

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:27,300

2  
00:00:27,300 --> 00:00:28,310  
Good morning.

3  
00:00:28,310 --> 00:00:32,369  
I am Joseph Preil, co-director  
of the Kean College Holocaust

4  
00:00:32,369 --> 00:00:36,510  
Resource Center, assisting--

5  
00:00:36,510 --> 00:00:39,210  
working with me this  
morning on today's interview

6  
00:00:39,210 --> 00:00:41,368  
will be Dr. Mark Lender.

7  
00:00:41,368 --> 00:00:41,910  
Good morning.

8  
00:00:41,910 --> 00:00:46,290  
Director of grants at the  
college, and a fine historian

9  
00:00:46,290 --> 00:00:48,960  
in his own right, who's  
been very helpful to us

10  
00:00:48,960 --> 00:00:52,710  
in the development of the oral  
history project here at Kean.

11  
00:00:52,710 --> 00:00:55,750  
Our special guest this  
morning is Mr. Alan Moskowitz,

12  
00:00:55,750 --> 00:00:58,800  
a leading member of the  
Elizabeth Jewish community.

13

00:00:58,800 --> 00:01:01,290  
Mr. Moskowitz, in order  
to get started, could you

14  
00:01:01,290 --> 00:01:04,910  
please identify the  
members of your family

15  
00:01:04,910 --> 00:01:07,740  
and where you lived at  
the outbreak of the war

16  
00:01:07,740 --> 00:01:10,890  
in September 1939?

17  
00:01:10,890 --> 00:01:13,440  
At the outbreak of  
the war in 1939,

18  
00:01:13,440 --> 00:01:19,050  
I was in a yeshiva in  
Czechoslovakia called Šurany.

19  
00:01:19,050 --> 00:01:23,350  
Later when the Germans  
marched in, we had to disband

20  
00:01:23,350 --> 00:01:28,800  
the yeshiva and I went back  
to the place where my parents

21  
00:01:28,800 --> 00:01:33,780  
lived, which was Svidník  
in Eastern Slovakia.

22  
00:01:33,780 --> 00:01:35,880  
How old were you at the time?

23  
00:01:35,880 --> 00:01:39,130  
At that time, I was--

24  
00:01:39,130 --> 00:01:42,180  
in 1930, I was 16-years-old.

25  
00:01:42,180 --> 00:01:44,160

Who were the other  
members of your family?

26  
00:01:44,160 --> 00:01:46,970  
Your siblings,  
brothers, sisters?

27  
00:01:46,970 --> 00:01:51,390  
I had one brother  
younger than me.

28  
00:01:51,390 --> 00:01:57,610  
His name was Hanschl, and had  
twins, a brother and a sister,

29  
00:01:57,610 --> 00:02:00,750  
who were about  
seven years younger.

30  
00:02:00,750 --> 00:02:01,890  
So you're the oldest.

31  
00:02:01,890 --> 00:02:03,180  
I'm the oldest.

32  
00:02:03,180 --> 00:02:09,041  
Can you tell us something  
about life in Brusnica?

33  
00:02:09,041 --> 00:02:11,340  
Well, Brusnica was the  
place where I was born.

34  
00:02:11,340 --> 00:02:14,530  
I only stayed there till I was  
about six years old, since it

35  
00:02:14,530 --> 00:02:16,870  
was a very small village.

36  
00:02:16,870 --> 00:02:19,230  
I was sent to a  
bigger town, where

37  
00:02:19,230 --> 00:02:21,120

I had an aunt and an uncle.

38

00:02:21,120 --> 00:02:24,360

And I stayed with them, and

I went to school over there.

39

00:02:24,360 --> 00:02:28,320

And later on, we

moved to Svidník.

40

00:02:28,320 --> 00:02:31,650

And this is the

place where I was

41

00:02:31,650 --> 00:02:35,580

when the outbreak

of anti-Semitism

42

00:02:35,580 --> 00:02:38,305

and harassment of Jews started.

43

00:02:38,305 --> 00:02:43,350

We moved there in 1937.

44

00:02:43,350 --> 00:02:46,830

And well, then I went

to different schools,

45

00:02:46,830 --> 00:02:50,880

to different yeshivas, but I

always came back to Svidník.

46

00:02:50,880 --> 00:02:53,490

In 1942, I found

myself in Svidník.

47

00:02:53,490 --> 00:03:00,090

That's when I was first arrested

and taken to labor kommandos.

48

00:03:00,090 --> 00:03:03,480

I just want to know a

little bit more about life

49

00:03:03,480 --> 00:03:06,780

when life was a  
bit normal, and you

50  
00:03:06,780 --> 00:03:09,680  
said you were staying  
in a yeshiva and so on.

51  
00:03:09,680 --> 00:03:14,795  
Well, when I was in the  
yeshiva, I was 16 years old.

52  
00:03:14,795 --> 00:03:20,820  
In Surany, we were not allowed  
to go past a certain area,

53  
00:03:20,820 --> 00:03:26,940  
which it was off  
limits, I would say.

54  
00:03:26,940 --> 00:03:31,470  
Because they didn't want the  
student to go to movies or to

55  
00:03:31,470 --> 00:03:33,750  
mingle with the rest  
of the population,

56  
00:03:33,750 --> 00:03:36,510  
to concentrate  
mostly on studies.

57  
00:03:36,510 --> 00:03:39,950  
So it was a real  
yeshiva life in Surany.

58  
00:03:39,950 --> 00:03:43,330  
And I only stayed there  
about a year and a half.

59  
00:03:43,330 --> 00:03:47,760  
And then I went back to  
Svidník and Bardejov,

60  
00:03:47,760 --> 00:03:51,510  
which was a larger town  
where I could study.

61  
00:03:51,510 --> 00:03:54,640  
Also, since the  
yeshiva was disbanded

62  
00:03:54,640 --> 00:03:59,490  
we had private groups  
where we studied.

63  
00:03:59,490 --> 00:04:01,590  
And--

64  
00:04:01,590 --> 00:04:03,920  
The yeshiva disbanded  
in what year?

65  
00:04:03,920 --> 00:04:08,950  
In 19-- the Surany yeshiva  
at the end of 1939.

66  
00:04:08,950 --> 00:04:11,010  
That's what, the  
outbreak of the war.

67  
00:04:11,010 --> 00:04:15,000  
Yeah, the Jews were  
still be able to have

68  
00:04:15,000 --> 00:04:18,329  
their businesses and their  
jobs, but it just started.

69  
00:04:18,329 --> 00:04:21,300  
Different laws were  
introduced, and we saw it,

70  
00:04:21,300 --> 00:04:22,440  
coming little by little.

71  
00:04:22,440 --> 00:04:25,560  
The real trouble  
started in 1942.

72  
00:04:25,560 --> 00:04:29,520  
That's when they first took

all the youth and sent them--

73

00:04:29,520 --> 00:04:31,500  
they told us they're  
going to Lublin,

74

00:04:31,500 --> 00:04:33,450  
but actually they went  
directly to Auschwitz.

75

00:04:33,450 --> 00:04:36,990  
Those are the famous letters  
that we used to receive,

76

00:04:36,990 --> 00:04:41,190  
how well they are off in Lublin,  
but they were actually already

77

00:04:41,190 --> 00:04:43,950  
in the concentration  
camps, in Auschwitz.

78

00:04:43,950 --> 00:04:45,480  
I did not go with  
that transport.

79

00:04:45,480 --> 00:04:46,650  
I was hiding out.

80

00:04:46,650 --> 00:04:48,780  
I didn't trust them.

81

00:04:48,780 --> 00:04:52,200  
Neither did my-- well, they  
did not take families yet,

82

00:04:52,200 --> 00:04:53,280  
just the youth.

83

00:04:53,280 --> 00:04:56,400  
My brother and I were in hiding.

84

00:04:56,400 --> 00:05:00,150  
And my parents later  
on went into hiding

85  
00:05:00,150 --> 00:05:01,450  
with the two young girls--

86  
00:05:01,450 --> 00:05:02,730  
with the twins.

87  
00:05:02,730 --> 00:05:06,600  
How many-- what was the  
Jewish population of Svidník?

88  
00:05:06,600 --> 00:05:10,870  
Jewish population of Svidník  
was about 25 families.

89  
00:05:10,870 --> 00:05:12,160  
So it was a very small town.

90  
00:05:12,160 --> 00:05:13,290  
Very small town.

91  
00:05:13,290 --> 00:05:19,500  
And some of you understood  
not to get involved with the

92  
00:05:19,500 --> 00:05:20,760  
being gathered together.

93  
00:05:20,760 --> 00:05:21,660  
Right.

94  
00:05:21,660 --> 00:05:23,850  
Most of them ran away.

95  
00:05:23,850 --> 00:05:31,390  
From my town, from the  
25, I was the only one

96  
00:05:31,390 --> 00:05:35,160  
that did not go directly to  
the concentration camps in '42.

97  
00:05:35,160 --> 00:05:37,360  
I went later in '44.



98

00:05:37,360 --> 00:05:40,710

But most of them, most  
of the youths went.

99

00:05:40,710 --> 00:05:44,440

In fact, all of them that  
I know of went in 1942.

100

00:05:44,440 --> 00:05:48,310

The families were taken  
later in 1943 and 1944.

101

00:05:48,310 --> 00:05:52,390

How was the decision made  
that you would not join them?

102

00:05:52,390 --> 00:05:54,670

Was that your  
parents or yourself?

103

00:05:54,670 --> 00:05:57,090

My parents didn't trust them,  
and I didn't trust them.

104

00:05:57,090 --> 00:06:06,610

I always liked freedom, and I  
felt like I can be on my own.

105

00:06:06,610 --> 00:06:10,720

And because you heard  
all kinds of stories

106

00:06:10,720 --> 00:06:12,460

about what was  
going on in Germany.

107

00:06:12,460 --> 00:06:16,820

Most people felt, well, the war  
is not going to last forever.

108

00:06:16,820 --> 00:06:17,820

We're going to go there.

109

00:06:17,820 --> 00:06:18,903

We're going to go to work.

110  
00:06:18,903 --> 00:06:22,330  
We'll work for a few months,  
and the war is going to be over,

111  
00:06:22,330 --> 00:06:23,890  
and that's it.

112  
00:06:23,890 --> 00:06:25,900  
But I felt differently.

113  
00:06:25,900 --> 00:06:27,430  
And I was not the only one.

114  
00:06:27,430 --> 00:06:30,490  
Quite a few of us did,  
that were hiding out.

115  
00:06:30,490 --> 00:06:32,980  
And later on, we got  
false papers and traveling

116  
00:06:32,980 --> 00:06:34,240  
as Gentiles.

117  
00:06:34,240 --> 00:06:36,310  
Did you have specific concerns?

118  
00:06:36,310 --> 00:06:38,505  
Had you heard specific  
stories about what

119  
00:06:38,505 --> 00:06:41,120  
was happening to individuals  
who were sent off?

120  
00:06:41,120 --> 00:06:45,700  
Well, I did not know what  
was going on in Auschwitz.

121  
00:06:45,700 --> 00:06:48,610  
I didn't even know  
that Auschwitz existed.

122

00:06:48,610 --> 00:06:53,990

I only heard about the letters  
that were coming from Lublin.

123

00:06:53,990 --> 00:06:59,680

But you heard Hitler talking  
on the radio all the time,

124

00:06:59,680 --> 00:07:01,780

to destroy all the Jews.

125

00:07:01,780 --> 00:07:07,560

And I felt, how can you  
trust a man like this?

126

00:07:07,560 --> 00:07:09,700

What about your gentile  
neighbors in Svidník?

127

00:07:09,700 --> 00:07:11,840

And since I know the  
language very well,

128

00:07:11,840 --> 00:07:14,380

and I know that I didn't  
look Jewish at the time,

129

00:07:14,380 --> 00:07:18,070

and I was able to  
acquire good papers

130

00:07:18,070 --> 00:07:21,550

and from one paper another  
paper and so forth,

131

00:07:21,550 --> 00:07:25,990

until I worked myself up  
that they were foolproof,

132

00:07:25,990 --> 00:07:29,710

because they were actually  
from a living person that

133

00:07:29,710 --> 00:07:32,290

joined the London--

134

00:07:32,290 --> 00:07:35,860

the English Legion, the  
Czech English Legion.

135

00:07:35,860 --> 00:07:38,230

And I took his papers.

136

00:07:38,230 --> 00:07:40,300

Cost me a few hundred dollars.

137

00:07:40,300 --> 00:07:46,030

And I got myself a yearly card  
to travel on any train I wanted

138

00:07:46,030 --> 00:07:49,030

as a salesman and other papers.

139

00:07:49,030 --> 00:07:51,430

And I was traveling freely.

140

00:07:51,430 --> 00:07:55,510

Actually, I was  
never stopped, but I

141

00:07:55,510 --> 00:07:58,960

was able to stay in hotels  
and support myself and support

142

00:07:58,960 --> 00:07:59,560

my family.

143

00:07:59,560 --> 00:08:02,288

Because my father and mother  
eventually went into hiding,

144

00:08:02,288 --> 00:08:03,580

too, and I had to support them.

145

00:08:03,580 --> 00:08:06,530

146

00:08:06,530 --> 00:08:10,330

But in the beginning,

before we were taken away,

147

00:08:10,330 --> 00:08:12,700

I saw what was coming,  
because they started--

148

00:08:12,700 --> 00:08:15,220

anti-Semitism in  
Slovakia started.

