OK.

Remember, I told you that at the time, we were in the refugee home in Montreux.

To be precise, in Territet in Switzerland.

I had to leave the home because I was under a different status, that of immigrant and not refugee, which left the baby in the home.

Eventually, of course, they allowed
me to come back to the home.

13 00:00:29,570 --> 00:00:34,190
In return, I had to pay for room and board.

14 00:00:34,190 --> 00:00:37,400
at the same amount of money, or the same amount of money.

15 00:00:37,400 --> 00:00:40,970
that the Swiss had to pay.

16 00:00:40,970 --> 00:00:43,730
I think it was five or eight francs a day.

17 00:00:43,730 --> 00:00:46,270
Now, you're probably wondering how come.

18 00:00:46,270 --> 00:00:49,580
we had the money to pay that.

19 00:00:49,580 --> 00:00:51,530
I also told you that I had a brother who

20 00:00:51,530 --> 00:00:55,250
was in the American Army and was killed.

21 00:00:55,250 --> 00:00:56,720
in the Battle of the Bulge.

22 00:00:56,720 --> 00:01:01,880
And he had made a life insurance before he went overseas.

23 00:01:01,880 --> 00:01:05,580
And his life insurance was $10,000.
And it was paid out in monthly installments of $50 over I think a 20-year period, as a matter of fact.

And these $50 allowed us, or made it possible for us, to pay for my room and board in the refugee home.

So I forgot to explain that to you, where the money came from so we could pay this room and board.

What is your next?

Well, I remember, when we were talking earlier, that there were other family members that we hadn't talked about yet.
Hard to believe there's other family members we didn't talk about yet.

But the Monee family, these were your mother's cousins.

Your mother's first cousin?

Yeah, he was my mother's first cousin.

His name was Heinrich Monee.

His wife Paula and his sister Jeannette.

And they were deported with us to Gurs the same time.

And Paula was already really starting to go into a depression in Germany.

and had all sorts of peculiar ideas.

She accused my mother and her sisters
of being responsible
for them not

having been able
to go to Israel,

not being able to emigrate
to Israel, which was

of course total fabrication.

Neither my mother nor my aunt
had any influence or whatever

for them to leave
or not to leave.

It was something that
got into her head.

And she, I can
understand, wanted

to go to Israel to be
with her two sons, one

from a previous marriage.

She was left widowed and
then married this cousin
of my mother.

And of course, her second son, who was also in Israel.

And then, of course, came to deportation.

And we found ourselves in Gurs.

And the poor woman really went into a very deep depression,

to the point where she wouldn't really take care of herself.

There were weeks on end she would not speak to anyone in the family.

And it was really very hard.

She did come to the funeral of my aunt when my oldest aunt died.
And I think she might also have come to my grandmother's funeral.

Incidentally, while we speak of funerals, let me give you a description of a funeral in Gurs.

Yes, I would like that.

The funerals in Gurs--

the bodies were every morning collected in each block.

I mean, I first came across this.

There were two or three men who would come with a truck, an open truck.

And they would come into the office and sort of kick open the door with their
shoe and come in and say,

82
00:04:03,310 --> 00:04:05,520
you've got something?

83
00:04:05,520 --> 00:04:07,900
Meaning do you have any bodies?

84
00:04:07,900 --> 00:04:11,910
I mean, I heard that for
the first time, [GERMAN]..

85
00:04:11,910 --> 00:04:14,640
I was absolutely
shocked, you know,

86
00:04:14,640 --> 00:04:17,079
that you could speak
of people like that.

87
00:04:17,079 --> 00:04:19,680
But I guess when you do
this kind of work every day,

88
00:04:19,680 --> 00:04:21,839
it becomes sort of routine.

89
00:04:21,839 --> 00:04:22,980
These were French?

90
00:04:22,980 --> 00:04:24,740
No, they were refugees as well.

91
00:04:24,740 --> 00:04:25,260
Refugees.

92
00:04:25,260 --> 00:04:28,060
Yes, it was all
done by refugees.

93
00:04:28,060 --> 00:04:33,630
The bodies were then
taken down to the hospital

94
00:04:33,630 --> 00:04:38,380
and they were put in
caskets, very simple caskets,

95
00:04:38,380 --> 00:04:42,670
like you would in a Jewish
funeral, just six boards.

