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2 Steinhardt on one side and Rachel Roth on the other side.
3 However, there are at least three voices on the tape includ-
4 ing that of the interviewer and, it seems to me, more likely
5 four, one being so deep as to sound perhaps like a man at
6 times. No voice identification was ever given and many times
7 all the people present spoke and conversed among themselves.
8 Neither was there given a date or place of interview. I have
9 done the best I can to identify who must have been speaking
10 each time, beginning with the side marked Carol Steinhardt
11 and assuming from context who must have been the interviewer
12 and who must have been the other lady, Rachel Roth. Rachel
13 Roth apparently refers to herself as "Roma" a number of times.
14 When it became impossible for me to discern with any accuracy,
15 I simply put "V" for "Voice," indicating no identification.
16 The tape ends in the middle of Rachel Roth speaking, so I as-
17 sume there is more of this interview on another tape. I do
18 apologize at not having this back to you by the deadline of
19 July 15. All the time that I thought I had suddenly dis-
20 solved over the summer. However, if I can be of further help,
21 please call on me. I have some excellent sources for help on
22 many words, both Hebrew and German, as well as personal family
23 and friends who were in the camps during World War II.

24 Thank you for the opportunity to help!

25 Pat Winnubst
7609 Oak Bluff
Dallas, Texas 75240

1 (Identification: C: Carol Steinhardt; R: Rachel Roth;
2 I: Interviewer; V: Voice (unidentified)
3 C: I was born in Germany near Neu Frankfort-am-Main. Do
4 you want to know the date? It was 1925. As a matter of
5 fact, in 1933 Hitler started to occupy Germany and became
6 the Chancellor of Germany and Austria. That's when we start-
7 ed, you know. I was exactly eight years old. And my first,
8 I'm going to say, bad experience was when they came on my
9 birthday, March the 8th, to -- to take away the pistols and
10 the gun and knives from the Jewish people so they shouldn't
11 be endangered by any Jews. They (emphasis by speaker)
12 shouldn't be -- you know, live in any danger.

13 And my mother, who at that time was a very young woman,
14 was very hesitant. My father had been in the army in World
15 War Two (sic), and he had a rifle in the house and my mother
16 wasn't going to part from that rifle. And she hid it behind
17 the closet and she said -- and I was eight years old. And
18 they kept marching through the house and throwing things
19 over -- Sturm Trooper, which was the Storm Troop. The SS
20 wore bands and wore guns and what-have-you.

21 And my mother knew all the men because we were born in
22 that village. My -- my family has lived there for five hun-
23 dred years, so my -- both parents were born in this little
24 village in Germany. Naturally, my parents grew up there so
25 they were very familiar with each and every person in the

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1 place. Suddenly we were Jews, you know.

2 So my mother hid this rifle because she felt that one
3 never knows how you needed it. She quickly ran upstairs, and
4 I noticed. And as a little girl that age, you get very
5 scared. And I kept saying, "Why don't you give it to them?
6 Why don't you give it?" And she says, "It's -- " That was
7 taking a chance on her part, you know, with a little girl,
8 and my sister was ten -- oh, nine. So he -- he'd searched
9 the whole house and one man says -- said, "Okay, I don't
10 think she's going to hide anything from us. I know her too
11 well," meaning my mother, you know. And they marched out.

12 And then I remember my mother opening up -- We were
13 religious Jews. My mother opened up the prayer book. I --
14 I don't remember what she said, but it must have been
15 Tehillum (translation: Psalm), you know, because that's the
16 -- a prayer you say. (Lady crying at this point.) I catch
17 myself.

18 But basically my mother was a very strong woman and she
19 felt -- First of all, she knew these guys all her life, and
20 they were going to hurt her. And my father came home and
21 she told the -- she told them that -- what happened. And he
22 said, "Oh, who cares? How long do you think he's going to
23 last, Hitler? Don't worry about them. We know them.
24 They're idiots. They're dummies," you know, and "We'll
25 take care of that, don't worry."

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1 And that's how we stayed in Germany, you know, because
2 my father has been a -- what you call a Feldweibel in the
3 first -- What is that? That is like --

4 V: Uh, like, uh --

5 C: I would like -- assume like a lieutenant. Lieutenant or
6 something like that. And he was very well known, very well
7 liked. And we were the only Jews in this little village who
8 owned a farm. So we were just like the Gentiles but Ortho-
9 dox, you know. And the Gentiles -- you know, they expect --
10 they accepted us. We were one of them. There were three --
11 thirty other German-Jewish families, but there was never any-
12 thing. Everything was fine. And my father felt that's ridic-
13 ulous. "He's not going to lay us in (perhaps meaning "do us
14 in). We can live here for the rest of our lives." He loved
15 his land. He was German before he was a Jew. Religious,
16 but just like the Americans, you know.

17 So my -- we stayed there. And then I was eight years
18 old; my sister was nine. And I -- we stayed there till I
19 was eleven, in the school, but we couldn't take it anymore
20 because the children would throw stones at us and kick us
21 and hit us, and did all kind of things, and tell us suddenly,
22 "You're a Jew!" And what did we know? Yes, so we are Jewish.
23 Most of the people in -- in my little village spoke a dia-
24 lect and we only spoke what you call Hoch Deutsch. We --
25 it's like the King's English or -- you know? So we were a

1 little like -- that -- more educated. And like the -- only
2 the doctors, the lawyers, the higher class Germans would
3 speak better German. That's what we did. We spoke the real
4 German only the Jews did. So we were sort of respected by
5 most of the people, teachers and doctors and whatever. And
6 so my father couldn't get that into his head that we should
7 emigrate. "Why go away? We've -- I lived here all my life.
8 My parents -- " whatever.

9 I: Who did he think that --

10 C: No, he wouldn't believe it! You know. And he was a very
11 educated man and I don't know why he never thought of it. So
12 when I was eleven years old, it was impossible. And my sis-
13 ter was twelve. She went to Frankfort, which was the nearest
14 next town. I -- I went to Bad Neuheim to a -- a -- called
15 the Toqschuller, which was a school run by Jews. And they
16 sort of selected all the Jewish children from the neighboring
17 towns and they all went there and lived there in a boarding
18 school and were educated there. And that was great because
19 we won't -- we were among our own people. Most of the time
20 we didn't even go into the city by ourselves. We were taken
21 by other, older people, you know, to protect us from all the
22 miseries.

23 But in 1938 the Kristallnacht came and all the syna-
24 gogues were destroyed and all the children from my school,
25 from this school I went -- the Jewish school, were taken to

1 the police station. And at that time I was -- thirteen?
2 Twelve, thirteen. We all thought they were going to kill us
3 there. And that's what they said. They came in again like
4 the Storm Troops and they told us to march, or go out. "Go!
5 Run to the police station!" And our teachers were very pro-
6 tective and tried to hide it -- hide it -- hide everything
7 from us, and kept saying, "Oh, no, it's nothing. We're just
8 going there. They've going to protect us so nothing will
9 happen to us." And so unknown (perhaps meaning "unknowing"),
10 little children, we marched to the police station. And we
11 were there overnight sleeping on the floor. And the next day
12 we were released to go back to school.

