

RG-50.120 #0076

Synopsis: of Tape 1 of 2, Frieda Kobo Translation: Hebrew to English

1st hour, minutes 0 through 13

Kobo discusses her childhood, saying she was born in 1921 as Frieda de Medina. As a child, she was treated like a princess, and lacked nothing. Her family was good to her, and she had many friends at the YMCA she attended in addition to her school. At school, Kobo learned Greek, French, and German. During her leisure time, she went to the YMCA and to the sea.

In 1934, Kobo's oldest sister, Vitoria Florentin (Florentine) was sent to Palestine to be married through the process of an arranged marriage. The wedding was held in Tel Aviv. Kobo was the 4th child in the family. The first child was Florentine who went to Palestine to get married. The 2nd child was Mentesh, who studied in a Catholic school. The 3rd child was Marie, who also studied at a Christian school. Behind Kobo was the 5th and youngest child in the family, who attended the Greek school Kostandinidis.

Kobo's mother was the head of the household, but even she never had to work. There were always servants around the house, tending to the affairs of the house.

1* hour, minutes 13 through 32

At one point during Kobo's childhood, several Istanbulian Greeks came to Salonika. Throughout Kobo's life in Salonikw she rarely lived in Jewish circles.

Frieda had a vey high status in her hometown. She remembers that around the age of fifteen she participated in a special carnival for Purim. She loved to be with her friends, and her social circle did not merely consist of Jewish people. She talks more about the history of her hometown and the Jews who were expelled from Spain and Portugal during the time of the Spanish Inquisition. She speaks of the Neo-Christians and the torquemada. Also, she speaks of how Metudela came to visit Salonika in the 11th C. After discussing some Greek history, Kobo mentions that she and her father were "reform" Jews who only attended synagogue on the High Holidays.

Kobo recalls how the community paid many taxes, in order to care for the widows and orphans in the community. She thinks that most of the people she knew in the community lived like "lords," having a Fraulein from Switzerland, having close ties to the Sarbonne in Paris. Her sister attended 'AJJI', the Association Jun Juif an organization for Jewish women, which would raise money for Israel. Apparently, there were several other Jewish youth organizations in Greece such as: Maccabi, Koach, and Theodor Herzl. The groups prepared their members to work in the then-near future, in Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). While everyone attending these groups was proud to be Jewish, it seemed that they were also proud to be Greek.

1st hour, minutes 32 through 42

Frieda talks about the Passover holiday and how she loved to go to services. She says that she ate fish and that her mother made the lettuce charoset dish. She sang traditional songs with her family in Ladino [Espanolit], Hebrew and Aramaic. At this time there was a 7:00 PM curfew. **On the 41st minute of the tape, Frieda sings a song in Ladino, and tells how she loved all the phrases she sings, most especially the last passage. The 42nd minute of the tape, she gets emotional, remembering that people

never entered or left her house in Greece without a joke.

1st hour, minutes 42 through 45

Frieda's older sister played piano, as most other Salonikan girls did. In the summer, Kobo's father would order a taxi to take the family to town. In the wintertime, Kobo's family pastime was seeing movies at the movie theatres. Apparently, many people respected her father; he was often sought out for advice.

1st hour, minutes 46 through 52

Kobo says that in 1932, the Greeks became more international, and there was a fire held there. As a result, many Jews left and went to France, Switzerland, and Belgium. Roughly 30,000 Jews left.

The Kobos knew the famous Rav Koretz, the prominent rabbi of Salonika, who supposedly arrived shortly before the Nazis came. The previous rabbi was named Chabib, whom Frieda also knew.

Around this time, five families came to live with Frieda because there were areas in Salonika where Jews could no longer live, and these people who had lived in these areas previously were left homeless. Kobo tells how in her home in Greece, there were five rooms and one salon. She talks of her home, almost as though giving directions, saying that her family lived on the left, two roads up, near the Monasteries – it was one place where Jews could live. One family she came to know was named Morcho, and later survived the Holocaust. The man who survived, Morcho, wrote a book which in English translates to, 'The Memoirs of/next to Salonika'. Frieda was asked to translate from the language it was written into Ladino.

Frieda Kobo speaks also about how when the Italians came, her father gave each child some money to take with the, should the family be separated. When the Italians came to Greece, some 300,000 people were killed. Around this time, Kobo experienced appendicitis and had to go to the hospital for an operation in the wintertime, and the nurse asked for her permission to have the procedure done. Kobo responded that she had already reached the age of 18, and she gave herself permission to have the operation.

