National Council of Jewish Women Sarasota-Manatee Section
Holocaust Oral History Project
Lilly Baron, Survivor
March 5, 1986
Bradenton, Florida

Fern Niven – Longboat Key, Sarasota, Florida, March 5, 1986
From the home of Mrs. Lilly Baron who is a survivor of the Holocaust

Q: Mrs. Baron, I'd appreciate it very much if you would help us in this tape recording by starting with some of your earlier experiences, telling us where you were born and about your family and your schooling, and whatever else you think would be relevant.

A: Thank you very much. I was born in Prague in 1910, so I was, ah, in, I had my normal schooling and then I was in high school. And because I had no parents, my late father died, and, ah.

Q: At what age did your father die? What age were you when your father died?

A: I was about six years old, and my mother died before, so we were very unfortunate. I had only one sister, and my aunt...

Q: Who raised you?

A: That's what I want to tell you. My aunt was the sister of my mother and she had no children so her only wish, only, always, was to adopt us, to take us that she has two children. And how fate is--one month before she adopted us, she had a stroke and the doctor said it must have been from too much joy, or from too much sorrow, and because she had no sorrow---they were very well off, her husband was, ah, fit, and fifty years old--or forty-five years old, so it was from joy. So, she died, but still, as you see, I always called him father. So he adopted us and he was a very rich man and he--everything that he had we had, my sister and myself. So my youth was very lovely and I had high school, I had matura, and then I---

Q: What was that word, matura?

A: Matura, that means a diploma from high school. And after this, my late father, because he thought we had no mother, aunt was dead, so he had to be very strong with us so he said, "Now you have your diploma, you decide. One of you stays in my office." He had lots of employees but still he wanted to... My sister, she was not for house, homework, so it was decided immediately she goes to the office and I had to stay home.

Q: What kind of business was he in?

A: He had iron and blesh (metal). Iron, iron--wholesale and, ah, everything that goes with it, but not office, it was a whole, it was a whole...

Q: Foundry?

A: Yeah.

Q: A foundry.

A: Yeah, something like this. And that was my youth, and when I was, ah, in '39--to make it short--in '39 I was already 20, married, and, ah, so...

Q: How long, when did you marry? At what age?

A: What"

Q: At what age did you get married?

A: I, no...in twenty--when I was 26--my father would never have allowed me to marry because he got me too late and he wanted to have me home. But, ah, so we went together with my husband and then we married when I was 29--in the year '39.

Q: Were you a religious family? Did you belong to a synagogue?

A: No, we went to the synagogue, in--to every, ah, holidays, I must tell you---every holiday. My sister was older than me, myself, she was, ah, two years older. And so, when she married---she married when she was 24--it was in the Temple, in the synagogue, and our Rabbi, he knew us very well, so he made a big speech--everybody cried. So, you know, I cried the most, and then I married. And then that was already '39, so Hitler came to Germany. As you know, the..no, you don't know it, but you know it from this experience--in '33—I think there was a Kristallnacht, as you remember. And we still stayed in Prague with my husband. And he still doesn't say he's Czech, he doesn't want to go out. But then we had to...and...

Q: What kind of work did your husband do?

A: My husband did a factory with neckties.

Q: He was the owner of the factory?

A: Yeah, with two brothers. There were three brothers. And, ah, in '41 he was a collector of photo apparatus, you know. He was the best photo amateur in Prague, and when he was not, he was visiting people.

Q: So you were still in Prague in 1941?

A: I was still in Prague in 1939--in 1941--I was still in Prague. And before we were sent to the camp, he went to his store, to buy appliances for his photo material, photo material that he bought. And there was one boy, and he didn't know it, and he was a German. And he knew about my husband--how many photo apparatus he had lost. And he bought a new one. And one--my husband invited him to my home and I always told him--don't do it. Don't. Aw, he's a very good boy, he would never do...

Q: Why did you feel he shouldn't?

A: I don't know. Instinct!

Q: Nothing that he actually said?

A: My instinct. I was afraid of the Germans that were in Prague and I was afraid he heard tell of him. And really one day, they came at ten o'clock in the morning. My husband was in the bathroom. They rang the bell and they came and I knew that this SS. So I shouted to my husband, we never talked German we always talked Czech, but this time I talk German to give him time to recover. So I said in German, "Victor, there are two gentlemen who want to talk to you." He came out and he said, they said he has to go with then, with them. So I was awfully upset and he said, "Don't be upset, he comes home, don't be upset!" And he really came home. That was their tactic. They came one week, they took him to Peychek Pali in Prague.

Q: What was that, a prison?

A: Peychek Pali? Peychek was the richest man in Prague, and he fled to--he went in time to the states, and they immediately occupied--SS immediately occupied the whole pali--it was a pali.

Q: SS means what?

A: What?

Q: SS means what?

A: Sturmbahn--everybody knows what SS is. Oh, I can't tell you...SS, with two stripes. You know, with the armbands.

Q: Sturmbahnfuhrer?

A: Your husband will tell you what SS means. Sturmbahn...Anyway, so in downstairs, in the cellar, they had a torture chamber. They tortured the Jews. They wanted the Jews and they tortured my husband because he--they thought he make it for business.

Q: The pictures?

A: He made it for his own collection. He had collected like watches he collected, the best watches they wear in--he collected it. Like somebody collects pictures, he collected. So, and actually he came home at night. Oh, so we were so happy and everything after exactly one week--they came again--instead of seven, at six. They took him and finished, and he went to the, mmm ahh, to the ...So they took him to the jail and I was really not myself the whole day. In the evening I phoned our lawyer and ask him what could have happened? And they said don't be upset, tomorrow morning you take a little valise and give pajamas and his toothbrush, and something in gold and they will let you in. So, really I did it. I was the first for him, and, ah, he went, he stayed there about two weeks and Then I started to make, to bribe the Germans, because you could bribe them with lots and lots of money, and they told me on the 28th, I will never forget, on the 28th of October he will be out.

Q: This is in 1941?

A: 1941. And on the 28th of October, from the morning I was sitting and waiting yet he didn't come. At that time, we had already the Jude, you know?

Q: The "J"?

A: The "J".

Q: It stood for "Jew".

A: I covered it. I went because we didn't have any phones. We had to go out of our homes to the old town and I went to the telephone and I phoned the German, I was very courageous, you know. I phoned the German and said, you promised me that my husband will be out, and he didn't come. He said, I forgot the 28th of October they don't, they don't let anybody out, because the 28th of October was the Revolution, the Czech Revolution, in nineteen hundred--in 1917. So he said, but tomorrow he's coming--and he really came. He came on the 29th of October out of the jail. On that 30th of October, one day later, two Germans came--be prepared--in the afternoon you go to the concentration camp.

Q: In the week between the first time the SS had picked him up and the second time, had he thought about leaving the country?

A: No, he couldn't have--anymore. How could he have left the country?

Q: Had he thought about it before that?

A: He didn't think about it at all. I told you. He didn't think about it. Maybe he thought about it before he came into the jail, and that was much too late.

Q: Did you think about it before...?

A: I thought about it from '39.

Q: What was the first--clues or inkling that you had that...

A: Anschluss in Austria. In Austria, when Schusnig was murdered, you know...

