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INTERVIEW OF: CECILIA EINHORN

*Interviewed by Lynn Rappaport  
San Francisco  
11/12/84  
Austria Poland*

Transcribed by: Rebecca Park

1 INTERVIEWER: Okay, it's on record now, so--so  
2 forget about the tape recorder as soon as you  
3 can.

4 CECILIA EINHORN: Uh huh.

5 INTERVIEWER: Okay?

6 CECILIA EINHORN: Try. I will try.

7  
8 Q. Okay, I think--I think the first thing to give  
9 me is--is your name now and your maiden name.

10 A. Ah, I am Cecilia Frohmer (phonetic spelling),  
11 maiden name; Einhorn now. It's Cecilia Einhorn.

12 Q. Okay. Where did you live in Poland?

13 A. I lived in Bochnia. That's a small town  
14 in the province of Krakow in southern Poland.

15 Q. How do you spell that?

16 A. Bochnia? B-o-c-h-n-i-a.

17 Q. Okay. Were you born there?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. How old were you when the Germans occupied Poland?

20 A. I was 18.

21 Q. What were your circumstances? Were you married?  
22 Were you in school?

23 A. No, I was in school. I graduated in '38 from  
24 high school and I just started courses at the University  
25 in Krakow but, uh, didn't have a chance to finish because

1 then he came, Hitler came.

2 Q. What were you studying?

3 A. Uh, chemistry. I wanted to be a doctor, but as  
4 a Jew it was not easy. I hoped but I was just beginning,  
5 chemistry.

6 Q. What did your father do?

7 A. My father worked, uh, like salesman selling  
8 agriculture machines, for the agriculture.

9 Q. Were you a middle class family, poor, rich?

10 A. Uh, middle class, I guess. More--there was not--  
11 not much of a middle class in Poland at this time.

12 Q. How many--

13 A. But it was comfortable. Sometimes worse, sometimes  
14 better. And--but it was a warm and nice life, family  
15 life, parents. I was the oldest of five children.

16 Q. What did your mother do?

17 A. My mother was just taking care of five children.  
18 (Laughing) And the house.

19 Q. I thought so.

20 A. Yeah.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. We had a big family. My mother's parents and  
23 sisters and their children. It was a big--big family.

24 Q. You lived together in the same house?

25 A. No. The same town. This was a small town, uh huh.

1 Q. How many lived through the war?

2 A. In my family? Just me, myself, and my brother,  
3 who lives now in Israel.

4 Q. Out of how many people?

5 A. Well, immediate family were five children and  
6 my parents, which were young. My mother was only 43  
7 when the Germans shot her.

8 Q. Oh.

9 A. So--and from the other family were left, uh,  
10 there were a lot of people, maybe just three--three young  
11 boys left. Well, they are not young any more.

12 Q. Where do they live?

13 A. Uh, it's just one now left, the others die. In  
14 New York.

15 Q. Oh.

16 A. Immediate cousins.

17 Q. These are cousins?

18 A. Yeah, nobody else here.

19 Q. What was it like immediately after the Germans  
20 occupied Poland?

21 A. Uhm, fear. A lot of young people run away. Uhm,  
22 but somehow we didn't--first of all, that was--the army came.  
23 We didn't see it, the Swastikas, too many of them, the  
24 first few days, as I remember. And we just didn't believe  
25 that they would be that cruel and that bad, that murderous.

1 You know, we--since we all mostly spoke German--we studied  
2 German in school so we could talk to them--didn't believe  
3 it. But shortly after that we could see what it--what  
4 would have--go on with that right away, how cruel.

5 Q. What did--how soon?

6 A. Uh, how soon? I think in 1940, I think they  
7 started the ghetto, no? Something like that, I don't  
8 remember.

9 Q. They started the ghetto in 1940?

10 A. Uh, yeah. It was not--it was not closed up yet,  
11 but in 1940 I think we had to wear armbands with -- with  
12 Magen David, with the Star of David. We were different,  
13 we shouldn't leave the city and (inaudible)--

14 When was the ghetto--

15

16 MAN'S VOICE: In '39

17

18 A. (continuing) '39? Already. Yeah, I said  
19 from beginning on.

20 Q. So how--

21 A. From beginning on they started--

22 Q. So right after the--

23 A. --but it was not yet so closed up that you have  
24 to be one place. Later in--

25 MAN'S VOICE: '40.

1 A. (continuing) In '40, then, it--that  
2 in '40, yeah.

3 Q. Could your father still work?

4 A. No, he -- he was not (inaudible) a salesman  
5 to go outside the city. He couldn't do it anymore, so  
6 I don't remember what exactly what he--first of all, they--they  
7 took us to work. We have to work there right away for  
8 the Germans.

9 Q. Where?

10 A. Uh . . . on, uhm, all kinds of things. Cleaning  
11 and sewing and, for example, they didn't let the Jewish  
12 children go to public schools anymore, so we gathered  
13 our children and we were -- I was working also as a teacher,  
14 so we had to teach our little children to read and write.

15 Q. Were you teaching Jewish children?

16 A. Yes, I was teaching, yes. Because we didn't  
17 have enough teachers, Jewish, and since I already, you  
18 know, finished high school and so forth, that was my--my  
19 work.

20 Q. What was life like in the ghetto?

21 A. Tension. Uhm . . . a lot of people were very  
22 depressed and no hope, and not enough to eat. Hunger.

23 Q. Were they--

24 A. And yet we young people got together sometimes  
25 and sung--used to sing songs and try to cheer each other

1 up as much as we could. We're even writing songs and  
2 making plays so that we keep up our spirits, but it was  
3 a very, very hard time.

4 Q. Did you think it would get better?

5 A. No, it didn't look that get better because we  
6 heard about the way--

7 Q. Uh huh.

8 A. --they were shooting people without any reason  
9 on the street, they were hitting them--

10 Q. Did you see them shoot people?

11 A. Oh, yes. A girlfriend, she was just--for no  
12 apparent reason at all. And sometimes the young people  
13 wanted to get some food for the family so they took off  
14 their Star of David band and went in the village to  
15 bring something and most of the time were the non-Jews  
16 in Poland, because they knew that we are Jewish, something,  
17 they show, "Oh, this one is a Jewess," so, of course,  
18 they have to come in their prison because of that, that  
19 they brought the people back for the family.

