

1 INTERVIEW WITH: MALA KANN SCHULESSER.

2 DATE:

3 PLACE:

4 TRANSCRIBER: BARBARA MARSHALL.

5 It was a very very famous camp. From there we
6 were laying two days in front down in the snow. They didn't
7 let us in. They were so full. They finally let us in a few
8 days.

9 There was a camp; everybody was there working
10 around that period-- skeletons. Then they took us to
11 Noshtaglava, Noshtaglava was the last camp there, not to
12 work but to die, no food, nothing. Noshtaglava. They left
13 us like just-- they didn't even want work from us, laying on
14 the wet floor, sending apples twice a day; freezing out, in
15 a thin dress, a short thin dress, no underwear, nothing. I
16 got typhoid there; I contracted typhoid there.

17 The time was nothing at that time; couldn't count
18 the days of the week or the months. I was liberated in
19 May.

20 So from January till May, I went through the
21 concentration.

22 Q Who was it that liberated you?

23 A The Russians, the Russians liberated us in May. I was
24 decorated. I didn't see the day of liberation at all. When
25 my (inaudible) came in my sister went out to look for a

1 doctor.

2 And she found a Polish young doctor, the Russians
3 took him to the Army and he came and revived me, took me
4 into a German house into a bed. The Germans ran away from
5 this place, and they tried to,-- I couldn't eat for-- I
6 couldn't eat; I couldn't swallow anything I really
7 (unintelligible).

8 Because I knew English before the war I took up
9 languages, French and English. I met the American Army, I
10 went over; the Polish doctor advised us don't stay with the
11 Russians, get with the Americans. We tried to get over. As
12 soon as I could walk, i went over to the American Army, and
13 I told them that I want to go, I have family in America. I
14 want to go to America.

15 Q You had family in America?

16 A Yes, because you see I have aunt, and they took me to
17 Belgium because it was a transport for French and prisoners,
18 French war prisoners. They took them over to Belgium. This
19 is how I came to Belgium with my sister, 45, and we stayed
20 in Belgium till 48.

21 Meantime, I got married, and I stayed in Belgium
22 and we came to this country 48. (Unintelligible).

23 And a lot of my friends were working outside still
24 in the Embassy. I have in the office. It was terrible,
25 winter, cold, they didn't give us any clothing, you know

1 short dresses, coat down to here without anything in those
2 wooden shoes, no stockings. It was terrible to work with.
3 I was the lucky one that I was inside the office.

4 And trying to remember the concentration camp,
5 (unintelligible).

6 I tell you one thing, will so strong in the person
7 nothing to live for in the camp, dying, sick, hungry,
8 starvation. The pain of hunger I think nobody talks about
9 it, what hunger means. Also the worse thing hunger. You
10 can't sleep, can't go on, only dream and think of food.
11 (unintelligible).

12 Q Was there anything you would have done to save
13 yourself?

14 A No, you couldn't. The only thing is only the will, I
15 was laying, dying let's say under the open window; snow was
16 rushing. I couldn't move even. And I heard outside in the
17 window the Germans, the girls that were over us, the German
18 I heard you know what, we have to leave now; we have to run
19 away, because the Russians are already near.

20 Q The Germans were saying this?

21 A Yes, those girls who were over us, who were sympathy to
22 us, you know (unintelligible). I was in bed dying. I
23 couldn't any more breathe; I was so weak, to the end, I
24 couldn't, I was laying. I was finished. And I had only
25 cold water to take. No food, a potato was a million dollar

1 word, a potato, the skin of a potato was like orange juice
2 to us, so hungry we were.

3 We were looking all over the garbage for a skin of
4 a potato. The shells of potato were important to us. And I
5 heard her saying under the window we have to run away. They
6 were already very close.

7 When I heard this, half dead, almost dead, I said
8 oh, no, I have to survive; I have to be strong. It pays to
9 survive to see Hitler's end. It pays to survive. I
10 couldn't, but I said I have to. You see, but it was my end;
11 I couldn't go on any longer, but I felt I had to survive; I
12 had to hold on I said, it won't take long any more, I
13 suffered so much; I am towards the end, I have to.

14 Q Almost like a feeling of joy?

15 A I was so happy I lived to see Hitler's end that
16 somebody will pay them back you know.

17 And then they came, they probably came, I don't
18 know when they came in, it was enough they revived me. I
19 could go on later.

20 But now, to tell day by day you die a thousand
21 times a day; you never knew the next day; you survive the
22 next day; it was impossible. It was a miracle I survived
23 every day; hungry, I had so many miracles during that time
24 on my march, of that death march to Auschwitz. We were so
25 hungry, eating snow and greens from under the snow, in the

1 middle of the road. Running like this we see a little bag
2 and my sister picks up the bag. It was a bag maybe like
3 with a pound of sugar, sugar! It was like sent from
4 somewhere from up, from nowhere! Sugar that kept us, the
5 energy going. When you eat a little bit of the sugar it was
6 a revolution in the body.

7 We didn't have anything; we were so out of energy,
8 that gave us so much energy.

9 Q How long did the sugar last you?

10 A For a long time; a pound of sugar me and my sister,
11 maybe-- we survived; we didn't freeze at that time. We
12 survived in fact to come over to Rommensbrig (phonetic). We
13 weren't frozen up. That was a miracle, a miracle. I
14 consider it a miracle and such miracles I had a lot, because
15 western some starving, we were so hungry and we didn't, we
16 went-- we didn't know what was going to happen to us. We
17 didn't-- some people have money; you know. I wasn't smart
18 enough to see, you know where in the beginning we had some
19 still dollars, American dollars and we had in the rectum.

20 Q Didn't they search you?

21 A The rectum they didn't search. They searched the
22 mouth. You had to open the mouth, the tongue out, but not
23 the rectum; where I was they didn't search the rectum.

24 I went through so many miracles every day. To
25 describe the miracles the way I survived, I don't know how

1 it was possible at all. I consider it my survival a great
2 miracle and I think my purpose of survival was I should tell
3 about it.

4 I feel saw so many people killed, so many children
5 killed. I stood around where they took away the children.

6 Q Did they treat it children differently from the adults?

7 A No, they took the child, they took the head on the wall
8 and split them. In the town of Stellengetto a German
9 officer had a son whom he taught how to shot in the air the
10 children.

11 I saw so many children killed that I didn't want
12 to have children after the war. I promised myself never to
13 have children. Nobody should be able to kill them. I have
14 one child, but thanks to my husband. He wanted absolutely I
15 have one child. He wanted more because he couldn't
16 imagine. He was-- somehow he survived. He was a survivor--
17 he was stronger, he wanted to go on living.

18 And he said he didn't imagine a family without
19 children. And I couldn't, I was so afraid that I made him
20 run in the pregnancy, in the eighth month of pregnancy we
21 liquidated the business, the home we rent to America in
22 order he should be an American citizen. I was afraid to
23 have a child in Europe, you know.

24 I didn't want to marry, I just wanted to lay and
25 look at liberators; I was so happy to lay and say in the

1 liberation that I am free; I can walk; I can go wherever I
2 want, see the blue sky.

3 It was so, people really don't appreciate freedom,
4 what means freedom.

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