

Memories of Judith Kalman Mandel.

I promised long time ago, 1944, that if I ever come alive out of the concentration camp I will say the tale, that it should never be forgotten, what happened to us and could happen to anybody else who is surrounded by fear, anger, discrimination and so on. People did not want to listen for a long, long time because it wasn't nice. My story wasn't pleasant. People had some guilt. Some people were totally disinterested so I talked as much as I could, to my family to whoever listened to me. I want to leave it as a memento not for me, and not for pity for me; but just to let it stay alive. That it should never happen again and it should never be forgotten again.

I was a young girl when it happened. I was sixteen and a half. I was 100 years old when I came out. Like every survivor I have my own story and like every survivor I have my own version of it, my own interpretation, my own questions. I give it to you to remember, to be better by it; to think before you say something or make fun of anybody; or belittle anybody, to know that it gives a deep wound. I want to give you the courage, the happiness of being alive and be able to see, smell, touch, whatever you want, and just enjoy life in general. Well, let's start with the story.

I come from an unreligious town, from an unreligious family although both grandparents were religious. My parents did not kept any more than Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur and we were first Hungarians and then Jewish. We were Hungarians who happened to be Jewish --- very proud to be assimilated and very well liked, in the beginning. I come from a little town, most people knew each other. My uncle was a fairly rich man. My father was middle class, well liked. My mother was a beautiful, intelligent woman, looked up to. I used to recite poetry since I was three years old and relatively pretty child. I was basking in love of my parents and my uncle and people around us, so I thought. Then slowly, very slowly, everything started to change. The different edicts from the authority came and our neighbor did not question why a Jew are not allowed to do. We went along, my father and everybody believed the Jewish hierarchy who said nothing will happen if you keep the law. We are Hungarians and nothing will happen to you. Nothing happened, we stayed home. You couldn't be a white-collar worker any more in an office so you became, like my father, a bricklayer. When the army did not take Jewish men in, they became working force without uniform, their own clothes. They went into and they learned songs and they made up new songs that it does not matter that we have a ... how you say it --- you work in the fields for Hungary. They're still good Hungarians. I went to school, fell in love. I laughed, joked, I bicycled, I recited poetry. I went to the Jewish organizations and slowly I learned that I was a Jew, very slowly. By the Hungarian Nazi Party emblem on my desk in school or kids spit on us and called us name and of course we gave it back. We fought and yelled and went home. They said they are idiots, ha, ha, ha and don't be hurt. Just go for --- like nothing happened. We did. The edict came, more and more. I remember when Hitler came on the radio or in the movie theater. We saw the news, and the pomp and the marching and the --- all the beauty of a Wagnerian night and I felt like a little mouse. All the goose steps were coming for me. But you joked, shook off. The next day was another day. School time came 1942, or '41 when I finished junior high and I couldn't go to high school because I was a Jew. I couldn't stay home either, just sit home, do nothing; so I started to work as a beautician where a richer Jewish kid could get into a different school, pay here and there. Slowly they went to school and who couldn't, learned a trade like your father, like me. I was supposed to go into a Jewish Hungary had one Jewish schoolteacher's

school which didn't take new pupils. They were not allowed and nobody else took me. So I learned and again life gone on. I had tutor who taught me when 'everything will be peaceful again', I could make my high school easier. I remember when Hitler walked into Poland. I remember some rumors. I knew my own family, friends; all of a sudden, we didn't hear from them. So you grabbed a little tighter around you and loved a little more. And we lived.

1944, March 19, the Germans occupied Hungary. I was in Budapest. That was my big chance to recite in a big Jewish auditorium. I couldn't and I sneaked back to my hometown Hatvan, which was not far from Budapest. Then the men were taken to working camp, all the men up to sixty. The women went home and came the edicts again. You had to put on the yellow star, you had to move into the ghetto. From the ghetto, you were taken out to a factory, a sugar factory. From there we were taken to unknown destination. Whoever was afraid was calmed down that you don't have to be afraid, we will be taken to a camp --- not a camp, a town where all the Jews will be together. We'll learn and we believed. That's how it was

