

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Harold Zissman**  
**February 28, 2000**  
**RG-50.549.02\*0062**

## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of an audio taped interview with Harold Zissman, conducted by Arwin Donohue on July 28, 1994 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

**Interview with Harold Zissman**  
**February 28, 2000**

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: So, we'll just have a little conversation so that I can test the level, and you can tell me about your neighborhood a little bit, and how long you've lived here, and I'll just test your --

Answer: Okay, I moved in here originally, in January, about two or three, of 1981. And I've been living here in the same apartment, since. I bought a apartment here before it was built, I bought it off a plan, and that's where we spent all these years now since, which it means over 20 years hence. Is coming through good?

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay.

Q: I'm just going to listen to it. Okay, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jeff and Toby Herr collection. This is an interview with Mr. Harold Zissman, conducted by Arwin Donohue, on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2000. And this is a follow up interview, it's a post -- focusing on post-Holocaust era -- it's a follow up interview to an interview that we conducted with Harold Zissman, in 1995. That was a Holocaust era interview, conducted on videotape. And we're going to start by reviewing some -- some things that -- that took place immediately following the war, and then move on to what happened in the United States, which will be our focus today. So, one of the first things that I wanted to know was when you -- in the last interview, that Randy Goldman conducted with you, it wasn't

very clear to me what liberation meant, and whether there was a moment when you were actually liberated, when you were recognizing, okay, I'm not responsible for being platoon commander any more, and I'm -- I'm a -- now I have to decide what comes next. Can you describe that a little more?

A: Of course. That was a very hard thing at the time, turning the clock back to the era. The forest sort of served as -- as a safety, away from the people who wanted my life, sort of -- without a good reason. Therefore, my separation from the forest was a very hard one to do. The commanding officer that particular time, when asked by two of my comrades who were in my platoon, ask me why am I not going out to join them, and see where I can enlist myself to do a job -- to work, well he told them, "Where do you think Harold is going to go? Is he going to enlist himself to be in the police? No, I don't think I want him to be there, I want him to be in a more important job." Whereupon, not so long after that, I'm getting an assignment to go to -- and take some people that they immediately drafted, between the ages of 18 through 45, to join the Red Army's armed forces. And because of the fact that the railroad tracks between Grodno and Marstee, were not ready, because we, the partisans, the yesterday's destroyers of that, to stop -- to not let the Germans be able to carry on their war, now had a problem of going back to see that they've all repaired, so the Red Army could be able to bring in their supplies, as well as manpower. So, they were drafted and I could -- well, was ordered to organize a -- another squad because I could -- I did not have enough to make a platoon, because everybody

was trying to get organized, and they [indecipherable] me to do it. So I must have gone about maybe 10 or 12 guys, and with that I started, and I reported to duty. And with bayonets open, we were marching them like they were prisoners, much rather than they were the people who are willing to serve, and go to fight the war, to liberate the rest of them, be the end of Germany. It made a bad impression on me, but an order is an order, I had to do it. So, freedom at that particular time to me, I did not even get taste of the freedom yet. I can only explain myself that those same people that I have to guard -- I had to guard at the time to take them, still had in them that anti-Semitism, although I didn't do anything against those people. They couldn't accuse me personally, but a pluralistic way of hate, because I was a Jew, didn't -- still was imbedded in them, and I felt the non-safety there. It took us al -- it took us almost until we put them on the train, and we go -- and we were able to move, was almost a week before the train could start operating. And as soon we reached the old border between the U.S. -- between the Soviet Union, and Poland, the KGB -- the army KGB took over command, and I was getting papers to be released with my squad that I had over there, and to go back to our -- well, I was told while living, where the officers are going to be, the local officers. However, I was told by my commanding officers, if I should return, and they will not be there any more. The staff -- the general staff will be in Minsk, which was the capital of Belarus, and I am to report to any of those places, after my assignment will be done. Whereupon --

Q: So we got some of that -- that -- we got the information about how you went to Minsk

--

A: Uh-huh.

Q: -- in the first interview. I just wanted to clarify a little bit that -- how you knew, okay, I'm not beholden to the partisan group any more. Now I have to just make my decision about what comes next, and -- and I was trying to get a sense of what you were thinking you -- you would do next, before you got in -- involved with the KGB.

A: Well, that's what it was at that particular time, our returning back to Minsk was used, since I had papers to be housed, and to be fed. So it was sort of used like vacationing.

After all, now we are free birds on ourselves. From my whole squad, I only remained three of -- two of the former guys, which they were Belarus, and I was their command por -- before I was their platoon commander, and now they were with me. They were sort of more like friends that we knew during the war, and during the partisans, when I would come in their settlement, they parents knew me, and as a matter of fact, I felt relief to be in their company, because relieve means secure. I was secure that no foul things could happen towards me in that particular time. So, we all went to that particular time, I received my medals, well I -- well I already said, being on the train, and all of a sudden, I found myself that I'm going to work for the KGB, which this was the farthest thing of my mind that I ever expected to happen. But I am the -- took soldiering before, when I escaped the ghetto, and I figured I'm continuing the same way. Besides that, I know the

consequences, what it would have been had I refused, and I would not want to become a KGB working person. However, when I came to Boronivitch, which that was sort of the re-region to where I was going to work, in that office there, and I passed all the tests they wanted me to know, I told them that I wanted to go now for a little bit vacation with the two guys that they enlisted themselves in the militia, and not in the KGB, because their education was below mine, and therefore they wouldn't pass to go into the KGB. And I wanted to go back to their settlement. Besides, I wanted, by any chance of all, maybe there was someone of my family, who by -- by any kind of way, survived, and if anything, probably that would be the place to meet them. On the other hand, I was separated from the partisans, the Jewish partisans, who were natives of Darechen -- of that -- of that city where the ghetto was that I escaped to the forest. I had my desire to go ahead to meet them, because we were separated, since I joined the other part, which it was in arvens, which I mean the paratroopers, with the General kus -- with General Kustenکو. So I was separated from all my past, sort of, in -- in spirit, as well as physically, and I was anxious to go there. So when I put it out that I want to go for two weeks, I was granted, and meaning granted at that particular time, you had to have a permit, otherwise, without a permit, you could have been arrested easily, and who knows where to -- you could wind up. So -- and I came to the house of -- Volodya was the guy's name, and his cousin, and I was greeted like I would have been his brother, no l -- no less. His mother and sister were there with open arms, and we kissed each other, and

hugged each other, that we survived, and came not injured. And his mother gave him to change of her clothing, she gave me. And the next thing, we went that evening cut -- in the fi -- in the settlement there. A guy was playing on the harmonica, we were dancing, the boys and the girls, and to me, while we started to drink, is the usual way it would have been at the time, and it was -- i-it was not regular vodka, it was homemade brew, sort of, to speak. And I don't know, no matter what I drank, somehow or other, I didn't get drunk. My mind was so busy think -- to think, where do I go from here? And it's not any other way that I could explain this, I just did not have a resoluting, I want to go and do this, I want to go look to do this. In a way, I felt sorry for myself immediately. Look, here [indecipherable] he had a place to come, he had a mother, he had a sister, he had cousins, he had -- what about me? I did not have anyone in -- or anywhere's to turn, to say to myself, I'm happy. We met, we are good. But everything was sort of like it would not have been real. It just like a fantasy that you dream about, or stuff like this here. So I, again, was very mixed. I worked with him a whole week on the farm. It was potatoes they do, because at the time of year. It's September when we are talking about, and at that particular time, farmers pick the potatoes there, and so on, because the other grain was already picked. And really, the need for help was in -- in a very bad way, because his mother an-and -- and his sister could not attend to it. So in a way, I was a handy helper, hel -- helping hand there. And to me at that particular time, a certain fantasy got into my mind again, why would I want to continue as a Jew? And immediately I saw a -- a



different horizon, sort of, in a way of speak. Look at it. We both for the war, he was against Nazism, he escaped to the partisans because he did not want to be drafted to go to Germany, to work with the Nazis. But look what had happened to the two of us. I had no one to come to, he comes back home. And he going and working, and coming at night, between meeting up with the boys and the girls. Like I say, a certain fantasy, I -- I call it the fantasy, because real, I was not looking for that. So I must call it a fantasy got into my mind, and that's what I thought, who knows? Maybe I'm going to get lost right now to these new world, and forget about the world that I lived in. And come Friday, the whole thing came to a change, whereupon Volodya says to me, "Harold, aren't you going to go to Darechen?" Darechen meaning the city nearby -- not so nearby, but from where the ghetto was. And he knew these partisans, these same guys from Darechen fought together. Where he says to me, "Aren't you going to see your Jews, over there?" He all of a sudden out of nowhere came out, while we were discussing -- I was discussing to myself, what happens Sunday now? Their church was still on over there, it was not destroyed, and what if he asks me -- I go with him on the farm, and work with him together. I associate in the same groups of people. What will it be, how will I feel if I'm asked to go to the church with him together? And I did not know at the moment, so when he start talking about, and using that word, you Jews, instead of using the word, aren't you going go see our friends, the partisans, over in Darechen? You know what I mean, or maybe naming someone? But he said you Jews. So I felt a separation going on, and I --

all of a sudden I awakened like from a dream, and says, "Wait a minute now, I cannot hide myself." Oh, I cannot run away, because each sort of day is something that it isn't totally open. And I immediately said to him, "Of course I want to see, but you know how we worked every day long hours, and hard work, how was I to disrupt you and me from that work, and ask you about going to Darechen? But since you don't plan on working perhaps tomorrow," because Saturday -- I did not observe S-Saturday, so anything like that at that time, because under the Soviets, religion was another part of life that you did not practice. So I said to him, "If time permits you, I will be very happy that you give it to me, and I will also ask you to please let me go to the cemetery."

Q: Before we go on, let me just footnote here that -- that you told this story in the first interview, and -- and I'm -- I'm glad you're telling it again, because you're giving some more details that are -- that are interesting, and that are helping to -- to clarify what was going on.

A: Yeah.

Q: But -- but we should just probably move on from --

A: Okay.

Q: -- from that area, rather than going into telling the whole story. I just wonder if you have any more. I know you -- you went -- well, for one thing, I wondered if you -- you told in the first video how you had -- how you had left, and Volodya.

A: Volodya, yeah.

Q: And did you ever see him again after that?

A: I -- I did since we wound up work -- after all, after the two weeks were up, we were back in Boronivitch, he to the militia. We went on the same train, at the same time. But from Darechen, I did not return back to his farmland. I only told him, I says, when -- we'll meet at it -- because I had to go to Zelbo, which is -- was the name, to take the train and to go to Boronivitch. So we said we'll meet approximately the same time. It so happened that we did meet on the station, and we went with the same train to Boronivitch, while he went to the militia. His cousin didn't go -- di -- wa -- didn't take the job there, so he remained separately. He, as a matter of fact, volunteered coming back to the army, you know? And we met back in Boronivitch, but it was not any longer in Boronivitch that we met as quickly, or as frequently as we wanted. And another thing I want to point out here, be for what he asked me, pertaining, as a I pointed out to the question, you Jews. I did not want to carry that as a stick, sort of to punish him with that, or asking him why did he say it, because in my mind, I saw the natural thing of it. You know, other words, it's I and you, and he sort of was not ready to hear from me, or to see from me, that hey Volodya, what do you mean you, or this, that and the other, we are just one, and I'm working the same way. So I did not take up any time. So whenever I would meet up with him, we meet -- we would meet again like yesterday's friends, and not any criticism whatsoever, because I took it in my heart a justifiable way, the way he said it. He didn't prepare himself to make a speech. He just said about the way he felt. So

therefore, I never criticized it, or take -- took it [indecipherable]. So yes they would meet. Now, I don't know whether I told you that I got married, after which -- in January, I don't know in the previous tape did I mention about it?

Q: Yes, you did.

A: I believe I did.

Q: You did.

A: That on January five we got married --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and the way I took in my hands, because I still was a reckless type of a person, even organized, and working the KGB. But certain instincts from the partisans, that you have to make decisions, still were left in me, and it was a hard time for me to get rid of it, that I'm constantly under the saluting, and under the command, and -- and th-there is a program that I have to do. So the same thing happen when I get married -- when I wanted to go and get married. Three times I applied, and they didn't let me give, so I decided, hey, nobody's going to hold me back, and -- and later, when I come back they arrest me, but the colonel comes, and releases me within -- and wants to put my commanding officer there in -- in my place in jail, because he says, "He was legitimately that he three times asked you, and you answer -- why didn't you let him go?" He says to him, "I did not have anybody to replace his work, he was doing the work for three people." So he says, "What did you do on those days that he was not here? When he was -- went away to

get married?" "Well," he says, "it was very hard, you know, but I mean to manage." He says, "So you see, you could have managed, you could have said to him, you can only get three days, four days, two days, so therefore you are the guilty, and not Harold," and he asked me at that particular time, as I -- my name at the time was Grigory Grisher, they -- everybody used to call me Harold, my name became in the USA. So -- and therefore, in my heart, all this here handling, was already a premonition of how I will escape, because I -- I appreciated the Soviet Union, that it gave me the opportunity to save my life, as well as so many more other Jews, that it could save their life and not be annihilated by the Nazis. But at the same time, I didn't think that I owe them my life since I didn't agree with the Communistic system. Communism was a very strange bedfellow in my mind. Even they tried to ingrain me through the school, and so on, but I -- I-I just didn't -- didn't go follow that. So that particular time, the animosity that I build up in myself, of the way the system works was already -- I was looking for that window, and especially, as I aforementioned before, when I went to register, and in the registration I find out that it -- being -- working with KGB I sort of -- not that I didn't think it couldn't happen, I didn't believe that it would happen, because it was a -- an official thing, posted everywhere, that anybody who was living in Poland before 1939, and they wished to return back can do it. But all of a sudden, I was called in, and with a locked door, as anybody who wrote about authoritarian governments, or Communism the way, and the boss kept me from 10 in the morning til five o'clock, and questioning me about every

little detail, which I sense that he wants to find something wrong in me, so he could go ahead. Although he did not have a good reason, if he wanted to jail me, he could. But somehow or other, he wanted to make a goo -- case for himself, and he couldn't break me down. That not breaking down gave me a fever. I don't know what I remembered saying that, about all of that.

Q: Yeah. No, we -- we do have this story on tape, and -- did you have something particular that you wanted -- wanted to say about that, because you -- we did get that story [indecipherable]

A: Well, if you have that story, so you know I escaped --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and I escaped to Bialystok, which it was the first stop to Poland.

Q: Yeah.

A: I later found out that a -- KGB had sent two guys, which both of them are still alive, one in Israel, and one is in -- is -- is in the USA, that they were chasing after me to find me in Bialystok, and there, one day -- y-you know what I mean, from Bialystok I realized -- I met a friend of mine, and I wanted to go into city where -- in 1939, from where I sort of -- we -- we were chased out from there, because it became Third Reich, and finding in Bialystok a friend that we went to school with together, he forewarned me, he says, "Harold, please. You survived the war, why do you want to go back and get killed?" Because he mentioned me somebody who went into the city, and he did not hardly live a

day before they killed him. And I must p-put in a note why that happened the way it happened. After all, somebody took away our homes, somebody took away our business. They did not want to have any witnesses to come back to claim it back. And the fact is wa -- I didn't. I didn't receive any money. All this time, while people got money from Germany, and I didn't because I didn't register til ma -- at the time, when 1952 was the deadline. So therefore, I understood the situation why. I did not want at that particular time, risk my life, and I listen to him, and realizing that -- since that it's -- what is going on, I wanted to go deeper. And the reason I wanted to go deeper, I wanted to go a little bit more close, I came there for to Łódź, which it was a big industrial city before the war. And it was not totally destroyed during the war, it was some left over there, because that was the trend sort of -- some people, I met some more people over there that I knew from before, and we found out that's the place to go. While being in Łódź, I meet up the Major Shpark, which it was his name, and he was the one also, who were after me to look in Minsk, because I was distrusted. To straighten up for the record was, that at that particular time when I made my papers, the new papers, I no longer was Zucherman, but my new name was Zissman, as I held to present. So, in other words, I had to change my name in order to get the documents from the Polish commission to transfer me. But under the name of Zissman, there was no record for them to go and listen, or ask, so therefore that's what it helped me. I don't believe I told it in the first recording, in that particular --

Q: You did mention that too.

A: Yeah.

Q: And I wondered if you had ever thought of changing your name back from Zissman after you arrived in the States?

A: I -- I was telling -- to tell you the truth, it was a grave mistake at that particular time, because I was so in -- I became to the United States, already had a child, and it's sort of, what is it, we're going to mix up a whole thing, you know what I mean? So to me it wasn't that far of my name, what -- what good is that going to me? And I remained with that name, however, at any time I tell my story, I -- or I file applications, or so, I still refer to that my birth name was Zucherman, and -- and my regular name was Zissman, the adopted name was Zissman. And it's -- it became a joke to me. Z-Zissman from German means sweet, and Zucherman means from sugar. So in other words I always joke the sugar became sweeter, that's why I used the name Zissman, and that was not too far fetched, you know what I mean, to do it. So I left it the way it is. So, after, in Łódź, meeting that Shpark, within a couple of days, I was in touched with a for -- with the former fighters of the partisan, and this ma -- people who already had formed the Zionistic party again, and the option was -- as they -- as it was called, the runners. They were there, tha -- from Hebrew Bricha. Anybody who ran away right now, and looked for an identity of where to go, and the -- the -- this -- the whole thing led us, the goal was to reach Israel, one way or the other, because we sort of -- no matter how I looked at it, Europe was an insecure place, because any country, other than Poland, I found had the



same story, Jews were killed. It was only a matter of the percentages. And unfortunately, out of the six million, three million were killed in -- in Poland, because they corroborated much more than the people in other countries did, and -- and that was the results of it. So basically my zeal at that particular time was, end goal, to reach Israel, and I enlisted myself with the illegal party -- not ill -- it's not the party, it was the part -- the Zionistic party, that they were doing, that helped to help those -- those who ran away, the runaways, sort of, to bring them in this year. And they accepted me, and immediately they made me the head of 10 more guys [indecipherable] and when we came from there, we -- from Łódź, we were sent to Kraków. And from Kraków, which is not too far from Czechoslovakia, we came to Czechoslovakia. In Czechoslovakia, the Red Cross, which I met for the first time -- otherwise, during the war, I did not even know that the Red Cross existed, or anything like that. I knew that -- that it existed, but meaning not to speak derogatorily about it, there was no such thing wherever the ghettos was, anything to see the sign of a Red Cross, as they should be the -- the -- the people to help the Jews in any kind of way. But, so for the first time in Czechoslovakia, I have seen a Red Cross, and they had a kitchen open for many runaways, because people were changing from -- either that they were working in Germany, or they were enslaved for the -- in Germany, whatever it is that everybody was returning home. So the traffic back and forth from countries existed, and the Red Cross, at that particular time, was available to give us a little helping hand. And they made us ID's, and the destination of that particular time,

was to go to Hungary, Budapest, from there. And we were on the train, and I don't know what I mentioned that on the train we ran into some drunken Soviet soldiers, you know what I mean, and that we had -- since we -- I had more partisans with me, so we had to do what we had to do. And to save our women that we -- were with us, or the whole operation, that we were on an illegal way, and we just -- when we were going near a river, we just shoved them down on -- over the -- into the river. I don't know what it was, the outcome of it, but we were [indecipherable] then the train stopped at Budapest, our minds, of the five of us that were there, were really thinking, who knows whether we may not hear a little call, because in Hungary still, the Soviets were occ -- on the occupation at that particular time. But, since it was quiet, we went to the community at that time, Communitaes rilita, and there sort of was an encampment for us where to sleep. And for the first time, we organized. The following mor -- day, that a demonstration that we are going to go to the consulate, which it was over there, British consulate, already in existence, and we made a protest march, declaring that Israel is supposed to become a state, so therefore it could house all it's refugees, as we were to so many years, driven out historically from Israel, and is a time of our return to -- back to our homeland, from our ancestors.

Q: How many people were involved in that march?

A: I give or take, not coming, because on the train, the whole group consisted of -- were over a hundred, but people of runaways that were already there in -- in Budapest at the

time, ready to go to Bucharest, because the route at that particular time, called for us to go to Bucharest, Romania. And being that they were ca -- boarding near the ocean, from there we would illegally send them on ships, to go illegally to Palestine, as it was called, not Israel, but Palestine at the time, as it -- as it's -- historically the name of the area was called Palestine. So -- but they changed on us in the middle. So to tell you approximately, the demonstration had at least about 200 people, at the event, in rows, orderly. Israeli flags were gi -- made to us, and we had inscriptions at that time of saying that -- that Israel should become a state. So it became to me, a new era of life, that all of a sudden, while I was not going where I'm going, I had some -- I had a goal in my life, I had some - - of re-establishing myself. And I felt very good about it, you know? And it was -- the marl thing was good, it -- my wife accompanied me, she did not sort of resist all of this, I think. She was in the same mind and mood, as to what I was doing. So, i-it sort of -- now I'm not by myself any more, I'm the -- we are two, and sort of it made a little bit my life easier, because I no longer was that one person like a stone in the desert. I use that word because that's my feelings of the way it used to be. So now we -- we were a team. Just for the sake of it, I don't know whether I told it in the other, we met our rabbi, who married us in her hometown, and he was apart over there to, where we were sleeping on bunk beds, and we were on the top, he was at the bottom, the bunk bed broke, and I almost -- he got injured from a nail from that, but not badly. But it was like I said, that little fun that we had to [indecipherable] accidents that had happened. And by that day --

Q: It was in Budapest?

A: In Budapest, yeah. When we were in Budapest, let me describe it to you. Over the Buda, there was not a single bridge, only pantoon bridges were left from the army, that [indecipherable] to cross over. They started already on -- working on restoring bridges, but that's how it was. It was fresh after the war, and one could see the difference what it was in Poland, the way it -- it looked like -- there we saw shops, all of a sudden, you can go in and shop. So what I didn't see in Boronivitch, or I didn't see back in Poland, even -- you know what I mean, the whole thing was in markets, outdoor markets, it was in Łódź, or in Bialystok in the same way. Here, I saw an organized thing like this here, that wa -- sure it was destroyed the Buda, you know, but the civilian housing was not damaged as badly to say. And in -- say there were apartments, and people were shoppers, there was market. All of a sudden, we were given at that particular time, salamis and everything to take with us, after they changed us route not to go to Bucharest, but to go to Gratz. And the fun part was in Gratz was different orders. We were going -- our documents make --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

A: -- and the -- th-the most -- most likely was to cross over to the English zone, but the Soviets still were there. So we told the supplies, the food supplies that were given to us to take to that hotel, we coming to that hotel, we turn it into the kitchen, and then we had to worry about food for ourselves to eat. Something else happened in that hotel, which I do

not know what I said to the other -- on the other tape, but I -- let's forget what I said on the other tape, I want to tell it now, because that was very important. We came in there, and that was the English zone. We were -- we were told that if we ever go through to the English zone, we must be very polite and quiet. And as we were going to the hotel, our orders were we only go in groups of two and three, and nobody is to speak at all, if possible. If you do speak, manage to speak German. If you do not speak German, you must speak another language, sort of, because we would be going there as we are Austrian Jews. Therefore, Austrian Jews returning back from concentration camp, therefore it would have been no questions asbay cause at the time, the police there, when it was, shied away from all of these things, sort of as to wash themselves of all the atrocities against the Jews they did. Anyways, we came to a hotel, and for the first time, I met there in the hotel, a representative from the American Joint Committee, which they were there to help the refugees. I also met a party faithful over there, and I brem -- I remember he -- Pinhaus was his name, he was with red hair. So, between the two of them, that was the command. In other words, the Zionist side, the American aide side, and so on.

