

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:06,960

2
00:00:06,960 --> 00:00:10,380
The following is an
interview of Ivan Becker.

3
00:00:10,380 --> 00:00:16,440
It is taking place
on January 18, 1995.

4
00:00:16,440 --> 00:00:19,050
It is being conducted
in Washington, DC

5
00:00:19,050 --> 00:00:22,030
on behalf of The United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum.

6
00:00:22,030 --> 00:00:25,440

7
00:00:25,440 --> 00:00:28,070
Could you please give
us your full name?

8
00:00:28,070 --> 00:00:30,730
Becker, Ivan.

9
00:00:30,730 --> 00:00:31,770
And your middle name?

10
00:00:31,770 --> 00:00:32,780
Endre.

11
00:00:32,780 --> 00:00:34,890
And where were you born?

12
00:00:34,890 --> 00:00:41,930
In Budapest on June 14, 1929.

13

00:00:41,930 --> 00:00:45,710

Let's begin talking
about your childhood.

14

00:00:45,710 --> 00:00:47,870

Who made up your family?

15

00:00:47,870 --> 00:00:52,460

My family was made up from
my mother and father, Kato

16

00:00:52,460 --> 00:00:57,110

and Dezso Becker.

17

00:00:57,110 --> 00:01:05,510

My father was an accountant in a
factory manufacturing cigarette

18

00:01:05,510 --> 00:01:10,520

paper called
Modino, M-O-D-I-N-O.

19

00:01:10,520 --> 00:01:13,370

My mother was a homemaker.

20

00:01:13,370 --> 00:01:21,920

We were pretty much
middle class people.

21

00:01:21,920 --> 00:01:29,090

We didn't have a car, but we did
have a maid who lived with us.

22

00:01:29,090 --> 00:01:37,910

And my father, as was
normal in the '30s and '40s,

23

00:01:37,910 --> 00:01:45,860

worked and came home for
lunch in the afternoon,

24

00:01:45,860 --> 00:01:48,470

went back to work, and
came home quite late.

25
00:01:48,470 --> 00:01:53,480
So the family was really
together mostly in the middle

26
00:01:53,480 --> 00:01:55,100
of the day and in the evenings.

27
00:01:55,100 --> 00:01:58,280

28
00:01:58,280 --> 00:02:00,840
As I say, we were not
well-to-do at all.

29
00:02:00,840 --> 00:02:05,510
But we had a nice
life, basically,

30
00:02:05,510 --> 00:02:10,309
enjoying music and
theatre, movies.

31
00:02:10,309 --> 00:02:13,920

32
00:02:13,920 --> 00:02:24,660
From the early '30s on, I
went to school in Budapest.

33
00:02:24,660 --> 00:02:30,000
And elementary school
for four years--

34
00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:31,710
Was this a public school?

35
00:02:31,710 --> 00:02:32,680
Public school.

36

00:02:32,680 --> 00:02:34,410
It was a public school.

37
00:02:34,410 --> 00:02:36,375
I was also a Boy Scout.

38
00:02:36,375 --> 00:02:38,960

39
00:02:38,960 --> 00:02:41,170
My reason for
bringing that one out,

40
00:02:41,170 --> 00:02:46,270
that it became a segregated, in
spite of all of the Boy Scout

41
00:02:46,270 --> 00:02:50,620
vows, it was a segregated
troop, only Jews.

42
00:02:50,620 --> 00:02:59,830
And after 1938 or so,
even the elementary school

43
00:02:59,830 --> 00:03:02,430
was segregated,
Jews in one class,

44
00:03:02,430 --> 00:03:03,890
Christians in the other classes.

45
00:03:03,890 --> 00:03:04,390
Yeah.

46
00:03:04,390 --> 00:03:05,980
We'll get to 1938 in a moment.

47
00:03:05,980 --> 00:03:08,500
Let's move back a little bit.

48
00:03:08,500 --> 00:03:11,320

Did you live right in town?

49

00:03:11,320 --> 00:03:11,980

Yes.

50

00:03:11,980 --> 00:03:18,700

We lived-- well, up to about
maybe four or five years old,

51

00:03:18,700 --> 00:03:21,130

we were in the suburbs.

52

00:03:21,130 --> 00:03:24,370

What would be termed in
a garden apartment today.

53

00:03:24,370 --> 00:03:28,750

And then we moved into
town when, I guess,

54

00:03:28,750 --> 00:03:31,958

it came time to go to school.

55

00:03:31,958 --> 00:03:34,000

Did you live in a private
house or an apartment--

56

00:03:34,000 --> 00:03:36,955

We were in a large,
large apartment house.

57

00:03:36,955 --> 00:03:38,330

What kind of
neighborhood was it?

58

00:03:38,330 --> 00:03:41,350

Was it mixed with
Jews and non-Jews?

59

00:03:41,350 --> 00:03:45,280

It was primarily a
Jewish neighborhood.

60

00:03:45,280 --> 00:03:49,030

It was a newer part of town.

61

00:03:49,030 --> 00:03:53,710

But it was totally
integrated, basically.

62

00:03:53,710 --> 00:03:57,490

So you had non-Jewish friends
and neighbors to play with?

63

00:03:57,490 --> 00:03:58,990

I had--

64

00:03:58,990 --> 00:04:00,260

As well as Jews?

65

00:04:00,260 --> 00:04:01,480

Yes.

66

00:04:01,480 --> 00:04:06,730

Because of classmates lived
all over town, not just

67

00:04:06,730 --> 00:04:11,290

in the district, my
friends came mostly

68

00:04:11,290 --> 00:04:12,700

from the apartment house.

69

00:04:12,700 --> 00:04:15,580

And they were both
Jews and Christian.

70

00:04:15,580 --> 00:04:19,690

Was there any problem when you
were very young about treatment

71

00:04:19,690 --> 00:04:21,730

of your friends?

72

00:04:21,730 --> 00:04:23,030

The only problem that--

73

00:04:23,030 --> 00:04:25,300

I'm talking about
when you were younger.

74

00:04:25,300 --> 00:04:28,360

All right, I mean, we're
talking about the first--

75

00:04:28,360 --> 00:04:29,020

Few years.

76

00:04:29,020 --> 00:04:33,910

--Jewish laws coming in in
1938, when I was nine years old.

77

00:04:33,910 --> 00:04:34,570

OK.

78

00:04:34,570 --> 00:04:39,130

And so until then, there
was no discrimination.

79

00:04:39,130 --> 00:04:42,088

And even after that, at
least amongst friends,

80

00:04:42,088 --> 00:04:42,880

we had no problems.

81

00:04:42,880 --> 00:04:45,730

82

00:04:45,730 --> 00:04:49,610

So you moved into town, you
said, because of the school.

83

00:04:49,610 --> 00:04:52,896

I'm assuming that's
why my father changed.

84
00:04:52,896 --> 00:04:53,396
Yeah.

85
00:04:53,396 --> 00:04:54,252
Yeah.

86
00:04:54,252 --> 00:04:57,880
And how religious
was your family.

87
00:04:57,880 --> 00:05:02,595
The family was not
religious at all.

88
00:05:02,595 --> 00:05:03,720
I think we were Hungarian--

89
00:05:03,720 --> 00:05:08,020
I know we were Hungarians
first and Jews second.

90
00:05:08,020 --> 00:05:10,540
Did you observe any
holidays, Jewish holidays?

91
00:05:10,540 --> 00:05:12,130
The only high holidays--

92
00:05:12,130 --> 00:05:16,810
we observed the high
holidays primarily

93
00:05:16,810 --> 00:05:20,560
because my uncle,
my mother's brother

94
00:05:20,560 --> 00:05:22,975
was more religiously oriented.

95
00:05:22,975 --> 00:05:25,930

96
00:05:25,930 --> 00:05:31,210
He was in Israel in the '20s,
came back to Hungary in '29,

97
00:05:31,210 --> 00:05:33,370
and then stayed there.

98
00:05:33,370 --> 00:05:36,318
And so we used to go to their
house for the high holidays.

99
00:05:36,318 --> 00:05:37,360
But within your own home?

100
00:05:37,360 --> 00:05:41,830
Within our own home,
we were not religious,

101
00:05:41,830 --> 00:05:47,830
although it was mandatory
to have religion in school.

102
00:05:47,830 --> 00:05:52,660
And once a week, we had
to go to the synagogue.

103
00:05:52,660 --> 00:05:59,740
And so learning
Hebrew was part of it.

104
00:05:59,740 --> 00:06:02,950
Bar mitzvah was a other part
of it, which was orthodox.

105
00:06:02,950 --> 00:06:07,450
Because it was the only thing,
the only Jewish religion that

106
00:06:07,450 --> 00:06:09,270
was available.

107

00:06:09,270 --> 00:06:13,795

In those days, there
was no reformed temples.

108

00:06:13,795 --> 00:06:16,600

109

00:06:16,600 --> 00:06:18,260

So I remember
being bar mitzvahed

110

00:06:18,260 --> 00:06:23,710

in an orthodox one, which later
on in our story comes out,

111

00:06:23,710 --> 00:06:27,040

I found, much later.

112

00:06:27,040 --> 00:06:30,070

We'll talk about that.

113

00:06:30,070 --> 00:06:31,390

Did you have any hobbies?

114

00:06:31,390 --> 00:06:34,630

I know you mentioned that your
family was interested in music?

115

00:06:34,630 --> 00:06:35,480

Well, yes.

116

00:06:35,480 --> 00:06:39,190

Other interests besides school?

117

00:06:39,190 --> 00:06:41,680

I loved to play soccer.

118

00:06:41,680 --> 00:06:45,070

I was beginning to be a
pretty good photographer

119

00:06:45,070 --> 00:06:47,420

when I was about 12.

120
00:06:47,420 --> 00:06:49,193
I loved to read.

121
00:06:49,193 --> 00:06:50,110
I was a lousy student.

122
00:06:50,110 --> 00:06:52,660

123
00:06:52,660 --> 00:06:57,760
But basically, I
liked certain subjects

124
00:06:57,760 --> 00:06:59,050
and I excelled in those.

125
00:06:59,050 --> 00:07:02,250
And what I didn't
like, I didn't excel

126
00:07:02,250 --> 00:07:09,910
in at all, which really was
the way the rest of my life

127
00:07:09,910 --> 00:07:12,410
turned out.

128
00:07:12,410 --> 00:07:14,390
I enjoyed certain things
and I was good at it.

129
00:07:14,390 --> 00:07:17,050
But other than that, I
didn't work very hard--

130
00:07:17,050 --> 00:07:20,080
When you played soccer,
were you playing

131
00:07:20,080 --> 00:07:22,000

with non-Jewish children also?

132

00:07:22,000 --> 00:07:24,385

Yes, soccer, hockey, water polo.

133

00:07:24,385 --> 00:07:26,920

134

00:07:26,920 --> 00:07:29,650

There was a total
integration in the area.

135

00:07:29,650 --> 00:07:32,020

So there was really no--

136

00:07:32,020 --> 00:07:36,340

I don't remember any even
latent discrimination.

137

00:07:36,340 --> 00:07:39,130

138

00:07:39,130 --> 00:07:42,090

Do you remember your father
talking about any of that--

139

00:07:42,090 --> 00:07:42,590

No.

