

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,180

2
00:00:01,180 --> 00:00:04,240
This is the United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3
00:00:04,240 --> 00:00:07,060
interview with Tania
Rozmaryn conducted

4
00:00:07,060 --> 00:00:11,590
by Gail Schwartz on
February 23, 1997

5
00:00:11,590 --> 00:00:13,750
in Silver Spring, Maryland.

6
00:00:13,750 --> 00:00:18,280
This is tape number one, side a.

7
00:00:18,280 --> 00:00:20,570
What is your full name?

8
00:00:20,570 --> 00:00:22,870
Tania Rozmaryn.

9
00:00:22,870 --> 00:00:24,900
And what is the name
you were born with?

10
00:00:24,900 --> 00:00:28,850
Marcus, Tania Marcus.

11
00:00:28,850 --> 00:00:31,180
And where were you born?

12
00:00:31,180 --> 00:00:37,710
I was born in Poland in a
little town called Smorgon.

13

00:00:37,710 --> 00:00:41,610

Actually, I was born in
Vilna, but my parents

14

00:00:41,610 --> 00:00:45,670

lived in Smorgon, so
that's where I lived.

15

00:00:45,670 --> 00:00:48,310

And when were you born?

16

00:00:48,310 --> 00:00:52,160

June 16, 1928.

17

00:00:52,160 --> 00:00:55,130

How far is Smorgon from Vilna?

18

00:00:55,130 --> 00:00:58,850

I would say 40
miles approximately.

19

00:00:58,850 --> 00:01:02,150

I really wouldn't know
exactly because, as a child,

20

00:01:02,150 --> 00:01:06,730

I didn't know how
to measure distance.

21

00:01:06,730 --> 00:01:09,220

Let's talk about the
members of your family.

22

00:01:09,220 --> 00:01:12,170

Who made up your
immediate family?

23

00:01:12,170 --> 00:01:17,800

My father, Yaakov Marcus;
my mother, Cyla Marcus,

24

00:01:17,800 --> 00:01:20,480

who, God bless her,
is still alive,

25
00:01:20,480 --> 00:01:25,060
she is in the Hebrew
Home; and my older sister,

26
00:01:25,060 --> 00:01:31,140
Rivka; myself; and my
younger brother, Nathan.

27
00:01:31,140 --> 00:01:34,750
And how long had your
family been in that area?

28
00:01:34,750 --> 00:01:36,400
For many generations?

29
00:01:36,400 --> 00:01:38,740
How far back did they go?

30
00:01:38,740 --> 00:01:41,500
Yes, they had lived there
for many generations.

31
00:01:41,500 --> 00:01:44,500
I think there was an
interruption during World War

32
00:01:44,500 --> 00:01:46,960
I. They went to Russia.

33
00:01:46,960 --> 00:01:51,550
But then they came back, and
they had rebuilt their homes.

34
00:01:51,550 --> 00:01:55,760
Did you have a lot of extended
family in the general area?

35
00:01:55,760 --> 00:01:57,280
Yes.

36

00:01:57,280 --> 00:01:59,020

Would you like me
to be specific?

37

00:01:59,020 --> 00:01:59,870

Absolutely.

38

00:01:59,870 --> 00:02:01,510

Yes.

39

00:02:01,510 --> 00:02:08,590

In Smorgon, I had two aunts
and uncles, my father's two

40

00:02:08,590 --> 00:02:10,240

sisters.

41

00:02:10,240 --> 00:02:14,590

The older one was Fruma,
the younger one was Manya.

42

00:02:14,590 --> 00:02:17,350

She was married
to Mayor Goldberg,

43

00:02:17,350 --> 00:02:18,970

and they had three daughters--

44

00:02:18,970 --> 00:02:24,820

Bella, Sarah, and Esther.

45

00:02:24,820 --> 00:02:29,290

In Vilna, we had the
rest of our family.

46

00:02:29,290 --> 00:02:35,740

There was my mother's sister,
Pola Fil, and Benjamin,

47

00:02:35,740 --> 00:02:37,770

and they had four children--

48

00:02:37,770 --> 00:02:43,630

Ida, Mira, Richa, and Dovidl.

49

00:02:43,630 --> 00:02:47,830

We also had relatives in Vilna
on my grandfather's side,

50

00:02:47,830 --> 00:02:49,600

two sisters.

51

00:02:49,600 --> 00:02:51,960

And they are extended family.

52

00:02:51,960 --> 00:02:56,680

So most of our family
lived in Vilna,

53

00:02:56,680 --> 00:02:59,020

and they all perished in Ponar.

54

00:02:59,020 --> 00:03:01,675

There were over 80 people.

55

00:03:01,675 --> 00:03:05,250

56

00:03:05,250 --> 00:03:08,160

What kind of business
did your father have?

57

00:03:08,160 --> 00:03:11,880

Actually, my father had
two kinds of businesses.

58

00:03:11,880 --> 00:03:18,510

One business was a hardware
store, where he used to sell--

59

00:03:18,510 --> 00:03:21,600

he was with two partners,
with Mayor Goldberg,

60

00:03:21,600 --> 00:03:23,250

his brother-in-law,
and a friend,

61

00:03:23,250 --> 00:03:26,940

Motel Majerski
who both perished.

62

00:03:26,940 --> 00:03:28,950

He had a hardware.

63

00:03:28,950 --> 00:03:33,780

And he was selling gear, farming
equipment, to the farmers

64

00:03:33,780 --> 00:03:37,110

in the area, because Smorgon
was a small town surrounded

65

00:03:37,110 --> 00:03:38,580

by farmers.

66

00:03:38,580 --> 00:03:40,060

And he did very well.

67

00:03:40,060 --> 00:03:45,420

He also had another
business, which was a--

68

00:03:45,420 --> 00:03:51,210

a place where the farmers used
to bring their flax, which,

69

00:03:51,210 --> 00:03:54,270

of course, is made into linen.

70

00:03:54,270 --> 00:03:58,530

And that was a very large place
with several hundred people

71

00:03:58,530 --> 00:04:00,430

working there,

cleaning the flax,

72

00:04:00,430 --> 00:04:02,940
sorting them, and then pressing.

73

00:04:02,940 --> 00:04:06,360
And there was, I remember,
in the back of the plant

74

00:04:06,360 --> 00:04:10,710
was a rail coming from
the railroad station.

75

00:04:10,710 --> 00:04:15,720
And freight cars were there,
and they would fill them up

76

00:04:15,720 --> 00:04:19,959
and ship the flax abroad.

77

00:04:19,959 --> 00:04:21,550
Did your mother work?

78

00:04:21,550 --> 00:04:23,530
No, my mother did not work.

79

00:04:23,530 --> 00:04:25,720
We had a big, beautiful house.

80

00:04:25,720 --> 00:04:27,820
It's still standing there.

81

00:04:27,820 --> 00:04:29,760
The Russians took it over.

82

00:04:29,760 --> 00:04:36,420
And my mother was busy with
her children and charity work.

83

00:04:36,420 --> 00:04:43,210
And she had a
housekeeper and life

84
00:04:43,210 --> 00:04:47,710
was very good before the war.

85
00:04:47,710 --> 00:04:51,018
How long did you stay in
Vilna before you moved?

86
00:04:51,018 --> 00:04:52,810
You said you were born
in Vilna, and then--

87
00:04:52,810 --> 00:04:54,190
but you grew up in Smorgon.

88
00:04:54,190 --> 00:04:56,860
How long did you stay in Vilna
before you moved to Smorgon?

89
00:04:56,860 --> 00:04:57,520
You.

90
00:04:57,520 --> 00:05:02,410
Yes, no, actually, we lived
all the time in Smorgon.

91
00:05:02,410 --> 00:05:05,080
But my mother just went
to Vilna to give birth

92
00:05:05,080 --> 00:05:08,270
to me in a proper hospital.

93
00:05:08,270 --> 00:05:11,890
That's how-- I was just
born there, and then back

94
00:05:11,890 --> 00:05:12,390
to Smorgon.

95
00:05:12,390 --> 00:05:15,070

96
00:05:15,070 --> 00:05:17,235
You were talking
about your home there,

97
00:05:17,235 --> 00:05:18,610
which you said
was a lovely home.

98
00:05:18,610 --> 00:05:20,830
What kind of a
neighborhood was it in?

99
00:05:20,830 --> 00:05:25,180
Was it in a mixed neighborhood
of Jews and non-Jews?

100
00:05:25,180 --> 00:05:27,970
Yes, the neighborhood
was really mixed.

101
00:05:27,970 --> 00:05:32,830
Across the street from us was
the house of my uncle and aunt,

102
00:05:32,830 --> 00:05:34,480
my father's partner.

103
00:05:34,480 --> 00:05:36,580
But then I remember,
to the left,

104
00:05:36,580 --> 00:05:43,210
it was a non-Jewish family
who we got along very

105
00:05:43,210 --> 00:05:48,800
well with them until when the
war broke out, and we left.

106
00:05:48,800 --> 00:05:51,700
And when we came back, they
had cleaned out our house

107
00:05:51,700 --> 00:05:54,250
and wouldn't give
us anything back.

108
00:05:54,250 --> 00:05:58,030
So it was a mixed
neighborhood, yes.

109
00:05:58,030 --> 00:06:02,080
But this was a neighborhood
of upper-middle class

110
00:06:02,080 --> 00:06:03,610
or upper class?

111
00:06:03,610 --> 00:06:08,080
Yes, upper-- upper-middle
class, I would say.

112
00:06:08,080 --> 00:06:10,600
But actually, in
this small town,

113
00:06:10,600 --> 00:06:13,930
there was no such a
thing as a middle class

114
00:06:13,930 --> 00:06:15,160
or upper-middle class.

115
00:06:15,160 --> 00:06:17,500
You had a very large
big, beautiful house.

116
00:06:17,500 --> 00:06:22,060
And next to it, there
was a hovel or a--

117
00:06:22,060 --> 00:06:26,800
a small house, where poor people
lived with the wooden floors

118
00:06:26,800 --> 00:06:28,150
and no plumbing.

119
00:06:28,150 --> 00:06:32,350
So the city was not
divided specifically

120
00:06:32,350 --> 00:06:34,810
Jewish and non-Jewish
neighborhoods,

121
00:06:34,810 --> 00:06:37,270
or wealthy or less wealthy.

122
00:06:37,270 --> 00:06:40,270
It was sort of the
whole town was mixed.

123
00:06:40,270 --> 00:06:44,480
People lived just wherever they
happened to be comfortable.

124
00:06:44,480 --> 00:06:46,500
So you lived right in
the center of town?

125
00:06:46,500 --> 00:06:49,120
Yes, in the center of town.

126
00:06:49,120 --> 00:06:52,010
How religious was your family?

127
00:06:52,010 --> 00:06:56,060
Well, interesting--
very traditional.

128
00:06:56,060 --> 00:07:00,520
Because I know, of course,
Shabbat and Kashrut

129
00:07:00,520 --> 00:07:03,110
was always observed.

130
00:07:03,110 --> 00:07:06,320
My father would learn
when he had the chance.

131
00:07:06,320 --> 00:07:12,030
But he never wore a
yarmulke except mealtime.

132
00:07:12,030 --> 00:07:17,135
And I remember after we had our
meals and we said the prayer,

133
00:07:17,135 --> 00:07:21,140
he would take off his
yarmulke and put it aside.

134
00:07:21,140 --> 00:07:24,650
Nobody at that point--
especially in Lithuania.

135
00:07:24,650 --> 00:07:30,200
And we considered ourselves
more of Lithuanians than Polish,

136
00:07:30,200 --> 00:07:36,320
because Smorgon and Vilna were
occupied by Poland since World

137
00:07:36,320 --> 00:07:40,940
War I. And basically, it
was going from Lithuania

138
00:07:40,940 --> 00:07:43,490
to White Russia to Poland.

139
00:07:43,490 --> 00:07:45,530
So it was really--

140
00:07:45,530 --> 00:07:47,870
it was considered the culture.

141

00:07:47,870 --> 00:07:54,620
And the Jewish way of
life was in Lithuania--

142
00:07:54,620 --> 00:08:01,090
very Zionistic, Jewish-oriented,
a private Jewish school,

143
00:08:01,090 --> 00:08:02,090
which was called Tarbut.

144
00:08:02,090 --> 00:08:05,720

145
00:08:05,720 --> 00:08:09,020
But we did not have
Hasidim in town,

146
00:08:09,020 --> 00:08:12,530
or people that we
call now Hasidim,

147
00:08:12,530 --> 00:08:14,990
with a beard and
payots or shtreimel.

148
00:08:14,990 --> 00:08:17,420
There weren't any at all.

149
00:08:17,420 --> 00:08:21,230
Did you have any religious
training as a young girl?

150
00:08:21,230 --> 00:08:24,050
The only religious
training in school

151
00:08:24,050 --> 00:08:28,955
was that we had
one hour of Bible.

152
00:08:28,955 --> 00:08:33,020

153
00:08:33,020 --> 00:08:36,740
Most of the subjects were
taught in Hebrew, even

154
00:08:36,740 --> 00:08:38,970
secular subjects.

155
00:08:38,970 --> 00:08:43,340
But no specific religious
training, except what

156
00:08:43,340 --> 00:08:45,500
we absorbed in the house.

157
00:08:45,500 --> 00:08:47,885
So the school that you went
to was a Jewish school.

158
00:08:47,885 --> 00:08:49,010
It was not a public school.

159
00:08:49,010 --> 00:08:53,690
No, it was a private Jewish
school called a Tarbut.

160
00:08:53,690 --> 00:08:58,510
And these type of schools
were very prevalent

161
00:08:58,510 --> 00:09:00,380
all over Lithuania.

162
00:09:00,380 --> 00:09:03,920
And my father was very
instrumental of building

163
00:09:03,920 --> 00:09:07,630
that burgeoning school.

164
00:09:07,630 --> 00:09:10,270
Your family was very Zionistic?

165
00:09:10,270 --> 00:09:11,530
Very much.

166
00:09:11,530 --> 00:09:15,820
My father was very, very
dedicated to Zionists.

167
00:09:15,820 --> 00:09:19,360
I remember people
would come to our home,

168
00:09:19,360 --> 00:09:23,320
and there were all kinds of
meetings about Palestine.

169
00:09:23,320 --> 00:09:26,860
And he wanted very
much, before the war,

170
00:09:26,860 --> 00:09:30,580
to emigrate to Palestine.

171
00:09:30,580 --> 00:09:34,440
But at that time, you
needed a special--

172
00:09:34,440 --> 00:09:37,030
a special-- they called
it a certificate.

173
00:09:37,030 --> 00:09:43,390
But it was probably some kind of
a visa or special permit, which

174
00:09:43,390 --> 00:09:47,980
he couldn't get unless
the authorities in Israel

175
00:09:47,980 --> 00:09:49,030
would grant it.

176

00:09:49,030 --> 00:09:50,160
And it never came.

