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UC SAN DIEGO

## **Politics of Memory**

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1 hour, 27 minutes, 06 seconds

Speaker: Tal Golan

Transcribed by: Rachel E Lieu

[Holocaust Living History Workshop](#)

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Time      Transcription

00:00      [The Library UC San Diego]

00:06      [Tal Golan: The Politics of Memory]

00:07      Deborah Hertz: We're starting close to time, right? I know it's the dinner hour. So, I'm Deborah Hertz. I'm the founder of the project and I'm very happy to see my students here. I know you swam a long distance to get here. Um, it's my pleasure to introduce - where are you - to introduce my colleague, and my friend, Tal Golan. I'll just say a couple of words about how I see Tal's, Tal's mind and body laying across continents. When I had only been at UCSD [University of California, San Diego] one quarter when I was called to go to lunch with Tal and uh, discussed 19th century um, um, rhetoric, and law, and um, and medicine, and the subject of Tal's, Tal's research at that time. And since then he's expanded his research to do the history of science um, in Israel, a big project on science in Israel, science in Zionism, technology, democracy, technology.

00:57      Deborah Hertz: So, in this talk that he's going to be giving for us Tal is again sort of lying between Europe and Israel by bringing the story of his father in the Warsaw ghetto, and his father coming to Israel, and his father returning to Poland, and how he, Tal, a very accomplished son of his beloved father, he's going to share that with us. So I thank you all for coming. Um, I have to put in a plug for Susanne's course. Okay, so for anyone here who's um, can sign up for a course, Intellectuals in Politics [unclear]. And since uh, you're all intellectuals - or budding intellectuals - and we're all ipso facto living in politics, you must take Susanne's course. Um, Susanne is such a wonderful instructor that um, my students come to me and said, well when I took Professor Hillman's course this is how she designed the [unclear] Get with the program, it's Professor Hillman. So anyway, take the course and welcome Tal.

2:00      Tal Golan: Um, hi thank you all for coming. This is uh, I remember seeing this workshop. Thank you, you know, seeing the ads and coming to a few of those, and I thought that this was, this is a wonderful project. So I want to thank you for doing this. I never thought that I would end up on this side of the podium. I must admit, I'm not sure exactly how it happened that I agreed, but uh, if I'm here I'll try to do my best to tell you a good story. Okay, so um, um, I guess the advertisement that presents what this is about - it's a story about my father um, who, towards the end of his life uh, started to remember and to reconnect to his childhood that, for many years - I would say like, you know, more than 50 years, something like this - basically left behind, had to deny its existence in order to exist, to survive. And after that, for other reasons maybe, in Israel trying to become Sabra. You can discuss some of the, I will describe maybe some of the details. We can discuss in question time, explore more. I will certainly, I will not try to be speculative but to try my best to

be descriptive um, um so, and this is the story, what happened, and what I learned from this to some extent.

- 03:42 Tal Golan: Um, one good place to start maybe is in early 1999. I was in Cambridge [Massachusetts] doing a postdoc at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and then I got a telephone from my father. We used to speak not frequently and he didn't call me, but this time he called me. He says, listen, son. I decided that I want to go to Poland, Warsaw as uh - And I said, hmm, how interesting. Why would you do that? And he said I want to be a testimony or a testimonial person. And he explained to me that there is this what then was a growing project in Israel, where you send high schoolers to what they call their root, root trips uh, roots trips to Poland. And so, there will be, I don't know, a class of a certain high school, 200-300 students. Um, they will go in uh, you know, organized tour and they will have some people that were called testimonial people, these people that experience the Holocaust first hand typically, and then - because I don't know if all of them were that way. And then, they would go in the buses, and they will tell the kids about their experiences, and will be able to enrich all this.
- 05:16 Tal Golan: Um and my father said that he agreed to do that, but he agreed only, that he hesitated. He was, he didn't want to do it alone, and he asked me to join him, said that. Uh, and I said, um yeah sure. I'll join you. I had no idea what it is all about, I mean, except from what he told me. And uh, I should tell you that we didn't discuss the Holocaust at home. And when we discussed it and, uh some, maybe on some intellectual terms, but my my father never discussed what happened to him in the Holocaust, right? He didn't have any family Israel. All my family was from my mother's side. And my father was not a depressed person. He didn't, he was not an angry person. And um, so, but I knew of course that he was born in in Poland, and things happened. But funny enough, when I think back, I didn't inquire much not, not typical of me but in this area I didn't.
- 06:26 Tal Golan: Anyway, so I said, yes. We'll meet in Warsaw. We set a time in the spring of [19]99. He flew with the delegation from Israel. I flew from Boston. We met in Warsaw and um, they I had the plan of their trip and we, I met him in Warsaw in the Great Synagogue. And they remained, or it was by then renewed, restored uh, and, and I went from the airport, and I met him over there. All the delegation was going around looking at stuff. He was restless. Uh, he was concerned, nervous because what he saw, because his life was over there. He he didn't know how to handle it. He didn't know how much he remember, how much he didn't remember. He felt like he is going to, what he discussed, what he negotiated with the head of, head of the party - or the delegation - that they will give us the second day off so we can get alone, and try to track down what happened to him during the war. Uh, and, and he impatiently wait, waited for this. He couldn't talk talk much to the kids yet. Later he even told me that he was not sure that he was able to tell them anything because he didn't do it until then, for 50 years. It was totally new for him. Actually,

he wasn't sure even if he can speak Polish because he hadn't done it for so long. But as, as, as the plane landed in Warsaw, it came back to him.

08:06 Tal Golan: so I met him in the Synagogue and from there we travel together with the delegation, although at the certain point, we parked it to, to the ghetto and the ghetto is uh, the Warsaw ghetto today looks like - I don't know if today, but in [19]99 - look like um, another neighborhood in a socialist capital city. You don't see much by those, you know, apartment buildings with some green in between them. And here and there you'll see stuff, like this. This is a picture taken from the ghetto. And, and we traveled through the streets and he remember suddenly, the name of the street made sense to him. And he said, yeah, we go right here maybe. He was looking for the street where he was with his sisters, and then we found it. Of course, there was nothing to find there, that the street was there. And we looked at it. We spoke about about this, or the memory and stuff. Then we went back to the hotel for dinner, and the next day was off to, trying to track down what had been during the war.

09:18 Tal Golan: We didn't have much. We rented a driver, I did already in the airport, and he was supposed to pick us in the morning. My father didn't remember much. What we had to start with is that his family, he remember, he was a Hasidic family of a certain rabbi, who afterwards had a brilliant career in Israel. The, the, the Rabbi of Gur uh, Gur is the right pronunciation. And that was about 80 kilometers from, or like 50 miles um, south of uh, Warsaw, in a certain area. And you remember that when the assembly used to go to travel uh, to the parties at the rabbi's court, they would travel by wagon for two nights or one night. So we had a pretty good idea pretty - good idea, terrible idea - but an idea where to start, what area to go. So in the morning, we went um, on and in the car um, very nice car, the driver turned out to be a, as a elementary school teacher. That, after the fall of the Communist Party, had to find other work to support his family, the teacher, and he became a driver; he was very helpful throughout the day.

