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Interview with Marie Krisofova

March 9, 1997

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Question: OK, let's start. Please, tell us something about your parents, your family, how you lived, where you lived, where you were born and when.

Answer: Well, I was born in Čehovice (ph), here in Prostějov district. And my Daddy was a horse dealer, when he was alive, he traded horses, **ja (The German spelling is correct but why is she saying it? Unless it is a Czech or Gypsy interjection?)**, and my Mom was a housewife. We lived in Horovice (ph), **ja**. Well and then they sent my Dad to Oświęcim.

Q: Wait a minute, in the beginning you lived in?

A: In Horovice (ph).

Q: And your childhood?

A: Well, childhood, it was like this, when our parents were alive, we lived and growing up with them so it was fine.

Q: And you lived in a house or an apartment or?

A: We lived in a house.

Q: And what was it like there? How was it, you had your own pictures, clothes, bandanas, everything?

A: Everything. We had everything there, everything.

Q: Tell us about it a little.

A: We had everything there, we lived there and our Dad would go to work and come home from work and children would go to school, right.

Q: As a horse dealer?

A: Yes, he came from that village.

Q: And he would go there as a horse dealer?

A: Yes, he would, he had six horses and always went to markets and traded horses. Right.

Q: And your mother?

A: Well, Mum was a housewife. She looked after kids, you know. We were many children at home, so we were at home. And then they took Daddy to Oświęcim.

Q: Hang on, please. You lived together?

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A: Yes, all together, with parents.

Q: And then the Germans came.

A: Yes, then the Germans came.

Q: And then what, you knew that it would be bad?

A: No we didn't, we knew nothing, **ja**, nothing.

Q: And what changed then?

A: They sent Daddy to Oświęcim, they took him away.

Q: When? When was that?

A: I don't remember.

Q: In the winter, in the spring?

A: That was in the spring. And then, they took two guys from ___ovice, two farmers. And they took them to Brno with my Dad.

Q: And why, why, what did they tell you? What, what did they tell your father?

A: Well, nothing really, nothing, they just took him away.

Q: And who, who came for him?

A: Germans, Germans, you know.

Q: And.

A: And they put them into a car.

Q: And what Germans were they? They were cops or?

A: Cops, normal Germans. **Ja**, Germans.

Q: And do you know them, do you?

A: No. We were there, what were we? Young girls we were. Young girls and our Mum didn't take us with her. My sister then lived in Brno. My sister, her name was Růžičková, **ja**. And she wanted to bail Daddy out, you know. To give the Germans cigarettes, you know, she wanted to give them cigarettes then, and money, to bail Dad out. But he was on the train already, it was not possible. And they took him to Oświęcim, **ja**.

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Q: And before.

A: We remained alone, **ja**, for two weeks we were alone and then they took us to Hodonín (ph).

Q: When the gendarmes or cops came there, what did they do with you? When they came to your home?

A: Well, when they came to take us to Hodonín (ph)?

Q: Right.

A: Well, they put us on a rack wagon, kids with Mum, **ja**, and they took us to the train station, either here in Olomouc or to a big school. And there they busted everyone, whole groups went. One to Oświęcim and the other one to Hodonín, alternating them.

Q: And they took photos there?

A: No, they didn't, not there. But they took them in Hodonín (ph), yes.

Q: And how long were you in that school?

A: Well, we were there for about a week. Until they busted everyone, you know.

Q: And how did they treat you during that week? Where did you sleep?

A: Well, on the ground, on the ground we slept, even kids, we slept on the ground, too.

Q: And food?

A: Well, we got no food. Nothing at all.

Q: And who was there with you?

A: With us, - -hang on, my daughter is coming. _____ So come in, come in. _____

This is the girl I look after. _____ Come here. Go to the back Janička, come here. _____ Go there for a while, you will have to stay there for a while. _____ - -

***man's voice: Take the dog with you, please.

A: Take the dog with you.

*** man's voice: Thank you.

A: Stay there for a while. _____ It will be over soon. Don't close the door, Janička.

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Q: Let's get back to the school, who was there with you, who did they put to the school?

A: Well, there were many, many people, it was completely full. Many children, too.

Q: And what people?

A: Gypsies, only Gypsies. And Ukrainians, too, yes, and people, you know. Many Ukrainians, too.

Q: Whole families?

A: Well, there were whole families were.

Q: And what about the cops, what did they do with you?

A: They locked us up and we were there, locked up.

Q: But you had no food, right?

A: Well, we didn't, we were locked up. And then we were put in the cattle-wagons, those, you know.

There was no water, nothing.

Q: Did they punish anyone in the school?

A: No, not yet, not here.

Q: And did anyone want to escape?

A: No, not here, not here. It was more or less OK there, you know.

Q: And did you know what would happen at that time?

A: Well, we knew nothing, we only heard that we would be put into a concentration camp. But we didn't know where to..

Q: And you didn't know what a concentration camp was?

A: No, we didn't. We didn't have a clue.

Q: Nor about Auschwitz?

A: No, nothing, nothing.

Q: And did you, for instance you personally, think of escaping? Escape?

A: No, not here.

Q: And how many were you there from your family? How many of you did they put there?

A: How do you mean?

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Q: Well.

A: Other people and us?

Q: Yes. Your family.

A: Ours?

Q: How many people?

A: My Mom went there, then her cousins, but those only went away, they were sent to Oświęcim from Hodoníněk (ph), you know.

Q: And from the school?

A: They put us into the cars, the cattle-wagons, locked them up, **ja**, and they took us to Hodoníněk (ph). There we got off, **ja**. Well, and then we ____ or whatever it was they were beating women with. Beating them.

Q: Who, who beat them?

A: The Germans, the Germans, **ja**, the SS, everything. So they beat them.

Q: And on the first day, what did you see?

