

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:00,510

2

00:00:00,510 --> 00:00:03,510

This is the United States  
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3

00:00:03,510 --> 00:00:07,140

interview with Rene  
Tressler conducted

4

00:00:07,140 --> 00:00:12,180

by Gail Schwartz on  
February 20th, 1997,

5

00:00:12,180 --> 00:00:14,250

in Silver Spring, Maryland.

6

00:00:14,250 --> 00:00:19,230

This is tape number two,  
side A. Is there anything

7

00:00:19,230 --> 00:00:22,620

else you wanted to add about  
your brother's transport, what

8

00:00:22,620 --> 00:00:25,470

date it took place  
on and so forth?

9

00:00:25,470 --> 00:00:28,530

OK, my brother, as I  
had mentioned before,

10

00:00:28,530 --> 00:00:33,870

left with the Edelstein  
group to prepare the city,

11

00:00:33,870 --> 00:00:42,390

and that was on the  
4th of November, 1941.

12

00:00:42,390 --> 00:00:49,350

The transport name was ST for  
Stab, which means the leaders.

13

00:00:49,350 --> 00:00:54,750

And that transport became--

14

00:00:54,750 --> 00:00:57,600

the people of that  
transport became the member

15

00:00:57,600 --> 00:01:02,970

of the so-called Aeltestenrat,  
which means the Board of Elders

16

00:01:02,970 --> 00:01:05,870

of Theresienstadt.

17

00:01:05,870 --> 00:01:09,620

Any specific names you wanted to  
mention who were in that group?

18

00:01:09,620 --> 00:01:13,490

There is only 23 names here.

19

00:01:13,490 --> 00:01:17,870

There was Fredy Hirsch was  
a member of that group,

20

00:01:17,870 --> 00:01:19,940

as we mentioned his name before.

21

00:01:19,940 --> 00:01:26,510

He was the leader of  
the youth Hagibor.

22

00:01:26,510 --> 00:01:34,280

And I mean, the things that  
he was in charge of Hagibor

23

00:01:34,280 --> 00:01:39,830

where the children were allowed

to spend their free time,

24

00:01:39,830 --> 00:01:40,910  
as I mentioned before.

25

00:01:40,910 --> 00:01:44,360  
And Freddy Hirsch,  
actually, already in that

26

00:01:44,360 --> 00:01:48,770  
time was a very popular  
person, and even more

27

00:01:48,770 --> 00:01:52,820  
known, and popular,  
and famous, actually,

28

00:01:52,820 --> 00:01:58,670  
became in Auschwitz,  
Birkenau, where

29

00:01:58,670 --> 00:02:01,580  
he was the leader of  
the children's block.

30

00:02:01,580 --> 00:02:05,960  
And there's another  
story about him

31

00:02:05,960 --> 00:02:07,970  
that we maybe come to later--

32

00:02:07,970 --> 00:02:11,210  
how he died.

33

00:02:11,210 --> 00:02:14,270  
Did you say goodbye  
to him when he left?

34

00:02:14,270 --> 00:02:15,680  
Left for where?

35

00:02:15,680 --> 00:02:16,370  
When he went.

36  
00:02:16,370 --> 00:02:18,470  
To Theresienstadt?

37  
00:02:18,470 --> 00:02:20,720  
Yeah, we all said  
goodbye to him.

38  
00:02:20,720 --> 00:02:24,410  
Somebody else took over  
to organize the games

39  
00:02:24,410 --> 00:02:25,670  
in Hagibor place.

40  
00:02:25,670 --> 00:02:27,200  
And he left.

41  
00:02:27,200 --> 00:02:30,080  
I knew he is leaving with my  
brother in the same group,

42  
00:02:30,080 --> 00:02:34,250  
although most of the  
Prague Jews did not

43  
00:02:34,250 --> 00:02:37,490  
have any idea what  
that group is about,

44  
00:02:37,490 --> 00:02:40,700  
but I knew since my brother  
was a member of it, right?

45  
00:02:40,700 --> 00:02:44,450  
Did you have any contact--

46  
00:02:44,450 --> 00:02:46,580  
correspondence-- with  
your brother once he left?

47

00:02:46,580 --> 00:02:50,810

No, none whatsoever until  
we got there ourselves.

48

00:02:50,810 --> 00:02:53,120

We didn't know if  
he is even alive

49

00:02:53,120 --> 00:02:56,300

and where he is, how  
he is, nothing, no.

50

00:02:56,300 --> 00:03:01,490

Now, was your father coming  
to see you at this time?

51

00:03:01,490 --> 00:03:03,840

No, my father, as  
I mentioned before,

52

00:03:03,840 --> 00:03:08,690

was married to the German  
girl, and I once in a while

53

00:03:08,690 --> 00:03:14,060

came to see him in his  
apartment in Prague,

54

00:03:14,060 --> 00:03:20,810

but, otherwise, we had not  
regular contact with him, no.

55

00:03:20,810 --> 00:03:24,840

Naturally, my father knew  
that my brother is leaving.

56

00:03:24,840 --> 00:03:30,240

And obviously, my brother  
came to say goodbye to him,

57

00:03:30,240 --> 00:03:32,390

but that was it.

58

00:03:32,390 --> 00:03:36,530

Did you have any relationship  
with your stepmother?

59

00:03:36,530 --> 00:03:41,690

No, just kind of a  
friendly relationship,

60

00:03:41,690 --> 00:03:45,790

yeah, but nothing specific.

61

00:03:45,790 --> 00:03:47,470

Did you get to know her family--

62

00:03:47,470 --> 00:03:49,040

her German family?

63

00:03:49,040 --> 00:03:54,910

Yes, I knew her German  
family already from before

64

00:03:54,910 --> 00:04:00,520

the occupation  
because as a child,

65

00:04:00,520 --> 00:04:04,990

while they were in divorce with  
my mother in '37 still living

66

00:04:04,990 --> 00:04:11,050

in ÅsstÅ, naturally, I went like  
for school vacations to visit

67

00:04:11,050 --> 00:04:12,130

my father.

68

00:04:12,130 --> 00:04:16,720

And he already lived  
at her parent's place

69

00:04:16,720 --> 00:04:20,250

in the city of the

name Hummeldorf,

70

00:04:20,250 --> 00:04:25,150  
and in German or in English,  
Komotau, which was not very far

71

00:04:25,150 --> 00:04:31,840  
away from where we lived in  
Aussig-- about 60 miles or so,

72

00:04:31,840 --> 00:04:33,670  
70 miles maybe.

73

00:04:33,670 --> 00:04:38,570  
So your father was accepted  
by his German in-laws?

74

00:04:38,570 --> 00:04:41,720  
Yes, I'm not really  
sure of that.

75

00:04:41,720 --> 00:04:45,160  
I feel that he must have  
been since he lived together

76

00:04:45,160 --> 00:04:49,930  
with them in the same  
village and same place, yeah.

77

00:04:49,930 --> 00:04:51,640  
Is there anything  
you want to add

78

00:04:51,640 --> 00:04:55,840  
about the year between the  
time that your brother left

79

00:04:55,840 --> 00:04:58,210  
and the time that you  
and your mother left?

80

00:04:58,210 --> 00:04:59,550  
Any other.

81  
00:04:59,550 --> 00:05:01,290  
The time my brother  
left and what?

82  
00:05:01,290 --> 00:05:03,040  
And then the time that  
you and your mother

83  
00:05:03,040 --> 00:05:06,640  
left between 1941 and '42.

84  
00:05:06,640 --> 00:05:09,790  
There's a bunch of  
happenings, a bunch of stories

85  
00:05:09,790 --> 00:05:17,260  
there, which I am thinking which  
one I should tell you about.

86  
00:05:17,260 --> 00:05:21,490  
Maybe it would be interesting,  
and, again, I hate to say that,

87  
00:05:21,490 --> 00:05:25,720  
but, naturally, it is a part  
of one of the story of my book

88  
00:05:25,720 --> 00:05:26,800  
too.

89  
00:05:26,800 --> 00:05:31,420  
The story about a  
Obersturmbannfuhrer

90  
00:05:31,420 --> 00:05:35,260  
whom I named in the  
book Obersturmbannfuhrer

91  
00:05:35,260 --> 00:05:38,140  
[? Fertzer, ?] but I don't  
think that was his name.



92

00:05:38,140 --> 00:05:40,150

And, in fact, I forgot his name.

93

00:05:40,150 --> 00:05:45,310

And when we lived in that  
nice modern apartment

94

00:05:45,310 --> 00:05:55,358

in the Czech brother's building  
church, one day, he came to us.

95

00:05:55,358 --> 00:05:55,900

I don't know.

96

00:05:55,900 --> 00:06:00,550

He was recommended by  
some organization that

97

00:06:00,550 --> 00:06:07,150

took care of the  
German officials who

98

00:06:07,150 --> 00:06:10,900

came to Prague with  
the occupation army

99

00:06:10,900 --> 00:06:13,450

to accommodate them, you know?

100

00:06:13,450 --> 00:06:18,940

And that office, which was kind  
of very still friendly and nice

101

00:06:18,940 --> 00:06:23,710

in that time, called my mother  
once that I understood later,

102

00:06:23,710 --> 00:06:28,240

and prepared her for  
one man who would like

103

00:06:28,240 --> 00:06:32,620

to discuss lodging with her.

104

00:06:32,620 --> 00:06:35,140

She had no idea  
what's it all about.

105

00:06:35,140 --> 00:06:36,160

And he came.

106

00:06:36,160 --> 00:06:39,370

He was a man in civil clothes.

107

00:06:39,370 --> 00:06:45,370

And he was trying to persuade my  
mother to let him our apartment

108

00:06:45,370 --> 00:06:52,610

and to move to another apartment  
that he would provide for us.

109

00:06:52,610 --> 00:06:55,480

And he was explaining that  
there is some provisions

110

00:06:55,480 --> 00:06:59,170

that we would have to leave  
modern apartments anyway--

111

00:06:59,170 --> 00:07:03,730

the Jews, sooner or  
later in a forceful way--

112

00:07:03,730 --> 00:07:06,610

and this way we could  
choose, and we could do it,

113

00:07:06,610 --> 00:07:09,130

you know, nice and friendly.

114

00:07:09,130 --> 00:07:16,270

And so we moved,  
although, actually, we

115

00:07:16,270 --> 00:07:18,280  
had no other choice.

116

00:07:18,280 --> 00:07:24,910  
And also, when he was talking  
to my mother later since

117

00:07:24,910 --> 00:07:28,780  
my mother still didn't  
understand his authority

118

00:07:28,780 --> 00:07:34,270  
from which he is trying to  
do this kind of exchange,

119

00:07:34,270 --> 00:07:39,790  
so finally, he snapped  
his heels and said

120

00:07:39,790 --> 00:07:43,390  
I am Obersturmbannfuhrer  
So-and-so here

121

00:07:43,390 --> 00:07:51,980  
in Prague with the occupation  
authorities, and that was it.

122

00:07:51,980 --> 00:07:55,750  
And SS Obersturmbannfuhrer,  
in that time,

123

00:07:55,750 --> 00:07:58,210  
we didn't know too  
much what it means.

124

00:07:58,210 --> 00:08:01,690  
Unfortunately, we  
learned soon enough.

125

00:08:01,690 --> 00:08:06,350  
And we moved to the old  
place, as I told you,

126

00:08:06,350 --> 00:08:08,470  
with that other family.

127

00:08:08,470 --> 00:08:12,400  
And he, when they  
were negotiating,

128

00:08:12,400 --> 00:08:14,470  
so-called, he was  
telling my mother

129

00:08:14,470 --> 00:08:17,560  
that those people in  
that other apartment

130

00:08:17,560 --> 00:08:20,080  
will stay there only  
for a couple months

131

00:08:20,080 --> 00:08:22,000  
or so for a short  
time, and then we

132

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:25,760  
will have the whole  
apartment for ourselves.

133

00:08:25,760 --> 00:08:30,310  
And so that he kept  
his word there.

134

00:08:30,310 --> 00:08:33,850  
That whole family was sent with  
one of the first transports

135

00:08:33,850 --> 00:08:35,559  
to Lublin--

136

00:08:35,559 --> 00:08:38,530  
to Lodz, actually, in Poland.

137

00:08:38,530 --> 00:08:41,299

And none of them  
returned naturally.

138  
00:08:41,299 --> 00:08:44,770  
So that we didn't  
know in that time.

139  
00:08:44,770 --> 00:08:51,010  
And so we stayed there  
and also the men--

140  
00:08:51,010 --> 00:08:55,660  
the SS men one day  
came back to visit us.

141  
00:08:55,660 --> 00:08:56,680  
I mean, to visit us?

142  
00:08:56,680 --> 00:08:58,520  
He just showed up.

