

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:41,580

2

00:00:41,580 --> 00:00:43,410

Good afternoon.

3

00:00:43,410 --> 00:00:45,120

My name is Bernard

Weinstein and I'm

4

00:00:45,120 --> 00:00:48,210

the director of the Kean

College Oral Testimonies Project

5

00:00:48,210 --> 00:00:50,580

at the Holocaust

Resource Center.

6

00:00:50,580 --> 00:00:53,130

We are affiliated with

the Video Archives

7

00:00:53,130 --> 00:00:56,460

for Holocaust Testimonies

at Yale University.

8

00:00:56,460 --> 00:00:59,670

Sharing the interview

with me is Nancy Kislin.

9

00:00:59,670 --> 00:01:01,440

We are privileged

to welcome Mr. Adam

10

00:01:01,440 --> 00:01:04,170

Spiro, a survivor

presently living in Wayne,

11

00:01:04,170 --> 00:01:07,620

New Jersey, who has generously

volunteered to give testimony

12

00:01:07,620 --> 00:01:09,820
about his experiences
before, during,

13

00:01:09,820 --> 00:01:11,760
and after the Holocaust.

14

00:01:11,760 --> 00:01:14,670
Mr. Spiro, we would both
like to welcome you.

15

00:01:14,670 --> 00:01:16,950
And I'd like to
begin by asking you

16

00:01:16,950 --> 00:01:21,570
if you would tell us a little
bit about your early life,

17

00:01:21,570 --> 00:01:24,870
the place you came from, and
some of your early memories.

18

00:01:24,870 --> 00:01:27,970

19

00:01:27,970 --> 00:01:34,920
I was born in Warsaw,
Poland in 1905,

20

00:01:34,920 --> 00:01:41,410
from a family that was very
much involved in political life,

21

00:01:41,410 --> 00:01:45,900
especially Polish
socialistic life

22

00:01:45,900 --> 00:01:51,210
at the time of
Revolution of 1905.

23

00:01:51,210 --> 00:01:59,890

As a result of this
revolution, one of my brothers

24

00:01:59,890 --> 00:02:06,340

was executed by the
Russians for attempt

25

00:02:06,340 --> 00:02:10,289

on the life of the
General [PERSONAL NAME],,

26

00:02:10,289 --> 00:02:12,600

Governor of Warsaw.

27

00:02:12,600 --> 00:02:16,000

And the family was
expelled from Warsaw.

28

00:02:16,000 --> 00:02:22,090

So we moved to Lodz, which is a
big industrial city, near Lodz.

29

00:02:22,090 --> 00:02:25,140

And there I was raised.

30

00:02:25,140 --> 00:02:31,680

I went to what is called
in Europe a gymnasium.

31

00:02:31,680 --> 00:02:37,410

I finished gymnasium and
went for the higher study

32

00:02:37,410 --> 00:02:47,040

to free city of Donetsk, where
I attended a technical institute

33

00:02:47,040 --> 00:02:53,760

and finished with a degree
of electrical engineer.

34

00:02:53,760 --> 00:03:00,510

I came back to Warsaw
and worked as an engineer

35
00:03:00,510 --> 00:03:03,890
for the Polish Ministry
of Communications.

36
00:03:03,890 --> 00:03:04,390
Excuse me.

37
00:03:04,390 --> 00:03:06,182
When you came back to
Warsaw, you came back

38
00:03:06,182 --> 00:03:07,410
alone or with your family?

39
00:03:07,410 --> 00:03:10,990

40
00:03:10,990 --> 00:03:12,775
No, my family was in--

41
00:03:12,775 --> 00:03:14,170
In Lodz.

42
00:03:14,170 --> 00:03:16,150
Yes, was in Lodz, yes.

43
00:03:16,150 --> 00:03:21,460
My father retired soon
after I finished school.

44
00:03:21,460 --> 00:03:25,210
And they want to live
in a small resort.

45
00:03:25,210 --> 00:03:27,370
What was his
profession or vocation?

46
00:03:27,370 --> 00:03:31,240

My father was
professor of moral--

47
00:03:31,240 --> 00:03:35,950
philosophy, especially
moral and ethics

48
00:03:35,950 --> 00:03:43,090
in higher classes of gymnasiums
and in teacher seminars.

49
00:03:43,090 --> 00:03:47,550

50
00:03:47,550 --> 00:03:51,130
His background I think
is very interesting.

51
00:03:51,130 --> 00:03:55,440
And I will maybe spend a few
minutes talking about him.

52
00:03:55,440 --> 00:03:58,350
Please.

53
00:03:58,350 --> 00:04:05,340
He's the son of a very famous
Jewish rabbinical family

54
00:04:05,340 --> 00:04:07,210
in Poland.

55
00:04:07,210 --> 00:04:14,820
And he was raised on the
court of [INAUDIBLE],, one

56
00:04:14,820 --> 00:04:19,585
of the [INAUDIBLE]
families in Poland.

57
00:04:19,585 --> 00:04:23,400

58

00:04:23,400 --> 00:04:30,540

He was married there to a
doctor of a very wealthy family

59

00:04:30,540 --> 00:04:35,220

and was supposed to spend
his life studying Talmud.

60

00:04:35,220 --> 00:04:42,870

But somehow he got acquainted
with the young ladies

61

00:04:42,870 --> 00:04:48,930

from Jewish families that
were attending the finishing

62

00:04:48,930 --> 00:04:51,730

schools in Switzerland.

63

00:04:51,730 --> 00:04:57,110

And through the
communication with them,

64

00:04:57,110 --> 00:05:01,860

acquired lust, I might
say, for another life.

65

00:05:01,860 --> 00:05:05,460

He went to Warsaw.

66

00:05:05,460 --> 00:05:10,500

And working very hard
as a Hebrew teacher,

67

00:05:10,500 --> 00:05:20,490

he attended secret
educational courses,

68

00:05:20,490 --> 00:05:24,540

Polish secret
university courses.

69

00:05:24,540 --> 00:05:28,530
And that was his education.

70
00:05:28,530 --> 00:05:30,840
These were courses that were
forbidden by the Russians.

71
00:05:30,840 --> 00:05:32,370
Yes, they were not--

72
00:05:32,370 --> 00:05:36,570
that was a time when Russia
was repressing Polish culture

73
00:05:36,570 --> 00:05:41,160
and Polish sentiments
in what was then

74
00:05:41,160 --> 00:05:42,570
called [INAUDIBLE] Poland.

75
00:05:42,570 --> 00:05:45,120

76
00:05:45,120 --> 00:05:52,440
He was then-- that was a
time of the emancipation,

77
00:05:52,440 --> 00:05:54,720
the Jewish emancipation.

78
00:05:54,720 --> 00:05:59,880
And many young people from
Jewish Hasidic families

79
00:05:59,880 --> 00:06:05,070
in providences were coming to
Warsaw looking for the facility

80
00:06:05,070 --> 00:06:07,740
to learn.

81

00:06:07,740 --> 00:06:12,990
Some philanthropic families
organized a school,

82
00:06:12,990 --> 00:06:16,170
which my father directed.

83
00:06:16,170 --> 00:06:20,520
And this was a
school where he was--

84
00:06:20,520 --> 00:06:25,410
he and people that worked
with him were teaching

85
00:06:25,410 --> 00:06:28,230
these young people,
preparing them

86
00:06:28,230 --> 00:06:35,210
for the maturity examination--

87
00:06:35,210 --> 00:06:37,190
there's a special name for it--

88
00:06:37,190 --> 00:06:40,292
without attending the school.

89
00:06:40,292 --> 00:06:40,875
Matriculation.

90
00:06:40,875 --> 00:06:45,680
Many of these people
became very famous people.

91
00:06:45,680 --> 00:06:48,800
Because then from
this school they

92
00:06:48,800 --> 00:06:52,650
went to European universities.

93

00:06:52,650 --> 00:06:58,670
And many of them become
very famous people.

94
00:06:58,670 --> 00:07:04,250
Then when this-- when
my brother was killed

95
00:07:04,250 --> 00:07:08,030
and father went to
prison, and after he

96
00:07:08,030 --> 00:07:12,500
was released from prison,
he was expelled from Warsaw.

97
00:07:12,500 --> 00:07:16,130
Then he went to Lodz.

98
00:07:16,130 --> 00:07:21,110
And as a result of this
Revolution of 1905,

99
00:07:21,110 --> 00:07:26,660
the Russian government
allowed some Polish schooling.