20 Q. Because they were trying to buy--

21 A. Right. To buy, right. So it was a very, very  
22 hard time.

23 Q. How did your family survive? Live. Did your  
24 father have money or work?

25 A. Uh, I don't know. I really can't understand how--

1       somehow, you know, when you're young you don't think  
2       about those things. But maybe we got some -- some flour.  
3       I remember Mother making bread. I remember crying if  
4       some of the children wanted another piece of bread and  
5       she didn't let, because we won't have it for tomorrow.  
6       You know, something like that. It was very hard time.  
7       They give us maybe some flour or something, uh, rations,  
8       you know, something like that.

9       Q.           Uh huh. You didn't--

10      A.           And we worked--we worked, so then maybe they  
11      gave us something instead of--because we worked we got  
12      some flour, we got something, but I don't remember how  
13      we survived, really.

14      Q.           How many hours a day did you have to work for  
15      the Germans?

16      A.           Don't remember. A lot of hours. Went in the  
17      morning until late, late in the evening, afternoon, it  
18      depends how long. It depends. They change us. I would  
19      remember I was working, cleaning a house and cleaning--

20      Q.           A German house?

21      A.           Yes. There would be occupation forces were  
22      living there, in a house. I had to clean it, and sometimes  
23      I was assisting a doctor--our doctor from town when he  
24      had some sick people coming in, I assisted him in some  
25      small operations or something, in the office.



1 Q. When did the first action--from what I've read  
2 they used to have these actions--is that what you call it?

3 A. Action, yes. I think in 1940? '40, '41, some-  
4 thing like that, yeah.

5 Q. I can't--

6 A. (inaudible) before that. The greatest----the greatest  
7 action was in 1943.

8

9 MAN'S VOICE: Two.

10 CECILIA EINHORN: Two?

11

12 Q. 1942? Okay, what--

13 A. '42.

14 Q. --what--what happened in the action?

15 A. Now, the best I remember that they took my sisters,  
16 uhm, one was 21 and the other 22, I think that--or maybe  
17 20--20 and 21. Uhm, they took her to Belzec. That  
18 was an extermination camp, we found out later. They  
19 took her. It was a very hot day, it was in the summer.

20 Q. Your brother--your older, your--

21 A. Younger.

22 Q. Your younger sisters?

23 A. Yeah, two younger sisters, uh huh.

24 Q. How did they catch them?

25 A. They just took them. Gathered them together and

1 they--

2

3 MAN'S VOICE: They surrounded the whole ghetto.  
4 They . . . (inaudible) . . . and they took  
5 her sisters.

6 CECILIA EINHORN: Uh huh.

7

8 Q. Okay, so the SS surrounded the ghetto--

9 A. Uh huh, and they took them and then some people  
10 got--like I got, since I was a teacher, that was something,  
11 they gave me a piece of paper that I can still stay in  
12 the ghetto.

13 Q. What did your sisters do?

14 A. Uhm, my sisters were working. One was working  
15 in some factory and some other, also something sewing,  
16 sewing uniforms for the--for the soldiers, something.

17 Q. But they didn't get the paper?

18 A. No, they didn't. And I got--it's just--it was  
19 a stamp, you know, from the SS, and--and then I was allowed  
20 to stay there in the ghetto, but they took them. And my  
21 parents were still there, too. I don't know how did they  
22 get to stay. I don't remember it well.

23 Q. How did--did you know your sisters would die  
24 when they were taken or--

25 A. No! We didn't. We found out later. Somebody

1 came back and told us, but we didn't have much hope for  
2 them. We didn't. First of all, there was, uh, so many  
3 people and we knew that--and young, and old, and everybody  
4 together. But then we had proof, somebody came back,  
5 I think the people who were driving the--

6  
7 MAN'S VOICE: (inaudible)

8 CECILIA EINHORN: Uh huh, yeah.

9  
10 A. (continuing) My husband would know more about  
11 it. Uh, who said that the people were taken right away  
12 to gas chambers or they were killed right away.

13 Q. And what was the--

14 A. I never saw my sisters again.

15 Q. --name of that concentration camp?

16 A. Belzec.

17 Q. B-e-l-z-e-c?

18 A. B-e-l-z-e-c; Belzec.

19 Q. I thought so. What happened after your sisters  
20 were taken away?

21 A. Well, my sisters were taken away. The life  
22 was going on in the ghetto. I myself contracted some  
23 stomach typhus. It's a terrible sickness. I had very,  
24 very high temperature and, uh, my mother didn't know--my  
25 mother, father, what to do because if the SS men, if

1 I wouldn't go to work and they would come home and see  
2 that I am sick, they would just shot me--shoot me on  
3 the spot.

4 Q. Right.

5 A. So what my mother did, she put a cross on my  
6 neck and gave me some--some papers, I don't know, that  
7 I am not Jewish, and they smuggled me out because sometimes  
8 our people from ghetto are going to Krakow, which is  
9 the big city. They smuggled me to Krakow and put me  
10 as a non-Jewess in a hospital so I could survive, and  
11 I did. I was there--that was in '42. End of '42, somewhere,  
12 maybe November or something, no, something end of '42,  
13 and I was there for several months as a non-Jewess, as  
14 a Catholic girl. And they operated on me because of  
15 complications, you know, (inaudible)--

16 Q. Huh.

17 A. They operated. And, uh--

18 Q. What was the complications from, from the--

19 A. Pus. Pus behind my ear.

20 Q. Oh.

21 A. And so they cut it because the pus was pushing  
22 against my brain, you know, I would have died anyway.  
23 So, see how I survived because, I don't know, kismet.  
24 Something is there, and after all that I survived. I  
25 came back somewhere after Easter, I think it was.

