

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:08,109

2

00:00:08,109 --> 00:00:12,790

Isaac, when we-- the last  
part of the tape that we were

3

00:00:12,790 --> 00:00:16,270

on a few minutes  
ago, you were getting

4

00:00:16,270 --> 00:00:19,480

on top of the  
flatbedded truck that

5

00:00:19,480 --> 00:00:21,370

had all of this material on it.

6

00:00:21,370 --> 00:00:23,890

And I gather that these  
trucks were always

7

00:00:23,890 --> 00:00:25,450

going to the mountains.

8

00:00:25,450 --> 00:00:26,750

I mean, did they-- or not?

9

00:00:26,750 --> 00:00:27,250

No.

10

00:00:27,250 --> 00:00:28,270

Not to the mountains.

11

00:00:28,270 --> 00:00:33,460

They were essentially  
traveling from Athens

12

00:00:33,460 --> 00:00:36,000

to various towns or cities.

13

00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:38,740

14

00:00:38,740 --> 00:00:41,440

And some of them, of course,  
were also in other directions

15

00:00:41,440 --> 00:00:42,850

from--

16

00:00:42,850 --> 00:00:45,010

between other cities.

17

00:00:45,010 --> 00:00:47,230

It was primarily commerce,  
because there were no--

18

00:00:47,230 --> 00:00:50,560

at that time, there were no--

19

00:00:50,560 --> 00:00:52,450

I don't even know,  
highways, as we know it--

20

00:00:52,450 --> 00:00:56,890

but even routes that  
an ordinary truck even

21

00:00:56,890 --> 00:00:58,720

with powerful engines  
could possibly

22

00:00:58,720 --> 00:01:02,940

negotiate to go up mountains.

23

00:01:02,940 --> 00:01:05,850

And so who's-- besides you--

24

00:01:05,850 --> 00:01:06,820

And Thanassis.

25

00:01:06,820 --> 00:01:08,700  
--and Thanassis, who--

26  
00:01:08,700 --> 00:01:12,750  
People, villagers-- People  
would travel, I imagine.

27  
00:01:12,750 --> 00:01:18,780  
Because especially with the  
advent of the black market--

28  
00:01:18,780 --> 00:01:23,100  
or let's call it the  
underground market, right--

29  
00:01:23,100 --> 00:01:25,800  
the villagers would bring  
things that obviously

30  
00:01:25,800 --> 00:01:28,440  
are important to Athens--

31  
00:01:28,440 --> 00:01:30,450  
food primarily.

32  
00:01:30,450 --> 00:01:34,680  
And in turn, they would exchange  
it for goods of all kinds.

33  
00:01:34,680 --> 00:01:39,900  
I think principally  
textiles, occasionally

34  
00:01:39,900 --> 00:01:44,620  
some light machinery that  
existed at that time.

35  
00:01:44,620 --> 00:01:46,470  
So it was primarily  
a commercial thing.

36  
00:01:46,470 --> 00:01:50,970  
Of course, you had

also-- excuse me--

37

00:01:50,970 --> 00:01:55,770

not tourists but passengers  
who visited relatives

38

00:01:55,770 --> 00:01:58,060

in Athens or vice versa.

39

00:01:58,060 --> 00:02:00,100

These are generally  
the [INAUDIBLE]

40

00:02:00,100 --> 00:02:05,950

But I think all the buses,  
if I can call them that way

41

00:02:05,950 --> 00:02:11,110

that I saw at that time, because  
they were so laden with goods

42

00:02:11,110 --> 00:02:14,230

and because it was  
so expensive, they

43

00:02:14,230 --> 00:02:18,010

wanted to make sure that  
cargo would be transported

44

00:02:18,010 --> 00:02:20,380

as well as passengers.

45

00:02:20,380 --> 00:02:23,005

Did you have an ID  
card of some kind?

46

00:02:23,005 --> 00:02:26,830

Ah, that's important,  
very interesting.

47

00:02:26,830 --> 00:02:30,690

It was necessary  
for me to get an ID.

48  
00:02:30,690 --> 00:02:34,080  
Before the German  
takeover of Athens,

49  
00:02:34,080 --> 00:02:37,980  
I had an ID with my real name.

50  
00:02:37,980 --> 00:02:45,030  
But now I had to get a  
Greek identity-- that's

51  
00:02:45,030 --> 00:02:48,720  
to say, a Christian  
Orthodox identity.

52  
00:02:48,720 --> 00:02:51,360

53  
00:02:51,360 --> 00:02:55,170  
Thanassis had a friend  
who was a policeman.

54  
00:02:55,170 --> 00:03:01,890  
And I guess he was trustworthy  
enough to ask him to help

55  
00:03:01,890 --> 00:03:04,710  
me get an identity card.

56  
00:03:04,710 --> 00:03:09,400  
He was able to get the card  
detail if I gave him a photo.

57  
00:03:09,400 --> 00:03:12,100  
And he did the appropriate  
thing of pasting

58  
00:03:12,100 --> 00:03:13,810  
the photograph in the  
appropriate place,

59

00:03:13,810 --> 00:03:16,990  
plus filling out all  
the other things.

60  
00:03:16,990 --> 00:03:20,140  
But there was one  
thing that had to be

61  
00:03:20,140 --> 00:03:22,420  
done to which he had no access.

62  
00:03:22,420 --> 00:03:26,500  
And the last thing was  
that the seal was embossed.

63  
00:03:26,500 --> 00:03:31,110  
But that seal was  
only at headquarters.

64  
00:03:31,110 --> 00:03:35,400  
So having no access there,  
he told me, I regret it,

65  
00:03:35,400 --> 00:03:39,130  
but I cannot get you  
anything more than that.

66  
00:03:39,130 --> 00:03:43,080  
So before embarking on my  
trip, I took an old coin--

67  
00:03:43,080 --> 00:03:47,240  
a pre-war 5 drachma piece.

68  
00:03:47,240 --> 00:03:50,480  
And I put it at the  
corner of the photograph

69  
00:03:50,480 --> 00:03:55,580  
and hammered it, so that  
it left an impression.

70  
00:03:55,580 --> 00:03:59,420

Because the coin in its  
face had embossed letters.

