-TITLE- ERIKA JACOBY & MALVINA ENGEL

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15:01:27 Interviewer: Who would like to start and give us a frame

of time and place?

Engel: You ask and I will answer.

Interviewer: How old were you in 1936?

Engel: I was 35 years old.

15:01:48 Interviewer: So what was happening then?

Engel: What was happening? It wasn't new, the anti-Semitism because

it was always there. It started with the children's education.

Interviewer: How old was Eriks then?

Jacoby: In 1935, I was seven.

Engel: But not with my children education at --. They didn't take

the Jewish children to colleges.

15:02:24 In high school, they still could go, but not to colleges.

About six percent of the students could be Jews at this time, but

they didn't go because they didn't feel good. So they had to go to

other countries.

Interviewer: The Jews?

15:03:14 Engel: The Jews. They went to Italy. They went to

Czechoslovakia. They wanted to become doctors, lawyers or

something.

Interviewer: And you had one boy older than Erika and one younger?

Engel: But it doesn't matter because I wouldn't send anyone to

college.

15:03:49 Then they started with the licenses for the Jewish

businessmen. Everybody had to prove that they were really Hungarian

born. At this time already, it wasn't all Hungary. When my parents

and grandparents were born,

15:04:13 Hungary was very big. When fascism came, it was declared

separate states. So my father had to go and look for his birth

certificate. It was in another part of the country. It

15:04:43 belonged to Czechoslovakia. It was very hard to get it

because you had to have witnesses. His witnesses were all very old.

They couldn't remember anything. So it was very hard. Of course, a

lot of bribery and

15:05:03 a lot of money could get this. Even with that it was very

hard because they took all the money and they didn't do anything.

15:05:43 Interviewer: You were telling us earlier about your

father. Do you want to talk a little about him ?

Engel: My father. He was a well-to-do man so we didn't feel too

much of the anti-Semitism because they were dependant on him. He

had 400 workers in

15:06:06 his coal mine. Almost the whole town was not much more

than this because it was at this time about 3000 or 4000 people. So

they were dependant on him. Later on, in '18 after the revolution

when they took everything away, all these people who he

15:00:46 brought home from the front in the First World War came in

and said. Look, the mine is ours and you \_\_\_

Interviewer: They nationalized your mine.

15:07:16 Engel: So then we saw the real nature of these people.

Later on, it wasn't so bad because people got used to the changes.

In the first days of the revolution, everybody was mad. But it

calmed down a little. They accepted that, in this little city, they

can't do anything without the Jew. They never went to school. They

didn't know how to write their

15:08:06 names. They couldn't do anything. They needed the Jews.

so it was a little easier. Only it was not good because every three

or four months, there was another government. But with the people,

it wasn't so bad.

Interviewer: We were talking before about the envy and the anti-

Semitism.

Engel: The anti-Semitism was always there. We went to Jewish

schools beaus there

15:08:35 was no public school. There was the Catholic, the

Protestant and the Jewish.

So they hated each other. The Catholics hated the Jews and they

hated the Protestants. The hated each other and they both

15:08:55 hated the Jews. So it was always there. When children went

on the street, the Gentile children always said" This is Jew. This

is Jew." And maybe they throw a rock. But you got used to it

because everything came only from the people not the government. In

this little city that was dependant on the Jews, the

15:09:35 government was dependant on the Jews too. You remember all

these stories from Germany about how they were always dependant on

the Jewish money. It was so in Hungary too. So the anti-Semitism

didn't

15:09:56 come out. Even if they ware anti-Semites, it didn't come

out in the open against us.

Interviewer: How were you experiencing it later, Eriks, as a kid?

Jacoby: Well, I remember as a child that I was always afraid of the

non-Jews.

15:10:21 I grew up in the city of Miskolz?) My brothers went to

...?) and they had these little pairs. I remember that they were

going to school during the day. That was alright. But in the

evening, our maid always had to go and fetch them because

15:10:33 they would be beaten up on their way home. In the morning

too. When I went to Eddering(?) where my mother was born, there was

a very interesting relationship with the non-Jews. I was allowed to

play with

15:10:55 them, but I knew that there was something in between us

that we could never talk about. I wasn't sure what it was. I

remember not understanding why I was not as free or good as they

were although

15:11:11 they looked worse than I did. As a child, that was a very

confusing thing for me. I didn't understand the distinction and on

what basis there was a distinction between us. I also knew, for

example, exactly how to behave with them. I knew what I could do,

in whose house I could go and whose house they would throw me out

or not welcome me. Also, I remember stories about the (cher?)