1 Q. You went back to your parents?

2 A. Back--back to the ghetto, to my parents, and I  
3 still had a bandage. I was--the whole head was bandaged  
4 but I came, and I--

5 Q. Did they have to smuggle you back into the  
6 ghetto?

7 A. --stayed with my parents. Uh, I don't remember.  
8 I think so, yes, they had to or maybe they had some, you  
9 know, permission to--to bring--something. Anyway, I  
10 don't know how they arranged it, but I came back to the  
11 ghetto and I worked. Stayed with my parents and then  
12 I was working also. Then when I was working as assistant  
13 to the doctor, and, uh, worked with them 'til -- 'til  
14 1940--'42, end of '42.

15

16 CECILIA EINHORN: Steve, what was--when was it?  
17 I think, uh . . . '43?

18

19 Q. How did you finally get caught? What happened?

20 A. I didn't get caught. They--I was just sent  
21 to a small, uh, small camp, it was called Szebnia; S-z-e-  
22 b-n-a-a. N-i-a; Szebnia. Where--that was the camp where  
23 my parents were sent before, several months before, uh,  
24 with my, uh, two brothers.

25 Q. Okay. Wait. When you got back from the hospital

1 your parents and your brothers were there?

2 A. I--yes, yes, they're there. But then they were  
3 sent--

4 Q. When were you sent to the camp?

5 A. They were sent--my parents--

6 Q. They just kind of rounded you up?

7 A. That's right. They rounded them up and they  
8 took them to Szebnia. It was a lot--not just my family,  
9 but a lot of other people, to Szebnia. In forty--forty-  
10 three. That was in '43, somewhere in Summer, no? And  
11 after that for the ghetto, which left a little--a little,  
12 not too many people, and I was left between them, and  
13 then somewhere in September - October, they sent me to  
14 that camp also, where my parents were, but my mother  
15 was already by then shot and my younger brother was shot.

16 Q. How did they shoot them, they just took them  
17 out and shot them?

18 A. They took them and shot them. My--my husband  
19 was there, too. See, my husband comes from the same  
20 town and went through the same thing--

21 Q. He saw it?

22 A. --the same thing what I went through.

23 Q. He saw your parents shot?

24 A. He saw my mother and my little brother, only 10  
25 years old, was shot, too. So all left of my family was

1 my father and my brother and when I came there I was with  
2 them just maybe a week and they sent us to Auschwitz.  
3 Now that was a horrible, horrible ride. That was very  
4 cold.

5 Q. Tell me about the transport.

6 A. The transport. They took us, loaded us on the,  
7 uh, train. That was train for cattle, I think, or for  
8 things, you know, it wasn't just a train. And they  
9 took everything off from us. I was just in a thin blouse  
10 or even just underwear.

11 Q. They took your clothes? Before--

12 A. They took clothes--

13 Q. Before you got on the train?

14 A. Yes, they took everything away from us. Uhm,  
15 my mother, before the, you know, she gave me her ring  
16 before she left, her wedding ring, to hold on. I couldn't  
17 hold on to it. They took it away from me, too. And they  
18 put us that we couldn't even sit down or--it was hard, you  
19 know, like cattle next to each other. And it was very,  
20 very cold, I remember, because it was already, I think,  
21 November. It was very cold. And I don't remember how  
22 many days we went there, closed up in those cattle train,  
23 in those boxes, for how long. And then they, after what  
24 seems eternity, we finally came to Auschwitz.

25 Q. How did you survive the trip?

1 A. I don't know. I don't know how we survived  
2 the trip. I don't know. I just remember the screaming.  
3 I remember some children and some people were just dying,  
4 exhausted, and some screamed. Some cried quietly. Sick  
5 people were dying. I--

6 Q. Were you alone?

7 A. --remember the stench of the urine, you know,  
8 everything. It was a horrible, horrible thing. But  
9 somehow, I was young, and I survived. I don't know how.  
10 I really don't know how. If we had some--maybe we had  
11 some piece of bread with us or not. I don't--it's such  
12 a horrible thing, you know, I had to push it away from  
13 my mind or something. I just remember it was a terrible,  
14 terrible time for us.

15 And we came to Auschwitz and the train came  
16 into the camp and they started pushing us out. Again  
17 I felt like a cow, like a cattle.

18 Q. Did they beat you?

19 A. Oh, ho, ho, ho, and how. Hitting on the head  
20 and screaming and screaming, "Go, go, go, go, get out,  
21 get out, get out." It was something like fog, you know,  
22 you just . . . and then they told us to take off everything.  
23 We had to stay naked and there was SS men coming around  
24 and looking at us, and--and then before it was--before we undressed--

25 Q. Before the selection you had to be naked?



1 A. Before the--no, no. No, the selection was--we  
2 (voice garbled . . )--the selection, there was an aunt  
3 with me and she was with me also, and she was with me  
4 also and suddenly they say to my aunt, they said, "You're  
5 to come--go to that side." And they pushed me to the  
6 other side. And the aunt screamed, "Why don't you go  
7 with me? Why do you leave me alone?"

8 And I almost went there and I still don't know  
9 what was the reason and what actually--I wanted to be  
10 with somebody.

11 Q. Uh huh.

12 A. And, like, somebody physically was push me back,  
13 don't go there. And I had no idea if I do right if  
14 I go on that side or she goes there. She was not an  
15 old woman. She was in her thirties. So I still don't  
16 understand what happened, but anyway I went--I stayed  
17 where I was and then I found out later that the people  
18 who were on the other side, they went straight to the  
19 gas chamber. And a matter of fact, was my father, but  
20 I didn't see him because the men were separate. My father,  
21 but my husband saw him when he went, my father went.

22 Q. Uh huh.

23 A. And my father was with my brother, who was then  
24 I think 12 years old, he pushed him away from him. He  
25 didn't let him go with him. He evidently knew that if

1 the brother would go with him, that he would die, too.

2 So, we came to Auschwitz and then they started  
3 to undress us and, uhm, shave our heads off and put the  
4 number on, which I will--that I will never forget because  
5 they make that and then suddenly I touched something  
6 and that was wiped off, you know, like the ink there  
7 and I was scared that I did something wrong. So I went  
8 toward the woman and I said, "Look what happened, the  
9 number is gone. I don't want to have trouble."

10 So she hit me with such a force. "You stupid  
11 cow. Don't you know that's a tatoo? Once it's put on  
12 nothing can take it out."

