-TITLE- GROUP INTERVIEW UCLA

-I\_DATE- 2/7/84

-SOURCE- UCLA HOLOCAUST DOCUMENTATION ARCHIVES

-RESTRICTIONS-

-SOUND\_QUALITY- EXCELLENT

-IMAGE\_QUALITY- EXCELLENT

-DURATION-

-LANGUAGES-

-KEY\_SEGMENT-

-GEOGRAPHIC\_NAME-

-PERSONAL\_NAME-

-CORPORATE\_NAME-

-KEY\_WORDS-

-NOTES-

-CONTENTS-

In January, 1983 UCLA and the I939 Club collaborated to

produce testimonials of Jewish Holocaust survivors. My name

is Flora Bel Kinsler and I'm a social worker for Jewish

Family Service and I've been one of the interviewers. I'm

going to let the people here this evening introduce

themselves.

My name is Beba(?) Leventhol. I was born in VilNa, Lithuania

and it used to be Poland.

My name is Barbara Gerson Borren Branka Nomberg, married name

Kosherovig(?), from Lodz, Poland.

My name is Barry Brack and I was Born in Lodz, Poland.

I am Marion Sherman, known before the world as Marion

Chervinski(?) from Warsaw, Poland.

I am Sophie Weinstein Neshikova(?) born in Warsaw, Poland.

My name is Fred Diamond. I was born in Gelzinkiz(?), Germany.

1- 16 I am Ian Russ. I'm a family therapist and the

staff psychologist at the University of Judaism. We are here

this evening to talk about your experience of going through

interviews about your experience during the Holocaust. It's

like a time to reflect on what it's like to bring up old

memories. What I want you to do is to put yourselves back to

the last ten minutes of your interview and to remember what

you were talking about, how you were feeling, what that

experience was like, how the interview comes to an end, and

then start to remember all the things you wanted say, all the

things you forgot to say, your frustrations, maybe the good

feelings and that's really where I wanted to begin tonight.

Can you share with us what your experience was like right

after you finished telling your history during the Holocaust?

Marion: When I was given the time limit of my interview

realized I didn't really say everything I wanted to say. I

guess 1 and 1/2 hours for five years of tragic experience was

not quite enough and so many things were going through my

mind that it was hard t concentrate and remember.

Interviewer #1: What did that feel like, having 1 and 1/2

hours?

3-13 Marion: At the end I felt quite at ease but I was

nervous and reliving. I was much calmer than at the

beginning. I recall that when I started my interview after

maybe the first few words, I broke down right away. I did not

expect for that to happen that fast. I was much calmer at the

end. I guess I kind of simmered down a bit.

Interviewer #1: Are you regretting that you broke down?

3-47 Marion:I don't regret it. I just feel very happy

that I did it and I think it's something all of the survivors

should do. I think it would be impossible to put us all on

tape. I think it is something of great importance.

Interviewer #2: What were other people's experiences?

4-05 Barry: My experience was that it was the

frustrations of so many years that I didn't express other

than to my children. I believe I told the segments of my past

and it was one of the most important things at this time of

my life to leave these segments for posterity. I think it's

more important than anything I've done through all the years

I've been in the U.S. To follow up Marion, when I came to the

end of of the interview I thought I didn't; have enough and

my interviewer said, "what else do you have say?" and I said

that if I had to say more I'd probably have to talk for

another five years. That gave me afterward quite a relief but

at the same time I went in to the car and I had to be by

myself, driving around for hours, not talking to anybody. I

was so warn out, even my wife was in the car waiting and I

told her to go home. She said, "where are going to go" and I

said that I'll just drive around, and that I'll be back

later. The whole thing, picture, just came back which was

hidden for so many years.

5-52 Interviewer #2: Where there any feelings going

on with that or was it just pictures?

5-55 Marion: Of course feelings of episodes were brought

back by the interview of my parents, relatives, and tragic

things that I saw and didn't remember to mention.

Interviewer #1: Did it feel like a reliving Barry?

Barry: It was a reliving. I saw everything very

vivid and I didn't even remember them before. It was very,

very important.

6 - 3 3 Interviewer #1: What about others?

6 - 3 7 Beba: I had a somewhat different feeling. I

started out quite relaxed because I was interviewed many

times so I'm used to it. I started to feel myself getting

angry because we touched on subjects that I hadn't touched on

previously, for instance, about the German people. I don't

always think about that they haven't been punished for what

they did to us or that they never expressed their regrets and

somehow towards the end of the interview these thing came out

and I found myself thinking more and more about it. I do live

with the Holocaust quite a bit and I relive certain portions

of it, and I live with these portions, but these portions

about the German people got me especially angry. Also, when I

started to think back about my family I and started to think

that Hitler didn't make it easy for us to survive. I started

think about it in my own mind and I remained alone from my

family and everyone was killed and I always have sense of

responsibility. I used to think perhaps I could have done

something and when you live with that, it gets a little

heavy, so towards the end of the interview I was more upset

than at the beginning.

Interviewer #1: Okay, Sophie?

8-20 Sophie: For me it was quite an experience.

Originally I didn't want to testify because I never talked

about my past with anybody, not even my family. I understood

the importance of the testimony and finally decided to do it.

But, I was in such an uproar, such an anguish, that for weeks

I just couldn't sleep. It was like starting to unbury all

these past experiences of those years. Finally I came to the

interview and I was tremendously nervous. Looking at it

respectively, now looking at the testimony, it was a

tremendous release to let it all pour out finally after forty

years of silence it was out in the open. I was really very

satisfied with myself that I did it and that somebody helped

me to do it because I would have never done it by myself.

