United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Michael M. Cernea
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PREFACE

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MICHAEL M. CERNEA
May 4, 2005

Question: Good morning, Michael.

Answer: Good morning.

Q: It's very nice to meet you and have you here.

A: I'm glad to be here.

Q: Good. Michael, what was your name when you were born?

A: It was Catz, is family name, Catz you pronounce it, C-a-t-z, Moisei M-o-i-s-e-i, which was Moishe in terms of a Jewish name, but they -- it was a lucified name of -- the variational form of Moishe or Moisei. In fact, by -- by the book, my name is Moisei Catz. Moisei bar Mordechai Catz a coyen, of course.

Q: So when did you become Michael Cernea?

A: That happened about 20 some years later. I change my name. It came first as a kind of prank, which we did as high school kids, a -- a bunch of us were -- you want the story?

Q: Yeah.

A: That happened in -- I believe in 1940 -- '48 - '49.

Q: This is after the war?

A: After the war, yes, when -- a b-bunch of friends from our class was walking and we were walking town, and having a good time and we noticed there was an announcement about -- for a competition for sportswriters. The sport newspaper of Bucharest was trying to recruit -- hire, identify sportswriters and opened a competition. So a few of us said why not, let's try. We were really kind of -- sensed that it's not the best chance to give our names -- in addition to real names, and additionally didn't know what the repercussion that have at school. So I invented the

name and I took Cernea. And that kind of -- that was destiny kind of, I w -- I won the competition for the writing, then the -- the oral competition, I was offered the job. That changed a lot of things in my life, including the name. So this how --

Q: So that's how the name changed.

A: -- I stayed with the name for a number of years until after I married, we decided to change it in the documents as well, because I married under the real name, but there was a lot of conflicts in -- in documents between the people calling me one way, the documents being different, having to explain everything [indecipherable]

Q: Right.

A: -- so this is how it changed.

Q: So your recollection as yourself as a child, especially during the war period is as Moishe, or Mose -- Moise -- Moisei --

A: Well the diminutive name which my mother and everybody in the family used was Musi.

Q: Musi.

A: Musi, which is M-u-s-i, written in Romanian. The name is not very frequent for men, but it's quite frequent for girls, whose variant, you know, feminine variant of Musi is Musia.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So we can find a lot of women called Musia.

Q: I see.

A: But I was Musi and my good old friends, since high school and before, who are still alive, those are -- call me Musi today.

Q: Not Michael.

A: Not Michael, no, no.

Q: No Michaels. And what was your date of birth?

A: It was October 14, ‘31

Q: 1931.

A: 1931.

Q: And you -- where were you born?

A: In Balti. This is a famous town of the -- of the -- even more famous Yiddish song, Mein shtaitila Balti.

Q: Right, it’s a great song.

A: If you recall Mein shtaitila Balti, da, la, la, la, la, la, la, that song. It’s a beautiful song. It is spelled, if you need to know, B-a-l-t-i. It is in Bessarabia which at that time belonged to Romania. Then it passed. That is a territory between the rivers Prut and Dniester. And it changed state allegiance or ownership or belongingness al-along the centuries. When I was born it was part of Romania; in 1940 it was shifted back to Russia. And the Russian pronunciation of the town is Balti. Until 1917 - 1918, I think, the Russian revolution, it was part of Russia. So population there spoke Russian and the Jews spoke Yiddish, too, so my mother, who was born there and her family spoke Russian and -- and Yiddish. So they were all fluent in Russian and I learned the Russian, a bit of Russian from my mother, too so --

Q: You did?

A: Yes.

Q: Now why were you born in Balti since your mother and father were living in Iasi?

A: Well Joan, you should know better how young mothers feel and behave. When my mother was pregnant, my father and mother lived in Iasi, which was a big city, apparently the second city of Romania at that time, over a hundred thousand people in the northeastern part of

Romania, close to the border with Bessarabia. So Bessarabia was then part of Romania, and she decided to go to deliver in her mother's house and be with the care of her mother, which was supposed to be even better than in the big hospital in Iasi. This is how I was born in Balti, yes.

Q: And did you go back and forth to Balti a great deal to see your grandparents, or other relatives?

A: As a matter of fact, not. I believe I have one recollection, I don't know whether I was four years old or so, that I was in Balti and I remember being on my grandfather's lap on the f -- front part of his house. That I remember very clearly, and was confirmed by my mother, and some guy who was selling pickled apples, which was a specialty there, was passing by, and he -- I wanted and my grandfather stopped him and bought me the apple, which was very tasteful. I believe was the first time in my life, and the last time.

Q: And the last --

A: And the last time. I never heard again about pickled apples.

Q: No, I've never heard [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, in Romanian they're called mere murate, mere murate. And I still have the plan to identify whether somebody knows how to do such things now.

Q: So you can try it again, yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: Let's talk --

A: Yeah, but then I was again in Balti --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- that is the fullest ans -- fuller answer to your question.

Q: Yes.

A: After the collapse of the Soviet Union, when that part, which in the meantime became the Soviet Republic of Muldavia, during Soviet exis -- Soviet Union existence, became now the independent country of the republic of Moldova. And I -- with the help of an assignment from the World Bank, where I was working [indecipherable] in the 90's, I made my way back to that place. I took a few days off from my formal mission to go back to Balti. And this is when I visited Balti, I believe it was '94 or '95. And so th-the place of my birth again, of course, totally changed and course the city was destroyed, the -- ravaged during the war. But I was there, and the part which was not fully destroyed, still existed, was a cemetery which I visited. So yes, I re -- retrieved my place of birth.

Q: And you were able to see the grave of your great-grandfather, is that right?

A: When I was -- that was one of ma -- my purposes, to see the grave of my grandfather. And that time, one of my cousin and his family were still living in Balti in '94, they lived there. They went during the war, we kind of skipped over time, but anyway, they were, during the war put in camps, persecuted, some of -- many people in my family died in that period, in camps, of -- were killed, or died of typhus and other diseases, and -- in the camps. He was among those who survived. And after the war he went into the Russian army, when the army -- Russian army freed the people in the camp, and then even visited us in Romania. So we kept in touch with them during the war, and after the war, and now I had the chance, I went to see him and talked him into speaking up his own thoughts of leaving and moving to Israel. And indeed, two or three years later, they did move to Israel, and he passed away in Israel. But when I was in '94, in Balti, he took me -- he and his wife Tiupa, who is still alive -- his name is Zioma Faerstein. Both of them took me to the grave of my grandfather. And I saw the grave, yes.

Q: Mm-hm. Let's talk a little bit about your family. What was your father's name?

A: Marcu.

Q: Marcu.

A: Marcu, in fact, Marcu Leib Catz.

Q: And that's Leib, L-e-i-b.

A: L-e-i-b, yes.

Q: Yeah. And --

A: And Marcu you spell with a C.

Q: C, right. And what did he do?

A: He was trained as an engineer. His training was electrical engineering in Romania of course, but he was also -- got for a specialization and went to France for a few months. But that -- the conditions were not very good in Romania for that specialty. Romania was an agrarian country, basically. So he shifted his work to the textile industry and worked as a engineer in textile industry, first for electrical engineering, but then he learned the master -- the engineering of textile work. So that was basically his profession as long as he was allowed to exercise it as a professional, after which he was eliminated. No, from among the profession, he was fired, sorry, not eliminated, but had to become a -- a merchant of textiles.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: You know, the Jews were allowed to be merchants but not to be employed as professionals.

Q: So was he employed in Iasi?

A: Yes, in Iasi, yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Until 1939 or 1940.

Q: I was going to ask, yes.

A: Yeah, when all the professional Jews were -- were, by law, fired from all places, so all of a sudden he became unemployed, as in fact I did, more or less the same time, although I was only what, eight, nine years old, because all the Jewish kids, by another law at the same time, were expelled from all the state schools.

Q: Yeah --

A: So --

Q: -- so you would -- you [indecipherable]

A: -- we shared -- we shared fates, yes.

Q: T-Tell me what you remember about life in your home before the war. What -- what do you remember about your father, do you -- were you close with your father, did he spend time with you, or was that not typical at that time?

A: No, no, my father was a very warm person, loved me very much. I was his first born, so he invested himself a lot in me. And I loved him, and course he was a constant presence in my life, so to say th -- spiritual presence too, he gave me my religious education when I was a child, and my intellectual education he contributed very much because he was an intellectual, too. And -- and my mother was also an intellectual, she was trained as a pharmacist.

Q: Really?

A: Yes. They both, in fact, met in the university in Iasi, where they got to know -- came to know each other, then got married. And my mother was a pharmacist, she was well educated also in literature, which she loved, and was multilingual. Very bright woman, an extraordinarily strong presence in my life. And when I was unfortunate to lose my father in the late 60's, after illness, which is due largely to the to the pogrom in Iasi, my mother lived until her -- close to her 90's

and she came to the States. I brought her to the States, in fact, and we had a very good time here. And therefore, she -- her presence in my life lasted until just 14 years ago.

Q: Wow, that's fabulous.

A: And it was a very presence -- a very strong presence. I owe -- I owe a very great deal to my mother for all I have done and for the way I am.

Q: Right, right.

A: For my values, so it was a very tight family life. I have a brother, is -- that is part also of your question?

Q: Yes.

A: His name is Zolly, Zolly Catz. His name is -- the Jewish name is Zollman. And he is -- carries the name of my grandfather of my mother's side. Be -- I -- my name Moisei is -- Moisei is the name of my great-grandfather, also my mother's side.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: So as you see, my mother ruled the --

Q: It's very --

A: -- the name giving in the family. And she told me all -- all the stories I -- she remembered about her great -- her -- her grandfather was my grand --

Q: Uh-huh, your great-grandfather.

A: -- greatfather, yes, Moisei Baraz. So that was my mother, and I was very fortunate to have in our home, in addition to my brother and my parents, my grandmothers, on both sides.

Q: Both sides?

A: On both sides, until late. I mean, my grandmother on my father's side, named Eva -- Chava was a s-strongest religious presence in the house, lived with us until the 1944.

Q: Really.

A: I knew also my grandfather on my father's sti -- side. His name is Itic -- Itic. And he passed away when I was a child, but I remember him when they visited us, in a kind of cart with horses. I remember his very imposing -- both my grandfathers were very imposing Jews, tall, both tall, with gray beards, with payas --

Q: Payas.

A: -- yes. So they hard to forget. And then my parents spoke very often with great reverence about their parents, so I know a lot about that.

Q: Right.

A: It was a tight family, close family, and -- and you know, I inherited the -- the -- the devotion to the idea of family from -- from my own parents'.

Q: So you must have had a fairly large home if you also had your two grandmothers there, or am I wrong?

A: Well, we had a large home by Romanian standards. It would be a -- a -- a [indecipherable] or a tight home by American standards --

Q: American stan --

A: -- yes. You know, is -- I slept with my brother in a room, or otherwise he sl -- I slept in the -- or he slept in the so-called living room which doubled o -- [indecipherable] living room, and in a corner had a bed for my -- one of my grandmothers, so that --

Q: Uh-huh, right.

A: -- I don't complain, it was a good family life, yeah.

Q: It was a good family life.

A: I wouldn't say that my family was among the poorest families, Jewish families, no, because they were middle class.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Middle class.

Q: So you felt comfortable, not -- not deprived?

A: No, until -- on a -- only after -- until my father was employed --

Q: Yes, yes.

A: -- then we had periods, long periods when my father did not make, you know, a salary.

Q: Right.

A: Had to improvise, and to expose himself to very risky activities to -- to bring something on the table --

Q: Home.

A: Yes.

Q: What was your mother's name?

A: Seindel.

Q: It was her first name, Seindel?

A: Sein -- Seindel, yes, Seindel, and her name is in Jewish, yeah Seindel -- Shinya -- no, sorry, her Jewish name is Seindel, her -- the name by which everybody knew her and called her was the Russian diminutive of Seindel, which was Shanya.

Q: Shanya.

A: Shanya, yes.

Q: That's very nice.

A: Shanya.

Q: Was it an --

A: She -- she was pr -- very proud of her family name as a girl, which was half a century before modern feminist bent. And she always liked to call herself Shanya Faerstein Catz.

Q: Catz.

A: Yes.

Q: That's interest --

A: And this is what she wanted to be written on her gravestone and this is how I wrote on her gravestone.

Q: Was it unusual for a woman to be so educated in Romania?

A: Yes, it was unusual, it was not frequent. But she was bright, she wanted to get educated. Her father was really enamored by her, her mother. She was his only child of her mother, who was the second wife of my grandfather. My grandfather had six children for his first marriage, and then his wife died, Chava died, and -- and he married my grandmother, Brana, who came from a -- a -- another little shtetl, Briceva, also there. Brana Baraz. And their only child was my mother, so it was a child, at old age you can imagine --

Q: Right.

A: -- how dear -- in fact, I have a -- a picture of my grandfather, imposing as he was, my -- my grandmother and my mother at the age of one year, where she looks like a doll, you know.

Q: Right. And we'll see that picture later, yes?

A: As you wish, yes.

Q: And in -- wh-when you remember back, in terms of your household.

A: Yes.

Q: Was it a happy household, was there a lot of discussion, were you involved with your parents and your grandparents? I mean how do you -- h-how do you picture it when you think --

A: Well, it was a --

Q: -- now I'm talking before the war, of course.

A: -- yeah, it was a happy household obviously, but it was not -- it was a Jewish household where you would have a fight and you would have some people screaming, and you have arguments. Was a whole hullabaloo, you know? I do remember arguments, too. I do remember my father getting upset and angry and you know, using strong words. He was a coyen and you know, the Kohanim are -- are traditionally seen as people who are easily irritable.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh.

A: You know, they have a short fuse.

Q: Right.

A: I'm a coyen, too.

Q: So is that true of you, too? Yes?

A: Well, I've -- you know, going through so many cultures, I try to temper it -- that characteristic, but I wouldn't say that I am alien to my heritage. So I inherited that too. But -- so it was a normal household, Joan, nothing very special, but an educated household where, you know, discussions were very often about politics, about broader issues and the daily life values. Sometimes philosophy, you know --

Q: Right.

A: -- issues, political issues, tyranism, anti-Semitism, a lot of discussion the situation in Romania, the situation in Russia, whether Jews are doing better in Russia -- this was before the war --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- and during the war what -- you know, a lot of discussion. My mother was involved early in the Zionist movement. And she had connection there, so the matter came up and she -- I recall that she would go to reunions of the Zionist women of Iasi at that time, and she came back and brought and spoke to me about oranges who grow in Palestine. Yeah. And then sh -- they were also involved on the left of center activities, like many other Jews at that time were in Romania, but particularly my mother, coming from Russia had friends who were really enrolled in anti-Fascist, an-and communist underground, and they, in fact, used the friendship with my mother to ask her to give them shelter when they were pursued by the police. And -- and some of them slept and came and hid in our house and then disappeared as silently as they came. Only for us to recognize them -- and my mother, of course, she knew, but then sh -- after the war, when they emerged as political leaders.

Q: I see.

A: And one of them even became a minister in gr -- Romania's government, who was in hiding in my mother's -- father's home, brought by that -- the people. So it was -- to come back to your question, it was a house where political issues were discussed, and I -- I listened as a child.

Q: Right.

A: I can -- I was not a participant in those discussions.

Q: Right, but clearly around the table --

A: Yes.

Q: -- y-you were not told to leave --

A: No, no, no, I don't re --

Q: -- you -- you certainly heard this.

A: -- no, I don't ever recall that I was sent to my toys, no.

Q: Sent, yeah, to your room.

A: Yes.

Q: When you said your f -- your father taught you religion --

A: Yes.

Q: -- or religious traditions, religious values, how did he do that, what did he do?

A: Well, he was re -- a rel-religious person himself, he got the --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- very strong religious education for his father -- from his father. Went to the synagogue pretty often, not every day, but when he wouldn't go to synagogue he will put tefillin in the morning and do the prayers at home every single morning.

Q: Really?

A: For years, yes. So on the holidays we go to the synagogue, all of us, I remember -- like it was one year -- you know, holiday I could play with the other kids for the entire day in the big courtyard of the synagogue. Coming in, when the Kohanim gave their blessing of -- for the congregation, something which doesn't happen here unfortunately. It's the only thing I am disappointed because the Kohanim here are not -- except for very Orthodox synagogues are not called on high holidays to give their blessing you know, for the -- for the congregation. So at that moment th-the prayer, even when I was small child, five, six, seven I was called in and I s-strained to hear and recognize my father's voice because if you saw sometime the scene, the

Kohanim are the front, then they say to the back, to the congregation which is behind them, and at a certain point they all turn around but they have their heads covered by the big talit -- talitim. And their hands, which are -- are covered.

Q: Yes, expla -- explain that because some people who are watching this may not understand what you've just done with your hands.

A: Well, the Kohanim are supposed to give a blessing on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur on the congregation. They -- there is a special text which is the blessing and which they have to pronounce when they give the blessing. The -- they have to keep their hands in a blessing movement, and the -- the way the hand have to be kept is to keep two fingers together on each hand, tight, and separated the two, and you keep your hand this way, yes.

Q: [indecipherable] I see.

A: Which is not very easy.

Q: No --

A: Not everybody can do it. But the Kohanim are trained to do that. I'll -- I can tell you how I was trained to do that. And he would then say the blessing and the long prayers, stay with the back of the congregation and when they have to say lvareh'ha adonai ve'ishmereha and so on, they turn around to the congregation and say that in loud voice. And this is when I was trained --

Q: Hear it.

A: -- straining to recognize the voice of my father, and to tell you frankly, honestly, it still rings in my ears when I think of that.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, is really -- he was really yelling, and I was able to recognize, among the chorus of the voices.

Q: So did he teach you things at home?

A: So, as a child before Bar Mitzvah you are not supposed to do that, but after Bar Mitzvah you are [indecipherable] you have to po -- so, as part of the -- when it came time to be prepare for the Bat Mitzvah, there were terrible times already in Romania, the war started, the -- there was a massacre, the pogrom of Iasi to -- in ’41, and I was to be Bar Mitzvah’d in ’44. So from ’42, in fact, they took -- he took -- and my mother [indecipherable] for me a Melamed to teach me at home because -- I believe we are jumping history, you know, again, but after the pogrom I couldn’t go to the school so I stayed at home for a full year. The Melamed would come and teach me, and will teach me Hebrew and other things, but one of the things of those teaching was to keep my hand this way. And this was done very simple, anything body can do. Take a string and tie those two fingers together and those two fingers together --

Q: And you separate --

A: -- and then separate them. And do that several times and you’ll end up able to --

Q: Able to do it.