143  
00:08:58,520 --> 00:09:03,950  
And that is kind of a more  
or less sad and funny story.

144  
00:09:03,950 --> 00:09:06,470  
He fell in love with my mother.

145  
00:09:06,470 --> 00:09:12,770  
And my mother kind of  
rejected him, naturally.

146  
00:09:12,770 --> 00:09:16,580  
And that was already at  
the time when my brother

147  
00:09:16,580 --> 00:09:18,020  
was in Theresienstadt.

148  
00:09:18,020 --> 00:09:26,240  
And so my mother, when  
he became too fresh,

149

00:09:26,240 --> 00:09:32,390

she punched him in the  
face, and he left completely

150

00:09:32,390 --> 00:09:35,210

with his black SS uniform.

151

00:09:35,210 --> 00:09:41,330

And a few weeks later, we  
were going to Theresienstadt.

152

00:09:41,330 --> 00:09:45,950

And that was the result of that  
I think because, otherwise, we

153

00:09:45,950 --> 00:09:48,560

would have stayed in  
Prague for much longer time

154

00:09:48,560 --> 00:09:51,170

if not through the whole war.

155

00:09:51,170 --> 00:09:52,820

Because there was--

156

00:09:52,820 --> 00:09:55,670

I hate to say that but it was  
the truth-- the people who

157

00:09:55,670 --> 00:10:00,410

went with that special  
transport with Edelstein,

158

00:10:00,410 --> 00:10:06,380

their family was supposed to  
be also protected in Prague

159

00:10:06,380 --> 00:10:08,930

as long as, you know,  
probably forever.

160

00:10:08,930 --> 00:10:14,360

But in that case,  
they just sent us too.

161  
00:10:14,360 --> 00:10:19,070  
But I also learned that all  
other people sooner or later

162  
00:10:19,070 --> 00:10:21,080  
went anyway.

163  
00:10:21,080 --> 00:10:24,470  
Were you ever physically  
accosted on the street?

164  
00:10:24,470 --> 00:10:26,420  
No, I think you  
asked me that before.

165  
00:10:26,420 --> 00:10:32,270  
No, I was never physically  
hurt or attacked

166  
00:10:32,270 --> 00:10:34,130  
on the street in Prague, no.

167  
00:10:34,130 --> 00:10:36,740  
I understand in other  
occupied countries

168  
00:10:36,740 --> 00:10:39,200  
that was the case very often.

169  
00:10:39,200 --> 00:10:41,780  
In Prague, I must admit--

170  
00:10:41,780 --> 00:10:43,250  
or I mean not admit.

171  
00:10:43,250 --> 00:10:48,650  
I must say although there  
were a lot of antisemites

172

00:10:48,650 --> 00:10:51,050  
within the Czech nation--

173  
00:10:51,050 --> 00:10:56,390  
people-- but I believe  
they were the mildest ones

174  
00:10:56,390 --> 00:10:58,820  
of all the occupied countries.

175  
00:10:58,820 --> 00:11:02,990  
Like I know in Poland,  
they had terrific problems

176  
00:11:02,990 --> 00:11:07,550  
with physical beatings  
and so on the street.

177  
00:11:07,550 --> 00:11:14,140  
And I don't recall any of  
such cases in Prague, no.

178  
00:11:14,140 --> 00:11:18,700  
OK, you said that a few  
weeks after this incident

179  
00:11:18,700 --> 00:11:22,300  
with this man, your  
family was notified.

180  
00:11:22,300 --> 00:11:23,860  
How were you notified?

181  
00:11:23,860 --> 00:11:25,960  
Oh, as everybody else.

182  
00:11:25,960 --> 00:11:33,310  
You got they came like a  
man with postman's bag,

183  
00:11:33,310 --> 00:11:36,880  
and he took out a piece  
of paper, gave it to you,



184  
00:11:36,880 --> 00:11:38,770  
you had to sign  
it, and that paper

185  
00:11:38,770 --> 00:11:43,090  
said you have to come  
to the gathering place

186  
00:11:43,090 --> 00:11:49,750  
for the purpose of being  
transported to another place,

187  
00:11:49,750 --> 00:11:50,710  
all right?

188  
00:11:50,710 --> 00:11:53,320  
Were you home when this came?

189  
00:11:53,320 --> 00:11:54,640  
Yes, I was, right.

190  
00:11:54,640 --> 00:11:55,840  
Because they came at night.

191  
00:11:55,840 --> 00:11:59,830  
They always came at  
night around midnight.

192  
00:11:59,830 --> 00:12:00,580  
I don't know why.

193  
00:12:00,580 --> 00:12:03,520  
How did you feel  
when you got that?

194  
00:12:03,520 --> 00:12:07,880  
I remember my mother was very  
unhappy, although, on one hand,

195  
00:12:07,880 --> 00:12:11,590  
she hoped that we would

be sent to the same place

196

00:12:11,590 --> 00:12:14,380

as my brother was,  
although we didn't know.

197

00:12:14,380 --> 00:12:17,230

And she was very unhappy,  
but she was also happy

198

00:12:17,230 --> 00:12:19,540

that she's going to  
see her son again.

199

00:12:19,540 --> 00:12:22,450

And then she was unhappy  
because she knew that I'm

200

00:12:22,450 --> 00:12:24,340

going to have to go too.

201

00:12:24,340 --> 00:12:27,730

And she would have  
rather spared me

202

00:12:27,730 --> 00:12:31,240

from that kind of  
experience, although she

203

00:12:31,240 --> 00:12:32,710

didn't know what  
kind of experience

204

00:12:32,710 --> 00:12:34,270

it's going to be either.

205

00:12:34,270 --> 00:12:38,470

And so we went, as I  
said, with the transport

206

00:12:38,470 --> 00:12:43,510

Cc in November '42.

207

00:12:43,510 --> 00:12:45,085

November 20th, 1942.

208

00:12:45,085 --> 00:12:46,180

Right.

209

00:12:46,180 --> 00:12:50,335

And we were in

Theresienstadt, right.

210

00:12:50,335 --> 00:12:52,450

And how many people  
were on that transport?

211

00:12:52,450 --> 00:12:55,570

A thousand, yeah.

212

00:12:55,570 --> 00:12:57,910

And you are 15 years old now.

213

00:12:57,910 --> 00:12:59,990

I am 15 years old now.

214

00:12:59,990 --> 00:13:02,340

And the transport were--

215

00:13:02,340 --> 00:13:05,218

I'm sorry, that was November,  
not December, right?

216

00:13:05,218 --> 00:13:06,010

Did I say November?

217

00:13:06,010 --> 00:13:06,760

You said November.

218

00:13:06,760 --> 00:13:08,020

20th of November.

219

00:13:08,020 --> 00:13:17,500

And there was a thousand people

there out of which 843 died.

220

00:13:17,500 --> 00:13:19,420

I'm knowing it

because I'm reading it

221

00:13:19,420 --> 00:13:23,860

right now from the

Theresienstadt memorial book.

222

00:13:23,860 --> 00:13:29,080

And 154 were liberated--

223

00:13:29,080 --> 00:13:31,330

three, they didn't know

what happened to them.

224

00:13:31,330 --> 00:13:34,420

But naturally, out

of those 154, I

225

00:13:34,420 --> 00:13:37,600

doubt too many will be

still living in these days.

226

00:13:37,600 --> 00:13:43,300

This is a number from

1945, and, obviously, there

227

00:13:43,300 --> 00:13:46,892

is just out of 154,

I don't really know,

228

00:13:46,892 --> 00:13:49,660

but I think maybe five or so.

229

00:13:49,660 --> 00:13:51,790

Let's talk about the

journey, or let's talk

230

00:13:51,790 --> 00:13:53,170

about first, getting--

231  
00:13:53,170 --> 00:13:55,270  
so you got this notice to come.

232  
00:13:55,270 --> 00:13:56,840  
And where did you go?

233  
00:13:56,840 --> 00:14:00,610  
We went in Prague  
at a place where

234  
00:14:00,610 --> 00:14:03,820  
there used to be world fairs--

235  
00:14:03,820 --> 00:14:06,340  
fairs, business fairs and so.

236  
00:14:06,340 --> 00:14:08,470  
And they gathered us there.

237  
00:14:08,470 --> 00:14:11,080  
We stayed there  
actually for two nights

238  
00:14:11,080 --> 00:14:13,420  
before the transport went.

239  
00:14:13,420 --> 00:14:15,040  
And then they took us.

240  
00:14:15,040 --> 00:14:16,810  
How did you sleep?

241  
00:14:16,810 --> 00:14:21,100  
On the floor, some  
mattresses, some blankets,

242  
00:14:21,100 --> 00:14:22,900  
and things on a wooden floor.

243  
00:14:22,900 --> 00:14:24,670  
It was an indoor place.

244  
00:14:24,670 --> 00:14:26,260  
What did you take  
with you from home?

245  
00:14:26,260 --> 00:14:31,385  
We were allowed to take  
a couple bags each one.

246  
00:14:31,385 --> 00:14:33,010  
So that's what we  
had, my mother and I.

247  
00:14:33,010 --> 00:14:34,840  
What did you take with you?

248  
00:14:34,840 --> 00:14:37,360  
I wouldn't really remember that.

249  
00:14:37,360 --> 00:14:42,310  
[LAUGHS] I think just  
some clothes, and yeah.

250  
00:14:42,310 --> 00:14:44,890  
Anything special that you wanted  
to take with you-- personal?

251  
00:14:44,890 --> 00:14:49,390

252  
00:14:49,390 --> 00:14:51,565  
Not really, no.

253  
00:14:51,565 --> 00:14:53,950  
No special books or  
anything like that?

254  
00:14:53,950 --> 00:14:57,340  
No, I don't-- not that  
I recall really, no.

255  
00:14:57,340 --> 00:15:03,430

We just went to  
TerezÃn, and we got--

256  
00:15:03,430 --> 00:15:09,570  
my mother got a place to stay.

257  
00:15:09,570 --> 00:15:12,310  
Well, wait, before we get there.

258  
00:15:12,310 --> 00:15:14,450  
You're still-- you're  
at this gathering place.

259  
00:15:14,450 --> 00:15:16,330  
And you're there for two nights.

260  
00:15:16,330 --> 00:15:19,850  
What did you do during the day?

261  
00:15:19,850 --> 00:15:23,210  
I think we just gathered  
wherever, whatever kids there

262  
00:15:23,210 --> 00:15:26,900  
were-- a few kids-- and  
played around, fooled around,

263  
00:15:26,900 --> 00:15:30,530  
or details, I wouldn't  
really remember that now.

264  
00:15:30,530 --> 00:15:32,780  
But I know we had--

265  
00:15:32,780 --> 00:15:36,640  
they gave us some food there.

266  
00:15:36,640 --> 00:15:41,140  
And it was not very  
restricted, except we were not

267  
00:15:41,140 --> 00:15:42,550

allowed to go out anymore.

268

00:15:42,550 --> 00:15:45,430

And the German guards, what  
was their treatment of you?

269

00:15:45,430 --> 00:15:48,550

I think the guards  
were kind of invisible.

270

00:15:48,550 --> 00:15:53,020

They were outside  
at the gates and so.

271

00:15:53,020 --> 00:15:55,630

So inside the rooms,  
I don't remember.

272

00:15:55,630 --> 00:15:58,720

I don't recall there would  
be any guards inside or so.

273

00:15:58,720 --> 00:16:01,360

And the sanitary facilities?

274

00:16:01,360 --> 00:16:04,045

Yeah, I think there  
were some toilets there.

275

00:16:04,045 --> 00:16:06,810

276

00:16:06,810 --> 00:16:07,965

And then how did you get--

277

00:16:07,965 --> 00:16:09,090

[INAUDIBLE] [? washroom. ?]

278

00:16:09,090 --> 00:16:11,610

How did you get  
to Theresienstadt?

279



00:16:11,610 --> 00:16:13,470  
By train, yeah.

280  
00:16:13,470 --> 00:16:15,790  
They took us to  
the train that was

281  
00:16:15,790 --> 00:16:20,550  
the railroad-- a small  
railroad station of Prague.

282  
00:16:20,550 --> 00:16:24,240  
And I think the name of the  
railroad station was Bubenec,

283  
00:16:24,240 --> 00:16:26,580  
and they took us there.

284  
00:16:26,580 --> 00:16:29,430  
I really don't recall whether  
we walked or they took us

285  
00:16:29,430 --> 00:16:31,470  
in a truck or something.

286  
00:16:31,470 --> 00:16:33,780  
I think we walked  
to there, yeah.

287  
00:16:33,780 --> 00:16:38,760  
And they put us on a train.

288  
00:16:38,760 --> 00:16:41,320

289  
00:16:41,320 --> 00:16:43,030  
Were people very concerned?

290  
00:16:43,030 --> 00:16:49,400  
Did you sense an  
atmosphere of fear or what?

