

All right. In those days, Jewish prisoners could get released if they could prove they would be able to leave the country, Germany. And the problem was to have the possibility to go to some other country. Well, my relatives who were on the outside, they managed to secure a visa for me for Shanghai, so I had the chance to be released. But it took time.

To get this process going, I had to sign papers, mail them back home to my parents, and also get a picture taken for a visa or whatever. And when they took you to the photographer in the facility in Dachau, well, the chair that you were to sit on had a needle inserted in the seat which the SS men the photographer could raise by remote control, sticking into the buttock. And the picture would come out grotesque. But I was always very alert and I had noticed immediately the situation. I didn't sit straight. I raised myself a little bit and I did not get-- Even so, my picture looks terrible. I mean, I have it.

Anyway, when I was arrested back in Vienna, when I was beaten up at the police station in the train station, my face was swollen and black, had black marks on it under my eyes. I couldn't take my picture for, I don't know, for several months before all that had cleared up. Well, that's one story.

Another story is that the food we got was, oh, quite a bit of herring, barrels of herring came from Holland, we were told. Somebody in Holland donated it. Many of the men couldn't stand to eat the salty herring. They preferred to eat just the bread that we got. The bread was terrible. And it appears that it had a lot of sawdust mixed in, of course. But I ate the herring, and I think that helped me. Herring had more nutrition than anything else we got, so I frequently swapped my bread for herring.

Another item we got was some kind of soup made with tapioca. And when some higher officials came to inspect the camp site, we got some better meals with some kind of meat in the soup, tripe or whatever. We don't know what. Once we saw a horse-drawn wagon come into the camp and we never saw that horse and wagon leave the camp so we assumed the horse wound up in our soup. Could be, who knows?

Also, we always got some tea. The tea was made from some herbs, herbal tea. And those who knew about it among the prisoners said it contained a lot of bromide and it will cause us in later years some problems. I forgot what. I think prostate problems.

Well, the food was carried in big containers, in big cans, heavy cans. And there was always a detail who had to run to the kitchen and pick up the containers and then the empty containers take them back. And occasionally I had to be on that detail too. I'm short, and there were two handles on each side and two men carried one of these big heavy containers. One grabbed one handle and the other the other handle. And I am short, and if I wound up with a tall fellow most of the weight was on me to carry. And when we came into the kitchen, the SS men there played tricks and they turned water hoses on us, cold water hoses, and got us soaking wet and made us run and spilled things and got punished for that and so.

In my group that was a Orthodox rabbi. He was very religious. He wanted to have prayer meetings every morning and every evening according to our Jewish Orthodox tradition. And in this Orthodox Jewish religion it's required for a prayer meeting there's a number of 10 men, so he always looks for volunteers. It was not permitted to have prayer meetings going on, but he was taking a chance, a risk. And I volunteered. I was always a faithful volunteer. I was not that religious, but just the suggest to this rabbi I always helped him out.

And when he was released, he wrote a card to my father, I still have it, thanking me for helping him out. And this Orthodox man never ate anything that is any kind of food that appeared to be not kosher. Nothing was really kosher, but anything containing meat he would avoid. Well, we didn't get too much of meat anyway.

What else should I tell you? I think I started to talk about the days we were marched into a quarry to dig ditches. And it was hard work and a very scary. And we removed our jackets and we and later next to us. And as we kept digging and moved on, we had to remember to move our jackets along. If we didn't do that, if somebody forgot and run back to get the jacket, he got killed, shot. He was not supposed to run back. So we had to be on the alert, remember to move your jacket with you as you moved on digging.

And they had some vicious dogs in his quarry. If any man started to run away, the dogs were sent after them. And the dogs were trained to attack the men by the testicles, by the genitals. Well, of course I never saw that happen, but I'm sure that happened. And the dogs were black dogs with constantly growling and barking and had a dark red mouth and fangs. I'm sure a number of these prisoners, not just Jewish but other kind of Aryan prisoners, got attacked by these dogs and badly mauled.

And once when I was in the infirmary, they had the hospital room there too. And once when I came in I saw a man lying on the table. He was completely pale and also completely undressed. And he had no genitals. They were missing. There must have been a small hole for urinating left, but I couldn't figure out first whether it was a woman or a man, but I found later it was a man that was castrated. He didn't even have the pubic hair in that area. He looked terrible. You were not permitted to look and stare at anything, otherwise you can't punished.

One of these barracks was used for conducting some research on-- One of these SS men did some medical experiments. And occasionally we were called out to appear there and to be questioned and looked at for medical purposes. I was also one they picked out because of the form of my skull. Apparently this one scientist, this SS man, he collected skulls. And if he saw some interesting skulls, the prisoner was earmarked, apparently. I was one of them, I came in there and they took my measurements and so on and everything was recorded but I never heard again from them. But it didn't scare me. I was even glad to have a few minutes of being indoors out of the cold. And I enjoyed what time it took to be indoors out of the cold in a nice, warm room.

