

Good afternoon. My name is Marcia Weisberg, and I'm a member of the Kean College Oral Testimonies Project of the Holocaust Resource Center. We're affiliated with the Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies at the Sterling Library at Yale University. Sharing the interview with me is Phyllis Tobin, and we're very privileged to welcome Mr. Ernest Pollack--

Thank you.

--a survivor presently living in Hillside, New Jersey who has generously volunteered to give testimony about his experiences before, during, and after the Holocaust. Welcome, Mr. Pollack.

Thank you. My name is Ernest Pollack. I was born in Vienna, Austria, September 1912. As you know from history, at this time, it was the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy.

My life as a young kid was overshadowed by the First World War, who broke out when I was only two years old. My father, like everybody else, had to serve in the army, and he died later. He came home only every two years. And I had two younger brothers and sisters who did not understand the seriousness of the situation. However, because I was the oldest in the family, I could understand very well what was going on.

As I said, my father died in 1918. My mother was left with three small children. I was only six years old. There was no help or anything else at this time, and we were left in poverty. And the only thing what I remember was the letter my mother got that my father died for God, Kaiser, and Fatherland. It was really hard to make a living on this level.

Vienna was, at this time and time before and I don't know how long, it was kind of a center of anti-Semitism. The first year I went to school, I learned it the hard way. The Jews were not separated. As a matter of fact, we had to go to the religion, what they called religions instructions. The Christians separate. And if you're Jewish, and they just separate.

Much later, in this country, I learned how important it is to separate church and state because we were few little boys who were separated from [? other. ?] There, it started already, before we did any-- before we even opened the mouth, we were separated. They are the Jews. There, they go to her classes. I managed to go through that, but there always was called-- not always, but many times-- Jew and other names which I do not want to repeat here.

Finally, the time came when I was able to work. Because I had to work early and I had to finish my education in night schools. I had to support my mother and the other smaller children.

Was there any extended family? Did you have any grandparents or aunts or uncles that were part of your early life?

My grandparents and the other extended family lived in Hungary at this time, in Budapest. At this time, it was very difficult to go there, just because we didn't have the money to take the train there. And we didn't have a car, not even a bicycle.

So your mother was alone?

My mother was alone, and she had to struggle very hard, without any help, to bring us up. During all those years, we almost daily heard the name they called us because we were Jews. And it is no coincidence that Hitler was born in Austria. He came to so to speak with the mother milk in him, like many millions.

I worked, and we were able, little by little, to have a little better living. We furnished our very modest apartment with things, little things.

How old were you when you began working?

I beg your pardon.

How old were you when you began working, and what did you do?

About 16 years old.

What kind of work did you do?

I worked in the haberdashery business. I had a very nice boss, what they called chef over there.

Ernest, excuse me. In Vienna, at that time, were all the people German, or did you have a mix? Were there Russian people living in Vienna? I know somebody--

In Vienna, there are no Germans. There are only Austrians.

OK, Austrians. Anybody else?

But we're very mixed with people from Czechoslovakia. Vienna was a natural point, bridge between the East and the West, and we had many Jewish people from Poland, Russia, and other places there.

OK.

Lithuania and other places, and I spoke a lot with those people. And we had a very hard time there, but they had it even harder there. And, at this time, the medical profession in Vienna was world-famous, and they came to Vienna to seek cures for their ailments.

At this time, we had kind of two civil wars in Vienna. Their names are forgotten now. One was Mr. Seipel, who was a Catholic prelate, which is near a bishop or whatever. He didn't do too much to help the Jews. Later on, if you remember the history, there was a Mr. Dollfuss, who was murdered by the Nazis.

And, at this time, the Nazis were very strong already. They were not only strong because they got so much money from Germany, they were strong because of the desire of the majority of the population to do something, and including the anti-Semitism.

What was the economy like at that time?

Our economy was very bad. One out of three people were out of work. Later on--

What period of time are we talking about, now?

Between the '20s and the '30s. Later on, before the war broke out, the Second World War, Mr. Schuschnigg was in charge of the [? Dollfuss. ?] He was an intellectual Jesuit. They were not a priest, but he went to University for a Jesuit, so he was a very well-educated man. And he, later on, taught in the United States.

