

Oh, yes. So as I said, they came, these Nazis, the Hungarian Nazis, what they call the Nyilas Garaz-- that was the Hungarian name-- they were sometimes more brutal and more perverse than the Germans, if you can be more.

The Minka?

Nyilas. Nyilas. No, Minkas was in Romania. This was the Nyilas. So when he came to that to this couple what I told you, that mother and father and son, and take their papers and they did not accept their papers. And they took them out, and of course as I told at that time, there was such a big bombardment That they didn't have time to take them to the Danube, so they shot them all, the mother father and son. I found that out later. I didn't know that they were shot right before the house.

But that was not the end of the story. As they walked out, they looked at me. And I knew that in that moment, in that how do they say that in English? That comes a moment of--

Moment of truth.

A moment of truth. In that moment of truth, I didn't know will they tell me if they take me she's Jewish too. Or they will say that or they will not say that, but in order to save that moment of truth-- You see everybody had the blanket or a quilt or we called it different. And in that moment when they took them out I thought, I have to-- You see, that time I escaped from so many things already that I had a little bit of experience and I was far from that naive already what I was before.

I said to the guy who was standing beside me, I said, these people, these Jews-- I used the word-- they had a very nice blanket and I don't have one, can I have it? Startled, the guy who checked my paper, before I even gave him my papers the other guy said, well, you don't have to check her out. She will have the new blanket from the Jew and I will check her out.

And he didn't even had my papers in his hand because my papers was even so I have it with me and they were not-- I was a prostitute according to that kind of papers I had. And I certainly acted sometimes accordingly. So that's another story again that in any case they went away and they took them out and they shot them.

Now I have to interject here now a scene. These people whom they shot before the house, she had a brother. And after the war, when we were still in that house, the brother came to pick up whatever they had. And then he said, I heard that there was somebody here, some shiksa here who took away my dead brothers whom they shot before the house. I want to confront that woman.

And I was still-- because that time was still not safe to go out. But even so that the Russians took already over, the Germans sometimes came back and forth, so it was not safe yet to give yourself away. And I never did that. Some people did it. They gave themselves away and then the Germans came back. That was the end of them. I still didn't because I knew that they come. Budapest is two parts-- Buda and Pest. And in Buda was the Germans in Pest was the Russians. And they went back and forth and it took two, three weeks until finally the Russians took over.

So he wanted to confront me that who is that who took her and to tell me certain things. And when he came there and confronted me, and it was even so the time that the Russians were there already and I was still afraid, I said, just don't make too much commotion. I did that to save my life. I'm Jewish too. We talked there some time and he says, well, in that case I understand it. So that was the aftereffect of that case.

So in any case, we were there in that shelter all the way until January 18. In the night, one the Russian guy comes down. You see there I talk about the Russians so much because the Russians are the ones who liberated us. Not the Russians, I'm not here.

This is 1945 already.

That is 1945, January 18. So my war lasted from 1941 till 1945. So I was 4 and 1/2 years wherever. So when the first Russians came in-- and mind you, I was still with Catholic papers there. When the first Russians came in, somehow you know I, in any case, [INAUDIBLE] already with the bombardment is just catching the parents and everything, I am quite sure that I was mentally really not right, and understandably so. So I was really, really on the end of my line. I couldn't take too much more anymore.

And when I saw the first Russian I sat there with other young people around everywhere, wherever we were living in the shelter. That was in the basement, of course, and half of it was bombed and everything. And I wanted to run to that Russian and kiss him from top to toe. I'm free! I'm free! You know the movies? And they were holding me back and they said, don't you know what the Russians are doing? They did a lot of raping, you know that. And they didn't care about whether they rape 18-year-old or 88 years old. They didn't care.

But the difference it was that the first fighting group who fights for a city is always the elite of the military and they do not do any raping. They are not the one who does it. The occupying troops are the one who does it when all kind of it was free. Free robbery, free raping. You could do everything. But the first elite group didn't do too much raping. But I wanted to go out, and then the girl next to me said, what are you so happy about to see the Russian? Wasn't that-- She started because she really didn't know who I am. She just knew, hi, my name is [[Jotko Maria ?].

So she was holding me back and I didn't go. But the second day, because then they came more and more Russians to the basement looking for men who were hiding also. And that young man who stood beside me and he said-- You know that was up on the floor it was a department store and they had in the department store they had honey left. Food was a big thing that time.

And he comes to me and he says, before yet the Russians came, he said, you know what? There is a big, big container of honey there. We will go up there and I will give you a lot of honey. And honey, that was gold at that time. And that was already after that incident with the Germans. So I said, no I don't need it anymore. But as he said, you know what? I will give you the honey. I saved your life. But he knew already that the Russians are on the corner. But when it comes to it, will you save mine?

