

Interview with Barbara Farkas
December 9, 1995

Question: It's okay, we can, this isn't for broadcast.

Answer: It's for what?

Q: It's for the Museum's archives, it will be used, did they send you a form to sign, I have one with me.

A: For what?

Q: Basically, just giving your permission to do the interview and for them to use it the Museum.

A: No, they didn't send me anything.

Q: Okay, I have some here that later we can do. But, I guess the, do you want to close that? I guess the best way to start is if you could just say your name and where you're from and where we are right now and then we'll proceed from there.

A: Okay. My name is Barbara Marton, my maiden name, and my, after my, my living here, my name is Farkas. Miss Barbara Marton Farkas. We are from north Transylvania, from Arad(ph) City, but originally I am from Oradia(ph) which is also in Transylvania and I was deported in 1944 from Oradia, which at that time was Hungary, and when I came back, I went to Arad, that was my uncle and I was living in their house and they were very good to me and from there I went to University, get married, went to Israel and then come to America. We are staying now in my house in Newton(ph), we have here a two family house, we are living with my husband in this house. On the second floor is rented for a tenant. My

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daughter, I have a only child, a daughter, she is now 43, married, she lives in Newton with her family, her husband and two children, a boy, Unaton(ph), 11 years old and a girl, Leanna(ph), she will be 10 in January.

Q: And you've been living in Newton since 1973?

A: We live in Newton, in our house since 1973. But before we lived in Brooklyn, six years. And since then, we, when we moved to Newton, we bought this house and since then we live here.

Q: Well, let me ask you Mrs. Farkas, to start, I'd like to spend most of the time talking to you about after the war, after the Holocaust, after the, in the years, and starting out just in the years just after liberation and I want, if you can and when you can, for you to tell stories of how you felt at that time and specific things that you might remember from people that you met, experiences that you had. I read a little bit in the interview that you did back in 1990, about, so I know a little bit about how you were in Sweden and then you came back. But, what I'd like to do in the time that we have this afternoon is just have you go into some more detail about those things and in, more than anything, I suppose, the incredible challenge you must have had to rebuild your life in some ways after such a horrible thing happened. So, in a way, it's, it's something that I think can educate people to see how someone is able to rebuild their lives in the way that you did and so, I think that's one of the reasons that the Museum wanted me to come and talk to you

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today, so I'll ask you specific questions, but if you remember a story from another time that you wanted to tell, it's not so formal that, you know, please go ahead and say whatever you like, okay? I remember one image from your interview from before, I think it was just around the time of liberation when you realized that something had changed, when you opened a door and you saw a Red Cross?

A: Yeah.

QQ: Can you talk about, maybe we can start with that and talk about how, what impression, what feelings you had then.

A: Okay, I understand. We were wandering days in those _____, forth and back and already the SS guards were changed for Wermacht(ph) soldiers. They were sitting in our wagon, the door was open and on, when we were close to the Denmark border, north Germany, close to the Denmark border, the rail, rail wagons stop, they open large the door and I saw outside Red Cross cars and we look outside and we saw a commission, I can say, civil, civil dress, I mean civil clothing, with nurses with Red Cross uniform. And they were going from one wagon to the other, when they arrived to our wagon, how you say, wagon?

Q: Is it like a wagon, like a railroad car?

A: Yeah, railroad car, railroad car for animals, not for persons, we were sitting on the floor and nothing else was in the, inside. This was used for transportation, for transport of cattle or other material, not for people. And when they opened the

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door large, they said that we are free and we will be go to Sweden with the Sweden Red Cross. And that moment, we were in the wagon at least 16, 17, 16 up to 17 females. Everybody started to cry, to scream, we feel just something unbelievable, that is _____ because we were very weak, days we didn't eat, we didn't have water, all our mouth was dry and full with stuff.

Q: Like cotton or the cotton feel in your mouth?

A: Yeah.

Q: Very dry?

A: Very dry. And full with fleas, or fleas?

Q: Fleas?

A: Yeah.

Q: Like the little insects?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, you had fleas?

A: Full, full, our clothes were full with that. And just slowly they took us from the wagon and, I think, some 10, 15 girls, we entered in those Red Cross cars. We were transported not too far from there to a farm. The name of that town name was Badborg(ph), that was in Denmark, on Denmark soil. And we were, and they help us to get down from the cars and was, they give us to eat Hafenflock(ph) with milk. Hafenflock is some kind of cereal, warm cereal like, here you said is, some

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hot cereal with milk and they said, don't eat too, they give us portion, not, we didn't take voluntarily from some big pot, they gave us the portion and they said, some girls, they were asking for more because we were starving. They give us a good portion, but we could eat more. And they said, "No, you should eat with very big caution because you can get sick. You are starving and you don't, are not allowed to eat too much at once". That we understood and that was afternoon. After that they give to everyone, they give some sleep bags and we went to a, they take us to a, very close to that location, to a, how you say that, to a site where we were sitting on the floor with those bags and _____ those sleeping bags and we were overnight there. What happens in that time? With us were also the _____ in the Stubbinsk(ph), later _____ girls, they were the bosses in the lager(ph), they were very bad people. Beating girls and cursing girls, very, very bad behavior. That night, the girls they were a little bit stronger, a few of them, together get those girls and start to beat them very good with revenge for how they had, were behaving in the lager.

Q: Did you see this happening?

A: I see, but I was so weak that I couldn't, I was happy that I couldn't lift my arm, but not enough strong to go take part in that beating and one of them was even arrested, a couple. A Jewish couple. And she was arrested and they took her away, I don't know where. But those girls, a few of them, were very good, very well

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beaten. That was that. In the morning, again in those Red Cross cars and they took us to the railroad station, put us in some wagons, but they were beautiful inside, they were personal wagons. They were with velvet chair and, you see, very fancy wagons. And we were so feel bad, I feel bad because we were full with fleas, to sit on those nice seats or to lay down or something that, but was no other choice, we just sit on the chairs and they take us, transport us to Copenhagen.

Q: How many days is this after, after liberation? How many days is this after liberation?

A: That happens on first of May when the Red Cross take over. And this group was, they said that is the, _____ group, that means _____ of Sweden arranged with the Germans, with the Nazis, Hitler was already dead, he arranged with the Bernitz(ph), Marshal Bernitz who took over after, is not okay?

Q: It's okay, yeah, I'm just checking, go ahead.

A: Who took over Germany and he know, already the war was lost for them, and they want to have some advantages from the West Army, from the West Ally and they found out this, I found out this in Sweden already after that. That they Ally, with the money of the American Jew, they pay, they said, 15 dollar per person to let us go. And Prince Bernard(ph) _____, who was doing this business between the Jewish community, I mean the Goind community and the Nazis, the Marshal Bernitz. After we arrive in Copenhagen, they, we get down and they put

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us on a ship and we went to Sweden by ship to Malmar(ph), the southeast part of Sweden, Malmar. There again, they put us in cars, in some wagons and they took us in a forest, was a forest, I think was a military base there because a military people take care of us, each one separated, they pick our clothes, they get to do the bathing and then we went to, we were seen by a doctor. I remember my skin was so pinched by the fleas, that the doctor thought, they put me a note on my wrist, on the paper, on that note was written, scabies, but I said the doctor, it's not scabies, these are the pinches of the, of the fleas. And I just said, because he was talking in Swedish, I just said, no, no scabies, and he understood. And then they give us clean clothes, they put, in that time, there were tables in the beginning, or using disinfectant, they put some DDT powder on our head, we had already a little hair, the hair already grow after in Auschwitz was cut down, and with a towel, they make a turban around our head and, again, by bus this time, they, we went to Lanskrone(ph), is not far from Almer(ph), we enter in a school and the school was transformed in dormitories for us. In the classes, we were six, seven girls, again with those sleeping, sleeping bags and the doctor then check us after the bath. If he find something on that person, they send them in separate, separate and they send her to the hospital. I didn't have anything, any illness, I mean, my _____, my heart, everything was okay. Just I was very skinny, I was 32 kilo and that's around 64 pounds, something there, anyway, I was not sent to the

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hospital because they didn't find anything on me, just that I was very skinny. And we were in that school, they said there is a quarantine, we were in, they put us in quarantine in Lanskrone in the school, in that school which was reserved for us. There we stood, I think, two or three weeks, I don't remember exactly how many days, but a little more than, more than more, I mean, two weeks, three weeks, I don't know exactly. In that time, that was very, very, very joyful for us. Came the May nine in that quarantine and we were staying in a, in a class toward the street that _____, from the window we saw people in the street. And we, nine, May ninth was a big procession with, with, how you call it, priest and people and torches and flags and singing and when they, when they arrive in front of our school, they stop and start to hail us.

Q: To hail, to hail you?

A: Yeah.

Q: To salute you?

A: Yeah, yeah. And we found out that is a procession for the victory because it was May ninth, the victory of the, over the Nazis. And in those days when we were in the quarantine, start to come from the Consulate and Embassies in Sweden, representants from different countries because we were a group from Hungary, from Czechoslovakia, from Yugoslavia, from Greece, from Poland and they made list, they have the list of the people from their country and they come to me and

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said, Oradia was the city from where I was taken to Auschwitz, that was not Transylvania under the Hungarian occupation, and they said no Transylvania is already Romania, that means you belong to Romania Embassy. They take all kind of date about my family, that I have family and where can, the addresses and they gave us some money, but I don't remember how much, not too much, just pocket money. And also, from Sweden, from the local, that city of Lanskrone, they came to visit us, ladies from the Jewish organization, I don't know Haddasah(ph) or _____, I don't remember exactly, but they came, they talked to us, they give us some presents, they very, they are very nice with us. Also there, some people, some girls get sick from the food because they, they give us very dietetic food in the quarantine and even with that, some girls get sick and they were transported to the hospitals. After that, after the, we were allowed to get out from the building in the yard of the school. Many people were at the fences and we talked to them and how we can, I know French and I met a girl, a student, she was speaking French, her name, I remember, it was Margaret, and she gave me her picture and she made picture of me, I was looking terrible, you can imagine 32 kilos with short hair and terrible looking. When I saw myself in the mirror, I start to cry. And I have some picture made in the yard outside the building. Then when the time was over, I mean the quarantine time, they take us to the Romania, I don't want to use the word camp because camp is something wrong, were some villas on the shore

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outside of Stockholm, I don't remember the name of that place, where two or three villas where they, we were staying there doing nothing. And I get very friendly with three girls, three sisters, the Foyer(ph) sisters, Fire(ph) sisters. The oldest, Blanca(ph), she was married and left her girl in Budapest at the Red Cross. The other two, Magda(ph) and Anna, they were not married. Magda had her, her fiance back, took to work, to, in Russian, in Ukraine, Ukraine. And the youngest one, she was just finishing school. We were, get very friendly and after a while, after three or four weeks, we said, we don't want to stay here, I get a lot of pounds, almost double my pounds, my weight. And we said, we don't want to stay here for how long time. And they said, the supervisors, the three supervisors said if we want to go to work, something, _____ for us, we can go.