15:11:41 non-Jews. I remember the words being used: "Oh, he's a

rocher(?) It means he's a wicked man. I remember trying not to pass

in front of his house because as children, we were affected by

these words. We didn't understand exactly what could be done to us,

but we knew that if there was somebody who was a rocher(?), perhaps

we couldn't even pass

15:12:05 in front of his house. Something terrible might happen to

us. The thing I most clearly remember has to do with the Church. I

remember that there was a real frightful experience: the Easter.

We were very

15:12:25 frightened. We were told not to go outside because

something could happen to us. We didn't quite know what. As I think

back, all the beautiful pageantry of the Church becomes very

hateful to me. There was danger lurking behind those pageantries.

I couldn't understand because synthetically, it was beautiful. I

couldn't understand how that could hurt me.

15:13:04 Christmas also was a very frightening experience for me.

Mainly because we didn't understand the connection. Nobody sat down

with us and explained what might happen or why there are those

feelings. So I think children were not paid much attention to.

Interviewer: Was there a reason?

15:13:28 Engel: I didn't feel these things that she felt because

when I was at home, I felt independent like my father. I was in

business with my father. I had to deal with all these people and

they were really dependant on my. They had to get a loan. They had

to buy something on charge. So they were dependant

15:14:02 on my father and dependant on me. So I didn't feel these

things. When I went on the street, I felt that I was more than they

were. They wouldn't dare say a word that I wouldn't like because

they knew that I could do something for them back. It was already

the march of fascism. She didn't belong already. She was already

the third generation.

15:14:47 But I didn't feel these things because I thought that I am

more and you depend on me. I didn't feel bad when I went into the

priest and I told him... My father wouldn't know about it, but

there was a young priest who I would sit down with. I told this

young priest what I wanted to tell him. I wasn't

15:15:18 afraid of him. I had this strength because it was my

background that made me strong.

Jacoby: I remember when we had restaurant in Miskolz(?). During the

night, we usually put down a heavy iron grate or curtain. That

covered all the window. They used to come at night and bang on

15:15:52 the .. Our house was attached to the restaurant. They used

to bang on them and call," Dirty Jew." Open up. I don't know how

real the danger was, but I remember being very frightened. My

father was very frightened too. My mother wasn't so frightened.

15:16:18 She went to the kitchen and took out the long knife and

she said "Nobody's going to come in here" She was standing there

with that long knife at the door and if anybody would dare come

in... Now, I don't know if she would have done anything, but those

were very frightening times.

Later on, when things got worse as I grew older, I remember mostly

how we were kind of ostracized from other people. That was mostly

in Miskolz(?). I remember that we had a neighbor, an older

15:16:59 man. He didn't allow us to come near his house. "Dirty

Jewish kids! Keep away from my place" We used to be so scared of

him. He used to yell at us. We never dared to cross in front of his

house. What happened, and it really has a very sad ending, was this

man himself was a third generation convert.

15:17:27 His grandfather was a Jew. He was transported to Auschwitz

in the same cattle car that I was. I never forgot that.

Interviewer: So who brought you up to 1944.

15:18:14 Jacoby: The other neighbors... for example, we lived in an

apartment building and upstairs there was a Catholic family. They

had a son about my age. I

15:18:30 very much wanted to be his friend. I would have liked to

visit him especially when it came to be Christmas. I went up and I

wanted to look in at their Christmas tree. I had great envy of the

little colored candies that were a Christmas decoration. I

15:18:55 wanted so badly to have one. I wanted to go in to say

hello to them. The boy noticed that I was lurking around their room

and came out and said "I can't talk to you. My mother told me I

can't talk to you. You are Jewish"

15:19:13 By than, of course, I understood, but it was a real pain.

I just couldn't understand why. I understood that because I was

Jewish, but I didn't understand why I wasn't okay to talk to.

15:19:31 I remember one of the neighbors of my girlfriend whose

house we went to play at. The neighbors kids also played with us.

The neighbors kids were sent to get some bread from the Jewish

bakery. They brought it home and then sliced the

15:15:57 bread and took the crust off each slice. I said to the

lady "Why do you take the crust off? My mother says that's very

healthy" So she said "That's because the Jews touched it. We can't

eat it if the

15:20:14 Jews touched it" So these were the things that I'm sure

affected me and gave me the kind of image about myself that

something must be terribly wrong with me. In contrast to my mother

who never felt there was something wrong with her, I always felt

there

15:20:32 was something wrong with me. I couldn't understand why. I

always tried very hard to be a good girl and the best student I

could be, but still I wasn't good enough.

Interviewer: At that point, you were still in school?

