

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:20,890

2

00:00:20,890 --> 00:00:26,410

Can you describe for me the  
difference in everyday life

3

00:00:26,410 --> 00:00:31,760

from before the war and  
then after the Germans came?

4

00:00:31,760 --> 00:00:33,050

Tell me how things changed.

5

00:00:33,050 --> 00:00:40,490

6

00:00:40,490 --> 00:00:48,950

Well, to begin with, life  
was disrupted immediately.

7

00:00:48,950 --> 00:00:55,643

We, I didn't go to school.

8

00:00:55,643 --> 00:00:57,560

I was glad that I didn't  
have to go to school.

9

00:00:57,560 --> 00:00:59,227

I didn't like the  
school I was going to.

10

00:00:59,227 --> 00:01:02,550

That's how stupid I was  
when the war broke out.

11

00:01:02,550 --> 00:01:04,125

But I grew up very quickly.

12

00:01:04,125 --> 00:01:08,600

13

00:01:08,600 --> 00:01:15,720

My-- it's difficult  
to really say that,

14

00:01:15,720 --> 00:01:23,650

because the disruption  
was gradual.

15

00:01:23,650 --> 00:01:29,470

And some things were very  
drastically different

16

00:01:29,470 --> 00:01:35,680

when the war broke out,  
and then gradually life

17

00:01:35,680 --> 00:01:40,750

became more normal  
but very different

18

00:01:40,750 --> 00:01:43,420  
than it was before the war.

19

00:01:43,420 --> 00:01:48,260

So that for instance, we  
came back from the country

20

00:01:48,260 --> 00:01:51,220

shortly before  
the war broke out,

21

00:01:51,220 --> 00:01:54,700

and our cupboards were bare.

22

00:01:54,700 --> 00:01:58,480

And my mom tried to buy food  
because she had survived

23

00:01:58,480 --> 00:02:02,170

the First World  
War, and she knew

24

00:02:02,170 --> 00:02:07,690

that it would be difficult  
to buy food in the beginning.

25

00:02:07,690 --> 00:02:10,120

But she couldn't  
get any staples.

26

00:02:10,120 --> 00:02:11,470

She couldn't get any bread.

27

00:02:11,470 --> 00:02:13,090

She couldn't get any flour.

28

00:02:13,090 --> 00:02:14,350

She couldn't get any potatoes.

29

00:02:14,350 --> 00:02:16,970

30

00:02:16,970 --> 00:02:19,550

So she bought  
whatever she could,

31

00:02:19,550 --> 00:02:25,130

so we ended up having  
chocolates and halvah and caviar

32

00:02:25,130 --> 00:02:30,875

and pickled herring.

33

00:02:30,875 --> 00:02:34,160

34

00:02:34,160 --> 00:02:36,320

Fun food, but not real food.

35

00:02:36,320 --> 00:02:40,580

36

00:02:40,580 --> 00:02:42,980

The Germans came into  
our city three days

37  
00:02:42,980 --> 00:02:45,350  
after the war broke out.

38  
00:02:45,350 --> 00:02:49,690  
So then immediately the  
first thing that happened,

39  
00:02:49,690 --> 00:02:51,610  
there was shooting  
that you hear.

40  
00:02:51,610 --> 00:02:56,470  
We didn't-- the first thing that  
happened is that no one walked

41  
00:02:56,470 --> 00:02:57,670  
out.

42  
00:02:57,670 --> 00:02:59,890  
We didn't leave our apartment.

43  
00:02:59,890 --> 00:03:02,350  
We were afraid to leave.

44  
00:03:02,350 --> 00:03:05,410  
And then of course, as soon  
as the Germans came in,

45  
00:03:05,410 --> 00:03:09,480  
they passed all kinds of  
decrees and there was a curfew.

46  
00:03:09,480 --> 00:03:14,940

47  
00:03:14,940 --> 00:03:19,230  
Later on, some maybe--

48  
00:03:19,230 --> 00:03:20,550

I don't remember exactly--

49

00:03:20,550 --> 00:03:25,930

maybe a week later,  
people started

50

00:03:25,930 --> 00:03:27,430

walking out into the street.

51

00:03:27,430 --> 00:03:29,860

People had to go out.

52

00:03:29,860 --> 00:03:33,310

Bakeries were apparently  
given permission

53

00:03:33,310 --> 00:03:35,650

to start baking bread.

54

00:03:35,650 --> 00:03:39,010

So that people were  
going and buying bread.

55

00:03:39,010 --> 00:03:45,520

I remember the first time I left  
the house with my mother very

56

00:03:45,520 --> 00:03:47,470

early in the morning.

57

00:03:47,470 --> 00:03:50,960

My mother didn't want my  
father to leave the house.

58

00:03:50,960 --> 00:03:54,350

You kept men in the house  
if you could help it.

59

00:03:54,350 --> 00:03:56,720

That was true not just  
for the Jewish population.

60

00:03:56,720 --> 00:03:59,080

It was true for all of us.

61

00:03:59,080 --> 00:04:01,680

62

00:04:01,680 --> 00:04:05,160

So I remember getting up  
very early in the morning

63

00:04:05,160 --> 00:04:06,390

because there was a curfew.

64

00:04:06,390 --> 00:04:10,700

But perhaps even  
before the curfew--

65

00:04:10,700 --> 00:04:13,430

in other words, it may have  
been earlier than the time

66

00:04:13,430 --> 00:04:15,710

when we were permitted to  
leave because my mom was

67

00:04:15,710 --> 00:04:18,649

anxious to get into  
the bread line.

68

00:04:18,649 --> 00:04:21,290

And I remember standing  
in the bread line.

69

00:04:21,290 --> 00:04:23,900

And I remember bringing  
a bread home, which

70

00:04:23,900 --> 00:04:26,570

was a wonderful thing  
because we didn't

71

00:04:26,570 --> 00:04:31,310

have any real food, as I told

you, for probably about a week.

72

00:04:31,310 --> 00:04:38,040

73

00:04:38,040 --> 00:04:44,020

Well, then I also

remember, I remember

74

00:04:44,020 --> 00:04:47,710

that about perhaps

10 days after the war

75

00:04:47,710 --> 00:04:49,990

broke out that the Germans--

76

00:04:49,990 --> 00:04:56,910

and that was a treatment

that was apparently meant

77

00:04:56,910 --> 00:04:58,950

for the Jewish people,

because I remember

78

00:04:58,950 --> 00:05:05,250

the soldiers came into the

apartment house in which we

79

00:05:05,250 --> 00:05:06,300

lived.

