

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:32,490

2  
00:00:32,490 --> 00:00:33,990  
Good morning.

3  
00:00:33,990 --> 00:00:37,830  
I'm Bernard Weinstein, director  
of the Kean College Oral

4  
00:00:37,830 --> 00:00:41,430  
Testimonies Project  
on the Holocaust.

5  
00:00:41,430 --> 00:00:44,500  
With me today is  
Manya Mandelbaum.

6  
00:00:44,500 --> 00:00:46,620  
Mrs. Mandelbaum, welcome.

7  
00:00:46,620 --> 00:00:47,820  
Thank you.

8  
00:00:47,820 --> 00:00:53,220  
Would you tell me, first, a  
little bit about your life

9  
00:00:53,220 --> 00:00:58,980  
before the war, where you lived  
and what your life was like?

10  
00:00:58,980 --> 00:00:59,480  
All right.

11  
00:00:59,480 --> 00:01:02,360

12  
00:01:02,360 --> 00:01:07,820  
I come from a family, my father,  
Jeruchim Reich, my mother,

13  
00:01:07,820 --> 00:01:10,280

Rosa Foster Reich.

14

00:01:10,280 --> 00:01:13,430

15

00:01:13,430 --> 00:01:21,860

And in the family were  
four girls and two boys,

16

00:01:21,860 --> 00:01:30,160

and everybody is not anymore  
here, because after the war,

17

00:01:30,160 --> 00:01:35,720

I found out that I don't have a  
mother, or father, or siblings.

18

00:01:35,720 --> 00:01:41,420

My life in Kraków was very nice.

19

00:01:41,420 --> 00:01:51,580

We were a family, well-to-do,  
and my mother never work,

20

00:01:51,580 --> 00:01:55,360

and I went to nice schools.

21

00:01:55,360 --> 00:01:58,690

So did my siblings.

22

00:01:58,690 --> 00:02:08,440

And from the early  
years, I had a boyfriend,

23

00:02:08,440 --> 00:02:12,550

and then he became my  
husband, and my life

24

00:02:12,550 --> 00:02:16,100

was very happy at home.

25

00:02:16,100 --> 00:02:22,240

But all of this finished in  
'39 when the Germans came in.

26

00:02:22,240 --> 00:02:24,670

Tell me, first of all,  
about your early life.

27

00:02:24,670 --> 00:02:27,300

28

00:02:27,300 --> 00:02:31,180

Did you have a strong  
Jewish identification?

29

00:02:31,180 --> 00:02:34,830

Yes, we were an orthodox family.

30

00:02:34,830 --> 00:02:38,850

All of the Jewish holiday  
were strictly observed,

31

00:02:38,850 --> 00:02:41,050

and I grew up with that.

32

00:02:41,050 --> 00:02:44,560

All my life, I was religious.

33

00:02:44,560 --> 00:02:49,000

Even concentration camp,  
I was eating kosher,

34

00:02:49,000 --> 00:02:53,380

or I didn't eat any treif food.

35

00:02:53,380 --> 00:02:58,740

And it was very hard, very hard,  
but thank God I have survived,

36

00:02:58,740 --> 00:02:59,950

and I am proud of it.

37

00:02:59,950 --> 00:03:03,250

Did your whole family  
live in Kraków,

38

00:03:03,250 --> 00:03:05,110

I mean your extended family?

39

00:03:05,110 --> 00:03:07,710

Yeah, the extended family.

40

00:03:07,710 --> 00:03:09,340

No, some, some.

41

00:03:09,340 --> 00:03:17,770

Like my grandparents from my  
mother's side lived in Cieszyn.

42

00:03:17,770 --> 00:03:21,940

This was a border  
of Czechoslovakia.

43

00:03:21,940 --> 00:03:25,475

And my father's family  
comes from Rzeszow.

44

00:03:25,475 --> 00:03:28,910

45

00:03:28,910 --> 00:03:32,600

I knew very well  
my mother's family.

46

00:03:32,600 --> 00:03:37,430

She comes from a  
family, nine children,

47

00:03:37,430 --> 00:03:41,940

and no aunt survived even.

48

00:03:41,940 --> 00:03:42,990

No one, for that matter.

49

00:03:42,990 --> 00:03:44,930

Their grandmother  
and grandfather

50

00:03:44,930 --> 00:03:48,200

was killed also by Hitler,  
but even the aunts,

51

00:03:48,200 --> 00:03:52,790  
when they were surviving  
the first stage of the war,

52  
00:03:52,790 --> 00:03:55,940  
then they disappeared in  
the concentration camps,

53  
00:03:55,940 --> 00:04:01,310  
and so I don't have  
aunts or uncles even.

54  
00:04:01,310 --> 00:04:04,460  
How many siblings did you have?

55  
00:04:04,460 --> 00:04:05,450  
Six.

56  
00:04:05,450 --> 00:04:10,490  
I mean, with me, were 6 siblings  
in the family, four girls

57  
00:04:10,490 --> 00:04:11,900  
and two brothers.

58  
00:04:11,900 --> 00:04:14,365  
And where were you in  
the family constellation?

59  
00:04:14,365 --> 00:04:16,510  
Were you the oldest,  
the youngest?

60  
00:04:16,510 --> 00:04:18,649  
Yeah, before the last.

61  
00:04:18,649 --> 00:04:22,000  
My brother was the  
youngest, Herman.

62  
00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:29,810  
There was sister Sala, Regina,  
Gusta, and brother Isaac,

63  
00:04:29,810 --> 00:04:32,460

Herman, and before Herman I--

64

00:04:32,460 --> 00:04:34,470  
So you were the  
youngest of the sisters.

65

00:04:34,470 --> 00:04:36,562  
Right, right.

66

00:04:36,562 --> 00:04:38,270  
And what did your  
father do for a living?

67

00:04:38,270 --> 00:04:45,860  
Oh, he was selling every  
thing what the baker needed.

68

00:04:45,860 --> 00:04:50,480  
The machines would  
make the rolls,

69

00:04:50,480 --> 00:04:59,030  
like 30 rolls in one cut, and he  
installed ovens for the bakers,

70

00:04:59,030 --> 00:05:04,710  
and he supplied everything  
except the flour what the baker

71

00:05:04,710 --> 00:05:08,360  
needed for having a bakery.

72

00:05:08,360 --> 00:05:11,810  
That's why, during the  
war, we were having bread,

73

00:05:11,810 --> 00:05:13,940  
because he had connections  
with the bakers.

74

00:05:13,940 --> 00:05:16,920

75

00:05:16,920 --> 00:05:21,070  
As a matter of fact, the

machines came from Germany.

76

00:05:21,070 --> 00:05:24,440

All the machines who  
divided the rolls

77

00:05:24,440 --> 00:05:29,720

in 30 parts or the  
mixing machines

78

00:05:29,720 --> 00:05:35,660

for bread, very heavy  
utilities, he supplied.

79

00:05:35,660 --> 00:05:39,890

In Kraków, before the war, did  
you experience anti-Semitism,

80

00:05:39,890 --> 00:05:42,910

or did you experience isolation?

81

00:05:42,910 --> 00:05:45,380

We lived in Podgórze.

82

00:05:45,380 --> 00:05:48,410

This was like, I would  
say, a suburb from Kraków

83

00:05:48,410 --> 00:05:51,950

because a bridge was  
divided between Kraków,

84

00:05:51,950 --> 00:05:55,370

and we had a comfortable life.

85

00:05:55,370 --> 00:06:00,350

We didn't experience  
anti-Semitism.

86

00:06:00,350 --> 00:06:02,675

We lived with the  
Poles in one house.

87

00:06:02,675 --> 00:06:05,200

88

00:06:05,200 --> 00:06:09,170

We lived in a tenement  
where they were around 2,

89

00:06:09,170 --> 00:06:14,180

3 families on one floor,  
and one was not Jewish,

90

00:06:14,180 --> 00:06:17,240

but we were very friendly.

91

00:06:17,240 --> 00:06:21,590

But if you say about the  
suburbia from Kraków,

92

00:06:21,590 --> 00:06:25,920

if you go out where  
only peasant live.

93

00:06:25,920 --> 00:06:28,130

And sometimes there,  
they had to travel.

94

00:06:28,130 --> 00:06:35,390

He experienced names  
and stone throwing,

95

00:06:35,390 --> 00:06:42,170

because my father was in  
an attire like the Hasidim.

96

00:06:42,170 --> 00:06:46,400

He was not in European  
clothes, but later on, yes,

97

00:06:46,400 --> 00:06:48,860

but in the beginning.

98

00:06:48,860 --> 00:06:55,430

So this kind of  
incident often appear,

99

00:06:55,430 --> 00:06:58,970

but not in Kraków



that I should say.

100

00:06:58,970 --> 00:07:07,490

Later on, in the later  
years like '36, '37,

101

00:07:07,490 --> 00:07:13,160

anti-Semitism grew, because  
there were even incidents.

102

00:07:13,160 --> 00:07:17,010

My husband was  
studying in Haifa,

103

00:07:17,010 --> 00:07:22,280

so for vacation he came so we  
could go in Kraków on a very

104

00:07:22,280 --> 00:07:28,100

beautiful street,  
like in Florianska,

105

00:07:28,100 --> 00:07:35,180

and these anti-Semites, the  
students from the University,

106

00:07:35,180 --> 00:07:43,220

threw off the hat and call  
names like, you Jew, you Jew.