96
00:04:42,670 --> 00:04:44,230
And then the funeral--

97
00:04:44,230 --> 00:04:48,790
we had the cemetery,
which rapidly filled up.

98
00:04:48,790 --> 00:04:50,350
The graves were dark.

99
00:04:50,350 --> 00:04:55,330
And since it was winter,
and mud, and rain,

100
00:04:55,330 --> 00:04:58,840
the caskets literally
were swimming.

101
00:04:58,840 --> 00:05:03,670
They plunged down into the
water, went down for a second,

102
00:05:03,670 --> 00:05:07,630
and then came back up and were
swimming on top of the water.

103
00:05:07,630 --> 00:05:11,630
It was the most awful sight
you could ever have imagined.

104
00:05:11,630 --> 00:05:14,170
You know, this first
falling into the water,
the water splashing up, and then the casket coming up again on top of the water.

And then, of course, it was covered by earth.

But the funerals were really something you wouldn't want to really experience.

Now, Paula Monee might have come to my grandmother's funeral.

I do not remember.

But she definitely came to my aunt's funeral.

And maybe she even said a word or two to the family.

But basically, she was in such a deep depression that she would not speak to them.
And still and always with the idea you are responsible for me being here.

It's your fault we couldn't emigrate.

And how far back did these accusations go?

Well, they started in Germany in 19--

early '39.

After Kristallnacht.

After Kristallnacht.

The woman was totally desperate.

And unfortunately, she eventually

had a granddaughter who was mentally also not very stable.

And only about eight years
ago committed suicide.

00:06:20,640 --> 00:06:23,450
So there must have been something.

00:06:23,450 --> 00:06:26,824

Heinrich Monee, he was a very nice person,

00:06:29,400 --> 00:06:32,360
a very good-natured person.

00:06:32,360 --> 00:06:36,860
And I liked him quite a bit as an uncle.

00:06:36,860 --> 00:06:40,220
Really did because he was very good-natured and very nice.

00:06:40,220 --> 00:06:45,320
And you know, just a nice guy, too, you know.

00:06:45,320 --> 00:06:48,898
There was a sister, Jeannette Monee, she worked for my aunts

00:06:48,898 --> 00:06:49,565
in the business.

00:06:49,565 --> 00:06:52,170

She was the bookkeeper and general office manager,
if you wish.

And she was with is in Gurs.

She was then taken
to another camp.

After all, she was
an elderly person.

And she survived.

She survived in France
and after the war,

went back to Germany to
live in a Jewish old age

home in Frankfurt.

This old age home existed
already before the Hitler time

and during the Hitler time.

And she went back there
probably very simply

because she could have there
a life, a comfortable life.
She was entitled to her social security in Germany, while in France, she didn't have a penny. And whatever little money she had, she probably got from some relatives in Switzerland. So said, she was this way independent. And I cannot blame her for having gone back to Germany under these circumstances.

Now, Heinrich and Paula were eventually brought-- Heinrich and Paula were deported from Gurs to Auschwitz. And I believe they were also deported only four
days after my mother, around the 10th of August, 1942.

Yes, that's what the book.

That's always--

[BOTH TALKING QUIETLY]

Yes, I thought of some more questions regarding Gurs.

And I'm very glad that you remembered to describe the funerals.

When you're describing your uncle and your obvious affection for him,

occurred to me how sad it must have been that you were kept separate.
Because you were kept separate from the men.

Yeah, the women and children were separate from the men.

Once the boys were 14 years old, they had to go into the blocks where the men were, the men's blocks.

whether they had a father or relative there or not.

In other words, at 14, they were taken away from their mothers.

They had to go with the men.

So I had the vision of you separated from one of your dearest uncles and forced to be with this complaining, depressed aunt.

Well, she was in another barracks.
But it was difficult. I mean, you tried to talk to her, to be nice to her. After all, she was family. And here was this totally depressed person. Yeah. What was it like to live in Gurs? You were there for quite a while. 11 months. Yeah. Very difficult, extremely difficult. The sanitary conditions were impossible. I don't know whether I mentioned it before.
There was a lot of illness.