Q: Can I interrupt you for a moment here?

A: Yeah.

Q: Before we go on to that whole period where you started working, I wanted to just go back briefly to ask a couple of questions before we move on, if that's okay.

A: Okay.

Q: I just need to check something there, it's before, I wanted to ask you, going back, it seems as though, unlike many other people that were at Auschwitz and other places, you did not stay in the DP camps for very long at all, you went very quickly to Copenhagen and then on to Sweden, is that right?

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A: Yeah.

Q: It was just a matter of...

A: A few days, a few days.

Q: A few days.

A: A few days.

Q: Okay. I wanted to ask you, just, you described how you were crying and you couldn't believe this was happening when finally you saw the Red Cross there.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did it take a long time for you to, in a sense, believe that this was really changing, that this was really happening?

A: Yeah, we when we...

Q: What were your feelings like at the time?

A: I feel that is, was, I believed that because we were waiting for that moment. We were praying to get liberated. And we knew, we knew, I mean I knew, that Hitler is dead. I _____. When we were in that wagon, one night I was not sleeping, I hear somebody was, in the wagon outside, and tell to our soldier who was with us, sitting on the open door with his legs outside and he told to our soldier, "Our Fuhrer is dead". And we passed this news to all of them inside. That means we knew that Hitler is kaput and we, we were hoping and we were very anxious to see the end of the war. That, when we saw the Red Cross outside, we were surprised,

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but no very surprised.

Q: Right.

A: We were waiting for that because we knew that Hitler is dead and the war will finish very soon. But, even with that, we start to scream, to cry, many of us were screaming, "Where is my mother? Where is my husband? Where is my child?" You know, this kind of screaming they heard.

Q: It must have been such a combination of emotions that you had at that moment.

A: Terrible, it was a very, very hard time. Very hard time. The thing, I tell you, we were so weak and our mind was so depressed somehow, that we can't _____ really what is going on.

Q: Perceive?

A: Perceive what is going on, you know? We were not, we couldn't think very deeply. Just what happens, happens, but no, no very hard, very deep feelings because we were so weak that we couldn't think about so deeply somehow.

Q: Was it almost like a feeling of being numb?

A: Yeah, something that, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: And as the days, in those first days of liberation went on, do you remember the kinds of emotions you had as you started to eat a little more and as you, some of the first sensations, like the taste of the food and the..

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A: Yeah.

Q: The feeling of freedom, do you remember those kinds of feelings? And also, the terrible sadness you must have felt.

A: Yeah, the feeling was that to get back to my family. I knew that my parents, I was the only child to my parents, I knew that my parents are not alive because I, when I was selected by Mengele(ph), he took my mother to the left and I, he took me to the right. And I knew that, after that, already in the Nazi camp, that who went to the left, they went to gas chambers, but I didn't know anything about my father because the men and the women were separated immediately after, when they arrive in Auschwitz. And first, the woman went to be selected and the men, they were at the back and the line was so long that I didn't know what happened to my father. I have time to kiss my father at the, when we arrived, when we separated, but when I was separated by Mengele, showing to his helpers, to take me to the right, I had no time to say a word or to kiss my mother. And it was something unbelievable, you see, I was so, so confused, so, I can't explain that. In the first day in the lager, the Nazi camp, I was like a, living in a dream, in a bad dream. I can't perceive what's going on around me. And my friends in the, in that lager, in that block, they shake me and said, "Barbara, you wake up, wake up, don't think so". You know, they thought that I, I lost my mind. But after a few days, really, I wake up and I start to eat that terrible food. The first day I didn't eat because I was

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in a so big shock that I didn't know, I didn't know what is going on around me.

Q: Now, going back to those first few days after liberation, do you recall, did you have dreams at that time, dreams like could you find your family...

A: No.

Q: Or dreams of being free or not being free?

A: I have nightmares, all the time being chase, some...

Q: Chased?

A: Chased, that kind of dreams I had all the time, even now, I have that kind of dreams, to be chased and trying to hide. Trying to hide.

Q: Do you remember the details of those dreams?

A: Yeah. That I was in a, in a room and some Nazi soldier came in and want to take people out and we try to hide, you know, that kind of dreams I had.

Q: Uh-huh, do you remember some of the things like what you were wearing and where you would hide and those kinds of things, or is it more of a general...

A: No, more general, general.

Q: How did you feel towards the people who, the Red Cross people and some of the soldiers who, from the Allies, who...

A: We don't see, I don't see, didn't see any liberators, I mean soldiers. Because from the wagon, they took, I was transported to the, immediately in the Red Cross wagon, that means no soldiers. They were Red Cross senators, I mean with

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uniform of senators, that means I didn't see a liberator.

Q: And...

A: And I was lucky that I was in that group because the others they were in Bergen-Belsen and that was typhus, how you say?

Q: Say that again.

A: Typhus, typhus. You get that...

Q: Oh, typhus.

A: Typhus, typhus, you get that from the fleas. But our group didn't have, maybe there were some cases, but I don't know those people. In Bergen-Belsen there was, there was a big epidemic of typhus and many people die, you know. Just I said, I was very lucky that I was in that group because I heard after that that in other lager when they were, when they were liberated by soldiers, the Russia or American or English, English soldier, they give them all kind of food, _____, and the people started to eat and they were starving and eat that heavy _____ food, mostly meat, they get sick and many die.

Q: Because they couldn't digest?

A: They can't digest and it was not for the stomach, those heavy food. But we get all the time, very, very dietetic food with, for our very weak bodies, you know, we get very, everybody was very skinny. And the doctors, they prescribe diet and medicine, vitamins, so that means was very, they were very, very nice to us. They

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take care excellent.

Q: You were describing, moving back now up to where you were talking about before, the moment that you were staying in the school dormitory, and you were talking with some of the other, some of your other friends, did you start to think, you know, I have to put my life back together now, I can't just, were you feeling at all like you were rely, you didn't want to rely so much on other people?

A: We were not thinking for the future, for the far future, just what's going now, everybody want to go home. I mean, to the country from where they came, to find out who came back from the family. Who came back. Just I said, one was looking for her, for the fiancé, the other for husband, the other for parents, so on, they were thinking only about that. Because I was the only child and I knew what happened to my mother, but not to my father, I was thinking how to get back to Romania and I knew that in south Transylvania, were my uncle and his family, two uncles and one aunt, they are living, I knew that they are alive because from Romania, we find out, there was no deportation to Poland, to Auschwitz. And I tried, when the people from the Romania Consulate came to see us, I give the address, I knew the address of my uncle in Arad(ph) in south Romania, to send them or let them know that I, where I am. To make contact with them, that was in May, I never receive any answer, nothing. Many of my friends and the others, other girls, they get already telegrams, some of them letter, they get some

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information from the Consulate, that they are home already, their husband or somebody from the family. I didn't get any, any answer. I was very, very despaired, you say despaired?

Q: Desperate?

A: Desperate, yeah. And after we started to work, around December, beginning of December, somebody gave me idea to write a telegram, to send a telegram to Arad, the Jewish community, to the Jewish community office, putting in that telegraph, my name, the name of my uncle, his age, his wife name, and when he was living, the street. And after a short while, I get already the telegram for my uncle, they get him. And the telegram, I remember, was, with open arms we _____ you home. And I was so happy and we start to write to each other and you know what was the, was the mistake, why they didn't get my telegrams before? I put the number of the street, 36 _____, and their address was 32. And in 36 was a student dormitory and they didn't find anybody with that name in that dormitory with that name. For that, for that, because that number was wrong, they didn't get my telegram. From May until December, I send at least three telegrams in that time.

Q: To the same, to that same address.

A: To that, all the time I put 32, I mean 36 instead of 32.

Q: And, and so, was May to December of 1945?

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A: Yeah.

Q: And so then you, what was your reaction when you got this telegram back?

A: Yeah, the telegram, I was very, very happy and my uncle knew from before that I want to start at the university. And then he send me letters and I send to them letter, he wrote to me that, now if you come home, you can go to university and start with what you want. And I was very, very, very happy. Because I was dreaming all the time to go to study and to have a profession, you know. And from December '45 until September '46, I couldn't get home. Because I wrote letters to the Romania Embassy that I want to go to university and if I not getting home in time, I will lose the year, to study, you know, because in September start the school years, writing, writing, writing. Finally, they send me back in September '46, back. In this time, when we decided with my three friends, to go to work, we went to work, they send us to work. First, I was sent to a, in Walstadt(ph), was a seashore resort, and I was sent, I was sent to work in a, as a waiter, waitress in a small private cafe. A small, very small, familia, family cafe. Finally, I was the waitress, in the garden we had maybe four, five table, that was all. Then my other two friends, they were washing dishes in a big restaurant, I had a better situation because nobody push me around. The lady was very nice to me. The only thing what I disliked and I say I will not stay here, that I get a lot of tips from the, our clients, they come to the cafe. You know, they find out who I am, so, and they give

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me a lot of tips and he took my money, she said put this money in a, how you call it, in a box and she pay me from my money. And I get very mad of this and I said, I went to the employment office, and I said I want to, I don't want to stay to work for her any more.

Q: Did you say why?

A: I, yeah, I told, yeah. There I meet very nice people, especially was a couple, he was a former Consul in France and we, the lady was very, very nice, we spoke French and very nice people. And then they send, they send from the employment office, they send me to a nursing home and there I was working together in that nursing home, with a Polish girl. There we have excellent food, you know, they, everything was buffet style, we were, I was serving the people, the food there because many of them, they were in the bed, lying and I take the food to them and it was good. But, my other two girls, girlfriends, they were in the restaurant washing the dishes, they, because was a summer resort, they close the restaurant and they were, they became unemployed. They went, and I didn't want to be separated from them, we all three, three of us, we went back to the Romania so-called lager, was not lager, just I said, outside of Stockholm in villas, so on. And we went back there, that was our base. And then, there I met other three girls and we decided, because one of them was a seamstress, you know?

Q: Mmm-hmm (yes).

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A: And the sisters, they were just students, finish school, high school, myself, too. And when they ask us what, where are you going to go work, because they ask us, what you want to do? And Olga(ph), the seamstress, lady, she was married, she lost her husband, she said, "All three are seamstresses". I mean, her sisters and myself, we are all seamstresses. And they sent us to Urebro(ph), that is a big city.

[End of side one of tape one.]

Q: Okay, maybe if you could start again from just describing where you went to the factory, you were seamstresses and you went to this other, other city.