Q: In what year was that?

A: That was the first in Vienna.

Q: In what year?

A: That was in 1937. And we were still playing tennis like nothing in Prague and then came this awful--and that--then we knew--now it's finished. And then my husband knew it too, but it was much too late. He would never have got a passport. He wouldn't have got a visa, he wouldn't have got anything. Who didn't escape before this couldn't escape any longer.

Q: I see. I interrupted you, you were saying the following day they came and took...

A: The following day, without preparation. I remember my, I had a harmonica, hohner, you know. That was on the day the--we were at home--we had to leave everything and go. We had one valise but what could you pack into one valise? My husband had one valise and we had to go to Theresienstadt.

Q: They took both of you at that point?

A: Both. Both of us. And we went to the, eh, summer concentration in Prague when there were about, I don't know--twelve hundred people. But you know, I have to laugh when somebody asked me, why didn't you fight? With what? With what should we have fought? With what? We had pistols, silver. For every two hundred German SS, who would have killed you, they would have had very good work because they would have killed all of us and they didn't have to spend money for the gas chambers and for everything. It would have been very easy. They would have killed--all of us. And so we had at least a hope--maybe we come home, not all, but maybe we come home. Can you understand?

Q: I can understand.

A: I can't. I can't hear this at all when somebody says, why didn't you fight? I was----------

Q: At that point did you people in Czechoslovakia already know about the gas chambers?

A: No. We didn't believe it. Would you believe me when I tell you I three years in Theresienstadt and when they talked about gas chambers, I thought that's not possible. That's impossible. And, no, it--I don't want to go (words missing in original transcription) and if you want to tell me how it was in Theresienstadt. Theresienstadt was a village where usually I lived in Czechoslovakia, where usually lived, free, it was a garrison, you know what they say, garrison? Where they--militant--where the...

Q: Yes, where the soldiers are quartered.

A: Soldiers were. Three thousand five hundred people in Theresienstadt all their lives. And when we came there were seventy thousand. So you can't imagine how it looked like. We were in casserns-- in, in, um...

Q: In barracks?

A: In barracks.

Q: Describe some of that, please.

A: We had our valises and we slept on our valises, nothing else. If somebody was fortunate who could get a blanket, you had to bribe-- I don't know whom-- to get only a small blanket, otherwise we slept...

Q: On the floor?

A: But, on the blanket-- on the val-- valises.

Q: The valises were on the floor, or you had bunk beds or what?

A: On the floor. No, not in Theresienstadt. Not in the beginning, at least. No, no we slept the whole time on the valises.

Q: How did you get to Theresienstadt? In cattle cars, or trains, or what?

A: In cattle cars. There were no trains for us and from, from a station-- if you kill me I don't know now the station-- we had to go on foot with all this valises. It took us about one hour, to come to the, um, place where we were incarcerated, you know.

Q: How far was Theresienstadt?

A: From Prague? Ah, normally maybe four hours but we, we had to, it took one whole day because we, then--they went one hour we were standing, you know, stopped. Another hour, so it took us the whole day. And when we arrived they--they knew that we are going to Auschwitz, they would take everything from us, but they didn't take anything from us. So therefore, we slept on our valises, you know. So, and that in the beginning there was no food. It was not organized, of course. And so they boiled the water, put caraway seed into it, and that was the whole food.

Q: For how long a period?

A: And that was about three, four months before we got potatoes, so they put some potatoes in the soup and we could get packages, you know. They--of course--if you got a package like I got from my friend every month, at least she put something that was interesting like, ah, sardines or she put lots of liquor, wine or something that--all they took. They give us--gave us only, they put some--I don't know—whatever--rice or something that they gave us. And then later on we had a little oven and that was, ah, organized. Every room, you know, from the barrack, had a special times they have an hour to cook something. But it came much, much later.

Q: Did many people perish during those few months when they had no food?

A: The old . They couldn't survive. Not with this food...

Q: It doesn't sound like it.

A: No, they couldn't survive in Theresienstadt. But later it was better. I was fortunate. One of my friends had a friend, a man who was, like, ah, manager of the garden outside the, in the camp, and she took me with her. So we were outside. My late husband, he was the happiest person in God's earth because to go out of the stench, out of this misery, from seventy thousand people being in this little, little town, it was awful.

Q: Were you actually in the town or where the barracks outside of the town?

A: No, no, it was in town. In town. It was, anyway, who survived in Theresienstadt. And when we came to Auschwitz we always said--I would like to be one month in Theresienstadt and one day in Auschwitz. You know we changed...

Q: There was that much of a contrast.

A: Of course, it was much, much worse.

Q: How long were you in Theresienstadt?

A: In Theresienstadt I was, eh three and a half years, nearly. We were fortunate, really very fortunate. And then we went, our man, five thousand people. I think you heard about it, five thousand people, every week or twice a week had to go. And we asked them to write us, but they had the order to write, "I'm very well" and so on, you know. So what can you take out of it? I thought it's a camp where they have to work. So I went to the office in Theresienstadt and asked that I wanted to go, on my own whim. And you know, they didn't let me go. And for the third time, they let me go. I didn't see my husband anymore. I went to Auschwitz on my own free will, maybe I would have survived in Theresienstadt, I don't know.

Q: Up until the time you left Theresienstadt were you and your husband together?

A: Never. I tell you, I came to Auschwitz.

Q: No, at Theresienstadt, were you with him?

A: The whole time. In Theresienstadt we were together and, ah he was, ah, ghetto service-like a ghetto cop. So, he got a room. I was in this room with my sister and her husband and two children and in the middle they had a curtain and on the other there was a small room like this. Not so long like this, in the middle a curtain and she was on one side, I was on the other side because I didn't want her to be with the children in the, in the barracks.

Q: And your father?

A: My father was dead. Unfortunately my father died when the Germans started to get the businesses. He always said to us, "Children, I won't let a German touch my family, I kill him." So we were always afraid, and he got pneumonia and died, fortunately. One week later they came, and he was already dead.

Q: Can you tell me some particular incidents that stand out in your memory from these experiences?

A: Yes I could. In Theresienstadt for instance, suddenly they came. Everybody has to go to a certain place in the forest. Immediately, that was always immediately, so we didn't know what happened. Later we knew what happened, what should have happened. So, we went--without food, without anything and they let us stand there, standing the whole day.

Q: In the forest?

A: In the forest--standing the whole day. We didn't know why. Everybody was guessing. But not why. And in the evening they came, one-two-three, one-two-three, go, go, go!

Q: Was this in cold weather?

A: And, what?

Q: Was this in cold weather?

A: Cold weather. And afterwards we knew they wanted to kill us all...

Q: That's why they sent you there

A: That's why. They wanted us to be in the end--and then they changed their minds. I don't know why, alright. And I don't know until now, it's only guessing why they changed their minds.

Q: What is your guess?

A: My guess is that they didn't want the Red Cross, actually. Wars should have come to Mondria, to Theresienstadt, and they didn't want this to happen. And that was a farce, the Red, the Red Cross. Imagine after one week after this happened they started to make a little circus. They started to make a lake, they started to make a beach. Would you believe it? The Germans?

Q: The Germans?