13 But while they did that to us, little kids, they took
14 the fathers, the mothers and whoever -- fathers, mostly, to
15 concentration camps. Of course, my parents didn't live with
16 us then because they still lived in this small, little village.
17 But my father was taken to Buchenwald. But being that he
18 was a -- what I said before, (phonetic) front-camp-fer, that
19 he -- he served in the first world war, he was released after
20 three weeks. So he came home. And still my father said,
21 "Ach, this is just a ridiculous thing. They're not going to
22 do anything to us." And he -- he instilled one thing in me.
23 He kept saying, "They're not going to hurt us. They want to
24 drive us crazy. They don't have the guts to do anything to
25 us. Don't worry -- they just want to drive us crazy." And

1 I -- I thought, of course, whatever my father said was right.
2 He says, "Just keep a -- you know, a -- "

3 (Interviewer or someone else interjects a word inaudibly)

4 C: Yes. "And -- and keep your head on -- have your head on
5 straight. Don't get right away tense, nervous. It's going
6 to be okay."

7 So my sister went to a teacher's seminary. She -- she
8 went -- she did very well in school. I did very well in
9 school. My father had no -- for no way would he take us out
10 of the school because we were so happy there and the teachers
11 were satisfied. And he said, "We're going to stay." And
12 that's why we stayed.

13 So in 1941 we were taken -- I was take -- taken to Ber-
14 lin. And that was already a -- There were SS -- Hitler --
15 not a concentration camp but a camp supervised by Nazis, by
16 SS. And I was taken to a munition factory. We worked there
17 for two years. We were still allowed to go out during cer-
18 tain hours, but we were taken -- while working in Siemens
19 Zuckert in Berlin, we were taken to the toilet. We couldn't
20 go from one room to the other, from one factory --

21 V: And always guarded --

22 C: -- always guarded as we were -- I was fifteen, you know,
23 so I was young to -- guarded us (embarrassed laughing) even
24 in the toilet.

25 So we were there for two years. There were two hundred

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1 girls. My friend here was taken with me. That's where we
2 met in 1941. We were taken to different stations, different
3 places, different -- What would you call it?

4 R: Work areas.

5 C: Work areas, right. And -- but then at night we met in
6 this particular house that was assigned for the Jews, like a
7 camp for -- for the Jews guarded by Na -- by SS.

8 And in 1943 there -- Hitler had come to the conclusion
9 that this should soon be settled, the final solution should
10 be taken care of, and we should be gassed. They should be
11 taken away from Germany, period. So in 1943 one thousand
12 Jews went that particular day -- of course, we were among
13 them -- to Auschwitz on -- on the cattle trains, whatever you
14 see on the pictures here in the Center. And we were taken
15 to Auschwitz. Of course, we didn't know where they were
16 going --

17 I: You hadn't heard anything about --

18 C: We -- we had heard of Auschwitz, but nobody knew of gas
19 chambers --

20 R: (Inaudible) -- was in the (phonetic) cold and it was --
21 we were going to another munition factory.

22 C: Yes, we were trying teach -- we were training ex-prisoners --
23 well, actually prisoners or what -- civilians who came in
24 from Italy, France and Belgium, non-Jews --

25 R: And Russia. And Russia.

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1 C: -- we -- we trained to take our position in Berlin and
2 we -- they say that you were going there --

3 R: Right.

4 C: -- we were going to a better place, more or less. But
5 they said --

6 R: They said you were going to a better --

7 C: Better place, instead of that. But we had already so
8 much experience and we came to Auschwitz and we were selected
9 at the ramp and it was, you know --

10 I: What was that like? I mean what --

11 C: The -- you -- you -- it was like in the middle of a field
12 with railroad tracks and the rail -- the -- the train came in,
13 cattle trains, and then we were taken off the cattle trains
14 with dogs and with SS guards and with loudspeakers. And the
15 shouting, "Dirty Jews!" and all kinds of nasty things. And
16 we were taken -- taken all in -- in a big row and then a few
17 SS men -- I suppose it was Dr. Mengele and a -- a few of the
18 higher-ups would come, Rudolph Hess, Thilo, would come and
19 say, "Well, you go here, you go there," but we didn't know
20 where we were going, you know.

21 I: It was just --

22 C: It was --

23 I: It was just they'd just point --

24 C: Yeah, would just point.

25 I: No -- there was nothing --

1 C: No. They just looked into our faces and noticed the age.
2 So we were -- I was seventeen and most of the girls were
3 eighteen, seventeen, sixteen, something of that -- young
4 enough to do some work. So they just put us on one side and
5 the older people and the children went on the other side.
6 Little did we know that we were going to the --

7 R: Lager. (Translation probably "camp")

8 C: -- lager, and the others were going to the gas chambers.
9 So when we got into the lager, we were taken to the sauna,
10 which you know what a sauna is, you know, you -- we were
11 taken under the shower and we were what they call und-loused;
12 they were taking the lice off us, which we -- we didn't have.
13 There was -- they shaved our heads --

14 R: (Inaudible) -- called louse because --

15 C: Yes --

16 R: -- we caught lice --

17 C: -- in -- into us, right. And they shaved our heads,
18 underarm hair all over, and they put a solution on us so that
19 we shouldn't bring any lice into the lager. Took everything,
20 everything off, you know, whatever we had; every possession
21 was put away and we were given lager garments, you know, the
22 stripes and whatever -- or whatever they had, just something
23 to put on us.

24 I: Did you feel -- I -- you know, I said -- as I said to --
25 that I -- I can never understand, no one who didn't experi-

1 ence it, but when you -- when this happened to you, when they
2 shaved you and when they took everything away, did anybody
3 resist? I mean, what happened to people that said, "Why are
4 you doing this to me" or --

5 C: Oh, yes, many people --

6 I: -- (inaudible) --

7 C: Yes, many people would say, "What are you doing?" And
8 we used to have this particular kapo, which was a German --
9 excuse my expression, but she was a woman of a house of ill
10 repute, and she would come around and examine us internally
11 (emphasis by speaker), I want you to know, because she was
12 afraid that we would be hiding gold or diamonds or anything
13 from the Germans. She was a prisoner herself, but by then
14 she had already the authority to hit us over the heads, and
15 then besides that she was German; we were Jews. So --

16 V: She was (phonetic) seeking for prostitution, for -- for
17 (inaudible) prostitution. This was a (inaudible word) --

18 C: Yes, she was a prisoner for illegal prostitution --

19 V: For illegal prostitution.

20 C: -- definitely. So she was quite a macher (translation:
21 fixer, wheeler-dealer); and we were just poor little girls.
22 And this was an older woman, by the way; she may have be --
23 a retired prostitute. But nevertheless she examined us from
24 all sides and we kept saying, "What -- " I remember people
25 saying to her, "What are you doing to me? I'm a woman."

1 And she used to say, "What do you think, I am a hure (trans-
2 lation: whore)?
3 V: Hure, that means prostitute.
4 C: Yes.
5 V: Well, it is here, too.
6 V: Well, it's -- it's a German --
7 C: The -- the whores --
8 (Overlapping conversation, inaudible few words)
9 C: Yeah.
10 V: (Inaudible) -- a name, how --
11 C: She put --
12 V: Written in a different way.
13 C: It's different --
14 V: Who -- who -- how --
15 V: (Inaudible) -- in a different way --
16 C: We'll discuss it later.
17 (Laughter)
18 V: (Inaudible) -- in a different way.
19 V: Ihre hunden, ihre vervlugt, ihre hure --
20 C: Hunden, hunden, that stops.
21 V: Huren --
22 C: Huren, yes, it --
23 I: Is that h-u-r-e --
24 V: Hure -- (inaudible)
25 V: Give a name to --

1 V: And vervlugt.

2 C: Vervlugt means --

3 V: What is vervlugt?

4 C: -- you're damned.

5 V: Damned.

6 C: Right. So we -- we were given lots of names, but I think
7 we be -- became accustomed to the sounds and we -- we just
8 let it slide by. Besides that -- Yeah, we were tattooed, you
9 know. We were tattooed when we came in. And that was done
10 by some girls who had gone to Auschwitz previously. And
11 usually it was done by --

12 V: Prisoners.

13 C: -- prisoners, yes. Most of them were Czechoslovaks.
14 They came from the -- they were the first ones. They had the
15 number one thousand and whatever. And we were thirty-seven
16 thousand four hundred and sixty-eight; that was my number.