He made it clear that we, as Jews, we had nothing to fear from him. But he made it clear that we should separate ourselves, make Jewish clubs, make Jewish dancing. In other words, it was already a line drawn even before Hitler came.

And it's almost to the day, today, 50 years that Vienna was occupied by the Germans. At this time, we had no idea what later is going to happen because we were told, by some people, we have nothing to fear-- we were born here, my father died in First World War for the Fatherland-- that we are going to work like it was before.

What was your life like at this time?

I was still working. But we knew better. We knew better. As soon as the Germans were in a couple of days, a large part, I must say, that a large part of the population looked forward to get the properties, whatever Jews had, for a small

amount of the real value. And they did that.

But this was not the main thing. They took over businesses which were established for many years, 100 or 200 years ago. They just took it over, always saying, no, you don't have nothing to fear. The population itself, it was absolutely shocking and surprising. Only after a few days, they rounded up many Jews, let them wash the sidewalks or houses and so on, and tried to make kind of a circus for the population [INAUDIBLE].

I, myself, had to stand before businesses at this time. Don't buy a Jewish establishment, and so on. But they released me very soon because there was nothing extraordinary on me to see. I was not-- I was not nothing, nothing funny in me. I was dressed like every Austrian. Other people with the--

Excuse me. In your mother's house--

Yes.

--was there a lot of religious ritual or Yiddish keit?

My mother, itself, was kosher. But we, my siblings and myself, we were not kosher. We were what we would call today Reformed Jews.

The population started to beat up Jews, to spit on people, and to do other things. And they started to go around with big trucks and just put people on the trucks. And they never were seen again. I, myself, lost two good friends. They were just [INAUDIBLE].

I was lucky because I was dressed, as I said, like every Austrian. They didn't get me. However, we were fully aware what will-- that was only the beginning what will happen.

And one thing I must mention here-- because it might be controversial, but to my best knowledge, it is the truth-- we had a large population in Vienna. Vienna was a 2 million city. The Jews were about 200,000, a little more. The Jewish community had not much communication between them. We were running around like mice, like mice, like lost mice. We didn't know what to do.

The Catholic Church, including the Cardinal of Vienna-- his name was Josef Innitzer-- was an ardent Nazis. He greeted the Nazis-- the Germans and made them feel very welcome. Later on, he had to pay a very high price for that.

So myself and other thousands had nothing to go on. We had no communication with our Jewish people, and the Catholic Church closed all communication completely. They did nothing whatsoever like they did in some other countries. When I say nothing, I mean nothing.

The people, especially-- Austria is about 99% Catholic. It was Catholic at this time. The Catholic Church in the provinces still made the people believe, by the millions, that the Jews killed Jesus and so on. And they believed it. And, naturally, when the Germans came, they had a reason to go after us.

To make a long story short, we tried to get away. There was no place to go away. The borders were closed. No reason was to be-- was available.

You could not sit down in the at the -- After March, the spring came. It was a nice day. You couldn't go no place because of the danger just to sit on a little bank in a park or someplace. It was impossible.

One day, I just couldn't stand it anymore. I had to go out. I was a young man, and I went on a place which is kind of a nature preserve. And I know that place in and out. It was a couple of miles wide and long, and I went over there to get a little fresh air not knowing, that at this time, a large Nazi brigade called all the Jews in that police.

Because I know almost every tree in that place, I managed to go out, taking a turn . My Home was maybe half an hour

away. It took me about five hours to go home, all the way around.

Were you alone?

I was alone, at this time. The Germans or the Austrians-- I don't know-- made everything possible to make the exit very difficult. They asked for many papers, that you paid your taxes, you did this, you did this. And you had to stay day and night and in line to get to the particular office.

Needless to say, that most all people who worked at the office for the government did nothing to speed it up, and it took a long time to get certain papers. And, sometimes, you stayed there day and night, and then they closed the door exactly on the hour. They weren't interested in your comfort.

I had to get a passport in order to get away, and it was next to impossible to get a passport the regular way. I heard from some of my friends that a certain lawyer will provide passports, a lawyer who was not Jewish-- was not a Jew, for a certain money. And I did that, so I had a passport, approximately May.