A: In Theresienstadt. We didn't know what happened. The children were told that they said, Uncle Schneider, that was, (words missing in original transcription) the German who, were the boss of the whole camp. We have a game chotla(?), they were taught, little babies, they were taught to tell, and, ah, so it went on for month and then we heard the Red Cross coming.

Q: So they were trying to put on a show for...?

A: Yeah, a show. They came, they saw it. The children went to bed. Awful German who was in Theresienstadt came, "Uncle Schneider can we have piece of chocolate?" "Oh, sure, darling." He put the chocolate out of reach, they never saw a chocolate in their life in Theresienstadt. And, thank you! uncle. The other child came, "Oh you gave me chocolate, you want to give me chocolate again?" Such a shock. One wouldn't believe it, that it is possible. After all this--as soon as they vanished, as soon as they went, everything vanished--in no time at all. And Theresienstadt was Theresienstadt again; how it used to be, you know.

Q: We hear when reading the history of the Holocaust that there were selection lines when people came into the camps. Were you exposed to that?

A: That was in Auschwitz. That was in Auschwitz. In Theresienstadt we didn't have no selections. In Theresienstadt I heard they started to build the gas chamber but it was already too late, you know, you were at the end of '44 and as you know, the Russians, they had no, ah, success anymore and Hitler was nearly fatally ill with his imaginations, so we didn't came to it. And Hitler gave the order every young woman has to work. So when we came to...so I came to Auschwitz to save faith. I tell you a little story. I had a friend and she thought I was pregnant in Aush--in Theresienstadt too, but I had to have an abortion. They didn't allow children. And my friend, I don't know how it came, she had her birth, and she had twins.

Q: In the camp?

A: In the camp. And on the day when I went to--to Auschwitz there were all the children with their mothers on the platform before the train came and I was afraid they will leave me in Theresienstadt because I wanted to go to my husband, so I begged her--give me one child of yours, that they let me go. That was that--that same day, and she said, no, no, no--I keep them. If I would have had a child, do you know what Mengeles said, that was so and so.

Q: So, and so meaning that...

A: That means, that goes to the gas chamber...That goes for work. And we didn't know that that meant the gas chamber. So these little things happened. My sister--my sister was with her two children in Theresienstadt and when I went, I thought, to the camp where my husband was, I came to her, I said, Addie, what will Paul say, that was her husband, when I come along and she said to me, I will never forget--she said to me, "If you have to go, go Lilly. I don't go, because I had the order of my husband to stay and wait for him in Theresienstadt". If she would have gone with the two children I would have gone with her.

Q: You said that when you left Theresienstadt your husband remained there?

A: My husband was--you didn't understand...

Q: That's why I'm asking, to clarify it for myself.

A: My husband went maybe one week before I went. He went with the 5,000 men. We were, the whole night, we didn't sleep, the train didn't come because at that time already the Germans needed every train for the military. But, and we were so happy maybe the train won't come anymore. But the train came. So my husband, and my husband told me. "Without you, I won't survive." And these words, I have in my brain every minute of my stay. So, I decide, I'd go after him. So after one week, as I told you before, I went to the office in Theresienstadt and

told them I go on my own free will. So two times they didn't want me, the third time I...the boss of the...I can't...the Jew, it was the Jewish office. So he said, if you want to go, go--because he knew what's awaiting me. He knew it, that the (words missing in original transcript). That's the story, and I went after him one week and I never saw him again. He was, he...We were in the women's camp and they were in the men's camp and he was not in there, Auschwitz anymore, they went to Dachau.

Q: Did you ever find out what had become of him?

A: Yeah, when I came to Prague. I...

Q: After the war?

A: After the war when I came. I escaped, it was quite a story what would take you five hours when I would tell you how I escaped.

Q: Well we will get to that.

A: But after the war, we had always signs in every coffee house, like Usted's, Victor Usted's born this and this day and went to Dachau and Auschwitz and Greenberg(?), I don't know where every, and if somebody can give me, ah, information. Nobody came, and we, remember we were five, so always talking, "Did you...? No." So one day one of my friends, she said, did you go to this and this street and there is an office and there you can make out where is your husband. So the next day, I went, of course, because I thought maybe he is a, lying somewhere and I am here. So the first man said no, he's not under the um, ah, (words missing in original transcript) and the second, a, give me the same, and then they told me--why don't you go to this man. So I went, and he looked, and I hadn't found him. But this is already the end of this, so this is not interesting anymore for you because this is the end, so let's go back to Auschwitz.

Q: Alright, tell me how you got to Auschwitz.

A: I got to Auschwitz, you know how I told you, by train. We, we--it took us about three days.

Q: Auschwitz was how far away in miles from Theresienstadt?

A: I'm not really—Auschwitz is in Poland. And maybe, normally from Theresienstadt, I don't know how many hours, but eh, you can imagine, it's not abroad, it's only Poland and Czechoslovakia--border of Czechoslovakia is Poland, so it was maybe even four hours, but it took us three days. And, eh, with women and children in this train, you can't imagine. I will never forget there were a lovely woman with three children. She looked like a queen, and the children had

such lovely voices of their singing. All of them end in the gas chamber, you know. That was a tragedy anyway. When we arrived in a...

Q: Did they provide food on the train?

A: No.

Q: Were there toilet facilities?

A: We had something with us--bread, but how long does it take--three days? We are all hungry. No food, no nothing. We went to Birkenau. Birkenau is actually a camp next to Auschwitz, but mostly for gas chambers. In Auschwitz are political, eh, lots of political prisoners and gentiles who don't go to the gas chambers. But Birkenau is a Jewish camp where everybody had to go, later or, ah--or sooner, to the--to the gas chambers. So when we arrived we came one after--first of all the Kapo. The Kapo is, ah, ah...

Q: Kapo. K-a-p-o?

A: K-a-p-o or c-a-p-o, I don't remember. They went, as soon as the, eh, the train stops in, ah, in Birkenau, they come into the train, they take, and boom, they, eh, throw you out of the--and everythings stays in the train. That's what I said. In Theresienstadt at least we had our own nightshirts or something. In Birkenau, Auschwitz you'd have nothing. Nothing, nothing. Only the money what we had on us and this--this started to...the, the whole way until we went for cutting of the hair that full with money, because we knew we had to give it up. Our, our watches. I stamped on this, you know. Everybody, did...So when we arrived at the platforms, the children and their mothers, they had to go, ah, eh, right and we went left. So we came. It was like not even anywheres lived like this. It was a bunker.

Q: Bunker is like a trench in the ground?

A: A bunker, yah, and we were like crouched inside--five girls--when we wanted to turn, we had to turn four of us because it was just for one person and we laid five. And we are always to tell, can you imagine? Can you imagine? Every Thursday was selection day. That's what you asked me. Every one whom they selected had to walk in the middle of the room with a platform like this. And like martyrs they had to walk naked. And, eh, again, ah, ah, either left or right, either she stayed, or she had to go on this side. At that time we knew already she goes to the gas. I remember when I lived in Birkenau, Auschwitz so that when I saw so much smoke and I asked one of the girls, she was Polish, and I asked her, where is the smoke coming from? And she started to shout at me and she said, "Be quiet--you don't see any smoke." That was the gas chamber. That was already from the people who arrived with us. She didn't tell me. She was nice.

