

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:31,430

2

00:00:31,430 --> 00:00:35,540

Continue our interview
with Adam Spiro.

3

00:00:35,540 --> 00:00:40,184

Were you aware of your
wife's safety at the time?

4

00:00:40,184 --> 00:00:47,120

During all this
time, from the day

5

00:00:47,120 --> 00:00:50,930

of separation on that
night in the train,

6

00:00:50,930 --> 00:00:56,870

I didn't have any direct
communication with my wife.

7

00:00:56,870 --> 00:01:00,920

She was getting my
letters from the military.

8

00:01:00,920 --> 00:01:03,230

But somehow, I was--

9

00:01:03,230 --> 00:01:06,530

even in the [? army, ?] we're
traveling from point to point,

10

00:01:06,530 --> 00:01:10,490

and her letters to me
never caught with me.

11

00:01:10,490 --> 00:01:21,390

But at one time, I think
late in April 1940,

12

00:01:21,390 --> 00:01:26,940

I was told to go
to Paris to testify

13

00:01:26,940 --> 00:01:31,020

before the Commission
investigating the causes

14

00:01:31,020 --> 00:01:36,570

of Polish collapse in 1939.

15

00:01:36,570 --> 00:01:41,220

And I met in Paris
a cousin of mine

16

00:01:41,220 --> 00:01:44,850

who was a Jewish
journalist in Paris.

17

00:01:44,850 --> 00:01:51,210

And he told me that he was in
communication with my wife,

18

00:01:51,210 --> 00:01:55,860

and knew that everything
is well there.

19

00:01:55,860 --> 00:01:59,880

So I didn't have to worry.

20

00:01:59,880 --> 00:02:04,350

My wife was without
letters from me

21

00:02:04,350 --> 00:02:11,670

most probably from the beginning
of May, when the big battle

22

00:02:11,670 --> 00:02:20,340

started, and to September 1940.

23

00:02:20,340 --> 00:02:25,020

In September 1940, Commission
of International Red Cross

24
00:02:25,020 --> 00:02:29,720
came to Belfort,
and everyone of us

25
00:02:29,720 --> 00:02:33,660
wrote a postcard to
the family, just saying

26
00:02:33,660 --> 00:02:37,600
that you are well and alive.

27
00:02:37,600 --> 00:02:41,280

28
00:02:41,280 --> 00:02:50,130
From this camp in France, we
were sent in November 1940,

29
00:02:50,130 --> 00:02:57,110
to Stalag 17 in Austria.

30
00:02:57,110 --> 00:03:05,600
Stalag 17 was near
Hungarian-Austrian frontier.

31
00:03:05,600 --> 00:03:08,450

32
00:03:08,450 --> 00:03:13,220
It was a very, very huge place.

33
00:03:13,220 --> 00:03:16,220

34
00:03:16,220 --> 00:03:25,350
The meaning of it is that
this was a center of activity

35
00:03:25,350 --> 00:03:28,620

for the whole region.

36

00:03:28,620 --> 00:03:36,045

There was a post office for the
prisoner of war, the hospitals,

37

00:03:36,045 --> 00:03:39,450

the administration centers.

38

00:03:39,450 --> 00:03:43,600

But we were not generally
sitting in a camp.

39

00:03:43,600 --> 00:03:47,525

We were sent out in commandos
all over the country to work.

40

00:03:47,525 --> 00:03:50,950

41

00:03:50,950 --> 00:03:53,410

It will be interesting to say.

42

00:03:53,410 --> 00:04:08,640

We traveled into crowded
railway wagons that

43

00:04:08,640 --> 00:04:13,180

had inscription five
horses or 40 men,

44

00:04:13,180 --> 00:04:15,280

and maybe 80 were crowded in it.

45

00:04:15,280 --> 00:04:18,100

46

00:04:18,100 --> 00:04:20,890

We were stopping
from time to time

47

00:04:20,890 --> 00:04:23,740

to let us relieve ourselves.

48
00:04:23,740 --> 00:04:29,350
So food was given in advance
for the whole voyage,

49
00:04:29,350 --> 00:04:32,245
and we came to the camp.

50
00:04:32,245 --> 00:04:35,440

51
00:04:35,440 --> 00:04:41,290
There was the usual searches
of the things that we had.

52
00:04:41,290 --> 00:04:52,720
And showers and
[INAUDIBLE] situation.

53
00:04:52,720 --> 00:04:58,570
And then we were on our
way to the huge barrack.

54
00:04:58,570 --> 00:05:03,030

55
00:05:03,030 --> 00:05:04,920
There was a separate
barrack for Jews?

56
00:05:04,920 --> 00:05:07,260
Yes.