71  
00:03:59,420 --> 00:04:04,880  
I'm sure it said  
[NON-ENGLISH] Greek Republic.

72  
00:04:04,880 --> 00:04:06,360  
But it had to be some semblance.

73  
00:04:06,360 --> 00:04:10,780  
So I think it would not have  
withstood the scrutiny, even

74  
00:04:10,780 --> 00:04:12,100  
by an amateur.

75  
00:04:12,100 --> 00:04:20,620  
But fortunately, the only two  
checkpoints we went through--

76  
00:04:20,620 --> 00:04:23,350  
after leaving Athens to  
my eventual destination

77  
00:04:23,350 --> 00:04:26,050  
in Karditsa in Thessaly.

78  
00:04:26,050 --> 00:04:27,730  
It was during a driving rain.

79  
00:04:27,730 --> 00:04:30,970  
We were, of course,  
entirely soaked to the bone

80  
00:04:30,970 --> 00:04:33,370  
on top of those trucks.

81  
00:04:33,370 --> 00:04:36,220  
But by the same  
token, the guards--

82

00:04:36,220 --> 00:04:40,150  
which were Germans  
with Greek police--

83  
00:04:40,150 --> 00:04:43,840  
didn't pay that much attention.

84  
00:04:43,840 --> 00:04:46,570  
So I didn't have  
to do what I had

85  
00:04:46,570 --> 00:04:49,150  
promised my father I would do.

86  
00:04:49,150 --> 00:04:52,270  
Now, Nehama must have  
been clearly a Jewish--

87  
00:04:52,270 --> 00:04:52,840  
Oh yes.

88  
00:04:52,840 --> 00:04:53,800  
--name, right?

89  
00:04:53,800 --> 00:04:55,960  
So it would have  
been too noticeable.

90  
00:04:55,960 --> 00:04:56,620  
Oh yes.

91  
00:04:56,620 --> 00:05:00,400  
My Greek name on  
that fake identity

92  
00:05:00,400 --> 00:05:07,240  
was Giannis Democritus,  
which is a rather famous name

93  
00:05:07,240 --> 00:05:08,840  
of a Greek philosopher.

94



00:05:08,840 --> 00:05:12,190

In fact, the first  
one to declare,

95

00:05:12,190 --> 00:05:16,150

on no evidence at all  
other than his mind,

96

00:05:16,150 --> 00:05:18,460

the existence of an atom.

97

00:05:18,460 --> 00:05:18,960

Right.

98

00:05:18,960 --> 00:05:21,640

99

00:05:21,640 --> 00:05:22,150

All right.

100

00:05:22,150 --> 00:05:24,610

So you're on this--

101

00:05:24,610 --> 00:05:26,650

you go through two  
checkpoints, so you

102

00:05:26,650 --> 00:05:30,190

don't have to run away the  
way your father has suggested

103

00:05:30,190 --> 00:05:31,480

you do if there's a problem.

104

00:05:31,480 --> 00:05:34,780

Because, you know, those  
trucks-- as I think

105

00:05:34,780 --> 00:05:36,620

mentioned possibly  
in the last tape--

106

00:05:36,620 --> 00:05:39,880  
they were not driven  
by a gasoline engine

107  
00:05:39,880 --> 00:05:42,640  
but by burning wood.

108  
00:05:42,640 --> 00:05:46,240  
So they didn't have  
that much of power.

109  
00:05:46,240 --> 00:05:49,990  
So it's rather a long trip.

110  
00:05:49,990 --> 00:05:56,710  
And because of the rain, we then  
had to stop en route in a town

111  
00:05:56,710 --> 00:06:00,460  
called Lamia, which  
is a sizable town.

112  
00:06:00,460 --> 00:06:02,830  
So we stopped there  
for the night.

113  
00:06:02,830 --> 00:06:06,610  
And where did you  
stay that night?

114  
00:06:06,610 --> 00:06:08,290  
Well, we arrived.

115  
00:06:08,290 --> 00:06:12,500  
And because we were soaked,  
the first thing we thought

116  
00:06:12,500 --> 00:06:13,900  
was to dry ourselves.

117  
00:06:13,900 --> 00:06:18,790  
So next to the station where  
we stopped-- if we can call it

118  
00:06:18,790 --> 00:06:20,530  
a bus station--  
was a restaurant.

119  
00:06:20,530 --> 00:06:21,820  
We were very hungry.

120  
00:06:21,820 --> 00:06:26,140  
So we went there and really  
stood near the kitchen,

121  
00:06:26,140 --> 00:06:27,550  
so we could--

122  
00:06:27,550 --> 00:06:30,220  
the heat would dry our clothes.

123  
00:06:30,220 --> 00:06:33,670  
And then we were ready  
to go out after the meal

124  
00:06:33,670 --> 00:06:39,460  
to find a place to stay, a  
hotel if such a thing existed.

125  
00:06:39,460 --> 00:06:41,350  
But then they told  
us in the restaurant

126  
00:06:41,350 --> 00:06:45,990  
that in five minutes,  
the curfew began.

127  
00:06:45,990 --> 00:06:49,110  
And it was patrolled  
by German patrols.

128  
00:06:49,110 --> 00:06:55,660  
And you shouldn't be found  
out walking after curfew time.

129

00:06:55,660 --> 00:06:57,000  
So who do we call?

130  
00:06:57,000 --> 00:06:58,420  
We had no place to go.

131  
00:06:58,420 --> 00:07:07,150  
But next to the restaurant  
was I think the one and only

132  
00:07:07,150 --> 00:07:09,260  
bordello in town.

133  
00:07:09,260 --> 00:07:11,380  
So that's where we ended up.

134  
00:07:11,380 --> 00:07:13,950

135  
00:07:13,950 --> 00:07:18,660  
So just because it's  
a little bit funny,

136  
00:07:18,660 --> 00:07:19,692  
what is the situation?

137  
00:07:19,692 --> 00:07:21,150  
You go and you say,  
we're two kids.

138  
00:07:21,150 --> 00:07:22,287  
We have no place to stay.

139  
00:07:22,287 --> 00:07:23,370  
Will you let to stay here.

