

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,220
Interview with Ernest
Fontheim on March 12, 1997.

2
00:00:06,220 --> 00:00:07,960
The interviewer
is Randy Goldman.

3
00:00:07,960 --> 00:00:12,880
This is tape three side A.

4
00:00:12,880 --> 00:00:17,860
The deportations-- the
mechanism of the deportation

5
00:00:17,860 --> 00:00:25,390
was handled, of course, by the
Gestapo at the command level.

6
00:00:25,390 --> 00:00:30,250
But it was carried out
under orders of the Gestapo

7
00:00:30,250 --> 00:00:33,280
by the Jewish community
organizations.

8
00:00:33,280 --> 00:00:40,030
And they put together the
lists of Jews to be deported.

9
00:00:40,030 --> 00:00:44,620
Sometimes the Gestapo would
make particular demands--

10
00:00:44,620 --> 00:00:47,830
for example, at one
time the Gestapo

11
00:00:47,830 --> 00:00:57,130
was afraid that Jews who lived
along the elevated train tracks

12
00:00:57,130 --> 00:01:01,750
might give flashlight
signals to allied bombers,

13
00:01:01,750 --> 00:01:07,550
and thus directing them to bomb
the tracks, which on its face

14
00:01:07,550 --> 00:01:11,020
is ludicrous, because they
would have then also directed

15
00:01:11,020 --> 00:01:14,080
the bombs to themselves, living
right next to the tracks.

16
00:01:14,080 --> 00:01:19,510
But anyway, be that as it
may, the Gestapo ordered

17
00:01:19,510 --> 00:01:22,600
the Jewish community
to provide such a list

18
00:01:22,600 --> 00:01:25,390
and get these people on
the deportation trains.

19
00:01:25,390 --> 00:01:28,790
But in general, that
was one exception.

20
00:01:28,790 --> 00:01:31,900
The community picked the people.

21
00:01:31,900 --> 00:01:35,890
It was initially a process
where people were notified,

22
00:01:35,890 --> 00:01:39,340
sometime ahead of
time, by a letter which

23
00:01:39,340 --> 00:01:42,460
only said that
their apartment has

24
00:01:42,460 --> 00:01:47,560
been designated to be cleared.

25
00:01:47,560 --> 00:01:50,830
It was sort of as if that
was all there was to it,

26
00:01:50,830 --> 00:01:52,960
that the apartment
was to be cleared.

27
00:01:52,960 --> 00:01:55,210
But everybody knew what
it meant, of course.

28
00:01:55,210 --> 00:01:59,590
And with a set of
detailed questionnaires

29
00:01:59,590 --> 00:02:02,800
where all the assets had
to be filled in, and so on.

30
00:02:02,800 --> 00:02:06,550
And then another
questionnaire where all the

31
00:02:06,550 --> 00:02:08,229
contents of the luggage--

32
00:02:08,229 --> 00:02:11,770
there were detailed
instructions how much

33
00:02:11,770 --> 00:02:16,660
luggage in terms of size and
weight could be taken along,

34

00:02:16,660 --> 00:02:19,840
which items should
be taken along,

35

00:02:19,840 --> 00:02:21,980
and which could
not be taken along.

36

00:02:21,980 --> 00:02:24,740
Among those not to be
taken along, for example,

37

00:02:24,740 --> 00:02:32,110
were anything negotiable--
values, securities, money,

38

00:02:32,110 --> 00:02:35,980
cash, jewelry.

39

00:02:35,980 --> 00:02:40,240
And it had to be
filled out exactly

40

00:02:40,240 --> 00:02:42,940
what the contents
of the luggage was,

41

00:02:42,940 --> 00:02:45,460
that was to be taken along.

42

00:02:45,460 --> 00:02:48,190
Now, the result of
that was that there

43

00:02:48,190 --> 00:02:53,560
was a wave of suicides, many
people who were too scared

44

00:02:53,560 --> 00:02:56,920
to go through the deportations,
since nobody knew what really

45

00:02:56,920 --> 00:02:58,610
happened to these people.

46
00:02:58,610 --> 00:03:00,700
And so after a
while, the Gestapo

47
00:03:00,700 --> 00:03:03,640
discontinued that
and then went over

48
00:03:03,640 --> 00:03:07,210
to a system where people
were just being picked up

49
00:03:07,210 --> 00:03:09,730
without any prior notification.

50
00:03:09,730 --> 00:03:14,590
And anyway, they had to
be kept in a transit camp

51
00:03:14,590 --> 00:03:20,440
before being shipped out because
the cattle cars and freight

52
00:03:20,440 --> 00:03:24,670
cars that were used
for deporting Jews,

53
00:03:24,670 --> 00:03:29,410
such a train was holding
upwards of 600, 700 people,

54
00:03:29,410 --> 00:03:32,230
even up to 1,000 and 1,100.

55
00:03:32,230 --> 00:03:35,350
And it took more
than a day or two

56
00:03:35,350 --> 00:03:37,180
to pick up that many people.

57

00:03:37,180 --> 00:03:40,120

So they were housed
in a transit camp.

58

00:03:40,120 --> 00:03:41,980

At first, the transit
camp, in fact,

59

00:03:41,980 --> 00:03:48,070

was one of the synagogues
that, until the military--

60

00:03:48,070 --> 00:03:51,280

that synagogue, by the way,
had been only lightly damaged

61

00:03:51,280 --> 00:03:54,970

during Kristallnacht and had
been repaired afterwards.

62

00:03:54,970 --> 00:03:59,200

So that was first used
for a transit camp.

63

00:03:59,200 --> 00:04:02,530

And then the military
sort of made a demand

64

00:04:02,530 --> 00:04:06,510

to have that synagogue for,
I think, storage of some sort

65

00:04:06,510 --> 00:04:07,480

or other.

66

00:04:07,480 --> 00:04:11,830

And then it was
shifted to an old age

67

00:04:11,830 --> 00:04:14,230

home of the Jewish community.

68

00:04:14,230 --> 00:04:18,070

And Jews were collected there
until they had enough people

69

00:04:18,070 --> 00:04:20,290

in there to fill a transport.

70

00:04:20,290 --> 00:04:22,150

Then they were taken away.

71

00:04:22,150 --> 00:04:24,190

During this process,
were you very

72

00:04:24,190 --> 00:04:26,280

aware of what was going on?

73

00:04:26,280 --> 00:04:27,820

Yeah, at that point, yes.

74

00:04:27,820 --> 00:04:30,970

And in fact, this
group of people

75

00:04:30,970 --> 00:04:33,670

that I mentioned who
were also having various

76

00:04:33,670 --> 00:04:35,710

lectures and so
on, at that point

77

00:04:35,710 --> 00:04:43,030

we decided that we have to
somehow do something, at least

78

00:04:43,030 --> 00:04:46,210

first of all, to find
out what is happening,

79

00:04:46,210 --> 00:04:49,300

because people were

being picked up and then

80
00:04:49,300 --> 00:04:51,952
never heard from again.

81
00:04:51,952 --> 00:04:55,660
Now that in itself has a
tremendously terrorizing

82
00:04:55,660 --> 00:04:56,440
effect.

83
00:04:56,440 --> 00:04:59,260
Somebody-- your
neighbor or maybe even

84
00:04:59,260 --> 00:05:02,320
your brother or
somebody close to you

85
00:05:02,320 --> 00:05:06,130
who you still saw yesterday,
today he was gone, or she.

86
00:05:06,130 --> 00:05:11,140
And not only was
that person gone,

87
00:05:11,140 --> 00:05:14,040
but I mean, except
for the fact that you

88
00:05:14,040 --> 00:05:17,670
knew they were transported East,
otherwise you had no inkling.

89
00:05:17,670 --> 00:05:20,550
There was never a letter
or postcard coming back.

90
00:05:20,550 --> 00:05:25,950
There was never any
sign of life, even.

91
00:05:25,950 --> 00:05:29,460
So that in itself has
a terrorizing effect.

92
00:05:29,460 --> 00:05:33,980
But we were all very, very
naive about the whole process.

93
00:05:33,980 --> 00:05:38,340
We sat down and had
a big sort of session

94
00:05:38,340 --> 00:05:41,250
where we threw out
all kinds of ideas.

95
00:05:41,250 --> 00:05:46,440
Then we came away with a great
idea that whoever of the group

96
00:05:46,440 --> 00:05:51,870
is the first one to be
deported, then has to see,

97
00:05:51,870 --> 00:05:56,070
after getting to the East, to
contact maybe German soldiers

98
00:05:56,070 --> 00:06:01,170
or somebody who can get a
message back to one of us

99
00:06:01,170 --> 00:06:03,870
describing what was happening.

100
00:06:03,870 --> 00:06:07,570
In the light of how the
deportations were handled,

101
00:06:07,570 --> 00:06:09,870
it was just unbelievably naive.

102

00:06:09,870 --> 00:06:13,080

And of course, the first one of our group-- there was a girl.

103

00:06:13,080 --> 00:06:14,610

I still remember her.

104

00:06:14,610 --> 00:06:18,240

And of course, she vanished exactly like everybody else.

105

00:06:18,240 --> 00:06:20,050

And nothing was ever heard from her.

106

00:06:20,050 --> 00:06:22,890

She obviously had no chance to contact anyone.

107

00:06:22,890 --> 00:06:26,555

I mean, Jews who were deported immediately--

108

00:06:26,555 --> 00:06:28,680

of course, that was not really known at that time--

109

00:06:28,680 --> 00:06:32,310

but they were immediately put into either ghettos

110

00:06:32,310 --> 00:06:35,280

or extermination camps.

111

00:06:35,280 --> 00:06:38,730

And in the extermination camps, many were immediately

112

00:06:38,730 --> 00:06:40,170

on the spot gassed.

113

00:06:40,170 --> 00:06:42,720

And those who were
not gassed were

114
00:06:42,720 --> 00:06:46,650
kept in that camp for
hard labor and had no way

115
00:06:46,650 --> 00:06:49,830
to communicate with anybody
outside of that camp.

116
00:06:49,830 --> 00:06:53,010
That was just
totally impossible.

117
00:06:53,010 --> 00:06:54,960
And your family,
they were all fine?

118
00:06:54,960 --> 00:06:56,280
Yeah.

119
00:06:56,280 --> 00:07:02,010
Of course, again, the thing
was that my father considered

120
00:07:02,010 --> 00:07:04,980
himself lucky
originally because he

121
00:07:04,980 --> 00:07:09,060
was exempted from the forced
labor because of a doctor's

122
00:07:09,060 --> 00:07:10,110
certificate.

123
00:07:10,110 --> 00:07:13,170
But now that labor
was the only thing

124
00:07:13,170 --> 00:07:16,800
that exempted you from

deportation, that turned out

125

00:07:16,800 --> 00:07:18,450

to have been not so lucky.

126

00:07:18,450 --> 00:07:22,950

He went through several stages of such real ironies.

127

00:07:22,950 --> 00:07:24,480

Now, of course, he would not have

128

00:07:24,480 --> 00:07:26,860

been in a position, really, to do factory work.

129

00:07:26,860 --> 00:07:32,370

However, he knew one of the personalities

130

00:07:32,370 --> 00:07:36,150

at the center at the congregation offices.

131

00:07:36,150 --> 00:07:39,120

And in fact, there was a woman who

132

00:07:39,120 --> 00:07:48,070

was in charge of the sort of deportation decisions

133

00:07:48,070 --> 00:07:48,980

and so on.

134

00:07:48,980 --> 00:07:53,630

And she gave him an unpaid job there for the community.

135

00:07:53,630 --> 00:07:56,710

What he did he, never really talked about.

136
00:07:56,710 --> 00:07:59,740
And yeah, he was--

137
00:07:59,740 --> 00:08:02,950
I mean, like in all other
things, very closed mouthed.

138
00:08:02,950 --> 00:08:06,220
But I know he had some work
at the Jewish Community.

139
00:08:06,220 --> 00:08:10,450
And that may have exempted
him for some time.

140
00:08:10,450 --> 00:08:12,940
Now in April '42--

141
00:08:12,940 --> 00:08:15,980

142
00:08:15,980 --> 00:08:17,740
oh.

143
00:08:17,740 --> 00:08:20,080
I have to back up, actually.

144
00:08:20,080 --> 00:08:24,310
Now I remember I
made a mistake when

145
00:08:24,310 --> 00:08:29,320
I talked about the arrest
of my girlfriend, Ruth.

146
00:08:29,320 --> 00:08:32,289
I know that I said it
was in either September

147
00:08:32,289 --> 00:08:33,669
or October of '41.

148
00:08:33,669 --> 00:08:36,530
It was actually '42.

149
00:08:36,530 --> 00:08:40,520
In '41, the deportations
had barely started.

150
00:08:40,520 --> 00:08:44,810
And it wasn't in October
of '42 or September

151
00:08:44,810 --> 00:08:47,600
then, I don't know, that
her arrest took place.

152
00:08:47,600 --> 00:08:51,200
OK, coming back, my
parents were actually

153
00:08:51,200 --> 00:08:55,240
arrested in April of '42.

154
00:08:55,240 --> 00:08:58,505
And by the Gestapo.

155
00:08:58,505 --> 00:08:59,005
And--

156
00:08:59,005 --> 00:09:03,280
Now, I want to interrupt you a
second, because on your notes

157
00:09:03,280 --> 00:09:08,528
I see that you said they were
imprisoned in December '42.

158
00:09:08,528 --> 00:09:09,820
Yeah, well, I'm coming to that.

159
00:09:09,820 --> 00:09:10,450
Oh, I'm sorry.

160
00:09:10,450 --> 00:09:13,240
Excuse me.

161
00:09:13,240 --> 00:09:16,390
And they were taken to
the collection point,

162
00:09:16,390 --> 00:09:19,150
to that synagogue
that I referred to.

163
00:09:19,150 --> 00:09:27,010
But the Gestapo officers who
arrested them said-- oh, yeah.