There was a tremendous amount of dysentery.

We had no medications whatsoever.

What kind of food did they feed you?

The food—well, in the morning, we would get—

would pass this coffee.

We got a ration of bread of about 2 and 1/2 pounds a day.

Per person?

No, excuse me.

Half a pound or something.
Half a pound, yeah.

Half a pound of bread.

Sorry.

A half a kilo, yeah.

Something like that.

A quarter of a kilo.

Something like that.

And lunchtime, we would have a soup, maybe

some vegetables in it.

Maybe some chickpeas in it, occasionally

a little piece of meat.

And in the evening, it was basically the same thing.

Very occasionally, we would be given
a small portion of brown sugar.

Was the first time I had seen brown sugar was in France.

The very beginning, we didn't get any soap.

I think we got, later on, a little bit of soap.

Living conditions were very hard.

The worst thing, really, was the mud.

The incessant rain in winter, the mud,

the barracks that were leaking.

So when you were lying down, the water would drip down.

If you were lucky, someone had taken along maybe an umbrella.
And the umbrella would be hung upside down into the rafters
to catch the rain.
So that was very nice as long as it lasted.
But then came the morning, you had
to empty out the damn thing.
And when you took it down, more likely than not,
it would spill.
You know, I mean, it sounds funny today,
it wasn't at the time.
Especially when you think, when it was always
damp, and nothing would dry.
You know, it was no heat in the barracks.
Was always cold in winter.

So there was a stove in the barracks but nothing to heat with or very little.

You forgot to mention that it is documented.

That it is documented that a portion of the money which was allotted by the French government for food never reached us--

Was stolen.

--because it was stolen before we ever got food for it.

Sounds like you were very resourceful.

The people in Gurs became very resourceful, yes.

You had to be.
For one thing, tin cans, large tin cans, oh, about 15 inches high and maybe six inches in diameter were turned into ovens or cooking stoves, if you wish, whatever you want to call it.

Portable stoves?

Like a portable stove, right.

How were those put together?

They were not put together.

The top was cut open, obviously, because whatever was in there had been emptied out.

You simply opened on the bottom, like a little opening.
right, so you could put in some wood.

And if the pot you put on, the little pots that we-- they were not really pots,

they were like mess kits from the army.

They had little handles on each side.

So they were hanging over the edge of the tin can

so they could hold them in place.

Sometimes, if there was a little wire,

they would put some wire on the bottom

in order to put the wood on there

so it would have some draft from the bottom up,
not unlike a crate in the fireplace.

You know, so there would be some draft.

And so whatever people could get hold of,

if they had a little money and could

do maybe a little black marketing with the Spaniards,

they would cook on these makeshift stoves.

It worked.

People in your barracks used them?

Certainly, whoever could afford to get ahold of one.

Usually, you had to pay a little money to get it.

These weren't home--they were made by--
They were all made in Gurs, they were made by the men.

The Spaniards made them there.

And the little money that--

The Spanish prisoners?

The Spanish prisoners, yes.

They made a little money that way, you know.

And I guess they also found most of those tin cans.

You know.

So it was a way of, if you had a little money,

to add something to what you were given in the camp.

Now, some people did get money on a fairly regular basis

in Gurs from relatives.
And the money would be paid out, whatever the amount was.

That led to a tremendous inflation in the black market

so that we found ourselves in a situation

where only a certain amount of money

twice a month would be paid out to limit the amount of money

that was available to people.

So the black market, or the inflation of the black market,

couldn't go even higher.

So the ones who had very little money

or got very little money from the outside

were not totally shut out from buying some food, right,
or whatever was available.

Also, we instituted at that time a percentage of whatever money you got had to be put in a welfare fund.

And I don't remember what the percentage was, maybe 10% or whatever.

I really don't remember that.

But it had to be collected from everyone who got money and was given to the people who had no money whatsoever, had no relatives who could afford to send them any money,

or had no relatives on the outside.

So they also could have a few pennies in their pockets
to buy something to add to their diet, whatever was available.

So some people kicked a lot when they had to give up a couple of percentage of what they got.

My poor mother was in charge of collecting this money in the barracks.

