

Good afternoon. My name is Bernard Weinstein, and I direct the Holocaust Oral Testimonies project at the Holocaust Resource Center. We are affiliated with the Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies of the Sterling Library at Yale University.

Sharing the interview with me is Dan Gober. We are privileged to welcome Elizabeth Stern-Szollosi, a survivor presently living in Florida, who has generously volunteered to give testimony about her experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. Mrs. Szollosi, welcome.

Thank you.

I'd like to begin by asking you to tell us a little bit about the town or the city where you grew up.

I born in Hungary in Győr, spelled G-Y-O-- with the umlaut on the top-- R in Hungary. And this located between Budapest and Austria, Vienna, from either side 125 kilometer.

Was it a large city, a large town?

It was that time about 75,000 population, which where now is over 100,000 population I guess. And it's a beautiful city. Is five river and lot of bridges and really here surround-- and a lot of town, which one small towns. And in this towns is in one or a few-- a few Jewish family was in the little town.

But in Győr was a big Jewish communication. We had three temple. We had the orthodox, a Neolog, which one is a reform in the name, and the other one between the two of them. And about approximately in Győr and the surrounding was 10,000 Jewish people. And we had a very lively Jewish life.

What did being Jewish at that time mean to you and to your family?

Well, my father and especially my mother was very religious and kosher. And I had four brothers. And I was the youngest one, the only girl.

And one of my brother was deaf, and he was a lovely nice boy, and he went to special school. And he was very religious, more than my other brothers. My other brothers wasn't.

But he was, and he prayed every day from [INAUDIBLE] He was bar mitzvahed. And good as an angel can be a good. And so I was also kosher through the Second War, I mean, after the Second War.

And what did your father do for a living?

My father was in food business, like a pastry, making pastry and cookies. He had some time ago a factory, like I can compare like a [INAUDIBLE], social tea, biscuit, and things like this--

Confectioner.

Yes, and later on, approximately year 35, he finished this and opened a pastry shop-- just a small pastry shop, like French pastry European style. And when grow up, one of my brothers take the same profession. And after I finishing my high school and commercial school like a bookkeeper, then I went to my father's store and worked there. And I learned myself to be a professional pastry maker, French pastry.

Later on, after the war, I even take my Master's degree from baking.

If I can go back a little bit, what was your schooling like?

I had the I mean finishing the commercial school, which we learn bookkeeping, correspondence-- French, German--

corresponding, commercial, and literature we learn, and short-hand typewriting, things like that. But I never went in a job like that because I did the job in my father's store. I talking about before the war, just before the war.

Did your mother work with your father?

No, no, my mother was not too healthy. She had asthma, and I take care of my mother as much as I could. But she was OK.

Can you talk a little bit about some early memories you have of your family or of the time when you were all together before the war?

Everybody thought oh, I must be very spoiled because I was the youngest and only girl. It was just the opposite. They don't want girls, and they don't want the younger ones shlepping around them. And so my friends, they came from the school really.

And talking about later in the high school-- when I was small, I live in a mixed neighborhood. It was not too pleasant because they calling names my brothers and me-- you Jew and different lousy remarks and pull my hair. It was not too pleasant in the neighborhood where I lived. Each place is really different.

And in the high school, it was in a commercial school, we was a small lovely group. We were 18 girls in the classroom, and six was Jewish. But everybody was like sisters. And then, the time go by and then come to the graduation. The first time I felt terrible-- we was preparing for the yearbook and the picture from the graduation. And we agreed that we will make the photograph with one of the photographer which one of the girls like it very much. And so we all agree with this.

One morning-- I always was almost the first one in the classroom-- and then, one of the girls was also first one. As soon as everybody came, they whispering something to everybody, but not for me. They're not the Jewish girls. Only six Jewish girls was in this classroom. And suddenly, whispering to everybody but not to the Jewish one. And after that, when everybody was together, she stands up and said, we shouldn't go to Mr. Klein to the first classroom photographer. We should go to-- I don't know-- some other name. I just doesn't recall right now-- because he's a very nice Hungarian Christian man.

