

RG-50*123
RAZON YVONNE

TAPE 1 OF 1 (3.18.1993)

01:01:57 I was born in 1928 in Greece. I lived in a Jewish neighborhood named: "Baron Hirsch". We shared the same apartment with another family, but I remember happy life. My father worked in a leather factory. My mother was a housewife. Every day at lunchtime, I had to walk 1/2 an hour by foot to bring my father his warm lunch. My father came to Greece as a tourist from Yugoslavia, but he met my mother and stayed in Greece. In school we learned: Greek, Hebrew and Ladino.

01:05:30 By the outbreak of World War II, I was 12 years old. We hid from the bombardments in a coal warehouse. My brother and I had started to work. We sold cigarettes. We went many kilometers to the nearby villages to bring some food.

01:09:40 We celebrated Rosh-Hashanah (New Year) and Pesach (Passover). My mother came from a rabbinical family. She went to synagogue, my father didn't.

01:13:20 One time the Greek police caught me with a bag of wheat and a bag of flour. I was arrested for the night. I told them that I have a small brother and sisters and we don't have what to eat. They felt pity for me and sent me back home on a train.

The restrictions had begun with the German regime. We were expelled from our school, we had to wear the Star of David, and we could not walk freely as we could before. We heard rumors that all the Jews would be sent to labor camps in Poland. One night we found that our neighborhood was surrounded by fence. We were in a ghetto. The transports had started. We were not sent in the first ones, because my father had a Yugoslavian citizenship.

01:17:20 The voyage in the transport train was dreadful. I had a baby sister about 1 1/2 years old, another sister who was 10 years old, a brother who was 8 years old and I was 14 years old. All of our relatives went before us, in the first transports. The journey took 8 days.

01:22:00 { Yvonne, cries. Tells that she can't sleep at night for many years. She lives on medications. The memories from the camp followed her everywhere. }

The train stopped. We heard shouts: "Get out! Get out"! We saw German soldiers and dogs. They separated the men from the women. We stood in a line. A hand grabbed me from the line and the man told me to walk to the camp. My mother and the children would come with a truck. I asked my mother how she would manage alone with the children. She told me: "Yvonka, I'll be fine and so do you. I'll meet you in the camp". I never saw her again.

We arrived at Birkenau. It was night and quiet. In the morning we saw weird people wearing weird cloths.

01:27:30 Miss Kunyo, who worked as translator, entered our block in the next morning and told us not to ask about our families, because they were all burnt and from now on we had to take care of ourselves.

They tattooed a number on our hand and took us to the showers. There we were shaved. We had to stand naked for a long time, while the Germans scored us. In the showers the water was freezing.

01:33:40 We moved to a quarantine. We slept 8-10 women in one bed and we had one blanket. I heard a voice said: "Those who are 15 years and younger – get out". I was sent to a place named: Viberai (?) where we wove braids from cellophane. Then I was brought back to the camp. I had to march to work to the sound of the orchestra's music. My work was to dig ditches. It was very hard for me.

01:36:30 The woman who was in charge of our block whispered something to her closest friends. She told them to go out. I went out with them. Someone wrote down our number. On the next morning we were told not to go out to work. We were taken to a hot bath and to a new block where we got clean sheets and blankets and new cloths: a suite and a sweater. I was between the first ones to work in the "Kannada Commando". (We had to take the cloths from the people who were sent to the crematorium, and to make packages to send to Germany.) Every day they search our bodies very carefully to see if we smuggled something.

01:40:30 We traded for bread and jam with some of the things we found.

A capo from my lager asked me to bring her a nightgown. I was caught and sent away from the Kannada commando. First I had to dig tunnels two meters deep and then I moved to the Munchin fabric(?)

In the drinks we got, the Germans put some medicine to prevent our menstruation. I got Kratz (my body was covered with wounds). On the first selection they took me, but the woman who was in charged in our block, pushed me back.

01:48:00 In the Union I worked in sorting screws. We had to sit on our knees.

01:53:20 One day we saw 4 women who smuggled explosive material to bomb the crematorium. The Germans hanged them.
We saw women who threw themselves on the electric fence and died.

01:55:30 In Birkenau we smelled the smell of the burnt bodies.

02:01:00 In the Union I had a friend that was muzelman. Her name was Zerman. She was taken in one of the selections. She succeeded to run and came back. We gave her more food and saved her.

02:04:20 In the Kannada commando there was a table for underwear, for socks, for shirts and so on. We had to supply 40 packages no matter how many transports had arrived. When we didn't have enough supplies, we waited after they counted the packages and started to make another packages from the same material in another order.

02:12:00 I worked on the night shifts. One day I heard a voice calling my name. He told me that my father was in the same camp. He brought me a note: " My dear daughter, if you can help me, send something to me". I said it was not my father hand write. On the next day I got a not in my father hand write in French. He worked in the Shoe commando. I sent him anything I could.

02:16:00 We moved from Birkenau to Auschwitz. It was a small improvement in our conditions. We had showers with hot water and less selections.

02:22:30 The evacuation from Auschwitz was by foot. We went on the "Death March". It was winter. I got shoes from my father. It saved me. On

our way I saw red ditches, from the blood of the people the Germans shot. We walked five women in a row. We marched for several days and we arrived to a camp: Raversbruk. We slept one on the other. No food or water.

02:29:20 From there we moved to Malchov(?) It was a labor camp. I worked there as a nurse. I had to pull out the bodies and to pile them out of the hospital.

02:34:00 We got punishments to stand outside for days and nights in the freezing snow. When the Germans had started their withdrawal they wanted to put us in the Nubrandenburg(?) camp, but as we saw them running away, we decided to hide in the forest. On the next morning we saw red flags on the hills and Russian soldiers. We suffered from them for three days and nights. They wanted women and behaved in a very barbaric way.

02:38:00 The liberation for me was to get into houses and to look for food. Then we entered the camp, but this time we were under the attention of Russian soldiers.

02:40:00 I got Typhus and had to lie in the hospital for a long time. I could have gone to France or USA, but I wanted to go back home, hoping to find someone from my family. My father was in Italy. He found out that I was alive and wrote me to come to Palestine if I wanted to meet him. I was in a camp for Aliya near Athens in Sunnyo, and came to Atlit with Chaviva Reich. From there I went to Kibbutz Ein-Shemer until my father came and took me. I was 16 1/2 years old. We moved to Tel-Aviv and I had to go to work for our living.

02:46:00 I didn't have neither childhood nor youth. How could I ever forget what I went through? I suffered from deep depressions. I didn't talk with my kids about it, only with my little one. They didn't want to hear, I was afraid to tell them because they could not believe me.

02:47:30 The absorption in Israel was very difficult. I was a child by my own, without any relatives cloths, money...

I had started to write some memories several years ago, but I could not continue. Now I had decided to tell my story, in order that people will know, that it won't happen again.

02:52:20 How could I leave my mother with three little children?

Yvonne cried and asked to stop the tape.