

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:10,000

2
00:00:10,000 --> 00:00:12,260
Continue, please.

3
00:00:12,260 --> 00:00:12,760
OK.

4
00:00:12,760 --> 00:00:17,780

5
00:00:17,780 --> 00:00:21,950
I was just talking
about my father's death.

6
00:00:21,950 --> 00:00:27,620
And it was a bitter
pill to swallow.

7
00:00:27,620 --> 00:00:32,680
Because it was just a few
months before the liberation.

8
00:00:32,680 --> 00:00:36,730

9
00:00:36,730 --> 00:00:41,750
The situation at that time
started changing dramatically.

10
00:00:41,750 --> 00:00:46,030
The German troops
were retreating

11
00:00:46,030 --> 00:00:49,180
towards the German border.

12
00:00:49,180 --> 00:00:58,550
And we saw in our area they
dug trenches all around.

13

00:00:58,550 --> 00:01:04,510

And we were very afraid that
they shouldn't dig in the area

14

00:01:04,510 --> 00:01:07,890

where we buried my father.

15

00:01:07,890 --> 00:01:14,220

However, the trenches they
dug were not even used.

16

00:01:14,220 --> 00:01:18,610

Because the Russian troops
broke through near Lublin,

17

00:01:18,610 --> 00:01:21,105

and they started an advance
toward the German borders.

18

00:01:21,105 --> 00:01:24,270

19

00:01:24,270 --> 00:01:31,680

As soon as the movement of
the Russian troops started,

20

00:01:31,680 --> 00:01:37,180

we got out of our area,
and we moved closer.

21

00:01:37,180 --> 00:01:43,850

We moved east, so we should be
on the side of the liberation,

22

00:01:43,850 --> 00:01:46,558

the Russian troops.

23

00:01:46,558 --> 00:01:53,450

We left my mother and my sister
and the rest of the family

24

00:01:53,450 --> 00:01:58,580
in the area near Siemkowice.

25
00:01:58,580 --> 00:02:01,970
The trenches were dug
not far from the house

26
00:02:01,970 --> 00:02:05,300
where my family was.

27
00:02:05,300 --> 00:02:08,850
I was very concerned about it.

28
00:02:08,850 --> 00:02:12,720
However, I couldn't
do anything about it.

29
00:02:12,720 --> 00:02:19,380
The peasant friends, well,
the sons fought with us,

30
00:02:19,380 --> 00:02:25,260
decided that it's too dangerous
for my mother and my sister

31
00:02:25,260 --> 00:02:29,760
to be close to the trenches.

32
00:02:29,760 --> 00:02:32,640
They told them
that the best thing

33
00:02:32,640 --> 00:02:35,790
is if they can start
moving towards the city.

34
00:02:35,790 --> 00:02:42,310
Because over there, at least the
war won't affect them as much.

35
00:02:42,310 --> 00:02:46,600
And they left to
Dabrowa G³rnica,

36
00:02:46,600 --> 00:02:51,060
which was a nearby town
where we used to live.

37
00:02:51,060 --> 00:02:56,720

38
00:02:56,720 --> 00:03:01,580
It was the worst week.

39
00:03:01,580 --> 00:03:06,470
Because the fright
of being caught

40
00:03:06,470 --> 00:03:11,440
the week before the
liberation was enormous.

41
00:03:11,440 --> 00:03:13,290
You knew the
liberation was coming?

42
00:03:13,290 --> 00:03:17,000
Yeah, we knew, because you
heard the artillery already

43
00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:21,260
from far away coming
closer and closer.

44
00:03:21,260 --> 00:03:31,900
So I was liberated a few weeks
before my family was liberated.

45
00:03:31,900 --> 00:03:34,840
And I went up in Lublin.

46
00:03:34,840 --> 00:03:38,920
Lublin was a provisional
Polish government set up.

47

00:03:38,920 --> 00:03:45,280
Because with the Russian troops,
the Polish troops came too.

48
00:03:45,280 --> 00:03:47,290
And they set up a
provisional government,

49
00:03:47,290 --> 00:03:49,760
because Warsaw was
not liberated then.

50
00:03:49,760 --> 00:03:55,950
The front was uneven.

51
00:03:55,950 --> 00:04:00,120
Later on, when
Warsaw was liberated,

52
00:04:00,120 --> 00:04:07,740
the Polish government moved
from Lublin to Warsaw.

53
00:04:07,740 --> 00:04:12,060
In Lublin, I met
many future leaders

54
00:04:12,060 --> 00:04:17,160
of the Polish government,
military and political.

55
00:04:17,160 --> 00:04:25,890
And they greeted us with
great respect and love.

56
00:04:25,890 --> 00:04:30,630
We all really didn't know
what we're going to do now.

57
00:04:30,630 --> 00:04:35,530
We all were really like
not in an army, you know?

58

00:04:35,530 --> 00:04:39,780
We were was just unwanted.

59
00:04:39,780 --> 00:04:44,130
However, when for
the first time,

60
00:04:44,130 --> 00:04:53,340
I met General Zawadzki's wife,
who was a friend of my family.

61
00:04:53,340 --> 00:04:58,590
She was a daughter of
a watchmaker who lived

62
00:04:58,590 --> 00:05:01,980
in our building in Bedzin.

63
00:05:01,980 --> 00:05:06,310
And she recognized me
from before the war.

64
00:05:06,310 --> 00:05:09,930
Because she escaped to Russia,
and she met this fellow,

65
00:05:09,930 --> 00:05:13,230
General Zawadzki, who comes
from Dabrowa GÅ³rnicza also,

66
00:05:13,230 --> 00:05:14,820
a neighboring town.

67
00:05:14,820 --> 00:05:19,590
And he became political general
of the [? KoÅ³ciuszko ?] Army,

68
00:05:19,590 --> 00:05:28,470
one of the foremost people in
the Polish liberation movement.

69
00:05:28,470 --> 00:05:34,650
And when she recognized me, she

was so happy, she was crying.

70

00:05:34,650 --> 00:05:36,300

And she was asking
about her father,

71

00:05:36,300 --> 00:05:39,160

and her father was
not there anymore.

72

00:05:39,160 --> 00:05:40,830

And she was asking about Bedzin.

73

00:05:40,830 --> 00:05:42,510

And I told her what happened.

74

00:05:42,510 --> 00:05:48,060

And I said, I am away from
Bedzin for several years,

75

00:05:48,060 --> 00:05:52,140

and I'm away also
from this area.

76

00:05:52,140 --> 00:05:56,720

So she introduced me
to General Zawadzki,

77

00:05:56,720 --> 00:06:01,550

and he said to me, well,
we need guys like you.

78

00:06:01,550 --> 00:06:06,680

And I was at that
time given a position

79

00:06:06,680 --> 00:06:09,950

that soon, the liberation
of Silesia would take place,

80

00:06:09,950 --> 00:06:11,660

and Zaglebie Dabrowskie.

81

00:06:11,660 --> 00:06:16,760

I will be working for
the security office.

82

00:06:16,760 --> 00:06:20,690

What position, I didn't
know at that time.

83

00:06:20,690 --> 00:06:23,690

I was very happy,
and I also was very

84

00:06:23,690 --> 00:06:32,290

anxious to know what happened
to the rest of my family.

85

00:06:32,290 --> 00:06:35,140

Perhaps they are
still in the village.

86

00:06:35,140 --> 00:06:37,300

Perhaps they went
to another town.

87

00:06:37,300 --> 00:06:39,840

I really lost contact, you know?

88

00:06:39,840 --> 00:06:46,630

Well, finally, when the Russian
troops broke through completely

89

00:06:46,630 --> 00:06:50,230

and they started entering
the German territory,

90

00:06:50,230 --> 00:06:54,730

Silesia and Zaglebie
was liberated.

91

00:06:54,730 --> 00:07:02,480

We ran immediately
towards my city of Bedzin.

92

00:07:02,480 --> 00:07:11,750

And as I came to my city, I
found out that my family is

93

00:07:11,750 --> 00:07:16,920

in Dabrowa G³rnicza
with Polish people,

94

00:07:16,920 --> 00:07:22,410

and they are doing very
well, and everything is OK.

95

00:07:22,410 --> 00:07:24,450

I was very happy.

96

00:07:24,450 --> 00:07:28,290

The reunion was very emotional.

97

00:07:28,290 --> 00:07:30,330

You can imagine.

98

00:07:30,330 --> 00:07:35,550

Being in a war, and all of
a sudden, you are liberated.

99

00:07:35,550 --> 00:07:39,390

The feeling is
just undescrivable.

