

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,240  
This is an interview with Ernest  
Fontheim on March 12th, 1997.

2  
00:00:06,240 --> 00:00:08,310  
The interviewer  
is Randy Goldman.

3  
00:00:08,310 --> 00:00:15,870  
This is tape two, side A.

4  
00:00:15,870 --> 00:00:23,080  
What affected me actually more  
than these vicious articles

5  
00:00:23,080 --> 00:00:26,500  
in the [NON-ENGLISH] were  
anti-Semitic articles

6  
00:00:26,500 --> 00:00:28,330  
in the general press.

7  
00:00:28,330 --> 00:00:33,280  
And I also felt at that  
time-- and still feel today--

8  
00:00:33,280 --> 00:00:37,750  
that they probably were much  
more effective in influencing

9  
00:00:37,750 --> 00:00:41,350  
people than [NON-ENGLISH]  
articles because the articles

10  
00:00:41,350 --> 00:00:43,300  
in [NON-ENGLISH]--

11  
00:00:43,300 --> 00:00:44,860  
most of them at least--

12  
00:00:44,860 --> 00:00:47,680

were so outlandish that--

13  
00:00:47,680 --> 00:00:50,200  
and also, they were  
always accompanied

14  
00:00:50,200 --> 00:00:53,920  
by horrible caricatures,  
where a Jew looked

15  
00:00:53,920 --> 00:01:00,460  
like a mixture of awe of a  
gorilla and a human being

16  
00:01:00,460 --> 00:01:05,019  
and totally distorted, that  
I'm sure many people just

17  
00:01:05,019 --> 00:01:06,310  
couldn't take it seriously.

18  
00:01:06,310 --> 00:01:09,110  
On the other hand, the  
anti-Semitic articles

19  
00:01:09,110 --> 00:01:16,570  
in the general press, which  
were more subdued and not

20  
00:01:16,570 --> 00:01:23,830  
as outwardly ridiculous,  
and therefore also probably

21  
00:01:23,830 --> 00:01:26,920  
appeared more  
reasonable, probably

22  
00:01:26,920 --> 00:01:32,050  
influenced many more people  
toward increased anti-Semitism.

23  
00:01:32,050 --> 00:01:37,630  
And they were-- for example,

I have to admit that to some

24  
00:01:37,630 --> 00:01:43,150  
extent, even I was  
influenced by--

25  
00:01:43,150 --> 00:01:46,150  
a constant refrain  
of the German press

26  
00:01:46,150 --> 00:01:50,620  
was that the Jews were in  
charge of all the countries

27  
00:01:50,620 --> 00:01:53,330  
that were fighting against  
Germany, particularly,

28  
00:01:53,330 --> 00:01:55,510  
of course, the United States.

29  
00:01:55,510 --> 00:02:00,850  
And there was a whole succession  
of names that always appeared.

30  
00:02:00,850 --> 00:02:03,880  
One was that of course of Felix  
Frankfurter, the Supreme Court

31  
00:02:03,880 --> 00:02:05,090  
justice.

32  
00:02:05,090 --> 00:02:07,660  
Another one was Herbert Lehman,  
the governor of the state

33  
00:02:07,660 --> 00:02:09,729  
of New York, I remember.

34  
00:02:09,729 --> 00:02:12,710  
And there were one or  
two other-- oh yeah,

35

00:02:12,710 --> 00:02:17,590  
of course Bernard  
Baruch, the financier.

36

00:02:17,590 --> 00:02:24,580  
And they made it appear  
as if these people were

37

00:02:24,580 --> 00:02:26,950  
behind the scenes manipulating.

38

00:02:26,950 --> 00:02:29,200  
And of course,  
Roosevelt himself,

39

00:02:29,200 --> 00:02:32,830  
whose name was often  
distorted, as Rosenfeld,

40

00:02:32,830 --> 00:02:35,410  
implying that if he  
wasn't a Jew, at least he

41

00:02:35,410 --> 00:02:36,640  
was of Jewish descent.

42

00:02:36,640 --> 00:02:39,430

43

00:02:39,430 --> 00:02:42,460  
And after the war,  
particularly after meeting

44

00:02:42,460 --> 00:02:44,080  
American soldiers--

45

00:02:44,080 --> 00:02:46,060  
and many of them Jewish--

46

00:02:46,060 --> 00:02:48,280  
I was surprised  
actually, to hear

47  
00:02:48,280 --> 00:02:52,360  
that there was large-scale  
anti-Semitism in this country,

48  
00:02:52,360 --> 00:02:59,110  
and that the influence of these  
Jews was relatively minimal.

49  
00:02:59,110 --> 00:03:00,880  
I forgot one name,  
of course, that

50  
00:03:00,880 --> 00:03:04,810  
was Henry Morgenthau, the  
Secretary of the Treasury

51  
00:03:04,810 --> 00:03:06,250  
at that time.

52  
00:03:06,250 --> 00:03:08,560  
He was, partly I would say--

53  
00:03:08,560 --> 00:03:10,960  
from what I can judge  
reading history--

54  
00:03:10,960 --> 00:03:14,650  
the most influential, in  
the government at least,

55  
00:03:14,650 --> 00:03:16,330  
of the United States.

56  
00:03:16,330 --> 00:03:19,690  
And I think he was fairly  
close to President Roosevelt.

57  
00:03:19,690 --> 00:03:23,120  
But it was nothing like that.

58  
00:03:23,120 --> 00:03:25,420

And as the Nazis--

59

00:03:25,420 --> 00:03:29,890  
and I was, I have to  
admit now, disappointed

60

00:03:29,890 --> 00:03:33,700  
because somehow that part  
of the Nazi propaganda

61

00:03:33,700 --> 00:03:36,790  
I had started to  
believe somewhat.

62

00:03:36,790 --> 00:03:40,150  
And by the way, the same  
thing in the Soviet Union,

63

00:03:40,150 --> 00:03:42,070  
there were lots  
of Jewish names--

64

00:03:42,070 --> 00:03:47,710  
many of these were actually  
exterminated by Stalin himself,

65

00:03:47,710 --> 00:03:52,840  
and particularly many of the  
original revolutionaries,

66

00:03:52,840 --> 00:03:56,630  
starting with  
Trotsky, of course.

67

00:03:56,630 --> 00:04:03,110  
And there too, actually the  
fact that there was widespread

68

00:04:03,110 --> 00:04:05,810  
anti-Semitism in  
the Soviet Union

69

00:04:05,810 --> 00:04:08,090

and never made it into  
the German papers.

70  
00:04:08,090 --> 00:04:11,830  
It wouldn't have  
fit their purposes.

71  
00:04:11,830 --> 00:04:17,000  
Now the Kristallnacht  
was not only

72  
00:04:17,000 --> 00:04:23,900  
just a devastating, horrible  
event in my personal life,

73  
00:04:23,900 --> 00:04:28,130  
as well as the lives  
of all Jews in Germany,

74  
00:04:28,130 --> 00:04:32,810  
but it represented a  
watershed because that

75  
00:04:32,810 --> 00:04:40,250  
was followed by a avalanche  
of new laws and regulations

76  
00:04:40,250 --> 00:04:42,140  
totally restricting Jews.

77  
00:04:42,140 --> 00:04:44,300  
What affected us  
first of all was

78  
00:04:44,300 --> 00:04:47,630  
that the remaining Jewish  
lawyers were now disbarred.

79  
00:04:47,630 --> 00:04:50,810  
So suddenly my father  
was not only living

80  
00:04:50,810 --> 00:04:57,170

in an anti-Semitic hotbed,  
like Germany, but on top of it

81  
00:04:57,170 --> 00:04:59,300  
he was unemployed here.

82  
00:04:59,300 --> 00:05:04,880  
And my parents made, from then  
on, really desperate efforts

83  
00:05:04,880 --> 00:05:07,820  
to get out of the country.

84  
00:05:07,820 --> 00:05:11,260  
But by that time,  
everybody had woken up.

85  
00:05:11,260 --> 00:05:17,900  
And I remember once standing in  
front of the British consulate

86  
00:05:17,900 --> 00:05:22,520  
in Berlin, which was in  
the embassy compound,

87  
00:05:22,520 --> 00:05:25,250  
arriving there at  
6:00 in the morning,

88  
00:05:25,250 --> 00:05:28,700  
just to get some  
form to fill out.

89  
00:05:28,700 --> 00:05:33,200  
And I think by 11:00 or  
12:00 or so, finally it

90  
00:05:33,200 --> 00:05:38,118  
was my turn to  
receive those forms.

91  
00:05:38,118 --> 00:05:39,410  
I don't know whatever happened.



92  
00:05:39,410 --> 00:05:41,390  
But I don't think--

93  
00:05:41,390 --> 00:05:43,340  
but obviously, we  
didn't go to England.

94  
00:05:43,340 --> 00:05:48,530  
But neither did I. So I had  
stood there for nothing.

95  
00:05:48,530 --> 00:05:52,410

96  
00:05:52,410 --> 00:05:57,260  
And then also that was  
followed by laws making

97  
00:05:57,260 --> 00:06:04,010  
it illegal for a Jew to  
visit any place of amusement

98  
00:06:04,010 --> 00:06:06,410  
or entertainment  
or general culture.

99  
00:06:06,410 --> 00:06:10,880  
That included the whole  
spectrum, from see a theater,

100  
00:06:10,880 --> 00:06:19,975  
symphony, opera, to  
circuses, county fairs,

101  
00:06:19,975 --> 00:06:27,280  
that kind of thing, or you  
name it-- also public beaches,

102  
00:06:27,280 --> 00:06:35,480  
public swimming pools, movie  
theaters, public parks even--

103

00:06:35,480 --> 00:06:38,870

parks were much more  
popular in Germany

104

00:06:38,870 --> 00:06:42,600

than they are here because  
most people in this country--

105

00:06:42,600 --> 00:06:45,560

or at least a high proportion--  
live in their own homes

106

00:06:45,560 --> 00:06:47,360

and have their own gardens.

107

00:06:47,360 --> 00:06:49,970

In Germany the vast majority,  
at least at that time,

108

00:06:49,970 --> 00:06:51,560

lived in apartments.

109

00:06:51,560 --> 00:06:56,900

And so parks were visited by  
people just regularly just

110

00:06:56,900 --> 00:06:59,330

for recreation, just like  
people here might just

111

00:06:59,330 --> 00:07:01,370

sit in their backyard.

112

00:07:01,370 --> 00:07:05,090

Anyway they were now  
outlawed for Jews.

113

00:07:05,090 --> 00:07:08,030

From the beginning, I  
and all of my friends

114

00:07:08,030 --> 00:07:10,940

totally ignored that law.

115

00:07:10,940 --> 00:07:12,080

And we just kept going.

116

00:07:12,080 --> 00:07:17,270

I remember one humorous  
incident in the summer of 1940.

117

00:07:17,270 --> 00:07:21,170

The Rome State Opera  
from Rome, Italy,

118

00:07:21,170 --> 00:07:27,920

gave a one-week guest appearance  
at the Berlin State Opera.

119

00:07:27,920 --> 00:07:30,290

And I had been an opera fan.

120

00:07:30,290 --> 00:07:34,100

And on the day when the  
ticket sales started

121

00:07:34,100 --> 00:07:37,820

for the Rome Opera, everybody  
knew you had to be there early.

122

00:07:37,820 --> 00:07:40,580

So I was there I think at  
5:00 in the morning or so.

123

00:07:40,580 --> 00:07:43,470

And there was  
already a long line.

124

00:07:43,470 --> 00:07:47,090

And while do you stand in line,  
of course, for hours, sort

125

00:07:47,090 --> 00:07:50,390

of treading from left leg  
to right leg and vise versa,

126  
00:07:50,390 --> 00:07:52,850  
you start also with  
people around you,

127  
00:07:52,850 --> 00:07:55,730  
to get acquainted  
and talk and so on.

128  
00:07:55,730 --> 00:08:00,530  
And the advantage of that  
was that you could then

129  
00:08:00,530 --> 00:08:04,310  
ask somebody to hold  
your place while you--

130  
00:08:04,310 --> 00:08:06,710  
it's just easier to  
take a little walk

131  
00:08:06,710 --> 00:08:08,280  
than to stand at the same spot.

132  
00:08:08,280 --> 00:08:09,980  
So I did that also.

133  
00:08:09,980 --> 00:08:13,460  
While I then took my walk,  
I walked along the line.

134  
00:08:13,460 --> 00:08:19,500  
And I saw three other boys for  
my Jewish high school class.

135  
00:08:19,500 --> 00:08:24,170  
And it was sort of an unwritten  
law, one Jew might get away.

136  
00:08:24,170 --> 00:08:26,640  
Two Jews is already  
like a synagogue.

137

00:08:26,640 --> 00:08:30,500

So we just waved at  
each other with a grin

138

00:08:30,500 --> 00:08:35,340

without really getting together.

139

00:08:35,340 --> 00:08:38,870

And most people I knew did that.

140

00:08:38,870 --> 00:08:41,270

But there was a danger.

141

00:08:41,270 --> 00:08:47,840

If the Gestapo caught  
somebody, the least thing

142

00:08:47,840 --> 00:08:49,070

was a concentration camp.

143

00:08:49,070 --> 00:08:52,560

144

00:08:52,560 --> 00:08:57,220

But as a young  
person, first of all,

145

00:08:57,220 --> 00:08:59,780

I was always defying authority.

146

00:08:59,780 --> 00:09:04,590

And plus a young  
person is always

147

00:09:04,590 --> 00:09:07,270

more reckless than older one.

148

00:09:07,270 --> 00:09:15,020

149

00:09:15,020 --> 00:09:18,050

Actually in my personal  
life, what happens then,

150  
00:09:18,050 --> 00:09:20,720  
finally the schools were  
permitted to operate again.

151  
00:09:20,720 --> 00:09:23,300

152  
00:09:23,300 --> 00:09:26,330  
But then shortly--  
that was probably late

153  
00:09:26,330 --> 00:09:29,660  
'38, that date I don't quite  
remember anymore precisely--

154  
00:09:29,660 --> 00:09:33,380  
but then in early '39,  
most Jewish schools

155  
00:09:33,380 --> 00:09:37,670  
were closed by the Gestapo,  
including the [INAUDIBLE]

156  
00:09:37,670 --> 00:09:40,640  
school to which I was going.

