

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:01:21,130

2  
00:01:21,130 --> 00:01:22,420  
OK.

3  
00:01:22,420 --> 00:01:24,835  
This is the Holocaust Oral  
History Project interview

4  
00:01:24,835 --> 00:01:28,990  
of John Steiner,  
undoubtedly number five,

5  
00:01:28,990 --> 00:01:31,390  
taking place in San  
Francisco, California,

6  
00:01:31,390 --> 00:01:34,640  
on December 2, 1993.

7  
00:01:34,640 --> 00:01:35,890  
My name is Sylvia Prozan.

8  
00:01:35,890 --> 00:01:39,530  
I will be doing the first  
part of the interview.

9  
00:01:39,530 --> 00:01:44,310  
John, how old were you when  
you were taken to the camps?

10  
00:01:44,310 --> 00:01:47,100  
I just turned 17.

11  
00:01:47,100 --> 00:01:51,950

12  
00:01:51,950 --> 00:01:54,620  
Just turned 17.

13

00:01:54,620 --> 00:02:00,270

And I was born on the  
3rd of August '25.

14

00:02:00,270 --> 00:02:07,790

And as a retaliation of  
Reinhard Heydrich's--

15

00:02:07,790 --> 00:02:13,190

SS General Reinhard  
Heydrich's assassination

16

00:02:13,190 --> 00:02:17,150

in Prague, a number of people--

17

00:02:17,150 --> 00:02:21,140

Jews and non-Jews, but  
particularly Jews at that

18

00:02:21,140 --> 00:02:24,110

particular point in my case--

19

00:02:24,110 --> 00:02:27,500

were rounded up and  
sent to Theresienstadt

20

00:02:27,500 --> 00:02:30,770

as a special transport.

21

00:02:30,770 --> 00:02:35,720

And that was on the  
10th of August '42.

22

00:02:35,720 --> 00:02:37,250

And I was born on the 3rd.

23

00:02:37,250 --> 00:02:40,410

And the interesting part  
was that, on the 3rd,

24

00:02:40,410 --> 00:02:42,470

I woke up, my birthday.

25  
00:02:42,470 --> 00:02:44,990  
And my mother came  
to congratulate me.

26  
00:02:44,990 --> 00:02:47,330  
My father was already  
in Theresienstadt.

27  
00:02:47,330 --> 00:02:50,710  
He was one of the first to build  
up, actually, Theresienstadt.

28  
00:02:50,710 --> 00:02:54,620  
He went there in 1941.

29  
00:02:54,620 --> 00:02:59,320  
And I woke up, and she came  
and congratulated me to my--

30  
00:02:59,320 --> 00:03:00,480  
my birthday.

31  
00:03:00,480 --> 00:03:02,710  
And I said, I'm really--

32  
00:03:02,710 --> 00:03:05,330  
I have a terrible problem.

33  
00:03:05,330 --> 00:03:06,830  
I just feel awful.

34  
00:03:06,830 --> 00:03:08,930  
Something terrible  
is going to happen.

35  
00:03:08,930 --> 00:03:13,340  
And I kept on repeating  
that and all day.

36  
00:03:13,340 --> 00:03:14,750  
And said, well, are you sick?

37  
00:03:14,750 --> 00:03:16,503  
Have you eaten  
something or whatever?

38  
00:03:16,503 --> 00:03:17,420  
What's wrong with you?

39  
00:03:17,420 --> 00:03:19,370  
I said, something terrible  
is going to happen.

40  
00:03:19,370 --> 00:03:21,230  
That's all I could say.

41  
00:03:21,230 --> 00:03:25,400  
And on the 10th, they  
came to pick me up.

42  
00:03:25,400 --> 00:03:31,760  
And just myself-- my mother  
stayed until later that year,

43  
00:03:31,760 --> 00:03:32,730  
for whatever reason.

44  
00:03:32,730 --> 00:03:36,780  
So we all were taken to  
Theresienstadt separately.

45  
00:03:36,780 --> 00:03:39,200  
First, my father.

46  
00:03:39,200 --> 00:03:42,890  
And that is to say our family,  
not the extended family.

47  
00:03:42,890 --> 00:03:46,400  
Extended family was taken  
before us, actually,

48  
00:03:46,400 --> 00:03:50,390

to Lodz Ghetto, because  
my uncle and my aunt

49  
00:03:50,390 --> 00:03:51,950  
were very well-to-do.

50  
00:03:51,950 --> 00:03:59,360  
And people with money  
were taken to the camps

51  
00:03:59,360 --> 00:04:02,540  
before those who had  
lesser money, which is

52  
00:04:02,540 --> 00:04:03,800  
an interesting sort of thing.

53  
00:04:03,800 --> 00:04:08,210  
Certainly, in terms of Prague  
and Bohemia in general.

54  
00:04:08,210 --> 00:04:12,380  
So that was the beginning.

55  
00:04:12,380 --> 00:04:18,170  
And before that, of  
course, I was a member

56  
00:04:18,170 --> 00:04:24,350  
of a group of people,  
primarily Jewish people, who

57  
00:04:24,350 --> 00:04:33,620  
helped those who were deported  
to come to that assembly place

58  
00:04:33,620 --> 00:04:35,280  
and assisted them.

59  
00:04:35,280 --> 00:04:38,030  
And that is something  
which was a voluntary--

60

00:04:38,030 --> 00:04:40,280  
voluntary activity.

61

00:04:40,280 --> 00:04:45,440  
We had passes so that we  
could walk around freely,

62

00:04:45,440 --> 00:04:47,720  
because some of the  
streets we are not

63

00:04:47,720 --> 00:04:52,070  
supposed to enter during the  
day, during certain hours.

64

00:04:52,070 --> 00:04:55,530  
And some of them we  
couldn't enter permanently.

65

00:04:55,530 --> 00:04:57,530  
So we had special passes.

66

00:04:57,530 --> 00:05:01,130  
And helped those people who  
were deported, primarily

67

00:05:01,130 --> 00:05:04,280  
older people, to get  
to the assembly places

68

00:05:04,280 --> 00:05:07,700  
and somehow psychologically  
support them.

69

00:05:07,700 --> 00:05:11,240  
Which, in itself, was  
exceedingly difficult.

70

00:05:11,240 --> 00:05:15,410  
But we at least saw to it  
that most of their belongings

71

00:05:15,410 --> 00:05:21,330  
which they're permitted to take  
with them, they had with them

72  
00:05:21,330 --> 00:05:25,910  
and so that they didn't go  
barehanded and totally--

73  
00:05:25,910 --> 00:05:28,120  
because some people  
were very old.

74  
00:05:28,120 --> 00:05:30,080  
How long were you  
in Theresienstadt?

75  
00:05:30,080 --> 00:05:31,760  
I was-- from--

76  
00:05:31,760 --> 00:05:34,570

77  
00:05:34,570 --> 00:05:39,500  
we arrived, I think,  
on the 11th of August.

78  
00:05:39,500 --> 00:05:48,500  
And I was there until  
just about early--

79  
00:05:48,500 --> 00:05:51,350  
early autumn, '43.

80  
00:05:51,350 --> 00:05:52,640  
And then where did you go?

81  
00:05:52,640 --> 00:05:58,340  
And then I went to  
Auschwitz-Birkenau, again,

82  
00:05:58,340 --> 00:05:59,010  
on my own.

83

00:05:59,010 --> 00:06:06,360

My father stayed, because he  
was in a particular situation,

84

00:06:06,360 --> 00:06:08,450

which is unusual for  
those people, who

85

00:06:08,450 --> 00:06:10,130

build up the ghetto.

86

00:06:10,130 --> 00:06:13,640

He was protected from being  
deported to destruction camps,

87

00:06:13,640 --> 00:06:15,840

strangely enough.

88

00:06:15,840 --> 00:06:18,250

And so my mother  
was still there.

89

00:06:18,250 --> 00:06:19,040

My father was.

90

00:06:19,040 --> 00:06:21,570

But I went by myself.

91

00:06:21,570 --> 00:06:24,230

I was singled out  
for whatever reason

92

00:06:24,230 --> 00:06:26,510

and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

93

00:06:26,510 --> 00:06:29,060

94

00:06:29,060 --> 00:06:33,080

And then eventually we met  
there, again, by accident.

95

00:06:33,080 --> 00:06:36,380

Because it was designed-- by design, obviously, because we

96

00:06:36,380 --> 00:06:37,470

had no control.

97

00:06:37,470 --> 00:06:41,340

But by accident, that my mother and my father came.

98

00:06:41,340 --> 00:06:44,970

The interesting thing is that my mother also

99

00:06:44,970 --> 00:06:49,770

was sent without my father, because my father had

100

00:06:49,770 --> 00:06:53,490

this exemption, as I've said before.

101

00:06:53,490 --> 00:06:55,800

He volunteered to go with her, which--

102

00:06:55,800 --> 00:06:57,180

which is really incredible.

103

00:06:57,180 --> 00:07:02,970

Because at that particular time, most people

104

00:07:02,970 --> 00:07:06,030

were pretty well-informed that some terrible things

105

00:07:06,030 --> 00:07:12,900

happened in the places to which they were deported.

106

00:07:12,900 --> 00:07:15,630  
But we didn't know about  
gassing, obviously,

107  
00:07:15,630 --> 00:07:17,580  
at least we didn't.

108  
00:07:17,580 --> 00:07:20,340  
And most of the  
people I know didn't.

109  
00:07:20,340 --> 00:07:24,390  
But we knew that it was  
much worse, much worse

110  
00:07:24,390 --> 00:07:25,290  
than Theresienstadt.

111  
00:07:25,290 --> 00:07:27,600  
And Theresienstadt  
already was not

112  
00:07:27,600 --> 00:07:29,490  
the best place to begin with.

113  
00:07:29,490 --> 00:07:32,880  
But it was one of  
the best places

114  
00:07:32,880 --> 00:07:38,740  
of all the ghettos and all  
the concentration camps.

115  
00:07:38,740 --> 00:07:42,120  
So we met at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

116  
00:07:42,120 --> 00:07:46,830  
And I was informed, because  
I had very good contacts

117  
00:07:46,830 --> 00:07:51,330  
and also belonged  
to a group of people

118  
00:07:51,330 --> 00:07:53,460  
under the leadership  
of a man called--

119  
00:07:53,460 --> 00:07:58,890  
young man, Fredy Hirsch, who  
was a Zionist, a very, very

120  
00:07:58,890 --> 00:08:01,680  
unusual person.

121  
00:08:01,680 --> 00:08:06,020  
Very athletic and  
very bright and very--

122  
00:08:06,020 --> 00:08:10,140  
a very compassionate  
individual, who

123  
00:08:10,140 --> 00:08:16,020  
was just organizing  
that particular group

124  
00:08:16,020 --> 00:08:19,740  
in Auschwitz-Birkenau  
which was to be developed

125  
00:08:19,740 --> 00:08:21,390  
into a resistance group.

126  
00:08:21,390 --> 00:08:24,150  
But I feel that was  
all pretty much Mickey

127  
00:08:24,150 --> 00:08:25,980  
Mouse and premature.

128  
00:08:25,980 --> 00:08:30,450  
Because they then were taken,  
including Fredy Hirsch,

129

00:08:30,450 --> 00:08:36,419  
to be gassed, while they  
were at Auschwitz-Birkenau

130  
00:08:36,419 --> 00:08:38,909  
in the family camp  
for quite a while.

131  
00:08:38,909 --> 00:08:40,740  
But they were supposed  
to be taken out.

132  
00:08:40,740 --> 00:08:41,909  
And they were taken out.

133  
00:08:41,909 --> 00:08:47,610  
And Fredy Hirsch, instead of  
letting himself be gassed,

134  
00:08:47,610 --> 00:08:48,612  
committed suicide.

135  
00:08:48,612 --> 00:08:50,445  
One of the few people  
who committed suicide.

136  
00:08:50,445 --> 00:08:53,850

137  
00:08:53,850 --> 00:08:56,700  
Because he understood  
that they would be gassed.

138  
00:08:56,700 --> 00:08:58,170  
By that time, of  
course, everyone

139  
00:08:58,170 --> 00:09:02,760  
knew that people who were taken  
out were going to be gassed.

140  
00:09:02,760 --> 00:09:04,940  
And that was an

entire transport.

141

00:09:04,940 --> 00:09:10,200

And there were certain numbers  
which were tattooed on the arm,

142

00:09:10,200 --> 00:09:16,890

certain numbers which was, I  
think, 148,000-plus something.

143

00:09:16,890 --> 00:09:20,361

All these people with  
that particular number

144

00:09:20,361 --> 00:09:25,770

were taken out to be  
gassed at the orders--

145

00:09:25,770 --> 00:09:27,470

on the orders of--

146

00:09:27,470 --> 00:09:29,030

of Berlin.

147

00:09:29,030 --> 00:09:32,220

You knew your parents  
were coming to Auschwitz.

148

00:09:32,220 --> 00:09:34,440

I had some inkling, yes.

149

00:09:34,440 --> 00:09:36,830

In what circumstances  
did you meet them?

150

00:09:36,830 --> 00:09:40,490

Well, I met them when they  
came to the family camp.

151

00:09:40,490 --> 00:09:43,550

And before, I, at  
times, could get out

152

00:09:43,550 --> 00:09:45,845  
of the camp on  
some sort of work--

153

00:09:45,845 --> 00:09:49,400

154

00:09:49,400 --> 00:09:52,430  
work group, which could  
get out of the camp.

155

00:09:52,430 --> 00:09:57,290  
And so we had access,  
at times, to go out.

156

00:09:57,290 --> 00:09:59,240  
And I've done that  
on several occasions.

157

00:09:59,240 --> 00:10:02,960  
And I got to places  
and other camps

158

00:10:02,960 --> 00:10:07,272  
and the family camp in  
which things happened,

159

00:10:07,272 --> 00:10:09,230  
which were very different  
from the family camp.

160

00:10:09,230 --> 00:10:13,310  
Because the family camp was,  
to a large extent, protected.

161

00:10:13,310 --> 00:10:15,530  
And what did you say to them?

162

00:10:15,530 --> 00:10:18,215  
Well, I mean, I prepared  
them for the worst.

163

00:10:18,215 --> 00:10:21,590  
And I told them that this was--

164  
00:10:21,590 --> 00:10:25,520  
this was hell on Earth.

165  
00:10:25,520 --> 00:10:30,590  
As one of my best friends,  
who was part of the group

166  
00:10:30,590 --> 00:10:34,490  
of musicians who played music--  
he was a very accomplished

167  
00:10:34,490 --> 00:10:41,960  
musician-- a pianist  
and a harmonica player--

168  
00:10:41,960 --> 00:10:44,750  
he came, and he already  
knew that I was coming.

169  
00:10:44,750 --> 00:10:49,820  
And he came to tell me  
that I should give him

170  
00:10:49,820 --> 00:10:51,530  
all the things,  
all my belongings,

171  
00:10:51,530 --> 00:10:56,800  
which I would like to keep.

172  
00:10:56,800 --> 00:11:00,890  
So that he would  
take them and prevent

173  
00:11:00,890 --> 00:11:04,180  
that I would-- that they  
would be taken away from me.

174  
00:11:04,180 --> 00:11:06,940  
So he came and warned

me, and said, give me

175

00:11:06,940 --> 00:11:09,790  
all the things which you want  
to save, the things which

176

00:11:09,790 --> 00:11:13,240  
he could carry, and brought  
them into the family camp.

177

00:11:13,240 --> 00:11:15,370  
Because otherwise, I  
would have lost them.

178

00:11:15,370 --> 00:11:17,680  
And he told me  
already, prepared me.

179

00:11:17,680 --> 00:11:22,270  
So in a similar vein,  
I prepared my parents

180

00:11:22,270 --> 00:11:25,600  
for what was to happen,  
except I couldn't help them

181

00:11:25,600 --> 00:11:27,130  
to the extent this  
friend of mine

182

00:11:27,130 --> 00:11:31,180  
helped me, because he was  
in a privileged situation

183

00:11:31,180 --> 00:11:33,550  
by virtue of being  
one of the camp--

184

00:11:33,550 --> 00:11:38,590  
a member of the camp  
group of musicians.

185

00:11:38,590 --> 00:11:40,780

And what happened  
to your parents?

186  
00:11:40,780 --> 00:11:43,520  
My parents?

187  
00:11:43,520 --> 00:11:47,590  
We were all, for quite a  
while, in the family camp.

188  
00:11:47,590 --> 00:11:50,980  
And the interesting  
thing is that my parents

189  
00:11:50,980 --> 00:11:56,740  
were relatively physically doing  
very well, relatively speaking.

190  
00:11:56,740 --> 00:12:03,520  
My mother, who used to be  
very sickly, occasionally,

191  
00:12:03,520 --> 00:12:08,270  
was remarkably well under  
those circumstances.

192  
00:12:08,270 --> 00:12:13,240  
And so one day we  
were asked to--

193  
00:12:13,240 --> 00:12:16,870

194  
00:12:16,870 --> 00:12:19,990  
by one-- one of  
the SS officers--

195  
00:12:19,990 --> 00:12:21,430  
I don't know exactly--

196  
00:12:21,430 --> 00:12:25,540  
some kapos and  
officers, SS officers--

197  
00:12:25,540 --> 00:12:31,150  
to volunteer for work.

198  
00:12:31,150 --> 00:12:33,480  
And they wanted  
only specialists.

199  
00:12:33,480 --> 00:12:35,980  
So they wanted to know  
whether we had any skills.

200  
00:12:35,980 --> 00:12:42,940  
And I had quite some  
experience as an electrician,

201  
00:12:42,940 --> 00:12:45,070  
because that is something  
which I learned when I

202  
00:12:45,070 --> 00:12:46,850  
no longer could attend school.

203  
00:12:46,850 --> 00:12:51,370  
So we went to special schools  
in Prague to learn a trade.

204  
00:12:51,370 --> 00:12:53,030  
And that's exactly what I did.

205  
00:12:53,030 --> 00:12:57,640  
And I completed that particular  
course in that trade.

206  
00:12:57,640 --> 00:13:01,570  
So I, with good conscience,  
said, I'm an electrician.

207  
00:13:01,570 --> 00:13:05,440  
And my father said that he  
was a gardener or something

208

00:13:05,440 --> 00:13:06,640  
like that or--

209  
00:13:06,640 --> 00:13:13,250  
or some sort of a building  
specialist construction person.

210  
00:13:13,250 --> 00:13:16,360  
And so we are asked  
to strip naked.

211  
00:13:16,360 --> 00:13:18,970  
And then we had  
to parade in front

212  
00:13:18,970 --> 00:13:22,870  
of either Mengele or some  
other medical person,

213  
00:13:22,870 --> 00:13:25,240  
but I think it was Mengele.

214  
00:13:25,240 --> 00:13:26,260  
Naked, run.

215  
00:13:26,260 --> 00:13:29,350  
And so then we, of  
course, tried to appear

216  
00:13:29,350 --> 00:13:30,670  
very healthy and all that.

217  
00:13:30,670 --> 00:13:32,410  
And, yes, we were selected.

218  
00:13:32,410 --> 00:13:35,050  
And then were sent  
to a next camp,

219  
00:13:35,050 --> 00:13:37,990  
next to us, the  
so-called A camp.

220

00:13:37,990 --> 00:13:41,260

And from there, we  
were shipped to a place

221

00:13:41,260 --> 00:13:49,030

called Blechhammer, which was an  
industrial complex, war effort.

222

00:13:49,030 --> 00:13:56,410

In that place, they  
produced synthetic gasoline.

223

00:13:56,410 --> 00:13:57,850

My mother stayed behind.

224

00:13:57,850 --> 00:14:02,320

And we still talked over the  
fence, electric-barbed fence,

225

00:14:02,320 --> 00:14:04,150

and said goodbye to each other.

226

00:14:04,150 --> 00:14:05,690

And she was very  
confident and said

227

00:14:05,690 --> 00:14:08,080

we'll see each other  
again soon and all that.

228

00:14:08,080 --> 00:14:11,210

She was very confident,  
very optimistic.

229

00:14:11,210 --> 00:14:13,090

And I think she was  
authentic about it.

230

00:14:13,090 --> 00:14:14,530

She was genuine.

231

00:14:14,530 --> 00:14:16,210

And I was much less so.

232

00:14:16,210 --> 00:14:22,630

And while we were talking,  
one of the block seniors

233

00:14:22,630 --> 00:14:27,520

came in which I was,  
in the block I was,

234

00:14:27,520 --> 00:14:32,440

of which they sent me to, where  
I was to stay for a few days

235

00:14:32,440 --> 00:14:36,910

until we would be shipped to  
this place called Blechhammer.

236

00:14:36,910 --> 00:14:39,030

And he saw me.

237

00:14:39,030 --> 00:14:42,970

It happened to be a  
Jewish block senior.

238

00:14:42,970 --> 00:14:47,140

And he saw that I was conversing  
over the fence with my mother.

239

00:14:47,140 --> 00:14:51,220

So he-- that was  
one of the few times

240

00:14:51,220 --> 00:14:53,890

he just really slapped  
my face hard so

241

00:14:53,890 --> 00:14:55,180

that I fell on the ground.

242

00:14:55,180 --> 00:15:00,280

It didn't take much for  
me to fall on the ground,

243  
00:15:00,280 --> 00:15:03,880  
because I was very emaciated.

244  
00:15:03,880 --> 00:15:06,430  
But anyway, so in  
front of my mother.

245  
00:15:06,430 --> 00:15:09,640  
And that really-- not that it  
physically hurt me so much,

246  
00:15:09,640 --> 00:15:11,830  
but my mother was very  
upset about the fact

247  
00:15:11,830 --> 00:15:14,560  
that this big, burly  
fellow came and just

248  
00:15:14,560 --> 00:15:18,400  
really slapped my face hard  
so that I fell on the ground,

249  
00:15:18,400 --> 00:15:20,720  
while we were saying  
goodbye to each other.

250  
00:15:20,720 --> 00:15:23,370  
So that was a  
lasting impression,

251  
00:15:23,370 --> 00:15:26,620  
which was the last  
I seen of my mother.

252  
00:15:26,620 --> 00:15:28,640  
And then we parted.

253  
00:15:28,640 --> 00:15:29,830  
We just said goodbye.

254

00:15:29,830 --> 00:15:33,190  
And he just immediately  
took me into the barrack.

255  
00:15:33,190 --> 00:15:36,700  
But nothing else happened  
to me personally.

256  
00:15:36,700 --> 00:15:39,670  
And from then, we were shipped  
to this other camp called

257  
00:15:39,670 --> 00:15:40,360  
Blechhammer.

258  
00:15:40,360 --> 00:15:42,820  
And how long were you there?

259  
00:15:42,820 --> 00:15:48,175  
I was there just about,  
I would say, close to--

260  
00:15:48,175 --> 00:15:50,890

261  
00:15:50,890 --> 00:15:52,420  
close to a year, probably.

262  
00:15:52,420 --> 00:15:53,860  
Close to a year.

263  
00:15:53,860 --> 00:16:00,550  
And until the Soviets  
came very close,

264  
00:16:00,550 --> 00:16:03,490  
and because the Germans  
were losing the war

265  
00:16:03,490 --> 00:16:04,660  
at that particular time.

266

00:16:04,660 --> 00:16:09,730  
That was in '44 already.

267  
00:16:09,730 --> 00:16:15,370  
And so they rounded us up.

268  
00:16:15,370 --> 00:16:17,170  
And we had two options.

269  
00:16:17,170 --> 00:16:18,920  
And I was there with my father.

270  
00:16:18,920 --> 00:16:22,282  
We were very close and  
supported each other

271  
00:16:22,282 --> 00:16:24,865  
and helped each other and really  
helped each other to survive.

272  
00:16:24,865 --> 00:16:25,840  
We were very close.

273  
00:16:25,840 --> 00:16:29,170  
At that time, we had  
the closest relationship

274  
00:16:29,170 --> 00:16:32,620  
we ever had as father and son.

275  
00:16:32,620 --> 00:16:40,960  
And so when the  
Russians-- we already

276  
00:16:40,960 --> 00:16:44,470  
could hear the noise  
of the battlefield

277  
00:16:44,470 --> 00:16:46,880  
and all that coming closer.

278  
00:16:46,880 --> 00:16:52,930

So they rounded us up and  
said, all abled bodies--

279  
00:16:52,930 --> 00:16:55,420  
all able-bodied have  
to leave the camp.

280  
00:16:55,420 --> 00:17:00,280  
And those who are  
not, they can stay.

281  
00:17:00,280 --> 00:17:06,520  
But somehow, the notion was that  
that was a very dangerous thing

282  
00:17:06,520 --> 00:17:09,859  
to do because the chances  
were that they would be shot.