I remember so well like yesterday when they took us out the first time to work in the fields. They took out 50 people from the ghetto. Meanwhile in the ghetto, they collected money, the Germans and the Hungarian Nazis, for us. My mother pulled me with her. That's way, after a full day's work, we were coming back and the people of this lovely little town stood there while we had to march in the middle of the gutter, singing and kissing the ground where the horses were going before. The people, they stood by and laughed and cheered and clapped. I remember the faces around me. I remember the fear of dying. Got me like a knife. I remember the hatred what came into me when I saw my so-called friends in the crowd laughing and pointing at me. I remember other times when my friend next door wouldn't say hello to me when I had to wear the yellow star. There were some nice people --- went out their way to say a kind word; probably very ashamed of it. But nobody raised a question, nobody asked why. All of a sudden, good law abiding citizens became lower than dirt. The property was taken, the freedom was taken away. Fear was planted. I saw people being beaten in the street and nobody came to rescue. I remember the Hungarian so-called police who beat us unmercifully, unmercifully. You learned to be quiet; you learned to be a Jew and talked about Palestine and you were no more Hungarians. I remember when we had to give in the jewelry, the radios, the bicycles, the record players, all the treasure, the jewelry, my mother's wedding band. I remember when we were allowed only 50 pounds, excuse me, 100 pounds, 50 kilos out of the home to go to the inner ghetto. My mother saved, since I was a baby, my hope chest and tearing all up. The photo albums, tear out the pictures and leave my house. Everything on our back. My mother and I were the last to be taken out from our home because my father was so well liked, big deal, I loved him. I remember my mother's tears and her cries when I took the beautiful and never used Czechoslovakian dishes, glass dishes, and cracking them together saying, if I can't use it, nobody else should. She had a pearl necklace, Richleau pearl they call it here. It was not round shape, it's more like different size, more like pear shape. I threw it into the bathroom, the toilet. If I couldn't have it, nobody else will. But I remember my mother cleaning up the house before we left, it should be neat. I'm fighting with her, leave them and burn this and let not have --- they enjoy it and my mother smiled and said, oh, we'll come back here. I also remember two peasants coming who loved my father and wanted to hide us like --- as we live in Yonkers, one in New Rochelle would hide me and the other would hide my mother in Hastings. Being we were so uninformed to know what's coming and what's going on in the world, my mother refused saying, I can't go away from my child. Whatever happens, will happen with us two because I can't be separated. Well, Mengele separated us, Dr. Mengele in Auschwitz. My mother wanted to kill herself as we were going on this train to Auschwitz and I

didn't let her. I should have, maybe, I don't know. Anyhow, you learn to be a Jew very, very hardly with many, many, many pain and many disappointment. I would envy those who had faith, who was brought up as a religious Jewish kid because at least, they had some background information. I only was a Hungarian first. Oh, how I loved the gypsy music which was always playing and how much I loved the Hungarian poets. How heartily I recited. I learned about Jewish poets and I learned about Palestine. Our Jewish hierarchies, even our rabbi in that time didn't approve of it. They only told us to follow the rules and follow the laws and nothing will happen. We are Hungarian and nothing could happen to us. Hungary will not let us go. Then you learn in the Eichmann time, that Hungary paid the German to take us out.

June 12, 1944, we were taken from Hatvan into a freight train and we started our journey. June 15, we arrived to Auschwitz. This was the first time I ever heard of the word, Auschwitz. It was a big, immense place with horrible smell. People were running with sticks in pajamas, pajama-looking things, no hair. I asked my mother are we in an insane asylum? We were taken out from the train and all our valise, our papers, our identification are staying in the train. We have to go in front of the SS ---- we were selected, one to right, one to left. I was taken from my mother. I was sent to right. She was sent to left. My girlfriend who was in the next line heard Mengele and the foreman talking to my mother who was crying. Why are you crying? Your daughter is going ahead of you, waiting for you with coffee and bed. Just go with the rest. You're so young and beautiful, shouldn't have a big girl like yours, just go with the rest and you will see your daughter shortly. My mother went and I went. She was 38 years old. I was taken to a bathhouse. I had a belt, a wide leather belt which my mother sewed in money and a switch knife. If ever anybody tried to attack me, I should use it. Whoever heard that; you will be in rags, hairless, nameless, sometimes walking naked because there was no clothes for me. We were taken into a big barrack. You didn't know who was there and there were about 1,000 people in one barrack. We were sleeping on the floor. Was no food, there was no toilet, there was no dignity. There was nothing. You get up at three in the morning, they counted you and then they herd you back again to the same room. You couldn't go out. You put your hand --- one put the hand on the hairless head just to see if it's nightmare or if it's real. Then I cried and I asked one of the kapo, a Slovakian girl, where's my mother? She pointed to a chimney. She said she's burning over there. Of course you couldn't believe that. You saw your friend, you didn't see yourself and you started to laugh because you couldn't recognize it in that condition. Then slowly it dawned on you that this is it, it's real, it's there and you lived. You try to adjust and form a new family, you had to belong. Somebody you have to love and love yourself and it was very hard there to love, even yourself or your neighbor. You fought for everything, a piece of apple on the floor, so nobody should step on you. And the bread, you had to hide it. I never hide my bread, I always ate it. I always was hungry, immensely hungry and hunger hurt. Believe me, hunger is pain. There were three things what hold me up high --- hold myself up high. I never stole from my fellow-inmates; I never fought for food; and I never sat on the "kuble". The kuble was a barrel which I took out and brought in but I never sat on it. It was the lowest point --- lowest thing in my eyes, it was filled with diarrhea and everybody's shit and everybody's urine and it's all over. I couldn't sit on it; in front of everybody. But I got up in the morning and I took it out to the latrine before anybody. I was in the latrine committee rather than sit on it. It's ridiculous, it's stupid but it held me back. It's called dignity. Human dignity for a sixteen year old. The food what we get was garbage. It was deliberately over salted if we get anything and then they didn't give us water; or they give us black coffee without sugar or some kind of tea. It was too early yet in the stage to be able to eat it. We were in this place for about three weeks. At July, about two weeks when I was taken to Krakow Plaszow --- to me Krakow Plaszow was the worst place. It was a Jewish cemetery. There we took out the marble