177
00:09:50,160 --> 00:09:54,410

178
00:09:54,410 --> 00:09:58,200
Did you have any other
interests as a child?

179
00:09:58,200 --> 00:09:59,690
Music or reading?

180
00:09:59,690 --> 00:10:03,850
Anything that you liked
to do outside of school?

181
00:10:03,850 --> 00:10:06,620
Oh, well, I was in
the fourth grade

182
00:10:06,620 --> 00:10:09,950
when the war broke out in 1939.

183
00:10:09,950 --> 00:10:13,670
So it was just that--

184
00:10:13,670 --> 00:10:14,570
I used to.

185
00:10:14,570 --> 00:10:15,750
I would read.

186
00:10:15,750 --> 00:10:21,170
And as far as musicals,
my father had a mandolin,

187
00:10:21,170 --> 00:10:21,890
I remember.

188
00:10:21,890 --> 00:10:24,530
And he would play

for us, especially,

189
00:10:24,530 --> 00:10:27,530
every time, the Jewish
national anthem.

190
00:10:27,530 --> 00:10:32,840
And every summer, we used to go
on vacation to a little village

191
00:10:32,840 --> 00:10:35,510
near the Viliya.

192
00:10:35,510 --> 00:10:39,680
That was a river that passed
through not far from us.

193
00:10:39,680 --> 00:10:42,860
And it was rather
very, very pleasant.

194
00:10:42,860 --> 00:10:44,810
Most of the Jews
who could afford

195
00:10:44,810 --> 00:10:47,000
would go there in the summer.

196
00:10:47,000 --> 00:10:50,630
And there was a lot of
swimming and boating

197
00:10:50,630 --> 00:10:55,520
and volleyball playing
and lots of walks.

198
00:10:55,520 --> 00:10:57,350
My father would take
me-- even though I

199
00:10:57,350 --> 00:11:00,440
remember-- as a little kid, he
would take me to the forest.

200
00:11:00,440 --> 00:11:06,800
We used to go to gather wild
strawberries or rare hazelnuts.

201
00:11:06,800 --> 00:11:09,110
And he would talk to me a lot.

202
00:11:09,110 --> 00:11:14,600
He used to tell me stories
that, at this point I realize--

203
00:11:14,600 --> 00:11:17,390
and I said to myself,
I was a little girl.

204
00:11:17,390 --> 00:11:20,990
And those are really
philosophical questions

205
00:11:20,990 --> 00:11:21,800
and ideas.

206
00:11:21,800 --> 00:11:23,960
He probably had a
premonition that he

207
00:11:23,960 --> 00:11:28,340
wouldn't be with me
too long and conducted

208
00:11:28,340 --> 00:11:33,210
very serious and mature
discussions with me.

209
00:11:33,210 --> 00:11:36,030
What kind of topics
did he talk about?

210
00:11:36,030 --> 00:11:40,620
Well, he would talk about
Israel and Jewish history

211
00:11:40,620 --> 00:11:48,540
and Jewish legacy and family
relations and relatives.

212
00:11:48,540 --> 00:11:50,310
And it was rather--

213
00:11:50,310 --> 00:11:53,360
where I considered
myself at that time

214
00:11:53,360 --> 00:11:56,610
mature, that he would
share with me all kinds.

215
00:11:56,610 --> 00:12:00,900
But mostly, he always, when
he came from his business,

216
00:12:00,900 --> 00:12:03,450
no matter how tired he
was, he would always

217
00:12:03,450 --> 00:12:06,420
sit down with my
sister and myself

218
00:12:06,420 --> 00:12:08,290
and ask us what we learned.

219
00:12:08,290 --> 00:12:12,670
Take us on his knee, what we
learned, and review it with us.

220
00:12:12,670 --> 00:12:17,055
And when he had time, he
would take us to the--

221
00:12:17,055 --> 00:12:19,630

222
00:12:19,630 --> 00:12:22,230

to the stadium where
they used to play soccer.

223
00:12:22,230 --> 00:12:24,250
But during the week,
when they didn't, then he

224
00:12:24,250 --> 00:12:28,840
would teach us how to
ride a bicycle or just--

225
00:12:28,840 --> 00:12:31,640
in the wintertime, he did
beautiful things for us.

226
00:12:31,640 --> 00:12:35,130
First of all, we were
going skiing and skating.

227
00:12:35,130 --> 00:12:39,560
And he bought me a pair
of skates and skis,

228
00:12:39,560 --> 00:12:42,760
so we went cross-country skiing.

229
00:12:42,760 --> 00:12:46,150
And then since he
knew many farmers,

230
00:12:46,150 --> 00:12:50,720
he would ask the farmers to
come with a sleigh and horses

231
00:12:50,720 --> 00:12:52,300
during the wintertime.

232
00:12:52,300 --> 00:12:54,280
And we would all
get into the sleigh

233
00:12:54,280 --> 00:12:57,700
and with the bells

jingling, and we

234
00:12:57,700 --> 00:13:01,860
would go all over through
the villages around town.

235
00:13:01,860 --> 00:13:05,180
It was just great, yes.

236
00:13:05,180 --> 00:13:07,190
How would you describe
yourself at that time?

237
00:13:07,190 --> 00:13:08,720
Were you a very quiet child?

238
00:13:08,720 --> 00:13:10,310
Or more outgoing?

239
00:13:10,310 --> 00:13:13,340
Yeah, I was very
quiet and very shy.

240
00:13:13,340 --> 00:13:19,440
And I think that
it did haunt me.

241
00:13:19,440 --> 00:13:22,170
I did suffer, for
many, many years,

242
00:13:22,170 --> 00:13:25,905
for an insecurity and
inferiority complex.

243
00:13:25,905 --> 00:13:28,820

244
00:13:28,820 --> 00:13:30,360
And I always thought--

245
00:13:30,360 --> 00:13:34,080

my mother was ready to
give her life for me--

246
00:13:34,080 --> 00:13:35,820
for me, for my sister,
for every-- she

247
00:13:35,820 --> 00:13:41,040
was a wonderful, wonderful
mother as far as helping us

248
00:13:41,040 --> 00:13:45,420
with knowledge, with
homework, and to make sure

249
00:13:45,420 --> 00:13:47,850
we are dressed and
proper manners.

250
00:13:47,850 --> 00:13:52,560
But never, ever would
she hug us or kiss us.

251
00:13:52,560 --> 00:13:57,740
And I feel now, when
I come to visit her

252
00:13:57,740 --> 00:14:00,600
and I kiss her and I hug
her and she kisses me back,

253
00:14:00,600 --> 00:14:02,220
I feel that she lets go.

254
00:14:02,220 --> 00:14:04,250
But I feel she was
not the only one.

255
00:14:04,250 --> 00:14:07,730
I think that at that
time, the Jewish parents

256
00:14:07,730 --> 00:14:13,790

felt that praise of showing love
to children would spoil them.

257

00:14:13,790 --> 00:14:16,170
And they wanted the children
to grow up wholesome.

258

00:14:16,170 --> 00:14:17,960
But what they didn't
realize, what we

259

00:14:17,960 --> 00:14:22,970
know now, that by not doing
so, by keeping a distance,

260

00:14:22,970 --> 00:14:26,810
the children grew
up very insecure.

261

00:14:26,810 --> 00:14:33,220
But she was the most wonderful,
selfless person in the world

262

00:14:33,220 --> 00:14:37,925
that I knew, even in
comparison to other mothers.

263

00:14:37,925 --> 00:14:39,670
[CHUCKLES]

264

00:14:39,670 --> 00:14:42,790
You said that you did have
some friends who were not

265

00:14:42,790 --> 00:14:44,680
Jewish in the neighborhood?

266

00:14:44,680 --> 00:14:45,500
Is that true?

267

00:14:45,500 --> 00:14:46,837
Did you play with any children?

268

00:14:46,837 --> 00:14:48,670

I'm talking about before
the war, of course.

269

00:14:48,670 --> 00:14:50,740

Yes, of course.

270

00:14:50,740 --> 00:14:54,130

Actually, not friends,
they were neighbors.

271

00:14:54,130 --> 00:14:57,670

But they always let us
know that we were Jews.

272

00:14:57,670 --> 00:15:01,330

Like, for instance, in the
summer, when we went down--

273

00:15:01,330 --> 00:15:05,740

our house was on a corner
on the top of a hill.

274

00:15:05,740 --> 00:15:09,490

And down the hill, a block down,
was a little brook, a river.

275

00:15:09,490 --> 00:15:11,260

And we liked to
go swimming there

276

00:15:11,260 --> 00:15:16,120

in the summertime
in-between going away

277

00:15:16,120 --> 00:15:19,960

to the big river for
our summer vacation.

278

00:15:19,960 --> 00:15:22,600

So the non-Jewish
kids, they always came.

279

00:15:22,600 --> 00:15:27,490

And they were throwing mud at us
and chased us out of the water,

280

00:15:27,490 --> 00:15:28,270

and we would run.

281

00:15:28,270 --> 00:15:32,420

In the wintertime, the
brook would freeze over,

282

00:15:32,420 --> 00:15:35,110

and we tried to
go skating there.

283

00:15:35,110 --> 00:15:36,680

And they did the same thing.

284

00:15:36,680 --> 00:15:39,580

They would come and
cause us trouble.

285

00:15:39,580 --> 00:15:46,930

And even in the house, I
remember we had a metal roof.

286

00:15:46,930 --> 00:15:52,240

And every time they would pass
by, they would throw rocks.

287

00:15:52,240 --> 00:15:57,610

And of course, the sound was--

288

00:15:57,610 --> 00:15:58,960

was horrific.

289

00:15:58,960 --> 00:16:03,920

Because when the rock hitting
the metal, it was like--

290

00:16:03,920 --> 00:16:07,600

like, amplified terribly.

291
00:16:07,600 --> 00:16:09,070
And it was very frightened.

292
00:16:09,070 --> 00:16:11,680
We've never stayed
home alone at night.

293
00:16:11,680 --> 00:16:15,070
We were always afraid
to be there alone.

294
00:16:15,070 --> 00:16:18,310
When these type of
things happened,

295
00:16:18,310 --> 00:16:21,280
did you talk it over with
your parents or your sister?

296
00:16:21,280 --> 00:16:23,420
How did you handle
this as a child?

297
00:16:23,420 --> 00:16:25,130
Oh, we talked about it.

298
00:16:25,130 --> 00:16:30,310
But it wasn't a surprise,
because it was known.

299
00:16:30,310 --> 00:16:35,300
This is what the shkotzim used
to do to the Jewish children.

300
00:16:35,300 --> 00:16:41,360
So we knew that there is nothing
our parents could have done

301
00:16:41,360 --> 00:16:45,605
about it, because the kids
would pass by and throw rocks

302

00:16:45,605 --> 00:16:47,740
on the roof.

303

00:16:47,740 --> 00:16:51,560
So there was nothing a
Jew could do about it.

304

00:16:51,560 --> 00:16:55,590

305

00:16:55,590 --> 00:17:00,297
What was the first big change
that you noticed in your life?

306

00:17:00,297 --> 00:17:01,380
Of course, you were young.

307

00:17:01,380 --> 00:17:05,970

308

00:17:05,970 --> 00:17:09,599
Was it September 1939
when the Russians came in?

309

00:17:09,599 --> 00:17:10,890
Yes, exactly.

310

00:17:10,890 --> 00:17:15,270
Well, the first change
came in September in 1939

311

00:17:15,270 --> 00:17:22,200
when Germany divided
Eastern Poland, and our--

312

00:17:22,200 --> 00:17:31,710
our town became under the
occupation of the Soviet Union.

313

00:17:31,710 --> 00:17:34,320
Actually, the war
broke out on Sunday.

314
00:17:34,320 --> 00:17:37,350
And somebody had told my
father, because what the--

315
00:17:37,350 --> 00:17:43,440
what-- no, no, I am--
no, I'm jumping ahead--

316
00:17:43,440 --> 00:17:51,270
that happened in June 22,
1941, before the Germans

317
00:17:51,270 --> 00:17:53,080
occupied that.

318
00:17:53,080 --> 00:17:56,250
But when the Russians came,
they took over the town,

319
00:17:56,250 --> 00:17:59,400
and they took away my
father's businesses.

320
00:17:59,400 --> 00:18:04,840
And they made my father
go to work in the forest.

321
00:18:04,840 --> 00:18:07,290
And I remember he
used to come home

322
00:18:07,290 --> 00:18:11,550
with calluses on his hands.

323
00:18:11,550 --> 00:18:15,720
And immediately, they
converted our school,

324
00:18:15,720 --> 00:18:18,540
that was the private
Tarbut school,

325

00:18:18,540 --> 00:18:22,020
into a Russian public school.

326

00:18:22,020 --> 00:18:27,540
And they opened a non-kosher
coffee shop there,

327

00:18:27,540 --> 00:18:32,280
which was shocking to me,
even though we weren't so--

328

00:18:32,280 --> 00:18:36,600
we weren't so "very
religious," quote, unquote,

329

00:18:36,600 --> 00:18:38,880
as you would perceive now.

330

00:18:38,880 --> 00:18:41,220
But the house was
kosher and holidays

331

00:18:41,220 --> 00:18:44,430
were observed without question.

332

00:18:44,430 --> 00:18:48,300
And of course, the preparation
for Passover and other holidays

333

00:18:48,300 --> 00:18:49,660
was tremendous.

334

00:18:49,660 --> 00:18:54,630
And there it was, a non-kosher
coffee shop and the school.

335

00:18:54,630 --> 00:18:57,750
And we felt it.

336

00:18:57,750 --> 00:19:03,630
We still had food
and clothes to wear,

337
00:19:03,630 --> 00:19:07,440
but everything else
was taken away.

338
00:19:07,440 --> 00:19:11,740
My father and my grandfather
had cars which was taken away.

339
00:19:11,740 --> 00:19:15,900
My grandfather was the
first one, that he bought--

340
00:19:15,900 --> 00:19:18,945
I think it must have
been in '36 or '37--

341
00:19:18,945 --> 00:19:21,870

342
00:19:21,870 --> 00:19:22,800
a truck.

343
00:19:22,800 --> 00:19:25,800
It was a shining blue Chevrolet.

344
00:19:25,800 --> 00:19:27,960
And nobody knew how to drive.

345
00:19:27,960 --> 00:19:30,660
And there wasn't even
a gasoline station.

346
00:19:30,660 --> 00:19:33,690
So he brought a chauffeur
with his wife from Germany.

347
00:19:33,690 --> 00:19:35,350
Rex was his name.

348
00:19:35,350 --> 00:19:36,780
He gave him a house.

349

00:19:36,780 --> 00:19:40,240

And his job was to take
care of that truck.

350

00:19:40,240 --> 00:19:41,940

And he was the chauffeur.

351

00:19:41,940 --> 00:19:44,590

And I remember my
experience the first time,

352

00:19:44,590 --> 00:19:50,440

when he took me and my mother
to Vilna to visit our relatives.