100
00:07:26,660 --> 00:07:32,090
Not under the auspices of
the Minister of Education,

101
00:07:32,090 --> 00:07:37,400
but under the auspices of
the Ministry of Commerce.

102
00:07:37,400 --> 00:07:44,480
So all the school were somehow
called a commerce school.

103
00:07:44,480 --> 00:07:45,320
Does your family--

104
00:07:45,320 --> 00:07:50,180

They were very famous schools
in Poland in every big city.

105
00:07:50,180 --> 00:07:53,300
Was your family treated
differently in Lodz than they

106
00:07:53,300 --> 00:07:57,290
were in Warsaw following the--

107
00:07:57,290 --> 00:08:00,200
Politically, by
the government, I

108
00:08:00,200 --> 00:08:07,040
don't recall any surveillance
or nothing that was a family--

109
00:08:07,040 --> 00:08:10,580
I think that they
left father alone.

110
00:08:10,580 --> 00:08:12,320
Yeah.

111
00:08:12,320 --> 00:08:16,550
They didn't attempt in any way,
in light of their past history

112
00:08:16,550 --> 00:08:17,060
to--

113
00:08:17,060 --> 00:08:17,860
No.

114
00:08:17,860 --> 00:08:18,860
--censor or curtail him.

115
00:08:18,860 --> 00:08:22,640
Father was an
educator from heart.

116

00:08:22,640 --> 00:08:24,710

He was a real educator.

117

00:08:24,710 --> 00:08:27,800

Did he teach in Lodz

also, when he was in Lodz?

118

00:08:27,800 --> 00:08:32,539

In Lodz, he taught

in the high schools

119

00:08:32,539 --> 00:08:37,039

and in teaching seminar.

120

00:08:37,039 --> 00:08:40,400

Because there was

the schools that

121

00:08:40,400 --> 00:08:42,559

were allowed by the

Russian government.

122

00:08:42,559 --> 00:08:47,450

And then a few years

later came the war.

123

00:08:47,450 --> 00:08:52,890

And with the war, the

independent Poland.

124

00:08:52,890 --> 00:08:57,770

How did your father's family

react to him when he--

125

00:08:57,770 --> 00:09:00,620

Estranged, estranged, yes.

126

00:09:00,620 --> 00:09:04,110

127

00:09:04,110 --> 00:09:10,560

When my grandfather died and

my father went to the funeral,

128
00:09:10,560 --> 00:09:15,620
he was almost stoned in
this little town in Warsaw

129
00:09:15,620 --> 00:09:17,090
from which they came.

130
00:09:17,090 --> 00:09:21,160

131
00:09:21,160 --> 00:09:26,410
The family was Polish oriented.

132
00:09:26,410 --> 00:09:29,470
Father was anti-Zionist.

133
00:09:29,470 --> 00:09:33,150
Belonged to the group
of people that thought

134
00:09:33,150 --> 00:09:36,640
that this is a dead idea.

135
00:09:36,640 --> 00:09:41,380
That there will never be
a place for all the Jews

136
00:09:41,380 --> 00:09:47,170
that will want to come to Israel
if it becomes independent.

137
00:09:47,170 --> 00:09:52,510
And there was all--

138
00:09:52,510 --> 00:09:58,870
there was a whole philosophical
school of anti-Zionists

139
00:09:58,870 --> 00:10:03,740
based on this approach.

140

00:10:03,740 --> 00:10:09,020

Were the members of your
family intensely nationalistic

141

00:10:09,020 --> 00:10:12,000

as far as Poland was
concerned, or did you

142

00:10:12,000 --> 00:10:15,010

lean more towards socialism?

143

00:10:15,010 --> 00:10:20,050

Some of the members
were socialistic.

144

00:10:20,050 --> 00:10:26,260

One of my sisters was
an important member

145

00:10:26,260 --> 00:10:33,700

of the Polish government, with
the party, lived in Moscow.

146

00:10:33,700 --> 00:10:41,290

And was liquidated by Stalin
during the purges in '56.

147

00:10:41,290 --> 00:10:47,110

The younger generation,
my brother next to me

148

00:10:47,110 --> 00:10:49,540

was a patriotic Pole.

149

00:10:49,540 --> 00:10:52,525

Was an officer in
the Polish army.

150

00:10:52,525 --> 00:10:55,710

151

00:10:55,710 --> 00:10:59,980

In secret Polish army
at first and then

152
00:10:59,980 --> 00:11:02,080
in the normal Polish army.

153
00:11:02,080 --> 00:11:04,610

154
00:11:04,610 --> 00:11:11,200
We would consider
ourselves Poles.

155
00:11:11,200 --> 00:11:14,770
You know that there
was a minority--

156
00:11:14,770 --> 00:11:21,070
three things that
Poland had to sign

157
00:11:21,070 --> 00:11:26,240
before the Western
countries accepted her

158
00:11:26,240 --> 00:11:28,690
as a member of the conference.

159
00:11:28,690 --> 00:11:34,180
And according to
this minority treaty,

160
00:11:34,180 --> 00:11:38,350
the Jews could declare
their nationality

161
00:11:38,350 --> 00:11:40,600
as a Jewish nationality.

162
00:11:40,600 --> 00:11:50,230
Most of the Jews were declaring
Polish citizen, [INAUDIBLE]

163

00:11:50,230 --> 00:11:53,500
persuasion, Jewish nationality.

164

00:11:53,500 --> 00:11:56,680

165

00:11:56,680 --> 00:12:01,360
Members of my family
insisted that we

166

00:12:01,360 --> 00:12:04,180
are treated as nationals--

167

00:12:04,180 --> 00:12:07,300
Polish nationals.

168

00:12:07,300 --> 00:12:11,605
We were laughed at by Poles.

169

00:12:11,605 --> 00:12:15,340
And we were laughed
at by the Jews.

170

00:12:15,340 --> 00:12:19,965
But this was our
belief at that time.

171

00:12:19,965 --> 00:12:22,510

172

00:12:22,510 --> 00:12:25,840
When you say laughed
at, were you,

173

00:12:25,840 --> 00:12:31,670
or Jews generally, at that
time ridiculed or mistreated?

174

00:12:31,670 --> 00:12:38,410
The Jews were-- the period
when I was growing up

175

00:12:38,410 --> 00:12:43,420
was a period where the Jewish
nationality was coming forward

176

00:12:43,420 --> 00:12:46,550
in two aspects.

177

00:12:46,550 --> 00:12:52,210
One, in the aspect of the
Bund with the Jewish culture.

178

00:12:52,210 --> 00:12:56,590
And the Zionists with
the Hebrew culture.

179

00:12:56,590 --> 00:13:00,820
And both had to--

180

00:13:00,820 --> 00:13:03,580
didn't like, let's
say, my approach

181

00:13:03,580 --> 00:13:07,030
or my friends that were
saying we are Poles

182

00:13:07,030 --> 00:13:14,380
and we want to assimilate
with the Polish culture.

183

00:13:14,380 --> 00:13:19,510
I didn't have any background
for a Jewish national life

184

00:13:19,510 --> 00:13:22,570
or for Hebrew national life.

185

00:13:22,570 --> 00:13:25,450
My culture was Polish.

186

00:13:25,450 --> 00:13:28,930

187
00:13:28,930 --> 00:13:32,290
If I sound a little
bit apologetic,

188
00:13:32,290 --> 00:13:36,310
it's because later
on, after all,

189
00:13:36,310 --> 00:13:38,600
our philosophy went bankrupt.

190
00:13:38,600 --> 00:13:39,100
Yes.

191
00:13:39,100 --> 00:13:45,050
So maybe we should have seen
theirs, after this bankrupt.

192
00:13:45,050 --> 00:13:48,070
But we didn't see it this way.

193
00:13:48,070 --> 00:13:53,750
Anyhow, when I finished the
school, I came back to Warsaw.

194
00:13:53,750 --> 00:14:00,230
As I said, I started to
work for the government.

195
00:14:00,230 --> 00:14:03,490
Now, this was-- when
I started to work

196
00:14:03,490 --> 00:14:12,510
was a time of a good relation
between Jews and Poles,

197
00:14:12,510 --> 00:14:16,410
between the Jewish organization
and the Polish government.

198

00:14:16,410 --> 00:14:21,780
That was the time when
Pilsudski came back to power.

199
00:14:21,780 --> 00:14:28,650
And somehow didn't allow
official antisemitism

200
00:14:28,650 --> 00:14:31,980
to come to life.

201
00:14:31,980 --> 00:14:35,080
What year was this?

