

Chervenka, Miriam
RG 50.120*0323
2 Videotapes
In Hebrew

- Abstract:** Miriam Hartz Chervenka was born in 1924 in Pohořelice, Czechoslovakia. She had one sister who was four years younger. Miriam's mother died prior to the invasion of the Germans into Czechoslovakia. The family, along with all the other Jews in their community, was Zionist. After the Munich Agreement, her family moved to Brno. Miriam was sent to a learning farm in preparation for immigration to Palestine. Miriam's father was detained and eventually died in Mauthausen in 1941. Shortly after, Miriam and her sister were transported to Theresienstadt. The two orphans were "adopted" by members of the Judenrat. Both sisters got married in Theresienstadt and remained there until the ghetto's liberation. After leaving the ghetto, Miriam was able to relocate her husband, who had been transported to Auschwitz near the close of the war.
- 1:00:34 Miriam (nee Hartz) was born in 1924 in Pohořelice, Czechoslovakia. For a time, they lived in her mother's birth place: Znojmo. Her family was Zionist, though not religious, and belonged to the bourgeoisie. In a village of 3,000 inhabitants, only about 300 were Jews. They were all Zionists. Miriam had a sister who was four years younger. When Miriam was seven years old, her mother, to whom she was very close, fell gravely ill. She was raised by nannies.
- 1:04:12 Her grandmother's home was 40 km away. Her father was a grains merchant. Miriam's sister sometimes accompanied him on his trips. She was close to him. They had a car.
- 1:06:30 Miriam joined the youth movement, Young Maccabi at age eleven. She was educated in public schools. The village was 60% Czechs, 40% Germans.
- 1:10:00 Her mother died in 1938; two years prior to that, her grandmother and then a beloved aunt also died.
- 1:12:00 She describes her difficult behavior, difficult years at home, and her mother's death. Finally she was sent to school, 20 km away. At first, she commuted to Brno. She was thirteen to fourteen years old.
- 1:21:41 She moved to Brno and lived there for two years.

- 1:22:24 In 1938, the Germans invaded Czechoslovakia. Her father was registered as a Jew, under nationality (the decision was made by plebiscites, to allow Jews to declare Jewish as a nationality).
- 1:25:00 Panic ensued following the Munich Agreement. The family left for a resort city in Moravia, called Luhacovice. While there, they heard a list of places to be given to the Germans; despite her family's hopes, Miriam's city was on the list.
- 2:00:00 Miriam did not experience anti-Semitism prior to the war.
- 2:11:19 While in the resort town, after they heard that their town was included in the Nazi take-over, her father decided to move some belongings to Brno, where they were allowed to settle due to their identification as Jews. (Those who had declared "German" as their nationality were not allowed entry into Brno.) Czechoslovakia opened its borders to all refugees but the situation became difficult. The few families who were left in Pohořelice were deported by the Nazis to a "no-man's-land" zone, and were kept there for two months. The JOINT helped a great deal. Miriam's family rented a small apartment in Brno. (The Nazis entered Brno in February 1939. Her family had been there since October 1938.) Their life there was difficult. They had no income; her father accepted support from the community.
- 2:17:42 In 1939, when anti-Jewish laws were enacted, Miriam's father sent her to learn how to sew.
- 2:18:46 In the summer of 1940, Miriam went to a farm to learn and prepare for her immigration to Israel (the farm was in Dušníky, near the Terezin ghetto). While there, she was offered to go to a course in Prague. She accepted and spent four months there.
- 3:03:43 She went back to the training farm in Pohořelice after the seminary. In 1941, the Jews were ordered to wear the yellow star.
- 3:07:16 After a short sojourn home, where the situation continued to be difficult, it was decided that Miriam should go back to the farm in Moravia.
- 3:10:20 Two days after Yom Kippur, Miriam received a telegram from her sister telling her to come home, because their father had been detained. He was taken, along with all the other Jews there, from a coffee house the day after Yom Kippur.
- 3:12:36 After a while, the Germans sent the sisters notice that, if they were willing to leave on the first convoy to Poland (where "they are building towns to resettle the Jews") their father would join them at the border. A cousin,

having found out about this plan, begged the sisters not to go and not to believe anything the Germans promised. They stayed home for a time, but eventually Miriam returned to her friends at the youth movement.