291

00:16:49,400 --> 00:16:53,990  
Don't forget, you're speaking  
about a 14, 15-year-old kid,

292  
00:16:53,990 --> 00:16:55,160  
right?

293  
00:16:55,160 --> 00:17:00,500  
And me, specifically, I never  
took anything very seriously,

294  
00:17:00,500 --> 00:17:01,250  
as I said.

295  
00:17:01,250 --> 00:17:06,980  
I still don't, and what is  
coming, is coming, you know?

296  
00:17:06,980 --> 00:17:09,920  
If I can do-- if I can change  
this, I try to change this.

297  
00:17:09,920 --> 00:17:12,829  
If I cannot change this, then  
I will not break my head with

298  
00:17:12,829 --> 00:17:13,410  
that.

299  
00:17:13,410 --> 00:17:15,680  
And I think I was that  
way as a child too,

300  
00:17:15,680 --> 00:17:19,250  
and, actually, I looked  
forward to see my brother.

301  
00:17:19,250 --> 00:17:21,200  
I didn't know  
where we are going.

302  
00:17:21,200 --> 00:17:23,329  
I just thought it's

just another city.

303

00:17:23,329 --> 00:17:26,119

We're going to get some  
apartment, small apartment

304

00:17:26,119 --> 00:17:28,500

or something, and  
that will be it.

305

00:17:28,500 --> 00:17:31,520

But unfortunately,  
that was not it.

306

00:17:31,520 --> 00:17:33,800

So they took us  
to Theresienstadt.

307

00:17:33,800 --> 00:17:36,380

And Theresienstadt,  
for the first day,

308

00:17:36,380 --> 00:17:41,840

we stood in one  
special big hall which

309

00:17:41,840 --> 00:17:45,230

was called  
[? Schloiska ?] I don't

310

00:17:45,230 --> 00:17:47,690

think there's a translation  
for that for English.

311

00:17:47,690 --> 00:17:50,780

And it's a big  
room, big hall where

312

00:17:50,780 --> 00:17:52,490

nobody was allowed to go out.

313

00:17:52,490 --> 00:17:54,110

Nobody was allowed to come in.

314  
00:17:54,110 --> 00:17:58,080  
And where we were laying  
down on the floor--

315  
00:17:58,080 --> 00:17:59,670  
on the wooden floor--

316  
00:17:59,670 --> 00:18:06,030  
and they were kind of organizing  
where each one will go to stay.

317  
00:18:06,030 --> 00:18:08,510  
And they took most  
of our luggage.

318  
00:18:08,510 --> 00:18:11,000  
They stalled, and never  
gave it to us, you know.

319  
00:18:11,000 --> 00:18:13,820  
Each one got only  
a couple things.

320  
00:18:13,820 --> 00:18:18,710  
And then after two  
days, they just

321  
00:18:18,710 --> 00:18:22,980  
sent us to our  
[? ublications, ?] you know?

322  
00:18:22,980 --> 00:18:25,260  
Our places where we would stay.

323  
00:18:25,260 --> 00:18:30,530  
Now, fortunately, as I said  
before, my brother organized

324  
00:18:30,530 --> 00:18:36,320  
for my mother a place to  
stay in the same building

325

00:18:36,320 --> 00:18:39,463  
as he had his place, you know?

326

00:18:39,463 --> 00:18:43,570

327

00:18:43,570 --> 00:18:48,850  
The Board of Elders  
each had his own room,

328

00:18:48,850 --> 00:18:52,900  
although small room, and  
so no bathroom, no toilet--

329

00:18:52,900 --> 00:18:54,460  
just a small room.

330

00:18:54,460 --> 00:18:56,950  
They didn't have to share.

331

00:18:56,950 --> 00:18:59,200  
And my mom was in  
that same building.

332

00:18:59,200 --> 00:19:02,560  
And she shared a  
large room together

333

00:19:02,560 --> 00:19:07,540  
with other mothers of  
members of the board.

334

00:19:07,540 --> 00:19:11,290  
So they had in compare  
with others, I must admit,

335

00:19:11,290 --> 00:19:15,370  
they had a very, very  
nice place to stay.

336

00:19:15,370 --> 00:19:19,060  
I mean, just in compare

with the other people.

337

00:19:19,060 --> 00:19:25,960

And I was put in a children's  
home-- youth home--

338

00:19:25,960 --> 00:19:32,440

where I shared a  
room, a small room

339

00:19:32,440 --> 00:19:38,170

with eight other  
children, and that was it.

340

00:19:38,170 --> 00:19:40,810

Was it hard to be  
separated from your mother?

341

00:19:40,810 --> 00:19:44,390

No, we were free to move  
around in Theresienstadt.

342

00:19:44,390 --> 00:19:46,270

That was just where I slept.

343

00:19:46,270 --> 00:19:49,270

I could go visit my mother  
and my brother any time

344

00:19:49,270 --> 00:19:52,570

I wanted to in Theresienstadt.

345

00:19:52,570 --> 00:19:57,880

And inside the city it  
was open, the movement,

346

00:19:57,880 --> 00:20:00,880

only you couldn't go out  
of the city, you know?

347

00:20:00,880 --> 00:20:04,930

And naturally, most people's  
living quarters were not

348

00:20:04,930 --> 00:20:07,850

as good as mine, or my  
brother's, or my mother's.

349

00:20:07,850 --> 00:20:13,990

They were very, very bad, like,  
let's say a room like this,

350

00:20:13,990 --> 00:20:19,030

there were 25 people sleeping  
in those high beds, right?

351

00:20:19,030 --> 00:20:23,830

And no hygiene  
facilities, nothing.

352

00:20:23,830 --> 00:20:30,460

And so Theresienstadt,  
I must tell you

353

00:20:30,460 --> 00:20:33,250

this, although I  
am sure everybody

354

00:20:33,250 --> 00:20:36,520

who knows something about  
the Holocaust history

355

00:20:36,520 --> 00:20:40,240

is familiar with that,  
Theresienstadt as such,

356

00:20:40,240 --> 00:20:45,790

was not really a concentration  
camp as we learned later,

357

00:20:45,790 --> 00:20:51,880

as we knew like Buchenwald,  
Dachau, Auschwitz, Blechhammer.

358

00:20:51,880 --> 00:20:56,710

Theresienstadt was really

more like a ghetto,

359

00:20:56,710 --> 00:20:59,060

and that's what they'd call it.

360

00:20:59,060 --> 00:21:03,440

And so although we

are living there,

361

00:21:03,440 --> 00:21:07,580

we thought we are in the

worst place in the world,

362

00:21:07,580 --> 00:21:12,110

but later we learned that it was

like paradise in Theresienstadt

363

00:21:12,110 --> 00:21:14,840

in compare with other

concentration camps.

364

00:21:14,840 --> 00:21:17,270

And the reason for that

was that, actually,

365

00:21:17,270 --> 00:21:21,260

Theresienstadt was just

a preparation camp--

366

00:21:21,260 --> 00:21:24,590

a gathering camp--

to be for people

367

00:21:24,590 --> 00:21:31,160

to be sent further up and to

Auschwitz from Theresienstadt.

368

00:21:31,160 --> 00:21:34,400

Everybody from Theresienstadt

who went out of Theresienstadt,

369

00:21:34,400 --> 00:21:35,750

went to Auschwitz, you know?



370  
00:21:35,750 --> 00:21:37,370  
Like, there were  
some exceptions,

371  
00:21:37,370 --> 00:21:39,470  
but most of the people  
went to Auschwitz.

372  
00:21:39,470 --> 00:21:42,560  
So now you're there,  
what did you do?

373  
00:21:42,560 --> 00:21:45,110  
What was a typical day like?

374  
00:21:45,110 --> 00:21:49,400  
Oh so in Theresienstadt,  
all people

375  
00:21:49,400 --> 00:21:52,990  
had some kind of occupation,  
some kind of work,

376  
00:21:52,990 --> 00:21:57,970  
and as I said, in  
Theresienstadt,

377  
00:21:57,970 --> 00:22:06,340  
the Germans tried to make it  
an exemplar place that they can

378  
00:22:06,340 --> 00:22:09,070  
show to the International  
Red Cross people,

379  
00:22:09,070 --> 00:22:13,660  
and so it was a showcase  
really for them.

380  
00:22:13,660 --> 00:22:15,910  
And they allowed  
us to do things,

381  
00:22:15,910 --> 00:22:21,460  
which you couldn't dream about  
in other camps in Europe.

382  
00:22:21,460 --> 00:22:24,610  
So, for example, there  
was theater there

383  
00:22:24,610 --> 00:22:27,820  
in Theresienstadt, which  
is described in literature.

384  
00:22:27,820 --> 00:22:31,480  
And there was orchestras  
there, and concerts there,

385  
00:22:31,480 --> 00:22:38,110  
and there was also a  
large soccer league there.

386  
00:22:38,110 --> 00:22:43,090  
And since there were  
people in Theresienstadt

387  
00:22:43,090 --> 00:22:47,290  
from all over Europe, not just  
from Czechoslovakia, right?

388  
00:22:47,290 --> 00:22:52,060  
And within those people, Jews  
were very good soccer players.

389  
00:22:52,060 --> 00:22:56,230  
And there were people  
who played at home

390  
00:22:56,230 --> 00:22:58,390  
for their national teams--

391  
00:22:58,390 --> 00:23:03,010  
I mean, great professionals  
well-known all over the world.

392  
00:23:03,010 --> 00:23:09,430  
And I was 15 years  
old, not even 16.

393  
00:23:09,430 --> 00:23:13,870  
I was the youngest soccer  
player of the professional level

394  
00:23:13,870 --> 00:23:17,650  
there of all the people.

395  
00:23:17,650 --> 00:23:23,560  
What happened, the teams  
were divided according

396  
00:23:23,560 --> 00:23:27,050  
to workplaces,  
although the people who

397  
00:23:27,050 --> 00:23:29,980  
played for the soccer  
team usually never worked.

398  
00:23:29,980 --> 00:23:33,400  
The workplaces were  
led by Germans--

399  
00:23:33,400 --> 00:23:38,230  
by SS men or by German  
professionals, experts

400  
00:23:38,230 --> 00:23:40,750  
for the certain field of work--

401  
00:23:40,750 --> 00:23:46,330  
and I played and was supposed  
to work as an electrician

402  
00:23:46,330 --> 00:23:48,550  
for the team of electricians.

403

00:23:48,550 --> 00:23:50,830  
And they had their  
own building where

404  
00:23:50,830 --> 00:23:54,564  
they had their labs, their  
laboratories, their workplaces.

405  
00:23:54,564 --> 00:23:57,010  
You know, they were  
needed, electricians

406  
00:23:57,010 --> 00:23:58,360  
in that whole city.

407  
00:23:58,360 --> 00:24:00,280  
There were, I don't  
know how many,

408  
00:24:00,280 --> 00:24:03,070  
probably 100 electricians there.

409  
00:24:03,070 --> 00:24:09,130  
And the man who led the  
whole thing-- the German guy,

410  
00:24:09,130 --> 00:24:10,480  
you know--

411  
00:24:10,480 --> 00:24:14,170  
took care of the  
soccer team too.

412  
00:24:14,170 --> 00:24:16,160  
We had the best uniforms.

413  
00:24:16,160 --> 00:24:17,560  
We had the best soccer shoes.

414  
00:24:17,560 --> 00:24:20,080  
And in Prague, the  
professional teams

415

00:24:20,080 --> 00:24:21,320  
couldn't get soccer shoes.

416

00:24:21,320 --> 00:24:24,460  
So we had the newest one, the  
best ones because the Germans

417

00:24:24,460 --> 00:24:26,230  
got them for us, you know?

418

00:24:26,230 --> 00:24:28,790  
And it was such a  
game between them--

419

00:24:28,790 --> 00:24:30,820  
the SS people and the Germans--

420

00:24:30,820 --> 00:24:33,970  
that "my team is better  
than your team," you know?

421

00:24:33,970 --> 00:24:37,180  
And so they provided  
us, so we could really

422

00:24:37,180 --> 00:24:40,810  
perform like horses.

423

00:24:40,810 --> 00:24:47,290  
And they also gave us special  
rations where every game or so,

424

00:24:47,290 --> 00:24:50,680  
I got a roll of salami  
like this long--

425

00:24:50,680 --> 00:24:52,000  
half a yard long--

426

00:24:52,000 --> 00:24:55,900  
a couple loaves of bread, a  
square of margarine-- you know,

427  
00:24:55,900 --> 00:24:59,680  
the butter substitute.

428  
00:24:59,680 --> 00:25:02,590  
Other people would  
have this for a month.

429  
00:25:02,590 --> 00:25:07,720  
So we got supplied  
by them pretty well.

430  
00:25:07,720 --> 00:25:11,270  
How did you feel getting  
more food than others?