A: Well, the first day, when they brought us there, there were big Alsatians. And the mother had a little girl, like this, the sister lives here, she is, she was really small. And she held her in her arms and the dogs were jumping on us and we were holding onto our Mum's skirt, you know, and we cried. And on the same day they put us among corpses. There was a huge room, and inside there were only dead bodies, naked, **ja**. And we had to be there, with the corpses until the next morning. We ate nothing, nothing.

Q: And when was this then?

A: Well, that was in Hodoníněk (ph).

Q: Yes, but when, in summer or in autumn?

A: Well, that was in summer.

Q: It was not winter yet, was it?

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A: No, we were placed there in summer. And we had to be there with our mother, **ja**. But first they shaved our heads, even small children. And then they put us in with the corpses, and it was dark in there. And we sat there with our mother and cried.

Q: And how old were you?

A: I might have been eleven or so. Maybe thirteen fourteen.

Q: Can you tell me who cut your hair?

A: Well, they did.

Q: Yes, but.

A: We don't know who it was.

Q: Cops?

A: No, not cops, they had someone. There was an infirmary, you know where they had, you know, some other, they were with the Germans, you know, **ja**. And there were Czechs, too, the cops there were Czechs, you know, **ja**. And they were even worse than the Germans. So it was like this, you know.

Q: And what were you given to eat?

A: Well, they gave us cups and we went to get the food, **ja**. And when we walked there, some of the Germans, **ja**, they had these leather whips and some hit the cups we were carrying and they flew off. So you went uphill, and lost the cup and didn't go for the food any more. Left it like that. For example mashed potatoes they gave us, no good quality, nothing.

Q: And to drink?

A: Well, water. Horrible.

Q: And where did you sleep?

A: Well, we slept then, we slept in blocks. We went to see the place when we were still in Hodonín (ph), we went there by car, you know. And our block is still there, **ja**. And then some others, where the Germans slept, and the Czechs, you know, three-part houses, you know. And the house where we were with Mum is still there. So we went to see where she had been with us. What she had been though, **ja**.

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Q: What she was through.

A: Well, and I, as a young girl, went to the kitchen. And a sister. I went to the kitchen and my sister then became a nurse, **ja**. But she had to do, you know, everything. She could not do it but she had to assist with deliveries, even there women gave birth, **ja**. So they, they would beat her if she didn't do it, so she had to do it. And some other people went to do groundwork and dug with pickaxes, digging rocks, yeah. And then there was one, a Czech cop. He was called Výroba, Výroba was his name. And he was the worst, **ja**. First we did the groundwork. And I had a fight with another girl and then we got beaten up by him, over our backs, terrible. He was horrible, that cop, horrible. Some of the Czechs were even worse than the Germans. Yes.

Q: And why did they beat you?

A: And then they took photos of us. - -Because we had had a fight, you know, **ja**. We were carrying rocks in wheelbarrows and I refused to do it, because I didn't want you (young?) girls to do it. So we had a fight, **ja**. Well, and then we had to dig with pickaxes, too, we had to dig, **ja**. There were little wagons on rails, we were throwing the rocks into them, so that was it. And there were women digging and they had their children on their backs, and the women, in the sun, they were falling asleep. We had to crush the rocks with hammers, **ja**. So they beat them over their heads with clubs. Horrible.

Q: And who beat them?

A: The Germans, right. The Germans went to work and back, **ja**, right. And when someone escaped they attached these iron balls to their feet and tied their feet and so they had to go to work with the balls. It was horrible there, horrible. And when we were having a bath, then there were huge tubs and a brother went into one together with Mum, children, all together. All in the same tub. Horrible. So they humiliated people, it was horrible there. And then one is _____, you know. A when one, you know, when the men came to me, I didn't want to do anything with them because one went through things there that people cannot go through anywhere else. Never.

Q: Tell me now, what did people do there, I mean prisoners, in order to get some more food. Like a piece of bread or so.

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A: Well, they stole each other's food. For instance my mother didn't eat and kept it aside. Little pieces of bread, one for the whole day. And she would hide it, in the pallet and someone else would steal it. So she had nothing for her children then. And children were crying with hunger. And lots of people got typhoid, lots. Children and grown-ups were dying of typhoid. And then they buried the dead in the forest, right. It is still there.

Q: Was there a doctor?

A: Well, there was that Vyroba.

Q: But he was not a doctor, was he?

A: Oh yes, he was both a doctor and a cop, right. And he controlled everything.

Q: And how did he treat people as a doctor?

A: Well, they did.

Q: Or what kind of diseases were there?

A: Well, typhoid, mostly typhoid. There were ill people, the whole block.

Q: From the beginning or later?

A: It was all the time like that, sick people all the time. And then they made these, you know, from paper, they threw them into it, they made something like a trough from the box, put them inside and made ditches and put them inside. They are still buried in the forest.

Q: And was there any priest present?

A: Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

Q: And you saw how they were putting the dead bodies there?

A: Right. We saw it many times.

Q: And who put them, the dead bodies there?

A: Well, again the prisoners, they carried them, you know, and put them there, you know.

Q: And did anybody say anything, like from the Bible or so?

A: No, nobody said anything. Nothing like that.

Q: So you came there in summer. Autumn.

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A: Right.

Q: In the beginning when it was not cold yet.

A: Right.

Q: And what did you think?

A: Well, we young girls were making fun of it, right. We saw everyone with a shaven head, they wore bandanas and showed us that they were cutting hair, **ja**. But before we came there we were still singing. We had no clue what would follow. We were completely surprised, **ja**. And then we saw the terror, the dogs so we all started crying. All of a sudden we were, we didn't laugh any more. And then we grabbed our mother, holding onto her and the dogs were jumping at us. That was all.

Q: And who released the dogs?