283  
00:17:09,859 --> 00:17:12,430  
And so we discussed  
it with my father.

284  
00:17:12,430 --> 00:17:15,420  
And my father was  
in such bad health--

285  
00:17:15,420 --> 00:17:19,210  
although, he was usually a very  
athletic and healthy person.

286  
00:17:19,210 --> 00:17:22,270  
But he was very deteriorated  
and had a terrible case

287  
00:17:22,270 --> 00:17:24,069  
of dysentery and so forth.

288  
00:17:24,069 --> 00:17:25,450  
He just simply couldn't.

289  
00:17:25,450 --> 00:17:27,700  
And he stayed.

290  
00:17:27,700 --> 00:17:32,920  
Now, and I decided to  
go on that march, which

291  
00:17:32,920 --> 00:17:35,110  
was a major mistake--

292  
00:17:35,110 --> 00:17:36,830  
major mistake.

293  
00:17:36,830 --> 00:17:37,330  
Why?

294  
00:17:37,330 --> 00:17:40,480  
Because we discussed, well,  
what's the better chance?

295  
00:17:40,480 --> 00:17:44,180  
And so we decided that I  
would go and he would stay.

296  
00:17:44,180 --> 00:17:45,700  
So nothing happened to him.

297  
00:17:45,700 --> 00:17:48,190  
It was very shortly  
after that he

298  
00:17:48,190 --> 00:17:52,180  
was liberated by the  
Soviets, by Soviet troops.

299  
00:17:52,180 --> 00:17:57,620  
And we had to go on a death  
march, middle of the winter,

300  
00:17:57,620 --> 00:18:04,930  
which was in early  
January '45, and--

301  
00:18:04,930 --> 00:18:10,840

and marched for about  
close to 10 days.

302  
00:18:10,840 --> 00:18:12,310  
And many people died.

303  
00:18:12,310 --> 00:18:14,990  
Thousands of people  
were on that march.

304  
00:18:14,990 --> 00:18:18,045  
The majority died--  
frostbite, other disease.

305  
00:18:18,045 --> 00:18:22,210  
We were not permitted  
to stay in other places

306  
00:18:22,210 --> 00:18:26,350  
other than in some sort of  
peasant huts and whatever,

307  
00:18:26,350 --> 00:18:28,970  
haystacks and what have you.

308  
00:18:28,970 --> 00:18:32,230  
And then frequently  
also slept in the snow.

309  
00:18:32,230 --> 00:18:37,780  
So and that was, of course, so--

310  
00:18:37,780 --> 00:18:41,500  
so dreadful that  
very many people

311  
00:18:41,500 --> 00:18:45,310  
died of frostbite, or  
just limbs fell off.

312  
00:18:45,310 --> 00:18:51,430  
And that's when my right foot  
and left foot was frostbitten.

313  
00:18:51,430 --> 00:18:55,510  
And I had a hard time  
continuing the death march.

314  
00:18:55,510 --> 00:18:57,350  
Where did you end up?

315  
00:18:57,350 --> 00:18:58,930  
Well, I ended up--

316  
00:18:58,930 --> 00:19:04,180  
finally, I ended up  
in a place called--

317  
00:19:04,180 --> 00:19:10,660  
which was just a farm and in  
one of those haystacks where

318  
00:19:10,660 --> 00:19:16,040  
they've had hay and all  
that, in this farmer's place.

319  
00:19:16,040 --> 00:19:19,930  
And then I found out that  
I just simply couldn't--

320  
00:19:19,930 --> 00:19:23,050  
I just took off my shoes,  
and it was all black

321  
00:19:23,050 --> 00:19:25,180  
and bloodied and infected.

322  
00:19:25,180 --> 00:19:30,020  
And I could actually take parts  
of my toes and throw them away.

323  
00:19:30,020 --> 00:19:36,190  
And so I knew that there was,  
for me, no chance to continue.

324

00:19:36,190 --> 00:19:38,860  
And we knew, and that  
we knew, that people

325  
00:19:38,860 --> 00:19:43,700  
who were left behind were  
frequently shot by the SS,

326  
00:19:43,700 --> 00:19:49,300  
by guards who just simply  
followed all the transport

327  
00:19:49,300 --> 00:19:52,765  
and saw to it that it  
was all cleaned up.

328  
00:19:52,765 --> 00:19:54,070  
And what happened to you?

329  
00:19:54,070 --> 00:19:57,160  
And so they came and found us.

330  
00:19:57,160 --> 00:19:59,710  
And instead of shooting us--

331  
00:19:59,710 --> 00:20:02,650  
which we anticipated,  
we expected that--

332  
00:20:02,650 --> 00:20:08,530  
they took us and put us on  
some sort of horse and buggy,

333  
00:20:08,530 --> 00:20:16,347  
covered horse and  
buggy carriage,

334  
00:20:16,347 --> 00:20:22,030  
and moved us to a very  
nearby concentration

335  
00:20:22,030 --> 00:20:25,510  
camp called Reichenbach.

336  
00:20:25,510 --> 00:20:28,450  
And that's where there  
were some other incidents.

337  
00:20:28,450 --> 00:20:31,690  
Some other people came,  
and officers, and said,

338  
00:20:31,690 --> 00:20:34,240  
we'll show you, you  
swine, you bastards.

339  
00:20:34,240 --> 00:20:36,160  
The Russians are advancing.

340  
00:20:36,160 --> 00:20:38,800  
We'll show you what that  
means to you and all that.

341  
00:20:38,800 --> 00:20:41,710  
So threatening with pistols,  
drawn pistols and all.

342  
00:20:41,710 --> 00:20:45,680  
All ridiculous, because we  
could only crawl at that point.

343  
00:20:45,680 --> 00:20:49,030  
So, I mean, we were no  
threat to anyone for sure.

344  
00:20:49,030 --> 00:20:51,220  
Anyway, so they put us  
on another carriage.

345  
00:20:51,220 --> 00:20:54,010  
And then they took  
us to that place

346  
00:20:54,010 --> 00:20:56,590  
called Reichenbach,  
where all the people who

347

00:20:56,590 --> 00:21:01,420

no longer could walk and all  
that were sent, brought in.

348

00:21:01,420 --> 00:21:03,370

And we were lucky  
why we were not shot.

349

00:21:03,370 --> 00:21:06,850

It was a relatively  
simple explanation,

350

00:21:06,850 --> 00:21:11,350

simply because we were so close  
by to that concentration camp,

351

00:21:11,350 --> 00:21:13,482

that they'd rather brought  
us in than shoot us.

352

00:21:13,482 --> 00:21:15,940

And said, well, something is  
going to happen to them there,

353

00:21:15,940 --> 00:21:17,890

so we might as  
well put them there

354

00:21:17,890 --> 00:21:19,990

rather than to  
mess up the place.

355

00:21:19,990 --> 00:21:24,550

And because if we had been  
in some sort of wilderness

356

00:21:24,550 --> 00:21:28,240

in between townships  
or villages,

357

00:21:28,240 --> 00:21:33,140

the chances are that, as they

have had done in other cases,

358

00:21:33,140 --> 00:21:34,330  
they would have shot us.

359

00:21:34,330 --> 00:21:38,280  
Anyway, so we came  
there to Reichenbach,

360

00:21:38,280 --> 00:21:40,130  
and there we were assembled.

361

00:21:40,130 --> 00:21:45,650  
And from there, we were shipped,  
after several days, without,

362

00:21:45,650 --> 00:21:48,830  
of course, any  
treatment, without--

363

00:21:48,830 --> 00:21:52,830  
we got some food, which  
was relatively speaking,

364

00:21:52,830 --> 00:21:57,200  
for concentration  
camps, superior to what

365

00:21:57,200 --> 00:22:00,260  
we had received before,  
apart from the fact

366

00:22:00,260 --> 00:22:05,630  
that we are marching for about  
a week or so, or 10 days--

367

00:22:05,630 --> 00:22:10,180  
difficult to be exact as far as  
the time is concerned-- where

368

00:22:10,180 --> 00:22:12,680  
we received exactly nothing.

369

00:22:12,680 --> 00:22:18,230

We ate the snow and  
didn't receive any food.

370

00:22:18,230 --> 00:22:21,110

Or, if we were lucky,  
in some farmer's place,

371

00:22:21,110 --> 00:22:23,810

we were able to get some grain.

372

00:22:23,810 --> 00:22:27,140

And we were-- because  
we are not permitted

373

00:22:27,140 --> 00:22:29,750

to stay in the  
stables with cows,

374

00:22:29,750 --> 00:22:35,180

they put us, at times,  
into stables with pigs.

375

00:22:35,180 --> 00:22:40,880

And so we, at times,  
shared the food of pigs.

376

00:22:40,880 --> 00:22:44,510

And that was, of course,  
the best we could have.

377

00:22:44,510 --> 00:22:49,220

So the food which we received  
in Reichenbach was, of course,

378

00:22:49,220 --> 00:22:52,820

superior to what we've had  
for the last 7 to 10 days.

379

00:22:52,820 --> 00:22:55,280

And after Reichenbach,  
where did you go?

380

00:22:55,280 --> 00:22:58,250

Then, we were put on open  
lorries, small lorries,

381

00:22:58,250 --> 00:23:01,700

because there was some sort  
of industry there which--

382

00:23:01,700 --> 00:23:08,630

which had a-- small  
lorries and on rails.

383

00:23:08,630 --> 00:23:16,310

And these rails went directly  
to the-- to the small railway

384

00:23:16,310 --> 00:23:18,740

station, open railway station.

385

00:23:18,740 --> 00:23:23,930

And we were thrown  
in into open boxcars,

386

00:23:23,930 --> 00:23:25,220

because we couldn't climb in.

387

00:23:25,220 --> 00:23:30,180

So those who were more  
able-bodied were--

388

00:23:30,180 --> 00:23:34,680

were forced to simply help us  
or throw us into the-- those who

389

00:23:34,680 --> 00:23:36,740

were not able-bodied--

390

00:23:36,740 --> 00:23:39,020

throw us into these boxcars.

391

00:23:39,020 --> 00:23:43,940

And so that they were just

about at least 100 people

392  
00:23:43,940 --> 00:23:46,730  
to one open boxcar.

393  
00:23:46,730 --> 00:23:50,630  
And so while we were in  
the lorries-- of course,

394  
00:23:50,630 --> 00:23:53,420  
some people are  
very badly injured--

395  
00:23:53,420 --> 00:23:55,490  
we were transported  
to the open boxcars

396  
00:23:55,490 --> 00:23:59,270  
from that concentration  
camp, Reichenbach.

397  
00:23:59,270 --> 00:24:02,450  
They're just small, open  
lorries, like miner lorries,

398  
00:24:02,450 --> 00:24:04,130  
you see, like, for miners.

399  
00:24:04,130 --> 00:24:08,720

400  
00:24:08,720 --> 00:24:14,150  
The SS came when  
people were crying out

401  
00:24:14,150 --> 00:24:15,510  
in pain and all that.

402  
00:24:15,510 --> 00:24:19,100  
So instead of somehow helping  
them, they just killed them.

403

00:24:19,100 --> 00:24:22,970  
And that lorry I was,  
there was one person

404  
00:24:22,970 --> 00:24:28,430  
whose foot was badly mangled,  
frostbite, broken, whatever.

405  
00:24:28,430 --> 00:24:33,260  
And because we were about four  
in one of those open lorries,

406  
00:24:33,260 --> 00:24:39,590  
so obviously, we sat on other  
people's legs and injuries.

407  
00:24:39,590 --> 00:24:43,580  
And so the pain was  
terribly excruciable.

408  
00:24:43,580 --> 00:24:48,650  
And so he was  
crying out in pain.

409  
00:24:48,650 --> 00:24:52,550  
And I've told him,  
the SS are coming,

410  
00:24:52,550 --> 00:24:54,690  
why don't you try to be quiet?

411  
00:24:54,690 --> 00:24:56,990  
But he couldn't do it,  
because he was in such pain.

412  
00:24:56,990 --> 00:25:01,490  
So they heard him and came.

413  
00:25:01,490 --> 00:25:10,190  
And one of them had a steel bar  
or whatever, a piece of steel,

414  
00:25:10,190 --> 00:25:13,100

and just simply killed the man.

415

00:25:13,100 --> 00:25:21,875

And then we proceeded  
to this open boxcar.

416

00:25:21,875 --> 00:25:23,000

And then we were thrown in.

417

00:25:23,000 --> 00:25:27,860

And there were immediately one,  
two, three layers of bodies--

418

00:25:27,860 --> 00:25:31,320

bodies, at that time,  
of course, live bodies.

419

00:25:31,320 --> 00:25:35,810

And so the first were covered  
by the second, the second

420

00:25:35,810 --> 00:25:40,220

by the third, so that so  
many people suffocated

421

00:25:40,220 --> 00:25:43,385

in a very short time, because  
they didn't get any air.

422

00:25:43,385 --> 00:25:45,390

And all the bodies  
lying on them,

423

00:25:45,390 --> 00:25:47,570

they had no other way to  
go, because we were just

424

00:25:47,570 --> 00:25:48,770

packed like sardines.

425

00:25:48,770 --> 00:25:50,470

What month of the year was this?

426  
00:25:50,470 --> 00:25:51,290  
What month?

427  
00:25:51,290 --> 00:25:53,000  
I've said, January.

428  
00:25:53,000 --> 00:25:53,825  
January of '45.

429  
00:25:53,825 --> 00:25:54,950  
[INAUDIBLE] in January.

430  
00:25:54,950 --> 00:25:55,550  
That's right.

431  
00:25:55,550 --> 00:25:57,050  
And where were you  
transported then?

432  
00:25:57,050 --> 00:26:00,320  
And from there, we  
were finally moved

433  
00:26:00,320 --> 00:26:08,000  
to Dachau via Prague, Pilsen,  
Bavaria, Munich, Dachau.

434  
00:26:08,000 --> 00:26:10,370  
Did you arrive in  
Dachau in January?

435  
00:26:10,370 --> 00:26:12,860  
That's right.

436  
00:26:12,860 --> 00:26:14,180  
Just about end of January.

437  
00:26:14,180 --> 00:26:16,070  
And what happened to you there?

438  
00:26:16,070 --> 00:26:19,940

Well, there we were in such  
a state that, out of the 100,

439  
00:26:19,940 --> 00:26:23,930  
just about 10 were still alive.

440  
00:26:23,930 --> 00:26:30,290  
And there were just about  
10 railway boxcars, roughly.

441  
00:26:30,290 --> 00:26:31,730  
Just about 10.

442  
00:26:31,730 --> 00:26:34,370  
So that was just  
about the average,

443  
00:26:34,370 --> 00:26:36,380  
that 90% of the people--

444  
00:26:36,380 --> 00:26:40,700  
80% to 90% of the people  
in every boxcar were dead.

445  
00:26:40,700 --> 00:26:42,740  
And they are not permitted  
to be thrown out.

446  
00:26:42,740 --> 00:26:43,680  
They had to be there.

447  
00:26:43,680 --> 00:26:46,010  
So we were just  
mingled, the live ones,

448  
00:26:46,010 --> 00:26:49,240  
with decomposing bodies  
for that length of time,

449  
00:26:49,240 --> 00:26:50,810  
which was just close to a week.

450

00:26:50,810 --> 00:26:52,760

And what was the  
state of your health?

451

00:26:52,760 --> 00:26:55,290

And my state of health,  
I was a total wreck.

452

00:26:55,290 --> 00:26:58,700

And so when we arrived,  
even the SS people,

453

00:26:58,700 --> 00:27:04,220

who received us  
there, they're making

454

00:27:04,220 --> 00:27:08,060

remarks, which reflected  
even compassion

455

00:27:08,060 --> 00:27:11,210

and said they haven't seen  
anything like that ever before.

456

00:27:11,210 --> 00:27:14,000

And they're absolutely  
horrified and expressed

457

00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:16,860

that horror, which was very  
interesting, very helpful.

458

00:27:16,860 --> 00:27:19,220

Were not cruel and  
were supportive,

459

00:27:19,220 --> 00:27:23,840

actually, more than cruel,  
which was very unusual.

460

00:27:23,840 --> 00:27:26,150

And so there was an officer.

461

00:27:26,150 --> 00:27:31,280  
And I was-- most of the  
people couldn't even talk,

462  
00:27:31,280 --> 00:27:33,590  
or they couldn't speak,  
because they were so exhausted,

463  
00:27:33,590 --> 00:27:38,990  
just absolutely in a state in  
which they simply couldn't--

464  
00:27:38,990 --> 00:27:40,340  
couldn't function.

465  
00:27:40,340 --> 00:27:43,460  
And I was still able to talk.

466  
00:27:43,460 --> 00:27:47,090  
And because I'm fluent,  
perfect in German,

467  
00:27:47,090 --> 00:27:51,005  
when this SS officer came  
to look at us, I said,

468  
00:27:51,005 --> 00:27:52,970  
you just have to do  
something with us,

469  
00:27:52,970 --> 00:27:57,470  
because either  
you shoot us and--

470  
00:27:57,470 --> 00:27:59,690  
so that we can stop--

471  
00:27:59,690 --> 00:28:02,330  
we can't continue like that--  
we just suffered something,

472  
00:28:02,330 --> 00:28:03,410  
you can see that--

473  
00:28:03,410 --> 00:28:05,750  
or you help us to survive.

474  
00:28:05,750 --> 00:28:09,410  
And apparently what  
I said impressed him

475  
00:28:09,410 --> 00:28:12,560  
to such an extent that he--

476  
00:28:12,560 --> 00:28:15,440  
he ordered that we  
would get special--

477  
00:28:15,440 --> 00:28:18,590  
special food.

478  
00:28:18,590 --> 00:28:22,940  
And that helped the group, to  
some extent-- not all survived.

479  
00:28:22,940 --> 00:28:29,965  
But it helped us  
to survive for--

480  
00:28:29,965 --> 00:28:31,037  
for quite some time.

481  
00:28:31,037 --> 00:28:32,870  
Because otherwise, we  
wouldn't have made it.

482  
00:28:32,870 --> 00:28:33,830  
None of us.

483  
00:28:33,830 --> 00:28:35,720  
Were you aware  
about the progress

484  
00:28:35,720 --> 00:28:38,520  
of the war during this time?

485  
00:28:38,520 --> 00:28:40,490  
Well, not really, you see?

486  
00:28:40,490 --> 00:28:44,780  
Because we are so isolated  
that we never received--

487  
00:28:44,780 --> 00:28:47,990  
at least the group  
I was a part of--

488  
00:28:47,990 --> 00:28:51,800  
never received any-- any news.

489  
00:28:51,800 --> 00:28:56,810  
We only heard, of course, that  
they are losing the war, simply

490  
00:28:56,810 --> 00:28:58,760  
by virtue of the fact  
that they are moved out

491  
00:28:58,760 --> 00:29:04,370  
and that the Third  
Reich was shrinking.

492  
00:29:04,370 --> 00:29:08,810  
And the allied forces were  
simply pushing them back

493  
00:29:08,810 --> 00:29:09,650  
into the Reich.

494  
00:29:09,650 --> 00:29:11,660  
So that much we knew.

495  
00:29:11,660 --> 00:29:13,790  
And that was, of course,  
a very good sign.

496  
00:29:13,790 --> 00:29:17,990

But specific news  
or any sort of--

497  
00:29:17,990 --> 00:29:20,450  
I never received  
any of that nature.

498  
00:29:20,450 --> 00:29:24,650  
Other than, when in Dachau,  
there were frequent air raids,

499  
00:29:24,650 --> 00:29:29,930  
particularly nearby industries  
in which inmates had to work.

500  
00:29:29,930 --> 00:29:34,670  
And some came back  
dreadfully injured

501  
00:29:34,670 --> 00:29:38,870  
because of the-- because  
of the air raids--

502  
00:29:38,870 --> 00:29:40,520  
torn limbs, whatever, you know?

503  
00:29:40,520 --> 00:29:42,320  
I still remember that.

504  
00:29:42,320 --> 00:29:47,600  
And so that-- that  
is the only thing.

505  
00:29:47,600 --> 00:29:50,200  
And we also heard the--

506  
00:29:50,200 --> 00:29:52,820  
the consequences of the  
air raids and always could

507  
00:29:52,820 --> 00:29:54,590  
see when the inmates came back.

508

00:29:54,590 --> 00:29:58,310

So that much we  
knew and understood

509

00:29:58,310 --> 00:30:06,465

that, apparently, the Nazis  
were at the end of their--

510

00:30:06,465 --> 00:30:07,550

their reign.

511

00:30:07,550 --> 00:30:09,300

That much we could guess.

512

00:30:09,300 --> 00:30:12,470

But specific news,  
no, I never did.

513

00:30:12,470 --> 00:30:15,920

What happened the day  
that you were liberated?

514

00:30:15,920 --> 00:30:20,000

Well, the day we were  
liberated, I already

515

00:30:20,000 --> 00:30:22,920

counted my days, so to speak.

516

00:30:22,920 --> 00:30:27,770

And at that particular  
time, I was virtually blind.

517

00:30:27,770 --> 00:30:33,080

I was so weak and--

518

00:30:33,080 --> 00:30:41,480

and ill, primarily because  
of the frostbite and--

519

00:30:41,480 --> 00:30:44,180

the infected frostbite.

520  
00:30:44,180 --> 00:30:51,860  
They worked on my foot  
on several occasions,

521  
00:30:51,860 --> 00:30:55,760  
once in a bathtub.

522  
00:30:55,760 --> 00:30:58,250  
And the second time,  
a Czech surgeon,

523  
00:30:58,250 --> 00:31:01,610  
a well-known Czech  
surgeon, heard about me

524  
00:31:01,610 --> 00:31:05,120  
or found out about me, and he  
performed surgery on my foot.

525  
00:31:05,120 --> 00:31:07,040  
But still, they didn't  
have any medication,

526  
00:31:07,040 --> 00:31:09,230  
so it was badly infected.

527  
00:31:09,230 --> 00:31:11,630  
And there was just  
the kind of beginning

528  
00:31:11,630 --> 00:31:17,600  
to be a general sepsis  
of the entire organism.

529  
00:31:17,600 --> 00:31:20,120  
And so I counted my hours--

530  
00:31:20,120 --> 00:31:21,350  
not just days, hours.

531  
00:31:21,350 --> 00:31:25,490

And I gave myself about 24  
hours when we were liberated.

532  
00:31:25,490 --> 00:31:29,450  
And what I found out, how I  
experienced the liberation,

533  
00:31:29,450 --> 00:31:32,630  
I was just half conscious.

534  
00:31:32,630 --> 00:31:36,540  
I could see allied  
soldiers, officers,

535  
00:31:36,540 --> 00:31:38,990  
rushing through the  
barrack, looking at us,

536  
00:31:38,990 --> 00:31:44,990  
and being horrified  
at what they saw.

537  
00:31:44,990 --> 00:31:46,931  
And that was the--

538  
00:31:46,931 --> 00:31:50,670  
that was my impression.

539  
00:31:50,670 --> 00:31:52,700  
People were rushing  
through the barrack.

540  
00:31:52,700 --> 00:31:55,490  
And some of them threw  
cigarettes or chocolates

541  
00:31:55,490 --> 00:31:56,900  
at us and all that.

542  
00:31:56,900 --> 00:31:57,770  
But didn't stop.

543

00:31:57,770 --> 00:31:58,550  
They didn't stop.

544  
00:31:58,550 --> 00:32:00,140  
None of them stopped  
the first day.

545  
00:32:00,140 --> 00:32:01,730  
They just rushed  
through, because they

546  
00:32:01,730 --> 00:32:04,230  
couldn't stand the sight of us.

547  
00:32:04,230 --> 00:32:06,440  
Were you aware of who they were?

548  
00:32:06,440 --> 00:32:10,170  
Well, I knew that they  
were American soldiers.

549  
00:32:10,170 --> 00:32:11,990  
You could see that?

550  
00:32:11,990 --> 00:32:14,550  
Well, that I was--

551  
00:32:14,550 --> 00:32:15,050  
faintly.

552  
00:32:15,050 --> 00:32:16,100  
Yeah, sure.

553  
00:32:16,100 --> 00:32:17,390  
That much I knew.

554  
00:32:17,390 --> 00:32:20,150  
Did you have any  
sense of elation?

555  
00:32:20,150 --> 00:32:24,860  
The funny thing is I was very

flat at that time, very flat.

556

00:32:24,860 --> 00:32:28,730

My feelings, you know, I was so exhausted, I was near the end.

557

00:32:28,730 --> 00:32:32,690

So that I don't think I felt any sort of elation,

558

00:32:32,690 --> 00:32:37,130

because I was totally drained at that particular point.