Q: Excuse me, are you talking about the Joint Distribution Committee?

A: Committee, yeah, that they were, that particular time, already there in that hotel. We go into that hotel, we were housed where we should go, and before long I meet up over there a guy who was a guide, and he was with us in the forest, the partisans. In a way it

was a ray of sunshine, you know? Lusek, I speak to him -- and I hear that he's guiding -- I ask him first, I was -- wanted to go, ready with my group, I still kept the group, sort of like the 10, that we work together, as I said, to begin. I was their leader, or commander, if you want to call it. He says, "Harold, you and Sonia, you got to wait a little while. They'll tell you when your turn comes." And before long, since we made ourselves known that we are former partisans, fighters over there, we get an order that we are going to go, and we were told we are going to go to come to the river Moore, which it was a fast river, but a narrow one, and we are to cross that river, and on the other side of that river, we will immediately -- immediately enter to the English zone. Myself, being a platoon commander before, and the other guys being partisans, when we hear assignment like this here, we did not ask any questions whatsoever. We were given tickets to take the train, and we were to go from Gratz to Klagenford. And in Klagenford we were given the directions to go to the river, and there -- but we were told, don't go like you're marching, go like normal, two people again together. But when you come to the river, immediately I find out that in my group there were a few guys who could swim, and a few guys who couldn't swim at all. And we were with women and men together. I decided that once we come there, to form a chain. I'll lead the group first, I was a swimmer, and my wife was next, which she was not a swimmer, and that's how I made the chain to be. So, by the time we stretch across, even with a little bit of paddling with our hands, we'll be able to reach almost the other side. So swimming was not to be very far. All of a sudden, a

galloping horse is heard, and a commanding officer, was in Soviet gear, comes over, he a -- makes [indecipherable] to stop, and of all people, he asks us question what we are trying to do, we are telling him we're trying to swim in the river. You know what I mean? But of course we did not have any bathing suit on, or anything like that, we are now civilian, and we didn't have any problems what -- that'll get wet [indecipherable]. And of all the things, he arrests me. He arrests me, now of all things in the world, I'm an escapee from the Soviet Union, and from the KGB, and now, I finally, at the mement -- the moment of re-liberation, I should fall back? But I had no alternative, he immediately he had two more on horses with him, and -- and he's already got a little squad, sort of, and I have none to say. Anyway, the rest of the group, with my wife together, go back, and they decided to get in contact, now again with the hotel in there, and telling them of what had transpired, and they just -- and they told that they're sending out immediately, somebody who is going to handle the case, and take it over. Sure enough, within the nec - - by the next day, I immediately am taken to the jail, and in the jail, all the questions and answers that they gave me, was that I wanted to go to Klagenford, and my aim was to go further away in Italy, and I -- whichever I mentioned the name, they says, "Well, you don't have to worry about it, we'll send you there." But being -- working for the KGB, and knowing them from the time that I know before the war, when we were -- were in their zone, I knew that when the Soviets tell you you gonna go to one place, you may wind up in Siberia until you get there. So I did not have my trust in that system, and I was

really scared, but what could I do? I was -- no way for me to break out, I did not have in -  
- any money, or anypla -- anything at all. So I figured I got to wait for time, and see what  
is going to be. By the next day, it looks like somebody came from there, a courier, and it  
looks like they had money, and they knew how to bribe Soviet officials at that particular  
time, and they paid up, [indecipherable] for my freedom, and they let me out. When we  
came back to the hotel, I organized my 10 guys, immediately I posted to each door  
exceeding that hotel, I says, "Everybody stay, as the guy told me that nobody's going to  
go out. Whoever is going to come in, you'll know. Because we are not going to let -- be  
mistreated. We, because we were former fighters, are not going to be let into another  
situation like that. Josef Lusek is the name of the guy. The way he takes the other, we are  
going, and they're going to take us tonight, not tomorrow." I came in with an ultimatum  
to the office, and I told them, I says, "I have guards in all the exits from my guys,  
nobody's going to go out." I says, "You dealing with former partisans. And remember,  
our ch -- our duty did not finish as yet, we are not in Israel as yet, and that's what we're  
aiming to be. I'm not going to let you guys play with our lifes any longer. Nobody is  
going out of the hotel tonight." And I spoke -- meanwhile, Lusek comes over, he tried to  
calm me down, and he says, "Harold, I know your wife from days past, before I knew  
you. I'll take you," -- my wife, I says, "Never mind to all of these here things, "My group  
goes with you, and you are going to be responsible for all of us. If anything foul plays



[indecipherable] remember, we are not going to remain silent. You know us from the forest.”

Q: Let me ask you something here. Were the other people in the hotel that Lusek was taking across --

A: Yes.

Q: -- were they involved with the Bricha also, or was this just --

A: They were involved just like we refugees, who looking to go forward to Israel.

However, there were people with money, people who went smuggling while I was working with idealism, and they were mi -- Black Marketeering, and they already got so many -- made money, and about it, and ma -- and you know, it was payola, immediately went into existence at that particular time. And I found it out quickly, and this is where I made a point, I banged the table in the -- in the office, and I told him, “No, it’s not going to go on like that. I speak for my group. I’m their leader, and that’s what is gonna be.

And tonight, if any plans you have about leaving any group, I don’t care who the others are, we are going,” and Lusek, he was -- I called him into -- be in presence, so I says, “You know. You the leader, and you the guide, but command, I will have. I and my wife will be -- ride next to you and your wife.” She was there, too. And remember, there will be no foul play. So he told us, “We’ll have to enter a barn. In that barn in the mountains over there, is where the Soviets [indecipherable] are there, we have to bribe him, we have to pay him -- pay him off, and therefore they’ll let the group go through.” And he warned

us, "They will -- they probably may body search you, and if they find anything of value, they might take it away, they may liquidate it. Don't make a resistance, because otherwise you'll spoil the whole operation." I really did not have much, but at the same time, a ring f -- we had from my father and mother, we had a watch, and so on. So my wife, what she did, she had some yarn, you know what I mean, for knitting a sweater, so on. So she took some of the valuables, made a ball out of it, you know what I mean, wrapped it inside, so in a way we figured that what so. Then we came to that barn, like you said, anyways -- I rushed a little bit too fast. They accepted my -- what I dema -- my demands, and my group was going with that -- the whole group together must have been about another 20 people, so we were a big column, and when we came to that barn, like I said, which he explained that to us, we started -- they started to body search us, you know what I mean, and so on. So happened that to my group, nobody had any valuables, really, to worry about. We did not try to acquired it in that time that we were involved with. But, there were some people who had to pay off, you know, give this, and we became knowledgeable before watid. Now, we already on the other side of the barn, and we're ane on the English zone, physically. We walked for --

Q: I want to remind you that we do have all of this on the other tape, so we don't --

A: You still have that?

Q: Yeah, we have --

A: Okay, so not --

Q: -- we have all of th -- we have everything up until when you left for the United States.

A: Okay.

Q: But -- but I just had a few, focused questions, so we don't want to go over everything again.

A: Ask me any questions, and I'll answer them.

Q: One thing was -- well, I did have another question about your march in Budapest, you had mentioned.

A: Yes?

Q: Did anything come -- become of that? You had -- you had a couple hundred people marching.

A: Well, the only thing was it was so new a thing that it never existed before. Later on I found out that these type of marches existed also in Romania, and perhaps in other sources. But it was totally new to us, and it was totally new in Budapest for something like that to happen. Absolutely we must say that later on, you know, I've told -- we are talking right now about 1945, you know it -- Israel didn't become a state til 1948, but you know that in the intervening years, of these three years, a lot of demonstrations of that type begin to happen, be in Europe, be in is -- be in isra -- not Israel, but Palestine, or in the United States of this same way, until the resolution finally came to pass, that Israel was granted statehood. So I mean, it was -- perhaps it -- I di -- cannot claim that it was -- we were the beginners of that, but be -- because later I found out that similar things went

on. So I don't want to go ahead to take a first eenadida, but it was a first in Budapest, where it should happen.

Q: Did you -- you were obviously preparing to go to is -- Palestine. Did you have very strong feelings at the time, about going to Palestine?

A: Absolutely, as in my former tape, I said I was -- since childhood, and in the school I graduated, Yaven in Poland, Zionism was imbedded in me. I -- I had to hide it through Hitlerite times, and I had to hide it in the time of the Soviet's occupation, which it was -- I know they called it liberation, but let's -- let -- let it be for history to judge, whether it was occupational, or it was liberation. But inside, that spark lit up, at that particular time in Łódź. No sooner I met up in -- you know, in found that former shamring, you know what I mean? Which it was that it was shameratsyer, that it was a youth organization belonging to the Zionist organization, and that spark kept through me, it was the new thing, just like it was the thing for getting out of the ghetto, and become a resister, and fight the Nazis, this is how it was, the new fighting that it became in me, and I assume in the rest of the guys that are war with me, because when people resorted themselves to go on train -- to a -- rooftops, and on the steps to go with -- wi-with -- with [indecipherable] on their shoulders, and speeds of the trains maybe 70 - 80 miles an hour, maybe 60, times 50, doesn't matter the speed. But it was dangerous, it was a dangerous mission to do. But it was a goal in our hearts imbedded, that we must go to see for freedom and liberty for ourselves, someplace where we could be safe from annihilation, and so on.

Q: So, what I didn't understand from the in -- the video then, was how -- how you a -- came to agree to go to the United States, rather than to Palestine.

A: I'll tell you that, because it was deception in the party. While I was working in Italy, sending illegals away, and one day I came telling them that my wife became pregnant. When I told them about the news, they say -- and I want to go with my group, illegals, they says, "No, Harold, you stay here on the point, you're doing very good, and we are expecting to get legal passage. We will send you the first thing -- you know what I mean, for legal passage." I succumbed to that, because to me it sound very real, the words that they were telling me, an-and I was -- what we were doing in the kibbutzim is preparing them for Israel, and so on. However, the day came, and the free passage, as we called them, certificates at that particular time became -- and I come to Rome, to find out what's going on, I hear that as they were passing out certificates to some people, but all of a sudden, I came and I asked my man in charge, "What happened to me, and my wife?" He says, "Well, there wasn't enough this time, but we expect pretty soon to have more." And at that particular time, you know, it was already -- of course, she was not -- she probably must have been -- give or take at that particular time, maybe in her fifth month, you know, because I'm -- I'm not counting at this time the times. I came the second time to Rome, when the next batch of certificates came, and all of a sudden, people begin to laugh at me. They s-say, "Oh, Harold, you don't want to go to Israel any more, you trying to go to America." You deceived the Zionist organization. And I felt really, in my heart,

that somebody put me down too low, it was too much. So then I said to my commanding officer, "I'll tell you, I'm resigning my post. I am going to register to go for Israel -- for United States, instead of going to Palestine." At that particular time, they start pleading with me, "Okay, if you want to go to Palestine, fine, but we still want you to go on a no -- a kibbutz near Rome." Where -- that story is printed in one of the books that -- for my -- one of my men, who was in my platoon, his name was Kigernovitch, Moshe Kigernovitch, and he described part of that stor -- that story. He pleaded with me at that time to write the [indecipherable] personal thing that I wrote in my manuscript, but I was not ready and I couldn't try it. At that particular time I was not ready to sit down and write my life's story. That's why I refused, but h -- I have -- he recorded it with my picture, and him, and acknowledging that I was the comoon -- platoon commander, or commandeers ruddid, way they say it in -- in Russian. And it's in his book. Unfortunately the book is only written in Yiddish, and it never been translated, because he is writing not just about the forest where we were, he is writing about a lot of other forests, the partisans, Jewish partisans existed, because he wanted for historical sake, to acknowledge that Jews did fight in the partisans, and Jews participated in resistance, okay? So, at that particular time, as we are right now which you asking me the question, I had Zionism in me, but it was dormant for these years, because I had to, but as soon -- the sooner -- it got ignited very easily, they -- somebody did not have to sort of hit me, and to say, "Hey Harold, what are you doing?" I was right there, and I was willing to risk, in those days,

my life. So therefore, when he put me down, I says, "No, I'm not going to sway things to send others to go illegally," which it was a lot of hardship with going through illegally. "And I am going to s -- go to America. So therefore, I'm resigning, and that's all." I therefore enlisted myself at that time to come to Florence, Italy, which I joi -- I -- I lived - - what you sa -- everything is told, until I came to Italy, until the United States. So, you probably know the story, the way we were taken out of the camp there, and we were put it into DP camps in Italy, and then I, instead of being in a camp, was then out of the camp, and I worked with the illegal elleah, which it was kibbutzim, and I was the leader there, and train them, and descend them. And like I say, at that time, when I said that, they say, "Harold, you can go the next time with next group we are sid -- we are shipping, and you can go with them." I says, "Are you for real, or you just trying to?" I says, "My wife entered already the sixth month." I says, "In the sixth month of pregnancy you ask me to -- I should go ahead to gamble with the lives of two, my wife and the baby?" I says, "No, I cannot do that. Therefore, I refuse, and" -- and that's how I wound up in Florence, Italy, and I came in there, and started to write to my family. My mother had a sister here, and three brothers, and I wrote to them, and we started a whole new thing about it, because until now, all the letters that I sent to America, never send them a - - an address, but [indecipherable] address. I used to drive my aunt crazy. She heard from me, and she did not know where she can correspond with me. But at that particular time, when we came to Florence, we in -- stop -- we established writing through the army post,

unival, and -- because the regular post was still not operating too much. And -- and this is where my decision was reached that I'm going to go to the -- to the USA. Being in the USA, my Zionism again did not change, I still remained a Zionist, and as soon we landed, I hardly made a living, but I immediately joined -- we had at that particular time, the new citizen club. It was an organization and a club. And we used to meet -- have meetings, sometimes to raise money for our cause of existence, people would have dances, or raffle tickets or so on, the usual way. And again, it imbued in me anew, I'm a Zionist, even -- and someday -- I didn't at that particular time talk about going to Israel, when you already have a child in the United States, and f -- we came in '48, March 14. 22 months old then my daughter was. And the next year, 1949, in September, my son is born. So I was -- looks like too busy with having children instead of talking about operational way to go to Israel.

Q: So it -- your family being in the United States, was that the crucial thing that made you come to the United States, rather than going to Israel?

A: No, it was not the crucial, it was the helping point. You must remember the importance. I did not have money, I did not have means. We were living -- after I entered in Florence, we were living under the help from the UNRRA, the United Nations Relief Organizations, that they -- but we formed the kibbutz. So, in other words, I want to explain it, as I said a little before. My Zionism was still there. Again, we form a kibbutz, even in that, while we're waiting to go to America. I still have pictures to prove that, with



the name of the kibbutz, and in Florence, and I was -- I have the pictures to prove I was speaking about Zionism, and how we must do. Although I was going to America, but the support for Israel, I never -- it stopped being a -- a dire participant belonging, even though today, and all through the years since 1953, I'm a member of the B'nai Brith. But I'm still a Jew who belongs to the Zionist causes and so on. And it's not just belonging in person, but with my pocket also, you know what I mean? The Israeli bonds that I'm buying, or to charitable events that you know, where you -- you give charity to these here. So, all of these here, because I changed to bad leadership, at that particular time, so my route did change, but inside of me, my heart did not change a little bit, and I remained of the same way. So now, when I came to Chicago, and I must make it -- I went to high school -- I went to one of the best high schools at the time that it was, it was in Austin High. And not to tell you the story, as a fact, it's not a story, within three semesters I made American high school. At the same time, looks like the principal says to me, how come I'm not going to go to college now, because I was working at night. And I want you to understand, I made a point there. At six o'clock in the morning, I used to get up, take a streetcar to go to work -- of course, I did not have a car, as yet. And from s -- from the store I used to go to school, which it was a streetcar, as we called it at that time, going all the way to school. Do my homework at that time, going there. School would start at about eight o'clock, to 10 at night, two hours, and it was regular school. Of course, it was grownups, so you had a lot of homework to be given, and certain thing would be done at

school, such as reading, or on the blackboard to the big [indecipherable] like the -- the kids [indecipherable] today. And I would come home, the earliest was 11 o'clock at night. My wife and kids were asleep, so my dinner, sort of like I said, was grabbing a bite in the store. I was working at that time in a grocery store for a brother of my mother's, my uncle. And that's what it was, my routine. So between six in the morning, til the 11, or 11:30 at times, that was working, and then working with my head, and working so hard, but I established -- so like I said to the principal, I says, "I -- by all means, I'd love to go further myself in college," which I never did, unfortunately, but my kids did, so I'm happy that I did -- was a good father to my children. And I didn't complain or anything like that, and I had wa -- it was a challenging thing that I could achieved, to know how to read, and to know how to write, and you know, and that's what -- and in the meanwhile, this -- we are talking about 1949, where my son is born. By 1953, I mastered all that I had in me, to sit down and write my manuscript, which of course, I to -- it took me a year, and -- and a nervous breakdown afterwards, because when I speak about these things, even now, I am not here with you in the good USA, I'm there, where it was. I'm there time, the way it was. And thanks God that I can control my emotions today better than I could in those years past, because it was too fresh an issue, and my thing was record, and to tell for posterity.

Q: Before we go on with that, I wanted to ask you more about your -- I have a couple of questions about Italy. You mentioned you were involved in the camp --

A: Yes.

Q: -- administration in Modena, and you also mentioned you were involved in organizing the kibbutz, with -- are those two separate things, or the same things?

A: Separate things.

Q: Can you tell me something about the camp administration? What were you doing?

A: I was in the administration, there was no specific titles. We were in Modena, which -- it was a camp from the former military academy, where we got in one day only from Mauthausen, Austria, they got in trucks, and unloaded human cargo, just like it was regular cargo of something else, because they did not look like humans. And in that big crowd, of all these people, of 5,000, from one truck that they unload them, and we are staying there on the sidewalk. That was -- and please let me correct it for the record -- it was still in Bologna, we afterwards came to Modena. We're standing on the outside, we have nothing more than blankets or anything like that. When my wife points at me, she says, "Harold, look, this man is my uncle's brother." I said, "Careful, how -- are you sure?" The man was swollen, you know what I mean, and so on. We -- we come near, and she says to him, "Isn't your name," she says, "you know, Lasarovitchasun?" And he looks, a-and sort of somebody says something to me, he was not talk himself. He says, "Don't you have a brother Misha Mandel, he's my uncle?" You know, and we got from there. We kept company with him throughout, because from there we were ordered to go to Modena, and we were housed in the military academy, that's' where they made a

camp. People were sleeping on the floors, laying. It was just like sardines. But somehow or other, there was no protests. The biggest protest what we had, that we had a camp right next door to us, housing former Nazis, in there -- which it was some SS with them, and so on. And every day it used to start a rumbling, with stones, bottles, or anything like that to these Nazis. The MP would come -- the American MP would come to quell it. And we told him, "If you want it to be quiet, either you move us to another place, or you move them away, because we will not remain," -- to us, it was a lie that we didn't care if somebody will be arrested, or anything like that. But to look at a Nazi face on, that was something that we could not let our minds to say, "Oh, it was yesterday, it was a war." Because we knew the first thing, if these guys would have been on the -- this side of the fence, not the other, they would be more than happy to kill the -- us again, you know what I mean, because it was imbued in their lives. It was not that they sought revenge because of some, there was no because. That's what it was, the training that they got. Finally, within a few days, the camp was moved, with the SS, and we remained in that camp. Now, that camp was a mixture of youth, middle aged people, pregnant, sick and the biggest thing being in the administration, what we were seeking for help. The army, of course, provided us at that particular time, I must say, with blankets, and so on, because they couldn't rebuild it -- the -- the military academy, but they gave us help.

Q: Which -- which army?

A: The US army. The US army was stationed in Florence, in -- not in -- not Florence, I mean in -- in Modena at that particular time. There was also the -- part of the British army, which it was attached to them, which the Israeli part was a part of them, too, and they were the ones, as I mentioned, brought us into Italy from Austria, and it was also over there, a part of the Polish -- a -- a Polish -- a part of the Polish army, which it was along with the Britain. So we had at least one thing, since we didn't speak Italian at that particular time. But we could speak Hebrew to these here, we could speak Polish to the other soldiers, and they all were, in a way, I must confess, they were all trying to help us one way or the other, but when we [indecipherable] on it for anything and everything, looks like the patience va -- to say be patient was not the right answer. And I, being in the administration, had the opportunity to see a person from the jewi -- Joint Distribution Committee, but she was in an English -- a British uniform. How that came about, or what -- that she was not with the American army, I don't know. I cannot go into details. And she came to the -- to our place where we would meet, and she asked us the question, what could we help you? And I asked her at that time, I said, "Where should I start?" So therefore, I'll start and tell you. We have here young people, at the ages of about 14 - 15 - 16. You got to remember, these people were taken to the camps, as -- as kids. Now they are teenagers. Through the -- through the -- if anybody was 10 years of age, you got to imagine he is now -- I says -- we -- we -- we encountered venereal disease in there means, because it was open prostitution in Italy, you know, on the street. But these kids

did not know, you know what I mean, any better, they were not brought -- I says, "So therefore, I'll make my biggest request to you, let's take the kids out of the camp." And before long, which again I have pictures to prove you -- that point, if at any time you interested, but since we are doing it just for -- on a tape like that, but if you would be interested, I will be more than happy to supply with copies of the pictures, where, at this particular time, the Palestine brigade, or the Jewish brigade, as it was called, which it was attached to the British fifth army, came in to help, not the Joint Distribution Committee, and with their trucks, which you will see on the pictures, I'll -- I'll show them to you afterwards, which with their trucks, we took the kids, and we shi-shipped them out to a separate camp to make a camp, where they could be tended to the needs those youngsters were needing, and they were the first ones to be shipped even illegally to Israel, by means that we were not even aware of how, but they shipped them out, and they gave them the treatment that needed. The next thing was we send --

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is tape number two, side A, of an interview with Harold Zissman. Okay, go ahead.