10:39 Tal Golan: So we going around, and my father talked to the drivers, and asked, and they, we drive for about an hour south on the way to Radom. If you, if uh, that's what, you remember, that's the direction where they - We're getting, more or less, to the area where the rabbis used to live. We wander around, not sure what's going to happen next. And a certain point, my father says, that looks familiar. What does that mean? No uh, so we had another piece of information that we could go on is that uh, the guy who helped my father um, most of all, the guy who took him in, and taught him how to behave like - and, and in a minute I will tell how it happened and why was that important - taught him how to behave like like a Polak, like a Polish farmer. The guy who took him in, uh, he was a blacksmith but my father didn't remember his name. So we just, arbitrarily there's an old guy coming from one of the courts around there. We stopped him and the driver asked him, is there an old blacksmith around here? So, and, and this old farmer looks at us. He says,

- Wojciech? You mean Wojciech? And my father jumps like this. Yes, because he didn't remember the name, but that's the name. So the guy looks at him and says, yeah, he died nine years ago. So yeah, exactly, my father goes, uh. And then he says, but his daughter is having a pharmacy close by. I can take you over there.
- 12:15 Tal Golan: And my father remember that indeed this guy Wojciech had a family, a small daughter, two years old. So by now, we are four people getting into the car. The, the farmer joined this strange expedition uh, obviously interested in, in this weird gentleman. And uh, we're traveling to the pharmacy, getting up the stairs, second floor look around. There's a nice lady uh, there are a few ladies. They call the owner. She greets us and uh, my father is too excited to talk. So the the driver speaks. It's all in Polish, I don't understand Polish. Okay but what, so I'm basically a fly on the wall. I videotape everything, so I do have the videotape um, but I'm not going to use it today. So um, so obviously, from what I could see from the side, she's very polite. She understands the basic idea that [unclear] that her father helped this gentleman during the war. And she and she smiles politely and says yeah, my father was a kind person. He helped many people. Um so, and she didn't remember him. And then she said, wait wait - and also she said, I was born after the war.
- 13:42 Tal Golan: So my father was getting confused but then she says that I have an older sister who was born in the war and she lives in Warsaw now. And they start to exchange some information, and my father is warming up a little bit. Uh, and he starts to tell her things about her father, and at a certain point she, you can see, she connects. She said I know who you are. You are Yużek. My father used to talk about you next to the dinner table, wondering what happened to you because later the, their ways parted. And, and then she just hugs him, and she opens the table. And then, and, and, and they start talking, and they call her older sister in Warsaw. Or, at least they couldn't get her, but she said she will try to arrange a meeting. We sit for about an, I don't know, an hour. Uh, by now it's probably 11, 12 and they talk and and then she gives us uh, the address of um - Well so, so this is the start of the line okay, I'm still thinking how to tell it. All right, so this is this is the start of the thread, right, and um.
- 15:13 Tal Golan: Uh what my father remembered, that her father, this Wojciech guy did, blacksmith, my father stayed. He ran away from ghetto Warsaw. I'll come back to this in a few minutes once I'll find the right place to connect that. He ran from ghetto Warsaw just a few days before the rebellion in in January, I think [19]40 - when was that [19]43 - and he wandered around. And at a certain point, he was so desperate, and hungry and starving and freezing, he came out from the woods wherever he was and this guy Wojciech, he asked him for food. And this guy recognized immediately that my father recognized me - he presented himself as a Polish boy, but obviously, everybody could see that he's a Jewish boy. And the guy took him in and um, taught him how to behave like a Polish person. And then, when he became

- dangerous at the certain place where he stayed, where he stayed that the Germans started to occupy, there would be more people over there, and he moved him on to his brother-in-law. Okay, my father moved to another place, nearby farm, where, where he was taught how to be a farmer, skilled farm worker.
- 16:40 Tal Golan: So we got the name of this guy Vitek, the brother-in-law for father from her. And on we are, in the car and we're going to this other guy Vitek. And um, and we're getting there and the guy just, we passed him actually, on the way. We didn't know that we passed him. It's very close to the house and we park in, and then he comes in on a tractor - that's the countryside - falling apart by the way, at that time, still not prospering. And then, this old man comes out from the tractor, and my father you know, walks towards him. And then the driver comes in and he says uh, the driver tells this guy, Vitek, I brought something interesting for you. And my father looks at him, at, at this Vitek guy, and tells him, do you know who I am? And this Vitek is looking and says, yes. I know you. You are Yuzek. And that's after, well that was in [19]43 but in [19]99, right? And these two guys gets together the vodka comes out. This is Polish vodka, homemade. They're getting drunk for the next three hours, telling stories uh, and um, and then we get back to the, uh then. No, no we didn't get that. Like at three, four o'clock I, I started telling my father that maybe we should go on because there, we want to do more things today and uh, so we moved on.
- 18:26 Tal Golan: Um, from this Vitek guy my father told him that after he left here he had also to leave this place; at a certain point it became also dangerous. Over there [unclear] or maybe there was enough food, my father didn't remember, but they had to move. But by this time he was a skilled farmer, farm worker, in um, a place where there was a significant want of skilled workers because many of them were taken to Germany, especially young workers to Germany, for forced labor. So he could move around and, and find work where he felt he's unsafe. And he did, moved around quite a lot. And um, he spoke with Vitek and he more or less could triangulate where did he go, but he didn't exactly remember. Vitek suggested a certain name of a family, and another family remember that he worked for, a very rich family. So we came down with a certain name and this Vitek guy gave us direction, and off we went. My father by now, after a few shots of vodka, forgot the name after the war. And we lost our way in the countryside. In a certain point, my father says stop, get in reverse. We walk in and we see on the left side of the road there was a pond and my father says, I remember this pond. And funny enough, I remember also this pond because one of the stories that my father told me - it turns out that he did tell me stories, but they were disconnected; they were not around the Holocaust. There were stories here and there before I go to sleep, you know, when I was a kid about his adventures.
- 20:10 Tal Golan: And one of the stories that stuck with me is that the first Russian soldier that he ever saw, he was at a certain farm in, in Poland and he was watering the

cows from uh, from this winter of um, this is winter of what, [19]45 I believe. And uh, there was a hole in the ice and the water were dirty only the animals could drink from there, actually just the cows, not even the horses, I remember the story. And then somebody ran from the woods with all hair, and dirty with the first Russian soldier, soldier dressed weirdly, and just put his head in the water like this, and drank, and drank, and drank, and then came up. And by that time many kids were around, looking at him like this, and he looks at him and he says, which direction is Berlin? And, and then, and they point west, and he keeps running. That's the story he used to tell me. And we were driving in Poland, and you know, south of Warsaw getting, lost our way, and suddenly he thinks this is the pond. And fair enough, we stopped the car. We went in and this was indeed the place. And again, we knocking on, on, we, there's some farmer coming out to meet us. The drivers tell them this funny story that this gentleman was hiding here through the war, you know. And, and he says, yeah, I was a kid during the war. And my father remembered him, as a very small kid. And then we went in, and then they started putting out pictures, and my father took them on a tour and showed them all kind of places in the farm that they didn't know uh, the farmer and his wife. And um from there we went to another farm and, and so this was our day.