A: They were running around there. In the courtyard.

Q: Did you notice if someone wanted to escape?

A: Well, many tried but then they got beaten, oh my.

Q: And who escaped?

A: Gypsies did.

Q: Could you describe one case when somebody escaped?

A: Well, I can't really, because it's been many years, hasn't it, and I can't really remember, but that they beat us, they really bashed us. And one guy, he was called Dydy (ph) Karel, he was from Slovakia, **ja**. And he was sent down for life, you know, after the revolution, our people, you know, we were inveighing against him, **ja**. Because one woman ate a cat, raw, she was pregnant. She was hungry so she ate it. And it was the commanders' cat, you know. So they beat her up, so that her behind. And he got life, he was in Slovakia, but he is dead now. So this I remember clearly.

Q: And what did he do to the prisoners?

A: Excuse me?

Q: Dydy (ph). What did he do?

A: Well, he would beat people and take them to work. He was there as, what is it called, the, **ja, ja**.

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Q: Roads, or.

A: No, they were something like our superiors, you know.

Q: I see, kapos.

A: Yes, like kapos. They were our kapos. And then there was one Gypsy, **ja**.

Q: What was he called?

A: They were all from Slovakia. I didn't know him, I didn't know him.

Q: And mothers could have children with them?

A: No, not children? We weren't, as young women, they separated mothers, guys and small children were separated, too. Everything separate. Separate from the mothers.

Q: And babies, nursing babies?

A: They were with their mothers, but when they grew bigger then they put them in separate blocks.

Q: Who was the chief there?

A: The chief? That one, the.

Q: No, I mean the chief of the camp.

A: The Výroba, Výroba. Well and then Germans came, **ja**. They selected us, young girls and sent us to dig rocks, gravel, you know, and they took pictures of us, doing the rocks. They chose a few young girls and photographed us.

Q: Did anyone help you in the camp?

A: No, no.

Q: And did the prisoners, the girls help each other?

A: Well, no, not really, everyone cared about his or her life, you know. So that they would survive. I have told you that they would steal bread that someone was keeping for, they were hungry, you know, **ja**, hungry, so they robbed one another, stealing whatever they found, right. Taking stuff from the kitchen rubbish, where the cabbage leaves were, they would pick them and eat them. They must have been ill, the people they must.

Q: Did anyone try to commit suicide?

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A: There? No, no, certainly not. But they were running away, that's true. That is true.

Q: Did you see when they killed someone?

A: No, not killing someone, but they would beat people, a lot. Especially when they ran away.

Q: And what did the people who ran away and got caught tell you?

A: Well, they announced a call-up, no command, no. And we all had to watch when they beat them, right. They put there a long bench, pour two buckets of water over their behind and then started beating them.

Q: And the behind was bare?

A: Yeah. Horrible, horrible. It was so horrible.

Q: How long did you stay there?

A: You mean there at the?

Q: At the **Appellplatz**.

A: **Ja**, well, it didn't take that long, about thirty or forty minutes or so.

Q: And what about the nights?

A: Nights? Terrible, terrible, we couldn't get any sleep, kids would cry, people would moan, there was so much crying. And the worst came when they started transports to Oświęcim. That was, that was so terrible.

Q: How, how and who selected people for Oświęcim?

A: Oświęcim?

Q: Yes. Who selected them?

A: Germans with Výroba. Again the Výroba, **ja**, the Výroba, **ja**, oh well. He chose people together with the Germans, **ja**. Then they chose me and wanted to put me on a big car, right. And I stand there, and my step-brother is put there, he is already inside, it was all ready, ready to go, no not him, the car. And I am standing there and my sister comes. So she took me because the Výroba told her to, to take me and hide me away. So she hid me and I was hidden. Otherwise I would have been in Oświęcim.

Q: When was that? When did they send the prisoners to Oświe, to Auschwitz? In spring or in summer?

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A: That was in summer. In summer it was.

Q: And how long were you there by then?

A: By then we were there for fourteen months, in Hodonín.

Q: And that was in, in the beginning or?

A: Well, I don't really remember. It's been a long time.

Q: And what did you know about Auschwitz at that time?

A: well, we knew by then, that people were going to be burned in Oświęcim.

Q: And what did people do in order to avoid going there.

A: They couldn't, they couldn't do anything.

Q: I mean, for example parents, mothers, when they saw that they wanted to take their children from them.

A: Well, you know, they cried and cried and cried.

Q: Did children get beaten there?

A: Just once, you know what they did, what one German? He came in when the babies were crying and women lay down, we saw it with our own eyes, **ja**, he took the baby in the baby wrap and slammed it down on the floor. The little child.

Q: And then what.

A: And now tell me, what could we, you know. When we were bathing all together, with my brother, me with the fathers and the children were there and saw everything, everybody naked. Saw each other. So tell me.

Q: What happened to the child?

A: It was dead, so they threw it in the morgue.

Q: And who, who beat her?

A: Well.

Q: Who was it?

A: Germans.

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Q: Germans. Do you remember any names?

A: I don't know, I can't tell you.

Q: And those people were Germans, there in the?

A: Where?

Q: In the camp.

A: Yes.

Q. Did they work?

A: They came there, and slept there on the, on the **dřevákách** they slept, **ja**. And the Výroba was in the infirmary.

Q: And were there any Czech gendarmes and what did they do?

A: They took people to work, went to work with the prisoners, you know, went to work with them and Germans too.

Q: And among them there were the?

A: Among them there were the Czech cops.

Q: And were they good?

A: No, they weren't. Neither these, nor those. And then they took two guys who were, who didn't know a single Czech word, only German, **ja**, and they were in some other concentration camps, where there were only guys, you know?

Q: Right.

A: So they would beat us, too, and the others too, everyone would. So it was terrible there.