57
00:05:07,260 --> 00:05:17,190
Now the group that came
from this barracks in France

58
00:05:17,190 --> 00:05:20,260
were about 300 people.

59
00:05:20,260 --> 00:05:23,400

And together, we
were there about,

60
00:05:23,400 --> 00:05:31,170
I would say 800 to 900
Jews in the Stalag 17.

61
00:05:31,170 --> 00:05:38,040
Now before they brought us,
the Germans, to the barrack,

62
00:05:38,040 --> 00:05:43,440
they stopped and they told us
to take our things, and lay out,

63
00:05:43,440 --> 00:05:47,310
and they will go
look for things.

64
00:05:47,310 --> 00:05:53,180
They were just stealing
soap and tobacco.

65
00:05:53,180 --> 00:05:55,460
That's what happened.

66
00:05:55,460 --> 00:06:00,240
And while this procedure
was taking place,

67
00:06:00,240 --> 00:06:03,170
an officer came by.

68
00:06:03,170 --> 00:06:07,400
And he started to ask questions.

69
00:06:07,400 --> 00:06:11,660
And he asked them to give
everything back to us.

70
00:06:11,660 --> 00:06:15,050
And the German soldier
said to him, sir,

71
00:06:15,050 --> 00:06:17,840
when they will come
to this barrack,

72
00:06:17,840 --> 00:06:21,860
the other prisoners of war
will rob them of everything

73
00:06:21,860 --> 00:06:23,300
that they have.

74
00:06:23,300 --> 00:06:26,940
So why can't we
have a part of it?

75
00:06:26,940 --> 00:06:30,932
And the officer
said, never mind.

76
00:06:30,932 --> 00:06:34,370
Give back and bring
them to the barracks.

77
00:06:34,370 --> 00:06:39,380
And as they said, the moment
that we came into the barracks,

78
00:06:39,380 --> 00:06:49,750
it was like [INAUDIBLE] attack.

79
00:06:49,750 --> 00:06:53,080
The people came on us.

80
00:06:53,080 --> 00:06:58,300
And everything that
we had disappeared,

81
00:06:58,300 --> 00:06:59,380
our Jewish friends.

82
00:06:59,380 --> 00:07:02,810

83

00:07:02,810 --> 00:07:06,710

Now we were keeping
together, this group

84

00:07:06,710 --> 00:07:09,920

that came from Belfort.

85

00:07:09,920 --> 00:07:16,610

And we found out that originally
this other 500-600 Jews

86

00:07:16,610 --> 00:07:24,880

that were in the camp, came
much earlier to the camp,

87

00:07:24,880 --> 00:07:29,770

and were at the stalag,
and were sent to work

88

00:07:29,770 --> 00:07:33,400

in outside, the provinces.

89

00:07:33,400 --> 00:07:37,480

And they immediately
started the commerce.

90

00:07:37,480 --> 00:07:41,440

And population was,
police was complaining,

91

00:07:41,440 --> 00:07:44,350

and they were retrieved
into the camp,

92

00:07:44,350 --> 00:07:48,490

and so the Jews would
never go back to work.

93

00:07:48,490 --> 00:07:50,920

We stay in camp.

94

00:07:50,920 --> 00:07:56,860

Now camp is a prison,
with all the tragedies

95

00:07:56,860 --> 00:07:58,570

that happened in the prison.

96

00:07:58,570 --> 00:07:59,410

Yes?

97

00:07:59,410 --> 00:08:03,235

And the biggest tragedy
of the prison is louse.

98

00:08:03,235 --> 00:08:08,430

99

00:08:08,430 --> 00:08:10,170

That brings sickness.

100

00:08:10,170 --> 00:08:13,890

That brings suffering.

101

00:08:13,890 --> 00:08:20,180

And there is a louse,
an animal louse,

102

00:08:20,180 --> 00:08:22,970

and there was a human louse.

103

00:08:22,970 --> 00:08:28,850

The people that are sitting in
the camp, that can manipulate.

104

00:08:28,850 --> 00:08:35,059

Manipulate, if you had
cigarettes or soap,

105

00:08:35,059 --> 00:08:39,590

you could buy the best
meal in this camp.

106

00:08:39,590 --> 00:08:44,420

And you're a sucker and doesn't
have anything, then you starve.

107

00:08:44,420 --> 00:08:46,430

And the same was true
of Jews as non-Jews?

108

00:08:46,430 --> 00:08:49,950

109

00:08:49,950 --> 00:08:50,710

Even more.

110

00:08:50,710 --> 00:08:55,000

111

00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:57,700

So here we were in
this camp, and we

112

00:08:57,700 --> 00:09:02,560

started to make a few friends.

113

00:09:02,560 --> 00:09:07,690

In Belfort, intellectuals
will start to talk to us now.

