bodies ? » He's the one who saved us.*

« Les corps ont été juste mis dans un fossé ? Enterrés ? »

« *The bodies were just put into a ditch ? Buried ?* »

Ils ne les recouvraient pas tellement parce qu'il fallait en mettre par la suite d'autres... C'est incroyable.

*They didn't really cover them up because they had to put other bodies in there later.... It's unbelievable.*

"A Zurawno, tu sais où ont été enterrés les corps?"

« *In Zurawno, do you know where the bodies were buried ?* »

Je t'ai dit pourquoi. En 1942, je n'y étais pas, moi je crois qu'ils ne les ont pas emmenés parce que la gare, il y a avait 11km. D'après moi ils les ont massacrés comme 9a.

*I just told you. In 1942, I wasn't there, I thought that they hadn't brought them because the train station was 11 km away. If you ask me they massacred them right there.*

« Et où ont été enterrés les corps? »

« *And where were the bodies buried ?* »

Dans un fossé sûrement... Parce que les juifs qui étaient survivants ils s'étaient cachés. En 42, tout ce qui est resté comme juif à Zurawno, on nous a emmenés à Stryy. Dans le ghetto.

*In a ditch, surely... Because the surviving Jews had hidden themselves. In 42, everyone who stayed Jewish in Zurawno, they took us to Stryy. To the ghetto.*

« Où s'était cache ton père? »

« *Where was your father hidden ?* »

Je ne sais pas, je n'étais pas avec lui. Mais j'avais un oncle, le frère de ma mère, qui était caché, je sais où. Et c'est lui qui a dit, « tu sais ta mère et genia (ma sœur ), elles ont été prises par quelqu'un dont la fille était à l'école avec ta sœur. » Il a vu il était caché. « Ta mère elle faisait ça (geste du coude) et il l'a prise et comme à côté il y avait d'autres ukrainiens, ils les ont emmenées avec tous ceux qui avaient été attrapés, pour les emmener, d'après moi, à Auschwitz ; mais c'est moi qui crois ça, ils étaient exterminés, comme la plupart des bourgs en Ukraine, tu sais ; ils ne vont pas s'amuser, si il ya 10 ou 15.... Les amener.... Tout ceux-là étaient exterminés par des mitraillettes...

*I don't know ; I wasn't with him. But I had an uncle, the brother of my mother, who was hidden, and I know where. And he's the one who told me, « You know my mother and Genia (my sister), they were taken by someone whose daughter was in school with your sister. » He saw this while he was hidden.*

*« Your mother did this (elbow nudge), and he took her, and since nearby there were other Ukrainians, he took them along with all those who had been captured, to take them, I bet, to Auschwitz ; but I'm the one that believes that ; they were exterminated, like the majority of towns in Ukraine, you know ; they didn't play with them ; if there were 10 or 15... brought them.. all the ones there were exterminated by submachine guns.*

16. When you and your family were taken to Stryy, you said there were 31 people in the truck. Do you remember anything about those other people in the truck?

On nous a mis dans un appartement, il y avait tous les juifs qui étaient exterminés, moi j'avais, avec mon père, une petite pièce, et les autres ils étaient, attends.. 4, 5, 6, 7 personnes. La pièce était plus grande, mais seulement ,n'importe comment, il n'y avait rien à manger, il fallait se débrouiller. On se débrouillait Ha oui, et puis, un de ceux qui étaient 7, il y avait deux frères, le plus jeune, il est mort, tu sais pourquoi ? Parce qu'il avait mangé du boudin noir, c'était pourri, pas frais, et bien il est mort, le pauvre, toute la nuit, il gémissait, il criait, tu ne peux pas savoir, et on ne pouvait rien faire. Et qu'est ce que tu veux faire ? Et après justement ils sont venus, ils ont amenés le corps, parce que tous les jours il y avait des morts, par la faim, par le froid...

*They put us in an apartment ; there were all the Jews who had been exterminated ; I had a small room with my father, and the others, there were, wait... 4, 5, 6, 7 people. The room was bigger, just, there was nothing to eat ; we had to manage any way we could. We got by, oh yes, and a 7 year old, he had 2 brothers, the youngest, he died ; do you know why ? Because he had eaten blood sausage ; it was rotten, not fresh, and he died, the poor thing, the whole night he shivered, he screamed, you can't even imagine, and we couldn't do anything. And what would you want to do ? After they came, they took the body, because every day there were more deaths, from hunger, from cold...*

« Tu connaissais les gens avec qui tu es venu de Zurawno ? »

*Do you know the people you came with from Zurawno ?*

Oui je les connaissais. Les survivants. Il y avait 2, 8... ma tante avec les filles ca fait 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, ben on devait être dans les 25. Il y en avait peut-être d'autres, mais moi j'en ai vu 25, 26 qui étaient là.

*Yes I knew them. The survivors. There were 2, 8... my aunt with her daughters that made 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 ; so it must have been about 25. Maybe there were others , but I saw 25 or 26 there.*

17. Do you remember the *Judenrat* in Stryy?

18. [Q.47-48] Tell us what you remember of the people who were with you in the Stryy ghetto. What do you remember of the *aktionen* there? You told us a story about when you hid in a house during an *aktion*, and then found some gold and jewelry hidden there by one of the Jews who apparently was taken away. Can you tell us more about that story?

A Stryy, il y avait les survivants de Stryy, plus tous ceux qui sont arrivés des alentours, les survivants de tous les villages autour. On était dans des conditions horribles. Il y avait des poux. Moi-même... est-ce que je lui ai dit ? Moi-même j'ai eu le typhus. Mes cheveux sont tombés, après ils ont aussitôt repoussés. Enfin, j'ai eu de la chance, et comme j'étais encore très jeune, peut-être que ça, ça ma sauvé.

*In Stryy ; there were the survivors from Stryy itself, plus all those who had arrived from the surrounding areas, the survivors of all the surrounding towns. We were in horrible conditions. There were lice. And myself... Did I tell him ? I had typhus. My hair fell out, then later it grew back. I was lucky, and since I was still very young, maybe that saved me.*

« Comment se passaient les *Aktion* ? »

« *What were the Aktionen like ?* »

Ils ne prévenaient pas, mais nous on savait par quelqu'un, alors à chaque fois on allait se cacher. Ceux qu'ils découvraient ils les amenaient. Et une fois terminé, les survivants ressortaient. Moi j'ai fait ça jusqu'à la liquidation totale du ghetto.

*They didn't warn us, but we knew from someone, so each time we would go hide. The ones they discovered they took. And once it was over, the survivors came back out. I did that until the complete liquidation of the ghetto.*

« Tu changeais de cachette à chaque fois? »

*Did you change your hiding place each time ?*

Oui, je changeais. Et comme il ma demandé, dans une cachette, j'ai trouvé un petit sac avec de l'or, avec des pièces de 20 et de 10 dollars en or.

*Yes, I changed it. And like he asked me, in one hiding place, I found a little sack of gold, with 10 and 20 dollar gold pieces.*

« Que faisais-tu la journée, au quotidien ? »

*« What did you usually do during the day ? »*

Je faisais... c'est tellement invraisemblable que... qu'est ce que je faisais ? J'allais, je revenais... heureusement, quand même, après j'ai eu la chance que les 2 3 ukrainiens et polonaises que j'ai vus et qui m'ont aidé, sans eux je sais pas si je serais encore là. Et la pauvre elle a payé de sa vie pour ça.

*I did... it's really implausible that... what did I do ? I went off, I came back, fortunately I had been so lucky that the 2 or 3 Ukrainians and Poles that I had seen had helped me ; without them I don't know if I would still be here. And the poor woman, she paid with her life for that.*

« Vous aviez des discussions dans le ghetto ? »

*Did you discuss anything with each other in the ghetto ?*

Tout le monde savait qu'on était condamné a mort, 24 heures sur 24.

*Everyone knew they were condemned to death, 24 out of 24 hours.*

« Et tu as trouvé de l'argent dans un endroit ? »

*You found money in one place ?*

On était combien ? 4 et 4 8 9 10 11 12 et 4 16, on était 21! Alors tu vois... Ca c'était la première fois qu'on nous avait découverts. Parce qu'il y avait un petit garçon qui a dû crier. Et quelqu'un qui est passé a entendu, alors ils ont compris que la cachette était là.

