

[MUSIC PLAYING] Good afternoon. My name is Bernard Weinstein, and I direct the Kean College oral testimonies project, the Holocaust Resource Center. We are affiliated with the Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University. Sharing the interview with me is Melissa Silverman. And we are privileged to welcome Lillian Ross, a survivor presently living in Union, who has generously volunteered to give testimony about her experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. Mrs. Ross, I'd like to welcome you.

Thank you.

I'd like to begin by asking you to tell us a little bit about the town or city where you lived. What it was called, and its population, and other things about it that are important.

I was born in Łódź, Poland. Łódź was called Polish Manchester because it was a very industrial city, mostly textile, but also other industries. It was the second city which had the biggest Jewish population after Warsaw, about quarter of a million Jews lived there.

And it had the reputation of a wealthy city because, I think, it was about the first and only larger town which had no river nearby. And also the smoke from the factories made the air very polluted. However to me, it was my hometown and I lived there with my parents.

What did your father do?

My father had a machinery business. Also sold construction and building materials, rails, boilers. This was a line that his family work for generation, and his father was in this line, and so was he.

Was your mother involved in that business also?

Yes. Yes, my mother came from Warsaw. From a Jewish prominent family because her grandfather was the chief rabbi of Poland, Harav Zvi Perlmutter. She was his oldest granddaughter.

His distinction was that he was the first Jewish representative to the so-called Sejm, which was equivalent to American Congress. And he was also a personal friend of Marshal Pilsudski, who, about World War I, was in charge of the country.

And he had a secular as well as a religious education?

Yes, he did. He was a self-made man. He spoke several languages. Because I remember as a child, I came there. He was, at that time a very, very old man sitting like on a throne with a big tube. He was probably hard of hearing, so you had to talk to him through the tube. And he was discussing with my mother. He asked her what she was reading, some German and French literature.

And thanks to his position, my mother was able to go to a Russian gymnasium, which was at that time unheard of. For the Jewish girls, she was very well educated. And that was our luck because she placed a great emphasis on education.

And although she has only girls-- we were four girls. They were trying desperately to have a son but none came. She felt that the daughters should be as well educated as sons. And we always, since kindergarten, we went to private Jewish excellent schools.

Obviously, with your grandfather as a distinguished rabbi, you must have had a great emphasis in your home on religion, on Jewishness.

Yes.

Tell us a little about that.

Actually, our whole life revolved around Jewish holidays. There was that tremendous stimulation and

excitement before Passover or before the Jewish new year. Which for the children is really, very exciting, and means so much. And Hanukkah, of course, with the gifts was our favorite.

But, however, my parents being in business had to be also secular. To each other, they spoke Yiddish. Mostly when they didn't want us to understand what they were talking about.

But at home, the Polish language was spoken. And my father, who was a Hasid when he married my mother, had to change into civilian clothing to be able to conduct business with Polish people and German who didn't like Hasidim.

Did he feel, in any sense, compromised by this? Or was he uncomfortable in that--

I imagine that in the beginning, he probably did. But that must have been when I was very young. Ever since I remember him, he was in civilian clothing. But my both grandfathers wore the traditional black garb and hats, so.

What proportion of the people in Łódź were Jewish at the time you were growing up?

I would say it was at least half. I don't know exactly, but in my own world, was 90%. Because we lived in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood. There were some Polish people. But the ones that I came in contact with, to be frank with you, was only the janitor of our apartment house, and the workers who worked for my father. So, of course, they were very nice to us because they worked for my father. And so was the janitor who was tipped very generously.

And I really lived mostly in a Jewish world. Our neighbors were mostly Jewish. I went to Jewish school.

And I really thought-- I, frankly, did not experience anti-Semitism until I was about 14 years old, and there was a parade on the 3rd of May, which is a great national holiday in Poland. And the Jewish schools were parading separately. And that was already before the war, about two years before the war, when the anti-Semitism was growing.

