We continue our interview with Lillian Ross.

You spoke about liquidation for Radom. What do you mean by liquidation?

That means that from 30-some thousand people. I don't know how many, maybe I think 3,000. I'm not sure about the figures. But at least 90% of people were sent by train. We didn't know where. And only a small amount of the lucky ones remained.

So you remained in the beginning?

Yes, I remained by pure chance and luck. I was in the line for the selection, where the assessment at least took a look at my arbeits card. You know, I was working for the shops. And it said that I was a tailor, a dressmaker, you know.

And he let me and my sister go to the right at least, to the people that stayed. However, my mother was taken to the left. And so were most of our friends. Whole families were wiped out completely.

What about your father and your sisters? My father was-- first he was working at that time for the waterwork. And first, he, you know, was supposed to stay there. Everybody was, you know, when that thing happened, of course, we knew something was coming. There was a premonition of doom. And everybody was trying to escape the ghetto.

However, we didn't know anybody. We were not from Radom. We had no contact with any Polish people there. Whoever somehow could maybe. But the experience was such that a lot of them had to come back. Because the Polish people were afraid to keep them. They were risking their lives, too. So my father came back to the ghetto.

And my older sister and my sister, Helen, they were-- stayed in their working place, you know, overnight. So they didn't have to go through what we did. So it was just my mother and my father, me, and my younger sister, Eva. When we went to the left, we saw already my father there. Then I looked and I saw that my mother was in the line, while the SS men were just not even looking at the arbeits card.

They were just-- tore everything up and gave everybody a knock over the head. They were very drunk. And put everybody to the left. And thus my mother went to the left.

And then I saw my neighbor's daughter who was left alone. Everybody went to the right, and she was alone. A young girl who suffered, really. And she went to my mother. And my mother embraced her, and that's how they both went.

Did you get to say goodbye? No.

No, not even across the-- like goodbye, nothing.

Nothing, nothing. That was the last I saw of her. But of course, at that time, I didn't realize what a terrible fate she went to. And I didn't realize. But that was, in a way to me-- that liquidation of the ghetto was, to me, what would you say? The Apocalypse Now. That was the end of the world as I knew it.

Did you know where she was taken?

No. We just knew they took them by train. And on the way to the train, they left a lot of corpses. But I mean, at least nobody told me whether she was one of them. Whoever couldn't walk fast or this was just shot on the spot. And the rest of the people, the small group of people like us, was taken to two streets which were closed up. And that was the forced labor camp, called forced labor camp.

So it was your father, you?

Well, my father, me, and my sister. And then next day, my two sisters--

They all came back.

--came back. And they were very angry with me. How could I let my mother go alone? Why didn't I go with her? And I had a terrible guilt feeling, too. Somehow, they expected I should go, at least, with my mother. Although it wasn't up to me.

But then they started the rumors that there was one man who escaped the train. And he met people while walking through the woods. He met a group of Jews who were working in Treblinka on construction of the gas chambers. And he told-- they told him what was the fate of the people that came there. And he decided he has to come and warn the people of the camp as if we could do anything about it.

And he came and he told us. And nobody believed him. We didn't want to believe him. We didn't want to believe him. Because to believe him would mean to give up any hope. Not only for our dear ones, but also for ourselves. That things like that is possible, there was no God, and we couldn't abandon God. Because he was the only thing that we could think of giving us any help in a terrible situation.

And so the man was completely ostracized. Nobody wanted-- everybody stood away from him. He was bad news. He was bad news.

And of course, then the ghetto-- then my sister, my older sister, went with her father-- with her husband. She got married to Skarzysko. I got married, too. People were married in the ghetto. Because you have to have somebody.

And the few people that remained and had absolutely nobody, they try to attach themselves to anybody-- to somebody. Whether it was one younger friend of mine attached herself to a very old man. But you know, just to have some solace, somebody to think about. Because my experience, the whole tragedy was that a person that was alone was a doomed person. All the time.

And I think that the-- really, one thing that I have to say is about staying alive was because I was at least always with one of my sisters. I had somebody to remind me that I was once a human being. Somebody to remind me that there could still be hope. But the people that had nobody, either they adopted somebody and they were just like a family, or if they didn't have the ability to do so, they perished.