Q: And those were Germans?

A: Germans, Germans.

Q: And Gypsies or?

A: Gypsies.

Q: What did they do to you?

A: They would do nothing to us. My Mum could speak German, you know, she spoke to them.

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Q: So they were,

A: Horrible.

Q: Nasty to Czechs, too.

A: Oh, yes. They were mainly after Slovak Gypsies, mainly after the Slovak Gypsies.

Q: Those were **Olaši**?

A: No, no, those were from Slovakia, those Gypsies, you know, the ones that live for instance in sheds, right, you know?

Q: And how many were they there? Approximately.

A: Well, there were many of them, there were many. And I forgot to tell you that there was a Gypsy wagon there, yes. And they would throw the dead into the wagon. It was there all the time, through the summer.

Q: What were the wagons like?

A: The wagons? Gypsy wagons, like for example the ones that circus artists have, so those were parked there.

Q: What was painted on the wagons?

A: Nothing, nothing was painted there. They threw the dead in and that was it.

Q: How did the parents look after their children?

A: They looked after them well, you know, everybody, every mother did, when they saw the terror, you know. Only the **olašský** Gypsies, one **olašská** Gypsy woman that was there abandoned her children and ran away, I remember that.

Q: Did they get caught?

A: Well, they did and she got beaten a lot. Oh, yeah. It was so terrible there.

Q: What did Blahynka (ph) Štefan do there?

A: Which one?

Q: Blahynka (ph) Štefan?

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A: I don't remember this anymore. There were all kinds of these, I used to remember both the Germans' and Czechs' names, too, all of them. But I don't remember them anymore.

Q: When did the typhoid break out?

A: That was a long time ago.

Q: When the typhoid broke out.

A: Right.

Q: What, what did they do?

A: They did nothing against it. When we could we would throw bread to them as they were starving, you know, but they gave them nothing to eat, **ja**.

Q: Where did they put the sick ones?

A: Sick ones? Well, they put them, there were beds, something like we had, and they lay on the beds. They slept on the beds, on pallets, **ja**. Nothing, only thin blankets they had ____.

Q: And were they together with you or separately?

A: No, they were separate. They had one block and they put the typhoid people there, the ones who had typhoid. And when they died, they died and they put them away. Right. So they did it. Terrible.

Q: And there were various doctors?

A: No, only one, Výroba, he was in charge of everything. You know what he would have deserved? Not to die in peace but tortured, so that he would remember what he did to the people there, you know.

Q: And who was he?

A: That was the Czech cop.

Q: The Výroba?

A: Výroba, yes, he was a doctor, too.

Q: Do you remember that man, he was also a doctor... He was a Jew.

A: This one was not there.

Q: He was there, but later, in summer.

A: You know what he.

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Q: He was called **Bohin** (ph).

A: I don't know him, but he was not there, this man. No, I don't recognize him.

Q: You don't?

A: There were so many Germans.

Q: What about your siblings? How did they survive? The time before.

A: Well, we tried to, you know, our Mum supported us and when I was in the kitchen, I tried to snatch something now and then, you know, **ja**. And I took it to my Mum so that she could support the children. Bread or jam, you know, or dumplings, you know, **ja**, or cabbage some other time, you know, right. And then I gave them the cabbage or meat some other time, you know, **ja**. And I would hide meat in my apron and take it to my Mum, right. So that she could support the kids.

Q: Who else was in the kitchen?

A: Well, they are mostly dead now, you know.

Q: No, I mean, how many people were in the kitchen?

A: There was one guy in the kitchen who was in charge. He was Czech and he didn't have a leg, right. And he a wooden leg but now he's dead, he was from Olomouc. And then there was a woman, and they lived together. They were in charge.

Q: What did the gendarmes do with the women?

A: With the women?

Q: Yes.

A: With the prisoners?

Q: Right.

A: Sometimes they got beaten when they were going to work. They would get bashed a lot, men and women, you know.

Q: And did you ever see that women would be abused?

A: There? Well, they liked to do that, you know, to do that. Yes, they did it.

Q: And who did that?

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A: The Germans did it, they did. They saw young girls so, you know, they did it.

Q: And did the girls protest?

A: Of course they did, you know, of course.

Q: And where?

A: If they knew, they tried. For instance, there were people outside when it was warm, **ja**, sitting by the wall, you know, with the kids, **ja**. And they went into the wooden houses or the other little houses where they had single rooms, you know, right. They had offices there, they had one bed there. So they always took the girls there.

Q: And the Czechs?

A: The young women had to do it for food, they did it for food there. Right.

Q: And the Czech gendarmes?

A: The same, you know, you know, they were all the same there, you couldn't tell what they were doing there. Terrible it was.

Q: Did they have a favorite woman?

A: Well, the ones who were there might be dead by now. The cops were older than me, you know. Maybe some of the girls went to Oświęcim, **ja**, so they burned them there. And those guys survived. But they were older men then, those guys, so they might have been, compared to them, as the cops, you know, right.

Q: Let's show it to the camera.

*** man's voice: Action.

Q: Who is this man?

A: I don't recognize him, no.

Q: And were there any nice doctors in the camp? Did they help you?

A: No, nothing.

Q: And did you contract typhoid?

A: No, no.

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Q: There were various punishments, weren't there?

A: Right.

Q: What other kinds of punishments were there?

A: Well, I can tell you that they beat people for running away a lot.

Q: They beat them and what else did they do to them?

A: They beat them, they bet them a lot, yes.

Q: Did you see that?

A: Yes, that's terrible. We were there to watch it, in Bohemia they once talked about this and showed a movie about what they did with the people, you know.

Q: And where was that?

A: Well, I can't remember what the place is called. It is in Bohemia, in Bohemia, but I can't remember.

Q: In the south?