I was very insulted. Not because the other one-- [Personal name] was the name-- not because he's good or bad, or the other one good or bad-- that the reason what they did, that we shouldn't go to a Jew. We should go Hungarian Christian man.

Was the word "Jew" used in that conversation?

No, that time in the school, No. Mr. Klein, everybody knows he's Jewish, even by name. And Mr. [Personal name] everybody knows that he wasn't Jewish. So I was very, very upset. And we decided we don't want to be a part of the picture. And then, to the religious teacher, name was [Personal name] And our classroom teacher professor was also a Jewish-- [? accident, ?] very few Jewish teacher or professor.

So we went and told her too that we don't want part of the graduation picture. So she said, girls, there's the time coming. We cannot do anything. Don't do that. So we was in the part of the picture. I remember when they take my photo, I was very upset. I couldn't smile. And he kept telling me, smile. So anyhow, this was the very first dividing in our classroom, which gave a very, very bitter taste. So that's from the school.

We had a very nice popular shop French pastry-- not like here a bakery. People coming there and socialize, eat, the youth, and the old, and everybody. And one day, when the Germans come in-- or before? Yeah, before-- I think before Hitler come in.

A friend of my father come to the store, and said, I want the store. And he make my father move out, take away the owner of the building who rented the store. He said, I cannot be shamed that the Jewish rent in my building. And they

take away our pastry shop. This was in year, I think, in '43 or what-- something like that. That time, I married between-- I married in year '42.

And my husband's name accidentally was also Stern, just like my maiden name. And his profession now is also a pastry chef and chef. So there's the coincidence. And one week before the first anniversary, he was taken to the first labor camp. And before that, two of my brothers was taken. And then, the third one was taken. And only my deaf brother [INAUDIBLE] family stay home with two babies.

What was the relationship in time between your father's losing his business and your brothers being taken? Was it around the same period of time or was there--?

Around just before Hitler came in in my city because is not start only when Hitler came in-- because day by day was restricting they call Jewish laws. They just twist and always something happened.

Who was in control at that time?

Horthy.

Yeah.

Horthy Miklos.

Were the fascists already--

Always.

--there?

Always was like that really because Jewish cannot hold certain jobs. Jewish cannot go to a certain University or just very, very limited and losing the jobs day by day. I think I'm jumping a little bit because we have our pastry shop and the Jewish youth and others want to come to the store and were restricted. We was not allowed to hear English radio or some non-Nazi countries. And I remember at night, around 11:00, we closed the store. And the people, Jewish youth, stayed inside and secretly watched TV.

Then later on, we heard they want to attack the temple. And my husband and friends, they went to the temple, and they want to protect the temple. And a lot of harassment-- and it's very hard to say by timing how day by day it happened. But it happened, I remember, I want to go too. And they don't let me go. Girl go shouldn't go. So only the boys went.

And then before my husband left to the war, I have such a terrible feeling. We married because of the war really, very fast because the day before I even don't know the next day I will be married. But every day, the Jewish boys was calling. And they try to get married. My husband lived in Budapest. I lived in Győr. So we decided that we don't wait until the time. And we really want to marry. We married just before.

Was this in order not to be taken?

Not not to be taken, that be sure married before he will be taken. This doesn't give excuse really from taking people. Just because we want to be married, I decide it doesn't matter what happened-- even he come home without legs, without hands, I still want him. So it doesn't matter why we shouldn't be spend time until he's right there. So that's what make many, many girls and boys to get married because of the situation.

And when my husband left and all the family, my parents, not with a good health-- they was around their 50s at that time. And so I was there, and my deaf brother, and his two babies-- 3 and 1/2 years old and then later on born a four weeks old when he was taken to Auschwitz. This was the age.

And when everybody left, I just had the instant feeling that always come the worse and the worse. And it's not finished. That's not the end of it, what happened here. So we're talking over with my husband that if he were taken, if they take me too, or destroy my home, my apartment, then how can we meet each other? We even won't know the address or where we should look for each other?

So we're talking over that every year, 2nd of June, at home, if no home, then at the post office. If the post office will be destroyed, then the next one. So make day by day, place to place, where we meet and which day.