559

00:32:37,130 --> 00:32:40,910

And only after a few days, when we got individual attention,

560

00:32:40,910 --> 00:32:47,300

and the American forces brought in the nurses and physicians

561

00:32:47,300 --> 00:32:50,480

and cared for us, and we are moved

562

00:32:50,480 --> 00:32:52,670

to some other better quarters and all that,

563

00:32:52,670 --> 00:32:56,570

and were given medication and were examined

564

00:32:56,570 --> 00:33:00,240

and what have you, then, at that particular point, of course,

565

00:33:00,240 --> 00:33:05,240

I felt that it was unbelievable I survived.

566

00:33:05,240 --> 00:33:09,650

To me, then, then I  
really could appreciate

567  
00:33:09,650 --> 00:33:10,850  
what has actually happened.

568  
00:33:10,850 --> 00:33:13,110  
And then I responded to that.

569  
00:33:13,110 --> 00:33:16,400  
But at that particular  
time of the liberation,

570  
00:33:16,400 --> 00:33:22,230  
I was too drained to respond  
with any joy or elation,

571  
00:33:22,230 --> 00:33:24,630  
because I was too far gone.

572  
00:33:24,630 --> 00:33:26,580  
And so they really  
took care of me.

573  
00:33:26,580 --> 00:33:28,650  
And they gave us  
very little food,

574  
00:33:28,650 --> 00:33:31,950  
which I resented, because  
I couldn't understand that.

575  
00:33:31,950 --> 00:33:37,360  
But they were sophisticated  
enough to understand that--

576  
00:33:37,360 --> 00:33:41,550  
and they apparently had some  
previous cases of that nature--

577  
00:33:41,550 --> 00:33:49,680  
that after years of starvation,  
the body couldn't digest or--

578  
00:33:49,680 --> 00:33:52,890  
just normal quantities of  
food, or just normal food.

579  
00:33:52,890 --> 00:33:54,460  
So they gave us very little.

580  
00:33:54,460 --> 00:33:58,620  
And we couldn't understand it,  
because we still were starving.

581  
00:33:58,620 --> 00:34:01,290  
Until much later, we  
understood that they actually

582  
00:34:01,290 --> 00:34:04,800  
saved our lives by not  
giving us more food.

583  
00:34:04,800 --> 00:34:08,253  
Were the others who were with  
you, were any of them happy?

584  
00:34:08,253 --> 00:34:08,958  
Showing it?

585  
00:34:08,958 --> 00:34:09,750  
Oh, yes, of course.

586  
00:34:09,750 --> 00:34:12,090  
Some of them were in  
much better condition.

587  
00:34:12,090 --> 00:34:14,070  
And they, of course,  
were overjoyed.

588  
00:34:14,070 --> 00:34:18,250  
And they dragged in some SS  
people and killed them and--

589

00:34:18,250 --> 00:34:21,330  
and did things--  
all sorts of things.

590  
00:34:21,330 --> 00:34:25,710  
And these people, of course, had  
a totally different response,

591  
00:34:25,710 --> 00:34:27,239  
because they were also mobile.

592  
00:34:27,239 --> 00:34:28,830  
They're much more mobile than I.

593  
00:34:28,830 --> 00:34:30,630  
At that time, I was immobile.

594  
00:34:30,630 --> 00:34:34,020  
I just could only lie,  
because I couldn't--

595  
00:34:34,020 --> 00:34:37,139  
until the time I got--

596  
00:34:37,139 --> 00:34:43,889  
I got proper care and treatment.

597  
00:34:43,889 --> 00:34:46,590  
And within a very  
short time, I was

598  
00:34:46,590 --> 00:34:51,500  
able to move and walk and  
go about the camp and--

599  
00:34:51,500 --> 00:34:55,560  
and then became interpreter.

600  
00:34:55,560 --> 00:34:58,380  
Because I went to an  
English kindergarten.

601

00:34:58,380 --> 00:35:02,460

And my aunt and my mother were  
totally perfect in English.

602

00:35:02,460 --> 00:35:06,840

And my mother actually even  
translated *Gone With the Wind*

603

00:35:06,840 --> 00:35:07,900

into German.

604

00:35:07,900 --> 00:35:10,950

And so I was surrounded by--

605

00:35:10,950 --> 00:35:14,430

by English, because they  
always talked English together,

606

00:35:14,430 --> 00:35:16,620

my aunt and my mother.

607

00:35:16,620 --> 00:35:19,570

Especially when I was not  
supposed to understand what

608

00:35:19,570 --> 00:35:20,190

they're--

609

00:35:20,190 --> 00:35:21,563

but later on, then I understood.

610

00:35:21,563 --> 00:35:22,980

And then, of course,  
they stopped,

611

00:35:22,980 --> 00:35:24,970

because I could understand.

612

00:35:24,970 --> 00:35:26,580

You were an  
interpreter for whom?

613

00:35:26,580 --> 00:35:28,320  
For the Americans.

614  
00:35:28,320 --> 00:35:31,680  
And Americans, because most  
of the people, the inmates who

615  
00:35:31,680 --> 00:35:35,880  
were liberated, did not  
understand English, of course.

616  
00:35:35,880 --> 00:35:39,930  
And so the people who  
were treated and needed

617  
00:35:39,930 --> 00:35:44,950  
to be dealt with, they had  
to communicate with them.

618  
00:35:44,950 --> 00:35:48,270  
And so they couldn't do it,  
because most of the people

619  
00:35:48,270 --> 00:35:50,920  
didn't speak any English at all.

620  
00:35:50,920 --> 00:35:54,690  
Do you feel that you were almost  
dead the day of liberation?

621  
00:35:54,690 --> 00:35:57,150  
Well, I thought I made  
it perfectly clear.

622  
00:35:57,150 --> 00:36:00,180

623  
00:36:00,180 --> 00:36:00,680  
Yes.

624  
00:36:00,680 --> 00:36:04,820  
I thought that I was  
going to die, yes.

625  
00:36:04,820 --> 00:36:06,800  
I gave myself about 24 hours.

626  
00:36:06,800 --> 00:36:12,040

627  
00:36:12,040 --> 00:36:14,490  
So I stayed in the  
camp for another month,

628  
00:36:14,490 --> 00:36:15,720  
actually, before--

629  
00:36:15,720 --> 00:36:18,150  
many people were  
shipped out very quickly

630  
00:36:18,150 --> 00:36:19,750  
after the liberation.

631  
00:36:19,750 --> 00:36:24,630  
But I was-- they wanted to  
keep me there longer because

632  
00:36:24,630 --> 00:36:29,820  
of my injuries, and also  
because I was useful to them.

633  
00:36:29,820 --> 00:36:33,810  
But primarily because of  
my state, my condition.

634  
00:36:33,810 --> 00:36:39,440  
And so until I was in  
a better shape, then--

635  
00:36:39,440 --> 00:36:42,060  
then we are brought to--

636  
00:36:42,060 --> 00:36:48,720  
in an American truck driven

by American soldiers,

637  
00:36:48,720 --> 00:36:52,320  
we were brought from  
Dachau to Pilsen

638  
00:36:52,320 --> 00:36:55,350  
and left there on our own.

639  
00:36:55,350 --> 00:37:00,120  
And I took a train  
from Pilsen to Prague.

640  
00:37:00,120 --> 00:37:03,660  
And then I wanted  
to go back home,

641  
00:37:03,660 --> 00:37:09,840  
because I understood that  
the apartment which we've had

642  
00:37:09,840 --> 00:37:11,100  
was confiscated.

643  
00:37:11,100 --> 00:37:17,190  
And as I found out, the  
Germans moved in, the Nazis.

644  
00:37:17,190 --> 00:37:19,440  
And so I wanted to go  
back into my family,

645  
00:37:19,440 --> 00:37:22,290  
only to find out that this  
was one of the very, very

646  
00:37:22,290 --> 00:37:27,630  
few houses which were destroyed  
during one of the very few air

647  
00:37:27,630 --> 00:37:28,780  
raids.

648

00:37:28,780 --> 00:37:33,240

So then I had to go back  
to the railway station

649

00:37:33,240 --> 00:37:41,610

and stay overnight at the  
railway station on a bench.

650

00:37:41,610 --> 00:37:45,450

And that, to me, was a disaster,  
because I was looking forward

651

00:37:45,450 --> 00:37:49,800

to move back into the apartment,  
to our apartment, only

652

00:37:49,800 --> 00:37:52,710

to find out that the  
house was destroyed,

653

00:37:52,710 --> 00:37:54,910

completely destroyed.

654

00:37:54,910 --> 00:37:57,630

Which was just an  
unbelievable accident,

655

00:37:57,630 --> 00:38:01,200

because there were very  
few air raids in Prague.

656

00:38:01,200 --> 00:38:05,130

And that house, especially that  
house, of all the other places

657

00:38:05,130 --> 00:38:09,300

to be destroyed, was just  
an unbelievable coincidence.

658

00:38:09,300 --> 00:38:10,020

Bad luck.

659

00:38:10,020 --> 00:38:11,640  
So you were devastated.

660  
00:38:11,640 --> 00:38:13,140  
About that, yes, sure.

661  
00:38:13,140 --> 00:38:15,930  
And then I wasn't sure  
who had survived or not.

662  
00:38:15,930 --> 00:38:18,360  
Did my mother and father and  
all that, because we all,

663  
00:38:18,360 --> 00:38:21,540  
then, had been separated.

664  
00:38:21,540 --> 00:38:23,680  
And when did you  
find out [INAUDIBLE]??

665  
00:38:23,680 --> 00:38:25,470  
Well, my father [INAUDIBLE].

666  
00:38:25,470 --> 00:38:29,340  
I just went to friends and  
distant relatives [INAUDIBLE]..

667  
00:38:29,340 --> 00:38:41,300  
And they said, oh, your father's  
[INAUDIBLE] from friends

668  
00:38:41,300 --> 00:38:46,360  
who stayed until the very last  
moment in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

669  
00:38:46,360 --> 00:38:48,165  
He was gassed in '44.

670  
00:38:48,165 --> 00:38:51,890

671

00:38:51,890 --> 00:38:56,030  
Was there a time when you  
said, now I'm really liberated,

672  
00:38:56,030 --> 00:38:58,220  
I'm really free, it's over?

673  
00:38:58,220 --> 00:39:00,950

674  
00:39:00,950 --> 00:39:03,410  
Well, I think that's a  
really important question,

675  
00:39:03,410 --> 00:39:08,120  
because you're really  
free when you are--

676  
00:39:08,120 --> 00:39:12,650  
stand on your own feet, so to  
speak, and self-sufficient.

677  
00:39:12,650 --> 00:39:14,900  
And it took quite  
a while until I

678  
00:39:14,900 --> 00:39:17,180  
adjusted and became  
self-sufficient, because I

679  
00:39:17,180 --> 00:39:18,230  
was totally dependent.

680  
00:39:18,230 --> 00:39:19,970  
I had no place to stay.

681  
00:39:19,970 --> 00:39:23,900  
I depended on friends  
who gave me shelter.

682  
00:39:23,900 --> 00:39:28,650  
And then I had to get some  
money and work and whatever.

683  
00:39:28,650 --> 00:39:32,780  
And so until that time, of  
course, we had lost everything.

684  
00:39:32,780 --> 00:39:34,924  
We just came just--

685  
00:39:34,924 --> 00:39:36,620  
just in my striped--

686  
00:39:36,620 --> 00:39:39,110  
I came back in my  
striped pajamas.

687  
00:39:39,110 --> 00:39:42,590  
You know, the one which we  
were given back in Dachau.

688  
00:39:42,590 --> 00:39:45,470  
And that's what  
I came back with,

689  
00:39:45,470 --> 00:39:48,940  
and some memorabilia,  
which I took from raiding

690  
00:39:48,940 --> 00:39:53,790  
the SS places, the houses  
in which the SS lived.

691  
00:39:53,790 --> 00:39:55,700  
So some-- but worthless stuff.

692  
00:39:55,700 --> 00:39:59,430  
At that time worthless, but,  
to me, interesting stuff.

693  
00:39:59,430 --> 00:40:01,910  
And so that's all I've had.

694  
00:40:01,910 --> 00:40:06,920

So then we depended on friends  
and people who supported us

695  
00:40:06,920 --> 00:40:10,250  
until we could  
earn our own living

696  
00:40:10,250 --> 00:40:14,390  
and were in a position to  
take care of ourselves.

697  
00:40:14,390 --> 00:40:17,180  
And that took several months.

698  
00:40:17,180 --> 00:40:19,830

699  
00:40:19,830 --> 00:40:22,080  
Do you feel that you  
are liberated now?

700  
00:40:22,080 --> 00:40:24,390  
Do you have that feeling?

701  
00:40:24,390 --> 00:40:26,150  
I think I'm liberated now.

702  
00:40:26,150 --> 00:40:29,840  
I mean, I'm responding  
to conditions, prevalent

703  
00:40:29,840 --> 00:40:32,090  
conditions of the times.

704  
00:40:32,090 --> 00:40:35,430  
But, yes, I'm absolutely  
sure, of course.

705  
00:40:35,430 --> 00:40:38,170  
Oh, yes.

706  
00:40:38,170 --> 00:40:42,280

And I know others are going to be interviewing you soon.

707  
00:40:42,280 --> 00:40:45,790  
I just wanted to ask one or two questions about what the--

708  
00:40:45,790 --> 00:40:48,460

709  
00:40:48,460 --> 00:40:53,920  
going back and interviewing the German officers, what that

710  
00:40:53,920 --> 00:40:57,600  
meant to you psychologically.

711  
00:40:57,600 --> 00:41:07,380  
Well, my motivation to really respond

712  
00:41:07,380 --> 00:41:13,600  
to injustice and unfairness of that magnitude, of course,

713  
00:41:13,600 --> 00:41:14,940  
was totally novel.

714  
00:41:14,940 --> 00:41:20,850  
And I was outraged that this can become part of a reality.

715  
00:41:20,850 --> 00:41:23,790  
That this actually was a reality.

716  
00:41:23,790 --> 00:41:28,860  
And that, to me, I was preoccupied in the camp.

717  
00:41:28,860 --> 00:41:33,180  
And I'd say, how can people do that to other innocent people?

718  
00:41:33,180 --> 00:41:36,690  
And that was a big question.

719  
00:41:36,690 --> 00:41:41,310  
And I needed to find  
out how people--

720  
00:41:41,310 --> 00:41:44,400  
in what sort of position  
people need to be,

721  
00:41:44,400 --> 00:41:48,900  
what sort of state do  
people have to be until--

722  
00:41:48,900 --> 00:41:52,900  
when they do things to  
other people of that nature.

723  
00:41:52,900 --> 00:41:55,950  
And so that was the  
motivation which--

724  
00:41:55,950 --> 00:42:00,240  
which I had in order to  
go back to SS officers

725  
00:42:00,240 --> 00:42:04,620  
and find out what made  
them tick, so to speak.

726  
00:42:04,620 --> 00:42:11,910  
What made them do these things,  
under what conditions, and how

727  
00:42:11,910 --> 00:42:14,010  
they understood what  
they actually did,

728  
00:42:14,010 --> 00:42:17,250  
and to what extent they felt  
accountable, to what extent

729

00:42:17,250 --> 00:42:21,240

they understood the  
consequences of their acts.

730

00:42:21,240 --> 00:42:25,870

And so that was my major reason  
why I went back and said,

731

00:42:25,870 --> 00:42:29,010

I have to find out  
what sort of people

732

00:42:29,010 --> 00:42:32,250

are these people who  
have done what they have.

733

00:42:32,250 --> 00:42:41,140

And to a large extent, I  
have satisfied my curiosity.

734

00:42:41,140 --> 00:42:44,520

But I'm still working on  
it, because obviously this

735

00:42:44,520 --> 00:42:46,680

is a very complex question.

736

00:42:46,680 --> 00:42:50,430

But psychologically, also,  
it was very helpful to me,

737

00:42:50,430 --> 00:42:52,080

because I needed--

738

00:42:52,080 --> 00:42:53,280

I had an urge--

739

00:42:53,280 --> 00:42:56,760

I had a need to  
better understand

740

00:42:56,760 --> 00:43:06,120  
how these things can come  
about, what produces situations

741  
00:43:06,120 --> 00:43:10,380  
in which people  
behave to each other

742  
00:43:10,380 --> 00:43:17,610  
in a way which was so  
destructive and inhumane.

743  
00:43:17,610 --> 00:43:21,250  
And did finding  
or seeking this--

744  
00:43:21,250 --> 00:43:24,190  
this information give  
you any more peace

745  
00:43:24,190 --> 00:43:26,200  
when you were at  
your-- had interviews?

746  
00:43:26,200 --> 00:43:28,920  
I think so, yes, certainly.

747  
00:43:28,920 --> 00:43:34,710  
It certainly did something  
to my hatred, which

748  
00:43:34,710 --> 00:43:37,260  
always existed to begin with.

749  
00:43:37,260 --> 00:43:44,890  
And it appeased me  
in a way, and said,

750  
00:43:44,890 --> 00:43:47,550  
ask general questions  
about human nature

751  
00:43:47,550 --> 00:43:51,330

and under what conditions  
human nature will

752  
00:43:51,330 --> 00:44:01,190  
be responding to  
situations which produce

753  
00:44:01,190 --> 00:44:06,620  
these extreme situations.

754  
00:44:06,620 --> 00:44:08,720  
What did it do to the hatred?

755  
00:44:08,720 --> 00:44:10,430  
You said it did  
something to your hatred.

756  
00:44:10,430 --> 00:44:11,270  
What was that?

757  
00:44:11,270 --> 00:44:16,310  
Well, I think that I just  
simply don't hate anymore.

758  
00:44:16,310 --> 00:44:19,640  
I dislike, but I don't hate.

759  
00:44:19,640 --> 00:44:23,420  
And that certainly--  
and also, I can better

760  
00:44:23,420 --> 00:44:26,060  
understand these people.

761  
00:44:26,060 --> 00:44:31,340  
I have a better understanding  
and a better insight

762  
00:44:31,340 --> 00:44:34,010  
under what  
circumstances people--

763

00:44:34,010 --> 00:44:38,880  
any people-- will behave  
the way they have.

764  
00:44:38,880 --> 00:44:50,010  
And that somehow reduced  
my emotional turmoil.

765  
00:44:50,010 --> 00:44:51,780  
Have you any idea why?

766  
00:44:51,780 --> 00:44:53,790  
Oh, yes, I have written  
books about that.

767  
00:44:53,790 --> 00:44:56,628

768  
00:44:56,628 --> 00:44:57,455  
Could you just--

769  
00:44:57,455 --> 00:44:58,830  
Well, I mean, it's  
very difficult

770  
00:44:58,830 --> 00:45:01,950  
to say that in one  
sentence, you know?

771  
00:45:01,950 --> 00:45:08,700  
I think that we all  
participate in creating

772  
00:45:08,700 --> 00:45:13,650  
situations which are  
either constructive

773  
00:45:13,650 --> 00:45:17,760  
or the other  
extreme, destructive.

774  
00:45:17,760 --> 00:45:21,270  
And if we are not vigilant,

and if we don't understand

775

00:45:21,270 --> 00:45:26,730  
the interdependencies which  
produce the situations, which

776

00:45:26,730 --> 00:45:31,440  
somehow imprison us so that we  
will behave in a way which we

777

00:45:31,440 --> 00:45:35,580  
may not even know  
that we can behave,

778

00:45:35,580 --> 00:45:38,850  
then we are out of control.

779

00:45:38,850 --> 00:45:42,350  
And once I'm threatened  
or feel threatened

780

00:45:42,350 --> 00:45:45,060  
for real or unreal  
reasons to the extent

781

00:45:45,060 --> 00:45:52,950  
that I'll defend myself, or feel  
that I have to defend myself,

782

00:45:52,950 --> 00:45:57,510  
I will primarily protect  
myself at the expense

783

00:45:57,510 --> 00:46:01,435  
of the well-being  
of other people.

784

00:46:01,435 --> 00:46:02,932  
Thank you very much.

785

00:46:02,932 --> 00:46:13,411

786  
00:46:13,411 --> 00:46:14,409  
[INAUDIBLE]

787  
00:46:14,409 --> 00:46:26,420

788  
00:46:26,420 --> 00:46:27,500  
OK.

789  
00:46:27,500 --> 00:46:29,150  
OK.

790  
00:46:29,150 --> 00:46:31,790  
We're here on the same day,  
continuing the interview

791  
00:46:31,790 --> 00:46:34,040  
with John Steiner.

792  
00:46:34,040 --> 00:46:37,160  
His colleague, Carol Hurwitz,  
is here, who may also

793  
00:46:37,160 --> 00:46:38,270  
ask questions later on.

794  
00:46:38,270 --> 00:46:39,710  
John Grant is our producer.

795  
00:46:39,710 --> 00:46:42,470  
And I'm Sandra Bendayan.

796  
00:46:42,470 --> 00:46:44,930  
I'm going to continue a little  
bit asking you just a few

797  
00:46:44,930 --> 00:46:49,040  
more questions related to  
liberation, because I remember,

798  
00:46:49,040 --> 00:46:57,920

in the past, you talking about  
a kind of loss of joy in living.

799  
00:46:57,920 --> 00:47:00,410  
Mm-hmm.

800  
00:47:00,410 --> 00:47:03,710  
That you felt your  
Holocaust years robbed you.

801  
00:47:03,710 --> 00:47:05,177  
Mm-hmm.

802  
00:47:05,177 --> 00:47:07,260  
I was wondering if you  
could talk about this more.

803  
00:47:07,260 --> 00:47:12,260  
Yes, I think that's a very  
important topic actually.

804  
00:47:12,260 --> 00:47:15,530  
Now, one has to  
remember that people

805  
00:47:15,530 --> 00:47:21,260  
were taken to camps  
during different stages

806  
00:47:21,260 --> 00:47:22,950  
of their lives.

807  
00:47:22,950 --> 00:47:29,000  
And so we have about three--

808  
00:47:29,000 --> 00:47:32,480  
roughly three, four  
generations-- three, four

809  
00:47:32,480 --> 00:47:37,830  
generations, taken to the camps.

810

00:47:37,830 --> 00:47:51,080  
And I was one of the  
people who was in an age

811  
00:47:51,080 --> 00:47:57,360  
where they were not killed  
in destruction camps,

812  
00:47:57,360 --> 00:48:00,510  
because we were still  
deemed to be useful.

813  
00:48:00,510 --> 00:48:02,950  
People who were a few  
years younger than I

814  
00:48:02,950 --> 00:48:05,970  
were gassed with their mothers.

815  
00:48:05,970 --> 00:48:08,490  
So that, I think, is a  
very important thing.

816  
00:48:08,490 --> 00:48:12,990  
Also, in terms of survival,  
it was very important--

817  
00:48:12,990 --> 00:48:15,650

818  
00:48:15,650 --> 00:48:18,530  
the age was very important  
by virtue of the fact

819  
00:48:18,530 --> 00:48:19,580  
that we were--

820  
00:48:19,580 --> 00:48:24,920  
the young ones were more  
resilient vis-À-vis all

821  
00:48:24,920 --> 00:48:28,700  
the extreme pressures

which we encountered.

822

00:48:28,700 --> 00:48:38,150  
And where survival was directly  
linked with being alert.

823

00:48:38,150 --> 00:48:40,790  
And if you were not  
alert, and young people

824

00:48:40,790 --> 00:48:45,260  
are more alert than  
the older generations,

825

00:48:45,260 --> 00:48:50,100  
we were able to survive.

826

00:48:50,100 --> 00:48:52,520  
So there was a positive aspect.

827

00:48:52,520 --> 00:48:56,450  
Because when people were older,  
they-- when they were 30, 40,

828

00:48:56,450 --> 00:48:58,340  
they were already  
very old people.

829

00:48:58,340 --> 00:49:02,120  
In a concentration camp,  
people aged much more quickly.

830

00:49:02,120 --> 00:49:07,492  
So that people over 40 were like  
people over 60 and 70 today.

831

00:49:07,492 --> 00:49:08,450  
That's how they looked.

832

00:49:08,450 --> 00:49:12,630  
They just simply  
deteriorated very rapidly.

833

00:49:12,630 --> 00:49:18,320

So being young was,  
in the camp, an asset.

834

00:49:18,320 --> 00:49:24,140

However, after the liberation,  
having lost the entire family,

835

00:49:24,140 --> 00:49:26,720

namely those who were  
actually older than you

836

00:49:26,720 --> 00:49:31,370

and were less resilient and  
had lesser chance of survival,

837

00:49:31,370 --> 00:49:36,680

meant that we were deprived  
of a support system, which

838

00:49:36,680 --> 00:49:40,100

at that time, in our  
psycho-emotional development,

839

00:49:40,100 --> 00:49:43,110

we still very much needed.