A: Near Liberec, it is by Liberec, **ja**. And they took us, all the people who lived in our room, they told us, **ja**, and we saw the beds, the rooms there, like in Hodonín (ph) (Hodonín u Kunštátu) where we were. And they told us that people had been hanged in that room, the man said that, **ja**. And then that there was water and then the Germans put them together, two people, two prisoners, **ja**. And when he won, he released the one when they won, **ja**. But they didn't win so they _____ both of them into the water. Terrible.

Q: What was the heating system in the houses?

A: Nothing. No heating. Just like that.

Q: In winter too?

A: in winter too.

Q: They didn't give you any wool caps?

A: No, absolutely nothing.

Q: Did you at least have any blankets?

A: Yes, thin blankets we had. We were cold all the time.

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Q: Could people visit prisoners?

A: Yes. When someone came to visit, then yes, you know. They would bring food, too.

Q: Did anyone come to visit you?

A: My sister would come, the one that lived in Brno. She brought bread, salami, but what then? When you got salami and people ate it they got diarrhea then, you know, from the food. Or they ate too much bread and again, they had diarrhea.

Q: When there were visitors, how long could you talk to your sister, for instance?

A: Well, it was like, as far as this was, you know. Maybe ____ or so. Right.

Q: But how long?

A: Well, we never went there, our mother would. They didn't take us. They only took Mum.

Q: And why do you think you were in the camp and she was free?

A: Well, she was, too, you know, maybe she went to Slovakia and bribed someone, **ja**, bribed someone. She went to Slovakia because Slovakia was independent, wasn't it.

Q: And she came to visit you from there, right?

A: No, she came from here, from Brno.

Q: I see.

A: She visited us from Brno.

Q: And then?

A: Then she left and we didn't see her anymore, we saw her here after we returned.

Q: What about the transports? How many people did they take away?

A: They put people into cars, those were big trucks, **ja**, and they put everyone in there.

Q: And did they give them any food for the journey?

A: They gave them a bucket of jam and some loaves, each person got one little loaf for the jam, that was it. No water, nothing.

Q: And to wear?

A: Nothing.

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Q: No clothes?

A: Well, clothes.

Q: And how was that? How did you go there?

A: Well, they gave us something like clogs to wear, **ja**. We wore it in summer, winter, in snow, too.

Q: How did you arrive in Hodonín, what did you have with you?

A: Only our clothes, rags that we were wearing, nothing but that.

Q: Anything precious?

A: Nothing, nothing, nothing. We had nothing.

Q: And who refused to give you permission to take things with you?

A: Again those who took us over. They took us over, so they said we couldn't take anything with us.

Q: That was in that school?

A: Right.

Q: And there?

A: Nothing, we took nothing from home. We only had what we wore, so we went like that.

Q: And the travelers came there.

A: Right.

Q: With the wagons.

A: Right.

Q: How did they live there?

A: There?

Q: Did they live differently there?

A: How.

Q: Those in the camp.

A: **Ja**, in the camp.

Q: Right.

A: It was the same, everything was the same.

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Q: How did you speak together?

A: Us? We spoke Czech.

Q: And Romany?

A: Well, Gypsy too. Czech, German. Because Mum could speak German, she comes from Leznice (ph) near Zábřeh. Mother came from the Sudetenland.

Q: And when you sang, for instance, or lamented, or the old women, in what language did they sing?

A: They sang in Czech and in Gypsy, too.

Q: And can you still sing some songs?

A: Well, not really, I won't remember any. Not anymore.

Q: And when you went to work, what time did you get up?

A: Well, we got up, at six o'clock we got up, **ja**. And then we had to, we had to go to call-up, to the **Appell**.

Q: And what was the **Appell** like?

A: **Appell, ja**, like this, men here, women there, **ja**, or the young girls stood here. They counted how many we were and than opened the gate and we went to work.

Q: And you counted in German?

A: Counted what?

Q: Well, prisoners had to count in German, didn't they?

A: Yeah, they had to.

Q: During the **Appell**.

A: Well, yes, in German, Germans.

Q: And.

A: Germans.

Q: And how long did that take?

A: Well, how long, over an hour or so. Over an hour until they counted everyone, and then again.

Q: And who else was there at that time?

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A: And then they counseled. And then off to work.

Q: And who was there?

A: And they counted again, recounted us and when someone was missing, they took dogs, the Germans took dogs and ran, looking for people with the dogs.

Q: And who counted during the **Appell**?

A: Germans.

Q: Germans?

A: Only Germans.

Q: Was it the commander or anyone else?

A: The superior was the German, **ja**, and then the other, the prisoner, you know. He counted and told the Germans. So they counted everyone and we went to work.

Q: Where did you go to work?

A: Well, to, to what is it called, I can't say that.

Q: Quarry?

A: Quarry, quarry. We went there and dug rocks, **ja**. There were little wagons on rails and we threw the big rocks into them.

Q: How heavy were the rocks?

A: Well, pretty heavy. Here on my leg I still have the, the, from the rock that fell on me, look. Here, and there too. As I lifted it, it rolled and fell right on my foot.

Q: The stuff.

A: The rock.

Q: My colleague did not catch it, could you show it once again?

A: Well, there is no blood to see any more.

*** man's voice: I can't see it, there is the table, you understand?

A: You know, here.

*** man's voice: Let's try it from the other side.

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A: Here.

Q: It's not possible to see it.

*** man's voice: I cannot see it.

A: Right, here and there. The rock rolled and here it, it bled.

Q: How did you manage when you were exhausted, when you couldn't work any more?

A: We had to, otherwise they would have killed us, right, even if you couldn't you had to stand, you had to.

Q: You saw.

A: Or they would have finished you off. Totally.

Q: Did you see them to kill anyone?