140  
00:07:23,370 --> 00:07:24,453  
Is that what you end up--?

141  
00:07:24,453 --> 00:07:26,310  
Well, they welcome you.

142

00:07:26,310 --> 00:07:29,550

Of course, you are  
obliged to take a girl.

143

00:07:29,550 --> 00:07:30,900

Ah, yes.

144

00:07:30,900 --> 00:07:31,530

Really?

145

00:07:31,530 --> 00:07:32,500

Well, sure.

146

00:07:32,500 --> 00:07:34,690

Otherwise, you--  
they've got [? along ?]

147

00:07:34,690 --> 00:07:35,910

for the entire night.

148

00:07:35,910 --> 00:07:38,730

I mean, they knew that, of  
course, the curfew had started.

149

00:07:38,730 --> 00:07:43,770

And so the price was  
appropriate, ha, ha,

150

00:07:43,770 --> 00:07:45,275

for a whole night.

151

00:07:45,275 --> 00:07:47,980

152

00:07:47,980 --> 00:07:49,720

So this is a new experience?

153

00:07:49,720 --> 00:07:50,890

Yes.

154

00:07:50,890 --> 00:07:51,390

Right.

155  
00:07:51,390 --> 00:07:52,656  
[CHUCKLING]

156  
00:07:52,656 --> 00:07:53,500

157  
00:07:53,500 --> 00:07:55,420  
And you spent one night there.

158  
00:07:55,420 --> 00:07:56,290  
Yes.

159  
00:07:56,290 --> 00:07:58,330  
Did they feed you  
breakfast in the morning?

160  
00:07:58,330 --> 00:07:59,200  
Feed who?

161  
00:07:59,200 --> 00:08:00,220  
No, no, no.

162  
00:08:00,220 --> 00:08:01,180  
At the place?

163  
00:08:01,180 --> 00:08:01,990  
No, no, no.

164  
00:08:01,990 --> 00:08:09,490  
We just-- we knew-- we were  
told that the bus people would

165  
00:08:09,490 --> 00:08:10,480  
come around.

166  
00:08:10,480 --> 00:08:13,570  
Because they knew some people  
probably were there drifting.

167

00:08:13,570 --> 00:08:16,720

And because they  
wanted to start early.

168

00:08:16,720 --> 00:08:18,940

So we left around 7:00.

169

00:08:18,940 --> 00:08:22,022

And first of all, I  
think that probably you

170

00:08:22,022 --> 00:08:24,610

know that in the  
Balkan countries,

171

00:08:24,610 --> 00:08:28,390

generally people  
don't have breakfast.

172

00:08:28,390 --> 00:08:32,006

If they have, they may  
have a cup of coffee.

173

00:08:32,006 --> 00:08:33,339

I don't know if we had anything.

174

00:08:33,339 --> 00:08:38,409

So we just got on the  
bus s on the truck.

175

00:08:38,409 --> 00:08:42,429

And by the end of  
that second day,

176

00:08:42,429 --> 00:08:44,470

we arrived at our destination--

177

00:08:44,470 --> 00:08:46,710

Karditsa.

178

00:08:46,710 --> 00:08:48,077

And then what happened?

179

00:08:48,077 --> 00:08:48,660

And then you--

180

00:08:48,660 --> 00:08:50,780

Well, we alighted,  
and we got off.

181

00:08:50,780 --> 00:08:53,530

Now for us, it was the end.

182

00:08:53,530 --> 00:08:59,450

And nearby was--  
there near Karditsa,

183

00:08:59,450 --> 00:09:04,640

although it was not part of,  
quote, "free Greece," unquote.

184

00:09:04,640 --> 00:09:08,330

But it was near enough the  
foothills of the mountains

185

00:09:08,330 --> 00:09:15,280

that there had been no Italian  
or German presence in Karditsa.

186

00:09:15,280 --> 00:09:18,050

At least voluntarily,  
they had left it.

187

00:09:18,050 --> 00:09:19,520

But it doesn't mean--

188

00:09:19,520 --> 00:09:23,750

but still it was on  
the plains of Thessaly.

189

00:09:23,750 --> 00:09:27,750

It was not occupied by  
the partisans either.

190

00:09:27,750 --> 00:09:31,420



So let's call it  
a no-man's land.

191  
00:09:31,420 --> 00:09:38,010  
So we looked around, and  
we struck up a conversation

192  
00:09:38,010 --> 00:09:40,440  
with the teacher--

193  
00:09:40,440 --> 00:09:48,300  
a teacher in one of the schools  
in Karditsa And Thanassis,] who

194  
00:09:48,300 --> 00:09:51,910  
had a specific  
destination in mind,

195  
00:09:51,910 --> 00:09:56,020  
I think very quickly  
asked the teacher--

196  
00:09:56,020 --> 00:09:58,630  
we want to go and join Zervas.

197  
00:09:58,630 --> 00:10:02,260  
So where do we go to do that?

198  
00:10:02,260 --> 00:10:08,130  
The teacher said, Zervas  
was around this area,

199  
00:10:08,130 --> 00:10:10,050  
but that's a few months ago.

200  
00:10:10,050 --> 00:10:13,080  
And there's been some  
fighting with ELAS,

201  
00:10:13,080 --> 00:10:16,590  
in other words, the other side.

202

00:10:16,590 --> 00:10:22,380  
And I'm afraid that the nearest  
place that you can find Zervas

203  
00:10:22,380 --> 00:10:27,150  
was Epirus, which is near  
the Albanian border, which

204  
00:10:27,150 --> 00:10:31,140  
was very far away and  
totally beyond our means,

205  
00:10:31,140 --> 00:10:35,770  
even if we could find  
transport to go there.

206  
00:10:35,770 --> 00:10:39,490  
We didn't discuss it very  
much more at that time.

207  
00:10:39,490 --> 00:10:43,330  
And the teacher was  
really kind enough--

208  
00:10:43,330 --> 00:10:45,760  
we didn't even ask  
him, but he offered

209  
00:10:45,760 --> 00:10:49,270  
to let us stay in  
his house overnight.

210  
00:10:49,270 --> 00:10:52,990  
And we could decide what to  
do the following morning.