202
00:14:35,080 --> 00:14:42,640
This, 1930-1931.

203
00:14:42,640 --> 00:14:56,860
And they were-- in my branch
of service were three Jews.

204
00:14:56,860 --> 00:15:06,490
One was pretending that
he isn't Jewish at all.

205
00:15:06,490 --> 00:15:12,630
One was hiding.

206
00:15:12,630 --> 00:15:16,120

207
00:15:16,120 --> 00:15:21,110
He didn't allow to talk
about his Jewishness.

208
00:15:21,110 --> 00:15:28,190
And I was stressing
my Jewishness.

209
00:15:28,190 --> 00:15:38,060
I didn't want to be embarrassed
by antisemitic remarks

210

00:15:38,060 --> 00:15:43,410
or by unpleasant treatment.

211

00:15:43,410 --> 00:15:52,520
So by stressing my Jewishness,
I was putting myself immediately

212

00:15:52,520 --> 00:15:55,230
above the offense.

213

00:15:55,230 --> 00:15:58,640
They couldn't-- they
didn't dare to offend me.

214

00:15:58,640 --> 00:16:01,940

215

00:16:01,940 --> 00:16:03,890
Do I make myself clear?

216

00:16:03,890 --> 00:16:04,970
Yes.

217

00:16:04,970 --> 00:16:06,980
By being open about
it, you were--

218

00:16:06,980 --> 00:16:10,100
Here was a Jew and--

219

00:16:10,100 --> 00:16:12,500
It was a source of pride
to you, rather than--

220

00:16:12,500 --> 00:16:17,460
I never want to work
on Jewish holidays.

221

00:16:17,460 --> 00:16:21,420
And if once or
twice was occasions

222

00:16:21,420 --> 00:16:25,160

that I had to come
because of emergency,

223

00:16:25,160 --> 00:16:30,530

I came dressed up for
holiday and not for work.

224

00:16:30,530 --> 00:16:36,170

And I have to say that I was
very much respected for it.

225

00:16:36,170 --> 00:16:37,910

Were you, yourself, observant?

226

00:16:37,910 --> 00:16:42,690

Or was it based mainly in a
kind of ethical or moral--

227

00:16:42,690 --> 00:16:44,360

No, only ethical.

228

00:16:44,360 --> 00:16:47,870

I wasn't at all observant Jew.

229

00:16:47,870 --> 00:16:54,560

I didn't come to work
because that was my station.

230

00:16:54,560 --> 00:16:58,650

But I didn't belong
to the synagogue

231

00:16:58,650 --> 00:17:01,100

and I didn't attend synagogue.

232

00:17:01,100 --> 00:17:03,860

I wasn't even bar mitzvahed.

233

00:17:03,860 --> 00:17:12,950

So entirely moral
and self-defense.

234
00:17:12,950 --> 00:17:25,859
Also, I was a Jewish heritage,
and the importance and honor

235
00:17:25,859 --> 00:17:31,990
of Jewish heritage was very
much implanted in me at home.

236
00:17:31,990 --> 00:17:32,490
Yes.

237
00:17:32,490 --> 00:17:34,912
Yes, that we were--

238
00:17:34,912 --> 00:17:38,880
the Jewish philosophy, the
Jewish morals, the Jewish--

239
00:17:38,880 --> 00:17:45,950
the Jewish-- how should I say--

240
00:17:45,950 --> 00:17:50,640
the part that the Jews played
in the history of the world--

241
00:17:50,640 --> 00:17:52,900
that means the
history of a culture--

242
00:17:52,900 --> 00:17:55,760
was very much impressed on us.

243
00:17:55,760 --> 00:18:00,870
And I was proud to be a
member of this people.

244
00:18:00,870 --> 00:18:02,230
And you were respected for it.

245
00:18:02,230 --> 00:18:02,730
Yes.

246
00:18:02,730 --> 00:18:06,120

247
00:18:06,120 --> 00:18:12,690
The first few years, there were
no incidents of antisemitism.

248
00:18:12,690 --> 00:18:20,070
But later on, Poland became
much more dictatorial.

249
00:18:20,070 --> 00:18:24,370
And was flirting with Germany.

250
00:18:24,370 --> 00:18:25,530
This was after Pilsudski?

251
00:18:25,530 --> 00:18:26,130
Yes.

252
00:18:26,130 --> 00:18:28,200
After Pilsudski died.

253
00:18:28,200 --> 00:18:37,530
And there started to be
these unpleasant moments too.

254
00:18:37,530 --> 00:18:43,190
There was a group of
young Polish nationalists,

255
00:18:43,190 --> 00:18:47,640
a very strong group,
among my colleagues.

256
00:18:47,640 --> 00:18:54,870
And they were, to a certain
degree, boycotting me as a Jew.

257
00:18:54,870 --> 00:19:01,830
And they were

unpleasant situation.

258

00:19:01,830 --> 00:19:07,730

But I also work with the army.

259

00:19:07,730 --> 00:19:14,640

My work involved a contact,
a very close contact

260

00:19:14,640 --> 00:19:19,710

with the signal corps
officers of the army.

261

00:19:19,710 --> 00:19:25,860

And somehow, all these people
that I worked with the army

262

00:19:25,860 --> 00:19:29,070

were very fond of me.

263

00:19:29,070 --> 00:19:36,660

And they were, if you
may say so, protecting me

264

00:19:36,660 --> 00:19:41,640

from the outboards.

265

00:19:41,640 --> 00:19:47,490

Also, I sensed that my bosses
were also very, very friendly,

266

00:19:47,490 --> 00:19:48,990

were appreciative.

267

00:19:48,990 --> 00:19:50,010

They liked me.

268

00:19:50,010 --> 00:19:55,110

And they appreciate my
effort and my contribution

269

00:19:55,110 --> 00:19:57,500

to the world.

270

00:19:57,500 --> 00:20:01,650

There was an incident in 1938.

271

00:20:01,650 --> 00:20:05,340

One of the main
antisemitic papers

272

00:20:05,340 --> 00:20:11,880

published an article,
in which he was accusing

273

00:20:11,880 --> 00:20:19,110

our office of tolerating Jews.

274

00:20:19,110 --> 00:20:22,050

And there was a
sentence there saying

275

00:20:22,050 --> 00:20:26,670

that no important decision
is made without influence

276

00:20:26,670 --> 00:20:28,005

of Mr. Adam Spiro.

277

00:20:28,005 --> 00:20:30,510

278

00:20:30,510 --> 00:20:37,020

So on one hand, the
friends started to call in,

279

00:20:37,020 --> 00:20:41,130

saying that this is a
very unpleasant situation.

280

00:20:41,130 --> 00:20:45,190

And my bosses said,
they are praising you.

281

00:20:45,190 --> 00:20:46,980
You don't have to be concerned.

282
00:20:46,980 --> 00:20:49,800
They're saying you
are important person.

283
00:20:49,800 --> 00:20:53,710
You are an important person.

284
00:20:53,710 --> 00:20:59,890
So when the situation
became very unpleasant

285
00:20:59,890 --> 00:21:05,940
in the end of 1938,
beginning 1939,

286
00:21:05,940 --> 00:21:10,380
I was officially told
by my supervisors,

287
00:21:10,380 --> 00:21:16,050
as long as the constitution
is functioning,

288
00:21:16,050 --> 00:21:21,850
the constitution of the country,
I don't have to worry a bit.

289
00:21:21,850 --> 00:21:24,457

290
00:21:24,457 --> 00:21:26,540
Did you feel that they
were looking the other way?

291
00:21:26,540 --> 00:21:29,810
Or did you feel that
they were sincere?

292
00:21:29,810 --> 00:21:36,890
No, no, they were considering

the young nationalists

293

00:21:36,890 --> 00:21:40,450
as a bunch of fascists.

294

00:21:40,450 --> 00:21:45,560
And the older generation,
if it was antisemitic,

295

00:21:45,560 --> 00:21:47,260
wasn't fascists.

296

00:21:47,260 --> 00:21:50,280
The younger generation
were fascists.

297

00:21:50,280 --> 00:21:51,750
Yes.

298

00:21:51,750 --> 00:21:52,730
At that--

299

00:21:52,730 --> 00:21:54,210
I'm sorry.

300

00:21:54,210 --> 00:21:57,360
At that time in 1938,
were you aware of what

301

00:21:57,360 --> 00:22:01,050
was going on outside your
immediate surrounding?

302

00:22:01,050 --> 00:22:02,880
Naturally, naturally.

303

00:22:02,880 --> 00:22:08,310
We had a nephew in school
and he was suffering.