431  
00:25:11,270 --> 00:25:15,400  
I don't think I really  
broke my heart over that.

432  
00:25:15,400 --> 00:25:20,410  
I knew it happens, but it  
happened in the normal life

433  
00:25:20,410 --> 00:25:22,900  
too that some people have  
more than others, right?

434  
00:25:22,900 --> 00:25:27,780  
And being 15 years old, you  
don't think about it too much,

435  
00:25:27,780 --> 00:25:29,550  
but that was the fact.

436  
00:25:29,550 --> 00:25:36,900  
And so that was the  
entertainment there and.

437  
00:25:36,900 --> 00:25:39,540  
What else did you do  
besides play soccer?

438

00:25:39,540 --> 00:25:43,860

For one time, I  
was kind of bored

439

00:25:43,860 --> 00:25:48,000

and in winter,  
specifically, so my brother

440

00:25:48,000 --> 00:25:52,470

arranged for me to work  
in the dental laboratory--

441

00:25:52,470 --> 00:25:55,590

I mean, a laboratory where  
they there were repairing--

442

00:25:55,590 --> 00:25:59,110

443

00:25:59,110 --> 00:26:00,780

what do you call it?

444

00:26:00,780 --> 00:26:01,460

Dental.

445

00:26:01,460 --> 00:26:02,220

Dental plates?

446

00:26:02,220 --> 00:26:04,917

Plates, right, dental  
plates for old people.

447

00:26:04,917 --> 00:26:07,250

They came there, broke their  
plates, they'd bring it in,

448

00:26:07,250 --> 00:26:08,790

and we were repairing them.

449

00:26:08,790 --> 00:26:11,600

That was the only  
work that we did.

450  
00:26:11,600 --> 00:26:14,490  
And so, officially,  
when somebody asked me

451  
00:26:14,490 --> 00:26:17,550  
because we were not allowed  
to say, what are you doing?

452  
00:26:17,550 --> 00:26:18,480  
I'm a soccer player.

453  
00:26:18,480 --> 00:26:20,500  
That's nonsense, you  
know, you cannot do that.

454  
00:26:20,500 --> 00:26:24,140  
So you I said I'm a  
dentist, [LAUGHS] which

455  
00:26:24,140 --> 00:26:27,090  
it wasn't true either,  
but it sounded better.

456  
00:26:27,090 --> 00:26:29,910  
And I once in a while  
went to that laboratory

457  
00:26:29,910 --> 00:26:33,450  
and worked there repairing  
those dental plates.

458  
00:26:33,450 --> 00:26:35,850  
And that's all I did in  
Theresienstadt, otherwise,

459  
00:26:35,850 --> 00:26:38,700  
I really didn't do  
anything in Theresienstadt.

460  
00:26:38,700 --> 00:26:41,130  
How much contact did you  
have with your brother?



461

00:26:41,130 --> 00:26:43,590

As I said, I could see  
him any time I want to.

462

00:26:43,590 --> 00:26:48,430

In fact, I went probably went to  
visit my brother and my mother,

463

00:26:48,430 --> 00:26:53,730

as I said they lived  
in the same garrison,

464

00:26:53,730 --> 00:26:57,900

and I went to see them  
probably every day.

465

00:26:57,900 --> 00:27:00,540

Did your brother talk  
about what he was doing

466

00:27:00,540 --> 00:27:02,250

or any decisions he had to make?

467

00:27:02,250 --> 00:27:05,760

No, no, not at all,  
not at all, no.

468

00:27:05,760 --> 00:27:09,830

I know he was a member  
of the Aeltestenrat

469

00:27:09,830 --> 00:27:14,700

or the Board of Elders,  
but how and what, no.

470

00:27:14,700 --> 00:27:17,310

He never talked about it.

471

00:27:17,310 --> 00:27:20,240

And OK, go ahead.

472

00:27:20,240 --> 00:27:23,720  
Did you have a 16th  
birthday there?

473  
00:27:23,720 --> 00:27:25,930  
I'm just thinking if  
I had my 16-- yeah,

474  
00:27:25,930 --> 00:27:31,310  
I think I had my 16th birthday  
in Theresienstadt, right, yeah.

475  
00:27:31,310 --> 00:27:32,690  
Did you do anything special?

476  
00:27:32,690 --> 00:27:35,420  
Not really, no.

477  
00:27:35,420 --> 00:27:38,630  
Maybe my mother made me a  
[? birth ?] cake probably

478  
00:27:38,630 --> 00:27:40,910  
that was a specialty  
in Theresienstadt.

479  
00:27:40,910 --> 00:27:43,490  
You know you save  
bread, and then

480  
00:27:43,490 --> 00:27:49,490  
you dip it in coffee substitute,  
and you put in the margarine

481  
00:27:49,490 --> 00:27:54,060  
that you ration that you got,  
and mix it up with a little bit

482  
00:27:54,060 --> 00:27:56,780  
sugar from the ration too.

483  
00:27:56,780 --> 00:28:01,730  
You know, we had rations there,

pretty bad ones, very small

484

00:28:01,730 --> 00:28:06,830  
ones, but still a thousand times  
better than other concentration

485

00:28:06,830 --> 00:28:07,850  
camps, you know?

486

00:28:07,850 --> 00:28:11,780  
What did the 15 and  
16-year-old boys talk about?

487

00:28:11,780 --> 00:28:16,360  
Soccer, girls, and  
I still do that.

488

00:28:16,360 --> 00:28:21,700  
Did you have any relationship  
with the girls there?

489

00:28:21,700 --> 00:28:23,470  
Oh yeah, yeah, I had some.

490

00:28:23,470 --> 00:28:27,040  
What was the social situation  
like for young teenagers

491

00:28:27,040 --> 00:28:27,920  
like you?

492

00:28:27,920 --> 00:28:29,620  
I mean, I had some  
friends there.

493

00:28:29,620 --> 00:28:35,170  
I had some  
girlfriends, you know?

494

00:28:35,170 --> 00:28:38,380  
Girlfriends--  
16-year-old boy, right?

495

00:28:38,380 --> 00:28:44,050

And I had a group of girls that  
were excited about my playing

496

00:28:44,050 --> 00:28:47,830

in that big very  
important team, right?

497

00:28:47,830 --> 00:28:50,020

They came to see the game.

498

00:28:50,020 --> 00:28:56,440

There were games that were  
played in a yard of garrison.

499

00:28:56,440 --> 00:29:02,230

That name was Dresden by  
the city of Dresden, right?

500

00:29:02,230 --> 00:29:07,390

And there was a women's  
building-- women's garrison.

501

00:29:07,390 --> 00:29:10,660

And then the yard, that  
was a large place where

502

00:29:10,660 --> 00:29:13,240

we played the soccer games.

503

00:29:13,240 --> 00:29:18,910

And the building  
had three floors,

504

00:29:18,910 --> 00:29:24,640

and around the yard were  
like balconies, you know?

505

00:29:24,640 --> 00:29:27,160

I don't know how  
to explain that.

506

00:29:27,160 --> 00:29:30,730

From the balconies, you  
went into the rooms, right?

507

00:29:30,730 --> 00:29:31,780

It was like a courtyard?

508

00:29:31,780 --> 00:29:34,070

Courtyard, no, but  
in the floors, right?

509

00:29:34,070 --> 00:29:34,570

Yeah.

510

00:29:34,570 --> 00:29:35,590

Yeah, right.

511

00:29:35,590 --> 00:29:38,170

And there were  
people standing there

512

00:29:38,170 --> 00:29:41,320

like in a stadium in the  
stands watching the games.

513

00:29:41,320 --> 00:29:47,230

They were 5-6,000 people  
at the game, yeah.

514

00:29:47,230 --> 00:29:49,540

That was that.

515

00:29:49,540 --> 00:29:52,570

Did you take any  
classes, any schooling?

516

00:29:52,570 --> 00:29:53,320

In Theresienstadt?

517

00:29:53,320 --> 00:29:54,280

Yeah, any?

518

00:29:54,280 --> 00:29:54,970  
No.

519  
00:29:54,970 --> 00:29:57,400  
No, [INAUDIBLE] people  
who weren't teaching.

520  
00:29:57,400 --> 00:29:59,845  
Were there any classes given?

521  
00:29:59,845 --> 00:30:03,700  
No, there was no classes, no  
teaching, no school center

522  
00:30:03,700 --> 00:30:04,450  
in Theresienstadt.

523  
00:30:04,450 --> 00:30:07,930  
The only thing was for, I  
think, for younger kids--

524  
00:30:07,930 --> 00:30:10,210  
for the real children kids--

525  
00:30:10,210 --> 00:30:13,030  
there was a building there.

526  
00:30:13,030 --> 00:30:15,610  
It's the building where  
now in Theresienstadt

527  
00:30:15,610 --> 00:30:21,400  
is the Theresienstadt  
Holocaust Museum.

528  
00:30:21,400 --> 00:30:23,920  
That building had  
little children,

529  
00:30:23,920 --> 00:30:28,570  
and they had some teachers  
there who taught them.

530

00:30:28,570 --> 00:30:29,425

But I don't think.

531

00:30:29,425 --> 00:30:31,300

But there was nothing  
for the older children?

532

00:30:31,300 --> 00:30:32,170

No, no.

533

00:30:32,170 --> 00:30:33,870

And what about  
cultural activities?

534

00:30:33,870 --> 00:30:36,740

You said you were musical, so  
did you take part in anything

535

00:30:36,740 --> 00:30:37,440

there?

536

00:30:37,440 --> 00:30:39,550

There were concerts there.

537

00:30:39,550 --> 00:30:44,530

There was even a coffee shop  
where there was music played.

538

00:30:44,530 --> 00:30:49,700

And once or twice, you had  
to have tickets to go there,

539

00:30:49,700 --> 00:30:50,200

you know?

540

00:30:50,200 --> 00:30:52,720

I got the ticket to go  
to that [INAUDIBLE]..

541

00:30:52,720 --> 00:30:54,040

How did you get the tickets?

542

00:30:54,040 --> 00:30:57,940

I think through the  
electrician guys too.

543

00:30:57,940 --> 00:31:00,950

And you went there.

544

00:31:00,950 --> 00:31:05,750

You got a cup of coffee--  
of substitute coffee,

545

00:31:05,750 --> 00:31:09,050

and you're sitting there like  
in a coffee shop, big shot,

546

00:31:09,050 --> 00:31:10,850

and listening to the music.

547

00:31:10,850 --> 00:31:13,910

In two hours they kicked you out  
and some other people get in,

548

00:31:13,910 --> 00:31:20,260

[? you know. ?]

549

00:31:20,260 --> 00:31:23,410

This is tape two,  
side B, and we were

550

00:31:23,410 --> 00:31:25,450

talking about Theresienstadt.

551

00:31:25,450 --> 00:31:30,730

Yeah, we were talking  
about the fun there, right?

552

00:31:30,730 --> 00:31:33,250

Yeah, we had there  
were concerts there.

553

00:31:33,250 --> 00:31:36,340

Sometimes there were theaters.



554  
00:31:36,340 --> 00:31:40,690  
Everything on a very,  
very primitive base, very

555  
00:31:40,690 --> 00:31:42,640  
primitively done, you know?

556  
00:31:42,640 --> 00:31:48,610  
The stages, the paintings,  
the outfits, and the costumes,

557  
00:31:48,610 --> 00:31:51,640  
and the instruments, everything  
was very, very primitive,

558  
00:31:51,640 --> 00:31:55,450  
but for us, it was something.

559  
00:31:55,450 --> 00:31:56,966  
Did you do any singing?

560  
00:31:56,966 --> 00:31:58,703  
No, not in Theresienstadt, no.

561  
00:31:58,703 --> 00:32:00,370  
I didn't do-- as I  
said, I didn't really

562  
00:32:00,370 --> 00:32:04,390  
do anything else but date  
girls and play soccer.

563  
00:32:04,390 --> 00:32:07,190  
That was all I did  
in Theresienstadt

564  
00:32:07,190 --> 00:32:10,375  
and visited my mother,  
and my brother.

565  
00:32:10,375 --> 00:32:13,480

And I also, and I  
forgot to mention

566  
00:32:13,480 --> 00:32:16,737  
my grandmother was  
there, my grandfather.

567  
00:32:16,737 --> 00:32:18,070  
These are your mother's parents?

568  
00:32:18,070 --> 00:32:19,490  
My mother's parents.

569  
00:32:19,490 --> 00:32:22,600  
And my mother's  
sister was there.

570  
00:32:22,600 --> 00:32:29,110  
They all wound up in the  
gas chamber in Auschwitz.

571  
00:32:29,110 --> 00:32:31,600  
Did they come with you  
on that same transport?

572  
00:32:31,600 --> 00:32:36,150  
No, they actually they came  
later than I did here, I think.