And there was always a hassle about this, especially from some people.

But as a whole, it was done well and it was a necessity.

So socialism was not dead.

It was not dead, no.

There were reluctant socialists even there in Gurs?

There were some left, yes.
Funny enough, it's always the same thing.

The ones who got the most money kicked the most.

Kicked the most, yeah.

And probably complained, too.

Yes.

How about like with these portable stoves?

Those who had them, was it possible for someone who didn't have a portable stove to use someone else's?

Oh, sure.

That was not a problem.

Yeah, yeah.

So they were shared.
When I finish, you can have it.

350
00:16:59,610 --> 00:17:01,290
You know, I mean, that was not.

351
00:17:01,290 --> 00:17:02,310
So they were shared.

352
00:17:02,310 --> 00:17:03,420
Yeah.

353
00:17:03,420 --> 00:17:06,210
And the food that was cooked-- obviously,

354
00:17:06,210 --> 00:17:08,593
it was possible to prepare your own food.

355
00:17:08,593 --> 00:17:10,010
And this would have been smuggled.

356
00:17:10,010 --> 00:17:11,760
Well, prepared.

357
00:17:11,760 --> 00:17:15,869
Whatever you got, you made something out of it, you know.

358
00:17:15,869 --> 00:17:19,319
When we left Germany, my aunt went into the kitchen

359
00:17:19,319 --> 00:17:23,880
to get some food, which she had never in her life cooked.

360
00:17:23,880 --> 00:17:26,069
She didn't know anything about cooking.
And what she took, she thought was sugar.

Actually, it turned out to be farina.

And that was a much better deal to have the farina because you could make sort of a porridge out of it, if you wish.

Right?

Sure, it was only water, right, but it was at least something.

So that lasted for a little while.

Maybe you can later on buy a can of milk or you got some food packages from somewhere, which we could receive, right.

And you used whatever was in...
there and made meals out of it.

Such, you know, meals.

Meals is an exaggeration, some additional food.

So we had some of the amateur cooks that were here.

But the image now is not one of people--

Well-fed.

But cooking every night.

No, no, no.

It's not like your American barbecue on the Fourth of July,

right?

Absolutely not.

It was an occasional thing.

These are not heavily used.
No, it was not a daily thing.

It was an occasional thing.

Very occasional.

So occasional that I really don't have a recollection that my mother ever cooked.

Did the men do it?

Less.

Were these portable stoves present in the men's section?

Some of them, yeah.

But I mean, mostly, it was a man who acquired them from the Spanish and then they ended up the women's barracks.
Yeah.

Could you estimate how many of these were in use?

No way.

No way?

No way.

Not even between the two of you--

No.

--you couldn't.

I really couldn't estimate how many of these--

What would be--

--makehift things.

--a minimum number that you would have seen or smelled?

I really couldn't tell.
Whatever I would tell you might not be right.

And so I'd rather not put myself down to a number.

Yeah.

But there were there--

They were there.

--at least a handful.

Yes.

Oh, yeah.

At least you will even find pictures

and I'm sure the museum has some pictures of these stoves.

There is a woman sitting in front of one of these doing whatever cooking she can.
So it was possible to get warm food. But only if you did it yourself. Occasionally. Well, got warm food. The only thing is what quality was the food we got. Yeah. And the quantity. Nonexistent. And the quantity. You know, the nutritional value was nonexistent. These empty cans, these cans you're talking about, by any chance, could
the cans of food

00:20:05,720 --> 00:20:10,370
that had been sent to the
camp for the prisoners?

00:20:10,370 --> 00:20:12,180
It could have been food--

00:20:12,180 --> 00:20:15,290
well, they were rather
large, as I described.

00:20:15,290 --> 00:20:16,880
So it could be
that they were cans

00:20:16,880 --> 00:20:19,070
that came into the
so-called kitchen, which

00:20:19,070 --> 00:20:22,170
was like a field kitchen, an
open thing with, you know.

00:20:22,170 --> 00:20:27,320
That maybe some canned food
came into these kitchens.

00:20:27,320 --> 00:20:28,430
I do not remember it.

00:20:28,430 --> 00:20:29,550
But it's possible.