157  
00:09:40,640 --> 00:09:49,000  
And there was only one Jewish  
high school left operating.

158  
00:09:49,000 --> 00:09:53,620  
And that was the official high  
school of the Jewish community

159  
00:09:53,620 --> 00:09:55,180  
of Berlin.

160  
00:09:55,180 --> 00:09:59,080  
But by that time, my parents  
were really in high gear, time

161  
00:09:59,080 --> 00:10:00,280  
to emigrate.

162  
00:10:00,280 --> 00:10:02,530  
And they had the idea  
that it would be good

163  
00:10:02,530 --> 00:10:06,020  
for me to go to the  
American School in Berlin.

164  
00:10:06,020 --> 00:10:07,900  
The American School  
in Berlin also

165  
00:10:07,900 --> 00:10:10,150  
was very close to  
where we lived.

166  
00:10:10,150 --> 00:10:12,820  
It was run by an  
American principal.

167  
00:10:12,820 --> 00:10:17,620  
And it mainly served  
children of diplomats--

168  
00:10:17,620 --> 00:10:21,250  
not just Americans, obviously,  
but also British and others

169  
00:10:21,250 --> 00:10:23,680  
who would know English--

170  
00:10:23,680 --> 00:10:28,210  
and also children of businessmen  
who were stationed in Berlin.

171  
00:10:28,210 --> 00:10:33,470  
And therefore the tuition was  
correspondingly very high.

172

00:10:33,470 --> 00:10:37,930

And I remember that was the first time I heard about

173

00:10:37,930 --> 00:10:42,490

that this was a big sacrifice for my parents

174

00:10:42,490 --> 00:10:44,800

to put me in that school.

175

00:10:44,800 --> 00:10:48,610

And actually I was scared because I

176

00:10:48,610 --> 00:10:54,582

would be thrown suddenly into a totally English environment.

177

00:10:54,582 --> 00:10:56,385

The teachers were all Americans.

178

00:10:56,385 --> 00:11:00,400

Some may be British actually.

179

00:11:00,400 --> 00:11:01,930

But English was the language.

180

00:11:01,930 --> 00:11:06,720

Most kids had English as their native tongue.

181

00:11:06,720 --> 00:11:08,740

And I had had three years of English

182

00:11:08,740 --> 00:11:11,230

at the [INAUDIBLE] school.

183

00:11:11,230 --> 00:11:17,390

But fortunately, things turned out to be not quite as bad.



184  
00:11:17,390 --> 00:11:22,480  
As it turned out, the school  
followed the curriculum

185  
00:11:22,480 --> 00:11:25,660  
of the basic American  
school system.

186  
00:11:25,660 --> 00:11:28,290

187  
00:11:28,290 --> 00:11:31,470  
And that was a German  
gymnasium, was really

188  
00:11:31,470 --> 00:11:34,350  
a much more rigorous  
and elitist school

189  
00:11:34,350 --> 00:11:37,860  
and was at least a year,  
if not more, ahead of it.

190  
00:11:37,860 --> 00:11:41,690  
So many of the things-- for  
example, in Latin and biology,

191  
00:11:41,690 --> 00:11:44,340  
I remember--

192  
00:11:44,340 --> 00:11:46,700  
we had had already much earlier.

193  
00:11:46,700 --> 00:11:53,370  
So the material itself was often  
just for me a review of things

194  
00:11:53,370 --> 00:11:55,320  
I had learned earlier.

195  
00:11:55,320 --> 00:11:56,790

And therefore that  
made it easier

196  
00:11:56,790 --> 00:12:00,200  
for me to concentrate  
on the language then.

197  
00:12:00,200 --> 00:12:05,730  
And I think I made quite  
a bit of progress there.

198  
00:12:05,730 --> 00:12:07,510  
I don't know exactly how long--

199  
00:12:07,510 --> 00:12:09,840  
I wasn't there  
very long, probably

200  
00:12:09,840 --> 00:12:16,500  
from about February, March, '39  
until the start of the summer

201  
00:12:16,500 --> 00:12:23,730  
term, which was, I  
think, May or June '39.

202  
00:12:23,730 --> 00:12:30,740  
And '39 also was the  
first summer in my life

203  
00:12:30,740 --> 00:12:35,220  
where my parents didn't  
send me to a summer camp.

204  
00:12:35,220 --> 00:12:39,600  
And on the 1st of  
September, 1939, of course,

205  
00:12:39,600 --> 00:12:45,090  
the German Wehrmacht entered  
Poland, attacked Poland,

206  
00:12:45,090 --> 00:12:48,000

and I listened to  
Hitler's speech

207  
00:12:48,000 --> 00:12:54,540  
to the Reichstag, in which  
he explained this rationale.

208  
00:12:54,540 --> 00:13:02,870  
And I never forget the  
words, which he said.

209  
00:13:02,870 --> 00:13:07,080  
Since 5:00 this morning,  
we are shooting back.

210  
00:13:07,080 --> 00:13:10,490  
The fairy tale that the  
Nazis told the world

211  
00:13:10,490 --> 00:13:13,310  
was that Poland had  
attacked Germany.

212  
00:13:13,310 --> 00:13:17,420  
And that had been going on  
already for days and weeks,

213  
00:13:17,420 --> 00:13:20,960  
while he patiently tried  
to look the other way

214  
00:13:20,960 --> 00:13:24,300  
and tried to come to  
a peaceful solution.

215  
00:13:24,300 --> 00:13:31,170  
And finally he is not taking  
it anymore and shooting back.

216  
00:13:31,170 --> 00:13:32,200  
It's unbelievable.

217  
00:13:32,200 --> 00:13:36,620

Anyway that was a  
Friday, September 1.

218  
00:13:36,620 --> 00:13:43,090  
And I should say, actually, two  
days before, on August 30th,

219  
00:13:43,090 --> 00:13:46,460  
that was my father's  
birthday, 1939--

220  
00:13:46,460 --> 00:13:49,520  
must have been  
his 57th birthday.

221  
00:13:49,520 --> 00:13:51,890  
And at that time  
already, everything

222  
00:13:51,890 --> 00:13:53,540  
was much more subdued.

223  
00:13:53,540 --> 00:13:57,080  
And we didn't have  
a party at home.

224  
00:13:57,080 --> 00:14:00,530  
We just went out to some  
nice restaurant downtown.

225  
00:14:00,530 --> 00:14:03,710  
And while we were sitting  
there, suddenly newsboys

226  
00:14:03,710 --> 00:14:07,600  
came in with stacks of news--  
extra editions shouting,

227  
00:14:07,600 --> 00:14:08,780  
extra, extra.

228  
00:14:08,780 --> 00:14:11,180  
Every table bought a paper.

229  
00:14:11,180 --> 00:14:15,080  
And a big fat headline  
was, "General Mobilization

230  
00:14:15,080 --> 00:14:16,430  
in Poland."

231  
00:14:16,430 --> 00:14:19,020  
and so everybody knew already.

232  
00:14:19,020 --> 00:14:21,530  
See in Germany,  
general mobilization

233  
00:14:21,530 --> 00:14:25,280  
was never officially announced  
because the Nazis had already

234  
00:14:25,280 --> 00:14:28,600  
quietly mobilized.

235  
00:14:28,600 --> 00:14:32,530  
And then on the 1st, as I  
said, Germany attacked Poland.

236  
00:14:32,530 --> 00:14:33,860  
That was a Friday.

237  
00:14:33,860 --> 00:14:40,680  
On Sunday, the 3rd, we took  
our customary Sunday excursion.

238  
00:14:40,680 --> 00:14:44,060  
We walked through  
the forest near where

239  
00:14:44,060 --> 00:14:49,460  
we lived to one of the cafes  
at the river bank of the Havel

240  
00:14:49,460 --> 00:14:51,380

River.

241

00:14:51,380 --> 00:14:57,110

And at that time also most, if  
not all, restaurants in Germany

242

00:14:57,110 --> 00:15:00,260

were wired for public  
address systems.

243

00:15:00,260 --> 00:15:01,730

And while we were  
sitting there--

244

00:15:01,730 --> 00:15:03,590

it was early  
afternoon, I think--

245

00:15:03,590 --> 00:15:08,660

the public address  
system went on

246

00:15:08,660 --> 00:15:13,520

with a important announcement  
from the German government.

247

00:15:13,520 --> 00:15:17,990

And it said that the British  
ambassador had, at 11:00--

248

00:15:17,990 --> 00:15:19,430

I still remember the time--

249

00:15:19,430 --> 00:15:25,160

submitted a diplomatic  
note, requesting

250

00:15:25,160 --> 00:15:32,000

that German troops be taken back  
to the original German-Polish

251

00:15:32,000 --> 00:15:35,750

border within a certain

number of hours.

252

00:15:35,750 --> 00:15:39,890

If Germany refused to do  
that, then Britain in line

253

00:15:39,890 --> 00:15:42,350

with its treaty  
obligations to Poland

254

00:15:42,350 --> 00:15:46,010

will consider itself  
at war with Germany.

255

00:15:46,010 --> 00:15:51,890

And the French ambassador had  
submitted a similar note also.

256

00:15:51,890 --> 00:15:56,360

As we were sitting there,  
I remember that my father

257

00:15:56,360 --> 00:15:59,120

broke out into tears.

258

00:15:59,120 --> 00:16:02,940

And that was the first  
time that I saw him cry.

259

00:16:02,940 --> 00:16:10,800

And he said, this is a second  
world war in his lifetime,

260

00:16:10,800 --> 00:16:13,430

and that he was not  
going to survive it.

261

00:16:13,430 --> 00:16:16,720

262

00:16:16,720 --> 00:16:18,930

What prompted that  
remark, I never--

263  
00:16:18,930 --> 00:16:23,360

264  
00:16:23,360 --> 00:16:29,490  
the Holocaust was still so far  
away as to be unbelievable.

265  
00:16:29,490 --> 00:16:33,831  
But obviously he must  
have sensed something.

266  
00:16:33,831 --> 00:16:37,600

267  
00:16:37,600 --> 00:16:41,020  
And then we went home.

268  
00:16:41,020 --> 00:16:46,660  
And then the outbreak of  
the war was followed then

269  
00:16:46,660 --> 00:16:49,010  
by many more restrictions.

270  
00:16:49,010 --> 00:16:52,070  
One was we had to turn  
in our telephones.

271  
00:16:52,070 --> 00:16:55,480  
We had to turn in  
all appliances.

272  
00:16:55,480 --> 00:16:58,780  
Of course, all these, people  
had much fewer than today.

273  
00:16:58,780 --> 00:17:01,300  
But still that  
included such things

274  
00:17:01,300 --> 00:17:04,825



as vacuum cleaners,  
phonograph players--

275  
00:17:04,825 --> 00:17:07,490

276  
00:17:07,490 --> 00:17:09,780  
I don't know what else  
one had in those days.

277  
00:17:09,780 --> 00:17:13,400  
It was before washing  
machines and dishwashers.

278  
00:17:13,400 --> 00:17:16,330  
But whatever one has,  
it had to be turned in.

279  
00:17:16,330 --> 00:17:18,079  
In addition to--

280  
00:17:18,079 --> 00:17:18,579  
Radios?

281  
00:17:18,579 --> 00:17:21,887  
Oh yeah, radio?

282  
00:17:21,887 --> 00:17:22,970  
Yeah, I think radio's too.

283  
00:17:22,970 --> 00:17:25,520

284  
00:17:25,520 --> 00:17:32,120  
And then up to that time,  
I think Jews religiously

285  
00:17:32,120 --> 00:17:33,290  
obeyed all these things.

286  
00:17:33,290 --> 00:17:35,390  
And that was the

first time where

287

00:17:35,390 --> 00:17:37,220  
people started to sort of balk.

288

00:17:37,220 --> 00:17:39,640

And not everything  
was turned in.

289

00:17:39,640 --> 00:17:42,080

I know of many  
cases where people

290

00:17:42,080 --> 00:17:44,220

didn't turn in everything.

291

00:17:44,220 --> 00:17:49,910

Also jewelry, valuables,  
gold, silver, diamonds,

292

00:17:49,910 --> 00:17:53,150

things like that had  
to be all turned in.

293

00:17:53,150 --> 00:17:55,850

And it was just turned  
in for a receipt.

294

00:17:55,850 --> 00:17:59,898

There was no thought of for  
the government to buy it.

295

00:17:59,898 --> 00:18:00,690

It was just stolen.

296

00:18:00,690 --> 00:18:06,840

297

00:18:06,840 --> 00:18:10,620

And of course one victim  
of the outbreak of the war

298

00:18:10,620 --> 00:18:13,270  
was the American  
school in Berlin,

299  
00:18:13,270 --> 00:18:16,230  
which did not reopen  
because even though America

300  
00:18:16,230 --> 00:18:19,530  
itself at that time  
was not yet in the war,

301  
00:18:19,530 --> 00:18:22,900  
but Germany was in the war, and  
Germany was considered a war

302  
00:18:22,900 --> 00:18:23,400  
zone.

303  
00:18:23,400 --> 00:18:26,420  
And there was a possibility  
of air raids and so on.

304  
00:18:26,420 --> 00:18:30,300  
So the school didn't reopen.

305  
00:18:30,300 --> 00:18:33,900  
And then at that point, I  
wanted to go back and do

306  
00:18:33,900 --> 00:18:37,170  
my high school graduation.

307  
00:18:37,170 --> 00:18:40,620  
So I went back to the high  
school of the Jewish community

308  
00:18:40,620 --> 00:18:45,320  
and graduated there  
in March, 1940.

309  
00:18:45,320 --> 00:18:48,270  
That's a big difference

between a high school

310  
00:18:48,270 --> 00:18:49,830  
graduation in Germany--

311  
00:18:49,830 --> 00:18:53,490  
I think in any European  
country, also England--

312  
00:18:53,490 --> 00:18:54,570  
and that in America.

313  
00:18:54,570 --> 00:18:58,410  
In America, it is simply  
an automatic thing

314  
00:18:58,410 --> 00:19:04,620  
after completing 12th grade  
of school, you graduate.

