

1

00:01:58,050 --> 00:02:01,333

Welcome and thank you for joining us for First Person conversations

2

00:02:02,250 --> 00:02:03,599

with Holocaust survivors.

3

00:02:04,140 --> 00:02:07,227

My name is Bill Benson. I have hosted the Museum's First Person

4

00:02:07,470 --> 00:02:10,259

program since it began in 2000.

5

00:02:10,710 --> 00:02:13,619

Through these monthly conversations, we will bring you firsthand

6

00:02:13,620 --> 00:02:15,259

accounts of survival.

7

00:02:15,630 --> 00:02:19,529

Each of our first person guests serves as a volunteer at the Museum.

8

00:02:20,370 --> 00:02:23,990

For many of you, it may be helpful to define the Holocaust.

9

00:02:24,420 --> 00:02:26,968

It was a systematic, state sponsored persecution and

10

00:02:27,870 --> 00:02:30,271

murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and

11

00:02:31,350 --> 00:02:33,030

its allies and collaborators.

12

00:02:33,390 --> 00:02:36,599

The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January.

13

00:02:36,600 --> 00:02:40,440

1933 believe that Germans were racially superior

14

00:02:40,650 --> 00:02:43,982

and that the Jews were inferior and a threat to the so-called German

15

00:02:44,250 --> 00:02:45,250

racial community.

16

00:02:45,720 --> 00:02:48,660

Holocaust survivors are those who were displaced, persecuted

17

00:02:49,530 --> 00:02:52,568

or discriminated against due to the racial, religious, ethnic,

18

00:02:53,280 --> 00:02:56,309

social and political policies of the Nazis

19

00:02:56,940 --> 00:03:00,089

and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945.

20

00:03:00,090 --> 00:03:03,719

This included inmates of concentration camps,

21

00:03:04,020 --> 00:03:06,470

ghettos and prisons, as well as refugees and those

22

00:03:07,530 --> 00:03:08,530

in hiding.

23

00:03:11,620 --> 00:03:15,039

We are honored to have Holocaust survivor Dora Klayman

24

00:03:15,070 --> 00:03:18,580

share her individual account of the Holocaust with us.

25

00:03:19,030 --> 00:03:20,229

During our program,

26

00:03:20,500 --> 00:03:24,009

please send us your questions and let us know where you are joining

27

00:03:24,010 --> 00:03:26,080

us from in the live chat.

28

00:03:26,800 --> 00:03:30,249

Dora, thank you so much for agreeing to be our first person

29

00:03:30,250 --> 00:03:31,250

today.

30

00:03:31,720 --> 00:03:35,680

Many thanks. I am very honored to be able to

31

00:03:36,550 --> 00:03:40,080

speak to the audience in front of us.

32

00:03:40,090 --> 00:03:43,809

And it's unusual that we are actually

33

00:03:43,810 --> 00:03:46,554

able to speak to many people who are all over the place.

34

00:03:47,620 --> 00:03:50,805

And I welcome you all and I'm glad to be able to share some of my

35

00:03:51,130 --> 00:03:52,130

story.

36

00:03:52,300 --> 00:03:54,995

Dora, thank you so much. You have so much to share with

37

00:03:55,810 --> 00:03:59,349

us and we have limited time. So we'll start please begin

38

00:03:59,350 --> 00:04:02,919

by telling us when and where you were born and a few

39

00:04:02,920 --> 00:04:04,839

details about your early life.

40

00:04:06,310 --> 00:04:08,368

I was born in Zagreb, but at that time was

41

00:04:09,850 --> 00:04:13,539

Yugoslavia. In January of 1938.

42

00:04:14,680 --> 00:04:17,130

It was still a very peaceful time, of course, much

43

00:04:18,310 --> 00:04:20,979

before the war reached that part of the world.

44

00:04:21,339 --> 00:04:23,887

And there is a picture that I would like to share of

45

00:04:25,000 --> 00:04:26,000

my parents.

46

00:04:26,770 --> 00:04:29,949

So at this point, I was already two years old

47

00:04:30,280 --> 00:04:33,249

and this is a picture of my parents

48

00:04:33,850 --> 00:04:37,660

with me in front of the Zagreb Zoo.

49

00:04:37,900 --> 00:04:39,489

And I think it's still there,

50

00:04:39,730 --> 00:04:41,019

should you go and visit.

51

00:04:41,830 --> 00:04:45,459

My mother was actually not from

52

00:04:45,460 --> 00:04:48,939

Zagreb. She was born daughter of a

53

00:04:48,940 --> 00:04:51,390

rabbi, the rabbi of the small town of Ludbreg

54

00:04:52,660 --> 00:04:53,689

in what is northern

55

00:04:56,290 --> 00:04:57,417

Croatia, and she became

56

00:05:00,040 --> 00:05:02,980

a teacher, an elementary school teacher, taught for a bit

57

00:05:03,550 --> 00:05:07,089

of time and then married my father and came

58

00:05:07,090 --> 00:05:09,197

to Zagreb. My father, the family originally

59

00:05:11,380 --> 00:05:12,850

also came from originally from

60

00:05:14,920 --> 00:05:18,399

Romania via Bosnia and then established itself in

61

00:05:18,400 --> 00:05:20,889

Zagreb. And my father learned

62

00:05:22,270 --> 00:05:24,573

all about brush making and established a small

63

00:05:25,720 --> 00:05:29,529

factory of brushes in Zagreb proper.

64

00:05:30,550 --> 00:05:33,470

He must've been visiting Ludbreg

65

00:05:34,390 --> 00:05:37,660

at one point, probably as a visiting Cantor

66

00:05:38,110 --> 00:05:40,060

for a holiday just for the holidays.

67

00:05:40,330 --> 00:05:43,240

And the two of them met and married,

68

00:05:43,780 --> 00:05:46,839

moved to Zagreb and had

69

00:05:47,620 --> 00:05:50,920

first me and then eventually

70

00:05:51,490 --> 00:05:55,089

my little brother.

71

00:05:55,100 --> 00:05:56,423

Dora, you spent a lot of time

72

00:05:58,660 --> 00:06:02,350

in your mother's home town of Ludbreg and eventually you would spend

73

00:06:02,380 --> 00:06:03,550

the war years there.

74

00:06:04,000 --> 00:06:07,569

Were you share with us a little about Ludbreg and what

75

00:06:07,570 --> 00:06:08,780

was unique about it?

76

00:06:10,390 --> 00:06:12,644

Well, I don't know how unique it was, but it's

77

00:06:14,290 --> 00:06:16,720

a small town.

78

00:06:18,190 --> 00:06:21,309

The interesting thing about Ludbreg these days and if anybody

79

00:06:21,910 --> 00:06:23,889

from Ludbreg hears it, they will agree.

80

00:06:24,130 --> 00:06:26,384

They think they're in the center of the world.

81

00:06:26,470 --> 00:06:29,290

But that's sort of an inside joke.

82

00:06:30,820 --> 00:06:34,479

They it's a small town in a basically

83

00:06:34,480 --> 00:06:37,959

rural area. And had

84

00:06:38,260 --> 00:06:41,770

before the war a small Jewish population,

85

00:06:41,800 --> 00:06:45,819

not everything grand as a synagogue,

86

00:06:45,820 --> 00:06:49,179

but there was a synagogue. And at one point

87

00:06:49,750 --> 00:06:53,259

the community asked,

88

00:06:54,120 --> 00:06:57,760

wanted to have a rabbi come and my grandfather

89

00:06:57,940 --> 00:07:00,850

arrived from Slovakia.

90

00:07:02,140 --> 00:07:04,247

And I will explain the picture in a minute.

91

00:07:04,390 --> 00:07:08,500

But he came from Slovakia already

92

00:07:08,650 --> 00:07:11,980

with his family. He already had one daughter

93

00:07:12,250 --> 00:07:15,699

and a son, and then another daughter

94

00:07:15,700 --> 00:07:17,620

was born. And eventually my mother.

95

00:07:19,500 --> 00:07:22,000

Ludbreg was an interesting town in that

96

00:07:23,080 --> 00:07:26,739

in that small population, there was very little

97

00:07:26,740 --> 00:07:28,210

to no friction of anti-Semitic

98

00:07:30,370 --> 00:07:32,829

friction I mean. And

99

00:07:34,030 --> 00:07:37,329

there were very few incidents in during that time.

100

00:07:37,330 --> 00:07:40,480

My grandfather was actually

101

00:07:41,980 --> 00:07:45,250

a rabbi there for forty two years by the time

102

00:07:46,060 --> 00:07:49,510

war ended his leadership there.

103

00:07:49,900 --> 00:07:54,130

Here is the picture is interesting because my grandfather

104

00:07:54,820 --> 00:07:58,149

is the person with a circle around his head.

105

00:07:58,480 --> 00:08:02,229

And so just to identify

106

00:08:02,230 --> 00:08:04,974

him from the other clergyman at the other end, the other

107

00:08:05,680 --> 00:08:08,740

clergyman is the local Catholic priest.

108

00:08:09,880 --> 00:08:12,640

Ludbreg is, was a practically

109

00:08:14,080 --> 00:08:16,990

totally Catholic world, but

110

00:08:17,620 --> 00:08:21,309

as this picture shows, there was precious participation

111

00:08:21,310 --> 00:08:25,420

within the school. This is the middle school faculty

112

00:08:25,690 --> 00:08:28,189

pictured here, and my grandfather apparently taught

113

00:08:29,290 --> 00:08:31,989

Jewish children their religion.

114

00:08:31,990 --> 00:08:35,558

And there was a Catholic priest that taught

115

00:08:36,669 --> 00:08:37,669

Catholic children.

116

00:08:38,799 --> 00:08:42,699

My grandfather participated in many other things, civic,

117

00:08:42,700 --> 00:08:46,570

civic things in town, acted as a translator, for example,

118

00:08:47,480 --> 00:08:49,829

for the court. He spoke a number of languages.

119

00:08:50,480 --> 00:08:51,607

So here you have both a

120

00:08:54,190 --> 00:08:57,460

rabbi and a priest on the faculty of the public school,

121

00:08:58,070 --> 00:09:01,389

which I would I would think that that would have been very unique at

122

00:09:01,390 --> 00:09:03,399

the time. Along the same lines.

123

00:09:03,410 --> 00:09:06,919

I think we have another photograph that you want to talk about, Dora.

124

00:09:07,870 --> 00:09:11,080

Yes. This other photograph is of the local

125

00:09:11,920 --> 00:09:13,719

tennis club at that time.

126

00:09:14,860 --> 00:09:18,849

And the lady with the circle around

127

00:09:19,150 --> 00:09:21,698

her head is the oldest daughter of whom I spoke, who

128

00:09:22,600 --> 00:09:25,150

was actually born in Slovakia and came.

129

00:09:25,990 --> 00:09:28,149

And again,

130

00:09:29,800 --> 00:09:33,340

the fellow above her with a with a circle

131

00:09:33,640 --> 00:09:37,119

is Ljudevit, who played a very large

132

00:09:37,120 --> 00:09:40,629

role in my in my world.