140

00:07:42,590 --> 00:07:43,570

--workwise?

141

00:07:43,570 --> 00:07:47,890

I remember my father
talking about politics.

142

00:07:47,890 --> 00:07:55,600

I remember that when German
troops took over Hungary,

143

00:07:55,600 --> 00:07:57,910

my father was throwing

out all his Social

144
00:07:57,910 --> 00:08:03,790
Democratic newspapers, so
that if there is a search,

145
00:08:03,790 --> 00:08:05,230
they wouldn't find it.

146
00:08:05,230 --> 00:08:07,870
Because this was unacceptable.

147
00:08:07,870 --> 00:08:12,840
But other than that, I don't
think that he was aware of any.

148
00:08:12,840 --> 00:08:16,180
And I know that
he had co-workers

149
00:08:16,180 --> 00:08:19,420
that we have seen socially
that were Christian.

150
00:08:19,420 --> 00:08:24,400
Did you have a large extended
family, aunts, uncles, cousins,

151
00:08:24,400 --> 00:08:27,490
grandparents?

152
00:08:27,490 --> 00:08:34,960
I had about, probably,
four, five family members

153
00:08:34,960 --> 00:08:36,890
who were really family.

154
00:08:36,890 --> 00:08:39,340
There was an extended
acquaintanceship,

155

00:08:39,340 --> 00:08:42,340
friends of the family.

156
00:08:42,340 --> 00:08:48,130
But the aforementioned uncle,
his wife, and two children

157
00:08:48,130 --> 00:08:52,120
were really the only relatives
that we had in Budapest.

158
00:08:52,120 --> 00:08:53,890
Because that was on
my mother's side.

159
00:08:53,890 --> 00:08:55,900
On my father's
side, everybody was

160
00:08:55,900 --> 00:09:00,940
in Transylvania in two
towns, actually, maybe three.

161
00:09:00,940 --> 00:09:05,990
But one is [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH],,
which is [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]

162
00:09:05,990 --> 00:09:06,670
today.

163
00:09:06,670 --> 00:09:09,760
Cluj, which was
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH],,

164
00:09:09,760 --> 00:09:14,950
and [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]
was the third town where

165
00:09:14,950 --> 00:09:18,250
my father's family
was traced, basically.

166
00:09:18,250 --> 00:09:19,690

They kind of moved around.

167
00:09:19,690 --> 00:09:22,030
There was a substantial--

168
00:09:22,030 --> 00:09:29,470
there was an uncle, my father's
brother, my father's mother

169
00:09:29,470 --> 00:09:30,160
and father.

170
00:09:30,160 --> 00:09:32,890

171
00:09:32,890 --> 00:09:36,270
Did you go to visit
these relatives?

172
00:09:36,270 --> 00:09:38,670
I did go to visit them
on school holidays,

173
00:09:38,670 --> 00:09:41,640
usually, in summertime.

174
00:09:41,640 --> 00:09:44,610
One of the family
members had a vineyard

175
00:09:44,610 --> 00:09:47,820
in [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH].

176
00:09:47,820 --> 00:09:55,830
And I stayed there in a
vineyard most of the summer.

177
00:09:55,830 --> 00:09:59,130
I remember visiting there even
in the wintertime, because I'm

178
00:09:59,130 --> 00:10:08,710

remembering trying
to kill myself

179
00:10:08,710 --> 00:10:12,220
on a sled, some
ridiculous places,

180
00:10:12,220 --> 00:10:16,610
with a bunch of my
cousins and other kids.

181
00:10:16,610 --> 00:10:26,360
And that probably goes back
to around 1938, '39, 1937.

182
00:10:26,360 --> 00:10:28,520
What language did
you speak at home?

183
00:10:28,520 --> 00:10:29,390
Only Hungarian.

184
00:10:29,390 --> 00:10:30,920
That's the only language?

185
00:10:30,920 --> 00:10:35,360
Only language spoken, we
did not speak Yiddish.

186
00:10:35,360 --> 00:10:39,200
We were not very--

187
00:10:39,200 --> 00:10:41,060
because of their
religious orientation,

188
00:10:41,060 --> 00:10:43,940
we also didn't know
anybody who was religious.

189
00:10:43,940 --> 00:10:50,330
And so the assimilated ones
would not speak Yiddish,

190
00:10:50,330 --> 00:10:52,110
even if they could.

191
00:10:52,110 --> 00:10:54,590
And I don't think
my parents could.

192
00:10:54,590 --> 00:10:57,020
My uncle did and could.

193
00:10:57,020 --> 00:11:00,310

194
00:11:00,310 --> 00:11:02,650
All right, let's now start
to talk about when you

195
00:11:02,650 --> 00:11:05,720
noticed a change in your life.

196
00:11:05,720 --> 00:11:13,840
What was the first memory or
experience that you can recall?

197
00:11:13,840 --> 00:11:14,770
1938?

198
00:11:14,770 --> 00:11:20,260
1938, when the first Jewish
restriction or restrictive laws

199
00:11:20,260 --> 00:11:21,700
came in.

200
00:11:21,700 --> 00:11:23,010
And that was--

201
00:11:23,010 --> 00:11:24,280
You were only 9-years-old.

202

00:11:24,280 --> 00:11:25,238

I was 9-years-old.

203

00:11:25,238 --> 00:11:26,530

What do you remember from that?

204

00:11:26,530 --> 00:11:32,020

I was aware of the fact
that the proclamation

205

00:11:32,020 --> 00:11:35,860

that Jews can now not
do certain things.

206

00:11:35,860 --> 00:11:39,100

And they can only do certain
things in terms of jobs.

207

00:11:39,100 --> 00:11:43,220

How did you know
that at 9-years-old?

208

00:11:43,220 --> 00:11:47,680

I guess reading it and listening
to my parents talking about it.

209

00:11:47,680 --> 00:11:50,260

210

00:11:50,260 --> 00:11:52,870

Radio.

211

00:11:52,870 --> 00:11:55,090

Were you frightened
on hearing this?

212

00:11:55,090 --> 00:11:56,830

No.

213

00:11:56,830 --> 00:11:58,240

We were not frightened.

214

00:11:58,240 --> 00:12:05,380
And strangely enough,
in 1938, my grandmother,

215
00:12:05,380 --> 00:12:09,460
my father's mother
from Transylvania,

216
00:12:09,460 --> 00:12:16,630
went out to her two
daughters in America,

217
00:12:16,630 --> 00:12:20,990
supposedly for the
World's Fair in 1938.

218
00:12:20,990 --> 00:12:25,270
And she stayed behind.

219
00:12:25,270 --> 00:12:26,390
And in 1938--

220
00:12:26,390 --> 00:12:27,610
Stayed in the United States?

221
00:12:27,610 --> 00:12:28,777
Stayed in the United States.

222
00:12:28,777 --> 00:12:30,040
Never went back.

223
00:12:30,040 --> 00:12:32,800
My grandfather was
dead by that time.

224
00:12:32,800 --> 00:12:35,440
And so she stayed with her
two daughters in New York.

225
00:12:35,440 --> 00:12:44,180

226

00:12:44,180 --> 00:12:46,840
The husband of one
of the daughters

227
00:12:46,840 --> 00:12:51,160
sent us an affidavit
that would have

228
00:12:51,160 --> 00:12:55,450
enabled us, my father,
my mother, and I,

229
00:12:55,450 --> 00:12:58,360
to immigrate to America.

230
00:12:58,360 --> 00:13:01,240
But I remember my father
worrying about the fact

231
00:13:01,240 --> 00:13:06,540
that he, at that time, was 40--

232
00:13:06,540 --> 00:13:07,540
'38?

233
00:13:07,540 --> 00:13:14,170
41, 41, 42-years-old,
the fact that he

234
00:13:14,170 --> 00:13:17,170
didn't speak any English.

235
00:13:17,170 --> 00:13:19,680
He felt that he
could not get a job.

236
00:13:19,680 --> 00:13:22,840
And he was not worried too
much about the restrictions.

237
00:13:22,840 --> 00:13:24,300
Because they were fairly light.

238

00:13:24,300 --> 00:13:25,690

It didn't touch him.

239

00:13:25,690 --> 00:13:28,930

His job was not of that level.

240

00:13:28,930 --> 00:13:36,430

And he felt that because he was
in the army during the First

241

00:13:36,430 --> 00:13:38,350

World War, he was
an officer, and he

242

00:13:38,350 --> 00:13:41,830

was decorated, that they're
not going to touch him.

243

00:13:41,830 --> 00:13:48,450

And so he decided not to take
advantage of this affidavit.

244

00:13:48,450 --> 00:13:52,560

As I mentioned, he was
in the First World War.

245

00:13:52,560 --> 00:13:57,180

He fought on the Italian front
and also on the Russian front.

246

00:13:57,180 --> 00:14:00,470

247

00:14:00,470 --> 00:14:02,300

He was in the infantry in Italy.

248

00:14:02,300 --> 00:14:07,880

And he was an aerial observer
on the Russian front.

249

00:14:07,880 --> 00:14:11,690

I'm bringing this up,

because I his pictures

250
00:14:11,690 --> 00:14:14,960
from those times, which is
the few things that were left.

251
00:14:14,960 --> 00:14:18,220

252
00:14:18,220 --> 00:14:21,580
And so the decision
was made, essentially,

253
00:14:21,580 --> 00:14:22,880
[INAUDIBLE] to stay behind.

254
00:14:22,880 --> 00:14:25,510
And as things got
worse and worse

255
00:14:25,510 --> 00:14:27,532
in terms of the restrictions--

256
00:14:27,532 --> 00:14:29,740
Well, let's talk about how
these restrictions applied

257
00:14:29,740 --> 00:14:31,730
to you and your family.

258
00:14:31,730 --> 00:14:35,890
The first, if I
remember correctly,

259
00:14:35,890 --> 00:14:40,900
the first thing that
I personally felt

260
00:14:40,900 --> 00:14:44,320
was the segregation in school.

261
00:14:44,320 --> 00:14:48,430

If I remember the first two
years of elementary school,

262
00:14:48,430 --> 00:14:50,890
we were integrated.

263
00:14:50,890 --> 00:14:53,540
How old were you when
you started school?

264
00:14:53,540 --> 00:14:54,440
I was seven.

265
00:14:54,440 --> 00:14:56,050
Seven.

266
00:14:56,050 --> 00:14:57,820
It was 1936.

267
00:14:57,820 --> 00:15:04,210
And '38 and '39 got more
and more restrictive.

268
00:15:04,210 --> 00:15:05,580
Separating Jews from Nazis.

269
00:15:05,580 --> 00:15:08,770
Separated the Jews from
non-Jews in the class.

270
00:15:08,770 --> 00:15:11,800
Were you angry?

271
00:15:11,800 --> 00:15:15,080
I don't remember being angry.

272
00:15:15,080 --> 00:15:17,935
I remember being--

273
00:15:17,935 --> 00:15:21,110

274
00:15:21,110 --> 00:15:21,610
Puzzled?