13 You know, I didn't realize, huh, you had no idea  
14 what was going on. Then--it's not that I was in--they  
15 put me in barrack there with other people.

16 Q. What barrack were you in?

17 A. I don't remember the number. I don't remember  
18 any more, that. But I worked there, was working. And  
19 they told me to work, carry stones from one place to  
20 the other, back and forth all the time.

21 Q. That was your first job?

22 A. Yeah, carrying stones. That's what I was doing.

23  
24 MAN'S VOICE: No meaning.

25 Q. How--no meaning, just back and forth?

1 A. Yeah, back and forth. Later they took me--

2

3 MAN'S VOICE: And the dog's.

4

5 A. Yeah, later they took--and the dogs, the dogs  
6 running up to us and when we stop for a while they could  
7 kill us.

8 Q. What was your work detail called? Carrying stones?

9 A. Carrying stones. And later I was sent--that  
10 was from beginning. Later I was sent to work, called  
11 kartoffen commando. That means potatoes. We were--  
12 potatoes--

13 Q. But the stone carrying was held where?

14 A. I don't remember. Uh, Steinbrook--Stein something.  
15 I don't remember. Just--just stones. I guess they  
16 wanted to keep us occupied, stones from one place to  
17 another and later they--some other--not potatoes, the  
18 other, uh . . . uh, how do you call those? Oh, boy.  
19 (???) I don't remember what the name of it,  
20 in English. It's a vegetable.

21 Q. Gardening?

22 A. No, no, a big vegetable which you cut up,  
23 yellow.

24

25 MAN'S VOICE: Probably--(inaudible).

1 A. No.

2 Q. Well--

3 A. Some vegetable, big, and they took it and we  
4 were supposed to take it and clean it up, and I remember  
5 how happy I was because I could steal a little piece  
6 and eat it up--

7 Q. Sure.

8 A. --because I was so hungry.

9 Q. How did you survive the first few weeks?

10 A. The first few weeks, how did I survive? Well, they  
11 gave us once a day some food and a piece of bread and  
12 I remember from the beginning I was breaking up a piece  
13 and I ate that and then I left it for later. But what  
14 happened, when I was out of the room, when I came back,  
15 I didn't find it anymore. So I learned to eat it, whenever  
16 I got something to eat, I ate it all up. That's how  
17 I -- I survived. They gave us some, some soup and . . .

18 And then I learned that I had to have a little  
19 cup with me, uh, because if I didn't have that cup I  
20 wouldn't get the soup.

21 Q. How'd you get the cup?

22 A. So I was holding up--they gave it to us, but  
23 I was holding it on a string next to me so nobody would  
24 see it, because if I didn't have the cup, I wouldn't  
25 get the soup.

1 Q. How did you feel, those first few weeks?

2 A. In a shock. Complete shock. I couldn't even  
3 think about my family, about anybody. I was just thinking  
4 how to survive. I felt like an animal. Just to eat  
5 something and come tired and I could just lie down and  
6 sleep.

7 And--but made us somehow--slowly, we were young  
8 girls, all together, and slowly we get used to it or, what,  
9 I couldn't say used to it, but with youth, that's how  
10 it is, and we better make the best of it, whatever.  
11 So we were sitting around and we were talking. I don't  
12 know, most of what we're talking about is how nice it  
13 was at home when the table was covered with a clean  
14 tablecloth and the food was (inaudible).

15 You know, I don't know why we did it because it  
16 was torture, but that's what we did, and sometimes we're  
17 just sitting and singing songs.

18 Q. When did you sit and sing songs, at night?

19 A. Well, after work, because early in the morning  
20 they woke us up and we have to go to work, but in the  
21 evening we were singing. I used to have good voice,  
22 singing voice, so they always ask me, please sing, and  
23 I was singing it and they were listening around, sitting  
24 around and listening to me. And talking and--mostly  
25 talking, and not too long, because we were tired and

1 exhausted and hungry--

2 Q. How many hours did they make you haul stones  
3 from once place to the other?

4 A. It seems so long. I really can't tell you  
5 exactly but it seems such a long, long time.

6 Q. What about the roll call? How long did that  
7 last?

8 A. Oh, yeah, in the morning, they are, yeah. Uh,  
9 it depends. Sometimes they let us stand for a long  
10 time and very often we have to stand completely naked  
11 and the SS men came and watched our bodies. If we are  
12 still not right as they were calling out people, you  
13 know, from the eloah group and we knew those who they  
14 called out were to go to another, uh, barrack, you know,  
15 to another place, that they were taken in the gas chamber.

16 Q. How often did they make you stand naked?

17 A. It seems very often, very often, and especially  
18 when sometimes somebody was missing in the camp, somebody  
19 tried to escape. So then they, right away, wherever we  
20 were we had to stay and it's called Zähl apel (phonetic spelling),  
21 they were counting us, they were counting us, it's called  
22 Zähl apel, uh huh.

23 Q. How do you spell that?

24 A. Uh, Z--I think Z-a-umlaut-h-l, Zähl--Zähl, apel.

25 Q. Did they give you back your clothes?

1 A. Later, after work, yes. Sure. We got the clothes.  
2 But we had to undress because they had to check us, our  
3 body, what shape they are. If somebody was in bad shape  
4 and looked exactly like a skeleton--not that we all didn't  
5 look like skeletons, we did, but some looked better, some  
6 worse. and the worst, they took them. And even so, some--  
7 they had--I guess supposedly they had to have so many  
8 people to exterminate today because there were other  
9 coming, so even if some people looked better, so it seems  
10 to me that they took them anyway in the gas chamber,  
11 because they had to have so many people.

12 Q. Did anyone help you survive?

13 A. No, nobody helped me to survive. No way, uh uh.

14 Q. Your friends didn't help you, you never--

15 A. Well, we--how could we help each other? We  
16 couldn't. With words. We helped each other that we  
17 talked, that we---Come on, you have to be strong, you  
18 have to survive and feel that day when the Germans  
19 will be beaten, that they will, you know. We will win,  
20 we'll be alive.

21 And--because very often, we were so depressed  
22 that we didn't think we'd go through that alive. So in  
23 that way we helped each other, "Come on." Or it was  
24 enough to go close where the, uh, wires were, you know.  
25 So if--if you touch the wires, it was full of electricity.