A: Yeah, we went, they send us to Urebro, to a confection factory by name, Tulens(ph), was a factory, they were doing suits for men and coats and for woman, only coats. And my girlfriend, she was, which was a seamstress said, "If they..." she was the older between us four of us, she said, "If they put you to work on machine, sewing, sewing machine, I am sure that all the machine are electrical. You going to see, in Romania you work on non-electrical machine, that means you don't know to work on that". Only she knew, the seamstress girl, she knew to work on the electrical machine because she was really a seamstress. And they were very, very nice people, the daughter of the owner find us rooms, where to stay, a furnish room with bath, with kitchen. And we were living, four of us, in two rooms. Two in each room. She find for us, she wait for us at the, at the railroad station, she took us by cart to those places and that was okay. And the factory was very

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close to our room, our apartment. And we were very well in the factory, three of us, we were working by hand doing the linen of the arms, around the arms, inside of the, of the coat or jacket. And we were sitting close from each other and all day we were talking in Hungarian, naturally, I mean we didn't know Swedish. And the boss, the man, the supervisor of that department, he was a little bit mad because we were talking too much. But, they were very, very pleased with our work because we work very fast and we did a lot of work for them. The Swedish girl, they were all the time out smoking or talking outside, and they were working slower, much slower than us. Even they, they told us, don't work so fast because it's not good for us, they said. But we were very nervous, you know, and very temperamental, and we work very fast.

Q: And, that's, I'm interested to hear you talk about that, being nervous at that time. I mean, you, you were safe in a way, and you were free, but in your mind, you must have, did you feel lonely or...

A: We were very, very not patient, we think to go home. Very impatient?

Q: Impatient.

A: Impatient to go home, to finish that staying in Sweden. They invited us, our colleagues in the factory, to go to their home and start, want to socialize with us, we went some, sometimes, but we didn't like it to go.

Q: Why?

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A: Because they were asking all the time our life in the Nazi camp and that was very painful to live through again, what we went through.

Q: Do you remember any specific times, Mrs. Farkas, where you were over at someone's house where you just did not want to talk with them?

A: No, we talk, we didn't refuse, but we didn't go again. You know?

Q: So, you wanted to be polite?

A: We went polite, we went, but when they invited us again, we find something to say and we said, I'm sorry I can't go or something that. And that time, came Christmas, you know, '45 Christmas. And where we were living in our apartment, the landlady was a very nice lady, was a divorced lady with a 15 year old girl, and she gave us present for Christmas and even I give some kind of uniform for Santa Claus and I give the presents to other, some just kind of jokes. But, in general, they were very nice to us. And also, in that city, in Urebro, there, there are many, I can't tell you by number how many, other people like us, from Poland, from Hungary, from Czechoslovakia, and we were choosing to meet with them, to socialize with those people, mostly with all of us together, not with the Sweden.

Q: Did you feel, you mentioned you felt impatient to go home, did you also feel lonesome in a way, lonely, there in Sweden?

A: No, no, because we were very close friends and we help each other and we, if some, one of us was a little depressed, they try to talk you out and we help each

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other psychologically, you know? The other bad thing about war is that we talk about the Sweden, about the work, about everything, and always we get back to the camp. By compare, by comparing something. You know? About the food, about all this, we finished with talking about the camp, and that was very, very strange. And we tried to don't do that.

Q: But you would do it anyway.

A: So, unvoluntarily, we get back to the, to talk about, about something compared to present life, we talked was in the lager. For example, we never threw out food, leftover food. We, we cook for ourself in Urebro, the last place where we were, we cook for ourself and we never threw out leftovers and we always said, "You see, don't throw that out because that would be good in Auschwitz". And if you're filled up, you don't have to throw it out, just put it in the refrigerator and eat it somehow next day or third day, but don't throw it out. No bread, no food. That was, even now, I have that feeling to don't throw out any food, leftover.

Q: So this friendship you had with these other people, these other women, it must have been so important for you in those first years.

A: Yeah, very important. Yeah, it was _____.

Q: Yes.

A: _____. Because one, the youngest girl, Anna, she had something with her back, some pain, I know, she was taken to the x-ray and some medication,

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now she didn't work. Not, the doctor didn't let her to work. I don't know, I don't remember exactly what she had, something with her back side. I mean, with her back. But the older two sisters, they were working and they eat together, they had the same room and that means she was supported by them. Was no problem.

Q: Did you stay in touch with those women for a long time?

A: They are in Israel, I visit them.

Q: They are your friends?

A: Yeah. The first one, Blanca, who was the seamstress, she find her girl, I mean her brother came back from Ukraine and he knew that her, that his sister's little girl was in the Red Cross in Budapest and he took her home. I mean, to Satumare(ph), they were from Satumare, also a city from north Transylvania, and Blanca, she knew that her little girl is home with her brother. The older girl, Magda, find out that her fiancé is back. And she was the first who was sent home, Magda. The Romania Embassy sended her at least two or three months early than I was sent home. And Blanca, who had the little girl, also. They went back to Satumare and then they went to Israel, all of them.

Q: During this time, Mrs. Farkas, that you were in Sweden, did you think a lot of your parents?

A: I have dreams all the times. Yeah. It was very painful and it's very painful now to talk about. My mother was very young, she was only 52, my father was 58 and I

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was thinking all the time, what she was thinking, something, what was in her mind when she, she was taken to the left side and what happens then. You know, in the ghetto, you know, Rhadia(ph), we were living at the house, in the apartment of a rabbi who was the rabbi who taught me Hebrew every Sunday at, in Sunday school. That means we were very close to them. They were old people. And when we went in front of Mengele, in the line was, the side to Mengele, was the rabbi wife, in the middle was my mother and I was, I was on the inside of that line. And from inside that _____, Mengele took me and put me on the right side, you know, from inside. That was very easy to don't see me and just let go the line because they were going pretty fast, not walking slow, but pretty fast we were passing in front of him, and I was thinking, if they wouldn't take me, maybe, no maybe, I was sure get to the gas chamber together with my mother and the rabbi wife. While I was inside, very easy can, can, can happen, that he didn't see me, he just oversee me or something, but it was unbelievable, that fear of, and those nightmares, to get hidden all the time in my mind.

Q: Were you afraid when you were in Sweden just because, that maybe you, like how could you be safe, how could you feel safe?

A: In Sweden, I feel very safe.

Q: You did feel safe?

A: Very, very, very safe. Well, not any thinking about that.

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Q: That thought of, the twist of fate, of how you ended up on the right side, seems like it's been with you for so many...

A: Yeah, that was what I said before, that in the first day, when I was put on the right side and I was already in the block, in that terrible place, and we were at least 800 people in a small, not so small, but very, very crowded place, they call it block, I was so numb and just how I said.

Q: Do you ever wonder why, how it was that they, why they chose you to go to the right side?

A: Because I was young, they looked to the face, they choose the younger people who he thinks that is capable of working or do works. You know? That way, not for his good will, no, just was a good person to work for them.

Q: Do you remember then when you, the first day that you realized that now I'm finally going to go back. You were in Sweden, you were working in the factory, do you recall what it was like the day that you realized that you were going back?

A: Yeah, they, yeah, I was very, very happy, very, very happy. And in Sweden, we made very good money with our work. We bought, myself and the others, too, a lot of things. When I came home, I have two big luggages full of clothes, shoes, handbags, coats, a little jewelry. I had two Omega watches and that means everything. I was thinking and spending the money on those things because I knew that I will go to university and I will have not money to buy five years any

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clothes, and I tried to buy for winter, for summer, all kind of clothes to have it for that time. And I was right because when I came home, I sold one of the watches and was enough for me one year for, for pocket money. Because my uncle, he wasn't a rich man, they were evacuated from the town in Romania and taken with two luggages to Ara(ph), to the bigger city. There were concentrated all the Jew from the towns in the one city. That means all, everything what they had, was lost. And he had a job as a accountant, not big salary, and I didn't expect from them to help me. I was happy that I have that to go home and in vacation to go to them and, but no, I didn't expect to help me with money. And I didn't need it, I'll tell you why, because at the university, it didn't cost me a penny. The whole five years.

Q: Even your food?

A: Nothing, nothing, not a dormitory nor the food, I mean the canteen, nor the fee, nothing. First of all, because I didn't have any, how you call, anything on me, I mean no house, no, no nothing. I was considered with no property. Secondly, which was more, more heavy to for them, I was a very, very good student. And they give scholarship to good students. And that means there were three categories of scholarships, first degree, second degree, third degree. And I was in the first degree with no fee, no pay for the dormitory and no pay for the food, for cantina. That was the situation, that didn't, and when I came home in vacation, my uncle send me money for the railroad to come home. That was all. And I guess

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some pocket money from them when they, how much they can afford.

Q: And when you first got back, what was that reunion like with your uncle and the family?

A: Oh, it was very thankful, I was crying, and they, again, they were very, very good to me, they didn't ask me how happens, what happened, because they knew that I am very, very sensitive, you know, and they didn't ask what happened, how was there, nothing, they didn't happen, they, what I tell them, they accepted, but didn't put questions. And that was, that was very good because I didn't live through all my, all my past life again, that was always very painful and I hate those people who was asking all the time about how was in the Nazi camp because I was living through again those emotions.

Q: It must have been hard enough to not be haunted by it anyway, even without people asking, you know, it was probably hard enough to try to put it out of your mind.

A: Yeah, and then when I came home, that was very sad, the story, coming home. They sent us from Stockholm to Prague by airplane, you know. In Prague we arrived just the day before the _____, and they didn't let us leave because it was a holy day, that was _____, was with the transportation, he said, "You have to stay in the hotel". They put us in a very, a fourth class hotel, and we stood there for two days, over _____. In that hotel were all kind of people, transition,

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in transition, coming from Hungary, from Romania, going to America, going here, going there, and when they found out, talking to us, that we came from Sweden and go back to Romania, they said, "Are you crazy? We come from that and you go back there?" And we were a little bit scared, you know?

Q: What were you scared of?

A: They said that the economic situation is very hard, that they don't have food, that Russia occupation, they were at that time still they have Russia soldiers all over. And we were a little bit scared, but didn't want to go back. We could go back to Sweden or go to America or some where else, but we said we won't go back because each of us finds somebody from the family who was already home. And we want to go back there.

Q: Were you at all afraid, also, as a Jew?

A: No, no, no.

Q: That was not a fear of yours?

A: That was not a, not a fear, no, no, no, no.

Q: And that is because, because you knew the situation had changed?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So, you then, was it in 1950 that you got married?

A: No, let me tell you, coming home from Prague to Arad(ph). To Prague we came by airplane from Stockholm. There, from Prague to Romania was not airplane, air

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route, was not, just by train. We went to the, they took us to the, to the railroad station and we were staying within the, how are the, those wagons, you know, on the corridor, not with, not covered, how you say it? Outside of the wagon, between...

Q: On the platform?

A: On the platform.

Q: The station platform?

A: On the station platform, we were staying there because there was no room inside. In Prague, the Consulate, the Romania Consulate, put us together with 50 Romania soldiers who came back from west, they were prisoner in west and now they give us the visa for all of us. Seven girls and I think 10 or 15, I don't remember exactly how many Romania soldiers. But they were very, very nice to us because we have heavy luggages and they help us for a package of American cigarettes, we knew this and we had a lot of, 10 or 15 package of cigarettes we had, each one of us, the girls, and we give them cigarette just to help us with the luggages. It was very nice. Until we arrive at the Hungarian border and we get down, because from Budapest we have to go to Arad, to Romania, you know? And then we get off from the train at the Hungarian, inside Hungaria, Hungary, at the border, was a Sunday afternoon. And many peasant people were at the station looking who is coming, who is going, you know, in the town, the big, the big thing is to go to station and

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see who is struggling _____. And they are very, there are many peasant, woman and men, too. And when they saw our group, we were all together, you know, they ask us who are we. And we said. And you know what they said? "Too many came back". That was the first _____ in the Hebrew, how you say, when you get a...

