

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:15,270

2

00:00:15,270 --> 00:00:20,220

We continue our discussion
with Dr. Hans Fisher.

3

00:00:20,220 --> 00:00:22,590

Dr. Fisher, during
the break, you

4

00:00:22,590 --> 00:00:28,140

mentioned that there were some
gaps in your experience already

5

00:00:28,140 --> 00:00:29,970

recounted that
you had mentioned.

6

00:00:29,970 --> 00:00:32,400

And I would like you to talk
about them now, if you will.

7

00:00:32,400 --> 00:00:37,530

Yes, I'd like to fill in a
few salient features, which

8

00:00:37,530 --> 00:00:42,360

I think help round out the
picture a little bit more.

9

00:00:42,360 --> 00:00:46,080

Things that I
think many a person

10

00:00:46,080 --> 00:00:48,660

wouldn't put into the
context of the story

11

00:00:48,660 --> 00:00:52,170

that I've been
recounting here, which

12
00:00:52,170 --> 00:00:57,540
has been primarily the
events leading up to, and on,

13
00:00:57,540 --> 00:01:03,180
and following the trip
voyage of the St. Louis.

14
00:01:03,180 --> 00:01:10,050
But something that perhaps
very few people realize,

15
00:01:10,050 --> 00:01:14,280
and that may be of
interest, is that my family,

16
00:01:14,280 --> 00:01:16,350
we mentioned very early
on, if you remember--

17
00:01:16,350 --> 00:01:18,990
one of the earliest comments
had to do with the fact

18
00:01:18,990 --> 00:01:22,560
that the school that I went
to was a Zionist school.

19
00:01:22,560 --> 00:01:29,670
My family had very
strong Zionist feelings

20
00:01:29,670 --> 00:01:30,480
and tendencies.

21
00:01:30,480 --> 00:01:32,910
And as I indicated,
members of the family

22
00:01:32,910 --> 00:01:36,315
had already gone to Palestine
in the very early '30s.

23

00:01:36,315 --> 00:01:38,990

24

00:01:38,990 --> 00:01:43,350

Well, one of the things I went
to recount is that, in 1937--

25

00:01:43,350 --> 00:01:46,860

can you imagine,
as late as 1937,

26

00:01:46,860 --> 00:01:50,760

my grandfather on
my mother's side

27

00:01:50,760 --> 00:01:58,170

celebrated his 75th birthday
by going outside of Germany.

28

00:01:58,170 --> 00:02:01,540

It was actually celebrated
in Czechoslovakia.

29

00:02:01,540 --> 00:02:04,380

He had just come
back from Palestine,

30

00:02:04,380 --> 00:02:07,230

from visiting two daughters.

31

00:02:07,230 --> 00:02:09,840

There were three daughters,
my mother was the third one.

32

00:02:09,840 --> 00:02:11,820

The other two were in Palestine.

33

00:02:11,820 --> 00:02:15,360

And he had gone there and came
back, and went back to Germany

34

00:02:15,360 --> 00:02:17,400
in 1937.

35
00:02:17,400 --> 00:02:22,045
His feeling, I can still see
him, was, I'm an old man,

36
00:02:22,045 --> 00:02:23,670
they're not going to
do anything to me.

37
00:02:23,670 --> 00:02:25,770
This is just going
to be another storm,

38
00:02:25,770 --> 00:02:29,760
we'll weather it, and so on.

39
00:02:29,760 --> 00:02:31,480
That's one aspect.

40
00:02:31,480 --> 00:02:36,000
The other aspect is that my
father and mother decided also

41
00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:40,170
that they would
emigrate to Palestine.

42
00:02:40,170 --> 00:02:47,880
And started in early 1938
to plan to go to Palestine.

43
00:02:47,880 --> 00:02:51,510
And they applied for what
was called a certificate.

44
00:02:51,510 --> 00:02:53,100
In German, [GERMAN].

45
00:02:53,100 --> 00:02:58,230
These were the permissions
that were granted,

46
00:02:58,230 --> 00:03:01,350
or had to be granted, by
the British government

47
00:03:01,350 --> 00:03:04,980
to enter Palestine.

48
00:03:04,980 --> 00:03:10,020
And towards that end, they
had built special furniture.

49
00:03:10,020 --> 00:03:16,260
Special in the sense to fit into
very small, tiny apartments.

50
00:03:16,260 --> 00:03:17,940
Very utilitarian.

51
00:03:17,940 --> 00:03:23,250
They got a very good
cabinetmaker to make the kinds

52
00:03:23,250 --> 00:03:27,040
of [?caster?] convertibles
that we see today.

