

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:00,952

2  
00:00:00,952 --> 00:00:02,380  
Start.

3  
00:00:02,380 --> 00:00:05,765  
Just back up and  
restate that you had

4  
00:00:05,765 --> 00:00:07,788  
a choice between repatriation.

5  
00:00:07,788 --> 00:00:19,420

6  
00:00:19,420 --> 00:00:22,420  
While in a displaced  
persons camp of Bad Gastein,

7  
00:00:22,420 --> 00:00:25,190  
we were given two choices.

8  
00:00:25,190 --> 00:00:28,750  
One, to return to the  
country of our origin

9  
00:00:28,750 --> 00:00:33,730  
and become repatriated  
or to remain in the camp.

10  
00:00:33,730 --> 00:00:37,180  
In that case, we have to  
pronounce ourselves and declare

11  
00:00:37,180 --> 00:00:42,070  
ourselves stateless, without  
any right of belonging

12  
00:00:42,070 --> 00:00:45,490  
to any country any longer.

13  
00:00:45,490 --> 00:00:49,570  
And that was a choice  
that many of us

14  
00:00:49,570 --> 00:00:55,080  
decided in favor of  
becoming stateless.

15  
00:00:55,080 --> 00:00:58,980  
At that moment of  
our decision, I

16  
00:00:58,980 --> 00:01:06,830  
think we suffered a  
very tremendous anguish.

17  
00:01:06,830 --> 00:01:11,150  
Because the decision has to  
be made on the basis of what

18  
00:01:11,150 --> 00:01:14,060  
is there for us in the future.

19  
00:01:14,060 --> 00:01:17,420  
We knew we can not go back  
to Poland because there

20  
00:01:17,420 --> 00:01:19,640  
was nothing to go back to.

21  
00:01:19,640 --> 00:01:23,360  
We knew we have lost  
all the ties to Poland.

22  
00:01:23,360 --> 00:01:26,300  
And we knew that the  
situation in Poland

23  
00:01:26,300 --> 00:01:29,960  
was really not favorable  
to establishing any kind

24  
00:01:29,960 --> 00:01:32,430  
of a life for ourselves.

25  
00:01:32,430 --> 00:01:35,030  
So the decision to  
become stateless

26  
00:01:35,030 --> 00:01:40,430  
was the better  
decision and perhaps

27  
00:01:40,430 --> 00:01:44,855  
the more promising  
decision for our future.

28  
00:01:44,855 --> 00:01:47,650

29  
00:01:47,650 --> 00:01:50,740  
And it was at that  
moment, I remember,

30  
00:01:50,740 --> 00:01:57,800  
that my thoughts and my  
feelings ran the gamut.

31  
00:01:57,800 --> 00:02:05,010  
It was a period of feeling  
tremendous anguish, even

32  
00:02:05,010 --> 00:02:05,510  
despair.

33  
00:02:05,510 --> 00:02:08,220

34  
00:02:08,220 --> 00:02:12,840  
Liberation was a very  
bittersweet concept for us

35  
00:02:12,840 --> 00:02:15,330  
at that moment.

36  
00:02:15,330 --> 00:02:20,220  
And as much as we longed  
for being liberated

37  
00:02:20,220 --> 00:02:23,820  
all these years  
of the Holocaust,

38  
00:02:23,820 --> 00:02:28,290  
the situation of  
having been liberated

39  
00:02:28,290 --> 00:02:34,380  
did not hold very much promise  
for a better life for us.

40  
00:02:34,380 --> 00:02:37,500  
Our thoughts went back,  
obviously, to the past,

41  
00:02:37,500 --> 00:02:41,590  
to our childhood, to our  
youth, to our families,

42  
00:02:41,590 --> 00:02:43,890  
to our parents.

43  
00:02:43,890 --> 00:02:46,800  
And there was a  
tremendous emptiness

44  
00:02:46,800 --> 00:02:50,360  
in our souls and our hearts.

45  
00:02:50,360 --> 00:02:55,980  
There was no jubilation,  
there was no happiness,

46  
00:02:55,980 --> 00:02:58,200  
there was almost depression.

47

00:02:58,200 --> 00:03:01,450

48

00:03:01,450 --> 00:03:05,710

When we talked, when we  
met, we were always somber.

49

00:03:05,710 --> 00:03:10,410

50

00:03:10,410 --> 00:03:15,840

And we couldn't really  
understand whether or not

51

00:03:15,840 --> 00:03:17,590

we made the right decision.