304

00:22:08,310 --> 00:22:11,280
And many friends were suffering.

305

00:22:11,280 --> 00:22:13,560

We knew exactly what's going on.

306

00:22:13,560 --> 00:22:15,240

Yes, we knew.

307

00:22:15,240 --> 00:22:20,130

It wasn't that we were isolated.

308

00:22:20,130 --> 00:22:25,560

And in 1938, I went abroad.

309

00:22:25,560 --> 00:22:30,550

And a vacation, but
a working vacation.

310

00:22:30,550 --> 00:22:35,160

And I was trying to
contact the people

311

00:22:35,160 --> 00:22:38,250

that I knew in big
telecommunications

312

00:22:38,250 --> 00:22:42,000

organization in the West
if I could eventually

313

00:22:42,000 --> 00:22:45,330

get work and get out of Poland.

314

00:22:45,330 --> 00:22:52,820

But coming for a
moment back to this.

315

00:22:52,820 --> 00:22:57,020

316

00:22:57,020 --> 00:23:06,320

I was attending a German high
institute, a German school.

317

00:23:06,320 --> 00:23:11,600

And that was in time where
Hitler was coming into power.

318

00:23:11,600 --> 00:23:18,410

And there were many unpleasant
incidents at school.

319

00:23:18,410 --> 00:23:23,570

Now, when I finished,
I make my thesis.

320

00:23:23,570 --> 00:23:30,360

After defending the thesis, a
professor, who was my partner,

321

00:23:30,360 --> 00:23:34,080

you might say, congratulate me.

322

00:23:34,080 --> 00:23:40,850

And he said to me like this,
if that would be a normal time,

323

00:23:40,850 --> 00:23:48,920

I would have sent you now to
one of the capitals of Europe.

324

00:23:48,920 --> 00:23:56,150

And you would be starting
a career in the industry.

325

00:23:56,150 --> 00:24:01,220

But this being
not a normal time,

326

00:24:01,220 --> 00:24:09,990

I cannot do anything for you, he
said, but give you one advice.

327

00:24:09,990 --> 00:24:17,540

If you will achieve for
yourself a name in the industry,

328
00:24:17,540 --> 00:24:23,570
nobody will pay attention to
if you are Jew or not Jew,

329
00:24:23,570 --> 00:24:28,250
but only after you will
achieve by yourself a name.

330
00:24:28,250 --> 00:24:31,150

331
00:24:31,150 --> 00:24:36,430
But the same professor, in
an international conference

332
00:24:36,430 --> 00:24:42,850
approached the Polish delegation
and told them about me.

333
00:24:42,850 --> 00:24:47,210
And told them if you
know what you're doing,

334
00:24:47,210 --> 00:24:50,770
you will hire this young
man for your services.

335
00:24:50,770 --> 00:24:53,820

336
00:24:53,820 --> 00:25:02,350
The payoff came when
the war broke out.

337
00:25:02,350 --> 00:25:11,140
And I was evacuated from Warsaw
as a part of the inner circle

338
00:25:11,140 --> 00:25:13,660
of the ministry.

339

00:25:13,660 --> 00:25:19,390
And then two weeks later
when Russia came in

340
00:25:19,390 --> 00:25:25,930
and Polish government decided
to go into exile into Romania,

341
00:25:25,930 --> 00:25:28,730
we were taken--

342
00:25:28,730 --> 00:25:32,020
I say myself, my
wife, and my daughter

343
00:25:32,020 --> 00:25:39,820
were taken in a
official bus to Romania.

344
00:25:39,820 --> 00:25:47,980
Although many people in the bus
objected that some young Jew is

345
00:25:47,980 --> 00:25:54,760
going and taking place of
some important personality,

346
00:25:54,760 --> 00:26:00,750
the man who was in
charge said, the minister

347
00:26:00,750 --> 00:26:06,740
itself insisted that Mr. Spiro
and his family go with us.

348
00:26:06,740 --> 00:26:08,400
So this was the payoff.

349
00:26:08,400 --> 00:26:11,050
And the Germans didn't
raise any objection to this?

350
00:26:11,050 --> 00:26:11,550

Who?

351

00:26:11,550 --> 00:26:12,350

The Germans.

352

00:26:12,350 --> 00:26:15,980

The Germans didn't-- they
didn't-- they weren't there

353

00:26:15,980 --> 00:26:16,480

yet.

354

00:26:16,480 --> 00:26:17,400

Oh, they weren't there yet.

355

00:26:17,400 --> 00:26:19,108

I thought the war had
already broken out.

356

00:26:19,108 --> 00:26:22,500

We were between the
Germans and the Russians.

357

00:26:22,500 --> 00:26:24,840

I went through Romania.

358

00:26:24,840 --> 00:26:32,290

Now this is also very important.

359

00:26:32,290 --> 00:26:34,340

And I would like
to talk about this.

360

00:26:34,340 --> 00:26:39,260

361

00:26:39,260 --> 00:26:42,650

We came to the
place where we have

362

00:26:42,650 --> 00:26:46,730

to pass a river, which was

a frontier between Poland

363
00:26:46,730 --> 00:26:49,100
and Romania.

364
00:26:49,100 --> 00:26:54,590
And we didn't have any
money, only some zlotys, yes.

365
00:26:54,590 --> 00:27:00,920
And I said to myself, I
will go into the market.

366
00:27:00,920 --> 00:27:05,390
And there are the
black marketeers, Jews.

367
00:27:05,390 --> 00:27:08,370
And maybe they will help
me to get some money.

368
00:27:08,370 --> 00:27:11,240

369
00:27:11,240 --> 00:27:17,060
They went there, and
nobody wanted talk with me.

370
00:27:17,060 --> 00:27:19,130
Said forget about this.

371
00:27:19,130 --> 00:27:22,700
You will never go to
Romania, they said.

372
00:27:22,700 --> 00:27:31,940
There is a strict policy, very
strictly enforced, no Jews.

373
00:27:31,940 --> 00:27:35,700
And they told me that
there were very, very

374

00:27:35,700 --> 00:27:42,070
rich Jews that had plenty of
gold and those things happened.

375

00:27:42,070 --> 00:27:48,180
So they say you want us
to sell you some money

376

00:27:48,180 --> 00:27:50,940
and then they would
not let you in.

377

00:27:50,940 --> 00:27:52,100
You will come back.

378

00:27:52,100 --> 00:27:56,670
You will want back your
money, forget about it.

379

00:27:56,670 --> 00:28:02,490
OK, so now we are in this
bus, deep in the night.

380

00:28:02,490 --> 00:28:04,630
And we're going over this river.

381

00:28:04,630 --> 00:28:07,890

382

00:28:07,890 --> 00:28:12,570
In the middle of the
bridge, the bus has stopped

383

00:28:12,570 --> 00:28:17,840
and Romanians come
in to inspect.

384

00:28:17,840 --> 00:28:25,270
A General, Romanian gendarme--
that means military police--

385

00:28:25,270 --> 00:28:29,420

a general, a big
man, big man come.

386
00:28:29,420 --> 00:28:32,450
And the chief of
staff of the ministry,

387
00:28:32,450 --> 00:28:37,790
who was directing this
bus present himself,

388
00:28:37,790 --> 00:28:44,010
gives also papers
and so on, agreement.

389
00:28:44,010 --> 00:28:49,100
And the man says, I
would like to talk

390
00:28:49,100 --> 00:28:52,800
with the members of the group.

391
00:28:52,800 --> 00:28:54,330
OK.

392
00:28:54,330 --> 00:28:59,820
So he goes from group to group,
from one seat to another,

393
00:28:59,820 --> 00:29:05,410
asks for papers, talks, looks.

394
00:29:05,410 --> 00:29:09,610
One of these people that
I was talking about that

395
00:29:09,610 --> 00:29:15,310
was not willingly
admitting that he's a Jew,

396
00:29:15,310 --> 00:29:20,920
his name was Joseph
Zilberstein--

397
00:29:20,920 --> 00:29:25,830
no, Jacob Zilberstein,
Jacob Zilberstein.

398
00:29:25,830 --> 00:29:29,510
And the general takes
his papers in hand

399
00:29:29,510 --> 00:29:35,220
and says Jacob Zilberstein,
you're a Jew, sir.

400
00:29:35,220 --> 00:29:37,900
He says, no.

401
00:29:37,900 --> 00:29:44,530
So the general says Jacob
Zilberstein, you are a Jew.

402
00:29:44,530 --> 00:29:47,350
And he says, no.