Were they parading separately by their own choice, or by some edict--

No. That's how they were assigned. There was a dancing also. We danced in separate circles. So at that time, as I was parading, I heard for the first time-- people were lined up on both sides of the street, and as we parade by, they were shrieking at us, get out from Poland!

This was--

We don't want--

--the Jewish contingent that they were shrieking at?

Yes. Yes. We don't want Jews in Polish schools. Because there were some schools that also had Jewish people in them, government schools. So that was a great shock to me.

When you were asked to march separately, when they had assigned it so the schools marched separately, were you aware at that time that that might have been anti-Semitism? Or it wasn't until you were in the parade and heard the shouts?

No. I knew that we were second-class citizens. I knew it from very early.

How?

I think my first experience was when I was playing with a Polish girl, who was a daughter of a policeman. And we got in some kind of an argument, and she told me that, my God stinks. Which made me very mad, and I said, if my God stinks, your God stinks too.

And then I left, and came home, and told my mother about it. And my mother got very pale, and she said, gosh, what you talking about? You're going to bring misfortune on our family. I said, but she said it first. If she insulted my God, couldn't I insult her God?

So my mother said, no. We don't live in our country. This is Poland. This is their God and this is their country. And don't you ever dare to say anything like that.

And right away you knew that you were Jewish not Polish.

And then right away, I realized that we are not as good as the Polish people, and that our God is inferior, and that I better keep my mouth shut.

And your parents had already absorbed that idea themselves.

Yes. My parents, of course, went through the World War I, and a lot of persecution from the Russians, and from the Germans, and then from the Polish people. And they were used to this, and they lived with it the best way they could.

So after this parade in May that you refer to, when they started shouting those words at you, did things get worse progressively? Or did they stay the same or did they diminish for a while?

No, there was a increase in anti-Semitism. In the papers, first of all, because there was also increase of Nazism in Germany which was very close to us. Right before the war, there was the famous pogrom in Przytyk that the Jewish people tried to defend themselves, and they were all sentenced while the Polish people went free.

Also they forbade the Jewish people to slaughter ritually the cattle. And we, most of the Jews, were strictly kosher, and they couldn't eat-- that was not slaughtered this way.

Now this was done by the Poles themselves.

That was done by the Poles themselves. With the growth of Nazism in Germany, the element-- I mean, Poland was always a very anti-Semitic country. But, luckily as a child, I didn't feel too much of it because our parents tried to shelter us from the outside world.

That's how we grew up. The whole security, everything that meant to us was the family, and later on, the school which was also Jewish. And the outside world was hostile, was that something that we were afraid of.

So your parents didn't speak very much about these things to you unless the subject--

We could hear them sometimes discussing problems in business, where my mother who didn't look Jewish-- she was blond and had blue eyes-- was really the one who-- my father was the expert, but she was the one who was conducting the business. And as a matter of fact, we had one French-- German, I'm sorry, German customer, a very big customer.

He had a very big factory of swimwear. He would come by car, stop in front of our business, and his chauffer would go and get my mother with a notebook, and she had to sit there and write the order. He wouldn't go into the Jewish business. So that gave us an idea that the German people didn't like it and neither did the Polish.

If you had wanted to or your family had wanted to leave Poland at that time-- they saw that it was getting really bad. And they felt they could leave the business, would they have been able to?

My mother's friend, when I was still a little girl, went to Palestine. And when she went, my mother asked her to find out how it is there, and maybe we will go there too. However, she wrote very-- that, you have to understand was probably in the-- I was only a very little child, so it must have been the '20s, some time.

And the life in Palestine was very, very hard. She wrote to my mother that she had to wash her own clothes, that she has to clean, that she has to cook. And my mother did not do any of those things. She was a businesswoman, and we always had a housekeeper and governesses. So, of course, my mother said, how could I do that?

And that was about the only time-- and then the whole-- our family had nobody that lived abroad. From my father's side and from my mother's side, they all lived in Poland, and they are all quite comfortable. So there was no frame of reference or comparison how people live someplace else.