149

00:08:15,220 --> 00:08:17,370

You heard cases where  
they were cutting off

150

00:08:17,370 --> 00:08:20,890

beards, where they  
put the beard on Fire

151

00:08:20,890 --> 00:08:23,330

my father was afraid to travel.

152

00:08:23,330 --> 00:08:24,930

And this is how I  
became a salesman.

153

00:08:24,930 --> 00:08:27,860

So my father sent me to--  
we still had a business.

154

00:08:27,860 --> 00:08:31,360

the businesses were not  
taken away till 1942.

155

00:08:31,360 --> 00:08:35,020

So my father asked me to  
travel for him to Bratislava,

156

00:08:35,020 --> 00:08:36,635

to buy merchandise,  
to bring it back,

157

00:08:36,635 --> 00:08:37,885

so we could support ourselves.

158

00:08:37,885 --> 00:08:39,218

What kind of business was he in?

159

00:08:39,218 --> 00:08:39,840

Textile.

160

00:08:39,840 --> 00:08:40,929

Textile.

161

00:08:40,929 --> 00:08:44,049

So I was doing the traveling.

162

00:08:44,049 --> 00:08:46,120

And later on, when  
my father went

163

00:08:46,120 --> 00:08:50,110

into hiding and my  
mother and the twins,

164

00:08:50,110 --> 00:08:53,620

my brother and I were  
hiding in a different place.

165

00:08:53,620 --> 00:08:58,580

And there were periods  
where it was quiet,

166

00:08:58,580 --> 00:09:00,130

when no transports went.

167

00:09:00,130 --> 00:09:01,780

And that was the  
time that they were

168

00:09:01,780 --> 00:09:06,240

negotiating trucks for Jews.

169

00:09:06,240 --> 00:09:06,930

[INAUDIBLE]

170

00:09:06,930 --> 00:09:09,070

In 1942?

171

00:09:09,070 --> 00:09:12,250

That was in 1943, '44.

172

00:09:12,250 --> 00:09:14,710

Well, then I was  
traveling already.

173

00:09:14,710 --> 00:09:19,030

And during that  
period, my father

174

00:09:19,030 --> 00:09:22,450

was finally caught in a  
basement where he was hiding out

175

00:09:22,450 --> 00:09:23,220

with my mother.

176

00:09:23,220 --> 00:09:27,880

They were sent away to a camp  
in Slovakia called Novaky,

177

00:09:27,880 --> 00:09:30,280

and later on to Sered.

178

00:09:30,280 --> 00:09:33,490

My mother somehow slipped  
out and went to Bratislava.

179

00:09:33,490 --> 00:09:34,980

We were hiding her out.

180

00:09:34,980 --> 00:09:39,790

My father went away  
directly to Mauthausen,

181

00:09:39,790 --> 00:09:43,840

and then I found out that  
approximately the time--

182

00:09:43,840 --> 00:09:47,290

because I am keeping  
now the yahrzeit.

183

00:09:47,290 --> 00:09:49,760

So I found out

approximately the time

184

00:09:49,760 --> 00:09:55,150  
that he was taken from  
Mauthausen to the crematorium.

185

00:09:55,150 --> 00:09:58,760  
And my mother was hiding  
out in Bratislava.

186

00:09:58,760 --> 00:10:03,730  
So from 1939 to 1942, you're  
part of Czechoslovakia,

187

00:10:03,730 --> 00:10:06,220  
all of Czechoslovakia  
was under German rule.

188

00:10:06,220 --> 00:10:08,200  
No, they were under  
Slovak rule, but they were

189

00:10:08,200 --> 00:10:10,200  
collaborating with the Germans.

190

00:10:10,200 --> 00:10:10,900  
All right.

191

00:10:10,900 --> 00:10:13,120  
The Germans did not to come in.

192

00:10:13,120 --> 00:10:16,030

193

00:10:16,030 --> 00:10:18,070  
Well, actually I  
saw German soldiers,

194

00:10:18,070 --> 00:10:20,110  
because they were going  
to the Polish border.

195

00:10:20,110 --> 00:10:21,910  
They were traveling  
through Czechoslovakia



196  
00:10:21,910 --> 00:10:23,380  
to the Polish border.

197  
00:10:23,380 --> 00:10:25,690  
But the administration  
was all Slovak.

198  
00:10:25,690 --> 00:10:27,820  
There was no German  
administration.

199  
00:10:27,820 --> 00:10:30,100  
The Germans only  
came in when it was

200  
00:10:30,100 --> 00:10:32,680  
time to take all the Jews away.

201  
00:10:32,680 --> 00:10:34,970  
That was in '42.

202  
00:10:34,970 --> 00:10:35,630  
Well, no.

203  
00:10:35,630 --> 00:10:37,690  
In '42, still the  
Slovaks were doing it.

204  
00:10:37,690 --> 00:10:39,970  
Maybe there was a German  
supervisor telling them

205  
00:10:39,970 --> 00:10:44,565  
how to do it, but the  
Slovaks were doing it.

206  
00:10:44,565 --> 00:10:49,750  
When they came to take the  
families in 1943, then in 1944,

207  
00:10:49,750 --> 00:10:53,710  
then the first time that  
we saw SS men coming in.

208

00:10:53,710 --> 00:10:58,760

So the Slovaks were  
cooperating with the Germans.

209

00:10:58,760 --> 00:10:59,280

They were.

210

00:10:59,280 --> 00:11:02,750

In terms of getting  
the Jews to the camps.

211

00:11:02,750 --> 00:11:03,250

Right.

212

00:11:03,250 --> 00:11:05,800

And your family  
went into hiding.

213

00:11:05,800 --> 00:11:06,400

Right.

214

00:11:06,400 --> 00:11:10,577

And managed to hide until '42.

215

00:11:10,577 --> 00:11:11,785

No, they didn't have to hide.

216

00:11:11,785 --> 00:11:14,410

They didn't start taking  
families until '43.

217

00:11:14,410 --> 00:11:16,700

They took the youths in '42.

218

00:11:16,700 --> 00:11:17,200

Yeah.

219

00:11:17,200 --> 00:11:19,230

And the families they  
didn't take till '43.

220

00:11:19,230 --> 00:11:22,180

So they went into hiding in '43.

221

00:11:22,180 --> 00:11:24,120

And they were  
hiding in '43, '44.

222

00:11:24,120 --> 00:11:27,080

The middle of '43 somewhere.

223

00:11:27,080 --> 00:11:29,860

And so what happened  
to you in '42?

224

00:11:29,860 --> 00:11:33,120

In '42, in the beginning,  
I went into hiding,

225

00:11:33,120 --> 00:11:35,390

and I got my papers.

226

00:11:35,390 --> 00:11:37,990

I got my papers in Bratislava.

227

00:11:37,990 --> 00:11:40,710

And then I was traveling.

228

00:11:40,710 --> 00:11:44,478

And I took my mother  
to Bratislava,

229

00:11:44,478 --> 00:11:45,520

and I was hiding her out.

230

00:11:45,520 --> 00:11:48,220

A Gentile woman gave  
her a room over there.

231

00:11:48,220 --> 00:11:52,360

And I used to come every week  
over there and pay for it.

232

00:11:52,360 --> 00:11:54,730

In your hiding, in  
you're traveling,

233

00:11:54,730 --> 00:11:57,850

did you receive any  
assistance from Gentiles

234  
00:11:57,850 --> 00:12:01,450  
or get any reactions from your  
Gentile neighbors or business

235  
00:12:01,450 --> 00:12:03,400  
associates about the  
state of affairs?

236  
00:12:03,400 --> 00:12:06,290  
In Slovakia, very few of them.

237  
00:12:06,290 --> 00:12:09,220  
I don't know whether  
out of fear or they

238  
00:12:09,220 --> 00:12:11,110  
just didn't want to do it.

239  
00:12:11,110 --> 00:12:13,450  
There were some of them  
that were hiding out.

240  
00:12:13,450 --> 00:12:20,470  
And there was one area  
in Central Slovakia where

241  
00:12:20,470 --> 00:12:22,870  
there were high mountains,  
and Jews were hiding out

242  
00:12:22,870 --> 00:12:24,520  
in the mountains.

243  
00:12:24,520 --> 00:12:26,830  
And at night, they were  
coming down from the mountains

244  
00:12:26,830 --> 00:12:29,530  
to get their supplies, and  
they behaved very nicely,

245  
00:12:29,530 --> 00:12:32,230

some of them.

246

00:12:32,230 --> 00:12:35,400

A lot of them did it for money.

247

00:12:35,400 --> 00:12:40,480

Later on, when then

the Germans announced

248

00:12:40,480 --> 00:12:43,300

that if they catch

anybody hiding a Jew,

249

00:12:43,300 --> 00:12:46,900

that he's going to

be shot and so forth,

250

00:12:46,900 --> 00:12:47,950

the Jews had to leave.

251

00:12:47,950 --> 00:12:50,720

They wouldn't keep

them any longer.

252

00:12:50,720 --> 00:12:52,810

Which I cannot

blame them for it.

253

00:12:52,810 --> 00:12:57,250

But most of them

survived in Slovakia.

254

00:12:57,250 --> 00:13:00,490

Very few of them

survived in hiding.

255

00:13:00,490 --> 00:13:03,030

They only survived

in the mountains.

256

00:13:03,030 --> 00:13:04,210

Hiding out in the mountains.

257

00:13:04,210 --> 00:13:05,560

Your mother was--

258

00:13:05,560 --> 00:13:09,160

My mother was with a woman  
hiding in Bratislava, right.

259

00:13:09,160 --> 00:13:10,710

Now, why did that woman--

260

00:13:10,710 --> 00:13:11,750

For money.

261

00:13:11,750 --> 00:13:12,520

For money.

262

00:13:12,520 --> 00:13:17,428

Maybe she needed the money, and  
maybe she also wanted to help.

263

00:13:17,428 --> 00:13:17,970

I don't know.

264

00:13:17,970 --> 00:13:19,720

And how long was  
your mother there?

265

00:13:19,720 --> 00:13:21,550

My mother was there--

266

00:13:21,550 --> 00:13:23,880

let's see.

267

00:13:23,880 --> 00:13:25,990

I'd say about eight months.

268

00:13:25,990 --> 00:13:27,640

From when till when?

269

00:13:27,640 --> 00:13:31,290

From the beginning  
of '44 to about--

270

00:13:31,290 --> 00:13:32,280

and I was caught.

271

00:13:32,280 --> 00:13:34,660

I was caught the  
end of September.

272

00:13:34,660 --> 00:13:41,050

So let's say from about maybe  
February, March '44 till

273

00:13:41,050 --> 00:13:45,670

about the end of September  
or beginning of October '44.

274

00:13:45,670 --> 00:13:48,820

So what happened to you, and  
what happened to your mother

275

00:13:48,820 --> 00:13:49,490

at that time?

276

00:13:49,490 --> 00:13:53,500

Well, I used to go out  
every week to my mother,

277

00:13:53,500 --> 00:13:57,900

to visit her, and also  
to pay the Gentile woman.

278

00:13:57,900 --> 00:14:00,640

On the way back,  
it was a Sunday,

279

00:14:00,640 --> 00:14:03,610

going back from my mother.

280

00:14:03,610 --> 00:14:05,350

I was walking.

281

00:14:05,350 --> 00:14:12,430

And a car pulled over,  
and two Gestapo men

282

00:14:12,430 --> 00:14:16,930

jumped out of the car, and  
they took me into a hallway.

283

00:14:16,930 --> 00:14:20,450

And they told me to pull my  
pants, pull my pants down,

284

00:14:20,450 --> 00:14:22,570

and they examined me,  
saw I was circumcised.

285

00:14:22,570 --> 00:14:24,702

They slapped me, says "Jude."

286

00:14:24,702 --> 00:14:27,160

And I find out at the time,  
they were not looking for Jews.

287

00:14:27,160 --> 00:14:31,060

They were looking for  
underground, for partisans.

288

00:14:31,060 --> 00:14:33,970

But the first thing, whenever  
they caught somebody,

289

00:14:33,970 --> 00:14:36,970

because in Slovakia,  
to be circumcised it

290

00:14:36,970 --> 00:14:40,240

was a 100% sign that you're  
Jewish, because the Slovaks did

291

00:14:40,240 --> 00:14:43,580

not believe in circumcision.

292

00:14:43,580 --> 00:14:47,320

So they took me to  
the Gestapo, and they

293

00:14:47,320 --> 00:14:51,310

started to examine my papers.

294

00:14:51,310 --> 00:14:52,360

"Is this your real name?"

295



00:14:52,360 --> 00:14:54,040  
I said, "Yes, Andre Kolina."

296  
00:14:54,040 --> 00:14:56,033  
I was going under that name.

297  
00:14:56,033 --> 00:14:57,700  
They say, "how come  
you're circumcised?"

298  
00:14:57,700 --> 00:14:58,820  
I says, "I don't know."

299  
00:14:58,820 --> 00:15:01,420  
So I got a few more slaps.

300  
00:15:01,420 --> 00:15:06,040  
And then they asked me, "did  
your mother light the candles

301  
00:15:06,040 --> 00:15:08,530  
Friday night?"

302  
00:15:08,530 --> 00:15:12,100  
I say, "I don't remember my  
mother lighting candles."

303  
00:15:12,100 --> 00:15:13,990  
So they slapped me  
around a little more.

304  
00:15:13,990 --> 00:15:17,020  
So I figured it's not going  
to help me, because I realized

305  
00:15:17,020 --> 00:15:18,580  
they saw I was circumcised.

