

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva Kollisch sits alone at the end of a long table. She looks younger than her nineteen years. Her brown hair cut short, her skin, without make-up - as is her way. Eva hates wearing makeup.

Across from her, at the other end of the table, are three comrades sitting side by side facing her. They're at the office of the Detroit branch of the Workers Party - a small socialist group with big plans. Their goal? To take down capitalism from the bottom up. And with Hitler upending the world, this just might be their chance.

Eva feels at home here, among the folded chairs and stacks of *Labour Action*, the movement paper. But not today. Because today she's at a hearing - though it feels more like a trial. And she's the one in the hot seat.

In the Party's eyes, she's committed something akin to an act of treason. One of the judges instructs Eva to answer their questions with just a yes or a no.

"Was it true that you were absent from the Branch for over two months?"

Eva nods.

"Was it true that you quit your job without permission?"

She nods again.

I mean, she did walk away from her factory job - where she was secretly recruiting workers to the cause. She deserted her post to hitchhike across America. She needed some air. Some freedom - especially after that disastrous event. The one where she slammed face first into expectations of how far a woman should go to recruit people... to recruit men...to the Party.

"We're waiting for an explanation of your actions, comrade? A movement cannot be built if comrades simply act on their own individual needs and desires."

Eva's been a dedicated member of the Workers Party for over two years now, giving up a lot for the movement. Even marrying for it.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: For me, who had witnessed the beginning of the Nazi horror, joining the Movement promised redemption, meaning, and a new beginning. History would no longer be a nightmare but instead become a partner, a benign mentor - provided we did our part.

MANDY PATINKIN: But does ‘doing your part’ have to always mean denying the self? It’s an ideal she’s struggling with. What’s so bad about taking some ‘me’ time?

Eva will eventually find her place in history...on her terms. She’ll spend a lifetime at the vanguard of several key movements of the 20th century. This is just the beginning of her activist life. But she doesn’t know any of this yet. What she does know, in this room, is that she’s terrified of being kicked out of the Workers Party. It’s the only place she felt true belonging as a refugee in America - after fleeing Nazi-occupied Austria just a few years ago.

The judges try to throw Eva a bone. Was it physical illness, a family emergency, a mental health issue that took her away? Eva looks up. What should she say?

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: There are times when you simply have to do something for yourself. I looked at all three of them. They wore the same expression. Their lips were pressed tight. They had righteous condemnation on their faces.”

[OPENING THEME]

MANDY PATINKIN: Welcome to Exile - a podcast from LBI, the Leo Baeck Institute, New York. I’m Mandy Patinkin. When everything is taken away, then what? From LBI’s archives, untold stories of Jewish lives in the shadow of fascism.

Today, the activist beginnings of Eva Kollisch. How does a young refugee become a lifelong radical - and find belonging on the frontlines of change?

About three years before that trial in Detroit, in 1942, Eva Kollisch walks into a large smoke-filled room in Manhattan. It’s packed. A meeting’s in progress. A round-looking man with a large forehead is giving an impassioned speech. He’s denouncing Russia - asking the audience how anyone can still consider it a Worker’s State after all that’s happened.

Eva can’t believe her luck. That she’s here - at her first Workers Party meeting...away from her boring life in Staten Island, where she lives with her family. She doesn’t usually go out on a school night. But she made an exception when she got a last minute invite from two friends. Truth be told, they’re her only friends. She’s so excited, she doesn’t even bother to ask her mom.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: A person who hangs out with revolutionaries doesn’t ask for permission to go to a meeting.

MANDY PATINKIN: From Eva's memoir - *Girl in Movement*.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: So I set the table and left one note for mother and another for my brothers. The latter said, "This is Tuesday. That means spaghetti, salad and applesauce. I'm going to a meeting in the city. You open the cans."

MANDY PATINKIN: Not only is this Eva's first Workers Party meeting, it's also her first time at the Labour Temple on Union Square - a gathering place for every labor group under the sun. And there are a lot of them. The Communists. The Stammites. The Marlenites. The Labour Zionists. The list goes on. It's a popular time for class politics. America's coming out of the Depression. And it seems the old world order is in trouble.

KATE WEIGAND: It was pretty clear to anybody who was paying attention that the war was going to be a watershed moment in history and that everything was going to be different afterwards.