Jacoby: I was still in school. I went to a Jewish elementary school

and then to a Jewish junior high school which was a community

school. It was a very good school. From that school,

15:21:03 children who graduated either entered a teachers'seminary

which was also a Jewish community school or they would go to a non-

Jewish school like a commercial high school if they could. By the

time I graduated from junior high, there was no opportunity for me

to go on to any other school. Although I was a very good student,

I

15:21:33 was not able to go on studying any more. I felt very

betrayed about that. I thought that if I studied hard, I could do

something, but I couldn't.

Interviewer: What did you want to do? What was your dream?

Jacoby: I didn't want to do business; I grew up in a business

family. I wanted to be some kind of a professional. I didn't know

exactly what, but I knew I wanted to study. My brothers were sent

to Yeshivs(?) and I was envious of them. Probably I

15:22:12 wanted to study something about the Jews. I was very

interested in that. I also wanted to compete with the boys. I

wanted to be as good as them. I don't remember if I had any

definite goals, but I knew that I wanted to study. Studying was

very important.

Interviewer: Was this okay with you and your husband?

15:22:38 Engel: Yes beaus I always wanted to study my whole life.

My father agreed that I could study what I wanted because he

trusted me and he loved me very much. Of all the children, I can

say that he

15 22:59 loved me the most and he trusted me the most. I never

wanted to stay in businsss either. I wanted to study. I asked to

study. So, I didn't mind her. The boys we minded because we wanted

them to be reading a lot about religion. We wanted them to know a

lot of Talmud. It was much harder to study the Talmud than to study

for a lawyer.

Interviewer: You mentioned before that your father was convinced

that you wouldn't go away from the religion and you were convinced

that Erika wouldn't go away from the religion.

Engel: Yes. Because they were growing up and there weren't public

schools so there wasn't a mix of the

15:24:03 students like here.

Jacoby: Every family wanted their children to be educated. The boys

of course wanted their children to have a lot of Jewish studies.

15:24:25 Interviewer: Then as the war came on and you were

struggling with that, school stopped?

Jacoby: Yes. All the schools were stopped. There was no more Jewish

education or any education for children. Jewish children were not

accepted anymore to the Catholic or Protestant high schools.

15:24:51 Interviewer: Were you hearing what was going on in Germany

and Poland? What did you know?

Jacoby: I had very little factual knowledge. I only had

impressions. I remember when some of the refugees arrived and we

heard stories about how their families were

15:25:52 killed. There was one evening when we had a wedding for a

rabbi who escaped whose whole family was killed. He remarried in

Hungary. I remember that we had to hide him in our house. We

15:25:35 made a kind of underground wedding for him. I remember how

impressed I was about the danger of that. We heard the stories

about Hitler. I must have been very young. We fabricated stories of

heroism, what we could do to Hitler. I remember how we

15:25:57 tried to outdo each other. "I would do this" And the other

would say "No, I'm going to do this." We kept boasting about our

courage and how we would deal with this man. Of course, there were

Hitler jokes and things like that coming from the synagogue. My

brothers would come home every night with a new joke about how we

were going to overcome Hitler.

15:26:23 The fear of Hitler was among us all the years while the

stories went on, but I don't think that I had an actual, factual

knowledge of what was really happening. You probably did.

15:21:41 Engel: In the first years when Hitler came up, we were so

Hungarian that we ware really angry with the Allies that they took

away from Hungary the tutors(?) and took away from Germany the

rule. We were really angry. Four years we were in the war

15:27:07 and they took everything away. So first we really didn't

mind what he did because the Versailles Peace Treaty wasn't right.

We felt this way as Hungarians. We were more Hungarian than Jew.

Later when he came out with all these laws against the Jews, we

started to

15:27:45 think that this is against us and not against the allies.

Interviewer: But you still felt safe?

Engel: I felt safe.

Jacoby: Until when?

Engel: Until he wasn't in Hemuskolz(?).

Jacoby: Do you remember your brother who was studying in

Preshbourg(?)?

15:28:11 Engel: Not in Preshbourg(?), in Austria.

Jacoby: In Austria. He came home and told us about what was

happening. What happened then? You didn't believe him?

Engel: Nobody believed him. He came home and said that the Germans

came into Vienna. They threw

15:28:32 people out of the Viendorz(?). His rabbi's wife had to

clean the street. All kinds of things. So in the restaurant(?),

people said to him "You know, you'd better not say these things

because you can get in jail" But he believed this so after half a

year, he wasn't in Heinrick(?). He told everybody and nobody wanted

to believe it.

15:29:12 Interviewer: Where did he go?

Engel: To Mexico. He went to all the lands. He went to Greece. He

went to Italy. He went everywhere until he got out of

Proportagard(?) in the last ship to Mexico. But nobody wanted to

believe him. It was

15:29:30 already 1941.