A: Well, they did kill people. But they did it so that you couldn't see it, you know. They had a room, and there they went with the _____ to work, they were beaten, tortured there, you know, those who tried to run away. They tortured these people there and these rooms were enclosed, you know. So our blocks were somewhere else and the German's too.

***man's voice: Stop.

Q: What?

***man's voice: May I?

***man's voice: Yeah.

***man's voice: Please.

Q: I would like to know, you said that the block where you lived still exists. Could you try to remember where the block was situated.

A: So, you go, go, there is the gate, you go uphill, **ja**, then it is on the right side. The last house, right.

Q: Did it have a number?

A: It was long. I don't know, we didn't look at numbers, you know, but tried to remember our Mummy, returned into the experience with our mother.

Q: And how many rooms were there in the house?

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A: Well, rooms. There was one smaller room, and the rest, it wasn't rooms, it was called a block. It was long, **ja**, long. And there beds were one on top of each other, you know.

Q: How many were there on top of each other?

A: Well, there might have been about four or five beds. There were little steps and you climbed up.

Q: And how many people were there in the block?

A: Many. I don't remember, but many. Many people were there. Many.

Q: And your whole family lived in the block? Can you tell me who lived in there with you?

A: Well, we were there with our mother, **ja**, kids.

Q: How many children?

A: We were six girls and one boy.

Q: And your sister Květa.

A: Květa.

Q: Where did she live?

A: Květa, Květa lived with us and she was in the infirmary. She assisted with the deliveries there.

Q: And where did she live?

A: Well, sometimes she slept in the infirmary, **ja**. Because when the women were in labor, she had to go to them, **ja**. Well, either they took her and brought her to the woman giving birth or dragged the woman to the infirmary.

Q: And where was the infirmary?

A: The infirmary was behind the kitchen. There was a kitchen, on the left, here was the kitchen and behind it, there was the infirmary.

Q: And what was it like in the infirmary, did you ever go there?

A: Yes, I did. It was kind of small, right. It was a small room, about this big.

Q: And what about the equipment?

A: Equipment? Normal, like in a doctor's office. Like here.

Q: Could you try to remember what it looked like?

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A: Like at a doctor's.

Q: How many beds were there?

A: There was a table, one table was there, white. And then a little desk or something like that he had there. A washbasin and that was it.

Q: There were no beds?

A: He had one bed there, metal bed.

Q: So there were no patients on beds.

A: No.

Q: In the infirmary.

A: No.

Q: And who used to be there apart from Květa?

A: Well, Výroba, the guy called Výroba, he was there.

Q: And how often was he there?

A: Well, almost every day.

Q: He was there regularly?

A: Yes, regularly.

Q: And what about Květa, what did she do during the day?

A: When something happened to someone, she would bandage a hand, or a leg. That was it.

Q: Where did she learn that?

A: They forced her, they forced her to assist with the deliveries, too.

Q: Who?

A: The Germans.

Q: Who?

A: The Germans.

Q: Who in particular?

A: They said that if she didn't do it, they would kill her.

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Q: I see.

A: So she had to do it. She assisted with Soňa, too, she was with Mum, and with Soňa, too.

Q: And how did it go?

A: She did it really well. She did a good job.

Q: And which of the

A: She was

Q: Germans forced her?

A: Well, the Germans, and Výroba forced her to do it, too.

Q: And how did he do it? Were you there?

A: No I wasn't. I wasn't there.

Q: And do you remember when your mother was pregnant with Soňa?

A: Yes.

Q: How was it before she gave birth? Do you remember the moment?

A: Well, they dragged me, she dragged her to the infirmary, **ja**. And there were, next to it, there were white beds they had there, **ja**. Beds. They put people in favor there, you know.

Q: People in what?

A: Výroba, you know. When some of the people, you know, for instance. Like now, a doctor likes you. And Výroba liked some of them so they put them in that room, on those beds. And kept some people alive.

Q: And why did he put people he liked there?

A: Because nobody could see that. He was there, with the Germans, you know.

Q: And how many people did he have there?

A: Well, one or two people, you know, **ja**. But not too many, no.

Q: And can you remember who exactly he had there?

A: No, no I can't, I can't possibly remember. I can't.

Q: And the people lived there permanently?

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A: Right.

Q: And did they go to work, too?

A: Yes, they did. And all those went to Oświęcim then.

Q: What is your explanation for this?

A: What?

Q: Since they were his favorites.

A: Well, they might have been, I think so, he knew them well, those people from Hodonín (ph), didn't he, so he kept them there. He gave them better medicaments than to us, right.

Q: And what did they sleep on, what was on the beds?

A: Pallets (ph).

Q: The same as in the blocks?

A: Same as in the blocks.

Q: And where was the difference then?

A: Same, there was just the white canvas there. And the beds were metal and ours were wooden.

Q: And covers?

A: Yeah. There were blankets, normal blankets.

Q: Same as in the blocks?

A: Same as in the blocks.

Q: And what kind of food did they get?

A: Well, food from the kitchen, too.

Q: And what size portions did they get?

A: Well, I can't tell you because I don't look into the cup when they carry it. I can't see that.

Q: Did they have bigger portions than other prisoners?

A: I don't know I couldn't tell the truth. I can't tell.

Q: You worked in the kitchen, right?

A: Yes, I did.

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Q: And what did you do in the kitchen?

A: Well, we peeled potatoes there, prepared stuff for the morning, prepared food.

Q: Can you describe how that worked? You were there to work, weren't you?

A: Well, we cooked potatoes, added some flour to it and stirred it, stirred it. ____ We would make some soup. But it was like water, the soup. And then we put it in their cups when they came to the window.

Q: You also put it in the cups?

A: Yes, I did, I did.

Q: And how much were they given? How were the portions measured?

