

Anya Brodman, June 8, 1988

Q: Today is Wednesday, June 8, 1988 and I am at the home of Mrs. Anya Brodman, in Sarasota, Florida. Mrs. Brodman has kindly consented to share with us her memories and experiences during the Holocaust years. I want to thank you, Mrs. Brodman, for being willing to do this. I know that this is an emotional strain on you. Uh. Before we get into the Holocaust years, I think it would be helpful if you would talk a bit about your early years- your childhood – how many brothers and sisters you had . . . what your parents did for a living . . .where you were born and raised . . .

A: Yes. I was six months old when my parents brought me from Russia, Poltava, Ukraina. You know, where the Swedish war was, and then my father, from the beginning I don't know what he was doing, but later on, he had a factory, and my mother was a mother . . .

Q: Your father had a factory? What kind of factory? What did you make in his factory?

A: Stockings. Stocking. What else? And, then, when I grew up, I attended the gymnasium.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

A: Oh yes. I had a sister Yetta, which was very begifted . . means. . . how do you call it . . very talented in music, and she was very good and she was playing and everything and my father was very happy. Then, my mother took sick all of a sudden, I was about 17, finished gymnasium, and the doctor was very liberal – Dr. Aberzersky . . .very liberal man . . .very liberal . . and I was reading . . my later father ordered for me the “Medicinisher Velt” which was a magazine about medicine, because I always wanted to be professional. And, so I was reading the “Medicinisher Velt” and he came over to me. “What are you doing with the? Playing with sicknesses?” I said, “Oh, that's my hopes that some day . . but how could I, I am Jewish.” He wasn't. “I am Jewish and I am a woman”
“And was numerous classes . . can't get it” “You just tell me everything you told me, and go to the Dean,” I said, “How will I go to the Dean.” He said, “Just go to the Dean. Go in the morning.”

Q: What year was this, do you remember?

A: No, I don't. No chronology.

Q: What year were you born?

A: I was born in 1918.

Q: And, what year . . how old were you when this event occurred?

A: This was . . I was 18 years old. I had just finished gymnasium.

Q: This was 1926 then.

A: Probably, probably.

Q: You were still living in Vilna?

A: No. Yes. In Vilna, of course, in Vilna. So, when I . . . so I decided to listen to him. I like to listen, especially to such friends of the Jews. A very nice person. I went, and the butler didn't want to let me in. I said, "But, I will not go away. Then I'll wait until the Dean will go out, and I will go after him. I don't feel that this is proper." He heard what I was talking about. . .

Q: This was the Dean of the Medical School?

A: Yes, University of Medicine. Stephan the Terrible. Stephan the Terrible was once King, Polish King, and he said, "Let this young lady in." and, I told him the same what I told Dr. Aberzsky. When I finished, I said, "Can I have hopes?" And he said, in Polish, "Nuzuny dashenza?" "the people alive should never lose hope." And, I went out.

Q: That's a good piece of advice.

R: Yah. Yah. When I went out and not long, my father, my late father heard that I am admitted to Medicine.

Q: Let me go back a little bit, please. Uh. When you were growing up, were your parents religious people? Did they practice Judaism in your home?

A: No. I . . . My father . . . My later father . . . My mother's father . . . I mean . . . home was very religious.

Q: Your mother kept kosher?

A: No, no. My father's in Ukraine, in Russia.

Q: So, your father's family was religious.

A: My mother's . . . yah. My father's family came from a rabbi. A rabbi for father . . . but he wasn't. he loved Jewish music. I know . . . he knew very well the Jewish history, everything fine, but I . . . I had something different from my grandfather, because I said, "Oh, Father, today is Friday. Make. . . and he had a very nice voice . . . "So, you know . . . traditional. .

Q: Did you go to religious school when you were growing up?

- A: No. No. But, I had a good teacher who didn't know one word of Russian, and I spoke only Russian, you know, when I was very young, about 8,9. He used to live in my father's home so we
Have been all laughing from him,
- Q: You had been what?
- A: Laughing. Me and my sister. Because, he didn't know how to pronounce one word in Russian, and we didn't know another one.
- Q: What kind of a public school did you go to?
- A: I didn't go to a public school. Gymnasium is not a public school. Gymnasium is a school – when you finish gymnasium, it is like here, college. Not the complete college, but I remember when my daughter used to study, for being in college, she knew . . everything what I learned in gymnasium. So, I don't know how to tell you what it is.
- Q: So, it was like a private school?
- A: Yes, private school. Yes, private school.
- Q: And you graduated with the equivalent of a high school degree from there?
- A: Yes, that's right. All the way through college. Not medicine. Medicine was very bad. Very hard.
- Q: Growing up, did you experience much anti-Semitism?
- A: You see, it was a lot. It was a lot of anti-Semitism because we had beautiful girls . . .beautiful girls . . and it was a certain party . . not a party . . I don't know how you call this . . .organization . . from the anti-Semites, call the Endec, and they used to have on their hands something, and went out when the students used to go to school - - grabbed the faces . . beautiful faces . . really the most beautiful, beautiful girls.
- Q: They would, like, scar their faces for life?
- A: That's right. No, I don't know it was . . not for life . . but I don't know what they did. The parents . . their parents . . took them away from this school. My father used to be always on the phone, "Don't go out. You know what goes on . . Tell Yettaska she should not got out also." You see, he always protected us. Because we knew it was a lot of anti-Semitism, and always from the students.
- Q: So, what's was your father's reaction when you got admitted to Medical School?
- R: Oh, you know know. The telephone didn't stop. This was a miracle. My father – he was very proud . . was very proud. And, I don't trust one Christian person. I don't. I had a

best friend, she was beautiful. She just was built like a statue, beautiful and she denied the love of the parents and married on of the Endec. When the Germans came to run by, you know, so he brought her after a couple of weeks . . he brought her to “Toor Vach.” This was . . . how you call it . . from the Ghetto. Toor Vach is like the door to the Ghetto. We have to separate that . . that ghetto . . and I don’t know what he said, but she was shot on his eyes. And, Like this. Nobody had been in the windows to look what goes on here. And so . . killed her. And her father was so striked with grief, and not talk about it.