10-03 Well I had some experience. Before, I was going to

school and I had spoke about the Holocaust so I thought it

was going to be much easier now that I had the experience. It

was one of the first days that the taping took place. I

wasn't really very nervous and I didn't expect that after

three minutes of taping, as I recall, I broke downn.

Of course, I must say that this was very important for me

because I know when my husband was alive we made a partial

tape with my daughter and there were some things that I could

not talk about and here, in front of strangers, I told my

story. I was very happy later that I could reveal something

that at that time I believed was very intimate. I was not

mature enough when I was married. The tape made me feel that

I grew up. I could now face the future. I will review the

tape with my children I won't be ashamed, I won't be

embarrasses. It's going to be a fact that happened, facts of

life. And I, like Barry, I must say, I did not want to be

picked up to come to UCLA. I wanted to be by myself. I went

back and I was in the car. I did it for two people in my

life, for two men in my life. It was for my father, and for

my husband, my companion, who I did it for.

Interviewer #: And you did it because he

wanted to do it, he just didn't live long enough?

Interviewer #2: Fred, what was it like for you?

12-21 Fred: With me, it was like Beba, I had been

Interviewed before. I also appeared seven times as a witness

in the Buchner(?) Trials in Germany. I wouldn't say I was

nervous, but I felt there's an opportunity to bring out

something that unfortunately has not been brought out for

years and years. Namely, the myth that Jews just went to the

cellar like sheep is commonly accepted and here there are so

many acts of heroism, of resistance, on every level. Casual

resistance, psychological resistance, passive resistance,

what have you,. I don't really like to talk about it and

while we were talking I would say I was definitly the first

one. The longer the interviews went on the more we learned

from past mistakes and while I was talking I literally got

scared I might run out of time. Did I tell the important

things, did I communicate the important things, did I convey

the essence of what I wanted to? And while I was talking

about what we did, the resistance and so on.. Interestingly

enough I have a brother. We were together five years and he

was hanged in Auchwitz and suddenly I got the terrible guilt

feeling while I was talking about it. Did I do enough to

Fevent it? Why didn't I actually go with him. Suddenly like

out of nowhere came this guilt feeling and I didn't even,

after the time was up I wasn't really sure if I did a good

job in conveying what I wanted to convey. And this guilt

feeling, at night I was thinking about it literally for

weeks. I had this guilt feeling after the war; this was

persecuting me for years literally and I got away form it and

suddenly it came back. Thank god I, I had to convince myself,

under the circumstances that I did the best I could, and I

overcame it, but it came back interestingly enough.

Interviewer #1: It's something you have to

live with, huh?

Fred: Exactly

14 - 41 Interviewer #2: It sounds like you started

telling the stories and events, but as it reached closer

toward the end there were emotions you needed to confront.

Fred: Yes, Yes.

Interviewer #2: One of the things that Flora

and I and the other interviewers talked about was the how far

we could press you from your memories. We were concerned; we

wanted an accurate, emotional portrayal, but we didn't want

anyone leaving as a basket-case either. What was your

experience on that balance? Do you wish we had pressed harder

for memories.

15-20 Barry: I felt I always liked to talk and

discuss in a chronological way because if I co(?) in a

chronological way I remember dates and happenings. I found I

started to tell the story in a way from months or years and

then I started to deviate probably because there was not

enough time. Of course, I had to sit there for god knows how

many days . While you start to tell the story you remind

yourself of things, but again, you come in with another

question because of time. If you only had an hour and three

quaters, it was probably more than somebody else, and I then

I stared to open up. For me it wasn't enough.

Interviewer#l: So it wasn't just the event,

but the feelings that went along with them?

Barry: Yes.

16-22 Beba: With me it's not enough time because I

really wanted to talk about my experience as a witness in

Germany. only recently. It was 1977 I testified against the

Gestapo and unfortunately they didn't give me the chance, but

I believe in the future I will interview it on a tape. But,

that was not enough and this was the first day of the

tapings. Like you say about dates; all these years I said I

must remember one thing; that was the day when I said goodbye

to my father and I never forgot it. It's just inside my

brain. I will always remember that day when I said goodbye to

my family and never to see them again.

17 - 2 6 Interviewer #2: Did others have similar

memories?

17-29 Barbara: I felt I was not pressed and I was

given quite a free reign and I told my story.

However, I believe that everybody has some natural defenses

and deep down there are things that nobody ever reveals and

with me too, because there were things going on in the camps

that would be very difficult for a normal person to

understand and these certain details I never talk about and I

never reveal. One doesn't have to say everything. You say

the most pertinent. But, I do believe that there is a certain

threshold, there is a certain line, beyond which you can't

go. This is the case for me.

Interviewer #2: Is the threshold for me or for you?

Barbara: For me.

18-21 Marion: I'd like to go back to the remarks

made by Freddy. And I think that all of us have some kind of

feeling of guilt because most of the cases we are maybe the

only survivors of the family and some Jewish families were

large, most of the time so. Why I and Why not others? Did I

do enough to maybe help them survive with me? But I think

that you have to justify and come to a conclusion, I guess I

did all I could and unfortunately they did not make it as

much as we wish they could. Also, in thinking about the

interview itself I didn't feel any pressure and I was made to

feel quite at ease. I was never tense wen i broke down and I

was reminded to calm down and to take my time and to come

back to the situation when I can talk again. I agree with

Barbara that there are certain things I didn't talk about

maybe very tragic things that I meant originally to put in

for posterity but when it came time for it I spoke mostly in

general terms. I talked about general situations rather than

specific incidents in detail.