A: -- to do it. And most people when they try, they do it this way, and they cannot, th-they tremble, and -- try it, you’ll s --

Q: Right, it’s not so easy.

A: It’s not easy, so --

Q: No.

A: -- you -- you tend to think that you cannot do it.

Q: Right.

A: But you can.

Q: But you can.

A: If you [indecipherable]

Q: I'm afraid we have to stop and to change the tape.

A: Yeah.

End of Tape One

Beginning Tape Two

Q: Michael.

A: Yes?

Q: What sort of friends did you have when you were a ki -- and I'm -- I'm really trying to distinguish if we can, before the war. Did you have Jewish and non-Jewish friends, did you live in a Jewish neighborhood? How do -- would you de-describe it?

A: Yeah, wi -- we live in several houses, my parents never owned a house, so we had to move every two, three years for rent purpose and for other things, so I remember some of our houses, and you know, you ca -- friendships depend on geographical location and on space patterns, so I -- I remember I had a very good friend, his name was Marcu Grunberg, in one house, which I terribly missed when we moved in another house and I kept looking for him years, and I found him again when I was in my 20's or so -- looked for him. So there were some friends th -- this way then, in the last house we lived in the year before we went on refu -- or became refugees, I had some kids in the same courtyard, which was basically a Jewish courtyard with one Romanian family, and I befriended -- befriended also the girl in that family, who was about my age. So basically I had a mixed group of friends, I think. Most of them were Jewish, and then when I was thrown out of school and I resumed ler -- schooling after a year in a community, Jewish community school, of course all my friends were Jews, yeah. That was my childhood, right.

Q: All right, e-explain something to me, because yo-you -- you used a nomenclature that seems very typical in Europe, but not necessarily here. You said there were Romanians, and there were Jews.

A: Yes.

Q: But you are Romanian, so why the nomenclature -- do you think this way?

A: Because in Romanian -- rom -- in Romania we were identified as Jews.

Q: Not as Romanians.

A: Not as Romanian, Romanian was a second kind -- of course we were -- my father was Romanian citizens, we all were Romanian citizens, but we were the Jews of Romania. Here in the States, and you know, the American culture, you say always both, you know, Romanian Americans, or Jewish Americans, or --

Q: Right.

A: So -- but over there it was very distinct. So when I say Romanian, I mean non-Jews. They could be Romanian or even Hungarian people, and others, all kinds of national -- it didn't matter to me at that time, the exact ethnic identification, but we knew who was Jewish and who was not Jewish.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes. In fact, we were reminded very often that we are Jewish by those who were not.

Q: Did -- did you experience anti-Semitism as a kid before the war?

A: Yes, of course --

Q: You did.

A: -- yes, yes.

Q: And -- and how did it manifest itself?

A: In all kinds of ways. In school you are known and remembered. We had the very clear identifier, the name. So being named Catz was from the very beginning a clear identifier to everybody, first the teachers, who knew that we are Jewish, and I'm Jewish, and many of the kids, who heard a lot of things about Jews and non-Jews in their families. It was -- no, yo-you need to understand also the background. Moldova, that part of Romania was heavily populated

by Jews, and by the turn of the century, many townships in Romania and some bigger towns too, had -- a majority of their population was Jewish. So the presence was massive, there was always an issue, and in Romania when I lived, it was the second town of Romania, and by that time it was almost half -- a little bit less than half of the population was Jewish. I read documents which said at a certain point in time, the beginning, turn of the century or [indecipherable] before, the Jewish population exceeded a little bit, 50 percent.

Q: This is in Iasi?

A: In Iasi, yes. So that made everybody conscious and clear who it is and who isn't. The heavily populated Jewish areas are almost homogeneously Jewish. Ours was not, we were a bit farther away from the massive Jewish concentration of Iasi. But our courtyard had still a majority of Jewish people, even though our house was very close to the most important chur -- cathedral in -- in Iasi, the Mitropolea, Mitropolea, which was a very important, the most important religious place, Christian religious place. So this explains my reference, Joan.

Q: [inaudible].

A: Yeah.

Q: But it must have been more comfortable in Iasi because there was such a complement of Jewish people, where it's almost 50 percent, if not more at certain times.

A: Well, you can reason this way --

Q: Or maybe not?

A: -- the question wa -- the question is whether that was real what happened. In fact, the presence of many Jews made it easier for the ideologically anti-Semites to build their entire propaganda and advocacy ag -- against Jews, that here is a population which is a parasitic population, which is oppressing us -- which was not true because they just didn't have the political power -- which

absorbs our economic resources. Which again was false because the Jews being in economic activities were the -- in fact the engine of -- of many activities and facilitating. They were not land owners, or maybe large land owners never Jewish. But they facilitated the trade between agricultural sector and the urban consumers. And so -- so the number made it easy to mount a very strong chauvinistic, anti-Semite attitude for those who wanted to exploit that. Not everybody bought that on the Romanian side. Some did not buy. Not every single Romanian was anti-Semite, but there was a long tradition of anti-Semitism in Romania. The literature is replete with description of Jews in a very negative way. You know, the Jidan was the equivalent of Kike, and this was thrown very liberally to everybody. Not liberally in the positive sense, but very easily to everybody as an insult.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Is -- you know, go to Palestine. I mean, I know that -- the existence of Palestine I learned from the curses which were thrown at me as a child. When I came home and asked my mother, what is Palestine? So in that time there were boys who knew that and say you don't have a place here, and use that. So this accounts for the distinction.

Q: Was this hard on you as a kid?

A: I-It was something which was intended as a humiliation. And when you are a child and you are cursed, everything which is accepted as a curse is -- becomes a curse. So yes, you were -- you were -- you felt very bad, and insulted and all of a sudden kind of sad that's you are -- you are something totally different and base. That was, again, in the context of literature which described Jews often as -- as evil. There is now a book, a very interesting book, written by a -- somebody in Romania, a Sociologist who is Jewish [indecipherable], "The Image of the Jew in the Romanian Culture." The book is that thick.

Q: Really?

A: Because there is a lot to write about the image of the Jew in the literature, in poetry, in -- in paintings, in design, in -- in all -- all the means of arts. The -- very unfortunately, the main poet of Romania, Mihail Eminescu was really a very great, romantic poet. In his political philosophy he was very reactionary on various grounds, including being an anti-Semit -- Semite. And he wrote -- well, his poetry is beautiful and everybody can enjoy it, and -- and really feel the emotion and identify with the poetry. His article, because he was also a j -- a journalist, were replete with base, evil reasoning, which are a shame. In fact for him, now as you look at him in retrospect, and for -- very unpleasant and uncomfortable for Romanian culture, but it's a fact. This is how -- so however the reputation of his poetry somehow gave more weight to -- to the evil political reasoning, and that captured too, a lot of minds. So anti-Semitism has been a -- a big problem in Romania, and Romania is not -- has not expurged even today, yet.

Q: When you were a -- when you before --

A: Despite all the changes which Romania has gone --

Q: Gone through.

A: -- and all the progress --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and now moving to a totally different pass, a democratic pass, anti-Semitism, paradoxically, despite the small number of Jews who are still there, is still visible, yes. Not so widespread, certainly not as of -- official pol -- policy or ideology, definitely not so, but still present.

Q: Okay. When -- when you were a kid, di -- there were special things in school that you liked. Do you remember?

A: You have to ask me what school, because --

Q: Okay, which school?

A: -- yes. I started school in 1938.

Q: Right. And you were seven then? Six?

A: Yeah, seven.

Q: Seven, yeah.

A: Seven, yes, seven, exactly seven. But two years later, in 1940, by decree of government, all Jewish children were expelled from state schools. And therefore I had to go to a Jewish school. The community had to create in a hurry, school for all this mass -- big mass of children who were suddenly all expelled. I -- so my first recollections are from the school where I went together with other children.

Q: Right.

A: All kind of children, like any school in my district. From that school I have very good memories too, about little kids. I felt good, I didn't feel bad in the school, on the contrary. But I have one scene. We had the most beloved teacher we had -- we had two teachers. In elementary school you don't have many teachers. One was particularly loved by everybody. And we didn't know why, but in a -- one good day, a gang of people with green shirts, leather bands, and came and simply pulled him out of the classroom, beat him in front of us, and turned and pull him away and we are left without our teacher. It was -- this was Iron Guard, as I learned afterwards. He apparently was a democrat. I don't know what his political -- I didn't know what that political al-allegiance. And they knew of that. And he was a very good teacher, that's the only thing I knew, but they did not hesitate to come and pull him and beat him in front of the children and took him away. And I never saw him --

Q: They beat him in the classroom?

A: In the classroom, in front of the children. This was the Iron Guard, thugs.

Q: That must have been really scary.

A: Oh, I -- I don't forget it, I cannot forget it to this day. I -- I know the name of the teacher was Motas, Constantin Motas. I mean, that moment seared him in my memory forever, more than even his being a beloved teacher -- beloved teacher. Could have remembered him anyway, or forgotten him, but that made him unforgettable to me. And the Iron Guard persecuted a lot of Romanian intellectuals. In fact, the Iron Guard, which was the Fascist party, the Nazi party of Romania, even killed the -- the most -- the highest reputed scholars of Romania, the -- a scholar of international reputation, who was an historian, Byzantineologist, history of Byzanthe -- Byzantine Empire. And he was a democrat, a liberal, western oriented, French oriented, not German and Nazi oriented. They knew of that. He was also a politician. They simply pulled him out, and -- one night from his house when they were fighting for power, took him in a forest near Bucharest and shot him to death. It was a uproar in the entire country and in -- in the world, because he was highly respected scholar internationally. So the fact that they pulled an elementary school teacher was not -- as I learned more, was not an isolated event. They were fighting the democrats in the -- in Romania. And not only the Jews.

Q: Right. And what was his name, that scholar?

A: That scholar was Nikolai Iorga, Iorga.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: I-o-r-g-a.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: When you went home after seeing your teacher beaten, did you talk to your parents about that?

A: Yes, of course.

Q: Yes.

A: I was scared --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- tha -- everybody ask what happened, and I told them, and the mother didn't know at first what happened, but then she understood, and a few days we didn't go to school, we didn't have a teacher. And when -- and then we had somebody, but I never saw him again. I don't know what happened to him. I really don't know. I tried asking --

Q: But you have ne -- never found out?

A: Never found out. And that's all I knew about his name, but [indecipherable] hear laters on, but no, I didn't. He did not reappear to the school, and next year I -- I went to another school, closer to home. As a matter of fact, the other school I was registered for my second class was the school of a monastery which was close to us. They had a school, and their name was Trei Ierarhi, which exists still in Miaj. Beautiful church, nicely painted. And they also had the school, it was not a confessional school, it was a, you know, secular school, but it was on the grounds of that and because it was close, I was given there, registered there, and I learned there. My mother -- my parents were not, you know, how to say, so closed [indecipherable] oriented to give me only -- and to register me only on -- on a Jewish school. But I -- I was there part of the year and then I was expelled. So --

Q: And you were expelled in 1940, or 1939?

A: 1940 --

Q: 1940.

A: 1940, yeah, yeah.

Q: So, after the attack on Poland?

A: Yes.

Q: ’39.

A: That was in ’39, yes.

Q: Right.

A: The -- when the law came, I don’t recall exactly when the law for expelling the children came back, it was a state law.

Q: Right.

A: The good thing about that, because it was a good thing in -- in -- which I didn’t realize at that time, of course, the community mobilized itself to create schools, and created schools in synagogues. And when I resumed school, which was one year later because it was also the -- the pogrom and the massacres started, the war started, and I lost a si -- a year, I went on the last to the improvised school to finish my education. And what was a good thing is that not only the children who are expelled, but all the Jewish teachers were expelled from all the state schools.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: So the community had a good supply of very good teachers, and they were very good teacher, maybe among the best. So we -- we had, all of a sudden, a very good complement of teachers in those improvised schools in synagogues. So th -- they were not only the only good teachers. As I said, my teacher, the Motas was not Jewish, clearly was a good teacher himself, very good, I loved him. But then we had, and I realized later on how good my teachers were, because I continued in -- you know, beyond elementary school. And I realized they were all one and one.

As a matter of fact, when things changed in Romania after the war, some of those people who taught elementary school or high school kids, turned out to be, in fact, scholars of high capacity in Romania, mathematicians who were recognized immediately and made into university professors. Yes, yes, immediately after the war.

Q: Right.

A: Including Minyash, yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember your parents talking about Nazis, talking about Iron Guards? Because Iasi becomes, when Antonescu takes power, Iasi is considered the capital of the Iron Guard, which sounds really ominous.

A: Yeah, it was -- of course a topic of discussion. We didn't call them all the time the Iron Guard, in Romania this is Garda de Fier. But they called -- called them the Legionari, legionnaires. And it was a full -- how to -- how to protect ourselves from them, how to avoid them. I -- we knew where there was the building where they had their headquarters. It was, as a matter of fact, not far from our house, on a major street of Iasi, which was called Stefan cel Mare, which is, you know, the name of a Romanian king. And this is where they had their headquarters, and of course called cuibue, the nest of legionnaires. And I tried always to not walk on that side of the street.

Q: Right.

A: To walk on the other side. Other times, later, when they were defeated by Antonescu, it still remained a building with all kind of political -- with -- and there was a flag hanging on there, including this flag with a swastika. I -- anyway. This -- yes, of course. So the answer to your

question is the discussion we were aware of the [indecipherable] were aware of their campaign. It was a matter of parents training children to not go on that street, to pass away, to avoid them, to not look into their eyes, to -- when you see, if you can turn around, go turn around. If you cannot go on the other side of the sidewalk and avoid them because they can hit you again. As it happened, I mean it happened to me, I was beaten -- beaten up, but you know, the -- the discussion was constant. We were aware, it was -- as we came closer and closer to the war, and as I became more and more conscious, that was a per -- constant concern.

Q: Were you conscious in 1939 of the attack on Poland at the time, or was it --

A: My father was talking politics all the time --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- so we knew that the war started. When I really became conscious of that was when the stream of Jewish refugees from Poland came down south and went through -- came through Romania, and some of them tried to move further to the seaside to leave for Palestine. But some stayed in Iasi, and -- and created synagogues and Hassidim or Hassidim, and my father -- and a lot of them, I mean we knew it was convoys of refugees coming from Poland. Romania was not yet in war at that time.

Q: Right.

A: That was ’39. And my father took me to one of those Hassidim’s synagogue [indecipherable] the rabbi and -- and I remember that visit because they prayed and then afterward they sang, and they started to dance. It was probably holiday, with a tune which I remember for years. I will not produce it now to you, but I remember the tune, I think I still remember it.

Q: Can you try?

A: I probably can, but it's on video, so anyway -- but it was with -- was oh, you know, ta, ta ron, ton, ton-ton. It was a real nice tune, and at certain time it has -- it turn around and you start it again and start it again, and every time faster. And it was nice.

Q: And you liked that.

A: Yeah. I did like it, yes, I liked it.

Q: Do you think -- I know you -- you probably didn't know it at the time but maybe your mother told you after the war, did they talk about leaving, or was that not a possibility?

A: Yes, they did. The -- as I told you, the my -- my mother was Russian -- well, I mean, not Russian, w-was educated in -- her childhood in Russia, so she knew Russian literature very well. As a matter of fact, later on in life, she had to make a living out of her knowledge of Russian and of Russian literature and Russian language, so she took a second degree in -- in the 50's in Romania and became a teacher before my father ma -- was already in and didn't have a job and she had to sustain the family. And wi -- she went back to -- to school at the university and studied for four years. I mean part time, but took all the exams, because she already had a -- a diploma, university diploma, and became a qualified teacher of Russian, and knew a li -- Russian literature. So her friends -- there were a number of friends who were, you know, who thought that everything in Russia is fine, and considered living in Russia. Some considered leaving for Palestine, other for Russia. So discussion about -- some, in fact, left for Russia, unfortunately. In 1940 when -- when Russia took that part back, with Hitler's support, the people who were born in Russia had permission by law from Romanian authorities to emigrate in Russia. And some of my parent's friend did, and lost their life soon thereafter, and after everything. So they discussed, I mean, other friends of my family, the family Gluckman, also the lady was a classmate of my mother, and a good friend. They also considered, but they decided to leave for Palestine. And

they did, and they were so smart. They left, they escaped the life, and my good friend, childhood friend Irma left with them, and grew in Palestine, then in Israel, was trained there. Then went to tea -- to study at Berkley, and became an economist. And years later, when both her parents, whom my mother retrieved by correspondence after the war, they reestablished contact, but both died and my mother lost contact again. In 1970, by -- absolute by miracle, when I was, for the first time invited to the United State, to that think tank at Stanford for my -- because I wa -- the [indecipherable] Romania arriving there the first day, the second day, I was told there is a Romanian lady scholar, an American -- sorry, an American scholar who was born in Romania, who is also the same roster of fellows. And do you want to meet her? Why not? So she came, she introduce her, she told me her name Irma Adelman, I told her my name, we started to discuss, and she said she is from Romania, childhood and so on. And that started triggering my memory. I said, “Ar -- Irma, you said Irma, right?” “Yes, Irma.” “By any chance, could it be possible that your maiden name was Gluckman?” I mean, she was dumbfounded. It was like stricken by -- it was my actual first day in the Center for Behavioral -- Advanced Studies and Behavioral Sciences. The highest reputed think tank for social scientists in the U.S., she was there a fellow. I arrived much later because the Romanian government would not allow me to go in time, and it’s another story. But in the first time -- day of meeting -- telling her, she said, “[indecipherable] how do you guess that?” “So I said, if you are that, I am your childhood playmate. Do you remember the name of Musi? Musi Catz?” She looked, “Yes, of course I remember.” And -- and this is how I [indecipherable]

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Yeah. And -- and she is one of the foremost economists of the United States, I mean, is extraordinarily accomplished in her field, yes.

Q: Right, right. We're going to have to change the tape.

A: Okay.

End of Tape Two

Beginning Tape Three

Q: Okay. Michael, what was the statistical possibility here of the two --

A: Well, you know, the -- Irma's husband was a ph -- ma -- physicist, and -- who took the year off to accompany her to the think tank, to the center. And everybody was so stunned. And he thought to calculate the statistical chance, likelihood, in fact for us to meet after so many years, with names changed, and factor in also the fact that it's different country, different profession, she's an economist, I'm a sociologist, and that that think tank has a pattern of one year roster, so we could have been on two different years and just go like the stars in the night and never met -- meet again. And he calculated statistical probability of that to actually happen, and he came up with a number like that, and show it to everybody, so all -- there are a lot of scholars there, and everybody was amazed on that. So all of a sudden from my second day I became a -- a cause celebrity.

