

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:04,900

2
00:00:04,900 --> 00:00:08,890
The following is an
interview of Irena Kirkland.

3
00:00:08,890 --> 00:00:16,030
It is taking place on June
26, 1996, in Washington DC.

4
00:00:16,030 --> 00:00:18,340
It is being conducted
by Gail Schwartz

5
00:00:18,340 --> 00:00:21,280
on behalf of the United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum.

6
00:00:21,280 --> 00:00:23,930

7
00:00:23,930 --> 00:00:26,720
Could you please give
us your whole name?

8
00:00:26,720 --> 00:00:28,460
Irena Kirkland.

9
00:00:28,460 --> 00:00:30,670
And the name you were born with?

10
00:00:30,670 --> 00:00:32,420
Neumann.

11
00:00:32,420 --> 00:00:33,660
Where were you born?

12
00:00:33,660 --> 00:00:35,330
I was born in Prague.

13

00:00:35,330 --> 00:00:37,880

I would have behind
my name "ova."

14

00:00:37,880 --> 00:00:40,790

It would be
"Neumannova" in Czech.

15

00:00:40,790 --> 00:00:42,590

And when were you born?

16

00:00:42,590 --> 00:00:45,425

On the 22nd, August '25.

17

00:00:45,425 --> 00:00:48,920

18

00:00:48,920 --> 00:00:51,600

Who were the members of
your immediate family?

19

00:00:51,600 --> 00:00:54,590

My father, my mother,
my sister, and I.

20

00:00:54,590 --> 00:00:55,880

Your father's name?

21

00:00:55,880 --> 00:00:57,560

Emil Neumann.

22

00:00:57,560 --> 00:00:59,970

And where was he from?

23

00:00:59,970 --> 00:01:06,620

He was from a place which is
like 40 miles out of Prague,

24

00:01:06,620 --> 00:01:08,300

called [PLACE NAME].

25

00:01:08,300 --> 00:01:10,760
And your mother's name?

26
00:01:10,760 --> 00:01:16,070
Was Ludmila [? SteinlovÃ¡. ?]
And she is from a place which is

27
00:01:16,070 --> 00:01:22,070
like also 40, 50 miles out
of Prague called Benesov.

28
00:01:22,070 --> 00:01:23,910
And your sister?

29
00:01:23,910 --> 00:01:27,410
Her name is [? Alena. ?]
Alena NeumannovÃ¡.

30
00:01:27,410 --> 00:01:28,730
And how old is she?

31
00:01:28,730 --> 00:01:30,770
She is the same age as I am.

32
00:01:30,770 --> 00:01:32,180
She's my twin.

33
00:01:32,180 --> 00:01:33,290
Twin sister.

34
00:01:33,290 --> 00:01:36,300
What kind of work
did your father do?

35
00:01:36,300 --> 00:01:38,840
He was an architect--

36
00:01:38,840 --> 00:01:41,930
engineer architect.

37
00:01:41,930 --> 00:01:43,270
Did your mother work?

38
00:01:43,270 --> 00:01:45,980
No, no.

39
00:01:45,980 --> 00:01:49,160
And did you live right in--

40
00:01:49,160 --> 00:01:51,060
We lived right in Prague.

41
00:01:51,060 --> 00:01:52,070
In Prague.

42
00:01:52,070 --> 00:01:53,870
What kind of
neighborhood was it?

43
00:01:53,870 --> 00:01:57,540
Was it a mixed neighborhood
of Jews and non-Jews?

44
00:01:57,540 --> 00:01:58,460
I don't think--

45
00:01:58,460 --> 00:01:59,270
I don't know.

46
00:01:59,270 --> 00:02:01,940
But I don't think it existed.

47
00:02:01,940 --> 00:02:05,150
The Jews were very
assimilated in Prague.

48
00:02:05,150 --> 00:02:09,110
They were not-- there was
no ghetto or anything.

49
00:02:09,110 --> 00:02:14,180
We lived in the neighborhood
where for the first--

50

00:02:14,180 --> 00:02:17,840

I think our five
years of my life--

51

00:02:17,840 --> 00:02:21,230

were today the residence of
the American ambassador is.

52

00:02:21,230 --> 00:02:23,150

That's the neighborhood it was.

53

00:02:23,150 --> 00:02:25,280

A very nice, near big park.

54

00:02:25,280 --> 00:02:29,090

And then we moved to the
other side of Prague,

55

00:02:29,090 --> 00:02:31,880

also near a park or whatever.

56

00:02:31,880 --> 00:02:34,100

But I don't think it
existed, that Jews

57

00:02:34,100 --> 00:02:38,210

would be living in one place
and non-Jews in another.

58

00:02:38,210 --> 00:02:40,550

OK, so this, as you say,
was a mixed neighborhood

59

00:02:40,550 --> 00:02:42,950

of Jews and non-Jews, then.

60

00:02:42,950 --> 00:02:46,040

Well, it was mixed.

61

00:02:46,040 --> 00:02:50,000

But I am not conscious
that ever there

62
00:02:50,000 --> 00:02:52,670
were only Jewish neighborhoods.

63
00:02:52,670 --> 00:02:54,470
And you said your
father was an architect.

64
00:02:54,470 --> 00:02:57,980
What did he particularly design?

65
00:02:57,980 --> 00:02:59,030
Houses.

66
00:02:59,030 --> 00:03:00,020
Private houses?

67
00:03:00,020 --> 00:03:02,930
Yeah, I think private
and office buildings.

68
00:03:02,930 --> 00:03:07,280
I mean, he was
working for a firm.

69
00:03:07,280 --> 00:03:13,250
And he was what in Europe you
would call engineer-architect,

70
00:03:13,250 --> 00:03:15,740
because he was
allowed to build also.

71
00:03:15,740 --> 00:03:17,060
He designed and built.

72
00:03:17,060 --> 00:03:20,810
And then he opened
his own office.

73
00:03:20,810 --> 00:03:24,470
Unfortunately, only like a

year or two before the war.

74

00:03:24,470 --> 00:03:28,550

So that went down
the chutes then.

75

00:03:28,550 --> 00:03:30,710

How religious was your family?

76

00:03:30,710 --> 00:03:31,820

They were not.

77

00:03:31,820 --> 00:03:34,700

78

00:03:34,700 --> 00:03:42,080

My father came from
the kind of generation

79

00:03:42,080 --> 00:03:47,030

of which I think in the Central
or perhaps Western Europe

80

00:03:47,030 --> 00:03:52,790

was at that time very prevalent,
that they were not atheists.

81

00:03:52,790 --> 00:03:55,280

They were agnostics.

82

00:03:55,280 --> 00:04:04,470

So we didn't go to any
church or any nothing.

83

00:04:04,470 --> 00:04:08,270

And so did you observe
any holidays or?

84

00:04:08,270 --> 00:04:09,870

No, no.

85

00:04:09,870 --> 00:04:10,920

Nothing.

86
00:04:10,920 --> 00:04:12,630
No religious education?

87
00:04:12,630 --> 00:04:13,770
No.

88
00:04:13,770 --> 00:04:18,810
Because we did--
only the Catholics

89
00:04:18,810 --> 00:04:22,140
had the religion in school.

90
00:04:22,140 --> 00:04:28,140
I mean, during-- then also the
non-Catholics had the hour off,

91
00:04:28,140 --> 00:04:30,856
which we loved.

92
00:04:30,856 --> 00:04:36,180
So it was not a hardship for us.

93
00:04:36,180 --> 00:04:38,670
I mean, whether they
were Jews or whether they

94
00:04:38,670 --> 00:04:41,370
were of no religion or
Protestant or whatever,

95
00:04:41,370 --> 00:04:44,070
they had an hour off.

96
00:04:44,070 --> 00:04:48,990
And I think it was
once a week or twice.

97
00:04:48,990 --> 00:04:50,830
I can't-- I can't remember.

98
00:04:50,830 --> 00:04:54,480
I mean, how often the
religion, the Catholic religion

99
00:04:54,480 --> 00:04:57,330
was being taught in schools.

100
00:04:57,330 --> 00:04:59,550
What about your mother's family?

101
00:04:59,550 --> 00:05:03,540
Your mother, was she
religious at all?

102
00:05:03,540 --> 00:05:10,830
Well, my mother, She died when
we were like eight months old.

103
00:05:10,830 --> 00:05:15,100
And my father remarried whom
I would call then mother,

104
00:05:15,100 --> 00:05:18,360
and I didn't know
that she was not

105
00:05:18,360 --> 00:05:26,140
our mother till I think
we were like 14 years old,

106
00:05:26,140 --> 00:05:28,620
and it came out of an aunt.

107
00:05:28,620 --> 00:05:32,610
Because when they were
going by transport,

108
00:05:32,610 --> 00:05:38,790
a ship by the Germans,
and she let it out.

109

00:05:38,790 --> 00:05:42,510
So I don't think they--

110
00:05:42,510 --> 00:05:47,340
the family-- I cannot tell
you about the families

111
00:05:47,340 --> 00:05:52,080
of my parents, whether
they were religious or not.

112
00:05:52,080 --> 00:05:59,010
My mother's father, that
would be my grandfather, who

113
00:05:59,010 --> 00:06:02,490
was a big landowner
and he was a member

114
00:06:02,490 --> 00:06:09,040
of the Austrian parliament for
the Czech party, and so that--

115
00:06:09,040 --> 00:06:14,190
But I have no idea whether he
observed something or didn't

116
00:06:14,190 --> 00:06:20,850
observe, because he was
dead by the time we were--

117
00:06:20,850 --> 00:06:26,310
and on both sides,
there was a lot

118
00:06:26,310 --> 00:06:28,590
of intermarriage in the family.

119
00:06:28,590 --> 00:06:31,470
So that again, I
don't know whether it

120
00:06:31,470 --> 00:06:41,490

was looked at well or not well,
that they married, so to say,

121
00:06:41,490 --> 00:06:43,020
out of faith.

122
00:06:43,020 --> 00:06:49,080
Some of my father's
sisters, his--

123
00:06:49,080 --> 00:06:56,730
1, 2, 3, I think,
siblings married non-Jews.

124
00:06:56,730 --> 00:07:01,530
And so I don't know, I
mean, what was happening.

125
00:07:01,530 --> 00:07:03,660
When you were a young
girl and growing up,

126
00:07:03,660 --> 00:07:06,480
did you consider
yourself Jewish?

127
00:07:06,480 --> 00:07:09,900
Did you know you were?

128
00:07:09,900 --> 00:07:11,130
I don't know, really.

129
00:07:11,130 --> 00:07:15,478

130
00:07:15,478 --> 00:07:19,830
I don't think I thought
about it too much.

131
00:07:19,830 --> 00:07:26,970
I do remember that when
Hitler marched to Prague,

132
00:07:26,970 --> 00:07:31,500
which was on the
15th of March '38--

133
00:07:31,500 --> 00:07:32,370
'39.

134
00:07:32,370 --> 00:07:44,370
Sorry, '39, that mother called
us to her bedroom before we

135
00:07:44,370 --> 00:07:47,220
went to school, and told
us that we are Jewish,

136
00:07:47,220 --> 00:07:50,770
and that it will not be so
good and so and so forth.

137
00:07:50,770 --> 00:07:57,510
And I remember that I
came back from school,

138
00:07:57,510 --> 00:08:01,500
and we had for lunch
something which I loved.

139
00:08:01,500 --> 00:08:04,320
And I couldn't understand
then, when the whole world

140
00:08:04,320 --> 00:08:07,680
is going to pieces, and my
world, I mean, you don't know,

141
00:08:07,680 --> 00:08:09,690
we will be dead tomorrow.