100

00:07:39,390 --> 00:07:42,690

You could sit here for hours
and describe the feeling,

101

00:07:42,690 --> 00:07:46,485

the tears, the stories.

102

00:07:46,485 --> 00:07:49,110

103

00:07:49,110 --> 00:07:52,230

That we survived the Holocaust,
that we survived the worst

104
00:07:52,230 --> 00:07:53,453
catastrophe in the world--

105
00:07:53,453 --> 00:07:55,120
Both your sisters
were with your mother?

106
00:07:55,120 --> 00:07:55,995
Both of your sisters?

107
00:07:55,995 --> 00:07:56,970
Yeah, both my sisters.

108
00:07:56,970 --> 00:07:57,720
Yes.

109
00:07:57,720 --> 00:07:58,710
Two sisters.

110
00:07:58,710 --> 00:08:00,780
One sister was in
the United States.

111
00:08:00,780 --> 00:08:03,330
I don't know if I
mentioned that before.

112
00:08:03,330 --> 00:08:13,760
But when I entered Bedzin,
and I saw the city,

113
00:08:13,760 --> 00:08:16,730
I couldn't recognize it.

114
00:08:16,730 --> 00:08:19,100
Before the war, this
was a bustling city

115
00:08:19,100 --> 00:08:24,770
of people, 60,000 population,
and 45,000 Jewish people,

116
00:08:24,770 --> 00:08:28,170
as I explained in beginning.

117
00:08:28,170 --> 00:08:31,190
And when I came in,
there was empty streets.

118
00:08:31,190 --> 00:08:35,390
It was sad to go into
a town like that,

119
00:08:35,390 --> 00:08:38,510
knowing what a town it was.

120
00:08:38,510 --> 00:08:43,120
No businesses,
everything was closed.

121
00:08:43,120 --> 00:08:47,440
It was a frightening
experience to go to a city

122
00:08:47,440 --> 00:08:52,450
where you were born, and to
see the devastation of people.

123
00:08:52,450 --> 00:08:55,870
No Jewish people.

124
00:08:55,870 --> 00:08:59,770
Finally, the next day,
I found one family who

125
00:08:59,770 --> 00:09:05,733
survived with Polish people.

126
00:09:05,733 --> 00:09:07,900
Excuse me, that neighborhood
that you went through--

127
00:09:07,900 --> 00:09:10,550

was that entirely a Jewish area?

128

00:09:10,550 --> 00:09:11,557

The neighborhood?

129

00:09:11,557 --> 00:09:12,140

Yeah, it was--

130

00:09:12,140 --> 00:09:13,432

The part that you went through?

131

00:09:13,432 --> 00:09:17,810

No, mostly, the whole city
was like a Jewish area.

132

00:09:17,810 --> 00:09:22,820

And very few Polish
people lived there.

133

00:09:22,820 --> 00:09:28,730

But combined with the
whole area of Bedzin,

134

00:09:28,730 --> 00:09:31,380

mostly, the Jews
lived in the town.

135

00:09:31,380 --> 00:09:33,530

Out of town lived
the Polish people.

136

00:09:33,530 --> 00:09:40,130

Because they had farms, and all
kinds of houses that they had.

137

00:09:40,130 --> 00:09:41,920

I met a lot of Poles I knew.

138

00:09:41,920 --> 00:09:44,510

And some were very
happy to see me,

139

00:09:44,510 --> 00:09:49,100
and they embraced me
and the cried with me.

140
00:09:49,100 --> 00:09:51,800
And some asked me,
do you still live?

141
00:09:51,800 --> 00:09:55,620
The question was not proper.

142
00:09:55,620 --> 00:10:01,170
But when I brought my family
a few days later to the city

143
00:10:01,170 --> 00:10:06,120
of Bedzin, we could not
go back to our apartment

144
00:10:06,120 --> 00:10:09,700
anymore, because somebody
else lived there.

145
00:10:09,700 --> 00:10:14,650
The better apartments were
confiscated by the Germans

146
00:10:14,650 --> 00:10:18,950
when the Jewish
people were moved

147
00:10:18,950 --> 00:10:21,380
into the ghetto of Srodula.

148
00:10:21,380 --> 00:10:28,610
And the other apartments
were taken over by Poles.

149
00:10:28,610 --> 00:10:35,330
So being that we had a
choice, we found an apartment

150
00:10:35,330 --> 00:10:43,190

in the blocks like this, a
beautiful area, with furniture.

151
00:10:43,190 --> 00:10:46,430
We just moved in, because
the Germans just vacated it

152
00:10:46,430 --> 00:10:48,570
maybe a week before.

153
00:10:48,570 --> 00:10:51,720
And we established a residence.

154
00:10:51,720 --> 00:10:56,180
Once I established
a residence, I

155
00:10:56,180 --> 00:10:58,880
was waiting for
further instructions

156
00:10:58,880 --> 00:11:05,850
to what is my function to
do, what am I supposed to do.

157
00:11:05,850 --> 00:11:10,580
There was no Jewish life
anymore in the city.

158
00:11:10,580 --> 00:11:13,580
I was not used anymore
to anything else

159
00:11:13,580 --> 00:11:21,590
but fighting, and
trying to establish

160
00:11:21,590 --> 00:11:27,550
a little feeling of victory.

161
00:11:27,550 --> 00:11:32,500
And I used that time
to go to the city hall

162
00:11:32,500 --> 00:11:38,080
and find out what
happened at the day

163
00:11:38,080 --> 00:11:43,270
when they burned the synagogue
and the surrounding area.

164
00:11:43,270 --> 00:11:49,000
And documents were showing
that some conspirators--

165
00:11:49,000 --> 00:11:56,400
people who worked with
the German Nazis--

166
00:11:56,400 --> 00:11:59,310
conspired at that time
to burn all the houses

167
00:11:59,310 --> 00:12:02,880
around the church so
the church will be more

168
00:12:02,880 --> 00:12:08,440
exposed to the beautiful area.

169
00:12:08,440 --> 00:12:12,730
And they suggest
at the time to say

170
00:12:12,730 --> 00:12:22,010
that it's enough with
a Jewish presence

171
00:12:22,010 --> 00:12:28,620
that they have to burn this
area and destroy so many people.

172
00:12:28,620 --> 00:12:32,590
And this story I told
right in the beginning.

173
00:12:32,590 --> 00:12:34,180
We found the conspirators.

174
00:12:34,180 --> 00:12:43,390
They were Polish citizens
of German descent.

175
00:12:43,390 --> 00:12:46,410
And actually, they were
very happy, probably,

176
00:12:46,410 --> 00:12:50,770
to do this thing
to become heroes.

177
00:12:50,770 --> 00:12:56,520
And when I became
security chief of Silesia,

178
00:12:56,520 --> 00:13:01,050
my first action was to notify
the Russian authorities

179
00:13:01,050 --> 00:13:07,860
that we have
collaborators in our town

180
00:13:07,860 --> 00:13:10,420
who are guilty of murder.

181
00:13:10,420 --> 00:13:12,952
And they were arrested.

182
00:13:12,952 --> 00:13:14,160
They were brought to a trial.

183
00:13:14,160 --> 00:13:16,920
It was a short trial.

184
00:13:16,920 --> 00:13:20,880
And they got death

penalty, and rightfully so,

185

00:13:20,880 --> 00:13:29,580

because people who without mercy
can take the life of 800 people

186

00:13:29,580 --> 00:13:34,050

and make the rest of the
town as miserable as possible

187

00:13:34,050 --> 00:13:37,260

deserve not to live.

188

00:13:37,260 --> 00:13:40,230

I'm not an advocate
of capital punishment.

189

00:13:40,230 --> 00:13:45,370

But in those times, I think that
was the proper way of doing it.

190

00:13:45,370 --> 00:13:51,740

And they were executed
exactly in the area

191

00:13:51,740 --> 00:14:00,340

where the burning took place,
in front of many people.

192

00:14:00,340 --> 00:14:07,810

The Russians were not
very lovable people

193

00:14:07,810 --> 00:14:09,580

one way or the other.

194

00:14:09,580 --> 00:14:11,680

They had very strict orders.

195

00:14:11,680 --> 00:14:16,350

And they had strict orders
to destroy collaborators,

196

00:14:16,350 --> 00:14:20,680

and especially any SS men
they could put a hand on.

197

00:14:20,680 --> 00:14:24,390

198

00:14:24,390 --> 00:14:27,750

This was almost like the
first function I had.

199

00:14:27,750 --> 00:14:35,040

I arrived in Katowice, which
was the capital of Silesia,

200

00:14:35,040 --> 00:14:36,360

January 20th.