Of what year is this?

1938. Still, at this time, we know the situation, and some people believed that it will go away. But most people tried to get away. They did try to United States, to England, to other places to get some kind of papers. I had nobody in the United States, or England, any place. I didn't want to go to Hungary. I didn't want to go to the East because I felt the East is-- it's going to be the same thing.

There were a lot of rumors going around in places where we came together with other Jews. We talked about so many countries where you could go. You could theoretically, but practically they were absolutely closed.

Finally, one night-- no, excuse me, one afternoon, I heard the real I tell you this, I heard from somebody, which I didn't know, that he heard that Luxembourg, a small country between Germany, France, and Belgium, at this time, for short few days, let the refugees in and [? in the ?] Jews. When I heard that, I said to my mother, I will go and take a chance, this evening.

I took my little valise, which was not bigger than this, went to the railway station and took a ticket.

By yourself?

By myself. My mother stayed there.

And your brother and sister?

My brother took a ski tour to Switzerland and never came back. My sister was lucky enough to get a domestic permit to England, so she got away.

In what year?

To work as a servant, you mean?

Yes.

Uh huh.

In what year?

1938.

And your brother left on this ski trip in '38 as well?

All in '38.

And your mother remained in Vienna?

My mother remained, but my sister tried to get her a permit, which eventually she got. And she went there.

I took the train to Luxembourg. I never was in Luxembourg. And the train went through all Germany. And as soon as we left Austria, I felt a little bit better because it is the truth that the Germans, at this time, were a little bit better than the Austrians. At least, they didn't bother me and other people.

There were also called, what they called gentiles in the train. I was the only Jew. Naturally, I didn't talk with nobody. So I came to the German-- the border between Germany and Luxembourg. And the German soldier looked at my luggage and looked at my sandwich I had and he let me go through.

All of the sudden, I was in Luxembourg. As I found out the next day, I was the lucky one because the people after me, they had to swim through the-- the little river there. So I just came to Luxembourg this way.

And the first letter I did write to my mother was that I was sitting on a bench on the street. She knows what it means because no Jews could, in the summertime, sit on a bench on the street. You are shaking in your home and afraid that they're going to take you.

I stayed in Luxembourg for almost two years. Actually, less, one and a half years.

What did you do there?

The refugees, we are not allowed to do anything. As soon as they found out that you did anything, they put you back to Germany. However, I did odd jobs like cleaning the carpets, turning the dust over in the garden, and so on and so on. I worked at the kitchen. I became kind of an expert waiter and things like this.

There was a committee there supported by the United States. We told them, for the two years, that Luxembourg is a mousetrap. That when something happens, we will be caught, and we were so right.

The Germans, on that particular river, on the border, they'd build bridges half the way in the-- into the river, halfway. The second half was laying there just waiting to be assembled, which took less than half an hour. They did that.

And, one day, we'd actually know what was going on. One day, we know the Germans were over in the center of the city of Luxembourg. They were there. And this was the elite German army.

The Jewish people, the French people, the Belgian people, the English people, and the United States made the biggest mistakes they ever made. They thought the Germans will not have equipment to run the trucks to support the army, to have tires for their cars, and so on. Nothing was further off the truth. It was just the opposite. Those countries said not enough. The Germans had everything.

And here starts my odyssey. It took me a long time to come to the Dominican Republic, where I stayed for a long time. All right. The situation in Luxembourg became impossible.

And this is 1940?

Yes, but it was 1940, right. The situation in Luxembourg became impossible. We were lucky enough that the German army was in charge of everything, not the Gestapo. And the German Army, they were not interested in the few Jews and the other refugees. I don't know if that is known here or not.

The German army was interested in one thing, to defeat France and go to Paris. And one German-- actually, a Viennese soldier told me, "We will be, in 14 days, in Paris." Remember, it was an elite corps, elite army, day and night, with the most modern equipment going, through Luxembourg. There was no resistance or anything else.

The people in Luxembourg were friendly to the Germans?

They were friendly.

Uh-huh.