164
00:09:27,010 --> 00:09:30,070
What happened was
that my father had

165
00:09:30,070 --> 00:09:32,470
agreed with his
personal physician

166
00:09:32,470 --> 00:09:37,210
that he would either
commit suicide or take

167
00:09:37,210 --> 00:09:42,160
some strong sedative which
would totally knock him out.

168
00:09:42,160 --> 00:09:45,430
And the physician prescribed
to him something called

169
00:09:45,430 --> 00:09:47,530
[?Veronal?].

170
00:09:47,530 --> 00:09:50,900
I don't think it exists, at
least not under this name.

171

00:09:50,900 --> 00:09:53,080

So I don't know what
it would be here.

172

00:09:53,080 --> 00:09:58,850

But he immediately took that
and was sort of like in a coma.

173

00:09:58,850 --> 00:10:04,090

And so he was [INAUDIBLE],, and
they couldn't take him along.

174

00:10:04,090 --> 00:10:08,080

So they put in a phone call.

175

00:10:08,080 --> 00:10:11,820

And I had the Jewish
hospital pick him up.

176

00:10:11,820 --> 00:10:17,470

And then my mother
and sister were taken.

177

00:10:17,470 --> 00:10:21,220

And they told me to come along
because they said it's likely

178

00:10:21,220 --> 00:10:25,780

that if the father is not
capable of being transported

179

00:10:25,780 --> 00:10:31,920

that my mother and sister
would be sent home again.

180

00:10:31,920 --> 00:10:37,650

So that is also one of
the sort of weird examples

181

00:10:37,650 --> 00:10:42,210

where occasionally
they add something

182

00:10:42,210 --> 00:10:45,420

that might almost sound
like humane in all

183

00:10:45,420 --> 00:10:48,270

this murderous brutality.

184

00:10:48,270 --> 00:10:55,320

At any rate, I spent several
hours in that transit camp.

185

00:10:55,320 --> 00:10:57,665

And it was a
horrible sight, also.

186

00:10:57,665 --> 00:11:00,330

And the Jews there--
it was a synagogue.

187

00:11:00,330 --> 00:11:05,160

And the people who
were to be sort of

188

00:11:05,160 --> 00:11:09,480

awaited their deportation,
they were all at the balcony.

189

00:11:09,480 --> 00:11:12,270

I mean, European
synagogues at that time--

190

00:11:12,270 --> 00:11:16,230

and I think still today, in
fact-- separate the sexes.

191

00:11:16,230 --> 00:11:20,520

The men pray downstairs
and women in the balcony.

192

00:11:20,520 --> 00:11:24,720

And so they had all of
the people for deportation

193

00:11:24,720 --> 00:11:25,800
in the balcony.

194

00:11:25,800 --> 00:11:29,970
And you could see sort
of people up wandering

195

00:11:29,970 --> 00:11:34,980
around absent-mindedly
and so on and in a daze.

196

00:11:34,980 --> 00:11:38,850
And then on the
ground floor, which

197

00:11:38,850 --> 00:11:42,180
was the area where
men used to pray,

198

00:11:42,180 --> 00:11:43,590
that's where the Gestapo--

199

00:11:43,590 --> 00:11:46,170
they had their offices and
they would periodically

200

00:11:46,170 --> 00:11:49,140
call somebody down
fill out forms

201

00:11:49,140 --> 00:11:51,750
and for interrogation and so on.

202

00:11:51,750 --> 00:11:56,130
So anyway, after several
hours, my mother and sister

203

00:11:56,130 --> 00:11:58,750
were told they
could go home again.

204

00:11:58,750 --> 00:12:01,110

And so that's what we did.

205

00:12:01,110 --> 00:12:04,890

And they handed our luggage
back, their luggage,

206

00:12:04,890 --> 00:12:08,500

and then we went back.

207

00:12:08,500 --> 00:12:11,080

Did you think that when
you were in that synagogue

208

00:12:11,080 --> 00:12:15,610

that you might all be leaving
and that it was just a ruse?

209

00:12:15,610 --> 00:12:16,890

No, I didn't.

210

00:12:16,890 --> 00:12:17,900

That you weren't--

211

00:12:17,900 --> 00:12:18,940

No.

212

00:12:18,940 --> 00:12:21,790

I didn't [INAUDIBLE].

213

00:12:21,790 --> 00:12:24,958

But maybe that was just
my habitual optimism.

214

00:12:24,958 --> 00:12:25,500

I don't know.

215

00:12:25,500 --> 00:12:28,580

216

00:12:28,580 --> 00:12:31,610

As time went on,
the situation became

217
00:12:31,610 --> 00:12:33,950
more and more unbearable.

218
00:12:33,950 --> 00:12:39,980
I remember one co-worker in
the factory from the Jews,

219
00:12:39,980 --> 00:12:41,960
he was probably about
five years older

220
00:12:41,960 --> 00:12:50,840
than I. He appeared one morning
with a totally lost expression.

221
00:12:50,840 --> 00:12:54,080
The night before, when
he came home from work,

222
00:12:54,080 --> 00:12:55,940
he found the apartment empty.

223
00:12:55,940 --> 00:12:59,840
He had a wife and a
little baby girl, I think.

224
00:12:59,840 --> 00:13:01,250
And they were gone.

225
00:13:01,250 --> 00:13:04,390
I mean, he couldn't even
say goodbye to them.

226
00:13:04,390 --> 00:13:06,970

227
00:13:06,970 --> 00:13:07,600
They were gone.

228
00:13:07,600 --> 00:13:09,460
And he was supposed

to continue working.

229

00:13:09,460 --> 00:13:12,030

230

00:13:12,030 --> 00:13:15,270

And there were many
similar horror stories.

231

00:13:15,270 --> 00:13:18,900

And they were constantly,
of course, circulated.

232

00:13:18,900 --> 00:13:21,990

And in fact, since Jews were
also no longer permitted

233

00:13:21,990 --> 00:13:26,010

to buy newspapers, by the way--
and as we discussed before,

234

00:13:26,010 --> 00:13:29,850

also had to turn
on their radios.

235

00:13:29,850 --> 00:13:35,850

So there was a new way to
sort of spread the news.

236

00:13:35,850 --> 00:13:39,840

And that was called sort of
radio by mouth or mouth radio.

237

00:13:39,840 --> 00:13:44,680

238

00:13:44,680 --> 00:13:48,880

And I mean, the
psychological situation

239

00:13:48,880 --> 00:13:51,040

became just unbearable.

240

00:13:51,040 --> 00:13:58,630

It was sort of a combination
of fear of the worst to come

241

00:13:58,630 --> 00:14:05,080

and being trapped into something
where one has no control

242

00:14:05,080 --> 00:14:09,220

and mixed with a desire
to do something about it.

243

00:14:09,220 --> 00:14:12,370

I mean, many of my friends--
also my friend Hans and I

244

00:14:12,370 --> 00:14:13,670

and so on--

245

00:14:13,670 --> 00:14:15,460

we talked about
going underground.

246

00:14:15,460 --> 00:14:17,860

But to go underground,
that means going

247

00:14:17,860 --> 00:14:21,610

into hiding with forged papers.

248

00:14:21,610 --> 00:14:24,310

Seemed like such an
enormous undertaking.

249

00:14:24,310 --> 00:14:27,400

I mean, first of all,
to get forged IDs,

250

00:14:27,400 --> 00:14:29,110

it would cost a lot of money.

251

00:14:29,110 --> 00:14:33,430

And then food would have to be procured on the black market.

252

00:14:33,430 --> 00:14:38,350

And of course, none of us had any money to speak of.

253

00:14:38,350 --> 00:14:41,470

So it was mainly a lot of talk.

254

00:14:41,470 --> 00:14:45,280

And now some people-- mainly those who were politically

255

00:14:45,280 --> 00:14:46,480

engaged--

256

00:14:46,480 --> 00:14:53,740

they were able to go underground and be protected by politically

257

00:14:53,740 --> 00:14:54,640

like-minded people.

258

00:14:54,640 --> 00:14:59,110

That was true especially of communists.

259

00:14:59,110 --> 00:15:02,020

Yeah, and talking about communists,

260

00:15:02,020 --> 00:15:06,820

there was a Jewish communist cell actually centered

261

00:15:06,820 --> 00:15:11,170

in one of the other Jewish departments at Siemens

262

00:15:11,170 --> 00:15:18,280

and headed by a man named Herbert Baum and his wife,

263
00:15:18,280 --> 00:15:21,006
and Marianne Baum--

264
00:15:21,006 --> 00:15:28,540
B-A-U-M. And they had been
apparently an underground cell

265
00:15:28,540 --> 00:15:34,630
for years only of Jews and
basically just meeting and sort

266
00:15:34,630 --> 00:15:39,010
of like holding seminars
about Marxism and the dangers

267
00:15:39,010 --> 00:15:42,010
of capitalism and
fascism and so on.

268
00:15:42,010 --> 00:15:44,620
And then at some
point they decided

269
00:15:44,620 --> 00:15:47,410
that wasn't really
enough and something

270
00:15:47,410 --> 00:15:51,490
had to be done really to
fight back against the Nazis.

271
00:15:51,490 --> 00:15:55,060
And it was also sort
of in the summer,

272
00:15:55,060 --> 00:15:59,380
I think, of 1942, in
the center of Berlin.

273
00:15:59,380 --> 00:16:04,150
The Nazis staged a vast
exhibit under the name

274
00:16:04,150 --> 00:16:06,130
"the Soviet paradise."

275
00:16:06,130 --> 00:16:10,180
And of course, they
meant it sarcastically.

276
00:16:10,180 --> 00:16:14,920
And the exhibit was
devoted to materials

277
00:16:14,920 --> 00:16:20,890
which they had uncovered in
their process of conquering

278
00:16:20,890 --> 00:16:24,160
large parts of the
Western Soviet Union.

279
00:16:24,160 --> 00:16:27,160
And much of it may
have been true.

280
00:16:27,160 --> 00:16:30,040
Much of it was lies, whatever.

281
00:16:30,040 --> 00:16:32,980
Then the exhibit apparently
was quite successful.

282
00:16:32,980 --> 00:16:34,580
There were songs visiting it.

283
00:16:34,580 --> 00:16:36,910
So they decided to burn it down.

284
00:16:36,910 --> 00:16:39,490
But of course, they were
not experts at anything.

285
00:16:39,490 --> 00:16:45,500

I mean, they were not experts in sabotage and technical things,

286
00:16:45,500 --> 00:16:46,160
and so on.

287
00:16:46,160 --> 00:16:47,350
So it was a big tragedy.

288
00:16:47,350 --> 00:16:53,530
They succeeded in putting in a small fire.

289
00:16:53,530 --> 00:16:58,060
So the damage was so minimal that the Germans even could

290
00:16:58,060 --> 00:16:59,500
keep it out of the newspapers.

291
00:16:59,500 --> 00:17:01,000
There had been a major fire.

292
00:17:01,000 --> 00:17:03,940
They would have had no choice but to at least report it.

293
00:17:03,940 --> 00:17:06,310
But it wasn't even reported in the press.

294
00:17:06,310 --> 00:17:09,910
And not only that, but immediately they

295
00:17:09,910 --> 00:17:10,960
didn't catch anybody.

296
00:17:10,960 --> 00:17:17,260
They thought of-- they scattered certain delayed incendiaries,

297

00:17:17,260 --> 00:17:21,310
which you put somewhere and
then it takes five minutes or so

298
00:17:21,310 --> 00:17:23,380
for the flame to break out.

299
00:17:23,380 --> 00:17:25,180
So they were gone by the time--

300
00:17:25,180 --> 00:17:26,740
so nobody was caught.

301
00:17:26,740 --> 00:17:30,370
But the Gestapo had
apparently a network

302
00:17:30,370 --> 00:17:36,340
of undercover agents also in the
underground communist movement.

303
00:17:36,340 --> 00:17:38,300
Anyway, the details
I don't know.

304
00:17:38,300 --> 00:17:42,070
The fact is that they
got on their trail.

305
00:17:42,070 --> 00:17:45,230
They were arrested, all of them.

306
00:17:45,230 --> 00:17:47,710
And the first thing
that the Gestapo did

307
00:17:47,710 --> 00:17:52,360
is to tell the Jewish
community that they want

308
00:17:52,360 --> 00:17:55,780
500 Jewish men immediately.

309

00:17:55,780 --> 00:17:58,880

250 of them will be
shot on the spot.

310

00:17:58,880 --> 00:18:02,950

And another 250 will
be immediately deported

311

00:18:02,950 --> 00:18:04,690

to concentration camps.

312

00:18:04,690 --> 00:18:10,360

And if any sabotage where Jews
are involved happens again,

313

00:18:10,360 --> 00:18:14,230

they will take 10
times as many people.

314

00:18:14,230 --> 00:18:16,450

And that was all
that immediately

315

00:18:16,450 --> 00:18:19,780

spread through this
mouth radio, of course.

316

00:18:19,780 --> 00:18:23,350

And I knew some of the people
involved, incidentally,

317

00:18:23,350 --> 00:18:25,420

because it was
centered at Siemens,

318

00:18:25,420 --> 00:18:28,450

the bombs were at Siemens.

319

00:18:28,450 --> 00:18:35,260

And so that contributed to
the demoralizing effect.

320

00:18:35,260 --> 00:18:39,910
As a sideline, I want to say
that they became great heroes

321
00:18:39,910 --> 00:18:44,370
in the now defunct German
Democratic Republic, formerly

322
00:18:44,370 --> 00:18:45,540
East Germany.

323
00:18:45,540 --> 00:18:49,590
And there was a street
named after them.

324
00:18:49,590 --> 00:18:54,310
And books were
written, and so on.

325
00:18:54,310 --> 00:18:56,910
But of course,
they are all dead.