Jacoby: so interesting to hear this because,

Engel: Because we had Horty(?). We believed so in Horty.

Interviewer: Admirer Horty.

Jacoby: But what about your brothers? Your brothers were old and

taken into the working camps already

5:29:50 why before Hitler came in. What did you think?

Engel: Because in the first years in 1939 when they first took my

older brother, after a year he came back. So we thought that when

they took the other ones out, they want come back too. But nobody

came

30:00 back. I don't know why we couldn't believe it. We saw already

that these Jews who came in 50 years ago from Gardisia(?), from

Poland... They had already grandchildren there and they had

businesses there. One day came that everybody had to go and

register and they took all of the men away. We didn't

15:30:48 know where they were. They took the men to Poland.

15:31:01 Interviewer: So you didn't recognize that this was

different? This wasn't just like conscription into the army.

Engel: We were very backwards in Jewish leadership.In Budapest, the

big ones, they knew already. They knew already, but didn't know it

in 1944 when Eichmann(?) came in because until 1944, nobody left

Budapest either. They went only when they

15:31:44 were taken by Eichmann(?). They didn't go before.

Jacoby: I think that there was a terrible ignorance and denial on

the part of the Jews. It is incomprehensible. I don't know what we

could have done because even those who tries to escape couldn't get

visas. We couldn't get out. We didn't have many

15:32:12 friends. We couldn't really hide, but I'm sure we could

have done more than what we did.

Engel: But if you went somewhere, you had to eat. Nobody would

serve you anything to eat any where. This was the main reason why

people didn't go. You didn't have anything to look forward to. You

had children and you had to eat, you had to sleep somewhere. Where

can you go?

15:32:43 Interviewer: Was there already much hunger in 1940, '41,

'42?

Jacoby: Rations, yes. I don't know if there was hunger. I remember

we couldn't get flour or oil or we had to go somewhere to pick up

these things even

15:33:05 potatoes.

Engel: But you weren't starving.

Jacoby: It wasn't starving. It wasn't like in the ghetto or

anything like that.

Engel: Until 1944. In 1944 when Hitler came in, you couldn't buy

anything. We gave away all our clothes. In the night, a peasant

woman came and brought the chicken and we would give her what we

had. In 1944

15:33:33 after Hitler came in.

Interviewer: Was that then a closed ghetto?

Engel: Yes.

Jacoby: See, everything that happened in the other countries that

took years in terms of the ghetto and the deportation...

Engel: This took six weeks.

15:33:52 Jacoby: The whole thing went very fast.

Engel: Six weeks.

Jacoby: As a matter of fact, that's the tragedy of the Hungarian

Jews.

Engel: Half a million Jews they took in six weeks.

Jacoby: But the Hungarian Jews could have probably been saved

already because Hitler was losing the war. He was willing to

negotiate and had they bombed the

15:34:15 railroads, they could have been saved. As Elie Wiesel

said, 100 people a day were killed at that time. So that is a real

tragedy.

Interviewer: But Hitler had sent Eichmann in?

15:34:36 Jacoby: Yes.

Interviewer: It's very deliberate.

Jacoby: He was the one who was in charge of the deportation of the

Jews.

Out here were some Hungarian leaders who were able to buy

themselves out and escape. Of course, there was a lot of turmoil

about this among the Jews.

15:35:20 Interviewer: Some sense of betrayal.

Jacoby: Yes. Also after March 19th when the Germans physically

marched in...see until then I remember the debates. 'there not

going to come in. They're not going to come into Hungary. We are

cooperating. We are good Nazis. That's what they said. "Hungarians

are good Nazis. They're not going to have Germany occupy the

country. So we believed them. Although we're going to have a hard

life or we are discriminated against or we are beaten. My brother

was beaten most every day because

15:36:00 he had to go to something like a youth group where they

were taken out and given military training, but after each

training, they were beaten. That's how they were sent home. My

uncles were in these forced labor camps attached to military camps.

But all these things we were kind of coping with. We were still in

our home. No Germans were present until March 19th.

Engel: You know who? Because in the government, there were still

ministers who didn't like the Jews, but they were m\_\_\_. They didn't

want to deport

15:36:49 the Jews from Hungary. Until we had a minister named

Kar(?) and they killed him. After him came another one and they

gave up to the Germans.

Interviewer: So until this time, the family was still intact?

15:37:17 Jacoby: Yes. Except my uncles were taken into forced

labor camps. On March 19th when the Germans marched in, my brother

who was at that time 17 or 18 went to a football game in Budapest.