142
00:08:09,690 --> 00:08:15,210
And we have what I love.

143
00:08:15,210 --> 00:08:18,480

But I don't know,
really, whether I--

144
00:08:18,480 --> 00:08:21,285
how much I was
thinking about it.

145
00:08:21,285 --> 00:08:23,160
I never thought about
it, because it was such

146
00:08:23,160 --> 00:08:29,880
an important part since '39.

147
00:08:29,880 --> 00:08:32,280
But what happened
before, everything

148
00:08:32,280 --> 00:08:36,690
seems like marvelous
times and no worries.

149
00:08:36,690 --> 00:08:39,299
Do you remember what was it
like when your mother told you,

150
00:08:39,299 --> 00:08:40,110
you were Jewish?

151
00:08:40,110 --> 00:08:41,700
Did it come as a
complete surprise?

152
00:08:41,700 --> 00:08:45,910
Well, it was just before we
went-- no, I don't think so.

153
00:08:45,910 --> 00:08:47,520
I don't think so.

154
00:08:47,520 --> 00:08:50,130
I mean, it was--

155

00:08:50,130 --> 00:08:53,670

no, I'm sure that I knew that.

156

00:08:53,670 --> 00:08:56,730

No, I'm sure that I knew that.

157

00:08:56,730 --> 00:09:03,540

But that was not something
which I can put my finger on.

158

00:09:03,540 --> 00:09:04,980

I think we knew that.

159

00:09:04,980 --> 00:09:09,030

It's only that we didn't
go to religious school.

160

00:09:09,030 --> 00:09:12,840

I mean, some-- and we did not--

161

00:09:12,840 --> 00:09:16,650

my parents didn't go on
the high holidays or--

162

00:09:16,650 --> 00:09:17,970

Did you celebrate Christmas?

163

00:09:17,970 --> 00:09:18,630

Did you--

164

00:09:18,630 --> 00:09:19,950

Yes, we did.

165

00:09:19,950 --> 00:09:21,830

But then everybody did.

166

00:09:21,830 --> 00:09:25,230

I mean, that's not--
it was not really--

167

00:09:25,230 --> 00:09:28,880

because the religious
people went to church.

168
00:09:28,880 --> 00:09:32,051

The non-religious had
a marvelous dinner,

169
00:09:32,051 --> 00:09:34,800

and children got
beautiful presents,

170
00:09:34,800 --> 00:09:37,650

and we had a tree, yes.

171
00:09:37,650 --> 00:09:41,460

172
00:09:41,460 --> 00:09:42,960

Let's talk about
your schooling now.

173
00:09:42,960 --> 00:09:45,350

What kind of school did
you go to as a young girl?

174
00:09:45,350 --> 00:09:50,430

Well, I think it
was a law, you had

175
00:09:50,430 --> 00:09:53,760

to go to the school
which was nearest to you,

176
00:09:53,760 --> 00:09:58,020

the first five years
of your schooling.

177
00:09:58,020 --> 00:10:00,570

178
00:10:00,570 --> 00:10:02,860

So this was a local
public school?

179
00:10:02,860 --> 00:10:04,860
Yes, we didn't have--

180
00:10:04,860 --> 00:10:07,290
I don't know whether
they now will have it,

181
00:10:07,290 --> 00:10:11,340
but I don't think
So except England,

182
00:10:11,340 --> 00:10:14,890
the Europeans didn't have too
much of private schooling.

183
00:10:14,890 --> 00:10:20,670
Usually if a child couldn't
make it in a public school,

184
00:10:20,670 --> 00:10:23,610
you sent him to private
school, and it meant

185
00:10:23,610 --> 00:10:26,210
that the schooling is bad.

186
00:10:26,210 --> 00:10:28,560
Not the public, the private was.

187
00:10:28,560 --> 00:10:30,780
For money, you buy
him some degree,

188
00:10:30,780 --> 00:10:34,020
but you don't buy
him good schooling.

189
00:10:34,020 --> 00:10:37,260
And then there were
religious Catholic schools.

190

00:10:37,260 --> 00:10:39,750

I don't know whether
they were Protestant

191

00:10:39,750 --> 00:10:41,160

as well, but Catholic.

192

00:10:41,160 --> 00:10:44,530

And again, they were basically
for kids who couldn't make it.

193

00:10:44,530 --> 00:10:47,430

194

00:10:47,430 --> 00:10:54,750

So that it probably was
that like everywhere else

195

00:10:54,750 --> 00:10:59,310

that the schools
were the bourgeoisie

196

00:10:59,310 --> 00:11:05,280

or the better class people will
be better than very, very poor

197

00:11:05,280 --> 00:11:06,990

people live.

198

00:11:06,990 --> 00:11:10,300

But we had the kids
from very poor families

199

00:11:10,300 --> 00:11:12,120

and so on, I think.

200

00:11:12,120 --> 00:11:14,640

201

00:11:14,640 --> 00:11:16,530

And then you continued
on to another school?

202

00:11:16,530 --> 00:11:22,410

And then after that, at that
time after the first five

203

00:11:22,410 --> 00:11:28,020

classes, you go either
to a high school,

204

00:11:28,020 --> 00:11:31,770

which leads to university,
which would be 8 years.

205

00:11:31,770 --> 00:11:37,590

Or you go to four years,
where you then cannot go

206

00:11:37,590 --> 00:11:38,660

to university.

207

00:11:38,660 --> 00:11:41,190

So you have to take an exam.

208

00:11:41,190 --> 00:11:43,050

And that was--

209

00:11:43,050 --> 00:11:47,730

I don't think that it was a
completely private school.

210

00:11:47,730 --> 00:11:50,340

They were only that
they were public,

211

00:11:50,340 --> 00:11:54,300

but you had to pay if your
father made so much and so

212

00:11:54,300 --> 00:11:55,800

much, so that we paid.

213

00:11:55,800 --> 00:12:02,130

I mean, but we went

to the one which

214
00:12:02,130 --> 00:12:08,020
leads to the university, which
had Latin and things like that.

215
00:12:08,020 --> 00:12:11,580
When you were in school, were
there any unpleasant incidents

216
00:12:11,580 --> 00:12:12,660
because you were Jewish?

217
00:12:12,660 --> 00:12:13,890
Did you sense any of that?

218
00:12:13,890 --> 00:12:15,720
I'm talking about early on.

219
00:12:15,720 --> 00:12:16,530
No.

220
00:12:16,530 --> 00:12:17,670
No problems?

221
00:12:17,670 --> 00:12:19,320
And what about in
your neighborhood.

222
00:12:19,320 --> 00:12:22,810
I mean, did you play with the
other neighborhood children?

223
00:12:22,810 --> 00:12:23,610
Yeah.

224
00:12:23,610 --> 00:12:27,420
But there were no
difficulties, no problems?

225
00:12:27,420 --> 00:12:29,010
No, no.

226
00:12:29,010 --> 00:12:31,530
What other interests
did you have?

227
00:12:31,530 --> 00:12:33,360
Were you interested in music?

228
00:12:33,360 --> 00:12:37,080
Well, we had to
have piano lessons.

229
00:12:37,080 --> 00:12:39,540
I mean, not that I
wanted to, but we

230
00:12:39,540 --> 00:12:41,670
had to go to piano lessons.

231
00:12:41,670 --> 00:12:46,510
We had firstly after the--

232
00:12:46,510 --> 00:12:48,690
we were very small.

233
00:12:48,690 --> 00:12:51,210
We had a Czech nanny.

234
00:12:51,210 --> 00:12:54,420
Then we had a German one.

235
00:12:54,420 --> 00:12:58,650
And then we had somebody
who was mademoiselle--

236
00:12:58,650 --> 00:13:01,070
I mean that we
should learn French.

237
00:13:01,070 --> 00:13:04,710
It did not take too
well, because we were two

238
00:13:04,710 --> 00:13:06,780
and she was one.

239
00:13:06,780 --> 00:13:07,710
But--

240
00:13:07,710 --> 00:13:09,790
What language did
you speak at home?

241
00:13:09,790 --> 00:13:10,290
Czech.

242
00:13:10,290 --> 00:13:11,550
You spoke Czech at home?

243
00:13:11,550 --> 00:13:13,970
Yeah.

244
00:13:13,970 --> 00:13:14,680
Yeah.

245
00:13:14,680 --> 00:13:19,440
So you were very
close to your sister,

246
00:13:19,440 --> 00:13:21,865
being a twin growing up?

247
00:13:21,865 --> 00:13:22,740
Did you have a good--

248
00:13:22,740 --> 00:13:24,630
We fought a lot.

249
00:13:24,630 --> 00:13:29,460
And I mean, we were
like one person.

250
00:13:29,460 --> 00:13:31,590

So that it's you are
fighting with yourself,

251
00:13:31,590 --> 00:13:33,740
but we fought a lot.

252
00:13:33,740 --> 00:13:39,820
And she had at that time
very often bronchitis.

253
00:13:39,820 --> 00:13:42,720
So she was weaker.

254
00:13:42,720 --> 00:13:43,870
Are you identical twins?

255
00:13:43,870 --> 00:13:46,610
Yeah, yeah.

256
00:13:46,610 --> 00:13:52,700
And so that-- but
otherwise, we were.

257
00:13:52,700 --> 00:13:55,620
We couldn't do anything
else, because we

258
00:13:55,620 --> 00:13:56,950
went to the same school.

259
00:13:56,950 --> 00:13:59,790
We were living in
the the same house.

260
00:13:59,790 --> 00:14:02,430
And we looked exactly the same.

261
00:14:02,430 --> 00:14:06,210
And people would say
much later that when--

262
00:14:06,210 --> 00:14:10,320

I mean friends, that somebody
would say, what are you

263
00:14:10,320 --> 00:14:13,230
doing today in the afternoon?

264
00:14:13,230 --> 00:14:16,410
And I or she would say, well,
I'm doing such and such.

265
00:14:16,410 --> 00:14:18,000
And what is the other one doing?

266
00:14:18,000 --> 00:14:19,440
Well, of course the same.

267
00:14:19,440 --> 00:14:26,155
I mean, we didn't even consider
probably that we are two.

268
00:14:26,155 --> 00:14:27,405
Were you interested in sports?

269
00:14:27,405 --> 00:14:31,530

270
00:14:31,530 --> 00:14:33,570
We had to go to certain--

271
00:14:33,570 --> 00:14:34,950
we had it in school.

272
00:14:34,950 --> 00:14:37,200
We did-- kind of--

273
00:14:37,200 --> 00:14:38,550
I don't think so, no.

274
00:14:38,550 --> 00:14:43,980
No, we went skiing in the
winter, and I broke my--

275

00:14:43,980 --> 00:14:48,630

I remember my wrist skating,
and I hated skating.

276

00:14:48,630 --> 00:14:52,830

So that was a great burden
that I broke the wrist.

277

00:14:52,830 --> 00:14:57,270

And we went, of
course in summer.

278

00:14:57,270 --> 00:15:00,660

My parents always took us
for two months somewhere

279

00:15:00,660 --> 00:15:06,630

in the country, so with the
other family members and so--

280

00:15:06,630 --> 00:15:10,740

and so we went swimming.

281

00:15:10,740 --> 00:15:14,430

You know, the normal kind.

282

00:15:14,430 --> 00:15:19,190

I think when we were 13,
started tennis or whatever.

283

00:15:19,190 --> 00:15:21,450

Any youth group membership?

284

00:15:21,450 --> 00:15:24,390

They sent us one
year to a camp, which

285

00:15:24,390 --> 00:15:28,170

was done a la American camps.

286

00:15:28,170 --> 00:15:30,480

You know, youth camp.

