

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:03,120
--June 29, 2020.

2
00:00:03,120 --> 00:00:09,750
And we are continuing
the interview, the USHMM,

3
00:00:09,750 --> 00:00:13,530
Holocaust Memorial Museum
interview with Mr. Helmut von

4
00:00:13,530 --> 00:00:19,500
Schweitzer, which we did
several parts of last week

5
00:00:19,500 --> 00:00:21,120
and the week before.

6
00:00:21,120 --> 00:00:23,500
And now we're taking
up where we left off.

7
00:00:23,500 --> 00:00:26,770

8
00:00:26,770 --> 00:00:30,750
So, Helmut, please,
Helmut Yzchak,

9
00:00:30,750 --> 00:00:34,830
tell me, when we left
off before, I believe

10
00:00:34,830 --> 00:00:38,628
we were talking about
your cousin [? Bertel, ?]

11
00:00:38,628 --> 00:00:39,420
who, at war's end--

12
00:00:39,420 --> 00:00:41,160

Yes.

13
00:00:41,160 --> 00:00:43,410
--there had been a--

14
00:00:43,410 --> 00:00:47,125
her husband, [?Hans Strasse?]
I believe his name is--

15
00:00:47,125 --> 00:00:47,625
Yeah.

16
00:00:47,625 --> 00:00:51,210
--had hired some
kind of vehicle.

17
00:00:51,210 --> 00:00:54,990
Whether it was a truck
or a car, I'm not sure.

18
00:00:54,990 --> 00:00:55,950
Oh!

19
00:00:55,950 --> 00:01:03,060
That really is charging ahead,
ahead of time completely.

20
00:01:03,060 --> 00:01:09,590
Because I'm talking about my
school when I was 15 years old.

21
00:01:09,590 --> 00:01:12,540
It didn't-- there was
nothing like that then.

22
00:01:12,540 --> 00:01:15,060
I mean, the war was on.

23
00:01:15,060 --> 00:01:18,170
But, I mean, nothing like that--

24
00:01:18,170 --> 00:01:20,694

all that is post-war
or-- you know.

25
00:01:20,694 --> 00:01:21,870
OK.

26
00:01:21,870 --> 00:01:23,890
But because we were
at this point--

27
00:01:23,890 --> 00:01:25,380
we'll go back to your schooling.

28
00:01:25,380 --> 00:01:26,590
We'll go back to it.

29
00:01:26,590 --> 00:01:28,200
But in this post-war
time, I want

30
00:01:28,200 --> 00:01:31,500
to kind of finish up the
story with [? Bertel, ?]

31
00:01:31,500 --> 00:01:35,370
and then come back,
if that's possible.

32
00:01:35,370 --> 00:01:35,980
Is that OK?

33
00:01:35,980 --> 00:01:37,860
Well, it's possible
from your point of view,

34
00:01:37,860 --> 00:01:40,200
but it'll be out of--

35
00:01:40,200 --> 00:01:45,790
we're bound to come back to
it at the right time when--

36

00:01:45,790 --> 00:01:46,390
later on.

37
00:01:46,390 --> 00:01:47,460
OK, OK.

38
00:01:47,460 --> 00:01:48,630
Well then let's do that.

39
00:01:48,630 --> 00:01:49,580
Let's do that.

40
00:01:49,580 --> 00:01:50,080
You--

41
00:01:50,080 --> 00:01:50,950
Yeah.

42
00:01:50,950 --> 00:01:53,880
So let's talk about
your schooling now

43
00:01:53,880 --> 00:01:57,090
and what kind of
school you went to when

44
00:01:57,090 --> 00:02:00,480
you joined your mother's
family, [? Kluger, ?]

45
00:02:00,480 --> 00:02:01,700
in the Sudetenland.

46
00:02:01,700 --> 00:02:02,200
Yes.

47
00:02:02,200 --> 00:02:04,920
And this is your birth
mother, who passed away

48
00:02:04,920 --> 00:02:06,630
when you were a little boy.

49

00:02:06,630 --> 00:02:08,820

Correct, yeah.

50

00:02:08,820 --> 00:02:12,900

And so describe for me what
it was like, and how it was--

51

00:02:12,900 --> 00:02:18,090

was it different than what you
had experienced in Wiesbaden?

52

00:02:18,090 --> 00:02:21,660

Well, [LAUGHS] it was
something totally different.

53

00:02:21,660 --> 00:02:26,790

Because some-- I mean,
apart from the very quiet,

54

00:02:26,790 --> 00:02:32,520

old-age home of my
step-grandparents,

55

00:02:32,520 --> 00:02:40,810

this was a lively kind
of industrial leader

56

00:02:40,810 --> 00:02:43,660

home on a little farm.

57

00:02:43,660 --> 00:02:49,920

He had a little farm
attached to his home,

58

00:02:49,920 --> 00:02:56,510

and a lot of people coming
and going the whole time,

59

00:02:56,510 --> 00:02:59,020

even though it was the wartime.

60

00:02:59,020 --> 00:03:06,820
And they even had soldiers
there who had been wounded

61
00:03:06,820 --> 00:03:10,190
and were released
from their hospital,

62
00:03:10,190 --> 00:03:13,840
but who didn't have any home
to go to while they were still

63
00:03:13,840 --> 00:03:15,100
recovering.

64
00:03:15,100 --> 00:03:20,200
So then they had a special
guest room for these soldiers

65
00:03:20,200 --> 00:03:20,980
at their home.

66
00:03:20,980 --> 00:03:24,040

67
00:03:24,040 --> 00:03:26,280
Did you ever engage
with the soldiers?

68
00:03:26,280 --> 00:03:28,250
Did you ever talk
to them and find out

69
00:03:28,250 --> 00:03:29,250
about their experiences?

70
00:03:29,250 --> 00:03:30,290
Oh, yes.

71
00:03:30,290 --> 00:03:33,840
But they certainly didn't
want to talk about war.

72

00:03:33,840 --> 00:03:39,360
I mean, quite frankly, I
mean, everybody was under oath

73

00:03:39,360 --> 00:03:44,640
that they mustn't talk about
the war and the war experience.