And this give me such a tremendous hope and willpower that I know we will meet again. And he said, even if you got the death certificate, don't believe it. I will maybe throw away my IDs, change the clothes, if I can, and I will escape another side. But you should have hope. And I really had hope.

How old were you when you married--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I was in my 20s.

20s.

And then we're talking over a secret word that don't believe any message, only if they give out the secret word which one was good too and useful also later on. So when they take away our store, I went to work in a big factory, cake factory, something like [INAUDIBLE]. But then, I can't work this job either because Jewish cannot be in the factory anymore. And come the ghetto time. It was Shavous The German come in 20 of March.

This is "44, 1944.

Yes. And then, it was completely restricted. We cannot go certain street, and they said this is the last time when we could go on the other street and in the ghetto. And we have in the temple-- our temple was in a section where Jewish cannot go anymore-- the Shavous was the very last time when we was able to go there. The Jewish was there. We had a lovely rabbi, Dr. [? Rohde ?] Emil, a beautiful wife and two children.

And people was crying loud in the temple with flowers. And Dr. [? Rohde ?] rabbi said, not the time to suicide. A lot of people suicide, killed themselves. He said, don't give them the satisfaction that we take our own life, take off from them the guilt. And the Torah was open all night and pray. We have to close the temple now. God give back that we can make it again and open someday.

And that was the last time you were there?

Last time that we was in the temple. After that, we have to leave our home and go to a ghetto. It was very hard because the ghetto was a very small section and a lot of Jews. And at that time, we had to give up our apartment, give up our furniture, everything-- just the very small stuff, and a little hand-- four-wheel for something to carry to the ghetto.

And after that, we was squeezed for a while. And people was taking day by day. I remember, my mother and my aunts heard and see the people groups Shema Yesrael look at that, I couldn't. Pretty soon they're taking us too. And then--

How many people in your family went with you into the ghetto? How many were you?

The ghetto was only my deaf brother, the wife, the two babies, my mother, my father, and me. The rest of them already was in the forced labor camp. And we don't know where they are. And then, from there, they took us to searching us in a school to take into to a barrack, which was already wired. And this was a terrible experience. And they take us to a certain school.

And one by one basis, they examined everybody-- and very degrading, and very suffering. They were searching if we

have any gold, or value, or anything. And the women have to be naked. And the midwife look at inside the women-- and gendarmes looking and take off everything. Even the baby was-- they opened the baby's clothes and look over if hiding anything there, any value.

And then, I had nothing anymore. But I get my wedding band. And they taking this too. And I don't want to give up. And my mother said, don't say no. Just give it. No. And then, we hear the man crying because they beat up the man in private rooms. We just hear the screaming, searching for value.

And then, everybody was searched already. Then, with the rain dropping, we walk with the baby carriage, the little baby, the 3 and 1/2 years old. And we wait. My sister-in-law was breastfeeding. And they even don't like to go under house door that she should feed her baby.

So we went to the barrack. I never forget this scene. [INAUDIBLE] was lying dead. And I say, if there is any guard, destroy them. I don't care if I destroy myself too, but please, why let to do that? And the people looking us in the window, and smile, and laugh-- such a degrading--

And in the barrack was already fence around like a concentration camp was already in Hungary in my city Győr. And I bring art from the jail, the people, the Jewish people, from the hospitals, from the mental institute, from all over.

We had a lovely, lovely doctor, Dr. Nobel Wilmush, like an angel. He helped the poor people. It doesn't matter religion or anything. He will get you whatever. If they have no money, they even give medicine then. And he was the very first one who was taken to the jail because they said they are for the Americans and English, maybe spy, and he wasn't -- so anyhow, they take first the intellectual, the Jewish intellectual. They take very first time, even before Hitler. And he was taken then.

And I remember everybody hanging around, and kissing him, and was happy for him. And until I'm here, I tell you what happened with him. In Auschwitz, he was-- and I heard that-- when a man was beat up and losing his sight from the beating, he went over there. And he going to help this man. And he was beaten to death because he want to help for a man to save his life eyesight. And now if I'm here, I tell you what happened with our beloved, wonderful rabbi who get together the Jewish youth and everybody. And he teach us and was wonderful every single day.

