

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:19,000

2
00:00:19,000 --> 00:00:22,720
If I've never been
in the ghetto I and I

3
00:00:22,720 --> 00:00:25,540
haven't even heard of the ghetto
can you just sort of describe

4
00:00:25,540 --> 00:00:27,940
to me in general
what a ghetto is like

5
00:00:27,940 --> 00:00:30,590
or what that ghetto was like?

6
00:00:30,590 --> 00:00:31,940
Were there schools?

7
00:00:31,940 --> 00:00:33,935
Was there a culture?

8
00:00:33,935 --> 00:00:36,640

9
00:00:36,640 --> 00:00:40,120
In the beginning there
were some makeshift schools

10
00:00:40,120 --> 00:00:42,678
for the children.

11
00:00:42,678 --> 00:00:44,095
In the beginning
there were books.

12
00:00:44,095 --> 00:00:47,130

13
00:00:47,130 --> 00:00:50,610
In the beginning
there was a hospital

14
00:00:50,610 --> 00:00:56,760
that had been established
on ghetto grounds.

15
00:00:56,760 --> 00:01:04,620
But as time went on,
children were taken away.

16
00:01:04,620 --> 00:01:08,130
There were no more
schools necessary.

17
00:01:08,130 --> 00:01:11,450
The hospital was
burned to the ground

18
00:01:11,450 --> 00:01:19,503
with patients and
doctors burned alive.

19
00:01:19,503 --> 00:01:20,420
The books were burned.

20
00:01:20,420 --> 00:01:26,720

21
00:01:26,720 --> 00:01:34,190
And it was just a very, very
gray existence of hardship.

22
00:01:34,190 --> 00:01:35,730
It was so cold.

23
00:01:35,730 --> 00:01:37,850
There was no--

24
00:01:37,850 --> 00:01:40,700
In the winters where

temperatures dropped

25

00:01:40,700 --> 00:01:47,420
to 30 and 40 degrees
below zero and people

26

00:01:47,420 --> 00:01:50,540
have no firewood to
heat the premises.

27

00:01:50,540 --> 00:01:53,930

28

00:01:53,930 --> 00:01:57,080
I remember that
when we went to bed

29

00:01:57,080 --> 00:02:05,060
we covered ourselves with
every feather quilt, every coat

30

00:02:05,060 --> 00:02:12,360
that we still owned before we
had to turn in our fur coats

31

00:02:12,360 --> 00:02:14,130
to the Germans.

32

00:02:14,130 --> 00:02:23,370
But the existence was, it was
almost on a subhuman level.

33

00:02:23,370 --> 00:02:25,630
Microscopic rations.

34

00:02:25,630 --> 00:02:30,030
I don't know what the
official rations were.

35

00:02:30,030 --> 00:02:34,180
I think some working people
had some food supplements.

36

00:02:34,180 --> 00:02:37,330

37

00:02:37,330 --> 00:02:43,020

There was a curfew at
night, maybe 6 o'clock

38

00:02:43,020 --> 00:02:47,400

unless some workers returned
from their night shift

39

00:02:47,400 --> 00:02:50,435

and then they were
exempt from the curfew.

40

00:02:50,435 --> 00:02:52,960

41

00:02:52,960 --> 00:03:05,500

It was just a bare existence
with a lot of hunger pangs,

42

00:03:05,500 --> 00:03:08,950

cold, and exhaustion.

43

00:03:08,950 --> 00:03:10,870

Plus hopelessness.

44

00:03:10,870 --> 00:03:15,330

Actually, I never felt hopeless.

45

00:03:15,330 --> 00:03:19,680

Of course, I had the luxury of
not feeling hopeless because I

46

00:03:19,680 --> 00:03:21,870

was only in my mid teens.

47

00:03:21,870 --> 00:03:29,870

48

00:03:29,870 --> 00:03:35,990
Yes, young people
still were able to see,

49
00:03:35,990 --> 00:03:39,350
had the energy or interest
in seeing their school

50
00:03:39,350 --> 00:03:43,620
friends on the only day
they didn't have to work.