287

00:15:30,480 --> 00:15:38,200

And I can't-- and there was the two of us and a cousin as well.

288

00:15:38,200 --> 00:15:42,480

And I don't think either of us really enjoyed that very much.

289

00:15:42,480 --> 00:15:46,350

We didn't suffer there, but it was not something which--

290

00:15:46,350 --> 00:15:50,075

I think we were probably quite spoiled.

291

00:15:50,075 --> 00:15:54,280

292

00:15:54,280 --> 00:15:59,475

Were your parents interested in Zionism at all?

293

00:15:59,475 --> 00:16:00,850

Or was that not a part of their--

294

00:16:00,850 --> 00:16:01,600

No, no.

295

00:16:01,600 --> 00:16:02,450

It wasn't.

296

00:16:02,450 --> 00:16:03,450

No, no, no.

297

00:16:03,450 --> 00:16:06,900

298

00:16:06,900 --> 00:16:10,740

Now, of course you were

obviously very young in 1933,

299

00:16:10,740 --> 00:16:14,490

but when were you
first aware of Hitler?

300

00:16:14,490 --> 00:16:15,960

Do you remember
when that first--

301

00:16:15,960 --> 00:16:21,120

But there were refugees
coming from Germany.

302

00:16:21,120 --> 00:16:25,440

And my grandmother had--

303

00:16:25,440 --> 00:16:28,440

I think it was her sister or
grandfather's sister, I don't

304

00:16:28,440 --> 00:16:31,030

know, who lived in Vienna.

305

00:16:31,030 --> 00:16:31,905

She was a typical--

306

00:16:31,905 --> 00:16:35,790

307

00:16:35,790 --> 00:16:42,000

a typical kind of
spinster old lady.

308

00:16:42,000 --> 00:16:45,900

And she came suddenly to Prague.

309

00:16:45,900 --> 00:16:48,660

Yeah.

310

00:16:48,660 --> 00:16:52,380

And I mean, I'm sure

that the grown-ups

311

00:16:52,380 --> 00:16:54,240

talk about it quite a lot.

312

00:16:54,240 --> 00:16:56,130

And we were aware.

313

00:16:56,130 --> 00:17:00,630

I mean, the Czechs never
liked very much Germany,

314

00:17:00,630 --> 00:17:03,420

and so that it was
not difficult than you

315

00:17:03,420 --> 00:17:09,900

would be aware there's something
bad happening next door.

316

00:17:09,900 --> 00:17:15,720

And plus the part
of Bohemia, that

317

00:17:15,720 --> 00:17:20,190

Sudetenland where the
Germans started, and we

318

00:17:20,190 --> 00:17:23,710

used to-- that's where
everybody used to go to ski.

319

00:17:23,710 --> 00:17:28,230

And plus my mother had a
cousin there, who had a factory

320

00:17:28,230 --> 00:17:29,610

and they lived there.

321

00:17:29,610 --> 00:17:34,980

And so that I can't
tell you when I was,

322

00:17:34,980 --> 00:17:40,030
but we certainly were
conscious very much of Hitler.

323

00:17:40,030 --> 00:17:44,010
Were you particularly
frightened at that point?

324

00:17:44,010 --> 00:17:53,910
I don't think that we ever
thought that they could occupy.

325

00:17:53,910 --> 00:18:02,220
Czechoslovakia had a very good
army, very militarily strong.

326

00:18:02,220 --> 00:18:08,820
And it was a rich country
with great industry.

327

00:18:08,820 --> 00:18:12,450
I think they were
number two in steel

328

00:18:12,450 --> 00:18:15,840
and every third car in
Europe was Czech or whatever.

329

00:18:15,840 --> 00:18:19,920
So that it was kind of
inbred, nothing very much

330

00:18:19,920 --> 00:18:21,150
can happen to us.

331

00:18:21,150 --> 00:18:23,910
I mean, we would fight.

332

00:18:23,910 --> 00:18:32,190
And I remember that in
1939, before Munich, they

333

00:18:32,190 --> 00:18:35,940
kept the mobilization.

334
00:18:35,940 --> 00:18:41,940
That was before the Czech
president gave the Sudetenland.

335
00:18:41,940 --> 00:18:43,350
So they mobilized.

336
00:18:43,350 --> 00:18:45,720
And at that time,
they asked everybody

337
00:18:45,720 --> 00:18:50,160
who has the possibility that
women and children should

338
00:18:50,160 --> 00:18:53,160
be evacuated out of Prague.

339
00:18:53,160 --> 00:18:59,340
So we went with my
parents' friends.

340
00:18:59,340 --> 00:19:03,510
And we had the nanny with us.

341
00:19:03,510 --> 00:19:08,562
And we went out of
Prague to a place.

342
00:19:08,562 --> 00:19:11,940
And my father then
with the other men

343
00:19:11,940 --> 00:19:17,190
returned to Prague in case they
would be called up or whatever.

344
00:19:17,190 --> 00:19:22,290
And you saw the roads
lined up by people,

345
00:19:22,290 --> 00:19:25,770
asking for a lift to go to
their battalion or whatever.

346
00:19:25,770 --> 00:19:27,900
I mean, they were called
up and everything.

347
00:19:27,900 --> 00:19:30,480
And there was no--

348
00:19:30,480 --> 00:19:32,640
everybody very--
I still remember

349
00:19:32,640 --> 00:19:35,940
that, I mean, in a very up mood.

350
00:19:35,940 --> 00:19:39,450
And that night, in that
place outside of Prague,

351
00:19:39,450 --> 00:19:47,310
when German Fraulein came
to our room and made us

352
00:19:47,310 --> 00:19:52,020
kneel and swear on the
Bible that we will never

353
00:19:52,020 --> 00:19:57,120
say that she's born
in Sudeten Germany,

354
00:19:57,120 --> 00:20:01,500
that she's German, that we will
always say that she's Czech,

355
00:20:01,500 --> 00:20:03,090
and that she's very--

356

00:20:03,090 --> 00:20:05,130
she loves Jews or Whatever

357
00:20:05,130 --> 00:20:07,200
And of course when
Hitler marched

358
00:20:07,200 --> 00:20:10,200
in, she was the first one
who marched to our house

359
00:20:10,200 --> 00:20:15,750
and said to my mother, I know
exactly which jewelry you have,

360
00:20:15,750 --> 00:20:21,460
and don't you dare to hide
it and blah, blah, blah.

361
00:20:21,460 --> 00:20:26,730
But at that time, I mean, she
was absolutely on our side.

362
00:20:26,730 --> 00:20:33,000
And then after a few days when
the Munich pact was signed,

363
00:20:33,000 --> 00:20:38,250
and so we were going
back to Prague,

364
00:20:38,250 --> 00:20:43,230
you so grew up man
standing on the road crying.

365
00:20:43,230 --> 00:20:48,360
Because I don't think
that anybody imagined--

366
00:20:48,360 --> 00:20:51,780
and that was not
Jews or non-Jews--

367

00:20:51,780 --> 00:20:56,235

I mean, that they will give
up without firing a shot.

368

00:20:56,235 --> 00:20:58,920

369

00:20:58,920 --> 00:21:02,130

And so then it
started to be much--

370

00:21:02,130 --> 00:21:09,990

I mean, you know everybody knew
that that the Czech countries

371

00:21:09,990 --> 00:21:10,920

are vulnerable.

372

00:21:10,920 --> 00:21:12,750

I mean--

373

00:21:12,750 --> 00:21:18,210

Were you able to talk this over
with your parents, the change?

374

00:21:18,210 --> 00:21:19,800

Because you said
this was the change.

375

00:21:19,800 --> 00:21:22,050

No, no, no.

376

00:21:22,050 --> 00:21:25,505

You went back home to Prague?

377

00:21:25,505 --> 00:21:28,130

378

00:21:28,130 --> 00:21:34,010

Yes, and I'm sure that that
was when my father tried

379

00:21:34,010 --> 00:21:37,340
and started to get us
visa to some country,

380
00:21:37,340 --> 00:21:42,180
and to get us out, which was
by that time nearly impossible.

381
00:21:42,180 --> 00:21:42,680
I mean--

382
00:21:42,680 --> 00:21:45,500

383
00:21:45,500 --> 00:21:47,142
And did he talk
things over with you

384
00:21:47,142 --> 00:21:48,600
about what he
thought would happen?

385
00:21:48,600 --> 00:21:51,410
No, no, no.

386
00:21:51,410 --> 00:21:53,450
Did you and your sister
talk between yourselves

387
00:21:53,450 --> 00:21:54,575
about this terrible change?

388
00:21:54,575 --> 00:21:55,682
I don't think so.

389
00:21:55,682 --> 00:21:56,390
I don't think so.

390
00:21:56,390 --> 00:21:57,510
Because you were young.

391
00:21:57,510 --> 00:21:59,030

You were young.

392

00:21:59,030 --> 00:22:04,850
And I think that also everybody
was trying to pretend--

393

00:22:04,850 --> 00:22:07,700
I don't know-- that nothing
will happen or whatever.

394

00:22:07,700 --> 00:22:08,670
I mean, it was--

395

00:22:08,670 --> 00:22:18,100

396

00:22:18,100 --> 00:22:25,870
that was the end
of the good times.

397

00:22:25,870 --> 00:22:29,830
Did you have a lot
of extended family?

398

00:22:29,830 --> 00:22:30,520
Yes.

399

00:22:30,520 --> 00:22:31,300
Yeah.

400

00:22:31,300 --> 00:22:32,380
Cousins and aunts?

401

00:22:32,380 --> 00:22:33,010
Yeah.

402

00:22:33,010 --> 00:22:34,490
Was it a close--

403

00:22:34,490 --> 00:22:35,770
Yes, yes, yes.

404

00:22:35,770 --> 00:22:37,190

You would get together?

405

00:22:37,190 --> 00:22:38,090

Yeah, yeah.

406

00:22:38,090 --> 00:22:41,380

Everybody talked to everybody.

407

00:22:41,380 --> 00:22:48,040

They would-- but most of
them did not come back

408

00:22:48,040 --> 00:22:51,280

after the war, though.

409

00:22:51,280 --> 00:22:54,330

All right, so now
you're back in Prague.

410

00:22:54,330 --> 00:22:54,830

Yeah.

411

00:22:54,830 --> 00:22:58,810

And what was the next change?

412

00:22:58,810 --> 00:23:02,870

I kind of don't
remember too much

413

00:23:02,870 --> 00:23:10,750

what was happening between that
Munich and March of the Germans

414

00:23:10,750 --> 00:23:12,010

marching into Prague.

415

00:23:12,010 --> 00:23:14,890

416

00:23:14,890 --> 00:23:17,230

Marching into Poland, you mean?

417

00:23:17,230 --> 00:23:18,340

Or marching?

418

00:23:18,340 --> 00:23:19,900

No, they marched first--

419

00:23:19,900 --> 00:23:24,260

they marched on 15th of March '39, they marched to Prague.

420

00:23:24,260 --> 00:23:25,050

To Prague, yeah.

421

00:23:25,050 --> 00:23:27,790

They marched in '38 to Vienna.

422

00:23:27,790 --> 00:23:28,760

'37 or '38, yeah?

423

00:23:28,760 --> 00:23:29,620

Right.

424

00:23:29,620 --> 00:23:32,320

And then '39 to Prague.

425

00:23:32,320 --> 00:23:35,980

Did your family know or were you aware of Kristallnacht?

426

00:23:35,980 --> 00:23:37,110

I'm sure that--

427

00:23:37,110 --> 00:23:40,030

I do know that they knew, because then everybody knew

428

00:23:40,030 --> 00:23:41,560

Kristallnacht.

