

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Interview with Joseph Kutrzeba
June 6, 1995
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Joseph Kutrzeba, conducted on June 6, 1995 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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Joseph Kutrzeba

June 6, 1995

Q: Joseph, as we begin talking about the period after the liberation, I just want to make sure that we covered everything that you wanted to before.

A: There was one episode that I meant to cite and I will do it now. In those first few days of September of 1942, when the mass deportation started, my mother had been taken away. My father and my sister had to leave our dwelling because the Germans who were shrinking and shrinking the size of the Ghetto. It was hot. It was summer and there was no roof over their head anymore so we lived in the street for about three days and three nights on the pavement. When I finally obtained my father's permission to leave him for a few minutes because I wanted to look up my buddies from the resistance movement, something which he opposed for two or three hours, because he didn't want to lose sight of me in case we don't find each other again or that one of us will be swept up by yet another Razzia. I, walking down the street, I ran into one of the two fellows who a year and a half before recruited me for the resistance movement Hashomer Hatzair. This was Richard, we called him Rishak. He had the look of an insane person rushing about, and I asked him well where are the leaders and where is our cell and he finally gave me an address where I could find our company commander, a girl about 17. The word being Gdud, and when I asked him where Simon was, the taller of us three who also with him recruited me into the resistance movement, he told me that several days before the two of them were caught by the curfew. They had managed to work their way homesby a few minutes. The streets were deserted. The punishment for violating the curfew was often

instant execution in the street. So, the two of them darted into a store front and were flat against the wall when the German gendarme went by. German gendarme, who paroled the Ghetto most of the time in addition to the SS who used to come in for forays, for selection, but mainly after 9:00 in the evening it was the gendarmes, you might call it the military policemen. They discovered them and as Richie had time to tell me in those few words with the commotion in the street and throngs of hundreds of people milling about not knowing where to go what to do with themselves, waiting yet another selection. He said when the German gendarme approached them and asked them what they were doing in German, the gendarme turned to the taller Simon who was always the more combative one, the more bellicose one of us three. He always felt that when the time comes, the sooner the better that we should fight with whatever we had at our disposal. The German gendarme turned to him and called him "Du verfluchter Juedischer Schwein_", which means you Goddamn Jewish pig. Richard said Simon shot back and said you Goddamn German pig, at which point the gendarme shot him between the eyes. That's how we lost our closest friend, and at that point Richard, with his half insane look on his face said I got to go. I got to look for my father. I don't know where my father is. So, I went back to join my father and my sister in the street.

Q: Let me ask you one question. The years after that when hiding you were a catholic boy when you converted, did you have any information or contact with Jewish people?

A: Since I jumped out of the train on the way to Treblinka in the first few days of September of '42, other than sneaking into two more Ghettos, in the provincial small towns, which

lasted a few weeks before the deportations there started also. Once I was on my own again, and later with the priest and working for the Polish peasants, as of November '43 going to east Prussia with new Polish documents and Polish catholic until the end of the war, I had absolutely no contact with the Jewish people. I had no idea what became of them except that common talk had it that they were all either having been exterminated or they're in the concentration camps, and that there is a countrywide hunt for the Jews. I did not know about the crematoria obviously at that point, but I had the foreboding based on tidbits that they're either all exterminated or about to be exterminated.

Q: What about

A: There was no time to stop and think and deliberate as to what it feels like. The entire focus second by second, minute by minute, day by day was on self preservation and that meant watching my facial expressions, my 13:08:13 gesticulations, my "true story" where I came from, my identity obviously changed as to my background, my schooling, who my parents were, watching my speech. Because one could give one self away with one word. Even though we were quite Polanized, coming from a certain environment one accrues a lexicon of words that one doesn't even think about. Whether one be an Irishman or a Jew or an Italian, every now and then you use a certain word which under normal circumstances it is accepted and is part of the mosaic of life especially when there are some minorities in the country. You don't think of that, but when you try to play another role as it were and pose for someone else, one could give one's self away with a word. I'll never forget by the time I got to East Prussia and my German was already

so-so because of exposure and because of my childhood where my father taught me a little bit German and I was speaking German passably and I'll never forget when I spoke to a German and I used the word for bread Broit. Broit is the Yiddish, Brot is the German. Well, inadvertently trying to acquire as much German as I could in order to speak to the Germans, I used that word Broit and the German looked at me and corrected me and said it's not Broit, it's Brot. And I said yes, of course, but I almost collapsed within me because I felt that I would give myself away with that one word. Fortunately the German was not aware of that, but one had to be on a constant alert every second of the day first speaking to the Polish population for whom out in the country I was the "educated city boy." So, when they commented how good my Polish is, well he's from the city. But also with the priest, Father Farkowski we had a number of sessions where he would pluck out a word from my daily 13:12: lingo and then coach me not to use this word, not to use that word, and taught me a new melody of speech. In other words, a pygmalion, he was remaking me right down to how to hold my lips together because he felt that Jews by and large were more sensuous people and their lips were by and large thicker. Many Poles so he felt had a thinner line of lips, so then he coached me that when I'm not actually speaking to hold my lips together like this. In order to project a thinner lip line. So, I was -- ever since those days when he started remaking my identity as it were, for years and years after the war as I see it now, I have been groomed to play a role, and that lasted for years and years after the war, until not too long ago, maybe ten or fifteen years ago when I began to search for what is my own self.

Q: I want to get to that a little bit later. Let's pick up from when you were liberated. If you can remember that for me.

A: Well, the day after the liberation by the American troops and this was Patton's third army in Erfurt, Thuringen, which I was liberated the day after President Roosevelt died, which I believe was April 13, 1945. A couple of the Polish fellows with whom I lived courtesy of my boss, where he found a small room for five, six of us Polish civilian workers so we would not have to stay in a labor camp. One of the two Polish fellows said to me to go to the main railroad station, Erfurt, because that's where there were a lot of Americans. So, we walked over there maybe a half an hour or so, and there across the street from the main railroad station in Erfurt, there were a lot of G.I.s. In front of the hotel across the street from the station there was a lot of movement of G.I.s so obviously it's hard to describe how it felt. A mixture of enthusiasm that one actually not fully believed yet that this was liberation, but it must have been because there were American soldiers all around. It was warm and many of the soldiers were in a very friendly mood so I trying to invoke my English of which I had had two years in the underground high school courses in the Warsaw Ghetto, and I knew a fair amount of English because I liked the language from the beginning more so than French and I started conversing with the American soldiers. One word led to the other and they give us as usually after liberation -- skip it. They give us chocolate and cigarettes and things of that nature and we were very grateful and they said to come back in the evening and they'll have something more for us to eat. When I went back there the second day, one of the soldiers introduced me to a first lieutenant Preston. That lieutenant asked me, he looked like by the way one of the British

stars, David Niven, with the moustache, slim, tall very presentable, asked me whether I knew German. I said Yes, I do. Do I know Polish, yes of course, I'm Polish, I know some Russian. He said come on in and help us interpret because they've had a number of refugees and foreign nationals and also Germans whom they were interrogating apparently. So, I studied interpreting. I was then 17, for the American G.I.s. He asked me to come back the next day and after some two or three days, they gave me a shirt and the trousers of a G.I. uniform without an insignia so that within three or four days after the liberation I was already dressed as an American soldier. My job there was ostensibly as an interpreter and all around helper. I suppose some people call guys like me in those days a mascot or just a kid who fell in with the American troops. Within about a week later after I helped interpret for a huge number of displaced persons, Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, goodness knows who else who would stop by that hotel simply because the Americans were there. Help me with this and help me with that. It was a whole movement of nations. Occasionally, they would bring in Germans and as I found out later some got pretty rough treatment. They were moving out. This American unit and they asked me if I wanted to go with them. Well, you might as well of put me on the moon of my dreams because of course I would want to go with them. By that time I was eating with them and the food was out of this world compared with the war time diet. There was candy and cigarettes and everything else. It wasn't until a few weeks later when my English started getting better and so on that I found out what that unit what. To me they were just American soldiers. They were CIC. Counter Intelligence Corp of the United States Army, and as it turned out this was detachment 220 of the 20th Corp which was part of the 3rd Army, Patton's. So, I traveled with that unit. There were at the most

ten of them in that detachment headed by Major Lobb who I was told by one of the CIC men a New Yorker or a Jewish fellow said that son of a gun, he was the judge who once found me guilty when I had a traffic ticket in New York. Major Loeb who was a prince of a fellow in contrast with one of his lieutenants who within I would say two weeks or so made approaches to me, homosexual approaches that I frankly didn't know how to cope with. In the best English I could offer him when he came into my room in the evening, because wherever we went they commandeered the German hotel, I told him I was a catholic and as best as I could that we don't do things like these. Because up until that time I had never had any sexual encounter at age 17 since during the war in East Prussia at age 15 or 16 there were simply no girls or women to be with. A foreign national, Pole or any other non-German was under severe penalty to have any intimate relationships with a German girl, which was unthinkable. Some who had and found a German girl I suppose consenting were taken to concentration camp or severely beaten by the Gestapo. That was to preserve the purity of the German race. So, I had had absolutely no experience with a man or a woman. Within a few days after I was liberated and I was with these American G.I.s in a hotel 13:22:30 where they were stationed. One of them asked me if I could play piano and I said yes a little bit and I sat down to play piano. I had short pants. It was April and he sidled up to me and he put his hand inside my pants and started fondling me as I was playing piano. This was a few days after liberation. That was before I found out that they were CIC. To me they were just normal American soldiers. Within a couple of weeks two of them had made advances to me. That was part of my exposure to my great liberators and it wasn't until years, years later when I had gone to Yale and acquired a little bit more street wisdom and exposure to the world that I

