

**Interview with Marie Sendreiova  
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Question: Mrs. Sendreiova, we are starting now. Would you be so kind as to introduce yourself and say when and where you were born and then continue talking about your childhood.

Answer: Well, I was born in southern \_\_\_\_\_ on December 16, 1929. And I lived in Mezov and then we went for a visit to Košice. We stayed there for two weeks, in Košice in Mezov.

Q: So you were - -

A: So, in Košice, I should say. I mustn't get confused. And then we wanted to go back home after those two weeks, yeah, but early in the morning the Hungarians came. They banged on our door telling us that we have to go to work.

Q: Could you go back a little to your childhood? Tell us about your life. How you lived with your granny.

A: Well, we lived in Mezov. Yeah. My grandma was a widow, my mom died at my birth. So I didn't go to school because my grandma lived on her own. She walked from house to house and looked for work. And I tried hard as well to help her a bit. So we went house to house and worked. Sometimes people would give us money, sometimes they would give us something to live on so that we could somehow support ourselves. So that's how we tried to get something to eat. And we used to go picking raspberries too and we picked bilberries in the woods. So we lived penny to penny, to have something to live on. Well, granny was without a man, you know - -

Q: She was just getting by.

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A: She was just getting by. Yeah, and Dad was still alive and then he married another woman. Well, after that, he had different kinds of problems, because he had eight children so he couldn't take care of me. And I couldn't stay in his place either because it wasn't the same as living with my granny. I didn't think of her as my granny but I thought of her as my mom. My granny was so happy to have me and I was even more glad to have her.

Q: So even though you didn't have a mother, your childhood was quite happy?

A: Childhood, yeah, yeah. Well, you know there wasn't much wood then, and we didn't have such nice clothes today as you have today. Well, and when we went to work, granny would always beg for some clothes or shoes so I could have some. Yeah, and then in winter - - We already started saving pennies in summer to have some money later and some food. We got by as we could, you know. Well and then - - Dad would never give me a penny to tell you the truth, he didn't. He could have, maybe, but he couldn't because of his wife. 'Cause his wife, she didn't like me. Because she liked her own kids, you know?

Q: Mrs. Sendreiova, where did you live? Did you have a house or - -

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah we did, yeah. Granny did. She even had a garden. She had a nice house, you know, a big one she had, right, yeah. But then, when they, when we were leaving the Germans just knocked everything down.

Q: When you were still a child and you lived with your grandmother, did

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you, at that time, encounter any anti-Romanies behavior, would anyone get angry with you?

A: No, no, no, no. We always stuck together. Everywhere. I can't say that there were arguments or anything. When you didn't have enough, people helped each other. So we all had something, we had, you know. I can still remember that, cause I was already like a grown-up then. To tell you the truth, I was a hard working girl, I tried hard but every time when, you know, they didn't have enough or we didn't have enough, we helped each other. But arguing or some kind of hurting, no. I can't remember that, that anyone would do such a thing. Nobody did anything like that there. We all thought each other decent people, you know? Well then, I tell you, we went to Košice, you see?

Q: Yes. \_\_\_\_\_

A: So granny said, like, she would like to go to see her sister in Košice. So we went to Košice for a visit. We were there for two weeks. So we were in Košice and after those two weeks we wanted to go back home, but we couldn't. We couldn't get home anymore because early in the morning the police started banging on our door. It was those Hungarians, you know, telling us that we're going to work. Yeah, we wanted to take something with us, some clothes but they told us not to, not to take anything, that they would give us something there and that we would go back home then. That wasn't true though.

Q: Did you go - - Did they take the family you were visiting as well?

A: Everybody, everybody, all of the Romanies, they took all of us. Yeah.

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Well, but Jews as well. And then they took us down, we had to line up and the policemen took us like that all the way down to Kosice.

Q: By car?

A: No, on foot, to those barracks. Yeah, to those barracks, yeah, and when we came there, there was straw already because already - - I think there had been more people there already. There was lots of straw there, so we sat there and at four in the morning there were some train cars standing there already. They were standing there and they shoved us in the cars, all of us. It was the policemen with those dogs, to stop anyone running away, so they took us to Terezin.

Q: Were you transported on open freight cars or by passenger cars?

A: By ordinary cars. By ordinary cars. They shoved us in and that's where we went, right. And then when we were travelling in those cars they stopped in some of those bigger towns, they threw in straw and bread yeah, and there were lots of Jews with us. To tell you the truth, a lot of the people there were Jews. Some of them were even going nuts. I'll tell you, they kept saying - - they started talking Hungarian, yeah, because a lot \_\_\_\_\_ left \_\_\_\_\_ we would come back or not. And I can remember well, there was such a small opening, we had to go and pee there or do number two as well, when we had to go. Yeah. Yeah, I'll tell you, lots of Jewish women died, we were only women with children there you see.

Q: And you are talking about - - You are still in the train. Are you talking

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about the train?

A: Yes, yes. In those cars, yeah. As we were going in those cars.

Because they didn't stop when we needed the toilet or anything so we had to do it there, yeah. Then, when they transported us to Terezin, we went, I think, for about a week. From Kosice - -

Q: Is that how long you were traveling?

A: Yeah. From Kosice to Terezin. Yeah, because I remember all those trees passing, you know. Yeah, the trees. Yeah, and then we got off at the station and there was a band there already. Yeah. The band was there and they started to play. So we went, right, we went all the way to Terezin from the train station on foot.

Q: You must have arrived at the station in Bohusovice since there was no station in Terezin.

A: I can't remember that anymore, you know? I can't remember that. I know that we got off and we walked and the band with us. Yeah. Well you know, some couldn't go on anymore on the way. Sometimes they fell. Yeah, they would leave them there and told them to get up and if they couldn't, they shot them, they left them there. Yeah, and then we got to Terezin. We could see the gate then, you know, so, we went there, you know, they put everybody in the blocks, as they say.

Q: You were at the Small Fortress, weren't you?

A: Well, I think it was some kind of a fortress, and right there, when they put us there, then we went to work, we worked on trenches, yeah, and guys, they dragged things with those straps on their legs and they dragged - -

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and they threw them in that pit and women would tie up, right. And they, the soldiers were standing over us, yeah, were standing, so that we would do it properly, and stuff, yeah.

Q: So you lived - - Where did you live? Were there some bunk beds or what did it look like in there?

A: Well, there were some at the bottom, at the top and the third one, yeah, and granny and I slept on the third one.

Q: And did your granny go to work as well?

A: Yes, she went to work too. I slept in number 13. I can remember that. I slept in 13.

Q: Mrs. Sendreiova, try to remember and describe what a day was like at the Small Fortress from morning until evening .

A: Right, so we had to get up \_\_\_\_\_ we had to get up already, we had to go out, we had to line up, they counted people, who was missing, who wasn't, yeah, and then we were dismissed, yeah, and then they would be already telling us to go to work.

Yeah, so they took us there. To work, in those trenches, so we dug there, worked there, yeah, and then we had to go back home. Yeah. Got a ladle of turnips with potatoes, right and then again we had to go to that block, tired, wretched and then early in the morning the same, over and over again.

Q: You were 13 years old then - -

A: I was 13.

Q: Were there any other children your age there?