326
00:18:56,910 --> 00:18:59,730
Actually, one of the
members of the group

327
00:18:59,730 --> 00:19:04,110
was a girl who graduated with
me from that high school.

328
00:19:04,110 --> 00:19:05,770
She was in my class.

329
00:19:05,770 --> 00:19:09,210
And in fact, I remember that
after graduation, I once

330
00:19:09,210 --> 00:19:10,150
had a long discussion.

331
00:19:10,150 --> 00:19:12,270
She was then

already a communist.

332
00:19:12,270 --> 00:19:15,240
And she tried to convert me.

333
00:19:15,240 --> 00:19:19,590
All I remember is that we had
a very lively, hard-hitting

334
00:19:19,590 --> 00:19:20,460
discussion.

335
00:19:20,460 --> 00:19:24,300
And I didn't convince her
and she didn't convince me.

336
00:19:24,300 --> 00:19:27,960
But it never occurred to me
that she would belong to them.

337
00:19:27,960 --> 00:19:29,970
If she would have
convinced me, who knows.

338
00:19:29,970 --> 00:19:33,630
Maybe I would have been
in that group, also.

339
00:19:33,630 --> 00:19:39,720
Anyway, yeah, they were all
tried by the so-called People's

340
00:19:39,720 --> 00:19:40,380
Court.

341
00:19:40,380 --> 00:19:46,020
That's the same court that also
convicted those plotters who

342
00:19:46,020 --> 00:19:50,850
tried to assassinate Hitler
two years later, in July '44.

343

00:19:50,850 --> 00:19:53,730

And of course, most
of them were executed.

344

00:19:53,730 --> 00:19:56,280

A few got some jail sentences.

345

00:19:56,280 --> 00:19:56,780

Right.

346

00:19:56,780 --> 00:20:00,660

347

00:20:00,660 --> 00:20:02,490

This is basically
the atmosphere.

348

00:20:02,490 --> 00:20:06,300

Now also, I mean, I
should say about Siemens,

349

00:20:06,300 --> 00:20:08,310

coming back to that.

350

00:20:08,310 --> 00:20:11,880

I said already that we
got no worker food ration

351

00:20:11,880 --> 00:20:15,330

stamps, and even less
than the general consumer.

352

00:20:15,330 --> 00:20:19,350

We got paid less than the German
workers who did similar work.

353

00:20:19,350 --> 00:20:23,260

And I said we couldn't
go to the toilets.

354

00:20:23,260 --> 00:20:27,390

And also, we couldn't

use their cafeteria.

355

00:20:27,390 --> 00:20:29,895

We had to bring our own
lunch and sort of eat it

356

00:20:29,895 --> 00:20:32,280

at our work desk.

357

00:20:32,280 --> 00:20:36,960

And of course, we had no
right to vacation time.

358

00:20:36,960 --> 00:20:40,680

But my friend Hans Fabisch,
whom I mentioned earlier,

359

00:20:40,680 --> 00:20:43,680

who was training to
become a physician,

360

00:20:43,680 --> 00:20:50,220

he sort of advised me on
certain back symptoms,

361

00:20:50,220 --> 00:20:52,230

which cannot be
traced by a doctor,

362

00:20:52,230 --> 00:20:55,860

which are purely subjective, but
make you incapable of working.

363

00:20:55,860 --> 00:20:58,590

And it has to hurt
at a certain point.

364

00:20:58,590 --> 00:21:00,420

And when the doctor
pushes this way,

365

00:21:00,420 --> 00:21:03,480

it hurts more, and

that way it works less.

366
00:21:03,480 --> 00:21:06,540
And so I feigned that.

367
00:21:06,540 --> 00:21:12,300
And so I received an
official sort of a statement.

368
00:21:12,300 --> 00:21:14,130
As a Jew, one couldn't
just call in--

369
00:21:14,130 --> 00:21:15,150
I'm sick today.

370
00:21:15,150 --> 00:21:19,830
You had to have a physician
certified a written statement

371
00:21:19,830 --> 00:21:25,950
that Ernest Fontheim has blah,
blah, such and such a sickness

372
00:21:25,950 --> 00:21:30,130
or disease, and is not
capable to come to work.

373
00:21:30,130 --> 00:21:34,320
So anyway, I got that
following his instructions.

374
00:21:34,320 --> 00:21:37,530
That was in the latter
part of December.

375
00:21:37,530 --> 00:21:41,400
So on December 24,
then I was at home.

376
00:21:41,400 --> 00:21:42,840
I wanted to come back.

377

00:21:42,840 --> 00:21:49,050
I said earlier in this
interview that Christmas played

378

00:21:49,050 --> 00:21:51,210
a special role in our family.

379

00:21:51,210 --> 00:21:54,930
And I meant that in many ways.

380

00:21:54,930 --> 00:21:57,960
It played a role as I
grew up because we always

381

00:21:57,960 --> 00:22:01,050
had a Christmas tree.

382

00:22:01,050 --> 00:22:04,140
And Santa Claus came
and we had gifts.

383

00:22:04,140 --> 00:22:07,830
Well, on the 24th
of December, 1942,

384

00:22:07,830 --> 00:22:10,830
my parents were
arrested and my sister.

385

00:22:10,830 --> 00:22:14,280
And it happened this way.

386

00:22:14,280 --> 00:22:20,940
I was actually-- that was when
I was on that fake sick leave.

387

00:22:20,940 --> 00:22:23,370
And I had left the
apartment to make a phone

388

00:22:23,370 --> 00:22:25,140
call for a public phone.

389
00:22:25,140 --> 00:22:26,610
I said, we don't have phone.

390
00:22:26,610 --> 00:22:29,250
Public phones were also
prohibited to Jews.

391
00:22:29,250 --> 00:22:32,760
But by walking a few
blocks and hiding my star,

392
00:22:32,760 --> 00:22:34,830
I could then go into a booth.

393
00:22:34,830 --> 00:22:41,160
And I was making a call to
the parents of Margot, whom

394
00:22:41,160 --> 00:22:43,080
I had met some time earlier.

395
00:22:43,080 --> 00:22:47,850
And they had a
phone because they

396
00:22:47,850 --> 00:22:50,550
were subletting
an apartment that

397
00:22:50,550 --> 00:22:53,490
was in the name of a
Hungarian Jewish woman.

398
00:22:53,490 --> 00:22:58,230
And since she was
not a German citizen,

399
00:22:58,230 --> 00:23:00,730
these anti-Semitic laws
did not apply to her,

400

00:23:00,730 --> 00:23:04,170
even though she was a Jew.

401
00:23:04,170 --> 00:23:06,150
So anyway, so they
had that phone.

402
00:23:06,150 --> 00:23:07,440
And I called them up.

403
00:23:07,440 --> 00:23:08,790
I don't even know why anymore.

404
00:23:08,790 --> 00:23:10,120
Doesn't make a difference.

405
00:23:10,120 --> 00:23:13,710
But when I went
back, we lived now

406
00:23:13,710 --> 00:23:16,750
in that apartment with
these relatives of ours

407
00:23:16,750 --> 00:23:20,190
that I described earlier, which
was a second floor apartment.

408
00:23:20,190 --> 00:23:22,140
And as I approached
the apartment,

409
00:23:22,140 --> 00:23:26,130
I noticed my sister, Eva,
leaning out the window

410
00:23:26,130 --> 00:23:29,460
and waving me away.

411
00:23:29,460 --> 00:23:32,190
And I knew immediately--
in those days,

412

00:23:32,190 --> 00:23:36,280

you knew always what was
happening on a signal.

413

00:23:36,280 --> 00:23:40,350

And so I walked away.

414

00:23:40,350 --> 00:23:44,570

I knew that the people were
there to pick my family up.

415

00:23:44,570 --> 00:23:49,460

So I walked just maybe
50 yards or so back so

416

00:23:49,460 --> 00:23:52,700

that I was still in view and
watched what was going on.

417

00:23:52,700 --> 00:23:55,790

And then after a
while, the janitor--

418

00:23:55,790 --> 00:23:59,450

the janitor actually
happened to be also a Jew,

419

00:23:59,450 --> 00:24:03,110

but lived in a mixed marriage
and was protected, therefore,

420

00:24:03,110 --> 00:24:07,400

by the Nazi laws.

421

00:24:07,400 --> 00:24:12,080

And he came and said,
I should come up.

422

00:24:12,080 --> 00:24:15,260

The people who came
for the pick up

423

00:24:15,260 --> 00:24:17,480
were actually Jewish orderlies.

424
00:24:17,480 --> 00:24:19,880
And they go strictly by lists.

425
00:24:19,880 --> 00:24:21,470
My name-- that
was just the names

426
00:24:21,470 --> 00:24:24,290
of my both parents
and my sister.

427
00:24:24,290 --> 00:24:29,450
So I went up and there was
a total frenzy at home,

428
00:24:29,450 --> 00:24:29,990
of course.

429
00:24:29,990 --> 00:24:33,230
And my father was again out.

430
00:24:33,230 --> 00:24:35,090
He had done the same thing.

431
00:24:35,090 --> 00:24:37,790
And one of the
orderlies had already

432
00:24:37,790 --> 00:24:42,980
gone down to call the Gestapo to
say that he was not-- could not

433
00:24:42,980 --> 00:24:45,080
be transported.

434
00:24:45,080 --> 00:24:48,350
And he came back
after 10, 15 minutes

435

00:24:48,350 --> 00:24:51,590
saying he was told
that my father has

436
00:24:51,590 --> 00:24:55,490
to be brought under
whatever circumstances,

437
00:24:55,490 --> 00:24:59,660
even if they have to carry him
down the stairs in a chair.

438
00:24:59,660 --> 00:25:06,920
And then my parents were
frantically packing.

439
00:25:06,920 --> 00:25:09,770
I mean, most people had already
have most of the things packed,

440
00:25:09,770 --> 00:25:10,490
and so did they.

441
00:25:10,490 --> 00:25:12,380
But there's some
last minute things.

442
00:25:12,380 --> 00:25:16,620

443
00:25:16,620 --> 00:25:19,740
My father was not
completely out of a coma

444
00:25:19,740 --> 00:25:24,870
but in a very weakened state.

445
00:25:24,870 --> 00:25:30,240
And he took my hands
and said, we will never

446
00:25:30,240 --> 00:25:31,980
see each other again.

447
00:25:31,980 --> 00:25:37,530
And then my sister
suddenly, out of the blue,

448
00:25:37,530 --> 00:25:40,890
threw her arms around
my neck and had

449
00:25:40,890 --> 00:25:45,480
an incredible crying spell.

450
00:25:45,480 --> 00:25:48,030
Her whole body shook.

451
00:25:48,030 --> 00:25:50,790
And I kept her close.

452
00:25:50,790 --> 00:26:01,930
And I frequently
thought to myself,

453
00:26:01,930 --> 00:26:07,760
why I simply did not take
her and walk out with her?

454
00:26:07,760 --> 00:26:13,100
That is a question which I
have asked myself ever since.

455
00:26:13,100 --> 00:26:18,330

456
00:26:18,330 --> 00:26:24,120
Then when the
preparations were done,

457
00:26:24,120 --> 00:26:27,360
my father was actually
really carried down the steps

458
00:26:27,360 --> 00:26:28,800

in a chair.

459
00:26:28,800 --> 00:26:35,490
And the picking up
of Jews was done

460
00:26:35,490 --> 00:26:41,250
by a moving van from a
company that I never forget.

461
00:26:41,250 --> 00:26:45,840
The name was [? Sheffler. ?]
Of course, the Gestapo,

462
00:26:45,840 --> 00:26:48,660
they don't release those vans.

463
00:26:48,660 --> 00:26:52,110
And inside the vans,
they had long benches

464
00:26:52,110 --> 00:26:57,240
where the Jews were picked
up, were sort of lined up.

465
00:26:57,240 --> 00:26:59,220
And then sitting
until it was full

466
00:26:59,220 --> 00:27:03,630
and then the van would
go to the transit camp.

467
00:27:03,630 --> 00:27:05,520
By that time, the
transit camp had

468
00:27:05,520 --> 00:27:08,520
shifted from the
synagogue where it

469
00:27:08,520 --> 00:27:12,000
used to be still and

able to a former old age

470

00:27:12,000 --> 00:27:16,000
home of the Jewish community.

471

00:27:16,000 --> 00:27:18,750
And your sister, your
mother, and father?

472

00:27:18,750 --> 00:27:19,440
Yeah.

473

00:27:19,440 --> 00:27:24,390
And actually I
decided to ride along

474

00:27:24,390 --> 00:27:28,770
in that van for some
blocks to be together

475

00:27:28,770 --> 00:27:30,300
with them some more.

476

00:27:30,300 --> 00:27:38,700
And then, at the
corner of [GERMAN],,

477

00:27:38,700 --> 00:27:43,050
I said goodbye and
jumped out of the back.

478

00:27:43,050 --> 00:27:50,870
And that was the last time I
saw my parents and my sister

479

00:27:50,870 --> 00:27:57,920
on December 24, 1942.

480

00:27:57,920 --> 00:28:00,410
Christmas Eve.

481

00:28:00,410 --> 00:28:04,400

And the next day,
our doorbell rang.

482
00:28:04,400 --> 00:28:07,640

And when I opened, I
was surprised to see

483
00:28:07,640 --> 00:28:13,250

my former mathematics
teacher, Dr. [? Behr ?]

484
00:28:13,250 --> 00:28:16,040

from the Jewish school.

485
00:28:16,040 --> 00:28:20,270

He told me that he was serving
as an orderly in the transit

486
00:28:20,270 --> 00:28:24,860

camp and had a
message for my mother.

487
00:28:24,860 --> 00:28:27,440

And he added that it
was strictly forbidden

488
00:28:27,440 --> 00:28:33,320

for orderlies to make any
communication between people

489
00:28:33,320 --> 00:28:35,900

in the transit camp
and people outside.