133

00:09:40,630 --> 00:09:42,100

And he

134

00:09:44,170 --> 00:09:47,999

is totally Catholic from a well known

135

00:09:50,320 --> 00:09:51,986

old time, semi aristocratic family

136

00:09:54,070 --> 00:09:57,039

of Ludbreg, the mother was of a very aristocratic background.

137

00:09:58,060 --> 00:10:01,509

And there are other Jewish and non Jewish people in

138

00:10:01,510 --> 00:10:04,809

this picture, which also shows the

139

00:10:05,410 --> 00:10:09,280

social participation and social interaction between groups.

140

00:10:10,060 --> 00:10:13,809

The reason I wanted to particularly point

141

00:10:13,810 --> 00:10:15,574

to Ljudevit with the circle is that he

142

00:10:17,260 --> 00:10:20,860

and my aunt work together in the bank.

143

00:10:21,040 --> 00:10:24,610

He eventually was a director of the bank and she worked there.

144

00:10:24,940 --> 00:10:27,419

And this is your Aunt Giza, right Dora?

145

00:10:27,670 --> 00:10:30,999

This is my aunt Giza and they fell in love and

146

00:10:31,420 --> 00:10:33,120

they were in love for a long time.

147

00:10:33,490 --> 00:10:36,039

Here is where they're older together.

148

00:10:36,700 --> 00:10:40,059

And he was very special in that.

149

00:10:40,060 --> 00:10:41,060

He was well known

150

00:10:43,570 --> 00:10:46,810

in that town as a one time mayor.

151

00:10:47,780 --> 00:10:51,369

He that tennis club, he was one

152

00:10:51,370 --> 00:10:54,580

of the organizers and founders of the

153

00:10:55,000 --> 00:10:58,660

of the in 1919, I think of the sports club

154

00:10:58,950 --> 00:11:02,679

of Ludbreg and had one of the first automobiles in town,

155

00:11:03,460 --> 00:11:05,714

in Croatia in fact. It was very proud of this

156

00:11:07,090 --> 00:11:08,409

large automobile.

157

00:11:08,890 --> 00:11:12,039

And the two of them were in love for a long time, but they did not

158

00:11:12,040 --> 00:11:15,400

marry probably because of the difference of religion.

159

00:11:15,760 --> 00:11:19,330

And in Croatia and Yugoslavia at that time,

160

00:11:19,570 --> 00:11:21,726

there was no such thing as a civil marriage.

161

00:11:22,690 --> 00:11:24,748

You either have to marry in a Jewish or in

162

00:11:26,200 --> 00:11:29,280

a Catholic faith, and neither was converting.

163

00:11:29,300 --> 00:11:32,889

And so it's not until 1939

164

00:11:33,100 --> 00:11:35,109

that they married. At that time

165

00:11:35,530 --> 00:11:38,889

they of course, became aware

166

00:11:39,070 --> 00:11:41,079

of what was going on in Germany, that the

167

00:11:42,520 --> 00:11:46,149

war had started with the already with

168

00:11:46,150 --> 00:11:48,009

the invasion of Poland.

169

00:11:48,010 --> 00:11:49,480

And they decided, having heard

170

00:11:51,610 --> 00:11:54,820

that perhaps a non

171

00:11:56,410 --> 00:11:57,733

Jewish partner could save a

172

00:11:59,950 --> 00:12:03,579

spouse who was Jewish, they decided to go to Hungary

173

00:12:03,580 --> 00:12:06,730

where a civil ceremony was possible and they were married.

174

00:12:07,240 --> 00:12:10,299

And, of course, as you just said, they had hoped that it would

175

00:12:11,410 --> 00:12:13,027

help save your Aunt Giza's life.

176

00:12:13,210 --> 00:12:16,809

And as you'll tell us later, that that was not to be.

177

00:12:16,870 --> 00:12:19,320

Dora before we continue, I'd like to share with you

178

00:12:20,380 --> 00:12:24,009

that we have viewers joining us from all kinds

179

00:12:24,010 --> 00:12:27,097

of different places here in the United States from Ohio, Texas,

180

00:12:27,700 --> 00:12:28,827

Arizona and California.

181

00:12:29,680 --> 00:12:30,849

And we have some schools.

182

00:12:31,240 --> 00:12:34,149

So we have the whole classrooms where the whole school, including

183

00:12:34,450 --> 00:12:37,929

Hopewell Elementary School in Iowa, and we have

184

00:12:37,930 --> 00:12:41,679

international viewers from Argentina, Mexico and Canada.

185

00:12:41,680 --> 00:12:45,369

So lots of people from everywhere are watching you today

186

00:12:45,670 --> 00:12:47,630

Dora, World War Two began in September.

187

00:12:49,630 --> 00:12:50,830

1939.

188

00:12:51,160 --> 00:12:53,757

But it really did not reach you until Germany invaded

189

00:12:54,700 --> 00:12:56,769

Yugoslavia on April 6,

190

00:12:56,770 --> 00:12:57,970

1941.

191

00:12:58,300 --> 00:13:01,240

You were just three years old at that time and you were away

192

00:13:01,870 --> 00:13:04,740

from Zagreb on a visit with relatives in Ludbreg.

193

00:13:05,590 --> 00:13:09,279

Please tell us why you were away from your parents and what

194

00:13:09,280 --> 00:13:10,839

happened once the Germans

195

00:13:11,210 --> 00:13:12,630

came into Yugoslavia.

196

00:13:15,380 --> 00:13:18,919

There was a time that that the

197

00:13:20,150 --> 00:13:24,049

neighbors of my grandparents came to visit us in Zagreb

198

00:13:24,320 --> 00:13:27,799

and my mother and father probably thought it would be a good

199

00:13:27,800 --> 00:13:31,470

opportunity to send me to go visit my grandparents.

200

00:13:31,730 --> 00:13:34,429

But in addition, at that point, mother,

201

00:13:36,530 --> 00:13:38,590

my brother was already born.

202

00:13:38,600 --> 00:13:41,950

My brother was born almost exactly three years after me

203

00:13:42,800 --> 00:13:45,200

in January of 1941.

204

00:13:45,470 --> 00:13:48,214

So here was a three year old that could be sent away for

205

00:13:48,950 --> 00:13:52,900

a bit of time, for a bit of respite I would imagine.

206

00:13:53,150 --> 00:13:55,190

And so I was sent to Ludbreg.

207

00:13:56,780 --> 00:14:00,200

And here we see your mother with your baby brother,

208

00:14:01,550 --> 00:14:02,550

right?

209

00:14:03,830 --> 00:14:06,830

Yeah. And so and

210

00:14:07,430 --> 00:14:11,179

so by by the time April 6

211

00:14:11,180 --> 00:14:13,140

of '41 came, I was still in Ludbreg

212

00:14:14,780 --> 00:14:16,720

and basically stayed there.

213

00:14:18,650 --> 00:14:20,120

What happened, of course, with

214

00:14:22,130 --> 00:14:25,460

the invasion is that

215

00:14:27,380 --> 00:14:30,110

not only did Yugoslavia fall

216

00:14:31,910 --> 00:14:35,679

and basically fell apart within a very short period of time,

217

00:14:35,680 --> 00:14:38,869

in just days.

218

00:14:41,080 --> 00:14:44,669

The Germany basically overran

219

00:14:45,070 --> 00:14:46,393

and Yugoslavia, but of what

220

00:14:48,610 --> 00:14:52,149

happened at the same time or actually was happening

221

00:14:52,810 --> 00:14:55,779

previous to that, is that there was a group

222

00:14:57,070 --> 00:15:00,339

of right wing

223

00:15:00,880 --> 00:15:03,940

nationalist, ultra nationalist

224

00:15:05,080 --> 00:15:08,730

terrorist group of Ustasa

225

00:15:09,400 --> 00:15:12,879

which had tried to get a foothold

226

00:15:13,630 --> 00:15:17,379

in Yugoslavia before, but never managed to do so.

227

00:15:17,620 --> 00:15:19,629

And they instead went to Italy, organized

228

00:15:21,490 --> 00:15:24,409

themselves into a force with this

229

00:15:25,120 --> 00:15:28,436

with the help of Mussolini,

230

00:15:28,720 --> 00:15:32,349

of course. And they made

231

00:15:32,950 --> 00:15:36,099

an arrangement with Germany

232

00:15:36,670 --> 00:15:40,120

that they would want to have a

233

00:15:40,900 --> 00:15:44,349

nationalist country of Croatia,

234

00:15:44,350 --> 00:15:47,889

which they would run with the tacit approval

235

00:15:47,890 --> 00:15:50,169

of Germany. And that is what happened.

236

00:15:51,790 --> 00:15:55,480

Here is a picture of Ante Pavelic

237

00:15:55,600 --> 00:15:58,179

who was at the head of this Ustasa group.

238

00:15:58,540 --> 00:16:00,909

And this is and he's

239

00:16:02,770 --> 00:16:05,409

here pictured with Hitler, who came to visit.

240

00:16:05,830 --> 00:16:08,470

And this was a little bit later

241

00:16:10,240 --> 00:16:13,929

in the time that that that Ustasa were already

242

00:16:14,200 --> 00:16:15,549

totally running the country.

243

00:16:15,820 --> 00:16:17,308

What Ustasa did they established

244

00:16:17,980 --> 00:16:21,999

something they called the Independent State of Croatia.

245

00:16:22,870 --> 00:16:23,999

And Dora,

246

00:16:25,530 --> 00:16:29,610

As you said, they were a puppet state of the Nazi Germany

247

00:16:30,000 --> 00:16:33,990

and they adopted their own set of laws for

248

00:16:34,320 --> 00:16:37,769

Croatia that were mirrored on the Nuremberg laws

249

00:16:37,770 --> 00:16:41,429

of Germany. Right. And and those were incredibly restrictive.

250

00:16:41,610 --> 00:16:45,389

Exactly. Basically, Jews were now restricted

251

00:16:45,390 --> 00:16:46,390

to second to second,

252

00:16:48,960 --> 00:16:51,720

hence noncitizens, basically.

253

00:16:53,070 --> 00:16:54,442

But it wasn't just the Jews.

254

00:16:55,140 --> 00:16:58,020

It was just like in Germany.

255

00:16:58,410 --> 00:17:02,159

Other groups were singled out.

256

00:17:03,300 --> 00:17:06,749

And in this case, it was

257

00:17:06,750 --> 00:17:09,219

also Roma, just like in Germany.

258

00:17:09,240 --> 00:17:13,049

But in addition, within within Croatia,

259

00:17:13,050 --> 00:17:17,022

there were also laws

260

00:17:17,130 --> 00:17:20,789

and persecutions against

261

00:17:20,790 --> 00:17:24,509

Serbs. Now, Serbs were a fairly large,

262

00:17:24,690 --> 00:17:27,960

fairly sizable minority within Croatia.

263

00:17:28,230 --> 00:17:31,066

And they

264

00:17:31,800 --> 00:17:35,737

they were a subject

265

00:17:36,030 --> 00:17:39,273

of persecution by Ustasa, who wanted to

266

00:17:39,480 --> 00:17:42,349

have when they called the independent state of Croatia.

