

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,950

2  
00:00:01,950 --> 00:00:09,840  
So then within a couple of  
weeks, and particularly in--

3  
00:00:09,840 --> 00:00:12,510  
most of the Hungarian  
Jews who survived

4  
00:00:12,510 --> 00:00:16,320  
were Jews from Budapest  
and the provinces.

5  
00:00:16,320 --> 00:00:23,680  
The deportation of  
Jews was much, much--

6  
00:00:23,680 --> 00:00:27,420  
it was really very,  
very extensive.

7  
00:00:27,420 --> 00:00:30,360  
And most of the people in  
the provinces didn't survive.

8  
00:00:30,360 --> 00:00:33,270  
And this was in the  
province of Miskolc.

9  
00:00:33,270 --> 00:00:38,010  
So very quickly, the school was  
seized by the local fascists

10  
00:00:38,010 --> 00:00:39,390  
and the Germans.

11  
00:00:39,390 --> 00:00:42,480  
And most of the kids  
from that school

12

00:00:42,480 --> 00:00:48,090  
were sent directly to Auschwitz  
and killed, including that boy

13

00:00:48,090 --> 00:00:51,150  
whose father I talked to.

14

00:00:51,150 --> 00:00:53,580  
And of course,  
when that happened,

15

00:00:53,580 --> 00:00:56,625  
suddenly my mother had--

16

00:00:56,625 --> 00:00:59,550  
become from-- turned  
from a crazy woman

17

00:00:59,550 --> 00:01:04,769  
into a great sage  
who had the foresight

18

00:01:04,769 --> 00:01:06,285  
to make the right decision.

19

00:01:06,285 --> 00:01:09,190

20

00:01:09,190 --> 00:01:12,540  
Then what-- so that was--

21

00:01:12,540 --> 00:01:15,330  
that phase finished.

22

00:01:15,330 --> 00:01:21,510  
Then later on, I guess in  
beginning spring or maybe

23

00:01:21,510 --> 00:01:28,170  
mid-spring of 1944, I remember  
I was at a soccer game,

24

00:01:28,170 --> 00:01:31,800  
watching a soccer game with  
a couple of friends of mine,

25

00:01:31,800 --> 00:01:34,890  
when the sister of  
one of these friends

26

00:01:34,890 --> 00:01:38,460  
came and told us that  
we better go home,

27

00:01:38,460 --> 00:01:42,730  
that they're going to be  
taking the Jews again.

28

00:01:42,730 --> 00:01:46,740  
And I got home, and  
my parents had already

29

00:01:46,740 --> 00:01:48,570  
heard about that, too.

30

00:01:48,570 --> 00:01:50,730  
But it was not an  
official announcement.

31

00:01:50,730 --> 00:01:54,460  
By this time, the  
grapevine was pretty good,

32

00:01:54,460 --> 00:01:58,380  
so that story-- a story like  
that got out before they

33

00:01:58,380 --> 00:02:01,810  
intended it to get out.

34

00:02:01,810 --> 00:02:06,190  
And so then the question became  
is what are we going to do

35

00:02:06,190 --> 00:02:09,090  
and where are we going to hide?

36  
00:02:09,090 --> 00:02:13,380  
And my parents, I do  
remember that fairly clearly,

37  
00:02:13,380 --> 00:02:17,310  
talking and trying to think of  
all the possible alternatives,

38  
00:02:17,310 --> 00:02:20,580  
and deciding finally to  
approach the president

39  
00:02:20,580 --> 00:02:25,440  
of the Chamber of Commerce  
who had been so much farther--

40  
00:02:25,440 --> 00:02:28,530  
my father's behalf earlier.

41  
00:02:28,530 --> 00:02:30,750  
And so they approached  
him about whether we

42  
00:02:30,750 --> 00:02:34,440  
could hide out on his property.

43  
00:02:34,440 --> 00:02:36,570  
And he said, OK.

44  
00:02:36,570 --> 00:02:39,300  
And in fact, he had a  
one or two other families

45  
00:02:39,300 --> 00:02:41,640  
that he had already  
arranged to hide.

46  
00:02:41,640 --> 00:02:43,290  
Now, where did the hide us?

47

00:02:43,290 --> 00:02:50,160

In the pigsty-- literally, in  
a pigsty, and on the ground.

48

00:02:50,160 --> 00:02:56,010

And so we stayed there with  
rats all over the place,

49

00:02:56,010 --> 00:03:02,010

and we stayed there for two  
or three days and nights.

50

00:03:02,010 --> 00:03:05,970

And by that time, the--

51

00:03:05,970 --> 00:03:08,700

my parents were getting  
word from this man

52

00:03:08,700 --> 00:03:11,250

that he was getting nervous  
about this whole business,

53

00:03:11,250 --> 00:03:14,280

and he wasn't sure how  
long he could keep us.

54

00:03:14,280 --> 00:03:16,680

And then the next  
day, he told us

55

00:03:16,680 --> 00:03:19,680

a new development  
had taken place.

56

00:03:19,680 --> 00:03:27,660

The whole thing has been called  
off and everybody can come out,

57

00:03:27,660 --> 00:03:34,860

and that a deal had been struck  
with the Jewish leadership that

58

00:03:34,860 --> 00:03:38,310  
instead of the Jews  
being deported,

59

00:03:38,310 --> 00:03:43,140  
that the Jews from that section  
of Slovakia, Eastern Slovakia,

60

00:03:43,140 --> 00:03:46,068  
would be required  
to move to the west.

61

00:03:46,068 --> 00:03:48,360  
So for a while, there's a  
question, do you believe him?

62

00:03:48,360 --> 00:03:49,068  
Do you trust him?

63

00:03:49,068 --> 00:03:50,820  
Because trickery had been--

64

00:03:50,820 --> 00:03:53,880  
or do you-- or do you  
trust the announcement?

65

00:03:53,880 --> 00:03:56,760  
Was it that set  
up so that people

66

00:03:56,760 --> 00:03:59,010  
would come out of hiding?

67

00:03:59,010 --> 00:04:01,290  
And then they would  
catch them all.

68

00:04:01,290 --> 00:04:05,340  
But they decided to come  
out, and most people

69

00:04:05,340 --> 00:04:07,540

decided to come out, and  
turned out to be true.

70  
00:04:07,540 --> 00:04:09,930  
And this was an  
instance where some

71  
00:04:09,930 --> 00:04:15,070  
of the top Jewish leadership did  
negotiate about the situation.

72  
00:04:15,070 --> 00:04:19,589  
And the reason they  
decided at that point

73  
00:04:19,589 --> 00:04:25,530  
to try and deport the  
Jews from that area

74  
00:04:25,530 --> 00:04:29,640  
was because the Russian  
front was approaching.

75  
00:04:29,640 --> 00:04:35,520  
And so the unreliable Jews  
had to be gotten rid of.

76  
00:04:35,520 --> 00:04:40,140  
And also, this was a time when  
the transports from Hungary

77  
00:04:40,140 --> 00:04:44,290  
were going through  
Slovakia to Auschwitz.

78  
00:04:44,290 --> 00:04:46,740  
So it seemed like  
a convenient time

79  
00:04:46,740 --> 00:04:51,390  
to hook up a few  
cars to those trains.

80

00:04:51,390 --> 00:04:54,210

But the deal was  
made, and it was true,

81

00:04:54,210 --> 00:04:58,850

and everybody had to move  
to western part of Slovakia,

82

00:04:58,850 --> 00:05:02,590

except people who had  
certain exemptions, even

83

00:05:02,590 --> 00:05:09,310

then, like doctors and  
dentists, pharmacists.

84

00:05:09,310 --> 00:05:12,430

They could remain and be exempt.

85

00:05:12,430 --> 00:05:16,150

I say-- I mention that because  
in fact what happened was that

86

00:05:16,150 --> 00:05:19,360

later on, those exemptions  
were no longer valid,

87

00:05:19,360 --> 00:05:23,860

and most of those people really  
did not survive because they

88

00:05:23,860 --> 00:05:28,870

were so isolated and  
really hadn't learned--

89

00:05:28,870 --> 00:05:31,150

they had been exempt  
all the way through

90

00:05:31,150 --> 00:05:36,740

and they hadn't learned  
the art of survival.