306  
00:15:18,580 --> 00:15:22,100  
The papers I knew that they  
couldn't prove anything.

307  
00:15:22,100 --> 00:15:26,860  
So I figured maybe if I  
admit something to give them

308

00:15:26,860 --> 00:15:31,190  
a little help, so I told them  
that I remembered, though,

309

00:15:31,190 --> 00:15:32,915  
that once you visited  
my grandmother,

310

00:15:32,915 --> 00:15:36,070  
and she used to light--  
she lit candles.

311

00:15:36,070 --> 00:15:38,580  
And they had a lot of  
them like me over there.

312

00:15:38,580 --> 00:15:41,225  
They didn't have time to  
do too much examination.

313

00:15:41,225 --> 00:15:42,850  
They were going to  
send me away anyway,

314

00:15:42,850 --> 00:15:45,040  
so they give me another  
slap and says "Mischling."

315

00:15:45,040 --> 00:15:48,070  
That means I come  
from a mixed marriage.

316

00:15:48,070 --> 00:15:49,810  
So they put me--

317

00:15:49,810 --> 00:15:52,130  
I stayed in the Gestapo  
there a day or two,

318

00:15:52,130 --> 00:15:54,580  
and then we went to Sered.

319

00:15:54,580 --> 00:15:58,230  
In Sered, they had a special

barrack for Mischling,

320  
00:15:58,230 --> 00:16:00,100  
for mixed marriages.

321  
00:16:00,100 --> 00:16:04,060  
And we were treated a little bit  
better than the rest of them,

322  
00:16:04,060 --> 00:16:06,670  
because we were not 100% Jews.

323  
00:16:06,670 --> 00:16:08,590  
In what respect was it better?

324  
00:16:08,590 --> 00:16:11,470  
Well, it was a little cleaner,  
because I saw the other one.

325  
00:16:11,470 --> 00:16:12,890  
There was lice over there, too.

326  
00:16:12,890 --> 00:16:15,490  
But this was just  
a gathering camp.

327  
00:16:15,490 --> 00:16:17,320  
This was not like a  
concentration camp.

328  
00:16:17,320 --> 00:16:19,700  
We still wore our  
civilian clothes.

329  
00:16:19,700 --> 00:16:22,000  
We didn't wear the striped  
clothing like later

330  
00:16:22,000 --> 00:16:24,820  
on in the concentration camp.

331  
00:16:24,820 --> 00:16:30,858  
And the other ones went  
out, the Kommandos to work.

332

00:16:30,858 --> 00:16:31,400

I don't know.

333

00:16:31,400 --> 00:16:34,000

They were shoveling  
snow, doing other work,

334

00:16:34,000 --> 00:16:35,910

just to keep them busy.

335

00:16:35,910 --> 00:16:41,100

And I got a job to  
clean, to shine the shoes

336

00:16:41,100 --> 00:16:46,320

of Hauptsturmführer Brunner.

337

00:16:46,320 --> 00:16:48,450

Matter of fact, I have  
an article over here.

338

00:16:48,450 --> 00:16:49,677

It was in The New York Times.

339

00:16:49,677 --> 00:16:50,260

He's in Syria.

340

00:16:50,260 --> 00:16:52,060

They want to bring him back now.

341

00:16:52,060 --> 00:16:54,970

So I went there every  
morning and shined his shoes.

342

00:16:54,970 --> 00:16:58,030

And it seems that he liked the  
way I was shining his shoes,

343

00:16:58,030 --> 00:16:59,380

so he kept me a little longer.

344

00:16:59,380 --> 00:17:01,570

Because there were a  
lot of transports going.

345

00:17:01,570 --> 00:17:05,440

And I did not  
leave for the camps

346

00:17:05,440 --> 00:17:09,690

till the end of December 1944.

347

00:17:09,690 --> 00:17:15,700

Auschwitz was already closed,  
and I was, as you can see,

348

00:17:15,700 --> 00:17:18,579

I wrote down over here my  
first concentration camp was

349

00:17:18,579 --> 00:17:20,190

Sachsenhausen Oranienburg.

350

00:17:20,190 --> 00:17:25,060

And that's the one you're  
discussing until now.

351

00:17:25,060 --> 00:17:26,619

Beg your pardon?

352

00:17:26,619 --> 00:17:28,149

Shining the shoes  
was in that camp.

353

00:17:28,149 --> 00:17:31,780

The shining shoes was in  
Sered, in Czechoslovakia.

354

00:17:31,780 --> 00:17:32,410

Aha.

355

00:17:32,410 --> 00:17:34,210

That's where Brunner  
was the commandant.

356

00:17:34,210 --> 00:17:34,710

Right.

357

00:17:34,710 --> 00:17:38,230

In fact, he was in charge  
of all the transports.

358

00:17:38,230 --> 00:17:40,580

What happened to your mother?

359

00:17:40,580 --> 00:17:45,160

Now, my mother, I found  
out that she left.

360

00:17:45,160 --> 00:17:46,660

I did not know what  
happened to her,

361

00:17:46,660 --> 00:17:49,610

but I found out that she's  
not in that place anymore.

362

00:17:49,610 --> 00:17:52,315

Somebody that came later  
on from Bratislava,

363

00:17:52,315 --> 00:17:54,730

he told me that she's  
not there anymore.

364

00:17:54,730 --> 00:17:56,605

How he found out, I don't know.

365

00:17:56,605 --> 00:17:59,830

But anyway, after  
the war, my mother

366

00:17:59,830 --> 00:18:02,730

told me the story  
what happened to her.

367

00:18:02,730 --> 00:18:05,470

The following week  
that I did not show up,

368

00:18:05,470 --> 00:18:07,810

she still had some money left.

369

00:18:07,810 --> 00:18:10,780  
But I did not show up, she  
knew that something went wrong,

370  
00:18:10,780 --> 00:18:13,030  
that I must have been caught.

371  
00:18:13,030 --> 00:18:15,140  
So she was afraid  
for two reasons.

372  
00:18:15,140 --> 00:18:17,215  
First of all, she was  
afraid that she's not

373  
00:18:17,215 --> 00:18:18,340  
going to have enough money.

374  
00:18:18,340 --> 00:18:20,370  
They're not going to keep  
her there long enough.

375  
00:18:20,370 --> 00:18:24,900  
And another thing, in case,  
I had the address with me,

376  
00:18:24,900 --> 00:18:26,650  
that they're going to  
find her and they're

377  
00:18:26,650 --> 00:18:28,360  
going to come after her.

378  
00:18:28,360 --> 00:18:30,220  
So she packed up,  
and she started

379  
00:18:30,220 --> 00:18:34,510  
to walk until she came  
to a small village,

380  
00:18:34,510 --> 00:18:36,550  
where there was an inn.

381  
00:18:36,550 --> 00:18:38,590

And she walked into  
that inn and told

382  
00:18:38,590 --> 00:18:41,380  
the woman that kept  
the inn that she's

383  
00:18:41,380 --> 00:18:44,320  
running away from the Russian  
front, which was very common.

384  
00:18:44,320 --> 00:18:47,020  
A lot of people were running  
away from the Russian front.

385  
00:18:47,020 --> 00:18:50,230  
She was dressed like  
a peasant woman.

386  
00:18:50,230 --> 00:18:52,210  
And she asked for a job.

387  
00:18:52,210 --> 00:18:58,238  
She said she's going to work  
just for board and food.

388  
00:18:58,238 --> 00:18:59,280  
So they gave her the job.

389  
00:18:59,280 --> 00:19:00,580  
They gave her a room.

390  
00:19:00,580 --> 00:19:03,790  
And she started to work there.

391  
00:19:03,790 --> 00:19:07,880  
And came mealtime, my  
mother was very religious.

392  
00:19:07,880 --> 00:19:09,460  
She wouldn't eat  
non-kosher food.

393  
00:19:09,460 --> 00:19:12,080  
So she told the woman



she's a vegetarian.

394

00:19:12,080 --> 00:19:14,790

She'll only eat vegetables.

395

00:19:14,790 --> 00:19:15,430

Says OK.

396

00:19:15,430 --> 00:19:16,460

You're the cook.

397

00:19:16,460 --> 00:19:18,490

You're going to cook,  
so you can cook yourself

398

00:19:18,490 --> 00:19:20,410

whatever you want.

399

00:19:20,410 --> 00:19:23,720

Then came Saturday my mother  
wouldn't work on Saturdays.

400

00:19:23,720 --> 00:19:27,760

So she told the woman she's  
a Seventh day Adventist.

401

00:19:27,760 --> 00:19:30,100

So the woman respected that.

402

00:19:30,100 --> 00:19:31,860

She says listen, you  
want to work Sunday,

403

00:19:31,860 --> 00:19:34,318

you can work on Sunday.

404

00:19:34,318 --> 00:19:35,360

And she worked every day.

405

00:19:35,360 --> 00:19:38,200

And then German soldiers  
started to come to the inn.

406

00:19:38,200 --> 00:19:40,180

My mother was very  
religious, and she

407

00:19:40,180 --> 00:19:41,350  
felt very uncomfortable.

408

00:19:41,350 --> 00:19:43,300  
She was a good-looking  
woman, too.

409

00:19:43,300 --> 00:19:46,920  
She was uncomfortable when  
the soldiers made remarks

410

00:19:46,920 --> 00:19:48,400  
or they looked at her.

411

00:19:48,400 --> 00:19:51,780  
So she turned away, and  
that woman, the innkeeper,

412

00:19:51,780 --> 00:19:55,800  
noticed how uncomfortable  
she is when soldiers come in.

413

00:19:55,800 --> 00:19:57,250  
What soldiers?

414

00:19:57,250 --> 00:19:58,470  
The Germans soldiers.

415

00:19:58,470 --> 00:19:59,680  
German soldiers.

416

00:19:59,680 --> 00:20:05,740  
So she told her, listen, if  
you don't feel comfortable,

417

00:20:05,740 --> 00:20:09,490  
I can see you are a very  
devout Seventh Day Adventist,

418

00:20:09,490 --> 00:20:11,610  
and you don't want to  
look at strange men.

419  
00:20:11,610 --> 00:20:15,580  
Because she told her she lost  
the husband on the front.

420  
00:20:15,580 --> 00:20:18,940  
So she says you can go.

421  
00:20:18,940 --> 00:20:23,170  
You can go upstairs and find  
yourself some work upstairs.

422  
00:20:23,170 --> 00:20:26,230  
And this is how she stayed  
there the whole war,

423  
00:20:26,230 --> 00:20:31,220  
till the end of March when  
Slovakia was liberated.

424  
00:20:31,220 --> 00:20:34,300  
And at this time,  
where were you?

425  
00:20:34,300 --> 00:20:35,100  
I was in Sered.

426  
00:20:35,100 --> 00:20:36,880  
At this time, I was in Sered.

427  
00:20:36,880 --> 00:20:38,320  
Yes.

428  
00:20:38,320 --> 00:20:43,810  
And in December, shining  
the shoes for Brunner.

429  
00:20:43,810 --> 00:20:49,390  
And at the end of December,  
the last transport--

430  
00:20:49,390 --> 00:20:52,090  
I thought it was the last  
transport from Sered,

431  
00:20:52,090 --> 00:20:56,800  
but when I was interviewed a  
few months ago by the Germans

432  
00:20:56,800 --> 00:20:58,720  
about Brunner,  
because they wanted

433  
00:20:58,720 --> 00:21:01,180  
me to testify against  
him, they told me

434  
00:21:01,180 --> 00:21:05,710  
that they were still  
catching Jews in basements,

435  
00:21:05,710 --> 00:21:07,330  
and they were bringing  
them to Sered.

436  
00:21:07,330 --> 00:21:11,950  
And the last transport went in  
the beginning of March in 1945.

437  
00:21:11,950 --> 00:21:13,600  
Just a few weeks  
before liberation,

438  
00:21:13,600 --> 00:21:15,670  
they were still  
sending away Jews.

439  
00:21:15,670 --> 00:21:18,430  
Aside from polishing  
shoes for Brunner,

440  
00:21:18,430 --> 00:21:20,860  
did you have any  
contact with the men?

441  
00:21:20,860 --> 00:21:21,610  
With Brunner?

442  
00:21:21,610 --> 00:21:22,540  
Yes.

443

00:21:22,540 --> 00:21:26,410

The only contact I had, when  
he walked in, in the morning

444

00:21:26,410 --> 00:21:28,320

I stood in attention.

445

00:21:28,320 --> 00:21:30,220

I was afraid to look  
him in the eyes,

446

00:21:30,220 --> 00:21:32,350

and I never said one word.

447

00:21:32,350 --> 00:21:33,970

The other soldiers  
sometimes threw

448

00:21:33,970 --> 00:21:38,050

me a piece of bread on  
the way out, the SS men.

449

00:21:38,050 --> 00:21:41,140

Because they were  
supervising the shoe shining.

450

00:21:41,140 --> 00:21:46,310

But the only other contact  
when he sent me away,

451

00:21:46,310 --> 00:21:49,540

when there was a roll call,  
they were going to leave.

452

00:21:49,540 --> 00:21:52,800

And he went with his  
stick, counting off.

453

00:21:52,800 --> 00:21:54,280

And I was right  
in the front row.

454

00:21:54,280 --> 00:21:57,140

He looked straight

at me and that's it.

455

00:21:57,140 --> 00:22:00,290

But he recognized me, because  
he saw me every morning there.