80

00:05:06,300 --> 00:05:12,540

Most people in Poland, if they

lived in cities or big towns,

81

00:05:12,540 --> 00:05:14,310

did not live in private homes.

82

00:05:14,310 --> 00:05:17,010

They lived in apartment houses.

83

00:05:17,010 --> 00:05:19,920

And the apartment  
houses had courtyards.

84  
00:05:19,920 --> 00:05:22,860  
And I remember the soldiers  
came into the courtyard

85  
00:05:22,860 --> 00:05:27,240  
and started to shout that  
all the Jewish people have

86  
00:05:27,240 --> 00:05:29,470  
to come down to the courtyard.

87  
00:05:29,470 --> 00:05:35,670  
And I do remember coming down  
with my mom and my father and--

88  
00:05:35,670 --> 00:05:39,040  
I was the oldest--  
there were four of us.

89  
00:05:39,040 --> 00:05:42,830  
And I think that our  
cook, who was Jewish,

90  
00:05:42,830 --> 00:05:44,940  
was still with us at that point.

91  
00:05:44,940 --> 00:05:45,980  
And she came down.

92  
00:05:45,980 --> 00:05:49,060

93  
00:05:49,060 --> 00:05:53,020  
And we came down and they  
took all the men away.

94  
00:05:53,020 --> 00:05:55,600  
They took my father.

95



00:05:55,600 --> 00:05:59,760  
And I don't remember how  
long my father was gone.

96  
00:05:59,760 --> 00:06:05,320  
That was a very  
difficult time for us.

97  
00:06:05,320 --> 00:06:07,680  
But I do remember that  
my father came back.

98  
00:06:07,680 --> 00:06:12,060  
He may not have been  
gone more than a week.

99  
00:06:12,060 --> 00:06:17,380  
But I remember that my  
father had auburn hair.

100  
00:06:17,380 --> 00:06:25,560  
And I remember that when he came  
back he was almost all gray.

101  
00:06:25,560 --> 00:06:27,450  
And it was shocking.

102  
00:06:27,450 --> 00:06:32,380  
And my father, now that I think  
about it, he was 39 years old.

103  
00:06:32,380 --> 00:06:36,540  
He was born in 1900,  
and this was 1939.

104  
00:06:36,540 --> 00:06:41,180  
So he was 39 years old,  
and he turned gray.

105  
00:06:41,180 --> 00:06:48,940  
And the I also know that  
some men didn't come back,

106

00:06:48,940 --> 00:06:56,570  
because apparently the Germans  
killed some of the Jewish men.

107  
00:06:56,570 --> 00:06:59,090  
Whether it was at random  
or whatever the reason,

108  
00:06:59,090 --> 00:07:03,610  
my father never talked about it.

109  
00:07:03,610 --> 00:07:06,200  
So that was--

110  
00:07:06,200 --> 00:07:08,690  
I don't know if I'm  
describing the difference,

111  
00:07:08,690 --> 00:07:17,520  
but before the war, we had  
a very normal household.

112  
00:07:17,520 --> 00:07:18,480  
I went to school.

113  
00:07:18,480 --> 00:07:21,090  
I was the oldest.

114  
00:07:21,090 --> 00:07:23,860  
My parents were--  
we were not rich,

115  
00:07:23,860 --> 00:07:25,800  
but we were very comfortable.

116  
00:07:25,800 --> 00:07:31,050  
My father owned a children's,  
infant wear factory.

117  
00:07:31,050 --> 00:07:33,710

118

00:07:33,710 --> 00:07:35,990  
We had help in the house.

119  
00:07:35,990 --> 00:07:39,320  
We went to school.

120  
00:07:39,320 --> 00:07:40,775  
We went to parks.

121  
00:07:40,775 --> 00:07:43,600

122  
00:07:43,600 --> 00:07:44,690  
I had friends.

123  
00:07:44,690 --> 00:07:45,520  
I read books.

124  
00:07:45,520 --> 00:07:48,740

125  
00:07:48,740 --> 00:07:52,000  
I did continue reading  
during the war.

126  
00:07:52,000 --> 00:07:57,460  
That was the one thing that,  
in the beginning, was good.

127  
00:07:57,460 --> 00:08:00,040  
There were lending libraries.

128  
00:08:00,040 --> 00:08:04,270  
And we had curfews, and  
I did get an education

129  
00:08:04,270 --> 00:08:05,740  
in the beginning of the war.

130  
00:08:05,740 --> 00:08:07,780  
I was always a bookworm.

131

00:08:07,780 --> 00:08:13,220

And in the beginning, there  
wasn't that much to do,

132

00:08:13,220 --> 00:08:16,050

so I did a lot of reading.

133

00:08:16,050 --> 00:08:20,330

That was perhaps the one  
nice thing that happened.

134

00:08:20,330 --> 00:08:24,440

135

00:08:24,440 --> 00:08:29,510

Can you talk a little bit about  
how you continued in education

136

00:08:29,510 --> 00:08:32,240

after the schools  
were closed and how

137

00:08:32,240 --> 00:08:35,140

you taught your brother?

138

00:08:35,140 --> 00:08:35,950

OK.

139

00:08:35,950 --> 00:08:40,090

Let me just tell you  
a few things kind of.

140

00:08:40,090 --> 00:08:41,390

There was no school.

141

00:08:41,390 --> 00:08:43,870

The first thing, of course,  
that the Germans did

142

00:08:43,870 --> 00:08:48,470

is that Jewish children were  
not permitted to go to school.

143  
00:08:48,470 --> 00:08:51,700  
All schools were closed to us.

144  
00:08:51,700 --> 00:08:55,000  
But my parents,  
my parents didn't

145  
00:08:55,000 --> 00:08:56,620  
know what was in store for us.

146  
00:08:56,620 --> 00:08:59,210  
No one did at that point.

147  
00:08:59,210 --> 00:09:04,450  
In fact, my parents felt  
that things may get better.