211  
00:10:52,990 --> 00:10:58,135  
So he offered us food and  
lodging without payment.

212  
00:10:58,135 --> 00:11:01,370

213

00:11:01,370 --> 00:11:05,670

We got up the following day,  
Thanassis apparently having

214

00:11:05,670 --> 00:11:09,960

reflected on the situation.

215

00:11:09,960 --> 00:11:14,170

And he really didn't  
give me many reasons.

216

00:11:14,170 --> 00:11:19,390

But he said to me very clearly,  
I really cannot proceed any

217

00:11:19,390 --> 00:11:20,860

further.

218

00:11:20,860 --> 00:11:23,470

I understand that in your case--

219

00:11:23,470 --> 00:11:26,590

because the only other choice  
that was available is to join

220

00:11:26,590 --> 00:11:32,500

ELAS, who were only 30 or 40  
kilometers away from Kalavryta.

221

00:11:32,500 --> 00:11:34,900

I understand your  
situation, but I cannot.

222

00:11:34,900 --> 00:11:38,800

And I will therefore  
return to Athens.

223

00:11:38,800 --> 00:11:40,690

But he had no more money.

224

00:11:40,690 --> 00:11:43,890

I had no money left.

225

00:11:43,890 --> 00:11:46,160

We embraced.

226

00:11:46,160 --> 00:11:48,920

I thanked him.

227

00:11:48,920 --> 00:11:53,630

We took-- we leave  
of each other.

228

00:11:53,630 --> 00:12:00,182

And I mentally visually still  
remember seeing him walking.

229

00:12:00,182 --> 00:12:01,890

Because either the  
directions, you really

230

00:12:01,890 --> 00:12:03,080

wouldn't take a highway.

231

00:12:03,080 --> 00:12:05,240

There was no such  
thing or a route.

232

00:12:05,240 --> 00:12:07,370

So he's following the  
railroad tracks, right?

233

00:12:07,370 --> 00:12:11,960

I see the railroad tracks  
and Thanassis walking.

234

00:12:11,960 --> 00:12:20,480

It's like the end of a movie  
as it fades in the background.

235

00:12:20,480 --> 00:12:23,310

So I then ask the--

236

00:12:23,310 --> 00:12:23,810

If I may--

237  
00:12:23,810 --> 00:12:24,560  
I'm sorry, yes.

238  
00:12:24,560 --> 00:12:28,600  
--before you move on, how do  
you understand his decision now?

239  
00:12:28,600 --> 00:12:30,680  
Do you think it was  
because he didn't want

240  
00:12:30,680 --> 00:12:33,230  
to join the communist group?

241  
00:12:33,230 --> 00:12:37,290  
He really was wanting  
to join the other--

242  
00:12:37,290 --> 00:12:38,450  
The former.

243  
00:12:38,450 --> 00:12:39,960  
But let's be careful.

244  
00:12:39,960 --> 00:12:42,470  
ELAS was not a communist group.

245  
00:12:42,470 --> 00:12:45,630  
It included, but it was  
not a communist group.

246  
00:12:45,630 --> 00:12:46,130  
Right.

247  
00:12:46,130 --> 00:12:46,630  
OK.

248  
00:12:46,630 --> 00:12:47,670  
Only for a--

249

00:12:47,670 --> 00:12:48,170  
Right.

250  
00:12:48,170 --> 00:12:48,290  
No, no.

251  
00:12:48,290 --> 00:12:48,998  
That's important.

252  
00:12:48,998 --> 00:12:51,200  
Uh.

253  
00:12:51,200 --> 00:12:51,700  
And--

254  
00:12:51,700 --> 00:12:53,620  
So it wasn't anti-communist.

255  
00:12:53,620 --> 00:12:54,400  
No.

256  
00:12:54,400 --> 00:12:56,120  
So then it would  
include communists.

257  
00:12:56,120 --> 00:12:57,010  
Right.

258  
00:12:57,010 --> 00:12:59,440  
It was a coalition  
of leftist parties.

259  
00:12:59,440 --> 00:13:03,910  
There's no question that it  
was dominated by the far left.

260  
00:13:03,910 --> 00:13:07,370  
Because they were the best  
organized group of resistance.

261  
00:13:07,370 --> 00:13:12,010  
But [INAUDIBLE] was

the political side.

262

00:13:12,010 --> 00:13:14,330

And ELAS was the military side.

263

00:13:14,330 --> 00:13:16,330

But they were a conglomeration.

264

00:13:16,330 --> 00:13:18,760

And I met lots of people  
who had nothing to do

265

00:13:18,760 --> 00:13:21,990

with the communists up there.

266

00:13:21,990 --> 00:13:25,590

Perhaps later on-- but it's  
appropriate now for me to tell

267

00:13:25,590 --> 00:13:26,280

you--

268

00:13:26,280 --> 00:13:29,460

because you asked me this  
question about Thanassis--

269

00:13:29,460 --> 00:13:34,650

that at the end of the war,  
when I returned to Athens,

270

00:13:34,650 --> 00:13:36,720

within a couple  
of weeks there was

271

00:13:36,720 --> 00:13:40,590

the so-called troubles between  
the central government,

272

00:13:40,590 --> 00:13:42,940

now liberated.

273

00:13:42,940 --> 00:13:45,280

And I had not even  
had the chance

274  
00:13:45,280 --> 00:13:49,150  
to visit him and his parents  
and thank them and tell them

275  
00:13:49,150 --> 00:13:51,980  
that I have survived and  
everything like that.

276  
00:13:51,980 --> 00:13:56,330  
Because this problem arose,  
where the streets now,

277  
00:13:56,330 --> 00:13:59,900  
the shooting going  
on between factions.

278  
00:13:59,900 --> 00:14:03,440  
And it was at the end of  
December after my return

279  
00:14:03,440 --> 00:14:05,510  
from concentration camp--

280  
00:14:05,510 --> 00:14:09,010  
the British concentration  
camp, this time--

281  
00:14:09,010 --> 00:14:11,260  
in Egypt that I  
learned that Thanassis

282  
00:14:11,260 --> 00:14:18,620  
was killed during this month of  
a couple of weeks of troubles.