*How many of us were there ? 4 and 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 4, 16, there were 21 of us ! So you see... That was the first time they found us. Because there was a little boy who had to yell. And someone passing by heard, so they realized the hiding place was there.*

« C'était quoi la cachette ? »

*What was the hiding place ?*

C'est nous qui l'avions faite ; on a eu de la chance On regardait on voyait la fenêtre on pensait pas qu'il y avait une cachette derrière. Jusqu'à ce qu'il fasse du bruit. Moi tu sais comment je me suis sauvé ? Parce que quand on est descend en bas, il y a deux trappes, une porte comme ça qui s'ouvre comme ça pour aller à la cave. C'était toujours fermé. Juste quand nous on est descendu, la moitié de la porte était ouverte. Alors j'en ai profité, j'ai sauté là-dedans. Parce que... et voila ! Tu sais, là maintenant... Dans cette période, il y avait tellement de trucs, que je n'arrive pas à me concentrer...

*We made it ; we were lucky. If you looked, you saw the window and you didn't think there was a hiding place behind. Unless someone made noise. Do you know how I saved myself ? When you would go downstairs, there were two trapdoors, one door that opened like that to go to the cellar. It was always closed. When they brought us downstairs, the door was halfway open. So I took advantage of that ; I jumped inside. Because... well there you go ! You know, at that time there, there were so many things that I never managed to concentrate on anything...*

« Et le sac d'or ? »

« *And the sack of gold ?* »

J'ai donné ça à la polonaise . La pauvre... Je ne sais pas moi je n'ai pas vu. Mais moi je crois que. .. Ecoute, avec ce quelle a fait, ça s'était la condamnation à mort, de cacher des juifs...

Alors que je suis encore là tu vois... Même moi, il y a des moments, je me dis... mais je n'étais pas le seul.. tous les juifs... on n'a jamais vu ça. Et je t'ai dit, après la libération, on pensait pas à ça. Tu te rends compte. Peut-être les gens qui avait 50 60 ans oui. Mais ceux qui avaient mon âge, que j'ai rencontrés a paris, on ne parlait pas de ça.

*I gave that to the Polish woman. The poor thing... I don't know, I didn't see it. But I believe that... listen, what she had done meant condemnation to death, hiding Jews...*

*The fact that I'm still here, you see... Even me, there are moments when I tell myself...but I wasn't the only one. All the Jews. We had never seen anything like it. And I told you, after the liberation, we didn't think about it anymore. You realize. Maybe the people who were 50, 60 years old, yes. But the ones my age, that I met in Paris, we never talked about it.*

« Peux tu raconter quand tu t'es caché dans un sac de linge sale, dans le ghetto ? »

« *Can you talk about when you were hidden in a sack of dirty laundry, in the ghetto ?* »

Pourtant il y avait un chien ! Il y avait quelque chose pour me protéger ! Ce n'est pas possible autrement ! Imagine toi ! Quand ils ont découvert la premier cachette, je savais qu'il y avait une autre cachette avec des juifs, et je suis rentré dans cette cachette-là. Il y a avait justement un juif qui venait d'en sortir, un père qui était avec sa fille, il est sorti et il s'est donné la mort parce qu'il ne pouvait plus supporter. Et moi-même je suis sorti aussi.

*« There was a dog ! There must have been something protecting me ! Otherwise it wouldn't have been possible ! Can you imagine ! When they discovered the first hiding place, I knew there was another hiding place with Jews, and I went to that one. There was a Jew who had just left it, a father who was with his daughter, he left and killed himself because he couldn't stand it anymore. And I left that hiding place too.*

« C'était quoi comme cachette ? »

« *What kind of hiding place was it ?* »

Il fallait rentrer par l'armoire et en-dessous il y avait une espèce de trappe qu'ils avaient faite. Imagine, ils auraient mis quelque chose par-dessus, on aurait étouffé là-bas. Et ben ils l'ont découverte ! Et moi j'étais juste sorti ! Peut-être 10 minutes avant ! J'étais au premier étage. Je regarde : un SS, avec un chien,. Il y avait un sac gros comme ça, un truc où on met le linge sale, je me suis mis là-dedans. Tu te rends compte ! Alors. Je te dis... et puis il y avait encore un inox. Et puis encore, je suis tombé une nuit sur une femme avec ses 3 gosses qui faisaient du bruit. C'était la nuit je suis allé voir, j'ai dit « Ecoutez, vous savez, si votre gosse il fait du bruit vous allez vous faire découvrir. » Elle ma dit, la pauvre elle me dit, « Qu'est-ce que vous voulez que je vous dise, mon mari il m'a laissée avec les gosses et puis il est parti, il ne pouvait pas supporter. » Je sais pas si il était parti pour longtemps, si il n'avait pas été pris par les allemands. C'est ce quelle ma dit la pauvre... « Il ma laissée avec les gosses... »

*You had to enter through the wardrobe, and underneath there was a sort of trapdoor that they had made. Imagine, they had put something up above and we were stuffed in there. And they discovered it ! And I had just left prior to that ! Maybe 10 minutes prior ! I was on the first floor. I watched : an SS, with a dog. There was a big laundry sack, a thing they put all the dirty laundry in, and I hid myself inside of it. Do you realize ! So... I told you... And then there was the inox (translator's note: something made out of stainless steel... a duct?). And then, one night I came across a woman with her 3 kids who were making noise. It was nighttime, and I went to see what was going on, and I said « Listen, you know, if your kid makes noise you're going to get yourselves discovered. » She told me, the poor thing, she told me, « What do you want me to do ; my husband left me with the kids and ran off ; he couldn't stand it. » I didn't know if he ran off for long, or if he had been taken by the Germans. That's what she told me, the poor thing... « He left me with the kids... »*

« Et le père s'était suicidé ? Comment ? »

« *And the father committed suicide ? How ?* »

Moi je suis sorti, je lai vu mort déjà. A côté. Il s'est suicidé, je ne sais pas avec quoi il s'est suicidé. Et justement, là-dedans, il y avait la fille (elle a été prise) la fille du frère à Chemush qui avait 3-4 ans de plus que Chemuch. Cette fille-là sortait avec le frère de Chemuch. Avant la guerre. Quand il n'y avait pas encore les allemands. Et la pauvre elle était dedans... alors, elle a été prise... déportée. A Stryy, énormément, ils ont tué comme ça.

*I went out, and I saw him already dead. He had killed himself, I don't know how he did it. And then, inside, there was the daughter (she had been taken), the daughter of Chemush's brother who was about 3 or 4 years older than Chemush. This girl went out with Chemush's brother. Before the war. Before the Germans were there. And the the poor thing was inside... so she had been taken... deported. In Stryy, overwhelmingly, that's how they killed them.*

« Peux-tu raconter la fois où tu t'es caché sous une couverture ? »

« *Can you talk about the time when you hid under a blanket ?* »

Tu vois, il passé devant moi. Dans un lit, oui. Recouvert. Il passé... C'est pour ça que je te dis... je crois que si quelqu'un me racontait ça comme je raconte maintenant, je me dirais "il ment comme il respire, c'est pas possible" est-ce que tu t'imagines, pendant 4 ans, être condamné à mort, et survivre... alors tu sais...

*He passed right in front of me. In a bed, yes. Covered up. He passed... That's why I tell you... I think if someone told me this like I'm telling now, I would tell myself, « He lies as easily as he breathes ; it's impossible, » can you imagine, for 4 years, to be condemned to death and survive... do you know...*

19. How did you get separated from your father?

Je suis resté avec mon père quand on nous a amenés, les survivants de Zurawno. Malgré le fait que j'étais à Khodoriv, à 20 km, mais j'étais revenu à Zurawno. J'ai été séparé quand ils ont découvert la première cachette. Ha et j'ai oublié de te dire. Ils ont été fusillés tout de suite. Tu sais pourquoi? Il fallait qu'ils se déshabillent, et bien tous les vêtements qu'il portait je les ai vus dans un endroit. Ca je m'en rappelle, surtout les vêtements de mon père qui étaient complètement dans un état épouvantable... est ce que tu te rends compte, raconter des choses pareils.. non mais c'est presque... je sais pas quoi dire... et en plus de ça, si encore je pouvais bien les classer vraiment... ça sonnerait bien : dire « après », et « avant »..

