

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:23,890

2

00:00:23,890 --> 00:00:25,100

Good afternoon.

3

00:00:25,100 --> 00:00:26,500

My name is Bernard Weinstein.

4

00:00:26,500 --> 00:00:28,930

And I direct the Kean

College Oral Testimonies

5

00:00:28,930 --> 00:00:31,750

Project of the Holocaust

Resource Center.

6

00:00:31,750 --> 00:00:34,150

We are affiliated with

the Video Archives

7

00:00:34,150 --> 00:00:37,360

for Holocaust Testimonies

at Yale University.

8

00:00:37,360 --> 00:00:40,480

Sharing the interview with

me is [? Robyn ?] [? Rice. ?]

9

00:00:40,480 --> 00:00:44,410

We are privileged to welcome

Judit Gottdiener a survivor

10

00:00:44,410 --> 00:00:47,530

presently living in Hillside,

New Jersey, who has generously

11

00:00:47,530 --> 00:00:50,950

volunteered to give testimony

about her experiences

12

00:00:50,950 --> 00:00:53,950
before, during, and
after the Holocaust.

13
00:00:53,950 --> 00:00:55,840
Mrs. Gottdiener I'd
like to welcome you

14
00:00:55,840 --> 00:00:57,210
on behalf of both of us.

15
00:00:57,210 --> 00:00:57,710
Thank you.

16
00:00:57,710 --> 00:00:59,920
And I'd like to
ask you to tell us

17
00:00:59,920 --> 00:01:03,430
something about the
place where you grew up

18
00:01:03,430 --> 00:01:06,340
and something about
your early years.

19
00:01:06,340 --> 00:01:08,860
I was born in Budapest.

20
00:01:08,860 --> 00:01:12,310
And I grew up, all the
time before the war,

21
00:01:12,310 --> 00:01:14,260
I was in Budapest.

22
00:01:14,260 --> 00:01:18,130
Only maybe little vacations
in these odd places.

23
00:01:18,130 --> 00:01:19,375
But everything in Hungary.

24

00:01:19,375 --> 00:01:26,410

25

00:01:26,410 --> 00:01:30,630

My family was consisting
of my parents.

26

00:01:30,630 --> 00:01:33,260

I had an older sister
and a younger brother.

27

00:01:33,260 --> 00:01:37,340

28

00:01:37,340 --> 00:01:44,120

I was brought up in an orthodox,
observant religious home.

29

00:01:44,120 --> 00:01:49,520

My father was a very
deeply religious person.

30

00:01:49,520 --> 00:01:53,560

And so in that time,
in my time, in Hungary,

31

00:01:53,560 --> 00:01:55,570

there were Jewish schools.

32

00:01:55,570 --> 00:01:56,950

So I had the privilege.

33

00:01:56,950 --> 00:01:59,560

I was able to go
to Jewish schools.

34

00:01:59,560 --> 00:02:03,475

I attended always
Jewish schools.

35

00:02:03,475 --> 00:02:07,420

36
00:02:07,420 --> 00:02:09,610
My childhood was in Hungary.

37
00:02:09,610 --> 00:02:15,340
The Jewish people lived
relatively good, one can say.

38
00:02:15,340 --> 00:02:22,330
So we had certain Jewish laws,
I mean, against the Jews.

39
00:02:22,330 --> 00:02:27,490
Like, there was a certain
percentage how many people

40
00:02:27,490 --> 00:02:32,380
could just go to the
university, or Jewish people

41
00:02:32,380 --> 00:02:36,010
were not allowed to have land.

42
00:02:36,010 --> 00:02:37,890
I was really a child that time.

43
00:02:37,890 --> 00:02:41,455
So I don't remember exactly
these kinds of things.

44
00:02:41,455 --> 00:02:43,990

45
00:02:43,990 --> 00:02:47,800
We lived in a
Jewish neighborhood.

46
00:02:47,800 --> 00:02:51,010
So I wasn't really
too much in contact,

47
00:02:51,010 --> 00:02:56,680

or I rather can say almost not
in contact with gentile people.

48
00:02:56,680 --> 00:03:02,050
So I didn't feel too much how
the Hungarian gentiles were

49
00:03:02,050 --> 00:03:03,010
in my time.

50
00:03:03,010 --> 00:03:06,560

51
00:03:06,560 --> 00:03:12,980
And the Hungarian Jews, one
could say, were, in a way,

52
00:03:12,980 --> 00:03:20,190
lucky because to us, the
worst time came just in '44.

53
00:03:20,190 --> 00:03:23,870
And that was close, already,
to the end of the war.

54
00:03:23,870 --> 00:03:27,620
In the period before
'44, did you ever

55
00:03:27,620 --> 00:03:33,860
experience outright
anti-Semitism to you

56
00:03:33,860 --> 00:03:35,940
or to members of your family?

57
00:03:35,940 --> 00:03:37,790
Did you ever confront
anything that was--

58
00:03:37,790 --> 00:03:38,670
Not really.

59

00:03:38,670 --> 00:03:42,530

This is what I was trying
to say because I really

60

00:03:42,530 --> 00:03:43,970

lived in Jewish neighborhood.

61

00:03:43,970 --> 00:03:45,560

I went to Jewish school.

62

00:03:45,560 --> 00:03:51,140

So I didn't have the
experience to face them or get

63

00:03:51,140 --> 00:03:52,270

in contact with them.

64

00:03:52,270 --> 00:03:53,860

Yeah, I was thinking
more in terms

65

00:03:53,860 --> 00:03:56,540

of when you left your
neighborhood for whatever

66

00:03:56,540 --> 00:03:58,310

reason.

67

00:03:58,310 --> 00:04:00,350

No, we didn't.

68

00:04:00,350 --> 00:04:03,920

I mean, my father
had a big business.

69

00:04:03,920 --> 00:04:10,260

And through the business, he was
in contact with gentile people.

70

00:04:10,260 --> 00:04:10,760

But--

71

00:04:10,760 --> 00:04:12,920

What kind of business was he in?

72

00:04:12,920 --> 00:04:22,400

He had a retail and wholesale
in tobacco accessories.

73

00:04:22,400 --> 00:04:25,460

And he handled with
the whole country--

74

00:04:25,460 --> 00:04:29,360

that were very few people
handled in these articles.

75

00:04:29,360 --> 00:04:32,580

So he was handling
with the whole country.

76

00:04:32,580 --> 00:04:35,630

He had buyers.

77

00:04:35,630 --> 00:04:38,300

And I don't remember that he--

78

00:04:38,300 --> 00:04:43,520

I would hear from him
very bad experiences.

79

00:04:43,520 --> 00:04:46,370

So basically, you're saying
until the onset of the war,

80

00:04:46,370 --> 00:04:50,400

you really were pretty much kept
from any of the difficulties.

81

00:04:50,400 --> 00:04:50,900

Yes, yes.

82

00:04:50,900 --> 00:04:52,100

I could say so.

83
00:04:52,100 --> 00:04:55,040
Do you have memories
that were particularly

84
00:04:55,040 --> 00:05:00,560
pleasant and good as
you recollect them now

85
00:05:00,560 --> 00:05:02,060
in those years?

86
00:05:02,060 --> 00:05:04,310
In my childhood?

87
00:05:04,310 --> 00:05:08,730
I think we had a very
nice family life.

88
00:05:08,730 --> 00:05:12,650
And I enjoyed very
much the holidays

89
00:05:12,650 --> 00:05:17,150
when he had Seder nights.

90
00:05:17,150 --> 00:05:19,560
Not only our family was there.

91
00:05:19,560 --> 00:05:23,240
But the rest of the
family, aunts, uncles,

92
00:05:23,240 --> 00:05:25,670
were invited, cousins.

93
00:05:25,670 --> 00:05:27,620
And we had fun.

94
00:05:27,620 --> 00:05:35,520
We had life without
worries, as I remember.

95
00:05:35,520 --> 00:05:36,020
Children.

96
00:05:36,020 --> 00:05:37,480
I'm sure my parents had worries.

97
00:05:37,480 --> 00:05:39,800
Did the rest of your family
live in Budapest also?

98
00:05:39,800 --> 00:05:42,260
And were you close
together, or--

99
00:05:42,260 --> 00:05:43,880
Yes.

100
00:05:43,880 --> 00:05:48,200
Yes, my mother's
grandparents, they

101
00:05:48,200 --> 00:05:52,550
were living just a few
streets away from us.

102
00:05:52,550 --> 00:05:56,010
I remember every
Shabbat afternoon,

103
00:05:56,010 --> 00:05:58,770
we went to visit them.

104
00:05:58,770 --> 00:06:02,990
And my father's mother
died very early.

105
00:06:02,990 --> 00:06:04,520
I don't even remember her.

106
00:06:04,520 --> 00:06:06,000
I was a small child.

107
00:06:06,000 --> 00:06:09,200
So my father's father
moved in to us.

108
00:06:09,200 --> 00:06:12,350
And he lived with us.

109
00:06:12,350 --> 00:06:13,730
I loved him very much.

110
00:06:13,730 --> 00:06:16,880
And I was very close
to him somehow.

111
00:06:16,880 --> 00:06:19,968

112
00:06:19,968 --> 00:06:20,510
I don't know.

113
00:06:20,510 --> 00:06:24,510
He was like a loner
in the family.

114
00:06:24,510 --> 00:06:28,220
I mean, he was always with
the family at meals, and so.

115
00:06:28,220 --> 00:06:31,280
But otherwise, he was
a lot in his room.

116
00:06:31,280 --> 00:06:33,980
And I always felt sorry for him.

117
00:06:33,980 --> 00:06:36,260
When I was a little child,
I always went to his room.

118
00:06:36,260 --> 00:06:37,580
And I was his company.

119
00:06:37,580 --> 00:06:40,190

120
00:06:40,190 --> 00:06:41,750
Were you the youngest, or?

121
00:06:41,750 --> 00:06:42,271
No, middle.

122
00:06:42,271 --> 00:06:42,813
Middle child?

123
00:06:42,813 --> 00:06:43,739
Middle child.

124
00:06:43,739 --> 00:06:46,520

125
00:06:46,520 --> 00:06:48,590
I imagine-- you
mentioned that there

126
00:06:48,590 --> 00:06:51,383
was something of an age
difference between you

127
00:06:51,383 --> 00:06:52,550
and your brother and sister.

128
00:06:52,550 --> 00:06:54,800
Did you feel, at
some point, as almost

129
00:06:54,800 --> 00:06:56,780
like an only child
in the family?

130
00:06:56,780 --> 00:06:57,650
Not really.

131

00:06:57,650 --> 00:07:00,470

132

00:07:00,470 --> 00:07:01,340

It's interesting.

133

00:07:01,340 --> 00:07:03,620

Between me and my
brother and my sister,

134

00:07:03,620 --> 00:07:05,570

it's almost the same difference.

135

00:07:05,570 --> 00:07:08,780

But we were brought
up like I was always

136

00:07:08,780 --> 00:07:10,040

with my brother together.

137

00:07:10,040 --> 00:07:11,810

We were the children.

138

00:07:11,810 --> 00:07:15,440

And my sister was always
the grown-up girl.

139

00:07:15,440 --> 00:07:18,200

So she was always
already separate.

140

00:07:18,200 --> 00:07:19,910

She was about six
years older than you?

141

00:07:19,910 --> 00:07:20,510

Yes.

142

00:07:20,510 --> 00:07:24,200

Yes so, when I was
six, she was 12.