148  
00:09:04,450 --> 00:09:09,200  
They felt that some  
of the horror stories,

149  
00:09:09,200 --> 00:09:14,230  
the shooting, that  
this was just what

150  
00:09:14,230 --> 00:09:16,850  
happens when a  
country is occupied

151  
00:09:16,850 --> 00:09:21,820  
and the occupiers want  
to put the fear of God

152  
00:09:21,820 --> 00:09:23,240  
into the population.

153  
00:09:23,240 --> 00:09:26,200  
So there is harsh treatment.

154  
00:09:26,200 --> 00:09:29,330  
But my parents thought

that after a while--

155

00:09:29,330 --> 00:09:32,380

and that was their memory  
of the First World War--

156

00:09:32,380 --> 00:09:37,570

that life will become  
a little more normal.

157

00:09:37,570 --> 00:09:39,970

Of course, given the fact that  
there was a war out there.

158

00:09:39,970 --> 00:09:44,830

And then of course, my parents  
hoped that the war will end

159

00:09:44,830 --> 00:09:46,990

and it will end the right way.

160

00:09:46,990 --> 00:09:51,180

161

00:09:51,180 --> 00:09:54,180

So my parents, I don't  
remember exactly when,

162

00:09:54,180 --> 00:09:58,660

but probably maybe a month  
or two after the war started,

163

00:09:58,660 --> 00:10:03,600

we started private tutoring.

164

00:10:03,600 --> 00:10:07,300

Now, I don't mean that it  
was on a one-to-one basis.

165

00:10:07,300 --> 00:10:13,080

But the teachers who taught in  
the schools organized classes,

166

00:10:13,080 --> 00:10:17,310

and we would meet in  
different people's houses.

167

00:10:17,310 --> 00:10:21,690

And I remember in my group  
there were maybe 12 or 13 of us.

168

00:10:21,690 --> 00:10:23,370

And we studied.

169

00:10:23,370 --> 00:10:26,880

We really had classes of sorts.

170

00:10:26,880 --> 00:10:32,010

We certainly studied Polish  
and Polish literature

171

00:10:32,010 --> 00:10:34,350

and history and geography.

172

00:10:34,350 --> 00:10:36,210

It was more difficult  
with sciences,

173

00:10:36,210 --> 00:10:38,610

because we had no labs.

174

00:10:38,610 --> 00:10:40,350

We did mathematics.

175

00:10:40,350 --> 00:10:45,060

And my parents were very, very  
concerned that we continue.

176

00:10:45,060 --> 00:10:48,702

Because they felt that once  
the war will come to an end,

177

00:10:48,702 --> 00:10:50,160

that there was  
going to be a world,

178  
00:10:50,160 --> 00:10:54,720  
and they wanted us to  
continue with our education.

179  
00:10:54,720 --> 00:10:59,700  
So I was in such a group,  
and so were my sisters.

180  
00:10:59,700 --> 00:11:03,130  
My youngest brother was only  
six when the war broke out,

181  
00:11:03,130 --> 00:11:06,360  
so I started to tutor him.

182  
00:11:06,360 --> 00:11:08,250  
I taught him to read and write.

183  
00:11:08,250 --> 00:11:13,840  
And he was very  
good in mathematics.

184  
00:11:13,840 --> 00:11:18,410  
I think had he lived, he may  
have been really extraordinary.

185  
00:11:18,410 --> 00:11:23,170  
I have a very bright, very,  
very good, very bright son

186  
00:11:23,170 --> 00:11:25,060  
who's extremely  
good in mathematics,

187  
00:11:25,060 --> 00:11:26,532  
as a matter of fact, and I--

188  
00:11:26,532 --> 00:11:28,140  
[BEEP]

189  
00:11:28,140 --> 00:11:34,650



And you can start just where  
you tutored your little brother.

190  
00:11:34,650 --> 00:11:37,140  
My brother was six years old.

191  
00:11:37,140 --> 00:11:41,990  
So instead of sending him  
to some kind of a organized

192  
00:11:41,990 --> 00:11:42,630  
school--

193  
00:11:42,630 --> 00:11:45,840  
not school, but  
organized tutorial--

194  
00:11:45,840 --> 00:11:48,840

195  
00:11:48,840 --> 00:11:50,610  
I was the one who tutored him.

196  
00:11:50,610 --> 00:11:53,220  
And I taught him how  
to read and write.

197  
00:11:53,220 --> 00:11:55,470  
And I taught him arithmetic.

198  
00:11:55,470 --> 00:11:57,510  
And he was very bright.

199  
00:11:57,510 --> 00:11:59,010  
He was very good in mathematics.

200  
00:11:59,010 --> 00:12:02,160  
He was he was a  
bit of a whiz kid.

201  
00:12:02,160 --> 00:12:05,790  
I remember that

after a while, I used

202

00:12:05,790 --> 00:12:09,780

to take him around  
because, particularly

203

00:12:09,780 --> 00:12:14,040

in the evening when there was  
a curfew, in the courtyard,

204

00:12:14,040 --> 00:12:15,820

people were sitting  
in the courtyard.

205

00:12:15,820 --> 00:12:18,160

It was still before  
it got very cold.

206

00:12:18,160 --> 00:12:24,660

And I remember that my  
brother, his name was Lulek,

207

00:12:24,660 --> 00:12:30,840

people would say to him,  
how much is 5 times 75?

208

00:12:30,840 --> 00:12:32,280

And he would come  
back right away.

209

00:12:32,280 --> 00:12:33,990

Or more than that.

210

00:12:33,990 --> 00:12:38,610

They would say to him,  
how much is 20 times 183?

211

00:12:38,610 --> 00:12:43,600

And it wouldn't take him but  
a second to give the answer.

212

00:12:43,600 --> 00:12:49,230

And as I said, I really think

that he was extraordinary

213

00:12:49,230 --> 00:12:52,410

when it came to  
mathematics, that he

214

00:12:52,410 --> 00:12:54,460

had some kind of a gift.

215

00:12:54,460 --> 00:13:02,130

And he didn't live to realize  
his potential, obviously.

216

00:13:02,130 --> 00:13:04,200

So that was my little brother.

217

00:13:04,200 --> 00:13:08,780

218

00:13:08,780 --> 00:13:13,430

Things were becoming  
normal, but they weren't.

219

00:13:13,430 --> 00:13:18,530

The one thing I remember  
is how very quickly we were

220

00:13:18,530 --> 00:13:20,300

hungry for a piece of bread.

221

00:13:20,300 --> 00:13:23,360

There wasn't enough  
bread in the house.