A: All the others, the grownups, who remained on the waiting list, or what it may become later, some of them were integrated through the parties, because I must confess, the party system immediate -- immediately began . . . immediately the parties began, even it was camp life, and there was the Revisionist party, the a -- the Ashumer party, in other words meaning Jharbortinsky's party to the right, and it was to the middle, and to the left. And it could be visible to those of us who were working in the administration, and to those of us who were organized, that it was immediately my people, your people, and so on. But it's one thing I must confess. The harmony for the good of the cause existed. It was not an open bipartisan, it not -- b-but it was bipartisan. Everybody understood the need of the time, and so on. From there, it started to group out, from the big camp there. The kibbutzim, it started at that time. I at that particular time joined a seminar which -- it was near Milano, and there were instructions to be taught to us. Professor -- there was a professor over there, I gotta thi -- I gotta think of his name.

Q: Fir -- Garfinkel?

A: Garfinkel. Oh, you know already [indecipherable]

Q: You -- you did --

A: You know my story about it. I'm glad that you're aware about my story. Yeah, Professor Garfinkel, he was a light to us, explaining and teaching us, and a lot of these things went into our head very well. Even though, at that particular time, I did not think of anything else but Ashumer, meaning the party to the left, as I started in the youth organization. I couldn't help it, I was with them, and I could sense in that seminar, that that seminar was orchestrated by my party, or so -- and I mean -- in other words, the party to the left. So --

Q: I have a question about -- y-you talked in the other interview about recruiting -- about being involved with recruiting the young people to go to Israel, with these groups.

A: Well [indecipherable]

Q: So you did -- you talked about it some, and I wanted to know -- this is kind of a -- a question that -- that you might have something to say about and you might not, but I've heard some talk about -- about there being discrimination in Israel against camp survivors, and that there was some looking down on camp survivors in particular because of what they had been through. Did you witness any of that?

A: Well, I can tell you that much. Being in that -- s -- you can call that a camp, in the military academy's building that we were, that was a camp. To see what Hitler did to our people is -- I'll describe it in plain. There wasn't a night passing by without in the middle of the night that it would start almost like a regular riot. Kapo, you heard an outcry kapo, meaning, a kapo is the German name for the leader of a group. And these leaders were



the ones who were smitten -- smiting the Jews, and punishing the Jews. The Hitlerites always got a double pleasure, to see when a Jew hits another Jew, you know? And in the meanwhile, those people who recognize it, we had to call in the MP's, and it was a terrible, terrible situation to keep. That's why we realized we gotta break the camp away from it, but the entire camp feeling, which you ask me, I did not know this. And to say that in Israel it was a feeling against them, no. If it was a feeling against them, it was among people -- in other words, between camp leaderships and so on. What per -- say to generalize that, I couldn't -- I wouldn't agree on that part at all.

Q: It was -- I -- I had heard something about how maybe there was some discrimination be -- be -- on the part of -- of some of the people who were interested in building the state of Israel because they were looking for people who were strong, and who would fight, and there was some discrimination because it was assumed that people who were in camps didn't resist enough. And I was wondering whether you saw any of that kind of discrimination. So you didn't see any -- you're saying you didn't see anything.

Q: I -- I didn't see it, but it's -- remains a situation of division for always and forever, basically. There is more told what it went on in the camps. All the horror stories are more knowledgeable, be in film, be in script, and so on. The resistance story is still a novice, in my book. I read quite a few books, but the real stories, and the more the merrier, because it needs to be told more now. Israel, per se, did not have anything but open arms that they extended to us at that particular time. And we must confess, those people who were

in the camps, those people who were in the partisans, they were the front lines, who immediately joined from those illegal ships, when the war broke out in Israel, be that it was not fully recognizable, but in 1948, when Israel got status as a state of Israel, at that particular time, you saw yesterday's camp inmates, yesterday's people who came from hiding, or they were fighting in the partisans. As I mentioned before, there was a bipartisan way, and it was no discrimination going on here. Yes, there was a discrimination at the time that it happened in Israel, bipartisan, with that ship that it blew up in ammunition, and so on. And I'm sure you've heard about it, but that is not my time, or my story here to talk about it, that is already recorded. But Esterburg say, you resisted, or didn't resist, was sort of a question mark in a school level, or otherwise, and that goes on til this day. When I come to Israel, I was there only about a year and a half ago, and the same thing so many years afterwards, when I came into the kibbutz what the partisans have over there, and I could find a lot of the -- my name is in there, and a matter of fact, I'm sending them, I didn't finish, a -- a biography in short -- my biography in short, it will be about 10 pages, so they could record it, but I couldn't -- find any animosity, or any criticism. It's just minds that have -- want to know, to fill in the void about how we resisted. Not -- and the other thing, that it was resistance. And I still must tell you, I know year after year, when I go to the awareness days, when I come here, I was there last month, and I'm going to go again this year in March again. When I talk to these here high school kids, be -- you find -- last time in -- it was the biggest, curious

thing happened to me is I had a Israeli -- the parents were Israeli, the kid was born in Israel, but he was over here with -- because they moved here. He knew nothing about the Holocaust whatsoever. To him was just a novice thing that he just heard it, and especially my telling him that I was in the partisans. I had 10 students around my table, and I think it was the most active table in many tables around, not that the other ones didn't. But somehow or other, it was a curious thing to those who understand. And after all, I'm dealing with kids let's say 15 - 16 years of age, and they know what it is, resistant to -- in the word, to understand. But they had a general view, story is not known. But as soon you open up your mind, the question always comes up, why weren't there more? Not that I wanted more. There was in every country of Europe, let's for the fact, be Martial Tito in Yugoslavia, be the French Resistance in -- in France. No matter which country you want to name, where resistance existed, there were Jews in there. Were they in the percentages that it should have been, no. However, the public lacks the understanding. First of all, the physical make-up of those people in the ghettos, if they were longer, were not to be able to become fighters and resisters. But the Warsaw ghetto proved it, that they did resist, and they did hold for two weeks, much more than the armies in Poland held the Germans from entering Poland. So, there was resistance in other ghettos besides Warsaw, too. But to resist in the way that we joined the resistance of the partisans, of the Soviet partisans, or wherever, in the other countries. That is an understanding that we lacked the organization, we lacked the willingness of the people involved in it to say come and join

us. Because it took me a hard time, almost three weeks to find them, and after I found them, my group of four, we had a hard time explaining to the commander that we could not. How do we obtain weapons? Yes, we went on the ambush with them, and that's how they got weapons, and that's when it -- and the -- and the majority were good fighters, among the top fighters. And I'm talking about the Jewish fighters, not that I'm trying to glamorize the situation, but tell the facts for posterity's sake, that people should know about it. Because we were a fighter who had nothing to lose. The other fighters had a lot to lose. They had families, they didn't want to go to work in Germany. So the Belarus, for instance, or those leftover soldiers who didn't want to wind up in POW camps, they were -- they had a lot to lose, because they had families and everything. But any Jew who came onto the partisans, or to the resistance, remember, his last -- whatever he had he -- blood in him, or whatever he had power to resist, he resisted, because it was the last fight. Every day was the last fight of his life that he'd been fighting. So it's understanding that they -- we could be among the ones to be talked about a lot. And unfortunately, so far, it isn't talked enough. You see how hard I told you I have to go ahead to have my manuscript published. There is no takers. Looks like if I was to write a novel, which a lot of times people told me -- and maybe they'll encourage me to do, but how in a novel -- where, in a novel it's fantasy? You don't necessarily hear the true story about it, but looks like people in a -- buying a novel is easier to sell, or easier, in other words, to sell it to the -- to the people responsible for publishing, as well as the public perhaps reading it. Looks

like people do not want to read a lot the horror stories what it went on. And again, it was directly against just a minority, the Jews, for not giving the reason why. So I suppose maybe that has a reason, but for the sake of history, and for the future generation, this story must be told, be inscript -- be -- what we are doing right now, and just tell our stories.

Q: You mentioned your family in the United States, and you also mentioned that in the first interview, that the aunt who was here in the US, that you were corresponding with -- with, was a favorite of yours.

A: Yes.

Q: How did you know her? How di -- had she -- when did she come to the States?

A: She came in 1929, at the same time when we -- we moved over to another city from where I was born. And we moved -- the name of that city was Australenka, and I still with my mother, went to the train to say good-bye to her. And she was favorite with me when I was a child, up to then. You know, I was only seven years of age in 1929. But the point was, to ever she was go out, leave for picnics, whatever it is, I was -- I -- like she took me like -- she loved me -- not at -- like she loved me, she loved me so much that she always was -- the other part about it, from the other nieces and nephew what they had, they were not there, in Poland they were all -- in America, her brothers were already before that in America. And so she came to America that time. My mother would keep at that time, sort of a promise that I -- we should be in contact. So while my mother was

write, she would go ahead to ask me to write the address to her. So therefore, in my mind, it just imbued that I remembered -- I could not even pronounce good in English in those years, the address. But at that address, where she was living in Chicago was so memorized by me, and my few words that I used to write so we can keep contact. So yes, she remembered me as the child when she left Poland. And when I first got in touch with her, it was the whole story of our lives, you know what I mean? They had to make papers three times, to bring us in, like I was telling you. So what was the reason? At first she thought that I'm still single, because I couldn't write in the letters through that army that I'm telling her that I already am married. So they made out immediately papers for me to come. No sooner we got more in touch, they found out that I'm married. So, at that time they made the second papers. The third papers they made th -- because our baby -- our daughter was already born, so that was the reason I had to make three times the papers. So -- some -- some of the data, I mean, was misconstrued, but that is -- that is a minor situation, we are not going to go into that, that was -- so our love re-establish our -- itself, immediately. However, the other three brothers that they were here, they were much -- they were much -- they were in America probably before I was born. So I therefore couldn't go ahead to remember them, but the first, in Chicago, for instance, we had the -- one of the -- there was originally four, but one of them was already dead. So in Chicago we -- I had two uncles, and my aunt. In Los Angeles I had a third brother, he was the oldest, which again, none of them, besides my aunt, remembered me as a child in Poland.

And after all they -- I started working later for my uncle, and that was my mother's brother, he was in the grocery business. And, as I forementioned with going to school, that was the store I was working for, for him. So I know how much further in the story that I told, I do -- over there. I joined again immediately an organization, we called them the new citizens. So, in Chicago, we dwe -- used to have meetings, and like I aforementioned, and make money f-for existence, and above all, to help Israel, be that it was already -- when the bonds came in existence to be -- the bond drives. Be otherwise -- ambulances to send to Israel, or any of these -- it was basically -- all what we did was raising money, and funds through all means, be that it was a dance, be that it was a dinner, be it was membership, but it all was -- the idea about it Israel. And all of us were a bunch together, but again, the story prevailed with me, there were not that many fighters, there was all concentration inmates. And we did not have any misunderstanding because and how and what. And sooner or later we found out, you know what I mean, the way it was. I remember when Israel's sen -- fifth anniversary came, and we had a guy from the embassy coming to speak to us, and I was on the committee, I always belonged someplace, and I always didn't just remain not to belong, or be on the committee or whatever it is, because I cared for it so much. So that man was a former army colonel, I believe, or so, and he was in the embassy attached. So he comes in, and he says to me, he says, "Explain me a little bit about your group." Because he was going to have the speech, and he wanted -- he didn't have the time before to ask the questions. So I tried to

tell him we were 95 percent of former survivors of the concentration camps, or resistance like I am. A few that were -- not even five people that are -- were f -- in the resistance. Hiding maybe, yes, but not in the resistance. So -- and I tried to tell him it's a make-up of various participation. He says, "Why don't we belong to a party," you see, in other words, the party image or curse, maybe I should say, because it's a curse. If we wouldn't be so divided, we would have been a stronger nation through the years. Why don't you belong to one party? I says, "What would that help Israel better? We raise money, we do all we can to help Israel. And that party, I wish you'd stop being so party minded in Israel, I believe it'd be an easier life." In contrary, he didn't like my comments, of course, because he said, "Why do you want to be orphans?" In other words, belonging to a party meant not being an orphan in his mind, and in his view. And he came speaking to us, which he was not aware enough what had went on during the Holocaust, because my critic to the time and the era was as -- in my writings, I -- I must mention it to you, there isn't a year that I don't write to the newspaper, at least in a folder about an inch thick, and I have all of them of -- of home. And I'm a critic of some of these here things. I will always try to defend Israeli causes, and Jewish causes, of -- of the -- of course, you know what I mean, like I said, I didn't want to give up Judaism in spite of Hitler, and I believe that whenever I think about it, I'm -- I'm more for than I was before ba -- myself, even if I'm not in Israel. But I visited Israel a number of occasions. I received a medal like holmor of the partisans who were there, when we came to Israel in 1983, then we had a



gathering of all the fighters. And I have over here at har -- at home -- it's too bad that we cannot take another picture. I was honored as a partisan over here, too, in -- in -- in Fort Lauderdale, a number of years ago. So, I been a constant participant in all of Jewish causes, no matter what it is. I will always belong somewheres, and I will always speak my mind whenever I can, and whenever I've reached out. So like I say, it was born at that particular time, even when I came to the United States, and we formed the organization. I was in the starter, but it already was in existence. We called it the New Citizen's Club, as I aforementioned. We used to have once a month a meeting, and so on and so far. So, then it came out the story, which I don't know whether I mentioned inform, where the Nazis wanted to march in Skokie.

Q: That's -- that's a little farther in the future, so let's stay back a little bit. I wanted to ask.

A: Okay, so I'll wait for your questions.

Q: I wanted to ask about the -- your journey to the United States, and about what you expected to find when you arrived.

A: Well, my journey in the united -- to the United States, was basically at the time, that I had family, and I thought that they would be of help for me to get organized, and settled. And I believe it's a little personal about it, and I do not want to be -- feel that it's a personal way. I didn't get the help I expected to help, although the family each other -- helped each other when they came, so with me, when they spend the money, and other

money came from my wife's family that she had in New York. I believed that when I wanted to get established to go in business, which I did, I came to '48, and in 1953 in January, I went to business to open up a grocery store. And I must thank the Almighty, who let my wife's father -- my father-in-law survive, and he was with us in the forest, too. And if he wouldn't lend me that time the money, I would not be in business, you know? So while I came to the family for help, I didn't get the help I wanted to get. Not that I need -- I wanted the help to give out -- even to loan me the money, I wasn't -- because you must remember, I had no collateral. I had no -- no way in the world to establish credit, and I wanted to go in business. One of my uncles, may he rest in peace, says, "Since you got off the boat, you wanted to go in business." I said, "I thought it's a capitalistic system in the United States, that to go to business is okay." But like I say, I do not wish at this time in my recording to leave the animosity about that, but I seek to come here because of them. The turnout was that I would have been helped with the Joint Distribution Committee much more if I would not have been there. The mere fact of going to school, if I would have been getting help from the Joint Distribution Committee, I probably would have been able to maintain to go to college. This way I did not have any insurance, and my son was supposed to be born, beforehand to have some money, because I did not have insurance for the pregnancy insurance, I had to acquire another job. While I was working at my uncle's store, fi -- six days a week, I had to get a job to work in a tavern, which it was -- he was in partnership with -- with his other part of the

family. So I used to work there Thursday night, or rather, some weeks Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night, because all those days I worked in a store. And Sunday I used to come, after closing the store 12 o'clock, I used to go home, rest up, get something to eat. At fi -- at six o'clock I would be back to work to work til 12. And this is how I accumulated the extra money that I needed for my son to be born in that hospital. I wanted here to give a plug to a person who really -- talking about the family. My family went to their gynecologist at that particular time, and asked him to take charge of my wife. And then they asked them, "Why do you ask me to give them a break? You're the family, I'm -- I'm a doctor. I took care of all of you." And he was very feeling low, in other words, for them asking, however -- may he rest in peace, he's no longer around, he said he'll do the work free of charge. And he was a renowned gynecologist in Chicago, on Michigan Avenue, which the price was pretty high. But as a gesture of his own, he went and did -- because my wife had to have Caesarian section, she had a letter with it -- with her from the fir -- from my daughter was born, she had by Caesarian section, she couldn't have it any other way. So he gave -- he only told us, you cannot go through the clinic, you must go through the regular channels, because through the clinic they may not have me doing the surgery, and I wanted him to do the surgery at that particular time. And when I -- after my son was born, when I came to the office with my wife for a visit, I brought a -- a -- a bunch of roses, at that time he yelled at me. "I thought you can't afford it, and that's why I helped you. Why did you have to spend the money on the flowers?"

So he was really a righteous type of a person, which I always remember, and I -- and Blumenfeld, I-I think was his name, and -- it is name. And he was not Jewish, he was a Gentile. So in other words, I like always, for posterity's sake, to remember that there were always some people in cl -- even if they were not Jews, they were Gentiles, but they were generous. That's why we have in Israel, the Righteous Gentile's walk. And whenever I'm in Yad Vashem, I go through that, to read names and so on. At a time when I was honored here, there was a Righteous Gentile, was honored to the same time, a woman who saved seven Jews. Of course, instead of the whole eyes of the audience would go to my case, as being a platoon commander on the partisans, she was deservedly so, which I understand, after all, she saved seven Jews, being a Gentile, and she got, sort of the place, much more than me. And so like I say, so many things that happened through that era, afterwards, even though to some people, it's a novice story, because they didn't hear enough of the resistance. But whenever it gets ex-exposed, I can tell -- say that much with a full mouth, that people understand it, and they're eager to hear about it more and more. So I can only hope and pray someday that my manuscript should be published, and people should be able to read it in a more detailed way, the way all of that horror went through, and how victory came, that I survived.

Q: I wanted to find out about your journey to the United States. It was by ship, I assume.

A: By ship, yeah.

Q: And do you remember anything about the journey, the name of the ship, your arrival --

A: Yes, yes, I'll tell you the whole thing. You want me on?

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay, it was a little problem since usually, when we applied to come, and we had the visa already to go to the United States, the Joint, at that particular time wanted to intervene to help some of the people, and I thought I'll go through them, too, while their - my relatives needed help in one way or the other. Anyways, they wanted to give me passage, and where did they find the passage? On a Soviet ship. And I refused take him -- to go with a Soviet ship, because basically, as I aforementioned, I didn't trust the Soviets, even they should have been on a journey taking me to y -- to the United States. So I refused to go passage. And you know, visas have a certain expiration times, I couldn't play around with much. The passage available until my expiration of the visa was so -- was very little choices to be made, besides that Russian ship. So I was told by them that the only way for me to go would be best to meet the visa time that I have to go by air, to fly to the United States. And I did not -- I was not at that particular time ready with flying. Therefore, we had to -- I had -- I had to -- I could get passage on the Vulcania, which it was going to meet the date. However, the Vulcania had only opening on second class, as you know, they have always grades of classes. It was normally with third class, but they had second class only open passage for us to go, everything else was booked up. So I had to go to the family, both time [indecipherable] my wife family, and my family to -- about the passage. And sure enough, they wired the money, so we could get the

passage to go on that ship, on the Vulcania. The Vulcania was a luxury vessel, there is no question about it, and especially riding on second class was another thing that I did not know how to take it, because with all the misery of life that we went through -- in Italy it was better, but it still was not like living in apartment and a -- enjoying, you know what I mean they -- everything a human beings are ma -- ine -- are desire -- not only that they want to, but they're entitled to have. So this was coming in like to a new world on that ship. My -- be -- when we started to sail from Naples, until they hit the Gibraltar, it was good sailing, because we were told, you know, the first thing you get on the ship, you get sick and all of that, and we went out even that night, and then [indecipherable] near the Gibraltar, I went outside the deck and even bought some -- some liqueur, you know what I mean, because for a dollar you could buy a nice bottle of liqueur to bring it to the United States, I figured for gifts or so on. And no sooner the next morning when we started sailing, my wife took sick. She couldn't take this. When we had to cross the storm, to -- they -- when it was crossing, at that particular time, I almost was sick. But my daughter, being 22 months old, like I say, a little child, they usually can withstand it and they don't get sick. And each time, she would speak -- my daughter -- Yiddish at the time, or Italian, because kids learn fast languages. And each time she would say, "The boat, the boat is," you know what I mean, turning? Because from the storm, you used be thrown away, and be the time. And I had to -- not was -- I could do to my wife, because she was confined and the nurse was giving her injections, whatever it is. And my little

girl just kept me busy, because we going with the stairs, up and down. A child is a child. She didn't care it's a storm. And each time I had to keep her that sh -- because when the ship -- that she shouldn't get hit or hurt. And it was -- we were delayed because of that storm, whole day that we came in later. We were supposed to come in -- in on a Friday, we came in on Saturday, which it was late, and we didn't disembark on a Sunday. Only when we saw harbor, that's when my wife came to, and she was back to herself, so she at least -- otherwise she -- you know, she wasn't sick, per se, with any special sicknesses, but she was seasick. So once we looking at the lights, and see the harbor, it sort of was, now we looking at the new world, we are about to come and start our new life that we promised ourselves to be. So it -- we didn't mind it once she got well, and we had a big group of people coming to wit -- to meet us at the border -- at -- I mean there, at the -- to see us from the boat, it was a lot of her family, that she had more than mine. There were cousins, like one cousin was my father's cousin, which I knew the family quite well, and they were also. And then from there we were taken to a house, oh she's already deceased by now, which it was a first cousin of my wife. And they had a little child at home, too. And after a few days, that cousin of my father, Louie was his name, he came, took us to his place, because he had a home, and there was more room in his home for us to be taken. And of course, I must say at that time, charity began with the family right there. That morning, you know, he took me shopping, his wife took my wife shopping, bought us clothing, you know what I mean, because we came -- we made -- I made tailor made

suits over there from the money my parents -- my relatives used to send me packages, and with the packages used to be chocolate, and it used to be cigarettes. So they helped me of all kinds of troubles. When my wife had to have the Caesarian section there, which I'd rather leave a whole part of the story, but I'll only inject over here, the cigarettes, and the chocolates --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

A: -- and I would go to the marketplace and buy a chicken, and chicken soup was the good remedy that we always know about. So I would cook, even. But all of that was because of the cigarettes, and the nuns would be very friendly. They gave me a cot that I could sleep at night. Because after surgery, for 24 hours, they were primitive in those -- '48, in Italy -- I mean, my daughter was born in '46. When I came in '48 to the United States, and my son had to be born in '49, I was like a fantasy. It -- to what it take, a whole month for her to get well, within two -- three days, she was on her feet. And that's how much advanced the American medical system was versus what it was in Italy.

Q: Were there any other -- was it just you and your wife, and your daughter that came together on the ship, or did you come with anyone else you knew?