315  
00:19:04,620 --> 00:19:07,230  
And there, there's a  
rigorous examination.

316  
00:19:07,230 --> 00:19:12,450  
I still remember it  
was a fearful thing.

317  
00:19:12,450 --> 00:19:15,360  
And I studied day and night.

318  
00:19:15,360 --> 00:19:22,010  
And passed it, of  
course, but it was--

319  
00:19:22,010 --> 00:19:27,900  
it ranks in my memory  
together with my PhD prelims,

320  
00:19:27,900 --> 00:19:30,930  
each one at their own level.

321

00:19:30,930 --> 00:19:34,490

Also it's a  
state-administered exam.

322

00:19:34,490 --> 00:19:41,088

So they are from the  
State Education Authority,

323

00:19:41,088 --> 00:19:46,360

a high official appeared there.

324

00:19:46,360 --> 00:19:56,650

And the way the evaluation  
examination goes

325

00:19:56,650 --> 00:19:57,400

was the following.

326

00:19:57,400 --> 00:20:01,030

There was first a set of written  
examinations, each three hours

327

00:20:01,030 --> 00:20:02,170

long.

328

00:20:02,170 --> 00:20:08,350

One was a German composition,  
which incidentally, we

329

00:20:08,350 --> 00:20:11,350

had several essay  
topics to choose from.

330

00:20:11,350 --> 00:20:18,310

And the topic I chose was  
the discussion and evaluation

331

00:20:18,310 --> 00:20:23,200

of the work of a leading  
personality of modern times.

332

00:20:23,200 --> 00:20:27,970

And I chose Theodor Herzl,

the founder of Modern Zionism.

333

00:20:27,970 --> 00:20:31,300

And later on, my  
father chided me for it

334

00:20:31,300 --> 00:20:35,860

and said, since it will be  
read by a German examination

335

00:20:35,860 --> 00:20:39,610

commission, it was a  
mistake that I did that.

336

00:20:39,610 --> 00:20:40,570

It might harm me.

337

00:20:40,570 --> 00:20:45,770

And then I said, the  
people know who I am.

338

00:20:45,770 --> 00:20:46,360

I am a Jew.

339

00:20:46,360 --> 00:20:48,110

And they know that  
that's a Jewish school.

340

00:20:48,110 --> 00:20:54,970

So my father was always really  
concerned for something.

341

00:20:54,970 --> 00:20:57,940

And actually I got a  
very good grade for that.

342

00:20:57,940 --> 00:21:03,340

And mathematics and so  
on, and that takes place

343

00:21:03,340 --> 00:21:07,390

over a period of about a month--  
these various exams spaced.

344  
00:21:07,390 --> 00:21:10,090  
And then after that about--

345  
00:21:10,090 --> 00:21:13,390  
I think after the last exam,  
maybe two or three weeks

346  
00:21:13,390 --> 00:21:14,680  
[INAUDIBLE].

347  
00:21:14,680 --> 00:21:23,290  
And the German examiners, they  
get all the written tests.

348  
00:21:23,290 --> 00:21:28,990  
And then one of them appears  
for the final oral examination.

349  
00:21:28,990 --> 00:21:33,160  
And the oral examination  
was handled in such a way

350  
00:21:33,160 --> 00:21:36,610  
that the examination  
commission, which

351  
00:21:36,610 --> 00:21:38,890  
consisted of all  
the teachers that we

352  
00:21:38,890 --> 00:21:42,720  
had in 12th grade,  
the school principal,

353  
00:21:42,720 --> 00:21:47,320  
and the German official, were  
sitting in the examination

354  
00:21:47,320 --> 00:21:49,200  
room, and we were  
called in one by one.

355

00:21:49,200 --> 00:21:51,880

We were 13 or 14.

356

00:21:51,880 --> 00:21:54,000

I forgot-- I think 13.

357

00:21:54,000 --> 00:21:56,220

We were called in.

358

00:21:56,220 --> 00:22:00,180

And before that started, we  
were all called in together.

359

00:22:00,180 --> 00:22:04,350

And the German official  
made a little speech.

360

00:22:04,350 --> 00:22:08,180

And he was a tall,  
good looking guy

361

00:22:08,180 --> 00:22:14,790

with a white thick mane of hair  
and such a huge swastika party

362

00:22:14,790 --> 00:22:21,330

member button here, which  
didn't particularly made us--

363

00:22:21,330 --> 00:22:23,190

or at least me-- feel easy.

364

00:22:23,190 --> 00:22:27,000

And he said a few things.

365

00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:30,300

But then he went on to  
say that he has read so

366

00:22:30,300 --> 00:22:32,430

far our written examinations.



367

00:22:32,430 --> 00:22:35,070

And he wanted to  
make us a compliment.

368

00:22:35,070 --> 00:22:39,510

He said, they are far above the  
average of what he has seen.

369

00:22:39,510 --> 00:22:43,050

And he wanted to  
particularly compliment us

370

00:22:43,050 --> 00:22:46,650

because he is aware of the  
difficult circumstances

371

00:22:46,650 --> 00:22:48,720

under which we are living.

372

00:22:48,720 --> 00:22:51,180

And then he dismissed us.

373

00:22:51,180 --> 00:22:55,810

And that man was  
obviously, you know,

374

00:22:55,810 --> 00:22:58,590

must have been hold over  
from the Weimar Republic.

375

00:22:58,590 --> 00:23:00,570

He was old enough  
anyway for that.

376

00:23:00,570 --> 00:23:03,960

And many of these  
guys were pressured

377

00:23:03,960 --> 00:23:08,160

into joining the party  
or losing their job.

378

00:23:08,160 --> 00:23:09,560  
And so they all--

379  
00:23:09,560 --> 00:23:11,790  
not all, I guess,  
but many compromised

380  
00:23:11,790 --> 00:23:13,140  
and joined the party.

381  
00:23:13,140 --> 00:23:20,250  
But that man obviously, to have  
said that took already courage.

382  
00:23:20,250 --> 00:23:24,030  
So anyway that was  
the examination.

383  
00:23:24,030 --> 00:23:29,730  
And then after that, I was,  
anyway really as I understood,

384  
00:23:29,730 --> 00:23:30,660  
claimed.

385  
00:23:30,660 --> 00:23:36,390  
So I volunteered for one  
of the preparatory camps

386  
00:23:36,390 --> 00:23:38,662  
for emigration to Israel--

387  
00:23:38,662 --> 00:23:40,740  
or Palestine in those days.

388  
00:23:40,740 --> 00:23:46,650  
And they were named by  
the Hebrew name [HEBREW]----

389  
00:23:46,650 --> 00:23:47,880  
means preparation.

390

00:23:47,880 --> 00:23:51,660

391

00:23:51,660 --> 00:23:54,390

But I discovered that  
I was totally unsuited

392

00:23:54,390 --> 00:23:55,780

for communal living.

393

00:23:55,780 --> 00:23:58,690

I felt totally unhappy.

394

00:23:58,690 --> 00:24:03,090

The living there was to  
simulate kibbutz-style living.

395

00:24:03,090 --> 00:24:06,250

396

00:24:06,250 --> 00:24:10,150

And I was constantly homesick  
and didn't like it at all.

397

00:24:10,150 --> 00:24:13,200

And then for me, fortunately,  
actually, that camp

398

00:24:13,200 --> 00:24:15,360

was dissolved for some reason.

399

00:24:15,360 --> 00:24:18,480

And people were distributed  
partly to other camps

400

00:24:18,480 --> 00:24:22,770

and partly to a work camp  
in a suburb of Berlin.

401

00:24:22,770 --> 00:24:24,690

And that's where I was put in.

402

00:24:24,690 --> 00:24:29,040  
And that was in a  
southern suburb of Berlin.

403  
00:24:29,040 --> 00:24:34,780  
And we were just a  
small group of boys--

404  
00:24:34,780 --> 00:24:38,160  
maybe wasn't more than 10--

405  
00:24:38,160 --> 00:24:42,300  
detailed to work  
in a forest, which

406  
00:24:42,300 --> 00:24:44,970  
was managed by a  
forestry official,

407  
00:24:44,970 --> 00:24:49,860  
to cut down certain  
trees that were diseased.

408  
00:24:49,860 --> 00:24:51,330  
And I still remember that.

409  
00:24:51,330 --> 00:24:55,790  
That must have been the  
healthiest time of my life.

410  
00:24:55,790 --> 00:24:58,620  
It was by that time  
midsummer 1940.

411  
00:24:58,620 --> 00:25:03,060  
And we were working bare  
chested, just some shorts

412  
00:25:03,060 --> 00:25:04,890  
on, and sawing down.

413  
00:25:04,890 --> 00:25:06,540  
And of course, that

was in the days

414

00:25:06,540 --> 00:25:08,430  
before chainsaws and all that.

415

00:25:08,430 --> 00:25:13,500  
It was really hand sewing  
these long band saws,

416

00:25:13,500 --> 00:25:16,100  
where one man grabs  
a handle on one

417

00:25:16,100 --> 00:25:19,830  
end, and the other on the other,  
and you go back and forth.

418

00:25:19,830 --> 00:25:25,950  
And then after the tree has  
been felled, with an ax,

419

00:25:25,950 --> 00:25:29,580  
all the branches had to be cut--  
apparently they were deceased,

420

00:25:29,580 --> 00:25:32,460  
but still could be  
used for some purpose

421

00:25:32,460 --> 00:25:38,610  
because we had to hack off  
with axes all of the branches

422

00:25:38,610 --> 00:25:44,400  
and then with a special peeler,  
peel the bark off so that just

423

00:25:44,400 --> 00:25:47,580  
the bare trunk remained.

424

00:25:47,580 --> 00:25:52,770  
And the local forester  
was a fairly decent guy.

425  
00:25:52,770 --> 00:25:55,190  
He got us as Jews--

426  
00:25:55,190 --> 00:25:58,800  
I should have said that with  
the outbreak of World War II,

427  
00:25:58,800 --> 00:26:01,290  
of course, immediately  
food was rationed.

428  
00:26:01,290 --> 00:26:05,220  
And not only food, also  
clothing, everything, shoes--

429  
00:26:05,220 --> 00:26:07,680  
everything you can think  
of-- all consumer goods

430  
00:26:07,680 --> 00:26:10,030  
were rationed.

431  
00:26:10,030 --> 00:26:14,130  
And Jews from the beginning  
got less than the--

432  
00:26:14,130 --> 00:26:18,300  
the ration system was  
a three-tiered system.

433  
00:26:18,300 --> 00:26:21,300  
The lowest was called  
the general consumer.

434  
00:26:21,300 --> 00:26:25,950  
And then higher, the next  
step up was [NON-ENGLISH]..

435  
00:26:25,950 --> 00:26:28,110  
These are factory workers.

436

00:26:28,110 --> 00:26:33,420  
They got certain items more,  
like fat, milk, maybe meat.

437  
00:26:33,420 --> 00:26:36,870  
And then the highest  
category was heavy labor.

438  
00:26:36,870 --> 00:26:38,580  
These were people  
like construction,

439  
00:26:38,580 --> 00:26:43,350  
miners in the coal mines--  
this sort of thing.

440  
00:26:43,350 --> 00:26:47,340  
But first of all Jews were not  
entitled to any [NON-ENGLISH]

441  
00:26:47,340 --> 00:26:50,610  
even if they did do some  
work where Germans would have

442  
00:26:50,610 --> 00:26:51,840  
received them.

443  
00:26:51,840 --> 00:26:53,760  
And then our rations  
were actually

444  
00:26:53,760 --> 00:26:57,790  
shortened even compared  
to the general consumer.

445  
00:26:57,790 --> 00:27:00,340  
But the forester there,  
since he wanted also

446  
00:27:00,340 --> 00:27:06,040  
to get work out of us, and  
he knew hungry people are not

447

00:27:06,040 --> 00:27:08,610  
as strong, so he got--

448  
00:27:08,610 --> 00:27:13,660  
I actually saw the local  
Nazi [INAUDIBLE] as a farmer

449  
00:27:13,660 --> 00:27:14,410  
leader--

450  
00:27:14,410 --> 00:27:18,010  
peasant leader, whatever--  
extra rations for us

451  
00:27:18,010 --> 00:27:22,450  
of farmer's bread and sausages,  
which were actually delicious.

452  
00:27:22,450 --> 00:27:27,430  
And it was sort of a really  
nice little community there.

453  
00:27:27,430 --> 00:27:29,920  
And I spent the summer there.

454  
00:27:29,920 --> 00:27:32,540  
And occasionally  
we had furloughs,

455  
00:27:32,540 --> 00:27:37,030  
where I could go into the  
city to visit my parents.

456  
00:27:37,030 --> 00:27:43,600  
And so that was over, I think,  
about in the fall of 1940.

457  
00:27:43,600 --> 00:27:46,540  
And then my parents,  
still hoping

458  
00:27:46,540 --> 00:27:50,650  
that maybe something will come



of the immigration-- my parents

459

00:27:50,650 --> 00:27:53,230

did all kinds of things  
that I never really

460

00:27:53,230 --> 00:27:55,360

was aware of fully.

461

00:27:55,360 --> 00:28:03,380

And there was in Berlin  
a mechanic school

462

00:28:03,380 --> 00:28:08,800

from ORT, O-R-T, that exists  
still today in many countries.

463

00:28:08,800 --> 00:28:14,230

And they had a school for  
mechanics and machine working.

464

00:28:14,230 --> 00:28:19,930

And so I started down  
sometime in the fall of 1940.

465

00:28:19,930 --> 00:28:22,160

And by that time, however,  
already the Germans

466

00:28:22,160 --> 00:28:26,620

started to draft  
Jews into factories,

467

00:28:26,620 --> 00:28:29,110

namely to replace  
German workers who

468

00:28:29,110 --> 00:28:33,830

had been drafted into the  
army, to the Wehrmacht.

469

00:28:33,830 --> 00:28:38,980

But my parents were lucky.

470  
00:28:38,980 --> 00:28:44,740  
Somehow they were able to  
produce doctor's certificates

471  
00:28:44,740 --> 00:28:51,160  
to exempt them from  
the Arbeitseinsatz.

