

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Ginetta Sagan
September 23-4, 1999
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PREFACE

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GINETTA SAGAN

September 23-4, 1999

Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: This is United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ginetta Sagan, conducted by Joan Ringleheim, on September 23rd, in Atherton, California, in the home of Ginetta Sagan, and this is tape number one, side A. Good morning, Ginetta.

Answer: Good morning, Joan, and thank you for coming and doing this.

Q: Thank you, thank you for having us here -- thank you for having me, I'm not an us.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you first just tell us when and where you were born? Let's stop -- we -- I just heard the --

A: Yeah.

Q: Right, Ginetta, te -- can you give us your official date of birth, and where you were born?

Yes, I was born in -- near Milan, in a little place called San Columbano Olumbro, little f-fatsioni of Milan, now it's a little village, on June first, 1923.

Q: And can you tell us something about the life that you led before you got into the Resistance?

Yo -- I know that it was a rather complicated and interesting time for you.

A: It was complicated, and at some level, it was also a good life. And one of our circle of friend -- the circle of friend, the most important thing was the circle of friends we had, all anti-Fascist, and all active in assisting people who had been persecuted by the Fascist party. Yes, Jewish, but the Fascist party was also persecuting people who were anti-Fascist. It just happened that many of the anti-Fascist were also intellectual, and intellectual are more likely to be critical. Until 1938, it wasn't too difficult. Then, when the Nazi law were adopted by Mussolini, in Italy, there was a great deal of criticism about Mussolini doing that. And yet, the discussion I vaguely

remember, in our circle of friends, particularly when we went to the mountains, climbed everythi -- if it was a day, that it was not very clear, they talked, they talked, they talked about political issues, social issues, anti-Fascist persecution. The general atmosphere was that even some intellectual had signed some paper approving of Mussolini adopting the Nazi racial law, and that was 1938, so I was pretty young, and to be very honest with you, there were times when I were -- yes, I was interested, but I wanted to climb, I wanted to hike, I wanted to sing, I wanted to have a good time. I was touched by it. At the same time, I also wanted to have a good time, going to look for ackenberry, for example, in August, and have ackenberry pies, and for -- in the refuge, and -- or rather, I have never forgotten that the criticism of the Nazi law was not only done by educated people, but there were also a farmer who taught i-il pladoni, Mussolini didn't have much hair, so they called him il pladoni, he is crazy. He is doing -- you know, why is he doing this, why is he going after the Jews, wh-why is he doing that? And then, in the discussions, and as I said, I heard not only within my family, but also in my -- the circle of friends, who were personal friends, all interested in mountain climbing, all interested in going to refugi for hikes. Near the lake of Como, there were mountains called Laigreenai, and there were refuges where we went, and we had to carry our food in the back. Ex -- there were some supplies left there, brought by donkey, like polenta, rice, potatoes. But -- and the farmer would have milk, a -- etcetera. And then we would hike, and then the discussions. Yes, there was discussion of movies, there was discussion of theater, there was discussion of opera. There were discussion of work in the factories. There -- but also, there were always political discussions, and invariably, we found -- at least I experienced the fact that people had joined the Fascist party because they had to work. Tha -- they were very few who would disagree, and -- and there were big discussions. "Hey, you stupido, cretino, that you believe in these idiotesa, that is -- we don't like the

German.” Well, I didn’t like when they said, “I don’t like the German,” generally. I made -- and my parents taught me, and my friend taught me, then -- there has to be a distinction between the pro-Nazi and the German. And, there was a discussions, very early, about the fact that some German people, yes, they were Communist, and Socialist, but they were also member of the upper class. And some bishops, who, when Hitler began the persecution of the Jewish -- the anti-Fascist -- anti -- there were Communists, Socialists, and Jews. And it just happened that many intellectual were also Jewish. At that time -- I was very young, but I remember the heated discussions about Hitler, as announced in the press, that he has opened a concentration camp, to put those people in. It was very difficult for young people to understand what it meant. The -- some of the friends that I had, who were older, mature, and who -- and my parents, they were aware of the Fascist party having a special tribunal, i-i -- where the Fascist didn’t have courts of law for those anti-Fascist, anti-Nazi -- f -- in Italy, was anti-Fascist, but you understand, then, they were against both. And instead of a court of law, with judges, which of course many of the f -- the Fascist had nominated those people, but nevertheless, the special tribunal could condemned anyone, that when that person -- and there were women, too, became quote, suspect, the special tribunal had the special Italian Secret Police, called Ovra, O-v-r-a, to investigate the suspect. And I remember one particular day, when they were discussing this, we couldn’t go up climbing, we couldn’t go hiking, it was raining, and -- and they were discussing all this -- I mean, it sounds s-strange thing, that this suspect could be man or the woman, and then the Ovra could pull in, for interrogation, the baker, the priest, the butcher, friends, associates of the work, whether they were engineer, or doctor, or [indecipherable] and, I remember that they were talking about some people were killed, executed. Some people were sent to what was known -- oh, some people to San Vittory prison, something, somebody sent to remote area in Italy, where

these people who were intellectual, writer, artist, doctor or lawyer, could not see the family, except maybe once a year, twice a year, I can't remember correctly. But they were deprived of the mail, very rarely they could have the mail. They could only receive visits from the family very rarely. In other word, they were denied everything, and whether they were imprisoned in San Vittory, or sent to these remote area, there was the attempt to isolate them from society, deprive them of their professional life, their French -- their family, their friends. And the special tribunal had the power to do that, in Italy. But the German, apparently, were doing the same, and again I didn't understand very clearly, except in Dachau was a place, after 1933, where priest, Socialists, Communists, intellectual, could be sent, and the judicial system -- and they talk about the judicial system being damaged. The SS, and the Gestapo took over the function. That meant that it became very arbitrary, also. And I also remember that both in Italy, and I mention, in Germany, if some big Fascist liked a woman, sometime they had the man investigated, so -- you know, in other word, an arbitrary, unjust, terribly painful process for the fellow. Now, that picture of the special tribunal, those memory of San Vittory, the exiled, it remained with me forever, for as long as I remember. But at the same time, we -- there was a great deal of joy. There was country, the -- the hikes in the mountains, seldom we went to the sea. Occasionally we went to a place called Paylee, and I learned how to watch the farm -- the fisherman to bring in the fresh fish, and -- and have a meal with them, they made the mayonnaise with the garlic, and the parsley, and I wasn't cooking at that time, but I watched them there, enjoyed the French eating, but mountains were the [indecipherable]. Short weekend was [indecipherable]. And, in addition to climbing, and we met -- we knew the Pastore, who had this wonderful bitar and then the cow, and they made the fresh cheese, and there was be -- song, in spite of the difficulty. Now, the people --

Q: It was what? I didn't --

A: Difficulties, in spite of the difficulties --

Q: There was?

A: -- there was joy.

Q: Joy.

A: And the mountain club, the Italian mountain club, was a social equalizer. There were intellectual, very wealthy people. Papa Bolla was the president of the Italian mountain club, the whole family, Leala, Rico. He was a businessman. The Sturani -- nobility, Count and Countess Sturani, and then the worker from the factories. There were engineer, there were geometry impligati clerks. And, of course, we met th-the wives, and the children participate. In fact, in one particular refuge Pialeral, we built it. And we had to maintain it, and you had to walk, after you arrived with funicular above Como, you had to walk for four hours carrying your knapsack, and as I said, in summer they had donkey that they brought durable goods. But otherwise, y -- and then you just roam around, and in winter it was skiing, but not the skiing of today, where you go up and down, up and down, can't stand that. Th -- the skiing was for sightseeing, for enjoy -- now, non-vacation was different. Then, we went to -- went to Nash, we went to Cherbania, and there was one funicular at that time, and we went up to anolder tel colostum becko, and that again was a reunion place. Summer was hiking all over, climbing. And I began climbing with my parents and guides. They were very strict about guides. You don't go up in the mountains unprepared, because the mountains, like the sea is very harsh, can be very difficult, so you have to be prepared. And then we refuge.

Q: What does that -- what does that mean, refuge?

A: Refuge -- refuge? Well, huts where you bring your supply. You melt the snow with Sterno, to make [inaudible], and you bring dry fruits, and a pinyotta. Pinyotta are dry cracker, but very hard on your teeth, you better have good teeth, or else you are in trouble. And, of course, the first day or so, you have fresh fruit also, but -- and, for the first day or two, you have slice of rosto polarose, but then you drive everything, and whatever. It was fun, it was climbing, it was hiki -- i-i -- picotsa, if there was a snow, you use the ice pick, as -- la picotsa, I think. You had the scarponi, and so you go to refuge -- let's take an example, from Shamoni, this was not -- this was Shamoni, you go to -- by train to Ajohntierre. Ajohntierre you start hiking, I remember cutting it, sta -- to your refuge, le refuge de Ajohntierre, and you spend the night there, and the -- often the refuge can offer polenta, or zupa -- soup, or polenta, occasionally risotto, but really polenta is more [indecipherable]. Also, they made, f-fontina [indecipherable], fontina toma. So polenta was fontina toma, all fresh, goat cheese, or fresh whatever there was. And you spent the night. And it's wonderful because there is a camaraderie, I think is the word. Easy. Young people talk, talk about theaters and movie, talk about the love, talk about this, talk about that. The serious people talk about -- yes, some politics, or is -- Italian are very yeah, yeah, yeah, talk politics great deal. But, also talk about traveling, talk about culture, talking about booksa, talking about history, talking about the meaning of some opera, for example. And I remember in -- in Ajohntierre, we're talking about a performance in Paris of Don Carlos, and how Verdi had a -- really used opera to express the essence of repression, a religious repression. The burning, the -- and then there were discussion over -- on religion, for example, because at that time, Voltaire was a prohibited author by the church. So needless to say, we talk about Voltaire, and -- and also, the press was controlled. I must confess that at that time, I was far more interested in boys and girls, I was far more interested in the mountains, far more interested in having fun, and I had a good

friend at that time, that I knew when I was seven, and he was 11, and he -- I heard all this, and I paid some attentions, but I must confess that my attention at that time, when I was so young, was in the mountains, in the fu -- wildflower. I was crazy about wildflower, I -- I -- we went, as family and friends, to do le narche zarta, which meant we went to the refuge, and then we picked, very carefully, a bouquet of -- it's daffodil-like, but white with a little red, little eye, and very perfume, not cheesy. And you are taught conservation from day one. And again, in the mountains you talk about planning. Let's go for a narche zarta in Como next spring. We take the picnic, we go. Some people work for Las meerbischoza for factories. What we discovered -- and while we were talking about fun in mountain, there was a great deal of politics all the time. Now, the best, active people, at the political level, were Socialist, and Communist. Anti-Fascist, many of them. And being Communist, but after having been in the prison of Mussolini with the Communists, they changed. They followed the lead of two people, that I didn't know, and I be -- who started a movement called jostitsia en liberta, the Rosselli brother. And they were talking about the Rosselli brother as having taught them how common -- hard line Communism of the Stalinist-Leninist type was as dangerous as Nazi Fascist, and therefore they wanted, yes, Socialism, yes, a just society, due process of law. That was taught by lawyer, like Enrico Enpigi all the time, Contamessa -- Rainso Contamessa. Due process of law, fair trial, and then -- and no military judges, like the special tribunal. So there was this combination of hat -- la -- Ajohntierre was one. And then we went home sometime for two weeks, from refuge to refuge, refuge to refuge, and guides, always guides. But you have the leisure of enjoying something very much, with a diversified company, from student, and young children, to factory worker, engineer, lawyer, professor, doctors, a-academic, some very serious were very angry about the academician who had signed the Nazi manifesto for 1938 duration of Mussolini. And all in good

humor, even those who were accused of being -- you are a damn fa -- you are an Fascist stonase, c'est une cretino, c'est qui -- the next day we climbed together, we ate together, we -- you know, it was not vindictive, it was not nasty -- yes, there were bursts of recrimination, but it didn't become so sickening that hate, a -- hate --

Q: Wh-Why do you think that was so?

A: I don't know, to these days. Perhaps that question should be given to psychiatrists, or other. I believe then the Italian culture, with so many occupation, for centuries, by so many countries -- you know, remember in Sicily, the Swedes were there. In fact, there was a beautiful poem called, "Curadino dis vetsia." And I have never forgotten a small part of that poem. The poem referred to a mother, in switzer -- in -- in swede -- in sw -- in Sweden. You see, in springtime, a swallow return, and the mother ask the swallow what coming -- was coming from ita -- from the south, "Dimi iveesto il filio meo," Tell me, have you seen my son, who was sent to fight in Sicily? And the swallow answered, "Si, no veesto, erabuendo, erabianco, sotolarko diontempio era saipporto." Yes, I saw him. He was blonde, he was white, under the arch of a temple he was buried. And I remember the discussions around that poem, and I've always remembered that poem because it emphasized the commonality of human being, but here it was from Sweden invading Sicily, and then of course, we had the Berber invading, and the French, and the Austrian invasions. And each invader brought destructions, pain, suffering, but also the need for some people to get together and help each other. And I have a feeling that that common bondage of seeing so much suffering, and [indecipherable] destruction the pope's rector, in Italy one must -- I mean, there were powers, and corrupt, and -- so ou -- in one sense you were devout Catholic, went to church, you practice. You had also many skeptics, and the selling of the images, and all those things, were discussed, I mean, they talked about everything. The mountains was a

teaching place, because of the situation that here you are up in a refuge, and you're having your time, but I don't [indecipherable] leisure to talk and think. Not that I understood very well everything, far from it. But it's amazing how later things seems to connect. And I remember when they were talking about the special tribunal, the prisoner in San Vittory, the persecution of the family. The injustice of having a judicial system with three military judges who had the power to bring in everybody to i -- to interrogate, intimidate, frighten friends, family, butcher, maid, you name it. And I thought, how can they do that? And yet, there was the other side of helper all the time.

Q: Helper?

A: Helpers, all the time in San Vittory, which was a prison for criminal, and for political prisoners. And the political prisoner, I think Grandshe may have also been there, they had a great deal of help from the suaray. First of all, the sister were there, the doctors. And the suaray play, a -- were nurses at the time. And inside -- and these were people hired by the Fascist party, but we always found people -- the bakers, God bless the bakers -- we always found people who could help. I have the feeling, listening from the discussion, from my parents, from Enrico [indecipherable], all those people, that in Italy, it was easier to help than it was possible to do in aust -- in Germany. In -- i-in Nazi Germany, they in fact, destroyed all of the antique -- Nazi -- much more easily than they could in Italy, and I think it may have to do something -- but again, I'm not a historian, I'm a re -- an ordinary woman. My feeling, listening to the other, was that the German were cultured, music, but also disciplinarian. And they treated children with il maganello, with a stick, as they grew up. And therefore, that could have had an influence in the rigidity of behavior of that particular -- of -- of the German, that although there was resistance by some in the church, by intellectual, like Bunoffer, but, in the resistance had networks, mostly of

Communists, and Socialists. They were wiped out. They didn't have the support that their counterpart in Italy had from the general population. And we split, within the church.

Q: Could -- could you just give -- give me a sense of your education beyond the more -- somewhat more formal education, because I think it's very interesting that you had such a wide and cultured education at a very young age, and it seems to me it must have influenced you as well.

A: Well, first I had to work very hard, and studying. It's okay to have fun, but you study. And I had a -- oh, for two years, when we lived in this place, which was called Santangelo de Jarno, I had -- and I lived with a family -- my family, but also -- came very often, but I also had this wonderful family who was Istytotwiss. And yes, I went to school in the elementary year, and I had marvelous teacher. Her name was Bentivania Lucia, and then she married a man whose name was Negrini. And I think they were anti-Fascist, but in school, the subject, history, writing, reading, she was very good, and just marvelous. She would inspire her student to do the best. Still, when we had to do the essay, we had to praise Mussolini, and -- and she did that with a wooden face. So we had to write our essay, how wonderful Mussolini was, and then in, I believe was '35, but you should check, when he went to Ethiopia, there was a horror in my -- all our circle about Mussolini invading Abyssinia, was called at that time, dropping poison. And the Duca da Oustar, a family with -- a -- being there too, I mean, there was a tremendous dispute. Mussolini, of course, wanted an empire -- em-em-em-empire. The king went along with it, that idiot -- excuse the expression. If I understood correctly, the queen -- the wife was absolutely opposed to Mussolini, to his enterprise. She was born in Montenegro, Elena, and was a -- from what I've heard --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: Tape one, side B. I'm sorry Ginetta.