Q: Griefstricken.

A: Griefstricken, you know. He . . before it happened to him . . before it happened to him . . do you know something from the Jewish religion . . when somebody dies. . . it calls – to cut “cria”? he cut his clothing, you know that. It is . . Anyway, but when she was shot, he got a heart attack, right after this, and . . and he was not alive. Her name was Zablubofska. Beautiful girl. Beautiful girl. Intelligent, you know. When she studies, sometimes, I used to go also. I wanted to tell her . . study, study, study. When I was in medicine school but, I used to go when it was law . . lessons of law, yah. I loved it, how she spoke, and she . . .

Q: So, how many years of medical school?

A: Three and a half years.

Q: What happened then to interrupt it?

A: What do you mean? We didn’t have to . . Well, the war – we didn’t have the right to . . . it was the war.

Q: I want you to explain . . some people are listening to the tape. . .

A: You have no Jewish people . . .Even they had the star, the yellow star, the right to go, like people are going all around . . in the middle . . but to go to school – to attend te school – there was no question about it . . .

Q: By this time it was 1938.

A: I don’t know.

Q: And the Germans had invaded Poland.

A: Of course.

Q: How quickly did your life change after the Germans invaded Poland?

A: We were in the ghetto.

Q: When did they really start . . . ?

A: Right away. We . . . my parents had a beautiful apartment and everything was comfortable. You know . . . And, uh . . . they came . . . we had a chandelier . . . they took the chandelier . . . we had a velvet drapes . . . they didn't ask you.

Q: They just took . . .

A: Yah. And, I was sitting and reading a scene all my life. And he said, "Du seine ein schawshpeiler?" are you an actree?
"No". "Seinen yer Juden?" "Are you Jews?" I said, "yes" "You have a bechingen in life" ". . . a misfortune" "What are you studying?"
He came with a soldier, and they took whatever they wanted. We knew it was no good. but after an hour, he came with a big head from a pig. We had been hungry. We didn't have nothing. Nothing. And, I have two brother, too.

Q: Younger than you? You are the oldest?

A: Yah, the oldest.

Q: How much older are you than your sister and your brothers?

A: No, one after another, you know.

Q: Close together in age?

A: Yah, close. Very close. My sister is a year and a half younger. I'll show you my pictures. Terrible, terrible.

Q: There was not enough food? Was there enough water? Were people moved into your home?

A: No, no, no. This anti-Semitism was in the Polish government. What I told you . . . And, after, when the Germans came, it was much worse. Much worse.

Q: But after the Germans came, it was much worse.

A: It was much worse. We have been separated from people, anyway. Maybe I didn't make clear.

Q: Can you describe the ghetto – was there really an actual wall?

A: There was ein bridge. Yes, it was a wall, and there were soldiers staying on . . . in front of the door – called traver hoffen, and when you used to come fro work . . . they used to . . . when we used to . . . in the morning – 5 o'clock in the morning they used to serve us . . . let me tell it from the beginning . . .

Q: Go ahead.

A: They used to serve us coffee from the previous kettle. The kettle was for soup. The soup was from stained bread. And, in the coffee was still alive worms. And that is what we went . . . we went through this, and I was . . . when we have to come to work, then we have to stay by the soldiers in a row.

Q: What kind of work did you have to do?

A: Whatever they give us.

Q: Well, for instance.

A: I was carrying heavy canisters. Is it canisters in English? Canisters.

Q: Canisters.

A: Canisters. Very heavy canisters. They were like that. We Carried this to put in the train. This what I do. And

Q: How did you have the strength to do this with so little food?

A: You know . . . then there was a head from a horse, with the teeth together. Did you hear of this?

Q: I heard of similar things . . . but it is still unpleasant.

A: And, in the morning, how you call this . . . the coffee . . . or the coup . . . no, what was coffee . . . because the kettle wasn't clean . . . contained stained bread, which was the soup at 12 o'clock and she used to pour, she used to pour like this. Everything here, and nothing was left.

Q: You mean the person who was dishing it out? And they would pour it out so it would spill?

A: Anyway, this was . . . and in the evening there was this head. Piece of head with the teeth.

Q: You must have become very thin with such a diet?

A: Some diet. Didn't you hear about that?

Q: Yes, but I still want to hear . . .

A: No, no, no. But . . . do you want to talk about it?

Q: Certainly, we'll talk about it.

A: Yah. I was in Kaiservald. Kaiserland is Riga, Latvia. You want to know that?

Q: Yes, I do want to know that. When did you go there? Do you remember?

A: I don't remember the year. 1942.

Q: 1942. How did you go there? How did they get you from Vilna?

A: By transportation – not cars, of course. Cattle . . . cattle trains.

Q: Can you describe it?

A: Yes, I can describe it. One on top another and all the physiological needs was done right there. You understand what I mean?

Q: Yes I understand. There was no toilet facility.

A: Water, also.

Q: How many days did that trip take?

A: Who knows. . . it was about nine days, and, let me tell you, some people couldn't stand it. they broke the window and fell out and break their arms and their legs.

Q: And some of the people died while they were on the train?

A: No, they don't die. They didn't want to go. They didn't want to leave, and they broke the windows. It was in the train a window, a cattle train. Even the boards, they used to . .

Q: Didn't they give you any food during this time, or did you have food . . . ?

A: We didn't have even water.

Q: For nine days. You must have been frantic by the time you got to the camp.

A: The worst thing is the odor. Ach!

Q: What did they tell you about . . . what did they say about where you were going to?

A: They didn't talk with us. When we came already to the destination place, it was the whole room . . . full of little mattresses full of straw . . . one on top of the other. And then they brought something, I don't know, what kind of straw. I am not a good . . . I am a very big picker, since I was young, very young at home, I couldn't tough this . . . I couldn't tough this . . . this kind of food.

Q: And, what kind of tasks did they have you doing at Kaiservald?

A: In Kaiservald? I told you, I was on the rampus. How is rampus in English? And everybody was brought into Pilsudski.* Do you know who Pilsudski was? When we came to the ghettos, some people hanged themselves and didn't go. They knew where we are going. And, the hospitals with little children, half dead. And . .

Q: You had your own child then?