I tried to flee and took my little-- whatever I had with me. And I wanted to go to Belgium, not realizing that the motorized German army did that much faster than I did, and I had to go back to Luxembourg.

And, finally, the Luxembourg people were very friendly, of us, they supported us.

The us is a group? Were there a group of you?

We had about 60 people there, [? 60. ?]

And the people in Luxembourg--

I might be wrong on 60, but approximately--

And a group of Jews that had come from Vienna?

About 60 people. Not all. From all over Europe.

And these were refugees or all Jews?

All refugees. We were all refugees.

And Jews?

Luxembourg itself had a Jewish population. They believed that they can stay there. They all-- they never came back.

Finally, at this time, the rabbi from Luxembourg, they had, like Austria, a Concordat with the Pope. That means the religion is part of the state, and it has to be supported by the state. And they paid, also, the Jewish men who gave lessons in Jewish history and so on.

This rabbi-- he is dead already-- had no communication whatsoever with the Jewish people. Actually, he closed himself in, and it was impossible to talk to him. You know, time like this, it is easier for me to say that, but it is the truth.

I was married in Luxembourg. And when I let him know, somebody else, that I will get married, he officiated the marriage there. And I got, also, the papers from the City Hall from Luxembourg.

Whom did you marry?

A Polish girl, Jewish girl, who was a refugee from Poland but was a refugee in France.

The Jewish community hired three big buses or four buses to take all the Jews who wanted to go-- so they occupied-- at this time, Paris was already occupied by the Germans. They walked in like with clean shoes, with nothing. They took it like nothing.

We were supposed to go from Luxembourg to the border, which is not far from Nancy and Limoges. To go this way,

what they call Occupied France. And we had-- somebody give us visas to Cuba, which we had forged. We found it out later, the hard way.

We had those buses. And the buses, they-- the police, which we found out later was already the Gestapo, who did bring us to the Occupied France, they had some kind of a treaty with the Germans in Luxembourg that, instead, that they take care of the Jews. The Jews, itself, will take care of the Jews who want to go so they don't have to travel to bring us in the concentration camps. So we were lucky, in this way.

And we stayed overnight in Paris and went through all France. There were young people, babies, old people, maybe 100 people and so on, also Luxembourg Jews, with the hope that we eventually will arrive in Cuba. How, we didn't know.

And then we went from Paris, somehow, to the so-called unoccupied France, the Vichy regime, to a town which is called Hendaye. There is an international bridge. This is the bridge between France and Spain.

You can imagine that we were very lucky to leave France. It was all Occupied France. Go over the bridge, and we came at the end of the bridge. We were so lucky that we left the German soldiers. We didn't see them anymore.

However, the first thing we saw on the sides, which is Irun. Irun--

Spain?

It is Spain. Looked at this time like Vietnam, everything was destroyed. It was a place where the Germans and the Italians tried their new bombs on. So the situation, actually, in Aragon was worse than over there. It was shocking.

We took the Spanish train in order to get to Portugal. We went over Madrid and arrived in-- on the Spanish border between Portugal and Spain. As you know, the trains, when you go over international border, they stop at the place. Then they go over and stop already in Portugal. And then you have another control about your passport and so on.

We did not think of that. The Gestapo stayed in the same train as we were on. And the Gestapo went-- by design or not, I don't know-- with us to the place in Portugal, which is a famous place, at least in my opinion, Villa Formoso.

Now, Salazar was the head of Portugal and Franco was in Spain at that time?

Yes. Franco was in Spain, for sure. Salazar, I don't know.

Now, here starts the trouble, as if there was not trouble enough, as if we didn't lose everything what we had in Vienna and the other places. And when I see the homeless in New York, then I realized-- and I told it to many people-- I was homeless for a long time. I slept in welfare hotels and things like this, and I was happy I could.

In Villa Formoso, in Portugal, the train stopped there cold. Later on, we know what happened. Portugal was a neutral country, but the Gestapo went anyway to Portugal, the railway of Portugal. Maybe they didn't. I don't know.

They did not let us continue to Lisbon. We stayed eight days in the train-- they did not let us go out-- under impossible sanitary conditions, eight days.

Who was the "they" that did this?