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A: There were, yes. There were, there were, yeah. When they \_\_\_\_\_, those who could work, right, and because my granny never wanted to leave me on my own, she used to say: "Better say you can work, so you can stay with me, so that they don't separate us anywhere, right?" So I tried to. I tell you, I saw a few times that someone couldn't go on any more, maybe an older woman, so I took the pick and started digging, right. And I shovelled out too. And there was a Gestapo woman who could speak Czech too. Czech - - she spoke Czech to me. And she would say: "Don't overdo it, you are only little, \_\_\_\_\_"

Q: Were you hungry?

A: Jesus Christ, we were fed only once a day.

Q: Were you given only one meal a day?

A: We were given only one a day. Otherwise on Sundays we used to get a piece of bread. That was \_\_\_\_\_ bread, that you could see through it, we got a slice of salami, a small amount of margarine, that's what we waited for most of all, when it was Sunday, to fill ourselves a bit, you see.

Q: Didn't you get any bread during the week?

A: We didn't, no, we didn't. Not at all. We got it only on Sundays. Only that turnip with potatoes still in their peelings. That's what we were given. That's true, that is, but bread only on Sundays.

Q: On the block, were there any supervisors from amongst the prisoners?

A: There were, there were, there were, yes.

Q: How did they treat you?

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A: How did they treat us, well, you know, not very well. Not well - - They didn't do us any good. They had to - - had to, if they didn't want to, if they didn't want to be told off, didn't they, yeah. And I'd like to tell you something else. They burned us out. You know? In Terezin.

Q: How did they burn you out? I don't understand.

A: Like, into the womb.

Q: In Terezin?

A: In Terezin, yes.

Q: At an infirmary or where?

A: No, it was - - well it was like a sickbay.

Q: Yes.

A: There was, like, a sickbay - - There was just one - - I slept at 13, just towards that side, I remember it well. I even went to have a look, you know?

Q: And were you also - -

A: Yes. Also. So they burned out our wombs. They had such a cooker or what was it, you know? And they put needles in there, right? Yeah, so they burned us out. In the womb. Yeah, everyone. They did it to every woman. Yeah. They did.

Were you together with - - only Romanies, or were you together with all the other prisoners?

A: Look, there were Romanies as well as Jews.

Q: Were there any Czech people? Czech women?

A: Well, no, no Czechs. Czechs weren't with us. There were only those

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Jews and Romanies. I remember well, that it was the concentration camp where that number 13 was, there were beds on one side, there were beds on the other side and all that was such a wide place. So I know that all the Romanies were on one side, on this half, and the Jews were on that half. Yeah. And we all went to work.

Q: Were you given any prisoner clothes or did you wear your own clothes you arrived in?

A: No, no, no. When we got there, they took everything from us, they cut our hair and they gave us those striped clothes they had, you know. The wider ones. And we had that \_\_\_\_\_ we had a number in front, you know. Yeah, we had that and that's how they knew who'd run away and who hadn't, so they would know who it was, yeah. I can still remember that well.

Q: When you went to work, did you go outside the area of the Small Fortress?

A: Yeah, that's it, we went outside, you know. There were those trenches they worked on, yeah, we worked on those trenches and the men dragged things and they threw it into that, what's it called, in that pit where we dug, you know. So it was thrown in there and we buried it again. With dirt, you know. That's what we did.

Q: Maybe there were some pipes put in there or something like that?

A: Yeah, something like that.

Q: So you could meet men too at - - at work.

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A: No, no. They were only there, they weren't allowed to talk to us at all.

Neither them or us could. Nobody. We weren't allowed, no. They worked, but those soldiers, there were those Gestapo guards there, they had those nightsticks on them, yeah, so we weren't allowed to speak, we weren't allowed to say a word, yeah, so they - - so they worked like that, they - - they were dragging these things and we threw it in there, yeah, and when we finished we had to go back home again, back in the line, they counted us, how many of us there were and then back again to that little room and then again waiting in line for lunch. We ate, you know, dirty, unwashed, unprepared, yeah.

Q: And was there anywhere to wash, some shower, some troughs where you could have a little wash?

A: Well, to tell you the truth, as far as I can remember, there weren't any. We didn't have any. Only, you know, the only time I could wash was when - I don't know if it was in Terezin or not - where those little rooms were. They said that if someone tried to run away they would throw them in there and they would never come back. I'm telling you how I heard it. Exactly the same, because I can't make it up. Yeah, so we used to go cleaning there, you know? Sometimes. Yeah, and a little bit further down there, down that little path, right there, well there they used to cut off heads and there by that wall, they used to shoot. You know, we women, we would - -some of the older women said that, so I can remember it. Right. And when they were cutting them off there, those heads, the water flowed there. Yeah, it was bloody too, yeah, but today - - I've just been to

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the spa and the women were going for a trip there. So I put my name down too, right, so I went and I looked, yeah, and there is no water running there anymore.

Q: And did you recognize the place where you used to live?

A: I did. I went there first. Some doctor went with us and he said:

“Madam, where are you going?” I didn’t want to say - - they wouldn’t have let me in, because one lady went in there and she felt sick and I was so stubborn that I went in there, right to that number 13, yeah, and I slept right up there. I want to cry now.

Q: And from the medical point of view, did you and your granny survive it without any damage to your health? Without going to the infirmary, the sickbay?

A: Only her sister was there, you know, she had typhus, because just there, where the sickbay was, there was such a hospital where they took those with typhus. Yeah, to that hospital, but she didn’t come back again. And that was, it was on Sunday, we were standing outside, you know, and granny recognized her. She was already undressed, naked, as they were putting her on those trolleys. And as they were putting her on that trolley my granny said : “So our \_\_\_\_\_ is dead already.” So she was taken away. They took them somewhere, but where I can’t tell you. Yeah.

Q: How long were you there? In the Small Fortress?

A: Well, to tell you the truth, I must have been there for over a half year or so.

Q: Do you know, when you were taken from Košice, was it in spring, in

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fall, do you know which time of the year?

A: It was in summer. It was in summer, the weather was nice and warm.

Well I don't remember which day of course, you know. Yeah, I know it was warm, it was nice, that must have been in May, June, it must have been, because that was just when they took us to Terezin, right.

Q: And how did it happen that you were taken yet further?

A: Well, we were there then, yeah, I don't know why - - well I think, you know, that maybe they knew that they were coming to liberate us, you know. So quickly, they quickly took us away in those train cars, yeah.

Q: So you are saying that you were there for about half a year, that means, that you were taken to another camp sometime in winter.

A: Yeah, it was, it was like this. Yeah, and they took us away, right, they gave us bread, yeah, they gave us a piece of bread and a bit of salami, and with that - - and then they put us in those train cars and we went further, yeah.

Q: And where did you go?

A: To Ravensbruck, we got to Ravensbruck.

Q: Were you still together with your granny?

A: With granny, yeah, in Ravensbruck, but there in Ravensbruck she died on me.

Q: And was it a big group, the people who went from Terezin to Ravensbruck? Did you go by train again?

A: Yes, by train cars again.

Q: Train cars.

A: Train cars, yeah. We walked, right, all the way to the station, with music again, you know, and from there they took us to those train cars again. Right, and when

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we came there they cut our hair again and who had earrings or things like that they took it away from them and then they shoved us in a bathroom.

At least we could wash ourselves. Yeah.

Q: In Ravensbruck, was it better there for you than in Terezin?

A: Well, to be honest, it was worse.

Q: Worse?

A: It was worse there. It was worse there because when they called Zählappell (ph) and

someone pushed or something they would hit people, you know, with a night stick and stuff, yeah. And then, it was fall already - we were there in fall - it was snowing already, I remember, that it was snowing but we had to go to work anyway.