00:20:29,550 --> 00:20:32,720
I rather suspect that
most of these cans

00:20:32,720 --> 00:20:35,285
came from the French
personnel and the Spanish.
Prisoners?

No, sanitation detail just picked them up wherever they found them.

And didn't throw them away, but kept them for--

Recycling.

--recycling.

Everything was recycled.

But you never saw any of these cans with the original label on them?

No.

They had already been stripped of their labels.
Whatever it was, it was stripped.

But they were around and they did help.

And when anything was available, they were used.

Real kitchens were not available?

No.

There was-- in each block was a field kitchen and that was it.

And did anyone, to your knowledge,

bring portable kitchens?

Because I know it's been said that--

No.

No.
No portable stove was brought.

No portable stoves.

A lot of peculiar things were taken along, like coffee mills.

I mean, the most impossible things were taken along.

There was no opportunity, for example, to use electrical--

Absolutely not.

Absolutely not.

This is a very, very primitive.

There was electricity in each barrack, but there was no--

there wouldn't have been
a hookup for anything.

483
00:21:52,530 --> 00:21:53,070
No.

484
00:21:53,070 --> 00:21:55,333
And don't forget,
in those days--

485
00:21:55,333 --> 00:21:56,250
There was no electric.

486
00:21:56,250 --> 00:21:59,960
--electrical appliances
were much less frequent--

487
00:21:59,960 --> 00:22:00,502
That's right.

488
00:22:00,502 --> 00:22:01,418
--than they are today.

489
00:22:01,418 --> 00:22:01,980
Yes.

490
00:22:01,980 --> 00:22:02,935
You had no electrical.

491
00:22:02,935 --> 00:22:04,960
You had no electrical
appliance, so to speak.

492
00:22:04,960 --> 00:22:06,390
Especially not
travel appliances.

493
00:22:06,390 --> 00:22:09,590
Yeah, yeah, OK.

494
00:22:09,590 --> 00:22:10,960
There was no such thing.
There was maybe--maybe some people took along a little field thing, you know, like they have fed by.

Oh, what is this stuff called?

It comes in a can.

It's like propane or?

Only in the little cans.

There were little blocks of stuff which you could dry.

This was like dried alcohol.

It was like a little bars of dried alcohol

that you would ignite.
And maybe or of the other person had taken one of those little things.

But they usually only were for a cup or two at most.

And you went until all of this ran out.

Yeah.

And then there was no more.

But to say that anyone brought along any sort of cooking facility and appliance or whatever, that is silly.

You know, that's plain silly, and not sought out.

Because if you're being deported, you don't think of these things.
Surely, people grab peculiar stuff, right.

But not that.

Like the one woman who had taken along a coffee mill.

Now, what in the heck she grabbed that heavy coffee mill for-- it was a Turkish one at that, a brass one.

You know, I mean, ridiculous.

Don't forget, most people didn't have more than two hours time to--

To pack.

You were an exception.
We were-- I was an exception.

532 00:23:34,260 --> 00:23:36,190  
Yeah.

533 00:23:36,190 --> 00:23:38,940  
How did they wake you up in the morning, the camp?

534 00:23:38,940 --> 00:23:41,440  
Or there was no particular wake-up time?

535 00:23:41,440 --> 00:23:45,940  
Oh, yes, in the beginning, there was a supervising person

536 00:23:45,940 --> 00:23:50,340  
who came into the barracks and counted heads.

537 00:23:50,340 --> 00:23:52,410  
And god forbid if one of the kids

538 00:23:52,410 --> 00:23:54,550  
had slipped under the blanket and the number

539 00:23:54,550 --> 00:23:56,250  
didn't come up right.

540 00:23:56,250 --> 00:23:57,660  
So they counted you in your beds.

541 00:23:57,660 --> 00:23:59,730  
In the beginning, yes.

542 00:23:59,730 --> 00:24:01,520  
And these were beds or lumps?
No, no, no.

We were on the floor.

On the floor.

We were on the floor.

And she, she was a very nasty person.

And she would come in in the morning and count heads,

around 6:30, 7 o'clock.

And we had small children with us in the barracks.

And you know how small kids are.

They are covered up to over their heads.