52

00:03:17,590 --> 00:03:19,830

We just felt in  
our guts that this

53

00:03:19,830 --> 00:03:26,610

was the decision, the  
decision that we had to reach,

54

00:03:26,610 --> 00:03:30,090

knowing full well  
that we are not

55

00:03:30,090 --> 00:03:32,760

the masters of our own fate.

56

00:03:32,760 --> 00:03:37,290

We just had to leave  
everything to those who

57

00:03:37,290 --> 00:03:41,250

would direct us from then on.

58

00:03:41,250 --> 00:03:45,560

So many of us decided to  
be as positive as we could.

59

00:03:45,560 --> 00:03:48,230

We would gather  
together and we would

60

00:03:48,230 --> 00:03:50,840

attend some kind of lectures.

61

00:03:50,840 --> 00:03:56,450

I remembered many of us  
decided to learn English.

62

00:03:56,450 --> 00:04:01,610

We decided to find some  
books or some resources that

63

00:04:01,610 --> 00:04:04,190

would allow us to get  
acquainted, at least,

64

00:04:04,190 --> 00:04:06,230

with the language so  
we could communicate

65

00:04:06,230 --> 00:04:09,350

with the people of  
UNRRA, most of whom

66

00:04:09,350 --> 00:04:13,880

were either American or British.

67

00:04:13,880 --> 00:04:16,519

And I remember getting  
some kind of a book

68

00:04:16,519 --> 00:04:20,540

with verses, with little  
ditties, little poems.

69

00:04:20,540 --> 00:04:24,090

And we were learning them and  
trying to understand them,

70

00:04:24,090 --> 00:04:27,360  
and I still remember  
a couple of them.

71  
00:04:27,360 --> 00:04:36,620  
But we tried to be as useful  
to ourselves as possible.

72  
00:04:36,620 --> 00:04:39,410  
Another aspect of our  
activities, I remember,

73  
00:04:39,410 --> 00:04:42,830  
were political activities.

74  
00:04:42,830 --> 00:04:46,370  
We have found out that  
the British did not

75  
00:04:46,370 --> 00:04:54,680  
allow the boats to land in  
Haifa and they did not allow--

76  
00:04:54,680 --> 00:05:00,420  
they did not receive the  
refugees into Palestine.

77  
00:05:00,420 --> 00:05:02,520  
I don't recall  
whether we learned

78  
00:05:02,520 --> 00:05:06,150  
about the camp of Cyprus  
at that time or not.

79  
00:05:06,150 --> 00:05:09,870  
But we heard that some of  
the boats were returned.

80  
00:05:09,870 --> 00:05:13,260  
And we organized protests.

81  
00:05:13,260 --> 00:05:17,700

And we were marching  
and protesting.

82  
00:05:17,700 --> 00:05:21,510

And we were very  
vociferous, very vocal

83  
00:05:21,510 --> 00:05:25,170  
against the British actions.

84  
00:05:25,170 --> 00:05:29,010  
And we were trying to  
influence the International Red

85  
00:05:29,010 --> 00:05:32,835  
Cross to express our protest.

86  
00:05:32,835 --> 00:05:35,780

87  
00:05:35,780 --> 00:05:39,530  
I know that we had a number  
of visitors who brought us all

88  
00:05:39,530 --> 00:05:44,180  
this news of what was going on.

89  
00:05:44,180 --> 00:05:49,490  
And we tried to inform  
ourselves the best we could.

90  
00:05:49,490 --> 00:05:52,560  
And we tried to help  
people who were in need.

91  
00:05:52,560 --> 00:05:56,420  
There was a hospital  
nearby in Hofgastein.

92  
00:05:56,420 --> 00:05:59,090  
My sister, who had  
some nurse's training,



93

00:05:59,090 --> 00:06:01,400  
was working in that hospital.

94

00:06:01,400 --> 00:06:04,520  
We tried to obtain  
as much medication

95

00:06:04,520 --> 00:06:10,220  
as we could to save the health  
of a number of people who

96

00:06:10,220 --> 00:06:13,130  
were placed in that hospital.

97

00:06:13,130 --> 00:06:17,246  
We tried to be as helpful  
to each other as we could.

98

00:06:17,246 --> 00:06:24,890  
We tried to be as social  
with one another as we could.

