

RG-50.120\*081

**Kraus, Edit**

**Tape 1 of 4**

- 1.01.00 Edit (Dita) Kraus was born in Prague on July 12, 1929. Parents were from Brun. Mother's maiden name was Adler; she was the daughter of a judge. Mother had an elder brother from whom she was estranged. Mother was orphaned as a baby and was raised by her stepmother. This made an impact on both the mother and later, on Dita. She didn't know her maternal grandfather who passed away shortly after her birth. Her parents were married in 1927. Father was a recently graduated lawyer. His first job was with the "social security" working for workers' rights. Family moved from Brun to Prague. Dita's maiden name was Polach from their origin "polac." The name was given by mistake to Dita's father in the civil register. Her paternal grandfather was well known as an active member of the social-democratic party and he and his wife were atheists. They demanded to be taken out of the registry of the Jewish community. They didn't see themselves as Jews, but as socialists. Dita was influenced by her grandparents' position, but in the negative - as she hates politics. Her grandfather became a Senator in the Czechoslovakian Parliament from the late 20's on. Mother had a high school education, which was very rare. Her mother was born in 1902. Father trained as a lawyer under the man who later became the Secretary of Welfare in the government. Father was not an independent lawyer, thus his income was limited. The family lived modestly. Later they moved to the "electric house" in a nice suburb of Prague.
- 8.42 At home, they spoke only German. Parents spoke Check haltingly.
- 9.36 For Dita to learn Check well, her parents hired a maid who was like a member of the family.
- 10.00 Father was very interested in all aspects of culture.
- 12.00 Family life and interpersonal relations.
- 16.20 Dita didn't hear the word "Jew" until she was 8 years old.
- 16.30 More about grandfather.
- 21.28 Grandmother Polach, Catharina.
- 29.00 Dita was a member of the Socialist youth movement.
- 30.36 Dita went to a German school in the neighborhood. While in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (age 8), she found on a her desk a note with the words "You are a Jew." She took the note home for an explanation, which her mother gave her. However, she didn't tell her that the family was Jewish. Later, in 1937, she overheard her parents talking seriously about Germany's annexation of the Suddetenland. Her mother

- said, "...and now probably they will enact there the Nurenberg Laws." Dita found out then they were anti-Jewish laws, but still she did not understand that it applied to them. Then, her mother added, "We are Jews."
- 33.06 They used to have a Christmas tree at home when Dita was young. At age 7, the family stopped. There were no other holidays, except for the summer holiday for a saint. Mother refused to let Dita participate.
- 35.00 They were a completely assimilated family though.
- 36.00 At home, the family read books and newspapers in German. After the "You are a Jew" incident, Dita was transferred to a Check school. She was not well received by the teacher or children.
- 42.15 After the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, in 1939, after Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia, she was sent to a village of her father's acquaintance (Zdar Namoravie) for the summer months. In the past, every year, they would go out on vacation. Edit ended up spending the entire year there and went to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She had a great time, but developed an ulcer. Both parents came to visit.
- 46.09 The Nazis enter Prague. Father tried to join the "Black Rose" operation to cross the borders. He didn't succeed.
- 47.30 Parents were already looking for a place to immigrate. Correspondence with Uncle Adolph, who had worked in Herzl's office. He tried to get visas for them. The problem was what could the father do, he was an impractical intellectual.
- 50.20 Mother went to learn some occupation (lampshades) starting in 1939. Also tried to send Dita out, to Turkey, to Uncle Adolf's daughter. Nothing came of it. Many countries in South America were also taken into consideration, but money was always a problem.
- 52.16 Reasons for sending Dita to the village. Dita was well received there, because she came from the big city (Prague).
- 53.48 When Dita tried to join a sports club, she was refused. Other than that, the fact that she was Jewish didn't come into consideration.
- 54.00 Dita's friends.
- 58.00 Social position and family friends. Lifestyle.
- 2.04.51 In March or April of 1939, the family was thrown out of the "electric house" and the Nazi commanders took it over. Father was always gentle. His only reaction was, "I will remember their faces after the war." The family moved to a different apartment near the river and they took the grandparents with them.