201

00:14:36,360 --> 00:14:38,870

202

00:14:38,870 --> 00:14:43,360

The liberation of Auschwitz
took place, I think,

203

00:14:43,360 --> 00:14:45,860

three days later.

204

00:14:45,860 --> 00:14:47,880

Because the front
wasn't going even.

205

00:14:47,880 --> 00:14:51,140

The southern front was
going a little slower,

206

00:14:51,140 --> 00:14:54,080

and the western front was
going a little bit faster.

207

00:14:54,080 --> 00:14:59,920

208
00:14:59,920 --> 00:15:05,030
It was not an easy task
for me to take over

209
00:15:05,030 --> 00:15:06,410
a position like this.

210
00:15:06,410 --> 00:15:09,690
I had no idea.

211
00:15:09,690 --> 00:15:14,360
I had no experience
how to run that.

212
00:15:14,360 --> 00:15:16,990
The experience of my
fighting during the war

213
00:15:16,990 --> 00:15:22,720
was minimal, as far as
securities are concerned.

214
00:15:22,720 --> 00:15:24,730
We had only one way.

215
00:15:24,730 --> 00:15:29,310
We can kill the enemy,
or we can fight them,

216
00:15:29,310 --> 00:15:34,090
or we can run away and
try to hide in order

217
00:15:34,090 --> 00:15:39,640
to plan other actions.

218
00:15:39,640 --> 00:15:42,150

219
00:15:42,150 --> 00:15:49,080
But they say that experience

is a mother's teacher, right?

220

00:15:49,080 --> 00:15:52,740

That you learn on the job a lot.

221

00:15:52,740 --> 00:15:53,840

And I have learned a lot.

222

00:15:53,840 --> 00:15:56,606

223

00:15:56,606 --> 00:16:00,950

The instructions came
from General Zawadzki

224

00:16:00,950 --> 00:16:07,780

to know that Silesia is an area
where a lot of Volksdeutsche

225

00:16:07,780 --> 00:16:08,280

lived.

226

00:16:08,280 --> 00:16:13,700

Volksdeutsche were actually
Germans who lived in Poland

227

00:16:13,700 --> 00:16:17,750

and were citizens of
Poland during the time

228

00:16:17,750 --> 00:16:19,940

when Poland was free.

229

00:16:19,940 --> 00:16:24,970

But after, you had a lot
of collaborators, people

230

00:16:24,970 --> 00:16:30,220

who were Nazis, and you had a
lot of Germans or Volksdeutsche

231

00:16:30,220 --> 00:16:31,950

who were not Nazis.

232

00:16:31,950 --> 00:16:34,630

So you had to be very
careful in dividing

233

00:16:34,630 --> 00:16:39,670

your work in such
a way not to try

234

00:16:39,670 --> 00:16:41,420

to hurt somebody
who is innocent.

235

00:16:41,420 --> 00:16:45,490

236

00:16:45,490 --> 00:16:47,580

My entrance to Katowice--

237

00:16:47,580 --> 00:16:51,130

as to describe-- it was
not a very pleasant one,

238

00:16:51,130 --> 00:16:57,490

because you saw the
city was somehow

239

00:16:57,490 --> 00:17:01,390

not completely destroyed, but
destroyed in certain areas.

240

00:17:01,390 --> 00:17:05,470

You saw tanks which
were not functioning.

241

00:17:05,470 --> 00:17:07,359

You saw broken up vehicles.

242

00:17:07,359 --> 00:17:10,599

You saw a lot of
bodies in the street.

243

00:17:10,599 --> 00:17:12,940

And they were already
not bodies of Jews,

244

00:17:12,940 --> 00:17:17,940

but they were mostly
bodies of German soldiers.

245

00:17:17,940 --> 00:17:19,109

This had to be cleaned up.

246

00:17:19,109 --> 00:17:22,380

And special units came in.

247

00:17:22,380 --> 00:17:25,710

The cooperation between
the Russian government

248

00:17:25,710 --> 00:17:29,460

and the Russian troops and
the Polish troops and the HIAS

249

00:17:29,460 --> 00:17:32,350

was very good at
that particular time.

250

00:17:32,350 --> 00:17:37,780

And I introduced myself
to the Russian general.

251

00:17:37,780 --> 00:17:45,600

And I said that I'm going to
be a Polish [? functioneer ?]

252

00:17:45,600 --> 00:17:47,380

to do the work.

253

00:17:47,380 --> 00:17:49,920

And I would need their help,
because we have nothing

254

00:17:49,920 --> 00:17:50,610

to work with.

255

00:17:50,610 --> 00:17:57,920

256

00:17:57,920 --> 00:18:03,980

Soon, when Auschwitz was
liberated, I went there.

257

00:18:03,980 --> 00:18:07,490

258

00:18:07,490 --> 00:18:16,790

I saw with my own eyes
what a destruction machine

259

00:18:16,790 --> 00:18:20,240

was built in order to
destroy the Jewish people.

260

00:18:20,240 --> 00:18:21,750

My heart was bleeding.

261

00:18:21,750 --> 00:18:24,780

I was crying.

262

00:18:24,780 --> 00:18:30,030

My eyes were red a
whole day from seeing

263

00:18:30,030 --> 00:18:37,720

the bones and the ashes and
the broken up crematoriums.

264

00:18:37,720 --> 00:18:42,750

Because they bombed
them, they dynamited.

265

00:18:42,750 --> 00:18:49,250

And the burnt cabins
there where people lived.

266

00:18:49,250 --> 00:18:51,480
And you had a
pretty good picture.

267
00:18:51,480 --> 00:18:54,290
And I saw people
who wandered around

268
00:18:54,290 --> 00:18:58,970
without knowing what
happened to them.

269
00:18:58,970 --> 00:19:03,665
Some Jews survived Auschwitz
all the way till January 23rd.

270
00:19:03,665 --> 00:19:08,140

271
00:19:08,140 --> 00:19:13,240
And you saw some of the people
who looked like half people,

272
00:19:13,240 --> 00:19:14,240
you know?

273
00:19:14,240 --> 00:19:19,010
Skin, skeletons walking,
and their eyes bulged out.

274
00:19:19,010 --> 00:19:21,590

275
00:19:21,590 --> 00:19:27,080
The whole form of a person,
you couldn't even look at them.

276
00:19:27,080 --> 00:19:28,490
Were these Muselmann?

277
00:19:28,490 --> 00:19:30,960
Muselmann, right, yeah, exactly.

278

00:19:30,960 --> 00:19:32,063

I forgot the name already.

279

00:19:32,063 --> 00:19:33,029

Muselmann.

280

00:19:33,029 --> 00:19:35,930

281

00:19:35,930 --> 00:19:38,420

And I really didn't
meet anybody.

282

00:19:38,420 --> 00:19:41,210

I didn't see anybody
of my friends,

283

00:19:41,210 --> 00:19:44,090

because it was such
a [? callous. ?]

284

00:19:44,090 --> 00:19:49,100

And I at that time understood
that the march took place.

285

00:19:49,100 --> 00:19:53,660

And some of them who came back
a week or two or three weeks

286

00:19:53,660 --> 00:20:00,050

later told us that there was
a death march, that 80% or 90%

287

00:20:00,050 --> 00:20:04,610

of the people in Auschwitz were
taken out in the last moment

288

00:20:04,610 --> 00:20:07,160

before the Russian
troops came in,

289

00:20:07,160 --> 00:20:14,600

and they were walking hundreds
of miles towards Germany.

290

00:20:14,600 --> 00:20:19,400
And in the march, many of them
were shot, or just dropped dead

291

00:20:19,400 --> 00:20:21,230
because it was winter.

292

00:20:21,230 --> 00:20:24,650
And Poland has a
very severe winter.

293

00:20:24,650 --> 00:20:28,260
And that winter was a
severe winter in '45.

294

00:20:28,260 --> 00:20:32,560
So I hadn't been there.

295

00:20:32,560 --> 00:20:35,010
I didn't see what
happened with the march.

296

00:20:35,010 --> 00:20:39,510
But the first
witnesses came to me.

297

00:20:39,510 --> 00:20:43,850
And whoever came to Katowice--

298

00:20:43,850 --> 00:20:45,770
and I invited a lot of people.

299

00:20:45,770 --> 00:20:47,980
I said, if you get
a little better

300

00:20:47,980 --> 00:20:54,170
and you get a little bit
stronger, you come to me,

301

00:20:54,170 --> 00:20:56,330
and I'll give you jobs.

302

00:20:56,330 --> 00:20:59,960
I had enough jobs for everybody.