114

00:09:07,690 --> 00:09:10,090

And we said something
has to be done.

115

00:09:10,090 --> 00:09:17,080

Who wants to stick here for
who knows how many years?

116

00:09:17,080 --> 00:09:23,300

So we petitioned to see
the commanding general.

117

00:09:23,300 --> 00:09:28,490

And that petition

was signed by me.

118
00:09:28,490 --> 00:09:33,020
I had a rank
[? Ministerial ?] rank,

119
00:09:33,020 --> 00:09:38,520
which is a very high
civil service rank,

120
00:09:38,520 --> 00:09:41,360
and makes impression to mention.

121
00:09:41,360 --> 00:09:45,740
There were lawyers and
there were medical doctors.

122
00:09:45,740 --> 00:09:50,550
So we signed this petition
that I would like to see him.

123
00:09:50,550 --> 00:09:54,530
And we were brought
to his house.

124
00:09:54,530 --> 00:09:57,840
And we asked him that we
would like to go to work.

125
00:09:57,840 --> 00:10:00,840
We would like to
sit in the camp.

126
00:10:00,840 --> 00:10:05,950
And he said that he had
this bad experience.

127
00:10:05,950 --> 00:10:10,700
I would say maybe we will mix
new and old prisoners together,

128
00:10:10,700 --> 00:10:14,300
and maybe they learned something

through this few months

129

00:10:14,300 --> 00:10:18,840

that they were sitting in camp,
and that things will be better.

130

00:10:18,840 --> 00:10:19,760

So all right.

131

00:10:19,760 --> 00:10:20,315

I will try.

132

00:10:20,315 --> 00:10:23,090

133

00:10:23,090 --> 00:10:27,860

And we were sent out.

134

00:10:27,860 --> 00:10:35,700

Now this was-- I was in a
group who were about 50 people.

135

00:10:35,700 --> 00:10:38,510

And we went out from this camp.

136

00:10:38,510 --> 00:10:45,506

A nice train, sitting
like people in the train

137

00:10:45,506 --> 00:10:47,240

to place of work.

138

00:10:47,240 --> 00:10:50,330

We came to this
place in the night.

139

00:10:50,330 --> 00:10:51,400

It was dark.

140

00:10:51,400 --> 00:10:55,248

141
00:10:55,248 --> 00:10:57,950
No lights yes.

142
00:10:57,950 --> 00:11:02,820
And they brought
us, opened the door,

143
00:11:02,820 --> 00:11:08,900
and we came into
the beautiful hall.

144
00:11:08,900 --> 00:11:15,830
Light and music playing,
it's another world.

145
00:11:15,830 --> 00:11:21,500
Not a barrack, it was a
mess for foreign workers,

146
00:11:21,500 --> 00:11:26,690
and we were given food,
and not only to eat

147
00:11:26,690 --> 00:11:35,420
as much as we wanted there,
but also bread and sausages

148
00:11:35,420 --> 00:11:39,382
to take with us for
the night with barrack,

149
00:11:39,382 --> 00:11:42,800
so a nice reception, very nice.

150
00:11:42,800 --> 00:11:50,840
And the person in charge,
the sergeant, said to us--

151
00:11:50,840 --> 00:11:53,070
the German said to us,
immediately he said,

152

00:11:53,070 --> 00:12:00,020
I am a Prussian sergeant, an
old-fashioned [NON-ENGLISH],,

153
00:12:00,020 --> 00:12:01,460
he said.

154
00:12:01,460 --> 00:12:08,530
And you will do what I say,
and we will be friends.

155
00:12:08,530 --> 00:12:12,520
Or you will not do what
I say, and we will be

156
00:12:12,520 --> 00:12:18,140
enemies, your choice, he said.

157
00:12:18,140 --> 00:12:19,580
All right.

158
00:12:19,580 --> 00:12:24,230
He took us out in the
night, went to the place

159
00:12:24,230 --> 00:12:26,200
where we were supposed to--

160
00:12:26,200 --> 00:12:29,270
barracks made especially for as.

161
00:12:29,270 --> 00:12:31,460
We approached this
barrack, and we

162
00:12:31,460 --> 00:12:35,750
see it's a new
barrack, entirely new.

163
00:12:35,750 --> 00:12:38,780

164

00:12:38,780 --> 00:12:43,520
And one of the
doctors, our doctor,

165
00:12:43,520 --> 00:12:49,880
went out, stood before the
door, and said nobody enters.

166
00:12:49,880 --> 00:12:54,440
So this sergeant says,
on who's command?

167
00:12:54,440 --> 00:12:59,350
He says to him, listen,
we have a little louse,

168
00:12:59,350 --> 00:13:02,180
we have [? plenty ?]
of dirt on us.