- 7.03 Dita couldn't go to school (after her 5<sup>th</sup> grade in the village). They were also evacuated from their new quarters. They were forced to move to the medieval "city of the Jews" neighborhood near the synagogue. They were forced to live in one room in a common house with kitchen privileges.
- 8.28 Nazis ordered to fire all Jews from government jobs. Dita's father received a small pension after being fired. Managed to become the speechwriter for the city's mayor, Peter Zenkl, who had to speak German, but didn't know how. Zenkl had been the head of the social security beforehand and gladly gave the job to Dita's father.
- 10.24 Encounter with Germans provoked anger among the occupied people. They tried to avoid them.
- 12.21 After prohibition to go to school, a member of the Jewish families organized themselves to teach their children privately. Before this was organized, Dita's father taught her history and geography.
- 14.00 Dita's Aunt Manya and Uncle Ludwig taught her also.
- 16.11 Dita's grandfather was a professor of Greek and Latin in the gymnasie. He had been Edelshteyn's teacher. Edelshteyn, the head of the ghetto, later gave Dita's family special living conditions in the ghetto. They were on the list of "protected people" until Edelshteyn himself was taken, and afterward, all of the people on his list.
- 17.32 Grandparents were sent to the ghetto before Dita and her parents. When they arrived the grandfather had already died. Grandmother survived the war and passed away in 1950.
- 18.08 Dita still had relatives (father's cousins – Uri Bass) in Brun who went to a Jewish school.
- 19.44 Between entrance of Nazis to Prague and the deportation, Dita was a child and couldn't understand if the prohibitions were somehow deserved. She lacked life experience to judge.
- 23.23 One of Dita's friends was sent to the Lodz ghetto – among the first to be deported. Dita's mother started to make preparations for deportation because they knew that their turn would come, too.
- 24.43 Summer camp ("Hero's Field") in 1942. Activities and enjoyment. They went everyday, one-hour walk each way.
- 26.24 Short period of studies in the Jewish school in 1942.

- 28.00 One of Dita's classmates is today the assistant director of the museum at Therezin.
- 29.09 Dita felt independent in 1942. Her strongest influence was the summer camp, and the Jewish school.
- 30.00 Scarcity of clothes. Mother and grandmother were forced to sew and alter.
- 33.39 They heard about Lodz. They heard about Therezinstaat only after a group had been sent there to prepare it.
- 34.34 Only expression of regret of parents was that they did not immigrate in time. She also heard names, political talk about the invasion, El-Alamein, Stalingrad.
- 35.51 Dita was returned from the farm (where she went to school for 5<sup>th</sup> grade) because her parents were afraid they would not be able to visit her; travel in trains was already forbidden for Jews).
- 36.13 Parents couldn't join Dita in the farm, because it was forbidden to change the living places (This was only permitted when the Nazis took over the homes).
- 36.40 Not all Jewish homes were confiscated and none outside of Prague.
- 37.42 Yellow patch ("golden star") anecdote; public transportation.
- 40.00 Encounter with Zionism.
- 41.13 Youth movement; agricultural training ("Hach-Shara") in 1941.
- 43.26 Destiny of Eva, a relative of Dita, who was sent to Auschwitz.
- 44.39 Dita didn't think of Zionism as an eventual solution for the Jews. She was only 12-13 years old. For her, to be a Jew was something to be ashamed of or to hide. She liked to be in the company of other youth, and to sing. Ze'ev Shek taught them the song "Hechalil." Freddy Hirsch was one of the leaders of the Hero's Field.
- 48.00 Sex education in Dita's home was perfunctory, from her mother.
- 49.00 Place of Zionist encounters was also used later on when the evacuations started – the Jewish volunteer youth group helped the sick and frail to pack, carry their belongings, etc.
- 50.48 Dita doesn't recall if her Zionist talk provoked some kind of reaction from parents.