303

00:20:59,960 --> 00:21:04,720
And it so happened that a
lot of people who came back,

304

00:21:04,720 --> 00:21:12,000
I gave positions in the security
forces, or in other positions,

305

00:21:12,000 --> 00:21:15,750
like in commerce, or
whatever they could handle.

306

00:21:15,750 --> 00:21:18,810
It took many, many
months for people

307

00:21:18,810 --> 00:21:21,960
to come back to reality
that they're alive,

308

00:21:21,960 --> 00:21:25,350
and to eat a little bit
more decent in order

309

00:21:25,350 --> 00:21:30,020
to gain some
strength and weight.

310

00:21:30,020 --> 00:21:35,940
And among them, I had a
friend of mine, a woman.

311

00:21:35,940 --> 00:21:39,090
I'd like to mention
that, because there's

312

00:21:39,090 --> 00:21:49,555
an article about it written
in a magazine in California,

313
00:21:49,555 --> 00:21:52,890
where they describe this woman--

314
00:21:52,890 --> 00:21:55,320
her name is Lola Potok.

315
00:21:55,320 --> 00:21:59,430
This woman received
a position from me

316
00:21:59,430 --> 00:22:02,660
as a warden of a
prison in Gleiwitz.

317
00:22:02,660 --> 00:22:09,660
Gliwice was also a
neighboring town in Silesia.

318
00:22:09,660 --> 00:22:13,120
It was already a part of
Germany before the war.

319
00:22:13,120 --> 00:22:16,440
But it was incorporated
in our area.

320
00:22:16,440 --> 00:22:25,700
And this Lola Potok had 10
brothers and one sister,

321
00:22:25,700 --> 00:22:29,310
or nine brothers and one sister.

322
00:22:29,310 --> 00:22:32,070
There were 11 kids at home.

323
00:22:32,070 --> 00:22:36,980
And she was a
survivor of Auschwitz.

324
00:22:36,980 --> 00:22:41,070
And she was in the death
march, and she came back.

325
00:22:41,070 --> 00:22:43,110
She escaped from
the death march.

326
00:22:43,110 --> 00:22:48,000
And she came back
through all little towns,

327
00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:51,760
and she wound up in Katowice
maybe a month after.

328
00:22:51,760 --> 00:22:58,710
And when she came to me and
she wanted revenge, I said,

329
00:22:58,710 --> 00:23:01,820
the best revenge is I make
you a warden of a prison.

330
00:23:01,820 --> 00:23:05,270
And mostly, what we sent to
the prison is SS or others,

331
00:23:05,270 --> 00:23:11,790
so you'll all the opportunities
to do whatever you want.

332
00:23:11,790 --> 00:23:16,680
We really were not
concerned about the lives

333
00:23:16,680 --> 00:23:19,950
of the German people.

334
00:23:19,950 --> 00:23:27,040
We felt that they deserved the
worst treatment in the world.

335
00:23:27,040 --> 00:23:31,180
But unfortunately-- and
I have to say that--

336
00:23:31,180 --> 00:23:35,761
unfortunately, they were
treated much, much better

337
00:23:35,761 --> 00:23:37,960
than we were treated.

338
00:23:37,960 --> 00:23:40,240
Because they were
guilty of murder.

339
00:23:40,240 --> 00:23:41,470
We were not guilty of murder.

340
00:23:41,470 --> 00:23:44,560
We were guilty only that we
are Jews, that we were Jews.

341
00:23:44,560 --> 00:23:46,990
But there were guilty
of premeditated murder.

342
00:23:46,990 --> 00:23:49,530

343
00:23:49,530 --> 00:24:00,480
So life in Katowice in Silesia--

344
00:24:00,480 --> 00:24:06,120
in a way, we started to see
the influx of the Jewish people

345
00:24:06,120 --> 00:24:11,670
coming from Russia back home,
coming from concentration

346
00:24:11,670 --> 00:24:19,145

camps, coming from hiding,
or from other survival.

347
00:24:19,145 --> 00:24:22,800

348
00:24:22,800 --> 00:24:24,930
But you didn't see
too many of them.

349
00:24:24,930 --> 00:24:28,740
You didn't see that influx
like you would expect.

350
00:24:28,740 --> 00:24:30,960
Most of the people who
were liberated later

351
00:24:30,960 --> 00:24:38,260
on by the American
British, and French forces

352
00:24:38,260 --> 00:24:39,330
remained in Germany.

353
00:24:39,330 --> 00:24:43,080

354
00:24:43,080 --> 00:24:52,140
I tried at that time to
somehow straighten my life.

355
00:24:52,140 --> 00:25:00,820
I was not sure what I
really wanted from my life.

356
00:25:00,820 --> 00:25:02,820
I really didn't know exactly.

357
00:25:02,820 --> 00:25:08,130
I had the problem bothered
me that my father is

358

00:25:08,130 --> 00:25:10,600
buried in the woods there.

359

00:25:10,600 --> 00:25:16,620
And it also bothered me too that
my sister got very, very sick

360

00:25:16,620 --> 00:25:21,520
from the beatings she received
in Udetfeld at that time.

361

00:25:21,520 --> 00:25:27,470
And there weren't too
many doctors around.

362

00:25:27,470 --> 00:25:33,020
First, I decided to move
the body of my father

363

00:25:33,020 --> 00:25:38,430
to the Jewish cemetery
in Bedzin, which

364

00:25:38,430 --> 00:25:42,380
still was existing at the time.

365

00:25:42,380 --> 00:25:51,300
And I took a squad of soldiers,
and I went to the area,

366

00:25:51,300 --> 00:25:53,950
already in a uniform.

367

00:25:53,950 --> 00:25:57,380
And I don't know how it
happened, but all of a sudden,

368

00:25:57,380 --> 00:26:00,800
when we came with trucks--

369

00:26:00,800 --> 00:26:02,170
we had two trucks--

370
00:26:02,170 --> 00:26:05,840
and with the soldiers, the
villages around all of a sudden

371
00:26:05,840 --> 00:26:09,890
find out that
somebody is coming,

372
00:26:09,890 --> 00:26:15,860
and the rumors came
out that the Jews came

373
00:26:15,860 --> 00:26:18,592
to take out the gold from the--

374
00:26:18,592 --> 00:26:19,550
they buried gold there.

375
00:26:19,550 --> 00:26:22,520

376
00:26:22,520 --> 00:26:29,500
And I said to the
fellows there, let's dig.

377
00:26:29,500 --> 00:26:33,800
Naturally, my two brothers
were with me at that time too.

378
00:26:33,800 --> 00:26:38,270
So we start digging
for the body.

379
00:26:38,270 --> 00:26:45,920
And it was only maybe six months
or seven months when he died,

380
00:26:45,920 --> 00:26:53,410
so it was no problem to take
out the box from the earth.

381

00:26:53,410 --> 00:26:59,860

And all of a sudden, we
see hundreds of peasants

382

00:26:59,860 --> 00:27:07,210

surrounding that wood and
with all kind of knives,

383

00:27:07,210 --> 00:27:09,770

with all kinds of instruments.

384

00:27:09,770 --> 00:27:12,350

The Jews came to take out gold.

385

00:27:12,350 --> 00:27:14,060

How many of you were there?

386

00:27:14,060 --> 00:27:15,440

We were about a dozen.

387

00:27:15,440 --> 00:27:18,620

388

00:27:18,620 --> 00:27:26,050

So I said to the soldiers,
set up the machine guns.

389

00:27:26,050 --> 00:27:29,750

And if they want to
go close, then we

390

00:27:29,750 --> 00:27:32,200

will have to teach
them a lesson.

391

00:27:32,200 --> 00:27:36,620

But don't shoot at them first.

392

00:27:36,620 --> 00:27:41,690

And we tried to call
them from far away,

393

00:27:41,690 --> 00:27:45,660
that this is not gold, that
this is a body we're taking out

394
00:27:45,660 --> 00:27:48,290
of here.

395
00:27:48,290 --> 00:27:51,540
But they came closer and
closer, so I gave the order

396
00:27:51,540 --> 00:27:53,660
to shoot in the air.

397
00:27:53,660 --> 00:27:59,550
As soon as we start shooting
in the air, they start running.

398
00:27:59,550 --> 00:28:07,940
So I mention the incident
because the influence of Hitler

399
00:28:07,940 --> 00:28:14,070
was so spread that even
after the war, when they knew

400
00:28:14,070 --> 00:28:18,270
that there were no
Jews alive, they still

401
00:28:18,270 --> 00:28:22,350
were trying to have--

402
00:28:22,350 --> 00:28:24,030
they thought that the gold--

403
00:28:24,030 --> 00:28:27,280
that they collected gold
with Jews all the time,

404
00:28:27,280 --> 00:28:34,740
which was a terrible thing to
say, but a terrible feeling.