107

00:07:43,220 --> 00:07:45,380

Go to Palestine.

108

00:07:45,380 --> 00:07:56,240

This was in '37, '38, and '39  
because the anti-Semitism grew.

109

00:07:56,240 --> 00:07:59,090

Maybe I don't  
remember how it was

110

00:07:59,090 --> 00:08:03,710

because I didn't pay attention,  
but when I was already grown

111

00:08:03,710 --> 00:08:09,235  
up, I realized that it was.

112  
00:08:09,235 --> 00:08:16,640  
But still, as Poland took,  
always, in Jewish people.

113  
00:08:16,640 --> 00:08:20,750  
Well, maybe some  
other lands didn't.

114  
00:08:20,750 --> 00:08:24,770

115  
00:08:24,770 --> 00:08:27,580  
Not all Jews could study.

116  
00:08:27,580 --> 00:08:29,770  
There was numerous clauses.

117  
00:08:29,770 --> 00:08:34,090  
We were like 10%  
population, so only 10%

118  
00:08:34,090 --> 00:08:38,220  
could be admitted  
for law, or even less

119  
00:08:38,220 --> 00:08:41,169  
for medicine, or engineering.

120  
00:08:41,169 --> 00:08:44,000  
My husband couldn't  
study in Poland,

121  
00:08:44,000 --> 00:08:48,970  
so he had to go to Israel  
to the Polytechnic of Haifa,

122  
00:08:48,970 --> 00:08:51,940  
and he was studying  
from '36 to '39.

123  
00:08:51,940 --> 00:08:54,480  
What was your own

schooling like?

124  
00:08:54,480 --> 00:09:01,180  
Oh, I had my grades,  
and then I went

125  
00:09:01,180 --> 00:09:08,950  
for three years like a  
buchalteria, how you say,

126  
00:09:08,950 --> 00:09:11,973  
bookkeeping school.

127  
00:09:11,973 --> 00:09:12,860  
How do you call it?

128  
00:09:12,860 --> 00:09:14,010  
Like a commercial course.

129  
00:09:14,010 --> 00:09:15,150  
Yes, commercial course.

130  
00:09:15,150 --> 00:09:17,170  
Yes, three years.

131  
00:09:17,170 --> 00:09:21,560  
And I finish, and  
then I got a job.

132  
00:09:21,560 --> 00:09:24,090  
I was short handwriting.

133  
00:09:24,090 --> 00:09:32,860  
I learned typewriting, and  
bookkeeping, and billing.

134  
00:09:32,860 --> 00:09:39,640  
So I had a very good job, before  
the war, in a wholesale place

135  
00:09:39,640 --> 00:09:49,510  
were they sell jewelry,  
but not fake jewelry.

136

00:09:49,510 --> 00:09:53,770

We always got this  
from Czechoslovakia.

137

00:09:53,770 --> 00:09:58,990

They were the  
biggest manufacturer

138

00:09:58,990 --> 00:10:02,920

for the fake jewelry,  
a very big place.

139

00:10:02,920 --> 00:10:06,610

This was a wholesale place,  
and I was working there

140

00:10:06,610 --> 00:10:09,790

until the war broke out.

141

00:10:09,790 --> 00:10:17,830

And then, I was working,  
when the war broke out,

142

00:10:17,830 --> 00:10:20,740

I was zwangsarbeit.

143

00:10:20,740 --> 00:10:25,220

How you say that I had to work?

144

00:10:25,220 --> 00:10:34,210

zwangs is what everybody had  
to work when the Germans came.

145

00:10:34,210 --> 00:10:34,870

Forced labor.

146

00:10:34,870 --> 00:10:35,720

Forced labor.

147

00:10:35,720 --> 00:10:37,960

Sorry, forced labor.

148

00:10:37,960 --> 00:10:39,190

Sometimes the word isn't--

149

00:10:39,190 --> 00:10:39,690

Yes.

150

00:10:39,690 --> 00:10:41,350

So this was forced labor.

151

00:10:41,350 --> 00:10:44,890

And because I knew how  
to sew on the machine,

152

00:10:44,890 --> 00:10:51,400

so I went to a factory  
under the Germans auspices,

153

00:10:51,400 --> 00:10:57,310

and we made blouses for the  
soldiers, for the Wehrmacht.

154

00:10:57,310 --> 00:11:00,160

and so I was working there.

155

00:11:00,160 --> 00:11:03,850

What are your memories of  
the beginning of the war?

156

00:11:03,850 --> 00:11:05,330

It was outrageous.

157

00:11:05,330 --> 00:11:09,500

We thought that  
this is only a fake.

158

00:11:09,500 --> 00:11:18,550

159

00:11:18,550 --> 00:11:19,310

A false alarm?

160

00:11:19,310 --> 00:11:20,340

False alarm.

161

00:11:20,340 --> 00:11:23,620

That's right.

162

00:11:23,620 --> 00:11:24,860

A false alarm.

163

00:11:24,860 --> 00:11:27,310

So this was the  
1st of September.

164

00:11:27,310 --> 00:11:29,050

So it's a false alarm.

165

00:11:29,050 --> 00:11:32,560

But no, the bombs were  
flying over Kraków.

166

00:11:32,560 --> 00:11:35,640

So we realized, oh,  
my God, it's a war.

167

00:11:35,640 --> 00:11:37,640

The Germans came.

168

00:11:37,640 --> 00:11:43,650

So the radio was blasting that  
everybody that is young should

169

00:11:43,650 --> 00:11:51,980

run away toward the border  
of Russia, out of Kraków.

170

00:11:51,980 --> 00:11:57,190

So everybody but the old people,  
like my mother and father,

171

00:11:57,190 --> 00:12:00,170

said, where will I run?

172

00:12:00,170 --> 00:12:01,070

Where will I run?

173

00:12:01,070 --> 00:12:06,020

But the youngsters, they know  
how to run because by foot.

174

00:12:06,020 --> 00:12:14,170

And so my boyfriend came  
the 16th of September

175  
00:12:14,170 --> 00:12:19,310  
from Palestine there for  
vacation to his parents

176  
00:12:19,310 --> 00:12:22,180  
where they lived on the  
same street, and to me.

177  
00:12:22,180 --> 00:12:23,830  
What was he doing in Palestine?

178  
00:12:23,830 --> 00:12:30,330  
He was in a polytechnic  
of Haifa engineering,

179  
00:12:30,330 --> 00:12:35,320  
and he had only three months  
to finish the engineering

180  
00:12:35,320 --> 00:12:39,207  
when he came for vacation  
to see the parents and me.

181  
00:12:39,207 --> 00:12:42,190

182  
00:12:42,190 --> 00:12:47,026  
The family was very unhappy, his  
family, because don't you know?

183  
00:12:47,026 --> 00:12:50,570  
In Palestine you didn't  
hear that war is so close?

184  
00:12:50,570 --> 00:12:54,805  
No, it seems that it  
will be only cold war

185  
00:12:54,805 --> 00:12:59,190  
and they will come  
to understanding,

186

00:12:59,190 --> 00:13:01,000  
and the world will not break.

187  
00:13:01,000 --> 00:13:02,200  
But it will break.

188  
00:13:02,200 --> 00:13:05,580  
So he was trapped in Kraków.

189  
00:13:05,580 --> 00:13:11,170  
And as a matter of fact, he had  
a Palestine visa to go back,

190  
00:13:11,170 --> 00:13:12,700  
and the Germans didn't allow.

191  
00:13:12,700 --> 00:13:16,270  
He went and he said, look,  
I'm a student in Palestine.

192  
00:13:16,270 --> 00:13:23,070  
It was not so strict, and  
maybe even the Americans,

193  
00:13:23,070 --> 00:13:29,530  
the English, didn't  
join then, only in '42.

194  
00:13:29,530 --> 00:13:31,540  
So they didn't allow him to go.

195  
00:13:31,540 --> 00:13:37,010  
So we started to walk,  
because it was like when

196  
00:13:37,010 --> 00:13:39,450  
you see the people in Vietnam.

197  
00:13:39,450 --> 00:13:42,050  
They take their  
belongings and they go.

198  
00:13:42,050 --> 00:13:43,350  
They go.



199

00:13:43,350 --> 00:13:48,240

So then all Poland walked.

200

00:13:48,240 --> 00:13:51,020

There was walking--

201

00:13:51,020 --> 00:13:52,670

From west to east?

202

00:13:52,670 --> 00:13:54,830

Yes, from west to east.

203

00:13:54,830 --> 00:13:55,820

Right.

204

00:13:55,820 --> 00:14:00,360

Everybody wanted  
to go to the east.

205

00:14:00,360 --> 00:14:06,360

Not knowing where, but  
probably to go to Russia,

206

00:14:06,360 --> 00:14:11,050

but there was no other way,  
because to the east was Russia.

207

00:14:11,050 --> 00:14:18,240

All the other countries like  
to Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria

208

00:14:18,240 --> 00:14:28,115

down below east.

209

00:14:28,115 --> 00:14:34,710

The east countries  
were also taking us in,

210

00:14:34,710 --> 00:14:37,600

the refugees, then.