1st hour, minute 52 through 2nd hour, minute 12

When Hitler came to power, Kobo claims that she and others had no idea of what to do, nor what to expect. For a while, everything seemed just fine. In 1941, the Germans came to Greece, but before that they fought with the Italians. The fighting was so brutal, such people as the British had to come in and bring aid. Soon after, when the Germans came, the British fled very quickly. The German tanks rolled in the streets of Greece, and Kobo recalls that people became hysterical.

Frieda talks of how Koretz had come to Greece circa 1934. When the Germans came to Greece, there were three who stayed in her house, one on each level. One of the Germans who stayed with Kobo's family was about 43 years old, and was a philosopher. About eight months after he came to Kobo's house, he vanished. When the German stayed with Frieda, she remembers some of the activities they did together. One day, she

went exploring and found a skull, but did not know what it was. Together, Kobo and family and the Germans had coffee and cakes on the second level of her house. Also, Frieda recalls that every Jewish Sabbath, she would travel and catch butterflies in a nearby forest. Josef Rinschoff, she comments, was the German who stayed with her family. He knew that Frieda's family was Jewish. On Friday evenings, the family lit candles together to usher in the Sabbath. The German sat with the family and talked.

Apparently, Michael Morcho had a daughter who spoke German and she visited. Sometimes she would go upstairs to the neighbor and talk in German.

One day, the Germans took the Karasso child named Manuel to be killed. Josef, the German who had stayed with Frieda's family, was no longer there. He had already gone to Yugoslavia to take another post. Once, when he visited, the family told the German about the fate of Manuel. At the time, Rinschoff was about 55 years old, and said not to worry. Later, he freed Manuel and went to visit in Altuna.

She briefly talks about a woman who was a teacher and visited Israel who had a connection to her past. Then, Kobo discusses how she and her family prepared for war by sending their money away to places they thought the Germans would never go to. Then, the money was eventually seized in such places as Altuna, when the Germans captured the place to which the money was originally sent.

There is a brief microphone/technological problem with the film. Kobo continues, saying that for eight years she learned at the Eliaz School. There she studied French, Hebrew and Greek. In the upper grades [like the 7th and 8th grades], Kobo learned ancient Greek, Chemistry, mathematics and geometry. There, too, she studied the main disciplines such as the History of the Jews, and general history in French. After completing these years of study, Kobo received her first diploma and then went to the French Lyceum. There she found many Jews, Greeks and Armenians. She had a very long day at school, but she studied there until 1940. Later, she attended an American school which returned her money for tuition when the war with the Italians broke out.

2nd hour, minutes 12 through 30

After the time Kobo attended the American School, people would send their kids to play at her house. Kobo became a teacher, and had 8 students. She would teach these students grammar, Greek, French, arithmetic, and other subjects.

Switching subjects, Kobo remembers that when the Germans came, there were signs posted at coffeehouses, as well as at theaters saying that Jews should not be allowed to enter such places. However, after a protest the signs were removed.

In August of 1942, the Germans wanted the Greek people to enlist in the army. There were events hosted by and at the Italian consul. Kobo recalls her mother telling her to listen to the screams in the streets; everyone was singing patriotic songs. Kobo and her family were out on their balcony, all five kids, watching the soldiers pass in the streets below. The soldiers carried guns and were wearing their official uniforms.

2nd hour, minutes 30 through 45

400,000 people had died, and the Germans were sending the Jews away. Kobo's mother prepared an eggplant meal, and others would try to steal the meal from her. Kobo remembers cleaning for Passover on April 6, 1943 – three days before the holiday.

She and her family bought goods off of the Black Market. The curfew was 11 o'clock at night, and Kobo lived in fear. The rabbis promised the people that nothing bad would happen to the Jews, but for Kobo things were changing. Eventually, she needed to bribe people for food with her jewelry. She would prepare little plates, just enough so people would not get hungry.

2nd hour, minutes 45 through 50

Kobo recalls several restrictions imposed on the Jews; they could not sell or buy things or give money to Christians to purchase merchandise for them. At first, the Germans did not monitor the Jews extremely carefully; they could have escaped. Some neighbors of Frieda's family would hide. There was a mother who was found by Germans, and as a punishment was sent to Auschwitz without any clothing. Some children were sent to Altuna, but they could not escape.

Kobo recalls money exchanges. She remembers changing gold and silver for zlotys, Moshe Rabaynu, and Torah in the had – all different forms of currency. Often times, Kobo saw Rav Koretz who was in a carriage. He urged the Jewish community to give 200,000 gold liras to the Germans to ensure survival. Concurrently, the Germans were dreaming up little tricks to make the Jews think that they were safe, when in fact, the Jews were really unsafe.