169
00:13:02,180 --> 00:13:04,640
This is a new
barrack, and you think

170
00:13:04,640 --> 00:13:09,800
if we come now there as we
are, we will infest the place,

171
00:13:09,800 --> 00:13:13,660
and we will be forever infested.

172
00:13:13,660 --> 00:13:14,845
Bring the machine.

173
00:13:14,845 --> 00:13:18,010

174
00:13:18,010 --> 00:13:20,030
Bring us to the shower.

175
00:13:20,030 --> 00:13:23,090
The louse that were in
uniform and everything,

176
00:13:23,090 --> 00:13:27,270
and then we will
have a clean place.

177
00:13:27,270 --> 00:13:29,990
And he says, where
will you sleep?

178
00:13:29,990 --> 00:13:32,040
We'll sleep on the ground.

179
00:13:32,040 --> 00:13:36,210
It's pretty cold, but
we'll sleep on the ground.

180
00:13:36,210 --> 00:13:41,130
The next morning, that sergeant
with one of our doctors

181
00:13:41,130 --> 00:13:46,470
went to the municipality,
and they made the big stink.

182
00:13:46,470 --> 00:13:51,300
The camps that were clean, and
so he said what the camp says

183
00:13:51,300 --> 00:13:55,170
and what we say are
two different things.

184
00:13:55,170 --> 00:13:59,710
Anyhow they brought
this big machines

185
00:13:59,710 --> 00:14:04,830
that are washing and delousing
the clothes where everything

186
00:14:04,830 --> 00:14:05,640
was washed.

187

00:14:05,640 --> 00:14:06,820

We went to river.

188

00:14:06,820 --> 00:14:09,180

We went to shower, we washed.

189

00:14:09,180 --> 00:14:12,810

We went into the
beautiful place.

190

00:14:12,810 --> 00:14:20,470

A barrack, a military barrack,
but clean, everything fresh.

191

00:14:20,470 --> 00:14:22,620

Fine.

192

00:14:22,620 --> 00:14:24,840

And we started to work.

193

00:14:24,840 --> 00:14:28,690

What we were doing,
we were fixing

194

00:14:28,690 --> 00:14:34,020

the river banks, that high
in the mountain, in Alps,

195

00:14:34,020 --> 00:14:36,000

in Austrian Alps.

196

00:14:36,000 --> 00:14:38,760

We were fixing the
banks that were

197

00:14:38,760 --> 00:14:44,230

damaged by the floods
in the previous summer.

198

00:14:44,230 --> 00:14:50,130

Very hard work, not accustomed
to it, in the cold water still.

199
00:14:50,130 --> 00:14:53,740

200
00:14:53,740 --> 00:15:02,510
But they told us the
foreman was a Slovak.

201
00:15:02,510 --> 00:15:06,360
And he said to us, if you
would do so much and so much,

202
00:15:06,360 --> 00:15:08,820
I would be satisfied.

203
00:15:08,820 --> 00:15:12,060
And I will not pester you.

204
00:15:12,060 --> 00:15:15,555
And we decided we will do.

205
00:15:15,555 --> 00:15:19,780
We will try to
cooperate with them.

206
00:15:19,780 --> 00:15:21,840
And it was very nice.

207
00:15:21,840 --> 00:15:28,460
We were working there,
physically terrible.

208
00:15:28,460 --> 00:15:35,000
For a man who's not accustomed
to the physical work, yes,

209
00:15:35,000 --> 00:15:38,120
hard physical work.

210
00:15:38,120 --> 00:15:44,036
Every bone in your body ached.

211

00:15:44,036 --> 00:15:47,060

We couldn't sleep in the night.

212

00:15:47,060 --> 00:15:54,380

But we weren't hungry, and we
were left alone, and we worked.

213

00:15:54,380 --> 00:15:57,640

And here comes a
very important thing

214

00:15:57,640 --> 00:16:05,140

that happened to us, that
gave us hope for future.

215

00:16:05,140 --> 00:16:13,300

One day-- near by
was a big steel mill,

216

00:16:13,300 --> 00:16:16,810

a tremendous steel
mill, operated

217

00:16:16,810 --> 00:16:19,330

by the French prisoners of war.

218

00:16:19,330 --> 00:16:24,730

There were about 5,000
prisoners of war there.

219

00:16:24,730 --> 00:16:30,730

And they were organized as
a French military group.

220

00:16:30,730 --> 00:16:35,920

They had their general,
colonels, majors;

221

00:16:35,920 --> 00:16:39,310

the whole thing there.

222

00:16:39,310 --> 00:16:45,200

And their life was
miserable, these people.

223
00:16:45,200 --> 00:16:47,210
And they were complaining.

224
00:16:47,210 --> 00:16:53,300
And the same general that we
had the interview in camp,

225
00:16:53,300 --> 00:16:58,280
came to inspect
what's going on there.