Q: What was your life like during the ordinary day there? What did you do? Did they have you working, or what did you do...?

A: In the beginning, we didn't work. We were selected for work, you know, but we didn't work. They had to organize it, where to go...I will never forget, I saw a little bit of--I saw a little bit of, eh, whatever I found. I used (words missing in original transcript) like a crazy woman. And we had these, Holland, eh, Dutch sandals, you know, and it was mud, and sometimes we had to run from one place to the other.

Q: With wooden Dutch, the wooden shoes that Dutch use?

A: The wooden shoes, the Dutch wooden shoes. And, eh, you can imagine when we stepped in the mud, the shoes stayed inside so you had to--and that was one (words missing in original transcript) he was (words missing in original transcript). So I always run around with only--without the sandals. I kept it in my hand because I couldn't run thru it. Now, and one day, I will never forget, we had very, very little--only potatoes to eat, and potatoes--ya--that was fortunate too--when I in (words missing in original transcript) Theresienstadt--when I lost my job in the garden, and that was only because a friend of mine waited for her daughter, and she asked me if I could take her with, with me--out. So I said--it was Yom Kippur--I will never forget. And I said to her...

Q: Out where?

A: In, that was still in Theresienstadt, now I come back to the story...

Q: But where did she want you to take her out to?

A: Because she was waiting for her daughter. And the daughter, as I told you, we walked one and a half hour with all the valises. And she wanted to see her daughter, can you...it's nothing--she wanted to go out to see her daughter. I said to her, I asked, I talked. I called her mommy because she was older than I, much older. And I said, "Mommy, if I take you." I was the leader of these girls, anger. And never were only a girl, there was always six girls, sometimes they had flu or something. So I said, "If I take you, you have to promise me that you won't run to, to her, because if you run to her you make me unhappy and you make yourself unhappy, I tell you because contraband was not allowed." And if that German was in the group with us, we never knew somewhere, and she runs, and her daughter has contraband, you know, eh, contraband means lots of things what they had, conserves or something--so that was the worst what she could do. And she said, "No, no, no, I swear to God I don't want to run. I want only to see her." I said, "Even if you see her with her children, and even if she has lots of (words missing in original transcript) leave her alone." What do you think she did? The first thing what she did--she saw her daughter--she runs to her. And next to me was a German (words missing in original transcript). He said to me, what's your

name. I know already, but I was afraid he send me to Auschwitz, it was in '42. after Heidrich, you know when Heidrich was killed; you don't remember. (words missing in original transcript) And so he said to me my name and I should come to the office. And she had to go with her husband immediately to Auschwitz...

Q: As a punishment?

A: Punishment. As a punishment. And I told her that was on Yom Kippur. You remember such little stories...Anyway, (words missing in original transcript) and when I came, ya, and in Auschwitz we stayed about, eh, three weeks. It was like five years. And then they ordered us for work. I didn't finish with the selection. The girls were naked, you mentioned. Five SS and they had to parade to and fro and if she was too thin, she, if she had something on like this, I have now, she went to the gas chamber.

Q: It was very humiliating.

A: Aw!

Q: As well as...

A: You know that what was the most humiliating. When we wanted to go to the toilet --toilets! holes only--we had to go with the SS, a German. Could you believe that? And there was a time exactly when you can go--in the morning--the whole day not--at six o'clock in the evening. Whatever you did you had to wait until six o'clock. So, the old woman couldn't go there, of course, and they died because eh, it was something that they couldn't keep and when they made it a...ah, I can't even tell you. ,,,Then we went for work.

Q: What kind of work?

A: We had to, eh, work, how do you call--schitengarten for the military to make holes that they can hide, eh, when the camions came, you know.

Q: Like bunkers?

A: Bunkers. Like bunker. And we had to do it. So that, ah, went on in the morning at five o'clock so we had to get up because--black coffee, one piece of bread for the whole day, and we had to go for work.

Q: That was hard physical labor.

A: Hard physical labor, without food, therefore so many died. For nothing didn't die six million people. And, eh, when, then came the, the kettles with soup, but it was quite some way before they came (words missing in original transcript), you know. It come half, half full. So everybody got a few spoons of, eh, eh, soup and

that was all. In the evening we came and we get again a cup of coffee. I don't know how I survived. I don't...

Q: Were you still able to get food packages?

A: No. Not in Auschwitz, oh no, not in Auschwitz. And so it went, and the last day we stayed in this camp, I remember came meat. That was the first time we got meat. And the same day, the Russians were very near already, and the same day, the German said, everybody in five minutes has to go out. There were girls with typhus, they were on the carriage, and they were shot in front of us, all of them--thirty. Then there were huts where the girls who were carriers of typhus...They had typhus but they didn't know it, but they were carrying the bug. So they were separated too, naked of course. They were shot in front of us. Then we started to walk, it was marsh. There is so called marsh. And we started to walk and it was so cold that only food what we had was snow, what we ate on our way. So I, after maybe two weeks, I said to my friend, we will never survive, because we saw immediately who was, eh, this time to die. They got big eyes, they got big bellies...and we knew exactly they die. So I said, I will escape. However it is, if they shoot me, it's better than this. So she said, please, please take me with you. She lived in Montega(?). So I took her with me and now that fate started, one day, yeah, the whole day we walked. In the evenings the Germans went into the city because in where we walked thru the forest that nobody sees us. In the evenings they went to the city in schools, in barracks, whatever...

Q: What time of year was this?

A: It was in, eh, nineteen hundred, eh, beginning nineteen hundred, no--end of 1944.

Q: In the winter then?

A: It was such a winter, I don't know. If your husband, or, but it was the coldest winter what I can imagine.

Q: So, on top of no food, you didn't have adequate clothing...

A: So one day, we went to eh, eh, how do you call where—Baden...and I said to my friend, "Don't talk with me." Yeah, she was Czech, she couldn't speak German so I always told her, "Don't speak, don't speak." So, I said to her, "Do what I do." And in the middle of the barn there was a ladder up. So I started, when I saw everybody was sleeping, I start to go out. And there was hay, and she went after me and we were, and I thought we are saved. So she said, "What will you do, what will you do?" I said, "We will see what happen." In the morning I heard a like this--get up, get up, get up. And we stayed, we didn't get up, we stayed. And we slept the first time after a long, long time. And then suddenly we heard dogs...

Q: Were there just the two of you in the barn?

A: We didn't know! The two of us...later...and then we heard dogs and we had--we heard people, and they had sticks and they put the sticks in every barn, in every barrel, and everywhere and they had had us and they put me out and they put her out and then we saw...

Q: Who were these people? Farmers?

A: Germans. Germans.

Q: Not soldiers, though?

A: Not soldiers. The Germans from the village where we were. I don't even know why because they took us everywhere. And everything was in the vicinity of maybe five miles. Around and round. And, and then I saw there were fifteen women hidden in this.... So in the morning, that was in the morning when they left already, so I remember I went to him, I asked him and begged me to shoot me. This I remember very well because I knew if we come to the camp they will shoot us anyway. And...

Q: Who was it that you asked to shoot you?