456

00:22:00,290 --> 00:22:03,770

457

00:22:03,770 --> 00:22:09,370

So that's about it for Slovakia,  
what happened in Slovakia.

458

00:22:09,370 --> 00:22:12,730

459

00:22:12,730 --> 00:22:15,220

Unless you want  
some other details.

460

00:22:15,220 --> 00:22:20,110

How long were you in Sered?

461

00:22:20,110 --> 00:22:23,327

In Sered I was only about Oct--

462

00:22:23,327 --> 00:22:25,660

let's see, October, November,  
December-- about 2 and 1/2

463

00:22:25,660 --> 00:22:26,540

months.

464

00:22:26,540 --> 00:22:28,600

And what happened then?

465

00:22:28,600 --> 00:22:34,270

Then I was sent away to Germany,  
Sachsenhausen Oranienburg.

466

00:22:34,270 --> 00:22:36,480

How many were sent at that time?

467

00:22:36,480 --> 00:22:39,330

There were about three carloads.

468

00:22:39,330 --> 00:22:41,100

I mean, what do you call it?

469

00:22:41,100 --> 00:22:41,890

The trains.

470

00:22:41,890 --> 00:22:42,398

Trains.

471

00:22:42,398 --> 00:22:42,940

Trains, yeah.

472

00:22:42,940 --> 00:22:46,720

So they could have what,  
about 100 in each car?

473

00:22:46,720 --> 00:22:47,710

Yeah, about 100.

474

00:22:47,710 --> 00:22:48,820

Maybe 80 to 100.

475

00:22:48,820 --> 00:22:50,380

Right.

476

00:22:50,380 --> 00:22:54,310

And what was your work?

477

00:22:54,310 --> 00:22:57,000

What was your program  
in Sachsenhausen?

478

00:22:57,000 --> 00:23:00,100

Well, this was the first  
real concentration camp.

479

00:23:00,100 --> 00:23:02,350

And we arrived to Sachsenhausen.

480

00:23:02,350 --> 00:23:08,670

First we were told in Berlin,  
when we came off the train,

481

00:23:08,670 --> 00:23:13,990  
they told us that if anybody's  
caught with gold or dollars

482

00:23:13,990 --> 00:23:19,090  
in Sachsenhausen that he's  
going to be killed immediately.

483

00:23:19,090 --> 00:23:20,860  
So right away,  
everybody took out

484

00:23:20,860 --> 00:23:23,770  
whatever money he had  
in gold, and we hid it

485

00:23:23,770 --> 00:23:27,040  
underneath the stones  
on the railroad.

486

00:23:27,040 --> 00:23:31,660  
And this was a ruse,  
because the guys

487

00:23:31,660 --> 00:23:35,830  
that were going around telling  
us these things, after we left,

488

00:23:35,830 --> 00:23:38,300  
they were going over there  
and picking up the gold

489

00:23:38,300 --> 00:23:41,380  
and whatever we were  
hiding over there.

490

00:23:41,380 --> 00:23:44,560  
The reason why we took some  
gold, because from the letters

491

00:23:44,560 --> 00:23:46,540  
that we got from  
Lublin, they told us

492



00:23:46,540 --> 00:23:50,530  
that the Polacks come in  
once a week to the camp,

493  
00:23:50,530 --> 00:23:53,260  
and you can buy things  
if you have money.

494  
00:23:53,260 --> 00:23:56,310  
So everybody took some money  
with them in order to buy.

495  
00:23:56,310 --> 00:23:59,735  
But when we got to  
Sachsenhausen, the first thing,

496  
00:23:59,735 --> 00:24:04,720  
well, "Arbeit macht  
frei" you see on his.

497  
00:24:04,720 --> 00:24:07,960  
And the beatings  
started right away.

498  
00:24:07,960 --> 00:24:10,250  
This is how we got initiated.

499  
00:24:10,250 --> 00:24:13,660  
You know, "schneller,  
schneller," and the Kapos,

500  
00:24:13,660 --> 00:24:16,230  
you know, rounding us up.

501  
00:24:16,230 --> 00:24:20,930  
The first thing you do, you go,  
you get undressed completely.

502  
00:24:20,930 --> 00:24:24,160  
You go to Entlausung,  
which means

503  
00:24:24,160 --> 00:24:26,170  
to see that you have no lice.

504

00:24:26,170 --> 00:24:29,820

And they cut all your hair  
from the head, from the body,

505

00:24:29,820 --> 00:24:31,930

all hair is cut off.

506

00:24:31,930 --> 00:24:37,880

And you get a striped uniform  
with a number on the uniform.

507

00:24:37,880 --> 00:24:40,700

We did not get tattoos  
anymore than Sachsenhausen.

508

00:24:40,700 --> 00:24:44,200

Only it was that in Auschwitz  
they used to get the tattoos.

509

00:24:44,200 --> 00:24:46,670

Maybe in Sachsenhausen they  
got it in the beginning,

510

00:24:46,670 --> 00:24:49,750

but when we got there, we  
didn't get tattoos anymore.

511

00:24:49,750 --> 00:24:52,330

And then they take  
us to the bunks,

512

00:24:52,330 --> 00:24:54,670

and every day you  
go out to work.

513

00:24:54,670 --> 00:24:59,760

But Sachsenhausen was also only  
a transitional camp for us.

514

00:24:59,760 --> 00:25:02,980

We knew we're not going  
to stay over there.

515

00:25:02,980 --> 00:25:05,062

Then they just divided  
us to different places

516

00:25:05,062 --> 00:25:06,520

where we're going  
to go from there.

517

00:25:06,520 --> 00:25:08,520

Did they send you to work?

518

00:25:08,520 --> 00:25:11,260

Work, whether there  
was work or no work,

519

00:25:11,260 --> 00:25:13,547

they always kept  
you busy over there.

520

00:25:13,547 --> 00:25:14,380

There was shoveling.

521

00:25:14,380 --> 00:25:15,640

What did they keep  
you busy with.

522

00:25:15,640 --> 00:25:17,620

Over there I think we  
were shoveling something.

523

00:25:17,620 --> 00:25:19,550

I don't remember  
exactly what it was.

524

00:25:19,550 --> 00:25:21,880

But you had to go to work.

525

00:25:21,880 --> 00:25:26,050

But in Sachsenhausen Oranienburg  
we only stayed a few weeks.

526

00:25:26,050 --> 00:25:30,788

From there we walked to  
Berlin, part of Berlin.

527

00:25:30,788 --> 00:25:31,330

I don't know.

528

00:25:31,330 --> 00:25:32,205

I'm not too familiar.

529

00:25:32,205 --> 00:25:33,520

This was 1944?

530

00:25:33,520 --> 00:25:34,710

This is--

531

00:25:34,710 --> 00:25:36,100

Spring and then through summer?

532

00:25:36,100 --> 00:25:36,610

No, no.

533

00:25:36,610 --> 00:25:39,280

This was the end  
of December 1944.

534

00:25:39,280 --> 00:25:39,830

I remember--

535

00:25:39,830 --> 00:25:40,330

Really?

536

00:25:40,330 --> 00:25:42,950

The war was almost over already.

537

00:25:42,950 --> 00:25:44,870

Well, over there it  
wasn't over yet in '44.

538

00:25:44,870 --> 00:25:46,150

The war was over in '45.

539

00:25:46,150 --> 00:25:47,260

In May.

540

00:25:47,260 --> 00:25:48,070

Right.

541

00:25:48,070 --> 00:25:52,210

So the end of December or

the beginning of January,

542

00:25:52,210 --> 00:25:55,630

we were walking to  
Heinkel Flugzeugwerke.

543

00:25:55,630 --> 00:25:59,490

Because I remember we still  
saw some of the decorations

544

00:25:59,490 --> 00:26:02,170

from the holidays  
in the windows.

545

00:26:02,170 --> 00:26:04,840

How far a walk was that?

546

00:26:04,840 --> 00:26:07,670

That was a few hours.

547

00:26:07,670 --> 00:26:10,332

I can't remember exactly, but  
I know we made it the same day.

548

00:26:10,332 --> 00:26:11,290

We left in the morning.

549

00:26:11,290 --> 00:26:14,110

We were there sometime  
in the afternoon.

550

00:26:14,110 --> 00:26:19,390

By late 1944, can you describe  
the conditions, health, morale,

551

00:26:19,390 --> 00:26:22,600

outlook, otherwise of  
the other prisoners?

552

00:26:22,600 --> 00:26:25,330

When you arrived in  
the camp, how did you

553

00:26:25,330 --> 00:26:27,130

find the other prisoners?

554

00:26:27,130 --> 00:26:30,190

Well, in Sachsenhausen  
at that time,

555

00:26:30,190 --> 00:26:33,460

I was in contact  
mostly with newcomers.

556

00:26:33,460 --> 00:26:37,990

So we still looked  
like human beings.

557

00:26:37,990 --> 00:26:42,040

But the Kapos, the  
ones that were over us,

558

00:26:42,040 --> 00:26:44,530

they had enough  
food all the time.

559

00:26:44,530 --> 00:26:47,320

But we noticed already  
in the other camps

560

00:26:47,320 --> 00:26:51,790

that were looking at us,  
they looked like zombies.

561

00:26:51,790 --> 00:26:54,940

First we did not know  
who these people are,

562

00:26:54,940 --> 00:26:56,260

because they didn't look human.

563

00:26:56,260 --> 00:26:59,090

They looked like zombies to us.

564

00:26:59,090 --> 00:27:00,610

We used to call  
them a Musselman,

565

00:27:00,610 --> 00:27:04,030

which means he's on

the way out already.

566

00:27:04,030 --> 00:27:06,850

It's his last few weeks.

567

00:27:06,850 --> 00:27:11,570

Most of these people weighed  
between 70 and 90 pounds.

568

00:27:11,570 --> 00:27:13,360

Later on, we all  
looked the same.

569

00:27:13,360 --> 00:27:16,320

570

00:27:16,320 --> 00:27:19,080

At this stage with the  
guards, in comparison

571

00:27:19,080 --> 00:27:21,750

to later treatment, did  
the guards act perceptively

572

00:27:21,750 --> 00:27:23,220

differently at this point?

573

00:27:23,220 --> 00:27:25,890

In Sachsenhausen,  
there were beating

574

00:27:25,890 --> 00:27:32,570

because they wanted to train  
us, to keep the bunk in order.

575

00:27:32,570 --> 00:27:34,830

And when the Kapo  
called somebody,

576

00:27:34,830 --> 00:27:36,670

you had to jump right away.

577

00:27:36,670 --> 00:27:38,580

But I did not see--

578

00:27:38,580 --> 00:27:42,960

at that time, I didn't see any  
killing yet in Sachsenhausen.

579

00:27:42,960 --> 00:27:44,700

In the few weeks I  
was in Sachsenhausen,

580

00:27:44,700 --> 00:27:47,790

I did not see any killings.

581

00:27:47,790 --> 00:27:51,940

The people-- I don't like the  
use of the word "prisoners."

582

00:27:51,940 --> 00:27:55,850

I don't know what else  
to use at this point.

583

00:27:55,850 --> 00:28:00,330

What was the proportion  
that were Jewish with you?

584

00:28:00,330 --> 00:28:03,340

With me, 100%.

585

00:28:03,340 --> 00:28:05,740

The ones that came from  
Sered were 100% Jewish.

586

00:28:05,740 --> 00:28:09,430

And how did they  
live with each other?

587

00:28:09,430 --> 00:28:11,250

The Jews amongst themselves?

588

00:28:11,250 --> 00:28:12,536

Yeah, the prisoners.

589

00:28:12,536 --> 00:28:15,450

The prisoners, in the beginning,  
as I said, a few weeks

590



00:28:15,450 --> 00:28:16,970  
we still behaved  
like human beings.

591  
00:28:16,970 --> 00:28:18,060  
We shared.

592  
00:28:18,060 --> 00:28:20,710  
We shared bread with each  
other, with somebody.

593  
00:28:20,710 --> 00:28:23,390  
Because we didn't know  
what was going to happen.

594  
00:28:23,390 --> 00:28:26,710  
The rations were very small.

595  
00:28:26,710 --> 00:28:30,430  
But who was thinking  
about food at the time?

596  
00:28:30,430 --> 00:28:34,130  
Since we were still in  
Sered, when we left Sered

597  
00:28:34,130 --> 00:28:35,590  
we still had enough food.

598  
00:28:35,590 --> 00:28:36,830  
There was no prison food.

599  
00:28:36,830 --> 00:28:40,850  
In fact, in Sered you  
could even get private food

600  
00:28:40,850 --> 00:28:44,710  
that the community  
used to send into us.

601  
00:28:44,710 --> 00:28:47,410  
So we used to share.

602  
00:28:47,410 --> 00:28:48,730  
Or we used to exchange.

603  
00:28:48,730 --> 00:28:50,860  
Somebody wanted to  
get a piece of bread

604  
00:28:50,860 --> 00:28:52,540  
and a piece of  
margarine, and somebody

605  
00:28:52,540 --> 00:28:54,160  
would give a half  
a slice of bread

606  
00:28:54,160 --> 00:28:59,425  
for the little  
piece of margarine.

607  
00:28:59,425 --> 00:29:05,440  
And for lunch was  
watered down soup with

608  
00:29:05,440 --> 00:29:09,160  
sometimes you find a little  
turnip in it, or maybe--

609  
00:29:09,160 --> 00:29:13,050  
some said it was dog meat  
or whatever floating on top.

610  
00:29:13,050 --> 00:29:14,440  
That was the lunch.