The Portuguese, the police in Portugal. After eight days, we could go around the railway station.

Did you have food on the train?

We had some money. We bought it there. People came. They know that-- the people from the little town came to sell us that. After about eight days, or longer, somebody told us, in a very quick, not misunderstand, because the Gestapo did that and we were also under suspicion, they will send us back. And they did.

So everything I told you, it was reversed now. They put us in the train. We went, again, over the International Bridge. We came back to Hendaye and some other places, back to Gestapo, to the Gestapo.

In what city?

Finally, we landed in Bayonne, which is near Biarritz, the famous place for the millionaires. Again, we were very lucky. Bayonne, at this time, was under the German military command. And, to be fair, the Commandant of the military there was a colonel, whatever, or lieutenant from Hamburg.

He saw what was going on, and he confiscated the whole old factory with no windows and open roof for us. He commanded them, the military, to get beds, those coats-- cots?

Cots.

And they put a cot--

Cots.

Cot.

Cots?

Yeah.

And put it up in that factory, and we slept for a couple of weeks. It was cold, and the black river rats had a picnic with us. And then the Gestapo came who wanted to deport us, first, to Gurs. Gurs was a French concentration camp.

The French authorities provided us with food, what we call food. The food was prepared in the same containers what we have our garbage here, those high cans. And that was our food, some kind of a beets for the cows and so on.

Was the "us" the same group that you had left Luxembourg with?

Yes.

Were you intact as a group?

Part of the group. Some people tried to leave the group. We found out later, all of them perished.

Where did they try to leave?

In France. They had relatives and other friends there. They all died.

When they first came out?

Yes.

Not on the way back, but the first coming out?

They first came out.

So how many of you were left in this group?

Maybe 80. So we stayed for a while in that-- oh, it was kind of a camp or not. But it was-- he was a good guy, that



German lieutenant. There was no food there, so we had to go out, and he let us go out and try on the black market to get something.

And we did. We had to hang it up on the roof from thin rope. But, somehow, the black river rats, they got that.

Black river?

The water rats.

Rats?

River rats, kind of house pets. The German lieutenant and the Gestapo and we ourselves realized that it cannot go on for long like this.

Did you get to know this German from Hamburg?

Oh no.

No?

I never was in Hamburg.

No, this-- the Commandant who was the one who put up the cots?

No, he let us come at 6 o'clock, and we had the straight line. And he called the names.

But you didn't know him?

No.

No.

I never saw him before.

Was-- were you with the woman you had married in Luxembourg?

Yeah, for sure. Finally, they still made some deal with the Gestapo. The rabbi for Luxembourg must have known what was going on in Bayonne, and he came with the Gestapo. And I don't know what they wanted to do or not.

At this time, they let one American citizen in, into their so-called-- well, this was Occupied France. He had the permission from higher up, and he worked for the committee in New York who made a deal with the president of the Dominican Republic. At this time, they were ready to leave in a couple of thousand Jews.

And he looked for young Jews who wanted to work in agriculture or looked halfway decent for heavy work, who could take the work. And then the other people-- he selected myself and my wife and other people who worked in or had a farm in Germany and other places. So we became tickets for the train to Marseilles.

And, there, we had to wait for a boat to go to Marseilles from Occupied France to unoccupied France. It was a, oh, a deal which you cannot imagine because it was the war going on. And there are German soldiers there and other soldiers, and they talked about many things in the trains and so on. We had to sleep someplace.

But, somehow, I was lucky. I just got away. We arrived in Marseilles.

Marseilles, at this time, it was in 1940, early '40, maybe '39, it was impossible to find a room or anything else because

the city from about 800,000 with about 2 million refugees lived there. It was terrible. Finally, we found a place which was actually not a room. It was kind of space between the staircases, something like this, but we were happy to stay there.

And it was very dangerous. Marseilles was just as dangerous as being in Germany or Vienna because the French police worked together on the Vichy, which was Germans. Especially young people like myself and other people, we realized that.

Who was lucky? Like my brother, which I met by incident there.

The one who went to Switzerland, skiing?

Yes. He worked, later on, as prestataire. Prestataire means you lent yourself to do some work for somebody else, and it's prestataire.

