

## From the Testimony of Alex Feuer about the Arrival and First Selection at Auschwitz

At the ripe old age of fifteen I arrived in Auschwitz, the infamous human extermination camp. We were pushed like cattle into freight train cars. After a five-day, unbelievable hard journey we arrived in Auschwitz. As we were being removed from the train our first view was SS men with guns and guard dogs. The SS guards told us to leave the little belongings we had on the ground and line up. Little did we know that at the time that we were about to be selected for life or for death. As I stood in line a stranger tapped me on the shoulders from behind and told me in Yiddish: "Little boy, stand on your feet. Stand on your toes when you come up to the German SS. Make yourself taller." I stretched and strained, somehow knowing that my life depended upon the stranger's advice. I was selected to work in a road gang while my parents and my younger brother were taken to the gas chambers. After they selected me for work we were taken near the showers. There we relinquished all our clothing and what little personal belongings we carried with us. We were all completely disrobed and had our hair shorn off. As I looked about I could see mountains and mountains of personal belongings such as eyeglasses, shoes, clothing of every description, and piles and piles of human hair. Now we were being led to the showers. Apprehension and fear was present among all since we had heard rumours that the showers were gas chambers. We were reluctant to enter and had to be pushed and shoved with force into the showers. To our amazement they were real showers. It was a miracle that our lives had been spared and we had survived this ordeal. We were then disinfected with some kind of chemicals and issued one set of striped work clothes. As we were being led away to the living quarters we could see smoke and flames rising out of the chimneys. The talk among us was disbelief of the horrors that were occurring. Words cannot describe or furnish anyone with any accurate picture of what went on there.

**Source: Yad Vashem Archives O.3-8521**