MANDY PATINKIN: Kate Weigand is an historian and author of "*Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation*."

KATE WEIGAND: All of these groups had a vision of a socialist utopia that they wanted to create. You know, where, every person would... What's the phrase? "From each according to his ability. To each according to his needs." You know, the idea that the world would really be run for human good and not for profit. But there was tremendous disagreement about how to get there.

MANDY PATINKIN: That disagreement led to a lot of infighting and a lot of splintering. That's pretty much the origins of the Workers Party - a faction of a faction of a larger Trotskyist group. Historian Kate Weigand again.

KATE WEIGAND: The Workers Party was a pretty small party. It had maybe three to 400 members nationally. So it was tiny. Especially compared to the Communist Party in the same period which had, you know, tens of thousands of members across the country.

MANDY PATINKIN: Max Shachtman is the leader of the Workers Party. He's also tonight's orator - excitedly bouncing up and down. Rolling up his shirt sleeves. Mopping his sweaty brow. Getting yelps and cheers from the crowd.

KATE WEIGAND: Max Shachtman was really one of the major Trotskyist intellectuals at the time. So he was an important guy. And he and some of the people he worked with did make some important contributions to different labor struggles.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva's intoxicated by Shachtman's call for a revolution.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: I sensed the gravitational pull toward a new belief, one which seemed however oddly familiar.

MANDY PATINKIN: She's so overwhelmed by it that she has to get some air.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: On the pretext of looking for the Ladies Room, I peered into some other rooms where meetings were going on. Earnest faces, cigarette smoke and lively discussions there too. What if I tiptoed in, listened, was won over, and disappeared into another group?"

MANDY PATINKIN: It's no surprise someone like Eva - young, rebellious, an intellectual - is attracted to a group like the Workers Party.

KATE WEIGAND: It wasn't particularly rare for young Jewish women, especially in a place like New York, to get involved in any left sort of labor political activism in the thirties and forties. I think for a lot of women becoming active in those old left groups, like the Workers Party and others, was a liberating alternative to the sort of mainstream life that women were supposed to lead.

[CLIP - EVA KOLLISCH IN 2004]

***EVA KOLLISCH:** I mean, that was an additional reason why this movement attracted me, because you didn't feel this boy-girl dichotomy, you know, as I had experienced it in my experiments, going dating with boys.*

MANDY PATINKIN: This is Eva back in 2004. She was interviewed for the "Voices of Feminism Oral History Project" for Smith College.

***EVA KOLLISCH:** And where you had to kind of make yourself stupid not to frighten the boy. So here you are really allowed to be as smart as you wanted to be or could be.*

MANDY PATINKIN: But there's one thing that doesn't sit well with Eva... The Party's stance on the war - or as Max Shachtman calls it - the Imperialist War. They're against it.

KATE WEIGAND: Its whole objection to the war was that it wasn't going to do anything for the workers. So it wasn't that they didn't think fascism was bad, but that they didn't think that the U.S. was really fighting the war to defeat fascism, but, you know, create a better situation for American capitalism. It's the first difficult pill Eva's asked to swallow in order to join the revolution.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: America was capitalist and that was bad but Hitler was worse. And quickly I let a news real strip of frenzied Nazi mobs beating up Jews pass before my eyes.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva knows first hand what it's like under Nazi rule. She was born in Austria in 1925 and raised in a picturesque spa town near Vienna. She led a relatively comfortable life before Hitler took over. Her parents were upper middle class Jews, with servants. Her mom - a translator and a poet. Her dad - an architect. Eva was the middle child - sandwiched between two brothers. She envied their physical freedom and often borrowed their pants so she could also freely play. She had a sense of justice early on.

***EVA KOLLISCH:** As a child, it bothered me a lot that there was this injustice of poor and rich, and that servants who were not always that nice themselves, but still that they had to work for so little money and that there was this definite class division.*

MANDY PATINKIN: The voice of Eva Kollisch during that Smith College interview in 2004. You'll be hearing that tape of her a few more times.

***EVA KOLLISCH:** And it puzzled me, you know, because it sort of went against some other, not that we were religious, but somewhere in this ethos was the idea that humanity. We are all one, you know. And I saw that we were not all one.*

MANDY PATINKIN: Maybe she saw that because her own belonging was questioned.