*I stayed with my father when they brought us, the Zurawno survivors. Even though I was in Khodoriv, 20 km away, but I came back to Zurawno. We were separated when they found the first hiding place. Oh and I forgot to tell you. They were shot immediately. Do you know why ? They made them remove all their clothing, and I saw all of the clothes they'd been wearing in a pile. I remember that, especially my father's clothes that had been in a dreadful state... do you realize, to tell a similar story.. no, but it's almost.. I don't know what to say... and even more than that, if I could really classify all of the stories, it would be in terms of « after » and « before. »*

20. [Q.50] In an earlier interview, you told us that a Ukrainian man and his daughter directed you to a Polish woman who took you in. You said that you stayed away from the Polish woman's house during the day, and went to her house to eat at night. It was that woman who was betrayed by her first floor (or upstairs?) neighbor. Where did you hide during the day?

Dans la journée, non, j'étais caché, j'avais une cachette, en dehors. Il n'y avait plus de ghetto. On pouvait rentrer d'accord, mais il n'y avait personne. Alors dans la journée, justement, cette polonaise-là elle ma donné une adresse pour me cacher dans la journée. C'était à 1 km de Stryy, je me rappelle.

*During the day, no, I was hidden, I had a hiding place, outside. There was no more ghetto. We could go back there, but there was nobody left. So during the day, this Polish woman there had given me an address where I could hide during the day. It was 1 km from Stryy, I remember.*

« Ce n'était pas risqué de marcher un km tous les jours ? »

« Wasn't it risky to walk 1 km each day ? »

Mais il faisait noir. Je vais te dire, j'ai eu la chance, je crois, je me fais peut-être des illusions : je n'avais pas du tout le physique d'un juif à cette époque (peut-être maintenant non plus je ne sais pas). Si c'était à Zurawno, je n'aurais pas pu, parce que tout le monde se connaissait, les ukrainiens, les polonais, les juifs, tandis que là... Ha oui ! Ho ! La pauvre polonaise, elle s'était débrouillée. Elle avait

son mari qui était en Allemagne pour le travail force (comme en France on prenait des français pour le travail). Alors je ne sais pas comment était son mari, elle m'a donné deux pantalons, bien, comme ça, avec des chemises de son mari. Je les ai mis Parce que comme j'allais pendant un certain temps tous les soirs chez elle, quand il faisait noir... Jusqu'à un certain jour, où celle du premier étage elle s'est dit, ça ne peut être qu'un juif, et qui a dénoncé. Moi personnellement je n'ai pas vu si on l'a tuée, mais je suis sûr que oui parce que ça c'était radical : tu aides un juif, tu lui donnes à manger, tu es passé par les armes...

*But it was dark out. I'll tell you, I was lucky, I believe, I fooled people : I didn't have a Jewish physique at all at that time (maybe not now, I don't know). If it was in Zurawno, I couldn't have done it, because everyone knew everyone else, the Ukrainians, the Poles, the Jews, whereas there.. Oh yes ! Oh ! The poor Polish woman, she managed to get by. Her husband was in Germany doing forced labor (like in France when they took French people for work). So I don't know what her husband was like ; she gave me two pairs of pants and shirts that belonged to her husband. I put them on because since I went to her house every night for a while, when it was dark... Until a certain day, when the lady from the first floor said to herself, « That has to be a Jew, » and she reported us. I didn't see personally if they killed her, but I'm sure they did because that was serious : you help a Jew, you give him something to eat, you go in front of the gun.*

« Où était ta cachette la journée ? »

*Where was your hiding place during the day ?*

Ca me revient ! J'avais une autre polonaise ! Tu vois ! C'est pour ça c'est trop compliqué ! J'avais aussi une famille d'ukrainiens, drôlement gentils avec moi. Et c'est eux qui mont donné une autre cachette. J'ai été quand même découvert, mais par les propriétaires. Ils mettaient le blé et tout ça, et ils ne venaient pas l'hiver, presque jamais. Alors j'étais là-bas caché. Et un jour il est venu. Ecoute, je ne comprends pas, il avait peut-être... tout jeune, 25 ans;. Et là je me suis mis a courir, comme ça, j'ai eu de la chance qu'il ne se soit pas mis à courir après moi. Il aurait pu me... Tu vois, des trucs comme ça.. Mais je te dis, il faut savoir raconter, parce que quelqu'un qui raconte ça bien et tout, on peut écrire un livre. Il y a des livres sur cette période.

*I just remembered ! I had another Polish woman ! You see ! That's why this is too complicated ! I also had a Ukrainian family ; they were so nice to me. And they were the ones who gave me another hiding place. Even so I was discovered, but by the owners of the place. They stacked the hay there ; they rarely came during the winter. So I hid there. And one day he came. Listen, I don't understand, he was about 25 years old, very young. And I set off running, and I was lucky that he didn't set off running after me. He could have... You see, things like that... But I tell you, you have to know how to tell it, because someone who could tell this well could write a book. There are books on this period.*

« Et après la mort de la polonaise, qu'as-tu fait? »

« *And what did you do after the death of the Polish woman ?* »

Après je n'y suis plus revenu. Après, comment s'est arrivé, je me suis retrouvé en Hongrie d'abord, en Autriche après et en Allemagne après... jusqu'à la libération.



*After that I didn't return. After, what happened was that I found myself in Hungary first, then in Austria, then in Germany... until the Liberation.*

21. After you escaped from the SS and Ukrainian and broke your arm, where did you go? Was that when you were arrested and put on a train to Belzec, the train you escaped from?

Et puis j'avais le bras comme ça... holala tu vois ! Ca c'était le jour quand elle m'a dénoncée. Celle qui habite au premier étage, que je n'ai jamais vue. Quand elle ma dénoncé, ils sont rentrés tout de suite elle a mis la nappe de la table sur moi pour me cacher. Quand j'ai vu les deux bottes, hop je suis sorti par la fenêtre. Ils mont rattrapé. Et là ! Heureusement à l'époque je parlais couramment l'ukrainien. Parce que j'ai été à l'école, où on apprenait l'ukrainien. Et ben ils se sont laissés..., j'ai dit je connaissais une cachette, ils savaient bien que ça pouvait être vrai, parce que les juifs, ceux qui avait un peu de moyens ils amenaient ce qui pouvaient amener a part l'argent. Tu vois, je suis monté avec eux. Ca aussi, on va dire « Il raconte des histoires ». J'ai sauté, malgré le bras cassé je me suis trainé jusqu'à une cachette.

*Then my arm was like this...you see ! That was the day she reported me. The lady who lived on the first floor that I had never seen. When she reported me, they came immediately and she put the tablecloth over me to hide me. When I saw the two boots, I darted out the window. They caught me. Fortunately at the time I spoke fluent Ukrainian. Because in school, we learned Ukrainian. They let themselves... I said, I know a hiding place, and they knew that could very well be true, because the Jews, those who had some means brought whatever else they could, apart from money. I went upstairs with them. See, that too, you'd say « He's making up stories. » I jumped, and in spite of my broken arm I crawled to a hiding place.*

« Où était cette cachette ? »

« Where was this hiding place ? »

C'était tout de suite après la ville.

*It was just outside of the town.*

« Tu as sauté d'un train. Comment t'es-tu retrouvé dans le train ? »

« You jumped from a train. How did you find yourself in the train ? »

Comment ca s'est passé... Imagine-toi un moment donné j'ai dit « Ho je vais peut-être retourner à Zurawno.. Il y avait 32 km jusqu'à Zurawno. Comme j'ai vu qu'il y avait beaucoup de bois j'ai commencé à aller comme ça. Et puis d'un seul coup, il y avait des prisonniers russes.