74

00:03:44,640 --> 00:03:46,800
That was secret.

75

00:03:46,800 --> 00:03:52,920
But I think quite
naturally they didn't want

76

00:03:52,920 --> 00:03:56,230
to be dragged into that at all.

77

00:03:56,230 --> 00:03:58,500
So, for me, it was
quite frustrating

78

00:03:58,500 --> 00:04:02,460
because I wanted to find out
what was really going on,

79

00:04:02,460 --> 00:04:07,200
not just the newspaper reports.

80

00:04:07,200 --> 00:04:13,530
But I was always
sort of put off.

81

00:04:13,530 --> 00:04:18,560
They'd say, no, we don't talk
about that, and that was that.

82

00:04:18,560 --> 00:04:21,130
Do you know at least
where they served?

83

00:04:21,130 --> 00:04:25,040

Whether it was the Eastern
Front or in France or somewhere

84
00:04:25,040 --> 00:04:28,890
in Western Europe, from
what part of the war

85
00:04:28,890 --> 00:04:31,670
they had come to your home?

86
00:04:31,670 --> 00:04:34,070
Well, I can't remember now.

87
00:04:34,070 --> 00:04:36,170
I expect they would
have said that they

88
00:04:36,170 --> 00:04:41,930
were either in Italy or on
the Balkan Front, or something

89
00:04:41,930 --> 00:04:42,510
like that.

90
00:04:42,510 --> 00:04:48,090
But, now, it didn't make the
greatest impression on me,

91
00:04:48,090 --> 00:04:51,490
and it certainly hasn't
been very recorded by me.

92
00:04:51,490 --> 00:04:54,370

93
00:04:54,370 --> 00:04:56,700
So let's talk about school.

94
00:04:56,700 --> 00:04:59,100
What was it like going
to school during the war

95

00:04:59,100 --> 00:05:01,770
years in the Sudetenland?

96
00:05:01,770 --> 00:05:04,290
Well, of course,
I was-- you know,

97
00:05:04,290 --> 00:05:10,280
I arrived there as a kind of
favored, kind of a new arrival.

98
00:05:10,280 --> 00:05:13,220
Because I had been
in a big city,

99
00:05:13,220 --> 00:05:21,280
Wiesbaden High School, where
I had passed my latest year.

100
00:05:21,280 --> 00:05:25,170
And I was of the Kluger family.

101
00:05:25,170 --> 00:05:27,880

102
00:05:27,880 --> 00:05:33,630
And so there was
absolutely no question

103
00:05:33,630 --> 00:05:37,770
of doing an entrance exam,
as I was in Wiesbaden.

104
00:05:37,770 --> 00:05:44,730
I was, in fact, invited in as,
well, somebody a bit special.

105
00:05:44,730 --> 00:05:47,950

106
00:05:47,950 --> 00:05:53,210
And the school, were there
Czech students as well

107
00:05:53,210 --> 00:05:55,610
as German students in it?

108
00:05:55,610 --> 00:05:57,710
Or how-- what was its makeup?

109
00:05:57,710 --> 00:06:02,060
What was its context for
where you were living?

110
00:06:02,060 --> 00:06:13,130
Well, it was only
German-speaking pupils, mainly.

111
00:06:13,130 --> 00:06:20,730
This town called Arnau,
[? Arnof, ?] now, I think--

112
00:06:20,730 --> 00:06:27,470
on the River Elbe, a small
town, but they had a huge paper

113
00:06:27,470 --> 00:06:30,630
manufacturing plant.

114
00:06:30,630 --> 00:06:33,710
That was the only
industry there.

115
00:06:33,710 --> 00:06:43,010
And there were a handful
of girls, mostly boys.

116
00:06:43,010 --> 00:06:48,400
And teachers at that
time were beginning to--

117
00:06:48,400 --> 00:06:51,060
and also some women,
which in Wiesbaden,

118

00:06:51,060 --> 00:06:55,360
they had all still been men,
to some extent men who'd

119
00:06:55,360 --> 00:06:58,490
be already pensioned,
but would come back

120
00:06:58,490 --> 00:07:01,580
to fill gaps of people called
up, that kind of thing.

121
00:07:01,580 --> 00:07:05,420

122
00:07:05,420 --> 00:07:06,970
So that was it.

123
00:07:06,970 --> 00:07:14,170

124
00:07:14,170 --> 00:07:18,100
Do you remember anything
from your lessons

125
00:07:18,100 --> 00:07:20,862
and any particular
kinds of subjects

126
00:07:20,862 --> 00:07:21,820
that you were covering?

127
00:07:21,820 --> 00:07:28,930
Well, for me, the most important
thing was that, in that school,

128
00:07:28,930 --> 00:07:33,490
English had been a foreign
language taught right

129
00:07:33,490 --> 00:07:36,250
from the beginning,
from the first year.

130
00:07:36,250 --> 00:07:42,070
Whereas in Wiesbaden,
it was French.

131
00:07:42,070 --> 00:07:47,090
French was the more
old-fashioned kind of system.

132
00:07:47,090 --> 00:07:52,690
And so I had to catch up
four years of English.

133
00:07:52,690 --> 00:07:57,520
With the help of my Aunt
Tilla, who was obviously very

134
00:07:57,520 --> 00:08:00,790
useful and helpful
to bring up to date,

135
00:08:00,790 --> 00:08:03,280
I had no real difficulty
in catching up

136
00:08:03,280 --> 00:08:10,930
within my first year at
[? Arnau ?] High School.

137
00:08:10,930 --> 00:08:19,170
And, otherwise, well, one of the
things that I found difficult

138
00:08:19,170 --> 00:08:23,610
at the time is the
school, our class,

139
00:08:23,610 --> 00:08:29,030
had organized dancing lessons.

140
00:08:29,030 --> 00:08:33,020
And me being by far
the youngest guy,

141
00:08:33,020 --> 00:08:38,179
and of course relatively
few girls there, I

142
00:08:38,179 --> 00:08:43,880
was the usual guy sitting out
at the dancing lessons, [LAUGHS]

143
00:08:43,880 --> 00:08:50,900
which was a very humiliating
kind of experience.