2nd hour, minutes 50 through 55

Kobo remembers the synagoge next to the monastery; Monasteria was a rich city in Yugoslavia. Kobo heard Koretz's speeches and lectures to the community, filled with promises that nothing evil would befall the Jews. Some people believed him, and others did not.

The Judenpolizei, the Jewish police, helped the Germans by working with the Jews, putting the Jews on the trains to the various concentration camps. Everything was done so quickly and so efficiently. Kobo heard that she and her family were going to Krakow. The family took dry goods: sweets, cologne, sugar, chocolate, a leather case, etc. Kobo got off with her sister at Birkenau and went through the first round of inspections with the goods still with them. Having the goods still with them made Kobo and her sister happy, but later on, at another inspection, the goods were found by the Germans and taken away.

2nd hour, minutes 55 through 3rd hour, minute 4

Frieda begins to talk about her brother who was four years her junior. He apparently was taken away to do some light work. Everybody was separated, and gave him their money, figuring that he would be the only one able to save it. When he was free from his work, he traveled to a forest, but was captured and sent to jail for 3 weeks. He was Morico. He later went to the door of people who knew Kobo's father – they lived in another town. When the people saw him, they were overcome with joy, took him in, bathed him and shaved him. The deed was very honorable, considering that the penalty for Jews hiding Jews was the death penalty.

Later, her brother hid in a hospital for 13 months. He had very little food and money. All the money he earned, he gave away to buy underwear, and other clothes. That night in Altuna, 1,000 men protested against British invasion, not wanting to have a monarchy or a king. So, Kobo's brother went to hide in the cellar for 3 days and 3 nights – he would have stayed in the hospital, but many Jews died there and the Germans destroyed everything else. He had a bad case of rheumatism, and, although he had a strong desire to write, he was unable to send a letter. 4 months later the brother received medical treatment in Salonika, and found that nobody was there. He went to a Christian woman who had his sister's wedding dress. There were lists of those who survived the war. Kobo claims that she and others returned to Altuna via Belgium. There were 14 planes. The plane where Kobo was remained in Italy. When she took the bus and went down there, she discovered that her brother was still alive. Kobo said it was a big gift. However, the Greek welcome felt like a disappointment. After the war, at this time, Kobo felt somewhat confident about being in Greece.

3rd hour, minutes 8 through 22

Later, Kobo and her family received some oil in Altuna. Nobody cared; wherever Kobo went, she seemed to have good luck after the war. When Kobo was in Belgium, she looked for 3 families: one, friends of her father's, two, friends of other family members, and three, old friends – whose daughter Rebecca married in Belgium. Later, Kobo discusses how it was difficult for her to adjust to living in Israel when she first came there. She recalls it was hard for her to get accustomed to the clothes and living in apartments. She lived on Rehov Magen.

There were 3 places to which Frieda did not want to go to after WWII, even now: Germany, Poland, and Greece, but most especially Poland. Kobo claims that when she sees the Birkenau entrance, she cries. During the war, Kobo did not know who the Partisans [underground Jewish fighters during WWII] were.

Apparently there were 5 girls in the block in Auschwitz, including Kobo, and she explained to them just how exactly they needed to work. Kobo, herself, did not work. She was a supervisor for the girls. Kobo discusses how she later got sick from typhus and from the selections made by the Germans.

3rd hour, minutes 22 through 38

Koretz was seen as he was taken to Bergen-Belsen, and he died shortly after liberation. Kobo later saw the late Koretz's wife on the beach in Salonika, not swimming because for women it was not modest and proper. Kobo was well respected during and after the war. Even during the war, Kobo was given socks for darning by the German soldiers. She spoke German well. The partisans who were supposed to come during the war to help the Jews, never actually came.

TAPE 2 of 2

4th hour, minutes 0 through 9

Kobo describes how at Auschwitz, she and other inmates planned a sabotage. Certain valuables were thrown into the toilet for preservation purposes, and later on, some girls did business with the items. She was warned by German officials who attempted to intimidate her that if Greek girls became involved with illegal practices, they all would be punished badly. Being a Greek, Kobo took the warning to heart.

She claims that she was not as brave as the many girls who went to the kitchen and stole food. In going to the kitchen, the girls would receive extra food from the Polish girls who worked there ladling soup.