grave markers were taken into Krakow to redone the gutters. Many times you hit into the earth and you came up with skeleton or piece of bone and heads and the work was horrible. It wasn't productive work, it was sheer torture. We took how you call it --- gravestones, big stones. Six, seven, eight girls were taken as horses and had to pull wagons. There were beating, constant beating, big German shepherds were --- trained dogs to go back in after the woman's breast and men's testicles and pull them apart if one went out of the line. I saw the Gestapo beating and asking people, you know, for some stupid secrets. I saw them being tortured --- this is where I saw young children taken out and halfway alive still, burning on the fire and screaming. There was no God, God didn't listen and I said there was no God. But still we tried. You had a human dignity and you choked down the garbage that was called food. When hunger was very hurting, you cried. Nobody else saw and the six, seven girls were band together, you had nobody else. They delegated one as a mother and took care. One went for water and one went for food and one tried to save the other. Keep up the spirits and we joked. Every time you felt like crying, then we laughed. One was an opera singer who sang and I recited poetry at night. Another teacher taught us something. We talked about resistance --- that was our resistance. They could not push us that low or that down. You hang on to humanity and they were gone. I became sick, I was taken to the hospital there in Krakow. I had typhoid fever and I lived it through. I sang. The Polish Jews, they were still in their ghettos and they had some --- some had food. So they told me to sing, they would give me food. I had fever and I sang and I sang. Sometimes I get food. Then there were rumors that we will be taken again. My friend came and sneaked me out of the hospital. Hid me in the so-called bed and we were taken out again back to Auschwitz.

Krakow was the worst place for me and the worst was the captain on a white horse. I don't know his name. I know he was hanged after. Krakow, I got so many beatings and I thought many times about killing myself. Can't live like this --- going to the electric wire. I had a friend, her name was Kathy. Was a beautiful, intelligent, sweet girl, full of fire. She gave me a big speech. She told me that look at me, I eat all the shit what they giving here and I'll go home and I'll give it back. Everything I get and I live it through and look at me. She slipped and as she slipped, she was falling toward the wire. She grabbed the live wire and she was dead in a second, that was Kathy. There were other girls, a girl friend, Susie. Her eye was --- one of the kapo started to hit her and hit her in the eyes. Her eyes were coming out. She was blinded in one eye. There were constant beating and fighting and killing. If not the German, then the Jewish kapos. For a gold tooth, they killed people and pulled out their teeth. Food was everything. It was something what constantly was on everybody's thought and we became skinnier and sicker and filled with boils and ragged. They only gave us rags and lice with them. We had horrible, horrible time. The fear from one another, from one Jew to the other and the German laughter and they came in clean beautiful clothes and touched us with a white glove only. You felt lower and lower. Then you said no, I'm not lower, I'm just as good, I'm better than them. There was a young German man, a German SS, who saw me once. It was in August, we were working in the field and it was a peculiar weather. It was extremely cold in the morning and the night but it was very hot in the daytime. He was drinking from his canteen. As he was drinking, I was swallowing. He turned around and he offered me his drink from his own canteen. To me, I was in rags and filth and I looked at him and I said, you're offering me? He said, yes, why not? I don't hate you. I looked at him and I said then how could you look around and see this? He said, I don't care, I'm only following orders. Tomorrow I'll shoot you without a doubt if they tell me to do so. I looked at him and I said, oh, just tell me one thing, how could you sleep after this? How could you put your head down and go to church or tend to your friend, go home and kiss a girl. Could you ever live like normal people again. He said, oh

yes, I'm only following orders. This was already July, 1944 when the Americans were already in France. I didn't know about my father. I didn't believe that my mother was dead. We left again and we hoped again. The rumors were flying that tomorrow we're going home. Or we will be away from here or they're taking us here or there. You hang on to hopes. I remember when we were in that assassination against Hitler, they tried --- an attempt to assassinate him. Every tenth of the prisoner was killed. We didn't know why. I remember when they were taken from us. It was extremely quiet in our barracks. Somebody started to pray. That passed too. I remember rape was done to us. Not by Germans, by kapos. Although it didn't have to be rapes because there was a price. A girl's price was a piece of buttered bread, a women's price on the market was a piece of bread and an onion because was less work. I never was tempted to go there. Was too low. Maybe it would be a little more, I might have been. Hunger is very painful. I was constantly, constantly hungry and thirsty. I find my friend, my all-time best friend since childhood, selling me water for bread. In August, we were taken, evacuated from the Krakow Plaszow ghetto, we were taken back to Auschwitz. That was a three days' trip. This is the first time they gave us herring in August, and didn't give us water for three days. They put us in a train. First 80 people in a freight train. Then they put more and more and more into it. People went absolutely crazy. Hunger hurt but thirst is much worse. There were people who drank their own urine and drank their blood and died. Everybody was fighting for just to put down their feet to be able to stand. We throwed the dead ones in one end of the train. Then we arrive in Auschwitz. Oh yeah, in between time, they once opened the train --- we were yelling for water, begging for water. One soldier came with water and threw at us, wouldn't let us drink. We arrived in Auschwitz. There was again a selection and I was again survived. I was sleeping another barrack the whole night. I was with my aunt from night to morning and I didn't know it. She only find me in the morning when we spending the night to be taken to another part of Auschwitz. She was working near the crematorium. She was working with the Canadians, the white kerchiefs, "girls". They had a "good position". They could get the food, they were separating the clothing and food from the deported luggage.