91



00:05:36,740 --> 00:05:42,830

So our family moved to a town in western Slovakia,

92

00:05:42,830 --> 00:05:44,950

which is called Nitra.

93

00:05:44,950 --> 00:05:47,380

And the reason they chose that was

94

00:05:47,380 --> 00:05:53,150

because that's where my father's Gentile partner came from.

95

00:05:53,150 --> 00:05:55,750

That's where his family still live,

96

00:05:55,750 --> 00:05:58,520

and he wanted to go back there.

97

00:05:58,520 --> 00:06:03,230

So not only us then, but the part-- and in fact,

98

00:06:03,230 --> 00:06:09,880

all the apprentices move together with the shop,

99

00:06:09,880 --> 00:06:13,720

because the training still depended on continuing

100

00:06:13,720 --> 00:06:15,970

their apprenticeship.

101

00:06:15,970 --> 00:06:20,290

And so we all moved to Nitra.

102

00:06:20,290 --> 00:06:24,190

And after a while, we got a place to live.

103

00:06:24,190 --> 00:06:27,050

And this will be-- this is an important part of the story.

104

00:06:27,050 --> 00:06:29,620

My parents found a place to live,

105

00:06:29,620 --> 00:06:34,270

but in this kind of a complex, sort

106

00:06:34,270 --> 00:06:38,770

of a little housing complex, that had a--

107

00:06:38,770 --> 00:06:43,180

was walled off from the street with a gate through the wall.

108

00:06:43,180 --> 00:06:47,210

Inside, there was a couple of yards.

109

00:06:47,210 --> 00:06:52,150

And on one end of the yard there was a detached very small

110

00:06:52,150 --> 00:06:56,620  
house, which is where we lived.

111

00:06:56,620 --> 00:07:01,420

Across from the yard was a larger house,

112

00:07:01,420 --> 00:07:04,960

one section of which there was a big room where

113

00:07:04,960 --> 00:07:10,726

the four apprentices that came with my father lived.

114  
00:07:10,726 --> 00:07:15,430  
Adjoining them was where  
a railway conductor's

115  
00:07:15,430 --> 00:07:17,510  
and his family live.

116  
00:07:17,510 --> 00:07:22,180  
And the apprentices  
arranged for board

117  
00:07:22,180 --> 00:07:25,810  
by this railway  
conductor's wife.

118  
00:07:25,810 --> 00:07:28,630  
And around the corner  
and then the other side

119  
00:07:28,630 --> 00:07:33,140  
of this railway conductor's  
family was a machine tool shop.

120  
00:07:33,140 --> 00:07:36,150  
And this was all within  
one enclosed complex.

121  
00:07:36,150 --> 00:07:43,720  
Now, the whole place was  
owned by a woman whose husband

122  
00:07:43,720 --> 00:07:49,720  
had been a Communist during the  
first Czechoslovakian Republic.

123  
00:07:49,720 --> 00:07:53,950  
And he was afraid of persecution  
for being a Communist.

124  
00:07:53,950 --> 00:07:58,360  
So when they built this  
house, they specifically

125  
00:07:58,360 --> 00:08:03,730  
built it with a hiding place  
that might be used potentially

126  
00:08:03,730 --> 00:08:05,350  
by him.

127  
00:08:05,350 --> 00:08:10,150  
The hiding place  
was a space that

128  
00:08:10,150 --> 00:08:12,850  
within the structure  
of the house

129  
00:08:12,850 --> 00:08:18,590  
that you could get into  
from the apprentice's room.

130  
00:08:18,590 --> 00:08:23,920  
There was a kind of a closet  
that was set into the wall,

131  
00:08:23,920 --> 00:08:28,390  
really, more like a armoire  
or something like that,

132  
00:08:28,390 --> 00:08:30,040  
set into the wall.

133  
00:08:30,040 --> 00:08:33,220  
And you open it up  
and it seemed to end

134  
00:08:33,220 --> 00:08:34,510  
where it ended in the back.

135  
00:08:34,510 --> 00:08:38,080  
But actually, it  
was a false door

136

00:08:38,080 --> 00:08:43,900  
that if you pushed it aside,  
you got into this space, which

137  
00:08:43,900 --> 00:08:45,595  
was the hiding space.

138  
00:08:45,595 --> 00:08:51,030  
Now, in terms of size, it--

139  
00:08:51,030 --> 00:08:54,260  
I suppose I should use feet,  
maybe you can translate it.

140  
00:08:54,260 --> 00:08:57,520  
It was about as  
wide as from here

141  
00:08:57,520 --> 00:09:01,330  
to maybe the other side of your  
chair that you're sitting on.

142  
00:09:01,330 --> 00:09:03,640  
That's as wide as it was.

143  
00:09:03,640 --> 00:09:08,260  
In terms of length, it  
was, say, from this wall

144  
00:09:08,260 --> 00:09:11,440  
down to about the  
end of the rug there.

145  
00:09:11,440 --> 00:09:14,560  
So it was a relatively  
small space.

146  
00:09:14,560 --> 00:09:17,410  
It had no access to the outside.

147  
00:09:17,410 --> 00:09:22,030  
The walls were  
damp with moisture.

148  
00:09:22,030 --> 00:09:25,930  
At any rate-- but when my  
parents got this place,

149  
00:09:25,930 --> 00:09:28,580  
this woman who rented it  
out and have owned it,

150  
00:09:28,580 --> 00:09:33,040  
who didn't live there, told  
them about this hiding place.

151  
00:09:33,040 --> 00:09:35,350  
And apparently, that  
railway conductor's family

152  
00:09:35,350 --> 00:09:40,420  
and his family also knew  
about this hiding place.

153  
00:09:40,420 --> 00:09:42,325  
So then what happened was this--

154  
00:09:42,325 --> 00:09:46,300

155  
00:09:46,300 --> 00:09:49,100  
after we'd lived there  
for a little while,

156  
00:09:49,100 --> 00:09:51,970  
somebody came and  
told my parents

157  
00:09:51,970 --> 00:09:53,950  
that they had heard  
one of the big shots

158  
00:09:53,950 --> 00:09:59,230  
in the local fascist  
guard, obviously drunk,

159

00:09:59,230 --> 00:10:02,920  
he started yelling and  
screaming in the marketplace

160

00:10:02,920 --> 00:10:08,620  
about how the day will soon  
come when he will come to our--

161

00:10:08,620 --> 00:10:13,390  
this whole complex and get all  
of the Jews and communists out.

162

00:10:13,390 --> 00:10:16,750

163

00:10:16,750 --> 00:10:20,320  
And when my parents  
heard this story,

164

00:10:20,320 --> 00:10:24,570  
they immediately realized they  
had to do something about this.

165

00:10:24,570 --> 00:10:28,090  
Like you could not afford  
to have an important person

166

00:10:28,090 --> 00:10:33,410  
like that out gunning for you.

167

00:10:33,410 --> 00:10:44,290  
So my father went to  
see him with his partner

168

00:10:44,290 --> 00:10:50,140  
and put the idea of somehow  
buying his goodwill, so

169

00:10:50,140 --> 00:10:52,600  
gifts or bribe.

170

00:10:52,600 --> 00:10:58,070

And the man wouldn't  
hear anything of it.

171  
00:10:58,070 --> 00:10:59,800  
And apparently,  
what was clear was

172  
00:10:59,800 --> 00:11:03,040  
that he had some grudge  
against the woman who

173  
00:11:03,040 --> 00:11:05,050  
owned this place, that he had--

174  
00:11:05,050 --> 00:11:09,430  
he felt she had cheated him out  
some years before or something,

175  
00:11:09,430 --> 00:11:13,720  
and he was still holding a  
bitter grudge against her.