222

00:13:23,360 --> 00:13:25,080

Food was rationed.

223

00:13:25,080 --> 00:13:27,920

And I remember my  
brother asking my mom

224

00:13:27,920 --> 00:13:32,450

for another slice of  
bread, and my mom say, no,

225  
00:13:32,450 --> 00:13:35,250  
that's all you can get.

226  
00:13:35,250 --> 00:13:40,010  
Sometimes one of  
us would give him

227  
00:13:40,010 --> 00:13:42,590  
a little piece of  
our bread, because we

228  
00:13:42,590 --> 00:13:45,650  
felt that he was little  
and he didn't understand.

229  
00:13:45,650 --> 00:13:47,450  
But my mother  
didn't encourage it.

230  
00:13:47,450 --> 00:13:54,360  
My mother felt we should all  
get our certain amount of food.

231  
00:13:54,360 --> 00:13:58,060  
But then things  
did improve some.

232  
00:13:58,060 --> 00:14:01,490  
My father's factory was  
taken over by the Germans,

233  
00:14:01,490 --> 00:14:04,250  
by a German [NON-ENGLISH].

234  
00:14:04,250 --> 00:14:09,030  
That means somebody  
that the Germans trust.

235  
00:14:09,030 --> 00:14:12,630  
And my father worked

in his factory.

236

00:14:12,630 --> 00:14:16,080

What it meant is that he  
taught the other men, probably,

237

00:14:16,080 --> 00:14:19,180

how to run the factory  
and what to do.

238

00:14:19,180 --> 00:14:22,870

But that was good, because  
then we as a family--

239

00:14:22,870 --> 00:14:28,740

he was getting paid and we  
were getting ration cards.

240

00:14:28,740 --> 00:14:32,380

Everything was rationed  
by that time in Poland.

241

00:14:32,380 --> 00:14:34,320

So it was very important  
to have the cards.

242

00:14:34,320 --> 00:14:37,950

And if you didn't work, you  
didn't have the ration cards.

243

00:14:37,950 --> 00:14:41,760

And my mother probably started  
to work at this time, too.

244

00:14:41,760 --> 00:14:43,380

I don't remember  
where she worked,

245

00:14:43,380 --> 00:14:46,380

but I know she was working.

246

00:14:46,380 --> 00:14:50,140

I also remember

a few things that

247

00:14:50,140 --> 00:14:55,040  
happened that were  
dramatic at that point.

248

00:14:55,040 --> 00:15:01,270  
One was that shortly after  
the war broke out, may

249

00:15:01,270 --> 00:15:03,550  
have been shortly  
after my father

250

00:15:03,550 --> 00:15:06,250  
started working in this factory,  
when the factory was taken

251

00:15:06,250 --> 00:15:09,730  
over, there was a knock on  
our door in the apartment

252

00:15:09,730 --> 00:15:11,330  
in which we lived.

253

00:15:11,330 --> 00:15:18,700  
And my mom opened the door,  
and there was a German lady.

254

00:15:18,700 --> 00:15:20,020  
She was a Volksdeutsche.

255

00:15:20,020 --> 00:15:21,490  
So she was somebody who became--

256

00:15:21,490 --> 00:15:27,160  
she was maybe partly Polish,  
and she had some German family

257

00:15:27,160 --> 00:15:27,970  
in the background.

258

00:15:27,970 --> 00:15:31,040  
And with two SS men,  
or two soldiers.

259  
00:15:31,040 --> 00:15:32,620  
I don't remember.

260  
00:15:32,620 --> 00:15:35,020  
And she walked  
into the apartment,

261  
00:15:35,020 --> 00:15:38,890  
and she looked around,  
and she said, I like it.

262  
00:15:38,890 --> 00:15:40,690  
All of it.

263  
00:15:40,690 --> 00:15:45,760  
And the following  
day, apparently she

264  
00:15:45,760 --> 00:15:51,070  
was able to get some big  
trucks, and they came.

265  
00:15:51,070 --> 00:15:54,100  
People came into our place  
and they took everything out

266  
00:15:54,100 --> 00:15:55,330  
of our apartment.

267  
00:15:55,330 --> 00:15:58,930  
All the furniture,  
everything that was there.

268  
00:15:58,930 --> 00:16:01,030  
All the rugs.

269  
00:16:01,030 --> 00:16:02,330  
She was a nice lady.

270

00:16:02,330 --> 00:16:05,830

She sent us some  
broken chairs and table

271

00:16:05,830 --> 00:16:11,020

and beds and a old wardrobe.

272

00:16:11,020 --> 00:16:16,750

I remember that at that point,  
it seemed like not a tragedy

273

00:16:16,750 --> 00:16:24,850

anymore, but certainly something  
that we were upset about.

274

00:16:24,850 --> 00:16:28,600

Little did we know that  
there was much, much worse

275

00:16:28,600 --> 00:16:31,040

in store for us.

276

00:16:31,040 --> 00:16:34,480

We simply didn't realize it.

277

00:16:34,480 --> 00:16:39,190

In fact, I do remember,  
but that was later,

278

00:16:39,190 --> 00:16:44,270

that during the time when I was  
reading so much, I read a book.

279

00:16:44,270 --> 00:16:51,250

It was called Forty Days of  
Musa Dagh by Franz Werfel.

280

00:16:51,250 --> 00:16:52,975

I don't know how to  
pronounce his name.

281

00:16:52,975 --> 00:16:59,650



W-E-R-F-E-L. But I think  
Americans know him because he

282  
00:16:59,650 --> 00:17:02,920  
wrote a book called The  
Song of Bernadette, I think,

283  
00:17:02,920 --> 00:17:05,270  
which was made into a movie.

284  
00:17:05,270 --> 00:17:08,710  
But in the book 40  
Days of Musa Dagh,

285  
00:17:08,710 --> 00:17:14,020  
he wrote about what the  
Turks did to the Armenians

286  
00:17:14,020 --> 00:17:17,280  
during the First World War.

287  
00:17:17,280 --> 00:17:23,300  
And I remember-- not right  
then, not in the beginning

288  
00:17:23,300 --> 00:17:26,089  
of the war, but maybe  
a year into the war--

289  
00:17:26,089 --> 00:17:30,830  
I remember coming down to  
my father with that book,

290  
00:17:30,830 --> 00:17:34,430  
and I said, Daddy, Dad,  
that's what the Germans are

291  
00:17:34,430 --> 00:17:37,650  
going to do to us.