611  
00:29:14,440 --> 00:29:16,450  
And at night, you  
also got a slice

612  
00:29:16,450 --> 00:29:18,310  
of bread and black coffee.

613  
00:29:18,310 --> 00:29:21,070  
That was the diet over there.

614  
00:29:21,070 --> 00:29:28,720  
The diet was about 350 to  
400 calories, I would say.

615

00:29:28,720 --> 00:29:31,040

At this point, was there any  
medical attention at all?

616

00:29:31,040 --> 00:29:32,665

No medical attention  
over there at all.

617

00:29:32,665 --> 00:29:34,820

618

00:29:34,820 --> 00:29:38,550

And you were there for  
would you say how long?

619

00:29:38,550 --> 00:29:39,360

Just a few weeks.

620

00:29:39,360 --> 00:29:39,630

I don't know.

621

00:29:39,630 --> 00:29:41,047

A few weeks, and  
then you went to?

622

00:29:41,047 --> 00:29:44,150

Then we walked to  
Heinkel Flugzeugwerke.

623

00:29:44,150 --> 00:29:45,620

And how long were you there?

624

00:29:45,620 --> 00:29:47,670

Heinkel Flugzeug  
just a few days.

625

00:29:47,670 --> 00:29:49,310

So it was again a transition.

626

00:29:49,310 --> 00:29:50,360

Just a transition.

627

00:29:50,360 --> 00:29:54,080

And then we walked  
to Siemensstadt.

628  
00:29:54,080 --> 00:29:56,220  
How long did that take?

629  
00:29:56,220 --> 00:30:00,950  
The walk, I think we  
walked some in part.

630  
00:30:00,950 --> 00:30:04,220  
In part we went by  
truck if I remember.

631  
00:30:04,220 --> 00:30:05,540  
Some of us went by truck.

632  
00:30:05,540 --> 00:30:07,010  
I don't remember.

633  
00:30:07,010 --> 00:30:10,430  
I part of it from Heinkel  
Flugzeug to Siemensstadt,

634  
00:30:10,430 --> 00:30:13,630  
I remember getting  
off a truck slightly.

635  
00:30:13,630 --> 00:30:16,890  
Siemensstadt was  
a starvation camp.

636  
00:30:16,890 --> 00:30:18,660  
It was also transitional.

637  
00:30:18,660 --> 00:30:20,570  
We were not supposed  
to stay there.

638  
00:30:20,570 --> 00:30:23,360  
But practically no food.

639  
00:30:23,360 --> 00:30:25,400  
We were there a few  
weeks, and a few of us

640  
00:30:25,400 --> 00:30:27,680  
died from starvation over there.

641  
00:30:27,680 --> 00:30:30,960  
That's when we started  
to lose all our weight.

642  
00:30:30,960 --> 00:30:34,790  
I don't know the reason  
why, whether they were not

643  
00:30:34,790 --> 00:30:36,710  
able to bring in food.

644  
00:30:36,710 --> 00:30:37,850  
Because there were raids.

645  
00:30:37,850 --> 00:30:43,820  
Every night we heard the  
American planes bombing Berlin.

646  
00:30:43,820 --> 00:30:49,040  
And quite a few of us  
died in Siemensstadt.

647  
00:30:49,040 --> 00:30:52,780  
From Siemensstadt, we went on--

648  
00:30:52,780 --> 00:30:56,645  
they put us on a train,  
and we went to Ohrdruf.

649  
00:30:56,645 --> 00:30:58,880  
That took a few days.

650  
00:30:58,880 --> 00:30:59,760  
And it was very cold.

651  
00:30:59,760 --> 00:31:01,322  
Still Germany?

652  
00:31:01,322 --> 00:31:02,280  
This is all in Germany.

653

00:31:02,280 --> 00:31:04,700

This was all in Germany.

654

00:31:04,700 --> 00:31:08,960

I remember on one  
stop, that we stopped

655

00:31:08,960 --> 00:31:13,290

there was another train  
going with Russian prisoners.

656

00:31:13,290 --> 00:31:20,410

And the International Red  
Cross was handing out some food

657

00:31:20,410 --> 00:31:23,410

to French prisoners,  
Russian prisoners.

658

00:31:23,410 --> 00:31:25,660

On the other side  
were watching, and we

659

00:31:25,660 --> 00:31:28,390

hoped when they get through  
with them, they'll come to us.

660

00:31:28,390 --> 00:31:29,440

We never made it.

661

00:31:29,440 --> 00:31:30,950

They never came  
over to our side.

662

00:31:30,950 --> 00:31:34,007

They probably had orders they  
cannot bring any packages

663

00:31:34,007 --> 00:31:34,840

to Jewish prisoners.

664

00:31:34,840 --> 00:31:36,910

Were they aware  
of your presence?

665

00:31:36,910 --> 00:31:39,280

Yes, they saw us.

666

00:31:39,280 --> 00:31:40,970

I don't know whether  
they insisted,

667

00:31:40,970 --> 00:31:43,050

but they did their job.

668

00:31:43,050 --> 00:31:45,230

They unloaded the food  
that they brought in,

669

00:31:45,230 --> 00:31:50,830

but Jewish prisoners  
didn't get one meal.

670

00:31:50,830 --> 00:31:55,180

And then I don't know how  
many days it took to get to--

671

00:31:55,180 --> 00:31:57,430

because a lot of times  
they had to take detours,

672

00:31:57,430 --> 00:32:00,950

because a lot of the  
railroads were bombed out.

673

00:32:00,950 --> 00:32:04,270

So it took a long time  
to get to Ohrdruf.

674

00:32:04,270 --> 00:32:05,510

That was my next.

675

00:32:05,510 --> 00:32:07,960

Now, Ohrdruf was a  
real working camp.

676

00:32:07,960 --> 00:32:11,560

And this was, according to  
some of the prisoners that I

677

00:32:11,560 --> 00:32:14,650  
met there from Auschwitz, they  
said that this is the worst

678

00:32:14,650 --> 00:32:16,780  
camp that they've ever been to.

679

00:32:16,780 --> 00:32:17,590  
Really?

680

00:32:17,590 --> 00:32:20,710  
And I can see why.

681

00:32:20,710 --> 00:32:22,180  
Why?

682

00:32:22,180 --> 00:32:26,440  
Because the work was so heavy,  
so little food, and so much

683

00:32:26,440 --> 00:32:27,265  
work.

684

00:32:27,265 --> 00:32:29,860  
And we wore wooden shoes.

685

00:32:29,860 --> 00:32:33,070  
If somebody lost a  
shoe, he was finished.

686

00:32:33,070 --> 00:32:40,210  
Because he couldn't walk on  
the ice or on the Snow and we

687

00:32:40,210 --> 00:32:49,240  
had to carry heavy railroad  
ties, and clean the racks.

688

00:32:49,240 --> 00:32:52,160  
They were building a railroad in  
the mountains for some reason.

689

00:32:52,160 --> 00:32:53,130  
I don't know why.



690  
00:32:53,130 --> 00:32:57,370  
And we had to clean up  
the area where they want

691  
00:32:57,370 --> 00:33:00,430  
to lay the railroad tracks.

692  
00:33:00,430 --> 00:33:03,820  
And there were heavy,  
heavy boulders.

693  
00:33:03,820 --> 00:33:05,980  
And we had to pick  
them up and carry them

694  
00:33:05,980 --> 00:33:08,560  
from one place to another.

695  
00:33:08,560 --> 00:33:11,880  
And most of the time, the  
ones that were hit the worst

696  
00:33:11,880 --> 00:33:13,150  
are the tall people.

697  
00:33:13,150 --> 00:33:16,890  
Because the short ones--

698  
00:33:16,890 --> 00:33:19,670  
if the tall ones  
were up in the front,

699  
00:33:19,670 --> 00:33:21,440  
they carried the whole load.

700  
00:33:21,440 --> 00:33:23,780  
And the Kapos and the  
SS men were watching

701  
00:33:23,780 --> 00:33:25,790  
that nobody bends the knees.

702  
00:33:25,790 --> 00:33:28,220

So the guys that  
were in the middle,

703  
00:33:28,220 --> 00:33:30,260  
if they were a little  
shorter, they were lucky.

704  
00:33:30,260 --> 00:33:31,780  
They survived a little longer.

705  
00:33:31,780 --> 00:33:34,138  
The tall ones went first.

706  
00:33:34,138 --> 00:33:35,930  
And over there, there  
was a lot of beating,

707  
00:33:35,930 --> 00:33:41,570  
because if you didn't go  
fast enough up the hill.

708  
00:33:41,570 --> 00:33:44,750  
And this is the place where  
I got my first beating.

709  
00:33:44,750 --> 00:33:48,560  
And I got my first  
beating during lunch.

710  
00:33:48,560 --> 00:33:54,090  
They brought out  
some soup to feed us.

711  
00:33:54,090 --> 00:33:57,350  
And while I was  
eating my portion,

712  
00:33:57,350 --> 00:34:03,290  
a black uniformed Ukrainian--  
that was an SS but they had

713  
00:34:03,290 --> 00:34:05,210  
special uniforms--

714  
00:34:05,210 --> 00:34:08,210

started a conversation with me.

715

00:34:08,210 --> 00:34:13,010

He noticed that my hands  
were not a worker's hands.

716

00:34:13,010 --> 00:34:17,920

So he asked me what  
my occupation is.

717

00:34:17,920 --> 00:34:20,896

So I told him a student, which  
was the truth at the time.

718

00:34:20,896 --> 00:34:22,354

I didn't have any  
other occupation.

719

00:34:22,354 --> 00:34:24,050

It seems he didn't  
like students,

720

00:34:24,050 --> 00:34:27,469

and he hit me so hard  
on the side over here,

721

00:34:27,469 --> 00:34:29,780

that to this day,  
I still feel it.

722

00:34:29,780 --> 00:34:33,010

The sciatic-a--  
the sciatica nerve.

723

00:34:33,010 --> 00:34:38,090

And over there most  
of us died in Ohrdruf.

724

00:34:38,090 --> 00:34:40,520

Very few of us survived.

725

00:34:40,520 --> 00:34:43,400

I met-- the only  
reason why I survived

726

00:34:43,400 --> 00:34:46,489  
is I met a cousin that came  
there from Auschwitz, that

727  
00:34:46,489 --> 00:34:49,350  
left in 1942 Czechoslovakia.

728  
00:34:49,350 --> 00:34:50,870  
He was one of the first ones.

729  
00:34:50,870 --> 00:34:54,630  
He had one of the lowest  
numbers in Auschwitz.

730  
00:34:54,630 --> 00:34:56,780  
And when he came  
to Auschwitz, he

731  
00:34:56,780 --> 00:35:01,942  
claimed that he  
was a electrician.

732  
00:35:01,942 --> 00:35:03,400  
They were looking  
for electricians.

733  
00:35:03,400 --> 00:35:04,910  
A friend of his  
told him, if they

734  
00:35:04,910 --> 00:35:07,360  
ask for electricians,  
whatever profession,

735  
00:35:07,360 --> 00:35:09,010  
just tell them that you know it.

736  
00:35:09,010 --> 00:35:10,430  
So he says electrician.

737  
00:35:10,430 --> 00:35:13,160  
And once he got in there,  
he didn't know anything

738  
00:35:13,160 --> 00:35:15,650

about negative or positive.

739

00:35:15,650 --> 00:35:19,752  
But the friends helped him out.

740

00:35:19,752 --> 00:35:20,710  
They showed him around.

741

00:35:20,710 --> 00:35:22,810  
And this is how he  
became an electrician.

742

00:35:22,810 --> 00:35:26,460  
And he was in charge of  
the electrified fence

743

00:35:26,460 --> 00:35:27,510  
around the camp.

744

00:35:27,510 --> 00:35:29,720  
They had to check it and  
see if it's all right.

745

00:35:29,720 --> 00:35:32,550  
And this is how he  
survived Auschwitz.

746

00:35:32,550 --> 00:35:34,190  
He got a little better food.

747

00:35:34,190 --> 00:35:36,350  
And then he was sent to Ohrdruf.

748

00:35:36,350 --> 00:35:38,300  
When he came to  
Ohrdruf, he already

749

00:35:38,300 --> 00:35:43,460  
had all his connections with  
the other officials over there

750

00:35:43,460 --> 00:35:44,660  
in the camp.

751

00:35:44,660 --> 00:35:47,450  
And he found out that I was  
there, and he brought me.

752  
00:35:47,450 --> 00:35:49,610  
Every night he brought  
me some extra food,

753  
00:35:49,610 --> 00:35:51,950  
and this is how I was able  
to survive over there.

754  
00:35:51,950 --> 00:35:53,600  
You said Ohrdruf  
was the worst camp.

755  
00:35:53,600 --> 00:35:54,380  
The worst.

756  
00:35:54,380 --> 00:35:54,880  
In fact--

757  
00:35:54,880 --> 00:35:55,640  
You were there.

758  
00:35:55,640 --> 00:35:56,390  
Yes.

759  
00:35:56,390 --> 00:35:58,580  
And you were the only  
member of your family there.

760  
00:35:58,580 --> 00:35:59,080  
Only member.

761  
00:35:59,080 --> 00:36:00,430  
You were a young boy.

762  
00:36:00,430 --> 00:36:01,130  
Yeah.

763  
00:36:01,130 --> 00:36:04,430  
What kept you going?

764

00:36:04,430 --> 00:36:07,730

What kept me going  
is, I tell you,

765

00:36:07,730 --> 00:36:11,780

if I did not believe in  
God, I would commit suicide.