490
00:28:35,900 --> 00:28:40,100

But since I had been a student
for quite a number of years

491
00:28:40,100 --> 00:28:44,540

that he knew me already
as a smaller boy,

492
00:28:44,540 --> 00:28:49,580

he did it out of a
gesture of friendship.

493
00:28:49,580 --> 00:28:53,450
He told me, first of all,
that my mother had forgotten

494
00:28:53,450 --> 00:28:57,410
certain things that
he offered to bring in

495
00:28:57,410 --> 00:29:01,400
and they would also
be glad if I could

496
00:29:01,400 --> 00:29:04,070
pack some additional food.

497
00:29:04,070 --> 00:29:07,940
And then he added that
my mother also told him

498
00:29:07,940 --> 00:29:12,260
that she was interrogated
the day they arrived there

499
00:29:12,260 --> 00:29:13,850
by the Gestapo.

500
00:29:13,850 --> 00:29:17,420
And the Gestapo showed
particular interest in me.

501
00:29:17,420 --> 00:29:20,360
They wanted to know
what hours I work,

502
00:29:20,360 --> 00:29:23,720
when I come home
from work, et cetera.

503
00:29:23,720 --> 00:29:29,270
And I knew immediately

that that was a message.

504
00:29:29,270 --> 00:29:31,940

505
00:29:31,940 --> 00:29:40,580
And obviously the message
was never to go back.

506
00:29:40,580 --> 00:29:46,710

507
00:29:46,710 --> 00:29:50,520
So that's what I did.

508
00:29:50,520 --> 00:29:54,100
At that point, I had
no place to stay.

509
00:29:54,100 --> 00:30:02,760
But as I just mentioned earlier,
the parents of my co-worker

510
00:30:02,760 --> 00:30:07,950
Margot, whom I had been
interested in first, live--

511
00:30:07,950 --> 00:30:10,710
sublet an apartment
that was actually

512
00:30:10,710 --> 00:30:14,760
registered in the name of
a Hungarian Jewish woman,

513
00:30:14,760 --> 00:30:17,700
and therefore was not
on the Gestapo list.

514
00:30:17,700 --> 00:30:23,430
And they had a small sort
of a maid's room inside

515

00:30:23,430 --> 00:30:25,590

of the apartment that
belonged to it which

516

00:30:25,590 --> 00:30:27,790

they used for storage.

517

00:30:27,790 --> 00:30:31,500

But they said I could stay
there and sleep there, also.

518

00:30:31,500 --> 00:30:34,710

So that's what I did.

519

00:30:34,710 --> 00:30:40,120

On New Year's Eve,
December 31, first of all,

520

00:30:40,120 --> 00:30:44,340

I knew at that time that no
transport had left Berlin.

521

00:30:44,340 --> 00:30:47,100

So I knew that my
parents were still there.

522

00:30:47,100 --> 00:30:51,900

And I was there with
Margot and her parents

523

00:30:51,900 --> 00:30:57,190

and also with a
friend of theirs.

524

00:30:57,190 --> 00:31:00,220

I forgot his name.

525

00:31:00,220 --> 00:31:03,930

He was sort of an
elderly man, about 60--

526

00:31:03,930 --> 00:31:05,940

in his 60s.

527

00:31:05,940 --> 00:31:10,350

And his entire family
had been arrested.

528

00:31:10,350 --> 00:31:14,580

But he had some
contact to the Gestapo

529

00:31:14,580 --> 00:31:17,880

and was negotiating
with them to bribe

530

00:31:17,880 --> 00:31:21,570

them to get his family out.

531

00:31:21,570 --> 00:31:28,380

And he was supposed to meet his
Gestapo contact the next day.

532

00:31:28,380 --> 00:31:32,310

But he also knew the Gestapo
had power to do anything.

533

00:31:32,310 --> 00:31:36,240

They could just take whatever
he had to offer, arrest him,

534

00:31:36,240 --> 00:31:40,200

too, and laugh in his face.

535

00:31:40,200 --> 00:31:45,990

And that New Year's Eve was the
most horrible New Year's Eve

536

00:31:45,990 --> 00:31:48,780

that I ever had in my life.

537

00:31:48,780 --> 00:31:52,980

My parents and sister
were in the transit camp.

538

00:31:52,980 --> 00:31:55,620

My girlfriend, Ruth,
was already long gone.

539

00:31:55,620 --> 00:31:58,590

540

00:31:58,590 --> 00:32:02,760

And I didn't know what
would become of me.

541

00:32:02,760 --> 00:32:08,070

And that man was there
with this horror story.

542

00:32:08,070 --> 00:32:12,198

The atmosphere was so
unbelievably gloomy.

543

00:32:12,198 --> 00:32:13,490

And it's even hard to describe.

544

00:32:13,490 --> 00:32:17,130

545

00:32:17,130 --> 00:32:23,190

I kept in touch with my friend,
Hans Fabisch, of course.

546

00:32:23,190 --> 00:32:28,710

And he actually had met a
physician, a Jewish physician,

547

00:32:28,710 --> 00:32:30,960

who he was going to marry.

548

00:32:30,960 --> 00:32:36,420

She was a few years older
than he and she was Austrian.

549

00:32:36,420 --> 00:32:39,870

So that's why otherwise

a person of that age

550
00:32:39,870 --> 00:32:42,090
wouldn't have had a
medical degree in Germany

551
00:32:42,090 --> 00:32:45,090
because in Germany, a Jew
couldn't study anymore

552
00:32:45,090 --> 00:32:48,000
since 1933.

553
00:32:48,000 --> 00:32:51,930
But coming from Vienna,
she could study till 38.

554
00:32:51,930 --> 00:32:54,150
Anyway, she had
a medical degree.

555
00:32:54,150 --> 00:32:57,090
And her name was [?Valli?].

556
00:32:57,090 --> 00:33:00,466
And they got married in
the first week of January,

557
00:33:00,466 --> 00:33:02,090
[INAUDIBLE].

558
00:33:02,090 --> 00:33:03,000
Yeah.

559
00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:06,420
And Hans and I discussed
the possibility maybe

560
00:33:06,420 --> 00:33:08,140
of going underground together.

561
00:33:08,140 --> 00:33:12,820

562
00:33:12,820 --> 00:33:15,520
But a basic
difference of opinion

563
00:33:15,520 --> 00:33:17,260
developed between
Hans and myself.

564
00:33:17,260 --> 00:33:20,500

565
00:33:20,500 --> 00:33:24,940
His philosophy was that as long
as we were employed at Siemens,

566
00:33:24,940 --> 00:33:30,820
we were protected and deferred
from that deportation.

567
00:33:30,820 --> 00:33:35,530
On the other hand, if he went
underground and were caught

568
00:33:35,530 --> 00:33:39,130
on some ID check on the
street without a star,

569
00:33:39,130 --> 00:33:42,850
that meant immediate
deportation.

570
00:33:42,850 --> 00:33:45,580
Therefore, he felt
at this point it

571
00:33:45,580 --> 00:33:53,110
was much safer if we stayed
legal, quote, worked at Siemens

572
00:33:53,110 --> 00:33:57,310
and were protected that

way, and then go underground

573

00:33:57,310 --> 00:34:03,400

whenever the deferment
would no longer be valid,

574

00:34:03,400 --> 00:34:07,090

or Siemens might lay
us off, or whatever.

575

00:34:07,090 --> 00:34:11,110

I, on the other hand, argued
that the Gestapo was not

576

00:34:11,110 --> 00:34:13,540

going to offend us
printed invitations

577

00:34:13,540 --> 00:34:17,590

or announcements saying,
now you're no longer

578

00:34:17,590 --> 00:34:19,630

protected and deferred.

579

00:34:19,630 --> 00:34:21,340

That is going to come overnight.

580

00:34:21,340 --> 00:34:23,050

Without that, anybody knows it.

581

00:34:23,050 --> 00:34:24,820

And then it's going
to be too late.

582

00:34:24,820 --> 00:34:29,440

It is true right now it is
safer to be walking around

583

00:34:29,440 --> 00:34:31,750

with a star and
working at Siemens,

584

00:34:31,750 --> 00:34:33,159
because that is protection.

585

00:34:33,159 --> 00:34:36,340
But because of the
uncertainty of how long

586

00:34:36,340 --> 00:34:41,739
that is going to
last, there's no--

587

00:34:41,739 --> 00:34:43,330
that risk we have to take.

588

00:34:43,330 --> 00:34:46,210
And there was another
point, in fact,

589

00:34:46,210 --> 00:34:51,040
which leads me to
briefly a flashback

590

00:34:51,040 --> 00:34:52,900
to our time at Siemens.

591

00:34:52,900 --> 00:34:55,570
I had forgotten to
mention that already,

592

00:34:55,570 --> 00:35:00,460
since the fall of
1942, we received

593

00:35:00,460 --> 00:35:04,600
in our department
forced laborers

594

00:35:04,600 --> 00:35:07,600
from German occupied
territories.

595

00:35:07,600 --> 00:35:10,570

It started out with a group of French women.

596
00:35:10,570 --> 00:35:13,300
And after a while, we also got Polish women

597
00:35:13,300 --> 00:35:15,880
to work in our department.

598
00:35:15,880 --> 00:35:20,335
These were all people who were deported, obviously,

599
00:35:20,335 --> 00:35:26,320
against all international law and without their consent

600
00:35:26,320 --> 00:35:30,400
into Germany to work for war production.

601
00:35:30,400 --> 00:35:35,290
And I also referred to that in talking to Hans

602
00:35:35,290 --> 00:35:37,100
that it's very obvious.

603
00:35:37,100 --> 00:35:39,700
First of all, the Germans have millions and millions

604
00:35:39,700 --> 00:35:42,400
of people in the occupied territories

605
00:35:42,400 --> 00:35:45,020
and tens of thousands of Jews.

606
00:35:45,020 --> 00:35:49,570
So why do they need a few tens of thousands of Jews

607
00:35:49,570 --> 00:35:52,630
if they can be replaced
from a pool that

608
00:35:52,630 --> 00:35:54,280
has millions of people?

609
00:35:54,280 --> 00:35:58,330
And they have already started
to introduce these people

610
00:35:58,330 --> 00:35:59,650
in our department.

611
00:35:59,650 --> 00:36:04,250
And they know already how to do
the things that we are doing.

612
00:36:04,250 --> 00:36:08,560
So I think that probably
the time is imminent,

613
00:36:08,560 --> 00:36:13,960
even that these deferments
for our work and defense plans

614
00:36:13,960 --> 00:36:14,800
are going to lapse.

615
00:36:14,800 --> 00:36:17,450

616
00:36:17,450 --> 00:36:21,920
But we did not obviously resolve
that difference of opinion.

617
00:36:21,920 --> 00:36:25,250
Hans, himself, felt
that, for the time being,

618
00:36:25,250 --> 00:36:27,380

he was safer that way.

619
00:36:27,380 --> 00:36:30,410
He did, however, do
one thing, and that

620
00:36:30,410 --> 00:36:38,090
is to order forged IDs, a
forged ID, at least for himself,

621
00:36:38,090 --> 00:36:39,080
to go--

622
00:36:39,080 --> 00:36:42,920
it was practically
impossible to live in Germany

623
00:36:42,920 --> 00:36:45,800
without some sort of
an ID, because there

624
00:36:45,800 --> 00:36:50,420
were frequent checks for
identification on the streets.

625
00:36:50,420 --> 00:36:54,560
There was a whole
spectrum of agencies

626
00:36:54,560 --> 00:36:57,800
who could do that, in addition
to just the ordinary police.

627
00:36:57,800 --> 00:37:01,040
There was a Gestapo, of
course, which was essentially

628
00:37:01,040 --> 00:37:02,780
a political police.

629
00:37:02,780 --> 00:37:05,540
There was the so-called
criminal police.

630
00:37:05,540 --> 00:37:10,730
These were detectives
looking for common criminals.

631
00:37:10,730 --> 00:37:13,340
There was the military police.

632
00:37:13,340 --> 00:37:17,060
There was a so-called
labor police, and probably

633
00:37:17,060 --> 00:37:19,400
other agencies that I
wasn't even aware of.

634
00:37:19,400 --> 00:37:25,380

635
00:37:25,380 --> 00:37:34,360
So basically, it was definitely
necessary to have forged

636
00:37:34,360 --> 00:37:36,820
identification
papers, because if you

637
00:37:36,820 --> 00:37:42,250
were asked for an identification
by any one of these agencies,

638
00:37:42,250 --> 00:37:44,890
and you were not able
to identify yourself

639
00:37:44,890 --> 00:37:50,350
to their satisfaction, that
meant immediate arrest.

640
00:37:50,350 --> 00:37:54,550
Margot's father
had a contact that

641

00:37:54,550 --> 00:37:59,410

could provide a
forged identification

642

00:37:59,410 --> 00:38:02,110

as an employee for
an organization

643

00:38:02,110 --> 00:38:06,160

called Deutsche Arbeitfront,
which means in English German

644

00:38:06,160 --> 00:38:06,940

Labor Front.

645

00:38:06,940 --> 00:38:15,240

646

00:38:15,240 --> 00:38:19,370

This is tape three, side B of an
interview with Ernest Fontheim

647

00:38:19,370 --> 00:38:23,750

continued on March 13, 1997.

648

00:38:23,750 --> 00:38:25,460

The interviewer
is Randy Goldman.

649

00:38:25,460 --> 00:38:28,730

650

00:38:28,730 --> 00:38:31,160

This organization,
the German Labor

651

00:38:31,160 --> 00:38:36,900

Front was the Nazi answer,
basically, to labor unions.

652

00:38:36,900 --> 00:38:39,830

They had smashed, of

course, the labor unions

653

00:38:39,830 --> 00:38:42,380
and declared them illegal.