144
00:08:50,900 --> 00:08:54,290
Well, in those years, when
you're a young teenager,

145
00:08:54,290 --> 00:08:57,050
nothing is more
mortifying, nothing.

146
00:08:57,050 --> 00:08:59,930
The world falls down
when you feel like you

147
00:08:59,930 --> 00:09:02,270
are the most unpopular kid.

148
00:09:02,270 --> 00:09:04,680
Kid, yeah, that's
right, certainly.

149
00:09:04,680 --> 00:09:06,200
It was for me.

150
00:09:06,200 --> 00:09:12,730
I mean, I stuck it out, but I
never really, really learned

151
00:09:12,730 --> 00:09:14,050
dancing well.

152

00:09:14,050 --> 00:09:17,645
And then, I married with Rivka,
a champion dancer, which--

153
00:09:17,645 --> 00:09:22,640
[LAUGHS] but between
us, we haven't

154
00:09:22,640 --> 00:09:24,400
been able to make it out.

155
00:09:24,400 --> 00:09:28,684
[LAUGHTER]

156
00:09:28,684 --> 00:09:30,600

157
00:09:30,600 --> 00:09:32,470
That's funny,
that's kind of cute.

158
00:09:32,470 --> 00:09:38,070
It-- yeah, at first is
was a bit of a problem.

159
00:09:38,070 --> 00:09:41,500
Because, naturally, she would
naturally go to the dance floor

160
00:09:41,500 --> 00:09:47,450
when I would hesitatingly
follow her, which--

161
00:09:47,450 --> 00:09:49,500
then we somehow compromised.

162
00:09:49,500 --> 00:09:54,090
But I don't think I ever
became a really good dancing

163
00:09:54,090 --> 00:09:55,332
partner for Rivka.

164
00:09:55,332 --> 00:09:55,832
Oh.

165
00:09:55,832 --> 00:09:59,070

166
00:09:59,070 --> 00:10:01,110
I've got to ask you.

167
00:10:01,110 --> 00:10:05,340
We're having very good
sound on our interview,

168
00:10:05,340 --> 00:10:08,880
but something is rattling
that I-- that comes through.

169
00:10:08,880 --> 00:10:15,210
Do you think it could be your
wire connecting the earbuds

170
00:10:15,210 --> 00:10:16,220
or something?

171
00:10:16,220 --> 00:10:19,840
Or-- don't take them
out, they're fine.

172
00:10:19,840 --> 00:10:20,340
[INAUDIBLE]

173
00:10:20,340 --> 00:10:22,500
It's some place lower below.

174
00:10:22,500 --> 00:10:23,730
Yeah.

175
00:10:23,730 --> 00:10:26,340
I mean, they're a
bit loose in my ear,

176

00:10:26,340 --> 00:10:28,470
but I've got another set.

177
00:10:28,470 --> 00:10:29,490
No, no, no, no.

178
00:10:29,490 --> 00:10:33,120
I'm thinking it's rattling
down closer to your waist, is

179
00:10:33,120 --> 00:10:36,510
there's something
going on closer--

180
00:10:36,510 --> 00:10:38,090
that rattles.

181
00:10:38,090 --> 00:10:38,610
Nothing.

182
00:10:38,610 --> 00:10:39,110
No?

183
00:10:39,110 --> 00:10:40,060
No, nothing at all.

184
00:10:40,060 --> 00:10:40,950
OK.

185
00:10:40,950 --> 00:10:41,910
Well, here's the thing.

186
00:10:41,910 --> 00:10:46,810
When you have-- one of the
aspects of very good sound

187
00:10:46,810 --> 00:10:49,420
is that you hear everything.

188
00:10:49,420 --> 00:10:51,930
And so I'd much rather
that we hear everything

189
00:10:51,930 --> 00:10:56,310
and continue having good
sound rather than not.

190
00:10:56,310 --> 00:10:59,130
So we'll ignore
this and continue,

191
00:10:59,130 --> 00:11:01,290
and sorry for the interruption.

192
00:11:01,290 --> 00:11:02,340
No, no.

193
00:11:02,340 --> 00:11:03,580
It's fine.

194
00:11:03,580 --> 00:11:07,980
So do you remember any
kind of political classes

195
00:11:07,980 --> 00:11:08,880
during the war?

196
00:11:08,880 --> 00:11:12,840
Because this is wartime,
this is the Sudetenland,

197
00:11:12,840 --> 00:11:16,950
this was the patriotic place
that wanted to join Germany.

198
00:11:16,950 --> 00:11:19,290
And I want to get
a sense of what

199
00:11:19,290 --> 00:11:24,340
was the atmosphere in school
and outside of school?

200
00:11:24,340 --> 00:11:30,620

Very, very liberal, if you like.

201
00:11:30,620 --> 00:11:33,250
OK, in Wiesbaden,
I mean, it was sort

202
00:11:33,250 --> 00:11:36,910
of the [? spark ?]
attitude, which really

203
00:11:36,910 --> 00:11:38,680
the war and everything just--

204
00:11:38,680 --> 00:11:41,050
but, even there--
but the only thing

205
00:11:41,050 --> 00:11:44,590
was, of course,
that the whole class

206
00:11:44,590 --> 00:11:51,370
was older by roughly a year
older than my Wiesbaden class.

207
00:11:51,370 --> 00:12:00,120
And of the oldest group
in 1924, the group

208
00:12:00,120 --> 00:12:05,670
were about to be called up
sometime during that year,

209
00:12:05,670 --> 00:12:06,540
that first year.

210
00:12:06,540 --> 00:12:10,510

211
00:12:10,510 --> 00:12:14,880
So there was a
different attitude.

212

00:12:14,880 --> 00:12:18,960

I mean, these guys
realized they couldn't

213

00:12:18,960 --> 00:12:28,620

finish the final certificate,
tests or whatnot.