- 51.47 There was no information forth coming form Therezinstaat. Therefore, Dita did not fear the transport. A postcard arrived from Lodz, from her Uncle Ludwig. Later, a carepackage was returned with a stamp “deceased.” Aunt Manya was not Jewish. She was an active communist. When Dita’s family was sent to Therezinstaat, and then to Auschwitz, Aunt Manya sent them small care packages. Aunt Manya survived and gave a home to Dita after the war. She still lives in the Check Republic and is still a fervent communist.
- 57.00 Aunt Manya divorced Ludwig in order to save their lives, but mixed marriages were protected almost to the end.
- 58.15 Jews had to register with the Germans. They were “disciplined” and did so. Dita feels that the tragedy that occurred was a consequence of that. The registration was done in an orderly fashion and took place in the orphanage.
- 3.00.0 No one tried to escape the registration, because the penalty for not following orders was visited upon the relatives (not necessarily on those who committed the infraction). There was a fear to be sent to a concentration camp if orders were not followed.
- 4.35 Residence at the end of 1941 and beginning of 1942 (Walthauser/Birkova No. 6). They lived together with the family of Dita’s piano teacher. Dita’s occupation during that time.
- 13.20 Father didn’t work. He was employed then in the administration of the Jewish community. Mother took care of the house and of the food for the family.
- 15.00 With pocket money, Dita could buy books or cheap jewelry.
- 16.42 Food was more expensive than that. Although, in preparation for the deportation to Therezin, the family bought a large goose – which was the “talk of the town.”
- 18.00 There was no direct contact from the ghetto. They reached the conclusion that there will be even less food in Therezin from rumors. So, the family made preserves from that goose.
- 21.47 Freddy Hirsch and other youth counselors; about Freddy.
- 25.00 Through the activities in the youth group, “Jew” took some positive connotations. Dita discovered that Jews had a history (Gratz work was mentioned in the discussion). Parents were cognizant of German culture only, not Check.
- 32.33 In the spring of 1942, Dita was working at a dentist’s office.
- 35.08 On the same summer when Ludwig’s parcel was returned with the worked “deceased” to Dita’s family, the pain was deep: the first death in the family.

- 37.01 Dita's training as hygienist at the dentist's office; she was 13 years old.
- 39.00 Manya provided the information about the war, but none from the ghetto.
- 43.13 August 1942, Dita's grandparents were deported. They received a letter (the letter was written in December, but arrived in Prague in the summer) from an uncle from Palestine and he told them a baby had been born, only the second grandchild. Dita was in charge to bring the news that the baby was born to her grandparents, who were very frail. The baby's name was Doron, having the same meaning as Theodor (a gift from God).
- 46.46 Dita received the news of her grandparents' deportation as a given. Months later, when her family and herself were deported, the grandfather had already passed away.
- 49.00 When Dita's family was scheduled for deportation, she was overcome by grief at leaving the things she loved, but not fear. Packing for the ghetto included bedding, food, clothes (mainly warm), and medications. The rest of their prized possessions were given to neighbors for safe-keeping. The deportees gathered in the fair grounds. That day, they were allowed to take the train. They sat waiting for 2-3 days. This was November 1942. They sat near a group of retarded youth also waiting for deportation.
- 59.00 Upon arrival to destination, they had to walk to the ghetto (which was quite an ordeal considering the amount of clothes they were wearing and the weight they were carrying).
- 4.00.00 There was practically no room for that transport in Theresien. They were housed in catacombs in the walls. Each person had room enough to lie down. They were there for weeks.

## **Tape 2 of 2**

- 8.47 The hardest adjustment under Nazi rule was (for Dita and her father) the prohibition to walk in the parks to enjoy nature as they were used to do.
- 9.30 The Jewish cemetery of Malwazinsky (???) in the outskirts of Prague, represented the only place where Dita and her friends and family could lie on the grass (Germans did not prohibit entrance to the cemetery).
- 10.45 Youth would also go to the old Jewish cemetery, sit among the graves and under trees, hold meetings, take care of babies whose mothers brought for a stroll and have a good time.
- 15.00 Encounter with grandmother in concentration camp.