283  
00:14:18,620 --> 00:14:23,430  
So here again, in a  
different vein as my mother,

284  
00:14:23,430 --> 00:14:27,590



here's another case of  
somebody who went with me.

285  
00:14:27,590 --> 00:14:33,440  
I didn't have a chance to see  
him again after we parted.

286  
00:14:33,440 --> 00:14:37,290  
But there's no question  
that he was really

287  
00:14:37,290 --> 00:14:44,400  
a member of an extremely  
rabid right wing group.

288  
00:14:44,400 --> 00:14:47,250  
And therefore, it would  
have been unthinkable

289  
00:14:47,250 --> 00:14:51,420  
for him to join.

290  
00:14:51,420 --> 00:14:55,080  
But even being a member of such  
an extreme right wing group

291  
00:14:55,080 --> 00:14:57,790  
didn't mean he wouldn't  
help you as a Jew.

292  
00:14:57,790 --> 00:15:00,380  
The anti-Semitism was  
nothing in this situation.

293  
00:15:00,380 --> 00:15:01,180  
No, no, no.

294  
00:15:01,180 --> 00:15:03,560  
These didn't-- they were  
two separate things.

295  
00:15:03,560 --> 00:15:06,000

296  
00:15:06,000 --> 00:15:06,500  
All right.

297  
00:15:06,500 --> 00:15:10,310  
So that's-- Thanassis  
is gone unfortunately.

298  
00:15:10,310 --> 00:15:11,510  
Yeah.

299  
00:15:11,510 --> 00:15:12,560  
So he goes.

300  
00:15:12,560 --> 00:15:13,550  
And now you have--

301  
00:15:13,550 --> 00:15:14,420  
I asked the teacher.

302  
00:15:14,420 --> 00:15:18,470  
I said, well-- and  
it was very easy.

303  
00:15:18,470 --> 00:15:20,480  
He says, do you see the  
top of this mountain?

304  
00:15:20,480 --> 00:15:24,920  
He pointed west,  
straight due west.

305  
00:15:24,920 --> 00:15:26,990  
That's where you go.

306  
00:15:26,990 --> 00:15:28,110  
And that's what it is.

307  
00:15:28,110 --> 00:15:31,160  
I just-- following  
that kind of thing,

308

00:15:31,160 --> 00:15:36,630

I began on the road, which is  
in the beginning a visible road

309

00:15:36,630 --> 00:15:40,980

and it fades into  
a kind of a track.

310

00:15:40,980 --> 00:15:45,900

And it took close to five  
hours to negotiate that.

311

00:15:45,900 --> 00:15:48,240

And I was reaching--

312

00:15:48,240 --> 00:15:52,240

I could see the monastery  
becoming bigger and bigger.

313

00:15:52,240 --> 00:15:56,640

But the biggest shock  
was just, I think,

314

00:15:56,640 --> 00:16:02,760

half an hour before I got to  
the grounds of the monastery.

315

00:16:02,760 --> 00:16:11,340

All the surrounding area of  
trees, forest, grass, all that

316

00:16:11,340 --> 00:16:14,230

is filled up with Italian  
soldiers, but all of them

317

00:16:14,230 --> 00:16:14,730

armed.

318

00:16:14,730 --> 00:16:16,410

319

00:16:16,410 --> 00:16:22,410

And I'm walking through, and  
I see Partisans with beards

320  
00:16:22,410 --> 00:16:24,385  
talking to the Italians.

321  
00:16:24,385 --> 00:16:26,010  
Now, I know there  
was an armistice but,

322  
00:16:26,010 --> 00:16:28,660  
of course, no idea what  
had happened in between

323  
00:16:28,660 --> 00:16:32,830  
and especially armed Italians.

324  
00:16:32,830 --> 00:16:35,395  
But what subsequently  
I learned, it

325  
00:16:35,395 --> 00:16:40,750  
was a regiment of Italian  
cavalry called Aosta,

326  
00:16:40,750 --> 00:16:44,800  
from the region in  
Italy, that voluntarily

327  
00:16:44,800 --> 00:16:48,040  
joined the Partisans.

328  
00:16:48,040 --> 00:16:52,220  
And of course, I had  
more dealings with them.

329  
00:16:52,220 --> 00:16:54,123  
And so I got to the monastery--

330  
00:16:54,123 --> 00:16:55,540  
Did they stop you,  
these soldiers?

331  
00:16:55,540 --> 00:16:56,403  
No, no, no.

332  
00:16:56,403 --> 00:16:57,070  
You're walking--

333  
00:16:57,070 --> 00:16:59,113  
No, they're just chatting  
and passing the day.

334  
00:16:59,113 --> 00:17:00,590  
And you're just  
this kid walking.

335  
00:17:00,590 --> 00:17:01,780  
I'm just this kid walking.

336  
00:17:01,780 --> 00:17:04,210  
And I reach the monastery.

337  
00:17:04,210 --> 00:17:08,770  
I saw a number of Partisans.

338  
00:17:08,770 --> 00:17:10,329  
And some of them--

339  
00:17:10,329 --> 00:17:12,940  
it was still early afternoon.

340  
00:17:12,940 --> 00:17:15,265  
The sun is still  
shining, although it's

341  
00:17:15,265 --> 00:17:17,020  
close to November.

342  
00:17:17,020 --> 00:17:18,819  
It was a warm day.

343  
00:17:18,819 --> 00:17:22,300  
And I don't know why they

were naked to the waist,

344

00:17:22,300 --> 00:17:25,000  
but I learned subsequently why.

345

00:17:25,000 --> 00:17:26,890  
But I asked to go  
see the leader.

346

00:17:26,890 --> 00:17:29,120  
And I was shown up to  
the leader, which was

347

00:17:29,120 --> 00:17:32,890  
a tall man with a long beard.

348

00:17:32,890 --> 00:17:36,870  
And I admittedly  
very briefly told him

349

00:17:36,870 --> 00:17:40,980  
that I had come to  
join the Partisans.

350

00:17:40,980 --> 00:17:42,240  
He didn't laugh outright.

351

00:17:42,240 --> 00:17:43,166  
He didn't laugh.