A: The German. One of the Germans.(words missing in original transcript) all of them, and a Nazi may be a Nazi from the, the village. So they took us all, and we had to go in a carriage and they said no, you go to the camp, I won't shoot you--they would shoot you--I won't shoot you. And now what happened, I gained faith--I remember it was a hill down. And we went down and behind was a soldier with a bayonet. I wanted to jump and stay. And we had to go, and suddenly, we came to the road and then there are hundreds and hundreds of those. Carriages with, with eh, like in historic times, you know, in times when they wandered from one place to the other. In those...

Q: Like gypsy caravans?

A: Like gypsy, yah--caravan. And everybody screamed, everybody cried, "The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming." They didn't, they didn't fear the English or the Americans or the French.

Begin Side B.

You wouldn't believe. The Germans jumped out of the carriage. They didn't know what to do. They came to me and they said to me, "Listen, we are going back." They were afraid of the Russians too. "We are going back. Over the bridge is your camp. You guarantee that you bring all the women to this camp." I was standing there because I was perfect in German, so I said, "Okay, okay, I'm

going to bring everybody to the camp." They turned their carriage and went back and left us. So, we went to the--over the bridge, And I said to all the girls, "Girls, go wherever you want. I go somewhere and you go somewhere else. We can't stay together. They would catch us and they will bring us." So I went with my friend to the first--in the first door of eh, of eh, cafeteria was there.

Q: This was in Poland?

A: That was in Poland. And we came into the laundry room. And now what--so we were sitting there and suddenly the door opened and the man came, and I didn't know if he's German, German--and suddenly he said to me, "What are you doing here?" And on the accent I recognized he's Czech. And I started to speak Czech to him and I said, "What are you doing here?" I am, he was lieutenant to a German, he was a--he's a--how do you call?

Q: Assistant?

A: He's not assistant. He...he, ah...cleaned his shoes and uh...

Q: Aide?

A: Yea, aide. And so I told him, we are from the camp and we are here and I don't know what to do and the camp is very near here--the other camp. He said, "You can't go--and you can't go where the Germans go--you go opposite because the Germans go, ah, to the Germans. You go opposite. So--I--you can walk only at night, during the day you have to hide." So that's what we did.

Q: So you had to hide from the Germans at night or the Russians?

A: We had to hide for the Russians. Now we went where the Germans were not. We went to the Russians. You know, one--eh--one road went like this--to the Germans--and one road went against--they went through the Russians. They went through the Russians.

Q: What was the prevailing attitude of the Polish people towards you?

A: We didn't meet any Polish people. What do you mean Polish people?

Q: When you said the...

A: Yea...all the time with the Germans. We were all the time with the Germans.

Q: But wasn't the concentration camp in Poland?

A: Yea--but that had nothing to do with it. There was a German concentration camp in Poland, you know. I told you I can't even know if we got out--we went round

and round. We--they went with us during the night and during the day in the forest, in the evening we went some school or whatever, we had to sleep on the floors--and so I escaped.

Q: How long did it take you to do this?

A: Umm, it took me a long time but I was the first who came to Prague. It was May the first--first, nineteen hundred eighty--uhh--nineteen hundred forty-five.

Q: What did you find when you got back to Prague?

A: When I got to Prague I didn't know that my husband is dead and I had my, eh, sister-in-law where I used--where we both said we will meet. So I went to her and when I went up the stairs to--I thought I will never see my husband because I had dreams. He had very strong glasses and I was always dreaming that the Germans took the glasses from him and...so I came and Martha, that was my sister-in-law, and the first thing I said, "Victor is here." She said, "No." And I sit down and started to cry. She said, "You are the first I see who came from the camp." She had--her husband is a gentile, you know. And...

Q: So she never had to leave Prague?

A: She never had to leave Prague. He saved her. She left maybe for three months only. And so, and then afterwards, comes the story what I telled you--we are looking for our husband. That was after I went to her. But with the Russians--I can't tell you. This story I wouldn't tell—because that was something...

Q: Did you ever encounter any Russians?

A: Heh! What do you mean encounter? One day I was with the Germans and they—I had--here, you see my arm. I had a, um, blood poisoning from working too hard. And, ah, um, we were at the, at the--we were on the street all the time and sometimes somebody gave us a few pennies. So we saved up only for the coffee and for sitting down somewhere because we had so much water in our shoes. So one day we came to such a place and there was an oven in the middle of it, and I...

Q: There was a what in the middle?

A: It was in Germany.

Q: No, you said there was something in the middle of it...

A: An oven.

Q: An oven?

A: An oven. And that was heated. So I went straight to the oven and took off my shoes. I started to arrange my stocking--there was water in it--and suddenly the owner of this was standing there. I had already a story in my mind, you know. I didn't want them to think we are Jewish, eh, ah, because they would give us immediately to the police. So we started-—I started to say we are Polish girls. We are Polish, our--our cam--our camp, because there are lots of Polish camps in .(words missing in original transcript), our camp was--ah dismantled, there were nobody in and we are on our own and we have nothing to eat. So he said, "Would you like to work?" And I said, "Yes, I would like to work for my food and for--that I can sleep somewhere"--because we slept in the--in the forest--we didn't sleep because it was cold--we stand there--anyway, it's unbelievable what--that's the truth. So he said, "You know what--stay here, in the evening there is here a meeting and we will decide." Imagine, we two Jewish girls stay there--there were about twenty Germans—and he said, "I have here two Polish girls who can't be in the camp anymore because the camp is now closed--would you need somebody for work--they want to work." So there came a small German, a big German--one took me and one took my friend. That was the first time she gave me--I was sleeping in a bed. I will never forget it in my life.

Q: After how many years?

A: After four years. I will never forget it. And I would have done anything. So she came and she said, "Can you milk a cow?" I said, "Yes." I have no idea. So, "Can you?" Everything I said, "Yes I do." In the morning she came and she brought me ah----ah--this--ah, schmatas--um--how do you call it?

Q: Trousers?

A: No, no--not trousers—ah--now I can't remember. Front cross anyway—from—from—ah--from some sack--a sack.

Q: Oh a sack. Like a flour sack?

A: Yeh, a flour sack. And she said, go with me. So I go with her and I begged to what I prayed that I will be able to close my hand. At that time I couldn't close my hand from the bump...and she gave me a stool and I was sitting under the cow and I didn't close my hand properly--she looked at me and she start to go. I took this stool to the second cow, to the third cow--until I started really to cry. And she came, "What happened?" I said that happened in the camp--in my Polish camp--and, "Look--I can't close my hand." So she looked at me, she said, "Okay, I will do it." She was a good woman because she knew it—eh--finished, you know. So she said, and she was such a woman--if she was four feet--I don't know--but she was sitting like this--and she--she took all this what the cows--the dirt from the...

Q: The manure?

A: Yea, manure. And she put it--I couldn't even do it, so I didn't know what to do. In the evening we prayed grace. I prayed with them, and what, that was faith, there was eh-some-eh--knitting what she give. And I asked her, what is she doing? And she said, "I have to finish this pullover and I never have time." And I said to her, "Would you allow me to finish it for you because I am very good in knitting." She just looked at me, she said, "Why not?" So I stayed up the whole night. I finished it for her. In the morning we came--and five o'clock I came too--and I brought it--I said, "I finished it for you." So she saved me--and since then I was the knitter of this little village. I had my food, I went back to this woman to sleep and I was knitting--you know--that's fate what I tell you.