17 V: That was the number --

18 C: That was the number of the women in that particular camp.

19 I: Uh-huh. How did they --

20 C: They -- they tattooed just like any other tattoo. People
21 always think that was very bad, but that wasn't too -- that
22 was not bad at all.

23 (Several voices; a few inaudible words)

24 C: They just -- no, they take a pin (or pen) and then they
25 stick it into your skin, and it's the upper layer of the skin.

1 V: Like dots, dots, dots.

2 C: Yeah, little dots. If you look at it closely, they are
3 little dots. Now they became bigger because it's been a long
4 time; you know, they sort of spread a little bit, yes.

5 I: So what is this --

6 C: This was a half -- half of a Jewish star.

7 I: Oh, so that was --

8 C: I suppose making --

9 I: (Inaudible) -- politics.

10 C: Yeah, that was -- we -- they used to call it a (phonetic)
11 vinkel (probably spelled in German "winkel"), which is half --
12 half of a Jewish star --

13 V: And it -- it also was --

14 (Transcriber's note: None of the people with whom I spoke
15 had ever heard of a winkel or half of a Jewish star; however,
16 the suggestion was made that prisoners at Auschwitz had their
17 numbers preceded with a German script "A" for Auschwitz and
18 that it may have looked like a point of a star and simply
19 came to be called half of a Jewish star.)

20 V: Non-Jewish prisoners didn't have this.

21 C: Didn't have that, no. Only Jewish -- only Jewish --

22 I: Did non-Jewish prisoners have the tattoo --

23 V: No.

24 I: -- or only the Jewish people?

25 V: No.

1 V: Nor did Aryans.

2 Chorus of voices: No, no, no, no.

3 V: Oh, yes, the Polish had, but only not Germans. Germans
4 didn't have it. German -- German -- German, not Jewish, but
5 Jew -- or -- the other Polish had, also, but they didn't have
6 this winkel.

7 V: Winkel, but -- no.

8 C: Unlike -- like Sophie's Choice there -- she has the num-
9 ber like we had, maybe you have. I have never seen a Polish
10 prisoner with a number.

11 V: Yes, they have.

12 C: Oh, well, maybe.

13 V: Yeah, they had -- only the German Reich, the born German
14 (inaudible word) -- the prostitute, they didn't have. German,
15 not Jews, they didn't.

16 V: Any Aryan --

17 V: Aryan German, not -- but from other country they have.
18 The Polish have without the winkel.

19 V: Without the winkel.

20 V: And the half of the Jewish star, of course, was very --

21 C: Well, actually, yeah, that was supposed to mean that you
22 would be a -- a political prisoner.

23 I: Okay.

24 C: That was it.

25 I: Yeah, so it was a pop political --

1 C: And people ask me, you know, how did it feel to get this.
2 This was the least. That was absolutely nothing. But the
3 shaving of the hair, you know -- as a young girl of seventeen
4 and, you know, we all had long hair and looked kind of beauti-
5 ful. That was terrible. That was an awful thing for us and
6 we looked immediately like prisoners and -- not the same;
7 like animals.

8 R: And, matter of fact, I remember correctly, you know,
9 we've been together -- that after leaving the -- after leav-
10 ing the showers and coming into the sauna -- and you look at
11 yourself and you're completely undressed, nude --

12 C: No hair.

13 R: -- and no hair. I was sitting next to her and I did not
14 recognize her.

15 C: Right. We did not recognize each other, couldn't recog-
16 nize --

17 R: And I said, "Oh, you Carol!"

18 C: That's right. We were --

19 R: You know, I worked with my aunt, with my very ill aunt
20 all of the -- maybe four years, and we were -- we kept to-
21 gether. Like her name was Franke and mine Rothstein, and it
22 was -- when the tattoo-ation according to the alphabet the --
23 you know. So I -- she went before me. She -- she had a
24 forty-six -- forty-six thousand; I had forty-eight thousand.
25 And then after tattoo-ation, they shave our -- shave our

1 hair and -- and -- and would change -- we got other clothes.
2 And we all -- we had clothes, you know, for -- I -- I was
3 small and short; I got long, black skirt and a -- and a
4 green, tremendous blouse. And they put a cross -- they put
5 a cross -- a paint red cross on the back of the -- of the
6 dresses, because they didn't have enough -- the camp dresses,
7 that's all they get, (phonetic) two billion dresses, but
8 with a red cross on the back so that we cannot run away.
9 This -- all this was -- was made not -- prevent running away,
10 escaping from the camp. We -- the number, we didn't have
11 hair, we have funny dresses, we did -- funny shoes, the --
12 with the red cross on the back. And I was standing next to
13 my aunt because we -- we try to keep together. And I called,
14 (phonetic) "Hayla, Hayla," and she called, "Roma," and we
15 are standing next to each other. We did not recognize her.
16 She looked for me like, you know, they are from Poland and
17 Warsaw, the orphanage, and they used to shave the children's
18 heads because of the lice. And I -- she looked like a girl,
19 the perfect expression, like a girl from orphanage. I didn't
20 recognize her. I stood before her and then we started to
21 kiss and cry because it was terrible. We didn't recognize --
22 afterward, and we are so clo -- we are so close; it's like my
23 sister. We were all the time holding hands. Because of the
24 alphabet, we were separated for a minute. It was terrible.
25 It was a terrible experience. You want to --

1 I: When they gave you -- they gave you the gowns, if you
2 want to call them that, what did they do in -- seasons? Did
3 they ever give you coats?

4 V: No.

5 I: Did they give you blankets?

6 C: Well, they gave us whatever they had. They didn't care
7 whether we were cold or whether we were hot. We were wear-
8 ing the same garb all times, you know? And one thing they
9 did give us, in the summertime they gave us a kerchief be-
10 cause they were afraid that they would have to shave our
11 heads too often; the hair would grow faster. So they gave us
12 kerchiefs. Now, I want you to know -- well, they gave it to
13 us in the summertime, not sometimes in the wintertime, but I
14 had it in the summertime, because during the winter I had
15 nothing on my head. My shoes fell off me after three days
16 because --

17 I: Wooden shoes?

18 C: No, they gave us -- they let -- they let us have -- when
19 we came they -- I guess they didn't have enough shoes. But
20 we weren't prepared for that kind of thing and we wore shoes
21 like -- everybody wear shoes. We should have had boots, but
22 who knew?

