

This is a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. Jaime Zilberstein on September 18, 2019 in Merrick, Long Island, New York. Thank you, Mr. Zilberstein for agreeing to speak with us today to share your story to let us know of how the policies of the Nazi regime and their collaborators, possibly, impacted your life and the life of your family.

I'm going to start from the very basic questions, and then we take things from there. So my first question is, can you tell me the date of your birth?

I was born in September 1, 1937.

Oh my goodness. So you were exactly two years old when World War II started.

Exactly.

Exactly. September 1, 1937. And the war starts September 1, 1939. What was your name when you were born?

My name in Yiddish?

The name that you were-- when you were born, how were you called?

Jaime.

Jaime.

Jaime.

Jaime. And Zilberstein was the same?

Yes. Zilberstein was the same.

OK. And where were you born?

I'm born in a small town which name is Sarnaki.

Sarnaki?

Sarnaki. It is a small town very close to the Russian border about 60 kilometers from the Russian border. It's in the province of Siedlce.

Sirdce.

Siedlce.

Siedlce.

Siedlce.

The Jews used to call it Shedlitz, but the correct name in Polish is Siedlce.

Siedlce.

This is the main city in this area. So Sarnaki in the region of Siedlce.

Exactly.

And so we take it this is Poland. This is in Poland?

It's with Poland, and it's still now Poland.

It's still Poland today?

It's still Poland now. Yes.

OK. And had your family been from Sarnaki for generations?

Yes. My parents and my grandparents were born in the same town.

OK. Did you have brothers and sisters?

Yes. Now I have one sister. She's younger than me. She lives in Miami.

And when was she born?

She was born during the war in 1941.

OK. And what's her name?

Her name is Rebecca.

Rebecca Zilberstein.

Now she's Rebecca Novik because she's married to, uh--

So her married name is Novi?

Her husband's name is Novik. Novik.

Novik. Novik.

Novik. Yes.

Novik. And did you have any other brothers and sisters? Yes. I had another brother, but unfortunately he died in the trip from Poland to Russia.

What was his name?

No. Unfortunately, I don't know his name because he was very little.

Were you the oldest?

I was the oldest. Yes.

So you were two years old, and then there was an infant.

Yes.

Your brother who maybe didn't even have a name. Would that be possible?

No. I think he had the name. Yes. But he died because of the very bad sanitary condition during the trip. My parents decided to flee from Russia when Germans invaded the country. We had to go in a former train where the sanitary conditions were very bad, so my brother died because of this. Like, the illness was different than what I had from my parents.

Do you have any memories at all of Sarnaki?

No. From Sarnaki, unfortunately not because I was two years old, and we didn't come back to Sarnaki after World War finished.

All right. I'll step back a little bit. Let's talk about your parents. What was your mother's name? Maiden name as well as first name?

My mother's name was Sarah, and her name was Nortman.

Nortman?

The last name. Yes. Nortman.

And her family was also from Sarnaki for a long time?

Yes.

OK. And do you know the date of her birth?

The date of her birth? She was born in Sarnaki, but I'm already not sure. I'm not sure.

Do you know whether she?

She died many, many years ago.

OK. Do you know how old she was when she had you? I think that it was in a normal age between 20 and 17.

You don't know whether she was a very young mother or an older woman?

No. She wasn't a very young mother. No.

OK. And did she have brothers and sisters?

Yes. But unfortunately I don't know because it's possible that some of them were killed during the war.

OK.

But the other reason why I don't know is because they didn't like to talk about it with us-- with the children. So they were silent during many, many years. This is one of the reasons why I don't know many, many issues. Not many.

Well, the silence is also part of the story. You know, people lost living people, but they also lost their own family histories as a result. And so not knowing tells us as much as knowing, you know.

I understand. Yes. I understand what you mean. Yes. It's correct. It's true. It's true. This is at least my case now.

Yeah. So your mother is Sarah. And you don't know if she had brothers and sisters, or how many, or whether they were women or men?

No. I don't know.

OK.

I'm trying to find out now. My family thinks my son-in-law in Israel is doing the best he can to find out from many different kinds of institutions. Here, also in the US, there are many institutions that are involved in this search. And I still try to find out what you asked me.

Yeah. And I take it then you also did not know your grandparents. That is, her parents.

No. I only know my grandparents from my father's side.

We'll come to that.

Yes.

We'll come to that. But from mama's side, you don't.

No.

Do you know of them? Did she ever tell you about them? Your mother? Did she ever tell you about her own parents?

Yes. She told us but not too much. Not too much. That's why I can't remember many.

OK. Do you know what kind of a family she came from? That is, what kind of profession they might have had whether they were educated, whether they had a business, things like that? Did you know that?

Yes. I only know that my mom and her family were businessmen-- and my father from my father's side also. Like, most of the Jews in these small towns those years were merchants or businessmen.

Do you know what kind of business they had? Your mother's parents?

They had a store, but I don't remember exactly what they were selling.

OK. So you don't know if it's dry goods, or foodstuffs, or groceries?

No, it wasn't food, or groceries, or something to eat. It was fabric with clothes.

If it wasn't with that?

No. It was more related to clothing.

Oh, I see. So it was like a dry goods store. It was a fabric store.

For fabric. Yes.

Textiles.

Textiles. Yes.

OK. OK. And do you know-- did she ever say whether or not they were well to do?

Sorry?

Were they financially comfortable?

Yes. They were financially comfortable. Yes. We had our own house. We were in a good economic condition. Yes.

OK. All right. That's on your mother's side.

Before World War II. No?

Yes. Everything I'm asking you now is before World War II.

That's what they told me. And I still remember. Yes. But not too many details.

Yeah. Let's turn to your father's side then. What was his first name? His first name was Szaia.

Szaia.

In Hebrew, it's Yeshayahu, But in Polish they call it Szaia.

Szaia.

And in Yiddish it is Szaia

OK. Could you spell it for us? Szaia? So that we know for sure. Is it S-H?

But when you spell it in Polish, it's S-Z. S-Z, Szaia like in other Slavic languages.

All right. So it's S-Z.

S-Z-A-I-A. This is in Polish.

This is in Polish.

In Polish. But in Yiddish it is the same, which is Szaie,

With an E at the end?

With an E in the end. Yes. With an E in the end.

OK. What language did you speak at home? The first language you learned?

The first language I learned was Yiddish because at home I spoke Yiddish. And depend when, which age of my life, especially when we went to Russia, I spoke Russian and Yiddish at home. But when we came back from Russia after World War finished, I spoke outside-- it was Polish and with my parents in Yiddish.

So if I were to say, the languages that you learned in sequence, the first was Yiddish. The second was Russian. The third was Polish.

Exactly.

OK. And your father Szaia, do you know what year he was born?

He was born in 1909. I only know that he was two years younger than my mom.

So she's born in 1907.

1907. Yes.

We have a year for the date of her birth.

You have?

Now when you said that he is two years younger--

She. yeah.

--than your mother that means she was born in 1907.