405

00:28:34,740 --> 00:28:39,130

We took the body out,
and we left in peace.

406

00:28:39,130 --> 00:28:41,880

We were happy that
nobody got hurt.

407

00:28:41,880 --> 00:28:49,030

We were happy that this incident
was not really a bloody one.

408

00:28:49,030 --> 00:28:52,300

But we were ready,
we were ready.

409

00:28:52,300 --> 00:28:56,980

And we buried our
father in the cemetery.

410

00:28:56,980 --> 00:29:03,320

At that particular time already,
we had 10 men for a minyan.

411

00:29:03,320 --> 00:29:06,850

That means that it was a
great honor for my father

412

00:29:06,850 --> 00:29:10,520

to be buried with a minyan.

413

00:29:10,520 --> 00:29:15,430

And this was like
memories came again.

414

00:29:15,430 --> 00:29:18,040

We went through the same feeling
that we went through when

415

00:29:18,040 --> 00:29:23,830

we first time did this.

416

00:29:23,830 --> 00:29:28,160

And life was going on.

417

00:29:28,160 --> 00:29:33,310

I did not like the behavior of
a lot of people in Silesia--

418

00:29:33,310 --> 00:29:36,480

the politics around.

419

00:29:36,480 --> 00:29:40,260

Right after the war were
all kind of politics.

420

00:29:40,260 --> 00:29:48,780

And the politics came from a lot
of Polish different political

421

00:29:48,780 --> 00:29:53,460

groups, like the
Armia Krajowa, who

422

00:29:53,460 --> 00:29:55,650

was much against the Russians.

423

00:29:55,650 --> 00:29:59,910

And they were also
against the Jews.

424

00:29:59,910 --> 00:30:04,560

And the temporary
governor of Silesia

425

00:30:04,560 --> 00:30:12,480

was a colonel who was
not a very liked person.

426

00:30:12,480 --> 00:30:18,420

So at that particular
time, I called Warsaw,

427

00:30:18,420 --> 00:30:22,410

and I said that the
situation is Silesia

428
00:30:22,410 --> 00:30:24,540
is very difficult
to handle, that we

429
00:30:24,540 --> 00:30:30,670
need special
instructions what to do.

430
00:30:30,670 --> 00:30:36,380
I suggested that it
would be a good idea

431
00:30:36,380 --> 00:30:41,500
to bring General
Zawadzki to Silesia,

432
00:30:41,500 --> 00:30:45,440
being that he has the experience
of handling cases like that.

433
00:30:45,440 --> 00:30:48,650

434
00:30:48,650 --> 00:30:55,640
And as young as I was,
and as little power I had,

435
00:30:55,640 --> 00:30:57,560
I convinced the
government of Poland

436
00:30:57,560 --> 00:31:02,290
to bring General Zawadzki, who
became the governor of Silesia.

437
00:31:02,290 --> 00:31:06,250
And being that I was
instrumental in that,

438
00:31:06,250 --> 00:31:13,920

and I knew them from
Lublin, he accepted it.

439
00:31:13,920 --> 00:31:16,360
And he came to Katowice.

440
00:31:16,360 --> 00:31:19,540
And the first thing
what he said is,

441
00:31:19,540 --> 00:31:25,000
I'll accept this job if
you will be my advisor.

442
00:31:25,000 --> 00:31:25,750
I accepted it.

443
00:31:25,750 --> 00:31:27,580
I said, with great pleasure.

444
00:31:27,580 --> 00:31:30,730
This will be my pleasure to do.

445
00:31:30,730 --> 00:31:36,610
As a matter of fact, I
designated the nicest mansion

446
00:31:36,610 --> 00:31:39,520
left in Katowice untouched--

447
00:31:39,520 --> 00:31:48,130
the chief of the Gestapo
lived there during the war--

448
00:31:48,130 --> 00:31:51,470
to become his residence.

449
00:31:51,470 --> 00:31:55,400
And naturally, he took
over the job, which

450
00:31:55,400 --> 00:31:57,150

was much easier for me then.

451

00:31:57,150 --> 00:32:02,570

Because he brought with
him a lot of experience,

452

00:32:02,570 --> 00:32:06,020

and he was the
commander-in-chief

453

00:32:06,020 --> 00:32:09,485

of the armed forces of Poland.

454

00:32:09,485 --> 00:32:12,460

455

00:32:12,460 --> 00:32:15,830

And he knew how to do the job.

456

00:32:15,830 --> 00:32:20,780

And he did the job of cleaning
up political rivals, made sure

457

00:32:20,780 --> 00:32:23,600

that everything is in order.

458

00:32:23,600 --> 00:32:29,600

And my job was to make sure
that the area was peaceful,

459

00:32:29,600 --> 00:32:32,450

and that the people have
food, and that nobody

460

00:32:32,450 --> 00:32:36,460

is looting and robbing.

461

00:32:36,460 --> 00:32:46,000

And I will help the commander of
the police and the other police

462

00:32:46,000 --> 00:32:52,240

to do the job as
best as they can.

463

00:32:52,240 --> 00:33:04,420
Then naturally, I got involved
with Major [? Yokovski, ?] who

464

00:33:04,420 --> 00:33:08,530
was the chief of the
[? Ubear. ?] [? Ubear ?] is

465

00:33:08,530 --> 00:33:12,340
the organization who
handles criminals,

466

00:33:12,340 --> 00:33:15,520
and political
criminals especially.

467

00:33:15,520 --> 00:33:22,990
And I tried to situate
a lot of survivors,

468

00:33:22,990 --> 00:33:26,860
who came home without
families, without brothers,

469

00:33:26,860 --> 00:33:34,270
without sisters, single people
mostly, and tried to give them

470

00:33:34,270 --> 00:33:41,770
positions, whether in the Polish
milic, or was it in the police,

471

00:33:41,770 --> 00:33:50,818
or in the [? Ubear, ?] and
in different other locations,

472

00:33:50,818 --> 00:33:59,290
like commerce and schools,
whatever was available.

473

00:33:59,290 --> 00:34:03,110

And then I became
very involved--

474

00:34:03,110 --> 00:34:07,880

how am I going to
save my sister?

475

00:34:07,880 --> 00:34:14,330

My sister was to me
like a part of my life,

476

00:34:14,330 --> 00:34:16,610

like a part of my body.

477

00:34:16,610 --> 00:34:18,350

I loved her dearly.

478

00:34:18,350 --> 00:34:21,650

I knew she's not well.

479

00:34:21,650 --> 00:34:27,010

I knew she suffered a lot,
maybe because of me, in a way,

480

00:34:27,010 --> 00:34:32,239

that if I would not get
involved in this work

481

00:34:32,239 --> 00:34:35,310

in the underground organization,
maybe this wouldn't happen.

482

00:34:35,310 --> 00:34:42,120

So I had a feeling
of guilt. I tried

483

00:34:42,120 --> 00:34:46,440

to get advice of
some doctors who

484

00:34:46,440 --> 00:34:50,250

came from all kind of

Poland to our area.

485
00:34:50,250 --> 00:34:55,920
And they told me that Poland
has no facilities right now

486
00:34:55,920 --> 00:34:59,490
to save anybody with
a situation like this.

487
00:34:59,490 --> 00:35:02,340
What was her specific illness?

488
00:35:02,340 --> 00:35:06,000
When the Gestapo beat her
up, they collapsed one lung.

489
00:35:06,000 --> 00:35:08,670
And because of
all the situation,

490
00:35:08,670 --> 00:35:14,070
she got TB in both lungs.

491
00:35:14,070 --> 00:35:15,270
How it came about--

492
00:35:15,270 --> 00:35:19,120
is it from the beating or not?

493
00:35:19,120 --> 00:35:24,240
And she was at that
time in a hospital.

494
00:35:24,240 --> 00:35:28,650
Actually, it was
a hospital for TB.

495
00:35:28,650 --> 00:35:29,980
And she was in bed.

496
00:35:29,980 --> 00:35:33,240

She was bedridden
most of the time.

497
00:35:33,240 --> 00:35:38,100
And all the doctors advised
me that the best thing

498
00:35:38,100 --> 00:35:44,820
would be to send her
to Sweden, or maybe

499
00:35:44,820 --> 00:35:47,970
to Italy or Switzerland.

500
00:35:47,970 --> 00:35:51,890
Switzerland wouldn't
extend a visa.