Q: Right.

A: All -- but it was also good because I was coming at that time from Romania, the -- the managers of the center knew me. Some of the people who knew my work and invited me knew, but all the others didn't know anything and -- and knew that I'm coming from Romania, who am I?

Q: Right.

A: All of a sudden there was a friend, a recognized person of [indecipherable]

Q: Right.

A: -- who -- who vouched for my family, for who -- I am where I'm coming from, so I felt all of a sudden so well in that center. That year in the center was a marvelous year, and influenced the -- the rest of my life, Joan, for all my work subsequently in the States, yes.

Q: Well let's go back now.

A: Yes.

Q: 1940 is a very pivotal year in -- in Romania, and I don't -- Antonescu takes over, he signs an agreement with the Germans and by 1941 he's going to be part -- Romania will be part --

A: Yes, right, yes, yeah.

Q: -- of the attack on Russia. Do you feel this as a kid? As -- 1940 is there -- is there a big change as you see it, or not?

A: I -- what I recall from 1940 is that shift from the -- the fact that I was expelled from the school, and that my father lost his job suddenly, and he wouldn't go any more to -- he -- he was an engineer in a textile factory. And all of a sudden he would be at home, and not go to his work. So --

Q: And was that because of the anti-Semitic legislation that came up in 1940?

A: Yeah, that was, yes, exactly.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, yes, yes. The other thing, not immediately after, but the end of '40 - '41, they were clearly more military in tone. So this what I remember. That was -- he was very grim, kind of heavy, and we were increasingly worried about what might happen, what might happen. In Romania there is a, I would say [indecipherable] fear really, it was a -- the epitome of worrying, what can the future bring us. And this what I recall. Nothing else, but this is --

Q: Right.

A: -- describes to you the atmosphere.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you n -- you didn't hear any words about concentration camps that were in Germany --

A: No, no.

Q: -- and people weren't talking -- I g -- I suppose people couldn't imagine what could possibly happen anyway.

A: I don't recall --

Q: Yes, yes.

A: -- anything of that [indecipherable] I cannot say that they wouldn't talk, or some would not --

Q: Right.

A: -- speculate, but I -- I have no recollection of that, and I don't think anybody at that time was aware or -- or could anticipate what was likely to happen.

Q: Now, when your father's off of work, is your mother still working?

A: My mother wasn't working, she was a -- she was a pharmacist by training, but she worked very little in the beginning of her -- after i -- after the marriage, her marriage [indecipherable] but then she didn't practice pharmacy.

Q: I see, I see.

A: So she was, you know, keeping the house and my father was making an income. When -- when he lost the job, there was no context in which she could found -- find work. Had she been employed she would have been eliminated as well, so no. And my father quickly had to make some living and what they did was to transform the front room of our house with the exit -- with the entrance, into a store. And to have a number of shelves built. And my father bought a few pieces of textiles, you know, to sell. But that was an improvisation because our home was not in a commercial district, nobody would come there. In addition our home was somewhere in the middle of a courtyard, it was not at the street. So nobody could see it, all passersby on the street

wouldn't no -- see nothing, just a big gate and the entrance to a big courtyard. So we had that in the front and he will go in the -- the commercial center, talk to one merchant, to another and then possibly from time to time bring somebody, pull somebody to our home. And that was always an event. So what happened, would he buy anything? And he became an intermediary in a way between people who had various textiles. He was a specialist engineer, he had more knowledge about those fabrics than the usual merchants of them, and how they are produced. And he would intermediate buying and selling because the commercial quarter still was alive, those people were not expelled, they were their own shops, and Iasi was a big city and there were a lot of people coming and buying their textiles, their, you know, clothes. By that time they were not ready made clothes, and they would buy everything from cotton for shirts to -- to fabric for -- for trousers, to heavy coats and so on. So that was a very lively area. I know it because when I started to go through to school, I had always to cross that street, that long street, which was called Colonel Langa. So I know, and even before that, my father would take me sometimes and keep me by hand and we go from shop to shop and he will ask, do you need that, do you need that, you know? There is somebody who has such a thing, would you like to buy? He carried some kind of briefcase with samples, simply to make a living, because by having a small commission from mediating a sale, he would get a small commission, and that was a livelihood.

Q: And were you okay, I mean can you -- could your parents afford the rent?

A: No, there was -- th-th-there -- there was strain at that time, there was [indecipherable] you know, the -- there's a concept in Yiddish, parnasa, which means making a livelihood, you know. Th-There I learned that term, and that is a cen -- there was, at least at that time, a center concept in -- in the effis of -- of Jews, and whether they were able to make a living or not, because it was a matter of -- of making a living. So, do you have a parnasa, what's your parnasa, you know.

Q: I see.

A: Good parnasa, and it's like that.

Q: When is your brother Zolly born?

A: In '39.

Q: '39.

A: Yes, May eighth, '39.

Q: So that added a burden in a way, I would --

A: It -- very much.

Q: Yeah.

A: The moment was not the best choosing by my parents, but it happened, yes, yes. In '38 the situation was different in Romania. So, he was born in '39, and you know, was not aware of what was around him except he does remember, I -- I checked to him, as it happens he is visiting with us this very week, so I checked him and he has this -- th -- the -- even at two years, he remembers the pogrom and what happened to him at that time. But nothing else. However, I -- I know that he didn't have good years in his childhood. The war, the first years were --

Q: His is the whole childhood, I suppose.

A: Yeah, yeah. But the whole, he was -- you know, the end of the war was in '45, and then the situation started to improve. And he was -- at that time he was six, so it was better times. But the first six year were really bad, really bad. So.

Q: Do you remember the attack on Russia? Was there an announcement that the Romanian army is going to --

A: Yes, there was an announcement, yes, yes, yeah, yeah, there was a big announcement, very dramatic announcement of Marshall -- Marshall Antonescu, was broadcast all over when it

happened, on the radio, on the, you know, public speakers and so on, everybody heard it, and the war started, the -- before that, the town was already full of military, it was obvious to everybody, imminent that something will start sooner or later because the city of Iasi was at 19 kilometers, which is equivalent of about 11 miles from the border with Bessarabia, which by now was Russia already. And when you have so much might, army in town, the Romanian and German, you don't have to be too smart to -- to know that something will happen. So then he said the famous four words, "Va ordon treceti Prutul!" Which means, you are or -- I order you, cross the Prutul, the river, which is the border. That remained in -- in the Romanian folklore, almost as a -- as a prototype of a dramatic order. It's -- that I remember, that I remember.

Q: Do you remember his signing the agreement with Italy and Germany, bef -- before this, this is a -- I don't think -- I think it's November of 1940.

A: Oh yes.

Q: Was there as big an --

A: There was -- I don't -- I don't remember knowing at the time how things happened.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: That there was an agreement between Germany, and imposed in Romania because Romania, although was gravitating to the Germans, moving away from the traditional allegiances to the -- to France and to England, to the western Europe, and moving to the Germans, it was a process. But I was not aware of the politics or the process, but I was aware when that big thing happened at Bessarabia was moving back to [indecipherable] then when Transylvania was lost, also by Hitler's dictate, everybody talked about that. You know, the Romanian map became so distorted by that, totally different from -- from a round piece to something which looked like a big parenthesis.

Q: Yes.

A: Shaved on the east, shorn of a big piece all the way to the heart of the country, given away to another country, to Hungary, so -- so everybody -- it was a national trauma at that time.

Q: Right.

A: So I knew that something very bad happened. I didn't know the mechanics, the politics of it.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: But now, very few days after the attack on Russia --

A: Yes.

Q: -- there's something that's going to start in Iasi which is extremely shocking.

A: Yes, right.

Q: So tal-talk about what it is you remember as a kid.

A: I remember there was -- the Iasi -- the ci -- the city was f -- the city was full -- [phone ringing]

Q: Is that you?

A: Yes, I have right here.

Q: All right, we were going to -- you were going to start to talk about what you remember about the pogrom, which happened days after the attack on Russia.

A: Yes, well we were in our home, I mean all of us at home, the war started and everybody was frightened to death. There was some bombing on -- on the town in the first week of the war. N-No big damage, I mean no damage at all in our area. They might have fallen some other places, but as I recall, the newspapers didn't report any major damage from those bombing done by the Russians. However, those bombing were used as one of the pretexts to justify what became the -- that -- the pogrom, the massacre of the Jews of Iasi. Just one week after the war started, it was a

Sunday, it was -- the war started on June 22nd, that was June 29th, we were on the house and we saw that there are columns of people moving on the street. We saw -- we had a view through the gate of the courtyard into the street, and you could see a narrow corner. We saw they were moving, we didn't know were [indecipherable] but they recognize there were Jewish people in those columns, so we understood that something bad happened, and we're all kind of huddled. And sure enough, very soon, a group of individuals came in. There's some military, some police, some civilians, started knocking this first -- go -- a couple of them, two, three, went to each one of the houses in the courtyard, and they started knocking the door, came to us, entered the house, opened -- pulled the door, entered the house and said, "Out, out, all Jews out, all Jews out." And violently pulling everybody from -- from the house away. This is when -- a moment which is remembered even by my brother, happened, as I mentioned before, in our house lived both grandmother's. My grandmother on my mother's side, was a short woman, rather heavy woman, and very religious, if I said that, really she was a -- a bearer of religion, she imposed on my mother to be very kosher for her, nothing was kosher enough, nothing, nothing. And she had speaking [indecipherable] she would berate my mother often for -- for -- this is relevant, I'll tell you why it is relevant, for not being kosher enough. So she was heavy, she was ill, and she was laying in bed, really laying in bed. And they were pull -- and they saw that woman is laying in -- in bed. So they say, "Out, come out." She barely spoke Romanian, but she wasn't able to move. So -- so one of them, very angry, went and -- and caught her by the hair and pulled. And there the hair came off. Because she was wearing a wig as a very, very Orthodox woman. And the guy wa -- and the guy said -- and -- and this is what my -- my brother remembered because he was two years, and sh -- he told me, down in there, he was so scared, saying that he -- he pulled all her hair. And -- and you know, my father was begging and praying, she's ill, she's very heavy,

she's very old, please, please forgive her, let her be there, she cannot move. They tried to pull her, but she was too heavy. And they realize that she will be unable to move into the column, so they left her in the bed, and pulled us, all of us. Fortunately they didn't shoot her on the spot, but this is why it was relevant that she was very Orthodox, and -- and we were pulled, put in the columns, and then the column started moving, slowly, slowly, because it was s-s-stopping at every next courtyard, and waiting for the Jews of that courtyard to be pulled. And the next courtyard was -- a friend of mine was living, a very good friend, Nuni Steinberg, who -- his family was pulled and -- and brought in our back, and put into the column. And so it was until the -- our entire street, that was street Colonel Langa, on which we lived, came to the main street. The main street had been already combed by prior groups, so once we got to the main street, we simply marched, were marched further, we didn't have to stop because from the main street on, the place were already judenrein.

Q: They had already shot Jews?

A: No, they sh -- cha --

Q: Oh, they just moved them?

A: Shot, or -- or moved them. Not all shot on the -- they -- so we moved. But with us was my brother. We had all to -- to go with hands up when we moved. When we stayed, they allowed us to keep the hands down, but when we moved, we had to -- and my brother was two years old, so he couldn't move, a child of two years, so my father put him on his shoulders. And my father was supposed to keep I -- hi -- hands up, and they little boy keep -- kept. And I remember him, I -- that image I see him, and he remembers, si -- was staying on his father's shoulders with his hands up, like everybody else in the column.

Q: So he was sitting on his shoulders with the legs down on --

A: Legs, right, right, yes --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: The legs here, and --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- [indecipherable] and with his little --

Q: With his hands up.

A: -- little hands up. And this is how we were marched. Then as we were marched, they saw corpses on the street, and we --

Q: You did see corpses?

A: Yeah, we did see corpses on the street here and there, kind of people who obviously didn't move, dead or -- or mortally wounded, who knew, were -- we -- er -- people in the column were beaten, I mean they were forcibly marched, screamed at. People screamed from the sidewalks who were not in the columns, [indecipherable] the inhabitants, insults and so on, and were moved there, and whoever was old was pushed, and you know, there -- the rifle, the butt of the rifle pushed and -- and hurried to advance faster. As a -- and we were shepherded toward the headquarters of the police in Iasi. As we approached that -- that place, we noticed there were columns coming from different other directions, cause you had to pass a -- a square, a big square and that was on the other side of the square. So we -- really that happened from all parts, and there were -- so the streets were full with columns. There was a -- a -- a lot of people, a crowd was on front of the big gate of the -- which was a big metal gate, a wooden gate, but closed, you couldn't see inside the courtyard, but part of the gate was opened. So when we were brought in, our turn came, then they will be the triage, the selection. They kept all the men and the grown up

boys, and sent women back with children. And as we arrived there, they pulled my father in, and they waved us all back. I was at that time, in ’41, was -- was I --

Q: 10.

A: -- nine and a half -- yes 10, almost 10, but I was a small kid at that time. Now I am taller, but I started to gr -- grow after 13, I had a tonsils operate and started to grow fast, but as a child I was a very small child, so at 10 I was still small. Other children, I mean boys of 13 - 14 - 15, some were sent back, some were kept. Then my father disappeared through the gate. I -- we didn’t see what happened to him. Later -- later I -- I learned what happened to him, and we were sent back. At that time my father passed my brother to my mother, and we were hurrying back. The coming back, in small groups not in column, was a real scare, enormous scare, and hellish because we were not in a column, only a small group. Everybody who was not Jewish knew what happened, and so, and there were people beating my mother, and my grandmother, who was with us. And my mother would -- would embrace Zolly, my brothers, and screaming all the time, copilul, copilul, please, we’re all c-copilul, protecting him. And I started to protect him too. And my hands was -- were beaten by, you know, the -- you -- sticks, and --

Q: Right.

A: -- and -- and we are running and my poor grandmother was running with us. So we made it almost -- so this was really -- there -- by that time there were more corpses, I remember seeing more corpses laying on the streets, and blood here and there. And as we came close to our home, another gang of people stopped us all and collected us again, and said, “Wo -- how do you go? Where do you go, home? No, no, no, you should go to the police.” And -- and stopped and started to collect all the people who were coming back, who were only women and children, or elderly people, not men, including some other people from our courtyard. A family called

Zilberman, with two girls older than I, Lidia and Mia, whom I knew very well, but they also stopped there [indecipherable]. And then the women started to beg and to pray, say, “We were at the police, please allow us to go home. They released us from the police.” “No, no, no, you are lying, you are escape. We’ll shoot you.” So they -- they made like they were about to shoot people, say, “You stand to the wall.” And then somebody came and say, “Leave them, let them go.” And all of a sudden they were let go. We were already close to home, so we ran home. And that happened to the family, that Zilberman family, and that other, but with all the men. In our house, in our courtyard there was another family, Barad, who was also a -- a merchant, and with a family lived there, and they had three sons. And it was only the lady who was released, and the two smaller sons, children. The father and the elderly son was retained, like my father. Well, what happened -- and I learned later, to my father, to everybody who was pulled there, was that they had to move through a -- I would say the gauntlet of people, you know, two rows of people, soldiers, policemens, [indecipherable] people with iron bars, with rubber truncheons, simply beat them with rifles, beat them bloody, then stepped on them. And they were forced to -- to pass through that, and to run, and move, move, move, while beating. Some fell, were trampled, others were hit. My father were -- was badly hit, and they ran, and in the back of the courtyard, thousands of people were already gathered. So they gathered the crowd. That I learned later. At home my mother was scared and concerned to death and said, “What will happen to Tata?” And what they believed, they are still very naïve, is that they are rounding up the Jews to send them to labor camp as labor. And she said, “But he left with nothing, I mean, with the clothes on him. Let me make something and see what I,” -- she was, as I told you, she was extraordinarily -- very courageous. She got in front of the mirror, dress herself with her best clothes [indecipherable] everything, put lipstick -- she was very pretty woman -- to look as elegant as possible, not Jewish

at all. Made the bundle, a little -- with a -- with shirt, with a -- some -- some towels, soap, some medication, maybe a little package, to take and get to the police to be able to pass on to her husband so he has something where he is deported to a labor camp, because he didn't have a shirt, nothing. And prepare them, you know, we are afraid and my grandmother say don't go, her mother say don't go, don't go. She would say, "No, I have to go, I have to go. Nobody will recognize me, I will try to do, you know, and if then they will beat me, they will send me back, they retain only -- but I have to go, I cannot leave him." And she was just about to go when my father appeared to the door. Bloodied, beaten, but appeared at the door of the house. What happened there?

Q: Well, I think we have -- let's wait til the next tape, and you'll tell us what happened.

A: Yeah, okay, yeah.

Q: Cause we're right at the end of this tape.

End of Tape Three

Beginning Tape Four

Q: Michael, I'm sorry about the interruption.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: We were -- we ended where your f -- your mother was going to try and go see your father and give him something.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: But sh -- he came back.

A: Yeah, she was ready with a little package, and bundle to -- to take, and he came back and -- beaten, full of blood here and limping. And he make -- and he kind of fell into the house and push her back, and say, "Stay, stay, don't go." "Wh-What is happening?" He was shocked to see her so elegantly dressed, but she -- what happened at the police, the police had a big courtyard, but as time passed, I mean, they start in effect the rounding up of Jews not only the 29th, but on the 28th in the evening, as I learned later -- we had no way of knowing, but later I learned that in fact on the 28th of th-the -- the -- of June, they also killed a lot of people in their homes and in their houses. In the 29th in the morning they were surrounding, and also killing, but o -- occasionally killing, mostly bringing them to the police. So as they brought column after column and -- and selected only the men, even the men were too many for the courtyard. So the courtyard became full brim -- full to the brim, they couldn't push any more people in that. So people -- the column kept going -- they accumulated in front of the -- so something happened that they brought -- my father described that exactly. They pushed some -- brought a table, two chairs and two Romanians officers, with a paper and a stamp, and making a list, and s -- started to call people come. And whoever was in the front row started to move one by one. Say name, address and giving them a piece of paper, take it, with a stamp, that say he can go. Lieber, it was

written in that. And that gave them the permission to go out of the -- so, going out was another difficult moment, they had to run because again were the beaters there. And people started to be freed from the -- the police to create room for others to enter. And that apparently lasted for some time. My father saw that, he tried to be in the front, push himself, ran [indecipherable] and was beaten down and got up and got -- he was on the side come -- as I said, you know, and finally he got the line to go and got the thing and came out. This is very relevant because as we also learned later from other people and the survivors, after awhile of giving those tickets to many people, not just to a few, to many, creating room, some German officers appeared there. They had a discussion with the Romanian officer, and they stopped giving out those things. From that moment they wouldn't give any more. Those who got it, got it. That accredited idea, that those who got the ticket and gave the address were kind of hereby enlisted for the future collection for labor camp, or maybe they thought of deporting them, who knows? But -- but the others who are -- in the meantime, the day was over, s -- dark started to -- to come down, and the columns stopped too. And that -- that I haven't seen, but I know from the stories. And my father was home, this is how my father was home. I am telling my family story, not what happened, but I explain how he got home. So when he got home, my mother told him and they understood immediately, they said, "You have to hide. Yo -- they have your name, address, they can come after you. You have to hide." My mother remained -- undressed, dressed again normally. And next to our ho-house in that big courtyard was a kind of -- the land, I cannot say the word in English. In Romanian it's a Ripa. It's a kind of little valley with some stream and a little small lake, I mean [indecipherable] in the bottom. And that little valley had kind of this undulation going down, with a -- we used always in winter that valley this way to put our -- how do you call that? Sleighs.