Q: What did you do there?

A: We worked too.

Q: The same work? Did you dig somewhere?

A: The same work, the same work, but we wouldn't - - we didn't work everyday in summer, you know, because they had burned many by then, you know. In those chambers.

Q: Did they burn people in those chambers?

A: Yeah, I think so because we didn't go to work so often as in Terezin, you know? Yeah, and it was cold, so I don't know, but I can't picture it that well anymore.

Q: And when you arrived in Ravensbruck, did they let you stay together, the group from Košice or were you separated and put in those blocks?

A: Yes, they separated us, yes. They counted people, how many of us were there, you know and they put everybody in a different place. Yeah, but from Košice, you

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know, us from Košice, these Romanies, right, we wanted to stay together, you know, so we pushed as close to each other as possible. So that we would all stay together. Yeah, but there, many people from Kosice died there.

Q: They died there, yes?

A: Right, they died there. Yeah, and then we were standing in line waiting for lunch and a Gestapo woman hit granny over the head, right, with that night stick, you know. Yeah and after that she couldn't go on anymore, she was ill all the time, yeah. She survived somehow but towards the end, when we were being taken somewhere else again, she stayed there, stayed in that dormitory, everyone was being counted, yeah, and they were missing me and my granny. And the Gestapo woman came back - - that one was kind too, can't say she wasn't, they weren't all the same, as people say, yeah, and she said: "Little girl, come with me, your granny is going to stay here, she's not gonna live anymore." Yeah, and I sat down, sat by her and cried. And before they transported us we were given bread again, you know, we were given some bread and she had it in her lap and she didn't speak at all. She didn't speak, she only passed me that bread, so that I would have some for the journey, yeah and then this Gestapo woman took me back, you know.

Q: Did anyone look after you after that, somebody around you, somebody from Košice?

A: Yeah, because we were together, you know, the women, the older ones died there and we, the younger ones, came back, you know. Because we were together all the time, we were together.

Q: So they did look after you a little bit, you didn't have to - -

A: Be afraid? No, I wasn't so afraid, because I was with them, right, and everyone - -

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they all kept telling me: "When we are going to work, don't go anywhere, don't run far, stay in one place, so that we can get - - you know how to do it." So we stayed together in one place and we walked back together in that, that camp.

Q: How long were you in Ravensbruck - - approximately?

A: Well, I was there for nearly a year, I was there the longest. Yeah, we were there nearly a year, and then again - it wasn't the same as in Terezin, we worked hard there, yeah, we did go to work, but not as often as in Terezin.

Yeah, but the food situation was bad, well, you know, many times when we were walking to work we would find a carrot. You didn't even wipe it, you would just eat it. We found a bone many times, with a bit of meat on it, we would eat it, we survived as we could. And if you couldn't you died. You know, there I was the longest, there in Ravensbruck.

Q: So you were there the longest.

A: Yes. I was there the longest. Yeah, and then they transported us somewhere else again, this time to Buchenwald.

Q: In Ravensbruck, were there - - there were mainly women there, weren't there?

A: Women, yes, we were all women in there, yeah, but men were also - -

Q: They were there as well.

A: But they were separated.

Q: But not so much.

A: The women and children were separated too.

Q: Were there children there as well?

A: Children as well. They were saying that they did good thing for children, like, they had school for them, that they played theatre or what, but I haven't seen anything like

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that. I can't say if it's true or not. We didn't see that or maybe we couldn't get in there, we went only to work and then back again in the camp.

And we couldn't even go outside. Only, let's say to the toilet.

Q: How many of you were there in one room? Well, it was us who slept up here, it was on that side \_\_\_\_\_, yeah there was about 12 of us up there. There were lots of us, there were lots.

Q: Did you have any blanket?

A: Yeah, we did, but it was torn and full of lice, to tell you the truth. You know, if someone passed it would be left there and they gave it to us again, but we slept on bare wooden board. There was a bit of straw and nothing else, right. And then in winter, my shoes were stolen. My granny told me: "Tie them" - - what's it called, those wooden shoes - - "Tie them around your neck, so that no-one can steal them." It was in winter, because they counted Zählappell (ph.) every day. They counted

people. So I did it, I put the shoes under my head - - and I must have slept so deeply or what, someone stole them. And then a Gestapo woman came and she started : "Zählappell, Zählappell!" (ph.) Right and now I am looking for my shoes, those wooden

shoes and they just weren't there. So I told her: "Schuhe nichts.", like that I don't have any shoes, right, and she is like that she doesn't care, that I have to go, so I was just standing there, to tell you the truth, barefoot in the snow. I can remember that. And granny was wearing some kind of blouse, you know, so she torn that blouse apart and wrapped it around my feet. Yeah, and then the next day they gave me those wooden shoes again. 'Cause they saw I was barefoot, so they gave me those

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shoes. Otherwise, we walked Zählappell (ph.) all the time - to work, we went like that

for meals - they fed us that turnip with potatoes - we went to pick wood like that as well.

Q: And were you still wearing those clothes you had from, you were given in Terezin? Or did you get different ones? In Ravensbruck?

A: Yeah, we had to take those of and they gave us different ones. Yeah, different ones. Because when they were transporting us they took the old clothes away and they gave us a piece of soap or what it was. And towels, you know, but there were, like, there were from paper. Of course we were glad to have some water, some shower, that we could wash a bit. Yeah, and then they cut our hair, the men cut women's and the women cut men's.

Q: Did you cut each other's hair?

A: Only adults, I didn't, because I was just a child, yeah, they cut each other's hair. You were used to things like that.

Q: Did they shave your heads completely?

A: Completely, completely. Yeah. And when we used to go to work they would give us such a spotted head scarf and we could tie that round our head, yeah.

Q: You are saying that after about a year you were transported to Buchenwald.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: Tell us about it. About the journey and what was awaiting you there.

A: Well, when they took us there, we were transported and there was the music again already waiting for us, so that we would go merrily. So they took us away from there as well, yeah, and to tell you the truth I was very, very ill then. Because I'd

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got typhus, you know? So I was ill then, right.

We used to go to work there too, but I had high temperature, so a Gestapo guard or maybe the Gestapo woman reported it, like, that I was ill and stuff, so I was allowed to rest for one week. Until I got better.

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Q: Mrs. Sendreiova, we will use this little break and go back to some of the things which we didn't cover fully. First, I'd like to ask you, you said you had a brother. Tell us something about him.

A: Yes. I think he was 18 or 19, not more than twenty. I can't remember anymore how old he was, but I can remember him very well. He was a musician, he played the Cembalo. Yeah, he played, yeah, and he was granny's pride and joy, yeah and there was a doctor, a very good doctor, he treated him, right, he came to see him before, he came to see him and he told him in Hungarian : "Elemir, hoshvaneket (ph). How are you feeling?" And he said : "I am still feeling fine" yeah, and he asked who was playing that day in the dance hall, you know? And they said: "Someone else is playing instead of you," and he said that he would like to go and watch him playing and stuff. And the doctor said: "Elemir, you can't go because you are very ill." Yeah, he didn't want to tell him that he was dying, you know. Right, so he wrapped himself up and they sat him in a car and he went to have a look there. Yeah. And he said that he would like to play once more. So he played, played while he could, you know? Yeah, the doctor could see that he couldn't go on anymore and he said : " Elemir, you are tired, you have to go home." So he went home and it didn't take an hour and he died.