Well, how can I say what he said? You know how you can save it. So he knew who I was because he wouldn't ask me that question that whether I can save your life or not. So when the Russians came in, when they were already in looking for Hungarian soldiers or non-Jews, he came to me and he said, help me to get out of here. I helped you, you help me. And I did help him to escape. Whether I did it right or wrong but I did it and he did escape. I don't know what happened.

Well, in any case then the Russians came in and then of course it started-- I don't know whether you know about the aspect of how the Russians behaved. I mean it was soup kitchens again and it was again standing in the line. It was all the ruins. And I had nobody. I just walked on the streets, you know, and saw people coming out from the ghetto. And everybody said, oh [? Yancika ?]. [? Elzika ?] [? Pistika ?] [? Jurika ?] And I went there and I had nobody because everybody died.

So I said, well, I will look for my aunt. You know that aunt who didn't believe? They were in the ghetto and they were the rich aunts in the family because they had a house in Hungary, and that was like having a house in New York at that time. So they had some six, seven rooms, and that was an awful lot of room in Hungary. Here you know people who work and can have four rooms too it's nothing.

So in any case they did survive. And I did go to them. And it was a big, beautiful reunion. Of course they took away their house and they took away their apartment and they gave them the room where the maid used to live. And there where the maid used to live, there I was living with them for a while until they got another room attached to-- They got back their own room. Not the house, just a room, because the Russians of course won't give them back the house.

And what was life, you will ask me, after the bombardment, after the Russians came in? It was a tough life. It was, first of all, the first days were-- the first week, rather-- after the war it was also interesting. You know we lived on the fourth floor when we didn't go to the shelter. And after the so-called , fighting I went up on the fourth floor and looked out the window, because I was more or less like freer because after five years you felt, well, Mommy, I survived. And I was

rather careless that time and I went and I looked out the window because I wanted to see what is a war.

You see this is not a war like here they drop an atomic bomb and everybody's boom finished. There they are fighting corner to corner. And I went up on the window and I looked down I saw this one is Germans and this one is Russian. They are shooting. And I look out of the window, so they shot up and they almost shot my head off. So I got, well, because I didn't know better.

So I went back until things subsided. That time houses were closed yet and Russians were standing all over. And slowly, slowly life got back to it everything. You couldn't buy nothing. And as I said, I was secretary for a lawyer and I had to make something to-- Money didn't mean anything and I had nothing anymore to sell. The only thing it is to work and get food for it.

And the lawyer where I worked, whom I worked before once, he took me back. Some people came to get advice and they gave him eggs and bread or pork fat or whatever they gave him he gave me part of it as a payment to the secretary until--

Things didn't get back to more or less I couldn't call it normal because this was far from normal. Until I met one day, a friend of our father and mother who did survive. Her family didn't survive, but her house, her room was bombed and she lived in a small room. And her living room got the full hit from the bomb and it had the hole in the middle. And so I lived in the little room in that house. And she was very attached to me because I was young and I worked.

Budapest has many, many beautiful, beautiful bridges which were all bombed, all the bridges. So people went through the Danube back to Buda to get potatoes or flowers. So I sometimes brought it back so she was attached to me because she knew that being young I will bring something also.

And by the way, that time there was another incident what maybe I will tell you certain main aspects of it. There was a couple of days after things settled down. There was a so-called free looting. So people went with big bags in these big department stores and whatever they found they put it in the bag and they took it home. It was free loot. The Russians stood there and told you to take it. If you went out empty handed, they sent you back to take something.

So I live there in that house where above it was a department store. And in this department store. I thought I will go looting too. Why not, other people do? But I didn't prepare myself for the proper looting. I didn't have a bag, I didn't have a knife, I didn't have the scissor, so I was not quite made for this looting business.

And there was big, giant men that are cutting materials and everything. And I was just there. If they make me, I was some 85, 90 pounds. If they gave me a push I would just fall down. And they said, if you want to live, you better go away. But I want to loot, so I went down where the food was. And there in the food people went also and took the silverware and whatever it is. And finally, one guy lifted me up and put me on a bag of flour. And he said, you stay here if you want to be alive. Because they were strong people and I was just the wind could blow me away that time.

And I was seeing that people took everything and I stood there on the bag of flour until everything was looted out. And I stood there with the bag of flour. Of course, I couldn't take the bag of flour and that was full with pickles and jams and everything and on me. But I still was sitting on a bag of flour. So what did I do? I had one and only dress, and I took the flour and I put it in here like this in there. And I went all the way walked that way to my landlady and I said, here we have flour we make bread from it, which we took out the glass and we did make bread from it.