Interviewer #1: Go ahead Sophie.

20-08 Sophie: I want to touch down on that feeling of

guilt. I have never discussed it with anybody. That's the

first time I am listening to it and I feel it's very true. We

all have that feeling of guilt the guilt stems from the fact

that we watched our family being destroyed and we could do

absolutely nothing about it and that quilt, it's like a team.

It's something in all of us I think because we never

discussed it between ourselves before. I sense that it must

be something that everybody feels about it. As for the

interview I was put very much at ease. And even though I was

tremendously nervous I felt that you helped me very much to

get through it. There is absolutely no way that you can tell

in one and a half hours what happened during that time. It is

practically impossible because every step of the way there is

another chapter by itself so there is no way you could tell

it all during that short interview. Just for me, personally,

that I was able to talk about it was just a revelation. It

was a marvelous thing for me.

22-10 Interviewer #1: So in a way like Beba says

about Hitler having the rest of your live in an uneasy kind

of condition seems to be what you're attesting to . That to

live and pick up is something else again.

22-29 Barbara: I think unfortunately we passed it

down to our children and many children feel the same guilt.

There is a guilt, a definite guilt. They feel guilty that

about what we went through.

22-44 Interviewer #1: So your saying guilt is

separate from maybe Freddy having some regret about not

expressing some emotions. So I think we're identifying a few

different themes here. You're talking about guilt and I'm

remembering something that you said about feeling that you

had to portray a situation and perhaps not linking it with

the feelings that you really had. That's another theme.

23-15 Beba: Well I think the underlying thing about

the guilt is I think everybody has survived the feeling that

he survived and that the other's sent here. That means in a

way that that person took somebody else's place and I usually

look at this thing from a mathematical view even though it

might be quite silly. I think I explained to you that I

though Hitler was out to kill a certain amount of people and

he would have done it no matter what. So if we weren't there

he'd take them, and if we weren't there he'd take somebody

else. I remember quite vividly how they started gathering

people or taking them to be slaughtered at eight in the

morning and at five o'clock there was a whistle and they

stopped like a regular work day. So when that happened when

they killed a thousand people or two thousand people and I

happened to be two thousand and one then ,you, see, I'm out.

So I used to play around with this terrible mathematical

game. I used to think, you know, if I had been killed maybe

my sister would've survived. It's not a rational approach but

I really couldn't help it.

24-30 Interviewer #2: I guess that's the defense you

were talking about before that helps keep you safe in the

memory.

24-39 Marion: I can not completely agree with that,

I'm sorry. I think I was asked many times how I survived.

It's a pretty valid question really from a person who wasn't

there. You are talking about atrocities and mass killings and

ten thousand people daily in Treblinka from the Warsaw

Ghetto. How did you survive? And I tell the people very

straight that I was at the right place at the right time. I

wasn't cocky, I wasn't smart. If I believe in god or an extra

force they were watching over me but nevertheless I have to

say that it's the kind of question..I was a young man. I was

nineteen years old. But there were people who were parents

and lost their children and they survived.

And there is afeeling of guilt they cannot explain in

mathematical situations.

Beba: I understand, everyone explains it differently.

Marion: So I think there is a natural feeling of guilt.

25-56 Interviewer #1: But interestingly enough

everybody has to have something that they run back on a tape

in their own mind that brings them back. You in one way, Beba

in another. You could respond to the question,"How did you

survive?" by saying, "which day?". 1200 days, which do you

want me to talk about?

Marion: First I want to go back to the

remark Barbara made. I don't think our children have a

feeling of guilt. I think our children feel uncomfortable to

know and hear about how mistreated their parents were. I

don't think it's a feeling of guilt. I think it's a feeling

of fear that something could happen to my parents. And as a

child no matter how old they fear that something will happen.

I know my daughter, or should I say our daughter, doesn't

talk too much about it, but she knows quite a bit. Holocaust

was portrayed on T.V. and she wouldn't watch it with us, but

she would watch at her own apartment. But, during every break

she called to ask questions and explanations, but she

wouldn't sit in the same room with us and watch.

27-18 Interviewer #l: Why do you think that is?

Marion: I think that she just can not face

us and ask us questions and face us and say, "my parents went

through that, and my parents could have been shot they were

hungry, or beaten, or they were worked not like human

beings."

Interviewer #1: It's too close, you're saying, it's too

intense and so close.

Interviewer #2: Hold on one second, Freddy?

27-54: Fred: I have to say that everyone of us really

has the intention of trying to make them aware, and we maybe

made a remark, years ago when we were not to comfortable,

when we had to to build our lives. I certainly did not

survive .... When our children look to us and are spoiled,

just one word ... If you believe that this created a guilt

feeling it did and it stays. And we did not do it

intentionally; we had no idea what the consequences would b.

And I have a personal problem with my daughter who is very

aggravated, but we talk about fear. You know, the biggest

fear in the camp was that all of us would get killed and when

the war was over there would be no one to tell the story.

We almost resigned to the fact that if the war goes on

another year probably no one will make it. But in fact, if

the war, God forbid, had continued another year we all

wouldn't be here. We were all totally exhausted and there's a

limit even a strong human being with a strong will to survive

can stand. I was very close to death. If I had not escaped I

would not be here today. I could figure out, as Beba said,

mathematically if I go on another week... and I was there six

years. I consider myself a veteran. I know everything. Every

trick, everything in the book about the camps.