501
00:35:51,890 --> 00:35:56,020
It was very difficult at
that time to get any visas.

502
00:35:56,020 --> 00:36:01,740
And it was very difficult to
get any place at that time.

503
00:36:01,740 --> 00:36:03,920
It was chaos in Europe yet.

504
00:36:03,920 --> 00:36:07,680
The German troops were
still fighting to the end.

505
00:36:07,680 --> 00:36:14,730
And it's very little
I could do, so we

506
00:36:14,730 --> 00:36:17,460
tried to do the best we could
at that particular time.

507
00:36:17,460 --> 00:36:22,980

508
00:36:22,980 --> 00:36:27,090
When I straightened
out the area and things

509
00:36:27,090 --> 00:36:31,330
were getting a little
bit better organized

510
00:36:31,330 --> 00:36:39,090
with General Zawadzki I was
thinking about other things,

511
00:36:39,090 --> 00:36:44,190
saving my sister, go back
to school, do things like--

512
00:36:44,190 --> 00:36:46,530
what am I going to
be, a military man?

513
00:36:46,530 --> 00:36:51,830
Am I going to wind up to
work for the Russians?

514
00:36:51,830 --> 00:36:58,320
The Russians particularly
were not my favorite people.

515
00:36:58,320 --> 00:37:01,580
I was not a communist.

516
00:37:01,580 --> 00:37:06,580
I wanted to do
something different.

517
00:37:06,580 --> 00:37:10,660
And before the war, I
wanted to become engineer,

518
00:37:10,660 --> 00:37:12,090
and I couldn't.

519

00:37:12,090 --> 00:37:15,800

Here I am young and with
a lot of experience,

520

00:37:15,800 --> 00:37:18,670

but still lacking
certain education,

521

00:37:18,670 --> 00:37:20,800

which I would have to get.

522

00:37:20,800 --> 00:37:24,260

523

00:37:24,260 --> 00:37:33,070

And I have contacted
the Ministry

524

00:37:33,070 --> 00:37:39,070

of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw
to try to do something

525

00:37:39,070 --> 00:37:45,940

for my sister, and they promised
that they will do their best.

526

00:37:45,940 --> 00:37:53,950

I went to the American embassy
in Warsaw, pleading the case,

527

00:37:53,950 --> 00:37:58,450

telling them that I have a
sister who is very sick--

528

00:37:58,450 --> 00:38:01,030

consequences of the war.

529

00:38:01,030 --> 00:38:05,950

I would like her to be able
to go to the United States

530

00:38:05,950 --> 00:38:08,150

to save her life.

531

00:38:08,150 --> 00:38:11,800

And we promise that we
will sign an affidavit

532

00:38:11,800 --> 00:38:17,570

that as soon as she gets better,
she'll come back to Poland.

533

00:38:17,570 --> 00:38:22,980

Being that I have a sister
in the United States--

534

00:38:22,980 --> 00:38:26,340

and at that particular
time, I didn't even

535

00:38:26,340 --> 00:38:30,870

know where my sister lived,
because we lost contact

536

00:38:30,870 --> 00:38:35,070

with her when she left Europe.

537

00:38:35,070 --> 00:38:39,897

And they told me that
they will discuss this

538

00:38:39,897 --> 00:38:40,980

and they will let me know.

539

00:38:40,980 --> 00:38:44,130

540

00:38:44,130 --> 00:38:55,250

A few weeks later, we get their
reply that they cannot accept

541

00:38:55,250 --> 00:39:01,040

her to come for
medical treatments.

542

00:39:01,040 --> 00:39:03,710

Although we signed everything,
and we feel that we are not

543

00:39:03,710 --> 00:39:08,330

going to be a burden
in the United States,

544

00:39:08,330 --> 00:39:10,770

they still cannot approve that.

545

00:39:10,770 --> 00:39:13,050

Did they offer a reason?

546

00:39:13,050 --> 00:39:14,400

They didn't offer a reason.

547

00:39:14,400 --> 00:39:20,870

They said that they don't
accept any TB people in America.

548

00:39:20,870 --> 00:39:25,920

I was a little bit upset, but
I thought that maybe this is

549

00:39:25,920 --> 00:39:29,440

the law, and that you
cannot press it very hard.

550

00:39:29,440 --> 00:39:34,100

551

00:39:34,100 --> 00:39:41,650

I met many people after
the war who survived,

552

00:39:41,650 --> 00:39:46,330

who were luckily here.

553

00:39:46,330 --> 00:39:50,180

I offered many positions again.

554

00:39:50,180 --> 00:39:56,930

I met a friend of mine,
a daughter of my father's

555

00:39:56,930 --> 00:40:00,340

good friends, who lived in the
neighboring town of Sosnoweic.

556

00:40:00,340 --> 00:40:08,990

And her name was [? Lusha ?]
[? Frankel. ?] Her uncle worked

557

00:40:08,990 --> 00:40:09,490

for me.

558

00:40:09,490 --> 00:40:12,640

559

00:40:12,640 --> 00:40:18,160

And he was the chief of
the police in Katowice.

560

00:40:18,160 --> 00:40:29,250

His name was [? Paternovski. ?]
And we went out for a while.

561

00:40:29,250 --> 00:40:36,740

We had not-- it was
difficult for people

562

00:40:36,740 --> 00:40:40,670

to meet other
people at that time.

563

00:40:40,670 --> 00:40:43,310

The only thing which
binds me with her

564

00:40:43,310 --> 00:40:50,950

was the fact that I
took her to a party

565

00:40:50,950 --> 00:40:55,870
that we had of survivors,
people survived the war.

566
00:40:55,870 --> 00:40:59,680
And on the way back
driving the car,

567
00:40:59,680 --> 00:41:03,910
I was hit by a Russian truck.

568
00:41:03,910 --> 00:41:07,450
He was supposed to
drive on the right side,

569
00:41:07,450 --> 00:41:08,920
and he drove on the left side.

570
00:41:08,920 --> 00:41:12,230
He thought he's in
England at the time.

571
00:41:12,230 --> 00:41:19,570
And unfortunately, we both wound
up in the hospital in Katowice.

572
00:41:19,570 --> 00:41:25,300
And she was almost--

573
00:41:25,300 --> 00:41:28,000
I found her about 50
feet away from the car,

574
00:41:28,000 --> 00:41:29,870
so the impact was tremendous.

575
00:41:29,870 --> 00:41:32,140
And I must have lost
my conscious a little

576
00:41:32,140 --> 00:41:40,700
bit at that time too,
because as I understand and I

577
00:41:40,700 --> 00:41:43,700
remember that I stood--

578
00:41:43,700 --> 00:41:47,360
when they found us and they
brought us to the hospital,

579
00:41:47,360 --> 00:41:50,630
I told the surgeon to
operate first on her,

580
00:41:50,630 --> 00:41:53,130
to do anything to save her life.

581
00:41:53,130 --> 00:42:00,500
Because she had a cut
across the face, and I

582
00:42:00,500 --> 00:42:02,240
thought that she lost an eye.

583
00:42:02,240 --> 00:42:08,630
But luckily, they saved
the eye and they sewed her

584
00:42:08,630 --> 00:42:11,250
up a little bit.

585
00:42:11,250 --> 00:42:21,740
And then one leg was broken,
so she was badly hurt.

586
00:42:21,740 --> 00:42:31,420
And at that time, I understand
that I lost my conscious then

587
00:42:31,420 --> 00:42:33,370
after the operation,
and they put

588
00:42:33,370 --> 00:42:35,620

me-- and I was about two
weeks in the hospital.

589
00:42:35,620 --> 00:42:39,370
And I came back to
myself little by little,

590
00:42:39,370 --> 00:42:44,280
and the consequences
are here, all beaten up.

591
00:42:44,280 --> 00:42:46,630
This is an episode which
maybe don't mean anything

592
00:42:46,630 --> 00:42:49,810
with survival, which I had,
but it's also part of--

593
00:42:49,810 --> 00:42:52,160
I could have gotten
killed right there.

594
00:42:52,160 --> 00:42:52,910
After all you did.

595
00:42:52,910 --> 00:42:55,100
After all what I did.

596
00:42:55,100 --> 00:43:01,200
Understand too that I had about
two bodyguards all the time

597
00:43:01,200 --> 00:43:03,640
in the hospital.

598
00:43:03,640 --> 00:43:05,220
They must have
thought very highly

599
00:43:05,220 --> 00:43:09,910
about me, if they decided
to put special police.

600
00:43:09,910 --> 00:43:13,260

601
00:43:13,260 --> 00:43:14,990
And I came out.