766

00:36:11,780 --> 00:36:13,340

Suicide was very easy to commit.

767

00:36:13,340 --> 00:36:14,990

A lot of them committed suicide.

768

00:36:14,990 --> 00:36:17,510

In fact, a lot of them  
gave away a piece of bread,

769

00:36:17,510 --> 00:36:19,760

and asked the fella, I'll  
you my bread if you kill me,

770

00:36:19,760 --> 00:36:21,710

if you choke me.

771

00:36:21,710 --> 00:36:23,960

And the only reason I  
didn't commit suicide,

772

00:36:23,960 --> 00:36:27,050

because I knew it was  
against my religion.

773

00:36:27,050 --> 00:36:30,300

If it wasn't for that,  
I would have probably--

774

00:36:30,300 --> 00:36:32,810

especially before  
my cousin came.

775

00:36:32,810 --> 00:36:36,440

Because the work  
was so heavy, and it

776

00:36:36,440 --> 00:36:38,450  
was so discouraging  
in the morning

777  
00:36:38,450 --> 00:36:42,420  
to see when they lined  
us up for the count,

778  
00:36:42,420 --> 00:36:44,510  
and you saw all  
the dead lined up.

779  
00:36:44,510 --> 00:36:49,100  
Because they used to line  
up when they counted.

780  
00:36:49,100 --> 00:36:50,780  
The system was like  
this over there.

781  
00:36:50,780 --> 00:36:51,972  
There used to be--

782  
00:36:51,972 --> 00:36:53,930  
they used to call them  
in German a "Schreiber,"

783  
00:36:53,930 --> 00:36:56,120  
which means the one  
that used to write down.

784  
00:36:56,120 --> 00:36:58,070  
And a "Laufer"  
means a runner that

785  
00:36:58,070 --> 00:37:02,810  
ran between the  
prisoners and the office

786  
00:37:02,810 --> 00:37:05,360  
with messages,  
whatever he had to tell

787  
00:37:05,360 --> 00:37:09,235  
the leader of that  
particular barrack.



788

00:37:09,235 --> 00:37:14,870

Now the Laufer and the  
Schreiber and the one

789

00:37:14,870 --> 00:37:19,820

that was in charge, the Jew that  
was in charge of the camp, not

790

00:37:19,820 --> 00:37:23,690

the German, they were  
standing in attention

791

00:37:23,690 --> 00:37:25,970

before the SS men  
with all the papers.

792

00:37:25,970 --> 00:37:28,010

And they were  
presenting the count,

793

00:37:28,010 --> 00:37:30,860

how many prisoners are  
presenting themselves

794

00:37:30,860 --> 00:37:32,270

this morning.

795

00:37:32,270 --> 00:37:36,720

And the SS man was counting  
to see if they were correct.

796

00:37:36,720 --> 00:37:40,310

So they had to--

797

00:37:40,310 --> 00:37:44,870

in the morning, the dead  
were counted in the barracks.

798

00:37:44,870 --> 00:37:46,492

And the sick were counted.

799

00:37:46,492 --> 00:37:48,950

Once they were recorded, they  
were counted in the barracks.

800

00:37:48,950 --> 00:37:50,850

And the living were  
counted outside.

801

00:37:50,850 --> 00:37:52,850

It could be  
freezing, below zero,

802

00:37:52,850 --> 00:37:55,880

you had to stand there  
for hours for the count.

803

00:37:55,880 --> 00:38:03,390

If the current was not correct,  
the Schreiber the one that

804

00:38:03,390 --> 00:38:06,140

was supposed to write and  
count, he was responsible.

805

00:38:06,140 --> 00:38:07,160

He could lose his job.

806

00:38:07,160 --> 00:38:08,618

He could become a  
prisoner like us.

807

00:38:08,618 --> 00:38:11,210

Or he could be killed.

808

00:38:11,210 --> 00:38:14,660

It happened one day,  
which I witnessed myself,

809

00:38:14,660 --> 00:38:18,920

where all of a sudden everybody  
is in line before the SS

810

00:38:18,920 --> 00:38:20,070

men got there yet.

811

00:38:20,070 --> 00:38:22,730

They wanted to make  
sure the count is right.

812  
00:38:22,730 --> 00:38:27,410  
Everything was  
standing five in a row.

813  
00:38:27,410 --> 00:38:28,640  
And he had the count right.

814  
00:38:28,640 --> 00:38:30,700  
And all of a sudden,  
somebody comes running.

815  
00:38:30,700 --> 00:38:31,770  
He probably had diarrhea.

816  
00:38:31,770 --> 00:38:34,610  
He was in the latrine,  
and he was late.

817  
00:38:34,610 --> 00:38:38,450  
And he came running, and  
he stands over there.

818  
00:38:38,450 --> 00:38:39,450  
And he takes one look.

819  
00:38:39,450 --> 00:38:42,200  
He says, I got one more.

820  
00:38:42,200 --> 00:38:43,610  
He took him back  
to the barracks.

821  
00:38:43,610 --> 00:38:46,470  
And I found later he was  
killed in the barracks,

822  
00:38:46,470 --> 00:38:50,670  
and he was with the dead people.

823  
00:38:50,670 --> 00:38:55,550  
So the count of the dead  
people he could fix somehow.

824

00:38:55,550 --> 00:38:58,400  
But the main thing is, because  
the SS men a lot of times

825  
00:38:58,400 --> 00:39:00,600  
did not go to count  
the death and the sick,

826  
00:39:00,600 --> 00:39:02,130  
but they counted the living.

827  
00:39:02,130 --> 00:39:04,760  
As long as the count was  
right, SS man was happy,

828  
00:39:04,760 --> 00:39:05,860  
and he was happy.

829  
00:39:05,860 --> 00:39:07,730  
So the Kapo killed.

830  
00:39:07,730 --> 00:39:11,220  
The Kapo killed,  
killed him in order

831  
00:39:11,220 --> 00:39:13,520  
that the count  
should be correct.

832  
00:39:13,520 --> 00:39:17,670  
One other time I remember,  
now this was at night,

833  
00:39:17,670 --> 00:39:21,050  
when we got back we were counted  
again, to see we are all back.

834  
00:39:21,050 --> 00:39:24,050  
At that time, we  
they count the dead

835  
00:39:24,050 --> 00:39:27,950  
who are laid down right on  
the side of the living ones.

836

00:39:27,950 --> 00:39:30,810

And they counted the  
living and the dead.

837

00:39:30,810 --> 00:39:34,910

So I remember one  
case, a lot of people

838

00:39:34,910 --> 00:39:38,870

lost limbs up in the  
mountains over there.

839

00:39:38,870 --> 00:39:45,050

You know, a rail fell down  
or a Kapo cut off his leg

840

00:39:45,050 --> 00:39:47,410

or whatever.

841

00:39:47,410 --> 00:39:49,340

One SS man was  
counting the dead,

842

00:39:49,340 --> 00:39:51,986

and he saw one dead  
person was laying there

843

00:39:51,986 --> 00:39:54,620

with a leg missing.

844

00:39:54,620 --> 00:39:58,400

He carried on there for, I  
don't know, 15, 20 minutes,

845

00:39:58,400 --> 00:39:59,330

where that leg is.

846

00:39:59,330 --> 00:40:03,100

And all the Kapos  
had to run around

847

00:40:03,100 --> 00:40:05,600

till they find a leg on a  
truck, and they brought the leg,

848

00:40:05,600 --> 00:40:09,980  
and this is how  
we were dismissed.

849  
00:40:09,980 --> 00:40:12,610  
Did these guards in  
their dealings with you

850  
00:40:12,610 --> 00:40:16,610  
have any understanding of  
who the various prisoner

851  
00:40:16,610 --> 00:40:17,360  
groups were?

852  
00:40:17,360 --> 00:40:21,200  
Did they have any overt  
attitudes toward the Jews

853  
00:40:21,200 --> 00:40:24,710  
or even know who Jews were?

854  
00:40:24,710 --> 00:40:26,560  
Aside from the  
prevalent anti-Semitism.

855  
00:40:26,560 --> 00:40:30,530  
Inside the camp, it was  
all run by prisoners.

856  
00:40:30,530 --> 00:40:33,080  
The camp inside was  
run by the prisoners.

857  
00:40:33,080 --> 00:40:35,240  
You only saw the SS men--

858  
00:40:35,240 --> 00:40:38,780  
you saw the guards  
on the towers.

859  
00:40:38,780 --> 00:40:40,880  
You saw the SS men.

860  
00:40:40,880 --> 00:40:47,400

And then when it came to count,  
and to count the prisoners,

861  
00:40:47,400 --> 00:40:50,678  
or you saw him sometimes  
go into the office,

862  
00:40:50,678 --> 00:40:52,220  
if there were special  
orders, if they

863  
00:40:52,220 --> 00:40:55,580  
needed a certain group of  
people to send on a Kommando

864  
00:40:55,580 --> 00:40:58,100  
somewhere, or to send them--

865  
00:40:58,100 --> 00:41:01,440  
or to send the sick people  
away to the crematoria.

866  
00:41:01,440 --> 00:41:04,370  
Then you saw the SS men  
coming in over there.

867  
00:41:04,370 --> 00:41:06,810  
Otherwise, it was an  
administration all

868  
00:41:06,810 --> 00:41:09,800  
run by prisoners.

869  
00:41:09,800 --> 00:41:12,610  
And as far as the Kapos,  
you had some good Kapos,

870  
00:41:12,610 --> 00:41:15,620  
and you had some bad Kapos.

871  
00:41:15,620 --> 00:41:19,430  
The German Kapos, I found  
out, were most of them

872  
00:41:19,430 --> 00:41:22,430

were homosexuals and  
criminals that were released

873  
00:41:22,430 --> 00:41:26,210  
from prisons to become Kapos.

874  
00:41:26,210 --> 00:41:29,000  
Some of the Jewish  
Kapos were mostly

875  
00:41:29,000 --> 00:41:36,360  
Polish Kapos, because they had  
the training before the Czech

876  
00:41:36,360 --> 00:41:38,030  
Jews they became Kapos.

877  
00:41:38,030 --> 00:41:39,860  
Some of them  
behaved very nicely.

878  
00:41:39,860 --> 00:41:42,020  
In front of the SS men they  
couldn't behave nicely.

879  
00:41:42,020 --> 00:41:46,130  
Sometimes they had to give you  
a Slap but most of the time,

880  
00:41:46,130 --> 00:41:47,210  
they very nicely.

881  
00:41:47,210 --> 00:41:49,340  
But some of them were  
actually sadists,

882  
00:41:49,340 --> 00:41:51,710  
and they enjoyed hitting.

883  
00:41:51,710 --> 00:41:55,260  
Or they wanted to  
keep their jobs.

884  
00:41:55,260 --> 00:41:59,660  
What was the proportion



of Kapos to prisoners?

885

00:41:59,660 --> 00:42:00,290

I would say--

886

00:42:00,290 --> 00:42:03,940

887

00:42:03,940 --> 00:42:08,130

I would say about every  
group of 50 had about two

888

00:42:08,130 --> 00:42:10,350

Kapos, one on each side.

889

00:42:10,350 --> 00:42:11,130

Approximately.

890

00:42:11,130 --> 00:42:12,930

I can't be sure.

891

00:42:12,930 --> 00:42:14,890

How long were you in Ohrdruf?

892

00:42:14,890 --> 00:42:22,390

In Ohrdruf I was from January  
'45, or beginning of January

893

00:42:22,390 --> 00:42:27,090

'45 till March '45.

894

00:42:27,090 --> 00:42:28,460

What happened then?

895

00:42:28,460 --> 00:42:31,590

Then we were marched  
to a camp called

896

00:42:31,590 --> 00:42:35,420

Crawinkel, which was underground  
bunkers, where we stayed.

897

00:42:35,420 --> 00:42:36,750

Why did you leave Ohrdruf?

898  
00:42:36,750 --> 00:42:39,990  
Because the Allies were coming?

899  
00:42:39,990 --> 00:42:40,890  
It could be.

900  
00:42:40,890 --> 00:42:41,640  
It could be.

901  
00:42:41,640 --> 00:42:44,310  
But there was no reason.

902  
00:42:44,310 --> 00:42:46,920  
Because there was no reason.

903  
00:42:46,920 --> 00:42:48,690  
There was no reason  
for sending people

904  
00:42:48,690 --> 00:42:50,700  
from one camp to  
another, anyway.

905  
00:42:50,700 --> 00:42:55,890  
This whole business of being in  
six camps in such a short while

906  
00:42:55,890 --> 00:42:58,490  
didn't make much sense,  
because the same work

907  
00:42:58,490 --> 00:43:02,880  
I did in Ohrdruf I could  
have done someplace else.

908  
00:43:02,880 --> 00:43:05,790  
What I understood  
from our discussions,

909  
00:43:05,790 --> 00:43:12,870  
why this was happening, it seems  
that the guards or the officers

910

00:43:12,870 --> 00:43:17,550  
that were running the camps  
were privileged people somehow

911  
00:43:17,550 --> 00:43:20,430  
that did not have to go  
on the Russian front.

912  
00:43:20,430 --> 00:43:23,770  
They had some kind  
of an in, in Berlin,

913  
00:43:23,770 --> 00:43:28,550  
that they were assigned these  
jobs which were easy jobs.

914  
00:43:28,550 --> 00:43:30,360  
They did not have  
to go on the front.