- 16.37 Finally, the family was sent to temporary headquarters. Dita's father was in the men's building, Dita and her mother somewhere else.
- 22.00 Dita was bothered by the fact that they always live with the suitcases packed (as there was no room to unpack them).
- 24.00 At one point, their temporary living accommodation emptied out, as Nazis organized all who were well, to be deported. Dita declared that she, herself, was ill, and "willed" herself to have fever. So, her mother and Dita stayed behind.
- 30.00 Mother worked in separation of ??????????????
- 31.33 The ghetto was very crowded. There was much motion in the streets; cars being carried with people, baggage, etc.
- 33.34 When a new group arrived, the residents had to stay indoors.
- 34.02 In Therezin, hunger was never great. Once every three months, it was permitted to receive food parcels of up to 5 kg. Aunt Manya sent them food.
- 37.00 Grandparents lived in a house for prominent people (grandfather was once a senator). After Dita's grandfather's death, her grandmother moved out of those quarters to a dorm for the elderly.
- 42.20 Grandmother's quarters became the meeting point for the entire family.
- 43.31 Father worked as a clerk in the labor office.
- 44.04 Dita moved to a girls' dorm. She worked in the vegetable gardens. It was hard work. She left work after three days. Her father took her to Dov Barnea, who arranged for work in scheduling youth to work. The next job was in a production line. She also left it and decided not to work. She would hide in her bed.
- 49.06 Diphtheria and typhus felled and killed many residents/
- 52.11 In the girls' dorm, there was schooling. There were also many social activities open only to the residents of that dorm.
- 54.43 Lots of reading in the dorm.
- 56.35 Girls studied after work.
- 5.02.13 Dita sang in the opera. She also drew and painted. There were art lessons from Friedl Brandriss.
- 6.08 A day in the life...

- 18.32 Room 25. Reuven Freudenfeld rehearsed the chorus for the opera, at the other times Shechter did.
- 22.36 They performed in 25 shows.
- 24.00 Life was easier for Dita than for her parents. She led her own life, with her occupations, etc...and tried to keep away from the parents' gloom.
- 25.00 Death in Therezin.
- 27.00 Encounter with other relatives in the ghetto. They all died.
- 40.00 Theft of goods happened mainly in the laundry.
- 41.04 Celebration of Purim and memory of the representation of the story of Esther in a modern fashion. Dita doesn't have any recollections of other holidays.
- 45.21 December 1943, they were transported out of Therezin by train.
- 50.34 They were pushed into train cars, with cruelty.
- 57.04 After a couple of days, they arrived to Aushchwitz, in the dark. Floodlights and dogs greeted them. They were told to leave behind their baggage. Somehow, Dita and her mother walked together, carrying a bundle. They were put in an empty barrack, and ate from the bundle. There were no bathrooms inside. Whoever left to relieve himself was shot.
- 6.00.00 They were tattooed with a number, on the arm, which hurt but Dita was embarrassed to cry. She learned to recite her number well in German, for the roll calls. Father had been separated from them, with all of the men.
- 3.04 Another recollection of being ordered to undress in a room with a cement floor, standing for a couple of days without food or water.
- 4.00 Finally, they were given clothes and unmatched shoes.
- 5.50 All of the women were taken to the shower where the German officers came to ogle.
- 6.00 Beginning of thought how to commit suicide. Dita mentioned it to her mother seeking encouragement. There was no way though.
- 10.00 After receiving the tattoos someone registered each person with a name and a number. This was the last time names were used.



- 12.11 They were moved to a family camp. There, they saw the men whose heads had been shaved.
- 13.48 Immediately, there were differences in status. Some were chosen for positions of “leadership.” Those who were willing to administer blows to others.
- 16.29 They were informed (the new arrivals) of what kind of camp this was: the ovens, the smoke.
- 17.44 Dita’s father aged, and helpless, at age 49 (???)
- 20.59 He was sent to build the road in the camp, he lost his will to live, lost more and more weight and he died on February 7<sup>th</sup>.
- 24.44 Mother was in the infirmary that day suffering from diphtheria the same infirmary where Mengele experimented on twins.
- 29.33 Block 6, for young women until 40 years of age.
- 30.17 The camp orchestra. The audition in the thick of winter.
- 33.00 Willie was the camp commander. Beautiful women were appointed head of the blocks (They were Willie’s protégés). They received nice clothes.
- 34.33 They were sent to work. Dita’s mother worked at the clothing storage and Dita was sent to the children’s block.
- 35.00 Block 6 was the site of physical punishment.
- 36.00 Hunger was rampant and stealing food was a frequent event. Food consisted of diluted soup and a slice of bread. Noses were continually running. Inmates sharpened the metal soup spoon handles to use them as knives. Hats were knitted to cover men’s heads. The material came from undoing a part of a knitted dress. The needles came from pieces of the wooden bunk beds.
- 41.0 The latrines; people were suffering from diarrhea.
- 42.46 Menstrual cycles stopped; the breasts diminished.
- 44.40 All of the belongings had to be carried so that they wouldn’t be stolen.
- 45.30 In the children’s block, there was heating. It was easier to dry laundry. People would otherwise walk with their recently washed clothes, shaking them in the air.
- 47.07 Freddy Hirsch managed to obtain from the Germans the “children block.” Children had their own activities there although they slept somewhere else.