472  
00:28:51,160 --> 00:28:53,700  
That means forced  
labor, basically.

473  
00:28:53,700 --> 00:28:58,450  
And then I was  
exempted because I

474  
00:28:58,450 --> 00:29:02,802  
worked in that mechanic school.

475  
00:29:02,802 --> 00:29:04,760  
I just wanted to ask you  
a couple of questions.

476  
00:29:04,760 --> 00:29:05,260  
Yeah?

477  
00:29:05,260 --> 00:29:09,950

478  
00:29:09,950 --> 00:29:12,720  
What was your sister doing  
throughout all of this?

479  
00:29:12,720 --> 00:29:15,600  
Was she just at home  
with your parents?

480  
00:29:15,600 --> 00:29:19,670  
Actually, there must have  
been telepathy [INAUDIBLE]

481

00:29:19,670 --> 00:29:25,280  
my sister [? was. ?] First of  
all when she went to school,

482  
00:29:25,280 --> 00:29:28,040  
initially she started in  
the German public school,

483  
00:29:28,040 --> 00:29:31,790  
but was then transferred  
by my parents

484  
00:29:31,790 --> 00:29:34,460  
to a Jewish school,  
but a much less

485  
00:29:34,460 --> 00:29:37,490  
religious Jewish private school.

486  
00:29:37,490 --> 00:29:43,140  
And when all of these schools  
were dissolved in early '39,

487  
00:29:43,140 --> 00:29:45,800  
just like the  
school I was in, she

488  
00:29:45,800 --> 00:29:51,440  
was transferred to  
another Jewish school

489  
00:29:51,440 --> 00:29:52,580  
of the Jewish community.

490  
00:29:52,580 --> 00:29:55,890

491  
00:29:55,890 --> 00:29:59,480  
And there she was until--

492  
00:29:59,480 --> 00:30:02,030  
but that came later  
I think in '41--

493  
00:30:02,030 --> 00:30:04,070  
all schooling for  
Jewish children

494  
00:30:04,070 --> 00:30:06,680  
was simply outlawed  
by the Gestapo.

495  
00:30:06,680 --> 00:30:14,745  
But until then, she went to  
school and had her friends.

496  
00:30:14,745 --> 00:30:19,830  
And in fact, she had  
already a little boyfriend.

497  
00:30:19,830 --> 00:30:22,708

498  
00:30:22,708 --> 00:30:24,250  
Your sister was a  
little bit younger.

499  
00:30:24,250 --> 00:30:26,530  
So at the point when  
schools were outlawed,

500  
00:30:26,530 --> 00:30:28,500  
were there underground schools?

501  
00:30:28,500 --> 00:30:30,430  
Or people just stopped going?

502  
00:30:30,430 --> 00:30:33,800

503  
00:30:33,800 --> 00:30:37,040  
When schooling was forbidden,  
no, I think first of all,

504  
00:30:37,040 --> 00:30:42,040

she was then sent also  
to the country for--

505  
00:30:42,040 --> 00:30:44,150  
there was some young  
Jewish kids were

506  
00:30:44,150 --> 00:30:51,420  
sent to help in harvesting  
things in the country.

507  
00:30:51,420 --> 00:30:55,020  
And then by that, when  
she came back from there,

508  
00:30:55,020 --> 00:30:59,710  
the deportations were already  
going strong [INAUDIBLE]..

509  
00:30:59,710 --> 00:31:02,070  
And your parents in--

510  
00:31:02,070 --> 00:31:04,070  
were they supportive  
of your going

511  
00:31:04,070 --> 00:31:06,850  
to these little Zionist camps?

512  
00:31:06,850 --> 00:31:09,110  
Yeah, they were  
supportive-- by that time,

513  
00:31:09,110 --> 00:31:10,610  
they wanted to get me out.

514  
00:31:10,610 --> 00:31:13,040  
In fact, we already  
applied for a passport.

515  
00:31:13,040 --> 00:31:16,070  
And in fact, they let us--  
one incident I remember,

516  
00:31:16,070 --> 00:31:19,565  
where we went the  
passport office--

517  
00:31:19,565 --> 00:31:24,530  
it was actually part of the  
Jewish emigration office, which

518  
00:31:24,530 --> 00:31:28,320  
was headed by Adolf Eichmann.

519  
00:31:28,320 --> 00:31:33,050  
And we applied there  
for a passport for me

520  
00:31:33,050 --> 00:31:35,180  
and for somebody here  
to come along, partly

521  
00:31:35,180 --> 00:31:38,010  
because I was a minor person.

522  
00:31:38,010 --> 00:31:39,930  
And while we were  
standing in line,

523  
00:31:39,930 --> 00:31:42,990  
you went from one  
position to the next,

524  
00:31:42,990 --> 00:31:46,920  
filling out forms of answering  
questions or whatever.

525  
00:31:46,920 --> 00:31:50,430  
While we were  
standing in line, two

526  
00:31:50,430 --> 00:31:54,150  
tall and very good  
looking SS officers

527

00:31:54,150 --> 00:31:57,030

walked across that  
waiting room where

528

00:31:57,030 --> 00:31:58,620

people were standing in line.

529

00:31:58,620 --> 00:32:02,280

And for some reason,  
one of them just

530

00:32:02,280 --> 00:32:06,420

got pulled to my father for some  
reason and walked toward him

531

00:32:06,420 --> 00:32:09,150

and asked him why we  
were waiting there.

532

00:32:09,150 --> 00:32:12,030

And my father answered  
that, this is my son.

533

00:32:12,030 --> 00:32:19,560

And he is preparing to  
emigrate to Palestine.

534

00:32:19,560 --> 00:32:23,730

Oh, and then he asked my  
father, is he going with

535

00:32:23,730 --> 00:32:26,070

[NON-ENGLISH]--

536

00:32:26,070 --> 00:32:27,740

in perfect Hebrew.

537

00:32:27,740 --> 00:32:31,170

And my father said, yes.

538

00:32:31,170 --> 00:32:35,130

And then he just turned

around and walked away.

539

00:32:35,130 --> 00:32:37,650

And I don't think--

540

00:32:37,650 --> 00:32:40,560

my father didn't seem

nervous or so on.

541

00:32:40,560 --> 00:32:43,540

But I'm sure it must have

been extremely nervous.

542

00:32:43,540 --> 00:32:48,300

That guy was-- he

looked very aggressive

543

00:32:48,300 --> 00:32:51,990

and like the image

of an SS officer.

544

00:32:51,990 --> 00:32:56,160

545

00:32:56,160 --> 00:32:59,175

In fact that passport

I still have.

546

00:32:59,175 --> 00:33:02,340

That's one of my cherished

memories-- with a big J, which

547

00:33:02,340 --> 00:33:06,090

after the war I found out we

actually owe the Swiss more

548

00:33:06,090 --> 00:33:08,520

than the Germans.

549

00:33:08,520 --> 00:33:12,190

Did you ever read about that,

that the Swiss pressured



550

00:33:12,190 --> 00:33:16,050

the Germans to put the J  
because Germany and Switzerland

551

00:33:16,050 --> 00:33:23,580

had a treaty for tourist visas  
not to need visas for tourism?

552

00:33:23,580 --> 00:33:26,830

But that apparently  
Jews discovered and went

553

00:33:26,830 --> 00:33:29,490

as tourists with  
their German passports

554

00:33:29,490 --> 00:33:31,410

but then didn't leave.

555

00:33:31,410 --> 00:33:33,340

And Swiss didn't like that.

556

00:33:33,340 --> 00:33:36,360

And so they told the  
Germans to do something,

557

00:33:36,360 --> 00:33:40,560

put a J in or whatever, so that  
they can immediately recognize

558

00:33:40,560 --> 00:33:41,610

the passport of a Jew.

559

00:33:41,610 --> 00:33:46,250

And then they can refuse him.

560

00:33:46,250 --> 00:33:48,930

These nice, neutral Swiss.

561

00:33:48,930 --> 00:33:55,600

Anyway coming back, where was I?

562

00:33:55,600 --> 00:34:00,640

Oh yeah, I went to  
ORT to learn mechanic.

563

00:34:00,640 --> 00:34:02,900

And actually that  
turned out to be

564

00:34:02,900 --> 00:34:06,690

one of the more useful  
things I learned in my life,

565

00:34:06,690 --> 00:34:09,510

probably more useful than Latin.

566

00:34:09,510 --> 00:34:13,790

But I learned how  
to operate a lathe--

567

00:34:13,790 --> 00:34:15,920

although that, I have  
never done later--

568

00:34:15,920 --> 00:34:19,330

and operate various tools.

569

00:34:19,330 --> 00:34:22,670

And as I said, at  
that time also,

570

00:34:22,670 --> 00:34:24,889

they started to draft Jews.

571

00:34:24,889 --> 00:34:31,880

And on April 30th, 1941--

572

00:34:31,880 --> 00:34:32,969

oh no, I'm sorry.

573

00:34:32,969 --> 00:34:35,420

I have to pick up there.

574

00:34:35,420 --> 00:34:39,350

I want to say that  
in February, 1941,

575

00:34:39,350 --> 00:34:41,989

we received a  
notice that we have

576

00:34:41,989 --> 00:34:47,090

to vacate the huge apartment  
that we still occupied

577

00:34:47,090 --> 00:34:51,670

on the Kaiserdamm, one of the  
major boulevards of Berlin,

578

00:34:51,670 --> 00:34:54,199

within a few days.

579

00:34:54,199 --> 00:34:56,480

That was an action  
that was actually

580

00:34:56,480 --> 00:35:02,940

originated by Albert Speer, who  
was a German armaments minister

581

00:35:02,940 --> 00:35:09,340

and also in charge of  
construction in Berlin.

582

00:35:09,340 --> 00:35:11,510

And he always  
tried after the war

583

00:35:11,510 --> 00:35:16,820

to pretend that he was  
just a professional

584

00:35:16,820 --> 00:35:19,310

and did a thing  
for the armaments,

585

00:35:19,310 --> 00:35:23,030  
but had nothing to do whatsoever  
with persecution of Jews

586

00:35:23,030 --> 00:35:27,530  
or other minorities,  
which is a big lie.

587

00:35:27,530 --> 00:35:32,360  
That was one of the things  
which he did, to kick Jews out

588

00:35:32,360 --> 00:35:33,740  
of their apartments.

589

00:35:33,740 --> 00:35:38,650  
And Jews who were kicked out  
in this way, had to move in--

590

00:35:38,650 --> 00:35:42,500  
then we were expected to move  
into so-called Jew houses.

591

00:35:42,500 --> 00:35:46,550  
These were apartment  
buildings where at least 50%

592

00:35:46,550 --> 00:35:50,120  
of the tenants  
were already Jews.

593

00:35:50,120 --> 00:35:54,500  
And then also you couldn't,  
by any means, of course,

594

00:35:54,500 --> 00:35:57,110  
displace the German  
family in such a house.

595

00:35:57,110 --> 00:36:01,820  
But you had to  
move into a sublet,

596

00:36:01,820 --> 00:36:04,460

into an apartment

already inhabited

597

00:36:04,460 --> 00:36:07,190

by another Jewish family.

598

00:36:07,190 --> 00:36:10,760

And that was a big blow.

599

00:36:10,760 --> 00:36:12,370

We had a huge apartment.

600

00:36:12,370 --> 00:36:15,380

Of course, I never had

mentioned that so far.

601

00:36:15,380 --> 00:36:17,510

But it was an

eight-room apartment.

602

00:36:17,510 --> 00:36:21,410

And there were many art pieces

in there that my parents had

603

00:36:21,410 --> 00:36:24,500

collected-- of course,

in better times--

604

00:36:24,500 --> 00:36:29,660

many oriental rugs, and I

did mention the big library

605

00:36:29,660 --> 00:36:31,860

that my father had.

606

00:36:31,860 --> 00:36:39,670

And so I mean just to design--

and, of course, I think today,

607

00:36:39,670 --> 00:36:41,100

for example, if

we had to move out

608  
00:36:41,100 --> 00:36:44,790  
of our house, which I think in  
square footage may be smaller

609  
00:36:44,790 --> 00:36:47,910  
than that apartment, it  
would be a nightmare--

610  
00:36:47,910 --> 00:36:49,530  
within a few days.

611  
00:36:49,530 --> 00:36:54,810  
You accumulate so many things,  
personal things, documents,

612  
00:36:54,810 --> 00:36:57,240  
pictures, and--

613  
00:36:57,240 --> 00:37:01,560  
but in addition to that, a  
new apartment had to be found

614  
00:37:01,560 --> 00:37:05,190  
or a new room that was  
in another apartment.

615  
00:37:05,190 --> 00:37:09,000  
To make a long story  
short, we thought

616  
00:37:09,000 --> 00:37:13,320  
we had an ideal solution,  
moving into the apartment

617  
00:37:13,320 --> 00:37:15,020  
of an uncle of my mother.

618  
00:37:15,020 --> 00:37:21,390  
Now the man was the brother  
of my maternal grandfather--

619

00:37:21,390 --> 00:37:23,010  
and his wife.

620

00:37:23,010 --> 00:37:26,970  
And it was a much  
smaller apartment.

621

00:37:26,970 --> 00:37:29,070  
And they were living there.

622

00:37:29,070 --> 00:37:33,630  
Then they had a son in  
their mid or late 30s.

623

00:37:33,630 --> 00:37:36,773  
And then two single women were  
already living there also,

624

00:37:36,773 --> 00:37:38,190  
who had been kicked  
out somewhere.

625

00:37:38,190 --> 00:37:47,110  
Else

626

00:37:47,110 --> 00:37:52,480  
This is an interview with Ernest  
Fontheim, March 12th, 1997.

627

00:37:52,480 --> 00:38:01,040  
Tape two, side B.

628

00:38:01,040 --> 00:38:03,770  
Of course, we were not  
the only family living

629

00:38:03,770 --> 00:38:06,890  
under such circumstances.

630

00:38:06,890 --> 00:38:08,720  
It was throughout  
the Jewish community

631  
00:38:08,720 --> 00:38:11,720  
that Jews were cramped together.

632  
00:38:11,720 --> 00:38:16,190  
That I guess was the equivalent  
of a ghetto in Berlin.