915  
00:43:30,360 --> 00:43:35,670  
And in order for them to  
show that they are needed

916  
00:43:35,670 --> 00:43:37,760  
and they are busy, they  
are administrating,

917  
00:43:37,760 --> 00:43:39,370  
they used to send  
one transport here,

918  
00:43:39,370 --> 00:43:44,230  
one transport there, and this,  
and keep themselves busy.

919  
00:43:44,230 --> 00:43:46,230  
And always they made these  
decisions themselves?

920  
00:43:46,230 --> 00:43:47,670  
They made the  
decision themselves.

921  
00:43:47,670 --> 00:43:49,920  
I can't see what

difference does make it

922

00:43:49,920 --> 00:43:52,070

whether I carry rocks

over here over carry

923

00:43:52,070 --> 00:43:53,510

rocks in another camp.

924

00:43:53,510 --> 00:43:56,430

It doesn't make sense to me.

925

00:43:56,430 --> 00:43:58,920

And from Ohrdruf you went to?

926

00:43:58,920 --> 00:43:59,775

Crawinkel.

927

00:43:59,775 --> 00:44:00,460

Crawinkel.

928

00:44:00,460 --> 00:44:04,940

Yeah, that was a camp

where we did not work.

929

00:44:04,940 --> 00:44:10,530

When I walked into Crawinkel,

the first thing that I saw

930

00:44:10,530 --> 00:44:16,000

was about six Russians hanging.

931

00:44:16,000 --> 00:44:18,720

Over there, there was

also a few barracks

932

00:44:18,720 --> 00:44:21,610

with Russian prisoners.

933

00:44:21,610 --> 00:44:25,380

So in the beginning, we

didn't know what this was.

934

00:44:25,380 --> 00:44:27,420

In fact, I thought  
it was like we

935  
00:44:27,420 --> 00:44:29,340  
used to have those scarecrows.

936  
00:44:29,340 --> 00:44:31,580  
You know, in the fields.

937  
00:44:31,580 --> 00:44:33,190  
You thought they weren't people.

938  
00:44:33,190 --> 00:44:34,440  
I thought they weren't people.

939  
00:44:34,440 --> 00:44:37,770  
Then we found out that  
they were trying to escape.

940  
00:44:37,770 --> 00:44:41,550  
And this was a warning  
to us not to escape.

941  
00:44:41,550 --> 00:44:45,330  
And over there, also how  
I survived over there,

942  
00:44:45,330 --> 00:44:49,710  
I met another friend that I  
knew from the old country, that

943  
00:44:49,710 --> 00:44:51,350  
came from Auschwitz over there.

944  
00:44:51,350 --> 00:44:53,230  
And he told me to  
come every evening

945  
00:44:53,230 --> 00:44:57,600  
after I eat my watered  
down soup to his camp,

946  
00:44:57,600 --> 00:45:00,080  
and he's going to give  
it to me from the bottom.

947

00:45:00,080 --> 00:45:03,030

You know, there was  
big casks of soup.

948

00:45:03,030 --> 00:45:05,780

And thickness, all the good  
stuff was on the bottom.

949

00:45:05,780 --> 00:45:08,340

He says that he's going  
to save me a portion.

950

00:45:08,340 --> 00:45:12,660

And this is-- that  
fellow, the older brother,

951

00:45:12,660 --> 00:45:14,080

he died in this country.

952

00:45:14,080 --> 00:45:15,625

They're all over here.

953

00:45:15,625 --> 00:45:17,000

They're called  
the Berger family.

954

00:45:17,000 --> 00:45:18,450

They're in the plastic business.

955

00:45:18,450 --> 00:45:19,890

[? Very nice. ?]

956

00:45:19,890 --> 00:45:22,200

But he died.

957

00:45:22,200 --> 00:45:23,610

He died in this country.

958

00:45:23,610 --> 00:45:27,210

In fact, I met him once,  
and I told him, you know,

959

00:45:27,210 --> 00:45:28,320

I owe you some soup.

960  
00:45:28,320 --> 00:45:30,090  
I'll take you to  
the best restaurant

961  
00:45:30,090 --> 00:45:32,795  
and I'll buy you the best  
soup in the restaurant.

962  
00:45:32,795 --> 00:45:35,860  
But we never got together.

963  
00:45:35,860 --> 00:45:37,860  
This was March 1945.

964  
00:45:37,860 --> 00:45:41,010  
As a prisoner, were you aware  
of what was going on in the war?

965  
00:45:41,010 --> 00:45:42,040  
In the war?

966  
00:45:42,040 --> 00:45:42,830  
We didn't know.

967  
00:45:42,830 --> 00:45:46,490  
We just heard that the Americans  
are getting a little closer.

968  
00:45:46,490 --> 00:45:49,940  
And we already-- you know,  
the overflights, we knew.

969  
00:45:49,940 --> 00:45:56,280  
Yeah, and also at the end, I  
also heard some of the guards.

970  
00:45:56,280 --> 00:45:58,238  
They were talking to us already.

971  
00:45:58,238 --> 00:45:58,780  
I don't know.

972

00:45:58,780 --> 00:46:01,180  
Maybe they were trying  
to justify to themselves.

973  
00:46:01,180 --> 00:46:02,510  
They knew the end is coming.

974  
00:46:02,510 --> 00:46:05,800  
He says-- he says--

975  
00:46:05,800 --> 00:46:10,630  
one guy says, [SPEAKING GERMAN].

976  
00:46:10,630 --> 00:46:12,640  
"You will be free soon."

977  
00:46:12,640 --> 00:46:15,260  
And we heard already from them.

978  
00:46:15,260 --> 00:46:19,820  
And we heard already  
the artillery.

979  
00:46:19,820 --> 00:46:23,030  
At night you could hear the  
artillery already approaching.

980  
00:46:23,030 --> 00:46:27,370  
Did the approach of the Allies,  
in this case, the Americans,

981  
00:46:27,370 --> 00:46:30,790  
did this change the  
behavior of the guards?

982  
00:46:30,790 --> 00:46:31,690  
Yes, it did.

983  
00:46:31,690 --> 00:46:32,440  
Some of them.

984  
00:46:32,440 --> 00:46:34,720  
Some of them it did.

985



00:46:34,720 --> 00:46:35,710  
Some of them.

986  
00:46:35,710 --> 00:46:37,480  
You're talking about  
the German guards?

987  
00:46:37,480 --> 00:46:38,080  
Yes.

988  
00:46:38,080 --> 00:46:41,290  
The German guards, some  
of them did, and some no.

989  
00:46:41,290 --> 00:46:42,700  
Some till the last minute.

990  
00:46:42,700 --> 00:46:46,840  
I think there were cases where  
even the commandant already

991  
00:46:46,840 --> 00:46:51,776  
called in some of the  
officials from the--

992  
00:46:51,776 --> 00:46:54,990  
not the Kapos but  
the Blockalteste,

993  
00:46:54,990 --> 00:46:57,220  
which was in charge  
of a whole block

994  
00:46:57,220 --> 00:46:58,840  
and had discussions with them.

995  
00:46:58,840 --> 00:47:03,520  
And in many cases,  
they were trying

996  
00:47:03,520 --> 00:47:11,500  
to find out how they think  
they're going to be treated.

997  
00:47:11,500 --> 00:47:13,870

And some of those  
commandants were

998  
00:47:13,870 --> 00:47:15,580  
looking to save their skin.

999  
00:47:15,580 --> 00:47:18,040  
And at the last  
minute, they tried

1000  
00:47:18,040 --> 00:47:22,870  
to make it a little easier  
and gave orders probably

1001  
00:47:22,870 --> 00:47:25,780  
not to officially kill anybody.

1002  
00:47:25,780 --> 00:47:28,780  
But the plain soldier--

1003  
00:47:28,780 --> 00:47:31,670  
the one, let's say, when  
we went on a transport,

1004  
00:47:31,670 --> 00:47:32,800  
or we were walking.

1005  
00:47:32,800 --> 00:47:34,700  
Later on, we were  
walking from Crawinkel

1006  
00:47:34,700 --> 00:47:37,210  
to Buchenwald, which  
took us a few days.

1007  
00:47:37,210 --> 00:47:39,220  
We slept in the fields--

1008  
00:47:39,220 --> 00:47:41,500  
they were shooting  
still on the road.

1009  
00:47:41,500 --> 00:47:43,950  
And they saw already  
the Americans,

1010  
00:47:43,950 --> 00:47:46,570  
the American planes over us.

1011  
00:47:46,570 --> 00:47:48,430  
And if somebody  
stepped out of line,

1012  
00:47:48,430 --> 00:47:52,390  
he had to relieve himself,  
so he went to the bushes,

1013  
00:47:52,390 --> 00:47:57,100  
you heard a shot,  
and the person never

1014  
00:47:57,100 --> 00:48:02,360  
came back till the last minute.

1015  
00:48:02,360 --> 00:48:06,520  
So you were in Crawinkel  
not long at all.

1016  
00:48:06,520 --> 00:48:07,220  
Not long at all.

1017  
00:48:07,220 --> 00:48:08,397  
A few weeks, maybe.

1018  
00:48:08,397 --> 00:48:09,730  
And then you went to Buchenwald.

1019  
00:48:09,730 --> 00:48:10,890  
We went to Buchenwald.

1020  
00:48:10,890 --> 00:48:15,520  
And when we got to  
Buchenwald, Buchenwald

1021  
00:48:15,520 --> 00:48:18,370  
was an organized camp.

1022  
00:48:18,370 --> 00:48:21,330  
In the beginning, we did

not see the crematoria

1023

00:48:21,330 --> 00:48:27,160  
and any atrocities  
that were committed.

1024

00:48:27,160 --> 00:48:32,110  
It was very regular, and  
everybody had to give his name

1025

00:48:32,110 --> 00:48:36,710  
and where he came from.

1026

00:48:36,710 --> 00:48:41,140  
So the first thing they did,  
they separated the Jews.

1027

00:48:41,140 --> 00:48:44,670  
They said, the Jews on one side,  
the Polacks on another side,

1028

00:48:44,670 --> 00:48:47,500  
and the Greeks on this side.

1029

00:48:47,500 --> 00:48:50,350  
We had Greeks, too, over there.

1030

00:48:50,350 --> 00:48:52,480  
And I was then with  
my cousin, the cousin

1031

00:48:52,480 --> 00:48:54,400  
that saved me in Ohrdruf.

1032

00:48:54,400 --> 00:48:58,810  
His name was Shimon  
[? Bubker. ?] My name,

1033

00:48:58,810 --> 00:49:02,590  
I came to the camp under the  
Gentile name Andre Kolina.

1034

00:49:02,590 --> 00:49:04,692  
So I told him, listen,  
we survived till now.

1035  
00:49:04,692 --> 00:49:05,650  
We don't have too much.

1036  
00:49:05,650 --> 00:49:07,300  
I don't like the  
idea they're taking

1037  
00:49:07,300 --> 00:49:10,120  
the Jew separate and  
the Czechs separate

1038  
00:49:10,120 --> 00:49:11,415  
and the Poles separate.

1039  
00:49:11,415 --> 00:49:13,210  
I say, I'm going  
with the Czechs.

1040  
00:49:13,210 --> 00:49:14,370  
I have a Czech name.

1041  
00:49:14,370 --> 00:49:15,460  
I'm gonna.

1042  
00:49:15,460 --> 00:49:17,680  
He says, what am I going to do?

1043  
00:49:17,680 --> 00:49:19,570  
My name is Shimon  
[? Bubker. ?] I say,

1044  
00:49:19,570 --> 00:49:21,790  
listen your name is  
now let's reverse it.

1045  
00:49:21,790 --> 00:49:22,810  
Bobby Shimko.

1046  
00:49:22,810 --> 00:49:25,900  
Shimko is a Slovak name.

1047  
00:49:25,900 --> 00:49:27,785  
They don't have

records so exact.

1048  
00:49:27,785 --> 00:49:28,660  
Don't worry about it.

1049  
00:49:28,660 --> 00:49:31,120  
Come with me, and  
let's go to the Czech.

1050  
00:49:31,120 --> 00:49:34,620  
And we went into  
the Czech barracks.

1051  
00:49:34,620 --> 00:49:35,800  
That was in the big camp.

1052  
00:49:35,800 --> 00:49:38,380  
All the Jews went  
into the small camp.

1053  
00:49:38,380 --> 00:49:39,640  
Very few of them survived.

1054  
00:49:39,640 --> 00:49:41,920  
We were there only a  
few weeks, but few--

1055  
00:49:41,920 --> 00:49:43,510  
they went into the  
[? rat holes. ?]

1056  
00:49:43,510 --> 00:49:47,380  
And many, many of  
them actually--

1057  
00:49:47,380 --> 00:49:49,750  
not that-- some of  
them died from typhus.

1058  
00:49:49,750 --> 00:49:51,550  
I got typhus later on, too.

1059  
00:49:51,550 --> 00:49:54,480  
But the Germans, as  
they were retreating,

1060  
00:49:54,480 --> 00:49:57,410  
they were killing them  
off in the small camp.

1061  
00:49:57,410 --> 00:49:59,197  
They just came  
with machine guns,

1062  
00:49:59,197 --> 00:50:01,030  
and would kill them off  
as much as they can,

1063  
00:50:01,030 --> 00:50:02,360  
and then they left.

1064  
00:50:02,360 --> 00:50:08,450  
The Czech barracks, the  
Czech had a little uprising

1065  
00:50:08,450 --> 00:50:09,450  
over there.