First of all, they cut the Magen David, you know, the Jewish star in his head, in the shaved head-- like the Jewish star shows. And the rabbi had to clean up the latrine, the-- the by his hand. I forgot to tell you, the yellow star, that we have to use the yellow star. And without the yellow star, if somebody went to the-- took away to a camp and [punished him terrible, took right away, we don't know then where, now we know.

So from the barrack, one day come the rumor-- I mean talking because it was true-- that everybody has to go. We don't know where. And I was tearing in part. What shall I do? Because they said, under 30, they have to go everybody. But if somebody is a widow, war widow, they don't have to go.

I got a widow letter from the Red Cross that my husband disappeared, probably dead. In five years, he doesn't come back, I'm permanent widow. I don't believe it, but anyhow, I said, what can I do? My brother is young. My brother was in his 20s, my sister-in-law. But they was deaf. They was taking anyhow. And I was young. But I have to go too. But maybe I won't have to go even if I'm younger because I'm a war widow according to the Red Cross.

So I just don't know what to do. Should I go with them or not to go? It's up to me, leave my sick, old parents here. I'm the only one who can help. Or leave my deaf brother, and the children, and deaf sister-in-law. Where shall I go? I said, I don't care. I let them be on the life. I will ask the gendarme if I have to go, I cannot decide it.

And then, I went there. I said, I'm the age group who take for war. But I'm a war widow. Do I have to go or not? He said, you dirty, rotten, and-- said about me the dirtiest word-- get your bag and go. Because he talk like this, I had run back to the barrack and I hiding. I didn't go.

So that's how I left my deaf brother, and sister-in-law, and two babies alone. If I go with them, I cannot tell you the story

right now. Because I told one of the children, I would be just as cremated the same second when I arrived like the rest of them. They were lying that they take them to work No, they take them to kill.

Then, after three days everybody was taken. They couldn't take everybody in the same time. This was the lie about it, making stories to groups. So my girlfriend, [Personal name] a lovely girl, and my mother was sick. And they said, the sick people, they take a bus. The other one have to walk. My father said, don't walk because probably sick, maybe they kill them. Go with the healthy people. I said, no, I won't leave my mother. I stay here with the sick.

So my girlfriend and me stayed there, and my father left with the group. And then, when we stayed there with the mother, they said, again, very dirty words-- Jewish dirty. I don't want to repeat the dirty words. But they said to us like prostitutes. Get out of here. The last transport, go, go. So I said my mother, kiss your hand, mother. That's how we, European people, say. I will see you at the door. I don't know what kind of door. But I thought wherever we go, it has a door. This was the last time that I saw my mother.

Before we left, we had no food. We had a piece of bread, a piece of bacon, and a handful of cane sugar. I said to my parents, we'll never know what happens. Divide this food because maybe we lost each other and should everybody have some food.

So I give my mother the bread because she was kosher till the last end. I beg, mother, eat something. It doesn't matter. You have to save your life. No, it'll be very sorry if I eat non-kosher. She won't eat it. So I give the bacon to my father. And I take for myself the handful of cane sugar. That's how we went to the wagon. I went by myself with my girlfriend. And with hunger, 85 people in the wagon, locked-- like the cattle wagon-- with the [INAUDIBLE].

And men, women, children, whoever-- and no toilet, the can in front of each other. No water, no food-- after three days and three nights, we arrived. And I run all over the wagons and calling my father and my mother names. I didn't find my mother. I find my father. And I meet him. I cry on his shoulder. And he said to me, OK, OK, don't cry anymore. I'm here.

As soon as they said that, they had already come and divided me from my father. I said the same thing to my father-- kiss your hand, father. I will see you inside. I saw him inside. When we walked outside in Auschwitz, we saw the gate. We saw terrible-looking people. My God, we don't know who they are. And they were bald. We don't know if they are men or woman. They was in raggedy-like dress, clothes.

So these clothes, it should be a woman, bald like a man, and jumping like crazy. And saying, eat everything, eat everything, whatever you have. Everything will be taken away from you. They said, throw away the food for me if you have. They take away from you anyhow through the fence.