211

00:14:37,600 --> 00:14:40,870

And a lot of people  
wind up to be In Lwów,

212

00:14:40,870 --> 00:14:43,820  
where then the Russians came  
from the other side and take

213

00:14:43,820 --> 00:14:48,090  
them all to Siberia, but at  
least they didn't murder them.

214

00:14:48,090 --> 00:14:54,350  
They took them as refugees,  
but if it comes to the Germans,

215

00:14:54,350 --> 00:14:56,310  
if they're caught, they shot.

216

00:14:56,310 --> 00:14:59,420

217

00:14:59,420 --> 00:15:03,240  
This was like the  
10th of September.

218

00:15:03,240 --> 00:15:04,640  
This was Sunday.

219

00:15:04,640 --> 00:15:06,830  
We started to walk.

220

00:15:06,830 --> 00:15:14,210  
Simon, my husband, and my  
brother, Herman, the youngest,

221

00:15:14,210 --> 00:15:17,060  
and my brother-in-law,  
Ascher Safir,

222

00:15:17,060 --> 00:15:21,230  
with his son, nine  
years old, Joey.

223

00:15:21,230 --> 00:15:24,980  
And we were walking and  
walking, and in the meantime,

224

00:15:24,980 --> 00:15:27,680  
there were raids.

225

00:15:27,680 --> 00:15:32,720  
So we hid in the  
bushes, and the screams

226

00:15:32,720 --> 00:15:36,530  
because when a bomb hit  
somebody, so it hit.

227

00:15:36,530 --> 00:15:40,580  
But so far, I have to tell you  
that we were going through Hell

228

00:15:40,580 --> 00:15:44,570  
with the bombs with  
the Germans overthrew,

229

00:15:44,570 --> 00:15:49,225  
and from our five people,  
nobody got killed then.

230

00:15:49,225 --> 00:15:51,890

231

00:15:51,890 --> 00:15:56,780  
And we were walking  
three days, and we

232

00:15:56,780 --> 00:16:01,773  
came to a little  
town, Mielec, and we

233

00:16:01,773 --> 00:16:04,200  
thought that we were safe.

234

00:16:04,200 --> 00:16:14,240  
We went to a peasant family and  
we asked if we can sleep over,

235

00:16:14,240 --> 00:16:17,710  
and when we woke up, after  
the three days we'd walked

236

00:16:17,710 --> 00:16:19,160  
and then we stopped.

237

00:16:19,160 --> 00:16:21,800  
We woke up and the  
Germans were there too.

238

00:16:21,800 --> 00:16:24,150  
So we couldn't run away anymore.

239

00:16:24,150 --> 00:16:26,420  
So we decided we'd go back home.

240

00:16:26,420 --> 00:16:31,190  
At least we have our  
own bed and our family.

241

00:16:31,190 --> 00:16:39,130  
So this was September, maybe  
6, 7, but we stood by them.

242

00:16:39,130 --> 00:16:43,520  
The people let us  
stay there a few days

243

00:16:43,520 --> 00:16:47,390  
until we rested, and  
we came, it was maybe

244

00:16:47,390 --> 00:16:56,000  
September 15, home where all  
the people we met, my parents.

245

00:16:56,000 --> 00:17:01,130  
But Simon's family  
took off with a car,

246

00:17:01,130 --> 00:17:06,849  
and with horse and buggy, and  
they went and they arrived,

247

00:17:06,849 --> 00:17:08,910  
in the three days, to Lwów.

248

00:17:08,910 --> 00:17:13,160  
And from then, his whole  
family, except him,

249  
00:17:13,160 --> 00:17:18,170  
was deported to  
Russia, to Siberia,

250  
00:17:18,170 --> 00:17:21,940  
and they survive, all alive.

251  
00:17:21,940 --> 00:17:29,570  
But when we came back, we  
had to obey all the laws

252  
00:17:29,570 --> 00:17:31,140  
from the Germans.

253  
00:17:31,140 --> 00:17:44,450  
It was the band, was going  
to work, to forced labor,

254  
00:17:44,450 --> 00:17:48,740  
and we were living  
from day to day.

255  
00:17:48,740 --> 00:17:51,890  
We didn't know what  
tomorrow will bring.

256  
00:17:51,890 --> 00:17:56,720  
And as a matter of  
fact, in the beginning,

257  
00:17:56,720 --> 00:17:59,600  
I was going still  
to that store where

258  
00:17:59,600 --> 00:18:04,760  
I was working with the band.

259  
00:18:04,760 --> 00:18:14,030  
And then, it was a little  
dangerous because the non-Jews

260

00:18:14,030 --> 00:18:16,640  
took advantage then, you see?

261  
00:18:16,640 --> 00:18:21,410  
Because from all sides we  
were blasted, the Germans

262  
00:18:21,410 --> 00:18:23,700  
and the Poles.

263  
00:18:23,700 --> 00:18:25,320  
And it was a very hard life.

264  
00:18:25,320 --> 00:18:27,670  
Right away, you  
couldn't buy things.

265  
00:18:27,670 --> 00:18:30,425  
So you get the rations.

266  
00:18:30,425 --> 00:18:35,170

267  
00:18:35,170 --> 00:18:37,930  
Some people, if they  
had connections,

268  
00:18:37,930 --> 00:18:40,960  
like always is the case.

269  
00:18:40,960 --> 00:18:41,980  
You have connections.

270  
00:18:41,980 --> 00:18:42,880  
You have bread.

271  
00:18:42,880 --> 00:18:50,565  
You have still butter, but it  
was always worse and worse.

272  
00:18:50,565 --> 00:19:00,300  
If somebody had a lot of money  
and jewelry, it was easier.

273

00:19:00,300 --> 00:19:09,320  
Then, this was '39,  
and '40, and it was--

274  
00:19:09,320 --> 00:19:18,100  
can I remember-- all  
kinds of laws they made,

275  
00:19:18,100 --> 00:19:24,160  
the Germans, like proclamations.

276  
00:19:24,160 --> 00:19:25,420  
This you shouldn't do.

277  
00:19:25,420 --> 00:19:32,380  
This one not allowed to  
go out, and then they

278  
00:19:32,380 --> 00:19:39,550  
took away their freedom  
by putting more people

279  
00:19:39,550 --> 00:19:43,330  
in the household than it was.

280  
00:19:43,330 --> 00:19:45,860

281  
00:19:45,860 --> 00:19:51,280  
Always people were going  
from one place to another.

282  
00:19:51,280 --> 00:19:54,880  
During the war, people were  
wandering from one place

283  
00:19:54,880 --> 00:19:55,700  
to the other.

284  
00:19:55,700 --> 00:19:57,350  
And they were crowding  
people together?

285  
00:19:57,350 --> 00:20:00,160  
And they're crowding

people together.

286

00:20:00,160 --> 00:20:01,810

And then, it came ghetto.

287

00:20:01,810 --> 00:20:06,040

So they crowded enormously.

288

00:20:06,040 --> 00:20:09,190

First of all, they make  
a clean up from people.

289

00:20:09,190 --> 00:20:13,630

The older people, they  
deported to other parts

290

00:20:13,630 --> 00:20:15,520

and you never knew  
where they are.

291

00:20:15,520 --> 00:20:18,890

292

00:20:18,890 --> 00:20:25,360

My parents had to move from  
Podgórze where we had our home

293

00:20:25,360 --> 00:20:31,250

because they didn't get the  
permission to live there.

294

00:20:31,250 --> 00:20:35,440

You had to have  
special permission.

295

00:20:35,440 --> 00:20:41,130

It's such a chaos that I  
cannot even remember everything

296

00:20:41,130 --> 00:20:47,110

in detail, but  
life was miserable.

297

00:20:47,110 --> 00:20:52,430

Work and the not enough to



eat, and then came the ghetto

298

00:20:52,430 --> 00:20:58,960  
where we were closed  
in, only to have

299

00:20:58,960 --> 00:21:02,320  
15 families in the household  
where we are only five.

300

00:21:02,320 --> 00:21:05,473

301

00:21:05,473 --> 00:21:06,640  
it was unbearable sometimes.

302

00:21:06,640 --> 00:21:07,500  
Who was with you?

303

00:21:07,500 --> 00:21:12,190

304

00:21:12,190 --> 00:21:16,730  
In '40, they proclaimed  
that all the bachelors

305

00:21:16,730 --> 00:21:25,030  
must go to zwangsarbeit, to  
work, but not voluntarily work.

306

00:21:25,030 --> 00:21:30,390  
I did still work in that  
firm where I was working,

307

00:21:30,390 --> 00:21:31,940  
but their work.

308

00:21:31,940 --> 00:21:37,294

309

00:21:37,294 --> 00:21:41,380  
We got married in  
'40 with my husband,

310

00:21:41,380 --> 00:21:48,910  
and with me and my husband,  
lived his brother and his wife,

311  
00:21:48,910 --> 00:21:55,930  
and my brother, Herman, with  
his wife and his wife's sister.

312  
00:21:55,930 --> 00:21:59,460  
It was, all together,  
in our apartment

313  
00:21:59,460 --> 00:22:06,745  
what consists of four room  
and a kitchen, 15 families.