She was born in 1970. Yeah. This I'm sure. Yes.

OK.

But I forgot already exactly the date.

OK. So that meant when she had you she was 30 years old. Mm-hmm.

30 years old.

30 years old. OK.

I thought a little bit less, but yes, it's true.

OK. And did your father have brothers and sisters?

Yes. My father had, I know, brothers. One of them perished during the Holocaust. And the other one, which name is Shulem. He came to Bolivia two, three years before World War II.

So he emigrated normally.

He immigrated I don't know how and which way, but he could come to Bolivia two, three years before World War II.

And his name was Shulem.

Shulem. Yes.

Did you ever meet him after the war?

I met-- no, I met him in Bolivia after the war. Yes.

Did you get to know him at that time, or was it just a one or two time meeting and that was it?

No, I've heard about him because we were from Poland, and we immigrated to Israel. There's a little bit farther. No later. But I've heard about him when I was already a teenager.

I see. So you didn't know that he existed until you were a teenager?

No, I didn't know that he existed until I was a teenager.

OK. And you say your father had another brother who perished in the Holocaust?

Yes. That was my son-in-law from Israel. And he could find out that he perished.

Did you know his name?

Yes, his name was Berko. Berel.

Berel. Berel Zilberstein.

In Polish, it was Berko.

Berko.

Yes.

And did you know of his existence as you were growing up?

No, I didn't know anything. I didn't know anything.

Did you find out about the fact that he existed from your son-in-law in Israel?

Yes. Last month. Not maybe five, six months ago.

You found out you had an uncle named Berko.

Exactly.

My goodness. When you think about that, that here's somebody-- if the world had been normal, and the war hadn't happened, and his policies hadn't been enacted, and the genocide hadn't been perpetrated-- you would have grown up with Uncle Berko and all of the aunts and uncles you might have had from your mother's side.

Yes. Exactly. But unfortunately this is the one relative I know until now. Maybe I had other relatives also, but it's impossible to know. Very hard to know nowadays.

Yeah.

Because my son-in-law, he made the European-- the Polish citizenship for his family, for his children. And the lawyer who made all this paperwork, he helped him to find out in the different offices in Warsaw that my father had a brother which name was Berko, and he perished during World War II.

In Yad Vashem, you know Yad Vashem Museum? He headed also to this institution in which the lawyer from Warsaw. He could find out that my father had another brother. Yes. But maybe he had some others also, but that's what I don't know yet.

OK. But you're actively searching?

I'm still searching, yes with his help and also from here in the US. You have many, many institutions that may help to find out it, but it's not easy. No.

This may sound like an obvious question. Why is it important to find out these things?

For me it's very important. Yes.

Tell me why.

Because I think that family is the most important things in life for each person. And you must know even if they don't exist anymore, but it's a need of a human being to know about his ancestors.

Do you know your grandparents' names?

Yes. The grandfathers from my father's side was Herschel. And from my mother's side was Ya'akov.

Her maiden name was Ya'akov?

The first name.

The first name.

My mother's father was Ya'akov.

Oh, I see. I see. So you knew at least your mother's-- so he was Ya'akov Nortman. If your mother was Sarah Nortman, he was Ya'akov Nortman. And on your father's side it was Herschel Zilberstein.

Exactly.

And do you know your grandmother's name on your father's side? His mother?

My mother's?

Your father's mother.

Yes. Tempeldiener.

Tempeldiener. That was her last name? And her first name?

I don't know it.

Do you know if you ever met them?

If I ever met them? My grandparents from my father's side? Yes. From my father's side, I met them. Yes.

OK. When you were an infant, or did they come with you to Russia?

They came with us to Russia, and afterward they came back to Poland and from Poland to Israel.

OK. So not only did you meet them, you knew them.

I knew them. Yes.

You knew them. They were part of your life.

Yes. I only know that the wife of my grandfather was his second wife.

Tempeldiener?

Yes. And they came together with us. Both of them came together with us to Israel.

And was she your father's mother or his stepmother?

She was-- no. She wasn't my mother's mother.

He wasn't your father's father? I'm talking about your father's side. The second wife of your grandfather-- was she your father's mother?

The second wife of my grandfather?

Yeah.

She was his second wife, but she wasn't.

In other words, did you.

She wasn't my grandmother.

OK. So your father.

She was the second-- she was the second wife of my grandfather.

OK. So that meant that the first wife was his mother?

Sure.

He was the child of the woman who no longer was there either died or divorced.

Exactly.

OK.

Yes.

But did she feel like a grandmother to you, the second wife, or not so much?

It's hard to remember everything, you know, but I think it was a normal relationship especially after during and after the war. You know that the relationship between the grandchildren and the grandparents was a little bit different.

And what was so different.

In order to get adapted to the new country, to the new language, and to the new place, it was-- for me, I think it involved a normal childhood compared to what children have now.

Well, it doesn't sound like it. And certainly-- I mean, we haven't even talked about it yet.

You understand. Yes, I know. But this is what I feel, you know.

Yeah.

I always have the opportunity to make the comparison with how it was before and how it's now. That's why I'm saying that it wasn't so easy. It wasn't so normal.

And that affected your relationships with the grandparents and I would assume also your parents?

You know, this is different though because the relationship to my parents-- I was always very. I still remember that I was always very thankful for what they did for us. But the role of the grandparents was more distant. You can understand?

Yeah, of course.

So that's why it's hard to compare the relationship between what they felt to my parents and to my grandparents because they came with us. We took them with us to escape from Germans from Poland. But the feelings weren't the same-- couldn't be the same. No.

OK. Were both sides of your family very religious?

No.

They were more secular?

Secular. More secular. Yes. They were very traditionally good Jews but secular.

OK. Did either side, your mother or your father, have higher education?

No. If you mean higher education, they went to the university. I can say that not. But I think that they had a normal culture and normal education as it was possible in those times because especially in the small towns it wasn't very easy to get higher education.

Yes.

But they always gave big importance to education.

OK. So it was important to them?

To them, yes.

OK.

That was, they proved their whole life. We'll talk about those things. At this point, what I'm trying to do is establish-- I'm trying to establish the world you came from. The world that doesn't exist anymore, and how much you knew about it, and how much you could either remember of it-- which would I assume not much-- but how much also people could have told you about this world you were born into.

And so do you know whether your father-- well, he could not have served in World War I. He would have been a young boy. If he was born in 1909, did he ever tell you any stories of World War I when he was a child?

No, I don't remember it. No, I don't think so. No.

OK. It's interesting. I mean, he was older than you were when World War II started, but he was still a child. So in some ways, his childhood was during the war, and your childhood was during the war.

His childhood was during World War I.

Yeah, during World War I.

No. Sorry. World War I was between '14 and '18.

That's right. And in 1914, he was five years old.

He was already-- oh yes. Yes. You're right. Yes. In '14, when World War I began, he was only five years old. So his childhood-- oh yes. You're right. His childhood was during World War I. And mine was during World War II.

You were younger but not by much.