learned that as the saying goes the intelligence community not to mention the diplomatic community is disproportionately staffed by homosexuals. My experience in the American counter intelligence, that's the people who liberated me within two weeks two of them had made advances vis-a-vis me and I was 17. As we drove with my liberators -- and the advances stopped by the way soon enough because I had made it clear that I didn't want them. The CIC detachment followed the front line troops throughout Bavaria and into Austria almost to reach Linz. As soon as the American troops occupied a city, the CIC was there within hours and sometimes even ahead of them. Once we were caught in the cross fire because we had marching orders to reach the next city and it turned out that that had not yet been freed by front line troops. Wherever we reached the city and it went - - we had 13:25: gone through Augsburg and a number of southern German cities and into Austria, and I remember we were stationed for a while in Ried, in Innkreis meaning the district of Inn and the town was Reid. As soon as we reached the town that was liberated, we had four or five jeeps and in teams of two we had addresses to pluck out the Nazis who had been on the list. So, this was basically the job of the CIC, that was to arrest the more prominent Nazis, and I interpreted when I could. I have not seen any bad treatment except one that who was detached from the first French army, a native Alsatian Frenchman who despised the Germans and whenever he was interrogating them he beat them up very badly. Since I didn't have to interpret I never wanted to be part of that but I would hear from another room and he would break chairs over their heads and so on and a number of the Hitler Jugend or the SS men caught were beaten up pretty badly when they didn't want to answer questions. Eventually, by the time that our unit was commandeered back into Germany from Austria, the CIC unit I believe was being

transferred or sent home so that I was taken by one of the officers to an MP unit, Military Police, and that was in Augsburg, Germany, with the recommendation that the MPs could use an interpreter. By that time, my English became 14:02: more proficient. I was with that unit of the MPs being houses and fed and of course living with them and having a GI uniform without insignia, for many weeks. This was when I gradually emboldened by my liberation began to confide in one or two soldiers about my true background. That I was Polish but I was also Jewish. Although by and large the GIs and MPs with whom I was living and working were a magnificent lot of young people. They were mostly draftees. They couldn't wait to count their points to be repatriated and to be released from the army. To them I was a kid, 17 and Polish and anxious to help them and grateful. They treated me magnificently. But, as the word got out that I was also Jewish, I started experiencing a few incidents of anti- semitism.

Q: It was a noticeable change?

A: Significantly, I remember standing in line for chow, the 14:04: army meal, in Augsburg where we were quartered. One MP sergeant with whom I only had a passing acquaintance was in the line nearby and he started calling me the Jew boy. As it turned out he was of Polish ethnic background from Chicago. Then, a time came soon after when I was ordered to undergo house arrest. The lieutenant Dempsey I remember his name a strapping, huge giant of a man from Kentucky who behaved towards me like an older brother with no hint of homosexuality whatsoever, always protected me and liked me. He told me that the major of the MPs, the provost marshall of that division, didn't

like Jews and ordered me house arrest for me. Lieutenant Dempsey the southerner who loathed negroes, blacks, so much so that whenever I went out on the inspection tour throughout the city, as an MP, an officer of the MPs, he was checking IDs and whether they had a pass, and whenever he met up with black soldiers, he treated them abominably, sometimes would lock them up. I asked him why he would he do that and he said because I hate the blacks because they are garbage and they are the scum of humanity, and I said but Lieutenant, as much as I was able to express myself, but isn't America for all? This was my dream of America, equality, justice from outside looking in. He said, yes, except for the blacks. And strangely enough, this was an MP lieutenant who was magnificent toward me even though he already began to find out that I was of Jewish background. But his superior officer, Major, also from the deep south, hated the Jews, and after a while, when Lieutenant Dempsey come sneaking into my room and bringing me something to eat, and I even needed permission to go the bathroom, because the major the provost marshal put me in a house arrest for as long as he would deliberate what to do with me next.

Q: What was the basis for house arrest?

A: That he didn't want a Jew boy to be an interpreter any more and he was trying to make up his mind what to do with me next, and Lieutenant Dempsy would come in and sharing his outrage but saying this was his superior officer. I can't 14:07:30 do anything about. And strangely enough, a man who became a friend of mine for years later in the United States, an attorney in Watertown, Massachusetts, an Irish man, John Corbot, who befriended me

also because he was one of the MPs. Strangely enough, he looked me up later when I was in the hospital and would bring me things to the hospital and when I came to the United States we became friends for years to come. So, that's another face of an American soldier. But, I never lost faith in the ideals of America and I wanted to go there, although I have already seen some of the shady sides of the face of the American people as exemplified by some of the soldiers. Meaning, some homosexuals, some Jew hating soldiers, and eventually I was taken to a DP camp in Augsburg which was a Polish displaced persons camp.

Q: Let me interrupt you for a second. How you experienced this, did it make you question whether you should remain catholic or admit your Judaism?

A: So, when I got to the DP camp in Augsburg, at the time when the population of the camp had to be registered, most had lost their i.d. cards and whatever. I then had a talk with myself because there was no one I could trust or knew what name I should use. My official name was then Kutrzeba, which was the assumed name under which I got the Polish identity card under the German occupation. When the time came to register at the Polish DP camp, I was wavering what name I should use and despite the couple of incidents of anti-semitism and the rather bitter parting with the military police for whom I was interpreting because of the major and one of the sergeants were anti-semites, I still felt that the overwhelming number of the G.I.s that I met were just great and friendly people, and I felt that I should revert back to my original name. Pride in my family and my background, so I had given the name Fajwiszys, the original family name, but as the

weeks went by into August, September of 1945 and as I lived in the DP camp with one of the American MPs, the one who became a friend of mine, stopping by occasionally and bringing me cigarettes and candy and all that, I began to experience manifestations of anti-semitism among my fellow Poles. It seems that whenever they talked about Jews it was denigrating and Jew boys and I wish they got rid of all of them and worse. So, here I was 14:11:30 in a DP camp with Polish population listening to a lot of anti-semitic comments, time and again, with most of them or all of them not knowing that I was also Jewish. This is no time and place, and I'm not a historian in order to make a case where there was anti-semitism in almost any country, including the United States, and there was some anti-semitism in Poland before the war, and the fact that there was six years of constant barrage on the average uneducated Pole by the German occupying authorities ridiculing Jews showing in the press caricatures of the Jew with the hook nose who is out to rob everybody and cheat everybody and for a case can be made, but this is no time and place for me to raise that. The fact is is that I began to experience almost daily anti-semitic conversations. That didn't make it easy, and when I was asked about the origin of the name of Fajwiszys which to those who know origin of names, might recognize that it is a Jewish name, I would say that it was a Lithuanian name, because a great many of Lithuanian names end is i-s. So, I said yes, it's an old family name from Lithuania. Then, when word reached me that a Polish gymnasium was being formed in Munich that one could go on with one's studies, I got permission to leave that camp and repaired to Munich where I was accepted into the gymnasium. There was a Polish gymnasium also in the DP camp specifically in the former SS Kaserne outside of Munich where very large Polish dp camp had been formed. The Jews had another camp a few

miles away and I had nothing to do with that and I have no reason to look up anybody because I was convinced that everybody I knew had perished. As I was exposed to some anti-semitism in the American army and in the DP camp I reached the conclusion by myself that the persecution is going to start over again. It's just a matter of time. I could not imagine that a country that was known to be the most civilized in Europe, Germany, at least 14:15 by some, launching a genocide with the whole world standing by without that it would start all over again. It was just a matter of time, and I didn't want to go through this again, now that I had obtained through some very difficult rambulations. My new identity I thought I would stick with it except in the way that my mind formed itself then, by then almost age 18, I felt that I should be proud of my original family name and somehow fake the answers to the origination of the name. In the DP camp in Munich, I eventually graduated from the Lyceum in 1947 an accelerated course with excellent marks, and the question was what's next. I still bore my original name Fajwiszys. But when I got to -- I'm going to start with something else now.

Q: I just want to ask you a question. I just want to a little bit about the conditions or the life in the DP camp.