A: That's okay. Now, in [indecipherable] circle of friends, the rutsini -- the rutsini [indecipherable] rutsini were the parents of Mary Mullisanno. Mary Mullisanno was married to Enrico Mullisanno. Enrico Mullisanno's brother was Pigi Mullisanno, who was married to a wonderful woman called Marcella. Now, the rutsini were from monarchy, the Mullisanno were anti-Fascist, anti-king, is an idiot. But also they were praising his wife for her intelligence, for training her children to be useful in society, and not just idiots. In other word, they felt very strongly that -- the Mullisanno -- that the king was not worth anything. I mean, yeah -- yeah, he was -- he went along with Mussolini, and critical, went along with signing the law, went along going to Abyssinia, went along with everything, and eventually went along with Mussolini becoming allies of the German, and al -- went along when Mussolini invaded France in 1940, and throughout that, while the rutsini always defended the king, and bi -- praising the queen, of course, and the children, etcetera. The Mullisanno said, the king goes along with Mussolini, so he's equally responsible, and -- and ya -- that -- that kind of -- so, it was a fairment of ideas. The essay we did in school had to reflect acceptance of Mussolini party line. And it was obvious that the teacher was very skeptical, but she had to do it. [indecipherable]. Then when I went home, I had to redo the whole damn thing -- excuse the expression. You know, I s -- what did you do today? And I said, well that's what we did, that Mussolini went to Abyssinia to re-vindicate the destiny of Italy, I mean all that rhetoric, pretending the Fasci romani as if he had become -- a-and naming the king eventually, when the war was over, and [indecipherable] it was

such a -- such a awful thing, that I was -- I learned that all this parade was -- was a charade, and although you couldn't speak in public, among friend, that was discussed all the time.

Q: But your parents then -- then asked you to rewrite your essay?

A: Yup. So, you can see -- then, meanwhile I also had to learn in French, I had to -- but -- and there were wonderful travels. Paris was a place, and -- and I'm glad I learned French. History was very important, literature was very important, and victory go -- Montaigne, Monsieur Montaigne, wi -- Pascal. I am glad I did, as well as Italian literature, as well as Italian poetry, like Danté, an old Italian. I-I am glad I did. I didn't understand as fully as my parents thought that I should. Who can understand Dostoyevsky when you are so young? You know, the [indecipherable]. But, I read them, and they always said, "One day, when you are 40, you will have to reread them all over again." But meanwhile, I di -- I had to do it, and history was important, literature was important, and the Greek, as well as the Roman. The lives -- Plutark's lives of the Greek, and the Roman. And that was becan -- but that was also discussed among the people with who -- if we are stuck in the refuge one day, or discuss Cicero, [indecipherable] that was part of growing up, somehow, and -- and looking back, it was a good education. Looking at what my children got in the school in Atherton, California, and before, they don't have education. They don't have history, except some minor history. American history, which is very important, they should study more. I'm -- we -- in other word, I could only understand how fortunate I was, how rich our -- and I'm talking about ours, not just my -- they gives you, in spite of Fascism, in spite of a dictatorship, in spite of the war, they give you a -- a -- a little richer background to understand lives, to understand other country, to understand other culture, to understand politics. And -- and I guess from that respect, I felt I was a fortunate woman -- now, I mean, in the last 15 - 20 years, I understood what a fortunate person I -- I have been, too. So, the

life in -- in Italy was a happy one, until really the war started -- the -- '38 was the beginning of difficulties.

Q: Can you describe that -- that change in some way?

A: Well, the first thing was that you have to be very careful never to say anything, and it's kind of hiding, without hiding. And you know, you have to be careful only with your friend, don't say anything to anybody else, don't discuss politics, don't discuss the racial law, don't discuss anything about the fact that the Jewish people now are discriminated against, they cannot go to the library, they cannot go to -- t-to -- in certain profession they are removed from the profession. People could not practice medicine or law, and -- and the Jewish children could not go to the library, or to the regular school. Can you imagine if you are going to a regular school in this country, and you are told sometime very nicely, sometime by people who felt pain in saying that, and sometime not so nicely, but you cannot come back? And then children taunt -- tau -- te -- you know, mock other children, who are Jewish, but not as many as I learned was happening in France, or other country, and that I learned it from other people. Because in Italy, there was this mockery, but not mean, mean, mean, except by the Fascist, and there were not so bi -- so many which are vehement about the issue. So Italy had a -- had had an integration of the Jewish people with Italian, lots of intermarriage. Nobody thought about that until Mussolini did that in 1938.

Q: But Mussolini was in power in 1922.

A: '22.

Q: So '38 changed something quite radically.

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: And was that the racial laws that made the change?

A: The racial law, yes, I think so. I think when Mussolini adopted the racial law, it was a turmoil within the society, and also the special tribunal, the political pers-persecution. In the jail, in San Vittory, and in the confini -- confini are those people -- those places where people were sent, and I remember my parents, my friends saying, imagine if you're a doctor, a lawyer, a philosopher, a sociolo -- an intellectual. Also well as a worker who is organizing for the Communist party, or the Socialist party. They didn't persecute the [indecipherable] party, not very much. But those people are deprived of all contact, family, friends, reading. I mean, those people read newspaper, republication, often they w -- spoke other language, like English, and French, and others. Imagine being deprived of everything? And be isolated, and you haven't done anything wrong, you're innocent. And then when the special tribunal even sentenced people to death. And there were women, also, who had been condemned to that. Now, some women, I understood -- and again, one should do research on that -- I understood that some women were sent south, a-and they -- sometime they were hired by well-to-do family, as maid. But they were separated from their family, their children, their husband, who say, if you didn't -- if you stayed at home and you took care of me and the children, you did not have to worry about that. And some were kind. There are some cases where I heard that the woman who gave them the job, was very sympathetic, very supportive, very helpful, particularly when during the visit, the ha -- she saw the husband treating the wife, because -- if you stayed at home, you wouldn't have had this, and you have th -- you caused me so much grief. I have to cook, you caused your children so much pain, and blah, blah, blah, and she became very supportive of this exiled woman. Now, I don't know about the [indecipherable] cases, you know, one should look into -- into that, but it struck me once again human being are capable of great love, human being are capable of great caring, concern, and there are some who're not. And my feeling at the time, when I learned from my

parents, from my friends, from the people I was surrounded with, was that it makes a difference if you're persecuted, and there are people who cares about you. And that began with a basket of roasted chicken, and thing that -- fruits -- and other -- than my parents, and other, brought to San Vittory at the prison, and -- and also to people who are very poor, because there was a great deal of poverty at that time, and Mussolini was encouraging women to have a lot of children -- a lot of children to provide sons to go to war, essentially, cause he was always in t -- trying that, and -- and things were bad, but then, when Mussolini met Hitler someplace, I think it was the Brenner Pass, and must have been close to the beginning of the war, maybe a couple of years earlier, I don't know. Again, the propaganda was all in the hand of the Fascist [indecipherable] and the radio, there was no television. Osana about the alliance between Mussolini, and -- and at that time, the open hostility and contempt for the Jews, the propaganda began, to the point when Jewish people began really to es -- try to escape, to get abroad, to -- but what struck me was, when we went [indecipherable] within smuggles, and friends, and the biter, the Pastore, you know, the enormous compassion, and the enormous anger at wik Fascistoni -- there was -- were Fascistoni means big Fascist. Because before, many people had accepted -- they were against the alliance with Germany from day one, because of the memory of World War One, because when German and Austrian soldier were captured as prisoner, farmer family treated them well. Apparently, when the Italian prisoner of the German came back, they had horrible story to tell. I was too young, but I have heard from -- from -- one we thing that happened at that time, that has remained with me very vividly, about wars, the occupation, that I mention so many French, Austrian, Berber, Swedish, that si -- that the memory of the occupation by the Austrian was very vivid when I was a child, because after all, Milan was occupied by them. The Aousta family, Piedmont -- regained Piedmont, the Aousta family, in 1849. Then, in 1859, is when finally

Lombardy was freed. You know, if -- and dios is nothing in human history, but my parents took me to see a little chapel in Lombardy not very far from Milan, in the countryside, and there are many of such chapel throughout Lombardy and Piedmont. And these little chapel, plain, there is usually an image of some saint or something [indecipherable]. Then there is a grate, and inside the grate, there are bones. And the bones are the bones then the farmer founds, either in Piedmont, or Lombardy, people who died in the war in 1848, in 1858 - '59. And the farmer found so many, then they erected this little chapel as a memorial to the people who died, but that memorial is a reminder that war is a horrible thing, and -- and people sometime bring matsolini di furey. If you pick up some poppy, and bachelor button, and -- you know, and it's a ca -- and then there is a -- a charo, there is a -- a candle, you know, those -- and then they put, and -- and this is done spontaneously, nobody is in charge. But my parents reminded me then, this was a way to remember those horror, and hopefully it doesn't happen again, but they also talk about Hitler, and Mussolini, but they also talk about Stalin. They felt that Stalin, and Hitler, but like this, Mussolini was considered a buffoon, less ideological, although he did put nula osta to the deportation. And it was not until after the war, when I met Angela Dinati, then we talk about the role of Italian Army of occupation in Greece, in Yugoslavia, and [indecipherable]. Now, already were -- throughout the world, there were letter coming from soldier Italian, in Albania, in Yugoslavia, and they crying the horror of the Nazi death camp, through letters, which, although there was censorship, nevertheless, it was brought out, and everybody talked about it. It was like one of those telegram -- verbal telegram tree, then everybody -- no. Admittedly, the retay may have been difficult. An interesting thing happened. Italy had censorship, but many Italian censor made a point of passing some of the material to the anti-Fascist groups, and probably also to the church, I don't know. I only know the anti-Fascist leadership, Communist, or Socialist, parti

[indecipherable], were recipient of those letters from Italian soldier who decried the horror of Italian being associated with the German in this horrib -- horrendous enterprise. It's against all the Italian history, culture, once religious figure [indecipherable]. And that's where the split in the religious community took place. And the ambiguity, and the lack of clarity, with the exception of some priests, who actually gave their lives. Norman Zofth, I think was his name. One priest in Milan, I know that he was shot in a -- in a place in Milan, that's a-another -- another period, but it was during the occupation. But again, there was this divisions, and of course there were many skeptics, although they were Catholic, and there were many Catholic who did everything to help the Jewish people. But they couldn't give back the jobs, the jobs were taken away. You know, the professor of the university were removed, and doctor were -- yes, they practiced, but i-in official universe medical school, etcetera, it was the Catholic doctor who took over, and some of them were wonderful, and some of them found even way to send patients to this Jewish doctor, so then they could make some money. But above all, it was a time to begin looking for safe places. I'm going to take a break, because I have to go to the bathroom, but I also want to show you that little red book, because two years ago, three years ago, when I went back to the -- to Milan, and I went to the archive with the cardinal -- we [indecipherable] then I ask Julianna, would she please take me to see some of the conven -- the churches, and the farm in -- where we used to hide people, and also the confessional, where -- the place where we could exchange message with sympathetic priest.

Q: Okay, let's take -- let's take a break. We're back from our break, we all -- we took a walk in the beautiful garden. Ginetta, I wanted to ask you, when the racial laws were promulgated in 1938, did you actually -- you were what, 15 years old?

A: Yes.

Q: 13 - 14 - 15 years old. So did you feel the real difference that happened when Mussolini is moving towards an alliance with Hitler, and when the racial laws came in, did you feel that, did you understand what was happening, that there was a real difference from you had experienced before under -- under Mussolini?

A: Not fully. Not fully, and there was that sense of uneasiness. There was s -- you know, you play with other children, and some -- very few, but -- would make some comments about Jews. I would say there was a quiet sense of fear, a little bit, uneasiness, uncertainty. Your world had changed. It seems that you had to be careful about everything. That carefree wonderful feeling, yes, there will be uneasiness, for a [indecipherable] something changed, and I cannot describe it very well, except there was a sense of uneasiness, and probably looking back, hidden fears. You are not fully -- not fully understand why, but it's there. And then, a-as I said, we read the newspaper, we listened to the radio, and of course, we didn't believe in it, but the propaganda was there, day after day after day. And I do remember that we listened to the BBC hiding in the cellar, because it was against the law. The other thing that my parents always did, and friends always did, every time they went to Switzerland skiing, like from breakfast to lunch, going to Zermatt, etcetera, they always tried to bring back a -- a pass from other countries, and I tell you, you do develop a love for the free press when you -- you pass it around from one to the other, and then -- oh, you only have to -- one day, then you have to give it to the other. It was just that, if you are affirmed, you were so famished for news, which were not the propaganda lying of the Fascist. And I -- I have -- you know, I -- I believed then one of the reasons I treasured article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was freedom of expression, which I still believe is one of civilization's highest achievement. Now [indecipherable]

Q: Shall we take a break? Yes, someone has entered the house, and we're going to take a break.

Okay, we're now back from our second little break, and I -- a friend of Ginetta's brought in a Amnesty International award that has a -- some of the barbed wire from the escape experiences, and we'll talk about that later. Ginetta, I wanted to ask you, di -- when you were in school, did you n -- did you notice the Jewish kids who were not able to be in school any more? Any of your friends?

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Yes, and that was a time when, actually, we moved to a place, at first, called San Columbano Olumbro, and went to another school for two years, new teacher, new s -- kids. That -- the principal of that school was a friend of my mother, and apparently she is the one who suggested that we move from this place called -- I think was called Grafeenyella. At first I had completed five grades, but secondly, she helped my parents to choose a place where probably we would have been more comfortable. And so we went for two years, a new school, new everything, and then two years later, we moved again to another place called Santangelo lo dejarno, but my parents at the time lived separately from me. They left me with a wonderful istyutris, a beautiful house --

Q: What is -- can you explain what an is --

A: Istyutris means a woman who is in charge of my education, teach -- continuing to teach me literature, French. And her name was Angeletta Souvinagi, an anti-Fascist. Her brother worked in Milan someplace, a -- but she loved music, and -- and of course, every weekend I would see my parents, but meanwhile I was being, quote, educated. I didn't understand fully until later, that it was a one way for me to be protected somehow. It was such a difficult period, it's hard to

describe. So, but I did get a wonderful education, number one, wonderful place to live, and with my parents cooperation, Angeletta Souvinagi developed -- they bought -- they built a chicken coops, one for white chicken, Leghorn, and one for red chicken called Rhode Island, and there the rooster. And they also built a -- oh, oh -- I -- remo -- remodel a place, I really don't know, but I had to learn how to feed chicken, and the feeders to mix the various ingredient, and then experiment with the white -- with the feeding white chicken, with the red with a different formula, and see which one did better, which one had more eggs. And it seems kind of teaching me how to study. And then, they also had an incubator, when -- I remember the eggs were furnished from some other place, I can't remember where, very expensive. And then I could observe once in awhile, how the embryo developed. And then eventually, when the chicks were born, again there was an incubator -- the room was divided in two section, two incubator, and again the chicks were fed a different formula than we had to make up. I remember there were dry powder milk for example. Fish, dry fish, something like that. I don't remember the ritay. All what I remember was it was a joyous experience. I could not play with other children. I went to school, and I came back. But, we could go to the mountains all the time. And so the chicken raising was w -- as well as studying French and literature, history, and singing. And -- I remember --

Q: And singing?

A: -- and remember bei -- no, not si -- studying singing, but listen to opera, and -- and -- and there were record, there was no cassette, or -- like today, but I do remember that song about San Vittory, which I learned, and of course [indecipherable] this friend was also anti-Fascist, but it was the physical environment was beautiful, there were fruit tree in summer, vegetable, chickens, and learning. But there were no other children.