He loved football. On his way back on a train ride, he was caught

in a raid.

15:37:48 That was the very day when they marched in.

Engel: They caught all the Jews on the trains.

Jacoby: They arrested him and he didn't come home. So we didn't

know what happened to him. He disappeared at that time. We tried

to figure out what happened. They said that they were arrested.

They were here, they were there. Later we heard that they were

taken to Auschwitz, but we didn't hear that until after the war

15:38:19 Engel: No. When we arrived at Auschwitz and he gave us the

number, he said I gave your brother a number a few days ago, but

they sent him away already someplace else.

Interviewer: You never saw him again?

Engel: No, he survived.

Jacoby: Then my father was taken to a forced labor camp. He left a

little before Shavor(?). I remember

15:38: seeing him. My father was very gentle and not a real hero,

macho type. I was very worried about him. I remember his skin was

always so white. I knew at that time that he couldn't survive. He

just wasn't physically strong.

Engel: Physically strong, he was, but he just wasn't strong in

feelings. He was always scared.

15:39:25 Jacoby: He was also saying that people started to convert.

One after the other. They thought they could save themselves. My

father said,"People without any inner strength" He couldn't

understand how they could give up their religion. But as I said,

when he packed this bag on his

15:39:50 back and said goodbye, I had the feeling that I would not

see him again. He didn't look like a man who could survive. My

younger brother, Moshe, went to Edder.ng(?)where my grandparents

were at the time. We thought he would be safer there. And they took

him from there. He didn't survive. He died of typhus just a week

before the liberation.

Interviewer: What about your grandparents?

15:40:31 Jacoby: After the Germans came in, they made a Ghetto out

of our street and a few more streets so that all the Jews who lived

in Mishkolz(?), we were about 10,000 maybe more, all came to live

in that confined areas. We had several families living with us.

During that time, I was allowed to go out to work.

They said, who can go to work can go to work.

Engel: We knew already that they would take us to work somewhere.

To Poland they told us. But who has work at home, they would leave.

So she went to

15:41:26 a farmer to work.

Jacoby: And I was able to get some food through the farmer. In June

at this time, there were bombings probably by the Russians. We

spent a lot of time in the basement where we had a shelter. I

remember that so much happened there that had nothing to do with

the war and had to do with

15:42:07 my age. I remember that was the first time I met a young

man that I liked. I remember feeling wonderfully happy down in the

shelter. And excited. And waiting to see him in the shelter. That

was my big adventure. Another thing that is so incongruent as I

think back is that the family who moved in with us had more money

than we did. By then we had very little

15:42:39 because our business had been closed about a year already.

These people moved in and brought butter. They gave bread and

butter to their little kids and I was dying to get a piece of bread

with butter, but I was ashamed to ask for it. So I never did. I

remember that I could see and smell the butter, but I couldn't ask

for it. It was too hard. Then after a few weeks, they told us that

we

15:43:13 should pack our stuff together. Whatever we could carry on

our backs. We would be transported to another area outside the city

which was the brick factory. There was no factory there. There were

shelters for the bricks with roofs, but nothing on the floor

15:43:36 So they told us to pack whatever we can take. Of course,

everybody packed whatever we thought was the most important things

in our lives. I don't know what you packed. I packed my diary, my

pictures, my notebook. Everything I thought I couldn't do without.

It had nothing to do with survival in a physical sense. I guess

that I just wanted to survive in a psychological.

15:44:02 Engel: We could take anything because they knew that they

would take it away.

Jacoby: So then we went to this brick factory and that's where the

reality of the situation really hit me.

As I said earlier, I was thinking that it was even fun for me. I

enjoyed the fact that we were together with so many people. I

enjoyed the social aspects of it. My friends were all near. So it

was

15:45:25 very exciting for me. I couldn't feel the pain or the

worry about things. Then in the brick factory, they told us that

this is where \_\_ staying. There was nothing. Nothing on the floor.

There was some straw and I remember that we wanted to lay on the

straw. Then, I wanted to go to the bathroom and they told us that

there were no bathrooms. I couldn't

15:46:00 understand how they could bring us to a place with no

bathrooms. I remember that the men started to dig trenches to make

latrines. It was an open latrine. It was just a little bit away

from where the shelters were. They said,"That's where you go" And

I wouldn't go. So I remember that for three days, I

15:46:35 didn't go to the bathroom. That was probably the beginning

of the humiliation that I just couldn't get adjusted to. Then as

soon as we settled down and set up a community kitchen, the

transports suddenly started to strive from the outskirts of the

city. Every day, we went up and watched who was coming. We were

15:47:04 separated [from them]. We were fenced in. One day, I saw

my grandfather and grandmother. This grandfather that was held in

awe by everybody, I suddenly saw being thrown out of the wagon. He

was a beautiful man. Big white beard and very gentile looking.