Kobo recalls the 'kontrol' she went through each morning, which was a quick medical inspection. After the inspection, the girls showered. Kobo says that at first, she and other girls were afraid to shower in front of the Germans. On Friday, she and other Jewish inmates were warned about time to prepare their Shabbat, their Sabbath. The German supervisors at work would encourage the workers to work quickly so as to have time to tend to their own affairs. Frieda Kobo remembers that the Sheismaster, the woman who tended to the bathrooms knew how to sing 'Yiddeshe Mame', and would make all the girls cry with her singing. A Slovakian girl named 'Inju' would sing as well. Other girls could play the violin quite well, and still others would dance.

4th hour, minutes 10 through 13

Apparently, the Slovakian girls tended to the rest of the girls. They had big black eyes. Frieda Kobo then talks of how the inmates were forced to put their clothes and other belongings by the Gaskammer. 3 or 4 bunks were stationed near the work fields. Kobo says that old clothes and shoes were kept in those bunks, along with old suitcases. Whatever was imaginable to find in there, including precious stones in the bread, could be found.

Kobo was especially happy when Auschwitz received Greek convoys. These people brought novelty items with them: face cream and vitamins as well. These goods remained not advertised in the fear that the items would be stolen. Among the people who would bring 'treats' to the girls were 2 young men, one of whom was named Ezrati.

4th hour, minutes 14 through 17

Kobo recalls that day per month, after work, each inmate would go into a line and bring a package to the Gaskammer to be sent to Germany. Once, Kobo was a night shift person who later discovered that a sonderkommando had taken a new group of arrivals to the 'showers'. In actuality, the people were gassed, and their clothes had been confiscated beforehand. The people who were expecting clean clothes on the other side of the showers received gas instead. Kobo says that the sonderkommando was busy with the gas and crematoria. A friend of Frieda's worked for the sonderkommando and wanted Frieda to come along and help her to check if anyone had survived some of the harsh treatment. She and Frieda would go for a half hour, only 20 meters to check. One would shout, and one would respond, checking if anyone was still alive. She and the friend Named Desi Karasso checked – and when people could not be found alive, Desi would weep.

4th hour, minutes 18 through 34

Kobo discusses Rehov Yavneh and dhow Karaso was spoken of there. Tourists would come and visit. Kobo talks about a very serious subject-how she became ill and how she got over typhus. She remembers burning up with a terrible fever. That day, there was a 'Selection'. In the Lager B, block 3, the girls had a cruel female leader. One by one, she needed to examine the girls who had to run naked at Birkenau. Later, Frieda survived and got vitamins from the people who she knew who had access to such pills. She went to the hospital in the summer of 1943. There, she received medicine and bandages. The beds for the sick, there were two girls. The Stubedinst, the head of the clinic where Kobo was, told her to stay with the 13 girls who were registered there. Kobo could not move on account of all the bandages in which she found herself entangled.

After two weeks passes, another 'Selection' was held. The Germans were unsatisfied and decided to redo the Selection. Kobo was so sick that she looked for ways to avoid the process. The first time the Selection was held that day, she jumped from one area of the bunk where the process was carried out, to the line where people who passed the Selection were sent to go. On the second go-round, Kobo jumped out of sight, and that is how she was saved on the day she was still burning with fever from her condition of having typhus. She wondered what she would do in the future.

There were two sisters from Warsaw who hid together beneath their bed idn the bunk and saved themselves. Kobo went under the Poles' bed. She heard the female head of her area return after the Selection, and there were only a few Christians left at camp. The people from work came the next day to see if she had survived the Selection. To their amazement, Kobo did. A woman name Heldushka said that there were female Jewish doctors in camp who could help Kobo if she went to them. There, she received better treatment and more food. She considered herself fortunate. In the Lager, the Polish took care of her as well. The Polish girls got to bring everything from home. Specifically, there was a special kind of pink underwear which a Polish girl brought for Kobo. The girl also brought Kobo some medicine which was to be mixed into water to help cure Kobo of Typhus. These events occurred approximately up to the time of September, 1944. According to Kobo, in three months, 400,050 Jews from Hungary came to Auschwitz. The Germans decided to give the rest of the inmates woolen clothing which was striped. These conditions existed circa mid-1943. Wearing these clothes, kobo and others would go with stones to build a railway.

4th hour, minutes 35 through 36

Kobo says that everyday, the people in the camp smelled 'burnt flesh' and that everything twinkled at night. Suzia Koel, her friend, said that she did not know if neither she nor Kobo would survive the war. She and Kobo planned to kill themselves against the electric fences, by throwing themselves against them, as others did. What stopped them was their notice of a truck of children who were taken to the crematoria.