Not that much. Three years younger. Yes. Three years younger.

Still, those early years, they're very important. It's like a stamp in the rest of your life.

Yeah. Do you think that your father had that stamp too?

It is hard to remember and hard to know it if you had this stamp because there are different circumstances, different experiences also. Because when I was still two years old they had to flee from Poland to Russia, but I don't know what we're doing-- his parents during World War I with him, and what he had to do, and where he had to go.

All we can assume is that there were-- if we talked geographically, that Sarnaki was 60 kilometers from the Russian border. There was probably some action. There was probably some kind of military action in that part of the world.

In that part of Poland.

Yeah, during World War I.

During War I? Oh, I didn't know it.

I don't know.

For me, something new.

Yeah. But I mean, I think of that. It was probably not a place that was peaceful during that time because you had the Austro-Hungarian Empire. You had the Russian Empire. You had Prussia. And they're all wanting these territories. That's the assumption I'm making.

It's possible to think like that. It's possible.

In the absence of really knowing?

I don't know this part of the history. Unfortunately, I never think about it.

I'm just throwing it out there as a supposition. This is all in the absence of really knowing what his experiences might have been as a young boy. We don't know. Now do you know whether or not Sarnaki being so close to the Russian border when Germany attacked Poland on September 1, 1939-- do you know? Oh yeah. Do you know whether or not that part was taken over by Germany or taken over by Soviet forces? Sarnaki itself in Siedlce.

In year 1939?

Yeah. Because Poland was divided.

Yes.

And part of it the Germans got, and part of it the Soviets got. So was Sarnaki in the Soviet part or in the German part?

No, Sarnaki was in the Soviet part. Yes. But I'm not sure. Since we fled, I'm not sure if the German army entered into Sarnaki or not. I think that yes.

Eventually, yes.

Yes. Eventually, yes.

Eventually, yes.

Because many, many Jews were killed there before sending them to concentration camps here.

That's right. That's right. Did your father work in the textile business in Sarnaki?

In Sarnaki?

Yeah. How did he put food on the table? He was 28 years old when you were born.

Yes.

Your mother is 30. How did the family eat? What supported you?

I only know that they were in a very good economic condition, and we had no problems with food or with the clothing. But exactly? I know also that they were involved in textile in the clothing and the fabrics. But how big was the store, and how much they were selling, how rich they were?

You don't know.

I don't know. I can't know it. But I only know that-- I still remember that I don't know if my father or my mother told me that I was born in a golden cradle.

So yes. That speaks of well being.

Exactly. Speaks of well being.

Speaks of well being. One of the reasons I ask is because when the Soviets arrive, they had a different system of classifying who were enemies of the people and who aren't enemies of the people. And if you're well to do you are not quite a friend of the people.

So some people got caught by that. They were called bourgeois. And I wondered whether or not that could have happened to your family, but you don't know of it at all.

No, I don't know it. It's impossible to know. How do you say the last French word?

Bourgeois. Bourgeois.

Bourgeois?

That is somebody who is well-to-do, somebody who is a capitalist, somebody who maybe employs workers is bourgeois.

Like a capitalist?

Mm-hmm.

Like a wealthy person?

That's right. That's right.

Thank you.

Do you know the circumstances of how your family left Sarnaki?

Yes. But not with many reasons-- not with many details. No. But you already remember they told me that, among the Jewish people, there were two different ideas-- two different sections. One of them was that they didn't believe how far can go Hitler.

And in order not to lose their properties, and their stores, and everything, they preferred to stay and to wait what will happen. Unfortunately, this was part of the six million.

Yeah.

And the other Jews, they were very scared because they knew already what were doing Germans with the Jews in Germany. So they imagine that the same thing can happen also in Poland. That's why many of them decided to lose everything.

They sold all the property and to escape but quickly. To leave everything but to escape quickly. Among these Jews were my parents. That's why they decided to lose everything and to escape to Russia.

OK. Do you know where they escaped to to Russia?

I only remember my parents told me that there was an agreement between both governments, with Poland and Russia, that the Russians let in refugees from Poland but with the requirement to work in labor camps.

So they send us directly to Siberia. I don't remember even the place but in the deep Siberia almost in the middle of nothing. There were the woods and forests. And my father had to work cutting trees in order to send the wood to the army to build the sleepers-- the sleeper for the trains for the railroads. You understand?

The rails?

The rails. The sleepers where they put it for the rails. With the wood of these trains they were cutting, they made. And this was more or less what my father had to do during our stay in Siberia.

So do you remember leaving your home in Sarnaki? Do you have any memories of that?

No. Because I was only two years old. I can't remember.

Of course.

But I know something about Sarnaki. Why? Because one of my daughters, she went to visit my birthplace.

And what did she find?

She found a small town with a square in the middle with the houses. And she was already 18, 20 years old when she went there. So she went, and she showed me some pictures. But the only thing I know from Sarnaki is from these pictures. 30, 40 years later, one of my daughters went there.

But she found no traces of your family there?

No. Nothing. She went with a friend just to see how it looked like-- how the town where her father was born.

So the way your parents explained it, that the Soviets agreed to take in refugees from Poland with the proviso that they work in labor camps-- and so your family was sent to Siberia to do that.

Exactly.

So that suggests that this was a voluntary agreement that your father and mother knew what they were signing up for and agreed to do it.

I'm not sure if they knew exactly what they had to do. But I can remember this was the only one option they had in this moment. So without knowing what they will do there, they only want to leave Poland.

Yeah. And do you remember anything of the train to Siberia? Because that's quite a train ride. That's quite a journey.

It was a long journey. It lasted more or less one week and, as I told, with very bad sanitary conditions because it wasn't a train for passengers. It was a cargo train. How do you say in English?

Cattle car?

A what?

Was it a cattle car?

Almost like a cattle car. Yes. Almost like cattle without any comfort.

Do you have memories of that?

Not too much. Not too much.

Were there other people in there?

Sure. Many, many people because many, many Jews decided to do the same what my parents did. So many people, many Jews escaped, and they send us to Siberia. This was the first place where we lived in Russia in the Soviet Union, but we went afterwards to other places.

OK. Do you have any memories of that first place?

Some are memories, and some both my parents told me. I still remember that we left within barrack made from wood. More or less 20 families together in the same barrack, and there was, like, a passage in the middle.

And the one side and the other side was rooms. In each room was the entire family. And I still remember they told me that in the end of this barrack there was the public restroom, so all of us had to use the same--

Facility.

--restroom. Yes. I also remember that it was very cold there. 30, 35 below zero. And there was also a lack of food. The food was rationed. You know what's rationed?

Mm-hmm.

Each family got a special amount of food, and then usually it wasn't enough. So if the parents wanted a little bit more for their children, they must to buy it in the black market, which was punished by law and even with jail.

But they took the risk sometimes in order not to-- in order to feed us in the correct way. Sometimes they had to buy food in the black market.

Is this what you're telling me from your own memory or from what they told you?

Mostly from what they told me. Yes. Because I was really little. I was two, three four years old. Because World War II lasted six years.