29-28 Interviewer# 2: Were there weeks where you

said," If I go on on another week I'm not going to make it?N

Freddy: No, interestingly enough. As a

matter of fact the information we got was distorted. When we

heard about Stalingrad, we knew, this is the end of Germany.

The question is who is going to survive, did we last long

enough? And it got worse and worse and at the end there was

an effort that someone should survive. We were so concerned

about this, that someone should tell the story. Otherwise, we

put our first efforts is surviving just to sustain life would

have been in vain. It wasn't easy to survive, and it wasn't

easy to live as a human being, to preserve your dignity, your

humanity because the Germans did everything possible t to

reduce us to a level sub-animal, not sub-human, worse than an

animal. And there was an effort day by day, hour by hour, to

try not to become an animal, an that was very tough.

30-40 Interviewer #l: So, personal integrity.....

Barry: I happen to agree with Marion. I also

think that it was something extraordinary that I survived and

someone else in my family didn't. I mentioned in the

interview that I came from an orthodox family. I have a

certain background and I believe this is probably what God

wanted. I remember after he war I came to Montreal, Canada, I

believe it was in 1947 and the Jewish Congress allocated me a

home and there was a woman there who said," How come you

survived?" So, I stretched out my arm and told her that I

didn't know. "What do you mean you don't Know- What did you

do?"

Interviewer #1: So it was an accusation.

Barry. I said I don't know, I was at a loss. I don't Know

what I did wrong or right, whether I was at the wrong time at

the right place or the right place at the wrong time. The

main fact is that I'm here.

32-13 Interviewer #1: Okay, but I hear you saying

something else. I guess as an old time social worker my own

guilt was that we might have intensified the guilt by

questions like that How did you do it, what did you do?

Marion: I don't think so. I think that was

probably just pure human interest. I probably would have been

as interested if someone went through a tragedy like that

where six million got annihilated and and how did this few

thousand, hundred thousand, survive. How did you make it?- it

would be interesting to know. And I have said that looking

back, I don't know how a human being could have live through

what we lived through.

33-07 Barbara: Sometimes I think, did it really

happen to us or was it someone else or is it just a fable?

Because it was impossible to remember the nights, the fear,

the days, Especially like in our camp we were talking, the

factory was mined and there was constantly the Russian. The

Dreckhaus(?) And whenever the Germans were winning they were

good. They didn't take people out to the guards for lashes.

But, when they were losing, they were impossible and we were

thinking, what should we pray for? Should they bomb the

factory, should they lose, or should we have a few more

months to live? so you don't know. You don't know what to do.

Of course, most people in the camp would say let them bomb,

maybe somebody will survive. They will bomb, they will run,

let the allies win.

34-30 Interviewer #2: On thing I get confused about

listening to you is I hear most of you saying that the

compelling factor was to live to tell the world about it. And

yet, the war ended and, Sophie, you didn't tell the story for

years and you must know other survivors who never told the

story and could not tell the story and there are parts that

you don't tell.

34-57 Sophie: I want to tell you about my

experiences. I was a young girl went I went into the camps. I

was in four camps. Maideneck(?), most of the time in

Auchwitz, then Ravensbruck(?), and then in Marakov(?) Somehow

I hoped all the time and that was I fought every step of the

way. I didn't survive because I deserved to but because I was

full of hope. It's after the war, when I came back to Warsaw

and saw the total destruction of our life, that I was hoping

somewhere, somehow, someone from our family survived. And

when I saw the total destruction of our family, my entire

family I just collapsed and I just went on for years never to

talk about it and just to have it buried very very deeply,

and I was so hurt that I was unable to talk about it. In the

beginning, for the first fifteen or twenty years I wasn't

able to smile or cry. I was just a mess, a complete mess. Now

that I look at it, people weren't very interested in what was

happening. I keep thinking that the interest in the survivors

came thirty years after the happening. I just can't

understand it.

37-15 Interviewer #1 : What does that feel like that

to you Sophie, that it took thirty years?

Sophie: I keep thinking about it. We went

last Saturday to the banquet of the Jewish Federation

Council. We were the personna non gratta for so many years,

nobody was interested in us. They were glad that we were here

and alive, but nobody took an interest in us. So I was very

surprised when for the flrst time I heard Mr. Gorah, the

president, speak about that we are an integral part of the

community and that we are all of a sudden accepted. I was

very surprised

Interviewer #1: Freddy, do you have something to say about

that?

38-17 Freddy; I want to say I try to analyze myself

and other survivors. I think there was an invisable stigma

attached to being a survivor. And you have to understand that

most survivors of what was going on in the camps. All they

say was people being slaughtered and put to death and beaten.

There were instances of resistance. We started believing the

myth that we really didn't do enough, that we were really

were sheep brought to the slaughterhouse. I've personally

been through this. I immigrated illegally to Israel in 1945.

Anyone who saw the movie, Exodus, I went through the third

degree like that. I was inducted into Hagganah and

interrogated just like in the move. Where were you liberated?

What do you do? Where did you work? Who were your friends?

Did you collaborate with the S.S.? It was like being

interrogated by the Gestapo. Somehow, we ourselves, believed

we must ask ourselves, did we indeed do enough, did we take

every opportunity, did we risk our own lives enough to save

others? That question is still valid today.

39-50 Interviewer #1: I have to ask myself the same

question and maybe that's why I got so involved in this. As

an American Jew.....