And then we were all very voracious readers. And I read a lot of books about America like *Jungle*. The American, it seemed to me that I was in heaven compared to old-fashioned books, which also were very bad, and our life was very comfortable in many ways.

So your family had to put up with the anti-Semitism, and so could you?

Yeah. Yeah, they always did, and they felt that's the way of living. And that's how we lived.

What was life like for you as a student in school? Were there any overtures of anti-Semitism from the teachers or--

No.

--any other people?

It was a purely Jewish school.

The secondary school you went to was Jewish also?

Yes. We always went to private schools, which were quite expensive. But all the teachers were Jewish. And the only one thing was that when I graduated, which was in summer of 1939, I had to go to a very-- I graduated from a humanistic lyceum. And in order to do so, there was a delegate from the government sent to the Jewish schools.

They did not trust the Jewish schools. And they were there. They gave first a written-- there were a whole week of written tests in different subjects, like Latin, math, history, and German, and so on.

And then the delegate personally interviewed each girl on their-- because that was only a girls school. It was not a co-educational school. And very often, good students who got nervous could fail, which was very unfair but that's how it was.

Did your sisters attend the same school that you did?

Yes. All my sisters attended. And my mother, for a number of years, was the president of the PTA because we had the only four-- and quite well-known in that school, I have to say, because each one was talented in one way or another. I was in charge of the theater. Every month, we had theater parties where I wrote songs and plays, and my sisters would perform.

Did you also act?

I didn't act too much, but my sisters were terrific dancers and singers, and played violin. And I mostly directed them.

So you had a lot of outlets here.

Yes, I did. School was, for me very, very important. Next to my family, which was represented my whole life and my security. It was the school that was very important.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I'm sorry.

I was just going to ask, that was a very happy time for you then?

Yeah, it certainly was. I was totally fulfilled as a child.

Go ahead.

Were you planning also, at the time the war broke out, on going to college or university?

Yes. Yes, my mother made some arrangements. I was supposed to go to Belgium because-- I forgot to tell you that-- at that time also, it was very hard for Jewish people to go to Polish universities. The Jewish student had to sit separately.

But they formed like a ghetto. And they used to beat them, you know, before they entered. And there were increasing numbers of anti-Semitic measures against the Jews. And they tried to discourage the Jews from getting higher education, because most of the intelligentsia in Poland was Jews-- the doctors, the lawyers, the teachers.

At what point did you first feel yourself in real danger?

Actually, when we went-- the summer, 1939, was the first summer that we did not go away-- far away. You know, because usually we went with my school to the mountains or to the shore. They had some kind of a camp, you know? But this summer, it was like the war was already in the air, and my mother was afraid we should go way too far. So we rented a summer place. And the news got worse and worse, and people were preparing for actual war, and digging trenches.

We decided to come back home. And we hired like a droshki that's with a horse-- a buggy, yeah? And as we were sitting with the horse and buggy, and going back to Łódź. A lot of peasants, Polish peasants, were standing on the roads like that, and saying, that's the last good-- of your good time that you're going to have. Now Hitler's going to get even with you. You won't go no more for summer vacation.

That was the first time I realized that we truly have to be afraid, not only of the Germans coming, but also of what the Polish people would do to us. And I didn't realize that their hatred was so terrible.

That's what I was going to ask you. Your mother said you were preparing for war. Did she-- did you have an understanding that the war was an anti-Semitic act? Or did you just think, there's a war in Europe, and we're going to be involved in this war?

Of course, I read the papers. So I knew that the Germans-- I mean Hitler was talking and threatening to kill the Jews. But it seemed to us that he was a lunatic, and that that was very unrealistic. How could you kill 250,000 Jews in a town? That seemed to us unbelievable. But of course, after the Germans came, and they started day after day different measures, and they were catching people like dogs in the street, and torturing them, and taking to all kinds of labor that didn't even make sense, then we realized that we were trapped.