For Poland.

Yeah. For Poland. Yes. But we didn't stay only in Siberia six years. We had to move to other places. One of them was a big city which name was Arkhangelsk. Have you heard about it?

Yes. I have heard about it.

It's a big port. In there was born my sister in '41. So that means that in Siberia would have been not more than two or three years.

And so your parents left Poland very early. We could say in 1939 itself after the war starts.

Exactly.

And they come to Russia. And at some point most likely still in 1939 you all are transported to Siberia.

Yes.

Were your father's parents with you at the same time?

Yes. They were with us.

OK. So when you were in Siberia in the one room that everybody had as a family, who was in that room with you?

Who was?

Who was in that room with you?

My parents, me, and my grandparents together.

And you're the only little one because your brother doesn't survive the journey.

Exactly.

And so when they go on the black market it is to buy food for you. Is that correct?

Yes. It's correct.

Did all four adults have to go to work as far as you know?

No. I'm not sure because this work was more for men. But my mother, I think that she did something else, but I don't know exactly what.

OK. And the older ones, your grandparents, do you know if they stayed in that room or whether they went to work too?

No. They stayed in the same room, but I don't know what they did there. But they did maybe something similar as what my father did. But I don't remember really how old was my grandfather.

Yeah. What I'm trying to establish is, were you left alone during the day, or was there someone to take care of you during the day? But you know.

No, I can't remember it. But I suppose that my mother had to take care of me because I was a very little child.

And, you know, the other thing is that with the ration cards, people generally got ration cards depending on what work they did. So if you didn't work, you didn't get a ration card, which meant that-- this is my understanding. I could be wrong.

What do you mean? The ration card?

The ration card which tells you how much food you're going to get.

Oh, how much food. How much food you can get, it was depending how big was the family and how many children.

OK.

This was the amount of food that they gave us.

OK. So you, yourself, would have gotten a certain amount just because you exist. That is, you're a child, and a child gets this much.

Exactly. So much food, so much meal, so much meat, and bread, and everything. A certain amount of bread. A certain amount of butter. This is what I still remember.

Do you remember eating butter?

No. I don't remember exactly the butter, but I'm trying to give you an example of only how it works.

Do you remember being hungry?

It is a good question. I don't remember being hungry.

And then you say you all left that place in the middle of Siberia where it was 35 degrees below, and your father, I believe, was chopping trees to make the rails.

Chopping trees. Yes.

And you went to Arkhangelsk.

Exactly.

Do you remember anything of the journey to Arkhangelsk?

No. I only know that it was a very big distance.

OK. Do you remember where you lived in Arkhangelsk? What kind of a place you lived in?

No. I don't remember it. I only know that we've been there, and there was born my sister. But not too much about how was the place and where we lived.

Do you know how long you stayed there?

Not exactly because from there we went to another place of Russia, which name was-- it was in the region of

Kuybyshev.

Kuybyshev.

Kuybyshev. Now it's named Samara. They changed the name. And it was more closer to the European region of Russia. And there we lived in a small town which name was Melekess.

Melekess.

Melekess. And in this town, I remember I began to go to school.

You were how old?

I was six years old.

So this is 1943. Something like that.

Something like that. Yes. Because I still remember that I went to the second grade in Russia.

OK. Yeah, that would make sense. That would make perfect sense chronologically by all the wars.

Chronologically. Yes. That is why I still remember.

And did you-- before you start school, did you have any kind of interaction with Russians? With people who were local?

Yes. I had interaction with the Russian children and the Russian people. Yes. Others also. Because I still remember many words, many expressions that they used to talk.

What are they?

What are they?

If you remember. Yeah. Some of them.

In order to know. But we didn't experience any anti-Semitism among the people. Anti-Semitism was more with the government, but the Russian people usually were very friendly to us. But one of the things that I still remember in order to know if you was Jewish or not, they said, [SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

And what does that mean?

What that-- maybe he knows.

[SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

From the mountain of Ararat--

Yeah.

There is a big--

[SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

There's a big grape, red, in red color.

And that's supposed to tell if you're Jewish or not?

Sure. Because depending how you pronounce the R, [SPEAKING RUSSIAN], because Jews didn't produce R.

I see. It was a question of accent.

Of accent. Of how do you pronounce the letter R. They say in Russian [SPEAKING RUSSIAN], but Jews said [SPEAKING RUSSIAN].

OK. So those are the sorts of things.

They said one other thing. And the other thing I still remember was [SPEAKING RUSSIAN]. The [SPEAKING RUSSIAN] is-- you know [SPEAKING RUSSIAN]? [SPEAKING RUSSIAN]?

Russian? Not Polish?

[SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

The button is ours.

"The soup is not porridge, but the button is ours." That makes no sense.

Why?

That makes no sense whatsoever. What does it mean?

What does it mean?

Yeah.

[SPEAKING RUSSIAN].

Is a button?

It's a button. So they played in breaking the butter out of the shell.

OK. But what does that have to do with soup and porridge?

Stew?

Soup and porridge.

[SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

In Russia, it's like a rhym-- a rhythm.

Oh. Like a rhyme.

A rhyme. It's like a rhyme. [SPEAKING RUSSIAN]

OK.

It's a rhyme.

OK. Now I get. So these are the sorts of things that kids would say when you were meeting kids and you were playing with kids.

This is one of the things I still remember. But many, many other maybe I'd forgotten, but I was very fluent in Russian because when we came back to Poland I spoke many words Russian. Yes.

You said that you didn't experience any anti-Semitism from the people, but you made a distinction and said something about the government. What's the distinction? What's the difference?

As I know, everybody knows that the communist was a-- the communist government was against the ethnic minorities especially among the Jews where many scientists, many people that didn't think like them. And afterward they were sent to the gulag to Siberia. It was part of the Jewish history in Russia.

Well, you know.

During Stalin's era.

Well, you were in Siberia during Stalin's era. Your family was there during that time. And I have to say that when you were telling me about what your father was doing and the circumstances, the barracks that you lived in, to me it does not sound like a voluntary trip to Siberia.

To me it sounds like your family was deported in that they may have fled to Russia to escape Germany, but they may not have known what they were getting into when they were in Russia, or in the Soviet Union.

Yes. Maybe. But since I was told by my parents, I remember that there was an agreement between the two governments. The Russian government let--

People in.

--people in because they needed cheap labor. Maybe this is one of the reasons. I'm not sure exactly.

The thought that I have to say that I had as you were telling me this is that the parents are being very careful with the child, so that the child does not say anything that could be perceived as hostile. Because people were very careful about what they told their children as to what was going on.

One of the reasons I say this-- and my point is not to influence your story, and I hope that what I say will not. But I have interviewed people who were Jews from the part of Poland that you were in who escaped eastwards.

And when they were in the Soviet Union itself, they were given a choice. They could either return to Poland and stay Polish citizens or accept Soviet citizenship. And if they wanted to return back, and many did simply because their families were there, then they were almost tricked.