292  
00:17:37,650 --> 00:17:38,970  
And I was crying.

293

00:17:38,970 --> 00:17:41,710

And I do remember that  
my father looked at me,

294

00:17:41,710 --> 00:17:45,280

and he said, don't say that.

295

00:17:45,280 --> 00:17:47,600

How can you say that?

296

00:17:47,600 --> 00:17:53,100

The Turks were much less  
civilized than the Germans.

297

00:17:53,100 --> 00:17:56,280

The Germans will never  
do anything like that.

298

00:17:56,280 --> 00:17:57,300

Not the Germans.

299

00:17:57,300 --> 00:18:01,440

They may do horrible things,  
but not what the Turks

300

00:18:01,440 --> 00:18:02,610

did to the Armenians.

301

00:18:02,610 --> 00:18:05,950

302

00:18:05,950 --> 00:18:08,140

I'm just telling  
you this, because I

303

00:18:08,140 --> 00:18:10,090

want you to understand  
that we really

304

00:18:10,090 --> 00:18:14,660

didn't have any idea  
what was in store for us.

305  
00:18:14,660 --> 00:18:16,460  
I don't know why.

306  
00:18:16,460 --> 00:18:20,480  
My father at that point, I  
remember, did listen to--

307  
00:18:20,480 --> 00:18:22,970  
we were not allowed  
to have radios--

308  
00:18:22,970 --> 00:18:26,780  
but my father used to meet in  
the evening with some friends

309  
00:18:26,780 --> 00:18:30,140  
in the house in which we  
lived during the curfew,

310  
00:18:30,140 --> 00:18:33,260  
and they listened to BBC.

311  
00:18:33,260 --> 00:18:35,150  
And we knew that France fell.

312  
00:18:35,150 --> 00:18:38,750  
We knew what was going  
on at that point.

313  
00:18:38,750 --> 00:18:42,130  
Of course, later on we  
no longer-- my father--

314  
00:18:42,130 --> 00:18:44,080  
it was too dangerous  
to listen to.

315  
00:18:44,080 --> 00:18:47,110  
And maybe there was  
no radio anymore.

316

00:18:47,110 --> 00:18:49,690  
But in the beginning,  
certainly the first half a year

317  
00:18:49,690 --> 00:18:53,770  
of the war, we did know what  
was going on in the world.

318  
00:18:53,770 --> 00:19:01,090  
It was easier to get an  
idea of what was going on.

319  
00:19:01,090 --> 00:19:04,240  
We also had-- that brings  
me to a couple of things.

320  
00:19:04,240 --> 00:19:08,660  
I was telling you about the  
furniture that was taken.

321  
00:19:08,660 --> 00:19:13,730  
Some things didn't  
happen right away.

322  
00:19:13,730 --> 00:19:18,260  
We lived in what was  
called an open ghetto.

323  
00:19:18,260 --> 00:19:21,500  
What that meant is that  
during that period when

324  
00:19:21,500 --> 00:19:26,870  
the Germans took over our city,  
they did some shifting around.

325  
00:19:26,870 --> 00:19:30,860  
Some people had to  
leave their apartments

326  
00:19:30,860 --> 00:19:33,050  
because there were  
some areas in the city

327

00:19:33,050 --> 00:19:35,780  
where the Jews were not allowed.

328

00:19:35,780 --> 00:19:38,210  
Some areas we were  
allowed to stay in.

329

00:19:38,210 --> 00:19:41,180  
So what was happening is  
that people were doubling up.

330

00:19:41,180 --> 00:19:45,260  
And that meant that many people  
had to take in other people

331

00:19:45,260 --> 00:19:47,180  
into their apartments.

332

00:19:47,180 --> 00:19:51,830  
And we actually did get  
another family to live with us.

333

00:19:51,830 --> 00:19:54,620  
And they happened to have  
been actually German Jews

334

00:19:54,620 --> 00:20:00,770  
from Leipzig who must have  
been also sent into our city.

335

00:20:00,770 --> 00:20:04,260  
And we could stay  
in our apartment,

336

00:20:04,260 --> 00:20:07,910  
which meant that our street  
was part of that open ghetto.

337

00:20:07,910 --> 00:20:11,640  
Now, an open ghetto was--

338

00:20:11,640 --> 00:20:18,000

what that meant was that we were  
not allowed to leave the area.

339  
00:20:18,000 --> 00:20:23,110  
We were not allowed into  
some streets of the city.

340  
00:20:23,110 --> 00:20:25,350  
We were only allowed  
in the area which

341  
00:20:25,350 --> 00:20:28,020  
was considered the open ghetto.

342  
00:20:28,020 --> 00:20:34,540  
But the non-Jews, the Poles  
could come into our area.

343  
00:20:34,540 --> 00:20:35,940  
And so could maybe--

344  
00:20:35,940 --> 00:20:37,530  
and so, certainly,  
did the Germans.

345  
00:20:37,530 --> 00:20:39,720  
Of course, they did anyway.

346  
00:20:39,720 --> 00:20:42,240  
Because of it, there  
was some barter.

347  
00:20:42,240 --> 00:20:44,115  
There was some-- it was easier--

348  
00:20:44,115 --> 00:20:47,796

349  
00:20:47,796 --> 00:20:52,200  
If people had something  
that they could barter,

350

00:20:52,200 --> 00:20:55,950  
then they were able to  
supplement some of their food.

351  
00:20:55,950 --> 00:20:57,990  
And I am sure that  
in the beginning,

352  
00:20:57,990 --> 00:21:01,230  
that's what happened  
in my family.

353  
00:21:01,230 --> 00:21:04,140  
Even though the Germans  
took all the gold away,

354  
00:21:04,140 --> 00:21:06,630  
you know, and they came  
and took the silver.

355  
00:21:06,630 --> 00:21:08,550  
People had to give  
everything away.

356  
00:21:08,550 --> 00:21:11,940  
I'm sure that my parents  
may have hidden some.

357  
00:21:11,940 --> 00:21:15,430  
Maybe my mother hid some  
of her rings or something.