Q: Slap in the face?

A: Slap, it was the first big slap in the face that, what they said was, too many, they came back too many. When we say that we were deported by the Nazis, they say, too many came back. We said, a good beginning, but we could _____, that already we could return. And from Budapest, we went to Romania, I mean to Arad because the border within Hungary and Romania is through Arad, I mean the first city in Romania is Arad, but the border, how you call it, where is the border is they call it Kortitsch(ph), Kortitsch is the little town that they do the checking of the passports. And then was again a big trouble. This soldier, they have some, some, how you call, those military blankets, green military blankets and the Hungarian border soldiers said that they steal that, those blankets. And the soldiers said, "No, we get that from, I don't know, they came from France". They were prisoner because they were fighting with the Germans, with Russia, up to _____, the Germany and then they go then to France, anyway, they came from France, that I know. And they said, "No, look, is the stamp of the French Army. They give us to

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have coming home". And they almost get fighting and they didn't let us go through, it was afternoon, to get through was only half hour to go through, to enter Romania. This was on Hungarian side. They said, "You have to stay here until tomorrow morning". Oh, we were despaired, we were very scared. Because there were many Russia soldiers around. And we were afraid that they will come to us and take the luggages and maybe something else they going to do. We were very, very scared. But soldier were staying at the door, these Romania soldiers, and they said, "Don't be scared because we don't let them in". And they turn off the lights, that means they can see that if somebody in, you know? And somehow came the morning and we also, funny position, we went, we passed the border and arrived in Romania. And then, oh, there was also trouble at the border. They get all of us down and looked at our luggages. Also, two packages of cigarettes had the effect, you know. And one of the railroad worker ask me, ask each one of us, from which, from where are you? And I said Arad and he said, "Look, I am going now to Arad, I finish my job here and I go back and tomorrow I come back". And I said, "Look, I give you my uncle address". And I give him two packages of cigarette and take this note to my uncle and tell him that I am here in _____. And he went and after three hours, my uncle was there with my, with his son, the son, my cousin was 15 years old and he came with a car. And he took me, he didn't let me stay there because my luggages was looked over already and he take

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me immediately home.

Q: What was that reunion like?

A: Was something unbelievable painful, crying and, I can't talk about that.

Q: Was there some joy there, too, to see him again?

A: Yeah, from their side was a big joy to see me alive. From my side, I feel, I went to them before the war in vacation, to spend my vacation at their house, you know. And now that I will stay all the time with them was somehow unbelievable for me, to be like on their neck because I knew that they are living very, very big difficulties. My aunt was not working, just my, her husband, my uncle and they have a 15 year old son, oh no, he was older, was in '56, he was born in '19, some 17, 18 age was my cousin, their son, only son. And then slowly, slowly, I get used to seeing them, and I say, what you going to do? And my uncle said to me, "Let's go to Oradia". The city from where we were taken to Auschwitz because I, before going to the ghetto, and we knew we were already with the yellow star on us and we, we knew that going to be a ghetto somehow, they going to take us down there because was they talking about that they were going to take us to work in a camp, in a farm, so on. And I made and my mother some purses, small purses, twenty kilos purses and put many things from our clothes and bed clothes and jewelry and all kind of things, I did five or six purses and give to the neighbors to keep them. And then I went back with my uncle to Oradia, we went to the house where we were living. I

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find absolutely nothing in the house, empty. Only one picture of mine, I will show it to you, it's here. That picture, enlarged picture, my aunt went after the war is over, this was already in '60, 1946, that means the war was over in '45, she went over there and find only that picture about me. And she took it with her, and some prayer books she find also. Nothing, nothing else. And I knew the families to whom we gave those purses, but I, before taking us to the ghetto. And with my uncle we went there and we ask, we said, "Now I am back and please give me back, return those purses". Some of them, three families, said, "No, we don't have them because the Russia took them. The Russia soldiers took them". That, everyone said, at that time because they want to keep, they were not good people, honest people. But two family, they give me back the purses and some jewelry. The jewelry was my parent's wedding bands and my father silver Docile(ph) watch, pocket Docile watch. And also some, my, no a ring, was a ring. But my mother had beautiful jewelry, some diamonds, I can show you the picture, nothing. And I didn't want to spend too much time there, we went to see one of, cousin of my father, who was a pharmacist. They were living already in Oradia, but before they live in the same town where we were living with my parents until 1937 and in '37 they moved to Oradia. From where we were deported. Anyway, we went to that family, to the pharmacist family and he said, "Barbara, what you going to do now?" And I said, "I would like to go to university, but I don't know where to start, how to start,

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how to go". And he said, "Look, I go to Bucharest on this day, very soon, and go to your school, your high school, which I, which was in Oradia that I went, and ask them to give you a copy about your graduation situation because the original disappeared during the deportation. I took all my papers with me to Auschwitz, very smart. And they give me a copy and I give it to him and he said, "Look, I tell you to study pharmacy". He was a pharmacist, "And I will inscribe you." How you say?

Q: Enroll you?

A: "Enroll you and that faculty in Bucharest, you don't have to be there. And then you continue in Bucharest or you ask for a transfer to Cluj". In the pharmacy the first year was practice in a pharmacy, that was the program of pharmacist, to practice in a pharmacy under the sponsorship of the pharmacist who teach you many things in the pharmacy, how to prepare this. Because in that time, they were not like know, everything was ready made, like in a store, just sell medicine bought from a pharmacy factory, they prepared it. And we, he knew that when I will present myself to the exam, I have to, they have to ask me those things. And I, we went back to Arad and I found a pharmacist who took me in and I was staying, I mean going every day and starting with them. They send me from the faculty from Bucharest some book and saying what I have to know, when after one year I have to go to the exam. Something else I want to tell you. In, after the war, those

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students who lost years because of the fascist, I mean they lost it because they were Jew or they were political persecuted, came out a law by the name Boytech(ph) Law, who give the right to these students to don't give a admission exam to be, to enter in the, at the university, not giving that exam, without that exam. And I was in that category, that means, that law was valid until, I think until '47 and that means I was not asked to go to give that exam, admission exam. Then I went to, every day to that pharmacy and in that time, in Arad, I meet my husband. He want to marry me in that time, but I said...

Q: Can you tell us, how did you meet him? Do you remember the moment that you saw him?

A: Yeah, I remember. My uncle's sister-in-law, her husband was a far relative of my husband, I mean, I don't know which grade, third grade cousin, something that. And when I was in Arad going to the pharmacy, not having any social life, they say, let's introduce her to this guy to take her here and there, to movies, to, you know. And that was that. And he wants to marry me because he is four years older than me and he had a very good job and I said, "I am not, I don't get married now, I want to finish the university". And that was that. After one year, I went, I get, I asked for transfer from Bucharest pharmacy university to Cluj. Cluj is a big city in Transylvania, it's a beautiful old city with two university, was the Hungarian and a Romania university, two opera houses, a very cultural city. With historic pasts,

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everything, very, very famous. And when I went to Cluj to give this exam, after the practice one year, I was staying, there was a Jewish dormitory with a cantina, supported by Goind, by the American Goind, did you hear about the Goind? G-O-I-N-D. I don't know the _____. Anyway, Goind is a society or is it funded, I don't know how to call it, who helped the Jew in any situation, all people, nursing homes, students, special after the war, many people were helped by them. And this dormitory and cantina, mostly, not mostly, 100% of the students was not, we were only 30 people, most, they were all students who came back from deportation with no family. And I was accepted to stay there, no pay, no nothing, and I went to courses. I passed the exam and I started to go to courses. After the, I finish the second year because the first year was, the practice was considered the first year. I finished the second year with very good marks and then the third year, but I then I was on the, then started the third year, was a reform in the school and that way the faculty of pharmacy was divided in two faculties. The prescriptions faculty and the industrial pharmacy. The prescription pharmacy was four years, the industrial was five years. And I switched to the industrial pharmacy, in biochemistry.

Q: Let me stop for a moment, I just want to switch the...

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Tape 2

A: I, the industrial was five years, the prescription was only four years.

Q: And you did the industrial.

A: I did the industrial. As a student, in _____ was very, very jolly. Because we have parties, we have many reunions, every week, at least three times, we went to opera, opera was very, very, very cheap. Mostly we entered with not paying, sitting on the stairs upstairs. That was the student's life, but concerts and very, very cultural life we had.

Q: Were you conscious, Mrs. Farkas, at the time of the, I mean was the life of an emerging communist society obvious to everyone or...

A: I tell you the truth, we, I wasn't communist, but we believe it, we have it good as a student, we had a good life, you know. Not important to us, the, we study, we had good marks, we had all kind of advantages, you know.

Q: Partly because of the, that was the values of that society?

A: That was in the beginning, you know, it was not _____, it was _____, that was in '48, I started in '46 and I finish in '51. That means, the problem was that it, that dormitory in _____ was Alta(ph) Mark(ph). Alta Mark was a, was a mathematic professor at the Jewish high school in Cluj, before the deportation, but he died before the deportation. He was lucky, he die in bed. And because he was a very supportive for students, this dormitory and cantina

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they gave his name, that means that name, the name of the, that, how you call it, cantina, the dormitory together?

Q: I'm not sure, let's see...

A: A student home, or...

Q: Student housing?

A: Yeah, yeah, something that, the house was a big villa of a former bank director who didn't come back. They have upstairs and downstairs dormitories, we had, the girls, we were six girls, we had on the lower level and the boys were on the top. But, we get very well together, it was no problem between us, it was no boyfriend, girlfriend situation. The only good thing was that when we went to opera, we had, we came home with our room, not roommates, our neighbor boys, they came together with us. And you know, if you came home just girls at night, the opera was ended around 11:00 and more, we came together with the boys, that was all.

Q: Now, during this time, in the '46 through '51, did you find that it was at all possible to, and were you trying consciously, to start, to try to live a normal, quote, normal life after all these terrible things? Were you able to just live life without thinking about it all the time?

A: I tell you something, what was, not only mine, but everyone who was deported, you feel somehow easier when you are in your situation not alone. When you know that others are the same like you, you know? Somehow you take much

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easier that you are not alone in that terrible situation, losing your family. I don't want say that helps, but it somehow a little bit easier when you know that you are not alone in the same situation.

Q: And was that the case for you?

A: Yeah.

Q: During these times as a student, as well?

A: Yeah, yeah. Because I was very much preoccupied with my studying, you know, studying and then, well, if somebody, they saw that, I mean the roommates, saw that is a little depressed or something, that, they took you to the opera or to some parties, you know, they didn't let you alone. They were, there was a very big camaraderie between us.

Q: And these were other people who were also survivors like yourself?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. All of them.