143

00:07:24,200 --> 00:07:29,750

And in our time,
it wasn't so much

144

00:07:29,750 --> 00:07:32,540

the fashion to go
to school so long.

145

00:07:32,540 --> 00:07:36,120

So she just finished
high school.

146

00:07:36,120 --> 00:07:38,870

And when she was
15 years old, she

147

00:07:38,870 --> 00:07:41,240

went in my father's
business to help.

148

00:07:41,240 --> 00:07:44,143

So that's when she was
really like, in my eyes,

149

00:07:44,143 --> 00:07:44,810

like a grown-up.

150

00:07:44,810 --> 00:07:45,400

She's a--

151

00:07:45,400 --> 00:07:46,233

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

152

00:07:46,233 --> 00:07:47,330

--working, working there.

153

00:07:47,330 --> 00:07:51,350

And she learned typing.

154

00:07:51,350 --> 00:07:53,990

And then she was
helping in the business.

155

00:07:53,990 --> 00:07:57,170

When did you first feel
yourself in danger?

156

00:07:57,170 --> 00:08:00,860

Or when did you first feel
that things were turning around

157

00:08:00,860 --> 00:08:01,360

for you?

158

00:08:01,360 --> 00:08:04,985

The real danger
that we felt, and--

159

00:08:04,985 --> 00:08:09,115

maybe I should
tell a little bit.

160

00:08:09,115 --> 00:08:09,863

After '39--

161

00:08:09,863 --> 00:08:10,780

Yes.

162

00:08:10,780 --> 00:08:15,360

--and the war break out,
then, after a while,

163

00:08:15,360 --> 00:08:19,180

I don't know exactly
when it began,

164

00:08:19,180 --> 00:08:22,030

that bombing was at night.

165

00:08:22,030 --> 00:08:25,810

The English planes were
coming to bomb Budapest.

166

00:08:25,810 --> 00:08:28,850

So that was a

horrible experience.

167
00:08:28,850 --> 00:08:32,110
I remember what I mentioned
before, Pesach night.

168
00:08:32,110 --> 00:08:36,410
As I said, that it was coming--

169
00:08:36,410 --> 00:08:39,549
how do you called
this, the air--

170
00:08:39,549 --> 00:08:40,840
RAF?

171
00:08:40,840 --> 00:08:42,052
Alarm.

172
00:08:42,052 --> 00:08:42,760
Oh, the air raid.

173
00:08:42,760 --> 00:08:43,840
Air raid, yes.

174
00:08:43,840 --> 00:08:45,340
Yes.

175
00:08:45,340 --> 00:08:48,837
They were always blowing
these air raid things

176
00:08:48,837 --> 00:08:50,670
that everybody has to
go down to the cellar.

177
00:08:50,670 --> 00:08:51,790
The sirens, yes.

178
00:08:51,790 --> 00:08:55,480
And I mean, every
night, it was horrible.

179
00:08:55,480 --> 00:09:00,070
We had to get out from the bed
and get dressed quick, quick

180
00:09:00,070 --> 00:09:01,420
and go down in the cellar.

181
00:09:01,420 --> 00:09:02,920
It must have been
terrifying to you.

182
00:09:02,920 --> 00:09:06,070
I remember as it would be now
that I was usually getting

183
00:09:06,070 --> 00:09:08,240
a terrible stomach ache.

184
00:09:08,240 --> 00:09:11,920
This must have
been from the fear.

185
00:09:11,920 --> 00:09:15,100
And then, one Seder
night, it happened also

186
00:09:15,100 --> 00:09:17,620
that we had to
run to the cellar.

187
00:09:17,620 --> 00:09:21,610
It was a terrible feeling
to leave the nice table

188
00:09:21,610 --> 00:09:22,810
and run down.

189
00:09:22,810 --> 00:09:25,900
And we never knew how long
we had to sit down there.

190

00:09:25,900 --> 00:09:28,090
Pretty cramped.

191
00:09:28,090 --> 00:09:30,670
We lived in a big
apartment house.

192
00:09:30,670 --> 00:09:33,520
For everybody from the
apartment went down and just

193
00:09:33,520 --> 00:09:35,560
sat there cramped together.

194
00:09:35,560 --> 00:09:37,870
Did the bombings
go on continuously?

195
00:09:37,870 --> 00:09:40,060
Or was there a period
when they stopped

196
00:09:40,060 --> 00:09:41,260
or when things calmed down?

197
00:09:41,260 --> 00:09:44,470
I don't remember exactly
how often it came.

198
00:09:44,470 --> 00:09:46,040
But it was pretty bad.

199
00:09:46,040 --> 00:09:52,150
So my parents were thinking,
then, it was so bad--

200
00:09:52,150 --> 00:09:57,370
that was already in '43--

201
00:09:57,370 --> 00:10:03,280
that for a while,
the school closed.

202

00:10:03,280 --> 00:10:06,400

And then my parents thought,
then when there is no school,

203

00:10:06,400 --> 00:10:10,150

why shouldn't we
be in such danger

204

00:10:10,150 --> 00:10:15,760

that they sent us to a small
town, my brother and me.

205

00:10:15,760 --> 00:10:17,260

We knew the people.

206

00:10:17,260 --> 00:10:18,910

And they sent us somewhere.

207

00:10:18,910 --> 00:10:22,510

They saw that would be safer
because they bombed always

208

00:10:22,510 --> 00:10:23,950

the big towns.

209

00:10:23,950 --> 00:10:26,410

So we were there
about two months.

210

00:10:26,410 --> 00:10:30,730

And then it happened that
my sister got engaged.

211

00:10:30,730 --> 00:10:32,440

And it was her wedding.

212

00:10:32,440 --> 00:10:34,090

So we came back to Budapest.

213

00:10:34,090 --> 00:10:38,500

That was in '44 January.

214

00:10:38,500 --> 00:10:45,368

So that shows that in Hungary,
life went on pretty normal

215

00:10:45,368 --> 00:10:47,035

until the Germans

[? didn't ?] march in.

216

00:10:47,035 --> 00:10:47,840

Yeah.

217

00:10:47,840 --> 00:10:51,148

How did you feel about that
separation at that time?

218

00:10:51,148 --> 00:10:52,690

Did you understand
what was going on?

219

00:10:52,690 --> 00:10:53,090

Oh, yes.

220

00:10:53,090 --> 00:10:53,590

Sure.

221

00:10:53,590 --> 00:10:57,910

I was already a 13 years
old and going to fourteen.

222

00:10:57,910 --> 00:11:00,390

Whom did you stay with when
you went to the small town?

223

00:11:00,390 --> 00:11:03,790

That was, for us, very
pleasant because we

224

00:11:03,790 --> 00:11:14,210

had the so-called young
woman who was with us,

225

00:11:14,210 --> 00:11:18,350

like you can call governesses,
they would call it.

226
00:11:18,350 --> 00:11:22,640
And a Jewish young
woman stayed with us.

227
00:11:22,640 --> 00:11:27,170
And her mother was living
there in this small town.

228
00:11:27,170 --> 00:11:28,800
So we went with her.

229
00:11:28,800 --> 00:11:33,410
So we weren't just by
very strange people.

230
00:11:33,410 --> 00:11:36,490
And nothing was wrong there.

231
00:11:36,490 --> 00:11:38,490
We just stayed there.

232
00:11:38,490 --> 00:11:39,740
So you were comfortable going?

233
00:11:39,740 --> 00:11:40,580
Yes, yes.

234
00:11:40,580 --> 00:11:43,160
I couldn't say that I
was suffering there.

235
00:11:43,160 --> 00:11:45,730
And this was you
and your brother?

236
00:11:45,730 --> 00:11:46,230
Yes.

237
00:11:46,230 --> 00:11:47,930

Yeah, OK.

238

00:11:47,930 --> 00:11:51,680

And so this was then

January '44 that we

239

00:11:51,680 --> 00:11:56,480

came we came back to Budapest
to the wedding of my sister.

240

00:11:56,480 --> 00:12:02,240

And my sister moved up.

241

00:12:02,240 --> 00:12:05,030

At that time, it was
difficult to get an apartment.

242

00:12:05,030 --> 00:12:07,310

So they moved.

243

00:12:07,310 --> 00:12:11,630

They took a little
apartment that

244

00:12:11,630 --> 00:12:16,040

was close by to a
Budapest resort place.

245

00:12:16,040 --> 00:12:19,590

So they took that in
a hotel, an apartment.

246

00:12:19,590 --> 00:12:24,200

And soon afterwards, not
so far away, was March '19.

247

00:12:24,200 --> 00:12:26,930

Then the Germans moved in.

248

00:12:26,930 --> 00:12:29,420

And that day, when
they moved in,

249

00:12:29,420 --> 00:12:32,000

I remember our family
were sitting together.

250

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:34,915

And we felt, this is the end.

251

00:12:34,915 --> 00:12:36,180

We just knew.

252

00:12:36,180 --> 00:12:40,550

We knew what was
going on in Poland--

253

00:12:40,550 --> 00:12:43,640

first in Germany
and then in Poland.

254

00:12:43,640 --> 00:12:49,700

There were many refugees coming
over from Poland from '39.

255

00:12:49,700 --> 00:12:53,780

Matter of fact, one of these
men came every Friday night

256

00:12:53,780 --> 00:12:55,670

to eat with us.

257

00:12:55,670 --> 00:12:57,230

So we felt close to them.

258

00:12:57,230 --> 00:13:00,030

And I remember that
I said terrible.

259

00:13:00,030 --> 00:13:05,120

In '41 they began to
look for these refugees,

260

00:13:05,120 --> 00:13:07,910

the Hungarian government

and the police.

261

00:13:07,910 --> 00:13:11,930

And they arrested
very many of them.

262

00:13:11,930 --> 00:13:14,460

And he was also among them.

263

00:13:14,460 --> 00:13:18,230

And I just felt very,
very sorry for them.

264

00:13:18,230 --> 00:13:20,000

Did you know what
happened to him there?

265

00:13:20,000 --> 00:13:23,930

No, when they were
arrested, that was it.

266

00:13:23,930 --> 00:13:26,320

Nobody would know
where they took them,

267

00:13:26,320 --> 00:13:27,620

what they did with them.

268

00:13:27,620 --> 00:13:29,090

They were just disappeared.

269

00:13:29,090 --> 00:13:30,270

Just gone.

270

00:13:30,270 --> 00:13:35,180

Yeah, so at this point, you
were already experiencing--

271

00:13:35,180 --> 00:13:38,167

before the Germans came in, you
were experiencing arrests and--

272

00:13:38,167 --> 00:13:39,500
Yes, these kinds of things, yes.

273
00:13:39,500 --> 00:13:41,990
I mean, it wasn't
really our life.

274
00:13:41,990 --> 00:13:45,030
But we heard and knew.

275
00:13:45,030 --> 00:13:47,550
But you were somewhat affected
by some of the goings on.

276
00:13:47,550 --> 00:13:48,110
Yes, yes.

277
00:13:48,110 --> 00:13:51,050
How did things change
under the Germans

278
00:13:51,050 --> 00:13:52,760
from what they had been before?

279
00:13:52,760 --> 00:13:53,675
Tremendous change.

280
00:13:53,675 --> 00:13:57,380

281
00:13:57,380 --> 00:14:00,770
I think in other countries,
things were small.

282
00:14:00,770 --> 00:14:02,480
Things were going slower.

283
00:14:02,480 --> 00:14:04,098
It was gradual
gradual, the changes.

284
00:14:04,098 --> 00:14:04,640

It's gradual.