Q: What was wrong with him? With your brother?

A: Tuberculosis. He had tuberculosis, yeah.

Q: Was it when you were still living at home?

A: Home, yes.

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Q: With your mom, I mean with your dad?

A: Yes, yes. Right. So, they brought him home and he died in one hour. Yeah.

Q: Also, I would like to go back to when you were in Košice, the town was in Hungary at that time, wasn't it?

A: Oh yeah, yeah, it was in Hungary.

Q: What year was it?

A: I can't remember that anymore.

Q: It was 1942 when you were 13, you said, you said that you were 13.

A: 13 years, yes, 13.

Q: You were born in 1929.

A: 1929, yeah.

Q: Then it was in the year 1942.

A: (little smile) You can remember it.

Q: And we would also like to know more about this event you were talking about, about Terezin and how you went to the sickbay and they burned you out - -

A: Yes.

Q: Try to remember everything you can from that time. About this.

A: Right, she came to us, a Gestapo woman and told us to get ready, that we were going to the doctor.

Q: Did all of you go or did they choose only certain women?

A: Oh no, no, all of us who were there, we had to line up, yeah, it wasn't far from that number 13, it was just opposite - -

Q: Opposite.

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A: So we were standing in line, right, we went in there one after the other, one after the other we went in there, one went in and one went out again. Yeah, we had to go and put our legs in those stirrups.

Q: And was there an operating room?

A: Yes, well I can't remember that well anymore, you were, you were scared, yeah, and then, when you saw what they were doing on that burner or what it was, like a cooker, that they - -

Q: Where they heating something up?

A: Heating up, yeah, and they burned out our wombs, yeah.

Q: Did it hurt?

A: It burned, it did, it burned, yeah. And then they said that it was all ok now.

Right? So we went outside again and they took another one. One after the other they took, yeah.

Q: And do you know why they did it?

A: That I can't tell you.

Q: No.

A: No. Because I don't know it, no. I only know, that they took us one after the other and they burned us out, everyone who was there. Yeah.

Q: And did it take only a little while?

A: Well, we just had to put our legs in those stirrups and it took just a moment.

Q: Then, when it was over, did you suffer any after effects? High temperature or anything?

A: Yeah, I did, right, I did. I did but granny didn't, but I did, that's right, you know.

Yeah, I was ill afterwards. Yeah, I was ill for about a week or two. But I had to go

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to work anyway. If I wanted to or not, I had to go to work.

Q: Right. We stopped, actually, when your stay in Ravensbruck was coming to an end - -

A: Yeah.

Q: And you were taken to Buchenwald.

A: Buchenwald, yeah.

Q: There were a lot of men in Buchenwald.

A: As well. Yeah, because when - - you are right, you've reminded me, because when we, when they transported us, there, in front of those wires, right, there was a lot of men standing there. Yeah, that's right, yes. I can remember that, because there were lots of men standing there. Yeah, but we weren't together.

Q: No.

A: No. We weren't together. Then they took us away, to another camp. Right.

Q: To yet another one, from Buchenwald?

A: No, like, to a different dormitory, you know?

Q: Yes.

A: We didn't meet men at all. We didn't meet any men. No. Only when we were at work, those who worked there, you know.

Q: So you were digging something somewhere again.

A: We had to again, yeah, we had to work somewhere again, you know, or we went to clean, you know, those yards, we were sweeping there, we had to do something again. Yeah, and then - - Once, I remember, I was baking a potato I'd found. I baked it on grass. Yeah. And they were dragging those ropes or what it was, they were dragging corpses. And there he was, my first husband, you

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know? He was dragging them. Yeah, and he said:” Little girl, give me a potato.”

So I handed it to him, yeah, and a Gestapo guard saw it, he laid into him, so much that he fell, poor man.

Q: So you met your husband-to-be in Buchenwald.

A: Oh yeah, yeah, in Buchenwald. And then they kicked his head in and they hit me as well. Yeah, I picked myself up and ran out of their way, yeah, and then back to work, to work, I’m telling you.

Q: Who guarded you there? Who were the guards there?

A: Well, the Gestapo women were there. There were mostly Gestapo women among us. Yeah, because there weren’t any men among us. Only when they came to count us, to find out if there was anyone missing or not and they called out names and numbers and we had to say that we were there. Like, here.

Q: Did that take place in the dormitory or outside?

A: Still in the dormitory, you know. They used to come. Yeah, and in the same way, they used to call Zählappell (ph) outside. Yeah, we were standing outside too, they counted us there too, if someone was missing or not. Yeah. That’s how I remember it, that many times we went outside to be counted. Yeah, if we were there, or - - So we had to say:” Hier”, didn’t we, like to say that we were there.

Q: Were you already alone at that time, I mean without your granny?

A: I was already without my granny then. Yes. That is true. I was without my granny. Yeah.

Q: And were you still together, the group from Košice?

A: From Koš - - Yes, yes.

Q: Were there mainly Romanies?

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A: Rom - - Yeah, there were, a lot.

Q: And were the Jews with you as well?

A: Maybe, maybe the different ones, you know, somewhere. From - - the ones we didn't know, let's say. We didn't know those Romanies either, only those from Košice, only those who were there with us. So we stayed together. But only three of us came home.

Q: Did only three of that group come home?

A: Only three, yes. Three women, the young girls came back. I was the youngest of them. Yeah.

Q: In the camp, if it was the first, the second or the third one, did you live together, did you stay - -

A: Yes.

Q: But there were other prisoners there as well.

A: Others, yes, yes, others. We were there - -

Q: Tell us, did you get along with them?

A: Well, look, we didn't hurt each other because we knew well that they were hurting us. So rather than hurting each other, we used to say: We must try hard, we must endure, so that when we are liberated we can go back home."

Q: Did you help each other?

A: Help - - Yes, each other. that's how they spoke, they kept telling us to hold on and not to do anything bad.

Q: Did anyone protect you? Did you have anyone there? Someone who looked after you a bit?

A: Well yes, those girls. The older ones, you know, those who were maybe 18,

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19, yeah, yeah, I could have been - -

Q: 14, 15 at most.

A: Yeah, towards the end, I was already 15 and a half, when I came back home, yeah. So they used to give me advice: "Hold on, just hold on, you mustn't give up."

Yeah.

Q: Did you guess that the end of the war was coming?

A: Yeah.

Q: Hope?

A: We suspected something because they quickly hurried, the Gestapo. They were transporting, or something like that. You know? Yeah, but to be honest with you, I got typhus there. Typhus, yeah, and we were liberated, and I heard that we were liberated by Americans and Russians, well - - that's what I heard, that Americans and Russians liberated us, I was already ill then, and when they liberated us I was already in the hospital. So I don't know anything, if you had killed me, I wouldn't have known - -

Q: How did it happen?

A: There - - Yes, because I was lying in the hospital for nearly a month. I wasn't conscious of anything, yeah and my first husband was there and he was looking for me.

Q: Because of that little potato. (laughter)

A: Because of that little potato. Yes. He and his friend looked for me, they were cousins, you know? Right, so he looked for me and then the nurse told him: "Well, there is one young girl here." Well I was young. And he apparently came

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to see me, but I didn't know that, I didn't know about it at all. And when I was well again, after a month, when I came round again, I was so surprised that everything around me was white and clean.

I said: "Jesus, where am I? Am I at home or what?" Yeah, and the nurse told me: "You've been liberated, everything's going to be all right now. Don't worry anymore, everything will be all right." Yeah, and then he found me.