267

00:17:42,540 --> 00:17:45,720

It wasn't independent, of course, and it was

268

00:17:46,590 --> 00:17:50,115

organized so that they could persecute

269

00:17:50,310 --> 00:17:54,029

Serbs and make Croatia totally

270

00:17:54,070 --> 00:17:55,950

Croatian and totally Catholic.

271

00:17:57,090 --> 00:17:58,939

If I could jump in for just a quick minute.

272

00:17:58,950 --> 00:18:02,086

I want to I'm going to interject here that a one of your friends

273

00:18:02,490 --> 00:18:05,759

is watching and they specifically want to say hi to you.

274

00:18:06,000 --> 00:18:08,254

Marianne Hahn met with her students at Peabody and

275

00:18:09,450 --> 00:18:11,165

she says, So good to see you again.

276

00:18:12,180 --> 00:18:15,240

And thank you for sharing your story, Dora.

277

00:18:15,660 --> 00:18:19,050

Well, Marianne is a wonderful, wonderful pianist, and

278

00:18:19,680 --> 00:18:23,630

people should listen to her music online.

279

00:18:23,640 --> 00:18:25,359

I am sure that it's available.

280

00:18:25,680 --> 00:18:28,170

She, is a professor of piano at Peabody.

281

00:18:28,590 --> 00:18:32,048

So Dora, Ustasa is in control as you said.

282

00:18:32,715 --> 00:18:35,669

Your brother and your parents are in Zagreb

283

00:18:35,670 --> 00:18:39,260

and you're in Ludbreg. What did that mean now for your parents?

284

00:18:39,270 --> 00:18:40,410

What happened next?

285

00:18:41,100 --> 00:18:44,609

Well, what it meant for the Jewish population generally

286

00:18:44,610 --> 00:18:48,259

is that they were now subject to all

287

00:18:48,280 --> 00:18:51,240

these discriminatory laws. That meant,

288

00:18:53,460 --> 00:18:57,368

as you see in the picture, they had to wear an

289

00:18:57,468 --> 00:19:00,599

identifying badge, so they're all wearing

290

00:19:00,600 --> 00:19:02,009

this yellow badge.

291

00:19:02,220 --> 00:19:05,459

This is my parents and my aunt, my

292

00:19:05,990 --> 00:19:09,480

my mother's sister in law and my little

293

00:19:09,510 --> 00:19:10,619

cousin Edita.

294

00:19:10,980 --> 00:19:14,190

And they're wearing badges that have this

295

00:19:14,800 --> 00:19:18,449

Magen David on them, the star of David

296

00:19:18,780 --> 00:19:22,220

and a letter Z with a little critical

297

00:19:22,260 --> 00:19:25,691

mark over it. It makes it into "zh," which means

298

00:19:25,950 --> 00:19:28,730

Zidov in Croatian, which means Jew.

299

00:19:29,340 --> 00:19:31,859

So they had to wear this at all times.

300

00:19:31,860 --> 00:19:35,249

And everybody that including even very little children.

301

00:19:37,110 --> 00:19:41,099

It also meant a loss of ability

302

00:19:41,100 --> 00:19:44,520

to have jobs in the government that are jobs,

303

00:19:44,940 --> 00:19:48,869

good jobs anywhere, loss of ability to

304

00:19:49,680 --> 00:19:53,339

attend university and a large amount

305

00:19:54,000 --> 00:19:55,000

of

306

00:19:57,930 --> 00:20:01,140

confiscation. So everybody had to declare what

307

00:20:01,450 --> 00:20:04,469

they owned. And actually, at the

308

00:20:05,070 --> 00:20:08,549

at the Holocaust Museum here, I saw

309

00:20:08,730 --> 00:20:11,994

facsimiles of forms that they had

310

00:20:12,210 --> 00:20:15,869

to fill out, which even my cousins had to fill

311

00:20:15,870 --> 00:20:18,124

out. They had little things like as one spring

312

00:20:19,530 --> 00:20:23,279

coat and one winter coat and then and the bracelet,

313

00:20:24,110 --> 00:20:27,719

one little chain, everything everything had to be declared so

314

00:20:27,720 --> 00:20:29,200

that it could be confiscated.

315

00:20:30,570 --> 00:20:34,439

So even even children had to fill out these lists of what they owned.

316

00:20:34,470 --> 00:20:36,359

Well, the parents, of course, did for them.

317

00:20:37,140 --> 00:20:39,051

But it was it had to be all filled out.

318

00:20:39,750 --> 00:20:43,319

Everything had to be declared so that it could be confiscated.

319

00:20:44,580 --> 00:20:48,269

And Dora, of course, it wouldn't be long before

320

00:20:48,390 --> 00:20:52,019

your parents were also arrested and taken. That happened

321

00:20:52,020 --> 00:20:54,929

fairly soon. Tell us what happened.

322

00:20:56,760 --> 00:21:00,240

Well, as as I mentioned before,

323

00:21:00,540 --> 00:21:04,680

I I was in Ludbreg and I actually remained with my grandparents,

324

00:21:04,890 --> 00:21:08,819

but my parents in Zagreb, this is where the deportation started.

325

00:21:09,120 --> 00:21:12,510

And so by the time by fall of that year,

326

00:21:13,380 --> 00:21:17,339

they were arrested and they were being held

327

00:21:17,340 --> 00:21:21,239

in a transfer, transfer

328

00:21:21,240 --> 00:21:24,685

point, a place where everybody

329

00:21:25,050 --> 00:21:28,619

was being held and then be transferred to the trains to be to be sent

330

00:21:28,830 --> 00:21:29,830

to camp.

331

00:21:30,510 --> 00:21:34,049

And my mother had my baby brother with her.

332

00:21:34,050 --> 00:21:37,470

Of course, he was only about nine months old at the time.

333

00:21:39,540 --> 00:21:43,289

But what was very lucky at the time, and

334

00:21:43,290 --> 00:21:46,680

of course, extremely difficult for my parents, is

335

00:21:47,100 --> 00:21:50,430

that a housekeeper of ours went to the camp

336

00:21:50,580 --> 00:21:53,369

and talked to the camp and she was, of course, Catholic.

337

00:21:53,550 --> 00:21:57,059

And she she talked to the guards

338

00:21:57,060 --> 00:22:00,869

and asked if she could have my brother and my mother

339

00:22:01,320 --> 00:22:03,839

must have been a fairly difficult thing.

340

00:22:04,020 --> 00:22:06,919

But she understood that it might save his life.

341

00:22:06,930 --> 00:22:10,500

She handed the baby to our housekeeper,

342

00:22:10,860 --> 00:22:14,250

who then went home, called

343

00:22:14,670 --> 00:22:16,287

my now Catholic Uncle Ludva and my

344

00:22:18,300 --> 00:22:19,770

aunt in Ludbreg, and they came

345

00:22:21,840 --> 00:22:23,009

and got him.

346

00:22:23,730 --> 00:22:26,579

And I have a fairly vivid memory.

347

00:22:26,580 --> 00:22:29,790

At that point. I was almost four, three,

348

00:22:30,400 --> 00:22:34,349

three, three quarters. And I, I remember his arrival

349

00:22:36,060 --> 00:22:39,599

mainly because I wasn't used to a crying baby.

350

00:22:39,600 --> 00:22:42,329

And there he was. And I hadn't seen him for quite a while.

351

00:22:42,870 --> 00:22:46,319

And also I remember very soon after

352

00:22:46,320 --> 00:22:48,839

it was wintertime and it was Hanukkah.

353

00:22:48,840 --> 00:22:51,960

And I sort of remember that time

354

00:22:52,920 --> 00:22:56,729

not only the candles, but I remember getting

355

00:22:57,000 --> 00:22:58,000

an orange for Hanukkah.

356

00:22:58,560 --> 00:23:00,059

And that was very special.

357

00:23:01,830 --> 00:23:05,131

And I was sort of wondering

358

00:23:05,400 --> 00:23:07,609

whether I have to share it with my baby brother.

359

00:23:07,770 --> 00:23:09,759

But I remember that.

360

00:23:09,780 --> 00:23:13,349

Dora, I want to remind our audience that we'd like them to please

361

00:23:13,530 --> 00:23:16,764

share their questions that they have of you and to do that via the

362

00:23:16,950 --> 00:23:18,029

chat feature here.

363

00:23:18,480 --> 00:23:20,790

So please do share those questions for us.

364

00:23:21,210 --> 00:23:24,213

Dora, as you said, the deportations began

365

00:23:24,720 --> 00:23:27,215

in Zagreb, including your parents.

366

00:23:28,416 --> 00:23:32,130

In 1942, deportations began from Ludbreg as well, and

367

00:23:32,430 --> 00:23:35,069

most of your extended family was deported.

368

00:23:35,850 --> 00:23:39,299

Tell us what you remember about those deportations

369

00:23:39,600 --> 00:23:41,220

of your own family members.

370

00:23:42,210 --> 00:23:45,089

That was, that was a very difficult time.

371

00:23:46,680 --> 00:23:49,130

This was '42, so I was already old enough

372

00:23:50,190 --> 00:23:53,836

that I do have some memory of it.

373

00:23:54,310 --> 00:23:57,999

I remember that I was in my aunt and my Catholic

374

00:23:58,000 --> 00:24:01,389

uncle's house by that point,

375

00:24:01,720 --> 00:24:04,978

and I remember it was sort

376

00:24:05,170 --> 00:24:08,979

of evening and everybody was coming by, all my cousins

377

00:24:08,980 --> 00:24:12,051

and my aunt and my grandparents and everybody was saying

378

00:24:12,700 --> 00:24:16,059

goodbye to me. And I wasn't quite sure.

379

00:24:16,540 --> 00:24:20,439

I don't know why everybody was crying,

380

00:24:20,830 --> 00:24:24,160

but obviously they had the feeling

381

00:24:24,460 --> 00:24:26,790

that they wouldn't see me, see us again.

382

00:24:26,800 --> 00:24:30,460

And I had no idea where they were heading exactly.

383

00:24:31,570 --> 00:24:35,740

So it was it was a very emotionally

384

00:24:35,920 --> 00:24:36,920

laden time.

385

00:24:37,690 --> 00:24:41,589

And they were taken away and they went

386

00:24:42,730 --> 00:24:45,880

all the deportations are happening quite a bit.

387

00:24:46,240 --> 00:24:49,729

I think that we have a picture of deportation.

388

00:24:50,800 --> 00:24:54,089

This picture is from the Museum, from the memorial

389

00:24:54,370 --> 00:24:55,779

Holocaust Memorial Museum.

390

00:24:55,990 --> 00:25:00,010

And it's a picture of of a Serb village being deported.

391

00:25:01,090 --> 00:25:03,809

As I mentioned before, the Ustasa

392

00:25:03,820 --> 00:25:06,579

We're not just eager to

393

00:25:08,530 --> 00:25:11,431

deport and kill Jews and Roma, but also

394

00:25:12,280 --> 00:25:15,701

Serbs. And they deported whole

395

00:25:15,910 --> 00:25:19,237

villages and many were shot on the way or

396

00:25:19,420 --> 00:25:22,839

shot every which way, killed every which way.