They lost the will.

They lost the will to live because there was nothing to live for. But as long as you had the link with humanity in one other person, you still strived to survive. And that's what happened to me. And I imagine to anybody else that tried to survive. Because you couldn't be alone. It was such a terrible, hopeless situation. You felt so helpless that if you didn't have the warmth of a hand of somebody else, you just couldn't make it.

So the man you married when you were in the ghetto-- is that the same man who's your husband today?

Yes. I married him with the sound of guns from Warsaw ghetto that was liquidated at this time. In April of--

'43?

--'44, yeah. And then we went through a lot of--

You had met him in Radom? Excuse me.

Yes, yes. He was born in Radom. And so were the husbands of all my sisters. My other sister after me also married a Radom man. And people were marrying. You know, there was element-- what was there to a marriage? It was a Sunday. Had to be on Sunday, because we worked the whole week.

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As a matter of fact, I didn't really remember my date of my wedding until I, you know, when I went to the rabbi to arrange for bar mitzvah of my son. He asked me for my marriage. And I said, I don't remember. I don't know. And he looked at me very suspiciously, and he said, were you married? You know, he was.

I said, I was. I was married by a rabbi. And I remember it was in April. And I remember it was Passover. And I remember it was Sunday. So then he took out a big calendar and he told me that the date was 6th of April. I did not remember. It wasn't such an important-- dates were not important to us. Time, there was no concept of time.

And that's what the liquidation of the ghetto meant for me. A total enemy a new reality with going the way of my-- although I still have my family. But losing my mother meant a total collapse of all my values and norms. And we really didn't know how to behave or what to do. Because we were never taught to be in a situation as we were.

How old were you?

How old I was?

Just in terms of, like, were you a teenager or were you early 20s? Around there.

No, no. At that time-- that was in '42. Yeah, I was 20 years old. I was 20 years old exactly. But still, I was brought up with certain values. And here, all of a sudden, there were-- and the worst thing that happened to me was when my mother-- we were caught in one place. And we tried to move to another, you know, to be around people. In order to do so, we had to go through a like, so-called battle zone. You know, from last night's Aktion.

Yes.

So we saw corpses thrown all over, you know. Jewish people who were there with a religious--

Garb.

--shawls and garbs, all stained with blood, with intestines out. And my mother grabbed me and my younger sister and covered my eyes. That's how we went with her, you know, clinging to her. And she was covering her eyes. And I thought, if there ever should be sculptures of Holocaust, it should be just a sculpture of a mother trying to cover eyes of the children.

To shield the children.

To shield them from that terrible reality. So then after that, my mother said to me, now I can see, I lived in darkness all my life. And that shook me up terribly. . Because I knew what she meant. She was a very religious person. And she felt at that time that there was-- that she has no reason to believe. That shook me up more than anything else.

Did you stop believing?

No. I still believed because I had to. I believed because that was the only way I could live. This was part of my personality. I had to have hope. And hope meant to believe in something which was stronger than the Germans. And I couldn't think of anything else but God. And the only thing that I knew, although I came from a religious family, I knew just one-- Krishma you know, the prayer.

The Shema.

Because we weren't really religiously brought up, being girls, you know. The boys, of course, had to do it. But that's all I knew, you know, the words of this.

Of the Shema.

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Of the Shema. And every time there was an Aktion, that's all I was doing is repeating. It was like a sort of meditation-- now I realize that was meditation-- over and over again those few words of the Krishma. And that helped to keep my sanity.

Yeah. And where did you go from there?

We went through one-- I have to mention that, you know, the heroism of my sister. Because one day--

Which sister?

My younger sister.

Eva?

Eva, yeah. She was working for [INAUDIBLE], which was the outfit of girls that was looking through clothing of the people from Treblinka.

As a matter of fact, she found a sweater of my mother. And she brought it home. And we wore-- every day, one of us wore it, trying to get some warmth from it. But we still did not realize. Or we didn't-- I don't know. We just did not realize. We just thought that it was hot and my mother left the sweater.