840

00:49:43,110 --> 00:49:46,280

And because of that  
loss, and because there

841

00:49:46,280 --> 00:49:49,790

was no one else who would take  
their place in most cases--

842

00:49:49,790 --> 00:49:52,040

exceptions to the  
rule, of course--

843

00:49:52,040 --> 00:49:54,110

but in my case, I  
don't think there

844

00:49:54,110 --> 00:49:56,630

was anyone else  
who could possibly

845

00:49:56,630 --> 00:50:02,450

take the place of  
the lost immediate,

846

00:50:02,450 --> 00:50:05,510

as well the extended, family.

847

00:50:05,510 --> 00:50:07,520

I felt it very  
acutely, and still

848

00:50:07,520 --> 00:50:09,320

feel it to the present day.

849

00:50:09,320 --> 00:50:13,770

And I probably will feel it  
until the very day I die,

850

00:50:13,770 --> 00:50:17,960

especially because some  
of us are not lucky to--

851

00:50:17,960 --> 00:50:21,710

enough to find someone  
who would fill the void.

852

00:50:21,710 --> 00:50:22,880

All right.

853

00:50:22,880 --> 00:50:25,700

So because of that  
loss, I think--

854

00:50:25,700 --> 00:50:27,530

and because of this--

855

00:50:27,530 --> 00:50:36,800

the pain and the lack of

psycho-emotional sustenance,

856

00:50:36,800 --> 00:50:42,200

I think much of the joy  
which other people experience

857

00:50:42,200 --> 00:50:44,030

some of us have lost.

858

00:50:44,030 --> 00:50:46,910

And I won't say  
that I've lost it.

859

00:50:46,910 --> 00:50:50,690

But I think it has been--  
it has become diminished.

860

00:50:50,690 --> 00:50:59,720

It's not as strong as it would  
be under normal circumstances.

861

00:50:59,720 --> 00:51:00,920

That's my finding.

862

00:51:00,920 --> 00:51:05,300

And I'm speaking for  
myself and those people

863

00:51:05,300 --> 00:51:08,390

I was in a position to observe.

864

00:51:08,390 --> 00:51:09,420

Does that--

865

00:51:09,420 --> 00:51:10,550

Yes.

866

00:51:10,550 --> 00:51:17,480

Did you feel this diminishment  
right after you were freed?

867

00:51:17,480 --> 00:51:18,860

Or has it gradually diminished?

868

00:51:18,860 --> 00:51:21,540

Well, that's again, a  
very important question.

869

00:51:21,540 --> 00:51:32,190

I think after the liberation,  
I had tremendous hopes.

870

00:51:32,190 --> 00:51:34,320

I think I was  
inspired or whatever

871

00:51:34,320 --> 00:51:36,610

happened-- what had happened.

872

00:51:36,610 --> 00:51:39,660

I was still very optimistic.

873

00:51:39,660 --> 00:51:47,900

And the less my  
expectations were satisfied,

874

00:51:47,900 --> 00:51:51,950

the more I've lost my optimism.

875

00:51:51,950 --> 00:51:58,880

So that finally, when I  
wind up in the age I am now,

876

00:51:58,880 --> 00:52:02,120

I've seen what do I have to look  
forward to and what I have lost

877

00:52:02,120 --> 00:52:03,770

and what I have gained.

878

00:52:03,770 --> 00:52:05,840

And I would say that  
I still have lost

879

00:52:05,840 --> 00:52:07,670  
much more than I've gained.

880  
00:52:07,670 --> 00:52:14,940  
Because life by itself, without  
affection, love, and family,

881  
00:52:14,940 --> 00:52:17,370  
is very barren.

882  
00:52:17,370 --> 00:52:21,430  
And that's exactly what  
I-- what I experience,

883  
00:52:21,430 --> 00:52:25,110  
especially those of us  
who were not lucky enough

884  
00:52:25,110 --> 00:52:32,520  
to find or form a substitute  
family, which as I said before,

885  
00:52:32,520 --> 00:52:34,500  
filling the gap which  
has been created

886  
00:52:34,500 --> 00:52:38,010  
by the loss of the family.

887  
00:52:38,010 --> 00:52:40,920  
Now, for older people,  
it's different.

888  
00:52:40,920 --> 00:52:42,870  
And that's why I say,  
it's very important

889  
00:52:42,870 --> 00:52:48,630  
to consider the age  
of the person who

890  
00:52:48,630 --> 00:52:50,400  
was taken to the camp.

891  
00:52:50,400 --> 00:52:52,920  
What was their age,  
and in what state,

892  
00:52:52,920 --> 00:52:57,750  
and what were the circumstances  
in the family and all that.

893  
00:52:57,750 --> 00:53:01,270  
So some other people who  
were older, of course,

894  
00:53:01,270 --> 00:53:02,990  
were more  
self-sufficient already.

895  
00:53:02,990 --> 00:53:06,150  
They already had cut  
the umbilical cord.

896  
00:53:06,150 --> 00:53:06,958  
I had not.

897  
00:53:06,958 --> 00:53:08,250  
There's no question about that.

898  
00:53:08,250 --> 00:53:11,040

899  
00:53:11,040 --> 00:53:14,250  
So you're talking a lot about  
the loss of your mother,

900  
00:53:14,250 --> 00:53:15,790  
the murder of your mother.

901  
00:53:15,790 --> 00:53:17,740  
Well, certainly, but  
not just the mother.

902  
00:53:17,740 --> 00:53:20,370

It just so happened that  
mother and I were very close.

903

00:53:20,370 --> 00:53:25,020

And she was just, to me, a very  
ideal mother in anyone's book.

904

00:53:25,020 --> 00:53:27,600

And she was a very  
unusual person.

905

00:53:27,600 --> 00:53:30,330

And I had the privilege to  
have a mother like that,

906

00:53:30,330 --> 00:53:32,820

because not many  
people have the luck

907

00:53:32,820 --> 00:53:34,630

to have a mother like that.

908

00:53:34,630 --> 00:53:37,695

So at that time,  
when I still had her,

909

00:53:37,695 --> 00:53:39,000

I appreciated it already.

910

00:53:39,000 --> 00:53:42,270

And I was very clear  
about what I had.

911

00:53:42,270 --> 00:53:44,670

I was very mindful  
of the fact that I

912

00:53:44,670 --> 00:53:46,230

had a very unusual mother.

913

00:53:46,230 --> 00:53:49,920

And I consciously appreciated,  
even though I was very young,

914  
00:53:49,920 --> 00:53:52,800  
where most kids,  
nowadays, are just not

915  
00:53:52,800 --> 00:53:56,580  
conscious of the fact  
whom they have as parents,

916  
00:53:56,580 --> 00:53:58,170  
unless they are bad parents.

917  
00:53:58,170 --> 00:54:01,590  
If they are good, they  
usually just simply accept it.

918  
00:54:01,590 --> 00:54:05,050

919  
00:54:05,050 --> 00:54:06,930  
Where were we?

920  
00:54:06,930 --> 00:54:08,550  
Talking about the  
loss of your mother.

921  
00:54:08,550 --> 00:54:10,620  
Yeah, well, so, yes.

922  
00:54:10,620 --> 00:54:14,610  
My mother played an especially  
important role in my life,

923  
00:54:14,610 --> 00:54:15,898  
because we very close.

924  
00:54:15,898 --> 00:54:17,190  
I mean, we didn't have to talk.

925  
00:54:17,190 --> 00:54:21,330  
We understood already  
the thoughts we had.

926  
00:54:21,330 --> 00:54:23,010  
And we just looked  
at each other and we

927  
00:54:23,010 --> 00:54:24,420  
knew what we are thinking.

928  
00:54:24,420 --> 00:54:26,170  
So we were especially close.

929  
00:54:26,170 --> 00:54:29,040  
So that, of course,  
was the greatest loss.

930  
00:54:29,040 --> 00:54:31,510  
But it just so happened that  
the extended family, also,

931  
00:54:31,510 --> 00:54:34,620  
were very unusual people,  
and we were all very close--

932  
00:54:34,620 --> 00:54:40,380  
very civilized,  
cultured, warmhearted,

933  
00:54:40,380 --> 00:54:44,550  
compassionate  
individuals, who were very

934  
00:54:44,550 --> 00:54:47,350  
humane in whatever they did.

935  
00:54:47,350 --> 00:54:53,430  
And so their loss  
exacerbates the loss

936  
00:54:53,430 --> 00:54:58,260  
of my mother in many ways.

937  
00:54:58,260 --> 00:55:01,650

And the only person who  
survived was my father.

938  
00:55:01,650 --> 00:55:03,450

And we were very  
close in the camp.

939  
00:55:03,450 --> 00:55:06,900

But before the camp  
and after the camp,

940  
00:55:06,900 --> 00:55:08,890

we were not close at all.

941  
00:55:08,890 --> 00:55:15,060

We are not really on a very  
similar wavelength in most

942  
00:55:15,060 --> 00:55:18,285

of the things and didn't--

943  
00:55:18,285 --> 00:55:21,400

didn't understand  
each other too well.

944  
00:55:21,400 --> 00:55:23,820

And then I had--

945  
00:55:23,820 --> 00:55:28,350

then my aunt, my father's  
sister, survived.

946  
00:55:28,350 --> 00:55:29,400

And we were very close.

947  
00:55:29,400 --> 00:55:31,260

And she was a fabulous person.

948  
00:55:31,260 --> 00:55:34,500

And she-- I tried to take  
her out of Czechoslovakia,

949

00:55:34,500 --> 00:55:36,060  
but she wouldn't go.

950  
00:55:36,060 --> 00:55:38,700  
And she said she wanted  
to stay in Prague,

951  
00:55:38,700 --> 00:55:42,030  
although the circumstances  
under which she had to live

952  
00:55:42,030 --> 00:55:47,658  
were exceedingly  
humiliating and--

953  
00:55:47,658 --> 00:55:57,030  
and meager in terms of  
socioeconomic lifestyle

954  
00:55:57,030 --> 00:55:59,080  
and what have you.

955  
00:55:59,080 --> 00:56:01,230  
So we were very close.

956  
00:56:01,230 --> 00:56:03,390  
She was also a very  
unusual person,

957  
00:56:03,390 --> 00:56:06,390  
and we're very lucky  
that she survived.

958  
00:56:06,390 --> 00:56:08,700  
Because she stayed in  
Theresienstadt because she

959  
00:56:08,700 --> 00:56:16,260  
was given a job in some  
sort of a war industry

960  
00:56:16,260 --> 00:56:17,370  
which she worked.

961  
00:56:17,370 --> 00:56:19,830  
And these people were--

962  
00:56:19,830 --> 00:56:23,820  
these people were  
protected from being

963  
00:56:23,820 --> 00:56:27,000  
deported to destruction camps.

964  
00:56:27,000 --> 00:56:31,110  
So she stayed in Theresienstadt  
until the time of liberation.

965  
00:56:31,110 --> 00:56:33,990  
And that's how she survived.

966  
00:56:33,990 --> 00:56:36,980  
So she was one member  
of your extended family

967  
00:56:36,980 --> 00:56:38,180  
that did survive.

968  
00:56:38,180 --> 00:56:40,460  
That's right.

969  
00:56:40,460 --> 00:56:42,170  
What experience did you have--

970  
00:56:42,170 --> 00:56:43,760  
And that's it, because  
no one else is.

971  
00:56:43,760 --> 00:56:46,390

972  
00:56:46,390 --> 00:56:50,510  
I was thinking about  
what the reaction was

973

00:56:50,510 --> 00:56:52,360

when you found that  
you and your father

974

00:56:52,360 --> 00:56:56,530

were no longer close  
after liberation.

975

00:56:56,530 --> 00:57:00,730

Well, my father somehow  
projected his notions

976

00:57:00,730 --> 00:57:03,520

as to who I am  
and what he wanted

977

00:57:03,520 --> 00:57:08,360

me to be in a way which  
didn't fit me whatsoever.

978

00:57:08,360 --> 00:57:11,450

And he saw me in a light  
which I, first of all,

979

00:57:11,450 --> 00:57:13,480

didn't feel that  
I should be seen,

980

00:57:13,480 --> 00:57:17,860

because I didn't identify  
with what he saw.

981

00:57:17,860 --> 00:57:21,940

And I don't think he  
really knew me too well.

982

00:57:21,940 --> 00:57:28,120

I don't think he had the talent  
to really understand people

983

00:57:28,120 --> 00:57:29,620

too well.

984

00:57:29,620 --> 00:57:32,650

I don't think he went  
into all the trouble

985

00:57:32,650 --> 00:57:35,110

or had the capability  
to really understand

986

00:57:35,110 --> 00:57:38,270

people in greater depth.

987

00:57:38,270 --> 00:57:39,820

So I don't think I  
was an exception.

988

00:57:39,820 --> 00:57:42,460

But then he  
projected pretty much

989

00:57:42,460 --> 00:57:46,060

what he wanted me to become  
and would want it to--

990

00:57:46,060 --> 00:57:49,750

what he wanted me to be in  
a way which didn't fit me

991

00:57:49,750 --> 00:57:52,480

at all as a personality,  
as far as my talent's

992

00:57:52,480 --> 00:57:54,790

concerned, and all that.

993

00:57:54,790 --> 00:57:59,530

So that we still, I would  
say, loved each other.

994

00:57:59,530 --> 00:58:01,580

I don't think there's  
any question about that.

995

00:58:01,580 --> 00:58:04,120  
And there is no question  
that he meant well.

996  
00:58:04,120 --> 00:58:06,880  
But at times, he simply  
couldn't help himself

997  
00:58:06,880 --> 00:58:09,010  
and behaved in a way  
which didn't help

998  
00:58:09,010 --> 00:58:11,150  
our relationship whatsoever.

999  
00:58:11,150 --> 00:58:14,240  
And estranged me from him.

1000  
00:58:14,240 --> 00:58:16,600  
And when I succeeded  
in so many things

1001  
00:58:16,600 --> 00:58:19,540  
which he didn't expect  
me to succeed in,

1002  
00:58:19,540 --> 00:58:21,490  
because he wanted  
me to be in business

1003  
00:58:21,490 --> 00:58:24,130  
and all sorts of things  
for which I didn't have

1004  
00:58:24,130 --> 00:58:26,770  
any interest whatsoever,  
and I don't think any talent

1005  
00:58:26,770 --> 00:58:30,490  
to be quite clear  
about that, and when

1006  
00:58:30,490 --> 00:58:33,380

I succeeded in my  
academic career,

1007  
00:58:33,380 --> 00:58:37,060  
he just bragged to all sorts of  
people about what I've achieved

1008  
00:58:37,060 --> 00:58:39,130  
and what sort of a son he's got.

1009  
00:58:39,130 --> 00:58:42,640  
But when we got together,  
he never bragged to me

1010  
00:58:42,640 --> 00:58:44,920  
and say, hey, you know,  
I'm really proud of you.

1011  
00:58:44,920 --> 00:58:47,590  
He gave me some presents  
when-- for example, I

1012  
00:58:47,590 --> 00:58:52,270  
completed my doctorate,  
he gave me some money.

1013  
00:58:52,270 --> 00:58:54,640  
But he never said, hey,  
I'm really proud of you.

1014  
00:58:54,640 --> 00:58:57,760  
I'm really happy about  
your accomplishment.

1015  
00:58:57,760 --> 00:59:00,410  
He didn't-- he never,  
ever said that.

1016  
00:59:00,410 --> 00:59:02,950  
Did you expect that  
your relationship would

1017  
00:59:02,950 --> 00:59:04,690

continue close, as it had in--

1018  
00:59:04,690 --> 00:59:06,280  
Well, I hoped, you see?

1019  
00:59:06,280 --> 00:59:06,820  
I hoped.

1020  
00:59:06,820 --> 00:59:08,090  
But we needed each other.

1021  
00:59:08,090 --> 00:59:09,520  
And somehow the times--

1022  
00:59:09,520 --> 00:59:12,610  
and that's very  
interesting, the situation

1023  
00:59:12,610 --> 00:59:13,780  
brought us very close.

1024  
00:59:13,780 --> 00:59:15,790  
And we were really on  
the same wavelength.

1025  
00:59:15,790 --> 00:59:18,520  
I mean, we had tremendous love  
for each other, very supportive

1026  
00:59:18,520 --> 00:59:21,460  
of each other, and very  
kind to each other.

1027  
00:59:21,460 --> 00:59:23,680  
And that changed  
abruptly-- or that

1028  
00:59:23,680 --> 00:59:27,460  
was very different before  
the camp and very different

1029  
00:59:27,460 --> 00:59:30,840

after the camp experience.

1030  
00:59:30,840 --> 00:59:33,310  
And I hoped that it would  
continue, yes, of course.

1031  
00:59:33,310 --> 00:59:34,295  
And but it didn't.

1032  
00:59:34,295 --> 00:59:36,280  
It didn't.

1033  
00:59:36,280 --> 00:59:40,270  
So until the very last time,  
we were not close at all,

1034  
00:59:40,270 --> 00:59:43,160  
because we were in conflict  
with each other for most

1035  
00:59:43,160 --> 00:59:45,100  
of the time.

1036  
00:59:45,100 --> 00:59:48,680  
What about your physical  
health in relation to your

1037  
00:59:48,680 --> 00:59:49,180  
[INAUDIBLE]?

1038  
00:59:49,180 --> 00:59:54,100  
Well, my physical health is  
quite interesting actually.

1039  
00:59:54,100 --> 00:59:56,110  
Because after the  
liberation-- and that

1040  
00:59:56,110 --> 00:59:58,510  
is something which  
needs to be recognized,

1041

00:59:58,510 --> 01:00:01,150  
and I don't know to  
what extent it has

1042  
01:00:01,150 --> 01:00:03,400  
been talked about very much.

1043  
01:00:03,400 --> 01:00:10,600  
After the liberation,  
the American forces

1044  
01:00:10,600 --> 01:00:15,550  
brought in physicians  
into Dachau,

1045  
01:00:15,550 --> 01:00:18,670  
brought in nurses with  
long, red fingernails,

1046  
01:00:18,670 --> 01:00:20,810  
which I saw at that time,  
for the first time, which

1047  
01:00:20,810 --> 01:00:21,700  
was very interesting.

1048  
01:00:21,700 --> 01:00:26,770  
Very, very kind of paradoxical  
in that particular situation.

1049  
01:00:26,770 --> 01:00:29,440  
Didn't fit at all.

1050  
01:00:29,440 --> 01:00:31,030  
But they really took X-rays.

1051  
01:00:31,030 --> 01:00:34,300  
They cared for us,  
gave us medication.

1052  
01:00:34,300 --> 01:00:37,190  
And they had problems  
in communicating,

1053  
01:00:37,190 --> 01:00:40,750  
simply because most of the  
inmates, as I said before,

1054  
01:00:40,750 --> 01:00:41,890  
didn't speak any English.

1055  
01:00:41,890 --> 01:00:45,922  
So I became one--

1056  
01:00:45,922 --> 01:00:52,120  
the one major interpreter  
at that particular point.

1057  
01:00:52,120 --> 01:00:58,300  
And was, therefore, able to  
help people who were actually

1058  
01:00:58,300 --> 01:01:03,100  
in a stage of dying  
to communicate

1059  
01:01:03,100 --> 01:01:07,570  
some of their problems they've  
had to their physicians.

1060  
01:01:07,570 --> 01:01:11,740  
And that may have made  
all the difference.

1061  
01:01:11,740 --> 01:01:14,830  
And one of my very  
close friends,

1062  
01:01:14,830 --> 01:01:20,380  
who unfortunately is  
living in the East Coast,

1063  
01:01:20,380 --> 01:01:21,970  
I saved his life that way.

1064

01:01:21,970 --> 01:01:26,191  
And he recognized-- gave  
me recognition for it.

1065  
01:01:26,191 --> 01:01:29,810  
A Slovak-- a Slovak--

1066  
01:01:29,810 --> 01:01:32,560  
a young Slovak Jew.

1067  
01:01:32,560 --> 01:01:37,570  
And so I was very  
glad that I could

1068  
01:01:37,570 --> 01:01:41,410  
do something constructive, even  
though I, myself, was still

1069  
01:01:41,410 --> 01:01:43,390  
very hurting.

1070  
01:01:43,390 --> 01:01:51,350  
And so they really took  
very, very good care of us.

1071  
01:01:51,350 --> 01:01:54,460  
And during that particular  
time, when they took X-rays,

1072  
01:01:54,460 --> 01:01:57,110  
they found out that pleurisy--

1073  
01:01:57,110 --> 01:01:59,110  
I had pneumonia.

1074  
01:01:59,110 --> 01:02:01,300  
And during that time  
in Auschwitz-Birkenau,

1075  
01:02:01,300 --> 01:02:07,790  
apparently when I've had this,  
I developed active tuberculosis.

1076

01:02:07,790 --> 01:02:08,990

And they found that out.

1077

01:02:08,990 --> 01:02:16,690

And so then when they found out  
that I had active tuberculosis

1078

01:02:16,690 --> 01:02:23,290

by way of X-rays, they  
put a red tape on my bed.

1079

01:02:23,290 --> 01:02:27,920

And from that particular moment,  
they are much more careful.

1080

01:02:27,920 --> 01:02:30,790

And I was not as frequently  
consulted any more,

1081

01:02:30,790 --> 01:02:34,160

because they felt  
I was contagious.

1082

01:02:34,160 --> 01:02:37,600

Which I was not, because  
it was not an open one.

1083

01:02:37,600 --> 01:02:40,180

It was an active one,  
but not an open one,

1084

01:02:40,180 --> 01:02:41,650

as it turned out later on.

1085

01:02:41,650 --> 01:02:44,160

And that healed  
up and everything.

1086

01:02:44,160 --> 01:02:49,600

But I was in a sanitarium after  
the war in Bohemia because

1087

01:02:49,600 --> 01:02:52,750  
of the active tuberculosis.

1088  
01:02:52,750 --> 01:02:56,290  
And it never became positive.

1089  
01:02:56,290 --> 01:02:59,200  
I never became positive,  
but I was active.

1090  
01:02:59,200 --> 01:03:03,070  
And then it healed up, and I  
haven't had any problems since.

1091  
01:03:03,070 --> 01:03:05,380  
But even in Australia,  
I was under control

1092  
01:03:05,380 --> 01:03:06,530  
when I was in Australia.

1093  
01:03:06,530 --> 01:03:11,930  
So and as far as my frostbite  
is concerned, of course,

1094  
01:03:11,930 --> 01:03:16,870  
all these things were  
being treated properly.

1095  
01:03:16,870 --> 01:03:23,080  
And therefore, strangely enough,  
in spite of all the-- in spite

1096  
01:03:23,080 --> 01:03:29,020  
of all the deprivation which I  
had suffered for three years,

1097  
01:03:29,020 --> 01:03:31,420  
things healed up very fast--

1098  
01:03:31,420 --> 01:03:32,570  
very fast.

1099

01:03:32,570 --> 01:03:34,690

So just the loss of  
your toes was the only

1100

01:03:34,690 --> 01:03:35,940

permanent physical damage?

1101

01:03:35,940 --> 01:03:37,330

That's right.

1102

01:03:37,330 --> 01:03:39,272

As far as I can tell.

1103

01:03:39,272 --> 01:03:40,105

I mean, it was all--

1104

01:03:40,105 --> 01:03:43,730

I've had some other  
things, what I don't want--

1105

01:03:43,730 --> 01:03:46,090

some sort of mental  
things which--

1106

01:03:46,090 --> 01:03:48,790

[CHUCKLES]

1107

01:03:48,790 --> 01:03:56,130

Did you feel that you suffered  
any emotional, spiritual

1108

01:03:56,130 --> 01:03:56,630

damage?

1109

01:03:56,630 --> 01:03:58,150

Not at the time, no.

1110

01:03:58,150 --> 01:03:59,650

No, no, not at that time at all.

1111

01:03:59,650 --> 01:04:01,300

No.

1112  
01:04:01,300 --> 01:04:02,800  
Because I functioned very well.

1113  
01:04:02,800 --> 01:04:04,000  
Now, looking back?

1114  
01:04:04,000 --> 01:04:07,510  
Well, I think it's not  
mental, but psycho-emotional.

1115  
01:04:07,510 --> 01:04:11,380  
I think I've suffered, because  
of the psycho-emotional

1116  
01:04:11,380 --> 01:04:17,530  
deprivation related to the loss  
of family, I think I'm damaged.

1117  
01:04:17,530 --> 01:04:19,141  
No question about that.

1118  
01:04:19,141 --> 01:04:20,083  
High blood pressure?