23 R: Who knew?

24 C: I mean --

25 R: They didn't take away from you your shoes --

1 C: They didn't take --

2 R: Not at that time.

3 C: Not at this time.

4 V: Oh, they took away from us everything.

5 V: Well, everything they took --

6 C: Everything, and we got wooden shoe. And wintertime --
7 wintertime the snow stick to the -- to the shoes and you --
8 you -- you -- you went -- you went like -- like -- like few
9 inches up, you couldn't walk and you -- when you went -- went
10 -- went to work you had to go left and right and left and right,
11 you know, like -- like soldier, and you couldn't make it be-
12 cause you were slipping on the -- on the -- on the shoe on
13 -- with the snow. It was -- the shoe -- shoe were very
14 heavy. I even have a sign (perhaps meaning "scar") from one
15 of the shoe because we -- we want you -- to have children
16 like you, you know, from home, and all this -- all of the
17 sudden you got wooden shoes with -- with -- with snow under-
18 neath, with (phonetic) all-de-sink (perhaps "all the things")
19 we -- we didn't got shoe. They were afraid that we holding --
20 you know, with the hiding in the shoes.

21 V: But at the beginning I guess they were not prepared so
22 they didn't have the shoe --

23 C: Which we were able only to keep a couple of days --

24 V: They were Nazi who have your shoe --

25 C: Then they gave us what they call now the -- the slides,

1 the wooden slides.

2 V: The clog.

3 C: The clogs. And --

4 V: Which was terrible.

5 C: And in the cold weather -- you know what clogs are, right?

6 And you better slept on them during the night; otherwise,
7 some other prisoner might have lost them or whatever, and they
8 were lost. They'll steal -- and you were -- no way you could
9 get any other one. That was it.

10 I: So they wouldn't -- if somebody took your shoes, they
11 wouldn't --

12 V: That was it.

13 C: Unless you happened to find somebody who had just passed
14 away --

15 V: That's right. And you would take --

16 C: And you would take their shoes. And I remember my shoes
17 were gone after three days and the -- the little thing I had,
18 a kerchief or a little something I found, I tied it around
19 my sole so I'd be able to walk. So in the winter of March,
20 thirty -- forty -- 1943 I must have walked in the snow with-
21 out any shoes on my feet. And, you know, like you say, it
22 was a miracle that my feet weren't completely frozen.

23 R: And some other thing, when we came to Majdanek, the
24 (phonetic) pes-mine came forth from Warsaw, after the upris-
25 ing, to Majdanek. So we -- we -- I was already also fifteen,

1 sixteen, and we got our period, and my (phonetic) face-peer
2 -- what a tragedy, you didn't have where to put. But I was
3 lucky, I got a Russian linen undershirt -- combination -- how
4 you have combination?

5 V: Combination.

6 V: Combination.

7 C: Combination. So I used to rip it up and put --

8 V: Have to use --

9 R: Rip it up till -- I would have -- till here it was -- I
10 was cold in the morning -- what I had on -- but lucky -- I
11 don't -- lately they used to put bran in our soup to stop our
12 period, and this was a blessing because --

13 I: What would you do?

14 R: And also they -- (phonetic) a-lot-a-schink-en) -- every-
15 thing stop our periods, thank God, because we -- but the
16 first period in -- it was a terrible experience. You didn't
17 have what --

18 V: You had no paper to go to the bathroom.

19 B: We didn't have a bathroom. We have little boxes outside
20 the block and we had to do it in the -- for -- for -- The
21 first time, I said to my aunt, "I'm not going to do my -- to
22 do, you know, it in this -- in this box that -- " because a
23 few yards away there was a -- a wire and the men's camp and --
24 and we had -- you had -- you had to pick up your skirt and
25 sit down and to show everything. So said, "You're crazy, to --

1 what you going to -- to -- to keep back?" I said, "I will,"
2 but how long you can keep back? So you got to use it. And
3 we used to take this food in a big wagon and -- and -- in
4 Majdanek -- and to bring this to the filth -- you know, I
5 said fertilizer. It was a very good work. Why? Because we
6 could greet our men that came with --how you -- how you call
7 it? It was --

8 V: A garbage dump.

9 R: Yes, from the men's camp. And my -- my aunt was married
10 and she wanted to see her husband. She was nine months mar-
11 ried. So this is the only place that she could speak to him
12 and see him. So while I -- I didn't want to separate from
13 her. They would call it the scheisskommando. How you explain
14 it in the high English?

15 V: Well --

16 C: Well, scheisse is -- what means scheisse? How you --

17 V: Oh, that's very bad; it's probably an expression for
18 that --

19 C: Yes, so we used to push it, and it was a very hard work
20 because it's heavy. The wagon was round and heavy with a
21 opening in the back. And we came on the feld -- field. So
22 we have to open the back. Nobody wanted to stand in the back
23 because the smell was terrible smell. And they have to push
24 it on a very muggy -- muggy --

25 V: Ground.

1 C: -- ground. And then -- and -- and so everybody went to
2 the front on the field so we got heat from the German, "You
3 go in the back." You -- you had to push from the back, you
4 know, the -- the wagon -- not -- the wagon didn't move. And
5 they wanted to spread all over the field. But we went to the
6 wall because we wanted to see -- see our men. And I -- well,
7 at first we didn't have a choice, but sometimes we change with
8 girls -- they didn't want to work, you know, so we change --
9 they gladly change with us. They went to other work and we
10 went to --

11 I: So you could -- you could talk to the men on -- Well, did
12 the Germans just --

13 C: No, they -- no, we were not allowed to speak to our men.
14 But we could throw a letter away or -- or one -- we -- we --
15 no, we are not -- we were not allowed. We could get hit for
16 the throwing -- for the throwing.

17 I: So if you talked, they would -- they wouldn't even --
18 they would hit you; they would --

19 C: Oh, yes, we were not allowed. We are not allowed to talk
20 to our men, but so we can look, we can see a sign, you know,
21 some -- but a letter -- and throw a letter, throw a letter
22 back, where you go, how you doing, how you feeling.

23 What I wanted to tell you, this is a very -- I think
24 this I should tell you: There was a fifteen, sixteen-year-
25 old girl, this was in Majdanek next to Lublin, and she es-

1 caped from the camp. They caught her and they hang her. So
2 they -- they -- 7:00 o'clock, it was like a -- you know, on
3 the collar or -- collar, you call it in English --

4 V: Oh, Roman, oh, yeah.

5 C: They brought her and they -- we didn't know what this is.
6 For the first time we saw execution -- execution, yes -- so
7 they brought a little chair -- a little chair and they put
8 her --

9 V: A rope.

10 C: A rope, a guillotine, how we say, the guillotine in
11 English, also?

12 V: Uh-huh.

13 C: And the German came and they brought her and they put her
14 on the -- on the little chair -- on the little chair, and --
15 and this one -- the German woman, she was expended from the
16 United States -- now, Hermina something, I forgot her name --

17 V: Ryan?

18 C: (Phonetic) A-rye-an. Her name -- we'll call her Brigitte,
19 she was a -- a nineteen-or-twenty-year-old German SS -- with
20 the boot she push the -- the --

21 Chorus of voices: The chair out of the way.

22 C: -- the -- the chair. And now in Germany they had their
23 trial and they call our girl from -- from (phonetic) U-tryme,
24 friend of mine. And they wanted them -- the -- the -- the
25 lawyer asked her what color of hair -- eyes did she have,