Freddy: Did you do enough? Exactly. Now

suddenly more research was done and stories came out that

indeed that under the most impossible circumsances, Jews and

other in camps showed dignity and did resist. Suddenly people

became proud to be a survivor, and rightly so. As I said, to

come out of the camp and act like a civilized human being is

an act of heroism. Something all came out and everybody talks

about it. Everybody has a search for these instances of human

dignity and heroism and show it.

41-09 Barry: You made a question about why we didn't

speak about it right after the war. I know myself, when my

children were growing up I made it a point to tell them

certain things and leave it at that. But I believe we were

too warped, too absorbed, to involved, and we didn't have the

time. There was nowhere to turn, You came to a strange

country without a language and without means. As a youngster

I had to eat. There were many times I didn't have money to

eat, I only had enough for room and board.

If I had to go to work in a street-car I couldn't pay for it

and I had to walk. This was one thing. But also, I believe

that even at that time if we would have talked there wouldn't

have been an interest. . No one would have believed it. The

woman I mentioned before who asked me the questions- what am

I going to tell her, a story, a happening? She'll think I'm

dreaming.

42-42 Interviewer #1: But Sophie made a point that I think

we have to consider that process seems to be unfolding here as to

when people feel ready. It's almost like forty years coming out of

Egypt.

45-56 Beba: This is what I wanted to refer to, why it took

so long. It's like a process of mourning, but a long mourning. In

my case, it wasn't that I had to make a living or that I didn't

have time. I always had the time and it was something inside of me

that wouldn't let me do it. It's like Flo says, there comes a time

when you are ready. Frankly, I am never ready. I always wait for

the kids to ask me questions; I can't sit them down and say, let me

tell you about the camp. I can't do that. My children ask, but

little. When I tell them something its like an agony. I don't mind

talking to you, and I don't mind who asks me questions. Thereare

questions people ought to ask you. And there was also a stigma. For

instance if you were a woman and halfway decent looking they would

wonder how you survived- maybe you slept with one of the guards. At

one point I talked to my son about it and he said, "Ma, I don't

care. I'm glad you survived because otherwise I wouldn't have been

born." I though that was tremendous, but I can't for one moment sit

down and tell him how it was. We have lived a long time in the

United States, longer than in any other place. This is my home, but

whatever successes and failures you have, those were the four most

important years of my life. Every time I live with that, every day

and it's never going to go away. And I can see the

intensity of it coming back. I suppose the older you get the more

intense those feelings become and the more you think about it. I

used to think that thirty years after the war I wouldn't think

about it, but you think about it anymore and not less.

45-51 Barbara: I think for at least thirty years we

were a very unpopular group. They used to call us refugees,

and we wanted to fit in to society, to assimilate. I didn't

even hear the word survivor. We wanted to be lost in the

crowd.

46-26 Interviewer #1: First you're among the despised

in Europe, then maybe in the resettlement process, and then

here.

46-36 I guess I have a different feeling than the rest of

you. We were called refugees, it's true, but I guess for a certain

part of the population we were competition. We were looking for

jobs and taking maybe ones that they could perform, but we were

younger.

I wasn't working in the line, but in the needle trade. At this time

it was a predominantly Jewish trade. I know my wife went in to this

trade for a while. She was younger, more productive, and a better

sewer. There was jealousy of some sort and we were intruding. Also,

I think we have to give a lot of thanks to NBC for puttingHolocaust

on television. It brought it to the general public, not just the

Jews. From the time it was on T.V. I've met a lot of people who ask

me questions and I never refused to answer. Even during Summer time

I have a tattoo and I wear a short sleeve shirt because I don't

have a number.I have a very different tattoo that only one camp

had. I never felt inhibited not to talk about it. Even with our

friends, no matter how we start out the social evening we end up

with our concentration camp experiences.

48-47 Barry: What amazed me most is particularly our own

age group. The war finished and we were very young. Even after

seeing all the attrocities we did not become cannibalized. It took

a short time to straighten yourself out in a decent manner. This is

the most amazing thing to me. Why didn't the go out and maime(?)

and take revenge, but just go about their own thing, and try to

make their own livlyhood, get married, have children, and so on? I

think about it very often. I never got the answer.

50-O6 Barbara: I'm not a psychologist, but I'll answer it.

Don't you think that before the war we lived by certain morals,

those of our parents, and we were brought up a certain way? Did you

hear of nobody killing another among our population, or raping? We

just took it from our home, whether it was rich or poor, there was

just such a dignity. We tried to give it to our children; not

everybody is sucessfull, but at least we try.

50-51 Beba: I think about it a lot too. That after all

this savagery, no one goes out with a gun, goes to Germany, and

kills a few. We all had experiences in the underground, or some of

us did, and we see that in the trials in Germany nobody is brought

to justice. I keep thinking of what is going on in South America

with terrorists and I see we don't do anything. I must tell you, I

have my regrets, Ireally do.

51-28 Interviewer #2: Did others of you have fantasies to

want to do that?

Beba: I used to .

51-33 Barry: I had the opportunity and I didn't do it. I

was given a gun right after liberation by an American soldier and

he said to go in the forest where there were some S.S. men and to

do what ever I wanted to them. I didn't even touch the gun.

Interviewer #2: Did you want to?

Barry: No, I didn't want to.

51-51 Interviewer #1: But, we know that some people did

and it didn't stop them for putting themselves together and

evolving.

51-59 Sophie: I actually agree with Barry completely. I

think as a group of people, as survivors, we should be very proud

of ourselves that we really are what you call a menchen, and living

with this for so many years, being confronted with this all the

time, and remaining what we are,respected as a group. I think we

should be very proud of ourselves.