And she wouldn't immediately see them.

And she would be furious, which she didn't come out
to the right count.

And she would go over it and over it, you know,

until she had all the numbers right.

These are wooden floors?

Wooden floors.

The barracks were wood.

They were only covered with straw paper, nothing else.

That's why we had so many leaks.

No, we were on the floor.

We were on straw.

Open straw in the beginning.

They just had bales of straw in the beginning when we arrived.
And later on, they gave us something to stuff the straw in to make something that was akin to a mattress.

It was more like a stable for animals than--

Exactly.

--a bedroom.

Absolutely.

In the beginning, we were about 60 people per barracks.

Later on, it sort of thinned out.

And then how did people go to sleep?

Would they just lie
down and fall asleep?

580
00:25:21,980 --> 00:25:26,080
Or was there an hour, a moment when everything was?

581
00:25:26,080 --> 00:25:29,410
I guess around 10 o'clock or so, everybody, especially

582
00:25:29,410 --> 00:25:30,600
in winter, was ready to.

583
00:25:30,600 --> 00:25:32,430
Wasn't the light shut off?

584
00:25:32,430 --> 00:25:36,460
No, the light was not shut off during the night.

585
00:25:36,460 --> 00:25:37,510
The light was on.

586
00:25:37,510 --> 00:25:38,080
All night.

587
00:25:38,080 --> 00:25:40,182
They were on.

588
00:25:40,182 --> 00:25:40,890
I don't remember.

589
00:25:40,890 --> 00:25:44,340
At least one was on in the barracks so you could sort of.

590
00:25:44,340 --> 00:25:49,340
But around 10:00, I should think 10:00, 11 o'clock,

591
00:25:49,340 --> 00:25:51,200
people sort of tried
to go to sleep.

592
00:25:51,200 --> 00:25:54,810
You know, whatever sleep.

593
00:25:54,810 --> 00:25:57,150
And how many muddy feet did you have

594
00:25:57,150 --> 00:26:02,160
to walk to get to the toilet facilities?

595
00:26:02,160 --> 00:26:04,890
That depended on the location of barrack.

596
00:26:04,890 --> 00:26:05,400
Barracks.

597
00:26:05,400 --> 00:26:05,900
Depends.

598
00:26:05,900 --> 00:26:07,630
Some were very close to the latrines,

599
00:26:07,630 --> 00:26:09,510
some were rather far away.

600
00:26:09,510 --> 00:26:14,220

601
00:26:14,220 --> 00:26:17,340
See, I was in a barrack, for instance,

602
00:26:17,340 --> 00:26:23,110
where I could go on the rear and be close to the latrine.
We were sort of in the middle of the block.

So we had--

My mother was also--

--quite a hike.

--in the middle of the block.

So it was quite a hike.

Did resourcefulness enable you to deal with the mud problem?

That is walking, footwear.

Were you able to?

Well, in the beginning, we had our own shoes.

But they were not designed for this kind of hiking.

They were not designed for that sort of thing.
And you would sink in, and they would be, of course, full of mud.

You would go and maybe when the water was running
wash them off and put them somewhere to dry out.

And if you were stupid enough to hang him on the fence,
as I did once, they disappeared.

So I lost a good pair of shoes that way in the very beginning.

And that was irreplaceable.

I had other shoes.

So what did you replace them with?

I had other shoes.
And when I worked in the office--

Because you had brought another pair with you?

Otherwise what if-- maybe you even knew of someone--

what if you didn't have shoes?

What if your shoes had been stolen or they'd worn out?

Did anyone make provisions?

Probably the social services.

Not that I can remember.

Now in the-- it's OK.

I worked in the office after some time

and I was a messenger and stuff in the office.

Each block has its
own office, which then
had to report to headquarters.

They had a pair of rubber boots.

I don't know how they had acquired them.

But they had a pair of rubber boots.

So when I had to run the errands--

You could borrow them.

I had these to get around in.

And you had to return them.

Absolutely.

They stayed there.

Now, given the lateness of the year when you were deported,

I imagine that people took--
Yes.

--winter coats with them.

Yes.

Most people had taken winter clothes.

And no matter how much we had, we were still cold.

