

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mrs. Marcia Loewi on March 6, 2016. And this is in addition to the interview that we conducted with Marcia Loewi earlier this year in January and should be considered as one interview. In this edition, Mrs. Loewi would like to add some information that she forgot to mention during our first interview.

So now I'm going to turn it over to you, Mrs. Loewi. Tell me about these points, these things, these experiences that you wanted us to record. And give me a little bit of context of what happened.

I worked in a small furniture company.

Yeah.

And one day, we came to work. And at night, if the night--

This was in the Lodz ghetto already?

Yes.

OK.

And the night shift-- how do you say it? The--

The night shift is perfectly fine. Yeah.

The night shift people were sitting and crying. We came in, like, 8 o'clock. And there was blood in the street. There was a hospital for mentally ill next. And it was next to our factory.

OK.

So at night, the Germans came and evacuated the hospital. There were children. They came with trucks. And they threw down the children like objects with their heads down.

From the windows.

From the windows of the hospital. It was called the [? Visola ?] Street Hospital. It's for mental ill. And they said what they saw happen, animals wouldn't act like this. Innocent children and people that were not capable--

They were-- mm-hmm.

They were mentally--

They had mental illnesses.

Yes.

And that affected us very badly, because what is a human being? You take and throw it out with the heads. You break the heads and scalps of innocent little children that were born with a defect.

Did anybody have family members, perhaps, who had been in that hospital? Did you know of anybody who had a dear one or a relative?

You see, I was a teenager in those times. I was maybe 15, 16. So we didn't-- I wasn't connected. It was a different area where we lived.

I see.

We lived on the other side of the bridge.

I see.

Out from there, in the center of the city, was a round thing. And there was a [NON-ENGLISH]. How do you say?

A statue?

A statue. There was a statue. And from this round circle were different streets-- this way, this way. And that's how the city was running. And we lived on this side of the city. And it went down to the lowest streets, to the-- not so center.

You're talking outside the ghetto, when you had [INAUDIBLE].

No, outside the ghetto.

Oh, outside the ghetto. Now, how--

So I don't-- I didn't know people that effectively. You had to go up and reach to the other side of the road. And the middle was barbed wire. And there was a bridge that was there that you shouldn't have to go through the traffic. It was a highway.

And was it one part of the ghetto connected to another part of the ghetto?

Out of the ghetto, yes. But I think this bridge probably was built before the war, because it was a big bridge.

It was pedestrian--

You went up steps. And there was a wall.

What was the name of the hospital? Do you remember?

[? Visola. ?]

[? Visola. ?] And had it been a hospital before the war?

I'm sure. I don't know. But I'm sure they didn't build hospitals during the war.

Oh, no, but a building could be taken over and made into a hospital.

I think it was famous. That's how they called it, [? Visola ?] Hospital. And our the factory was on beside. So it was one next of the other. And there was also a cemetery in back of our factory. It was a big cemetery. Sometimes, we used to go there in recess time. So we walked and we talked. But I didn't have connection with the people. We just heard it. And it was a terrifying thing.

Of course.

The way they explained they tore down the kids with their heads down.

And do you know, was this also Polish children, as well as Jewish children? Or do you think it was all Jewish?

No, that was part of the ghetto.

OK, so it would have been--

So I don't think [COUGHING] that the Polish children were there.

OK.

OK, about the hospital. Yes.

Yeah. So--

Yeah, I don't think they were only children. They probably couldn't stay home. And they needed the attention of-- medical attention.

Well, of course, the Germans had this euthanasia program within Germany itself for Jews and non-Jews. But--

The ghetto was separate.

The ghetto was separate.

The people moved from the city. The Jewish people there, they evacuated and took off everything, the stars. There was a lot-- it was a big city of 600,000 population.

That's right.

And 300,000 were Jewish. There were a lot of hospitals, big hospitals, that the rich Jews donated to build the hospitals. There were three student hospital. There was a very rich man they called Poznanski. And this Poznanski built two hospitals in different areas of the city.

And all of that was taken over and--

Taken.

--stolen, basically.

Taken over, and everything, they pushed out. And you see people are mean, too, because when we were in the ghetto, before the war, my parents build up-- they were wealthy.

Yes, I remember.

We had nine children. But if God wants, he gives you. He gives you to make a living. You could do more and work, and nothing happens. But if it's God's will, whatever you touch goes.