A: No, she wasn't born yet. What I want to say? And, then it was terrible because we heard that in the ghetto, people hanged themselves . . full of them . . I came to this main man . . Do you remember the name of this main man . . I forgot . . Katle . . Katle. I said, "Listen, I know how (by this time my mother was still alive), and I said that we know how to sew for the invalids and everything." And he said we should stay in toor vacher – that's a place there what he showed to me, "and then I'll talk to you" But, he never came. We never talked. And then we took . . .Then we had on the field . . .

Q: Then, what did you do? He told you to wait?

A: Yah, they come . . they took us.

*The place where he was buried. On this place

Q: So then you went down to the train?

A: No, not right away to the train. It was night already. It was Pilsudski very big . . a big, big space . . it doesn't make sense, I don't know. . . I jump form one to another. How could you do something with that?

Q: That's all right. Just keep talking. So let's go.

A: They brought us back . .

Q: To Kaiservald?

A: No, they brought us back . . first of all, over night, and then they put us again in the cattle train. From the ghetto to sleep over somewhere in the field and then from the . . in the morning . . everybody . . they took us to the cattle train, and from the cattle train to the Kaiservald.

Q: When you got to Kaiserlaut there were mattresses with straw?

A: They gave us . . what did they give us? Soup. Soup.

Q: Did people who worked in the kitchens, for instance, have a little more to eat because they could take food for themselves?

A: The people worked in the kitchens very seldom. Only to wash sometimes a kettle. Yah. A kettle.

Q: Who worked in the kitchens?

A: I don't know. Who was near the kitchen? We have been put in a certain place . . . a very long corridor. We didn't go . . . even know where the kitchen . . . later on, already, it was kitchens . . . I think
He scrubbed once somewhere . . . we didn't have . . . he was in the worst camp . . . we were in the worst camp. In the worst camp. Did you clean a kettle? And get a little? I am sorry, I don't know, I don't make sense.

Q: How long were you in Kaiservald?

A: In Kaiservald? Later on, they segregated us, and I was working there. It was with the canisters.

Q: But you can't remember how long you were there?

A: It couldn't have been too long, because they gave us right away what to do. (Male voice: that was in Kaiservald). I am talking about Kaiservald. (Male voice: but you ran away from Kaiservald.)
Not right away, I ran away. (male voice: in '43)

Q: So you were there several years, if I understand correctly.

A: No, about a year and a half. And, then I went to the church. I ran away.

Q: How did you get out?

A: Do you now. There was a man who used to come to pick us up for working, and, I don't know, why me . . . there were so many beautiful girls . . . he used to bring something . . . nobody should know . . . he put . . . I never got it, because all the girls . . . Jewish girls.

Q: What did he bring?

A: A piece of bread or something.

Q: A little extra fruit?

A: We didn't have any fruit. A piece of bread or something. I never had, and when he saw that I have nothing – I don't know why – he wanted to help me – Edmund – he told me later on – that's a long story – it is a book. And, he is also Jewish. But he had a best

friend, a Christian, dying and he gave him his papers. He was a writer, a very fine gentleman, and he had . . . what did I want to say.
(male voice: he worked for the hauptmann.)

Q: The hauptmann was the head there?

A: Edmund, right. Edmund. Isn't it in the book? (male voice: Sure) Anyway, he was Working for the hauptmann, and once he said that he has to clean the apartment and who is coming – a putzfrau- a woman who cleans – he told this to the hauptmann. So, the hauptmann came where I was working, and called my name and I came and now I said, “This is the hundred years of my life, finished . . .” and he said, “You come with me. Tomorrow you are coming to me to clean the apartment.” I said, “Yah vohl, Ya vohl.” I didn't know him. He was a very affable man, because he was once also victim and he was in camp by the Russians by the Russians arrested. I came. I said, “herr, where is the work for me?” everything was clean. He was cleaning the whole night . . . Edmund . . . he gave me a pair of trousers to sew up buttons and I came there several times. Several times the same button was cut and I felt very uncomfortable. He put on the table what you could only desire, and I couldn't eat . . . couldn't. then he goes to the huptman and he said, that I don't eat anything. Anyway, I couldn't. and, “Thank you very much” then I used to bring something to one sick woman. A young lady.

Q: You brought food from his house to someone?

A: Yah, something. I couldn't. because you have to go to the door. And, I got 25 on my back.

Q: 25 lashes?

A: 25 lashes because they found it here under my kerchief. Something for her. She had cancer. And said, “You will bring me this and this.” And she used to say, “I'll be all right.” Anyway, I tried, (to husband – you are disturbing me)

Q: Your husband is sitting here so quietly.

A: He can't stand how I talk.

Q: You are doing the best you can, and that's fine.

A: What do you have questions for me?

Q: Well, I want to know what happened after . . . how did you get out of Kaiservald? You said you escaped form there. How did you escape?

A: I ran away. He helped me. He helped me. Edmund helped me.

Q: In what way did he help you?

- A: He (male voice: he talked so long with her that she told him that she had a daughter -) a child, a baby daughter. (male voice: by . . with . . what's his name) Edmund (male voice: No, what's his name – that Ukrainian) by the Judge, this and the . . I have a little baby left by the . . and he . . and he said, “How about he should come and pick you up from here?” so, I don't know how it happened, I don't remember.
- Q: So it wasn't like you had to escape over the barbed wire fence.
- A: No, no. it was not like . . no fences, no.
- Q: In a wagon, or, how did you get out?
- A: This man, who had my baby, he was, he came. He said, “What could be better to do, as to have a mother, a real mother, with the baby.” He came to Riga . . with the baby.
- Q: How long had you been separated from your baby?
- A: Oh, a long time, (Male voice – it was two and a half years.)
- Q: That's a long time.
- A: (male voice – let me tell it. the point is, he wrote to him. To the judge. Show the picture,) he didn't have such a aristocratic face. He had a very good heart, and he was . . his mother – the judge's mother was a housekeeper by a Jewish doctor.
- Q: This was a Gentile judge, of course.
- A: Of course.
- Q: How did he happen to be the one who took your child?
- A: That's another thing. I met the doctor once, you know. His daughter got killed, and he introduced me. Everybody was very good tome. Everybody (male voice: she put it out from the ghetto, in front of the church, and he knew that she is going to be there) and he picked up.
- Q: Did you have any contact or knowledge of your sister and brothers and parents during this time?
- A: I had knowledge that they are not alive.
- Q: You knew what they had been killed?
- A: It cannot be nothing else. (male voice: they was in the Pinaz.) Pinale, that was a place. Near us. Pinale. Near Vilna. Right near Vilna, because nobody will know it. (Male

voice – very big this pinale. It was prepared for putting in underground, and they didn't utilize it. the Russians did it. the Russians did it, because the Russians were first there. Then the Germans came. So, the Russians did the canals and they buried over there all the Jews from Vilna.) and now in Israel is a Ukranian man (Male voice: that's a different story). A different story.