403
00:29:47,350 --> 00:29:49,260
And the boss is quiet.

404
00:29:49,260 --> 00:29:52,300
The other people on
the bus are quiet.

405
00:29:52,300 --> 00:29:54,625
Nobody says boo.

406
00:29:54,625 --> 00:29:57,350

407
00:29:57,350 --> 00:30:03,230
He takes his paper with
him and goes farther.

408
00:30:03,230 --> 00:30:05,000
And I said--

409
00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:09,560
I'm sitting with my wife and
I have my little daughter

410
00:30:09,560 --> 00:30:10,220
in [INAUDIBLE].

411
00:30:10,220 --> 00:30:12,020
She's asleep in my arms.

412
00:30:12,020 --> 00:30:20,590
And I said, listen,
Tonya, if he asks me

413
00:30:20,590 --> 00:30:25,150
I'm not denying that I'm a Jew.

414
00:30:25,150 --> 00:30:30,130
She said-- he comes to me.

415
00:30:30,130 --> 00:30:35,910
And I went to reach for papers
here, and here's the child.

416
00:30:35,910 --> 00:30:39,330
And he says, no, no, no
don't disturb the child.

417
00:30:39,330 --> 00:30:40,320
What's your name?

418
00:30:40,320 --> 00:30:43,710
I say Adam Spiro.

419
00:30:43,710 --> 00:30:44,630
Thank you.

420
00:30:44,630 --> 00:30:46,524
And he goes farther.

421

00:30:46,524 --> 00:30:49,210

422

00:30:49,210 --> 00:30:52,790

So we passed this [INAUDIBLE].

423

00:30:52,790 --> 00:30:54,820

We went to Romania.

424

00:30:54,820 --> 00:30:56,840

What happened to Zilberstein?

425

00:30:56,840 --> 00:31:03,420

Oh, he came back to
Zilberstein and says,

426

00:31:03,420 --> 00:31:06,760

Jacob Zilberstein,
you aren't a Jew,

427

00:31:06,760 --> 00:31:10,520

but Jacob is a Jewish
name, isn't it?

428

00:31:10,520 --> 00:31:14,240

And there is a
gentlemen sitting nearby

429

00:31:14,240 --> 00:31:16,460

and says my name is also Jacob.

430

00:31:16,460 --> 00:31:18,010

I am not a Jew.

431

00:31:18,010 --> 00:31:21,270

It isn't necessarily
a Jewish name.

432

00:31:21,270 --> 00:31:23,990

Oh, then everything
is all right.

433

00:31:23,990 --> 00:31:27,170
And went out, rode the bus.

434
00:31:27,170 --> 00:31:31,460

435
00:31:31,460 --> 00:31:33,750
OK, so we went to Romania.

436
00:31:33,750 --> 00:31:38,210
We were there for six months.

437
00:31:38,210 --> 00:31:41,630
Professionally it was a
very interesting moment

438
00:31:41,630 --> 00:31:46,520
because I was asked to
write the manual how

439
00:31:46,520 --> 00:31:50,240
to sabotage the things
that I was building before

440
00:31:50,240 --> 00:31:50,765
to function.

441
00:31:50,765 --> 00:31:53,880

442
00:31:53,880 --> 00:31:57,040
And the war was progressing.

443
00:31:57,040 --> 00:32:06,570
Now at this January 1940, it's
a funny war going on, yes.

444
00:32:06,570 --> 00:32:14,070
Two armies are staying on the
marginal line doing nothing.

445
00:32:14,070 --> 00:32:20,340

And everybody knows that Hitler
cannot stay long without doing

446
00:32:20,340 --> 00:32:21,090
something.

447
00:32:21,090 --> 00:32:25,050
Something must happen.

448
00:32:25,050 --> 00:32:29,700
And very possibly he will move,
not being able to move West,

449
00:32:29,700 --> 00:32:31,470
he will move East.

450
00:32:31,470 --> 00:32:38,250
There is a very strong
fascistic movement in Romania.

451
00:32:38,250 --> 00:32:44,070
And I said to my wife,
what are we going to do?

452
00:32:44,070 --> 00:32:52,360
We applied for American
visa, but that was far,

453
00:32:52,360 --> 00:32:55,570
far in future.

454
00:32:55,570 --> 00:32:58,770
So I said to my wife like this.

455
00:32:58,770 --> 00:33:04,110
If I will volunteer for
the army in France then

456
00:33:04,110 --> 00:33:10,260
I will maybe be able to
get you a visa to France.

457

00:33:10,260 --> 00:33:15,480
Because generally, if the men
went to the army to France,

458
00:33:15,480 --> 00:33:21,740
the women and children were
sent to Algeria to some camp.

459
00:33:21,740 --> 00:33:25,280
And that I didn't want.

460
00:33:25,280 --> 00:33:28,955
So we had many
discussions about this.

461
00:33:28,955 --> 00:33:35,450
It wasn't an easy
decision, not at all.

462
00:33:35,450 --> 00:33:42,650
But my wife, being
a good wife, said

463
00:33:42,650 --> 00:33:47,640
if your feel that this is
the best, so we'll do it.

464
00:33:47,640 --> 00:33:52,580
So I volunteered for the army.

465
00:33:52,580 --> 00:34:00,830
And I got permission for her to
go to Nice to the family house,

466
00:34:00,830 --> 00:34:02,195
as I was said before.

467
00:34:02,195 --> 00:34:05,760

468
00:34:05,760 --> 00:34:08,040
So we went to France.

469

00:34:08,040 --> 00:34:13,590

I was supposed to bring her to
Nice, arrange for everything,

470

00:34:13,590 --> 00:34:15,630

and then go to Paris.

471

00:34:15,630 --> 00:34:21,239

But at the frontier,
some military officer

472

00:34:21,239 --> 00:34:25,480

decided, no, you go out.

473

00:34:25,480 --> 00:34:34,500

So our goodbye was in the
night, in a crowded train,

474

00:34:34,500 --> 00:34:40,199

the five minute stay
between the frontier.

475

00:34:40,199 --> 00:34:44,880

And said goodbye.

476

00:34:44,880 --> 00:34:46,194

She will tell her story.

477

00:34:46,194 --> 00:34:49,780

478

00:34:49,780 --> 00:34:56,800

She had \$50 as the
whole our possession

479

00:34:56,800 --> 00:34:59,530

that we had at this time.

480

00:34:59,530 --> 00:35:03,550

She didn't have any special
jewelry that she could sell

481
00:35:03,550 --> 00:35:04,450
or nothing.

482
00:35:04,450 --> 00:35:06,790
That was it.

483
00:35:06,790 --> 00:35:13,030
And the family niece that
will accept her or not.

484
00:35:13,030 --> 00:35:17,150

485
00:35:17,150 --> 00:35:22,970
OK, I didn't hear from
my wife for the next--

486
00:35:22,970 --> 00:35:26,970

487
00:35:26,970 --> 00:35:31,670
almost a year, almost a year.

488
00:35:31,670 --> 00:35:33,410
I went to the army.

489
00:35:33,410 --> 00:35:37,100
I don't-- the army
was antisemitic.

490
00:35:37,100 --> 00:35:40,430
Antisemitic to the nth degree.

491
00:35:40,430 --> 00:35:41,880
They didn't learn anything.

492
00:35:41,880 --> 00:35:48,500

493
00:35:48,500 --> 00:35:52,440
From a Jewish point of view, I

have to go back for a moment.

494

00:35:52,440 --> 00:35:53,640

I'm sorry.

495

00:35:53,640 --> 00:35:54,640

Please.

496

00:35:54,640 --> 00:35:57,110

Don't apologize.

497

00:35:57,110 --> 00:36:00,770

When we came first
to Romania, we

498

00:36:00,770 --> 00:36:03,650

were approaching
the Jewish holidays.

499

00:36:03,650 --> 00:36:11,780

And we were in a
small Romanian shtetl,

500

00:36:11,780 --> 00:36:18,990

assigned to a house of a
dentist, a Jewish dentist.

501

00:36:18,990 --> 00:36:24,900

And this misses of the
house very, very delicately

502

00:36:24,900 --> 00:36:29,600

asked Tonya if we were Jews.

503

00:36:29,600 --> 00:36:32,000

And Tonya says, yes.

504

00:36:32,000 --> 00:36:38,900

So she said, would you like
to spend a Yom Kippur with us.

505

00:36:38,900 --> 00:36:43,260

And Tonya says I have
to ask my husband.