397

00:25:22,840 --> 00:25:25,339

But some of them, just like our my relatives, ended

398

00:25:26,470 --> 00:25:29,830

up instead in the in

399

00:25:30,040 --> 00:25:33,549

the camp, most in camps, mostly in the camp

400

00:25:33,550 --> 00:25:34,660

of Jasenovac,

401

00:25:35,110 --> 00:25:36,999

Which was actually in Croatia.

402

00:25:37,000 --> 00:25:40,332

We're going to come back to that. Dora, I do have a question for you

403

00:25:40,480 --> 00:25:42,279

from an audience member, Benell.

404

00:25:42,670 --> 00:25:46,449

She asks, Do you know where your parents were deported

405

00:25:46,450 --> 00:25:49,240

to once they left that transfer camp?

406

00:25:49,510 --> 00:25:51,450

Yes. Yes, definitely.

407

00:25:51,580 --> 00:25:55,329

They they went into the very camp that I was just about to speak

408

00:25:55,330 --> 00:25:57,240

about, which is Camp Jasenovac.

409

00:25:57,340 --> 00:26:00,819

But there was some feeling that my mother may have gone

410

00:26:00,820 --> 00:26:03,270

to Stara GradiÅŹka.

411

00:26:03,280 --> 00:26:06,241

I think she did. And maybe to ÄŹakovo, which is another

412

00:26:06,790 --> 00:26:09,789

place that was a horrendous place

413

00:26:10,300 --> 00:26:13,060

where men and women and children especially were killed.

414

00:26:13,510 --> 00:26:17,984

And I actually went there two years ago.

415

00:26:19,450 --> 00:26:22,720

It's just sort of another reminder.

416

00:26:23,020 --> 00:26:25,959

But mostly they went to Jasenovac.

417

00:26:25,960 --> 00:26:27,773

It was a the the biggest of the camps

418

00:26:29,740 --> 00:26:32,920

and it was a most horrific camp.

419

00:26:33,820 --> 00:26:37,450

And before you tell us more about that, as I know you, will

420

00:26:38,380 --> 00:26:40,599

you as you have you said the

421

00:26:41,980 --> 00:26:45,579

Ustasa was was deporting and brutalizing not just Jews,

422

00:26:45,580 --> 00:26:47,289

but also Serbs and Roma.

423

00:26:47,770 --> 00:26:50,024

But you also shared with me that not everyone,

424

00:26:51,460 --> 00:26:53,799

not not everyone in the Croatia

425

00:26:55,360 --> 00:26:59,917

accepted those policies or the Ustasa and some in fact resisted.

426

00:27:00,918 --> 00:27:01,779

Tell us a little bit about that resistance.

427

00:27:01,780 --> 00:27:02,920

Who who were they?

428

00:27:05,200 --> 00:27:08,530

Yes, many people did not follow

429

00:27:09,340 --> 00:27:12,609

the dictates of the of the Ustasa regime

430

00:27:14,590 --> 00:27:15,590

At their own peril of course.

431

00:27:20,020 --> 00:27:23,529

Join a group that was that was basically led first by

432

00:27:23,530 --> 00:27:27,459

the by a group of communists who are more organized

433

00:27:28,090 --> 00:27:32,109

even at that time than just general population.

434

00:27:32,110 --> 00:27:36,069

And then the person who

435

00:27:36,100 --> 00:27:39,819

was who became fairly well known later on and people

436

00:27:39,820 --> 00:27:42,969

may recognize the name was Tito, but

437

00:27:44,830 --> 00:27:47,427

basically people ran into the mountains and organized

438

00:27:48,400 --> 00:27:52,179

themselves and eventually became

439

00:27:52,180 --> 00:27:54,385

quite a force. And at the end toward the end,

440

00:27:55,780 --> 00:27:59,349

they became actually a formidable military

441

00:27:59,350 --> 00:28:00,350

force.

442

00:28:00,370 --> 00:28:03,549

And you'll tell us a little bit more about those partisans and how it

443

00:28:03,550 --> 00:28:07,029

really directly affected your life in a in a big

444

00:28:07,030 --> 00:28:10,690

way. You're you're now in Ludbreg.

445

00:28:10,700 --> 00:28:14,259

Still, you're with your Aunt Giza and your Uncle Ludva.

446

00:28:15,370 --> 00:28:19,680

Your Uncle Ludva, however, was arrested in 1943

447

00:28:20,014 --> 00:28:22,719

and and the Ustasa sent him to the

448

00:28:22,720 --> 00:28:26,289

Jasenovac camp as well. Tell us

449

00:28:26,710 --> 00:28:29,454

why your uncle who was was a Catholic, why he would have

450

00:28:30,220 --> 00:28:31,445

been arrested and sent to Jasenovac

451

00:28:33,940 --> 00:28:37,530

and what and what conditions were like in Jasenovac.

452

00:28:37,540 --> 00:28:40,299

You've told us just a little bit about it.

453

00:28:40,510 --> 00:28:43,689

Tell us some more and also tell us about what it was like for your

454

00:28:43,690 --> 00:28:44,690

uncle.

455

00:28:45,020 --> 00:28:48,236

OK, so the reason for my uncle's

456

00:28:48,460 --> 00:28:51,220

arrest was had to do with the partisans because,

457

00:28:52,090 --> 00:28:55,299

as I said, they became a formidable force that fought the

458

00:28:56,010 --> 00:28:59,249

Ustasa forces.

459

00:29:00,690 --> 00:29:04,249

The fighting was fairly frequent

460

00:29:04,470 --> 00:29:07,800

and fairly fierce

461

00:29:08,370 --> 00:29:12,089

in Ludbreg. And two times during

462

00:29:12,090 --> 00:29:15,810

the war we were actually liberated for a period of time.

463

00:29:16,680 --> 00:29:18,929

At one of those liberation when the Ustasa returned,

464

00:29:19,360 --> 00:29:22,997

they they weren't

465

00:29:23,070 --> 00:29:26,309

going to be just sitting down and saying, well, this is what

466

00:29:26,310 --> 00:29:29,219

happened. They actually wanted to find some scapegoats.

467

00:29:29,400 --> 00:29:31,800

They didn't lose just because the partisans were

468

00:29:32,850 --> 00:29:35,970

stronger. But there must have been some help from within.

469

00:29:36,180 --> 00:29:40,079

And so they arrested some leaders of that town,

470

00:29:40,970 --> 00:29:44,609

about five of them, and they sent them to the

471

00:29:44,690 --> 00:29:48,117

two to the same concentration camp to Jasenovac.

472

00:29:48,150 --> 00:29:51,959

That included my uncle. I didn't mention before,

473

00:29:51,960 --> 00:29:55,319

but he came from a family that that

474

00:29:55,710 --> 00:29:58,950

had had fairly,

475

00:30:02,670 --> 00:30:06,119

fairly frequent

476

00:30:06,960 --> 00:30:10,859

deaths in that number of his sisters

477

00:30:10,860 --> 00:30:13,140

and brothers died young of

478

00:30:14,490 --> 00:30:15,900

tuberculosis as such.

479

00:30:16,260 --> 00:30:19,670

So he himself was not a terribly strong person.

480

00:30:19,890 --> 00:30:23,400

So going to a concentration camp would have been

481

00:30:23,940 --> 00:30:26,881

terrible because this concentration camp

482

00:30:27,540 --> 00:30:28,910

was a killing camp.

483

00:30:29,280 --> 00:30:32,599

It was a place where people were out.

484

00:30:32,610 --> 00:30:36,119

This picture shows them just on the way in being

485

00:30:36,120 --> 00:30:39,719

stripped of all possessions.

486

00:30:39,720 --> 00:30:43,050

And it was a camp in which

487

00:30:44,700 --> 00:30:47,531

people were killed at will with

488

00:30:48,270 --> 00:30:51,839

any kind of implements, knives being there was

489

00:30:51,840 --> 00:30:54,836

Ustasa favorite. People were hanged, they

490

00:30:55,380 --> 00:30:58,920

were tortured. There were thrown in the river,

491

00:30:59,310 --> 00:31:02,709

the river Sava was full of floating

492

00:31:02,910 --> 00:31:04,310

bodies at one point.

493

00:31:04,920 --> 00:31:07,913

There are pictures of that in the Museum,

494

00:31:08,400 --> 00:31:09,400

actually.

495

00:31:09,900 --> 00:31:12,250

So it was a horrendous camp.

496

00:31:12,480 --> 00:31:14,660

People were starved to death and worked to death.

497

00:31:15,690 --> 00:31:18,539

So my uncle arriving there.

498

00:31:22,130 --> 00:31:25,127

Would have been very difficult for him to

499

00:31:25,880 --> 00:31:26,880

survive.

500

00:31:27,350 --> 00:31:30,740

I didn't mention before, but my

501

00:31:30,830 --> 00:31:33,133

grandfather, my my all my family ended up there

502

00:31:34,460 --> 00:31:36,630

except eventually for Aunt Giza.

503

00:31:36,650 --> 00:31:39,319

But everybody from Ludbreg ended up there.

504

00:31:39,560 --> 00:31:43,489

And I was told by eyewitnesses that my grandfather

505

00:31:43,490 --> 00:31:46,910

never even made it into the camp proper.

506

00:31:47,150 --> 00:31:50,450

But one of the Ustasa just hit him on the head with a shovel

507

00:31:50,990 --> 00:31:52,299

and killed him that way.

508

00:31:52,850 --> 00:31:56,539

So I was struck the first time you told

509

00:31:56,540 --> 00:32:00,019

me about Jasenovac and that the brutality.

510

00:32:00,420 --> 00:32:04,069

And I'm sure that many in our audience, probably most just

511

00:32:04,070 --> 00:32:07,269

like me. That was a place we never even heard of.

512

00:32:07,280 --> 00:32:09,485

And yet it was just you're only just touching

513

00:32:10,940 --> 00:32:14,080

on the surface for your for your Uncle Ludva.

514

00:32:14,270 --> 00:32:17,779

However, because he was frail, he had a

515

00:32:17,780 --> 00:32:21,105

little bit of little bit of good fortune in what

516

00:32:21,260 --> 00:32:22,450

they decided to do.

517

00:32:22,580 --> 00:32:25,520

So, yes, very much so, because they found out they knew that

518

00:32:26,390 --> 00:32:29,869

he was a banker and also that

519

00:32:29,870 --> 00:32:32,839

he was a amateur

520

00:32:33,920 --> 00:32:37,650

violinist and that he had organized an orchestra in Ludbreg,

521

00:32:37,670 --> 00:32:41,869

a small orchestra and a choir, and they put on performances

522

00:32:42,050 --> 00:32:45,699

and they knew that. And so they used him in that way.

523

00:32:45,980 --> 00:32:48,994

So he was he was then

524

00:32:49,490 --> 00:32:53,570

put in an office to to run the paperwork.

525

00:32:53,810 --> 00:32:57,289

And that, of course, saved him because the rest of the world was out

526

00:32:57,290 --> 00:32:58,290

there in the cold.

527

00:32:59,420 --> 00:33:03,109

And any kind of inclement weather with that practically without

528

00:33:03,110 --> 00:33:05,217

shelter and with almost no food and working

529

00:33:06,710 --> 00:33:09,900

very hard. My father my father was there and my uncle

530

00:33:10,190 --> 00:33:11,479

Ludva actually saw him there.