99

00:06:24,890 --> 00:06:29,600  
There were very many kids who  
didn't have any parents left

100

00:06:29,600 --> 00:06:31,980  
and who didn't  
have any siblings.

101

00:06:31,980 --> 00:06:38,400  
So we tried to sort of  
form extended families

102

00:06:38,400 --> 00:06:42,090  
for those who didn't  
have any families left.

103

00:06:42,090 --> 00:06:50,710  
We tried to boost  
each other's hopes.

104

00:06:50,710 --> 00:06:54,130  
And we tried to help each other.

105  
00:06:54,130 --> 00:06:58,090  
The International Red  
Cross came there to try

106  
00:06:58,090 --> 00:07:00,580  
to find some of our families.

107  
00:07:00,580 --> 00:07:04,700  
We had families-- we thought  
we had families in England.

108  
00:07:04,700 --> 00:07:06,280  
And we gave them the names.

109  
00:07:06,280 --> 00:07:08,680  
And they tried to  
research it for us.

110  
00:07:08,680 --> 00:07:16,010  
They did research some  
of the names for us.

111  
00:07:16,010 --> 00:07:18,260  
We tried to  
communicate with people

112  
00:07:18,260 --> 00:07:20,370  
we knew who lived in Israel.

113  
00:07:20,370 --> 00:07:24,290  
I had family in Israel,  
and we contacted them.

114  
00:07:24,290 --> 00:07:27,050  
And we established  
communications with Israel.

115  
00:07:27,050 --> 00:07:30,320

116

00:07:30,320 --> 00:07:35,990

What we were very surprised  
is that we were not

117

00:07:35,990 --> 00:07:43,280

very much helped by any Jewish  
organizations in the United

118

00:07:43,280 --> 00:07:45,110

States.

119

00:07:45,110 --> 00:07:49,280

I don't recall that any  
of these organizations

120

00:07:49,280 --> 00:07:53,150

came forward with  
any help for us.

121

00:07:53,150 --> 00:07:58,790

As a matter of fact, I  
do recall that the US

122

00:07:58,790 --> 00:08:08,960

helped with my ticket from  
Bremerhaven to New York City.

123

00:08:08,960 --> 00:08:13,190

But I also recall that I got  
a bill for them from them

124

00:08:13,190 --> 00:08:16,160

and eventually I  
had to repay them

125

00:08:16,160 --> 00:08:20,780

the fare of the transport  
from Bremerhaven to New York.

126

00:08:20,780 --> 00:08:24,770

127

00:08:24,770 --> 00:08:29,720  
I was very surprised.

128  
00:08:29,720 --> 00:08:35,120  
And in retrospect, I really  
cannot understand the fact that

129  
00:08:35,120 --> 00:08:43,280  
when I arrived in New York,  
nobody gave a hoot what has

130  
00:08:43,280 --> 00:08:47,330  
happened, what would  
happen with me.

131  
00:08:47,330 --> 00:08:54,110  
I was not given the  
opportunity for education.

132  
00:08:54,110 --> 00:08:57,920  
Nobody cared about my  
psychological well-being.

133  
00:08:57,920 --> 00:09:00,560

134  
00:09:00,560 --> 00:09:05,690  
Nobody ever asked,  
how in the world

135  
00:09:05,690 --> 00:09:08,720  
is it possible for  
a young person who

136  
00:09:08,720 --> 00:09:16,020  
has gone through 5 and  
1/2 years of persecution

137  
00:09:16,020 --> 00:09:18,800  
and the kind of  
personal tragedies

138  
00:09:18,800 --> 00:09:22,140

that we had to go  
through and not

139  
00:09:22,140 --> 00:09:25,020  
worry about their  
psychological well-being?

140  
00:09:25,020 --> 00:09:27,870

141  
00:09:27,870 --> 00:09:35,820  
This is something that  
has always dumbfounded me.

142  
00:09:35,820 --> 00:09:48,830  
That when the Holocaust survivor  
came to the United States,

143  
00:09:48,830 --> 00:09:55,100  
he or she embarked  
immediately onto the process

144  
00:09:55,100 --> 00:10:03,500  
of acculturation, of  
trying to adapt oneself

145  
00:10:03,500 --> 00:10:06,680  
to the way of life of America.

146  
00:10:06,680 --> 00:10:10,700  
To try not to stand  
out like a sore thumb.