A: The DP camp in Munich was the former SS barracks but barracks is not quite appropriate because Kaserne actually means a center, a military center. This was permanent brick houses with long halls and large rooms where there were double bunks. Life was fairly miserable meaning extremely skimpy food rations, watery soup, barely enough to sustain a person. As children meaning high school students, we would supposedly get a little

more, but I was convinced that there was so much corruption and stealing including the organs the international organs that were channelling the food to us, which was prominently UNRRA, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency. I remember when I broke my front tooth so that I was toothless in the front for about two or three years on crackers sent to us supposedly by American donors to the dps that were so hard they were almost impossible to bite. That's how I cracked one tooth. It was always a struggle for food. Eventually UNRRA was turned 14:19: into IRO, International Refugee Organization, but all the scuttlebutt and all the appearances we heard and saw was that there was an enormous corruption, an enormous black market of food supplies collected from many countries of the world, including I'm sure a great many well meaning people in the United States with a great deal of it being stolen or ending up on the black market and some of the officials getting very rich in the process. About a year after I entered the gymnasium in Munich the entire high school with our teachers was sent to a punishment camp by the American authorities. By 1946, the Soviets were exerting great political pressure to repatriate all displaced persons. Many of us Polish Nationals hearing that things were very unsettled in Poland didn't want to go yet, including the Polish forces who fought with the Allies at Tobruk, Monte Cassino and those who helped liberated Holland and Belgium and the Polish air force fighting for the battle of Britain. Eschewal repatriation because of word that the Soviets were entrenched with the Apparatchiks and so on, so that many of us didn't want to go back there until there was an assurance of free elections in Poland which as we know had not materialized. The pressure on the refugee organizations and the American zone authorities was so strong by the Soviets that there was a constant propaganda to return to

one's home country, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, Russia, what have you. The high school with our teachers was considered the hot bed of patriotism and nationalism simply because we were the more educated by comparison with the average uneducated inmate of the displaced person's camp, and because the school in ____ ?? ____ as a unit refused to be repatriated together with our professors who were prewar Polish teachers who found themselves in one way or another in Germany after the war, we were sent to a punishment camp in a place called Altenstadt near Garmisch Partenkirchen, wooden barracks. As it turned out, very cold and hardly heated in winter in order to break our spirit so that we would go to Poland, help solve the refugee problem for the American authorities and diplomatically help the Western allies who had millions of refugees on their hands in Germany further pressured by the Germans themselves who were telling them how can we rebuild our country with millions of refugees who don't want to go home. What's going to become of them. America and Australia and Canada and New Zealand, playing the waiting game, hoping that we all would go back home that they wouldn't have to admit us as emigrants. This waiting game went on in my case for five years. But in Altenstadt when we were herded on a train, we Refugees, displaced persons, members of the nations which fought on the Allied side in Germany, we were now being sent to a punishment camp because we refused repatriation under the communist regime. On the way to Altenstadt, we were stopped and searched by the American constabulary who was evoking in us an echo of being transported by the Nazis. Here we are a bunch of helpless civilians, Polish Nationals including mostly students of high school age with their professors guarded by the American constabulary which was a form of military police. Some of the MP units on occupation Germany called themselves

constabulary. At one point, a train was stopped. It was warm summer, every one of us refugees of Nazis was searched by the American constabulary and anything that was found in our possession fork, knife, old spoon for which we had no receipts of purchase was thrown on a heap and taken away from us. These were the measures employed by a combination of refugee authorities, the American constabulary and as we found out nearby a detachment of CIC where the head of it was a communist, an American officer. He also tried to force what he thought Polish nationalist to go back to Poland, because he may have been under orders to solve the refugee problem. Now, if you think of the ignominy of asking refugees to produce a receipt that we had purchased it during and after the war where one simply grabbed a fork 14:26: and a knife whenever one could, but here the American constabulary penalizing us refugees, us Allies to produce what would be under normal conditions in America. If you have something, produce a receipt of purchase. It was an unforgettable experience to me and the shady side of the American occupation that one had liberated me and on the other hand showed me the ugly side of America. Still in all, my faith in the United States never faltered because I felt that these were only people and the country as such is built upon Jeffersonian principles and liberty and justice for all and so on. And then as I prepared to enter the University of Munich as a pauper student after graduation, the food was scandalous, the little rations by that time. I had joined the Polish student home in Munich and our entire support was a carton of cigarettes sent by the Polish exile government in London to us, one carton a month. That was the entire support. So, those of us who smoke had the excruciating choice, to smoke half and sell the other half on the black market where you buy some food. By that time I applied and joined the Polish forces which were assisting

the American army and occupation. Polish forces put together from ex POWs and refugees and all kinds of young men who had been members of the Polish Armed forces before the war. There were all together I believe 60,000 of them in the American and British Zones of Occupation. All wore the American or British uniforms with Poland on the shoulder until the cold war started in '48 and the Soviets were launching propaganda that the Americans and the British are cultivating Polish forces to liberate Poland. End of

Tape 1

Tape 2

A: So, when I started attending the university of Munich on food rations that one can only imagine, no money no tuition to be sure, I have friends in New York to this day there are three of them that are my buddies, Polish students and to this day share a great friendship. We would share a slice of bread and a potato. This is '47 and '48, two years after the war. We were almost completely destitute, no source of income, no way to earn the money and no place to go except starting to attend lectures because every one of us wanted to make some thing of ourselves. I then decided that in order to survive and get some decent food I would join the Polish forces. Officially they became to be known as Polish guard, but we where in the service of the American army not armed because the soviets launched a huge propaganda that we were out to liberate Poland that the Americans and the British were cultivating this force in order to march on Poland but we were guarding American depots and performing a semi police duty for the American army. By that time, it was very difficult to get in on that force because there were three square meals a day and lodging and so on. Still, I resolved that I would try and what happened was a quirk of fate. When I appeared before the company commander who as it turned out was the prewar Polish army professional warrant officer called _____, in Polish. But I had been sufficiently exposed to anti-semitic moments that I resolved at the first opportunity I would have I would revert back to my assumed name, Polish name Kutrzeba, but how to do it. The best way to do it when I was about to join that Polish force even though I continued to study at the university whenever I could, attended lectures, and that 15:04: was the time to obtain a new identity under my old name. I

appeared before the company commander and had a long interview. I showed him my graduation papers from the Polish gymnasium, but I told him my real name was Kutrzeba and this is how I wanted to be known from now on. He asked me why and I had to concoct a new story in order to as by that time I pledged to myself remain Polish and catholic and make an absolutely clean break with Jews, and eventually hoping to immigrate to America into yet another lions den and I say it advisedly just as went into East Prussia with fake Polish documents hoping that in Germany I would be less apt to be found out a Jew than by fellow Polish nationals. This time I felt I would go to America as a Polish catholic and as long as I keep away from certain people, nobody would care, nobody would even bother because I had been told that in American as long as you do your job well, nobody cares who you are. Well, we'll get to that. So, when I appeared 15:06: before the captain and told him that Fajwiszys was a name that I took on because I didn't want to go back to Poland in the event that I was forced to go under my original name Kutrzeba. The name Kutrzeba has produced two famous persons in Poland. One was a revered history professor at the Jagelonian University in Krakow well known to all the academics and the other was General Kutrzeba after which my father named me. He asked me whether I was related, the captain that is, to General Kutrzeba, and I said no not really. Within one week I was accepted to enroll and I started within weeks as a corporal, later went to a sergeant and eventually became a second lieutenant with my main duties being teaching English to Polish troops as most of them were hoping to emigrate to an English speaking country, America, Canada, Australia, what have you. But I also performed the duties of the officer of the day every sixth day or so. It was months later that I found out from one of the members of that company that Captain Voiski told him

that he knew General Kutrzeba, that I looked like him. He was convinced that I was his son except that I was denying it preferring not to ask for extra favors and that was the reason that he hired me even though it was extremely difficult to be hired since the American Army put a quota on how many could be hired. So, then I spent two years as an officer for the Polish guard force working directly for the American Army and in the end we received preferential treatment for immigration to the U.S. as we served the American army.

Q: Can I ask a question. In all this time, did you feel alone, without family? Did you think about that?

A: Being alone and lonely became a fixture, sort of like a lamp 15:09: or the sky or a hurricane. At times an excruciating experience, a tortuous experience, worse yet because you have no one to confide in, no one to consult. I have made errors that in retrospect that if I had a kindly older person to consult or advise me let alone having the kinship and the warmth of the family. Now, I was alone. I was friendly with a few of the soldiers there. I became friendly with two or three of my fellow Polish students, but strangely enough, at the Polish student home in Munich, no one spoke of his war time experiences, and we were so touchy and respectful of one another that no one asked the other -- well, we might ask where you're from originally -- no one asked how did you survive, and I'm talking about non-Jews. Some Poles were taken into labor camps. Some participated in the Warsaw uprising, taken prisoner. It was almost an unspoken concordat where no one spoke of his war time experiences. You don't have to be Jewish to suppress the tortuous

and tragic events in your life if they are so close to you as we learned as we got older, 30, 40, 50 years later. It took that many years for some people to start confronting the torture of the war time experiences. At that time, '48, '49, '50, in Munich, the emphasis and the focus was on surviving. What's tomorrow. What am I going to do tomorrow and as we and some of my fellow students whose age range from -- I was the youngest. The rest of them were prewar students whose studies were either interrupted by war in the POW camps or what have you and some were 26 and 30 years old. So, I was the youngest, and our main focus after all being young and not being able to help ourselves and some whose families they had not heard from or who were also executed. Poland also had three million citizens executed in addition to three million Polish Jews. Our main focus was on what are we going to eat tomorrow and smoke and where are we going to find young girls to sleep with in addition to studying. That was the main focus. I in addition who had no family left, no one of my original background left, and I then began to play my role to the fullest of Polish catholic.

Q: Did you enjoy yourself at all. Did you start a social life?