1 A lot of people died this way. If you were just so  
2 depressed. Now, it's not only hunger, but I was covered  
3 all over with, uh--with, such as--I don't know what  
4 word--scabies.

5 Q. Oh.

6 A. And it was horrible. It was itching and it  
7 was miserable. So it very often came, I said, oh, just  
8 to make, to end all of that. And it was enough to go close  
9 to the wires. The SS men would shoot you or you would  
10 touch the wires and you die. So this way we help each  
11 other when we say, "Come on, you will survive, you  
12 will survive. Just be strong, just be strong." So we  
13 helped each other like that.

14 But otherwise you couldn't. How could you  
15 help? Because nobody had anything. You know, nobody  
16 could get--

17 Q. Did you smuggle food?

18 A. No, I was afraid. I was afraid because check  
19 you. As I say, I was working with potatoes, I bite a  
20 piece of raw potato or I work with those vegetables,  
21 I bit off a piece of vegetables, with everything a little  
22 bit, but not with me because I was scared. I was--  
23 because they checked when you brought the day, you know,  
24 they could shoot you and (inaudible) or hit you. I was  
25 scared of that.



1 Q. I read in some of the books people called it  
2 organizing.

3 A. Oh, yes. Yes.

4 Q. That the only way you could survive was to  
5 organize.

6 A. No, I didn't.

7 Q. You didn't?

8 A. I couldn't. I couldn't. I never did organize  
9 anything. Nothing at all. No, I couldn't do it.

10 Q. You managed--

11 A. It's possible. I will tell you why. It's  
12 possible, that I was always very slim, very skinny, I  
13 didn't need much food.

14 Q. Maybe.

15 A. See, because I saw some girlfriends of mine who  
16 were very strong and, you know, more on the heavy side.  
17 Those were the girls who died first because they couldn't  
18 survive because they didn't have enough nourishment.  
19 But somehow, I didn't need so much.

20 Q. You actually lived on those rations?

21 A. On those rations, yeah, sure. I didn't have  
22 anything else. But, of course, I went down to--I don't  
23 know, I think I weighed maybe sixty pounds. Very skinny.  
24 But then--and then I got typhoid.

25 Q. Again?

1 A. Yes. That's another--it's not the same sickness,  
2 another one. It's called typhoid.

3 Q. Oh, typhus you had before?

4 A. Yeah, the other was typhus, stomach typhus. This  
5 one was typhoid. And they send me to what was called  
6 a hospital and that was also a horrible thing because  
7 they couldn't help me much, I had high temperature.  
8 They didn't give me anything for it. I was lucky if  
9 they gave me some water to drink. And I was lying on--on  
10 those beds--call them beds--with people, all kinds. And  
11 I--in that time there was an old gypsy lying next to me  
12 and we were talking and she said, "Don't worry, you  
13 will survive, you will survive." And I say, "Aw, come  
14 one, you old gypsy, how can I survive, if I don't--" because  
15 they were coming and taking people to gas chamber from  
16 this hospital, you know, after a while. They want to  
17 make place for others, they didn't have enough place.

18 So she said, "You will survive." I said, "How  
19 come you so sure?" "I can look at you, you will."

20 And then another time she said, "Your number is  
21 lucky." Imagine number lucky. She said, "Two sixes,  
22 three seven." And she made me aware, you know, of anything,  
23 you add two six and three sevens is 33, and she said,  
24 "That's lucky," she told me, "And you will survive and  
25 you will go over big water and you will have two children."

1 And that's what happened.

2 And then the next morning I woke up and the  
3 gypsy was dead, next morning.

4 Q. Oh!

5 A. Yeah. So that's . . . then '43, January 18th,  
6 and I will never forget it--

7 Q. Uh huh.

8 A. --when it was, when we had--when the Russians  
9 were coming closer. That was 18--1945--

10 Q. Uh huh.

11 A. Yeah, the Russians were coming. So they took  
12 us out from Auschwitz.

13 Q. You were still in the hospital then?

14 A. No, no, no. That was already I came back.  
15 That was I came back.

16 Q. So you didn't get selected at the hospital,  
17 you--

18 A. I was selected. I was selected. I was even  
19 on the track to take me to the gas chamber--

20 Q. Oh.

21 A. --and they were sitting around me, sitting--  
22 sending. Girls around me screaming awful. I didn't  
23 scream. I was just standing like that, quiet. And  
24 my whole life was passing, you know, like on a tape or  
25 film or something, and they kept on asking me, "How come

1 you don't scream like the others?" I said, "Will it  
2 help me? It will not help me."

3 He said, "What were you doing when--before?"

4 So I said, "Well, I was a student before I came here."

5 "What were you doing here?"

6 "I was working . . . " I was--that was before

7 I worked. "I was in a hospital," and so--so he said,

8 "Get down." Just like that. A second.

9 Q. Why?

10 A. I don't know why. "Get down." And they pulled  
11 me down because I was not on my own and they pulled me  
12 down and then I was working, also helping them in the  
13 hospital.

14 Q. Wait a second. You were selected while you were  
15 in the hospital?

16 A. Yes. In the hospital, yes.

17 Q. And they put you on a truck?

18 A. They put me on a truck to take me to the gas  
19 chamber because I was so skinny and very sick.

20 Q. And very sick, right.

21 A. After the sickness.

22 Q. And you told him you were working in a hospital?

23 A. No, that I was in the hospital. I was in the  
24 hospital. Because I didn't know if he understood that  
25 we are coming from the hospital.

1 Q. Oh, oh.

2 A. But he told me, "I mean, what were you doing  
3 before you came to the camp?"

4 Q. Right.

5 A. So I said, "Well, I was a student." So they--  
6 and somehow he said, "Go down."

7 Q. Do you think he felt pity or compassion?

8 A. I have no idea what it was. I think it was  
9 because I wasn't screaming.

10

11 MAN'S VOICE: Wasn't screaming.

12

13 A. I wasn't screaming. I was the only one who  
14 wasn't screaming, you know, screaming. And I was sitting,  
15 was more drawn to them because I was so quiet. As I  
16 said, I was just looking at my life--life passing me  
17 by, you know, and he say, "Go down."