***EVA KOLLISCH:** Of course it was a very antisemitic country and I was the victim of anti-Semitism since I went to school from the age of six or seven in various ways - overt yelling, calling me dirty Jew, beating me up sometimes, feeling discriminated against by teachers. You know, I would look at myself in the mirror and say, there's nothing wrong with me. I look nice, you know, I like myself and I did. Nothing wrong with me, I don't even look very different from them. What is it they see that I don't see?*

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva also had a sense of rebellion back then. When Hitler took over Austria in 1938, she was forced to go to a Jewish, all girls school in Vienna.

EVA KOLLISCH: *In Vienna, in that boarding school, we would go walk to and to, you know, like in Madeline or something with the teacher. And we had to be very careful because we were Jewish children. And we walked through this park. We quickly sit down on the bench. Even though the bench was marked, Juden Verboten. It's you know, no Jews permitted. Just to sit down and put your little behind on that bench and sit there for a minute, made you feel very rebellious. Now, it sounds very trivial, but, you know, actually, we could have gotten into a lot of trouble. It was defiance and refusing to be treated as some...unspeakable kind of person who is not allowed to sit on the bench.*

MANDY PATINKIN: The following year, in 1939, Eva and her two brothers fled on a kindertransport train. They ended up in England. She was just 14 years old, and her family was scattered.

Eva and her brothers were each sent to separate homes. Eva's father eventually ended up in America - where he thought he had a better chance of helping his wife emigrate. Eva's Mutti, her mother, to everyone's worry, was still stuck in Austria.

EVA KOLLISCH: *Then my father got out. He visited briefly, but he was terribly worried about my mother. I think that made me a bit like a grownup, made me into a grownup certainly, and I shared that worry with my father and it was one of the times that I felt very close to my father.*

MANDY PATINKIN: In a letter in the LBI's archive, Eva writes to her dad on Sept 2nd 1939 - the day after Germany invades Poland.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: Tell me, Papa, is there really no other way anymore for Mutti to get out, really none? Even though this is terribly hard on you and on all of us, you cannot get yourself worked up too much because the three of us need a healthy father and mom needs a healthy husband.

MANDY PATINKIN: Being separated was traumatic. But Eva's mother, the missing piece - made it out a few months later and caught one of the last ships to America. The family reunited in New York in 1940.

EVA KOLLISCH: *I knew about New York and tall buildings, and I was fascinated by the idea of New York. But we lived on Staten Island. To me, that was a letdown. It was sort of quiet and suburban and houses and gardens. I mean, now it seems rather peaceful, you know, but then it just seemed dull.*

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva's life in America looks very different than it did in Austria. No catered parties. No maids. No nannies. Eva's mom works as a masseuse and Eva's dad - a vacuum cleaner salesman. Money is an issue.

DON KOLLISCH: Her family was working class in New York, hard working class, not bourgeois at all.

MANDY PATINKIN: Don Kollisch is Eva's nephew.

DON KOLLISCH: But they still had upper class bourgeois attitudes.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva doesn't fit in at school. But she tries. There's her short stint as a Girl Scout or when she goes out for the cheerleading team...a move she later calls 'deluded'.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: After that, the cheerleaders came to exemplify everything I wasn't and didn't want to be. As a cheerleader you had to be pretty and cheerful, even off duty. I considered myself not pretty. I had grown tall and thin. I was awkward and sullen looking. Not the kind of girl to be called "cute" or a "swell kid." I saw myself as lean and smoldering, like a wolf or a fox, stealthy, keeping my fierceness hidden. I thought of myself as a fighter in some not yet specified noble cause."

MANDY PATINKIN: The noble cause became socialism - the Workers Party.

DON KOLLISCH: She was rebelling against everything. I mean, she was an adolescent.

MANDY PATINKIN: Don - Eva's nephew.

DON KOLLISCH: And at the same time that you're saying, my parents are doofuses and my classmates are doofuses. And then you hear somebody saying, workers of the world unite. It is powerful. You're looking for a voice. You're looking for somebody who can articulate that, that frustration that you have with the older generation and particularly in wartime.

MANDY PATINKIN: But what about the Party's stance against WWII? The thing that Eva feels conflicted about?