22:06 Tal Golan: And we went back to Warsaw, and we had to be there by six in the evening because the pharmacist was able to arrange an evening meeting with her older sister, the daughter of - uh, are you still with me with all this? Okay and um, indeed we went there, and we had uh, you know, a long meeting - two, three hours meeting - with uh, the elder daughter that uh, remember my father. Well, she was two years old, three; she didn't remember but she remembered the talks after the discussion, what happened to this Jewish boy that disappeared for so long. She asked my father, why didn't, you know, create any contact all these years? Because she said, her father was concerned, and wanted to know what happened, and curious. And my father tried to explain that he just, he couldn't do that for personal reasons. So, so this is the end of the second day. All right, so we go to sleep. And um, and the third day we go on the buses and we start - this was about, I don't know, almost two weeks tour - and um now my father, as I told you, wasn't sure how he's gonna talk about this, if he will be able to talk about, you know, his experiences with the kids. He didn't do it, would not experience, he never dealt with it before. But after the second day just couldn't stop talking, you know. He went on the bus and he talked, and he talked, and he talked.

23:50 Tal Golan: It was like amazing to see. My father is not a great talker, usually, but he didn't stop. And when the trip ended and he came back to Israel, he went into his office in his house, and he stayed there for two months. Then he came out with a bunch of papers like that, by that time I was in Israel. I finished my postdoc at MIT and I, I, I went back to work in Israel. And I'm, you know, I'm the historian in the family, so my father comes to me with this bunch of papers written in, in pencil, in handwriting. He says, here's my memoir please edit this. and I look at it, my father

has a terrible handwriting. It's all over the place and just so I, I hand it back to him and says, let's make a deal. If you print it, if you type it, sorry, in your computer, I'll edit it. Yeah, but I can't work with it like this. He says, sure, takes it back. A few months later, even shorter, I don't remember, bring it to me typed. Um and, um I edited it. I, to be true, I took my time. I had to write my own book, and I took my time. But then it turns out that, he was, he became, that he has cancer and his time is short. So I put everything in the side, and I did, did edited, and produced what this book, the newspaper edition. This is his memoirs, his biography.

25:20 Tal Golan: Um, so that's the cover story. And through this process of editing stuff, I learned about this uh, my father, you know, the human being, who grew up in one culture uh, went through those terrible period, the Holocaust, had an amazing story of survival and spirit, and didn't make a fuss of it, went back to Israel. By a certain point, he got the advice from this guy Wojciech okay, the blacksmith. Said, he said, you gotta forget everything that you had before, all your memoirs. You have to forget them if you wanna survive because you got to pretend that you are a Christian farmer, Pole, all the things that you are not. You have to learn how they speak, how they eat. My father was not rude enough, so they kept learning him how to, teaching him how to curse and, and uh, but of course, how to ride horses, how to work in the farm uh, and uh, and this identity saved him. And uh, after the war ended and he went to Israel, he had to gain another identity even, you know, of that of the Israelis. For some, who some you know, some of it he didn't have to pretend much because he went, by then, through wars and, and many things. But uh again, he could not for other reasons that we can talk about here, he could not talk much about Holocaust, except with his own friends, and even they didn't talk about this. But they banded together because there was something they knew, there was something in the background they didn't talk about, but they belong to the same thing. All of them that wanted to become new Israelis, and this new society.

27:18 Tal Golan: Um, all right so um we got plenty of time. So I, I want to do two more things. I wanted, there is a continuation to the story with Wojciech's family, not much. At a certain point like, we applied as a family for uh, for the Israeli government and for the UN [United Nations] and he became and, and made uh, this guy Wojciech and his family - they called it *hasidei ha'olam* [righteous gentile]. There was a ceremony in, in, in Warsaw. There was some fuss in the tv and stuff, and they came visit us. My father and his family came visiting them, and that was very nice as well. It continued as long as he lived, after that it stopped. Um, so my plan in this talk was that in the middle of all this is to try to inject some more rich stories about the things that happen to him, okay? But I missed the turn when I'm supposed to do it. So I told you everything. I'll get back to it, okay, a little bit, and then. So, so this is the framework you know, maybe I'll -

28:29 Tal Golan: So my father, you know, he was born in a place that is called Nowe Miasto. Nowe Miasto is, is this area that we talked about. It's, it's a small town, not



much there. No more than a big village next to um, on the way to Radom, to the big city in the south of Poland. So it's, it's in an agriculture area. As I, I already said before um, so there will be around - this is Radom here, okay. This is uh, Warsaw, okay. Around here, doesn't matter much. That's the county city Grójec. And that's area that we traveled. That's the area that everything happened. Um okay, so he was born there in 1929. Okay, uh as I said from, for a Hasidic family. His grandfather was the head of a certain yeshiva over there, an educated a rabbi, very religious. His father rebelled against his father, and learned the profession to be a watchmaker, and later open a brick factory.

30:02 Tal Golan: And my father was born the fifth of a family of six children. Okay, with the three older sisters, and one older brother, and one younger brother. Um, 1930 to 1935 is the great depression not just in, in Poland it came a little later than the US [United States], lasted a little longer, and his father lost basically, his business collapsed, and he considered immigrating. And in [19]36, the dates are not totally clear, he tried to get for certificate to Palestine, couldn't get it. Try to get certificate to the U.S. [United States], couldn't get it. And he ended up going to Brazil, the father alone. And the idea was that he will put some, you know, uh substantiate himself over there again, position himself, and then bring his family over. But um, he lost contact to the family as the political event started to unroll quickly. I think I'm not sure exactly when he went. I mean, so um, he went, I, the way I figure it out he went in [19]35 or early [19]36.

31:22 Tal Golan: Okay and then he got stuck there. No words from him, great depression, and the family started to fall apart. My father's mother died from kind of disease, from a disease, not clear what and the six kids stayed alone. The family broke apart; uh, the older brother went to work somewhere, the younger brother was taken to some kind of institution, and the three sisters took my father with them as they went to work for relatives in, in the neighboring town. Okay, this is before the war. This is in [19]36. Please excuse me that I'm consulting the timeline here. Um, my father memoirs from this time include stuff like a few events that, you can't call them pogroms, because they are not really huge riots, but you can see the severe intense violence again Jews, clashes. He stays with a relative, and then the relative dies. Never mind those details. Sorry, it's the first time I'm telling my story also, so I gotta clean it a little bit, so I apologize for some of those details. At a certain point, the older sister is uh, establishing some kind of a trade between uh, the local, mostly rural community, here and and the big city in Warsaw. She goes on a train and she sells product in Russia, and she brings them back some dresses. She's trying to do this and she established she's going every week there, trying to trade stuff from there to here, and from here to there. And in [19]38 she takes with her to Warsaw the other two sister, and my father. They all moved to Warsaw.