147  
00:10:10,700 --> 00:10:15,170  
To try to meld into the  
culture and the life.

148  
00:10:15,170 --> 00:10:19,520  
To try not to show  
that we were different.

149  
00:10:19,520 --> 00:10:23,000  
To try not to act the victim.

150  
00:10:23,000 --> 00:10:29,690  
And to try to develop a certain  
modus vivendi, certain kind

151  
00:10:29,690 --> 00:10:33,080  
of a life, which  
would establish us

152  
00:10:33,080 --> 00:10:37,850  
as a normal human being  
and part of the society.

153  
00:10:37,850 --> 00:10:39,710  
Learning the  
language, for example.

154  
00:10:39,710 --> 00:10:43,620

155  
00:10:43,620 --> 00:10:48,990  
I came here and I  
didn't know English.

156  
00:10:48,990 --> 00:10:55,890  
And I remember my first act  
was to buy a dictionary.

157  
00:10:55,890 --> 00:10:58,170  
I couldn't find a  
Polish-English dictionary.

158  
00:10:58,170 --> 00:10:59,880  
I bought a Polish--

159  
00:10:59,880 --> 00:11:02,460  
a German-English dictionary.

160  
00:11:02,460 --> 00:11:05,040  
And I would buy  
the New York Times

161

00:11:05,040 --> 00:11:08,890  
and I would read it  
with a dictionary.

162  
00:11:08,890 --> 00:11:11,340  
We have to reload.

163  
00:11:11,340 --> 00:11:13,380  
Now, would you--

164  
00:11:13,380 --> 00:11:16,350  
Go to camera roll number  
four, slate four is up.

165  
00:11:16,350 --> 00:11:25,450

166  
00:11:25,450 --> 00:11:28,580  
So for example, the  
language-- if you could just

167  
00:11:28,580 --> 00:11:32,600  
back up to there and  
coming to this country.

168  
00:11:32,600 --> 00:11:38,430  
Well, oh, I didn't really  
know English at all.

169  
00:11:38,430 --> 00:11:45,960  
And what I did was I would  
buy the New York Times.

170  
00:11:45,960 --> 00:11:49,740  
And with the help of a  
German-English dictionary,

171  
00:11:49,740 --> 00:11:51,360  
I would read it.

172  
00:11:51,360 --> 00:11:54,420  
And I would try  
to understand it.

173  
00:11:54,420 --> 00:11:59,930  
And then everyone  
that I would meet,

174  
00:11:59,930 --> 00:12:02,750  
I would ask them  
to please correct

175  
00:12:02,750 --> 00:12:07,370  
my pronunciation, to correct my  
language as much as they could.

176  
00:12:07,370 --> 00:12:11,630  
Because I was very,  
very intent on learning

177  
00:12:11,630 --> 00:12:13,250  
how to speak English.

178  
00:12:13,250 --> 00:12:19,070  
I never learned a word unless  
I knew its spelling so that I

179  
00:12:19,070 --> 00:12:21,770  
knew how to spell  
it, and then I would

180  
00:12:21,770 --> 00:12:24,060  
learn how to pronounce it.

181  
00:12:24,060 --> 00:12:26,840  
And the pronunciation, of  
course, was very difficult.

182  
00:12:26,840 --> 00:12:29,630  
Once you are more  
or less an adult,

183  
00:12:29,630 --> 00:12:36,920  
it's very, very difficult to  
forget the idioms of a language



184

00:12:36,920 --> 00:12:39,820

that you were trained  
in and translate them

185

00:12:39,820 --> 00:12:41,120

into a different language.

186

00:12:41,120 --> 00:12:45,670

187

00:12:45,670 --> 00:12:50,530

But you really don't want me to  
talk about my time in America.

188

00:12:50,530 --> 00:12:53,590

189

00:12:53,590 --> 00:12:57,610

Tell me, going back  
to Wels, a little more

190

00:12:57,610 --> 00:13:03,060

about the day-to-day life there.

191

00:13:03,060 --> 00:13:07,400

Was there a lot of  
standing in line?

192

00:13:07,400 --> 00:13:08,990

Was it organized?

193

00:13:08,990 --> 00:13:11,320

Was disorganized?

194

00:13:11,320 --> 00:13:14,230

I thought it was  
pretty well-organized.

195

00:13:14,230 --> 00:13:17,560

But of course, there was always  
standing in line for the food.