176  
00:11:13,720 --> 00:11:18,880  
So when my father's  
partner came back,

177  
00:11:18,880 --> 00:11:22,870  
my mother, who was sort of canny  
in these ways said to my father

178  
00:11:22,870 --> 00:11:24,820  
that he ought to  
go back by himself,

179  
00:11:24,820 --> 00:11:27,630  
that the reason the  
man didn't take a bribe

180  
00:11:27,630 --> 00:11:31,270  
was that he didn't  
want a witness there.

181  
00:11:31,270 --> 00:11:34,240



And so my father did go back.

182

00:11:34,240 --> 00:11:39,640

And my father was very charming and engaging, and by--

183

00:11:39,640 --> 00:11:42,100

and listened to his complaints about this woman.

184

00:11:42,100 --> 00:11:44,380

And said, yes, you're absolutely right.

185

00:11:44,380 --> 00:11:48,580

And then offered him a couple of rings.

186

00:11:48,580 --> 00:11:51,730

And by the time my father left, he

187

00:11:51,730 --> 00:11:54,490

was as friendly as he could be towards my father.

188

00:11:54,490 --> 00:11:57,850

Now, that's supposed to be important because he

189

00:11:57,850 --> 00:12:00,290

appears again in the scene.

190

00:12:00,290 --> 00:12:02,780

The other thing that's important is this.

191

00:12:02,780 --> 00:12:04,640

And here again, my father-- my mother

192

00:12:04,640 --> 00:12:07,750

was really very

determined survivor.

193

00:12:07,750 --> 00:12:12,070  
And what happened was when  
we moved to western Slovakia,

194

00:12:12,070 --> 00:12:14,410  
of course, all Jews who  
had moved over there

195

00:12:14,410 --> 00:12:18,040  
were required to register.

196

00:12:18,040 --> 00:12:23,290  
And there would be a  
very severe penalty

197

00:12:23,290 --> 00:12:26,350  
for those failing to register.

198

00:12:26,350 --> 00:12:29,590  
Now, my parents  
had learned already

199

00:12:29,590 --> 00:12:33,310  
from the previous experience  
that certainly the police

200

00:12:33,310 --> 00:12:35,740  
followed the registration  
list, and then they

201

00:12:35,740 --> 00:12:38,620  
went to pick up the Jews.

202

00:12:38,620 --> 00:12:41,020  
So my mother was  
determined that we were not

203

00:12:41,020 --> 00:12:43,760  
going to register, period.

204

00:12:43,760 --> 00:12:47,920  
But there was such a pressure  
from everybody to go along,

205  
00:12:47,920 --> 00:12:51,850  
not to cause trouble,  
that one day there

206  
00:12:51,850 --> 00:12:53,470  
was this area where  
a lot of-- there

207  
00:12:53,470 --> 00:12:57,820  
was a Jewish soup kitchen  
and school, and so on.

208  
00:12:57,820 --> 00:12:59,780  
And that's where the  
registration took place.

209  
00:12:59,780 --> 00:13:03,517  
There was-- one day my  
mother saw my father in line

210  
00:13:03,517 --> 00:13:06,780  
to register, and she  
made a big stink.

211  
00:13:06,780 --> 00:13:08,700  
And he finally stepped  
out of the line

212  
00:13:08,700 --> 00:13:12,000  
and we didn't register.

213  
00:13:12,000 --> 00:13:15,750  
Which probably also helped,  
because what happened

214  
00:13:15,750 --> 00:13:16,320  
was that--

215  
00:13:16,320 --> 00:13:18,828

216  
00:13:18,828 --> 00:13:20,610  
again, this is part of history.

217  
00:13:20,610 --> 00:13:25,060  
There was this-- the Slovak  
resistance suddenly erupted,

218  
00:13:25,060 --> 00:13:29,190  
and the Germans  
marched and came in

219  
00:13:29,190 --> 00:13:35,160  
and took a much more direct  
role in the governing

220  
00:13:35,160 --> 00:13:37,110  
of the country.

221  
00:13:37,110 --> 00:13:39,390  
And also came to fight  
off the resistance,

222  
00:13:39,390 --> 00:13:41,520  
because suddenly,  
the resistance was--

223  
00:13:41,520 --> 00:13:44,680  
had taken over a fairly  
big chunk of territory,

224  
00:13:44,680 --> 00:13:48,400  
but not the town where we were.

225  
00:13:48,400 --> 00:13:53,250  
And-- so but people knew  
things were going to get bad.

226  
00:13:53,250 --> 00:13:57,360  
Now, the first day  
that my sister and I

227

00:13:57,360 --> 00:14:02,130  
were supposed to start up in  
school, September of 1944,

228

00:14:02,130 --> 00:14:06,060  
we were late for school.

229

00:14:06,060 --> 00:14:09,390  
Suddenly, my father comes  
back, having already left

230

00:14:09,390 --> 00:14:13,360  
to go to work, and in a panic.

231

00:14:13,360 --> 00:14:15,450  
He'd apparently stopped  
off at the barber.

232

00:14:15,450 --> 00:14:17,372  
Barber started  
lathering his face

233

00:14:17,372 --> 00:14:19,830  
and then told him about the  
Jews-- they're taking the Jews.

234

00:14:19,830 --> 00:14:22,440  
And my father said, take  
the soap, lather up.

235

00:14:22,440 --> 00:14:24,300  
He came right back.

236

00:14:24,300 --> 00:14:32,220  
But, hey, if we hadn't heard  
about this police big shot

237

00:14:32,220 --> 00:14:36,720  
being after us, he would have  
been there at 6:00 that morning

238

00:14:36,720 --> 00:14:40,290

to get us and-- if  
my father hadn't

239  
00:14:40,290 --> 00:14:44,640  
succeeded in winning him over.

240  
00:14:44,640 --> 00:14:47,580  
And if we had  
registered, they probably

241  
00:14:47,580 --> 00:14:51,560  
would have been there  
fairly early, too.

242  
00:14:51,560 --> 00:14:55,620  
In fact, they never came  
to pick us up officially,

243  
00:14:55,620 --> 00:14:59,910  
because we were not on  
the registration list.

244  
00:14:59,910 --> 00:15:05,950  
So-- but when we-- my father  
come back, what to do,

245  
00:15:05,950 --> 00:15:07,690  
where to go.

246  
00:15:07,690 --> 00:15:10,380  
And for some reason, I guess  
my parents really didn't quite

247  
00:15:10,380 --> 00:15:10,980  
trust--

248  
00:15:10,980 --> 00:15:13,710  
although, this railway  
conductor not long

249  
00:15:13,710 --> 00:15:16,710  
before I told my father,  
Henry, don't worry,

250

00:15:16,710 --> 00:15:19,480

tribal council will hide you.

251

00:15:19,480 --> 00:15:22,260

They, I guess, didn't trust  
it because their decision was

252

00:15:22,260 --> 00:15:29,910

that we would go to the house of  
my father's partner's parents.

253

00:15:29,910 --> 00:15:32,760

And they had a house on  
the other side of town,

254

00:15:32,760 --> 00:15:37,060

on the outskirts, with  
some orchards and so on.

255

00:15:37,060 --> 00:15:39,270

So again, we broke  
up into three groups.

256

00:15:39,270 --> 00:15:42,820

My sister and I and my  
father along and my mother

257

00:15:42,820 --> 00:15:46,170

along to make the  
journey across the town.

258

00:15:46,170 --> 00:15:50,160

And I do remember that because  
everywhere you saw police cars

259

00:15:50,160 --> 00:15:52,490

and they were picking  
up Jews everywhere.

260

00:15:52,490 --> 00:15:55,170

One time, it seemed  
to me, at least,

261  
00:15:55,170 --> 00:15:57,960  
like the policemen in the  
car looked at us for a while

262  
00:15:57,960 --> 00:16:00,510  
before he decided to go on.

263  
00:16:00,510 --> 00:16:06,540  
We finally all got  
there, and they put us--

264  
00:16:06,540 --> 00:16:09,720  
these people agreed to  
hide us, and they put us

265  
00:16:09,720 --> 00:16:14,160  
in an open kind of  
shed in their orchard.