A: Oh, sure, many times "you enjoyed yourself," especially when I started receiving income from serving in the Polish guard and still maintaining a tiny room in the student home. Of course I went to lectures. Of course I milled around with the Germans, but never got close to a single German. I remember one or two students took a liking to me and wanted to find out more about me, and wanted to invite me home to dinner and I turned it down. I didn't want to have anything to do with the Germans, although there was no other place

to study except at a German university. We were given preferential treatment, I mean displaced persons. The average young German had to perform physical labor for a year or two or three to clear rubbles and ruins of the bombed city until his turn came to attend a university, because millions of Germans who had not been killed in the war came back and they all wanted to study. We displaced 15:14: persons, as long as our credentials academically were sound, were accepted instantly, but the rest of the time there was no money, but if you could get a date with a German girl, sure why not. There was nothing else. You were a young man and blood was boiling so of course you would go to the park and go by the river and enjoy yourself in the sense where travel was almost impossible, passes were hardly obtainable, money was not there and I was lucky because I was getting three square meals a day and whatever I could I shared with my buddies who tried to scrounge of food someplace else.

Q: But you never got too close to people?

A: No. I could not get close to anybody because then the questions would follow about family about school and I had enough of my role intact to answer the basic questions, such as my family was killed. I went to school such and such before the war, gammer school, who cared and the rest of it was being suppressed.

Q: Did you feel like an imposter or that this was just the new you?

A: It shifted. There was a degree of self loathing at times. There was a feeling that I was dishonest toward my newly acquired friends other students, because one day they find out who I really am they would say to me, you were lying to us all along. Anybody else who would come even remotely close to my original background, I immediately stayed away from. This is how I came to America because in the Polish guard forces there were only six, seven officers, a company of about 120, and two of them as I learned gradually were anti-semites and both of them were suspecting me of being Jewish with little innuendos. Whenever an innuendo like that was directed towards me, I felt as if my whole world collapsed within. I would be in utter depression for days, but not knowing what to do with myself and having to put a face out to the world so I would not betray myself. My mind was made up. Sooner or later there is going to be another Holocaust. There is going to be another genocide because it was unthinkable that the world would not try it all over the again, since Jews are reputed to be the killer of Christ, at least that is what I knew up to that time. My mind was made up that I wasn't going to go through this again, that if I had a new identity and a reasonable speech and deportment that I'm going to preserve that. So, even though I could have stayed on in Germany for another year or two or three, because at that time I was both a student and earning some decent money where I could take girls out on dates and go to the opera and so on and had an imposing uniform and being an 15:18: officer, the Germans respected more than anything else, Herr Leutnant, they would flatten themselves because if it's a military rank the Germans would respect that, no matter who that is. If you don't have it, they'll step on you as fast on as a cockroach, but their respect for military uniform and authorities. So, I had a fairly decent life in addition to attending university and teaching English and performing officer

of the day every sixth day 24 hours, but I knew that that would not last. That could not last, and that I wanted to go away as far as possible with my newly confirmed identity Polish catholic. So, when everybody else, at least a great many applied for immigration so did I. One day my number came up. I had no affidavit. I had no relatives that I knew of or wanted to contact. Eventually I learned that my father's brother lived in America for 40 some years, and eventually I got to him. But I put my name on the list and it turned out that this was a contingent provided with blank affidavits by the Connecticut Tobacco Growers. Connecticut had been growing cigar tobacco for years and years, shaded fields, very hard labor. Well, a Mr. McCormick from near Bradleyfield Connecticut who wanted to get cheap labor, nothing wrong with that, American capitalist, you know, make money where 15:20: you can, had some Jamaican blacks but he wanted to have some nicer white boys from Europe. And through the NCWC, National Catholic Welfare Conference, Conference of American Bishops who were acting as the Jewish organizations were and others, to provide blank affidavits for young Polish refugees who had no place to turn. So, I came under that quota with \$10 in my pocket flown by the Flying Tiger Company in 1950 from Munich via Keflavik and Gander, New Foundland, because jets could not make the transatlantic trip yet, was taken to LaGuardia, and driven right to a tobacco farm where we started the next morning at 6:00. I and some twenty other Polish young men with no place to go were grateful that we were able to obtain American visa and the time was April 1950. We came on the tobacco farm and were shown our lodgings which were the former CCC barracks, Civilian Conservation Corp under Roosevelt, clapped together with wooden boards, a barrack of maybe 30, 40 persons double bunks half of them black Jamaican negroes and

half of us young Polish people. Work was back breaking under the shades, there were nets hung to protect the cigar tobacco in case of rain so that the leaves would not be destroyed by rain or hail. So, I was working 90 degrees in that heat under the nets which were back breaking and humid beyond description. 75 cents an hour, half of the weekly income was deducted for our food and room meaning barracks and the food was made by Jamaican cooks. To go to the nearest city, Hartford over the weekend we would probably spend the entire weekly wage whatever was left of it after taxes and deductions for food. This was my beginning in the United States. War in Korea broke out six weeks after I came to this country, and when I weighed in my mind what to do next, am I going to finish university studies which were almost out of the land of fantasy, and income and job, I had gone to the post office in Hartford Connecticut to volunteer for the airforce. I was by that time 22. I was in reasonably good condition, and I wanted to become a pilot and when I think now what motivated me to volunteer for the U.S. air force, I think there are at least three elements and in what proportion I'm not able to say. One was that in my own view of romantic idealism still in all despite some individual incidents in Germany after the liberation, I was alive because so many Americans died to conquer Hitler's machine. I was liberated by the American army. I was given entry into the United States. Now, as I saw it in my fairly naive romantic mind this country is in trouble. It's being attacked by an enemy, that's the North Koreans, so I would volunteer. Secondly, I would feel proud to wear a legitimate American uniform. Now, I'm fully legitimate finally. Thirdly, I felt that I would not have to work on a --by that time I know longer worked on a tobacco farm because I got a job in a factory in East Hartford I believe. Very, very difficult job where I threw up many times because there was no air

conditioning, hot in the summer, working on a machine having to do a quota, also 75 cents an hour and my stomach started acting up and I started throwing up because I was not used to the combination of milk shakes on one hand which I couldn't digest properly and the humidity on the other hand. So, by that time I already worked in a factory and I realized that if I volunteer for the army I'll have room and board after all and maybe, just maybe I'll be able to continue my studies because I knew by that time what the G.I. bill had been. What I didn't know was that it would take a long time before Congress would award the Korean veterans that same as World War II veterans because of political reasons the war in Korea was called police action and not war. But, in any event I then got caught in an incredible bureaucratic catch 22. The Air Force told me that I couldn't be accepted as a volunteer until I had my first papers. First papers meant the declaration of intention to become a U.S. citizen. It would take months before it would be processed bureaucratically and until then they couldn't accept me into the armed forces. So, I was willing to wait and one day when I came back -- I was renting a room for I think \$6 a week in West Hartford in Beacon Street, two elderly ladies who housed me. One day I came in and my land lady said you 15:27:30 have "greetings" and I said from whom? And she said from the United States, and I found out that that meant a draft notice. It was called greetings. I said they can't draft me because I already volunteered to the air force and I ran to the captain and he then told me that was the catch 22. As a resident of the United States, one could be drafted at any time even a foreign student residing in this country could be drafted under the draft law, but to volunteer you have to have the declaration of intention to become a U.S. citizen which takes months. In any event, the army got me and I ended up in I think one of the most abominable divisions I think as far

as treatment is concerned the 44th division part of Oklahoma National Guard where the cadre was what we called Oakies. There were policemen and all kinds of other men who felt that there would never be another war after World War II therefore they would get the income drink beer over the weekend and get some money for being in the National Guard. All of a sudden war in Korea broke out, they were federalized and there was something like 3,000 of them cadre and they had to find 10,000 cannon fodder meaning northern boys to become privates and all of them were upgraded and this as I found out they were taking out on us northerners still the vengefulness of the civil war. You know, the oakies finally have a chance to get Yankees and to tell them what to do. I went through some pretty hard times there. Once I was sent on shit detail for two weeks because I defended blacks in the division. When I was drafted into the U.S. Army in November of 1950, after very intensive basic training we had gone to Japan to train on the island of Hokaido. The Stars and Stripes wrote that in the entire history of the United States Army there hadn't been as intensive an infantry training as our division because in the wake of the initial American defeats when the war in Korea broke out, when it turned out that the average American soldier was unprepared and unfit physically to negotiate all the hills up and down, and up and down the terrain with backpacks, the Army was resolved on giving two divisions the 45th infantry Oklahoma National Guard and the 40th called the Sunburst of California to give them the most intensive training. And it was one step from hell, the training. I then resolved that if I'm going to fight the war for this country I might as well fight it and not get all the chicken feed from the tobacco chewing oakies as we called them and I volunteered for the front line service in Korea. Call it suicide instinct, whatever you wish, but I call it differently but that's for another

time. Eventually in Korea one year in the battle zone, there was some tough times. In fact there was a time with Oklahoma division on training where I seriously considered suicide because I just could not take the vicious handling by the southern non-coms who treated us northern gun fodder with utter contempt. This is also when I found out one more facet of true America when in Oklahoma National Guard sergeant once came into our barracks and started -- drunken, started a whole tirade against blacks and there were some blacks that served in our divisions but troops were then still separated, and I opened my big mouth and I said well sergeant I'm serving this wonderful country because I believe in it's principle of equality and justice and so on. Well, my punishment was two weeks on the shed detail, you know, digging ditches and so on. So, I began to accumulate my treasury of the many facets of America by that time. And when I served my time and came to this country and applied for Yale, I had to wait about nine months or so before the next school year, but I was accepted and eventually I had gone to the Yale Drama School on three scholarships, the G.I. bill, small scholarship from the Polish National Home in Hartford, and after the first semester, a half tuition scholarship from Yale itself. Plus, waiting on tables at the law school, the likes of Bill Lincoln and George Bush [?] had gone there probably just before me or certainly after me. Two hours a day to earn my three meals. Washing windows during Easter vacation when my rich friends went off snowboarding or skiing or whatever, and driving a Good Humor ice cream truck in the summer to earn my keep for the next academic year. Eventually I married a local New Haven woman, with whom I have a grown daughter, Karen. I lived with her for three years, and she still didn't know my background. She thought I was Polish catholic, because everything else I was suppressing. Nobody at Yale knew who I really was.