There was nobody to help him. I

15:47:39 jumped over the fence and I put him on my shoulders and

carried him down.

Interviewer: He had a stroke many years before?

Jacoby: Yes. He wasn't quite conscious. I couldn't understand how

they could do that to him. I carried him down and I laid him down

on the straw. He started asking me where he was. I started

15:48:02 giving him this story that we are going to Palestine. That

we are on the boat and the Messiah(?) had come. I remember deciding

that I had to take care of him. There was no accommodation for sick

or old people. Finally, we took him to one of the shelters where a

hospital was set up. There were all these dying people there. All

these helpless, dying people.

15:48:40 I organized my friends and we decided to take care of

them. I remember how I had to overcome my repulsion to clean up the

soil of these old people. And to feed them. I remember feeling

that if anything, this is the best thing I can do in my life.

15:49:15 It didn't last very long. We were there about ten days.

Everybody was brought there.

My whole family who was alive or was still around, they all arrived

there. So we all got together. Mostly kids and aunts. All of the

uncles were taken away.

15:49:32 Some of my impressions of that place were that the

Hungarian soldiers were different looking than the regular

policemen. They wore a fester in their hats. They were called

gender(?). They had bayonets. That was a change. We still didn't

have any Germans around.

15:50:05 I remember somebody got a postcard from Auschwitz to the

brick factory. It said,"We arrived. We are fine. Loved somebody

from our town. So we started to weave these dreams again.

15:50:27 Always weaving dreams about how good its going to be once

we are taken away from this awful place. Were going to go

somewhere. They're going to care for the old people. Were going to

be working. We're going to have food. All this confusion is going

to end

15:50:44 and were going to be okay. We kept saying that to

ourselves. So, one day they told us to pack everything we

15:51:55 can carry on our backs. We went up again on this little

hill and were put into wagons.

Engel: Every day, they took transports from the different shelters.

Everyday, we ran from our shelter to another one because we heard

that the Americans already were in France. It was June 6th. Every

day

15:52:41 counted. Monday the deportation started so Monday you went

to one shelter and Tuesday you went to another shelter. So finally

they took us up. There were about 20,000 Jews and two Germans. They

had whips and were yelling,"Run, run, fast, fast." They put us in

the cars. There were 80 inside.

Interviewer: Any men left?

Jacoby: There were some. Some of the older men were there. Those

that were not taken to forced labor camps. The kids under 15 were

there too. So we were all pressed into this wagon. That's

15:53:50 when I discovered my neighbor who I didn't know was Jewish

sitting there.

Engel: My father got sick in the ghetto. There was a wagon and they

put all the sick people there. I didn't want my father to be alone.

He couldn't eat. He couldn't drink. So I went and got Lila(?) and

they took her as a nurse for the sick people. So my

15:55:40 mother and father weren't there. Father was alive when we

arrived. My mother got out of the wagon. I ran to where they were.

She was standing there in a nice dress and I said, "Come down and

well go together. But she was smarter

15:56:23 than I was. She said, "No, I see that they are people. You

know that what happens to me and your father will happen. Go and

take care of your daughter and sister and leave me here. So I ran

back to them. We were standing there five in a line. I had a cousin

there with two little children. I had the little girl in my hands,

15:57:21 There was Mengele. He was standing there and he was

counting people. He said,"Women give the children to the older and

go on this side to work." So I felt that I was young. I was 40

years old.

15:57:52 So I took this baby and I gave it to the mother. She

cried,"Don't leave me alone. I can't take care of two children."

But I gave it to her. There came Mengele. He said,"Where do you

want to go?" I told him on this side. "Are you strong? Can you

work?" I can work more than all

15:58:27 these young people who you sent there. So I went there and

the other four went on the other side.

Jacoby: When we arrived at Auschwitz, one of the things that I

remember that I was hoping for was some order because of the very

great confusion that

15:58:50 was before this in the ghetto and in the brick factory.

There was order when we got out. Because I saw people lined up

there and I felt some relief. I heard the music and saw the

beautiful flowers. I was hoping that something would happen. I saw

in the far background so many people

15:59:21 wearing prison garb. They were waving to us and signaling

to us. I figured that they must be the mentally ill. I didn't

understand what they were trying to tell us. The message was of

course to try to get on that side and not on the other side.

Interviewer: Introduce yourselves.

Engel:My name is Malvina(?) Engel(?).

Jacoby: My name is Erika Jacoby. I was born in Miskolz(?) Hungary

in 1928.

