When war began, I lived in my home-town of Lodz. On September 4, 1943, the Polish Government asked the inhabitants of Lodz to leave the city. The population fled the town in terror, most of the Jews taking the Warsaw direction. The Germans bombed the roads and caused many casualties. After a 4 days' march, I finally reached Warsaw, which was already besieged. There was a lack of bread, water and other victuals. When the Germans first entered Warsaw, the Jews were treated no differently than the rest of the population; discriminations only began after the Germans had been in for 4 weeks. On October 1, 1939, after Warsaw's fall, I thought that I would be better off in Lodz, but on the way I was taken prisoner and brought to the station with 1000 other Jews. But falling on the way, I stayed behind unnoticed.

The next day I went by train to Lodz. Life in Lodz was tolerable during the first two weeks. Through the purchases of German soldiers, a shopping boom resulted, by which the Jews profited quite a bit. But suddenly, after 2 weeks, Jewish shops were expropriated, Jews were rounded up in the streets and apartments, and carried off to forced labour. There they were maltreated. Curfew was advanced to 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Jews hid themselves and did not dare to go out any more. The resident Germans of Lodz took a prominent part in helping to carry out anti-Jewish measures. The Jews were ordered to wear the Star of David in front as well as on the back, and shortly afterwards, the deportations started. "Litzmannstadt" was to be cleared of all Jews. At first deportation was to proceed on a voluntary basis; every day 1000 people were to volunteer. When after 3 days no volunteer had appeared, the Jews were carried by force from their apartments, or wherever they could be found, to camps, where men, women and children were separated.

On December 15, 1935, I fled from Lodz to Warsaw, where by that time lived about 500,000 Jews who had to wear white arm-bands with David's Star; but life was tolerable and the penalties for breaking the anti-Jewish rules were not particularly heavy; for not wearing the white arm-band, for example, one had to pay 500 złoty. These conditions lasted till the first of October 1940.

On October 1, the decree establishing the Ghetto was issued, and by the 15th of October, all Jews had to be in the Ghetto quarters. By October 16, 1940, all 12 Ghetto
exits were guarded by German military police and Polish police. Nobody could enter or leave the Ghetto without special permission. Since Jewish shopkeepers could not visit their shops anymore, Jewish shops outside the Ghetto were expropriated. Those who attempted to leave the Ghetto unauthorized risked the death penalty. Only a limited quantity of provisions was permitted to enter the Ghetto, and there soon was a scarcity of food. Prices went up three and four-fold, and after three months, starving people with swollen faces could be met begging on the streets. People were desperate enough to let their children risk death by stealing out of the Ghetto to buy a few pounds of potatoes and smuggle them back to the Ghetto. There they could sell them and make a good profit. Potatoes outside the Ghetto cost 2 Zloty per Kg; inside the Ghetto they sold at 8 Zloty. Children thus kept their families alive. Mrs. Marysia Crlowska (Aryan) states that she has seen a child being shot by a German military guard when stealing back into the Ghetto. Every entrance was guarded by two German uniformed guards, two Polish policemen, and two Jewish OD sentinels. The use of Jewish guards proved very valuable to the inmates of the Ghetto as they soon made friends with the German sentinels and facilitated the entry of food into the Ghetto. At that time, there was still a lively traffic of horse wagons and pedestrians between the Ghetto and the "Aryan" city, because there were many factories still in operation in the Jewish quarters. This traffic was chiefly used for smuggling food.

After about 6 months, conditions in the Ghetto were such that of the ca. 500,000 Jews of the Ghetto, about 100,000 lived by smuggling, 50,000 on their own capital, the remaining 350,000 were literally starving to death. Exhausted men and women collapsed dead on the streets, and every day about 200 dead were counted on the streets. The Ghetto administration had to pay the cost of burying these corpses in communal graves. Since the funeral expenses for persons who had died in their homes had to be borne by the families, it frequently happened that families laid their dead out on the streets, because they were unable to raise the funeral costs. These corpses were immediately robbed by the populace of clothes, shoes, and left naked on the pavement. In one single communal grave, about 500 persons were buried without a register being kept, because for the most part it was impossible to identify the bare corpses collected on the street. About this time, a further 100,000 Jews came to Warsaw, who had been driven from their homes in various small towns of the district.