314  
00:22:06,745 --> 00:22:09,870

315  
00:22:09,870 --> 00:22:16,540  
We took these covers and  
we made walls out of it

316  
00:22:16,540 --> 00:22:20,290  
that one family  
should live together

317  
00:22:20,290 --> 00:22:26,630  
and the other, not in one room  
like a shelter for everybody.

318  
00:22:26,630 --> 00:22:34,720  
And this was very hard life,  
but still we were alive.

319  
00:22:34,720 --> 00:22:38,950  
It was nothing more  
only to be alive.

320  
00:22:38,950 --> 00:22:41,080  
Your parents are with  
you too at that time?

321  
00:22:41,080 --> 00:22:44,560  
At that time, in the  
beginning, my parents

322

00:22:44,560 --> 00:22:50,380  
were, by then, they had to move  
out, because to live in ghetto,

323

00:22:50,380 --> 00:22:52,730  
you had to have  
their permission.

324

00:22:52,730 --> 00:22:55,060  
So they, as old  
people, didn't get.

325

00:22:55,060 --> 00:23:01,970  
So they moved in suburban  
Podgórze in a small,

326

00:23:01,970 --> 00:23:06,250  
small town where  
they rented a room,

327

00:23:06,250 --> 00:23:12,130  
and they lived there  
before the ghetto.

328

00:23:12,130 --> 00:23:15,630  
But in ghetto, they could  
come and they lived with us,

329

00:23:15,630 --> 00:23:19,190  
because all the Jews from  
the suburbs they gathered,

330

00:23:19,190 --> 00:23:22,320  
and they had to go  
into the ghetto.

331

00:23:22,320 --> 00:23:25,970  
And from ghetto, it  
was the aussiedlung,

332

00:23:25,970 --> 00:23:28,985  
when there was this--

333

00:23:28,985 --> 00:23:29,485

Deportation?

334

00:23:29,485 --> 00:23:31,720  
Deportation.

335

00:23:31,720 --> 00:23:35,180  
They deported them.

336

00:23:35,180 --> 00:23:39,810  
First, they kept them in  
that building, Optima,

337

00:23:39,810 --> 00:23:42,960  
a huge factory building.

338

00:23:42,960 --> 00:23:48,670  
So they gathered all the people  
who didn't have the kennkarte.

339

00:23:48,670 --> 00:23:50,330  
Kennkarte is the--

340

00:23:50,330 --> 00:23:52,860

341

00:23:52,860 --> 00:23:54,220  
Identity card.

342

00:23:54,220 --> 00:24:00,105  
Yeah, and we had  
so we could stay.

343

00:24:00,105 --> 00:24:03,880

344

00:24:03,880 --> 00:24:07,920  
It's so hard to remember  
how it was tragic.

345

00:24:07,920 --> 00:24:13,530  
I wanted to go with them  
when they deported them,

346

00:24:13,530 --> 00:24:15,240

and I was the wife.

347

00:24:15,240 --> 00:24:16,410

I was married.

348

00:24:16,410 --> 00:24:22,170

So my father said to me, your  
place is with your husband.

349

00:24:22,170 --> 00:24:24,870

You stay here, and they went.

350

00:24:24,870 --> 00:24:29,830

It was very, very  
hard to see that.

351

00:24:29,830 --> 00:24:35,120

352

00:24:35,120 --> 00:24:48,840

They went and then we were  
still living in ghetto.

353

00:24:48,840 --> 00:24:56,140

Yes, and from the ghetto we  
were working, going to work.

354

00:24:56,140 --> 00:24:59,560

So blurred now, everything.

355

00:24:59,560 --> 00:25:06,150

And then came the  
liquidation of ghetto.

356

00:25:06,150 --> 00:25:07,970

After how long?

357

00:25:07,970 --> 00:25:13,710

After two years.

358

00:25:13,710 --> 00:25:16,760

No, '39, '40.

359

00:25:16,760 --> 00:25:19,300

'39, '40.

360

00:25:19,300 --> 00:25:27,010

'41 was ghetto, '41 to '43.

361

00:25:27,010 --> 00:25:28,853

So this was '43.

362

00:25:28,853 --> 00:25:30,770

So did you know where  
your parents were taken,

363

00:25:30,770 --> 00:25:31,580

or did you find out later?

364

00:25:31,580 --> 00:25:32,090

Yes.

365

00:25:32,090 --> 00:25:33,030

No, no.

366

00:25:33,030 --> 00:25:38,750

I know that they  
were taking everybody

367

00:25:38,750 --> 00:25:45,350

who hadn't got the  
papers to live there,

368

00:25:45,350 --> 00:25:50,690

and some people hide, and  
they didn't find them.

369

00:25:50,690 --> 00:25:54,830

But my parents didn't  
hide and they took them.

370

00:25:54,830 --> 00:25:55,775

And they took them.

371

00:25:55,775 --> 00:26:00,490

372

00:26:00,490 --> 00:26:09,630

And then, all the people  
they took on this day,

373  
00:26:09,630 --> 00:26:14,230  
they took them to the  
building, to Optima building,

374  
00:26:14,230 --> 00:26:19,350  
and from there transport, and  
transport went where ever.

375  
00:26:19,350 --> 00:26:25,710  
Majdanek, Treblinka,  
Auschwitz, where they sent.

376  
00:26:25,710 --> 00:26:28,710  
The camps were  
already in operation.

377  
00:26:28,710 --> 00:26:29,880  
I don't even know where.

378  
00:26:29,880 --> 00:26:38,350  
I heard the Yahrzeit for my  
parents the day they left me.

379  
00:26:38,350 --> 00:26:40,890

380  
00:26:40,890 --> 00:26:45,300  
What happened, and when they  
gassed them, I don't know.

381  
00:26:45,300 --> 00:26:49,060

382  
00:26:49,060 --> 00:26:53,580  
And then, it was  
also my sisters.

383  
00:26:53,580 --> 00:26:57,490  
One in Debica, where I was born.

384  
00:26:57,490 --> 00:26:59,790  
She had a husband from Debica.

385

00:26:59,790 --> 00:27:05,280

So she went from there  
the deportation were also.

386

00:27:05,280 --> 00:27:09,845

My other sister was  
in Bochnia hiding.

387

00:27:09,845 --> 00:27:15,690

And all that was very tragic  
for me, because I had to suffer

388

00:27:15,690 --> 00:27:20,670

not doing a thing because I  
had to take care of myself,

389

00:27:20,670 --> 00:27:26,530

so to say, and Simon.

390

00:27:26,530 --> 00:27:27,030

Excuse me.

391

00:27:27,030 --> 00:27:30,590

Do any of your brothers  
or sisters have children?

392

00:27:30,590 --> 00:27:34,380

Yeah, both sisters,  
the older ones,

393

00:27:34,380 --> 00:27:37,113

had children, two  
beautiful children.

394

00:27:37,113 --> 00:27:40,100

395

00:27:40,100 --> 00:27:47,450

When they deported the  
first time from Kraków,

396

00:27:47,450 --> 00:27:56,410

she went to Debica with the two  
children, a girl, 11, a boy, 9.



397

00:27:56,410 --> 00:28:00,440

This boy was wandering with us  
in the beginning of the war.

398

00:28:00,440 --> 00:28:03,160

But when he came  
back, the family

399

00:28:03,160 --> 00:28:05,890

went to Debica, and  
from there they were

400

00:28:05,890 --> 00:28:09,390

deported with the children.

401

00:28:09,390 --> 00:28:15,050

And the other sister  
had two girls, 5 and 3,

402

00:28:15,050 --> 00:28:21,200

and she went to Bochnia,  
from Kraków, not far,

403

00:28:21,200 --> 00:28:23,660

and from there she was deported.

404

00:28:23,660 --> 00:28:32,190

So I knew about that living  
in ghetto, those times.

405

00:28:32,190 --> 00:28:40,340

And then, after this  
living in ghetto,

406

00:28:40,340 --> 00:28:42,620

every day we had murders.

407

00:28:42,620 --> 00:28:46,460

I mean shot for  
dead, shot for dead,

408

00:28:46,460 --> 00:28:49,670

because there were two  
gates to the ghetto

409  
00:28:49,670 --> 00:28:53,900  
and they command us went out to  
work, like my husband, Simon,

410  
00:28:53,900 --> 00:28:55,610  
they commanded to work.

411  
00:28:55,610 --> 00:28:59,930

412  
00:28:59,930 --> 00:29:04,520  
Sometimes he brought a little  
something like bread or butter,

413  
00:29:04,520 --> 00:29:08,330  
and other people  
brought, not merchandise,

414  
00:29:08,330 --> 00:29:12,910  
but these necessities, what  
you couldn't get everything

415  
00:29:12,910 --> 00:29:15,440  
in ghetto.

416  
00:29:15,440 --> 00:29:17,450  
So if they're caught.

417  
00:29:17,450 --> 00:29:21,567  
And most of the time  
the Jewish order

418  
00:29:21,567 --> 00:29:26,225  
mans, the police, the Jewish  
police, were on that gate,

419  
00:29:26,225 --> 00:29:31,760  
but when a German  
were too sometimes,

420  
00:29:31,760 --> 00:29:37,010  
to see if everything goes in  
order, and they caught, he got

421

00:29:37,010 --> 00:29:40,290

shot right away on  
the spot, people.