Q: You mean, Mr. Dejmaniak?

A: Dejmaniak.

Q: He comes from the same city I came from.

A: Yeah, from where?

Q: Cleveland.

A: He should never had been born. You know what he did? I don't want to tell. He used to put screw drivers. . .

Q: Now we are taping again. Tell me, how was it possible to keep yourself clean in the camp?

A: It was very bad. But, I was . . I had a good fundament . . you understand?

Q: Fundamental?

A: Fundamental, yeah, I was good, and young, of course. A lot of people had been eating mushrooms from, excuse me, what a dog did something . . a mushroom grows and they all had abscesses. I did not have one abscess, not one, nothing. It was like this. There was a barn, and full of snow around, crosswind, and it was cold and full of snow . . but, what they dripped the water, not gave a shower, but water was dripping.

Q: You took advantage of that to keep as clean as you could.

A: Of course. I did as good as I could. . . I could. But if you would see the bodies of the women. Oh, god, oh god, full of abscesses . . full . . young women. Terrible. Terrible. (male voice: but everybody was take a shower like that in cold water.)

Q: That was important to surviving.

A: Was not enough water because it was dripping, dripping.

Q: I have had other people tell me the same thing. So, after you left Kaiservald, then you lived in this church?

- A: No, I didn't get to Kaiservald yet. I went to this church and hide myself in the church. Two French women, speaking among themselves, and I told them the story in French, but I had a governess when I was young, and I knew the language better than English. And, asked them whether they knew my husband, and I said, I have to come here, and I said, maybe they could give me shelter for the night. From the beginning they wanted to, they after, they said, "we don't know who you are. We don't know who you are"
- Q: They refused to help you.
- A: Yah (male voice: you went to that hotel. There was a hotel there, where he came). Yes, I came to wait for the judge, no?
- Q: How far was this away from Kaiservald?
- A: oh, it was far. It was far. It was Lithuania, and this was Latvia.
- Q: How did you get there – from Lithuania to Latvia?
- A: What do you mean?
- Q: Did you go in a car?
- A: I told you they had brought us in a cattle car (male voice: no, she ran away. It was a street car. You went in a street car from the camp.) And some German said, "I think I know this one" (In German). My heart was under my eyes already.
- Q: I can imagine. You must have been terrified.
- A: I am sorry, how I talk today. I am . .
- Q: What was it like to be reunited with your child?
- A: It was a long time later. A very long time later. And he told her that there would come a woman . . a beggar. Me. As a beggar. You don't open the door. She was already here. He kept her very nice. Very nice. (male voice: see they didn't have children at that time.) But later on she got pregnant. They had been very nice people. Very nice people.
- Q: So, then, did you . . I'm not sure how much time passed from the time you were at the camp until the time you got back with your daughter.
- A: (male voice: that was about 4-5 days. Something like that.)
Wait . . they arrested me and I was in Gestapo. (male voice: that's later) ok. (male voice: my wife . . she mixes up everything. Before, when she was liberated, so she used to tell the stories,) why don't you say that I came. . . (male voice: every company we went, we were talking about our liberation and how we lived. I couldn't listen any more, but I remember everything what she said. But she mixes stuff up.) let me tell you, this

Mr. Edmund, what I told you brought me, and he said the first man in my story, he stole from the hauptmann for whom he was working, a pair of glasses, I should mask myself. He put a puchle, something like this, I should be a hunchback and he did whatever he could for me, and I think that he was not alive today. (male voice: anyway, he came to the hotel, what's his name?) Edmund? (male voice: no the judge.) oh, then we are going back? (male voice: no, that's not back) anyway, he came to the hotel, and he met Mr. Edmund, and he pretended that he come to buy whiskey. He had some whiskey. I don't know what. He was always . . and they call him . . he was afraid – he was a Jew, you know. He was afraid to be connected with anybody since they said that he is crazy. He was always in the library. He was a very intelligent person. He complete so muchbooks. And, he said always, “abens” he is “farticht” rich, he is crazy . . anyways, so what did I want to say? (male voice: he came to the hotel to see if you were . . you found him. The judge came) they judge came from Vilna to Riga.

Q: And then he took you with him?

A: No. not right away. (male voice: not the first time . . he come once for nothing) it was said that if somebody will escape then then, this who knew us. . .this will be killed. And, I said, I will never do this to Edmund. And, I did not go. You see, he went back the first time. He came twice.

Q: He went back to the camp?

A: (male voice: no, he went back to Vilna when he came once.) and I said that I am not going. He said to me, “What do you think? Maybe his hands are full of blood of your parents and sister and brother, and you, what is the matter with you? (male voice: she was afraid he will be killed.) I was afraid, and I never prayed for good or bad.

Q: That's a nice expression. I like that.

A: (Male voice: after a few months later, he came again because they were supposed to shave the hair). I'll tell you how it was. They put on all the Jewish girls, your beautiful girls. . .

Q: This was in the camp?

A: In the camp. You see, with long hair, all kinds of hair, and undressed. And everybody who was, I don't know what, a super, he put on a white coat and pretend to be doctors. One bulled the breasts from another. The one scooped the hair from . . Oh, my God, my God, what we went through.

Q: Very humiliating.

A: Anyway, we had been worse than cattle. It was a sign in Vilna for killing a Jew and a dog – no punishment.