1119  
01:04:20,083 --> 01:04:22,910

1120  
01:04:22,910 --> 01:04:25,420  
Well, Carol is also  
mentioning high blood pressure

1121  
01:04:25,420 --> 01:04:26,112  
as a possible--

1122  
01:04:26,112 --> 01:04:27,070  
Well, I don't think so.

1123  
01:04:27,070 --> 01:04:28,570  
I mean, I don't think so.

1124

01:04:28,570 --> 01:04:31,470

Because I don't think that  
is necessarily-- it could be,

1125

01:04:31,470 --> 01:04:34,590

but I don't have any  
indication that this-- there

1126

01:04:34,590 --> 01:04:36,431

would be a relationship.

1127

01:04:36,431 --> 01:04:38,070

Could be, but, I  
mean, who knows?

1128

01:04:38,070 --> 01:04:40,390

There were many other things--

1129

01:04:40,390 --> 01:04:42,000

many other things  
which happened,

1130

01:04:42,000 --> 01:04:46,530

which had nothing to do  
with a concentration camp.

1131

01:04:46,530 --> 01:04:49,320

You know, a bad marriage  
and all this sort of thing.

1132

01:04:49,320 --> 01:04:53,120

And that has--

1133

01:04:53,120 --> 01:04:56,790

I don't think that that is  
directly related to that.

1134

01:04:56,790 --> 01:04:59,070

And I think the bad  
marriage has more

1135

01:04:59,070 --> 01:05:02,370

to do with the  
immediate consequences

1136  
01:05:02,370 --> 01:05:05,352  
than the concentration camp.

1137  
01:05:05,352 --> 01:05:06,810  
When you were in  
the camps, did you

1138  
01:05:06,810 --> 01:05:10,440  
think that the liberation  
would be the total solution

1139  
01:05:10,440 --> 01:05:11,300  
to your problems?

1140  
01:05:11,300 --> 01:05:14,800

1141  
01:05:14,800 --> 01:05:19,090  
Well, yes, because,  
you see, seeing

1142  
01:05:19,090 --> 01:05:23,590  
from that particular  
predicament in the camps,

1143  
01:05:23,590 --> 01:05:28,360  
liberation was a true  
liberation from--

1144  
01:05:28,360 --> 01:05:34,300  
from excruciating  
suffering, hell.

1145  
01:05:34,300 --> 01:05:37,420  
And therefore-- and it's  
particularly interesting

1146  
01:05:37,420 --> 01:05:40,000  
in connection with  
your question--

1147  
01:05:40,000 --> 01:05:42,920  
that very frequently  
in the camp,

1148  
01:05:42,920 --> 01:05:48,940  
I said how nice it would be  
to be a beggar in the street

1149  
01:05:48,940 --> 01:05:52,270  
rather than an inmate  
in a concentration camp.

1150  
01:05:52,270 --> 01:05:58,360  
Because in my mind, at  
that particular situation

1151  
01:05:58,360 --> 01:06:03,520  
and looking into relatively  
normal civilian life,

1152  
01:06:03,520 --> 01:06:07,840  
for me to be a beggar would  
have been a deliverance.

1153  
01:06:07,840 --> 01:06:11,230  
And these are the  
times I looked at it,

1154  
01:06:11,230 --> 01:06:16,990  
because I had a lot to do with  
beggars back at home, because I

1155  
01:06:16,990 --> 01:06:21,220  
felt very strong compassion  
for people who were deprived

1156  
01:06:21,220 --> 01:06:25,840  
and lived a different type of  
life ever since I can remember.

1157  
01:06:25,840 --> 01:06:27,490  
And it hurt me.

1158  
01:06:27,490 --> 01:06:30,040  
It pained me and--

1159  
01:06:30,040 --> 01:06:33,580  
to see them in this  
sort of a situation,

1160  
01:06:33,580 --> 01:06:35,980  
in this deprived state.

1161  
01:06:35,980 --> 01:06:41,980  
And so I was very clear  
in terms of how beggars

1162  
01:06:41,980 --> 01:06:46,420  
lived in the streets or what--

1163  
01:06:46,420 --> 01:06:48,760  
what deprivation they suffered.

1164  
01:06:48,760 --> 01:06:51,350  
So that I was realistic  
about it and said,

1165  
01:06:51,350 --> 01:06:52,990  
hey, that would  
have been absolute

1166  
01:06:52,990 --> 01:06:56,710  
El Dorado to be a beggar  
instead of being in this.

1167  
01:06:56,710 --> 01:06:58,550  
It would be terrific.

1168  
01:06:58,550 --> 01:07:00,970  
So, yes, to me, it was--

1169  
01:07:00,970 --> 01:07:07,960  
when I came out, I felt  
very, very, very, very much

1170  
01:07:07,960 --> 01:07:09,640  
liberated and--

1171  
01:07:09,640 --> 01:07:18,460  
and satisfied, just like a  
tremendous burden is taking--

1172  
01:07:18,460 --> 01:07:23,470  
is being taken away  
from your shoulders.

1173  
01:07:23,470 --> 01:07:29,110  
Millstone around your  
neck is being removed.

1174  
01:07:29,110 --> 01:07:36,580  
And that, to me, was the first  
response after the liberation.

1175  
01:07:36,580 --> 01:07:41,740  
Later on, of course,  
life became a struggle.

1176  
01:07:41,740 --> 01:07:46,060  
And in order to achieve  
what I wanted to achieve,

1177  
01:07:46,060 --> 01:07:50,350  
the goals I set myself with the  
help of the ambitions my mother

1178  
01:07:50,350 --> 01:07:52,270  
had for me-- that's  
an important thing,

1179  
01:07:52,270 --> 01:07:54,010  
in contrast to my father--

1180  
01:07:54,010 --> 01:07:56,580

1181

01:07:56,580 --> 01:07:59,520  
I had to struggle in order  
to achieve these things,

1182  
01:07:59,520 --> 01:08:01,410  
without much help.

1183  
01:08:01,410 --> 01:08:08,610  
Only in terms of what I could  
attain through very hard work

1184  
01:08:08,610 --> 01:08:13,170  
and in some--

1185  
01:08:13,170 --> 01:08:23,620  
some part of what  
has been given to me

1186  
01:08:23,620 --> 01:08:27,399  
by way of talent and whatever.

1187  
01:08:27,399 --> 01:08:30,640  
And so I struggled.

1188  
01:08:30,640 --> 01:08:34,100  
The times I have not struggled  
and really enjoyed life--

1189  
01:08:34,100 --> 01:08:36,910  
and we're talking  
about enjoyment--

1190  
01:08:36,910 --> 01:08:44,365  
have been very fleeting moments,  
and they've never endured.

1191  
01:08:44,365 --> 01:08:47,470

1192  
01:08:47,470 --> 01:08:52,630  
Did you have any expectations  
of how the world would greet you

1193

01:08:52,630 --> 01:08:53,260  
as a survivor?

1194

01:08:53,260 --> 01:08:55,420  
Yes, yeah.

1195

01:08:55,420 --> 01:08:59,620  
That's, again, a very  
meaningful question.

1196

01:08:59,620 --> 01:09:03,550  
Yes, I thought  
that we would be--

1197

01:09:03,550 --> 01:09:09,640  
we would be welcomed as heroes.

1198

01:09:09,640 --> 01:09:12,069  
And the interesting  
thing is, when

1199

01:09:12,069 --> 01:09:20,260  
I talked about leaving  
the camp and being

1200

01:09:20,260 --> 01:09:22,960  
posited on a truck driven--

1201

01:09:22,960 --> 01:09:31,120  
American army truck driven  
by American soldiers,

1202

01:09:31,120 --> 01:09:32,979  
we went into Bohemia.

1203

01:09:32,979 --> 01:09:36,189  
And there, some  
individuals then said,

1204

01:09:36,189 --> 01:09:39,609  
look at them, we  
don't want you back.

1205  
01:09:39,609 --> 01:09:44,950  
Actually shouting, they  
said, we don't want you!

1206  
01:09:44,950 --> 01:09:48,054  
And that, to me, was  
a very rude awakening.

1207  
01:09:48,054 --> 01:09:50,260  
It was just really terrible.

1208  
01:09:50,260 --> 01:09:52,810  
And I know that all the people,  
of course, most of them,

1209  
01:09:52,810 --> 01:09:56,260  
all these people were  
Czechs on that truck,

1210  
01:09:56,260 --> 01:10:00,130  
because, yes, we were  
repatriated to Czechoslovakia--

1211  
01:10:00,130 --> 01:10:03,550  
then Czechoslovakia,  
free Democratic

1212  
01:10:03,550 --> 01:10:06,370  
Czechoslovakia after the war.

1213  
01:10:06,370 --> 01:10:09,430  
And to us, that was real--

1214  
01:10:09,430 --> 01:10:10,870  
just an absolute trauma.

1215  
01:10:10,870 --> 01:10:12,460  
It was just  
shocking, when this--

1216  
01:10:12,460 --> 01:10:16,300

and it was a woman actually  
who shouted, we don't want you!

1217  
01:10:16,300 --> 01:10:19,010

1218  
01:10:19,010 --> 01:10:22,790  
Why don't you go back  
where you came from?

1219  
01:10:22,790 --> 01:10:25,920  
And that really-- that  
was a terrible thing.

1220  
01:10:25,920 --> 01:10:30,260  
And then also I found that  
very many people who--

1221  
01:10:30,260 --> 01:10:33,020  
with the exception  
of the authorities--

1222  
01:10:33,020 --> 01:10:35,060  
the authorities  
gave us all sorts

1223  
01:10:35,060 --> 01:10:40,460  
of privileges in terms of  
certificates and ID cards

1224  
01:10:40,460 --> 01:10:44,810  
and all that, which  
virtually got us

1225  
01:10:44,810 --> 01:10:47,780  
into any other place  
a normal person never

1226  
01:10:47,780 --> 01:10:49,280  
would have been admitted.

1227  
01:10:49,280 --> 01:10:51,320  
That were the privileges.

1228  
01:10:51,320 --> 01:10:56,630  
But the people themselves  
were not dreadfully happy,

1229  
01:10:56,630 --> 01:10:58,940  
necessarily, seeing us again.

1230  
01:10:58,940 --> 01:11:01,910  
And that is something which we  
discussed earlier in [? the ?]

1231  
01:11:01,910 --> 01:11:02,840  
[? car. ?]

1232  
01:11:02,840 --> 01:11:06,470  
That many of us had friends,  
and they took possessions

1233  
01:11:06,470 --> 01:11:08,000  
which we didn't want to--

1234  
01:11:08,000 --> 01:11:09,560  
for safekeeping.

1235  
01:11:09,560 --> 01:11:12,440  
And we called it Aryanization.

1236  
01:11:12,440 --> 01:11:17,150  
And for safekeeping and  
when we would come back to--

1237  
01:11:17,150 --> 01:11:20,030  
if we would come  
back from the camps,

1238  
01:11:20,030 --> 01:11:22,670  
that this would be returned,  
because it was just

1239  
01:11:22,670 --> 01:11:23,510  
for safekeeping.

1240

01:11:23,510 --> 01:11:26,060

Many of these people were  
very reluctant to return that

1241

01:11:26,060 --> 01:11:28,340

and didn't like to see us,  
because some of the things

1242

01:11:28,340 --> 01:11:32,090

were really valuable things  
which they enjoyed having.

1243

01:11:32,090 --> 01:11:33,810

And they're not happy to see us.

1244

01:11:33,810 --> 01:11:34,790

And we were told so.

1245

01:11:34,790 --> 01:11:36,925

I said, well-- and one  
person, I remember--

1246

01:11:36,925 --> 01:11:41,500

it was one of a part-- a member  
of the Christian community--

1247

01:11:41,500 --> 01:11:44,490

a person-- I belonged  
to, said, well,

1248

01:11:44,490 --> 01:11:46,670

if I had known that  
you would come back,

1249

01:11:46,670 --> 01:11:49,070

I wouldn't have  
taken these things.

1250

01:11:49,070 --> 01:11:51,980

Can you imagine that?

1251

01:11:51,980 --> 01:11:54,200  
And he actually said  
that, and I'm verbatim.

1252  
01:11:54,200 --> 01:11:57,785  
I'm just actually  
accurate in this.

1253  
01:11:57,785 --> 01:11:58,910  
Shocked the hell out of me.

1254  
01:11:58,910 --> 01:12:01,880

1255  
01:12:01,880 --> 01:12:05,860  
And so, yes, there  
are some other people

1256  
01:12:05,860 --> 01:12:09,400  
who were very supportive  
and very kind.

1257  
01:12:09,400 --> 01:12:11,800  
But many people were  
just in between.

1258  
01:12:11,800 --> 01:12:15,100  
Most of the people  
were in between.

1259  
01:12:15,100 --> 01:12:18,130  
They're not necessarily  
happy to see you,

1260  
01:12:18,130 --> 01:12:19,210  
but they're not unhappy.

1261  
01:12:19,210 --> 01:12:23,150  
And they're supportive  
to some degree.

1262  
01:12:23,150 --> 01:12:29,860  
But very few really provided

you with the needed support

1263

01:12:29,860 --> 01:12:34,510  
after we had arrived back,  
quote, unquote, "at home."

1264

01:12:34,510 --> 01:12:37,870  
And the home after  
the concentration camp

1265

01:12:37,870 --> 01:12:41,950  
never was the home  
which you idealize

1266

01:12:41,950 --> 01:12:48,310  
and which you really  
feel as your home.

1267

01:12:48,310 --> 01:12:56,190  
And so that very frequently,  
in some of my dreams,

1268

01:12:56,190 --> 01:12:58,670  
I feel displaced.

1269

01:12:58,670 --> 01:13:04,330  
I'm still searching for a  
home which I have never found.

1270

01:13:04,330 --> 01:13:08,110  
Because the home which was home  
to me was taken away from me.

1271

01:13:08,110 --> 01:13:10,840

1272

01:13:10,840 --> 01:13:15,260  
And again, I'm talking about  
particular people of my age,

1273

01:13:15,260 --> 01:13:21,550  
because people have different  
needs during different stages

1274  
01:13:21,550 --> 01:13:22,140  
of their life.

1275  
01:13:22,140 --> 01:13:26,650

1276  
01:13:26,650 --> 01:13:30,850  
Do you have any other thoughts  
or comments on liberation?

1277  
01:13:30,850 --> 01:13:32,140  
Its expectations?

1278  
01:13:32,140 --> 01:13:33,510  
How it was carried out?

1279  
01:13:33,510 --> 01:13:39,910

1280  
01:13:39,910 --> 01:13:43,760  
Well, all these sort of things  
I found out after the fact,

1281  
01:13:43,760 --> 01:13:45,400  
actually, when we had--

1282  
01:13:45,400 --> 01:13:51,760  
the American-Japanese.

1283  
01:13:51,760 --> 01:13:53,840  
Many of the things,  
I don't know.

1284  
01:13:53,840 --> 01:13:58,120  
I really had hoped,  
and to some extent

1285  
01:13:58,120 --> 01:14:02,800  
believed, that they came to  
Dachau to liberate Dachau,

1286

01:14:02,800 --> 01:14:04,210  
liberate us.

1287

01:14:04,210 --> 01:14:07,450  
Only to find out that it was  
just an accidental thing.

1288

01:14:07,450 --> 01:14:10,720  
They were on their  
route to Munich.

1289

01:14:10,720 --> 01:14:12,550  
That was not at all  
their intention.

1290

01:14:12,550 --> 01:14:14,170  
And I think that is  
something which we

1291

01:14:14,170 --> 01:14:17,330  
didn't know until much later.

1292

01:14:17,330 --> 01:14:20,720  
And then the incidents also  
in the camp while I was there.

1293

01:14:20,720 --> 01:14:22,720  
And as I said, I was  
there much longer

1294

01:14:22,720 --> 01:14:28,300  
than most of the other people,  
who were then shipped home

1295

01:14:28,300 --> 01:14:32,620  
to the Soviet Union, to  
Poland, to all sorts of places.

1296

01:14:32,620 --> 01:14:35,470  
Lots of Germans,  
Austrians, what have you.

1297

01:14:35,470 --> 01:14:37,010  
They all went home.

1298  
01:14:37,010 --> 01:14:42,160  
Most of us who just-- who stayed  
were very much in the minority.

1299  
01:14:42,160 --> 01:14:47,140  
And I remember that one day  
there was an American soldier.

1300  
01:14:47,140 --> 01:14:49,990  
And the funny thing is that also  
some of the American soldiers

1301  
01:14:49,990 --> 01:14:52,870  
who understood and seen  
this sort of thing--

1302  
01:14:52,870 --> 01:14:54,600  
and let me start with--

1303  
01:14:54,600 --> 01:14:56,690  
let me start with this,  
because that was also

1304  
01:14:56,690 --> 01:14:59,080  
a shocker, not because of the--

1305  
01:14:59,080 --> 01:15:01,550  
There was one sergeant, a  
master sergeant, I remember.

1306  
01:15:01,550 --> 01:15:05,510  
A burly fellow,  
well-fed and all that.

1307  
01:15:05,510 --> 01:15:09,340  
And so one day, he comes and--

1308  
01:15:09,340 --> 01:15:17,530  
and offers us chocolate  
and a cigar and all that.

1309  
01:15:17,530 --> 01:15:23,710  
All this stuff was  
plastic and rubber.

1310  
01:15:23,710 --> 01:15:26,830  
And it was a tremendous  
joke, because we, of course,

1311  
01:15:26,830 --> 01:15:28,480  
grabbed it and so--

1312  
01:15:28,480 --> 01:15:29,890  
and he laughed his head off.

1313  
01:15:29,890 --> 01:15:31,360  
He thought he was  
dreadfully funny

1314  
01:15:31,360 --> 01:15:32,590  
under those circumstances.

1315  
01:15:32,590 --> 01:15:34,240  
Can you imagine that?

1316  
01:15:34,240 --> 01:15:37,360  
I'll never forget that.

1317  
01:15:37,360 --> 01:15:40,210  
And some of us--  
these people had

1318  
01:15:40,210 --> 01:15:45,010  
strict, of course, strict orders  
not to give us extra food.

1319  
01:15:45,010 --> 01:15:49,060  
And I remember there was another  
sergeant, an older fellow,

1320  
01:15:49,060 --> 01:15:50,500  
very compassionate fellow.

1321  
01:15:50,500 --> 01:15:55,360  
And we met at the  
toilet frequently.

1322  
01:15:55,360 --> 01:15:58,000  
And there, they could  
talk unobserved.

1323  
01:15:58,000 --> 01:16:00,280  
And said, what can I do for you?

1324  
01:16:00,280 --> 01:16:04,000  
I said, well, I'm hungry.

1325  
01:16:04,000 --> 01:16:06,140  
So he gave me some-- a  
little bit more food.

1326  
01:16:06,140 --> 01:16:09,000  
And another fellow  
said, well, just--

1327  
01:16:09,000 --> 01:16:10,720  
well, I just would like to read.

1328  
01:16:10,720 --> 01:16:13,540  
And the way I said it, he  
said, you would like to eat?

1329  
01:16:13,540 --> 01:16:16,030  
No, I said, I  
would like to read.

1330  
01:16:16,030 --> 01:16:21,360  
And then he gave me some  
things to read and did it.

1331  
01:16:21,360 --> 01:16:23,050  
And these people existed also.

1332  
01:16:23,050 --> 01:16:26,140

And I want to be very  
clear about that.

1333  
01:16:26,140 --> 01:16:28,450  
And then there was-- one  
person said, come with me,

1334  
01:16:28,450 --> 01:16:29,860  
I'm going to do you a favor.

1335  
01:16:29,860 --> 01:16:37,000  
And then he took me  
out the direct camp,

1336  
01:16:37,000 --> 01:16:39,175  
from the camp premises, direct--

1337  
01:16:39,175 --> 01:16:41,530  
just immediate camp premises.

1338  
01:16:41,530 --> 01:16:43,090  
Took me out, and  
there are some sort

1339  
01:16:43,090 --> 01:16:46,540  
of kind of barracks with  
doors in it and all this.

1340  
01:16:46,540 --> 01:16:50,380  
Just kind of cubbyholed  
type of doors.

1341  
01:16:50,380 --> 01:16:53,600  
And he took his machine gun and  
started to spray these doors.

1342  
01:16:53,600 --> 01:16:55,390  
Said, you know, SS  
people are in it,

1343  
01:16:55,390 --> 01:16:57,970  
and I just killed a few for you.

1344

01:16:57,970 --> 01:17:01,300

And I was horrified.

1345

01:17:01,300 --> 01:17:02,940

Were there SS people in there?

1346

01:17:02,940 --> 01:17:06,155

Well, I've never--

I've never been to see,

1347

01:17:06,155 --> 01:17:07,280

but that's what he claimed.

1348

01:17:07,280 --> 01:17:10,900

He said, I've just

killed some SS in there.

1349

01:17:10,900 --> 01:17:12,100

And he was unobserved.

1350

01:17:12,100 --> 01:17:12,947

No one was around.

1351

01:17:12,947 --> 01:17:13,780

He was the only one.

1352

01:17:13,780 --> 01:17:15,160

I don't know what his rank was.

1353

01:17:15,160 --> 01:17:16,180

I don't remember that.

1354

01:17:16,180 --> 01:17:17,680

But I was horrified.

1355

01:17:17,680 --> 01:17:20,560

1356

01:17:20,560 --> 01:17:22,620

And he said, I'm going

to do you a favor.

1357  
01:17:22,620 --> 01:17:25,458

1358  
01:17:25,458 --> 01:17:27,000  
So all these sort  
of things happened.

1359  
01:17:27,000 --> 01:17:31,370  
And I remember that I was  
interviewed by some reporters

1360  
01:17:31,370 --> 01:17:34,560  
in the camp and told them.

1361  
01:17:34,560 --> 01:17:37,400  
They said, well, we don't--

1362  
01:17:37,400 --> 01:17:40,010  
I don't think we should--  
we won't write about that,

1363  
01:17:40,010 --> 01:17:43,640  
because that doesn't  
fit into the--

1364  
01:17:43,640 --> 01:17:47,390  
fit into our way of  
thinking at this point.

1365  
01:17:47,390 --> 01:17:49,250  
So many of these  
things which happened

1366  
01:17:49,250 --> 01:17:54,410  
were simply repressed,  
or suppressed, whatever.

1367  
01:17:54,410 --> 01:17:56,930  
And so that experience  
was very interesting.

1368

01:17:56,930 --> 01:18:02,360

Also, things which-- we  
were, of course, fairly

1369

01:18:02,360 --> 01:18:06,260

free to move about, obviously,  
at that particular point.

1370

01:18:06,260 --> 01:18:11,090

And Dachau had the  
largest SS magazines

1371

01:18:11,090 --> 01:18:14,630

with all sorts of  
material in them,

1372

01:18:14,630 --> 01:18:17,210

including ammunition,  
including all.

1373

01:18:17,210 --> 01:18:19,850

And some of the kids, some  
of the younger people,

1374

01:18:19,850 --> 01:18:22,400

naive people, just  
played around with things

1375

01:18:22,400 --> 01:18:25,670

and killed themselves by using--

1376

01:18:25,670 --> 01:18:27,290

playing with explosives.

1377

01:18:27,290 --> 01:18:28,850

And I've seen that.

1378

01:18:28,850 --> 01:18:30,800

Just caps, you  
know, which explode

1379

01:18:30,800 --> 01:18:32,420

and all this sort of thing.

1380  
01:18:32,420 --> 01:18:36,350  
Because that was the  
major magazine for the SS,

1381  
01:18:36,350 --> 01:18:38,930  
Dachau, that it was part of.

1382  
01:18:38,930 --> 01:18:42,720  
Not the direct camp, but  
the vicinity of the camp.

1383  
01:18:42,720 --> 01:18:44,900  
So we went there and  
just played there.

1384  
01:18:44,900 --> 01:18:47,510  
And then they finally,  
after so many people

1385  
01:18:47,510 --> 01:18:51,860  
got hurt and even killed,  
then they put posts there.

1386  
01:18:51,860 --> 01:18:53,930  
And even that was not  
enough, because we

1387  
01:18:53,930 --> 01:18:55,730  
could sneak in and do  
all sort-- because we

1388  
01:18:55,730 --> 01:18:56,690  
didn't have any sense.

1389  
01:18:56,690 --> 01:18:59,090  
We didn't really have  
any-- we didn't know much

1390  
01:18:59,090 --> 01:19:00,380  
about all these things.

1391

01:19:00,380 --> 01:19:04,220  
We just-- now we felt free, and  
now there was-- these things

1392  
01:19:04,220 --> 01:19:08,930  
were symbols of power for us.