53
00:03:27,040 --> 00:03:29,700
But this was back in 1938.

54
00:03:29,700 --> 00:03:34,500
They had couches that could
serve as beds simultaneously.

55
00:03:34,500 --> 00:03:42,960
And bookcases that could also
serve as storage cabinets.

56
00:03:42,960 --> 00:03:45,340
All kinds of things like that.

57
00:03:45,340 --> 00:03:49,830

And everything was
geared for Palestine.

58
00:03:49,830 --> 00:03:56,820
In fact, sometime in the early
fall before Kristallnacht,

59
00:03:56,820 --> 00:04:01,110
they had had a lift built.
You know what a lift is?

60
00:04:01,110 --> 00:04:05,550
A lift is a huge wooden
box in which you pack all

61
00:04:05,550 --> 00:04:08,550
your belongings, and it's
then transported by boat

62
00:04:08,550 --> 00:04:09,540
to another country.

63
00:04:09,540 --> 00:04:13,710
They still use them
occasionally nowadays.

64
00:04:13,710 --> 00:04:16,649
And everything was
packed for Palestine.

65
00:04:16,649 --> 00:04:18,570
The only problem was clothing.

66
00:04:18,570 --> 00:04:22,800
All clothing for a warm,
semi-tropical country.

67
00:04:22,800 --> 00:04:26,070
But of course, the
certificate never arrived.

68
00:04:26,070 --> 00:04:30,150
And then the events took

place that we laid it before.

69

00:04:30,150 --> 00:04:33,240

Ultimately, strange
as that may seem,

70

00:04:33,240 --> 00:04:36,100

we did get that lift in Cuba.

71

00:04:36,100 --> 00:04:39,940

Oh, for heaven's sakes.

72

00:04:39,940 --> 00:04:42,040

Of course, much, much later.

73

00:04:42,040 --> 00:04:43,610

Because Cuba wasn't at war.

74

00:04:43,610 --> 00:04:46,030

So it somehow got out.

75

00:04:46,030 --> 00:04:47,980

But the point that
I wanted to make

76

00:04:47,980 --> 00:04:52,840

was that again, had
things been normal

77

00:04:52,840 --> 00:04:59,860

and the British hadn't imposed
its infamous white paper

78

00:04:59,860 --> 00:05:03,370

restricting immigration
to Palestine, again,

79

00:05:03,370 --> 00:05:05,720

this whole thing might
have been avoided.

80

00:05:05,720 --> 00:05:06,220

Yes.

81

00:05:06,220 --> 00:05:08,950

That was one thing that
I wanted to mention.

82

00:05:08,950 --> 00:05:11,110

Another thing that
I wanted to fill

83

00:05:11,110 --> 00:05:20,050

in was the impact of
all these experiences

84

00:05:20,050 --> 00:05:22,300

really can be
measured, obviously,

85

00:05:22,300 --> 00:05:27,910

in terms of the immediacy
of one's reaction.

86

00:05:27,910 --> 00:05:33,310

Hopefully, I'm also not one
of those who suffered unduly

87

00:05:33,310 --> 00:05:34,870

from any of this.

88

00:05:34,870 --> 00:05:36,500

But it took its
toll on my mother.

89

00:05:36,500 --> 00:05:40,930

I know that she had a major
nervous breakdown in Cuba.

90

00:05:40,930 --> 00:05:41,440

Yes.

91

00:05:41,440 --> 00:05:46,390

Which was clearly the
accumulation of everything.

92
00:05:46,390 --> 00:05:48,100
I remember it
happened at the time

93
00:05:48,100 --> 00:05:53,410
that word reached her that her
parents had died of starvation

94
00:05:53,410 --> 00:05:57,145
in Theresienstadt.

95
00:05:57,145 --> 00:05:58,882
You know, that was one of the--

96
00:05:58,882 --> 00:05:59,590
One of the camps.

97
00:05:59,590 --> 00:06:01,870
--model concentration camps.

98
00:06:01,870 --> 00:06:05,140

99
00:06:05,140 --> 00:06:07,120
And of my wife's.

100
00:06:07,120 --> 00:06:08,980
Actually saw them still.

101
00:06:08,980 --> 00:06:11,740
She survived Theresienstadt.

102
00:06:11,740 --> 00:06:17,860
And she saw them in that
particular concentration camp.

103
00:06:17,860 --> 00:06:22,690
And the death certificates
actually exist.

104

00:06:22,690 --> 00:06:25,263

The Czech government made
them available to us.

105

00:06:25,263 --> 00:06:26,680

And I remember it
was at that time

106

00:06:26,680 --> 00:06:30,490

that this happened to my mother.