On July 24, 1942, the deportations of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto began. The Senior Councillor of the Jewish community, Czerniakow, had committed suicide two days before,
on learning of the deportation order.

It is of interest to recall that the German authorities compelled the Jewish Council to buy expensive film cameras which were used to shoot various staged scenes designed to show the immoral conduct of the Jews.

Thus for instance old men were put in bath tubs naked with naked young girls and both were forced to wash one another. Or a luxuriously appointed table was laid in a dining room where well-dressed young Jews were told to go through the actions of eating while others whose bodies were swollen from starvation, were told to implore them mainly for food. Many similar scenes were shot.

The deportations began with the evacuation of the Jewish prison. Next it was the turn of the poorer and hungrier population, of whom 7000 were evacuated within three days. The guards at the entrances of the Ghetto were reinforced six-fold, thus making the smuggling of food nearly impossible, and sending prices soaring to unprecedented heights. The evacuation on a voluntary basis was then proceeded with. Notices appeared calling upon Jews to volunteer for work; and promising all volunteers a bonus of 5 kg of bread and 2 kg of jam. This offer attracted masses of volunteers, who besieged the registrar's offices. In this way, 6000 people a day left the city during this period. It lasted about one month; then this voluntary exodus ceased. Presently new decrees followed, by which all Jews not employed by German agencies or firms would be deported. The others received a certificate of employment. Overnight, a vast crop of "German businesses" sprang up. The necessary machinery was suddenly forthcoming, and a German owner was invariably found. There began a trade with such certificates, for which sums of 1000 Zloty or more were paid. As a result of the founding of so many enterprises, and the lively trading of certificates, the demand for Zloty rose so sharply, that on the black exchange one Dollar fetched only 12 Zloty instead of 50. After a short time, the whole of Warsaw's Jewish population was in possession of employment certificates, of which probably 50% were false. At that time about 350,000 to 400,000 Jews were left in the Ghetto. To illustrate the scarcity of food which resulted it may be mentioned that 10 Dollars were paid for 1 kg of bread.

When this state of affairs resulted in no material for deportation being available, the German authorities began to annul these firms, and deport their employees. Again the rate of deportation reached 6000 a day. But it still could not be ascertained where these people were deported. The Jewish OD (Ordnungsdienst) sentinels frequently asked the people who were deported to write their destinations on the sides of the carriages when they got
The same carriages came back regularly (their numbers had been noted) but on the sides only dates and hours of arrival were written; probably the deported did not know themselves where they had been brought. The Jews also tried to bribe the guards on the train to disclose their destination, but could not get any information because the train personnel believed by others on the way. After a time, the formal annulling of firms stopped, and surprise raids against them began during which all Jews present were deported. This indiscriminate deportation lasted 15 weeks. Thereafter about 50,000 Jews remained in Warsaw-Ghetto, and another 50,000 were in hiding in the "Aryan" quarters under cover of assumed identities, or otherwise. On July 27, 1942, I fled from Warsaw, obtained "Aryan" papers, and lived in Cracow. Twice a week I came to Warsaw on business; at these occasions I used to collect information about conditions in the Ghettoes. The only possible business under the circumstances, which was also mine, was the foreign exchange business, or Black Bourse. From Cracow I went to live at Wischnitz (Wislica)? and thence to Czenstochowa, because I had been informed that the Jews from Wischnitz were to be deported to Bochnia within three days, and from there they would be deported again. One did not know exactly what this deportation meant, but it was clear that it meant death in some shape, since none of those who had been deported had ever appeared again. I arrived at Czenstochowa with Jewish papers and a travelling permit. Nevertheless, I was arrested by the Polish police under German orders, imprisoned for 4 weeks. One day after Yom Kipur (Day of Atonement) I heard that the Jews of Czenstochowa were to be deported. I stayed a further 8 days in the prison with 109 fellow prisoners. During that time I tried to persuade my fellow-sufferers that in case of a deportation they should not give in easily, but try to escape at all cost, arguing that at least a small number of so many would surely be successful, and thus some at least would be saved. But I could not persuade anyone but a Jew named Sachs; the two of us decided to use any opportunity of escape. The authorities warned us that for every "deserter" 10 people would be shot as in reprisal. On the way to the station 48 policemen guarded 109 prisoners, thus making escape impossible. 59 carriages crammed full of deportees were already standing in the station. Men and women, altogether 84 people, we were squeezed into the 60th and last carriage. One carriage window near the ceiling being open, I discussed with Sachs the possibility of an escape from there during our journey. But when we wanted to realize our intentions, our fellow-travellers protested energetically, for fear that they would be shot. A quarrel followed, as a result of which Sachs and I were beaten up considerably, and forbidden to
use the window. During the journey I enlarged a hole in
the back wall of our carriage with a nail, looked through
it, and saw that a policeman was standing in the brakes-
man’s cabin who looked out only every now and then; I con-
cluded that our flight would have been successful.