Q: Sleighs?

A: Sleighs, yes. And to go down, and every time we go here, jump, and they caught, you know, lots of speed and it was fun and the whole thing was to get down in high speed and to avoid the little water, the little lake where the -- otherwise you fall on your face.

Q: [inaudible]

A: And it was -- this is what I -- I learned my mastery in conducting the sleighs. And it was very fun, and in the winter there was nothing but this -- this tops from the corn which was growing. In summer, however, that was all cultivated, it was fertile land, with corn. So the corn in June was already tall. So where could my father fall -- the -- my mother made some food for him, a piece of clothes to lay on the ground, and he immediately disappeared into the corn, because the corn tall, you know, and big and -- and have a -- and disappeared and didn't see anything, and stayed there, hidden. And we were in the house. Indeed the nay -- night came, my father didn't come back, he was hidden there, and sure enough during the night, we hear again beatings. I don't know whether my mother slept or not, I sure did. And we heard heavy beatings, and then screams, th-the door was already kind of barricaded and strong, but we were afraid, we couldn't resist, so immediately my mother called us. We were dressed. We were asleep, but I was dressed, and my brother was dressed. And again my -- my grandmother was in bed, but the other was mobile. And while they were beating in the front door, we exited through the back door.

Q: Oh, when you say beating, you mean they were hitting the front --

A: Hitting, yes, sorry.

Q: -- hitting the front door, uh-huh.

A: La -- ra -- yeah, beating the door.

Q: Okay.

A: Beating the door at that time.

Q: Yes.

A: Trying to enter, and we heard immediately there were a big noise and they were beating the door, hitting the door and screaming, open, open, open. So we immediately -- what is? And we went down to the back of the house, which also had a door, looked [indecipherable] looked, nobody was there out of the group of the front, so we ran away through the back. And we ran to the back of the yard where there was that single Romanian family in the -- in the courtyard, who was Mihaescu, Mihaescu -- Mihaescu something. When I had my playmate, that girl, Coca. They were not very friendly with my mother and my father, generally speaking, not very pleasant, but they sheltered us. So they were a bit -- you know, now they'd be really rewarded for that. But they received us and we hid there. And we wouldn't know what happened in the house. We were sure that my father hears the noise, because if -- he was in the corn, but not far, and hope he will not come out and they will not find him. And we stayed the whole morning, and in the morning my mother went first -- sent the neighbor and then went first, and found indeed the house -- the house -- the -- the front door was badly damaged, but they didn't break in.

Q: Oh, they didn't?

A: They didn't break in and the -- they found the house. And then, slowly, we came back, and then my mother went onto the corn with more food to find my father. And she found him, with Marcu, Marcu, you know, s-slowly, she [indecipherable] found him, he heard all -- sh -- he was very happy hearing that everybody is fine. He kind of understood because those people could be overheard as they spoke, and -- and cursed, you know, that they didn't catch us. He imagine what had happened. In short, he stayed there for three days and three nights. And my mother would go and bring him food and water and come back, and he would not come back into the house for the

fear that they will come again and -- and pick up the men, or the people, whatever. So he slept on -- on the -- the ground because of cour -- and on the fourth day he first came o -- in the meantime we started to learn through voices and people that a lot of people didn't come back. In our courtyard some came back, but others didn't. In the family Barad, which I believe I mentioned, only the woman with two children came back, the man was -- and he didn't ex -- ec -- access the -- the point to where they got the ticket. And I learned that a lot of people were killed in the courtyard of the police, and that others were taken to -- to the train station. Again, I didn't know what happened, train station made it plausible that they were taken to some labor camp somewhere, to be -- as it turned out later, it was not a labor camp, but the -- the -- the si-situation a bit calmed in the sense that there were not gangs of people roaming the s -- the town to pull out the Jews. There were other things on their agenda because the war was already in the 10's or 12's or 13 days, you know, and the army broke through the Russian row -- armies -- and advanced, and all the news were very happy. The newspapers said, you know, the victory of that, and -- and it appeared that the interest in the Romanian Jews faded for the moment, it was felt. My father came, stayed in the house, didn't go out for months, weeks, I don't know. Kept me in the house, everybody stay, we -- the -- they exchanged food between neighbors. It was very, very little food; water we had. And this is how we passed the time after the thing. Then, only later on, we started news to percolate, or at least for me to learn that in the -- what happened, that people were put in the trains. And these were the famous death trains of Iasi, which became, you know, the equivalent of Nazi chambers on the wheels. There were box cars stuffed with Jews to the brim, cars which normally couldn't take anything else but -- but, you know, bags and sacks and -- and freight. People were like sardines in a box, 150 - 200, I don't know, but it was full. And all the boxcars were filled, and then they sealed the boxcars so the doors cannot be opened, and

there is no air, and the train started to move and to go in a direction nobody was told. But in fact, they didn't go anywhere. It was moving between stations. If you ask me why it was moving, I don't know whether they didn't know where to go or whether one pulled -- I mean the -- the -- th-the -- there were soldiers on the train guarding those things, or whether they intentionally did that back and forth to kill the people in the [indecipherable]. But with no food, with no water, people started to scream and -- and die, in fact, and -- and were horrible scenes which were told by the survivors after several days, six or seven days, one of the trains reached a far away point, after shuttling far away, but a point which could have re -- be reached in several normal hours of train, and only a few of the people still were alive and were taken out. Another, second train, was in fact never moved farther away, they were shuttling between very close places. No, because it was -- people were screaming all the time, and they were stopping in stations, the soldiers wanted to stop to do their things, they also realized that people dead -- there were dead people, an-and they opened the door, and asked the people from the boxcar to throw out people who were dead. And they brought and throw them on the pavement. And they -- the -- those who were all right were not allowed to -- to come out, wa -- and they left on the pavement, sealed the doors again and the train left. Those who were there -- in some places there were some Jews in those little towns. Not in all, because before the war, the Jews from the smallest places were forcibly relocated in the bigger towns. Was a political design in -- in fact. But this what happened, nobody knew at that time why. But in some smallest towns there were some Jews who were not on the trains and who were summoned to collect those people, and to bring them in the cemetery. In other places, they were simply loaded on horse drawn carts and dumped in the cemetery. Were some interesting scenes because as a train like that, screaming, comes and stays, and people hear of that, and some of the locals came too. Some cursed, some others tried to help.

And there are -- there are records made by the survivors who testified that some of those who came really wanted to help, and to give them water. Some traded the water and the people in the boxcar gave them rings, and gold, and whatever they had on them. Others simply grabbed and give them. One -- I remember that one of those who was reported doing so was recognized by Yad Vashem as among the Righteous of the People. And her name is there, and he's -- she's very much revered -- revered. Victoria Agarici is her name. She is being described by the survivors by setting the gendarme aside. "I don't care about you, I need to give water and bread to those people. Beat me if you want." And she broke through the rows and approached the train and gave people water. I mean, it's a very emotional, but this is the story, and she saved probably the lives of some of those people who were -- you know, people drank the urine of other people. There was a hole in the wooden -- in the board, they would struggle among themselves who could put his mouth on that hole to breathe some fresh air from outside. So horrible Danté-esque scenes inside. And here was a good, honest woman, was willing to fight the police to do what she felt was right, and to give the food and to save other people. So this is what happened. This is how so -- the m -- the majority of the people who were put on the trains died on the tra -- either died on the train, or came out at the arrival point of the first train and died in the next several hours. And their numbers, which probably the Holocaust Museum has, about how many exactly survived, and how many died, because statistics were kept, all -- all those by -- by the killers, and they reported so many corpses, which were [indecipherable] in fact, there is a report which was discovered in the archives of the -- the special service, security service of Romania, who apparently organized the massacre of the Jews, about the total number of Jews who were killed. That was a report th-the pride, accomplishment and was reported by numbers, and the document exist which reports a -- a -- you know, a scary figure. If you can imagine that 13,100 or 200

people in total were killed in those days. And this was a report sent by the local unit of that special service to their superiors, as an accomplishment. I couldn't give you my own opinion, I don't have a number, but I know how many I saw myself. But this is a total number, so they kept numbers also on the people who survived from the trains, and people who were unloaded. But I can again say that I saw in this -- in the 90's, when I was able again to travel to Romania, and I did travel. I got married in the meantime, here in the States, and I took my wife, who is American, and we went through the route of the Moldova, and stopped in all these little t-towns until we went to Iasi, where I was born and showed her, and then went further. She's also an anthropologist, Ruth Cernea, very interested in the story of my family, and the story of the Jews in -- in Romania. She's -- her field of study is Jewish culture, and the Passover Seder, which -- she wrote books on that. No -- well -- very well known anthropologist. And of course was interested herself in seeing what happened. And in those little towns, coming close to Iasi, where the train stopped, we visit cemeteries, and you can see huge graves, collective graves, in which those bodies were dumped, without any identification, nobody knows who was buried where. Shortly thereafter, the war, those common graves covered, you know, by soil and -- and branches got, you know, stone covers, and immediate after the war, the community, the town put huge slabs of concrete. It's not normal gravestone, but they are -- they are enormously impressive because you see slabs of concrete covering the collective graves of those killed in the trains, which are stretching from here all the way to the wall there, one after the other, one after the other.

Q: So 20 or 30 feet of --

A: Pardon me?

Q: 20 or 30 feet of concrete.

A: There were about even more, seven, eight meters I would say, which yes, exactly 25 feet length. All standard cement, you know, some -- but those are the collective graves, which were set immediately after the war -- I mean, the -- the -- the slabs. And historical -- historical paradox and irony, and the sociological paradox is that those -- the graves of those killed in those -- in the massacres, are in several cemeteries not far from another corner of the cemetery, which co-contained the graves of people who were killed during the first World War, and in some prior war, which was called the War of Independence, when some Jews were allowed to fight for -- in the army. Still distinguished as Jews, but they're very willing to fight and proud to fight for the independence of Romania. And then they were buried in the Jewish cemetery, where their remains were brought because they were Jews, in -- but the Jewish communities were very proud that part of their community gave their lives in the fight and in the war for Romania's independence. It was a matter of honor, and the desire to make their contribution to the country and identify with the right cause of independence of the country they were living. And that corner of cemetery, the heroes of the independence war, and of the first war is always treasured, and kind of honored specifically. And next to it you can see the -- the Jews killed in Romania in a massacre, in a pogrom which was the -- the premonition of what was to happen in the next year on a even larger scale to so many other hundreds and thousands of Jews.

Q: Right.

A: So this is -- it was -- later when we -- some of the people who remained alive, send messages where they are, and their families went and contacted, and tried to find out whether their own relatives were among the survivors. One arrived in some wha -- Calarasi. And another, which was farther away, another was in Portleroi which was closer and easier from Iasi to travel there. And you know, there was an unending waiting, and when people came back, family members,

and were -- got the news that their father, or their brother, or their son didn't make it, was killed, and others was all right, no, you know, that -- you know, Sroul Abramovitch died. I know for sure because he died in front of me. And the other died, and I know when his body was -- was thrown down. So they found -- they got the certainty of having lost those people forever. So it was a continuous awareness of that pogrom.

Q: [indecipherable] in some way, because --

A: No, no, I mean the -- the -- the climate the people who disappeared were first deemed alive and hopefully will return, because as I said, not only my parents, but others thought that eventually they are being transpor -- transported to some labor camps. The country was in war, the need for labor was obvious. It was a plausible -- maybe it was wishful thinking, but nobody could imagine that they -- people, live people are being put in train and shuffled from one place to the other, without food and wa -- to be killed, or be killed in -- s -- but this happened, so awareness seeped in more and more, and the tragedy, and the crying and th-the suffering and the fear was -- were prevailing.

Q: Right.

A: So it was very hard months and years, and my parents kept me the entire year, inside the -- the house and would not allow me to go except in the courtyard under supervision, to know all the time what happened to me. No going out on the street. And I was not the only child treated this way by their families. So, it was a time of hard oppression, of fear for the -- in the entire community. And the awareness of -- of the loss, and of the massacre, which nobody would have conceived that. You know, there -- that was not actually the first in Romania, there were pogroms before, in '97 -- 1907, some Jews were killed, there were riots in Romania [indecipherable] killed. There was a small pogrom in 1940, apparently done by the military,

which some people learned about it. I did not know about that at that time, I was a kid, but it was in Dorohoi. A number of Jews, two or 300 were killed. I read about it later. My parents could have known that it happened in 1940. We all knew, however -- I also knew tha -- about what happened in January in ’41 before Romania entered the war, when there was the -- not the riot but the attempt to a coup -- coup d’etat that -- the coup by the Iron Guard to grab power, and Antonescu was the leader, use the army to -- to squelch that -- that attempt to grab the power, an- and defeated the Iron Guard. But during the Iron Guard upraising and attempt, they killed Jews, and they killed also Romanian police or Romanian soldiers who fought them. When they took the Romanian soldiers, which were Romanian, they would still kill them. But for the Jews, there was a special treatment. They took the Jews whom they caught, brought them to the town slaughterhouse, killed them, and hang their bodies. And the newspapers carried pictures of that. The reason the newspapers carried pictures was bay -- because the newspapers of Antonescu, who fought the Iron Guard, was interested to show what the Iron Guard was doing, killing Romanians, and also those jidan, you know, th-the Jews. And look what they did, they were savages and --

Q: I’m afraid we have to stop. Sorry.

End of Tape Four

Beginning Tape Five

Q: Michael, can you give us some sense of what that year of being in the house pretty much -- I mean, I know you went into the courtyard, but you were not a free kid any more.

A: No, no, well it was a very hard year. It was a general year of -- of -- a sense of impending doom. After all we heard that ha-happened, the fear was pervasive in our bones, it could re-happen again every -- every day in fact. We were seeing that the presence of the army was less, and there was apparent quiet, but the rumor mill and the fears, the -- the -- the sense that, you know, we have no -- no -- no protection whatever, you can -- absolutely -- are absolutely at the mercy of anything anybody wanted to do. And there was now and then, news coming about somebody was beaten, somebody was -- you know, in the open day, everything was stolen from him, and beaten and left there in full day -- full daylight. And police didn't say anything. So, the sense was that you were under siege all the time.

Q: Were you conscious of this as a 10 year old?

A: Yeah, I wasn't -- I was, beca -- you know, I did have at that time, 10 - 11 years, but those events make you more mature than your age, and your fear makes you sensitive. No, th -- and real things happened, it was not simply a -- an anonymous or kind of general unexplained fear. My father for instance, and other Jews, received a paper which was called Call Order. Was a military paper from the military service saying -- and this was tha -- six months we -- after the -- the massacre, in beginning of '42. They say, hereby you are informed that you are to deliver to -- to work as labor -- forced labor. You are part of a team number 38, or some number, under the team leader is so and so. This is the place where you have to be present when called. The calls will be made publicly, by public speakers and other ways, and you immediately have to present yourself at that place, under severe penalties. Signed, the military circle of Iasi. So we received

that, and that document I -- I remember was the -- the scariest of all. So finally they said they are coming now around to put out all the Jews, to round them up and to send, and this is even official, and not unan -- announced. And with -- make -- happen all the day because there is no today. And so you lived in fear that that order would be executed any time, and would not know what would happen to -- to him, or to us. And sure enough, shortly thereafter that order came another one asking him to -- to come to be present for forced labor at the place, which was the address of the train station. Now this was a train station from where the -- the death trains were sent out. And here is a paper asking him to come there and -- and work, so you can imagine what he thought. Will he ever come back, or are they all rounding them up there under some kind of order, pretext, whatever. They will load them on the train and here it will happen again, they will be killed, taken away, you will never see them. On the other hand, he couldn't not go. How could he not go, because it was obvious they had his name and his address and in full. So, with all the fear in your heart, and other people also received, so it was a collective -- and the rumor mill k-kept going, did you receive, did you receive, I did receive, I didn't receive, why didn't that receive, what will happen. So on the appointed day, he was all dressed, equipped with heavier because it was a cold winter, with a package, you know, to last him, and he was summoned and he had to go to the train station. At the train station they were all put to shovel snow, and clean that and clean that, and we were waiting, waiting. And it was the explosion of joy when at the end of the day we saw him back. We didn't know whether he will come back. And he worked there for I don't know how many, a -- a week, or [indecipherable] and he came back every day, and others came back. They did not send those -- them again or kill them. Was hard work, forced labor, but they all came back. But with the indication that they can be called again any time. So if -- we all lived in expectation of another call, so the -- the sense of fear, the terror, the impending

risks or -- were there. And he was called indeed, but he came back. Interesting enough, the par -- the bureaucracy works in all system. He received a document that he did present himself to that place, and he did the days of labor. And I have the documents of, you know, the call order, and the confirmation that he was present and did the hard labor, signed by the military, you know, department, with the dates exactly what it is. So that was the year -- oh, yes, I was saying about all the Jews, there was, at the end of spring, the -- the -- the news came that all the Jews will have to be submitted to a census, the entire Jewish population. And that should be done through the Jewish community, the Jewish community was responsible that -- that all the Jews be recorded. Now, we knew that the Jewish community knew who the Jews are and where they are, so why is there all of a sudden need to do again such a thing? Again, th -- all the inferences and the fears. It was just short of a year from the pogrom, from the massacre in May, June. And it was announced and we lived in fear and then there were cards sent for each to fill in, because it was a census to be filled in. Indeed, the community was asked to do, to submit to the government. We didn't hear the community, we fer -- we feared what was going to happen, and everybody had to receive, old, young, child, no matter, so we fe -- I -- I filled the card of that census myself, as the original document, which was titled, you know, census of all inhabitants with Jewish blood. Recensamintul locuitor cu ringelvreese. I mean, this is how blunt it was, nothing veiled, nothing hi --

Q: And this is the Romanian government [indecipherable] this is not Germans.