266  
00:16:14,160 --> 00:16:15,810  
And that night was miserable.

267  
00:16:15,810 --> 00:16:21,660  
It was cold, and we kept  
hearing noise of people going--

268  
00:16:21,660 --> 00:16:24,960  
obviously, being in the woods  
and coming closer and closer

269  
00:16:24,960 --> 00:16:27,300  
and branches crackling.

270  
00:16:27,300 --> 00:16:31,590  
Finally, totally panicked  
by it, made them--

271  
00:16:31,590 --> 00:16:33,300  
these people take us inside.

272  
00:16:33,300 --> 00:16:37,170



We heard later on that there  
had been thieves in the orchard

273  
00:16:37,170 --> 00:16:39,570  
all night, and that's  
what we were hearing.

274  
00:16:39,570 --> 00:16:41,400  
We stayed there for  
a couple of days--

275  
00:16:41,400 --> 00:16:43,680  
two or three days.

276  
00:16:43,680 --> 00:16:47,340  
And then these people said,  
we can't keep you anymore.

277  
00:16:47,340 --> 00:16:51,180  
We're afraid of what  
will happen to us.

278  
00:16:51,180 --> 00:16:54,120  
We've got an idea for you--

279  
00:16:54,120 --> 00:16:55,030  
place to hide.

280  
00:16:55,030 --> 00:16:56,340  
We know of this place.

281  
00:16:56,340 --> 00:16:57,270  
They're in an attic.

282  
00:16:57,270 --> 00:16:58,740  
There are 24 people.

283  
00:16:58,740 --> 00:17:01,140  
I'm sure they'll take you, too.

284  
00:17:01,140 --> 00:17:03,990  
And here again, my parents,

particularly my mother's

285

00:17:03,990 --> 00:17:07,962

response is, I'm  
not going there.

286

00:17:07,962 --> 00:17:11,880

If you know about this place  
and you have no business knowing

287

00:17:11,880 --> 00:17:14,369

about that hiding  
place, that place

288

00:17:14,369 --> 00:17:18,930

isn't going to be good  
for very long at all.

289

00:17:18,930 --> 00:17:20,599

And in fact, it wasn't.

290

00:17:20,599 --> 00:17:25,230

Within a week or two it  
was raided and everybody--

291

00:17:25,230 --> 00:17:29,330

so then my parents said, can  
we stay for-- until dark?

292

00:17:29,330 --> 00:17:33,170

No, you have to  
leave right away.

293

00:17:33,170 --> 00:17:40,750

And so we had to make-- we made  
the trek back to our place,

294

00:17:40,750 --> 00:17:43,510

again, in the three  
groups, and again, still

295

00:17:43,510 --> 00:17:47,230

police all over the place.

296

00:17:47,230 --> 00:17:52,550

We got back, and at that point,  
this was a Saturday afternoon,

297

00:17:52,550 --> 00:17:55,510

and my parents did approach  
the railway conductor

298

00:17:55,510 --> 00:18:01,900

and said, look, we want to  
hide out in this hiding place.

299

00:18:01,900 --> 00:18:04,570

And he his family  
had to be involved

300

00:18:04,570 --> 00:18:07,810

because we had to be  
fed, aside from the fact

301

00:18:07,810 --> 00:18:09,200

that we knew about the place.

302

00:18:09,200 --> 00:18:14,200

And so he said, no way.

303

00:18:14,200 --> 00:18:17,360

And there was pleading  
back and forth,

304

00:18:17,360 --> 00:18:20,170

but he was adamant-- no way.

305

00:18:20,170 --> 00:18:23,320

And then at some  
point, he goes off

306

00:18:23,320 --> 00:18:26,185

for a walk with his  
seven-year-old daughter.

307

00:18:26,185 --> 00:18:29,110

308

00:18:29,110 --> 00:18:33,760

And this was one  
time where I really

309

00:18:33,760 --> 00:18:37,570

did feel everything was  
lost and my parents just had

310

00:18:37,570 --> 00:18:41,120

no idea what they were doing.

311

00:18:41,120 --> 00:18:46,720

And we're waiting at  
any time for a knock

312

00:18:46,720 --> 00:18:51,430

to come on the gate,  
and that was it.

313

00:18:51,430 --> 00:18:54,010

At some point, we hear a knock  
on the door, which is the gate

314

00:18:54,010 --> 00:18:57,130

hadn't opened and we pretty  
sure it wasn't the police,

315

00:18:57,130 --> 00:19:00,160

and it was one of  
the apprentices.

316

00:19:00,160 --> 00:19:06,235

And he told us, why don't you  
come into that hiding place?

317

00:19:06,235 --> 00:19:08,970

We'll hide you.

318

00:19:08,970 --> 00:19:12,220

So of course, we went.

319  
00:19:12,220 --> 00:19:15,070  
Then it became a matter  
as the other apprentices

320  
00:19:15,070 --> 00:19:18,640  
made their appearance of testing  
each one of them out to see

321  
00:19:18,640 --> 00:19:21,470  
how they felt. They all agreed.

322  
00:19:21,470 --> 00:19:26,410  
Of course, they were all offered  
generous weekly subsidies

323  
00:19:26,410 --> 00:19:27,340  
while they were there.

324  
00:19:27,340 --> 00:19:29,590  
I mean, like making  
about four times as much

325  
00:19:29,590 --> 00:19:32,920  
as they were at their job.

326  
00:19:32,920 --> 00:19:35,130  
Then the question was  
to approach the railway

327  
00:19:35,130 --> 00:19:39,790  
conductors real nice about it  
while he was out on his walk.

328  
00:19:39,790 --> 00:19:42,520  
Because without  
her being in on it,

329  
00:19:42,520 --> 00:19:45,790  
there was no way that-- that  
wasn't going to work, either.

330

00:19:45,790 --> 00:19:52,730  
And she was offered a  
generous compensation for it,

331  
00:19:52,730 --> 00:19:54,730  
probably more-- much more  
money than her husband

332  
00:19:54,730 --> 00:19:56,380  
was making with the railway.

333  
00:19:56,380 --> 00:19:57,670  
And again, this was important.

334  
00:19:57,670 --> 00:20:01,270  
My father had the shop  
all this time and able

335  
00:20:01,270 --> 00:20:04,510  
to make the money.

336  
00:20:04,510 --> 00:20:09,190  
And I think he was--  
they were smart to offer

337  
00:20:09,190 --> 00:20:11,840  
the money in installments,  
because at the same time,

338  
00:20:11,840 --> 00:20:14,620  
there were some people who  
asked people to hide them

339  
00:20:14,620 --> 00:20:16,760  
for all the money they had.

340  
00:20:16,760 --> 00:20:18,760  
The people took the money  
and called the police.

341  
00:20:18,760 --> 00:20:19,260  
Right.

342  
00:20:19,260 --> 00:20:19,940  
Right.

343  
00:20:19,940 --> 00:20:20,440  
Yeah.

344  
00:20:20,440 --> 00:20:26,740  
So then-- but-- and partly,  
they agreed, I think.

345  
00:20:26,740 --> 00:20:28,503  
I mean, probably  
they did feel for us

346  
00:20:28,503 --> 00:20:29,920  
and so on, and  
there was certainly

347  
00:20:29,920 --> 00:20:33,730  
some charitable  
feeling involved.

348  
00:20:33,730 --> 00:20:37,300  
But also at that point,  
there was still the sense

349  
00:20:37,300 --> 00:20:40,000  
that maybe it'll be all over,  
that the partisans might

350  
00:20:40,000 --> 00:20:42,550  
actually win, and the  
whole thing would be

351  
00:20:42,550 --> 00:20:45,130  
over after a couple of weeks.

352  
00:20:45,130 --> 00:20:47,840

353  
00:20:47,840 --> 00:20:52,960  
So we were there, we

were in that hiding place

354

00:20:52,960 --> 00:21:00,200  
without ever budging from that  
place for two full months.