573  
00:32:36,150 --> 00:32:37,060  
I believe so.

574  
00:32:37,060 --> 00:32:38,980  
I'm not really sure now.

575  
00:32:38,980 --> 00:32:42,700  
But they left with the--

576  
00:32:42,700 --> 00:32:46,720  
oh, actually, my grandfather  
died in Theresienstadt.

577

00:32:46,720 --> 00:32:49,510

He had some prostate  
problems, and they couldn't

578

00:32:49,510 --> 00:32:51,790

operate there, so he died.

579

00:32:51,790 --> 00:32:57,790

And my mother's sister, Erika,  
and my mother's step-mother,

580

00:32:57,790 --> 00:32:58,840

actually--

581

00:32:58,840 --> 00:33:00,910

because her mother  
died long before--

582

00:33:00,910 --> 00:33:05,680

they went to Auschwitz  
with that transport

583

00:33:05,680 --> 00:33:10,870

that came to Auschwitz three  
months before our transport.

584

00:33:10,870 --> 00:33:15,160

And they were a part of  
that infamous, famous family

585

00:33:15,160 --> 00:33:18,820

camp in Auschwitz, Birkenau.

586

00:33:18,820 --> 00:33:23,140

And they were, unfortunately,  
also in that transport, as I

587

00:33:23,140 --> 00:33:24,700

said, three months before us.

588

00:33:24,700 --> 00:33:28,900

Therefore, their six  
months passed three months

589  
00:33:28,900 --> 00:33:32,050  
before our time, and  
after three months,

590  
00:33:32,050 --> 00:33:34,960  
everybody had the  
sign on this card

591  
00:33:34,960 --> 00:33:39,460  
in Auschwitz SB6, which  
meant Sonderbehandlung

592  
00:33:39,460 --> 00:33:42,550  
in sechs Monaten, which means  
special treatment in six

593  
00:33:42,550 --> 00:33:44,950  
months, which meant gas chamber.

594  
00:33:44,950 --> 00:33:47,950  
And that whole  
transport, including

595  
00:33:47,950 --> 00:33:51,340  
Fredy Hirsch, who  
went there before us,

596  
00:33:51,340 --> 00:33:57,640  
and including lots of relatives  
and friends, were gassed.

597  
00:33:57,640 --> 00:34:01,180  
And three months later,  
we were supposed to--

598  
00:34:01,180 --> 00:34:03,500  
I think we are  
jumping ahead now.

599  
00:34:03,500 --> 00:34:05,070  
Yeah, Yeah, let's  
stay [INAUDIBLE]..

600  
00:34:05,070 --> 00:34:08,350  
Theresienstadt, there's not  
much more to say except the time

601  
00:34:08,350 --> 00:34:12,790  
when I left for  
Auschwitz really.

602  
00:34:12,790 --> 00:34:14,560  
That is a great--

603  
00:34:14,560 --> 00:34:18,370  
I mean, great-- a big sad story.

604  
00:34:18,370 --> 00:34:26,050  
We were definitely have to  
be covered by our brother.

605  
00:34:26,050 --> 00:34:32,739  
And all members of the Board  
of Elders of Theresienstadt

606  
00:34:32,739 --> 00:34:33,699  
were covered--

607  
00:34:33,699 --> 00:34:36,969  
the whole family  
was covered whenever

608  
00:34:36,969 --> 00:34:40,929  
they came to Theresienstadt,  
they would not have to leave.

609  
00:34:40,929 --> 00:34:44,170  
I mean, whole family, only  
close family-- brother, sister,

610  
00:34:44,170 --> 00:34:45,610  
mother, father, OK?

611  
00:34:45,610 --> 00:34:47,980

Not grandfather or so.

612  
00:34:47,980 --> 00:34:51,040  
And we were pretty safe there.

613  
00:34:51,040 --> 00:34:54,670  
I kind of thought that I'm  
going to spend the rest

614  
00:34:54,670 --> 00:34:56,739  
of the war in Theresienstadt.

615  
00:34:56,739 --> 00:34:59,410  
In that time, we  
already felt it's

616  
00:34:59,410 --> 00:35:04,640  
kind of getting to  
go to an end, and we.

617  
00:35:04,640 --> 00:35:05,650  
The war is ending.

618  
00:35:05,650 --> 00:35:10,153  
Not end, but we knew that  
Hitler is not going to win.

619  
00:35:10,153 --> 00:35:12,070  
Because we had been  
talking about that before.

620  
00:35:12,070 --> 00:35:14,320  
What did you know about  
what was happening

621  
00:35:14,320 --> 00:35:15,566  
in other parts of Europe?

622  
00:35:15,566 --> 00:35:18,310  
In Theresienstadt,  
specifically, the adults

623

00:35:18,310 --> 00:35:20,380  
were very well-informed.

624  
00:35:20,380 --> 00:35:21,865  
I think that the Czech--

625  
00:35:21,865 --> 00:35:24,370

626  
00:35:24,370 --> 00:35:25,730  
what do you call it?

627  
00:35:25,730 --> 00:35:29,290  
The guards, the Czech  
guards who were there,

628  
00:35:29,290 --> 00:35:33,910  
they brought a lot of  
information into the camp.

629  
00:35:33,910 --> 00:35:36,970  
They also brought a lot  
of material into the camp.

630  
00:35:36,970 --> 00:35:41,150  
Some of them, I would  
think as much as I heard--

631  
00:35:41,150 --> 00:35:44,620  
I was not in touch with them--  
but as much as I heard later,

632  
00:35:44,620 --> 00:35:48,100  
they behaved pretty  
well, the Czech guards,

633  
00:35:48,100 --> 00:35:49,900  
so-called Chetniks.

634  
00:35:49,900 --> 00:35:54,340  
And they also brought  
material to Theresienstadt,

635

00:35:54,340 --> 00:36:00,250  
food and also letters, packages,  
naturally, all illegal.

636

00:36:00,250 --> 00:36:04,600  
And they practically risked  
their own life to doing so,

637

00:36:04,600 --> 00:36:05,740  
but they did so.

638

00:36:05,740 --> 00:36:07,280  
Most of them did.

639

00:36:07,280 --> 00:36:10,360  
There were some who were  
pigs, but most of them

640

00:36:10,360 --> 00:36:13,030  
were very nice  
people I was told.

641

00:36:13,030 --> 00:36:16,130  
Did you talk to  
the German guards?

642

00:36:16,130 --> 00:36:18,580  
Not in Theresienstadt,  
except the ones

643

00:36:18,580 --> 00:36:20,770  
that had their soccer teams.

644

00:36:20,770 --> 00:36:23,080  
That came always to  
the game, naturally,

645

00:36:23,080 --> 00:36:24,760  
and they had a  
special place where

646

00:36:24,760 --> 00:36:27,280



they were with  
their guards there,

647  
00:36:27,280 --> 00:36:32,060  
and they have festive uniforms.

648  
00:36:32,060 --> 00:36:34,990  
It was a big day  
when they played--

649  
00:36:34,990 --> 00:36:36,880  
their team played, you know?

650  
00:36:36,880 --> 00:36:41,500  
And I am sure I heard, at  
least, that they were having

651  
00:36:41,500 --> 00:36:45,250  
bets between each other, those  
German guys-- the SS people--

652  
00:36:45,250 --> 00:36:47,230  
and so.

653  
00:36:47,230 --> 00:36:49,960  
As the months went on,  
did you have any change

654  
00:36:49,960 --> 00:36:53,650  
in your feeling towards  
seeing Germans in uniforms,

655  
00:36:53,650 --> 00:36:55,390  
army uniforms, SS uniforms?

656  
00:36:55,390 --> 00:36:58,180  
Yes, as the time  
went on, my feelings

657  
00:36:58,180 --> 00:37:02,710  
were worse, and worse,  
and more harsher, and more

658

00:37:02,710 --> 00:37:06,520

harsher, and more  
scary than every day

659

00:37:06,520 --> 00:37:10,060

before because I  
saw what they are

660

00:37:10,060 --> 00:37:14,650

capable of doing with the  
progress of time, not so much

661

00:37:14,650 --> 00:37:17,830

in Theresienstadt as  
later on naturally.

662

00:37:17,830 --> 00:37:20,440

Did you see any physical  
maltreatment in Theresienstadt?

663

00:37:20,440 --> 00:37:23,800

In Theresienstadt, I must  
admit I did not see any,

664

00:37:23,800 --> 00:37:26,170

although I heard about some.

665

00:37:26,170 --> 00:37:31,210

Yeah, there was some  
physical maltreatment,

666

00:37:31,210 --> 00:37:34,540

especially before I  
came to Theresienstadt.

667

00:37:34,540 --> 00:37:37,390

I understand there were  
some hangings there,

668

00:37:37,390 --> 00:37:39,340

some punishments and so.

669

00:37:39,340 --> 00:37:41,560

But during the  
time I was there, I

670

00:37:41,560 --> 00:37:44,020

would not know about  
anything like that.

671

00:37:44,020 --> 00:37:46,120

I heard there was  
a police there.

672

00:37:46,120 --> 00:37:46,720

I knew that.

673

00:37:46,720 --> 00:37:51,010

The ghetto [NON-ENGLISH],, and  
the German policed sometimes

674

00:37:51,010 --> 00:37:52,810

the camp too inside.

675

00:37:52,810 --> 00:37:58,240

And I know if somebody quasi  
did something he shouldn't have

676

00:37:58,240 --> 00:38:00,220

done, they put him in jail.

677

00:38:00,220 --> 00:38:03,490

And sometimes you'll hear about  
big affairs-- something this

678

00:38:03,490 --> 00:38:06,550

and this happened--  
but, personally, I

679

00:38:06,550 --> 00:38:08,950

was not involved in  
any, and I did not

680

00:38:08,950 --> 00:38:12,520

know anybody who would have

been involved in those things,

681

00:38:12,520 --> 00:38:16,410

but, again, that is  
because my age so.

682

00:38:16,410 --> 00:38:18,420

So here you think  
you're being protected

683

00:38:18,420 --> 00:38:19,420

because of your brother.

684

00:38:19,420 --> 00:38:19,920

Right.

685

00:38:19,920 --> 00:38:21,430

And then what happens?

686

00:38:21,430 --> 00:38:27,500

What happened is  
the Edelstein group

687

00:38:27,500 --> 00:38:35,090

we're responsible for the  
transports going to Auschwitz,

688

00:38:35,090 --> 00:38:37,230

which we didn't know where  
it's going in that time,

689

00:38:37,230 --> 00:38:39,110

naturally-- going out  
of Theresienstadt.

690

00:38:39,110 --> 00:38:41,570

Did you have contact  
with Edelstein?

691

00:38:41,570 --> 00:38:43,100

Me, personally?

692

00:38:43,100 --> 00:38:47,630

I saw him a few times with my  
brother in my brother's place

693

00:38:47,630 --> 00:38:50,360

or my brother's  
office in the garrison

694

00:38:50,360 --> 00:38:53,480

where the Board of  
Elders was lodged

695

00:38:53,480 --> 00:38:55,730

and where they had the offices.

696

00:38:55,730 --> 00:38:57,458

Yes, I saw him many times, yeah.

697

00:38:57,458 --> 00:38:58,500

What was your impression?

698

00:38:58,500 --> 00:39:05,000

But I did not speak directly  
to him, not in a lengthy way.

699

00:39:05,000 --> 00:39:08,150

Maybe once or twice when  
I was with my brother,

700

00:39:08,150 --> 00:39:12,680

he petted my head  
and called me famous.

701

00:39:12,680 --> 00:39:15,440

Yeah, I think once  
he said something

702

00:39:15,440 --> 00:39:18,540

like I am more famous than he is  
in Theresienstadt or something

703

00:39:18,540 --> 00:39:19,040

like that.

704  
00:39:19,040 --> 00:39:20,060  
Because of the soccer?

705  
00:39:20,060 --> 00:39:23,000  
Yeah, right, but  
I'm more popular

706  
00:39:23,000 --> 00:39:26,720  
than he is because the elders  
were not very popular people

707  
00:39:26,720 --> 00:39:29,870  
there, although they  
tried to do their best.

708  
00:39:29,870 --> 00:39:32,960  
And actually, after  
the war, and all

709  
00:39:32,960 --> 00:39:35,630  
the literature shows  
that they really

710  
00:39:35,630 --> 00:39:39,140  
were trying to help the people.

711  
00:39:39,140 --> 00:39:41,270  
In fact, so what  
happened is they

712  
00:39:41,270 --> 00:39:47,900  
were making the administrative  
work for those transport.

713  
00:39:47,900 --> 00:39:51,050  
They were told that and  
that many people has to go--

714  
00:39:51,050 --> 00:39:53,270  
this and this kind of  
people have to go--

715

00:39:53,270 --> 00:39:55,700  
and they made lists, naturally.

