

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:45,205

2  
00:00:45,205 --> 00:00:46,000  
Three marker.

3  
00:00:46,000 --> 00:00:53,800

4  
00:00:53,800 --> 00:00:55,290  
Sorry.

5  
00:00:55,290 --> 00:00:56,860  
That made it worse.

6  
00:00:56,860 --> 00:00:59,370  
Hold on a second.

7  
00:00:59,370 --> 00:01:00,750  
Four marker.

8  
00:01:00,750 --> 00:01:06,240

9  
00:01:06,240 --> 00:01:11,220  
So you thought you remembered  
something about the Germans.

10  
00:01:11,220 --> 00:01:14,460  
Yes, at the very  
last I think they

11  
00:01:14,460 --> 00:01:20,070  
couldn't find they couldn't  
get their final count of 500.

12  
00:01:20,070 --> 00:01:26,880  
They must have barged  
into homes and dragged

13

00:01:26,880 --> 00:01:31,920  
some able-bodied, young  
Jewish men out of their homes

14  
00:01:31,920 --> 00:01:38,200  
and added them to the  
rest of the group.

15  
00:01:38,200 --> 00:01:40,920  
And so you had a bad  
feeling when they left,

16  
00:01:40,920 --> 00:01:43,070  
and then how did you  
figure out what happened?

17  
00:01:43,070 --> 00:01:47,570

18  
00:01:47,570 --> 00:01:50,180  
I was still optimistic  
when they left.

19  
00:01:50,180 --> 00:01:53,940

20  
00:01:53,940 --> 00:01:58,560  
And when the truth  
finally came out,

21  
00:01:58,560 --> 00:02:02,690  
it was just total disbelief.

22  
00:02:02,690 --> 00:02:05,390

23  
00:02:05,390 --> 00:02:06,440  
Such deception.

24  
00:02:06,440 --> 00:02:10,190

25

00:02:10,190 --> 00:02:10,690  
And then--

26  
00:02:10,690 --> 00:02:14,770  
Yeah, when I found out  
that they had been killed,

27  
00:02:14,770 --> 00:02:20,780  
I think they were killed  
at one of the fortresses.

28  
00:02:20,780 --> 00:02:21,850  
I forget which one.

29  
00:02:21,850 --> 00:02:24,430

30  
00:02:24,430 --> 00:02:26,490  
How did you find that out?

31  
00:02:26,490 --> 00:02:28,750  
Did it just come in--

32  
00:02:28,750 --> 00:02:37,890  
Well, the news just spread like  
wildfire throughout the ghetto.

33  
00:02:37,890 --> 00:02:44,250  
Neighbors huddled together  
and counted the losses.

34  
00:02:44,250 --> 00:02:48,960  
Many of our family friends  
were in that group.

35  
00:02:48,960 --> 00:02:55,380  
The best-- the best minds  
were taken out of the ghetto.

36  
00:02:55,380 --> 00:02:57,900  
The best minds who  
might have been

37

00:02:57,900 --> 00:03:03,960

able to provide leadership,  
they were no longer there.

38

00:03:03,960 --> 00:03:07,520

39

00:03:07,520 --> 00:03:12,260

And then not long after that,  
near the end of October,

40

00:03:12,260 --> 00:03:13,670

was the big action.

41

00:03:13,670 --> 00:03:17,040

Can you tell me  
how that happened?

42

00:03:17,040 --> 00:03:17,540

Yes.

43

00:03:17,540 --> 00:03:22,310

44

00:03:22,310 --> 00:03:32,200

It was the last Tuesday in  
the month of October, 1941.

45

00:03:32,200 --> 00:03:42,880

Again, posters must have been  
nailed to public buildings,

46

00:03:42,880 --> 00:03:50,740

and verbal commands  
had gone out that

47

00:03:50,740 --> 00:03:53,080

on the morning of Tuesday--

48

00:03:53,080 --> 00:03:54,850

I forgot the date--

49

00:03:54,850 --> 00:03:56,860

October.

50

00:03:56,860 --> 00:03:59,380

Maybe it was the 28th.

51

00:03:59,380 --> 00:04:01,450

Was it?