275
00:15:21,610 --> 00:15:26,970

276
00:15:26,970 --> 00:15:35,460
Authority was always
paramount in Hungary.

277
00:15:35,460 --> 00:15:37,290
And government authority was.

278
00:15:37,290 --> 00:15:38,790
So essentially, the
government could

279
00:15:38,790 --> 00:15:41,440
do most anything that
they wanted you to be

280
00:15:41,440 --> 00:15:43,330
or wanted you to do.

281
00:15:43,330 --> 00:15:46,380
And so on the
acceptance was there.

282
00:15:46,380 --> 00:15:48,330
And I think that there
was maybe a relief

283
00:15:48,330 --> 00:15:49,960
that, well, it's not so bad.

284
00:15:49,960 --> 00:15:52,950
We can live with this.

285
00:15:52,950 --> 00:15:55,140
Some people stayed
behind because

286

00:15:55,140 --> 00:15:57,150
of that kind of a belief.

287

00:15:57,150 --> 00:16:00,288
And some tried to
emigrate at that point,

288

00:16:00,288 --> 00:16:01,830
because they believed
that things are

289

00:16:01,830 --> 00:16:04,620
going to get worse and worse.

290

00:16:04,620 --> 00:16:11,710
My family wouldn't believe how
bad things would be later on.

291

00:16:11,710 --> 00:16:12,870
So there was no anger.

292

00:16:12,870 --> 00:16:14,730
There was acceptance.

293

00:16:14,730 --> 00:16:15,390
It was the law.

294

00:16:15,390 --> 00:16:18,410
So we got segregated.

295

00:16:18,410 --> 00:16:20,730
Did you still see these
children outside of school

296

00:16:20,730 --> 00:16:23,540
or was there segregation
in playing also?

297

00:16:23,540 --> 00:16:24,600
No.

298

00:16:24,600 --> 00:16:29,250

The segregation was
really in school and even

299

00:16:29,250 --> 00:16:36,920

in the Boy Scout troop,
which was split up

300

00:16:36,920 --> 00:16:43,270

into families, so-called,
of four or five children.

301

00:16:43,270 --> 00:16:47,720

The Jewish kids had one
or two of the families.

302

00:16:47,720 --> 00:16:49,670

And the rest of them
were the Christian.

303

00:16:49,670 --> 00:16:50,780

And we played together.

304

00:16:50,780 --> 00:16:54,440

And we were Boy Scouts together.

305

00:16:54,440 --> 00:16:58,430

And I believe I
remember, as a Boy Scout,

306

00:16:58,430 --> 00:17:03,417

marching when Lord Baden
Powell came to Budapest.

307

00:17:03,417 --> 00:17:05,000

And it will be
interesting to find out

308

00:17:05,000 --> 00:17:08,300

whether if he did and did
I remember it correctly.

309

00:17:08,300 --> 00:17:12,380

But I seem to remember
a story that he told us

310
00:17:12,380 --> 00:17:18,470
over the megaphone that he
had, I believe, scarlet fever

311
00:17:18,470 --> 00:17:20,420
as an adult.

312
00:17:20,420 --> 00:17:26,750
The reason for that was that God
looked down and saw this person

313
00:17:26,750 --> 00:17:31,530
in short pants and said he did
not have scarlet fever yet.

314
00:17:31,530 --> 00:17:34,630
So give it to him.

315
00:17:34,630 --> 00:17:37,310
And the story is
basically that we did not

316
00:17:37,310 --> 00:17:39,770
have long pants as Boy Scouts.

317
00:17:39,770 --> 00:17:42,660
I mean, as children,
we had short pants.

318
00:17:42,660 --> 00:17:43,700
Nobody had long pants.

319
00:17:43,700 --> 00:17:45,870
Winter or summer,
we had short pants.

320
00:17:45,870 --> 00:17:50,746
And this was the
gist of that story.

321

00:17:50,746 --> 00:17:54,470

Whether I read it or it's
memory, it's hard to tell.

322

00:17:54,470 --> 00:17:57,830

But I remember parading
with all the scouts

323

00:17:57,830 --> 00:18:01,880

from all over Hungary in
one of the soccer stadiums.

324

00:18:01,880 --> 00:18:05,480

You would have
been how old then?

325

00:18:05,480 --> 00:18:11,820

Probably 8, 9, 10, thereabouts.

326

00:18:11,820 --> 00:18:12,320

OK.

327

00:18:12,320 --> 00:18:16,115

The first you said was
segregation within schools.

328

00:18:16,115 --> 00:18:16,820

In class.

329

00:18:16,820 --> 00:18:17,480

In class.

330

00:18:17,480 --> 00:18:18,063

And then next?

331

00:18:18,063 --> 00:18:20,210

Second one, the Boy Scouts.

332

00:18:20,210 --> 00:18:23,050

333

00:18:23,050 --> 00:18:35,990
Then subsequent laws mandated
that the men go into service,

334
00:18:35,990 --> 00:18:39,140
into the labor brigades.

335
00:18:39,140 --> 00:18:41,480
That must've been around 1940.

336
00:18:41,480 --> 00:18:43,040
I'm not clear on it.

337
00:18:43,040 --> 00:18:46,430
My father was drafted into this.

338
00:18:46,430 --> 00:18:50,990
But because he had a
bronze medal for heroism

339
00:18:50,990 --> 00:18:56,450
during the First World War, he
went in as a company commander

340
00:18:56,450 --> 00:19:00,410
and was in for--

341
00:19:00,410 --> 00:19:02,610
my guess is for a
couple of years.

342
00:19:02,610 --> 00:19:03,110
OK.

343
00:19:03,110 --> 00:19:04,693
He was taken away
to another location?

344
00:19:04,693 --> 00:19:07,670
He was taken away to
another location where

345

00:19:07,670 --> 00:19:09,920
we could visit him on occasion.

346
00:19:09,920 --> 00:19:11,510
What was your
feelings when he left?

347
00:19:11,510 --> 00:19:16,527

348
00:19:16,527 --> 00:19:17,110
Was that hard?

349
00:19:17,110 --> 00:19:19,300
I think there was anxiety.

350
00:19:19,300 --> 00:19:23,590
But then, there was acceptance.

351
00:19:23,590 --> 00:19:29,200
Again, there was
worry, I remember.

352
00:19:29,200 --> 00:19:30,880
There was fear.

353
00:19:30,880 --> 00:19:33,760
There was no anger
that I was aware of.

354
00:19:33,760 --> 00:19:38,950
Acquiescence, really what
came into being at that point.

355
00:19:38,950 --> 00:19:41,790
Did he say anything special
to you when he left?

356
00:19:41,790 --> 00:19:43,320
Do you remember
anything specific.

357

00:19:43,320 --> 00:19:43,820
No.

358
00:19:43,820 --> 00:19:45,170
It was very matter of fact.

359
00:19:45,170 --> 00:19:47,150
I knew he was going
to be an officer.

360
00:19:47,150 --> 00:19:51,740
And I guess it was expected.

361
00:19:51,740 --> 00:19:55,220

362
00:19:55,220 --> 00:19:59,270
He did not really
talk to me about it.

363
00:19:59,270 --> 00:20:07,730
My communication with him
was loving, but not formal,

364
00:20:07,730 --> 00:20:08,540
necessarily.

365
00:20:08,540 --> 00:20:12,170
But except for the weekends,
I didn't see much of him.

366
00:20:12,170 --> 00:20:14,720

367
00:20:14,720 --> 00:20:18,155
My mother and I were
always together.

368
00:20:18,155 --> 00:20:21,170

369
00:20:21,170 --> 00:20:24,340

But I basically remember of a
good relationship [INAUDIBLE]

370
00:20:24,340 --> 00:20:28,250
with my father, a
loving relationship

371
00:20:28,250 --> 00:20:29,960
with a very nice person.

372
00:20:29,960 --> 00:20:34,250

373
00:20:34,250 --> 00:20:38,240
So you knew where
he was being sent?

374
00:20:38,240 --> 00:20:40,700
Well, I knew that
he went in, but not

375
00:20:40,700 --> 00:20:44,030
where he was going to be sent.

376
00:20:44,030 --> 00:20:46,860
But then he came--

377
00:20:46,860 --> 00:20:49,420
then he was communicating with
us and told us where he was.

378
00:20:49,420 --> 00:20:51,253
How did he communicate
with you, by letters?

379
00:20:51,253 --> 00:20:55,190
Letters and telephone call,
and so we knew where he was.

380
00:20:55,190 --> 00:20:57,710
And we went visiting.

381

00:20:57,710 --> 00:21:01,370
There was visiting privileges.

382
00:21:01,370 --> 00:21:03,980
What kind of conditions
was he living under?

383
00:21:03,980 --> 00:21:07,850
I think that, as an officer,
he had quite good conditions.

384
00:21:07,850 --> 00:21:13,280
And even in those
days, the labor brigade

385
00:21:13,280 --> 00:21:15,680
itself was fairly well-treated.

386
00:21:15,680 --> 00:21:18,860
It was early on.

387
00:21:18,860 --> 00:21:24,620
That evolved into, as
further laws came in,

388
00:21:24,620 --> 00:21:28,730
he was discharged
for a period of time

389
00:21:28,730 --> 00:21:32,750
and then drafted back, but
into the brigade itself.

390
00:21:32,750 --> 00:21:38,000
By that time, you had to have
a high rank or many more medals

391
00:21:38,000 --> 00:21:41,330
to remain an officer.

392
00:21:41,330 --> 00:21:43,990
And so he went back into--

393

00:21:43,990 --> 00:21:49,840
and essentially, this is a
period of two or three years,

394

00:21:49,840 --> 00:21:52,160
he would be traveled around.

395

00:21:52,160 --> 00:21:54,020
And we heard from him some time.

396

00:21:54,020 --> 00:21:55,820
But he never came
home, and we never

397

00:21:55,820 --> 00:22:00,530
could visit, to the
best of my recollection.

398

00:22:00,530 --> 00:22:03,260
When your father left, it
was you and your mother.

399

00:22:03,260 --> 00:22:05,300
How did you manage?

400

00:22:05,300 --> 00:22:09,020
How did your mother
manage financially?

401

00:22:09,020 --> 00:22:11,870
I am not sure.

402

00:22:11,870 --> 00:22:13,730
I know we had help.

403

00:22:13,730 --> 00:22:17,210
We had help from some
people, money help.

404

00:22:17,210 --> 00:22:22,490
She eventually
discharged the maid.

405
00:22:22,490 --> 00:22:25,010
And just mother and I were
in the same apartment,

406
00:22:25,010 --> 00:22:27,860
where we'd always been.

407
00:22:27,860 --> 00:22:36,710
But she picked up and
started making small jewelry

408
00:22:36,710 --> 00:22:40,490
from pearls and was selling it.

409
00:22:40,490 --> 00:22:45,120

410
00:22:45,120 --> 00:22:52,260
At the same time, I
was also going to--

411
00:22:52,260 --> 00:22:56,640
well, we're talking about now,
we skipped a couple of years

412
00:22:56,640 --> 00:23:00,630
where nothing much happened
except things got tighter.

413
00:23:00,630 --> 00:23:02,690
And the loss came in other--

414
00:23:02,690 --> 00:23:05,400
What other ways?