353

00:19:50,440 --> 00:19:53,550

I was in total shock
to be in that car.

354

00:19:53,550 --> 00:19:55,770

So they, of course,
they took everything.

355

00:19:55,770 --> 00:19:59,530

The Russians took
everything away from us.

356

00:19:59,530 --> 00:20:01,500

How did your father
explain this to you?

357

00:20:01,500 --> 00:20:03,460

You're 11 years old now.

358

00:20:03,460 --> 00:20:05,440

How did he-- what
did he say to you

359

00:20:05,440 --> 00:20:08,560

when these terrible
things began to happen?

360

00:20:08,560 --> 00:20:12,860

Actually, I really
do not recall.

361

00:20:12,860 --> 00:20:18,080

The love, of course, at home
was the same, and we had food.

362

00:20:18,080 --> 00:20:25,580

But I remember seeing my father
very down, sometimes depressed.

363

00:20:25,580 --> 00:20:27,080

But there were no--

364

00:20:27,080 --> 00:20:32,040

I don't recall any discussions
about the situation,

365

00:20:32,040 --> 00:20:34,760

none whatsoever.

366

00:20:34,760 --> 00:20:36,440

What kind of work
was he forced to do?

367

00:20:36,440 --> 00:20:40,590

368

00:20:40,590 --> 00:20:46,130

To go to the nearby forests with
other people that were wealthy

369

00:20:46,130 --> 00:20:49,810

and to chop down trees.

370

00:20:49,810 --> 00:20:54,630

And to sort them up
into certain logs

371

00:20:54,630 --> 00:20:58,980

or whatever it was required.

372
00:20:58,980 --> 00:21:02,400
He would come home on
his bicycle, very tired,

373
00:21:02,400 --> 00:21:03,970
exhausted, and depressed.

374
00:21:03,970 --> 00:21:06,670

375
00:21:06,670 --> 00:21:09,520
And what kind of contact did
you have with your relatives

376
00:21:09,520 --> 00:21:11,500
in Vilna then?

377
00:21:11,500 --> 00:21:15,250
With the relatives in
Vilna, very little contact.

378
00:21:15,250 --> 00:21:16,780
We didn't go there.

379
00:21:16,780 --> 00:21:20,650

380
00:21:20,650 --> 00:21:24,540
When somebody used
to come to visit,

381
00:21:24,540 --> 00:21:26,660
they would usually
bring us regards

382
00:21:26,660 --> 00:21:28,830
from the other relatives.

383
00:21:28,830 --> 00:21:33,900
Otherwise, there was really
not much of a contact.

384
00:21:33,900 --> 00:21:37,650
Did you talk about the changes
with your other Jewish friends?

385
00:21:37,650 --> 00:21:40,220

386
00:21:40,220 --> 00:21:43,010
I really don't recall.

387
00:21:43,010 --> 00:21:46,730
We sort of took the
changes for granted.

388
00:21:46,730 --> 00:21:51,500
Because the Russians
really did not torture us.

389
00:21:51,500 --> 00:21:55,190
As a matter of fact, because we
had a big and beautiful house,

390
00:21:55,190 --> 00:21:58,730
the Russian Army had
confiscated one of the rooms

391
00:21:58,730 --> 00:22:02,090
for a Russian lieutenant.

392
00:22:02,090 --> 00:22:04,100
He was a tank commander.

393
00:22:04,100 --> 00:22:08,930
And that was before they
started the war with Finland.

394
00:22:08,930 --> 00:22:10,190
And he was in our--

395
00:22:10,190 --> 00:22:11,450
he was in our house.

396

00:22:11,450 --> 00:22:17,400

His name was [? Kutchov. ?] And
he was a very, very nice man.

397

00:22:17,400 --> 00:22:20,390

He would sit with my
parents and talk a lot.

398

00:22:20,390 --> 00:22:23,630

And he would bring us
food from the army.

399

00:22:23,630 --> 00:22:27,050

And I recall, even
in the morning,

400

00:22:27,050 --> 00:22:31,190

sometimes he would wake
us up to go to school.

401

00:22:31,190 --> 00:22:34,340

He was really very nice.

402

00:22:34,340 --> 00:22:39,530

And we felt that, in
a way, it was safer,

403

00:22:39,530 --> 00:22:45,670

because we did not suffer from
the non-Jewish boys and girls'

404

00:22:45,670 --> 00:22:49,450

anti-Semitic outbreaks.

405

00:22:49,450 --> 00:22:52,490

So seeing people in
Red Army uniforms

406

00:22:52,490 --> 00:22:55,080

was not frightening for you?

407

00:22:55,080 --> 00:22:56,760
No, not at all.

408
00:22:56,760 --> 00:23:00,860
As a matter of fact,
they came to our school,

409
00:23:00,860 --> 00:23:02,750
and they organized--

410
00:23:02,750 --> 00:23:06,530
they organized the younger
people into the Pioneers.

411
00:23:06,530 --> 00:23:11,000
This was the organization for
the young Communist Party.

412
00:23:11,000 --> 00:23:13,750
And the older ones in Komsomol.

413
00:23:13,750 --> 00:23:16,520
And they didn't
accept me, because I

414
00:23:16,520 --> 00:23:19,490
was a daughter of a bourgeois.

415
00:23:19,490 --> 00:23:21,030
And I was very upset.

416
00:23:21,030 --> 00:23:24,140
I was very jealous that all
my friends were walking around

417
00:23:24,140 --> 00:23:29,420
in navy skirts, white
blouses, and red scarfs

418
00:23:29,420 --> 00:23:33,440
and go to meetings
and go to parades.

419

00:23:33,440 --> 00:23:35,360

And I was very jealous.

420

00:23:35,360 --> 00:23:38,450

And then my father
found a relative

421

00:23:38,450 --> 00:23:41,390

who they used to be very poor.

422

00:23:41,390 --> 00:23:44,660

And of course, they
were acceptable.

423

00:23:44,660 --> 00:23:47,470

So she became a leader
in the Komsomols.

424

00:23:47,470 --> 00:23:51,560

I remember, he talked to her,
and she persuaded somebody

425

00:23:51,560 --> 00:23:53,420

to take me into the Pioneers.

426

00:23:53,420 --> 00:23:57,530

And I was in seventh
heaven at that time.

427

00:23:57,530 --> 00:23:59,770

So what kind of activities
did you then do with them?

428

00:23:59,770 --> 00:24:01,960

Well, it was interesting.

429

00:24:01,960 --> 00:24:03,280

We used to have meetings.

430

00:24:03,280 --> 00:24:05,680

And of course, on special
days, there were parades.

431
00:24:05,680 --> 00:24:08,260

432
00:24:08,260 --> 00:24:13,270
They brainwashed us so immensely
that we felt all of a sudden

433
00:24:13,270 --> 00:24:17,140
that we were proud of
the Communist regime.

434
00:24:17,140 --> 00:24:20,690
We used to sing our
praises to Stalin.

435
00:24:20,690 --> 00:24:24,640
And we were very
happy to do that.

436
00:24:24,640 --> 00:24:29,160
And of course, at
home, we never--

437
00:24:29,160 --> 00:24:33,420
my parents never
discussed it with us.

438
00:24:33,420 --> 00:24:37,290
I imagine now, thinking
back, they probably

439
00:24:37,290 --> 00:24:40,797
did not want to contradict,
because there was nothing

440
00:24:40,797 --> 00:24:41,880
that could have been done.

441
00:24:41,880 --> 00:24:47,180
And they saw that we were
happy, my sister and I,

442

00:24:47,180 --> 00:24:51,840

having been liberated from
the anti-Semitic outbreak.

443

00:24:51,840 --> 00:24:55,850

So they just let
it go, I suppose.

444

00:24:55,850 --> 00:24:58,280

So you did not experience
any anti-Semitism

445

00:24:58,280 --> 00:25:00,410

in this Communist
youth movement?

446

00:25:00,410 --> 00:25:01,250

Oh, no, no, no.

447

00:25:01,250 --> 00:25:03,750

In the Communist youth
movement, on the contrary,

448

00:25:03,750 --> 00:25:08,810

everybody considered each other
a brother and a loving sister.

449

00:25:08,810 --> 00:25:12,110

What languages did you
speak at that time?

450

00:25:12,110 --> 00:25:14,840

The basic language
at home was Yiddish.

451

00:25:14,840 --> 00:25:20,130

However, in the first year--
my father spoke Hebrew at home.

452

00:25:20,130 --> 00:25:23,180

Like I mentioned, he was
a very dedicated Zionist.

453

00:25:23,180 --> 00:25:26,510

When the time of the
[NON-ENGLISH] came,

454

00:25:26,510 --> 00:25:29,640

he was always very, very active.

455

00:25:29,640 --> 00:25:32,150

And so in school, in
the Tarbut school,

456

00:25:32,150 --> 00:25:34,160

we were required
to speak Hebrew,

457

00:25:34,160 --> 00:25:35,930

even outside in the street.

458

00:25:35,930 --> 00:25:38,180

And we were afraid
if a teacher would

459

00:25:38,180 --> 00:25:41,600

catch us speak any
other language,

460

00:25:41,600 --> 00:25:44,210

we would have been penalized.

461

00:25:44,210 --> 00:25:47,430

So at that time, I spoke
Yiddish, and I spoke Hebrew.

462

00:25:47,430 --> 00:25:52,670

And interesting, even today--

463

00:25:52,670 --> 00:25:56,270

I am a teacher now, of course,
I've been for so many years--

464

00:25:56,270 --> 00:25:59,930

and people think,

even Israelis, they

465

00:25:59,930 --> 00:26:02,690

think that I was born
and lived in Israel.

466

00:26:02,690 --> 00:26:04,700

Because even though
my vocabulary

467

00:26:04,700 --> 00:26:09,530

was maybe 50 or 80
words, but my accent

468

00:26:09,530 --> 00:26:15,020

was absolutely typical
of an Israeli, a sabra,

469

00:26:15,020 --> 00:26:17,000

which it remained with me.

470

00:26:17,000 --> 00:26:21,830

So we spoke Hebrew with the
limited vocabulary, Yiddish,

471

00:26:21,830 --> 00:26:23,030

and Russian.

472

00:26:23,030 --> 00:26:28,250

In the two years that the
Russians were in our town,

473

00:26:28,250 --> 00:26:30,950

we only spoke, in
school, Russian.

474

00:26:30,950 --> 00:26:32,510

At home, still Yiddish.

475

00:26:32,510 --> 00:26:36,860

But Russian was spoken
all over the place.

476

00:26:36,860 --> 00:26:38,690

Did you know Polish?

477

00:26:38,690 --> 00:26:42,260

Interesting, we were
under the Polish regime.

478

00:26:42,260 --> 00:26:49,050

However, we only learned
Polish one hour a week.

479

00:26:49,050 --> 00:26:52,590

And we had a Polish teacher.

480

00:26:52,590 --> 00:27:00,720

And only in the municipal
offices, if one had to go,

481

00:27:00,720 --> 00:27:02,280

had to speak Polish.

482

00:27:02,280 --> 00:27:05,730

But for me, Polish was
a foreign language.

483

00:27:05,730 --> 00:27:11,370

Now I speak Polish well,
because two of my sister-in-laws

484

00:27:11,370 --> 00:27:15,930

are from Poland, and
they always spoke Polish,

485

00:27:15,930 --> 00:27:18,045

and I learned Polish from them.

486

00:27:18,045 --> 00:27:22,050

[CHUCKLES] But at that time, no,
I couldn't speak Polish at all.

487

00:27:22,050 --> 00:27:23,280

No.

488
00:27:23,280 --> 00:27:25,530
Did you have a favorite holiday?

489
00:27:25,530 --> 00:27:27,540
Favorite religious holiday?

490
00:27:27,540 --> 00:27:32,640
Well, the most favorite
religious holiday was Passover.

491
00:27:32,640 --> 00:27:35,040
I remember, as it was
a little town when

492
00:27:35,040 --> 00:27:37,560
my mother started preparing.

493
00:27:37,560 --> 00:27:40,140
First of all, it was--

494
00:27:40,140 --> 00:27:44,110
the preparations
started in the winter.

495
00:27:44,110 --> 00:27:51,400
In the beginning of the winter,
my mother started stuffing

496
00:27:51,400 --> 00:27:58,700
geese to have [them
fat ?] for Passover.

497
00:27:58,700 --> 00:28:04,090
So on Hanukkah time, the
geese were slaughtered.

498
00:28:04,090 --> 00:28:07,190
And in the house, they
were plucking them

499
00:28:07,190 --> 00:28:12,940

and koshering them, and then rendering the fat for Passover.

500
00:28:12,940 --> 00:28:14,640
And that was a special--

501
00:28:14,640 --> 00:28:16,550
a special occasion.

502
00:28:16,550 --> 00:28:20,800
And then, like, six weeks before Passover, my mother

503
00:28:20,800 --> 00:28:24,910
would buy tons of raisins and start to make wine.

504
00:28:24,910 --> 00:28:29,320
Because everything was so difficult, when I think of it.

505
00:28:29,320 --> 00:28:31,690
Like, in the fall, everything had

506
00:28:31,690 --> 00:28:36,850
to be bought, like, all kinds of vegetables and fruit into the--

507
00:28:36,850 --> 00:28:39,560
put into the cellar for the winter.

508
00:28:39,560 --> 00:28:44,110
And then my mother would put up cabbage, sauerkraut,

509
00:28:44,110 --> 00:28:46,900
and pickled pickles for the winter.

510
00:28:46,900 --> 00:28:51,370
And in the fall, she would--

511
00:28:51,370 --> 00:28:53,115
we had a big garden
with strawberries,

512
00:28:53,115 --> 00:28:56,080
and then and she would
make all kinds of jams

513
00:28:56,080 --> 00:28:58,150
from strawberries
and raspberries.

514
00:28:58,150 --> 00:29:01,510
And everything went to the
cellar in big, big jugs

515
00:29:01,510 --> 00:29:04,420
in preparation for the winter.

516
00:29:04,420 --> 00:29:08,680
And then, of course,
for every Thursday,

517
00:29:08,680 --> 00:29:15,760
my mother would send me to
the shochet, my sister and I,

518
00:29:15,760 --> 00:29:19,930
with the chicken or a goose
to slaughter for Shabbat.

519
00:29:19,930 --> 00:29:21,760
And then, of course,
it was brought home,

520
00:29:21,760 --> 00:29:24,070
and it was plucked, and it was--

521
00:29:24,070 --> 00:29:26,740
it was cut opened and koshered.

522

00:29:26,740 --> 00:29:31,030
And every little thing
was so complicated.

523
00:29:31,030 --> 00:29:34,630
The only things that
my parents used to buy

524
00:29:34,630 --> 00:29:38,170
was, of course, butter,
eggs, for everyday use.

525
00:29:38,170 --> 00:29:41,650
Otherwise, everything
was bought in bulks--

526
00:29:41,650 --> 00:29:45,250
cheeses, [? heads?], salamis.