1393  
01:19:08,930 --> 01:19:11,370  
And now we had access to them.

1394  
01:19:11,370 --> 01:19:15,290  
And that's how I think we  
responded, subconsciously.

1395  
01:19:15,290 --> 01:19:17,420  
Now, I didn't do  
anything that stupid.

1396  
01:19:17,420 --> 01:19:19,970  
But I certainly was naive  
enough to have done that,

1397  
01:19:19,970 --> 01:19:21,320  
except I was more careful.

1398  
01:19:21,320 --> 01:19:22,790  
That's all.

1399  
01:19:22,790 --> 01:19:25,070  
But I was not more  
sophisticated about that.

1400  
01:19:25,070 --> 01:19:28,750

1401  
01:19:28,750 --> 01:19:32,310  
Well, I think-- well,  
we can move on now

1402  
01:19:32,310 --> 01:19:36,610  
to start to talk  
about your work.

1403

01:19:36,610 --> 01:19:38,010

Can we stop for one minute?

1404

01:19:38,010 --> 01:19:39,160

--specific questions.

1405

01:19:39,160 --> 01:19:41,730

It also helps me to  
make associations.

1406

01:19:41,730 --> 01:19:42,247

OK, good.

1407

01:19:42,247 --> 01:19:43,830

And then feel free  
to go [INAUDIBLE]..

1408

01:19:43,830 --> 01:19:44,850

Yeah, and that's what I'm doing.

1409

01:19:44,850 --> 01:19:46,210

That's exactly what I'm doing.

1410

01:19:46,210 --> 01:19:48,060

So that we just--  
but then you have

1411

01:19:48,060 --> 01:19:51,210

to be sure that I also close the  
circle again, that I come back.

1412

01:19:51,210 --> 01:19:51,810

Well, yeah.

1413

01:19:51,810 --> 01:19:52,844

But, you know, I--

1414

01:19:52,844 --> 01:20:03,150

1415

01:20:03,150 --> 01:20:03,650

OK.

1416  
01:20:03,650 --> 01:20:05,010  
I'd say anytime.

1417  
01:20:05,010 --> 01:20:06,910  
OK.

1418  
01:20:06,910 --> 01:20:13,480  
OK, so to proceed with how  
you came by your life's work.

1419  
01:20:13,480 --> 01:20:18,070  
When did you first decide  
to study the perpetrators?

1420  
01:20:18,070 --> 01:20:22,670  
Well, I mean, it started  
very early in life actually.

1421  
01:20:22,670 --> 01:20:25,540  
And it's very much to do with,  
I think I already mentioned

1422  
01:20:25,540 --> 01:20:30,770  
before, my  
early-developed notion

1423  
01:20:30,770 --> 01:20:33,760  
sense of justice and fairness.

1424  
01:20:33,760 --> 01:20:38,800  
And that is something  
which developed very early

1425  
01:20:38,800 --> 01:20:40,390  
when I was a child.

1426  
01:20:40,390 --> 01:20:42,300  
And I could see that the--

1427  
01:20:42,300 --> 01:20:45,880

the disparity between  
people's standard of living.

1428  
01:20:45,880 --> 01:20:50,350  
And we had a house  
manager, a family of three,

1429  
01:20:50,350 --> 01:20:51,760  
who lived in the basement.

1430  
01:20:51,760 --> 01:20:53,890  
And not like in  
the United States.

1431  
01:20:53,890 --> 01:20:57,160  
Were exceedingly deprived  
financial or otherwise.

1432  
01:20:57,160 --> 01:21:00,610  
It was just about the  
lowest menial type of job

1433  
01:21:00,610 --> 01:21:01,900  
you could have had.

1434  
01:21:01,900 --> 01:21:06,250  
So the husband, who was also  
a manager, a house manager,

1435  
01:21:06,250 --> 01:21:09,490  
worked as some sort of  
an unskilled laborer.

1436  
01:21:09,490 --> 01:21:16,930  
And had his wife who  
cleaned the stairs--

1437  
01:21:16,930 --> 01:21:18,970  
janitorial sort of work.

1438  
01:21:18,970 --> 01:21:22,720  
And then the daughter  
just simply--

1439  
01:21:22,720 --> 01:21:26,950  
and they lived-- lived  
under those circumstances,

1440  
01:21:26,950 --> 01:21:29,610  
went to school, was  
considerably older than I,

1441  
01:21:29,610 --> 01:21:31,810  
but still very young.

1442  
01:21:31,810 --> 01:21:36,910  
And so somehow it didn't  
make any sense to me

1443  
01:21:36,910 --> 01:21:41,110  
at all that-- that we would be  
living in a very nice apartment

1444  
01:21:41,110 --> 01:21:44,710  
and have everything  
we needed and more

1445  
01:21:44,710 --> 01:21:45,920  
than that and all that.

1446  
01:21:45,920 --> 01:21:51,640  
And these people were  
in the basement living

1447  
01:21:51,640 --> 01:21:53,980  
this type of deprived life.

1448  
01:21:53,980 --> 01:21:57,520  
And that somehow concerned me.

1449  
01:21:57,520 --> 01:22:01,360  
And that's the  
proper way to say it.

1450  
01:22:01,360 --> 01:22:04,840

And I spent a great deal of  
time with people who were--

1451  
01:22:04,840 --> 01:22:09,260  
who were deprived, whether  
I saw them in the streets,

1452  
01:22:09,260 --> 01:22:12,250  
I somehow was attracted to  
them for whatever reason.

1453  
01:22:12,250 --> 01:22:14,770  
If I saw a blind  
person, so I tried

1454  
01:22:14,770 --> 01:22:15,970  
to be helpful or something.

1455  
01:22:15,970 --> 01:22:16,990  
That is something.

1456  
01:22:16,990 --> 01:22:18,548  
And I don't know  
where I got it from.

1457  
01:22:18,548 --> 01:22:19,840  
Certainly, my mother was there.

1458  
01:22:19,840 --> 01:22:23,140  
But not to that extent  
that she would--

1459  
01:22:23,140 --> 01:22:27,080  
still was upper-middle  
class and all this.

1460  
01:22:27,080 --> 01:22:28,850  
And so that's how it started.

1461  
01:22:28,850 --> 01:22:32,556  
And then at school,  
I noticed that--

1462

01:22:32,556 --> 01:22:37,390

that people had prejudices  
and they're antisemitic.

1463

01:22:37,390 --> 01:22:43,120

And one day, I remember  
very clearly, an incident

1464

01:22:43,120 --> 01:22:45,590

which stayed in my mind.

1465

01:22:45,590 --> 01:22:54,000

And that was in 1938, when  
I was about 12 years old.

1466

01:22:54,000 --> 01:22:56,740

Mother and I were in a bus.

1467

01:22:56,740 --> 01:23:00,910

And they just had arrived at our  
destination, just a few steps

1468

01:23:00,910 --> 01:23:04,690

from our house or apartment.

1469

01:23:04,690 --> 01:23:08,290

And children, or  
just 12-year-olds,

1470

01:23:08,290 --> 01:23:14,380

just like they are, just didn't  
wait until the bus would stop.

1471

01:23:14,380 --> 01:23:17,440

So I just went down to the  
steps and wanted to jump off.

1472

01:23:17,440 --> 01:23:18,940

And my mother, who  
was a little bit

1473

01:23:18,940 --> 01:23:27,080

overprotective at times,  
cried out in German and--

1474  
01:23:27,080 --> 01:23:28,140  
stop and all that.

1475  
01:23:28,140 --> 01:23:30,360  
And there was one  
person in that bus--

1476  
01:23:30,360 --> 01:23:34,940  
I didn't-- I didn't jump off,  
but I stayed on the steps

1477  
01:23:34,940 --> 01:23:36,710  
because because of that.

1478  
01:23:36,710 --> 01:23:43,310  
So then a person in the  
bus responded to this.

1479  
01:23:43,310 --> 01:23:47,180  
And that was the first  
time I really became aware

1480  
01:23:47,180 --> 01:23:51,980  
of the problems  
which more or less

1481  
01:23:51,980 --> 01:23:55,100  
we had to anticipate in a  
very childish sort of way,

1482  
01:23:55,100 --> 01:23:57,440  
just a 12-year-old would.

1483  
01:23:57,440 --> 01:24:00,110  
And this fellow  
said, in the bus--

1484  
01:24:00,110 --> 01:24:03,360  
well-dressed, middle-class  
type of person.

1485  
01:24:03,360 --> 01:24:05,090  
He had a hat on and everything.

1486  
01:24:05,090 --> 01:24:08,570  
Just didn't look any unusual.

1487  
01:24:08,570 --> 01:24:10,640  
Sort of typical  
middle-class person,

1488  
01:24:10,640 --> 01:24:13,640  
who blends into  
middle-class society.

1489  
01:24:13,640 --> 01:24:27,480  
And he said, "Only Jews, only  
Jews, Hitler, Hitler," in order

1490  
01:24:27,480 --> 01:24:28,020  
to--

1491  
01:24:28,020 --> 01:24:29,940  
and the message was very clear.

1492  
01:24:29,940 --> 01:24:37,140  
What he meant to say is,  
too many Jews, all we need

1493  
01:24:37,140 --> 01:24:44,054  
is Hitler to clean  
up the Jewish.

1494  
01:24:44,054 --> 01:24:47,560  
Now, my mother was very  
dark and didn't look Jewish.

1495  
01:24:47,560 --> 01:24:48,685  
But she looked very--

1496  
01:24:48,685 --> 01:24:52,450  
she very frequent was confused

being Indian, East Indian.

1497

01:24:52,450 --> 01:24:57,790

Interesting, very dark--  
so very dark-skinned.

1498

01:24:57,790 --> 01:24:59,440

But he was very right on.

1499

01:24:59,440 --> 01:25:03,010

And he was obviously a very  
antisemitic sort of person.

1500

01:25:03,010 --> 01:25:07,270

And that brought a -- and my  
mother was terribly upset.

1501

01:25:07,270 --> 01:25:10,810

And I remember that  
she went to a policeman

1502

01:25:10,810 --> 01:25:14,080

and reported this  
sort of thing, which

1503

01:25:14,080 --> 01:25:18,790

was a joke, because the man  
in the bus was gone long--

1504

01:25:18,790 --> 01:25:22,990

just in the very moment  
she talked to him.

1505

01:25:22,990 --> 01:25:24,730

But she was very  
upset about that.

1506

01:25:24,730 --> 01:25:29,050

And I was upset, not because  
I really understood the--

1507

01:25:29,050 --> 01:25:34,330

the consequences of it

all, the meaning of it all.

1508  
01:25:34,330 --> 01:25:38,830  
But the fact that this  
could have been said

1509  
01:25:38,830 --> 01:25:42,250  
and that my mother was  
responding to it the way

1510  
01:25:42,250 --> 01:25:44,350  
she did.

1511  
01:25:44,350 --> 01:25:48,310  
And so that really set  
me up, so to speak,

1512  
01:25:48,310 --> 01:25:55,220  
to expect things in a very  
childish sort of fashion.

1513  
01:25:55,220 --> 01:25:59,950  
And again, I felt, how can  
a person say what he said?

1514  
01:25:59,950 --> 01:26:03,010  
And Hitler was, to me, at  
that particular point, already

1515  
01:26:03,010 --> 01:26:07,240  
an entity I was  
very much aware of.

1516  
01:26:07,240 --> 01:26:13,240  
Because when I was much  
younger, my grandfather had just

1517  
01:26:13,240 --> 01:26:16,360  
bought a radio, a wireless set.

1518  
01:26:16,360 --> 01:26:19,600  
A typical old-fashioned  
radio set had come out.

1519  
01:26:19,600 --> 01:26:21,620  
And I still remember  
the brand name,

1520  
01:26:21,620 --> 01:26:23,570  
which was called Standard--

1521  
01:26:23,570 --> 01:26:24,070  
Standard.

1522  
01:26:24,070 --> 01:26:26,380  
A radio called Standard.

1523  
01:26:26,380 --> 01:26:28,480  
And so they listened  
to speeches.

1524  
01:26:28,480 --> 01:26:31,900  
And there, for the first  
time, I heard Hitler.

1525  
01:26:31,900 --> 01:26:38,080  
And I was very small then-- very  
small, just a real small child.

1526  
01:26:38,080 --> 01:26:41,380  
And I was horrified,  
not because I

1527  
01:26:41,380 --> 01:26:48,430  
understood what was said,  
but the way it was said.

1528  
01:26:48,430 --> 01:26:50,020  
And that I remember  
very vividly.

1529  
01:26:50,020 --> 01:26:52,840  
So there are a lot of  
things which, then,

1530

01:26:52,840 --> 01:26:56,110  
somehow accumulated.

1531  
01:26:56,110 --> 01:27:04,330  
And then incidents which  
also happened at school,

1532  
01:27:04,330 --> 01:27:13,300  
for example, when I just had,  
in our art class, worked on a--

1533  
01:27:13,300 --> 01:27:20,515  
worked on a castle out of  
this plasterine type of stuff.

1534  
01:27:20,515 --> 01:27:21,640  
And I was very proud of it.

1535  
01:27:21,640 --> 01:27:24,280  
I wanted to bring it to  
show it to my mother.

1536  
01:27:24,280 --> 01:27:27,310  
And another boy  
came, who happened

1537  
01:27:27,310 --> 01:27:31,930  
to be an orphan,  
a Jewish orphan,

1538  
01:27:31,930 --> 01:27:34,780  
living in an orphanage,  
Jewish orphanage.

1539  
01:27:34,780 --> 01:27:38,680  
And he was very aggressive  
and very disgruntled

1540  
01:27:38,680 --> 01:27:42,130  
for psychological reasons  
which I can better understand.

1541  
01:27:42,130 --> 01:27:46,780

But at that time, I  
didn't understand why he

1542  
01:27:46,780 --> 01:27:49,450  
would behave so aggressively.

1543  
01:27:49,450 --> 01:27:52,510  
And he tyrannized  
fellow students.

1544  
01:27:52,510 --> 01:27:56,000  
He happened to be very strong.

1545  
01:27:56,000 --> 01:27:58,450  
The monster was not that  
tall, but very strong,

1546  
01:27:58,450 --> 01:28:01,090  
athletic build, a lot of muscle.

1547  
01:28:01,090 --> 01:28:07,030  
And he came and smashed this  
beautiful castle which I built.

1548  
01:28:07,030 --> 01:28:12,040  
And I was so upset that  
I started to shake.

1549  
01:28:12,040 --> 01:28:15,760  
And I said, why  
would you do that?

1550  
01:28:15,760 --> 01:28:19,380  
And when I asked him that, he  
became even more aggressive,

1551  
01:28:19,380 --> 01:28:22,130  
and we got into a  
fight and all that.

1552  
01:28:22,130 --> 01:28:25,330  
And that's what, you know?

1553

01:28:25,330 --> 01:28:28,660

And I said, why would people  
behave towards each other

1554

01:28:28,660 --> 01:28:34,430

in such a way which is  
totally uncalled for?

1555

01:28:34,430 --> 01:28:37,940

1556

01:28:37,940 --> 01:28:38,440

So--

1557

01:28:38,440 --> 01:28:41,110

1558

01:28:41,110 --> 01:28:41,860

Can you remember--

1559

01:28:41,860 --> 01:28:44,980

This developed this sort of  
sense of fairness and justice,

1560

01:28:44,980 --> 01:28:46,210

the need for--

1561

01:28:46,210 --> 01:28:50,620

and I, today, still have  
this sort of very principled

1562

01:28:50,620 --> 01:28:53,680

attitude, which gets me into  
conflict with even well-meaning

1563

01:28:53,680 --> 01:28:58,210

people, that I just  
simply cannot give in.

1564

01:28:58,210 --> 01:29:01,840

Not because I am  
not able to give in,

1565  
01:29:01,840 --> 01:29:04,270  
but I can't give  
in in terms of what

1566  
01:29:04,270 --> 01:29:07,510  
I have experienced in life.

1567  
01:29:07,510 --> 01:29:09,070  
Because I would be selling out.

1568  
01:29:09,070 --> 01:29:11,620  
I can't do it.

1569  
01:29:11,620 --> 01:29:15,340  
All right, so because what  
happened in the concentration

1570  
01:29:15,340 --> 01:29:17,200  
camp, which of  
course exacerbated

1571  
01:29:17,200 --> 01:29:21,200  
all the things, all the  
feelings of injustice,

1572  
01:29:21,200 --> 01:29:26,110  
it was an absolute  
must, a need for me,

1573  
01:29:26,110 --> 01:29:30,670  
to find out about people  
who were in a position

1574  
01:29:30,670 --> 01:29:35,685  
and did all these terrible  
things of which we--

1575  
01:29:35,685 --> 01:29:39,350  
which we had to experience.

1576  
01:29:39,350 --> 01:29:42,880

And that is why  
I had this urge--

1577  
01:29:42,880 --> 01:29:45,850  
and it was an urge--

1578  
01:29:45,850 --> 01:29:50,170  
to seek out, not only to study  
the documents, to begin with,

1579  
01:29:50,170 --> 01:29:52,180  
in order to better  
familiarize myself

1580  
01:29:52,180 --> 01:29:56,380  
with the National Socialist  
system, the structures,

1581  
01:29:56,380 --> 01:29:58,460  
and the--

1582  
01:29:58,460 --> 01:30:02,200

1583  
01:30:02,200 --> 01:30:06,980  
the infrastructure, if you will.

1584  
01:30:06,980 --> 01:30:11,510  
And so I wasn't satisfied.

1585  
01:30:11,510 --> 01:30:16,660  
And when I was not satisfied,  
studying these documents

1586  
01:30:16,660 --> 01:30:21,980  
in various archives and  
with supervision of people

1587  
01:30:21,980 --> 01:30:24,190  
who were eminent historians.

1588  
01:30:24,190 --> 01:30:28,000

1589

01:30:28,000 --> 01:30:35,680

At that time, already a very,  
very well-known historian--

1590

01:30:35,680 --> 01:30:42,460

but was just in the process of  
becoming really well-known--

1591

01:30:42,460 --> 01:30:44,320

somehow took me under his wing.

1592

01:30:44,320 --> 01:30:48,790

And he was not that much older  
than I, but he was older.

1593

01:30:48,790 --> 01:30:54,160

And was very supportive of my  
work, my research, of the SS

1594

01:30:54,160 --> 01:30:59,530

in the archive which  
he was the director of.

1595

01:30:59,530 --> 01:31:03,370

So we had always very frequent--  
frequently discussions

1596

01:31:03,370 --> 01:31:06,010

about what I found out  
my ideas and all that.

1597

01:31:06,010 --> 01:31:09,730

And he responding very,  
very nicely and very--

1598

01:31:09,730 --> 01:31:12,310

1599

01:31:12,310 --> 01:31:17,080

so I told him, OK, I've  
done most of the work,

1600  
01:31:17,080 --> 01:31:20,560  
paperwork and studying,  
and I'm not satisfied.

1601  
01:31:20,560 --> 01:31:23,500  
I really have to  
interview people in order

1602  
01:31:23,500 --> 01:31:25,900  
to really get at  
the core of things

1603  
01:31:25,900 --> 01:31:28,120  
and see what makes them tick.

1604  
01:31:28,120 --> 01:31:30,770  
And he suggested that I--

1605  
01:31:30,770 --> 01:31:33,460  
he was very helpful in doing  
that-- he said, there is--

1606  
01:31:33,460 --> 01:31:35,050  
I was in Munich--

1607  
01:31:35,050 --> 01:31:36,760  
there is a fellow  
with your namesake

1608  
01:31:36,760 --> 01:31:39,730  
who is known to be  
very accessible.

1609  
01:31:39,730 --> 01:31:42,190  
And why don't you  
go and see him--

1610  
01:31:42,190 --> 01:31:45,140  
call him and see if you  
can get an appointment

1611

01:31:45,140 --> 01:31:47,360  
and interview him.

1612  
01:31:47,360 --> 01:31:48,130  
And I've done it.

1613  
01:31:48,130 --> 01:31:49,933  
And this man was very helpful.

1614  
01:31:49,933 --> 01:31:51,100  
He said, oh, yes, of course.

1615  
01:31:51,100 --> 01:31:54,450  
Well, we might be  
related and all that.

1616  
01:31:54,450 --> 01:31:55,570  
The same, Steiner.

1617  
01:31:55,570 --> 01:31:56,830  
Was this person Felix Steiner?

1618  
01:31:56,830 --> 01:32:01,210  
Felix Steiner, SS  
general, full general.

1619  
01:32:01,210 --> 01:32:04,570  
And so he was very,  
nice, very interested,

1620  
01:32:04,570 --> 01:32:06,520  
and very encouraging.

1621  
01:32:06,520 --> 01:32:07,940  
And so we made the appointment.

1622  
01:32:07,940 --> 01:32:09,250  
And that was the first step.

1623  
01:32:09,250 --> 01:32:11,590  
And then, of course, went  
there with a great deal

1624  
01:32:11,590 --> 01:32:12,970  
of trepidation.

1625  
01:32:12,970 --> 01:32:15,160  
And said, my God, now  
I'm going through this.

1626  
01:32:15,160 --> 01:32:16,600  
Because, you see,  
at that time, I

1627  
01:32:16,600 --> 01:32:19,510  
lumped all the SS  
people in one pot,

1628  
01:32:19,510 --> 01:32:21,580  
not understanding that well--

1629  
01:32:21,580 --> 01:32:25,270  
well, ideologically, of  
course, and otherwise, I

1630  
01:32:25,270 --> 01:32:28,090  
understood that there were  
very many different departments

1631  
01:32:28,090 --> 01:32:29,800  
within the--

1632  
01:32:29,800 --> 01:32:32,560  
the SS and with different  
functions and all that.

1633  
01:32:32,560 --> 01:32:36,250  
But to me, all these people  
were SS, which they were.

1634  
01:32:36,250 --> 01:32:38,600  
And I felt they were all  
pretty much the same.

1635

01:32:38,600 --> 01:32:44,770  
So I felt that I'm going to  
interview a monster, you see?

1636  
01:32:44,770 --> 01:32:45,570  
And then I--

1637  
01:32:45,570 --> 01:32:48,250  
Were you afraid?

1638  
01:32:48,250 --> 01:32:52,660  
I wouldn't say I was afraid,  
but I was very apprehensive.

1639  
01:32:52,660 --> 01:32:54,220  
I don't think I was afraid.

1640  
01:32:54,220 --> 01:32:56,380  
After the concentration  
camp, I don't know

1641  
01:32:56,380 --> 01:32:58,640  
whether I know fear anymore.

1642  
01:32:58,640 --> 01:33:01,660  
I have fear of  
suffering, that I have--

1643  
01:33:01,660 --> 01:33:04,600  
I fear suffering.

1644  
01:33:04,600 --> 01:33:06,490  
I fear to be hurt.

1645  
01:33:06,490 --> 01:33:12,010  
And I get plenty of occasion  
to be made to be hurt.

1646  
01:33:12,010 --> 01:33:14,350  
I've been hurt many times.

1647  
01:33:14,350 --> 01:33:17,080

And that, I would  
say, I have a fear of.

1648  
01:33:17,080 --> 01:33:19,660  
But I am not feared  
to, let's say,

1649  
01:33:19,660 --> 01:33:22,300  
get hurt, other than  
physically or that--

1650  
01:33:22,300 --> 01:33:23,410  
I don't care.

1651  
01:33:23,410 --> 01:33:24,520  
I really don't.

1652  
01:33:24,520 --> 01:33:25,700  
So that was not an issue.

1653  
01:33:25,700 --> 01:33:29,750  
The issue was, there I'm  
going to see a monster again,

1654  
01:33:29,750 --> 01:33:33,320  
a person who will  
behave as a monster.

1655  
01:33:33,320 --> 01:33:37,510  
And so I come to his apartment.

1656  
01:33:37,510 --> 01:33:41,372  
And that was in '60--

1657  
01:33:41,372 --> 01:33:45,140

1658  
01:33:45,140 --> 01:33:46,780  
I think that was  
just early '60s.

1659  
01:33:46,780 --> 01:33:51,108

1660  
01:33:51,108 --> 01:33:54,040  
And the doorbell and his name--

1661  
01:33:54,040 --> 01:33:55,690  
well, he didn't even  
have a nameplate.

1662  
01:33:55,690 --> 01:33:59,590  
It was a piece of cardboard  
on which his name was.

1663  
01:33:59,590 --> 01:34:03,670  
And not general, but author.

1664  
01:34:03,670 --> 01:34:05,440  
Well, as I found  
out, the man had

1665  
01:34:05,440 --> 01:34:09,400  
written a number of books, some  
of which I helped him with.