Q: And was it in the hospital? Where you still lying there?

A: I was in the hospital then.

Q: In the army hospital probably.

A: I don't know, I can't tell you that, because I was in the hospital but I don't know which one. Which hospital it was.

Q: Was it still in Buchenwald?

A: Near the end. Near the end, when it was already, when the war was over. The nurse said: "Go and sit outside for a while. It - - it's nice and warm outside. Just for a while." So I went but I felt dizzy. I can remember that. And then he, my dead husband, he came there with his friend. And he said: "Little girl, is that you who gave me that potato?" and I said: "Yeah, it's me." "I've been here three times already, but you didn't speak at all, nothing, you were just lying there." Right, so then he - - After that he used to come regularly.

Q: That is a beautiful romance! (laughter)

A: Yeah, then he used to come. He came everyday. He said: "You girl, we have to fatten you up, because you need it now. So he used to go to the village. To tell you the truth, he used to go there to steal chicken and things like that and then he cooked it. And he would bring me soup in a little pot and stuff. So I got a bit

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better, to be honest. He would go and bring grapes too, he brought me a full bowl of grapes and I - - There were such things as fruit there, I liked it, so I stuffed myself with it. Yeah, and then he goes: "I'd like to tell you something, but I don't dare." And I'm like: "What would you like?" I called him uncle, to be honest, he was 30 and I was half his age, wasn't I, and I said: "What was it you wanted, uncle?" and he goes: "Well, I'd like you to go home with me, to Moravia, to Hradiště." He was from Kunovice. Hradiště Kunovice. And I said: "Oh no, I'm only a little girl, I don't need any gentleman yet." And he - - he goes: "Come on, come with me, don't be afraid. You'll be well." "No", I said, "no, no, no." But he did so, so much, he used to come again and again and his cousin had already found himself a girlfriend there you know and now he wanted us to get married, you know. - - "Dad has to give his blessing, can't do it otherwise." Well, you know, us older people, things were different then. Not like nowadays. Well to tell you the truth, they muddled my head. And when we were released, those who wanted to could fly home after a check-up, since I was little I've had - - since the concentration camp my heart's been weak, you know. "No, she's ill, it's not possible." So I had to go by train cars again.

Q: You went by train, a repatriation train, I suppose?

A: Yeah, yeah, but a kitchen went behind us.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: And were you already traveling with your - -

A: Already, already - -

Q: With your husband?

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A: We already went to Br - - and now I have to tell you that I don't know. Brno or Olomouc, if you killed me, I couldn't remember. They left us - - like to have a rest, you know, we stayed there for about three or four days, I can't tell you that. They took those old clothes, they gave us different clothes, and they put us up in hotels.

Q: Someone paid for you, didn't they – you didn't have anything.

A: We didn't have anything. Yeah, because they let us stay there. Yeah, and they gave us clothes, we had meals for free at the hotel, everything. Yeah, we were there for a few days and then they gave out our papers – I can remember that to tell you the truth, they issued our papers and they gave us 500 crowns each for the journey or they asked where we lived. Well, I said in Kosice, past Kosice. They gave us some spare clothes too, so that we would have some. Yeah, and then we went by train again, by train.

Q: Were you on your own or already with - -

A: Already with him, with him we - -

Q: Did you like him?

A: He looked good, he was older, but kind.

Q: (little smile).

A: Well, and because he went through a lot too, he went through so much, he was there for over four years, he was.

Q: And were was he?

A: Well, he wa - - well in Osvetim. He was there most of all, right. They burned his wife there with the children as well. He had two kids. Yeah. And then we went straight to Uherské Hradiště. And he lived in Kunovice. Yeah, but those houses weren't there

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anymore, everything was ruined. Yeah, some people there recognized him and were like: "František, you are home."

Yeah, three of the brothers came back home. Yeah, and one of them - - he stopped us when we were going home - - we met him on the train, the oldest of his brothers, right. And he was asking immediately where his wife was. "She was burned there, kids as well." And then - - then me - - "Who is that little girl?" And he said: "I've taken her."

Q: You were married already?

A: No, like, he meant he was taking me home. Yeah, and he said: "Right, but look after her well. Your wife and two kids were burned, look after her, don't hurt her."

Yeah and that's how we thought of each other.

Q: Did you manage to find your dad?

A: Dad - - he was mourning for me, to tell you the truth. He thought I stayed there. That I died. So we went to Moravia, after a month. Yeah, and I still had very little hair, because they used to cut it everywhere. Yeah, so we went there and one of the girls there recognized me. She said: "Oh, uncle, your girl is coming, Maryška is coming." He says: "Don't tell me," right, and now dad goes outside and he's staring, that was something. You know, that was something for him - - "And I thought you \_\_\_\_\_ , but - - I am mourning for you," yeah. So everyone was glad I came back home. "Where is granny?" Granny wasn't there anymore. Yeah. So we stayed there. Dad didn't want us to go yet but my husband said: "No, I have to find a job, I have to work so that we can provide for ourselves somehow.

Q: And your dad, wasn't he persecuted, didn't he have to go anywhere?

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A: They didn't take people from there, you know? Even from as near as Mezeje they didn't take anyone. They took people only from Kosice. From Hungary, you know. But from there, where the Slovaks were, not at all. Only from Hungary.

Q: Yes. And then you went to Kunovice.

A: Then we went to Kunovice and worked in a slaughter house. But I'll tell you straight away, I couldn't even cook. As a child. He used to bring so much food, he did, you know. Butter as well, because they used to give it to him. Yeah and then there was this lady, she lived there. She wasn't a gyp - - She was Czech, right. And she goes: "Maruška, you can't cook, can you?" and I'm like: "No, I can't at all." So she taught me. She taught me everything, how to make cakes and cook, how to clean up. She used to come everyday and she would say: "Don't tell František, tell him that you learned to cook yourself." (whispered)

Q: You lived - -

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have your own house or did you live in - -

A: No. We got it from the national council, because the houses the family had were all ruined, you know. Yeah, so they were given some afterwards, they were. They took care of them immediately, you know, the town hall people, so they could get an apartment immediately. Yeah and also, they respected them there in Moravia, you know. They respected them a lot, because many people from their family were in a concentration camp. Only three brothers came back. The youngest one went crazy, he came home. And two more came back. Alive, yeah. But then, the older one died as well.

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Q: So your husband comes from many children.

A: Yeah, he must have, must have, yeah.

Q: And did you work? After the war?

A: He didn't let me. Because I was - - pregnant.

I stayed home after three weeks. I didn't know what it was - to be pregnant, right, I was just puking all the time and he knew, you know. And he said: "Good, we're gonna have a family." And he was so happy. He didn't let me work, no. He said "I'll cope myself" so I stayed home. Yeah, I worked later and we moved to Teplice.

Q: To Teplice in Bohemia?

A: Yes. Because there in Teplice, my stepsisters live there, you know. My stepsisters and stepmother lived there. She's dead already, four years ago.

Q: I asked you at the beginning and you said that you have never encountered any anti-Romanies behavior. And after the war - - has anything like that happened to you?

A: Nothing, not anymore. Everything was ok after that. It was ok then. And that's why everything was fine after I came back home. Because he worked - - and then I had a girl with him, we had two boys already - -

Q: For the first - -

A: Well, and then I found myself a job.

Q: What did you do?

A: I worked in the glass factory, where the beers are made. Bottles, you know.