*How did that happen... Imagine a moment where I said « Maybe I'll return to Zurawno... » It was 32 km back to Zurawno. I saw that there were a lot of woods and I began to go back through there. And suddenly, there were some Russian prisoners.*

« Ca c'est après le train. Mais comment es-tu arrive dans le train ? »

« That was after the train. But how did you end up on the train ? »

Ha oui, à cette époque-là on était dans un camp, où on mettait les juifs. On m'a rattrapé pour la troisième fois. On m'a rattrapé et puis les ukrainiens qui habitaient juste à coté, ils nous ont gardés. Je n'étais pas tout seul là. J'étais avec un type, un juif.

*Oh yes, at that time we were in a camp where they put the Jews. They caught me for the third time. They caught me and the Ukrainians who lived nearby guarded us. I wasn't alone there. I was with a guy, a Jew.*

“Comment t’es-tu retrouvé là?”

« *How did you end up there ?* »

J’allais avec ce type-là. Il était de là-bas, il avait un paysan qui lui donnait à manger, alors on est parti quand il a commencé à faire noir. On est arrivé, parce qu’il y avait peut-être 4 ou 5 km quand même. Il lui a donné deux pains ronds je me rappelle. Et puis on est reparti pour revenir où on était dans la cachette à côté de Stryy. On était fatigué, il dit « Je m’arrête là, il y a un espèce de grenier ». Tout de suite le matin, les gosses ils sont venus jouer là bas, ils nous ont découverts ! Je me suis dit « Ca y est ce coup ci, c’est fini .. ». Et ben, je me rappelle comme aujourd’hui, il neigeait tu te rends compte, on était dehors, on n’était pas habillé chaudement. Alors, ils nous gardent, comme ça sans pistolet sans rien. Et après, qu’est-ce que je vois, il y a une voiture qui s’amène. Je me dis « Ca y est ce coup-ci .. ». Il y a un type en civil qui sort. Bon ?, il nous a embarqué dans la voiture. Je me dis « Merde, mais qu’est ce qu’il va nous faire ? » Et ben il nous a emmenés d’abord dans une prison, ça s’appelait Drohovitch( ?). De là, après il y a quelqu’un qui est venu nous chercher. Il nous a emmenés dans un camp où il n’y avait que des juifs (*A Léa : il y avait le frère à Moshe dans ce camp là*) et quand les russes ont commencé à avancer, on nous a tous mis dans un train pour nous amener. Et c’est là... il faut dire une chose, j’ai eu de la chance, dès qu’il a commencé à rouler, j’ai pu me sauver.

*I went with the guy. He was from there ; there was a farmer who fed him, so we left when it began to get dark. We arrived ; it was maybe 4 or 5 km away. He gave him two round loaves of bread, I remember. And then we left to return to our hiding place in Stryy. We were tired ; he said « I’m stopping here ; there’s a sort of attic. » Immediately in the morning, the kids came to play there and they discovered us ! I told myself « That’s it, it’s over. » And I remember like it was yesterday, it was snowing you realize, we were outside and not dressed warmly. So they guarded us without a gun, without anything. And later, I saw a car coming. I told myself, « This is it... » There was a guy in civilian clothing who got out. Okay... ? He took us in the car. I told myself « Shit ; what’s he going to do to us ? » And he took us to a prison ; it was called Drohovitch. From there, someone came to get us. He brought us to a camp with only Jews (to Léa – Moshe’s brother was in that camp ) and when the Russians began to advance, they brought all of us along in a train. And that’s where... I have to say one thing ; I was lucky ; when the train started to move, I was able to save myself.*

« Comment était la prison ? »

« *What was the prison like ?* »

Je ne suis pas resté longtemps. Ce que je me rappelle, c’est surtout, sur les murs, c’était marqué en polonais « On ne se verra plus » « Adieu ma chérie ». Des trucs comme ça partout partout. Là c’était les gens qui étaient deportés. Et c’est resté les écritures.

*I didn’t stay very long. What I remember especially is that on the walls, it was written in Polish, « We’ll never see each other again, »... « Goodbye forever, my dear. » Things like that everywhere, everywhere. Those were people who had been deported. And their messages remained.*

« Tu y étais tout seul »

« *You were there alone* »

Non. Avec ce type-là. Du train, je me suis évadé. Et je me suis dit « Où est-ce que je peux aller ? ».

*No. With that guy. I escaped from the train. And I said to myself, « Where can I go ? »*

« Avez-vous été plusieurs à sauter du train ? »

« *Were there others who jumped from the train ?* »

Il y en avait peut être d'autres aussi. Mais il y avait des SS quand même. Alors je me suis dit je vais retourner. Manque de pot, il y a les prisonniers russes avec des soldats allemands qui allaient dans l'autre sens. Je voulais me cacher mais ils m'ont vu. Ils m'ont carrément mis avec eux, comme ça.

*Maybe there were others too. But there were also SS around. So I said to myself, I'm going to return. Unfortunately, there were Russian prisoners with German soldiers who were going in the other direction. I wanted to hide but they saw me. They just took me with them.*

### **World War II: Leaving Ukraine**

22. Was it after you jumped from the train that you tried to walk back to Zurawno? Was that when you met the column of Russian prisoners?

Quand ils m'ont mis dans le truc, il y a un prisonnier qui m'a dit « Holala ! Qu'est ce que tu fais là tout seul ? tu n'aurais pas pu te cacher ? ». Vous voyez, il ne savait pas que j'étais juif. J'ai dit « Non la preuve... » Et tu sais j'ai su ça, on a été comme ça jusqu'en Hongrie

*When they put me in the thing, one prisoner said to me, « My goodness ! What are you doing there all alone ? You weren't able to hide ? » You see, he didn't know that I was Jewish. I said « No, evidently not... » You know I knew that ; we stayed that way until Hungary.*

« vous parliez russe ensemble ? »

« *Did you speak Russian together ?* »

Oui à l'époque je parlais le polonais, le russe et l'ukrainien.

*Yes, at the time I spoke Polish, Russian and Ukrainian.*

« Ils te croyaient russe ? »

« *Did they think you were Russian ?* »

Ha oui. Ha il y a un polonais il me dit « toi tu es ukrainien toi ! ». Tu vois. Et il y avait même un russe, une fois que je suis arrivé en Hongrie, il savait que j'étais juif. Parce qu'il m'avait vu travailler à Stryy, dans un truc où les avions se posaient pour aller bombarder Moscou. Il m'a dit « Ne t'en fais pas, moi je ne vais pas dire que tu es juif. »

*Oh yes, There was a Pole who said to me, « You're Ukrainian ! » You see. And there was even a Russian when I arrived in Hungary, he knew I was Jewish. Because he had seen me working in Stryy, in a place*

*where the planes were staged for going to bomb Moscow. He told me, « Don't worry, I won't tell anyone that you're Jewish. »*

Alors on s'est arrêté, on avait fait peut-être je ne sais pas combien de km, on s'est arrêté dans une grande grange. On devait être au moins 60. Ho oui. Et on a dormi sur la paille comme ça dehors. Et le lendemain on est parti comme ça jusqu'à a Hongrie.

*So we stopped ; we had gone maybe, I don't know how many km ; we stopped in a big barn. It had to be at least 60 (km). Oh yes. And we slept on the hay outside. And the following day we left for Hungary.*

« Combien d'Allemands vous gardaient ? »

« *How many Germans were guarding you ?* »

Surtout des ukrainiens, et puis deux allemands. Et puis là, je te dis on nous a amenés, ca s'appelait Yusgorod, en Hongrie. Et on a travaillé là bas. C'est là que j'ai vu le russe qui savait que j'étais juif. Et on a travaillé comme ça je ne sais pas combien de temps.

*Mostly Ukrainians, and then two Germans. And then, like I told you, they brought us to a place called Yusgorod, in Hungary. And we worked there. That's where I saw the Russian who knew that I was Jewish. And we worked there, I don't know how long.*

« Quel travail faisiez-vous? »

« *What kind of work did you do ?* »

Quel travail ? Tu sais, la chaussée les trucs comme ça... tous ces millions d'ouvriers qu'il a amenés en Allemagne pour travailler... Alors écoute, après il y a un train qui nous a embarqués et on est parti comme ça jusqu'à 60 km de Vienne en Autriche, dans un train.