Well, why don't you ask me some questions now?

OK. Going back to when you were picked up and jailed. You were in just one building or they moved you to another building?

We were moved from one police station to another, one time into I think it was a school building in a gymnasium where we were crowded in, pressed. We couldn't even sit down on the floor, that tight like really tight packed like sardines.

Do you remember where you were held?

What?

Do you remember the name of the places where you were held?

No. It was a local police stations. I know the first one was [GERMAN] near where I lived. And then I don't know. They didn't have any-- The main police station, whatever they called it. Central police station in Vienna.

How long were you held in these police stations before they put you on the transport?

It must have been 20 hours. I think one night I spent overnight in this police station. It is not very clear in my memory some of the details. Strange as it is, but many things I simply forgot. When I was released, I was put on the train in Munich for a train to Vienna. It completely escaped my memory who met me at the train station in Vienna. How did I get from the train station back to my home? I don't remember that. Whether I walked or somebody met me there, I don't remember.

How did you get enough money to take the train back to Vienna?

They paid for it.

Did they give you any money for food or any food for the journey?

No. It couldn't have been a very long ride, maybe a day's ride from Munich to Vienna. When I tell people this story about my imprisonment in Dachau, invariably if they listen to me the first question is, how did you get out? Well, I told

you at that time they still let you out if you could prove you could leave the country. And we Jews were fortunate compared to the Aryan prisoners. And some of the Aryan prisoners envied us, they wished they were Jews because the Aryan prisoners, some of them, had absolutely no chance to get out of a concentration camp. They were not permitted, they didn't have the choice to leave the country. And I know I met Aryan prisoners who wished there were Jewish, strange as it sounds.

And also I told you they ask me, how did I get out? Well, I was able to get out. People apparently expect to hear some heroic story that escaped, I killed some guards or whatever. No, that wasn't like that. When they released us from camp, when my time came from and together with others, we were warned, you are going to leave that camp, but do not talk about your experience in camp. And the minute you talk about it, you will be arrested and taken back. Anyway, they said, nobody will believe you if you tell them all the stories. And it was so true. They knew it. Frequently when I told people about my experience they didn't believe it when I came to the United States and so on.

Also, when I left Europe I came for the United States eventually, I went to-- When I left after release from concentration camp, I left Vienna for London, where I waited several months for my American visa to come through. And I got to London in May of 1939 and I got my visa in late August of '39. And the war in Europe broke out on September 3, 1939, when Britain declared war on Germany after Germany invaded Poland.

And I was able to get a booking on a ship to leave for the United States. The war had already started. When I came to claim my ticket at this travel agency, they told me somebody got ahead of me and got my space. So they told me they will try to get me another ticket for another boat. This ship that I was supposed to be on was the first one that got sunk in the war, first passenger ship.

And the people in the United States who had helped me to come to the United States, they thought I was on that ship and I would never come. But I was able to get a booking on another ship, and I left. I came to the United States on September 16, 1939. So I was lucky that I didn't get-- that somebody took my space on that ship. I forgot the name of the ship, but I have in my record the name of the ship that it came on. I must have it, I'm sure.

And when I was in the United States only three years, not yet a citizen-- it took five years to apply for citizenship-- and I got drafted into the American Army and got my basic training and was sent back to Europe. And at one time, it was already after the shooting war, I was with the American Army near Munich. And I managed to get a Jeep and drive to Dachau. I wanted to go back to see it.

When I came back to Dachau, first I couldn't get out when I was an inmate, but this time I want to go in and I couldn't because of the typhus epidemic and they didn't let me. But I talked to some of the local people in Dachau that I met on the street. And I asked them what they knew about it and everyone denied it. They said they had no idea what was going on throughout the years. And yet they lived right outside the camp. They must have known it.

Well, another thing that I remember. When we had to stand for hours on camp ground to be counted in the cold weather, sometimes I found pleasure just to see a nice sunset. Or at one time I heard a flock of geese or cranes flying, you know noisy flying over. And I remember that.

There was this well-known German poet, a classic, Friedrich Schiller, and he wrote a ballad. In Germany it's called [GERMAN] "The Cranes of Ibycus." It's a story of a Greek by the name of Ibycus who was a poet and a songwriter. And he was on the way to the festivals at Corinth. And on his way there, he was waylaid by a couple of thugs and they murdered him. And while he was lying there in his last moments, he lamented that there was no witness to this horrible deed. But he heard the cranes fly overhead and said he shouted out, you cranes, are the only witness to what happened to me.

And those two thugs, they went on to attend those festivals. And while they were sitting on the bleachers a flock of cranes flew overhead and one of them said to his buddy, [GERMAN] was his name, see the kinds of Ibycus flying overhead. And the people sitting next to them heard them make that statement, and so they discovered that they must be implicated in this murder and they got caught and arrested.

Well anyway, my story is this. When I was standing on the camp ground in the dark the beast or the cranes flying overhead, I was surprised I could from memory recite to myself the entire story. Stop?