654

00:38:42,380 --> 00:38:45,890
And also they declared
that in their ideology,

655

00:38:45,890 --> 00:38:51,650
this whole idea of class
warfare and of a sort

656

00:38:51,650 --> 00:38:56,810
of adversarial relationship
between management and labor

657

00:38:56,810 --> 00:39:01,850
is not in the sense of
a Germanic nationalism.

658

00:39:01,850 --> 00:39:05,900
Instead, they formed
this German Labor Front,

659

00:39:05,900 --> 00:39:11,240
which contained members both
of the employed laborers

660

00:39:11,240 --> 00:39:15,200
and employees, and of
management and owners.

661

00:39:15,200 --> 00:39:21,260
And the supposed idea
was that in this forum,

662

00:39:21,260 --> 00:39:27,020
before conflicts arise, all
issues will be discussed

663

00:39:27,020 --> 00:39:31,430
in a cooperative way, because

both sides are obviously

664
00:39:31,430 --> 00:39:35,630
interested in the
flourishing of the company.

665
00:39:35,630 --> 00:39:38,600
This whole idea might have
sounded good on paper,

666
00:39:38,600 --> 00:39:42,680
but it was, of course,
done mainly in order

667
00:39:42,680 --> 00:39:46,220
to smash the voice
of the workers

668
00:39:46,220 --> 00:39:55,520
and to enable German industry to
increase production, and mainly

669
00:39:55,520 --> 00:39:59,740
war production, without
any disruptions.

670
00:39:59,740 --> 00:40:04,770
So Margot's father had,
through some contact,

671
00:40:04,770 --> 00:40:10,920
and for roughly the sum of
1,500 German reichsmark, which

672
00:40:10,920 --> 00:40:14,890
was the currency at the
time, the opportunity--

673
00:40:14,890 --> 00:40:17,100
1,500 a piece, of course--

674
00:40:17,100 --> 00:40:22,230
to obtain IDs as an employee

with the German Labor Front.

675

00:40:22,230 --> 00:40:26,520

This was, of course, a very prestigious organization.

676

00:40:26,520 --> 00:40:32,100

And so the ID also contained a passport picture

677

00:40:32,100 --> 00:40:37,720

of the person, the obviously name, birth date, address,

678

00:40:37,720 --> 00:40:41,700

and so on, and then a rubber stamp

679

00:40:41,700 --> 00:40:46,020

numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, to be stamped,

680

00:40:46,020 --> 00:40:49,590

I think, semiannually, so that it also

681

00:40:49,590 --> 00:40:55,140

had the impression of being updated on a semiannual basis.

682

00:40:55,140 --> 00:41:01,230

The rubber stamp came-- was just a number came with the ID

683

00:41:01,230 --> 00:41:02,110

itself.

684

00:41:02,110 --> 00:41:05,760

So we could sort of revalidate it every six months

685

00:41:05,760 --> 00:41:08,700

for ourselves.

686
00:41:08,700 --> 00:41:15,840
Hans also agreed to buy this ID
and sort of put it away in case

687
00:41:15,840 --> 00:41:21,060
when the situation is [? ripe?]
he considers ripe to go

688
00:41:21,060 --> 00:41:23,380
underground.

689
00:41:23,380 --> 00:41:27,340
In the meantime, as I
had mentioned earlier,

690
00:41:27,340 --> 00:41:31,630
I was already no longer
living in our apartment

691
00:41:31,630 --> 00:41:35,680
because of the hidden
warning that my mother

692
00:41:35,680 --> 00:41:37,570
had conveyed to me.

693
00:41:37,570 --> 00:41:44,230
And I lived in a small
maid's room of the apartment

694
00:41:44,230 --> 00:41:47,500
of Margot's parents.

695
00:41:47,500 --> 00:41:51,160
But during the day,
commuted to our apartment

696
00:41:51,160 --> 00:41:55,510
because I had decided to
save as much as possible.

697

00:41:55,510 --> 00:41:59,000
And incidentally, I should
also add that at that time,

698
00:41:59,000 --> 00:42:02,380
my parents and sister
were still in the transit

699
00:42:02,380 --> 00:42:09,100
camp in that former
Jewish old age home.

700
00:42:09,100 --> 00:42:13,780
Only after the war-- in
fact, fairly recently with

701
00:42:13,780 --> 00:42:16,420
publications of the
history and so on--

702
00:42:16,420 --> 00:42:20,780
did I learn of the brutal
conditions in that camp.

703
00:42:20,780 --> 00:42:23,930
I mean, I never thought that
there would be nice conditions.

704
00:42:23,930 --> 00:42:27,250
But at least I thought since
it was an old age home,

705
00:42:27,250 --> 00:42:28,630
there would be beds in there.

706
00:42:28,630 --> 00:42:33,250
And they would at least
have some form of amenities.

707
00:42:33,250 --> 00:42:41,890
I learned now that some
so-called specialists

708

00:42:41,890 --> 00:42:45,760
in Jewish immigration
from the Vienna SS

709
00:42:45,760 --> 00:42:50,380
had been gotten to Berlin on
the orders of Adolf Eichmann,

710
00:42:50,380 --> 00:42:56,980
and also to speed up
the deportation of Jews.

711
00:42:56,980 --> 00:43:02,830
And the first thing that
the man in charge was a man

712
00:43:02,830 --> 00:43:05,980
named [? Alois ?]
Brunner, incidentally.

713
00:43:05,980 --> 00:43:09,460
His rank was SS
Hauptsturmführer.

714
00:43:09,460 --> 00:43:11,440
The fact that he was
in Berlin, in fact,

715
00:43:11,440 --> 00:43:13,730
was known at that time.

716
00:43:13,730 --> 00:43:16,270
But what was not known
is that his first act

717
00:43:16,270 --> 00:43:20,488
after arriving and
looking at the transit

718
00:43:20,488 --> 00:43:23,350
in that former old
age home that he

719

00:43:23,350 --> 00:43:26,590
ordered that all furniture
be thrown out the windows.

720
00:43:26,590 --> 00:43:28,252
And that was literally done.

721
00:43:28,252 --> 00:43:29,710
They were thrown
out of the window,

722
00:43:29,710 --> 00:43:33,190
even though even there was
a shortage of furniture

723
00:43:33,190 --> 00:43:34,690
for Germans.

724
00:43:34,690 --> 00:43:37,930
And there were
just bare floors so

725
00:43:37,930 --> 00:43:42,160
he could pack more
Jews into the building.

726
00:43:42,160 --> 00:43:46,630
And so even in that
transit camp already,

727
00:43:46,630 --> 00:43:51,340
they must have lived under
very miserable circumstances.

728
00:43:51,340 --> 00:43:55,450
And let me see.

729
00:43:55,450 --> 00:43:59,200
How long was your
family in that camp?

730
00:43:59,200 --> 00:44:03,350
That comes to-- their transport

left on the 12th of January.

731

00:44:03,350 --> 00:44:06,220

It was a Tuesday,
and an unbelievably,

732

00:44:06,220 --> 00:44:09,160

unusually cold day,
even for Berlin.

733

00:44:09,160 --> 00:44:16,060

And the departure of a transport
became known within hours

734

00:44:16,060 --> 00:44:18,250

always in Berlin, because
that couldn't-- you know,

735

00:44:18,250 --> 00:44:22,810

there were, what, 1,000 people
were marched from the transit

736

00:44:22,810 --> 00:44:24,670

camp to the nearest--

737

00:44:24,670 --> 00:44:26,920

they didn't go to a
regular railroad station

738

00:44:26,920 --> 00:44:30,070

but to a freight yard where
they were loaded on like cattle.

739

00:44:30,070 --> 00:44:32,770

740

00:44:32,770 --> 00:44:35,620

As I had said earlier,
the arrest of my parents

741

00:44:35,620 --> 00:44:38,590

took place on December 24.

742

00:44:38,590 --> 00:44:44,170
And I guess in order to allow
the SS some Christmas vacation

743

00:44:44,170 --> 00:44:47,350
from their strenuous
activities, no transport

744

00:44:47,350 --> 00:44:54,490
went away from Berlin between
December 24 and January 12.

745

00:44:54,490 --> 00:44:59,170
So they were there almost
three weeks, 2 and 1/2 weeks.

746

00:44:59,170 --> 00:45:01,070
Were you at work when they left?

747

00:45:01,070 --> 00:45:01,570
No.

748

00:45:01,570 --> 00:45:08,080
As I explained earlier, I
was on that faked sick leave.

749

00:45:08,080 --> 00:45:10,030
And I simply never went back.

750

00:45:10,030 --> 00:45:12,640
The sick leave, of
course, was limited to--

751

00:45:12,640 --> 00:45:16,540
I forgot what it was-- a certain
number of days, maybe a week.

752

00:45:16,540 --> 00:45:19,600
But by never going
back then, I was

753

00:45:19,600 --> 00:45:22,900

hoping that my absence wouldn't
be immediately noticed,

754
00:45:22,900 --> 00:45:26,680
because obviously if
somebody was just absent,

755
00:45:26,680 --> 00:45:28,870
they would immediately
send orders

756
00:45:28,870 --> 00:45:31,580
for the arrest of that person.

757
00:45:31,580 --> 00:45:34,990
So where were you when
the transport left?

758
00:45:34,990 --> 00:45:36,520
Did you see this procession?

759
00:45:36,520 --> 00:45:37,240
No, no, no.

760
00:45:37,240 --> 00:45:40,653
I didn't see-- I just heard that
also through the mouth radio

761
00:45:40,653 --> 00:45:42,320
that I had mentioned
also at some point,

762
00:45:42,320 --> 00:45:47,020
that when I was actually
considering how primitive it

763
00:45:47,020 --> 00:45:49,210
was and that we didn't
even have telephones

764
00:45:49,210 --> 00:45:52,630
was incredibly efficient, how
it went from these things meant

765
00:45:52,630 --> 00:45:54,380
for mouth to mouth.

766
00:45:54,380 --> 00:45:58,350

767
00:45:58,350 --> 00:45:59,530
Let me see where--

768
00:45:59,530 --> 00:46:08,780

769
00:46:08,780 --> 00:46:11,840
During that time,
as I said, we--

770
00:46:11,840 --> 00:46:17,330
I lived, then, in
that maid's room

771
00:46:17,330 --> 00:46:21,260
at the apartment of
Margaret's parents,

772
00:46:21,260 --> 00:46:25,460
which was really very
far away and a distance

773
00:46:25,460 --> 00:46:28,520
from our apartment
where we lived.

774
00:46:28,520 --> 00:46:31,490
So every day, I went
there to pack things.

775
00:46:31,490 --> 00:46:37,130
And my plan was to have as much
of personal effects and so on

776
00:46:37,130 --> 00:46:40,760

picked up by a moving company.

777

00:46:40,760 --> 00:46:44,210

That moving company had
been a client of my father's

778

00:46:44,210 --> 00:46:47,540

when he was still
practicing law.

779

00:46:47,540 --> 00:46:52,250

I still remember the name
was [NON-ENGLISH] Zimmerman,

780

00:46:52,250 --> 00:46:54,530

which means brother Zimmerman.

781

00:46:54,530 --> 00:47:00,410

The owner, actually, was a Mr.
[? Schutt, ?] who was very,

782

00:47:00,410 --> 00:47:03,170

I must say, was a fantastic man.

783

00:47:03,170 --> 00:47:05,690

And he knew, of course,
that we are Jews.

784

00:47:05,690 --> 00:47:07,100

And he stuck with us.

785

00:47:07,100 --> 00:47:11,600

He had already from
our nice apartment

786

00:47:11,600 --> 00:47:15,170

that we-- where we were
thrown out a lot of furniture

787

00:47:15,170 --> 00:47:19,670

stored in a storage place
under a different name

788

00:47:19,670 --> 00:47:21,950
so that it couldn't be traced.

789

00:47:21,950 --> 00:47:27,080
And I went to him and told
him that my parents had been

790

00:47:27,080 --> 00:47:29,270
arrested and would be deported.

791

00:47:29,270 --> 00:47:30,950
And I wanted to
save more things.

792

00:47:30,950 --> 00:47:33,770
And he immediately agreed.

793

00:47:33,770 --> 00:47:39,320
And the pick up van was
supposed to come on January 19.

794

00:47:39,320 --> 00:47:42,470
And I was supposed to
designate all the pieces that

795

00:47:42,470 --> 00:47:44,030
were supposed to be picked up.

796

00:47:44,030 --> 00:47:47,210
And there were certain
pieces of furniture

797

00:47:47,210 --> 00:47:50,870
that I thought maybe at one
time I might want to sell,

798

00:47:50,870 --> 00:47:55,970
and also a trunk full of all
kinds of personal articles.

799

00:47:55,970 --> 00:47:59,190
It also contained the

diary of my sister.

800
00:47:59,190 --> 00:48:02,240
And she had kept a
diary for a long time,

801
00:48:02,240 --> 00:48:05,420
and also particularly the
letter that my sister had

802
00:48:05,420 --> 00:48:10,400
written to me when she
was as a harvest helper

803
00:48:10,400 --> 00:48:11,780
away from Berlin.

804
00:48:11,780 --> 00:48:17,410
And I had written to her of the
arrest of my girlfriend, Ruth.

805
00:48:17,410 --> 00:48:21,970
And so I was busy then
every day for a few hours

806
00:48:21,970 --> 00:48:23,260
in the apartment.

807
00:48:23,260 --> 00:48:26,560
And always left
considerably earlier

808
00:48:26,560 --> 00:48:28,900
than I would have
come back had I

809
00:48:28,900 --> 00:48:34,870
worked so that I wouldn't
be running into some trap

810
00:48:34,870 --> 00:48:37,420
by the Gestapo.