226
00:16:58,280 --> 00:17:02,300
And it was dirt,
and I don't know.

227
00:17:02,300 --> 00:17:06,630
He was very, very unhappy,
very, very unhappy.

228
00:17:06,630 --> 00:17:11,960
And our sergeant
said to him, General,

229
00:17:11,960 --> 00:17:16,760
would you like to see my
command, my Jewish command?

230
00:17:16,760 --> 00:17:18,589
And he says, naturally.

231
00:17:18,589 --> 00:17:21,170
And he came to us--

232
00:17:21,170 --> 00:17:26,450
clean, nice, pleasant.

233
00:17:26,450 --> 00:17:30,640
I would say even for the
condition, military life.

234

00:17:30,640 --> 00:17:33,895

But not a prison,
a military camp.

235

00:17:33,895 --> 00:17:36,820

236

00:17:36,820 --> 00:17:41,620

And he sat down and
started to talk with us.

237

00:17:41,620 --> 00:17:45,160

And he said, he also
was a prisoner of war.

238

00:17:45,160 --> 00:17:47,930

He was also an Austrian
officer in Siberia.

239

00:17:47,930 --> 00:17:50,650

240

00:17:50,650 --> 00:17:56,424

And he also didn't believe that
he would ever go back home,

241

00:17:56,424 --> 00:17:57,920

he said.

242

00:17:57,920 --> 00:18:02,720

And I went, and he
said after years, I

243

00:18:02,720 --> 00:18:07,760

forgot about the hard time,
and all what I was remembering

244

00:18:07,760 --> 00:18:11,780

were sometimes the more pleasant
things about the captivity.

245

00:18:11,780 --> 00:18:15,140

And the same thing will
be with you, he said.

246
00:18:15,140 --> 00:18:16,820
So the war will end.

247
00:18:16,820 --> 00:18:18,260
You will go home.

248
00:18:18,260 --> 00:18:20,780
You will forget about all this.

249
00:18:20,780 --> 00:18:26,840
You will only remember the
nice, pleasant memories.

250
00:18:26,840 --> 00:18:31,340
And somebody said, yes,
but we are the Jews.

251
00:18:31,340 --> 00:18:34,250
He said, you are
the French soldiers

252
00:18:34,250 --> 00:18:38,870
in the French uniform under
the protection of the Geneva

253
00:18:38,870 --> 00:18:39,760
Convention.

254
00:18:39,760 --> 00:18:42,830

255
00:18:42,830 --> 00:18:48,470
And he says, as long as you
are underneath your uniform,

256
00:18:48,470 --> 00:18:54,530
the German army will honor their
obligation under the Geneva

257

00:18:54,530 --> 00:18:57,010
Convention.

258
00:18:57,010 --> 00:19:00,160
In all of this time, were
you ever under the scrutiny

259
00:19:00,160 --> 00:19:01,750
of the SS or--

260
00:19:01,750 --> 00:19:03,800
Nothing.

261
00:19:03,800 --> 00:19:09,820
We didn't have anything to do
with them, only later on, when

262
00:19:09,820 --> 00:19:17,860
there were a escape attempts
that people that were caught

263
00:19:17,860 --> 00:19:24,910
escaping, they were sent to
special punishment camps,

264
00:19:24,910 --> 00:19:32,700
and they had to do with the
whole civilian apparatus.

265
00:19:32,700 --> 00:19:37,670
I didn't have anything to do
with the civilian apparatus.

266
00:19:37,670 --> 00:19:40,540

267
00:19:40,540 --> 00:19:42,040
You were not involved
in any attempt

268
00:19:42,040 --> 00:19:43,310
to escape or any attempt--

269

00:19:43,310 --> 00:19:43,810

No.

270

00:19:43,810 --> 00:19:47,710

I didn't have work to escape,
and my wife was writing to me,

271

00:19:47,710 --> 00:19:49,270

you sit where you are.

272

00:19:49,270 --> 00:19:52,000

This is the safest
place for you.

273

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:52,690

She was right.

274

00:19:52,690 --> 00:19:54,190

Yes.

275

00:19:54,190 --> 00:19:57,230

So the year went by.

276

00:19:57,230 --> 00:20:01,990

We were sent from one camp to
another camp, to another work.

277

00:20:01,990 --> 00:20:05,020

278

00:20:05,020 --> 00:20:10,150

We were landscaping.

279

00:20:10,150 --> 00:20:15,340

I was working in gypsum
mine for two years.

280

00:20:15,340 --> 00:20:25,810

I was working in in quarry.

281

00:20:25,810 --> 00:20:28,890

In stone quarry.

282

00:20:28,890 --> 00:20:34,200

A nice work for a
fine Jewish boy.