285

00:14:04,640 --> 00:14:07,250

But in Hungary,
somehow, the Germans

286

00:14:07,250 --> 00:14:09,950

must have felt
that it's the end.

287

00:14:09,950 --> 00:14:11,240

And they have to hurry.

288

00:14:11,240 --> 00:14:17,240

That was the most important
thing to take care of the Jews

289

00:14:17,240 --> 00:14:20,450

before the war ends.

290

00:14:20,450 --> 00:14:24,800

So when they came in,
a few days afterwards,

291

00:14:24,800 --> 00:14:30,230

we heard that at
every train station,

292

00:14:30,230 --> 00:14:36,230

they asked people identification
because in the identification

293

00:14:36,230 --> 00:14:39,050

it was written what
was your religion.

294

00:14:39,050 --> 00:14:43,100

So when somebody was
Jewish, it was captured.

295

00:14:43,100 --> 00:14:45,500

Then, from important post.

296

00:14:45,500 --> 00:14:52,640
My uncle had a pretty important
post at the government office.

297

00:14:52,640 --> 00:14:54,950
One morning, he went
into the office.

298

00:14:54,950 --> 00:14:56,870
People told him, don't go.

299

00:14:56,870 --> 00:14:57,710
He said, why?

300

00:14:57,710 --> 00:14:58,740
This is my office.

301

00:14:58,740 --> 00:15:02,660
I am working there
maybe 30 years.

302

00:15:02,660 --> 00:15:03,770
Why shouldn't I go there?

303

00:15:03,770 --> 00:15:04,410
He went.

304

00:15:04,410 --> 00:15:05,510
And he was captured.

305

00:15:05,510 --> 00:15:08,990
And we never heard
about him anymore.

306

00:15:08,990 --> 00:15:11,030
So that's how it went on.

307

00:15:11,030 --> 00:15:16,520
Then, very shortly
afterwards, they

308

00:15:16,520 --> 00:15:19,850
thought that it must
be Jewish houses.

309
00:15:19,850 --> 00:15:25,280
So they made a certain district
that the Jewish houses will be.

310
00:15:25,280 --> 00:15:29,150
And then any Jew was
living in other districts,

311
00:15:29,150 --> 00:15:30,890
they had to move in.

312
00:15:30,890 --> 00:15:33,620
For instance, in our
apartment, they just

313
00:15:33,620 --> 00:15:35,570
moved in another family.

314
00:15:35,570 --> 00:15:38,042
That was tremendous shock.

315
00:15:38,042 --> 00:15:38,750
Did this become--

316
00:15:38,750 --> 00:15:39,800
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

317
00:15:39,800 --> 00:15:41,315
Did this become a ghetto?

318
00:15:41,315 --> 00:15:44,390
Yes, they said this
became the ghetto, yes.

319
00:15:44,390 --> 00:15:46,250
Did you have to
wear a Jewish star?

320

00:15:46,250 --> 00:15:46,820
Oh yes.

321
00:15:46,820 --> 00:15:48,830
Yes, good that you mention it.

322
00:15:48,830 --> 00:15:52,040
Of course, that was the
first thing that they said.

323
00:15:52,040 --> 00:15:56,190
Every Jew has to
wear the yellow star.

324
00:15:56,190 --> 00:15:58,900
And it was as a curfew.

325
00:15:58,900 --> 00:16:01,340
We were allowed to
go out very little.

326
00:16:01,340 --> 00:16:05,840
And when we went out, we had
to have on the yellow star.

327
00:16:05,840 --> 00:16:07,850
Did you any episodes
or incidents

328
00:16:07,850 --> 00:16:10,945
of brutality or cruelty
on the part of the Germans

329
00:16:10,945 --> 00:16:11,970
to the Jews?

330
00:16:11,970 --> 00:16:12,980
Not that time.

331
00:16:12,980 --> 00:16:15,770
I didn't see that time.

332

00:16:15,770 --> 00:16:18,140
But I would just
like to mention you

333
00:16:18,140 --> 00:16:20,880
that most probably
the Germans saw

334
00:16:20,880 --> 00:16:27,140
that it's a terrible humiliation
to put on the yellow stars.

335
00:16:27,140 --> 00:16:29,200
But somehow, we didn't feel it.

336
00:16:29,200 --> 00:16:36,170
We felt they were the same or
that we didn't feel humiliated.

337
00:16:36,170 --> 00:16:39,710
We were just wearing it because
they said, you have to wear it.

338
00:16:39,710 --> 00:16:41,750
But--

339
00:16:41,750 --> 00:16:43,760
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

340
00:16:43,760 --> 00:16:49,880
So you had the sense that they
were trying to wear you down

341
00:16:49,880 --> 00:16:52,010
to make you feel less.

342
00:16:52,010 --> 00:16:52,700
But actually--

343
00:16:52,700 --> 00:16:53,870
I am sure that that was--

344

00:16:53,870 --> 00:16:54,350
in fact, it didn't.

345
00:16:54,350 --> 00:16:54,900
Yes.

346
00:16:54,900 --> 00:16:55,612
No, no.

347
00:16:55,612 --> 00:16:57,260
No.

348
00:16:57,260 --> 00:16:59,330
Maybe in a way,
when I went out, I

349
00:16:59,330 --> 00:17:04,130
felt proud that here I am,
coming out and wearing it.

350
00:17:04,130 --> 00:17:04,849
I am not afraid.

351
00:17:04,849 --> 00:17:08,030

352
00:17:08,030 --> 00:17:11,150
What was your family life
like in this period of time?

353
00:17:11,150 --> 00:17:14,223
What did your father
do and your mother?

354
00:17:14,223 --> 00:17:15,130
How did they try to--

355
00:17:15,130 --> 00:17:20,369
I think the shops, our
business, had to be closed.

356
00:17:20,369 --> 00:17:23,300

I don't remember my father
was working anymore.

357
00:17:23,300 --> 00:17:26,300
The Jewish schools
had to be closed.

358
00:17:26,300 --> 00:17:28,290
So we were just at home.

359
00:17:28,290 --> 00:17:32,990
And I remember my father
was a very strong character.

360
00:17:32,990 --> 00:17:35,900
And he wasn't the type
of person who would just

361
00:17:35,900 --> 00:17:38,570
sit around and await his end.

362
00:17:38,570 --> 00:17:42,320
We were many times sitting
together, the family,

363
00:17:42,320 --> 00:17:43,520
and thinking about it.

364
00:17:43,520 --> 00:17:45,430
What has to be done?

365
00:17:45,430 --> 00:17:48,980
We know we are in
terrible danger.

366
00:17:48,980 --> 00:17:49,970
What should we do?

367
00:17:49,970 --> 00:17:54,590
We were contemplating
to buy gentile papers.

368

00:17:54,590 --> 00:17:58,590

369

00:17:58,590 --> 00:18:00,860

My parents were
thinking that maybe they

370

00:18:00,860 --> 00:18:05,450

send the children again down
to the smaller villages.

371

00:18:05,450 --> 00:18:07,880

But that they gave
up soon because they

372

00:18:07,880 --> 00:18:10,700

saw that Jewish people
couldn't use the trains.

373

00:18:10,700 --> 00:18:15,020

Anybody would go to the train
station is captured right away.

374

00:18:15,020 --> 00:18:20,000

Then, my father was always
active in Jewish community

375

00:18:20,000 --> 00:18:20,960

life.

376

00:18:20,960 --> 00:18:23,840

So he was very at home.

377

00:18:23,840 --> 00:18:27,740

And he himself was also working
in the orthodox community.

378

00:18:27,740 --> 00:18:29,420

He was like a leader.

379

00:18:29,420 --> 00:18:35,600

So that time, he went always
there was the Jewish council.

380
00:18:35,600 --> 00:18:37,790
It had to be from
the Jewish council

381
00:18:37,790 --> 00:18:41,660
because the Germans gave all the
orders to the Jewish council.

382
00:18:41,660 --> 00:18:45,920
And the Jewish
council had to tell

383
00:18:45,920 --> 00:18:48,650
all the Jewish people what
is the next step, what

384
00:18:48,650 --> 00:18:49,700
you have to do.

385
00:18:49,700 --> 00:18:52,130
So my father went there.

386
00:18:52,130 --> 00:18:58,725
And first, I would like to tell
that he heard about it that one

387
00:18:58,725 --> 00:19:03,090
could buy these protective
papers that the Swedish gave

388
00:19:03,090 --> 00:19:03,590
out.

389
00:19:03,590 --> 00:19:07,970
And all the neutral countries
gave out the protective papers.

390
00:19:07,970 --> 00:19:11,900
So he bought or
got one of these.

391

00:19:11,900 --> 00:19:17,480
And then we heard
that some people

392
00:19:17,480 --> 00:19:19,550
were stopped on the street.

393
00:19:19,550 --> 00:19:21,230
And they showed these papers.

394
00:19:21,230 --> 00:19:23,315
And it was ignored.

395
00:19:23,315 --> 00:19:25,490
They were ripping it up or so.

396
00:19:25,490 --> 00:19:27,052
So my father, said, that's out.

397
00:19:27,052 --> 00:19:28,340
This is no good.

398
00:19:28,340 --> 00:19:31,110
So then, another day,
he heard that there

399
00:19:31,110 --> 00:19:35,165
is something going on,
that they are negotiating

400
00:19:35,165 --> 00:19:42,290
with the Germans, that maybe a
certain amount of people they

401
00:19:42,290 --> 00:19:44,690
would be willing
to save, somehow,

402
00:19:44,690 --> 00:19:47,840
to get them to Palestine.

403
00:19:47,840 --> 00:19:50,980

So my father considered
that very seriously,

404
00:19:50,980 --> 00:19:54,710
that he would choose that way.

405
00:19:54,710 --> 00:19:59,870
The leader of this was Mr.
Kastner, Rudolf Kastner.

406
00:19:59,870 --> 00:20:03,500
He was a leading Zionist.

407
00:20:03,500 --> 00:20:06,770
And I don't know how,
but he got some ways

408
00:20:06,770 --> 00:20:12,740
to negotiate with the
top German officials who

409
00:20:12,740 --> 00:20:19,430
had to take care of
the Jews in Hungary.

410
00:20:19,430 --> 00:20:21,780
I heard always the
name [? Krumhei, ?]

411
00:20:21,780 --> 00:20:25,000
the high German officer.

412
00:20:25,000 --> 00:20:28,820
So he was negotiating with
them or collaborating.

413
00:20:28,820 --> 00:20:31,820
I don't know exactly
how it worked.

414
00:20:31,820 --> 00:20:35,750
But it came out that
they said that 1700

415
00:20:35,750 --> 00:20:41,300
people they would be willing
to transport and somehow

416
00:20:41,300 --> 00:20:43,990
get them to Palestine.

417
00:20:43,990 --> 00:20:49,030
They were taking the
top Zionist people.

418
00:20:49,030 --> 00:20:51,460
And people who
weren't Zionist, they

419
00:20:51,460 --> 00:20:53,960
had to pay for them themselves.

420
00:20:53,960 --> 00:20:57,820
So my father-- we
weren't Zionists.

421
00:20:57,820 --> 00:21:02,290
I mean, we didn't
belong to any movement.

422
00:21:02,290 --> 00:21:06,190
We had to pay per
head 100,000 pengos.

423
00:21:06,190 --> 00:21:09,610
This is I think like \$100,000.

424
00:21:09,610 --> 00:21:12,070
So of course, we
didn't have this cash.

425
00:21:12,070 --> 00:21:15,550
But everybody had jewelry.

426
00:21:15,550 --> 00:21:18,190

Some gold one kept.