*What kind of work ? You know, roadwork, things like that... All these workers they'd brought to Germany to work... Okay listen, later there was a train that took us on board, and we went 60 km from Vienna, in Austria, in a train.*

23. When you met the Russian prisoners, why did you decide to join them? Was that when you saw a Russian you knew from Stryy? Was that also when you took the alias of "Stanislas Renkasowski". Who was the real Stanislas Renkasowski?

Ha c'est à partir du moment où on nous a amenés en Hongrie. Et je me suis fais appeler comme ça. La preuve, quand je suis arrivé à paris, quand une fois j'ai dit à mes copains que je m'appelais comme ça. Pendant X temps il m'ont appelé par le petit nom, pas par le grand, par le petit nom, Stanshek ! Henri, David et tout ça ! Et bien alors je te dis après on a atterri en Autriche, dans un stalag.

*Ah, that began when they brought us to Hungary. I started calling myself that. It stuck when I arrived in Paris, when I told my friends that that was my name. During that time they called me by the nickname, not the full name, but the nickname, Stanshek ! Henri, David and everyone ! So then, I told you that later we landed in Austria, in a stalag (prisoner camp).*

« Le vrai Stanislas, tu le connaissais ? »

« *Did you know the real Stanislas ?* »

Oui. Quelqu'un à l'école, quelqu'un avec qui j'étais à l'école.

*Yes. Someone from school ; someone I went to school with.*

« Tu étais obligé de rester avec les prisonniers russes ? »

« *Did you have to stay with the Russian prisoners ?* »

Oui, et je vais te dire. Quand on nous a amenés après, d'abord en Hongrie, et puis en Autriche, en train. Et par Vienne, il y avait encore 60km de Vienne, ça s'appelait le stalag 17A.

*Yes ; I'll tell you about that. When they brought us later, first to Hungary and then to Austria, on the train. And by Vienna, it was about 60 km from Vienna ; it was called Stalag 17A.*

« Vous avez été de la Pologne en Hongrie à pieds ? »

« *You went from Poland to Hungary on foot ?* »

Ha oui, mais ce n'était pas loin de la Hongrie !

*Yes ; it wasn't far from Hungary !*

« Et entre la Hongrie et Vienne ? »

« *And between Hungary and Vienna ?* »

Alors ça c'était... je suis resté, je ne me rappelle pas exactement combien de temps. Après le train nous a emmenés en Autriche. Un stalag, où c'était leur spécialité de garder des prisonniers. Alors il y avait des anglais, à part, les russes et les polonais et les ukrainiens, à part. Alors je me rappelle les anglais ils étaient mieux que les soldats allemands. Ils recevaient des paquets, de manger, de Suisse. Uniquement les soldats anglais, pas nous. Nous on mangeait que de la saloperie. Alors je me rappelle, comme c'était séparé, mais pas tellement, on était séparé des anglais, j'allais toujours là, vers là-bas, pour avoir à manger.

*So that, ... I stayed, I don't know how exactly how long. After the train brought us to Austria. A stalag ; that was their specialty there for keeping prisoners. So there were some English there, in one part, and Russians, Poles and Ukrainians in another part. I remember the English were better than the German soldiers. They received packages, things to eat, from Switzerland. Just the English soldiers, not us. We ate slop. I remember, since it was separate, but not completely, we were separate from the English, I always went over by them, to have something to eat.*

24. [Q.51] Did you walk all the way to Hungary with these Russian prisoners?

25. What kind of work did you do while in Vienna?

Là-bas, je faisais du travail. Il fallait aller chez les fermiers. A ce moment-là, on n'était pas tellement gardé. Alors on allait chez des paysans faire leur travail, parce que leurs maris étaient au front. Le village où on faisait ce travail-là, ça s'appelait Meyenheim.

*There, I worked. We had to go to the farms. At that time, we weren't very guarded. So we went to the farms to do their work, because the husbands were on the front. The village where we did that work was called Meyenheim.*

« C'était en Allemagne ? »

« *That was in Germany ?* »

Oui.

Yes.

« Et avant, à Vienne, vous faisiez quel travail ? »

« *And before, in Vienna, what kind of work did you do ?* »

C'était un camp de prisonniers.

*It was a prisoner camp.*

« Quel travail faisiez-vous ? »

« *What kind of work did you do ?* »

Je ne me rappelle même pas. Et là, on nous a emmenés à Meyenheim. Et là il y avait une usine, de je-ne-sais-quoi, où j'ai travaillé.

« *I can't even remember. From there, they brought us to Meyenheim. And there was a factory, for I don't know what, where I worked.*

26. When you were in Germany you and your work group worked on farms, is that correct? How did the farmers treat you?

En Allemagne, je me rappelle, le village où on allait, ça s'appelait Meyenheim, et en plus de ça, je vais te dire une chose c'est à Meyenheim que j'ai vu un écriteau en grand, je ne sais pas si c'était un atelier ou une usine, exactement mon nom ! Eichen ! Exactement ! EICHEN. Et puis d'abord je vais te dire. Là je suis resté... Et tu sais quoi, la dernière fois quand j'ai reçu du courrier d'Allemagne, il y a la rue qui s'appelle Eichenstrass. C'est à Dusseldorf. Tu te rends compte ! Alors ! On dirait que toi tu es une allemande !

*In Germany, I remember, the village where we went was called Meyenheim, and more than that, I'll tell you something, it was in Meyenheim that I saw a big sign, I don't know if it was a workshop or a factory, of exactly my last name! Eichen! Exactly! EICHEN. And then, I'll tell you. I stayed there... and you know what, the last time I received mail from Germany, there was a street named Eichenstrass. It's in Dusseldorf. Do you realize! (to Juliet) People would say you're a German!*

“Quel était ton travail dans les fermes?”

« *What kind of work did you do on the farms ?* »

Il fallait s'occuper des bêtes, nettoyer des trucs.

*We had to take care of the animals, clean things.*

« tu étais libres ? »

« *Were you free ?* »

J'ai toujours eu la peur que quelqu'un découvre que j'étais juif. C'est tout ce que j'avais... j'allais même à l'église, tu vois.

*I was always afraid that someone would discover I was Jewish. That was the only thing... I even went to church, you know.*

« Tu pensais à t'enfuir ? »

« *Did you think about running away ?* »

Mais non, là comme j'étais là, chez les paysans, ils me donnaient à manger tout ça. Je me disais, maintenant j'attends que la guerre soit finie. Bon on ne savait pas trop. Je n'étais pas au courant. Je ne savais pas qu'ils étaient presque là... C'est pour ça que je me disais "je ne sais pas où aller", je ne connaissais rien.

*No, the way I was there, with the peasants, they gave me food to eat and all that. I told myself, «Now I'll wait until the war is over. » I didn't know too much. I wasn't up-to-date. I didn't know they were almost there... That's why I said to myself « I don't know where to go ;» I wasn't familiar with anything.*

« Comment se passaient vos relations avec les fermiers ? »

« *How did you get along with the farmers ?* »

Les fermiers... A la fin, quand les Américains sont arrivés, je ne savais pas. J'y suis quand même retourné une journée, je ne sais pas pourquoi. « Ha vous savez ! Moi j'ai une fille, elle a 17 ans, si des fois vous voulez rester avec ma fille... » Non mais tu te rends compte ! moi j'en avais 19 je crois. Pour te dire...si il savait ce que je pensais là : « ils mont tué ». Et là je suis resté jusqu'à ce que les américains arrivent.

*The farmers... in the end, when the Americans arrived, I didn't know. I even returned one day, I don't know why. « Oh you know ! I have a daughter, she's 17, if you wanted to stay with my daughter... » No, but do you realize ! I was 19 I think. To tell you... if he had known what I was thinking at that moment... « They killed me. » And I stayed there until the Americans arrived.*

27. You also said that your work group was not guarded and you came to know some of the local farmers, one who wanted you to marry his daughter. Tell us about that.