429

00:23:41,560 --> 00:23:47,255
Because I kind of have memories
of the radio talking about it

430
00:23:47,255 --> 00:23:47,755
or whatever.

431
00:23:47,755 --> 00:23:54,220

432
00:23:54,220 --> 00:23:59,560
But the Germans
came in '39, and--

433
00:23:59,560 --> 00:24:01,270
What was it like for
you as a young girl

434
00:24:01,270 --> 00:24:02,690
to see the Germans coming in?

435
00:24:02,690 --> 00:24:07,030

436
00:24:07,030 --> 00:24:08,900
I don't know, really.

437
00:24:08,900 --> 00:24:09,920
I really don't.

438
00:24:09,920 --> 00:24:10,590
I mean, that's--

439
00:24:10,590 --> 00:24:16,345

440
00:24:16,345 --> 00:24:23,020
Seeing uniforms, was
that frightening?

441
00:24:23,020 --> 00:24:28,150
I don't think it was as

frightening as it should be.

442
00:24:28,150 --> 00:24:31,210
Because they came kind of--

443
00:24:31,210 --> 00:24:34,750
unfortunately, there
was no television.

444
00:24:34,750 --> 00:24:37,670
So what do you didn't go
to see, you didn't see.

445
00:24:37,670 --> 00:24:40,270
Right, saw what was nearby.

446
00:24:40,270 --> 00:24:45,040
And they went downtown
in the Wenzel Square.

447
00:24:45,040 --> 00:24:47,956
And so--

448
00:24:47,956 --> 00:24:51,040

449
00:24:51,040 --> 00:24:55,720
So then life in a sense
continued on for a bit,

450
00:24:55,720 --> 00:24:56,770
once they invaded?

451
00:24:56,770 --> 00:24:57,670
Yeah, yeah.

452
00:24:57,670 --> 00:24:59,410
You continued in school.

453
00:24:59,410 --> 00:24:59,940
Yes.

454

00:24:59,940 --> 00:25:01,940

And your daily
routine continued.

455

00:25:01,940 --> 00:25:04,510

Yes.

456

00:25:04,510 --> 00:25:16,400

And I wouldn't know how
fast which law came,

457

00:25:16,400 --> 00:25:24,470

because they were kind of
putting the laws against Jews

458

00:25:24,470 --> 00:25:25,260

and this.

459

00:25:25,260 --> 00:25:29,900

I don't know which,
because there

460

00:25:29,900 --> 00:25:34,550

was a point when they wouldn't
allow Jews to go to school.

461

00:25:34,550 --> 00:25:46,160

Then they wouldn't also allow
to have more in the apartments.

462

00:25:46,160 --> 00:25:48,080

You were allowed to have--

463

00:25:48,080 --> 00:25:51,410

Jews were allowed only to have
so much and so much place,

464

00:25:51,410 --> 00:25:58,490

so that you had to
take other families in.

465

00:25:58,490 --> 00:26:02,810

And then there was one that--

466

00:26:02,810 --> 00:26:08,840
one of the first was that Jews
have to give all their jewelry

467

00:26:08,840 --> 00:26:12,290
to the fatherland.

468

00:26:12,290 --> 00:26:15,170
Then they were not
allowed to have pets.

469

00:26:15,170 --> 00:26:18,560
So we had the dog and a canary.

470

00:26:18,560 --> 00:26:26,360
So I remember that my parents
sent the dog to some friends

471

00:26:26,360 --> 00:26:28,970
outside Prague, and
bought something

472

00:26:28,970 --> 00:26:30,620
which they gave him,
because you know

473

00:26:30,620 --> 00:26:34,470
that he would be destroyed.

474

00:26:34,470 --> 00:26:38,390
It was a kind of a
sadism of the uttermost.

475

00:26:38,390 --> 00:26:41,480
Because what can they do
with the dogs or whatever?

476

00:26:41,480 --> 00:26:44,240

477

00:26:44,240 --> 00:26:46,100
What was it like
for a young teenager

478
00:26:46,100 --> 00:26:49,640
to be told she
couldn't go to school?

479
00:26:49,640 --> 00:26:54,020
You know, there were so many
worries that I cannot tell you

480
00:26:54,020 --> 00:26:56,300
how it was, because
they of course--

481
00:26:56,300 --> 00:27:03,080
they wanted to make out of
Jews a race which that--

482
00:27:03,080 --> 00:27:07,310
I don't know which came first,
between a race which was,

483
00:27:07,310 --> 00:27:10,730
but also that they wouldn't
know how to read and write

484
00:27:10,730 --> 00:27:11,790
and whatever.

485
00:27:11,790 --> 00:27:18,620
And so even though it was
actually against a German law

486
00:27:18,620 --> 00:27:23,480
so that my parents took somebody
who would teach us privately.

487
00:27:23,480 --> 00:27:28,400
So we were not off the hook.

488
00:27:28,400 --> 00:27:30,380

Then we were not
allowed, of course,

489
00:27:30,380 --> 00:27:33,960
to go to movies or
whatever but to park.

490
00:27:33,960 --> 00:27:39,200
So that's when we used to go
to the old Jewish cemetery

491
00:27:39,200 --> 00:27:41,450
to play around there.

492
00:27:41,450 --> 00:27:45,410
And then-- it was
one after-- and I

493
00:27:45,410 --> 00:27:47,210
don't know which came when.

494
00:27:47,210 --> 00:27:54,060
I mean, and I remember when
the first transports started,

495
00:27:54,060 --> 00:27:56,000
which was I think in '41.

496
00:27:56,000 --> 00:27:59,510
And then everybody
had to be registered.

497
00:27:59,510 --> 00:28:02,060
And unfortunately,
Czechoslovakia

498
00:28:02,060 --> 00:28:04,910
was a very Western country.

499
00:28:04,910 --> 00:28:07,760
So they had
everybody registered.

500

00:28:07,760 --> 00:28:12,680

You know, even if you didn't register, the registry where

501

00:28:12,680 --> 00:28:15,200

you were born or whatever would send it to them,

502

00:28:15,200 --> 00:28:17,150

because it was German-occupied.

503

00:28:17,150 --> 00:28:20,540

So it didn't help what you did.

504

00:28:20,540 --> 00:28:24,920

I mean, everything was on paper nicely.

505

00:28:24,920 --> 00:28:27,980

So you had your own identification papers?

506

00:28:27,980 --> 00:28:28,790

Did you?

507

00:28:28,790 --> 00:28:31,230

I don't know when it started, whether they

508

00:28:31,230 --> 00:28:33,590

start to wear the star.

509

00:28:33,590 --> 00:28:37,100

I think that was like '41.

510

00:28:37,100 --> 00:28:39,030

To actually wear a star on your clothing?

511

00:28:39,030 --> 00:28:40,100

Yeah, yeah.

512

00:28:40,100 --> 00:28:44,330

So that everybody sees
immediately that you are a Jew.

513

00:28:44,330 --> 00:28:47,020

How did that feel
for you to do that?

514

00:28:47,020 --> 00:28:50,050

Well, it scares the
hell out of you.

515

00:28:50,050 --> 00:28:54,260

Because that's not a--

516

00:28:54,260 --> 00:28:55,970

you couldn't go--

517

00:28:55,970 --> 00:28:58,520

I think in the shopping,
then you could go only

518

00:28:58,520 --> 00:28:59,540

from 5:00 to 7:00.

519

00:28:59,540 --> 00:29:03,380

I mean, I don't
remember what there was.

520

00:29:03,380 --> 00:29:07,370

There was one thing after
another what you couldn't do

521

00:29:07,370 --> 00:29:10,070

and what you could do.

522

00:29:10,070 --> 00:29:12,350

What about your
non-Jewish friends?

523

00:29:12,350 --> 00:29:16,220

Did they change in their

attitude towards you?

524

00:29:16,220 --> 00:29:17,990

Well, they would be--

525

00:29:17,990 --> 00:29:21,690

funnily enough, I
remember only one who did.

526

00:29:21,690 --> 00:29:25,610

And that was the one
who was in our class,

527

00:29:25,610 --> 00:29:29,120

and her mother was washerwoman.

528

00:29:29,120 --> 00:29:31,760

I mean, it was--

529

00:29:31,760 --> 00:29:37,430

and so-- and my sister
and I liked her very much,

530

00:29:37,430 --> 00:29:41,510

because she used
four-letter language.

531

00:29:41,510 --> 00:29:43,250

And she would always
say, you know,

532

00:29:43,250 --> 00:29:45,880

your mother never
uses four-letter word,

533

00:29:45,880 --> 00:29:49,250

and we would swear she
does, and she didn't.

534

00:29:49,250 --> 00:29:50,960

I mean, it was--

535

00:29:50,960 --> 00:29:55,670
and when we had private
lessons, my parents

536
00:29:55,670 --> 00:29:57,250
paid for her as well.

537
00:29:57,250 --> 00:30:02,180
And so she was the first
one which dropped us.

538
00:30:02,180 --> 00:30:04,790
And no, that makes
actually sense.

539
00:30:04,790 --> 00:30:07,410
People don't like
to say thank you.

540
00:30:07,410 --> 00:30:11,130
I mean, I'm sure that her mother
said you will be nice to them.

541
00:30:11,130 --> 00:30:16,220
I don't know, but perhaps
she was a horrible person.

542
00:30:16,220 --> 00:30:19,530
But perhaps it was just
normal that [? she thinks ?]

543
00:30:19,530 --> 00:30:24,720
thank God I don't need to
try to eat like a human being

544
00:30:24,720 --> 00:30:27,960
when I go to their house
for lunch or whatever.

545
00:30:27,960 --> 00:30:31,560
Plus, I don't need
to learn anymore

546

00:30:31,560 --> 00:30:35,550
English or French or whatever.

547
00:30:35,550 --> 00:30:38,910
But otherwise, I think they
used to come at the beginning,

548
00:30:38,910 --> 00:30:42,120
and tell us what they
are learning in school.

549
00:30:42,120 --> 00:30:46,030
I don't have a memory that
somehow we were dropped.

550
00:30:46,030 --> 00:30:46,530
I mean--

551
00:30:46,530 --> 00:30:49,770

552
00:30:49,770 --> 00:30:52,050
Before you couldn't
go to school,

553
00:30:52,050 --> 00:30:54,810
were the teachers
still pleasant to you?

554
00:30:54,810 --> 00:30:55,580
Yes.

555
00:30:55,580 --> 00:30:56,748
Yeah, yeah.

556
00:30:56,748 --> 00:30:58,290
So there was no
problem there either?

557
00:30:58,290 --> 00:30:59,590
I don't think so.

558

00:30:59,590 --> 00:31:00,930
I don't have a memory.

559
00:31:00,930 --> 00:31:04,170
Perhaps I was dumb, but
I have no memory of that.

560
00:31:04,170 --> 00:31:13,410

561
00:31:13,410 --> 00:31:14,900
[LAUGHTER]

562
00:31:14,900 --> 00:31:17,120
Very good customer.

563
00:31:17,120 --> 00:31:19,640
This is tape one,
side B. And we were

564
00:31:19,640 --> 00:31:22,490
talking about your childhood.

565
00:31:22,490 --> 00:31:26,420
Are you and your sister
similar in personality?

566
00:31:26,420 --> 00:31:30,350
Yes, I think she's the
stronger of the two of us.

567
00:31:30,350 --> 00:31:32,690
But yes, I would say.

568
00:31:32,690 --> 00:31:35,180
That's why I wanted
that-- and she perhaps

569
00:31:35,180 --> 00:31:38,400
is coming at the end of August.

570
00:31:38,400 --> 00:31:40,490

So if you could--

571
00:31:40,490 --> 00:31:45,600
because I wanted originally
that we do it together.