531

00:33:12,430 --> 00:33:14,479

He actually survived to the very end.

532

00:33:15,890 --> 00:33:19,279

And he he was working in a factory,

533

00:33:19,520 --> 00:33:21,920

in a tannery, which was very hard work.

534

00:33:22,070 --> 00:33:25,190

There was also a factory that created chains.

535

00:33:25,430 --> 00:33:28,460

These were this was awful hard work.

536

00:33:28,700 --> 00:33:32,390

But my uncle was being put and was put in office

537

00:33:32,750 --> 00:33:36,949

and there was someone kind there that sometimes

538

00:33:36,950 --> 00:33:40,010

helped a little. And also he was ordered to put

539

00:33:40,400 --> 00:33:43,303

on a performance. And so he he used to tell me

540

00:33:43,940 --> 00:33:47,330

afterwards that he would take everybody that he could think of

541

00:33:48,020 --> 00:33:50,876

into the group. And so they would have

542

00:33:51,530 --> 00:33:54,512

at least some time indoors to to practice

543

00:33:55,130 --> 00:33:58,670

singing instead of instead of freezing

544

00:33:58,700 --> 00:34:01,390

or working out outdoors.

545

00:34:01,700 --> 00:34:05,089

So the fact that the Ustasa wanted to be entertained

546

00:34:05,480 --> 00:34:09,049

and they took advantage of the fact that your your your your

547

00:34:09,050 --> 00:34:13,099

uncle could play music, but he used that as an opportunity

548

00:34:13,460 --> 00:34:15,919

to try to save others in joining him.

549

00:34:15,969 --> 00:34:17,519

Yes, very much so.

550

00:34:19,370 --> 00:34:22,339

Dora, Was Aunt Giza able to be in touch

551

00:34:22,940 --> 00:34:25,939

with your uncle while he was at Jasenovac?

552

00:34:26,600 --> 00:34:29,599

Yes, he was able to write

553

00:34:30,199 --> 00:34:32,329

and he was able to get some packages.

554

00:34:33,620 --> 00:34:37,189

And the pictures in front of you is of

555

00:34:37,190 --> 00:34:39,559

my Aunt Giza and my brother and me.

556

00:34:40,010 --> 00:34:42,411

And this is a picture, we went to the photographer

557

00:34:44,030 --> 00:34:47,059

to have it taken so that we could send it to him.

558

00:34:48,469 --> 00:34:50,869

And we sent that.

559

00:34:50,870 --> 00:34:52,880

And we also used to send some food.

560

00:34:53,210 --> 00:34:56,710

And one of the foods that I remember very well, my aunt

561

00:34:56,719 --> 00:35:00,170

preparing is a something that

562

00:35:00,440 --> 00:35:04,340

we think of as roux in in cooking in United States.

563

00:35:05,210 --> 00:35:08,420

I think in Croatia, we used to call it ajnpre and

564

00:35:08,810 --> 00:35:12,530

it was a mixture of fat and flour,

565

00:35:12,800 --> 00:35:14,659

and she would make a lot of it.

566

00:35:14,660 --> 00:35:16,460

So it would be sort of like a brick.

567

00:35:16,940 --> 00:35:20,300

It would be very, very thick and hold it together.

568

00:35:20,510 --> 00:35:23,780

And she would send that. And the reason for it was

569

00:35:24,080 --> 00:35:27,230

that you could take a little bit of that sort of a

570

00:35:27,810 --> 00:35:29,770

walnut size, maybe pea sized piece and put it

571

00:35:31,310 --> 00:35:34,879

in the in your what they call soup, which was

572

00:35:34,880 --> 00:35:38,599

basically water and get

573

00:35:38,600 --> 00:35:41,949

some caloric value out of it, some nutritional value.

574

00:35:42,890 --> 00:35:45,683

So, yeah, that was one of the things that I remember very

575

00:35:46,400 --> 00:35:48,590

well from making and sending them

576

00:35:48,890 --> 00:35:52,820

Dora, while your Uncle Ludva was Jasenovac

577

00:35:53,360 --> 00:35:55,189

in early 1943,

578

00:35:55,190 --> 00:35:58,039

Your Aunt Giza who was caring for you and your brother

579

00:35:58,670 --> 00:36:01,610

was turned into the authorities for being Jewish and she was

580

00:36:02,300 --> 00:36:05,929

deported. What can you tell us about what happened to

581

00:36:06,200 --> 00:36:09,709

Aunt Giza and and why you think you and your brother

582

00:36:09,710 --> 00:36:12,440

were able to remain in the Ludbreg?

583

00:36:14,450 --> 00:36:17,030

It was a very unfortunate thing as I,

584

00:36:18,100 --> 00:36:20,280

Ludbreg was in

585

00:36:21,280 --> 00:36:24,100

In a way unique in that people

586

00:36:25,060 --> 00:36:28,434

people knew who we were and no one gave us

587

00:36:28,630 --> 00:36:31,770

up. No one went ringing the police or at the

588

00:36:32,110 --> 00:36:34,409

police door and saying there are some Jewish children there,

589

00:36:35,590 --> 00:36:39,250

but and many, many people from that town

590

00:36:40,150 --> 00:36:43,600

had relatives, children of their own and so on in

591

00:36:44,110 --> 00:36:45,310

joining the partisans.

592

00:36:46,060 --> 00:36:49,784

But one time there was one guy and his name was Tomczyk.

593

00:36:49,840 --> 00:36:52,633

And I can't remember where he came from, actually, but he

594

00:36:53,380 --> 00:36:56,723

knew he found out about my aunt and he denounced

595

00:36:57,070 --> 00:36:59,949

her. And so the Ustasa

596

00:37:00,640 --> 00:37:04,209

came to get her and

597

00:37:04,210 --> 00:37:06,579

she she she was trying to hide

598

00:37:07,810 --> 00:37:11,349

and she was running and she grabbed my brother and me

599

00:37:11,350 --> 00:37:14,104

on the way and and took us to

600

00:37:14,860 --> 00:37:16,139

our next door neighbor.

601

00:37:16,780 --> 00:37:19,630

That was the house we owned next door.

602

00:37:19,930 --> 00:37:22,177

And we had we had a family

603

00:37:23,590 --> 00:37:25,269

living there. The family Runjak lived there.

604

00:37:25,270 --> 00:37:28,810

There was a simple family.

605

00:37:28,930 --> 00:37:32,170

He was a house painter and she was a nurse

606

00:37:33,310 --> 00:37:36,849

who took care of lots of people that suffer from tuberculosis.

607

00:37:37,210 --> 00:37:40,389

And they had three children older than we were.

608

00:37:40,390 --> 00:37:44,109

And my aunt took us there and said to Mrs. Runjak,

609

00:37:44,410 --> 00:37:46,089

please take care of these children.

610

00:37:46,090 --> 00:37:49,119

And at that point, that the Ustasa caught up with her,

611

00:37:49,630 --> 00:37:51,590

but she left us with the Runjak family and they

612

00:37:53,200 --> 00:37:56,091

were most kind to accept us because it was pretty dangerous

613

00:37:57,190 --> 00:37:59,320

to be harboring Jewish children.

614

00:38:00,780 --> 00:38:04,470

Especially because at times we had

615

00:38:05,220 --> 00:38:08,969

we had Ustasa bivouacking in our

616

00:38:09,150 --> 00:38:10,816

in our backyard, the our house and

617

00:38:12,630 --> 00:38:15,749

my uncle's house, and this house actually

618

00:38:16,110 --> 00:38:18,510

had the same common backyard.

619

00:38:18,810 --> 00:38:20,939

And the Ustasa were settled there

620

00:38:22,320 --> 00:38:24,020

literally in your backyard, literally.

621

00:38:24,290 --> 00:38:25,770

Literally in our backyard.

622

00:38:25,810 --> 00:38:28,950

Yes. So, of course, I was told by Mrs. Runjak

623

00:38:29,580 --> 00:38:32,999

we were told to be sure to call her mom

624

00:38:33,720 --> 00:38:36,807

if the Ustasa or anybody that we didn't know came into the

625

00:38:37,050 --> 00:38:40,379

house. And I was old enough to

626

00:38:40,590 --> 00:38:42,991

know when it was somebody we didn't know and when

627

00:38:44,340 --> 00:38:46,219

it was somebody friendly that we knew.

628

00:38:46,530 --> 00:38:48,000

So I would call her mom, momma

629

00:38:50,280 --> 00:38:53,630

when it was important, when it was dangerous.

630

00:38:53,640 --> 00:38:56,727

And then I would call her Mrs. Runjak when I knew it wasn't dangerous

631

00:38:57,120 --> 00:38:59,039

any longer because we were by ourselves.

632

00:38:59,520 --> 00:39:02,705

My brother, on the other hand, who was three years younger, never

633

00:39:03,420 --> 00:39:06,989

knew the difference. And he called her he called her mom to the end

634

00:39:06,990 --> 00:39:07,990

of time

635

00:39:08,970 --> 00:39:11,369

Dora, one of our audience members.

636

00:39:11,370 --> 00:39:15,239

Calli asks why that when this man denounced

637

00:39:15,630 --> 00:39:19,290

turned in your Aunt Giza, why he didn't do that

638

00:39:19,560 --> 00:39:20,789

for you and your brother?

639

00:39:23,250 --> 00:39:26,040

I don't know. I wish I knew all of that.

640

00:39:26,910 --> 00:39:30,260

I think probably because they

641

00:39:31,690 --> 00:39:34,739

they didn't want to bother with children, they would have to do

642

00:39:34,740 --> 00:39:37,800

something with us because my aunt was taken away.

643

00:39:37,950 --> 00:39:40,792

She was she was not sent to Jasenovac, but she's the only

644

00:39:41,550 --> 00:39:44,456

one. She was actually loaded on a train

645

00:39:45,330 --> 00:39:46,409

and sent to Auschwitz.

646

00:39:46,950 --> 00:39:50,820

And possibly at that time, whoever was running the place

647

00:39:51,660 --> 00:39:54,697

wasn't interested in dealing

648

00:39:55,290 --> 00:39:58,800

with two little children, or I'm not sure

649

00:39:59,430 --> 00:40:02,670

whether whether my aunt was able to deposit us

650

00:40:02,880 --> 00:40:04,497

with the Runjak family before the Ustasa

651

00:40:04,860 --> 00:40:07,679

came and they didn't realize that we were there.

652

00:40:09,660 --> 00:40:10,499

Dora,

653

00:40:10,500 --> 00:40:13,619

Ludva then was released and

654

00:40:14,040 --> 00:40:17,489

he was released from Jasenovac and he came home

655

00:40:17,490 --> 00:40:19,800

to find that Giza had been deported.

656

00:40:20,790 --> 00:40:23,730

What do you remember about his reaction to learning that his

657

00:40:24,390 --> 00:40:26,249

wife, your aunt, has been deported?

658

00:40:26,700 --> 00:40:28,268

And what do you know about what?