A: No, we came with other friends that we met on the boat, but they -- their lives -- survival was in the Soviet Union. They escaped to the Soviet Union when four -- 1941 when the Germans attacked, again. So they were living in -- in Iasia. And, I mean, they



were suffering, but it was normal war suffering, shortages of this, ashu -- but the threat of life did not exist with them. We met them, and as a matter of fact, they remained friends with -- he is gone already, by now, but with his wife, even up to this day that we made friends then, and we still remain friendly, and we had sort of a club together, and the organization together, and so on.

Q: They ended up in Chicago as well?

A: Sure. They came to Chicago like we did, so we had a lot in common for starters, you see? They also came to family in Chicago. We went to high school to-together in Austin High. They were living in Austin, though, while I was living in Chicago, which it made a difference, that's why my traveling was more. But we graduate school at the same time, and he s -- he still has a brother alive that they -- we've bi -- was -- with school -- in school with me at the same time.

Q: What were their names, the --

A: Sofferstein is their name. Th-The both -- two brothers, and I -- and the other --they both were married, you know what I mean, and have children, and we got to know them then, and we still, like I say, maintain to be f -- to be friendly together.

Q: What were your first impressions of the United States? When you arrived in New York, what were -- what did you -- what were your impressions of New York?

A: To say the least, I would say, I really saw a world that I haven't witnessed before. Not because of the atrocities, but it was so much difference in living, to know that you have a

toilet in the same apartment, which -- who would dream about it otherwise than in a hotel. In Poland, you know, before the war, to see something like that, running water, where in 1939, when the war broke out, we still had to ment -- to bring our water in in a bucket, from going to -- you know, to a well, or whatever it is outside. So it was just like an oasis in the desert would be the easiest description for me to make the comparison, or the analogy at the time, that it was.

Q: How were your spirits at that time?

A: My spirits were very uplifted. I really felt at that time that I survived. Until then, we did not talk each other, oh we survived, or this, that, and the other. And because people were asking, but it's a cute story that it happened in New York with whole family, with my wife's -- it was an aunt, her mother's sister, that we were invited for dinner there. And of course, everybody was eager to hear how we survived, and what had went on. I kept talking and telling the people til about three in the morning, and afterwards I was angered. I was angered because the questions, after I told them all, two guys says over there, "So how did you survive?" And it's sort of to say, "I just told you how we survived. We escaped." But it was so unbelievable to them to listen. It was so remote that, in other words, that they had to ask me that question, so how did we survive. So, like I say, I was anger, but I tried to be understanding. I says, after all, if somebody would have told me about a story like that, by me not being there, how would I react? I would not know how to react about a case like that either. I usually make the analogy, if people

tell you about Vietnam, or they tell you about the My Lai massacre, or anything like that, it's hard to make a judgement for someone who hasn't been there. But if you talk to a soldier who has been there, and he tells you that, I take it for granted that he told me the story, because I know how my story when I tell people who haven't witness, or been around, it's very hard to make them see, or believe, above all, believe the story that a b -- story was exactly the way it happened. And this is why it's a commonology about it, that when you talk to survivors, do not take for granted that the next guy you talk with, had had the same past as the first one you talk, or the third one that you may talk. And it was proven in the documentation sent over, they took interviews from so many survivors, that hardly could have been two or three stories that you could make, oh it's the same thing. The only same thing was the German, the Nazis, the beating, you know, perhaps, and so on. But the way it came all about was totally difference and -- and by now a lot of people are aware, more than they were let's say 1948, when we came to the United States. But it was a total, total strange story. Some of them told us that [indecipherable] in the papers, they didn't know anything about it, which later on, when I began to find other findings, I was a tremendous critic about it, because there is no way in the world that a ship, the Saint Louis, who came and wanted to dock in Florida, right here, that it could have happened. I believe for -- in posterity, a hundred years, 200 years from today, when the kids'll read it in history, it will not come to them. They will say, something is not told accurately that it could have been that a ship with a hundred people. We know more from

history now that Hitler tried to prove it, that the Jews are not want -- and here America let them plu -- prove it. That's why, when we talk about books that have been published, "The Secret War Against the Jews," for instance, by John Loftus, for one, or others, people know more about it today. But at the time, in the era, and it -- when that happened, the event, it's hard for me, even a survivor, to understand how that could have happened without demonstrations. How it could have happened without better judgement than the American people and the American government had made not to let in that ship.

Q: But people were asking you about your experiences, and were interested?

A: Yes, people are very interested after they ask. But some people are afraid to ask because they feel like they are hurting us, the survivors, by revealing the past, what had happened. For instance, I want to inject one more time, even if I do it to the other tape. Til this day, we never sat down with our kids, or grandchildren, and tell them. I gave them my manuscript to read. In fact, they didn't read it. Not why they didn't read it. I believe they can put themselves together to face us, and say, "Look what our parents, or grandparents went through." I'm understanding to the fact. So, when we sit down about a certain thing, or when I write to the papers, and they read it -- I have one of my granddaughters that w -- just got married a-about a few weeks ago. And I was writing poems, and I have one poem, Dermarterology, when I wrote Dermarterology, and I asked in it the question, sort of why did the world have to have a Holocaust? Did-Didn't the 10 command-mandments that we gave to the world, didn't all the other things, with so many

Nobel prize winning, and everything, satisfy the world for the good we brought to them? Why did it have to have the Holocaust? And she was always eager to read if a -- an article, and I wanted basically to let her read, much better than tell my daughter. I don't know why I felt that way, but that what it was. And she said to me more than once about my poems -- because my poems are interjected how I escaped to the forests, some of my poem -- I ask in one of my poem -- poems, I ask to God, "Why don't you grant me some wings, so I could fly from tree to tree, until I will come to freedom?" I mean, the whole poem deals with it. And the other one that I have, I -- a dream, like I dreamed that I will be able to escape from all the -- the -- the bad things that it's going on in the ghetto, and so on. So I'm saying in me, it's imbedded, the whole life. And my granddaughter said to me at the time, me -- as a child -- she must have been a child, probably, that I [indecipherable] about it, must have been eight or nine years of age. And she said, "Papa, how come all your poems, or your writing is so sad?" I says, "Marissa, I lived a sad life. I cannot go out to put in -- in it happy occasions. So when I write about that I," you know, like I told her the other poem, when I described in it I wish God would give me those wings so I could fly, and then I come to the end. "Oh God, you didn't grant me the wings, and I will be sitting and cry for always and forever," you know what I mean, about it. I don't say I will die. That I don't bring out. Somehow or other, in all my punishment, I did not use wordings of dying or thinking -- I always was thinking of life. And maybe that was what I needed to survive, is the positive part, to fight if it's necessary, whatever it is.

So, all in all to say I was involved with all of these here things, on every occasion daneech, even though, at the time when I raised little children -- I took, in 1953, as I -- I don't know, I believe I forementioned it, the audacity to go to write a manuscript in English. I felt so goo -- sure, I knew how to write, but I did not know literally how to write, but to me, I didn't care what's it's missing, you know, because I always left it to that literary agent, which I paid for, and didn't do nothing for me, and who knows whether he's still alive, or to the other one. But I wanted the story. I would not -- if I would have be locked in in a room today, like we are right now, and say, "Harold, tell me the story, it wa -- in your manuscript," I probably would not be able to tell it in the way it happened. I probably would not be able to tell -- remember all the names, dates for sure not, you know what I'm saying. Well, but, for these things, there is such thing as documents, you can always add in things. So that's what it was, my part. I only wanted to put up as good of my memory as I remembered what I went through. It was a party before they broke out in Poland, which I mention over there. So it's no use me revealing. I live with all of this here history. When I speak to people, for instance, I must say it over here, which I couldn't say it there, I'm bilingual in eight languages, and I speak them fluently. And when I speak to people, and I'll start turning from Spanish into Hebrew, or into Russian, or into Polish, and that's in me -- in business it helped me a lot, especially in Chicago. There's a lot of bilingual usage that you could -- being here in Florida, the same thing, we get people from all ur -- of Europe, and when I can turn around in a

minute -- but I must confess here, I reserve myself in not speaking a language which it happened a few times. When I started to speak German to a German fellow, and all of a sudden he removed his shirt, and he wants to try on a shirt. I was working in Galleria Mall at that particular time, for the -- name of the store was The Forum. And I took a look [indecipherable], here I saw underneath his arm -- the SS used to have this here, that was their code, where it was r -- put over there, underneath there -- or the Gestapo, who knows where he could have bi -- when I saw that, I -- I turned colors, I c -- I was -- I was -- asked that I want to go to the washroom, just to go away from the man, if not to lose myself. So when I -- like we were in Israel a year and a half ago, and we [indecipherable] over there, in that hotel, they were maybe 40 percent of Germans, young, of the ages of my kids, and with their children, I did not feel restricted of myself to speak German to these people. And -- but all in all, I -- I meet people because I am so involved with it, so to one I can speak Polish, while in -- two seconds later, I'll switch over to Russian, or from Russian to Spanish, or to Hebrew, and people always have -- how could I remember all of that at one time? And this is -- was my own idea, I don't know how good my memory will serve as I age, you know what I'm saying? So, it was always importance to me to bring out in me. I believe someday some student will probably want to make this here a lesson, and to talk about to other children, which is of importance. And I hope that they always get -- that they always can remember when you have a bad times, don't look for the half empty glass, look for the half full glass. Hope should never be lost. We'll die

anyways, we all know that. We cannot preserve that. But hoping to die, you will die sooner. Hoping to live, you will live longer. And it's not just a phraseology of words, it's a thing that it's -- really works. And you talk to prisoners of war -- we did -- we talked to a man like Mr. McCain, who was in prison with the Vietnamese, or you talk anybody who was in prison, and they survived. They will tell you in the same words that I am saying, they couldn't overcome their ordeal, be in Iran, be in Vietnam, be in Korea, be ever -- anyplace that a prisoner of war was taken, if hope would not be lost. Because when hope is lost, that's what it happens, it's lost, life is lost. So, my message is always of importance. When I talk about the better deal, not to forget to have that listener hear that hope to live. So when I speak to young kids, high school kids and student -- or students, or even in colleges which I spoke, I always do not give answer. The hardest thing was for me when I spoke to kids in school of years back -- which I have some on tape also, and they ask me how many Germans did I kill? And how do you go ahead to answer a child in school when he ask me a raw question like that? And it's a hard way to answer. I must therefore, instead of giving him an answer to say, "Oh, I killed probably 20, or 30, or 50," which it would mean I would go ahead to look at a personal thing, remember the questioner, remember that he is the child of 14 and 15, and I do not want to give him that answer, that life -- answer is the weapon, and killing is the answer. So I always must bring it to him the idea, that yes, killing is not right, but defending oneself is the right that he must never forget, no matter who it is, when your life is threatened, you



also have the law of rights for you to go ahead and defend your life. So when I tell that to the kids, they get a bi -- they get a different understanding about weapons, and about killing. And this is usually, when I spoke to kids today, it would not matter where. I spoke seven years in a row that I used to be here in Fort Lauderdale, and I used to make the Day of Remembrance -- Remembrance Days, in city hall. And I remember the first mayor that time, that adopted for me to do it was Mayor Kaminski. And the biggest question always used to be, why did I want to chose that I want to speak in city hall? And after I explained it to him, they saw my way is right. I say, you must remember that all our sufferings, it started in buildings like that. Whether laws were changed, or the laws were taken away. I want to be proud of the idea that I survived, and we have seen a time where we can come back to these buildings, and salute the freedom we have in America, and the freedom that it should be of democracy throughout the world, that yes, there is a - a repayment day to be proud of, that we changed the evil days, and this is what it was, my message in the same way when I came to speak in front of the justice depart -- justices in Springfield, Illinois, when the Nazis wanted to march, so if you're ever interested, go ahead, get the movie, "Skokie," and you'll see Danny Kaye play Harold Zissman in it. And this is what I said, and I was the last speaker, not expected maybe, to speak at all, and when we get it first at the house, with the congressmen, and it was, at that place, it was the military commander the -- from the Jewish war veterans of the state of Illinois. It was the commander of the war veterans -- the Jewish war veterans of

Chicago, it was a few congressmen, and everybody was sort of questioning, what subject are you going to talk about, what subject is the other one going to talk about? Because we did not want to use the time, in other words, that shu -- two people who should be talking it in the same way. When it came to me, I says, "I? I had no title." Just as it is in the movie, the true words that he picked up. Who knows, maybe I may not even be called to say anything, but today a surprise. Even I was the last person called, when they called my name, I came over, and I says, at the time, which the language is still fresh with me, "Ladies and gentlemen of the justices, and justice's guests, who are here today, I want you all to rise for one moment of silence, today is D-Day." With the loudest voice I could get out. They all rose, and I tuc -- checked my watch. And I says, "Now, you may be seated." Cameramen started running from all side to me, I became the hero, I became the one. And a guy from a small town in Illinois comes over to me, he says, "Mr. Zissman, I'd like an interview." I said, "I'll be more than happy to give you an interview, but not today, not now." I says, "Rabbi Montrose and me are going right now back to Skokie, because my niece, and the rest of the class of the Hebrew school is going to be graduating today. However, here is my card," I was an [indecipherable] salesman at that particular time. I says, "You can call me to my house, I will give time to you, and I'll make the time for your convenience. Come and see me and I'll give you all the interview." The fact remains that he did have a beautiful [indecipherable] in some place, like almost to say my archives there. And the man, you know, he was not Jewish, he was Gentile, but I moved

him, and that's why he wanted to hear me. All the other speakers, while they were talking about the march, I didn't talk just about a march [indecipherable]. I just come with a -- that -- the minute of silence, I says, "So many years ago, our boys and girls went to Europe to fight Nazism, so that menace should never be seen nor heard." The judiciary committee at that particular time wanted to pass on a law that freedom of speech yes, but to go on the paraphernalia, with the swastikas and everything like that, the way the Nazis, especially the SS, and Gestapo were dressed, that is not necessary to do, because whatever we tried at that time, on the jer -- Phil Donohue show, which I forced my way through, and I repeat something, probably you heard of it. Talked to Goldberger, I wanted to make the separation between freedom of speech, and attack on people's life. And that's basically what the march was all about. They did not -- if they want to speak, they didn't have to come to Skokie, they can speak anyway. But they wanted to come to Skokie for the reason that survivors of the Holocaust were living by such multitudes there, and throw the venom that we don't deserve to be alive. Now, this is a different than free speech, this is a threat to life, and I believe the First Amendment never was intended to make a threat of life. We used to say that hi -- il -- you know, saying fire in a crowded theater is against the law. Okay, but this is another saying. Now, a threat of a life of a person cannot be tolerated, be -- who it may be, be against Jews, be against Asians, be against Blacks or anybody else. It has no place in a society, of the 20 -- of the millenium that we entering right now to exist. And this has always been my fight about it. And

that's why I -- I -- we tirelessly, no matter I work hard, I still -- I just stopped working for a little while right now, because my granddaughter's marriage, but I may go back to work [indecipherable], I'll see how my health will permit me. But it never took away from me the time to sit down behind the typewriter and write an article to the paper. A lot of times I'm not published, and they try, perhaps to discourage me, but no one, as long I will live, and my mind will be silent -- will be in good shape, and it'll be sane, will anybody give me any problems that I will not be able to speak my mind up against someone. Sure, I wrote an article against Haider now in Austria, it was not published, but I spoke up. Maybe these words may change the editor, okay? So be whatever situations that has -- i-it happens in the United States, of all the years that I've been here. I always was vocal, and I will remain vocal for as long as I live, to bring the story out. It's not just to tell about the Holocaust, it's to tell to prevent another Holocaust every to occur, and it doesn't have to be a Holocaust against the Jews, the Holocaust against anybody else. The Holocaust only happened because too many minds were silent. What it happens right now with Haider, in Austria, which openly -- and we will see, with those people who think mine -- that he has no place in government. For as long -- because he says I'm sorry I said that, it still lives in him. For as long people have in their minds against certain people, which I said it in my article there -- he was against the immigration with comes in. Who made them be immigrants if it wouldn't be for the Nazis at their time, where Austria was a part. So we must, and understand always, these situations. There's so many lies came out in print

because they knew somebody. I'll never forget, I had a fight, and I lost it. I lost the fight. About thr -- about three years ago, that time when my other daughter was married [indecipherable] -- my granddaughter, the first one, and it was in West Palm Beach. And in West Palm Beach, we have a lot of these haters in there, be that they're neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klan, you name it. Be from the church, or whatever. They are there, they find they are th -- and an article was there, written by a man who is a novelist writer, he is not a historian, and he came saying that the Auschwitz [indecipherable] about Germany has got to stop. So he tries to bring out, why not look at the good things? And the man came and brought out that in Berlin, that the Berliners were hidden 10,000 Jewish families. Now, when I saw that -- I was reading the paper [indecipherable] that morning, and I was all shaken up. 10,000 is a multitude. If he was to say at least a hundred, maybe it would have been cor -- not questionable, but it would have been believable. But that multitude, 10,000? And I wrote a -- an article to the paper, and asking them. I says, "Don't you think that Yad Vashem in Israel would have any knowledge about that, so they would go ahead to," -- they did for single people who saved a Jewish family, planted a tree in his name and everything. I said, "The Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., don't you think they would have had a record of something like that?" But it falls on deaf minds. I called before that, because I think maybe I didn't hear it, but I know, I am pretty much in tune to all of these here things that are happening, but my article of rebuttal, never appeared. And this is why we must have more people be outspoken, be in script, be vocal. And we must

not remain just to ourselves, "Oh, you can't do anything about it." That's the negative attitude, which I said. We must look at it positive. When it's a time to speak out, we must speak out. Otherwise, democracy will never be a democracy, but that's the whole idea of democracy, that everybody is entitled to their opinion. So while we guard honor to exist, we must guard of these reactionary forces, that they never should take hold again, to whatever they have in mind. And you know -- we know whatever they have in mind, one against the other, and that's what they come, and become -- you know what I mean. To settle -- they kill both of them, and that's all there is to it.

Q: Let me ask you, y-you're obviously -- do you want to take a break?

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is tape number three, side A, of an interview with Harold Zissman. I wanted to stay with the time of your arrival in the United States a little bit more, and get some more details about what happened. And -- and also, if you could comment on -- y -- obviously you were ver -- you're very aware of the American judicial system, and -- and the importance of the laws, and how they affect people, and your involvement at Skokie speaks to that, too. So maybe you could talk about how you became a US citizen, and --

A: Okay, that's -- will be good.

Q: -- and what that meant to you.

A: When I came to United States in 1948, I believe the first thing on my mind was in the positive, how do I become a citizen of the United States. I filed my first papers, as we call them, as soon time permitted to be done for it, and -- and at -- when I was called was almost five years later to become a citizen, and I proudly am happy that I was granted the -- first of all, that I was granted life again, because I consider that's -- I was reborn -- reborn, I, my wife, and my daughter, coming to the United States. We -- some people of ours, the survivors want to come, that we were reborn, at freedom time when -- when the hostilities ended. But to me, I don't want to call it that it was still life. To me, the impression that I made, the first class, in the ship that I thub -- the same thing, even though our apartment, the first apartment was in a basement, and we were there with a child, and a few months later, my brother-in-law came. So even though there was a lot of

things to be dissatisfied about, but my satisfaction, like I forementioned, be going to school, be all of the other things, belonging again to an organization. So I can see that my life had started -- I was reborn in 1948 with my wife, and I hope the man above, or the person above, that God remembers that not to account my years before, and that would been a great favor that I can ask. The United States as a government, I had a lot of dissatisfaction in my mind with the Roosevelt era, and at times it was hard on me to go ahead to throw it away. I know being a history student, and being involved with the things in Italy, I knew n -- quite well about a person from Switzerland who came that he was working, and telling over here, he -- the ordeal of the Jews, what it was on. And it was at a time in '42, when Hitler already had made the dimension of the le -- Final Solution, or Judenrein, but the Final Solution, that was image. I know well enough the story where the partisans in Poland, who sent all their messages to England, and it went in a safe world. So like I say, it was a rebirth for me, coming to see freedom. And I suppose when a person is frees, that's how your questions become open, because in other words, when I was under the Soviet Union, I couldn't ask some of the questions that it came up to me in the United States. I couldn't ask why would the British at that particular time, keep hidden that story that -- that it was told, that the final solution, by Goebbels when he allows -- that they'll rid themselves of the Jews of all Europe, why would that have to be in a safe sill? Perhaps the Jewish community in Britain would have maybe react to it, I understand, and that's why they kept it from them. But in America, under the



Roosevelt administration, knowing full well at that time that a delegate came, and telling all of that, and since the United States, at that particular time, under the Roosevelt presidency did not see fit to give any help whatsoever, to stop the menace of destruction that it went on in Auschwitz, and so on, by ohm -- what that means. I know full well at that -- this -- this story of the rabbi from Cleveland, who went at that particular time to intervene to the president, and what came out of it. He came out with that message, don't rock the boat. All of these here parts of hate, and what had happened to all of us became renewed follen -- during freedom. But above all, I wanted to become one of the Americans, in spite of all of this. In a way, I thought maybe, speaking as an American citizen, it would help my grief to speak out a little bit better. And therefore, things got, in 1953, I was -- became a proud citizen, and quiet I did not remain. I was vocal, and whatever I could write -- even I didn't care that my writing was not as good as that American who perhaps was born, and had more schooling in English than I did. I was proud about the other thing, that I could speak more languages than the average American.

Q: Will you list the languages that you speak?