- 48.00 Names of other people.
- 51.30 Dita was the librarian of the 16-18 books they had.
- 54.00 The making of a broom.
- 55.00 They got a little better soup in the children's block.
- 56.39 Inmates were ordered to write from the ghetto.
- 7.00.00 Some of the people still had sexual relations.
- 4.36 Arrival of a massive transport from Hungary. They stood naked and shaved. The shock at the sight was great. For 2-3 days, they stood there. The inmates in Dita's camp started throwing them clothes from the little they had. The worse shame for those women was to stand without a head cover.
- 8.10 In the children's block they also did a puppet show.

**Tape 3 of 3**

- 10.16 How Dita's family was sent to Auschwitz in December 1943 despite the fact that they were on Edelshteyn's list of "protected" people. When Edelshteyn was sent to Auschwitz, the family lost its protection. They were deported on the same train. Dita's grandmother stayed behind in Therezinstaat until the end.
- 11.34 February - after father's death and mother is healthy again, she was still weak and broken. She was sure they would all die in the gas chambers. Dita didn't believe it, out of naivete. Dita also believed that they would be out of the camp before her birthday in mid-July. They left on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 17.14 Deportation of the group that had arrived in September to Heideberk (???) camp. Group was first transferred to a neighboring camp and then put on trucks. Reports say that they sang Hatikvah, the Check Hymn, the International (???); others said that they did not sing at all on the trucks. They were sure they would be transported to the gas chambers. Feelings of guilt mixed with glee at the sight of the emptied barracks, with great heavy blankets in all kinds of colors. Soon the barrack was filled out.
- 19.50 In that barrack, there was a mother with a daughter (3 years old). The mother decided to stay with the daughter rather than going to work.
- 22.25 Mother moved to the new barrack with Dita.
- 22.47 There was a change in the everyday life. People in charge were human. There was also more room. The jobs were divided between the people in Dita's transport. The felling was they would be taken out and killed in June.

- 24.45 New transports arrived in May, making the camp very crowded. News from Dita's grandmother. She was very ill with pneumonia. In truth, she survived the war.
- 29.40 Cases of suicide by electrocution against the electrified fence. The bodies were not taken down immediately.
- 30.37 If anyone died, the other inmates were stripped of their clothes and left to lie naked.
- 31.28 A friend was punished by shaving her head.
- 37.36 Roll calls took place twice a day.
- 38.00 Announcements were relayed through shouting from guard to guard. Recollection of message shouted – when Mengele arrived to examine the twins. The guards were Jewish.
- 41.00 When new transports arrived, immediately, on the ramp from the train, the bundles of inmates were checked. There were piles of shoes, lenses, bread, and clothes. They were picked and the best items were sent to Germany.
- 42.44 At the end of May, the children's block was emptied to use for the selection. It went according to numbers from the age of 16 to 40. Dita was 15 and mother was 41 to 42. They pretended to be the appropriate age. The camp was falling apart. People could mingle and talk. It was a feeling of freedom before a tragedy.
- 45.00 Selection day with Mengele presiding. They needed to state the number, age and profession. There was a conflict about what to say. The rumor was that they were being sent to work, but the Germans lied on purpose as a matter of principle.
- 49.31 The other girls presented themselves as farmers. Dita said she was an artist. Mengele asked if she could make his portrait. Dita and her mother were separated for a while and then reunited again on the same side of the selection.
- 53.29 They lined up in fives at the entrance of the family camp. They were put in a women's camp, which was worse than the camp before (this was the beginning of July).
- 8.00.10 They were in the women's camp for a couple of days. There were brick houses there (a huge one), and selections were a daily routine. People didn't behave with civility toward each other but rather like animals.
- 2.00 Examples of cruelty.