527
00:29:45,250 --> 00:29:49,420
Lots and lots of long
salamis were hanging in the--

528
00:29:49,420 --> 00:29:51,130
in the cellar.

529
00:29:51,130 --> 00:29:55,240
And so Passover was my
most favorite holiday

530
00:29:55,240 --> 00:29:59,300
because, of course, the cleaning
and the house and everything.

531
00:29:59,300 --> 00:30:03,210
But then we didn't have, at that
time, even the wealthy people,

532
00:30:03,210 --> 00:30:04,810
special Passover dishes.

533
00:30:04,810 --> 00:30:07,090
Everything was being koshered.

534
00:30:07,090 --> 00:30:10,660
And I remember the big
things my mother would--

535
00:30:10,660 --> 00:30:14,300
had a very big pot
and a special--

536
00:30:14,300 --> 00:30:16,870
special oven outside,
where she would

537
00:30:16,870 --> 00:30:19,570
boil the pots and everything.

538
00:30:19,570 --> 00:30:24,180
But with the silverware, we used
to go, there was a public bath.

539
00:30:24,180 --> 00:30:28,090
And in the back of that
bath, they had a big fire,

540
00:30:28,090 --> 00:30:29,750
and they had a big--

541
00:30:29,750 --> 00:30:35,590
a big cauldron, I would say,
with boiling water and rocks.

542
00:30:35,590 --> 00:30:40,000
And everybody would bring their
silverware or their dishes

543
00:30:40,000 --> 00:30:42,790
to kosher.

544
00:30:42,790 --> 00:30:44,980
But we had--
everything was meat.

545

00:30:44,980 --> 00:30:48,280
There was no dairy
whatsoever for Passover.

546
00:30:48,280 --> 00:30:51,430
On the fingers of one hand,
you could count the dishes

547
00:30:51,430 --> 00:30:53,710
that people would prepare.

548
00:30:53,710 --> 00:30:57,010
But then before
Passover, my mother--

549
00:30:57,010 --> 00:31:00,220
we would get dressed and
had new patent leather

550
00:31:00,220 --> 00:31:02,860
shoes and white socks
and new dresses.

551
00:31:02,860 --> 00:31:05,320
And all the girls
in the neighborhood,

552
00:31:05,320 --> 00:31:08,320
we used to go to
the rabbi's house

553
00:31:08,320 --> 00:31:10,730
to wish him a happy Passover.

554
00:31:10,730 --> 00:31:12,580
And everyone had a little dish.

555
00:31:12,580 --> 00:31:14,770
And the rabbi would
give us charosets

556
00:31:14,770 --> 00:31:18,290
that he prepared

for the whole town.

557

00:31:18,290 --> 00:31:21,960

And that was just
fantastic, yes.

558

00:31:21,960 --> 00:31:26,020

Did this continue after the
Russians came into town?

559

00:31:26,020 --> 00:31:28,470

There were no restrictions?

560

00:31:28,470 --> 00:31:30,660

No, no, no, all this stopped.

561

00:31:30,660 --> 00:31:33,210

Everybody would
make Pesach as best

562

00:31:33,210 --> 00:31:39,460

as they could in their
own home and nothing

563

00:31:39,460 --> 00:31:41,740

was done on the outside.

564

00:31:41,740 --> 00:31:44,500

We still had the Seder,
and my grandparents

565

00:31:44,500 --> 00:31:46,390

lived in the same town--

566

00:31:46,390 --> 00:31:48,950

my Zayde Berel and
Bubbeh Chaya Basya.

567

00:31:48,950 --> 00:31:50,170

And they used to come.

568

00:31:50,170 --> 00:31:54,760

And then my grandfather
used to sing nicely,

569
00:31:54,760 --> 00:31:57,940
and non-Jews would
gather around the windows

570
00:31:57,940 --> 00:32:02,870
to listen to my grandfather
sing all the songs for Passover.

571
00:32:02,870 --> 00:32:07,630
Which I carried on and
transferred it to my children.

572
00:32:07,630 --> 00:32:13,740
We sing the same melodies
at our Pesach Seder.

573
00:32:13,740 --> 00:32:16,110
Well, now it's, your
father's working,

574
00:32:16,110 --> 00:32:19,200
and you and your sister are
members of the Communist Youth

575
00:32:19,200 --> 00:32:20,070
group.

576
00:32:20,070 --> 00:32:23,670
And you're going to a
regular school now, you said.

577
00:32:23,670 --> 00:32:28,290
So were there any other
changes, restrictions,

578
00:32:28,290 --> 00:32:32,770
in your life at that
point after September '39?

579
00:32:32,770 --> 00:32:37,540

Really no restrictions
whatsoever, except, of course,

580
00:32:37,540 --> 00:32:41,080
there were less material
things in the house.

581
00:32:41,080 --> 00:32:46,870
Which it really did not
diminish from the enthusiasm,

582
00:32:46,870 --> 00:32:51,250
because we felt that to be a
member of the Communist party,

583
00:32:51,250 --> 00:32:55,270
it's an honor, and we have
to do without many things.

584
00:32:55,270 --> 00:32:58,760
And we just accepted it.

585
00:32:58,760 --> 00:33:02,470
And then the next change?

586
00:33:02,470 --> 00:33:08,250
Yes, the next change was
the 22nd of June, 1941.

587
00:33:08,250 --> 00:33:10,370
Well, let's talk a
little bit about--

588
00:33:10,370 --> 00:33:15,740
so your father continued
to work in the forest all

589
00:33:15,740 --> 00:33:20,480
the way through the next
year, year and a half,

590
00:33:20,480 --> 00:33:22,160
and life went on.

591
00:33:22,160 --> 00:33:25,630
OK, and now you said--

592
00:33:25,630 --> 00:33:30,050
And then the change
was my grandmother

593
00:33:30,050 --> 00:33:32,870
was very sick in 1940.

594
00:33:32,870 --> 00:33:37,850
And she was taken to Vilna,
because her other daughter,

595
00:33:37,850 --> 00:33:40,790
my mother's sister, Pola,
was there, an older relative.

596
00:33:40,790 --> 00:33:42,600
But she had passed away.

597
00:33:42,600 --> 00:33:44,210
And my grandfather came back.

598
00:33:44,210 --> 00:33:45,590
And he had a big house.

599
00:33:45,590 --> 00:33:47,540
He didn't stay
with the children.

600
00:33:47,540 --> 00:33:50,660
He was always a very
successful businessman.

601
00:33:50,660 --> 00:33:55,120
And he was tremendous.

602
00:33:55,120 --> 00:33:57,530
When we grew up, I must--

603

00:33:57,530 --> 00:33:59,180

I must mention this.

604

00:33:59,180 --> 00:34:01,790

His name was Berel Danishevski.

605

00:34:01,790 --> 00:34:03,860

And he had a big business.

606

00:34:03,860 --> 00:34:06,050

He had a business of--

607

00:34:06,050 --> 00:34:11,420

in those days, they didn't
have the plastic tubes

608

00:34:11,420 --> 00:34:13,980

for sausages or for salami.

609

00:34:13,980 --> 00:34:18,500

So he was contracted
from the slaughterhouse

610

00:34:18,500 --> 00:34:20,030

that everything--

611

00:34:20,030 --> 00:34:21,800

whatever was
slaughtered there, he

612

00:34:21,800 --> 00:34:25,040

had people that they
would take over and clean

613

00:34:25,040 --> 00:34:28,100

all their intestines
of their animals,

614

00:34:28,100 --> 00:34:31,190

and then salt it or
blow it and dry it.

615

00:34:31,190 --> 00:34:36,830

But it was so much that
he exported it to Germany.

616

00:34:36,830 --> 00:34:39,710

And this is actually
why he bought the truck.

617

00:34:39,710 --> 00:34:43,370

And many times, he
was away on business.

618

00:34:43,370 --> 00:34:46,820

And when he was away
on business, one of us

619

00:34:46,820 --> 00:34:50,540

was asked to stay with my--
sleep with my grandmother.

620

00:34:50,540 --> 00:34:52,790

And I remember, I
was always petrified,

621

00:34:52,790 --> 00:34:56,870

because their house was a big,
beautiful, comfortable house,

622

00:34:56,870 --> 00:35:00,050

but it was near a
Jewish cemetery.

623

00:35:00,050 --> 00:35:02,137

And I was always petrified.

624

00:35:02,137 --> 00:35:04,220

I couldn't sleep there,
even though my grandmother

625

00:35:04,220 --> 00:35:07,220

would close the shutters.

626

00:35:07,220 --> 00:35:08,420
I was very frightened.

627
00:35:08,420 --> 00:35:11,090
But whenever he came,
he always brought us

628
00:35:11,090 --> 00:35:14,310
all kinds of goodies and toys.

629
00:35:14,310 --> 00:35:17,120
And he would do it in
an interesting way.

630
00:35:17,120 --> 00:35:19,880
Like, when we were
home, all of a sudden

631
00:35:19,880 --> 00:35:22,520
we would hear a violin outside.

632
00:35:22,520 --> 00:35:26,330
And we would look out, oh,
there is zayde, Zayde Berel,

633
00:35:26,330 --> 00:35:27,690
playing the violin.

634
00:35:27,690 --> 00:35:33,197
He brought us violin and
all kinds of special toys.

635
00:35:33,197 --> 00:35:35,030
Let's talk a little bit
about just some more

636
00:35:35,030 --> 00:35:39,800
changes before
the summer of '41.

637
00:35:39,800 --> 00:35:41,600
You had to go to regular school.

638

00:35:41,600 --> 00:35:44,960

Did you experience
any anti-Semitism

639

00:35:44,960 --> 00:35:47,570

from any of the teachers or
any of the other children

640

00:35:47,570 --> 00:35:48,320

in your school?

641

00:35:48,320 --> 00:35:51,080

642

00:35:51,080 --> 00:35:52,310

No, we didn't.

643

00:35:52,310 --> 00:35:55,330

Actually, they were now--

644

00:35:55,330 --> 00:35:58,550

there were no
non-Jewish students.

645

00:35:58,550 --> 00:36:02,270

What they did was they
took this Tarbut school

646

00:36:02,270 --> 00:36:04,400

which was going up
to the eighth grade,

647

00:36:04,400 --> 00:36:08,580

and they converted it as
it was to a Russian school.

648

00:36:08,580 --> 00:36:12,320

So essentially the same
students were there.

649

00:36:12,320 --> 00:36:14,630

There were no outsiders.

650

00:36:14,630 --> 00:36:17,420

And the teachers were--
there were other teachers.

651

00:36:17,420 --> 00:36:20,830

Most of them Jewish,
who were communists.

652

00:36:20,830 --> 00:36:23,490

And they were our
teachers, of course.

653

00:36:23,490 --> 00:36:25,420

And I remember,
we had a teacher,

654

00:36:25,420 --> 00:36:31,900

[? Zukerman, ?] in algebra
and in Russian language.

655

00:36:31,900 --> 00:36:34,570

Interestingly enough, we were--

656

00:36:34,570 --> 00:36:40,580

we had one hour a week,
we had a German teacher,

657

00:36:40,580 --> 00:36:44,080

and we had to learn German.

658

00:36:44,080 --> 00:36:49,930

Then she became an interpreter,
of course, when the Nazis came.

659

00:36:49,930 --> 00:36:54,940

And there was one other thing
that was very, very nice there.

660

00:36:54,940 --> 00:37:00,940

This Dr. [? Zukerman, ?] his
wife had training in drama

661
00:37:00,940 --> 00:37:02,260
and in music.

662
00:37:02,260 --> 00:37:07,930
And she had organized
and directed

663
00:37:07,930 --> 00:37:12,850
many plays and skits
with us, and the choir.

664
00:37:12,850 --> 00:37:14,210
And it was just wonderful.

665
00:37:14,210 --> 00:37:15,970
I loved singing in the choir.

666
00:37:15,970 --> 00:37:19,880
I loved to participate in
the plays and in the skits.

667
00:37:19,880 --> 00:37:22,920
Were there any restrictions on
Jewish history or the Hebrew

668
00:37:22,920 --> 00:37:24,360
language at that point?

669
00:37:24,360 --> 00:37:26,670
Well, Hebrew language,
it was finished.

670
00:37:26,670 --> 00:37:30,990
Jewish history and Hebrew
language was finished.

671
00:37:30,990 --> 00:37:36,930
And they started
teaching us Yiddish more.

672
00:37:36,930 --> 00:37:41,400
And even the plays and the

skits were all in Yiddish.

673

00:37:41,400 --> 00:37:44,280

Because at that time
in the Soviet Union,

674

00:37:44,280 --> 00:37:48,720

they were pushing their
idea of Birobidzhan.

675

00:37:48,720 --> 00:37:51,900

And therefore,
actually what they did

676

00:37:51,900 --> 00:37:55,290

was that our school was
converted to a Yiddish school

677

00:37:55,290 --> 00:37:57,330

more than it was
a public school.

678

00:37:57,330 --> 00:38:04,040

679

00:38:04,040 --> 00:38:07,850

This is tape one, side b.

680

00:38:07,850 --> 00:38:12,170

And you were talking
about the musical shows

681

00:38:12,170 --> 00:38:15,080

that you took part in in school.

682

00:38:15,080 --> 00:38:16,550

Anything else you wanted to say?

683

00:38:16,550 --> 00:38:22,390

You also had said that you
couldn't study Hebrew anymore

684

00:38:22,390 --> 00:38:23,920
and Bible.

685
00:38:23,920 --> 00:38:28,070
We couldn't study Hebrew
or Bible or Zionism,

686
00:38:28,070 --> 00:38:29,480
for that matter.

687
00:38:29,480 --> 00:38:33,050
It was all Yiddish or Russian.

688
00:38:33,050 --> 00:38:36,610
Did that upset you,
those restrictions?

689
00:38:36,610 --> 00:38:41,290
I don't think it did, because
I loved the school so much.

690
00:38:41,290 --> 00:38:46,330
I loved, especially, the teacher
that would direct and conduct

691
00:38:46,330 --> 00:38:48,970
all the plays.

692
00:38:48,970 --> 00:38:54,700
And I was so happy, because
she had a concertina.

693
00:38:54,700 --> 00:38:57,160
And many times, she
would let me look at it

694
00:38:57,160 --> 00:39:00,492
and try it, and even let me
carry it to her house, which

695
00:39:00,492 --> 00:39:01,450
was a tremendous honor.

696

00:39:01,450 --> 00:39:04,280

[CHUCKLES]

697

00:39:04,280 --> 00:39:06,770

No, I don't think so.

698

00:39:06,770 --> 00:39:08,180

It's sort of-- I don't know.

699

00:39:08,180 --> 00:39:12,830

I look at children at this
point, at my age at their time,

700

00:39:12,830 --> 00:39:16,280

and they are so sophisticated,
and they're so knowledgeable.