- Q: There was no punishment for killing a Jew or a dog.
- A: Or a dog or a Jew, the same – no punishment. It would be a good thing. What else? Today I have (male voice: let me help you.) Help me. (male voice: so, then after a few months, he came back and he wrote then, because they had to shave the head and she wouldn't be able to leave. She would be conspicuous. So, she wrote him again, and he came, and she put on a big coat and a big thing, and eyeglasses – she couldn't see. And got out of the camp and got on a streetcar and got into Riga. And she hide there in a hotel, and he came. Edmund did see him.) ah, Edmund, I would give him what I have. He was better than a thousand brothers.
- Q: That must have been a terrifying time for you.
- A: (male voice: that was terrible) it was only being so strong as I was and so young as I am that I could survive, believe me. (male voice: oh the train going to Vilna, two women recognized her.) Yeah, you know who . . . used to deliver to my parents, chickens and eggs and everything,
- Q: With all the disguise, they recognized you?
- A: I took off . . . who could breath? But they recognized me. I said, what are you talking about? (male voice: anyway, right away they went off the train and, tell them about the cholem.
I'll tell you one thing. I was hiding right away by the judge. There was hiding also prominent men from Vilna.
- Q: So the women got off of the train, but they didn't report you?
- A: I said, "What are you talking about? It's ridiculous. I belong to this little town . . . to the village. Anyway, they went out first and they didn't report. I don't think that they would know. Anyway, so, what did I want to say? Then, this Mr. Hall was a millionaire, and he was also cholem . . . Vilna and everybody who knows. . . Vilna knows who is going. He was also hiding by the same judge. And two other girls. One, the daughter of a big, big book store, and one Lithuanian. And all of us . . . and he used to say, "Anya, if we survive, money is water, like water is full, and he has "mir zagen" and he had a lot. We'll make all, in all the cities, but give me your hand, and you will walk with me."
- Q: To do what?
- A: To let know, to let the whole world know what they did to us.
- Q: What happened.
- A: I said, I'll give you my hand. In Jewish, "kiashaf", is more than ever – like you swear, and I gave him my hand that I will help him. I didn't have anybody in the whole world and I wanted all the world should know.

- Q: So the judge never had . . . the man that you are talking about . . . you little girl . . . and two other people and yourself . . . five people –hidden under his roof. Didn't people wonder about this?
- A: Who would know . . . nobody walked out.
- Q: But he had to bring in food for everybody.
- A: They had food . . . the Lithuanian people had food – full of special places where they had. This was nothing. But, this lady, the wife of Mr. Rutkowska, his name is Rutkowska . . . this judge. The lady, Anita. Anyway, Anita used to take out the baby a little for the fresh air. They put wonderful flowers in her room and everything – but still a little fresh air. And everybody said, "Whose child is this? Beautiful child. Such eyes." Not veiled. You have to know that the Lithuanian people are very ugly. Ugly.
- Q: So, a beautiful child was unusual.
- A: That it's probably Jewish. So, it was on a day of my birthday, a knock on the door. I sleep with my child in the bed. The two girls sleeping there. A terrible, terrible knocking at the door. He liked to take a little drink. He liked to drink, the judge. He gave me a name, Ottilia. Not Anya, Ottilia. He screams, "Somebody at the door, Ottilia, Ottilia, Ottilia. I don't trust him. I stay still. And she took out the baby and she was walking. Opened the door. They came.
- Q: Who came?
- A: Two Gestaop. With a big dog. The girls right away spoke beautiful Lithuanian, because they are from there. I don't know one word. Before they came in, she said, Anya, call something, do something. You don't know one word. We speak so fluently" didn't help them. Anyway, they came in with the dog, and my shoe was, by this time four and a half, small, and the dog took my shoe and the one Gestapo said, "Whose little shoe is this?" and she . . . the Lithuanians have such big feet . . .
- Q: Peasant feet.
- A: They are peasants. Anyway, she said, "This is mine" But he didn't pay attention. And the girls, they spoke to him Lithuanian and it didn't help. He told them to get out. And she took the baby. And, I am alone in the bed. And she took all the heavy mattresses, the heavy . . . and springs . . . you know . . . and put them on me.
- Q: Put them on top of you?
- A: On top of me. I was in the bed. And on top of me they should see me. I would be here. Anyway, to make a long story short, finally, with troubles and troubles, she started

screaming to them, “This is my child, and how dare you . . .” And she spoke to the child all kinds of words, but she didn’t realize. She didn’t answer nothing.

Q: How old was she?

R: A year maybe, already. About a year. So, they went, and they said they are coming back. If I would listen to him, if I wouldn’t use my own judgment. I should jump to him, I wouldn’t be here. Because I don’t. anyway, to make a long story short, they went away, and right away he went down and bought a paper. And, in the paper was announcement, to the Germans, they need a putz frau who cleans, and this and this and this. And, I went, and I told them . . . (male voice: so you went to Riga.) Riga, that’s right.

Q: So you took a job as a housekeeper.

A: Not keeper. To clean the floors, to clean the dust out. A putzfrau, cleaning. Anyway, then, what did I want to say . . . then I came and I went right away to this . . . Each German had a Geliebte. A Geliebte means a girl-friend. And, I probably didn’t look like a . . . anyway, I had troubles. I had to clean, to wash and this . . . and this was everything not enough . . . not enough.

Q: And where did you live then?

A: They gave me some place.

Q: In the same house where you did the work?

A: Yes, there was plenty of little rooms and everything (Male voice: Later you rented) Later on I knew that one Russian woman, and I speak very well Russian – I know Russian, anyway. That she would gladly take me to help me. I said, “I’ll give you money when I’ll get it, but I haven’t got it now.” Come on, And I was . . . when I used to finish the job, I was happy to be in a different atmosphere. You know, for a long time, knowing very well German, I couldn’t hear one word German. I, right away, saw pictures of this bitter man with the black, with the black (male voice: finish with one). Huh? (male voice: finish with one). There is everything in my head. (male voice: everything is in here) Yah.

Q: That’s all right. You are sharing your memories with us as well as your experiences.

A: That’s terrible. Anyway, I was living there.

Q: How long did you stay there?