A voluntary? Volunteer work.

Not volunteer.

No, he got played. I guess?

They would have taken you anyways. So, as prestataire, they're wearing old French uniforms which, most of the time, were too big or too small. They looked terrible, but they got away because they got food. And they worked in the roads and so on. And that was the prestataire business. It was taken over from the last 200 or 300 years. And, at this time, the French military was allowed to take people like soldiers of fortune to work for them.

Anyway, my brother was lucky to work for them. And I met him there. So when you were lucky, they took you to those prestataires. However, I was not lucky like this.

And we waited and waited. And, all day long, we went out to find a little food. The Germans, at this time, were on the-- I don't know if the people know what this Les Halles, Les H-A-L--

A market.

This hall, in--

Paris, the markets.

In Paris. They took the town hall. They had the same thing in Marseilles. And we stood there at 4 o'clock in the morning.

The produce markets.

Not produce. Meat or other produce, to get a little bit meat. There was a line much longer than the whole Kean College.

Were the natives of Marseilles, the French natives, friendly?

They helped us, yes.

Were they friendly, or? I'll come to that.

OK.

However, I couldn't believe it, but it is true, the Germans were there. They had the preference. So they took the best part

for them, and for us was the rest. The junk was left over. But we were happy to get some, if we got it. You stood in line with the Frenchmen and so on.

I, at this time, spoke fairly French, and my accent did not help me too much. And when they talked to me-- so, many hours, we stood there-- and it was really cold. At the ocean, it's very windy and cold.

However, I said, to oui, oui or c'est vrai, c'est vrai, that's true, and things like this. Now, they get suspicious that I with my German accent, get the food, a sign for the French people. Something [INAUDIBLE].

Sometimes, we got horse meat, which was a holiday. Once in a while, very seldom. Sometimes we had nothing. We had two slices of bread, and I made all kind of magician pieces together, a little bit more, and sometimes I was lucky.

We ran out of money in Marseille. And, also, the Jewish Committee there and so on did not help too much. And we had no communication with the French people, for reason I said before. As soon as they would have found out that we are-- I had a beret like the French people. Well, I could not be seen-- I was the same dress as the French. Maybe that helped me a little bit.

Oh, it was hard in--

Why? Why didn't the Jewish people in Marseilles help you?

Why they didn't? They helped a little bit, but next to nothing.

They were afraid to help? They were not afraid. They had the same attitude, the same mentality, as the people in Vienna, in Germany, and France, that we who are born here, who work, who fought for the Fatherland and so on, nothing will happen to us. We are safe. Well, we found out the hard way that it was not this way.

Finally, our ship arrived, which, to my luck again, was the last ship from Marseille. No, I'm sorry. No. We took the train, and went over the High Pyrenees to Portugal. At the moment, I don't remember the name of the famous [INAUDIBLE] where the Maria with some wonders there. I forgot the name.

Lourdes?

Lourdes.

Lourdes, we were down the Lourdes.

[? Monsieur. ?]

Merci. We went through Lourdes. And in Lourdes, we had our papers. I slept the first time in, maybe, a half a year or more, in a little bed with white linens. I never forget that. We went over the High Pyrenees. There was still snow there and so on.

And, at this time, we were not afraid to go to Spain, which was in terrible condition. You cannot imagine.

Now, this was what year?

1940.

This was after the Civil War?

Yes.

(WHISPERING) Could I have some water?

Sure. This.

Thank you.

[INAUDIBLE]

And after we went through the border between Spain and Portugal, at this time, we were shaking and we make another [? trouble, ?] but we did not make any trouble. And we came to Lisbon, where we stayed 10 days where we were free again, could eat normally and sleep normally without being afraid.

And then our ship came. It was a Portugal ship for cattle, and it was the last trip between Europe and the United States. So I was, again, lucky. And the other people, too.

Oh, you were still about 80 in number?

Much less at this time, much less.

Why?

Some people left. Some people didn't want to go. So then some people were not chosen to go there. They all perished. They all perished.

Before that moment?

Yes. We were only a few lucky, maybe 20 people.

20 left? From the original 80--

Maybe 30.

--that left Luxembourg?