701

00:39:16,280 --> 00:39:21,660

And I think of myself of
being so naive or stupid.

702

00:39:21,660 --> 00:39:25,290

But I think it's
because we were not

703

00:39:25,290 --> 00:39:31,350

exposed to all the knowledge
and bombarded with all media

704

00:39:31,350 --> 00:39:35,340

that the children
have now, that it--

705

00:39:35,340 --> 00:39:40,410

I guess every child my age
was that gullible, naive,

706

00:39:40,410 --> 00:39:46,410

and perhaps stupid in
comparison to children

707

00:39:46,410 --> 00:39:49,740

this age in our time.

708

00:39:49,740 --> 00:39:51,280

Now, you're 13 years old.

709

00:39:51,280 --> 00:39:55,770

And it is June 1941.

710

00:39:55,770 --> 00:39:59,770

June 1941, it was a Sunday.

711

00:39:59,770 --> 00:40:05,610

And I remember that on a
day before, on Saturday

712

00:40:05,610 --> 00:40:08,670

and a Friday, my mother--

713

00:40:08,670 --> 00:40:12,540

somebody came and
told my father that we

714

00:40:12,540 --> 00:40:17,100

are on the list to being
transported to Siberia,

715

00:40:17,100 --> 00:40:20,580

because my father
was a wealthy man.

716

00:40:20,580 --> 00:40:22,350

And that's what they
did, the rations.

717

00:40:22,350 --> 00:40:27,270

Little by little, they cleared
out the town of the bourgeois,

718

00:40:27,270 --> 00:40:29,910

of the rich people,
the business people,

719

00:40:29,910 --> 00:40:33,510
and they would ship them with
their families to Siberia.

720
00:40:33,510 --> 00:40:35,520
So somebody told my father.

721
00:40:35,520 --> 00:40:38,730
And they said, be
prepared because this

722
00:40:38,730 --> 00:40:40,230
was-- on Sunday
morning, they are

723
00:40:40,230 --> 00:40:42,780
going to take you to the train.

724
00:40:42,780 --> 00:40:45,240
And there are
freight cars there,

725
00:40:45,240 --> 00:40:48,540
and they'll ship you to
Siberia with the family.

726
00:40:48,540 --> 00:40:51,010
So my mother prepared,
first of all,

727
00:40:51,010 --> 00:40:54,270
whatever valuable
things we had--

728
00:40:54,270 --> 00:40:56,400
gold pieces and jewelry.

729
00:40:56,400 --> 00:41:00,690
And she sewed it into
the lining of our coats.

730
00:41:00,690 --> 00:41:03,730
And then she prepared a

knapsack for everybody.

731
00:41:03,730 --> 00:41:08,580
She dried bread into,
like, [INAUDIBLE]..

732
00:41:08,580 --> 00:41:13,890
And whatever could be prepared
to take along as food,

733
00:41:13,890 --> 00:41:17,640
she had it all prepared in
bags for each and every one,

734
00:41:17,640 --> 00:41:21,630
according to age, how much
we could carry in our bags.

735
00:41:21,630 --> 00:41:24,060
So when the Russians
will come Sunday morning

736
00:41:24,060 --> 00:41:27,780
to take us to the train
and ship us to Siberia,

737
00:41:27,780 --> 00:41:29,430
we'd be prepared.

738
00:41:29,430 --> 00:41:31,170
But that never happened.

739
00:41:31,170 --> 00:41:33,000
Because 4 o'clock
in the morning,

740
00:41:33,000 --> 00:41:37,650
the Germans started shooting
and bombarding our town.

741
00:41:37,650 --> 00:41:42,210
And that was the end
of the Russian regime.

742
00:41:42,210 --> 00:41:45,060
Had you, before
that, heard of a man

743
00:41:45,060 --> 00:41:47,250
named Hitler, as a young girl?

744
00:41:47,250 --> 00:41:50,390

745
00:41:50,390 --> 00:41:56,420
We did hear between '39 and '41.

746
00:41:56,420 --> 00:41:59,630
On the radio, we had
a radio in our house.

747
00:41:59,630 --> 00:42:02,810
And sometimes my parents
would sit and listen

748
00:42:02,810 --> 00:42:05,420
to the speeches of Hitler.

749
00:42:05,420 --> 00:42:10,460
And they would tell us that
this is a dictator in Germany.

750
00:42:10,460 --> 00:42:14,900
But it never occurred
to us that it might

751
00:42:14,900 --> 00:42:19,130
concern us, me, or my family.

752
00:42:19,130 --> 00:42:24,530
We really lived in such
seclusion at that time,

753
00:42:24,530 --> 00:42:30,800
that all we were concerned

was the daily existence

754

00:42:30,800 --> 00:42:33,680

in our town and our family.

755

00:42:33,680 --> 00:42:36,500

Your parents understood German?

756

00:42:36,500 --> 00:42:37,760

They understood German.

757

00:42:37,760 --> 00:42:40,250

I know that my parents were--

758

00:42:40,250 --> 00:42:42,830

they would discuss
politics a lot.

759

00:42:42,830 --> 00:42:46,820

I even remember that at one
point when I was there--

760

00:42:46,820 --> 00:42:49,850

I don't remember what
time, but historically, I

761

00:42:49,850 --> 00:42:52,850

could pinpoint it,
because my father read

762

00:42:52,850 --> 00:42:55,400

the Jewish newspaper every day.

763

00:42:55,400 --> 00:42:58,550

And then he was discussing
politics with my mother.

764

00:42:58,550 --> 00:43:00,470

And his friends would come.

765

00:43:00,470 --> 00:43:04,950

And at one point, I remember we

were on vacation, and he read--

766
00:43:04,950 --> 00:43:07,590
he read the paper.

767
00:43:07,590 --> 00:43:13,860
And he was talking about
Franco and Addis Ababa.

768
00:43:13,860 --> 00:43:15,510
And I-- I just--

769
00:43:15,510 --> 00:43:20,480
the names sounded so
peculiar to me that I--

770
00:43:20,480 --> 00:43:23,820
I knew they were
somewhere in the world.

771
00:43:23,820 --> 00:43:35,200
But to give you a perception of
the timidity and naivete, that

772
00:43:35,200 --> 00:43:40,840
when somebody would
describe a place, that as--

773
00:43:40,840 --> 00:43:44,470
actually, if you say now to
go to Mars or go to Venus,

774
00:43:44,470 --> 00:43:45,850
it's credible.

775
00:43:45,850 --> 00:43:47,920
But in those days,
when somebody would

776
00:43:47,920 --> 00:43:50,200
say, so where are you going?

777

00:43:50,200 --> 00:43:52,930
Where do you think I'm
going, to Honolulu?

778
00:43:52,930 --> 00:43:57,430
Honolulu was farther
than any galaxy

779
00:43:57,430 --> 00:43:59,810
that we could perceive
at this point.

780
00:43:59,810 --> 00:44:03,400
We didn't even know that
a place like Honolulu

781
00:44:03,400 --> 00:44:06,660
existed, because it
was sort of a paradox--

782
00:44:06,660 --> 00:44:08,740
oh, you're going to Honolulu.

783
00:44:08,740 --> 00:44:12,370
Although, I must recall,
when I was in school

784
00:44:12,370 --> 00:44:16,570
when the Russians
came, they did teach us

785
00:44:16,570 --> 00:44:18,580
a great deal of geography.

786
00:44:18,580 --> 00:44:20,410
And I loved geography
and history.

787
00:44:20,410 --> 00:44:21,950
I loved it very much.

788
00:44:21,950 --> 00:44:27,010
And I remember that at

one point I had to give,

789

00:44:27,010 --> 00:44:29,560

as a test, an oral
test, a comparison

790

00:44:29,560 --> 00:44:35,420

between the Japanese islands
and the British Isles.

791

00:44:35,420 --> 00:44:38,720

I don't know how well I
did, but I had to do it.

792

00:44:38,720 --> 00:44:41,060

[CHUCKLES]

793

00:44:41,060 --> 00:44:42,920

So here it came.

794

00:44:42,920 --> 00:44:47,920

And the Germans came, and they
started bombarding the town.

795

00:44:47,920 --> 00:44:51,190

And my father immediately
said, let's run.

796

00:44:51,190 --> 00:44:53,560

Let's run towards
the Russian border.

797

00:44:53,560 --> 00:44:56,480

Maybe we'll make it into Russia.

798

00:44:56,480 --> 00:45:00,450

And this is where
we ran to the East.

799

00:45:00,450 --> 00:45:03,670

And my father still
had his bicycle.

800

00:45:03,670 --> 00:45:06,420

He put most of the
things on the bicycle.

801

00:45:06,420 --> 00:45:11,340

And we had our knapsacks ready
for being shipped to Siberia.

802

00:45:11,340 --> 00:45:14,340

So we took it all with
us, and we walked.

803

00:45:14,340 --> 00:45:17,190

And thousands of people
were on the roads.

804

00:45:17,190 --> 00:45:19,950

When you say we, who
are you including?

805

00:45:19,950 --> 00:45:25,360

My father, my mother, my
sister, my brother, and myself.

806

00:45:25,360 --> 00:45:28,360

And everybody was
going towards East,

807

00:45:28,360 --> 00:45:32,410

hoping that we could make it
into Russia, to the Soviet

808

00:45:32,410 --> 00:45:33,850

Union.

809

00:45:33,850 --> 00:45:37,990

And as we were walking,
and the roads were so

810

00:45:37,990 --> 00:45:40,720

filled with people,
every now and then,

811

00:45:40,720 --> 00:45:44,200

a German plane would come
down very low over the people

812

00:45:44,200 --> 00:45:46,030

and machine gun.

813

00:45:46,030 --> 00:45:48,310

And when we saw
the planes coming,

814

00:45:48,310 --> 00:45:51,010

we would run into the high--

815

00:45:51,010 --> 00:45:51,760

to the fields.

816

00:45:51,760 --> 00:45:55,270

The wheat was
already quite tall.

817

00:45:55,270 --> 00:45:58,820

And we would run in and
hide until the plane passed.

818

00:45:58,820 --> 00:46:00,990

And then we would
come out again.

819

00:46:00,990 --> 00:46:10,465

And we marched maybe 15 miles
to that little town, Lebedev.

820

00:46:10,465 --> 00:46:12,340

What was it like for
you to leave your house?

821

00:46:12,340 --> 00:46:15,500

822

00:46:15,500 --> 00:46:18,710

It was very difficult.

We looked around.

823
00:46:18,710 --> 00:46:19,880
We left the house.

824
00:46:19,880 --> 00:46:23,300
But we knew that
there is a purpose,

825
00:46:23,300 --> 00:46:25,010
that we have to save our lives.

826
00:46:25,010 --> 00:46:27,680
And as a child, it really--

827
00:46:27,680 --> 00:46:32,810
because I never ever really had
suffered hunger or loneliness

828
00:46:32,810 --> 00:46:38,590
or cold or not having a
comfortable room, my own room,

829
00:46:38,590 --> 00:46:40,010
or beautiful clothes.

830
00:46:40,010 --> 00:46:43,940
So that it never dawned on me
that it could be different.

831
00:46:43,940 --> 00:46:48,440
So I felt, well, let's go.

832
00:46:48,440 --> 00:46:51,880
We'll have it-- wherever we
will go, we'll have it again.

833
00:46:51,880 --> 00:46:53,740
But, of course, it wasn't so.

834
00:46:53,740 --> 00:46:57,400
Did you take anything special

as a 13-year-old girl?

835

00:46:57,400 --> 00:47:00,180

Anything personal?

836

00:47:00,180 --> 00:47:02,925

I think I took a little--

837

00:47:02,925 --> 00:47:06,720

a little book with
photos in a scrapbook.

838

00:47:06,720 --> 00:47:08,340

Yes, I took that with me.

839

00:47:08,340 --> 00:47:11,650

840

00:47:11,650 --> 00:47:13,000

Definitely.

841

00:47:13,000 --> 00:47:15,940

Anything else I can't recall.

842

00:47:15,940 --> 00:47:19,690

Probably maybe a favorite
doll or something.

843

00:47:19,690 --> 00:47:22,990

But even that,
it's just amazing.

844

00:47:22,990 --> 00:47:27,730

Now going back, before the war,
my parents were so wealthy.

845

00:47:27,730 --> 00:47:31,000

But I remember
having a few dolls,

846

00:47:31,000 --> 00:47:33,290

but nothing in particular.

847
00:47:33,290 --> 00:47:36,250
And there was one
girl in my class

848
00:47:36,250 --> 00:47:39,160
that had relatives
in the United States.

849
00:47:39,160 --> 00:47:42,820
And they had sent her
a doll that when you--

850
00:47:42,820 --> 00:47:46,660
putting her down horizontally
would close her eyes.

851
00:47:46,660 --> 00:47:48,850
And everybody was so fascinated.

852
00:47:48,850 --> 00:47:51,500
And everybody wanted
to be friends with her.

853
00:47:51,500 --> 00:47:53,890
And when she invited
me or other girls

854
00:47:53,890 --> 00:47:58,360
to our house to play with that
doll, it was a special holiday.

855
00:47:58,360 --> 00:48:02,800
It's just amazing
how things were

856
00:48:02,800 --> 00:48:06,310
and perceptions in those days.

857
00:48:06,310 --> 00:48:07,690
Do you want me to go on now?

858

00:48:07,690 --> 00:48:11,380

We're going to-- so
we came to Lebedev.

859

00:48:11,380 --> 00:48:14,470

And in Lebedev,
we had relatives.

860

00:48:14,470 --> 00:48:21,290

They were a sister
of my grandmother.

861

00:48:21,290 --> 00:48:24,190

Her name was Golda.

862

00:48:24,190 --> 00:48:28,970

Her husband's name was Reuven.

863

00:48:28,970 --> 00:48:32,450

And they were very, very poor.

864

00:48:32,450 --> 00:48:35,030

I remember once
when I was younger,

865

00:48:35,030 --> 00:48:37,490

my mother took me to visit them.

866

00:48:37,490 --> 00:48:39,380

And I just couldn't
understand why

867

00:48:39,380 --> 00:48:41,960

they didn't have a nice home.

868

00:48:41,960 --> 00:48:46,010

And the floor was a
wooden floor and no rugs.

869

00:48:46,010 --> 00:48:51,200

And he made magazines.

870

00:48:51,200 --> 00:48:53,660

And he would sell
them in the market.

871

00:48:53,660 --> 00:48:56,000

Very pious people.

872

00:48:56,000 --> 00:48:58,600

And they had three children--

873

00:48:58,600 --> 00:49:02,900

Moshe Aaron, who was
married; Michal, a young man;

874

00:49:02,900 --> 00:49:05,870

and Rivka, a young girl.