“Comment avais-tu connu ce fermier?”

« *How did you know this farmer ?* »

Je l'ai connu parce que c'est les allemands qui m'ont amené jusqu'à Meyenheim. On était peut-être 15 ou 20 à travailler comme ça. On a travaillé jusqu'au jour où... c'était une petite ville alors on passait tous les jours par Meyenheim, et le soir, quand on est revenu un jour, tout était bombardé, il n'y avait pas de trace de la ville. C'était les anglais. Et comme à cette époque là, les allemands n'avaient déjà plus d'avion et tout... C'est comme ça que je me suis dit, ça peut pas durer encore longtemps.

*I knew him because the Germans took me to Meyenheim. There were about 15 or 20 of us working there. We worked until the day when... it was a small town so we spent the days in Meyenheim, and returned at night, and when we came back one day everything had been bombed ; there was no trace of the town.*

28. You have said that you and the members of your work group knew that the Germans were losing the war. What kind of conversations did you and your fellow prisoners have? What kind of plans were you and the other prisoners making?

“Tu savais que les Anglais étaient sur le point d’arriver? »

« *Did you know that the English were about to arrive ?* »

Je le savais parce que certains l’ont dit, des échos des américains et des russes qui sont prêts de venir.

*I knew because some people said it, rumors that Americans and Russians were ready to come.*

« Tu discutais avec les autres prisonniers ? »

« *Did you discuss it with the other prisoners ?* »

Non non... Si! J’ai discuté en polonais. Tu te rends compte ! Quand je pense que j’ai oublié tout ça ! Et le russe et le polonais et l’ukrainien, j’ai oublié.

*No no... actually yes ! I discussed it in Polish. Do you realize ! When I think about how I’ve forgotten all of that ! Russian and Polish and Ukrainian, I’ve forgotten.*

« Vous faisiez des plan pour après ? »

« *Did you make plans for later ?* »

Ha ça ! Je te dis, quand les américains sont arrivés, on nous a mis dans une espèce de camp, jusqu’au jour où il y en a qui sont retournés en Pologne, il y en a qui sont repartis, des ukrainiens. Moi j’ai dit « Je veux pas repartir ». C’est pour ça que je suis venu en France.

*Oh that ! I tell you, when the Americans arrived, they put us in a sort of camp, until the day when some were allowed to return to Poland ; there were some who went back, some Ukrainians. Myself, I said « I don’t want to go back. » That’s why I came to France.*

### **Liberation, Post War and France**

29. You were in Meyenheim when the Americans arrived. How did the local Germans react? How did the farmer whose house you were at react?

Tu sais, la population... on passait... Un dimanche j’ai même été à l’église. Comme ça c’est peut-être rien mais...

J’ai même eu la chance, parce que je savais que les américains étaient de l’autre côté, j’aurais pu me faire tuer par une balle américaine !

*You know, the population... we passed them... one Sunday I was even at the church. That could have been just normal... I was lucky even, because I knew that the Americans were on the other side ; I could have gotten myself killed by an American bullet !*

30. [Q.54] You mentioned you were made a guard at the camp at Reims and you guarded German prisoners. Were other former prisoners also made guards? How did the Germans react to being guarded by Poles who were former slave laborers? How did the Poles react?



Les américains ils ont mis un fusil dans ma main pour garder. Là j'ai mal fait, au lieu de venir tout de suite à Paris, j'ai perdu 9 mois comme ça avec les américains a Reims. J'aurais mieux fait de venir à Paris.

*The Americans put a gun in my hand to guard with. That was a bad decision ; instead of coming directly to Paris, I lost 9 months like that with the Americans in Reims. It would have been better to come straight to Paris.*

« Vous étiez plusieurs polonais à garder les allemands ? »

« *Were there many Poles guarding the Germans ?* »

On logeait dans des camps américains. Des tentes.

*We stayed in the American camps. In tents.*

« Que faisaient les allemands ? »

« *What did the Germans do ?* »

Je me rappelle, la plupart, ils allaient pour ramasser le raisin pour faire du champagne ou du vin. C'est le coin, à Reims. Alors moi, avec les autres polonais on avait un fusil. Je n'aurais jamais su m'en servir.

*I remember, the majority of them went to pick the grapes to make champagne or wine. That was where it was, in Reims. The other Poles and I had a gun. I never knew how to use it.*

« Quelle était la réaction des allemands au fait d'être gardés par des polonais ? »

« *How did the Germans react to being guarded by Poles ?* »

Ils étaient pires que les clochards. Tant qu'il étaient forts, tu aurais vu, c'était peut être pas des SS, mais... ils étaient vraiment... on pouvait les appeler des « lâches », ils voulaient être gentils... comme ça... (air méprisant)

*They were worse than tramps. As strong as they were, you would have seen, maybe they weren't SS, but... they were really... we could call them cowards ; they wanted to be nice... like this... (contemptuous attitude)*

« Les gardiens polonais étaient-ils méchants avec les Allemands ? »

« *Were the Polish guards mean to the Germans ?* »

Je ne sais pas. Les Polonais, c'était des extrémistes. Ils voulaient avoir un régime... parce que le gouvernement polonais en exil était à Londres. Ils croyaient que ce serait un régime comme avant. Mais c'est Staline qui a envahi tout ça et ils ont été obligés de garder un régime communiste.

*I don't know. The Poles were extremists. They wanted a regime... because the Polish government was in exile in London. They believed that there would be a regime like before. But Stalin invaded everything and they had to keep a Communist regime.*

31. You mentioned there were two American soldiers who were Jewish. Were you tempted to tell them you were a Jew? Why did you decide not to tell them?

A eux, je l'ai dit que j'étais juif; je crois. Je me rappelle, les deux personnes. Tous les deux étaient mariés en Amérique. Il y en a un qui n'arrêtait pas de dire « je crois que ma femme elle ne m'attendra pas, elle va trouver... » Si si je me rappelle il a dit ça. En rigolant.

*I told them that I was Jewish, I think. I remember the two people. Both of them were married in America. One of them wouldn't stop saying, « I don't think my wife will wait for me, she'll find... » Yes, yes I remember he said that. While laughing.*

« Et tu leur as dit que tu étais juif ? »

« *You told them you were Jewish ?* »

Oui je l'ai dit. A eux je lai dit que j'étais juif. Parce que, d'abord, l'un des deux avait vraiment le type juif. Et pourtant il était bien, mais il avait vraiment le type juif. Mais l'autre il était brun.

*Yes, I told them. I told them I was Jewish. Because, in the beginning, one of the two really looked Jewish. And he was, but he really looked Jewish. But the other one had dark hair.*

« Comment savais-tu qu'ils étaient juifs ? »

« *How did you know that they were Jewish ?* »

Ho je l'ai vu tout de suite ! Pour te dire, à cette époque il y avait quand même du racisme. Il y avait un autre américain, non juif. Il ne savait pas que j'étais juif. Il m'a vu parler avec eux tous les deux. Alors quand j'ai été tout seul il ma dit, « c'est des juifs eux, laisse les où ils sont ». Tu te rends compte! C'était un américain d'origine polonaise. Mais catholique.

*Oh I saw it right away ! You see, at that time there was a lot of racism. There was another American, a non-Jew. He didn't know that I was Jewish. He saw me talk with both of the Jewish men. So when I was alone, he said to me, « Those two are Jews ; leave them where they are. » Do you realize ! He was an American of Polish origin. But Catholic.*

« Comment ont réagi les soldats quand tu leur as dit que tu étais juif ? »

« *How did the soldiers react when you told them you were Jewish ?* »

Je ne sais pas. J'étais jeune. Je n'ai pas raconté mon histoire. Je ne sais pas. Tu te rends compte. C'est parce que j'étais jeune que je n'ai pas parlé tout de suite après. Mais je n'étais pas le seul. Tous mes copains qui étaient à Paris avec qui j'ai fait connaissance, c'était surtout des juifs, des polonais, on ne parlait pas, comme si ça n'existait pas.