283

00:20:34,200 --> 00:20:38,190

But after a few months,
after the first few months,

284

00:20:38,190 --> 00:20:46,230

was bones adjusted to the
work, it wasn't hard anymore.

285

00:20:46,230 --> 00:20:50,650

And we were often
joking among ourselves

286

00:20:50,650 --> 00:20:58,950

that the white-collared man
has a pity for the men who

287

00:20:58,950 --> 00:21:01,680

works hard with their hand.

288

00:21:01,680 --> 00:21:09,460

And it is not necessary
to have a pity.

289

00:21:09,460 --> 00:21:14,040

Because a man works with a
hand, if he has food enough

290

00:21:14,040 --> 00:21:19,980

and sleep enough, rests,
and is much more healthy

291

00:21:19,980 --> 00:21:23,940

than the white-collared
man who works in the office

292

00:21:23,940 --> 00:21:26,190

and then go with the work home.

293
00:21:26,190 --> 00:21:27,450
And--

294
00:21:27,450 --> 00:21:30,630
Many, many of these
white-collar people

295
00:21:30,630 --> 00:21:32,730
tragically died in
Auschwitz, because they

296
00:21:32,730 --> 00:21:35,550
didn't have the skills
that could keep them alive.

297
00:21:35,550 --> 00:21:36,050
Yes.

298
00:21:36,050 --> 00:21:36,690
Yes.

299
00:21:36,690 --> 00:21:42,930
Now about the
food, very early we

300
00:21:42,930 --> 00:21:48,090
learned that we have to
live with the Germans.

301
00:21:48,090 --> 00:21:52,020
So when we were going somewhere
to a new place, the first thing

302
00:21:52,020 --> 00:21:56,880
that we will do, we were
negotiating the amount of work

303
00:21:56,880 --> 00:22:01,070
that we are supposed to deliver.

304
00:22:01,070 --> 00:22:07,310

In order to get a
special nourishment cart,

305
00:22:07,310 --> 00:22:13,060
special ration for the
hard-working people.

306
00:22:13,060 --> 00:22:20,170
And then we will negotiate with
the owner, with our employer,

307
00:22:20,170 --> 00:22:24,790
that one of our men would
stay in barracks and cook.

308
00:22:24,790 --> 00:22:28,960
That we would make our own
food from our own provisions

309
00:22:28,960 --> 00:22:31,090
and that we can get
through the camp.

310
00:22:31,090 --> 00:22:37,300
And it worked very nicely
through all this time.

311
00:22:37,300 --> 00:22:41,255
Now pleasant or unpleasant
moment, naturally there

312
00:22:41,255 --> 00:22:45,610
were unpleasant moments,
because the people--

313
00:22:45,610 --> 00:22:52,400
our people didn't
behave always correctly.

314
00:22:52,400 --> 00:22:57,820
So there were punishments,
and they were unpleasant.

315

00:22:57,820 --> 00:23:04,450
But from myself saying,
I would say this.

316
00:23:04,450 --> 00:23:12,100
I don't believe that outside of
American, any prisoner of war

317
00:23:12,100 --> 00:23:20,000
could spend the war
as safely as I did.

318
00:23:20,000 --> 00:23:24,800
I was getting packages from
my family from America.

319
00:23:24,800 --> 00:23:26,840
So I wasn't hungry.

320
00:23:26,840 --> 00:23:30,840
I was hungry, but I
wasn't hungry, yes?

321
00:23:30,840 --> 00:23:33,800
If I don't know you,
you had missing bread.

322
00:23:33,800 --> 00:23:37,820

323
00:23:37,820 --> 00:23:39,840
The food wasn't normal food.

324
00:23:39,840 --> 00:23:42,170
But I didn't starve.

325
00:23:42,170 --> 00:23:44,105
I had the force to work.

326
00:23:44,105 --> 00:23:47,414

327

00:23:47,414 --> 00:23:50,180
I was working in the--

328
00:23:50,180 --> 00:23:54,460

329
00:23:54,460 --> 00:23:57,070
I wasn't giving
up my vital force.

330
00:23:57,070 --> 00:23:59,970

331
00:23:59,970 --> 00:24:05,490
I was-- I lost weight.

332
00:24:05,490 --> 00:24:09,180
But I wasn't
starved, as people--

333
00:24:09,180 --> 00:24:11,550
You weren't emaciated or sickly.

334
00:24:11,550 --> 00:24:16,680
I didn't have, until
the last few months

335
00:24:16,680 --> 00:24:24,020
before the end of the war, I
didn't worry about my life,

336
00:24:24,020 --> 00:24:30,270
that they will come and take
me to the extermination camp.

337
00:24:30,270 --> 00:24:31,590
At the end, did you?