355

00:21:00,200 --> 00:21:05,140  
We were mostly all  
lying down to be

356

00:21:05,140 --> 00:21:09,490  
able to fit in to that place.

357

00:21:09,490 --> 00:21:13,090  
The woman would bring us the  
food in the laundry basket

358

00:21:13,090 --> 00:21:14,410  
and so on that--

359

00:21:14,410 --> 00:21:17,140

360

00:21:17,140 --> 00:21:19,900  
and of course, it  
wasn't kosher food.

361

00:21:19,900 --> 00:21:22,030  
It was pretty good  
that first day,

362

00:21:22,030 --> 00:21:26,350  
and it was OK to eat  
it because you have to.

363

00:21:26,350 --> 00:21:33,400  
And then in terms of our  
elimination functions,

364

00:21:33,400 --> 00:21:37,690  
we had the chamber pot  
and used that all day.



365

00:21:37,690 --> 00:21:40,720

And then in the evening,  
one of the apprentices

366

00:21:40,720 --> 00:21:47,200

would get rid of the waste.

367

00:21:47,200 --> 00:21:49,870

And so they stayed  
for two full months.

368

00:21:49,870 --> 00:21:52,820

We didn't budge out of there.

369

00:21:52,820 --> 00:21:57,490

And then I became sick with  
fever and-- with high fever,

370

00:21:57,490 --> 00:22:00,410

and my parents started  
worrying about that.

371

00:22:00,410 --> 00:22:03,310

And I remember that  
very well, because there

372

00:22:03,310 --> 00:22:06,530

was a lot of anxiety.

373

00:22:06,530 --> 00:22:08,530

And I remember  
sweating like a pig

374

00:22:08,530 --> 00:22:10,840

at some point and thinking  
that was-- that meant

375

00:22:10,840 --> 00:22:12,520

I was really going to die.

376

00:22:12,520 --> 00:22:14,990

I didn't know that meant

my fever was breaking.

377

00:22:14,990 --> 00:22:17,230

And it was after they had  
sent one of the apprentices

378

00:22:17,230 --> 00:22:19,870

out to get some kind of  
anti-fever medication.

379

00:22:19,870 --> 00:22:22,780

But the fear was, if  
you call any doctor,

380

00:22:22,780 --> 00:22:28,930

you couldn't be sure  
he would turn you in.

381

00:22:28,930 --> 00:22:32,380

Now, the fact that  
after all-- after that,

382

00:22:32,380 --> 00:22:37,840

my parents decided that it was  
not very healthy to just stay

383

00:22:37,840 --> 00:22:40,310

in that place.

384

00:22:40,310 --> 00:22:44,350

So we moved over into  
the apprentice's room.

385

00:22:44,350 --> 00:22:46,930

And a couple of them, I  
guess, moved somewhere else

386

00:22:46,930 --> 00:22:48,508

in the complex.

387

00:22:48,508 --> 00:22:50,050

A couple of them  
were staying with us

388  
00:22:50,050 --> 00:22:55,010  
in that room with the idea that  
if necessary in time of crisis,

389  
00:22:55,010 --> 00:22:58,090  
we could run into  
the hiding place.

390  
00:22:58,090 --> 00:23:00,610  
And for the next period  
of time-- and now,

391  
00:23:00,610 --> 00:23:01,690  
this was after--

392  
00:23:01,690 --> 00:23:04,150  
this-- I mean, the total  
time we were in that hiding

393  
00:23:04,150 --> 00:23:04,915  
was nine months.

394  
00:23:04,915 --> 00:23:07,600

395  
00:23:07,600 --> 00:23:09,820  
But during-- there  
was a period of time

396  
00:23:09,820 --> 00:23:12,070  
there where we would then,  
particularly if the railway

397  
00:23:12,070 --> 00:23:14,890  
conductor and the fact that  
he was away most of the time,

398  
00:23:14,890 --> 00:23:19,720  
because he made it possible  
to maintain this arrangement.

399

00:23:19,720 --> 00:23:20,486  
I see.

400  
00:23:20,486 --> 00:23:23,260

401  
00:23:23,260 --> 00:23:26,410  
But we kept hearing stories  
from the apprentices

402  
00:23:26,410 --> 00:23:29,110  
about how this hiding  
place was exposed.

403  
00:23:29,110 --> 00:23:30,290  
These people were taken.

404  
00:23:30,290 --> 00:23:31,870  
Those people were taken.

405  
00:23:31,870 --> 00:23:38,350  
And one never-- every day  
that could happen with us.

406  
00:23:38,350 --> 00:23:45,880  
At some point, one of the  
boys-- in fact, the boy who

407  
00:23:45,880 --> 00:23:50,590  
asked us to come in, there  
were stories coming up

408  
00:23:50,590 --> 00:23:52,780  
that pretty soon  
the Germans were

409  
00:23:52,780 --> 00:23:56,860  
going to conscript  
able-bodied Gentile

410  
00:23:56,860 --> 00:24:04,930  
Slovakians for labor in Germany  
to help with the war effort.

411  
00:24:04,930 --> 00:24:07,360  
And he certainly  
didn't want that.

412  
00:24:07,360 --> 00:24:10,720  
So he wanted to be able to use  
the hiding place for himself,

413  
00:24:10,720 --> 00:24:12,620  
if necessary.

414  
00:24:12,620 --> 00:24:13,930  
So he asked us to leave.

415  
00:24:13,930 --> 00:24:16,450

416  
00:24:16,450 --> 00:24:25,180  
And at that point, my parents  
said to him, OK, George, we'll

417  
00:24:25,180 --> 00:24:27,730  
go, but you know  
very well they're

418  
00:24:27,730 --> 00:24:30,370  
going to catch us very quickly.

419  
00:24:30,370 --> 00:24:35,776  
And I'm sure they'll  
ask us, where were you?

420  
00:24:35,776 --> 00:24:38,020  
And we'll tell them.

421  
00:24:38,020 --> 00:24:41,890  
I mean, aside of course,  
from the possible punishment

422  
00:24:41,890 --> 00:24:44,380  
for hiding, which really never--

423  
00:24:44,380 --> 00:24:46,180  
there was always  
threatened, but I never

424  
00:24:46,180 --> 00:24:49,700  
heard of anybody who really  
got shot or anything like that

425  
00:24:49,700 --> 00:24:51,460  
for hiding Jews.

426  
00:24:51,460 --> 00:24:54,190  
But the hiding  
place was no good.

427  
00:24:54,190 --> 00:24:57,050  
If the officials knew, it  
wouldn't be any good for him,

428  
00:24:57,050 --> 00:25:01,825  
so there was no reason for him  
then to pay off and his asking.

429  
00:25:01,825 --> 00:25:04,450

430  
00:25:04,450 --> 00:25:09,010  
That in itself-- and for a while  
then, occasionally at night,

431  
00:25:09,010 --> 00:25:11,650  
we would actually go out  
in the yard for a walk.

432  
00:25:11,650 --> 00:25:14,270  
And I remember the first  
time the fresh air.

433  
00:25:14,270 --> 00:25:16,210  
I hadn't seen for months.

434

00:25:16,210 --> 00:25:20,020

435

00:25:20,020 --> 00:25:26,650

But then one day, the German  
army moved into that complex.

436

00:25:26,650 --> 00:25:31,460

They took over the place  
where we had lived.

437

00:25:31,460 --> 00:25:34,780

And there was a leather  
shop they made there.

438

00:25:34,780 --> 00:25:37,990

They took over the  
machine tool shop,

439

00:25:37,990 --> 00:25:41,710

and had some other kind of shop.

440

00:25:41,710 --> 00:25:45,310

And the whole yard was  
patrolled by a German sentry

441

00:25:45,310 --> 00:25:47,750

all the time.

442

00:25:47,750 --> 00:25:50,260

So there was no  
way, obviously, we

443

00:25:50,260 --> 00:25:52,420

could ever go out of that room.