Q: And I also wonder if, and I guess this could apply for the first moment that you stepped back onto the Romania soil, as well as the years following, did you feel that, that you, that this was so different now? I mean, your life had changed so much and so much had, had been torn away from you, that it was, that you were, it was almost like you were living a different reality, you had come back almost to a different place, a different country, did you feel that way?

A: No.

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Q: No?

A: No. No, I was, I feel very home with my family, my uncle's family. And also I was very happy at the university, that I can study, I was very happy with my results, my college in the university was very, very a good atmosphere.

Q: And did you experience anti-Semitism at all while you were in college?

A: Not really.

Q: No?

A: That was in the beginning, you know, then was the big fraternity within the minority and the Romania, the communist ideal. To everybody is equal and everybody is your brother and, that time, but later on, we can, very different, you know. In that time, in my, when I was, I tell you something, to please the Hungarian students and Hungarian people in Transylvania, they open a Hungarian university in Cluj to, you know. Which after, I don't know how many years, during the _____, they close that university and they can study in Hungarian at the Romania university as a different study, a different material somehow, their language, not everything in Hungarian, just some of them, you know. That, but this was the beginning when everything was in rose.

Q: And did you feel at that time in the, in those years at the university in the late '40's, that Romania was your home again, a place that you wanted to live for a long time?

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A: In the beginning, yes. In the beginning, yes. When came to be, to understand that is not the reality, happens once when I was ask, I was in the union of the Rumanians, of the university students, was a union, you know. A little bit was _____, was like a anti-_____ to the communist party. We were very much influenced by the communist government in matter, we were forced, it was mandatory to study at the university, Marxism, Leninism in Russia language, you know. And then was, once was a selection when they eliminate the party members which they think out that they are not 100% feeling communist. And they ask me once, because I was from Arad, when they were verifying a student who was from Arad, but I didn't know him well because I was not originally from Arad. They ask me to go to be present when they, when they verify him, how you say it, verify? When they check him, openly in front of the others.

Q: When they investigate him?

A: Yeah, investigate him in front of others. And that I dislike and I was very, how you say, shocked by that attitude. They, they find out and they ask that student, that when he was 13 years old he was a Zionist, he went to the Zionist, Zionist meetings. And he say, "Yes, I went to that Zionist meetings because in that time, we are not allowed to go to other clubs because they were, it was the anti-Semite and they didn't let us go with them. And I was forced to go to the club with all the Jewish students and they, we were Zionists". You know. And they, he was very

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much criticized and I think they threw him out from the party.

Q: Because he had gone to a Zionist meeting?

A: Yeah, Zionist was...

Q: When he was 13?

A: ...something terrible wrong for the communist.

Q: But even when you were 13?

A: Even, yeah, now wait a moment. Then came and they ask me what I knew about him and I said, "I know, I don't know him when he was 13 years old because I came to Arad only in '40, in '46, I didn't know him before". That was that.

Q: So they were asking you about your credentials, your loyalties?

A: Yeah, I was like a martyr, like a, like eye witness somehow. And I said, "I don't, I didn't know him before, I had no idea what he did when he was 13 years old". That was one. In the same, in the same time...

Q: And what year is this, excuse me? What year are you talking about now? When they're doing these investigations?

A: Yeah, I want to tell you about the others meeting, what was a very big shock for me, these students why.

Q: Is this 1950, 1951?

A: No, it was 19, 1959, 50 something there.

Q: Oh, so this is after you are out of the university and everything?

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A: No, I was still student.

Q: Still student, in 1950, did you say?

A: Yeah, I finish in '51.

Q: Okay, so it was 1950, okay.

A: Yeah, 1949, '50, I don't know exactly.

Q: Okay, fine.

A: Then, came the other student, in the same time when I was in that meeting, a Romania student, he was on his last year of the study, let me see, he was around 23 years old, a Romania guy, and he, they said to him, "You were in the, in the Romania parliament during the _____," who was a big anti-Semite, "going as a representant of the students, to the Romania parliament and give a speech for in the favor of _____, and that means you were a anti-Semite". What you, and what happened. They say that he was misleded, he was not threw out from the party, but the Jewish student who at age 13 went to Zionist meeting because he can't go to other meetings, other, he was throw out. That was a big shock for me.

Q: And how did this start shaping your thinking?

A: How? In 1950, oh, in the time, in 1950, in spring, in April, when I went home in vacation, we get married with my husband.

Q: Can you tell...

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A: We met again and we get married in April. When I went back to Cluj to study, he was staying in Arad, separated. In 1950, in the fall, you know. Came a law in Romania, Romania, that who was to emigrate, can emigrate.

Q: To Israel.

A: Israel. But you have to go to the police and take a form, fill it up, give it back and wait to get your emigration passport. And I remember, was a Yom Kipper day, I was still home, it was in the beginning of September, I don't know exactly what date, and we went with my husband and we stay in line at the police, there were many Jew there, going from the Synagogue to stay in line for the police and the police on Yom Kipper day. We went to get the papers, we fill it up, what happen? The police immediately are known, get the place where you work. My husband had a very good job, high position, he was a, he _____ control, in the, the big factory in Arad, they were fabricating railroad wagons. But the big one, they work for export to and he had a very, very high position. Immediately they found out that we asked for immigration, they put him down in a very low position, they didn't fire them, just put in a very low position. I went back to Cluj, they find out that I am also, I am asking for immigration, they threw me out from the student union. But they let me finish the school, that was the big advantage, because later on after two, three years, they didn't let people, Jewish students, to finish the, their study because they were asking for emigration. One of my nieces, happened to her. Just

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two exams was missing to become a physician, and she couldn't let them, let her finish and she was put to work as a nurse. And that moment, I was very, very mad and very _____.

Q: You felt that you had been deceived?

A: Deceived, yeah, very, very much. And I was lucky that I could, I finish the last year and that was that. Nothing happened to me because that. Just they threw me out from the student union. Now, the rule in Romania was that when students finish the university or any school, they put them in a job, they give them a job, officially. You don't have to look for, in that time, you didn't have to look for find a job. They ask from this city are you, you want to work in that area? Yeah, I want to work in Arad because I was already married, I finish in '51, but since '50 I was married and I said I want to work in Arad because my husband lives there. And because in Arad was not a medicine factory, you know, they give me a job as a biochemist. Because my study was industrial pharmacy in biochemistry and they give me a job to work at the hospital as a biochemist in the laboratory. That was it. We were waiting to get the immigration passport 10 years. Nothing came out. Later we find out that if you ask to emigrate to other countries, not Israel, they had that, they are very good friends with the Arabs, you know, and the Arabs, they didn't like it, too many Jews to go to Israel. If you ask for other country, they will maybe let you go. Then I wrote to my, one of my, not girlfriend, a girl, we are in the

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same city in the same society, in Urebro(ph), she get married with a Swedish guy. And I knew her address and I wrote to her and I ask her to send me a letter that I am a relative of her and she wants me to go there. And she send me that letter and we present it to the police and I said even that is my sister, but that was not true. Anyway, after one year, I get the permission to emigrate to Sweden. And we get the visa from the Sweden Embassy in Bucharest to go to Sweden. And then we went, oh no, I forgot to tell you something. I get married in 1950, in 1952, I had my girl, I give birth to my daughter, she, in that time, then we get the passport to go to Sweden, she was nine years old and that was in '61. Yeah, she, no, no, she was born in '52, this was in '61, yeah, nine years old she was. She was a very, very sweet little girl, she went, we had no problem with her, she went to daycare, went to school and we were very happy with her, she was very, very nice little girl and very good girl, no problem with her. Healthy and beautiful. I will show you the picture. And when we get the permission to go to Sweden, we went to, the way to go to Sweden or everywhere, was through Vienna. And we went to Vienna and in Vienna we find out that the Sweden want to give us the permission to stay there only for six months. And I didn't want to go on the, to my girlfriend to stay with her because she was living in a town, small town and from there what I got work I can do. I am a chemist, what work I can do there? And I didn't want to be on her neck because she was living together with her in-law, and I didn't want to go to bother

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her. And then we went to the highers, you know highers, the _____ highers. Highers is a agency who help Jew to go, not to Israel, but all in the whole world when it is possible to be accepted. And they tried to ask the Stockholm Jewish community to take guarantee of us, about us. But they said that they can't afford it and then we switch and we went to, we ask to go to Israel. And the lady, the director of the Highers was a very, very nice lady, American lady, and she said, "If you want, I send you to Canada". And I said, "Oh, I don't go to Canada, I haven't anybody, I don't know anybody in Canada, I will be too separated from the whole world, no". We switch and we went to Israel.

Q: So it was right at that moment in Vienna that you decided that, or this was before?

A: Originally, it was before, but to go to Sweden was only a pretext to get out from Romania.

Q: And after that, you didn't care where you were going to go, I mean you didn't know that you were going to go to Israel at that point, or you did?

A: You know, when we were waiting in Vienna, six weeks was the discussion between the Highers and the Sweden, we were staying six weeks on their account, on the Highers account in a hotel, and they were bargaining about us. Then I said, "I don't go anywhere, we go to Israel".

QQ: When did you, when you decided in 1951, to apply for emigration, was it

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because of what you started to see around you?

A: Yeah. There started to be, to feel anti-Semitism already. That case with that student, they opened my eyes what is behind their smile, you know, and their good will.

Q: And so, was it, was it a dream of yours to go to Israel, those years?

A: Yeah. In those years we were, my cousin, my uncle to whom I came back, they went to Israel in '58, you know, and they wrote that it is not easy, you know, in that time it was not easy to, even now it's not easy to get a good job, but they were, my cousin was a, became a chemical engineer and he get a very good job at, at a American chemical factory and my uncle was not so old, was only 60 years old, he also had a little job. That made things there pretty good. And they ask us to go to Israel, you know, because I was afraid, I was afraid that my husband can't get a job because he was a, an accountant somehow, you know? I knew that I can get job very easily as a chemist, but I was afraid of him, you know. That was my first idea that what happen if we go there. He doesn't know the language and how he can get a job.

Q: Did you speak Hebrew at the time?

A: No. No, not at all, no.

Q: Or Yiddish?

A: No, no Yiddish, we didn't speak Yiddish at home, at all. Yiddish was spoken in

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north Transylvania, north, north. Which is now Ukraine.

Q: So your languages at the time were French?

A: No, my mother tongue is Hungarian. In the school from the beginning, from the first grade in the elementary school, I learn in Romania because we were in Romania. After I finish the university, that means I spoke both languages very well. And in school, in high school, from the first grade of the high school, because the high school in Romania was eight years and the elementary only four years, French was the foreign language. And when I finished the high school, I spoke very well French because eight years I was studying.

Q: And since then, English and Hebrew.

A: English and Hebrew.

Q: So you speak five languages?

A: I don't speak French, my conversation in French is very difficult already for me because I don't have occasion to speak to somebody in French, but I, what I read, I understand 100%, I write correctly, but vocabulary, I mean the conversation is missing.

Q: Perhaps, so, well I wanted to ask you a little bit about the journey to Israel and some of your time there and maybe you could tell me a little bit about...