A: then, one Oberfurdoktor, that is, a higher doctor who was working for them – they have a lot of Russian soldiers with a half of face. This, I had the right to give to them an

injection or to make, or to do something for them – but not to the Germans I used to come out . .

Q: The Russians were prisoners?

A: Of course, prisoners. Treated horrible. Anyway, then, he said that I should.. um . .work by blutlisen (male voice: laboratory work)

Q: Laboratory work?

A: To could the blood cells and everything. I said, but I don't know how. I said, I am only a putzfru. But you will learn he said. By us, a putzfrau knows everything. Knows languages. What should I tell you? You see, I learned. I knew before a little.

Q: it must have been a little easier to do that then to be cleaning.

A: Yes. It was later, but I almost paid with my life for that. And, I was working there and I got . . I was very undernourished and some of the Germans gave me cod liver oil to drink and something soups and something to eat, and whatever he could – he . . one or another who cooked, used to bring . . and I started blooming. You know. With the food. So the Oberschutz, doctor said he wants to go out with me. And this started my troubles. I finished very bad and was arrested to the Gestapo, you know. I was. . I feel . . I had terrible feelings and I said to the lady in Russian that I have a very bad feeling that something is happening to me. And, all of a sudden, came a jeep, with how many, I don't now, how many it was there soldiers.

Q: I'm sorry. All of a sudden came what?

A: A jeep. You know what is a jeep? NO. (male voice: a jeep)

Q: A jeep, OK

A: A jeep with men. I'm sorry. With men. A couple of men with such big carabines – what is that? (male voice: machine guns) machine guns . . and took me away. I was afraid that this is the end of my life. Anyway, but what can I do? But, I didn't . . but they gave me a little cell. In the morning, I'll go to the district attorney. So,

Q: Did they tell you why they took you away?

A: No. they took me away . . that's the end.

Q: They didn't have to tell you?

A: No, they didn't have to tell me. All night I was knocking on the door, knocking in the door from the cell, but nobody came there. Five o'clock came. "wait another hour and you'll go to the District Attorney." So, came the hour and they brought me to the District

Attorney. I decided not to answer him what he is asking me. I said, "Ich nicht Deutsch" that's not an expression in German, "Ich nicht Deutch" I said, "Ich nicht Deutch" I have to describe you the room. The room was very big, very long. In each corner sat one District Attorney. One dog. In all corners, four. On one wall was a big board, you know, on what you could write, and it was a big . . . how you call it (male voice: whip) a big whip, full still with blood, from the people who had been beaten. And I said to him . . . he asked me, "you are a student? And this, and that, and this . . ." and anyway, I said, "Ich nicht Deutch" everything was noticed by one man who sat, I was here, he was up there, and he came over. "Was is loes?" What happened? He said, "Which language do you speak? I said, "Polish" and he was a Pole. I said, "Polish. I attended Polish University and I speak Polish." So, he came and he said, and I talked to him – mind district attorney doesn't understand a word. But I said, "this is a private affair" (male voice: private dispute) not dispute: no. Privately I paid for this, because I didn't want to go out with him. I said, "I have a husband, and I don't want to go nowhere and I don't know where my baby, and I don't know nothing. I have no desire. He asked me several times until he sent me this Gestapo to pick me up. Anyway, you know he . . .

Q: So picking you up was like a punishment for not going out with him?

A: No, to arrest me. Let me tell you. So, I told . . . I was in Gestapo and I am already in this room what I describe you. A long room with four in each corner, one of the attorneys . . . not attorneys . . . Gestapo men. The persecutors, yes . . . the persecutors. And the board with the big words, and a little whip full of blood, and I found out that just one girl had been taken away what she confessed, and she is all ready for being killed. No, I am very cheerful, but I don't know from where, I was screaming, "I don't speak German. I don't know German. I never learned. I never know." And this man from the corner listened. He didn't listen, paid attention to his victim, because he had also a victim. Everybody had victim. He listened to his victim. He came over to us, and he said, "Was it loes? What happened?" I said, this is personal. A personal affair. It is personal. He said, you know, now is lunch time. You could imagine how many hours I was there. Lunch time. It was eleven. And, he said, you go, I give you a guard. Take you to the cellar, and after lunch you will come back. When I was in the cellar – I didn't sleep the whole night – and I closed my eyes and I see we had in Poland a famous rabbi, a famous rabbi, Rubenstein. He is supposed to be . . . his children were Rabbi Rubinstein, and I dreamt that he told me, "Don't worry, my child, don't worry, my child, you and your child will got to America. I don't have nobody in America, but, I somehow woke up in a better mood.

Q: He gave you some hope?

A: I don't know what.

Q: For the record, say the name of your daughter.

A: My child is Lenatchkah, Lena. But in the book is Ninka.

Q: Lena.

A: But in the book is wrong.

Q: Yes, I remember.

A: Anyway, so I am afraid she is farmuddlt with me. So then he said that I should go there. So, all of a sudden, the door opens and the guard came and take me up stairs. And, he told me something, a couple of words, a couple of words in Polish. So it was very nice, but he waited for me when I went out from this. It was a guard. (male voice: he took her out) he . . he saved my life. he said, "He will never, never let you leave because you didn't obey him. You didn't go out with him" he asked me three or four times to go out. I knew what he wanted. If he would be caught with a Jewish woman, he would be killed too. Anyway, when he said to me . . wait a second (male voice: but he didn't know that you are Jewish, you did not say so). No, he didn't know. (male voice: had Irish papers).

But wait a second, when I went . . then I . . he said "You should go away from here." I was a night somewhere and stayed. I don't remember by whom, and you have to wait a while. And he gave me the number of his field . . nobody gets from Gestapo . . fieldpost . .

Q: Fieldpost.

A: How to say it? (male voice: his mail, that is his) His address. That I nobody gets it, and he gave it to me, and he said, "I have a German wife, he said, but I will get rid of her and I will marry you." I said, Of course. What should I have said? And then, we came, I don't know how come that we have been . . (male voice: you ran away). Yah, I ran away to a railroad. What do I want to say . . there (male voice: he brought) Wait a second, he brought me something from the canteen, but he was clothes and it was bread. Anyway, I cut the bread in fourteen pieces. (male voice: no, that's not this way.) what? He brought me this. (male voice, OK) he brought me this. I didn't know nobody else. He brought me this bought a ticket, too. (male voice: he bought a ticket, too). Everything. And you know Poles are very anti-Semitic. All the Catholics are like that. (male voice: but he didn't know that you are Jewish) Oh, please. He remembered me. He told me from the Europa. From the Hotel. (male voice: but, he didn't think you are Jewish). How do you know? (male voice: I say.) How do you know it? (male voice: because you said at that time). But I said now that he knew it.