At 7 p.m. we reached the station at Walkyne. The train
stopped there and was divided into 6 trains of 10 carriages.
As far as I could observe, the employees of the train were
exchanged. Then a locomotive pulled our 10 carriages onto
a branch-line, and after a further 15 minutes under way, we
passed through Tremblinka and went on an other 5 minutes
until we reached a forest. There a gate opened, the train
passed in and stopped. By knocks on the carriage-doors we
were told to be ready to get out, and suddenly the doors
were opened. All along the train, men armed with clubs
and sticks shouted "Get out of the train" in all languages
(Polish, Jewish and German). Then they fell upon us, and
everybody tried to get out of the train as quickly as pos-
sible so as to avoid the blows; some were crushed to death.
Behind this human chain stood 12 Ukrainians with ready guns,
and behind them 4 SS men with revolvers in their hands and
big bloodhounds. Near the station we were lined up and
counted. Then the SS commander looked at his wrist-
watch and commanded: "Within 1 minute everybody take off their
shoes and socks, and hold the bundle ready in their hands;
those who are slower will be shot." Everybody was ready
within the minute. The same people who had received us
lined up so as to form a corridor. Without bundles in our
hands, we then had to run through this passage, which was
scattered with sharp stones, so that our feet were torn
bloody. All the time we were driven on with sticks and
clubs. Many died in this passage. In this way we came to
a place where there was a huge pile of shoes about three
storeys high. We had to throw our shoes in that pile, and
run on until at last we were ordered to stop and men and
women were separated. The women were led to a shed with a
roof but without walls. We were told to strip naked. Then
we were ordered to take our clothes in one hand, documents,
money and articles of value into the other. The women, too
were ordered to undress and leave their clothes on the
ground. They were immediately led naked through a gate
into a yard which was separated by a high fence. We men
had to continue running with our clothes and documents,
the former of which had to throw onto a huge pile of other
clothes, and the articles of value we had to throw into
ready opened trunks. While we were running a terrible
shriek lasting one or two minutes came to us from the di-
rection of the fence; then we were driven back to the shed,
and had to take the women’s clothes and put them on the
pile. Thus the way through the "corridor", (which consist-
ed of Jews I noticed) had to be made several times,
Ukrainians with ready guns standing behind the row of Jews
and threatening them with their guns if they did not drive and beat as sufficiently. During this whole process, I wondered what would happen to us, and how it would be possible to escape. While running, I several times asked those Jews with the sticks what would happen to us, and what to do to escape, but I did not receive any answer. At last one of them whispered to me: "Try to get dressed". So when I had again reached the clothes-pile, I sprang out of the line, tore a pair of trousers and a waistcoat over my naked body, grasped a pair of shoes from the shoe pile and ran in the opposite direction. Reaching the human passage I took a stick, fell into the row, and did the same as the others; but my neighbours were afraid, and pushed me out again. At last I found a place where I could beat and shout with the others unnoticed. The 4 SS men supervised all this, and every now and then they picked out a well-grown Jew among the running men and put him aside. When all women's clothes were carried away, the running Jews did not return, but after a while I heard again this terrible scream lasting one or two minutes; and followed by complete silence, we who had formed the corridor were then led to the pile, and were ordered to pile all clothes on top of the clothes mountain. Meanwhile, all Jews, those who had been picked out by the SS men, were ordered to come to us and to dress themselves; I used this opportunity to do the same properly. I had hardly finished when I heard a shrill blow of the whistle; all those standing near the pile started running in the direction of the station. Coming to the rails, I saw that the next 10 carriages had arrived. We took up the same position on the rails as those who had received us. Now at last I had a free moment to look around and see where I was. We were inside a large yard (ca.1 square km.) surrounded by a barbed wire fence, which was very well camouflaged by intertwining with living trees and hedges. At a far end I saw a long line of billowing smoke.