427

00:21:18,190 --> 00:21:21,850

So I remember that my father
was going to this Jewish council

428

00:21:21,850 --> 00:21:26,710

with an attache case full of
jewelry and whatever we had.

429

00:21:26,710 --> 00:21:28,510

Here it is that we have.

430

00:21:28,510 --> 00:21:31,370

And please take us with you.

431

00:21:31,370 --> 00:21:35,770

So it's a very strange
thing that from that on, it

432

00:21:35,770 --> 00:21:42,760

was like we agreed that they
should take us to concentration

433

00:21:42,760 --> 00:21:45,760

camp before anybody else went.

434

00:21:45,760 --> 00:21:49,050

Maybe they did it
already, liquidated

435

00:21:49,050 --> 00:21:52,210

the ghettos in small villages.

436

00:21:52,210 --> 00:21:55,567

I don't know that
exactly date wise.

437

00:21:55,567 --> 00:21:57,150

But you would not
have known about it.

438

00:21:57,150 --> 00:22:00,400

But in Budapest, it
wasn't yet ghetto.

439

00:22:00,400 --> 00:22:02,830

And sure, in
Budapest anyway, they

440

00:22:02,830 --> 00:22:04,940

didn't liquidate it, the ghetto.

441

00:22:04,940 --> 00:22:08,830

So we went ourselves.

442

00:22:08,830 --> 00:22:10,490

So they gathered us one day.

443

00:22:10,490 --> 00:22:12,160

That was in June.

444

00:22:12,160 --> 00:22:17,620

They gathered us in a big
place, like a camp place.

445

00:22:17,620 --> 00:22:21,460

And the strange thing
was, we went willingly.

446

00:22:21,460 --> 00:22:24,900

But in the minute
that we were in there,

447

00:22:24,900 --> 00:22:29,830

there were German soldiers
standing around us.

448

00:22:29,830 --> 00:22:35,080

And we were handled like
anybody else in a ghetto.

449

00:22:35,080 --> 00:22:40,356

Then, they took us
to these trains.

450
00:22:40,356 --> 00:22:42,520
The trains, you can call it.

451
00:22:42,520 --> 00:22:43,570
Freight cars.

452
00:22:43,570 --> 00:22:44,200
Trains for--

453
00:22:44,200 --> 00:22:44,980
The feed cars.

454
00:22:44,980 --> 00:22:46,000
Yeah.

455
00:22:46,000 --> 00:22:50,230
So they put us in there.

456
00:22:50,230 --> 00:22:55,360
And then it went very slow.

457
00:22:55,360 --> 00:22:56,080
I don't know.

458
00:22:56,080 --> 00:22:58,970
It seemed to us like
we went back and forth.

459
00:22:58,970 --> 00:23:00,970
And then we got,
after a long time,

460
00:23:00,970 --> 00:23:06,100
to the border, the
Hungarian Austrian border.

461
00:23:06,100 --> 00:23:09,640
There, the car stops.

462
00:23:09,640 --> 00:23:12,490

And they said we can get out.

463

00:23:12,490 --> 00:23:14,110

There was grass there.

464

00:23:14,110 --> 00:23:15,700

We could sit around
in the grass.

465

00:23:15,700 --> 00:23:19,000

But always, the German
soldiers around us.

466

00:23:19,000 --> 00:23:23,800

And it seemed that nobody knew
what they wanted to do with us.

467

00:23:23,800 --> 00:23:27,670

It was a confusion somehow
because this whole thing,

468

00:23:27,670 --> 00:23:30,070

it was done in secret.

469

00:23:30,070 --> 00:23:32,260

So they didn't know.

470

00:23:32,260 --> 00:23:36,700

They got, I think,
confusing orders,

471

00:23:36,700 --> 00:23:38,830

the Germans who were taking us.

472

00:23:38,830 --> 00:23:42,275

So we were standing there
three days, three nights.

473

00:23:42,275 --> 00:23:44,080

I don't know what we lived on.

474

00:23:44,080 --> 00:23:47,320

I guess we had some
good food from home

475
00:23:47,320 --> 00:23:49,150
because nobody
gave us food there.

476
00:23:49,150 --> 00:23:53,620
And then it came a terrible
news that the transport

477
00:23:53,620 --> 00:23:56,260
will be taken to Auschwitz.

478
00:23:56,260 --> 00:23:59,470
Then some people
tried to escape.

479
00:23:59,470 --> 00:24:02,710
And they did because we
didn't have too many guards.

480
00:24:02,710 --> 00:24:05,380
So some people escaped
and went back to Budapest.

481
00:24:05,380 --> 00:24:07,620
They got too afraid.

482
00:24:07,620 --> 00:24:11,560
I guess we just didn't
see that we could escape.

483
00:24:11,560 --> 00:24:12,610
So we just stayed.

484
00:24:12,610 --> 00:24:15,460
And then we were put
again in the feed cars.

485
00:24:15,460 --> 00:24:20,210
And they took us to Linz.

486

00:24:20,210 --> 00:24:22,250

That was the next stop.

487

00:24:22,250 --> 00:24:25,150

There, they took
us to [INAUDIBLE]..

488

00:24:25,150 --> 00:24:28,550

That was the first
horrible experience

489

00:24:28,550 --> 00:24:32,590

because somehow, we knew
already what was going on.

490

00:24:32,590 --> 00:24:35,570

So we thought that's the end.

491

00:24:35,570 --> 00:24:40,110

And my mother said and my
sister, we were together.

492

00:24:40,110 --> 00:24:41,860

She said, let's wait.

493

00:24:41,860 --> 00:24:42,440

Let's wait.

494

00:24:42,440 --> 00:24:43,340

Let's not go yet.

495

00:24:43,340 --> 00:24:45,710

Let's see what's
happening to the people.

496

00:24:45,710 --> 00:24:47,480

And nobody came out.

497

00:24:47,480 --> 00:24:49,940

So we thought, that's the end.

498

00:24:49,940 --> 00:24:52,100
But it wasn't.

499
00:24:52,100 --> 00:24:57,220
It was just their way
of doing all the bath

500
00:24:57,220 --> 00:25:02,210
houses were made like this,
that you went in from one side.

501
00:25:02,210 --> 00:25:05,300
And you put it, your clothes,
on some kind of thing

502
00:25:05,300 --> 00:25:07,430
where they took all
the clothes also.

503
00:25:07,430 --> 00:25:11,750
And I think it went through
a disinfection thing.

504
00:25:11,750 --> 00:25:14,880
And that went then
to the other side.

505
00:25:14,880 --> 00:25:18,450
And after the shower, you
got out on the other side.

506
00:25:18,450 --> 00:25:19,918
And you got back your clothes.

507
00:25:19,918 --> 00:25:20,960
And that's what happened.

508
00:25:20,960 --> 00:25:21,940
Everybody got out.

509
00:25:21,940 --> 00:25:24,270
But you didn't see what
happened on the other side.

510
00:25:24,270 --> 00:25:25,192
So you didn't see--

511
00:25:25,192 --> 00:25:26,025
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

512
00:25:26,025 --> 00:25:26,685
No, no.

513
00:25:26,685 --> 00:25:28,190
Before we went in,
we had no idea.

514
00:25:28,190 --> 00:25:29,898
You just thought they
weren't coming out.

515
00:25:29,898 --> 00:25:31,880
Only when we came out,
we saw that, thank God,

516
00:25:31,880 --> 00:25:34,880
everybody was out and all right.

517
00:25:34,880 --> 00:25:41,120
And then this train went on,
I don't know how many days

518
00:25:41,120 --> 00:25:43,340
we were sitting in this car.

519
00:25:43,340 --> 00:25:46,520
It's very close together.

520
00:25:46,520 --> 00:25:49,910
We were allowed to
take a little luggage.

521
00:25:49,910 --> 00:25:52,680
They said, take as
much as you can carry.

522

00:25:52,680 --> 00:25:57,050

So each of our family member
had one little suitcase.

523

00:25:57,050 --> 00:26:00,680

So I remember in the cart, I
was sitting on the suitcase.

524

00:26:00,680 --> 00:26:02,975

That was my spot
for day, for night,

525

00:26:02,975 --> 00:26:05,000

to sleeping, or anything.

526

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:06,990

And we arrived in Bergen-Belsen.

527

00:26:06,990 --> 00:26:10,520

528

00:26:10,520 --> 00:26:13,760

It's strange, you know, when
after so many days you are

529

00:26:13,760 --> 00:26:16,160

in a car that you
cannot stretch out.

530

00:26:16,160 --> 00:26:20,360

Then in a way, you feel relieved
that you can stretch out

531

00:26:20,360 --> 00:26:23,000

on a straw thing.

532

00:26:23,000 --> 00:26:29,600

And then afterwards,
they were telling us that

533

00:26:29,600 --> 00:26:33,110

because the whole thing
is done in secret way,

534
00:26:33,110 --> 00:26:39,020
they cannot straight take
us to freedom or Palestine.

535
00:26:39,020 --> 00:26:44,630
So they keep us in Bergen-Belsen
just a short while.

536
00:26:44,630 --> 00:26:49,340
And then, we will be
transported further.

537
00:26:49,340 --> 00:26:51,980
I was just going to
say, at this point,

538
00:26:51,980 --> 00:26:54,240
did you still believe that
you were going to be going?

539
00:26:54,240 --> 00:26:54,800
Yes, we did.

540
00:26:54,800 --> 00:26:55,800
Everyone still believed?

541
00:26:55,800 --> 00:26:56,562
Yes, we did.

542
00:26:56,562 --> 00:26:57,062
OK.

543
00:26:57,062 --> 00:27:00,350

544
00:27:00,350 --> 00:27:03,440
Everything was confusing,
I think, to the Germans

545

00:27:03,440 --> 00:27:07,850
about this group because
unfortunately, they

546
00:27:07,850 --> 00:27:11,690
had the system that
they were taking off

547
00:27:11,690 --> 00:27:14,900
all the hair from women,
shaving off their heads.

548
00:27:14,900 --> 00:27:16,980
So they began to do
that, I think, already

549
00:27:16,980 --> 00:27:19,160
in Linz or in Bergen-Belsen.

550
00:27:19,160 --> 00:27:21,590
And then they got
an order, stop.

551
00:27:21,590 --> 00:27:23,570
This is a special transport.

552
00:27:23,570 --> 00:27:24,150
Stop.

553
00:27:24,150 --> 00:27:27,320
So I was, thank
God, spared of that.

554
00:27:27,320 --> 00:27:31,730
I saw my friend,
they did it to her.

555
00:27:31,730 --> 00:27:35,540

556
00:27:35,540 --> 00:27:44,600
So then, after six weeks, there
came a few German officers.

557
00:27:44,600 --> 00:27:50,180
And they all had to
go and stand in lines.

558
00:27:50,180 --> 00:27:51,320
The barracks were there.

559
00:27:51,320 --> 00:27:54,740
And between the barracks,
there was space and a ground.

560
00:27:54,740 --> 00:28:00,560
And they were choosing
alphabetically the names,

561
00:28:00,560 --> 00:28:05,060
they began by A, and choosing
600 people from our group.

562
00:28:05,060 --> 00:28:07,580
We were 1,700.

563
00:28:07,580 --> 00:28:10,220
And they took the 600 people.

564
00:28:10,220 --> 00:28:12,527
And they put them
over to Switzerland.

565
00:28:12,527 --> 00:28:17,000

566
00:28:17,000 --> 00:28:19,680
So and then, they told
us that after a while,

567
00:28:19,680 --> 00:28:22,410
after a few weeks, they
would come again and take

568
00:28:22,410 --> 00:28:25,940

another part because
we are too many.