107

00:06:30,490 --> 00:06:36,040

In the family of this non-Jewish
lady, even though they were--

108

00:06:36,040 --> 00:06:39,310

she certainly was
somewhat less affected,

109

00:06:39,310 --> 00:06:42,760

because her parents
were not in danger.

110

00:06:42,760 --> 00:06:47,740

She also suffered
enormously from

111

00:06:47,740 --> 00:06:50,650

immigration-related problems.

112

00:06:50,650 --> 00:06:55,360

There were two other
children, older children,

113

00:06:55,360 --> 00:06:58,120

from a previous marriage.

114

00:06:58,120 --> 00:07:04,030

And since she had taken her
own youngest child along

115

00:07:04,030 --> 00:07:07,420

and gone to join the father,

and the other two older

116
00:07:07,420 --> 00:07:09,280
ones were left behind--

117
00:07:09,280 --> 00:07:11,860
even though they
weren't Jewish, and

118
00:07:11,860 --> 00:07:15,940
weren't, to the best
of my knowledge,

119
00:07:15,940 --> 00:07:19,090
discriminated against
in any overt way,

120
00:07:19,090 --> 00:07:21,940
even though their
father had been Jewish--

121
00:07:21,940 --> 00:07:24,790
they never forgave her.

122
00:07:24,790 --> 00:07:27,580
They later came to
the United States

123
00:07:27,580 --> 00:07:30,220
and they never forgave
their stepmother

124
00:07:30,220 --> 00:07:36,040
for having left them
behind, as they saw it.

125
00:07:36,040 --> 00:07:39,420
And she suffered a
great deal over this.

126
00:07:39,420 --> 00:07:40,120
Yeah.

127

00:07:40,120 --> 00:07:44,080

So there are all
kinds of nuances

128

00:07:44,080 --> 00:07:49,560

that go way beyond the
immediacy of the events.

129

00:07:49,560 --> 00:07:50,890

Yeah, yeah.

130

00:07:50,890 --> 00:07:58,360

In any case, to get back where
we had left off, we arrived.

131

00:07:58,360 --> 00:08:00,970

It was a very
auspicious arrival,

132

00:08:00,970 --> 00:08:08,330

because within four weeks, I
was bar mitzvah in New York.

133

00:08:08,330 --> 00:08:11,770

In one of the very large
synagogues right off

134

00:08:11,770 --> 00:08:19,570

Broadway on 91st, 93rd Street,
somewhere around there.

135

00:08:19,570 --> 00:08:28,540

And my parents-- my mother had
no difficulty finding work.

136

00:08:28,540 --> 00:08:38,240

She worked as a nurse and
did very well financially.

137

00:08:38,240 --> 00:08:42,309

My father, who was
already over 50 years old,

138

00:08:42,309 --> 00:08:45,040
couldn't find anything.

139

00:08:45,040 --> 00:08:47,470
He'd been a lawyer
and a businessman,

140

00:08:47,470 --> 00:08:52,160
and in neither capacity
could he find any work.

141

00:08:52,160 --> 00:09:00,760
And so he was persuaded
by some friends

142

00:09:00,760 --> 00:09:07,480
to seek the help of the
Jewish Agricultural Society,

143

00:09:07,480 --> 00:09:14,020
and got a loan for a mortgage,
and bought a farm in Vineland,

144

00:09:14,020 --> 00:09:15,530
in South Jersey.

145

00:09:15,530 --> 00:09:16,810
Yeah.

146

00:09:16,810 --> 00:09:23,380
And so in October or thereabouts
of 1941, we moved from New York

147

00:09:23,380 --> 00:09:31,130
to Vineland and started
life on a chicken farm.

148

00:09:31,130 --> 00:09:37,710
And so from 13--

149

00:09:37,710 --> 00:09:42,810
I was 13 at the time-- until

I graduated high school

150

00:09:42,810 --> 00:09:47,820

four years later, I grew
up on a chicken farm.

151

00:09:47,820 --> 00:09:51,240

Which must in itself
have been quite a jolt.

152

00:09:51,240 --> 00:09:53,180

Well, I thought it
was great at the time.

153

00:09:53,180 --> 00:09:53,440

Yeah.

154

00:09:53,440 --> 00:09:54,285

It was a great experience.

155

00:09:54,285 --> 00:09:55,868

Well, there's some
jolts too, I guess.

156

00:09:55,868 --> 00:10:00,278

And in a sense, it
ultimately led to my career.

157

00:10:00,278 --> 00:10:01,320

To the work you have now.

158

00:10:01,320 --> 00:10:02,730

Indirectly, yes.