1 this -- this Brigitte. So my friend said, "You -- I had time
2 there to look in her -- in her eyes? You (inaudible) super-
3 vising us while we work, you know." They put -- so I want --
4 I want her to finish the story with the girl. So in the
5 (phonetic) last-win-ter they -- they -- they asked her what
6 is her last wish. So with her foot she slap the -- this
7 woman in her face, so she got very (phonetic) tearius and she
8 -- she pushed this -- and she -- she hang this girl. And we
9 were standing very quietly around and to show us the -- the
10 -- to show us that nobody would -- should run away, as the
11 example, where to stand all -- almost all the night, they
12 went to sleep -- the German, they said -- till we would not
13 hear the whistle; we have to stand and look at her. And it
14 was night, it was May, it was very cold and we -- we got
15 light clothes, you know, and we are standing -- it was Fri-
16 day evening and she was hanging and -- and circulate -- you
17 know, the wind, she blew us here and there. And we were
18 standing around. We are standing in fives, you know, that --
19 it was very cold. We change, you know, this one in the mid-
20 dle was warmer, so we -- we -- we decided that we would change.
21 The first one and the last one were the coldest because the
22 wind. She -- she was hanging. And the girl was crying, un-
23 happy, and remembering. And because it was Friday evening
24 I started to tell them how it look in our house, you know,
25 to take their mind and also my mind away from her. So I --

1 I started to say how Friday evening we were all -- nice bath,
2 and we were little; I was the oldest with three girls, two
3 girls and a brother, with a bow in our head and with a fish --
4 my father came from the shul and we have Kiddish and we drank
5 very sweet, good wine. I put the point on food because every-
6 one was hungry. And -- and then we went -- we had fish and
7 hot soup with -- with noodle, good food, and -- and -- and,
8 you know, I -- I -- I spread out the story long, long, and
9 it was (phonetic) a-lee-zy dawn, you know, the -- the -- the
10 (phonetic) wush-tins, then we can go to sleep for maybe 3:00
11 o'clock (meaning probably three "hours"). So when -- we were
12 already tired and -- and -- and we went so -- and so I went
13 with my aunt to the block and a woman maybe -- older woman,
14 maybe she was thirty-eight, but in my eyes she was already
15 maybe thirty. She looked already very run down. And she
16 called me and she said, "Come, child, to me." So I said,
17 "What happened?" She said, "I heard how you describe your
18 Friday evenings. I'm a convert, a third-generation convert.
19 I have -- I never saw a Friday evening Jewish table because
20 my grandmother convert already," because, you know, as in --
21 in the -- to convert even the third generation were considered
22 a Jew. So she was in concentration camp as a Jew. But she
23 said, "I -- I never heard and I never saw a Jewish Friday
24 evening table, but to describe it so beautifully -- you have
25 a gift of telling and you are young. Look, my feet are

1 already swollen. And you have to promise (speaker very
2 emotional and crying) that you will tell the world what they
3 do with us, because I will not survive. You must survive be-
4 cause you are younger and you are stronger and you have a
5 gift of telling. And you have to tell the world. You have
6 to promise me." I said, "I promise. I promise if I will sur-
7 vive." She said, "You must survive." And the following day
8 she was taken because she had swallowed (phonetic) wood --
9 geo-deni -- was taken. I couldn't speak of this a long time
10 because I had nightmares. I was dreaming that they taking
11 away my children at night.

12 I started -- you know, twenty-four years ago, thirty, I
13 started to write, but I couldn't because my own everyday life
14 was disturbed, you know. I was -- the children were suffer-
15 ing. My husband, he said, "I don't allow it." And I was
16 suffering. But the time come now after thirty, forty years,
17 I started to -- and I still cry. I'm surprised because I
18 shouldn't cry. When I arrived, I don't cry anymore. Now I'm
19 back, you know, I remember every single -- very -- very good
20 till now. When I put it on the paper, I've -- I'm forgetting
21 already. I had the responsibility to remember everything
22 till now, you know, till I arrived. And after the -- after
23 when I am -- after the story that I put on paper already, I
24 am forgetting. I am -- I am not remembering so clever the
25 date and the thing -- you understand? Because I had it in

1 me that I should remember.

2 What else you want? I can tell you like -- all the day
3 I can tell you stories.

4 I: Is it something that doesn't -- I mean you say it was
5 hard to remember and hard to put on words, but it must stay
6 with you or --

7 C: No, it wasn't hard. It was because I was living this
8 again. You see, I was living it again. It was -- even now
9 I am writing, also. My husband said, "When do you finish all
10 of this book? You don't have -- you know you are -- " You
11 know, sometimes they have a nice -- a ballet on the -- on the
12 TV or something. After writing, I don't feel like to look at
13 nice thing. I feel like it is not the time to look. And my
14 husband said, "Enough! Finish already your book. You are
15 all busy with your book; you do your book." The best thing
16 to write, I am getting up in the morning very early like
17 4:00, 5:00 o'clock, because I am working. And then it's
18 (phonetic) stale and so I can put myself back in this time,
19 you understand. But --

20 I: It is quiet.

21 C: It's quiet. But most -- now I am (phonetic) more-de-quiet,
22 I am looking at this in the distance already. But it was a
23 terrible thing, a terrible experience that I think we will
24 live it -- we will live with it till our death.

25 I: Is it something you can never --

1 C: I'm -- I'm -- when I -- whenever I feel a smell of burning,
2 you know, sometimes a fire or something, I feel the burning
3 of Warsaw ghetto, the smell of the Warsaw ghetto. When you --
4 when you feel -- you know, sometimes you -- cleaning the
5 chicken and you put --

6 I: Singe it, you feel the crematoria

7 C: -- on fire, you feel the crematoria. You feel the cre-
8 matoria, right? I feel -- moment I don't want to remember,
9 but you have to remember. It is the same smell that came
10 from the crematoria. The -- the -- the burning flesh like
11 burning chicken or goose or -- or -- or -- you know when you
12 put on the fire. This -- this, I think, when you see a smoke,
13 you remember the crematorium. So you remember right away
14 your sister and brother and mother and children and everybody
15 vanish in the -- in the -- how strong you -- you want to be.
16 You still -- this -- this is a part of you.

17 Another thing I guess we all remember and -- and felt
18 for a long, long time was seeing children in a bus. You
19 know, on the highway you see children going to camp and what-
20 ever. We could never forget. I could never see a bus and
21 not start crying because I remember the children -- as a mat-
22 ter of fact, the people taken on buses into the gas chambers.
23 Or trains like someone, Mr. Mead or someone, mentioned at the
24 first day we were here that other people are very happy see-
25 ing people -- seeing trains: that means vacation for us,

1 trains or airports. For me, it took me years to go to the
2 airport to send someone off. I would only go to pick someone
3 up.

4 V: Right.

5 C: As a matter of fact, I was afraid every time I entered
6 any place, trains, whatever, to go, having the feeling, the
7 fear that I will never return. So that, I think, stayed with
8 us for a long time. And like Roma said, I remember this
9 little girl -- little girl, she was nineteen. I was seven-
10 teen and -- but she was a little girl, and she was a very
11 sweet girl. She had gotten married. They allowed it in
12 Berlin. I don't know why and what the circumstances actually
13 were, but she was allowed to move out of the camp we were in
14 and get married. And she married a young man maybe twenty-
15 two years. She felt that we were never going to come out of
16 this whole mess. And at least she wanted to be married. She
17 loved this young man too much -- so much. So we brought her
18 under the ~~(phonetic) hoops~~ ^{chupa}; we made her a veil and whatever.
19 And some Jewish family allowed us to do it in their home.
20 And she came to Auschwitz with us in 1943. And she was very
21 strong, you know, minded, but she got -- after three weeks
22 she got very sick. We were all sick. We were going down
23 and down, you know; we had typhus and whatever. And I remem-
24 ber one day I went over to her and I said, "What is it? You
25 -- you look terrible." And she said to me, "You know, I'm

1 married a year now. I'm pregnant."