18 Q. How did you feel about dying?

19 A. Well, I feel I will die--

20 Q. At that point, at that point.

21 A. At that point, as I said, I was just resigned  
22 to it, I guess.

23 Q. You were resigned to it.

24 A. I knew I had to--I knew what it meant to go on  
25 that truck from that, that I'm going to die, that I'm

1 going to the gas, you know, but . . . and then what we're  
2 talking about, January 18th when we left Auschwitz, it  
3 was called (?) March. That means Death March, and  
4 then we were marching. That was a terrible, terrible  
5 experience when we were very cold and we were walking  
6 and walking. Sometimes at night they let us sleep in  
7 some farm from the snow in the hay, hay loft or something  
8 and a lot of people were dying.

9 Q. How many days--

10 A. I don't remember how many days. It seems like  
11 really very, very long. And a lot of people were dying  
12 on the way and those who just couldn't walk and then  
13 the dogs killed them or the SS men shoot them down because  
14 some people couldn't walk anymore. And then they took  
15 us on some again trains, again those horrible trains  
16 and we came to Bergen Belsen, and I was in Bergen Belsen  
17 until--I was working in a kitchen distributing food to  
18 the inmates, to the people, and until April 15, '45. Then  
19 the British came and liberated us.

20 Q. Do you have any other times that you were close  
21 besides the time--I mean, you were always close, of course--

22 A. To death, yeah.

23 Q. --that you were selected or that you were beaten  
24 almost to death or that you were--

25 A. Oh . . . oh, yeah, once, uh, I was--we were working

1 together and I was helping them--I think it was the stones  
2 then and I was helping some woman to pull out something  
3 and the SS men saw it and they used to walk with such  
4 a walking stick, at the end was a piece of iron. He  
5 hit me--I still can see the thing. He hit me here in  
6 the head and blood was spurting. I don't know how I--  
7 how I stopped it and it was infected for a long time  
8 and somehow I survived without any medication, without  
9 anything.

10 Q. Those were the two times, main times, the time  
11 that you were hit with the--with the stick--

12 A. Oh, I was hit many times. I was hit many times  
13 on the head. You didn't even feel it anymore. Pushed  
14 around and hit a lot. Sure. Black and blue all over.  
15 But, I mean, that's when I was scared that I wouldn't  
16 be able to stop that blood and who knows what will  
17 happen, hit on the head. And terrible, terrible  
18 pain, sciatic pain, being barefoot on the snow and it  
19 started already in ghetto and then in terrible pain and  
20 I was scared stiff that I stay on that thing and I  
21 won't be able to stand up or work, that they will kill  
22 me because the men, if you cannot go on, they--

23 Q. This was during the Death March or while you  
24 were working?

25 A. Death March, all the time, and working in the

1 concentration camp.

2 Q. You had no shoes?

3 A. Oh, sometimes I had, sometimes I didn't. Sometimes  
4 I had. Sometimes I had wooden shoes. Sometimes had such  
5 big mens' shoes.

6 Q. When people died, did you take their clothes,  
7 their shoes, their food?

8 A. No.

9 Q. No?!

10 A. No, I never did. I never did. Never ever.  
11 I couldn't do it. I'd rather ate dirt, I could take  
12 a piece of earth or dirty potato, but I couldn't. I  
13 couldn't, no.

14 Q. Huh.

15 A. That I couldn't do. I never, ever did that.

16 Q. You never took clothes or shoes--

17 A. Never.

18 Q. --from people that died?

19 A. I just washed my--I slept in my clothes.

20 Whatever I got, I washed it sometimes and I lie down  
21 on it so they dried when it was (inaudible). But I never  
22 took away anything.

23 Q. How did you wash your clothes? With what?

24 A. Uh, somewhere on the side, I remember in Auschwitz  
25 was some water where I wash myself or something. I washed



1 it up and put it back again or something. I remember.  
2 Not too often but we did and we got some changes when  
3 we went to, uhm . . . uh, washup--they called them  
4 flaussen. (?)

5 We had some showers, you know, what we washed,  
6 so we got some fresh ones, I--

7 Q. How often did you get to the showers?

8 A. I don't remember really, how often.

9 Q. One question I want to ask.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Unpleasant, but I've read so much about it.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. It's about bowel movements.

14 A. Well, we had latrines.

15 Q. That they wouldn't let you go but once a day  
16 and that some people walked around with feces all over  
17 them. I read that. Now, is that true?

18 A. It--one thing is true that when it was very  
19 cold and you didn't have enough underwear or no underwear  
20 at all, so, of course, the blood, you couldn't hold--uh,  
21 it's not the bowel movement but so sometimes you went  
22 out like that, it was horrible. But I--I don't remember--  
23 you could go to latrines I think more than once a day.  
24 I think we went. It was worse only when we had diarrhea.  
25 That was a horrible time, you couldn't stop.

1 Q. Where did you go?

2 A. Well, where I go, you try to go outside or  
3 something, but it was very hard, it was very hard.

4 Q. I--

5 A. You cannot imagine.

6 Q. That to me is so horrible.

7 A. Yeah, yeah.

8 Q. That was one of the things I--

9 A. Yeah, you tried, you tried to go outside. It  
10 was better when it was snowing or snow because you could  
11 use snow for cleaning things, you know.

12

13 MAN'S VOICE: You think, a human being, it's  
14 horrible but don't forget that we--

15 MRS. EINHORN: (inaudible)

16 MAN'S VOICE: --(inaudible)

17 MRS. EINHORN: Yeah (inaudible)--

18 INTERVIEWER: Right. But it was so much part  
19 of a process of humiliation.

20 MRS. EINHORN: Yes.

21 INTERVIEWER: And degradation to make you walk  
22 around like that.

23 MRS. EINHORN: It was.

24 INTERVIEWER: It was just more--

25 MRS. EINHORN: It was--uh, I was only one thing

1           less, you know, that somehow, as soon as I came  
2           to Auschwitz I stopped menstruating because  
3           that would be even worse.