4th hour, minutes 37 through 40

Sometimes **Frieda Kobo** went to get some sugar for her sister who was in the camp, for

when she would visit her. Her sister would ask how she could ever repay **Kobo** for her kindness. After not hearing from her sister for a while, **Kobo** got angry and wrote her sister a letter, expressing her anger. Later, **Frieda** felt relieved that she never sent that letter to her sister; **Kobo** later discovered that her sister and some other sick inmates had been taken to a bunk and left without food and water for three days. They all died. **Kobo** claims that all of those who were ill were 'Mussulmen'.

4th hour, minutes 40 through 44

Kobo says that there were four girls per bed at the bunks. She shared her bed with **Desi Barzilai** of Chile, and Stella Aruch who later went to America. One day when the girls were together, they were processed through "**Kontrol**" and then for the next 100 meters of walking, the girls were told that the cremators had been bombed. Half the girls were moved around. Some were taken to Lager A some to Lager B . **Kobo** loved all of the **Salonikan** girls.

4th hour, minutes 45 through 55

Kobo recalls being taken at times to see beatings. The **Loiferim** were beating the people. **Kobo** remembers seeing Dr. **Mengele** many times at Auschwitz. **Mengele** did not treat **Kobo** badly. Every time he came to look at the inmates, there were rumors of his upcoming arrival. Most of the people **Frieda** knew hid in the bathroom to avoid his Selections (for death). The prisoners really did not know much about **him**, except that he was a leader.

Kobo shares an observation she had about the boy she saw in front of the man's group, wearing an earring. She realized that there was always a boy like that, just like **Pipl** (the boy's given name), in every group of men.

Kobo talks about how she ate and what she ate. Dirty pieces of food and bread were stolen so that the girls had something to eat. At night, in the lager, they would march like soldiers. **Kobo** said she would have sesame oil to eat, and one side of girls would go up to the Lager to get margarine for whatever else the girls would eat. She remembered that the Slovakian girls quickly learned Polish, and how she was stunned that they could learn the language that rapidly.

4th hour, minutes 55 through the 5th hour

The Polish non-Jews did not like the Jews. The Jews, did not speak Polish like the Poles could. There were girls who spoke beautiful Polish. The girls, with **Frieda** would sing in lines. They all learned German songs, other cultural songs, and songs about the lager.

Kobo never received any punishment, and during the interview she takes a break to drink. She claims that in the evening, she would see a place where people were killed. It was called Bzezinka.

5th hour, minute 1 through 13

Once, **Kobo** dared to go to **Bzezinka**, and someone brought her a beautiful ring. She loved to hang around with the Greek girls so that she could speak Ladino. The one who brought her the beautiful ring said that she would like for **Kobo** to come with her and ask permission from

the head of the block zone if Kobo could go and work in Bzezinka. In the line at Bzezinka, Kobo was asked where she had worked previously. She answered in "Kanada-the zone of Kanada" and the German officer said that she had obviously stolen things if she had worked there, and told her to get out of line. Instead, she went to find a red kerchief which she borrowed from a friend, and put it around her head. She then stepped back into line. The line was so long, Kobo knew that the officer would not remember her from before. The next time she was asked where she had worked, Kobo said she had worked in housingkommando. She was then asked if she could write in German and was subsequently given a test for German writing.

When she passed the test and got to work, she worked in the same area as the Kanada workers did. She was the number of workers there including Kobo totaled 32 girls, all German from Upper Silesia. Kobo stayed in a bunk where everyone had her own sheets, and a lamp for reading. There was no health check as there had been every day before Kobo had arrived at this bunk. There were three cabins where work was done. There were two Germans around Kobo, and she was the only Jewish person at that specific work zone.

Kobo worked on the train tracks, and she had a comparatively "good life" than before then. She drank tea all day and had better cooked soup and other foods. On Sunday, she and her so-workers would go to the men's lager and listen to a concert held by those who knew how to play instruments. She slept next to the girls of the Kanada zone, and would get to hear the gossip from them and share the gossip which she, herself knew. Kobo learned gossip because the post, the German guard tower closest to where she was, was just outside the bunk's window. The messages and headlines which the newspaper displayed could be seen from where Kobo stood in the bunk. Sometimes she could tell when the Russians were advancing and would be happy to spread the news.

At night, Kobo had a book to read. Her room was very neat and tidy, and she could always wear what she wanted to. The Germans (the girls) would give her the old clothes from when the new transports came in and the people would have to leave their old clothing. Kobo begins to tell the story of her friend Inju. Apparently, Inju had a male German companion named Hans. When she told Hans that her sister was in trouble, Hans saved the sister's life. Also, later on during the death march, Hans would walk by Kobo to make sure that everyone was doing "fine," keeping the pace of marching up.