159

00:10:02,730 --> 00:10:07,500

Because my father took me aside.

160

00:10:07,500 --> 00:10:09,390

And when I told
him that I wanted

161

00:10:09,390 --> 00:10:12,900

to study mathematics
and languages,

162
00:10:12,900 --> 00:10:20,826
he said that he would strongly
dissuade me from doing that.

163
00:10:20,826 --> 00:10:25,050
That I should learn a
lesson from his educational

164
00:10:25,050 --> 00:10:27,360
experiences and not
go into law, or go

165
00:10:27,360 --> 00:10:31,530
into something esoteric like
that, but to study something

166
00:10:31,530 --> 00:10:36,240
that would be useful in
every country in the world.

167
00:10:36,240 --> 00:10:38,270
Yeah.

168
00:10:38,270 --> 00:10:40,920
I didn't decide on anything
except the sciences.

169
00:10:40,920 --> 00:10:43,810
He thought I should go into the
sciences, and so I started out.

170
00:10:43,810 --> 00:10:46,920
And then I had a very
good teacher in college

171
00:10:46,920 --> 00:10:51,365
in biochemistry,
and veered into.

172
00:10:51,365 --> 00:10:52,740

Where did you get
your education?

173
00:10:52,740 --> 00:10:56,040
I went to Rutgers
as an undergraduate.

174
00:10:56,040 --> 00:10:56,790
Yeah.

175
00:10:56,790 --> 00:11:00,240
And was strongly influenced
by an excellent biochemistry

176
00:11:00,240 --> 00:11:01,440
teacher.

177
00:11:01,440 --> 00:11:05,490
And then I went to the
University of Connecticut,

178
00:11:05,490 --> 00:11:06,795
got a master's degree there.

179
00:11:06,795 --> 00:11:08,670
And then I went to the
University of Illinois

180
00:11:08,670 --> 00:11:09,930
and got my doctorate there.

181
00:11:09,930 --> 00:11:18,210
And that was-- those were the
best years of both my wife's

182
00:11:18,210 --> 00:11:21,210
and I lives, really.

183
00:11:21,210 --> 00:11:24,405
We had gotten married when I
graduated from Rutgers in 1950.

184

00:11:24,405 --> 00:11:25,530
How did you meet your wife?

185
00:11:25,530 --> 00:11:29,880
Well, our mothers were
friends in Germany.

186
00:11:29,880 --> 00:11:33,510
And I had mentioned that
this lawyer friend--

187
00:11:33,510 --> 00:11:34,410
Yes.

188
00:11:34,410 --> 00:11:36,130
--had gone to Chile.

189
00:11:36,130 --> 00:11:38,220
He was my father's best friend.

190
00:11:38,220 --> 00:11:46,250
And my wife's mother was
my mother's best friend.

191
00:11:46,250 --> 00:11:52,410
So in the meantime,
my wife's mother

192
00:11:52,410 --> 00:11:58,290
had written me a birthday
greeting on my 21st birthday.

193
00:11:58,290 --> 00:12:01,470
Because that was-- she
had gotten engaged,

194
00:12:01,470 --> 00:12:04,780
I believe, on my
birthday 21 years ago.

195
00:12:04,780 --> 00:12:06,660
So she remembered that.

196

00:12:06,660 --> 00:12:08,220

She had called up
her best friend

197

00:12:08,220 --> 00:12:09,960

to tell her that she
had gotten engaged

198

00:12:09,960 --> 00:12:13,130

and was told that her
best friend was in labor.

199

00:12:13,130 --> 00:12:17,310

So in any case, so we had
started to correspond.

200

00:12:17,310 --> 00:12:19,230

And I decided right
after college,

201

00:12:19,230 --> 00:12:20,940

I deserved a little vacation.

202

00:12:20,940 --> 00:12:27,150

So I pawned a 1935 Ford
and a few other belongings,

203

00:12:27,150 --> 00:12:31,830

and went to Chile.

204

00:12:31,830 --> 00:12:37,290

And met my wife's family
and the renewed acquaintance

205

00:12:37,290 --> 00:12:39,810

with my father's family.

206

00:12:39,810 --> 00:12:42,420

And found many, many others.

207

00:12:42,420 --> 00:12:47,700

It turned out that there is

a much larger German Jewish

208

00:12:47,700 --> 00:12:51,840
community from Breslau
in Cuba than is together

209

00:12:51,840 --> 00:12:53,940
in any one place in the
United States, at least

210

00:12:53,940 --> 00:12:54,910
that I'm aware of.

211

00:12:54,910 --> 00:12:57,150
So there were many others.