569
00:28:25,940 --> 00:28:28,210
They cannot do it at once.

570
00:28:28,210 --> 00:28:30,330
But we were waiting and waiting.

571
00:28:30,330 --> 00:28:32,130
And in the meantime,
summer went over.

572
00:28:32,130 --> 00:28:34,950
Summer wasn't so
bad there because we

573
00:28:34,950 --> 00:28:37,440
could be indoor, outdoor.

574
00:28:37,440 --> 00:28:42,180
That was what it meant special
Lager, that we didn't work.

575
00:28:42,180 --> 00:28:44,540
Was your whole family
with you at this time?

576
00:28:44,540 --> 00:28:45,480
Yes.

577
00:28:45,480 --> 00:28:47,220
None of them were
taken to Switzerland?

578
00:28:47,220 --> 00:28:47,720
No.

579
00:28:47,720 --> 00:28:48,420
No, no, no.

580
00:28:48,420 --> 00:28:51,460

We were [? Libertowski, ?]
so we were at the end.

581
00:28:51,460 --> 00:28:52,380
Yeah.

582
00:28:52,380 --> 00:28:53,490
We were all together.

583
00:28:53,490 --> 00:28:56,535
And of course, women
barracks and men barracks

584
00:28:56,535 --> 00:28:58,110
were separated.

585
00:28:58,110 --> 00:29:00,890
But still, we were
on the same ground.

586
00:29:00,890 --> 00:29:01,390
Yeah.

587
00:29:01,390 --> 00:29:04,590
So I was together always with
my mother and with my sister.

588
00:29:04,590 --> 00:29:07,770
And my father was
together with my brother.

589
00:29:07,770 --> 00:29:09,930
It's very interesting that--

590
00:29:09,930 --> 00:29:15,000
oh, I forgot to tell what's
an interesting thing, that Mr

591
00:29:15,000 --> 00:29:19,560
Kastner made up his mind,
somehow, on his own,

592

00:29:19,560 --> 00:29:22,450
that he was choosing
from all over Hungary.

593
00:29:22,450 --> 00:29:24,420
It wasn't just from Budapest.

594
00:29:24,420 --> 00:29:27,000
He went to all the ghettos.

595
00:29:27,000 --> 00:29:30,130
And he took out the
prominent people.

596
00:29:30,130 --> 00:29:33,540
So from our groups, they
were from all over Hungary.

597
00:29:33,540 --> 00:29:38,490
Doctors, lawyers,
rabbis, he took them.

598
00:29:38,490 --> 00:29:40,500
And big Zionists.

599
00:29:40,500 --> 00:29:42,840
And, of course, his family.

600
00:29:42,840 --> 00:29:50,370
And-- what did I wanted
to point out there?

601
00:29:50,370 --> 00:29:56,280
Yeah, that it's very interesting
that a big rabbi, the Satmar

602
00:29:56,280 --> 00:29:59,850
Rebbe, was in our group.

603
00:29:59,850 --> 00:30:05,950
Matter of fact, my father was
in the same barrack with him.

604

00:30:05,950 --> 00:30:11,700

And they had, every
morning, praying.

605

00:30:11,700 --> 00:30:14,510

They prayed
together, the quorum.

606

00:30:14,510 --> 00:30:15,330

Minyan.

607

00:30:15,330 --> 00:30:17,460

Yeah, the Minyan.

608

00:30:17,460 --> 00:30:21,840

My father was praying with
him together in Minyan.

609

00:30:21,840 --> 00:30:26,100

So really, in barracks, we
could do whatever we wanted.

610

00:30:26,100 --> 00:30:28,280

Did the women have prayer also?

611

00:30:28,280 --> 00:30:30,570

No, no.

612

00:30:30,570 --> 00:30:34,890

But I heard from my
father that they did.

613

00:30:34,890 --> 00:30:41,950

I would like to go back all the
way through to '44 in Hungary.

614

00:30:41,950 --> 00:30:42,450

Please.

615

00:30:42,450 --> 00:30:46,890

Because it was a very,
very scary experience what

616
00:30:46,890 --> 00:30:47,640
we went through.

617
00:30:47,640 --> 00:30:50,580

618
00:30:50,580 --> 00:30:53,790
When the Germans came
in, what I mentioned,

619
00:30:53,790 --> 00:30:56,640
that my sister and
my brother-in-law,

620
00:30:56,640 --> 00:30:59,460
they were up in a resort place.

621
00:30:59,460 --> 00:31:01,440
And just from one
day to the other,

622
00:31:01,440 --> 00:31:07,200
it happened that, so one
morning they wake up.

623
00:31:07,200 --> 00:31:13,380
And that resort place is the
headquarters from the Germans.

624
00:31:13,380 --> 00:31:15,730
So they got terribly scared.

625
00:31:15,730 --> 00:31:17,490
They were afraid to go out.

626
00:31:17,490 --> 00:31:19,440
And I don't remember how come.

627
00:31:19,440 --> 00:31:21,960
But I was that
day visiting them.

628
00:31:21,960 --> 00:31:24,360
I was there visiting
them, up there.

629
00:31:24,360 --> 00:31:27,480
And we just were
very frightened.

630
00:31:27,480 --> 00:31:31,560
How would we now get back
to Budapest, to our family?

631
00:31:31,560 --> 00:31:34,380
And we made up our
minds we had to.

632
00:31:34,380 --> 00:31:35,220
We must try.

633
00:31:35,220 --> 00:31:37,770
So we took a taxi.

634
00:31:37,770 --> 00:31:42,990
And at night, we went
down with the taxi.

635
00:31:42,990 --> 00:31:46,170
And I remember seeing
the German soldiers

636
00:31:46,170 --> 00:31:47,890
all the way on the road.

637
00:31:47,890 --> 00:31:51,090
They were standing
guard because that

638
00:31:51,090 --> 00:31:53,760
was the headquarters there.

639
00:31:53,760 --> 00:31:57,990

And I remember that I was
praying all the way because you

640
00:31:57,990 --> 00:31:58,920
asked about praying.

641
00:31:58,920 --> 00:32:01,440
I was praying all
the way going down.

642
00:32:01,440 --> 00:32:07,836
I said our very important
prayer, the Shema Yisrael.

643
00:32:07,836 --> 00:32:11,840
And thank God, we got out.

644
00:32:11,840 --> 00:32:14,190
So I just wanted
to mention that.

645
00:32:14,190 --> 00:32:14,700
Thank you.

646
00:32:14,700 --> 00:32:18,420
That I think prayer helps.

647
00:32:18,420 --> 00:32:24,000
So back to Bergen-Belsen.

648
00:32:24,000 --> 00:32:30,070
The summer wasn't so bad there
because we took all just summer

649
00:32:30,070 --> 00:32:30,570
clothes.

650
00:32:30,570 --> 00:32:32,520
We thought we go to Palestine.

651
00:32:32,520 --> 00:32:36,120
So in this little

suitcase, we just

652

00:32:36,120 --> 00:32:38,010
took summer clothes with us.

653

00:32:38,010 --> 00:32:41,820
I remember I had
one sweater with me.

654

00:32:41,820 --> 00:32:44,790
And then later,
they forgot of us.

655

00:32:44,790 --> 00:32:47,670
They didn't come
back to pick us up.

656

00:32:47,670 --> 00:32:49,875
So it was October.

657

00:32:49,875 --> 00:32:51,120
It was November.

658

00:32:51,120 --> 00:32:53,700
And it began to be very cold.

659

00:32:53,700 --> 00:32:57,780
It's a terrible climate there,
always raining in the fall

660

00:32:57,780 --> 00:32:58,800
and in the winter time.

661

00:32:58,800 --> 00:32:59,620
A lot of rain.

662

00:32:59,620 --> 00:33:02,250
So it's that wet, damp cold.

663

00:33:02,250 --> 00:33:05,160
And we didn't have
the right clothing.

664
00:33:05,160 --> 00:33:09,510
And so we didn't have to work.

665
00:33:09,510 --> 00:33:11,550
That was, in a way, easier.

666
00:33:11,550 --> 00:33:14,940
But we suffered from
hunger all the time

667
00:33:14,940 --> 00:33:19,590
because they just gave
to eat as much that you

668
00:33:19,590 --> 00:33:24,390
don't die from starvation.

669
00:33:24,390 --> 00:33:32,070
Every day, we got one kind of
soup where it was potato in it

670
00:33:32,070 --> 00:33:33,960
with the peel, I remember.

671
00:33:33,960 --> 00:33:35,820
That was like dirt.

672
00:33:35,820 --> 00:33:41,430
You heard there was dirt in it.

673
00:33:41,430 --> 00:33:47,730
And some kind of carrots
what you give for animals.

674
00:33:47,730 --> 00:33:50,850
And that was mostly.

675
00:33:50,850 --> 00:33:57,000
Then, we got for every week, we
got a little portion of bread.

676

00:33:57,000 --> 00:34:01,980

Once a week, I think it was for
every day, one slice of bread.

677

00:34:01,980 --> 00:34:06,670

And they gave maybe so much
of margarine for a week

678

00:34:06,670 --> 00:34:11,250

and one spoonful of
preserves for one week.

679

00:34:11,250 --> 00:34:14,310

That was interesting,
that some people just

680

00:34:14,310 --> 00:34:17,290

went and ate the
whole thing at once.

681

00:34:17,290 --> 00:34:18,464

Some people really--

682

00:34:18,464 --> 00:34:19,409

Measured it.

683

00:34:19,409 --> 00:34:22,330

--measured it for every day.

684

00:34:22,330 --> 00:34:26,940

And so we suffered from hunger.

685

00:34:26,940 --> 00:34:31,080

And then later, I remember
mostly suffering from cold.

686

00:34:31,080 --> 00:34:32,489

This was the worst.

687

00:34:32,489 --> 00:34:34,280

Maybe because we
weren't working.

688
00:34:34,280 --> 00:34:39,270
We were just sitting around
doing nothing in the cold.

689
00:34:39,270 --> 00:34:41,222
Then, you suffer
even more from cold.

690
00:34:41,222 --> 00:34:43,139
Yeah, I was wondering,
if you weren't working,

691
00:34:43,139 --> 00:34:46,679
what did your day comprise of?

692
00:34:46,679 --> 00:34:48,389
How was your time spent?

693
00:34:48,389 --> 00:34:50,550
Doing nothing, really.

694
00:34:50,550 --> 00:34:52,560
And then, with
this doing nothing,

695
00:34:52,560 --> 00:34:56,489
we had to get up very early
because every morning,

696
00:34:56,489 --> 00:34:59,040
they had the counting.

697
00:34:59,040 --> 00:35:01,590
Everybody had to go
out from the barracks

698
00:35:01,590 --> 00:35:05,600
and stand in certain line,
you know, like the soldiers.

699
00:35:05,600 --> 00:35:06,100

Formation?

700
00:35:06,100 --> 00:35:06,770
Yeah, formation.

701
00:35:06,770 --> 00:35:08,160
Yeah.

702
00:35:08,160 --> 00:35:12,600
And they put us
there a long time

703
00:35:12,600 --> 00:35:16,050
before the officer
came in to count.

704
00:35:16,050 --> 00:35:20,010
So we were standing there in
the cold, in the freezing cold.

705
00:35:20,010 --> 00:35:21,720
And then, when
the officers came,

706
00:35:21,720 --> 00:35:24,510
it was always such
a terrible fear

707
00:35:24,510 --> 00:35:27,580
because we knew when
somebody would be missing,

708
00:35:27,580 --> 00:35:28,680
it would be horrible.