Q: Th-The tape is almost finished, let's change the tape.

A: -- except for the mountains, except for the mountain, that remained. Going to the mountains, going to the refuge, that remained.

Q: Okay, let's stop the tape for a moment.

End of Tape One, Side B

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ginetta Sagan, conducted by Joan Ringleheim on September 23rd, in Atherton, California, and this is tape number two, side A.

Ginetta, when we just completed the other tape, you were talking about having to be protected.

Can you explain why you needed to be protected, and why you have to move, and stay away from the other children?

A: Because my mother was Jewish. My father was Catholic, but my mother was Jewish, and it was not something that I fully understood. So I had lots of trouble to -- why do we have to move? Why do we have to go f -- it was not hiding, because I went to the mountains as usually, I went to the Lake of Como, I went to Valdentelvee, I went -- but there was no playing with other children, that's -- was difficult.

Q: Were -- were you tau -- educated in either religion? In either Catholicism or Judaism?

A: I had to study. I had to study the cath -- the Jewish religion, the Catholic church, and I ha -- I went to church, and I went, you know, to -- with my friends, sometime -- not very religious. The thing that my parents taught me was that God is a -- an entity that every person has to decide for themselves. The most important thing then, the religion, the Judeo-Christian religion has left us, are the principle of caring, loving, and one of the thing that ins -- they insisted I would read, beside the Bible, also with some friends, we went to the Catholic church when there was a series of les parabala. They were telling the stories of -- from the Jewish tradition, and the Catholic tradition of when, for example, Joseph was sold in Egypt, when -- a-and all the stories. When the -- Jesus Christ was on a horse, and gave a -- a coat to somebody who was very poor, and the reason I remember that was because there was also a difficult depression in Italy. So I gave my coat, next day, to one of the s -- girls that I knew her father was out of job. And I remember my mother

making my lunches three times more and telling me how careful I had to be, and tactful, because the father of so and so does not have a job. Now, I don't know if it was because of the depression, or because they were Jewish, I have no idea, except that she made all these wonderful roasted chicken legs, and -- and reminding me how I had to be very delicate, and say, "Oh," you know, "here, I can't eat all this. How would you like some?" Knowing that she didn't have some de -- I remember the coat, because I -- I went home, and I said, "I gave away my coat," because of the parabala of giving, and so she started laughing, and they got me another coat.

Q: S-So she wasn't angry, she --

A: Oh no. No, no, no. No, no, not at all. It -- on the contrary, you know, no, acha -- they -- they smiled, and they laughed, and -- and that was it. But I do remember being in the mountains sometime, when I took walk -- when wa -- if I was in Shamoni, and I decided t-to -- to go and pick up some ackenberry myself, I was always staying with people, but sometime you feel like going by yourself along the stream, and the boat, and pick up a berry. And the owner of the pensionne would make the pastry, and -- at that time I didn't cook. And thinking about -- you know, it's really marvelous what we have around us, all this beauty. And then thinking about the -- Moses escaping from Egypt, the oil that lasted in -- in -- seven days, or [indecipherable]. And trying to reconcile the Jewish with the Catholic. And then, I had trouble understanding how the Catholic could hate the Jews. And so many pogrom -- that we knew, about the pogrom, and other, and -- and being puzzled, and not un-understanding how can they do this? You know, they -- and then saying, "Well, whichever God is up there, I like the beauty, the flowers, the mountains, the sea. But I don't like what's -- what some people are doing. And, so my parents would explain that it's one thing the philosophy of a religion, and you take the best of it. Then

we spoke about the Muslim, and how there were many wonderful thing, charity, caring, that people empower -- transformed part of that religion, in order to secure their own power, and they did that by terrorizing people. And then they gave me the example of the first time -- some people rebelled immediately against the tax collector, who, on the name of the -- the power of the God, given to the temple -- power, was collecting the taxes, and the people were starving. So finally, one day they drew him out of town, apparently. And that was one example of how religious power was used for temperon power, and how that power was used to oppress people. And that, many religion had done, throughout the centuries. So, we also went to Greece, and I remember how they compared the Egyptian god. Serious, forbidding, autocratic. And how the god of Greece were funny. And so I had to learn somehow, about religion, in a very different way than most people learned religion, but I love to go to -- to the [indecipherable] sometime, for the sola mass, we -- we did. And with my nurse, my wet nurse, you know, it was so comforting. Now, in the synagogue when I visit, I couldn't understand why men and women were in one place, and the other, and I -- why not together? But again, that was -- was not something that I became deeply involved in practicing. I loved the ceremonial, and I remember on a Friday night, when my mother put on a white blouse, and then with the candle, and she did something like that. But I didn't understand it. What they tried to teach me were the wonderful, biblical story of the Bible, and what the Catholic church had taken, but pointing out, when the Catholic church for example, was going to forbi -- forbade study of other religions, and so they gave me Voltaire to start to read and study. So I studied Voltaire, and the rebelliousness of Voltaire, and then -- and the bola from the city church, exercised control, or publication through special stamps. I can't remember the name of it, but Voltaire -- index, that's what it was. Voltaire was one of the

author at the index. So, my parents made a point, and I had to study, read Voltaire, I loved it. So -- and --

Q: So, there was some ritual in your house, in terms of religion, with your mother doing the Sh-Shabbas?

A: Occasionally.

Q: Occa-Occasionally.

A: Very occasionally.

Q: But -- but not with you participating?

A: No. The -- may I skip to another?

Q: Sure.

A: Occasion during the resistance where we were hiding in Milan, and it was Friday, and candela were very precious. But somebody provided two candle, because the other people hiding were Jewish, and so for Friday. So, I think sometime how lucky people are, if on Friday night, they can have the ceremonial. Just as I think about other religions being free to have the ceremonial, freely, without coercion, without persecution. But that [indecipherable] motzikoni di candela, two small pieces. I mean, it's unbelievable how those things remain with you, and -- and think, if people were free to do that, they should be so happy, not to be persecuted, not to be -- or looked upon as strange, or -- and I owe that to my parents, to teach me early, early, the power of oppression, then some people gain, through a control of part of religion, and so many have done that, so many religion have done that. So I ended up by trying to work for every person to be free to practice their religion, or political belief, or ethnic pride, or what have you. But I also feel that we are so fortunate to have so many beautiful thing in earth around us, whether the mountains,

the flower, the sea. And -- and people. We should bless how fortunate we are, even if we -- sometime we have some difficulty. Okay.

A: S-So you sound li -- as if you had a very co -- close, intimate kind of relationship with your parents, with a lot of discussion, and a lot of communication, is that correct?

A: When they don't -- when they didn't disappear.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then, I never knew --

Q: What happened?

A: W -- they wouldn't talk about what they were doing. Was very -- I don't like the word secretive, but in a sense they didn't want to expose other people. And I -- we could only perceive then something was going on, and we could only guess. I remember -- and I spoke about this, on one evening, when I was sent -- I was fed early, and I -- and then, go to your room to study, or do, you know, things. And I remember a heated discussion when my parents had with somebody, that I don't know who, and they kept on saying, "You must leave Germany now," or -- and the person saying, with an accent, "But I was born there. My father had meadows," or something, I can't remember the detail. And my parents, both of them, said, "We can help you now. We may not be able to help you later." And the argument, "But I was born there, I was -- never did anything wrong, I never committed any crime, I'm not a criminal." And -- and their answer was, "It has nothing to do with that, it has to do with Hitler's law, racial law. You've got -- we can help you now, we may not be able to help you later."

Q: And what did you think when you were hearing this?

A: I was puzzled. I didn't understand. I couldn't understand why people have to leave their country. And this one was not from Italy, this was somebody else now. When I spoke to Guido Bustelli about all this, then he -- we spent the whole day going through, and we don't have the time to do that, but -- although I knew many things, but Guido Bustelli clarified for me so many aspect of the pre-war period, and he is the one who told me that -- Bustelli -- that in August, 1939, the chief of the Intelligence Services of Switzerland, and I re -- I believe his name was Mayzon, but I can't swear to it. Mayzon because I associate it with brick. Mayzon -- maison in French, because my parents taught me to make association of words with things. Apparently, they were all called together by the chief of the Swiss Intelligence Service, and said, "Gentlemen, based on the information we received f-from excellent sources, reliable sources, Hitler will attack Poland in a couple of weeks, and that was about the middle of August. And of course, he did. And also, Bustelli told me that the Swiss Intelligence knew that they would use a Jewish prisoner in a mock attack on the German, and claim that it was instigated by the Jewish people. Now, I -- I haven't read that part of history, somebody else will have to do that, but we spend the day, and then at the end of the days, when I said bus -- by then he has become very friendly, and [indecipherable] before the very official Swiss officer. By then he had taken me to his study, and he showed me a lot of photograph of people who had been -- I mean, you -- they had been arrested, and -- another story. Two, particularly, John and Eddie, and he -- he did something wonderful. I said -- at that time, there was this head of the network of smuggler, called Lydia, I don't know her real name. [indecipherable] familiar, and he started laughing. So, he took my hand, we went through -- and [indecipherable] study at this point. So Lena, his wife, Jenna, and Lillaburra were still drinking white wine, and eating parmesan cheese, and -- and we

-- a-and Guido smiled at them, and took me to the end of the court -- [indecipherable] was a telephone, he dialed a number, and he said, "Lydia, Torpelino is alive."

Q: So she didn't know you were alive, and you didn't know.

A: [indecipherable]. Such an emotional moment. Then there were -- stupid

[indecipherable]creedi mocha tua morte. She thought -- you know, many people -- since I disappeared, I was in a convalescent home. They thought that either I had died, some thought that I was in a mental hospital. I just disappeared, and so what she did was every year to say a mass with -- for the dead one of her family, for Torpelino. So, someplace there is a picture of Cosmillas, who say, Lena said you were tired, and we should go home, and I said, "No, I've got to get to [indecipherable]." So Lena described this get together, and of course since then, we get together all the time, and we talk all the time, and -- and she has this place in Alba, and she said, "No, you has to come next spring you come to Alba." I see her -- them, all the time of course.

Q: And Torpelino was one of the names that you had when you were in the Resistance?

A: One of them, yeah. [indecipherable] yeah. Torpelino, then Giorgio, then something else, you know. And the difficulty was to remember the new identity that we were given. It was not easy, and we had to practice, practice, practice, and on one occasion, I practice a new ident -- and others, remember we -- we -- we. And then, after three or four hours of grilling, where I was born, usually in a place where the allies already occupied, so we -- they couldn't find the place now, and as I was leaving, "Ginetta." "Yes?" Eh! More hours of grilling, and next day more hours of grilling. And you know, you just -- you just learn, but it -- I swore that I never would be involved that kind of thing again. Well, I ask the good lord to forgive me for breaking that promise.

Q: Ginetta, can you ex -- describe -- do you want -- do you wish to take a break?

A: Maybe [indecipherable]

Q: You want to take a break. Okay, we're taking a break. We f -- we stopped for the day at around noon, and we're going to continue tomorrow, September 24th, on side B

End of Tape Two, Side A

Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ginetta Sagan, conducted by Joan Ringleheim, on September 24th, in Atherton, California. This is tape number two, side B. I -- Ginetta, could you describe how you decided to go into the Resistance, and when?

A: I didn't decide. We were. There was no such a thing as a day when a conscious decision was made to join the Resistance. It was an anti-Fascist movement, and as such, dedicated to helping the victim of Fascism. One particular group of people, who deserves a great deal of recognition is a small convent, with nun. My parents were very close to them. These nun had the small convent in a place called, I believe, Grafinala, which was a tiny village near Milan. These nun were truly dedicated to helping people in needs. Women who had been thrown out of their home, because they're pregnant with illegitimate children, and quietly, with the head of the -- what is -- Cosinda -- Cosinda, the mayor of this little village, Grafinala, who is also the head of the Fascist party. He sits there, wert, in the city hall of this little village, together with my family, friends. Was an incredible unit, organized to assist the victim of Fascism, although he was the head of the Fascist party for this little communit -- this little village. And it's always assisted people who are hiding, who are sent by my parents, or by other people, to hide in the farms. They may have been Jewish, they may have been anti-Fascist, I don't know. It's just that all of us young people seems to have been recr -- not recruited, you were just par -- natural part of the assistant project. And

then, in 19 -- I believe it is '42, but I'm not certain, the head, th -- the Sindaco, the -- the mayor, whose sister was the employee of the city hall, who was giving coupon for clothes, for food, decided that I should work there as a temporary employee in order to, yes, give the coupon to people of the village, who paid, I believe was one lira, but I'm not -- you know, it's such a long time ago. And every 10 coupons, I would put away one that I would give to the nun. And those were to help her -- people who were either anti-Fascist, or Jewish, hiding. Because in Milan, they had already established some controls of the coupon given in certain area of the city block, a city block. And the Ova -- the secret police, was watching in case there were more coupon for food than the people. Don't ask me how it was done, I don't have a clue. All what I know that it was done, and this little village, and possibly other, I don't know, these little group of nun, with help -- with the help of the s -- mayor -- you call it mayor, it's Sindaco, who is a Fascist, the head of the fasc -- he was helping, and his sister, being a city hall employee, was a -- crucial. And they were so outraged about what Mussolini was doing to the Jewish people, or anti-Fascist. The question arose, apparently -- I only heard, that there was a discussion, he wanted to resign, and everybody said don't you do it, because you are far more helpful where you are, in helping us. And so he stayed, and on the -- the Fascist would give away sometime, la bifana -- la bifana fashista, which was January sixth, or something like this, after Christmas, and he would give special toys and things to children in the name of the Fascist, but he was wa -- our greatest helper, and his sister, and the nun, and the Mother Superior was a gem. I didn't mind working two weeks to make lace for the church, and such a warm, caring environment, trying to help. They -- they were never judging people, are you Jewish or not Jewish, are you Fascist, or anti-Fascist? Are you Catholic, or not Catholic? It was just -- what I felt was this is the display of true

Christianity, if there is such a thing, you know? I'm certain that the best of the Judeo-Christian tradition in caring, I saw it at that time.

Q: Mm-hm. So what then happened? You s -- you started doing this, but then you obviously moved to more dangerous and complex acts, no?

A: Yes. The group in Milan, Enrico Mullisanno, Rainso Contamessa, Pigi Mullisanno, Peggy, and other, decided that apparently I was bright. I didn't know how to type, but they felt that I could be very helpful working with them, for them, as a secretary, at the headquarter of the Italian Air Force in Milan. I think was Piazza Italibalbo number four.

Q: C-Could I interrupt? How --

A: Yes?

Q: -- how old were you at this time, about?

A: Oh, I don't know, 15 - 16, something like that, I can't -- young. But because many clerk were away in the war, it was a terrible war. All young people were drafted. I must make a point here, than many young people who are Fascistoni, big Fascist, and pro-Nazi, who screamed moliama la guerra, moliama la guerra, we want war, we want war, they didn't go to the African front. They didn't go to the Russian front. They didn't go to the Albanian front, they didn't go to Yugoslavia, and all those places which were dangerous. They found a nice, warm hiding places in the office, the bureaucracy of the military, of the navy, or everything else. And that was, I believe, a shock for the Italian, that all these Fascistoni then proclaimed moliama la guerra, moliama la guerra, but then, they -- they were called inboscanti. They found a comfortable niche in the city where there was no danger of them being killed. They send all those poor young men to died, especially on the Russian front, as well as the African front, as well as Yugoslavia, and Albania. And there is a wonderful song about Albania, about the alpini, those are the mountain

troops, who truly wonderful, and not politicized to the same degree as other. And they began writing home letters describing what was happening on the Russian front, describing what was happening in Albania, describing what was happening in Yugoslavia, Croatia, and all those places, and saying, "I am Italian, I love my country, but I am ashamed of what some people are doing, collaborating with the Nazi." And they were letting their family know, and of course not everything came true, and the censorship was very strict, but we have to remember that among the censorship there were also people who were Italian, and Italian being Italian, and member of the -- letter go through, so that we seems to be aware at that time -- not that I understood it, far from it. But anyway, I was asked to go and work as a secretary for Enrico Mullisanno, the lawyer, Pigi Mullisanno, a lawyer, Rainso Contamessa, a lawyer, who were all officers of the Air Force dur -- in Piazza Italibalbo at the headquarter. All of them were anti-Fascist, all of them were part em -- of the anti-Fascist movement called jewsteetsa liberta. All of them intent on working with the factory, with industry. Industry had to produce for the German, but one person who was at -- it -- at the headquarter was Guido Chezura. Guido Chezura was a high ranking offi -- officer of the Pirelli, but he was a captain of something, I can't remember his exact grade, but he was with Pirelli. Pirelli was supplying rubber tire, and others. Well, stay out of any anti-Fascist movement, you are far more valuable if you don't say anything, if you just help. An incredible woman, who every time she typed anything, there was an extra copy for the committee -- but there was no committee of national liberation at the time. I don't know, but it went to the anti-Fascist movement. Her name was Peggy. And I always look at her, because she was so beautiful, and beautifully dressed, and I felt like a shrimp next to her. But she was a wonderful friend, and on top of all, she was a very effective underground worker. I was simply a courier, but I learned at the time that bringing messages, such as the one preparatory to a March

1944 strike, simultaneously taking place in Milan, Torino, Genoa. I went back and forth, went to the factories, and I discovered in all these women working in this factory, most of them were Communists and Socialists, very hard line, very committed, very well organized. And I have to say this, the Communist, and the Socialist were very, very well organized against anti-Fascism. The leadership had been imprisoned --

Q: You mea -- you mean against Fascism, not against anti-Fascism?