When the carriage doors were opened, the procedure applied to us on arrival repeated itself. We had to shout and drive the Jews out of the carriages. An old Jew stumbled out of the carriage and the SS man ordered one of us "to bring him to the hospital". Then came another old Jew, and the SS man ordered me "Hallo, this one also to the hospital." Since I had no idea where the "hospital" was, I followed my companion who had the same order. He led the old man towards the smoke line. When I came near it, I saw a ditch about 10 m wide and 10 m deep. The ditch stretched down as far as the fenced yard. At the bottom a huge fire burned, and I knew immediately that corpses were burning down there. Near us stood one SS man and 10 armed Ukrainians. The SS man gave the order "undress and sit down." In order to avoid mistakes, I looked at my companion; we undressed our old Jews, and set them down on the edge of the ditch. Meanwhile other old people were
sent to the "hospital". When 10 Jews were sitting on the edge of the ditch, they were shot from behind by the Ukrainians, and fell automatically into the fire. Then I went back, and the same as had happened to us, happened to all the newly arrived people. All this lasted till 12 o'clock.

At 12 o'clock we had to line up for a roll-call. The SS man (commander) ordered that the 11 newcomers should stand in a row separately from the others. Of course I joined the newcomers. Now the fact that we were 13 instead of 11 was found out; I noticed that Mr. Sachs was also among us. He told me afterwards that he had had the same idea as I. The SS commander got very excited about this, and ordered that the intruders whom he had "recognized immediately", should report voluntarily or he would not answer for the consequences. He pulled out his revolver, fiddled about with it, shot into the air, screamed, but of course we did not own up. At last he dismissed us and we had lunch. I tried to find out as much as possible about the situation and explore every possibility of escape. I talked to and questioned all my fellow-sufferers, but when I told them about my intentions they declared me a lunatic. The general answer of these people was that the very thought of flight was crazy, that it was impossible, and most of them did not even want to consider the idea. When my friend Sachs heard that with the train from Czenstochowa his child had been brought here, he said that after the loss of his child he did not care what happened to him; life had no meaning for him anymore, and he did not care enough to take the trouble to save himself. I heard that 3 weeks was the longest anyone had been here; most of my comrades had been there for 4 - 10 days. Every morning some were picked out, whom we never saw again. These were then replaced by newcomers, as in our case.

Our hours were from 7 to 12 a.m. and from 1 to 6 p.m. Our work chiefly consisted in baiting continual newcomers; the rest of the time we arranged the clothes, shoes, and articles of value, and put the shoe-and-clothes-pile in order. 4 times a day we were lined up and counted. At 6 p.m. we had to retire to our barracks. The windows had to be kept open all night. Opposite the windows which did not give on the yard, a watch tower had been erected from which our windows were illuminated and guarded all night. Behind the fence was the so-called "death-camp", which we were not allowed to enter. Two boys succeeded in crossing over to us from there, and this is the information we received from them.

About 500 Jews worked on that side, and there were 8 big barracks for about 7000 people. The naked people who were brought there were herded into those barracks, and told that they are going to be bathed. When a batch of them
was inside, poison gas was let in. Those still outside naturally tried desperately to back away when they realized what was going on inside. Then the SS and Ukrainians with their bloodhounds went into action and forced them in. The cries we had heard came from such crowds at the moment of entering. When a batch was inside the door was closed and remained so for 15 minutes. By the time it was opened again, everybody inside was dead. Now the 500 Jews employed there had to throw the corpses into the fire-ditch which stretched beyond the fence into the death-camp. Those 500 Jews were in terrible condition of physical and psychic decay. They also got very little food, and daily 10 or 18 committed suicide. From their "work" they all emitted a penetrating cadaverous smell. It was this smell which betrayed our two informants, who were discovered among us and marched away by guards.