33:23 Tal Golan: Okay [19]38, there's no war yet. There's no ghetto yet. They try to make a life over there okay, with these three sisters, and in September [19]39 um,

Germany invade Poland. And shortly after, they start to establish the ghetto in, in Warsaw. Okay, I don't have much to say about the ghetto, I mean this is known information right about they, they decided on the certain, what the Germans called a certain part of Warsaw. They didn't use the word ghetto. They moved out of it; they moved uh, about 100,000 Poles move in equal numbers in the beginning, a little greater number of Jews and at the height of the ghetto there were close to 400,000 Jews. I think it was an area of 1.5 square miles, something like this. I got the numbers here. Yeah, 1.3 square miles. Um all right, and so here's my father at [19]39. He's 10 years old by then, find himself in the ghetto. Um, he has friends over there, they play, there's a culture life over there. There's all kinds of youth movements. There's a choir. There's a symphonic orchestra. He remembers this stuff, but at the same time, there's a growing financial, actually starting a shortage of food and other things. And things start to deteriorate, deteriorate. Um, there were three friends okay, over there that he remembered. One of the names, his name is Berel, the other guy is Fishal. And there's so this guy Berel disappears from the ghetto in [19]30, in the beginning of 1940. And the rumors was that his rich uncle in America brought them over okay, and they are works in the movies.

35:52 Tal Golan: And this is important because my father and Fishal both, one of their main wishes later is to run away from the ghetto and get to America. And they think they can do it by just somehow getting over the wall and just walking to America. They think it's just outside the wall somewhere, 10 years old right? They even build a wagon. It's in the picture here. Okay, I thought in the beginning when he told me that they built it, that this is some kind of a metaphor or something, and I asked him to draw it for me. And I thought I would get something, but it was such a - he drew it. He says that's how it looks like. You know, they were basically, they took some furniture, broke them apart, took a plate - square plate - there were plenty of deserted bicycles around from which they can take wheels. And they start practicing around, pushing each other so they can get to America, to their friend. Um all right, if things got ugly in the ghetto my father learned how to get along. He was a very creative and an energetic kid. He learned first of all to break into deserted apartments, and they were growing in numbers. People were taken in, in, in, in the actions and uh, or people who did, who you know, who found a way to get out of the ghetto. Many of them were affluent Jews, who left behind a sometimes apartment full of food and other stuff.

37:27 Tal Golan: So he learned to, how to break into those places. And actually, he learned also how to move from one apartment to another without getting out by breaking the wall from one apartment to another, after making sure that they are empty. And he, uh so um they will, that's basically how he was able to support his sisters and and even uh and Fishal his friend, and his family. And they survived the growing difficulties. And we um, all right, and this is in the winter in [19]41 okay, and the beginning of [19]42. And by the summer there is this uh, what is called the uh, the Grossaktion, and the great uh, action where uh, uh - the numbers are all over

the place - but close to 200 uh, Jews were transported, taken out of the ghetto to, mostly to Treblinka, within three months. He was able to survive it but his two big sisters were gone; they were taken. At a certain point, he was left just with their younger sister, which was older than him, younger sister and um, and you know. And at that time, it was clear that the Germans will come back and they start to plan a resistance.

38:59 Tal Golan: And, and um, in [19]42, in early [19]42 and, I'm sorry in the, in late [19]42. And uh, at a certain point, they asked my father to be a messenger, to get out of the ghetto and there was a certain message that we need to transport to somebody, for food for for ammunition. And uh he knew how to do that. Okay when he told me it sounds crazy, but what he did he was, one of the checkpoints he would wait until lunchtime. There was, there usually were two people over there, uh guards, and when one of them went to eat you could sneak out if a car passes exactly by, a big car. You can get out from the other side without anybody seeing if you're quick enough. And he was able to do that and to get the message and, and, and, and then they they found that, this certain youth movement that organized some of the resistance, found another way to get out from the ghetto through one of the apartments that were close to the wall. So you can break through the wall, get to the other apartment and walk out from the other side. So that's how he came back to the ghetto and that's how he was able to establish a lifeline in and out of the ghetto, and he used to do that as a messenger but also to buy some bread on the other side bring it to the ghetto.

40:27 Tal Golan: This is how to survive at the winter of [19]42 the end, and by the end of the year, probably a few days just before the rebellion, his sister, which was involved with all this and through her he was, told him that he's got to get away. Because things are going to uh, um, things were going to start soon and then he should get away. And um, and he escaped the ghetto. That's the last time he saw so his sister. He started walking around. His plans was to go to his friend in America but he couldn't take the wagon with him. And he's walking and he realize after a while that maybe America is not that close, after a day or two that he's lost. So he decided instead he will go to, back to the area that he knew. Okay, around here there were family around, and maybe he can find them and recuperate until he will, and then go to America. And then he starts. So he goes to um, a town that is called Mogielnica which is a little bigger than where the the the village that he was in, where his relatives were there. Actually, that's where his sisters took him after the family broke apart, that's where the working relative - He went there, took him um, a few days to get there, a week. I don't, doesn't matter really, but when he gets there he finds that the place change. Mainly, there are no Jews anymore. All of them were taken away and he doesn't know what to do, he said. But what he does, he meets a friend that he used to play around with on the outside.

42:10 Tal Golan: And I gotta say something on the side here that I didn't explain. My father was in a way, and that's probably what saved him, was not a regular uh, orthodox Jew. He didn't like to go to the cheder. He didn't like to pray. He liked to play outside it was a sheigetz, as they call it, all right? Uh, he was very good in sport; he was fresh, uh uh, all those things. So he had this boyfriend that everybody told him again and again, don't be friend with him. You cannot trust him. But this guy actually is the only one that was left to help him, and he helped him. He helped him find a work in a bakery, so he turned to him. So my father worked for a little while in the bakery and but, then somebody blow the whistle on him and Polish policemen came to arrest him. He was able to escape. He had to run away from there, and by then he knew that there is another village that there are Jews over there. And because there is some wood industry that they work in it over there, that the Germans allowed them to stay and work on it. He decided to go to this village. Uh and he, there is uh, some of his family was in this village, a rich branch of his family that actually owns some of those uh, wood factories. He gets there, there's a whole kind of adventures, and there's - it's guarded. There's only one bridge go through it. He has to go through the river. We don't need to get into it. He gets there. It doesn't work in this village as well. His family ignores him. He stays with some uh, friends of the family that, but they are not, he feels like he's a burden. There's also a lot of problem at the time. So he, at this time, he runs away also from this second village that he's been in, okay. And then he gets lost for more than a week in the woods.