A: This is the Romanian government, no, no, no, this is absolutely the Romanian government, and -- and it was [indecipherable] my name, my age, my place of -- my address, my everything. And because I was a minor, my father was -- had -- there was a place to record that -- his

signature, to guarantee for the accuracy of the data. So I was also on the record as a inhabitant with Jewish blood. You know, available for pick up, if needed.

Q: Now, is this true of everybody in the household, your mother, and your --

A: Everybody, yes, everybody.

Q: Everybody? So all the women --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- and all the men?

A: All the -- inclu --

Q: Including your little brother?

A: Including my little brother. Everybody with Jewish blood. He may have his own card, because my -- my father and my mother saved that. I have mine from my -- through my mother and I don't know that he has it. But it is, it has all the stamps on the four -- front, on the back. It's a document, you know. Maybe sometime I'll donate it to the Holocaust Museum, because it [indecipherable] a document. So you may realize from those moments which I try to reconstruct, the -- the climate in which we lived, and how everything like that was like a -- a jolt of fear and you know, shaking us up and throwing us back into fear and uncertainty and th-the sense of constant siege, and a risk of life. You know, I told you when I came -- I was near execution on the way back from the police quarters when they caught us, stopped us and put us with the face to the wall. And they said, you escaped, you will -- going to be killed, until that voice sounded, let them go. But it was impending execution to be with your face -- so you don't forget easily such things. So that was what we felt at the time and how the year went, and --

Q: Just -- was your sleep disordered? I mean, during that year when you were in the house, and clearly by then you know that things are extremely tense and something horrible can happen at

any moment. Do you have nightmares? Do you -- I mean are you still this -- a kid whose -- and you --

A: Y -- like I say, it's very likely plausible, I -- I -- perhaps it was. I don't have a recollection to say specifically that this happened to me. The only thing I knew that I do recall that I lived in fear, that I was afraid to go out re -- there was no need for parents to restrain me too much to not go on the street, I wouldn't go on my own.

Q: I see.

A: [indecipherable] here. And it was justified because later when I was star -- started leaving the house, I was once knocked down by somebody who was coming across me, didn't show any sign of hostility except he stopped one meter in front of me, and when I came close, he really slapped -- knocked me down until I was down. He -- in fact, I saw him taking the glove, and stopping them, he knocked me down, and then I was down. He didn't say a word, he put his gloves back, and walked away.

Q: Yeah.

A: So I waited for him to walk away, I collected myself and -- and ran back home. Well, so this --

Q: Yes.

A: -- so I don't know whether I had nightmares, but I know that it was a nightmare during --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- awake hours yes. In wake hours.

Q: An-And how did your mother and father get food for you all? Where --

A: I cannot say, but it was -- they had to do expeditions outside, they were selling certain things. There were -- yes, I do remember some things. You know, Romania was an agrarian country, a

lot of f-food was brought by -- and there were women peasants who would bring thing in the market, and then they started to bring things to home, realizing that people don't come to the market, but they may be customers at home. And they will say [indecipherable] smintina brinza, which is sour cream, or cheese, or other things, some vegetables. And -- and this was truck, this was exchange of food for items.

Q: I was going to say, because your parents don't have money.

A: No money, no. There were things being given to those women, and then a bag to come back, and they would come back after three weeks or four weeks, bring another thing, sometime they brought a -- a chicken. And this was the way we're getting food, they were trading things from the house.

Q: Mm-hm. Did you feel hungry during that period, or do you remember?

A: I don't remember.

Q: You don't remember.

A: I -- well, I think that whatever food there was came first to me and to my brother, in the house, yes.

Q: And then your parents last, right.

A: Because we were very loved as children --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and I know that my mother ate very little. My father ate a bit more, but no, I don't -- I don't recall being hungry, I don't recall being hungry. Oh, my parents did something. They realized -- yes, this is significant, they realized how lonely I am, and how bad it is for a child to not have anybody. So they reach an understanding with another family who had many children, to take one boy of my age to live with us.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, his name was Haim, Haimala. Simply to give me -- to create a companion for me. There was no payment exchanged. Those -- but they promised to share the food with him. For that family, where there were about six children, that was a good relief. They knew my parents as very respectable, and they allow that child to come. And this was Haimala, and my father, who was an engineer, was a good chess player, taught us both chess. And that was very fortunate because to learn chess you have to have a partner of more or less the same caliber to be play -- yes. And we learned at the same time, and it was match each other and the other, and we played for hours. For hours we played chess, and he lived with us for a few months and I had a -- a friend in the house, in the house. Some times we go in the field, and -- I don't remember his family name, but his first name, Haim, Haimala.

Q: Haim. And you got along?

A: Yes, we got along very well.

Q: And this went on for a few months?

A: For a few months in -- in '42.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: In '42. A period after the massacre, not beyond the -- the summer of '42, because in the fall of '42 I -- I start to go into school.

Q: School, yeah.

A: Yeah. But -- so this was the period then --

Q: It's interesting that your parents would come up with an idea like that.

A: Yeah, yeah [indecipherable] yes, yes, yes, they did, and that -- I wish I can name that person, though.

Q: Yes. Did you play with your brother also, cause here it is, your tiny, little brother.

A: Well, not chess [indecipherable]

Q: No, I understand.

A: But yes, I played, but he was really small.

Q: Right.

A: I mean, he was -- in ’42 he was three years old, ’44, so [indecipherable]

Q: Right.

A: -- I was already 11 years old.

Q: Right, you’re a big guy.

A: Yeah, so he claims that I wasn’t very nice to him always, but -- but so I loved him.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, he was my -- I protected him when people were beating my mother with him in her arms.

Q: Yeah.

A: So I love him, and he was my brother, but I don’t think we played a lot together.

Q: Right, right.

A: Yeah. At that time it was a big age difference.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean later, you know, the age didn’t count so much.

Q: Now, some time in ’42, you’re able to go to a Jewish community synagogue school.

A: Yes, and --

Q: Does that -- so that you leave the house?

A: Yes, I leave the house, as I said, things slowly, slowly --

Q: Got a little better.

A: Yeah, we had the -- the census of the Jewish community done by the Jewish community. We are afraid that something will happen. A month passed, two months passed. People from the community said no, we gave the data over here, but we don't think s -- the danger is -- send your children to school, we'll do the best to protect, so they encouraged, and then they send me to school indeed. Indeed we saw -- we saw that although the census was made, and my card bears the date of the census, which was June, I believe, '42, and one month, two months later, nothing happened. There was evidence of who are the Jews, but nothing happened. At the same time, which was a very important factor, the Romanian army was victorious. It was far away, deep into the Soviet Union, and -- and there was a -- a -- a sense of triumph in the Romanian community and clearly they were -- there were a lot of things being stolen from Russia and coming in, it was known there is a -- trains of items were brought and officers came with cars loaded, military cars with their own build -- I mean, their items stolen and -- so somehow the concern with the Jews decreased a bit, and we felt that. So it was a bit more relaxed and they send me to school. They wanted to -- me to learn something. I told you that during the same year, I was -- a Melamed came to our home. Again my father asked somebody who was younger than him [indecipherable] to come and teach me. And again, the payment was in -- in things. And he came and taught both me and Haimala the -- the Hebrew alphabet, and this is when I actually started. I know -- I remember we weren't too good students and he was not a very tough teacher and ri -- we didn't do our schoolwork and so on, it wasn't -- I didn't learn too much. But he came -- he came and he tried, so I was a bit prepared. And my mother would talk to me about literature, so some kind of home schooling, and my father did with me, math. Math, mathematics, you know, arithmetics, to -- to teach me the f -- the things, because he was an engineer. And then Haimala,

too. So we had some kind of improvised schooling at home. And then they said, you know, the child grows, he has to go to school. And they send me to school, and first I was accompanied, then finally I would go by myself. They advised -- the parents want for us to come in groups, so say if something happens, you run and tell whoever you can what happened, so we'll come to help. And I was crossing the Jewish quarter in fact, all the way to school, and the school, what was the school? The school was a big synagogue with a shtender, you know the shtender, it was individ --

Q: What is a shtender?

A: The shtender is the -- the piece of furniture on which you keep your -- your Sidur, to read when there is an individual bench. Otherwise there is a full bench. A lot of times there is, you know, a chair, and the shtender at a chair. Here we were given the shtenders to be able to use the boxes to put our copy books -- prayer books. It wasn't proper equipment for children, that was made for ad-adults, but I remember very well how we learned. We had teachers and we went to school. We had breaks, you know, we played in the breaks and a bit of normalcy seeped in. And this was end of '42 - '43, and then Stalingrad happened, and then we became happy, and the Romanians, and the others people there started to understand that the war is turning. And since [indecipherable] and casualties were on the Romanian side pretty severe -- very severe in fact, because the Germans put always the Romanian troops and regiments in the -- in the fire, you know, in the most dangerous, and there were many casualties and losses. So the situation turned generally grim, but we were able to -- to learn about what is happening, and some hope started to -- to come up, that the Germans are going to be defeated, and the war is going to be turned around. So that gave us a bit of hope, our hope grew. The situation generally didn't worsen, and it didn't worsen for Jews as it was -- became apparent much later, I did not have any way myself

to learn that, but for the overall picture it appeared that the politicians, including the government, Antonescu, realized sooner than we did that the war is turning and then the risk of being -- killing the Jews is 10 times as high because they may be a -- become accountable. So the -- the state's anti-Semite activities did not grow, or did not expand their -- I am not aware of any other massacre or pogrom, or further very severe -- I don't recall my father being called again in '43 to -- to do forced labor and now I understand, I mean there are documents which show that the -- the government wanted to -- to change course. They send also representatives on the sly to contact the allies, without Germany knowing. And that was '43, in '44 Romania turned sides already. So for us the situation was better on that. Still fear, still Jews. We had an episode of wearing the yellow star in the period of '41, I don't recall in -- exactly how long, but I still have the yellow star and -- two yellow stars, in fact. One was also exhibited in New York, and -- which were mine, my -- my mother kept that too, which were sewn on garments when we had to go out of the house, and stayed on the garments except that if we had to change the garments, we had to move those things. So there was -- that situation of living between how do you I say it, one fear and the other, and one hope and another hope. Until -- but then, you know, the -- the sense of hope and the sense of possible escape started to soon -- rather s-soon to disappear again because the Russians were successful in pushing the Germans and the Romanian armies back. And that increased the -- for us, th-the sense of fear that if they are defeated, and if they are going to retreat, we can be again in great jeopardy, and another massacre may occur when the armies will be here. That was one -- one thing. The other thing which happened in that - those years, is news percolated to us that our relatives were deported, or -- but some of them may be in camps. Not -- not specifically was about our relatives, but news about the Jews in Bessarabia. My mother was desperate all the time, knowing that so many of her cousins and brothers -- my

mother had four brothers -- half brothers of course, but brothers very good, and two sisters, because from her --

Q: Mm, it's a big family.

A: Yeah, her -- her -- her father in the first marriage had six children. She was the youngest but she was very close to the youngest because she was from the second wife. But very close to the youngest child from the first wife because my grandfather, when he lost his wife, and a man with six children, tried to marry soon again and he did marry and his wife bore him a child, my mother, who was very close in age to the smallest child he had from the --

Q: Okay.

A: So that particular child became the friend of my mother, a boy about three years older than my mother. What his name was? Not shu -- I remember. I knew his name. I know the name of his son. And as she was extremely energetic, hoping that some of those people, of her brothers and cousins and aunts, and then there was a family on her mother's side. All these brothers and sister I mentioned were on her father's side. But her mother had also three sisters, who got married there, and those sisters had children who were her cousins and so on. So she wanted to find out who is where and if anybody was alive. You couldn't write, there was no post. But something happened. Romania got short of medical personnel. There are a good number of Jewish doctors and Jewish paramedics, and so on, of course, health personnel, who was fired from all positions when my father was fired in '94, they weren't allowed to practice, and they practiced then for the community, Jewish community [indecipherable]. And then they -- some kind of decision was made to re-allow, to bring back some of the Jewish doctors in the military to tend to the wounded, because there were enormous amount of wounded people and they needed to be treated and the Romanian doctors were not enough. So the Jews -- the Jews were --

physicians were brought back, given a military uniform, with a distinctive sign that they are not -- they are military doctors and they are not the regular army, and which identified them with Jews. But they were put to practice. That was [indecipherable] that was permanent. My father as engineer was put to forced labor, unqualified labor, but they were put to qualified labor. And they were sent to the front, going to the front back and forth by train, they stopped here and there. And some of them became couriers in trying to give messages and visit camps. My mother found one of such doctors, gave her -- him the name of our people, the Faerstein family, Zioma and Uca and Monea and other names and told him, begged him, please whenever you have a chance, ask who has ever heard of the Faerstein family from Balti.

Q: We had to stop here, so we can stop the tape.

A: How do you know --

End of Tape Five

Beginning Tape Six

Q: Michael, you were talking about your mother giving information --

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: -- to these doctors so they could find --

A: Yeah, so it was more than one, two, three, whomever she could catch. As I said, my mother was extremely energetic. You can see that I loved my mother very much from the way I speak about her, but she is -- truly was, truly extremely energetic she was. And she, being the first university educated person in her family in all -- among all her brothers and uncles and so on, nobody had [indecipherable]. And moving to the big city, she became the center, the -- the -- the anchor point, not the center, the anchor point. When everybody needed something, they would contact Shanya, before the war, already, and she was there. And she kind of assumed responsibility for them. Somebody ill would be sent from Balti to Iasi, that was in the years before the war. And she would take care, go with them in the ho-hospital and so on, so on. So -- and she loved them, she grew up there, she was very much concerned. She tried to identify them and -- and lo and behold, one of those doctors -- ambassadors, ambassadors to the camps, this is what they were, one comes back one good day and says, “I found it, I found your family.” You know, I remember that moment, I mean that was extraordinary. Whom did you find? She found, in -- in -- not she, he found, in a camp farther away from Balti, the family of one of her brother -- brothers, Yosl, with two of his children and his wife. The two children were Zioma and Uca. And as, you know, the -- then I learned that from my mother, the details, because it’s -- it’s such an extraordinary story, and how did he found -- he was going from camp to camp, and asked do you know somebody from -- and no, no. And then somebody told him, in that camp may be somebody with that name. And he went, apparently towards Marculesti, or -- I have to remember

-- one of th-the camps was Marculesti, and the other was Cecilnica. I don't recall which one was that, but -- and then somebody else, we have got your family here, and they pointed there and he goes and he found one -- one of the two younger brother, and not -- not my mother's fa -- brother, and the mother of the two boys. And indeed it was her family, and she said, "You know, I am the doctor, I was sent by Shanya Catz, and she's your relative." And then they told him the whole story and what happened to them, and they came, and the address. And my -- those people are my cousins. There were four brothers. So the story was that one of the four got sepa -- when they were marched -- th-the -- the whole thing is that the Jews of Balti were marched, walking by -- by soldier of the Romanian army on horses. Put in column and marched for tens of kilometers to be evacuated out of Balti. When the army entered they were first put in a prison, in the Balti prison. They were kept there a couple of weeks or some shorter time, and there they were started to march. If you look -- to march them to the east --

Q: East, right.

A: -- to the east. And they stayed in a place, and then moved further and pushed further and pushed further. All the time no transportation offered, no -- no help to people who are old or sick or incapable of doing. Lots of them perished on those marches, you know, they weren't given horses, the soldiers have the horses. And until they stayed in a place for awhile, they had to beg their food, they are receiving very little, beg their food from the peasants around them, steal the food from the field, eat whatever they could find on the field, potatoes, raw potatoes and any other thing. And he found them -- and then were stayed in houses emptied by people who went when the Russian army retreated, they -- many people evacuated with -- together with the Russian army. And those camps were not in the system of the German camps, you know, the barracks were well organized German style, were simply improvised, the same way like the --

you know, the -- the -- the killing of the Jews in the pogrom, which I already told you, was a very artisanal killing.

Q: It was a very?

A: Artisanal killing.

Q: Artisanal, right.

A: I mean, in death trains, you know, hacking them to death, it was not the gas chambers, the type of thing, the horrible. And maybe the fact that, you know, the gas chambers are so well known is not due only to the huge numbers but to the industrialized manner of killing Jews. Here it was more the traditional manner was used, you know, kill directly, or the innovation was putting them on trains. But i-in the camps were -- do the same thing. They were herded to a place, compelled to work, or left abandoned there, fell on the ground, found someplace to sit down. And then in a week or two days or three days or maybe two months, when the new order came, or when the soldiers rested, they were shepherded further. So he came back and told us that my uncle Yosl died of starvation and -- and illness. He was not shot, but he caught typhus and -- and he died in the arms of his sons. That the -- his wife is alive, Surka, Aunt Surka. Who was, as it happened in a Jewish family, she was also the youngest sister of my grandmother. So the grandmother, my grandmother married as a second wife, her husband, who had sons from the first wife. Some of the sons were much older than [indecipherable] young people. So one of them at the -- some point, married the youngest sister of my grandmother. So the son married the sister of his father's wife, second wife. But it was perfectly [indecipherable]. And she became -- and she gave birth to four sons, who are my direct first cousins. And the story came that one of them, in that terrible evacuation being herded, separated from the family and was lost. As it turned out, he didn't separate by chance. He wanted to -- to run away and to run away with the Russians and

to reach the Russians and to fight. And he did succeeded, went east on his own, crossed the front line, reached the Russians line, and became a soldier. And for the entire war in the Russian army, all the way to Germany, survived. Was crippled, unfortunately, and remained cripple -- shorter leg for -- but came back alive. And we are very proud of him because he wanted to fight and he fought the Nazis to -- to the end. And -- and then another one, who lived not with his father in Balti was caught in an -- another thing, and also apparently left and was on the Russian side. So to escape that war and the camps, the father died, the boys survived, and the mother survived. And the doctor brought us the information only about those who he fou -- he found in the camp, we -- at that time we didn't know about those who fought in the army. And then next time when he went, my mother gave him money, gave him a blanket, gave him medication. Not too much, because he couldn't carry. He went back to the same camp, found them and gave them the blanket. Now imagine what it means in that condition to receive something like from heaven, you -- you get, and it was -- and they never forget. I met th-the cousin Zioma, one of them I mentioned, I believe before, that I met him in Balti years later and then he went to Israel. The youngest one, Uca, is fortunately still a-alive. He left the Russia earlier than his older brother, he came to Canada. And he's still alive in Canada, and I talked to him on the phone a few days ago. And he -- he -- you should interview him because he was in camp. I was not directly in camp, I was with the massacres, but his story is extraordinary, how he -- they were moved from camp to camp, marched in -- in the worst conditions, not fed. How he had to go and steal and bring home some food for people, how his father died in his hand, sick and no-not medicated by anybody. The stories are horrible, but he is alive. He is almost 80 or more. And he has his daughter and son and they live in Toronto. If you want I will give him your --

Q: Okay.