Once I almost had a nervous breakdown because it seems that when I got close to someone I couldn't take even a small rejection. I thought I fell in love with a fellow student, but I think it was like a puppy love, and things functioned all right as long as I was like someone compared to driving a bike, as long as you're moving and you work and you strive, you're okay. The minute the bike stops, you fall off. So, that when some feelings started developing toward the young woman I felt that if she didn't respond as much as I would want to emotionally, my whole world collapsed because I could not take what I thought was emotional rejection. No family, no friends, no one close, so that became very difficult to handle and it became a recurring pattern later on as well. In any event, when I got to New York after graduation something like A minus I guess, you call it with honors, I tried to get a job with CBS because the stage jobs that were available to me were not enough to support a wife and a young child. Among others I had gone to CBS because at that time CBS was developing a lot of good drama, which is now almost gone practically gone. Studio One, etc. The following incident I think is rather poignant. There was one man in the CBS television by the name of Jim Levinthal who interviewed me. As I was hoping to get an entry while being a page at NBC working the Steve Allen, the Tonight Show and so on, I think \$44 a week as a uniform paid for by NBC. I had gone to see Jim Levinthal at CBS two more times and at one point he said to me-- and he was in charge of hiring production assistants to become stage managers and directors, like John Frankheimer for example who had gone through that route. He asked me where did you say you came from and I said I came from Germany. He burst out and he said to me, "I'll be goddamn if I'm going to hire for the CBS program department, someone who came from Germany." And that was that. Jim Levinthal obviously an

American Jew and I was a Polish Jew and he turned me down because I had come from Germany. In this sense I suppose he reaffirmed his glorious American Jewish identity where he wouldn't hire someone who had come from Germany. So much for that scene, and that route was cut off. Eventually I got in through another door. While I was at CBS the first few years of course everybody knew me as a Polish catholic and that as that. My marriage was breaking up, and in '59 I was divorced and I was still with CBS. About the time before the marriage was broke up after three years, I was driving from Hartford Connecticut to Mt. Vernon New York, where I lived with my then family, and a passenger was a middle aged woman from Israel. She impressed me as having being made of an entirely different cloth. Tough and hard nosed and courageous and speaking of the new Israeli pioneer spirit although she introduced herself Polish Jewish. At one point she sat in the back, my wife next to me she fired a point blank question. Are you Jewish? I said yes. Then I surprised myself. It was something in her demeanor, in her deportment that apparently got through to me. She then spent the night with us and one word led to another and it opened up a whole past life for my then wife who knew nothing about it. It was that woman from Israel who began to insist whether I had any relatives in the world, and I said that I understood that my father's brother who had come to this country in the 20s that he was here somewhere. She wanted to know why I wouldn't look him up and I said of course not. First of all, he wouldn't understand me. He would condemn me. Secondly, I have nothing to do with him. I never met him, and I have some questions to him if I met him which I don't want to, what was he doing when we were being 'geharget' as they say in Yiddish, or exterminated and I don't want to go through the whole war time history with him because he would want it. She had

undertaken upon herself to try to trace my uncle, my father's younger brother, and when she had made contact, she prevailed on me to meet him using every kind of appeal for me to consent. When I finally did, we made a date because my uncle lived in Brooklyn and we lived in Mt. Vernon. We made a date to meet at Rockefeller Center, 30 Rock Plaza, as you walk in through the main door, I remember, in the main lobby, he described how he would look and Mrs. Bergman, the woman from Israel accompanied me. At once we saw a little man, slim with an elderly woman apparently his wife. She approached him and confirmed his identity. He walked up to me -- that is my uncle, my closest living relative, 1959, which is 14 years after the war. He pulled me to the side, walked over toward the very corner of the marble wall there, and said to me are you Joe, Yossel? I said yes. He looked to me turned towards the wall and started crying like a little baby. He couldn't say another word. It was I who had to gently pat him on the back and say Uncle Sam, all right, calm down now. I had to calm him down. Well, eventually I started visiting him and my marriage broke up, but shortly before it did, my wife started to persuade me to try to find out who I really am because I was between and betwixt. All of a sudden when that Pandora's box had been tapped I had no idea of who I was anymore, how I should act, what I should aim for and what my identity was etc. So, that my uncle -- through a ruse I found later, but through a ruse, made an appointment with me and a 16:14: Rabbi in New Rochelle, who then was the presiding Rabbi of New York City. It's a rotating function. Rabbi David Golemvenski, now deceased. Through a ruse because if my uncle would have asked me to see a Rabbi I would have turned him down. I would say I have nothing to do with a Rabbi. I didn't even know one before the war in a Jewish family which was traditional but not very religious. But he used a rouse together with a

rabbi I was told that the Jewish Center needed a director to direct a play. That was the rouse. I said sure, okay. When I went there little by little, he was a rabbi in the U.S. Marine Corp and advisor in Jewish Affairs among others to President Roosevelt. A man very accomplished and very bright. Well, one word led to another and he started a series of conversations with me and once I opened up I started letting him have it. I said where were all the rabbis when we were being surrounded. Where were the rabbis when we had to reaffirm our national identity in the spirit of resistance they instead urged us not to offer any resistance because a good Jew doesn't shed blood and so on. Where were all the rabbis that for two thousand years taught us passivity instead of reaffirmation of human dignity through resistance and so on. By the time that I started these conversations after I had met the rabbi once only I decided to seek out Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, who was a national figure, like Reverend Robertson today or Billy Graham. Fulton Sheen as a bishop had a half hour show on t.v. nationwide and was an incredible speaker. So, I thought I would repair to him and seek his advice. I was in his home on Murray Hill a number of times, and we had many conversations and it was then that my uncle Sam said to me well, you're a rational man. You went to Yale. Certainly why shouldn't you listen to the other side. I said sure it makes sense. And I started seeing Rabbi Golovensky. In the final analysis it didn't solve many of my problems of identity and the really point of explosion occurred when my uncle in about 1960 or so finally one day laid it on the table and said to honor my parents and to honor Jewish people in my heritage and so on, he says I had been baptized under duress as he called it and I called it not. I said it was of my own volition. He said well, what did you know you were 15 years old. You were frightened, you were terrified to death and the man was kind to you and told you there is

another god who is more valid and so on and in the name of that god Jews had been murdered for centuries and in the name of Christ allegedly as Christ killers, the biggest lie in history. So, my uncle made me an ultimatum, in fact wrote me a letter which I believe I have to this day saying that I ought to publicly renounce catholicism and reconvert to be a Jew, possibly some kind of a mumbo jumbo ceremony. I said absolutely not. Whatever happened, happened, and it happened because a magnificent young man, a priest, in the name of his god, but his god must be our god if we believe in unideism, or else nothing makes sense. In the name of the higher postulates of religion and human morality he risked his life because he 16:19: believes that love thy neighbor is the basic tenet. A man who did that for me in the name of his religion or call it is liturgy cannot be wrong, must be a worthy person and I am not going to spit him in the face and walk out on everything he taught me only because you who did nothing to save me want me to. We had a few very explosive conversations and it sent me into a long bout of depression. I believe at that point CBS has layoffs so the people with least seniority had to be laid off. As it turned out several months later they rehired me, but I already had a job with the U.N. then, and I was in the most abysmal state of depression. Again deserted, again alienated from everybody, again feeling myself deserted by my next of kin who said that if I don't reconvert he will condemn me and doesn't want to have anything to do with me. In one of the conversations I remember was rather explosive in his home and I asked him point blank, telling him that a decent Pole, a Christian with the help of a few other priests saved my life, risking it every minute of the day and I asked him at one point, what did you do Uncle Sam to save your own family at the time when strangers were saving Jews lives? What did you do? And he started