Bottles - -

Q: In Teplice?

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A: In Teplice, yeah. Yeah and then we moved to Louny, so I worked in a porcelain factory for 17 years, yeah. And then I worked on a farm, I did, yeah. I tried to work so that we could provide for ourselves somehow, so that we would have something. Yeah and - -

Q: What about your children? What do they do now?

A: Well, I'll tell you the truth. My girl finished school, but she found herself a boyfriend and then ran away. And so she didn't finish her training. And my boy didn't finish his training either, but he also worked in the porcelain factory my girl worked in - - Later my husband worked there, we all worked there. Yeah, we worked there in that porcelain factory - - Yeah, we all did.

Q: And how did you come here from Teplice?

A: Well, because - - then - - I don't know. Somehow he didn't like the work there so much, you know. They didn't get much money and stuff. So they went where they could earn the most money. So. So we went there, and so there we, like, bou - - bought that little house, they gave, got us that loan, the company, yeah. So they docked 500 from my husband and 500 crowns from me monthly, yeah. So there we were. And then, when he died, I sold it. The children were telling me: "Mom, don't stay there on your own, there's no point." So I got those 65,000 instead. That was earlier. You know. Under the communists. So I gave it to the children. We divided it in half and that was that.

Q: Are they near? Somewhere around here?

A: One of them lives in Žatec, she's married to an officer. The one who is in the airport. And the boy's married to a Pole.

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Q: A what?

A: A Polish wife. Po - -

Q: Also somewhere near here?

A: Yeah, also, it isn't far. Tuhovice past Louny.

Q: So you do see them sometimes?

A: Yeah. Because they sometimes come to see me and stuff, but - - You know, they all have their own children. And - -

Q: How many grandchildren have you got?

A: Well, to tell you the truth, the girl had five and the boy six.

Q: Are they all alive?

A: Well, to be honest, my daughter's little boy was run over by a truck. That was my first darling. Yeah.

Q: So you have 10 grandchildren.

A: Yeah, I do.

Q: So you have - -

A: Now I am a great grandmother as well - -

Q: Already. (laughter)

A: Yeah. I am a great grandmother as well. The girl has two and the boy has four kids, yeah, so that's six. Six and that one from the daughter, the boy has three as well, well so there - -

Q: Lots of children then.

A: Well, I am a great grandmother.

Q: (laughter) Well, thank you very much.

A: You are welcome.

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Q: Oh, you wanted to show me that picture of your husband. Is it still possible?

The man in the background: Yes.

- the following questions are asked by a different journalist.

Q: I just wanted to ask you, Mrs. Sendreiova, from Košice, apart from you, how many Romanies were taken? And could you remember some names, what were those people's names?

A: Look. I'll say this. We only went to visit, yeah – in Košice. The only ones I know are those of my aunt, her daughter and so, you know, those relatives, but the other people, I didn't know their names.. There.

Q: And what was your aunt's name?

A: Her name was the same as my great grandmother's. Vikárová.

Q: Vikárová?

A: Vikárová was her name, yeah.

Q: And did they take some men as well?

A: Men as well, yes. Men and children as well, and adults. They took everyone.

Yeah.

Q. And could you remember any other last names, maybe?

A: Like - -

Q: What were the names of those other Romanies, those others? Not anymore?

A: No, not anymore.

Q: And - - How were you transported from Košice?

A: Well, we walked.

Q: Walked?

A: Exactly. On the road. And they took us to those barracks.

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Q: And about how many of you were there, when you walked?

A: A lot.

Q: Walking?

A: A lot. What a line!

Q: And all of them Romanies?

A: All of them, yeah. Yeah. Because then they kept bringing people. And they brought more again, but Jews most of all too. And they walked from one Jewish house to another and they transported Jews as well. Yeah.

Q: And when you arrived in Terezin, did you meet all those whom you were transported from Košice with, those Romanies, or maybe you never met them again?

A: Yeah, because they transported us to just one concentration camp. Right, yeah.

Q: Which one?

A: Well, the number you mean? No. What do you mean?

Q: Which one - - Which concentration camp do you mean? In Terezin - -

A: Terezin.

Q: Or maybe - -

A: Terezin. Terezin, they transported us to Terezin.

Q: And there you were, all these Romanies from Košice?

A: Yeah, we were all there and Jews as well and women.

Q: About how many of you Romanies were there?

A: A lot, a lot. That was something.

Q: Could you try to remember them?

A: Well, at the top there laid let's say about \_\_\_\_\_, 11, 12. Yeah, and now at the bottom the same too. That was three beds, right. And it was the same

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on the sides. It was about - - well, wait, three, I mustn't forget any. Well, three rows there was. Yeah. Because on those sides there laid 12 and there 12 and down there 12 as well. And now, the same on those other sides. It - - On some of them there was less, on some of them more, you know. Yeah on some. You can't remember so well to count. You couldn't do it. Yeah.

Q: And you, did you live in one of those houses, in that concentration camp?

A: Yeah. That was a concentration camp where we were, right and we used to go to work somewhere else.

Q: In Terezin you mean?

A: Terezin, yeah.

Q: And what did those houses look like?

A: Well those - -

Q: The house, that old house you slept in? Like - -

A: Well the beds were wooden. They were for a long time.

Q: And about how many of you were there in one of those houses?

A: Well, a lot. A lot of us.

Q: And do you remember who slept next to you?

A: Well I slept with my granny.

Q: And who else slept next to you?

A: Well, women from Košice slept there, Gizela, Arana slept there. Those young girls. You know, the ones I was friends with. Well those, yeah. So we would lie exactly like that, the young girls from Košice and me and my grandma were there. I never did anything without my granny. I was with her all the time, everywhere. Yeah.

Q: And how did you talk to each other?

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A: In Romany language.

Q: Mainly in Romany language.

A: We spoke Romany language and Hungarian.

Q: And what did the guards say when they heard you speaking Romanz language?

A: We had to whisper. We couldn't talk there. We whispered so they wouldn't know that we were talking about something, something different, they would be scared. We whispered.

Q: And can you, maybe, remember what you were talking about?

A: Well, about how we were going to survive, or maybe not and that God knows what they were going to do with us, yeah, and that's how we were counting and when we walked to work we were thinking that if you couldn't work anymore you'd either be shot or thrown into the ditch. You... You thought all kinds of things.

Q: And when you say that they shot or threw people in the ditch you mean you saw that yourself, such an event?

A: Yeah, just as we were walking in that line, for example as they took us away, you know? And when someone couldn't go on anymore, was ill or couldn't walk anymore and fell over, they just left them there, yeah. Well and when they couldn't keep up or something, they shot them and left them lying on the road and we kept walking.

Q: Could you remember for example a concrete event when something like that happened and talk about it?

A: Well look, I'll tell you the truth, it has been 55 years, that...

Q: And did you yourself ever witness someone being shot?

A: I did see that, yes.

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Q: And how did it happen? Or why?

A: Because she couldn't walk anymore you know, yeah. And maybe she fell, she was sick or something. So they shot her there and left her on the road, and you couldn't help. Or if you went and helped you would be killed as well.

Q: And can you remember whom it was, which woman? The one they killed?

A: It was more than one woman, you know. I can't really say that they were only from our town Košice. We walked in a very long line.

Q: So you didn't know them.

A: No, I didn't. I didn't. No.

Q: Did you ever sing any songs with your granny or with the other women from Košice, maybe?