Q: Where was this ticket to take you to?

A: To Vilna.

Q: Back to Vilna.

A: To Vilna, yah. And he gave me this address, I should right away call him. Yah. I would never do it, of course. I adored the Poles anyway. But, what I want to say. Wait a

second. Uh. And, wait a second, what is it? and I stopped in Vilna. And there was I knew very well Vilna. And I looked because my parents were still there. And there was a hotel. Wait a second. And I go to the hotel, and I need a room. What? (male voice: there was a mine on the train, don't you remember?). yes, there was a mine on the train, but I wasn't hurt. The whole train turned over, and I was . .

Q: And you weren't hurt. That's remarkable.

A: Yes, but I was shocked. And he brought me – the same S.S. man brought me bread and a little wine, or I don't know what . . (male voice: liquor) liquor. Near me was laying, half alive and gory . . I mean a man . . an old man . . and I gave it to him a little, and he was very thankful, and I said that if my husband will know. . he wanted to take me to his home, so I said, "My husband will know that I have come and he will never believe that somebody . . anyways, a story I told him. And, I went to this hotel. He brought me to this hotel. I couldn't stay on my feet, and I asked for a room, and they gave me a room, and I said, Listen, put a pail of water there, and put a sign, nobody should disturb me. They did it. in the morning, I hear there such a commotion outside. (male voice: seven days you were there.) seven days, yah.

Q: Seven days you were in the hotel?

A: (male voice: she divided the bread for seven days.) For seven days.

Q: And the water was to drink. Or to wash?

A: I don't know. What water?

Q: You said you asked them to bring you a pail of water.

A: Who knows? I drank.

Q: Whatever you needed.

A: You see, I cut the bread for the same amount, for the seven days, it was enough. Like I would know, I don't know . . I was guided by an angel, and , all of a sudden, on the eighth day, on the seventh . . I hear a terrible commotion. The room was downstairs. And, I see a lot of women spoking, spoking . . speaking Polish, that they are running away, the Germans. And it is a canteen open and there you could take whatever you want. Do you think I didn't go? I went, and I had cookies, which I brought for my child.

Q: It's ok.

A: (male voice: when they took them away.)

Q: Whom?

- A: (male voice: after a while, after a few months, they took away the Lithuanian judge with his wife, with his child) Oh yes, yes. The child. They had a child, you know. (male voice: and her daughter.)
- Q: They took them all away.
- A: (male voice: they took them all away to the Gestapo, and then) Oh yes, I cannot remember this. I don't want to remember . . . (male voice: and then, one of the Gestapo, because he swore, the judge swore, that this is his child) that this is his child, (male voice: that this is a beautiful girl, so he had her, when they killed them all, he hid in the bushes, and after they killed all the people, they took . . he took her home. Do you think you heard another story like that? No. I am not sure (male voice: he took her home to his home, and from there he give her meantime to a . . a orphanage home. When he will go back to German, he could take her with him, because she was a beautiful blond and beautiful eyes . .) beautiful hair.
- Q: She could pass as a German child.
- A: (male voice: she could pass as a German child . . what they wanted . . blonde, beautiful.)
- Q: Aryan children.
- A: (male voice: yah, the Gestapo, what they killed the . . what's his name?) wait a second, the doctor. Remember she wanted only to take her too. She was in a children's home, you know, a home, and the doctor wanted to take her for herself.
- Q: In the meantime, did you know where she was?
- A: (male voice: no.) No, I don't know nothing. (male voice: no, she didn't, but she knew approximately that she is in a home.) In a home. I picked her up from a home.
- Q: You knew she hadn't been killed when the judge and his wife and child were killed.
- A: No. no. I knew this, that she was all right.
- Q: That's like a miracle.
- A: Yah. (male voice: because of what Anita told you.) who is Anita? (male voice: a woman . . not Anita, the old woman what was working for them) Oh Martinelli. The Lithuanian Martinelli, what was working for them. Martinelli is a babka, that means a grandmother. Yah. Yah. She used to drive her . . I mean paint her all kinds of Jews with big noses and everything. This was Martinelli. Anyway, she told me that she is in an orphanage, and I went. My life wasn't what . . all my life was my child. It is understood, of course. And, I went there, and a priest and a nun helped me, and I found her. (male voice: she went to two orphanages.) I went to many orphanages, and in the last one.

- Q: It must have been very terrifying not to be able to hind her.
- A: I don't know how or where I got the strength. I was a nervous wreck.
- Q: Ok So, then what happened? You said the Germans were leaving. Was that because the war was coming to an end?
- A: That's right. They leave. (male voice: The Russians were coming). The Russians were coming.
- Q: What was it like to have the German's gone? Did people carry on and celebrate in the streets, or, what did they do?
- A: No, the did . . they couldn't do anything because they would be killed. My father went from one. I know . . I know it very well. How it was. Celebrating on the streets (male voice: after the Germans left.) After the Germans left, then it was quite. I told you how they came and took whatever they want. (Male voice: let me explain you something. The Polish were afraid for the Russians).
- Q: Uh, hun.
- A: And the Polish were afraid. (male voice: the Russians are coming and the Jews are the rulers of the Russians, the Communists, the Russian Communists.) it was an idea that all the Jews have been Communists. (male voice: the top man in the communist party.)
- Q: Who have them this idea?
- A: (male voice: that . . that.) Some idea. Anti-Semites. (male voice: anti-Semites)
- Q: Gave them this idea.
- A: You should know Poles are the worst anti-Semites, the Catholics, French too. "Sal Juive – Dirty Jews" All Catholics are terrible, all terrible.
- Q: So, where did you go then, after the war ended? Did you stay in Poland?
- A: I stood, of course. I was in Vilna.
- Q: for how long?
- A: I don't remember (male voice: she . .after the war was finished, she was liberated in '44, sometimes in this time) Yah. I was.
- Q: You landed in May 1945.