The Party thinks it's a war for capitalism and not against facism. Well, Eva notices that there are a lot of Jewish members of the Workers Party - and many are children of

European immigrants. If they can support the Party's view against WWII, then so can she - a pacifist at heart.

Here's Eva's only child - her son Uri Berliner.

URI BERLINER: I mean, I think she was wrong. I think that moment in history was not about organizing workers to overthrow capitalism, its about defeating Naziism. That was really all that mattered.

My mother obviously wanted the Nazis to be defeated and maybe she thought that could happen through the workers movement. I think it's just her idealism, her hope for something to shift this awful reality.

MANDY PATINKIN: There's also an influential member of the Workers Party, Walter - that's not his real name but it's the name Eva gives him in her memoir. He's giving Eva a lot of attention.

Walter's a decade older - around 27...These are different times. He's smart and he has a soft spot for Eva. He likes that she's smart too. She likes that he sees her potential in the movement. Plus, Walter takes her on dates into the city - where Eva feels alive.

And even if she doesn't know whether she likes him you know, romantically - things are finally happening for Eva outside of her boring High School. Now, her real challenge is how to live up to the movement's ideals - and demands. Can Eva truly shed the greatest sin of all - her bourgeois upbringing?

Life as a comrade is exciting. Eva's finally a part of something - something big. She's going to meetings. Reading books like Das Kapital. Debating Marxist theory.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: I was intoxicated by these words. I felt their magic and their power. In time, they became for me...levers that lifted us.

MANDY PATINKIN: She's dedicated to the cause. Relishing the importance of it even. But the cause can also be...stifling. Though she probably wouldn't use that word. Not yet.

DON KOLLISCH: Yeah, she wouldn't have said it was limiting back then - though, you know, when Eva graduated from High School she wanted to go to Brooklyn College with her best friend. But she didn't.

MANDY PATINKIN: But college goes against the Party line. It's too bourgeois. The Party wants her to work in factories. To recruit people to the movement. To help start a worker's revolution. Eva's parents aren't happy. They want their daughter to get an education. But they don't understand her or what she's fighting for. So she moves to Manhattan and starts working - like the Party wants her to.

KATE WEIGAND: You know, I think when you're in a movement and you feel like you're on the cusp of something big and you're going to possibly be able to really make huge change in the world. I think it's not unusual at all for people to feel like it's important to sacrifice their own needs for something bigger.

MANDY PATINKIN: Like the cause, Walter also has demands of Eva. They've been seeing each other for a little less than a year now.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: He would bring up the fact that he would be drafted soon. He would say how much my commitment would mean to him when he faced the hardships of army life. This made me furious. I felt manipulated. I shouted that it wasn't fair, that I needed to feel free. I reminded him that according to Marx and Engels the family relationship was a property relationship and a wife no more than chattel. "Free love!" I would cry and practically jump out of bed every time he brought up the subject of marriage.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva has a meeting with Max Shachtman - the leader of the Workers Party. He also asks her to marry Walter. She's shocked that he'd meddle like this. She tells him she doesn't believe in marriage.

"That's a lot of petty bourgeois hokum," he says. In his office, they debate her future.

VOICE ACTOR - EVA KOLLISCH: "I haven't seen Walter so happy in years," Max rhapsodized, "The movement needs contented comrades."

"And what about me? That I'm not ready to commit myself is of no account?". He reminded me that the Movement expects its members to subordinate their personal feelings to the cause of the Revolution.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva and Walter marry in November of 1942. It's a little ceremony, in front of a justice of the peace, with a few friends and her parents. Eva's son Uri believes the union was strategic.

URI BERLINER: It was kind of a marriage of politics rather than one of romance and she was taken by the cause. I think she believed in this Trotskyist vision of an

international socialism that could spread around the world and solve humanity's problems of injustice and deprivation. And so she was all in.

MANDY PATINKIN: Once again, Eva's parents don't approve of her decision, especially her mother. What if Eva gets pregnant and Walter dies at war?

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: "Mutti, in times like these, one doesn't want to be too practical...". I was surprised by the quaver in my voice. My mother started crying and, quite unexpectedly, I found myself crying too.

MANDY PATINKIN: Walter eventually serves overseas. Eva volunteers to go to Detroit for the movement - to work at General Motors, Chrysler, Ford, or Chevrolet. Eva calls these factories "the cathedrals of the working class capital of the world."