(End of Tape 1, Side A)

I asked her where my mother was and she told me about the crematorium. I was beaten and I saw her being beaten. She spit out her tooth and I spit out two tooth. But I had somebody, I know that somebody in my family was alive in that time. I learned the fact that my grandmother died, my mother died, my cousins died and I believed that first kapo who told me that they are burning people here. That was the first time I believed it. I didn't want to live nor did I want to die any more. I didn't fought to be alive.

I was just lucky or unlucky. Anybody, any survivor who says to you or to anybody, I was lucky because I did this so I survived. Or I did that and I was smart or I did this and that's why I survived. They are all lying. Or making it --- they just believe in that because it was sheer luck who came back and who didn't. Just sheer luck.

So we were in Auschwitz again. And this time, we had piches, bunk beds, we had bad. We got gray uniforms, not the stripe, just plain gray uniform. We were deloused and we still weren't working. We were beaten every time somebody was hanging out of line and any little amount of "undisciplined behavior" was good thing for beating. The dead was still counted. Then in September we were taken into Augsburg factory where we working in an airplane factory. That saved my life. . . . We were tattooed in Auschwitz in our hand. We got again the gray uniform. We went through again a selection. Again the usual freight train ride. Five hundred of us were taken to Augsburg into a factory where the first time I was working outside in Augsburg for the bomb. Cleaning up after the bombing. Many times I found food put down

where we were expected to go. October came and we heard about Horthy, our Hungarian governor going away to Germany. No more is operating from the German army and then the afternoon we heard that the Hungarian SS party took over the governments. Again we grouped together. We had a mother, Marta and I had a friend, Veronica and another friend who was actually from Hatvan, my hometown. Her name was Elizabeth, she was very good to me. Very good it mean always food. She gave me food. She gave me her portion. She was a decent girl otherwise. Marta was our mother and we cling together. We talked, talked about getting out, when will be, if it will be over. We'll be together. We gave up the hope that we will meet anybody or find our family more or less. Sometimes we believed that we will reach Palestine -- - sometimes we didn't that we ever will wake up even the next day. We were very happy when the Americans bombed the city or even our factory. We cared nothing of being alive. It was unimportant any more. The importance were that it should be heard about it. The world Jewry should know about it. That Hitler should be defeated. Rumors were constantly flying.

When I was working finally in the factory itself, after two or three months of outside duty, I got into, in November, into the factory --- which again I was lucky because it saved me. I was working next to a German woman one side and next to a German man on the other side so there was no way to sabotaging work. Whatever we done, it went through another German hand. One German man, a beautiful human being, even though they didn't have much to eat, he gave us two hefling, the two prisoners, the two jailbirds, food every morning. I find food in my place and my friend find food next to her. There was washing facility here and more or less better food. The winter we survived. I learned to walk in wooden shoes or without shoes. I learned to sleep while I was working or standing. I had blood poisoning Christmas time. I was operated on my arms and we had a Jewish doctor with us. Told me that they will cut off my arm. I had about 104, 105 fever and I survived that without an aspirin. I woke up after the operation and I tried to touch my arm and it was there.. I went further and my hand was there but I was afraid to touch my finger, my finger was there. So I was very lucky all over. I had pleurisy in that place. Also I survived that without aspirin even. I was taken out to take out the bomb, to put it out. The German thought we are very brave but it was no fear in us. It did not matter if we dead or alive or whatever; but it mattered if a bomb fell on them. We were always very happy when the American fighters came, the airplane came and the bombing was beautiful to our eyes. That's how we were, wished to die. Whenever we were taken, they went to the shelter --- we were just taken down into a place where we couldn't escape. It was delightful. We sang, we ate our food --- whoever saved it. I never saved my food, I was very happy to eat it. Almost all of us survived in that place until March when we were taken out again.