572
00:31:45,600 --> 00:31:49,000
So Because it would be a
little bit like Rashomon,

573
00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:51,650
you only have one thing.

574
00:31:51,650 --> 00:31:53,327
Is there more coffee?

575
00:31:53,327 --> 00:31:56,010

576
00:31:56,010 --> 00:31:58,910
So how would you describe your
personalities at that time?

577
00:31:58,910 --> 00:32:01,850
Were you outgoing or quiet?

578
00:32:01,850 --> 00:32:03,660
No, I don't think we were quiet.

579
00:32:03,660 --> 00:32:05,550
More outgoing,
friendly type children?

580
00:32:05,550 --> 00:32:06,440
I think so.

581
00:32:06,440 --> 00:32:09,070

582
00:32:09,070 --> 00:32:13,430
OK, so now you're at home,
and you're wearing the star.

583
00:32:13,430 --> 00:32:16,368
And again, did you share your
thoughts with your sister

584
00:32:16,368 --> 00:32:18,160
then about what it's
like to wear the star?

585
00:32:18,160 --> 00:32:19,150
I don't even know.

586
00:32:19,150 --> 00:32:20,440
No, no, no.

587
00:32:20,440 --> 00:32:25,780
I don't remember one single
incident talking about it.

588
00:32:25,780 --> 00:32:29,140
And the restrictions increased?

589
00:32:29,140 --> 00:32:30,250
Yeah.

590
00:32:30,250 --> 00:32:33,342
And then what was
the next change?

591
00:32:33,342 --> 00:32:35,890
Well, the transports
started, which

592
00:32:35,890 --> 00:32:38,140
is a frightening kind of thing.

593
00:32:38,140 --> 00:32:43,580

594
00:32:43,580 --> 00:32:44,840
How did you know about them?

595

00:32:44,840 --> 00:32:48,260

Well, first of all,
one of my uncle

596

00:32:48,260 --> 00:32:51,920

went with one of the
first one, where they--

597

00:32:51,920 --> 00:32:56,750

I think it was basically all
lawyers went somewhere to--

598

00:32:56,750 --> 00:32:58,940

it was sent somewhere to Poland.

599

00:32:58,940 --> 00:33:04,130

And it was, I think, Litzmanns--

600

00:33:04,130 --> 00:33:05,750

Lodz.

601

00:33:05,750 --> 00:33:08,420

And I don't think
anybody survived.

602

00:33:08,420 --> 00:33:13,610

I mean, not a single
person survived.

603

00:33:13,610 --> 00:33:19,430

And then there was again
a little bit of respite.

604

00:33:19,430 --> 00:33:21,320

And then they
started to send it,

605

00:33:21,320 --> 00:33:25,340

and I remember we had
to go and work then

606

00:33:25,340 --> 00:33:28,590

at the Jewish community.

607
00:33:28,590 --> 00:33:31,460
Why it was, I
don't know anymore,

608
00:33:31,460 --> 00:33:35,630
but I don't even know
what I was doing there.

609
00:33:35,630 --> 00:33:40,100
I think I was standing
at a machine there.

610
00:33:40,100 --> 00:33:41,000
What kind of machine?

611
00:33:41,000 --> 00:33:44,230
I think it was what do
you call the copy machine?

612
00:33:44,230 --> 00:33:47,960
[INAUDIBLE] But I don't
know why I would--

613
00:33:47,960 --> 00:33:51,740
and they were not good times.

614
00:33:51,740 --> 00:33:58,170
And then in '43, we got our--

615
00:33:58,170 --> 00:34:00,950
and we were shipped.

616
00:34:00,950 --> 00:34:03,260
All right, if we can talk
a little bit about that,

617
00:34:03,260 --> 00:34:07,830
how did your family find
out what they had to do?

618

00:34:07,830 --> 00:34:10,010
How were they notified?

619
00:34:10,010 --> 00:34:11,210
Well, it came by--

620
00:34:11,210 --> 00:34:15,259
I think it came by paper,
by a letter or whatever.

621
00:34:15,259 --> 00:34:18,050

622
00:34:18,050 --> 00:34:19,489
To report to a certain place?

623
00:34:19,489 --> 00:34:20,389
Yes, yes.

624
00:34:20,389 --> 00:34:21,245
It was a place.

625
00:34:21,245 --> 00:34:24,199

626
00:34:24,199 --> 00:34:26,630
I'm sure it still
exists in Prague,

627
00:34:26,630 --> 00:34:29,870
where they had the big fairs.

628
00:34:29,870 --> 00:34:33,949

629
00:34:33,949 --> 00:34:34,790
Kind of--

630
00:34:34,790 --> 00:34:35,889
Big grounds?

631

00:34:35,889 --> 00:34:41,090
Yeah, and they put there
whatever, 5,000 people.

632
00:34:41,090 --> 00:34:45,830
That I know, like sardines,
one next to another.

633
00:34:45,830 --> 00:34:48,110
What did you take with you?

634
00:34:48,110 --> 00:34:54,949
They allowed you,
I think, 20 kilos.

635
00:34:54,949 --> 00:34:57,680
Did you take anything
special with you?

636
00:34:57,680 --> 00:34:58,325
We didn't--

637
00:34:58,325 --> 00:34:58,908
As a teenager?

638
00:34:58,908 --> 00:35:04,970
By that-- no, I would say
that we probably-- everybody

639
00:35:04,970 --> 00:35:08,030
did the same, to
take warm clothing.

640
00:35:08,030 --> 00:35:11,650
You know, nobody knew, I mean--

641
00:35:11,650 --> 00:35:15,800

642
00:35:15,800 --> 00:35:17,450
and--

643

00:35:17,450 --> 00:35:19,610
Did you know where
you would be going,

644
00:35:19,610 --> 00:35:21,950
or they just told you to report?

645
00:35:21,950 --> 00:35:24,170
Yeah, I don't know
whether we knew

646
00:35:24,170 --> 00:35:26,840
that we are going
to Theresienstadt

647
00:35:26,840 --> 00:35:32,370
or whether that we didn't,
but that's where we went.

648
00:35:32,370 --> 00:35:35,630
So the four of you, your
mother, father, and your sister,

649
00:35:35,630 --> 00:35:37,160
and you reported together?

650
00:35:37,160 --> 00:35:39,620
Right, right.

651
00:35:39,620 --> 00:35:42,350
And then after I think
three, four days,

652
00:35:42,350 --> 00:35:44,210
I don't know how
long we were there.

653
00:35:44,210 --> 00:35:45,020
Those are things--

654
00:35:45,020 --> 00:35:46,370
In this collection area.

655

00:35:46,370 --> 00:35:47,600

Yeah.

656

00:35:47,600 --> 00:35:50,540

They put us on trains.

657

00:35:50,540 --> 00:35:51,972

And--

658

00:35:51,972 --> 00:35:53,430

The four of you
are still together?

659

00:35:53,430 --> 00:35:54,590

Yes.

660

00:35:54,590 --> 00:35:57,650

Did you have other relatives
with you at that time?

661

00:35:57,650 --> 00:36:00,140

No, I don't think
that they were--

662

00:36:00,140 --> 00:36:06,050

I think my grandparents
just went before.

663

00:36:06,050 --> 00:36:10,220

And some other relatives
went like before.

664

00:36:10,220 --> 00:36:13,280

I mean, we were one of
the last of our family.

665

00:36:13,280 --> 00:36:15,950

I mean, not of all
the [? trains. ?]

666

00:36:15,950 --> 00:36:17,240

We were one of the last.

667
00:36:17,240 --> 00:36:20,920

668
00:36:20,920 --> 00:36:23,900
And we went to Theresienstadt.

669
00:36:23,900 --> 00:36:28,430
OK, which is about
40 miles from Prague.

670
00:36:28,430 --> 00:36:30,020
But that journey--

671
00:36:30,020 --> 00:36:31,340
Is it 40 miles?

672
00:36:31,340 --> 00:36:34,280
No, it must be more.

673
00:36:34,280 --> 00:36:37,670
I think it took like
three or five hours.

674
00:36:37,670 --> 00:36:39,040
I don't know, but--

675
00:36:39,040 --> 00:36:42,860
I think it's about
approximately 40 miles.

676
00:36:42,860 --> 00:36:43,520
What?

677
00:36:43,520 --> 00:36:46,985
By train 40 miles would be--

678
00:36:46,985 --> 00:36:49,250
It went slowly.

679
00:36:49,250 --> 00:36:51,347

No, because I said that--

680
00:36:51,347 --> 00:36:52,430
Or maybe it wasn't direct.

681
00:36:52,430 --> 00:36:52,930
Maybe.

682
00:36:52,930 --> 00:36:55,100
Maybe they didn't
go in a direct line.

683
00:36:55,100 --> 00:36:56,290
I don't know.

684
00:36:56,290 --> 00:36:56,900
Whatever.

685
00:36:56,900 --> 00:36:58,160
I couldn't imagine.

686
00:36:58,160 --> 00:36:59,300
I think it must be more.

687
00:36:59,300 --> 00:37:04,070
From the simple point of view I
said that I go by kilometers--

688
00:37:04,070 --> 00:37:04,640
Oh, right.

689
00:37:04,640 --> 00:37:07,910
So kilometers would be 60, 70?

690
00:37:07,910 --> 00:37:08,450
Yeah, no.

691
00:37:08,450 --> 00:37:12,380
But that's because I said that
the place where my father is

692

00:37:12,380 --> 00:37:15,210
from or my mother is 40 miles.

693
00:37:15,210 --> 00:37:16,790
But then it's next door.

694
00:37:16,790 --> 00:37:17,720
It's five miles.

695
00:37:17,720 --> 00:37:20,550

696
00:37:20,550 --> 00:37:21,600
You went by train?

697
00:37:21,600 --> 00:37:22,100
Yeah.

698
00:37:22,100 --> 00:37:23,420
OK.

699
00:37:23,420 --> 00:37:26,030
And what was that
train ride like?

700
00:37:26,030 --> 00:37:27,110
I don't remember.

701
00:37:27,110 --> 00:37:27,920
I don't remember.

702
00:37:27,920 --> 00:37:31,070
I remember the train
going to Auschwitz.

703
00:37:31,070 --> 00:37:32,780
I don't remember this one.

704
00:37:32,780 --> 00:37:36,272
What was your first
impressions of Theresienstadt

705

00:37:36,272 --> 00:37:36,980
when you arrived?

706

00:37:36,980 --> 00:37:41,120

707

00:37:41,120 --> 00:37:51,140
You know, it was a barrack
city from Maria Teresa,

708

00:37:51,140 --> 00:37:55,550
from the 18th century.

709

00:37:55,550 --> 00:37:56,810
The Czechs used that.

710

00:37:56,810 --> 00:38:03,200
And and next door was what
they called the Fortress

711

00:38:03,200 --> 00:38:07,070
Theresienstadt, which
was one of the worst

712

00:38:07,070 --> 00:38:11,360
Germans under the
Nazis, where were

713

00:38:11,360 --> 00:38:13,100
a lot of political prisoners.

714

00:38:13,100 --> 00:38:14,450
But this was a--

715

00:38:14,450 --> 00:38:18,800
And they were barracks.

716

00:38:18,800 --> 00:38:26,360
I mean, old kind of,
where I don't know.

717

00:38:26,360 --> 00:38:30,590

I can't-- I know that we
were in one of the barracks.

718

00:38:30,590 --> 00:38:33,710

How many thousand people
lived in one room,

719

00:38:33,710 --> 00:38:35,250

I don't know anymore.

720

00:38:35,250 --> 00:38:37,872

I knew-- but--

721

00:38:37,872 --> 00:38:39,600

Were the men and
women still together?