602
00:43:14,990 --> 00:43:19,240
I'm telling the story,
because this woman--

603
00:43:19,240 --> 00:43:22,390
and her name is Feiner now--

604
00:43:22,390 --> 00:43:26,350
she married her fiancée,
who she went out--

605
00:43:26,350 --> 00:43:28,350
he also survived the war.

606
00:43:28,350 --> 00:43:34,030
And she finished
medicine in Germany.

607
00:43:34,030 --> 00:43:39,110
After the liberation,
she went back to Germany.

608
00:43:39,110 --> 00:43:42,640
It seems that this accident
wasn't very good [LAUGHS]

609
00:43:42,640 --> 00:43:45,040
going out business.

610
00:43:45,040 --> 00:43:51,910
And she lives in Great
Neck, Long Island now.

611
00:43:51,910 --> 00:43:57,770
I tell this story because after

I came out of the hospital,

612
00:43:57,770 --> 00:44:02,420
I had a tremendous desire
to leave that whole business

613
00:44:02,420 --> 00:44:14,520
of being such an important
member of the Polish government

614
00:44:14,520 --> 00:44:15,470
with such a position.

615
00:44:15,470 --> 00:44:20,280
I thought that I have to
devote a little more time

616
00:44:20,280 --> 00:44:22,790
to my family.

617
00:44:22,790 --> 00:44:26,600
And at that time,
I went to Warsaw.

618
00:44:26,600 --> 00:44:29,330

619
00:44:29,330 --> 00:44:32,360
And I spoke to General
Zawadzki, who gave me

620
00:44:32,360 --> 00:44:37,640
all kinds of instructions,
and whom shall I meet

621
00:44:37,640 --> 00:44:40,680
and whom shall I talk to.

622
00:44:40,680 --> 00:44:47,460
And they gave me permission to
leave Poland with my sister.

623

00:44:47,460 --> 00:44:50,310

There were two choices,
to go to Sweden--

624

00:44:50,310 --> 00:44:54,020

they accepted that
my sister should

625

00:44:54,020 --> 00:44:58,480

come to Sweden for medical
treatment-- or Italy.

626

00:44:58,480 --> 00:45:01,050

Italy had no choice
in that, but Sweden

627

00:45:01,050 --> 00:45:02,490

had a choice to accept or not.

628

00:45:02,490 --> 00:45:06,150

Because Italy was a conquered
country at that time.

629

00:45:06,150 --> 00:45:09,320

630

00:45:09,320 --> 00:45:16,090

This is already December 1945.

631

00:45:16,090 --> 00:45:21,345

I got the permit
to go to the zones.

632

00:45:21,345 --> 00:45:26,550

633

00:45:26,550 --> 00:45:30,180

Because the occupation
of Europe took place,

634

00:45:30,180 --> 00:45:33,510

you had to have a permit
to go to the Russian zone.

635
00:45:33,510 --> 00:45:37,150
You had to have a permit
to go to the English zone,

636
00:45:37,150 --> 00:45:41,590
the American zone, and
through the Italian border.

637
00:45:41,590 --> 00:45:44,320

638
00:45:44,320 --> 00:45:48,940
I decided at the beginning
that I will take a car

639
00:45:48,940 --> 00:45:51,790
and drive all the way through.

640
00:45:51,790 --> 00:45:54,970
But everybody told me that
it's not a very good idea,

641
00:45:54,970 --> 00:45:59,410
because in case something breaks
down, you will never get parts.

642
00:45:59,410 --> 00:46:01,150
All Europe was
devastated, everything

643
00:46:01,150 --> 00:46:04,840
was impossible to get.

644
00:46:04,840 --> 00:46:13,090
So being that they
talked me out of it,

645
00:46:13,090 --> 00:46:17,090
I decided to go by train.

646
00:46:17,090 --> 00:46:23,760

I got a passport for myself, for
my mother, and for my sister.

647
00:46:23,760 --> 00:46:29,690
I was the first, probably,
Jew after the war

648
00:46:29,690 --> 00:46:35,320
who got diplomatic
passports for my family,

649
00:46:35,320 --> 00:46:40,420
with permits of the Americans to
go through their American zone,

650
00:46:40,420 --> 00:46:43,330
with permits of
the Russian zone,

651
00:46:43,330 --> 00:46:48,410
and with permits of
the French and British.

652
00:46:48,410 --> 00:46:52,980
And being that I was a little
bit scared to go by myself,

653
00:46:52,980 --> 00:46:54,980
with my mother and
my sister, being she

654
00:46:54,980 --> 00:47:00,950
was bedridden and
difficult, I got permissions

655
00:47:00,950 --> 00:47:02,170
from my brother--

656
00:47:02,170 --> 00:47:04,100
not a passport, but a permit--

657
00:47:04,100 --> 00:47:11,250
to go with me to Vienna,

to Austria and back.

658
00:47:11,250 --> 00:47:14,560
And he decided to go with me.

659
00:47:14,560 --> 00:47:18,000
And that's the brother who was
chief of the police in Bielsko

660
00:47:18,000 --> 00:47:20,300
at that time.

661
00:47:20,300 --> 00:47:24,352
And just before-- two
weeks or three weeks,

662
00:47:24,352 --> 00:47:26,810
I don't remember exactly, but
it would be about three weeks

663
00:47:26,810 --> 00:47:28,610
before Christmas--

664
00:47:28,610 --> 00:47:35,720
December-- we left
Katowice to go by train

665
00:47:35,720 --> 00:47:41,130
to Chechen,
Czechoslovakia, Moravska

666
00:47:41,130 --> 00:47:46,270
Ostrava towards Bratislava.

667
00:47:46,270 --> 00:47:49,530

668
00:47:49,530 --> 00:47:58,315
The first crossing of the border
with all my documents was easy.

669
00:47:58,315 --> 00:48:00,440

A little search.

670

00:48:00,440 --> 00:48:02,840

Then we went to
Bratislava by train.

671

00:48:02,840 --> 00:48:06,973

It took about, I think,
two days or three days

672

00:48:06,973 --> 00:48:09,140

to get there, which normally
takes only a few hours.

673

00:48:09,140 --> 00:48:13,970

674

00:48:13,970 --> 00:48:21,860

In Bratislava, there was no
communication to go to Vienna.

675

00:48:21,860 --> 00:48:28,190

So somebody told me that if I
contact a few Russian soldiers,

676

00:48:28,190 --> 00:48:32,780

truck drivers, there's
always on the market

677

00:48:32,780 --> 00:48:36,240

Russian troops who go to Vienna.

678

00:48:36,240 --> 00:48:41,780

Vienna at that time was
occupied by the Russians,

679

00:48:41,780 --> 00:48:43,250

and also by the Americans.

680

00:48:43,250 --> 00:48:45,050

It was divided the
same like Berlin.

681

00:48:45,050 --> 00:48:48,370

682

00:48:48,370 --> 00:48:54,990

I went to that market,
and I offered the Russians

683

00:48:54,990 --> 00:48:57,690

vodka, which I took with me.

684

00:48:57,690 --> 00:49:01,050

And I say, I have a sick sister.

685

00:49:01,050 --> 00:49:06,970

I have to take her to
Vienna to a hospital,

686

00:49:06,970 --> 00:49:09,640

and I need their help.

687

00:49:09,640 --> 00:49:12,640

So they agreed.

688

00:49:12,640 --> 00:49:14,890

But as smart as I was,
I wasn't smart enough

689

00:49:14,890 --> 00:49:20,980

to know that it was very unsafe
to go with Russian trucks

690

00:49:20,980 --> 00:49:25,450

without the authority
to know about it.

691

00:49:25,450 --> 00:49:30,040

And they put my sister
in the first truck,

692

00:49:30,040 --> 00:49:34,960

and then they put
me and my brother--

693

00:49:34,960 --> 00:49:41,110

no, my sister was
with a truck driver,

694

00:49:41,110 --> 00:49:44,110

and my mother was on
the top of the truck,

695

00:49:44,110 --> 00:49:46,930

and me and my brother
on the other truck

696

00:49:46,930 --> 00:49:47,930

on the top of the truck.

697

00:49:47,930 --> 00:49:52,040

698

00:49:52,040 --> 00:49:55,520

And we were driving
towards Vienna.

699

00:49:55,520 --> 00:50:00,530

All of a sudden, the first
truck went a little bit faster.

700

00:50:00,530 --> 00:50:04,370

And the second truck
approached the first truck,

701

00:50:04,370 --> 00:50:07,202

and we see my sister,
who couldn't walk,

702

00:50:07,202 --> 00:50:08,660

standing in the
middle of the road.