A: Well, it was like this, the _____ was this big, like a palm, right. So, you know, when my mother came I gave her more.

Q: Did anyone keep an eye on you when you were distributing food?

A: No, nobody did. They just stood by, the German would stand over there.

Q: And which German was that?

A: I don't know I don't remember. It's been many years. I knew them all, even those who came there, the main Germans, the highest ones, **ja**. I knew them all but now I cannot remember, only the Výroba I can remember.

Q: And besides Výroba, was there any other Czech gendarme?

A: Yes, there were, many, many. In our age, some of them were older. These _____ are dead for a long time.

Q: And who was the worst?

A: Výroba.

Q: And why, what did he do?

A: Sometimes Výroba went to work with people. And he beat them, very much, he would beat people, terribly. I myself got beaten by him.

Q: What for?

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A: As I told you, we were using the wheelbarrows, right, and when we worked together, with the wheelbarrows, I say: "Now you take it" and she said that she wouldn't and so we started arguing, right and we had fight, so then he beat us both. Severely.

Q: What did he beat you with?

A: With a club, with a club.

Q: And how many blows did you get?

A: Oh, many, many.

Q: And the other woman?

A: She got a lot, too, we both got beaten. It was horrible, terrible it was there.

Q: And what did this incident mean to you later? Did anything change in your behavior?

A: Like what.

***man's voice: Action?

***man's voice: Yes, I can, you can. Yes.

Q: Yes. I would like to hear about the wagons you mentioned, the travelers.

A: Yes.

Q: Who lived in them?

A: They put corpses into them, they threw them in.

Q: How do you know?

A: Because we saw that during the call-up, there were some people who were very ill, you know, STD, ja. And when they dropped dead, they saw it and threw them into the wagons and that was it.

Q: You saw that?

A: Yeah.

Q: And did anyone live in the wagons?

A: No, nobody lived there, they only threw corpses in there. The garages were not big enough so they threw them in there.

Q: And what happened with the corpses then? How long did they stay in there?

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A: Well, they would leave them there for four, five days, they didn't care about the bad smell, **ja**, that there would be germs, right. And then they took them to the forest and buried them there.

Q: How do you know, that they buried them in the forest? Were you there?

A: My sister always _____ went there _____.

Q: And what did she do there?

A: Well, she would take the corpses there.

Q: And what, what did she do with them?

A: She _____ them there .

Q: How, did she tell you about it?

A: When they carried them, the guys, **ja**, she took the bag and had to put them there. Even if she refused to, the Germans forced her to, so you had to do it.

Q: And what guys used to carry it?

A: Well, the prisoners again, right.

Q: And why did she take it there?

A: Well, she had to, who else would have put the corpses there, they had to. They dug a hole and threw them in there.

Q: And what happened then?

A: Well, well, then they went to the camp.

Q: And who else, who went there?

A: Just, just the Germans, the Germans, the Germans went with them so that they wouldn't run away.

Q: I would like to know one thing, you spoke about baths.

A: Yes.

Q: Ho often did you have a bath.

A: They had a big car there. Like a big drum, **ja**. And they stripped the people, we had to strip. They put the clothes on big heaps and threw it into the drums. And they **fired** (burned? No. I think she's talking about putting clothes in big boiling cauldrons.) it because there were fleas in it, and lice,

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because there were so many people, so they put it into the drums, there, **ja**. Well, and then, the women with the kids, all naked, had to wait there, wait until they brought the clothes back.

Q: And how long did they wait?

A: Well, they waited an hour or two until the clothes were **fired**. There were many, many people.

Q: And they brought them back dry, the clothes?

A: Yeah, yeah, dry. They were dry when you got them back.

Q: And they waited there naked, all the time?

A: Yes, naked, with the kids, too.

Q: And what happened while you were waiting for the clothes?

A: They cried, you know, the women cried, they covered themselves, they held the small children in front of themselves, right, she had a son there, there was the dad so they covered themselves with the little kids.

Q: And how many times did you experience this?

A: This? Many times, many.

Q: How often did you have a bath?

A: Well, they would take us outside to have a bath.

Q: I mean after how long time you had baths.

A: Baths? Well, about once in a month. But in the summer they would take us outside for a bath.

Q: And where to?

A: It was little water, running, **ja**.

Q: You mean a brook?

A: Well, little water, **ja**. And they took people there and they bathed there, naked, too. And they walked over a kind of bridge. They had bridges, the Germans there and watched the people bathing down there.

Q: How far was that from the camp?

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A: Well, it was about, well, about, about an hour, an hour and a half maybe. There was a big meadow, you know, **ja**, and water. They took people there and they bathed there.

Q: Did you go there after the war, to see the place, the water?

A: No, I wasn't there, I wasn't but I went to the place where they built like, you know, a cemetery they made there, **ja**. They made it like a cemetery. A wooden God and stuff. So they made that there. We went to see it when they were building it.

Q: How did you get out of the camp?

A: How I got out? Well, listen. They released Mum, **ja**. And they sent me to Brno, to a jail or something like that, they put me there. And there, there were people going to, you know, to transports, so I was among them. And then the German opens the door and calls out, calls out names. And I told him: "My mother has been released," I say. So we stayed there to work, we had to clean it up.

Q: How was that organized, the work?

A: Well, some girls stayed there, the released ones. And we cleaned it, **ja**.

Q: What exactly did you do there?

A: We cleaned the camp there. Sweeping, you know, right. And then they sent me to Brno, to jail and there were many people, you know, many.

Q: Can you remember where it was in Brno?

A: I can't remember, we were many there and then the German calls out and I tell him that mum had been released and I should be too, right. Well, and he says then: "**Wie heissen sie?**" Right, in German he says. So I told him what my name was and he says: "**Gehen sie raus, gehen sie raus.**" And then he called me out and he let me out.