44:07 Tal Golan: By then you realize that he cannot find any of his family. He cannot count on anybody. He's got no one. He doesn't know what to do. He's what, 11 years old in the woods. He's hungry; it's uh, winter. He remembers hallucinating; he remembers sleeping with wolves, or dogs on the trees. And then desperate, he comes out of the wood because he needs something. And then he meets this guy Wojciech. That's the first guy he met and that's his fortune. That's his luck because he could meet, you know, very few people would give shelter to a runaway kid that looks like that, tells stories that he's some kind of a Polish guy, that his parents were taken by the Germans because they resisted the Germans. It wasn't a popular. And probably still had those, you know spoke, in a very funny Polish way. It was easy to recognize. So he was lucky to run into this Wojciech guy, but this Wojciech guy knew immediately that this is a Jewish boy who faced hard times and, and then he took him in and he taught him how to behave like a Pole and then he moved on to his brother-in-law Vitek. And he taught him how to be a skilled worker and then he could move around and offer his services to other farms that needed skilled work. And basically, that's how he was um, able much to survive.

45:34 Tal Golan: All right. Now as he works in those, in one form or the other, and he moved a few of them, and I don't know exactly how much because he doesn't remember. We were only able to locate one or two. But he has to be very careful not to be himself kidnapped to Germany for forced labor. Not because he wouldn't like to go there, okay? People say that it was great over there. By then he's 15, I

don't know. No, this is [19]43; he's 14. Okay, the point here is that if you, if they uh, the Germans or the local, their local corporate, you know, police that get you for forced labor, first of all, you have to go through medical examination. You go to medical examination, you're exposed to be uh, a Jew okay? And he knows that he cannot be captured. So he's trying very careful to avoid this. They have those roadblocks they put, and he has to move around because he's working. At a certain time, he falls into a roadblock there, and then and the Germans were able to capture him and to go to forced labor. And they put him on, and, and so they concentrate uh, the youth that they're able to assemble put them in on about ten trucks you remember, and they drive he thinks that they were driving towards Warsaw.

- 47:09 Tal Golan: So uh, at a certain point he is able to escape. He jumps from the truck. There's the road turns around like this, at the certain turn where it's at evening and then the other truck behind this - because there's always soldiers in the front of the truck behind you watching the back of the truck behind them. So it's a certain [unclear] they don't still see you and stuff. A few of the guys, he organize a few of the guys; they jump off the truck. They shooting at them, but they miss. They are escaping, so he is escaping this. Let me find where I am for a second. Right, and he working, and he gets to working and finding himself back to one of the farms that he works in. Works more over there. At a certain point he, the, the farmers that employed him, but he became basically um a family member over there. I don't, I don't know what to make of it, but that's the way he writes about this. He tells him that the German Army demands that one of the family uh, um, that a worker from this farm has to join a the German Army. At least to bring in a, a wagon with horses.
- 48:32 Tal Golan: Okay what happened then is that the Eastern front, the Russian advancing of the Eastern front, the German are retreating back into Poland. The the fighting line, the fire lines are getting closer. The Germans are needing ammunition; they need transportation and they need resources. They recruits the local people to do that. They ask the farmers. They confiscate basically, the horses, the wagons. And the farmers asked my father to go and join the German Army for three months. That's the deal, with a wagon and three horses. And my father says, yes I'll do it. I mean, you know, I live in your house. I do all those things I do so my father joined the German Army, basically on the front lines, moving ammunition and soldiers to the posts. Uh, that's in the winter of [19]43. Okay uh, and um, at a certain point, it's winter; he's got two soldiers with him moving them and ammunition to one of the front. He describes also how some of the posts were so close to the Russians, the front, you could hear the other soldiers cursing each other.
- 49:45 Tal Golan: And a certain point um, he travels in a wagon and um, with ammunition and two soldiers, and they're making, they're cutting through a frozen lake and, and the Russians um, start to uh, uh, artillery uh, to fire with their um - how would you say that, a heavy ammunition, uh cannons. Exactly that's the word I was looking for,

thank you, cannons. And the ice breaks. And the wagon, and the horses, and the soldiers are all getting down. They find themselves in under the ice. He's the only one who's able to get out, probably because the soldiers were, you know, with their boots, with the heavier things and, of course, the horses are still in harness. And so he comes out um, and uh, makes it back to the camp, and, and find it hard to explain what happened, and basically takes off and finds a way back. Um, that's the end of his German military career. And he finds his way back, more or less, to where he used to be. Um, this is already early [19]44 and then he joins the partisans. And then he finds that the, the opportunity suggests itself when he joins the partisans. By then he's 15. He's too young maybe, but he cheats about his age, and he wants to join them.

51:15 Tal Golan: Uh he finds a connection and he joins it, but he joined the, what is called the the Armia Krajowa, the, the nationalistic. There's two factions of partisans Polish, basically resistant movement. The most popular, the bigger one are the nationalists, backed by the British. By [19]44 they amount to, they're the biggest resistance at least. They're not very active but in numbers, they're very big 380,000. Uh, they are loyal to the exiled government, the Polish exiled government that sits in England, financed by them. And they don't like Jews very much. So he joins them but he cannot say that he's a Jew. He has to hide it. They live in the forest in, in well-hidden places uh, in a compound, and he joins them, and they practice. And he's young, so he's becoming the, basically the boy servant of the, of the officer, of the head of the unit. And they don't fight much. Okay, they practice a little bit but in the evening they drink vodka, they play cards. And um, one of those nights that they do this uh, after a long night of cards uh, he left alone in the tent with his commander, and he's washing the dishes, or the glasses from the vodka and the commander is handling uh, his gun and he start whistling the tune.

52:46 Tal Golan: And my father recognized the tune. It's the the most famous Zionist tune they sing in Zionist camps. And he heard it because his aunt had this uh, how do you call it a wood uh, sewing operation next to the river, and they used to do a [unclear] camp over there. And he, he, he was during the summer he knew the tune. And now this head of the partizans is whistling his auntie's tune. My father says, that he basically, he had a few he's washing dishes that everything, everything fell from when he was so surprised. And the commander noticed that didn't say anything, but after a few days took him aside and start to interrogate him. And it turns out and, and and my father just had to admit that he's a Jew. And it turns out that the commander is also a Jew. More than that, it turns out that the surgeon of the unit is the brother of the commander, is also a Jew. And so, and uh, and it turns out also this. And they start, so they, so they start to share their secrets, and they took him around. And part of their routine was to confiscate food and other things that they needed from local farmers, especially those who know were known as co-operators with the Germans.

54:07 Tal Golan: And they did this, and then he discovered that actually, the commander had a family a wife, and a baby hidden in one of the farmers, in one of the farms, because they had to stop there. And the deal was that the commander will supply them, the farm, with things in return for hiding the wife and the kid. And at the summer of [19]44 things have started to heat up because the German's presence is getting thicker and thicker because their retreat the Eastern lines back to the area of Warsaw. The clashes are becoming more frequent, and at a certain point they have a clash and the commander is getting hurt. He's able to escape but he has to stay in bed for three months, and they don't go to visit his family after three months. And after three months, when he's able to move they go on the horses, the three of them, and they go to visit the family. And when they get there, they hear that, the farmers tell them that there was somebody turned them over and the Germans were here and they fetched the commander's family. And they don't believe it, and they go to loop around where the hideout was and they find signs of struggle, maybe some blood, my father was not sure. Anyway, they found out that since the commander didn't come the, the farmer's family basically killed. They know what to do with the wife and the baby, and they kill them. And uh, they end up, the commander and, the two brothers end up burning the place, killing the, the farmers and his family, and uh, turnout and burning the place and getting away from there.