A: Yes. First of all, I must say, as I said it in the aforementioned tape, I graduated in Poland, a school by the name Yavna, which is a Zionist Hebrew school, and it's a trilingual school. We were taught over there Yiddish, Hebrew, and English. So immediately, I started with three schools. I usually say to people when they ask me, how

does it happen that you speak eight la-languages, I say invention -- I say, if a person's in trouble, he says, he must invent something. So, the American proverb goes with it, and that's what it was invention, for me. With three languages, when we crossed the border on the Russian side, I had to learn Russian. Afterwards, after the war, when we came into Italy, I did not know Italian, so I learned Italian. While being under the German yoke, it was not a question learning German because I loved that language, it was a question that when a German spoke to you, and you didn't understand what he was saying, the beating was worse. However, even if you did do what he wanted, you still got a beating. But you had to -- so again, it was necessity, was for me to learn another language. So no matter how much I learned German, but I could at least speak, and converse with someone in German. So we have three, and two is five, and the sixth one, came to Italy again. You come to a country, is strange, beautiful people, I wish it would have been this type of -- side of the ocean, I don't ever leave them. They didn't care to say Jew. To them it was polacko. Seeing as I was coming from Poland, I'm Polish. And when you said to them the word Jew, or Hebraio, they did not even know what the meaning of it, especially in a country like that, where Mussolini, and fa -- fash -- if -- if you call Fascism Fascism, started it way before Hitler. But the people were not drilled on the hatred. If anybody hated a Jew, perhaps he hated somebody else, too, because he was a hater. But I didn't feel it. The hospitality of these people, what they had to us, is beyond reproach. You ask an Italian person, you show him with an address here and there, he wouldn't tell you it's

there, or down the street, next block. He'd take you there. This, to us, at that particular time, case is need, but I still tried to learn Italian. So, you have -- you have six languages by then. When I started making my papers, I did not want to come to America, not be able to turn my tongue. So, as dearly as I was living on charity sort of, but going to a private teacher -- to a tutor, I and another friend of mine, we went away to take up English. So, as you see, one after the other, one after the other was means of necessity. When I had my store, after the riots that I went into, instead of the grocery business, to the men's business, even the riots, I must make my point, I was totally destroyed, and 20 years of labor went on with smoke. But I went on with life, and I restructured it, I went into the men's clothing. A tailor recom -- is being recommended to me by a neighbor businessman, a barber, and he's a good tailor, I tested him, he knew what to do. But I cannot speak Spanish. My wife goes out, and buys me a dictionary, I get another little book, and all of a sudden, within a few months -- so there you make the total of all of it, and they come to eight all together. And I'm very proud about it, that I can speak to people with other languages. It never happened to me that if I meet someone, and he's got a hard time in the li -- speaking English, but I can, through their dialect recognize the -- one of the languages, and I'm right there -- we already friends, within two minutes, because the person can talk to me, or ask me qu -- the -- so it becomes a friendship. So -- but writing, like I say, I only write in English. I did not write to write in any other language, not that I couldn't write in Hebrew, or anything like that, I write, but it's still

today -- in today's world, that's the language of the world. When you know English, you can go anyplace in the world and be heard of or -- or know about. So that was the reason that my languages was not a merit -- matter of scholastically, they were a matter of necessity. And this is exactly why I adopted all of these here things.

Q: Just a little footnote, the first -- the first three languages -- I just wanted to mention, I think there -- there was a slight mistake. When you mentioned the first three language, it was Yiddish, Hebrew, and Polish, right?

A: Right, three.

Q: Okay, you had -- you had mentioned English, okay.

A: Russian is four, and German is five, Italian is six, Spanish is seven, and English is eight, you know. So there you go, you -- my -- my figures are accurately [indecipherable]

Q: And I -- when you became a citizen, or when you started to -- to settle into the United States --

A: '53, I went in business, and became a citizen at the same time. In 1953, I became a citizen, and in January of 1953, I went in the grocery business. Thanks God, as I forementioned, to my father-in-law, that he helped me with the money, otherwise I'd never be able to get started.

Q: Did you come immediately from New York to Chicago?

A: Yeah. Yeah, I was in New York only when I -- when I came about -- it's immediately -- I spent about three weeks in New York. And therefore, we came in March, in April we were here already -- to sh -- in Chicago, I mean. So that's what it was.

Q: And when did you father-in-law come to the United States?

A: He came in 1950. He was in Germany, while we weren't -- we were, like I told you already, there were -- we were -- we didn't touch Germany. My brother-in-law came at the end of 1948, and -- no wait, my father-in-law came probably in 1949, not 1950, please forgive me, 1949 he came.

Q: Let me ask you something. Someone else who we interviewed, who was involved in the resistance said that -- that while they were raising their children in the Chicago area, that -- that sometimes they -- they -- they knew s -- there were some American Jews in the neighborhood who wouldn't let their children play with the children of Holocaust survivors.

A: Very true, very true. I'll tell you mine -- my story now. And this is a documented situation. In 1948 -- '48 became -- in 1953, I started a business on my own, and between 1948 and '53, I worked for my uncle, which I said, my mother's brother -- brothers. Be for what it's worth, that in about 1955, I already had saved enough money for a down payment of a three flat building that I went in Skokie, and I bought it. One day my uncle comes to visit with me. Next door to us, in the other, was only a two flat, not a three flat. Over there, they had a boy of my son's age, which you usually feel good about it, the two

children of the same ages, they had some -- so their son used to come to our house sometimes, my son would go to their house, and the two boys used to be playing together. And I did not want to inject that [indecipherable] that kid was an adopted, but for the sake of it, I let it be, it would not mean any difference. One day when my uncle wants to come to visit with us, to see -- in other words, our new apartment, first of all, and the building what we bought, because I no longer -- I -- my -- my employment for him stopped in 1953, in December. So he comes in and while we were waiting, next door to us, the guy, who used to be called as a nickname Red. "Hey Red, how you doing?" My uncle says to him, "Oh," he says, "I came here to visit my nephew, you know the nephew I brought from Europe." He gave the moniker right away. And so on, so how you doing, he talks to him because he knew him that he used to be in the clothing business, so on. Not telling you a story, but a fact of life, my son's relationship with his son had stopped within a few days, and it never woke up again. I did not want to aggravate a situation like that towards my child, you know what I mean. After all, my son was born in 1949, so here we're talking about 1954, so you know, he was a little boy of, you know, five years old, he understands wa -- so, he's a very -- a child cannot understand this here. So be it. So in school he met with more kids than that, when he started school, which at five, you know what I mean? He didn't [indecipherable] yet. So we didn't worry about it. It hurted us, what happened. So, the only disruption it could have been, that this way he didn't know what we Holocaust survivors, you know? Because first of all, we were working too

hard, and my wife used to take the kids to s -- to the store to bring them, because at that particular time I tried to save as much as I could on help, you know? And besides, I borrowed money. I borrowed money from my father-in-law, borrowed money from my brother-in-law, and I had to repay them, so the only way to repay them when you buy a small store, is to see that a -- you don't overdue on expenses, you know? So that was the part, which at that time, that we did. So we did not have, basically, enough association with the neighbors around, you know? Was -- when we came, was late at night, when we went away was early in the morning. The store used to be open from -- from about nine in the morning, til about six o'clock at night, so you know, it -- it would take, in those days, I will driv -- I started to drive a car 1949, just as my son was born. I fought for everything. I wanted to be, to me to become just a regular person, without a moniker, you know what I mean? So to say a lot of times, I would get, through the years, from American people, not just that particular case that I forementioned, "Hey, I detect an accent on you, where you from?" I says, "I'm from hell, but I made it back." And people would say -- one time a customer in the store said to me, "You mean from Hell, Indiana?" I says, "No, I did not know that Indiana has a Hell." He says, "Oh yeah, there is a place named Hell, in Indiana." He says, "My hell comes much further than that." So, the cus -- the wife -- the customer says, "You mean, you come from Europe?" I says, "Yes, the Holocaust is what I forementioned." So what I'm saying, I always tried to keep this away. Even as of late, when I worked at Bloomingdale's in Boca Raton, people

would come into me, other ones would say, "Hey, I just heard you speak another language, you spoke Spanish. Where are you coming from?" And I would say the same thing, from hell. "So what happened you acquired all these languages?" I says, "Necessity." Just like the proverb says, is the mother of invention. Necessity is the mother of invention. That was with me the case. But people always sort of have a habit that very few inst -- not all -- not all of them, not there, some people take it in a wrong kind of a way. You know how to saying goes, if -- if you are ever bitten by a dog, keep a stick handy. You know what I am saying? Because not to be bitten again. And this is -- in most cases, it's a touchy way when you touch it. You know, it's like electricity, you get that shock. You get an electric shock with the way some people -- oh I know -- I heard all about it. You know what I'm saying? If you heard all about it, you wouldn't have to ask me, obviously, but you do ask me, so it's still misunderstood, the whole era, even we are talking about 55 years later. And some people, if I has to vocalize on it, will say, if there are Jews, or non-Jews, wouldn't matter with me. The guilt of the citizens, who were complacent at the era, and who were not mixed up in the politics -- which American people are not mixed up in politics. I don't know, I could say thanks God, no, and I s -- could say the other way around, there's always two sides to each story, because we see it by the record of ame -- percentages of American people who go to -- to vote. I woke -- by the way, I worked for a polling place, and I go do it for quite a few years. The percentages comparing Europe and the United States, who go to the polls to vote, is



ridiculous. So that is the same thing what I say, American people basically, until election time don't count -- don't talk about the politics so much as people of other countries. So like I say, there is perhaps a plus, and a minus in it. Who knows how the outcome would have been different? But the guilt is a guilt in existence. Nobody -- when somebody just as recently started to mention for the millenium, talking about presidents. And I don't care what category they're going to put in Roosevelt, he had made at that particular time, Social Security, and anything like that, yes, there were good things. But we have a proverb in Hebrew that we say, "Wherever there is light, there is always a shadow." And we know it when we speak scholastically from school. When you put in that little stick in the ground, at 12 o'clock the shadow is the smallest, but there is a shadow. So you always must understand it, to be understanding to people. There is always going to be that shadow, there's always going to be some people who do not, or did not know well, or don't understand the situation well, to opinionize certain ways. However, I would not label it, if anybody comes to ask me with that question. Do you think -- yes, there are. But I always -- I always give the answer why, as I just said it. Either those people are not aware, or they are guilty. They are guilty of why the American government, and the American people did let it happen the way it happened. And this is always going to be a matter -- how do you going to bring the time back, with those people back, to be judged there.

Q: Let me ask you something, did you talk -- when you first arrived, and you had -- and you were meeting with your family in the United States, and yo -- did you ask them these questions at all, or did you talk about these issues?

A: I was vocal about it right there and then. The majority people gave me an answer, we did not know. And I used to madly answer them, that's the story I heard with the German people, they say, we didn't know. But the stench of the concentration camp was in their backyard, and those people came saying they didn't know. I says, so please, I used to chastise tremendously, especially Jewish people, and in my family same way. Please don't tell me you didn't know. It was publicized everywhere, and you did know. The point was, you were too busy with yourself, because I had gotten answers like these here. My wife used to work in a bakery here, as a clerk, and a lot of times, people would say the same thing. They ask her about accent the first thing, you know, the accent. So, politely you would say, "Oh, we've -- Holocaust survivor." "Oh, we also had here, we had a depression in here." So, when a person can go ahead to metaphorize the depression with the Holocaust, I believe that's a very low tone, and low way of doing it. I wrote, for instance, to the paper, they published it, but they fixed my clock, they put in just a few sentences. That editorialist writer tried to take Mozambique, and all the other places, and compare it with the Holocaust. I, a few times wrote it, and the last time I don -- I don't get tired of writing, and I asked, how dare? I says, "The Jews did not ask for territory. The Jews did not ask for any recognition as far as government, or anything like that. But

in Mozambique, or in the other place, those are people who are fighting political wars, and religious wars. Where do you compare these with the Holocaust? The Holocaust had nothing of that nature. The Holocaust was just done, provoked by a government, made up laws in Nuremberg, and for one reason, because you were born Jewish, therefore you deserved to die. Or that's -- give them the right to kill you, or all kinds of other reasons." Which, you say how can -- how can people, in their sane mind, make that comparison, be that it's Kosovo, be that it's Mozambique. Yes, it happens there, yes, there are atrocities there. Yes, the Serbs wanted to get -- get rid of the Albanians. Yes, the Catholics don't appreciate the Moslems. Yes, the Moslems maybe don't like the Jews, or the others. We know that there will be dissatisfaction. But the usage of the word holocaust cannot, and should never be made over such a analogy to interpret it. Because no matter which dictionary in the world, be Webster's or anybody else, they mix in a word of sacrifice, burning. Yes, we were the sacrifice for the hungry lions of Germany. I said it in my manuscript. Of course, the rewrite doesn't bring out these kinds of sentences. But that's -- what -- I cannot stand that word, that -- that word holocaust, when you read from a dictionary, or certain dictionaries to say it's a burning, it's a sacrifice. I cannot answer that. The Holocaust was a definitely -- meaning by a government from their top level, to the man on the street, that he was ordered, if he didn't want it -- to do it, that this is the way he was graded. That was the difference between going to the front lines, or being in the concentration camps, and be a commander there, or whatever it is. What they got

from everything, including the gold teeth that they tore out, or the watches and rings that took away, to send to their loved ones, or to accumulate all what they did.

Q: So are you tel -- are you saying you have trouble with the word, the term holocaust, as it's used?

A: I have the trouble for always and forever, when anybody tried to analogize, or metaphorize the word holocaust to anything that is going on. I give you an example.

Ghetto is another one that I have a problem with. When Harlem is called a ghetto, I wish to the world that they would only be living in these type of ghettos, and believe me there would not have been a such thing. When we define ghettos, we must always define the ghetto where are we talking about. The ghetto of Rome? The ghetto of Venice, which it was the first? And because of grata, came into ghetto, because it was the steel bars that it was made around there, and it was near a foundry, but that name was fine. So the first ghetto. Or, do we talk of the ghetto of Rome, that the Jews were put there, and only for one reason, become Catholic, and you're free. Those little places are still left today.

Where it used to be the Jesuits used to come out to the Jews each time they let them out from the ghetto, they would say, "Why don't you become a Christian, and you wouldn't have to live in here?" When they came back to return to let them into the ghetto, it was still the same [indecipherable]. How can anybody make that analogy to that word ghetto to use when the Black people of America were living in their neighborhoods? They were living in their neighborhoods because they felt good. Jews were living in the Bronx, or in

Skokie because -- not that anybody put them there, because they felt good. But when a government puts you in a place, and they make barbed wire, or any kind of enclosure, and you have to have a permit to go in, and you have to have a permit going out, and you denied from all freedoms, you become an inhuman. Are you going to compare this here with a [indecipherable] neighborhood. No, I cannot tolerate that. And I doubt it any survivor from the Holocaust could tolerate. But we know a lot of writers take the law in their own hands, and the thing they emphasize, to say if it was an airplane who was lost, and so many, maybe a few hundred people got killed by that, they say it was a total holocaust. I don't know from where they have the audacity, or the shortage of words in their command, that they have to use that word holocaust, to make the issue be blown up more out of proportion. We are talking about six million human. Sure, somebody will tell me that 25 million is what the Nazis brought over. So we're talking about 19 -- yes, we must establish the old, famous word, that other people than Jews were killed. But the Jews were meant to be killed. So the other people maybe could have been killed by way, be that they were criminals, be that they were in the way of them, or whatever it is. But the Jewish people were definitely meant, and put by the laws, executed with armies to do that. So how can you analogize something like this, or metaphorize that word for a situation like that, like that woman did to, say Mozambique? So she fixed my clock. She gave me about seven or eight lines, instead of like she had a big spread. And that happens all the time. Like I started to tell you that story about that -- with the 10,000 Jews that he

claimed Berlin had saved. It's a lie. But the press will pick up these lies fast, and don't give you an edge, to let you respond in the proper way. So, that's democracy, I suppose. So, I cannot say any other way. In democracy everybody gets into these here [indecipherable]. There will never be a perfect world, there isn't a perfect family. You don't have a family, with the same mother and father, and they have three, four kids, and all kids are the same. So my expectation, to have a world of such ideals, history proves that it never happened, and I don't care to what denomination they belong, or to what religion they adopted. We cannot do it. In order to do that, we woulda have to create a new world from A, to start in an -- in an [indecipherable] here, that you cannot leave any other way, but everybody's the same, and everybody feels the same. But we know we will not achieve it, and history's not going to change. The least we can do is fight for the rights. But again, I'll repeat it. To take any situation of -- a situation in history and metaphorize it for another situation, by that same name, is wrong. Doesn't have to be just Holocaust. Could have been any other usage of the word, like I said the word ghetto. Which ghetto are we talking about? Nazi ghetto? We're talking about -- or the other ghettos? There was always the casbah in Africa, when we see it in the film. That was also a means of a ghetto. But that was a separation of doing certain things. A neighborhood is not a ghetto, and let's -- let -- let's understand each other. When you have the freedom where -- to choose where you want to live, even in a restricted area, even, let's assume the niggers, as they used to be called, which it's a -- was, I think because of the Niger

river, you know what I mean, it was interpret like that, even at that time, they still had the opportunity of living on this street, or on that street, they did not go to ask the government. They moved on their own. But the -- when we talk eras with Holocaust, when we talk about eras from the ghetto, that was restricted, you couldn't, as I just aforementioned, with the priests, or the Jesuits who would stay there, and tell them, why don't you join us? So when you get the choice, how can it be so bad about it. As -- in the ghetto, I used to have to discuss it with my father's brother, who was a rabbi, and he was reminding the 14<sup>th</sup> century Spain, and he would say, with his words, can you imagine, because he was a religious person, he says, "God had conference with the Jews of Spain," so he let them have a choice, and those who wanted to remain Jews, remained Jews. Some were -- that it -- were caught, wound up with the --

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side B

A: -- to come from work, and I have seen the killings what they did, of children, of so on, I used to be shaken up. I used to be shaken up, and I used to come -- I says, children, they did not have time to sin. Why were they murdered? And that again comes to part of the analogy which I'm talking about, or metaphor to say, when killing children, are you going to compare this here to other situations? No, there is no comparison to that. That was a unique situation, and it must for history -- historical events, or history for the future, remain a unique event what it happened. We see a lot of times of atrocities that it

happened to people, but for as long governments were involved in these atrocities, it doesn't become a singled out case, it becomes a part. The Holocaust was involved from a government, with an army, and everything like this here to carry out. Can you imagine, people were denied to go to the front lines, for as long there were good killers of Jews. Now, can you have anything to compare a situation like that with? You cannot.

Q: Okay, we're talking about being in -- in Chicago in the -- in the early 1950's, and you're going to school, and -- and working to establish a business, and you have kids. How aware were you, and how interested were you in -- in political situations that were going on in -- in those years, or in broader social and cultural issues, or were you more focused on just trying to build your own life, and your family, or were you kind of aware of some of the -- some of the things like the -- were you following the Korean war, and those issues, or -- or the -- the Civil Rights movement as it started up?

A: I was -- became a democrat, I believe right now, before I even was justified to go to walt, you know, but I was a democrat. President Truman left a very big mark on me, his interpretation of political events. I must say, til this day, although, in the interim of the years being in America as an American, and I didn't miss an election that I didn't vote, even -- even if it wasn't a regular election, but it was just a matter of a party election, which it was, I always voted, because I feel, after what I've been through, where voting was denied for me, where citizenryship was denied from me, that this is a privilege thing that one could never give up, and I never did, and I never failed to vote. And like I said,



President Truman left a big -- that buck stops here, he left a lot of good things on me, and through the era, every once in awhile it happened, for instance, I voted for President Reagan over President Carter, because I was very mad at President Carter's era that he was the president. I personally [indecipherable] he did not deserve to be a president. He made a good peanut farmer. He will never go in through history as a good president. We lost a lot of things that we still haven't straightened out because of his misjudgment. And I believe above all, when we are talking about the prisoners, just look what he did at that time, playing into the hands of Khomeini with Iran. We never -- we never fixed that rupture since then. But if he would have invoke at that time, our military might, which we had and we could, because when a country invades an embassy of the next country, that's a declaration of war, even if it's not officially said, the word, but that international law is an in -- is immediately, it's a declaration of war. So therefore, he was justified as president to do a much better job than he did. And I believe the loss -- the horn of Africa at that time, and inflation that had gone up to 27 and half percent, sure the retired people loved him for that, because they didn't -- some of them didn't make as much money on their jobs as these inflationary dollars, they thought brought it to them, because elderly people, of course, don't spend as much as young people. So when they got 18 and 20 percent on their bank books, you know, or even the -- even 18 percent, that was big money for them, and you know what I mean, they want -- but look at, they would have only turned around to see that the 18 percent that they earned, they have to go out in the

marketplace, and pay 22 percent for it, if they were to buy. So in the long run, they lost four percent, not that they gained that much. So I mean, there was a lot of good things, and therefore when it came Reagan to go for president, I did vote for him. Not for so much that it was a vote for him, as it was a vote against President Carter. I believe it's -- certain elections, I'd probably cross the line, because I like one candidate, a cert -- over a certain party, better than the other one. So, in generalizing, or -- or finalizing my statement, I would say, when you come to that little room, and you come behind that curtain to vote your opinion, a person should think about a little bit. And I was always thinking about who I vote for. And -- and I have been -- I am encouraging other people the same way. So yes, I became immediately an American by going into politics, meaning supporting the political will. I became a democrat, and I've been a registered democrat all the years since we came to the United States. And hopefully, unless I see the Republican party grown up, and understand that all of us are not millionaires, and all of us don't have inheritance in the oil, and in the others, and we still have to go out to make a living, so if they want our labor force to turn around and become a labor force of Mexico, I don't say they're justified there. But they live in Mexico, and if they can take it, with their livelihood that provided, fine. But here in America, as Americans, we're entitled to have a Social Security, we entitled to have our Medicare, and we also entitled to all the goods of life, that is given, like all others. So therefore, when today we see that, for instance, the -- the -- the amount a person can earn, I don't care that people say he's a

-- a youngster from school and goes to work for the minimum wage. The minimum wage is understandable that no one can remain forever. But at the same time, we must understand that sometimes in life there are people in between jobs, and when they go in, and they have to earn this measly few dollars, is not right. Again, we cannot make that this industry belongs just to the kids, to school kids, or so on. That would not be democratic either. And this is why I cannot be a Republican as yet, because the democrats still, at least show me the belief of life that every American deserves to get, and I supported villa myself, all the time.

Q: In the er -- in the 1950's, you -- you had come just recently out of a Communist system, and you were critical of it. How did you feel about McCarthyism, [indecipherable]

A: I was terribly disgusted with that era, and all, because here, I saw repetition of yesteryears under the Communism, not under Hitler, where people were convicted -- in minds you can't, but in open, to convict them before they even were proven guilty. And we know the old saying in the USA, you're not guilty until proven. And the McCarthy era tried to change all of that around, and thanks God for sane heads, that it existed, that that man was removed, but the laws were not changed to favor him. And I hope that lesson serves for always. You prove first that a man is guilty, before you make him be guilty. And this I believe is the law of humanity, this is the law -- a law without justice is not -- is not a good law. And this is the j -- this is what it would be, a law without justice,

you know what I mean, to let McCarthyism exist. So they just -- you gotta obey the law. Of course you'll have to obey the law, but let us make the laws with justice, so therefore they wouldn't -- the laws wouldn't become law under this here circumstance.

Q: You were raising -- I'm still thinking about that -- th-that same era, the decade of the 1950's, when you're getting settled in -- in the United States, and -- and I'm wondering did you -- did you and your wife talk a lot about -- about the Holocaust and what had happened, and did you talk with your children about it when they were young?