415
00:23:05,400 --> 00:23:06,750
Further restrictions.

416
00:23:06,750 --> 00:23:07,940
On you, what ways?

417
00:23:07,940 --> 00:23:10,080
On us, in terms of--

418
00:23:10,080 --> 00:23:10,860
The curfew?

419
00:23:10,860 --> 00:23:15,930
--curfew, when we could go
out, when we had to be home.

420
00:23:15,930 --> 00:23:17,700
I was not able to go
to school anymore.

421
00:23:17,700 --> 00:23:19,980
I went to gymnasium.

422
00:23:19,980 --> 00:23:22,380
And I was no longer
able to go to gymnasium

423
00:23:22,380 --> 00:23:24,090
because of the curfews.

424
00:23:24,090 --> 00:23:26,513
What were the time curfews?

425
00:23:26,513 --> 00:23:28,680
You couldn't get home in
time, was that the problem?

426
00:23:28,680 --> 00:23:29,180
No.

427
00:23:29,180 --> 00:23:32,190
I think that the restriction
was from 10:00 AM morning

428
00:23:32,190 --> 00:23:35,660
till 4:00 in the afternoon
we were able to get out.

429

00:23:35,660 --> 00:23:39,450

But then, eventually, that
got tighter, like, only

430

00:23:39,450 --> 00:23:44,460

in the afternoon that we were
able to get out of the house.

431

00:23:44,460 --> 00:23:46,980

How did you feel,
as a young boy,

432

00:23:46,980 --> 00:23:49,290

being restricted to
your house like that?

433

00:23:49,290 --> 00:23:53,640

I think that was a great
deal of resentment.

434

00:23:53,640 --> 00:23:54,480

It was troubling.

435

00:23:54,480 --> 00:24:03,660

Because we knew that there
were certain actions taken

436

00:24:03,660 --> 00:24:04,620

against Jews.

437

00:24:04,620 --> 00:24:08,830

We heard of beating,
et cetera, because we

438

00:24:08,830 --> 00:24:10,740

had to wear the yellow star.

439

00:24:10,740 --> 00:24:12,450

When did you start
wearing a yellow star?

440

00:24:12,450 --> 00:24:13,680

I can't remember the date.

441
00:24:13,680 --> 00:24:17,130
It was-- I am only
guessing that it

442
00:24:17,130 --> 00:24:26,110
was kind of 1940,
1941 thereabouts,

443
00:24:26,110 --> 00:24:29,280
and was part of
the restrictions.

444
00:24:29,280 --> 00:24:34,090
How did you like
wearing a yellow star?

445
00:24:34,090 --> 00:24:37,300
I remember being
very upset about it.

446
00:24:37,300 --> 00:24:42,150
First of all, I did not like
to be labeled and stand out

447
00:24:42,150 --> 00:24:45,150
from a group, from
the rest of the world.

448
00:24:45,150 --> 00:24:47,190
I do not like to be
picked on, as it were.

449
00:24:47,190 --> 00:24:50,020

450
00:24:50,020 --> 00:24:52,830
Because it was too
easy to pick us off

451
00:24:52,830 --> 00:24:56,700
the street when the

Nazis wanted to do it.

452

00:24:56,700 --> 00:24:58,950

Although I think that I'm
skipping a little bit ahead.

453

00:24:58,950 --> 00:25:10,250

Because up to March
of 1944, and so

454

00:25:10,250 --> 00:25:18,210

I am skipping about two years
of mounting difficulties,

455

00:25:18,210 --> 00:25:22,500

of getting food,
of getting money.

456

00:25:22,500 --> 00:25:32,440

I was also going to
gymnasium at that time.

457

00:25:32,440 --> 00:25:34,840

And I was in the fourth
year of gymnasium.

458

00:25:34,840 --> 00:25:38,220

459

00:25:38,220 --> 00:25:41,900

As I mentioned, I was
a rather poor student.

460

00:25:41,900 --> 00:25:47,740

And I made a deal
with the professor,

461

00:25:47,740 --> 00:25:52,690

who was the class
supervisor, I guess,

462

00:25:52,690 --> 00:25:56,850

that because of my

mathematical inability,

463

00:25:56,850 --> 00:25:59,230

I would not come back
to the fifth year

464

00:25:59,230 --> 00:26:03,940

and he would let me
graduate on the fourth year.

465

00:26:03,940 --> 00:26:07,120

Before graduation,
however, which

466

00:26:07,120 --> 00:26:10,240

would have been in May or
June, March 19 the Germans

467

00:26:10,240 --> 00:26:11,530

marched in.

468

00:26:11,530 --> 00:26:17,800

And so that effectively ended
school career completely.

469

00:26:17,800 --> 00:26:24,310

From that point on,
I did some smuggling

470

00:26:24,310 --> 00:26:27,270

to go into the provinces.

471

00:26:27,270 --> 00:26:28,720

Well, going out
of town, that they

472

00:26:28,720 --> 00:26:32,530

called it the suburbs,
by bus and train,

473

00:26:32,530 --> 00:26:39,400

and trade for some
meat and cold cuts.

474
00:26:39,400 --> 00:26:43,240
Bring it back into
town and trade it

475
00:26:43,240 --> 00:26:46,330
for food and other staples.

476
00:26:46,330 --> 00:26:49,180
How did you know how to do this?

477
00:26:49,180 --> 00:26:50,760
I [? do ?] remember.

478
00:26:50,760 --> 00:26:54,430
I remember that I had
the little backpack.

479
00:26:54,430 --> 00:26:59,020
And I went out and picked
up some sausages and salami

480
00:26:59,020 --> 00:27:00,280
and such.

481
00:27:00,280 --> 00:27:01,240
And I brought it back.

482
00:27:01,240 --> 00:27:06,250
And I believe my mother was able
to either sell it or trade it.

483
00:27:06,250 --> 00:27:07,390
You did this by yourself?

484
00:27:07,390 --> 00:27:10,630
I did it by myself
with the knowledge

485
00:27:10,630 --> 00:27:14,410
that if I get
caught for smuggling

486
00:27:14,410 --> 00:27:16,120
then I would be killed.

487
00:27:16,120 --> 00:27:20,170
Were you wearing your star
while you were doing it?

488
00:27:20,170 --> 00:27:21,010
I believe so.

489
00:27:21,010 --> 00:27:22,010
While you were doing it?

490
00:27:22,010 --> 00:27:23,586
I believe so.

491
00:27:23,586 --> 00:27:24,930
Mhm.

492
00:27:24,930 --> 00:27:26,520
I pretty much had
to at that point.

493
00:27:26,520 --> 00:27:28,680
As I say, it's a
little bit fuzzy.

494
00:27:28,680 --> 00:27:31,380
But I remember that,
for some reason,

495
00:27:31,380 --> 00:27:38,010
one of the bagful of
sausages smelled terribly.

496
00:27:38,010 --> 00:27:41,670
And how anybody could miss
me, that I was smuggling yet--

497
00:27:41,670 --> 00:27:44,460
I never could understand.

498

00:27:44,460 --> 00:27:47,107

So my smuggling days came
to an end at that point

499

00:27:47,107 --> 00:27:48,690

because it was
becoming too dangerous.

500

00:27:48,690 --> 00:27:55,110

And I also was able to
get a job in a printing

501

00:27:55,110 --> 00:27:59,070

plant as an apprentice.

502

00:27:59,070 --> 00:28:02,940

My uncle, who was still living
in Budapest at that time,

503

00:28:02,940 --> 00:28:08,230

was a graphic artist,
quite well-known,

504

00:28:08,230 --> 00:28:12,780

specialty of the placards
for display purposes

505

00:28:12,780 --> 00:28:15,210

and advertising.

506

00:28:15,210 --> 00:28:21,000

And he had connections with
a rather large printing

507

00:28:21,000 --> 00:28:28,860

company called Globus, which is
still in existence as of 1994.

508

00:28:28,860 --> 00:28:31,620

And I went there
as an apprentice

509

00:28:31,620 --> 00:28:40,710
in the photo engraving
section of the printing shop.

510

00:28:40,710 --> 00:28:43,500

511

00:28:43,500 --> 00:28:47,100
And this happened
after March of 1944.

512

00:28:47,100 --> 00:28:53,060
So this must have been in later
part of March, April, May,

513

00:28:53,060 --> 00:28:56,870
June, July.

514

00:28:56,870 --> 00:28:57,380
Go ahead.

515

00:28:57,380 --> 00:29:00,665
Yeah, I just wanted to back up
a little before spring of '44.

516

00:29:00,665 --> 00:29:03,230

517

00:29:03,230 --> 00:29:06,140
Tell me about your bar mitzvah.

518

00:29:06,140 --> 00:29:07,230
You said you did have one.

519

00:29:07,230 --> 00:29:09,930
And that would
have been in 1942.

520

00:29:09,930 --> 00:29:10,680
OK.

521

00:29:10,680 --> 00:29:13,070
June of '42.

522
00:29:13,070 --> 00:29:18,140
My bar mitzvah was
in the neighborhood

523
00:29:18,140 --> 00:29:19,460
nearby where I lived.

524
00:29:19,460 --> 00:29:22,760

525
00:29:22,760 --> 00:29:26,390
It was in an Orthodox temple.

526
00:29:26,390 --> 00:29:30,200
It was an Orthodox bar
mitzvah to the point where

527
00:29:30,200 --> 00:29:31,850
men and women were separated.

528
00:29:31,850 --> 00:29:35,150

529
00:29:35,150 --> 00:29:37,850
As usual, I was not a
very good Hebrew student.

530
00:29:37,850 --> 00:29:41,840
So everything was written
out for me phonetically

531
00:29:41,840 --> 00:29:46,940
in Hungarian,
which later on will

532
00:29:46,940 --> 00:29:50,420
have a connection to something
else that went on many years

533

00:29:50,420 --> 00:29:53,180
later.

534
00:29:53,180 --> 00:29:57,020
It was a family affair.

535
00:29:57,020 --> 00:30:02,510
I remember my mother serving
little cakes called [?minion?]

536
00:30:02,510 --> 00:30:12,310
from [?Gerbeuad?],, which was one
of the best bakery sweet shops

537
00:30:12,310 --> 00:30:13,510
still in existence.

538
00:30:13,510 --> 00:30:16,720

539
00:30:16,720 --> 00:30:19,330
The family was-- and
friends, we didn't have

540
00:30:19,330 --> 00:30:22,570
too many people that came over.

541
00:30:22,570 --> 00:30:28,570
But it was largely a family
affair, mostly grown ups.

542
00:30:28,570 --> 00:30:34,300
I only remember my cousins
being there, and no other child.

543
00:30:34,300 --> 00:30:37,010
And it certainly was
not a fancy deal at all.

544
00:30:37,010 --> 00:30:41,810
It was just we went to the
temple, had the bar mitzvah,

545

00:30:41,810 --> 00:30:43,902
came home.

546

00:30:43,902 --> 00:30:44,860
Was everybody wearing--

547

00:30:44,860 --> 00:30:45,710
Had people in.

548

00:30:45,710 --> 00:30:50,650
Was everybody wearing
their stars at the time?