And I was working at that time in the kitchen, you know. The ghetto, one day, I think it was in December of 1943, all of a sudden the ghetto was surrounded and they took out all the people who were in the ghetto. Me and my father, I took into the kitchen, too. Because I was not a dressmaker. I couldn't work as a dressmaker, although I was [INAUDIBLE] count as a dressmaker.

And they took us-- we had to walk to Szydlowiec, which was a small town, I think three or four kilometers from Radom. And then we found a few thousand Jews from surrounding villages. And it looked to me like that was the end of the line. And we are there to get-- nothing good will come.

And I was in terrible state of such deep depression the only thing that kept me alive was my father. Because I knew if I will get away with myself, he will really go completely to pieces.

And then all of a sudden, I felt like going. You know, I was laying there on the floor, like the rest of the people are waiting our fate, I decided to go outside. And then I see a German truck coming. And I couldn't believe my ears when the driver said, "is there Abram Kronenberg, Lillian Kronenberg? Abram?" I said yes, yes. They said, where is your father?

I grabbed my-- I ran and luckily I was able to find my father. And I said, father, somebody sent for us. And my father said, your mother in heaven-- he probably realized-- must have sent to get us out from this. And then a woman attached herself to him and said to the driver, I'm his wife, please, I am his wife. And he asked my father, is that also your wife? My father said, yes.

So they took her through and they brought us back to ghetto. My father cried and said my mother performed the miracles. But it happened-- when we came to ghetto, I found out that my sister, Eva, worked at that time at [INAUDIBLE], and she saw, you know, the SS men were constantly coming and taking, picking out jewelry and other stuff for themselves.

And among them was ObersturmfÃ¼hrer [Personal name] who was one of the most ferocious SS men, He was father of six children. And during the liquidation, he taught to the SS men how to save bullets by crushing children's skulls against the sidewalk.

My sister approached that man and begged him to save me. But only, she practically threatened him. She said, you are a father of six children. Just imagine how would you feel if your dear ones were taken away. Please, do everything and

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bring my father and my sister back.

And that was unheard of for a man like that. Instead of taking her and sending her with us, somehow got some kind of a pity. And he sent that truck. And that's how we were saved from Szydlowiec and the rest of the people were sent to Treblinka from this transport.

Then we dealt with people that were completely unpredictable. When we came back first to the ghetto, there was like a-- they picked few people that had Palestinian relatives and Palestinian papers. And a lot of them lost their children. So other people gave them children, you know, to go on their-- the papers. And this group reached Palestine. And we got some news about it.

And strangely enough, among those children who were attached to strange people was the first ambassador to Egypt. I think his name was Friedman, but I'm not completely sure. He was one of the children that a woman who lost her own children took him to Palestine.

So then there was a hope that the Palestine somehow tries to get some people, save some people. And especially when there was one Aktion that only people who were-- they started to register people who have relatives in Palestine. And of course, everybody wanted to be on the list.

We didn't have any relatives. We lived at that time in a room that was infested with rats. It was cold. But there was a little hiding place there.

At that time, I worked for the Air Force. And one night, I had to work later. And instead of the SS escort, I got an officer, which right away I could see was a darling. And very shortly after we left, a woman joined us. And you could see that they were in love. And he started to talk to me like to a human being, which I wasn't used to. And he asked me, do you have family? And I said, my mother was resettled.

And when I said that, I could see him exchange a glance with that woman. And he said, promise me one thing. When there will be a resettlement in the ghetto, do anything, but don't go. Hide, do anything you can do. But don't go. That, of course, shook me up a lot.

But then as we were nearing to the ghetto, he got scared, and he said, I'll take you. Don't say that to anybody that I told you that. But of course, I told that to my family.

So when the day came that all the Germans surrounded against the ghetto, we hid in that hiding place infested with the rats. And that's how we went through this. So only people who were registered-- 1,500 people stayed in the ghetto. Everybody else was sent to Treblinka. That, of course, gave us a hope that it is good to have some Palestinian connection.

So Purim was coming. And they ask for a list of intellectuals. And everybody tried to be on the list, but they desired-- they demand at least a college degree for it. But of course, people somehow-- there was a big group of people, at least hundred or more, who didn't have the degrees and tried to somehow get on the list.