506
00:36:43,260 --> 00:36:48,170
Now she comes to me and says,
you know, if you accept,

507
00:36:48,170 --> 00:36:51,200
you have to fast.

508
00:36:51,200 --> 00:36:54,410
She says, you have
to play the game.

509
00:36:54,410 --> 00:36:59,330
And I said, nobody died
from not eating today.

510
00:36:59,330 --> 00:37:03,560
They are very friendly,
very nice to us.

511
00:37:03,560 --> 00:37:08,610
We shouldn't-- I wouldn't
like to disappoint them.

512
00:37:08,610 --> 00:37:17,120
So for the first time in my
life, I observed Yom Kippur.

513
00:37:17,120 --> 00:37:23,890

514
00:37:23,890 --> 00:37:29,740
When war ended, I came back
to Nice and we reunited.

515
00:37:29,740 --> 00:37:32,470
And again came Yom Kippur.

516
00:37:32,470 --> 00:37:37,280
My wife asked me, and
how would we be now?

517
00:37:37,280 --> 00:37:42,280
And I said, we don't go back.

518
00:37:42,280 --> 00:37:48,160
So this was my
introduction, if I

519
00:37:48,160 --> 00:37:52,170
say, to the religious
Jewish observance.

520
00:37:52,170 --> 00:37:55,445

521
00:37:55,445 --> 00:37:56,570
How did you meet your wife?

522
00:37:56,570 --> 00:37:59,760

523
00:37:59,760 --> 00:38:02,920
Through her [NON-ENGLISH].

524
00:38:02,920 --> 00:38:10,720
Yes, I was renting a room
in the house of this lady.

525
00:38:10,720 --> 00:38:15,970
And this lady decided that
we would be a good match.

526
00:38:15,970 --> 00:38:16,470
Yeah.

527
00:38:16,470 --> 00:38:20,640

528
00:38:20,640 --> 00:38:23,445
Well, I think a very good match.

529

00:38:23,445 --> 00:38:31,200
We're very happy in marriage and
had a very nice life in Warsaw.

530
00:38:31,200 --> 00:38:37,470
I was writing for
technical papers

531
00:38:37,470 --> 00:38:41,070
and making maybe
more money this way

532
00:38:41,070 --> 00:38:45,670
than from my salary
as an employee.

533
00:38:45,670 --> 00:38:48,900
And this is also why
I was well known.

534
00:38:48,900 --> 00:38:52,410
Because every month,
almost every month,

535
00:38:52,410 --> 00:38:57,480
there was my name in the
monthly professional paper.

536
00:38:57,480 --> 00:39:01,660

537
00:39:01,660 --> 00:39:10,820
So it came-- yes, the war
started for us this way

538
00:39:10,820 --> 00:39:15,800
that my father was
living there in Warsaw.

539
00:39:15,800 --> 00:39:25,860
And then in 1939, he was--

540
00:39:25,860 --> 00:39:33,450

'39-- he was 73 years old.

541

00:39:33,450 --> 00:39:39,200

And he was tall, straight.

542

00:39:39,200 --> 00:39:41,330

And he said, what?

543

00:39:41,330 --> 00:39:43,780

You're kidding about the war.

544

00:39:43,780 --> 00:39:48,340

He is trying his best
to get what he can,

545

00:39:48,340 --> 00:39:53,900

but he never would go to
war against France, England.

546

00:39:53,900 --> 00:39:57,480

That was the last time
that I saw my father.

547

00:39:57,480 --> 00:40:00,040

548

00:40:00,040 --> 00:40:02,220

What happened to him?

549

00:40:02,220 --> 00:40:11,230

He was finished in ghetto.

550

00:40:11,230 --> 00:40:24,380

It means, there was an
extermination camp near Warsaw.

551

00:40:24,380 --> 00:40:27,478

552

00:40:27,478 --> 00:40:28,474

What was the name?

553

00:40:28,474 --> 00:40:33,460

554

00:40:33,460 --> 00:40:38,590

The whole family, everybody
that was in Warsaw, perished.

555

00:40:38,590 --> 00:40:42,220

How many brothers and
sisters did you have?

556

00:40:42,220 --> 00:40:50,050

In Warsaw at that time, I had
a brother with his family.

557

00:40:50,050 --> 00:40:56,590

And I will pay
honor to my nephew.

558

00:40:56,590 --> 00:41:01,990

He was an-- a virtuoso pianist.

559

00:41:01,990 --> 00:41:08,890

He finished conservatorium,
a musical conservatorium

560

00:41:08,890 --> 00:41:14,080

while he was in the
sixth class of gymnasium.

561

00:41:14,080 --> 00:41:17,230

And couldn't get his
diploma from conservatorium

562

00:41:17,230 --> 00:41:21,490

because that was a institute
of higher education.

563

00:41:21,490 --> 00:41:27,950

Had to first make
maturity examination.

564

00:41:27,950 --> 00:41:37,090

He was in London in 1939,
in the beginning of 1939,

565

00:41:37,090 --> 00:41:45,100

taking part in a competition
of young artists.

566

00:41:45,100 --> 00:41:50,380

And he got the second prize
because he was the youngest

567

00:41:50,380 --> 00:41:55,120

and didn't have
a large hand yet.

568

00:41:55,120 --> 00:42:01,420

And play a concert
at Buckingham Palace

569

00:42:01,420 --> 00:42:04,870

for now Queen and her sister.

570

00:42:04,870 --> 00:42:08,410

Was invited to play for them.

571

00:42:08,410 --> 00:42:11,830

And he was giving
concert in ghetto.

572

00:42:11,830 --> 00:42:16,150

And was taken from one of
the concerts by the Germans.

573

00:42:16,150 --> 00:42:21,290

And so he went.

574

00:42:21,290 --> 00:42:29,660

And father went, and brother and
sister, and naturally, plenty

575

00:42:29,660 --> 00:42:30,950

of family.

576
00:42:30,950 --> 00:42:34,280
My wife didn't lose anybody.

577
00:42:34,280 --> 00:42:37,040

578
00:42:37,040 --> 00:42:41,860
She had at that time
sister in Warsaw,

579
00:42:41,860 --> 00:42:46,640
but the sister went to Russia
and save herself there.

580
00:42:46,640 --> 00:42:51,690

581
00:42:51,690 --> 00:42:55,740
OK, so now is the war.

582
00:42:55,740 --> 00:42:59,700
And everybody knows how it went.

583
00:42:59,700 --> 00:43:03,540
The French capitulated.

584
00:43:03,540 --> 00:43:07,680
And there was a
situation that we

585
00:43:07,680 --> 00:43:18,580
didn't know if the Germans will
accept our military status.

586
00:43:18,580 --> 00:43:21,900
That means from the Polish
people that came from Poland,

587
00:43:21,900 --> 00:43:27,060
or will declare them guerrillas.

588

00:43:27,060 --> 00:43:31,200

So this was decided,
that whoever wants

589

00:43:31,200 --> 00:43:36,670

would try to get to Switzerland
if Switzerland will admit them.

590

00:43:36,670 --> 00:43:42,180

So I also went into that forest
and tried to reach Switzerland,

591

00:43:42,180 --> 00:43:49,990

but was caught almost at the
Swiss frontier by the Germans.

592

00:43:49,990 --> 00:43:56,700

And when I was caught
in the night, a German--

593

00:43:56,700 --> 00:44:04,000

an Austrian [INAUDIBLE] came
to me and look at me and said,

594

00:44:04,000 --> 00:44:06,547

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

595

00:44:06,547 --> 00:44:09,900

Yeah, I believe he knew that.

596

00:44:09,900 --> 00:44:17,550

[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

597

00:44:17,550 --> 00:44:19,202

He wouldn't reveal anything.

598

00:44:19,202 --> 00:44:20,910

He wouldn't betray,
is that what he said?

599

00:44:20,910 --> 00:44:22,180

Excuse me?

600
00:44:22,180 --> 00:44:24,180
How would you translate
that, that he wouldn't--

601
00:44:24,180 --> 00:44:27,945
Oh, he says nothing
will happen to you.

602
00:44:27,945 --> 00:44:29,070
Nothing will happen to you.

603
00:44:29,070 --> 00:44:30,280
So don't be afraid.

604
00:44:30,280 --> 00:44:31,980
Nothing will happen to you.

605
00:44:31,980 --> 00:44:33,350
Was this an officer?

606
00:44:33,350 --> 00:44:34,400
No, a soldier.

607
00:44:34,400 --> 00:44:35,228
A soldier.

608
00:44:35,228 --> 00:44:37,860
A soldier.