214

00:12:28,620 --> 00:12:34,020

And, in fact, I think it was
in that year, or at sometime

215

00:12:34,020 --> 00:12:40,650

during that year, Hitler
made a special order that

216

00:12:40,650 --> 00:12:50,925

in each class, each high school
class, the youngest people--

217

00:12:50,925 --> 00:12:57,370

they were defined which
year of birth and so on--

218

00:12:57,370 --> 00:13:03,450

would be retained to do
the final high school

219

00:13:03,450 --> 00:13:07,440

examinations, regardless of
whether they were already 18

220

00:13:07,440 --> 00:13:08,670

or not.

221

00:13:08,670 --> 00:13:18,980

And I was the one in that school
who was dedicated in that way.

222

00:13:18,980 --> 00:13:22,070

223

00:13:22,070 --> 00:13:24,230
Forgive me, I don't
fully understand this.

224
00:13:24,230 --> 00:13:26,420
Let me repeat what
I think I've heard

225
00:13:26,420 --> 00:13:30,070
and correct me in the areas
where I didn't understand it

226
00:13:30,070 --> 00:13:30,570
properly.

227
00:13:30,570 --> 00:13:32,930
OK.

228
00:13:32,930 --> 00:13:39,650
You are going to a school
now in the Sudetenland

229
00:13:39,650 --> 00:13:44,270
where most of the other
students are young boys.

230
00:13:44,270 --> 00:13:47,000
There are some girls, but
most of them are young boys.

231
00:13:47,000 --> 00:13:47,810
Yeah.

232
00:13:47,810 --> 00:13:52,655
And they're about a year
older than your students--

233
00:13:52,655 --> 00:13:57,200
Well, a year and a year and
a half older than I was.

234
00:13:57,200 --> 00:13:58,230
OK.

235
00:13:58,230 --> 00:14:03,200
But this, the Hitler order,
was general for the whole

236
00:14:03,200 --> 00:14:07,550
of the German Reich.

237
00:14:07,550 --> 00:14:12,230
He wanted to be sure that, at
the end of the victorious--

238
00:14:12,230 --> 00:14:13,760
naturally, victorious--

239
00:14:13,760 --> 00:14:18,800
war, there would be people
ready to go to university

240
00:14:18,800 --> 00:14:25,890
and ready to continue
the university life.

241
00:14:25,890 --> 00:14:29,690
And, for that purpose,
there were these exceptions

242
00:14:29,690 --> 00:14:34,670
made for their
final examinations

243
00:14:34,670 --> 00:14:38,150
to stay on, regardless
of their actual age,

244
00:14:38,150 --> 00:14:40,280
until the final examination.

245
00:14:40,280 --> 00:14:47,150
In actual fact, even after
1941, the call-up ages

246

00:14:47,150 --> 00:14:50,690
were constantly reduced.

247
00:14:50,690 --> 00:14:57,260
I mean, when I think to
1942, '43, even 16-year-olds

248
00:14:57,260 --> 00:15:00,440
were called up, not
directly to the army,

249
00:15:00,440 --> 00:15:05,690
but to the arbeit
[? steins ?] to the workers.

250
00:15:05,690 --> 00:15:06,850
Labor force, labor force.

251
00:15:06,850 --> 00:15:10,150
Labor force, yeah, yeah.

252
00:15:10,150 --> 00:15:16,190
So I avoided all that
because of my age, and also

253
00:15:16,190 --> 00:15:20,860
partly because I was
a Hitler Youth Leader.

254
00:15:20,860 --> 00:15:24,360

255
00:15:24,360 --> 00:15:28,050
OK, I'm going to see if
I can get it this time.

256
00:15:28,050 --> 00:15:32,030
So that means that,
within any one class--

257
00:15:32,030 --> 00:15:34,340
that is, you're in school,
you have a certain number

258
00:15:34,340 --> 00:15:37,190
of people in that class.

259
00:15:37,190 --> 00:15:39,860
In your case, most of
them are other young boys,

260
00:15:39,860 --> 00:15:42,410
but they are older
than you are--

261
00:15:42,410 --> 00:15:46,940
they will be called up simply
because, in ratio to everyone

262
00:15:46,940 --> 00:15:48,260
else, they're older.

263
00:15:48,260 --> 00:15:50,930
But you are an
exception, you will not

264
00:15:50,930 --> 00:15:55,100
be called up because you
are younger in that class.

265
00:15:55,100 --> 00:15:56,890
Is that my understanding?

266
00:15:56,890 --> 00:16:00,260
Yeah, that was the
way it was decided.

267
00:16:00,260 --> 00:16:08,180
I suppose the idea was really to
still get a maximum of students

268
00:16:08,180 --> 00:16:11,880
to be turned into soldiers.

269
00:16:11,880 --> 00:16:21,230

And the least lack of
attendance for actual fighting

270
00:16:21,230 --> 00:16:23,870
would be that these
youngsters, like myself,

271
00:16:23,870 --> 00:16:28,120
who would, in any case,
only maybe arrive just

272
00:16:28,120 --> 00:16:29,610
at the end of the war.

273
00:16:29,610 --> 00:16:32,760
And that was-- it became
one of my concerns

274
00:16:32,760 --> 00:16:35,090
because I wanted
to be in the war.

275
00:16:35,090 --> 00:16:38,180
Because people the
street would say to me,

276
00:16:38,180 --> 00:16:41,250
you look pretty fit, why
haven't you been called up?

277
00:16:41,250 --> 00:16:44,390
And that kind of thing.

278
00:16:44,390 --> 00:16:48,140
Was it something-- the others
who were in your class,

279
00:16:48,140 --> 00:16:50,600
was that a sentiment
that they all shared?

280
00:16:50,600 --> 00:16:54,410
They wanted to be called

up, they wanted to go fight?

281

00:16:54,410 --> 00:17:00,320

Well, the opposite didn't say
they didn't like the idea.

282

00:17:00,320 --> 00:17:03,060

Nobody would do that.

283

00:17:03,060 --> 00:17:06,089

They were apprehensive, yes.

284

00:17:06,089 --> 00:17:09,319

And a few of them, they were
really looking forward to it.

285

00:17:09,319 --> 00:17:13,369

For them, the idea to get
away from all the school

286

00:17:13,369 --> 00:17:19,640

drudgery, which they
sort of felt immediately

287

00:17:19,640 --> 00:17:22,060

that there would
be some sort of--

288

00:17:22,060 --> 00:17:23,990

they would be
released from the--

289

00:17:23,990 --> 00:17:29,010

but, of course, the army
life isn't like that.