659

00:40:28,650 --> 00:40:32,159

What can you tell us about what he did then to protect you and your

660

00:40:32,160 --> 00:40:34,320

brother until the end of the war?

661

00:40:37,590 --> 00:40:40,320

Well, yes. He returned because he had

662

00:40:41,610 --> 00:40:45,059

as a political prisoner, he actually had a sentence of Jews

663

00:40:45,060 --> 00:40:47,069

and Roma and Serbs didn't have sentences.

664

00:40:47,520 --> 00:40:49,921

They were just there until until they either died

665

00:40:51,120 --> 00:40:54,630

or or were killed or the war ended.

666

00:40:55,260 --> 00:40:58,739

But political prisoners, some of them, anyway, he

667

00:40:58,740 --> 00:41:02,399

had a sentence and he returned, of course, shocked to find

668

00:41:02,400 --> 00:41:05,190

his wife gone and finding us.

669

00:41:07,140 --> 00:41:10,679

And by the way, while talking

670

00:41:10,680 --> 00:41:13,940

about Jasenovac, I do want to mention that in

671

00:41:14,490 --> 00:41:17,549

in former Yugoslavia, in Croatia now, Serbia

672

00:41:18,000 --> 00:41:20,929

is referred to often as "Jas-o-no-vach" and not "Jas-sin-o-vich".

673

00:41:20,940 --> 00:41:24,659

But I am using the pronunciation that we

674

00:41:24,660 --> 00:41:28,169

used in Ludbreg, and that's part of the of the

675

00:41:28,170 --> 00:41:29,640

world. It's a certain dialect.

676

00:41:30,000 --> 00:41:33,239

So just so the people understand that.

677

00:41:33,630 --> 00:41:37,520

Anyway, going to the matter of what happened,

678

00:41:37,770 --> 00:41:40,739

well, my uncle tried to actually follow

679

00:41:41,250 --> 00:41:44,760

my aunt's trail where they had taken her.

680

00:41:44,970 --> 00:41:48,387

And unfortunately, if it had been someplace

681

00:41:48,780 --> 00:41:52,379

locally, he might have cajoled somebody or something, or at least

682

00:41:52,380 --> 00:41:54,095

he hoped so. But this was hopeless.

683

00:41:54,570 --> 00:41:57,420

He was she at that time, they were starting to ship

684

00:41:59,220 --> 00:42:02,532

whoever, Jews they could find at that time.

685

00:42:02,850 --> 00:42:06,510

And Serbs to there was starting to ship people to

686

00:42:06,540 --> 00:42:09,959

Auschwitz. And she was one of them being shipped to Auschwitz.

687

00:42:10,170 --> 00:42:13,974

So he returned and took over the care

688

00:42:14,010 --> 00:42:15,329

of me and my brother.

689

00:42:16,200 --> 00:42:19,800

And we lived together from then on.

690

00:42:20,100 --> 00:42:20,879

Dora before,

691

00:42:20,880 --> 00:42:23,909

we're going to turn in just a minute to to another question from the

692

00:42:23,910 --> 00:42:26,507

audience. But before we do, during that time that you

693

00:42:27,360 --> 00:42:30,929

were living, just the two of you, your brother and yourself with

694

00:42:31,320 --> 00:42:34,800

Uncle Ludva, you were you were actually baptized as Christians.

695

00:42:35,160 --> 00:42:37,139

Why? Why, why was that?

696

00:42:37,140 --> 00:42:40,349

And I think we have a picture you want to show you, right?

697

00:42:41,460 --> 00:42:43,650

Not a dismal picture. This just a picture.

698

00:42:43,830 --> 00:42:46,800

But the reason for for the baptism is that

699

00:42:47,700 --> 00:42:50,340

Mrs. Runjak was a

700

00:42:51,510 --> 00:42:54,149

fairly normal religious Catholic

701

00:42:55,020 --> 00:42:58,559

and some and had some dealings

702

00:42:58,560 --> 00:42:59,929

with the priest, local priest.

703

00:43:00,600 --> 00:43:04,049

And the local priest sort of

704

00:43:04,320 --> 00:43:08,099

issued a veiled threat like he knew

705

00:43:08,100 --> 00:43:11,629

who, that we were there and we knew who we were,

706

00:43:11,640 --> 00:43:15,079

and he said to her, what about those children?

707

00:43:15,810 --> 00:43:19,493

And that was, by the way, reported to me exactly

708

00:43:19,780 --> 00:43:22,890

in those words from from Mrs. Runjak's

709

00:43:23,640 --> 00:43:24,690

oldest daughter.

710

00:43:26,250 --> 00:43:29,699

Much, much after the war, after everybody else was gone fairly

711

00:43:29,700 --> 00:43:31,709

recently. But she was still alive anyway.

712

00:43:32,850 --> 00:43:35,300

He said what is going to what's going to be

713

00:43:36,300 --> 00:43:39,739

with these children? And so my uncle

714

00:43:39,750 --> 00:43:43,409

decided that perhaps one of the things to do would be to

715

00:43:43,710 --> 00:43:47,189

to baptize us. So the two of us were baptized in

716

00:43:48,000 --> 00:43:50,284

1944.

717

00:43:50,430 --> 00:43:53,789

Dora, before we come back to talk a little bit more about what life was

718

00:43:53,790 --> 00:43:57,389

like for you at, towards the end of the war

719

00:43:57,390 --> 00:44:00,300

with the battles raging between the partisans and the Ustasa

720

00:44:00,330 --> 00:44:03,989

like you shared with us earlier, we're going to bring in a video

721

00:44:03,990 --> 00:44:07,709

question from Lacy, who is a student, a sophomore,

722

00:44:07,710 --> 00:44:10,170

in fact, at Geneseo High School.

723

00:44:13,140 --> 00:44:15,800

Hi, Lacy, I'm a sophomore at Geneseo High School.

724

00:44:15,850 --> 00:44:18,888

My question is, what was life like afterwards and what was the

725

00:44:19,290 --> 00:44:22,170

hardest part about readjusting to life after liberation?

726

00:44:25,320 --> 00:44:28,859

So just to repeat that question so that you hear

727

00:44:28,860 --> 00:44:32,309

it, she Lacy asks, what was life like

728

00:44:32,310 --> 00:44:34,620

for you afterwards? And I know we're jumping ahead.

729

00:44:34,980 --> 00:44:37,871

And and what was the hardest part about readjusting to life

730

00:44:38,820 --> 00:44:40,019

after liberation?

731

00:44:41,460 --> 00:44:43,567

Yeah. Yet we are still far from liberation.

732

00:44:44,130 --> 00:44:46,962

But once it happened, then, of course,

733

00:44:47,730 --> 00:44:50,432

it was difficult to be told that my

734

00:44:51,210 --> 00:44:53,513

parents and all the other people we knew and my

735

00:44:54,810 --> 00:44:58,338

and my Aunt Giza, whom I love, you know, are gone

736

00:44:58,530 --> 00:45:00,179

forever and.

737

00:45:02,870 --> 00:45:05,719

This is a picture of people who

738

00:45:07,040 --> 00:45:09,680

who were present at my my parents'

739

00:45:10,820 --> 00:45:14,180

wedding. So now we are back in 1936.

740

00:45:15,460 --> 00:45:18,190

When this photo was taken? 1936, OK?

741

00:45:18,230 --> 00:45:21,259

Yes, it was taken in 1936 because that's where my parents

742

00:45:21,260 --> 00:45:24,289

were married. This is the picture taken at their wedding.

743

00:45:25,070 --> 00:45:27,920

After the, so after the

744

00:45:29,120 --> 00:45:32,498

the ceremony ended, which I have a lovely picture

745

00:45:32,750 --> 00:45:36,349

of my mother, of my parents and my mother in a beautiful white

746

00:45:36,350 --> 00:45:39,192

dress. They all changed their clothes, I suppose, and went

747

00:45:40,070 --> 00:45:42,650

out into the yard to have their picture taken.

748

00:45:43,700 --> 00:45:47,150

So my parents are obviously the

749

00:45:47,160 --> 00:45:50,150

two people in the center on the bottom in the bottom row.

750

00:45:50,900 --> 00:45:54,409

With the grandparents on my mother's parents on one

751

00:45:54,410 --> 00:45:55,910

side and on the other side.

752

00:45:56,120 --> 00:45:59,630

I don't know who the lady is next to my mother, but the

753

00:45:59,690 --> 00:46:02,510

the lady next to her is my father's mother.

754

00:46:02,870 --> 00:46:03,889

Katarina Deutsch.

755

00:46:05,240 --> 00:46:08,869

So most so

756

00:46:08,900 --> 00:46:11,030

here is a group of people.

757

00:46:12,440 --> 00:46:15,889

The ones with the circles around their heads are the only

758

00:46:15,890 --> 00:46:17,150

ones who survived.

759

00:46:17,600 --> 00:46:18,800

Everybody else.

760

00:46:19,730 --> 00:46:21,050

Everybody else was killed.

761

00:46:21,650 --> 00:46:25,031

I should say that my grandmother, Katarina, actually died of natural

762

00:46:25,520 --> 00:46:28,460

causes before being deported.

763

00:46:28,880 --> 00:46:31,639

But everybody else, including my little cousins

764

00:46:32,480 --> 00:46:35,059

Varus, Trinka, Edita they were all killed.

765

00:46:37,610 --> 00:46:39,679

Go ahead Dora.

766

00:46:39,890 --> 00:46:43,088

Yes. So the two surviving, the two survivors,

767

00:46:43,790 --> 00:46:47,030

the two gentlemen to the right with the circles around their heads,

768

00:46:48,020 --> 00:46:51,649

survive as prisoners of war, German prisoners

769

00:46:51,650 --> 00:46:54,919

of war because they served in the Yugoslav army

770

00:46:55,130 --> 00:46:59,150

at the time at the time of the German invasion.

771

00:46:59,540 --> 00:47:01,639

And they were prisoners of war.

772

00:47:01,640 --> 00:47:05,119

And that shot as such there were released at the end of the war

773

00:47:05,120 --> 00:47:08,510

and returned and.

774

00:47:12,290 --> 00:47:15,469

We'll come back to that. But what I think the most important thing

775

00:47:15,470 --> 00:47:18,606

you're sharing with us here and later you explain about the four

776

00:47:19,070 --> 00:47:20,539

individuals who who did survive.

777

00:47:21,530 --> 00:47:22,999

So these people didn't return.

778

00:47:23,000 --> 00:47:26,119

And that was, that was the hard part at the end of the war.

779

00:47:26,120 --> 00:47:28,178

And, of course, dealing with you know, where

780

00:47:29,690 --> 00:47:32,900

are we going to go? And that is, of course, after the war.

781

00:47:32,930 --> 00:47:34,489

So we are jumping ahead a lot.

782

00:47:34,490 --> 00:47:36,320

And yeah.

783

00:47:36,560 --> 00:47:39,500

But there's there's 21 people in this photograph and

784

00:47:40,010 --> 00:47:43,050

only four survived.

785

00:47:43,430 --> 00:47:46,879

Right. Let's go back Dora to the time towards

786

00:47:46,880 --> 00:47:50,419

the end of the war. You are with Uncle Ludva and your brother

787

00:47:50,420 --> 00:47:54,020

and you're in a you are in a literal battle zone.