In a far corner of our yard, there was a barrack where the so-called "Yard-Jews" lived. They were about 100 craftsmen, locksmiths, joiners, electricians, also tailors, and 12 musicians. These people had been brought here from Warsaw 4 weeks before the general deportations, to set up the camp. They wore suits with yellow stripes, lived apart from the others, and only met them during meals. They worked in their work-shops and were not admitted at the above-mentioned killings. The 12 musicians had to play every evening at banquets held by the Germans. I was told that among them there had also been a chauffeur who had managed to gain favor with the Germans, and was often taken out of the camp by them. When the deportations in Warsaw began, he drove out with an SS man to get his wife and children out. But after a few days he took the car and fled with his family. The SS could not forget this incident, and were still cursing about it when I was there. I myself heard one of them say: "That bloody dog, if we catch him again, he shall find out that there is a worse death than by clubbing or shooting."

As I have mentioned before, one of our duties was to arrange the clothes pile. During a roll-call the commander told us to examine the clothes carefully for money and articles of value left in the pockets or sown in between seams elsewhere. "You know best where Jews usually hide their money," he told us, "I do not wonder that you do such things; after all, you are human beings, and think that you can save your money that way. What we do with you is our policy, just as England and America have their policy against us."

During my 4 days' stay there, 110,000 (hundred-and-ten thousand) Jews came to that camp, and were delivered to the death-camp by the method related above. The transports came from France, Holland, Vienna and Poland. Apparently the foreigners had come to us by direct trains,
because their carriages had built-in benches, and they arrived in fairly good condition. Everybody had a number, and so had the baggage. The ashes from the burnt corpses were taken out of the hole, passed through sieves, and packed into boxes. What happened then to it, I do not know.

At last I succeeded to win over two boys for my plan of escape. I could persuade them that we had nothing to lose, and the only question to be solved was how to go about it. During a roll-call the SS commander told us that it was useless to think of escape, since it was impossible; but if someone should really get over the barbed wire (which was impossible), he would not be able to go on from there. But if by some magic anybody should succeed to get out he could be certain that he would be brought back there after a short time. I can tell you, he said, that by December 31st, 1942, not one Jew will be left in the Generalgouvernement.

From the moment we left our barracks at 7 a.m. till we entered them again at 7 p.m. we were watched continuously. Any separation from the group would have been noticed at once, we concluded that flight in daytime was quite out of the question. An escape by night had to be considered, and for that reason we had to find a way to remain outside the barracks after 7 p.m. Before 6 p.m. I packed each of my two companions into a bundle of clothes and took them up onto the clothes pile; my friend Sachs did the same with me. Each of us provided himself with as much money and jewellery as we could find hidden in the clothes, and with one big kitchen-knife. In case we were captured we decided not to die without defending ourselves. After 6 p.m. it became quite around us, and I freed myself a little from my bundle so as to be able to watch my surroundings. The Ukrainian guard was relieved, and I now waited for darkness to fall. At about 8.30 I crept out of my bundle and freed my other companions of theirs. It was the night of Hoshana-Raba (the seventh day of the feast of the tabernacles); I am certain of this because it is the day of my father's death. We dug a hole in the clothes pile, so that standing up only our heads looked out. We stood watching, and observed that every thirty minutes a guard circled the yard and that a search-light crept regularly over the clothes pile. We intended to wait, since we expected a change after midnight.

But when until one o'clock no change had occurred we decided to creep forward at one o'clock after the passing of the search-light beam. Still buried in the pile we observed a thick smoke coming from the ditch, from which we concluded that the corpses were being sprinkled with something. We decided to reach this dense screen of smoke, and push for-
ward under its cover. At 5 minutes past one we let ourselves down the pile, crept towards the smoke cloud, and reached it unnoticed. We now found ourselves standing in front of a barbed wire fence. Without hands and knives we managed to dig a hole under the fence, the ground being soft. We squeezed through under it, and stood in a dense forest. We proceeded straight forward and after a few minutes stood again in front of a barbed wire fence. This time the spil was hard and we could not get through the same way as before. We were obliged to scale disregarding the spikes; we wore two pairs of gloves, so we got across with only a few scratches. Then we went on only to encounter after a few minutes a third barbed wire fence which had to be negotiated the same way as the second. Our way then led us further into the forest, which we only left about half past three next morning. From the edge of the forest we saw a village, but decided not to enter it before about 5.30, since there was in the Generalgouvernement a general curfew till 5 a.m. One of my comrades decided not to wait, and went in the direction of the village. We soon lost sight of him but heard dogs bark after a short while. We never found out what happened to him.