609
00:44:37,860 --> 00:44:48,690
Then, so we were sent
to a small [INAUDIBLE]..

610
00:44:48,690 --> 00:44:53,140
And there I was treated
very, very badly.

611
00:44:53,140 --> 00:45:02,650
There was a volksdeutscher
from Poland, from Silesia.

612

00:45:02,650 --> 00:45:05,950

And he said to me,
the Fuhrer said

613

00:45:05,950 --> 00:45:10,360

that if the war will come that
would be the fault of the Jews

614

00:45:10,360 --> 00:45:11,750

and Jews will pay.

615

00:45:11,750 --> 00:45:16,440

And you are the Jew
and you will pay.

616

00:45:16,440 --> 00:45:23,538

And he forced me
to do dirty work.

617

00:45:23,538 --> 00:45:25,890

And I was very, very unhappy.

618

00:45:25,890 --> 00:45:33,570

And after a few days, I saw
an officer, a German officer

619

00:45:33,570 --> 00:45:34,740

from far away.

620

00:45:34,740 --> 00:45:37,740

And I yelled to him.

621

00:45:37,740 --> 00:45:40,980

And he came over and
says, what's the matter?

622

00:45:40,980 --> 00:45:47,190

And I said I'm a soldier,
a captive soldier, why

623

00:45:47,190 --> 00:45:52,470

do I deserve such a treatment?

624
00:45:52,470 --> 00:45:56,010
And this officer took
me from the soldier.

625
00:45:56,010 --> 00:46:01,380
Brought me to another
part of the floor.

626
00:46:01,380 --> 00:46:03,420
Gave me a bath.

627
00:46:03,420 --> 00:46:06,510
Took me to the
magazines and gave me

628
00:46:06,510 --> 00:46:12,960
new underwear and new
uniform because everything

629
00:46:12,960 --> 00:46:15,320
was soiled and stinked.

630
00:46:15,320 --> 00:46:19,620

631
00:46:19,620 --> 00:46:27,300
Again, they brought me back, if
I may say, to the civilization.

632
00:46:27,300 --> 00:46:37,170
And sent me away from there
to the bigger camp in Belfort.

633
00:46:37,170 --> 00:46:39,690

634
00:46:39,690 --> 00:46:45,510
A big city in France and
there were assembly points

635
00:46:45,510 --> 00:46:49,350

for the prisoners of war that
were in Belfort at the time

636
00:46:49,350 --> 00:46:54,480
that I was in the group, maybe
100,000 prisoners of war.

637
00:46:54,480 --> 00:47:00,360
And hunger, because the
Germans said that the French

638
00:47:00,360 --> 00:47:04,500
when they were treated,
they treated the wheat

639
00:47:04,500 --> 00:47:06,960
with petroleum.

640
00:47:06,960 --> 00:47:10,530
So now we had to eat this--

641
00:47:10,530 --> 00:47:16,920
everything smelled
petroleum-- bread, and soup,

642
00:47:16,920 --> 00:47:18,960
and everything.

643
00:47:18,960 --> 00:47:23,400
And in this camp one
day, they declared

644
00:47:23,400 --> 00:47:26,790
that all the Jews
have to come forward

645
00:47:26,790 --> 00:47:30,270
under the penalty of
death, immediately,

646
00:47:30,270 --> 00:47:32,070
or it's a big penalty.

647

00:47:32,070 --> 00:47:37,150

So I went also to
this assembly place.

648

00:47:37,150 --> 00:47:43,260

And from there, they took
us to another barracks.

649

00:47:43,260 --> 00:47:47,030

Approximately how
many Jews were there?

650

00:47:47,030 --> 00:47:52,560

From this place
we were maybe 20.

651

00:47:52,560 --> 00:47:56,330

But they took us to
the barracks where

652

00:47:56,330 --> 00:48:00,350

there were about 300 Jews.

653

00:48:00,350 --> 00:48:02,870

And when we approached
this barracks,

654

00:48:02,870 --> 00:48:07,580

a Jewish
non-commissioner officer

655

00:48:07,580 --> 00:48:10,850

was in front of the
barrack, talking

656

00:48:10,850 --> 00:48:15,470

very friendly with German
non-commissioner officer

657

00:48:15,470 --> 00:48:18,320

in German, because
he was [INAUDIBLE]..

658

00:48:18,320 --> 00:48:21,560

And he was in as a young
man in the German army.

659

00:48:21,560 --> 00:48:24,620

660

00:48:24,620 --> 00:48:29,960

Ends up was the barracks
that were only Jews there.

661

00:48:29,960 --> 00:48:35,450

Now, while we were starving
in this other barrack,

662

00:48:35,450 --> 00:48:38,930

in this barrack
with the same diet.

663

00:48:38,930 --> 00:48:42,440

Somehow everything
was very nice.

664

00:48:42,440 --> 00:48:44,120

Was a Jewish cook.

665

00:48:44,120 --> 00:48:50,620

And he knew how to do
the thing and everything.

666

00:48:50,620 --> 00:48:54,580

Beautiful that we had linen.

667

00:48:54,580 --> 00:48:59,740

We were sleeping
in beds with linen.

668

00:48:59,740 --> 00:49:01,300

We were there.

669

00:49:01,300 --> 00:49:03,070

But that's dream.

670
00:49:03,070 --> 00:49:06,910
But the dream lasted
only about a week.

671
00:49:06,910 --> 00:49:09,040
And now, again, we
were transferred

672
00:49:09,040 --> 00:49:11,830
to another barracks.

673
00:49:11,830 --> 00:49:18,660
Now we came to a
very, very huge place.

674
00:49:18,660 --> 00:49:30,450
And when we came in there was
a fire, open fire going on.

675
00:49:30,450 --> 00:49:36,270
And we were ordered to
make a circle around this.

676
00:49:36,270 --> 00:49:44,610
And a civilian came in and
start to insult us, the Jews--

677
00:49:44,610 --> 00:49:48,450
dirty Jews, and this,
and this, and this.

678
00:49:48,450 --> 00:49:51,720
And we don't recognize
any rank among Jews.

679
00:49:51,720 --> 00:49:52,990
Was this a German or a Vichy?

680
00:49:52,990 --> 00:49:53,490
German.

681

00:49:53,490 --> 00:49:54,190
German.

682
00:49:54,190 --> 00:49:54,810
German, yes.

683
00:49:54,810 --> 00:49:59,290

684
00:49:59,290 --> 00:50:03,520
Excuse me, he was a Alsatian.

685
00:50:03,520 --> 00:50:04,020
Alsatian.

686
00:50:04,020 --> 00:50:07,290
That means a French citizen.

687
00:50:07,290 --> 00:50:18,235
And he was one of the big
heads of the nationalist party,

688
00:50:18,235 --> 00:50:21,690
nationalist socialist
party in Alsace.

689
00:50:21,690 --> 00:50:24,300
A big shot.

690
00:50:24,300 --> 00:50:32,550
Anyhow, they make a scene
like from a Dreyfus film.

691
00:50:32,550 --> 00:50:41,090
He called the officers forward
and he ripped their insignia.

692
00:50:41,090 --> 00:50:42,000
The chevrons.

693
00:50:42,000 --> 00:50:44,950
No officers, no signia.

694
00:50:44,950 --> 00:50:47,350
A big, big parade.

695
00:50:47,350 --> 00:50:53,080
And we're staying there, cold,
and tired, and looking at him,

696
00:50:53,080 --> 00:50:58,130
and saying, what is the
meaning of all this?

697
00:50:58,130 --> 00:51:02,060
What does it mean for us?

698
00:51:02,060 --> 00:51:08,270
It meant for us that
they sent us to the--

699
00:51:08,270 --> 00:51:16,400
not to the normal barrack,
but to the stables for horses.

700
00:51:16,400 --> 00:51:21,140
And there was some straw
on the floor, that much.

701
00:51:21,140 --> 00:51:24,410
And you dirty
Jews, that is where

702
00:51:24,410 --> 00:51:29,300
you will be living, working,
living, and starving.

703
00:51:29,300 --> 00:51:33,060

704
00:51:33,060 --> 00:51:43,260
And as we were sitting there and
trying to assess the situation,

705

00:51:43,260 --> 00:51:49,050
comes a troop of German
soldiers with a bayonet.

706
00:51:49,050 --> 00:51:50,850
We were uncertain by then.

707
00:51:50,850 --> 00:51:53,910
And comes a German officer.

708
00:51:53,910 --> 00:51:58,620
And he says, now this is
not a comedy, he says.