811

00:48:37,420 --> 00:48:39,490

On the 18th of January--

812

00:48:39,490 --> 00:48:46,520

it was one day before

I had ordered the van--

813

00:48:46,520 --> 00:48:53,140

the moving van-- to come, I was,

again, doing some last packing

814

00:48:53,140 --> 00:48:57,610

fit to finish up for the

pick up on the next day when

815

00:48:57,610 --> 00:49:00,610

one of the women I had mentioned

earlier that there were

816

00:49:00,610 --> 00:49:02,230

quite a number of

people living--

817

00:49:02,230 --> 00:49:04,450

had been living

in that apartment.

818

00:49:04,450 --> 00:49:08,560

One of the women

came and reported

819

00:49:08,560 --> 00:49:14,980

that the infamous

pick up moving van

820

00:49:14,980 --> 00:49:17,930

was in the

Brandenburger Strasse.

821

00:49:17,930 --> 00:49:22,420

That is a street where my

friend, Hans was living.

822

00:49:22,420 --> 00:49:25,090

I think I had mentioned
that the pick-ups of Jews

823

00:49:25,090 --> 00:49:29,650

for deportation was
done by a furniture--

824

00:49:29,650 --> 00:49:35,430

a furniture moving van of
the firm [? Scheffler. ?]

825

00:49:35,430 --> 00:49:38,500

And Brandenburger
Strasse, as I said,

826

00:49:38,500 --> 00:49:41,850

was the street where my
friend Hans was living.

827

00:49:41,850 --> 00:49:43,770

Also that was in mid-morning.

828

00:49:43,770 --> 00:49:47,760

And I knew that Hans
was at work at Siemens.

829

00:49:47,760 --> 00:49:53,280

But his wife, [?Valli?] did
not work and might be at home.

830

00:49:53,280 --> 00:49:58,435

So I immediately grabbed
my coat and raced

831

00:49:58,435 --> 00:50:02,850

towards several blocks away
from where our apartment was.

832

00:50:02,850 --> 00:50:06,450

And then I turned the corner
into Brandenburger Strasse

833

00:50:06,450 --> 00:50:10,770

and saw that van parked right
in front of their house.

834

00:50:10,770 --> 00:50:14,400

And it struck me
like a lightning.

835

00:50:14,400 --> 00:50:18,600

I stopped for a few seconds,
considering-- now that house

836

00:50:18,600 --> 00:50:21,750

also, like all houses where
Jews lived, of course,

837

00:50:21,750 --> 00:50:24,930

was a so-called Jew
house, which meant

838

00:50:24,930 --> 00:50:27,870

that there was a large
number of Jewish parties.

839

00:50:27,870 --> 00:50:31,170

And I figured that the
probability that they were just

840

00:50:31,170 --> 00:50:33,990

in their apartment
is probably small.

841

00:50:33,990 --> 00:50:36,270

And at any rate,
I would never be

842

00:50:36,270 --> 00:50:41,370

able to face my friend
if I didn't do anything

843

00:50:41,370 --> 00:50:45,230

I could to get his wife out.

844

00:50:45,230 --> 00:50:48,940

So they lived in a-- it was
a walk up on the fifth floor.

845

00:50:48,940 --> 00:50:53,010

I raced up the
steps, rang the bell,

846

00:50:53,010 --> 00:50:57,690

and they had sublet one room
just in an apartment, which was

847

00:50:57,690 --> 00:51:00,090

rented by a Mrs. [INAUDIBLE].

848

00:51:00,090 --> 00:51:03,480

And Mrs. [INAUDIBLE]
opened the door.

849

00:51:03,480 --> 00:51:06,960

Her face looked
horrible, as white as--

850

00:51:06,960 --> 00:51:11,760

even more whites than this
wall here, like this cup.

851

00:51:11,760 --> 00:51:13,280

I've never seen her like that.

852

00:51:13,280 --> 00:51:16,400

And she looked
completely dejected.

853

00:51:16,400 --> 00:51:20,180

And all she said, what
are you doing here?

854

00:51:20,180 --> 00:51:21,920

Get away quickly.

855

00:51:21,920 --> 00:51:25,640

And then, instead of turning
and running, I asked,

856
00:51:25,640 --> 00:51:27,570
is [?'Valli?'] I want
to talk to [?'Valli?']..

857
00:51:27,570 --> 00:51:29,780
And then she repeated,
and get away.

858
00:51:29,780 --> 00:51:33,860
And upon that, I
saw behind her a man

859
00:51:33,860 --> 00:51:36,110
in an SS uniform appearing.

860
00:51:36,110 --> 00:51:38,420
And at that point,
I turned around

861
00:51:38,420 --> 00:51:41,150
and raced down and
was on the landing

862
00:51:41,150 --> 00:51:48,530
below when I heard a thunderous
voice in a Viennese dialect

863
00:51:48,530 --> 00:51:50,660
saying, halt immediately.

864
00:51:50,660 --> 00:51:52,070
And I turned around.

865
00:51:52,070 --> 00:51:56,090
I saw an SS officer
leaning over the balustrade

866
00:51:56,090 --> 00:51:58,760
with a drawn pistol
pointing at me.

867
00:51:58,760 --> 00:52:04,970
And I got such a shock of
scare that almost my knees

868
00:52:04,970 --> 00:52:06,320
buckled under me.

869
00:52:06,320 --> 00:52:08,210
And I walked back up.

870
00:52:08,210 --> 00:52:12,620
And he got me in,
closed the door.

871
00:52:12,620 --> 00:52:14,830
And the first
thing-- your papers.

872
00:52:14,830 --> 00:52:19,030
And then I pulled
out my forged ID

873
00:52:19,030 --> 00:52:22,900
from the German Labor Front,
which he looked at carefully

874
00:52:22,900 --> 00:52:28,570
and compared my face with
the picture on the ID.

875
00:52:28,570 --> 00:52:37,480
And then he barked at me what
I was doing there, you know,

876
00:52:37,480 --> 00:52:39,400
because there was
supposed to be no contact

877
00:52:39,400 --> 00:52:42,670
between so-called
Aryans and Jews.

878

00:52:42,670 --> 00:52:46,510

And of course, the question
totally caught me by surprise.

879

00:52:46,510 --> 00:52:51,640

And I was so devastated
and fearful anyway

880

00:52:51,640 --> 00:52:53,600

that I couldn't think straight.

881

00:52:53,600 --> 00:52:57,190

So all I could blurt
out was that, there's

882

00:52:57,190 --> 00:53:00,460

a Jew who lives here still
owes me some money, which

883

00:53:00,460 --> 00:53:02,170

in retrospect was stupid.

884

00:53:02,170 --> 00:53:04,660

And the guy didn't
even catch it,

885

00:53:04,660 --> 00:53:07,120

because if he owed me
money, that meant that I

886

00:53:07,120 --> 00:53:08,590

must have loaned it to him.

887

00:53:08,590 --> 00:53:10,930

And if I loaned him
money, what business did

888

00:53:10,930 --> 00:53:13,420

I have loaning money to a Jew?

889

00:53:13,420 --> 00:53:17,980

But he didn't pursue it,

but instead, he took my ID,

890
00:53:17,980 --> 00:53:20,800
put it in his uniform
pocket, and said,

891
00:53:20,800 --> 00:53:24,010
I want to ask you some
more questions tomorrow.

892
00:53:24,010 --> 00:53:28,330
I want you to come to my
office at Gestapo headquarters

893
00:53:28,330 --> 00:53:31,780
such and such street address
room number so-and-so.

894
00:53:31,780 --> 00:53:33,070
I forgot that.

895
00:53:33,070 --> 00:53:35,890
But I do remember at
9:00 tomorrow morning,

896
00:53:35,890 --> 00:53:38,030
I want to see you there.

897
00:53:38,030 --> 00:53:41,770
And then you'll
get your ID back.

898
00:53:41,770 --> 00:53:44,260
And then I left.

899
00:53:44,260 --> 00:53:50,380
And I felt as if I had
sort of escaped from hell.

900
00:53:50,380 --> 00:53:54,520
That was one of the
two or three scariest

901
00:53:54,520 --> 00:53:57,310
episodes in my entire life.

902
00:53:57,310 --> 00:53:58,420
I went down.

903
00:53:58,420 --> 00:54:03,340
But at least one thing,
while we were standing,

904
00:54:03,340 --> 00:54:07,060
that little conversation
took place inside their door

905
00:54:07,060 --> 00:54:10,390
in a little sort of
like a vestibule.

906
00:54:10,390 --> 00:54:12,820
And the various
rooms went over it.

907
00:54:12,820 --> 00:54:15,950
And in Hans' room, I
didn't see a person.

908
00:54:15,950 --> 00:54:19,090
So it seemed to me that
[?Valli?] wasn't there.

909
00:54:19,090 --> 00:54:23,860
So as I raced down as quickly
as possible-- because I thought,

910
00:54:23,860 --> 00:54:26,830
maybe the guy changes his mind.

911
00:54:26,830 --> 00:54:31,030
I decided to-- then I walked
out of the house to the street.

912
00:54:31,030 --> 00:54:36,250

And to the next corner
was several houses.

913
00:54:36,250 --> 00:54:39,280
So I walked to the next
corner and around the corner.

914
00:54:39,280 --> 00:54:42,700
But then I positioned myself
there around the corner

915
00:54:42,700 --> 00:54:47,110
so that I could see who
approached the house.

916
00:54:47,110 --> 00:54:50,020
And I was hoping that
if [?Valli?] would come,

917
00:54:50,020 --> 00:54:55,210
that I could signal or shout
at her and get her away.

918
00:54:55,210 --> 00:54:57,970
It was also a cold winter
day, the 18th of January.

919
00:54:57,970 --> 00:55:00,920

920
00:55:00,920 --> 00:55:03,350
And I stood there.

921
00:55:03,350 --> 00:55:06,120
In the meantime, that
van had already left.

922
00:55:06,120 --> 00:55:09,860
But it was known that
sometimes if a person that they

923
00:55:09,860 --> 00:55:13,100
were looking for wasn't there,

they left somebody behind.

924

00:55:13,100 --> 00:55:19,070

So that's why I stuck there
until my legs were really

925

00:55:19,070 --> 00:55:22,980

like just columns of ice and
I couldn't stand it anymore.

926

00:55:22,980 --> 00:55:26,120

And at 4:00 also
was shift change.

927

00:55:26,120 --> 00:55:30,620

I felt I had to notify Hans.

928

00:55:30,620 --> 00:55:33,290

And of course, that was
a tricky thing, because I

929

00:55:33,290 --> 00:55:36,240

was by that time away without--

930

00:55:36,240 --> 00:55:37,830

from work-- without permission.

931

00:55:37,830 --> 00:55:39,900

So I couldn't be seen there.

932

00:55:39,900 --> 00:55:45,830

So I went to the
elevated station

933

00:55:45,830 --> 00:55:49,190

that we went to when we
went to work at Siemens,

934

00:55:49,190 --> 00:55:51,410

and then walked
towards the factory,

935

00:55:51,410 --> 00:55:54,770
but didn't walk all
the way but sort

936
00:55:54,770 --> 00:55:58,490
of hid in the entrance
of an apartment building

937
00:55:58,490 --> 00:56:02,870
which was still a block or
two away from the factory,

938
00:56:02,870 --> 00:56:04,850
but where people
at the shift change

939
00:56:04,850 --> 00:56:07,070
would sort of stream past.

940
00:56:07,070 --> 00:56:09,500
And of course, by that
time, it was winter.

941
00:56:09,500 --> 00:56:12,710
It was already fairly dark.

942
00:56:12,710 --> 00:56:18,740
So I stood there and then when
Hans came by, I whistled to him

943
00:56:18,740 --> 00:56:22,890
and he stopped and was
surprised to see me.

944
00:56:22,890 --> 00:56:26,210
And I told them the
events of the morning.

945
00:56:26,210 --> 00:56:31,390
And of course, he got very
depressed and agitated by that.

946
00:56:31,390 --> 00:56:34,130

And we went together back.

947

00:56:34,130 --> 00:56:37,430

And then when we arrived
in front of his house

948

00:56:37,430 --> 00:56:38,450

and looked up--

949

00:56:38,450 --> 00:56:42,020

there was also in
wartime, windows

950

00:56:42,020 --> 00:56:46,520

had to be darkened in order
not to give away locations

951

00:56:46,520 --> 00:56:50,360

to enemy airplanes.

952

00:56:50,360 --> 00:56:52,610

But often-- I mean, not often.

953

00:56:52,610 --> 00:56:57,320

Always there was sort of a
small slit of light coming just

954

00:56:57,320 --> 00:57:02,870

from the edge where the curtain
just quite didn't hit the wall.

955

00:57:02,870 --> 00:57:07,040

And we saw some light
coming out of his apartment.

956

00:57:07,040 --> 00:57:13,630

So we both felt, oh, somebody
must be home, at least.

957

00:57:13,630 --> 00:57:14,790

So we rushed up.

958

00:57:14,790 --> 00:57:18,840
And on the floor below,
Hans turned to me and said,

959
00:57:18,840 --> 00:57:21,780
you know, why don't
you wait here?

960
00:57:21,780 --> 00:57:26,760
I'll go up and if everything
is clear, I'll call you.

961
00:57:26,760 --> 00:57:31,440
So I stood one floor
below and watched him.

962
00:57:31,440 --> 00:57:34,650
And he put the
key into the lock,

963
00:57:34,650 --> 00:57:38,770
but hadn't turned it when the
door opened from the inside.

964
00:57:38,770 --> 00:57:45,420
And I saw a tall,
gray-haired civilian opening

965
00:57:45,420 --> 00:57:47,250
the door who didn't
belong there, never

966
00:57:47,250 --> 00:57:50,010
seen before in my life.

967
00:57:50,010 --> 00:57:55,560
And he immediately looked down
and shouted to me, who are you?

968
00:57:55,560 --> 00:57:59,140
And then I turned around
and ran as fast as I could.

969

00:57:59,140 --> 00:58:01,450
I never ran as fast
in my life, I think.