352

00:17:43,166 --> 00:17:46,020  
No, he didn't laugh,  
but at least he smiled.

353

00:17:46,020 --> 00:17:48,450  
He said, look.

354

00:17:48,450 --> 00:17:50,180  
This is extremely rough life.

355

00:17:50,180 --> 00:17:52,910  
You are very young.

356  
00:17:52,910 --> 00:17:58,830  
And then, just as simply, I  
told him that I had no choice.

357  
00:17:58,830 --> 00:18:03,450  
I'm a Jew, and the Germans  
are persecuting us.

358  
00:18:03,450 --> 00:18:06,534  
And I cannot return to Athens.

359  
00:18:06,534 --> 00:18:07,470  
He says, what?

360  
00:18:07,470 --> 00:18:08,716  
Stay.

361  
00:18:08,716 --> 00:18:10,570  
Stay.

362  
00:18:10,570 --> 00:18:11,785  
And that was the end of it.

363  
00:18:11,785 --> 00:18:13,660  
Did you also tell him  
that you had been a boy

364  
00:18:13,660 --> 00:18:14,530  
scout as if that might be--?

365  
00:18:14,530 --> 00:18:15,760  
Yes, I have to convince him.

366  
00:18:15,760 --> 00:18:17,328  
Yes, I told him I  
was a boy scout.

367  
00:18:17,328 --> 00:18:17,828  
He laughed.

368

00:18:17,828 --> 00:18:18,370  
Did he laugh?

369  
00:18:18,370 --> 00:18:20,620  
Yes, he laughed.

370  
00:18:20,620 --> 00:18:23,110  
Then I went to the yard again.

371  
00:18:23,110 --> 00:18:25,270  
And finally, I  
got enough courage

372  
00:18:25,270 --> 00:18:30,760  
to ask because then I began  
to observe the Partisans who

373  
00:18:30,760 --> 00:18:33,190  
were naked to the midriff  
because they were fiddling

374  
00:18:33,190 --> 00:18:34,587  
with their shirts.

375  
00:18:34,587 --> 00:18:35,920  
And I know what they were doing.

376  
00:18:35,920 --> 00:18:38,230  
They were killing lice.

377  
00:18:38,230 --> 00:18:40,750  
They were delousing themselves.

378  
00:18:40,750 --> 00:18:44,560  
And for me, it was  
such a new thing

379  
00:18:44,560 --> 00:18:48,430  
to see fact that I asked one  
of them who was doing it,

380  
00:18:48,430 --> 00:18:51,220



how many had he killed?

381  
00:18:51,220 --> 00:18:55,450  
He looks at me, such  
a crazy question.

382  
00:18:55,450 --> 00:18:57,860  
He didn't count.

383  
00:18:57,860 --> 00:19:03,410  
But to sort of  
humor me he said 47.

384  
00:19:03,410 --> 00:19:05,710  
Such a great number.

385  
00:19:05,710 --> 00:19:08,260  
Little did I know that  
very quickly I would be

386  
00:19:08,260 --> 00:19:12,155  
doing exactly the same thing.

387  
00:19:12,155 --> 00:19:18,220  
So did the leader of  
this particular part

388  
00:19:18,220 --> 00:19:22,060  
of the resistance immediately  
say you can do x or y or--

389  
00:19:22,060 --> 00:19:23,028  
No, no.

390  
00:19:23,028 --> 00:19:24,070  
I mean, he did all right.

391  
00:19:24,070 --> 00:19:28,250  
But we have to decide what  
we're going to have you do.

392  
00:19:28,250 --> 00:19:31,330

But almost immediately,  
the following day,

393  
00:19:31,330 --> 00:19:34,780  
I was then assigned the--

394  
00:19:34,780 --> 00:19:37,120  
if I can call it  
a graveyard shift

395  
00:19:37,120 --> 00:19:39,820  
of being a telephone operator.

396  
00:19:39,820 --> 00:19:44,080  
These telephones were  
military field telephones

397  
00:19:44,080 --> 00:19:46,330  
strung with wires.

398  
00:19:46,330 --> 00:19:48,860  
And there was a little room.

399  
00:19:48,860 --> 00:19:51,310  
This was in a monastery,  
a former monastery.

400  
00:19:51,310 --> 00:19:54,370  
There were cells on all floors.

401  
00:19:54,370 --> 00:19:56,740  
And there was a  
little telephone room.

402  
00:19:56,740 --> 00:20:01,900  
Now, my shift started  
around 11 o'clock at night.

403  
00:20:01,900 --> 00:20:06,940  
Before going there, I had to go  
to the commissary or whatever

404

00:20:06,940 --> 00:20:10,240  
to get a little  
tin container that

405  
00:20:10,240 --> 00:20:14,170  
was filled with  
rough kerosene oil

406  
00:20:14,170 --> 00:20:15,610  
because that was the only light.

407  
00:20:15,610 --> 00:20:18,170  
There was no electricity.

408  
00:20:18,170 --> 00:20:21,750  
So we had this lamp with a wick.

409  
00:20:21,750 --> 00:20:23,910  
And I knew from  
the very first day,

410  
00:20:23,910 --> 00:20:27,640  
after the end of my  
shift, my throat, nose,

411  
00:20:27,640 --> 00:20:30,060  
and everything else were black.

412  
00:20:30,060 --> 00:20:34,320  
I would spit black  
stuff from inhaling

413  
00:20:34,320 --> 00:20:41,280  
the smoke that came out of  
that wick during the shift.

414  
00:20:41,280 --> 00:20:44,340  
Of course, when the phone would  
ring, then I would respond,

415  
00:20:44,340 --> 00:20:45,585  
take notes.

416

00:20:45,585 --> 00:20:49,160

At times I was  
given messages too.

417

00:20:49,160 --> 00:20:53,600

But I remember the second  
night before starting my shift,

418

00:20:53,600 --> 00:20:55,250

again, I was going  
to the commissary.

419

00:20:55,250 --> 00:21:03,480

But I have to remind myself  
and you that when you--

420

00:21:03,480 --> 00:21:05,040

the first noticeable  
thing when you

421

00:21:05,040 --> 00:21:10,710

are in the mountains anyplace  
is how black and dark it is.