But after a while it was not humorous anymore with the soup kitchens and everything. And I left that time. I went away from my aunt and I lived in a friend of mine, the same friend who was together with me in the camp. I went to that house and I lived. And there was they call it belated reactions when you know you survived, when you know five years went away and you survived, alone, but you survived.

And then after that when you know that it comes that psychological for what and for whom and for why? And that was on the fourth floor where I lived that time. And it was in December. And I was just alone. I came to the point that I needed help, which I, of course, didn't get psychological help. So I opened the window and I went on the windowsill.

And I thought, well-- Many people did that, by the way. I was not the only one. And I said, well, let's finish it up.

And my landlady, who was a very nice lady, she came into the room, and she says, Elizabeth, you must be crazy. You are opening the window and the whole heat what I put up here it goes away. I mean, I don't heat here that you open here the windows. And I am standing on the window ledge, jumping. And I got very mad. And I got so mad that I went to her and I started to hit her. And I hit her and I hit her and she knelt down beside me and said, oh, Elizabeth, don't do that. Don't do that. She did that and said that just to bring me back from the ledge. She was a nice lady.

So after that I said, well, OK. Let's start living. And I went to the soup kitchen and I asked for a job in the soup kitchen. And in there there are so many incidents. So many incidents happened there during the war, after the war, during the bombing, in the ghetto where it is interesting but as I told it to Henry, you cannot go into every aspect.

Well, you can tell any ones that you would like.

Well, what is really standing out I told you with the-- So one day when I went home to my landlady I met-- You see, I was working with a lawyer. And in that law office, I met a young Jewish man who also survived the war and who met me in that soup kitchen. He went not for soups, because he was at that time in the black market business. And he started to make-- That time people made only money because there was no business. There's nothing. That was only black markets, and he started the black market business very successfully.

And he always had an eye on me, but I was not too interested. But after the war when he gave me a proposition, he said, you know what? I mean what is that? You work in the soup kitchen. I have money. You will come and live with me and we will see what we will do. I probably would have become what papers I had before. And I said, OK. And I went to my landlady and I had, as I said, one dress which I washed was full of flour. And I said to her, well, I have a date with that man.

And he was standing down with the car. I lived on the second floor that time. And I told my landlady he's waiting, and my landlady said OK because she wanted something from me too. And I opened the window and I said, I'm coming down five minutes. As I said, I had one dress. And I went down to go on the road what could end like Madame X or who knows what. I don't know what would have become.

But as I walked down the steps going to the guy who was waiting for me on the house before the car, a Russian soldier comes up the steps. And I see a Russian soldier I run because I had incidents with a Russian soldier which I didn't tell you which I wrote about it if you are interested, a jar of pickles, where you know the Russians did their plenty. So when I saw Russian I run. This was my experience.

And the Russian guy tells me, well, Elizabeth. Don't you recognize me? And I didn't recognize him because he was in a partisan uniform with a red star. To me that was Russian. So then I looked at him and then I saw. And I went back with him to my landlady, and landlady opened the door and said, are you crazy bringing a Russian here? I said, he's not a Russian, he's not a Russian. He's Jewish and I know him from the ghetto. And then she said, but he's waiting downstairs with the car. And I said--

But you know it's interesting, and I don't want to be sentimental about it, and we are old enough not to be, but five years I fought for my life. And in the minute he came into my life, I said, well, that's it for me. Now take over. And he did. And that was how we met. No more do you ask me now. What do you want to know more?

I think that should probably do it.

And then of course we dated and then we went to Vienna. And from Vienna we went to the consulate. And the consulate said the quota is closed. And then suddenly my brother kept sending me affidavits and everything. And meanwhile I got pregnant and we thought we'd settle down in Vienna like many other Jews. But then one day the consulate writes me a letter, the Polish quota is open. So the Polish quota is open. Let's go to America.

You mentioned something about a trip to Israel. That was just to visit.

The trip to Israel was before when we knew already that we come to America. And we had brothers that time in Israel so we went to Israel As a matter of- Barbara, our daughter, the first move what she made was in Israel. So that was the trip before we go.

But one thing I want to tell you more in the tape because that was also a nice incident. We came with the Mauretania. And when you're nearing the Statue of Liberty, the captain, and especially at that time-- By the way, we were one of the last who didn't go to Ellis Island. Before us, they still went to Ellis Island. When we came it was not Ellis Island anymore.

So there were two incidents what I want to tell you. So when we were on the boat and we were nearing the Statue of Liberty, and the captain of the boat was reading that, "Give me your tired, your poor," and we were standing, Henry and I, and he had his story to tell and I had my story. And I was pregnant and we went to America and we were holding hands, and we were looking at the Statue of Liberty and I said, well, we made it. That's the end of the story.