We were taken to Muehldorf-Waldlager. In that place, my introduction to the place were one of the young schriber saw me ---- schriber is a writer who wrote the people's name and numbers in --- he looked up and he said to me, oh my sister. I said you are mistaken, I am not your sister. He took my name, my number, excuse me, he was kissing me. He jumped up and kissed me, oh, my sister, my dear sister. I said no I'm not your sister and I told him where I come from and my name and serial number. After that, he very quietly gave me the place where to go which was --- in there we were sleeping on the good earth. There was a trench between the beds. There was a trench where we were walking and there was a tent over us. Again I saw a man, a skeleton man around us. The place was surrounded by electric wire but between one camp to the other, between one section to the other, there was just normal wires. I went back to my barrack or whatever you --- tent, and I get a message from one of the longer-time inmate that I was called to the wire where the man meets woman. These were the hierarchies, the kapos, the doctors, etc., they had more energy, more food in them to even be able to think, not necessarily

sex, but be more than human who needed companion rather than all thinking of food and immediate danger, I think. Anyhow, I didn't go. The second day I was put to work. I was working near the kitchen and at night again I got a call to go out to the wire to meet this schriber. I was, I don't know, proud or stupid or what have you --- so I send back a message that I am not a cow to be looked over and leave me alone. Well, next day, I was out to work in an underground airport. This was in 1945, March. They put cement on my shoulder which I supposed to climb with two flights up. The cement was about 25 kilo, about 50 pounds and to take it up two flights. I just --- they put it on my shoulder and I just fell down with it. They put it on again my shoulder and I fell with it. So I was beaten back, beaten from the work back to the camp which was about a good kilometer. At the door, he was receiving this boy. His name was Eddy Binbaum from Kejnark who was waiting there and took my number, took my name, my number. It wasn't the name only, the number. He started --- as I left he whispered to me and he said, now you coming to the wire and I said, yes, of course. I went there and we talked. He explained that he thought I was his long lost sister and he was in the Warsaw ghetto. He gave me food through the gates and I was put to a very easy job. I went into the forest collecting acorn. I got even a toothbrush which I didn't see for a year, almost a year. I saw him through the gates and we talked. I never liked him. I always had a fear in me for him, because of him, because of his behavior. I learned a great deal from this experience. That you --- in the circumstances where you are, you never know what you will do just to survive. Because if that boy would have asked me in that particular time, after the beating, that if I have to go back there or lay down for him, I would have laid down for him. I don't think I would ever be ashamed of it. I don't know, it never come to that point. But I could understand a little more. Anyhow I come back to this part for understanding. Then we were there until April.

On April 24, no April 23, there was an airplane, a bombing and many prisoners escaped. They put a --- what you call it, a laousserstrasser --- it meant a punishment stripe into my starting-to-grow hair. It's about three inches with cut into the middle of your head completely, like an Indian or like the Hara Krishna people except it was reversed. Anyhow I was taken to the train with the rest of the 500 girls and the rest of the camp. All of a sudden, this schriber came with two SS men and called my name and number. He told the head SS that I'm not able to travel, I had typhoid fever. I should go back with him to the camp. As I told you, I had some fear in me. I was climbing down when people who were with me from my town; they told me, don't go. You will be a whore. You will be his lover and that's why he's doing it. So I didn't. I went down and said I'm much better. I'm all right now and I shouldn't be taken back. This boy quietly told me that it cost him a lot of money to take me out of the --- a lot of gold, not money -- to take me out of the transport because they are going into Innsbruck and they will kill us all with a benzine injection. Benzine injection that we could burn faster. Meanwhile every time we left the camp, like Augsburg or Muelldorf or Waldlager, we saw the Germans trying to erase all track of the camp. The papers and everything was burning and they were in a mad rush to clean up after them. That's the time when my group swore that if any of us will be alive, we will talk so it shouldn't be forgotten no matter how much the Germans, the SS were trying to cover up. Whoever will survive will talk. So with this knowledge of benzine injections, I climbed back to the train and sat there. I didn't tell nobody our future. I figured whatever happens to the rest, should happen to me. Sit there. April 27, they opened the train, the Germans, and they said we are free. It was a beautiful, sunny, gorgeous afternoon. The town name is Poing, it was spring. Everybody started to run away from the train. I climbed down and I became hysterical. I cried and I stood by the train and I couldn't get up. I kissed the earth. I just got paralyzed, I just couldn't get up. My friends were trying to pull me away from the train. I couldn't move. I was skinny and the knowledge of impending death and the

benzine injections in my head and keeping it secret was just too much. All of a sudden, the guards, they say we were free. It was about a good five minutes and then we heard the machine guns. We were completely surrounded by other SS and like a sickle, I don't know how you say, when you see that with the thing in his hand, death and sickle, just went with the machine gun, went in a complete circle. I saw the girls who were together, some of them from the beginning, falling. Then I could get up --- oh I jumped, I jumped back to the train, back to the freight train and we started to pull back our comrades, the girls who will be able to pick up. The train started again and April 28, the American bomb came and started to machine gun our train because the Germans at Poing put an anti-aircraft wagon to our train. They started to shoot the American airplane. The Americans came down and, in return, they started to machine-gun us. That train ride was my lowest_____, the lowest point. I know that I will become a musleman after that. It meant not only will you be dead --- I gave up. I know the minute when I give up. In that point, when I gave up, I remember as yesterday. I even remember better than yesterday. I was in the train and somebody left a piece of bread, a crumb. I had a very big struggle in me. To steal it or not to steal it. When I turned around, somebody else stole it and there was a big fight between the girls. We get low and we were dirty. We were covered with filth and was thinking, look at myself and I said, there is no use. Maybe the Germans are right; that we shouldn't be alive. When the machine guns started, I was standing in a corner where there was a little hole looking out the passing wheels. Everybody who had somebody who was standing with me there, two of my girlfriends, Kathy S and Lili, they have somebody pull them down. Made room for them to lay down so that machine guns shouldn't hit them. I was standing there and nobody picked me or pulled me down no matter how much they liked me. There was no way to throw myself. The rest of the skeletons were dead people and hurt people. Somebody, some man had a striped uniform. They pushed it out to show the American raiders. Their machine gun stopped. They went and gone around and meanwhile I said my goodbyes in my little life, in my little head to everybody. I counted whom I will see again in other world. I was very sure that that's it, that it's finished.