549

00:30:50,650 --> 00:30:52,580
I don't think so.

550

00:30:52,580 --> 00:30:53,500
I don't think so.

551

00:30:53,500 --> 00:30:57,850

552

00:30:57,850 --> 00:31:01,180
The only picture that I
have of myself with a star

553

00:31:01,180 --> 00:31:04,480
was taken in 1944.

554

00:31:04,480 --> 00:31:07,740
So I am not sure.

555

00:31:07,740 --> 00:31:09,940
It's something I
ought to find out.

556

00:31:09,940 --> 00:31:12,460
I believe that the
stars had to be

557

00:31:12,460 --> 00:31:15,520

put on after the Germans
took over in March of 1944.

558
00:31:15,520 --> 00:31:16,440
Oh, OK.

559
00:31:16,440 --> 00:31:17,840
I am pretty sure of that.

560
00:31:17,840 --> 00:31:27,280
So until then, there was no
major identification problem.

561
00:31:27,280 --> 00:31:30,670
Although, I said it before,
I don't know if we actually

562
00:31:30,670 --> 00:31:34,010
had curfews before that.

563
00:31:34,010 --> 00:31:38,600
I suspect it was in 1944
that the curfew started

564
00:31:38,600 --> 00:31:40,220
at the insistence
of the Germans.

565
00:31:40,220 --> 00:31:42,010
Because Hungary was--

566
00:31:42,010 --> 00:31:42,860
An ally of Germany.

567
00:31:42,860 --> 00:31:45,540
--it was an ally of Germany,
but was not occupied,

568
00:31:45,540 --> 00:31:48,290
and was a reluctant
ally, if you will.

569

00:31:48,290 --> 00:31:50,750
They tried to survive
[INAUDIBLE] Germans

570
00:31:50,750 --> 00:31:52,030
were fighting in Russia.

571
00:31:52,030 --> 00:31:59,200

572
00:31:59,200 --> 00:32:02,500
You were explaining about
the Hungarian situation

573
00:32:02,500 --> 00:32:03,660
being an ally of Germany.

574
00:32:03,660 --> 00:32:04,630
Right.

575
00:32:04,630 --> 00:32:11,050
And in March
thereabouts of 1944,

576
00:32:11,050 --> 00:32:17,770
the Hungarians tried to make
a pull out of the alliance

577
00:32:17,770 --> 00:32:23,170
and wanted to make a separate
peace with the West, which

578
00:32:23,170 --> 00:32:24,250
was very impractical.

579
00:32:24,250 --> 00:32:27,940
Because certainly, the
Germans were West of us

580
00:32:27,940 --> 00:32:33,010
and the Germans were all
over us, all around us.

581

00:32:33,010 --> 00:32:37,330

But they clearly felt
that to have Hungary

582

00:32:37,330 --> 00:32:40,300

as an independent
hostile country

583

00:32:40,300 --> 00:32:43,480

would threaten their
efforts in Russia

584

00:32:43,480 --> 00:32:45,550

and threaten their supply line.

585

00:32:45,550 --> 00:32:52,220

So they were compelled
to occupy the country.

586

00:32:52,220 --> 00:32:55,270

And did you ever see
Admiral Horthy --

587

00:32:55,270 --> 00:32:56,670

I have seen him--

588

00:32:56,670 --> 00:32:58,330

--at that time?

589

00:32:58,330 --> 00:33:03,925

I have seen him, certainly in
magazines, but not in person.

590

00:33:03,925 --> 00:33:07,870

591

00:33:07,870 --> 00:33:09,790

How did you and your
mother hear about what

592

00:33:09,790 --> 00:33:12,880

was happening in the rest of

Europe at that time, in 1942,

593

00:33:12,880 --> 00:33:14,145
1943?

594

00:33:14,145 --> 00:33:15,910
Or did you know?

595

00:33:15,910 --> 00:33:17,360
We knew what was happening.

596

00:33:17,360 --> 00:33:19,420
We had a radio.

597

00:33:19,420 --> 00:33:26,530
And it was capable of listening
to the BBC, which was against--

598

00:33:26,530 --> 00:33:28,707
I mean, punishable by death
if they catch you do it.

599

00:33:28,707 --> 00:33:30,040
So that was another restriction?

600

00:33:30,040 --> 00:33:33,460
That was another restriction
that you actually

601

00:33:33,460 --> 00:33:36,220
had to hand in any
fancy radio which was

602

00:33:36,220 --> 00:33:39,010
capable of shortwave reception.

603

00:33:39,010 --> 00:33:42,850
But we had a radio
which was a simple one.

604

00:33:42,850 --> 00:33:44,960
And my father didn't hand it in.

605
00:33:44,960 --> 00:33:48,670
And so we listened to it at
night, with the windows closed

606
00:33:48,670 --> 00:33:50,237
and the shades drawn.

607
00:33:50,237 --> 00:33:51,070
You and your mother?

608
00:33:51,070 --> 00:33:53,740
My mother, and he,
when he was home.

609
00:33:53,740 --> 00:33:55,960
We did listen to it.

610
00:33:55,960 --> 00:34:01,060
So we were aware of
the war in general.

611
00:34:01,060 --> 00:34:05,500
Did your family have to turn
in any jewelry, any valuables?

612
00:34:05,500 --> 00:34:07,840
I believe they had
to turn in jewelry.

613
00:34:07,840 --> 00:34:09,969
I believe along with the radios.

614
00:34:09,969 --> 00:34:14,409
And I'm not sure
of anything else

615
00:34:14,409 --> 00:34:17,480
that had to be at that
point given up by us.

616
00:34:17,480 --> 00:34:19,719

We had no car, so
there was no problem.

617
00:34:19,719 --> 00:34:22,280

618
00:34:22,280 --> 00:34:28,290
But in reminiscing,
[INAUDIBLE] back

619
00:34:28,290 --> 00:34:32,730
into the '38 kind of
interesting memories

620
00:34:32,730 --> 00:34:48,250
that the future
Pope came to Hungary

621
00:34:48,250 --> 00:34:50,920
in 1938, which was
the thousandth year

622
00:34:50,920 --> 00:34:58,660
of the Catholic
conversion of Hungary.

623
00:34:58,660 --> 00:35:02,110
And his name was
Pacelli at that time.

624
00:35:02,110 --> 00:35:07,950
I saw him because we had
friends on the Danube.

625
00:35:07,950 --> 00:35:10,090
And he came by boat.

626
00:35:10,090 --> 00:35:14,850
And I saw him, within
100 yards of him coming.

627
00:35:14,850 --> 00:35:18,400
He, ultimately, of course,

didn't help the Jews

628
00:35:18,400 --> 00:35:19,180
all that much.

629
00:35:19,180 --> 00:35:23,350
He was rather working
with the Germans,

630
00:35:23,350 --> 00:35:27,250
as we found out much later.

631
00:35:27,250 --> 00:35:38,660
But childhood was fairly
normal going to summertime,

632
00:35:38,660 --> 00:35:43,590
into swimming pools,
to playing soccer,

633
00:35:43,590 --> 00:35:46,500
bicycling all over the town.

634
00:35:46,500 --> 00:35:47,910
This is even in '42, '43?

635
00:35:47,910 --> 00:35:51,690
This is even then, even then.

636
00:35:51,690 --> 00:35:52,190
So up till--

637
00:35:52,190 --> 00:35:56,780
Growing up without any
restrictions of that type.

638
00:35:56,780 --> 00:36:00,060
And I don't believe that I
had to give up my bicycle,

639
00:36:00,060 --> 00:36:02,170
because I had it in 1944.

640
00:36:02,170 --> 00:36:03,480
So I'm assuming--

641
00:36:03,480 --> 00:36:07,770
Before spring of
'44, did you yourself

642
00:36:07,770 --> 00:36:12,660
have any anti-Semitic
incidents happen personally,

643
00:36:12,660 --> 00:36:17,100
on the street to
you by other people?

644
00:36:17,100 --> 00:36:21,360
Once in a while, we
were called a dirty Jew,

645
00:36:21,360 --> 00:36:22,380
something like that.

646
00:36:22,380 --> 00:36:24,412
And how did you respond?

647
00:36:24,412 --> 00:36:25,440
Or did you?

648
00:36:25,440 --> 00:36:28,860
With shock, but no
response, no fighting back.

649
00:36:28,860 --> 00:36:33,750

650
00:36:33,750 --> 00:36:35,040
I guess we knew it was--

651
00:36:35,040 --> 00:36:38,850
I mean, it was widespread
enough, because of the laws

652
00:36:38,850 --> 00:36:46,910
and because of the
shops being sized

653
00:36:46,910 --> 00:36:49,770
that this is a Jewish
shop and only Jews

654
00:36:49,770 --> 00:36:54,940
go in here in some cases.

655
00:36:54,940 --> 00:37:00,450
So there was no real
fighting spirit left in us.

656
00:37:00,450 --> 00:37:03,300

657
00:37:03,300 --> 00:37:07,380
Did you talk among your
friends, the other boys

658
00:37:07,380 --> 00:37:10,110
your age about
what was happening?

659
00:37:10,110 --> 00:37:12,580
Not that I remember.

660
00:37:12,580 --> 00:37:14,790
Remember, some of
them were Christian.

661
00:37:14,790 --> 00:37:17,460
And so we did not
talk about religion.

662
00:37:17,460 --> 00:37:21,090

663
00:37:21,090 --> 00:37:30,030

My little girlfriend
was Christian.

664
00:37:30,030 --> 00:37:31,860
That family will come up later.

665
00:37:31,860 --> 00:37:34,480

666
00:37:34,480 --> 00:37:40,650
So it was really
expected by our parents

667
00:37:40,650 --> 00:37:43,770
that we probably were going
to go end up married one day.

668
00:37:43,770 --> 00:37:46,650

669
00:37:46,650 --> 00:37:51,930
But so I'm not aware
of any discrimination.

670
00:37:51,930 --> 00:37:56,130
One of my friends who
I have pictures with

671
00:37:56,130 --> 00:38:00,060
became a conductor,
world-renowned,

672
00:38:00,060 --> 00:38:03,000
that we played with.

673
00:38:03,000 --> 00:38:06,240
He was half-Christian.

674
00:38:06,240 --> 00:38:09,060
But his father's mother--

675
00:38:09,060 --> 00:38:12,690

so somewhere along
in their background,

676
00:38:12,690 --> 00:38:14,370
there was one family
that was Jewish.

677
00:38:14,370 --> 00:38:15,960
But he was basically Christian.

678
00:38:15,960 --> 00:38:20,190
And he survived as a Christian.

679
00:38:20,190 --> 00:38:22,895
So there was nothing--

680
00:38:22,895 --> 00:38:24,020
there was no Kristallnacht.

681
00:38:24,020 --> 00:38:29,430
And there was no beatings that
I have seen on the street,

682
00:38:29,430 --> 00:38:31,530
although we heard, clearly.

683
00:38:31,530 --> 00:38:33,990
So you, yourself
never witnessed?

684
00:38:33,990 --> 00:38:39,300
I had not witnessed anything
like that until the end of '44,

685
00:38:39,300 --> 00:38:43,530
when things got real sticky.