52

00:04:01,450 --> 00:04:06,970

Every person-- every Jewish  
person in the ghetto--

53

00:04:06,970 --> 00:04:13,400

had to report at--

54

00:04:13,400 --> 00:04:15,190

it may have been 6  
o'clock in the morning.

55

00:04:15,190 --> 00:04:22,630

Very, very early-- at  
the public square, which

56

00:04:22,630 --> 00:04:25,270

was called Democracy Square.

57

00:04:25,270 --> 00:04:34,070

58

00:04:34,070 --> 00:04:38,840

Everybody was able to  
walk, regardless of age.

59

00:04:38,840 --> 00:04:40,770

The houses had to be left--

60

00:04:40,770 --> 00:04:44,900

the doors had to be left open.

61

00:04:44,900 --> 00:04:50,480

Everybody who was found in  
the home would be executed.

62  
00:04:50,480 --> 00:04:53,510  
Executed on the spot.

63  
00:04:53,510 --> 00:05:01,950  
And ostensibly, this was done  
for the taking of a census.

64  
00:05:01,950 --> 00:05:04,800

65  
00:05:04,800 --> 00:05:08,090  
And it didn't look good.

66  
00:05:08,090 --> 00:05:11,525  
In our case, my mother  
could barely walk.

67  
00:05:11,525 --> 00:05:15,510

68  
00:05:15,510 --> 00:05:21,290  
But I do remember that the  
house where we were living

69  
00:05:21,290 --> 00:05:24,680  
was very close to  
the square, so we had

70  
00:05:24,680 --> 00:05:27,560  
a very short distance to walk.

71  
00:05:27,560 --> 00:05:32,150  
We may have had a 5- or  
10-minute walk at the most.

72  
00:05:32,150 --> 00:05:34,970

73  
00:05:34,970 --> 00:05:43,790

And we had planned to leave  
our house around 5:30.

74  
00:05:43,790 --> 00:05:48,850  
Well, around 4:00  
on that morning,

75  
00:05:48,850 --> 00:05:56,120  
I could hear footsteps,  
never-ending footsteps.

76  
00:05:56,120 --> 00:05:59,245  
It was still-- there was  
still total darkness.

77  
00:05:59,245 --> 00:06:01,970

78  
00:06:01,970 --> 00:06:21,460  
It was a cold, damp, foggy, kind  
of late fall, early winter day.

79  
00:06:21,460 --> 00:06:24,970  
There may have been  
some snow on the ground.

80  
00:06:24,970 --> 00:06:27,190  
There may have been  
some wet snow falling.

81  
00:06:27,190 --> 00:06:30,640

82  
00:06:30,640 --> 00:06:36,400  
And the three of us, my  
mother, father, and I,

83  
00:06:36,400 --> 00:06:43,480  
started getting ready for  
our trip down the steps

84  
00:06:43,480 --> 00:06:45,100  
and out the door.

85

00:06:45,100 --> 00:06:49,570

Before we did that, I  
dabbed some lipstick

86

00:06:49,570 --> 00:06:56,230

on my mother's cheeks to make  
her look a little more healthy.

87

00:06:56,230 --> 00:07:05,470

We dressed warmly and just  
started out towards the square.

88

00:07:05,470 --> 00:07:07,840

My father was supporting  
my mother on one side.

89

00:07:07,840 --> 00:07:10,760

I was supporting her  
on the other side.

90

00:07:10,760 --> 00:07:13,960

And we slowly walked--

91

00:07:13,960 --> 00:07:19,600

joined the rest of  
the gray mass that

92

00:07:19,600 --> 00:07:26,500

was walking in front of us,  
and made it to the square.

93

00:07:26,500 --> 00:07:29,785

At the square there  
was total chaos.

94

00:07:29,785 --> 00:07:36,060

95

00:07:36,060 --> 00:07:40,650

Family units didn't  
know where to stand.



96

00:07:40,650 --> 00:07:45,990

Everybody, of course at that point, already had a work pass

97

00:07:45,990 --> 00:07:51,700

and was affiliated with a work group.

98

00:07:51,700 --> 00:07:58,230

My father was-- as head of the family--

99

00:07:58,230 --> 00:08:02,700

we joined his work outfit, and he

100

00:08:02,700 --> 00:08:07,620

was working at the military airport doing

101

00:08:07,620 --> 00:08:13,290

just manual labor, construction work, digging, hauling rocks,

102

00:08:13,290 --> 00:08:15,790

that sort of thing.