5th hour, minutes 13 through 29

On January 1st the girls took their nice clothes and they also had a party with honey cakes. The girls told Kobo that if she sang, she would get a piece of honey cake. Kobo sings for a moment on the tape... <"Everybody knows where is the Mississippi..." She also sings Tina Ross songs, etc.

Kobo continues. In Brezinka, she says, there was a Greek seamstress. The people would organize a play and those who could dance were given a costume. Suddenly, the people talked about a rumor, regarding a transfer to another camp, and Kobo began to prepare.

There were wooden structures at Auschwitz. The crematoria were closed, so Kobo never saw them. When walking through the camp, everything was done on foot. There was a small entrance into the camp which was not guarded. There was a time when trucks came for the children and dumped them into the pits and holes in the ground. When the children did not die from falling into the holes, the kids were shot to death. Although these occurrences took place relatively far away, Kobo and others still heard the screams of the children. There was light work to be done.

One time, some girls knocked on the door and asked for something from Kobo. Everyone seemed scared and wooed. Kobo remembers that once on a Sunday night, and she saw the newly-transported people. She thought that there were a bunch of crazy people who had come into Auschwitz. She saw that they wore black hats and garb, and that they also had long side curls. Later, when Kobo arrived in Israel, she saw these same types of people and realized that they were Hasidic people. In Greece, she had never seen such people because Greece was completely modern, and one could not usually tell the difference between a Jewish and a non- Jewish Greek. Kobo knew some girls who could sing in Hebrew and would say the Jewish prayers with the others on Friday nights. Those girls had learned in Jewish schools. Kobo always wondered where God was, but the girls would continue to laugh.

Some of the Yugoslavian girls would get beatings. Kobo continues about her experiences at Bzezinkw in September/october, 1944, through January or February, 1945.

5th hour, minutes 29 through 50

After a long while, Kobo and the others began to learn that a crematorium had been bombed. Kobo knew that something was askew when all of the German officers began to run every which-way. In the beginning of 1944, in the summer, after the revolt, the gassing became more frequent than usual. Although the stench of burning flesh was awful, Kobo and her fellow inmates did not suffer from the smell.

On January 18th, Kobo prepared to march, taking wool blankets and half a loaf of bread. During the march, she passed through forests, and SS dogs were always at the sides of the marching Jews. Everyone seemed to wonder where they were headed. Kobo witnessed the death of many people who could not keep the pace the Germans expected them to. She recalls how on the second night of the march, the bread was so hard, she broke two teeth trying to bite into it. She also had difficulty trying to fall asleep; it was so cold-the place where she marched was like the Siberia of Europe. Sometimes during the march, the rain was so heavy, the legs of the marchers would be damp, and their legs would stick together. The march lasted for five days in Poland. From a distance, Kobo and the others heard explosions; they knew that the Russians were coming and were very happy as a result.

The melted snow everywhere was like candles to Kobo-it attracted her. When she was thirsty, she could drink the "snow." The Jews were taken one day to the train tracks, and then to wagons. When the train moved, there were so many people. The snow and water would fall through the cracks in the trains, and Kobo would catch the drops which fell onto her. Others would begrudge her the thirst-quenching snow. Later on, all of the inmates received good bread, which was divided at night. When there were wagons of Germans, the inmates would play a game with the last piece of bread which was too small a portion for any single inmate. The inmates would play the game, and the person who won got to have the small piece of bread.

There were two stops at the end of the journey. Half the people got off at Ravensbrueck and half got off at Bergen-Belsen. Kobo got off the train at Ravensbrueck, and the bunk to which she was assigned was full of snow. She put her mouth near where the snow melted and drank it. She said that it tasted like carbon, but that she did a good thing to have quenched her thirst. The tent in the darkness was very sad. Kobo says that the Ukrainian girls were like cows who stole food.

5th hour minute 50 through the 6th hour, minute 8

She was at Ravensbrueck for four months. The conditions were very tough, according to Kobo, because there were no shoes for the majority of the people to wear, and the food there was rarely distributed. There were girls who wore black triangles, girls from Auschwitz. Kobo takes a break to drink during the interview. Kobo was regularly inspected for health problems. She had three rings from the Kanada zone of Auschwitz which she brought with her for the purposes of bribery and trade for more treats. She once worked for the Wermacht at the housingkommando.