716

00:39:55,700 --> 00:39:59,820  
And they went-- the transport  
went out from Theresienstadt,

717

00:39:59,820 --> 00:40:02,210  
later we learned to  
Auschwitz, right?

718

00:40:02,210 --> 00:40:06,230  
What they probably, I think,  
I believe that Edelstein

719

00:40:06,230 --> 00:40:11,690  
and the group, they knew what's  
happening further up there.

720

00:40:11,690 --> 00:40:13,800  
Did they come up with names?

721

00:40:13,800 --> 00:40:14,300  
Yeah.

722

00:40:14,300 --> 00:40:14,890  
That group.

723

00:40:14,890 --> 00:40:17,240  
What did your brother say  
about having to do that?

724

00:40:17,240 --> 00:40:19,550  
I don't think I talk  
about it with him.

725

00:40:19,550 --> 00:40:24,140  
I just know that's what I want  
to come to that what they did

726

00:40:24,140 --> 00:40:29,000  
is they put people who died

in Theresienstadt, that they

727

00:40:29,000 --> 00:40:31,220

put them on the transport list.

728

00:40:31,220 --> 00:40:35,790

So each transport

left with about 40,

729

00:40:35,790 --> 00:40:40,710

50, whatever amount people

less than it should have to.

730

00:40:40,710 --> 00:40:46,180

And the Germans were

not in that case,

731

00:40:46,180 --> 00:40:48,985

you know, they loaded the

trains inside Theresienstadt

732

00:40:48,985 --> 00:40:50,610

in the middle of

Theresienstadt really.

733

00:40:50,610 --> 00:40:55,050

There was a rail there going

straight into the city.

734

00:40:55,050 --> 00:41:00,930

And the Germans did not

really, strangely enough,

735

00:41:00,930 --> 00:41:03,280

have so much control there.

736

00:41:03,280 --> 00:41:06,870

So they just loaded the people,

and sometimes they count,

737

00:41:06,870 --> 00:41:08,460

and sometimes they didn't.



738

00:41:08,460 --> 00:41:11,490

They had a list, and they were supposed to check the list.

739

00:41:11,490 --> 00:41:14,520

So what are they going to do if they miss somebody?

740

00:41:14,520 --> 00:41:17,520

They are not going to unload the whole train to find a person.

741

00:41:17,520 --> 00:41:19,650

They probably checked it, you know?

742

00:41:19,650 --> 00:41:24,990

There were lower-rank assessment there checking those lists,

743

00:41:24,990 --> 00:41:27,510

and so they didn't care that much.

744

00:41:27,510 --> 00:41:36,050

So and that went very nicely, this system, until the--

745

00:41:36,050 --> 00:41:38,480

and that is, again, I'm sorry to say

746

00:41:38,480 --> 00:41:41,510

that this is one of the big stories that I wrote--

747

00:41:41,510 --> 00:41:46,910

until one day the commander of the Theresienstadt,

748

00:41:46,910 --> 00:41:53,840

I think Seidl was it, found a very strange name

749  
00:41:53,840 --> 00:42:00,740  
on the list of which he  
knew that the man was

750  
00:42:00,740 --> 00:42:05,090  
a member of a roofing commando--

751  
00:42:05,090 --> 00:42:08,900  
of a roofing  
workgroup that roofed

752  
00:42:08,900 --> 00:42:12,020  
the roof of the commendatore  
in Theresienstadt.

753  
00:42:12,020 --> 00:42:16,250  
And it was some kind of a  
very, very unusual name.

754  
00:42:16,250 --> 00:42:19,070  
And he found this name  
on the transport list,

755  
00:42:19,070 --> 00:42:22,030  
and he knew that men died.

756  
00:42:22,030 --> 00:42:24,050  
So he went after that.

757  
00:42:24,050 --> 00:42:27,610  
And so he found one and  
two and 10 and 1,500s,

758  
00:42:27,610 --> 00:42:30,530  
and that was a big melee there.

759  
00:42:30,530 --> 00:42:35,320  
And they immediately  
jailed Edelstein,

760  
00:42:35,320 --> 00:42:39,520

and he was commanded to  
his jail for a while.

761  
00:42:39,520 --> 00:42:46,390  
And then they arrested  
several people of the elders--

762  
00:42:46,390 --> 00:42:48,640  
not my brother, fortunately.

763  
00:42:48,640 --> 00:42:53,170  
And the next thing what  
happened they put us,

764  
00:42:53,170 --> 00:42:56,800  
all the Board, and all  
Edelstein, and everybody,

765  
00:42:56,800 --> 00:43:00,610  
and the families, they put them  
in the transport to Auschwitz.

766  
00:43:00,610 --> 00:43:03,790  
And that's how we wound up  
outside of Theresienstadt which

767  
00:43:03,790 --> 00:43:05,570  
we hoped would never happen.

768  
00:43:05,570 --> 00:43:07,680  
But that was the reason.

769  
00:43:07,680 --> 00:43:10,780  
And so they saved  
a lot of lives,

770  
00:43:10,780 --> 00:43:15,460  
but they spent their own,  
specifically, Edelstein.

771  
00:43:15,460 --> 00:43:19,920  
He was shot in  
Auschwitz, you know?

772  
00:43:19,920 --> 00:43:21,990  
But the whole family--  
his whole family,

773  
00:43:21,990 --> 00:43:25,470  
his children, and his  
wife, they were all

774  
00:43:25,470 --> 00:43:32,670  
shot in the crematorium right at  
the time when we were supposed

775  
00:43:32,670 --> 00:43:36,420  
to leave Auschwitz after those  
six months, which we really

776  
00:43:36,420 --> 00:43:38,610  
did, but they did not.

777  
00:43:38,610 --> 00:43:40,560  
They shot them,  
and they were also

778  
00:43:40,560 --> 00:43:45,000  
killing most of the members  
of this group here, you see?

779  
00:43:45,000 --> 00:43:47,070  
They were mostly shot to death.

780  
00:43:47,070 --> 00:43:53,220  
And that was the end of  
Theresienstadt for me.

781  
00:43:53,220 --> 00:43:54,870  
Now, what month?

782  
00:43:54,870 --> 00:43:57,450  
When was this?

783  
00:43:57,450 --> 00:44:02,520

I want to be very  
correct and tell you.

784  
00:44:02,520 --> 00:44:07,965  
I went to-- let me see--

785  
00:44:07,965 --> 00:44:12,250

786  
00:44:12,250 --> 00:44:18,730  
18th of December 1943, I went to  
Auschwitz from Theresienstadt.

787  
00:44:18,730 --> 00:44:20,690  
Reasons that

788  
00:44:20,690 --> 00:44:21,770  
Let's talk about that.

789  
00:44:21,770 --> 00:44:22,800  
All of us did.

790  
00:44:22,800 --> 00:44:26,360  
Yeah, let's talk about the  
journey from Theresienstadt.

791  
00:44:26,360 --> 00:44:30,320  
The journey was, I think,  
about four or four days or so,

792  
00:44:30,320 --> 00:44:31,850  
five days maybe.

793  
00:44:31,850 --> 00:44:34,460  
I wouldn't know exactly.

794  
00:44:34,460 --> 00:44:40,640  
That journey is one of the  
first horror situations

795  
00:44:40,640 --> 00:44:42,890  
that I recall.

796  
00:44:42,890 --> 00:44:47,600  
And the horror I was  
in the cattle cars

797  
00:44:47,600 --> 00:44:51,470  
were loaded with people  
that we were hardly

798  
00:44:51,470 --> 00:44:53,700  
able to sit down on the floor.

799  
00:44:53,700 --> 00:44:56,060  
There was no seats  
or anything actually.

800  
00:44:56,060 --> 00:45:01,640  
And there was one bucket  
for increments, you know.

801  
00:45:01,640 --> 00:45:06,830  
And there was one  
little window with bars.

802  
00:45:06,830 --> 00:45:10,730  
And even the bars were waved  
through with barbed wire,

803  
00:45:10,730 --> 00:45:11,720  
you know?

804  
00:45:11,720 --> 00:45:15,390  
And so very little air, no  
food whatsoever, no water,

805  
00:45:15,390 --> 00:45:17,970  
nothing during the whole trip.

806  
00:45:17,970 --> 00:45:22,020  
And that was pretty difficult,  
and also a few people

807

00:45:22,020 --> 00:45:26,370  
died in every car the day  
before we get there, right?

808  
00:45:26,370 --> 00:45:29,610  
Which family members were  
you with in that car?

809  
00:45:29,610 --> 00:45:33,570  
I was with my brother and  
with my mom in the car, yeah.

810  
00:45:33,570 --> 00:45:35,950  
How was she holding up?

811  
00:45:35,950 --> 00:45:39,720  
Actually, I think  
my mother was always

812  
00:45:39,720 --> 00:45:44,550  
a very courageous,  
a very strong woman,

813  
00:45:44,550 --> 00:45:46,570  
not that I would  
be a crying baby,

814  
00:45:46,570 --> 00:45:51,270  
but once in a while in that  
age, I leaned upon my mother,

815  
00:45:51,270 --> 00:45:55,380  
and so she always  
find a way to make

816  
00:45:55,380 --> 00:45:59,880  
me feel better, and easier,  
and said don't worry.

817  
00:45:59,880 --> 00:46:00,870  
It will be all right.

818  
00:46:00,870 --> 00:46:04,110

We'll just get through  
this, and then we are fine.

819  
00:46:04,110 --> 00:46:06,990  
And that through this, with  
several through this's,

820  
00:46:06,990 --> 00:46:10,290  
you know, and,  
but we [INAUDIBLE]

821  
00:46:10,290 --> 00:46:11,400  
she kept her word too.

822  
00:46:11,400 --> 00:46:13,740  
We were fine.

823  
00:46:13,740 --> 00:46:15,960  
And with your brother  
in the car also?

824  
00:46:15,960 --> 00:46:16,920  
Yeah, right.

825  
00:46:16,920 --> 00:46:20,670  
And did the three of you  
stay together, close physical

826  
00:46:20,670 --> 00:46:21,510  
proximity?

827  
00:46:21,510 --> 00:46:26,520  
Until they took us  
to the B2b camp,

828  
00:46:26,520 --> 00:46:30,540  
we went through the procedure  
getting the tattoo on the hand,

829  
00:46:30,540 --> 00:46:33,870  
on the arms, you know, which  
I still naturally have here.



830

00:46:33,870 --> 00:46:38,940

Well, but let's just before  
that, you're in the journey,

831

00:46:38,940 --> 00:46:40,590

were people helping each other?

832

00:46:40,590 --> 00:46:42,450

What was the feeling  
inside the car?

833

00:46:42,450 --> 00:46:44,580

Inside the car, there  
was nothing much you

834

00:46:44,580 --> 00:46:46,260

could help anybody, you know?

835

00:46:46,260 --> 00:46:49,170

The only thing is you  
could pass the buck.

836

00:46:49,170 --> 00:46:53,670

And when it was overflowing,  
you tried to pull it out

837

00:46:53,670 --> 00:46:56,190

where there was some  
crevice in the cart

838

00:46:56,190 --> 00:46:59,700

so it wouldn't stink too much  
in there, and that was it.

839

00:46:59,700 --> 00:47:01,470

There was no food, no nothing.

840

00:47:01,470 --> 00:47:02,820

There was no other help.

841

00:47:02,820 --> 00:47:05,040

There were actually

sick people there too,

842

00:47:05,040 --> 00:47:07,030  
and nobody could help them.

843

00:47:07,030 --> 00:47:11,670  
Some of them died during  
the trip, and that was that.

844

00:47:11,670 --> 00:47:15,210  
What was it like for  
you as a 16-year-old boy

845

00:47:15,210 --> 00:47:18,490  
to see dead bodies and  
have to stay in the car?

846

00:47:18,490 --> 00:47:23,520  
Yeah, as I said, that was  
my first horror experience.

847

00:47:23,520 --> 00:47:28,560  
Before that, it was difficult  
and unusual, and tough,

848

00:47:28,560 --> 00:47:30,360  
but not really--

849

00:47:30,360 --> 00:47:35,970  
I haven't seen people falling  
and dying, and being hungry,

850

00:47:35,970 --> 00:47:39,240  
and not having a toilet, and not  
having water to drink, to wash,

851

00:47:39,240 --> 00:47:39,990  
or anything.

852

00:47:39,990 --> 00:47:43,590  
That was the first  
situation I became

853

00:47:43,590 --> 00:47:47,610

familiar with in that  
time, and that was actually

854

00:47:47,610 --> 00:47:51,720

pretty strenuous for a  
15, 16-year-old kid, yeah.

855

00:47:51,720 --> 00:47:53,500

Were you allowed out  
of the car at all?

856

00:47:53,500 --> 00:47:54,390

No, not at all.