Q: Yes, that is.

A: Yea--so after this time one day we got up and she said to me, "Unfortunately, now you are on your own." The Russians were very near.

Q: By this time the war is still going on...

A: Oh sure--of course, the Russians came always nearer and nearer and nearer. And the Russians fought for every small village--even if five hundred people, they fought for it. So she said to me, "Here, have a piece of salami, and here you have a piece of bread and you are on your own." So I thank her because they went to the bunker they had--and she said, "We have a bunker--but only for the two of us." So I went to my friend. My friend was still in bed, and I said, don't you want to go up, the Russians are coming. She said, naaa--they talk about it so long the Russians are coming--and suddenly, I saw a Russian in front of me and I said to her, you know what--the Russians here. She got up so quick that you can't remember. So when we--I went to the woman and I said to her--she should give me all the cigarettes she had . So she give me the cigarettes. I knew only one expression in Russian, straustuet(?), that means everything--good morning, good afternoon--I don't know--I don't know. Anyway they looked at me and they said, where we are coming from, and I said, from Czechoslovakia. So that I gave them cigarettes and everything. And then came--eh--so a lieutenant and higher military and he told me we have to go--we should go with him--because here is no good. But that was the first military who came--and they are the worst--they are the Mongols and all this. And we are in this room and there are Mongols. Did you see a Mongol?

Q: Well, I don't think I have.

A: A Russian...You have never seen something like this in your life.

Q: Ca you describe it?

A: You can't imagine. Short--all of them were short--very heavy, with beast eyes, with beast noses, with their mouths open and big teeth. Not--if I met him at night, I die.

Q: Very fierce and frightening?

A: Very, very--and I went to her (words missing in original transcript) and I took a knife and I said to her, "I have enough. I will slash my veins." And she took the knife from me and said, "Don't do this." At that moment, I saw in the room, Stalin, you know--you remember Stalin?

Q: Yes, of course I remember who Stalin was.

A: I took the picture. I don't know why--and they all--door opened and the higher military man came in. And he asked me and I said--I told him I'm Czechoslovakian. I told him, "Look what I have the whole time with me." And I showed him Stalin. You have no idea what they did--how they adored Stalin. He sat down, he looked at the photo like a sad man and he said look she had the whole time Stalin with her, our father Stalin. So he took us too and went with us to another barrack and in this barrack we stayed for about two days and then he told us we should go because in the other villages there is already order--not in this village. So we went to the other villages and so we survived. One day I went to the Russian officer and I ask him if we can't go home. It was about the end of--ah--end of April.

Q: Of what year?

A: 1945. And so he said, ah--I will send you home with one of the trains. I didn't believe him, but really after three days he came and he said, be ready in five minutes. We have nothing. So anyway we were ready. And so we went with the trains, but you don't know what the Russians did, you know. Seventy-year-old women, seventy-year-old women even, they, ah, raped. And we were hiding all the time--in the cellar, in the abbey, wherever we were hiding.

Q: It sounds from the way you describe it as though you were more afraid of the Russians than you had ever been afraid of the Germans.

A: I can say merely that the Germans had another method, you know. They had--the Germans in Auschwitz had their own whores--Jewish women. Did you read the Death of a Salesman?

Q: Yes.

A: Did you read the story how she was a whore of the Germans?

A: Yes.

A: And she took her own life. That's what the Germans did. And they took only the nicest, the prettiest girls what they could find. The Germans, for the Russian, that was the same—they wanted sex and they raped everybody. That was the difference...the choice is very difficult for me to make, you know--very difficult for me.

Q: When you got back to Prague was there ever a time when the war was officially declared over and there was a sense of celebration?

A: Oh ya, oh ya--at--actually, the Germans didn't bombard Prague very much. It was not too much damage done with the--Prague--to Prague, because as you know, Chamberlain went to--German--to--uh--Berchtesgaden in Germany to talk with Hitler and--and--ah--they made the pact that they want the Sudetenland and part of--uh--Czechoslovakia, and then they took it all so they--they didn't fight. So they didn't bombard Czechoslovakia. I came on the march on May the fifth, and on May the tenth--until May the tenth--it was not--not even order enough in Prague. When they saw some Germans with white stocking, they throw them into the river--the Czechs, you know. But then it was very, very--eh--soon there were--wasn't any Prague. At the end of May, there were order--nobody can forget the time, not even the Czechs, not even-- not only the Jews
but not even the Czechs because there were lots of communists, lots of communists in Czechoslovakia at the end--and they are all taken to the concentration camp, so they didn't have it so easy too--not only the Jews--but, uh, to be frank. But, of course, the Jews took the biggest deal.

Q: After you went back to your sister-in-law and asked if your husband was there and she said no, from then on how did you get your life back together again?

A: Very, very difficult. I didn't talk to anybody. I had one friend who lived next to me and she was with me from morning till evening--ever afraid I will make suicide, or something. And as soon as I saw somebody, I didn't talk, you know. That's how I met my husband. Actually he was invited--he already--he will tell you that--he already went to friends for lunch everyday and he still had his uniform--the striped, you know--he had nothing.

Q: What uniform?

A: That was a striped...

Q: Prison uniform?

A: Prison only because they send their (words missing in original transcript) to London. He wanted to go to London with his wife. Actually he was in London before, ah--the concentration camps started and his wife was still in Prague and he

came back. He could have stayed there, but he's a very honest man, and--uh--fair, and so he came back for her, and they didn't allow her to go because she looked very much like a gentile girl and they tore her passport in two, you know, when she said, you don't go with German pig, you know. And, ah, some--ah--one day I went to my friend and, ah, suddenly the door opens and my husband comes and he cries, "FiFi--imagine what I bring you." And it was my husband--and I wanted to run--and she said, "No you stay for coffee, at least." So that was all safe too, because usually went in the street and this one day he went in street and my friend's husband was standing with his dog. FuFu was the dog, and he said, "Oh, so you came back--you have to come upstairs--you have to come upstairs--so"...the whole story, but ah...

Q: As I had asked you a few minutes ago, if there was any celebration when the war actually ended.

A: I don't know. Nobody even had the head for a celebration. It was so sad. If you come home and you went through so much and suddenly you don't find your husband. It was no--I had no head for--nobody, actually--it was very sad in Prague, because usually, ah--the men didn't come back, you know. Bit in some cases both came back. It was sad, very sad, either woman or man came back.

Q: Did your sister survive?

A: My sister survived only because her husband arranged in Theresienstadt she was employed (words missing in original transcript) she was working in a factory who make glima. This is--it looks like glass--it looks like a convex.

Q: What do they do with it?

A: For the--they needed for their planes.

Q: I see.

A: And who worked for them was--safe for Auschwitz. He didn't go to Auschwitz. And this is what my brother-in-law did before even Auschwitz. So she stayed. She came back much later, but she came back. One son had to go with her husband. Her husband didn't come back and how her oldest son would be today--fifty. He didn't go--he go--and the small boy, he stayed with her.

Q: So, when did you come to this country, and what made you decide...

A: When we--this decided the (words missing in original transcript) and told me why are the Jews going from here, you know. The communists.

Q: In what year was that?