*I don't know. I was young. I didn't tell my story. I don't know. You realize. It's because I was young that I didn't talk right away afterwards. But I wasn't the only one. All of my friends who were in Paris with me that I got to know, they were mostly Jewish, Polish ; we didn't talk about it, like it didn't exist.*

32. How did you get the confidence to reveal to the clothing store owner that you were Jewish?  
When did you give up using the name Stanislas Renkasowski?

Ha justement. Tous les gens avec qui j'étais étaient des polonais catholiques, de tendance plutôt extrémiste; ils croyaient que ce serait la Pologne comme avant la guerre. Tous les jours, comme c'était à 7 km de Reims là où on était, on allait presque tous les jours à Reims, avec la jeep d'un américain. Parce que

tous les jours ils sortaient, ils nous amenaient à Reims. Avec qui j'étais, avec le polonais (avec qui j'étais d'ailleurs sur la photo). Il me dit « Tu sais quoi, ya un commerçant juif ». il me dit que c'est un commerçant juif, mais gentiment .Il me dit « J'ai besoin d'un pantalon. ». Et ben j'ai été avec lui, et moi quand je suis rentré au magasin, tu penses bien : un juif 100%, 150%. Il essaie le pantalon, il l'achète. Et puis je regarde le type, il avait peut-être, je sais pas, il pouvait être mon père largement. Et ben, je le regarde comme ça, et c'est tout, au revoir. Et en sortant, ça commence à quand même...j'ai dit « Ca alors, ça fait bientôt 8 mois passés que je suis là, j'ai jamais parlé à un juif. Jusqu'à quand ça peut durer comme ça ? » Et ca m'a tellement... Je lui ai dit « Rentre tout seul parce que moi j'ai quelque chose à faire encore. » Je rentre dans le magasin. Le type il me dit en polonais « qu'est ce qu'il y a ? A votre service mon cher monsieur Pant. J'ai dit d'un seul coup... je répond et je dis, en polonais : « Il faut que je vous dise... » et puis je lui ai dit. Il s'est mis en pétard. Il a dit « Quoi ! vous êtes un survivant et vous êtes resté comme ça sans rien savoir. Et comme c'était vendredi, il a dit « Ecoutez, vous allez rester ici dormir ici et demain matin vous allez repartir, et je vais vous donner une adresse ou prendre le train avec ce que vous avez.

Il m'a donné l'adresse où aller. Je suis arrivé à Paris. Je me rappelle ! Haha! J'arrive à Gare de l'Est... je vois... je n'ai jamais vu un métro de ma vie, je me dis quoi, il faut rentrer? J'atterris Porte d'Italie, au lieu de 13 boulevard des Italiens. Moi quand j'ai vu l'écriteau « Italie » j'ai atterri Porte d'Italie. Alors je ne me rappelle pas, j'ai dû retourner. Et ben là, la première des choses qu'il ont dit : « Vous allez tout de suite à la préfecture de police pour faire un récépissé, qui est valable 3 mois ». Parce que j'aurais pu pourtant garder le nom de l'autre polonais. Mais je me suis dit « Ben non je ne veux pas ». Parce que dans ma tête, je voulais rester presque polonais. Et voila on m'a fait les papiers et puis après il fallait aller Porte de Versailles pour faire les papiers pour le travail. Et comme je n'avais pas de métier... Enfin... ce n'était pas des roses. Quand je vois maintenant les gars, il leur faut tout, comme ça! Hahaha !

*Ah, okay. All of the people I was with were Polish Catholics with rather extremist tendencies ; they thought that Poland would be the way it was before the war. Every day, since it was 7 km from Reims to where we were, almost every day we went to Reims in the Jeep of one of the Americans. Because every day they went out, they brought us to Reims. I went with whom I was with, with the Pole (the one I was in the photo with). He said to me, « Look at that, already a Jewish merchant. » He told me that it was a Jewish merchant, but nicely. He said to me, « I need a pair of pants. » And I was with him, and when I went into the store, you guessed it : Jewish, 100%, 150%. He tried on the pants ; he bought them. And then I looked at the guy ; he was maybe... I don't know, he probably could have been my father. So I looked at him like that, and that was it, goodbye. And after I left, I started to... I said « It's been 8 months since I was back there ; I've never since spoken to a Jew. How long is that going to last ? » And that really struck me... I said to him (companion) « Go back on your own because I still have something to do. » I went back into the store. The guy said to me in Polish, « What is it ? At your service, my dear Mr. Pant. I said in a rush... I responded in Polish, « I have to tell you... » and then I told him. He made a big fuss. He said « What ! You are a survivor and you've stayed like this without knowing anything. » And since it was Friday, he said « Listen, you are going to stay here, sleep here, and tomorrow morning you are going to leave, and I am going to give you an address where you can take the train with what you have. » He gave me the address of where to go. I arrived in Paris. I remember ! Haha ! I arrived at the Gare de l'Est (the East Train Station)...I see... I had never seen a metro in my life, I said what, do I have to go back in (to the*

subway)? I got off at Porte d'Italie, near 13 Boulevard des Italiens. When I saw the sign « Italie » I got off at Porte d'Italie (metro stop). But I didn't remember ; I had to go back. The first thing he had said to me was, « Go right away to the police station and get papers that will be valid for 3 months. » I would have been able to keep the other Pole's name (Stanislas Renkasowski). But I told myself, « No I don't want to. » Because in my head, I wanted to stay almost Polish. And so they completed my papers and later, I had to go to Porte de Versailles to get my work papers. And since I had no job... well... it wasn't a pleasant experience. When I see young guys now, they have everything! Hahaha !

33. [Q.56] In an earlier interview, you said that the society ball where you met Léa was organized by Jewish fighters. What kind of fighters were they and where had they fought?

Oui. Quai d'Orsay. Des anciens combattants. Tous ceux qui ont été dans l'armée. Ah oui c'était au Palais d'Orsay. Maintenant c'est un musée.

Yes. Quai d'Orsay. Old fighters. All the ones who had been in the army. Yes, it was at the Palais d'Orsay. Now it's a museum (Musée d'Orsay).

34. Can you tell us about the first moment that you saw Léa? The first words that the two of you shared? Did your heart leap?

Lea: On a flirté.

Lea: We flirted.

David :La première fois, j'ai tâtonné!

David : The first time, I fumbled !

C'est mieux maintenant, quand on sait qu'on ne veut pas avoir un gosse, ou si on veut, ca c'est bien.

It's better now, when you know what you don't want to have a kid, or if you want to, then it's fine.

Je ne sais pas... Ha non ! La première fois, c'est quand on m'a envoyé dans une école professionnelle dans le 18eme arrondissement. Il y en avait de toute sorte : des soudeurs, des électriciens pour apprendre, la plomberie. Moi c'était la soudure électrogène, tu parles... Et moi tous les matins, avant que ça commence, je la voyais, elle, souvent, rentrer à l'école. Elle allait dans la même école.

I don't know... oh no ! The first time, it was when they sent me to a professional school in the 18th arrondissement (district of Paris). There were all kinds of professions : welders, electricians, plumbing. For me it was soldering... and every morning, before it started, I saw her, frequently, going to school. She was in the same school.

Léa : Moi j'apprenais la couture, dans une école israélite, une école professionnelle.

Léa : I was learning sewing, in a Jewish school, a professional school.

David : Et au bout de combien de temps après ? Je ne m'en rappelle plus... après... Ha oui, parce que je suis tombé que tu étais juste là au Palais d'Orsay. Je me rappelle, je t'ai dit « Et vous savez, je vous vois tous les jours là-bas. Oui, parce quelle était toujours la dernière ! Ha oui et à midi on mangeait là-bas je crois. Oui je me rappelle. Il y avait même le soir. Alors moi j'allais le soir, alors le directeur il m'a dit "Vous

savez monsieur, vous n'avez pas le droit. Que vous mangiez à midi, oui. Mais pas le soir." Je lai vue au Palais d'Orsay !