And they came out and everybody gave them letters. And everybody was so envied. They were dressed in their best. And they went and they put them in the trucks. And the minute they left the ghetto, we saw it wasn't good. Because the truck was joined by Ukrainian Army, Ukrainian soldiers. And surely enough, they were massacred in the cemetery.

But some of them, somehow, begged. The knew the Ukrainian. And they said, we weren't on the list. We came by mistake. They came to the ghetto and they were telling us the whole story. Of course, we knew that the situation was very, very bad.

Then on in this day in November on 1943, the ghetto was completely liquidated and the rest of the people were sent to Szkolna, where was the ammunition factory. And that was already a camp with a barracks.

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And, well, this SS men. Every night, they checked feet, where you had clean feet and beat people senseless. How could you have clean feet if there was no sanitary condition or anything? It was very atrocious, I think.

At that time, I was already very on the last leg, so to speak. I saw there was absolutely no hope. And that's why, when one day, in a march, they took all the older people and children who were left and put them on the list. And they said if the family want to join them, they can.

I decided for me and all my sisters, all family, and my husband, whose parents were also taken-- we decided to go. We don't care, we'll go with them. And they took us to the station, put us in the cattle cars. And of course, when we looked around and saw who are we with, old people and that was that.

However, we came to Majdanek. And to our biggest surprise, they took us to the shower, which I thought that was the end. Verily, when we felt that the water came, we couldn't believe.

You expected gas?

We all expected gas. Because that time, we already knew. And the whole transport went through with it. With the children, with the older people. They took us through it.

We came there, Majdanek was already Judenfrei. There were no Jews except for hundred women and hundred men who were left from the massacre. And I met some of my beautiful girls, all young, beautiful girls, and very strong, handsome men.

And they told me how Majdanek was one day completely liquidated. Because they found a gun there and they shot all the people. And people were just sitting in their excrement, just waiting for death. And then in the last minute, they picked hundred girls and hundred boys. And they stayed there to sort out the clothing or valuables.

They were wearing special garb with a big letter A, which means Aktionenjuden, Jews who witnessed the Aktion. So of course, they knew they were doomed unless there will be a miracle.

And they were really very-- they were very happy, of course, when we came, that there were some. That gave them hope. And the children and all the people, that we all went through. And some of them really adopted. You know, like there was one older woman. So they adopted her like a mother. They washed her hair, they were very nice to her and everything.

And we were all full of hope, because we knew that the news-- that there was one woman, a Polish woman, who was married to a Jew and who was taken with her sister, went with her daughter, who was a Mischling, half Jewish. She lived, or worked in the office. And she was friendly with our stubenalteste there.

And she came every night and told us all the news. And she was telling us that the Russians are approaching and that the Germans get terribly beaten. And there was really hope in the air. And spring was coming, too. That was April.

And really, I remember standing behind it a while and looking. There were some trees and birds. And I was so envious. I said, gosh, if I could change in a ward and just crawl through that barbed wire, maybe I could be saved. And it was really beautiful weather that you felt like living. And I'm sure that the poor hundred girls felt the same way. They were full of hope, too.

But unfortunately, one day, that woman from the office came and told us that our transport is going to go. And their transport is going to go in a different direction, which already gave us very bad-- we knew that it wasn't good.

So if it was that woman who was treated as a mother, all of a sudden, of course, became an object of terrible hate. And her daughters, adopted daughters said, how come that you, an old woman, will be able to survive and we're so young, we'll have to go to our death?

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And I gave some of my friends my coat and everything. Because they said they will escape. And also, a lot of women-- there was one woman who had a brother in England. She gave me an address of her brother, which I kept maybe until Auschwitz. And she wanted me to tell him how she went to her death.

And they went one day. The next day, they put the rest us all in striped garbs. And we went to Plaszow. And about 150 people died in Majdanek of starvation and epidemic. But our families went untouched.

We came to Plaszow, which was a terrible camp. And right away, our men were isolated, kept in quarantine. Because the Jews in charge, when they heard that the only survivors of Majdanek came, they figured out they must have a pool with the Germans to be alive.

So they said that there was typhoid in the mountain. And they quarantined so they couldn't work and do anything. And they were just starving to death unless they had some women who could bring them some food.