857

00:47:54,390 --> 00:47:56,910

During the whole trip,  
the car did never open.

858

00:47:56,910 --> 00:48:00,030

Although there were  
stops, we don't even

859

00:48:00,030 --> 00:48:03,930

know where it stopped, you know?

860

00:48:03,930 --> 00:48:05,770

Did you know where  
you were going?

861

00:48:05,770 --> 00:48:07,980

No, we had no idea  
where we were going--

862

00:48:07,980 --> 00:48:09,060

no idea.

863

00:48:09,060 --> 00:48:12,180

Some people saw,  
once in a while,

864

00:48:12,180 --> 00:48:15,780

a name on a railroad station  
that we passed through,

865  
00:48:15,780 --> 00:48:18,810  
and they were guessing and  
saying we're going here,

866  
00:48:18,810 --> 00:48:21,690  
we're going there, but  
nobody cared really

867  
00:48:21,690 --> 00:48:26,290  
where we're going, as long  
as they didn't let us out.

868  
00:48:26,290 --> 00:48:29,520  
And then when they let  
us out, we immediately

869  
00:48:29,520 --> 00:48:34,770  
learned this is no  
recreational place.

870  
00:48:34,770 --> 00:48:37,500  
This is concentration  
camp Auschwitz.

871  
00:48:37,500 --> 00:48:39,900  
Did you know what Auschwitz  
meant at that point--

872  
00:48:39,900 --> 00:48:40,560  
No, not at all.

873  
00:48:40,560 --> 00:48:41,352  
--when you arrived?

874  
00:48:41,352 --> 00:48:45,300  
But if you took one look, you  
kind of knew a lot already.

875  
00:48:45,300 --> 00:48:48,390  
What was your first impressions

when the car stopped?

876

00:48:48,390 --> 00:48:50,600

What do you first remember  
when it first stopped?

877

00:48:50,600 --> 00:48:53,880

My first thought was I  
hope I won't be here too

878

00:48:53,880 --> 00:48:57,270

long I hope they will take  
us somewhere else, although I

879

00:48:57,270 --> 00:49:00,030

didn't know what it  
is, how it is, nothing.

880

00:49:00,030 --> 00:49:03,510

[INAUDIBLE] on the ramp  
there, and there were--

881

00:49:03,510 --> 00:49:07,170

we were one of the transports,  
one of the few transports

882

00:49:07,170 --> 00:49:10,020

who did not go  
through a selection.

883

00:49:10,020 --> 00:49:11,490

You know, the  
selection, you know

884

00:49:11,490 --> 00:49:14,670

normally when a transport  
came to Auschwitz,

885

00:49:14,670 --> 00:49:18,445

Dr. Mengele selected  
the old and sick,

886

00:49:18,445 --> 00:49:20,070

put them in the gas  
chamber right away,

887  
00:49:20,070 --> 00:49:22,800  
the others put in some  
kind of a camp or so.

888  
00:49:22,800 --> 00:49:25,950  
Our transport was  
the only transport

889  
00:49:25,950 --> 00:49:27,750  
that was not selection.

890  
00:49:27,750 --> 00:49:32,017  
That was the only transport who  
had their own civilian clothes

891  
00:49:32,017 --> 00:49:32,850  
from Theresienstadt.

892  
00:49:32,850 --> 00:49:37,020  
We did not get striped clothes.

893  
00:49:37,020 --> 00:49:39,180  
They took away all  
our possessions

894  
00:49:39,180 --> 00:49:41,980  
whatever we took with  
us from Theresienstadt,

895  
00:49:41,980 --> 00:49:46,650  
but what we had on  
us, they left us.

896  
00:49:46,650 --> 00:49:48,478  
So the doors open.

897  
00:49:48,478 --> 00:49:49,770  
What was your first impression?

898

00:49:49,770 --> 00:49:53,700

Oh, they started to beat  
us with the rifle butts,

899

00:49:53,700 --> 00:49:56,430

and yelling, and crying.

900

00:49:56,430 --> 00:50:00,390

And we saw sometimes  
they were throwing out

901

00:50:00,390 --> 00:50:02,400

the dead ones from the carts.

902

00:50:02,400 --> 00:50:03,790

And that was the first--

903

00:50:03,790 --> 00:50:07,830

how can you describe  
an impression like this

904

00:50:07,830 --> 00:50:09,300

in first time of your life--

905

00:50:09,300 --> 00:50:11,490

16-year-old life, right?

906

00:50:11,490 --> 00:50:13,510

But it was terrible.

907

00:50:13,510 --> 00:50:18,270

But, again, my mom  
said, [? child, ?] look,

908

00:50:18,270 --> 00:50:18,900

they just died.

909

00:50:18,900 --> 00:50:19,550

They're old.

910

00:50:19,550 --> 00:50:20,600

They are sick.

911  
00:50:20,600 --> 00:50:21,540  
That happens.

912  
00:50:21,540 --> 00:50:23,370  
And let's go, right?

913  
00:50:23,370 --> 00:50:24,630  
Don't look.

914  
00:50:24,630 --> 00:50:28,030  
I'm sure she knew a little  
bit more than I did.

915  
00:50:28,030 --> 00:50:30,480  
And they, as I  
said, they took us,

916  
00:50:30,480 --> 00:50:32,670  
they kind of shoveled  
us a little bit

917  
00:50:32,670 --> 00:50:34,230  
with the rifle butts.

918  
00:50:34,230 --> 00:50:37,680  
Here and there somebody  
got a hit over his head.

919  
00:50:37,680 --> 00:50:41,070  
And they took us to a shower.

920  
00:50:41,070 --> 00:50:43,060  
This is everybody in your car?

921  
00:50:43,060 --> 00:50:43,560  
Pardon?

922  
00:50:43,560 --> 00:50:46,860  
Everybody in your  
car stayed together?



923

00:50:46,860 --> 00:50:49,680

No, no, no, no, no, once  
you go out of the car,

924

00:50:49,680 --> 00:50:51,250

there was a bunch, you know?

925

00:50:51,250 --> 00:50:53,490

The whole bunch of  
the transport started

926

00:50:53,490 --> 00:50:56,307

to march towards the  
one building, which

927

00:50:56,307 --> 00:50:57,390

we didn't know what it is.

928

00:50:57,390 --> 00:50:59,010

It was a shower building.

929

00:50:59,010 --> 00:50:59,940

It said shower.

930

00:50:59,940 --> 00:51:04,440

And fortunately enough, it  
was really shower, all right?

931

00:51:04,440 --> 00:51:07,290

Later, if I knew, I  
would never go there.

932

00:51:07,290 --> 00:51:09,780

I would rather let him  
kill me right there

933

00:51:09,780 --> 00:51:11,160

instead of going there.

934

00:51:11,160 --> 00:51:13,110

But we didn't know better then.

935

00:51:13,110 --> 00:51:15,330

And we went, and we  
really got to shower.

936

00:51:15,330 --> 00:51:19,990

We got our clothes back,  
and we got the tattoo.

937

00:51:19,990 --> 00:51:22,770

And during that process,  
they beat us over the head

938

00:51:22,770 --> 00:51:25,590

with sticks-- the Kapos,  
you know, and the Germans.

939

00:51:25,590 --> 00:51:28,470

And so I knew it's no fun.

940

00:51:28,470 --> 00:51:30,450

What is your tattoo number?

941

00:51:30,450 --> 00:51:33,465

My number is 170955.

942

00:51:33,465 --> 00:51:37,200

1-7-0-9-5-5, you see here?

943

00:51:37,200 --> 00:51:39,360

You will see my number--

944

00:51:39,360 --> 00:51:43,020

you will notice my number is a  
little bit larger than normally

945

00:51:43,020 --> 00:51:44,560

other people's number.

946

00:51:44,560 --> 00:51:50,480

The reason for that is because  
I was 15-16 and I still grew,

947

00:51:50,480 --> 00:51:52,400  
and the number grew with me.

948

00:51:52,400 --> 00:51:56,630  
Where an adult person,  
18, didn't grow anymore,

949

00:51:56,630 --> 00:52:01,360  
the number stayed the same  
size, so that's the reason.

950

00:52:01,360 --> 00:52:04,950  
How did you feel  
getting a tattoo?

951

00:52:04,950 --> 00:52:06,840  
I felt terrible really.

952

00:52:06,840 --> 00:52:10,690  
I know to say that is  
just the understatement.

953

00:52:10,690 --> 00:52:16,140  
But this was the smallest  
worry that I had in the time.

954

00:52:16,140 --> 00:52:17,102  
I said, all right.

955

00:52:17,102 --> 00:52:17,810  
Give me a number.

956

00:52:17,810 --> 00:52:19,258  
Leave me go, OK?

957

00:52:19,258 --> 00:52:20,800  
Let's see where we  
are going to live.

958

00:52:20,800 --> 00:52:22,270  
What are we going to do?

959

00:52:22,270 --> 00:52:24,730

That was more important  
than the number.

960

00:52:24,730 --> 00:52:27,347

I said, OK, some statistic  
they have to have,

961

00:52:27,347 --> 00:52:28,930

they put the number  
on you, all right.

962

00:52:28,930 --> 00:52:30,520

Was it painful?

963

00:52:30,520 --> 00:52:31,670

Not too.

964

00:52:31,670 --> 00:52:35,500

It was just kind of sticking,  
but it was not too bad, no.

965

00:52:35,500 --> 00:52:38,500

The thing was we  
went in a row always,

966

00:52:38,500 --> 00:52:42,620

you know, men in one  
row, one after another.

967

00:52:42,620 --> 00:52:44,470

And once in a while  
they hit somebody

968

00:52:44,470 --> 00:52:47,620

when the one in front of  
him didn't walk too fast.

969

00:52:47,620 --> 00:52:51,610

My brother, poor guy, he  
always went in front of me,

970

00:52:51,610 --> 00:52:53,630  
and he was a little  
bit taller than I.

971  
00:52:53,630 --> 00:52:56,020  
And when somebody swung  
the stick or something,

972  
00:52:56,020 --> 00:52:58,240  
my brother got hit and I didn't.

973  
00:52:58,240 --> 00:53:00,530  
And I think he  
did it on purpose.

974  
00:53:00,530 --> 00:53:02,650  
He kind of protected me  
a little bit, you know?

975  
00:53:02,650 --> 00:53:05,150  
Is his number one away?

976  
00:53:05,150 --> 00:53:05,650  
His number

977  
00:53:05,650 --> 00:53:08,710  
is one number lower  
than mine, yes, 54.

978  
00:53:08,710 --> 00:53:10,420  
He was in front of me.

979  
00:53:10,420 --> 00:53:12,760  
And my mother's were  
different because women

980  
00:53:12,760 --> 00:53:15,610  
were separated in  
a separate shower

981  
00:53:15,610 --> 00:53:18,580  
room and separate numbers too.

982

00:53:18,580 --> 00:53:21,850

And so then they  
took us, we walked

983

00:53:21,850 --> 00:53:28,120

to that camp, which later we  
found out to be the B2b camp.

984

00:53:28,120 --> 00:53:31,180

And also later,  
we find that that

985

00:53:31,180 --> 00:53:36,100

is the only camp where men  
and women were together

986

00:53:36,100 --> 00:53:38,080

in the whole Auschwitz area.

987

00:53:38,080 --> 00:53:41,200

I mean, I'm saying  
camp assuming that you

988

00:53:41,200 --> 00:53:42,820

know what I'm talking about.

989

00:53:42,820 --> 00:53:45,400

Auschwitz was one giant big--

990

00:53:45,400 --> 00:53:47,530

I mean, Auschwitz, Birkenau--

991

00:53:47,530 --> 00:53:52,450

one giant big [INAUDIBLE]  
camp, but inside that camp

992

00:53:52,450 --> 00:53:57,040

where small camps divided  
where always 2,000, 3,000,

993

00:53:57,040 --> 00:54:00,010

4,000 people were lodged in.

994

00:54:00,010 --> 00:54:04,450

And there were always camps  
of two rows of barracks,

995

00:54:04,450 --> 00:54:08,160

except, as I mentioned before,  
I don't think outside--

996

00:54:08,160 --> 00:54:09,550

I think outside the tape.

997

00:54:09,550 --> 00:54:13,840

The A camp was only  
one line of barracks,

998

00:54:13,840 --> 00:54:18,250

and that was such  
a transitional camp

999

00:54:18,250 --> 00:54:21,790

where nobody stayed  
for a long time.

1000

00:54:21,790 --> 00:54:25,450

Usually, they just put people  
there either transport them out

1001

00:54:25,450 --> 00:54:30,220

or put them in a gas chamber,  
which was the case in our camp.

1002

00:54:30,220 --> 00:54:35,890

So our camp became the so-called  
"family" log or family camp,

1003

00:54:35,890 --> 00:54:41,470

B2b, where, as I mentioned  
before, Fredy Hirsch organized.