1666  
01:34:09,400 --> 01:34:11,890  
As a matter of fact, one  
of which I helped him with,

1667  
01:34:11,890 --> 01:34:14,410  
in terms of research  
and all that, which

1668  
01:34:14,410 --> 01:34:16,460  
was interesting because  
I was very interested.

1669  
01:34:16,460 --> 01:34:20,180  
And so anyway, he opens  
the door, well-dressed,

1670  
01:34:20,180 --> 01:34:24,310  
and a very robust person.

1671  
01:34:24,310 --> 01:34:31,042  
Just about shy of almost 6--

1672  
01:34:31,042 --> 01:34:37,060  
what-- 6 feet tall.

1673  
01:34:37,060 --> 01:34:39,060  
Very friendly, welcoming.

1674  
01:34:39,060 --> 01:34:42,070  
I mean, bringing me  
to the dining hall,

1675  
01:34:42,070 --> 01:34:44,650  
where there's just a  
beautifully prepared table

1676  
01:34:44,650 --> 01:34:50,980  
with coffee and whipped cream  
and cake and all this and that.

1677  
01:34:50,980 --> 01:34:54,490  
And I was just  
absolutely perplexed,

1678  
01:34:54,490 --> 01:34:57,730  
because I had totally  
different expectations.

1679  
01:34:57,730 --> 01:35:01,270  
There, I get a red carpet  
treatment of someone

1680  
01:35:01,270 --> 01:35:05,070  
who would have probably  
not done anything if--

1681  
01:35:05,070 --> 01:35:07,180  
if he would have  
seen me being shot

1682  
01:35:07,180 --> 01:35:09,140

under different circumstances.

1683

01:35:09,140 --> 01:35:10,330

So I had to readjust.

1684

01:35:10,330 --> 01:35:13,720

And said, my God, a very  
confusing situation.

1685

01:35:13,720 --> 01:35:16,930

How did you decide  
to deal with the fact

1686

01:35:16,930 --> 01:35:18,250

that you were a survivor?

1687

01:35:18,250 --> 01:35:20,050

You still have a tattoo.

1688

01:35:20,050 --> 01:35:22,470

Well, first of all,  
that's a good--

1689

01:35:22,470 --> 01:35:23,770

good question.

1690

01:35:23,770 --> 01:35:25,660

What I did is, first of all--

1691

01:35:25,660 --> 01:35:29,960

and at that time, I  
very rarely, if ever,

1692

01:35:29,960 --> 01:35:32,950

wore short-sleeved shirts.

1693

01:35:32,950 --> 01:35:37,330

So I had always  
long-sleeved shirts.

1694

01:35:37,330 --> 01:35:39,760

And so that was no issue.

1695  
01:35:39,760 --> 01:35:42,790  
But it became an issue at  
other circumstances, when

1696  
01:35:42,790 --> 01:35:45,910  
they asked me, why don't  
we go for a swim and all

1697  
01:35:45,910 --> 01:35:46,600  
this and that.

1698  
01:35:46,600 --> 01:35:47,830  
And then I had problems.

1699  
01:35:47,830 --> 01:35:51,160  
And I really had to find  
excuses, and it was not easy.

1700  
01:35:51,160 --> 01:35:53,995

1701  
01:35:53,995 --> 01:35:56,950  
Or when I stayed overnight  
at some of the apartments,

1702  
01:35:56,950 --> 01:35:58,540  
and they--

1703  
01:35:58,540 --> 01:36:00,160  
they didn't mind undressing.

1704  
01:36:00,160 --> 01:36:04,645  
Because I was looking for their  
tattoo, which was a blood--

1705  
01:36:04,645 --> 01:36:07,090  
blood group which they  
had tattooed on them.

1706  
01:36:07,090 --> 01:36:09,130  
And so I'd say, why

don't you show me?

1707

01:36:09,130 --> 01:36:12,170

I talked to SS gentleman  
and say, hey, show me.

1708

01:36:12,170 --> 01:36:13,630

And he showed me and all this.

1709

01:36:13,630 --> 01:36:16,920

1710

01:36:16,920 --> 01:36:19,330

So, yeah, I had to be very  
careful and very alert.

1711

01:36:19,330 --> 01:36:22,300

Now, especially-- I didn't lie.

1712

01:36:22,300 --> 01:36:24,400

I never lied when  
they asked me things.

1713

01:36:24,400 --> 01:36:25,480

I told them the truth.

1714

01:36:25,480 --> 01:36:28,220

But they didn't ask me whether  
I was in a concentration camp.

1715

01:36:28,220 --> 01:36:30,460

And I didn't volunteer.

1716

01:36:30,460 --> 01:36:33,790

In some cases, I  
volunteered, when it

1717

01:36:33,790 --> 01:36:38,200

was useful for all concerned.

1718

01:36:38,200 --> 01:36:39,985

I volunteered, and they knew.

1719  
01:36:39,985 --> 01:36:43,600  
What would you have done  
if the person asked you

1720  
01:36:43,600 --> 01:36:46,690  
if you were in a camp?

1721  
01:36:46,690 --> 01:36:47,971  
If I was what?

1722  
01:36:47,971 --> 01:36:51,280  
If you had been in the camps.

1723  
01:36:51,280 --> 01:36:53,230  
Did you think what  
you might do if you

1724  
01:36:53,230 --> 01:36:55,720  
got that kind of question?

1725  
01:36:55,720 --> 01:36:57,460  
It never actually happened.

1726  
01:36:57,460 --> 01:37:03,400  
But the chances are, I would've  
said, yeah, I was in camps.

1727  
01:37:03,400 --> 01:37:08,020  
See, because I always said  
that I'm a researcher.

1728  
01:37:08,020 --> 01:37:10,330  
At that time, I was at Berkeley.

1729  
01:37:10,330 --> 01:37:15,730  
And that's what I said, I'm a  
researcher from UC Berkeley,

1730  
01:37:15,730 --> 01:37:17,710  
and I'm a sociologist.

1731

01:37:17,710 --> 01:37:20,770

And I'm doing this  
research on the SS,

1732

01:37:20,770 --> 01:37:24,430

because I have a need to  
find out what happened

1733

01:37:24,430 --> 01:37:26,440

and why you behaved  
or what happened--

1734

01:37:26,440 --> 01:37:29,380

why you behaved the way  
you did and all this, what

1735

01:37:29,380 --> 01:37:30,850

is it all about.

1736

01:37:30,850 --> 01:37:35,260

Did you have any particular  
obvious negative feelings

1737

01:37:35,260 --> 01:37:37,630

toward the Germans  
at that point?

1738

01:37:37,630 --> 01:37:39,880

I mean, what about  
your own anger, rage,

1739

01:37:39,880 --> 01:37:41,890

left from your experiences?

1740

01:37:41,890 --> 01:37:46,180

Well, that is an  
interesting thing.

1741

01:37:46,180 --> 01:37:48,640

And that is something  
which needs to be mentioned

1742

01:37:48,640 --> 01:37:50,170  
and perhaps emphasized.

1743  
01:37:50,170 --> 01:37:54,430

1744  
01:37:54,430 --> 01:38:04,730  
After the liberation and after  
my return to Czechoslovakia,

1745  
01:38:04,730 --> 01:38:10,640  
I was so preoccupied with  
injustice and unfairness

1746  
01:38:10,640 --> 01:38:15,330  
that hatred, for me,  
was not the issue.

1747  
01:38:15,330 --> 01:38:18,470  
So what I did instead,  
very consciously, including

1748  
01:38:18,470 --> 01:38:19,700  
my father--

1749  
01:38:19,700 --> 01:38:23,180  
including my father, who was  
perhaps less aggressive than I

1750  
01:38:23,180 --> 01:38:25,250  
in these things--

1751  
01:38:25,250 --> 01:38:29,210  
I went around to help  
all my German friends

1752  
01:38:29,210 --> 01:38:30,740  
who were into deep trouble.

1753  
01:38:30,740 --> 01:38:34,580  
Some of them were  
killed, murdered.

1754

01:38:34,580 --> 01:38:37,610

Some were put into prisons,  
and I got them out.

1755

01:38:37,610 --> 01:38:39,530

Particularly those  
people, of course.

1756

01:38:39,530 --> 01:38:42,290

And I only knew people  
who were decent Germans--

1757

01:38:42,290 --> 01:38:44,390

quote, unquote,  
"decent" Germans.

1758

01:38:44,390 --> 01:38:47,240

Because I was very much  
aware that you simply cannot

1759

01:38:47,240 --> 01:38:49,850

generalize, merely because--

1760

01:38:49,850 --> 01:38:53,120

not merely, but because you  
had SS people and because

1761

01:38:53,120 --> 01:38:53,750

the German--

1762

01:38:53,750 --> 01:38:56,780

many Germans were National  
Socialists and behaved

1763

01:38:56,780 --> 01:38:59,210

in a way which was inexcusable.

1764

01:38:59,210 --> 01:39:03,200

Doesn't mean that all  
the people are swine.

1765

01:39:03,200 --> 01:39:07,370

And so therefore, my, again,  
feeling of justice was,

1766  
01:39:07,370 --> 01:39:12,110  
I cannot let people who are  
innocent be treated the way I

1767  
01:39:12,110 --> 01:39:14,240  
was treated.

1768  
01:39:14,240 --> 01:39:17,540  
In that, I had my full  
support of my father, who

1769  
01:39:17,540 --> 01:39:20,360  
was just on even keel with me.

1770  
01:39:20,360 --> 01:39:23,665  
And so what we did, we  
helped our German friends,

1771  
01:39:23,665 --> 01:39:25,610  
who were numerous.

1772  
01:39:25,610 --> 01:39:27,470  
I even helped and  
saved the lives

1773  
01:39:27,470 --> 01:39:31,970  
of people, my schoolmates,  
who couldn't care less

1774  
01:39:31,970 --> 01:39:35,270  
about what happened to me.

1775  
01:39:35,270 --> 01:39:39,630  
And certainly didn't give me  
any or render any support.

1776  
01:39:39,630 --> 01:39:43,400  
But I felt it was my  
moral responsibility

1777

01:39:43,400 --> 01:39:46,010  
in view of the fact  
what had happened to me.

1778

01:39:46,010 --> 01:39:51,800  
And I even, for example, in  
certain parts of Bohemia,

1779

01:39:51,800 --> 01:39:58,880  
the northern parts of Bohemia  
where I lived to begin with

1780

01:39:58,880 --> 01:40:01,370  
and was clerk in--

1781

01:40:01,370 --> 01:40:06,560  
the town clerk, actually, and  
had lots of responsibilities.

1782

01:40:06,560 --> 01:40:09,230  
And we had lots of Germans  
which we had to deal with.

1783

01:40:09,230 --> 01:40:13,220  
And anyone who-- and that was an  
interesting thing, because that

1784

01:40:13,220 --> 01:40:17,540  
was patterned after  
the German model,

1785

01:40:17,540 --> 01:40:21,680  
that anyone who was a  
Czech was now superior.

1786

01:40:21,680 --> 01:40:25,240  
It just turned the  
table, so to speak.

1787

01:40:25,240 --> 01:40:34,300  
Anyone who was a Czech and  
fraternized with Germans

1788

01:40:34,300 --> 01:40:38,590  
will be fined 1 million  
crowns and punished, whatever.

1789

01:40:38,590 --> 01:40:42,520  
And I still have some of the  
original handouts on that--

1790

01:40:42,520 --> 01:40:47,350  
still have them at home  
in my-- in my files.

1791

01:40:47,350 --> 01:40:49,880  
So to me, that didn't  
mean anything at all.

1792

01:40:49,880 --> 01:40:53,080  
And then so people  
came to me for help

1793

01:40:53,080 --> 01:40:55,570  
and even offered  
me their daughters

1794

01:40:55,570 --> 01:40:58,840  
as kind of a reward if--

1795

01:40:58,840 --> 01:41:01,690  
they'd say, why don't you  
take her to bed or something?

1796

01:41:01,690 --> 01:41:03,820  
I mean, people were desperate.

1797

01:41:03,820 --> 01:41:06,610  
And I had understanding  
for this desperation.

1798

01:41:06,610 --> 01:41:07,600  
And I'm not going to--

1799

01:41:07,600 --> 01:41:08,960

I was not going to--

1800  
01:41:08,960 --> 01:41:11,440  
they bribed me, wanted to  
bribe me and give me money.

1801  
01:41:11,440 --> 01:41:12,760  
I never took a dime.

1802  
01:41:12,760 --> 01:41:16,540  
I never took advantage of my,  
at that time, power position.

1803  
01:41:16,540 --> 01:41:19,540  
But helped these people as  
much as I could, and even took

1804  
01:41:19,540 --> 01:41:22,690  
people over the border,  
so that they would--

1805  
01:41:22,690 --> 01:41:25,720  
could get to Germany unharmed.

1806  
01:41:25,720 --> 01:41:27,830  
And I'm proud of it.

1807  
01:41:27,830 --> 01:41:33,970  
So for all practical purposes,  
what is defined today

1808  
01:41:33,970 --> 01:41:35,980  
as rescuer, I was a rescuer.

1809  
01:41:35,980 --> 01:41:38,210  
Yes.

1810  
01:41:38,210 --> 01:41:42,580  
And it was not a  
question of the--

1811  
01:41:42,580 --> 01:41:45,820

I didn't-- that was  
something which came natural,

1812  
01:41:45,820 --> 01:41:50,440  
because I didn't feel that I  
was doing anything special.

1813  
01:41:50,440 --> 01:41:54,100  
I just simply behaved in a  
way which I thought I had to,

1814  
01:41:54,100 --> 01:41:58,840  
morally had to, because that was  
my responsibility, after what I

1815  
01:41:58,840 --> 01:42:00,880  
had suffered.

1816  
01:42:00,880 --> 01:42:03,010  
And I'm still preoccupied  
with these things.

1817  
01:42:03,010 --> 01:42:04,600  
And I'm very sensitive on that.

1818  
01:42:04,600 --> 01:42:08,140  
And many people don't  
understand it, why I draw lines.

1819  
01:42:08,140 --> 01:42:09,940  
They don't understand me.

1820  
01:42:09,940 --> 01:42:12,370  
They think they  
do, but they don't.

1821  
01:42:12,370 --> 01:42:16,150  
And therefore are offended when  
I draw the line and say, hey,

1822  
01:42:16,150 --> 01:42:16,690  
I'll do it.

1823

01:42:16,690 --> 01:42:19,790

1824

01:42:19,790 --> 01:42:22,060

I see that you do  
not want to act out

1825

01:42:22,060 --> 01:42:23,550

the prejudice  
toward Germans which

1826

01:42:23,550 --> 01:42:25,820

had been acted out against you.

1827

01:42:25,820 --> 01:42:27,250

That's right.

1828

01:42:27,250 --> 01:42:30,850

But did you have any other  
feelings towards, say,

1829

01:42:30,850 --> 01:42:34,320

the particular perpetrators?

1830

01:42:34,320 --> 01:42:35,460

The SS?

1831

01:42:35,460 --> 01:42:41,800

Well, I just felt very  
strongly about what they did.

1832

01:42:41,800 --> 01:42:45,110

And I felt that it had  
to be brought to justice.

1833

01:42:45,110 --> 01:42:46,900

I really felt that  
they-- and that's

1834

01:42:46,900 --> 01:42:52,660

why I was very much in  
favor of the Nuremberg

1835  
01:42:52,660 --> 01:42:57,520  
trials of major war criminals,  
or minor war criminals.

1836  
01:42:57,520 --> 01:42:59,020  
And I played a part in it.

1837  
01:42:59,020 --> 01:43:01,690  
I was a witness and  
was interrogated

1838  
01:43:01,690 --> 01:43:05,290  
as a witness against Mengele  
and some other people.

1839  
01:43:05,290 --> 01:43:09,520  
And I did that very consciously  
and felt very good about it,

1840  
01:43:09,520 --> 01:43:12,290  
because I felt I had to do it.

1841  
01:43:12,290 --> 01:43:14,720  
So I really think that these  
people had to be brought--

1842  
01:43:14,720 --> 01:43:18,640  
I still have the documents,  
by the way, of an SS witness.

1843  
01:43:18,640 --> 01:43:20,380  
I had to go to German courts.

1844  
01:43:20,380 --> 01:43:25,960  
And in one interview, I  
had here in San Francisco.

1845  
01:43:25,960 --> 01:43:28,560  
And the consul general  
interviewed me.

1846

01:43:28,560 --> 01:43:32,260  
He was just antisemitic to  
the hilt and as unpleasant

1847  
01:43:32,260 --> 01:43:34,180  
as he could possibly be.

1848  
01:43:34,180 --> 01:43:36,550  
And I couldn't understand it.

1849  
01:43:36,550 --> 01:43:38,140  
Just as unpleasant  
as he could be.

1850  
01:43:38,140 --> 01:43:40,940  
Just really-- just awful.

1851  
01:43:40,940 --> 01:43:43,130  
And I made it very  
clear to him also.

1852  
01:43:43,130 --> 01:43:49,930  
I just hated that person's guts,  
the way he conducted himself.

1853  
01:43:49,930 --> 01:43:55,990  
Anyway, so this is-- this is the  
consequence of my experience.

1854  
01:43:55,990 --> 01:43:59,170  
And that's why I'm  
obsessed, preoccupied.

1855  
01:43:59,170 --> 01:44:01,450  
And that's when I'm  
treated unfairly,

1856  
01:44:01,450 --> 01:44:06,080  
what I consider unfairly, I  
respond to that, and I say,

1857  
01:44:06,080 --> 01:44:06,760  
I can't take it.

1858  
01:44:06,760 --> 01:44:08,470  
And people can stand  
on their heads,

1859  
01:44:08,470 --> 01:44:11,140  
and they can be infuriated  
and say, OK, I'd

1860  
01:44:11,140 --> 01:44:13,360  
rather part company with you.

1861  
01:44:13,360 --> 01:44:17,080  
If you, you know, that's it.

1862  
01:44:17,080 --> 01:44:21,880  
So when you began  
interviewing the perpetrators,

1863  
01:44:21,880 --> 01:44:26,350  
you had some apprehension.

1864  
01:44:26,350 --> 01:44:31,345  
Did you feel that you might get  
actively angry with the person?

1865  
01:44:31,345 --> 01:44:32,620  
Oh, yes, and I did.

1866  
01:44:32,620 --> 01:44:35,000  
Because there were  
situations, for example,

1867  
01:44:35,000 --> 01:44:42,160  
when I was asked to be present  
during one of the rallies or--

1868  
01:44:42,160 --> 01:44:44,440  
with the assembled  
former members

1869  
01:44:44,440 --> 01:44:49,090

of the SS-- assembled, which  
they still can do legally.

1870  
01:44:49,090 --> 01:44:52,450  
Just about, I would say,  
1,500 maybe or something--

1871  
01:44:52,450 --> 01:44:53,860  
just a very large number.

1872  
01:44:53,860 --> 01:44:56,080  
And I was invited.

1873  
01:44:56,080 --> 01:44:57,970  
And then it turned  
out that I was also

1874  
01:44:57,970 --> 01:45:00,370  
a guest of honor,  
which that was--

1875  
01:45:00,370 --> 01:45:03,640  
I was, at that time, on  
a Fulbright fellowship

1876  
01:45:03,640 --> 01:45:08,630  
and already teaching and  
full professor at that time.

1877  
01:45:08,630 --> 01:45:13,360  
I just had been made full  
professor at Sonoma State.

1878  
01:45:13,360 --> 01:45:16,090  
And so they invited me.

1879  
01:45:16,090 --> 01:45:18,320  
And I had to address  
them and all that.

1880  
01:45:18,320 --> 01:45:23,430  
So it was just a terrible  
thing and a tremendous strain

1881  
01:45:23,430 --> 01:45:27,610  
to say things which would  
be truthful on one hand,

1882  
01:45:27,610 --> 01:45:30,140  
and also would  
make a difference.

1883  
01:45:30,140 --> 01:45:34,060  
So it was very difficult for  
me, because I didn't expect it.

1884  
01:45:34,060 --> 01:45:35,740  
They didn't tell me  
that I would address

1885  
01:45:35,740 --> 01:45:39,100  
a crowd of 1,500 former SS  
people and their family.

1886  
01:45:39,100 --> 01:45:41,950  
That includes their  
family and because--

1887  
01:45:41,950 --> 01:45:43,810  
and that was a very--

1888  
01:45:43,810 --> 01:45:44,890  
kind of a very--

1889  
01:45:44,890 --> 01:45:51,785  
I sweated blood sitting with  
SS generals at a VIP table.

1890  
01:45:51,785 --> 01:45:54,640

1891  
01:45:54,640 --> 01:45:59,980  
So I just-- it took a lot of  
concentration and adjustment

1892

01:45:59,980 --> 01:46:02,110  
for me to do all this.

1893  
01:46:02,110 --> 01:46:03,880  
But I did it for  
a purpose, namely

1894  
01:46:03,880 --> 01:46:07,450  
to really be a  
participant observer

1895  
01:46:07,450 --> 01:46:12,160  
and see, how do these people  
behave and conduct themselves

1896  
01:46:12,160 --> 01:46:15,340  
in different situations,  
which gave me

1897  
01:46:15,340 --> 01:46:17,800  
clues and insights,  
which otherwise I never

1898  
01:46:17,800 --> 01:46:19,900  
would have been able to get.

1899  
01:46:19,900 --> 01:46:20,650  
See?

1900  
01:46:20,650 --> 01:46:31,520  
And so the upshot of  
it was that, at times,

1901  
01:46:31,520 --> 01:46:34,250  
I got into arguments,  
where you're-- for example,

1902  
01:46:34,250 --> 01:46:39,680  
at this particular mass meeting.

1903  
01:46:39,680 --> 01:46:46,500  
I was then socialized-- we  
then socialized after all

1904  
01:46:46,500 --> 01:46:47,610  
the lectures--

1905  
01:46:47,610 --> 01:46:52,440  
lectures-- not lectures,  
speeches and whatever.

1906  
01:46:52,440 --> 01:46:58,350  
We socialized, and then  
I was asked to socialize,

1907  
01:46:58,350 --> 01:47:00,870  
sit with some SS  
people at one table.

1908  
01:47:00,870 --> 01:47:04,920  
And one person started very  
racist, antisemitic talk

1909  
01:47:04,920 --> 01:47:05,620  
and all this.

1910  
01:47:05,620 --> 01:47:08,700  
And then I said, well,  
you objective people

1911  
01:47:08,700 --> 01:47:10,570  
are prejudiced against  
you, because you

1912  
01:47:10,570 --> 01:47:14,040  
were a member of the SS.

1913  
01:47:14,040 --> 01:47:16,680  
But now you do exactly  
what you object to.

1914  
01:47:16,680 --> 01:47:18,280  
How do you account for that?

1915  
01:47:18,280 --> 01:47:22,260

And we got in a terrific row  
with the man and the other SS.

1916  
01:47:22,260 --> 01:47:24,210  
There were just  
about five people

1917  
01:47:24,210 --> 01:47:26,700  
at that table, five or six.

1918  
01:47:26,700 --> 01:47:29,220  
And the interesting thing  
is the other SS people

1919  
01:47:29,220 --> 01:47:30,870  
really supported my arguments.

1920  
01:47:30,870 --> 01:47:37,790

1921  
01:47:37,790 --> 01:47:41,710  
And what I found is that--

1922  
01:47:41,710 --> 01:47:44,540  
that we prevailed.

1923  
01:47:44,540 --> 01:47:49,010  
The person who came out with  
these antisemitic remarks

1924  
01:47:49,010 --> 01:47:53,150  
is the person who left  
the table in a huff.

1925  
01:47:53,150 --> 01:47:56,270  
So, yes, there are situations  
where I just simply

1926  
01:47:56,270 --> 01:47:59,180  
got into arguments,  
because you draw a line.

1927

01:47:59,180 --> 01:48:01,130  
You are an interviewer.

1928  
01:48:01,130 --> 01:48:04,340  
But you have to draw  
the line at times

1929  
01:48:04,340 --> 01:48:08,000  
where something is being said  
which needs to be responded to,

1930  
01:48:08,000 --> 01:48:13,910  
where you can say,  
this is irresponsible.

1931  
01:48:13,910 --> 01:48:19,400  
Did you ever-- while you were  
in the camps, did it ever

1932  
01:48:19,400 --> 01:48:25,612  
occur to you then to observe  
the behavior of the SS

1933  
01:48:25,612 --> 01:48:27,070  
or any Germans that  
were in charge?

1934  
01:48:27,070 --> 01:48:29,810

1935  
01:48:29,810 --> 01:48:30,890  
When I was in the camp?

1936  
01:48:30,890 --> 01:48:31,580  
Yes.