- 3:14:25 Six weeks after their father was detained; a telegram arrived in the town announcing his death, from pneumonia, in Mauthausen. It was October or November 1941.
- 3:17:49 In March of 1942, Miriam received a notice that they had to join the convoy to Theresienstadt.
- 3:23:44 In 1942, she arrived in the ghetto. Her grandmother had died in June of 1942. While still in their village, Miriam had received the certificates to go to Israel but the exits had already been blocked.
- 3:28:00 Miriam and her sister Ruth arrived at the ghetto as orphans. They were “adopted” by two people from the Judenrat.
- 4:00:32 The people who adopted the sisters knew where to send them to work (in jobs that were important to the Germans in the ghetto). She talks about their living conditions.
- 4:04:08 Miriam describes “an average day in the life of the ghetto.”
- 4:10:00 She stole food for friends and others.
- 4:13:07 In 1943, Miriam met her future husband. Despite the circumstances, she says that there were still good times among the young people.
- 4:14:58 Miriam describes her experience in the training farm in Linden.
- 4:15:49 She reveals the fate of her husband and brother-in-law.
- 4:20:00 She talks about her romances.
- 4:28:00 Miriam’s cousin and her cousin’s parents arrived in the ghetto.
- 5:00:39 The Jews held discussions about the Zionists policy that attempted to prevent young people from joining their parents in deportations. Miriam describes the emotional problems of not having a marked burial place for close relatives.
- 6:00:00 The ghetto was evacuated as residents were sent to roll call—all 35,000 people were summoned. They were surrounded by tanks and planes were soaring above. The goal was to count the people because two young men

had been able to escape. After an entire day of standing outside the ghetto in a nearby valley, they were sent back to the ghetto.

- 6:12:31 Miriam got married in the ghetto. She got pregnant and had to undergo an abortion.
- 6:15:00 She talks about her abortion.
- 6:17:40 Miriam underwent a tonsillectomy in the ghetto.
- 6:21:21 Miriam went to work in the production of the explosives for the German war effort. It was tough work. In addition to the eight hours of work at the factory, Miriam had to work an extra eight hours picking potatoes.
- 6:24:45 Miriam talks about the trading for condoms that took place.
- 6:26:19 She describes sports in the ghetto as well as in her family past. She remembers playing hand ball.
- 7:01:32 The cultural life in the ghetto consisted of theater and music in the café, primarily just prior to the Red Cross Visit.
- 7:03:51 The ghetto made preparations for the Red Cross visit: evacuations, cleaning streets with soap and water.
- 7:04:29 They used iodine to prevent infections.
- 7:05:00 Helping with the convoys, Miriam met her future husband, Milo.
- 7:10:00 Miriam and Milo managed to hide before the convoy leaves, even though they were ordered to appear at the station.
- 7:12:58 Miriam talks about her journals.
- 7:20:00 Miriam tells about her experiences during liberation.
- 7:26:00 The Red Cross did not allow the surviving ghetto Jews out, but Miriam and her sister escaped with the help of a Russian soldier who had been posted outside of the ghetto.
- 8:03:54 Miriam arrived in Prague. There she found out that Milo, who had been sent to Auschwitz, was alive in Budapest (she learned this through Milo's sister, who lived in Prague.) Miriam explains her relationship with Milo's sister.
- 8:24:25 Milo and Miriam's first child, Tamar, was born in April, 1946.

- 8:26:03 Milo joined the Czech army on September 1, 1945.
- 8:28:00 Miriam and Milo officially wed.
- 9:02:00 They had a good life in Prague.
- 9:05:00 A group of men was trained and organized to go to Eretz Israel in 1949. Even though Miriam was pregnant at the time with their second child, the family decided to immigrate to Israel. She describes their arrival in Israel. They arrived on December 15, 1948.
- 9:23:35 Miriam describes their arrival in Givat Haim and their beginnings at the kibbutz.
- 10:00:00 Kibbutz-born Jews and Holocaust survivors had ideological discussions about the suffering of the Jews in Europe. The kibbutz-born Israelis accused Holocaust survivors that they went 'like sheep to the slaughter.' Miriam expresses her pride in her past, in the establishment of the "Terezin House" museum as a monument to Holocaust victims. It is located in the most central spot within kibbutz Givat Haim.