338
00:24:31,590 --> 00:24:32,520
Yes.

339
00:24:32,520 --> 00:24:35,550

I would-- if you
will have time, I

340
00:24:35,550 --> 00:24:37,530
will say a few a words about it.

341
00:24:37,530 --> 00:24:40,470
I was in steady
communication with my wife.

342
00:24:40,470 --> 00:24:43,740

343
00:24:43,740 --> 00:24:49,980
I was working high in
Alps in good house.

344
00:24:49,980 --> 00:24:52,250
So I was blessed.

345
00:24:52,250 --> 00:24:55,070
Indeed.

346
00:24:55,070 --> 00:25:03,020
I still thought that I
lost my best life, the best

347
00:25:03,020 --> 00:25:07,220
years of my life, that I
was a victim of the war,

348
00:25:07,220 --> 00:25:12,230
and so on and so on, until I
came to France after the war,

349
00:25:12,230 --> 00:25:15,320
and found out what happened.

350
00:25:15,320 --> 00:25:17,210
And then I said, shut up.

351
00:25:17,210 --> 00:25:19,610

What you have to say?

352

00:25:19,610 --> 00:25:20,270

Be happy.

353

00:25:20,270 --> 00:25:21,890

Smile.

354

00:25:21,890 --> 00:25:22,700

You're safe.

355

00:25:22,700 --> 00:25:25,880

You didn't suffer.

356

00:25:25,880 --> 00:25:28,260

Did you know what was
happening at any point?

357

00:25:28,260 --> 00:25:31,175

Yes, from German soldiers.

358

00:25:31,175 --> 00:25:33,820

359

00:25:33,820 --> 00:25:38,950

We were in all those
places that we were

360

00:25:38,950 --> 00:25:40,710

working were transportations.

361

00:25:40,710 --> 00:25:44,240

The Germans were coming for--

362

00:25:44,240 --> 00:25:47,530

363

00:25:47,530 --> 00:25:50,470

the trains were coming
to pick up the material.

364

00:25:50,470 --> 00:25:51,620
Yes?

365
00:25:51,620 --> 00:25:55,180
So we were serving--

366
00:25:55,180 --> 00:25:59,530
we were serving our material
on the station or a railway

367
00:25:59,530 --> 00:26:00,190
station.

368
00:26:00,190 --> 00:26:03,340
And there was continuously
on this railway station,

369
00:26:03,340 --> 00:26:09,850
a military transport that were
waiting for the right of way.

370
00:26:09,850 --> 00:26:15,910
And we were talking with
one of the German soldiers.

371
00:26:15,910 --> 00:26:20,260
And they were telling us that
terrible things are happening.

372
00:26:20,260 --> 00:26:28,570
Maybe we didn't know
about the camps,

373
00:26:28,570 --> 00:26:31,810
about killing in the camps.

374
00:26:31,810 --> 00:26:33,730
That we didn't know.

375
00:26:33,730 --> 00:26:43,240
But we knew about ghettos,
about people taken to camps,

376

00:26:43,240 --> 00:26:44,890
about what's going on.

377

00:26:44,890 --> 00:26:47,265
You didn't know necessarily
about the final solution,

378

00:26:47,265 --> 00:26:47,890
in other words?

379

00:26:47,890 --> 00:26:48,620
Yeah, no.

380

00:26:48,620 --> 00:26:55,210
Did you ever see the boxcars
with the people on them?

381

00:26:55,210 --> 00:26:58,330
Only in the last--

382

00:26:58,330 --> 00:27:06,760
later in February 1945.

383

00:27:06,760 --> 00:27:10,930
There was a moment,
there was a occasion

384

00:27:10,930 --> 00:27:18,410
that a military factory that
was nearby was bombed out,

385

00:27:18,410 --> 00:27:24,970
and that was when we were
working at the gypsum mine.

386

00:27:24,970 --> 00:27:30,100
At the gypsum mine was also
fabricated the gypsum plates.

387

00:27:30,100 --> 00:27:33,670
And they needed these plates
to rebuild the planes.

388
00:27:33,670 --> 00:27:37,615
So they sent workers
from the other factory

389
00:27:37,615 --> 00:27:41,590
to our place to
make these planes.

390
00:27:41,590 --> 00:27:46,850
And there were Polish
boys from Warsaw.

391
00:27:46,850 --> 00:27:58,730
And they told us about Warsaw,
about the fence of Warsaw

392
00:27:58,730 --> 00:28:02,120
ghetto, and what happened in--

393
00:28:02,120 --> 00:28:03,170
'43.

394
00:28:03,170 --> 00:28:09,770
And then I knew that
there are no more Jews,

395
00:28:09,770 --> 00:28:14,630
that Jewish population of
Warsaw doesn't exist anymore.