422

00:29:40,290 --> 00:29:42,680

And every day you heard shots.

423

00:29:42,680 --> 00:29:44,570

Were the ones who  
did the shooting,

424

00:29:44,570 --> 00:29:45,980

were they Germans or Poles?

425

00:29:45,980 --> 00:29:50,180

Germans, Germans, only Germans.

426

00:29:50,180 --> 00:29:50,980

SS?

427

00:29:50,980 --> 00:29:51,570

The SS.

428

00:29:51,570 --> 00:29:54,460

429

00:29:54,460 --> 00:29:57,770

Yeah, most of the time the SS.

430

00:29:57,770 --> 00:30:01,580

There were also Jewish  
police, but they

431

00:30:01,580 --> 00:30:12,020

didn't have guns, weapons, but  
they were very common with us

432

00:30:12,020 --> 00:30:15,590

to please the Germans.

433

00:30:15,590 --> 00:30:19,550

This was outrageous,  
but it was real.

434

00:30:19,550 --> 00:30:21,290

Was there a Judenrat?

435

00:30:21,290 --> 00:30:25,670

Yes, there was a Judenrat,  
and you could complain,

436

00:30:25,670 --> 00:30:29,390

and you can go, and  
sometimes Judenrat

437

00:30:29,390 --> 00:30:33,440

helped very much,  
because there were Jews

438

00:30:33,440 --> 00:30:37,090

who were American citizens.

439

00:30:37,090 --> 00:30:42,020

So the Judenrat intervened  
that he should go out, go back,

440

00:30:42,020 --> 00:30:44,570

but sometimes they didn't let.

441

00:30:44,570 --> 00:30:49,970

This is up to the  
mood, I would say,

442

00:30:49,970 --> 00:30:56,450

what happened during this time,  
that everybody had his own say

443

00:30:56,450 --> 00:30:56,950

so.

444

00:30:56,950 --> 00:31:01,225

445

00:31:01,225 --> 00:31:03,950

It's a lot of luck  
that you had to have

446

00:31:03,950 --> 00:31:05,795

to survive and to go through.

447

00:31:05,795 --> 00:31:10,520

448

00:31:10,520 --> 00:31:17,220

I can say about me, I was  
left alone from all my family

449

00:31:17,220 --> 00:31:26,140

and somehow I survived,  
and even today it's

450

00:31:26,140 --> 00:31:31,500

45 years after the  
war, what passed

451

00:31:31,500 --> 00:31:35,360

so quick with all  
the tragic moments

452

00:31:35,360 --> 00:31:37,230

that I had during this time.

453

00:31:37,230 --> 00:31:39,870

454

00:31:39,870 --> 00:31:42,500

Sometimes you pinch yourself.

455

00:31:42,500 --> 00:31:43,420

You survived?

456

00:31:43,420 --> 00:31:44,610

You survived?

457

00:31:44,610 --> 00:31:51,750

It's unbelievable what people  
can go through and survive,

458

00:31:51,750 --> 00:32:00,060

that a human being is so strong,  
and by the same token, is weak.

459

00:32:00,060 --> 00:32:04,605  
Here you live, and next day you  
have a heart attack and you go.

460  
00:32:04,605 --> 00:32:14,130  
So if you are a  
believer, you say

461  
00:32:14,130 --> 00:32:16,440  
everything is in God's hands.

462  
00:32:16,440 --> 00:32:24,310  
You have to believe that some  
higher hierarchy above you

463  
00:32:24,310 --> 00:32:29,550  
that you survive, and the  
fate of the other people

464  
00:32:29,550 --> 00:32:32,820  
that they died.

465  
00:32:32,820 --> 00:32:37,780  
So the life, altogether,  
when I only go back,

466  
00:32:37,780 --> 00:32:41,040  
were very happy in my youth.

467  
00:32:41,040 --> 00:32:42,350  
Very happy.

468  
00:32:42,350 --> 00:32:43,800  
And there was struggle.

469  
00:32:43,800 --> 00:32:45,960  
And it was the  
happiest time when

470  
00:32:45,960 --> 00:32:48,730  
I met my husband after the war.

471  
00:32:48,730 --> 00:32:52,993

472

00:32:52,993 --> 00:32:55,160

What happened to you when  
the ghetto was liquidated,

473

00:32:55,160 --> 00:32:58,910

and how was the ghetto  
liquidated, first of all?

474

00:32:58,910 --> 00:33:02,480

The ghetto was very  
tragically liquidated,

475

00:33:02,480 --> 00:33:06,210

because they took the people.

476

00:33:06,210 --> 00:33:07,700

If you had work--

477

00:33:07,700 --> 00:33:11,030

478

00:33:11,030 --> 00:33:14,570

in the ghetto, people worked  
and people didn't work.

479

00:33:14,570 --> 00:33:21,650

The people who worked, they  
were sent right away to Płaszów,

480

00:33:21,650 --> 00:33:26,100

and they were the work  
force like it was in ghetto.

481

00:33:26,100 --> 00:33:28,550

So I was working in Madritsch.

482

00:33:28,550 --> 00:33:32,540

This was a very big  
concern, a German owner,

483

00:33:32,540 --> 00:33:34,560

Madritsch was his name.

484

00:33:34,560 --> 00:33:39,050

And as I said, I was  
sewing the blouses.

485  
00:33:39,050 --> 00:33:41,470  
This was like piecework.

486  
00:33:41,470 --> 00:33:45,534  
And with my sister-in-law,  
always with my sister-in-law,

487  
00:33:45,534 --> 00:33:47,150  
Blanka.

488  
00:33:47,150 --> 00:33:56,840  
And the people who didn't have  
work, they went to a place

489  
00:33:56,840 --> 00:33:59,310  
and they shipped  
them right away.

490  
00:33:59,310 --> 00:34:01,880

491  
00:34:01,880 --> 00:34:03,740  
They don't need them.

492  
00:34:03,740 --> 00:34:08,880  
So they were standing  
on this place

493  
00:34:08,880 --> 00:34:18,940  
with children, because people  
have, and they were going

494  
00:34:18,940 --> 00:34:22,780  
to a transport where nobody  
knew, but then we find out,

495  
00:34:22,780 --> 00:34:26,330  
or to live or to gassed.

496  
00:34:26,330 --> 00:34:31,690  
And then the others, it was a  
complete cleanup from ghetto



497

00:34:31,690 --> 00:34:34,730  
to Płaszów to go.

498

00:34:34,730 --> 00:34:38,900  
Some people took children.

499

00:34:38,900 --> 00:34:47,730  
They smuggled them into Płaszów,  
and they're were lucky that

500

00:34:47,730 --> 00:34:50,090  
they have them for  
a little while,

501

00:34:50,090 --> 00:34:59,280  
but then they take all the  
children to Auschwitz to gas.

502

00:34:59,280 --> 00:35:02,610  
At this moment, what we  
share with other people,

503

00:35:02,610 --> 00:35:04,980  
I didn't have children.

504

00:35:04,980 --> 00:35:12,000  
And other people lived in  
this ghetto with children,

505

00:35:12,000 --> 00:35:13,590  
and I can remember one.

506

00:35:13,590 --> 00:35:16,630  
This was tragic.

507

00:35:16,630 --> 00:35:24,490  
A boy from one of the  
women who lived with me,

508

00:35:24,490 --> 00:35:27,640  
and when we all had  
to go and clean up

509

00:35:27,640 --> 00:35:29,980  
the apartment, this  
boy was standing

510  
00:35:29,980 --> 00:35:35,470  
on the balcony  
calling, mommy, mommy.

511  
00:35:35,470 --> 00:35:39,120  
She couldn't take him because  
otherwise she would be shot.

512  
00:35:39,120 --> 00:35:41,980  
A lot of women on  
that appellplatz where

513  
00:35:41,980 --> 00:35:49,980  
they went with children  
got shot right away.

514  
00:35:49,980 --> 00:35:53,310  
This boy was standing  
on the balcony

515  
00:35:53,310 --> 00:35:59,900  
and screaming, only  
one boy, and we left.

516  
00:35:59,900 --> 00:36:03,566  
I was so sorry for him.

517  
00:36:03,566 --> 00:36:14,960  
Oh, I remember so many children,  
but I cannot forget that boy.

518  
00:36:14,960 --> 00:36:20,780  
As a matter of fact, I  
cannot forget because my son,

519  
00:36:20,780 --> 00:36:27,320  
when he was born, I  
named him Richard,

520  
00:36:27,320 --> 00:36:29,320  
because I couldn't forget.

521

00:36:29,320 --> 00:36:34,197

His Jewish name is  
Jeruchim, after my father,

522

00:36:34,197 --> 00:36:35,280

but we called him Richard.

523

00:36:35,280 --> 00:36:38,050

524

00:36:38,050 --> 00:36:42,830

And so many tragedies,  
and I survived.

525

00:36:42,830 --> 00:36:46,070

526

00:36:46,070 --> 00:36:53,540

After the war, when we  
lived in Bindermichel, I

527

00:36:53,540 --> 00:36:56,850

went to the rabbi  
and I said, look,

528

00:36:56,850 --> 00:37:00,690

I was from a very big  
family, and I survived.