4  
5           Q.           Yes. Well, that was one thing, I was wondering  
6           how did women menstruate; what happened?

7           A.           All--all--no, we didn't.

8           Q.           No one menstruated?

9           A.           No way. All the time as long as I was in  
10          Auschwitz I didn't menstruate. A few weeks after the  
11          Liberation I started normal again.

12          Q.           Well, that was fortunate.

13          A.           I don't know--

14          Q.           No one menstruated?

15          A.           No, unless they were some women who got maybe  
16          better food, were in charge of the barracks or something.  
17          So I don't know. I didn't talk to them about it, but  
18          from all of us, nobody was menstruating, no, uh uh.  
19          And it was out of luck--luck. It was luck or something.

20          Q.           Why do you think you lived?

21          A.           First of all, I wanted to live. The will to  
22          live was so strong and I am from nature optimist. I  
23          just didn't, you know, like succumb to it, like, "No, ah,  
24          come on, we won't live; I won't survive," no, there was  
25          no such a thing. I want very much--sometimes (inaudible)

1 said, "It's impossible that we can survive that; they are  
2 so strong." You hear that they take country after  
3 country. We have to--then I pushed it away. Somehow  
4 I was just a (inaudible) optimist, and I said, "No, I  
5 will survive."

6 And I guess the will to survive helps a lot.

7 Q. Did any of your friends survive?

8 A. Uh, yes, I have girlfriend here who comes  
9 from the same town as we; she survived. And some other, a  
10 few, but it was a very big transport of young women who  
11 came to Auschwitz. I don't know how many thousands there  
12 were. I don't remember. But very few survived.

13 Q. So you think that the main thing was that you  
14 wanted to live. Was there--

15 A. Very much.

16 Q. --ever a moment when you were about to give  
17 up, that you can remember?

18 A. Yes, yes.

19 Q. A turning point.

20 A. It was when I was covered with those scabies.

21 Q. Uh huh.

22 A. And they gave us treatment. They put us in  
23 seltzer water, I think. Seltzer water once in a while  
24 to get rid of it. But somehow it was awful, that itching  
25 and those thick furuncles, you know, on the body, that's

1 when I said, "Oh, God, it's better to finish it off."  
2 And I started to walk toward those wires, you know, outside  
3 but--maybe happened twice, chicken, but then I went  
4 back. I said, "No, no. I will survive." Always that  
5 will to survive was in me.

6 Q. Was that the only time?

7 A. I guess so, that was the only time. Because  
8 see, you are so hungry and worried about your well being,  
9 about you being alive, that you couldn't even think about  
10 it, what you lost, your family, your parents, your sister,  
11 your brother, you know, it was--the shock--most shock  
12 came after the war.

13 Q. Oh.

14 A. I was taken from Bergen Belsen as a witness  
15 against those murderers--

16 Q. Uh huh.

17 A. Those SS men there, the head of the camp and those--  
18 SS women who are shooting people, and that was  
19 the first time in Nuremberg and we came, there is witnesses  
20 (inaudible) hotel--

21 Q. Uh huh.

22 A. --and we are passing by--I will never forget  
23 that--on the street, and we saw the inside of a house,  
24 a German house. A family was sitting at the table with  
25 children, father and mother--that's when it hit me,

1 that what I lost. You know, I saw a family. Because  
2 once you are--you are 'til now, you must understand, in a  
3 camp with the girls and the same--the same problem and  
4 it was just continuation. We are still in a camp even  
5 after the war. And we saw first time the family. I  
6 remember that. Then when I got high temperature and they  
7 were even afraid something happened to me, you know.  
8 That's when I went through, but it took just a day or  
9 two and then I . . .

10 Q. Okay, we're at Liberation so then the--the  
11 British liberated Bergen Belsen?

12 A. Yes, yes.

13 Q. Okay, so what happened immediately after  
14 Liberation, can you talk about it?

15 A. After--immediate after the liberation--

16 Q. Right, what happened?

17 A. --first of all, when they came in, I will never  
18 forget, the British soldiers--actually they were British  
19 medics because there was so much sickness in Bergen  
20 Belsen--

21 Q. Uh huh.

22 A. So I remember since I spoke English then already,  
23 so I asked them--they pushed me out. "Ask them if they are--"  
24 the girls are saying, "Ask if they are--maybe they are  
25 just Germans dressed up as British." We couldn't believe

1 it that those are British soldiers and I will never forget  
2 it and I said, "Are you really British soldiers?" So  
3 I will never forget the one of the soldiers said, "Yes,  
4 Lovey." He must have been from Scotland. "Yes, Lovey, yes.  
5 We are British. And you are free. Don't worry, don't  
6 worry." And that moment I will never forget.

7 Q. Did you--what happened?

8 (END SIDE ONE OF TAPE RECORDING)

9  
10 Q. How tall are you?

11 A. I am five-two, something like five-two, five  
12 two and a half. Five two and a half, I don't know.

13 Q. Did they feed you? Where'd they put you?

14 A. They start but I was smart enough not to eat  
15 too much. See, what happened to the people, when they  
16 were fed right away, like sardines and--and all kinds  
17 of fatty foods, when they grabbed it and ate too much,  
18 they died. They were sick.

19 Q. They died?!

20 A. Yeah, a lot of people died because they ate  
21 too much. And I ate slowly and first of all I ate only  
22 plain bread, white bread, you know, something like that.  
23 Light. Because--and slowly, and it didn't take too  
24 long, then I looked much better and I felt better.

25 Q. How long did it take?

1 A. Few weeks.

2 Q. And you could--

3 A. Until I felt--

4 Q. --eat normally?

5 A. Eat normally, yes. Uh huh. I still stayed  
6 away from fatty foods because we didn't have any heavy  
7 food for so many years, but slowly, slowly, and you could  
8 see the difference in (inaudible), my appearance.

9 Q. Then what happened?

10 A. Then my brother found me, because I found my  
11 younger brother who is eight years younger than I am.  
12 He found me, he found out from somebody that I am in  
13 Bergen Belsen. He came and we didn't stay long and we  
14 went away. We went to Ragansburg.(?) That's southern  
15 Germany, and we waited there, got in touch with our  
16 family, my mother's family in America, and then we  
17 came here. We came in 1950.