giving me what I call etcha petcha metcha, which means well you know there was some anti-semitism and there were the German Bund here and it wasn't so easy, and I said did you chain yourself to the gate of the White House as a protest because your brother and you family was being exterminated. If you didn't you have no right to tell me how to live my life, and what friend to honor, and whom to be loyal to. So, the following period, if I remember, about two years where I had nothing to do with him or his wife. And I was told in retrospect that he couldn't sleep nights. That he was crying and so on, but what I felt all along would happen that sooner or later if not my uncle then someone else would condemn me a traitor to the Jewish race because I was baptized. Along in about 1962, by pure chance I had walked into Yivo, the Jewish Historical Institute because Rabbi Golvensky felt and insisted that I ought to go. There may be a photograph or maybe something of my family of my past because I had nothing to reestablish the link with my past and to his credit he insisted and pressed me. So, I did, and when I walked into Yivo, and said who I was, my original name, there still was on the staff the few survivors who of course knew music and culture in Poland, and a man by the name of Finklestein immediately popped and said of course I knew your father. I said to myself, yes, a lot of people say they know my father like a lot of people know the pope, or Lenny Bernstein but does he know everyone. I was used to that by the way. When I was a child everybody said I know your father and it turned out my father didn't even know the man. So, within minutes he called from upstairs, as it turned out a revered, gentleman by the name of Jonas Turkow, a famous Polish actor and director before World War II, who as it turned out was a friend a my father was with my father in the committee for underground in the Warsaw Ghetto. His wife was the famous Diana Blumenthal, a chanteuse for

whom my father wrote songs at one time, and he came down when I was introduced. Finklestein said this is Joseph Fajwiszys, he said you are little Joe? I said, yes I guess so. Well, that's when the next chapter in my long track to reestablish my roots so to speak had begun. Because Ilu Turkow then had me in this home and with his wife Diana Blumenthal showed me a handwritten song my father wrote once for his wife which he buried in a can in the Warsaw Ghetto ruins before he managed to scale the wall posing as a Polish railroad man and found it after the war. He gave me and I still have it, and a long, long conversation started with a man whose daughter, herself, had been given over to Christians and when he survived the war his daughter who by then was eight or nine was saying oh those goddamn Jews, was imbued with anti-semitism by the very people to whom Turkoff entrusted his own daughter. So, his daughter also had a very difficult road back but at least had the original father and mother and so on, and still I understand as of a few years ago, she's not in very good shape mentally. Well, Turkoff as if he had found his own son. This went on for a number of months. I came to respect him and regard him highly because he had no religious ax to grind. He was just a man of culture. A man of tradition but progressive and so on. And one day, he told me that a man had visited him who was in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and that he would like to start an organization that had something to do with those who were in the resistance movement in the Warsaw Ghetto and wanted me to be part of it. I had grave scruples. I didn't want to do anything about it, but more and more he appealed to my conscience and the rest is history, because the few of us that's Jack Eisner, Jonas Stutkoff, Bob Bjorn and Joe Tulesky, Latka Meed and myself, formed an organization that we didn't know for weeks how to call it. Finally I came up with the acronym WAGRO, Warsaw Ghetto Resistance

Organization and I threw myself into that work, even though I was with CBS at the same time. We wanted to among other things, the objectives we discussed but then I wrote them the final version and they're still everyday at Madison Square Garden it's all there, it's all my language among other things is to build a memorial to Warsaw Ghetto heroes in New York. And we started raising funds for it with \$1 little coupon contributions. I sold them to anybody, from Walter Cronkite, to Mike Wallace, you name it, hundreds. Then it turned out from the treasurer I couldn't get an accounting of how much money we took in.

Q: How did this impact you psychologically when you had to all of sudden start dealing with a past that you had put very much in the back of your mind?

16:27

A: Well, both consciously and unconsciously I think that I felt that I finally no matter what the religious scruples were and no matter which church or synagogue I chose to pray in that it's my own damn business but at least I am who I am and I am the son of my father and I am the product of a certain tradition. The conflicts came with what I call the low class people, the Yiddishists, not that every Yiddishist is low class. Don't misunderstand me. There are some marvelous writers and poets, but Yiddishist in this context I call low class people who even before the war didn't know the language of the country but only spoke Yiddish and now wanted to remake history in the image of their particular social class. And people who wore their congressional medal honor which I called their concentration camp star, as a congressional medal of honor. In other words, any Jew who had not been to a concentration camp can only be relegated to secondary or tertiary role

because they were the front line troops. If you were not in a concentration camp, you don't count. Your voice is not important. You were too assimilated. If you know Polish literature if you want to speak your mother tongue, which was Polish in my case, and the case of Anielewicz, that's secondary. Yiddish is our language, concentration camp is our passport and that's that. They would not admit any dissenting voices. My clean break with them came after a year and a half where I was the only American educated member with everyone asking me to do things from the composition to board of directors and getting a non profit status and tax exempt status and doing the first two commemorations including one at Carnegie Hall organizing the whole thing artistically and managerially and all I asked for is that we run ourselves according to the American principles of legality and democracy. So, when it came to elections, and I had no ambition to be a president but only to elect someone else, there were two slates and they quashed down the second slate with big arms and strong pushy elbows and at that time, I left. So once more I left my people.

End of Tape 2

Tape 3

A: Ever since I began to acknowledge my roots which goes back to '59 and '62, it's been now over 30 years of intermittent, at time tortuous, inner life, except that I no longer am hiding -- parts of me are still hiding, but by and large I'm not. A cynic might say it comes with age because the closer we are to the end of our life we care less about when it might start all over again and from history we know that the ways of persecution of Jews and we see in the world today where other minorities are occasionally being exterminated by others. You don't have to be Jewish to be a Biafran, Nigerian, Bosnian and Serbian, and so on and so on, but you begin to care less and less about survival at any cost. Now it matters, survival with integrity. As I was construing my integrity way back then, I felt that and I've been throughout my childhood that any Jew who would convert is a traitor to the nation, and I believed it because what else was I to believe except everything I was taught. Eventually through the shock of the selections and the extermination phase when I was desperate and destitute and a young priest put his life on the line for me, but also taught me a great many things which I had not been taught in my childhood. I was taught a few prayers, just mumbling them in order to satisfy one class in school and that was the end of it. I had been to synagogue maybe two three times a year on the high holidays because my father felt that he ought to put in an appearance and occasionally he conducted a 12 voice choir or played the philharmonia which was sort of like an organ. But it had been inbuted in me that throughout that a Jew who is baptized and is converted is a traitor to his nation. He does it only for self advancement or for other commercial reasons. That is why I felt that when I was baptized by the priest and I remember once he

told me that it would be interesting to know if I would hold faith with the truth as he taught me in addition to love thy neighbor of which he was the best exemplified tenet, but also about Christ and so on. He said at one point it would be interesting to know that when the war was over if I would keep faith, because he says throughout centuries Jews converted in order to survive when it was more convenient and when the threat was no longer there they reconverted as he said a Jew will always be a Jew. I was determined to prove to him as I construed my integrity that that was not so, that I would be faithful to the faith as he taught me. That I would not change 180 degrees the minute it was convenient to me and the minute that was over that I could get help from Jewish organizations. In fact I had never gone to a Jewish organization. I came to America on my own, worked on a tobacco farm but I would not go to a Jewish organization because then I would have to go through the third degree and say oh but I baptized, I'm very sorry now could you help me with money. I would not do that. So, throughout all this I felt that I've lost everything, but my integrity as a human being, and as a human being I ought to keep faith with the priest that saved my life. That was my contract, that's it's okay to convert when you saw the true light or human kindness or mercy as exemplified by another religion, but it's not okay to reconvert because then you have no values left.

Q: Is religion a contract or is simply a belief?

A: Being in contact with Father Furkosksy for the last 50 years, I was guilty of not answering his letters sometimes for a year or longer, but he never got angry. He always wrote again and again with love and compassion and understanding until we had our first

reunion and second and then later on in Israel when he was decorated and so on. But there were long periods when I didn't see contact with 17:07:30 him because I felt I would have to live up to what he expected me, and I found that I progressively could not. I could not live a chaste life. As I told him once that without a love of a woman, I don't want to live in this world. He said he could understand that, that I had to get to the bottom of the few reasons for the persecution of Jews as he had implanted in me. That resulted eventually in a film that I was prevailed upon to do, namely Children in the Holocaust that nearly devastated me. I just couldn't sleep nights and so on and going to ten countries and listening to stories of some of the survivors that I couldn't even imagine that such plight existed in other cases. And throughout it all I had to find myself. Myself meaning that at one point I read all the four epistles from beginning to end and I immersed myself in books on the sources of anti-semitism and by omission and commission and by hiding by running away by struggling over many years, I have finally reached what I believe is going to stay with me and stick with me and that's me. That's only in the last few recent years. What is me, first of all. I am who I am in terms of my birth, my roots, my heritage. There's no getting away from that. I am proud of it as much as an Irishman is proud to be Irish and a Pole is proud to be Polish. No more and no less. I condemn and have so done in articles and speeches that I have made. People no matter what their ethnic grouping is, Jews or non Jews who look for a scape goat. Anti-semites look for Jews as scapegoats when the economy is down and they say it's all the faults of the Jews. Jews when they feel empowered find a scapegoat in others. Whether they be certain degrees of second citizenship among Palestinians, and I'm not a utopian and I know the reality and self preservation, or for many years claiming that all Poles are