Kobo recalls how when a plane flew overhead, she had to wear camouflage. Her friend, Desi from Chile sat with her outside and said the Shema prayer. Afterward, she and others were locked into four rooms per bunk. Suddenly, the girls noticed that there was no longer a post for standing guard. The eighty girls in the room were happy. One girl found a chair in the room and broke the window bars and got out. Menca la Hebreia was singing in Hebrew.

The tape breaks for a moment. Suddenly, Kobo remembers not feeling that there was any surveillance. The girls jumped out through the window. Kobo considers herself lucky that she caught margarine which was thrown out of the window. Everyone also got uncooked potatoes at night. Some who ate all the food-six girls in particular, died from eating so much food when they were not used to eating what was for them, massive quantities.

The girls jumped and kissed each other, but were worried after hearing shots around them. They decided to take an excursion to the town bakery. They had no money, but the man there gave them bread on the house. When the girls returned to the cellars at the camp, they looted the German quarters. They agreed that that very night, they would sleep in the SS quarters. Eventually the Americans left, and the Russians came. Kobo wanted to be with the American soldiers so she and others walked twenty kilometers to be with the Americans, by the wheat fields. Then, Kobo went to Lunenburg.

6th hour, minutes 8 through 18

Kobo remembers going through the camps and finding Ladino poets. She and the other Greek girls told them who they were. The girls were cared for for the duration of three months. Kobo later traveled to Greece via Belgium. She went to Hannover to buy clothes. A friend got hit on the head and three days later died; the friend was buried at Layze. Kobo went to an optician's shop in Hannover which had a Star of David in the window. She was very relieved to see a soldier with a Jewish Star of David in Germany after the war. .

In Belgium, Kobo stayed for fifteen days. She had a good family friend in Antwerp. Once in Belgium Kobo did not have money to ride the tram, but she got on anyway. Eventually she was kicked off but she had wanted to ride the tram since she had not been allowed to during the beginning of WW11.

6th hour, minute 18 through 36

After traveling in Altuna, the Germans left and Kobo was there for three days. In Israel, Kobo's role was to pick vegetables and salads. She dug bathrooms, and everything was done in the open-fields. The men worked on dairy products. At Kibbutz Beit Hashita, people learned Hebrew, Israeli culture, and how to dance the hora. Kobo talks about how she traveled to Israel as an illegal immigrant, and when she was on the boat, just across from Tel-Aviv, the British jumped on board and detained all the Jewish passengers. The British questioned the passengers and sent them to Athlit. The passengers sang in every language except for Greek.

After the detention period, **Kobo** left for Haifa, and she saw Mount Camel. She then boarded the bus, but as she did so, somebody called "**Frieda Medina Frieda Medina!**" A man named **Yitzhak Alczech** said that he was a lend and called to her. **Kobo** explained how she had been detained at **Athlit** for two weeks. At that time, when she was actually 21 years old, she had a certificate made that she was 18. She arrived in Tel-Aviv, at the House of Immigrants, the absorption center, and **she** registered for citizenship and gave residential information. Every night, there were dances.

Marcello Fortis translated the material of Hanna **Senesh**. Many parties were held the first few days **Kobo** and the others spent in Israel.

6th hour, minutes 36 through 43

Kobo says that at first she was not happy in Israel. In 1946, 1947, **Kobo** first learned about the tense situation with the issue of neighboring **Arab** lands. Many young boys went down to Latrun to fight. **Kobo** talks about the Partisans and sings a Partisan song she knows, as much of it as she can. She attempts to translate it.

The Greek Jews, she claims, were not well-understood by the Sabras (native Israelis). In the heart of Tel-Aviv, there was a lot of laundry hanging around.

6th hour, minutes 44 through 53

Kobo talks about how she went to **Lewinsky** Road. She is proud of her two successful daughters and of her grandchildren. **Kobo** expresses the concerns she had when she lived on the kibbutz, and when she first learned of the **Israeli-Arab** conflict near the borders. She names the school where her children studied; they studied at **Judah Macabee** School while she lived in **Eshdarot Nordo**. **Frieda Kobo** is happy that there is such freedom and happiness of heart, coupled with the peace in Israel.

Kobo discusses how she was welcomed in Israel when she first settled in. She claims she received so many presents and flowers at first, she did not know what to do with them. She comments how she is glad to have done the interview, offering to give more information if she recalls some at a later date.

Kobo also says that she could never bear to visit Auschwitz or Poland in general, saying that the land is filled with blood.