212

00:12:57,150 --> 00:13:00,975
Many other families that
I knew or knew about.

213

00:13:00,975 --> 00:13:02,640
Is this Cuba or Chile?

214

00:13:02,640 --> 00:13:03,900
Did I say Cuba?

215

00:13:03,900 --> 00:13:04,627
I meant Chile.

216

00:13:04,627 --> 00:13:05,460
Is this in Santiago?

217

00:13:05,460 --> 00:13:07,320
In Santiago, yes, yes.

218

00:13:07,320 --> 00:13:09,480
I'm sorry, I meant Chile.

219

00:13:09,480 --> 00:13:09,990
Yeah.

220

00:13:09,990 --> 00:13:13,420
So we got married at that time.

221
00:13:13,420 --> 00:13:18,180
And we had a wonderful
time then in Illinois.

222
00:13:18,180 --> 00:13:19,650
My wife is a musician.

223
00:13:19,650 --> 00:13:24,510
And Illinois just
opened a whole new vista

224
00:13:24,510 --> 00:13:27,462
of musical experiences.

225
00:13:27,462 --> 00:13:29,670
And this is while you were
working on your doctorate?

226
00:13:29,670 --> 00:13:31,020
I was working on my PhD.

227
00:13:31,020 --> 00:13:33,720
I got my PhD there in
nutritional biochemistry.

228
00:13:33,720 --> 00:13:37,710
And it was just fantastic place.

229
00:13:37,710 --> 00:13:39,030
When you-- I'm sorry, go ahead.

230
00:13:39,030 --> 00:13:40,638
Could I just leave
back a second?

231
00:13:40,638 --> 00:13:42,930
When you were growing up in
Vineland, which the war was

232

00:13:42,930 --> 00:13:43,680
still going on, right?

233
00:13:43,680 --> 00:13:44,190
Oh, yes.

234
00:13:44,190 --> 00:13:47,130

235
00:13:47,130 --> 00:13:49,925
Were you aware of what
was going on in Germany?

236
00:13:49,925 --> 00:13:51,330
No, no.

237
00:13:51,330 --> 00:13:52,650
We did not know that.

238
00:13:52,650 --> 00:13:53,730
No.

239
00:13:53,730 --> 00:13:54,540
Yeah, that--

240
00:13:54,540 --> 00:13:56,910
We had no idea.

241
00:13:56,910 --> 00:13:59,351
So this was as great a shock
to you at the end of the war

242
00:13:59,351 --> 00:14:00,393
as it was everybody else.

243
00:14:00,393 --> 00:14:00,893
Yes.

244
00:14:00,893 --> 00:14:02,820
Yeah.

245

00:14:02,820 --> 00:14:05,150
How do you think the--

246
00:14:05,150 --> 00:14:09,030
as you look back from
your perspective today,

247
00:14:09,030 --> 00:14:12,780
how do you think
these early events

248
00:14:12,780 --> 00:14:17,360
that you had shaped your future
life and your future thinking?

249
00:14:17,360 --> 00:14:20,280

250
00:14:20,280 --> 00:14:26,070
Well, they certainly made me
much more serious and much more

251
00:14:26,070 --> 00:14:33,450
mature than the average person
my age, say, going to college.

252
00:14:33,450 --> 00:14:38,400
There was certainly no interest
in and no desire, say, to join

253
00:14:38,400 --> 00:14:42,840
a fraternity, which
was very much in vogue.

254
00:14:42,840 --> 00:14:48,390
Although it was also the time
when I went to college in '46,

255
00:14:48,390 --> 00:14:49,480
the war was just over.

256
00:14:49,480 --> 00:14:52,950
So there were also many veterans

who also had very little use

257

00:14:52,950 --> 00:14:55,080
for fraternities.

258

00:14:55,080 --> 00:15:00,840
But the whole attitude
was one, you know--

259

00:15:00,840 --> 00:15:06,690
this was not a period
just for entertainment.

260

00:15:06,690 --> 00:15:11,520
This was a period
of serious study.

261

00:15:11,520 --> 00:15:15,690
My parents were not doing
all too well financially

262

00:15:15,690 --> 00:15:20,400
on the farm and
they needed my help.

263

00:15:20,400 --> 00:15:22,110
I would come home weekends.

264

00:15:22,110 --> 00:15:24,000
And certainly,
summers I would work.

265

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:31,470
And as I said, my father
in 1941 was over 50,

266

00:15:31,470 --> 00:15:33,180
so he wasn't a youngster.

267

00:15:33,180 --> 00:15:37,860
And farm life did not
particularly agree with him.

268

00:15:37,860 --> 00:15:40,770

My mother was much more adept.