529

00:37:00,690 --> 00:37:02,080

Tell me why.

530

00:37:02,080 --> 00:37:09,130

What is that, that only I.  
So he said, Mrs. Mandelbaum,

531

00:37:09,130 --> 00:37:15,020

you survived because  
from you will come--

532

00:37:15,020 --> 00:37:16,980

and said [SPEAKING YIDDISH].

533

00:37:16,980 --> 00:37:19,880

He said in Yiddish,  
said [SPEAKING YIDDISH]..

534  
00:37:19,880 --> 00:37:26,220  
You know, a generation,  
what God wanted this.

535  
00:37:26,220 --> 00:37:34,170  
Thank God I have three beautiful  
boys, and I take it for granted

536  
00:37:34,170 --> 00:37:38,090  
that If I would not live,  
they would not be here.

537  
00:37:38,090 --> 00:37:42,840

538  
00:37:42,840 --> 00:37:45,010  
I am still very faithful.

539  
00:37:45,010 --> 00:37:51,330

540  
00:37:51,330 --> 00:37:55,740  
People, after the war, they ask,  
where is God, where was God,

541  
00:37:55,740 --> 00:38:00,710  
but I never asked because  
I said, this is my life.

542  
00:38:00,710 --> 00:38:03,080  
This is my fate.

543  
00:38:03,080 --> 00:38:07,640  
I took it as it came.

544  
00:38:07,640 --> 00:38:10,900  
Did you go right to Płaszów from  
the liquidation of the ghetto?

545  
00:38:10,900 --> 00:38:12,410  
Yes, from liquidation.

546

00:38:12,410 --> 00:38:13,610

Your husband too?

547

00:38:13,610 --> 00:38:14,990

Yes.

548

00:38:14,990 --> 00:38:16,820

As a matter of  
fact, he went first

549

00:38:16,820 --> 00:38:18,470

because he was  
building the barracks.

550

00:38:18,470 --> 00:38:24,830

551

00:38:24,830 --> 00:38:31,340

When we came to Płaszów,  
there was not everything built

552

00:38:31,340 --> 00:38:37,160

because still command us build,  
in Płaszów, other barracks,

553

00:38:37,160 --> 00:38:45,770

but we were over 18,000, because  
Madritsch was very prominent

554

00:38:45,770 --> 00:38:49,550

for the Germans, because  
he was doing something

555

00:38:49,550 --> 00:38:50,710

for the Wehrmacht.

556

00:38:50,710 --> 00:38:59,672

The blouses were very important,  
very industry, very important,

557

00:38:59,672 --> 00:39:06,170

where others were not so  
important, but they kept us.

558

00:39:06,170 --> 00:39:13,680

So it was a gemeinschaft,  
where they made shoes

559

00:39:13,680 --> 00:39:14,730

for all of the Wehrmacht.

560

00:39:14,730 --> 00:39:17,180

It was also very important.

561

00:39:17,180 --> 00:39:25,280

Then, there was a gemeinschaft,  
where my husband was then

562

00:39:25,280 --> 00:39:30,380

working when the buildings  
were all built up.

563

00:39:30,380 --> 00:39:37,250

So he was working in the  
other corporations, so to say,

564

00:39:37,250 --> 00:39:39,348

gemeinschaft.

565

00:39:39,348 --> 00:39:42,440

It was a-- how did they call it?

566

00:39:42,440 --> 00:39:46,751

567

00:39:46,751 --> 00:39:48,143

How did they call it?

568

00:39:48,143 --> 00:39:51,250

569

00:39:51,250 --> 00:39:53,890

Something with metal, metal.

570

00:39:53,890 --> 00:39:54,970

Metal factory?

571

00:39:54,970 --> 00:39:56,000

Metal factory.

572

00:39:56,000 --> 00:39:59,340

So what did they do?

573

00:39:59,340 --> 00:40:01,510

The work was not  
important, but they

574

00:40:01,510 --> 00:40:06,040

had to come and work and then go  
home, and go the next day again

575

00:40:06,040 --> 00:40:06,670

to this.

576

00:40:06,670 --> 00:40:10,840

577

00:40:10,840 --> 00:40:16,380

I have to laugh when I think  
that the men were separated

578

00:40:16,380 --> 00:40:19,090

and the women were separate.

579

00:40:19,090 --> 00:40:23,730

If some men were smart,  
and they were risking,

580

00:40:23,730 --> 00:40:30,070

they came to these wives, like  
my husband always visited me.

581

00:40:30,070 --> 00:40:36,700

And even in Płaszów, there  
were moments that you could be

582

00:40:36,700 --> 00:40:38,770

happy.

583

00:40:38,770 --> 00:40:47,140

But in all, this was so  
degrading, so degrading,

584

00:40:47,140 --> 00:40:53,020

all this life, and these  
latrines where we went.

585

00:40:53,020 --> 00:40:57,830

They made you feel  
you are nothing.

586

00:40:57,830 --> 00:41:04,630

Then, when they  
needed the women,

587

00:41:04,630 --> 00:41:06,850

let's say, for other things.

588

00:41:06,850 --> 00:41:11,370

So it was not important that  
you are working for Madritsch.

589

00:41:11,370 --> 00:41:17,110

So they took a lot of  
from that industry,

590

00:41:17,110 --> 00:41:25,420

and they asked to carry  
these wooden planks.

591

00:41:25,420 --> 00:41:28,940

So two women, long, long, long.

592

00:41:28,940 --> 00:41:33,032

593

00:41:33,032 --> 00:41:39,710

They were thinking only  
of vicious, vicious things

594

00:41:39,710 --> 00:41:42,590

to do to these people.

595

00:41:42,590 --> 00:41:46,000

If they couldn't  
legitimate ways,

596



00:41:46,000 --> 00:41:52,180  
so they manipulated,  
that from exhaustion,

597  
00:41:52,180 --> 00:41:54,980  
that the women should die.

598  
00:41:54,980 --> 00:41:59,830  
And if they didn't do that,  
so when the commander came,

599  
00:41:59,830 --> 00:42:05,950  
and they were searching to  
the iota what they brought,

600  
00:42:05,950 --> 00:42:09,600  
and one guy could something--  
the whole kommando they

601  
00:42:09,600 --> 00:42:15,490  
took on the field, you know,  
all take off their clothes

602  
00:42:15,490 --> 00:42:17,906  
and shot.

603  
00:42:17,906 --> 00:42:18,760  
You know?

604  
00:42:18,760 --> 00:42:21,640  
Barbaric things, and  
you are used to it.

605  
00:42:21,640 --> 00:42:24,930  
Every day, you hear these shots.

606  
00:42:24,930 --> 00:42:31,380  
Finally, you are used to  
it, and you cannot help it.

607  
00:42:31,380 --> 00:42:35,420  
You are just helpless.

608  
00:42:35,420 --> 00:42:46,360  
You have to go like they say, a

cow to the shokhet, how we say.

609

00:42:46,360 --> 00:42:47,410  
To the slaughter.

610

00:42:47,410 --> 00:42:48,240  
To the slaughter.

611

00:42:48,240 --> 00:42:50,000  
Cow to the slaughter.

612

00:42:50,000 --> 00:42:55,760  
So this was life in Płaszów.

613

00:42:55,760 --> 00:42:59,910

614

00:42:59,910 --> 00:43:03,590  
The food was very meager.

615

00:43:03,590 --> 00:43:07,600  
If the people were  
working, only Madritsch

616

00:43:07,600 --> 00:43:14,600  
had additional bread if you  
made more than the contingent.

617

00:43:14,600 --> 00:43:18,940  
So people tried to work hard,  
and not to talk, and then

618

00:43:18,940 --> 00:43:24,790  
only to work, that the piece  
of bread should come more.

619

00:43:24,790 --> 00:43:27,250  
And it was like bread and soup.

620

00:43:27,250 --> 00:43:30,760

621

00:43:30,760 --> 00:43:31,840  
This was our food.

622

00:43:31,840 --> 00:43:36,882

623

00:43:36,882 --> 00:43:40,270

It was awful.

624

00:43:40,270 --> 00:43:41,820

One day, they said--

625

00:43:41,820 --> 00:43:45,130

626

00:43:45,130 --> 00:43:47,260

this was in ghetto.

627

00:43:47,260 --> 00:43:51,970

This was still in ghetto that  
everything we had to give.

628

00:43:51,970 --> 00:43:54,490

First was a fur day.

629

00:43:54,490 --> 00:43:58,790

So furs, whatever  
somebody had to give them.

630

00:43:58,790 --> 00:44:03,340

Then it was everything  
silver and gold.

631

00:44:03,340 --> 00:44:07,560

So the candelabras and anything.

632

00:44:07,560 --> 00:44:11,220

And then, if somebody  
had a ring, even.

633

00:44:11,220 --> 00:44:17,530

So they said the wedding  
rings we will collect.

634

00:44:17,530 --> 00:44:20,530

Some people didn't want to give,

so they throw it in the latrine

635

00:44:20,530 --> 00:44:26,420  
because instead to give  
them, you know, sabotaging.

636

00:44:26,420 --> 00:44:32,140  
But as much as we could  
not to go to the slaughter

637

00:44:32,140 --> 00:44:33,040  
with everything.