422

00:21:10,710 --> 00:21:14,670

In cities, even in a darkened  
place, the glow of city

423

00:21:14,670 --> 00:21:18,150

lights still there,  
but in the mountains,

424

00:21:18,150 --> 00:21:20,250

two things are  
immediately noticeable.

425

00:21:20,250 --> 00:21:23,130

The silence is deafening.

426

00:21:23,130 --> 00:21:26,610

Literally, you hear nothing.

427

00:21:26,610 --> 00:21:29,060

That's why you can hear  
things from a distance.

428

00:21:29,060 --> 00:21:31,880

And it's also very dark.

429

00:21:31,880 --> 00:21:35,510

So there were no lights in  
the monastery corridors.

430

00:21:35,510 --> 00:21:37,340

So I'm going to go  
to the commissary

431

00:21:37,340 --> 00:21:40,550

to fill my lamp with oil.

432

00:21:40,550 --> 00:21:43,280

And then the first  
thing I know is one

433

00:21:43,280 --> 00:21:45,530

leg is going through a hole.

434

00:21:45,530 --> 00:21:48,320

And then instinctively,  
the other leg

435

00:21:48,320 --> 00:21:52,210

is going through a hole, and  
I'm falling through space.

436

00:21:52,210 --> 00:21:57,370

And in the middle of the fall,  
I hit a beam on the side.

437

00:21:57,370 --> 00:22:00,060

And after a couple of other  
seconds-- it was actually,

438

00:22:00,060 --> 00:22:01,570

it only took a few seconds--

439  
00:22:01,570 --> 00:22:04,210  
I fell through two floors.

440  
00:22:04,210 --> 00:22:08,530  
And I must have screamed  
in the process of falling.

441  
00:22:08,530 --> 00:22:10,920  
They came running.

442  
00:22:10,920 --> 00:22:14,855  
I just got up, and  
they all marveled,

443  
00:22:14,855 --> 00:22:17,620  
and they thought that it was  
a miracle that had happened.

444  
00:22:17,620 --> 00:22:18,870  
They said to me that you are--

445  
00:22:18,870 --> 00:22:21,950  
I was particularly lucky.

446  
00:22:21,950 --> 00:22:23,203  
So that was your introduction.

447  
00:22:23,203 --> 00:22:23,870  
My introduction.

448  
00:22:23,870 --> 00:22:31,090  
And I stayed on that particular  
job for about two weeks.

449  
00:22:31,090 --> 00:22:33,760  
And then for the  
following two weeks,

450  
00:22:33,760 --> 00:22:37,840  
I was then made a messenger.

451

00:22:37,840 --> 00:22:45,380

I had to take messages  
to division headquarters.

452

00:22:45,380 --> 00:22:50,300

And the higher in rank  
was the military unit,

453

00:22:50,300 --> 00:22:54,110

the higher was also  
physically in the mountain.

454

00:22:54,110 --> 00:22:57,620

The division was  
higher and higher.

455

00:22:57,620 --> 00:23:00,380

And this is when I  
was given a rifle.

456

00:23:00,380 --> 00:23:03,280

I was given-- it was  
an Italian rifle--

457

00:23:03,280 --> 00:23:05,945

and two rounds of--

458

00:23:05,945 --> 00:23:11,756

459

00:23:11,756 --> 00:23:12,750

Ammunition?

460

00:23:12,750 --> 00:23:14,340

--ammunition.

461

00:23:14,340 --> 00:23:16,380

And I was then  
given the messages.

462

00:23:16,380 --> 00:23:21,840

And I was given the general

direction, just march that way.

463

00:23:21,840 --> 00:23:25,430

And I didn't know whether  
my destination was,

464

00:23:25,430 --> 00:23:30,860

and you would need an  
occasional shepherd

465

00:23:30,860 --> 00:23:32,240

tending goats or sheep.

466

00:23:32,240 --> 00:23:36,030

And you would say how  
long is, and you mentioned

467

00:23:36,030 --> 00:23:37,380

the name of the place.

468

00:23:37,380 --> 00:23:41,190

And he would say half an hour.

469

00:23:41,190 --> 00:23:45,540

They have no conception of  
time in terms of the units

470

00:23:45,540 --> 00:23:46,410

that we use.

471

00:23:46,410 --> 00:23:51,810

You walk for another three  
hours, it's still not there.

472

00:23:51,810 --> 00:23:54,590

And that's what I did  
for the next week or so.

473

00:23:54,590 --> 00:23:55,930

Now, let me ask you something.

474

00:23:55,930 --> 00:23:56,280



Yeah.

475

00:23:56,280 --> 00:23:58,020

Did you become a  
messenger because you've

476

00:23:58,020 --> 00:24:00,460

done the telephone  
operator job so well

477

00:24:00,460 --> 00:24:02,140

or did they just  
happen to need--

478

00:24:02,140 --> 00:24:07,260

No, they just decided that  
now they needed somebody

479

00:24:07,260 --> 00:24:09,000

to carry messages.

480

00:24:09,000 --> 00:24:12,840

And I became available  
or I could be spared

481

00:24:12,840 --> 00:24:14,460

from the telephone thing.

482

00:24:14,460 --> 00:24:18,360

After all, as I said,  
there were three shifts

483

00:24:18,360 --> 00:24:20,820

because it really had to  
be tended all the time.

484

00:24:20,820 --> 00:24:24,420

And that's when I  
became a messenger.

485

00:24:24,420 --> 00:24:28,140

But when I returned  
from the last trek

486  
00:24:28,140 --> 00:24:33,960  
in delivering a message, then  
there was a general retreat

487  
00:24:33,960 --> 00:24:38,220  
because the Germans decided,  
which they did periodically,

488  
00:24:38,220 --> 00:24:41,070  
to do a sweep.

489  
00:24:41,070 --> 00:24:45,570  
And in fact, we could  
begin to see at a distance

490  
00:24:45,570 --> 00:24:51,360  
the trucks coming up and  
armored vehicles because they

491  
00:24:51,360 --> 00:24:54,570  
didn't have tanks or  
anything like that.

