

You were going to recollect a bit on the differences. You said you had just learned recently that there were post-war pogroms--

Yeah, well, in the intermission you were talking-- I asked you how you-- why are you interested in it if you were a daughter of a survivor. Yeah, a lot of Polish Jews did not go back and stayed in DP camps. I have no experience with it at all. The fact that my mother was alive brought some sort of a normalcy to my life after the war.

And in fact, a fellow who was my brother's age, who was six years old and myself, whose parents did not survive moved in with us and became one of us, and he is the one I just visited in Czechoslovakia. He's now 67. And believe it or not, now that the communists have gone he is trying to reestablish his great-grandparents' business that was founded in 1849, at the age of 67 starting to drive business.

And fortunately he has some knowledge of how business was done under free-- normal capitalistic circumstances, which they don't in Czechoslovakia. It's just a state of chaos. That bothered me more than going to my town, see how inexperienced people are, how terribly harmed they were by the Soviet regime.

And I drew an analogy, that the Soviets, the communists, actually owe reparation to these people, what they have done to their lives, how they have subjugated them. Morally, mentally what they have done is just-- we're so lucky that I have escaped it, that I was able to get away after that terrible-- I almost drew an analogy what the Germans have done.

I don't know-- I don't know which was worse, except that communism lasted 40 years, the Germans only-- in Czechoslovakia-- only five years. But coming back, I just tried to get it in there.

Yeah, I have never-- I was surprised, actually, that that happened. The difference between Poland and Czechoslovakia-- I'm not saying better, but it was quite a bit different. I think that, with the exception of what is the Ukrainian-- part of-- now it's Ukraine, part of Czechoslovakia. It was given back to the Russians-- given? It was taken away from it in 1945 where there were a lot of Orthodox and Hasidic Jews.

But Czechoslovakia-- the Jews were probably more integrated into the Czech life, a lot of synagogues. They're still-- they were Jewish, but they were more-- I wouldn't assimilated. I would say integrated. So there was not such a tremendous difference. You didn't see people in caftans so much walking with the big fur hats, though there was a group of Orthodox Jews in the town that I came from.

But nothing like that happened in Czechoslovakia. Whenever I was telling you-- I know we didn't-- we didn't speak Yiddish. We didn't have this Yiddishkeit. We spoke Czech. That was our language.

In fact, when we came to Auschwitz, a lot of Polish Jews disliked us for the fact that we didn't speak Yiddish. They thought that we were ashamed of fact, we were Jewish. It just wasn't part of our upbringing.

And it was thrown into our face many times. It just was not our language, and it isn't my language today. I have learned it, and I said I used it for fun because German and Yiddish is somewhat-- Yiddish has the origins of German, the Old German. But it was different.

I have a question that I recall from the last interview we did, and this may be just too intrusive to go back. But you were in a clinic-- I think it was in Buchenwald-- with your feet--

Cleaning hospital.

And you said during that interview that you saw some terrible things, but you didn't want to-- you didn't know if we wanted to hear these disgusting things that--

Well, yeah, maybe they were terrible-- maybe they were sort of terrible things that you see today. It's just-- I remember saying it.

It was just-- when I said terrible, there was terrible then. Today what you see on TV is probably-- when you look at pictures of Ethiopia, it's equally terrible. You see what I mean?

I saw people just with diarrhea and just sort of disappearing in front of your eyes. I know I-- don't know if I mentioned that. I may have. For example, people just got bones, just bones, and they were chewing on the bones. And they got constipated, and they could-- and I remember that they put a man on a-- they were just scraping from his rectum bones. They were just-- and then the men got diarrhea. Just in a day he was gone, gone.

You saw amputations just right there, right in front of you. So for a 15-year-old they were terrible then, so maybe I made it sound more dramatic than it really is today.

There were things that 15-year-olds normally don't see. So I-- terrible-- I don't think-- it's terrible when you see a human being just fade away.

It seems a paradox to me that at the same time they are trying to exterminate and eliminate they are also trying to heal and cure. I find that a paradox.

Buchenwald was a camp that was-- I asked the question myself. Buchenwald was a camp that was founded right in the 30s. It wasn't for Jews. It was for the. It was political prisoners, people who were not sympathetic to the Nazi regime. So that was the origin of the-- and there was the leader of the Communist Party in Germany. His name was Thalmann, same as the composer, who lived in camp.