722

00:38:39,600 --> 00:38:41,300

Were you still with your father.

723

00:38:41,300 --> 00:38:42,800

I think, yes.

724

00:38:42,800 --> 00:38:44,736

Yes.

725

00:38:44,736 --> 00:38:45,236

And--

726

00:38:45,236 --> 00:38:48,940

727

00:38:48,940 --> 00:38:50,590

Would you characterize
your parents

728

00:38:50,590 --> 00:38:52,720

as being very strong people?

729

00:38:52,720 --> 00:38:54,340

Was your father--

730
00:38:54,340 --> 00:38:56,140
I'm sure my father--

731
00:38:56,140 --> 00:38:58,060
--able to keep his composure?

732
00:38:58,060 --> 00:39:01,390
Yes, that he did.

733
00:39:01,390 --> 00:39:06,350
But we met there with
some people we knew.

734
00:39:06,350 --> 00:39:11,080
So that-- I mean, so that at
least I remember that I had

735
00:39:11,080 --> 00:39:14,920
a feeling that it was--

736
00:39:14,920 --> 00:39:18,940
because it was that
certain familiarity,

737
00:39:18,940 --> 00:39:22,390
because you saw some people.

738
00:39:22,390 --> 00:39:24,370
And--

739
00:39:24,370 --> 00:39:25,990
Where did you eat?

740
00:39:25,990 --> 00:39:31,180
You went for-- you had a kind--

741
00:39:31,180 --> 00:39:35,620
like a-- you know, for
camping they use it.

742

00:39:35,620 --> 00:39:40,300
And you went to a communal
kitchen, which they put some--

743
00:39:40,300 --> 00:39:42,040
On your tray?

744
00:39:42,040 --> 00:39:43,660
Tray.

745
00:39:43,660 --> 00:39:45,310
Trays!

746
00:39:45,310 --> 00:39:49,020
I meant a small dish
tray or whatever.

747
00:39:49,020 --> 00:39:50,810
Yeah, yeah.

748
00:39:50,810 --> 00:39:54,535
And I think that's what--

749
00:39:54,535 --> 00:39:57,477
that's how I remember that.

750
00:39:57,477 --> 00:39:58,810
What was the food they gave you?

751
00:39:58,810 --> 00:39:59,560
What kind of food?

752
00:39:59,560 --> 00:40:05,890
Terrible, but I
don't remember that--

753
00:40:05,890 --> 00:40:10,870
I mean, the hunger which we
had then in the German camps,

754
00:40:10,870 --> 00:40:14,650
that I do remember much more so.

755
00:40:14,650 --> 00:40:18,970
I think it was-- it
was not plentiful.

756
00:40:18,970 --> 00:40:21,700
It was not even
enough, but it was not

757
00:40:21,700 --> 00:40:26,410
something that you only
think about food, that it

758
00:40:26,410 --> 00:40:31,660
was probably still, let's say,
a potato here and potato there,

759
00:40:31,660 --> 00:40:34,510
and something.

760
00:40:34,510 --> 00:40:37,960
And you are 18 years
old at this point.

761
00:40:37,960 --> 00:40:39,800
Yeah, yeah.

762
00:40:39,800 --> 00:40:42,490
Did you feel very
old by that time,

763
00:40:42,490 --> 00:40:45,760
considering what you
had just gone through?

764
00:40:45,760 --> 00:40:47,680
No, why would I feel old?

765
00:40:47,680 --> 00:40:52,420
Well, I mean, leaving your
home and going to this transit

766

00:40:52,420 --> 00:40:54,940
center.

767
00:40:54,940 --> 00:40:58,420
Yeah, but it had
nothing to do with age.

768
00:40:58,420 --> 00:41:00,220
I just know whether
it made you feel older

769
00:41:00,220 --> 00:41:03,020
than a typical
18-year-old young woman.

770
00:41:03,020 --> 00:41:03,520
Oh, no.

771
00:41:03,520 --> 00:41:09,470
That I thought about only after
the war, that I never was 18.

772
00:41:09,470 --> 00:41:14,470
I mean, that we had not
the luxury to think about.

773
00:41:14,470 --> 00:41:16,930
What was a typical
day like there?

774
00:41:16,930 --> 00:41:18,250
We had to work there.

775
00:41:18,250 --> 00:41:21,700
No, I think that the first--

776
00:41:21,700 --> 00:41:22,990
I don't know how long.

777
00:41:22,990 --> 00:41:26,380

778

00:41:26,380 --> 00:41:29,200
We worked in so-called
the agriculture,

779
00:41:29,200 --> 00:41:32,320
which was very bad
for people like me,

780
00:41:32,320 --> 00:41:37,960
who know nothing about
agriculture, don't care for it.

781
00:41:37,960 --> 00:41:43,000
And you know, because you are
bending around in the sun.

782
00:41:43,000 --> 00:41:45,910
You were-- I don't know
what it was anymore,

783
00:41:45,910 --> 00:41:46,900
what we were doing.

784
00:41:46,900 --> 00:41:48,317
You were working
out in the field.

785
00:41:48,317 --> 00:41:49,450
Yeah, right.

786
00:41:49,450 --> 00:41:54,010
So you could pick up here
a strawberry or something

787
00:41:54,010 --> 00:41:55,000
to eat, perhaps.

788
00:41:55,000 --> 00:41:58,990
But it was so--

789
00:41:58,990 --> 00:42:03,220
and then I worked in a factory
there, which was making--

790
00:42:03,220 --> 00:42:06,100

791
00:42:06,100 --> 00:42:09,910
I think constructing
beds for those barracks.

792
00:42:09,910 --> 00:42:11,950
You know, from wood.

793
00:42:11,950 --> 00:42:15,340
I mean with a ma-- and that
I kind of liked better,

794
00:42:15,340 --> 00:42:17,050
I remember.

795
00:42:17,050 --> 00:42:20,710
What month in 1943 did
you go to Theresienstadt?

796
00:42:20,710 --> 00:42:22,930
I don't know whether
it was May or June,

797
00:42:22,930 --> 00:42:25,270
but it was somewhere
there that it was.

798
00:42:25,270 --> 00:42:27,160
And then came--

799
00:42:27,160 --> 00:42:30,130

800
00:42:30,130 --> 00:42:36,670
I think it was October in '43,
which was the fateful transport

801
00:42:36,670 --> 00:42:43,180
to Auschwitz, which we

both were, Alena and I.

802
00:42:43,180 --> 00:42:51,280
And my father somehow
managed to get--

803
00:42:51,280 --> 00:42:55,420
he thought both of us, but only
Alena got the piece of paper

804
00:42:55,420 --> 00:42:59,320
that she is out, that
she doesn't need to go.

805
00:42:59,320 --> 00:43:06,050
Because that she has-- so it
was that she got scarlet fever.

806
00:43:06,050 --> 00:43:14,410
And there were-- and
then I got the exclusion.

807
00:43:14,410 --> 00:43:16,600
I still have this
piece of paper,

808
00:43:16,600 --> 00:43:19,300
because that was the
transport which went--

809
00:43:19,300 --> 00:43:23,740
the whole 5,000 went to gas.

810
00:43:23,740 --> 00:43:26,980
I mean, there is
not one survivor.

811
00:43:26,980 --> 00:43:30,100
So that was--

812
00:43:30,100 --> 00:43:33,970
I should actually give it
to the Holocaust Museum.

813
00:43:33,970 --> 00:43:36,080
If I give it to you--

814
00:43:36,080 --> 00:43:37,360
We could work something out.

815
00:43:37,360 --> 00:43:38,080
Yeah.

816
00:43:38,080 --> 00:43:40,360
Yeah, because that I
don't know whether they

817
00:43:40,360 --> 00:43:44,050
have things like that that.

818
00:43:44,050 --> 00:43:45,445
Now, why were you excluded?

819
00:43:45,445 --> 00:43:48,410

820
00:43:48,410 --> 00:43:50,330
I can't-- I don't know.

821
00:43:50,330 --> 00:43:56,660
I think that-- well, I am sure
that my father tried, whatever.

822
00:43:56,660 --> 00:43:57,590
And I was.

823
00:43:57,590 --> 00:43:59,570
Whether it was-- who know?

824
00:43:59,570 --> 00:44:02,660

825
00:44:02,660 --> 00:44:04,950
When these transports

would leave--

826
00:44:04,950 --> 00:44:05,450
Yeah.

827
00:44:05,450 --> 00:44:07,190
--would you know where--

828
00:44:07,190 --> 00:44:08,600
No, they didn't.

829
00:44:08,600 --> 00:44:12,620
My father maintained
that he knew.

830
00:44:12,620 --> 00:44:16,820
Because he never told us
when we then were going,

831
00:44:16,820 --> 00:44:21,040
that it goes to Auschwitz,
and that Auschwitz gas.

832
00:44:21,040 --> 00:44:21,690
So it is.

833
00:44:21,690 --> 00:44:24,320
They thought that they
know where they are going,

834
00:44:24,320 --> 00:44:26,880
but the gas question
wasn't there.

835
00:44:26,880 --> 00:44:28,100
OK.

836
00:44:28,100 --> 00:44:28,600
And--

837
00:44:28,600 --> 00:44:32,180

838
00:44:32,180 --> 00:44:37,550
When the Red Cross came to visit
and the camp was spruced up,

839
00:44:37,550 --> 00:44:38,700
were you a part of that.

840
00:44:38,700 --> 00:44:41,940
I think we still were there,
but it was a big failure.

841
00:44:41,940 --> 00:44:44,630
Right, this big hoax, right.

842
00:44:44,630 --> 00:44:47,300
No, the failure was
of the Red Cross.

843
00:44:47,300 --> 00:44:50,840
They got intimidated
by the German.

844
00:44:50,840 --> 00:44:52,410
We were not there anymore.

845
00:44:52,410 --> 00:44:55,250
But I was told because my
parents were there behind,

846
00:44:55,250 --> 00:45:01,760
that the Swedes came later, and
they didn't take any nonsense

847
00:45:01,760 --> 00:45:03,320
from the Germans.

848
00:45:03,320 --> 00:45:06,110
When they said you
have to stay outside

849
00:45:06,110 --> 00:45:08,660

and you can't talk to
the prisoner or whatever,

850
00:45:08,660 --> 00:45:09,930
they said, nothing doing.

851
00:45:09,930 --> 00:45:12,500
We don't talk to
warring parties.

852
00:45:12,500 --> 00:45:13,580
We don't talk to you.

853
00:45:13,580 --> 00:45:15,920
We go in and we talk to them.

854
00:45:15,920 --> 00:45:21,690
And they distributed
cigarettes or whatever it was.

855
00:45:21,690 --> 00:45:25,040
But it was a great
morale booster.

856
00:45:25,040 --> 00:45:28,380
Whereas the Red Cross
shut up and went home.

857
00:45:28,380 --> 00:45:32,450
I mean, [INAUDIBLE]

858
00:45:32,450 --> 00:45:35,510
So you worked first in the
fields, then in the factory.

859
00:45:35,510 --> 00:45:36,120
Yeah.

860
00:45:36,120 --> 00:45:37,760
Any other jobs?

861
00:45:37,760 --> 00:45:41,900

I don't think that
I had any other job.

862
00:45:41,900 --> 00:45:45,080
What were the sanitary
conditions like for you?

863
00:45:45,080 --> 00:45:47,360
You know, that I don't remember.

864
00:45:47,360 --> 00:45:56,930
But I don't remember at all
how did we stay clean or what.

865
00:45:56,930 --> 00:45:57,800
Not at all.