6th hour, minutes 53 through 57

Kobo shows pictures she brought in her purse. The first picture shows three friends upon their return to Greece. The second picture reveals **Kobo** and her good family friend, **Suzia** Koel, washing laundry. The third picture shows Marie, **Kobo's** sister, next to **Kobo**. The fourth picture shows **Kobo** dressed up for her school carnival. The costume she wears in the picture was the design of the outfit of Greek soldiers from the time when Greece was under the Ottoman Empire's rule. The last picture shows the daughter of **Morcho** and the **Noach** Family, along with **Frieda Kobo**.

6th hour, minutes 57 through the 7* hour

Kobo talks about a journal of her and Emilie Kuho's Holocaust experiences which they co-authored, shortly after WWII ended. The two women filled the pages, expressing the sorrow and suffering they felt in their hearts. In Layze, some English reporters came to do a news story, and they wanted to borrow the journal, saying it would be returned the next day. However, Kobo never saw the British reporters again. She does not know where the journal of her memoirs can be found to this day.

RG-50.120 #076 2 Tapes
Kobo, Frieda

- 1.01 Born 1921 in Saloniki. Maiden name Demedina. Describes happy, privileged childhood in upper middle class family. Talks about history of the Jewish community of Saloniki. She went to French school.
- 1.09 Talks about father who was a wealthy importer and about brothers and sisters, 5 in all. Describes the wealth of the Jewish community and her family.
- 1.27 She did not experience anti-Semitism. Describes Jewish youth organizations, Jewish holidays, sings popular songs of the time.
- 1.46 In 1932 Greeks became more nationalistic and burned Jewish buildings. Talks about Rabbi Koretz. Describes Italian bombardments in 1941.
- 1.53 April 1941, the Germans entered and the bombardments stopped. The Greek army fled. The Germans brought back Rabbi Koretz as head of the Judenrat. Describes German officer stationed in their house who treated them well.
- 2.07 Germans emptied large warehouses of Jewish merchants and sent them to Germany.
- 2.13 Describes Greek anti-Semitism, they welcomed the Germans when they entered.
- 2.27 Summer of 1942. Describes starvation. Jews were sent to do hard labor.
- 2.38 Describes mood in the Jewish community and life in the ghetto.
- 2.48 Describes Koretz and his functions as head of Judenrat. The Jewish police and their functions.
- 2.54 They were told that they would go to Krakow to live and what to take with them. Forced labor groups.
- 2.55 Story of her younger brother and his escape.
- 3.05 Her return to Greece after the liberation, going to Israel and her life there.

- 3.14 German orders to assemble. Describes the ghetto near the train station.
- 3.27 Koretz and his family survived the camps.
- 3.30 Describes the Baron Hirsch enclave, being hoarded into trains and the 9 day ride.
- 3.39 Arrival in Birkenau in April 1943 and the Selection.
- 3.42 Describes camp, treatment, crematorium.
- 3.57 Her work routine in 'Canada', 5 km away in Auschwitz.

II

- 4.01 Describes work in 'Canada'. Trading things for food. Kapos.
- 4.15 Describes Sonderkommando who had to take people to gassing and out after they were dead and who were gassed themselves in the end.
- 4.19 Describes getting typhoid, the hospital, and how she avoided selection to the crematorium in the summer of 1943.
- 4.34 What they knew about the camp.
- 4.37 The loss of her sister in Lager A who was burned.
- 4.40 Describes the bombing of the crematorium.
- 4.44 Describes punitive actions and visits by Mengele.
- 4.50 Describes the Gypsy Lager. They were all gassed.
- 4.53 Block of German women criminals.
- 4.55 Life in Block.
- 5.01 She is sent to work in Brezinka. Describes her work and the fair conditions there.
- 5.19 Describes the killing of children, and the arrival of transports.
- 5.29 Repeats the story about the killing of the sonderkmmmando in the beginning of '44 after the revolt.
- 5.32 Jan. 18, 1944 they were marched out of Auschwitz of Gleiwitz and from there by train to Ravensbrück.
- 5.44 Describes the camp.

- 5.49 She is transported to camp Meklenburg. Describes her work. April '45 the airport was bombarded, the forest was on fire and the guards locked them in barracks and escaped. The end of the war.
- 5.57 Describes escaping the camp and going to Neustadt.
- 6.06 Describes leaving the Russian zone and getting to the American zone, to Brussels and from there to Athens.
- 6.18 Describes returning to Saloniki and joining a Hachshara group, organized by the Jewish Brigade, in preparation for Israel.
- 6.24 The boat trip to Israel, arrival and joining her family in Tel Aviv.
- 6.36 Adjustment in Israel.
- 6.44 Lack of help to Greek survivors.
- 6.46 Continuing nightmares and mental distress.
- 6.50 Wonderful reception by her family in Israel and her new life and family.