709
00:35:28,680 --> 00:35:31,020
Who knows what's
happening there.

710
00:35:31,020 --> 00:35:36,060
And they always made a
mistake in the counting.

711

00:35:36,060 --> 00:35:36,830

They counted.

712

00:35:36,830 --> 00:35:39,040

Then, they said
somebody is missing.

713

00:35:39,040 --> 00:35:40,500

Then, they went
on counting again.

714

00:35:40,500 --> 00:35:42,160

Nobody was missing ever.

715

00:35:42,160 --> 00:35:43,410

But I don't know why they do--

716

00:35:43,410 --> 00:35:48,220

Some sick people were
staying in the barracks.

717

00:35:48,220 --> 00:35:49,980

So they had to go
and count them.

718

00:35:49,980 --> 00:35:51,150

And adding to that.

719

00:35:51,150 --> 00:35:52,740

And they mixed up.

720

00:35:52,740 --> 00:35:55,950

And many times, it was
somebody is missing.

721

00:35:55,950 --> 00:35:58,260

So you had to stand there.

722

00:35:58,260 --> 00:36:01,800

It's again and again
counting and counting

723

00:36:01,800 --> 00:36:03,660

till they found
out that nobody was

724

00:36:03,660 --> 00:36:05,820

missing because I
don't think anybody

725

00:36:05,820 --> 00:36:07,620

could escape from there.

726

00:36:07,620 --> 00:36:10,860

We were always surrounded
with barbed wires.

727

00:36:10,860 --> 00:36:14,160

And then the guards
were standing outside.

728

00:36:14,160 --> 00:36:18,300

And we somehow never
thought of it, escaping,

729

00:36:18,300 --> 00:36:23,340

because you felt you were very
far away from any civilization.

730

00:36:23,340 --> 00:36:25,110

And you were in Germany.

731

00:36:25,110 --> 00:36:27,180

So where could you escape?

732

00:36:27,180 --> 00:36:32,160

And Bergen-Belsen was like
one Lager after the other.

733

00:36:32,160 --> 00:36:34,980

I mean, there was
no place to escape.

734

00:36:34,980 --> 00:36:43,380

While you were there doing
nothing and just passing time,

735
00:36:43,380 --> 00:36:45,688
what did you keep
your minds focused on?

736
00:36:45,688 --> 00:36:46,730
What did you think about?

737
00:36:46,730 --> 00:36:48,550
Ah, it's interesting.

738
00:36:48,550 --> 00:36:51,400
[INAUDIBLE]

739
00:36:51,400 --> 00:36:54,720
We has very intelligent people.

740
00:36:54,720 --> 00:37:00,430
And they were doing a
little bit cultural things.

741
00:37:00,430 --> 00:37:01,950
And I remember the women--

742
00:37:01,950 --> 00:37:04,530
I was in the women's barrack--

743
00:37:04,530 --> 00:37:07,350
they were often sitting
together and telling recipes

744
00:37:07,350 --> 00:37:10,710
to each other because, I
think, when people are hungry,

745
00:37:10,710 --> 00:37:12,660
then they are
thinking about food.

746
00:37:12,660 --> 00:37:14,280

Yeah.

747

00:37:14,280 --> 00:37:16,170

There was no books to read.

748

00:37:16,170 --> 00:37:18,760

I remember the only

book that we had,

749

00:37:18,760 --> 00:37:21,670

it was a small prayer

book from my mother.

750

00:37:21,670 --> 00:37:25,630

My mother took with her

her small prayer book.

751

00:37:25,630 --> 00:37:28,300

And I was handling that a lot.

752

00:37:28,300 --> 00:37:32,200

It was with translation

to Hungarian.

753

00:37:32,200 --> 00:37:35,060

So I read again and

again something.

754

00:37:35,060 --> 00:37:37,930

And I remember something that

I was thinking to myself,

755

00:37:37,930 --> 00:37:42,190

because I was a schoolgirl,

that it's very bad that I am not

756

00:37:42,190 --> 00:37:43,640

learning anything.

757

00:37:43,640 --> 00:37:49,090

So how about I will try to learn

something from the praying book

758

00:37:49,090 --> 00:37:55,840

to remember, just to train
myself to learn something.

759

00:37:55,840 --> 00:37:58,825

These kinds of things,
you were doing.

760

00:37:58,825 --> 00:38:03,600

But somehow, you get
also very apathetic.

761

00:38:03,600 --> 00:38:04,600

Is this the right word--

762

00:38:04,600 --> 00:38:04,870

Yes.

763

00:38:04,870 --> 00:38:05,320

--in English?

764

00:38:05,320 --> 00:38:05,820

Yes.

765

00:38:05,820 --> 00:38:08,140

When you are just
hungry and cold,

766

00:38:08,140 --> 00:38:10,580

then you don't feel
like doing too much.

767

00:38:10,580 --> 00:38:14,350

We were mostly
lying on the banks

768

00:38:14,350 --> 00:38:17,890

because as the
months were passing,

769

00:38:17,890 --> 00:38:21,910

you get weaker and weaker,

not the right food and things.

770

00:38:21,910 --> 00:38:26,760

771

00:38:26,760 --> 00:38:29,550

I guess my sister
maybe suffered the most

772

00:38:29,550 --> 00:38:31,630

because she was pregnant.

773

00:38:31,630 --> 00:38:34,950

She was all the way
pregnant in this time.

774

00:38:34,950 --> 00:38:41,280

She gave birth to my nephew
just two weeks after we

775

00:38:41,280 --> 00:38:43,350

arrived in Switzerland.

776

00:38:43,350 --> 00:38:45,360

Was her husband also in--

777

00:38:45,360 --> 00:38:45,860

Yes.

778

00:38:45,860 --> 00:38:48,002

Yes, he was also with us.

779

00:38:48,002 --> 00:38:49,890

Yeah.

780

00:38:49,890 --> 00:38:51,780

Maybe it's
interesting to mention

781

00:38:51,780 --> 00:38:56,910

that even in these
bad conditions,

782
00:38:56,910 --> 00:39:02,550
I guess some people don't
lose themselves or dignity

783
00:39:02,550 --> 00:39:03,990
or whatever you call it.

784
00:39:03,990 --> 00:39:08,670
I remember that my
father had his birthday.

785
00:39:08,670 --> 00:39:10,200
And my mother also.

786
00:39:10,200 --> 00:39:15,780
And each of us were
sparing a piece of bread

787
00:39:15,780 --> 00:39:18,570
and little of the margarine
and little of the jelly.

788
00:39:18,570 --> 00:39:23,640
And we were piling it up,
one on the top of the other

789
00:39:23,640 --> 00:39:24,510
and making--

790
00:39:24,510 --> 00:39:27,910
that was the birthday
cake for them.

791
00:39:27,910 --> 00:39:30,100
So you were able to
keep some semblance of--

792
00:39:30,100 --> 00:39:31,060
Yes, yes.

793
00:39:31,060 --> 00:39:32,760

That is good.

794

00:39:32,760 --> 00:39:39,620

And also, I remember it's very important that we were there

795

00:39:39,620 --> 00:39:41,570

on Yom Kippur.

796

00:39:41,570 --> 00:39:45,230

And I don't know who was able to do it.

797

00:39:45,230 --> 00:39:51,760

But it was given out to people a little paper with one prayer

798

00:39:51,760 --> 00:39:54,920

on it. [? On ?]

[? a ?] [NON-ENGLISH]..

799

00:39:54,920 --> 00:39:58,130

So we were fasting on Yom Kippur.

800

00:39:58,130 --> 00:40:01,610

And we were able to say some prayers.

801

00:40:01,610 --> 00:40:04,490

And I remember that every year on Yom Kippur.

802

00:40:04,490 --> 00:40:05,620

And I have to cry.

803

00:40:05,620 --> 00:40:08,710

804

00:40:08,710 --> 00:40:09,210

It's OK.

805

00:40:09,210 --> 00:40:17,098

806

00:40:17,098 --> 00:40:20,880

So the Jewish
people, even there,

807

00:40:20,880 --> 00:40:22,200

didn't give up their hope.

808

00:40:22,200 --> 00:40:32,670

And they believe in God because
on the [NON-ENGLISH] is that we

809

00:40:32,670 --> 00:40:37,210

accept that God is the
ruler of the world.

810

00:40:37,210 --> 00:40:40,980

And he is the judge.

811

00:40:40,980 --> 00:40:43,710

And we said this prayer.

812

00:40:43,710 --> 00:40:45,280

And this gave you comfort.

813

00:40:45,280 --> 00:40:46,000

Oh, sure.

814

00:40:46,000 --> 00:40:46,500

Sure.

815

00:40:46,500 --> 00:40:49,780

816

00:40:49,780 --> 00:40:52,360

Because one hears
stories about people

817

00:40:52,360 --> 00:40:55,450

who gave up their belief.

818
00:40:55,450 --> 00:40:58,190
Did you see people
or hear people say--

819
00:40:58,190 --> 00:40:59,700
No, not the people--

820
00:40:59,700 --> 00:41:00,610
no, no.

821
00:41:00,610 --> 00:41:03,160
I don't think so.

822
00:41:03,160 --> 00:41:07,510
As I said, my father was
always praying with the rabbis

823
00:41:07,510 --> 00:41:08,635
together every morning.

824
00:41:08,635 --> 00:41:12,120

825
00:41:12,120 --> 00:41:14,320
And we had rabbis.

826
00:41:14,320 --> 00:41:18,020
I think he gave, once,
a speech to the people,

827
00:41:18,020 --> 00:41:21,250
the [INAUDIBLE] was with us.

828
00:41:21,250 --> 00:41:24,430
He talked to the people.

829
00:41:24,430 --> 00:41:29,750
And then, I have to say,
also, the medical doctors.

830

00:41:29,750 --> 00:41:32,050

We had many medical
doctors with us.

831

00:41:32,050 --> 00:41:34,970

They gave a lot of
courage to the people,

832

00:41:34,970 --> 00:41:41,080

telling them what to do
and that they shouldn't

833

00:41:41,080 --> 00:41:45,100

get so weak and things.

834

00:41:45,100 --> 00:41:45,877

All this helped.

835

00:41:45,877 --> 00:41:47,710

Yeah no, it sounds as
though your experience

836

00:41:47,710 --> 00:41:51,490

was with a group of--

837

00:41:51,490 --> 00:41:53,080

special is not the
right word, maybe.

838

00:41:53,080 --> 00:41:54,260

But selected people--

839

00:41:54,260 --> 00:41:54,760

Yes, yes.

840

00:41:54,760 --> 00:41:56,760

--who were highly
motivated in their lives.

841

00:41:56,760 --> 00:41:57,277

Yes, yes.

842

00:41:57,277 --> 00:41:59,110

And so your experience
was with these people

843

00:41:59,110 --> 00:42:01,780

that had a drive to keep going.

844

00:42:01,780 --> 00:42:04,760

Yes, yes.

845

00:42:04,760 --> 00:42:10,240

We also tried not to eat
and not to eat t'refah food.

846

00:42:10,240 --> 00:42:15,850

In that soup, sometimes, it
was junk of some kind of meat.

847

00:42:15,850 --> 00:42:16,630

I don't know what.

848

00:42:16,630 --> 00:42:20,290

And we didn't eat it.

849

00:42:20,290 --> 00:42:22,600

The doctors were
saying we should

850

00:42:22,600 --> 00:42:25,450

because every little
thing counted.