686
00:38:43,530 --> 00:38:49,620
So the normalcy for my
normal childhood into a more

687
00:38:49,620 --> 00:38:53,670

restricted one was gradual.

688
00:38:53,670 --> 00:38:55,260
It was not cataclysmic.

689
00:38:55,260 --> 00:38:57,660
It was difficult only
from a financial point

690
00:38:57,660 --> 00:39:00,050
of view and the fact that
my father was not there.

691
00:39:00,050 --> 00:39:03,720

692
00:39:03,720 --> 00:39:04,220
OK.

693
00:39:04,220 --> 00:39:06,630
Now it's spring of '44.

694
00:39:06,630 --> 00:39:13,380
Spring of 1944, I remember
that the school class,

695
00:39:13,380 --> 00:39:16,110
I was still in the
fourth gymnasium.

696
00:39:16,110 --> 00:39:21,840
The name of the gymnasium was
[NON-ENGLISH SPEECH] gymnasium,

697
00:39:21,840 --> 00:39:27,900
which is a state gymnasium, or
high school where I spent four

698
00:39:27,900 --> 00:39:29,310
years.

699
00:39:29,310 --> 00:39:32,340

And then spring of
'44, in March of '44,

700
00:39:32,340 --> 00:39:36,930
we went on a class outing.

701
00:39:36,930 --> 00:39:39,570
And it was on March 19.

702
00:39:39,570 --> 00:39:42,090
And the day-- and
we were coming back

703
00:39:42,090 --> 00:39:45,240
from the outskirts of Budapest.

704
00:39:45,240 --> 00:39:47,160
Our bus broke down.

705
00:39:47,160 --> 00:39:48,000
And so we walked.

706
00:39:48,000 --> 00:39:50,580
We had to walk the
rest of the way.

707
00:39:50,580 --> 00:39:57,000
And we saw, over the town,
over Budapest, the German dive

708
00:39:57,000 --> 00:40:02,850
bombers diving, going up,
diving, not dropping bombs,

709
00:40:02,850 --> 00:40:04,020
just scaring people.

710
00:40:04,020 --> 00:40:06,730
And we didn't know
what was going on.

711
00:40:06,730 --> 00:40:08,640

And when we get
back to Budapest,

712
00:40:08,640 --> 00:40:10,340
the German army was marching in.

713
00:40:10,340 --> 00:40:13,640

714
00:40:13,640 --> 00:40:14,320
You saw them.

715
00:40:14,320 --> 00:40:15,260
That scared us.

716
00:40:15,260 --> 00:40:15,760
Yes.

717
00:40:15,760 --> 00:40:16,260
OK.

718
00:40:16,260 --> 00:40:19,690
That was the first time
that I really felt fear.

719
00:40:19,690 --> 00:40:20,560
When you saw--

720
00:40:20,560 --> 00:40:23,080
When I saw the Germans, yeah.

721
00:40:23,080 --> 00:40:24,660
You went back to
school right away?

722
00:40:24,660 --> 00:40:25,660
Or did you all go home?

723
00:40:25,660 --> 00:40:26,160
No.

724

00:40:26,160 --> 00:40:30,940
I went back to school,
wearing the star.

725
00:40:30,940 --> 00:40:33,850
What did your teachers say?

726
00:40:33,850 --> 00:40:34,690
They said nothing.

727
00:40:34,690 --> 00:40:38,440

728
00:40:38,440 --> 00:40:43,405
Mostly, except one, who was our
Latin professor, most of them

729
00:40:43,405 --> 00:40:45,790
were old people.

730
00:40:45,790 --> 00:40:49,257
Old being in there 50s and
60s and, in some cases,

731
00:40:49,257 --> 00:40:50,215
I would guess, the 70s.

732
00:40:50,215 --> 00:40:54,320

733
00:40:54,320 --> 00:40:58,000
They did not
discriminate against us.

734
00:40:58,000 --> 00:41:00,985
They were teaching our class
much like any other class.

735
00:41:00,985 --> 00:41:03,920

736
00:41:03,920 --> 00:41:07,030

I don't remember
any of them making

737
00:41:07,030 --> 00:41:08,770
any anti-Semitic statements.

738
00:41:08,770 --> 00:41:13,110

739
00:41:13,110 --> 00:41:19,750
But sometime in
the spring of '44,

740
00:41:19,750 --> 00:41:25,240
we were no longer allowed to go
to school, allowed to go out.

741
00:41:25,240 --> 00:41:30,105
So that's when I went
to the printing factory.

742
00:41:30,105 --> 00:41:32,710

743
00:41:32,710 --> 00:41:34,870
What do you mean not
allowed to go out?

744
00:41:34,870 --> 00:41:39,640
There were restrictive
times, going out

745
00:41:39,640 --> 00:41:43,530
except certain periods
in time in a day.

746
00:41:43,530 --> 00:41:46,890
And certainly not at night,
I think after 4:00 we

747
00:41:46,890 --> 00:41:48,450
had to be in the houses.

748

00:41:48,450 --> 00:41:53,360

And the houses, eventually,
had Jewish stars on them.

749

00:41:53,360 --> 00:41:56,910

And some of them were mixed.

750

00:41:56,910 --> 00:42:01,270

Our house was mixed because it
was a double-sized apartment

751

00:42:01,270 --> 00:42:01,770

house.

752

00:42:01,770 --> 00:42:06,190

And the first half was Christian
and the second half was Jewish.

753

00:42:06,190 --> 00:42:08,040

Then the Jews moved
from the first half

754

00:42:08,040 --> 00:42:10,010

into the second
half of the house.

755

00:42:10,010 --> 00:42:11,010

But you stayed in yours?

756

00:42:11,010 --> 00:42:13,280

We stayed in our apartment.

757

00:42:13,280 --> 00:42:19,350

And we had a boarder
at that time, a woman.

758

00:42:19,350 --> 00:42:23,795

And so we did not had
to take in anybody else.

759

00:42:23,795 --> 00:42:24,420

A Jewish woman?

760
00:42:24,420 --> 00:42:25,080
A Jewish woman.

761
00:42:25,080 --> 00:42:28,290

762
00:42:28,290 --> 00:42:35,070
Because I went to work
in this printing house--

763
00:42:35,070 --> 00:42:36,660
This was at the age of 15?

764
00:42:36,660 --> 00:42:37,800
--at the age of 15.

765
00:42:37,800 --> 00:42:44,400
And we were printing German
army magazines, as well as

766
00:42:44,400 --> 00:42:46,830
the equivalent of Life
magazine, for instance.

767
00:42:46,830 --> 00:42:50,600

768
00:42:50,600 --> 00:42:52,910
What was it like to work
for an organization that

769
00:42:52,910 --> 00:42:55,130
printed German army magazines?

770
00:42:55,130 --> 00:42:56,150
Bother you?

771
00:42:56,150 --> 00:42:57,420
It didn't bother me.

772

00:42:57,420 --> 00:43:02,750

It gave me the opportunity
to wear an armband that

773

00:43:02,750 --> 00:43:06,860

let me move freely
around outside

774

00:43:06,860 --> 00:43:11,770

of the times, the restrictions.

775

00:43:11,770 --> 00:43:13,668

What did the armband look like?

776

00:43:13,668 --> 00:43:14,960

What did the armband look like?

777

00:43:14,960 --> 00:43:17,750

It was the Hungarian flag.

778

00:43:17,750 --> 00:43:23,150

And at a certain point,
again, within a few weeks

779

00:43:23,150 --> 00:43:27,020

of the Germans coming
in, we were no longer

780

00:43:27,020 --> 00:43:28,460

allowed to go home at night.

781

00:43:28,460 --> 00:43:39,110

So I slept in a printing
place and worked at my job--

782

00:43:39,110 --> 00:43:43,160

I got some money for it--

783

00:43:43,160 --> 00:43:44,060

all day long.

784

00:43:44,060 --> 00:43:47,540

And then I took another
job, packing the magazines

785

00:43:47,540 --> 00:43:52,160
and loading cars, trucks with
it, which was extra money.

786

00:43:52,160 --> 00:43:57,470
My mother, at that time, was
by herself in the apartment

787

00:43:57,470 --> 00:44:03,030
and was able to bring
me food once a day.

788

00:44:03,030 --> 00:44:04,850
So I saw her.

789

00:44:04,850 --> 00:44:07,930
And that system went on.

790

00:44:07,930 --> 00:44:11,900
And I was able to go home
once in a while because

791

00:44:11,900 --> 00:44:17,240
of the armband that allowed
me to move outside of curfew.

792

00:44:17,240 --> 00:44:19,740
Was this a very
frightening time for you?

793

00:44:19,740 --> 00:44:20,240
It was.

794

00:44:20,240 --> 00:44:28,940
Because we were not only
restricted in movement

795

00:44:28,940 --> 00:44:32,330
and feared, really,
for our lives when

796
00:44:32,330 --> 00:44:36,540
we were out, or even in a home.

797
00:44:36,540 --> 00:44:41,540
But we were also being bombed
by the Americans as well

798
00:44:41,540 --> 00:44:44,150
as the British.

799
00:44:44,150 --> 00:44:49,700
So that was really the beginning
of the really tough times.

800
00:44:49,700 --> 00:44:54,320
Because by that time,
food shortage, also death

801
00:44:54,320 --> 00:44:57,680
was easy to come by because
of the bombings, which

802
00:44:57,680 --> 00:45:00,440
were quite heavy.

803
00:45:00,440 --> 00:45:03,380
What did you do
in bombing raids?

804
00:45:03,380 --> 00:45:09,530
Usually, the sirens went
off and we went down

805
00:45:09,530 --> 00:45:14,760
into the cellars,
which were reinforced.

806
00:45:14,760 --> 00:45:19,160
And on May 2, there was a
particularly heavy bombing raid

807

00:45:19,160 --> 00:45:25,570
where I was in a printing plant.

808
00:45:25,570 --> 00:45:28,500
And that neighborhood
was hit fairly heavily.

809
00:45:28,500 --> 00:45:32,300
So we felt the earth
shake and dust.

810
00:45:32,300 --> 00:45:36,440
And it was rather scary.

811
00:45:36,440 --> 00:45:40,310
And after the raid
was over, I went home

812
00:45:40,310 --> 00:45:44,810
and found that one half of
the house was also bombed.

813
00:45:44,810 --> 00:45:50,060
And our apartment was
basically blown out.

814
00:45:50,060 --> 00:45:52,220
The walls and the
doors and windows

815
00:45:52,220 --> 00:45:55,430
were blown out so that
we couldn't stay up

816
00:45:55,430 --> 00:46:04,340
in the apartment, but had
to move down a few floors

817
00:46:04,340 --> 00:46:08,840
and moved in with a family,
including our furniture.

818
00:46:08,840 --> 00:46:14,810

And so we lived there
basically until we were finally

819
00:46:14,810 --> 00:46:15,560
taken away.

820
00:46:15,560 --> 00:46:25,460
But shortly after
that May bombing,

821
00:46:25,460 --> 00:46:29,990
it became quite unsafe to
be in the printing place.

822
00:46:29,990 --> 00:46:32,210
So I essentially
moved back home.