492  
00:24:54,570 --> 00:24:58,950  
But this is what happened  
throughout the occupation.

493  
00:24:58,950 --> 00:25:02,730  
The Italians would sweep up  
from time to time, sometimes

494  
00:25:02,730 --> 00:25:05,280  
light sweep,  
sometimes very heavy.

495  
00:25:05,280 --> 00:25:07,260  
And this was a heavy sweep.

496  
00:25:07,260 --> 00:25:08,910  
So we are retreating.

497

00:25:08,910 --> 00:25:11,580  
So the monastery was evacuated.

498  
00:25:11,580 --> 00:25:15,180  
The Italian soldiers  
also accompanied us.

499  
00:25:15,180 --> 00:25:18,930  
And we're going  
higher and higher.

500  
00:25:18,930 --> 00:25:22,760  
There was no action other  
than occasionally firing

501  
00:25:22,760 --> 00:25:23,960  
a gun or two at the Germans.

502  
00:25:23,960 --> 00:25:28,320  
But you'll engage  
heavily armed enemy.

503  
00:25:28,320 --> 00:25:32,890  
That's what Partisan war is.

504  
00:25:32,890 --> 00:25:35,010  
And after about  
two or three weeks

505  
00:25:35,010 --> 00:25:37,860  
of going higher  
than the Germans,

506  
00:25:37,860 --> 00:25:42,120  
decided that they had done  
as much damage as they could,

507  
00:25:42,120 --> 00:25:44,280  
which really didn't  
do anything other

508  
00:25:44,280 --> 00:25:46,050  
than burning some villages.

509  
00:25:46,050 --> 00:25:49,170  
And they went back  
to the plains.

510  
00:25:49,170 --> 00:25:52,530  
And that's when then  
I was able to join

511  
00:25:52,530 --> 00:25:57,130  
a real unit rather than a band.

512  
00:25:57,130 --> 00:26:02,070  
The group that I  
saw in the monastery

513  
00:26:02,070 --> 00:26:05,520  
was a portion of a major unit.

514  
00:26:05,520 --> 00:26:09,150  
It was the First  
Regiment of Thessaly,

515  
00:26:09,150 --> 00:26:13,920  
the First Regiment of Thessaly,  
to which then I became--

516  
00:26:13,920 --> 00:26:15,720  
I joined.

517  
00:26:15,720 --> 00:26:17,340  
Let me ask you something.

518  
00:26:17,340 --> 00:26:19,830  
When you became a messenger,  
did you wear special clothes

519  
00:26:19,830 --> 00:26:21,720  
or are you wearing the  
clothes you came in?

520  
00:26:21,720 --> 00:26:24,360

I'm still having-- there  
are no clothes to go around.

521  
00:26:24,360 --> 00:26:24,870  
Right.

522  
00:26:24,870 --> 00:26:25,710  
So you're still wearing--

523  
00:26:25,710 --> 00:26:27,210  
I'm still in civilian  
clothes, which

524  
00:26:27,210 --> 00:26:32,790  
are beginning now  
to tatter and also

525  
00:26:32,790 --> 00:26:34,650  
get dirty and feel they were--

526  
00:26:34,650 --> 00:26:41,280  
I was able to scare up another  
pair of underwear to change.

527  
00:26:41,280 --> 00:26:46,110  
There were no  
facilities of that kind.

528  
00:26:46,110 --> 00:26:46,920  
That's it.

529  
00:26:46,920 --> 00:26:49,140  
I still remember  
that fortunately--

530  
00:26:49,140 --> 00:26:57,210  
I don't know why I had traveled  
from Athens to Karditsa wearing

531  
00:26:57,210 --> 00:27:04,510  
also a blue overcoat, which  
was sort of a light overcoat,

532

00:27:04,510 --> 00:27:09,250

maybe a treated fabric that  
will withstand the rain.

533

00:27:09,250 --> 00:27:11,230

But it was a very,  
very handy thing

534

00:27:11,230 --> 00:27:16,840

because I went through  
a whole heavy winter

535

00:27:16,840 --> 00:27:19,270

with only these clothes.

536

00:27:19,270 --> 00:27:21,970

And the rifle that  
you were given,

537

00:27:21,970 --> 00:27:23,380

were you trained on the rifle?

538

00:27:23,380 --> 00:27:24,168

No.

539

00:27:24,168 --> 00:27:25,210

They just gave it to you?

540

00:27:25,210 --> 00:27:26,000

Give the rifle.

541

00:27:26,000 --> 00:27:30,390

They tell you, here is-- you  
know, the cartridges were

542

00:27:30,390 --> 00:27:32,280

in a clip, five to a clip.

543

00:27:32,280 --> 00:27:35,750

And they pull the--

544

00:27:35,750 --> 00:27:38,540

I forget now all  
these terms which

545

00:27:38,540 --> 00:27:41,060

I should know from the army.

546

00:27:41,060 --> 00:27:48,000

And you push the clip down,  
push the bolt back again,

547

00:27:48,000 --> 00:27:49,260

and you are ready to fire.

548

00:27:49,260 --> 00:27:51,780

I had never fired a  
rifle, and I still

549

00:27:51,780 --> 00:27:56,110

remember I'm marching about an  
hour away from the monastery.

550

00:27:56,110 --> 00:27:58,658

I'm in the middle  
of a natural plateau

551

00:27:58,658 --> 00:27:59,950

in the middle of the mountains.

552

00:27:59,950 --> 00:28:03,260

There's nobody  
around, total silence.

553

00:28:03,260 --> 00:28:06,170

And I fired the first  
bullet of my life,

554

00:28:06,170 --> 00:28:10,490

just to even get  
familiar with the sound.

555

00:28:10,490 --> 00:28:11,720

I didn't fire at anybody.

556  
00:28:11,720 --> 00:28:12,775  
It was towards the sky.

557  
00:28:12,775 --> 00:28:13,480  
Right.

558  
00:28:13,480 --> 00:28:17,280  
But that's the  
first time I fired.

559  
00:28:17,280 --> 00:28:17,780  
All right.

560  
00:28:17,780 --> 00:28:19,930  
Let's stop the tape.

561  
00:28:19,930 --> 00:30:20,000