DR: When you escaped the first time and realized you had to go back, how did you feel?

JK: When I learned that we had missed the partisan rendezvous and would have to wait three nights in the forest, I frankly did not give a lot of thought to my situation. I knew I wanted to survive. If I had fallen asleep then in the forest, I would have frozen to death.

DR: When you escaped the second time, what crossed your mind when you crawled out of the tunnel?

JK: To run as quickly as possible and hope that my legs would carry me for the next five miles.

DR: When we work together or when you tell your story to others, how do you feel revisiting that difficult time?

JK: About four years after I came to England, I moved into a flat with eleven other survivors from different parts of Europe. We were all lonely, without families, and we formed strong friendships. We stayed together for about two years, until I got married. During this period, we never talked about survival or about the pre-war years. We never asked each other any questions about who we were. We did not want to know.

Later, I can't remember the year, the book *Exodus* came out (Leon Uris's father was from Novogrudok). We started to relax, and for the first time I told my story. Only then did I realize that all survivors must tell their stories and that they should be recorded for posterity. Otherwise our suffering would not be known by the new generations. But I must tell you, it is not easy. Many times
I keep the tears away. Some of my friends have even felt guilty that they survived.

The same was true with the work you and I did: you put on a brave face, and you tell it as a story. It is not easy. You see the faces of your loved ones.

Telling my story always reminds me of another loss. My last day in school was in 1941, when I was twelve. I lost my education then. I always regretted that I have not picked up my schooling.

**DR:** How did your grandchildren react when they heard your story?

**JK:** They heard it mostly from my children and from videos made by the BBC and others. After telling them how hungry I was, I showed them what 125 grams of bread looked like. One slice and soup for twenty-four hours — a starvation diet. “How did you manage to survive?” they asked. It was and still is difficult for them to understand that their grandfather was a survivor.

**DR:** To what do you attribute your strength in surviving the camp and your many losses?

**JK:** I came from a loving family, an unusually loving family. Two brothers married two sisters. I never heard an argument in either home. It was a home full of love. Then came the Holocaust. You start losing one after the other. Killed for doing nothing, just for being Jewish.

After every killing, you get stronger. I wanted to survive. I wanted to take revenge. I somehow knew that I would survive.

After the operation, I lay on a hard bunk for about seven months. Not doing anything but thinking. Everybody was at work. From February 4, 1943, with the victory of the Battle of Stalingrad by the Russians, I somehow wanted to believe that the free world would win the war, and I wanted to survive to see it.

I also had *mazel* (luck). You needed luck to survive.