And then, I saw a building there, naked people front of this building inside and behind the fence. And my cousin said, look at that over there is my mother and your father. They was naked. That's the front of the gas chamber. I don't know then what I know now.

And then suddenly, we hear whistle and beeps. And boom, boom-- we didn't see anybody anymore. All the people who were yelling a minute before disappeared. What happened with them? I know later. We do this so everybody have to go back to their own barracks and not to communicate behind the fence.

When we went in, it was a large room. And we was crying God for water. We was very thirsty. The thirst is worse than the hunger. And every language is recalling-- [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. whatever we can say, we're begging for water. And no water-- they say, later. And then, they said, everybody, take off all the clothes, drop next to you.

And then, come people. And the Polish people who were prisoners before us, the German Nazis used them for them. This was not what they thought, not what the Polish people thought. They have to do it. And then, the SS women, SS men, and the Polish prisoners with the striped clothes was around. And they came and shaved us. And we see halfway shave-- [INAUDIBLE] they shave us all over-- down, underarm--

The men and the women were shaved the same way?

We was only women together. The men was separate. Women was separate. Old was separate. Everybody was separate. So our group was from young people which looks like 20, could be 11 years old, looks older-- or a little bit older than 40 but looks younger. But the range, approximately between 20 and 40, that doesn't mean really 20 and 40-- no idea anymore, no identity, nothing. The old people separate, the sick people separate-- so everybody separate.

So we was there, and then, I was still crying for water. And then, they said, leave everything. Only take your shoes. We can take our shoes with us. And then, we was pushed through another door. And then, they give us a very raggedy-rag top. If you want to call clothing, or a skirt, or whatever, you can name it. But it was terrible-looking, and long, short, bloody, dirty, whatever.

After that, we are still crying for water-- no water. So we were like the cattle sent to a big place, a barrack, a wood barrack. And then, we have to stand. They're counting us, approximately 1,200 women we were together. We stand. It's called Zahlappell. We don't know then. And then, Zahlappell. Means Counting, stay-- stay for counting. Zahlappell. That's the meaning.

And then, it was night, exhausted. And they said, sit. We had no seat to stretch your leg, just in the Turkish seat. And they said, now, you go to sleep. And left us. We had no room to stretch our body. We sleep on each other body. And in the morning, they said, you will hear the whistle, then everybody get up.

Morning was-- I don't know. The star was still out. You hear the whistle. And then, I wake up. This was one of the scariest time between many other. But this was terrible scary. When I look around, I said, my God, I'm the only woman here. Oh, I am with all the men. I was so scared. And then, I said, what?

Then, I start to remember. They are women. They have no hair. And I was shaved too. I forgot-- the night. I just see a lot of bald somebody. And then, we didn't recognize each other. We're calling names-- Elizabeth, Ann, Margaret, you know. And then, when we see each other, there's you. There's you. And we start to laugh. But nobody see the mirror, themselves. Everybody see the other one.

And then starts life in Auschwitz. Most of the people lost their mind. In a way, me too. I couldn't think any more. I had no feeling, no love, no hate, nothing. I was like a subject for-- I don't know what I was. And it was like this about approximately for two weeks. I had absolutely no feeling, nothing.

Then I start to pinch myself. I said, hey, wake up. Wake up. You had people who you loved. Think of them. Don't be like a vegetable. Some people said, oh, I go home. I go to the bathroom. I go shopping out. People lost temporary their mind, some of them.

I remember one of the women who was really lost her mind was taken away. Or the sick, or was it red spots, or something not completely healthy, they were taken away. And I said, really, really barrack like a hospital make-believe, I don't know.

And one of the girls say, come on, if you want to see something sit in Turkish seat. And one of the women, she must be a very highly intelligent woman. And she said, everything in poem. Everything in poems she talks. And I don't know the rhythm. But I can explain what it was about. And the German Nazis and everybody standing around her and laughing.

And she said, I had children, you take it. And like a trial to the German Nazis. I had nice clothes, you take it. And I had love. You take it. So like a trial, in poem, she said her life, all she had, and everybody Nazis take from her. And the rhythm was always give me a cigarette, give me a bottle of cherry. That was the rhythm. So she was hungry. She want to eat. And her imagination wanted food, wanted cherry. And she was smoking, so she asked a cigarette.