51
00:03:43,620 --> 00:03:51,660
I think Sunday there was
a day to regroup, wash up

52
00:03:51,660 --> 00:04:02,760
and so it really was a
very harsh existence.

53
00:04:02,760 --> 00:04:08,610
Not only that, and then
the either Ukrainian guards

54
00:04:08,610 --> 00:04:17,100
or Lithuanian partisans, whoever
was assigned to guard duty,

55
00:04:17,100 --> 00:04:25,840
would barge in and the
German soldiers or SS

56
00:04:25,840 --> 00:04:30,980
would barge in for
no reason at all

57
00:04:30,980 --> 00:04:38,530
and just terrorize the people
they found in the home.

58
00:04:38,530 --> 00:04:41,280

59

00:04:41,280 --> 00:04:44,370
Mostly hunger prevailed.

60
00:04:44,370 --> 00:04:47,070
People froze to death too.

61
00:04:47,070 --> 00:04:50,190
All of sudden, they disappeared.

62
00:04:50,190 --> 00:04:53,250
They weren't seen, they
weren't heard from.

63
00:04:53,250 --> 00:04:56,160
They may have died
from hunger and nobody

64
00:04:56,160 --> 00:05:02,330
knew because we certainly
didn't have telephones.

65
00:05:02,330 --> 00:05:07,250
We were not allowed to
bring in the newspaper.

66
00:05:07,250 --> 00:05:10,235
We were not allowed to
have cameras or radios.

67
00:05:10,235 --> 00:05:13,500

68
00:05:13,500 --> 00:05:18,120
All electrical appliances
had to be turned in early on.

69
00:05:18,120 --> 00:05:22,680
I don't remember whether
we had electricity or not.

70
00:05:22,680 --> 00:05:26,490
I know some homes did
but I forgot whether we

71
00:05:26,490 --> 00:05:28,560
had to use candles or not.

72
00:05:28,560 --> 00:05:32,410
Certainly there
was no sanitation.

73
00:05:32,410 --> 00:05:38,400
There was an outhouse in our
case, in our first place,

74
00:05:38,400 --> 00:05:42,600
in our attic space that
was our first residence.

75
00:05:42,600 --> 00:05:52,070
There was an outhouse that
the men took turns cleaning.

76
00:05:52,070 --> 00:05:55,670
And the water was
brought in from the well.

77
00:05:55,670 --> 00:06:00,950
In the winter the well froze
and one had to chop real hard

78
00:06:00,950 --> 00:06:01,880
to get to the water.

79
00:06:01,880 --> 00:06:05,040

80
00:06:05,040 --> 00:06:12,450
All of us had access
to the shared kitchen

81
00:06:12,450 --> 00:06:18,105
where occasionally I would
take a bath in a tin tub.

82

00:06:18,105 --> 00:06:21,080

83

00:06:21,080 --> 00:06:26,900

And the way to ensure
privacy was to put up a sheet

84

00:06:26,900 --> 00:06:29,240

and tell everybody not to
walk through the kitchen.

85

00:06:29,240 --> 00:06:33,430

86

00:06:33,430 --> 00:06:37,720

So that was a very
minor inconvenience

87

00:06:37,720 --> 00:06:42,640

compared to the other dangers.

88

00:06:42,640 --> 00:06:46,000

What about the administration
the ghetto police?

89

00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:50,940

90

00:06:50,940 --> 00:06:54,840

Our ghetto administration
was composed

91

00:06:54,840 --> 00:07:00,600

of very honorable men we were
very fortunate in that respect.

92

00:07:00,600 --> 00:07:09,240

Our ghetto elder was a highly
respected surgeon whose wife

93

00:07:09,240 --> 00:07:11,710

we knew from way back.

94

00:07:11,710 --> 00:07:17,740

95

00:07:17,740 --> 00:07:22,410

And he delegated authority
and made decisions

96

00:07:22,410 --> 00:07:27,150

with the rest of his council
to the best of his ability.