A: It's Uca Faerstein, you keep the name and so -- so th-this -- that was again a hor -- a typical event for our family, typical Holocaust event which marked our lives because we were able -- my mother was able once to send those things. But then she co -- started to collect things and prepare, in the hope that she will be able to send again and again and again. And collected from whoever she could, that and the other thing. There was no other option to send. But at least we knew that they were alive. And they kept hope that they will survive. So this is how we moved through '43. And then '44 came, and the front was coming closer to -- closer. This is when the panic started in the Jewish community again, that as the army would retreat, they were already visible retreating and convoys of people, very poorly looking, came through Iasi. You know, in the early years we saw Russian prisoners brought through Iasi. In the later years we didn't see Russian prisoners brought through Iasi any more. We saw convoys of the Romanian army, or of the Germans coming in a very ragtag shape. They were visible in '43, I remember, not '42, but in '43 I remember. And the stories was, you know, between people, telling whoever saw, communicated to the other, you know, I saw another convoy, it doesn't go good for them. [indecipherable] So --

Q: Oh, Michael, ha-have -- are you hearing anything about all the killings in Poland?

A: No, no, I --

Q: You hear nothing about killing centers?

A: No, that's -- I -- I ask myself the same thing --

Q: [indecipherable] uh-huh.

A: -- and for instance there were the killing of the Jews in -- in Kiev, which was -- that time I -- I don't recall, I cannot say that my father and mother knew nothing, but I am inclined to believe they didn't learn about such things. There were some things I believe about Odessa because

shortly after the beginning of the war, the Romanian army moved fast, they arrived in Odessa and then they did a bloody massacre of the Jews in Odessa, which were very close to Romania and the news came. But never did the news tell of the proportion.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But I am frankly not surprised about that, Joan, to tell you the truth, because I -- I know how the massacre in Iasi happened, that was the largest pogrom, I mean 13,000 people in one community is huge, is a huge -- men -- mostly men, maybe a few children and some women, so -- but th-there was a veil of silence afterward, nobody talked. At that time no newspaper reported.

Q: Right.

A: How would people know? Nobody discussed, that was buried under silence [indecipherable] thing. Th-Th-The west didn't know. Later on, you know, if you read those things, you find out that apparently some news percolated to the U.S. embassy in Romania, of course still an embassy then in '41, and some allusion -- you should ask your expert in the museum, some reference was vague in a -- some dispatch from the U.S. consul or embassy in Romania about some events in Iasi. But without proper description, nobody realized. And then the system kept it all the way secret until the war. In the war there was a process of them s -- at the end of the war.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Some of the people who are caught with very little full evidence, and then when the communist system took over in Romania, they put another veil of silence because they didn't want to -- Romania to be blamed for doing such things, such a massacre. In fact, however that massacre was o-of a magnitude unprecedented in Europe. Even at Kristallnacht in Germany, there were no 13,000 Jews killed. A lot of destruction, and a number of victims, but not 13,000 Jews. So that was th-the first big event on the European scale of killing Jews en masse. Maybe in

Poland it happened too, in ’39 or ’40, I don’t know. But then it was repeated in Odessa, it was repeated in Kiev. Babi Yar was a clear copycat of that, these people brought and killed in front of their trenches and [indecipherable] there. But there are description from the pogrom in Iasi that people -- corpses were loaded on trucks and when trucks came to a grave, first they -- they carried body by body, then they become too cumbersome, and they say, you know, let’s shovel all of them at once, to fall straight into the grave. This was how it was treated. And the -- the -- in short, there was -- what happened in Romania was huge, and yet little known. So therefore I’m not surprised that we didn’t receive the news from all the things which happened under the occupation in the Russian territory. We only realized through that doctor who came, when we got the story how they were pushed from place to place, that they were pushed to the east to be beyond any line which could presumably still remain under Russia. That that territory had to be clean of all the Jews, which that territory which was expected to become Romanian in the event of the war ending with a German victory, should be clean of Jews. This is why they -- they moved them, they killed some of them, but whoever stayed alive should be on the other side to Russia. Which was -- which -- that is what today we call th-the proper concept, ethnic cleanstick -- cleansing. That preceded with decades the ethnic cleansing in -- by Serbia’s -- or -- or by the Muslims in Croatia, and in what happened in Yugoslavia very recently. But it was ethnic cleansing. This throwing an ethnic group, either by direct killing, or by starvation, or by hunger, or allowing them to be killed by epidemics. And pushing the -- the remainders o-out beyond the border. So this is --

Q: When was it clear to you how big the pogrom was in Iasi? Because your own experience of the pogrom was limited. The fear was enormous, but you clearly wouldn’t have known at the end of the four days --

A: Oh no, no, no, no, no, no.

Q: That so many thousands --

A: At the year of the -- end of the four days, we -- we didn't know it.

Q: Right.

A: What happened. When we started to learn the story about the trains, we started to get more and more information and a grasp of events. Then the news percolated that a lot of people were killed then -- I mean, the people who saved the life, s -- told and communicated home that we are alive, but we saw that that and that was killed. The Iasi families [indecipherable] through messages, through friends, including Romanian friends, to contact those whom we ler -- who they learned are in Calarasi, I mean far away, to -- what happened to, you know, Avram Roitembaum, and so on and so forth. And the news we -- I saw him dead.

Q: Right.

A: So this -- the -- the realization of the -- of the magnitude seeped in gradually.

Q: Right.

A: And we s -- we realized it was bigger and bigger and bigger than we could realize then. We had it firsthand because in my courtyard, two people did not return, the -- Mr. Barad and his older son. And the family was -- stayed Shiva when they learned about that thing. So we realized continuously th-the inc -- increasingly realized the size of the -- the numbers we only found out and learned after the war, the total numbers. And as I mentioned to you during the communist system, there were no reports and le -- except the -- the trial of some of the criminals who were involved, no publicity was made. The Jewish community would have a commemoration of the massacre each year and they would say there were so many people killed, the -- 11,000 was the number at a certain time, which they believed it was, just huge. Then the documents were

discovered that there were -- in the special services reported more then 11,000 killed. And gradually we'd realize the size, but not when I was a child. From a child my -- my direct experience was about the reality of that happening to me, to my family, to the neighbors in the immediate --

Q: Right.

A: -- in the most indisputable and tangible way. The proportions I learned later, yeah.

Q: So y-y -- from what I can tell, you would describe the years following the m -- the massacre, the pogrom, as being sort of up and down. There are times when it's ha --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- when your fear is heightened, and there are times when the fear seems to be less but it never goes away --

A: No.

Q: -- because you're never sure --

A: Yes, exactly.

Q: -- until the war is completely over.

A: Like a sword hanging.

Q: Yeah.

A: All the time.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then really happening, I mean my father receiving the piece of paper that he had to -- to show up.

Q: Show up.

A: And then having to show up and then us being on edge the whole day whether he comes back or not. Then with the census, with all our data, and our mind was this is a list for them to come and systematically pick up and make sure that nobody is -- is -- is omitted from the pick-up. So, of course we had very strong indication that things can happen any day. Wh-When things worsened on the front, we -- we started having hopes that who knows, maybe we'll be lucky enough to survive that ordeal.

Q: Right.

A: That -- that was -- but we were, you know, fearing disappearance and death every time, yeah, yeah.

Q: [indecipherable] time. Do you think it changed you a lot? Of course it's very difficult to know what you would have been if you --

A: Exactly, how could [indecipherable]

Q: -- hadn't had the experience.

A: -- but it's un-unforgettable. It shaped my mind at that time because all my [indecipherable] when I came out from the war and when I started to go to school, and when the first years of freedom, everything was fresh in my mind and you know, I joined a group of more consciously thinking kids in our school, and even politically oriented kids, too, and engage in discussion, you know, what -- so what will happen? Will that happen again, what -- are they [indecipherable] are -- the Jewish problem, that was a [indecipherable] problem nationale which we discussed endlessly and shaped our aspiration, political conviction, desire to do something to create a different type of society. And that is a very clear chapter in -- in my life. After the war, as a result, a conscious result of the extraordinary sense of oppression and injustice which I had, which was imprinted in my cells and my genes, and I came out with that. And that, you know,

such oppression, such injustice shouldn't happen, I mean, again. So in that respect, it -- it changed me. Without that experience I -- definitely I would have been a different person.

Q: Person.

A: But otherwise it did change me, and it's -- it -- it's rooted in my mind, certain aspirations and values which I believe I still carry.

Q: [inaudible] Did you leave Iasi in '44, or you stayed?

A: Well, that's what th -- worry we -- we reached the point --

Q: Well --

A: -- as the --

Q: -- as the Russians --

A: -- the Russian was approaching, we fear -- the fear thermometer, I'd say. The fear thermometer, or barometer went up again, and say well, they're coming, they're going to destroy us when -- if the Russians are victorious and pushing them, when they retreat through Iasi, they will kill again all the Jews.

Q: Ah, the romane -- when -- when the arm -- Romanian army retreats --

A: Yes, that's what they fear --

Q: -- it's they -- uh-huh.

A: -- Romanians and German --

Q: Yes.

A: -- because the front was coming.

Q: Right.

A: We are going to be decimated, and destroyed, and -- because even the first time they took revenge, Romanian army took revenge on the Jews in Iasi and in other places, also on account

that the Jews of Bessarabia, when the Romanian army retreated from Bessarabia in 1940, kind of rejoiced in that retreat.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And then they had to pay -- to payback, and they paid back by killing. So with a -- they're going to retreat, that will be the end of us. We -- we survived until now, but that, no. And then everybody who could, say we have to run. We have to run, we have -- how to run? And this is when my parents, and other people started to -- to think how they can ran -- run away from -- where to run? There was no -- nothing, no place to run, but they said, if we can run to Bucharest, which is a big city with a much smaller proportion of Jews, we'll -- we'll disappear in the mix, perhaps we'll get lost ra -- in -- in Bucharest, a pogrom like that did not happen. So we -- that's was -- was the reasoning. And th-this -- my parents started to prepare themselves, and to do whatever they could to run away.

Q: Right.

A: And that prepared their -- their running away and becoming refugees and running away from Iasi at the end of the month of March, 1944. Which we, at that time, you know, they identified a taxi driver, in fact, who was -- or somebody who owned a car, I don't know whether he was a taxi driver, but owned a car, and reached a deal with him to pay him to transport us from -- from Iasi to Bucharest. And that's the entire story, I have to tell you [indecipherable] the trip, because we didn't have enough money, there was no cars, and we had to fit ourself in that car, all my family and the Barad family, who lost the head of the family and one of the sons. So we were five of us, I tell you about my other grandmother, and three of them to fit in one car, one small car. My father kind of took charge of the Barad family who remained without a man in the hou --

without a head of the family. And they were very close friends. And indeed, we were all loaded in that car, and that was an ordeal, but they made it to Bucharest.

Q: Hm. We have to stop the tape.

A: Okay. All right.

End of Tape Six

Beginning Tape Seven

Q: Michael, before you get to tell us about your trip to Bucharest, were there other relatives killed in other camps?

A: Yes, unfortunately there were, there were. And the one other uncle of mine, my mother's elder brother, half elder brother, whose name is Moise Leib was in a totally different camp, also coming from Balti, but they were driven, chased to another camp, and he died in Obadovka, this was the name of the camp. It was already in Ukraine, that Obadovka, like Cecilnica, which I said before, as they were pushed, and they arrived there, but died in the camp, and that camp, also his son, my cousin, if I recall correctly the name, I was -- it was also Yosl.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But he was still a small child, or a child of eight, 10 - 12 was -- who also was killed. Only his wife escaped, the wife of Moise Leib. That was again his second wife, of that uncle of mine whose son was killed. She survived, her husband and her son was killed. My uncle and my cousin were killed, she survived. But my uncle had two other sons from his first marriage, and they also either disappeared or were killed, I cannot tell you for sure about each one and all of them, but there were much more losses. Those which I mentioned I know for sure, and I know their names and I recall the instances we discussed. But my mother, who kept a very sober count, and a very loving count of them, in fact dedicated a number of trees in Israel, growing trees, to their memory and altogether it must be a big forest in -- in Israel only for them. And she also created the plaque with their names, the names of all who died from the family Al Kidush Hashem, and made a plaque which I have, a plaque at home, I have it, you can see it.

Q: Right.

A: If you want to put it on record with this. What is meaningful is that in fact, she did that plaque early on enough that she arrived here, in the States, and [indecipherable] you know. But then we found out about the others, who also were killed in the camps, and for whom -- my mother thought that they were disappeared in the war, or in the evacuation with the Russians, and they were war casualties rather than Holocaust direct massacred or killed people. But they were -- they didn't fit yet in -- in the -- in that table, in that plaque. So there are more than in the plaque. The answer yes, in Romania we -- you have very many casualties on that side. Everybody had casualties, I mean on -- on my grandmother's side, there were her sisters who were there, and who had their children and grandchildren, some of them were killed, some of them escaped, some of them were killed. There was no family which was left unscathed by that, that losses. I mentioned to you Uca, the one who is now in Toronto. He married, when he came after the war, surviving and came back to Balti, he married a woman in Balti. That woman was the only survivor of her family. Yanya is her name, and she's alive and his wife now. But she was a survivor in her family.

Q: Right.

A: So the casualties were terrible, and many, many [indecipherable]

Q: So more -- more than half of the Jewish population were killed in Romania.

A: Yes, I mean, the statistics show that altogether, the Romanian Jewry was one of the most numerous Jewish population in -- in Europe. Before the war about 850,000 Jews lived in Romanian territory. By -- after the war only four -- 400,000 were alive. Half or more on the eastern side, a good number on the Romanian territory, as happened in Iasi, and in Dorohoi and in other places which I mentioned. Bucharest and so on. And a good part in the western part of Romania, which was taken away from Romania before the war, and was under Hungarian

regime, and under Nazi control, and the Germans and the Hungarians deported the Romanian -- the Jews from that part, from Transylvania. So it was not the Romanian government which killed them, but they were part of the Romanian Jewry who were killed in the west, as opposed to in the east.

Q: Right.

A: Some of them we -- went to Auschwitz and to other big camps, and never returned.

Q: So it's not --

A: So it was how --

Q: -- exactly how you count --

A: -- yes, yeah.

Q: -- but the counting is difficult.

A: -- the -- the fact is --

Q: But still, it's a huge number.

A: -- it doesn't matter on -- so much on whose account -- I mean on whose count of murders they -- their names are, what matters is a murder took place, mass murder, mass killing.

Q: So you're in this car, eight people in a small car --

A: Yes.

Q: -- I can only imagine.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you have any luggage, is there anything, or it's just people?

A: No, no, we couldn't like -- take any luggage, very, very few things, but those few things were some of the things, the documents, and some of the Jewish heirlooms which my mother saved. In other words, the whole house was left un -- untouched, as you know, we left and

[indecipherable] they tried to -- to run away for life, and escape with their lives. So the entire house we don't what happened to the house, to the furniture, to whatever was left in the house, depleted enough as it was for th-the -- the exchange of --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- house item for goods and food. But there was still a household. The car -- I mean, what I remember is something which you d -- understand that a boy of that age would remember, I remember the -- the brand of the car.

Q: Oh, what was it?

A: At that time, oh I -- you know, it was a Plymouth.

Q: Oh.

A: P-l-y-m-o-u-t. And at that time I didn't know English, and so for years I -- I kept it in mind, in the Romanian reading, Plymouth. But now I can tell you. And it was a spacious Plymouth because in addition to the normal seats it has those banquettes, you know, the seats which -- so this is how we fit, but it still was an ordeal. So I don't know exactly how everybody was divided, but first of all we had a very heartbreaking situation with my grandmother on the mother's side. We were preparing to leave and it was absolutely obvious that she cannot make the trip. She was very heavy, still ill, everybody catered to her. She was more -- more lying than standing. Advanced in age.

Q: This [indecipherable] for years.

A: Yes, and -- for years, but as -- with every year, worse. So -- and -- and she said, "Leave me here, leave me here." And my father said, "I don't want to, how can we take you, what should we do?" And he wa -- we were desperate. But it -- it was impossible to -- to take her, and eventually they found a solution. The solution was they went to the same family where the child Haim

came, who was a family with children. They did not contemplate to -- to leave, or they didn't have the means, I don't exactly know. But they were s-saying we are staying here and if you want, we can take Chava as a family member, and we will take enormous care of her, whatever we can do for -- for us, we'll do for her. So this is what happened. Chava moved to the family of Haimala, and stayed there, and lived a little bit longer and then passed away indeed, because she was close to that moment. I believe she survived a few months, and passed away. I never saw her again. But we knew, and they took good care, because she got ill, and she was hospitalized, too. There was a former Jewish hospital owned by the Jewish community, which -- it was a very powerful community there, but then it was taken by the state. But we -- we learned that she was taken to the hospital for good care and that she died in the hospital, so at least we know that she didn't die abandoned and -- and [indecipherable] --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- but she -- it was a -- you know, she was very old, too. And --

Q: But it must be very difficult for everybody.

A: It was very -- it was heartbreaking, and worse [indecipherable] my parents were in touch with Iasi by that -- those time the phone was terrible, but they were in touch even after we arrived in Bucharest. But I, in the 90's, when I was in Romania again, before I left, I couldn't track her down. But when I came back from the States after that, I did everything to find her out, and we went to the cemetery in Iasi and tracked down who passed out in that years in the Jewish community, and we found the record. And I went to the cemetery in Iasi, and we found the place, but everything was, you know, weeds and soil and debris and so on, with a lady -- caretaking woman and the man at the cemetery, we started to dig and clean at the place where the numbers coincided, and lo and behold, the -- the grave appeared.

Q: You found it.

A: Yes, and we found the name there. So I know where my grandmother is buried. So this was the -- one thing about departure. And then the other grandmother was in much better shape physically. And indeed, she survived until ’66 or something.

Q: She did, really?

A: Yeah, another 20 years after that. And we got all loaded, there was no room, and I was the smallest -- not the smallest one, there’s Zolly, but I was the smallest adult, so to say. So they combined me with the youngest boy from the Barad family, took up only one seat. So he was a bit older than me, his name was Eugene, and again I can tell you some of a little story how I rediscovered him later. But I was on his knees the entire trip.