52-55 Interviewer #1: I have to say though that some of our

people have had very terrible struggles and haven't made it to the

level you have. You can't condemn them either. They did what they

could do and they say what they saw to their own level.

Barbara: But a very small percent.

53-16 Interviewer #l: Yes, a small percent. But what I

cherish, I have to share with you is the number of survivors

helping in the community, not just with other survivors, but with

the general population.

53-29 Marion: I think we have a great feeling of social

responsibility. During the Warsaw Ghetto, where you would think

everyone was only thinking about themselves, there was the Jewish

so called self help who were helping those who had less. There were

kitchens for those who could not afford to buy food on the black

market. I guess there is something embedded in us, maybe through

family upbringing, like Barbara said, that's charity, tzadaka.

54-14 Interviewer #1 : It really struck me that all the way

through the taping the degree to which the community maintained its

standards and values as long as it could. Once it wasn't a

community anymore it was hardly within your hand to keep that

going.

54-28 Freddy: Isn't that what kept the Jewish people alive

for two thousand years? Judaism is not just a religion, but it is

a way of life, a civilization. There is a certain value system and

it's stuck in us. Maybe it was hidden, maybe it was sleeping, but

we always sustained thinking and seeing like in the movies, seeing

good life like we had at home. Sometimes we dreamed about it when

we were hungry. We looked back to the nice Jewish family we had and

it all came back. After we survived, if we survived, we will

revitalize, and there will be a renaissance. That's what we

believed. We at least had to try to do that.

55-16 Interviewer #1 : Could it be that it's happening

Freddy?

Freddy: The survivors, whoever survived the

camp, must have been a tough cookie, a tough guy. And when

the American Jews said, "how come the survivors are so

successful?" I said that don't you see that they are the few

that survived, they are the tough people, they are veterans,

they went though hell? If they survived Auchwitz they had

something in them that made them stronger than the average

and the applied this after the war to new circumstances.

Obviously, a good person must have learned during the war

that there is an infinite capacity for evil in man, but there

is also a capacity for good. If we survived ,we tried to be

good. In regards to shooting the Germans, there were times

when we were in camps that we said if we had a gun I would

kill him, but when the day after the war came, we were back

in civilization.

Interviewer #1: As we move to the end of the first hour of

the tape Freddy has put before us the notion of survival of

the fittest. But, I think we have to consider that there are

dangers in that. If your children see you as larger than

life, do we come back to Marion's point about difficulty

being close you?

Barry: I don't know, even if I saw a killer that killed my

relatives, I wouldn't have it in me. I just don't hate. I

can't hate him. I couldn't even hit him- It's against my

principles.

Interviewer #1: You have passed these things on to your

granddaughter, I notice after seeing her on tape.

57-46 Barry: Of course. You remember the past, you

think about it. You just have to go on in the future. I just

don't hate. I don't think many survivors do. It's not in us.

Sophie: I don't agree with that entirely. I

that it's personal. It's normal to hate, it's part of

emotion. You don't love a person who has destroyed

everything. It's just not possible. It's normal to want to

get back at a person. I do not agree with you that we do not

hate and that we forgive. We are not that good. We are Jewish

people.

Interviewer #2: You already do have different events, though

the events are recorded the same.

Interviewer #1: Apparently Hitler didn't destroy the

individuality. We did not come out like one.

59-45 Interviewer #1: We started out by thinking

about the feelings of being taped, but other things are

arising that are so significant. While you were in the

ccamps, you had some dreams, some objectives. How do feel now

and where are you in your life with those things and wishes?

Marion: My dream in the camp was that there

would be a full loaf of bread and a knife to cut it and not

to have to be given a portion.

Barbara: My dream was that one night I'll go to sleep and I

won't be hungry. Or that I would be able to sleep longer.

Will I ever have enough sleep? It was hunger pains.

1-01-18 Sophie: The only thing we talked about was

food,. That was the single subject. We talked about it

constantly. The reason is obvious. We were so starving that

there wasn't anything else we could think of.

1-01-51 Interviewer #2: Are you satisfied with your

lives now?

Barry: I'm very satisfied. I think we've

achieved quite a lot since coming to this country. I think a

poll should be taken about loyalty to this country; they have

had a more loyal citizen because we recognize the freedom and

tranquility.

Interviewer#l: And maybe the opportunity to have the whole

loaf and not just someone slicing off a piece.

Barry: The ability for one to have more or lass. You never

have to go inside of a police station if you want to be good.

We've had a full and satisfying life, particularly in the

United States .

Beba: Talking about dreams, I don't know if you can, I lived

one day at a time. If one day passed and I was still there

there than that was an achievement. And food, that was a

constant preoccupation. I was preoccupied with matters of

time because I worked near the Gestapo and I saw what

happened. There was a war on two fronts and they needed

supplies. They always seemed short of this and that, but

there lways seemed to be enough trains for the Jews. I

thought that we wouldn't be so lucky. I was pessimistic and I

think that helped me. I was always concerned there wouldn't

be enough time.

People that see me from my camp remind me that I always

thought the end was near and we wouldn't make it. This

pessimism colors my life. The preoccupation and dream was if

we would have enough time.

1-O5-36 Interviewer #1: We have food, time, sleep, what

else?

Freddy; Obviously we were hungry, we

couldn't think of anything else. It was like a sickness.

