

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:34,334

2
00:00:34,334 --> 00:00:37,400
Now I want to take you
back to the ghetto.

3
00:00:37,400 --> 00:00:43,140
Tell me as if I'm a kid.

4
00:00:43,140 --> 00:00:46,270
Describe to me the
werkstätten in the ghetto.

5
00:00:46,270 --> 00:00:47,460
Who were they for?

6
00:00:47,460 --> 00:00:49,440
Who did they service?

7
00:00:49,440 --> 00:00:50,730
How many different ones?

8
00:00:50,730 --> 00:00:54,370
Were there a variety
of things there?

9
00:00:54,370 --> 00:01:01,740
The way I understand, the
committee in the ghetto,

10
00:01:01,740 --> 00:01:05,330
and that is Kovno
ghetto, I think

11
00:01:05,330 --> 00:01:11,660
they were more loyal to the
Jewish people in the ghetto

12
00:01:11,660 --> 00:01:16,230
than what I hear

in other ghettos.

13

00:01:16,230 --> 00:01:22,650

They really transformed
the ghetto in a work lager,

14

00:01:22,650 --> 00:01:26,520

in the workforce,
making the Germans

15

00:01:26,520 --> 00:01:32,310

being dependent on the labor
that the ghetto was providing.

16

00:01:32,310 --> 00:01:38,000

And I think that is
maybe one of the reasons

17

00:01:38,000 --> 00:01:42,480

that Kovno ghetto survived
longer than other ghettos.

18

00:01:42,480 --> 00:01:45,750

Because after a
while, they became

19

00:01:45,750 --> 00:01:49,540

to be dependent on
the labor force that

20

00:01:49,540 --> 00:01:52,570

used to go out to the
ghetto in different areas

21

00:01:52,570 --> 00:01:54,310

to perform work.

22

00:01:54,310 --> 00:01:56,350

In the ghetto there was
a kleiner werkstatten

23

00:01:56,350 --> 00:01:59,380

and the [? graze ?] werkstatten

The kleiner werkstätten were

24

00:01:59,380 --> 00:02:03,250
doing small things
and also services,

25

00:02:03,250 --> 00:02:08,229
like I said before, for
hothouses, for other areas,

26

00:02:08,229 --> 00:02:14,260
for farmers, to supply them
with the necessary things.

27

00:02:14,260 --> 00:02:17,350
But the [? graze ?]
werkstätten even more so.

28

00:02:17,350 --> 00:02:24,070
They did a lot of things like
fixing shoes and fixing things

29

00:02:24,070 --> 00:02:29,300
and clothes and stuff that
the Germans really needed it.

30

00:02:29,300 --> 00:02:33,440
And therefore this idea was
everybody should be employed.

31

00:02:33,440 --> 00:02:37,080

32

00:02:37,080 --> 00:02:38,880
If somebody could
not be employed,

33

00:02:38,880 --> 00:02:41,310
they were hiding it
and pushing it under,

34

00:02:41,310 --> 00:02:44,340
making sure that everybody

has a name and a number they

35

00:02:44,340 --> 00:02:47,040
are employed.

36

00:02:47,040 --> 00:02:48,770
And this was the
idea in the ghetto,

37

00:02:48,770 --> 00:02:53,090
and that's why I think
the Kovno ghetto survived

38

00:02:53,090 --> 00:02:56,720
longer than otherwise.

39

00:02:56,720 --> 00:03:03,320
With this in mind, that was the
idea that I became a tinsmith

40

00:03:03,320 --> 00:03:07,710
and I came to concentration
camp in Dachau.

41

00:03:07,710 --> 00:03:09,950
They ask, do you
have any profession?

42

00:03:09,950 --> 00:03:11,540
Yes, I'm a tinsmith.

43

00:03:11,540 --> 00:03:15,590
The end was I ended up
in taking care of one

44

00:03:15,590 --> 00:03:18,230
of the officers in the morgue.

45

00:03:18,230 --> 00:03:21,020
For a long time and
took care of the hut.

46

00:03:21,020 --> 00:03:24,350

I had to make sure
that as they sweep up.