1066  
00:50:09,450 --> 00:50:14,070  
A few of very well  
trained Czechs,

1067  
00:50:14,070 --> 00:50:17,190  
that were officers  
in the Czech army

1068  
00:50:17,190 --> 00:50:22,020  
and were taken to  
Buchenwald, made an uprising.

1069  
00:50:22,020 --> 00:50:25,410  
They somehow, they disarmed  
one of the German guards,

1070  
00:50:25,410 --> 00:50:27,500  
and then they  
disarmed another one,

1071  
00:50:27,500 --> 00:50:31,230  
and they got a hold

of one of the towers.

1072

00:50:31,230 --> 00:50:35,580

And the Germans brought  
in reinforcements,

1073

00:50:35,580 --> 00:50:37,410

and they wiped them out.

1074

00:50:37,410 --> 00:50:38,500

But it was too late.

1075

00:50:38,500 --> 00:50:39,930

They had to leave already.

1076

00:50:39,930 --> 00:50:44,370

So they were machine  
gunning the Czech barrack.

1077

00:50:44,370 --> 00:50:46,110

I don't know what  
happened to me.

1078

00:50:46,110 --> 00:50:47,580

I know I was sick of typhus.

1079

00:50:47,580 --> 00:50:50,130

Somebody pushed me  
underneath a bunk.

1080

00:50:50,130 --> 00:50:54,330

And I woke up three weeks  
later in the hospital

1081

00:50:54,330 --> 00:50:56,550

under the Americans.

1082

00:50:56,550 --> 00:50:57,940

That was liberation for you.

1083

00:50:57,940 --> 00:50:59,930

You were sick and unaware  
of what was going on.

1084



00:50:59,930 --> 00:51:01,160  
I was never--

1085  
00:51:01,160 --> 00:51:01,690  
Typhus.

1086  
00:51:01,690 --> 00:51:05,100  
Yeah, I was never aware  
that I was liberated.

1087  
00:51:05,100 --> 00:51:08,970  
So after two weeks of whatever,  
I was in the hospital.

1088  
00:51:08,970 --> 00:51:11,640  
After I got out of the hospital,  
I went back to the camp

1089  
00:51:11,640 --> 00:51:16,320  
to find my cousin  
that I lived with.

1090  
00:51:16,320 --> 00:51:18,240  
I wanted to see if  
he was still alive.

1091  
00:51:18,240 --> 00:51:23,490  
And I was all white, and I  
wore a white hospital uniform.

1092  
00:51:23,490 --> 00:51:26,850  
And I walked in over there.

1093  
00:51:26,850 --> 00:51:29,880  
He recognized me, thought  
I came back from the dead.

1094  
00:51:29,880 --> 00:51:31,770  
Right.

1095  
00:51:31,770 --> 00:51:36,690  
And I only stayed there after  
liberation maybe one week.

1096  
00:51:36,690 --> 00:51:39,780

We used to go into Weimar.

1097  
00:51:39,780 --> 00:51:42,150  
And when we walked  
in over there,

1098  
00:51:42,150 --> 00:51:44,650  
one guy says, let's go  
into this restaurant.

1099  
00:51:44,650 --> 00:51:45,750  
I says, you have money?

1100  
00:51:45,750 --> 00:51:47,340  
He says, you don't need money.

1101  
00:51:47,340 --> 00:51:50,500  
When the owners saw us coming  
and there were Germans sitting

1102  
00:51:50,500 --> 00:51:52,620  
there at tables,  
you know, he told

1103  
00:51:52,620 --> 00:51:54,960  
them to clean off  
right away two tables,

1104  
00:51:54,960 --> 00:51:57,240  
and sat us down,  
and gave us to eat.

1105  
00:51:57,240 --> 00:51:59,935  
He says, free of charge.

1106  
00:51:59,935 --> 00:52:00,810  
They wanted to show--

1107  
00:52:00,810 --> 00:52:03,710

1108  
00:52:03,710 --> 00:52:06,013  
And they claimed they never--

1109

00:52:06,013 --> 00:52:06,680  
They never knew.

1110  
00:52:06,680 --> 00:52:08,680  
They never knew what was  
going on in Buchenwald.

1111  
00:52:08,680 --> 00:52:12,860  
Now then, after liberation,  
I saw already the piles.

1112  
00:52:12,860 --> 00:52:14,890  
The piles of dead were piled up.

1113  
00:52:14,890 --> 00:52:18,590  
You know like you pile  
up lumber, firewood?

1114  
00:52:18,590 --> 00:52:21,320  
You know, one row like  
this, and one row like this?

1115  
00:52:21,320 --> 00:52:24,590  
This is is how is was  
piled up about 8 feet

1116  
00:52:24,590 --> 00:52:29,330  
high, rows and rows  
of dead people.

1117  
00:52:29,330 --> 00:52:31,150  
Your contacts with the--

1118  
00:52:31,150 --> 00:52:33,110  
I realize that you  
were sick and unaware

1119  
00:52:33,110 --> 00:52:35,360  
of what was going  
on when Buchenwald

1120  
00:52:35,360 --> 00:52:41,960  
was taken, but upon regaining  
consciousness or your health,

1121

00:52:41,960 --> 00:52:45,547  
did you have any conversations  
with American military or

1122  
00:52:45,547 --> 00:52:47,630  
medical personnel relating  
to the camps themselves

1123  
00:52:47,630 --> 00:52:48,380  
and what happened?

1124  
00:52:48,380 --> 00:52:49,170  
Oh, yes.

1125  
00:52:49,170 --> 00:52:49,950  
Oh, yes.

1126  
00:52:49,950 --> 00:52:50,450  
Oh, yes.

1127  
00:52:50,450 --> 00:52:51,390  
Their reactions?

1128  
00:52:51,390 --> 00:52:53,520  
Oh, they were very  
friendly with us.

1129  
00:52:53,520 --> 00:52:55,280  
And they took us.

1130  
00:52:55,280 --> 00:52:56,930  
There was a ball  
game, I remember,

1131  
00:52:56,930 --> 00:52:58,850  
going on in town over there.

1132  
00:52:58,850 --> 00:53:01,790  
They took a few of us out to  
watch the ball game, the soccer

1133  
00:53:01,790 --> 00:53:02,510  
game.

1134

00:53:02,510 --> 00:53:06,750  
And they took us over to  
the American army camp.

1135  
00:53:06,750 --> 00:53:08,940  
And they gave us  
chocolate and whatever we

1136  
00:53:08,940 --> 00:53:11,510  
wanted and took pictures of us.

1137  
00:53:11,510 --> 00:53:14,270  
Asked us if we have relatives  
in the United States.

1138  
00:53:14,270 --> 00:53:17,510  
We sent messages with them,  
because they could write.

1139  
00:53:17,510 --> 00:53:19,280  
They behaved very nicely.

1140  
00:53:19,280 --> 00:53:24,320  
This is the first time in my  
life that I saw a Black person.

1141  
00:53:24,320 --> 00:53:27,830  
And he looked so good to me.

1142  
00:53:27,830 --> 00:53:29,450  
Because normally in  
school we learned

1143  
00:53:29,450 --> 00:53:33,650  
there is a Black race, a  
yellow race, a white race.

1144  
00:53:33,650 --> 00:53:38,880  
But you know, all you saw  
is the pictures of them.

1145  
00:53:38,880 --> 00:53:41,690  
It's the first time I  
saw a live Black person.

1146

00:53:41,690 --> 00:53:42,785  
A GI?

1147  
00:53:42,785 --> 00:53:44,930  
A GI.

1148  
00:53:44,930 --> 00:53:48,140  
Did your contact with  
the American military

1149  
00:53:48,140 --> 00:53:50,660  
have any influence  
on your decision

1150  
00:53:50,660 --> 00:53:53,390  
eventually to come  
to the United States?

1151  
00:53:53,390 --> 00:53:57,710  
Well, the reason why I came  
to the United States after I

1152  
00:53:57,710 --> 00:54:00,680  
went back to Czechoslovakia--

1153  
00:54:00,680 --> 00:54:02,550  
by truck we were  
taken back to Prague.

1154  
00:54:02,550 --> 00:54:05,880  
I didn't stay one day in Germany  
after I could leave Germany.

1155  
00:54:05,880 --> 00:54:07,580  
I went directly to Prague.

1156  
00:54:07,580 --> 00:54:09,410  
And there was no transportation.

1157  
00:54:09,410 --> 00:54:12,650  
It took me about a month  
before I got back to my town

1158  
00:54:12,650 --> 00:54:17,600  
to find my mother, that

my mother was still alive,

1159

00:54:17,600 --> 00:54:18,980  
to hear her story.

1160

00:54:18,980 --> 00:54:20,833  
My brother was already--

1161

00:54:20,833 --> 00:54:22,250  
the name of the  
town was Bardejov.

1162

00:54:22,250 --> 00:54:24,500  
That's where we gathered.

1163

00:54:24,500 --> 00:54:27,020  
So my mother was there already.

1164

00:54:27,020 --> 00:54:29,390  
And my brother came  
back from Auschwitz.

1165

00:54:29,390 --> 00:54:33,200  
He already left  
Auschwitz in January.

1166

00:54:33,200 --> 00:54:35,420  
And my sister was in Sweden.

1167

00:54:35,420 --> 00:54:38,480  
She was taken to  
Bergen-Belsen and to Sweden.

1168

00:54:38,480 --> 00:54:41,360  
Now, my father  
died in Mauthausen.

1169

00:54:41,360 --> 00:54:43,280  
He was caught in Sered.

1170

00:54:43,280 --> 00:54:44,360  
He died in Mauthausen.

1171

00:54:44,360 --> 00:54:49,230

The twin of my sister,  
they were both 14-years-old

1172  
00:54:49,230 --> 00:54:52,190  
when they came to Auschwitz.

1173  
00:54:52,190 --> 00:54:54,380  
My sister was lucky.

1174  
00:54:54,380 --> 00:54:59,030  
She had a cousin, a  
girl that came in 1942

1175  
00:54:59,030 --> 00:55:01,850  
and she took her in as  
a helper, because she

1176  
00:55:01,850 --> 00:55:05,060  
was taking care of one block.

1177  
00:55:05,060 --> 00:55:08,010  
And my brother could have gotten  
a job, too, through my cousin.

1178  
00:55:08,010 --> 00:55:09,590  
But he says he wants to go.

1179  
00:55:09,590 --> 00:55:10,530  
He didn't want to go.

1180  
00:55:10,530 --> 00:55:12,488  
He says, I'm not going  
to work for the Germans.

1181  
00:55:12,488 --> 00:55:14,450  
He did not want to  
work for the Germans.

1182  
00:55:14,450 --> 00:55:17,630  
He went into the gas chamber.

1183  
00:55:17,630 --> 00:55:19,730  
14-year-old boy.

1184



00:55:19,730 --> 00:55:21,640  
That's David.

1185  
00:55:21,640 --> 00:55:28,370  
So of your family  
now, your father

1186  
00:55:28,370 --> 00:55:32,450  
was killed in Mauthausen, your  
brother David in Auschwitz.

1187  
00:55:32,450 --> 00:55:33,710  
In Auschwitz.

1188  
00:55:33,710 --> 00:55:36,710  
And who survived?

1189  
00:55:36,710 --> 00:55:40,402  
One brother in Auschwitz, and  
one brother and a sister that

1190  
00:55:40,402 --> 00:55:41,360  
were both in Auschwitz.

1191  
00:55:41,360 --> 00:55:42,950  
And you and your mother.

1192  
00:55:42,950 --> 00:55:45,320  
And my mother.

1193  
00:55:45,320 --> 00:55:50,070  
You mentioned the  
crematorium in Buchenwald.

1194  
00:55:50,070 --> 00:55:50,570  
Yeah.

1195  
00:55:50,570 --> 00:55:54,050  
Was that the only camp that had  
a crematorium that you were in?

1196  
00:55:54,050 --> 00:55:56,480  
No, every camp  
had a crematorium.

1197

00:55:56,480 --> 00:56:02,990

Well, the crematoria that  
was like an assembly line

1198

00:56:02,990 --> 00:56:04,940

was mostly in Auschwitz.

1199

00:56:04,940 --> 00:56:06,710

Maybe they also had it in--

1200

00:56:06,710 --> 00:56:08,480

I'm not familiar with Majdanek.

1201

00:56:08,480 --> 00:56:12,930

Majdanek, Treblinka, that's  
all they had in some of them.

1202

00:56:12,930 --> 00:56:16,720

But Auschwitz, it was  
like a production line.

1203

00:56:16,720 --> 00:56:19,040

They got off the  
trains, and this one

1204

00:56:19,040 --> 00:56:20,150

goes to the left or right.

1205

00:56:20,150 --> 00:56:21,775

They went straight  
to the gas chambers.

1206

00:56:21,775 --> 00:56:22,340

They got it.

1207

00:56:22,340 --> 00:56:24,000

Over there, mostly  
the crematorium

1208

00:56:24,000 --> 00:56:26,990

were for the ones that were  
killed or died in the camp.

1209

00:56:26,990 --> 00:56:29,555

They were burned.

1210  
00:56:29,555 --> 00:56:34,880  
I doubt that they had a  
gas chamber in Buchenwald.

1211  
00:56:34,880 --> 00:56:38,540  
I think we'll get  
back to what happened

1212  
00:56:38,540 --> 00:56:44,500  
to you after liberation after  
they put on a new tape for us.

1213  
00:56:44,500 --> 00:56:49,000