703

00:50:08,660 --> 00:50:11,170

704

00:50:11,170 --> 00:50:21,540
And we see a few of the soldiers
with the guns in hand, shooting

705
00:50:21,540 --> 00:50:23,530
at animals, or whatever.

706
00:50:23,530 --> 00:50:26,050
It was like wooded area.

707
00:50:26,050 --> 00:50:27,610
And I said to my
brother, I don't

708
00:50:27,610 --> 00:50:30,730
like what's happened here.

709
00:50:30,730 --> 00:50:35,710
I said, first of all, she
does not have to walk,

710
00:50:35,710 --> 00:50:37,780
and she was pale.

711
00:50:37,780 --> 00:50:41,660
And I said to Oleg,
you know what?

712
00:50:41,660 --> 00:50:43,210
There's something we have to do.

713
00:50:43,210 --> 00:50:45,280
We jumped off the truck.

714
00:50:45,280 --> 00:50:48,610
My mother was on the
top of the truck.

715
00:50:48,610 --> 00:50:50,800
And we pulled our guns.

716
00:50:50,800 --> 00:50:53,950

We didn't separate
with our guns.

717
00:50:53,950 --> 00:50:57,590
And we took the driver
from the second truck.

718
00:50:57,590 --> 00:50:59,680
We pulled the guns
in back of them.

719
00:50:59,680 --> 00:51:03,380

720
00:51:03,380 --> 00:51:05,540
We told them ruki vverkh.

721
00:51:05,540 --> 00:51:09,577
You know ruki vverkh in
Russian means hand up.

722
00:51:09,577 --> 00:51:11,910
We had pretty good experience
in doing things like this,

723
00:51:11,910 --> 00:51:13,470
but we were afraid.

724
00:51:13,470 --> 00:51:18,210
And the other guys
didn't know what to do.

725
00:51:18,210 --> 00:51:22,530
And everything took a
minute, because right

726
00:51:22,530 --> 00:51:30,240
at that scene, a car
with Russian officers

727
00:51:30,240 --> 00:51:35,700
came down that road and stopped,
and came running with the guns,

728
00:51:35,700 --> 00:51:38,520
and said what's happening here?

729
00:51:38,520 --> 00:51:44,670
And I told him we felt
that something is wrong.

730
00:51:44,670 --> 00:51:49,440
We told him the story about
how we got to go to Vienna,

731
00:51:49,440 --> 00:51:54,510
and that they
wanted to attack us.

732
00:51:54,510 --> 00:51:57,060
Because the way they
were carrying the guns

733
00:51:57,060 --> 00:52:04,540
against us was proof that
they wanted to do something.

734
00:52:04,540 --> 00:52:08,230
Naturally, they disarmed them.

735
00:52:08,230 --> 00:52:11,130
And they told us
that they are going

736
00:52:11,130 --> 00:52:16,330
to go ahead of the convoy,
and that way we came.

737
00:52:16,330 --> 00:52:22,000
We found out later in
Vienna that a lot of people

738
00:52:22,000 --> 00:52:25,510
got killed in the woods
between Bratislava and Vienna

739

00:52:25,510 --> 00:52:28,120

right after the war,
because soldiers

740

00:52:28,120 --> 00:52:35,720

were robbing these innocent
travelers and killing them.

741

00:52:35,720 --> 00:52:36,290

So this was--

742

00:52:36,290 --> 00:52:37,750

It didn't matter who they were?

743

00:52:37,750 --> 00:52:39,100

No matter who you were.

744

00:52:39,100 --> 00:52:42,160

They didn't ask you if you
were yevrey, Jew or not.

745

00:52:42,160 --> 00:52:44,980

It was not a matter of
me being Jewish or not.

746

00:52:44,980 --> 00:52:47,570

They couldn't even
believe that we were Jews.

747

00:52:47,570 --> 00:52:54,310

But the idea was that
they did things like this.

748

00:52:54,310 --> 00:52:58,870

So when we came to
Vienna, the officers

749

00:52:58,870 --> 00:53:01,640

asked me where we
would like to go.

750

00:53:01,640 --> 00:53:06,230

So I told him we would
like to go to the Red Cross

751
00:53:06,230 --> 00:53:10,970
or to any hospital, because
my sister is very sick.

752
00:53:10,970 --> 00:53:14,780
So they brought us
to the American zone,

753
00:53:14,780 --> 00:53:17,660
where the Red Cross was.

754
00:53:17,660 --> 00:53:20,940

755
00:53:20,940 --> 00:53:25,020
I was so happy.

756
00:53:25,020 --> 00:53:28,000
It was another
miracle of survival.

757
00:53:28,000 --> 00:53:32,540
This is almost a year
after the liberation,

758
00:53:32,540 --> 00:53:40,910
and we already were exposed to
brutality and stuff like that.

759
00:53:40,910 --> 00:53:44,810
And in Vienna, because of
the incident what happened,

760
00:53:44,810 --> 00:53:53,450
we stood about a week, because
she was taken to a hospital.

761
00:53:53,450 --> 00:53:56,390
And from there, we
traveled again by train

762
00:53:56,390 --> 00:54:03,320
to Innsbruck, Austria,
through different zones.

763
00:54:03,320 --> 00:54:06,960
In Innsbruck, we stood
a couple of days.

764
00:54:06,960 --> 00:54:12,420
There was no trains
going to Italy.

765
00:54:12,420 --> 00:54:18,150
And there was no transportation.

766
00:54:18,150 --> 00:54:19,290
I couldn't get any trucks.

767
00:54:19,290 --> 00:54:21,850
I was afraid
already with trucks.

768
00:54:21,850 --> 00:54:26,510
And there was a train going
halfway into the Alps,

769
00:54:26,510 --> 00:54:28,140
into the mountains.

770
00:54:28,140 --> 00:54:31,380
I don't know if you know
Italy or Brenner Pass?

771
00:54:31,380 --> 00:54:33,240
We're going towards
Brenner Pass.

772
00:54:33,240 --> 00:54:36,450
Can you imagine a
situation that we

773

00:54:36,450 --> 00:54:45,510
stopped for the night in a lodge
like this, and in the morning,

774
00:54:45,510 --> 00:54:52,415
we hired sleighs.

775
00:54:52,415 --> 00:54:55,940

776
00:54:55,940 --> 00:55:03,530
And we had to push sleighs up
the road towards Brenner Pass.

777
00:55:03,530 --> 00:55:11,820
We're talking about a
lot of height to make.

778
00:55:11,820 --> 00:55:20,930
And we put my sister on
the sleigh, and we pushed.

779
00:55:20,930 --> 00:55:25,070
And this was a sleigh
with a horse, you know?

780
00:55:25,070 --> 00:55:29,370
But the horse had difficulties
to make that mountain.

781
00:55:29,370 --> 00:55:30,350
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

782
00:55:30,350 --> 00:55:33,710
So me, my mother,
and my brother,

783
00:55:33,710 --> 00:55:38,230
who luckily went with
us always towards Italy,

784
00:55:38,230 --> 00:55:41,290
pushed that sleigh up

to the Brenner Pass.

785

00:55:41,290 --> 00:55:44,900

And soon we came to
the Brenner Pass,

786

00:55:44,900 --> 00:55:47,720

and we saw that Italy's
on the other side already.

787

00:55:47,720 --> 00:55:50,430

788

00:55:50,430 --> 00:55:59,900

We were surrounded by
Polish military, who

789

00:55:59,900 --> 00:56:07,970

were the Poles who were in
England, on the other army, who

790

00:56:07,970 --> 00:56:13,310

fought together with the Allies.

791

00:56:13,310 --> 00:56:19,100

But they were people who didn't
want that the Russians should

792

00:56:19,100 --> 00:56:19,820

liberate Poland.

793

00:56:19,820 --> 00:56:22,430

They wanted to be the
one to liberate it.

794

00:56:22,430 --> 00:56:25,940

So when we showed
the passports, they

795

00:56:25,940 --> 00:56:31,055

arrested us, saying that
they don't recognize

796

00:56:31,055 --> 00:56:38,930
the present Polish
government, and that they have

797

00:56:38,930 --> 00:56:41,420
to bring us to the authorities.

798

00:56:41,420 --> 00:56:44,422
Excuse me, we have to
stop for a few minutes,

799

00:56:44,422 --> 00:56:45,880
because we have to
change the tape.

800

00:56:45,880 --> 00:56:46,840
Oh, I'm sorry.

801

00:56:46,840 --> 00:56:48,390
OK.

802

00:56:48,390 --> 00:56:54,000