55:48 Tal Golan: So this is the summer of um, [19]45 right? In August there is the Polish Rebellion. Warsaw is on fire, the German is defeating this rebellion. More than 2,000 Poles are dying as well now. Warsaw is in total ruin. My father's unit is also getting into another very serious clash with the Germans, and they basically break down. They disperse. My father goes back to his base of the farms over there and hangs out until the beginning of [19]46, where the Russians finally take over the village where he stayed. Okay, and where he stayed was that the richest farm around. That's where he worked with other workers, and that's where the the Russians made their headquarters also. So he's very glad of course. That's also the incident when he saw the first, that I told you about, the first Russian soldier. And um, some also, the Russians are getting in and he is very happy, and he wants to come forward as a Jew. But then it turns out that another guy was ahead of him, stepping forward and said, I, I'm glad you came. I'm a Jew. I'm a Jew. And, and the soldiers killed him. Uh, uh it turns out that uh, the frontline, significant proportion - I don't know exactly how much - of, of the frontline of the Russian soldiers were ex-prisoners. People with the choice whether to go to, significant criminals at least, convicted criminals, where the choice to go to jail or to go, and it was very hard to control these guys.

57:38 Tal Golan: And uh, anyway the first Jew that identified himself, got shot and so my father didn't exactly step forward. When he realized that, he waited. and then he saw an a Russian officer that looks, to my father, looks to my father, in my father's eyes he looks like a classical Jew. All right my father said, he has big nose, he was dark, curly hair. So my father decided, this guy is a Jew. All right, but he couldn't,

you just, but so how does he going to establish some kind of a connection? Exposing himself, but what if he's wrong? What does he know? Um, so he comes to this guy and he tells him, listen I'm, I'm, I need to change some of the old money to the new money - that's uh, the Russian instituted a new currency - and uh, and I heard that the Jews are good at this. They usually, you should find a Jew to do, that's what they do, all they do is - And and and the officer gets mad at him and tells, that's not the true.

58:49 Tal Golan: Jews are not all about money, do other things. And my father actually was looking for, that's very smart to do that. He was looking, that's where he realized he was, you know uh, convinced this guy is a Jew. Then he exposed himself and they got so is that under this guy's protection. And turns out that this guy is part of the um, what would be the word, counter-intelligent forces of the Russians or certainly from the political unit. And he was very interested in my father's intimacy with the nationalist partisans because there became, by that time, the main challenge to the communist domination in Poland that most of the police did not want a communist regime, okay. They wanted Polish regime. And then the biggest part of the partisans by far were nationalists, and the communists, the Red Army, hunted them down. And since my father stayed with them, and worked with them, the officer thought that he might have the valuable knowledge.

59:52 Tal Golan: He sent him to, then he sent him to Łódź, which is the big city here. This is the central city for the south of um, of Poland, in order to forward, to the headquarters of the Red Army counterintelligence, whatever. My father did not want to do it. Certain point he was able to disappear, to escape. Or, or not escape exactly, but he didn't go there. Instead, he went to look for his relatives, or what might be. He heard that in Lublin there's an office was opened by the Jewish agency where people could come in, and hang out notes, and, and see, and meet whatever. He goes there. He doesn't find anybody. Uh, uh he's totally confused. There's so much confusion at that time, that everybody is moving around. The funny things that he said, that nobody understood is Polish there. Everybody spoke Yiddish or Russian. I'm not sure, maybe somebody can tell me why this is the case. But anyway, he gives up and he moves back to Łódź and, where he was. for the first time, he's met with a some, how do you say representative, from Palestine. Okay uh, how would I say but how would you say it in English, agent, okay? And um, and so recruiters, yeah. And then, this guy came in, in order to organize, you know, youth, you know, to to come, to immigrate to, to Palestine. And he, and he helps my father, basically gets him some papers, and put him in this building with another 20 to 30 young Jews. Most of them actually came from the Eastern territories, from Russia, from actually USSR, where they fled and that's why they survived basically.

101:57 Tal Golan: He was the only one who from Warsaw, and they were joined later by a few more. By, by um, [19]40, let me see, um, by, yes by early [19]45 there are about



70 people over there. And they decided, they get, by that time German defeat is just behind the corner, everybody expecting it. Budapest is being freed uh, and, and stuff. And they get papers as uh, prisoner of war, Greek prisoner. There was Germany's prisoner of wars and then as paper, they testified that they are like Greek prisoner of wars, and they're on the way back to Greece. That's the, for the papers. And they start to move around. They start going through, the first they went to Czechoslovakia. So they go through here and make a journey. I don't, okay, I had some pictures of the ghetto on the roll. I guess I missed it, didn't I? All right, here is let's see, this this is Wojciech, this guy here. I should get better coordination between my talk and my pictures. Here this is Wojciech. This is my father immediately after the war, and then shortly after he was uh, collected by uh, this Zionist organization and put with this group. Together uh, they describe him as a very quiet guy, doesn't say much, deeply depressed. He doesn't remember it this way. They, so they go through Bratislava. They go to Budapest. They cross from Hungary to Austria. They have to pay bribery on the way. They get to Graz over there. They stay, they, by May Germany already surrender, and you have on the roads millions of people basically. From Austria, they moved to Italy, to Rome, to Bari. The next year and a half basically moved with various Jewish groups.

1:04:18 Tal Golan: At a certain point they take him to help other immigrants, to get on ships, or through the roads. And with the organization they create a unit that is among them that helps elder Jews, to move, and to get on ships on the way to Palestine. Um, then you find the first traces of family in Palestine. Am I getting, I'll finish shortly. Okay, and that's where you find the first traces of a family, a far, not a close family, not intimate. But turns out that one of the elder women that he helped to get on the ship turns around and gave him a letter and says, can you send it for me? Make sure that it's sent to Palestine. That's where I'm going, so. And he recognized the name on the letter Liepster. And it turns out that her brother-in-law was their uncle. And he puts inside some words also, and where they're staying. And a month later he gets letter back from Israel, from Palestine, that indeed - this was his what his aunt writing him, this little sister of his father - and uh, that she is married. She's got three kids in, in the northern uh, Palestine, in Haifa. And she even put in the letter 10 sterlings, pounds, which miraculously arrived at their destination. And uh, so he had a good, a good spring. It supported him for quite a while. Then they traveled with friends to Rome and celebrated. Um, I guess a few more things, and, and that will be enough for this story, I think.