875

00:49:05,870 --> 00:49:07,790

I remember their
names distinctly

876

00:49:07,790 --> 00:49:11,630

because I make it
a point, whenever

877

00:49:11,630 --> 00:49:15,380

it's their Yizkor,
the memorial service,

878

00:49:15,380 --> 00:49:17,900

I make it a point
to mention each

879

00:49:17,900 --> 00:49:21,200

and every one of these
relatives by name

880

00:49:21,200 --> 00:49:24,260

so that I remember their names.

881

00:49:24,260 --> 00:49:28,820

We came to their home, and
they were very happy to see us.

882
00:49:28,820 --> 00:49:30,920
And they made us so comfortable.

883
00:49:30,920 --> 00:49:33,770
But by the time we got
there, the German tanks

884
00:49:33,770 --> 00:49:38,510
were rambling already on the
streets of this little village.

885
00:49:38,510 --> 00:49:41,140
And they took over
the town in no time.

886
00:49:41,140 --> 00:49:43,670

887
00:49:43,670 --> 00:49:47,000
The following day,
we were still there.

888
00:49:47,000 --> 00:49:52,430
And then my mother and father
were discussing what to do.

889
00:49:52,430 --> 00:49:53,990
And they said,
look, we are here,

890
00:49:53,990 --> 00:49:56,450
strangers with
relatives who are poor.

891
00:49:56,450 --> 00:49:59,030
They could hardly
sustain themselves.

892
00:49:59,030 --> 00:50:02,660
And the Germans
occupied us anyway.

893

00:50:02,660 --> 00:50:04,970

So that makes no
difference whether we're

894

00:50:04,970 --> 00:50:07,220

here or in our town in Smorgon.

895

00:50:07,220 --> 00:50:10,220

Let's go back to Smorgon.

896

00:50:10,220 --> 00:50:12,170

So my parents
discuss the matter,

897

00:50:12,170 --> 00:50:15,800

and then they decided that it
wouldn't be safe for my father

898

00:50:15,800 --> 00:50:18,110

to walk with us, to go with us.

899

00:50:18,110 --> 00:50:20,090

Because mostly we
would go by foot,

900

00:50:20,090 --> 00:50:23,600

unless a farmer would
pass by with their cart

901

00:50:23,600 --> 00:50:25,550

and would take us.

902

00:50:25,550 --> 00:50:27,920

So they decided-- my
father, they said, look,

903

00:50:27,920 --> 00:50:30,530

it's peaceful here, my
father should stay there.

904

00:50:30,530 --> 00:50:34,050

And my brother--

who was very, very--

905

00:50:34,050 --> 00:50:38,030

he was born in 1935, so

he was six years old--

906

00:50:38,030 --> 00:50:39,440

should stay there.

907

00:50:39,440 --> 00:50:41,750

And my mother, my

sister, and myself

908

00:50:41,750 --> 00:50:43,880

should go back to our town.

909

00:50:43,880 --> 00:50:46,280

And my parents made up

that when my mother will

910

00:50:46,280 --> 00:50:50,060

come home and see

what the situation is,

911

00:50:50,060 --> 00:50:55,670

she would go back and bring

my father and my brother home.

912

00:50:55,670 --> 00:50:57,080

So we started out.

913

00:50:57,080 --> 00:51:00,260

My mother, my sister,

and I, walking.

914

00:51:00,260 --> 00:51:02,390

Just in the opposite

directions where

915

00:51:02,390 --> 00:51:04,980

the German tanks were coming.

916

00:51:04,980 --> 00:51:10,630
They were moving East, and we
were going West to Smorgon.

917
00:51:10,630 --> 00:51:12,340
We came back to our town.

918
00:51:12,340 --> 00:51:14,170
We walked into the house.

919
00:51:14,170 --> 00:51:16,510
And the house was empty.

920
00:51:16,510 --> 00:51:19,360
My grandfather was
there in our house,

921
00:51:19,360 --> 00:51:23,440
because his house was burned
down during a bombing raid.

922
00:51:23,440 --> 00:51:26,260
And in the meantime,
he had remarried.

923
00:51:26,260 --> 00:51:28,720
He married my
grandmother's sister

924
00:51:28,720 --> 00:51:31,420
who had two small children.

925
00:51:31,420 --> 00:51:33,730
And they were
there on the floor.

926
00:51:33,730 --> 00:51:35,470
There was a table and chairs.

927
00:51:35,470 --> 00:51:36,700
And everything was gone.

928

00:51:36,700 --> 00:51:40,600
And he said that the next
door neighbor, the Christian,

929
00:51:40,600 --> 00:51:41,920
took it all.

930
00:51:41,920 --> 00:51:44,500
My mother walked
in to talk to him.

931
00:51:44,500 --> 00:51:48,880
And mercifully, he gave us
back a bed with a mattress.

932
00:51:48,880 --> 00:51:52,100

933
00:51:52,100 --> 00:51:53,900
This is the neighbor
you're talking about.

934
00:51:53,900 --> 00:51:56,270
This is the neighbor, right.

935
00:51:56,270 --> 00:52:02,390
And I think we still found
some food in the cellar,

936
00:52:02,390 --> 00:52:03,590
but it was--

937
00:52:03,590 --> 00:52:04,940
it was very scarce.

938
00:52:04,940 --> 00:52:11,380
But all my mother was concerned
is about the situation in town,

939
00:52:11,380 --> 00:52:13,000
what was happening.

940

00:52:13,000 --> 00:52:14,140
And she looked around.

941
00:52:14,140 --> 00:52:17,590
She spoke with friends and
with neighbors and relatives.

942
00:52:17,590 --> 00:52:21,040
And they said that, so
far, the Jews are afraid,

943
00:52:21,040 --> 00:52:25,060
but everybody's
sitting in their homes.

944
00:52:25,060 --> 00:52:27,350
The Germans have
made decrees posted

945
00:52:27,350 --> 00:52:32,120
that every Jew should give up
their furs and jewels and art

946
00:52:32,120 --> 00:52:34,810
and whatever
valuables they have.

947
00:52:34,810 --> 00:52:36,850
They should bring in
to a certain place.

948
00:52:36,850 --> 00:52:38,230
If not, they would be--

949
00:52:38,230 --> 00:52:42,460
if it would be found,
they would be killed.

950
00:52:42,460 --> 00:52:48,800
So my mother decided that it
was no different from what--

951
00:52:48,800 --> 00:52:50,740

from what it was
there in Lebedev.

952
00:52:50,740 --> 00:52:57,012
And she went back to Lebedev to
bring my father and my brother.

953
00:52:57,012 --> 00:52:58,720
Did you and your sister
go back with her?

954
00:52:58,720 --> 00:53:02,200
No, my sister and myself
stayed with my grandfather

955
00:53:02,200 --> 00:53:05,670
and his wife in our house.

956
00:53:05,670 --> 00:53:09,420
And then my mother
came there to Lebedev,

957
00:53:09,420 --> 00:53:15,140
and she found that
everything was finished.

958
00:53:15,140 --> 00:53:20,930
After we left, they gathered
all able-bodied men--

959
00:53:20,930 --> 00:53:23,380
the Germans-- and
they took them away.

960
00:53:23,380 --> 00:53:27,020
And we never saw
our father since.

961
00:53:27,020 --> 00:53:29,750
There was some
rumors somebody came,

962
00:53:29,750 --> 00:53:32,070

and they were telling
us that they tried to--

963
00:53:32,070 --> 00:53:34,560
he tried to escape.

964
00:53:34,560 --> 00:53:37,420
And they didn't
tell us exactly--

965
00:53:37,420 --> 00:53:40,170
I knew that they knew
exactly what happened to him,

966
00:53:40,170 --> 00:53:41,550
but they didn't tell us.

967
00:53:41,550 --> 00:53:43,740
But they didn't
touch my brother.

968
00:53:43,740 --> 00:53:47,070
So my mother took my
brother, and she came home.

969
00:53:47,070 --> 00:53:50,590
And of course, I
remember crying.

970
00:53:50,590 --> 00:53:55,830
I remember tearing
my hair and my skin.

971
00:53:55,830 --> 00:53:58,170
I just could never--

972
00:53:58,170 --> 00:54:03,338
could not imagine that
my father was gone.

973
00:54:03,338 --> 00:54:05,270
But it was the fact.

974

00:54:05,270 --> 00:54:12,000

And then they started asking all
the Jews to come out to work.

975

00:54:12,000 --> 00:54:15,360

And it was mostly at that
time, in the beginning,

976

00:54:15,360 --> 00:54:18,960

to humiliate, because
there was really nothing

977

00:54:18,960 --> 00:54:23,910

to do except to
sweep the streets.

978

00:54:23,910 --> 00:54:30,862

So whoever was in town, a
rabbi or businessmen or--

979

00:54:30,862 --> 00:54:33,650

Balabatishe people
would come out

980

00:54:33,650 --> 00:54:35,630

and had to sweep the streets.

981

00:54:35,630 --> 00:54:39,050

And something else, which
was very humiliating.

982

00:54:39,050 --> 00:54:41,450

They didn't have--
it was a small town,

983

00:54:41,450 --> 00:54:42,560

and it wasn't paved.

984

00:54:42,560 --> 00:54:45,890

It was still like it
was during World War I.

985

00:54:45,890 --> 00:54:47,580
And they had the cobblestones.

986
00:54:47,580 --> 00:54:49,910
And in between the cobblestones
on the side street,

987
00:54:49,910 --> 00:54:52,340
there was weed growing.

988
00:54:52,340 --> 00:54:58,250
So they would make the people,
men and women, sit on the road

989
00:54:58,250 --> 00:55:02,480
and, with knives, cut out
the weeds from the cracks

990
00:55:02,480 --> 00:55:05,340
of their cobblestones.

991
00:55:05,340 --> 00:55:10,200
Then one night, Germans
came to the house.

992
00:55:10,200 --> 00:55:12,780
And they started
knocking at the door.

993
00:55:12,780 --> 00:55:14,400
And my mother was petrified.

994
00:55:14,400 --> 00:55:18,430
We had a German
shepherd outside.

995
00:55:18,430 --> 00:55:21,490
And we had the fruit garden,
a vegetable garden, a flower

996
00:55:21,490 --> 00:55:25,630
garden, and there
was a dog house.

997
00:55:25,630 --> 00:55:27,290
And the dog started barking.

998
00:55:27,290 --> 00:55:28,060
And they came in.

999
00:55:28,060 --> 00:55:30,520
The first thing they did
is they shot the dog.

1000
00:55:30,520 --> 00:55:32,720
And then they started banging.

1001
00:55:32,720 --> 00:55:37,110
So we quickly--
somehow, my grandfather

1002
00:55:37,110 --> 00:55:39,270
managed to hide my mother.

1003
00:55:39,270 --> 00:55:41,820
And they came into the house,
and they looked around.

1004
00:55:41,820 --> 00:55:44,850
And whatever they found that
they-- that was still there

1005
00:55:44,850 --> 00:55:49,510
that they liked, they just
took it, and they walked out.

1006
00:55:49,510 --> 00:55:52,840
I think there was still
a fur coat of my mother

1007
00:55:52,840 --> 00:55:55,920
that they took, and
they walked out.

1008
00:55:55,920 --> 00:55:58,260

And we were there
for several months.

1009
00:55:58,260 --> 00:56:00,240
Were you in hiding
also when they came in?

1010
00:56:00,240 --> 00:56:01,680
Or did you see these Germans?

1011
00:56:01,680 --> 00:56:05,160
No, we saw that there were
two Germans that came in,

1012
00:56:05,160 --> 00:56:06,940
and they looked around.

1013
00:56:06,940 --> 00:56:08,440
They didn't pay attention to me.

1014
00:56:08,440 --> 00:56:11,940
And we was tiny little
girls, my sister and I.

1015
00:56:11,940 --> 00:56:14,080
I look now at a
13-year-old girl--

1016
00:56:14,080 --> 00:56:17,010
tall, developed.

1017
00:56:17,010 --> 00:56:20,520
I looked like an
8-year-old, 9-year-old girl.

1018
00:56:20,520 --> 00:56:23,640
What did a German
soldier look like to you?

1019
00:56:23,640 --> 00:56:29,490
Well, very tall,
impressive uniform,

1020

00:56:29,490 --> 00:56:33,990

blond, strong, but
didn't do anything to us.

1021

00:56:33,990 --> 00:56:35,280

He didn't hit us or anything.

1022

00:56:35,280 --> 00:56:40,920

Just looked all over to see what
he can find to take with him.

1023

00:56:40,920 --> 00:56:42,820

And that was it.

1024

00:56:42,820 --> 00:56:45,000

And then they started--

1025

00:56:45,000 --> 00:56:49,050

they announced that everybody
has to-- they had fenced

1026

00:56:49,050 --> 00:56:53,610

off a certain area, which
was predominantly Jewish,

1027

00:56:53,610 --> 00:56:56,690

it was the shul there.

1028

00:56:56,690 --> 00:56:58,230

There were two shuls there.

1029

00:56:58,230 --> 00:57:01,270

And most of the Jewish--

1030

00:57:01,270 --> 00:57:05,430

the poorest Jews
lived around there.

1031

00:57:05,430 --> 00:57:10,360

They fenced it off, and
they created the ghetto.

1032

00:57:10,360 --> 00:57:14,270

And all the Jews from
the town had to go in.

1033

00:57:14,270 --> 00:57:17,920

Although, they had
another ghetto.

1034

00:57:17,920 --> 00:57:23,450

North of Smorgon was, after
World War I, they tried--

1035

00:57:23,450 --> 00:57:28,480

the Jewish people tried to
organize a farm community.

1036

00:57:28,480 --> 00:57:30,490

And they called it the Karka'i.

1037

00:57:30,490 --> 00:57:33,010

Karka'i in Hebrew is land.

1038

00:57:33,010 --> 00:57:39,290

And there were maybe 20 or
25 families who lived there.

1039

00:57:39,290 --> 00:57:40,990

As a matter of fact,
I had some friends

1040

00:57:40,990 --> 00:57:44,710

who used to come to my school
from that area in there,

1041

00:57:44,710 --> 00:57:46,150

from that village.

1042

00:57:46,150 --> 00:57:48,640

So they created
one little ghetto

1043

00:57:48,640 --> 00:57:52,150

there for those
villagers and another one

1044
00:57:52,150 --> 00:57:55,090
for the people in Smorgon.

1045
00:57:55,090 --> 00:57:58,480
So we came to the ghetto
with whatever possessions

1046
00:57:58,480 --> 00:57:59,980
we could carry.

1047
00:57:59,980 --> 00:58:06,580
And they assigned us in a house,
in one room, that were, like,

1048
00:58:06,580 --> 00:58:08,710
four families to one room.

1049
00:58:08,710 --> 00:58:12,670
So it was my mother, my
sister, my brother, myself,

1050
00:58:12,670 --> 00:58:16,750
my grandfather, and there
were three other families

1051
00:58:16,750 --> 00:58:19,690
in the same room.

1052
00:58:19,690 --> 00:58:25,000
My grandfather was
very, very industrious.

1053
00:58:25,000 --> 00:58:26,610
He knew how to--

1054
00:58:26,610 --> 00:58:28,440
he was a survivor.