anti-semites, which is equally untrue. Because according to Yad va Shem 37 percent of all righteous Christians honored were Poles. There are Jewish circles who condemn Poles for anti-semitism simply because it is now more convenient because there are now until at least recently they were more helpless than the Germans. The same Jews who go to visit Germany or receive pension checks from Germany do not attack Germans en bloc but they do attack Poles en bloc, meaning that there are some absolutely undeniable facts. The undeniable facts are the holocaust, the Nazi extermination and their collaborators. That is absolutely undeniable. It is also undeniable that among other nations there were victims who were tortured because of the nationalism, because they saved others, a few hundred Polish priests and nuns were executed because they sheltered the Jews. That cannot be shoved under the rug either. We Jews do not have the license to righteousness only or to suffering. We must continuously also honor those who were tortured by dictatorship and Nazism and continuously uphold as role models those who risked their lives to save many of us. So, who am I? I'm a Jew and a Pole. I'm also an American citizen and I hope a very loyal one. But anybody who would want to press further be they a scientist or a common Yente would want the question between diverse would always be no, so who are you? So, do you go to church or do you believe in Jesus Christ? My first answer is non of your goddamn business. What I do in private is my own self -- my own business as long as I don't deny who I am and whether I am more comfortable to walk into church or synagogue, that's my own business. Now, for posterity and for the sake of bearing witness and making a record, do I believe in Jesus Christ because it all comes down to that right, sooner or later, right. Either you do or you don't. Either you go right or you go left, said Mengele, right? First of all, I don't agree

with that kind of a Nazi theory that I owe it to anybody, to anybody in the world, to publicly identify myself with this or with that. Having said that, my personal belief to this day is do I believe in God? Sometimes yes, sometimes not. I believe that if he's omnipotent, he must have been on vacation for a very long time. I think I'm familiar with almost every dogmatic or church, dogmatic possible answer to the 17:15 question.

Well, God had simply set these things in mechanism but he gave us free will and so on. I am familiar with every one of these postulates because I've been taught and I discussed it with my priest and with others. Recently with a father professor of the catholic university in Lublin who was here. We had hours of conversation. So, do I believe in God?

Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. Do I believe in Jesus Christ? From every historical bit of evidence, there was such a man who lived and such man must have been a role model along with several others throughout the ages for humanity to pursue possibly never to attain, because who's willing to just abscond everything and just put on a sack and eschew all the riches of the world etc, etc. Since such men lived, and expounded all the goodness and all the mercy, this to me along with some other somewhat antiquated wise sayings from the bible and the koran and whatever constitutes the essence of human ethics and morality but advanced one or two steps more. Meaning, that goodness and love they neighbor is no longer the province of Jews toward fellow Jews but anyone is my neighbor, anyone is. If that had not been taken seriously by my savior, my priest, and thousands of others like him, I wouldn't be here to talk to you, and the last vestiges of morality and ethics expounded by the three major religions would be gone, even though they collapsed long ago in Europe which has fought catholic and protestant one another. So, that if Jesus Christ expounded these ideals in the name of which people are willing

risk their lives to serve their neighbor, a stranger, these are some of the highest ideals in the world. Now, to go to one step further to the ultimate level, do you believe he was a god? Well, there are theologians to this day who are not sure, protestant and catholic. I read all 17:18: four epistles cover to cover to this day, and I don't see anywhere Christ saying I am God. He said I am the son of God, but in the next chapter, another evangelist or he himself says, we are all children of God, so to claim the deity of God, the immaculate conception of Virgin Mary which some protestant reject also can go on and go on. In the final analysis who do I pray to? None of your goddamn business. I pray when I pray to God whenever I have hopes that he exists and not that he owes me a lot, but I think he owes all of us a lot in order to justify the innocent slaughter of children, millions of them in the world, to this day. But if there is some kind of a mechanism that I don't understand, then I'm willing to say well I don't understand that and in times when I must clutch onto something, and if I believe that there is a god, yes, sometimes I pray to him. What I say to him is between him and me. I own no accounting to anyone else, possibly to the man who saved my life, but then he and I we have our own way of communicating. We understand each other.

Q: Is it possible for with your experiences to live with no acknowledgement of religion?

A: Well, the same question can be posed to millions of other Americans who --

Q: Yes, but I'm talking about you. Is religion important to you today?

A: Well, if I reached the end of my struggle maybe I'll be able to phrase it better for you. I'm still struggling day by day. I very seldom go to church or synagogue. When I do, sometimes I'm very comfortable in church and at times when I get the goose pimples thinking that in the name of this or that my ancestors were being murdered by the thousands. When I go to a synagogue I don't really feel very much because it's been dulled by what I think has been the exclusiveness of the Jewish religion as we know it today. That I no longer feel having been with many non Jews in situation of extreme danger and in combat and in living in suffering with non-Jews as well and seeing that they have the same humanity as I do. They also suffer and cry and shake when there is fear, and often would do anything for me as I have few friends like this, like these non-Jews, I refuse to acknowledge that I am somehow the chosen smarter, more talented, better and more adept than my fellow citizens, or good friends, non-Jews. I refuse to. I excel in one way and they excel in something else. I cannot be part of an official religion that claims we are the chosen people and continue to be chosen because that is an invitation to exclusivity and to snobbish. You might say survival also, but it's not our fault that the world had stolen the reformed Judaism from us because I call Jesus Christ the reformed Judaism. From every available fact, he simply tried to reform the ongoing corruption that sooner or later seeps into everything, into government into any organized religion. He tried to reform that and anytime you try to reform an establishment you're going to be condemned. This goes on in the U.S. air force or Jewish religion everywhere else. I simply cannot be part of a segment, 17:24: religious or otherwise that claims exclusivity and somehow a level above everyone else that may have existed at one time, but I don't think it should any longer and I am all for people organizing and having

cultural groups and so on. If you want to go to synagogue that's fine, but if you ask me, I have been back and forth to hell and back so many times that I only --it's nice when I can speak Polish or when I'm with a few people who were born in the same Jewish section as I was in Lodz, but the rest of the time I seek the few who are imbued with value of humanity because unfortunately as time and again when push comes to shove it's the small minority that comes to the top when they have a chance, the gangsters and others, give the mafia half a chance and they'll rule, permeate Italian government, you name it. The bulk of the people care about only what they're going to do and eat the next day and how they're going to dress their children. For that sake, they're willing to swallow anything and they will not do much and they will not risk their neck and a small percentage of what I call elite of humanity are the noblest and the finest. They're seldom rich. They're seldom on top of the world. They're seldom occupying the highest positions, but I only seek out those people.

Q: I'm thinking that to some extent you dismissed religion as a contract, I'm wondering what it is that made you have a need to find your roots? What is important about religion?

A: Which religion?

Q: Any religion and yours that made you need to see him again?

A: I have not sought the Jewish religion if you mean by organized religion. I think that some of the abuses in the world have been committed in the name of religion. I have not

come back to my roots to seek the Jewish religion, not at all. I've come back to my roots first of all to make peace with myself not to continue living with self denial. Secondly, to honor the memory of my father and my mother and my sister. They were who they were and they were innocently slaughtered and I have no right to deny them. Everything else in terms of my public identification with many of the manifestations of what we call religious life, I see so much intellectual corruption and twisting and revision wherever I turn, be it the Jewish organized life or catholic organized life, so I didn't seek to be admitted to the bosom of the Jewish religion. It doesn't mean a thing to me. I don't seek to be an official member of the catholic church either.

Q: I think what I'm asking is, is the Jewish religion for you? I'm not saying going to the synagogue every Friday night, but does it embody a sense of history a sense of tradition, a sense of culture.

A: History, tradition, culture, yes.

Q: It's part of you?

A: As far as the widening of the ethical and moral concept of the Jewish bible onto the rest of humanity, I think that this is what Christianity accomplished although it has been guilty of many lies such as expropriating the reform Judaism as I call Jesus Christ as a rabbi, expropriating and in the name of accepting his tenets of love thy neighbor, murdering Jews which is the most advanced lie and bigotry in the world. But I do believe

that the way of making ethics and morality available to all humanity is the way that I believe 18:01: it. Call it what you will. If anybody would ask me the catch all question as to what have been the after effects and the consequences of all these experiences, well it's like trying to reduce Homer's odyssey down to one paragraph. One can do it only with sufficient distance, and I think now after some 50 years I think I have achieved sufficient distance. In my case first of all for many years I had to play many roles. It's like the seven ages of man from Shakespeare. Until and only recently I stopped playing roles. In other words, I would bend my behavior to what I felt I should sound like, speak like, behave and what my attitudes should be to one person versus another person depending on who they were, Americans, Poles, Jews, etc. So, I played various roles. That eventually resulted in not only dichotomy, but in some self loathing as to who I am. That has been the easier part. More difficult part that caused me incessant inner torture and suffering and 18:03: struggling has been the alienation for most of my life from most people. So, with the result that I don't trust most people anyway, and the few instances that someone appeals to me, I tend to go overboard, meaning that I try to make up for what I lost in growing up, in the love of father, mother, sister, relatives, teachers, peers and so on, and become periodically over enthusiastic and overtrusting until I get disappointed but that began to level itself off with age. So, I am absolutely convinced that my one great regret is that if I didn't have these crippling problems of running away, of alienation of avoiding deeper relationships, that I could have achieved much more than I have, and to some degree I have achieved what I was able to do, but in spite of my problems and difficulties. Three university diplomas and a stint on Broadway, starting my own theater, etc. etc, the rest is in Who's Who in America, but I'm still extremely

dissatisfied with myself because I think I could have and should have achieved more. When I would go on vacation for example with my second wife who told me that I was the biggest pain in the neck when I was on vacation because within a day or two I was already restless and wanting to get back to start another project or get back to work. I simply could not enjoy vacation because I think deep down I felt that I had no right to just be merry and mirthful and enjoy myself while all my people had been exterminated. It's a sense of guilt that every day that I get up that I don't further the cause of either bearing witness or creating yet another project and justify my survival. Whatever I have accomplished which by some measure is little, and by other point of view may be I suppose of note, has happened despite great many personal problems in relating to people. For example, when I was with CBS and case in point when I worked with Don Hewitt who is now a big celebrity, creator of 60 minutes etc., this is just a case in point, not to appear on Entertainment Tonight, but I know that I could have easily been one of the producers or directors on 60 minutes or soap operas or whatever and I have worked against myself a critic might say in that when I felt for example that on a soap opera that the values were trite, that they were mundane, that they were exploitive, I had such contempt for the people who in view of everything that has happened to this world and to me personally and to holocaust and all of that, that these people could still deal with these trite and superficial problems instead of delving deeper into the human conditions for the edification of themselves and others, that I literally had contempt for those values and I'm sure that I've shown it and said so a number of times. Well, that's why I'm not a producer or a director on a soap opera making a quarter million dollars a year today, but it doesn't

matter to me because I would spitting in my face if I build my life around these trite values.