47

00:03:24,350 --> 00:03:28,880

The foremen, they were
Germans, and there

48

00:03:28,880 --> 00:03:33,260

was a big, big foreman that
he had his special room.

49

00:03:33,260 --> 00:03:34,400

He was a big shot there.

50

00:03:34,400 --> 00:03:36,470

And the other ones
had the front room

51

00:03:36,470 --> 00:03:38,530

but I had to make sure
that every morning I

52

00:03:38,530 --> 00:03:42,440

come in the morning, I make
the ovens, I make heat,

53

00:03:42,440 --> 00:03:43,700

and I make the water.

54

00:03:43,700 --> 00:03:46,340

And they come in
for lunch I have

55

00:03:46,340 --> 00:03:48,740

the kettle on and so forth.

56

00:03:48,740 --> 00:03:56,180

This helped me too because
I was a kid of 15, 16 and I

57

00:03:56,180 --> 00:03:58,610

used to do a good job and

used to clean up and make sure

58

00:03:58,610 --> 00:04:00,568

that everything is clean
and everything is neat

59

00:04:00,568 --> 00:04:01,820

and everything is in order.

60

00:04:01,820 --> 00:04:06,350

And the way I always
orderly, always the place

61

00:04:06,350 --> 00:04:07,260

for a long time.

62

00:04:07,260 --> 00:04:09,080

I worked like that.

63

00:04:09,080 --> 00:04:12,860

It was a time when
I did go out to work

64

00:04:12,860 --> 00:04:16,720

and we used to work
12-hour shifts.

65

00:04:16,720 --> 00:04:18,220

And in the 12-hour
shifts you only

66

00:04:18,220 --> 00:04:21,130

had two breaks of 15 minutes.

67

00:04:21,130 --> 00:04:24,730

And they used to give us
what they called soup.

68

00:04:24,730 --> 00:04:29,100

Actually used to be moldy
bread that was actually green.

69

00:04:29,100 --> 00:04:31,320
And that's what they called--

70
00:04:31,320 --> 00:04:32,100
They boil it.

71
00:04:32,100 --> 00:04:33,520
They made soup out of it.

72
00:04:33,520 --> 00:04:35,130
The soup was green.

73
00:04:35,130 --> 00:04:39,120
And that was you had a bowl
and that's what you ate.

74
00:04:39,120 --> 00:04:46,170
One break like that and we
were working in the forest

75
00:04:46,170 --> 00:04:49,560
knocking down trees and
cleaning it for the lumber.

76
00:04:49,560 --> 00:04:52,280

77
00:04:52,280 --> 00:04:55,970
I laid down on a bunch of
branches and fell asleep.

78
00:04:55,970 --> 00:04:58,560

79
00:04:58,560 --> 00:05:00,240
They probably wouldn't
have missed me

80
00:05:00,240 --> 00:05:04,440
if they were not called back
because the main work was

81

00:05:04,440 --> 00:05:09,960
to carry the cement from
the bags into that van

82
00:05:09,960 --> 00:05:19,880
there that they had a system
where they are pulling out

83
00:05:19,880 --> 00:05:23,150
the cement from the
bags on the ground

84
00:05:23,150 --> 00:05:25,940
and there was a screw
that was pushing

85
00:05:25,940 --> 00:05:32,540
the cement to the machines
that are making the concrete.

86
00:05:32,540 --> 00:05:34,665
But when the wagons were
not there with the cement,

87
00:05:34,665 --> 00:05:38,400
they didn't come in time,
they took us to the forest

88
00:05:38,400 --> 00:05:40,200
to do other work.

89
00:05:40,200 --> 00:05:43,170
When the wagons came,
we were called back.

90
00:05:43,170 --> 00:05:47,030
Every 20 people had
an SS storm trooper

91
00:05:47,030 --> 00:05:51,540
watching us besides the foreman
German to tell us what to do.

92

00:05:51,540 --> 00:05:55,690

And that was for
[? mo. ?] I fell asleep

93

00:05:55,690 --> 00:05:59,380

and they had to go away and they
counted and somebody's missing.