There were moment, I was in Auchwitz, we had a group of

youngsters who were part of a Zionist group who wanted to go

to Israel and build a Kibbutz. We decided to have a Hannukah

party and this Madriach talked about the Maccabbees of

Israel. He was strong enough to talk about what he would do

after the war. Why not another miracle? We dreamed this image

for four or five months and it gave us strength.

Interviewer #1: but, did you relate to the pessimism of Beba

because I wonder if some lives are a hostage to that

pessimism.

1-08-48 Sophie: When you speak about how you feel about

yourself, about the things you have, we are comfortable. Like

Barry said, is more or less. I don't think I'll ever be the

same. We go through the motions of living and having a good

time, we rear our children, but as for me I won't be what I

was.

Interviewer #1: What do you think it would

have been like?

Sophie: First, I lost my hope in the human race. I don't

think I have too much hope. I know what they are capable of

and if circumstances permit it will happen again. There are

forty wars going on around the world right now, so I really

don't have too much hope. I'm pessimistic.

1-10-57 Barry: I'm basically an optimist. I was always

one. I will agree with the notion oh hunger and we did dream

about food. When I came home from work in The Lodz Ghetto

there was nothing to eat. I put my head down and dreamed.

Truly, the smell was in my imagination. Basically I was an

optimist. As bad as it was, I thought maybe tomorrow.

Marion: The loaf of bread was true. In the

first camp we didn't work on Sundays and we sat down and if

we thought of chances of survival they were nihil. But

something inside said maybe I will make it. One of my friends

said not to talk about it because it makes you hungrier. So,

to divert our conversation we talked about intersections in

Warsaw. That was part of going back before the war. That's

how we killed time.

I remember the disappointing moment when we heard about

Roosavelt's death. That was the only outside news that the

Germans gave us. We thought, what's going to happen to us

know? The second big let down was in April at the end of the

war and we found out about an agreement made to take

prisoners to Switzerland. Our commander in Bergen Belsen(?)

would not open the doors.

10-15-53 Freddy: Flo, you asked if we were satisfied

with our lives. Every survivor is a missionary. I ask myself

not only if we described enough, but if we have taught the

lessons of the Holocaust to our children and the world at

large. If the lessons are frogotten it will come back. There

are great powers ready to initiate another Holocaust and in

this respect I'm a pessimist like Sophie. That is the biggest

disappointment as far as I'm concerned. I blame survivors

that we didn't do enough to remind those in power to remember

the Holocaust. We feel we were running out of time, getting

older. We fell that life must have meaning an what better

meaning is there that to teach.

1-17-37 Interviewer #1: Maybe,Freddy, You're giving a

reason for this project. The question is, should we have done

it sooner?

Interviewer #2: And what is the effect that

this project is going to have on the rest of your lives, for

you and your families? Combine what I said and what Flo said

all together.

Barry: I'm quite satisfied with my life. I think it is a very

necessary thing to be done, particularly ten, twenty, thirty

years down the line when we are gone. This is one of the most

important things to be done and I'm very proud to have been a

participant in this endeavor.

1-18-36 Interviewer #1: Did it do something for you

though? Did the American gathering do anything for you?

Barry: When I was at an auction sale two

weeks ago one man came over to me we solicited him for funds

for the Chair. He is not Jewish. He gave a substantial amount

of money and we put him in a plaque at the hall. A friend of

mine came up to me and said, " Barry, you know a friend of

mine was at UCLA and saw my name on a plate. How come?" I

said, you know when you give four thousand dollars... He

said, " Okay, next time you have something like this you come

to me and put my name on another plate. It's a worthy cause."

this it what makes me happy. This is going to come out in

younger generations. For what better way is there to educate?

1-19-44 Interviewer #1: I'm just going to explain that.

You're talking about the Holocaust Chair in the history

department at UCLA.

That has been endowed by the 1939 club and reaches many

students on campus.

Beba: You asked what results this has. i

don't know right now. It was good for me. I don't know if our

children will have a chance to see it . I don't know what

Yale is going to do with it. I hope it gets the greatest

exposure possible and will not be left on a shelf frogotten.

I want to go back to whether I'm satisfied with my life,

whether I had better or worse times. I don't think this is

very important. What is important is the legacy of the

Holocaust. One thing that bothers me to no end is that the

criminals are not brought to justice and just sit here and

it's not our concern. The Germans are sitting in the highest

councils of the world. People are paying great attention to,

they have the greatest industry, they are in positions of

power. It's like nothing ever happened. This is what bothers

me. Pretty soon we will not be here and they won't be here.

They will never know about the Holocaust because they simply

never bothered to tell their children about it. The German

children don't know about the Holocaust and this I consider a

great failure. Also, our community with our children; there

is a second generation, but I think it's a minority.

1-21-29 Barbara: what about our government. There are

criminals under our government who saught heaven and they got

away with the biggest crimes. Germans, they wanted to

annihilate us, I understand. But, this government, and that's

because it was convenient, it was their policy. So now the

skeleton is coming out of the closet and we know. The

criminals are still here. They are hidden, they are in the

intelligence, they are in high positions.

Barry: Because of that it doesn't mean that

we shouldn't do what we do for posterity- this education,

whether it be at UCLA or another school.

Marion: I think we stepped on a difficult plateau. These are

different things. I guess we have to remember that in the

whole world the Jewish population is about fourteen million

and to be honest we are not a very well liked group. There

are very important political decisions being made. They need

Arabs for oil, and they need Germans as a buffer against

Russia. They preoccupy tomorrow with that instead of our

problem, that the Holocaust should never happen again. I

agree with Sophie that if the situation is economically and

politically right there is a chance of another Holocaust

happening. There were many before. There were other things

that happened to the Jews. But that doesn't preclude the

situation that we should not do what we did because that

might help.