290

00:17:29,010 --> 00:17:29,510

Yeah.

291

00:17:29,510 --> 00:17:30,710

Except not the one--

292

00:17:30,710 --> 00:17:33,590
the way I experienced it.

293
00:17:33,590 --> 00:17:36,190
So let me understand this.

294
00:17:36,190 --> 00:17:42,320
If you were born in 1926, by
the time you are going to school

295
00:17:42,320 --> 00:17:46,610
in the early '40s,
what year would you

296
00:17:46,610 --> 00:17:49,640
have been called up
and at what age, which

297
00:17:49,640 --> 00:17:53,510
was now suspended in your case?

298
00:17:53,510 --> 00:17:58,400
I mean, originally, it would
have been 26 and [INAUDIBLE]

299
00:17:58,400 --> 00:17:59,880
in 1944.

300
00:17:59,880 --> 00:18:02,250
Yes, it was still--

301
00:18:02,250 --> 00:18:04,400
the basic rule was at 18.

302
00:18:04,400 --> 00:18:08,660
So in 1944, I would
have been called up.

303
00:18:08,660 --> 00:18:16,830
And, in 1944, in the
normal course of events,

304

00:18:16,830 --> 00:18:21,590

I think the early
summer of 1944 would

305

00:18:21,590 --> 00:18:24,560

have been my final examination.

306

00:18:24,560 --> 00:18:28,900

307

00:18:28,900 --> 00:18:35,800

But if you were born in 1925,
or even the guys in '24,

308

00:18:35,800 --> 00:18:38,590

obviously they would
have been called-- well,

309

00:18:38,590 --> 00:18:42,970

they were in any case called
up long before they would have

310

00:18:42,970 --> 00:18:44,300

been able to finish course.

311

00:18:44,300 --> 00:18:47,920

312

00:18:47,920 --> 00:18:50,230

Were you able to
finish your course?

313

00:18:50,230 --> 00:18:52,120

Were you able to finish school?

314

00:18:52,120 --> 00:18:56,980

Well, that's quite another story
we hope to-- we are getting to.

315

00:18:56,980 --> 00:19:05,410

Because at the last minute,
or at the beginning of 19--

316

00:19:05,410 --> 00:19:12,730
at the end of 1943,
I became the--

317

00:19:12,730 --> 00:19:18,100
there was another Hitler order
that the final examinations

318

00:19:18,100 --> 00:19:23,200
would be done in January
1944, not in July.

319

00:19:23,200 --> 00:19:27,280
So that was already a
cutback of six months

320

00:19:27,280 --> 00:19:32,290
or so, and that certainly
applied in my case.

321

00:19:32,290 --> 00:19:36,990
So I had my examinations.

322

00:19:36,990 --> 00:19:41,070
But I think we are
talking too far ahead

323

00:19:41,070 --> 00:19:46,590
now, because there were
other complications as well.

324

00:19:46,590 --> 00:19:49,290
So I have a few questions.

325

00:19:49,290 --> 00:19:52,280
Number one, I want to find out
about the other complications

326

00:19:52,280 --> 00:19:53,570
you just mentioned.

327

00:19:53,570 --> 00:19:57,230

And number two, I
wanted to find out

328
00:19:57,230 --> 00:20:00,140
if you were part of the Hitler
Jungvolk, the Hitler-Jugend?

329
00:20:00,140 --> 00:20:01,850
Yeah.

330
00:20:01,850 --> 00:20:04,580
In what way was that
different from what

331
00:20:04,580 --> 00:20:08,420
you had been doing when
you were in Germany proper,

332
00:20:08,420 --> 00:20:11,180
and how do you compare
and contrast it?

333
00:20:11,180 --> 00:20:14,480
And what actually were
your activities now

334
00:20:14,480 --> 00:20:18,360
that you were in Sudetenland?

335
00:20:18,360 --> 00:20:18,860
Yeah.

336
00:20:18,860 --> 00:20:21,980
Well, of course, I
was more senior than--

337
00:20:21,980 --> 00:20:26,720
I mean, in Wiesbaden it was
really only a complete side

338
00:20:26,720 --> 00:20:30,620
issue, because the Hitler
Youth wasn't well established

339

00:20:30,620 --> 00:20:34,800
in Wiesbaden, and certainly
not in the spa area

340

00:20:34,800 --> 00:20:40,990
where I was living
with my grandparents.

341

00:20:40,990 --> 00:20:47,180
And so it was really
only a Saturday duty,

342

00:20:47,180 --> 00:20:48,860
which I attended.

343

00:20:48,860 --> 00:20:51,170
And usually it was
just cleaning up

344

00:20:51,170 --> 00:20:55,670
part of the streets or something
like that, some sort of--

345

00:20:55,670 --> 00:20:59,840
and collecting, of course, and
I talked to you about that,

346

00:20:59,840 --> 00:21:03,590
meeting some Jewish people
who were naturally very

347

00:21:03,590 --> 00:21:07,830
upset that somebody like
me wanted to collect money

348

00:21:07,830 --> 00:21:09,550
from them.

349

00:21:09,550 --> 00:21:10,300
OK.

350

00:21:10,300 --> 00:21:15,740
In Sudetenland, the
issue was much more

351
00:21:15,740 --> 00:21:22,070
that all these guys who
were my classmates who

352
00:21:22,070 --> 00:21:26,900
were Hitler Youth leaders
of one kind or another,

353
00:21:26,900 --> 00:21:29,150
when they were called
up, they were looking

354
00:21:29,150 --> 00:21:32,100
for somebody to replace them.

355
00:21:32,100 --> 00:21:42,950
So I had, if you like, a
rapid advancement simply

356
00:21:42,950 --> 00:21:45,710
because they left and
somebody had to be

357
00:21:45,710 --> 00:21:47,530
found to take their place.

358
00:21:47,530 --> 00:21:51,980
And I was fit, physically
fit, and I was already

359
00:21:51,980 --> 00:21:54,650
in the Jungvolk,
the Hitler Youth.