358  
00:21:15,430 --> 00:21:19,320  
Because the first  
year of the war,

359  
00:21:19,320 --> 00:21:24,240  
once things started being  
a little more normal,

360  
00:21:24,240 --> 00:21:26,100  
there was some food  
that my parents

361

00:21:26,100 --> 00:21:29,790

were able to get probably  
on the black market.

362

00:21:29,790 --> 00:21:32,280

And the fact that it  
was an open ghetto

363

00:21:32,280 --> 00:21:36,130

made life, in that  
sense, easier.

364

00:21:36,130 --> 00:21:40,170

On the other hand, you  
couldn't go into many streets.

365

00:21:40,170 --> 00:21:45,630

And I have many  
memories of standing--

366

00:21:45,630 --> 00:21:49,080

I do have a memory of, for  
instance, at one time--

367

00:21:49,080 --> 00:21:53,340

and that was also maybe a half  
a year after the war broke out--

368

00:21:53,340 --> 00:21:58,410

standing in front of the  
main street in our city,

369

00:21:58,410 --> 00:22:02,820

which was called,  
became Hitler Strasse.

370

00:22:02,820 --> 00:22:06,300

But it was the street  
of the third of May,

371

00:22:06,300 --> 00:22:11,160

which is when the Poles  
had a national holiday.



372  
00:22:11,160 --> 00:22:15,588  
And it was a beautiful  
street with many trees.

373  
00:22:15,588 --> 00:22:19,080  
[INAUDIBLE]

374  
00:22:19,080 --> 00:22:22,218  
Camera roll three, take three.

375  
00:22:22,218 --> 00:22:24,650  
[BEEP]

376  
00:22:24,650 --> 00:22:26,150  
So let's go back  
to the beginning

377  
00:22:26,150 --> 00:22:28,740  
of that memory on that street.

378  
00:22:28,740 --> 00:22:30,850  
I have a memory.

379  
00:22:30,850 --> 00:22:35,340  
I remember my mom,  
when we started

380  
00:22:35,340 --> 00:22:39,960  
wearing our star of David  
and when it became obvious

381  
00:22:39,960 --> 00:22:43,200  
that we are not allowed  
into many streets,

382  
00:22:43,200 --> 00:22:47,250  
I have that memory of standing  
in front of that street

383  
00:22:47,250 --> 00:22:50,900  
just at the entrance

knowing that I'm not

384  
00:22:50,900 --> 00:22:52,760  
allowed to go there.

385  
00:22:52,760 --> 00:22:55,940  
And I'll never  
forget how beautiful

386  
00:22:55,940 --> 00:22:58,430  
that street, that  
whole street seemed

387  
00:22:58,430 --> 00:23:01,730  
to me with all of those  
beautiful chestnut trees.

388  
00:23:01,730 --> 00:23:06,490  
And I remember I would have  
given everything I had just

389  
00:23:06,490 --> 00:23:09,680  
to walk on that street once.

390  
00:23:09,680 --> 00:23:11,630  
And I remember that  
I had such an urge

391  
00:23:11,630 --> 00:23:15,450  
to go into that,  
to just disregard

392  
00:23:15,450 --> 00:23:18,260  
the fact that I'm not allowed.

393  
00:23:18,260 --> 00:23:20,120  
And then somebody  
pulled me back--

394  
00:23:20,120 --> 00:23:22,230  
must have been a friend--

395

00:23:22,230 --> 00:23:22,950  
and said, don't.

396  
00:23:22,950 --> 00:23:25,060  
No, don't go there.

397  
00:23:25,060 --> 00:23:26,470  
And I went back.

398  
00:23:26,470 --> 00:23:30,130

399  
00:23:30,130 --> 00:23:32,560  
It's just a little thing.

400  
00:23:32,560 --> 00:23:38,060  
My memory of some  
of the things--

401  
00:23:38,060 --> 00:23:43,550  
I'm trying to remember  
how long I was tortured.

402  
00:23:43,550 --> 00:23:50,030  
I think it was till  
about 1941, perhaps.

403  
00:23:50,030 --> 00:23:52,950  
The winter of 1941  
was a cold one.

404  
00:23:52,950 --> 00:23:57,740  
I do remember that at  
somewhere around this time,

405  
00:23:57,740 --> 00:24:03,810  
I started to work, but I  
continued with my schooling.

406  
00:24:03,810 --> 00:24:08,520  
But at the end of 1941,  
things were getting bad.

407

00:24:08,520 --> 00:24:10,080

They were getting worse.

408

00:24:10,080 --> 00:24:14,460

And I remember we  
stopped school.

409

00:24:14,460 --> 00:24:16,530

Things were getting  
worse because it

410

00:24:16,530 --> 00:24:20,850

was more difficult to get heat.

411

00:24:20,850 --> 00:24:24,580

People started to disappear.

412

00:24:24,580 --> 00:24:28,390

But most of them were  
young men and women

413

00:24:28,390 --> 00:24:34,900

who were taken to labor camp,  
to work camps in Germany.

414

00:24:34,900 --> 00:24:36,460

And there was contact.

415

00:24:36,460 --> 00:24:41,260

They were allowed to  
write a postcard a month,

416

00:24:41,260 --> 00:24:43,910

so we knew where they were.

417

00:24:43,910 --> 00:24:48,810

If some people disappeared  
and we didn't hear from them,

418

00:24:48,810 --> 00:24:50,910

that was not that well known.

419

00:24:50,910 --> 00:24:53,700

Although-- that's not true.

420

00:24:53,700 --> 00:24:59,110

In the very beginning, a  
lot of the intelligentsia

421

00:24:59,110 --> 00:25:00,460

did disappear.

422

00:25:00,460 --> 00:25:03,340

And that was not just the  
Jewish intelligentsia.

423

00:25:03,340 --> 00:25:06,460

That was true for  
the Poles, too.

424

00:25:06,460 --> 00:25:11,780

So some professors,  
some doctors.

425

00:25:11,780 --> 00:25:16,450

And now we know what  
happened to them.

426

00:25:16,450 --> 00:25:21,620

That was, again, considered  
just the beginning.

427

00:25:21,620 --> 00:25:24,190

People always-- I  
remember that my parents

428

00:25:24,190 --> 00:25:29,200

felt that the things that  
happened in the beginning,

429

00:25:29,200 --> 00:25:35,050

horrible as they are, are not  
a sign of what's going to be

430

00:25:35,050 --> 00:25:39,440  
but rather something  
that happens

431  
00:25:39,440 --> 00:25:41,000  
when a country is occupied.