633  
00:38:16,190 --> 00:38:18,500  
That would have been  
impossible for the Nazis

634  
00:38:18,500 --> 00:38:24,260  
to institute a real ghetto in  
an area, where only Jews lived

635  
00:38:24,260 --> 00:38:29,720  
because Jews never were  
concentrated in one area

636  
00:38:29,720 --> 00:38:31,310  
to such an extent.

637  
00:38:31,310 --> 00:38:35,630  
So they would have had  
basically to clear some area

638  
00:38:35,630 --> 00:38:37,840  
of non-Jewish Germans.

639  
00:38:37,840 --> 00:38:41,450  
And that would have  
been too disruptive.

640  
00:38:41,450 --> 00:38:45,620  
So instead they cramped  
then the remaining Jews

641  
00:38:45,620 --> 00:38:49,730  
at that time simply and  
into a much smaller number

642



00:38:49,730 --> 00:38:52,730  
of apartment buildings.

643  
00:38:52,730 --> 00:38:58,820  
That immediately led to  
innumerable conflicts.

644  
00:38:58,820 --> 00:39:02,320  
First of all, I think  
I indicated before,

645  
00:39:02,320 --> 00:39:04,130  
that food was rationed.

646  
00:39:04,130 --> 00:39:07,900  
And so it was very  
important for each family

647  
00:39:07,900 --> 00:39:12,670  
to keep its food supply  
identified and separate.

648  
00:39:12,670 --> 00:39:17,980  
And there were frequent  
suspicions, and sometimes even

649  
00:39:17,980 --> 00:39:22,600  
accusations, that somebody else  
ate somebody else's sausage,

650  
00:39:22,600 --> 00:39:25,570  
or at least part of  
it, or that something

651  
00:39:25,570 --> 00:39:30,070  
was missing that should  
have not been missing.

652  
00:39:30,070 --> 00:39:35,110  
And in fact the kitchen became  
known throughout the community

653  
00:39:35,110 --> 00:39:38,770

as the battlefield  
of the apartment

654  
00:39:38,770 --> 00:39:42,070  
because it wasn't just  
the problem of keeping

655  
00:39:42,070 --> 00:39:44,270  
the food supplies separate.

656  
00:39:44,270 --> 00:39:47,980  
Then there was a problem of  
preparing dinner, for example.

657  
00:39:47,980 --> 00:39:51,070  
Usually people eat more  
or less at the same time.

658  
00:39:51,070 --> 00:39:53,730  
And they don't  
eat dinner at 4:00

659  
00:39:53,730 --> 00:39:55,780  
when nobody needed a kitchen.

660  
00:39:55,780 --> 00:40:00,410  
And so there was a source  
of friction in that respect

661  
00:40:00,410 --> 00:40:02,370  
and then, of course,  
with cleanup.

662  
00:40:02,370 --> 00:40:05,410

663  
00:40:05,410 --> 00:40:08,980  
Particularly these things  
all might seem to be petty.

664  
00:40:08,980 --> 00:40:14,650  
But at that time, the nerves of  
all or most Jews at least were

665  
00:40:14,650 --> 00:40:23,620  
so frayed already by years of  
oppression and innumerable Nazi

666  
00:40:23,620 --> 00:40:29,530  
anti-Jewish measures, that  
it never took much for people

667  
00:40:29,530 --> 00:40:32,880  
to fly into a rage and to--

668  
00:40:32,880 --> 00:40:38,710  
that was really actually a  
very tragic outcome of that.

669  
00:40:38,710 --> 00:40:41,860  
But that's what's  
happened in many families.

670  
00:40:41,860 --> 00:40:43,450  
It happened in all--

671  
00:40:43,450 --> 00:40:48,880  
the fact that we lived with  
relatives that had absolutely

672  
00:40:48,880 --> 00:40:50,030  
nothing to do with it.

673  
00:40:50,030 --> 00:40:53,320  
And I think my  
mother and her aunt

674  
00:40:53,320 --> 00:40:56,640  
became fierce enemies  
while we lived there.

675  
00:40:56,640 --> 00:41:01,090

676  
00:41:01,090 --> 00:41:06,160

I would like just  
to back up briefly

677  
00:41:06,160 --> 00:41:11,230  
to a somewhat earlier  
time when we were still

678  
00:41:11,230 --> 00:41:15,610  
in the big apartment on  
the Kaiserdamm Boulevard.

679  
00:41:15,610 --> 00:41:20,080  
And when I mentioned that  
after the outbreak of the war,

680  
00:41:20,080 --> 00:41:23,770  
the telephones were  
taken away from Jews,

681  
00:41:23,770 --> 00:41:26,560  
a few days after that  
measure was instituted,

682  
00:41:26,560 --> 00:41:28,390  
our doorbell rang.

683  
00:41:28,390 --> 00:41:33,190  
And when we opened  
the door, the men

684  
00:41:33,190 --> 00:41:36,063  
who lived in the apartment  
upstairs above us

685  
00:41:36,063 --> 00:41:36,730  
was at the door.

686  
00:41:36,730 --> 00:41:39,550  
He was a wealthy bachelor--

687  
00:41:39,550 --> 00:41:43,180  
middle-aged-- I have no idea,  
but the way I remember him,

688

00:41:43,180 --> 00:41:46,030  
he was probably then around 50.

689

00:41:46,030 --> 00:41:50,970  
And he asked to talk to my  
father in private [INAUDIBLE]..

690

00:41:50,970 --> 00:41:55,690  
So my father and he went  
into our father's study.

691

00:41:55,690 --> 00:41:57,310  
And they spent some time there.

692

00:41:57,310 --> 00:42:00,040  
And we were all puzzled  
because there had never

693

00:42:00,040 --> 00:42:05,530  
been really any social or  
any other contact with him.

694

00:42:05,530 --> 00:42:10,210  
And then after some  
minutes, he reemerged.

695

00:42:10,210 --> 00:42:15,520  
And both gentlemen were  
chatting pleasantly.

696

00:42:15,520 --> 00:42:21,350  
And our upstairs neighbor  
said goodbye and left.

697

00:42:21,350 --> 00:42:26,380  
And my father then turned  
to us with total surprise

698

00:42:26,380 --> 00:42:30,120  
in his face, saying  
that Mr. [? Kopf-- ?]

699

00:42:30,120 --> 00:42:32,080

that was his name--

700

00:42:32,080 --> 00:42:36,250

just offered that we  
could use his telephone.

701

00:42:36,250 --> 00:42:39,250

He just heard that our  
phone was taken away.

702

00:42:39,250 --> 00:42:41,620

And he felt that was terrible.

703

00:42:41,620 --> 00:42:45,370

And if we had the need to call  
somebody, we should feel free.

704

00:42:45,370 --> 00:42:49,960

And not only that, but he  
even gave us permission

705

00:42:49,960 --> 00:42:57,310

to pass his number on to a few  
absolutely reliable people, who

706

00:42:57,310 --> 00:42:59,170

may have a need to call us.

707

00:42:59,170 --> 00:43:01,570

In that case he would  
send his maid down.

708

00:43:01,570 --> 00:43:04,750

And someone could come  
up and answer the call.

709

00:43:04,750 --> 00:43:08,260

And that-- in those days  
under those circumstances--

710

00:43:08,260 --> 00:43:12,370

was extraordinary because the man surely risked, particularly

711  
00:43:12,370 --> 00:43:15,370  
in the second part of the offer.

712  
00:43:15,370 --> 00:43:19,577  
So there were sometimes such cases also.

713  
00:43:19,577 --> 00:43:21,160  
Another thing that I wanted to mention

714  
00:43:21,160 --> 00:43:24,680  
is that in the same building on the first floor,

715  
00:43:24,680 --> 00:43:28,570  
the ambassador of a small Central American country

716  
00:43:28,570 --> 00:43:29,550  
was living.

717  
00:43:29,550 --> 00:43:32,650  
I am not 100% certain anymore, but I'm

718  
00:43:32,650 --> 00:43:35,860  
fairly sure that it was Costa Rica, I can't swear it.

719  
00:43:35,860 --> 00:43:38,390

720  
00:43:38,390 --> 00:43:42,790  
My parents, when the situation became worse and worse--

721  
00:43:42,790 --> 00:43:44,710  
particularly after Kristallnacht--

722  
00:43:44,710 --> 00:43:48,610  
my parents decided maybe  
an approach to that man

723  
00:43:48,610 --> 00:43:51,820  
might be helpful in  
opening some doors.

724  
00:43:51,820 --> 00:43:58,516  
And although we barely knew him,  
except when we crossed paths

725  
00:43:58,516 --> 00:44:02,290  
on the stairs or so on, my  
father made an appointment

726  
00:44:02,290 --> 00:44:05,050  
and went to see him.

727  
00:44:05,050 --> 00:44:10,130  
And all I know is that  
nothing ever came of it.

728  
00:44:10,130 --> 00:44:19,120  
And back now to February,  
1941, after our eviction

729  
00:44:19,120 --> 00:44:22,870  
from the big  
apartment and our move

730  
00:44:22,870 --> 00:44:25,206  
into that much  
smaller apartment.

731  
00:44:25,206 --> 00:44:30,960

732  
00:44:30,960 --> 00:44:33,390  
That was February of '41.

733



00:44:33,390 --> 00:44:35,160  
Two months later in April--

734  
00:44:35,160 --> 00:44:38,910  
precisely on April 30th, 1941--

735  
00:44:38,910 --> 00:44:45,360  
the apprentice  
workshop of ORT, where

736  
00:44:45,360 --> 00:44:52,070  
I was apprenticing for  
mechanic and machine shop work,

737  
00:44:52,070 --> 00:44:55,230  
was ordered closed  
by the Gestapo.

738  
00:44:55,230 --> 00:45:01,110  
And all students in  
there were supposed

739  
00:45:01,110 --> 00:45:04,200  
to report to the Labor Office.

740  
00:45:04,200 --> 00:45:09,600  
The Nazis incidentally had  
instituted a special Labor

741  
00:45:09,600 --> 00:45:15,300  
Office for Jews shortly after  
the outbreak of the war,

742  
00:45:15,300 --> 00:45:22,500  
whose task it was to deal with  
Jews exclusively and to give

743  
00:45:22,500 --> 00:45:28,620  
Jews jobs mainly in the defense  
industry or also in other

744  
00:45:28,620 --> 00:45:32,860  
generally considered unpleasant

work, like for example,

745

00:45:32,860 --> 00:45:36,040  
the city garbage  
department-- garbage pickup--

746

00:45:36,040 --> 00:45:40,590  
and similar things-- and  
also [INAUDIBLE] railroads--

747

00:45:40,590 --> 00:45:44,210  
and certain unpleasant jobs in  
connection with the railroads

748

00:45:44,210 --> 00:45:47,700  
and tracks or so on.

749

00:45:47,700 --> 00:45:51,990  
Many Jews had already  
been drafted to work.

750

00:45:51,990 --> 00:45:59,387  
My parents succeeded in  
getting exemptions by doctors--

751

00:45:59,387 --> 00:46:00,470  
certificates from doctors.

752

00:46:00,470 --> 00:46:04,050  
And neither one of them really  
was very healthy by the time

753

00:46:04,050 --> 00:46:05,430  
anymore.

754

00:46:05,430 --> 00:46:08,760  
And now for our advantage was--

755

00:46:08,760 --> 00:46:12,840  
I mean our meaning the  
students, the apprentices,

756

00:46:12,840 --> 00:46:14,010  
at the ORT school--

757  
00:46:14,010 --> 00:46:21,180  
that we were considered  
to be already trained

758  
00:46:21,180 --> 00:46:25,200  
mechanics and therefore  
could get some better jobs.

759  
00:46:25,200 --> 00:46:30,840  
And all of us wound up at  
one of the Siemens factories.

760  
00:46:30,840 --> 00:46:38,220  
Now before the war, the central  
Siemens factory was in Berlin.

761  
00:46:38,220 --> 00:46:40,950  
Although they did have factories  
in other parts of Germany.

762  
00:46:40,950 --> 00:46:44,010  
But in Berlin was a  
central factory and also

763  
00:46:44,010 --> 00:46:46,980  
the central administration  
building of Siemens

764  
00:46:46,980 --> 00:46:48,240  
was in Berlin.

765  
00:46:48,240 --> 00:46:51,650  
And it was a huge complex.

766  
00:46:51,650 --> 00:46:55,830  
It was many square  
miles large, fenced in,

767  
00:46:55,830 --> 00:47:00,300  
of course, many

buildings manufacturing

768  
00:47:00,300 --> 00:47:01,680  
all kinds of things.

769  
00:47:01,680 --> 00:47:04,050  
In general Siemens is  
an electrical equipment

770  
00:47:04,050 --> 00:47:07,800  
manufacturer, along the same  
lines as General Electric,

771  
00:47:07,800 --> 00:47:08,550  
maybe--

772  
00:47:08,550 --> 00:47:13,860  
at least used to be before they  
started building such things

773  
00:47:13,860 --> 00:47:16,710  
as jet engines or so.

774  
00:47:16,710 --> 00:47:19,140  
Of course they were  
entirely into war production

775  
00:47:19,140 --> 00:47:20,590  
at the time.

776  
00:47:20,590 --> 00:47:28,190  
And one day after the  
ORT school was dismissed,

777  
00:47:28,190 --> 00:47:30,660  
we had to report to  
this Labor Office.

778  
00:47:30,660 --> 00:47:36,210  
And there we were given  
pieces of paper telling us

779

00:47:36,210 --> 00:47:39,720  
where to report the next day  
and at what time and so on.

780  
00:47:39,720 --> 00:47:43,380  
And so that's how I  
wound up at Siemens.

781  
00:47:43,380 --> 00:47:45,480  
Did you have any choice in this?

782  
00:47:45,480 --> 00:47:47,050  
None whatsoever.

783  
00:47:47,050 --> 00:47:50,220  
In fact the Labor Office  
also was run strictly

784  
00:47:50,220 --> 00:47:51,660  
along Nazi lines.

785  
00:47:51,660 --> 00:47:57,300  
We were treated very badly  
there in the sense of words.

786  
00:47:57,300 --> 00:48:01,380  
Nobody was beaten there,  
but just insulted.