A: In Israel we were, my cousin in that time, he was sent to America to Chicago because he just started to work at that factory, but he needs some training and he

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was sent, he came to America. In that time, then we arrive almost, after a week he left for America. And that means I don't have not too much help. We were sent to stay in a Swedish bungalow in Afula(ph), this is north of Haifa, not too north of, very close to Haifa.

Q: Near Aka(ph)?

A: Afula. Afula.

Q: Do you know where Ako(ph) is?

A: I know, Ako is on the seashore.

Q: Yeah, this is further inland.

A: Yeah. But Afula, it's close to Lake Enerid(ph), to Tiberias(ph), not very close, but closer. And, why they send us to Afula? Because in Afula is a hospital, from the time Israel was under British domination. Was the hospital is from that time. And they send me, us there and I get a job at the hospital in the lab. Even if I didn't speak Hebrew, why? Because in the lab was a Hungarian chemist, was a Romania girl who speak, who was speaking Romania and they said maybe it will help, you'll get these two languages which you speak. And I get that job very soon, in two weeks. But my husband was sent to Haifa, from Afula to Haifa for a ulpan(ph) for six months. He was staying there all the time, just for shabat(ph) or for, he came home on Friday afternoon and Saturday night he went back. For six months, he was studying intensively the language. My daughter was in that time

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10 years old, that was in '62 because we left Romania in '61, in December, this took six weeks in Vienna and in '62, in January, we went to Israel. And she went to school, she has a very good sense to learn languages, my daughter. She started a school in Hebrew immediately in Afula and at Passover time, that means after three months, he already speaks so well Hebrew, that she has the school there to pick out all grade A. And then came an inspector to the school, you know, the teacher, she always shower her, how talented is she for languages and how well she speaks Hebrew. She speak perfect, even now. And the life was pretty easy in Afula. Because I was eating at the hospital, cantina, my daughter, too. The school was not far from, when she leaves the school, came to the hospital, we went to the cantina, after cantina, we went to the swimming pool in the hospital, went back, go the neighbors, listen to radio, it was, my husband came home, he called me during the week and was very easy. But when my husband finish the ulpan in Haifa, he didn't get a job. Can't get a job. And we were very, very, feeling very bad then. He didn't know what to do because, you know, a man to stay with no job. And I try to ask from the Tel Aviv office of the, the hospital that I was working was belonging to Cooper(ph) _____, Cooper _____ is the health insurance company, not company, center about mostly about the _____ clinics and hospitals, not all the hospitals because they are state hospitals, so this is a syndicated hospital, the Cooper _____. And I went there and I asked for a transfer to Haifa

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because...

[end of side one of Tape 2]

End of Tape 2.

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Tape 3

Q: Okay, I'm, we're back here interviewing Mrs. Farkas, Mrs. Barbara Marton Farkas, on December 10, 1995, after about a five or six week, five week delay. Would you like to talk about why we had to delay our interview? I'll hold it that's okay.

A: We had this delay because when we started at the moment the telephone rang and one of our friends call us to tell that Isak(ph) Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel was assassinated and we were so, myself and the interviewer also, were so shocked that we interrupt the interview and only after five weeks we are continue now the interview.

Q: Okay. Mrs. Farkas, we were, ironically, talking about Israel at the time that that phone call came. Have the last few weeks reminded you of what life was like there and some of the difficulties and challenges that you and your husband faced?

A: In the time when we were in Israel, the utmost fear in the country was completely different from now because was before and after the six day war. Before the six day war, everybody was prepared that will be a war and the people were very courageous and they were trusting the army and the government that everything will be resolved in a good way. That means Israel will survive. After the war, the situation was marvelous, everybody was happy and very fond of the army and the generals and about the whole government. People were very happy and

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ourself also and that situation was very, very pleasant for me and for my family and for everybody in Israel. But after a short time, we were living in Jerusalem, during the war were there, it was a very, very difficult three days. After the war, started the terrorist attacks in many places.

Q: What year is this, 1967?

A: '67, '67 in July started already. After one month, six weeks. A bomb exploded close to our house at the bus station, at the super sol(ph), at the Zion movie, cinema. And we get a little bit scared because, and a bus, also, I get scared because we were taking the bus, myself, my husband and my daughter to school every day. Three different line of busses. And all day I was thinking, I was a little bit, not scared, how you say? Nervous, somehow.

Q: Anxious?

A: Anxious that _____ something can happen in the bus in which we are going home or coming to work. And that may be because my past was so terrible and that was influencing my thinking because the Israelis, they were not scared, they were very courageous and they were not afraid of anything. But, myself, I was a little bit scary.

Q: How did you cope with that?

A: The life was going further in the normal way, going to work, meeting our friends, was no different. Something happen, after the six day war, my daughter and

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myself, we went to Haifa, there I helped, some say, aunt, my father's cousin, she lived in Haifa. On the Carmel(ph) and one day, my daughter, we were in downtown Haifa and I meet a lady and I know that lady from Oradia, from my town from where I was deported. And she invited me to go to see her husband which I know also, to make, to go and visit to them. And we went. Her husband, I don't know if he's still alive, at that time he was alive, and and he asked me, "Barbara, do you know what happened to your father?" And I said, "I was separated from my father when we arrived in Auschwitz and from then I don't know anything". He told me, "Look, I know what happened to your father. I was a doctor to a group of worker in Volsberg(ph), south of Munhen(ph), we were working in a stone mine and your father was in injured". Injured?

Q: Injured.

A: "Injured at his leg. We didn't have any medication, no antibiotics in that time, almost nothing. And in November, 1944, he die. I have a book". And he show me the book, where he sign all the men who die in his group. And my father name was there with the date of November 9, 1944. This was after 20 years, because we went to Auschwitz in '44, and this, no, it was 23 years, and this happened, when he told me this, it was in 1967, after the six day war when I went to Haifa. And I start to cry and I was in shock and something terrible I feel in that moment.

Q: It was all those years and you never knew.

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A: Yeah, in all those years I thought that he, I didn't know anything. I was thinking maybe he was taken to work, maybe he was killed in the same day, I didn't know anything. And this, not knowing anything made me very, very, very nervous and very, very bad feelings I had.

Q: And in all of these years, 23 years, it was unsettled in your mind, wasn't it?

A: Yeah, it was completely unsettled because about my mother I knew because I was separated from her arriving by Mengele, and she was taken, I saw her, she was taken to the left, I was taken to the right. And then I found out what happened to the people who went to the left. That means I knew what happened to her. But to my father, I didn't know anything. And just I said, I was very shocked and many, many weeks I was under that feeling of crying and thinking what happened to him.

Q: Were you able, Mrs. Farkas, to say goodbye to him in a way that you hadn't?

A: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, because when we arrive and get out from the wagons, we had, I had, they said to separate the men and the woman, and I had time to kiss him and to say goodbye and then immediately after, they took us in the line, to stay in line to go further before Mengele where he was making the selection. The woman went first, we went first, that mean my father was there. If he comes after us, I don't know, I didn't see mens coming after us. I was so disturbed, so nervous, you know, I didn't know where we are, I smelled the smoke and it was very, very scary, the whole situation. That was that.

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Q: And those years later, those 23 years later, you had, you were saying that it was unsettled all this time, and then you were obviously, understandably, so upset again, but during that time in '67, when you learned that your father had died in 1944...

A: In November.

Q: In November, did you, were you able to say goodbye to him again in a way, did you put him to rest in a way, in your mind, do you see what I'm asking?

A: Yeah. I couldn't put them to rest in my mind, not my mother, not my father. They are still living in my mind. The thing what I did, was that, you know, in the Jewish faith, you have to have _____, I mean, every year to the date when somebody die, you have to say a prayer, the kaddish(ph), 23 years I was saying, I was keeping the _____, lighting the candle and say the prayer, on June first, the day when we arrive, that was the anniversary, the day when we arrive in Auschwitz, when I was separated from my mother. And because I didn't know anything about my father, I did the prayer for him, too, on first of June. But when I find out the date exactly, the doctor told me exactly the date when he die, November nine, I find that in a Jewish calendar, that date, and I since then, I keep the _____ on that date for him and I light the candle on that date for him.

Q: Did it give you any peace to know what had happened?

A: No. No.

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Q: It wasn't helpful at all to learn?

A: No, no peace.

Q: Did you wish you hadn't even heard this story?

A: No, I am happy that I found out, but I am somehow angry that they didn't have any medicine to help him because to help some, how you say it?

Q: Injured, injury.

A: Injuries, if you have treat that injury with some antibiotics or keep it clean or something to do about, some treatment, medical treatment, maybe he will survive. But they didn't have and that why he die because he get sepsis, that means, I don't know how you say in English.

Q: Infection?

A: General infection of the blood.

Q: So suddenly, all of these things, here you are in Israel and all of these things are coming rushing back to you. But I suppose, in many ways, they've always been present with you every day.

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that right?

A: Yeah. With me, and I'm dreaming many times about them.

Q: Would you like to talk a little bit about, no, you don't want to. I'm sorry. You know, I wanted to ask you about Israel as a place for a survivor like you to live.

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Was part of what you wanted from Israel, well, let me ask you this way, what did Israel represent to you, particularly as a Holocaust survivor?

A: I was feeling very good after the anti-Semitism that I was feeling in Romania in the last years. Not from the beginning, from the last years. Special when we were asking already for immigration and I feel very well because I have friends, they almost everyone was a survivor and between survival, you feel somehow better like sister in suffering or something that. That means in this point of view, I feel well. In the work, was not the same situation. I had a boss who was not a nice man. There in the lab was working a older lady from Bucharest who also finished university as myself and we had experience, 10 years experience in Romania and that means we knew the work, you know? But this man, he was a math professor and he was trained to be a chemist, trained. And he was very jealous of us because we have a university basis in chemistry and he was just a autodeduct(ph), that means he was trained and he was learning himself. And he was, just I said, he was not a nice man with us, not with me and not with my colleague, that was very difficult to find the other job. I try to ask for a transfer, but the _____ was that they don't get transfer so easily, only if the, something very serious happened. For example, if my husband get transferred to other city, they didn't separate the wife. If they are close, it is, they said he has to travel, but if was a farther city, they somehow, very difficult way, they give you a transfer. That means I got stick there,

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I couldn't get out from that lab. And otherwise, the lab, the salary and the benefits were good. That means was no reason for me, for change job, only this guy was, I didn't feel, not myself, not my colleague, we felt, feel well with his behavior.

Q: But during that time, it sounds as though, outside of work, you had a really strong community of friends who were also survivors.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: You talked about how important that is, I mean in what ways did that help keep you going, help keep your life, in a way, rebuilding your life, I suppose.

A: First of all, I have my daughter, I, we love her very, very much and we were busy and preoccupied, how to get her education, how to do things for her, you know. That means this took our mind for our own problems, I mean with the past, and we try to, not to forgot, but to live for the present, you know. Mostly, preoccupied with my daughter, education and all other things related to her.

Q: Do you think that she ever felt from you, the pain that you had gone through and that...