No matter how many layers we managed to put on,

we were still cold because it was damp

No matter how many layers we managed to put on,

we were still cold because it was damp

So that the clothes never was really dry.

You know, this dampness went through everything.

Somehow.
How was laundry done?

Laundry was done whenever the water was running.

There were some troughs, which in the beginning were troughs where we had to wash out in the open.

And later on, the women at least, had a barracks with running water.

We never did.

Men did not have them.

It was simply a long basin, probably about two feet across and maybe six, eight feet long.

It was a tin-lined.
so the water would come out along,

you know, from these holes.

And the holes were placed probably eight,

10 inches apart.

Something like that.

So there was the water coming out of both sides of the pipe.

And that was our facility to wash.

But at least it was indoors, it was closed.

We weren't standing in full view of the main street of the camp,

which the men always had to do.

And the troughs that were outside,
they were wooden troughs, we used that to wash the laundry.

So it was always a fight who is going
to get the trough to put the laundry in there to wash.

And since we had very little soap,
we sort of soaked the laundry and let it soak right before we would use soap to wash it.

But it was a hardship.

Especially in winter when it was cold.

The water was ice cold.

And water was limited to three times a day for about two hours.

So it was very difficult.
And you would line dry?

We would line dry.

On the barbed wire, we would line dry our belongings and stay with it.

Otherwise, bye-bye.

Might be stolen.

Bye-bye.

Socialism has a way of becoming robbery?

Right.

Look, some people came with very little.

The Spanish people who were in the camp for years had very little.
So you were rich compared to them?

We were rich compared to them in many ways, right.

They had many more small children

than we had in comparison.

They were also much younger.

They were much younger than our we are all over-age group

of people basically.

You know, because most of the young people, whoever could,

had left Germany, right?

And left behind there a small group

of young people, a small group of children,

but mostly over-age people.
Yeah.

In fact, I still remember your description of the deportation.

You and what--

My grandmother.

--six old women being

escorted by how many guards?

12.

12 guards.

12 guards for six helpless women.

Was the water drinkable?

The water in camp?

Yes, we could drink the water.

This came from the Pyrenees?
Yeah, no. There's a lot of water in France you cannot drink. That's right, yeah. But the water in Gurs, yes, you could drink it. There was no problem there. It was good mountain water? That probably came down from mountains. Yeah, yeah. I have no idea where it came from. There was a water tank. Very high, up as a matter of fact. And insufficient.
Insufficient for the amount of people.

That's why we were so limited this water.

There is a picture of Gurs, and I'm sure you have seen it.

And it is actually taken from that water tower.

Well, the water had better be drinkable since they probably were not serving wine.

Nope.

Hardly.

You never saw anybody drinking wine, right?

Oh, I wouldn't say that.

I'm sure that there's so in the hospital,
particularly when I was down there, that the French personnel had access to wine.

Of course, yeah, yeah. Not the refugees.

Not the refugees. Not the prisoners.

Neither would we-- spend the money on something as frivolous as wine.

Look, in the beginning, when we came to Gurs, we left Germany with 100 mark, which was exchanged
to us for 2,000 francs, right?

In the very beginning, when we came,

my mother had a chance to buy one egg from a Spanish woman.

This one egg was 15 francs.

OK?

You have 2,000 francs.

One egg was 15 francs.

You think anyone would spend money on anything frivolous?

No.

Although the French would not consider wine to be frivolous.

No, no, no.

But can you give us some more
idea of what the prices were?

00:33:33,040 --> 00:33:34,700
Do you remember other purchases?

00:33:34,700 --> 00:33:35,800
No, I don't really.

00:33:35,800 --> 00:33:37,690
But this really stuck in my mind,

00:33:37,690 --> 00:33:39,875
that 15 francs for one egg.

00:33:39,875 --> 00:33:40,540
You know.

00:33:40,540 --> 00:33:43,370
The 2,000 francs were not going to last very long.

00:33:43,370 --> 00:33:43,900
No.

00:33:43,900 --> 00:33:45,210
No.

00:33:45,210 --> 00:33:48,870
Especially if you have to buy a stove.

00:33:48,870 --> 00:33:49,500
Or whatever.

00:33:49,500 --> 00:33:50,130
Or whatever.