787  
00:48:01,380 --> 00:48:06,780  
And we were just  
told where to work.

788  
00:48:06,780 --> 00:48:10,920  
Some others, by the way,  
were told to work also

789  
00:48:10,920 --> 00:48:12,450  
and sent to other factories.

790  
00:48:12,450 --> 00:48:15,180  
But I happened to  
end up at Siemens.

791  
00:48:15,180 --> 00:48:21,990  
Did you feel a bit safer  
because they needed your output?

792  
00:48:21,990 --> 00:48:24,930  
At that time the deportations  
hadn't started yet.

793  
00:48:24,930 --> 00:48:29,760  
So actually I felt,  
for two reasons--

794  
00:48:29,760 --> 00:48:31,710  
to put it mildly-- disappointed.

795  
00:48:31,710 --> 00:48:36,480  
One was that I had just  
been about seven or eight

796  
00:48:36,480 --> 00:48:41,100  
months at the ORT school and  
was just getting into it,

797  
00:48:41,100 --> 00:48:46,920  
learning all kinds of aspects of  
the trade of being a mechanic.

798  
00:48:46,920 --> 00:48:49,080  
And that would be  
interrupted now.

799  
00:48:49,080 --> 00:48:51,450  
And the second thing,  
of course, that I knew I

800  
00:48:51,450 --> 00:48:57,480  
would be working for the German  
war production, which didn't

801  
00:48:57,480 --> 00:48:59,820  
really make me obviously happy.

802  
00:48:59,820 --> 00:49:05,160

803  
00:49:05,160 --> 00:49:07,840  
At Siemens, the Jews  
who worked there--

804  
00:49:07,840 --> 00:49:11,420  
and I think that is true of  
all other defense plants also--

805  
00:49:11,420 --> 00:49:16,560  
did not work scattered around  
throughout the factory, here

806  
00:49:16,560 --> 00:49:20,630  
maybe a one machine operated  
by a Jew and next to him

807  
00:49:20,630 --> 00:49:22,100  
by a German worker.

808  
00:49:22,100 --> 00:49:26,870  
Instead the Jews were all in  
one particular department,

809  
00:49:26,870 --> 00:49:30,260  
where all workers were Jews,  
except for the foreman,

810  
00:49:30,260 --> 00:49:32,660  
of course.

811  
00:49:32,660 --> 00:49:37,400  
And in this way we also  
could be easier controlled.

812  
00:49:37,400 --> 00:49:39,740  
Number two, we  
were not permitted

813  
00:49:39,740 --> 00:49:43,430

to walk through the  
factory area unescorted.

814  
00:49:43,430 --> 00:49:47,060  
Now that meant the shift  
started at 6:00 AM.

815  
00:49:47,060 --> 00:49:50,300  
And it was already quite a  
walk from the factory gate

816  
00:49:50,300 --> 00:49:53,330  
to the building where  
we were working.

817  
00:49:53,330 --> 00:49:56,990  
So we had to be at  
the gate at 5:45

818  
00:49:56,990 --> 00:50:01,370  
to be picked up by a  
guard, which then led us

819  
00:50:01,370 --> 00:50:04,535  
to our department, where  
we then punched in-- we

820  
00:50:04,535 --> 00:50:06,290  
had to punch in before 6:00.

821  
00:50:06,290 --> 00:50:13,790  
If somebody missed that  
guarded walk from the gate

822  
00:50:13,790 --> 00:50:17,690  
to the department, then a  
separate guard had to be sent.

823  
00:50:17,690 --> 00:50:22,460  
And the foreman made a point  
of waiting after 6 o'clock.

824  
00:50:22,460 --> 00:50:26,420



And the person had no way  
to get to the department.

825  
00:50:26,420 --> 00:50:28,850  
And then he would  
send somebody down.

826  
00:50:28,850 --> 00:50:33,260  
The person then would come and,  
of course, punch in after 6:00.

827  
00:50:33,260 --> 00:50:38,990  
And there was a rule that  
every late appearance has

828  
00:50:38,990 --> 00:50:41,420  
to be reported to the Gestapo.

829  
00:50:41,420 --> 00:50:44,360  
And so that was a very  
powerful incentive

830  
00:50:44,360 --> 00:50:49,400  
to be on time even at that time,  
at which deportation hadn't

831  
00:50:49,400 --> 00:50:52,517  
started yet, because nobody  
wanted to get entangled

832  
00:50:52,517 --> 00:50:53,225  
with the Gestapo.

833  
00:50:53,225 --> 00:50:57,110

834  
00:50:57,110 --> 00:50:59,330  
Furthermore since we  
were not permitted

835  
00:50:59,330 --> 00:51:01,910  
to walk through  
the factory alone,

836  
00:51:01,910 --> 00:51:04,910  
that also meant that  
there was no way

837  
00:51:04,910 --> 00:51:08,330  
how we could walk to  
the toilets or restrooms

838  
00:51:08,330 --> 00:51:12,440  
whenever the individual  
need arose for a person.

839  
00:51:12,440 --> 00:51:15,590  
Instead twice a  
day, we were also

840  
00:51:15,590 --> 00:51:19,340  
under guard conducted  
to the toilets.

841  
00:51:19,340 --> 00:51:21,230  
One was at 9:00.

842  
00:51:21,230 --> 00:51:24,050  
And the second time after  
the lunch hour at 1:00

843  
00:51:24,050 --> 00:51:25,000  
between 1:00 and 2:00.

844  
00:51:25,000 --> 00:51:27,710

845  
00:51:27,710 --> 00:51:30,540  
That meant if  
somebody, for example,

846  
00:51:30,540 --> 00:51:33,410  
needed to go in  
between, that person

847

00:51:33,410 --> 00:51:37,640  
had to report to the foreman.

848  
00:51:37,640 --> 00:51:41,060  
And depending on  
the foreman's mood

849  
00:51:41,060 --> 00:51:43,400  
at that particular  
instance, he could either

850  
00:51:43,400 --> 00:51:46,130  
tell the person, well, you  
just have to wait, sorry,

851  
00:51:46,130 --> 00:51:48,890  
until the [INAUDIBLE].

852  
00:51:48,890 --> 00:51:53,390  
Or he could give him a  
dressing down and say,

853  
00:51:53,390 --> 00:51:57,470  
I'll detail somebody  
to take you down there.

854  
00:51:57,470 --> 00:52:02,690  
At this point, by the way, all  
the Jewish workers were men.

855  
00:52:02,690 --> 00:52:07,280  
Later on I will mention that  
we also got many Jewish women.

856  
00:52:07,280 --> 00:52:09,200  
And of course that  
was particularly

857  
00:52:09,200 --> 00:52:11,900  
humiliating in that  
case if a woman

858  
00:52:11,900 --> 00:52:14,870

had to go to that male  
foreman and tell him

859  
00:52:14,870 --> 00:52:18,170  
that she has to go to the  
restroom, and then for him

860  
00:52:18,170 --> 00:52:21,920  
possibly to sneer and  
to detail somebody

861  
00:52:21,920 --> 00:52:25,666  
to take her down  
to the ladies room.

862  
00:52:25,666 --> 00:52:29,240  
What was the actual  
work you were doing?

863  
00:52:29,240 --> 00:52:35,730  
We built a part of electromotors  
called commutators.

864  
00:52:35,730 --> 00:52:37,790  
We didn't know what  
they were used for.

865  
00:52:37,790 --> 00:52:40,670  
There was a rumor  
these were motors

866  
00:52:40,670 --> 00:52:45,230  
which were built into submarines  
for the electrical supply.

867  
00:52:45,230 --> 00:52:47,920  
But whether that was true  
or not, we didn't know.

868  
00:52:47,920 --> 00:52:51,140  
And it these commutators  
represent an essential part

869

00:52:51,140 --> 00:52:53,360  
of an electromotor.

870  
00:52:53,360 --> 00:52:55,790  
Were there any attempts,  
to your knowledge,

871  
00:52:55,790 --> 00:53:00,230  
to sabotage in subtle  
ways the production?

872  
00:53:00,230 --> 00:53:02,510  
To my knowledge, not--

873  
00:53:02,510 --> 00:53:06,740  
I gave it a brief thought  
and rejected it outright

874  
00:53:06,740 --> 00:53:08,990  
because while being  
there, of course,

875  
00:53:08,990 --> 00:53:11,420  
I also acquainted  
myself with the system.

876  
00:53:11,420 --> 00:53:15,770  
They had a very thorough  
and sophisticated quality

877  
00:53:15,770 --> 00:53:20,210  
control system,  
whereby any part that

878  
00:53:20,210 --> 00:53:24,140  
was produced before  
it left the factory

879  
00:53:24,140 --> 00:53:28,610  
went to a controller,  
somebody who checked it out

880  
00:53:28,610 --> 00:53:30,170

electrically and so on.

881

00:53:30,170 --> 00:53:35,660

That would mean anything that  
I would have done to make it

882

00:53:35,660 --> 00:53:38,540

misfunction would have been  
discovered by that person.

883

00:53:38,540 --> 00:53:41,150

So first of all, it wouldn't  
have achieved anything

884

00:53:41,150 --> 00:53:43,820

because it would have  
never gone to a place where

885

00:53:43,820 --> 00:53:45,500

it could have done damage.

886

00:53:45,500 --> 00:53:48,650

And secondly as  
far as I remember,

887

00:53:48,650 --> 00:53:50,910

they could trace who made it.

888

00:53:50,910 --> 00:53:55,370

So I would have wound  
up in some horrible way

889

00:53:55,370 --> 00:53:58,790

without even achieving  
any purpose in doing so.

890

00:53:58,790 --> 00:54:04,200

891

00:54:04,200 --> 00:54:09,390

The atmosphere, there were  
still a few German workers

892

00:54:09,390 --> 00:54:13,820  
in that Jewish department,  
actually some even women.

893

00:54:13,820 --> 00:54:16,050  
They had started to  
use women in factories,

894

00:54:16,050 --> 00:54:18,660  
which used to be also  
unheard of in Germany.

895

00:54:18,660 --> 00:54:22,950  
But simply because of the  
labor shortage after the war

896

00:54:22,950 --> 00:54:23,910  
broke out--

897

00:54:23,910 --> 00:54:27,300  
since most of the  
able-bodied males,

898

00:54:27,300 --> 00:54:31,380  
of course, served in the  
Wehrmacht, in the army.

899

00:54:31,380 --> 00:54:34,580  
And also German workers, some  
actually were quite nice,

900

00:54:34,580 --> 00:54:35,680  
I have to say.

901

00:54:35,680 --> 00:54:39,210  
And some others  
were very hostile.

902

00:54:39,210 --> 00:54:43,160  
So it varied from  
person to person.

903

00:54:43,160 --> 00:54:45,360  
Indeed as I said  
before, that happened

904  
00:54:45,360 --> 00:54:48,210  
on the 30th of April 1941.

905  
00:54:48,210 --> 00:54:53,790  
And in the summer of 1941,  
there was a rumor running around

906  
00:54:53,790 --> 00:54:55,990  
we are going to  
get Jewish women.

907  
00:54:55,990 --> 00:54:59,460  
And so obviously there  
was big excitement,

908  
00:54:59,460 --> 00:55:01,990  
notwithstanding the fact  
that for these women,

909  
00:55:01,990 --> 00:55:04,380  
probably was not so  
much of a pleasure.

910  
00:55:04,380 --> 00:55:11,370  
But at least we looked forward  
to some positive divergence.

911  
00:55:11,370 --> 00:55:13,270  
And the rumor turned  
out to be true.

912  
00:55:13,270 --> 00:55:16,020  
And so later on  
that day, I think

913  
00:55:16,020 --> 00:55:19,980  
in the afternoon, a whole  
group of girls and women--

914



00:55:19,980 --> 00:55:22,200  
led again by a  
guard, of course--

915  
00:55:22,200 --> 00:55:23,730  
came in.

916  
00:55:23,730 --> 00:55:28,830  
One of them particularly  
caught my eye immediately.

917  
00:55:28,830 --> 00:55:36,690  
She was in appearance,  
exactly what I had always

918  
00:55:36,690 --> 00:55:44,600  
looked for in a woman as far  
as appearance is concerned.

919  
00:55:44,600 --> 00:55:48,780  
So dark brown, close to  
black hair and brown eyes,

920  
00:55:48,780 --> 00:55:55,200  
curls, and looking  
in general had

921  
00:55:55,200 --> 00:56:00,350  
a very pleasant facial  
expression, and a very

922  
00:56:00,350 --> 00:56:04,500  
Semitic expression  
in her face, which

923  
00:56:04,500 --> 00:56:08,570  
I always enjoyed in a woman  
and still do, in fact.

924  
00:56:08,570 --> 00:56:12,840  
And it turned out--

925  
00:56:12,840 --> 00:56:19,740

so I concentrated my attention  
to the first few days on her.

926  
00:56:19,740 --> 00:56:23,220  
I found out that her first  
name was [? Margot. ?]

927  
00:56:23,220 --> 00:56:28,470  
And I also found out that she  
had a steady boyfriend, which

928  
00:56:28,470 --> 00:56:30,180  
didn't surprise me.

929  
00:56:30,180 --> 00:56:36,120  
So this immediately  
cooled my interest,

930  
00:56:36,120 --> 00:56:38,430  
at least for the time being.

931  
00:56:38,430 --> 00:56:43,740  
And we worked then together.

932  
00:56:43,740 --> 00:56:45,220  
We were really interspersed.

933  
00:56:45,220 --> 00:56:49,920  
There may have been a woman  
here and a male here and so on--

934  
00:56:49,920 --> 00:56:51,780  
several males, and so on.

935  
00:56:51,780 --> 00:56:56,750  
And among ourselves a real  
camaraderie developed.

936  
00:56:56,750 --> 00:57:01,350  
The chief foreman was a man.

937  
00:57:01,350 --> 00:57:02,780

His name was--  
I'll never forget--

938  
00:57:02,780 --> 00:57:10,140  
Alexander [? Ziegel. ?] And  
he was about, retrospectively

939  
00:57:10,140 --> 00:57:12,900  
guessing, in his late  
30s, I would say--

940  
00:57:12,900 --> 00:57:18,840  
possibly 40-- and  
a real roughneck,

941  
00:57:18,840 --> 00:57:24,270  
extremely nice to all females,  
who also after the war really

942  
00:57:24,270 --> 00:57:28,440  
didn't find much reason  
to complain about him--

943  
00:57:28,440 --> 00:57:32,430  
and very gruff two males.