So my parents had a beautiful home right before the war. One thing I am-- I feel my father went to a Rabbi.

I'm going to-- excuse me. I'm going to pause again just for a second.

--talk about it.

OK, but it was a very--

It's just--

It's very important.

It's just that everybody was so shattered by it, what happened. You couldn't imagine that people did things to--

Other people.

--innocent, sick children like this, to kill them.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Not to see them as worthy of any kind of consideration, or dignity, or anything.

And then you see this picture. We had in our bedroom, my parents' bedroom, a picture.

This particular-- uh-huh.

Now, this picture was a picture. There was once a court. And King Solomon was a very smart man. And he came there with two mothers. And the mothers had a fight.

Yes.

One child was missing from the hospital or from whatever. And each one claimed it's their child, it's her child. So the King said of the child-- and you see it on the picture-- We're going to cut the baby in two. And you get to half the baby. And you get half the baby.

So he wanted to see their reaction. And one of the mothers went-- how do you say it? Give her baby. Don't cut the baby. So he said, you are the mother, and she got the baby.

I remember that story.

You remember that story.

I remember that story. Yeah.

And we had the picture in our bedroom. And this was left. And I don't know. But my mother said she ordered it. It took a couple years to paint it because there a lot of detail on it.

Yes. Yes.

And the expression on the faces was very good-- you know, the way. And the mother was darling.

Yes.

Don't do it. Stop it.

Don't hurt the baby.

Yeah. You heard that story. And we had this painting. [INAUDIBLE].

You had it at your home in Lodz.

Yes, in Lodz.

OK. And did you lose that painting when you lost everything else?

Everything we lost. We came back. There was nothing ours. Nothing was belonging to us anymore. Somebody lived in our apartment, but they hardly left us any.

Really? Mm-hmm.

And they were neighbors before. They lived on the fourth floor. And we lived on the third floor. They weren't nasty, but they just weren't very happy that we came.

But they had taken over your apartment?

You see, the expensive furniture that we have, we took to the ghetto. There were two-- they had a place for horses and for cattle. So the people that lived there were friends of my cousin. He had a store that was selling wheat and food for horses and animals. So he exchanged the houses.

So we took that expensive dining room set. We took it to the ghetto. But once, somebody was showing-- somebody showed who was rich Jews and who might have money. Well, they came to the house. And they looked in the whole house.

The children were standing. And my father told us, don't look in the direction where I have some-- the older children. They younger didn't know. So we had medicine cabinet. In that medicine cabinet, my father-- because somebody denounced that we were rich. So he said, don't look in the direction where I have something, because they look in your faces.

That's right.

And then they follow where everybody is nervous about. So in the bathroom, in the medication, we had some diamonds, because my father-- when he gave up the business, for the first year, they needed textile factories to make uniforms. And they paid for it something. And my father had raw material, not finished textile. So they paid something for it and let him stay in the city for a while.

And this search was still in your original home, not in the ghetto-- when he says, don't look in their direction.

It was in the ghetto--

It was already in the ghetto.

--because the kripo, kriminalpolizei--

Kripo.

--went to look for rich Jews.

Jews. All right.

And they were--

Kripo is kriminalpolizei--

Kriminalpolizei. OK.

So my father said-- we had two rooms. How much did we have in the ghetto? We had two rooms-- we're nine children-- and a kitchen.

And they didn't find the diamonds.

No. We tried to look out the window. But they took away the expensive dining room set. It was gorgeous. You don't see

it, really.

Yeah. Yeah. Who knows where it's ended up? Who knows?

No, they took it.

I know. I know.

And then they called my father once to the kripo. And they beat him up and said, what he has, he should give. So he thought that dining room was in the office of there where they took him in.

He already saw it. Yeah.

They took it out from the ghetto and from the warehouse. And they took it-- it was built for unusual. It was African wood. And the mahogany veneer was laid out like lions' heads, and because that African wood has a--

Pattern, like a zebra pattern.

A pattern. Mm-hmm.

Patterns, yeah.

--like I have on my--

This is Sarah, your daughter, saying that--

Like that's on my vanity, crouch mahogany you're talking about, or like zebra wood.

You see, this is a copy. I bought the door that we had. It's deep, dark mahogany. It was gorgeous.