A: Okay, okay. I must confess again something. We never sit down per se to discuss that era with our kids, because our pain is -- is tremendous, and we feel like that we are giving anguish and pain to our children, would not be a justified way. As a matter of fact, in a Jewish way, it's definitely against that you should not imply anguish on someone else, because that's a sin to do. So we never did. But my daughter, for instance, she's a principal in a school, in a Jewish school for the English parts. She's got two Masters, and she's now going for her Ph.D. She learned on -- about the Holocaust scholastically. She takes her schoolchildren to the museum, it used to b -- in Washington, D.C., at least twice a year, for all the years since. She was also, while her husband was starting law in the George Washington University in -- in D.C., she was teaching at Bethesda, Maryland, and I had very good accolades about her teaching, from the principal at that time. So I must say, she cared to know, and she found out about it. She rehearsed a lot of times, Elie Wiesel's poems and stories, and she is involved in things like that. But on one -- one on

one basis, if she would ask us sometimes, would be different, we discussed it, but otherwise, to say let me tell you how this and that happened, unless they ask, we do not make. With our grandchildren, maybe sometimes, but also in the same way. We would not ahead to get in on the subject. Now, the other part I must tell you is, it's a funny thing about the survivors of the Holocaust, we may come to a party, or we may come to a house as an invitation for dinner, and maybe it's baseball season, and you talk about who's going to be in the pennant, or who's going to be in the World Series, or it could be football, and the same conversation at this time. But we will not get in maybe 50 percent of the time consumed together, without invoking a part of the Holocaust, without invoking a part of that era. Like, for instance, a lot of our friends are partisans, but it is -- that they be -- were in the forest, some hidden in the forest, but some of them are also former concentration camp inmates. We do not make the differentiation. But I noticed that be wherever we come, be to a wedding, or to come to the Days of Remembrance, that past era has never died in us, and we don't want it to die. I must tell you from the standpoint of doctor, I suffer high blood pressure to this day. And I used to have a doctor who was a Holocaust survivor's son, and whenever I would come to him to test me, and he would put on the blood pressure on me, so before that, he would go, had -- "So, Harold, did you write to the paper lately?" Or this and that and the other. He sort of would provoke me to the something about this here. All of a sudden he takes my blood pressure, it's maybe going to be 190 over 90. "Harold, I want you to lie down, don't talk

to anybody, rest up, I'll be back." Come back about 10 minutes later, now the blood pressure would go down. And he'd go with me to -- says, "Look, as a doctor, I must tell you my part, it's no good for you, because look how much working up you do yourself by talking on the issue. However, I would not want you to forget." So, what I'm trying -- what I'm trying to bring out is, the majority of us do not want to forget. We feel it's a sin to forget what we been through, all the atrocities, watching ourselves, our loved ones being murdered, for no other reason but being born Jewish, which it's a mark that the world should carry, the new mark of Cain, of the biblical days of Cain and Abel, we believe biblically that God made a sign on his forehead, and that sign we interpret was to be for people always to remember that he was a people killer. I used to convert this here time through my being in America, before the Holocaust Museum was established, and while the Holocaust Museum was established, I'd be asking you to give me the time a little bit more, and I will dwell on it, to make it. Because my analogy was also that the museums that they were built to -- literally to display all the past what had happened during the Holocaust, is a place of learning for the new people to see about it, that it must be there, because that's the mark of Cain, that must be to remind those people and tell them, look what it happens at an era where people remain quiet. Where people refused to disagree with bad laws. Where people refused to disagree with bad leaders. That's the era, what you see it happened here. So the museum era, I always make remission to that -- to the mark of Cain, of the same story. I had big fights, on paper. Without being

prepared to tell you, I cannot tell you the date, but approximately, the date goes back about the number of years, not too many years, where on the newspaper in New York, it was written -- and that was the era of the building of the Holocaust Museum, that there were a group of Jews who were against it, especially the religious part. That rabbi, I don't know should I mention his name, or not mention his name, I hear him at the same times, one Sunday on the radio, where he comes out because he was the one of the creators of Outreach program, which it means to bring Jewish kids back. But I'll -- I am not going to say anything other than the facts. His name is Mr. Buchwalt, Ephraim Buchwalt, and he and me had for a year's time, a correspondence, after the article that it appeared in the newspaper in New York, saying the Holocaust is killing the American Jews. Which it was a tremendu -- a tremendous shameful headline to be seen for me, a Holocaust survivor. I have spoken to Miles Lehrman when he came here to this part, in our synagogue, pleading to help about building the -- the museum. I believe every city in the world should have -- not as big, but a little part dedicated to the Holocaust, by way of museum. That the people should know, and a -- serve as a reminder, every day, what complacency does to a people. Not to reveal all the rest of the slogans what it is, but complacency's what it causes. Fascism, Hitlerism, Nazism, under any schism that you want, complacency happens to do all the bad things, be that it happens in our nearby countries, be that in Haiti for instance, or other countries, where the people are depressed, only because there is a mond of people over there, complacent to what their own has

done. So, I carried out a correspondence with this person, and I tried to explain it to him. His article was saying that if this money -- he accused the museum being guilty, or be the building, for Jewish pi -- intermarriages, because after all, I gotta take the other side, a Catholic child, who is married out of his faith to a Jewish child, the other family feels just as broken as this one. So I don't want to be a one-sided with my analogy what I'm making over here, but so my answer to him about all the accusations over why this money should not be spent there, but should be spent on education, was as follows. I said, those people who donated for the building of the museum, were anxious to see the museum built, for that reason, the mark of Cain. However, if you guys feel like you need a campaign to raise -- to build more schools, then why don't you do it? Why do you use your neglect, what you didn't do yourself, to try to deny a historical event that it must exist? I fought with him, one rabbi, for a year. I fought in Chicago with a head man who is the publisher of a paper called the Chicago Jewish news, where he came up again, which it was almost like he read an article, and it came at Yom HaShoah, Remembrance Day of the Holocaust, he came out athird of the articles, caught me at a time when I was in Chicago, and we were the B'nai Brith, and I was brought -- people know that I write to the papers, people know that I'm vocal, and at the same time, that I will take my time to write. And I was sende the paper, "Harold, did you see that, he was inter -- to -- they interviewed from the Sun-Times, by this, that, and the other, read it." I start reading the first paragraph, I says, "Look, it's a repetition what I had to do with Rabbi Buchwalt, in --



with New York, a few years ago. This man probably got the lesson from him, and he mentions in a different form,” after all, thanks God, the American language is a very rich language with teasers, and so many words that you can use more -- more than one way, but the meaning remains still the same. And I again had to learn -- give him a lesson. Of course, I saw it Saturday night, and on Monday morning, Harold Zissman, with Sonia his wife, were right there, at the office of the printing of that paper, with asking the questions, how dare is he to write these kind of words, and so on. Nobody’s asking you to -- to donate to that. Nobody’s asking you to come and visit if you don’t want to. So if you cannot help anything, don’t knock it at least. And if you knock it, have reasons, justifiable, why your side is right. And I had to enter with him with a dialog first, which of course the answer was he’s out of town, you can’t see him, Mr. Zissman. I says, “Okay, I’ll leave my message to him. I’m going to leave tomorrow for Chicago, and I’ll mail you an article which I hope you print, because I’ll assure you -- I -- I’m preparing you, if you looking for demonstrations, you’re going to have them. Because I, as a survivor, who fought in the underground, will not live to see the day that Jews will write these kind of things against museums, and against [indecipherable]. If they are bad -- th -- masters of their own destiny, how to raise money to build more schools or better schools, don’t blame on somebody else, who did their work diligently, it’s a -- must be done.” Well, he printed my article in the paper, no question about it. I had another dialog with him, and another, afterwards there. What I’m trying to say to you, just like the Holocaust

is not yet understood well, while we are still living, so is the building to prevent the future from happening definitely still. A lot of people come -- you know what we had with this Holocaust in -- and I was -- I must tell you, although I know him in person, I wrote to him, I'm very happy that Miles Lehrman is dismissed. And I hope he doesn't go against me with any publications, or anything like that. That man did -- and I wrote to him publicly -- of course, Mr. Birnbaum, he came at that time, to respond to me, which I have it, the letter. Now, another letters, I have a file with letters. And let me explain myself, he did not respond with my question it was, that he had no business mingling in with the Polish government, because he is only the head of this museum, he is not a re -- he is not in Madeline's Albright's position, he's not -- you know I mean, the Secretary of State, to speak to a foreign about the [indecipherable] in Auschwitz, and so on, which it was over there. And the dealings what he started to do. But, it turned up the museum almost to be a political issue, which definitely -- be the Arafat issue, with all of these here cases, we must not forget ourselves, as I say, it's a mark of Abel, it's a mark of learning, but we cannot let by all means, politicize either the memory, or the place like museums, for any personal use, or personal understanding. Anybody wishes to come to see this museum is welcome. But to make a dignitary issue, like to make this here because he is [indecipherable]. I don't care if the pope would come, and he wants to see Yad Vashem. If he will be there, I assure you, he's going to be greeted as a pope, yes, but no politicizing issues will ever grow out of that. And the same thing goes for anybody else,

whether they are Moslem, whether they are Catholic, or Buddhist, or whatever it is. Come and see, what it happened in an era, when people became silent to murder for no reason, and no cause, only because by being burn -- born on the wrong side of the street. And this will be an outspoken thing for me to say when anybody du -- even while it's a good thing the ma -- the m -- the museum exists. It's a bad thing of a Mr. Rioch, or any of the other people, over this person. He's not educated well enough to lead that part -- that he is. But he was a good person politically, to raise money for the party, and so on. And that's what he got there. I hope, since you're a young lady, and involved in that, that we see for the future that no politics should ever come between the museum -- the Holocaust Museum, the memorial of these here six million, or if you want to speak for 25 million that were there, to ever let politics take over, and make this a showplace that people should come to politicize. I, as long I can, will always write about it, to whoever the parties are, be it Miles Lehrman, be it Rabbi Weiss giving the accolades about it. And I just wrote, it's still not published in the Jewish journal, I wrote to ak -- of course, to give him a kudos for what he tirelessly continued with his campaign, because he exposed all these issues, with a lot of us didn't know what it was going on. Because you gotta have an access, you know what I mean, way to get into that. But in a general term, I must tell you, I was always, and will always be vocal for the rights -- be -- whichever it -- way it is. It could be my own brother if -- I wish he would be alive, if he would do something

wrong, I would be vocal about it to say, "You're wrong, my brother, you should not have done it, or you di -- shouldn't have done it that way."

Q: How is it that you're finding out all th -- did you just say that it was your rabbi who was giving you all the information about what's going on?

A: No, Rabbi Weiss writes -- and he is in Riverdale if you know, and he carries on -- he's the head of an organization called Zampa, which it means a folks organization of the people. And he often -- again, I like him, because he was outspoken, all the time. I like him because he went to Auschwitz, although he was accused that he tried to beat the nuns, which it was a pure lie. But you see, people like him, like myself, who are not afraid to expose your name, or to go to speak out what you really mean, but in the right way. That's the very important thing. I could be right, but I must express it in the right, and the proper way, and the same way. He didn't try to knock anybody down, but he was speaking out for the right. And the rights of those people murdered, laying there, have a right at least -- I don't say it's gotta be the Magen David, or anything, but they have -- or the eternal light, but have a right not to be converted now, y -- after death, posthumously. There was some Jews who converted, okay, so that's their business. There are Jews who believe in Jesus, that's their business. But let's not go ahead to make a political issue out of an era, as such. We must remember that, and we must fight for it, to see not to let others do. That's -- that's always my statement.

Q: Okay, Mr. Zissman is now going to read one of his poems.

A: This poem is headlined, "My Prayer in Plight of a Dream. The distant forest, with the thick bush, swamp, and quicksand, birds chirping, humming to no end, under tall trees and trails. Nature's way to preserve and protect, as everyone's land. The woodpecker, with his loud noise, building his nest prevails. The crow, with loud, crying flight, as if dangerous on the way, to signal the others about the plight in their midst. The robin -- the robins, and b -- and hummingbirds, are all astound to what may, busy with their catch, to quench hunger, in view of the beast. A kingdom of their own, all around. How safe could it be for me? The fenced ghetto must not be in the way. I must escape now to the forest, with big trees, and bush, birds, beast, insects, danger. Leave family and ghetto behind, a place to fight and hide. Time is short, I must decide, the forest is the place to escape. Dear God, grant me those wings of a bird, to fly and be safe, so I could fly from trunk to twig, from twig to branch. To the forest, to join the fight, not hide, to escape the murder. Oh God, grace me with those wings so I may survive, and be free. Grant me life, to remain your servant, to reveal your grace always. I must be a witness to tell how hell came down to earth, to destroy the people of the book. Who'll be your new children? Must we all vanish? We are your children, can't you grant us life? Why all that murder? No prayer, no cry, no plea. Must we all die? Where are you people? Are you going to remain silent to murder? I shall fight to survive, tell our sorrow, ask where was man and God?" See, I never speak just to God alone when I'm asking about people coming to tell me, didn't that bother you to ask the question where was God? And I, my answer has always been

the unique answer to say. I don't know where God is, but I do know where man is, and I see man. So my question was always be, where were man, and then I ask where was God. Because man were visible, and seen. So I cannot unleash my sorrow, and datday to God. I still remain [indecipherable] to man, and his life. To people, and not just to God. So therefore, it could never be misunderstood by my way, the way I see all what had happened, all the sorrow stories to tell, and all the innocent people who were murdered just for being born Jewish.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Q: This is tape number four, of an interview with Harold Zissman. When you moved to the Chicago area, did you move to Skokie right away?

A: No, I -- at first, we were living like a mansion to you, in a basement apartment where we came. Then, when my son was born, and my brother-in-law with us, in 1949, we could no longer live in that apartment, and I had to pay under the table, because apartments were not available, and it was illegal to charge any higher rent. So that was the means by which way one could get an apartment, is to pay under the table. It was sort of like a -- a guy gave that as a donation. That's what I was asked to say, and to write on my check, that that was a donation, upon this donor, to be given to his famous charity, whatever, he -- he dedicated it to. We moved on Edison Street, which it was more known, as about 10 blocks away from Kapp's park, that we were living there, and there we got on the third floor, a four room apartment, which it was huge by comparison of living in two f-- rooms in a b -- in two rooms in a basement apartment. And no air conditioning, of course, for -- and we had two children. My brother-in-law, at that particular time was no longer with us, because he was drafted to the army. He came to the States late in '48, and in '49 with th -- with that outbroke -- break in Korea, he was drafted in the American army, and he, believe it or not, was sent back to Germany, in the same places where he wore a -- a -- as a camp inmate -- I'm meaning as a DP camp inmate, there he was serving with the amer -- with the US uniform, as a soldier. Now, when he came back, and

we were living still in these four rooms, all of a sudden the four rooms became too small for all of us. So we had to go ahead and try to get another apartment, and times were terrible at that time to get another apartment. Each time I looked an apartment with three bedrooms, they asked us the question, which it was an infamous item to be asked to Holocaust survivors, do you have any kids? That was a painstaking answer. I says, "Why would I want a six room ap-apartment if I wouldn't have any kids?" "Well, but we don't want to rent to little kids that you have with it." And that I kept on and on til -- I was vigorous enough at that time to go ahead and de-decide to buy on my own. I wasn't ready for a home, so we bought a three flat building, at that particular time, which it was in West Roger's Park in Chicago, one of the very upcoming, beautiful neighborhoods. And we lived there til our ch -- til my daughter was of the age to go to high school. And at that particular time the run was for Skokie. And in Skokie the high schools were very good, and they were upgraded. So my daughter decided that she'd rather go to the high school in Skokie, and my son and my daughter both graduated from Skokie High School. And while in Skokie -- Niles East was the name of the schools. And while in Skokie again, I -- I became organized in the Jewish community, and I maintained at that time, my membership with the B'nai Brith, and it was the B'nai Brith who really dealt me a bad card at the time, when this -- when the Nazis decided that they want to move in Skokie, and being the advice that we got from the B'nai Brith, was very counter to the belief aw - - for me as a survivor, and everybody else. Their advice to us was, "Let them march and



do their talking, draw your curtains and don't mind anything at all. And if they won't get any -- any people to come listening to them, they probable decide not to come." Our advice was not to listen to these kind of ways, because basically they were not exercising Freedom of Speech. They were exercising their hate for one thing, and the threat of our lives for the second. Well, we just got freed from all those things, that we had to go through over again. I already mentioned, I believe, in the former tape, didn't I? Did I mention about the [indecipherable] justice department, I already said it to you on that -- on the tape over here, right?

Q: You mentioned -- you mentioned the -- a little bit about Skokie, and you mentioned getting onto the Phil Donohue show, and you mentioned going to testify.

A: Yeah.

Q: But -- but tell me a little bit more about the background of it. Were you -- were you involved with survivor's groups in Skokie?

A: Okay, I'll tell it now. While I belonged, as I said, to the B'nai Brith, in Skokie was the first chapter we organized to commemorated the name of Janoush Korchuk. Janoush Korchuk really was an assimilated Jew, but he was Jewish at heart, and at that particular time, he was living outside of the ghetto, but he moved into the ghetto, and he opened up orphanage houses, which I believe i-is -- he's well documented, even through the United Nations, and when that Janoush Korchuk, who was a healer, a doctor of philosophy and everything, the way he composed those children , who were already orphaned, and he

was with them. The day came when they wanted to eliminate the children in the ghetto, and it was called upon him to surrender the children from his -- from his home, to the Nazis. He refused, he says, "Wherever my children go, I'm going to go with them." So which it means they wanted to grant him life, but he decided rather to face death in the same manner his children. And his way was, "If I cannot survi -- if my children cannot survive, there was no use for me to survive." So that's a story of importance for everyone to remember, and I believe in the realm of B'nai Brith, and Anti-Defamation League, we found the survivors who were living in Skokie, and who were members of B'nai Brith to open up another lodge, and that lodge was named under Janoush Korchuk, which at many times, on other occasions, I spoke, even on the Days of Remembrance, when I had the opportunity to be the spokesman, I mentioned Janoush Korchuk, and his brave actions, what he did by trying to save the kids, even in the bad days, as it were, to keep them at least human, until the end. And he did not refuse a bit about it. From there on, as I say, living in Skokie and -- and belonging now to this here B'nai Brith lodge, so when the era came about the Nazis wanting to march in Skokie, and threatening our lives, I became very vocal about it. First of all, what I did, it was at city hall on that Monday, which it was a normal meeting, I talked to some guys and told them that we all should gather at the Skokie city hall, and tell them our grievances over why we do not agree to see that the Nazis come to Skokie. I was the first of the group to be called to speak, and I voiced my opinion against it, why we do not have to see and repeat our sufferings to accommodate

another group in our society. They could make their venture any time, anyways, I cannot stop them from speaking. But why should we allow them to come in our homes, and disobey the law, to go ahead to spill their hate and venom on all of us, against our lives, since we already went through all of that, and became survivors. Must we go through the agony again, just to satisfy a segment of people? Why couldn't they speak on television, radio, wherever they want to, but not come and threaten us in our homes, and playgrounds, wherever we live, and raise new children? Words got around, and we got a big crowd at night for the meeting. I was asked a question, from the city hall commissioners, and I was asked, what if we grant them the permit, that -- the meeting was basically to determine whether the city hall will grant a permit to the Nazis to come to Skokie. And I was asked what will I do at the time, if the Nazis get the permit, and they come to Skokie. And I politely answered the commissioner at that particular time, I says, "I cannot tell you now what I would do at time of anger. You know, when a person gets angry, and an anger of that type, I don't know, will I grab a stone, will I grab a bottle, whatever I will do to throw and disrupt probably, all of that." He says, "Well, you know, it's against the law to do it." I says, "It's -- in my ways of life, it's against the law for me to re-live the agony one more time, Commissioner. So I hope you, as the lawmaker and obeyer, can see that we survivors here, and for that matter, anybody we -- who is not a survivors, have to go through the agony of being threatened with their lives, by these group of mugs, and people, who call themselves the neo-Nazis." Well, needless

to say that they did pass the law, the attorneys advised them that it must be -- go ahead and granting in the law, with the rights of the Second Amendment of Free Speech. Well, now we had to get re-organized again, we opened up our office, and began to get ads in the paper. Skokie became so public that we -- people from Africa, people from Australia, wherever [indecipherable] everybody was granting us the courage for we doing it, and gave us the moral support, and even offered financial support, whatever it may take. We mastered to come out on the Phil Donohue show, at that particular time, in public. And it was a -- from the Civil Liberties Union, a man, Goldberger, which he was Jewish, who was the one defending them. My question to him was, does his heart allow him -- and his conscience, to go, to protect this bloody era of Jewish annihilation? Of course, Phil Donohue didn't let me get close. He didn't let me. But I, with my persistency, did not succumb to him not letting, and out of place, I yelled long enough til he had to come with the microphone to me, to be heard. My daughter, at that particular time, was living in Florida already, and she called me afterwards, "Oh, Daddy, I saw you -- I saw you on television. You're still fighting, looks like to me." That was her words to me. I says, "Yes, my dear, my fight did not end, obviously. I didn't think that I'll have to fight, but I must rise up again and fight again. That menace has got to get done with." That was my answer to her. Our fight, as I say went on; meeting -- meetings used to take place at times, evenings to last til one o'clock in the morning. And we had various plans of how to start. There was even at one time a plan that we actually wanted to attack their base,

what they had on the south side of Chicago. But after big pleas by attorneys, who were in touch with us, from the establishment of Jewish organizations, and the B'nai Brith kept appealing the same thing, draw your curtains and don't come. That's the best that they could offer for us, which by all means, I had to tell some B'nai Brith people, "Now I see why you did not act out against the situation when we were being murdered." I says, "Because that's your only solution, draw your curtains, and don't look. And then the same thing goes, put something in your ears, and you don't listen, or you don't hear. We cannot succumb to that menace," I said. And we organize groups all the time, and see what the plide could do. The Jewish establishment in Chicago, with the lawyers who volunteered to our help, suggested that we are to see i -- i -- Springfield, Illinois, the state capital, and we must inaugurate another law, that since freedom of speech must be given to them -- we tried to fight, that yes they can come, even to Skokie and speak, but they cannot wear these Nazi uniforms. We made an appearance there, and my appearance unwillingly, was very successful, because I really brought out the call of freedom, I really brought up today meet was exactly on D-Day, where all my compatriots, who were speakers, and former soldiers, and fighters and commanders, did not have the audacity to remember the day it was. I, however, the pain was too fresh on me to forget D-Day, because D-Day meant a big time for us at that particular time to see that. An-And things like that, you just don't forget, or mete out of the calendar. And I was, after all, became renown -- known. We had a lot of gatherings going on, and at one time, we wanted to

state our case, so in the JCC, we were divided in three speakers. We had a speaker from the Holocaust survivors who was an inmate in the concentration camp. I was the one who represented the partisans, and resistance, and there was --

Q: Say names if you can remember names.