396
00:28:14,630 --> 00:28:22,000
And I was mourning the family.

397
00:28:22,000 --> 00:28:26,230
And they were very
nice about this,

398
00:28:26,230 --> 00:28:29,560
because I came at
night into the barrack,

399

00:28:29,560 --> 00:28:31,680
and I cried the whole night.

400
00:28:31,680 --> 00:28:34,740

401
00:28:34,740 --> 00:28:37,830
I told them what happened.

402
00:28:37,830 --> 00:28:45,010
And in the morning, the
friends went to the foreman,

403
00:28:45,010 --> 00:28:47,400
and said, leave him alone today.

404
00:28:47,400 --> 00:28:49,830
Let him-- let him stay.

405
00:28:49,830 --> 00:28:55,020
So I went into the
forest to spend the day.

406
00:28:55,020 --> 00:29:06,750

407
00:29:06,750 --> 00:29:13,830
The prisoners of war
have a trustee always.

408
00:29:13,830 --> 00:29:18,900
Every group has a trustee
that speaks for them.

409
00:29:18,900 --> 00:29:26,390
We had also a trustee, but
he was letting me very often

410
00:29:26,390 --> 00:29:28,470
to talk, and I had--

411
00:29:28,470 --> 00:29:32,630

412
00:29:32,630 --> 00:29:39,670
I talked German, as
a high-class German.

413
00:29:39,670 --> 00:29:41,380
[NON-ENGLISH]

414
00:29:41,380 --> 00:29:47,400
And the German soldiers
and even officers

415
00:29:47,400 --> 00:29:54,370
inadvertantly were
respecting what

416
00:29:54,370 --> 00:29:59,770
I was saying, because I
talked to them the language

417
00:29:59,770 --> 00:30:00,920
of their superiors.

418
00:30:00,920 --> 00:30:04,520

419
00:30:04,520 --> 00:30:13,940
So I had-- let's say we
had privileges of shower,

420
00:30:13,940 --> 00:30:17,720
in [INAUDIBLE] our
town, in a coal mine.

421
00:30:17,720 --> 00:30:21,170
And then somehow
somebody says no,

422
00:30:21,170 --> 00:30:26,810
and they stopped giving us
permission to go to shower.

423

00:30:26,810 --> 00:30:28,980

And we were dirty.

424

00:30:28,980 --> 00:30:30,890

So I started to yell.

425

00:30:30,890 --> 00:30:33,290

So the officer came.

426

00:30:33,290 --> 00:30:36,100

And I yell at him.

427

00:30:36,100 --> 00:30:38,420

He said, later on,

[INAUDIBLE],, he said,

428

00:30:38,420 --> 00:30:41,300

we are afraid he will shoot you.

429

00:30:41,300 --> 00:30:46,190

I yell at him and we got back.

430

00:30:46,190 --> 00:30:53,750

Now I will talk about

one special accident, not

431

00:30:53,750 --> 00:30:58,970

accident-- incident,

and then about the end.

432

00:30:58,970 --> 00:31:02,300

The incident is this.

433

00:31:02,300 --> 00:31:10,670

We had a radio that was

working only on BBC channel.

434

00:31:10,670 --> 00:31:14,600

Radio made in the camp

and brought to us.

435

00:31:14,600 --> 00:31:17,180
And we were listening
Sunday afternoon

436
00:31:17,180 --> 00:31:23,690
to the broadcast, special
broadcast for prisoner of war.

437
00:31:23,690 --> 00:31:29,180
And here we are, Sunday
afternoon in the barrack,

438
00:31:29,180 --> 00:31:31,220
laying on beds.

439
00:31:31,220 --> 00:31:36,230
And my bed is the third high.

440
00:31:36,230 --> 00:31:37,157
Third tier.

441
00:31:37,157 --> 00:31:38,111
Yes.

442
00:31:38,111 --> 00:31:40,496
The third tier.

443
00:31:40,496 --> 00:31:43,750
We were resting,
and the door opened.

444
00:31:43,750 --> 00:31:48,670
The guard comes in
and yells, Achtung.

445
00:31:48,670 --> 00:31:52,810
And three officers, three
young officers come after him.

446
00:31:52,810 --> 00:31:58,490

447

00:31:58,490 --> 00:32:00,910
Search.

448
00:32:00,910 --> 00:32:09,100
So I have this
earphone in my ear.

449
00:32:09,100 --> 00:32:13,030
I dropped the earphone
and put under the pillow.

450
00:32:13,030 --> 00:32:16,090
And I spring down.

451
00:32:16,090 --> 00:32:17,470
But a moment too late.

452
00:32:17,470 --> 00:32:19,680
Everybody is--

453
00:32:19,680 --> 00:32:23,275