May 1st in the morning, our camp boys opened the train and they said, the Americans are here. I borned, I reborn May 1st. I was 22 kilos which is about forty pounds. I remember an American soldier picked me up and I was begging him not to give me back to the German again and then I don't know nothing for a week. I was very lucky again. A doctor friend of mine, Dr. Gatheish Gabol found me and he took me to Partenkirchen to a hospital for a week. He didn't give me food which was very good because anybody who got food in the belly in the first couple of days, they died. Well, that's my story. I was liberated at Seeshaupt, taken to Munich, then to Dachau.

Then I was in an UNRA camp till September. I had many experience there. I went home to find my father. Tried to pick up life. Met my husband, lost my first child, waited to go to either Israel or America. Israel, I mean Palestine, in that time there was still the camps in Cyprus which I couldn't bear to go. We came to America. I picked up my life. I'm happy to be alive. Mostly I enjoy every minute. I gain many thing by this experience. I know I do. I am a different person. I was a different person when I came out of camp. Now that the question is up and people are asking and there is interest in our stories, it's easier for me to --- finally after 33 years --- to heal my wounds. I was an atheist when I came out of the camp. Then I became an agnostic and my children born and raised in. When Eichmann was caught, it didn't matter to me that they will hang him or not. It made me happy that there is a trial, there was a trial. When the first American turncoats were showed, I became more understanding about a Jewish turncoat or kapos or collaborators. When you seventeen, everything black and white; when you

fifty-one, you can see gray. I don't know if I would be --- how I would react if it would have been presented with the same situation that they were, those kapos.. I know now that the Germans deliberately picked mostly the low people of our people to --- the opportunities to --- who were able to take these. They did it deliberately so that we could be more angry with what was immediate object to us, another hefling_____ another prisoner, rather than the immaculate god-like clean Germans. Nevertheless, when an American Jew says I'm proud to be a Jew, I think of the kapos. I'm not proud to be anything. I'm proud to be me. I'm proud to be a human being. Maybe, just maybe there is a little saying what I read somewhere -- if anybody else, not the Jewish people, would have been put in the same situation, they wouldn't only fight with mouth, they probably would kill each other -- which didn't happen.

I learned human nature. Nobody's perfect including myself. I learned tolerance on many, many things but I can't tolerate self-pity. I very seldom indulge pity in me, for me. I'm like the steel; I love my family probably more than it's normal but they are the most important thing to me after my freedom --- before my freedom. They first and then freedom. It's nice to have nice things but I could be very well without it. Whenever I felt low, I have to think very far, how lower I was before so everything after that is just high up. It's hard for me to see the flower picked because I know it will die but everything is already easy after that experience. You can't be afraid of dying. I'm neither afraid of aging. When you were sixteen and never thought you will be 17, you're just not afraid of it, of dying, or aging.

Israel, when I went to Israel, I made peace with God. I got my answer, my own answer. I know the world would never allow Israel to come in existence if not six million martyrs on their part. Oh, yeah, I have guilt too. It was a very, very deep guilt that I'm alive while the others didn't survive. I don't know why. Somehow I always knew. I know in my head, I didn't do nothing to be here and I was just lucky. But this guilt was persisting and the only way to press this was to talk the way I promised them. And I think I did. Although people said we are opportunists and liked to be pitied and so on. It wasn't so. I t was just sheer_____ frustration that they didn't want to hear it.

I had beautiful comrades, had beautiful experiences with them. I had friends who find their own potato and gave me half of it, when there was no food. The same token, I steal for them and I was beaten. Borach but it didn't matter. We cried at night when nobody else saw us. You could be sure the other person turned around and said don't cry and started to tell you something with a funny and you laughed. We tried to give each other a spirit to go on. When there was no hope, we created. You know you lie with the optimism, nevertheless you try. I had horrors, I saw unbelievable horrors. I saw babies being killed in fire when they weren't completely dead yet. I saw dogs tearing woman's breasts. I saw fighting like cats and dogs for a piece of breadcrumb. I liced (?), oh boy do I lice. When I was filled with boils and our feet hurt and still you could laugh. Still you recited poetry. Still there was a woman who talked about Shakespeare there and the other one who went to the Bible, without the book, only in her head. There were girls who for eleven months didn't eat a piece of crappy meat what they gave, wouldn't eat it and kept the religion as it should be kept with the laws. I learned that it's easy to be nasty --- by the same token light up; the world lights up with a good word. I learn that it's easy to say bad things to the other in anger. I learned to say the good things which make the world a nicer place. (End of Side B, Tape 1)