432  
00:25:41,000 --> 00:25:42,090  
They kept saying that.

433  
00:25:42,090 --> 00:25:43,760  
And then it's going to be--

434  
00:25:43,760 --> 00:25:46,160  
somehow life would be a  
little bit more normal.

435  
00:25:46,160 --> 00:25:49,210

436  
00:25:49,210 --> 00:25:51,730  
They were wrong, obviously.

437  
00:25:51,730 --> 00:25:58,810  
And I now know that there  
was a psychological war

438  
00:25:58,810 --> 00:26:02,740  
against the Jews, that many of  
the things that were happening

439  
00:26:02,740 --> 00:26:06,130  
to us were gradual.

440  
00:26:06,130 --> 00:26:08,440  
I think that this is very  
important to remember.

441  
00:26:08,440 --> 00:26:13,080  
I think that if they had--

442  
00:26:13,080 --> 00:26:17,220

if things had happened to us  
in a more sudden way and more

443  
00:26:17,220 --> 00:26:20,370  
immediate, I think  
that there would

444  
00:26:20,370 --> 00:26:23,220  
have been a much  
stronger reaction

445  
00:26:23,220 --> 00:26:24,670  
in the Jewish communities.

446  
00:26:24,670 --> 00:26:25,950  
This is my own feeling.

447  
00:26:25,950 --> 00:26:28,630  
I may be wrong.

448  
00:26:28,630 --> 00:26:32,700  
I think that when you strip  
a human being of his dignity

449  
00:26:32,700 --> 00:26:36,590  
slowly, he is not  
the same person.

450  
00:26:36,590 --> 00:26:39,370  
And I think that in a certain  
way, what the Germans were

451  
00:26:39,370 --> 00:26:42,790  
doing by putting us  
into an open ghetto,

452  
00:26:42,790 --> 00:26:50,870  
by taking away some  
of our rights slowly,

453  
00:26:50,870 --> 00:26:54,170  
it was a conditioning  
that permitted us to,

454

00:26:54,170 --> 00:27:08,590

that made us more willing,  
more able to accept it.

455

00:27:08,590 --> 00:27:10,660

But of course, I was a child.

456

00:27:10,660 --> 00:27:12,400

But I'm thinking  
about my father.

457

00:27:12,400 --> 00:27:18,550

Because my father was a really,  
I think, wonderful human being.

458

00:27:18,550 --> 00:27:22,930

And intelligent.

459

00:27:22,930 --> 00:27:24,820

And so was my mom.

460

00:27:24,820 --> 00:27:30,820

And I wonder why they were  
so unaware of some things.

461

00:27:30,820 --> 00:27:33,460

And I think they were.

462

00:27:33,460 --> 00:27:39,790

Maybe they had a belief in  
the goodness of human nature,

463

00:27:39,790 --> 00:27:43,460

and maybe that  
was their undoing.

464

00:27:43,460 --> 00:27:46,010

Because they didn't see.

465

00:27:46,010 --> 00:27:48,210

I don't think that they



saw what was happening.

466

00:27:48,210 --> 00:27:51,110

They didn't realize

where it was going.

467

00:27:51,110 --> 00:27:54,560

Of course, the fact

that we were so cut off,

468

00:27:54,560 --> 00:27:58,730

that there was no

communication, didn't help.

469

00:27:58,730 --> 00:28:00,770

Let me tell you a few

things that happened.

470

00:28:00,770 --> 00:28:02,270

Let me go back to my life.

471

00:28:02,270 --> 00:28:07,100

472

00:28:07,100 --> 00:28:15,500

In 1942, in the spring

of 1942, somebody,

473

00:28:15,500 --> 00:28:19,830

a militiaman we had

in our open ghetto--

474

00:28:19,830 --> 00:28:21,400

we were still in

the open ghetto.

475

00:28:21,400 --> 00:28:23,400

We had militia people.

476

00:28:23,400 --> 00:28:30,140

These were Jewish people who

were kind of a ghetto police--

477

00:28:30,140 --> 00:28:32,030  
came to our place.

478

00:28:32,030 --> 00:28:33,860  
And they had a list.

479

00:28:33,860 --> 00:28:36,310  
And I was on that list.

480

00:28:36,310 --> 00:28:41,810  
And they were going to take  
me to a labor camp in Germany.

481

00:28:41,810 --> 00:28:43,900  
This was very early.

482

00:28:43,900 --> 00:28:49,360  
This must have been March  
or February of 1942.

483

00:28:49,360 --> 00:28:52,210  
And I was not quite 16.

484

00:28:52,210 --> 00:28:54,050  
I was born in 1926.

485

00:28:54,050 --> 00:28:58,160  
So I was about 15 and a half.

486

00:28:58,160 --> 00:29:01,440  
And they took me from the house.

487

00:29:01,440 --> 00:29:05,040  
And they took me to a  
place that was called--

488

00:29:05,040 --> 00:29:07,580  
it was like a transit camp.

489

00:29:07,580 --> 00:29:10,460  
In other words, I wasn't

taken immediately to Germany

490

00:29:10,460 --> 00:29:15,360

but to this transit camp  
which was still in our ghetto.

491

00:29:15,360 --> 00:29:18,450

And I was not the only one.

492

00:29:18,450 --> 00:29:23,690

There were a lot of  
young girls and women,

493

00:29:23,690 --> 00:29:29,090

ranging probably ages  
from about 15 or 16 to 25.

494

00:29:29,090 --> 00:29:31,790

And men, but separately.

495

00:29:31,790 --> 00:29:34,430

And we were waiting,  
now I realize,

496

00:29:34,430 --> 00:29:39,290

to be bought by some  
of the German firms

497

00:29:39,290 --> 00:29:42,050

to be taken to Germany.

498

00:29:42,050 --> 00:29:44,640

My father was devastated.

499

00:29:44,640 --> 00:29:47,147

I think I was his favorite.

500

00:29:47,147 --> 00:29:48,980

I don't think parents  
should have favorites,

501

00:29:48,980 --> 00:29:51,710

but I was his favorite daughter.

502

00:29:51,710 --> 00:29:58,250

And he was devastated, and  
he tried to get me out.

503

00:29:58,250 --> 00:30:01,730

This is, again, ironic  
because Auschwitz was already

504

00:30:01,730 --> 00:30:05,990

operating, and going to Germany  
probably was not a bad thing

505

00:30:05,990 --> 00:30:08,170

at that point.