Can you describe for us the first days of the war for you?

Of course. First of all, there was bombing. And we all came to my grandmother, my father's mother, who had a big apartment house. And we stayed. And she has also a very large apartment. So my father and two of his sisters with children-- they had two small-- one had two small boys. One had a boy and a girl, still infants. We came and stayed with my aunt.

And every time-- with my grandmother-- there was bombing, we had to run down and sit in the cellar. And it was very frightening.

This was the first time you did that?

Yes, yes. It was very frightening, but it didn't take too long. And Łódź was not touched at all by the bombs-- very, very-- almost nothing. Because they planned right away to make it a German town. So they didn't want to do anything.

Because of the industry, or because of its closeness to the border?

Because of the large number of Germans who lived. There.

I was going to say, the people were supporting-- it's amazing to me that Poland didn't want Germany to take over as a country. Poland was defending itself against Germany. Yet they were happy that Hitler was coming in, because now the Jews were going to get it.

I'm talking about peasants.

Yeah.

I'm talking about the peasants. But of course, later on, it turned out that that was also an opinion of a majority of Polish people, at least the ones that I got in touch with. Because they were-- even in the camps, when we were in the same boat, so to speak, they were very anti-Semitic. If they could discuss in front of us, say, the first sign when the war will be over will be when they take out the Jews and kill them, then we will know that the war is over. Right in front of us they said that with great joy.

They didn't have to hide it anymore. It was as though--

Yeah. No, I mean that was-- they were gloating. They were gloating. And they were in the same boat, starving just like we did.

Did they blame you for that?

I don't know whether they blamed us. But you know, my last camp, where I was unfortunately assigned to a stube, which is like a room where there was-- we had no place to sleep, just on the floor. That was so-called the Polish stube which the Polish people were sitting under the walls, and the Jewish people were in the middle. And we were pushed with feet from one direction to another. So you know, the one on the right side pushed us to the left side.

And they were entertaining us with all kinds of stories about how the Jews-- one woman was telling how, as a child, she almost got killed because a man with a big beard and a long nose wanted to give her a candy. And it was a lucky thing that her mother warned her, because otherwise he would kill her and take the blood for a matzoh.

And this was-- this was already--

That was already almost the end of the war.

And it still went on?

That's right.

Let's go back to the beginning of the war. You were living with-- in your grandmother's apartment?

Yeah, after the Germans, for a while, came in, my father decided, you know, that it was better we should move to my grandmother's apart-- no, that was-- I was telling you about bombing. That was temporary. But later, we moved to one of her apartments.

This was still in Łódź?

That was in Łódź, yeah.

And how long did you live there with her?

I think it was probably late November or December when we were deported.

And during that time, you didn't experience much of the havoc of--

We just sat home. We were afraid to go out. Because once, I went and they caught me. And they beat me up, and I had to scrub the toilets. And that was a terrible experience. So since then, I was afraid to go out.

So you knew what was happening to Jews on the streets.

Yes, I knew what was happening. I knew that some of my friends, a newly married couple, the Germans came to them and forced them to perform all kinds of sexual acts, and were sitting there and laughing. And later on, those people who are very much in love before, just the man ran away to Russia and left the woman. So I knew those things were-- every day was something new.

Did you have to wear-- when you went out in public, you had to wear the star?

Yes, the yellow. We had to wear the yellow. But still, my father was still in his business. And he went every day there. And we thought we will just suffer through like everything else. Because my mother was telling us stories about the World War I. And she said they suffered plenty, but the things went away and she was all right.

So the few weeks that I spent in Łódź, that was before the ghetto. They didn't [INAUDIBLE]. Every day there was a new sign on the street. The doctors can't treat Gentiles, the factories will be taken over by the Germans, all kinds of things that were just making life very, very difficult. But we were trapped. We were there.