269

00:15:40,770 --> 00:15:43,530

She was considerably
younger at this.

270

00:15:43,530 --> 00:15:44,940

Did he remain on the farm?

271

00:15:44,940 --> 00:15:50,730

Yes, he remained on
the farm until 1959,

272

00:15:50,730 --> 00:15:57,340

when my mother tragically
died in a car accident.

273

00:15:57,340 --> 00:16:01,050

So until then, he
stayed on the farm.

274

00:16:01,050 --> 00:16:07,040

And they adjusted easily,
aside from the economics?

275

00:16:07,040 --> 00:16:08,070

No, they didn't.

276

00:16:08,070 --> 00:16:12,820

My father never
adjusted easily at all.

277

00:16:12,820 --> 00:16:18,610

No, he was a typical Yekke,
if you know what that means.

278

00:16:18,610 --> 00:16:19,110

Yes.

279

00:16:19,110 --> 00:16:20,820

German Jew.

280
00:16:20,820 --> 00:16:24,630
I always see him in
front of me with a book

281
00:16:24,630 --> 00:16:30,450
or with a magazine and an
English-German dictionary,

282
00:16:30,450 --> 00:16:31,900
always.

283
00:16:31,900 --> 00:16:33,418
He would always
look up every word

284
00:16:33,418 --> 00:16:35,460
that he didn't understand
in English, look it up.

285
00:16:35,460 --> 00:16:36,480
He had to look that up.

286
00:16:36,480 --> 00:16:40,620

287
00:16:40,620 --> 00:16:49,180
When you look back now at
German Jewry before the war,

288
00:16:49,180 --> 00:16:49,680
certainly.

289
00:16:49,680 --> 00:16:50,220
Yes.

290
00:16:50,220 --> 00:16:59,250
Between 1933 and 1939, do you
feel very, very strong regrets?

291
00:16:59,250 --> 00:17:02,740
Not, of course, for

yourself, because thank god

292

00:17:02,740 --> 00:17:05,849

you came out of it, and
your family did intact.

293

00:17:05,849 --> 00:17:12,180

But how do you feel
about the identification

294

00:17:12,180 --> 00:17:14,869

that German Jews
had with Germany?

295

00:17:14,869 --> 00:17:18,369

And very often the feeling
that they could survive

296

00:17:18,369 --> 00:17:20,425

and they could withstand
and all of that?

297

00:17:20,425 --> 00:17:22,050

Yeah, well, of course,
that's something

298

00:17:22,050 --> 00:17:23,700

that I never shared with them.

299

00:17:23,700 --> 00:17:29,460

I mean, I grew up
and have always felt,

300

00:17:29,460 --> 00:17:32,010

from my earliest
recollection, that I

301

00:17:32,010 --> 00:17:35,910

was a Jew first and
everything else second.

302

00:17:35,910 --> 00:17:40,050

German, American, anything,

it doesn't matter.

303

00:17:40,050 --> 00:17:41,850

Perhaps a human being second.

304

00:17:41,850 --> 00:17:44,400

But not nationality.

305

00:17:44,400 --> 00:17:50,540

Nationality wasn't

all that important.

306

00:17:50,540 --> 00:17:54,380

Because when the

chips were down,

307

00:17:54,380 --> 00:17:57,470

you were always the dirty Jew.

308

00:17:57,470 --> 00:18:01,310

And whether you wanted to

hide in a cloister like Edith

309

00:18:01,310 --> 00:18:05,480

Stein, when they found

you, you were the Jew.

310

00:18:05,480 --> 00:18:08,360

And you were killed

because you were Jewish.

311

00:18:08,360 --> 00:18:12,140

And that was something that

somehow became a part of me.

312

00:18:12,140 --> 00:18:18,050

I think there were many great

things in German Jewry, which

313

00:18:18,050 --> 00:18:23,570

I think the world has a

lot to be grateful for.

314

00:18:23,570 --> 00:18:26,090

There are a great many
things that I ask myself,

315

00:18:26,090 --> 00:18:27,810

how could they
have been so blind?

316

00:18:27,810 --> 00:18:32,150

How could people who had the
brilliance of an Einstein,

317

00:18:32,150 --> 00:18:35,780

and I can name you dozens of
biochemists and physicians

318

00:18:35,780 --> 00:18:39,170

who were world famous,
Nobel Prize winner--

319

00:18:39,170 --> 00:18:43,820

how could the same people
have been so utterly

320

00:18:43,820 --> 00:18:45,350

blind, did not see this?

321

00:18:45,350 --> 00:18:47,320

But I had it in my own family.

