

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,400

2

00:00:01,400 --> 00:00:04,070

This is the United States  
Holocaust Memorial Museum

3

00:00:04,070 --> 00:00:07,265

interview with Dolly  
Bestandig conducted

4

00:00:07,265 --> 00:00:14,010

by Gail Schwartz on July 27 at  
the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

5

00:00:14,010 --> 00:00:18,210

This is tape number  
three, side A.

6

00:00:18,210 --> 00:00:22,110

And you were just talking about  
the future of the Jewish people

7

00:00:22,110 --> 00:00:24,640

and what your thoughts were.

8

00:00:24,640 --> 00:00:27,750

I do feel that we have to go on.

9

00:00:27,750 --> 00:00:32,910

But I think that we are a  
special people, born to look--

10

00:00:32,910 --> 00:00:35,500

to show the humanity  
that we have

11

00:00:35,500 --> 00:00:39,660

brought to the world very good  
deeds, and very good things.

12

00:00:39,660 --> 00:00:43,650  
And we are not only because  
we are human beings--

13  
00:00:43,650 --> 00:00:47,280  
besides being a human  
being, we have a tradition

14  
00:00:47,280 --> 00:00:49,380  
to give to our children.

15  
00:00:49,380 --> 00:00:52,380  
We have a legacy of  
generations and generations

16  
00:00:52,380 --> 00:00:56,180  
of bright people, of  
good people, bad people.

17  
00:00:56,180 --> 00:00:59,862  
We deserve to live, and  
we will go on living.

18  
00:00:59,862 --> 00:01:06,080  
And I will say, like, the  
Hebrew people say [HEBREW],,

19  
00:01:06,080 --> 00:01:12,390  
[INAUDIBLE],, because I really  
mean it, that we will live,

20  
00:01:12,390 --> 00:01:17,910  
that HaShem is our God, and  
we will even see our children

21  
00:01:17,910 --> 00:01:20,790  
to grow up happy,  
in a happy land.

22  
00:01:20,790 --> 00:01:25,230  
And I appreciate  
it and thank HaShem

23

00:01:25,230 --> 00:01:31,550  
for making me come to  
this country of Mexico,

24  
00:01:31,550 --> 00:01:36,440  
or to this America, where I can  
breathe freely, where I can--

25  
00:01:36,440 --> 00:01:41,142  
I could work, I  
could study, I could

26  
00:01:41,142 --> 00:01:44,780  
become a person useful  
to other people.

27  
00:01:44,780 --> 00:01:50,050  
And we have to appreciate,  
also, all those countries that

28  
00:01:50,050 --> 00:01:55,690  
gave us the right and they  
gave us the opportunity

29  
00:01:55,690 --> 00:02:03,190  
to grow and to make money and to  
work, to be independent person

30  
00:02:03,190 --> 00:02:08,350  
and give us the rights  
to do whatever we like,

31  
00:02:08,350 --> 00:02:11,700  
to live where we want to live  
or to do whatever we want to do.

32  
00:02:11,700 --> 00:02:13,520  
And [INAUDIBLE]

33  
00:02:13,520 --> 00:02:20,230  
But have you gone back  
to Europe or to Vilna?

34

00:02:20,230 --> 00:02:21,520  
No, never.

35  
00:02:21,520 --> 00:02:24,700  
I have it always in  
the back of my mind

36  
00:02:24,700 --> 00:02:29,560  
that one day I'm going to go  
back to that part of Europe.

37  
00:02:29,560 --> 00:02:34,010  
I have been to Europe,  
but not in that part.

38  
00:02:34,010 --> 00:02:39,810  
I had to go in 1968,  
that I went to Israel.

39  
00:02:39,810 --> 00:02:43,870  
I went to Milano to visit  
a cousin of my husband.

40  
00:02:43,870 --> 00:02:46,620  
And we took a car  
to go to Munich,

41  
00:02:46,620 --> 00:02:50,070  
because I had to go and see  
a lawyer there for the visit

42  
00:02:50,070 --> 00:02:53,390  
with my-- that pays me money.

43  
00:02:53,390 --> 00:02:57,230  
If I would have gone there,  
my fee that I received

44  
00:02:57,230 --> 00:02:59,660  
would be doubled as now.

45  
00:02:59,660 --> 00:03:02,300  
So we went with

the car in Milano

46

00:03:02,300 --> 00:03:04,910

to pass the border  
through Munich.

47

00:03:04,910 --> 00:03:07,730

When I came to the border,  
I said to my husband,

48

00:03:07,730 --> 00:03:09,950

please turn around.

49

00:03:09,950 --> 00:03:10,700

You know, I said--

50

00:03:10,700 --> 00:03:12,020

I won't stand.