Me and my sister were lucky. We were selected to go to a brick factory, where work was very hard. We had to push barrels with the bricks. But we were able to buy some food from the Polish people that worked there.

But of course, to bring that food in the ghetto, or in the camp, was a very dangerous thing. Because they could shoot you on the spot. But we had to do that. Because otherwise, our men would die of starvation. So every time we passed this, we felt that was the end of us.

But somehow, maybe because we had the striped garbs or something, our transport went through. But we saw others getting caught, being punished and beaten and everything.

Was your father still with you? Was your father one of the men?

Yes, yes. My father was-- my father, and my husband, and my sister's husband, we were all together except my older sister, who was in Skarzysko at that time with her husband. So we were able to feed our men this way.

Then one day in July, they took us and the men, who were of course by now skeletons, most of them, to Wieliczka, which was the salt mines. And they had the airplane factory in the air.

And that was a very terrible day, because that little piece of bread that we got there, me and my sister, we gave away to my father to keep him alive. So of course, we both could not work. Every time we came from the ups and sunlight hit us, we both fainted. And we knew that that was the end.

But then one day, they took us away. And I remember, me and my sister took our bread, our last bread, to my father to say goodbye. And my father started crying and threw the bread back at us. It was the first time he threw like this. And he said, I don't want the bread, I want my children. Of course, nothing could be done.

And we were taken away back to Plaszow. In Plaszow, we were a few days, and they made-- oh, I forgot to tell you, before that, we lost my father-in-law. There was a selection of older people and young children. And all the children from Majdanek that survived went at that time. That was Shavous. All the action took place during the holidays.

The Jewish holidays.

So that's how I know, because we have a Yahrtzeit for my father-in-law. And also, the reason a lot of them went was that shortly before that, they took all the people from our transport and we had to donate the blood to the wounded German soldiers, which was really terrible thing.

First of all, the logic behind him. Here, it was an [GERMAN] to even come near a Jewish person. And here, they took our blood to save the German soldiers. And of course, by saving the German soldiers, a lot of our people by that time were Moslems. The people were--

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Muselmenn.

Yeah. And they went, a lot of people went at that time. And then one day, they selected a few people. And I was among them, but not my sister. And they made like a place in the middle of Plaszow, where they put the wire around it. And they put the group of people there.

And of course, I knew that was the end of me. I have no sister. I have nothing to live for. But my sister dug a tunnel under this. Because she was very small and skinny. And she went through. And we fell in each other's arms. And now, we knew that we didn't care about anything. We were together. And that's how they took us to Auschwitz.

And in Auschwitz, we survived the selection. We still-- when we came to Auschwitz, we didn't know what Auschwitz was. And a man was there working. And I started to-- you know, picking up the clothing. And I started to talk to him. And he was from Lodz. And I said, what kind of a camp is that? And he said, this is our family grave.

I said, what you mean? He said, you have here the Jews of the whole. But, you know, very fast and worried, because he was afraid to tell me this. Anyhow, I was very angry with him. How did he dare to bring me such news that couldn't be true?

But then of course, when there was a selection, and they took a lot of our women, and of course, all the children, and they set them apart, we still didn't know. We still didn't know. We were in the barracks. We were still me and my sister, my mother-in-law.

We went through and they shaved our hair completely. It was a terrible, especially I could see my mother-in-law, who had the most gorgeous head of hair, auburn, [INAUDIBLE], really. And she cried terribly when she lost her hair.

And after that, they walked us. And then we saw a tremendous big bonfire. And although, we did not know now, but still, such a fear gripped our hearts that everybody started crying terribly. Of course, most of the people there had people in that bonfire, but they didn't know it yet.

But when we came through Birkenau, and we met Czechoslovakian Jews, and Jewish from other, they didn't make any bones about it. And then there was the smell in the air. And there was still the-- we could see the transport coming and going. So then the terrible truth was right, open before us.

And in Birkenau, we were still we met my sister from Skarzysko. She was the only one who somehow had her hair. And she was able to exchange with somebody from another block before they tattooed our numbers. So she knew we were all four together laying on the bridge.