322

00:18:47,320 --> 00:18:49,130

I mentioned my grandfather.

323

00:18:49,130 --> 00:18:53,600

My father went out
in 1935 on a trip,

324

00:18:53,600 --> 00:18:55,350

I think, to Palestine, also.

325

00:18:55,350 --> 00:18:56,400

And they came back.

326
00:18:56,400 --> 00:18:56,900
Yes.

327
00:18:56,900 --> 00:18:59,660

328
00:18:59,660 --> 00:19:03,260
We hear stories about
people in Poland

329
00:19:03,260 --> 00:19:06,290
who happened to be
on the eastern border

330
00:19:06,290 --> 00:19:08,360
and might have
escaped into Russia.

331
00:19:08,360 --> 00:19:11,720
And because they didn't want to
be taken over by the Russians,

332
00:19:11,720 --> 00:19:14,450
went back to the west,
where they were sure

333
00:19:14,450 --> 00:19:16,190
certainly engulfed by Germans.

334
00:19:16,190 --> 00:19:21,230
Unless you were in that
same position at that time,

335
00:19:21,230 --> 00:19:23,390
it's very difficult to judge.

336
00:19:23,390 --> 00:19:26,010
The old story about hindsight
having 20/20 vision.

337
00:19:26,010 --> 00:19:26,690

I know.

338

00:19:26,690 --> 00:19:27,430

I know.

339

00:19:27,430 --> 00:19:30,170

It's very, very difficult to.

340

00:19:30,170 --> 00:19:33,830

But has your Judaism
been strengthened

341

00:19:33,830 --> 00:19:35,120

by your experiences?

342

00:19:35,120 --> 00:19:39,370

343

00:19:39,370 --> 00:19:42,730

Yes, I would say yes.

344

00:19:42,730 --> 00:19:45,880

It's hard to say whether
it's been strengthened

345

00:19:45,880 --> 00:19:50,320

or whether it's always remained
more or less equally solid.

346

00:19:50,320 --> 00:19:52,690

But I've always
been very involved

347

00:19:52,690 --> 00:19:54,970

in the Jewish community
at the University

348

00:19:54,970 --> 00:20:00,730

as well as in the
community at large.

349

00:20:00,730 --> 00:20:09,220

And I feel I have made my
contribution by instilling it

350
00:20:09,220 --> 00:20:10,420
in my children.

351
00:20:10,420 --> 00:20:11,320
Yeah.

352
00:20:11,320 --> 00:20:12,910
And that's very important.

353
00:20:12,910 --> 00:20:16,120
If I may ask one more question.

354
00:20:16,120 --> 00:20:20,950
We use these tapes, obviously,
for educational purposes.

355
00:20:20,950 --> 00:20:23,290
We'll use them for
educational purposes.

356
00:20:23,290 --> 00:20:28,240
And we have many young people
who, hopefully, will see them

357
00:20:28,240 --> 00:20:29,800
or segments of them.

358
00:20:29,800 --> 00:20:33,550
If you had to leave
an enduring-- what

359
00:20:33,550 --> 00:20:35,440
you believe to be an
enduring message on this

360
00:20:35,440 --> 00:20:37,940
tape that you're making.

361
00:20:37,940 --> 00:20:41,290

What would that message
be regarding the Holocaust

362
00:20:41,290 --> 00:20:43,030
and your experience with it?

363
00:20:43,030 --> 00:20:48,100

364
00:20:48,100 --> 00:20:51,220
Unfortunately, I'm not a Hillel
who can stand on one foot

365
00:20:51,220 --> 00:20:53,830
and say that so easily.

366
00:20:53,830 --> 00:20:56,140
But let me try.

367
00:20:56,140 --> 00:20:59,380
It's easy to be on one
foot when you're sitting.

368
00:20:59,380 --> 00:21:00,040
That's true.

369
00:21:00,040 --> 00:21:04,200

370
00:21:04,200 --> 00:21:21,680
I think I would want to say that
one has to try and brush away

371
00:21:21,680 --> 00:21:31,190
the immediate emotional impact
of your surroundings at a time

372
00:21:31,190 --> 00:21:36,740
when things are
difficult and bad

373
00:21:36,740 --> 00:21:44,180

and try and see what's going on
in a more universal, and a less

374
00:21:44,180 --> 00:21:50,090
parochial, and a
less personal way.

375
00:21:50,090 --> 00:21:55,820
In the hope that perhaps a
little bit of the gravity,

376
00:21:55,820 --> 00:22:01,460
a little bit of the
overall sense of importance

377
00:22:01,460 --> 00:22:04,340
of that moment can sink in.