94

00:05:59,380 --> 00:06:02,980

Now the German
watchman, the SS man,

95

00:06:02,980 --> 00:06:06,710

he would have gotten hell
for somebody missing.

96

00:06:06,710 --> 00:06:07,870

They were looking around.

97

00:06:07,870 --> 00:06:10,940

It took about a half
hour to 3/4 of an hour.

98

00:06:10,940 --> 00:06:14,530

And finally they were
shouting and I woke up.

99

00:06:14,530 --> 00:06:18,460

That night, if I
survived anything,

100

00:06:18,460 --> 00:06:23,130

that was the time that
the God that saved me.

101

00:06:23,130 --> 00:06:32,150

Because when we were marching
we were five abreast, 20 lines,

102

00:06:32,150 --> 00:06:34,640

100 people marching.

103

00:06:34,640 --> 00:06:36,860

We had to go from one
place to the other place.

104
00:06:36,860 --> 00:06:41,417
We had to stand abreast, three,
four, five abreast, and that's

105
00:06:41,417 --> 00:06:43,250
the way we were marching
so the German could

106
00:06:43,250 --> 00:06:47,290
see exactly who is marching,
how many people we are.

107
00:06:47,290 --> 00:06:53,290
Because he was late and he got
hell for not watching his men,

108
00:06:53,290 --> 00:06:55,430
he wanted to take it out on me.

109
00:06:55,430 --> 00:07:00,800
He took the rifle, and
holding it by the barrel

110
00:07:00,800 --> 00:07:03,380
he wanted to hit me over
the head with the butt.

111
00:07:03,380 --> 00:07:08,190
Because if I'm dead
I'm accountable,

112
00:07:08,190 --> 00:07:13,980
but if I'm missing, then
he gets hollered at.

113
00:07:13,980 --> 00:07:15,930
Fortunately, he didn't
hit me over the head,

114
00:07:15,930 --> 00:07:21,660

he hit me over the shoulder
and the barrel broke in two.

115
00:07:21,660 --> 00:07:23,610
The rifle broke in two.

116
00:07:23,610 --> 00:07:28,110
He kept it on a sling over
his shoulder, half a rifle

117
00:07:28,110 --> 00:07:30,060
on the front, half on the back.

118
00:07:30,060 --> 00:07:32,760
But wherever he
just looked for me.

119
00:07:32,760 --> 00:07:35,520
He wanted to kick me, hit me.

120
00:07:35,520 --> 00:07:40,980
So the people protected me by
if he went on the right side,

121
00:07:40,980 --> 00:07:44,610
then I changed places
to the left side.

122
00:07:44,610 --> 00:07:46,230
A whole evening.

123
00:07:46,230 --> 00:07:49,260
The only time I was safe
if I was carrying cement

124
00:07:49,260 --> 00:07:56,950
because he wouldn't dare to
break and ruin a bag of cement.

125
00:07:56,950 --> 00:07:58,750
That's when he will not hit me.

126

00:07:58,750 --> 00:08:01,480
So the minute I was in line
it used to be like this.

127
00:08:01,480 --> 00:08:03,040
Used to be 10 people.

128
00:08:03,040 --> 00:08:04,990
Two people were loading
on the shoulder,

129
00:08:04,990 --> 00:08:08,260
six people were running and
two people were taking it off.

130
00:08:08,260 --> 00:08:10,510
So the minute I was in
line with the six people

131
00:08:10,510 --> 00:08:17,130
to take the next bag, I may have
been the fifth or the fourth,

132
00:08:17,130 --> 00:08:19,950
if I see him coming,
I was the first

133
00:08:19,950 --> 00:08:23,220
with a bag on my shoulder
running back with the cement.

134
00:08:23,220 --> 00:08:27,720
And that's the whole night
that's how it went down.

135
00:08:27,720 --> 00:08:29,760
That was one experience.

136
00:08:29,760 --> 00:08:35,190
There was other experiences
where I had a gun or a rifle

137
00:08:35,190 --> 00:08:37,809

right to my face.

138

00:08:37,809 --> 00:08:44,490

And somehow, I don't know the reasons, but I'm still here.

