

## Choiceless Choices: An Exploration of the Nine Principles of Economics in Relationship to the Holocaust

### TRANSCRIPTS OF TESTIMONY EXCERPTS

#### Renée Firestone — Eco-Nomos - The Law of the Household (1:00)

“And, um, I have fantastic memories about my grandfather. He was a real character. He always at summertime wore these starched white suits like he just came out of a box. And when he saw the grandchildren he reached in his pockets and started to crackle the paper that was in there and we knew there was candy, and we used to ask him for the candy. My father was a business man and he had a textile business and a tailor shop. He was a very fine craftsman. My mother, when she was young, when she, before she got married, she was already a business woman. She and two other sisters went to Vienna, and they had a millinery shop. And then when my mother got married, then she became a housewife.”

#### Renée Firestone — Consider Property Rights (1:32 )

“I would like to tell you a little incident about my father’s business, because, um, at one point there was a non-Jewish family, a shoemaker, who had about nine children, came to my father and asked him to take his thirteen year old boy as an apprentice to his business, and my father took pity on him, and of course took him in – not only took him in as an apprentice, but he brought him into our house, and he grew up with us a brother. And at the end when we were taken to the brick factory to the ghetto, my father wrote a letter to him, to send us some supplies, and the answer was that he was not going to risk his life for us. Now this is a young man who took over my father’s business when they said that a Jew can no longer own a business. Then my father said, ‘This is a gentile son of mine, I can trust him,’ and he gave him the business and the money. He owned everything we owned at that point and he wouldn’t help us. And so, these are some of the stories about our neighbors and friends and how they supported us when we were in trouble.”

#### Renée Firestone — Consider Benefits and Costs (1:46)

“And then in the morning, they brought these two big barrels of so-called food; they called it *ersatz*; it was some kind of a liquid that looked like coffee or tea, tasted more like dishwater. But it was hot. And we had stood out there freezing half of the night. And then I realize that not everybody is going to get some of that. That the first prisoner was handed a bowl and she went to the barrel, and she got some of this liquid. Then she came back and was going to share it with the five of us. Well, in the beginning, we shared. But later on as time went on and we were starving, whoever was up front had some of the liquid; by the time the bowl reached the fourth and the fifth prisoner, there was nothing. And so from then on, it became a fight every time we did the line-up: who is going to stand up front and who is going to be in the back? And then later we found out that without any warning, Dr. Mengele arrived after line-up and was selecting for the gas chambers. So every morning and every afternoon, you had to figure out where you want to stand. You want to fight your way to the front of the line-up because you are so hungry that you may not make it to the afternoon line-up? Or you will manage to survive till the afternoon, then you really want to be in the back and hide from Mengele.”

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#### Renée Firestone — Consider Government Policies (1:19)

“Let me just tell you that in September before my sister died yet, there were Americans flying overhead. We saw the little silver dots in the, glittering in the sunshine and everybody yelled, “The Americans, the Americans!” and the sirens were going and the Germans were going to the bunkers and we stayed outdoors, and we were hoping that they are going to just bomb the whole place to pieces, including us, we didn’t care. But they didn’t. They flew over Auschwitz-Birkenau and then we heard bombing. There was about eight kilometers from us a factory, I.G. Farben-Auschwitz, and I presume that’s what they were bombing. (INT: It was an artificial rubber factory.) Yeah. (INT: There’s a docent at the Wiesenthal Center who was one of the pilots...) Yeah. (INT: ...and they were under express orders not to bomb Auschwitz.) I know. I know. And they, even if they didn’t bomb Auschwitz, if they would have just bombed the railroad before it reached Auschwitz, thousands and thousands of Jews and others could have been saved.”