788

00:47:54,920 --> 00:47:57,199

Right. So the partisans

789

00:47:58,970 --> 00:48:02,539

attacked Ludbreg a number of times and and

790

00:48:02,960 --> 00:48:06,499

it was while it was being held by Ustasa.

791

00:48:06,530 --> 00:48:10,159

And then the other way around at one time when the partisans

792

00:48:10,160 --> 00:48:11,959

were holding the town, the Ustasa attacked.

793

00:48:12,380 --> 00:48:13,789

And so

794

00:48:16,190 --> 00:48:18,444

we found ourselves in a sort of a battle zone.

795

00:48:19,700 --> 00:48:23,239

And there was

796

00:48:23,240 --> 00:48:24,710

there were times when when the

797

00:48:26,840 --> 00:48:30,769

battle would be raging in the middle of the night and sometimes

798

00:48:31,070 --> 00:48:34,776

we were not able to go and hide.

799

00:48:35,030 --> 00:48:37,850

And there were times that I remember

800

00:48:38,720 --> 00:48:41,081

crouching in a corner and we

801

00:48:42,260 --> 00:48:45,739

had it was the old house and the walls were fairly

802

00:48:45,740 --> 00:48:49,189

thick. So you were pretty safe if you were in a sort of a

803

00:48:49,190 --> 00:48:52,400

situation where you hide behind a wall.

804

00:48:52,580 --> 00:48:55,669

But of course, the the the the

805

00:48:56,090 --> 00:48:59,719

the bullets would be piercing

806

00:48:59,720 --> 00:49:02,809

through the windows. And there was a time when

807

00:49:03,190 --> 00:49:06,769

I was crying in my room and my uncle

808

00:49:06,770 --> 00:49:09,599

came to comfort me and the bullet went

809

00:49:10,250 --> 00:49:13,189

went exactly through the window into where he was because

810

00:49:14,120 --> 00:49:16,521

we had thought for everybody to hide in time.

811

00:49:17,690 --> 00:49:21,440

When we had the time and we sometimes knew that a battle would be coming,

812

00:49:21,800 --> 00:49:24,550

we would go and spend time in our cellar.

813

00:49:24,920 --> 00:49:28,399

So it was a basement by America, but by

814

00:49:28,400 --> 00:49:32,119

American standards, not the normal basement where you would just go

815

00:49:32,330 --> 00:49:34,670

in the house and go down the stairs.

816

00:49:34,940 --> 00:49:38,749

You had to get out of the house and into the into the cellar.

817

00:49:39,650 --> 00:49:43,039

We had a vineyard. And so there were barrels of wine down there

818

00:49:43,220 --> 00:49:46,849

and it was dirt floor and shelves with

819

00:49:47,990 --> 00:49:51,379

drying fruit and so on and frogs jumping around.

820

00:49:51,380 --> 00:49:54,229

But we had some cuts down there and

821

00:49:55,580 --> 00:49:59,330

there were times that we spent quite a bit of time down there

822

00:49:59,660 --> 00:50:02,090

because because there would be a battle and

823

00:50:03,050 --> 00:50:06,409

you didn't know who was going to win, and in the morning,

824

00:50:06,560 --> 00:50:08,814

we would peer through those small windows,

825

00:50:10,130 --> 00:50:14,150

high up near the ceiling of the of the cellar

826

00:50:14,330 --> 00:50:17,059

to see who was in charge.

827

00:50:17,060 --> 00:50:20,360

And I remember the time that we still couldn't tell

828

00:50:21,050 --> 00:50:24,440

exactly who it was, but we saw a cart

829

00:50:24,920 --> 00:50:27,860

being driven by pulled, by horses.

830

00:50:28,160 --> 00:50:31,749

And they the carts were full of dead bodies.

831

00:50:32,150 --> 00:50:35,420

So if you you would emerge

832

00:50:36,320 --> 00:50:38,974

when the shooting stopped and then

833

00:50:39,800 --> 00:50:42,679

hope that it would be the partisans in charge.

834

00:50:43,190 --> 00:50:46,659

And if not, you had to be careful to hide.

835

00:50:46,790 --> 00:50:49,860

There were times where the bullets were running through,

836

00:50:53,450 --> 00:50:57,349

coming through the windows and hitting the armoires,

837

00:50:57,350 --> 00:51:00,758

which we had. And so they were after

838

00:51:00,800 --> 00:51:04,789

the war, they were all pierced with bullets.

839

00:51:04,790 --> 00:51:07,632

And you took out the tablecloths or the sheets over there,

840

00:51:08,480 --> 00:51:12,169

and it was all as if somebody had taken

841

00:51:12,170 --> 00:51:14,410

those scissors and made little designs in them.

842

00:51:15,650 --> 00:51:18,540

So it was very hard to to live through that.

843

00:51:19,310 --> 00:51:19,670

Dora,

844

00:51:19,670 --> 00:51:22,610

of course, it did eventually end with the end of the war in

845

00:51:23,150 --> 00:51:24,760

May 1945.

846

00:51:25,190 --> 00:51:26,899

And so the war is over.

847

00:51:26,900 --> 00:51:29,989

You're there in Ludbreg with your uncle and with your brother.

848

00:51:31,280 --> 00:51:35,050

But there was more tragedy to come for your uncle and for you.

849

00:51:35,990 --> 00:51:37,754

But first, tell us about your uncle.

850

00:51:37,820 --> 00:51:39,440

He adopted both of you, right?

851

00:51:39,650 --> 00:51:40,909

Yes. After the war.

852

00:51:41,240 --> 00:51:44,593

Right away. When after we after he realized that

853

00:51:44,810 --> 00:51:48,349

my parents had perished and neither

854

00:51:48,350 --> 00:51:52,210

would return, he adopted us legally.

855

00:51:52,220 --> 00:51:55,699

And so in many places you could see

856

00:51:55,700 --> 00:51:57,121

my name as being Vrancic.

857

00:51:58,700 --> 00:52:00,366

That was his last name. Until I was

858

00:52:02,210 --> 00:52:03,739

married, that was my name.

859

00:52:04,850 --> 00:52:07,545

Unfortunately, my brother died very

860

00:52:08,300 --> 00:52:11,329

shortly after in 1946

861

00:52:12,110 --> 00:52:15,679

in the fall of Scarlet Fever, there were three little

862

00:52:15,680 --> 00:52:18,890

boys that got scarlet fever in Ludbreg and

863

00:52:19,760 --> 00:52:21,349

the other two recovered.

864

00:52:21,350 --> 00:52:25,039

By the time my brother succumbed and

865

00:52:25,460 --> 00:52:27,077

died, which was a tragedy, it was

866

00:52:29,150 --> 00:52:32,431

extremely sad for me, but it was totally tragic

867

00:52:32,690 --> 00:52:34,356

to my uncle who adored my brother.

868

00:52:35,180 --> 00:52:38,603

And after all the losses, that

869

00:52:38,810 --> 00:52:41,000

was just another awful loss.

870

00:52:41,720 --> 00:52:45,169

And Dora, of course, now you've gone from

871

00:52:45,170 --> 00:52:48,679

being under the Ustasa and the Nazis and

872

00:52:48,680 --> 00:52:50,719

now you're under the communist government.

873

00:52:50,960 --> 00:52:54,469

But you would continue to live there for several, a

874

00:52:54,470 --> 00:52:56,659

number of years living with your uncle now.

875

00:52:56,660 --> 00:52:59,160

Now he's adopted you. Tell us.

876

00:52:59,690 --> 00:53:03,469

In fact, we have a question from Kay, who wants

877

00:53:03,470 --> 00:53:06,361

to know about what was the deciding factor that brought you

878

00:53:07,010 --> 00:53:10,489

to the US. But before you answer that, let's go back

879

00:53:10,490 --> 00:53:14,059

to what happened with several of those few people

880

00:53:14,060 --> 00:53:16,909

who did survive from your family, who did return.

881

00:53:16,910 --> 00:53:19,770

And that that's part of your story for for what happened.

882

00:53:20,750 --> 00:53:23,229

And part of the reason how I ended up in the United States.

883

00:53:23,240 --> 00:53:26,007

Exactly right. So back to that picture.

884

00:53:26,130 --> 00:53:29,659

If we if we could I mean,

885

00:53:29,660 --> 00:53:32,453

the one before with my own my family, could we go back to

886

00:53:33,170 --> 00:53:34,170

that? Yeah.

887

00:53:34,670 --> 00:53:38,269

So there was my Uncle Ludva right in the middle with his

888

00:53:38,750 --> 00:53:41,510

wife on top who did not survive.

889

00:53:42,140 --> 00:53:44,933

But the gentleman to the gentleman to the left is another

890

00:53:45,860 --> 00:53:47,918

brother of my father's who survived and he

891

00:53:49,370 --> 00:53:50,370

survived.

892

00:53:51,770 --> 00:53:55,519

He survived by escaping into Hungary and

893

00:53:55,850 --> 00:53:59,479

with his wife and then getting on the Kastner train and then being

894

00:53:59,480 --> 00:54:01,880

in Bergen Belsen, then ending up in Switzerland.

895

00:54:02,300 --> 00:54:05,869

And he continued after the other two

896

00:54:05,870 --> 00:54:09,529

uncles who came to see me, the ones

897

00:54:09,530 --> 00:54:12,519

from the German prisoner camp, prisoner of war camp, they came to

898

00:54:13,010 --> 00:54:15,068

see me and they wanted me to go with them.

899

00:54:15,620 --> 00:54:19,429

And I had to make a decision whether I was going with them

900

00:54:19,430 --> 00:54:22,870

and they were leaving for Israel to live there and

901

00:54:23,780 --> 00:54:27,410

and or my uncle who with whom I had spent the war.

902

00:54:27,770 --> 00:54:29,534

And I, aged seven, said I'm staying.

903

00:54:30,590 --> 00:54:31,730

So that's how I stayed.

904

00:54:32,990 --> 00:54:36,439

The uncle to the left, the one who survived, ran from Belsen,

905

00:54:36,440 --> 00:54:40,010

was in Switzerland, wrote to me, sent me packages from time to time

906

00:54:40,280 --> 00:54:43,729

during the Communist era when things even

907

00:54:43,730 --> 00:54:46,969

such a small thing, like a small piece of chocolate, was very

908

00:54:46,970 --> 00:54:47,970

welcome.

909

00:54:48,770 --> 00:54:52,008

And eventually when I was 16,

910

00:54:52,760 --> 00:54:54,260

he invited me to come.

911

00:54:54,560 --> 00:54:58,099

And because I was considered by the government as

912

00:54:58,100 --> 00:55:00,648

a victim of fascism.

913

00:55:01,550 --> 00:55:04,779

Even though no one was leaving the country, I was allowed to leave the

914

00:55:04,780 --> 00:55:07,181

country and go and visit and for the first time I

915

00:55:08,260 --> 00:55:11,257

met someone from my family since the time

916

00:55:11,710 --> 00:55:15,189

that I just after the war. It was a very

917

00:55:15,190 --> 00:55:18,579

emotional meeting and he had a lovely

918

00:55:18,910 --> 00:55:22,449

wife Marta, and two children, Danny and Yakov and

919

00:55:23,590 --> 00:55:26,619

and they said, well, why don't you come back?