00:33:50,130 --> 00:33:53,225
Eventually, we can canteens.
Well, they belonged-- they were started by the Spanish.

They were run by the Spanish in our block.

In your block.

In our block, we started our own.

And we had one in the hospital, which was run by Franken.

And you know, where you could buy some stuff.

You mean Mr. Franken?

Yeah.

This Franken.

OK.

Lily's husband.

Lily's husband.
OK.

810 00:34:16,485 --> 00:34:19,409
So that was able-- how to get this, which

811 00:34:19,409 --> 00:34:23,139
gave him some little income.

812 00:34:23,139 --> 00:34:28,810
And you could buy certain things like canned sardines

813 00:34:28,810 --> 00:34:31,120
at more reasonable prices than black market.

814 00:34:31,120 --> 00:34:32,679
Yeah.

815 00:34:32,679 --> 00:34:35,940
Do you remember any prices on the sardines?

816 00:34:35,940 --> 00:34:43,989
But in our block, in Block K, the canteen

817 00:34:43,989 --> 00:34:47,100
that existed when we came was run by the Spanish women.

818 00:34:47,100 --> 00:34:50,290

819 00:34:50,290 --> 00:34:53,409
And the way we talked to them-- actually,

820 00:34:53,409 --> 00:34:57,850
my aunt, Helen Goldstein, spoke fluent Italian.
And so she could deal with the Spanish women.

Yeah, they're close enough, Italian and Spanish.

She managed.

And that's the way my aunt would, you know,

manage to speak to them and deal with them.

What the others did, I don't know.

I guess with hand and any old way.

Eventually, everyone learns a couple of words of Spanish,

and they learned a couple of words of German.

And words, at least a Spanish--

Or French.
--a pidgin of some of some type.

833
00:35:28,990 --> 00:35:30,470
And French above all, right?

834
00:35:30,470 --> 00:35:33,190
Well, there were not too many among us who spoke French.

835
00:35:33,190 --> 00:35:33,760
I know.

836
00:35:33,760 --> 00:35:36,380
And there's some of us who were reluctant to learn French,

837
00:35:36,380 --> 00:35:37,780
but eventually--

838
00:35:37,780 --> 00:35:38,530
They had to.

839
00:35:38,530 --> 00:35:39,610
--we all did, didn't we?

840
00:35:39,610 --> 00:35:40,600
We all had to.

841
00:35:40,600 --> 00:35:44,150
Yeah, those of us who did speak French were somewhat more--

842
00:35:44,150 --> 00:35:44,930
At an advantage.

843
00:35:44,930 --> 00:35:45,820
--advantaged.

844
00:35:45,820 --> 00:35:46,870
Definitely.
And the stubborn ones who didn't want to learn French--

They had to learn anyway.

--eventually learned, right?

Yes.

Their life depended on it eventually.

The trouble you had if you spoke French was to acquire a sufficient amount of knowledge of the local dialect.

Yeah.

Because a lot of the people who worked there were locals.

And this was not French.

Not Parisian French.
No, that was not literary French.

It was not only not literary French, it was almost Spanish.

Yeah, or Catalan.

Yeah, it sort of changes there.

You know, I had an awful amount of trouble to learn this.

You thought you knew French and you found out you had to relearn it.

He did, he did.

I did.

No, but I mean, he had to relearn--

But not that French.

--that French.

By the time I left there,
we communicated very well.

And then you had to go back to your more literary form of French when you finally got to Switzerland.

Yeah.

Well, even that French is a little bit different, isn't it?

Yeah, sure.

That French is slightly different.

I mean, that is French.

Look, like in any country, regionally, the language changes.

But by and large, the personality in the Swiss internment complexes
were German Swiss, not French Swiss.

And they spoke--

Spoke German.

--Hochdeutsch or Schweizerdeutsch?

No, Schweizerdeutsch.

But they know.

They know proper German.

They're being taught proper German in school.

Yeah.

But they don't like to speak it because it's a little foreign to them.

But there was no problem there.
Well, this is a lengthy postscript.

Have we remembered everything?

I hope so.

Well, on that note, I wish to thank you once again.

You're very welcome.

We thank you.