Right, like crouch mahogany, like clay mahogany.

And the doors were lined with marble. It was like a winery where you tap the bottles of wine liquor. And it opened this way, on hinges. It came apart when you opened it.

Like a wine rack, like a wine cellar, like a wine rack.

Oh, well, you--

Like cages. See, sometimes you have hinges you pull out.

Hinges, and you can see that it becomes a surface.

It comes out like a table.

OK. So let's finish up with that point then. So your father then sees this dining room set at the kripo headquarters.

Yeah. Yeah, because they came once to the house. And they looked all over, and they found it there. Probably, people--

Pointed it out.

They told them about it. They probably paid them something to say who the rich people were, people who have, where they would take things.

Yeah. Yeah.

People were jealous, too.

So what about the painting?

The painting stayed in the house. I don't think we had where to take it. But they took it away, because it was this historical painting.

Yeah, of course.

And it was even wider than this, because--

And this one-- if we look at your painting here, it is a painting of animals and landscape.

Now, this, my husband picked up here at an auction for \$20.

Oh, my goodness.

When we came to America, we imported antique-- you see this blue vase I have here?

Yes.

We were import this. We imported and sold--

Antique.

--antiques.

Antiques.

You see, I have here a Meissen vase and all of this. It was supposed to be for business. But we didn't sell it, so I have it.

I see.

We didn't go out to buy these things. We had more important. But we couldn't sell it, because the Americans, they liked to buy silver, and all this. We had to give it away. We needed money.

Yeah. Yeah.

So this is not so important. But the dining room set was-- nice couple thousand dollars we paid my parents. That was a piece of art--

Yeah.

--the table.

In the 1930s, a few thousand thousands is today like \$50,000, or 70.

It's a lot. It's a lot. And it shows--

And it was very unusual and very beautiful. But this, they took away. We took it to the ghetto, but not to the house.

Of course.

So they looked all over, and he took it away. And where they took my father, and they beat him up. He should say what he has to give, where he has his money.

So not only do they--

So he sell it to the-- he sell it later on in the kripo upstairs where they take the people for investigation. People were jealous, too. People are mean. People are jealous, was hungry. But you couldn't eat the furniture.

No. No. Was there anything else? Hang on just a second. Let's take a look here.

[INAUDIBLE].

Yeah, let's take a look here.

The hospital that I thought was important.

It's very important. I know. Was there any other point that you had wanted to bring up here?

No. The little kids-- 5, 6, 7-year-old kids-- worked in the straw factory. They were-- what do you call?

Weavers?

Weavers of straw. They made--

What did they make from the straw?

Baskets.

Ah, OK. I see.

Baskets. I don't know, because they're little kids.

Yeah.

They used the kids because whatever they could, they did. They didn't pay anything for them--

No, of course not.

--you see, probably. We got soap. And we got a piece of bread, this size, for a day.

So that would be something like 4 inches by 2 inches, something that.

Yes, this way. This way. You cut the bread. And we had to buy in loaves. And it was so heavy, because they left it wet, it should weigh more. So the people that I paid could take a little flour. It's stealing all over, much of the same.

OK. I'm going to pause for a minute. I've turned the machine on again. And I just want to be able to ask if there's anything else you wanted to add to your interview or any final thoughts that you had about what we were talking now or the other time when I was here.

That we should learn something from mistakes of people before. We shouldn't repeat the same thing--

I agree.



--because this wouldn't bring--

Right. Got you. Protect us--

--the world no peace.

--from antisemitism and any person--

Not only antisemitism.

--from anti-race and anti-discrimination for anyone.

Any people.

Discrimination is a bad thing for--

For any people.

--anybody. And again, my thing is that we should have the merit-- God should give us the merit and the good luck--

That God should give--

You know what I'm saying? To continue saying that, living well is the best revenge.

The best revenge.

Revenge.

OK, so we have heard now also from Sarah Loewi as well as Marcia Loewi. And with that, Mrs. Marcia Loewi, I thank you very, very much.

Thank you for all your work you put in.

You're welcome.

Because you really build up an example for the world.

Thank you in the name of the museum. We're very grateful to hear that.

Thank you.

And so this concludes the addition to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with Mrs. Marcia Loewi on March 6, 2016 in Brooklyn, New York.

Thank you.

Thank you.

And good luck.

Thank you.