A: Well, Rosensweig was one of the speakers, which he was -- his wife was later president, who she was representing those Jews who were in -- in -- in Russia. Our president's -- I must say, our late president, at that time, which she was a woman, and she was very vocal about the issues, she was very much in-involved. Her name is Erna Gense, and she was talking in regard, or rather, representing the inmates of the concentration camp. I, Harold Zissman, was taking part, speaking about resistance in the partisans. And we were very successful, the room was filled with people, and questions, while we only were thinking it'll be an hour to two hours, it was after three hours that we had to call a halt to the meeting, and call it for continuance of every day. Another thing we organized about, that was all to lightening the situation of [indecipherable]. I had, after that, one student that he was studying in medical school, but he was a Jewish boy, interested in Jewish history, that he asked me if he could come to my house, and I will give him on tape all my story, why and what, when -- no more than we discussed it. He came to my house, and made a few tapes, and afterwards he says, "Harold, I don't know how you survived, but I cannot listen to it." He says, "It was too much." I says, "That's the part of perseverance, and that's the part of endurance. If you want to go on to live,

you cannot surrender easily. You must keep your fight to the bitter end, just like I described in some of my poems, as it was.” Anyways, the other organization what we did, we decided on the Sabbath to send various groups to go to synagogues, bring out our situation on the pulpit, over why our dissatisfaction is with the Nazis do -- who want to march. We are trapped, and all of us are trapped. We know that we don’t want to have any -- any bad situation, maybe turning into riots, or whatever it is, where it could threaten the business community. So therefore, for all things concerned, the best thing is, by which ever way we can derive, that it should be legal and official to stop that march from coming, because at that particular time, the Jewish Defense League, which it was very famous in New York, joined us, and they wanted to become a party with us, to join in the fight against the Nazis. So, when the joish -- the -- the Jewish League came to us, the joining, it was a more scare on the merchants in the area, because now they knew with the Jewish Defense League around, that definitely hostilities will ic -- incur in the neighborhood. So, we ask what can we do about it? Anyways, by that time, the law passed in -- in -- in Springfield, and it was passed, but it was afterwards challenged, that it was illegal that this, in itself, the uniform in itself was declared also part of speech, and we cannot stop it. Well, be that it was right, be that it was wrong, maybe the legal heads that we had trying to help us were not the greatest, and the best, but it’s a known factor that American people, including the Jews, do not ever want to see a change in the Second Amendment of Free Speech. I perhaps feel the same way, but it’s too hard for me to

succumb to the idea that Free Speech, and threatening of life should be one and the same, and therefore granted immunity for that reason. That's why, until this day outspoken, that it was justified for us to stop them. However, be for what it's worth, that it did occur in Chicago later, that we were denied our law, and they came out to speak, but we started the same thing, as I said, we were throwing rocks, and eggs, and whatever you wanted, and the only thing it lasted for about three -- two minutes, or four, and they were -- had to be run out. The fact remains that later on we found out that those neo-Nazis were involved in so many lawbreaking things that they did. We found out the head of a Mr. Collins, that he was involved with -- with sexual things, involved -- and he was brought to court -- o -- justice, and he was jailed later. Which it proves, no more, and no less like Hitler and his gang, they were all not law abiders, but law breakers, but we granted the freedom. And of course, I was -- it was interpreted to us to tell this is the democracy in action, that a -- that we must be listening to everybody who wants to speak. Yes, listening to whatever we want to speak. But listening to someone who threatens my life, one day I hope, will be separated from Freedom of Speech, because it's the same as yelling fire in a crowded movie house, which this is not Freedom of Speech. And we continued our fight later, while I already aforementioned being in the -- speaking for the justice committee, and as I said, the law passed, and we again had a fight on our hands. No matter what itch we tried -- we stopped it. It was the fact to show what had happened. We were stopping that we shouldn't any more tal -- go to let them demonstrate, so the



city hall, and it's legal people advised, and devised an issue [indecipherable] prohibited, those people living in the neighborhood mind you, were prohibited to go out in that area where the Nazis, if it comes to pass that they will come to speak, so it means we were taken the laws of freedom away from us, that we could not go walk in that perimeter, while they, under the protection of the law, will be guided to let them come in and speech. Well, that's a good lesson to prove what Freedom of Speech means. I agree with it, but I don't agree at the cost of another part of the public, to be denied the laws. I believe something over there was not -- acting wrong. And we -- we mustered a lot, and since the Civil Liberties Union were protecting the Nazi so much, we decided we must hit them where it hurts, in their pockets. Our campaign continued, and we broke them actually, that they did not have enough contributions, and you know, the legal people are very -- trying to legal, but they wanted money for their time, and looks like they had to abandon the whole thing. That's why, in sko -- in Skokie, they couldn't muster up and come to march. But in Chicago, around city hall, even if it only lasted for two minutes, and the amount of money that it cost the city to allow that to happen, between the police, extra time, and extra vigilance that it -- they needed, was ext -- was a tremendous amount. I'm glad to hear that it never happened, another case like that, over there. In Florida a few times, there were also marches by the neo-Nazis, but they were done in a different way. They didn't go to the height of Collings, and his gang. There were different ways with them. And it was on one side the Nazis, and on the other side was the

anti-Nazis, us. And we protested in loud ways, not to let them be heard, over hel -- and then it was all over. So, the means to say is, it happened, but never did it reveal itself to be a case like in Skokie, because over there was the hard core of survivors, and that's what they wanted, and they almost -- almost won the battle to come and speak, but we prohibited them.

Q: Tell -- tell me, did you -- was there, to your perception, complete unity among survivors in -- in the Skokie case, or was there any dissension between survivors at all, about what ought to happen?

A: It's a good question you made, and I'm glad that you asked it in a way, because the movie of Skokie did not bring it out. There was no deception, but before long, it was so politicized, the issue, that it was unbelievable. I had over there, amongst us, as I mentioned before, the Jewish Defense League. Before long, it took a lon -- I took a look, some Communists were also trying to join us, and by all means, we did not want to have a part of no red flag, no this here. So this was the bad part, in part, dissension, no, but joiners, of various opinions, which definitely was not in our way, we found to -- to -- to be the case.

Q: And you mentioned a little earlier, Rabbi Montrose?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you a member of his congregation?

A: Well, I was a part member of his congregation, because I belonged to another congregation. I always belonged someplace. As a matter of fact, our B'nai Brith meetings, still to this day today, take place on Main Street, in se -- in Skokie central, as we call it, where Rabbi Montrose, still, God willing, presides as the rabbi. The rabbi was a very vocal helper now, of course, and as I forementioned, we went to synagogues, too, and the -- Skokie's central synagogue was all with the help we needed to be granted.

Q: Did -- did you -- you mentioned feeling angry with the B'nai Brith, because of their position in the -- in the case. Did you -- how did you -- how did that resolve itself? I mean, you s -- you just mentioned you -- you continued to be involved with B'nai Brith.

A: They had a letter cam -- writing campaign to B'nai Brith, and our words was, if you cannot help us, don't hurt us. In other words, it's too bad that you interpret it one way, and we see it the other way. To us it's Freedom of Speech, yes, but however, threatening our life is no freedom. So I believe B'nai Brith does -- wouldn't like to see that way, either. And we asked them, just stay neutral and leave us -- leave us alone, because you advised us not -- make us comfort. You make comfort to the enemy instead of making us comfortable about it. And I didn't resign from being a member of B'nai Brith, because one bad issue does not make you to turn against Anti-Defamation League, because that's what we was trying to claim it. We are being a -- defamed over there, and you -- you permission, what you are saying, is let defamation take place, while you trying to say draw your curtains. You know what I mean, or sort of shut your ears, you don't hear. But

that is not the way to handle a situation like that. And thanks God that later on, B'nai Brith, I believe, is becoming more mature about some of these situations, and they realize that it was not the right thing to answer to us, just draw your curtain, because as a whole, B'nai Brith did lose some members also, in the same way. I didn't -- you know, our lodge still remained very viable, and everything like that, but you know, a lot of other people did not want to just register the mildness to the resolution, as we did, and they just absolutely resigned, and it was hard to bring them back in there.

Q: Did you feel disillusioned with the American judicial system after the whole case, and after -- after it was decided that yes, the -- the First Amendment was going to be upheld in the form that it had been?

A: As I said, I'm all for the First Amendment. I'll go to fight, if I have to, to survive -- for the First Amendment to survive. However, we must literally understand, that threatening of life is not a First Amendment right to be treated under Freedom of Speech. We must modernize it, if needed, we must amend things in it, but that cannot -- should not be. We don't know when, tomorrow, when another branch of these hating groups will come up. We know what it happened in Memphis, we know what it happened with all. But the Jews were on the side to help the Black people, and can you imagine that anybody's going to tell me that it was a matter of Free Speech? No, it was not a matter of Free Speech, it was a matter plain, they wanted to kill, they wanted to destroy, and killing and destruction happened. We know just recently, only a year ago, what it happened in

Chicago, with the things that it happened against synagogues. We know the things that it happened there in schools. You see, this is all the outgrowth for people who harbor themselves under the First Amendment right to speak, with right to hate, okay we -- we a -- I know the ADL was very helpful in these cases, to pass laws against hate -- law. But it's -- it's a different situation between hated laws, and that causes them to be violent, or to come and trap them, openly. Neo-Nazis do not come others -- under any other auspices, but threatening the life of the Jews wherever they are. And we must learn how to separate, so yes, I am pro-Second -- the Amendment, the way it was written, Freedom of Speech, but as I said it, and I cannot reveal it again, how many times I say, that threatening of life, must be put -- it will take an extra amendment to it, just like the hate law was passed, it must pass this part of the hate law, whatever it is, that people's lives cannot be threatened by any group, by any ways.

Q: Tell me about how that whole event in Skokie, a-and the legal proceedings which took s -- took -- took about a year, I think to -- to unfold.

A: Yes.

Q: How did that affect your perception of yourself as an American citizen, and -- and the American -- did you -- did you feel connected with -- with the country at large, in -- in a sense of -- or did you feel a little more isolated afterwards? [indecipherable]

A: No, to the contrary, I felt very much American at the time. I know in the Civil War, we just didn't throw slogans, and won. It took blood almost, and fighting. Thanks God

that we did not have to shed any blood in order to do things like that. So no, never will I be isolated from the American freedom of law. However, in all my life that God gives me to live, I will fight for freedom with justice. I cannot afford to let my mind or soul separated one from the other. There is no freedom if there is no justice. So be that justice means that it was not for -- not letting Jews, or Blacks move into a certain neighborhood, or be sitting in the back of a bus. Be to the same thing is, when I am denied certain laws, whatever it has to be, that is not justice in these laws. So I hope that we remember the importance. Freedom must be with justice. Freedom without justice is not total freedom.

Q: Okay, I wanted to ask you about something else, but I'm going to flip the tape first.

End of Tape Four, Side A

Beginning Tape Four, Side B

Q: -- and -- and -- and important for many survivors, as well as just for -- for history of -- of reckoning with the Holocaust, and that was the Eichmann trial. And I wondered if you can recall whether you -- you watched that carefully, whether you talked about that with other people, and whether you felt that that was -- that that was an important event.

A: Okay, I -- first of all, let me touch, before I go to this here, I must put it in, I want to thank the people, Mr. -- Mr. Garber, what his name was, the producer of Skokie. Burger, Mr. Burger was his name of the producer, for producing that movie. I believe, as time goes on, it will remain a vocal part of the history of Skokie. The mayor of Skokie, we took at that time to Israel on a trip, he's no longer around -- the former mayor that it was

at the time. But it was a historical event, and I'm gla -- happy and glad, that someone took the time and efforts, even the financial cost, to bring it into light. At the same time, I want at this time, to thank all the other people, i-including those who pro -- made the movie of "Schindler's List," including -- I forgot his name.

Q: Spielberg?

A: Yeah. Including Mr. Spielberg, who gave so much efforts, and money of his cost, to bring these programs, even -- even part what he is paying for in the Holocaust museums, to bring the story of the survivors of the Holocaust, for posterity, so some students of tomorrow can learn what it was done wrong in our time, and in our era, so it shall not repeat itself again. When the Eichmann story, which you asked me, took place, I was very carefully watching it on the TV. And it proved that the bitter end, that instead of him asking forgiveness for the injustice that he carried out, much more than the law of Nuremberg asked him to do, he stand fast to protect the Nazi era, and he'll, to the last day, and to the last moment of that trial, stood with his opinion that it was right to do what he does. Which it proves it to you, the freedom, and the democracy, given to a murderer like this here, was given by the state of Israel. And, at the same time, of other people, we know the case what it happened, it proved the case in point, after the case of Eichmann, then the case of Demjanjuk was brought to Israel. And Israel believed in the fairness of the law in judicial way. Even though he was proving that in Trawniki, he was serving, in spite that he was not even th-the -- even grossly -- even th-the hater, but he

was there in the schools. So seeing as they did not have the total accuracy missing to the justice of the Israeli court, to condemn him, or to sue him for whatever it is, they much rather for letting him go free instead of condemning perhaps, in the mind of the -- of the judges to condemn a s -- a person who was not guilty in the case. Now, here is a big importance for Israel law to be predominant, and all the world to take, that they believe in the old saying -- in the Communist era, as well as the Fascist era through the Nazis, they'd rather kill a hundred people to find one guilty, while this way, when laws arvee justice, you'd rather let a hundred people free, instead of condemning one people -- one person who is not fully guilty. That it couldn't prove the guilt on him. I am proud to hear these things.

Q: Did you think -- were you aware of how the American public was responding to that, and that how that -- that things might have changed as far as amir -- American awareness of what had happened during the Holocaust after the Eichmann trial was televised in this country?

A: Well, American people have haters, like all other countries of the world. We know Buchanan for instance, who are the defender of Demjanjuk, and we know the ta -- at the tail end of it, that demjan -- that Buchanan told his way of the war, and everything, that he claims America did wrong, by coming to help diminish the Nazi era. So this question is a self centered to understand the -- for every American just to say, look in the mirror and see yourself. When we could have a man who was in the era, working with President



Reagan, to come out with a book the way he was written, so it's a very sordid on the American people, because thanks God that we don't have many Buchanans around, so we can still call ourselves a country of loving freedom, but not with this type of freedom that Mr. Buchanan would like to see going on in this country. As a whole, I believe the American people I never could condemn. I can only say not many American people are involved in the political systems, and they -- if they don't take a part in it, it's basically because they -- they cannot be participant without knowing cases. And they don't take the time to learn it, they feel so free that we don't have to. But to preserve our freedom, we must be participants in all these here political eras.

Q: You -- have you experienced any anti-Semitism directly since you've been in this country?

A: I had a few cases where I had to send my cases to the Anti-Defamation League. In most cases, when I ever wrote an article dealing with the Holocaust, or for instance when the pope was visiting the USA at that time, and I reminisced in my article to the paper that he was a young pope -- not pope, but he was a young preacher, at that time in Poland, and living in that era, he should know what the Hitlerites did to us, and I was speaking out against Pope Pius, not against him. I, as a matter of fact, went through in Israel with Yad Vashem, to make a study of that era, and the whole world knows the secret that the Vatican helped all these here criminals filter through Spain, and other places like this here. But it's the funny thing, when you bring it out in the open, some people don't like

to hear it, because to them, the word of a holy man, or the pope, is becoming a s -- a sacred item, and -- and whatever they say is right. That's how all these problems in the world, through many years, without questions asked, had happened. Because the public just wanted to believe one story, and not hear the other side of that story. And I'm afraid for that type of thinking. So when I had to speak out, and it's not pleasing to others, I'm sorry to say that, let him tell them -- let him prove that I'm wrong, and it's another story. But at any time my articles appeared in letters to the editor, so on, hate mail came to my doors, with threatening, and the same way. And the ADL explained it to me, that because these people are watching those letter writers to the editor, and at any time, they put on all this here kind of paraphernalia.

Q: Do you feel safe in this country, or do you feel that the -- this -- that there is the potential for the kind of violent anti-Semitism that happened in Europe?

A: I feel safe, for the time being. But as I said, when you become, in a c -- situation like that, that you're so satisfied and pleased, that you don't look on the other side, it's very dangerous. So to say, or to foretell what might happen, first of all, I'm not a prophet, second of all, I'm a believer. I hope the younger people of today make it their business to become participants, be of the political system which -- what is going on, and become vocal. Don't keep this story to yourself, it's not a story to be hidden, it's a story to be discussed in public. I'm very happy in my days, that I discussed certain things on college levels, and high schools, that I spoke to them, and I'm always open for the invitation

when invited. As a matter of fact, I invited myself a few times to go in colleges where they teach now the Holocaust story, which it became a part of the curriculum to teach, which I hoped that would have happened so many years ago, Hitler would have never been able to come. We see what it happens in Austria, with Haider right now. Look how it shook up the whole world, you know what I mean, just about letting this party come. So I'm very -- I feel very good that people get awakened these days, by any outbursts of this nature. But to say that I feel safe, yes, but am I secured for the future what it be? I cannot foretell the future, I wish I could, and I would be able to answer that in another way.

Q: It sounds as if you s -- you've always been very willing to talk about your experiences

--

A: And vigilant, and vigilant --

Q: And vigilant, and that's --

A: That was my --

Q: -- that's probably unusual, because some people, in the earlier years, didn't feel capable of talking about that. Later on, you know, gotten a distance from it. When did you start speaking publicly about it? Do you have a --

A: From the first day of my life that I survived. I couldn't speak about it in the ire -- under the Iron Curtain, needless for me to say, it would have been a foolish statement, even to make. So I will not tell you that I did, but as soon I got away from that curtain,

my mind was open, and I spoke about it, and when I came to the USA, like I said, in 1948, I became a participant right away to organizations, until I did not get my citizenship, I didn't want to make public some of the things, because let's just remember like the question you asked me before, the era of McCarthyism, and just think back, '48. In 1948, if you were in Soviet Union, you were right away a question mark, you know what I mean? So to tell you honestly, yes I was watching myself not to get caught in a bad web, because to defend oneself is not an easy situation. So, after I became a citizen, I became vocal immediately, and with every era, whatever time it happened, that I was speaking of. And it didn't hurt me a bit that I had to disagree with B'nai Brith, you know, because writing I did. I wrote to Mr. Foxman a few -- on a few occasions, and I became known, looks like, to some papers, that as soon they see my name under the article, they don't print it at times. And I played a trick on the -- on a few of them, that I used another name, with my address, and to prove my point, they printed it. Which it means, it's not so much that they care for the story, but they care who writes it. And I wish it would be good they would care for the other writers, who write the opposite, to be watching themselves, but unfortunately, there, they're afraid maybe they can go ahead to touch on the Free Speech amendment, where refusing me there is always ways, and how do they say? We cannot let you write unless six months elapsed since the last letters today. Of course, I'm not a hired hand, I'm just a letters to the editor writer, you know? So, of all kinds of ways, that's one of the items. I was told by the press, for instance, from the --

from West Palm Beach, says, "You eve -- don't even live here." And that was the publisher had that. I says, "Must one live over there to write an letter to the editor?" So, experiencing this through the years, I had the opportunity where I pass by, at one time writing to -- in Texas to a paper, responding on something. And I was -- was writing with a -- with a clergyman of high esteem, that the church didn't like too well, but we found a certain view, something in common, which it was the billing between Hanukah and Christmas, and we corresponded quite awhile. So to me, teaching about hopeful ways, about unifying people, about freedom loving people to be together, will always be a subject to talk about, it does not have to be Nazis, it does not have to be neo-Nazis, or any of the -- like that. I love to converse with people, but above all, I will never sacrifice the freedom of democracy for anything else. That's one thing I cannot live by, or have any reason.

Q: You've really become American.

A: Yup.

Q: I wanted to ask you, you have mentioned that your -- your store was burned down in 1968. Will you tell me about the -- about tha -- those events, the riots, and how you -- what happened, and how you perceived the issues?

A: I can conceive in a good, open mind, that what had happened to me with the riots, I did not pluralize ever to say Black people, this, that and the other. Because in every situation that it happens, it's going to be two sides to the story. My side of that story's a

[indecipherable]. My store did not have just all Black, but I would say there were two butchers, which they were white, and the other butchers, two of them were Black. The rest of the store, all my employees were Black, from management capacity, which at that particular time -- so, in other words, [indecipherable] to the era why the riots broke out in Chicago, because of the killing of Martin Luther King. My store should not be actually suffering anything like that. But this is again, as I told you, freedom without justice does not work, therefore, because innocent people get hurt. I consider myself that I was not the party that had to get hurt, but maybe to say I was in the wrong neighborhood, and therefore I got hurt because of that. So, many times when I interviewed for jobs, I didn't hesitate telling my background, what I did, and the first question would come, under the circumstances that you've been through, you obviously are prejudiced against Black. I says, "No, I am not prejudiced against Black, I'm prejudiced against wrongdoing." I believe in people demonstrate for a cause. Making riots and looting, is wrong. Regardless that I wasn't the only one hurt, but that is not the way to spread an issue. So be that it happened to me in 1968, with that other issues happened to other people in other times, two wrongs never made one right, and that's exactly what it is. While they are trying to wrong the wrongs, and trying to make them right, it's no use to follow in the fli -- same footsteps, to make another wrong. So, to say that I'm prejudiced, no, I do not see a Black person other than I see myself in that regard. I respect him, and I would always hope that I'll be respected by them. I didn't run into any circumstances other than that, or because

of that, but when you go -- I went another time, and reopened another store, and when things began to change to the bad, when my store began to be broken into, and all of these here things, I saw a repetition of that, yes, I went out. I made a going out of business sale, and I went away from that neighborhood all together. Because I cannot be watching times from changing. Times will change whether I watch it or not. So I figured, it's the wrong place for me to be, and I went out of there, that's all. I became a -- an outdoor salesman, I couldn't re-establish myself back in the retail business, because my fortune didn't go along with me, in other words, at the same time, I lost too much, insurance companies of that era went broke because of that, so I was just an innocent victim. Yes, I feel bad that it happened. Yes, I can ask questions, why did it happen to me? Maybe to say I didn't deserve to happen to me. It affects [indecipherable], it happened. Now, I have two ways of looking at it. Do I look with more hatred? Seems I'm trying to define that I'm against hatred, so it would be the ca -- same thing that I justify all the bad things that ever happened to me, that they are right. So that does not let me, and that's why those interviews for jobs, when they ask me that question, realize that I can pass the test, that I am not a hate type of person. I was sitting next to Jesse Jackson, next to me at the time when we worked together about stopping the Nazis from marching. We were joining forces at that time, and I believe they, in many a -- things, what the Black people want to see, any other minority wants to see the same way. And I hope it's clarified. I heard just recently in New York, and the things, what it was pulled out, with

the four policemen, please do not make riots, do not make break-ins, and I say Mr.

Sharpton was right, and I was happy to hear him say these words, because ideals cannot mix with violence. When you produce violence with ideals, the ideals get lost.