- 7.59 They were put on cattle trains again and fed bread. The prisoners hoped to leave camp. There was straw on the floor.
- 10.36 Exit from the women's camp in Auschwitz.
- 13.10 Rumor that the train was going to Germany to a work camp.
- 14.16 Arrival in Hamburg to a former storage building by the Elba River.
- 18.30 Women and girls were put to work. This period was less difficult than the one at Auschwitz. Life was more like that of a prisoner of war.
- 19.54 Memories of Hamburg.
- 20.50 Daily frequent bombings from the British forced them to find refuge in the basement, half of which was built under water for the purpose of unloading cargo ships.
- 26.09 Work in Hamburg: removal of the debris of the collapsed buildings; also, work in distilleries along the Elba.
- 28.00 Guards were, at first, nice ??????????????????, but they were replaced by cruel ones.
- 29.00 Work either filling out craters caused by bombs or digging foundation of new buildings. The area was called Williamsburg.
- 30.32 Food was an improvement over other places.
- 32.35 Italian prisoners of war traveled on the same ferry as the Jews. Dita's friend, Franco.
- 35.00 Romance in Hamburg.
- 37.00 Smoking machines were operated by the Germans to cover essential industrial plants during bombardments.
- 43.39 They stayed there (all women from Theresienstadt except for two from Holland) until the beginning of the Fall, and then they were transferred to another camp in the middle of a forest.
- 44.02 In Hamburg, there was a Jewish woman as a camp commander, Trude Levy. She looked fierce but behaved humanly. Each room also had a person in charge (Zimmermeister).
- 45.19 Same guards watched the women at work and the camp.

- 45.37 Recollection of a camp commander by the name of Shpies.
- 46.04 Sent to another forced labor camp: Neugraben ??, actually a sub-camp of a large concentration camp.
- 46.30 Work under all weather conditions.
- 48.05 Reaction of local folks who asked repeatedly why the workers were serving time.
- 49.00 Raid in food pantry. Punishment were blows “a la Dickens,” in front of everyone.
- 51.00 Punishment for two women who arrived pregnant to Hamburg; they were returned to Auschwitz.
- 52.57 Third camp in Hamburg: Tifstock???, which means “stuck deeply” in German.
- 53.43 After the inmates were removed from the original location in the warehouses by the river, they were told that the building had been hit by bombs. The same happened after they were transferred from the 2<sup>nd</sup> location.
- 54.10 Bombs reached them in Tifstock where they lived on the premises of the factory they worked for (making blocks).
- 55.41 Social interaction among the inmates: importance of friendship.
- 57.00 The bomb at Tifstock (March-April).
- 9.02.12 Finding of 3 cigarette packs in the ruins of the camp infirmary, allowed Dita and her friend, Margit, to trade them for food.
- 2.46 Deportation to Bergen-Belsen because of lack of housing in Tifstock.
- 4.16 Successful escape of one of the inmates because of chaos after bombing.
- 6.00 Illnesses in the camp.
- 7.22 The doctor at Tifstock was Dr. Gold. She was hurt during the bombing, but recovered.
- 8.30 The “entertainer” friend. She was caught corresponding with the neighboring camp, planning an escape. She was taken for interrogation for 2 days, but then returned. Her name was Lili.
- 13.17 Some light moments in the forced labor camp. The end of the year celebration (1944) and beginning of 1945 in Neugraben.