1-24-32 Sophie:; I just want to say exclusive of what's

going on around us we have to do our share.

We have no impact on what's going on around us, the politics,

but I feel very good about the tape. As much as I was against

it in the beginning, not against per se, but I couldn't do

it, I feel good about it. The only thing that can save us is

education. If we use it to educate people there is hope.

Interviewer #2: We only have time for one

more question which we will have to do briefly. The question

is, how do you hope this project is going to effect your

children, either directly through you- maybe you've changed

and that's going to effect you children? But let's focus on

that you want to do this for you and your relationship with

your children.

1-26-00 Beba: I can't say what it will do for my

children. I can say what I hope it will do for them. I hope

it will bring them closer to us, that there will be a showing

for them. In this way they will become better acquainted with

us because I feel there is a great difference. We cannot

reach them. We do have a second generation and when they see

t.v. they watch Holocaust they have to go in to another house

or room. There is a reason for that. I can say about my own

friends that they have great difficulty understanding and

communicating with their children. They talk on a different

level. I would like to see that conquered. I am not able to

do that, but I try my best. I hope this project will

facilitate it.

1-27-21 Barry: I would like to see it even broadened. I

would like to see the chair, or chairs, on the education in

highschools and to teach more young people particularly. I

think the message would get across because the further we get

away from it the more perspective young people get.

Sophie: I just about expressed what I felt,

before. I believe the tape is an extremely useful thing. We

should teach our children, not just our children, but young

people, because our hope is really in them. And that should

be expanded and taught in different ways and different

levels. Now, in terms of my children. I can not answer that.

I said I never talk to them about it but I think they should

have the tape. If anything it's going to strengthen them and

give them moral support. A lot of what made us stronger will

make them stronger too.

Interviewer #1: So it may offer them the opportunity to

interact with you also.

1-29-15 Freddy: If you look into the essence of it, the

key word is sensitizing. If we make our children and all

those who see the tape sensitive to the happenings then we

have accomplished a lot. Obviously we talk about it to make

people sensitive to human suffering and to make them aware

that you are not alone in this world.

If we talk about broadening the project, what we haven't yet

accomplished is to hold up the example of the few people that

stood up during the Holocaust to show that a human being has

to do under those circumstances . We as survivors have

failed, only recently, a counter-realization, that it's not

enough to show our children and the world only the capacity

for evil. It's just as important to show the capacity for

great. This can make the greatest difference, to show one

human can save one thousand. We saw this all the time. I dare

to say that we all survived because someone, somewhere helped

us.

Marion: I can't say that l know what the

tapes will do. It depends what is done with them. If they are

chelved, it's not good. They have to be put to use. The

question that I asked before is if they will be available to

schools, to synagogues, to organizations, and so on, and I

geuss this is not decided yet. What it will do for my

children, I don't know. I told her there might be a

possibility that I can purchase it and she sounded

interested. She participated once on one with me as a second

generation. I certainly hope these tapes will be put to use

and not collect dust. We did as much as we could. Maybe we

didn't emphasize everything. I want to go back to what Freddy

said; that there were not enough good people and I want to

pay som tribute to a gentle Pole because of whom I might have

survived the war. He was very helpful. He questioned as to if

they were really as bad as everyone sais and I said yes. Even

though I survived because of a Pole, there were really very

few of those. As a rule you do not have a good record, I

said.

1-32-35 Barbara: I'd like to leave this legacy to my

children and grandchildren but that they should not view the

middle age woman who faces tham but a young girl who

struggled, who had courage. I hope they will take an example

that during difficult times they will have time and they will

know what we sacrificed. There is another part. I was

picturing at Yale and UCLA when future historians and leaders

will study they will not just get a sheet with statictics.

They will see a real person, they will see real tears. I hope

this is a legacy we will leave for the future generations.

Interviewer #1: So, in 2084, feelings will be

seen?

Barbara: Yes, it's not played by an actress.

It's just a person who lived through hell, that had hope and

I am an optimist. I must survive and I was obsessed with

this. I hope that it will be a better world.

Barry: We all talked about ourselves and the

tape. I would like to salute those who were instrumental in

this. They deserve as much praise as we do.

Interviewer #1: It's been a privilage that

you've allowed us to share in your experience. It's been a

very meaningful experience for all of us.

1-35-55 Interviewer #2: Let me pull a few things

together. I shared with Flo that this was one of the most

extraordinary experiences of my life. That you and others

would be willing to share with us the most difficult moments

that have put you in a vulnarable position, again to be

willing to have that pain. What I heard tonight was many

different themes. One of them was soscial. That as a group of

people who were victimized by war, by anti semitism before

the war, and after the war you came to America and were

victimized again and again, this time not only on purpose,

but by a Jewish population who couldn't listen to what you

were saying. It was overwhelming and we shut you down. We

then took what we couldn't listen to and turned it around to

accuse you of being sheep who walked to the slaughterhouse.

You were chopped again and again. Now something's changing.

Some of it has to do with your age. Because of NBC's program,

because of Israel, because of Jewish pride, we can begin

hearing you. We can survive it and you can survive telling

the story. I hear you saying that you hope the experience

isn't in vain/ Yuo got throagh the camps, what got you

through, you hope isn't in vain. The tapes will be used to

make people more sensitive and to make this world a better

place, and that's very exciting.

.END.