But everything, she said such a poem. I wished to memorize the poem how she said it. I couldn't memorize it.

In rhyme.

In rhyme, yes, in rhyme. Everything was in rhyme. And they're laughing around her and threw her a cigarette. The other woman I remember there, she sit there. And she won't eat anything. Well, we don't have anything anyhow. But whatever she had, she threw away [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. Means non-kosher.

Pork.

And so she must be very religious. And in her mind, everything non-kosher-- this [INAUDIBLE] I remember. And then a girlfriend, some of the friends was taken because at Wiesbaden, we saw them. And they took naked into the truck. All of them, they concentrated. And we never see them again. We know now what happened.

Was your mother with you at that point?

My mother was [INAUDIBLE]

No.

My parents both, and my brother, my sister-in-law, and the two babies-- I never saw them again. But which one I almost forgot to tell you, we saw a big house, square, long chimney-- a chimney like a square-- terrible smoke coming out, heavy, heavy smoke like bone. And the fire day and night, we never saw a bird, never saw anything because of the fire and the smoke. Even the bird won't come around there. And the star we never saw.

How did you know what the smoke was?

We don't know. We ask long time there the Polish girls. And not this but, we're guessing. We said, it's true we don't get food. We don't get nothing. But so many people must be taking some bread. That's not smell like bread. OK, we don't have any garbage because we have nothing. We haven't got even to clean our back when we do something. If we find a piece of grass, we was lucky to clean ourself. So it was nothing. We had no garbage. What are they burning? Maybe somebody else's garbage.

Can you describe the odor?

Odor was terrible-- smell, bone and [? flesh ?] or something-- this kind of smell it was. And we still don't know. My imagination don't go that far. And then, we ask the Polish girls, the [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. Blockalteste, called. You know, blockalteste, I don't know if you know what this means. Block means block, and alteste means older-- so who was above us, appointed by the Germans.

A supervisor or a senior.

Something. Yeah. And we ask, where is our parents? Where is our children? Family? You see the smoke over there? There is your mother. There is your children. That's what they said. We look at each other. We said, no. She's crazy. If we would be so long [INAUDIBLE] here, we will be crazy too. And we don't want to believe it.

When we was taken to the shower, [INAUDIBLE] shower, I mean [INAUDIBLE] shower. Even outside was [NON-ENGLISH] It means gas chamber. And when we look at that, we say to each other, look at this, they take us to the gas. And the other girl said, don't worry about it. The German always lie. If they gas, they don't. If they won't be [? the same, ?] old would be.

So when somebody before they die, they're hanging on a straw or something, we don't want to believe it. We see it, but we don't want to believe it. And I suppose, it really was the gas chamber, which was like a shower. And sometimes, a drop of water coming out. Sometimes, the gas coming out.

So the women there-- a few drops of water coming out, we have to be naked and run through-- and then again through a piece of raggedy-rag like clothes. And then, at the door, whoever's going, they never saw if anybody come out. So



everybody tried to push behind not to go because we don't see anybody coming out. But they all have to go. My feet come out in them here.

And then, we was out from the shower, they said, sit down Turkish seat. We sit. And like you shower the flower for fun, they say, OK, we give you a shower. And they sprinkle us with water. And some of them don't get any clothes, just a blanket because it was not even that much clothes.

Once, I remember I was between the very end of the group where we went. And less and less naked. And until you're naked in a group, it's not so bad. When you're naked alone, it's terrible. And there was only maybe 20, 40 left-- I don't know. And I was scared to death.

And they threw the clothes, and I jumped and grabbed one and ran. I was so scared. And then, one of the women who hadn't got the clothes, just a blanket-- we went back to our barrack because the shower was in other lager. I guess, this was the C lager. I don't know.

And on the way back, when we went back, she saw a group, male group, and she recognized her son. And she said the name of the son. Because she did that, the Germans said to their dog "Jew." They jump on her, and tear up her blanket. and attack her-- just said "Jew." That was enough for the dog, the German Shepherd dog.