A: Yes, we did. We sweated it out, we made up those songs, two camps together.

Q: Could you possibly sing what you sung there?

A: I don't have a good voice.

Q: Maybe you could just try.

A: Well we sang for example this one. (singing) And then some songs, those we used to sing at home. Yeah.

Q: And who knew this song Androdata Boris (ph), who knew that one? Who did you learn it from?

A: Well because they had sung there already. Some of them did. Well, that, that .. that's the real one, because you had to work and not let \_\_\_\_\_

Q: Could you at least say those words?

A: Well.

Q: Of that song.

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A: Well how shall I say it? Well. Androdata Boris, paahry buuchik geress. Vasha teyaku termaro (ph). Well, that's it.

Q: Can you remember anymore?

A: No.

Q: That was really nice. We would be interested in hearing more.

A: Yeah, I know, but no more, but - -

Q: That song.

A: It brings tears to my eyes \_\_\_\_\_

Q: Ok. And did you sing any other songs?

A: Yeah, we sang those songs of ours too, yeah.

Q: Which other ones for example?

A: Well, this, this Temen rashu kareh (ph)\_\_\_\_\_ Oh, she would have died to sing me my song, first\_\_\_\_Czech, but then we sang in Gypsy. Yeah, we sang what we knew, yes.

Q: And were there times when you were allowed to sing in Gypsy language?

A: Well for example when we came back from work, yeah. Well, one of the Gestapo guards, she was just there too, so she told us that we could sing and stuff. You were in the mood, you were glad, you were so tired, and so little, so, so it, but we sang something under our breath slowly, sometimes yeah.

Q: And you said that the Gestapo woman told you that you could sing.

A: Yeah, she was kind, but...

Q: Hmm.

A: She could speak Czech, right, so she was good and stuff. Yeah, but they would always tell us when some \_\_\_\_\_ came.

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Q: So you spoke Czech to her.

A: Yes, I spoke Czech to her.

Q: And can you still remember the -- the other guards, what they were like, or what their names were?

A: That I can't.

Q: And what language did you speak to those other guards?

A: Oh well, look, they spoke German, didn't they? Well I can understand a little bit of German, yeah, but not much. As well. Because in Mezov, you see, they spoke German somehow and they spoke Hungarian, German they spoke. Yeah, but I didn't get much of it.

Q: And your grandma, did she speak German?

A: She could speak Hungarian perfectly and she spoke German too.

Q: So did she speak to those guards in German?

A: Yeah, she did. She understood it, my aunt too, her sister.

Q: Previously, you mentioned that in Terezin, there was nowhere to wash yourselves, only when you were cleaning some small rooms.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: And you said that they chopped heads off there.

A: Yes.

Q: How did you find that out?

A: Well, because people said so.

Q: And you, did you ever see anything like that?

A: Oh no, no I didn't. That, That - -

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**End of tape 1**

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**Tape 2**

Q: You were talking about Terezin, about those little rooms and how you cleaned there...

A: Yeah.

Q: Could you remember what was in those little rooms, what did they look like?

A: Well look, they were little, they were square and there were iron gates. Yeah. There were iron gates. So when we used to go cleaning there, there were older women too and so they said that for example whoever tried to run away, they threw them in there. Yeah, well yeah. They didn't come back again. For example. So who knows if there wasn't water, or some cellars or what because they didn't come back.

Q: What did those women tell you, the ones who were locked up there?

A: Well I don't know that, don't know, just because they were Czech, yeah. There were Jewish women too, and so, so they talked to each other and we heard that, didn't we? Yeah. Yeah and now if you go a little bit farther, there was this cutting thing.

Q: What cutting thing?

A: Where they cut off heads...

Q: What did it look like?

A: Well, like it was hanging there, wasn't it? Yeah, water flowed there and it doesn't any more. I went to look there on purpose, when I was in the spa. So there you see, they cut off those heads, yeah, so when we used to go cleaning there, there was so much blood, oh no, so you see, we scrubbed it, so that, well, it would always be clean

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and we used to sweep there. And, and then, than a little bit further away they shot into people. Yeah.

Q: How did you know that they used to shoot people there?

A: Well we did, because they said so, yeah. Women talked to each other, yeah and we listened.

Q: And did you ever see how they - -

A: No, no, no, no, I can't say that, no, not that.

Q: And that cutting thing you talked about, where was that?

A; Exactly where those gates are, those little ones. So right here, down that path and it's just there.

Q: And where was it standing? If maybe - - I can't imagine it. Could you describe it a little bit? What did it look like maybe? That cutting thing, as you say?

A: Well, look. It's like a knife. Like, isn't it? Yeah, it's made differently, yeah. So they had to...

Q: And what was it hanging on, that knife? Or - -

A: I didn't notice that. Oh, I didn't notice.

Q: And was it somewhere in the open space or was it somewhere inside?

A: No, it was outside.

Q: Outside.

A: Outside, yeah. You see it was outside of that - - Because we could see it too, right, that it was there outside. And that's were the water ran.

Q: The water flowed there all the time?

A: Yeah, the water, when we went to clean there the water was always flowing, yeah.

Yeah and then those walls you see, where they used to shoot people, so I don't

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know.

Q: And did you ever hear shooting in the camp?

A: Well, we were a bit further from the camp. Well that, that was a bit farther away.

Q: And do you know, for example, about how far you were from the place of the shooting?

A: Well, I don't know, because we walked around in circles. We used to go there only to clean and we walked quite far and a little bit into that camp, we did. I tell you, my head can't remember much anymore. But this I know, we used to go cleaning there, so - - and they were talking about what was happening there and what wasn't.

Q: And about how long did it take you to walk from that house you lived in to the camp, to this place you cleaned? How long did that walk take?

A: Not much, a little while, but we couldn't hear, yeah.

Q: And can you remember how many of those houses there were in Terezin? How many of those houses you lived in?

A: Well, look, there was a whole row right to the end, I can't know that, I didn't count them. And on the other side there was a hospital, yeah the infirmary and over there the Gestapo already had their own, where they could live. Yeah.

Q: You also told us that you had little golden earrings.

A: No, I didn't. I said, like, who had golden earrings or some silver or long hair, yeah, they cut big hair separately, they made wigs out of that, I heard too. And the gold separately, right, yeah, and clothes, if you had good clothes, you had to put all the good clothes on one side, good clothes all on one side.

Q: And from you or your grandma or your relatives, did they take anything from you, any gold or clothes?

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A: Yeah, from me only clothes, we had to take them off, yeah, so one after another, we threw them and we had to put them on the side. Yeah.

Q: And did you ever see those clothes again?

A: No, never - -

Q: So you didn't see them again.

A: No, no because we were given those striped clothes, yeah and the board with our number, so that they would be able to find us if we got lost. Or if something happened to us.

Q: And could you remember which number you had?

A: No, not anymore, no.

Q: And what did you wear in winter?

A: Wooden shoes.

Q: And clothes? The same as in summer?

A: We had those, how should I say, like, Jesus, how to... how should I say? Those tarpaulin ones, hard. So we wore those clothes, the striped ones. Yeah.

Q: Did they give you any different clothes for winter?

A: Yeah, we walked in them.

Q: Or still the same ones as you wore in summer?

A: The same, yeah.

Q: Didn't you have coats?

A: Well, we were given just such... to wear, yeah, something. They took it away again later... Well, yeah.

Q: And were you cold sometimes, maybe?