Q: Now this is a trip of what, 500 miles or something [indecipherable]

A: No, this was about 500 kilometers -- 400 --

Q: Aha, so it’s a little less.

A: -- four -- four --

Q: Four -- okay.

A: But it was not the distance, it was the duration which was killing us. A distance is a distance, but it was the -- the highways were not highways, or -- you know, roads as they were ’44, and they were clogged with refugees on carts, on -- on cars, trucks, military people coming from the war, ambulances, checkpoints which slowed the tr -- down the traffic, everything. Y -- military units going to the front, and military units retreating from the front. So the -- the trip was I don’t know, almost 24 hours, leave one day and arrive the next day in Bucharest. The poor driver drived all the time. He secured some piece of paper for him to prove, and really that was a -- lifesaving, because we were stopped.

Q: Right.

A: He was showing the paper, and my mother was pushing the bribe. That was a pattern because alone the paper justified, but they wouldn't let it. And my mother had, you know, one thing and another thing, precious thing, some jewelry went. And we -- one after the other went through all the -- the checkpoints.

Q: So she was the really imaginative one in terms of this.

A: Sh-She -- she was, yeah, she was the real --

Q: Yes.

A: My father, as I told you, came wounded and ba -- and he suffered for rest of the life for the consequences of those --

Q: The beatings.

A: -- thing, which became more psychologically damaging than physically damaging. He recovered physically from what he had, but psychologically it was really bad. So he had good times, but he was out of kilter for many. And then had strokes and -- a series of strokes, you don't -- cannot say for sure that the -- that is a direct relationship, but -- so we arrived in Bucharest. I remember I was not able to stand, and every time we stopped I wasn't able to stand, this is how numb --

Q: [inaudible]

A: -- my -- my legs were from sitting on his knees and being bent, because the car was low and -- and the room was extraordinary tiny. So, but we made it eventually to Bucharest and we arrived at the friend of my father, whose name was Lupu Catz, the same name, but they were no relative. There was also a Catz from the town of my father, and they were friend in -- in childhood, and they remained friends through the lifetime, and in time of need they had the house, and we all

decamped to their house. And we stayed there for awhile and I remember he had one daughter, a bit -- one year younger of me, so my age, practically. And she was -- she had a cold at that time, so she was bedridden. So here I see a -- a girl who became my friend and she's still alive and fine, and we are friends. But I remember the moment when I see -- saw her first time. Jenica is her name. And we stayed in their house [indecipherable] it was totally different for me, it was a big city, bigger indeed, it was close to the Jewish quarters of Bucharest, but a bit out. And indeed, the Jewish community was kind of smaller and lost in the total population of Bucharest. And nothing bad happened since then directly about Jews. The bad thing which happened is the -- the -- the allies started to bomb Bucharest. The front was coming up.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: So we -- we arrived at Bucharest virtually -- less than one week from the biggest ever bombing of Bucharest. And the fourth of April, 1944, that was the biggest bombing of Bucharest by the British planes, based somewhere I don't know. In the Mediterranean, the Greece, and they were coming to bomb the Romanian gas hills, Romania had the gas, and those were within 40 miles of Bucharest, so they drop part of the bombs there, on the gas field, and come with the rest. That was putting pressure on the population of the government to -- to --

Q: Stop.

A: -- to stop the war and to come out, preparing them to -- softening them for -- for the political negotiation to get Romania out of the war, and against the Germans. Because the Russians were pressing from the east, and here was the government, and -- who had to be bombed into submission, and bombed to -- to accept the -- the ca --

Q: That's quite an entrance after you're trying to escape from --

A: Yes, and we escape the war only to -- to fall here, and mind you, what happened after that first bombing, the raids continued to the point that they came every single day to bomb Bucharest.

Q: Really?

A: And to increase the political pressure, they came every day at the same hour. Ele -- 11 of the morning, we knew that this is the -- and [indecipherable] away I -- all the -- always the -- the -- it was deliberate, it was not -- so, I guess -- I didn't have any contact with the British headquarters to know, but why would they send the planes every day the same hour, except to demonstrate something, they are able to do it, and this is not --

Q: Yeah, right.

A: -- and you -- you -- you still fear, and you know that the next day they to -- come again. And then you cannot [indecipherable] so when will this stop, I mean how long? The -- then -- you know, the sirens would start screaming wildly, everybody would run away, everybody -- Bucharest wasn't bombed during the war, it was far from -- from theater of war. In the beginning maybe some, but I wasn't there, but during the -- the -- the height of the war it wasn't. But when the war came to the end, the pressure was put on Bucharest. It wasn't Dresden.

Q: Right.

A: Yes, but it was a lot of pressure.

Q: It was bad enough for you.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: So we knew that every day. And then we had to -- to hide ourselves now in the basement of the building, eventually move from my friends and my father's -- my mother found a small

apartment in a building in which another family from Iasi, also going as refugee escaping, which is a family of -- Rosenhaupt family. And in fact, it was the parents of the famous Israeli lawyer and politician, Meier Rosenne. Our parents were friends in -- in bu -- in Iasi, so hum -- somehow they got together, found the same building, and they moved into an -- one apartment. It was a small building with several apartments. And they were in another apartment in the same building. They knew -- th-the parents knew th -- I knew Meier from -- from his childhood, but then we really became close because we'd be together, we'd play together, and we would run to the -- to the basement together at 11 o'clock when the sirens will -- will start. And that happened for weeks. A number of houses were destroyed, and unfortunately the Barad family found an apartment in another place, the one I talked to you. And unfortunately that was -- that place was close to the Bucharest railway station. And the railway station was a part of the -- the bombing target in the fourth of April. There was blanket bombing there by the British. A lot was destroyed, the station was almost un -- disabled, I don't know was completely. But their house was bombed, and she was killed. The -- the baby was -- was with us one week before in the car and escaped the war in Iasi, was killed, and the -- the two boys were buried in the rubble of the house, which we learned later, when the youngest boy found ou -- us, after having been buried under the rubble for three days and three nights. And he came out, they were pulled out from the rubble by rescue teams when they found him in the rubble, and they found there was some plaque hanging there by his mother saying, if this boy is found somewheres, you know, alone, bring him either at that address, her address, or to the fa -- Catz family, who is on the street Mogos Vornicu five, where we are [indecipherable]. Or not Mogos Vornicu five, it was Kolono Moraro, one of the addresses. But this is how he could found us -- find us. He was -- his face and head were swollen from being hit by the bombing and debris and being on no food and no water

[indecipherable] the air for under the debris until he was rescued. He could move, but his head was very swollen, I remember his swollen head, and he found us and told what happened. And in the process, you know, she had the -- the -- her purse with all her -- their fortune was lost. She -- they had money and, you know, gold coins, whatever they had they lost, and they were poor like [indecipherable] so we had to help them, too, in that situation. But -- and they were victimized a second time, that family Barad, a really unlucky case. And then the -- then, you know, we went through the spring with so many bombings. Yes, my -- given the risk, I -- there were the same treatment. I had to carry here --

Q: In case something happened.

A: Yes, with a name and who I am and where I should be brought. And my mother sewed some things which they still had, some gold coins in my -- in my pants, yeah, and tell me always keep that pants, don't -- don't give it away and you know, know that in the need, that's what -- how you can pay for your food. Fortunately, our house was not bombed, and we lived in it throughout the bombing, until the middle of August, 23rd of August when Romania shifted sides.

Q: Right.

A: And two, three days later, the Russian tanks came into Bucharest, because the -- Romania came out of the war by -- by political maneuver with the king, and the -- Antonescu was arrested, and the Romania shifted sides. Then the Romanian army stopped fighting, and the Russian army was already in the east and with no opposition, advanced very quickly and tanks came into Bucharest, and I remember the Russian tanks coming, and me waving them, and my mother waving them, and finally the liberators.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: You know, you hear -- s -- hear so many things about American liberating people in Dachau and then all the camps. We were not in a physical camp like that, but I -- I surely recognize the feeling of people who are in a -- in that state, and are liberated by -- by the army who comes there, so --

Q: And a smile on your face, that's how you felt.

A: Oh, it was terrific --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- you know, yes. And in addition, you know, my mother was able to talk to the Russian soldier who are [indecipherable] --

Q: Ah, cause she can speak Russian, yeah.

A: -- she speaks Russian, yeah, I knew a few words.

Q: Yeah.

A: I even had an adventure with them because then, you know, I was there and next two or three, four or five days the Russians all came, and they -- a few of them camped in a little square. And I came to them, I said, you know, "Dobry Deni," and they were really surprised --

Q: Right.

A: -- so all very happy, all of them were missing their own children, gave me bread, gave me other thing. And then they said, "Do you want to come in the -- in -- in the truck?" We are going here, they say. I understood something that they g-go to fetch something, and will come back. And I say yes, and I got into the car. And they started driving and driving and driving and I mean I don't know whether the story is of any interest, so let me stop here. [indecipherable]

Q: The place -- they were taking you someplace?

A: They were taking me -- well, in short, they took me to a forest where they have an ammunition depot, and loaded the truck with ammunition. That was still when the Germans were bombing Bucharest.

Q: I see.

A: And that took a few hours and in the meantime, my mother --

Q: Was hysterical.

A: -- absolutely mad, hysterical, and I couldn't do anything, I was with them, and they could have taken me. They brought me back, late, after six hours of -- my mother was on the street, saw me, and I don't want to put on video, but I got my pants down and I got a spanking.

Q: Spanking.

A: You know?

Q: Yeah.

A: A spanking in the street, I will never forget that.

Q: Did she ever spank you before?

A: Not quite, no.

Q: No.

A: Not this way. I mean, she said never, never [indecipherable]. No, she didn't -- she didn't spank me, but sometime it happens, you get -- and you got that.

Q: Right. But this was real, this was --

A: This was real, yeah, oh I mean she -- she was out of her mind, she was -- that's the end of me, that I was kidnapped, I was killed --

Q: Right, right.

A: -- I was something, I will never return.

Q: That's the benefit of a cell phone, isn't it?

A: Ah. Yeah. So.

Q: All right, we have to stop the tape.

End of Tape Seven

Beginning Tape Eight

Q: Michael, I know that the -- that we have a -- a -- many, many years we could still cover, but for today I don't think we're going to be able to do that, and so --

A: It's -- it's late, it's --

Q: It's late. So that if you can give a kind of summary of -- a sort of outline of what happened to you, and then we can close it off and -- and start on another day.

A: Yes, well, I believe we reached the -- virtually the end, almost the end of the war, when Romania shifted sides, and then what happened, relevant to the past, that th -- we mean the past is, that we -- we really tied ti -- tried to find out what happened to everybody else in our family. As I mentioned, we had a large family on the other side --

Q: Right.

A: -- where they were in camps. And my mother had a very, very intensive way to do the search, and wiv -- she found some of the people, found out about others who died. My cousin, Zioma, who was in the camp, as I mentioned, in Marculesti, and hi -- another camp he was, I remember he and Uca were first in Rawoutsel, a camp, and then in Marculesti, and then in Cecilnica. As they came back to Balti, my cousin Zioma went into the army after a little while, because the war still went on, and lo and behold, he appears in Bucharest in the uniform of the army which freed, you know, so you can imagine our -- because the last we knew was -- of him was when that doctor found them and brought them the -- the blanket.

Q: Right.

A: And he reported to us with a letter from them that the blanket was delivered, which was a lifesaver for them in that time. So he came and we were happy, in fact, I have a picture with him coming, and I don't have it here with me if you ask for it, but it's at home if you need it. So we

were very happy. The other cousin of mine, Monea, who fought all the way to Berlin, and we are very proud, and was decorated, and was wounded, and became a cripple for the rest of the life his [indecipherable] came twice to Bucharest. And so we were very rejoicing in those -- and also, you know, mourning those whom we learned were lost. So it was a f-family stock-taking of what happened to all of us, and how we -- we went through. And that again, before -- beyond the stock taking, helped cultivate in me the sense of family and what -- how important, I mean the solidarity and the family solidarity is a very big, important value for me throughout my life and I believe those hard times instilled that value, and my mother deliberately instilled it. And -- to the point, in fact, that even after my mother's death, I felt the need to go to -- as I -- I think I mentioned, to the place of my birth, to Balti and to find out the place, and I found that [indecipherable] the synagogue didn't exist, but I found there another si -- very relative moment of Holocaust. In that synagogue, you know, people who came back to town -- it was also my family, my town. And they said Kaddish, and I -- I was given by the Jewish community from Balti, some Kaddish cardboards, and where the Kaddish words were written in Slavic le -- letters, for people to be able to pronounce the -- the Hebrew word, you know, [speaks Hebrew here] _____. But all thing with Russian letters because, as I was explained, the people in Balti, many of them didn't know the torit Hebrew. And I got that cardboard, one of them is in the Holocaust Museum, but not in yours, in the Holocaust Museum in --

Q: [indecipherable] in New York

A: -- in New York. I have another one, which is a -- a historic document, Kaddish, and -- and -- wi --

Q: And we'll show that in a little bit.

A: Fine, fine, if you want to --

Q: [indecipherable] yes.

A: -- you're welcome. So then, you know, the life fell back into normal except that we are -- w- we were bearing memory --

Q: Right.

A: -- and the consciousnesses we gained. I went back to school, I went to a Jewish school, my parents kept me to a Jewish school as long as Jewish schools were around in Romania, until '48 when the education system was reformed, all became state schools. And I continued my Jewish education, I had my Bar Mitzvah with a very memorable teacher, Mrs. Eisenstein, who was another formative element, maybe I'll tell you privately another time about her, but she was a remarkable person, Hannah Eisenstein. A book about her was printed in Israel, includes my memories of her, and Meier Rosenne's memories, because he also was a -- a student of her in Romania before he left for Israel.

Q: And she taught you Hebrew?

A: She taught me Hebrew, she taught him Hebrew.

Q: Right.

A: [indecipherable] that his parents decided to go to Israel very soon, when my parents decided to apply for immigration it was too late, and they were rejected. So that's why I stayed in Romania. But she was our mora, our teacher at the beginning and we both -- every time I meet Meier Rosenne now, we still talk about what she taught us, you know. She was very important to me. And then I -- I went into research after I went to [indecipherable] training, I did research, learned sociology. Also, it's a complex period, with a lot of political implications and --

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: -- it -- it was kind of profoundly affected. I believe you asked me a question how it changed my life. So my life was changed in the sense that I became concerned professionally too, about how societies develop and change in political systems. And I did my research in sociology when that became possible. I am trained in philosophy and sociology and then my research was -- became of interest to other scholars internationally, so I was invited to the United State, to the Center for Advanced Studies [indecipherable] that think tank, which I mentioned.

Q: Yeah, think tank, yes.

A: And my wife, Stella Cernea was also a sociologist. She was trained and she became a assistant profe -- associate professor at the university. When I applied to become the same, and I got my Ph.D., I was told no, we don't take Jews any more, point blank. And this was happening in -- in '58, '59.

Q: Hm.

A: In -- in communist Romania. So fortunately I was able to continue my work as a researcher in the system of the academy of sciences, and I did my research there, which apparently was important enough to be picked up by American scholars. Then, unfortunately, my wife died -- Stella, and -- by a brain hemorrhage and aneurysm.

Q: And this was in the 60's?

A: And this was in the -- '68. Put it very briefly, I -- I received at that same time the invitation to go to the center where I went two years later after a epic fight between that center and Romanian authorities, who would not allow me -- would not give me a visa, period, until they gave it under American pressure. And I was there -- I had to come back because they came -- kept my two children hostage, and my mother took care of them while I was away. So I stayed from '71 until '74, when I again was invited by the American Sociological Association and traveled to Canada

and the U.S.. I decided not to return at that time, and I could do that because the children were -- were older and I could still count on -- on them to survive well and to -- until I was able to get them out. And really, it took an hour and a half -- I-I'm sorry, a year and a half, almost, to -- to get them out. Fortunately I was offered a job as the first sociologist to be hired by the World Bank, that happened in '74, just when I left Romania. So that was another one of the twists and chances in life which happened, and hey, I did, I hope well in that job. So it brought me great gratification, realizing a lot of my values and ideals in helping poor people in societies and changing people's life. I honestly believe I made some contribution in that. And that brings me to the present day, Joan, wh-when --

Q: Yes.

A: -- I retired from the bank. I do continue my work and my writing.

Q: When did you retire from the bank?

A: I retired from the bank at the end of '76, beginning '77. I published a number of books in the meantime. I keep laboring on --

Q: Wait a minute, '76 or '77? No.

A: No, sorry, no.

Q: '96.

A: '96 - '97.

Q: Yes

A: Sorry, sorry. '96 - '97.

Q: And when did -- you remarried?

A: That was a -- I was about to say, I remarried in '87.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: With Ruth, my wife, she is also an anthropologist. If you want to know the story, there's a very funny story because -- anyway, I have to -- let me tell you. It was a nice -- after so many sad stories, this is a nice story to record. As an anthropologist at the World Bank in Washington, I was trying to be in touch with the community of Washington anthropologists, which there is an association, WAPA, Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists. And while at anthropological meetings, I bought a book at the meeting, because I saw an interesting book, which was about -- it's called, "Afikoman in Exile", about the ritual of Passover from an anthropological viewpoint.

Q: Right.

A: Which I read, I enjoyed very much. I knew much -- learned much more about that. And in one of the outings of that Washington Association for Professional Anthropologists, sa -- and went -- went to the races, if you can imagine. And we ate, we gathered a large group and somehow in anthropology the discussion came about Passover rituals and somebody said something, you know, we engage in a discussion and we have a little -- a really sharp discussion because I thought I was there -- maybe another Jewish, or anthropologist or two, and I knew well to say that I, you know, knew the book, and I kept my thinking sa -- on some points. Somebody had a different opinion, there was there a lady who had a different opinion and that intrigued me. And she was very firm in her opinion and I was very firm in mine. But I couldn't convince her, so that's was it, you know, we went home and the boss as -- before telling -- saying goodbye, I told her, "And I think really I was right, you were not right on the point, and to see that, you need to read the book about that. And this is a book called "Afikoman in Exile," and you will see," I said. "No, I don't, I know -- I think -- I think I know I'm right and I don't have to read that

book." So that was -- I say, "Why?" She said, "I wrote it." Well that concluded the argument, that concluded the argument, so --

Q: And did you start dating soon afterwards?

A: Well, I -- I tried to -- yes, I went straight to the book and looked at what they said about the biography of that lady.

Q: I see.

A: In the bio-note of that book --

Q: Right.

A: -- and yes, I did call her, and we met and fortunately we could get married.