2 V: Oy!

3 C: "And I -- that's the third month I'm in and I thought I
4 could make it, but I will never survive," she says, "but you
5 are strong and you're young and you'll come out and you'll
6 tell the world what they did to us." And I never, ever talked
7 about it. I remind -- had it in the back of my mind -- in my
8 mind for years.

9 But one day I was asked to be a panelist in a junior
10 high school in Brooklyn. And I was very hesitant. I (phon-
11 etic) fought-the-staw) that took volumes, but then I said,
12 "Why not?" Why not let -- " And I asked my friends, "Should
13 I? Shouldn't I?" And why not? And as I entered the school-
14 room, the children were very sweet, very nice. And one little
15 boy looked at me and he said -- he looked like a German little
16 boy. And he looked at me and he said, "I'd like to direct
17 my question to Mrs. Steinhardt: If I was a German child,
18 would you hate me?" And I looked at him; I said, "Never.
19 I would never hate you, because if I was to hate you, it
20 would be a vicious cycle, and we don't want that. That's why
21 we come. We are not militant people. We come here to tell
22 what happened to us so the world will know." He said, "Would
23 you hate my mother?" I said, "No, not your mother and not
24 your father." But I said, "About your grandfather, I have my
25 reservations!" (Laughing)

1 I: He understood that.

2 C: And he understood that. So as I -- as the whole conver-
3 sation went on, I became very open and I started to tell my
4 whole story. And some of the teachers looked at me. They
5 were really amazed. It took me awhile. But I reminded my-
6 self that this little girl who died in my arms that -- "Tell
7 the world. Tell the world what they did to us." And I fig-
8 ured now is my chance and I will. And I did.

9 I: When -- how long did it take you to -- to be able to
10 speak about it, how long --

11 C: It took me about a half an hour. I went in the bathroom
12 once more; took another Valium.

13 I: I mean how long after the --

14 C: Oh, after the --

15 I: -- events, how many years?

16 C: That's only about four years ago, so thirty-four years --
17 thirty-four years it took me to really open up and tell -- I
18 told my children bits and pieces because I wanted them to know.
19 I told my husband; he's not a survivor. He was -- he was a
20 soldier in the American Army. But I took him -- I told him
21 and he knows -- he's very understanding. My children are.
22 And my children for quite sometime were only very open; their
23 friends were survivors' children. And it worried me for
24 awhile because I thought maybe I did something wrong to them.
25 But later on they told me that somehow they had different

1 kind of feelings. They didn't marry survivors' children so
2 I guess they're quite normal.

3 I: Do you find that you all are friends with mostly sur-
4 vivors?

5 V: Well, this is one part you can never break. The bond --
6 too strong.

7 C: You know, we sort of became -- we -- we -- our relatives
8 were killed, were burned and whatever, so our --more or less,
9 the children grew up without grandparents, without uncles,
10 without aunts, most of us. So we -- we made our own fami-
11 lies. Now, we -- we met in 1941 and we never really separated,
12 although she lives in New Jersey and I live in --

13 V: (Inaudible)

14 C: Yes, like a sister.

15 R: Like a sister. We -- we were -- I was lucky I had my
16 aunt so we went together --

17 I: To the camp --

18 R: -- and she was very good to me and very protective, even
19 she was only four years older, but in this time, four -- be-
20 tween sixteen and twelve there is a difference of age. And
21 she was more clever and she was always, as I said yesterday,
22 putting me in the front of her in the selection because she
23 was afraid of (probably meaning "for") me and she was worry-
24 ing about me. We got in the morning a piece of bread and --
25 and things that -- called coffee, but it wasn't coffee; it

1 was some green things cooked in water and it was bitter and
2 it was very untasty and till the -- came to the blocks it was
3 already cold, also. But she used to say, "You remember -- "
4 Her father was my grandfater -- Grandfather said, "What you
5 eat in the morning is most important." So when we got our
6 piece of bread and soup 5:00 o'clock after work, she said,
7 "You have all -- you have always to keep the bread for tomor-
8 row to have because you can drink this dirty water-like, you
9 know, washing up to the -- easier when you have a piece of
10 bread in the morning.

11 (Inaudible conversation)

12 R: Yes, right, what you call it?

13 C: Well, we -- well, it was dishwater.

14 R: Dishwater.

15 C: Actually, we call a different name, but it was -- it was
16 -- tasted like dishwater.

17 I: The water that they used --

18 V: The soup what we got at lunchtime was the same way.

19 I: -- do you know what was in that, what --

20 R: No.

21 C: Well, it was water; there was no vegetables in there.

22 Several voices: Bran -- potato peels -- (inaudible)

23 C: I don't know what you call that.

24 (Inaudible conversation)

25 C: When you touch it, you know, like a green leaf, it burned.

1 V: It's a plant. It's a plant. It's a plant. If you touch
2 it, you burn your hand.

3 C: I forgot what you call that.

4 R: I used to go to work to pick it up. We had a couple; her
5 name was Rosel and she was really a German prostitute. And
6 she was (inaudible) couple -- were three hundred people. And
7 we went out, you know, to work from the camp, to commander --
8 kommando -- brennerkommander, you know, this commander. And
9 we used to go, you know, and with the German post -- you know,
10 gendarme around us with dogs that we would not run away. And
11 we went only to nobody's land. This was in Auschwitz. But
12 anyway they had -- all shoe -- take off or (Phonetic) all-
13 shoe-hair-un-tair because we -- we make -- you know, dust
14 for this. Elite, that was -- so you know, the little stone
15 I will never forget; they went into your finger, you -- and
16 you have to go left and right, left and right, with the stone
17 in you, you know, because -- and then -- but we liked this
18 commander -- this commander, this work, because why? We were
19 cutting down this little plant, you know, and this was nobody
20 land so we were--looked. There were a lot of spring and
21 summertime apple trees. So we -- sometimes we could find an
22 apple. And so we were looking when, you know, we came to a
23 place and she -- "Now, everybody go to work to -- " And we
24 had big -- big basket; two girls said, "Bring a basket." So
25 we were looking up for the -- for the apple tree, you know,

1 and up the -- under the apple tree when we cut you could find
2 by chance an apple. So she said, "You vervlugt -- you damn
3 -- where growing the apples, the -- the -- the plant? Up or
4 down?" And she (indecipherable) -- but we -- we receive it
5 with love because we always could find an apple or something
6 to eat. Sometimes you -- you take -- took an apple and you
7 are not allowed to ate -- eat it. So we swallow quickly and
8 -- and she said the movement -- she saw a movement of the
9 cheek, so she smack you and the apple fell down --

10 V: The apple came down.

11 R: -- and it was "So sorry! We are so sorry!" And then
12 sometimes when -- and she filled up her -- we brought this --
13 our soup (phonetic) without-it -- was like fifty liter kettle,
14 so she fell -- fill up with the German -- they fell up --
15 fill up this -- this sink with -- with beautiful apples.