A: That was in 1947. So we worked for a whole year. My husband, if you will--if you want to hear the story--he can tell you stories you never heard in your life. What he went through before we came out of Czechoslovakia. Because as I told you...

Q: I would like to hear about that from you.

A: From me! You know he was in a very exposed position. First of all, the workers, about three thousand in the chemical factory, loved him. And they choose him as their leader--that was already when the communists...Then he went to, as a delegate to Poland. And--ah...

Q: A delegate to what?

A: As a delegate from the chemical production, you know. And, ah, he went everywhere--and at the last they wanted him to go to Moscow. If he would have gone to Moscow he have never came out of the country because it would have been in the passport--Moscow. The English wouldn't have let us in--and he had a friend in London and he knew how efficient my husband and clever he is--so he wanted him in London. So they send him a visa for London. We were the only two people who went to London without an immigration passport, on a normal passport. Anyway, and--when he was in London--he was always traveling--when he was in London so he was in very good face with the home service because he had English--they needed some material they couldn't get, and he had the choice either to give it to the Russians or to give it to the English--so he gave it to the English. And maybe because they gave him a better price--the only reason. And--ah--so they didn't forget it. So they wanted him in :London and he made every... Then they told him he has to go to Moscow--he fell down and fainted. And the doctor in Prague, he said his heart is not in order--he can't go, you know. That was forty years ago. So he came to London. And I remember when we arrived in London the customs--the customs in London have very much to say about every immigrant who comes and they said to him, "Look your passport is expired, your visa is expired. What will you do after one year?" And he said, I was in there, and he said, "I hope to be of such help to the chemists--to the chemical production in England that you will let me stay." He looked at him and said, "Go."

Q: You must have been very malnourished and thin and needing to be...

A: Of course, no he was even worse than I was. I was--then I had in Prague many, many friends, gentile friends, who gave us food because in the beginning there was no food even in Prague--just like in England—rations--everything on rations. And so, after a time I gained enough, too much after a time. But in the camp, the girls who were too hungry and had nothing to eat, you know, you read about it I think, they ate mushrooms and died. They ate everything and then they were free. The Germans gave them fat and pork and all this stuff and they ate it and they couldn't take it.

Q: Couldn't digest it.

A: Digest it. So they died even at the last minute. I didn't--I didn't have to do it because I escaped. So...

Q: You're a very thin lady now. You must have been a great deal thinner.

A: I lost with my illness. I was not so thin. I lost, but now I have to stay like this. My oncologist didn't want it. He said, "You have enough. One hundred four pounds is enough for your height."

Q: Do you know how much you weighed when you left the camps?

A: Oh--eighty, I think.

Q: Eighty. That's very thin.

A: Ah--we were all--we were all only to put in the grave. That we were all looking like.

Q: Can you recall at what point you began to feel better emotionally and physically?

A: Emotionally, my husband helped me...

Q: How long after you had met him did you marry him?

A: In--in 1946. I didn't want to marry him in the beginning, but as I said, he was really very exposed in this, and this officer, he's uh—uh--one of the directors told him he has to marry. They knew he lives with me, you know, and he said you have to marry because you have to meet my people and we can't have it in our company. So we married. I didn't want to. Then I was happy I married.

Q: How long were you in London before you came to the United States?

A: Actually, we didn't come to the United States, we came to Canada.

Q: Canada--that's right, you told me you're from Canada.

A: We were in London three years. That was my happiest time. Did you ever live in London?

Q: I've been there, I've never lived there.

A: I lived there and who--at that time--today I couldn't like to live there, not even one day with all the Arab. But when we came to London, after Prague, after the

communists, after the Germans. After all we went through--I could have kissed the earth--in--on the airport. And then it was everything so easy for us. My husband went the second day immediately for work, you know, it was like we were home--it was so wonderful in London. And then Korea came, you know.

Q: The Korean war.

A: Yeah--and--eh--my husband wanted to insure a whole train--a whole train. He had some material for India in this train--from the government--from the English government. And he wanted to have it insured at Lloyds, and you know Lloyds is the best insurance in the world. They insure everything, even your tongue, they insure. And they didn't want to insure it. And that was it. They said (words missing in original transcript) and my husband wanted to have him insured against a war and bombardment. They said, "Mr. Baron, this we can't do." So he said, "It's (words missing in original transcript)" And he said, " I don't want to win through things like that." So we went to Canada. And we went to Montreal because his firm in London didn't want to let him go and they opened an office in Montreal for him, you know--that they don't lose him--so we went to Montreal.

Q: You've had to rebuild your life several times.

A: Oh--so many times. I said the other day, somebody had so much jewels on them, I said, I lost to the Germans because as I said we had to--in twenty-four hours we had to be finished. We had to leave. Everything I left there, and when the Russians came it was just the same. My husband was so afraid that they don't let him--that they will call him back--I had a little ring--like this--with a little stone what I got from him in the beginning, and he didn't let me wear it. I had to give it back to my sister. So, we lost so much--and we went through so much--you know, you have to have the nature--not everybody could do it.

Q: That's right.

A: I am very strong, maybe. And, ah, as I said, even now, I have constant...My Doctor Goldman in, in, Memorial, he said, "My wonderkin." I am a wonder. Anyway, so you see, when I read these books and when I read, I mean, I see these--ah--pictures and so on. So always I think, I don't know why people say, why don't you read--why do you read the books, because I have to say all this happened--all was true--and I am still here. And when I get up and see the sun rising and the sun going down, still I'm happy like a, I don't know what--nothing can--can destroy my happiness, only when my husband is ill, then I'm down completely.

Q: Yes, I know you were very worried about him when I spoke with you last month.

A: Oh--I was--you can't imagine (words missing in original transcript) I went too much now in the last time is my illness, so I had it always in my head. I have

three year blood tests he had to do and then he had to go to Dr. Goldman and, ah, I don't want to tell the name of the doctor, and he said, I don't know--you don't have enough protein in your blood and I don't know what--and you have, eh--I don't know what. And if he had an X-rays, how many X-rays that if he lives through this--nearly three weeks. And do you know what is wrong with him? He had--he has the inflammation of the joints, here. That's what--why he went to the doctor in the first place. He thought it's arthritis. He couldn't--and he said to tell inflammation of the joint. And I said to him, "Isn't it the same like arthritis?" He said, "Nearly, nearly, nearly." And then he started with all this blood test. And at the end they give him Prednisone. And in three days, now he's thin, he's much, much better.

Q: And you're very relieved.

A: Oh--you can't imagine. I saw me already going home and leaving--because if ever something happens I don't want to stay here in the hospital. I want to go home. I--I tell you.

Q: You've had many losses in your life.

A: Yah.

Q: I can see why any additional ones would be very frightening.

A: And still, you see, I would sometimes--I wonder--I went through so much even in my youth, I was a child when we were out of (words missing in original transcript) . Of course, then we had everything, but we have no mother--and no money on earth can give you a mother, you know.

Q: That's right.

A: No money on earth. And I remember I always, even now, when I think about it, so I think, how could we--how could we live without a mother when I hear the people talking about mothers. It was the worst for me-I--you can think. And still, we had so much to go through--concentration camp and now my illness.

Q: Well you said earlier that you gave your foster father a great deal if credit for having helped you grow up to be a strong person.