444

00:25:52,420 --> 00:25:56,080

And that room had a kind  
of a porch between itself

445

00:25:56,080 --> 00:25:59,090

and the yard, but you could  
see through the windows.

446  
00:25:59,090 --> 00:25:59,590  
You could--

447  
00:25:59,590 --> 00:26:00,908  
There-- was there any light?

448  
00:26:00,908 --> 00:26:02,200  
That's what I was going to ask.

449  
00:26:02,200 --> 00:26:04,450  
Very little light in  
that room, because what

450  
00:26:04,450 --> 00:26:07,780  
you had was certainly no  
light in the hiding place

451  
00:26:07,780 --> 00:26:11,230  
at all other than from a  
candle, and no electric light.

452  
00:26:11,230 --> 00:26:15,050  
And then there was room  
which was relatively dark,

453  
00:26:15,050 --> 00:26:16,750  
because there was,  
in fact, a porch--

454  
00:26:16,750 --> 00:26:20,200  
not a screen porch, it  
was a glass enclosed porch

455  
00:26:20,200 --> 00:26:21,910  
beyond that.

456  
00:26:21,910 --> 00:26:28,630  
And there was a little window  
between the room and the glass

457  
00:26:28,630 --> 00:26:30,850



enclosed porch, as  
well as, I think,

458  
00:26:30,850 --> 00:26:32,878  
some glass on the  
door that let--

459  
00:26:32,878 --> 00:26:34,420  
but you could see  
through the window.

460  
00:26:34,420 --> 00:26:37,000  
You could see the  
German sentry out there.

461  
00:26:37,000 --> 00:26:40,630  
And one time in the evening,  
one of the apprentices

462  
00:26:40,630 --> 00:26:44,380  
was on his way from the  
other conductor's house

463  
00:26:44,380 --> 00:26:48,400  
from his meal back to the place,  
and the German sentry said,

464  
00:26:48,400 --> 00:26:50,800  
halt. And he got  
panicked and kept running

465  
00:26:50,800 --> 00:26:52,870  
towards the room where we were.

466  
00:26:52,870 --> 00:26:55,510  
Finally, stopped  
at the door step.

467  
00:26:55,510 --> 00:26:58,780  
But he could have  
walked right in.

468  
00:26:58,780 --> 00:27:03,040

So then what happened was that--

469

00:27:03,040 --> 00:27:08,140

then the next  
crisis was the woman

470

00:27:08,140 --> 00:27:10,270

who owned the place  
suddenly showed up

471

00:27:10,270 --> 00:27:11,940

and she found out we were there.

472

00:27:11,940 --> 00:27:16,270

And she said that she  
had to sell the place.

473

00:27:16,270 --> 00:27:19,990

That she had accumulated  
big debts, and the only way

474

00:27:19,990 --> 00:27:23,500

she could get out of it was  
that she had to sell the place.

475

00:27:23,500 --> 00:27:27,500

And in fact, she did.

476

00:27:27,500 --> 00:27:32,210

And the new owners were  
supposed to take over

477

00:27:32,210 --> 00:27:37,940

1st of April of 1945.

478

00:27:37,940 --> 00:27:44,450

So-- but then around  
November of '44, December,

479

00:27:44,450 --> 00:27:49,880

we began to hear the artillery,  
the Russian artillery.

480

00:27:49,880 --> 00:27:54,590

But really, the front stalled  
for the winter about 35 miles,

481

00:27:54,590 --> 00:27:57,890

40 miles from where we were.

482

00:27:57,890 --> 00:28:04,370

And then one day, there  
were sirens and planes

483

00:28:04,370 --> 00:28:08,060

all over the place, and a big  
bombing attack took place.

484

00:28:08,060 --> 00:28:10,610

Before that, there had been  
air raids of American flying

485

00:28:10,610 --> 00:28:14,420

fortresses that kept flying  
over to Viennese Neustadt

486

00:28:14,420 --> 00:28:16,790

to bomb the armaments  
factories there.

487

00:28:16,790 --> 00:28:18,350

And we've gotten  
used to the fact

488

00:28:18,350 --> 00:28:21,980

that nothing ever  
happened there.

489

00:28:21,980 --> 00:28:24,450

But this time was  
different-- low flying planes

490

00:28:24,450 --> 00:28:27,080

and suddenly we  
were being bombed.

491

00:28:27,080 --> 00:28:29,580

And there was no  
basement we could go to,

492

00:28:29,580 --> 00:28:33,110

and windows were all broken.

493

00:28:33,110 --> 00:28:38,960

And-- but that was the start  
of the Russian offense that--

494

00:28:38,960 --> 00:28:45,080

where the front had been  
stalled for all of that time.

495

00:28:45,080 --> 00:28:49,580

And then the question  
was-- and at that point,

496

00:28:49,580 --> 00:28:52,160

this is what happened.

497

00:28:52,160 --> 00:28:54,230

We can no longer hide  
from the railway conductor

498

00:28:54,230 --> 00:28:56,510

that we were--

499

00:28:56,510 --> 00:28:59,420

and of course, with the  
war about to be over,

500

00:28:59,420 --> 00:29:04,280

he had no more objection to  
our being there because--

501

00:29:04,280 --> 00:29:07,130

one of the things, the  
propaganda, German propaganda

502

00:29:07,130 --> 00:29:08,570

was very--

503

00:29:08,570 --> 00:29:11,270

would have you believe  
that when they came in,

504

00:29:11,270 --> 00:29:14,720

whatever Jews were left  
would become kings.

505

00:29:14,720 --> 00:29:18,050

And anybody who had  
anything to do against them

506

00:29:18,050 --> 00:29:20,120

would be severely punished.

507

00:29:20,120 --> 00:29:24,470

And I guess it was to keep  
the motivation on their side,

508

00:29:24,470 --> 00:29:26,960

because a lot of people  
were in some way implicated,

509

00:29:26,960 --> 00:29:29,750

even though, I think, people  
had taken over Jewish property

510

00:29:29,750 --> 00:29:32,640

and so on and so forth.

511

00:29:32,640 --> 00:29:34,220

So-- but by that  
point, everybody

512

00:29:34,220 --> 00:29:37,380

was looking to have a  
good deed on their side.

513

00:29:37,380 --> 00:29:40,990

514

00:29:40,990 --> 00:29:43,370

So we were-- so at some  
point, particularly

515

00:29:43,370 --> 00:29:46,220

after the second night  
when the front started,

516

00:29:46,220 --> 00:29:51,110

it was shelling all night.

517

00:29:51,110 --> 00:29:55,220

Big flares of light  
and big explosion,

518

00:29:55,220 --> 00:29:57,510

and there was nowhere to hide.

519

00:29:57,510 --> 00:30:02,540

So at some point, my  
parents decided to go.

520

00:30:02,540 --> 00:30:04,990

And the other people,  
the railway conductor

521

00:30:04,990 --> 00:30:09,560

and the other apprentices went  
to the railway conductor's

522

00:30:09,560 --> 00:30:12,180

new house, which had  
a basement, which

523

00:30:12,180 --> 00:30:14,420

is about a mile or so away.

524

00:30:14,420 --> 00:30:18,230

And at some point, we  
decided to join them.

525

00:30:18,230 --> 00:30:22,580

But when we got there, then  
we started hearing stories

526  
00:30:22,580 --> 00:30:27,980  
that the Germans were going to  
come by and collect men, again,

527  
00:30:27,980 --> 00:30:28,590  
for work.

528  
00:30:28,590 --> 00:30:30,048  
But they would have  
found us there.

529  
00:30:30,048 --> 00:30:32,780  
There was-- that's  
no hiding place.

530  
00:30:32,780 --> 00:30:38,090  
So my parents decided we had to  
go back to the original place.

531  
00:30:38,090 --> 00:30:41,180  
And that-- by that point,  
one of the apprentices

532  
00:30:41,180 --> 00:30:43,660  
became the one that  
my parents really

533  
00:30:43,660 --> 00:30:46,280  
became very much to  
trust and rely upon.