1004

00:54:41,470 --> 00:54:44,380

He was such a courageous man.

1005

00:54:44,380 --> 00:54:49,960

He, being German himself, you  
know, from Berlin and German

1006

00:54:49,960 --> 00:54:53,500

Jew who came later to  
Czechoslovakia hoping

1007

00:54:53,500 --> 00:54:55,360

he would escape from Germany.

1008

00:54:55,360 --> 00:54:58,090

And so he didn't  
speak too well Czech.

1009

00:54:58,090 --> 00:55:00,940

He spoke brilliantly  
German, you know.

1010

00:55:00,940 --> 00:55:02,990

His whole education was German.

1011

00:55:02,990 --> 00:55:11,500

And he was such a type,  
such athletic type of man,

1012

00:55:11,500 --> 00:55:16,660

and a little bit, I would  
say, a military man, you know.

1013

00:55:16,660 --> 00:55:22,900

He also advocated since we still  
were in Prague and Hagibor,

1014

00:55:22,900 --> 00:55:27,430

for us to exercise, and  
to learn discipline,

1015

00:55:27,430 --> 00:55:30,160

and to be physically  
fit, and mentally fit.

1016



00:55:30,160 --> 00:55:35,920  
And that was his way of teaching  
us, you know, which we hated.

1017  
00:55:35,920 --> 00:55:39,520  
But we found out later that  
it was pretty good for us,

1018  
00:55:39,520 --> 00:55:42,610  
and that he was doing  
the right thing.

1019  
00:55:42,610 --> 00:55:44,110  
Because we wanted  
to play soccer,

1020  
00:55:44,110 --> 00:55:45,610  
and he couldn't stand it.

1021  
00:55:45,610 --> 00:55:50,530  
He just exercised and so,  
and scouting, and discipline,

1022  
00:55:50,530 --> 00:55:51,910  
and military, and marching.

1023  
00:55:51,910 --> 00:55:55,120  
And so anyway, he, in  
Auschwitz, got the courage

1024  
00:55:55,120 --> 00:56:00,490  
to talk back to the Germans,  
which was unheard of

1025  
00:56:00,490 --> 00:56:03,580  
and, I mean, crazy thing to do.

1026  
00:56:03,580 --> 00:56:06,490  
But he did it, and he  
succeeded with that.

1027  
00:56:06,490 --> 00:56:10,510  
And he managed to get a

special barrack for the kids,

1028

00:56:10,510 --> 00:56:13,450

for example, from the Germans.

1029

00:56:13,450 --> 00:56:17,140

And he managed to get special  
ration for the children,

1030

00:56:17,140 --> 00:56:18,070

you know.

1031

00:56:18,070 --> 00:56:21,040

And all kind of  
privileges he managed

1032

00:56:21,040 --> 00:56:25,810

to get from them because he  
spoke to them as they spoke

1033

00:56:25,810 --> 00:56:27,640

to him, in a military way.

1034

00:56:27,640 --> 00:56:31,990

And they very much  
like that, you know.

1035

00:56:31,990 --> 00:56:34,750

That impressed the  
Germans really.

1036

00:56:34,750 --> 00:56:37,850

And maybe the fact that  
they knew he is German,

1037

00:56:37,850 --> 00:56:40,870

and he speaks their  
language, and behaves

1038

00:56:40,870 --> 00:56:42,530

in their manner and so.

1039

00:56:42,530 --> 00:56:45,220

1040

00:56:45,220 --> 00:56:47,920

So you arrive with your  
mother and your brother

1041

00:56:47,920 --> 00:56:51,800

to this family camp  
in Birkenau, B2b.

1042

00:56:51,800 --> 00:56:52,840

Right.

1043

00:56:52,840 --> 00:56:54,730

And where did you stay?

1044

00:56:54,730 --> 00:56:58,030

Did you stay with your  
brother and your mother?

1045

00:56:58,030 --> 00:57:00,880

I stayed with my  
brother, and there were--

1046

00:57:00,880 --> 00:57:02,150

the barracks were separated.

1047

00:57:02,150 --> 00:57:07,510

There were women separated  
and men separate.

1048

00:57:07,510 --> 00:57:09,760

We're still within the  
family camp at this point.

1049

00:57:09,760 --> 00:57:11,720

Yes, yeah, in the family camp.

1050

00:57:11,720 --> 00:57:16,160

It's family camp, but  
the sleeping areas--

1051

00:57:16,160 --> 00:57:18,090

because I cannot  
say living quarters.

1052

00:57:18,090 --> 00:57:19,340

They were not living quarters.

1053

00:57:19,340 --> 00:57:23,047

They were the old horse--

1054

00:57:23,047 --> 00:57:23,880

what do you call it?

1055

00:57:23,880 --> 00:57:32,760

Stalls and there were those  
the leveled sleeping places,

1056

00:57:32,760 --> 00:57:36,913

and there were in one barrack,  
I think, about 1,500 people.

1057

00:57:36,913 --> 00:57:37,830

I don't know how many.

1058

00:57:37,830 --> 00:57:39,240

A lot of people anyway.

1059

00:57:39,240 --> 00:57:45,250

And it was not  
comfortable in any case.

1060

00:57:45,250 --> 00:57:49,710

And so I was with my  
brother, and my mother

1061

00:57:49,710 --> 00:57:51,508

was in another barrack.

1062

00:57:51,508 --> 00:57:52,800

With the other women, you mean.

1063

00:57:52,800 --> 00:57:56,340

With the other women Yeah  
many barracks of women

1064

00:57:56,340 --> 00:58:01,860

many barracks of men right and  
very soon after I arrived we

1065

00:58:01,860 --> 00:58:05,100

I started to work in  
that children's barracks

1066

00:58:05,100 --> 00:58:07,980

that Fredy got for the children.

1067

00:58:07,980 --> 00:58:11,730

And don't forget, they  
were there already,

1068

00:58:11,730 --> 00:58:14,820

that transport of Fredy Hirsch  
and so-- a week and three

1069

00:58:14,820 --> 00:58:15,630

months later.

1070

00:58:15,630 --> 00:58:16,830

Did he remember you?

1071

00:58:16,830 --> 00:58:19,230

Oh, yeah, surely, naturally.

1072

00:58:19,230 --> 00:58:24,150

All of us knew each other  
very well, most of us I mean.

1073

00:58:24,150 --> 00:58:26,310

What was the age  
range for the children

1074

00:58:26,310 --> 00:58:27,550

in the children's barrack?

1075

00:58:27,550 --> 00:58:28,050

What?

1076

00:58:28,050 --> 00:58:28,550

Again?

1077

00:58:28,550 --> 00:58:30,750

What was the age  
range for the children

1078

00:58:30,750 --> 00:58:33,150

in the children's barrack?

1079

00:58:33,150 --> 00:58:35,430

In the children's  
barrack, as I said,

1080

00:58:35,430 --> 00:58:38,400

was just a barrack where the  
children came during the day.

1081

00:58:38,400 --> 00:58:39,870

They did not sleep there.

1082

00:58:39,870 --> 00:58:43,920

And I think the  
allowed age was 16--

1083

00:58:43,920 --> 00:58:45,340

up to 16.

1084

00:58:45,340 --> 00:58:49,590

Anybody over 16 was  
considered an adult, right?

1085

00:58:49,590 --> 00:58:56,460

But since Fredy knew me, and  
since I was just close, over 16

1086

00:58:56,460 --> 00:58:59,340

only, he wanted to spare us--

1087

00:58:59,340 --> 00:59:02,070

kids of my age--

1088

00:59:02,070 --> 00:59:06,930

from the normal adult  
life there, which

1089

00:59:06,930 --> 00:59:12,960

was very, very difficult  
and horrifying really.

1090

00:59:12,960 --> 00:59:17,400

And so he let me, like, work  
in the children's barrack,

1091

00:59:17,400 --> 00:59:19,260

although the only  
thing I did was

1092

00:59:19,260 --> 00:59:22,860

that I was carrying the  
barrels with the children's

1093

00:59:22,860 --> 00:59:27,030

soup at lunchtime back and  
forth from the kitchen.

1094

00:59:27,030 --> 00:59:29,520

And that's all that I  
really had to do there,

1095

00:59:29,520 --> 00:59:32,250

and the rest of the  
day I was just joining

1096

00:59:32,250 --> 00:59:34,920

the kids like everybody else.

1097

00:59:34,920 --> 00:59:40,800

Now, that we were preparing  
children's theater

1098

00:59:40,800 --> 00:59:43,780  
plays in a very primitive way--

1099  
00:59:43,780 --> 00:59:45,460  
Fredy did that.

1100  
00:59:45,460 --> 00:59:48,930  
And in fact, I  
remember in that time,

1101  
00:59:48,930 --> 00:59:54,570  
I was translating since  
things were mostly writings

1102  
00:59:54,570 --> 00:59:57,270  
and whatever we had,  
literature, books,

1103  
00:59:57,270 --> 01:00:00,990  
whatever the Germans allowed us  
to have in the children block

1104  
01:00:00,990 --> 01:00:02,460  
were German naturally.

1105  
01:00:02,460 --> 01:00:05,220  
And we wanted to  
make a Czech play.

1106  
01:00:05,220 --> 01:00:07,680  
I think it was Snow  
White or something,

1107  
01:00:07,680 --> 01:00:11,295  
and I translated the  
German book into Czech.

1108  
01:00:11,295 --> 01:00:15,090  
[LAUGHS] That was probably  
my first translating job.

1109  
01:00:15,090 --> 01:00:19,200  
And we played that little play,



very short, and very primitive,

1110  
01:00:19,200 --> 01:00:20,190  
you know?

1111  
01:00:20,190 --> 01:00:22,500  
And what were the  
little children--

1112  
01:00:22,500 --> 01:00:25,920  
the smaller children's--

1113  
01:00:25,920 --> 01:00:29,400  
what was it like for them?

1114  
01:00:29,400 --> 01:00:33,270  
I don't know if they even  
were aware of the situation.

1115  
01:00:33,270 --> 01:00:34,230  
They were so young.

1116  
01:00:34,230 --> 01:00:37,260  
Some of them were  
I think four years

1117  
01:00:37,260 --> 01:00:41,670  
old, five years, seven, 10.

1118  
01:00:41,670 --> 01:00:43,560  
I don't think they  
were aware of what's

1119  
01:00:43,560 --> 01:00:44,950  
actually happening there.

1120  
01:00:44,950 --> 01:00:48,120  
I really couldn't  
even guess and imagine

1121  
01:00:48,120 --> 01:00:50,560  
what their thoughts were.

1122  
01:00:50,560 --> 01:00:59,340  
But, as I said, thanks to  
Fredy, they managed their life

1123  
01:00:59,340 --> 01:01:02,690  
in a pretty decent--

1124  
01:01:02,690 --> 01:01:05,780  
not decent-- in a  
better way than they

1125  
01:01:05,780 --> 01:01:11,300  
would have to in a regular  
camp and as an adult.

1126  
01:01:11,300 --> 01:01:14,000  
Who were the other  
so-called teachers there,

1127  
01:01:14,000 --> 01:01:16,580  
the other adults working  
with the children?

1128  
01:01:16,580 --> 01:01:19,670  
There were usually teachers  
from Theresienstadt

1129  
01:01:19,670 --> 01:01:30,000  
from the children building  
and young people of 20,

1130  
01:01:30,000 --> 01:01:34,370  
30 years old or so who had  
the ability, naturally,

1131  
01:01:34,370 --> 01:01:39,290  
to take care of  
little children, yeah.

1132  
01:01:39,290 --> 01:01:43,280  
Did you know what was happening  
in the rest of Birkenau?

1133

01:01:43,280 --> 01:01:48,240

Did you know about crematoriums?

1134

01:01:48,240 --> 01:01:49,500

We knew.

1135

01:01:49,500 --> 01:01:52,590

We learned pretty soon that  
there are crematoriums,

1136

01:01:52,590 --> 01:01:57,180

naturally, because you could  
see the flames flicking out

1137

01:01:57,180 --> 01:01:58,080

of the chimneys.

1138

01:01:58,080 --> 01:02:00,060

The chimneys of the  
crematorium were just

1139

01:02:00,060 --> 01:02:02,040

very close by really--

1140

01:02:02,040 --> 01:02:05,220

not very far-- and nothing  
was very far really.

1141

01:02:05,220 --> 01:02:07,940

And so we could see that.

1142

01:02:07,940 --> 01:02:12,540

And we heard probably  
from the first day

1143

01:02:12,540 --> 01:02:15,600

that there is something  
like a gas chamber there,

1144

01:02:15,600 --> 01:02:19,280

but we choose not to

believe it really.

1145

01:02:19,280 --> 01:02:20,000