1:06:05 Tal Golan: So uh, [19]46, he is by then 17, all right. He is part of what uh, now um, the Palmach, which is the growing uh, defense organization in Israel. At least the, the, the what's supposed to be the battle ready the combative forces, organizing a troop in Europe in order to organize with the, with immigration, with smuggling, the borders. They're getting them on the ships and he's, he's recruited to this group. He ends up being also a bodyguard in the Zionist Congress in [19]46 in Basel, and then uh, uh, finally in, in [19]47 he gets, he finds himself on one of the ships that they

basically prepared. Preparing ships at that time meant building very, building them wooden boxes where the the immigrants could sleep in, making them, you know, you should, you supposed to pack in 600 under the deck of, of medium size, that was you know 17 inch for square box. For each one they used to build this stuff, and they found themselves in the middle of, in [19]47, one of them. They are the, the troop is about a hundred by then. They are already part of the Palmach, but they never been to Israel. They don't know where the Palestine. Um, it ended up to be one of the more famous ships that ended up in Israel. He described the story, how they went through the, you know, through the coast of Greece, and in Turkey, and then all that by then there are about 800 souls on the ships. They have to go under deck as they get closer to Palestine shores, because the aerial, the airplanes that flew around the bridges should not see anything suspicious on the boat. And they might suspect, this is a very vivid, very active uh, trade route through the Suez Canal coming up from Europe, could look like one of those with some luck.

1:08:13 Tal Golan: And what happened is - I got a picture here, I think - um, so you, they go like right, so they go from Italy here, they go around this and, and this is Israel here. And this is the Suez Canal, and this is the, the route, more or less. And it's supposed to go here, but around here you can cut sharply, and drop your load on the shore of southern Israel. And that's what they do but uh, the captain making a mistake they find themselves fronted about 30-40 feet from - no in feet, we'll be like 70 feet - from the shore. Uh, there's a rescue, but the British capture all of them and send them to Cyprus. And there are stories, some stories over there - I will not talk about it. [Unclear] find themselves finally in in in late [19]47 back for the first time in Palestine. Uh, finding his, some family over there, okay. That's how he looks when he got to Palestine. That's his first picture in Israel. He's a good-looking guy. Um, and then he started to build his life in Israel, to become a successful uh get a, he starts, you know, by joining a building company, and then start to be a worker. And it's one of his favorite stories that in the first day he took, you know, the guy who hired him tell him, take these two buckets, fill it up with concrete, get to the fourth floor, get some garbage from there, get it done. Do it. In the end of the day he did this, his hands were totally badly. He says, and what tomorrow? And the guy told him, the same thing. So he says, all next week? He says, all year. That's, anyway it doesn't matter, things that I remember. But the point is that he becomes successful. At a certain point he's got his own companies is and then he get married, he got three kids.

1:10:18 Tal Golan: And uh, at a certain point he [unclear], uh, you know, and he's successful Israeli with a lot of the characteristics that he adopted in Israel. He doesn't talk much to us about the stuff that he went through. And only when he retired, he met an old friend, the one he used to do business with, and this friend also stopped working in the building - not also, he, it's a certain point he became an historian an amateur historian, and an organizer of those delegations that I talked about. And um, so this guy is into, you know, the Holocaust business and he starts, and he's very curious

about my father's story. And my father at that time didn't think about it, didn't talk about this for 50 years. He doesn't even remember much, but they sit around retired, retirees, you know hanging out drinking coffee, telling stories, and slowly my father starts to remember. And he doesn't think that it's a big deal, doesn't think that it's important to anybody. They just sit and talk. But the other guy seems to think that this is interesting, and he encouraged my father to join this delegation. My father thinks about it and says, maybe. Then they invite him to a committee to select those people, and then he tells them what he tells them. They say, okay you're in. And then he calls his son and says, can you come with me? I don't want to go alone. And, and then he gets to Warsaw. He doesn't even know if he speaks Polish, doesn't know if he remembers what he remembers is true or not and what and and then everything quickly goes in two days all this, all his past, is coming up very quickly. And uh, and he comes back and writes his memoirs. And um, so that's a that's a good story about how, by the end of his life, he's able back to reconnect with his childhood. Uh, and it did him good, did him a lot of good. So, um that's, I guess I'll stop here, and then we can talk about this. I don't know what you want to ask but I'll try and help.

- 1:12:44 Speaker 1: Do you think it was easier for him to remember these things because he was back in Poland? That it triggered memories.
- 1:12:53 Tal Golan: I think so yes, yes. And also, yes. And he had this stuff that he had to go on the bus, each every day a different bus, a different group of people, and tell them. And every day he remembered more, and it was coming from organic, some kind of a framework in which he had to tell the story. And as I said, after this day that we found all those things he just, my father transformed. I didn't see, he couldn't close his mouth. And uh, which, so um, um, yes?
- 1:13:34 Speaker 2: In 1999 when you were back in Warsaw, you had that picture, that picture of the wall. There's almost nothing left of the wall, that's about, that, that wall's probably all that's there, right?
- 1:13:50 Tal Golan: No, there's a few more sections that are being kept in, in as a monument, yeah.
- 1:13:55 Speaker 2: Because it's now, I mean, there's sort of a -
- 1:13:59 Tal Golan: There is no wall.
- 1:14:00 Speaker 2: The area, the area rises up, you can see where they built the next layer right on top of -
- 1:14:05 Tal Golan: Yes. Yes, you can see actually some places where you see where the yes. And they have, of course, the famous um, the, how do you call it, statue, memorial statue. Which, you have a copy of it also in Jerusalem. There's only one different; there's a brave women warrior in Warsaw, also in Jerusalem. In

- Jerusalem, her tits are covered. Her breast is covered and then in Poland, they are exposed. I thought this is - Yes.
- 1:14:42 Speaker 3: Is the farmer recognized as a righteous gentile?
- 1:14:46 Tal Golan: The blacksmith? No, the other guy was not interested. This, the the brother-in-law talk to him later, that recognized him immediately, was a a a cool character, you know. He looks my father, my father he recognized him through all these years. And the second thing he tells him, you see mount - they have this saying in Polish probably - it says, mountain don't meet, but people do. That's what he tells him, after all these years. And he didn't want to be recognized. He was, there was always this double attitude, I don't know how to do it. There's a slippage between their, their, the willingness of the Polish to be good people, and that doesn't mean they like you too much. Okay, there's, his son was a pastor. He was a devout Catholic. He still, he helped my father. He was in a very nice guy, but he didn't think that they should celebrate this in any way. I'm not sure how to do, I'm not trying to pretend that I can read him. But uh, he was already 80, he didn't -
- 1:15:59 Speaker 4: I know that most of this was new to you and may have been new to him, or reemerging in new ways. When you were growing up, were there, were there fragmentary stories that you had a general sense of what he had gone through?
- 1:16:19 Tal Golan: Nope. There weren't fragmentary stories. And, I'm sure you, we had the feeling he had great stories to tell. But uh, there were never, there was never the sense, the Holocaustic sense to them. You know what I'm saying? There was no misery, no suffering. Even when they were there, he didn't tell him that way. Actually, this is, when he published his memoirs - this is something to chew on - some people find it hard to read them because they sounded like *Huckleberry Finn* or something. And, and he was supposed to be a person who lost all his family, a most terrible crisis in his life and, and uh, and it was supposed to - And there is a certain feeling to those, this kind of literature, a certain oh, a certain darkness to it that in some way or another, you have to refer to, and his memoir did not. And people reacted to this uh, some of them angry. One very famous reviewer wrote that just this is, this is, this is phony. This is uh, uh, could not and should not be the case.
- 1:17:36 Speaker 4: You're talking about his memoir?
- 1:17:38 Tal Golan: Yes. Yes.
- 1:17:43 Speaker 5: Were you ever, or he ever, able to trace his father in Brazil?
- 1:17:48 Tal Golan: Thank you for asking. This uh, after coming to Israel uh, um to Palestine he had [19]47 and he starts to have a life. He gets a letter from your father in Brazil saying - what?