Until one morning when we were still in bed, my father went to the business. And it was just lucky that we were all at home, including a maid. And the door opened, and my father walked in very pale, and behind him two SS men. And they said, you have half an hour. Pack just your personal belongings. And they took the money from my father's, you know, whatever my father gave them, and gave 50 marks for each person.

And then, they walked us to my grandmother's house, which was a very big-- tremendous, big apartment house. There were, I would say, maybe hundreds. And all the people looking and crying because they saw us with the SS men going out. They didn't know what's going to happen to us.

And they took us to a place where we met a lot-- I met some of my teachers, a lot of very prominent people of Łódź. They were all-- and we had to go through a search. And my mother had a diamond ring that she was wearing. And she dropped it. You know, she said a jar with honey. She dropped it, and we went through. But they searched us totally, took anything that they wanted, and then they--

These were SS men in uniform?

SS men in uniforms. And they packed us in train. In a-- not a-- you know, how do you call it? A train for transport, that--

Were these the cattle cars they used?

The cattle car. Yeah, that's what I wanted to say.

With no windows, with no ventilation?

No windows, no ventilation. And we were going like that, I don't know for how long. Because the time

seemed of no consequence at that time, until we stopped at one spot and we saw the sign Debica It must have been at least two days that we were traveling. And that was in the evening.

And we came to the station. And then we saw people running with big-- with coffee and sandwiches. And those were the Jewish people who lived in that small town who were notified by the Germans that a transport of Jews from Pol-- from Łódź is coming, and they should take care of us.

They tried to do their best. They assigned each family to very modest places. But still, we slept on the floor there someplace. And a lot of people, who were able somehow to get out some money-- we didn't any, except the diamond ring which my mother had-- decided that they're going to stay there.

So they took you out of a large city like Łódź, and put you in to a small--

To general government. You see, Łódź was already considered Third Reich. They named it Litzmannstadt.

Yes.

But the ghetto was not-- when I left, there was no ghetto yet. But the first thing was, they got rid of all the people who could pose some resistance, like the intelligentsia. They caught them all. I met some of my teachers. And they were just-- at night, they came to them, and they grabbed them, and took them, just like us, with 50 marks for a head.

And did all these people go to Debica? Or did they--

No, all-- our transp-- I don't know what the other one. But our transport, which was one of the first ones to leave Łódź, went to Debica. And there, they just let us free. They told us, do whatever you want to do. And my father, having inheritance in Radom-- a house-- decided that we should go to Radom.

Although, his sister lived in Warsaw. But when he called up her, she told him that the whole family came running to her. They all got very scared, and they moved-- at that time, you could still move somehow. Later on, the border was closed. And they stayed with her, and she says she has no room for six people. And we had the maid also, who we had to let her go. And we gave her half of the money that we had.

Up to that time, your maid stayed with you?

Yes, she was-- the SS man gave her a choice. He said, you can go. You are not on the list.

Right.

The list, as we found out, was-- we were added to the list by my father's competitor, who was Gauleiter-- became a Gauleiter of Łódź. And he wanted our business. And that was the reason why we were in that transport. Because they demanded-- they told my father that this oberster fuhrer wants a list of people to whom-- who owe my father some money. He not only wanted the business, he also wanted to collect all the debts.

And he was a German?

German, yeah. So of course, my father said that nobody owes him any money. And we came to Radom. That was in December of 1939. And we were able to get one large room in this house. And we lived there. But of course, from the--

Was this a private house or an apartment house?

That was like a little apartment house that-- right next door to us was a historical house that King Casimir built for his lover-- Jewish lover, Esterka. So it was in a historical, like, place on a [INAUDIBLE]. It was an apartment house. But in order to get to the big room, which was a front room, we had to go through two rooms in which a very poor family lived. And they really-- thanks to my mother, they didn't starve. Because



whatever we had, we tried to share with them.

And my father, who was really-- we were left without anything. But he didn't give up. There were few iron foundries in this town, and he went to them. And they knew him, because they did some business with him before. And they employed him as a salesman. They gave him a pass. Because at that time, the Jews had to have a pass if they wanted to leave the city.