16 Afterward she was in a good mood. We were sitting so she
17 took out a little -- and she was throwing at -- up and (in-
18 decipherable) -- whoever (phonetic) ket-kote-is-ay-ped), but
19 -- and then we went with this green thing. We went to Ausch-
20 witz. It was a (phonetic) koe-ma -- it was a -- a -- Ausch-
21 witz is -- it was few different camps. One camp, I think you
22 were there. It was for show. It was clean --

23 I: Is that the one with the -- Wasn't it Auschwitz, one in
24 Auschwitz --

25 R: I think you was with the (phonetic) poe-shone -- no, you

1 was in (phonetic) biz-zhi-zheen -- kee-oh-wi-nih -- you were
2 (phonetic) bri-zheen till you were at Auschwitz.

3 I: Which is the one that had the band playing?

4 R: Everybody. Everybody had -- everybody. Now, but one --
5 how I know this camp, because we used to bring this plant to
6 the men's kitchen in this camp. And this was beautiful. It
7 looked like a motel. Not like -- exactly like little houses.
8 And the men's -- and the prison men would dress nice with
9 the -- clean and nice. Before each block it was water, you
10 know, drinking water. And this was like a camp for show.
11 And the -- when the Red Cross came -- and they didn't show
12 the (phonetic) bre-zheen-kee, our camp, our (phonetic) dahm;
13 they show this camp. And this meant they wasn't so hungry
14 like was in the (phonetic) peet-yahs because they saw how
15 hungry -- how we looked. And they always bring a little soup
16 out and a piece of bread they throw to us while we were
17 (probably meaning delivering)
(phonetic) delivered. So we liked very much this ward because
18 always you could (phonetic) help-sah.

19 And also we work together with Greece girl, Jewish girl
20 from Greece. And they told her, "Show us which leaves, sour
21 leaf that you can eat." So we ate -- we also find sour
22 leaves. And also the horseradish was -- were growing there,
23 very old, so we used to pick it up and eat, but it was never
24 bad, you know (laughing); it was --

25 C: But we had one cure -- I must tell you this: You know

1 we all had diarrhea?

2 I: Uh-huh.

3 C: And typhoid. And we didn't know how to stop it. And
4 medication --

5 V: It was more than diarrhea.

6 C: There was more. It was forbidden because nobody gave us
7 any -- dysentery, yes. We went through the kitchen --

8 V: Dysentery; it was dysentery.

9 C: Yes, yes. We went to the kitchen and we picked up some
10 coal. From the kitchen there was always a big -- what we
11 call a (phonetic) mist-haufen. That's why the big --

12 V: Was it charcoal?

13 C: Yeah, we picked up a little charcoal---

14 V: Didn't you come to steal it?

15 C: Well, we stole it, whatever. When we got near the kitch-
16 en we stole a little bit and everybody took a bite of the
17 coal and that stopped it.

18 I: Because of the --

19 V: Charcoal.

20 C: Charcoal. Just plain coal --

21 I: In an emergency you find your -- your own --

22 V: Remedy.

23 R: Remedy. I mean certain things I remember. I had my
24 -- my legs were swollen that I couldn't even walk. I have
25 no idea how it end by -- by itself. But I know a lot of

1 them would die when once the -- the swelling goes up to the
2 heart, that's it. But I don't remember. I know I used to
3 put my finger into my leg and the indentations stay for
4 awhile. I remember working and I couldn't even walk in those
5 wooden clogs anymore. So I got myself -- like she said be-
6 fore, I found a sweater and I cut it up in pieces and I
7 walked around with -- with that around my feet.

8 C: I remember her -- she was not the best-dressed woman in
9 Auschwitz (laughing). We took anything we could get ahold of
10 just to keep us warm. And I remember one of the kapoesses
11 -- look at me and used to say to me, "Here she comes again,
12 the rabbi," a (phonetic) rust-un without hair, very skinny,
13 tall I am, you know, long legs and long limbs, and looking
14 like a rabbi and not being able to hold my bowel movements.
15 She -- she would scream and -- and the girls -- all my other
16 friends around me used to get water, good water which you
17 were supposed to drink and be -- you know, how we --

18 V: Where did the water --

19 C: They got the water from the toilet -- no, but anything
20 we would drink, we were so thirsty at all times and they
21 would take the water and clean up after me because I just
22 couldn't hold my bowels. And she would -- yeah, come, and
23 she would see that, this kapo, and she would say, "Huh, again
24 the rabbi."

25 R: This water was -- iron, you know, and we used to prepare

1 the water -- wintertime, because sometimes the winter -- the
2 pipes froze and we didn't have the water. So in the same bowl
3 we ate, we prepare the water. But to go to the toilet we
4 have to go quite a few blocks. So sometimes girl used to
5 make in the -- in the -- and they couldn't melt it. In the
6 morning they -- we didn't know if this is a water or this is
7 a wee-wee because it was the same color. The real water was
8 the same color. So the kapo wanted us drink to prove that
9 this is water that we prepared yesterday; this is not some-
10 thing else, you know. And -- and I remember I had -- I had
11 typhus so I work with typhus. And we were -- were -- we had
12 (phonetic) bah-ren -- bah-ren -- do you know, is it (phonet-
13 ic) try-git, the (phonetic) try-git -- yes. And there were
14 seven girls, German, and they had to fill up the bottles
15 with a muggy -- each one a muggy -- muggy dirt, and we have
16 to carry this. And it was so heavy. And I was -- I had
17 typhus, but I didn't -- I didn't want to tell that I'm sick
18 because if we were sick you went to a hospital and the hos-
19 pital -- you have a selection and they send you -- I knew --
20 I knew already. So I was working. I came to the German men,
21 you know, to the SS, and I said, "Look, give me a"-- so I --
22 I -- part of girl, they were carrying bricks, six bricks. It
23 was much easier than that. I said, "Please, let me go to the
24 bricks." She kicked me. I remember this -- this SS kicked
25 me. I -- I rolled up like this because I was very sick. And

1 the following day on the -- on the roll, on the call roll I
2 fainted be -- and I -- so I -- I -- in the beginning I thought
3 it was only the dysentery because I had the run, but the day
4 I had little -- little dots, red -- red dot, like (phonetic)
5 flex-ie, but it was typhus. And I had -- I ran a -- I ran
6 very high fever, because I fainted. So -- so the block --
7 the girl in charge took me to -- with the sick -- to the
8 sick --

9 I: Sick bay, we call it.

10 R: Yes. And then I was so sick. It was so cold. I was so
11 miserable. So in the doctor's office there was a woman pri-
12 soner in a desk. So I was sitting there and I fell asleep,
13 like this. When I woke up they took me -- they -- the rest
14 didn't go. They were too -- too sick or they didn't have
15 enough beds, enough -- you know, (phonetic) pree-ches in the
16 hospital. So they took to the Block 25. Block 25, it was a
17 block you -- you wait for the --

18 V: Crematorium.

19 R: -- for the crematorium. Why? Because they didn't want
20 to waste the gas. So they wait -- they wait for the trans-
21 port from the liberty, you know, from the cities from -- And
22 then we joined -- these people from 25 were joined to the
23 big transport because they didn't want to waste the gas. So
24 this was like a waiting for that. It was a terrible block
25 with no food, no work, no -- it was terrible. And all pri-