- 1:18:06 Speaker 5: How'd they get together?
- 1:18:08 Tal Golan: He gets a letter from father in Brazil saying that actually, he did quite well. He's got coffee plantations. He's got a mattress factory. He remarried; he's got two kids and please come over the world will be open to you and stuff. And my father refused to answer, and he didn't speak with him. And he changed his name also; it used to be Goldberg and he changed his name to Golan, which is uh, there's no, you know, diaspora connotation. So we can talk about this a minute, he is not the only one, the whole generation at that time, of the kids certainly, are moved from biblical names to all kind of names, sounds almost like they're in Indian nation, you know, mountain, river. My name Tal means in Hebrew Jew, the witness, the morning witness, I don't believe. That's the meaning of it. So there's a whole rebellion in that sense, but my father is not just naming his kids. He changed his family. It's part of his way of dealing with that so. And [unclear] he didn't establish connection with his father. He didn't want to. Even, I ask him later maybe he should. No, he was not interested. Too late.
- 1:19:16 Deborah Hertz: So a few questions, one was about physiography, one was about language and one was about [unclear] So the first one is, if your, did your father ever say that if he had looked more Jewish, this whole camouflage would not have worked. The second one is when he was back in Poland, and you listened to his Polish, was it a Jewish-accented Polish, or did it sound like the Polish that you think [unclear] the Polish of the survivors? And the third question is, do you think that becoming a Zionist, and a Pioneer, and fighting in the Palmach as teen survivors, was it at all ideological or was it that that was really the only people that were really taking care of these orphans?
- 1:20:18 Tal Golan: Okay, all right, the first question. Uh, yes definitely. The, how he looked played a certain, central part in his survival. Not just how he looked, the way I see it, his mentalities, his, his character also played in it. Being, people wanted to help him, you know. He was, it is, he's this kind of a person. He can talk to people. He's is, is coming forward. Uh, you know, I don't take for granted the fact that many people helped him along the way, and it probably has to do with the way he interacts with the world, the way he sees about the world. Where later that he did not became also depressed, or angry, or hostile or, he's a positive, very positive guy. So yes, his physical look absolutely. Also, when he was a kid the fact that he did not go to the cheder, was able to play around also got him some, you know, skills that allow him later to masquerade as not, not as [unclear]. So yes. The second question, I wouldn't know what the Jewish accent Polish would be like, right? So I don't know. And the third remind me one more time.
- 1:21:38 Deborah Hertz: Was it that these teen orphan survivors were taken care of and they became Zionists or were they just basically taken care of?

- 1:21:46 Tal Golan: All right. That, that's maybe, that's a very interesting question. Um, probably not accidental that they became Zionists, but one factor, they were, the point here is to say, that there were many colors of Zionism and all of them were present in those immigration camps. All of them trying to recruit people in different ways, some of them are actually not very recommendable, to their camp. So yeah and Zionism was with the color of 1000, a coat with 1000 colors, right? You had the communists yeah the semi-communists, and and you had um, all kinds. And each one was trying to make to their own team. And a lot of that creates um, actually theological uh, friction in the, in, in those um camps. And uh, he didn't care basically where exactly for the ideology. What he writes is every time they're trying to recruit him he says, I'll do it in Israel. I started with this group, I'll stay with them. And that's what he did. Actually, there's all, I mean, he came with 80 people. He ended up only four people staying with the original group. All others were going with others who said they would - Okay, one trick for example was, is if you join us, we will go to Palestine next week. We are ready, so if you join the [unclear] or something and so I guess there was a lot of factions, and people didn't care much. The other point is that the first time he remembers when he saw the Jewish brigades that this Palestine, Jews, soldiers, brave, he adored them. It just, nothing in the world that he wanted to be more than that. So yes, there was ideological motivation, more than ideological. It's not even ideological. It's just uh, you know, talk about the ideology of theory just uh, so and he was not the only one that described that. Yes?
- 1:24:02 Speaker 6: Have you thought about translating your father's book into English so we can all read it?
- 1:24:07 Tal Golan: One of these days, sure. Yeah, maybe. Yes?
- 1:24:18 Speaker 7: So, you said because your father's a positive character, it sounds like that's why his memoir sounded more like an adventure story, but do you think somewhere along the way that he did suffer and he felt the losses or did he ever talk about that?
- 1:24:35 Tal Golan: Not much. I saw him break down when we got to Treblinka, okay, in one of the last days. Treblinka is a funny place. It's in the middle of a wonderful forest, deep in the middle of it. So you walk through all this [unclear] and then you get to a place where it's not very assuming, there's not a lot of, there's not a lot of buildings, because nobody stayed there. They were basically shipping the Jews over there and burying them on the place. They didn't even have to keep them for the night under a roof. So what you have is only a train rail that ends up somewhere in the middle of the forest with the darkness. So and uh, that's where the final ceremony was when all the delegation came in and there was all this uh, very much political, national ceremonies. And on the side over there - and we didn't know that - there was this kind of a symbolic cemetery, of course, they could know there was about 800 Jews burned over 900,000. So but, they had those big rocks for each community. And as he wandered around he saw the rock of his uh, that symbolized

his village, Nowe Miasto, it's called. And, and most probability that that's where his sister, certainly they were taken up in the last action was ended up, that's where they were taken. So that, I saw him, that's where he broke apart over there for uh, and he, when we talked about later he explained to me that he felt tremendous guilt for staying alive. And uh, but that he says that this uh, elevates it. Later he felt much better about this, and he kept looking for maybe some of his brothers who maybe [unclear] but he never found any [unclear]. All right, so, thank you for uh, coming and listening to me.

1:26:48 Susanne Hillman: Thank you, Tal. It was a wonderful talk. And please, on your way out, take a flyer for our next and final talk - Sam Horowitz, Hiding from the Nazis. I hope I'll see as many of you as possible on June 6th. Have a good evening.

1:27:06 [The Library / UC San Diego]