So they did have a hospital of sorts like they have a hospital in San Quentin. It was a prison. It was a camp prison. So they did have a hospital. If somebody got a typhoid fever, the Germans were not immune to that-- I mean the guards-- because if you didn't take care of it, it could easily spread. It is a paradox, but that was-- I think they did have that.

Well, listen, did it make any sense that when they were liquidating the camp when the Russians were-- instead of taking people to fight the war, they were liquidating camps and thousands and thousands of people to move the Jews and the prisoners, not to foreign-- I could never understand that. It certainly didn't make any sense. It is a--

But perhaps my explanation will be-- and I don't know if it's accurate, that the camp was founded in the 30s and that's when the hospital was-- I don't know why they didn't-- I was useless. I was useless at all times as-- people were not in the camps to work. They were not-- there were some like Mauthausen, and there were work camps. But at the diet that people were doing, it was certainly not very productive, not productive at all.

It must have been a tremendous hate of Jews. That's something else I could never explain, why-- what brought it in the Germans, what brought it about that they had such an incredible hate towards the Jews where the Jews were so active with the German-- such a productive minority within the German nation and many other European nations. I couldn't explain it.

Yeah, they did have a hospital. It was not very-- bare minimum. But nevertheless, it was a place where they put people who were ill.

I've got one question, Judith. Again from the earlier interview I forget the precise context, but you referred to an incident where a man was hidden in some straw as a German soldier, I think, which forked the straw, searching for him.

No, no. That was during the march. Go ahead. I'm sorry. I didn't let you finish.

Well, if you could expand on that anecdote--

Well, I thought I did. The man is alive. The man is alive. He lives somewhere in New York. He comes from my hometown. Well, he was on that march, and he tried to escape several times. First time they-- in Europe, in the farmhouses-- the barn was usually above the stables, way up there, and we had to crawl up there with ladders.

And then the Germans, before we-- people were hiding under the straw, hopefully they will not find us. And then they probably thought maybe the Russians will catch up with him. But they caught him first time. They didn't-- the pitchfork didn't hit him. They threw him down. They threw him from that first floor. Nothing happened to him, and he escaped several times.

He-- that is interesting. I talked to him about it on the phone not long ago, and he totally suppressed it. He could not remember it very well as I was talking. He has totally suppressed his-- he must-- not to remember that, somebody had to have suppressed it. He could not remember that, that he escaped.

And then as we were talking it was sort of coming back to him. And I don't think he even returned to our hometown. He stayed in Germany after the war, married a half-Jewish woman whose mother was arrested by the Gestapo, her Jewish mother, and that-- I don't think I've ever met her.

And he never never came back, so he probably consciously tried to suppress that. That probably is more interesting about the story than anything else, that I had to remind him of that, that he was caught by the Germans-- and it's not long ago that I talked to him.

When I meet some of the people that were with me, I like to talk of the present, of what has happened to them since the war rather than what went through the war. It's sort of-- I like to see the people who I know from before. But I like to know how they're doing now and how their children and grandchildren are doing rather than what we have done during-- we have done some of it when I met the people. It's inevitable. But I don't thrive on it. Some people do.

That's why I didn't know how I'll do in this interview if I-- I'm sure you have spoken to people who are much more descriptive and elaborate on what has happened during the war-- I was-- think my reaction of it probably is probably equally interesting, of how I'm looking back at that.

I mentioned about my number. People just do stare at it a lot, even people who were born way after the war who know a lot about it. I had an attorney who was terribly-- who did a thesis for his PhD about concentration camps. He was terribly interested. I don't know if I was paying for his time, but I was telling him about the concentration camps. You know attorneys. Well, he was on retainer. I figure--

But he was terribly interested, and he knew a lot about it. I was-- I'm surprised when somebody, especially an American, who was born way after the war, knows a lot about it. I'm really amazed because most people don't know even where Czechoslovakia is in this country. They mix it up with Yugoslavia very often. That amazes me equally.

Do you have a tattooed number? Would you allow us to see it?

Certainly.

This is something I was hoping we could ask you.

No problem.