851

00:42:25,450 --> 00:42:27,070

But I don't know.

852

00:42:27,070 --> 00:42:28,170

I just couldn't.

853

00:42:28,170 --> 00:42:31,340

So your faith kept
you strong in a sense.

854

00:42:31,340 --> 00:42:33,040
I think so.

855
00:42:33,040 --> 00:42:35,110
Yeah, how long were
you in Bergen-Belsen?

856
00:42:35,110 --> 00:42:37,490
Six months.

857
00:42:37,490 --> 00:42:43,730
And what happened at the end
that brought you out of there?

858
00:42:43,730 --> 00:42:46,190
Every day went on the same.

859
00:42:46,190 --> 00:42:53,000
Just suddenly before they took
us from there, one evening,

860
00:42:53,000 --> 00:42:58,910
I think, it came news that
we will be taken somewhere.

861
00:42:58,910 --> 00:43:01,790
And first, we got
very frightened.

862
00:43:01,790 --> 00:43:04,250
We didn't know where,
what will happen.

863
00:43:04,250 --> 00:43:08,720
But then, the next day, they
gave us a lot of provision.

864
00:43:08,720 --> 00:43:10,880
Everybody got the whole bread.

865
00:43:10,880 --> 00:43:15,110
And somehow, relatively
much more than they

866
00:43:15,110 --> 00:43:18,090
were used to it for the trip.

867
00:43:18,090 --> 00:43:19,910
That gave us some kind of hope.

868
00:43:19,910 --> 00:43:23,150
We thought that when they
are so nice to us, then

869
00:43:23,150 --> 00:43:26,210
maybe we are going for freedom.

870
00:43:26,210 --> 00:43:29,750
They wanted to show that
they took care of us.

871
00:43:29,750 --> 00:43:32,360
Had you had any news of the
people that had previously

872
00:43:32,360 --> 00:43:35,690
gone off to Switzerland?

873
00:43:35,690 --> 00:43:36,440
I don't think so.

874
00:43:36,440 --> 00:43:37,280
The original 600?

875
00:43:37,280 --> 00:43:39,650
So you had no idea what
had happened to them?

876
00:43:39,650 --> 00:43:42,800
Only as we were there,
when they took them away,

877
00:43:42,800 --> 00:43:45,270
that they will be
taken to freedom.

878
00:43:45,270 --> 00:43:47,345
OK, but so you really
had no information.

879
00:43:47,345 --> 00:43:47,750
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

880
00:43:47,750 --> 00:43:48,250
OK.

881
00:43:48,250 --> 00:43:50,100
So we were packing.

882
00:43:50,100 --> 00:43:55,940
And they said, next
day, we will all go.

883
00:43:55,940 --> 00:44:00,110
Then, they took the
whole Lager together.

884
00:44:00,110 --> 00:44:02,960
And we had to march.

885
00:44:02,960 --> 00:44:07,040
We had to go by
foot very, very far.

886
00:44:07,040 --> 00:44:11,120
Somehow, this
station was very far.

887
00:44:11,120 --> 00:44:13,820
And we arrived at
a big platform.

888
00:44:13,820 --> 00:44:15,500
It wasn't even a train station.

889
00:44:15,500 --> 00:44:18,170
It was nothing,

no building there.

890
00:44:18,170 --> 00:44:20,330
Just a big, big platform.

891
00:44:20,330 --> 00:44:23,090
It must have been
late afternoon.

892
00:44:23,090 --> 00:44:25,430
And there was no train there.

893
00:44:25,430 --> 00:44:28,700
So we were just standing
there on the platform.

894
00:44:28,700 --> 00:44:30,140
It began at night.

895
00:44:30,140 --> 00:44:32,150
And there, when it
was night, it was

896
00:44:32,150 --> 00:44:34,130
night because of the air raids.

897
00:44:34,130 --> 00:44:35,750
No lights at all.

898
00:44:35,750 --> 00:44:39,260
So we were standing in
this terrible darkness

899
00:44:39,260 --> 00:44:41,150
and terrible cold.

900
00:44:41,150 --> 00:44:43,100
Everybody was freezing.

901
00:44:43,100 --> 00:44:45,590
I remember the doctors
were telling mothers

902
00:44:45,590 --> 00:44:48,470
that they shouldn't let
their children fall asleep

903
00:44:48,470 --> 00:44:53,450
because then they can rather
freeze so keep them up

904
00:44:53,450 --> 00:44:54,170
and moving.

905
00:44:54,170 --> 00:44:55,130
Keep them awake.

906
00:44:55,130 --> 00:44:57,680
I don't know how long
it took, how many hours.

907
00:44:57,680 --> 00:45:00,260
Then, a train arrived.

908
00:45:00,260 --> 00:45:03,410
And that was already
a normal train.

909
00:45:03,410 --> 00:45:08,720
And everybody was storming into
the train, freezing and tired.

910
00:45:08,720 --> 00:45:10,100
[INAUDIBLE]

911
00:45:10,100 --> 00:45:11,450
And we got in.

912
00:45:11,450 --> 00:45:15,680
And I think we went
three days, three nights.

913
00:45:15,680 --> 00:45:18,200
Somehow, to me, it

remembers like we always

914

00:45:18,200 --> 00:45:20,300
went in darkness.

915

00:45:20,300 --> 00:45:21,530
Dark, dark, dark.

916

00:45:21,530 --> 00:45:24,050
And they just took us.

917

00:45:24,050 --> 00:45:26,780
And then, we got to
the Swiss border.

918

00:45:26,780 --> 00:45:30,230
And we got out from
the German trains.

919

00:45:30,230 --> 00:45:32,070
And we walked over.

920

00:45:32,070 --> 00:45:36,320
And we felt that we came
from hell to paradise

921

00:45:36,320 --> 00:45:41,390
because suddenly lights,
a beautiful, clean train.

922

00:45:41,390 --> 00:45:45,290
And they took us to St. Gallen.

923

00:45:45,290 --> 00:45:48,230
There, they put us in a school
because they were afraid

924

00:45:48,230 --> 00:45:52,460
that maybe we brought
in some sickness in us.

925

00:45:52,460 --> 00:45:53,090

Disease.

926

00:45:53,090 --> 00:45:57,860

So they just had in a
big school building straw

927

00:45:57,860 --> 00:46:00,420

that we could sleep on it.

928

00:46:00,420 --> 00:46:04,260

I will never forget
that wonderful feeling

929

00:46:04,260 --> 00:46:08,420

when, in the basement,
it was set up tables

930

00:46:08,420 --> 00:46:11,360

for everybody a
big piece of bread,

931

00:46:11,360 --> 00:46:14,270

the wonderful Swiss bread.

932

00:46:14,270 --> 00:46:17,570

And everybody got, I
don't know, nice food.

933

00:46:17,570 --> 00:46:21,740

And we were staying
there a few days.

934

00:46:21,740 --> 00:46:24,290

Have you ever
wondered through all

935

00:46:24,290 --> 00:46:30,890

of this why the Germans
were willing to allow

936

00:46:30,890 --> 00:46:32,330

this man-- what was his name?

937

00:46:32,330 --> 00:46:32,900

Krasner?

938

00:46:32,900 --> 00:46:33,500

Kastner.

939

00:46:33,500 --> 00:46:39,730

Kastner to do this and to
bring this small group of Jews

940

00:46:39,730 --> 00:46:40,447

to some kind of--

941

00:46:40,447 --> 00:46:42,530

Well, there are a lot of
books written about that.

942

00:46:42,530 --> 00:46:44,460

And I wish people
should read it.

943

00:46:44,460 --> 00:46:46,430

It's a long story.

944

00:46:46,430 --> 00:46:47,630

I was very young.

945

00:46:47,630 --> 00:46:50,150

So I wasn't so much in it.

946

00:46:50,150 --> 00:46:54,170

But the older people
heard more about it.

947

00:46:54,170 --> 00:46:58,010

I think that some German
officials realized that it's

948

00:46:58,010 --> 00:47:00,440

getting to the end of the war.

949

00:47:00,440 --> 00:47:04,100
And they wanted to make some
money, maybe, for themselves

950
00:47:04,100 --> 00:47:06,440
from that because it
was done-- that I heard.

951
00:47:06,440 --> 00:47:09,650
That it was done
behind Hitler's back.

952
00:47:09,650 --> 00:47:11,100
He didn't know about it.

953
00:47:11,100 --> 00:47:17,100
So some top German officials
who were in Hungary,

954
00:47:17,100 --> 00:47:20,120
they got somehow--

955
00:47:20,120 --> 00:47:20,810
But they--

956
00:47:20,810 --> 00:47:21,830
They were willing to--

957
00:47:21,830 --> 00:47:25,040
But they could have
accumulated the wealth

958
00:47:25,040 --> 00:47:28,230
and left you in the camps.

959
00:47:28,230 --> 00:47:28,730
Oh--

960
00:47:28,730 --> 00:47:29,825
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

961
00:47:29,825 --> 00:47:30,950

If it was just the wealth--

962
00:47:30,950 --> 00:47:35,360
--because we heard it that
just before they took us out,

963
00:47:35,360 --> 00:47:36,720
they required again.

964
00:47:36,720 --> 00:47:42,490
And that time, we heard and
saw that it was from America,

965
00:47:42,490 --> 00:47:46,360
that they got a lot of
medicine and trucks.

966
00:47:46,360 --> 00:47:50,370
So I think that's why
it took six months.

967
00:47:50,370 --> 00:47:51,630
They were negotiating.

968
00:47:51,630 --> 00:47:55,500
And then they got
something bigger and more.

969
00:47:55,500 --> 00:47:56,220
And who knows?

970
00:47:56,220 --> 00:47:59,220
Maybe they said you get it
when they are in Switzerland.

971
00:47:59,220 --> 00:48:00,360
OK.

972
00:48:00,360 --> 00:48:03,070
They got for it a lot.

973
00:48:03,070 --> 00:48:03,570

OK.

974

00:48:03,570 --> 00:48:09,840

And after the war,
a lot of people

975

00:48:09,840 --> 00:48:15,060

were very, very angry at Mr.
Kastner because they said,

976

00:48:15,060 --> 00:48:17,670

but how could you just
select a few people

977

00:48:17,670 --> 00:48:20,320

and not tell the
others what's going on?

978

00:48:20,320 --> 00:48:22,530

Especially from his own town.

979

00:48:22,530 --> 00:48:24,270

His town was Cluj.

980

00:48:24,270 --> 00:48:27,150

And that was three
miles away from Romania.

981

00:48:27,150 --> 00:48:30,030

And people could
run over to Romania.

982

00:48:30,030 --> 00:48:31,440

And he went down there.

983

00:48:31,440 --> 00:48:34,950

And he selected his family
and these few people.

984

00:48:34,950 --> 00:48:38,160

And he said to the rest of the
people-- that's how I heard.

985

00:48:38,160 --> 00:48:41,460

I wasn't there--
that just be calm,

986

00:48:41,460 --> 00:48:44,470

and everything will be fine.

987

00:48:44,470 --> 00:48:47,580

So these people were terribly,
terribly angry with him

988

00:48:47,580 --> 00:48:48,690

after the war.

989

00:48:48,690 --> 00:48:51,240

And he went after
the war to Israel.

990

00:48:51,240 --> 00:48:54,010

And they sued him.

991

00:48:54,010 --> 00:48:57,990

It was a big, big trial
going on four years.

992

00:48:57,990 --> 00:49:04,410

There is a book, Perfidy,
that's written about this trial.