1055
00:58:28,440 --> 00:58:31,770

So he decided he could
do anything he wanted

1056
00:58:31,770 --> 00:58:34,080
to-- very, very capable man.

1057
00:58:34,080 --> 00:58:35,670
He decided to become--

1058
00:58:35,670 --> 00:58:39,030
he figured, well, people
would have to fix shoes.

1059
00:58:39,030 --> 00:58:41,790
He decided he knows
how to fix shoes.

1060
00:58:41,790 --> 00:58:44,650
He announced to everybody
he's a shoemaker.

1061
00:58:44,650 --> 00:58:46,110
And I remember he
was sitting there

1062
00:58:46,110 --> 00:58:49,440
in the corner at a small
table and fixing shoes.

1063
00:58:49,440 --> 00:58:53,890
And people would bring a piece
of bread or some vegetables.

1064
00:58:53,890 --> 00:58:55,830
And this is how he sustained us.

1065
00:58:55,830 --> 00:58:58,700

1066
00:58:58,700 --> 00:59:04,870
And then they started
taking people to work,

1067

00:59:04,870 --> 00:59:08,890

to work outside the
ghetto with permission.

1068

00:59:08,890 --> 00:59:11,570

And they took my
mother and my sister.

1069

00:59:11,570 --> 00:59:14,830

Every day, they had
to go out to work.

1070

00:59:14,830 --> 00:59:19,180

And what they did was, there
was a high school in town.

1071

00:59:19,180 --> 00:59:23,170

And they converted the high
school into a lodging place.

1072

00:59:23,170 --> 00:59:28,660

So the German soldiers,
when they came--

1073

00:59:28,660 --> 00:59:33,430

when they came from
the West, pushing

1074

00:59:33,430 --> 00:59:36,370

towards the Russian
front to the East,

1075

00:59:36,370 --> 00:59:38,530

they would stay there overnight.

1076

00:59:38,530 --> 00:59:42,550

And they would have food there,
and they had the Jewish girls

1077

00:59:42,550 --> 00:59:47,470

there to wash their clothes
and to darn their socks.

1078

00:59:47,470 --> 00:59:52,870

And some of them were very nice.

1079

00:59:52,870 --> 00:59:55,180

They didn't rape the
girls or anything.

1080

00:59:55,180 --> 00:59:58,180

There were boys working
there, too, I remember.

1081

00:59:58,180 --> 00:59:59,250

There was one boy.

1082

00:59:59,250 --> 01:00:00,250

His name was Kapyl.

1083

01:00:00,250 --> 01:00:03,190

And he came back, and
he didn't understand.

1084

01:00:03,190 --> 01:00:07,930

He said, a German
soldier came over to him,

1085

01:00:07,930 --> 01:00:10,960

and he took off-- nobody
saw-- he took off his jacket,

1086

01:00:10,960 --> 01:00:13,810

his uniform, and
he put it on him.

1087

01:00:13,810 --> 01:00:17,410

And he said, listen,
Kapul, I know

1088

01:00:17,410 --> 01:00:21,550

he says the war will
be over and we'll lose.

1089

01:00:21,550 --> 01:00:24,250

And he said, if
you will survive,

1090
01:00:24,250 --> 01:00:26,950
don't take your revenge
on the soldiers,

1091
01:00:26,950 --> 01:00:29,620
just kill the German officers.

1092
01:00:29,620 --> 01:00:32,140
This is what he told the boy.

1093
01:00:32,140 --> 01:00:34,600
And day after day, they
went to work there.

1094
01:00:34,600 --> 01:00:38,750
And then my mother was
assigned another job.

1095
01:00:38,750 --> 01:00:43,990
They had a soup kitchen
in their synagogue.

1096
01:00:43,990 --> 01:00:46,720
And my mother was
assigned to cook there.

1097
01:00:46,720 --> 01:00:50,200
And then people, of
course, who were starving,

1098
01:00:50,200 --> 01:00:53,580
came to the soup
kitchen and she--

1099
01:00:53,580 --> 01:00:54,640
we didn't have to.

1100
01:00:54,640 --> 01:00:57,190
At that time, we still had food.

1101

01:00:57,190 --> 01:00:59,470

And we still had
food, and we still

1102

01:00:59,470 --> 01:01:02,350

had the jewelry and
the golden coins

1103

01:01:02,350 --> 01:01:04,240

that my mother had sewed in.

1104

01:01:04,240 --> 01:01:05,790

She was so brave.

1105

01:01:05,790 --> 01:01:09,460

And we had to wear the yellow
stars in front and in the back.

1106

01:01:09,460 --> 01:01:10,510

She was so brave.

1107

01:01:10,510 --> 01:01:13,630

Because my father used
to deal with farmers,

1108

01:01:13,630 --> 01:01:17,650

so she knew some of the farmers
in the neighboring villages.

1109

01:01:17,650 --> 01:01:21,550

So at night-- and there wasn't
barbed wire around the ghetto.

1110

01:01:21,550 --> 01:01:23,410

It was just a wooden fence.

1111

01:01:23,410 --> 01:01:27,040

So at night, she would
cover her yellow stars,

1112

01:01:27,040 --> 01:01:29,470

and she would take a

gold piece of something,

1113
01:01:29,470 --> 01:01:32,797
and run out, and run to
the neighboring villages,

1114
01:01:32,797 --> 01:01:33,880
and she would exchange it.

1115
01:01:33,880 --> 01:01:35,590
Then she would come
still in the middle

1116
01:01:35,590 --> 01:01:42,040
of the night with some flour
or even some ham or whatever.

1117
01:01:42,040 --> 01:01:46,430
At that time, Kashrut
was forgotten.

1118
01:01:46,430 --> 01:01:51,250
With ham or whatever they would
give her, she would come back.

1119
01:01:51,250 --> 01:01:54,730
And so we still, more
or less, had food.

1120
01:01:54,730 --> 01:02:03,220
We still had some things
to exchange until 1943.

1121
01:02:03,220 --> 01:02:07,735
So and then I was sent to work.

1122
01:02:07,735 --> 01:02:08,860
Let's back up a little bit.

1123
01:02:08,860 --> 01:02:11,560
What did you do in the beginning
when your mother and sister

1124
01:02:11,560 --> 01:02:13,000
first went out to work?

1125
01:02:13,000 --> 01:02:16,530
I remember I would
sit on my bed all day,

1126
01:02:16,530 --> 01:02:20,500
or go out with friends
in the ghetto to talk.

1127
01:02:20,500 --> 01:02:25,570
But mostly, I had some books
that I found in that house.

1128
01:02:25,570 --> 01:02:27,490
And I would sit and
read those books.

1129
01:02:27,490 --> 01:02:28,330
It's interesting.

1130
01:02:28,330 --> 01:02:33,070
I recall, it was worn, heavy
anatomy book that I found.

1131
01:02:33,070 --> 01:02:36,640
And I just sat there,
day after day, on my bed,

1132
01:02:36,640 --> 01:02:38,770
and I would read that book.

1133
01:02:38,770 --> 01:02:41,260
Because I'd never--
we were never

1134
01:02:41,260 --> 01:02:46,750
taught anatomy until then, so
I was very fascinated by it.

1135
01:02:46,750 --> 01:02:50,945

And I remember I would sit
on the bed and read the book.

1136
01:02:50,945 --> 01:02:52,570
What was the sleeping
arrangement like?

1137
01:02:52,570 --> 01:02:54,820
You said there were so many
families in this one room.

1138
01:02:54,820 --> 01:02:56,950
The sleeping arrangement
was my mother, my sister,

1139
01:02:56,950 --> 01:03:01,900
and I were sleeping in one bed.

1140
01:03:01,900 --> 01:03:06,130
And then my grandfather
and his wife in another.

1141
01:03:06,130 --> 01:03:10,090
And my brother would curl
up on the floor on some kind

1142
01:03:10,090 --> 01:03:13,500
of a straw mattress.

1143
01:03:13,500 --> 01:03:16,340
What were the sanitary
facilities like?

1144
01:03:16,340 --> 01:03:18,200
It was an outhouse.

1145
01:03:18,200 --> 01:03:21,290
And there was usually,
in those houses,

1146
01:03:21,290 --> 01:03:23,930
they had a water pump outside.

1147

01:03:23,930 --> 01:03:26,270

So we used to go
outside to the pump

1148

01:03:26,270 --> 01:03:29,840

and take water for
washing or cooking

1149

01:03:29,840 --> 01:03:31,850

or whatever we'd need it.

1150

01:03:31,850 --> 01:03:34,600

Taking a shower, of course,
was out of the question.

1151

01:03:34,600 --> 01:03:39,050

We would just wash
ourselves in the basin.

1152

01:03:39,050 --> 01:03:44,000

Sometimes we had a
curtain and closed it off

1153

01:03:44,000 --> 01:03:47,540

so we could wash in privacy.

1154

01:03:47,540 --> 01:03:49,290

Had you gotten your
period by then?

1155

01:03:49,290 --> 01:03:52,280

No, no, not until--

1156

01:03:52,280 --> 01:03:57,600

not until I was 16
or 17 years old.

1157

01:03:57,600 --> 01:03:59,400

You said you had to wear a star.

1158

01:03:59,400 --> 01:04:00,730

What was that like for you?

1159
01:04:00,730 --> 01:04:02,140
What did it mean to you?

1160
01:04:02,140 --> 01:04:04,900
Well, everybody wore a star.

1161
01:04:04,900 --> 01:04:09,690
And since I didn't go out
of the ghetto, it sort of--

1162
01:04:09,690 --> 01:04:12,780
it bothered me immensely
that I was singled out.

1163
01:04:12,780 --> 01:04:17,800
But still, I did not feel
tremendous suffering.

1164
01:04:17,800 --> 01:04:20,640
I don't know, again, maybe
because I was optimistic.

1165
01:04:20,640 --> 01:04:25,050
I was always optimistic
by nature, and strong.

1166
01:04:25,050 --> 01:04:26,700
Or I was stupid.

1167
01:04:26,700 --> 01:04:34,040
But because I did not comprehend
the immensity of the tragedy

1168
01:04:34,040 --> 01:04:36,720
at that time.

1169
01:04:36,720 --> 01:04:37,670
And it's interesting.

1170
01:04:37,670 --> 01:04:44,120
Here I am speaking to children

who are 11, 12, or high school

1171
01:04:44,120 --> 01:04:46,820
kids, telling them my story.

1172
01:04:46,820 --> 01:04:49,340
I do it, of course,
on their level.

1173
01:04:49,340 --> 01:04:52,490
And I say, look at these
childrens' reactions.

1174
01:04:52,490 --> 01:04:53,420
They understand.

1175
01:04:53,420 --> 01:04:54,440
They cry with me.

1176
01:04:54,440 --> 01:04:56,970
They know what
I'm talking about.

1177
01:04:56,970 --> 01:05:00,080
And I said, when
I was their age,

1178
01:05:00,080 --> 01:05:02,270
I really didn't know
what was going on.

1179
01:05:02,270 --> 01:05:05,420
Maybe because they were exposed
to television and movies

1180
01:05:05,420 --> 01:05:10,580
and all, so they have-- they
have seen these kind of stories

1181
01:05:10,580 --> 01:05:13,190
and movies.

1182

01:05:13,190 --> 01:05:15,170
Anyway--

1183
01:05:15,170 --> 01:05:17,710
Did you sew on your own star?

1184
01:05:17,710 --> 01:05:18,610
Yes.

1185
01:05:18,610 --> 01:05:19,760
Yes, we knew how.

1186
01:05:19,760 --> 01:05:23,240
We had to cut out a
yellow star and sew it on.

1187
01:05:23,240 --> 01:05:24,740
What did you cut it out of?

1188
01:05:24,740 --> 01:05:28,170
Oh, we had some cloth,
or it was provided.

1189
01:05:28,170 --> 01:05:31,780
And there was a
Judenrat in the ghetto.

1190
01:05:31,780 --> 01:05:36,350
And the Judenrat were very--

1191
01:05:36,350 --> 01:05:39,030
former business people.

1192
01:05:39,030 --> 01:05:42,050
They're aristocratic--
aristocracy,

1193
01:05:42,050 --> 01:05:44,320
the rabbi of the town.

1194
01:05:44,320 --> 01:05:47,420
And my uncle, the one that

was my father's partner, he

1195

01:05:47,420 --> 01:05:50,410

was also in the Judenrat

1196

01:05:50,410 --> 01:05:53,680

And but it was interesting.

1197

01:05:53,680 --> 01:05:57,580

Maybe, in many cases

of the Judenrat,

1198

01:05:57,580 --> 01:06:01,390

they were doing

things for themselves

1199

01:06:01,390 --> 01:06:04,000

first to save their own skin.

1200

01:06:04,000 --> 01:06:06,430

Not in this Judenrat.

1201

01:06:06,430 --> 01:06:12,000

When something came, when the

Germans would come and ask

1202

01:06:12,000 --> 01:06:16,770

for 500 people or 200 people,

they would-- at least--

1203

01:06:16,770 --> 01:06:18,970

and they would never,

ever give a list.

1204

01:06:18,970 --> 01:06:21,340

They said, because this

is what the Bible--

1205

01:06:21,340 --> 01:06:25,330

according to the

Bible, that when

1206

01:06:25,330 --> 01:06:29,380
in any kind of a
catastrophic situation,

1207
01:06:29,380 --> 01:06:36,850
when an enemy comes and asks
you to give people to be hanged

1208
01:06:36,850 --> 01:06:40,030
or to be punished,
according to Jewish law,

1209
01:06:40,030 --> 01:06:41,500
you're not allowed to.

1210
01:06:41,500 --> 01:06:45,790
You can tell them, if you have
to, you go out by yourself

1211
01:06:45,790 --> 01:06:48,340
and take whoever you
want, but we are not

1212
01:06:48,340 --> 01:06:50,550
going to give you a list.

1213
01:06:50,550 --> 01:06:54,990
Because the Bible felt that this
is a personal matter of destiny

1214
01:06:54,990 --> 01:06:56,890
and couldn't be helped.

1215
01:06:56,890 --> 01:06:59,940
But for another Jew,
to put somebody--

1216
01:06:59,940 --> 01:07:02,730
another Jew on the list,
that was absolutely

1217
01:07:02,730 --> 01:07:06,580
against the Bible,

and they never did it.

1218
01:07:06,580 --> 01:07:11,570
And then one day, I was
called to go to work.

1219
01:07:11,570 --> 01:07:16,430
And I found myself in
a very beautiful house

1220
01:07:16,430 --> 01:07:22,070
that belonged to a landowner
before the war, probably

1221
01:07:22,070 --> 01:07:24,470
a Polish landowner.

1222
01:07:24,470 --> 01:07:26,060
And I was brought there.

1223
01:07:26,060 --> 01:07:30,140
And another boy my age
from ghetto, [? Swierski ?]