360
00:21:54,650 --> 00:22:00,054
So I sort of graduated
automatically.

361
00:22:00,054 --> 00:22:02,720

362
00:22:02,720 --> 00:22:04,600
And what were some
of the things,

363
00:22:04,600 --> 00:22:07,090
the duties that you then had?

364
00:22:07,090 --> 00:22:11,450
And how much more of your
time did this take up?

365
00:22:11,450 --> 00:22:18,780
Well, obviously we're
talking not a city life,

366
00:22:18,780 --> 00:22:20,660
we're only talking countryside.

367
00:22:20,660 --> 00:22:25,820
So the distances to
move to get to places

368
00:22:25,820 --> 00:22:27,810
became bigger and bigger.

369
00:22:27,810 --> 00:22:37,280
So I had my bicycle, but
there were no proper streets.

370
00:22:37,280 --> 00:22:41,090
I mean, it was all rough gravel.

371
00:22:41,090 --> 00:22:43,580
So it was quite a--

372
00:22:43,580 --> 00:22:48,470
you had to be fit to
cycle around these places

373
00:22:48,470 --> 00:22:53,790

with the big puddles, some mud,
and all that kind of thing.

374
00:22:53,790 --> 00:23:01,970
And, again, due to
the war condition,

375
00:23:01,970 --> 00:23:07,460
the professional
leader for the Hitler

376
00:23:07,460 --> 00:23:14,840
Youth in the whole [? area ?]
Kreis district in [PLACE],,

377
00:23:14,840 --> 00:23:16,460
he was a cripple.

378
00:23:16,460 --> 00:23:19,610
The boy had a bad foot.

379
00:23:19,610 --> 00:23:24,260
So that's the only reason
why he hadn't been called up.

380
00:23:24,260 --> 00:23:25,460
So he was in charge.

381
00:23:25,460 --> 00:23:29,660
And, of course, he was
relying on somebody like me

382
00:23:29,660 --> 00:23:34,130
to do a lot of the work that
he would have needed to do,

383
00:23:34,130 --> 00:23:37,550
getting around to
things like when

384
00:23:37,550 --> 00:23:44,840
a boy died for any
reason or an accident,

385
00:23:44,840 --> 00:23:47,930
somebody had to go and attend
the funeral, and that kind

386
00:23:47,930 --> 00:23:48,430
of thing.

387
00:23:48,430 --> 00:23:51,780

388
00:23:51,780 --> 00:23:54,720
So I was the one
then sent along.

389
00:23:54,720 --> 00:24:00,560
And, actually, if the
leader says you must go,

390
00:24:00,560 --> 00:24:02,655
it's an honor, so you must go.

391
00:24:02,655 --> 00:24:04,460
You attend--

392
00:24:04,460 --> 00:24:09,960
So did you still collect money?

393
00:24:09,960 --> 00:24:12,440
Is that part of
your duties here?

394
00:24:12,440 --> 00:24:14,100
Or, I'm trying to
get a sense of what

395
00:24:14,100 --> 00:24:18,540
are the activities that a
Jungvolk person undertakes

396
00:24:18,540 --> 00:24:23,610
and is involved in in

this part of the world

397

00:24:23,610 --> 00:24:25,572
at that particular time.

398

00:24:25,572 --> 00:24:29,970
Yeah, exactly, it became
more and more practical

399

00:24:29,970 --> 00:24:36,220
things to do, fixing and
carrying, cleaning up areas.

400

00:24:36,220 --> 00:24:41,920
Particularly also, that was one
of my specialities, having--

401

00:24:41,920 --> 00:24:46,800
collecting camps in the woods
or in the mountains of berries

402

00:24:46,800 --> 00:24:51,450
and mushrooms and so
on, collecting them

403

00:24:51,450 --> 00:24:58,770
and bringing them back for
extra food for the community.

404

00:24:58,770 --> 00:25:04,380
But I liked the camping idea,
and so did a lot of the boys.

405

00:25:04,380 --> 00:25:07,447
And that's it.

406

00:25:07,447 --> 00:25:11,350

407

00:25:11,350 --> 00:25:15,430
Were there-- was there
anything political

408

00:25:15,430 --> 00:25:20,770

about these activities,
outside of wearing a swastika,

409

00:25:20,770 --> 00:25:26,400

wearing of a scarf or a
uniform, or something like that?

410

00:25:26,400 --> 00:25:32,010

Less and less, because
as the war intensified,

411

00:25:32,010 --> 00:25:37,260

all that Hitler stuff
went by the way.

412

00:25:37,260 --> 00:25:40,010

I mean, the war
effort was everything,

413

00:25:40,010 --> 00:25:43,050

and everything else was
just something that--

414

00:25:43,050 --> 00:25:47,190

415

00:25:47,190 --> 00:25:52,870

maybe Goebbels made a
speech, but, locally,

416

00:25:52,870 --> 00:25:56,250

the political leaders, they
were already in the army

417

00:25:56,250 --> 00:25:58,890

or already killed.

418

00:25:58,890 --> 00:26:05,520

So the whole spirit
of Hitler revolution

419

00:26:05,520 --> 00:26:07,610
was gradually
being squeezed out.

420
00:26:07,610 --> 00:26:11,370

421
00:26:11,370 --> 00:26:17,310
What about-- your school was
German-speaking, but was there

422
00:26:17,310 --> 00:26:19,110
a Czech community?

423
00:26:19,110 --> 00:26:23,850
Were there Czech people living
around you, or not so much?

424
00:26:23,850 --> 00:26:28,170
Was this homogeneously
German, or was there a mix?

425
00:26:28,170 --> 00:26:29,990
No, it wasn't
homogeneously German.

426
00:26:29,990 --> 00:26:36,060
There was, in my particular
area, a minority of Czechs,

427
00:26:36,060 --> 00:26:43,520
but they were usually living
in sort of settled areas.

428
00:26:43,520 --> 00:26:46,260
They hadn't been
resettled or anything.

429
00:26:46,260 --> 00:26:50,690
They were just left
behind kind of people.