920

00:55:26,920 --> 00:55:28,590

And this was the time I was.

921

00:55:29,080 --> 00:55:30,400

I only stayed for a month.

922

00:55:30,610 --> 00:55:34,239

And why don't you come back once you're a university student and

923

00:55:34,240 --> 00:55:37,809

then stay for longer and go

924

00:55:37,810 --> 00:55:39,810

to school here, go to university here.

925

00:55:39,820 --> 00:55:41,139

And that's what happened.

926

00:55:41,740 --> 00:55:45,039

And on the way to

927

00:55:46,120 --> 00:55:49,354

see him, I'll see them, the family, and

928

00:55:49,570 --> 00:55:52,840

go to University of Lausanne in Switzerland.

929

00:55:53,230 --> 00:55:57,039

On that train, I met a young man who

930

00:55:57,040 --> 00:56:01,119

is, who was American, was just accidental

931

00:56:01,120 --> 00:56:02,120

meeting.

932

00:56:03,310 --> 00:56:04,849

I don't know how much time we have.

933

00:56:04,850 --> 00:56:05,290

So I

934

00:56:05,290 --> 00:56:07,446

probably I wish we could spend a lot of time

935

00:56:07,780 --> 00:56:09,999

on the story of how we met and why we met.

936

00:56:10,780 --> 00:56:13,690

But eventually he went back to the states

937

00:56:15,370 --> 00:56:19,239

he had been in India with doing a postdoc work and then eventually

938

00:56:19,240 --> 00:56:22,179

came back. A year later we were married.

939

00:56:22,180 --> 00:56:23,581

And that is how I came to the United States.

940

00:56:23,710 --> 00:56:25,470

That's how you came to the United States.

941

00:56:25,480 --> 00:56:29,050

And before I ask a final question

942

00:56:29,650 --> 00:56:33,760

of you, Dora, that must have been very difficult

943

00:56:34,320 --> 00:56:36,429

for you and for Uncle Lutva.

944

00:56:36,490 --> 00:56:38,389

And how did he handle that?

945

00:56:38,950 --> 00:56:42,130

Well, maybe we can go back to that picture now with OK,

946

00:56:42,820 --> 00:56:46,359

so he obviously it was just

947

00:56:46,360 --> 00:56:49,398

him and me. He never remarried and we had lots of housekeepers

948

00:56:50,530 --> 00:56:52,119

and maids and things like that.

949

00:56:52,480 --> 00:56:56,139

And but he insisted that I learn music

950

00:56:56,140 --> 00:56:57,806

and go to a very best high school.

951

00:56:58,840 --> 00:57:01,110

And that was available there.

952

00:57:01,510 --> 00:57:05,229

I went to another town and and university

953

00:57:05,230 --> 00:57:08,750

and was he was a wonderful, wonderful person.

954

00:57:08,830 --> 00:57:11,770

And he understood that this was going to be terrible because

955

00:57:12,280 --> 00:57:15,579

I'll be far away. On the other hand, he also understood

956

00:57:16,150 --> 00:57:18,250

they were still in the communist system.

957

00:57:18,710 --> 00:57:22,449

Life was difficult and my going to the United States

958

00:57:22,660 --> 00:57:24,219

would be probably wonderful.

959

00:57:24,460 --> 00:57:28,300

And so we wrote back and forth and he said, if my uncle,

960

00:57:28,600 --> 00:57:32,499

my Swiss uncle, my mother, my father's brother, if he approved

961

00:57:32,500 --> 00:57:35,244

of my getting married and going to the United States, he

962

00:57:36,010 --> 00:57:37,839

would go along with it. And that's what happened.

963

00:57:37,840 --> 00:57:40,731

That's what happened. Dora, before I ask my final question

964

00:57:41,320 --> 00:57:44,920

of you for the day, we have one other question from an audience

965

00:57:45,190 --> 00:57:47,260

member that I think you'll really want to hear.

966

00:57:47,560 --> 00:57:50,469

And this is from Ivan, who's in Croatia.

967

00:57:50,860 --> 00:57:54,340

And Ivan asks, Can you still speak Croatian?

968

00:57:54,580 --> 00:57:57,489

And did you visit Croatian after you left?

969

00:57:57,610 --> 00:58:00,940

And greetings from MeÄ'imurje

970

00:58:01,690 --> 00:58:04,900

MeÄ'imurje, even

971

00:58:05,560 --> 00:58:07,170

Da, zdravo

972

00:58:07,180 --> 00:58:08,949

Govorim hrvatski

973

00:58:11,290 --> 00:58:12,564

what I said is yes, hello.

974

00:58:12,940 --> 00:58:14,116

And I do speak Croatian.

975

00:58:14,620 --> 00:58:16,531

In fact, my coming to the United States

976

00:58:18,100 --> 00:58:21,520

Holocaust Memorial Museum

977

00:58:21,910 --> 00:58:24,429

had to do with the fact that I do speak the language.

978

00:58:24,430 --> 00:58:27,730

And of course, I finished at University in Zagreb.

979

00:58:28,390 --> 00:58:30,940

So I speak the language and I read it and so on.

980

00:58:31,090 --> 00:58:34,750

So I came as a translator to the Museum when

981

00:58:35,410 --> 00:58:38,050

an archive came to

982

00:58:39,040 --> 00:58:42,639

me to to our museum, which

983

00:58:42,640 --> 00:58:46,599

contained all the remaining documentation

984

00:58:46,600 --> 00:58:50,199

from Jasenovac. And that was after the second war

985

00:58:50,740 --> 00:58:52,180

in Yugoslavia.

986

00:58:53,050 --> 00:58:55,402

Dora, I can only imagine the what you could share with

987

00:58:56,620 --> 00:58:59,315

us and what it was like for you to go back and read all

988

00:59:00,250 --> 00:59:03,359

those files, all that material from Jasenovac.

989

00:59:03,380 --> 00:59:06,969

That's when you started doing that as a volunteer for the Museum.

990

00:59:07,120 --> 00:59:09,969

We'll have to save that for another time.

991

00:59:10,000 --> 00:59:13,059

Dora, I do have one final question for you before we close, however.

992

00:59:13,060 --> 00:59:16,959

And and that is, please tell us why you continue

993

00:59:16,960 --> 00:59:20,409

to share your firsthand account of what you went

994

00:59:20,410 --> 00:59:23,350

through, what you experienced in the Holocaust and the impact

995

00:59:24,100 --> 00:59:27,579

that you see, what you witness in telling your

996

00:59:27,580 --> 00:59:29,440

story means to other people.

997

00:59:31,450 --> 00:59:35,139

Well, you know, after the war for many years

998

00:59:35,140 --> 00:59:38,679

and even during my life here in the United States, it was

999

00:59:40,120 --> 00:59:41,933

as if something it was something that

1000

00:59:43,690 --> 00:59:47,439

so many people who lived through that time didn't really want to talk

1001

00:59:47,440 --> 00:59:50,800

about it very much and didn't want to think about it very much.

1002

00:59:50,830 --> 00:59:52,869

We sort of felt it was behind us.

1003

00:59:52,870 --> 00:59:54,179

It will never happen again.

1004

00:59:54,880 --> 00:59:58,809

But unfortunately, as I live longer

1005

00:59:58,810 --> 01:00:02,349

and as we have witnessed what's been happening in

1006

01:00:02,350 --> 01:00:04,016

the world, including what happened

1007

01:00:06,190 --> 01:00:07,709

in even in former Yugoslavia in

1008

01:00:10,030 --> 01:00:12,195

during the this past war

1009

01:00:13,540 --> 01:00:16,284

of the 90s, when there was another genocide in Srebrenica

1010

01:00:17,260 --> 01:00:19,122

and what's happening everywhere.

1011

01:00:20,860 --> 01:00:22,281

And the recently the the rise

1012

01:00:24,550 --> 01:00:27,010

of anti-Semitism

1013

01:00:28,030 --> 01:00:31,239

persuaded me that it really I,

1014

01:00:31,750 --> 01:00:35,179

I it's it's up to me to to

1015

01:00:35,200 --> 01:00:38,190

talk to to talk about it and to

1016

01:00:39,820 --> 01:00:41,019

talk about the past.

1017

01:00:41,590 --> 01:00:45,219

And it's almost imperative that I speak

1018

01:00:45,220 --> 01:00:48,849

about it. And perhaps I could inspire someone

1019

01:00:49,450 --> 01:00:53,079

to see that compassion and tolerance,

1020

01:00:54,040 --> 01:00:57,699

empathy and respect for others is absolutely

1021

01:00:58,240 --> 01:01:02,139

imperative. And that the only way

1022

01:01:02,260 --> 01:01:05,469

that that we can go forward is to

1023

01:01:06,610 --> 01:01:10,269

minimize hatred and turn

1024

01:01:10,540 --> 01:01:13,139

toward one another in a humane way.

1025

01:01:13,750 --> 01:01:17,739

And I find that when if people understood

1026

01:01:17,740 --> 01:01:20,679

exactly the impact that

1027

01:01:22,240 --> 01:01:25,989

hatred has on human beings and really

1028

01:01:25,990 --> 01:01:29,439

think about it, that perhaps we could hope

1029

01:01:29,440 --> 01:01:30,440

for never again.

1030

01:01:30,910 --> 01:01:35,230

I hope. Dora, we are we are so enormously

1031

01:01:35,560 --> 01:01:38,697

grateful and privileged to have you continue

1032

01:01:39,280 --> 01:01:42,429

to talk about this in the ways that you do and particularly

1033

01:01:42,730 --> 01:01:44,319

sharing this with us today.

1034

01:01:45,220 --> 01:01:48,219

I would like to take a moment to thank our donors.

1035

01:01:48,610 --> 01:01:52,119

First person is made possible through the generous support.

1036

01:01:53,060 --> 01:01:56,540

From the Lewis Franklin Smith Foundation with additional funding

1037

01:01:56,810 --> 01:02:00,670

from the Arlene and Daniel Fisher Foundation.

1038

01:02:00,680 --> 01:02:02,750

Dora, thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

1039

01:02:03,140 --> 01:02:06,949

I'd like to share with everybody that we will have another program

1040

01:02:06,950 --> 01:02:09,498

in June. So please join us again on June 9th at

1041

01:02:10,610 --> 01:02:14,479

1:00 p.m. Eastern for a conversation with Holocaust survivor

1042

01:02:14,660 --> 01:02:16,010

Albert Garih.

1043

01:02:16,370 --> 01:02:19,506

When a neighbor threatened to turn in Albert's family, his mother

1044

01:02:19,820 --> 01:02:22,159

asked for help hiding her children.

1045

01:02:22,490 --> 01:02:25,773

Albert and his sisters were placed in separate boarding schools and

1046

01:02:26,090 --> 01:02:29,719

survived. And we'll learn more about his life experience

1047

01:02:29,720 --> 01:02:32,270

during the war in our next program.

1048

01:02:32,810 --> 01:02:34,159

Thank you all so much.