A: No. I never told her about my past, I didn't tell her. She knew that I was deported, but I didn't tell her any stories about my past. Because when she was a very sensitive girl and I don't want to that she feel bad or have, I don't know what kind of bad feelings about the whole thing. I want her to be happy, not to think about those terrible things, what happened to me.

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Q: What an incredible act of strength and love of you to...

A: No.

Q: It must have been so difficult for you not to share that. Or maybe you never wanted to.

A: I didn't want it. I didn't want to, no. But in the school, the children start to learn about Holocaust, you know, and I let her to know what, how much she heard in the school, how much they learn in the school. My own personal story, in detail, I didn't tell her.

Q: When did she learn that you were a survivor of Auschwitz?

A: When she was around eight, nine years old.

Q: So she, eventually, she did hear your story?

A: No, no detail, just that I was there and my parents perished there, but no details.

Q: Did she ask you questions?

A: She asked me some questions, but I give her the answers very, how you say, not exactly what she wants, she was asking.

Q: Vague?

A: Very vague, yeah.

Q: So, but you, did you ever sit down with yourself or maybe your husband at some point, after the Holocaust, after maybe when you were in Romania, maybe you had already come to Israel, and talk about how you had to rebuild a life

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thinking of the present? Did you convince yourself you needed to do that or was this just a natural instinct almost?

A: I didn't show him, not to my husband, not to my daughter, that I have problem of thinking about the past, you know. I was behaving like a mother who is take care of her child, of her husband, of her household, but no, no details, no sentiments about the past.

Q: And yet you did have this difficulty, you're saying? You have these dreams and you have these...

A: Yeah, but you know, during the day, during the day, you, I don't want to say you forgot, but you pass over this, this dreams. You have the every day work and problems and so on and that goes, the dreams.

Q: Did you ever feel like you have this other interior reality that was just for yourself and your friends who were also survivors?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Talk about that, can you?

A: I was, I didn't, myself, I suggest to myself not to get too deep in those feelings, you know. I didn't want to, to, to live in the past, I want to, not to forgot, but to leave behind my past. And see for the present, for the future, for my family, that means I didn't try to, try to live in the past. That was my thinking.

Q: Were there times where, with your friends who were survivors,t that you did

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want to talk about it, that you did...

A: It was, if something apropos to something, we were talking about, but not so very, very unformal, you know, and start to take all, talk over and talk about something else, not to get too deep in those feelings. And we never, mostly never, talk about feelings. Mostly about evenenments(ph).

Q: About?

A: About what happens, about things what happens. You know, but not about personal feelings.

Q: Why do you think that is?

A: Because we want to go ahead with our life, not to look back and to live in those terrible thinking.

Q: And I'm guessing, and tell me if this is right, that perhaps just being in the company of people who had the same experience, who understand what you went through and you understand what they went through, in a way, you don't need to say that much maybe.

A: No, because everybody was feeling the same way. Just I said, we were not talking about the feelings, we were talking about what happens apropos to something we were talking about, you know. But not about personal feelings because everybody knew and everybody feel the same feelings had, we had the same feelings. Those terrible feelings that we were not talking about openly.

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Q: And to this day and a couple of times in our conversation, even once today, when I've asked you things that are particularly painful, you don't want to talk about them, right?

A: No.

Q: I mean, you would, and I think I understand why, but maybe you would like to talk a little about why you don't want to.

A: I don't want to live through the same feelings because if I talk about now this, maybe at night I have dreams about this and I, I feel bad about that.

QQ: I understand.

A: It's something like, which is closing the books and I don't want to open it. I don't want to get deep in those feelings or to talk about them.

Q: I respect that. I want, I had one other question about Israel. Did it represent at all a place, I mean obviously, the, some of the attacks following the six day war were, you said were very scary. Did part of what you want, how you want it to feel, Israel, was it, did it represent the possibility of feeling safe again?

A: Not so safe, no.

Q: But was that sort of the desire?

A: Yeah, I would like, I was thinking to be safe as was before the war when we can go everywhere and nothing happen to us. But those _____, for example, the bomb at the bus station was the gas, I mean the bus station close to our house,

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you know, and also the super sol was very close to us, the super sol, because the house where we were living was a big, big block, it's 104 family in. They would call it the _____, that means that people who had university background were living in that block. The apartments were a little bit better than the others. And that's why all the people in that block were scary a little bit because, because was a big block, we call it block, the house. After the six day war, the Arabs on, came to sell fruit and vegetable in that block. And we were afraid that these Arabs who came to sell those things can bring a bomb and put it somewhere around the house, but we couldn't, we can't do anything to stop them to come. That was the scary part.

Q: Why did you decide to leave and come to the United States?

A: One thing was this situation plus we were, during the six day war, when Jerusalem was under siege was a terrible experience for myself. My knee was swollen because I was pushed out from a bus, I fell out and my leg didn't break, but was sprained, how you call that?

Q: Sprained?

A: Sprained, yeah, it was swollen and very painful. That means in that night there was the assault of Jerusalem, we were, my husband took me down to the first floor, we were living on the third floor, on the first floor they have some rooms when where they keep the things for cleaning, those little rooms where clean up

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and they put some chairs and during the assault, we were sitting there. And on that night we heard the bombardment, the airplanes, the molotov, we saw the molotov cocktails, I mean the lights, the dogs were barking terrible, were very, very scary. Plus we were listening to the radio, to the small radio, in those, how you call it, shelters, some, not shelter, not shelters, just the name was shelter, and we were listening to the radios, and we were listening, heard the Israeli speaker said what Nassar was saying that they will kill all the Jew and push them in the sea and so on. You know, and that atmosphere from outside, those noise, those shelters, and this, this kind of speech from Nassar, I get scary. The Israeli were laughing about, you know. They were heroes, every Israeli, they are heroes, but I was scary, I tell you that I was scary. And one of the cause that I decided to come to America, not for good, just for a year, to study, that was one of the cause. We didn't sell the apartment, we rented the apartment, I get a year permission from my job to, nonpay vacation, I mean don't pay leave of absence and that was the day, yeah, and also we met a family from Cincinnati who were a young couple, a rabbi, _____ with his wife. And I ask her about America, you know. And she told me, and I tell her that we would like to come, I would like to come for a year to America to study. And she gave me some addresses in Boston. I said I want to come to Boston because we have, from my husband's side, we have, he has a cousin who lives around, but I didn't want to ask him to help us to come, I mean to

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send an affidavit or something that, we didn't want to ask him from, for that. And she gave me some addresses here in Boston, some hospitals and she was very nice and she brought the letters to this hospital because I didn't know English, very little. I understand what I read, but I couldn't speak and I write a letter to a hospital personnel service. And she brought some letters saying what I am doing, what kind of diploma I have and that I would like to come to America for one year study. And after a short time, maybe a month, maybe less, I get answers from three hospitals here in Boston. And we got letter with one of the letters, I went to the American Embassy in Tel Aviv and I show them the letter and that letter was written the day they would like to accept me, can I come to America, to give me a job in the church, you know. I show that letter to the Embassy and they give me some forms to fill out, those forms. We fill it out, that was in August, August, September, and they send me a other, other papers to fill out, forms. And so around October they call us and said to go to Tel Aviv to a doctor to make some medical visits. We went, he did the checkups and after a very short time, in December, we get the permission to come to America with _____, you know what means the _____, it's a very good preference, they give that only to people with university, to the artist, to, you know, people with education. And we get in December that permission, but we can't come because my husband has some problem with his ear. And everybody, our friends, told do the operation here

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in Jerusalem because in America cost so much that you can't pay it. And really, he had the operation at the Hadasah(ph) hospital in Jerusalem and until he recover was already January. And we have time, I think six months to leave after we get the permission to come to America. And in February, he was already okay and in February 12th, we left. We rented apartment and in 12 February we left. I get the permission from my job to leave for a year and so on. My job remain open and that was it. When I came here I get the job that they promise to give me, but what happens? My husband, I get the job immediately, after one week, we stay, we came here in America. My husband had a little problem, after one month, he get a job as a accountant at a company and we didn't rent the apartment, we rented a furnish apartment, a one bedroom furnish apartment. My daughter, I put her, my daughter in, _____ school, high school and for her was very easy because her Hebrew was perfect, that mean she didn't have, _____ is a school then where Israel, Orthodox high school, but they, boys and girls they learn together, it's not a very, very orthodox school. It's a very good school, many students from there goes to Harvard and MIT, it's a very well known and good school. And she went there and everything was looking fine. After one year, I went back to Israel to see, yeah, because the lease expire at my apartment. We went back and what I find in my apartment I cry, how destroyed the apartment was by those people who rented the apartment. And I get older, my husband in that time was thinking, he was not

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decided that he wants to go back. I tell you why. He lose his pension rights in Romania, he was there almost 20 years in Romania, he lose that pension, if he go, if he, when we left Israel, even for a year, you lose your _____, the means you are not any more, I mean he was in that situation, I, my job was open, he lose his job over there and when I went to his job place, they said that they filled out his job with a Russia guy because in that time start to come the Russia, not too many, but a few. And they give his job to a Russia man. When my husband, then I came back and I told to my husband that your job is not open any more, he was very, very hurt. And he said, "Look, I don't have pension, not in Romania, not in Israel, what I going to do to go back to Israel and start from beginning, from the low level?" In six year he get advance to higher, higher jobs. And he said, "Look, you know what, I am not going back. I like my job here and I am, we not going back". I was crying and I feel like a traitor, traitor?

Q: To Israel?

A: To our Israel that I am not going back. But my husband said, "Look, if we go back, our old times, when we get old, our living will be very, very, very difficult because we don't get enough pension to live on. If we stay here, that will be different". And I recognize that he is right and very difficult way, I agree to stay here, to don't go back. Then I, after a few months, after one year when the second lease expire, I went back and I sold the apartment. That means the apartment was

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sold and we stood here. I forgot to tell you, when we came here, after a very short time, we get the, oh, at the American Consulate, they told us that if we go to America only for a year, my husband is, can't work in America because I get the permission to come to study, not my husband, that means he can't work because he doesn't have any basis to work here. But if he want, he wants to work, do it in this way. Ask for immigration, if you ask for immigration, he is a new immigrant, he can get a job and he can stay. But if you want, even if you are with immigration, you can go back to Israel any times. And we said okay, this is not a problem, we'll do it in that way. And we did it in that way. That's why, when we came here, after a 10 days, we get the green card, send it home by mail, you know. That means everything was okay with the immigration. We have the green card and that was very, very, very fine for us. We are arrived to work and to stay as a immigrant. That was it.

Q: And now that you look back after, what, 24 years now in the United States?

A: In '68 we came.

Q: Oh, I thought you said it was, oh, it was that soon after the, I thought it was in the early '70's for some reason.

A: No, no, '68 in February we came here, it was 12 of February.

Q: So 27 years you've been here. Do you, how do you feel about your decision now?

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A: I think we did a good decision because the situation in Israel get worser and worse.

Q: And how often do you think about Romania?

A: Very rare. Not often.