*David : And about how long after ? I don't remember anymore... later... oh yes, because I realized that you were right there at the Palais d'Orsay. I remember, I told you, « You know, I see you every day over there. » Yes, because she was always the last one ! Oh yes and at noon we ate over there I think. Yes I remember. Even at night. I went over at night, and the director said to me, « You know sir, you're not allowed to do that. You can eat at noon, but not at night. » I saw her at the Palais d'Orsay !*

Léa : tu lui diras qu'on a flirté. Il dansait très bien.

*Léa : Tell him that we flirted. He danced very well.*

David : Ca je l'ai appris quand j'étais chez les américains. Tu vois. On avait la tête à ça. Quand je pense à ce que j'ai vécu pendant 4 ans, et j'avais quand même la tête a danser.

*David : That I learned when I was with the Americans. You see. We were able to do that. When I think of what I saw for 4 years, and I even was able to dance.*

Léa : On dansait le rock'n roll.

*Léa : We danced to rock & roll.*

David : Tu sais, je ne suis pas le seul dans mon cas...

*David : You know, I'm not the only one in that situation...*

« Ton cœur a-t-il fait un bond dans ta poitrine quand tu l'as rencontrée ? »

*« Did your heart leap in your chest when you met her ? »*

Léa : ho oui !

*Léa : Oh yes !*

David : Ho, un bond, dis-donc... Elle n'était quand même pas la seule, avant j'en avais vues! Mettons à Reims, le première fille... Elle s'appelait Pierrette ! Pierrette Loviou. Elle avait 2 ans de moins que moi.

*David : Oh, a leap, well... She wasn't the only one ; I had seen a few before that ! In Reims was the first girl... she was named Pierrette ! Pierrette Loviou. She was 2 years younger than me.*

Léa: Tu la regrettes?

*Léa : Do you regret her ?*

David : Hoo... Heureusement que je ne suis pas resté là-bas dans ce bled ! Tu te rends compte! A Chesnay! Ca s'appelait le bled Chesnay!

*David: Ohh... Fortunately I didn't stay there in that boring town! Do you realize! In Chesnay! That boring town of Chesnay!*

35. [Q.58] David asked me why I am interested in Zurawno. I told him it was because of the stories my grandmother Lottie Spinner told me. Tell him that I too have been to Yad Vashem and cried at the sight of the name Zurawno.

Ha oui! Moi quand j'y ai été la première fois, je n'ai pas pleuré, parce qu'il n'y avait pas la ville de Zurawno. Il y avait Stryy. Parce qu'avant j'allais souvent en Israël ; Quand j'y ai été la deuxième fois, j'ai été encore voir le Yad Vashem, et quand j'ai vu la pierre avec marqué Zurawno... demande lui... presque évanoui !

*Oh yes ! When I went there the first time, I didn't cry, because the town of Zurawno wasn't there. Stryy was there. Because I often went to Israel ; when I was there the second time, I went to see the Yad Vashem again, and when I saw the stone marked Zurawno... ask him... I almost fainted !*

36. [Q.59] I am deeply moved by his final comment being "Next Year in Jerusalem". Maybe we can indeed meet there one day!

L'année prochaine à Jerusalem! Ca c'était dans les synagogues, partout. On disait "L'année prochaine à Jérusalem. »

*Next year in Jerusalem ! That was in the synagogues, everywhere. We said « Next year in Jerusalem. »*

Dis lui que moi, dommage, c'est la seule chose où je n'ai pas eu de chance: que je n'ai pas su qu'il y a avait des juifs en Israël de Zurawno. Et ça tu peux pas savoir...

*Tell him that, unfortunately, that's the only thing where I had no luck : I didn't know that there had been Jews from Zurawno in Israel. That, I had no way of knowing...*

« Et maintenant tu peux toujours y aller! »

*« But now you can still go ! »*

Mais non ils sont vieux... Encore moi, 8 jours, je pourrais aller à Tel-Aviv. Mais je pourrais y aller tout seul. Et même, je ne les préviens pas. A Tel Aviv, quand je serai là-bas à l'hôtel, je téléphonerai. Je vais voir. Je ne voudrais pas aller chez eux directement ; Quand je serai à l'hôtel je téléphonerai. Surtout Chemuch ! et je téléphonerai de l'hôtel, et lui dire. Tu te rends compte ! 72 ans après ! Je ne sais pas, je verrai après les vacances. Si je téléphone, s'il est là... Je vais voir ; je vais dire « Ecoute Chemuch, je dois être 8 jours à Tel Aviv, si tu veux je peux venir te voir. 8 jours ce n'est rien !

*No, they're old... But me, for a week, I could go to Tel Aviv. But I could go by myself. And I wouldn't warn them. When I'm at the hotel in Tel Aviv, I'll call them. I'll see. I wouldn't want to go directly to their houses ; when I'm at a hotel I'll call them. Especially Chemuch ! I'll call him from the hotel and tell him. Do you realize ! 72 years later ! I don't know ; I'll see after the summer holidays. If I call, if he's there... I'll see ; I'm going to say, « Listen Chemuch, I'm going to be in Tel Aviv for a week ; if you want I can come see you. A week is nothing ! »*

« « sam : we can meet in Bat Yam! »

Bat Yam! Et bien oui!

*Bat Yam! Oh yes!*

Léa: Il crève d'envie de le voir!

*Léa : He's dying of envy to see it !*

David : Chemuch il a peut-être 91 ans !

*David : Chemuch is probably 91 years old !*

37. [POSTCARDS] Has David had any more dreams of Zurawno that he would like to share?

Tu peux lui dire: des rêves, j'en fais sans arrêt! Comme je dors beaucoup, moi, je dors beaucoup, je rêve ! Même de toi j'ai déjà rêvé, tu ne peux pas savoir ! Parce que je pense, quand je suis arrivé ici, j'avais 19 ans, je ne parlais pas de ça, je ne parlais de rien rien rien, et puis maintenant, depuis surtout que j'ai arrêté de travailler, parce que quand je travaillais j'étais occupé, alors maintenant c'est sans arrêt, de ses copines même, de Jojo qui est mort.

*You can tell him : dreams, I have them constantly ! Since I sleep a lot, me I sleep a lot, I dream ! I've even already dreamed about you ; you can't even know ! Because I think, when I got here, I was 19 years old, I never talked about it, I never talked about anything, anything, anything at all, and now, especially since I've stopped working, because when I worked I was busy, so now it never stops, about her girlfriends even, about Jojo who is dead.*

Et de Zurawno : Holalala !avant plus que maintenant. Mais avant quand je me réveillais, je me disais, je suis à Zurawno. Tu ne peux pas savoir comment c'est. Ben oui. Alors ils mont vu arriver en voiture aussi, ils me disent « Mais comment tu fais pour conduire une voiture ? » Parce qu'à cette époque-là, quand j'étais gosse là-bas, une voiture c'était comme... Tu peux lui dire : je rêve de Zurawno, et de tout !

*And about Zurawno : Oh my goodness ! Before more than now. But before when I would wake up, I told myself, I'm in Zurawno. You can't even know what that's like. Yes. They saw me arrive in a car too ; they said to me « But how are you able to drive a car ? » Because at that time, when I was a kid over there, a car was like... You can tell him : I dream about Zurawno, and about everything !*

Sam : Merci de partager ces émotions

*Sam : Thank you for sharing these feelings*

David : Mon plus grand regret c'est que je suis allé à 40 ans la première fois en Israël et je ne savais pas qu'il y avait des gens de Zurawno.

*David : My biggest regret is that when I went to Israel for the first time at age 40, I didn't know there were people there from Zurawno.*

Dis lui, moi, depuis que j'ai arrêté de travailler, moi les vacances j'aime bien y aller mais on ne peut pas dire que ça m'enchant, parce que j'ai des petits trucs comme beaucoup de gens quand ils arrivent à un certain âge alors... Même si j'ai un grand confort dans un grand hôtel, je vais y aller, mais 15 jours, pas plus.

*Tell him that since I've stopped working, I would love to go there on vacation but I can't say that the idea delights me, because I have lots of little things like so many people when they get to be a certain age, so....if I have a lot of comforts in a big hotel, I'm going to go there, but not for more than 2 weeks.*