I confess, I'm usually pretty fearless, but I was--

I'm not showing off anything. You asked me. I would have never-- I was going to have a shirt with short sleeves, and because of that I took a shirt with long sleeve because I didn't want to be obvious. But I don't-- that was only because of this interview. I usually don't-- can I put my--

Sure, thank you.

By the way, that maybe-- there's 168597. The one number is quite-- is not legible. The seven I think has, after a while, disappeared, and I know they were checking us, and they have redone that again. Yeah.

And I probably told you that there was-- my brother was once 595-- there was one number between us, and we've never found out who the person who was in between us.

Yeah, even now in Europe somebody was just looking at it, and sometimes people ask me what it is. And I tell them it's a phone number, and if they're stupid and naive enough, they buy it. Yeah.

I guess talking about my children-- they saw it ever-- they thought it was just-- they never think about it. I often wonder what my kids feel about the camp, but they're just--

Did you ever just try to ask them?

Well, I decided that-- the fact that they didn't want to know bothered me. Maybe it wasn't fair of me because they are very young, and I think that when the time comes when they ask me maybe that's the time when I will tell them, when they're ready.

They do, of course, know a great deal about what happened.

Well, I think--

They know enough to not want to know--

Listen, I made them come to Dachau. Though I wasn't there, I made them go and see it. I took them to Terezin. I mean I made them go. They didn't want to go because it sort of sets them apart from me. And again, in all fairness, I understand that, and if they ever will see this tape-- they probably know how I feel today.

But they are not interested in it. Apparently it's quite common, I'm told, so. I like to believe that.

Did they ever ask you-- I know that they've obviously seen the numbers since their eyes focused. Did they ever ask you what it was?

The number?

Yeah.

Oh, they knew that. They know what it is. I guess they know what it is. One of the daughters was somewhat curious, but I guess because of the other day, so she gave up not to make her look bad. But so then she dropped it. But the time will come. We live in different times.

But as I said a few times before, their friends don't have fathers who were in camp, and that sets them apart. And the only way I understand is intellectually. Otherwise I just-- would I be interested? Would I be any different? Probably not. So you can't hold it against them.

Not many-- as I said, it's-- never mind. There's just a lot of things about that. Maybe we should stop. I think it's been a long time. It's 12:30.

Perhaps you'd like to photograph the composite picture that he brought with him.

That will be next.

With that--

Roll for a moment here. So tell us about this collage of photos here.

Well, this is something that my wife made up for me. As I said, when she cut up some of those pictures it shocked me. It was my birthday present, and I upset her by being shocked. But she said, look, at least now we're able to display these photographs. Before they were in a drawer. And she has a point.

Well, I was about 12 or 13 years old. That was during the war, obviously, when you see with the Star of David. That's my father as an officer in the Austro-Hungarian army. And he was a little bit bald-headed like I am today, but down when you see little hair it was when he was a student at the university in Vienna. You can see him lying down there.

Where is it?

If you raised-- if you were raised-- below the uniform. That's it. And he was a veterinarian, actually.

This photo here?

Yeah, that's all my father.

That's your father also.

And there's my father, clay pigeons. He was a hunter.

He was a veterinarian, your father?

Yeah. He gave that up, and he went to the lumber business. That was right when went to help his father.

And the clay pigeon shooting-- what year would that have been?

Oh, probably in the 30s. Probably in the mid-30s, I would imagine. He was an avid hunter. And when I was back now, a hunting partner-- the wife of a hunting partner-- I went to visit her, and she gave me horns of a roe buck. It's a type of European deer, a little deer, and we reminisced about-- that was wonderful times hunting. That was not something the Jewish people used to do, but we were different.

Your father's name? I don't think you mentioned it.

His name was Arn³st, A-R-N-O-S-T with an accent over the S. And this is my-- my mother is the one on the left.

Far left?

Far left, correct, and this-- my grandparents. I did know my grandmother. My grandfather I didn't know. He died when my mother was nine years old, so that--

And these two people?

My mother's sisters. They both were gassed in Auschwitz.

And this is about when?

Well, I don't know. How-- I'm sorry. How old was my mother there? What was she, 11, 12? A long time ago.

Were you--

My mother was born in 1902.

Were you at Auschwitz at the same time they were?

