

Five sound roll fifty--

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Synch 25. Now, you left off-- could you just say again, and painted many portraits for Germans in exchange for--

Yes, one even brought me a whole bread. This was such an event, yes. Yes, later in the camps, when the German-- when they knew that I was an artist, they brought me photographs of their children, and their wives, and-- once our commandant, who was a very bad German-- he caught me drawing, and he came in and beat me up. So the other soldiers said, instead of a prize, you'll get beaten up. And then he came to me later. Look, I'm going on my leave, and please do my portrait, and tell me what you need. I will bring you.

And then he brought me paper and China ink, and in my little book, Jewesses in Slavery, there are drawings done with a pen and ink, yes. Overs I have done with a sliver of wood, with some ink that the Germans gave me to do write the numbers I had to write for numbering, yes. So there were different ones, yes, but they exchanged him later because he started a romance with one of the women in the camp.

The next one was better, and then they overwhelmed me with work. And then they started to bring me every day a cup of soup from the German kitchen, yes. I shared with the sick people because I could sit in the sick room for my drawings. It was warm there, yes.

And once one of the Germans took me, in the evening, into town to draw his mistress, yes, and she brought me a package of onions. She has heard that we were so desperate for onions because onions had vitamins. It helped to survive. I always shared what I had.

And this was all at Stutthof?

No, this was in the labor camp. In Stutthof, I had my story, too, because the kapo there had a mistress, and when she knew that I was doing portraits here and there, she came and she wanted her portrait done. And she said to me, if you don't make me beautiful, you will see what will happen to you. Well, she was satisfied, and then she give me a whole bread. We got a slice. I had a whole bread. We made a feast with my friends.

So the other things happened in the concentration camp?

Yes, this was in the concentration camp. This was where the little-- let's say, little light that got up here and there. It never lasted, yes. It never lasted because the Germans were exchanging the personnel all the time. They were afraid that we were fraternizing.

Back in time--

What I want--

--back to October 28, I want you to tell me--

October--

--28, 1941, the Great Action.

Oh, the Great Action, yes, yes.

Just tell me that day.

Yes, yes. Well, there was an announcement that everybody but everybody had to go with his whole family to the big Demokratu Square, and there will be a count of the population. How do you call it? There is one word for it. And whoever will be found in his home will be shot on the spot.

So everybody, of course, was very, very much afraid, and then everybody came, but at the time there were already brigades. These were groups of people who were protected by the Germans, yes, who worked for them in town or somewhere. They came to fetch them, people with professions, yes. And they were separated, not to touch them.

And I went with my sister. My brother-in-law was already away with the 500 intellectuals they had taken in the beginning of the ghetto, my sister with her two-year-old, yes. And the young man who had helped me with my drawings-- he came with us, and he said that we were his family because he was a brigadier in a detachment that worked at the airfield, and he had his privileges. And his uncle was in the Council of Elders. He had the [NON-ENGLISH], the jordan paper. That was the paper that saved people.

And on that day, 10,000 people were separated and driven to the little ghetto first. At the beginning, no one knew what-- maybe they wanted to renew the little ghetto because it was very crowded here, and they said now they had to send people to Germany for other work in other camps.

But the next morning, we noticed that big, big numbers of people went up to the Ninth Fort, that road that we called the Via Dolorosa. And then it was told that they shot them all, and then no one wanted to believe until a woman who survived under the corpses and crawled out-- and she came and told the story. And still no one-- look, you couldn't take it. You just couldn't take it.

A woman came back?

A woman came back because they shot the people, and sometimes they didn't shoot them. They only wounded them. So they crawled out back again, yes, and somehow they found their way back to the ghetto. And they were telling their stories.

Did you talk to her?

Yes, I talked to her. I talked to her. She was a young woman of 30. She looked like 50, 60. And I write about her. I just went through my material to remember.

Did you see-- the next day, you saw people coming back with the baby buggies?

Yes, the next day, back from the mountain, they came with lorries, with trucks full of clothing and full of baby buggies, all the things they had dropped from the people they executed.

But from me you wanted to know about the culture in the ghetto, so I wanted to mention that there were musicians. There were many musicians that, at a certain time, were organized in an orchestra. And there were orchestra performances. Even the Gestapo people came to listen to them.

And there were writers, and we had lectures. I even gave a lecture on art. There were doctors who lectured on medicine, and there was some quiet in the middle of '43. And when I went for my lecture, they already talked about sending people from Kovno to Estonia, and I even thought of canceling my lecture. But people were already assembling there, and I did it. I delivered.

But this time never came again, and then came the parcellation and the sending to the satellite camps and the dissolution of the ghetto. And then a new commandant came, a new commandant who had been in Mauthausen. He had been he had orchestrated the gassing and the extermination of hundreds of thousands, and he came to be our head in the ghetto--