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: I went to buy myself a leather jacket, a workshirt and a pair of Levi's. I toyed with the idea of buying a working-man's cap too, but desisted.

MANDY PATINKIN: Even though she looks the part, getting a job isn't easy - as a woman, and as a Jew.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: "German? We're at war with those krauts."

"I'm not German. I'm Jewish."

"Jewish?" He wrinkles up his nose and finds that pretty offensive too.

MANDY PATINKIN: In January, 1944, Eva gets a job at Dodge Truck.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: This is how Jack prepared me for work in the factory.

MANDY PATINKIN: Jack is with the Workers Party - one of the Detroit branch leaders.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: "Don't curse. Don't spit. Don't talk down. Don't turn yourself into a stereotype of 'the worker.'"

"So, I should be myself?"

“Well, yes, up to a point. But don’t read marxist literature on the job. And try to look nice.”

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva wakes up at the early hour of 5:30am to head to her Dodge truck factory job where she climbs onto the front hood of Jeeps coming down the assembly line to attach windshield wipers.

URI BERLINER: Her oldest friend, who also was involved in the in the movement, was there in Detroit with her and admired my mother’s dexterity how she climbed on the jeeps and put the windshield wipers on and, you know, was kind of fearless, a little awkward, but very fearless.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva’s good at it, despite being bored by the monotony. She’s also good at her secret job - the real reason she’s there - as a recruiter. She gets two men at her factory to come to Workers Party meetings at the Detroit branch. Artie is the shop steward. He’s good looking, buff, and a flirt.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: Besides being gallant to women, he’s also more enlightened about African Americans than most of the other workers. Usually, African Americans do the hardest and dirtiest work in the shop, but on my line, they work alongside whites. This fact, plus the relatively pleasant working conditions makes me think we are a little further along the road of social progress than some of the other lines or sections of the plant.

MANDY PATINKIN: Clarence - the other man Eva’s recruited - works the assembly line, like Eva. He’s into Ghandi, Buddhism and Christian socialism.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: Whenever I injected something about the class struggle or the imperialist nature of the war into the discussion, Clarence would smile his smile of forbearance and Artie would cheer me on.

MANDY PATINKIN: Her socialist comrades are happy with her. She’s brought new blood. But Artie and Clarence have other plans. They want to pursue Eva, not the revolution.

Meanwhile, Walter and Eva write often. He’s happy she’s leading a “good, productive life” as he pens in one of his letters. He also asks her to write him a letter with her definition of socialism - being discreet about it of course. You don’t want to be labeled a Red in the army.

But Eva's consumed by another idea floating around in the movement. The debate over, as one of her comrades puts it, "the role of screwing in recruiting". It all comes to a head at a dance put on by the Workers Party. It's April 1944. The place is packed. The music's blaring. People are dancing. Drinking.

Artie immediately focuses on Eva. They dance and dance until she tells him to ask other women. She needs some space. She starts walking away when... Clarence quickly swoops in. And with Eva in his arms, swaying on the dancefloor, he takes this opportunity to trash talk the competition. He says that Artie vulgarly talks about Eva behind her back. And that Artie offered her the Assistant Shop Steward job so she'd sleep with him. Clarence tells her he's trying to protect her - so she doesn't get dragged into the mud.

Eva bristles. Why does Clarence think he's her dad? She tells him to leave her alone and furiously walks away. Artie sees the commotion and intercepts. He pulls Eva to him. He tells her to take him home with her. He swears she'll be the Assistant Shop Steward.

Never mind that Eva's married. That Artie's married. That Clarence is married. The war bends such commitments. Plus, the movement has a fairly open stance about sex - including around extramarital dalliances. And even though Eva's had her fair share of fun, she's not into these two. Their flirting is suffocating.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: "Go to hell!" I screamed, wrenching myself away from him. "You and Clarence both make me sick!"

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva runs to the washroom. She doesn't want anyone to see her cry. But one of her Detroit comrades, Jack, stops her.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: "What's the matter? Why are you acting so hostile? You're driving them away."

I was speechless and I asked, trying to sound very calm, if he considered it my political duty to be nice to them even though I thought they were disgusting.

"Well, no," Jack said, "but aren't you overreacting? They're just a couple of healthy men." He reminded me that I had put months into this project.