103

00:08:15,790 --> 00:08:23,100

So we looked for the larger contingent of airfield workers,

104

00:08:23,100 --> 00:08:29,920

and we stood with them, and stood and waited.

105

00:08:29,920 --> 00:08:33,070

106

00:08:33,070 --> 00:08:33,955

As we were waiting--

107

00:08:33,955 --> 00:08:41,059

108  
00:08:41,059 --> 00:08:44,990  
and at that point I think  
there were about 28,000 Jews

109  
00:08:44,990 --> 00:08:49,700  
in the ghetto, so all of  
them, or most of them,

110  
00:08:49,700 --> 00:08:53,870  
were assembled on the square.

111  
00:08:53,870 --> 00:09:07,430  
And so we noticed that  
several German officers--

112  
00:09:07,430 --> 00:09:11,930  
I don't know what unit they  
belonged to, whether they

113  
00:09:11,930 --> 00:09:14,870  
were SS or some other unit.

114  
00:09:14,870 --> 00:09:18,470  
I suspect they were  
members of the SS.

115  
00:09:18,470 --> 00:09:24,890  
And one of them  
was greatly feared.

116  
00:09:24,890 --> 00:09:33,680  
His name was Rauca, R-A-U-C-A.

117  
00:09:33,680 --> 00:09:36,050  
And he was-- I had  
never seen him before,

118  
00:09:36,050 --> 00:09:38,760  
but he was pointed out to me.

119

00:09:38,760 --> 00:09:48,200  
And I think he was standing  
behind some sort of table,

120  
00:09:48,200 --> 00:09:50,580  
and there may have  
been a chair, and there

121  
00:09:50,580 --> 00:09:53,340  
were some papers on that table.

122  
00:09:53,340 --> 00:09:56,430  
And he was not alone.

123  
00:09:56,430 --> 00:10:00,720  
There were other  
Germans with him.

124  
00:10:00,720 --> 00:10:03,240  
I don't know whether  
there were dogs or not.

125  
00:10:03,240 --> 00:10:06,780  
I don't remember  
that, but they all

126  
00:10:06,780 --> 00:10:15,780  
had their pistols in their  
holster and possibly whips.

127  
00:10:15,780 --> 00:10:25,890  
Well, as soon as family units  
had found their were groups,

128  
00:10:25,890 --> 00:10:29,580  
there was a little more  
order in the square.

129  
00:10:29,580 --> 00:10:35,100  
And I remember that we were  
still standing around noon.

130  
00:10:35,100 --> 00:10:38,410

Nothing had-- nobody had  
moved from our group.

131  
00:10:38,410 --> 00:10:44,850  
Nobody had passed in  
review before Rauca,

132  
00:10:44,850 --> 00:10:47,770  
but we could see  
what he was doing.

133  
00:10:47,770 --> 00:10:54,180  
He was assigning family units  
to the left and to the right,

134  
00:10:54,180 --> 00:11:00,120  
and already it was very  
obvious that the people who

135  
00:11:00,120 --> 00:11:03,240  
had been assigned  
to the right where

136  
00:11:03,240 --> 00:11:10,070  
the healthy and the able-bodied  
and the younger looking ones.

137  
00:11:10,070 --> 00:11:12,580

138  
00:11:12,580 --> 00:11:16,680  
And certainly no children  
among that group.

139  
00:11:16,680 --> 00:11:23,040  
And the families with children,  
perhaps their elderly parents

140  
00:11:23,040 --> 00:11:30,030  
or older people or sick people  
had been motioned to the left.

141  
00:11:30,030 --> 00:11:33,120

142  
00:11:33,120 --> 00:11:41,175  
And the three of us were just  
standing there, cold, stunned--

143  
00:11:41,175 --> 00:11:55,090

144  
00:11:55,090 --> 00:11:55,850  
Mark 15.

145  
00:11:55,850 --> 00:11:56,780  
Marker 5.

146  
00:11:56,780 --> 00:12:03,650

147  
00:12:03,650 --> 00:12:06,170  
So you and your parents  
were standing there,

148  
00:12:06,170 --> 00:12:08,260  
waiting and petrified.