A: Against Fascist.

Q: Fascism, right, yes, right, right.

A: Fascist and Nazi. And they had been part of the anti-Fascist movement. Some -- I mean the leadership -- some of them had been imprisoned during the Mussolini period, even before the war, in ile -- remote ila lipari, [indecipherable] and other prison. But they were organized. They had been trained to work in the underground. We're not. We learning -- we are learning, but they were pro, because for years they had had leadership. Now, the Rosetti brother formed jewsteetsa liberta, that was the result of the fact that they left Communism, because they felt there is really no difference between hard line Marxist Leninism, and Nazi Fascists, and formed jewsteetsa liberta. Then they were thrown -- they escape to France, and this I heard, I have no first-hand experience with all that, but I was told then the Ovra, the Italian Fascist secret police, in cooperation with the French secret police, political, assassinated both of them. And [indecipherable] what I found at that period during the war, and especially 1942 - '43, until the [indecipherable] was that everybody knew about them. And in the factory, the women, and the leadership be-began questioning whether their true commitment, total commitment to Marxist Leninism was the best way for the post-war government of Italy. I didn't understand it. I had -- you know, I tried, but I began to see that the anti-Fascism that I grew up with, and also the

reference to the Communist after World War One, were bad too, but it was so remote. This was real. This I had to go from Piazza Italialbo, every morning I went to work, every morning I was given messages to bring to this place, to that place, to this place, to that place. And don't ask many question. I was a stuffetta. But also, I remember being sent to places where there was the happa leadership of industry, la falca. I believe it was montanapalioni, I think. And they were providing money. Whether they were working under the Fascist, and producing for the Nazi, but they were providing funds to assist the victim of persecution, and -- which I delivered but I don't know -- there -- somebody else did the job. I was a simple stuffetta.

Q: And what -- what is a stuffetta?

A: Stuffetta means a person who's a courier. You don't know anything about anything else except what you are doing. A-And the reason was because they were taking extreme precaution, because the Ovra was still very active. Then, on July, 1943, Mussolini fell. And already they had sense in this group -- and remember, this was highly educated upper contact with the military, with the foreign office, with the society, with the churches, with -- and -- and I remember that Mussolini was overthrown, and I was told not to go home. I stay with Peggy one day, and we made eggplants, I always remember fried eggplants. And -- and people who I -- the same people, I believe, not all -- not the anti-Fascists, of course, but many people had say, "Mussolini, moliama la guerra, moliama la guerra, moliama la guerra." This time they were throwing mattresses out of the house on the Fascists. And I became acquainted with how easily political party can manipulate masses, bringing them by truck to demonstrations. How ya -- how do you say, whip them up for this, or against this. And I became very skeptical of the political processes, and le -- and began looking at the political process with a very keen eye, so to speak. The other lesson that I was learning at this time was the clandestine press, because we had wonderful

people who did work for the press, which was all controlled by the Fascists, who did control for the radio, which was all controlled by the Fascists. But we were also listening to the BBC. I didn't understand English, but somebody helped to understand it. And in the process, we were taught how to understand propaganda. If we had to write anti-Fascist leaflet, we had to understand why we were anti-Fascist, and anti-Nazi. The -- how propaganda is used, how it can be used, how it can be manipulated. And I must say that little by little, I learned that not everything is black and white, and -- however, I came away from that with a sense that the truth is very important. Eventually the truth emerge. And the other passion that I developed at that time was for freedom of expression. That we may not be absolutely right, but there i -- in a free expression, then there is always the mean to rectify. And people should treasure that, and be very careful, because dictatorship will always manipulate, distort, lie, deceive. And unless we keep constant vigilance, we are likely to lose those rights. And those rights could be privilege given by any government, political party, religious groups. Somehow I felt, and I was sitting at this table, and they were expert there, I was not. And I look at the world, where I felt we have opportunity to do something by informing people. And then somebody reminded me that many of the Italian were analphabet. They didn't know how to read and write. And therefore, education was the primary need, so then other people beca -- besides elementary education, they could also read, and then understand what they were reading. And -- we stopping?

Q: No.

A: So, that's --

Q: So --

A: Then I -- we continued, it was a -- just a tremendous hi -- traffic with many, many, many women, children, old men, because the young one weren -- and we often brought the messages in

shopping bag. There wasn't much to shop, but whatever we could find, wi -- then the bicycle came [indecipherable]

Q: The chain?

A: Bicycle, you know, the tubes, or the seat where you sit, in between, to put the messages, because bicycle was a very common thing. Trams were working when there was no bombing, but if there was a bombing, there was no trams, so that you walk, or you go by bus, you'd go. And what was extraordinary was a network which didn't have much structure -- it had a structure, the thing was that the structure was very loose, and chow Gino, chow Pierro. You didn't have a clue who chow -- who Pierro, or Gino, or whoever was, except for the leadership. And then there was the Communist party, the Socialist party, the partito retsioni. The democrat -- Christian democrat, thesort. They all -- s-some of the top people were together. At the [indecipherable] place where we were working, obviously they had contact with, and very careful about the possible spy within the headquarter, in Piazza Italibalbo. Ba -- by the time I was there, everybody was so discouraged. I mean, the employee, the career people, were so discouraged. And when, then, the ally came to Sicily, my group, right there, opened a bottle of champagne. And they were very sensitive about the career people who were there to do a job, their family was in Sicily, or in the south. And what struck me was the sense of compassion, then, everybody had about people who had to serve, to get the paycheck, divided with -- you know, from the family, etcetera. There wasn't hatred. And I do remember -- this is later, in September, when one of them said, "Signiorina, who's going to pay my salary now?" I would like a break.

Q: Sure. Gonna take a break now.

A: I don't know --

Q: We're back from our break. Ginetta, can you describe some of what was being written in the underground press?

A: Yes, one of the goal of the underground press was to bring to the attention of the Italian under the occupation of the Nazi Fascists, what was going on. Arrest, execution, deportation, often with the name of people, and also the public edict of the Nazi, and the Fascist, telling citizen that unless they cooperated, then the penal -- spelling out the penalty, also the reward. For any allied POW, there was a certain amount of salt, if I recall correctly, some money. Also promise of release of a family member who was in Germany, in exchange for turning in allied POW, or Italian who were anti-Fascist and awaiting the draft. So our goal was really to -- to do that. And every party, every political party had their own newspaper. One of the newspaper then, I enjoyed very much helping with in the distribution was noey darnet. We only had four members, but wonderful people. And I also think that that was a maturing step for all of us. Noey darnet. Thinking about the havoc wrought in the people -- Italian people's lives, men, women, and children, by Fascism, and how are we going to rebuild a des -- destroyed society. Mussolini intent was essentially to have women keep their place, produce many children. Women were not allowed to reach higher echelon of education. But they were -- women were praised and given incentive to produce more and more children. At one point also, the women were asked to give their wedding band, gold, in order to pay for the war material, and the queen did her duty, and put her ring. Later on we learned that many of the Fascists simply put a lot of the gold in their pocket. I don't know if it was true or not, but it -- it's irrelevant. The other thing we had to do was to give copper, our copper pots, to be used for cannon. And boy thi -- that turned women off, not to have your cooking pot, nice, heavy, often from grandparents, and from the farm, etcetera, to have to turn them in to make cannon. The other group of women, who were politically

sensitive, and better organized, were limondinae. Those were wonderful young women who, for the period when the rice needed to be weeded, would leave their home, and go into farm, big farm. And this big farm would have huge places with mattresses which are not mattresses, they were simply sack cloth filled with straw. And the women would go, I don't remember how long, but they could go for the period of mondini to weed the rice, which meant being in the water with leeches on their feet. And these women became quickly organized by the Communist party to fight Fascism, and their horrible conditions. They had their own newspapers too, but I do -- the one I knew was jewsteetsa liberta, no dominae, partito retsioni. The student paper, and -- and it was an -- a clandestine effort, needless to say. Paper was very scarce, and we were grateful to all the newspaper people who were employed in the regular [indecipherable] sera, yeah, for clandestinely making available to us, some precious, precious paper. Are you worried about the tape?

Q: I'm checking.

A: So, it was a -- a dangerous thing to do, because if a member of the gopper -- gopeesti, those who [indecipherable] an assassination against a target of the SS, the Gestapo, and other, if they were caught, they were shot. That -- the Nazi Fascist put a premium on arresting, catching, and torturing for interrogation, people who were involved in distributing the clandestine press, how did they organize, where was it printed, who is doing it, etcetera. And gathering the information for the clandestine press, which was done by a network of people, men, women and children, the railway, the bill of [indecipherable], you know that kind, and also the insignia on the German, and trying to more or less to see if there had been changes, an increase. Anyone caught in that kind of work automatically was a suspect for interrogation and torture.

Q: So anyone who was -- who had information, who -- and who was distributing information, and learning about what was going on, was in danger, yeah.

A: Absolutely. And that's when I began treasuring the freedom of the press.

Q: Right.

A: And also caught listening to the BBC, it meant deportation, or interrogation. In other word, the -- they put a great deal of emphasis on catching people who were providing information, education, exposing the horror, than they were doing -- although they were very stupid in many way, because on one occasion --

Q: Let's bl -- let -- hold that story, I -- because the tape is going to stop. One second.

End of Tape Two, Side B

Beginning Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ginetta Sagan, conducted by Joan Ringleheim, with -- on Friday, September 24th, in Atherton, California. This is tape number three, side one. Ginetta, on the last tape, you started talking about an incident where they were very stupid.

A: They were very stupid. Well, in general, you know, they were -- they were very -- they were expert in the art of interrogation, at -- at one level, because, instead of being selective, every suspect was tortured. They missed opportunity for getting information, because people died, or people simply decided no way, I'm going to die anyway. And one of the thing that must be said about the stupidity is, and for the first time, the SS and the Gestapo brought torture, not as an isolated incident, as the Odra had used, or the police had used [indecipherable] any time, any place, anywhere, that is a systematic system of interrogation. And it -- torturing people to obtain information which could be useful, became routine, and that was stupid, because they really tortured many people who didn't know anything. And then they were hanging people publicly, in the gallows, shooting them. The other stupidity that they did, horrendous stupidity was -- not in Milan, but abassoberto, they caught -- there were something like 50 -- approx -- 50 - 54 partisan, including a pregnant woman, and they made that group travel from village to village, and then they executed them all. In Liguria, near Genoa spitsa, there is another place where they took something like 40 or 50 young men, and publicly they executed them all. And now, when I'm using the word stupidity, is because far from frightening -- yes, people were frightened, people are terrorized, but also people said, what? Even many Fascists said, I don't want to be associated with this. This is not Italy. And true, with the Nazi, there were the Italian Fascist, SS, the libren, rigatinari, the mouti, the dechamamas, who as volunteer, joined the SS unit, and they were the

one who knew Italian, they were the one who knew the addresses to take these people, etcetera. I use the word stupidity because it really increased our ranks. People who had said, "No, I can't help you, I'm too frightened, not for me, but for my family -- what can I do to help?" And I suspect that in any underground movement, but I -- I only know Italy, when there is this kind of naked brutality, people will emerge, who will take far higher risk to help the victim than they had been willing to risk before. And the reason I felt strongly about the underground press, although I'm not a journalist, but of course the Ritsini was a journalist family, pro-monarchy, I suspect possibly pro-Fascist in the early period, but certainly against this kind of brutality, and they were a great help in understanding that some conservative, from monarchy, etcetera, maybe proconserva -- they don't accept such brutality, and -- and had to -- had to the paper -- now, our workers -- thousand of people was to paste notices, and -- and oo -- at that time, we had to make -- to mix flour with water, and pinello, and go -- and that was very dangerous. And then distribute the clandestine press every place we could, in the fabbrica factory, office, buildings, school. Now the university, the student had their own newspaper, but we have to remember then, most of the professor had been forced to flee, to hide, and so we, as a student hiding, had some time became captive audience to professor who couldn't teach, and if we were hiding someplace for few days, let me tell you, we did have good professor. I mean, discussions were marvelous, and unforgettable. You may forget something that you do in the regular school, you don't forget something that you learn under the circumstances, debates, pro and con, and sometime deliberately, they chose one or the other to take the opposite point of view for arguing a case, for arguing a point, for arguing an essay, for arguing a book. And between that, and assessing the press, evaluate it, analyzing it, and then come up with a synthesis that reflected the

truth in very short space. I believe it helps to consolidate your thinking in a way that nothing else since has ever helped me to consolidate ideas, and --

Q: Do you have a recollection of any particular debate, or -- during this time? Was there any --

A: Yeah, oh yes. The debate, at one point, centered around the role of people who had been part of the great concit of the Fascists, and then in July, turned against Mussolini, which caused, of course, the fall of Mussolini. The role of the king, accepting to be emperor, accepting Fascism all those year, in spite of the terrible cost to Italy, to the Italian people, and what should be the post-war or -- of those people who had been Fascist, which of course, I believe that as soon as the Nazi came to power, tried to erase them, and executed some, like Galliazo Channo, and -- and other, or the king, for post war. There were pro and con, and then debate about, so -- th-th-those were political discussion, and I have not been used to, and listen to people who had been professors and -- and student. It was interesting. It was a learning lesson in politics, for when -- I made up my mind that I would have never -- nothing to do with politics after world war -- I would have to do something with protecting human right, and freedom of expression. And then the other discussion was about the slogan of the Communist, from the Ural to the Atlantic. Is that what we want for Europe? And the answer, a couple said absolutely, because they provide social and economic right. Other felt like hell we want from the Ural to Atlantic, to have Stalinism, and Leninism, in Europe. Well, but the French wants that. Well, the Italian don't. Some did, but even the Italian who had been Communist, like Leo Baliani, and other, in the prison of Mussolini, changed, and decided it was not good for the Italian. And in fact, no -- Ricardo Lombardi, Leo Baliani, Federucho Parray, they all agreed that the principle of socio-economic right is important, but so are civil and political right, and the two shall be linked. And so the discussions was often heated. Then there was a discussion about why should we accept funds from the American --

from the allies, in the conduct of the underground in Italy, to assist prisoner, family, as well as assist the partisan. The air drops, also money from banks, and from -- funds from the army left over, etcetera. We should have nothing to do with funding from the allies, or somebody said that we -- the Russian are sending tons of money for the -- for the Communist, for the propaganda, for everything. So the discussion were often heated on that subject. And our feeling was that we have to win this war first. And then the political system that Italy will have, will have to be decided by the Italian. The most important thing we should ha -- must have, is a constitution. And so then there were the professor who -- who knew laws, and knew the -- then we read the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights, and oh, this is what we should have, and -- but the most thing -- everything agreed on no more dictatorship, and then brought into the question, what about the Marxist Leninist, that's a dictatorship. Oh yes, but that is a dictatorship of the proletariat. Does he allow freedom of expression? No. Yes, but he provides social and economic right. Work for everybody, houses for everybody, food for everybody, and my question was, at what price? So, here we are -- sometime the bombs were also falling, and having this discussion. But essentially I came away with a sense that open debate is crucial. But personally, I will never tolerate any dictatorship, no matter what the justification is -- is given by a government, period. And I didn't care if it was right wing, or left wing, or whatever. Any government, then want to impose a dictatorship on their people, in as far as I was concerned at that time, does not deserve to be respected, or supported. But to do that, you need the help of everybody to understand, to begin with, the danger, then this government represents. And they will always find excuses, I mean, Mussolini was giving us all the excuses, Hitler was giving us all the excuses. Hitler wa -- Stalin was giving us all the excuses. And what was the result? Suffering for everybody.