944  
00:57:32,430 --> 00:57:38,010  
And myself, I again started  
to rub him the wrong way

945  
00:57:38,010 --> 00:57:39,480  
and me the wrong way.

946  
00:57:39,480 --> 00:57:44,310  
So I was on his list  
to bark at whenever he

947  
00:57:44,310 --> 00:57:47,580  
found a pretext for doing that.

948  
00:57:47,580 --> 00:57:53,420

949

00:57:53,420 --> 00:57:58,370

I also met there, that is  
very important, a male--

950

00:57:58,370 --> 00:58:01,280

in fact that was  
already on the first day

951

00:58:01,280 --> 00:58:06,050

that I started to work there--

952

00:58:06,050 --> 00:58:12,080

a man a few years older than  
I. His name was Hans Fabisch.

953

00:58:12,080 --> 00:58:15,240

And we became really  
extremely close friends.

954

00:58:15,240 --> 00:58:18,050

It was my first  
close friend since I

955

00:58:18,050 --> 00:58:22,390

lost the one whom I  
had in high school,

956

00:58:22,390 --> 00:58:25,430

who emigrated to England.

957

00:58:25,430 --> 00:58:29,580

And we really went  
through thick and thin.

958

00:58:29,580 --> 00:58:33,760

We became close  
personal confidants.

959

00:58:33,760 --> 00:58:42,410

We shared our recreational  
hours and did a lot together

960

00:58:42,410 --> 00:58:44,000  
and talked a lot.

961  
00:58:44,000 --> 00:58:50,240  
And he was probably one of  
two or three best friends

962  
00:58:50,240 --> 00:58:51,050  
that I ever had.

963  
00:58:51,050 --> 00:58:53,780

964  
00:58:53,780 --> 00:58:56,450  
He was, as I said, a  
few years older than I.

965  
00:58:56,450 --> 00:59:02,900  
And he had decided to study  
medicine and was already--

966  
00:59:02,900 --> 00:59:05,810  
he had all kinds of  
medical books at home

967  
00:59:05,810 --> 00:59:12,620  
and had started to  
self educate himself

968  
00:59:12,620 --> 00:59:17,600  
in anatomy and other  
similar medical subjects.

969  
00:59:17,600 --> 00:59:20,950  
Oh yeah, that reminds  
me of something else.

970  
00:59:20,950 --> 00:59:23,330  
Since we graduated  
from high school,

971  
00:59:23,330 --> 00:59:27,110  
there was really no

educational outlet for us.

972

00:59:27,110 --> 00:59:30,320

Universities, of course,  
we were prohibited

973

00:59:30,320 --> 00:59:33,980

from enrolling in or  
even attending classes.

974

00:59:33,980 --> 00:59:37,970

And there was really nothing  
else except my apprenticeship

975

00:59:37,970 --> 00:59:39,830

to become a mechanic.

976

00:59:39,830 --> 00:59:46,310

So with a group of  
other friends and also

977

00:59:46,310 --> 00:59:49,910

particularly former classmates  
from my high school graduating

978

00:59:49,910 --> 00:59:56,570

class, we developed a set  
of informal talks, which

979

00:59:56,570 --> 01:00:00,800

were held in different  
apartments of us, sort

980

01:00:00,800 --> 01:00:02,690

of moving around.

981

01:00:02,690 --> 01:00:04,340

At that time I  
didn't use that word.

982

01:00:04,340 --> 01:00:06,620

But later on it occurred  
to me it was almost

983  
01:00:06,620 --> 01:00:09,650  
like an underground university.

984  
01:00:09,650 --> 01:00:11,930  
First of all, our  
German teacher,

985  
01:00:11,930 --> 01:00:17,180  
who was actually a very  
highly educated man also

986  
01:00:17,180 --> 01:00:22,400  
in philosophy, he taught  
us a course in philosophy.

987  
01:00:22,400 --> 01:00:25,790  
And it was partly  
that he talked.

988  
01:00:25,790 --> 01:00:28,820  
And partly it was done  
already in seminar style,

989  
01:00:28,820 --> 01:00:33,230  
where he would assign  
certain topics to one of us.

990  
01:00:33,230 --> 01:00:38,508  
And that person had to  
report back at the next time

991  
01:00:38,508 --> 01:00:39,800  
and give a little talk on that.

992  
01:00:39,800 --> 01:00:43,800

993  
01:00:43,800 --> 01:00:48,870  
And this Hans Fabisch,  
whom I just mentioned,

994

01:00:48,870 --> 01:00:53,070  
he had connections to  
various medical doctors.

995  
01:00:53,070 --> 01:01:01,860  
And we got talks from  
various medical subjects

996  
01:01:01,860 --> 01:01:04,830  
of general interest and so on.

997  
01:01:04,830 --> 01:01:06,300  
And then somebody else--

998  
01:01:06,300 --> 01:01:07,740  
I forgot who that was--

999  
01:01:07,740 --> 01:01:11,340  
knew a Jewish architect.

1000  
01:01:11,340 --> 01:01:13,410  
These were all, of  
course, Jews who talked.

1001  
01:01:13,410 --> 01:01:16,440  
And they were also  
happy because they

1002  
01:01:16,440 --> 01:01:18,630  
were thrown out of  
their professions

1003  
01:01:18,630 --> 01:01:20,910  
and had nothing to do.

1004  
01:01:20,910 --> 01:01:25,080  
But particularly this  
former German teacher,

1005  
01:01:25,080 --> 01:01:29,640  
whose name incidentally was  
called [? Leibenstein ?],,



1006

01:01:29,640 --> 01:01:31,590  
the others rotated.

1007

01:01:31,590 --> 01:01:35,670  
But he consistently, week after  
week-- he never took a penny--

1008

01:01:35,670 --> 01:01:40,710  
and he taught was  
extreme enthusiasm, which

1009

01:01:40,710 --> 01:01:43,590  
was infectious even.

1010

01:01:43,590 --> 01:01:50,700  
And that was a tremendous  
intellectual outlet for us,

1011

01:01:50,700 --> 01:01:54,670  
which otherwise we had  
really no outlet for.

1012

01:01:54,670 --> 01:01:58,700

1013

01:01:58,700 --> 01:02:03,050  
Another person that I  
would like to mention

1014

01:02:03,050 --> 01:02:07,040  
is a girl who was a few  
years older than I--

1015

01:02:07,040 --> 01:02:10,400  
I think about four years.

1016

01:02:10,400 --> 01:02:14,460  
Her name was Ruth Pearl.

1017

01:02:14,460 --> 01:02:20,540  
And she was part of that circle  
that also went to classes.

1018  
01:02:20,540 --> 01:02:26,620  
And she became somewhat  
close to my friend Hans

1019  
01:02:26,620 --> 01:02:30,870  
Fabisch and myself  
and as time went on,

1020  
01:02:30,870 --> 01:02:33,020  
I think closer to myself.

1021  
01:02:33,020 --> 01:02:39,620  
And we started to  
strike up a friendship.

1022  
01:02:39,620 --> 01:02:44,330  
And we occasionally  
went to movies together

1023  
01:02:44,330 --> 01:02:48,790  
and developed that--

1024  
01:02:48,790 --> 01:02:50,310  
we came quite close.

1025  
01:02:50,310 --> 01:02:53,660  
And she was my first girlfriend.

1026  
01:02:53,660 --> 01:03:00,500  
And we shared a lot of  
both personal thoughts,

1027  
01:03:00,500 --> 01:03:05,700  
general thoughts,  
and everything--

1028  
01:03:05,700 --> 01:03:08,750  
also entertainment, and so on.

1029  
01:03:08,750 --> 01:03:14,300  
An important factor, by

the way, also was music.

1030  
01:03:14,300 --> 01:03:17,900  
All of us in that circle  
and in various other circles

1031  
01:03:17,900 --> 01:03:21,080  
were lovers of classical music.

1032  
01:03:21,080 --> 01:03:23,990  
And that went also for Ruth.

1033  
01:03:23,990 --> 01:03:28,130  
And it was in wartime  
practically impossible

1034  
01:03:28,130 --> 01:03:29,840  
to buy your records.

1035  
01:03:29,840 --> 01:03:32,690  
So people in  
private apartments--

1036  
01:03:32,690 --> 01:03:37,220  
also many non-Jews--  
started business

1037  
01:03:37,220 --> 01:03:41,100  
swapping records,  
used records, that is.

1038  
01:03:41,100 --> 01:03:45,500  
And so I enriched  
my collection by--

1039  
01:03:45,500 --> 01:03:48,140  
and by the way, not just  
swapping, but also selling.

1040  
01:03:48,140 --> 01:03:52,190  
So I bought quite a number  
of records in those days

1041

01:03:52,190 --> 01:03:55,225  
that I didn't have before.

1042

01:03:55,225 --> 01:03:56,940  
It should be  
remembered, of course,

1043

01:03:56,940 --> 01:04:02,330  
that the quality and  
the kind of phonograph

1044

01:04:02,330 --> 01:04:05,870  
was a totally different world  
from what we have today.

1045

01:04:05,870 --> 01:04:08,070  
There was obviously no Wi-Fi.

1046

01:04:08,070 --> 01:04:10,670

1047

01:04:10,670 --> 01:04:13,880  
Obviously there was  
only one speaker

1048

01:04:13,880 --> 01:04:16,250  
out of an inferior phonograph.

1049

01:04:16,250 --> 01:04:21,950  
And a phonograph was  
sometimes even hand driven

1050

01:04:21,950 --> 01:04:23,040  
by winding it up.

1051

01:04:23,040 --> 01:04:26,120  
And if it was electric,  
then it was kept illegally,

1052

01:04:26,120 --> 01:04:30,200  
by the way, because it  
should have been turned in.

1053  
01:04:30,200 --> 01:04:35,270  
But we managed to have  
house concerts also

1054  
01:04:35,270 --> 01:04:39,500  
periodically, where we  
actually made up a program.

1055  
01:04:39,500 --> 01:04:42,790  
So like for  
Philharmonic concert,

1056  
01:04:42,790 --> 01:04:47,510  
say some Beethoven symphony,  
and maybe a piano concerto

1057  
01:04:47,510 --> 01:04:52,040  
by somebody else, and  
different people would then

1058  
01:04:52,040 --> 01:04:53,700  
brings those records.

1059  
01:04:53,700 --> 01:04:57,290  
And then we would all assemble  
in somebody's living room

1060  
01:04:57,290 --> 01:05:00,770  
and listen to it just  
the way one would

1061  
01:05:00,770 --> 01:05:04,970  
have gone to a  
Philharmonic concert, which

1062  
01:05:04,970 --> 01:05:07,600  
of course was also  
forbidden for Jews to go to.

1063  
01:05:07,600 --> 01:05:19,830

1064

01:05:19,830 --> 01:05:25,170

And a drastic change in  
the situation of the Jews

1065

01:05:25,170 --> 01:05:30,660

occurred with the introduction  
of the yellow Star of David,

1066

01:05:30,660 --> 01:05:35,610

as of September 19th, 1941.

1067

01:05:35,610 --> 01:05:39,030

The law was very  
specific that every Jew,

1068

01:05:39,030 --> 01:05:42,360

as defined by the  
Nuremberg laws,

1069

01:05:42,360 --> 01:05:47,340

has to wear such a yellow  
star on his outer closing,

1070

01:05:47,340 --> 01:05:53,190

over other clothing, whenever  
the person is in public.

1071

01:05:53,190 --> 01:05:56,480

And it specified even exactly  
where it had to be worn.

1072

01:05:56,480 --> 01:05:59,120

It had to be worn on  
the left-hand side,

1073

01:05:59,120 --> 01:06:02,280

about at the level of the heart.

1074

01:06:02,280 --> 01:06:07,620

And also it couldn't be tacked  
on by pins or safety pins,

1075

01:06:07,620 --> 01:06:10,560  
but had to be firmly sewn on.

1076  
01:06:10,560 --> 01:06:12,450  
And this way they  
wanted to avoid

1077  
01:06:12,450 --> 01:06:17,580  
that people might put on a star  
and then later on take it off

1078  
01:06:17,580 --> 01:06:18,330  
again.

1079  
01:06:18,330 --> 01:06:22,980  
And the Gestapo was known to  
walk up to Jews with a star

1080  
01:06:22,980 --> 01:06:27,960  
and try with their  
fingers to get under it,

1081  
01:06:27,960 --> 01:06:31,320  
to see whether there was  
a space between the star

1082  
01:06:31,320 --> 01:06:35,280  
and the garment, to make sure  
that it was firmly sewn on.

1083  
01:06:35,280 --> 01:06:36,240  
They did this to you?

1084  
01:06:36,240 --> 01:06:37,317  
No, not to me.

1085  
01:06:37,317 --> 01:06:38,650  
But they have done it to people.

1086  
01:06:38,650 --> 01:06:41,190

1087

01:06:41,190 --> 01:06:47,280  
That made it finally  
almost impossible for Jews

1088  
01:06:47,280 --> 01:06:54,450  
to go to all the entertainments  
and cultural offerings that

1089  
01:06:54,450 --> 01:06:56,580  
were forbidden  
after Kristallnacht

1090  
01:06:56,580 --> 01:07:00,090  
three years earlier.

1091  
01:07:00,090 --> 01:07:03,740  
My friend, Hans  
Fabisch, and I devised--

1092  
01:07:03,740 --> 01:07:06,030  
it was his original idea--

1093  
01:07:06,030 --> 01:07:09,060  
a method even to  
get around that.

1094  
01:07:09,060 --> 01:07:12,270  
And it was based on  
the following, that

1095  
01:07:12,270 --> 01:07:17,250  
in those days double  
breasted suits and coats were

1096  
01:07:17,250 --> 01:07:18,480  
fashionable.