430
00:26:50,690 --> 00:26:56,040

And for instance, when I
was cycling from my home

431
00:26:56,040 --> 00:27:02,580
there to the high school, I
went through a little valley

432
00:27:02,580 --> 00:27:05,390
where there were Czech houses.

433
00:27:05,390 --> 00:27:08,340
They looked the same
as the German houses,

434
00:27:08,340 --> 00:27:10,680
but there were known.

435
00:27:10,680 --> 00:27:13,650
And those people were
sort of separate.

436
00:27:13,650 --> 00:27:17,010
They had, presumably,
a separate school.

437
00:27:17,010 --> 00:27:22,150
But I wasn't really
involved with it.

438
00:27:22,150 --> 00:27:23,420
So--

439
00:27:23,420 --> 00:27:25,220
Was there any interaction?

440
00:27:25,220 --> 00:27:29,840
Did you ever meet any of
them, talk to any of them?

441
00:27:29,840 --> 00:27:31,760
Not directly.

442

00:27:31,760 --> 00:27:37,880
But Aunt [? Elsie, ?]
my aunt, she

443
00:27:37,880 --> 00:27:42,080
continued to have with
her Czech friends, which

444
00:27:42,080 --> 00:27:48,770
most German-speaking people
didn't do after the occupation.

445
00:27:48,770 --> 00:27:54,550
But she couldn't take any notice
of all these official things.

446
00:27:54,550 --> 00:27:57,350
And she often went through--

447
00:27:57,350 --> 00:28:02,070
also into the Czech area to
visit her old friends and so

448
00:28:02,070 --> 00:28:07,850
on, and continued to have
good relations with them.

449
00:28:07,850 --> 00:28:10,490
Did she ever bring
back any kind of news

450
00:28:10,490 --> 00:28:14,420
about what their thoughts were,
what their sentiments were?

451
00:28:14,420 --> 00:28:17,090
Was there any
filtration out of how

452
00:28:17,090 --> 00:28:20,390
they were feeling that
was coming to you?

453

00:28:20,390 --> 00:28:21,060
To your--

454
00:28:21,060 --> 00:28:25,970
Well, everybody was sure they
were resenting everything that

455
00:28:25,970 --> 00:28:32,270
was happening to them,
so one didn't bring up

456
00:28:32,270 --> 00:28:35,060
sore subject straight away.

457
00:28:35,060 --> 00:28:39,295
Because they would sort of
only then feel embarrassment.

458
00:28:39,295 --> 00:28:42,700

459
00:28:42,700 --> 00:28:47,290
There was no positive
feelings between the Germans

460
00:28:47,290 --> 00:28:50,970
and the Czechs, not at
all, except Aunt Elsie.

461
00:28:50,970 --> 00:28:58,460
She had a natural charm that
somehow bridged the divide.

462
00:28:58,460 --> 00:28:59,690
Did you ever go with her--

463
00:28:59,690 --> 00:29:00,350
No.

464
00:29:00,350 --> 00:29:01,600
--to visit your Czech friends?

465

00:29:01,600 --> 00:29:02,100
No.

466
00:29:02,100 --> 00:29:03,950
[LAUGHS] She was
impossible to go with.

467
00:29:03,950 --> 00:29:08,060
[LAUGHS] No, no.

468
00:29:08,060 --> 00:29:14,930
She was very much a unique
traveler, that's for sure.

469
00:29:14,930 --> 00:29:17,660
What makes her
impossible to go with?

470
00:29:17,660 --> 00:29:20,190
Tell me, explain to me why.

471
00:29:20,190 --> 00:29:20,900
So lively!

472
00:29:20,900 --> 00:29:27,110
So lively and always
such a positive--

473
00:29:27,110 --> 00:29:28,950
I mean, she was a lovely person.

474
00:29:28,950 --> 00:29:33,710
But, as I say, she
left always a trail

475
00:29:33,710 --> 00:29:38,480
of undone, unfinished
[LAUGHS] things behind her.

476
00:29:38,480 --> 00:29:41,810

477

00:29:41,810 --> 00:29:43,170
I mean, till I was--

478
00:29:43,170 --> 00:29:46,330
I just couldn't take it.

479
00:29:46,330 --> 00:29:49,890
Tell me, why was it
that Tilla was there?

480
00:29:49,890 --> 00:29:52,550
She's actually from your
father's side of the family,

481
00:29:52,550 --> 00:29:54,540
and this was your
mother's family.

482
00:29:54,540 --> 00:29:55,240
[INAUDIBLE]

483
00:29:55,240 --> 00:29:58,020
How is it that
she ends up there?

484
00:29:58,020 --> 00:30:00,960
I don't know how it was fixed.

485
00:30:00,960 --> 00:30:08,160
Obviously, that's something I
expect Ulla, my stepmother--

486
00:30:08,160 --> 00:30:14,710
she was the wonderful
organizer of everything.

487
00:30:14,710 --> 00:30:22,020
And when they sold
a farm in [PLACE],,

488
00:30:22,020 --> 00:30:28,300
she somehow managed to find
a place for everyone us.

489
00:30:28,300 --> 00:30:32,110
And she was just keeping
the small children,

490
00:30:32,110 --> 00:30:36,910
her own children, her own
three children with her.

491
00:30:36,910 --> 00:30:41,200
So could one understand that
Tilla was there to mind you?

492
00:30:41,200 --> 00:30:42,820
Was that her main role?

493
00:30:42,820 --> 00:30:45,490
No, she was there before me.

494
00:30:45,490 --> 00:30:50,230
She went there directly
when [PLACE] broke up.

495
00:30:50,230 --> 00:30:54,100
It may be that Aunt [? Elsie ?]
and she had already made

496
00:30:54,100 --> 00:30:56,260
arrangements to some extent.

497
00:30:56,260 --> 00:30:58,720
I mean, I can imagine that
Aunt [? Elsie ?] would

498
00:30:58,720 --> 00:31:01,710
have only said, yes,
you must come to us,

499
00:31:01,710 --> 00:31:03,520
and that was that, you know.