196

00:13:17,560 --> 00:13:21,290

There was always standing  
in line for the showers.

197

00:13:21,290 --> 00:13:26,460

There was always-- well,  
standing in line, of course,

198

00:13:26,460 --> 00:13:28,020

for registration.

199

00:13:28,020 --> 00:13:33,960

But this was a very, very  
well-organized system

200

00:13:33,960 --> 00:13:36,870

because they wanted to have  
everything under a very, very

201

00:13:36,870 --> 00:13:39,360

strict control.

202

00:13:39,360 --> 00:13:42,750

This was actually the first  
time that we registered,

203

00:13:42,750 --> 00:13:45,420

the first time that  
we declared ourselves

204

00:13:45,420 --> 00:13:50,910

as any kind of a living  
person to be dealt with.

205

00:13:50,910 --> 00:13:57,790

But it was very depersonalized,  
very cold, and very,

206

00:13:57,790 --> 00:14:04,010

very officious, I would say.

207

00:14:04,010 --> 00:14:08,600

We didn't get the impression  
that anybody really

208  
00:14:08,600 --> 00:14:12,950  
cared for us as people, as  
a person, as a human being.

209  
00:14:12,950 --> 00:14:15,620  
But they had a job to  
do and they did the job.

210  
00:14:15,620 --> 00:14:21,170  
And it was all on a  
very temporary basis.

211  
00:14:21,170 --> 00:14:25,340  
We knew that that was  
the place, that it

212  
00:14:25,340 --> 00:14:27,500  
was sort of a transit place.

213  
00:14:27,500 --> 00:14:30,740  
And we were hoping we were  
not going to remain there

214  
00:14:30,740 --> 00:14:32,460  
for a long time.

215  
00:14:32,460 --> 00:14:38,520  
At the time that you were there,  
were there many nationalities?

216  
00:14:38,520 --> 00:14:40,650  
And also, were  
there any non-Jews?

217  
00:14:40,650 --> 00:14:43,500  
I don't remember whether  
there were any non-Jews,

218  
00:14:43,500 --> 00:14:46,770  
but I do remember

many nationalities,

219

00:14:46,770 --> 00:14:51,810

many Czechoslovakia, and many  
Hungarians, many Romanian Jews.

220

00:14:51,810 --> 00:14:56,190

I don't remember that there were  
very many North European Jews.

221

00:14:56,190 --> 00:15:00,590

But I do remember Central  
and Eastern European Jews.

222

00:15:00,590 --> 00:15:03,860

Do you think there was  
a lack of understanding

223

00:15:03,860 --> 00:15:09,020

on the part of the  
administrators or the employees

224

00:15:09,020 --> 00:15:14,580

because many of you were  
from countries that they

225

00:15:14,580 --> 00:15:17,700

didn't understand why  
you couldn't go back?

226

00:15:17,700 --> 00:15:24,470

Well, I really cannot  
remember the exact conduct

227

00:15:24,470 --> 00:15:25,340

of the people.

228

00:15:25,340 --> 00:15:28,340

But I have the impression  
that is so lasting.

229

00:15:28,340 --> 00:15:31,760

As a matter of fact, I spoke

with my younger sister about it

230  
00:15:31,760 --> 00:15:32,960  
the other day.

231  
00:15:32,960 --> 00:15:36,080  
And I asked her what  
kind of impressions

232  
00:15:36,080 --> 00:15:38,120  
she took out of there.

233  
00:15:38,120 --> 00:15:42,660  
And she confirmed with me  
that she felt the same way.

234  
00:15:42,660 --> 00:15:44,720  
So it's not a personal aversion.

235  
00:15:44,720 --> 00:15:48,170  
It is something that was  
a general atmosphere,

236  
00:15:48,170 --> 00:15:51,110  
a general feeling  
that we weren't

237  
00:15:51,110 --> 00:15:53,090  
cared for as human beings.

238  
00:15:53,090 --> 00:16:01,130  
We were just cared for  
as an entity to process,

239  
00:16:01,130 --> 00:16:01,920  
more or less.

240  
00:16:01,920 --> 00:16:07,000  
It was a processing feeling  
rather than caring feeling.

241  
00:16:07,000 --> 00:16:11,860

And now, going back  
to liberation itself,

242  
00:16:11,860 --> 00:16:14,660  
can you tell me?