1097  
01:07:18,480 --> 01:07:25,680  
And if you buttoned it the  
men button their suit jackets,

1098  
01:07:25,680 --> 01:07:28,200  
then the left side



where the star was on

1099

01:07:28,200 --> 01:07:31,050  
was, of course, on the  
outside and visible.

1100

01:07:31,050 --> 01:07:32,640  
But if you changed  
the buttoning,

1101

01:07:32,640 --> 01:07:36,210  
and most were also  
sewn in such a way

1102

01:07:36,210 --> 01:07:38,370  
that there were button  
holes and buttons,

1103

01:07:38,370 --> 01:07:41,340  
you could button  
it either away--

1104

01:07:41,340 --> 01:07:44,430  
and the way say women's  
usually buttoned them

1105

01:07:44,430 --> 01:07:47,650  
with the right part  
over the left--

1106

01:07:47,650 --> 01:07:54,180  
then the star would be  
automatically covered up.

1107

01:07:54,180 --> 01:07:56,100  
It was important  
to have it that way

1108

01:07:56,100 --> 01:07:59,940  
because upon leaving one's  
apartment, and also walking

1109

01:07:59,940 --> 01:08:01,800

in one's own  
neighborhood, it would

1110  
01:08:01,800 --> 01:08:04,980  
have been much too dangerous  
to walk around without a star

1111  
01:08:04,980 --> 01:08:06,510  
because people know you.

1112  
01:08:06,510 --> 01:08:09,060  
And you would have been  
immediately reported

1113  
01:08:09,060 --> 01:08:10,470  
to the Gestapo.

1114  
01:08:10,470 --> 01:08:13,560  
So what we did is we  
left our neighborhood,

1115  
01:08:13,560 --> 01:08:18,090  
as good Jews with our yellow  
stars, walked many blocks--

1116  
01:08:18,090 --> 01:08:19,170  
maybe 10--

1117  
01:08:19,170 --> 01:08:22,140  
to an area where  
nobody knew us, then

1118  
01:08:22,140 --> 01:08:26,310  
ducked into an entrance of  
some apartment building,

1119  
01:08:26,310 --> 01:08:32,069  
and quickly changed the  
buttoning of our jacket or coat

1120  
01:08:32,069 --> 01:08:35,490  
and reappeared as Aryan Germans.

1121

01:08:35,490 --> 01:08:41,510

And then we could go to a movie  
or anything without detection.

1122

01:08:41,510 --> 01:08:44,680

Weren't you a little bit  
afraid of doing this?

1123

01:08:44,680 --> 01:08:45,180

No.

1124

01:08:45,180 --> 01:08:51,359

In fact, it actually  
got me excited,

1125

01:08:51,359 --> 01:08:53,560

like getting my  
adrenaline flowing,

1126

01:08:53,560 --> 01:08:55,740

that I was doing  
something like that.

1127

01:08:55,740 --> 01:09:01,020

My father, I should say,  
was horrified and forbade me

1128

01:09:01,020 --> 01:09:05,700

strictly to do that because  
not only did I endanger myself,

1129

01:09:05,700 --> 01:09:07,810

very often the Gestapo  
would then also

1130

01:09:07,810 --> 01:09:10,229

arrest the rest of the family.

1131

01:09:10,229 --> 01:09:18,479

But I just didn't want to  
listen to any advice of caution.

1132

01:09:18,479 --> 01:09:22,470  
And also, I couldn't  
stand being so cooped up.

1133  
01:09:22,470 --> 01:09:26,370  
I should make a reference  
incidentally in connection

1134  
01:09:26,370 --> 01:09:28,410  
with culture and movies.

1135  
01:09:28,410 --> 01:09:31,490  
There existed a  
Jewish [NON-ENGLISH],,

1136  
01:09:31,490 --> 01:09:34,229  
or culture society.

1137  
01:09:34,229 --> 01:09:36,870  
That actually existed  
already since long

1138  
01:09:36,870 --> 01:09:40,170  
before the Kristallnacht,  
namely since a time

1139  
01:09:40,170 --> 01:09:44,040  
when Jewish artists were  
summarily thrown out

1140  
01:09:44,040 --> 01:09:49,100  
from all German theaters and  
movie production companies, et

1141  
01:09:49,100 --> 01:09:50,040  
cetera.

1142  
01:09:50,040 --> 01:09:53,790  
And it was founded  
originally, of course,

1143  
01:09:53,790 --> 01:09:57,510  
to give Jewish musicians,

actors, et cetera,

1144  
01:09:57,510 --> 01:10:03,270  
a way of earning a  
living in their craft.

1145  
01:10:03,270 --> 01:10:06,080  
And it was always  
fairly well visited.

1146  
01:10:06,080 --> 01:10:10,170  
As I remember and in  
the summer of 1939,

1147  
01:10:10,170 --> 01:10:15,000  
I saw an excellent performance  
of a KÄlmÄn operetta--

1148  
01:10:15,000 --> 01:10:19,040  
KÄlmÄn was a Hungarian  
operetta composer--

1149  
01:10:19,040 --> 01:10:22,920  
Grafin Mariza,  
Countess Maritza, which

1150  
01:10:22,920 --> 01:10:26,920  
was staged by the Kulturbund  
very professionally.

1151  
01:10:26,920 --> 01:10:28,560  
And I enjoyed it very much.

1152  
01:10:28,560 --> 01:10:31,260  
And I've seen other things too.

1153  
01:10:31,260 --> 01:10:33,780  
And then after Jews  
were prohibited

1154  
01:10:33,780 --> 01:10:40,650  
from going to other  
general cultural events

1155  
01:10:40,650 --> 01:10:43,710  
and entertainment, et  
cetera, then of course

1156  
01:10:43,710 --> 01:10:46,830  
the Kulturbund became  
in addition to providing

1157  
01:10:46,830 --> 01:10:50,130  
an outlet for fired  
Jewish artists,

1158  
01:10:50,130 --> 01:10:53,670  
became also the only  
legal way, at least,

1159  
01:10:53,670 --> 01:10:56,070  
for the Jewish  
population at large

1160  
01:10:56,070 --> 01:11:00,990  
even to see a movie or  
a play or a symphony.

1161  
01:11:00,990 --> 01:11:03,000  
They had a very nice  
symphony orchestra,

1162  
01:11:03,000 --> 01:11:05,520  
by the way, all  
consisting of Jews.

1163  
01:11:05,520 --> 01:11:10,000

1164  
01:11:10,000 --> 01:11:15,880  
But I considered it  
simply a challenge

1165  
01:11:15,880 --> 01:11:18,520  
to do something that  
I was prohibited

1166  
01:11:18,520 --> 01:11:20,780  
from doing by the government.

1167  
01:11:20,780 --> 01:11:23,240  
And so we did that.

1168  
01:11:23,240 --> 01:11:32,240  
And my girlfriend Ruth went  
one day to a beauty parlor.

1169  
01:11:32,240 --> 01:11:35,950  
[INAUDIBLE] even beauty parlors  
were forbidden for Jews.

1170  
01:11:35,950 --> 01:11:38,650  
So of course, she didn't  
wear a Jewish star.

1171  
01:11:38,650 --> 01:11:43,930  
And along the way, she was  
stopped by a policeman.

1172  
01:11:43,930 --> 01:11:48,400  
There was a regular policeman  
in uniform and asked for her ID.

1173  
01:11:48,400 --> 01:11:52,840  
And when he saw  
that she was Jewish,

1174  
01:11:52,840 --> 01:11:56,860  
the way she told it to me  
was evidently embarrassed

1175  
01:11:56,860 --> 01:12:00,460  
and told her in  
an apologizing way

1176  
01:12:00,460 --> 01:12:04,600  
that unfortunately, he is  
forced by law to report that

1177

01:12:04,600 --> 01:12:06,220  
to the Gestapo.

1178

01:12:06,220 --> 01:12:09,950  
Any transgression by a Jew had  
to be reported to the Gestapo.

1179

01:12:09,950 --> 01:12:13,600  
And he had no way to avoid that.

1180

01:12:13,600 --> 01:12:16,660  
And so we were terribly scared.

1181

01:12:16,660 --> 01:12:19,280  
And then for weeks, we  
didn't hear anything.

1182

01:12:19,280 --> 01:12:23,260  
And so our scare  
slowly subsided.

1183

01:12:23,260 --> 01:12:27,580  
Although I told her that if  
they really get after her,

1184

01:12:27,580 --> 01:12:30,570  
that she should  
simply go underground.

1185

01:12:30,570 --> 01:12:33,850  
And then she told me  
she would definitely not

1186

01:12:33,850 --> 01:12:37,540  
do that because she has  
no way to sustain herself

1187

01:12:37,540 --> 01:12:40,720  
and doesn't know  
anyone where to go to.

1188

01:12:40,720 --> 01:12:52,790



So on one day, in fact, on  
the 9th of September, 1941--

1189  
01:12:52,790 --> 01:12:55,560  
was it the 9th of September  
or 9th of October?

1190  
01:12:55,560 --> 01:12:59,080  
It doesn't make a difference.

1191  
01:12:59,080 --> 01:13:04,870  
We always met in the morning  
on the way to the factory.

1192  
01:13:04,870 --> 01:13:07,390  
My train actually--

1193  
01:13:07,390 --> 01:13:12,640  
I had to change trains  
at a certain station

1194  
01:13:12,640 --> 01:13:16,150  
and joined another train, where  
she already was sitting in it.

1195  
01:13:16,150 --> 01:13:18,175  
She always sat in the same car.

1196  
01:13:18,175 --> 01:13:21,070  
And from there on, we  
always rode together.

1197  
01:13:21,070 --> 01:13:26,110  
And on that morning when I  
came into the railroad car

1198  
01:13:26,110 --> 01:13:28,300  
where she was sitting,  
and I took one look

1199  
01:13:28,300 --> 01:13:30,400  
and knew what had  
happened, she--

1200  
01:13:30,400 --> 01:13:33,130

1201  
01:13:33,130 --> 01:13:38,720  
her eyes were totally  
red from both probably

1202  
01:13:38,720 --> 01:13:41,410  
having cried and  
having been sleepless.

1203  
01:13:41,410 --> 01:13:48,070  
And she pulled, without saying  
a word, a letter from her pocket

1204  
01:13:48,070 --> 01:13:52,930  
book, which had  
the dreaded Geheime

1205  
01:13:52,930 --> 01:13:57,430  
Staatspolizei, the  
complete word for Gestapo,

1206  
01:13:57,430 --> 01:13:59,710  
which is just an abbreviation.

1207  
01:13:59,710 --> 01:14:05,890  
And it asked her to appear  
on that morning at 9:00

1208  
01:14:05,890 --> 01:14:08,050  
in their offices, of  
whom, such and such.

1209  
01:14:08,050 --> 01:14:11,070

1210  
01:14:11,070 --> 01:14:15,220  
That's all, just to appeal  
for an interrogation.

1211

01:14:15,220 --> 01:14:17,530  
But everybody knew  
what that meant.

1212  
01:14:17,530 --> 01:14:25,930  
And I haven't really talked  
about the deportations.

1213  
01:14:25,930 --> 01:14:29,500  
But the deportations had  
started a month earlier.

1214  
01:14:29,500 --> 01:14:34,180  
And Jews working  
in defense plants

1215  
01:14:34,180 --> 01:14:37,300  
were understood to be  
exempted from deportations.

1216  
01:14:37,300 --> 01:14:42,730  
So she had come to work  
mainly to show our foreman,

1217  
01:14:42,730 --> 01:14:47,050  
[? Alexander ?] [? Ziegler, ?]  
the summons to see what you

1218  
01:14:47,050 --> 01:14:48,460  
could do for her.

1219  
01:14:48,460 --> 01:14:53,170  
But he coldly told her  
that there was nothing

1220  
01:14:53,170 --> 01:14:56,740  
that he could do for her  
because the Gestapo does have

1221  
01:14:56,740 --> 01:15:03,110  
the complete lists of all Jews  
employed there by Siemens,

1222

01:15:03,110 --> 01:15:05,530  
and they know also  
of the agreement

1223  
01:15:05,530 --> 01:15:10,840  
that Jews working in defense  
plants are to be deferred.

1224  
01:15:10,840 --> 01:15:12,670  
However they can  
do what they want.

1225  
01:15:12,670 --> 01:15:15,260  
And there's nothing  
more that he can do.

1226  
01:15:15,260 --> 01:15:20,710  
And then we talked a little bit.

1227  
01:15:20,710 --> 01:15:26,740  
The atmosphere was so  
unbelievably stifling,

1228  
01:15:26,740 --> 01:15:34,470  
that I almost felt like  
somebody choked my throat.

1229  
01:15:34,470 --> 01:15:39,240  
And then she said goodbye to  
our mutual friend, Hans Fabisch,

1230  
01:15:39,240 --> 01:15:43,360  
and to me and just walked out.

1231  
01:15:43,360 --> 01:15:44,888  
It was the last time I saw her.

1232  
01:15:44,888 --> 01:15:53,530

1233  
01:15:53,530 --> 01:15:56,370  
Back up briefly, in  
September, just about

1234  
01:15:56,370 --> 01:16:01,830  
a month before this happened,  
the first deportation train

1235  
01:16:01,830 --> 01:16:04,040  
left for the east.

1236  
01:16:04,040 --> 01:16:12,750  
And that was characteristic  
of all transports to the east.

1237  
01:16:12,750 --> 01:16:16,470  
Nobody knew where  
these people went to.

1238  
01:16:16,470 --> 01:16:19,380  
It was just said it  
goes to the east.

1239  
01:16:19,380 --> 01:16:21,090  
Now the--

1240  
01:16:21,090 --> 01:16:26,280  
Who was deported, what kinds  
of groups or categories?

1241  
01:16:26,280 --> 01:16:29,970  
I don't think it was  
any particular category,

1242  
01:16:29,970 --> 01:16:33,270  
with the exception that those  
working in defense plants

1243  
01:16:33,270 --> 01:16:34,530  
were exempted.

1244  
01:16:34,530 --> 01:16:37,650  
But otherwise they just--

1245  
01:16:37,650 --> 01:16:43,170

I think the Jewish community  
was enlisted in putting together

1246  
01:16:43,170 --> 01:16:45,500  
lists for deport--

1247  
01:16:45,500 --> 01:16:47,000