149  
00:12:08,260 --> 00:12:10,990  
That's where we're picking up.

150  
00:12:10,990 --> 00:12:17,230  
Perhaps I should not say that  
the able-bodied were assigned

151  
00:12:17,230 --> 00:12:22,420  
to the right side because there  
are times when I'm not sure

152  
00:12:22,420 --> 00:12:26,740  
as to which the good  
side was, but what

153  
00:12:26,740 --> 00:12:32,740  
was happening before our eyes

was the human tragedy that

154

00:12:32,740 --> 00:12:34,270

was unfolding.

155

00:12:34,270 --> 00:12:40,060

Families that were

torn apart, were--

156

00:12:40,060 --> 00:12:44,920

perhaps the elderly parents were

separated from their younger

157

00:12:44,920 --> 00:12:54,550

adult children, or sometimes

even the mothers with children

158

00:12:54,550 --> 00:12:59,560

were separated from

their husbands.

159

00:12:59,560 --> 00:13:10,500

And the crying and

the despair, it was--

160

00:13:10,500 --> 00:13:15,590

it was just devastating.

161

00:13:15,590 --> 00:13:21,500

Of course our worry

was how to get by,

162

00:13:21,500 --> 00:13:28,160

get past the inspection table.

163

00:13:28,160 --> 00:13:29,890

How would we get

my mother through?

164

00:13:29,890 --> 00:13:34,910

165

00:13:34,910 --> 00:13:42,890  
I don't know if it  
was the hand of God,

166  
00:13:42,890 --> 00:13:55,880  
but we passed the table and  
Rauca must have-- perhaps

167  
00:13:55,880 --> 00:13:57,980  
was looking the other way.

168  
00:13:57,980 --> 00:14:03,680  
I know at one time he was  
eating his sandwich for lunch,

169  
00:14:03,680 --> 00:14:07,970  
and calmly eating his sandwich,  
holding it in one hand,

170  
00:14:07,970 --> 00:14:11,840  
and with the other  
hand directing people

171  
00:14:11,840 --> 00:14:17,120  
to life or to death.

172  
00:14:17,120 --> 00:14:21,560  
And it may have been that during  
one of those moments while he

173  
00:14:21,560 --> 00:14:24,740  
was not looking,  
the three of us were

174  
00:14:24,740 --> 00:14:33,440  
able to slip past  
the reviewing stand.

175  
00:14:33,440 --> 00:14:40,460  
And once we were on the other  
side, we were so relieved.

176  
00:14:40,460 --> 00:14:44,630

We knew it wasn't over  
yet, but at least we

177  
00:14:44,630 --> 00:14:57,510  
had reached a safety point, a  
safe haven for whatever period

178  
00:14:57,510 --> 00:14:58,920  
would be allotted to us.

179  
00:14:58,920 --> 00:15:01,560

180  
00:15:01,560 --> 00:15:04,800  
And how did you find out what  
happened to the people who

181  
00:15:04,800 --> 00:15:06,060  
went to the bad side?

182  
00:15:06,060 --> 00:15:08,780

183  
00:15:08,780 --> 00:15:10,580  
Probably the next day.

184  
00:15:10,580 --> 00:15:14,480

185  
00:15:14,480 --> 00:15:16,130  
They were all taken.

186  
00:15:16,130 --> 00:15:21,530  
Let me also add that 10,000  
people were taken away

187  
00:15:21,530 --> 00:15:23,210  
on that day.

188  
00:15:23,210 --> 00:15:26,720  
They were led away, and--



189

00:15:26,720 --> 00:15:30,170

pardon me for backtracking,  
but we came home,

190

00:15:30,170 --> 00:15:34,910

we had to take account  
who was still in the house

191

00:15:34,910 --> 00:15:38,400

and who had been taken away.

192

00:15:38,400 --> 00:15:50,120

So in our house everybody except  
the old pharmacist and his wife

193

00:15:50,120 --> 00:15:52,130

returned.

194

00:15:52,130 --> 00:15:56,390

We went back to the  
square the next morning

195

00:15:56,390 --> 00:16:03,700

and found Mr.  
[? Mesahovich ?] slumped over

196

00:16:03,700 --> 00:16:08,930

on a camp stool, which  
his wife had brought along

197

00:16:08,930 --> 00:16:12,080

for him to rest,  
because she knew it was

198

00:16:12,080 --> 00:16:15,260

going to be a long day for him.