Oh, I forgot to say when we went into Auschwitz is a [INAUDIBLE] lager was a nice door. Arbeit macht frei. That just means that work makes you free. And then was a nice garden, and music band, and we said to each other, look, maybe not so bad.

And the other girl said, wait a minute. That's the honest thing. After a minute, a man comes, humiliated, bleeding, bent. And two SS beat them up and said, that's what happens with the people who try to escape. So they give us an example. This was the introduction when we went in after the music.

I have to talk about the water. We had no water in our camp in B lager. I was in B lager, block 9. I think 10 blocks were there. Each block has about 1,200 women. And once a day, they bring us water in a big truck like the gasoline tank. And we're supposed to catch up some water with like a children swimming pool, a tub, where they are supposed to put the water over there. And we should get some water from there, dirty and everything.

But we have five of us. We had no dishes. One dish with the feeding-- I have to go back reminding me because they go away a little bit. And five in a row-- so this way, long row, this way, 5 in a row, we belong together. And we help each other. And then, we feed after each other. We'll talk about later.

So everybody has to go for water. This time, my turn was between us talking to pick up some water. When I run for water, they beat. The German take off the belt with the heavy buckle and start beat the women on the head. And from my city was one of the women, I think her name was [Personal name] It doesn't matter. The blood was coming out from the head because she tried to catch a little water.

And when they beat left side, the right side so I somehow managed to catch it like a soup bowl, water-- or cereal bowl. And when I went, the woman was laying on the ground, blistered from the thirst, the mouth, and begging me-- give me a drop of water, just a drop. Three days. I don't drink-- a drop of water. I don't drink. I even didn't taste this water. But I can't stand it. So I gave a drop.

Then, again, the same story-- when I get to the group, where is the water? I said, I got it. Where is it? I said, they beg for me, and I gave away. And then, they give me a fit. Who give to you? I said, don't fight. Don't fight. I run back. I go again. Just don't fight with me. So again, I run back. Finally, I got a little water. People begging me, I don't give anymore. I take to my group, and every one of us get a swallowing of water. That's how we got the water.

And the food was a terrible story. If I have a chance, I will tell you how we was fed, and what kind of food, how I can eat, and what to eat.

Were the guards women?

The guards were women. The SS was men and women. The electric fence was SS soldiers, men with machine guns. And the food we got, terrible food. You can say everything but not food. And people saw hunger couldn't eat. How I eat? I closed my eye, I closed my nose, and I said, I want to see my husband-- one swallow. I want to see my parents, other swallow. I want to see my brothers, one more. And I want to see the children. So I have to sacrifice to be able to swallow this terrible something, which they called food.

Do you know what it was that they gave you to eat?

It was terrible. I don't know. It was wood, grass. Who knows? Who knows? [INAUDIBLE] everything but not really which you can say food.

Was your friend with you during this period of time?

My girlfriend?

Yes.

Yes. Some of them-- they come from my city. We all know--

You all know each other.

--each other very well or went to school together, graduated together. Yes, they was there. And then, they got for a day one thin slice of bread and one spoonful of the margarine-- the little square which one you get in the restaurant-- or one thin slice of salami or one teaspoon of jam. So not all, one of them-- this was the whole day's supply.

And in morning, we got a drop of make-believe coffee, some dark liquid. And the first thing was to rinse our mouth with because we had no toothbrush, nothing, nothing, nothing. And even for this lousy food, sometimes, the end of the road runs out and couldn't get anything. And there was fighting for the food.

And when somebody faint in the Zahlappell-- this was the counting-- we have to stay there. And then, somebody faint or diarrhea or whatever, and the other one want to help, then, they beat up the person who want to help. And they said, there's no sick here-- either dead or alive, no sick. And if somebody tried to help, God forbid.

And we had no toilet. As many different, sometimes just like an arc-- one of the women in the very first days fell in it. So we make chain to pull her out on the waist. And men come and clean up. And so it doesn't matter if we do over there. So it is unbelievable. It's hard to recall what was in Auschwitz.

We'll stop at this point and pick up in a few minutes.