And he was able to go around and buy machinery and parts for the foundry. And he was really able to make a living, because we didn't starve like other people did in Radom. And we were still able to help, like, that family that was living next to us.

How long did you stay in Radom? And how long-- or in this particular location.

In March '41, Radom became a ghetto. When we came, there was no ghetto yet.

Right.

The Jews were not permitted to go on certain streets, but there was no definite ghetto. You know, there was-- and you had to wear a band, a white band with a blue star. And I was arrested once, and went through terrible things.

Why?

I was walking in the street. I forgot to put it on. And a Polish young boy grabbed me. And then, there were some SS men coming. And he told me that-- they knew who was Jewish and who wasn't. And I was taken to a police station and given like a order to appear there. And of course, I went-- the whole family went through a terrible time the few days until I had to appear. And my mother went with me, and she explained that I just simply forgot it. And I was lucky that was a police station, and we just paid the fine and they let me go.

But in March '41, they formed the ghetto in Radom. Radom was a completely different town than Łódź. It was a much smaller town. But very, very-- had a lot of industry, mostly leather tanneries, shoe stores. But they also had ceramic factories. And they also had iron foundries. So, and there were about 10,000 Jews.

So of course, our experience was comp-- for the first time, really, I saw what Jewish society meant. Because in Łódź, I didn't really have too much to do. All I knew was my family and my school. But there was a very closely-knit society with a real peck order, you know? There were rich people who were supporting the poor people. And they were quite well organized. And they were able to somehow cooperate with the Germans.

Was there a Judenrat there?

Yes, they were like a Council of Elders. And they were collecting money from the people who could pay and sending the poor people like to work, you know? At least there was some kind of a possible existence, not-- really not too bad until the ghetto.

The ghetto, then we came-- we saw a lot of starvation there, and epidemic--

Did you have any forewarning of the ghetto coming?

No. One day, just there was a sign on this that all Jews from those districts had to move within 10 days. And the rich people had not such a hard time, because they exchanged apartments with the Polish people. Of course, the poor people had a hard time. They would have to be assigned someplace. And there wasn't much room, because at that time, the population-- Jewish population swelled. There was a big group of people from Łódź like us. And there were also people from adjoining small towns that felt more secure.

So it was at least 35,000 people by that time in Radom. [SIGHS DEEPLY] So--

Was your family able to stay together during this period?

Yeah, we stood together all the time. And we even were able to employ somebody, you know, because my mother was not a housekeeper. She didn't know how to cook. She never cooked, she never-- so we had somebody who was doing it, everything in that one room.

But it was a very happy room, because, you know, socially, it was like a gathering. A lot of Radom, young people from Radom came there. And we were sitting, and talking, and joking. You know, it was-- we had a nice social life. Except that in the evening, they all had to leave, because they were not allowed to walk the streets.

But of course, in the ghetto, things got much worse. But still, my father was still able to make a living, without anything.

Were you and your sisters able in any way to continue your education, or read, or--

No, we were-- not only we weren't able to continue our education, but we were giving lessons. I was giving lessons to a group of younger girls than me, because I had a certain degree, you know? And my sister was really still a child herself. But she was very precocious and brilliant. She had a group of young girls. And as a matter of fact, one of her students, her husband is very active in the Holocaust-- Roman Kent. That was her student. And her sister was my girlfriend in school.

So we were both giving lessons-- everything in that one room. We made sure that the schedule-- I'm giving lessons this end. Those children were really very eager to learn-- very eager to do-- the ones that I had and she had, we always compared notes. Because that was the only stimulation that they had.

What was the morale of your parents at this time?

My mother was very depressed, because she left her family. She was very attached to her father. And if she really could take him with us, she would. But as it happened, she couldn't at that time. So we were constantly-- at that time, there were still letters from Łódź. And he wrote us that my grandmother died of intestinal problems.