97

00:07:27,150 --> 00:07:30,655

Not easy decisions.

98

00:07:30,655 --> 00:07:31,155

Police?

99

00:07:31,155 --> 00:07:36,590

100

00:07:36,590 --> 00:07:42,200

I just know that we
had ghetto police.

101

00:07:42,200 --> 00:07:46,520

I may have known some
of them personally,

102

00:07:46,520 --> 00:07:58,660

and often they had to
perform very hard assignments

103

00:07:58,660 --> 00:08:02,200

like rounding up,
like making up lists

104

00:08:02,200 --> 00:08:08,350

or rounding up
people for relocation

105

00:08:08,350 --> 00:08:13,230

from lists that were

provided to them,

106
00:08:13,230 --> 00:08:17,990
and that must have
been very difficult.

107
00:08:17,990 --> 00:08:24,040
I know nothing really good or
bad about the ghetto police.

108
00:08:24,040 --> 00:08:25,970
But you weren't afraid.

109
00:08:25,970 --> 00:08:26,470
No.

110
00:08:26,470 --> 00:08:33,510

111
00:08:33,510 --> 00:08:38,669
Oh, I also know they
had a very decent--

112
00:08:38,669 --> 00:08:41,880
The chief of police was
one of the most decent men

113
00:08:41,880 --> 00:08:43,380
in the ghetto.

114
00:08:43,380 --> 00:08:44,310
I forget his name.

115
00:08:44,310 --> 00:08:48,290

116
00:08:48,290 --> 00:08:53,700
The day of the Kinder Aktion,
which was much later in 1944,

117
00:08:53,700 --> 00:08:57,720
tell me what you saw.

118
00:08:57,720 --> 00:08:59,820
I happened to be
home on that day.

119
00:08:59,820 --> 00:09:06,210
I didn't report to work because
I was suffering from what

120
00:09:06,210 --> 00:09:08,280
I thought was a bad cold.

121
00:09:08,280 --> 00:09:13,380
I was running a
fever, and because I

122
00:09:13,380 --> 00:09:17,400
had a Jewish
supervisor I thought

123
00:09:17,400 --> 00:09:28,620
I would stay home and just get
better and make up all the work

124
00:09:28,620 --> 00:09:31,260
that I missed the next day.

125
00:09:31,260 --> 00:09:38,050
I knew that no reprisals
would be taken against me.

126
00:09:38,050 --> 00:09:42,620
Well, I was not
prepared for that day.

127
00:09:42,620 --> 00:09:45,160
When was it?

128
00:09:45,160 --> 00:09:50,940
I think it was in
March, in March of 1944.

129

00:09:50,940 --> 00:09:53,775

And it may have been the
last week in March also.

130

00:09:53,775 --> 00:10:00,960

131

00:10:00,960 --> 00:10:07,420

My mother had died
several years before.

132

00:10:07,420 --> 00:10:11,430

She died a natural
death, but she

133

00:10:11,430 --> 00:10:20,770

died as a result of starvation
and the consequences

134

00:10:20,770 --> 00:10:23,490

of the pneumonia.

135

00:10:23,490 --> 00:10:27,470

She just didn't have the
resistance to fight it.

136

00:10:27,470 --> 00:10:32,070

But by God's grace she
died a natural death.

137

00:10:32,070 --> 00:10:35,100

She was not taken away from us.

138

00:10:35,100 --> 00:10:38,830

Did you have a ceremony?

139

00:10:38,830 --> 00:10:44,320

We had a ceremony
at the cemetery.

140

00:10:44,320 --> 00:10:49,780

It was a very sad
funeral procession.

141

00:10:49,780 --> 00:10:59,420

An emaciated horse was pulling
some sort of a makeshift wagon.

142

00:10:59,420 --> 00:11:06,220

My mother's body was wrapped in
a shroud in the orthodox manner

143

00:11:06,220 --> 00:11:14,520

of burying the dead and a
righteous man had kept vigil.

144

00:11:14,520 --> 00:11:31,000