199

00:16:15,260 --> 00:16:18,030

He must have suffered  
a heart attack,

200

00:16:18,030 --> 00:16:22,040

and he was just left  
behind slumped over.

201  
00:16:22,040 --> 00:16:23,715  
His wife must have  
been led away.

202  
00:16:23,715 --> 00:16:27,980

203  
00:16:27,980 --> 00:16:34,250  
Shall I confess at this  
point that the two of them

204  
00:16:34,250 --> 00:16:41,660  
had tried to remain close to us  
and form a family unit with us?

205  
00:16:41,660 --> 00:16:50,990  
And that I certainly was trying  
to get away from them because I

206  
00:16:50,990 --> 00:16:51,995  
knew that our chances--

207  
00:16:51,995 --> 00:16:56,140

208  
00:16:56,140 --> 00:16:58,600  
our chances were  
slim to begin with,

209  
00:16:58,600 --> 00:17:03,820  
and I was afraid that if there  
was an elderly couple with us

210  
00:17:03,820 --> 00:17:07,750  
our chances would  
be even slimmer.

211  
00:17:07,750 --> 00:17:10,660  
So they did not return.

212

00:17:10,660 --> 00:17:18,310

Instead we found an old  
woman whom nobody knew.

213

00:17:18,310 --> 00:17:20,500

She was sitting in a  
chair in the kitchen

214

00:17:20,500 --> 00:17:25,300

when we came back,  
exhausted of course.

215

00:17:25,300 --> 00:17:28,810

Completely drained  
of all emotion.

216

00:17:28,810 --> 00:17:31,900

And we asked her--

217

00:17:31,900 --> 00:17:35,740

and the Jewish word for old  
woman is [? alt-- ?] or we

218

00:17:35,740 --> 00:17:40,480

called her {?\_{?\_[YIDDISH]\_?}\_?}  
little old woman.

219

00:17:40,480 --> 00:17:42,400

What are you doing here?

220

00:17:42,400 --> 00:17:44,650

Where did you come from?

221

00:17:44,650 --> 00:17:50,020

And she said she just got too  
tired walking to the square,

222

00:17:50,020 --> 00:17:55,420

she was all by herself, so she  
walked into the first open door

223

00:17:55,420 --> 00:17:57,160

and waited.

224  
00:17:57,160 --> 00:18:07,470

225  
00:18:07,470 --> 00:18:08,820  
OK.

226  
00:18:08,820 --> 00:18:12,557  
And within a few days  
everyone in the ghetto

227  
00:18:12,557 --> 00:18:13,930  
knew what had happened?

228  
00:18:13,930 --> 00:18:15,910  
Yes.

229  
00:18:15,910 --> 00:18:23,110  
I'm sure we heard the shooting  
coming from the Ninth Fort.

230  
00:18:23,110 --> 00:18:28,450  
And oh, at first there  
were all sorts of rumors

231  
00:18:28,450 --> 00:18:32,710  
that the people who had  
been separated from the rest

232  
00:18:32,710 --> 00:18:42,910  
would be assigned new workplaces  
outside of the ghetto,

233  
00:18:42,910 --> 00:18:49,960  
but at that point nobody  
believed these rumors.

234  
00:18:49,960 --> 00:18:51,925  
And then we could  
hear the shooting.

235

00:18:51,925 --> 00:18:54,910

236

00:18:54,910 --> 00:18:59,620

And we had the proof  
that they were gone.

237

00:18:59,620 --> 00:19:03,290

238

00:19:03,290 --> 00:19:07,670

And then gradually life became--

239

00:19:07,670 --> 00:19:09,500

Yes.

240

00:19:09,500 --> 00:19:12,390

Life returned to  
ghetto normalcy.

241

00:19:12,390 --> 00:19:15,350

242

00:19:15,350 --> 00:19:17,660

Let me see what happened  
to us after that.

243

00:19:17,660 --> 00:19:23,250

244

00:19:23,250 --> 00:19:30,180

I was assigned a work  
place, so I had a work card.

245

00:19:30,180 --> 00:19:34,640

And I can tell you about that.

246

00:19:34,640 --> 00:19:37,170

Tell me about your work.