16:01:32 Engel: I was born in 1901.

Jacoby: I wanted to come back a little to what we said earlier when

my mother said that there were only two soldiers when we were put

in the transports. What that really meant is there were only two

German soldiers, but the Hungarians cooperated and collaborated so

much. They were the ones who actually carried out the orders. So

that didn't mean that they were only guarded by only two soldiers

16:02:11 Which obviously would have made it very easy for some of

us to escape.

Interviewer: What happened then when the transport got you to

Auschwitz and you were divided up?

16:02:29 Jacoby: When we were divided up, my mother finally found

me and my aunt. We were in the same barracks. We were shaven and

given one piece of clothing. No underwear, no shoes. I remember

laughing. We looked at each other and laughed because we

16:02:55 looked so horrible. We didn't recognize each other. The

whole process of getting undressed in front of the Germans and

being exposed there brought back this feeling of senselessness. I

wanted order. I guess what I wanted was to make some sense out of

this. It was so foreign. We were brought up in a very modest,

religious

16:00:00 Jewish home where not only did we not get undressed in

front of other people, but we didn't uncover parts of our bodies

ever. To follow the order to get undressed, we looked at each other

and we

16:04:20 didn't believe that we really had to do that. That this

wasn't an order we could say no to. So when we arrived at the

barracks, I was looking for friends to see if some of my classmates

were there. One of my classmates who was my very best friend

happened to be with me. We were given food to eat in this pot. They

told us that ten of us will drink from this pot. I

16:05:11 wanted to drink, but I just couldn't and my friend said

that she wasn't even going to try. I remember that I begged

her,"Please do because you're not going to live" And she said,"No.

I just can't. I can't drink that." The third day, I finally began

to drink the soup. So I could overcome my repulsion with that, but

she couldn't. And she didn't live. She died a few weeks later of

starvation. She couldn't even drink

16:05:50 that soup. The confusion and the senselessness were the

most overwhelming feelings I had. \_\_\_\_ We saw all these fences,

watchtowers and Germans, but we didn't understand. I was sure that

my grandparents were taken to a hospital and that we were going to

see them on Sunday. I was very sure

16:06:37 of that. I don't think that I paid any notice to the

chimneys. After ten days, they told us that if they could take us

to a place to work then we would be safe. So we knew that we had to

get away from there. So after ten days when they asked for a

transport, we

16:07:13 wanted to go. They were taking transports one after the

other to working camps. So we were taken to Krskow which is not

really the city, but the outskirts which are called Prashov(?). It

wasn't too

16:07:36 far from Auschwitz, but we traveled for a day and a half.

It was a completely different scene. The work was mining rocks out

of the mountain. It was terribly hard. It was so exhausting and

impossibly difficult that many of us just couldn't do it. Many

16:08:06 of us perished there. We met older inmates there who had

hair. That was very encouraging for me. We asked them why they

still had hair. Then they started telling us these horrible

stories. This young man told us that he had

16:08:52 to kill his whole family before we arrived there to make

room for us. They had to exterminate all the children and older

people to make room for the workers. One day, we were able to get

to the trash and find some horse bones that they threw out from the

kitchen. This was the middle of summer and very hot so the horse

bones were covered with flies. I remember that we got to these

bones and we started

16:09:36 chewing them. We were feeling like we found paradise. We

also had a lot of bedbugs which contributed to our suffering. They

got on these sores that we had developed from lack of nutrition and

started eating.

16:09:56 point that we actually had little bedbugs nestled inside

our cheeks. There were some things that were better such as we had

beds and some things were of course already worse. We heard the

Russians coming closer and closer. This was 1944 in the summer. We

heard already

16:10:43 about the Normandy invasion. We were hoping that with the

Russians advancing, we would be liberated. It didn't happen. As

soon as the Russians got close enough, the Germans loaded us into

the cattle cars and transported us back to Auschwitz. There was a

big difference because this time, we already knew what Auschwitz

was. We wizened up. We knew what happens when you get there and

you're selected out. We knew what the chimneys were. I was very

worried about my mother. During the summer, she was the one who was

still stronger.

16:00:20 We used to carry big rocks and hand them over to each

other. She used to want to skip me and give over the bag to the

next one. Of course, she suffered a permanent back injury from

that. Toward the end of our stay in Prashov(?), she

16:00:50 developed a fever everyday. Her legs ware covered with

sores which we wrapped with paper so that the flies wouldn't eat at

it. When we arrived at Auschwitz, suddenly I saw all my cousins who

looked in pretty bad shape being sent to the wrong side. I saw my

mother standing there looking pretty hellacious. We decided that we

16:12:20 were going to stay together. So we sent my aunt first

because she was the strongest and we knew that she would pass. Then

we decided to send my mother second.