Q: Do you have the right to enjoy yourself?

A: To me enjoyment is even with no holocaust but simply responding to my education in the European condition in my field which has been theater and lately expanded into television maybe film, that simply is being faithful to my profession. A doctor considers his calling, if he's a good doctor, to treat others and prevent suffering and pain. Well, being in the theater from which I have emerged professionally, my calling is to examine the human condition, sometimes through laughter, often seriously. But 18:09: the triteness and the superficiality that I find in the commercial field to me is repugnant. It's a violation of every - - it's the same way that a doctor would work only to push as much penicillin or aspirin as he possibly can only to enrich himself, you know just push prescriptions.

Q: Can you enjoy a walk on the beach?

A: Oh yes of course I can. But..

Q: Simple pleasures?

A: Yes. But to go off on vacation for more than a few days, I feel guilty and I feel that I am not doing something worthwhile. You don't have to be Jewish to enjoy Jewish rights. You don't have to live through the Holocaust to be committed to some deeper values and the calling of the profession. But I think it's only been exacerbated by my experiences because I think that I ought to do something meaningful all the time to justify my survival and in that sense I'm not the ideal person to live with and only think of what fun to dedicate myself to after working hours. And for many, many years having lost my family, having lived in so much fear and terror, having felt myself abandoned by my family, by Jews, by the rest of the world, it was probably inevitable that in personal relationships for many years, I would construe a small slight as a rejection and then respond in kind by either more forceful repartee or by running away. In other words, terminating a relationship, and this has haunted me for many, many years. Until by the time I was able to gain an insightful look into it, I was getting older. So, that's been the other affect but it's like saying someone what is it like giving birth to a child. You can understand it intellectually, but unless you've gone through all the trepidations and the enormous pain, you don't really understand it. So, you can talk 18:12: about these things, but to have lived through the constant terror first to survive, and then to protect what you construed was your integrity but in fact was a false identity and live in terror of being unmasked. Because if I was unmasked then I had no place to turn. I had no place to turn. There was no going back and there was no going forward, so I had to protect that carefully constructed false identity and I think this has been the greatest curse of the after affects. [PAUSE] Well, there is, as you probably know a film made by a Kibbutz Lokhamei Hagettaoth in Israel some 20 years ago called the 29th blow or 49th Blow or

something. That is somewhat a dramatic of my approach, the conclusion of that film. In other words, there was a survivor who somehow lived through some 27 blows being whipped by SS or by the Gestapo. But the worst, the 28th blow was after the war when he had found out that the world was so little interested in what he had to say. I remember when we established the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization in 1962 and wanted to come out with the first commemoration ever of the Warsaw Ghetto heroes that we couldn't find one Jewish community group or one synagogue in the greater New York would give us a hall free of charge in which to hold the commemoration. This was before it became fashionable to attache yourself in more ways than one, socially, economically, financially, status wise to the word holocaust. And sooner or later of course it is fall into the hands of the establishment or people who have either economic ax to grind or want to enrich themselves by publishing this or that. And that hurts but I suppose that is inevitable, and so we are the last dying breed because when the war broke out I was 11 which means I was old enough to remember what was going and young enough to attain my present age and talk about it. But with my generation when we begin dying out that is the end of those who will bear witness, and then what hurts is that it will fall into the 18:16: hands of the interpreters, the revisionists, even the honest revisionists who are going to place this or that emphasis because they will have their own ax to grind. When you watch a play or a film called Rashomon when a woman was violated and there were three or four different versions of those who were present. Each had a different version, then you begin to take the so called holy scriptures, including the epistles, with a grain of salt because unless every word had been guided by the spirit of God and that has to be proven as I know the scientific formula for approving the spirits. Whether to what

degree we can trust what will be the witness that will be borne, we have fortunately ways of recording testimonies which we didn't have 2,000 years ago or more, and maybe for that reason it will be somewhat better preserved. But what hurts more than anything is that what happened to our generation will not be properly understood or acted upon and what hurts even more so is that from what I see the world has not learned and the same thing 18:18: is liable to occur again and again. I don't know what else to say. I don't want to say empty phrases. This is a picture about six months old 1927 in Lodz, Poland of Joseph Kutrzeba born as Josef Arye Fajwiszys about six months old on a bear skin as was then a habit of placing infants on. This is my father Professor Israel Fajwiszys approximately 1921 in Lwow pre-war Poland, now Ukraine, born in 1887 in Yampol which was extreme eastern Poland prior to 1939 but at the time of his birth was Russia. Well, left to right, a chart whose identity I don't know because I got these pictures after the war, next to him I believe is my father's mother or my grandmother whom I never met. Standing next to her is my mother Malka Fajwiszys, maiden name Hakman, born in Czer.....? Poland. It was Russia, I believe it was 1902. Standing next to her is my father Professor Israel Fajwiszys and then in the woman's lap is my sister Perla age two which was about two years before I was planned and next to her I believe was my mother's sister or cousin, I'm not sure.

Q: When was this picture taken?

A: This picture would have to have been taken in 1925 because my sister was born in 1923 and she looks about two years old here. This is the foursome family picture 1937 in Lodz

Poland, left to right, myself, age about nine. Next my sister Perla called by everyone Rella, for short. My mother Malka and my father Israel Fajwizys, composer conductor among others the best known song all over the world, called MIkhel Massada?_-. I was extremely unhappy that day. I had been crying for about an hour prior to the picture being taken I remember, and finally my father had to quiet me down because prior to going to the photographer I had been saving money in my little savings box for about a year and my parents decided that I needed a new sweater and they decided to spend all my savings on that and I thought it was very unfair. This is my elementary school private class part of the Jewish gymnasium in Lodz, fourth grade if I remember with the men standing in the back Grevitz, who taught us geography and the sign in the back says _____, which means Silesia in Polish. Apparently that week he was teaching us about _____, and that's me in the center age about nine. About 1936, '37. This was as you can see the lower figures ten two forty-five, which means the 10th of February 1945 almost exactly two months before liberation when I had to go in the city of Erfurt_ in Germany to obtain a new identity pass because my old one was stolen and I had to go to the Gestapo, actually SD (Sicherheitsdienst), which was the security officer of the Gestapo to have a new picture taken with a number as a Polish catholic civilian laborer in Germany, age not quite 17 I think. A few weeks after my liberation by the American troops I was an interpreter with the CIC detachment number 220 part of Patton's third army already wearing an American uniform age still about 17. This would have been May of 1945. I am on the extreme right standing by the way. This was a group of us gymnasium kids in the Polish dp camp in Altenstadt, summer of 1946 I was well 18 I think and myself on the extreme right. The time is 1948 in Munich in front of

the BMW, yes the people who make the cars. The building which was requisitioned by the American occupying authorities to house the Polish guard company which was an auxiliary military unit which served the U.S. Army in occupation, and this is a review of the Polish troops by two American officers, and on the extreme left which is the Polish commander captain, and I was his adjutant, second lieutenant. I'm the next behind him in full uniform and white helmet. This was in 1933 the 20th year of the activity of my father as a conductor was a very festive concert in Lodz Philharmonic of my father which I believe I may have attended. In fact, I think I remember that I was at age about six. It was a very festive occasion and this is the original document, the program of that concert which has the left side are excerpts of two Oratoria and then Jewish folk songs all in Polish and the right side is in Yiddish. They story very briefly about how the original came into my hands was that the Yivo Institute, or the Institute of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe had been established in the 1920s in Wilno, Poland. The original members of the board was Freud and Einstein and the institute started collecting various programs and notices and reviews of Jewish culture throughout Poland and the adjacent countries. When the Germans came, the contents of the museum was confiscated by Alfred Rosenberg, who despite the name was a Nazi, not Jew. He was minister of occupied territories. This was taken to a Frankfurt, not destroyed for some reason, and the American Army found it, was perplexed as to what to do with it and passed it on to the Yivo Jewish Institute in New York and I found this among other papers and reviews of my father's concerts 20 years after the war.

Conclusion of Interview