They were put on trains, and the trains went East not West. But because they refused to accept Soviet citizenship they were deported. This is the experience of some not all.

Not all.

Others were deported straight from Poland, but they had a similar kind of end. That is, they end up in Siberia because there were also Jews, who ran, who didn't get deported, who didn't end up in Siberia, who still could be refugees but didn't end up there.

And in 1941, people who were Polish citizens were released from the gulags because the Germans attacked the Soviet Union, and they were no longer allies. And then the Poles needed to be-- those who were Polish citizens are no longer enemies. We can release them from the work camps.

So I don't know whether your trip to Arkhangelsk is a result of that. There was an agreement between Sikorsky and Stalin in Moscow and general Anders is forming an army.

Poland.

In Poland. Well, for Poles in the Soviet Union.

Yes.

Or whether it's independent of that. But most people, who were deported to the gulags, who were not Polish citizens were not released. They stayed there in the labor camps-- in the work camps. Or they could move from place to place, but they're still considered prisoners.

They're still considered-- their circumstances might get a little better, but they have to ask permission for every place that they go. It is very varied. It is very, very varied what these experiences are, and it's one of the reasons why I was asking about whether your family was well-to-do because it mattered.

It mattered. Sure.

In that part of the world it mattered. Forgive me for this.

No, it's interesting. I know that you have many sources of information. And this is-- maybe this is part of the history now. But in my case, I already remember that since we didn't accept the Russian citizenship, we could come back to Poland.

They allowed us to come if we would accept the Russian, we couldn't--

You wouldn't have been able to leave the Soviet Union.

We would not be able to leave Soviet Union.

So here is where I'm saying is that probably because you didn't accept it.

Because we didn't accept it.

In the beginning.

We had to accept. But how do I know if we were obliged to accept it in the beginning?

You may not know.

That's what I don't know.

It could very well be. And then when you say that your parents-- the way your parents explained it to you sounds to me like a way of protecting, and shielding you, and not letting you know all of the various circumstances that could have been involved and why you end up going on that train, you know, where your brother dies and you end up in the labor camp.

It could be that they declined to accept Soviet citizenship at that point when they ran, and that was the consequence of not accepting it.

The consequence of not accepting the?

Soviet citizenship.

The Soviet citizenship.

It could be. We don't know.

But we can't be sure.

We don't know. We don't know. But let's go back to Arkhangelsk.

Yes?

You're in Arkhangelsk. And then you go to from there to Samara. You say it was called Kuybyshev?

It was called Kuybyshev. Yes.

OK. What was your father doing in, or your mother both, or the adults in Arkhangelsk and then in Kuybyshev? What kind of work were they doing, or were they doing anything like that?

In Arkhangelsk, I think that will be a very short time, but I don't know exactly what he was doing there. Afterward, when we came to Melekess, I'm almost sure that he was working as a carpenter somewhere. I don't know if in a factory or something related to carpentry.

Carpentry.

Yeah. Carpentry.

And your mother, was she employed someplace?

I don't know because in Arkhangelsk was born my sister, so she had to take care of--

The baby.

--both of us. But what she did apart from that, I don't remember. I don't know.

And did I ask you, what kind of a place did you live? And what was the name of the small town?

Melekess.

Melekess.

Melekess. Do you remember anything about that place? What it looked like?

No, not exactly. Because I always remember that I went to school. The school was very far from my home. I had to walk to work a few kilometers to get there. I still remember I had to cross the wooden bridge, a narrow bridge.

And I still remember that there was the river a very, very big distance. And also my nose was frozen because of the--

It was cold.

The cold weather. Yes. This is one of the things that I remember. And I went up to the second grade but not much more.

Do you remember anything from the school itself? Any teachers? Any of the other kids? Any of the lessons?

No.

OK. Were there many children in the classroom?

Exactly how many children? No. Because my primary and my secondary school, I made this something. I made in six different countries.

Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness. OK. All right. And so this was just the first?

It was the first.

OK. And how long did you stay there? How long did the family stay in?

Up to the end of World War II to '45. Up to the year '45. And I was told by my parents, since they didn't accept the Russian citizenship, they allowed us to come back to Poland.

OK. And do you remember the return journey to Poland?

I only know that it was by train not how long it took us. I don't exactly know.

But it was all six of you then? Your parents, your grandparents, your little sister, and yourself.

Exactly. Yes. This I know.

OK. And where in Poland did you go?

In Poland, we couldn't come back to our town because we were told that in this region in this area were hidden many Nazis and many bands of Nazi soldiers. And it was very dangerous to live there. So I don't know how my parents went to live in Niederschlesien.

Niederschlesien.

Niederschlesien is the German name, but it is the name which was Klodzko in Polish. It was Klodzko. It was very close to the Czech and the German border.

Was this?

Dolny Slask is in Polish.

Dolny Slask.

Dolny Slask. It's very close, 70, 80 kilometer from Breslau, which name in Polish was Wroclaw. It's a very big city in Poland.

Yeah. So it's in the western part of Poland.

It's more in the western part of Poland. Yes. The western part of Poland. Yes.

And so you go there.

We went to Klodzko. And there we lived almost six years.

That's a long time. That's a very long time.

It's a long time from '45--

To '51.

To '51.

OK. So in those six years, you are now a child. You're eight, nine, 10 years old. That's when you begin.

Yes.

Tell me you have more memories of this place.

I have some memories, but I don't understand why not more.

OK. Well, share with me what you do know. What you do remember. Do you remember the place you lived?

Yes, I remember the place. I remember the name of even the street. I remember how was the city more or less, the city was like a medieval city, with fortresses, with channels.

With a moat?

With the walls. With the walls. And nowadays a very touristic place.

What was the name of the city again?

In Polish it's Klodzko.

Kludzko.

Kludzko. Before World War II it belonged to Germany, and in Germany it was Glatz.

Glatz?

Glatz.

G-L-A-T-Z?

Exactly.

Glatz.

Glatz.

OK. So it was part of that territory that Germany lost basically.

Yeah. This is part of what the Germans lost. Yes.

So what you were seeing was old German architecture probably from at the time, if it's medieval, it could be Teutonic. But it was a German influence.

It was a German influence. Yes.

Were there Germans left in the city?

No, I don't think so. No Germans.

Do you remember ever meeting anyone--

No.

--who was German?

No. I don't remember seeing anyone who was German.

What was the name of the street?

The name of the street was Nizno. Nizno means "down." Means "down." This street.

And what was the address? Do you remember the number?

The number? No, not really.

OK.

Maybe somewhere it's written in some place because.

You know, some people remember these things. They remember their telephone number. If their family had a telephone, they remember their phone number.

But the memory of every person is different.

That's right.

I recognize that my memory is not the best nowadays.

Well. But tell me this. Do you remember the kind of building you lived in? Was it a single family home? Was it an apartment building? What kind of a place was it?

It was a single house.

It was a single house.

A single house. A small house not very big but a single house. Yes.

All right. And can you describe it for me? Did it have two stories, three stories, one story?