506

00:30:08,170 --> 00:30:11,310

Because it meant  
going to a labor camp.

507

00:30:11,310 --> 00:30:13,710

But my father didn't  
know about Auschwitz,

508

00:30:13,710 --> 00:30:17,250

and he didn't want  
his 15-year-old child

509

00:30:17,250 --> 00:30:20,550

to go to a labor camp.

510

00:30:20,550 --> 00:30:23,450

So he turned heaven and  
earth, and apparently this

511

00:30:23,450 --> 00:30:25,210

was possible.

512

00:30:25,210 --> 00:30:32,770

And he made an arrangement  
with a girl who was about 18--

513

00:30:32,770 --> 00:30:36,270

and maybe that's what  
permitted him to do it,

514

00:30:36,270 --> 00:30:39,270

because it was another  
child actually going for me.

515

00:30:39,270 --> 00:30:40,200

He paid for it.

516

00:30:40,200 --> 00:30:43,200

She probably was  
poorer than we were.

517

00:30:43,200 --> 00:30:44,610

As poor as we were.

518

00:30:44,610 --> 00:30:47,250

My parents may still have  
had something that they

519

00:30:47,250 --> 00:30:49,860

could pay these people.

520

00:30:49,860 --> 00:30:52,710

And she agreed to go for me.

521

00:30:52,710 --> 00:30:56,340

And maybe the fact, my father  
thought, that since she's 18,

522

00:30:56,340 --> 00:31:00,370

she's at least a young adult.  
And he was paying for it.

523

00:31:00,370 --> 00:31:03,420

And she was supposed to be  
my substitute, if you will.

524

00:31:03,420 --> 00:31:06,060

525  
00:31:06,060 --> 00:31:09,120  
I didn't know anything  
about it except that when

526  
00:31:09,120 --> 00:31:11,310  
I would come to the  
window at the transit camp

527  
00:31:11,310 --> 00:31:14,000  
and my father would  
be passing by,

528  
00:31:14,000 --> 00:31:18,450  
he motioned to me that  
he was doing something.

529  
00:31:18,450 --> 00:31:23,510  
And about, I don't  
know, four or five days,

530  
00:31:23,510 --> 00:31:26,510  
a week after I was taken, I  
was still in the transit camp.

531  
00:31:26,510 --> 00:31:28,610  
My name was called.

532  
00:31:28,610 --> 00:31:31,370  
And I was told to  
take my belongings.

533  
00:31:31,370 --> 00:31:34,850  
I had with me some clothing  
that I was permitted to take.

534  
00:31:34,850 --> 00:31:39,560  
I took it with me, and  
I was told to go out.

535  
00:31:39,560 --> 00:31:44,390  
And as I was coming out, I  
noticed my younger sister.

536  
00:31:44,390 --> 00:31:46,310  
My sister was 2 and  
1/2 years younger,

537  
00:31:46,310 --> 00:31:49,680  
so she was 13 years old.

538  
00:31:49,680 --> 00:31:50,670  
And I noticed her.

539  
00:31:50,670 --> 00:31:52,170  
And I was in this--

540  
00:31:52,170 --> 00:31:58,830  
I was tired and in  
a state of shock.

541  
00:31:58,830 --> 00:32:02,180  
But as I walked out  
and I saw my parents

542  
00:32:02,180 --> 00:32:05,450  
were waiting for me not  
right near the place,

543  
00:32:05,450 --> 00:32:09,500  
but where they were  
permitted to wait.

544  
00:32:09,500 --> 00:32:10,280  
And I saw them.

545  
00:32:10,280 --> 00:32:15,050  
They were both standing  
and crying, I think.

546  
00:32:15,050 --> 00:32:16,650  
And I started to cry.

547  
00:32:16,650 --> 00:32:20,900  
And I said, why am I out?

548  
00:32:20,900 --> 00:32:23,240  
And why is, what is  
Pina doing there?

549  
00:32:23,240 --> 00:32:25,710  
What is she doing there?

550  
00:32:25,710 --> 00:32:27,810  
And they started,  
they embraced me.

551  
00:32:27,810 --> 00:32:29,250  
And they took me home.

552  
00:32:29,250 --> 00:32:31,710  
And they told me that  
what happened actually

553  
00:32:31,710 --> 00:32:35,640  
is that that morning  
when my substitute was

554  
00:32:35,640 --> 00:32:41,350  
supposed to show up and go in  
for me, she changed her mind.

555  
00:32:41,350 --> 00:32:43,530  
And my parents were desperate.

556  
00:32:43,530 --> 00:32:47,130  
And my sister, who  
was always kind

557  
00:32:47,130 --> 00:32:50,550  
of a tomboy, one  
of those kids that

558  
00:32:50,550 --> 00:32:55,440  
was never afraid of anything,  
said, I'll go for Bella.

559



00:32:55,440 --> 00:32:57,180

And my parents  
thought, she's nuts.

560

00:32:57,180 --> 00:32:59,640

She's crazy.

561

00:32:59,640 --> 00:33:00,895

But I don't know.

562

00:33:00,895 --> 00:33:02,020

I don't know what happened.

563

00:33:02,020 --> 00:33:03,730

They must have been  
very distraught.

564

00:33:03,730 --> 00:33:07,070

She convinced them that  
she's going to go in for me.

565

00:33:07,070 --> 00:33:08,600

This was her idea.

566

00:33:08,600 --> 00:33:10,158

And that once she's  
in there, she's

567

00:33:10,158 --> 00:33:12,200

going to tell them that  
she doesn't belong there.

568

00:33:12,200 --> 00:33:14,270

She's only 13 years old.

569

00:33:14,270 --> 00:33:16,880

And they're going  
to send her home.

570

00:33:16,880 --> 00:33:19,590

I don't know how she  
could convince my parents.

571

00:33:19,590 --> 00:33:20,990

But this is a true story.

572

00:33:20,990 --> 00:33:24,330

She convinced them,  
and she went in for me.

573

00:33:24,330 --> 00:33:29,190

And lo and behold, she  
was sent to a labor camp,

574

00:33:29,190 --> 00:33:33,290

to Sudetenland, which  
is in Czechoslovakia.

575

00:33:33,290 --> 00:33:36,000