378
00:22:04,340 --> 00:22:09,500
So that one can make
a value judgment

379
00:22:09,500 --> 00:22:12,140
that won't be purely emotional.

380
00:22:12,140 --> 00:22:15,080
There won't be of
the type of my father

381
00:22:15,080 --> 00:22:17,810
and my grandfather,
who said, ah,

382
00:22:17,810 --> 00:22:20,750
they're not going
to hit an old man.

383
00:22:20,750 --> 00:22:25,530
It's still going
to just go away.

384
00:22:25,530 --> 00:22:31,190
And I think, also,

one has to have

385

00:22:31,190 --> 00:22:33,680
an optimistic outlook on life.

386

00:22:33,680 --> 00:22:38,190
Because ultimately,
life isn't all that bad.

387

00:22:38,190 --> 00:22:45,920
I mean, the Holocaust, with
all its trauma, is over,

388

00:22:45,920 --> 00:22:48,290
and we are here.

389

00:22:48,290 --> 00:22:52,340
And lots of good
has come from people

390

00:22:52,340 --> 00:22:55,220
who have gone through
much, much worse than I,

391

00:22:55,220 --> 00:22:57,650
and from people
like myself, who are

392

00:22:57,650 --> 00:23:03,350
contributing every day to
what's going on in this world.

393

00:23:03,350 --> 00:23:08,030
And everyone is
capable of doing that.

394

00:23:08,030 --> 00:23:14,900
I think it's a question of
one's outlook, one's optimism.

395

00:23:14,900 --> 00:23:21,520
And again, as a Jew, I feel
that my outlook on life

396
00:23:21,520 --> 00:23:27,070
is in part influenced
by being Jewish.

397
00:23:27,070 --> 00:23:31,810
I studiously have avoided
saying by the Jewish religion.

398
00:23:31,810 --> 00:23:32,980
I don't mean that.

399
00:23:32,980 --> 00:23:35,200
I think to me, Judaism
is a way of life.

400
00:23:35,200 --> 00:23:38,110
It's when I sit and talk to you.

401
00:23:38,110 --> 00:23:39,970
It's how I act and behave.

402
00:23:39,970 --> 00:23:42,190
It's how I study,
that I do study,

403
00:23:42,190 --> 00:23:43,745
that I have certain interests.

404
00:23:43,745 --> 00:23:45,250
It's how I bring up my children.

405
00:23:45,250 --> 00:23:48,940
That to me-- and there
are many other non-Jews

406
00:23:48,940 --> 00:23:50,810
who can be Jewish
in that same sense.

407
00:23:50,810 --> 00:23:51,740
That's what I mean.

408

00:23:51,740 --> 00:23:57,410

And so it's very dispersed
what I have said.

409

00:23:57,410 --> 00:24:00,100

But maybe there are
a few grains that

410

00:24:00,100 --> 00:24:02,470

will have meaning to
this or that person.

411

00:24:02,470 --> 00:24:03,252

Thank you.

412

00:24:03,252 --> 00:24:04,960

Peggy, is there anything
you want to add?

413

00:24:04,960 --> 00:24:08,410

No, I just thank you
very much for sharing

414

00:24:08,410 --> 00:24:14,500

the very commonplace things
and the very nice little pieces

415

00:24:14,500 --> 00:24:17,230

of philosophy that I
certainly will carry with me

416

00:24:17,230 --> 00:24:18,520

and think about.

417

00:24:18,520 --> 00:24:21,040

And I know the people that
view the tape will, as well.

418

00:24:21,040 --> 00:24:27,130

I would just like to add
that we who interview

419

00:24:27,130 --> 00:24:29,830

draw a great deal
of strength from you

420

00:24:29,830 --> 00:24:31,540

and from other survivors.

421

00:24:31,540 --> 00:24:35,800

Because you give us
faith and hope, too.

422

00:24:35,800 --> 00:24:36,300

Thank you.

423

00:24:36,300 --> 00:24:37,702

Well, then it was all worth it.

424

00:24:37,702 --> 00:24:38,410

It certainly was.

425

00:24:38,410 --> 00:24:39,090

Thank you, sir.

426

00:24:39,090 --> 00:24:39,990

Even the heat.

427

00:24:39,990 --> 00:24:40,830

Even the heat.

428

00:24:40,830 --> 00:24:43,780

You can always get
your visa stamped.

429

00:24:43,780 --> 00:24:44,532

That's right.

430

00:24:44,532 --> 00:24:46,380

Yes, OK.

431

00:24:46,380 --> 00:24:49,730

[MUSIC PLAYING]

432

00:24:49,730 --> 00:25:27,000