But in your heart when you talk all the atrocities, all the horror, all the pain, the hunger, the thirst, the humiliation, the hurt, the worry about your relatives, the pain what is unbearable when you see your friend die next to you, the lice bites, the fever without aspirin, without water,

itching, filth. I saw in Krakow Plaszow I a hospital when a baby is born and one of the SS came in and tear it apart. I saw a girl, after her mother was beaten, ran to the German and held his uniform and yelled, don't you have a mother? Both of them were killed just for holding on to his uniform. They talking about resistance. How could you resist when absolute indifference surround you? Not to talk about those people really hated you; but the rest, the good --- the nice people who just didn't care. It didn't hit them, didn't happen to them. There were many people with us but it wasn't the same. When you are alone, completely alone in the world, and you are surrounded by hate, you become timid. The resistance just --- there was resistance --- just to stay alive was a form of resistance. When you recited poetry, that was a form of resistance. But still --- with all these odds, you are still human, that was a form of resistance. When you walked in the snow barefooted because the wooden shoes, the Holland type of wooden shoes which everybody got the same size, didn't fit on your feet and you had to run and rush or else you would be punished. You walked barefoot and still you could laugh and look at their eyes and keep your head up and say, I might be lower than you but I'm just as human being and maybe much better than you are.

There were many, as I started to say, many people who were not Jewish also in camps. American prisoners and Russian prisoners and Polish prisoners-of-war; they had it a little easier, a little better. It wasn't that absolute aloneness, the nothingness behind it. It wasn't necessarily their family worried, where is their mother, where is their father, were they killed and why? It wasn't a hate surrounding -- the neighbors spit on you and so on. There were Christian wives or husbands who went into the camp deliberately and I definitely take off my hat to them. They were just in the same boat as we were. They were our comrades even if they weren't Jews, they were my sisters, my blood brothers and I give them credit. I don't have any notes, I'm doing this just on the spur of the moment and if I'm jumping here and there you'll have to excuse me.

I want to talk about after liberation a little bit to finish my story. After I was out of the hospital, I went to the United Nations Restitution Action, I think that means UNRA camp. We were there from May to September, I got home, back to Hungary. During that time, I personally again could only talk about my experience. Where I found friends, _____ who took me out from Muenicle to Dachau where he was working in the American kitchen and saved my life by giving me food and shelter. In there, there was a time of my life when I didn't belong to anybody. I didn't had to be account for anything, perfect absolute freedom. I done what I pleased, I went wherever I went. I know that we either go to Palestine there when the Haganah people came up for us. Our group decided to go first to Hungary to see if maybe somebody alive. From that time, I would have gone to Israel. Probably would never be in here, meet my husband, so who knows what was right, who knows what was wrong. Anyhow I didn't, I went back to Hungary. Meanwhile let's go back to the UN camp.

We got food, we got shelter, we got clothes. There was no worry where the food was coming from. The most important thing still was food to your stomach and that was done. There was a relative freedom in it. Being in jail, everything was beautiful. Being in jail and out of jail, it was everything beautiful. The young friends and all these. I again recited poetry. I lived with my so-called new family. We were responsible only for teach other, to each other. I was well liked. I went to camp to camp to recite poetry. I was in the American entertainment committee which meant that they took us to all these UNRA camps. I met many people, of course, whenever we meet, we always ask, you was with Hatvan? The people from Hatvan? Or did you meet people from Satorialia, Whely, Erdoebene? Where I -- my grandparents came and so on.

You recuperated slowly. You had no outside contact with anybody beside your friends and beside your fellow liberated inmates. Then in September, we were taken back to Hungary; also again of course, in freight train but in much better condition, with food, with shelter, with everything. One of my friend who was two days before me, came home, came back to Hungary; waited the Hungarian border and told me that my father is waiting for me at the station. Well, when I saw him, I thought he will die. He was skinny, he was ragged. He was liberated January and after January every single train he waited till he heard that I'm alive. He waited after that every single train again until I came home and it left a toll on him. Then I became sick, I had again a pleurisy and I was taken to the mountain, my grandparent's house. I met Ernie, fell in love, we got married and we had a plan to go to Israel. We went into a Hachshara, a aliyah camp and I became pregnant. There was no transports going to Palestine because most of the transports were caught in and was taken to Cyprus so we decided to get in touch with my uncle in France. He gave us working papers so we will be able to leave legally Hungary. I had no bad time after the war in Hungary but I never went home to Hatvan. I just couldn't bear the thought to go to Hatvan. I felt if I go near my house and I see something of my mother laying somewhere, I will run amok. So Hatvan was no more in my eyes. I had a baby, a preemie baby. We tried to keep her alive for two months and then she died. Then we left to France. We lived in Lyon for two years. Put in legal paper for either America or Palestine, to go to Palestine. My father, meanwhile, was already in America and family meant an awful lot to me. I knew that I have a lot of family here. So the paper came through and we did came to America.

