

**Bobek, Ruth**  
**RG-50.120\*0357**  
**One Video Tape**  
**In Hebrew**  
**Recorded November 18, 1999**

**Abstract**

Ruth Bobek was born in 1934 in Prague to an assimilated, though Zionist, family. She had a younger brother. Her father was an accountant, and her mother a housewife. Schooling was never normal for Ruth since, at the appointed age of six, there was an edict not to accept Jews in government schools. Her parents organized home instruction for their children, but Ruth did not have much success.

In July 1942 her entire family was deported to Terezín. Ruth, her mother, and her brother lived together in a house with 47 other Jews, with about 80 centimeters of space for each person. Her father lived separately, and was part of a work crew that built large projects in different parts of Germany. Members of that work crew were promised survival for their families and it was a promise that was kept. Ruth's mother was in charge of cooking and cleaning for everyone in the house.

There was much cultural life in Terezín as there were shows performed and even an art teacher at the camp, and the Red Cross visited. While in the camp, Ruth worked in a sewing workshop outside the ghetto fence.

When the Russians arrived, the camp was liberated. Ruth returned home where she found no one. She moved to Litomeritz near Terezín and immigrated to Israel in 1949. Ruth did not feel part of Israeli society, she only felt close to the friends and acquaintances she had at the Terezín house. She lives in Israel.

**Oral History**

- 01:00:50** Ruth Bobek, now 65, was born in Prague in 1934. She lived with her father, mother, and younger brother. Her father was an accountant and her mother a housewife. Ruth's grandparents lived in a village between Prague and Pilsen. When the war started her father was fired and worked in the forests near her grandparents' village. Ruth and her family spent their holidays in that village.
- 01:02:59** Ruth went to school, but in 1940 it was forbidden for Jews to do so. Her parents organized study groups in their home.
- 01:04:40** She remembers the holidays (mainly Hanukkah). Her family was secular. She remembers sport activities in the Maccabi organization.
- 01:06:00** Her Jewish identity only became clear when she was pointed at. Her family was very assimilated.

- 01:09:00** When her father was fired, he went to his parents' village by himself. The family stayed in Prague and he visited once a week.
- 01:14:00** Children in the family were kept in the dark about the war. They heard that their grandparents and other relatives were sent to Terezín but didn't know a thing about it.
- 01:16:04** Ruth, her mother, and her brother were deported to Terezín in July 1942. She describes her first impressions of the camp.
- 01:21:00** She describes her father's work and life in the ghetto.
- 01:23:13** Her mother was in charge of the cooking and cleaning in the house where they lived.
- 01:24:09** Her father worked very hard in Germany, constructing a building for the Germans. He was promised that he and his family would not be killed, and that promise was kept.
- 01:25:25** She talks about the art teacher in Terezín.
- 01:27:50** She describes the food distribution.
- 01:29:10** She talks about the other residents of the house.
- 01:33:00** She talks about her grandmother's block and the cultural activities there.
- 01:35:00** Ruth cannot remember the daily schedule.
- 02:00:00** Working outside the ghetto in workshops afforded her some feeling of freedom. Ruth and others also gathered wild chestnuts for the Germans and prepared some kind of extract from them.
- 02:06:42** She worked in the workshops as a seamstress or a knitter. She talks about her relationship with the other children.
- 02:11:58** Ruth remembers seeing Eichmann in the ghetto.
- 02:12:34** The "counting day" was November 7.
- 02:15:53** The camp had to make preparations for the visit of the Red Cross. She remembers waiting for them.

- 02:17:50** She remembers the famous phrase while the guests were there: “What, sardines again?” She talks about the Brundebarr show, and the opera “The Bartered Bride.”
- 02:24:00** The transports leaving Terezín did not make a strong impression on Ruth. They were a fact of life.
- 02:25:00** She describes her father’s place of work.
- 02:27:51** She recalls memories of other inmates who arrived in Terezín who were at the end of their strength. They fell on the food and keeled over because they hadn’t eaten for days.
- 02:30:00** The Russian front arrived, moving in the direction of Prague.
- 02:31:45** When she left Terezín she went to her grandparents’ village. Attending school did not go well between May and June.
- 02:35:00** After a while, Ruth’s father got a good job in Litomeritz, a small city near Terezín. The children participated in scouting activities and had many friends. No one discussed the war years.
- 03:00:00** Even after the war, Ruth did not make the connection between her Jewishness and the reason for her suffering. The few children who taunted her in school after the war did not especially bother her. They were educated. It was the priority of Ruth’s family to be Czechs first and foremost.
- 03:05:27** The only problem that kept popping up as her family were managing to re-enter the community was Ruth’s lack of basic education. She remembers how she and her family felt odd in solely Jewish groups; they felt alienated.
- 03:07:00** Ruth’s father had always been a Zionist, and one sister already lived in Israel. Ruth was 14 when the family immigrated to Israel in 1949. Ruth went to Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk and her brother to Kibbutz Merhavia. She felt alienated in Israeli society, and she lacked close friends who were from the same place as she was.
- 03:13:00** The setting of her recurring nightmares is mainly in the cattle cars.
- 03:14:00** She reflects on her time at Terezín as a positive experience and a positive force.
- 03:21:07** She talks about military service in Israel.

**03:22:14**

She talks about her closeness to Beit Terezín.