247

00:19:37,170 --> 00:19:46,290

Because I was very fortunate

in getting this assignment.

248

00:19:46,290 --> 00:19:50,730

It was in a greenhouse.

249

00:19:50,730 --> 00:19:55,320

I worked in a greenhouse along  
with perhaps a small group

250

00:19:55,320 --> 00:19:58,650

of 20 people.

251

00:19:58,650 --> 00:20:08,720

And there were several  
pluses to this work site.

252

00:20:08,720 --> 00:20:11,580

First, it was inside the ghetto.

253

00:20:11,580 --> 00:20:13,690

I didn't have far to walk.

254

00:20:13,690 --> 00:20:17,010

I didn't have to walk one  
or two hours every day

255

00:20:17,010 --> 00:20:23,030

to the airfield, as  
most other people did,

256

00:20:23,030 --> 00:20:28,440

who were doing really  
backbreaking labor there.

257

00:20:28,440 --> 00:20:34,200

I just had this short  
walk to the nursery

258

00:20:34,200 --> 00:20:40,890

where we grew out-of-season  
vegetables for the SS

259

00:20:40,890 --> 00:20:43,470  
hierarchy.

260  
00:20:43,470 --> 00:20:47,970  
And the best part of all,  
we had a Jewish supervisor,

261  
00:20:47,970 --> 00:20:53,250  
horticulturist by the  
name of Mr [? Kapit. ?]

262  
00:20:53,250 --> 00:20:55,810  
He was the brother of a  
former math professor.

263  
00:20:55,810 --> 00:20:59,280  
A very decent man.

264  
00:20:59,280 --> 00:21:01,680  
We still had to do our  
work, but it certainly

265  
00:21:01,680 --> 00:21:03,030  
was not backbreaking.

266  
00:21:03,030 --> 00:21:06,090

267  
00:21:06,090 --> 00:21:08,640  
We planted seedlings  
and transport--

268  
00:21:08,640 --> 00:21:12,570  
I mean, we planted seeds,  
transplanted the seedlings,

269  
00:21:12,570 --> 00:21:18,030  
and grew them to the point  
where we could harvest

270  
00:21:18,030 --> 00:21:26,400  
all sorts of vegetables,  
cucumbers, radishes, carrots,

271  
00:21:26,400 --> 00:21:31,300  
asparagus, green onions.

272  
00:21:31,300 --> 00:21:33,260  
We not allowed to  
take anything home.

273  
00:21:33,260 --> 00:21:37,220

274  
00:21:37,220 --> 00:21:41,210  
It was a great  
treat to be allowed

275  
00:21:41,210 --> 00:21:46,700  
to take a few tips  
of green onion home

276  
00:21:46,700 --> 00:21:52,460  
and have it with our  
microscopic ration of bread.

277  
00:21:52,460 --> 00:21:54,020  
It was a great treat.

278  
00:21:54,020 --> 00:21:57,470  
And like I said, the  
Jewish supervisor

279  
00:21:57,470 --> 00:22:03,830  
was certainly the exact  
opposite of a German guard

280  
00:22:03,830 --> 00:22:09,380  
who could have hovered over  
us with a gun or threats

281  
00:22:09,380 --> 00:22:10,820  
or taunts.

282  
00:22:10,820 --> 00:22:13,380



283

00:22:13,380 --> 00:22:16,290

Who was the food for?

284

00:22:16,290 --> 00:22:24,120

It was grown exclusively for  
the use of German officers.

285

00:22:24,120 --> 00:22:25,500

Is that what you asked me?

286

00:22:25,500 --> 00:22:31,473

287

00:22:31,473 --> 00:22:32,140

Did you smuggle?

288

00:22:32,140 --> 00:22:34,690

289

00:22:34,690 --> 00:22:38,220

I personally never got  
involved in smuggle,

290

00:22:38,220 --> 00:22:41,820

but as far as the producer  
was concerned, no.

291

00:22:41,820 --> 00:22:44,620

Nothing was taken out.

292

00:22:44,620 --> 00:22:51,540

It would have been too dangerous  
to endanger the other people

293

00:22:51,540 --> 00:22:58,130

in the group, as  
well as our good--

294

00:22:58,130 --> 00:25:07,000