Q: Can you explain to me how, or what it was then, that made you say, I will never get involved in politics, but I will get involved in issues of human rights? What -- what was for you at that moment, if you can go back there, wha -- what was it?

A: Well I realized that here were people that I loved, intelligent, dedicated, who truly believed that in the future, when the war was over, to obey the order of Stalin, for the good of the Italian, was essential to reveal our society in a mode, which would be different than Fascism. I was unable to accept that. The other was that there were some member of the Communist party began worrying about this kind of thing, and discussed this openly, and felt that the Roselli brother for just a salivita, and understood the danger that Marxist, Lenin, and Stalinism presented for society, we still wanted to change the socio-economic situation. That was freedom, and not freedom of expression suppressed in order to achieve the other. In fact, we felt at that time that Fascism was far more modern than Leninism -- Stalinist Leninism, and look what it has done. We didn't know about many other things than Stalin had done, and we knew what the Nazi had done. And analyzed, discussed, studied, compared, and all -- all the others were going to become part of political parties. All of them became political leaders. And it's okay, it's just that I felt there has to be voices outside of the political system, that you can say, I disagree with that. And I remember -- I can't remember who said this, and then later on I heard it after the war many times. I think it was Voltaire. I disagree with you, but I'm ready to die for your right to disagree with me. I'm not certain it was Voltaire, but that's what I thought at that time. That's what we thought at that time. I disagree with you, but I'm ready to die for your right to disagree. And we felt that post-war Italy had to be respectful of ideas. That there has to be a government which respect the right of citizen, and not imprison them, not torture them, not have mock trial, not have the special tribunal. Special tribunal was the tribunal than [indecipherable] Mussolini --

Ovra installed during the Fascist period where there were three military -- military judges, no legal defense, no -- entrapment was the -- the word for any suspect. So, those are the ideas that really consumed us, while we were all so activist in helping, in hiding, in pasting notices, or change slogan of the -- we knew then people were deported in railway tracks. We were told that they were sent to Germany to work. And somebody wrote [indéchiffrable] Tedeschi, W. Tedeschi, and we will paint Abastoy Tedeschi, I mean, stupid things like this. It -- it -- it was just perhaps childish, but we felt it was important, and boy if you were caught, you are shot. You know, that kind of -- that distribution of material -- leaflet press, and also learning to communicate to others, if there was a -- a danger. The reason I made a copy of Carla was because it's a classic example of somebody who undertake a very important project on that history, that also how somebody let him know then somebody was searching him, and instead of explaining, if you read it, you get it. And -- and [indéchiffrable] translated into English, so that you can -- is an example of hundreds -- hundreds, and ordinary people doing kind of strange things all the time.

Q: N-Not -- I don't want to push this too much, but your interest in human rights, going back to that period of time, is it that you were trying to establish what you thought were the necessary conditions for a society, whereas politics sometimes undermined those necessary conditions?

That you were -- that there was something about human life that you wanted to protect, whatever the political system was. So you weren't interested in power, and accumulation of power. I do -- I'm trying to figure out what it is that was pulling you away from politics, into another world. I don't know whether --

A: We have to say we, because I was not the only one.

Q: W -- we -- yes, right, right.

A: And I have emphasized the word we, we, we, because these were a group of people working together but who disagreed about the political system --

Q: Right.

A: -- to succeed Mussolini in post-war Italy.

Q: Right.

A: And then we also learned that sometime funds coming in from the allies, and distributed to the church, was distributed to every group, but we also learned that the Communists were also keeping money for the post-war re-organization of the Communist party. And at the time when you have such horror going on, and you need every penny to help everybody, I felt, my God, I am no different than the Fascist. They are already beginning to accumulate money for power, for their control after. And the slogan, from the Ural to Atlantic really made us uneasy. Not just me, but Enrico Mullisanno, Pigi Mullisanno, Rainso Contamessa. They were Communists who were queasy about it, but they still felt that they owed obedience. So my response was -- and this was my response, obideera -- craderai obideera combaterai. To believe -- to believe craderai.

Obideera, obey, combaterai, fight. And I said, what is the difference when with the slogan of Stalin, and the slogan of Mussolini, and the slogan of the church, the Catholic church. Craderai, obideera, combaterai. And I said, we want a force [indecipherable] of Italy, which hopefully will reflect the freedom that every person is entitled to. The respect, the dignity. If you want to be a Communist, you should be a Communist, but if I want to be something else -- I respect your right, but you have to respect mine. You don't imprison me if you are in power because I happen to have different view, political or religious, because we remember also the Inquisition. And Italian history is replete with it. One discussion we had in the underground about torture was then the -- actually the Empress of Austria, not herself, but on the advice of counsel, Austria had

abolished the use of torture to extract information, and I believe it was the end of the previous century, and yet, it was reinstated when the Nazi came, eliminating the judicial system, taking over the judicial system, and -- and using torture. So, the discussion also centered about what the -- the Austrian had done at the -- the end of the previous century -- not that Maria Theresa was necessarily enthusiastic, but she accepted the advice of her counsel to eliminate tr -- torture, and then, as Hitler comes to power, the court lose juridical prerogative, due to the court, and the judicial system, for political reason. And then they bring it to Italy. And while cases of torture had always occurred, but this was systematic torture, and it was horrendous. I mean, people -- the scream were heard in -- whether it was in Milan, in Biapaolocelli, in Torino, La Camradeebееasti, Aroust, every place. It became an epidemic. But we thought about the possibility of that under a dictatorial regime. And we felt a dictatorship can use this method, as the Nazi, the Fascists are doing, any place, any time. So in a post-war Italy, what we want is guarantee, and that will never happen again. And we're thinking about Italy.

Q: Where were you living at this time? Were you still living with your parents?

A: Oh, I -- I beg your pardon?

Q: Were you living with your parents?

A: No, I didn't see -- I couldn't see them. So I -- the underground had a assistance program, and I was actually handling three apartments, in Viama Kerajoya, '41. The concierge, Mrs. Columbo, was our friend. Her brother-in-law was executed, was one of the partisan who, in the railway, who was helping to give us the correct bill of lading, instead of the bill of lading when the Germans said on the train coming in, whate -- instea -- they would put clothes in, but e -- as, in fact they were armament. And that was very important to the allies, to know what kind of material the German were bringing in for the war effort. And there was an army of young people,

student and others. Now, the brother of mis -- in-law of Mrs. Columbo was caught and executed. Now, there were three apartment derain prepared by the underground. Don't ask me, except that my little apartment was quickly -- an arch -- furnitch -- an architect came and fixed the cupboard, and it was very well arranged. Then there was a third floor apartment, that I was handling for a courier who came back and forth. And then there was one on the fifth floor that I never saw, except that when somebody came, was a special password, it was the fifth floor. And only later, after the war, we realized then that was probably the OSS people. And they kept everything compartmen -- compartmentalized. Then, in addition to these three apartment, we were in the -- another apartment in [indecipherable] few block further down, and a network of places where people could spend a night. And it was all integrated with the work done by the Committee of National Liberation, and by the churches, by political party, by groups. And each group was very independent of the other, so that -- for example, since I'm looking at Lydia, one little church in Drunago, the priest was wonderful, and he hid people in the belfry. But, it was a network of people. Of course, once in awhile we were caught, once in awhile it was broken, and we lost people. There were deportation, and -- or a book this thick has name of Italian who were deported, and many of them didn't come back. And some were Jewish, and the other were Catholic. And they came from all walk of life, and if you look at -- I -- I think I -- I may have given it to Stan for those -- but if you look at the ages, you can see, it was truly a popular movement, had all ages, classes, education, or lack of education. Along the river Po, the -- the river, there are boats, and -- there are boats, and the network of people who knew the woods, in Pavia, in Bijaivino, in Mortara, Novara, it was unbelievable. But again, the churches were very important, and the confessional were very important. And the people went to the confession, who had never gone to confession before. And they were certainly not confessing sin. It was a mean

of communication, improvised very often, but what struck me was how people can sum up the courage to do things when they haven't thought about doing, or they would ever to, or -- or regret, and of course, many of them were deported. I remember one woman, a -- a peasant who hid in her farm some people, and -- and when her husband was taken -- the reason I went to see her, with another member -- another student, was to bring some money, and to wins -- you know, see what she needs, and -- and I always remember, they had been married many years. And she said, "He was such a good man." He was such a good man. I still see her face. Those things, I don't know. And I got tired in doing my work sometime, I -- I think about those wonderful, ordinary people. They will never be famous. I can't even remember her name, but to me, they embodied -- people who in my judgement are an ornament to the human spirit. I'm sorry about this, I -- I don't know. I never saw her again, afterwards. But i-it -- I like the idea that the underground was so caring about organizing assistance, and -- and thing. Let me clean my nose.

Q: Okay. We'll take a break.

A: Unfortunately --

Q: We're back now.

A: Unfortunately, there were some people among these mass of wonderful, dedicated, courageous people, some people were spies. They were informant, and I am not so sure that it was only ideology. In one of our discussion, in trying to understand the infiltrator, in order to prevent infiltration in our group, one of the discussion with a doctor, centered on what type of personality we had to be careful about. Not necessarily -- if they -- they are two anti-Nazi, anti-Fascist, too much, they -- they reminded us of Macbeth, the ladies doth protest too much. And in -- some of these senior people were trying to explain to us the factors -- in the human factors, psychologically, especially a doctor -- I believe his name is Grossé, I have to check it, he was

working at the Hospitality Niguarda, and he treated a victim of torture, but they were trying to explain to us, in our work, we had to be very careful of some people who would offer, it could have been a trap, they may have -- may have been suspect, and -- but also there are people who are so needy of protection, whichever power is in power. And has nothing to do with Fascism, it can be any.

End of Tape Three, Side A

Beginning Tape Three, Side, B

Q: This is tape number three, side B, wi -- and we interrupted. You were ending with people who wa -- needed to be protected no matter what the power was. Yeah?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes.

A: And they -- who will offer their services. Some are psychopaths, no question. People who -- who used torture, for example. Many of the high ranking people didn't touch themselves the prisoner, they had these thugs in the interrogation places who did the dirty work. And la -- later on in my own experience, many -- the officer was content to serve these people. But they needed them, they used them, and but o -- whether our seniors were teaching us to be very careful, and try to explain to us why we should be very careful of such people, because in working in the underground, you have people who come and offer, and then you always pretend that you don't know anything about it, you don't know what they are talking about, you know, because it could be a trap. And I thought there ta -- a-and they always came suggested by somebody that you knew. So, you always pretended you don't know anything about it, and then you say, "Oh maybe we see each other some other time, but you know, I can't help you, I cannot

do anything," etcetera, etcet -- then you check with the other people. So it becomes kind of skucky, we call it. I don't know how you would [indecipherable]

Q: Like a chess game?

A: Chess game, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: To go and [indecipherable] and this. The churches, by and large, were reliable, I would say, up to 90 percent. But even so, 10 percent of people who were not reliable, but also if the SS, the Gestapo, and the Black Brigade went to their church regularly. And there were Catholic the Nazi, who went to church regularly, who attended the service, who became friend with the priest. And according to the priest, you know, it was just s-serving a Christian. Now, what I also learned was there was some educated German Christian, who were helpful to us. Very, very helpful. And the way we communicated was in Latin. Heh, heh, heh, don't speak German. But in Latin we could communicate. And needless to say, we checked and counterchecked. But some German regular army people were very helpful.

Q: Were there a lot of people, young kids your age, teenager, 16 - 17 years old -- I mean, how -- how many people -- I -- I know you don't know how many people were in the entire group, but in the immediate group that you were working in?

A: Probably approximately 100.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: But, we knew th -- each family. We n -- cousin, rela -- friends, and like let's say, these 20, for example, they had a wonderful property in Piedmont. They could hide people, they were also upper class. And they could shelter people, but also, they were respected people. Enrico Mullisanno, the family Mullisanno, highly respected. Now, the Ritsini were from monarchy

etcetera, but highly respected. So their son -- they have a son Enrico, and they knew people. Now the Mullisanno daughter were two years old, and four years old. But their cousin in social circle, people that you have known for a long time -- and you knew very much who was a Fascist, more or less. That the pro SS and Gestapo, there were very few upper class, or well-educated people. Many of the upper class Italian joined the resi -- supported the Resistance, because of the allies, because of the British. Not necessarily for the American [indecipherable]. Max Salvatore was an ital -- an American -- Italian American, he work with the British Intelligence Services. He had loads of contact in Italy. And some other prominent exile, anti-Fascist Italian, had contact with Italian intellectual and aristocracy, or banking. Banking was another area, and industry was another air -- marini, [indecipherable] one of them was. Either way, they had contact then they kept, regardless of the war, like in -- Switzerland was the place where they could meet. And that's where Bustelli, and Lydia, and others came, so -- were so important to that. In Switzerland, nobody mentioned, then Switzerland allowed many Jewish people, not always, some were sent back, and were killed. But in the Teechino area, where Bustelli was, they had the resi -- this. September, 1943, when the disaster occurred, the Armistice, the Swiss allowed the Italian Army people to take refuge in camps in Switzerland. And those camps were -- many people were expert in military affair, as well as Intelligence, as well as Morse code, and things like that. So, eventually, some Intelligent people, with the help of Italian, likes Max Salvatore for example, and later on Max Gorbol, they recruited people from these camps. And Aurora Wilomin who died, was executed, she used to go and get the people who had been selected, to bring back to Italy, to help in the undergrounds. That's one important ti -- who did the communication? Housewife, farmer, student, children. They killed a young boy in Piazzo Larret, I believe he was 14 years old, was a messenger -- was a stuffetta. You know, it's -- and the camps, the military

camps were very important in Switzerland, also the object of penetration by the Nazi. In fact, the Nazi Fascist sent spies to i -- to get information about who was selected to come to Italy. And once again, Lydia, Bustelli, and -- and all -- and the network of people, were very important in the communication. And a communication from one post to the other was done by either women, or boys, or girl. In bicycle, on a horse, cart, or whatever. So it was -- [indecipherable]

Q: Is -- is that wa -- because they were less suspect?

A: Well, the Nazi and Fascist were suspa -- suspecting everybody. After all, remember that while we do it -- the peaceful work in assistance, there was also the underground then blew up the railway, blew up the partisan -- the Italian partisan, the band then -- then formed after September, they attack German and Nazi Fascist post in order to get arms, because they didn't have much. So they would organize, and some of the people who joined the partisan had been professional military people, particularly the Alpini in Baldosta, the Alpini, who were very good at climbing, who were very good at exercise, and -- and the German and the Nazi Fascist were determined to -- to get rid of them. But communication could not done by telephone, or t -- or e-mail, you know. Everything was done by voice, at most one page. But it was very, very, very serious. And that was rare, terribly rare. And code. We had one pad code, and I got it that once it was used, it goes in the wastepaper basket, because that was the most secure way of communicating. I need a break.