139

00:08:44,490 --> 00:08:48,160

Did you build the alarm clock in the ghetto?

140

00:08:48,160 --> 00:08:49,062

Yes.

141

00:08:49,062 --> 00:08:49,770

Tell me about it.

142

00:08:49,770 --> 00:08:51,950

I don't know how you know about the alarm clock.

143

00:08:51,950 --> 00:08:55,520

144

00:08:55,520 --> 00:09:00,890

We didn't use Saturdays there was a little electric

145

00:09:00,890 --> 00:09:04,460

but I told you before, in the same room we ate,

146

00:09:04,460 --> 00:09:08,000

the same room we prayed, and the same room we slept.

147

00:09:08,000 --> 00:09:10,110

And we needed a little light and Saturday we

148

00:09:10,110 --> 00:09:12,350

don't put out the lights.

149

00:09:12,350 --> 00:09:17,990
Before the Holocaust or now,
we have either a regular alarm

150
00:09:17,990 --> 00:09:20,480
clock, a regular
time clock, and we

151
00:09:20,480 --> 00:09:26,660
have people that are allowed
to put off the lights

152
00:09:26,660 --> 00:09:28,100
so it's no problem.

153
00:09:28,100 --> 00:09:30,570
But there was a problem.

154
00:09:30,570 --> 00:09:34,040
So what we did is I took
a regular alarm clock

155
00:09:34,040 --> 00:09:41,340
that you wind up and you
take a piece of string

156
00:09:41,340 --> 00:09:44,280
and put it on the switch.

157
00:09:44,280 --> 00:09:48,990
You put the clock
tight on the wall,

158
00:09:48,990 --> 00:09:52,800
and when the time comes
and it starts ringing,

159
00:09:52,800 --> 00:09:55,650
it shuts off the light.

160
00:09:55,650 --> 00:09:57,810
This we build
ourselves if that's

161
00:09:57,810 --> 00:09:59,550
what you call alarm clock.

162
00:09:59,550 --> 00:10:01,440
When the time
comes, it shut off.

163
00:10:01,440 --> 00:10:04,140

164
00:10:04,140 --> 00:10:07,930
Tell me about the council.

165
00:10:07,930 --> 00:10:10,510
Tell me about the administration
in the ghetto, what

166
00:10:10,510 --> 00:10:11,440
you knew about them.

167
00:10:11,440 --> 00:10:12,490
The administration.

168
00:10:12,490 --> 00:10:15,160
While I was in
ghetto, I had little

169
00:10:15,160 --> 00:10:19,840
to do with them because
I was a youngster.

170
00:10:19,840 --> 00:10:26,440
Except with my father and
he being a prominent Kovno

171
00:10:26,440 --> 00:10:31,480
citizen, knew everybody
and everybody knew him, so

172
00:10:31,480 --> 00:10:35,480
all the politics that

went on more or less

173
00:10:35,480 --> 00:10:37,100
we knew it in our house.

174
00:10:37,100 --> 00:10:39,650
And all I know is
what I overheard

175
00:10:39,650 --> 00:10:42,760
the adults talking about.

176
00:10:42,760 --> 00:10:46,320
And the council was--

177
00:10:46,320 --> 00:10:50,130
He had many, many predicaments.

178
00:10:50,130 --> 00:10:56,220
Like if the Germans made a
demand to make an Aktion,

179
00:10:56,220 --> 00:10:58,930
they had to make a decision.

180
00:10:58,930 --> 00:11:03,180
Are we going to cooperate
with them or we'll say,

181
00:11:03,180 --> 00:11:05,040
no, we're not cooperating?

182
00:11:05,040 --> 00:11:08,380
By not cooperating
it means two things.

183
00:11:08,380 --> 00:11:11,480
Either they can kill
them all and the Germans

184
00:11:11,480 --> 00:11:20,700
do it on their own, or they

can maybe sometimes intervene.

185

00:11:20,700 --> 00:11:26,620

But they did not, I think, that
the council did not cooperate,

186

00:11:26,620 --> 00:11:32,770

did not collaborate with the
Germans as much as they could.

187

00:11:32,770 --> 00:13:46,304