1224
01:07:30,140 --> 01:07:31,790
was his name.

1225
01:07:31,790 --> 01:07:34,620
And there, we came
in, and they--

1226
01:07:34,620 --> 01:07:38,300
I remember, it smelled so
delicious in that house.

1227
01:07:38,300 --> 01:07:40,610
And there was a
cook, a Polish woman.

1228
01:07:40,610 --> 01:07:42,680
They took us into the kitchen.

1229

01:07:42,680 --> 01:07:45,890
And the Polish woman told us
that we are going to help her--

1230
01:07:45,890 --> 01:07:49,850
that the boy was going to
chop wood for the kitchen,

1231
01:07:49,850 --> 01:07:52,280
and I would help her
with the vegetables

1232
01:07:52,280 --> 01:07:55,640
to peel and cut and wash dishes.

1233
01:07:55,640 --> 01:07:58,640
And there, I felt comfortable,
because it was warm.

1234
01:07:58,640 --> 01:08:00,950
I don't remember them
giving us any food,

1235
01:08:00,950 --> 01:08:03,020
but this is where we worked.

1236
01:08:03,020 --> 01:08:06,530
And then, of course,
there was the living room

1237
01:08:06,530 --> 01:08:08,540
and the bedrooms.

1238
01:08:08,540 --> 01:08:13,658
And then in the evening, I
saw a German officer came in.

1239
01:08:13,658 --> 01:08:14,450
And he lived there.

1240
01:08:14,450 --> 01:08:20,120
I had absolutely no
comprehension who the man was.

1241
01:08:20,120 --> 01:08:25,970
He was tall, dark hair, smoked
a pipe, had a pleasant face,

1242
01:08:25,970 --> 01:08:28,960
wore glasses.

1243
01:08:28,960 --> 01:08:34,540
And I knew-- when
I dusted the house,

1244
01:08:34,540 --> 01:08:39,160
I noticed a letter on the table.

1245
01:08:39,160 --> 01:08:42,779
Somehow, I looked at the letter.

1246
01:08:42,779 --> 01:08:44,760
And it was a letter--

1247
01:08:44,760 --> 01:08:47,910
his name was
Heinrich [? Funke. ?]

1248
01:08:47,910 --> 01:08:52,020
I looked at the letter, and I
saw it was a letter probably

1249
01:08:52,020 --> 01:08:53,370
from his wife.

1250
01:08:53,370 --> 01:08:57,660
And I looked at the return
address, and I remembered it.

1251
01:08:57,660 --> 01:09:01,710
The name was Heinrich
[? Funke, ?] Berlin,

1252
01:09:01,710 --> 01:09:06,490
SO 36, Dresdener Strasse 18.

1253
01:09:06,490 --> 01:09:07,590
And I memorized it--

1254
01:09:07,590 --> 01:09:09,930
always had a good memory.

1255
01:09:09,930 --> 01:09:12,939
And he was very nice to me.

1256
01:09:12,939 --> 01:09:15,060
And when I looked at--

1257
01:09:15,060 --> 01:09:18,930
there were letters and
mail and envelopes come--

1258
01:09:18,930 --> 01:09:24,270
came-- and I saw that he was
a very important official.

1259
01:09:24,270 --> 01:09:28,140
And only after the war,
I realized how important.

1260
01:09:28,140 --> 01:09:31,939
He was an Obersturmbannführer.

1261
01:09:31,939 --> 01:09:36,720
Of course, he wore the
black uniform of the SS

1262
01:09:36,720 --> 01:09:38,540
with the swastika and all.

1263
01:09:38,540 --> 01:09:41,100
And he was always
very nice to me.

1264
01:09:41,100 --> 01:09:44,270
He talked to me very gently.

1265

01:09:44,270 --> 01:09:46,950

One day, he called me in.

1266

01:09:46,950 --> 01:09:53,029

And he says, listen, Tania, I'm going to tell you something.

1267

01:09:53,029 --> 01:09:55,330

I am over the whole--

1268

01:09:55,330 --> 01:09:58,100

the [INAUDIBLE] of all--
he was all of White Russia.

1269

01:09:58,100 --> 01:09:59,630

You know a Obersturmbannführer.

1270

01:09:59,630 --> 01:10:03,230

He was a very, very important Nazi.

1271

01:10:03,230 --> 01:10:06,560

He said to me, I want to tell you something,

1272

01:10:06,560 --> 01:10:11,390

all the Jews in this region are going to be killed.

1273

01:10:11,390 --> 01:10:14,090

However, he said, if you will have a chance,

1274

01:10:14,090 --> 01:10:17,420

when they'll take people to a labor camp,

1275

01:10:17,420 --> 01:10:23,116

he said, go, because that might save you.

1276

01:10:23,116 --> 01:10:24,770

And that's all he said to me.

1277

01:10:24,770 --> 01:10:27,060

And I remembered.

1278

01:10:27,060 --> 01:10:30,030

And life went on in
ghetto as it was.

1279

01:10:30,030 --> 01:10:32,270

And I used to go to work there.

1280

01:10:32,270 --> 01:10:34,320

Did you go home to go to sleep?

1281

01:10:34,320 --> 01:10:34,820

Oh, yes.

1282

01:10:34,820 --> 01:10:35,862

Yes, I used to walk home.

1283

01:10:35,862 --> 01:10:38,540

I had a special pass that
I could walk the streets.

1284

01:10:38,540 --> 01:10:39,530

They used to give out--

1285

01:10:39,530 --> 01:10:41,960

people that came from--
went from the ghetto

1286

01:10:41,960 --> 01:10:44,180

to work had a pass.

1287

01:10:44,180 --> 01:10:47,280

And I came home, and
everything was just as usual.

1288

01:10:47,280 --> 01:10:51,410

Then one day we got
up, and my uncle that

1289
01:10:51,410 --> 01:10:54,440
was in the Judenrat,
Mayor Goldberg--

1290
01:10:54,440 --> 01:10:56,630
as a matter of fact, I
have a picture of him

1291
01:10:56,630 --> 01:10:59,750
here, I'll show you later.

1292
01:10:59,750 --> 01:11:05,500
And he spoke with my mother,
and he said, the Nazis,

1293
01:11:05,500 --> 01:11:12,160
they want us to give them 300
men and women to a labor camp.

1294
01:11:12,160 --> 01:11:14,410
And they don't want
to go and pick.

1295
01:11:14,410 --> 01:11:16,830
They want us to give a list.

1296
01:11:16,830 --> 01:11:18,000
So he told my mother.

1297
01:11:18,000 --> 01:11:21,190
He said, look, we had no choice.

1298
01:11:21,190 --> 01:11:22,410
We had to give a list.

1299
01:11:22,410 --> 01:11:27,390
But what we did, we put
our own family members--

1300
01:11:27,390 --> 01:11:29,310
each and every member

of the Judenrat

1301
01:11:29,310 --> 01:11:33,330
had to put a member of
his family on the list.

1302
01:11:33,330 --> 01:11:35,820
And this uncle of
mine had a daughter.

1303
01:11:35,820 --> 01:11:39,840
She was, at that time, maybe
20 or 21, Bailey Goldberg.

1304
01:11:39,840 --> 01:11:42,450
And he put her on the list.

1305
01:11:42,450 --> 01:11:48,990
And he also put my
grandfather's wife on the list.

1306
01:11:48,990 --> 01:11:52,170
And my mother, you know, we
started discussing and talking,

1307
01:11:52,170 --> 01:11:54,930
and they said, now,
what's going to be?

1308
01:11:54,930 --> 01:11:55,920
How could she?

1309
01:11:55,920 --> 01:11:57,830
She has a little girl with her?

1310
01:11:57,830 --> 01:11:59,020
How could she go?

1311
01:11:59,020 --> 01:12:03,990
And then I got up, and I
said, I'll go in her place.

1312

01:12:03,990 --> 01:12:08,280
Apparently, you know what he
told me, to go to a labor camp.

1313
01:12:08,280 --> 01:12:10,950
I said, I'll go in her place.

1314
01:12:10,950 --> 01:12:12,030
And they hesitated.

1315
01:12:12,030 --> 01:12:14,940
But then my mother said,
Bailey is going, too?

1316
01:12:14,940 --> 01:12:18,060
My cousin who was
already past 20.

1317
01:12:18,060 --> 01:12:21,530
She said, she'll
take care of me.

1318
01:12:21,530 --> 01:12:24,550
And I remember, I still
had, from before the war,

1319
01:12:24,550 --> 01:12:28,310
a pair of beautiful
red leather boots.

1320
01:12:28,310 --> 01:12:33,070
I had a shearling coat,
gray that was embroidered.

1321
01:12:33,070 --> 01:12:36,090
And my mother-- it was
winter-- she gave it to me,

1322
01:12:36,090 --> 01:12:38,090
and she gave me food.

1323
01:12:38,090 --> 01:12:42,770
And she got permission to walk

with us to the train station.

1324

01:12:42,770 --> 01:12:45,590

And she was walking
next to me and crying

1325

01:12:45,590 --> 01:12:47,030

and walking and crying.

1326

01:12:47,030 --> 01:12:50,300

But I saw her, that
she walked over--

1327

01:12:50,300 --> 01:12:55,820

the people that came
to take us were not SS.

1328

01:12:55,820 --> 01:13:03,260

They were called T.O.D. They
were the German soldiers

1329

01:13:03,260 --> 01:13:06,170

in construction that was a--

1330

01:13:06,170 --> 01:13:12,760

they had special groups, special
brigades for construction.

1331

01:13:12,760 --> 01:13:17,510

And I saw she was walking next
to that-- the officer that

1332

01:13:17,510 --> 01:13:18,560

was leading us.

1333

01:13:18,560 --> 01:13:22,060

And I noticed that she
pushed something in his hand,

1334

01:13:22,060 --> 01:13:24,680

then she walked to
the station with us.

1335

01:13:24,680 --> 01:13:29,050

And we cried and we
kissed and we hugged.

1336

01:13:29,050 --> 01:13:31,990

And they pushed us
into freight cars,

1337

01:13:31,990 --> 01:13:34,930

like the one you have
at the Holocaust museum.

1338

01:13:34,930 --> 01:13:37,060

And my mother left.

1339

01:13:37,060 --> 01:13:40,840

And I was there with
Bailey and another--

1340

01:13:40,840 --> 01:13:42,100

there were 300 people.

1341

01:13:42,100 --> 01:13:44,650

1342

01:13:44,650 --> 01:13:46,540

And the train started out.

1343

01:13:46,540 --> 01:13:48,680

They closed the cars.

1344

01:13:48,680 --> 01:13:51,620

Train started out.

1345

01:13:51,620 --> 01:13:53,740

And we didn't know
where we were going.

1346

01:13:53,740 --> 01:13:54,550

It was dark.

1347

01:13:54,550 --> 01:14:00,640
There was only a little window
for air on top, two windows.

1348
01:14:00,640 --> 01:14:04,540
And then the next morning
we came to a place.

1349
01:14:04,540 --> 01:14:08,320
And the cars were opened.

1350
01:14:08,320 --> 01:14:12,640
And we saw that there
were SS people talking

1351
01:14:12,640 --> 01:14:16,030
with the people from
the construction,

1352
01:14:16,030 --> 01:14:18,590
talking with each other.

1353
01:14:18,590 --> 01:14:21,760
And they kept us there maybe
for two hours, three hours,

1354
01:14:21,760 --> 01:14:23,980
and we didn't know
what was happening.

1355
01:14:23,980 --> 01:14:28,240
At the end of the three hours,
they closed the cars again,

1356
01:14:28,240 --> 01:14:29,830
and we proceeded.

1357
01:14:29,830 --> 01:14:35,110
What we found out later was
that the [INAUDIBLE] Commissar

1358
01:14:35,110 --> 01:14:40,720
of White Russia didn't

want us to go anywhere.

1359
01:14:40,720 --> 01:14:43,330
He told them to
pull up to Ponary,

1360
01:14:43,330 --> 01:14:45,520
where all the people,
the Jews from Vilna,

1361
01:14:45,520 --> 01:14:47,830
were killed in that forest.

1362
01:14:47,830 --> 01:14:50,500
And this is when
they opened the cars.

1363
01:14:50,500 --> 01:14:55,450
And this is when the head
of the construction company

1364
01:14:55,450 --> 01:14:57,790
negotiated with the
[INAUDIBLE] Commissar

1365
01:14:57,790 --> 01:14:59,920
that he needs these
people badly to build

1366
01:14:59,920 --> 01:15:02,410
a road from Kovno to Vilna.

1367
01:15:02,410 --> 01:15:05,710
And this is when
he closed the cars,

1368
01:15:05,710 --> 01:15:07,750
and he took us into Lithuania.

1369
01:15:07,750 --> 01:15:11,550

1370

01:15:11,550 --> 01:15:15,900
We came to Lithuania
in the morning.

1371
01:15:15,900 --> 01:15:18,900
They opened the cars.

1372
01:15:18,900 --> 01:15:20,070
We got out.

1373
01:15:20,070 --> 01:15:21,840
And there were
trucks, open trucks.

1374
01:15:21,840 --> 01:15:25,180
And they told us to
get in the trucks.

1375
01:15:25,180 --> 01:15:26,820
Let's back up a little bit.

1376
01:15:26,820 --> 01:15:30,690
Who also went on the train
with you besides your cousin?

1377
01:15:30,690 --> 01:15:34,990
My cousin, myself, and 300--

1378
01:15:34,990 --> 01:15:40,020
298 other people from Smorgon.

1379
01:15:40,020 --> 01:15:44,440
Which we knew each other, it was
a small town-- men and women.

1380
01:15:44,440 --> 01:15:46,200
So you knew the other
people in your car?

1381
01:15:46,200 --> 01:15:46,860
Yes, we knew.

1382

01:15:46,860 --> 01:15:48,780
I knew most of them.

1383
01:15:48,780 --> 01:15:50,820
Most of them I knew, yes.

1384
01:15:50,820 --> 01:15:53,640
What was the atmosphere
like in that car?

1385
01:15:53,640 --> 01:15:54,990
Well, there was no atmosphere.

1386
01:15:54,990 --> 01:15:59,920
Everybody was sitting in a
corner crying, depressed,

1387
01:15:59,920 --> 01:16:03,540
not talking, or talking
what is going to happen

1388
01:16:03,540 --> 01:16:04,920
and what will be.

1389
01:16:04,920 --> 01:16:06,960
But it's interesting.

1390
01:16:06,960 --> 01:16:11,290
We knew that we
are going to work,

1391
01:16:11,290 --> 01:16:16,590
but nobody ever
heard or discussed

1392
01:16:16,590 --> 01:16:20,250
liquidations, Jews
being shot and killed,

1393
01:16:20,250 --> 01:16:23,100
or concentration
camps, or crematoriums.

1394

01:16:23,100 --> 01:16:26,510

It was absolutely-- it
was not known at all.

1395

01:16:26,510 --> 01:16:29,000