- A: (male voice: in may 1945, after the war, and then, she went to other people to Berlin . . . to Lodz . . .) Wait a second . . . to Lodz. First of all, I was . . . (male voice: to Lodz) how can I survive when I washing the nurses' uniforms and I did everything . . . all the things, and then . . .
- Q: Lodz is also in Poland?
- A: Poland, of course. (male voice: Lodz in Poland, yes. And, from Lodz, they went to Berlin.)
- Q: And, was your idea to go from Berlin to the United States? Why did you go to Berlin?
- A: Yah, I wanted to go work, to Israel. I wanted to go.
- Q: To Israel.
- A: But I didn't have . . . to Israel was the quota for children to parents, and parents to children, and I didn't have nobody. Then, I didn't have what to select.
- Q: I thought anybody could go to Israel.
- A: (male voice: somebody helped her to . . . we came together in one boat.)
- Q: To the United States?
- A: (male voice: sure. Marine Perch.)
- Q: What was the name of the boat?
- A: (male voice: Marine Perch.)
- Q: Marine Perch?
- A: (male voice: I think so.)
- Q: What year was that?
- A: '46. June 24, 1946.
- Q: When you came to United States?
- A: (male voice: Yah. It was 10 o'clock in the morning.)
- Q: You got off the ship in Ellis Island?

- A: (male voice: no, no. on the boat dock. Not Ellis Island). One lady, the late lady, Mrs. Isaacs, she saw us . . she saw me with the baby, and she
- Q: Was it somebody from HIAS?
- A: (male voice: yes, she was from HIAS) I didn't know her. She said, "I'll be your judge." My little one said, "Everybody has a judge – that means aunt or somebody – we have nobody, and she overheard and said, "I'll be your judge". And she really became . . and then she died.
- Q: So, you landed in Manhattan? Where did you sleep? You had no place to go.
- A: No, no, no . . the organization.
- Q: Ok, HIAS took care of you.
- A: Not HIAS. (male voice: that was the . .) You have a good memory. What is it? (male voice: I went to Detroit right away, but what's her name, Jewish Organization, not HIAS . . .JORT . . no . . (male voice URO)
- Q: United Restitution.
- A: (male voice: United Restitution) No, URO was in Europe. They gave us a piece of herring they steal the money. (male voice: no, no. it's not URO)
- Q: URO helped people get restitution from Germany.
- A: (male voice: Restitution from Germany. That's something else.) Yah, wonderful restitution. (male voice: but, how you call the Jewish organization still exists, it is not the Jewish Congress) Levy, Levy was working there. (male voice: levy, yah.)
- Q: American Jewish Committee.
- A: (male voice: American Jewish Committee) No, no, no. Committee, no, no. it has a name. (male voice: American Jewish Committee. . what is the difference?)
- Q: So what did they do with you when you got off the boat?
- A: (male voice: they put us in a room in a hotel, and gave us slips for going to eat something).
- Q: How long did you stay there before you began to do things on your own? Did they help you get schooling, or to get a job?
- A: No, they paid for my rent, schooling she didn't need yet.

- Q: No, you. Training for work.
- A: For work, no. they did not give me (male voice: no) I wanted to continue medicine. I wanted to continue, because not too much left, but they paid us something. I don't remember. Was not enough, ever. But my child has it. that's enough for me.
- Q: This is the same daughter whose picture you showed me?
- A: (male voice: yes. Sure) We have only one daughter. (male voice: we have only one girl)
- Q: How old is your daughter now?
- A: Now? She, I don't remember. 40. 40 (male voice: anyway . .) so, you forgot . . ORT, no, not ORT. Levy was in this.
- Q: What was it like for you to set foot in the Unites States? Was it like a dream come true?
- A: No, Loneliness. Very lonely. Because there was no language. I speak several languages, still speak several, but not English. I didn't study in English. I picked French. (male voice: we all been in a daze) in a daze. Wait a second, they did a bad thing. All such people who ruined people, health ruined, supposed to give us somewhere to stay for a month to relax somewhere in a little village somewhere, not this tumultuous. No. (male voice: we were all in a daze.) we have been all sick, we are still (male voice . . My uncle came from Detroit to pick me up. We went to Detroit. And, I stayed there a month or six weeks, and I came to New York and again here on a street car I see my wife. .)
- Q: You just accidentally met her again?
- A: I didn't have a match-maker. My little one said, "mother" it's a long story. Working in Vilna that I met one doctor, who is now is Israel – our best friend. (male voice: after the liberation) he want also to marry me (male voice: A Russian. A Russian Jew) I didn't want to marry anyway. A Russian Jew. Wonderful people. And, he married. Thank god, he is very happy. It was a woman, a doctor, a son a doctor, a daughter a doctor, all doctors. They are all in Israel, and he wrote now a wonderful book. It is . . not survival, Jack. It is disaster – not in case of disaster – he predicts disaster – what was in Chernobyl. He is very interested in his sons, also.
- Q: Well, I have asked you a lot of questions. You have given me a lot of answers. Is there something I haven't asked you that you would like to add?
- A: You could always ask me. I don't want your time. It is very pleasant to be with you. You can always telephone if you write down. I mean.
- Q: I asked you - that you would like to have included in this tape.

- A: I would include everything, if you want to. Why not?
- Q: Well, I can't think of any more questions. I realize that you can't sum up all these years.
- A: Yah, I know. First of all, today is a bad day for me because I am on pills, and the pills, all pills have a little dope. You know. I am not so terrible always like today.
- Q: Well, I want to thank you very much for participating in our project.
- A: You didn't understand me that I postponed and postponed.
- Q: I knew you had reasons, but I needed to finish the recordings.
- A: When will you be finished?
- Q: I can't tell you that. I don't really know.
- A: it will be well to be the cause. I would go myself to visit to the schools.
- Q: When we get it done, we'll let you know. We will be happy to let you know. But, it may be another year before we get it completed because all of these tapes have to be transcribed.
- A: I didn't tell you the thousand part . . .

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