This was the one in whose apartment you had stayed earlier?

No, no. That was my mother's father. I didn't have a grandmother-- a grandfather from my father's side. He died. So you know, we still were able to send money to Łódź, because there was a woman whose daughter made, maybe, money there or something. So we were paying the money to the mother. And the daughter was giving the money to my grandfather. And we were supporting him all the time.

And when Radom became a ghetto, how did your lives really change dramatically?

Then, it really was-- although, we still lived in the same one room. Because we were lucky. This was the part of the ghetto where we lived. But then, a few months later, they decided to make workshops, in this [INAUDIBLE] where we lived, for the German shops, you know, of tailors. Because they had a lot of tailors, milliners, and others. So we had to vacate this room. And we were able to get a room in a hotel-- a small room in a hotel. But that was very shortly before the liquidation of the ghetto.

Of the Radom ghetto?

Yeah, so that was the first time that my mother cooked a soup for us. And we all enjoyed and praised her. And she said, I maybe-- now I feel that I maybe missed something in my life by not being able to serve my family in this way. But she was an excellent mother. She was really a friend. She was a friend of ours, because she was so young. She was only seventeen.

She was almost your contemporary in some ways.

She was very young. So she was more of a friend to us. And all my friends, really, were envious of our relationship to my mother. It was so advanced. She was really--

When the ghetto was liquidated, what was the first thing that happened? I mean, where were you? What happened?

The ghetto was liquidated-- there were two ghettos. There was a small ghetto in Glinice, and a larger one where we were on Wałowa. And they were already-- my father went to Warsaw on business, and came very distraught, because they said there are transports of Jews going from Warsaw, and nobody knows where. And it's a terrible situation. And my grandmother was in the hospital. And they took her from the transport-- for the transport. So he was very upset.

And then, we started to get letters from other family members from different towns, saying, maybe you will be saved. But it looks like we are going to go, and we don't know where. Please remember my child is in this labor camp. Everybody asked us to do something for them. And we were alone kept in the Radom ghetto.

And that was on August 5, 1942, at night, the Glinice ghetto was liquidated. And then, they still missed 2,000 people. They had room for 2,000 people more. So they came early in the morning. And everybody ran out. And luckily, we were in the back, because they took the first 2,000. And that's how we were saved. But then we knew that the situation was very bad. Nobody knew where the people went. But everybody knew, we don't want to go there, no matter what.

And people started-- there were a lot of weddings, people that before were just going around married. All women cut their hair short in case of a transport, because they didn't want to have long hair on account of lice.

You knew where you might be going.

No. We knew it was a resettlement-- resettlement. And we were resettled once from Łódź. So we believed it will be something like that again. No, we didn't know nothing.

Well, you would have your own quarters at least. But you thought that this would be another town, another city, another ghetto even?

Yes, we couldn't even imagine. But my mother-- my mother somehow had the feeling. And she used-- being in this business, when there were leftover iron pieces, they used to take it for smelts, to melt it down. She said, I think they're going to make smelts out of us. And she said, maybe we should all die-- at least let us die together. And we had guests in that little room in that hotel. She said, let's all take sleeping pills, and we going to kill -- we're going to die together.

But of course, we were very young. We got to live. And we were very angry with my mother for even entertaining a thought like that. We believed, and we were raised, with retributive justice. The god rewards you when you are good and punishes when you are bad. And I said to my mother, I didn't do anything wrong! As much as I search my soul, I can't think of anything that I did that is against my conscience. So why should I be punished? Why should I die?

And so we didn't listen to my mother. But a lot of people committed suicide at that time, because they felt that-- not because they felt how horrible it will be. But they just didn't want to leave their hometown. They were older people, sick people, and they were just afraid of being uprooted. And they figured out that will be the best way out.

Yeah.

And at that time, when that little ghetto in Glinice was liquidated with 2,000 people from the big ghetto, we knew already something is coming.

Lillian, we're going to have to stop at this point to take a short break to change the tape.

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