51

00:03:12,020 --> 00:03:18,150

When I saw those policemen,  
they had different clothing,

52

00:03:18,150 --> 00:03:22,830

the Nazis, and I understand  
they were different people.

53

00:03:22,830 --> 00:03:24,480

But I just couldn't stand it.

54

00:03:24,480 --> 00:03:28,390

I never could go to visit that  
lawyer and fix the papers.

55

00:03:28,390 --> 00:03:31,190

And I'm sure I would have  
received now much more money

56

00:03:31,190 --> 00:03:33,832

than what I received, but--

57

00:03:33,832 --> 00:03:34,540

How do you feel--

58

00:03:34,540 --> 00:03:34,840

It's impossible.

59

00:03:34,840 --> 00:03:35,340

--about it.

60

00:03:35,340 --> 00:03:40,240

How do you feel about  
receiving the reparations?

61

00:03:40,240 --> 00:03:41,970

Not well.

62

00:03:41,970 --> 00:03:44,190

I don't feel well.

63

00:03:44,190 --> 00:03:47,010

I receive it and put it  
aside for my children.

64

00:03:47,010 --> 00:03:49,860

That's all.

65

00:03:49,860 --> 00:03:52,980

They are not paying  
me for nothing.

66

00:03:52,980 --> 00:03:54,830

They cannot pay me--

67

00:03:54,830 --> 00:04:00,430

not my life, not my parent's  
life, not my family's life.

68

00:04:00,430 --> 00:04:02,133

I have a feeling that I could--

69

00:04:02,133 --> 00:04:07,230

that they don't repay me that,  
and that they were responsible,

70  
00:04:07,230 --> 00:04:10,080  
and have to take the  
responsibility to--

71  
00:04:10,080 --> 00:04:12,690  
that they-- by--  
for what they did.

72  
00:04:12,690 --> 00:04:15,810  
But with that, they don't  
wash the responsibility.

73  
00:04:15,810 --> 00:04:20,407  
But I also don't blame the  
new generations of Germans.

74  
00:04:20,407 --> 00:04:22,990  
I cannot blame them because of  
their-- what their grandfathers

75  
00:04:22,990 --> 00:04:26,490  
did, and parents.

76  
00:04:26,490 --> 00:04:30,210  
What was it like when you  
hear the German language?

77  
00:04:30,210 --> 00:04:32,490  
Terrible, and I have  
heard it all my life,

78  
00:04:32,490 --> 00:04:36,360  
since my in-laws were  
Yekkes and my husband

79  
00:04:36,360 --> 00:04:38,320  
speaks the beautiful German.

80  
00:04:38,320 --> 00:04:42,360  
And I used to speak  
with my mother-in-law.

81

00:04:42,360 --> 00:04:45,120

I thought it was  
Yiddish, and she

82

00:04:45,120 --> 00:04:46,950

thought she was  
speaking German, and I

83

00:04:46,950 --> 00:04:48,720

was answering her in Yiddish.

84

00:04:48,720 --> 00:04:51,965

The truth is that by  
now, when I speak Yiddish

85

00:04:51,965 --> 00:04:55,200

or when I teach  
Yiddish, I see that I

86

00:04:55,200 --> 00:04:58,420

have a lot of words that  
are really from her,

87

00:04:58,420 --> 00:05:00,570

that they're  
German-Jewish words.

88

00:05:00,570 --> 00:05:03,620

89

00:05:03,620 --> 00:05:09,620

But it's one thing to remember  
her speaking to me in German

90

00:05:09,620 --> 00:05:12,470

and me catching up a few  
words, and another thing

91

00:05:12,470 --> 00:05:16,452

is when I hear a German  
in the streets speaking.

92

00:05:16,452 --> 00:05:18,760

It's very hard for me.

93

00:05:18,760 --> 00:05:21,240

What does it do for you?

94

00:05:21,240 --> 00:05:28,050

It makes me remind of sounds  
and words I once heard.

95

00:05:28,050 --> 00:05:29,685

And shouting,  
especially shouting.

96

00:05:29,685 --> 00:05:34,640

97

00:05:34,640 --> 00:05:35,860

That's all.

98

00:05:35,860 --> 00:05:37,780

Thank you very, very, very much.

99

00:05:37,780 --> 00:05:39,730

You've been very kind.

100

00:05:39,730 --> 00:05:42,130

Well, thank you very much  
for doing this interview.

101

00:05:42,130 --> 00:05:45,110

We do appreciate it.

102

00:05:45,110 --> 00:05:49,840

This concludes the interview  
of Dolly Bestandig.

103

00:05:49,840 --> 00:05:51,390

This--

104

00:05:51,390 --> 00:05:54,000