"Since you feel their probable loss so keenly," I said in my most sugary voice, "why don't you sleep with them?"

MANDY PATINKIN: Egos bruised, Artie and Clarence no longer show up to Workers Party meetings. And they give Eva the cold shoulder at the factory. But what hurts her the most is that her comrades also shun her.

KATE WEIGAND: I think there was a lot of expectation that women should use their feminine wiles to help attract men to the movement and there was very little awareness among even left radicals, that that was problematic.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva feels betrayed. Aren't they her friends? Or is she only worth something to them if she's useful to the cause?

She packs a backpack and leaves to clear her head, to do something she wants to do - hitchhike across America to California until she's ready to come back, two months later.

That's when she finds herself sitting at the Detroit Branch office - on trial. Her comrades deciding whether she can stay and continue to be a part of her chosen family. That's when she's forced to answer their question of why she left the movement without telling anyone.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: "There are times when you simply have to do something for yourself."

DON KOLLISCH: That Eva would have at age 19 to have the core conviction to say, "There are times when you have to do something for yourself." Good for her. Good for her. That's great. Makes me love her all the more. And she always modeled this idea of, of friendship and love and politics all being interwoven and so a politics that does not include self-caring and caring for the people you care about, would be a politics that she would reject.

MANDY PATINKIN: But she's not ready to give up on the movement just yet.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: I admitted that my action had been egotistical, that I had confused personal gratification with the true freedom that only socialism can bring. Just because they were trapped in what they thought was their revolutionary role, why should I let them drive me away from our shared life and the struggle for a more human world - socialism?

MANDY PATINKIN: Her comrades look relieved. They no longer have to decide whether to kick her out or not. She's welcome back into the movement. Her punishment? Removing her voting privileges for three months.

But as much as Eva's relieved too, she's also irrevocably changed. She wants to experience the fullness of life - after having had a taste. And about a year later - and after a total of 4 years with the Workers Party - she quits.

EVA KOLLISCH: *It was something that I must have rehearsed many times inside me and really asked myself, almost like leaving a relationship, you know, I asked myself, what am I giving up? This is so important. This is so serious, and why am I withdrawing from it? And yet it seemed absolutely essential that I find another space, a larger space. And, you know, when I did it, it was not dramatic. It's just like life went on.*

MANDY PATINKIN: And life does go on. The war ends.

VOICE ACTOR - YOUNG EVA KOLLISCH: There had come to some of us the shock of awakening: the world revolution hadn't come. On the other hand, news of the concentration camps had become known in horrifying detail. That raised some painful questions. How could we have gone around saying so simple mindedly about the war: "A plague on both your houses?"

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva returns to New York. She divorces Walter. And she goes to Brooklyn College after all - giving up on activism for now, but not forever. Throughout the remaining 40s and 50s, Eva travels. Gets remarried to a man named Gert Berliner - who's also a kindertransport refugee. And they have a child. But her radical roots never leave her. With Gert, she opens a cafe in Greenwich Village called Rienzi. It's run on a socialist model with nine owners in total, all of whom share the work.

EVA KOLLISCH: *Our first big ideological fight came when people said, "We don't want to do the dishes anymore. Let's hire a dish washer." And I and a couple of others said, No, if we have a dish washer, he has to become a fellow owner, a co-owner. And it didn't happen. The majority felt this was just ridiculous and romantic. So anyhow, we had a very nice dish washer and we paid him about three times the going wage, because even the conservatives were liberal.*

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva and her husband - who eventually becomes her ex-husband - end up leaving Rienzi, but the cafe becomes a staple, a centre of intellectual life in the Village for over a decade. People like James Baldwin, Jack Kerouac, and Bob Dylan go there.

In the 60s, Eva hears the call of protest movements and joins in the fights against the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons. Her nephew Don did too.

DON KOLLISCH: You know, when I think about my relationship with Eva, probably the moment that I really come back to was when I was in college and I was involved in a bunch of anti-war demos. I went to MIT and we had a very active, anti-militarism group there. And I can't remember, I think I called Eva and said "Wow, I was arrested!" And she said, "I was arrested this weekend, too!" I have no idea if my memory is accurate. But in my mind, we had our first arrest on the same weekend. You know, I would have been 18 and she would have been 44, I think. It would have been 1969.

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva's son Uri has vivid memories of that time as well.