Q: Yes. That's a very interesting beginning, it might have been disaster.

A: Yes, that was the first argument she won, I have to say not the last. But it was -- I -- I -- I won also some.

Q: You won some arguments, I'm sure.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And your -- you have two children from your first marriage, both of whom are physicians?

A: I have two children, yes, both are physicians. This is my daughter Darna, who -- I didn't tell you that after my -- I saw -- they took me a ni -- year and a half to bring me my children. I had family here in America, also branches of the family from Bessarabia, again cousins, the Jacobsen family from Buffalo, and the Rochester fami -- the Davis family from Rochester. Also a relative of ours, whose, you know, grandfathers, or fathers left earlier from Balti and came to the States long before the Holocaust.

Q: Right.

A: And my mother tracked them down and mobilized them to plead with their political representative in the Congress, and in the Senate, to press for the freeing of the children and of my mother from back in Romania. And they did, they -- you know, the senator of New York was -- Rochester, Buffalo, you know, for New York the senator was Senator Javits.

Q: Javits, sure.

A: So they told him the story, he wrote the letter to the -- to the Romanian ambassador. In Stanford while I was there, I met Alan Dershowitz, who was also a fellow like myself with -- to whom I entrusted my -- my desire to -- to come and he say, “Michael, if you want to come now, I will help you now, legally. If you want to go back, go back to the children. But when the moment -- you decide the moment comes, I’ll give you all my support, you can count on that, this is my word.” And indeed I go -- went back, but when the moment came, I called, and Alan Dershowitz was right there to help.

Q: Yeah.

A: He had sent in fact, a student of his, Ben Segal to check on me after I went back in Romania [indecipherable] student. And when I came back that student was already a lawyer in Washington as it happened. So I got all the -- the best and the strongest --

Q: Right.

A: -- legal assistance and help. And they wrote -- Ben Segal’s father, who was a former rabbi, in fact, knew ha -- Hubert Humphrey. Hubert Humphrey wrote a letter to the Romanian government for my children. I was put on the U.S. Congress family unification list as a condition for the most favored nation clause, which was renewed every year --

Q: Right.

A: -- under the Jackson [indecipherable]

Q: Right.

A: -- so it was a interesting story.

Q: It was an interesting time.

A: And I got the children, and f -- you know, my daughter Darna came when she was 17 and she was accepted straight into Brandeis after an interview, and she studied there. My son had to go to high school here, at Georgetown [indecipherable], he was a very good student. He wanted to get circumcision as I told you, at his initiative which he is proud to this day, I am proud to this day. Because he didn't have the chance of a Jewish education in Bucharest. And now they created their own family, Darna is married, Eric [indecipherable] who has a Jewish French origin. They have three children. Darna decided to shift to a kosher home, with all my credit for that. And her children are going to Jewish day school in -- in New Hampshire, and get a very solid Jewish education, a very solid secular education. I'm very proud, we just had the Bat Mitzvah of the older one, Sarah, who has the name of my first wife, S-Stella.

Q: Stella.

A: Stella. So she is Sarah [indecipherable]

Q: They go to Jewish day school in New Hampshire, or New Jersey?

A: In -- sorry, New Jersey --

Q: Aha.

A: -- did I say New Hampshire?

Q: You said New Hampshire.

A: Sorry, no, New Jersey.

Q: It's all right.

A: In Englewood.

Q: Yes.

A: There are Jewish schools, and all -- they are, all three of them, Sarah, Rebecca and Alana, and going to the same Jewish school in -- in New Jersey. And they learned Hebrew, they were wonderful Bat Mitzvah, in which again we talked about family and so on. And my son and [indecipherable] she's a physician, my son went to medical school, too, he is a anesthesiologist. Of course, he's the vice president of the anesthesiology group in [indecipherable] if you ever need somebody.

Q: Okay. I'll remember that.

A: Remember. But he is a very good physician in general and an excellent anesthesiologist. He establish his family, his wife Lauren is a psychiatrist, a very good one, they have two children, wonderful, delightful children, Evan and Dylan, who -- whom I see -- you know, close, they live three blocks --

Q: Right.

A: -- from my house, and a -- av -- a very happy family, and we are very thankful to -- to our faith, for our faith and what happened.

Q: Right. Well, Michael, I thank you so very much for being willing to take so much time in telling us what's a very moving and I know very difficult story for you to be telling.

A: Yes, it is a difficult story, I thank you for your patience, and prompting and good questions and keeping so well, track. I think it's important that that story be known because it has -- you know, it's lifes, individual life's which interfere with history in crucial juncture moments of history, which therefore individualized may -- in happening, may become more relevant for broader purposes of identity or of faith, of history, of social change, political change. So I'm glad

that you invited me to put on the record those things, and I hope that my children children's children and so on will sometime also see that video, you and me talking, and --

Q: I hope so --

A: -- and they will know what is the history behind that.

Q: Right, thank you.

A: Thank you, thank you very much.

Q: Thank you again.

End of Tape Eight

Beginning Tape Nine

Q: And who is this?

A: This -- the picture of my great grandfath -- parents. This is -- the lady's name is Chaya. The man's name is Ushar. Chaya is the mother of my grandfather, Zollman Mayhel Faerstein. And this picture was taken apparently about exactly a century ago in 1905, or maybe 1906 because the family's story is that they left Balti at that age in that state. Apparently they were above 70 or even more, deciding to leave their family behind and going to the Holy Land to die there and to be buried in the Holy Land. And lo and behold, they had the courage, the stamina, and the strength, to accomplish that dream, and left Balti in 1906 or 1907. Finally they arrived in Jerusalem. I don't know how they did it, because they spoke only Yiddish and maybe a bit of Russian and they had to travel, of course, by horse, and by cart until they got to the train and then from the train they should have crossed the sea by boat, and then to arrive, but they made it. And they arrived in Jerusalem, lived Maya Sharim. As you can see he's -- has a beard, and has payas and the -- the traditional caftan. And my mother and I visited the cemetery in which we knew that they were buried. And that was still during my mother's life, and my mother discovered in the books their names. And we found their -- her grave in the cemetery of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. We didn't find Ushar's grave because Ushar grave was desecrated by the Jordanians when they controlled that part of Jerusalem. Last year I spent six weeks in Jerusalem at the Hebrew University, and I went back to retrieve the -- the grave of my great great great-grandmother. So fi -- I did find it, cleaned the -- the gravestone, her name is there, exactly when she died, and I brought the pictures back to my grandchildren. I would hope to get there with my grandchildren so they get a tangible sense of heritage, of -- of family history. And I still try to

find out, to construct the full family tree, which -- for which I have a lot of data, but I have to put it on a good chart.

Q: And this group?

A: This picture is real historic picture, is a picture of the synagogue of Balti before the war, when the synagogue was -- is -- it still existed. People attended the service and somebody took that picture which somehow arrived in my mother's hand and she saved it through the entire ordeal of my family lifes until -- then brought it to the United States. So here in that picture you can see my grandfather, Zollman Mayhel Faerstein, whose name is carried by my brother Zolly, as an old man there. And two of his sons, who are my mother's cousins and my uncles. This is Uncle Yosl on the extreme right of the picture and Uncle Shrul, a bit younger. So the others -- I know some names from my mother, but they are not relatives. But we are very proud to have this picture. But I like to say that I was very gratified realizing at my granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah that all my grandchildren were extremely happy and proud to have their pictures of their family tree, counting themselves as the sixth generation down from Haier Faerstein. So this great great great-grandmother, that made them very happy and very proud. So I am very proud of them, too. We have other pictures further, if you want to look.

Q: Yes [indecipherable]. And this picture?

A: This picture is my grandparents on my mother's side. It is Zollman Mayhel Faerstein, the man whom you saw in the prior picture in the synagogue, the elderly gentleman. This is shortly after my mother was born. In the picture is also my grandmother, Brana -- Brana Baratz Faerstein, and her little daughter Shanya, or Seindel Faerstein. She's barely one year old, and the picture apparently was taken at the same time with the initial picture when the family went to the only photographer in town, because the -- the parents, Chaya and Ushar decided to leave the country,

so they made pictures. Zollman Mayhel is already the father of six children before my mother. And you can see he is still looking as a young -- relatively young man. For Brana, his second wife, this is the only and first child -- the first child and the only child, Shanya. This is how families were at that time.

Q: And this picture?

A: In this picture you can see my other grandparents, on my father's side. This is Itic Catz, or Itac Catz, and his wife Ava, or Chava, of whom I -- whom I both mentioned in -- in the prior narrative of my life. They were in Roman. He was a -- a s -- a very small shopkeeper, is a grocer. They were rather poor. My other grandparent in the prior picture had a workshop producing soap, also very artisanal thing. But as you can see, he was also very distinguished in his looks, with a very respectable beard. Kind of stiff in the picture, unusual for him to be photographed. His wife Chava is the person whom I described to you as my grandmother who was rather short and heavy. You can see that he is sitting and she is standing and they are almost the same height, because she wasn't very tall and she grew bigger. The young man there is my father at a young age. He was in his teens, I believe; my father, Marcu Catz. I believe he was maybe 16 - 17, because his brother, Bernard, my Uncle Bernard is not in the picture, otherwise he would have been in the picture. The reason he is not is that he had to leave the town in which they left, Roman, because he was -- he got involved in some political activities a bit of the left, and he was badly beaten up and threatened. We have some pictures in the family of his being bitten -- I mean, the wounds he -- he endured in that beating and it was unsafe for him to stay so he left -- had to leave with his left leanings to Paris, where he could practice them a bit more. And then he left France for Canada where he established a family, but married in the typical Jewish way with a girl he met on the boat, and established the family. He's had one son, Charlie Kent, my cousin,

who established a very beautiful family, the Kent family with four children in Toronto and Phoenix and the States. Many grandchildren. Charlie married -- married Ida, who is still alive. My uncle -- Charlie Kent passed away, but they helped decisively in the -- in taking out my brother Zolly from Romania. In fact, ransoming him with money from the govern -- Romania's government, and this is how Zolly and his family arrived in Canada. But Bernard, unfortunately, is missing from this picture.

Q: Right [inaudible]

A: Yeah.

Q: And who's this?

A: This is my grandmother, again on the mother's side. I called her Babba Brana, this is Brana Baratz Faerstein, and the little person over there is me. That -- there is an inscription on the back of the picture which shows that at that age I was 11 months old. But you can see that my grandmother still looked very -- was a very beautiful -- the very beautiful woman she was here, with -- with white hair. In the earlier pictures with my mother at that age, she had hair was still dark and black. Young and beautiful and now she has -- that is what, about 30 years later, or so.

Q: And here?

A: Here are my two grandmothers. On the right there is Babba Brana, yes, who is my mother's mother, and on the other side is Babba Ava or Chava, who was my father's mother. They were with us in Iasi. This is a picture taking -- taken just about a year after the -- before the beginning of the war. The front person is -- small baby is my brother Zolly, and I am hiding behind him, showing only my head. Zolly this age had -- about 15 months or so, the grandmothers are both very proud and keep a very possessive hand on him, this was the latest sign of the family. And this is a very happy picture because it's a first -- the last picture I have with both my

grandmothers in the same picture. When the war started, they didn't make pictures any more. [indecipherable]

Q: Okay, go ahead.

A: What you can see now is the yellow star, the famous yellow star which the Jews from several parts of Romania were forced to wear. That part included Iasi. And that was the star I had, in fact, the stars were circulating in the family between me and my father. They had to be sewn on our garments whenever we went out. They -- if you use the same garment it stays the same, but if we change the garment we cannot go outside without the yellow star. So my mother saved two of our yellow stars. One of them is in the Jewish museum in -- Holocaust museum in New York, this is the second and I -- I -- that was my own and my father's, for some time. For --

Q: And did you -- did you have to purchase these, or were these homemade?

A: No, no, they were handmade by each family and this is why you have also variety. They were sewn in the house out of yellow fabric and black fabric.

Q: And the pens are for scale?

A: And the pen is in for scale, and you can see how it was. In fact, we had in our home, a sewing machine, and that was used; I remembered how it looked, and it used for garment too, cause at -- every family sew a lot of garments at that time for themselves. But it -- it was used to manufacture our yellow stars.

Q: And what are these documents right here?

A: These are documents from 1942, in the height of the Holocaust period. The first one is an order which my father received from the military authority of Iasi for the commandant -- you know, the commander of the military authority, to be on call, to be ready that he is going to be called for duties, unspecified, and he should be ready any time such call will be made. It will be

communicated loudly and he's bound to come to the address mentioned in the order, under sever -- severe penalty. It's also indicated that he was allocated to be a member of a -- a labor team number 38, to be led by another Jewish man named Kaufman, Yuda. His name was also written there. The name of my father is up there, Marcu L from Leib, Catz. The -- the threat was terrible because it does not -- it did not specify what will happen to them. Other Jews from Iasi received the same order, and the fear was that this is a systematic call again to -- to eliminate them, to kill them. Indeed then it was -- became known that they have to present themselves, the specific place was the railway station, exactly the same station where the Jews in the -- were put on the death train. So then my father was informed that he has to be present at a certain day there, together with other Jews. And with fear in his heart, he had to go. The bureac -- and he went. Fortunately we saw him back. But this second document is the certificate which the military bureaucracy handed over to him to -- as a proof that he indeed responded to the call and was there. That was important document too, to protect him from the accusation that he did not show up. So this our family document saved. There were more like that, but not all were sa -- saved.

Q: And what is this?

A: This is a document about myself. I believe I mentioned earlier that in 1942, the Romanian government decided to make a full census of the Jewish population and they asked the Federation of Jewish Communities to do that. It was called the Center Organization of the Jews. Whatever the name -- Centrala Evreilor din Romania. So again we got extremely afraid that the -- the census of all Jews is being made to keep good track of where they are and who they are, when the decision will be made that they could be picked up and -- and something done not very good to them. So this card however, is also very important historical document because it's -- it's blunt, it say, this is a census -- Recensamintul locuitoriln cu ringelvreese. The census for

inhabitants having Jewish blood. I mean, this is -- they were not mincing words. The ethnic bias is clear, blood bias. You have Jewish blood, you are a different category of person. The name is there, Catz, Moise, my name, our address, Iasi, street Colonel Langa, tracepervachi, which is 13. My fa -- because I was a minor in 1942, my father and that -- June '42 is mentioned there as the date, my father has to put his identity number on the left side of the card. Now, on the back of the card, you can see two stamps. One is the -- the stamps of the Iasi police, and the other one is -- the first one is the Iasi police with the crown of the king over there you can see in the first. And the second is the stamp of the Jewish community of Iasi, giving authenticity to this document.

Q: And this document?

A: This document is something -- is a gift which I received from the Jewish community of Balti in 1994 where I returned to my birth -- town of birth, simply to see how it looked at that time. I was on a World Bank mission to Moldova for developing programs which the bank was developing for Moldova, in my capacity the senior advisor at that time at the bank for social policies. I also spoke the language of course, so I went on that mission, and I took a few days off from the work problem to be able to visit my town, Balti. At that time I wanted to see the synagogue in which my -- my grandfather was praying in his time, but it had been destroyed long before by the war, and very little was left from Balti -- from past Balti. So I was told however that the new synagogue was created in a home, which was built like a usual home, a dwelling, but in -- it's used as a synagogue and was taken there. And then I saw there indeed, in '94, through the people who are living in Balti, the Jews living in Balti, in a -- in a Saturday morning, with a full service done as -- by usual service. My leader, th-the person who brought me there was my cousin, first cousin, Zioma Faerstein, who was -- whom I mentioned before, who was living with his family still at that time in Balti, in '94. He took me to the synagogue and

explained to me -- I -- I wanted to have some kind of memory and I asked whether I can have something from that -- they say we cannot give you any sidur, because we have very little sidurim, there are not enough, we don't have any other items. But I notice in that corner, some cardboards with some inscriptions. I say, "What are these?" They say, "Well, these are things which we had to write when we opened up -- came back from -- from the camps and there were a lot of people who died in the camps, and those who stayed alive wanted to say Kaddish after them, pray. But they didn't know to the Kaddish, the Hebrew Kaddish words. So we had to write the Hebrew Kaddish with Slavic -- with Cyrillic letters so they can pronounce, reading in Cyrillic letters, the -- the words of the Kaddish. At that time we wrote -- we created the black -- the cardboards, and these are some of them." On the right hand corner you can see the Hebrew word from Kaddish, the dollit is missing. Only k-u then sheen. On the left hand corner is Kaddish the same word with Cyrillic letters, and then the whole Kaddish is written in Cyrillic letter. [speaks Hebrew] _____ and so on. And this is a prayer which Jews from all the entire world are saying in the memory of those whom they lost. It was very moving to me to see that -- that document, historic document improvised, a product of the Holocaust whose -- who was needed because of the Holocaust, who will -- had to be manufactured by hand because there was no prayer books. And I ask whether I can have at least one of them to me. They said you can have them all because by now we have [indecipherable]. And they ended up giving me three of them. So I brought them with me. One is this one, another one is in the Holocaust museum in New York. The third one is with me still, waiting if your Holocaust museum, Joan, want to exhibit it, I'm happy to -- to give it there. It is extremely meaningful for me because it is from the same town I was born and from the synagogue, but I believe it's meaningful for the entire history of

what the Holocaust mean -- meant, and how people came out of the Holocaust having to cry for those whom they lost.

Q: Okay, and this?

A: This is a plaque, a memorial plaque which my mother commissioned after she arrived in the U.S. to -- for the memory of those in the family who died during the Holocaust and for the other people in the family who passed away. She donated the money for planting trees in Israel in their memory, and then ordered this plaque and she's -- it's written there, this garden of trees in Israel is in honor of the families Faerstein, Catz and Baratz, the families which I mentioned, made by Shanya Faerstein Catz. In parenthesis, Buchika which is a nickname which the small kids a -- you know, gave to her, my kids gave to my mother, Buchika, and this is how she was left in our family. And on the left hand side there are the names of people who died in normal circumstances before, or maybe after the Holocaust, but not in camps. It includes my grandfather, my grandmother and so on. Some of them were in the Holocaust, my father, including my late wife, Stella Yavetz Catz Cernea. On the right hand side are the names of many of those who died in Transnistria, I mean in the -- in the former Bessarabia, Balti and the other camps which I mentioned during my narrative. All of them whom she knew as certainly having died in those camps by the time she -- she ordered this plaque. Subsequently she found out that others, who are not here, also passed away, but their names are not [indecipherable]. In fact, there were more than the 25 she mentions here.

Q: And which is the right side?

A: This is the right side, yes.

End of Tape Nine

Conclusion of Interview