Q: Why?

A: I don't know. I don't feel belonging to there.

Q: Because of everything _____?

A: I don't know, I feel belonging mostly, mostly to Israel. And I went back to Israel since those years at least five times. We have relatives there, we have many friends, I have a only cousin, I mean my cousin to who's parents I went back to Romania from Sweden. The parents were alive, too, but they die in the '60's, no later, in '75, died my uncle and then my aunt. That's the way how happen.

Q: I wanted to ask you a couple of more things, Mrs. Farkas. And I was just, one of the things I wanted to ask you, I wanted to ask you one other question about Romania. And let's see, where does he say this, he talks about, this is in the book, it's the Silent Holocaust by, how do you say his name? Butenaro(ph)?

A: Butenaro.

Q: Butenaro. Let's see, he says, those who returned from the concentration camps, from the ghettos in Transnistria(ph)?

A: Yeah.

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Q: Transnistria, or from the forced labor camps, were naked, poor and without shelter. But they carried in their hearts, the star of hope and unshaken faith in the new world in which they would find the place they deserved, the place that suited them. That sounds, to me...

A: That hope for a better life, yeah, we had that, we had, I had that, that feeling, I have, yeah. Special, when my dream to start at the university became a reality, that was my dream from high school, to go to university, but, just I said before, I couldn't get to the university and when I came back from the concentration camps, I went to university. I finish my study, I became an industrial pharmacist and a biochemist and I was happy with that. Well then, I was feeling that I start a new life.

Q: As a Romania first? Or did you...

[end of side one of tape three.]

Q: ...fellow, I guess he would probably be maybe about your age now, named Pavel(ph). He was a...

A: Pavel?

Q: Yeah, a Romania Jew who lives in Bucharest still, it was in a book I was reading called Exit to History.

A: No.

Q: And he was saying that he felt that what a lot of the affects of anti-Semitism in Romania did was make people feel their Jewish identity more than before.

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A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: And what I'm hearing, what I'm wondering whether you're saying is that right after, with all the hopes and dreams you had, coming back after the Holocaust and to a new Romania, was more as a Romania than as a Jew, necessarily, at that time.

A: I wasn't a big Romania patriot, I wasn't. Because many, many Jews became very big patriots, mostly communist, you know, they embraced the communist because the communist said that everybody is equal, no differences if you Jew or not Jew, and they became a very big communist. But I didn't feel that. I was feeling as a Jew, even in Romania. In the beginning was no problem, I didn't feel anti-Semitism, I told you that. But later, when I started to work, my boss was a anti-Semite, but he was hiding that feeling, you know, but sometimes came up. But I didn't care about him so much because I had my job and I, I didn't care about him, he didn't say anything to me to hurt me, just I feel, you know, you have that feeling if somebody is not, is, if somebody is anti-Semite. That was that.

Q: Are there any, any particular songs or things you remember about, there's a song that Butenaro refers to, All Romania, that people used to sing. Are there any things that you remember from those days with fondness, any kinds of songs or stories that you used to tell or sing?

A: When we, when my, when I was in the high school, in Oradia, from '37 when

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we moved to Oradia, til '40, three years, the last three years of high school, I was going to the State high school in Oradia, by name, _____. In that time, in Romania, instead of Boy Scouts, you know, they have other group they call it, Strachere(ph), that means, Strachere means who is willing to, to look for the safe of something. Here in this case, was the safe of the country. We have a uniform, we go to school with that, in that uniform, we have many meetings and _____ song, but I didn't feel any anti-Semitism in that time in Romania. I could be, I was one of the good, one of the best student in the high school, I get medaly(ph) from my study, you know, in the end of the year they give medaly to the best student for the first, for the second and for the third, the best. I give, I receive always the second one because the first one is going to the daughter of a Admiral, an officer daughter and her and the two of the professors, ladies, had, their husband were under this Admiral officer, Admiral, I don't know how you say it, Admiral person, and he is, he is supervisor or how you say it, something there, and that means she was very much protected and with very big protection. Even she was not so good at all. But what happen, when we have the graduation exam, the so called baccalaureate, in Romania, I think still is the same rule, after you finish the high school, is a very, very difficult exam, they call it baccalaureate, when you have that exam, to Oradia, they came from other cities, girls, in the school where I was studying, at least three or four schools with girls, girls, they came to give this

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baccalaureate to the same school where I was studying. The committee who was in that exam, they were professor not from our school, was a absolutely neutral commission, the president of the commission was a university professor and the teachers who were in that commission were from other school from where there were no students in that, in that, at that baccalaureate. At that baccalaureate exam we were around 150 girls and I pass the second one with, you know, the grade, I was the second on the grade. There was no protect here, I mean no Admiral daughter, no nothing, just what you, how you answer and how you write the thesis. That was the situation.

Q: I wanted to just change the subject a little bit and end with a few more personal questions and I guess one of them is just living here, now that you've been here 27 years or so. Do the events of your life and in Israel and in Romania and during the Holocaust, do they seem because of the time and the physical distance that we are now from Europe and from the Middle East, does it seem a lot different, a lot more distant, than they did before?

A: Yeah, yeah. Special, in Romania. The Romania years are very, I don't remember, for example, my college and the school, the name, I don't remember already, because I don't think about them and I don't remember. So, the same thing with the teachers, some of them I remember, some of them I don't remember because I am not, I am never preoccupied with thinking of them, you know. Even

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when we went, I have a cousin with her husband, they are old couple, 83 and 95, her husband, still in Arad, and when we go to Budapest, we always go to Arad, too, because it's very close, is the city where I came back from the deportation. And when we go to visit them, they always, every three years almost, and I meet in the street people, I see them, but I don't remember their name, you know. I, you were, they were working, how the, some family situation, but I don't remember the name, I have to think very hard to remember who is this guy or this girl. That means I am not thinking of them anymore. Israel is different, that I remember everything.

Q: Because it's more recent and...

A: More recent and more pleasant somehow.

Q: And how about the Holocaust and the war, does that seem remote or is that just with you all the time?

A: I also don't remember the names, I saw my, my, the girls with which where I was together, I remember what color of her dress was, how was her, she looking with blond or black hair, but I do not remember, to some of them I remember the first name, but not the second name, the family name, at all. Is right that there we don't know anybody too much about the family names, I mean the last names, only the first name we knew each other.

Q: Can I ask you, Mrs. Farkas, what, what the word or the idea, the concept, of

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survival means to you?

A: What means? Something, a miracle, it's a miracle that I survive. Because very easy, Mengele can not accept me and send me to the left, to advance with the group to the left, that's all, that was a miracle that he took me from the, from that line and put me on the right side. Very, very, very easy I could go to the left side.

Q: Have you thought many, many times about why? Why you went to the right?

A: To the right, why he put me on the right? Because I was young and they need people to work for them, that was the selection, that they were looking for.

Q: Do you feel that, any sense of a mission in telling your story? Do you, is there something that you want the world to know about, about you and I mean, you've been, we've been talking now for some hours on the tape?

A: I don't think so, I don't want, I am not talking about to people to know my life, but I believe very much in the Museum policy that they want to preserve the Holocaust memory and life there and everything what happened there for the next generation, for the young people and by this I want to help them to understand the life of people who were there.

Q: Do you have any, any insights in the way that you've rebuilt your life and the way you have survived and lived and raised a family and made a home that you can share about how you, how you look at the world now after all of this has happened?

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A: You see, after the war, I became a very strong person. I try to do what I want to do and I, many cases, I get that. I _____ to do that, you know. Before, when I was with my parents as a, I was a very weak minded person. I was the only child and I was very, very much, how you say, saved by my parents in every way. Of everything. But after the war, I became very strong somehow, to do what I want to do, you know. And many cases, I can, I did that and I, how you call, _____?

Q: Make it, you changed, you mean?

A: No, no.

Q: Or in many cases you...

A: I want something and finally I get that.

Q: Strong willed?

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: Because, and it certainly what you're saying, it seems that you're, it's because of your experience that you realized in a way, what's important maybe?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. First of all, my, my goal was to study and to finish the university and get a job and get married, have a family. That was the, to don't stay alone, you know. I didn't want to, to, to stay alone in the world, I want to have a family.

Q: Do you think that your experience changed your views about the nature of human beings?

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A: I think so, yeah.

Q: And yet, in your own experience, you have found a way to rebuild and build beauty and strength all around you it seems.

A: Yeah. I was very diligent in my work and I strive to keep the money, to don't spend the money and to do a living, buy a house, you know, in that way. I want, I want to ensure my life and our family's life, for a good old time life, I mean when we get old.

Q: I wanted to read what Butenaro said about speaking out, he said near the end of the Silent Holocaust, that he hoped his book was a cry to strip away the layers of indifference and guilty silence by just coming out and telling one's story. Do you, do you share that at all?

A: As I said, I tell my story for the benefit of the Museum, I like and I appreciate very much how they handle the whole Holocaust problem and everything. And I want to help them by my story in this way.

Q: Is there anything else that you want to, that I haven't asked you about or that you want to share that we haven't touched on, anything that you think are gaps in my questions or anything else at all that you'd like to talk about?

A: Just that, about my family, maybe, my daughter graduated at my _____ and went to college and when she finish she was employed at the bank, she did some business college and she went to, she get a job at a bank and she became

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a assistant manager, she didn't want to be a manager. She said that she want to sleep quietly.

Q: She didn't want the phone ringing in the middle of the night?

A: No. No, no, she wants, she was afraid always of that that they borrow money to people and they don't pay back.

Q: And that she'd be responsible.

A: Yeah. And she didn't want to have that responsibility, she was the assistant manager and she get married in 1980 and she was still working til 1984 when she has her boy, her little child, very sweet boy who now is 11 and after 13 months, she had a daughter, Leanna. They are very nice, very good students, the boy has A+ in school, a excellent student. And the girl, she study very well, she has very good marks, B, B+, A, but she is very talented in writing, she write, she write poems. At age nine she started. Her poems were publicized in the school paper and also she is very good in painting.

Q: And they live?

A: They live here in the same town with us, not far from us and we see them very often. And my son-in-law, he is a very good father, a very good husband, he works in the, in a computer, big computer company already for 15 years and they have a, their own house, they have a nice life.

Q: Must be nice to...

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A: And they are, I am very happy, I am very happy that we stay in the same town with them. My husband, sometimes he wants to move to Florida because of the weather, but I say I don't move because I want to see my grandchildren and my family every week or maybe often. And we stay here, in the winter we used to go to some warmer place.

Q: I think we're just about finished then, but are you planning to go anywhere this winter? I'll just ask you that.

A: Yeah, we have a time sharing apartment in Mexico, in Cancun(ph) for two weeks and in February, in the beginning of February, we used to go there. And also next year, in March, we going to go to Baltimore to a Bar Mitzvah of my son-in-law's sister's daughter and in that time, I want to go to Washington to visit the Museum. I want to go to the Archive, because when I was there twice, the Archive was not open and I want to go there. I want to see some list with the girls with whom I was together if they have that.

Conclusion of interview.