A: That, you can't imagine. You can't imagine how I blessed him every day, every day. Because I had a friend--she was very well off, certainly like I was, and she--she had the lice were already inside her body because we were all full of lice. And they were inside her body because she didn't wash properly, and when I--when I said to her--I--Azzi why you're so careless like--I can't at that time, you know--you see. And they shot her. They shot her--just like I talk to her--you. They were finished in no time (words missing in original transcript) this shooting.

We had to go on the--(words missing in original transcript) marsh and we had to make a big bunker, and then I was still in the bunker-my friend she took me out. And then they--all the girls have to jump, about twenty--and they shoot--boom, boom, boom, boom, boom--and we had to go on.

Q: Were you constantly terrified, or did you become numb to this?

A: Become numb...there was not one minute when you were not terrified of them because you don't know what could happen. For instance, we walked at night and some girls had bound their feet, so they said, "I can't walk anymore." So we kept her walking and the SS always fight, and from both sides SS, the German Nazis, with--with the bayonets out, and they said, "Go, go." And when--if she didn't run to go--if she couldn't go, she had to go aside and they made selections on the (words missing in original transcript), we were about a thousand girls. Selections. And they were selected lots of girls--and we went on after ten minutes we heard it; they were all shot and they promised we come--we come for you. You stay here, we come for you...From the typhus, from malnutrition, from the hydration, from all kinds of things. I mean all from eating, as I said—uh--mushrooms what they couldn't eat--or later on eating, but mostly of typhus, mostly of typhus--and that the Germans were very much afraid of typhus because they went with us, they would have got it. But you would have seen how they changed at the end, you know.

Q: In what way?

A: In what way? They started to be friendly because they wanted us to know "the evil is very friendly" but we knew exactly who was friendly or not. But--I escaped--I was glad I didn't see them anymore. But my friend told them--that girl what I telled you--she had ah--that was her friend, but she saved her own family. I don't give it against her because she had to, but he was nice to her. He gave her his watch. He gave her money and there at the last time he said, "Look, I am lost anyway. I am a German. I was--ah manager of this whole camp--they will shoot me anyway, but you go. Go with your family, you have money." And she went. So, sometimes, you know, you found somebody like this, but it's not...Yah, you can find somebody where, ah--between--ah--thousand SS men.

Q: In the conversation we had, I have sort of directed you Are there things that I haven't asked you about that you want to talk about that I just didn't think to ask?

A: What?

Q: Anything that I haven't thought to ask you that you would like to include?

A: I--I could tell you lots, but I can't even remember now. It was so much, it was so cruel. In the little time we were in Auschwitz it was so crowded I couldn't understand how they could survive in the family. They had a name for it in

Auschwitz--they called it family camp--and the whole families could stay together. But that was their trick, that was awful--mind of the Germans, you know--always prepared at the last minute, anyway, you know. They started this nicely--ya, you stay together with your children and your wife--okay. After two months they came and all the children with their wives had to go to the gas chambers, you know. But it was only keeping the life for two months. It was so--so--every German, I think, was a--think of a sadist because that was the nature of them. When we came to Auschwitz, as I said to you, we had to go to the road and they cut off our hair. I got such hysterical--ah--laugh--laugh cramp that I started to rub and I saw my friends--they looked--like (words missing in original transcript), I started through the showers, the Germans were standing there naked--I had to rush through the showers, you know. Such things, unbelievable. Or they took all our--our dresses and they threw us. I had to blouse half of my breast that was open because it was torn and our good things and they sorted it. The best things went to Germany. The next best things, they got their wives of--the--of all the Germans what were with us in the company and we got the rest.

Q: Well, as you've said earlier. People like myself can't really understand...

A: No. And I can't, you know--I actually, English--I'm sorry to say is not my--one--ah--my language, you know. I can't express myself properly--say in English.

Q: You express yourself extremely well. What I meant by not being able to understand is that we have lived in such security here that we can only try to understand your considerable experiences.

A: You can't even try. You can't even try to imagine--you live at home--you sit, and when--when we made a hunger march once, we were standing on a place and I looked in the window and I said to my friend, once in my life I would like to sit on a real chair and sit at a table--and do you know what was my dream all the time--we always said--she said, "I would like to have a goose." And you know how they talk. I said I would like only one thing--to have a bath. And then I will sit in the bath--or--and do you know that I never forget whenever I sit--yeah--everyday in the bathtub, I remember this--that I--yes--I wanted only to have a bath. Everybody--you don't want to eat? I said, yes--but first I want to take a bath. We--when we escaped. So on our way, one soldier told us this all belongs to you because the Germans were gone. So we went in, and my friend, she was very clever, I was not that clever, she took pillows. I said, what are you doing with it? She said, "You never know." Then we came to the market, we have no money, of course, and she was standing--and she took a basket, a laundry basket—and she put it in the laundry basket and we were standing there and (words missing in original transcript) was nothing, you know...So we are standing there and people bought it for us, for a few penny. And there's a police standing, so we put it back--we run--you should have seen us. Then we had a few pennies and now I go and ask how much is a bath here, in Czestochowa. It was a Polish, very nice city. It's one of the nicest churches in the world in Czestochowa. So,

we went--ah--we had a bath--I was another person. And then we bought cookies. When I remember today the cookies--I wouldn't touch it today. Cookies--yellow and red, and you know how the Polish make cookies.

Q: But when you haven't had any cookies, they taste better.

A: Never. And by the time we ate the whole--the whole piece, we had a few pennies from this what we saw.

Q: Well, I think you have been wonderful to have given of your experiences.

A: Thanks. Maybe I didn't give you all the details, but it is much too much.

Q: I understand that you can't cover all those years in such a short period of time.

A: No, I can't...I know only one thing, when I came back after half a year, I wrote to the television in Prague, but I tell you now, only much more--better, and ah--I wanted to have it ah--in London.....the Readers Digest, and I wanted if I can--if they would take it. And they wrote me back that they would take it if I have a ghost writer. And I wrote to television--I wrote in BBC--in London, and they wrote me the same. And then I said--uh--so many people. And it was shortly after the war, I mean, it was three, four years, and I said--everybody--will you talk about it. Well who am I to talk about it. But even now, after so many years, they want to talk about it.

Q: Well now it's becoming even more important because people like yourself are older and pretty soon we will not have accurate stories.

A: Anybody like I am--ah--old—and everybody--and you know in Canada we have a man at school, he teaches school in Ontario, and he said all this what they talk the Jews is not true. Now, what would you say to this?

Q: I know that there are people who would like to believe that and would like to convince other people that that is--that it never happened, but we know differently. And you certainly know differently.

A: But okay, but how can a person think what is--we only fantasy of ours--or--I can't understand it. And he teaches children--and the students say, no it's not true. Mr. So-And-So said it's not true--it's not true. They only want to make ah--ah--hate against the Germans. Hate propaganda they call it--hate propaganda.

Q: I'm surprised that the school does not interfere in this process.

A: Only not now. He was dismissed. It went on for a few years. Now he's dismissed. And--ah--there was a process against him.

Q: Well that's good. I'm glad to hear that. Okay, well I thank you very much for what you have done for us.

A: You are very welcome.