About 6.30 we left the forest to look for the road and met a woman who showed us the way. We now took the direction of Wardaw and walked three days, spending the nights in the forest until we reached Warsaw. During this time we lived on dry bread. When we arrived in Warsaw one day after Sukkot (feast of the tabernacles) our first step was to go to the Karcelak (Warsaw's Caledonian market) to get other clothes, because ours were so ragged as to be conspicuous. I also had my head shaved because I had been shorn in prison, and I thought a head recently shorn would raise suspicion. I now parted from my comrade, and tried to enter the Ghetto in some fashion, in order to look for my sister. I did not succeed in this, but learnt that my sister was no longer in the Ghetto. I decided to go to Krakau, and before the journey, procured "Aryan" papers for myself. At Krakau, after a long search, I found my business friends, Viktor and Henryk Torstein, and Marysia Orlovskaya, who had worked with us before. All three are now here with me. They were amazed at my sudden appearance, because they knew that I had been deported from Czenstochova, and there had never been a case of a safe return, from a deportation. All four of us decided now to escape to Hungary, and for this purpose we made for the Hungarian frontier at Turki near Stryj. We got in touch with the smugglers who were to bring us across the frontier with great dispatch, because it had leaked out that Turki would be evacuated within 8 days. My three comrades returned to Krakau and I was to go before them to Hungary and make the necessary preparations for their crossing. I went with a group of about ten people under the guidance of the smug-
guiders who were to lead the way across the frontier in return for a fee of 20,000 Zloty (ca. 500 Dollars) for every member of the group. We were cheated, however, by the guides who took our money and abandoned us in the forest. We spent 11 days in the forest, and finally returned. I for my part went back to my friends at Krakau. The Ghetto still existed there, but we as "Aryans" obviously resided outside the Ghetto. To live in Krakau was rather dangerous; for this reason we induced an acquaintance by the name of Jellonek, who was married to a Jewess, to buy a villa at Swoszowice near Krakau at our expense, but in his name, and let it to us. Mrs. Marysia Orlovská kept the house for us.

While we were in the forest near Tureki I bought a Hungarian Certificate of Residence (Heimatschein) from a Jew for 2000 Zloty. I intended to use this certificate for registration and thus obtained the status of a foreigner, to whom the anti-Jewish regulations did not apply. This registration was to be arranged by Mr. Eliczer Landa, who possessed the necessary contacts with the competent authorities at Bochnia, and who was ready to help us if he would receive in return similar certificates for himself and all his family. We accordingly turned all our energy toward procuring a metal stamp for counterfeiting. Viktor Rotstein went to Stryj, where such papers were reported to be obtainable; however, he was caught in the deportation rush at Stryj and was carried off in a railway truck. He succeeded in making his escape at Lemberg, and returned to Krakau. After that Henryk Rotstein went to Warsaw and procured the stamp from the firm of Kolesa Trnka. The stamp was made out for the parish of Hust. We used it to forge a large number of Hungarian Certificates of Residence, which were countersigned by the chief of the German police at Bochnia, whose name was Schönberg.

In the meantime we had to escape from Swoszowice because Jellonek had been denounced by a Jew. He was arrested and shot because an old radio set was found on his loft. The informer Samuel Brodman, a disciple (Chassid) of the Rabbi of Bobova, had actually plotted against the brothers Rotstein, and the police were really looking for Viktor Rotstein when they found Jellonek's wireless.

Our certificates made it possible for us to live outside the Bochnia Ghetto. We had moved to Bochnia on February 15, 1943, and from there we managed to get in touch with Slovakian smugglers, with whose aid we finally succeeded with great difficulty in crossing the Slovakian border. Here again I must mention the valuable help of Mrs. Orlovská, who crossed with us.

David Milgrom from Lodz

August 30, 1943