243  
00:16:14,660 --> 00:16:19,580  
Yes, the process of liberation  
was a very interesting one

244  
00:16:19,580 --> 00:16:24,950  
in my case because I was  
sort of liberated twice.

245  
00:16:24,950 --> 00:16:30,320  
I was at that time living on  
false papers, on Aryan papers.

246  
00:16:30,320 --> 00:16:36,020  
And that was after we were  
wandering from place to place,

247  
00:16:36,020 --> 00:16:40,200  
trying to hide, and trying  
to establish ourselves.

248  
00:16:40,200 --> 00:16:40,700  
Let's--

249  
00:16:40,700 --> 00:16:44,820

250  
00:16:44,820 --> 00:16:45,320  
Five.

251  
00:16:45,320 --> 00:16:49,740

252  
00:16:49,740 --> 00:16:53,370  
My liberation was really  
a very curious one

253

00:16:53,370 --> 00:16:55,890  
because I was twice liberated.

254  
00:16:55,890 --> 00:17:03,090  
I was then under false  
papers, and trying to hide,

255  
00:17:03,090 --> 00:17:05,220  
and trying to emerge.

256  
00:17:05,220 --> 00:17:09,810  
And at one point,  
we heard rumors

257  
00:17:09,810 --> 00:17:12,119  
that the Russians are very near.

258  
00:17:12,119 --> 00:17:17,010  
That was very close to  
the Russian-German front

259  
00:17:17,010 --> 00:17:18,720  
in Western Poland.

260  
00:17:18,720 --> 00:17:21,790

261  
00:17:21,790 --> 00:17:24,369  
And when we heard that the  
Russians were very close,

262  
00:17:24,369 --> 00:17:33,080  
we decided that maybe we  
can emerge, and finally

263  
00:17:33,080 --> 00:17:36,870  
act as ourselves, and  
say, well, here we are,

264  
00:17:36,870 --> 00:17:38,420  
and we can be liberated.

265

00:17:38,420 --> 00:17:43,910

Well, the Russians did come, and we emerged, and we were elated.

266

00:17:43,910 --> 00:17:49,880

And they at first could not believe that we were Jewish

267

00:17:49,880 --> 00:17:54,620

because they had encountered, prior to that,

268

00:17:54,620 --> 00:17:57,710

Jews coming out of hiding or coming out of camps.

269

00:17:57,710 --> 00:18:00,390

270

00:18:00,390 --> 00:18:06,630

And sure enough, we were euphoric, absolutely euphoric.

271

00:18:06,630 --> 00:18:12,270

The Russians are very friendly, although they were a little bit

272

00:18:12,270 --> 00:18:13,170

rough.

273

00:18:13,170 --> 00:18:14,970

But they were very friendly.

274

00:18:14,970 --> 00:18:19,050

And they offered to share some food with us,

275

00:18:19,050 --> 00:18:22,890

which was very much welcomed.

276

00:18:22,890 --> 00:18:30,340

And then they went ahead and we were just



277

00:18:30,340 --> 00:18:39,430  
left there in a very sort of  
atmosphere of nobody's land.

278

00:18:39,430 --> 00:18:48,040  
And we didn't know how  
to act and how to relate

279

00:18:48,040 --> 00:18:51,350  
to the people we have met.

280

00:18:51,350 --> 00:18:55,450  
Whether to blow our cover  
or not because we really

281

00:18:55,450 --> 00:18:58,930  
didn't trust the Polish people.

282

00:18:58,930 --> 00:19:03,880  
So we decided not  
to show our elation

283

00:19:03,880 --> 00:19:07,780  
and to take it  
with a low profile.

284

00:19:07,780 --> 00:19:15,370  
And that was a very lucky choice  
for us because sure enough,

285

00:19:15,370 --> 00:19:19,870  
somehow or other, the  
Russians had to retreat,

286

00:19:19,870 --> 00:19:22,630  
and the Germans came back.

287

00:19:22,630 --> 00:19:27,640  
When the Germans came back, we  
really were very frightened.

288

00:19:27,640 --> 00:19:31,420  
We thought that we are  
going to be denounced

289  
00:19:31,420 --> 00:19:35,140  
by the population,  
who may have sensed

290  
00:19:35,140 --> 00:19:39,820  
our elation with the Germans.

291  
00:19:39,820 --> 00:19:44,530  
And we decided to go  
east, to move east,

292  
00:19:44,530 --> 00:19:46,780  
as far east as we could.