No. I still remember it was only one story. Only one story. But I don't remember exactly how many rooms or how was it. No.

Did it have modern conveniences? That is, did it have electricity?

Yes. We had electricity. We had water. Everything inside. Yes.

OK. And who lived there?

It was a comfortable house. Yes.

OK. Who lived there with you? Who was in the house? Your parents? Yourself? Your sister? Were your grandparents

there too?

I don't remember already if my grandparents lived together with us in this house. That's what I forgot already.

OK.

I don't remember.

Did you speak any Polish when you first arrived in Klodzko.

When we first arrived to Kuybyshev I didn't speak any Polish. I spoke only Russian and Yiddish.

That's not very popular.

Why not?

Well, in Yiddish maybe, but Russian would not have been very popular in Poland. And I'm wondering whether you got into any fights with children because of that.

Sorry? I didn't.

Russian was not very popular in Poland because the Russians occupied Poland. Now did you ever experience any difficulties because you spoke Russian and not Polish at that time?

No. What kinds of difficulties I experienced, I don't remember already now. But I only know that in order to go to school I had to learn Polish.

And did you?

Sure. In a couple of months, I spoke already Polish because I went to school. I went to Hashomer Hatzair. This was a Zionist organization. But I was in school, a bilingual school, because I learned Hebrew in the school. In the afternoon, I learned Polish.

Oh. So you went to-- you didn't go to a public school?

No, it was-- I don't know. It wasn't private. No. But I only remember that the same school I studied both languages, Hebrew and also Polish.

So that suggests that there were more Jewish families who were living in Klodzko. Yeah, in that city. And was it a particularly special school that was geared for Jewish children if you were studying Hebrew in the morning, and then Polish in the afternoon.

Yes.

OK. I had assumed you'd gone to a school with other Gentile Polish children.

No. I went to school when I learned Hebrew and Polish in the same school. Yes.

And because it's Hebrew that suggests that there was a purpose. The purpose of learning Hebrew was for what reason?

Because my parents were traditionally good Jews, and they were Zionist also. And they told me that we have to be good Jews at home and good citizens outside-- outside the home. This was the way we were taught by my grandparents.

Were they interested in leaving Poland? Was this school established for the purpose that there would be an eventual

emigration to Israel?

No. I didn't understand exactly the question.

OK. Was the school established so that you would eventually emigrate to Israel? Was that the purpose of it?

Was that the purpose of it?

Yeah.

It's hard to know if that's what the purpose of it because even now there are many schools in different countries that the purpose is not to go to Israel.

Of course.

Only to give Jewish education to Jewish families.

A fair point. A fair take. I am making assumptions in my questions, and I shouldn't be making those assumptions. I am making assumptions that when you returned to Poland after World War II the purpose was to eventually leave Poland.

And because you do go to Israel eventually, I'm making the assumption that there were plans already and that you going to the school is one of those plans, so forgive me. You are absolutely right.

This wasn't the proposal because since when we came back to Poland, my parents wanted to establish themselves and to live and to stay in Poland. It was the first time, the beginning, but yes, with passing, the circumstances were changing.

The communism began already in Poland. Up to year '50, '51, it was almost the same problem as in the Soviet Union. They began to confiscate private properties, stores, and factories from the Jews. Not only from the Jews.

From everybody.

From everybody, you know. And since my parents already recovered economically, they were doing well. They started to run a small factory, a shoe factory. And the economics in these five, six years, they were doing pretty well economically.

But suddenly the rules of the game were so different that they began to think that it's impossible to live in these circumstances in Poland. That's why finally they decided to leave Poland.

So this wasn't-- again, forgive me. I try not to ask leading questions, and this was one which was a leading question. When they first came back to Poland, it was with the idea, we're going to stay here. This is our home. We're going to live here. We're going to build our future here.

Yes.

OK. And you say they established a shoe factory?

Yeah. This is one of the things I remember they had with a partner with somebody else. Yes.

Did you ever go and visit that factory? Did you see where they did this?

I don't remember it. Maybe yes. But I don't remember how it was. It was a small factory. But we made a good living with it after World War II in Poland again.

And was there any talk? Do you remember now you're more conscious? Was there any talk about what happened to the

Jews who remained in Poland during the war? Was there any talk going on at this time about the Holocaust?

Yes. But not too much. My parents didn't talk too much about that because they felt not to make us sad because we were still children. But some things I remember but not too much. They preferred to be silent.

Were they themselves sad? Did you notice that about them or not? If your parents themselves, were they sad? Did you notice this as a child? Is my question clear?

No. I didn't exactly the question.

I'm trying to get a sense of whether or not you noticed if your parents were weighed down by what they knew, but they didn't share with you.

No. I couldn't realize that because all of us was busy, was occupied to get adapted to the new life to the new country. It was something like a new place.

It was a new place.

So in my case and myself with school, with the language, with the new friends, and my parents with the new business, the new work also. So that's why. And the main reason was that they preferred not to make us sad telling us what happened during--

The war.

They knew. They knew what happened, but they preferred not to talk about it.

I had forgotten to ask this earlier. But can you tell me a little bit about your parents' personalities, your mother and your father? You know, what kind of people were they?

What kind of people? Yes, it's a good question. My mother was especially a very good mother. She did everything to give us much more than we needed as children. She was a very good household.

She knew how to run a household.

Yes. She liked to have the best things in our home. Crystal from Waimea, carpets from Persia, and so on, and so on. And she was also a very, very good businessman. Even before the war, I still remember. But she told me.

Even men, businessmen, sometimes asked her the advice what to do in certain--

Circumstances.

In certain circumstances. So she was a really good mother, and a very good household, and also a very good businessman. And my father, yes, he was also a businessman. He was very good to us. But the life, he was obliged to do many things completely different what he used to-- what he has been because during the war he has to do everything in order to survive and to make survive the family.

But they suffered. They suffered a lot. I still remember that. For all these reasons, they suffered.

How did that suffering express itself? How did it show that they were suffering?

Because they lost many things, and they had to begin from this-- start from the beginning in different circumstances in the political circumstances was already hard and economically such like their life was broken. It was completely difficult, you know.

You had mentioned two things earlier that caught my mind. One is that you remembered being grateful to them. And was that from a very, very young age? It sounded like it was from a very young age that you were grateful for what they were doing.

Exactly as I remember it.

That's not usually what a child thinks. I mean, children are wonderful, but they don't think in those terms of being grateful for what they've got.

Yes, I agree. But I guess it's a little bit unusual maybe-- some point of view. Afterwards, if you want, I can explain why I have this feeling that I state my gratitude. I'm still thankful for what they did for us.

I very much want to hear it. That's why I bring it up. What is the reason for this point of view? I mean, it's clear. And most people eventually are grateful to their parents. But for you it was very, very pronounced and very young.

First of all, during when in Siberia, they put at risk their life buying food in the black market. In Russia, it was a very big sin. It was punished by jail, and they did it. They take the risk only to feed us dinner. This is one of the things I can remember.