970
00:58:01,450 --> 00:58:04,320
And that was the
last time I saw Hans

971
00:58:04,320 --> 00:58:08,580
And it is sort of
a sideline, that

972
00:58:08,580 --> 00:58:12,730
was the 18th of January, 1943.

973
00:58:12,730 --> 00:58:18,990
Exactly to the day five years
later that my high school

974
00:58:18,990 --> 00:58:24,310
friend from that orthodox high
school on the 18th of January

975
00:58:24,310 --> 00:58:25,500
'39--

976
00:58:25,500 --> 00:58:30,900
four years later-- left
Berlin to emigrate to England.

977
00:58:30,900 --> 00:58:35,340
So I left, I guess, the two best
friends that I had in my life.

978
00:58:35,340 --> 00:58:40,230
I lost them on the same
day, on the 18th of January.

979
00:58:40,230 --> 00:58:42,300
The only thing is
the one who left

980
00:58:42,300 --> 00:58:44,940

for England, left for life.

981
00:58:44,940 --> 00:58:45,950
And he's still alive.

982
00:58:45,950 --> 00:58:46,920
He's in Jerusalem now.

983
00:58:46,920 --> 00:58:50,150

984
00:58:50,150 --> 00:59:00,260
So then I went back again
to Margot's parents.

985
00:59:00,260 --> 00:59:07,320
And there was a
terrible argument.

986
00:59:07,320 --> 00:59:10,440
Her father accused me
that I was reckless,

987
00:59:10,440 --> 00:59:12,200
that I should have never--

988
00:59:12,200 --> 00:59:16,310
by having that ID
confiscated, that

989
00:59:16,310 --> 00:59:18,800
means now that ID may
even be useless now

990
00:59:18,800 --> 00:59:20,960
because the Gestapo knows--

991
00:59:20,960 --> 00:59:24,920
they are obviously going to find
out that this is a forged ID.

992
00:59:24,920 --> 00:59:30,330

And I was endangering
everybody else.

993
00:59:30,330 --> 00:59:35,570
And so we had a big
argument about that.

994
00:59:35,570 --> 00:59:44,990
And then-- and not only that,
but I probably overreacted

995
00:59:44,990 --> 00:59:47,720
and overestimated the
efficiency of the Gestapo.

996
00:59:47,720 --> 00:59:51,350
But at that time, I thought
they could probably lift

997
00:59:51,350 --> 00:59:53,990
my fingerprints from that ID.

998
00:59:53,990 --> 00:59:56,510
And all Jews had been
fingerprinted already

999
00:59:56,510 --> 00:59:57,710
years before.

1000
00:59:57,710 --> 01:00:00,920
So they had a fingerprint
file of all Jews.

1001
01:00:00,920 --> 01:00:06,590
And experienced criminologists
can match fingerprints.

1002
01:00:06,590 --> 01:00:12,800
So it occurred to me that what
if they match my fingerprint,

1003
01:00:12,800 --> 01:00:16,290
find out who that

owner of that ID

1004
01:00:16,290 --> 01:00:21,980
really was, and then
come to the apartment?

1005
01:00:21,980 --> 01:00:25,790
And if the moving van is
just there, that will be--

1006
01:00:25,790 --> 01:00:31,730
they will immediately find out
that this is being picked up,

1007
01:00:31,730 --> 01:00:35,510
you know, by that firm
of [? Zimmerman. ?]

1008
01:00:35,510 --> 01:00:38,600
And that will lead
them to me somehow.

1009
01:00:38,600 --> 01:00:45,160
So I called up the firm
and canceled the pick up.

1010
01:00:45,160 --> 01:00:51,970
And that was one of the most
horrible mistakes in my life.

1011
01:00:51,970 --> 01:00:55,535
It wasn't the furniture but
it was the personal things--

1012
01:00:55,535 --> 01:01:03,330

1013
01:01:03,330 --> 01:01:04,130
sorry.

1014
01:01:04,130 --> 01:01:09,250
The personal things that
were contained in the trunk.

1015
01:01:09,250 --> 01:01:14,620
The trunk contained my
sister's diary, her letters,

1016
01:01:14,620 --> 01:01:16,510
including the letter
that she had written

1017
01:01:16,510 --> 01:01:20,470
to me after the arrest of Ruth.

1018
01:01:20,470 --> 01:01:25,090
And I never went back
to that building,

1019
01:01:25,090 --> 01:01:30,190
simply because I was afraid
that it might be staked out,

1020
01:01:30,190 --> 01:01:33,040
while the Gestapo--

1021
01:01:33,040 --> 01:01:34,930
as far as I know--
never looked just

1022
01:01:34,930 --> 01:01:37,750
for Jews who were in
hiding in particular.

1023
01:01:37,750 --> 01:01:41,020
But in a case where
there was a forged

1024
01:01:41,020 --> 01:01:44,560
ID from an important
Nazi agency,

1025
01:01:44,560 --> 01:01:48,520
they would surely be
interested in finding out

1026

01:01:48,520 --> 01:01:52,840
how that ID was obtained, from
whom, et cetera, et cetera.

1027

01:01:52,840 --> 01:01:55,480
So that would have been
worthwhile to stake

1028

01:01:55,480 --> 01:01:56,650
that address out.

1029

01:01:56,650 --> 01:01:59,260
I just, in retrospect,
don't believe

1030

01:01:59,260 --> 01:02:01,540
that they were that
efficient that they

1031

01:02:01,540 --> 01:02:05,260
would have had all of that
figured out within less than a

1032

01:02:05,260 --> 01:02:06,830
day.

1033

01:02:06,830 --> 01:02:10,780
But at that time,
I felt strongly

1034

01:02:10,780 --> 01:02:14,020
that it was too
unsafe to go back

1035

01:02:14,020 --> 01:02:17,765
and also too unsafe to have
the moving company come

1036

01:02:17,765 --> 01:02:19,390
because that would
have led them to me.

1037

01:02:19,390 --> 01:02:22,030

1038
01:02:22,030 --> 01:02:25,450
The result of it is that I
have no personal belongings

1039
01:02:25,450 --> 01:02:28,430
of my sister whatsoever.

1040
01:02:28,430 --> 01:02:30,850
I have pictures, of
course, but that's all.

1041
01:02:30,850 --> 01:02:33,820

1042
01:02:33,820 --> 01:02:42,200
We intensified now
the search for a place

1043
01:02:42,200 --> 01:02:46,490
to hide Margot's parents.

1044
01:02:46,490 --> 01:02:49,430
And incidentally, of
course, I immediately

1045
01:02:49,430 --> 01:02:56,810
had to practically move
mountains to get another ID.

1046
01:02:56,810 --> 01:03:01,670
Margaret's parents were also
planning to go underground,

1047
01:03:01,670 --> 01:03:03,020
but didn't--

1048
01:03:03,020 --> 01:03:09,020
had one or two possible sort
of options, none of which

1049

01:03:09,020 --> 01:03:11,720
was ideal.

1050

01:03:11,720 --> 01:03:15,560
Then I came up with an idea.

1051

01:03:15,560 --> 01:03:21,170
And that was the former office
supervisor of my father's law

1052

01:03:21,170 --> 01:03:26,270
office was a Mrs.
Frida [INAUDIBLE]..

1053

01:03:26,270 --> 01:03:29,260
She was actually a
marvelous person.

1054

01:03:29,260 --> 01:03:34,920
She had been in his office as
far back as I can remember.

1055

01:03:34,920 --> 01:03:37,940
I don't know whether she was
there since before I was born

1056

01:03:37,940 --> 01:03:41,180
or since I was a
little boy, but as long

1057

01:03:41,180 --> 01:03:43,220
as I remember, as a
little boy, whenever

1058

01:03:43,220 --> 01:03:46,460
I was taken to the
office, she was already

1059

01:03:46,460 --> 01:03:47,630
working for my father.

1060

01:03:47,630 --> 01:03:52,640

And then in the last years,
she was his office supervisor.

1061
01:03:52,640 --> 01:03:58,370
And she held to us
even after my father

1062
01:03:58,370 --> 01:04:00,020
lost his license to practice.

1063
01:04:00,020 --> 01:04:03,080
And of course, then
she lost that job.

1064
01:04:03,080 --> 01:04:05,420
And she visited us frequently.

1065
01:04:05,420 --> 01:04:07,490
And I remember
often she brought us

1066
01:04:07,490 --> 01:04:12,710
food, even, that she had
taken from her own not very

1067
01:04:12,710 --> 01:04:15,590
generous rations.

1068
01:04:15,590 --> 01:04:23,090
And she owned a primitive
weekend cottage in a village

1069
01:04:23,090 --> 01:04:28,880
about roughly 35 miles
southeast of Berlin.

1070
01:04:28,880 --> 01:04:33,920
And all I knew was that
she owned that place.

1071
01:04:33,920 --> 01:04:36,110
I had never been there,
what it was like, or so.

1072
01:04:36,110 --> 01:04:38,690
But I went to her.

1073
01:04:38,690 --> 01:04:44,000
And of course, I told her also
that my parents and sister

1074
01:04:44,000 --> 01:04:46,910
had been arrested.

1075
01:04:46,910 --> 01:04:51,860
And I told her that whether
we could make some arrangement

1076
01:04:51,860 --> 01:04:55,250
that I and also a family
of friends there--

1077
01:04:55,250 --> 01:04:58,040
that's the couple
and her daughter--

1078
01:04:58,040 --> 01:05:00,380
could live in that cottage.

1079
01:05:00,380 --> 01:05:05,330
And she said that
because my father

1080
01:05:05,330 --> 01:05:07,970
was such a marvelous
boss for decades for her,

1081
01:05:07,970 --> 01:05:12,200
and she also considered herself
as a friend of the family,

1082
01:05:12,200 --> 01:05:15,840
that she would do
anything to save my life.

1083

01:05:15,840 --> 01:05:17,810
On the other hand,
she wasn't so sure

1084
01:05:17,810 --> 01:05:21,350
whether that cottage
really was the right place.

1085
01:05:21,350 --> 01:05:24,680
And she repeated again
that it was very primitive.

1086
01:05:24,680 --> 01:05:27,780
And maybe we ought
to look at it.

1087
01:05:27,780 --> 01:05:31,550
So first of all, of
course, I introduced her

1088
01:05:31,550 --> 01:05:34,650
to Margot's parents.

1089
01:05:34,650 --> 01:05:38,300
I think it was even the next
day we all went to her apartment

1090
01:05:38,300 --> 01:05:40,850
and sort of got acquainted.

1091
01:05:40,850 --> 01:05:46,490
And then we agreed on a day when
we would together travel out

1092
01:05:46,490 --> 01:05:48,980
and look at the place.

1093
01:05:48,980 --> 01:05:52,220
She said she hadn't been
there even for a year or two,

1094
01:05:52,220 --> 01:05:58,550
and maybe in a

fairly rundown state.

1095

01:05:58,550 --> 01:05:59,900

So we went out there.

1096

01:05:59,900 --> 01:06:05,510

And it was sort of a settlement.

1097

01:06:05,510 --> 01:06:09,560

This is sort of a

German custom, actually,

1098

01:06:09,560 --> 01:06:13,400

that there were

settlements of colonies--

1099

01:06:13,400 --> 01:06:18,710

sort of colonies of cottages

with very small pieces

1100

01:06:18,710 --> 01:06:19,970

of land-- like gardens--

1101

01:06:19,970 --> 01:06:25,370

around them, which sort of,

say, lower middle class Germans

1102

01:06:25,370 --> 01:06:31,430

would own to have a place

to go there on weekends.

1103

01:06:31,430 --> 01:06:38,720

And so we went there

and looked at the place.

1104

01:06:38,720 --> 01:06:41,280

It was, again, a

cold winter day.

1105

01:06:41,280 --> 01:06:46,880

And the first thing we noticed

was that the roof was leaking

1106

01:06:46,880 --> 01:06:50,120
and the cottage was
really very primitive.

1107

01:06:50,120 --> 01:06:52,980
There was, of course,
no inside running water.

1108

01:06:52,980 --> 01:06:56,930
There was a pump in front
of the house in the garden.

1109

01:06:56,930 --> 01:06:58,790
And of course, there
was no electricity.

1110

01:06:58,790 --> 01:07:01,850
There was an oil lamp
there, but for that, one

1111

01:07:01,850 --> 01:07:07,460
had to buy sort of a particular
kind of petroleum, which

1112

01:07:07,460 --> 01:07:10,400
was almost impossible to get.

1113

01:07:10,400 --> 01:07:15,850
Or also one could use candles,
which also were hard to get.

1114

01:07:15,850 --> 01:07:19,940
And then for heating,
basically there

1115

01:07:19,940 --> 01:07:24,680
was a kitchen
stove, which served

1116

01:07:24,680 --> 01:07:28,880
both as a stove for heating
and as a stove for cooking.

1117

01:07:28,880 --> 01:07:39,410

It was sort of a cast iron sort
of rectangular body on cast

1118

01:07:39,410 --> 01:07:40,700

iron legs.

1119

01:07:40,700 --> 01:07:45,920

And on top, there were sort of
concentric rings of iron, which

1120

01:07:45,920 --> 01:07:49,670

could be taken out, and
pots of different sizes

1121

01:07:49,670 --> 01:07:54,920

put in there to heat
things and cook things.

1122

01:07:54,920 --> 01:07:56,750

And that was all there was.

1123

01:07:56,750 --> 01:07:59,310

And the furniture, I
guess, was very primitive.

1124

01:07:59,310 --> 01:08:03,725

There were two rooms
and a sort of a veranda.

1125

01:08:03,725 --> 01:08:06,930

1126

01:08:06,930 --> 01:08:10,650

But we were desperate.

1127

01:08:10,650 --> 01:08:17,970

So anyway, we said we
would have to make do.

1128

01:08:17,970 --> 01:08:21,240

And she agreed to let

us have the place.

1129
01:08:21,240 --> 01:08:27,090
And of course, she
impressed on us the need

1130
01:08:27,090 --> 01:08:28,529
to be extremely careful.