293  
00:19:46,780 --> 00:19:50,830  
But we really couldn't get very  
far because the front moved,

294  
00:19:50,830 --> 00:19:54,130  
kept moving, from  
one kilometer one way

295  
00:19:54,130 --> 00:19:56,860  
to the one kilometer  
the other way.

296  
00:19:56,860 --> 00:20:00,460  
So we went underground.

297  
00:20:00,460 --> 00:20:05,380  
And then we heard fighting.

298  
00:20:05,380 --> 00:20:07,790  
And we just didn't  
know what to do.

299  
00:20:07,790 --> 00:20:12,250  
So we hid in basements  
as much as we could.

300  
00:20:12,250 --> 00:20:18,610  
Until about a few days later,  
when we heard total silence,

301  
00:20:18,610 --> 00:20:21,270  
when we didn't  
hear any shooting.

302  
00:20:21,270 --> 00:20:27,370  
When we sent somebody  
out to find out

303  
00:20:27,370 --> 00:20:29,650  
whether it was safe to come out.

304  
00:20:29,650 --> 00:20:34,420  
And when we came out, indeed,  
the Russians were there.

305  
00:20:34,420 --> 00:20:37,720  
And they assured us that  
they were there for good,

306  
00:20:37,720 --> 00:20:40,510  
and that the Germans  
retreated for good.

307  
00:20:40,510 --> 00:20:43,120  
And then we really  
blew our cover.

308  
00:20:43,120 --> 00:20:50,250  
And we felt that we were  
free to be ourselves.

309  
00:20:50,250 --> 00:20:53,550  
And then of course,  
the bittersweet feeling

310  
00:20:53,550 --> 00:20:55,330  
came upon us.

311

00:20:55,330 --> 00:21:00,480

We made the decision to  
return to our hometown,

312

00:21:00,480 --> 00:21:04,140

to see whether we can  
find anyone alive.

313

00:21:04,140 --> 00:21:10,350

And then we confronted the  
rubbles, the physical rubbles,

314

00:21:10,350 --> 00:21:16,910

and the psychological rubbles  
of the aftermath of the war.

315

00:21:16,910 --> 00:21:20,220

316

00:21:20,220 --> 00:21:25,710

And so order emerged out  
of the chaos very slowly.

317

00:21:25,710 --> 00:21:27,930

I wouldn't call it order.

318

00:21:27,930 --> 00:21:34,440

Chaos was continuing,  
people were wandering about.

319

00:21:34,440 --> 00:21:37,470

People were trying  
to establish stations

320

00:21:37,470 --> 00:21:42,690

where we could notify  
others about the fact

321

00:21:42,690 --> 00:21:48,390

that we are alive and try  
to find people's names.

322

00:21:48,390 --> 00:21:51,490  
There were on any--

323  
00:21:51,490 --> 00:21:56,040  
well, we had kiosks in  
Europe, where all kinds

324  
00:21:56,040 --> 00:21:58,860  
of proclamations were pasted.

325  
00:21:58,860 --> 00:22:01,950  
On any such kiosk  
in every town, you

326  
00:22:01,950 --> 00:22:06,600  
could see rows and rows of names  
that people inquired about.

327  
00:22:06,600 --> 00:22:08,970  
And those who were  
alive would put

328  
00:22:08,970 --> 00:22:10,660  
their names and  
their whereabouts

329  
00:22:10,660 --> 00:22:13,050  
so they could be contacted.

330  
00:22:13,050 --> 00:22:14,310  
It was no order.

331  
00:22:14,310 --> 00:22:15,300  
It was chaos.

332  
00:22:15,300 --> 00:22:17,910  
In Poland, especially,  
there was chaos

333  
00:22:17,910 --> 00:22:20,670  
because the government  
was in exile.

334

00:22:20,670 --> 00:22:25,290

And they had to form a  
new government, which

335

00:22:25,290 --> 00:22:29,490

was, of course, now being  
dominated by the Russians.

336

00:22:29,490 --> 00:22:34,050

And people could not understand  
where to go, and what to do,

337

00:22:34,050 --> 00:22:38,040

and how to establish  
their new existence.

338

00:22:38,040 --> 00:22:42,090

And there were  
people just wandering

339

00:22:42,090 --> 00:22:48,600

about looking for others, trying  
to make sense out of the chaos.

340

00:22:48,600 --> 00:22:52,340

Order was far, far away.