And they made everything that were necessary in order to make us happy and not to suffer in these kinds of circumstances. It's hard to explain in a foreign language.

Would it be easier for you to say it in Spanish?

No. But if there is something else I can add, just ask me. But I prefer not to.

OK.

But she knows already, not many details. Even during a long time I prefer not to talk about it even with my wife and my family also. But nowadays everything is completely different. I always think that I will not be able to have the best listeners.

Oh really?

Nowadays, people like to hear more happy stories and not this kind of story.

Well, you know, that is a concern. A lot of people didn't tell their stories or don't go into detail because they notice whether or not someone really cares or whether or not they really understand. And so sometimes it's just easier not to speak.

This is more or less my case. More or less.

So you know when you're--

Because to speak is sometimes you open your wounds also. And in psychology we call it catharsis. You know what is catharsis? Sometimes it has a therapeutic effect, but I don't need this kind of therapy.

Yeah. And that's not the purpose of these interviews.

Because it doesn't solve me anything.

The other thing that you said is that you were stamped very early, you know. That your childhood was different than other people's childhoods, and you can compare now. And I'd like to know if you can describe for me that stamp. What was stamped on you?

No. This time, it was simply how I passed my childhood. My childhood was the first years of my life.

Well, here's the thing. They sound-- I mean, when one describes what happened as historical events, it sounds horrific. You know, it sounds like these are sorts of things that maybe they lived through, but many people didn't survive-- didn't live through.

That is, they didn't survive those circumstances. And I also hear from you that the reason you're grateful to your parents is because you know how much they tried to protect you and to shield you.

Yeah.

And to some extent it sounds like they succeeded, you know, that they did shield you. They did protect you. And then my question is, but nevertheless, you're stamped? So what was it that they weren't able to protect you from going through all of these things? What was it that made that childhood different?

One of the things I told you already-- what happened during our stay in Siberia with the food and everything. And afterward when we came back to Poland, to give us the best education. But the main memory comes much later.

OK. And maybe we'll get there. So if we go back now to the chronological part, we're talking 1945 to 1951. And you're going to school, and things are not bad, you know.

Yes.

They're doing OK.

Yes. In those years, we had more or less a normal childhood because we didn't have a lack of food. We were getting a very good education. We were in a Zionist organization. I was a really good student in Hebrew and also in Polish.

I still have the grades, you know.

Your report card.

Report card. Yes. I have it not from Russia but visiting from Poland.

OK.

From Klodzko. And that means that in those six years after World War II, I think that I would-- except the problem of the adaptation, my childhood was a normal childhood. I have good memories from this period of my life.

OK. Many Jews talked about anti-Semitism in Poland after the war. Did you ever experience anything like that? Did your family ever experience anything like that?

In our case, no.

OK. So that means that when they left for Israel, or they started to plan to leave for Israel, it was purely because of the Communist influence. Because communists takeover communist policies.

Exactly. They were the main reason. Sure.

OK. And do you remember leaving Poland? You were then 13, 14 years old.

Yes, I remember.

Tell me about it.

Since my parents were already in a very good economic condition to leave Poland, we were obliged to leave almost everything-- almost all the belongings.

Would have been accumulated in those years.

Yes. Would have been accumulated all those years. Especially my mother, she liked very much to have the best in the world. And so the government gave us a list of belongings we were allowed to take with us and such amount of shares, such amount of pants, such amount of clothes and everything. But towels or how many sheets.

But the rest, you must leave in Poland. But since we had much more than the list, part of our belongings we had to leave. But my mother, apart of that, she took the risk in the border, and we took more than was allowed. And I still remember then when we got to the border.

Of which country?

To the border, it was when we left between Poland and Czech Republic. When we get right to the border, they begin to look for everything, and they began to take away, to take away, to take away. I still remember my mother asked us to cry. Maybe--

That would help.

--that would help to. I don't know the word exactly in English, but you understand me.

Mm-hmm. Exactly.

This is one of the things I remember. But anyway it didn't help.

It didn't work.

Didn't work. And we came to Israel almost with anything.

With just the shirts and the pants.

Just the shirts. Yes. But there's something anecdotic.

Yeah. An anecdote.

Anecdote. Many years later already in Buenos Aires in Argentina, we brought with us earlier the pillows. With puch. You know what is puch? The feather. The feather from the--

The goose feathers?

The goose feathers. Yes.

The best feathers that there were.

These were the best feathers. Yes. And my mother made some big pillows and also blankets made with these feathers very expensive.

Very expensive.

And my daughter in Buenos Aires, she wanted to make some jacket for one of his children, and she felt something hard

among the feathers. And this thing, something hard, was a \$5 bill bent inside.

Oh my goodness.

This is one of the things I still remember. So they had to hide at least something in order to go to Israel with something.

Something so you're not completely.

Sure. This is one of the things I still remember. When we arrived to Israel, we arrived almost with anything after being wealthy, wealthy people in Poland.

Well, it sounds like really feast or famine but really those two extremes. Feast or famine. Feast meaning there's everything or famine.

Or famine. Yes, I understand.

You know? Your family is comfortable in Sarnaki, and then they're in Siberia where there's no food and you could have ration cards. And then they go on the black market to make sure the children are OK-- you know, that they have enough to eat.

When they have a chance, they re-establish their lives, and they have things again. They want to leave. They have to leave it all behind and end up with almost nothing when they end up in Israel, so it's like these two extremes going back and forth.

Exactly.

Do you remember how you got to Israel? If you were at the Czech border, where did you go from there?

It was in year '51. Especially the economic situation in Israel in those times were very, very hard, very difficult. The government didn't have housing for the immigrants, so we had to live almost one year in tents in a camp in the middle of the desert not far from Tel Aviv because that time half an hour from Tel Aviv was already in the middle of the desert.

So we had to live in this place almost one year in a tent. And the water and the restrooms were outside. And afterwards, later, we could rent a small house close to Tel Aviv since one of my relatives was leaving already. And they helped us to find a house.

Was this from mother's or father's side, this relative?

It was from my father's side.

OK. And was this a cousin or a distant relative? Who was this?

No. It was from my mother's side. A cousin. Second cousin. Not the first cousin. From my mother's side. Yes.

From your mother's? Not your father's.

From mother. From mother. Sorry. From mother's side. Yes. They were living already in Israel before the independence war. So they were established there. They had a store grocery. And they helped us to find a house close to them to their store.

So now you have Hebrew added to your languages. Yiddish, Russian, Polish, Hebrew. And you started school while still living in a tent?

No. I started school when we go to the house.

OK. So for that one year, you don't have a new school when you were in the tent.

I was studying Hebrew, but I don't remember exactly if I went already to school because my school was closer to the city to Tel Aviv. But the tents, the camp, was further far from the city. That's why I'm not sure where I began to study there.

But I only know that I went to school, and I studied. I learned very quickly here.

That's quite a facility. I mean, truly.

I still remember that when if something goes later when my brother decided to leave Israel, but it comes later. Maybe we can kind of.