823
00:46:32,210 --> 00:46:35,120

824
00:46:35,120 --> 00:46:37,730
What was happening to your
father during this time?

825
00:46:37,730 --> 00:46:39,650
My father-- we didn't know.

826
00:46:39,650 --> 00:46:43,040
We didn't know where he was
or what was happening to him.

827
00:46:43,040 --> 00:46:44,960
There was no communication
at that point

828
00:46:44,960 --> 00:46:48,005
that I can recall,
not until much later.

829
00:46:48,005 --> 00:46:50,760

830

00:46:50,760 --> 00:46:57,140

So it was strictly my mother
and I trying to make a go of it.

831

00:46:57,140 --> 00:46:59,060

So what did you
do during the day?

832

00:46:59,060 --> 00:47:02,180

What was the day like
when you move back?

833

00:47:02,180 --> 00:47:08,150

During the curfew I was
out and I visited friends.

834

00:47:08,150 --> 00:47:11,360

And I remember one
particular time that--

835

00:47:11,360 --> 00:47:14,930

836

00:47:14,930 --> 00:47:17,750

again, my recollection is that
we had curfew in the morning

837

00:47:17,750 --> 00:47:20,300

and then we had to be home.

838

00:47:20,300 --> 00:47:23,600

And then curfew opened
in the afternoon again.

839

00:47:23,600 --> 00:47:26,240

And I went off to
a friend's house.

840

00:47:26,240 --> 00:47:29,000

And I didn't call my mother
that I am not coming home

841

00:47:29,000 --> 00:47:31,130
until late in the afternoon.

842
00:47:31,130 --> 00:47:36,660
And when I showed up, of
course, she was out of her mind.

843
00:47:36,660 --> 00:47:44,630
And I had a real severe
spanking for scaring her,

844
00:47:44,630 --> 00:47:47,490
which I could understand.

845
00:47:47,490 --> 00:47:51,410
But at that time,
I guess I was not

846
00:47:51,410 --> 00:47:54,900
frightened of what could
be happening to me.

847
00:47:54,900 --> 00:47:57,530
So I did not think
that I should call her.

848
00:47:57,530 --> 00:48:00,760

849
00:48:00,760 --> 00:48:06,260
But that was quite clear in
my mind of what happened then.

850
00:48:06,260 --> 00:48:08,990
But we have played with
friends in the house.

851
00:48:08,990 --> 00:48:14,090
And so except for the curfew,
when we went out and had

852
00:48:14,090 --> 00:48:18,210
to stand in line for food.

853
00:48:18,210 --> 00:48:20,840
We had ration stamps.

854
00:48:20,840 --> 00:48:26,690
We had to go out to try
to find some bread, which

855
00:48:26,690 --> 00:48:28,700
was by that time
made from rice flour

856
00:48:28,700 --> 00:48:31,920
because wheat was
no longer available.

857
00:48:31,920 --> 00:48:33,860
And there were
shortages of food.

858
00:48:33,860 --> 00:48:38,480
Meat, only once in a great
while, very little sugar,

859
00:48:38,480 --> 00:48:41,440
very little staple
food available.

860
00:48:41,440 --> 00:48:45,050
And certainly, during the
curfew times, of course,

861
00:48:45,050 --> 00:48:51,860
older Jews were out
and trying to find

862
00:48:51,860 --> 00:48:54,530
the shops that had something.

863
00:48:54,530 --> 00:48:58,850
And sometimes the
lines were long.

864
00:48:58,850 --> 00:49:00,320
And the curfew came.

865
00:49:00,320 --> 00:49:02,660
So you had to go
home empty-handed.

866
00:49:02,660 --> 00:49:04,250
It was difficult.

867
00:49:04,250 --> 00:49:05,930
What was your health
like at that time?

868
00:49:05,930 --> 00:49:10,140

869
00:49:10,140 --> 00:49:14,930
I was not aware of being
underfed, particularly.

870
00:49:14,930 --> 00:49:19,880
I remember that bananas
and oranges were something

871
00:49:19,880 --> 00:49:23,940
that I remembered
from early childhood.

872
00:49:23,940 --> 00:49:30,020
And I really would have
loved to have some.

873
00:49:30,020 --> 00:49:34,020
And I think that bananas, to
this day, has a significance.

874
00:49:34,020 --> 00:49:35,730
Because I remember
eating it as a child.

875
00:49:35,730 --> 00:49:39,140

876
00:49:39,140 --> 00:49:40,250
But your health was OK.

877
00:49:40,250 --> 00:49:43,430
But my health was OK.

878
00:49:43,430 --> 00:49:44,480
So was my mother's.

879
00:49:44,480 --> 00:49:46,820
We were in reasonably
good shape.

880
00:49:46,820 --> 00:49:50,500

881
00:49:50,500 --> 00:49:54,340
As the summer wore on, things
got tighter and the bombing

882
00:49:54,340 --> 00:49:54,955
got worse.

883
00:49:54,955 --> 00:49:57,910

884
00:49:57,910 --> 00:50:02,125
Did you see any deportations
during the summer?

885
00:50:02,125 --> 00:50:05,880

886
00:50:05,880 --> 00:50:07,740
I believe that I was
aware of the fact

887
00:50:07,740 --> 00:50:14,790
that my father's family was
deported, was taken away

888
00:50:14,790 --> 00:50:17,370
from Transylvania.

889
00:50:17,370 --> 00:50:19,710
I don't think it was
called deportation.

890
00:50:19,710 --> 00:50:21,690
I was not aware of it.

891
00:50:21,690 --> 00:50:27,960
I remember hearing people
receiving postcards

892
00:50:27,960 --> 00:50:32,730
from various places
in Germany, I believe,

893
00:50:32,730 --> 00:50:38,070
or Poland with stamps,
saying that we're OK.

894
00:50:38,070 --> 00:50:39,390
We're working, et cetera.

895
00:50:39,390 --> 00:50:43,620
And of course, that was a sham,
we find out many, many years

896
00:50:43,620 --> 00:50:44,770
later.

897
00:50:44,770 --> 00:50:51,210
So the awareness that they
were killing the people,

898
00:50:51,210 --> 00:50:53,140
we did not have the awareness.

899
00:50:53,140 --> 00:50:57,147
Did you see people in

Budapest being taken away?

900

00:50:57,147 --> 00:50:58,230

Did you ever witness that?

901

00:50:58,230 --> 00:51:03,270

No, because Budapest was not really-- in summer of '44

902

00:51:03,270 --> 00:51:05,460

was still reasonably safe.

903

00:51:05,460 --> 00:51:07,170

No one was deported.

904

00:51:07,170 --> 00:51:11,352

Because the Germans concentrated on the 400-odd thousand

905

00:51:11,352 --> 00:51:12,060

in the provinces.

906

00:51:12,060 --> 00:51:13,560

In the provinces, right.

907

00:51:13,560 --> 00:51:16,650

And so we did not see any of it.

908

00:51:16,650 --> 00:51:20,070

What we did see, of course, later on, when they started

909

00:51:20,070 --> 00:51:24,480

deporting people from Budapest.

910

00:51:24,480 --> 00:51:27,930

But that's not until September, October.

911

00:51:27,930 --> 00:51:28,430

OK.

912
00:51:28,430 --> 00:51:29,730
So the summer went on.

913
00:51:29,730 --> 00:51:32,970
The summer went on.

914
00:51:32,970 --> 00:51:39,880
Again, staying alive because
of bombings was paramount.

915
00:51:39,880 --> 00:51:44,280
We spent an awful lot of
time down in the cellars.

916
00:51:44,280 --> 00:51:46,800
What did you do when you
were down in the cellars?

917
00:51:46,800 --> 00:51:51,780
Kind of sit around in the dark
and hope that the bomb is not

918
00:51:51,780 --> 00:51:52,770
going to hit us.

919
00:51:52,770 --> 00:51:58,320
We were across the street from
the Western railroad station.

920
00:51:58,320 --> 00:52:03,060
And so we were in a
prime target area.

921
00:52:03,060 --> 00:52:12,160
And when, in May, the bombing
finally got to our house,

922
00:52:12,160 --> 00:52:13,410
it was a fluke.

923
00:52:13,410 --> 00:52:16,980
Because the Americans

were fairly accurate.

924

00:52:16,980 --> 00:52:21,900

Their system was to
send in an aircraft

925

00:52:21,900 --> 00:52:30,740

and to circle the target
area with smoke in the sky.

926

00:52:30,740 --> 00:52:34,220

And the bomber stream
unloaded into that circle.

927

00:52:34,220 --> 00:52:38,450

This [? was called ?]
saturation bombing.

928

00:52:38,450 --> 00:52:43,010

The May that we got hit, but
the railroad station didn't,

929

00:52:43,010 --> 00:52:46,010

the wind took that circle.

930

00:52:46,010 --> 00:52:50,030

And we got clobbered.

931

00:52:50,030 --> 00:52:56,360

So the raids were
pretty regular.

932

00:52:56,360 --> 00:52:59,810

Around 10:00 at
night they started.

933

00:52:59,810 --> 00:53:05,270

So by 20 of 10, we were down
in the cellars, expecting it.

934

00:53:05,270 --> 00:53:09,010

And I was working as a--

935

00:53:09,010 --> 00:53:14,240

well, my doctor,
my pediatrician,

936

00:53:14,240 --> 00:53:19,670

was the head of the volunteer
ambulance corps in Budapest.

937

00:53:19,670 --> 00:53:26,210

And after my stint in the
printing place, I asked him--

938

00:53:26,210 --> 00:53:31,040

I suppose I had to ask him
to see if I can get trained

939

00:53:31,040 --> 00:53:34,840

as a first aid person.

940

00:53:34,840 --> 00:53:37,730

And I went through a
course with adults,

941

00:53:37,730 --> 00:53:41,700

being the youngest to
graduate from that course.

942

00:53:41,700 --> 00:53:45,260

And so I was a full-fledged,
first aid type.

943

00:53:45,260 --> 00:53:50,510

And as such, I did not
go down to the cellar

944

00:53:50,510 --> 00:53:54,380

until the bombs
came awfully close.

945

00:53:54,380 --> 00:53:56,540

We were also fire guards.

946

00:53:56,540 --> 00:53:58,550
We were 15.

947
00:53:58,550 --> 00:54:01,920
So we didn't like the basement.

948
00:54:01,920 --> 00:54:04,110
It was a horrible place to be.

949
00:54:04,110 --> 00:54:08,420
And so my poor mother, scared
out of her wits for me.

950
00:54:08,420 --> 00:54:13,460
But I was all over the house
and watching for the aircraft

951
00:54:13,460 --> 00:54:14,960
to come.

952
00:54:14,960 --> 00:54:18,170
And the anti-aircraft
tried to shoot them down.

953
00:54:18,170 --> 00:54:21,080
And when a bomb started
whistling too close,

954
00:54:21,080 --> 00:54:23,150
then we ran down.

955
00:54:23,150 --> 00:54:30,000
So I really did not spend that
much time in those cellars,

956
00:54:30,000 --> 00:54:32,780
ever really.

957
00:54:32,780 --> 00:54:37,230
I felt that it was better
to die up there than not.