A: Jesus Christ, I can't feel today if it is, let's say, cold. Only my fingers, they are

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hurting me, they got frozen.

Q: Your toes?

A: My toes, but it's, it's a shame.

Q: And didn't you try to do something to make yourself warmer?

A: No, how could we, tell me? The heating there didn't work, did it? Yeah. We had some older rugs, we covered ourselves with them, didn't we and you slept on hard, on those floors. Yeah. There was a little bit of straw there. So little, just scattered. We were covered in lice, dirty and hungry, yeah.

Q: And did you see in Terezin, for example in the house where you lived that someone had died?

A: Yeah, they would carry out someone everyday.

Q: And what did they die of? What did those people die of?

A: Well, typhus, typhus, hunger. Yeah. Most of all they bought it from hunger or dirt. Well you know, we were dirty, we were covered in lice, we didn't have time to - - we didn't even kill them, we only threw them, we were covered in lice.

Q: And did they change your clothes? Or could you wash them yourself?

A: No, we couldn't, no.

Q: And did they change them?

A: Well, for example, if we went somewhere else, well - - I can't really remember, that they would give - - Only when we walked, when we were being transported, so again, they changed them there. We turned them in and they gave us different ones again. Yeah.

Q: And what was the worst thing about Terezin? What was your worst experience there?

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A: Well, how should I tell you? We worked, we were tired, we were hungry, we were covered in lice, we couldn't do what we wanted, we couldn't talk when the Gestapo guards could see us, that would mean trouble.

Q: And were you ever punished in Terezin?

A: No, I wasn't.

Q: And your grandma?

A: Yeah, only that - - In Buchenwald, right, when we were standing in that line. Then they hit her over the head. Yeah. And since then she was ill. And then she died there. Yeah.

Q: You were in Ravensbruck as well. I wanted to ask you about that. You said that there was this kind Gestapo woman.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: How did you talk to her.

A; She spoke Czech.

Q: And can you remember any guards from Ravensbruck? Their names maybe?

A: Oh no, no, I can't. We weren't allowed, to tell you the truth, we weren't allowed to go amongst them, only when they called Zählappell (ph), then we had to go and stand in

line, they counted us then, we weren't even allowed to open our mouths, we had to be quiet, only when they called out our names we had to answer, like to show we were there, yeah, but not otherwise.

Q: And in Ravensbruck, from amongst the prisoners, was there any woman who was supposed to supervise you?

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A: Well, she only counted us for work and then when we were leaving that camp, she counted us again. There they counted us for work again, if someone wasn't missing or what, yeah.

Q: How did they treat you?

A: Well, you know, they weren't sweet.

Q: Could you possibly remember any concrete event?

A: Well, when they were waking us up, they used to beat us.

Q: And who, who did they beat, for example?

A: Well it was like this, whoever's turn it was got hit.

Q: Did it happen to you as well?

A: Well yeah, I say, I got beaten too.

Q: And what were you beaten for?

A: Well, because I went down late.

Q: And how, how did they beat you?

A: She was walking with a night stick and she hit me. You know, over my back, something like that.

Q: Once?

A: Yeah.

Q: And that was a guard or one of the inmates?

A: It was the guard.

Q: The guard.

A: The guard, that's right, I can still remember that, like in that, Jesus, Uherské Hradiště, where I went with my first husband, I didn't tell that other lady, because it comes to my head only now, well there was this young girl. And she used to stick

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with the Germans.

Q: And where was that?

A: In Ravensbruck, yeah. She, she used to stick with them, but she was punished for that when she came home, after the war, so someone must have reported it. So she was locked up. But I don't know if it's true or not, because we moved from there, yeah, so she was punished for it.

Q: And did you know her in Ravensbruck? Did you have experience of her being there?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what did she do?

A: Well, because she was against us, right. Yeah, she could speak perfect German.

Q: And was she a Romany?

A: Yeah, Romany, yeah.

Q: What was her name?

A: Daňhelová. Daňhelová was her name.

Q: And who did, whom did she go there with? You said she was with Germans. And who with exactly? Or what did she used to do?

A: Well look, to tell you the truth, I couldn't have known whom she went with, because we were always in that one little room, yeah. So we did - -

Q: And did she live with you or somewhere else?

A: No, she lived somewhere else, she was somewhere else in that camp... Yeah.

Q: And what, what did she use to do to the prisoners?

A: Well, she could understand those Germans, couldn't she? So she was their friend. But I don't know what she did and what she didn't do. I can't tell.

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Q: And towards you and those other prisoners, was she, for example, strict?

A: She was strict, yeah.

Q: And what did she want you to do for example or how did she treat you?

A: Well she swore and abused us, told us off. All the time, yeah. She kept telling us off, yeah. And when I went to Hradiště I recognized her immediately. Yeah. I recognized her immediately. She insisted that it wasn't her.

Q: And how old was she?

A: Well, she could have been about 18, maybe 19 she could have been.

Q: And where was she from?

A: From Kunovice.

Q: So your husband knew her.

A: Not from Kunovice. From Hradiště. He knew her from Hradiště, because he went to school in Hradiště. Yeah, so he knew her, they grew up together.

Q: So wasn't he in a better position because he knew her?

A: Well, he didn't see her, right. He didn't know what she was doing. Only I told him, like, that I knew her, that she was against prisoners, us who were locked up, that she was against us a lot, that she hurt us so, didn't she. Yeah and he said: " Well, I don't know, I'm not sure." Well, who knows if she wasn't some relative of his or what. But he didn't want to say. Because, it was like this then, after the war. We were asked to report those we knew to have hurt people.

Q: And who asked you to report those people?

A: Well, we were also told to say it to the National Council too. That if I knew someone, if they came back alive, to report it. But none of us did that. Only her. Yeah, and my husband said that - -He was saying that she wouldn't do something

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like that, but he didn't know that, yeah. He didn't know so he protected her then.

Yeah.

Q: What do you think, Mrs. Sendreiova, what gave you the strength to be one of those that survived? How do you see it?

A: I don't know. I am totally surprised myself that from that wretchedness, from that dirt, from that work we did, I still came back. And today, now already - - in December I'll be 68. Yeah. And of those from Košice, there's no one there anymore. Of all those girls who were with me, none of them is with us anymore.

Q: Of those Romanies, could you name who else came back home with you? Of those of you who were taken from Kosice.

A: Well, that was - - of those of us who came back, to tell you the truth, it was only Gizela, Margita and Anča.

Q: And what were their names?

A: They were Margita, Anča and Gizela.

Q: And their last names?

A: I can't remember anymore. Yeah, and then my husband came and his cousin.  
Yeah.

Q: And what was your husband's name?

A: Daniel František.

Q: And what family was he from?

A: Well, he was from Hradiště and from Kunovice.

Q: And what was their life there like, before the war?

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A: No one came back again. Only his three brothers came back. Yeah and one of them went mad later, the youngest one. Yeah, the two of them were still there. That older one got married as well and my husband married me too.

Q: I mean before the war. What was your husband's family's life like in Kunovice?

A: I don't know that. I didn't know them. Oh, no, no. I didn't know him before. I knew him only there, in the concentration camp.

Q: And did your husband have a job before the war? What did he do?

A: He worked at a butchers. Yeah, worked at a butchers.

Q: So he had a permanent job.

A: Yeah, he did. Yeah, and then we moved to Teplice. Yeah, that's where we went.

Q: So, thank you very much.

A: You're welcome.

**End of tape 2**

**Conclusion of interview**