And I started to get terrible fainting spells. I couldn't stand. At the Appell, we've got to stand for hours. And finally, my sister tried to do everything to pick me up and I find the Blockalteste [INAUDIBLE]. I had to go to a hospital to [INAUDIBLE], which was of course for me the end of the road.

I went to the hospital. I had typhoid. And I was like in a dream world, you know, from the high fever. I didn't know a lot. All I knew was either they brought me food, I couldn't eat it. And of course, when the fever subsided, I was released.

Of course, people grabbed my food. And I was a living skeleton. I had absolutely no strength. On top of it, I developed like a boil on my back, which got infected and got worse and worse. And my shoulder blade was sticking out. You could see the flesh and bone. So of course, I was not a candidate for the long survival.

However, the doctor, a Hungarian woman doctor, she took pity on me. And after she attended to everybody, I was the last one. She put some dressing, something on my-- trying to relieve this. Of course, she couldn't close it up. But at least to keep it less infected. And as she was sitting with me after a whole day of very hard work. So she worked very hard there. And she saw plenty of death, I have to tell you.

We started to talk about literature. You know, she was a very intelligent woman. And she read a lot of books. French

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and Russian. And of course, I did, too. And we went in that-- it's ridiculous, but that's what we were doing. We found a great solace. For both of us trying to escape through literature in another world.

And then one morning, she came to me and she said, you better get out of here. Because the word is that it's going to be a selection. And of course, you are candidate number one. I don't have to tell you that you'll be it with the way you look. And I said, how can I go? I can't walk. How can I leave? She said, if you want to leave, you crawl. You do anything, but get out from here.

Luckily, the [INAUDIBLE] wasn't too far from the block where my sisters were. And I crawled with my force there. And then my sister grabbed me. And they put me on the bed and tried to somehow make my life bearable. But the wound was getting worse and worse.

Then my two younger sisters decided that they'd better leave. They saw that I was lost, a lost cause. And my older sister had a heart condition. Since a child, she had rheumatic fever. And she wasn't doing very well either.

Also, her husband was taken in Auschwitz. And she knew about it. In order to save her, some of her friends wrote a letter that he was safe and he was sent on a transport. And that gave her a will to live. And she said she will stay with me in Auschwitz. Maybe she will get the word. Because her husband knows that she's in Auschwitz. So he will notify her where he is.

So my two sisters went in, I think that was in November '44. They started transport. They were one of the first ones. Took all we knew, we said goodbye, and they went. And after they went, we, the two of us, completely went apart. Also, thank god we were two.

But still, we were missing them so badly that although we knew that it was not realistic and all this, we decided to go, too. That maybe we will meet my sisters. So when next time they'd ask for people on a transport, we showed up. And they took us to a big barrack.

Were you more healthy now?

I was able to walk. But I still looked to the Muselmann. And my wound was wide open. So we went to the barrack. And we didn't know what to expect. Then all of a sudden, I see some doctors coming in. And among them, that woman, that Hungarian woman doctor.

They came there to check people for scabies. Because the Germans were very afraid that a skin disease, it would-- you know that terrible itch. The Germans were terribly afraid of it. And they wouldn't enter a block until they were sure there was nobody there with scabies.

When she saw me, she almost fainted. She said, what you are doing here? She said, are you in a hurry to go to a gas chamber? Can't you wait till they take you? I saved you from the [INAUDIBLE] and now you go by yourself?

I started crying. I said, I don't-- I want to be with my sisters. She said, you better get out from here. And she attached me and my sister to the people that had scabies. And they took us to the block for the scabies.

And next day, when we came, we decided to go and see what happened to that block. We went there and we found in a little room a number of people locked up. And they knew what they were locked. Who didn't go through the selection.

And they had some bread. So they threw the bread at us and said, eat. Eat. Because we are-- we will go, we can't enjoy it anymore. We don't need bread anymore, where we are going. And remember, if you survive, you tell them what happened here.

So we went back because we took the bread. Because what else was there to do? And this then-- they took us from, there was a Birkenau . In this camp was a Birkenau that was only a transport camp. You know, people didn't work there.