Q: And where were your sisters?

A: They were at home with Mum.

Q: And how come they released them earlier?

A: Because they were with Mum and they kept older girls to work there, you know.

Q: How many did you stay there to work?

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A: Well, we were four girls there but I don't know where those went then, maybe to Oświęcim, I don't know. That's why I asked to get out of the room. That I was released, right. So he called me out, I told him my name, right, that my mother had been released, right, so he let me out and I took a train and went home.

Q: And where did the other prisoners from Hodonín go?

A: To Oświęcim, they took everyone to Oświęcim.

Q: Why do you think they released you and your Grandmother and sisters and took the others to Oświęcim?

A: Well, listen. I told myself that the reason might have been that Mum could speak German and she came from the Sudetenland, you know. And she spoke to one German, the highest one that was there.

Q: In the camp?

A: Yes, he would come there. He didn't stay there but he would come there. And mother talked to him.

Q: What about?

A: I don't know, I don't know. But she spoke to him and then she said: "I come from there, from the Sudetenland." She spoke perfect German, my Mum. Her whole family was in West Germany. So she talked to him and Mum said that if she hadn't, we might have all been in Oświęcim. So we were happy that we were released from there, and it was over.

Q: And when the other prisoners went to Oświęcim, what did you think? Did you know what was in Oświęcim or where they were going?

A: Well, they would only say: "Oświęcim." So we, as young girls had no clue, **ja**.

Q: And who said: "Oświęcim"?

A: Well, because there, the older people would say, you know, that they were sending to, that they were going to Oświęcim.

Q: The prisoners said that?

A: Yeah, the prisoners, you know. So we, young girls heard it, too, you know. But we didn't have a clue about what was going on in Oświęcim, did we, that they were going to gas chambers or whatever.

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Q: Were the prisoners afraid of going to Oświęcim?

A: Well, if you could see that, when they were going through the forest from Hodonín (ph). There is a forest and then a road. And in the car it was making noises like "hoot" like this in the forest and the people cried, and the children, too. They knew they were going to Oświęcim.

Q: And how did you happen to see that? Where were you standing?

A: Well, we were, because the cars were so big, it was inside, right, so there was a lot of space there. And they pulled in with the big cars, right, and put them, called them out and put them in the car. It was full there, completely full.

Q: I don't want to hold you up for too long, so I will ask about one more thing, the time after you returned from Hodonín. Where did you go?

A: Where did I go? Mum was alone in Ostrov (ph) with the kids and Květa and me had to work for some people in Pivín (ph). So that we could support Mum.

Q: And where was that?

A: In Pivín (ph), at the Vrbas (ph).

Q: What did you do there?

A: In the field we worked.

Q: And did you go back to your home?

A: Yes, we did, Mum stayed in Tvarovice (ph), with the little kids, right. Soňa was still small then. And the two of us had to work so that we could support our mother.

Q: And what did you,

A: Because we had no father.

Q: What did you find in Tvarovice (ph), when you returned there?

A: Completely empty, nothing, we had nothing.

Q: And the house was still there?

A: Well, the house was still there.

Q: And what remained inside?

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A: Nothing. Everything was gone, everything.

Q: You didn't ask in the village?

A: Well, later, after the war, right, we were, our mother married one guy. And he took us someplace else. And then when we were grown up we had our families so we lived somewhere else, too.

Q: I wanted to ask if you asked the people in Tvarovice where the things from your house went? If you were interested at all.

A: They told us nothing, the people, nothing.

Q: And how did they treat you when you returned?

A: Well, nicely, they treated us fine. They saw that we had hair shaven off, so they were shocked, shocked. Ad one woman was really nice, she would come to our place. She would always cry when she saw us. Always, horrible.

***man's voice: That's the end.

A: Well, it's fine, let's leave it, I don't know.

End of tape 1.

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Tape 2

***man's voice: We're ready.

A: Can I speak now?

Q: Yes, you can.

A: Well, I only wanted to say that we went through a lot, _____

Q: Go for it, so that everyone can hear this.

A: (sigh) ---I can't. We went through a lot in the concentration camp with our mother. We lost our father, we had to ___ ourselves. And then I moved to that house, my daughter wasn't born yet, I applied for an apartment and had to wait for eight years, we lived in a dump. We lived there for eight years before we got this apartment. And then this girl was born. And I was looking after the girl down here, because he had the pub. We lived down here and he turned that into a pub and made us move up here. I asked him for a substitute apartment or compensation. He said that I had no right to claim that, no right. And I went to the housing office and the woman there told me that I might have to wait five, three years for an apartment. I showed her all my working papers, health documentation, I had a lung treatment and my kidneys weren't all right. I worked in **OP (clothes factory in Prostějov)** before I retired. I did work. But he gave me that, everything cracked and I left with the girl to visit someone, we went to Liberec. And I didn't understand the stove that was there, I had never had such a stove. So I turned it off, and everything cracked because of the frost. In October everything got flooded, then. And we asked for a substitute apartment, for something else. But they said they didn't have anything, maybe in three, five years. And I say: "So we have to stay at that cold place and suffer there?" If only they had done something with it. But there was another winter ahead of us, living in there again ---(crying).

Q: And how did you heat in winter?

A: Radiator. So I am going to pay five thousand for the electricity bill. They do nothing with it. Nothing. Standa dealt with it but they won't do anything. The landlord is terrible here, terrible.

Q: What does he say?

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A: He says that I have to move out, that I have to look myself. And I tell him: "I've been everywhere." It is almost five thousand. Where am I supposed to get that money from? From my pension? Where shall I get it? And he says: "I have bought the house without tenants." That he has bought the house. And I tell him: "You didn't know that there were living people in the house? Why did you buy it then?" Right.

***man's voice: OK.

End of tape 2

Conclusion of interview.