Q: Okay, we're going to take a break. We are now back from our break. Ginetta, when I asked you where -- where you were living, you were talking about living apart from your parents after 1943, but I gather in 1941, you were -- when you -- when you went -- started working with the Resistance, you were living with your parents. Can you describe --

A: Yes, I -- I was living w-with my parents in Milan, and I was able to see also my nurse, my wet nurse, in the countryside. And we stayed in the countryside, because the mil -- Milan was bombed night after night by the ally, especially August 1943, lots of bombing took place, and so we rented a place in the country, and I could see also my wet nurse, th -- at a farm, like many thousand of Milanese, because many of the building were destroyed by the bombing.

Transportations was destroyed. The building blocked streets, bi -- the ma -- the -- when they were bombed, all the material, the -- the rubbles. Or whether [phone ringing]. Oh dear.

Q: Okay, we're back from our telephone break.

A: Okay, now, at that time, July, August, af-after the Mussolini fell, it was chaotic in Milan, and in addition to the kills -- political kills, there were the bombing by the allied, especially in August, 1943, and waves after waves of bomber came, and we stayed in the countryside. And we could see at night the city of Milan, red -- th-the sky was red, and hear all these airplane, and you know, you understand that in order to end this war, they had to bomb, because once again, although Mussolini was gone, Badoglio took over the government, Badoglio with the king, and he said, la guerra continma, and it was not an -- so people had to get out of the cities or industrial centers, even nearby, like sise to San Giovanni or other, and find places in the country, it was horrible. The transportation was not working, the train were packed, whatever, it all -- it was terrible. But we lived outside, and then we came back, around the beginning of September, to Milan, and it was at that time that -- and my parents told me that if anything should happen, and there should be a ashugamano, a ashugamano, this is to dry your hands, a -- a cloth, on the window, I should not go home, but should go and see Enrico Mullisanno if possible, or -- so, on September, my mother gave me some money to buy some sweater from Louisa Spanoli, which is still existing, and it was going back to school, to prepare for going back to school possibly, but

everything was in chaos. And I went, and I had this money, and the store was closed, so I had this cash on me. And then when I arrived home, I saw the ashugamano on the window, and there was a black car. And we call them the black maria, which were car used by the police to pick up Jewish people, or anti-Fascist. And we had, in a family living nearby, and the father simply had vanished. And in August, in spite of the bombing, my father had asked me to drive his car, a small car, to drive the children of this family, to Valdentelvi, and stay with our friend Hua Pastore, and bring the children to Switzerland with the help of Tonio, who was a smuggler, and the Pastore, who were dear, dear friend, an elderly couple who [indecipherable] known for many, many, many years. And try to do what I could. He gave me some money, and you know -- then, in September, I realized I couldn't go home, so it was getting late, and there was a curfew, so I -- there was a bombed out building, and I remember a -- something dangling, chair, or something dangling with the floor from the ceiling, and it was a bombed out place, and I -- it was getting late, I felt like crying, so I stayed in that place instead of trying to go all the way to Viatalaggio, where the Mullisanno lived, because I realized it would have been too far away to go, and I may not make it, and the city was literally in chaos. The Fascists were beginning to look all over the place for young people. The military people were trying to shed their uniform, be on civilian clothes, and trying to find a place to escape, and there were thousand of people in Milan in that situation, when the armistice was announced. Nevertheless, the police were still hunting people. And -- and that was the last time, I -- I was never able to see my parents again after that, but then Enrico, and Mary, and all the other really embraced me, and -- and also, there were some funds, in cash then were available, but the underground, the Resistance took care of paying the rent, providing minimum for food, clothes. Clothes were very difficult, everything was coupons, for food, coupon for this, coupon for that, and with the armistice, the king, Badoglio, and the

government fled to the south, leaving the people, the navy, the army, the air force in shamble. The headquarter of the air force, where I had been working with Enrico, all these officers, they tried to take as much documentation as they could, so we were helping to put away stuff, and prevent looting. But people came in and too -- and looted everything they could. It was a horror, and few people can imagine what it means for a government allied with a country, like the Italian government allied with the Germans, and then have an armistice with the ally, who are the enemy, the American, and the British, and the other, and flee, leaving the people, the armed forces of all, asbandati, alone. And the German had already suspected the armistice would come, and therefore quietly had already beg -- not quietly, everybody knew it. They began sending via the Brenner Pass, SS, Gestapo Panzer. And they are prepared the plan to take a -- intensify the cleaning -- ethnic cleaning of the Jewish people. Simultaneously to arrest all the people who were suspect of being anti-Fascist, and anti-Nazi. And then, of course, to capture all people who had been in the navy, air force, army, or armed force, everybody, to be deported for labor -- allegedly, for labor, to Germany. So again, they used their tru -- th-the railway, not to help people to come back into the city, or send them ba -- to transport [indecipherable] people than they took, allegedly for labor, and the immediate work of the Resistance was to organize assistance. And that organization was -- POW was let out of the camps. When I met Leo Valiani, and spoke to him, as well as I spoke to Ricardo Lombardi and others, "How many people did the Italian ordinary people help to escape?" And he said, "Prissipoco diachemila." App- Approximately 10,000 people, which did not surprise me. But people immediately helping everybody. The -- the Italian military of all, air force, navy, mari, everybody, army. Jewish people, and a lot of POW, who were let out of the camps, the camps were open, the prisoner of war were open, and so these young people, these prisoner, young and middle aged, disbanded all

over they could go, seeking -- hiding in the farm, and every place, because the German began immediately trying to recapture them, and force the Italian military -- of military age, who had been in the services, immediately recruited them for deportation to Germany, allegedly for -- they were rebuilding things. So, it was chaos.

Q: In this chaos, were you in danger because your parents were picked up? Were they looking for you, or didn't they know you existed?

A: I don't think they knew I existed at that time. But, it -- the Mullisanno, the Ritsini, Contamessa, and everybody else, who had already -- was already organized with groups in the underground, already, but immediately they said, "Never go near your place, never go near your nurse, never go near your close friend." No sisamide, we don't know. And above all, there was the work of organizing assistance, and that's what we focused on, immediate assistance, because streets were blocked by the German tank, few days, and they were looking for young people, for young men, ital -- and for Jewish people, and our job was to work with hundreds of other ch -- young children, women, men, to be the mobile telephone, human telephone from block to block, and the German are blocking the Immocatcho, they [indecipherable], the German are blocking such and such a street. The German are blocking such and such a street, etcetera. And to help people escape off -- unfortunately many were caught, because there was no way we could find civilian clothes for everybody, so we did the best we could. As far as POW, was e -- very difficult, because the shoes never fit, the clothes were too sm-small for those tall -- especially Australian, or -- but they w -- there were woods around the city, around Milan, Pavia, Bijaivano, there were woods, so many of the people were trying to escape, escaped to woods, and then there were farms, and then there were convents. Some convents, for example, were pilgrim at -- used to go through and find shelter to go to Rome, or whatever. [indecipherable] became places where

people could find some shelter, temporary, of course, and then the Swiss border. The Swiss border was our salvation in many way. And that's when the smuggler, who had made a living with smuggling, with contrabando for centuries, they knew where every passage was. And they, with very few exception, all of -- with few exception, they became our greatest helper. Men, women, children, it was an im -- unimaginable display of the solidarity of the human spirit. Needless to say, unfortunately, they were all saying filtrator, o-or infiltrated themselves with the military in the Swiss camp, which were made available to the Italian Army, Navy, Air Force, and -- and specialists. But by and large, it was a message of how ordinary people did a s -- extraordinary thing, in extraordinary, difficult times.

Q: Ca-Can you describe taking people through the border? What was that like?

A: Well, it was not easy, because you had to have -- first of all, you would be -- I mean, we're several places where we were living, working, hiding, and only the central group knew how to reach us, and the stuffetta, like I can mention one, Nino Benedetti, for example, he was only 15 or 16, he was extraordinary, Jako Padentichay, Meno Scapolla, or me -- and many f -- children of France, in cri -- 12 - 13 - 14 - 15, and women. And [indecipherable] people, old people, young people -- it was a -- they would be sent to communicate with this church, with this convent, with this farm, with this office, and say there are two paci, tre paci, une paco. Paco was the word for a person, so, chi serrano tre paci, kari verrano en Viama Kerajoya. Well, three packages, which were [indecipherable] Kerajoya, they didn't tell us how tall they were, how fat or thin, or young, or old. And so the most important thing was trying to have food, which was very, very scarce. And here I have to tell a story, because it's really -- we can laugh. The Fascist had a habit of preaching that we had to sacrifice for the welfare of the country, and we have to stick to your ration, etcetera, but we all knew then some -- not all, some were very honest, some believed in

Fascism, and there were some who were very corrupt people. And when you have a dictatorship, you will always have corrupt people. And we knew then very often, they arrested people who had nagotsi a store of fromage, fr -- cheese and salami, and prosciutti, but who were rationed, everything was rationed, or brought in from the countryside, and there were often rice subtracted to the forced giving than the Fascists had implemented at that time. You must give this, you make -- you work, and you produce five sacks of rice, well, one has to go to the government, and they came, and th -- to the farm, and looked, and -- and checked, and counterchecked, and if a farmer had not pr -- given everything, and they found something, it was the prison. And deportation even at -- ot [indecipherable]. Well, what we did, we found that one of these Fascists had a kashaday, a cellar full of food. Salami, cheese, so one -- Guido was his name, he and others org -- first of all, they requisitioned a truck from the Fascists, pretending to be Fascists. Then they went to this place, and they loaded everything they could find, and believe me, there was salami and cheese, prosciutto, and you name it, it was incredible. Butter, scarce as one can be. Farina for polenta, rice. Anyway, they made it available to us to use for the people who were hiding, and I must confess, and I was very happy. I know then you don't steal, but in these particular circumstances, I was very happy. And this is some of the food that we actually use, and we stored it with the help of Mrs. Columbo in the cellar, where we could share it with other - - and I have to confess that I gorged myself too.

Q: And how did people get to you?

A: Oh.

Q: I mean, h -- how was the network?

A: It was a -- it was a network of people, I wouldn't know the name of the people who brought -- let's say -- let's take Viama Kerajoya, although I can -- there were many other places, I'm using

this as an example. Quickly, we were given three apartments in this building, and plus another apartment in Viama Kerajoya, in another building. And when we got the notice duo paci, tre paci, etcetera, the only apartment we could not use ourself, but was used by the underground, was the fifth floor. And we stay away from that. Well, we would get from the potinaya, from the concierge, this little note that there would be duo paci, tre paci, quattro paci, and we would have somebody staying all the time. And these were like -- for example, this girl, I don't remember her name, except then she was lame. I can't remember her name now. She died of TB later, after the war. But there was a whole group of children, of friends, women, old men, and everybody took turn, but then it was us who were familiar with the border, who had to take the person to the next step. And for me, it was Aljanio, or it was Como, and not just for me, but for all the friends in the group of the mountains. These would be mountain loving people that young -- young girl, like all that group then, is gone now.

Q: Right. You know what I thought we would do? Maybe we'd look at the map, and you would -
- you can trace it.

A: All right.

Q: Let me change the tape.

A: I'm getting too tired, you know.

Q: You're getting too tir --

A: I have to eat something now.

Q: Okay.

A: I don't know about you, but I'm [indecipherable]

Q: Okay, we're going to stop now.

End of Tape Three, Side B

Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Q: This is United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ginetta Sagan, conducted by Joan Ringleheim, on September 24th, 1999, in Atherton, California. This is tape number four, side A. Ginetta, you wanted to speak about a sort of double person.

A: Well, one of the difficulty we had in the underground was that we always had to be careful about infiltrator into our group of assistance to the prisoner. And we have to remember that we assisted family and prisoner. There were people who were working, helping the war effort, for the allies, for the Committee of National Liberation in Milan, and elsewhere. Torino, Valdosta, val -- everyplace. And one of the difficulty we had was when a person was taken, the interrogation in depth, which meant torture, led to picking up other people. And I would never blame anyone for speaking under torture, because it's unbelievable the horror than they can perpetrate on human being. One of the places in Milan where the prisoner were taken was San Vittory, and there was a special section which was controlled by the SS, and the moti. The SS had control of the prisoner brought there. Usually their major interest was in information, people who are work -- working to gather information useful to the allies in the war effort. One of the key people in that accession of the SS, was named Hugo Osteria. Hugo Osteria had been a policeman -- political policeman for the Ovra, the secret police of Mussolini, or the Fascists, throughout that period. And when, after September eight, the -- he began working for the SS, and the Gestapo in San Vittory, in the section specialized in -- in interrogation. Besides Hugo Osteria, there was a -- a man, whose name was Franz, and he had huge dogs that he didn't mind unleashing on the prisoner. And another, Sawecki, something like that, s -- li -- Sawecki -- s -- I can't remember the spelling, Sawecki. He was an SS captain. Hugo Osteria was the interpreter for the SS, for the Gestapo in that particular area. So, he approached the committee of National

Liberation, and said, "I want to help you." So he would give us the name of the people detained in the particular area if he could, and also to let us know what was happening. Needless to say, we had other sources, mostly the suarai, the nun, the doctor, being careful, but was one. The baker was another one who was very helpful. And -- but Hugo Osteria became important. So, what he did was sometime he let people be tortured, deported to Germany. Among them was Jainjo Bamphi, the brother of Senator Arialdo Bamphi, a-and the husband of Mrs. Bamphi, whom I met, and she described that it was Hugo Osteria who arrested Jainjo Bamphi in their home. So Julianna -- Julia Bamphi told me he played the double game, because he helps them, and he help usually important people, of the Committee of National Liberation, like Ferucho Parai, then later on, at the end of the war, would testify on his behalf. But many other people, like Jako Perdenti, Cheenira Scapolla, and Jainjo Bamphi were not only tortured, but then deported to Mauthausen, where they died. And this was typical of this man, and other working for the Nazi and the Fascist. Then they would give the Committee of National Liberation, and the church, information about certain prisoner, or arrange for money to be paid to somebody by some family desperate to get help for their prisoner. But essentially, you never knew. Certainly she never trusted them, and eventually the allies decided that this man was so unreliable that he had to be shipped in the southern part of Italy. And Bustelli told me how he -- he was a S-Swiss Intelligent Services, how he, personally felt for a long time than this man was a prototype of politsiato, political politsiato, never to be trusted, that he would give some help when it was possibly beneficial for him in the future, in the political settlement after the war. But helped to arrest people, did a lot of damage, used informer, and unfortunately, because of the double game, managed to gain the trust of some people in the underground, which led to disastrous results. Yeah.

Q: I'm taking a break. We're back from our break.