993

00:49:04,410 --> 00:49:10,240

And he was, that time already,
in the Israeli government.

994

00:49:10,240 --> 00:49:13,770

So he was freed.

995

00:49:13,770 --> 00:49:17,100

And then, shortly afterwards,
somebody shot him.

996

00:49:17,100 --> 00:49:20,290

997

00:49:20,290 --> 00:49:21,780

Nobody knows who shot him.

998

00:49:21,780 --> 00:49:25,260

But it must have been from one
of these very bitter people who

999

00:49:25,260 --> 00:49:26,340

lost their families.

1000

00:49:26,340 --> 00:49:31,482

And they're just too, too
bitter and too angry at him.

1001

00:49:31,482 --> 00:49:34,384

So that's the story about him.

1002

00:49:34,384 --> 00:49:34,884

Hm.

1003

00:49:34,884 --> 00:49:36,360

Interesting.

1004

00:49:36,360 --> 00:49:40,040

What happened to you now
that you were in Switzerland?

1005

00:49:40,040 --> 00:49:47,040

In Switzerland, this
first happy moment

1006

00:49:47,040 --> 00:50:00,150

faded out then because we were
put in the Red Cross Lagers.

1007

00:50:00,150 --> 00:50:05,820

First six weeks, Swiss
police was around us.

1008

00:50:05,820 --> 00:50:08,040

We were in quarantine

because they

1009

00:50:08,040 --> 00:50:11,730

were afraid that we
have maybe some sickness

1010

00:50:11,730 --> 00:50:15,330

that we shouldn't
go among the people.

1011

00:50:15,330 --> 00:50:18,840

And of course, I mean,
it was much, much better.

1012

00:50:18,840 --> 00:50:22,650

But we felt, we are in freedom.

1013

00:50:22,650 --> 00:50:29,040

But we still had a
difficult situation.

1014

00:50:29,040 --> 00:50:32,340

My family got one room.

1015

00:50:32,340 --> 00:50:38,790

That means 2, 4, 6 people.

1016

00:50:38,790 --> 00:50:42,540

And then they put it
in plus a stranger.

1017

00:50:42,540 --> 00:50:45,600

That was one hotel
room because they

1018

00:50:45,600 --> 00:50:46,830

didn't have too much space.

1019

00:50:46,830 --> 00:50:50,070

Even that time, in
Switzerland, there

1020

00:50:50,070 --> 00:50:53,610
were already 100,000 refugees.

1021
00:50:53,610 --> 00:50:56,820
So the Swiss said,
it's too much for us.

1022
00:50:56,820 --> 00:51:00,900
So they began to make a plan
that they would take us,

1023
00:51:00,900 --> 00:51:06,780
that we are too much, that
they cannot handle us.

1024
00:51:06,780 --> 00:51:11,490
And they will put
us over to Algiers.

1025
00:51:11,490 --> 00:51:15,540
So we so desperate.

1026
00:51:15,540 --> 00:51:17,580
Who knows where they take us?

1027
00:51:17,580 --> 00:51:18,820
We suffered so much.

1028
00:51:18,820 --> 00:51:23,430
And who would be able
to go somewhere else?

1029
00:51:23,430 --> 00:51:25,650
At least we are
near in Switzerland.

1030
00:51:25,650 --> 00:51:29,580
So my father was, again,
among the leaders.

1031
00:51:29,580 --> 00:51:33,780
And they said they
organized the whole camp

1032
00:51:33,780 --> 00:51:35,280
that nobody would go.

1033
00:51:35,280 --> 00:51:39,840
They have to take us
one by one on stretcher.

1034
00:51:39,840 --> 00:51:40,710
Nobody will go.

1035
00:51:40,710 --> 00:51:42,600
And they negotiated.

1036
00:51:42,600 --> 00:51:45,930
And they told them and told
them till they left us alone.

1037
00:51:45,930 --> 00:51:47,920
An act of passive
resistance, in other words.

1038
00:51:47,920 --> 00:51:49,290
Yes, yes.

1039
00:51:49,290 --> 00:51:52,710
So after the ride,
they left us alone.

1040
00:51:52,710 --> 00:51:54,870
OK, they will manage.

1041
00:51:54,870 --> 00:52:00,790
So the food was pretty good.

1042
00:52:00,790 --> 00:52:03,152
But we didn't eat that.

1043
00:52:03,152 --> 00:52:04,920
We were half a year in this.

1044

00:52:04,920 --> 00:52:08,430

This was like hotels,
like old hotels

1045

00:52:08,430 --> 00:52:10,980

because there were no tourists
that time in Switzerland.

1046

00:52:10,980 --> 00:52:12,320

So empty hotels.

1047

00:52:12,320 --> 00:52:20,190

And that's why the Red Cross
took over and put us in.

1048

00:52:20,190 --> 00:52:22,720

There was a big
hotel where there

1049

00:52:22,720 --> 00:52:25,350

were the more modern people.

1050

00:52:25,350 --> 00:52:28,350

I guess they got
some kind of meat.

1051

00:52:28,350 --> 00:52:32,430

And then was our
hotel, a smaller hotel.

1052

00:52:32,430 --> 00:52:37,530

A few people who were observant.

1053

00:52:37,530 --> 00:52:39,430

And we got kosher.

1054

00:52:39,430 --> 00:52:42,030

That way, that we
didn't eat meat.

1055

00:52:42,030 --> 00:52:44,820

They couldn't supply
us with kosher meat.

1056
00:52:44,820 --> 00:52:48,600
So everything was always
just dairy or part of--

1057
00:52:48,600 --> 00:52:49,200
Vegetarian.

1058
00:52:49,200 --> 00:52:50,050
Vegetarian.

1059
00:52:50,050 --> 00:52:51,960
We got a lot of
sardines, I remember.

1060
00:52:51,960 --> 00:52:56,070
You're so hungry that
just between meals

1061
00:52:56,070 --> 00:52:58,120
to eat the whole
box of sardines,

1062
00:52:58,120 --> 00:52:59,065
that was like nothing.

1063
00:52:59,065 --> 00:53:02,570
Did you regain your health
and sense of well-being?

1064
00:53:02,570 --> 00:53:03,780
Slowly, slowly.

1065
00:53:03,780 --> 00:53:05,790
Not there.

1066
00:53:05,790 --> 00:53:08,280
It was a slow process
because it was winter.

1067
00:53:08,280 --> 00:53:10,950
Again, we didn't

have enough clothing.

1068

00:53:10,950 --> 00:53:14,040

I remember from freezing
with little shoes

1069

00:53:14,040 --> 00:53:17,310

that I got from Red Cross.

1070

00:53:17,310 --> 00:53:21,810

So I don't remember there
in that hotel situation

1071

00:53:21,810 --> 00:53:22,950

well-being.

1072

00:53:22,950 --> 00:53:26,160

It was later, they
organized that the children

1073

00:53:26,160 --> 00:53:30,790

would go to boarding
schools in Switzerland.

1074

00:53:30,790 --> 00:53:34,700

So I got with my brother
together to Celerina.

1075

00:53:34,700 --> 00:53:39,060

This was a boarding school
next to somebody St. Moritz.

1076

00:53:39,060 --> 00:53:45,570

And there, of course, it was
more alive, what children need.

1077

00:53:45,570 --> 00:53:47,100

We had good food.

1078

00:53:47,100 --> 00:53:49,980

And they took us to doctor.

1079

00:53:49,980 --> 00:53:55,110

And then, after a while,
they also put me in a school

1080

00:53:55,110 --> 00:53:56,100

in the next town.

1081

00:53:56,100 --> 00:53:57,600

It was a high school.

1082

00:53:57,600 --> 00:54:01,810

So I went to that
school for a few months.

1083

00:54:01,810 --> 00:54:05,670

So that was what I remember
beginning of a little bit

1084

00:54:05,670 --> 00:54:07,395

normalised life.

1085

00:54:07,395 --> 00:54:11,340

1086

00:54:11,340 --> 00:54:21,870

And then in December '45,
we heard the war was over.

1087

00:54:21,870 --> 00:54:26,680

And from the boarding school,
we went to visit my parents once

1088

00:54:26,680 --> 00:54:29,640

for the holiday.

1089

00:54:29,640 --> 00:54:32,700

And then, in December,
they came to visit us.

1090

00:54:32,700 --> 00:54:36,420

And they told us
that the war is over.

1091

00:54:36,420 --> 00:54:40,860

And they have the possibility
to go back to Hungary.

1092

00:54:40,860 --> 00:54:45,420

If we want to stay or if we want
to go back because they were

1093

00:54:45,420 --> 00:54:48,220

afraid, in a way, to take us.

1094

00:54:48,220 --> 00:54:52,050

They didn't know what
will await for them there.

1095

00:54:52,050 --> 00:54:56,670

They heard that maybe my father
can get back his business.

1096

00:54:56,670 --> 00:54:59,430

And they heard that
our apartment is there

1097

00:54:59,430 --> 00:55:02,430

with the furnishing because
that was in the ghetto.

1098

00:55:02,430 --> 00:55:04,110

So people lived there.

1099

00:55:04,110 --> 00:55:06,330

A lot of Jewish people used it.

1100

00:55:06,330 --> 00:55:07,410

But it was there.

1101

00:55:07,410 --> 00:55:08,790

We can get it back.

1102

00:55:08,790 --> 00:55:14,430

So they were contemplating that
maybe they'd leave us there

1103
00:55:14,430 --> 00:55:16,590
in the safety in Switzerland.

1104
00:55:16,590 --> 00:55:20,260
But I remember I and
my brother, we said,

1105
00:55:20,260 --> 00:55:22,520
we want to be together.

1106
00:55:22,520 --> 00:55:24,000
Wherever you go, we go.

1107
00:55:24,000 --> 00:55:30,900
And then, we went with
them to go [INAUDIBLE]..

1108
00:55:30,900 --> 00:55:36,450
And it was organized a
very interesting convoy.

1109
00:55:36,450 --> 00:55:37,650
Do you say that the English?

1110
00:55:37,650 --> 00:55:37,980
Yes.

1111
00:55:37,980 --> 00:55:38,570
Convoy?

1112
00:55:38,570 --> 00:55:39,070
Yes.

1113
00:55:39,070 --> 00:55:41,370
A lot of buses.

1114
00:55:41,370 --> 00:55:44,580
And I don't know how
many hundred people.

1115

00:55:44,580 --> 00:55:50,190

Oh, I forgot to say that after
the war, the Zionists who

1116

00:55:50,190 --> 00:55:53,220

wanted to go to
Palestine, they did go.

1117

00:55:53,220 --> 00:55:59,040

So about 700 people from
Switzerland, then to Palestine.

1118

00:55:59,040 --> 00:56:01,530

And for me, it's so
funny to say Palestine.

1119

00:56:01,530 --> 00:56:04,770

I would like always
to say Israel.

1120

00:56:04,770 --> 00:56:09,600

And so we were left there
and didn't know what will be.

1121

00:56:09,600 --> 00:56:13,110

And then came this news that
one can go back to Hungary.

1122

00:56:13,110 --> 00:56:17,070

We thought that will
be the best solution

1123

00:56:17,070 --> 00:56:21,030

because otherwise how can we
begin to normalize our life?

1124

00:56:21,030 --> 00:56:22,830

This is a good point
at which to stop.

1125

00:56:22,830 --> 00:56:24,360

And we'll continue
with your return

1126

00:56:24,360 --> 00:56:28,560

to Budapest when we
start the new tape.

1127

00:56:28,560 --> 00:56:32,000