866
00:45:57,800 --> 00:45:59,750
I have also no--

867
00:45:59,750 --> 00:46:06,290
I know that we had a
certain social life, which

868
00:46:06,290 --> 00:46:08,090
was a unique sense.

869
00:46:08,090 --> 00:46:12,770
And I don't think many
people kind of understand it.

870
00:46:12,770 --> 00:46:21,020
But there was a decision
by the Terezin--

871
00:46:21,020 --> 00:46:24,260
Terezin population.

872
00:46:24,260 --> 00:46:32,600
Now, they were there only the
Czech Jews, some German Jews,

873

00:46:32,600 --> 00:46:36,440
Dutch, the one--

874
00:46:36,440 --> 00:46:40,820
and the Danish who did not--

875
00:46:40,820 --> 00:46:45,000
were able to escape to Sweden.

876
00:46:45,000 --> 00:46:48,260
So then it was the crop
of the crop, so to say,

877
00:46:48,260 --> 00:46:49,430
of intellectuals.

878
00:46:49,430 --> 00:46:52,820
There were not really workers
in between those Jews.

879
00:46:52,820 --> 00:46:54,990
Everybody was Herr Doktor.

880
00:46:54,990 --> 00:47:01,920
And so they decided that you
combat hunger by culture.

881
00:47:01,920 --> 00:47:07,490
So they had readings,
and they had--

882
00:47:07,490 --> 00:47:12,425
they smuggled in one
piano to have an opera.

883
00:47:12,425 --> 00:47:15,230

884
00:47:15,230 --> 00:47:17,940
And they were putting together--

885
00:47:17,940 --> 00:47:20,870

886
00:47:20,870 --> 00:47:27,180
that was I think
Verdi's Requiem.

887
00:47:27,180 --> 00:47:30,740
Well, anyhow, they performed
the day when that--

888
00:47:30,740 --> 00:47:31,580
they didn't know.

889
00:47:31,580 --> 00:47:33,290
That was the horror of it.

890
00:47:33,290 --> 00:47:38,150
When the 5,000 people
went to gas in Auschwitz.

891
00:47:38,150 --> 00:47:43,850
But they had a [? Requiem. ?]
And they really were kind of--

892
00:47:43,850 --> 00:47:47,720
they had fiddlers going
where the really old people,

893
00:47:47,720 --> 00:47:49,220
you know, who were starving.

894
00:47:49,220 --> 00:47:54,110
Because you were getting food
also according to your job.

895
00:47:54,110 --> 00:47:56,360
If you were younger.

896
00:47:56,360 --> 00:48:02,030
you get more, because you
worked on a more strenuous job.

897

00:48:02,030 --> 00:48:05,480
Whereas the old people who
couldn't work, got the--

898
00:48:05,480 --> 00:48:09,170
And so that they
were going, fiddlers

899
00:48:09,170 --> 00:48:13,100
around playing Viennese
schmaltz music.

900
00:48:13,100 --> 00:48:15,860
But it was something
which I don't think

901
00:48:15,860 --> 00:48:21,320
anybody can imagine that--

902
00:48:21,320 --> 00:48:26,690
well, it's like in any
ghetto, if the people say,

903
00:48:26,690 --> 00:48:28,010
no, you will not kill us.

904
00:48:28,010 --> 00:48:31,850
We will really
survive by culture.

905
00:48:31,850 --> 00:48:35,240
We have it, and
that will save us.

906
00:48:35,240 --> 00:48:37,190
And it did.

907
00:48:37,190 --> 00:48:38,720
And--

908
00:48:38,720 --> 00:48:41,890
What did you take part in?

909

00:48:41,890 --> 00:48:43,650

No, I went to all these.

910

00:48:43,650 --> 00:48:46,310

You went to all these
concerts and readings?

911

00:48:46,310 --> 00:48:49,100

Yeah, yeah.

912

00:48:49,100 --> 00:48:52,880

But there was a
social life kind of.

913

00:48:52,880 --> 00:48:55,640

Not that you had food
and not that you had--

914

00:48:55,640 --> 00:48:58,190

915

00:48:58,190 --> 00:49:00,950

What did it consist
of, your social life?

916

00:49:00,950 --> 00:49:04,640

Well, you saw people, or you--

917

00:49:04,640 --> 00:49:08,840

I can't tell you
that, but it's--

918

00:49:08,840 --> 00:49:17,660

there was a certain kind of--

919

00:49:17,660 --> 00:49:22,250

which the other camp,
of course, didn't have.

920

00:49:22,250 --> 00:49:25,550

What about contact with
other young men your age?

921
00:49:25,550 --> 00:49:30,710
Yes, we saw them and there was--

922
00:49:30,710 --> 00:49:31,550
Any romances?

923
00:49:31,550 --> 00:49:32,670
Any--

924
00:49:32,670 --> 00:49:34,760
Yes, there were romances.

925
00:49:34,760 --> 00:49:38,230
And of course, most of
them didn't come back.

926
00:49:38,230 --> 00:49:41,600
And then we-- both of them--

927
00:49:41,600 --> 00:49:46,700
Were you able to spend time with
other young men out of crowds?

928
00:49:46,700 --> 00:49:47,260
Any privacy?

929
00:49:47,260 --> 00:49:51,260
Well, that's what I cannot
remember, really, too much.

930
00:49:51,260 --> 00:49:54,110
Because I know that
you had to be--

931
00:49:54,110 --> 00:49:56,720
you couldn't be in
the evening out.

932
00:49:56,720 --> 00:50:01,220
And you worked eight
or whatever hours.

933

00:50:01,220 --> 00:50:08,030

So I can't-- somehow I know
that we were together, but how--

934

00:50:08,030 --> 00:50:10,580

Were there any days that
you didn't have to work?

935

00:50:10,580 --> 00:50:11,540

I think Sundays.

936

00:50:11,540 --> 00:50:12,498

Sunday was the day off?

937

00:50:12,498 --> 00:50:14,270

Perhaps, but I'm not sure.

938

00:50:14,270 --> 00:50:16,980

I really am not sure.

939

00:50:16,980 --> 00:50:21,350

And because also I entered
working without knowing

940

00:50:21,350 --> 00:50:22,640

what it means, really.

941

00:50:22,640 --> 00:50:25,310

I mean, it was not
like a person who

942

00:50:25,310 --> 00:50:27,920

finishes school and
gets a job, I mean,

943

00:50:27,920 --> 00:50:31,280

so that you will have some--

944

00:50:31,280 --> 00:50:32,450

but--

945

00:50:32,450 --> 00:50:35,150

How did you feel about
the lack of privacy

946

00:50:35,150 --> 00:50:36,990

in your living conditions?

947

00:50:36,990 --> 00:50:40,280

I think that you are so
scared that you don't

948

00:50:40,280 --> 00:50:44,030

think about certain things.

949

00:50:44,030 --> 00:50:49,930

It's the human nature can look,
how did people survive seven

950

00:50:49,930 --> 00:50:51,950

years in a Vietnamese prison?

951

00:50:51,950 --> 00:51:00,530

I mean, something happens to
the brain or whatever it is.

952

00:51:00,530 --> 00:51:05,460

953

00:51:05,460 --> 00:51:08,250

Did your sister do the
same kind of work you did?

954

00:51:08,250 --> 00:51:10,260

Was she working
alongside of you?

955

00:51:10,260 --> 00:51:11,520

Yes.

956

00:51:11,520 --> 00:51:14,060

Or I alongside her.

957

00:51:14,060 --> 00:51:15,600

And what about your parents?

958

00:51:15,600 --> 00:51:16,740

Were they working?

959

00:51:16,740 --> 00:51:17,380

Yes.

960

00:51:17,380 --> 00:51:18,630

What kind of work did they do?

961

00:51:18,630 --> 00:51:21,463

Well, that's what I don't
know anymore, what my father

962

00:51:21,463 --> 00:51:22,380

and mother were doing.

963

00:51:22,380 --> 00:51:25,230

And their health
was OK in Theresien?

964

00:51:25,230 --> 00:51:27,240

Yeah, yeah.

965

00:51:27,240 --> 00:51:28,470

Kind of, yeah.

966

00:51:28,470 --> 00:51:30,210

And your health?

967

00:51:30,210 --> 00:51:35,160

Yes, we got both
of us encephalitis.

968

00:51:35,160 --> 00:51:38,025

Because that was a sudden--

969

00:51:38,025 --> 00:51:39,070

An epidemic?

970
00:51:39,070 --> 00:51:40,090
Epidemic.

971
00:51:40,090 --> 00:51:45,960
And of course they had
no medicine, but they--

972
00:51:45,960 --> 00:51:49,440
but I think that was one
time when the Germans allowed

973
00:51:49,440 --> 00:51:56,640
a little bit more food or
something, because these things

974
00:51:56,640 --> 00:51:58,620
don't know borders.

975
00:51:58,620 --> 00:52:08,190
So that-- because they
had infections there.

976
00:52:08,190 --> 00:52:09,610
They had the scarlet fever.

977
00:52:09,610 --> 00:52:13,260
Then they had the encephalitis.

978
00:52:13,260 --> 00:52:16,080
Kind of epidemics.

979
00:52:16,080 --> 00:52:18,840
What was it like for
you to be with people

980
00:52:18,840 --> 00:52:21,220
from other countries?

981
00:52:21,220 --> 00:52:23,280
The other refugees
who came to the camp?

982
00:52:23,280 --> 00:52:25,200
Did you mix with them?

983
00:52:25,200 --> 00:52:27,900
No, we were kind of the--

984
00:52:27,900 --> 00:52:30,540
first of all, the
Danes had a bit--

985
00:52:30,540 --> 00:52:36,960
they were under the
protection of the chief rabbi

986
00:52:36,960 --> 00:52:41,340
plus the archbishop
or whatever of Sweden.

987
00:52:41,340 --> 00:52:43,050
So they got parcels.

988
00:52:43,050 --> 00:52:45,210
They got much better treatment.

989
00:52:45,210 --> 00:52:47,010
And they were accounted for.

990
00:52:47,010 --> 00:52:49,320
I mean, you know,
the Swedes really--

991
00:52:49,320 --> 00:52:50,970
I think the Swedes did--

992
00:52:50,970 --> 00:52:55,200
I don't know what everything
they gave to the German--

993
00:52:55,200 --> 00:52:56,820
they gave them also--

994

00:52:56,820 --> 00:53:01,350
entrÃ©e to Norway, but they
also, I mean, took care of them.

995

00:53:01,350 --> 00:53:05,370
And the Dutch, they
also somehow didn't

996

00:53:05,370 --> 00:53:07,680
go to transport from Theresien.

997

00:53:07,680 --> 00:53:12,480
There was also some kind
of a protection for them.

998

00:53:12,480 --> 00:53:13,540
Not all.

999

00:53:13,540 --> 00:53:14,040
Sorry.

1000

00:53:14,040 --> 00:53:15,390
Not all.

1001

00:53:15,390 --> 00:53:19,860
So perhaps the Dutch
didn't have it so well.

1002

00:53:19,860 --> 00:53:25,350
But with the Germans and
Austrian, I don't know.

1003

00:53:25,350 --> 00:53:27,990
But you spoke fluent
German at that point?

1004

00:53:27,990 --> 00:53:29,310
No, I spoke German.

1005

00:53:29,310 --> 00:53:30,270
You spoke German.

1006

00:53:30,270 --> 00:53:35,730

We didn't like it, because it was the language of Hitler.

1007

00:53:35,730 --> 00:53:38,460

You know, I mean, it's not--

1008

00:53:38,460 --> 00:53:40,360

something we're kind of resisted.