A: But you can understand why I just don't want to [inaudible]. Excuse me. I wanted Hugo Osteria to be known as a skunk. But we have also cristori, police chief, who were asked to keep their job. It was very important than they stayed where they were. They had access to curfew paper, so that people could say, I'm a doctor, I'm a nurse, I need to travel after the curfew is implemented, and were very helpful. One of the first thing when the Committee of National Liberation did was to have false identity card made for various people, Jewish, Catholic, the people working in the underground, and -- so, there was this man, whose name was Joe Bacigalupi. I don't know where he came from, except that he was wonderful. Joe Bacigalupi work with the Committee of National Liberation, and he was a genius. What he did, according to my friend in the Resistance movement, and I was the beneficiary of his work for our people, what he did was to say to the cristori, "Look, this was is going to be won by the allies, not by the Fascists. If you help us, we will help you, and many other people." Now, I don't know why they -- he needed help, I have no idea, I don't know. What they asked him to do was to -- the underground asked him to ask the cristori for a list of the best forgerer, who had been either in prison in Milan, or were in prison because of forgery. So Joe Bacigalupi became the number one specialist in doing forged document. And was an enormous help, because we helped, working as cleaning people, cleaning floor, latrine, and other, for the Fascist, and for the German. And because you are a cleaner, doing meaning job, they don't consider you a person who has hear, and -- you know, all what they knew was that we were cleaner, perfect beggar, peasant, and -- and they would talk quite freely around people, because they didn't think that we wa -- but among all, was to steal. To steal some blank -- blank paper which were the koolfer -- call curfew for the lushapasari. And that was very important, because --

Q: What i -- what is luss --

A: Lushapasari means those papers, official paper that allowed people to travel after curfew was implemented. But then it happen -- Joe Bacigalupi, and the team of forgerer, when they had this, then it was their job to duplicate, raticate, etcetera, and make it available, and there was some for the doctor, some for the people of assistance, and many -- false, of course, but the German caught on of that. So every once in awhile, every two or three months, and they would change the papers. So here we go, the cleaning lady, the cleaning ti -- di -- or boys, or whatever, and -- and we had to take some more, or sometime we worked as cleaning lady from some Fascist and onners, and get some more, but Joe Bacigalupi, and with the cooperation of the cristori, the policeman, whoever, he managed to get the list of all the forgerer. He was best forgerer in -- in Milan, and for other paper. We were told at that time, that the allied in Switzerland had botched a job of duplicating false paper, which caused immediately the arrest of the two people who were carrying this false paper into Italy from Switzerland, so Joe Bacigalupi said, "Damn it, how stupid. Those allies my have much money and all that, but they don't know how to do things." And he was right. Eventually he was arrested. Eventually, with the help of the inside guard, a key was left unattended, so that he could walk out at lunchtime when everybody was busy eating. So this is some of my recollection. And then of course, his paper were very important for people to bring to Switzerland, and all people were sent from Switzerland. But then, in Switzerland too, we had a problem. On one point, an infiltrator, I believe his name was Cherasa, but I'm not certain. I believe so. He managed to go into one of these camps for Italian military, where he learned about plans by the allies, and -- to get people out, and he managed to get out and report to the -- San Vittory, to Hugo, and to the other group, what this Italian prisoner in the Swiss camp were planning, how they were selecting specialists, be the kind of job then that Aurora did

in bringing back into Italy these people to help in the underground, cause the ally needed help with specialists in demolition, for railway, for bridges, and so some Italian were very happy to get out of the camp, and help the allies to -- to do these kind of jobs. So you needed people to be very careful in the camps because of infiltrator, like this Cherasa, who they managed to get out, and go to report to Hugo, and to these people. And you needed specialists in demolition, se -- others. But the reason I think about Aurora was that here was a young woman in her 20, who gave her life to help.

Q: Right.

A: So, in a small way, we have tried to honor her, as well as the others. This is it.

Q: And you're referring to the Aurora Foundation?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Ca-Can you just briefly -- when -- when we look at this map -- we're now looking at a map of the northern part of Italy -- mon.

A: Yeah, but [indecipherable] Drunaggo is here. A-All this area here --

Q: Which is the last --

A: -- is border.

Q: Right.

A: Now, there are many other border --

Q: Right.

A: -- that we crossed. [indecipherable] people -- brought people over, etcetera, but --

Q: So if you could trace --

A: From -- well, all these area here, there are farms.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: But between Milano, Pavia, major university, major center of Intelligence gathering.

Actually, there was a group called U16, led by a professor of Pavia, a -- Bowerkio, who used to use my apartment for people to escape. And Usmiani, somebody called Usmiani. Now, all these people were involved in helping people to safety, as well people who guarded informations for the allies -- for the Committee of National Liberation. Committee of National Liberation gave it to them. Then, this is the area where -- I have a --

Q: We're now looking at a colored -- colored map that will be in the file.

A: Yes, but I have a place where I cannot see very well, I'm fogged. Ronaggo. All these area here, all these peasant --

Q: Is this Ronaggo?

A: No.

Q: I can't see it.

A: No, I had a fogging, let me see if I can clean my -- well I know --

Q: I'm looking --

A: First of all, we have to find Aljanio. It was from Aljanio, then the Valdentelvi.

Q: Aljanio.

A: Aljanio, that's Lake of Como. From the Lake of Como, and there is the Valdentelvi. This is Comkioni, where we had a big network.

Q: Here's Lugano, is it Como?

A: Lugano is here, Como is over here.

Q: Shall we look at another map?

A: Let's get another map. See [indecipherable]

Q: Oh, here.

A: See [indecipherable] I -- I ha -- no, I hav -- I must have another map. [indecipherable]

Q: Here's Como.

A: Okay. From Como -- this is not a good map, let me get a [indecipherable]

Q: This is not a good map, okay. I'm going to -- I'm going to stop the --

A: [indecipherable] no, no, this is the same.

Q: That's the same one.

A: But there was one. But there was one.

Q: Shall I stop the tape and let --

A: Can't see, it's so foggy. I don't understand why my glasses are so foggy.

Q: Aljanio [indecipherable]

A: Okay, Aljanio, and then we find the Valdentelvi. Casasco, all those little places.

Q: Ah, bide -- Intelvi -- Intelvi, I don't know if that's the same one.

A: Yeah, but I want to find Casasco, where I brought those children. San Fidelit Intelvi, here's a very important [indecipherable].

Q: Right.

A: And then, it goes all the way up here, near Lugano, and all this area here, all --

Q: Chanada austenno?

A: Y-Yes, but the San Fidelit Intelvi, is here. On the opposite side of San Fidelit Intelvi, there are other villa -- little bitops.

Q: Mm-hm, right.

A: Now they're all villas, but at that time they were all bitop. And, goes up, and Ronaggo -- okay, Lasold Intelvi was a major center osemistamento. That is to say, people were brought to

Lanso, and here was a wonderful network, with Laya Basso, his wife, Lizzie Buf -- Basso, who became senator later on. And Julia Bamphi, Jainjo Bamphi, their house, and was a -- a major --

Q: Right.

A: -- smuggling center, organized it, and Lydia organized all the smuggler -- knew [indecipherable] all the smuggler throughout all this area.

Q: Area, uh-huh.

A: And with Guido Bustelli, the chief of the fra -- Swiss Intelligence Service --

Q: Right.

A: They organized passages throughout all these border. And sometime was done through Ronaggo, sometime through Beesbeenyo, sometime to Arroyo, sometime -- all this area is consider a passing point.

Q: I see.

A: And all this area was patrolled at first, from -- by old Austria.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Then, when Lydia, and cohorts, began organizing dinner with food, drink, women, helped by little Katoria along the way --

Q: Uh-huh.

A: -- while the churches were sheltering the people to be passed. So Lydia was organizing the dinners. And at first the Austrian were very easy. Then, the German realized that -- what was happening, and instead of sending all the -- Austria, and they began sending SS. And true, they were SS who may have been f -- wounded on other fronts, but they were SS. And then they began to patrol with the dogs. And then it became more and more difficult, but we had the help of Bustelli and all the Swiss. Bustelli realized that his office had been infiltrated, it was

somebody, ba -- so he began talking to the -- not only to Lydia, but all to the smuggler in the dialect of the Teecheeno, which is incomprehensible to many people. And the day Leonard and I visited him, he -- he wrote a poem which I have in dialect, in my file. But he ro -- the whole area, the churches, the smuggler, the farmer, the pe -- everybody was --

Q: It was hilar --

A: -- helping, and on the other side, there were the Swiss. So I am aware then the Swiss kept money from the Jewish people, but I want to thank the Swiss people, who helped so much, not only with the border crossing, but also in the camps. I mean, there were some good people, and they deserve recognition for their courage. Now the dogs became a problem, and I want to mention what Lydia said, pass the words that we had to carry precious little ground meat. Inside there was a pill for the dogs, and above all, not to show fear. Lie down, pretend to sleep, leave the meat available right next to you, and as soon as the dog gulps that down, then the dog goes to sleep. Again, these are thing that we had no idea, but she and the network working with her, and the network with erking in Milan, all together, taught us. We were really greens on this matter. But the farmer, and the Pastore deser -- an-and then there was the guardida finansa, who were the Italian treasuries. Some of them remained faithful to Fascist, but few of them. The others all helped. So that when passages had to be done, organized by a, the network of the smart lerrer, and both Lydia from the Italian point, and Bustelli from the Swiss point, but there were a thousand of people working in the whole network. Then, it was very important in the guardida finansa, the Italian one, would turn their back so that we could do it. One of our job was to patch the holes. Now, the arrangement for passing between Bustelli, and Lydia, and their network, because obviously, was big network, was done by arrangement with special bell put on the collar of the goats. And the signal of the bell suggested the place of passing. It was an organization, but

the -- of course, we have to remember, the smuggler have been there for thousand of years. After the war, they became restaurant owner, bar owner, and we had the joy of meeting, my husband and I, and my son, actually, as well, and dot -- and granddaughter, we went to meet one of them in the Easala comatchina, on the Lake of Como, where there is a marvelous restaurant, and is run by s -- former smuggler, and their children, and their sa -- children now of course in their 40 and 50. So it's really an homage to ordinary people once again, but this woman deserve special recognition for --

Q: You mean Lydia.

A: Lydia. She -- I believe she never went beyond the third grade, but her capacity for organizing was incredible. Also her courage, and there are stories that we don't have time to go into it, but one brief one was that on one occasion, a man than she taught was with us, sent by the Committee of National Liberation in Milan. Turned out that he -- she helped him to go to the military camp. From there he learned a great deal, then he -- and then he came back and started her home, and she realized that he was a Nazi. At this point, two partisan came at her home, with guns. And this man, of course, also could do something. And Lydia said to the two partisan, "Please, please, I have two small daughter. If you kill him, then the whole village will be burned. Everything will be burned, and we will lose everything. So please go away, go away." And they did. So this Nazi man took Lydia to Milan, probably to the SS, she doesn't know where they took her. They sat her in a room where they gave her a big meal, and she thought this was her last supper. Then somebody came, took her by train back to Ronaggio, to the train station, gave her a note. Inside there was two gold coins, one for each of her daughter, and a little note. "You saved my life, I am now saved yours. But there will be no next time." So Lydia was so terrified by this experience, that she went to the home in the Swiss side of a friend and very active

member of the underground, and she went to sleep. And when she woke up -- these man had the penchant for putting mask with colored lights all over around the room. So when she woke up, she saw all these mask with all these lights, and she screamed, "Ayuto, ayuto, ayuto." And -- and all of a sudden, a -- several young men in trunk, because it was hot, arrived, beautiful young men who were waiting to pass through the Italian-Swiss border, to come to Italy to work. And she said to me, "Well, when I saw all those beautiful young men, I thought, if this is hell," because she thought she was in hell, ayuto, "if this is hell, I will stay."

Q: And what is -- what is ayuto?

A: Ayuto means help, help.

Q: Aha.

A: So Shirley Dondréa came with me, and we went with -- you know, with Lydia, we saw this beautiful villa. The owner was working with the underground, but he was also a major entrepreneur, traffic dinart, the Swiss knew it. But when he died, he left everything to Lydia, and -- because she helped, saved his life many times. But anyway, this Shirley and I -- I think Shirley took a -- pictures of this room with all the mask, with the colored light, and so we had a jolly good laugh at that time, and realized that the war was really over, we could talk about it.

Q: Did you see Lydia much during the -- during the war?

A: Oh -- oh no.

Q: No.

A: No, far from it. We knew about the famous Lydia, but -- she did other things that are incredible, such as she dressed like a bride, with a man dressed like a groom. From Milan they retrieved very precious material which was on a truck. And dressed like a bride and a groom, they crossed the borders, raising her sk-skirt flirtatiously with the German border, and then as

soon as they arrived, then she has a -- a str -- tremendous number of people who came out of the woods to help unload the truck, because it cor -- contained precious material than the Swiss could not get. And so Bustelli commissioned her to organize from Milan, this truck, loaded with this precious material, dressed like a bride, cross the border with a groom, and then as soon as they were on the other side, say this band of bandits -- I mean no, they were -- came out, and apparently, from what I learned from others, she had a stick and ran and said, "Faster, faster, faster, get it out." Because they were afraid then the German would realize the trick, and go after them. But this is Lydia for you. You saw her picture. No, then she thought that I was dead, or --

Q: Right.

A: So she said the mass, and so when I went to see Guido Bustelli with Leonard, and he's [indecipherable] died, and said, "Lydia is here." Well, it was a very emotional reunion. And let me show you a picture of Lydia in [indecipherable]

Q: Good, okay. We're going to take a break so that Ginetta can get this picture.

End of Tape Four, Side A

Beginning Tape Four, Side B

Q: This is tape number four, side B. Okay, we're back and we're now looking at an album, wonderful photographs.

A: Oh yeah, these are the -- when we became honorary citizen, [indecipherable] I'm looking for me there. You can look at [indecipherable]

Q: Mm-hm.

A: This is [indecipherable] lady, we had of the Institute Historical the -- Resistance.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: In Baldosta.

Q: Right.

A: This is the mayor, this is his assistant, who works there all the time, and she speaks English.

Okay, here is Lydia.

Q: There's Lydia. And this is what year?

A: This is Titiana.

Q: That's Titiana?

A: Oh this was -- this is Titiana. This was two years ago.

Q: Two years ago.

A: When we became honorary citizen.

Q: Right, 1997.

A: Well, look at the --

Q: I -- I am looking at Ginetta's wall, that ha -- made Ginetta Sagan, and Leonard Sagan
honorary citizens of Italy, yes, in 1997.

A: Oh, of Brusonne.

Q: Of Brusonne.

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Oh ho ho.

A: This is Lydia. That was the day we were made -- I have a short film about that day.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: This is Leonard and Ginetta.

Q: Right.

A: This is the priest, here's Titiana. This is Roberto Nico, the historian.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: And this is the mayor, with Titiana. This is all the Valdosta. Was a very emotional day.

Q: And this is you and Leonard.

A: And Leonard. See, he had regained quite a bit after surgery.

Q: Yes.

A: I'm so grateful to life than gave us that extra time. There is some member of the media. Let's see. This is Steve. I don't have to go to the doctor, he comes [indecipherable]. Okay, this are the two great partisan leader. This was the father of Titiana.

Q: And what's his name?

A: Tiba. Monsieur Tiba.

Q: Tiba?

A: Tiba. I gave you a copy of the picture with Tiba. And this is Lydia.

Q: Right.

A: That was a luncheon after the ceremony. The two great smuggler, y -- cause he alt with the Valdosta, and she was the Valdentelvi.

Q: And there's another picture of them.

A: Yeah. We laughed with his wife be -- whom I saw recently, that's when we took the pictures. It's a good picture.

Q: Very nice.

A: What an intelligent woman.

Q: Ah, that's very sweet. This is a picture of Ginetta being kissed by who?

A: Leonard.

Q: Aha!

A: He's my husband.

Q: Yes.

A: We are singing all the partisan song.

Q: Right.

A: Is a good picture of Leonard.

Q: Picture of Leonard.

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Anyway.

Q: Oh that's nice, nice picture of Leonard.

A: Well, what a life.

Q: What a life. Are you -- will you talk to me a little bit about your arrest? Is that okay, or --

A: About who?

Q: Your arrest. When they picked you up.