1937  
01:48:31,580 --> 01:48:36,260  
Well, obviously, because  
I couldn't get out

1938  
01:48:36,260 --> 01:48:39,320  
of my way to do  
that, because that

1939  
01:48:39,320 --> 01:48:44,570  
meant that I was  
risking my life.

1940  
01:48:44,570 --> 01:48:49,790  
But I could when I had  
a chance to observe it.

1941  
01:48:49,790 --> 01:48:51,680  
And then I also could  
respond to them.

1942  
01:48:51,680 --> 01:48:54,950  
And when I got into an  
interaction with them, which I

1943  
01:48:54,950 --> 01:48:55,730  
always--

1944  
01:48:55,730 --> 01:49:00,530  
or in most cases,  
99% cases avoided--

1945  
01:49:00,530 --> 01:49:04,100  
then I had to respond in  
a way which would be least

1946  
01:49:04,100 --> 01:49:06,050  
harmful to me, which I did.

1947  
01:49:06,050 --> 01:49:08,300  
But then, of course, all  
these sort of things,

1948  
01:49:08,300 --> 01:49:14,240  
like in this case, a little  
bit of a photographic memory.

1949  
01:49:14,240 --> 01:49:18,890  
And then this  
remained in my mind.

1950

01:49:18,890 --> 01:49:26,370

And I drew from that  
experience, which--

1951

01:49:26,370 --> 01:49:29,120

which was helpful  
in my research.

1952

01:49:29,120 --> 01:49:31,670

How about your friends,  
family, colleagues?

1953

01:49:31,670 --> 01:49:35,553

Did they have any reaction to  
you wanting to conduct research

1954

01:49:35,553 --> 01:49:36,470

with the perpetrators?

1955

01:49:36,470 --> 01:49:39,950

Well, I find very little  
understanding for it, because--

1956

01:49:39,950 --> 01:49:41,450

particularly in Jewish circles.

1957

01:49:41,450 --> 01:49:43,530

They say, how could you do that?

1958

01:49:43,530 --> 01:49:47,090

That means you must identify  
with the stupid sort of stuff

1959

01:49:47,090 --> 01:49:48,150

which people say.

1960

01:49:48,150 --> 01:49:51,620

You identify with the  
enemy and all these things.

1961

01:49:51,620 --> 01:49:54,500

Which is totally inappropriate,

in some cases-- may or may not

1962

01:49:54,500 --> 01:49:56,060

be.

1963

01:49:56,060 --> 01:50:01,700

Even when I read something which

I wrote about in my book about

1964

01:50:01,700 --> 01:50:08,310

that particular thing, because

some psychologists claimed

1965

01:50:08,310 --> 01:50:09,470

that-- and I know exactly--

1966

01:50:09,470 --> 01:50:13,190

I forget the name of the person

who came out with this notion.

1967

01:50:13,190 --> 01:50:16,910

And then I explained in my

book that these people did not

1968

01:50:16,910 --> 01:50:23,450

identify with the enemy, but

they identified, at times,

1969

01:50:23,450 --> 01:50:26,020

with their power position,

with their power.

1970

01:50:26,020 --> 01:50:27,520

And they wanted to

have their power.

1971

01:50:27,520 --> 01:50:32,780

So in order to

balance the power,

1972

01:50:32,780 --> 01:50:38,390

they behaved in a certain way

which was symbolically similar,

1973  
01:50:38,390 --> 01:50:44,120  
but did not identify with  
the cause of the SS at all.

1974  
01:50:44,120 --> 01:50:46,700  
But they only  
identified with the way

1975  
01:50:46,700 --> 01:51:00,360  
they conducted themselves in  
their overt behavior, demeanor.

1976  
01:51:00,360 --> 01:51:03,360  
So what I'm saying,  
to put it differently,

1977  
01:51:03,360 --> 01:51:08,250  
is that they did not  
identify with the--

1978  
01:51:08,250 --> 01:51:12,030

1979  
01:51:12,030 --> 01:51:17,010  
with the goals of the  
SS, namely to destroy,

1980  
01:51:17,010 --> 01:51:21,850  
but they identified with the  
power in order to survive.

1981  
01:51:21,850 --> 01:51:25,980  
So they used the means  
which they thought

1982  
01:51:25,980 --> 01:51:31,110  
were similar which would--  
which would counter

1983  
01:51:31,110 --> 01:51:38,400  
the power of the SS by simply  
relating to their power values

1984  
01:51:38,400 --> 01:51:39,750  
which they would recognize.

1985  
01:51:39,750 --> 01:51:46,560  
And one of which, which I  
used, was immaculate German.

1986  
01:51:46,560 --> 01:51:49,680  
And it worked every time.

1987  
01:51:49,680 --> 01:51:57,160  
My immaculate German, for very  
many reasons, saved my life--

1988  
01:51:57,160 --> 01:52:03,400  
saved my life, particularly when  
I had encounters with the SS.

1989  
01:52:03,400 --> 01:52:06,460  
Because then they  
said, my God, I mean,

1990  
01:52:06,460 --> 01:52:08,830  
this person doesn't  
fit the stereotype

1991  
01:52:08,830 --> 01:52:12,030  
of a "Jew," quote, unquote.

1992  
01:52:12,030 --> 01:52:13,680  
He's like us.

1993  
01:52:13,680 --> 01:52:23,290  
And then they're more  
reluctant to hurt me.

1994  
01:52:23,290 --> 01:52:25,550  
And every time I  
was in a situation--

1995  
01:52:25,550 --> 01:52:29,920

not that many occasions-- but  
every time this happened and I

1996

01:52:29,920 --> 01:52:35,530

behaved in a way which I  
knew was, to them, familiar

1997

01:52:35,530 --> 01:52:38,080

and they respected, I succeeded.

1998

01:52:38,080 --> 01:52:40,800

1999

01:52:40,800 --> 01:52:44,040

So are you saying  
that identification

2000

01:52:44,040 --> 01:52:48,750

with the aggressor would  
more entail the identifier

2001

01:52:48,750 --> 01:52:49,500

[INAUDIBLE] abuse.

2002

01:52:49,500 --> 01:52:50,520

The means.

2003

01:52:50,520 --> 01:52:51,720

Yeah, that's right.

2004

01:52:51,720 --> 01:52:53,880

And those kinds of things.

2005

01:52:53,880 --> 01:52:54,450

That's right.

2006

01:52:54,450 --> 01:52:56,310

But what you're  
describing is where

2007

01:52:56,310 --> 01:52:58,170

you pick out certain values--

2008  
01:52:58,170 --> 01:52:59,790  
That's right, exactly.

2009  
01:52:59,790 --> 01:53:01,440  
--and embody those.

2010  
01:53:01,440 --> 01:53:03,660  
Yeah, and that's what  
I explained in my book

2011  
01:53:03,660 --> 01:53:06,990  
and said that, this is  
certainly what took place.

2012  
01:53:06,990 --> 01:53:10,680  
For instance, kapos tried  
to look like SS people.

2013  
01:53:10,680 --> 01:53:14,250  
Of course, many of the  
kapos were in for themselves

2014  
01:53:14,250 --> 01:53:17,980  
and didn't care  
about fellow inmates

2015  
01:53:17,980 --> 01:53:23,220  
and at times killed them  
without any reservation

2016  
01:53:23,220 --> 01:53:26,250  
in order to survive, in  
order to have a better life.

2017  
01:53:26,250 --> 01:53:27,670  
Again, it's understandable.

2018  
01:53:27,670 --> 01:53:29,200  
I never would have done it.

2019  
01:53:29,200 --> 01:53:31,830

And I know quite a few who  
never would have done it.

2020  
01:53:31,830 --> 01:53:34,010  
And there are also  
some kapos and people

2021  
01:53:34,010 --> 01:53:40,170  
who were inmate functionaries  
who, indeed, did not

2022  
01:53:40,170 --> 01:53:42,480  
misuse their power position.

2023  
01:53:42,480 --> 01:53:46,110  
In fact, they used it to  
save other people's lives,

2024  
01:53:46,110 --> 01:53:47,880  
fellow inmates' lives.

2025  
01:53:47,880 --> 01:53:49,860  
And that happened also.

2026  
01:53:49,860 --> 01:53:52,080  
But I've never been  
in a power position,

2027  
01:53:52,080 --> 01:53:59,040  
because I wouldn't have  
liked to have it, number one.

2028  
01:53:59,040 --> 01:54:01,950  
And it was not--

2029  
01:54:01,950 --> 01:54:03,690  
I was not offered one.

2030  
01:54:03,690 --> 01:54:05,400  
But I never would  
have done anything.

2031

01:54:05,400 --> 01:54:07,830  
If I would have accepted, I  
never would have hurt anyone,

2032  
01:54:07,830 --> 01:54:09,120  
I'm sure.

2033  
01:54:09,120 --> 01:54:12,090  
I would have played the game.

2034  
01:54:12,090 --> 01:54:14,100  
So there were some  
kapos, you're saying,

2035  
01:54:14,100 --> 01:54:16,410  
who you would  
describe as falling

2036  
01:54:16,410 --> 01:54:18,840  
into the trap of identification  
with the aggressor

2037  
01:54:18,840 --> 01:54:19,890  
in their behavior?

2038  
01:54:19,890 --> 01:54:25,170  
Well, they did not-- still,  
they didn't identify.

2039  
01:54:25,170 --> 01:54:28,290  
But they did not identify  
necessarily at all

2040  
01:54:28,290 --> 01:54:31,290  
with a cause of SS.

2041  
01:54:31,290 --> 01:54:34,710  
But they identified with  
their power to be sure.

2042  
01:54:34,710 --> 01:54:38,670  
And they identified with  
the means to stay alive

2043  
01:54:38,670 --> 01:54:42,360  
and to succeed, which  
meant to be brutal,

2044  
01:54:42,360 --> 01:54:44,370  
which meant to kill people.

2045  
01:54:44,370 --> 01:54:46,470  
But they didn't do it  
for the Nazi cause.

2046  
01:54:46,470 --> 01:54:48,885  
They did it for their own  
personal cause in order

2047  
01:54:48,885 --> 01:54:56,370  
to-- in order to have a  
better life and survive.

2048  
01:54:56,370 --> 01:54:58,770  
So they didn't do it  
because they identified

2049  
01:54:58,770 --> 01:55:00,225  
with the cause of the Nazis.

2050  
01:55:00,225 --> 01:55:03,820

2051  
01:55:03,820 --> 01:55:08,270  
And that needs to be clarified,  
because very many people,

2052  
01:55:08,270 --> 01:55:12,040  
or most people, really  
don't understand it.

2053  
01:55:12,040 --> 01:55:14,395  
Maybe this would be a  
good place, if you would,

2054

01:55:14,395 --> 01:55:18,550  
to describe what is the  
difference amongst the SS,

2055  
01:55:18,550 --> 01:55:22,540  
the Waffen-SS, the Gestapo,  
all these different perpetrator

2056  
01:55:22,540 --> 01:55:23,040  
groups.

2057  
01:55:23,040 --> 01:55:26,930  
Yeah, so the SS was a very--

2058  
01:55:26,930 --> 01:55:28,415  
was not at all a--

2059  
01:55:28,415 --> 01:55:31,265

2060  
01:55:31,265 --> 01:55:37,570  
a unified organization.

2061  
01:55:37,570 --> 01:55:41,590  
It was an organization of  
many functions to be sure.

2062  
01:55:41,590 --> 01:55:44,230  
Most of the people, that's  
what they had in common,

2063  
01:55:44,230 --> 01:55:48,190  
identified with National  
Socialist ideology.

2064  
01:55:48,190 --> 01:55:49,750  
Because one should under--

2065  
01:55:49,750 --> 01:55:54,550  
forget that, until 1943,  
when people were recruited

2066

01:55:54,550 --> 01:55:57,790  
into the SS, still had  
some sort of a choice,

2067  
01:55:57,790 --> 01:56:01,000  
but not much of a choice.

2068  
01:56:01,000 --> 01:56:02,140  
They volunteered.

2069  
01:56:02,140 --> 01:56:05,170  
So the SS was made  
up of volunteers.

2070  
01:56:05,170 --> 01:56:09,080  
And that is a very important  
thing for us to remember.

2071  
01:56:09,080 --> 01:56:10,840  
So if they volunteered,  
so they had

2072  
01:56:10,840 --> 01:56:15,130  
to identify with something  
which appealed to them.

2073  
01:56:15,130 --> 01:56:18,640  
And the dominant sort of thing  
was, of course, Nazi ideology.

2074  
01:56:18,640 --> 01:56:23,380  
And you can't say that you  
disagreed with Nazi ideology

2075  
01:56:23,380 --> 01:56:26,110  
if you became an SS  
member, because then you

2076  
01:56:26,110 --> 01:56:29,890  
were a part of it.

2077  
01:56:29,890 --> 01:56:32,770  
You become an integral

part of Nazi ideology,

2078

01:56:32,770 --> 01:56:35,920  
namely to put Nazi  
ideology into practice.

2079

01:56:35,920 --> 01:56:38,890  
And that I think we shouldn't  
forget, because then--

2080

01:56:38,890 --> 01:56:41,080  
so that they had  
in common for sure.

2081

01:56:41,080 --> 01:56:44,030  
But their functions  
were different.

2082

01:56:44,030 --> 01:56:47,080  
So when I, for example,  
talked about the people

2083

01:56:47,080 --> 01:56:51,310  
of the Waffen-SS, so primarily,  
the Waffen-SS was supposed

2084

01:56:51,310 --> 01:56:54,700  
to be something like  
the US Marines--

2085

01:56:54,700 --> 01:56:58,720  
a superior combat elite.

2086

01:56:58,720 --> 01:57:02,470  
And Steiner was one of the  
people who was a co-founder

2087

01:57:02,470 --> 01:57:04,750  
of the-- that is to  
say, he built up--

2088

01:57:04,750 --> 01:57:09,760  
he really was one of the major

senior instructors who really

2089

01:57:09,760 --> 01:57:14,020  
built it up, along with some  
other people, all of whom-- no,

2090

01:57:14,020 --> 01:57:14,980  
one exception--

2091

01:57:14,980 --> 01:57:17,770  
I got to know-- two exceptions--

2092

01:57:17,770 --> 01:57:19,300  
and interviewed.

2093

01:57:19,300 --> 01:57:23,050  
Now, so, they were soldiers.

2094

01:57:23,050 --> 01:57:25,570  
But the question is,  
whom did they serve?

2095

01:57:25,570 --> 01:57:28,420  
And there is no question  
whom they served.

2096

01:57:28,420 --> 01:57:29,660  
They served their country.

2097

01:57:29,660 --> 01:57:31,960  
That's exactly  
what I asked him--

2098

01:57:31,960 --> 01:57:37,860  
whom did you-- did you  
serve Germany or Hitler?

2099

01:57:37,860 --> 01:57:42,040  
See, but you see, and that's why  
it is important to understand

2100

01:57:42,040 --> 01:58:00,450

that Hoess, the deputy leader  
in his introduction of Hitler,

2101  
01:58:00,450 --> 01:58:04,300  
said, you are Germany,  
and Germany is you.

2102  
01:58:04,300 --> 01:58:06,705  
So what they tried to  
do in the Nazi ideology,

2103  
01:58:06,705 --> 01:58:13,650  
they tried to fuse Hitler  
with Germany and Germany

2104  
01:58:13,650 --> 01:58:14,730  
with Hitler.

2105  
01:58:14,730 --> 01:58:18,270  
And to a large extent,  
they succeeded.

2106  
01:58:18,270 --> 01:58:20,760  
Is that what the SS  
would answer when

2107  
01:58:20,760 --> 01:58:22,140  
you asked to whom did they--

2108  
01:58:22,140 --> 01:58:25,920  
No, no, no, they didn't think  
that clearly, most of them.

2109  
01:58:25,920 --> 01:58:27,736  
Did they think they were--

2110  
01:58:27,736 --> 01:58:29,760  
They all claimed  
that they were--

2111  
01:58:29,760 --> 01:58:36,000  
that they were serving Germany,  
that they were patriots.

2112  
01:58:36,000 --> 01:58:39,510  
And that Hitler was a patriot.

2113  
01:58:39,510 --> 01:58:41,220  
And that he meant--

2114  
01:58:41,220 --> 01:58:43,650  
that he really meant--

2115  
01:58:43,650 --> 01:58:46,800  
just wanted the best for  
Germany and all that.

2116  
01:58:46,800 --> 01:58:52,597  
So that was this-- usually  
this type of question

2117  
01:58:52,597 --> 01:58:53,430  
which they answered.

2118  
01:58:53,430 --> 01:58:56,520

2119  
01:58:56,520 --> 01:59:03,070  
But you had people  
in the Waffen-SS

2120  
01:59:03,070 --> 01:59:06,610  
who were not necessarily  
members of the Nazi party

2121  
01:59:06,610 --> 01:59:10,570  
and were not Nazi ideologues,  
particularly the older ones.

2122  
01:59:10,570 --> 01:59:14,860  
The younger ones, of  
course, were very much--

2123  
01:59:14,860 --> 01:59:20,200  
very much indoctrinated

with Nazi ideology.

2124

01:59:20,200 --> 01:59:24,490

They went through the  
Hitler Youth, for example.

2125

01:59:24,490 --> 01:59:28,960

Or just about that,  
actually grew up

2126

01:59:28,960 --> 01:59:31,810

under the Third Reich or the  
beginnings of the Third Reich

2127

01:59:31,810 --> 01:59:37,627

up until '43, and very much  
affected by that, because they

2128

01:59:37,627 --> 01:59:38,710

didn't know anything else.

2129

01:59:38,710 --> 01:59:42,710

They really indoctrinated  
successfully.

2130

01:59:42,710 --> 01:59:44,530

And so they had a  
different attitude.

2131

01:59:44,530 --> 01:59:47,620

And therefore, the conflict  
between the older generation

2132

01:59:47,620 --> 01:59:50,720

of the SS and the younger was--

2133

01:59:50,720 --> 01:59:53,650

was visible, except  
they couldn't

2134

01:59:53,650 --> 01:59:57,430

do very much because the older  
ones were their superiors.

2135  
01:59:57,430 --> 02:00:00,220  
That only came  
out after the war.

2136  
02:00:00,220 --> 02:00:02,500  
How was it that the  
older ones weren't

2137  
02:00:02,500 --> 02:00:08,160  
full-fledged Nazis when you  
had to join from a [INAUDIBLE]??

2138  
02:00:08,160 --> 02:00:10,270  
Well, Steiner certainly wasn't.

2139  
02:00:10,270 --> 02:00:13,720  
And some other generals  
didn't like Hitler at all.

2140  
02:00:13,720 --> 02:00:15,790  
Hitler didn't get  
along with them at all.

2141  
02:00:15,790 --> 02:00:20,440  
But they felt that they  
are military people who

2142  
02:00:20,440 --> 02:00:25,780  
fought a war against the  
communists, the Soviet

2143  
02:00:25,780 --> 02:00:29,080  
Union, who were their arch  
enemy, hoping that they would

2144  
02:00:29,080 --> 02:00:34,270  
align themselves with the  
West against the Soviet Union.

2145  
02:00:34,270 --> 02:00:36,400  
Which, of course,  
never happened.

2146  
02:00:36,400 --> 02:00:38,260  
But that's what they hoped.

2147  
02:00:38,260 --> 02:00:39,460  
But they didn't like Hitler.

2148  
02:00:39,460 --> 02:00:41,560  
And they didn't particularly--

2149  
02:00:41,560 --> 02:00:44,840  
felt very strongly about him.

2150  
02:00:44,840 --> 02:00:48,310  
But they didn't do  
anything against him.

2151  
02:00:48,310 --> 02:00:51,350  
Well, Steiner, for example,  
knew quite a few people

2152  
02:00:51,350 --> 02:00:55,240  
who were-- who were active  
in the 20th of July.

2153  
02:00:55,240 --> 02:00:57,100  
And he knew about  
some of the things.

2154  
02:00:57,100 --> 02:01:04,120  
He disagreed with what they did,  
not because he loved-- and I

2155  
02:01:04,120 --> 02:01:05,920  
had discussions  
which-- with him,

2156  
02:01:05,920 --> 02:01:09,040  
which are in my book, which  
are appended in my book

2157  
02:01:09,040 --> 02:01:13,000

very specifically, verbatim,  
because immediately after that,

2158  
02:01:13,000 --> 02:01:15,550  
I put things down.

2159  
02:01:15,550 --> 02:01:22,960  
And so he said, well, if  
you want to kill a dictator,

2160  
02:01:22,960 --> 02:01:26,890  
you have to have enough courage  
to do it personally, and shoot

2161  
02:01:26,890 --> 02:01:30,382  
him and personally, rather than  
leave a bomb and then leave.

2162  
02:01:30,382 --> 02:01:31,840  
And that's an  
interesting argument.

2163  
02:01:31,840 --> 02:01:34,850

2164  
02:01:34,850 --> 02:01:37,090  
And so he said, well--

2165  
02:01:37,090 --> 02:01:41,440  
he disagreed with the  
killing of, at this point,

2166  
02:01:41,440 --> 02:01:46,213  
because he felt that it would  
have created greater chaos

2167  
02:01:46,213 --> 02:01:47,380  
and more people would have--

2168  
02:01:47,380 --> 02:01:48,338  
Let me put it that way.

2169

02:01:48,338 --> 02:01:50,970  
This is a rebellion that  
took place, as I understand.

2170  
02:01:50,970 --> 02:01:54,010  
Yeah, well, the  
20th of July '44.

2171  
02:01:54,010 --> 02:02:02,230  
And so many people knew about  
it, but did not participate.

2172  
02:02:02,230 --> 02:02:07,240  
And some knew about  
it and participate

2173  
02:02:07,240 --> 02:02:08,950  
against these people--

2174  
02:02:08,950 --> 02:02:10,773  
of the 20th of July people.

2175  
02:02:10,773 --> 02:02:12,940  
And some people knew about  
it and didn't do anything

2176  
02:02:12,940 --> 02:02:13,440  
about it.

2177  
02:02:13,440 --> 02:02:18,610  
Just simply swept it under the  
carpet, didn't get involved.

2178  
02:02:18,610 --> 02:02:21,640  
And Steiner was one person  
who did not get involved

2179  
02:02:21,640 --> 02:02:26,350  
and had some inkling in  
terms of what was happening.

2180  
02:02:26,350 --> 02:02:28,450  
This was a plot--

2181  
02:02:28,450 --> 02:02:32,050  
A plot to kill Adolf Hitler.

2182  
02:02:32,050 --> 02:02:33,995  
But that was already  
five to 12:00.

2183  
02:02:33,995 --> 02:02:36,370  
Why did they wait that long,  
because they could have done

2184  
02:02:36,370 --> 02:02:38,680  
that much-- of course,  
he was also lucky,

2185  
02:02:38,680 --> 02:02:42,280  
because many of the  
attempts to assassinate him,

2186  
02:02:42,280 --> 02:02:46,550  
he avoided successfully.

2187  
02:02:46,550 --> 02:02:49,490  
But there was that  
much fervor in a group

2188  
02:02:49,490 --> 02:02:53,780  
to eradicate him that late  
into this [INAUDIBLE]..

2189  
02:02:53,780 --> 02:02:56,360  
Yeah, but the interesting  
thing is that all these people

2190  
02:02:56,360 --> 02:02:57,410  
became generals.

2191  
02:02:57,410 --> 02:03:00,200  
And then what did they--  
they must have done something

2192

02:03:00,200 --> 02:03:03,198  
towards supporting  
Hitler, otherwise they

2193  
02:03:03,198 --> 02:03:04,490  
would have not become generals.

2194  
02:03:04,490 --> 02:03:07,460  
So all these sort of things  
are highly questionable things.

2195  
02:03:07,460 --> 02:03:10,790  
And it's not-- it's a very  
complex question, which

2196  
02:03:10,790 --> 02:03:13,580  
by no means has been resolved.

2197  
02:03:13,580 --> 02:03:17,570  
And I don't necessarily see  
great heroes in these people,

2198  
02:03:17,570 --> 02:03:18,950  
because they waited that long.

2199  
02:03:18,950 --> 02:03:23,760  
And also, they became very  
high-positied officers,

2200  
02:03:23,760 --> 02:03:25,310  
including SS.

2201  
02:03:25,310 --> 02:03:27,490  
Why did they want to kill  
Hitler at this point?

2202  
02:03:27,490 --> 02:03:32,630  
Well, to get out of the war  
and not be totally vanquished,

2203  
02:03:32,630 --> 02:03:35,630  
because it was  
purely pragmatic--

2204

02:03:35,630 --> 02:03:36,620

purely pragmatic.

2205

02:03:36,620 --> 02:03:37,990

And some--