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One day, they took the rest of the people. And they took the Birkenau working camp. That was the most terrible thing I have ever seen. Every minute, there was selection. And I knew already that was the end of me. And one day, they sure enough took us out. And they took our role numbers. At that time, I had the tattoo number. And my sister. And we didn't know where we are going.

Where's your father and your husband?

We left them in Wieliczka. We didn't know what happened to them. I told you that it-- you know, my father threw the bread at us. And that was the end I saw him.

Anyhow, one day, they took our numbers and I started crying. I thought that I won't go through the selection with my wound. And my sister, because I was so helpless, that I just wanted to have somebody with me. That's all I wanted to have is at least that one sister. And my sister said to me, if they take you, don't worry, I go with you.

And that gave me great solace. Although I knew that that was a sacrifice on her part. But I still felt secure. When we went through the selection, I went first, and my sister sort of tripped and, like, fell on me. And she covered my back. And that's how I went through. And they took us to Auschwitz.

In Auschwitz, we were in a block, where we were working in a-- as dressmakers. Fixing the clothes of the-- this was a block that was, like, to show off where the red Cross came. So it was fairly clean.

We had, each one of us got a bed with a blanket, which was, at that time, a [INAUDIBLE]. We didn't have to go out for an Appell, which at that time, it was winter. That was a tremendous plus. And they had also an infirmary, where they started to treat my would until it--

It healed.

--got well.

At that time-- yeah, but food was very scarce. We had no contact with the other blocks except through the fence. And I met there a friend of mine from Radom. And she asked me whether I need anything. And I said I could use some food. We were starving. So she said she was going to work, out. And she said, we have plenty of food. There is always-- they throw out the soup.

I said, could you bring me something? She said, I will try. So she was walking every day miles with a heavy soup thing. And brought us the soup. Me and my sister. And that was-- I believe it saved our life.

But there were already-- we knew that the war was coming to an end. And there were air raids. But of course, not directly in Auschwitz, but close by. And there were rumors that the Russians have come closer at that time.

So I went through a terrible thing. I had to witness the hanging of two girls who gave dynamite for the crematorium. One of the crematoriums was finished. And they hanged two young girls. And we were told that everybody has to look at them. If they will see that somebody averts the eyes, they will be shot on the spot.

And those two women were really heroes. And one of them cried. And one of them was very agitated, of course, and she said, remember, sisters, revenge. That was her last breath before she was hanged.

In January one day, they came and said that we are leaving the camp. Whoever wants can stay. I begged my sister to stay. Because I knew that she had a bad heart. And she won't-- at that time, I was stronger. She won't be able to maybe walk. But she was so sure that her husband was safe, she said, I have to leave to see him after the war.

And she said to me, what chance do we have here? Look who's staying here, just children and older people. Do you think that they will let them live after all this? But as soon as the other people walk out, they will finish them. As it happened, she was wrong. We could have saved ourselves five months of extreme suffering.

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We had to go to a warehouse to get shoes. Because we were, in that block, we were walking in the wooden Dutch shoes. And there was a woman there with me. And she picked a pair of very fancy shoes. And I said to her, are you crazy? After all, you will have to walk. And she said, for the first time, I feel like a woman. I can't take it off. Look how nice they look with my leg.

I saw that woman walking with her feet bandaged, with her clothing. She tore up her clothes and this. And you could see the blood soaking through it. And I was thinking to me how vain some people could be. To feel like a woman, she probably paid with her life. Because whoever was left behind was shot.

We were like cattle. We were. And everybody wanted to be-- nobody wanted to be in the back. Because he was shot. And I witnessed a son and a father. So the boy was maybe 15 years old. And the father couldn't walk any longer. And the son lay down and kissed the boots of the SS soldier. And he shot both of them.

And I don't know really how long we walked or I don't know what gave us both the strength. My sister, especially. We somehow came to a train, which took us to RavensbrÃ¼ck. In RavensbrÃ¼ck, we were assigned to a [GERMAN], which was full of Christian Scientists and lesbians. The combination. On one hand, they were sitting and praying. On the other one, the lesbians were cavorting. And of course, the--

We have just about a second. Can we stop now and--

Oh, sure.

--continue? I don't know how we're going to be able to do it.--

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