709
00:51:58,620 --> 00:52:01,740
This is now a serious business.

710
00:52:01,740 --> 00:52:05,970
Some of your people, he
says-- officer says--

711
00:52:05,970 --> 00:52:10,020
went into the line
of the prisoners that

712
00:52:10,020 --> 00:52:15,510
were ready to be
shipped out and took

713
00:52:15,510 --> 00:52:18,900
the food portions
that were reserved

714
00:52:18,900 --> 00:52:23,040
for these outgoing prisoners.

715
00:52:23,040 --> 00:52:26,870
So they are now
your friends that

716
00:52:26,870 --> 00:52:30,700
are going into
Germany without food.

717
00:52:30,700 --> 00:52:33,090
And that we'll not allow.

718
00:52:33,090 --> 00:52:35,880
Either, he says,
in a half an hour

719
00:52:35,880 --> 00:52:41,190
I have back this ten
portions that were taken

720
00:52:41,190 --> 00:52:48,660
or I will take a very,
very severe repercussions.

721
00:52:48,660 --> 00:52:49,990
We looked at each other.

722
00:52:49,990 --> 00:52:51,340
We didn't know each other.

723
00:52:51,340 --> 00:52:55,870
Yes, there were 300 Jews, but
we didn't know each other.

724
00:52:55,870 --> 00:53:00,550
But there was a group
of Algerian Jews there.

725
00:53:00,550 --> 00:53:03,730
And one of the officers
went-- the Jewish officers

726
00:53:03,730 --> 00:53:09,040
went to them and said,
hey, fellas, what about?

727
00:53:09,040 --> 00:53:13,060
So they admitted
that they took this.

728

00:53:13,060 --> 00:53:16,990

When they saw a line
that was getting bread,

729

00:53:16,990 --> 00:53:20,140

they went into line
and take two portions.

730

00:53:20,140 --> 00:53:22,020

They admit that
and they gave back

731

00:53:22,020 --> 00:53:26,770

that portions and the
incident was closed.

732

00:53:26,770 --> 00:53:30,130

Only we were told that
the next morning we'll

733

00:53:30,130 --> 00:53:34,510

have to be ready at
6 o'clock for work.

734

00:53:34,510 --> 00:53:36,000

Good.

735

00:53:36,000 --> 00:53:42,190

So who could sleep, slept,
who couldn't, didn't sleep.

736

00:53:42,190 --> 00:53:46,844

And at 6 o'clock in the
morning, we were ready.

737

00:53:46,844 --> 00:53:50,770

We wait, we wait, we wait.

738

00:53:50,770 --> 00:53:53,430

We don't have anything
to eat, coffee, nothing.

739

00:53:53,430 --> 00:54:00,400

At 10 o'clock came a few trucks
with the German soldiers.

740
00:54:00,400 --> 00:54:06,330
And one of the sergeants
asked where are the kommando,

741
00:54:06,330 --> 00:54:07,350
working kommando.

742
00:54:07,350 --> 00:54:09,230
We said, we are
working kommando.

743
00:54:09,230 --> 00:54:16,700
He said, I need 50
people and not 300.

744
00:54:16,700 --> 00:54:21,260
So volunteers.

745
00:54:21,260 --> 00:54:24,640
So I also went out,
because always better

746
00:54:24,640 --> 00:54:30,590
to go and work than
sitting in a room.

747
00:54:30,590 --> 00:54:33,350
Fresh air is always better.

748
00:54:33,350 --> 00:54:38,240
So we went on these
trucks, they took us.

749
00:54:38,240 --> 00:54:40,040
This was [INAUDIBLE].

750
00:54:40,040 --> 00:54:43,280
That means engineers.

751

00:54:43,280 --> 00:54:48,590
And then they were gathering
the munitions of the French left

752
00:54:48,590 --> 00:54:52,070
on the fields when they were
running away from everything.

753
00:54:52,070 --> 00:54:54,440
And they were gathering them.

754
00:54:54,440 --> 00:54:59,000
They treated us fabulously.

755
00:54:59,000 --> 00:55:01,160
They gave us food.

756
00:55:01,160 --> 00:55:04,850
They were very, very nice to us.

757
00:55:04,850 --> 00:55:13,870
And I worked with them from, I
would say, August to November.

758
00:55:13,870 --> 00:55:16,630

759
00:55:16,630 --> 00:55:18,010
Of what year?

760
00:55:18,010 --> 00:55:23,800
1939.

761
00:55:23,800 --> 00:55:27,490
And I didn't have
any worry with them,

762
00:55:27,490 --> 00:55:32,270
but I had a big worry
with my colleagues.

763
00:55:32,270 --> 00:55:41,050

Because we were then assigned
to normal rooms in barracks,

764
00:55:41,050 --> 00:55:54,140
this comedy with, I
would say, horse barracks

765
00:55:54,140 --> 00:55:55,970
was finished very, very quickly.

766
00:55:55,970 --> 00:56:00,740
The army took over and the
army was a very strict,

767
00:56:00,740 --> 00:56:09,620
but we were prisoner of war
under the control of the Geneva

768
00:56:09,620 --> 00:56:11,690
Convention.

769
00:56:11,690 --> 00:56:15,410
So everything
was-- we were Jews.

770
00:56:15,410 --> 00:56:19,220
We were separated from other
in a separate barracks.

771
00:56:19,220 --> 00:56:23,870
We were warned not to
mix with anybody else.

772
00:56:23,870 --> 00:56:27,770
But otherwise, they
left that alone.

773
00:56:27,770 --> 00:56:31,550
So Alsatian went into one room.

774
00:56:31,550 --> 00:56:35,900
Romanian went into another room.

775

00:56:35,900 --> 00:56:42,670

The Parisian Jews, that
means the oriental--

776

00:56:42,670 --> 00:56:51,550

the East European Jews that
lived in Paris in another room.

777

00:56:51,550 --> 00:56:56,560

And I didn't belong to
any one of these groups.

778

00:56:56,560 --> 00:57:02,920

So somebody comes to me
and says, [NON-ENGLISH]..

779

00:57:02,920 --> 00:57:05,380

No, I don't know Yiddish.

780

00:57:05,380 --> 00:57:06,515

I don't speak Yiddish.

781

00:57:06,515 --> 00:57:10,044

782

00:57:10,044 --> 00:57:15,670

And they look at me
from the Polish army.

783

00:57:15,670 --> 00:57:20,150

It was very-- they didn't
know what to do with me.

784

00:57:20,150 --> 00:57:21,910

I didn't know what
to do with them.

785

00:57:21,910 --> 00:57:26,675

And they decided that most
probably I am not a Jew.

786

00:57:26,675 --> 00:57:32,030

787

00:57:32,030 --> 00:57:36,480

A very, very unpleasant
situation, very unpleasant.

788

00:57:36,480 --> 00:57:39,920

And then comes one man out.

789

00:57:39,920 --> 00:57:45,710

Says to me, where from are you?

790

00:57:45,710 --> 00:57:48,330

I said, Warsaw, Lodz.

791

00:57:48,330 --> 00:57:49,010

Lodz?

792

00:57:49,010 --> 00:57:51,350

He says, what's your name?

793

00:57:51,350 --> 00:57:53,990

I said, Adam Spiro.

794

00:57:53,990 --> 00:57:55,830

Who was your father?

795

00:57:55,830 --> 00:57:59,382

My father was a
teacher, professor.

796

00:57:59,382 --> 00:58:03,320

Oh, Professor Spiro's son?

797

00:58:03,320 --> 00:58:06,510

He says, I know him.

798

00:58:06,510 --> 00:58:09,200

He is all right.

799

00:58:09,200 --> 00:58:13,730

So here I am introduced
to the company

800
00:58:13,730 --> 00:58:26,390
by a thief, a procurer,
[INAUDIBLE] character,

801
00:58:26,390 --> 00:58:28,520
as they say, as it can be.

802
00:58:28,520 --> 00:58:30,200
But he is my protector.

803
00:58:30,200 --> 00:58:31,850
He knows me.

804
00:58:31,850 --> 00:58:33,733
Now [INAUDIBLE].

805
00:58:33,733 --> 00:58:36,320
Mr. Spiro, we're going to have
to pause for a few minutes

806
00:58:36,320 --> 00:58:37,830
in order to change the tape.

807
00:58:37,830 --> 00:58:38,330
Yes.

808
00:58:38,330 --> 00:58:41,710
So we'll continue with
the story momentarily.

809
00:58:41,710 --> 00:58:47,258