1009

00:53:40,360 --> 00:53:43,680

And I remember I once cried to my grandmother,

1010

00:53:43,680 --> 00:53:45,640

why do we have to learn German?

1011

00:53:45,640 --> 00:53:47,430

And she said, look at the map.

1012

00:53:47,430 --> 00:53:52,170

You know, and of course, if we learned Russian,

1013

00:53:52,170 --> 00:53:53,940

it would have been better, but--

1014

00:53:53,940 --> 00:53:58,990

1015

00:53:58,990 --> 00:54:04,210

Were there any particularly physically difficult

1016

00:54:04,210 --> 00:54:05,890

experiences for you there?

1017

00:54:05,890 --> 00:54:10,660

I know you were working hard and the food was scarce,

1018

00:54:10,660 --> 00:54:13,825
but did you have any situations
where it was a particularly

1019

00:54:13,825 --> 00:54:15,280
difficult?

1020

00:54:15,280 --> 00:54:19,810
Because of the
time after we left

1021

00:54:19,810 --> 00:54:23,950
to go to Auschwitz and
then to Germany was so bad

1022

00:54:23,950 --> 00:54:29,380
that I probably automatically
blocked anything bad

1023

00:54:29,380 --> 00:54:31,390
about the Theresienstadt,
because that

1024

00:54:31,390 --> 00:54:33,580
was the good times.

1025

00:54:33,580 --> 00:54:37,307
The good times were not Prague,
because I couldn't remember.

1026

00:54:37,307 --> 00:54:38,140
You know, that was--

1027

00:54:38,140 --> 00:54:39,440
It's all relative, you mean.

1028

00:54:39,440 --> 00:54:39,940
Yeah.

1029

00:54:39,940 --> 00:54:40,440
Yeah.

1030
00:54:40,440 --> 00:54:44,560

1031
00:54:44,560 --> 00:54:47,140
So then you stayed
there working.

1032
00:54:47,140 --> 00:54:48,100
Yeah.

1033
00:54:48,100 --> 00:54:49,960
Until when?

1034
00:54:49,960 --> 00:54:52,210
We went in '44.

1035
00:54:52,210 --> 00:54:54,620
It was, I think, November '44.

1036
00:54:54,620 --> 00:54:57,100
Oh, so you were there for--

1037
00:54:57,100 --> 00:54:59,320
A year and something, yeah.

1038
00:54:59,320 --> 00:55:02,170
15, 16 months.

1039
00:55:02,170 --> 00:55:05,650
Perhaps it was October.

1040
00:55:05,650 --> 00:55:08,800
And all that time you
lived with your family.

1041
00:55:08,800 --> 00:55:10,623
Yeah, we moved
somehow around there.

1042
00:55:10,623 --> 00:55:11,290
In the compound?

1043
00:55:11,290 --> 00:55:13,200
I think we did, yeah.

1044
00:55:13,200 --> 00:55:15,750
Yes, yeah, yeah.

1045
00:55:15,750 --> 00:55:16,960
I think so.

1046
00:55:16,960 --> 00:55:18,460
You know my sister would--

1047
00:55:18,460 --> 00:55:22,280
I don't know I never
kind of concentrated on

1048
00:55:22,280 --> 00:55:25,480
That and then how did you
know-- again how did you know?

1049
00:55:25,480 --> 00:55:27,990
Oh, you got your
pieces of paper.

1050
00:55:27,990 --> 00:55:32,650
The Germans were very good
about everybody's accounted for,

1051
00:55:32,650 --> 00:55:34,790
and everybody gets those.

1052
00:55:34,790 --> 00:55:38,770
And you're still wearing
your clothes from home?

1053
00:55:38,770 --> 00:55:40,690
We didn't have uniforms.

1054
00:55:40,690 --> 00:55:41,510
That I know.

1055
00:55:41,510 --> 00:55:44,650
So then probably.

1056
00:55:44,650 --> 00:55:47,500
So you got your notice
that you would be leaving.

1057
00:55:47,500 --> 00:55:50,230
Yeah.

1058
00:55:50,230 --> 00:55:51,360
And that was bad.

1059
00:55:51,360 --> 00:55:53,910

1060
00:55:53,910 --> 00:55:56,380
We had a very good
friend who we'd

1061
00:55:56,380 --> 00:56:00,520
met there in Theresienstadt.

1062
00:56:00,520 --> 00:56:05,360
Her name was Eva, Iva.

1063
00:56:05,360 --> 00:56:08,240
And Neumann, like ours.

1064
00:56:08,240 --> 00:56:09,340
From Czechoslovakia?

1065
00:56:09,340 --> 00:56:12,340
She was, yeah, Czech.

1066
00:56:12,340 --> 00:56:13,720
She was not from Prague.

1067
00:56:13,720 --> 00:56:16,120
She came from some city.

1068

00:56:16,120 --> 00:56:19,290

1069

00:56:19,290 --> 00:56:22,260

She was only half-Jewish.

1070

00:56:22,260 --> 00:56:29,610

And absolutely this non-Jewish,
this Czech kind with this--

1071

00:56:29,610 --> 00:56:39,300

and she was much more kind of a
person the same age as we were,

1072

00:56:39,300 --> 00:56:42,690

and much tougher,
because she came

1073

00:56:42,690 --> 00:56:46,410

from tougher background,
which probably both of us

1074

00:56:46,410 --> 00:56:47,470

liked very much.

1075

00:56:47,470 --> 00:56:53,020

I mean, not to us, but she
took life much better than--

1076

00:56:53,020 --> 00:56:59,630

And she was in the
same transport.

1077

00:56:59,630 --> 00:57:04,840

So that we were the
three of us, kind of.

1078

00:57:04,840 --> 00:57:13,405

1079

00:57:13,405 --> 00:57:17,500

And the transport always

went late at night.

1080
00:57:17,500 --> 00:57:21,850
It was probably not so
late, but it was dark.

1081
00:57:21,850 --> 00:57:25,980
And as far as I can remember,
they were not normal wagons.

1082
00:57:25,980 --> 00:57:28,540
But they were kind of--

1083
00:57:28,540 --> 00:57:33,130
I don't know whether
we sat on ours.

1084
00:57:33,130 --> 00:57:40,360
We had what we were
taking with us.

1085
00:57:40,360 --> 00:57:45,960
And it took a long
time to get there.

1086
00:57:45,960 --> 00:57:50,620

1087
00:57:50,620 --> 00:57:52,295
We got to Auschwitz.

1088
00:57:52,295 --> 00:57:54,910

1089
00:57:54,910 --> 00:57:58,480
And it was dark, and there
was a German with the dogs,

1090
00:57:58,480 --> 00:58:01,720
and they were
immediately dividing you,

1091

00:58:01,720 --> 00:58:05,350
this way, which still
didn't know what that meant.

1092
00:58:05,350 --> 00:58:13,840

1093
00:58:13,840 --> 00:58:18,840
When somebody asked what
happened to the other--

1094
00:58:18,840 --> 00:58:22,630
because they marched,
I think, somewhere.

1095
00:58:22,630 --> 00:58:25,870
What happened to the others?

1096
00:58:25,870 --> 00:58:29,260
That was already a
Jewish kapo or whatever

1097
00:58:29,260 --> 00:58:31,810
who said, "you see
the smoke from there?"

1098
00:58:31,810 --> 00:58:33,880
That's from your people."

1099
00:58:33,880 --> 00:58:41,770
And they marched us to that
place, where they look at you

1100
00:58:41,770 --> 00:58:46,570
and strip and shave
you, [INAUDIBLE]..

1101
00:58:46,570 --> 00:58:53,340
And I think that went
through the whole night.

1102
00:58:53,340 --> 00:58:53,970
I don't know.

1103
00:58:53,970 --> 00:58:59,230

1104
00:58:59,230 --> 00:59:06,796
And they put us then
in the barracks.

1105
00:59:06,796 --> 00:59:11,940

1106
00:59:11,940 --> 00:59:16,560
And it was terribly cold
to stand that Zahlappell,

1107
00:59:16,560 --> 00:59:20,510
but they had the dogs there.

1108
00:59:20,510 --> 00:59:24,410
And they started to take
down only then your--

1109
00:59:24,410 --> 00:59:27,440
by that time, you had no
documents, no nothing.

1110
00:59:27,440 --> 00:59:30,200
Until that time in
Theresien, you always

1111
00:59:30,200 --> 00:59:31,880
had a piece of document.

1112
00:59:31,880 --> 00:59:34,340
You existed as such.

1113
00:59:34,340 --> 00:59:42,260
And because they took everything
away and put us in the prison

1114
00:59:42,260 --> 00:59:49,070
or in uniforms or whatever, so

that we had nothing of ours.

1115
00:59:49,070 --> 01:00:00,746
And there came a kapo to
take down our particulars.

1116
01:00:00,746 --> 01:00:03,830

1117
01:00:03,830 --> 01:00:08,960
You know, name, born, where.

1118
01:00:08,960 --> 01:00:15,350
And when it came to
either Alena or me,

1119
01:00:15,350 --> 01:00:18,290
we were together, those three.

1120
01:00:18,290 --> 01:00:19,730
We started to give--

1121
01:00:19,730 --> 01:00:21,290
the name was really the same.

1122
01:00:21,290 --> 01:00:24,300

1123
01:00:24,300 --> 01:00:28,695
But we started to give
the same date of birth.

1124
01:00:28,695 --> 01:00:32,170

1125
01:00:32,170 --> 01:00:40,700
And this kapo must have had
two seconds humanity in,

1126
01:00:40,700 --> 01:00:42,040
and she said--

1127

01:00:42,040 --> 01:00:45,580
barked, give a year different.

1128

01:00:45,580 --> 01:00:48,100
So we did.

1129

01:00:48,100 --> 01:00:51,610
Because we would
have ended in that--

1130

01:00:51,610 --> 01:00:58,980
which-- and I still
don't know how long

1131

01:00:58,980 --> 01:01:03,800
we stayed in Auschwitz.

1132

01:01:03,800 --> 01:01:08,330
Because they were by that
time sending people who were

1133

01:01:08,330 --> 01:01:13,670
able to the slave labor camps.

1134

01:01:13,670 --> 01:01:14,240
It was--

1135

01:01:14,240 --> 01:01:19,200

1136

01:01:19,200 --> 01:01:22,530
And I think it was
two, three weeks.

1137

01:01:22,530 --> 01:01:25,550
I only remember the cold.

1138

01:01:25,550 --> 01:01:31,350
It was full of mud,
standing in that without--

1139

01:01:31,350 --> 01:01:34,070
somehow they didn't
have proper uniforms.

1140
01:01:34,070 --> 01:01:36,920
So we had like summer dresses.

1141
01:01:36,920 --> 01:01:46,590
It was cold, and we were
standing in the morning,

1142
01:01:46,590 --> 01:01:48,240
and we were standing
in the evening.

1143
01:01:48,240 --> 01:01:55,408

1144
01:01:55,408 --> 01:02:01,240
And then we went through more
of those kind of exclusive kind

1145
01:02:01,240 --> 01:02:01,960
of--

1146
01:02:01,960 --> 01:02:04,870
they were trying-- well,
the exclusions, whom they

1147
01:02:04,870 --> 01:02:08,800
sent to gas and things here.

1148
01:02:08,800 --> 01:02:20,500
And then one day, there was
a big, fat German sitting

1149
01:02:20,500 --> 01:02:24,890
with dresses and shoes,
because we had no shoes.

1150
01:02:24,890 --> 01:02:30,640
We had only kind of
this wooden shoe.

1151
01:02:30,640 --> 01:02:31,420
A clog.

1152
01:02:31,420 --> 01:02:32,970
Yeah.

1153
01:02:32,970 --> 01:02:34,000