638

00:44:33,040 --> 00:44:36,880

639

00:44:36,880 --> 00:44:41,650  
We hoped that the war will  
finish every day, maybe today,

640

00:44:41,650 --> 00:44:45,090  
maybe today, and it was  
dragging on and dragging on.

641

00:44:45,090 --> 00:44:48,090

642

00:44:48,090 --> 00:44:56,120  
And then, by '44, when they  
took the husbands, the men,

643

00:44:56,120 --> 00:44:59,390  
to Mauthausen in August '44.

644

00:44:59,390 --> 00:45:02,721

645

00:45:02,721 --> 00:45:06,240  
So we said goodbye,  
and we never knew

646

00:45:06,240 --> 00:45:09,660  
that we will see  
each other, but we

647

00:45:09,660 --> 00:45:14,730  
promised that, when we survive,  
we will meet there and there.

648

00:45:14,730 --> 00:45:17,370  
We made the date.

649

00:45:17,370 --> 00:45:22,460  
And then the woman  
went also, but you see,

650

00:45:22,460 --> 00:45:25,340  
it started in September.

651

00:45:25,340 --> 00:45:30,730

652

00:45:30,730 --> 00:45:40,420  
First, other corporations  
like mine shafts,

653

00:45:40,420 --> 00:45:47,200  
shoemakers, the paper factory.

654

00:45:47,200 --> 00:45:49,650  
They were first.

655

00:45:49,650 --> 00:45:53,010  
We heard that they  
went to Auschwitz.

656

00:45:53,010 --> 00:45:59,720  
And when they went there,  
they shaved everybody,

657

00:45:59,720 --> 00:46:00,930  
the heads, the women.

658

00:46:00,930 --> 00:46:03,540

659

00:46:03,540 --> 00:46:13,695  
And for the women, this  
was so demoralizing.

660  
00:46:13,695 --> 00:46:18,120  
This is like to take away  
from them everything.

661  
00:46:18,120 --> 00:46:21,100

662  
00:46:21,100 --> 00:46:23,990  
But in this respect,  
we were lucky

663  
00:46:23,990 --> 00:46:29,330  
because we were in the  
later commander taking it,

664  
00:46:29,330 --> 00:46:32,150  
because they heard  
that the Russians are

665  
00:46:32,150 --> 00:46:34,610  
coming from the east.

666  
00:46:34,610 --> 00:46:39,530  
So they were very, very  
hasty to get rid of us.

667  
00:46:39,530 --> 00:46:45,840

668  
00:46:45,840 --> 00:46:50,570  
There was still a other  
commander in January

669  
00:46:50,570 --> 00:46:54,230  
for the five what  
was still in Płaszów,

670  
00:46:54,230 --> 00:47:00,210  
the rest of the people,  
and my brother was in this,

671  
00:47:00,210 --> 00:47:02,640  
but they shot him.

672

00:47:02,640 --> 00:47:07,380

The wife survived and she  
told me that Herman was shot.

673

00:47:07,380 --> 00:47:08,070

The youngest?

674

00:47:08,070 --> 00:47:10,110

The youngest, right.

675

00:47:10,110 --> 00:47:12,840

Because the other  
ones, they took them

676

00:47:12,840 --> 00:47:16,380

to concentration camps  
and maybe gassed them

677

00:47:16,380 --> 00:47:19,560

in Majdanek or  
Treblinka or wherever.

678

00:47:19,560 --> 00:47:20,580

I didn't know.

679

00:47:20,580 --> 00:47:24,300

I don't know to this day,  
but about this brother,

680

00:47:24,300 --> 00:47:30,960

the youngest, Herman, I know  
that this was in '45, January

681

00:47:30,960 --> 00:47:36,660

that they shot him.

682

00:47:36,660 --> 00:47:41,560

The wife told me that  
he suffered very much,

683

00:47:41,560 --> 00:47:46,860

and they thought that  
this is his appendix,

684

00:47:46,860 --> 00:47:51,580  
and they took him to  
make the operation.

685  
00:47:51,580 --> 00:47:55,780  
And they did, in the  
hospital, and after two days--

686  
00:47:55,780 --> 00:47:58,600  
this is 45 years ago--

687  
00:47:58,600 --> 00:48:03,230  
they had to take everybody  
from the hospital.

688  
00:48:03,230 --> 00:48:05,620  
The Jews have to walk.

689  
00:48:05,620 --> 00:48:11,440  
How can a sick person, with  
a wound still there, walk?

690  
00:48:11,440 --> 00:48:12,380  
So he didn't walk.

691  
00:48:12,380 --> 00:48:13,730  
So they shot him on the road.

692  
00:48:13,730 --> 00:48:17,070

693  
00:48:17,070 --> 00:48:20,360  
So this was my brother.

694  
00:48:20,360 --> 00:48:21,960  
This was my brother.

695  
00:48:21,960 --> 00:48:23,300  
I loved him so much.

696  
00:48:23,300 --> 00:48:25,990

697  
00:48:25,990 --> 00:48:28,016



I named my son after him.

698

00:48:28,016 --> 00:48:30,610

699

00:48:30,610 --> 00:48:33,000

And it's like you--

700

00:48:33,000 --> 00:48:35,300

so Henry.

701

00:48:35,300 --> 00:48:44,430

702

00:48:44,430 --> 00:48:48,400

And I don't remember  
everything, because it's

703

00:48:48,400 --> 00:48:52,110

hard to remember after  
45 years everyday.

704

00:48:52,110 --> 00:48:52,610

Yes.

705

00:48:52,610 --> 00:48:59,170

706

00:48:59,170 --> 00:49:03,680

What do you remember  
about Auschwitz?

707

00:49:03,680 --> 00:49:05,610

Auschwitz.

708

00:49:05,610 --> 00:49:11,148

When we came, they  
didn't shave us.

709

00:49:11,148 --> 00:49:14,640

You see, this was a  
mood from the commander.

710

00:49:14,640 --> 00:49:15,570

When?

711

00:49:15,570 --> 00:49:22,410  
This was December.

712

00:49:22,410 --> 00:49:23,255  
December, '44.

713

00:49:23,255 --> 00:49:26,685

714

00:49:26,685 --> 00:49:29,460  
It was cold.

715

00:49:29,460 --> 00:49:32,540  
They loaded us, in Płaszów,  
in the cattle wagons.

716

00:49:32,540 --> 00:49:36,360

717

00:49:36,360 --> 00:49:42,140  
And I was dressed like today,  
because whatever somebody had,

718

00:49:42,140 --> 00:49:43,820  
had for years.

719

00:49:43,820 --> 00:49:45,940  
So I had a jacket,  
maybe five years old.

720

00:49:45,940 --> 00:49:52,130  
So I wore the jacket, and  
a skirt, and a blouse.

721

00:49:52,130 --> 00:50:00,360  
And in Płaszów, they loaded us,  
and when they closed the door,

722

00:50:00,360 --> 00:50:02,100  
and the way it was--

723

00:50:02,100 --> 00:50:09,030

so they made a stop to pick  
up something the next stop.

724

00:50:09,030 --> 00:50:11,970

So when the next stop, they  
open, a lot of peasants

725

00:50:11,970 --> 00:50:17,210

were there until  
Auschwitz where you go.

726

00:50:17,210 --> 00:50:20,940

And when they opened the  
door of the cattle wagon,

727

00:50:20,940 --> 00:50:24,530

I was in the front, standing.

728

00:50:24,530 --> 00:50:28,440

And probably because  
I was very testy,

729

00:50:28,440 --> 00:50:31,480

so I wanted to go  
through the crowd.

730

00:50:31,480 --> 00:50:32,540

I came too fast.

731

00:50:32,540 --> 00:50:38,300

When they opened the way, and I  
asked a peasant woman, I said,

732

00:50:38,300 --> 00:50:41,520

could you give me  
a little water?

733

00:50:41,520 --> 00:50:47,950

So she smiled, just like in  
this movie Lanzmann made.

734

00:50:47,950 --> 00:50:48,450

Shoah.

735

00:50:48,450 --> 00:50:49,780

Shoah.

736

00:50:49,780 --> 00:50:54,710  
That the Poles, you  
know, smart alecks.

737

00:50:54,710 --> 00:50:59,120  
She looked at me and she said,  
you know where you are going?

738

00:50:59,120 --> 00:51:00,980  
You don't need  
that jacket on you.

739

00:51:00,980 --> 00:51:03,310  
Give me the jacket, I  
bring you a glass of water.

740

00:51:03,310 --> 00:51:06,070

741

00:51:06,070 --> 00:51:11,380  
I said, never in your life  
you will get my jacket,

742

00:51:11,380 --> 00:51:13,770  
and I didn't give her.

743

00:51:13,770 --> 00:51:17,360  
You know, I don't remember  
what I ate yesterday,

744

00:51:17,360 --> 00:51:20,350  
but this I will never forget.

745

00:51:20,350 --> 00:51:26,715  
And to think that they  
knew what's going on.

746

00:51:26,715 --> 00:51:32,250  
This was '44, and they knew.

747

00:51:32,250 --> 00:51:36,150  
No, it was cruel.

748

00:51:36,150 --> 00:51:41,100

Everybody was, I  
guess, against us.

749

00:51:41,100 --> 00:51:42,800

It was hard.