18 Q. You were never in a displaced persons camp?

19 A. No, I was not. We were living in an apartment  
20 in (inaudible.)

21 Q. How did you pay for that?

22 A. How did I pay for that? I was working for the  
23 American office, American government. They had the  
24 military government, I was working as interpreter and  
25 secretary. And--



1 Q. You got the job right away?

2 A. Yes, because they needed people who spoke both  
3 English and German.

4 Q. You spoke English?

5 A. Oh, yes. I learned English--

6 Q. Oh.

7 A. --in Poland as a young girl. So I worked there  
8 and then my husband came to find out--he was not my husband  
9 yet. He came to ask if I know something about his sister  
10 because she was in my group also in (inaudible).

11 Q. Uh huh.

12 A. And I'm sorry to say I had to tell him that  
13 his sister died, and we got to know each other and we  
14 married in '46.

15 Q. You got married in '46, right away?

16 A. Right away.

17 Q. Why did you decide to get married so soon?

18 A. Uh, because I fall in love! We wanted to be  
19 together and then our child--first child was born in  
20 '47--Anna was born in '47.

21 Q. Anna?

22 A. Anna, yes. And then we went to America in  
23 1950 where we are from 1950, we are here, where our  
24 second daughter was born in '58.

25 Q. Oh, it's a long time between them.

1 A. Yeah. Well, you came to a new country and to  
2 get, uh--

3 Q. Were your relatives good to you?

4 A. I didn't--we didn't want nothing from the  
5 relatives. We didn't go to the relatives. We didn't  
6 see them. We didn't want to go to them.

7 Q. Oh oh.

8 A. Out?

9 Q. No, it isn't, thank God. I was afraid it had  
10 stopped.

11 A. No, we didn't go. We kept in touch. They  
12 wanted us to go in there, we didn't want to. No. My  
13 husband, especially, said, "No, I don't want to say  
14 thank you to anybody." He started working very hard.  
15 But he will tell you that about himself.

16 Q. Okay. Well, I'll get the story about the American  
17 part from him.

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. But I've heard that from so many survivors,  
20 they didn't want anything.

21 A. No.

22 Q. Don't you think you deserved it?

23 A. No, I didn't want to, but we were very proud  
24 and we didn't want to say "thank you" to anybody. We  
25 wanted to work ourselves and not to be a burden to

1 anybody.

2 Q. But don't you think that after what you went  
3 through it would have helped their conscience to be able  
4 to give you something?

5 A. I don't know, but it wouldn't help us. I didn't  
6 think about that. We didn't want any help from anybody.  
7 There was a sister and a brother of my mother. My husband  
8 didn't have any relatives.

9

10 MAN'S VOICE: (inaudible)

11

12 A. (continuing) But--no. We didn't want anything  
13 and we didn't. No. We didn't want anything, no help  
14 at all.

15 Q. Okay, well, let me turn this off for a second.

16 A. Uh huh.

17 Q. After the war, did you have any feelings of  
18 revenge? Did you want to get even?

19 A. Even, uh . . . I didn't know how to get even  
20 because I am not a killer. I couldn't kill. I remember  
21 in Germany, Americans--the British officer saw how--how  
22 I was sometimes so depressed, how--how a young girl felt  
23 all alone. And he said to me, "Would you feel better  
24 if I give you my gun and you would kill a couple of  
25 Germans?" So I said, "No, I cannot do it." I am not

1 proud of it but I can't. I am not a killer. I am not  
2 German, I am not a killer, I cannot do it.

3 I despised them, I hated them, of course I did.  
4 Those were killers of my people. I--it was very hard.  
5 I--we had to live few years in Germany, waiting for our  
6 visa to emigrate. It was very hard to be--but first  
7 of all, none of the Germans we knew there, they had no--  
8 they had no idea there was such a thing as a concentration  
9 camp, that people were killed. Had no idea of something  
10 like that--I don't know if they were telling the truth.  
11 I'm sure of it that they were lying, because they--they  
12 had--no. And it was awful times. The Earth was burning,  
13 really, under our feet. We couldn't stand it but we  
14 had no other way.

15 I didn't want to go back to Poland, definitely  
16 not, because I didn't have anybody anymore in Poland,  
17 everybody was killed, and it was a very hard time.  
18 Until now I dream about those terrible things and how  
19 often my husband had to wake me up when I scream at  
20 night. Terrible dream.

21 Q What are your dreams like?

22 A I dream that they're coming, the Germans, the  
23 SS men and taking my children away, because I saw so  
24 many mothers where their babies were taken away from  
25 them, where they were shot, where their babies were

1       thrown in the air and used for target practice, you know,  
2       and that stays with you. And I'm not, in my dreams,  
3       I see myself as the mother, a young mother with children  
4       and the Germans want to take my children away. And then  
5       I scream. Or I am running and they are running after  
6       me. And from beginning was very awful. Now, it's less,  
7       but still from time to time I wake up screaming--(overlap  
8       of voices)

9       Q.           How often?

10      A.           Oh, when was the last time?

11

12                MAN'S VOICE: Two nights ago.

13

14      Q.           Two nights ago? Well, do you think talking  
15      about it, going to the reception--

16      A.           Uh . . . no.

17      Q.           --and things of that--

18      A.           Not always. Now, one thing is, I cannot read  
19      too many, but my husband reads a lot book--

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21                MAN'S VOICE: (inaudible)--it's on the tape--  
22                (inaudible)--

23      INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it's on the tape. I turned  
24      it back on.

25      MAN'S VOICE: Okay. Okay, good.

1 A. (continuing) Uh, it's, -uh--I, for example,  
2 cannot now read too many books from the Holocaust. I  
3 can't. It takes--I can feel that it takes too much  
4 out of you, it's too much for me. But yet, if I read--  
5 of course I do, and I hear or I watch something on  
6 television, I don't think it's--sometimes I dream, but  
7 not often, it's not affected. It must be my subconscious  
8 mind that is so deep--

9 Q. Oh, sure.

10 A. --that from time to time I do dream about it  
11 and scream. Awful, yeah.

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INTERVIEWER: Okay, thank you.

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