Well, they came-- they went to Theresienstadt at the same time. We stayed, and they went straight on. They went straight on to Auschwitz. And those people who didn't stay in Terezin went straight into the gas chamber.

And that's my mother, and the picture on the far left is what we looked like after the war. When we came back it was 1946.

And the people from left to right in that photo?

Well, on the left it's myself, my mother, and my brother. And if you-- go ahead.

Did you know that they had gone on to Auschwitz?

No idea.

They just were not at Terezin.

They just were not at Terezin. They were gone, and whether they were alive or not-- of course later on we learned what-- later we learned what happened with those people who went on. We've learned that later on-- how late, much. But that's what happened.

Now, if you will bring it up, that's my grandfather in front. That's our house in Czechoslovakia. And we've sold it, and people have redone it. It looks totally different now. And I was going to take a picture of it, and I said, that's not my house anymore. I won't do that.

That's the gravestone in Israel of my brother who was a pilot and who got killed in a plane crash. And there is my mother.

That's your mother?

That's my mother.

What year was this photo taken in the center there?

It's probably after the war. I would imagine after the war.

Your mother's name?

Irena, I-R-E-N-A, which is my oldest daughter's middle name. That's again my father hunting there, you see. And that's me as an Israeli soldier, if you-- right there.

If you don't mind my saying so, you look too young to be entrusted with a gun.

With what?

You look too young to be entrusted with a gun.

Everybody is.

I'm not sure age is the criterion.

Well, I was born in-- I must have been about 18, 19. No, wait a minute. That couldn't be. That was in 1949. I was 20 years old.

Almost 20.

Old enough, not old enough to drink in this country but old enough to have a gun.

Which is surprisingly young.

That's what they tell me.

This group again is what?

This is in the Israeli Air Force. They were just pilots with my brother. I only knew one of the men on the right was somebody who was with us in camp during the war. But I don't know who the others were, and I don't know-- I don't know what that piece of paper signifies. I don't know.

One of these people is your brother?

The one on the left.

The one on the left, OK.

The tallest.

And overhead is your father's dog, Lord?

Lord, yeah. Well, Lord--

Lord Number One.

Lord Number One. He was a very-- I have very fond memory of this dog. And in my first interview I mentioned that my father had to turn a dog in, and what a horrible experience it must have been for a man just to go and just turn your dog over to the Germans. I can't even imagine doing it today. I'd shoot them before I give them to the Germans.

It was a German shorthair?

It was a German-- no, it was a German wirehaired, actually. Same difference, except long hair. That's my mother. That was where we--

That's your mother looking out the window in the photo of the dog there?

That is a building which used to be a Jewish school in a Jewish quarter. I could hardly call it a ghetto. It was a Jewish quarter. And that was the apartment of then the-- the headmaster. But the widow has vacated that house, and we were able to move in after we were evicted from our house.

And that's Lord, actually, too. I see the picture enlarged. You see my father on the right right there. You see him?

In the hunting photo--

That's correct.

--the dog is there.

God, I've never noticed that. I'm sorry. I don't have my paternal grandmother on that thing, but she died very long, long time ago. So I-- there were not many photos of her.

I don't think you've mentioned for the recording your brother's name on there.

His name was Paval, P-A-V-A-L. And all-- actually, my daughter, our youngest daughter-- her name is Pavla. All my children have Czech names. In fact, the other day over dinner they were talking about it. Why did you give us names like that? But deep down they really like them.

They did actually come to question that?

Yeah. Yeah, said, God, I hate my name. But I don't believe it.

Besides, I think all--

All girls hate their names.

--little kids or at least all little girls go through a stage of--

Well, one of their name is Maya, which was sort of tolerable, I think. One of them is Petra, P, and one of them is Pavla. And I think they probably like to be different as far as-- there's probably not another one. Though there's a good tennis player in Czechoslovakia that's named Petra Langer, actually.

The back-- you have a bag that you brought?

Well, this is just a shopping bag from--

Why don't you drape it over the back of the chair there so we can see it?

Well, I don't know. I just-- this means-- Zelenina means vegetables, Terezin-- so it's probably named one of these communist cooperatives that probably originated-- and I saw the bag. I don't know where I took it, and I just-- I probably bought something in the town because I visited Terezin myself with my family. And I said, well, it'll probably be an appropriate bag to bring these photographs in.