500
00:31:03,520 --> 00:31:07,450

And as far as Ulla
mutter is concerned,

501
00:31:07,450 --> 00:31:17,170
I mean, she had to manage with
her children by herself, yeah.

502
00:31:17,170 --> 00:31:20,814
Well, that's how it
turned out, and, you know.

503
00:31:20,814 --> 00:31:21,314
Mm-hmm.

504
00:31:21,314 --> 00:31:25,150

505
00:31:25,150 --> 00:31:29,950
So Tilla is there,
you were there.

506
00:31:29,950 --> 00:31:31,720
What about your younger sisters?

507
00:31:31,720 --> 00:31:33,190
Are they also with you?

508
00:31:33,190 --> 00:31:39,160
They were with my
aunt further up

509
00:31:39,160 --> 00:31:45,020
in the Sudetenland,
the [? Grummans. ?]

510
00:31:45,020 --> 00:31:50,360
They had a clothing
factory in a town, which

511
00:31:50,360 --> 00:31:52,240
now is sort of facing Poland.

512

00:31:52,240 --> 00:31:55,300

513

00:31:55,300 --> 00:31:57,850

What was it called, the town?

514

00:31:57,850 --> 00:31:59,630

Do you remember?

515

00:31:59,630 --> 00:32:00,130

Yeah.

516

00:32:00,130 --> 00:32:03,150

517

00:32:03,150 --> 00:32:07,290

I mean, they went to
school in Troppau, Troppau,

518

00:32:07,290 --> 00:32:13,640

which was very far east
and part of the Czech area.

519

00:32:13,640 --> 00:32:19,200

But WÄ¼rbenthal was the name of
the particular one where they

520

00:32:19,200 --> 00:32:21,260

actually stayed.

521

00:32:21,260 --> 00:32:22,810

[? Luvental? ?]

522

00:32:22,810 --> 00:32:24,975

WÄ¼rben-- WÄ¼rbenthal.

523

00:32:24,975 --> 00:32:35,710

W-u-- umlaut--
r-b-e-n-t-h-a-l, WÄ¼rben--

524

00:32:35,710 --> 00:32:37,180

WÄ¼rbenthal.

525

00:32:37,180 --> 00:32:43,730

But I don't recall at the
moment what the Czech name was.

526

00:32:43,730 --> 00:32:45,530

Did you visit them there?

527

00:32:45,530 --> 00:32:49,050

Yes, oh yes, very often.

528

00:32:49,050 --> 00:32:49,550

[INAUDIBLE]

529

00:32:49,550 --> 00:32:52,940

So was it far from
where you were?

530

00:32:52,940 --> 00:32:55,560

Was it like two hours
or an eight hour trip?

531

00:32:55,560 --> 00:32:56,860

Or how was it?

532

00:32:56,860 --> 00:33:02,980

No, three-- I would say three
to four hours with the train.

533

00:33:02,980 --> 00:33:05,460

Not very fast trains
in those parts.

534

00:33:05,460 --> 00:33:08,810

535

00:33:08,810 --> 00:33:13,760

And was the town significantly
different from where you were?

536

00:33:13,760 --> 00:33:15,800

Or was it pretty much the same?

537
00:33:15,800 --> 00:33:16,310
No.

538
00:33:16,310 --> 00:33:18,080
Well, very much the same.

539
00:33:18,080 --> 00:33:22,640
And I only knew, shall we
say, the upper, better part

540
00:33:22,640 --> 00:33:26,900
were they had their
villa and the factory.

541
00:33:26,900 --> 00:33:33,704
So I didn't get much into the
actual town area at the center.

542
00:33:33,704 --> 00:33:36,460
OK.

543
00:33:36,460 --> 00:33:43,530
Now, the years-- the
years that you are in--

544
00:33:43,530 --> 00:33:46,470
with your mother's family,
the [? Klugers, ?] between

545
00:33:46,470 --> 00:33:52,740
'41 or '44, are pivotal
years for Germany,

546
00:33:52,740 --> 00:33:54,870
in that they're--
when you arrive there,

547
00:33:54,870 --> 00:33:56,670
they're winning the war.

548
00:33:56,670 --> 00:33:59,348

By 1944, they're
not winning the war.

549
00:33:59,348 --> 00:33:59,890
That's right.

550
00:33:59,890 --> 00:34:04,380
There is-- 1943,
there is Stalingrad,

551
00:34:04,380 --> 00:34:08,639
which is a turn militarily.

552
00:34:08,639 --> 00:34:13,290
Did any news of such things
filter down to your town?

553
00:34:13,290 --> 00:34:17,730
Oh, of course it did,
[LAUGHS] in a big way.

554
00:34:17,730 --> 00:34:23,159
Maybe not strictly on
time, but sooner or later,

555
00:34:23,159 --> 00:34:24,810
it had to be told.

556
00:34:24,810 --> 00:34:26,909
In particular, of
course, Stalingrad

557
00:34:26,909 --> 00:34:32,219
was so much of an actual
event with, I think,

558
00:34:32,219 --> 00:34:35,190
Germany and Hitler
expecting that they

559
00:34:35,190 --> 00:34:41,159
would be the winners in
the end of the big battle.

560
00:34:41,159 --> 00:34:46,024
So they couldn't just
drop it at the end.

561
00:34:46,024 --> 00:34:47,020
[INAUDIBLE]

562
00:34:47,020 --> 00:34:51,630
So how do you remember
Stalingrad being talked about,

563
00:34:51,630 --> 00:34:55,440
whether this was officially
through newspapers or radio

564
00:34:55,440 --> 00:34:58,110
or unofficially amongst people?

565
00:34:58,110 --> 00:35:02,920

566
00:35:02,920 --> 00:35:05,810
Oh.

567
00:35:05,810 --> 00:35:09,670
We froze for a little bit.

568
00:35:09,670 --> 00:35:12,160
Can you hear me?

569
00:35:12,160 --> 00:35:19,600
I think I'm going to have
to stop the recording,

570
00:35:19,600 --> 00:35:23,680
and we'll turn it on again
because something happened.

571
00:35:23,680 --> 00:35:26,340
So, yeah.

572

00:35:26,340 --> 00:35:31,000