958

00:54:37,230 --> 00:54:41,070
One of the things that also
happened in the after we

959
00:54:41,070 --> 00:54:53,810
had to wear the yellow star,
that the Vatican curia I guess,

960
00:54:53,810 --> 00:54:56,360
made an arrangement
with the Nazis,

961
00:54:56,360 --> 00:55:08,870
the Hungarian Nazi government,
that if a Jew converted,

962
00:55:08,870 --> 00:55:12,260
then they would wear
a different color.

963
00:55:12,260 --> 00:55:16,640
I think it was either white or
yellow, or just white armband.

964
00:55:16,640 --> 00:55:23,660
And they would be basically
exempt from the curfew

965
00:55:23,660 --> 00:55:29,715
or from the deportation, from
the taking them to labor camps

966
00:55:29,715 --> 00:55:30,465
or labor brigades.

967
00:55:30,465 --> 00:55:33,200

968
00:55:33,200 --> 00:55:43,250
And our superintendent's son,
who was a priest in Rome,

969
00:55:43,250 --> 00:55:51,220

came back to the
apartment house and was

970
00:55:51,220 --> 00:55:57,220
trying to convert the Jews.

971
00:55:57,220 --> 00:56:02,260
His name was Kuhn,
K-U-H-N, I believe.

972
00:56:02,260 --> 00:56:08,290
And my mother and I
went, took a few lessons,

973
00:56:08,290 --> 00:56:11,290
learned the catechism.

974
00:56:11,290 --> 00:56:15,720
And after a while, I
refused to go back.

975
00:56:15,720 --> 00:56:20,080
And I remember I had
the sense of abandoning

976
00:56:20,080 --> 00:56:23,210
one's religion under duress.

977
00:56:23,210 --> 00:56:30,430
And that that was not right,
at age 15, not being a Jew.

978
00:56:30,430 --> 00:56:33,640
I don't know where
that came from.

979
00:56:33,640 --> 00:56:37,552
But that was my feeling.

980
00:56:37,552 --> 00:56:38,260
It's interesting.

981

00:56:38,260 --> 00:56:42,670

It also led to another,
during the Korean War,

982

00:56:42,670 --> 00:56:50,720

that kind of a feeling surfaced
once again, when I was drafted.

983

00:56:50,720 --> 00:56:56,750

But the priest ultimately became
known as the hanging priest

984

00:56:56,750 --> 00:56:57,275

of Budapest.

985

00:56:57,275 --> 00:57:00,890

986

00:57:00,890 --> 00:57:04,010

I think that the museum
has a picture of him

987

00:57:04,010 --> 00:57:06,980

with a pistol on his cassock.

988

00:57:06,980 --> 00:57:13,370

And he went around the
streets shooting Jews.

989

00:57:13,370 --> 00:57:18,210

And he was hung shortly
after the liberation.

990

00:57:18,210 --> 00:57:26,800

But it was kind of a dichotomy
that he is trying to convert,

991

00:57:26,800 --> 00:57:30,440

but his hatred was such that he
would shoot those who didn't.

992

00:57:30,440 --> 00:57:34,460

993

00:57:34,460 --> 00:57:37,400
Did your mother willingly leave
the conversion lessons also

994

00:57:37,400 --> 00:57:38,380
with you?

995

00:57:38,380 --> 00:57:40,120
I don't remember that.

996

00:57:40,120 --> 00:57:43,060
It seems that, in some
cases, I took the lead.

997

00:57:43,060 --> 00:57:45,680

998

00:57:45,680 --> 00:57:53,630
And she deferred to me
in making some decisions.

999

00:57:53,630 --> 00:57:57,010
One of them was a life
and death decision.

1000

00:57:57,010 --> 00:58:02,200
There was a suicide
in the house once.

1001

00:58:02,200 --> 00:58:06,380
Somebody jumped off the
floor above us and died.

1002

00:58:06,380 --> 00:58:08,480
And I kind of remember that.

1003

00:58:08,480 --> 00:58:10,240
And it surfaced later on.

1004

00:58:10,240 --> 00:58:13,400

1005
00:58:13,400 --> 00:58:20,830
But the time period between
this conversion attempt,

1006
00:58:20,830 --> 00:58:27,010
which had to be maybe August,
September, October, things

1007
00:58:27,010 --> 00:58:28,330
were really getting hairy.

1008
00:58:28,330 --> 00:58:32,080
And I remember being out
on the streets as usual

1009
00:58:32,080 --> 00:58:39,820
and getting caught in a
bombing raid, away from home,

1010
00:58:39,820 --> 00:58:43,660
and coming home after the curfew
because the bombing raid didn't

1011
00:58:43,660 --> 00:58:44,680
end.

1012
00:58:44,680 --> 00:58:48,910
And dodging through
and hoping not to get

1013
00:58:48,910 --> 00:58:50,745
stopped by the Nazis.

1014
00:58:50,745 --> 00:58:58,160

1015
00:58:58,160 --> 00:59:00,300
And I'm trying to
remember at what point,

1016
00:59:00,300 --> 00:59:03,390

but it may be, again,
when we're talking about

1017
00:59:03,390 --> 00:59:06,280
that 90-day period into
September, October, November,

1018
00:59:06,280 --> 00:59:08,907
things really get
a little bit hazy.

1019
00:59:08,907 --> 00:59:10,740
But I remember, in one
of the bombing raids,

1020
00:59:10,740 --> 00:59:18,510
I got caught under an arch
in an apartment house.

1021
00:59:18,510 --> 00:59:23,250
And we were cowering,
lying on the floor.

1022
00:59:23,250 --> 00:59:26,280
And the raid was over.

1023
00:59:26,280 --> 00:59:31,650
And there was a bomb,
an unexploded bomb

1024
00:59:31,650 --> 00:59:36,210
within 20 feet of us, right
in the open arch area.

1025
00:59:36,210 --> 00:59:41,070
And we had to step
over it to go home.

1026
00:59:41,070 --> 00:59:43,290
And of course, by
that time, we begin

1027
00:59:43,290 --> 00:59:47,490

to see an awful lot of
death and injured people.

1028
00:59:47,490 --> 00:59:54,150
And bombings where three,
four times a day, really.

1029
00:59:54,150 --> 00:59:56,740
And of course, the Nazis
were getting worse.

1030
00:59:56,740 --> 01:00:02,960
And so the paranoia set
in, quite naturally,

1031
01:00:02,960 --> 01:00:05,640
that everybody was
after me, whether it

1032
01:00:05,640 --> 01:00:07,230
was on foot or in the air.

1033
01:00:07,230 --> 01:00:11,760
And so things were going
downhill fairly fast

1034
01:00:11,760 --> 01:00:12,850
at that point.

1035
01:00:12,850 --> 01:00:15,900
Were you ever stopped
by any of the Nazis?

1036
01:00:15,900 --> 01:00:18,150
No.

1037
01:00:18,150 --> 01:00:19,080
I was not.

1038
01:00:19,080 --> 01:00:21,300
I looked very much
like a German kid.

1039

01:00:21,300 --> 01:00:23,940

I was blond, very light blonde.

1040

01:00:23,940 --> 01:00:26,670

I also wore the
school uniform coat,

1041

01:00:26,670 --> 01:00:33,330

which was a an old
Hungarian-type uniform.

1042

01:00:33,330 --> 01:00:35,400

But you had the star on?

1043

01:00:35,400 --> 01:00:36,690

But I had the star on.

1044

01:00:36,690 --> 01:00:39,750

1045

01:00:39,750 --> 01:00:45,060

The period I'm
referring to, really, I

1046

01:00:45,060 --> 01:00:49,560

took the star off and was on
the street without the star,

1047

01:00:49,560 --> 01:00:53,610

moving around,
without any papers.

1048

01:00:53,610 --> 01:00:54,110

Of course--

1049

01:00:54,110 --> 01:00:56,110

This is September, October
you're talking about?

1050

01:00:56,110 --> 01:00:58,040

I would say October, November.

1051

01:00:58,040 --> 01:01:01,470

And I don't know how I had
the guts to do it or why.

1052

01:01:01,470 --> 01:01:02,900

I just did it.

1053

01:01:02,900 --> 01:01:06,150

And I moved because I
didn't like restriction.

1054

01:01:06,150 --> 01:01:15,360

And it pretty much
had to be that period.

1055

01:01:15,360 --> 01:01:17,820

Although, I was doing
that out of the Swedish

1056

01:01:17,820 --> 01:01:22,440

house, also, for a few days.

1057

01:01:22,440 --> 01:01:25,740

But at any rate, I moved around.

1058

01:01:25,740 --> 01:01:31,230

The danger, of course, was
is that if you were stopped,

1059

01:01:31,230 --> 01:01:32,730

you had no papers.

1060

01:01:32,730 --> 01:01:33,810

Pulled your pants down.

1061

01:01:33,810 --> 01:01:37,790

And if you were circumcised,
they killed you.

1062

01:01:37,790 --> 01:01:40,080

When you said you
had no papers, it's

1063
01:01:40,080 --> 01:01:41,430
because you left them at home?

1064
01:01:41,430 --> 01:01:44,290
Well, all my papers were Jewish.

1065
01:01:44,290 --> 01:01:47,028
Other words, all the papers that
we had, the documents we had--

1066
01:01:47,028 --> 01:01:48,570
So you purposefully
let them at home?

1067
01:01:48,570 --> 01:01:50,010
Said Judo, Jewish.

1068
01:01:50,010 --> 01:01:52,470
And so we just left it.

1069
01:01:52,470 --> 01:01:56,490
And I could claim
that it was lost.

1070
01:01:56,490 --> 01:02:03,190
And I had my apprenticeship
papers, which said who I was.

1071
01:02:03,190 --> 01:02:07,980
And I tore it in such a way
that the Jewish religion

1072
01:02:07,980 --> 01:02:08,850
was torn off.

1073
01:02:08,850 --> 01:02:11,580
But it would have kidded no one.

1074
01:02:11,580 --> 01:02:17,940
And they still would have
had my pants off, but didn't.

1075
01:02:17,940 --> 01:02:21,900
I was never stopped, luckily.

1076
01:02:21,900 --> 01:02:24,330
I got caught up in
a round up once,

1077
01:02:24,330 --> 01:02:26,377
and I was able to run away.

1078
01:02:26,377 --> 01:02:27,210
How did that happen?

1079
01:02:27,210 --> 01:02:31,350

1080
01:02:31,350 --> 01:02:36,300
I saw the Hungarian Nazis
blocking off the street.

1081
01:02:36,300 --> 01:02:37,920
And there were some
bombed out houses.

1082
01:02:37,920 --> 01:02:41,400
And I just scrambled
over the ruins

1083
01:02:41,400 --> 01:02:47,130
and ran home at that point.

1084
01:02:47,130 --> 01:02:56,190
So we were coming to the
December time period,

1085
01:02:56,190 --> 01:03:00,380
because things were, in this
October, November period,

1086
01:03:00,380 --> 01:03:01,800
very much the same.

1087

01:03:01,800 --> 01:03:03,350

Mhm.

1088

01:03:03,350 --> 01:03:04,000