Who were able to go on that boat.

To port.

To the Dominican Republic?

Well, we didn't go first to the Dominican Republic. We went to Ellis Island, where I stayed for a week or two. And when we came-- when they finally picked us up to take another boat to the Dominican Republic, I was not sure if I should run away and get lost in the crowd in the New York Harbor or not. But I was married, and I just enjoyed the travel.

Was there an attempt to enter the United States, or you knew that it was just passage?

There was no attempt.

Transit.

We know that we had to go to Ellis Island.

And then, but did you-- was there any attempt made in, when you were at Ellis Island, to enter America, to enter the city?

No. We were under guard there.

In transit? You knew you were in transit?

We knew that. I was thinking about making an attempt, but I didn't. They counted us three or four times a day. And the first thing, what came to my mind in Ellis Island, it was just impossible to comprehend the waste, what we Americans do today. The table was filled with everything what we could eat, and everything we did not eat was just thrown away in the garbage.

We, ourselves, were happy to find something in the garbage to eat. And there were thousands of people who went through the garbage to find something to eat, especially in Marseilles, the Harbor of Marseilles, which was a terrible place anyway. And I'll-- Marseilles is a nice town, but certain places. The Harbor is not one of the nicest places to be. Maybe, today it's different.

Well, anyway, you know the waste we have here, and we just throw that away. I just couldn't stand it, and I took the sugar and everything else, put in my pockets. It was all for naught, in vain. Just the shock was-- the culture shock was too much.

The name of the boat brought us from Lisbon to Ellis Island was [? Monsenhor. ?] It was a cattle ship. And we got very seasick. We got very sick.

Then we went to the other American boat going from New York Harbor to the Dominican Republic. Here, we had everything like in a cruise, what you could take today. It was impossible. I must laugh when I think about that.

And we arrived. Well, the day I landed at the Dominican Republic, which was prepared, at this time, by intervention of the President of the Dominican Republic--

Who was that, Trujillo?

And he was--

Trujillo? Leñidas Trujillo, Benefactor de la Patria and so on and so on. And they prepared a nice place for us, what we considered nice after that we went through. And I stayed in the Dominican Republic for 10 years.

What did you do there?

After a while, the organization, and the way they looked at this in the United States, was also very wrong. Like so many things, we are very grateful all our lives, what the money they spent for us in the United States. However, the so-called experts had no idea what was going on.

They let us plant tomatoes and other things like this, what you plant in Europe and the United States. And then when they ripened, there was no customer here for that. So they throw it away. And, also, they paid for us very little. In the other hand, they just throw it away.

We were supposed to get a farm, each one of us. And after some times, well, I worked a little different jobs and so on, I became a farm. I became a farmer. And they gave us 10 cows and a horse and a mule and some land.

At this time, we knew already that the population, the natives there, they are very poor. They cannot afford to buy anything. Their wage was \$0.70 a day, not an hour. But we paid them. The Dominicans paid much less than that.

Who was the organizer of whatever help that you got? Where was the source of the money? In the United States, or did-

Committee in New York, a committee from New York.

And committee, a federal committee or a Jewish committee?

A Jewish committee.

Was that the Joint Distribution?

The Joint with somebody else.

Yeah, the Joint.

And they sent a supervisor there to take care of everything. We had some supervisors there.

This was still during the war?

Yes. Yes. On one hand, we were in a country which was not of our choice. On the other hand, we saved our life-- our lives. Finally, after some time there, as I said, I got a farm and cows and so on. At this time, I did not know too much about cows or farming, though, which is an overstatement just by itself.

By asking around, by talking to other people, by reading and so on about that, I became kind of successful in that. I became half a veterinarian. I did know, finally, what to do.

But most people staying together in the Dominican Republic didn't want to stay there because there was no education. There was no environment for us which we were used to. I said so-called culture which we had in Vienna, which we found out was not a culture at all, but anyway we had a good education. We just didn't belong there. Only a very few people stayed there.

Excuse me.

Yes.

I think we're going to have to take a break now.

All right.

Yes, this is a good time to--

This is a good time to break.

While they finish up the-- this is the end of one tape. We just got the signal.

Now.