1 soners -- we knew about this. So I saw they didn't took me
2 to the hospital. I understood what I -- where they are tak-
3 ing me. And I woke up and I saw they were -- they -- they
4 putting us in -- in a group and they taking us away. So
5 there was a Polish doctor; I heard she spoke Polish. So I
6 started to -- to cry. And I don't know if she was Jewish or
7 she was Polish, I don't remember. And I said, "Please," in
8 Polish, "save me. They going to take me to the Block 25, I
9 would believe. Please, put me to the river, to the blo --
10 river is -- " So she picked me because I spoke Polish, you
11 know? And she opened her book and she put my number and I
12 go to the -- I went to the (phonetic) re-vere (perhaps mean-
13 ing river). I went to the -- So I was sleeping with another
14 girl. And we were thirsty, you know. At night we went down
15 -- not third floor, on the --

16 V: You know, the bunks.

17 R: Third bunk. And we were -- another two girls. I was
18 sleeping with one and one in the -- in the -- very narrow.
19 In the mornings they gave us a little water to wash, so we
20 took the water to drink because we were thirsty. Who was
21 thinking about washing? And so I -- I -- I -- I knocked, you
22 know, the girl that her foot was here. I -- I -- you know, I
23 said, "Take your water." She didn't move. "Take your water."
24 She didn't move. So I stand out and I -- "Take your water.
25 If not, I'm going to drink your water." She was dead (cry-

1 ing). So I told them. They -- they -- they took her down
2 at the noontime. And we were lying with this; we couldn't
3 down -- go down. I was too sick and I -- you couldn't take
4 her down. And she was dead. But you were so close to death
5 that you were not afraid -- afraid, you know? And she was
6 laying --

7 V: It was kind of different seeing that. It was a kind of
8 a feeling that you saw every day death.

9 R: Even if it's not today, it's tomorrow.

10 (Garbled conversation)

11 R: So where I were? Where did I finish?

12 I: You said you were so close to death.

13 R: In the morning they took me down and that was the -- the
14 -- the same Polish doctor saw me again and she said, "My chi -- "
15 And most probably I had the cris -- a crisis, you know this --
16 this --

17 V: A crisis, yeah.

18 R: A crisis of the sickness, this -- this--

19 V: You had reached the high point.

20 R: Yeah, because the morning I wasn't so hot. So she took
21 me down and she said -- she took my pulse and she said, "My
22 child, you go to the camp, to the -- back to camp to work."
23 I said, "I cannot stand. I -- I'm so weak. I -- I will die."
24 She said, "You better go because there going to be a big se-
25 lection," she told me, "and you are in danger -- in danger

1 here. You better go." And she let me go. And so I got that
2 shoe I had here (inaudible). I got that Holland -- Hollandische
3 shoe, the boot, and we got a blanket -- naked and it was
4 January; it was so cold. And few girl of us, we went like --
5 like -- like that engine, you know? And the snow was white
6 and we are walking to the -- to the -- to the bath, to the
7 bath together -- to the bathroom -- they were big sauna -- to
8 get our clothes. And we are walking. We came there. Nobody
9 was there. Do you remember there -- steps up -- steps that --
10 so we went dow -- up the steps. We had like four girls and
11 we laid down, covered with this blanket, and this -- my foot
12 was bleeding, but it was -- you know, a --

13 V: How do you say --

14 R: -- (phonetic) rahp-off. And we slept over there at night.
15 We don't know the time. We were so sick, you know? And we
16 were happy we could sleep there. And we slept and we were
17 forgotten, because in the German camp is the (phonetic) or-
18 de-nung; the order has to be. When they took us out from the
19 hospital, they took off our number. But we didn't -- they
20 didn't admit us still to the camp. So we were forgotten. We
21 didn't exist. And we were sleeping there. And it was a very
22 big selection. I don't know how you call it. You call it
23 mazzel, which means fate or you --

24 V: The selection, the selection --

25 R: No, no, no. But that I -- we were -- I was safe. I

1 didn't do thing to -- to save my life, but just happen, just
2 happen. You didn't want --

3 V: A miracle.

4 R: A miracle. In the evening the girl that worked in the --
5 in this sauna, they found us. They said, "What are you doing
6 here?" I said, "We are sleeping." They said, "You were
7 lucky. Look, the smoke -- they the dead people." And we
8 are -- we are -- "You dead already" and "How did you survive
9 the selection?" And we said, "We don't know." So they took
10 us to a camp. I couldn't work. I was so miserable. It was
11 so -- and you know -- and you know I -- I had lice and no
12 hair. And they cut my hair again when I went to the hospital.
13 And I was still dia -- I was still sick. And I was cold. I
14 -- so my -- I was separated from my aunt; she was -- she had
15 the typhoid on the block. She managed to -- to -- and I --
16 so I came to her. I said, "You know, I don't see end of this.
17 You know, let us suicide," because lot of girls suicide. In
18 the morning -- How do you suicide? You didn't have knives;
19 you didn't have anything. You -- you catch the electric wire
20 around the camp. In the morning on the call roll, they were
21 missing. The first thing they went to look to the -- to the
22 -- so --

23 I: People did this all the time?

24 R: Oh, a lot, a lot. So I said to my aunt, "Look, my mother,
25 my sister, your mother, all the family, like sixty people,

1 they are in -- in heaven. What we looking here for? There's
2 no end." So she said, "Oh, maybe tomorrow, maybe tomorrow
3 (crying) we'll do it. You have to have faith. Maybe tomor-
4 row. Maybe or (inaudible)." And we knew even if the war
5 were finished, they would not want to have witness, like we
6 are now witnesses. So they will finish us if they haven't --
7 I said, "Why to struggle? Why to fight? Let us do it." And
8 I came every day and she said, "You know, let us wait another
9 day." I was a -- a coward. I wouldn't want to go alone. I
10 want -- I was attached to her. I wanted to go to her. So I
11 came another day. And she was lying -- she was also sick.
12 And she would say, "Roma, another day. We will do it tomor-
13 row." I said, "No, let's -- " It was evening, you know.
14 They do it in the evening after the -- so I said, "All right,
15 tomorrow."

16 Once I came to -- few times that I came she said, "What
17 do you want from me? I want to live. If you want to die,
18 you go," she said to me. So I went. I went to -- to sleep.
19 The middle of the night I went to the toilet. And then with-
20 out thinking -- It was a beautiful night. It was snow all --
21 Around the wire was post, you know, (phonetic) post-in-care-
22 tin, how -- tower -- tower --

23 V: Guards.

24 R: -- tower -- and they were -- around tower. And then they
25 were -- it was a low -- and when you passed the -- the ditch,

1 they are allowed to kill you, because this mean you going to
 2 escape, you know, attempt to escape. I -- I was so sick, you
 3 know. On the behind I rolled down on the snow to the ditch
 4 inside. And I wanted to go up, but I didn't have the strength
 5 to catch the wire. You have to go up, and to catch the (phon-
 6 etic) oh-weh -- the wire. And then they shoot. And the --
 7 the bullet went next to -- zzzzz, zzzzz, so I woke up and I
 8 decide -- you know, I was like in a dream I did it. I didn't
 9 -- didn't sleep, but I was so --

10 I: In a daze, in a --

11 R: I was in a depression, some -- I -- I don't know how you
 12 call it. I didn't (phonetic) un-der-life-my -- so I did it
 13 automatically, you know. I want -- I had this in my mind.
 14 But since the bullet, I went back. I runned back. And they
 15 didn't shot anyway, because I am here. And I went and I de-
 16 cided I want to live. So we had to go to work and I was so
 17 sick. And there was a Russian girl. She was a kapo, you
 18 know. You know, she -- not the kapo, she was -- (End of tape)

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