534  
00:30:46,280 --> 00:30:50,780  
And he said, wherever you  
go, I will go with you.

535  
00:30:50,780 --> 00:30:52,790  
And he came back with  
us and was taking

536  
00:30:52,790 --> 00:30:55,130

some chance because  
there was a curfew,

537  
00:30:55,130 --> 00:30:59,000  
and just any patrol that stopped  
us could have shot us just

538  
00:30:59,000 --> 00:31:02,570  
for having a curfew violation.

539  
00:31:02,570 --> 00:31:05,720  
Anyway-- but then after  
another couple of days because

540  
00:31:05,720 --> 00:31:10,430  
of the heavy shelling and so  
on, and total lack of protection

541  
00:31:10,430 --> 00:31:14,690  
there, we decided to go back  
again to the other place.

542  
00:31:14,690 --> 00:31:18,320  
And then for the next two days,  
there was bombing and shelling

543  
00:31:18,320 --> 00:31:19,140  
and so on.

544  
00:31:19,140 --> 00:31:21,980  
And finally, there was  
silence one morning.

545  
00:31:21,980 --> 00:31:26,330  
And looked out and there  
were the Russian soldier.

546  
00:31:26,330 --> 00:31:29,600  
And a little-- and  
the liberation of that

547  
00:31:29,600 --> 00:31:33,200  
took place on March 31.



548  
00:31:33,200 --> 00:31:34,940  
I remember the April 1--

549  
00:31:34,940 --> 00:31:35,510  
Yeah.

550  
00:31:35,510 --> 00:31:38,490  
--deadline?

551  
00:31:38,490 --> 00:31:44,660  
Just as a little postscript,  
sort of presaging things

552  
00:31:44,660 --> 00:31:49,790  
to come, when we were  
liberated that day

553  
00:31:49,790 --> 00:31:53,630  
and came out into  
the open, my parents

554  
00:31:53,630 --> 00:31:57,620  
felt what if there is a  
counterattack and we were not--

555  
00:31:57,620 --> 00:32:01,940  
and Germans temporarily  
retake this place?

556  
00:32:01,940 --> 00:32:05,180  
So they wanted to find  
some way of moving

557  
00:32:05,180 --> 00:32:08,000  
further back behind the lines.

558  
00:32:08,000 --> 00:32:12,920  
Having believed all of this  
German propaganda about how

559  
00:32:12,920 --> 00:32:16,820

when the Russians came in, they  
were so wonderful to the Jews,

560  
00:32:16,820 --> 00:32:21,440  
my father set out to  
the Russian headquarters

561  
00:32:21,440 --> 00:32:25,280  
to find out if it's  
possible to be transported

562  
00:32:25,280 --> 00:32:28,070  
back further behind the line.

563  
00:32:28,070 --> 00:32:31,310  
He runs into a couple  
of Russian soldiers

564  
00:32:31,310 --> 00:32:34,300  
and asks, where is  
the headquarters?

565  
00:32:34,300 --> 00:32:37,200  
And they ask him, who are you?

566  
00:32:37,200 --> 00:32:38,750  
Why are you asking?

567  
00:32:38,750 --> 00:32:43,190  
And my father says, well,  
I'm Jewish, expecting then

568  
00:32:43,190 --> 00:32:45,440  
to be treated royally.

569  
00:32:45,440 --> 00:32:49,940  
And that one of the soldiers,  
they were both pretty drunk,

570  
00:32:49,940 --> 00:32:54,410  
points his automatic gun at  
him and said, you're Jewish?

571

00:32:54,410 --> 00:32:57,330

I'm going to kill you.

572

00:32:57,330 --> 00:33:00,030

And could easily have  
done that on the first day

573

00:33:00,030 --> 00:33:01,680

after the-- yeah.

574

00:33:01,680 --> 00:33:02,760

Oh, God.

575

00:33:02,760 --> 00:33:07,830

And his buddy said,  
ah, let him go.

576

00:33:07,830 --> 00:33:12,360

My father no longer looked for  
the headquarters but came back.

577

00:33:12,360 --> 00:33:16,650

We kept our fingers crossed,  
and of course, there

578

00:33:16,650 --> 00:33:19,260

was no counteroffensive  
because this was really

579

00:33:19,260 --> 00:33:27,440

the beginning of the final  
very quick retreat and defeat

580

00:33:27,440 --> 00:33:28,320

of the others.

581

00:33:28,320 --> 00:33:31,910

582

00:33:31,910 --> 00:33:32,970

It's a wild story.

583

00:33:32,970 --> 00:33:34,922

Yeah, that is a wild story.

584

00:33:34,922 --> 00:33:38,900

Are there you do have a couple of pictures of relatives.

585

00:33:38,900 --> 00:33:40,770

Are there any relatives that you'd

586

00:33:40,770 --> 00:33:44,180

like to talk about that we could possibly include

587

00:33:44,180 --> 00:33:46,150

in our project, do you think?

588

00:33:46,150 --> 00:33:48,720

Well, there's only-- I mean, none of them-- as I said,

589

00:33:48,720 --> 00:33:50,310

there's only one survivor.

590

00:33:50,310 --> 00:33:50,810

Right.

591

00:33:50,810 --> 00:33:52,990

I mean, of the ones who perished.

592

00:33:52,990 --> 00:33:57,440

Would you know enough about any of them to discuss?

593

00:33:57,440 --> 00:34:04,850

Well, I can say little things about them.

594

00:34:04,850 --> 00:34:10,370

The one cousin who did survive,

his parents and sister were--

595

00:34:10,370 --> 00:34:11,420  
both died.

596

00:34:11,420 --> 00:34:15,790  
And I do remember his parents.

597

00:34:15,790 --> 00:34:20,389  
His father was very,  
very good person.

598

00:34:20,389 --> 00:34:30,370  
They had a pastry shop that  
I used to go to and finagle

599

00:34:30,370 --> 00:34:34,070  
little dips of pastry.

600

00:34:34,070 --> 00:34:37,909  
And my aunt used to make  
ice cream every morning

601

00:34:37,909 --> 00:34:39,830  
the old fashioned way.

602

00:34:39,830 --> 00:34:43,655  
And it was-- as I remember it to  
be the most delicious ice cream

603

00:34:43,655 --> 00:34:45,080  
that I had ever--

604

00:34:45,080 --> 00:34:46,205  
that I had ever had.

605

00:34:46,205 --> 00:34:49,760

606

00:34:49,760 --> 00:34:57,410  
My cousin, their daughter, who  
was that point about 17 or 18,

607

00:34:57,410 --> 00:35:00,590

who I mentioned before who  
had hid out during that,

608

00:35:00,590 --> 00:35:04,670

she was very much  
wanted to survive

609

00:35:04,670 --> 00:35:09,570

but tried very hard  
not to be taken.

610

00:35:09,570 --> 00:35:11,870

But I don't remember  
the exact circumstances,

611

00:35:11,870 --> 00:35:15,740

but she did get taken.

612

00:35:15,740 --> 00:35:18,920

These relatives I mentioned  
before the-- my mother's

613

00:35:18,920 --> 00:35:22,850

younger sister, whose  
wedding picture you saw,

614

00:35:22,850 --> 00:35:26,210

she was a very pretty woman.

615

00:35:26,210 --> 00:35:31,970

And their daughter I mentioned,  
who was very, very cute.

616

00:35:31,970 --> 00:35:39,630

And I at one point, she and I  
played a fair amount together.

617

00:35:39,630 --> 00:35:42,070

And she kept talking about  
how she wanted to marry me,

618

00:35:42,070 --> 00:35:45,470

like girls of that age would.

619

00:35:45,470 --> 00:35:46,660

What was her name?

620

00:35:46,660 --> 00:35:48,740

Eva, called her Evicka.

621

00:35:48,740 --> 00:35:51,420

622

00:35:51,420 --> 00:35:53,620

And of course, she's--

623

00:35:53,620 --> 00:35:58,280

624

00:35:58,280 --> 00:36:04,125

those were the relatives that

I was closest to their age.