- 17.24 Female guards were the worst.
- 19.46 Although it is exaggerated to say that the women who survived the Holocaust were the ones engaged in prostitution with the Nazis, Dita says that many did that for food. Sex through the fence at Neugraben.
- 21.00 The damage the circumstances caused to Dita's sexual development and awareness.
- 31.50 Encounter with a German meister, a leftist with social-democratic leanings, who knew Dita's grandfather. He provided Dita and her mother with articles of clothing and food until their work in the distillery was finished (August-September 1944).
- 37.00 The S.S. women guards.
- 40.00 Other prisoners in other camps. Also talks about the food situation.
- 53.54 Sex between women.
- 54.51 Woman guard, who was a lesbian, visited Dita's room and had relations with Dita's friend and roommate. Booby was her last name.
- 56.32 That guard showed up later on in Bergen Belsen during the time between the Germans' retreat and the arrival of the British. She tried to hide, dressed in a civilian uniform, not to be unmasked as a S.S. officer. She was turned over to the British.
- 59.53 Dita has a copy of a documentary film that the British shot at their arrival at Bergen Belsen. She recognized herself in it, she thinks.
- 10.00.45 She has some doubt because her face looks too healthy in those last days of the camp, when hunger was rampant.
- 1.32 More about Booby.
- 2.20 Dita does not have an appetite for vengeance; too weak for that.
- 3.59 Last days at Belsen, the inmates didn't have the strength to walk. They spent their days lying on the floor of the barracks.
- 4.14 Hamburg to Belsen. She doesn't know the reason for their transfer.
- 4.52 A train took them from Hamburg to a beautiful, idyllic place in Luneborgahyde (???). It was the end of March or April. They sat in the cattle cars. Most of the

time, the train was stopped. The Germans were escaping from a Russian conquest, but train or foot, to the American or British areas.

7.39 Train stops gave some the courage to escape.

8.01 Shots were heard not too far away. At night, the sky was lit from the Allied bombings.

9.33 Escape was possible perhaps only to those organized in communist cells.

12.03 It took two days to travel the 100 km to Bergen Belsen.

#### **Tape 4 of 4**

16.52 Arrival in the camp. Walked from the station in the midst of a beautiful spring season. The camp looked very much like the fences in Auschwitz. It was a concentration camp again!

47.51 British did a preliminary registration of the S.S. women who were caught. Dita translated from the German.

49.22 Bodies were buried in huge, common graves. The German prisoners of war were in charge of hurling the bodies into the pit.

50.31 Mother was hired as a stenographer by the camp's new British commander.

52.57 British evacuated the camp in order to burn it and prevent epidemics.

56.11 British established an infirmary. Dita's friend Margit caught typhoid fever.

56.50 Encounter with Booby while Dita was working in registration. Dita gave her a cigarette.

58.00 One of the British officers got new clothing for the interpreters from the Germans who lived nearby.

59.20 An illegal tour outside of the camp with the British officer. There was farmland. There was no sign of war a few kilometers from the camp.

11.00.49 The surprise at the normal life that was being lived behind the camp.

2.17 Dita and her mother, and another couple (mother and daughter) received a private room with beds. Then, Dita fell ill from typhoid fever. Mother took care of her. She got well in no time.

4.13 British soldiers organized dances and any girl was welcome to come. There was transportation to another town, in a hotel in an old village.

- 7.43 Those who were not in danger of ailing from typhus were eligible for repatriation.
- 8.44 The Swedish government invited the survivors for R & R.
- 9.15 Mother wrote to her relatives in Israel and Prague. The plan was to go back to Prague and rebuild their lives.
- 11.05 Mother was hospitalized for a couple of days in order to get a medical certificate for eligibility to Sweden.
- 12.08 Then, mother fell ill and died.
- 17.42 Dita's plans for Sweden were nixed.
- 18.24 She was put on the bus to Prague.
- 19.54 The bus driver, from Pilsen, worked as a volunteer to return the survivors to their cities. They were put up in a luxury hotel in Marienbad.
- 22.17 The way from Pilsen to Prague by train.
- 26.00 Arrival in Prague, to a public dorm. Encounter with her aunt. Relearned how to live in a cultural society.
- 32.35 Encounter with her surviving grandmother.
- 37.00 Encounter with her friend, Margit. Return to studies in Teplitz for one year. Dita was 16.
- 39.14 Return to Prague.
- 40.00 The emotional damage of the Holocaust; inability to love, attitude toward death, not to think backwards – at least not about the war.
- 47.11 Reason for giving testimony; her sons and her grandchildren.
- 52.14 In 1958, the exhibit of pictures from the children of Theresienstadt came to Jerusalem. Dita was the only surviving child in Israel. For the most part, the Holocaust theme does not come up; only flowers and landscapes.
- 56.50 Friendships with other survivors have a special component that does not transfer to others.