750

00:51:42,800 --> 00:51:45,630

So we came to Auschwitz.

751

00:51:45,630 --> 00:51:46,963

It was nighttime.

752

00:51:46,963 --> 00:51:50,070

753

00:51:50,070 --> 00:51:54,690

They were gathering  
in one little room,

754

00:51:54,690 --> 00:52:01,440

and they said, everything  
to undress, everything.

755

00:52:01,440 --> 00:52:07,460

I had, here, a picture from  
that Richard and from my mother.

756

00:52:07,460 --> 00:52:12,090

757

00:52:12,090 --> 00:52:18,160

They said that nothing,  
nothing should be find,

758

00:52:18,160 --> 00:52:19,870

otherwise you will be shot.

759

00:52:19,870 --> 00:52:21,760

You will be shot.

760

00:52:21,760 --> 00:52:24,115

My sister-in-law  
said, Blanca, you

761  
00:52:24,115 --> 00:52:27,570  
are risking because  
of the two pictures?

762  
00:52:27,570 --> 00:52:29,200  
You are risking your life.

763  
00:52:29,200 --> 00:52:32,590  
They will ask to  
pick up your food.

764  
00:52:32,590 --> 00:52:34,786  
They will see a picture.

765  
00:52:34,786 --> 00:52:37,380  
They will not know  
what picture this is.

766  
00:52:37,380 --> 00:52:38,870  
Maybe it's some sign.

767  
00:52:38,870 --> 00:52:41,305  
They always suspect that  
something is going on.

768  
00:52:41,305 --> 00:52:43,680  
Something is being passed,  
some information or something.

769  
00:52:43,680 --> 00:52:45,568  
Right.

770  
00:52:45,568 --> 00:52:50,470  
And I said, I will go with that.

771  
00:52:50,470 --> 00:52:53,440  
Some people had still jewelry.

772  
00:52:53,440 --> 00:52:57,280  
They put it in their mouth.

773  
00:52:57,280 --> 00:53:01,830  
And all kinds of

things to survive.

774

00:53:01,830 --> 00:53:03,470

I don't know why, but anyway.

775

00:53:03,470 --> 00:53:08,370

776

00:53:08,370 --> 00:53:11,010

My sister-in-law,  
she was a pessimist,

777

00:53:11,010 --> 00:53:12,690

and I was an optimist.

778

00:53:12,690 --> 00:53:16,650

So she said, now we are  
going to the gas chambers.

779

00:53:16,650 --> 00:53:19,920

I said, no, we are  
going to shower.

780

00:53:19,920 --> 00:53:21,870

How can you be sure, she said?

781

00:53:21,870 --> 00:53:23,820

We are going to  
the gas chambers.

782

00:53:23,820 --> 00:53:24,630

Don't you know?

783

00:53:24,630 --> 00:53:25,560

Don't you feel?

784

00:53:25,560 --> 00:53:26,820

Don't you smell?

785

00:53:26,820 --> 00:53:32,360

I said, Yes, because the smell  
of body was all over Auschwitz.

786

00:53:32,360 --> 00:53:36,360

787

00:53:36,360 --> 00:53:40,590

And this was by the end  
of '44 when the ovens

788

00:53:40,590 --> 00:53:44,150

were a long time working.

789

00:53:44,150 --> 00:53:47,560

790

00:53:47,560 --> 00:53:53,350

And I said, no, we are going  
to shower, and you will see,

791

00:53:53,350 --> 00:53:55,100

and God will help us.

792

00:53:55,100 --> 00:53:56,940

We cannot survive, she said.

793

00:53:56,940 --> 00:53:59,160

Manya, what is with you?

794

00:53:59,160 --> 00:54:00,310

We cannot survive.

795

00:54:00,310 --> 00:54:02,350

I said, we will.

796

00:54:02,350 --> 00:54:05,450

I always was like that.

797

00:54:05,450 --> 00:54:10,480

And sure enough, we went  
to, and we came out.

798

00:54:10,480 --> 00:54:14,050

A heap of clothes was  
there, and this German woman

799

00:54:14,050 --> 00:54:19,320

gave from the heap,



this, this you get.

800

00:54:19,320 --> 00:54:24,130  
So our five women, who I said  
that we are always together,

801

00:54:24,130 --> 00:54:31,490  
got clothes, and we started to  
laugh spasmodic, because one

802

00:54:31,490 --> 00:54:36,690  
was a nightgown as your attire.

803

00:54:36,690 --> 00:54:40,625  
And can you imagine,  
in winter, in December

804

00:54:40,625 --> 00:54:44,180  
in Poland, the wind?

805

00:54:44,180 --> 00:54:52,301  
And one had a miniskirt, mini  
dress, until here, barefoot.

806

00:54:52,301 --> 00:54:59,110  
There was a heap of shoes,  
one white, one black,

807

00:54:59,110 --> 00:55:02,810  
one high heel, one.

808

00:55:02,810 --> 00:55:07,970  
You had to, in a hurry,  
take two shoes and go.

809

00:55:07,970 --> 00:55:09,740  
Can you imagine?

810

00:55:09,740 --> 00:55:11,930  
And everybody was afraid.

811

00:55:11,930 --> 00:55:16,520  
We instinctly felt  
we cannot survive.

812

00:55:16,520 --> 00:55:18,830

So if you cannot survive,  
let them shot you.

813

00:55:18,830 --> 00:55:19,620

No.

814

00:55:19,620 --> 00:55:22,535

So everybody was  
so afraid and was

815

00:55:22,535 --> 00:55:29,660

in a hurry whatever the German  
woman said, that it's pathetic.

816

00:55:29,660 --> 00:55:32,590

The will for surviving.

817

00:55:32,590 --> 00:55:33,380

Desperate.

818

00:55:33,380 --> 00:55:36,280

You see the danger.

819

00:55:36,280 --> 00:55:40,520

It's so strong that  
you don't even know,

820

00:55:40,520 --> 00:55:46,340

automatically your nature  
takes quick, go quick, take.

821

00:55:46,340 --> 00:55:51,950

But we couldn't  
resist this left,

822

00:55:51,950 --> 00:55:57,830

this feeling of seeing  
the people, how they look.

823

00:55:57,830 --> 00:56:01,880

It's just like, one falls  
down and it's hurting him,

824

00:56:01,880 --> 00:56:04,900  
but the other people  
see that so they left.

825  
00:56:04,900 --> 00:56:07,640  
We were spasmodic laughing.

826  
00:56:07,640 --> 00:56:12,000  
This was one thing in  
Auschwitz that I remember.

827  
00:56:12,000 --> 00:56:14,720  
And we went to a  
barrack, and then we

828  
00:56:14,720 --> 00:56:17,075  
had to go to make the numbers.

829  
00:56:17,075 --> 00:56:19,840

830  
00:56:19,840 --> 00:56:23,910  
So my sister-in-law said, no,  
when we will have the numbers,

831  
00:56:23,910 --> 00:56:27,030  
we are going to the ovens.

832  
00:56:27,030 --> 00:56:29,040  
So we hid in the latrine.

833  
00:56:29,040 --> 00:56:34,140  
We didn't want the numbers,  
and we hid in the latrine.

834  
00:56:34,140 --> 00:56:36,040  
So we didn't get the numbers.

835  
00:56:36,040 --> 00:56:42,100  
The next day all the  
numbers went to a camp.

836  
00:56:42,100 --> 00:56:43,020  
We didn't.

837

00:56:43,020 --> 00:56:49,110

We were running like  
mice afraid of the cats

838

00:56:49,110 --> 00:56:50,910

because we didn't  
have the numbers.

839

00:56:50,910 --> 00:56:55,190

We were not like one of them.

840

00:56:55,190 --> 00:56:58,535

So I was, in some  
way, blaming my sister

841

00:56:58,535 --> 00:57:01,190

where I said, if we would  
have the numbers, so we go now

842

00:57:01,190 --> 00:57:05,550

with the transport, because  
every day a transport went

843

00:57:05,550 --> 00:57:06,570

someplace else.

844

00:57:06,570 --> 00:57:09,350

845

00:57:09,350 --> 00:57:13,360

And so we survived nine  
days in that Auschwitz camp,

846

00:57:13,360 --> 00:57:16,810

running, and being,  
and not being.

847

00:57:16,810 --> 00:57:23,270

And I just can not remember  
day by day what we did,

848

00:57:23,270 --> 00:57:27,640

but I know that we  
were always running.

849

00:57:27,640 --> 00:57:36,450

And one day, they shipped  
300 women to Hamburg.

850

00:57:36,450 --> 00:57:39,220

851

00:57:39,220 --> 00:57:42,250

And this was this  
camp in Aschersleben.

852

00:57:42,250 --> 00:57:43,540

It's close to Hamburg.

853

00:57:43,540 --> 00:57:44,300

It's a suburb.

854

00:57:44,300 --> 00:57:44,800

OK.

855

00:57:44,800 --> 00:57:46,630

Before we continue,  
we're going to have

856

00:57:46,630 --> 00:57:49,800

to stop for a few minutes  
to change the tape.

857

00:57:49,800 --> 00:57:50,500

Uh-huh.

858

00:57:50,500 --> 00:57:52,660

So we will.

859

00:57:52,660 --> 00:57:56,000