625

00:36:04,125 --> 00:36:07,450

626

00:36:07,450 --> 00:36:08,890

Certainly tragic.

627

00:36:08,890 --> 00:36:10,000

Yeah.

628

00:36:10,000 --> 00:36:13,930

Are there any of the

incidents or episodes,

629

00:36:13,930 --> 00:36:16,840

images stand out in your

mind from this period

630

00:36:16,840 --> 00:36:23,170

that you didn't discuss that

you might want to include

631  
00:36:23,170 --> 00:36:24,689  
as part of the interview?

632  
00:36:24,689 --> 00:36:29,960

633  
00:36:29,960 --> 00:36:33,370  
I can't think of any right--

634  
00:36:33,370 --> 00:36:36,490  
Also, did you want to discuss a  
little bit about what happened

635  
00:36:36,490 --> 00:36:37,900  
to your family after the war?

636  
00:36:37,900 --> 00:36:39,340  
Yeah, I'll be glad to.

637  
00:36:39,340 --> 00:36:42,700  
I mean, the thing that--

638  
00:36:42,700 --> 00:36:45,650  
I mean, as soon as the  
war was over, of course,

639  
00:36:45,650 --> 00:36:49,570  
my parents once again wanted  
to come to America and so

640  
00:36:49,570 --> 00:36:51,640  
that-- as soon as possible.

641  
00:36:51,640 --> 00:36:55,510  
We obtained an  
affidavit, again, from--

642  
00:36:55,510 --> 00:37:01,630  
through my father's brother  
who was living in Minneapolis.



643  
00:37:01,630 --> 00:37:06,460  
And things were very  
difficult there after the war.

644  
00:37:06,460 --> 00:37:11,320  
Very few Jews were left,  
but antisemitism was still

645  
00:37:11,320 --> 00:37:14,500  
very, very strong.

646  
00:37:14,500 --> 00:37:19,160  
And there was little question  
in the minds of my family,

647  
00:37:19,160 --> 00:37:21,040  
anyway, that we  
wanted to get out

648  
00:37:21,040 --> 00:37:23,350  
of there as soon as possible.

649  
00:37:23,350 --> 00:37:25,600  
But again, because  
of there still

650  
00:37:25,600 --> 00:37:29,140  
being that discriminatory  
at that time, immigration

651  
00:37:29,140 --> 00:37:34,810  
law in the US against Slovak  
Eastern European country,

652  
00:37:34,810 --> 00:37:37,690  
we had to wait a long time.

653  
00:37:37,690 --> 00:37:41,830  
By this time, I had begun  
going to a gymnasium

654

00:37:41,830 --> 00:37:46,300  
in the public state  
gymnasium where

655  
00:37:46,300 --> 00:37:53,550  
I was one of two Jewish  
boys out of about 40 Jews--

656  
00:37:53,550 --> 00:37:58,060  
40 regular student.

657  
00:37:58,060 --> 00:38:05,230  
And our main teacher was  
clearly very antisemitic.

658  
00:38:05,230 --> 00:38:08,830  
And she would take--

659  
00:38:08,830 --> 00:38:12,070  
she you would have, essentially,  
this other Jewish boy and me

660  
00:38:12,070 --> 00:38:16,540  
take turns by being  
the scapegoat.

661  
00:38:16,540 --> 00:38:21,910

662  
00:38:21,910 --> 00:38:24,880  
And then that was to some extent  
true with some of the boys.

663  
00:38:24,880 --> 00:38:29,030  
I had one friend who like  
I'd befriended, and--

664  
00:38:29,030 --> 00:38:30,040  
a boy.

665  
00:38:30,040 --> 00:38:34,240  
And when we had an argument,  
like boys will have,

666  
00:38:34,240 --> 00:38:38,055  
what he had to say to  
me was that I always

667  
00:38:38,055 --> 00:38:39,430  
thought you were  
a different Jew,

668  
00:38:39,430 --> 00:38:43,390  
but I guess you're  
like all the rest.

669  
00:38:43,390 --> 00:38:46,319  
And this was after all  
of this had happened.

670  
00:38:46,319 --> 00:38:48,236  
Did they have any knowledge  
or sense of what--

671  
00:38:48,236 --> 00:38:50,150  
Yeah, I think they did.

672  
00:38:50,150 --> 00:38:53,200  
And one could occasionally  
hear from someone,

673  
00:38:53,200 --> 00:38:54,630  
they didn't finish the job.

674  
00:38:54,630 --> 00:38:57,310

675  
00:38:57,310 --> 00:39:07,000  
And my father began a  
jewelry shop, again,

676  
00:39:07,000 --> 00:39:13,420  
and actually that was quite  
successful for the next two

677

00:39:13,420 --> 00:39:14,800  
or three years.

678  
00:39:14,800 --> 00:39:18,490  
Now, then we were still there  
when the communist coup d'etat

679  
00:39:18,490 --> 00:39:21,970  
took place in February of 1948.

680  
00:39:21,970 --> 00:39:24,910  
And certainly, there  
was a lot of things--

681  
00:39:24,910 --> 00:39:29,620  
I did become, I must say also,  
quite active in the Zionist

682  
00:39:29,620 --> 00:39:32,920  
organization there.

683  
00:39:32,920 --> 00:39:37,840  
The-- and by that, it was  
Bnei Akiva that I belonged to.

684  
00:39:37,840 --> 00:39:43,900  
And attitude had changed  
towards Zionism because

685  
00:39:43,900 --> 00:39:46,180  
of the experience of the war.

686  
00:39:46,180 --> 00:39:49,750  
Although, when we  
finally left, I,

687  
00:39:49,750 --> 00:39:53,530  
having been a fervent Zionist  
at that point, really felt

688  
00:39:53,530 --> 00:39:55,360  
it was a betrayal  
to come to America,

689  
00:39:55,360 --> 00:39:58,000  
rather than go to Palestine.

690  
00:39:58,000 --> 00:40:03,190  
My father didn't think  
Palestine would survive,

691  
00:40:03,190 --> 00:40:07,450  
or the Jewish community there  
in Palestine wouldn't survive.

692  
00:40:07,450 --> 00:40:10,570  
Anyway, after about--  
within a month or two

693  
00:40:10,570 --> 00:40:16,720  
after the Communist took  
over, our number came up.

694  
00:40:16,720 --> 00:40:18,420  
And I don't know  
whether there was

695  
00:40:18,420 --> 00:40:20,890  
a quota had become  
accelerated because

696  
00:40:20,890 --> 00:40:24,580  
of the Communist takeover,  
and this was a few months

697  
00:40:24,580 --> 00:40:31,060  
before they clamped down  
on legal immigration

698  
00:40:31,060 --> 00:40:33,000  
from Czechoslovakia.

699  
00:40:33,000 --> 00:40:36,400  
So during that, there was  
that window of opportunity

700

00:40:36,400 --> 00:40:40,540

and we essentially left  
legally from Czechoslovakia,

701

00:40:40,540 --> 00:40:45,310

I think, in about April '48.

702

00:40:45,310 --> 00:40:48,700

And the other thing, I  
mean, the post-war years,

703

00:40:48,700 --> 00:40:54,160

I mean, I remember for some  
there was-- after you survive

704

00:40:54,160 --> 00:40:58,840

yourself, there was people  
kept clinging to the hope

705

00:40:58,840 --> 00:41:04,150

that their relatives  
would one day come back.

706

00:41:04,150 --> 00:41:09,190

And for many years,  
particularly around holidays,

707

00:41:09,190 --> 00:41:14,690

there would be a lot of  
remembering and weeping

708

00:41:14,690 --> 00:41:16,000

about all the loss.

709

00:41:16,000 --> 00:41:20,490

710

00:41:20,490 --> 00:41:25,000

Well, if there's anything  
else that you'd like to add,

711

00:41:25,000 --> 00:41:26,250

I want to thank you very much.

712

00:41:26,250 --> 00:41:28,010

You're welcome.

713

00:41:28,010 --> 00:41:30,379