1131
01:08:28,529 --> 01:08:31,160

1132
01:08:31,160 --> 01:08:34,380
But I mean, we were
aware of that ourselves.

1133
01:08:34,380 --> 01:08:36,720
Our punishment would
have been Auschwitz if we

1134
01:08:36,720 --> 01:08:38,500
would have been not careful.

1135
01:08:38,500 --> 01:08:39,840
It would have been discovered.

1136
01:08:39,840 --> 01:08:44,279
And she would have
probably also wound up

1137
01:08:44,279 --> 01:08:46,290
in a concentration camp.

1138
01:08:46,290 --> 01:08:47,069
And--

1139
01:08:47,069 --> 01:08:49,029
What about the neighbors?

1140
01:08:49,029 --> 01:08:49,529
Yeah.

1141

01:08:49,529 --> 01:08:50,580

I'm coming to that.

1142

01:08:50,580 --> 01:08:53,760

I mean, that was

just [INAUDIBLE]..

1143

01:08:53,760 --> 01:08:55,770

So she let it.

1144

01:08:55,770 --> 01:08:58,229

And she didn't take--

1145

01:08:58,229 --> 01:09:00,270

she took a small rent.

1146

01:09:00,270 --> 01:09:03,069

I forgot what it

was anymore, maybe

1147

01:09:03,069 --> 01:09:06,340

it was the order of 40

to 50 mark per month,

1148

01:09:06,340 --> 01:09:08,100

which at that time was nothing.

1149

01:09:08,100 --> 01:09:11,370

And the garden,

incidentally, contained

1150

01:09:11,370 --> 01:09:15,359

a number of marvelous fruit

trees, some cherry and also

1151

01:09:15,359 --> 01:09:16,830

plum trees.

1152

01:09:16,830 --> 01:09:21,330

And she told us we

could use the harvest.

1153

01:09:21,330 --> 01:09:26,310

And the harvest was so rich
that, in terms of black market

1154

01:09:26,310 --> 01:09:32,670

money, that was almost
more than the 40 or 50 mark

1155

01:09:32,670 --> 01:09:34,790

that we paid her for the rent.

1156

01:09:34,790 --> 01:09:39,689

1157

01:09:39,689 --> 01:09:40,600

Yeah, OK.

1158

01:09:40,600 --> 01:09:45,300

So then that was agreed upon.

1159

01:09:45,300 --> 01:09:48,390

And then we decided we
would move out there

1160

01:09:48,390 --> 01:09:50,040

as soon as possible.

1161

01:09:50,040 --> 01:09:53,430

I mean, you know, we had
to settle certain affairs.

1162

01:09:53,430 --> 01:09:54,090

Well, I didn't.

1163

01:09:54,090 --> 01:09:55,650

I was out of our apartment.

1164

01:09:55,650 --> 01:09:56,740

And that was it.

1165

01:09:56,740 --> 01:09:58,800

And everything in
there was gone,

1166
01:09:58,800 --> 01:10:00,540
as far as I was concerned.

1167
01:10:00,540 --> 01:10:04,780
But the only things I
had taken, of course,

1168
01:10:04,780 --> 01:10:08,190
personal items like
clothing along already

1169
01:10:08,190 --> 01:10:12,960
to the maid's room at
Margot's parents' house.

1170
01:10:12,960 --> 01:10:17,340
So I was all set
up to move there.

1171
01:10:17,340 --> 01:10:20,080
But they had to pack
their things yet.

1172
01:10:20,080 --> 01:10:23,710
And that took a few days.

1173
01:10:23,710 --> 01:10:30,700
And then actually, on the
30th of January, 1943,

1174
01:10:30,700 --> 01:10:33,520
we moved out to that--
the name of the village,

1175
01:10:33,520 --> 01:10:36,650
incidentally, was Senzig.

1176
01:10:36,650 --> 01:10:44,800
S-E-N-Z-I-G. And now a
completely different life

1177
01:10:44,800 --> 01:10:45,880
started for us.

1178
01:10:45,880 --> 01:10:50,200
I considered it at the
time a real adventure.

1179
01:10:50,200 --> 01:10:56,110
First of all, I was finally
off that continuous pressure

1180
01:10:56,110 --> 01:11:00,580
that was increasing by the
month of whether to be picked up

1181
01:11:00,580 --> 01:11:02,500
and to be deported.

1182
01:11:02,500 --> 01:11:07,890
And I felt for the first time
in years like a free person.

1183
01:11:07,890 --> 01:11:14,260
And I also felt that I somehow
I want control of my life

1184
01:11:14,260 --> 01:11:16,270
now, which I wasn't before.

1185
01:11:16,270 --> 01:11:23,230
And furthermore, I mean,
the threat was lifted.

1186
01:11:23,230 --> 01:11:27,010
And I could do what
I wanted to do.

1187
01:11:27,010 --> 01:11:28,360
Not exactly, actually.

1188
01:11:28,360 --> 01:11:33,720

But at least in a limited way.

1189

01:11:33,720 --> 01:11:37,630

Yeah, there were obviously many,
many things now to consider.

1190

01:11:37,630 --> 01:11:40,350

The first item was money.

1191

01:11:40,350 --> 01:11:45,070

I have to, again, sort of
backtrack a little bit.

1192

01:11:45,070 --> 01:11:49,300

My father had stored
away some what

1193

01:11:49,300 --> 01:11:55,510

was called black money in
the years before his arrest,

1194

01:11:55,510 --> 01:12:01,150

because all Jewish assets, even
if they were not confiscated,

1195

01:12:01,150 --> 01:12:05,410

were blocked by the German
authority, basically

1196

01:12:05,410 --> 01:12:12,400

the German equivalent of the
IRS, the Treasury Department.

1197

01:12:12,400 --> 01:12:14,800

That meant that
these assets still

1198

01:12:14,800 --> 01:12:18,100

belonged to the
particular Jewish owner,

1199

01:12:18,100 --> 01:12:22,000

but he could not-- he

or she could not freely

1200
01:12:22,000 --> 01:12:23,290
dispose of them.

1201
01:12:23,290 --> 01:12:27,610
Each family had-- was
given by the Gestapo

1202
01:12:27,610 --> 01:12:32,110
a maximum amount of money
it could spend per month.

1203
01:12:32,110 --> 01:12:35,650
And that was all from
the bank account.

1204
01:12:35,650 --> 01:12:39,070
Obviously, that was all in
preparation for confiscation.

1205
01:12:39,070 --> 01:12:42,700
They wanted to prevent
the Jews stash away money.

1206
01:12:42,700 --> 01:12:46,780
And that was based entirely
on the size of the family.

1207
01:12:46,780 --> 01:12:49,990
Like, we were four people, so I
don't know what the amount was.

1208
01:12:49,990 --> 01:12:53,830
But my father had a
certain amount of money--

1209
01:12:53,830 --> 01:12:56,410
maximum amount that
you could spend.

1210
01:12:56,410 --> 01:12:59,350
And anything that

he sold or so on

1211

01:12:59,350 --> 01:13:03,070
had to be paid into that
blocked account, also.

1212

01:13:03,070 --> 01:13:06,040
But my father did
particularly, at the time when

1213

01:13:06,040 --> 01:13:10,420
our big apartment
was given up, he

1214

01:13:10,420 --> 01:13:15,640
sold many items under the hand
and established black accounts

1215

01:13:15,640 --> 01:13:17,320
with a number of friends--

1216

01:13:17,320 --> 01:13:18,910
basically three.

1217

01:13:18,910 --> 01:13:20,920
Two of them were former--

1218

01:13:20,920 --> 01:13:21,640
no.

1219

01:13:21,640 --> 01:13:24,700
One of them was a former client.

1220

01:13:24,700 --> 01:13:27,040
That was a very
interesting man whom I

1221

01:13:27,040 --> 01:13:28,960
talk about a little bit later.

1222

01:13:28,960 --> 01:13:30,820
He was a furrier.

1223
01:13:30,820 --> 01:13:35,290
And in fact, he had the largest
and most prominent fur business

1224
01:13:35,290 --> 01:13:36,790
in Berlin.

1225
01:13:36,790 --> 01:13:38,920
One of his customers,
in fact, was

1226
01:13:38,920 --> 01:13:43,030
none other than Hermann
Goring, one of the top Nazis

1227
01:13:43,030 --> 01:13:47,080
and commander in chief
of the Air Force,

1228
01:13:47,080 --> 01:13:50,980
in addition to many other
offices that he held.

1229
01:13:50,980 --> 01:13:55,930
And his name was
Walter [? Lange. ?]

1230
01:13:55,930 --> 01:14:01,900
And in fact, he
had a Jewish wife.

1231
01:14:01,900 --> 01:14:08,300
And he told us that
Goring called him up

1232
01:14:08,300 --> 01:14:12,050
in the summer of
1939 telling him,

1233
01:14:12,050 --> 01:14:16,520
if you want your wife to
be safe, get her out now.

1234

01:14:16,520 --> 01:14:20,210

And I'll see to it that anything
that she wants to take out,

1235

01:14:20,210 --> 01:14:20,930

she can.

1236

01:14:20,930 --> 01:14:24,770

At that time, an ordinary
Jew who emigrated

1237

01:14:24,770 --> 01:14:29,400

could take out only very limited
amounts of valuables and so on.

1238

01:14:29,400 --> 01:14:33,860

And he shipped his wife
out with, I don't know,

1239

01:14:33,860 --> 01:14:37,850

oriental rugs and other
valuables to England.

1240

01:14:37,850 --> 01:14:41,270

And they had a son, by
the way, and the son also.

1241

01:14:41,270 --> 01:14:45,440

And so they were now
in safety in England--

1242

01:14:45,440 --> 01:14:48,440

safety except for
German air raids, maybe.

1243

01:14:48,440 --> 01:14:51,110

But of course, he conducted--

1244

01:14:51,110 --> 01:14:54,070

kept conducting his business.

1245

01:14:54,070 --> 01:15:00,700
And I forgot what the exact
amounts of money were,

1246
01:15:00,700 --> 01:15:02,920
but it was a fairly
sizable amount

1247
01:15:02,920 --> 01:15:06,200
that he kept in a separate
account for my father.

1248
01:15:06,200 --> 01:15:09,130
And my father had told
him and also the others

1249
01:15:09,130 --> 01:15:12,550
that if anything
happened to him, then

1250
01:15:12,550 --> 01:15:15,650
I should have access
to these assets.

1251
01:15:15,650 --> 01:15:21,790
The second person was actually
the father of the German lawyer

1252
01:15:21,790 --> 01:15:23,800
whom I had mentioned
earlier, who

1253
01:15:23,800 --> 01:15:28,510
had warned my father
of his imminent arrest

1254
01:15:28,510 --> 01:15:30,280
after Kristallnacht.

1255
01:15:30,280 --> 01:15:31,900
And I think I
mentioned at the time

1256

01:15:31,900 --> 01:15:34,840
that the father
of this lawyer had

1257
01:15:34,840 --> 01:15:39,100
been a minister of
the interior in one

1258
01:15:39,100 --> 01:15:43,530
of the pre-Hitler governments
of the Weimar Republic.

1259
01:15:43,530 --> 01:15:46,870
The son, the lawyer himself,
who had warned my father,

1260
01:15:46,870 --> 01:15:49,180
was by that time, of
course, drafted and was

1261
01:15:49,180 --> 01:15:51,610
an officer in the Wehrmacht.

1262
01:15:51,610 --> 01:15:55,120
But the father was
an elderly gentleman.

1263
01:15:55,120 --> 01:16:00,880
And he kept also a sizable
amount of money for my father,

1264
01:16:00,880 --> 01:16:04,960
and also was informed
that I should have access

1265
01:16:04,960 --> 01:16:07,080
to these assets.

1266
01:16:07,080 --> 01:16:13,200
The third person was my father's
former accountant and tax

1267
01:16:13,200 --> 01:16:14,400

advisor.

1268

01:16:14,400 --> 01:16:18,660

He actually had the
smallest amount, but also--

1269

01:16:18,660 --> 01:16:22,900

I think it was somewhere
between 5,000 and 10,000

1270

01:16:22,900 --> 01:16:28,005

Deutsche Reichsmarch, which was,
at that time, fairly sizable.

1271

01:16:28,005 --> 01:16:31,820

1272

01:16:31,820 --> 01:16:36,530

The interesting thing is that he
was the only one who cheated me

1273

01:16:36,530 --> 01:16:37,640

of the money.

1274

01:16:37,640 --> 01:16:41,030

Obviously because of the
danger for them and for us,

1275

01:16:41,030 --> 01:16:43,490

no receipts were exchanged.

1276

01:16:43,490 --> 01:16:46,490

I mean, it was all
just by word of honor.

1277

01:16:46,490 --> 01:16:50,600

And when I came to claim,
actually, part of the money,

1278

01:16:50,600 --> 01:16:52,970

he told me with
a straight face--

1279

01:16:52,970 --> 01:16:54,950

and in fact, that
was at the time

1280

01:16:54,950 --> 01:16:57,500

when my father was still
in the transit camp.

1281

01:16:57,500 --> 01:17:00,080

And he told me-- and it
was a straight face--

1282

01:17:00,080 --> 01:17:06,140

that unfortunately, my father
did not follow his advice

1283

01:17:06,140 --> 01:17:08,850

to let them keep the money.

1284

01:17:08,850 --> 01:17:12,320

But he picked the money up
about three, four months ago.

1285

01:17:12,320 --> 01:17:18,340

And he advised my father
that it was not a good idea

1286

01:17:18,340 --> 01:17:20,080

and that he should--

1287

01:17:20,080 --> 01:17:22,400

it would be better for
the safety of the money

1288

01:17:22,400 --> 01:17:25,260

if he would keep the money.

1289

01:17:25,260 --> 01:17:32,000