A: Oh. Because our friend -- well, first of all, I was sent in Valdosta. Now this is important. I have written about it. One of the underground activity was to organize people, sometime to go and evaluate the disaster made by certain destroy policy, by the Nazi in the valley, where we had so many partisan. And in Valdosta, in particularly Valtoonage, there was a very important group led by Usmiani, called the U16, Usmiani. And Buerkio. Buerkio was the professor at the University of Pavia. And he had access to my apartment, in fact, he personally often came on emergency, for instruction, also for training, for other people involved, into valdo -- Valdosta, and other, where the eevrie adeeoli veti company. The people at the high level, chief executive officer, and others, all these people had homes in -- in Cherveenia for skiing, in the valleys. That was normal. But was also a center, in Valtoonage, for transmitting to the allies, informations via

these whom -- I didn't know who it was. However, I was told that after the Rustellimenti, there was this page, then -- there is one page that you can copy, there was a frantic telephone call -- not telephono, some me -- some message, radio, whatever, I don't know exactly, to the Committee of National Liberation saying why the Germans -- the Nazi are negotiating in oursta with the church, and the representative of the partisan bands, or the truvalai, bartonunch, valdayass, dressonai. They are actually already starting towns to go, and people dressed in camouflage, including some very cruel troops, already starting to catch the partisan on their back -- clean up the valley. So here they were negotiating in oursta. The church in good faith. Tito, or ever, who is the commander of the Valtoonage did not go personally, as he was asked to do, but send somebody, because he sensed -- he smelled somebody. So there was this frantic call, or communication from Valdosta to Milan, to the Committee of National Liberation. The information had come from -- I was told, from somebody who went to a beauty parlor from our side, who heard either a Fascist or a Nazi woman, or mistress, or somebody saying, "Oh yeah, they are negotiating with the church, but they are going to clean up. The German are already started." Something like that. So, immediately, there was this one page, frantic communication to Valdosta, it was too late. We lost a lot of people, it was horrible. Many people were killed, and there was a traitor who was working right next to Tito. And when the time came for this person to go and give the meecha, the fire to the bridge, so then the tank couldn't go, he killed the other person with it. So -- and he had been with -- with us for three months and nobody realized that he was a double. But this I confirmed with Monsieur Tiba, when I saw him. And I spoke to Tito a few years ago about all this. So, after this disaster, we lost a lot of people, including young people that we had send up, because they didn't want to go to Switzerland, they wanted to participate in the active Resistance movement, so we send them up to the banns. And among

them a young man, Hoos Franco from either Maltarra, or Pavia, very close by, but actually, we were involved, our group was involved. Soon after all this disaster occurred, I was told by a friend, member of our group, the Benedetti, who was a mountain climber, and his son was working with us, he wife was working with us, that it was very important to go up to Valtoonage, and assess the damage, but more importantly, it was very important to go to the house of pierovono, one of the guide, one of the Alpinist, and only since last dega -- August, I knew -- I learned that he was part of this special group, like Lashincross, I didn't know before. As far as we knew, we were all in the underground, working. And these gentlemen, these architect, would come and pick me up at -- sometime early in the morning. He had all the permit, and he had a house, he owned a home in Chervinia. His name was architect Molino. Never met him in my life, but I was supposed to be his mistress. And, "But he's a gentleman, Ginetta, you don't have to worry, but we need somebody to go up with him, he own a house, and he has a perfect reason to see if damage was done, to fix it for the winter, and he has his mistress with him." And the mistress was me. And so jus -- lo and behold, here, in November come this gentleman, and kiss my hand, and I go with him, he had all the passes, everything. And we arrived, traveling to a place called Shationne. Shationne is right at the entrance of the Valtoonage. And we stopped. He was going to place his car someplace in Shantionne, and we had to carry the knapsack. I ask my ri -- I ask him if I could take a little suitcase, he said, "Yeah, if you feel like carrying that plus your knapsack, go ahead," but, you know, I didn't bring, I put everything in the knapsack. But we had to bring up some medicine, and we arrive in Shantionne, we go to this little bric and brac little store. This wonderful woman, Delphina was her name, and we chatted amiably, and then this architect said to me, "Go ahead, because I will catch up with you." Remember, I was in my teen, and he was probably 60, but he was much stronger. So it was obvious that he -- well, I

didn't think much, but it was obvious that he wanted to talk to her. Only in retrospect I figured all that out, but I didn't at the time. And we went, and we arrived in Valtoomage, and -- at the house of this family, and it was a -- all of the women were in black, they were -- well, they broke down crying, because of the horror. And one of them described to me how Franco died. They killed several people. In fact, about 10 years ago, I took a picture of the monument to those people, and we went, and then I realized that we -- we wanted to stay in val -- I wanted to stay in Valtoomage, and he, no, no, we have to go ahead. We went to Chervinia, and at the passage, at the block passage, there was Italian young Fascist. Very energetic, very ideologically committed people, but he had passes, and they were passes from the Gestapo, the SS, or some authority, and immediately everybody was, oh, please let me help you, blah, blah, blah, and all kind, and -- and I thought, oh my God, you know, I -- I trust Benedetti, no -- no -- but at the same time, you are startled. I never met this person, but he was kind. We arrived at his house, I was so tired. He helped me to take off my shoes, made a fire, and gave me something to drink, and -- and then I lied down and I slept for awhile, and then he woke me up, and he said, "We have to go." And we went to the home -- house owned by Pierovona in the same village. And we ha -- w-we had to retrieve some material, which we did, and I had to put them in my chest. Then, next day -- then I went back to bed -- next day, I s -- had to say to the Fascist that were mocking me for being with such an old man, etcetera, etcetera, that the altitude was not good for me, I had to go back, and say, "Oh yeah, this old man is no good, but we are good, come with us," blah, blah, blah all that suns -- kind of stuff. But they were very helpful. And I was going to walk down, but then they drove me down. And at the val -- at the end, th -- at Shationne, there was a little hotel where I was supposed to stay. When the hotel keeper saw me arrive with this Fascist, he was as cold as one can be, he said he -- yes, he had a room, but no food, nothing. So, well, I went to -- to the

bedroom, and about one or two in the morning, there were shots fired in my room, the glass fu -- so I went under the bed. Until the day before, the -- somebody from the Fascist or the Nazi used this place. So the partisan thought then they were still there, but I was there, so I went under the thing. And about oh, few minutes later, some partisan came in with the red ankle chafe, and the machine gun is -- "Where is she, where is she? Oh my God, what we have done?" They knew, they learned that I was there. So, the face of hotel keeper changed completely. He b -- the partisan actually, they said, libber, please give her some -- anything. So he brought out cheese and wine and bread, and -- and apologized. And then he put some coal in a scarbaletto. Is a gadget with a long handle, and inside put the coals, so that his wife warmed up the bed for me. I mean, it was such a change. And we -- next morning, I came down and he gave me -- I realized he put something in my knapsack which was very good, cheese and a piece of meat. I arrived home, and the apartment up above was where those two friends, and it was clear that something had happened, the food was left. And so I quickly got out, as well as bring the material to Viabeeli, and I was told then they were caught. So I began working with Dom Bickuli. And this Pierro, that I still don't know, who was an elegant man, working with the cardinal, etcetera. And the idea came, then I had to go and try to find hostages for exchange. That's little field that I have, is one example. And the son of Corvul sent me, because he knew then I had -- we were doing this. And I went north, all the way to another place, to another valley, up to Borneo. Borneo Livino. From Banktband with a password at each place, and -- and in Livino, I was told than [indecipherable] for exchange with our friends in Milan. Well, that was February, beginning of February. I took the bus, because I couldn't walk any more, my feet were so swollen. And I arrived in a place called Tiranno. And in Tiranno, the bus was surrounded, and -- and so that's how I was arrested. And from Tiranno few days later, that was the brigatanari, to Sondrio. And

to Sondrio, a very important story, because I saw someone died, and all sorts of thing. And then I was really -- I brought Milan to the mouti, and I was told by a man whose name was Crome that I didn't speak, but they had the means to make me speak. I didn't doubt it, but I -- but then they released me because somebody said then, oh no, no, I was not involved. Two hours -- I was still black and blue. Two hours later, one of the people from Sondrio, who had accompanied me to the bi -- mouti in Milan, arrived. And he said, "You are not working, so you have to come to Sondrio to work for us." And I said, "Well, I have an appointment with my doctor, because I have some problem with my lungs." And, "Well, you go and see your doctor and then you come back with us." So I went to the doctor, who was one of us, and the doctor meanwhile, had arranged for my friend, Enrico Mullisanno to arrive, and they said, "If you have the courage to do it, we would like you to -- to do it, to go back." Well, once they arrived back, it was clear that it was a ruse, too. And it was -- it's a long story, but the women of the Black Brigade were as bad as the men, and all of us remaining -- one was Bruno Bianci, whom I saw, and his wife was killed, the order came from Mussolini headquarter, from -- that all the people who may have been involved in Intelligence gathering -- and evidently they sus -- suspected that I was -- actually turnous, probably they were right, but I -- I didn't know -- they should be executed. And what they did was to make a sign that you were there voluntarily. They received a tremendous amount of brand new money from someplace, and they made a sign than they had given us all this money, when it was in fact they kept it, you know. And they wanted to interrogate me once again, which was, you know, it was the end of the war. But there was something really cruel about -- not all of them, at the point they were ready to be bad, but not all of them. Still holding on to this -- what they were talk about? The special weapon that the German would use, and would win the war after all, except after April thir -- 23rd. And they were talking about them, and

I was on the floor. They didn't want to leave witnesses to what they had done. It was very important that I give the name of all our people, it was -- so, they were trying once again. When the telephone rung, and somebody said than the German wanted to talk to me again. Well, everything was falling apart, but still they couldn't get it. And they were very angry that they didn't dare to say no to the German, they still had an inferiority complex vis à vis of the German, I think. That's my personal impression. And -- and two people dressed in German uniform came in, and made jokes about these Italian sissy, that they fall down on the floor, and f -- you -- you know. So the Italian dragged me up, but the German hold -- held me, and they took me out to the car. And from there they took me to the hospital where the nun received me and helped me. But I only learned later there were a number of people involved, not only for me, but for others, and German deserter was -- were asked to help. To intercept the communication in case the brigatanari, the mouti, would check to see whether it was true, that you still -- no, they didn't trust anybody. And so these people were risking their lives to -- to help us, to -- to survive. And it was from Bustelli, and -- and Lydia that they were part of the organizing with the help, with the guardiri publicani. The guardiri publicani were Italian who were called to serve. If they didn't, their father, their mother, would be beaten up, so they served, but they were our allies. So there was a number of people involved in rescuing last minute people in the interrogation cells, because they knew that we would all be executed. And so, for a couple of days, in the hospital, oh everything, you know, little broth, wonderful care. And -- but for two days, I was hidden, and then one of the people from the underground in that area -- that's another story, it's too complicated, but apparently I saved his life, and, "Torpelino, Torpelino," and then he came, and - - so then they brought me upstairs and I was in a bed. I was ca -- I had been cleaned up, and I was being treated, and I had wonderful care. And then, I have to say, the Italian government did

something that every government today should do for the people who are caught in such circumstances. They took care of all the care, and I was in Sondolo, it is a place, used to be for TB only, but we were rec -- put there. And then, from there f -- until September, and then to another place called San Martino di Castrotsa, in the mountains, for winter, and -- and then in Baratsai, f -- at the sea for a few months of treatment, and then I went to Scotland, and Paris, and -- and --

Q: Ginetta, see -- you were captured in February?

A: February, 1945, beginning of February.

Q: February, 1945.

A: And helped to get out in Apri -- on April 23rd, 1945.

Q: So when they were torturing you, was this consistent, every day, was it -- w-was it --

A: No, not every day, but they would do -- not only to me -- and remember, I was just one of other people Bianchi. [indecipherable] time they took turn, first him, then me. They had a hand generator for electricity. And I get upset when some people say, well we have to stop armament, because that only will stop torture. That's ridiculous. Torture can be applied in any small unity, by any means, by anybody. And -- and I think by doing the -- the other, you divert the attention from the reality, that any lethal piddling group, can find a way and means to torture people, including in the prisons. And -- but these were sophisticated matord, and many people didn't make it. Tiberio Pansini died under torture. And -- but also some people who were there, who tried to help. And you know, you could see in their eyes that -- and then of course, they did, they help you to escape. And also put out the matchbox, you know.

Q: Yes, could you tell that st-story, when you got the matchbox?

A: Well, because one of the point of the SS, the Gestapo, and [indecipherable] other police, everywhere, the point is to make the prisoner believe, that no one knows where he or she is, nobody care, the -- you are in their hands, period. And there is a consistent effort to make the prisoner believe that you are in their hands, nobody knows where you are, nobody cares. And one night, one of the guard shouting really bad words for a woman, you know, kicked the door open, and send this panino, that Italian bread, which is empty inside, you know, if you go to Milan, you'll see it. And I pick it up, and it was dark, but I -- we left the door open, but -- so I saw what it was, and -- and then I started eat, I was so hungry. I was also afraid that there may be some poison inside. But there was a matchbox, a tiny cherino. They are called cherini, I've never seen one so small in the country. They are cherini, and I lit it, and there was this little piece of paper, coracho. So I knew. No matter how many time they told me that nobody knows where I was, and I was. But I think it was important because I -- psychologically you feel like giving up. The other thing than they repeat to you day after day, that if you tell what happened to you to anybody, we will find you to the end of the earth, you will pay. And it seems to be a deliberate conditioning for the prisoner, because they did it on both places, in the tirano and the other. And a, nobody knows you are here. You are in our hand, we can do what we want, and b, if you tell anybody, you -- we'll find you to the end of the earth, you know, tha -- so, and -- working with prisoner later on in Chile, and re -- same thing. Former prisoner, former victim of torture would tell me time after time the same thing. And if it was in Greece or Chile, or Brazil, or Italy at that time, or Prague, or the soviet -- the same. So it -- it's -- there is an institution which is not necessarily taught, but developed by each one, by -- in each country. And I think most important thing is to educate the public everywhere, then there was a meaning to the universal declaration

of human rights, to make sure that see will never happen again to the Jewish people, to the anti-Fascist, to the anti-Stalin, to everybody else. And so I am glad I survived all these years.

Q: So are we.

A: Yeah. I've had the friendship of so many wonderful -- I discovered after the war that I was working with all the top people of the Committee of National Liberation, who, in their turn, were so helpful to our work for Amnesty International development. So that's really another story, than it's incredible how, because of the friendship of that period, you learn something, but above all, they helped to develop organization to help other people.

Q: Right. I'm going to take a slight break. This is the -- I'm taking -- I'm back from my little break. This is the end of the interview with Ginetta Sagan, on September 24th, in Atherton, California. And this is the end of tape four, side B. Thank you, Ginetta.

A: You're welcome.

Q: Actual -- the -- the interview ended, but we decided to go to another tape, and on tape five, there is a song, which is rather important for Ginetta, so while the interview ended, we still have one more -- a portion of a tape that --

End of Tape Four, Side B

Beginning Tape Five, Side A

Q: This is tape number five, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Ginetta Sagan, conducted by Joan Ringleheim, September 24th, Atherton, California. We are continuing just a little bit, to play a song. Have to get to the com -- I have to get to the tape recorder -- from the San Vittoria -- San Vittoria, the prison. Ginetta, can you --

[music plays]

Q: Can you translate it for us?

A: Si. Oh, we have to play it again.

Q: Well, we can, or you can just sing it, and --

A: Oh.

Q: Or do you want to play it again, and translate it?

A: Yeah, and translate.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay. But we have to --

Q: We have to rewind it.

A: -- I ca -- rewind it, yeah.

Q: Okay. Whoops.

A: See, I couldn't find it, this here, in -- in Milan.

Q: No.

A: This con -- this [indecipherable] can't find them any more, you find all that broken old jack, and so Jean Lee --

Q: Found? Okay. Okay, we're now playing the tape again, so Ginetta can translate it.

A: Is it playing?

Q: Mm-hm. No.

A: Well, it's playing, it's the machine, it's not --

Q: No, no, now it's playing.

A: O tara manna bella por tara manna. Por tara manna is the name of a porta in Milan. Chi stanna reregatsina kebardanno derradi -- little girls who -- li -- kay tayla danno. There are little girl than prima say good evening, and then they stretch the hand. Poila manno. The man is walking towards a street, bial lanjerri, where there is the San Vittory prison, and he said, jakta mijor -- throw down my jacket and the knife than I want to reven -- vindicate my brother, who is in prison. Throw down my jacket and -- and the knife that -- via San Vittory is full of stone, I know, I walked over it with punis sciafattor, and -- and -- how do you describe?

Q: Beating.

A: Puni. Beating.

Q: Beating.

A: Yes. Nofa -- bajeerai -- because very often the prisoner are beaten up as they are taken to the prison. Via falanjairi, the same, via San Vittory, it's a -- the equivalent of a ferocious beast in cage. The worst beast is the commissary de -- the commissary. The most ferocious animal is the commissary. Abasti de feroci. In via falanjairi, there is a bella wicha na campana. Every time it rings, it's a condemnation, a condamna. Yeah. There is this bell, that announces each condemnation. And we talk about the hand of these police sevaglio. Prima facha velardrai porai espy. Yeah, before he was a -- a chief and a spy, and now is the commissary of the politsia. Che valardro qui polaspia. We talked about that, about --

Q: And this ends tape number five.

End of Tape Five, Side A

Conclusion of Interview