Q: We should say, just for the record, that you're talking about the Amadou Diallo case [indecipherable]

A: Yeah, so this is the idea about it. I'm a true believer in these things, even if I pay dearly for it, but everybody knows that with -- just to speak, and one way, it happens to someone else, and you speak -- in other words, when it happens to you, it's not wrong, it's not wrong. It's not right to be like that, you can't -- it's a good saying that it goes around. When one's husband -- when your neighbor's husband is laid off from work, it's a recession, but when the husband from this house is laid off, then it's a depression. And that's the same thing, I mean, two wrongs, no matter how many times we tried it, will never prove to be right. So, no, I did not remain prejudiced due to the circumstances, it happened to me. And again, even though I'm hateful to the Nazis, I'm not hateful to the Germans. As a matter of fact, last time I was in Israel was in June of 1998, and I was in the company near us, 40 percent of the gatherings at [indecipherable] were Germans, well, they were young German people, with the children of the same -- they were the ages of my own children. I spoke to them, I didn't feel threatened, I didn't feel any animosity towards them. Yes, their parents, their grandparents were involved in all of that, as Mr. Goldhagen said, but this is my statement. I can speak German to a young person, and be



happy to speak, and that I know how to address them and speak. But I cannot speak to a person who's older than me, or my age, because that -- that language that [indecipherable] all of this here, yelling, and [indecipherable] was only the way to confuse the Jews, and -- and make them -- first strip them from rights, then strip them from anything that they could, be that it's food, and they really -- killed out the intelligentsia first, so we were people that it was not enough left of the intelligentsia, nor enough left of -- in us, to be able to resist, and that's why we didn't resist in as many --- more than it should have been. Besides, the population was not that open to help us, but they would help the others, you know? When their kids were taken to Germany, and they didn't like it, they helped the partisans, because they ca -- had where to escape. But Jews, they didn't. Let's remember, the Germans put a price, to catch a Jew was worth a pig, and to catch a partisan was worth a horse, if he was Jewish. So they always had a price. That's how we -- the -- the way of killing was so glamorized that it wasn't just the killing. How much they can first give him all kinds of punishment, until he wished to be dead, that was the enjoyment to kill them. But they -- but in the partisans, when I caught some Germans, to the police -- from the policeman [indecipherable] from that time, they were begging for mercy. Please don't kill me. And it was a case, which in my manuscript I described. When we caught once that he was from the sondenfuehrer, and a girl that [indecipherable], he pulled out from his pocket pictures. He did not know whether we are Jews, or other things, and he thought he would show us pictures of Jewish girls that he

has in his pocket, we do not know how these pictures came to be, and why he took them from the Jewish girls. Because that was their pleasure place, which they would take good looking girls, take them in there, and use them, you follow me, sexual. So, this girl, seeing these pictures what he pulled out, she says, "Harold, step it aside, this is all mine." And she didn't [indecipherable] on him, she smashed his head til he was dead. So I mean, it's a lot of things to understand about an era, be that it's resistance, be trying to w-w-way to resist, which people fail to understand what it was, the era at that time, what an era it was to survive. But one thing I must comment over here, no matter how bad it was, the rate of suicides, as history will record, was very little. In other words, people just wanted to live, to outlive the enemy, no matter how miserable they lived, while living, it still -- it was very easy, you disobey, and you shot, and you're dead. Didn't have to do any threatening things. If you would die -- but people no, they wanted -- that's what it wa -- that was their expression of resistance, which I like to comment over here about the resistance. In 1983, in the gathering in Israel was, we got up about 5,000 partisans. The Soviet Union let out their partisans to come to Jerusalem to show in the strong -- we almost mustered almost 5,000 people. which the medal that I showed you, that I got from the state of Israel, is hanging over there. Anyways, at that particular time, that we got that together, one of the spokesman was a lady, a professor, her name was Kattan. The name Kattan in Hebrew means short, small, and she was short, she was a small lady, but her words were big. And she once told us, and she knows she's speaking at a gathering of

freedom fighters if you want to say, or resisters. She asked the question to us, how would you describe yourself, what you did in the forest as resistance? One picked up his hand and he says, "I killed so many Germans." Another picked up his hand, and he talked about other things, what he did against the Germans. He [indecipherable] down so many trains. The other one was doing -- and doing other diversionary work. She says, "Do you consider all of that, what? Fighting the enemy, or you consider that resistance?" And everybody came out, it's one and [indecipherable]. She says, "No, resistance means if you resisted the enemy for one more day to live while he wants to annihilate you. For one more hour, for one more longer, that is resistance." The wire fences round all the camps electrified. You could throw yourself against the fence any time, but few people threw themselves against the fences. That in itself was resistance. Be that you had a machine gun, that you went openly in warfare -- ways, to fight and resist the enemy, or that you withstand in that concentration camp, or that labor camp, or in the ghetto, that you survived an extra day to -- to give the enemy a loss that he didn't win yet, that is resistance. I think I want to inject [indecipherable] in this conversation at the same time, we must learn, and very much be vigilant when we resist certain thing in our democratic way, and above all, I'll say it one more time, we must always fight for freedom, and laws with justice. If you don't have justice in it, we just don't have our fulfillment of freedom.

Q: Okay, I just have a few more questions, and --

A: Go ahead.

Q: -- say whatever -- whatever you want. Whose -- one question is, we -- did you ever return to Australenka, or to [indecipherable]

A: I believe, if you remember, I told you the story, when I came to Bialystok, and I met a friend of mine, and he told me that one returned there, and got killed right away. I cannot return back to Poland, and see that -- the ground there. I must invoke here the story of the 14<sup>th</sup> century [indecipherable] As we all know, the Inquisition [indecipherable] history of what it was. You -- if you wanted to become Christian, you had life, if you didn't want, they expelled you. On the ships of expulsion, at that particular time, the rabbis of the era who were there, with all that creation, they created this [indecipherable] which a lot of Judaism was created. They put out sort of a restriction order, that forever after, no Jew shall dwell in Spain. To me, that evendoor Franco, who let the Jews escape in the -- the Nazis come to Spain, while Hitler bitterly protested it, but Hitler could not afford to go and fight Franco, you know, for what he did. A story, I must tell you that story in my manuscript, I would like to show this, now that you mention, but what I wanted to bring out is, we did not have enough intellectual people, even including Elie Wiesel, who wrote a lot of work, and more like Elie Wiesel, that they did not insert that we cannot return back to these places of se -- of cemeteries. In Judaic law we provide a saying, that you cannot dwell on a cemetery, just like we are told with Egyptian people in Cairo live on the cemeteries, because of shortage of room. The cemeteries are created for dead people, and not for leef -- live people to live there. To us, the biggest cemeteries of the world

were left in these European countries, and the biggest one in Poland. Therefore, Judaic people are forbidden to dwell there. But we did not have enough of the clergy to dwell on that issue, and to make it public. To people who come back, and everyone who comes back, who didn't live in that era, but lives in today's era, and they come back, and when you talk to them, they have only one thing to say, the anti-Semitism in Poland is very visible, and it's very open. Even though Israel is dealing with the Polish people. Even though Israel is letting in Polish people to come to Israel, and everything else. Look, anti-Semitism is a disease, and no more like certain diseases are incurable, for the time being, we haven't found a cure for that anti-Semitism. Should I say that the religion fed into these people is part, if not fully the declaration of anti-Semitism? Perhaps, maybe it's one of it. But anti-Semitism, we must take it as a disease, and cure as a disease, because we cannot say, "Oh, you shouldn't say that," this and that. We see -- I say we -- we see these thing -- people in the open, we see what these people are doing, and the anti-Semitism is still alive. So, I said I'll tell you a little story about Spain, what had happened in that era, in the [indecipherable], I mentioned that story in my manuscript. At that particular time, Hitler was tremendously trying to influence the Spanish people, first of all that they should join his armies, then help him defeat the enemy, and above all help him defeat the Jews. So he used to send them [indecipherable] there, to make speeches, and he tells the story about at one farm area country over there, one of these emissaries came, and gathered them together, and trying to say to them, you know we're losing the war, only

because of the Jews. If it wouldn't be for the Jews, we would not have suffered all these losses. And all what it went bad with Germany, he [indecipherable] tried to blame it on the Jews. And therefore, he says, we must root them out, we must kill them wherever we find them. When he got through with his speech, all these farmers, everybody had -- they had tools what they used for farming, grabbed them in their hands, and they went chasing to found Jews. So illusion --

End of Tape Four, Side B

Beginning Tape Five, Side A

Q: This is tape number five, side A, of an interview with Harold Zissman.

A: Even though from the 14<sup>th</sup> century on, and that we are talking about the year of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so for 600 years, no Jews were in the areas there. To their dismay, they were running, and running, and they couldn't find a Jew, so they should kill him to please the speakers, demand, and desire, and what he told them to do. Even though it's only a story, but again, I support what I said to the outset, that anti-Semitism is a disease. It's not a because, because they did this, or because they did that. Because we found them in places where Jews did not even live there at all. So you'd say why -- wh-wh-why do you got -- want to blame them? It's an inherent disease, like any other diseases we haven't cured in the world yet, which you have to do, and this disease, apparently, until now, had not been cured. And we must hope and strive to cure this disease, until such time will not come -- we'll still have to be vigilant, and we will suffer with that same disease.

Q: Okay. What are the names of your children, and I -- I was just thinking, maybe you could tell us something about -- about your kids, and your grandkids.

A: Okay. My oldest daughter's name is Rosalie, and in Italy, they was a very famous name at the time, and we named her Rosalie. So Rosa, Rosa, you find a lot of this here. We are very proud, and she has her name at times, since she's in a school, in a Hebrew school that she calls it Shoshanna. As a matter of fact, she just became a grandmother, and she's be -- going to be called for her grandchild, Safta, which is the Hebrew word for

granny. And that's what she chose to be. So she's very much involved in the educational field. As I aforementioned to you before in our conversation, I -- which I didn't do with you on tape, that she was, after she got married, her husband was still going to law school, and he graduated George Washington University, while she took up over there, her Masters, at George Washington University. She had taken up another Masters since, and she's right now studying for her Ph.D. She -- she was teaching at the time in -- in a school over there, which it was dignitaries children, some from ambassadors, and so on. And when I came to visit with her, there wasn't enough words th-they -- that I her -- could be heard by the man who was the supervisor, to tell me about my daughter, which I'm very proud of. She brought me three children, the oldest one's name is Jennifer, the next one, who just got married -- and Jennifer is married, and that's was their first child, Emily. The next one was Marissa, which she just got married, and her husband's name is Ben, and Jennifer's husband I fe -- don't want to forget to say, his name is Jeff. So therefore, my son-in-law, we call Jeffrey, or we call him Jeff. And my son-in-law, as I mentioned, is a graduate at-attorney, and he's very well a part of the law. He's involved in a variation of businesses, and thanks God he's doing good for -- for his family. My wife, being in love with education, still is t -- like I say, with the education on the school, and I'm happy that all the parents from the children, like it used to be before, and the children, when we come visiting with her, we'll go to a restaurant, oh daddy, mommy. This is my children from this and this grade, and the mommy's -- so she not -- not only



knows the kids well, in a good way, but even the parents of the kids. So I'm proud of it. Now, the youngest son of theirs is -- is Jordan, and he is right now in Texas, in college, at a -- Dallas, which I'm very happy and proud of him, too, and he looks like he's going for business in there. And my son has two sons, just like he was a gymnast throughout school, from Skokie, from Niles East, his kids did not follow exactly his way, but they played, and we used to come to meet some summertime, to come to Chicago, see them play baseball, and they -- they involved in sports, probably the youngest one likes basketball, what'll hap -- be outcome. The older one, Scott is his name, the younger one is the name Mark. My son's wife name, Susie, and she is also going now for her Ph.D. She's also principal in a school. So round and ra -- and around, I'm glad.

Q: Thank you.

A: And I'm very happy that education worked, and it was my persuasion to the kids since they were little, to help them. I'm proud of myself that I could help even my grandchildren, not only my kids, with -- scholastically, with their schools, since my memory, thanks God, was good, and I was always a good student in school. So that was the case, that I not only prevailed with me, of telling them, but I'm happy to see the fruition of them, that they're all doing good, and they're educated very well, thanks God.

Q: I have the impression, correct me if I'm wrong, that -- that it's been very important to you to carry on the Jewish tradition --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and I -- I wonder if -- if you -- if they are all -- they have had Bar Mitzvahs, Bat Mitzvahs [indecipherable]

A: You asked a very good question. I must say that my son married girl who converted to Judaism, she was not Jewish. And someone would listen to her on the pulpit, where my grandchildren had Bar Mitzvah, they would not think that she is not Jewish. In the neighborhood, she is from Skokie, you know what I mean, which it was a lot of Jewish people. And so it worked good. Both of my -- both of their kids are recognizing their Jewishness. Both of them had Bar Mitzvahs. Then, of course, the oldest one is -- his name is Scott, is now in the university in Ohio -- in -- no, excuse me, in -- let's see, is it Iowa State College, taking up structural engineering, and we s -- cami -- we -- once in a -- we talk to each other, like I say. I come once a year at least to Chicago, so we can visit with each other. At times they come here. So depends which way, because to me, I -- I cannot put myself in a position to be away from my grandchildren, no more than for my children. So, all in all, the three grandchildren of my daughter, I had more closer contact, since they were -- the oldest one was born in Chicago, but the other two were born right here. So, they all know about it. My daughter, and my son-in-law, have a good write up in the zig -- museum, over here in Miami Beach. They also involved with Jewish causes, they are good donors, like I am. I gave them the example, as you saw in the room, which I have the accolades for it. We believe in Jewish hope, we believe in Jewish future, and yes, being a survivor from the Holocaust, I did not go to blame God for that, as I said it to

you before, I blame man, because man could have helped us, and they didn't. So it's no use to me to look for God. In -- in some people's belief, God put us on earth, and he gave us the wisdom to decide what to do. So when we do wrong, we can only blame ourselves, and not the maker. It's the same thing like you ri -- raise a child, and you tell him the good things, and then all of a sudden, the child goes to do a bad thing. So, sure, somebody would say -- the outsider would say, "It's your fault, you didn't raise him well." But you know in your heart that you raised him well, it's just that it happened to be that way, and you -- and you probably as a parent, accepted that way. But you don't go to blame the parent that they didn't raise him well. And that is my total belief in that way. But yes, I'm very proud to see -- we, in two different Judaism belonging. Both of my kids go to Reform, they find themselves more comfortable there. I'm a Conservative Jew, and I find myself comfortable where I belong, you know? But I never try to interfere with them, I attended services in their synagogues, and whatever it is on my side, what persuasion I believe should be a personal thing, and what you feel yourself comfortable in.

Q: I think I'm -- I'm -- I think that's the end of my questions for today. Do you have anything that -- that you can think of that I haven't touched -- asked you, that you'd like to talk about?

A: Well, a-as I said to you to begin with, if I was to prepare with question and answers from you to begin with, I could make it in an orderly way, and I would remor less, but

since it was part from the others, and part of the new one, you know what I mean, and I didn't put it in the order the way it happened, it sometimes could be omitted. So, I believe I, at the moment cannot think of anything left out, because I believe I s -- not to praise my own self, but participating in so many things, and it doesn't matter. I was a member also the Holocaust Museum, while I was a member also to the Simon Wiesenthal. As far as my writing, and asking like this here, I was always, like I say -- I'll never forget when the movie was made, from Simon Wiesenthal at that time, and in that movie, it showed a case, where typically, what the -- the inmate of a concentration camp becomes pregnant -- do you know that movie, what it was, or you don't -- or you didn't see it, it was [indecipherable]. And she was pregnant by that commanding officer. And later that husband -- oh, the -- in -- in camp, which it was the boyfriend of hers, when later, after so many years absence, because he escaped to the partisans, he didn't know about her, and later when he discovers her -- so when he discovers where she is, he makes so many attempts, and somehow or other, she does not want to s -- recognize herself. And the story ends that he makes a trip over there, he builds with his -- sim -- with Simon Wiesenthal [indecipherable] to make the movie. And then he comes there, she greets him, and then he takes a look at the child, and he sees the child s-so much close -- in close look at him, he looks like the commander of that camp from which he escapes. And she finally admits to him what had happened with the rest. And now she tries to tell him why she h -- was in hiding of that whole case, because how she -- she's still in love with him,

and that did not happen out of love that she has a baby with the other. And it happened the case is, that she does not want to testify against that particular murderer, from that camp. So she tests -- testifies why, she tells him the story why she cannot do that, because take a look at it, that's his son. She had -- what is to be told to that child? And that child already was involved with so many good things, pro-Zionism, pro-Israel, and everything like that, while he grew up with. So now -- so this case, and the [indecipherable] in other words, that they sort of -- that came the ending, without a conclusion. I wrote to Simon Wiesenthal about it, I mean, in -- in the -- in the -- California, and they told me, if you want to, you can write to Simon Wiesenthal your protest, which they gave me the address to write to him in Vienna, and everything like that. That was one of my things that I was against it of the ending of that movie. In other words, you ended the movie with sort of, what do you think? What do you think it was? Was she justified not to go to answer, or wasn't she not justified? And it'll always be a question about it. I personally, as I say, she was justified to go even, she answered the question. He's a human being, he's a child, so she got impregnated by -- in a forceful way, and that should not have stop her from showing to be confessing against him. I opposed it tremendously why the mov -- I was happy the movie was shown, but the way it ended, I definitely -- so, which I'm only trying to say, just talking about the Holocaust is not the full satisfaction. In my case, when something is wrong, if they do it in a visual way, or the other -- "Max and Helen," was the name of that movie, and it was -- and it was the movie -- you probably -- could

probably, maybe find about it, and that's what the name, "Max and Helen." And you'd find it -- and basically what I told you in short, is what it deals. Like I say, everybody has their opinion, but my opinion was when you put the name of Simon Wiesenthal on there, and he was -- I was -- I'm very happy with the man who discovered so many murderers, that they would have been done in the cases like this here. But no one is perfect, I suppose, in this world, and that was a goofball by Simon Wiesenthal, not that he planned it to work out that way. And it was a thing, it was done, it was over. I watched that movie twice that night. I called California because it was three hours, so the guard, looks like, was the Israelite. And I spoke to him in Hebrew, and he gave me even the address to write directly, and it -- I wrote, and I got a letter from them at the same time responding. Well, it's Simon Wiesenthal is responsible, he was the one producing that. So, what you talk to us over here [indecipherable] or the others, we had nothing to do with the producing it. I merely for the case, so that -- wanted to tell you about it, because for always, and forever, I will remain involved in the cause, or in the fight of justice, because this is, again, it was an unjust case. It -- let's surmise and to say, because she didn't come to be the witness, maybe he didn't get the proper punishment, or was punished at all. Now, I don't believe that a murderer should be brought -- so somebody who construe -- who made that movie should have made that part be a -- sure, all of this, but it should have ended in a different way. It could have perhaps ended that her testimony was not in a person to person kind of way, but it was in a -- taking a deposition, and therefore he

was -- [indecipherable] so much in prison, or whatever it is. At least it would have had a decent ending to what it is. Do you follow me what I am saying? But like this here, because it produced a child, and for her to expose it to this child, sooner or later, someday, he will know about it. Be that she will tell him, or others will tell him. Max had the -- meanwhile, had to leave that sort of -- he was in love with her, she was in love with him. And that came in the disturbance, you understand? So that's why they named the movie "Max and Helen." And, like I say, it's a hard taken movie, to see all the situation, what it took, until he must have told her that godsen came to see that, you know. But to my case, what I'm bringing it out, is to prove once more that it's not just one way or the other, I'm still -- you find the same person all the way around, with the same opinions. So, I told you about my children, I told you about myself -- about my wife I'll wait for you find out. She's been a good wife to me, and a good mother to my grand -- to my children, and grandchildren. We just celebrated in January, our 55<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Q: Congratulations.

A: Thank you. And I -- we are still in love with each other, which it's a good sign. When our children made our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and -- a surprise when we were in Chicago. I told them, you see, always, whenever you have arguments between husband and wife, take the model from us. We also had arguments, but never walked the bedroom door away, close it or stuff like this here, because remember, it could be done, if you want to. We have a good Zionist saying from -- from Intiered sue, he said -- [indecipherable] said it,

if you been heroed -- the first proclamation, if you will want to, it will come true. And life is that way. When two people are married, and they want to stay married, they'll be married. But if they are looking for a break someplace, e -- they'll find it, you know? And that's the idea about it. So I always am happy to say thanks God my daughter celebrated - - she got married in 1968 -- '69 rather, in si -- '68 was the riot, she graduated from school in '69. So they had already 30 years of marriage, which it's a good, happy occasion. So my husband -- my son and his wife are in good family standing in the same way, even though he travels, and so on. Hardworking, both of them. She works hard in her way, and he works very hard in his way, he's a director in automotive, that he travels out of the country, and so on. But he is also very devoted father, and husband, and I am proud to -- to speak about it, and to say it whenever I can. If you have more questions, ask them. I'll try and answer them.

Q: Thank you very much, I think that's -- I think that's it. I appreciate it.

A: Okay, Arwin, I must thank the museum for allowing me to express what I did. I'm only sorry, as I said to you at the outset, why the volume of my 16 cassettes could not be added onto that, to make that a fuller volume, and it could be somebody sitting down, and see in person. Because on the radio it comes out a different story, anybody could imitate, and tell it, but you gotta see the person, too. But I suppose that's all their budget allowed them to do, and I will re-invigorate myself to become again a member. I already told you, which I don't want to go on tape about what it is, not that it -- it's any difference, but I



believe the tape doesn't need to hear negative stories, I'm not a negative teller. So I'll just say I'll be -- I'll be coming back a supporter of the Holocaust Museum. I already told you the story what I had to go through a few times, with people in the know, that it should not criticize the museum -- Holocaust museums in -- no matter where it's built -- being built, it's our utmost. We saw what had happened in Germany, they want to build a museum in Berlin, and that's where Holocaust museum belongs. We must help and support the idea that the people of tomorrow, the German people of tomorrow, and any people of the world, who'll ever come to visit Berlin, they should be able to see of the bad era of history that it happened, because when you hide yourself behind, you only make that become a repetition, but when you speak about it, you educate things about it, that's a preservation of not to make the same mistake over again.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: Well, thank you Arwin, for taking your time to come to my house, and interviewing me, and I hope I gave you satisfaction I'm sure, your interview, if it gets an rating, will probably meet up a good rating on your behalf.

Q: Absolutely. Thank you very much. It'll meet up a good rating on your behalf, rather.

A: Thank you.

Q: Thank you.

End of Tape Five, Side A

Conclusion of Interview

**USHMM Archives RG-50.549.02\*0062**

**145**