We started anew and started from way bottom. Nobody helped us, thank God. Whatever we made, it was my husband's two hands. He started right away a little shop in the neighborhood and went to work. Then I became pregnant with my Kathy which was my happiest moment in my life because after the first baby I had to wait for four years till I was allowed to become pregnant. I had doubts that I could be pregnant anymore. We struggled and made a life and I was very happy. I am happy. I have three beautiful daughters. Ernie --- Ernest ---and I raised them the best of our knowledge, the best to our ability. There are times when I couldn't console them as maybe other mothers could because their problem or their cry was so ridiculous to me after I went through, that I couldn't feel sorry for something childish like not getting the good dress or what she wanted. I can't tolerate self- pity as I said before, on me, or on anybody. I tried my best with my children. I made many mistakes, of course. But all the mistakes was honest mistakes, not being -- that's one thing to hurt them. I love them more maybe than anybody else loved their child because to me it means a little more to have a family than somebody who gets it easy, got it easy. I love very deeply. I try to be tolerant to other people. Well, this is my story. I hope that little bit we learn from each --- from somebody else's experience and it shouldn't happen again. Not to me, not to the Jews, not to colored man, a black man, or a yellow man, or a Christian, or a Vietnamese, or anybody.

I love this country. It gave me shelter. I'm full and equal citizen. I have a vote. I came with nothing to this country and I built up a nice life. I like the American people who might be a little more naïve than the European but they are beautiful, they are helpful. I love the youth of America who cares for Vietnam and the black people. I love Israel. I think it's only existing because six million died for it and people working for it. I'm no Hungarian any more. I am American and I am a Jew. It is beautiful to me to look out the window when it's raining and I know that I have a shelter over my head and I have clothes to keep me warm. The smile of my children. I grew up a lot in eleven months and it always will be with me. I'm far from my friends. We were thrown all over the world. They got married and I got married. I don't know

their married name and they don't know mine, or so few who does. I met fellow camp people. We ever meet, it's like big family. Whenever I meet anybody with the same tattoo on their had as mine, they are close to me even if I wouldn't know their name, closer to me than anybody else could be. We came to this country with nothing. We brought out my father-in-law and mother-in-law. Then we helped out my sister-in-law and brother-in-law. We took out my Hungarian --- my sister-in-law is still in Hungary for twice to visit and my niece. Once we went back to Hungary and the first time I went back to Hatvan, my little town. I found nobody, but nobody there. There was not one Jew left in Hatvan. I'm not looking forward to go again to Hungary although I probably will, maybe this summer to see my niece getting married. I don't blame the people who completely assimilated over there, became Hungarianized. That much that they changed their name and became non-Jews or nothing, no religion or no nothing. They want just to be left alone, not to be reminded, not to be anything. They couldn't left Hungary so they have to live their life the way they can.. I try to live my life the way I see it fit. I don't think I could try to understand those people who are here and don't want to remember being Jews. They just want to be completely assimilated. I hope the world will let them forget everything but I doubt. As long as there is anti-Jewish joke or anti-Semitism open or quiet, I fight against it. I belong to B'nai Brith --- I started to belong when I came here and heard the first time about it when I didn't know the language yet. The Anti-Defamation League because I know what it could happen. But as long as I'm here and not in Israel, I am very thankful for this country what they done for me personally. I have deep wounds but now it starts to heal. Now that people are asking questions and it won't be forgotten. The libraries are full with each and everyone individual stories and it will become more and more I'm sure. You could go there and pick it out. The books are not burned anymore. Even in Skokie, even the neo-Nazis could yell again. Maybe somebody will know that they are not just idiots but they are threats and if we are standing together and fighting back now, then there won't be another Auschwitz, which I know definitely. We have a country now and our head high up. I think it's another story now but the awareness, we are aware what could happen, will help that it shouldn't happen again. The Hungarian Jews had one year, the Polish Jews had four, the German Jews had six or eight year of terror. I know that as long as I live, the American Jews, they're not going to there because we are citizens. If worst comes to worst, I'll just pack up and go to Israel because there is a country where the Jews live in their own field, in their own country and they fight and they are surrounded with Arab, enemies but they have a gun in their hand and it can't happen anymore. If I would have a gun in my hand, it wouldn't happen anymore.

Today's my mother's birthday. This is 1978. She was 38 years old and I bought all the lilac in the ghetto because I couldn't go out to buy her a card. A card, a little present so I stole all the lilacs and I gave it to her. Today I'm giving in her memory, this day. I wish my father would be alive to hear it and to know how much I loved him, how much I appreciated the way he raised me. What an honor and a pleasure and what a happiness God gave me that he was alive and I know him for thirty more years, 34 more years. He died --'44 -- no thirty years, exactly thirty more years with him. At least he saw my children. He loved them and they loved him. This is my story. Had to be told and I'm glad I said it and God bless you all. I am very, very happy. I could tell you when I'm around that it was worth it --- to be alive.