As I saw her pass in front of Dr. Mengele, I suddenly yanked the

wrapping off her legs because I saw that anybody wearing wrapping

was

16:12:51 sent to the other side. I gave her a clap on her back. She

straightened up and passed without any hitch. Then we were taken to

the baths. Of course, every time we were taken to the baths, we

were never sure whether that was really the baths or the gas

chamber

16:13:20 We were shaven again. That was a real loss because already

we had a little bit of hair. It seems ridiculous that that was

important, but it was. This time we also got numbers tattooed on

our arm. We were taken to Birkenau. On our way to the barracks,

I found two treasures. I found a little spreading knife and little

silver necklace. Somebody

16:16:38 must have lost it. I was delighted. I put on the necklace

and I felt like nobody could do anything to me. We arrived at the

barracks. We had beds here. Ten of us were on one of these

platforms so that every time somebody had to turn, everybody had to

turn. We had no blankets.

16:17:10 My mother was quite ill. I used to cover her with my body

every night because she was shivering so. They thought that she had

malaria. I wouldn't let her go to the infirmary because I knew that

if she went there, she would never come back. One day we stood in

line for food. This blockhauphster(?) who was a very beautiful

Jewish young woman saw me standing in line with this necklace. She

tore it off my neck. Of course, I

16:17:59 started to cry. My mother became furious. What did you do?

Engel: I told her,"How can you be so cruel? You have children too.

She said,"What shall I do for you?" Give her a half a spoonful more

soup every day."

Jacoby: So from then on, I got a half a spoonful more food which

probably helped me survive. They took us to the bath once a week

because the Germans were very meticulously clean. They were

16:20:12 afraid that we would get ill and then they would get ill.

They disinfected us once a week. As we were walking to the baths

one day, we saw my uncle next to the road working with the \_\_. My

uncle who has taken away the first

16:20:46 day the Germans arrived in Hungary. He saw us and he

started to scream. We couldn't get to him of course. On our way

back, he managed to get through the fence. He gave us bread and a

sweater for me. He gave us a kiss and a hug. We never saw him

again. He was killed I think when they blew up one of the

crematorium. We were taken to another working camp after six

weeks. This was probably the best conditions that we had in the

camps. During this time, my mother

16:22:13 was the sickest. She was so sick that sometimes I had to

hide her in the trash in the mornings because she couldn't go out

to work. I would dig her at night. From that camp, we went to

another camp. We were taken away in the middle of December. In this

16:23:17 camp, we dug trenches and also pipes. Then we were taken

to an ammunition factory. At first, we were housed about six m\_\_

away and every morning we had to walk at work in the snow to work.

My mother became a forbef(~) there. That meant that she was a very

good worker. She was

16:23:50 supervising 24 of us. I was several times able to survive

by sheer luck. One of the things I did was I made little charms

from leftover metal. I sold them for bread. I even sold some to the

German soldiers who sent it home to their children.

16:24:42 I don't know if by then we had any different understanding

of what was happening, but I think we still believed that although

everybody else's family was destroyed, not ours. We had a whole

system for survival. For example, one of the things that helped me

was that

16:25:12 every night, I took off that one piece of clothes and I

folded it just the way I would at home. I tried to simulate some

kind of balance in my life. The other thing I remember is that we

took off a little piece of our bread and we put it away for

shabath? So you saved that for Shabat? We always had too pieces of

bread. Standing in line, we would sometimes pray

16:25:46 loudly. Whoever knew the prayers would lead us. We were

liberated on May 8,1945 by the Russian army. We stayed about a

month in the ares. My mother went to work for the Germans to get

some food for us. She went back to work for them.

16:26:13 After about a month, we were able to get a wagon with a

horse. We hid inside the wagon that took us to the railroad

station. We started our journey back to Hungary because we wanted

to see who was alive from our family.

Interviewer: Who was left?

Jacoby: Every day, everybody who was alive went to the railroad

station waiting for others to see who was

16:27:04 coming. So I arrived there and my brother was there.We

lived for about two years in Hungary \_\_\_\_

two years in Cuba. I couldn't get into the United

16:27:28 States and other way so I came in illegally. I was flown

in by a private pilot. That's how I finally got to the United

States where I finally married Emily to whom I was engaged to

before we left Hungary.

My mother and brother ware able to get from Cuba to Mexico where my

uncles were. Eventually, my mother came over to the U.S.

Engel: That's the nice part of the story.

16:28:37 Interviewer: Thank you for telling us.

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