URI BERLINER: I mean, it almost became like part of the routine. I mean, she would tell me, you know, I'm going to protest. I think I'm going to be arrested and I might be there overnight. So here's some food. You can just heat it up. I'm sure I'll be back by the morning. It was that kind of thing.

***EVA KOLLISCH:** So, you know, about this activism, it's really the idea of a community. In my life, I've had periods when I've experienced community very strongly and then there are periods when I've experienced loneliness very strongly. And when you engage in politics, it's like it becomes a very large community. And so, again, there's a lot of joyous memory connected in my mind with the 60s*

MANDY PATINKIN: She also starts teaching Literature at Sarah Lawrence College.

***EVA KOLLISCH:** They offered me early tenure, which I turned down, because I didn't understand tenure and what a big deal that is, because at that time it was so much easier, you know. And I felt they were trying to make me complicit, because we had had some student strikes and I was very active with the radical students. And I thought oh they're trying to buy me off.*

MANDY PATINKIN: In the 70s, she's one of the co-founders of Gender Studies at Sarah Lawrence - where she's also shunned by her colleagues in the wake of a scandal. Eva tries to stop the New York Times Sunday Magazine from printing a homophobic article about lesbianism at the university.

By this time, Eva's dating women - including intellectuals like Susan Sontag - and fighting for queer rights. In the 1980s, she meets poet Naomi Replansky, the person who will become her partner for the next 37 years.

Fast forward a few decades, and even as a senior, Eva's creating community through activism - consciousness-raising in an older women's network that she starts.

URI BERLINER: I think her legacy will be as this incredibly committed, powerfully engaged woman who was both involved in so many of the causes of the 20th century as an activist and radical, but also as someone in our family life who was warm, empathetic and she was always very open to talking about people who are struggling in life and trying to help them find a way.

KATE WEIGAND: She's just somebody who really has, you know, lived her ideals, it seems to me, and done it so well and uncompromisingly for the most part. And, um yeah. I just really respect her.

DON KOLLISCH: How do you live a life well lived? You know? And she did. She was productive. She was fiercely political at the same time that she was loving.

[CLIP - NAOMI REPLANSKY'S PARTY]

MANDY PATINKIN: Eva Kollisch is 97 years old now. She's slowed down and still living in New York. She lost Naomi - who died earlier this year at the age of 104. But the month before Naomi passed everyone gathered for a celebration of life. This is what you're hearing. Naomi's party - full of people who deeply care about both women. And like that day, Eva continues to be surrounded by family, and friends, and a legacy of finding belonging and feeling rooted - through living her values.

VOICE ACTOR - EVA KOLLISCH: What has been constant through a long, full life and its accompanying changes is the mind-set of "the uprooted one," which has often felt like my truest self. Yet lately I feel that it may be time to lay this persona to rest.

ARCHIVE THROW: In addition to Eva Kollisch's memoirs *Girl in Movement* (2000) and *The Ground Under My Feet* (2014), LBI's collections include an oral history interview with Eva conducted in 2014 and the papers of Eva's mother, poet Margarete Kollisch, which document Eva's childhood experience on the Kindertransport. Learn more at www.lbi.org/kollisch.

TEASER: On the next episode of Exile...

A friendship strained by fascism. Prominent Austrian writers, Stefan Zweig and Joseph Roth... BFFs for nearly a decade.

TESS LEWIS: In the end, I think they became shackles to each other. The mutual disapproval and disappointment helped drag them both down.

The tragic endings of Stefan Zweig and Joseph Roth. A bond and two lives tested...on Exile.

CREDITS: Exile is a production of the Leo Baeck Institute, New York and Antica Productions.

It's narrated by Mandy Patinkin.

Executive Producers include Katrina Onstad, Stuart Coxe and Bernie Blum. Senior Producer is Debbie Pacheco. Associate Producers are Hailey Choi and Emily Morantz. Research and translation by Isabella Kempf. Sound design and audio mix by Philip Wilson, with help from Cameron McIver. Theme music by Oliver Wickham. Voice acting by Natalia Bushnik.

Special thanks to the Kollisch family for the use of Eva's two memoirs, *Girl in Movement* and *The Ground Under My Feet*, the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College and their "Voices of Feminism Oral History Project", and Soundtrack New York.