Has it to do with Hebrew?

Because you asked me about something else, and I I'm going too far.

To something else? Oh. It's OK. You can go too far if you want to. What I just made now is a comment on language that now you have your fourth language. It's Hebrew.

Yes.

And that reminded you of something.

Yeah. That reminded me. Yes. Since in those times the economic situation was really bad, and my father after being a successful businessman before and after the war, he had to work as a carpenter for somebody else.

Again.

Again. And the situation was really, really hard. And the only one brother, my father that survived the war, he was living in Bolivia as I told you.

Shulem.

Shulem. Yes. Very good memory. Congratulations.

Thank you.

He was in Bolivia already with a very big store and good economic situation. He asked my parents, if they want, he can make the paperwork and everything to take us to Bolivia. And they told, yes.

And how long did they live in Israel for?

We were leaving in less than two years.

Less than two years. So we're talking about 1953.

Yes, 1952.

'52 even?

'52. I still remember I learned so fast Hebrew that, when my parents decided to leave for Israel, I told my classmates that I'm leaving because I was 15, 16 years old. So they were really surprised. Why surprised? Because I was so perfect

speaking Hebrew that they thought that I was a Sabra. You know what is a Sabra?

Tell us. What is a Sabra?

Sabra is a child who was born in Israel.

So your accent was so good.

My accent and my Hebrew was so perfect they didn't believe me that I was an immigrant. I had to explain to them that I'm leaving already 1 and 1/2-- less than two years. So fast, I learned the language.

That's an accomplishment. That's quite an accomplishment.

I don't know if it's an accomplishment.

Of course it was. That's the way it was.

The way it was. Yes. And I was very, very integrated to a life in Israel. I was very happy there.

Did you not want to leave?

I had many friends there even my first girlfriend. But since my parents decided to leave, I had to go with him because I was less than 16 years old.

Yeah. I want to cut here for a second. So before our break we were at the point in your story where you had moved with your family to Israel. You had uncle Shulem in Bolivia. Let's cut the camera. OK. So I'm sorry we were interrupted again a little bit.

But yes, let's pick up the story from where we were. You had come with your family to Israel. You had been there for two years or so. And your uncle Shulem sends and arranges for your family to be able to come to Bolivia. And does that happen? Do you actually leave Israel for Bolivia?

Sure.

OK. When did you leave? 1953?

1922.

1952?

'52.

OK. And was this a plane journey? A journey by plane or journey by boat?

No. We came with the boat from Haifa from Israel to Genoa to Italy. And in Genoa, we had to stay about a month, a month and a half because there was some problem with the passports or something like that. We had to stay in a small hotel in downtown Genoa.

And I still remember that the owner of the hotel, every night, he came to talk to us. But he spoke all only Italian, and we didn't. So in less than two months, I learned--

A little bit Italian.

No.

A lot?

A lot of Italian because when we arrived to Bolivia, it was very easy for me to learn Spanish because it's so similar to Italian. So it's something that I still remember.

So it's number five and number six after Yiddish, Russian, Polish, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish. Wow. OK.

That's why I still remember that when we came to Bolivia, and I went to school, when the teacher made us dictate.

You had to take dictation. You had to write it down.

Yes. And my classmates, they were leaving-- they sat down next to me to copy.

What you were writing.

My writing. My orthography was almost perfect after being there a couple of months.

So if we were to talk today, if you were to rank your languages today by fluency, what would be the language that you are the most comfortable expressing yourself?

Nowadays the most comfortable is Spanish because I am speaking Spanish already more than 60 years. Since I met my wife, and I've been with her more than 53 years, I don't-- she doesn't speak another language but Spanish. But sometimes, seldom when I travel, when I go to Israel, when I come here, I can speak others languages also.

And as the years were passing, I must learn English because for traveling in order to get in touch with my family I must speak English also. But I'm still not very happy with my English not enough.

Well, I think your English is just fine.

But for you it's fine, maybe. It's quite thick.

But you learned that. Then you learned English as an adult already.

Sure.

So that's language number seven. Are there any more that come? Or is this the-- I mean, this is quite a menu of what we've got here.

No. I learned also German because Yiddish is very similar to German.

This is true.

And do you know that this is a dialect from old German. So when we came to Bolivia I still remember that I went to school to a private school. And the director, the owner of the school, was a German guy. Since I was the best student in German because of my Yiddish.

And I still remember, as a gift when I finished school, she gave me a book, which name is Hansel and Gretel.

Really? He gave you the?

I still have it. I still have the book. Yes. Best German student, but--

What was the name of that school? Do you remember?

Pestalozzi.

Pestalozzi?

Have you heard who he was?

No.

He was a very famous pedagogue Swiss pedagogue.

And the school was named after him?

Yes, the school is named after him. Yes. Pestalozzi.

I have a question that I'm a little self-conscious about, and it goes on again some assumptions. So forgive me for those assumptions. The image that we in North America have of some in South America is that the South American countries had German colonies that were almost exclusively Nazi colonies, and you mentioned that you go to school that was a German school or the director was German?

But he was the best school-- the private school in this town. When I came to Bolivia, the name of the city was Santa Cruz. It was in the capital. It was almost more than 60 years ago. Bolivia was and still now a very undeveloped country. So the best place where I could study was in this private school.

But was it true? I mean, did you?

Yes.

Were there other students there whose parents might have had, what we'd say, questionable backgrounds who might have fled from Germany because of their activities?

Yes. I know what you are asking. But until now I don't know if the owner of this school was a Nazi or not because I don't know when he came to Bolivia if after the war or maybe he was there before the war. So if he was there before the war, maybe he wasn't a Nazi.

But some people asked me if I knew or if my parents knew if he was or not Nazi. They wouldn't have done this school. But I think that they didn't have another option to send me to the school because, it was the best private school in this town. It was a small town.

I still remember that the streets were paved with dirt, and the houses were very, very modest. So it was very-- only 12 Jews were living there.

And was your uncle one of them?

Yes. My uncle was one of them. Sure.

And what kind of-- how did he make a living?

He sold the store.

He had a store?

A store.

OK.

He sold everything. Almost everything. Not food or groceries.

Like, a hardware store or a dry goods store?

Clothes, fabric, shoes, everything except food except hardware. Some hardware stuff.

Was it more like a department store?

Sorry?

More like a department store like what we have here? These larger department stores? Or was it like Woolworth's?

Yes, I know. Yes. More or less similar to that. Yes.

OK. And what kind of-- what did your family do when you got there to Santa Cruz?

My uncle helped them install a store to make a store.

Of their own.

Of their own by their own. And then we rented a house, and they run this store almost like my uncle but a little bit smaller.

So in other words, they're starting their lives over again, jeppers, the fifth time. The sixth time? I've lost count. After Sarnaki, there's the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union, there's several places in the Soviet Union. Then there's back to Poland. Then from Poland, there's Israel and now once more a new beginning.

Exactly.

How did that go?

How did that go?

Yeah.

In Bolivia? My parents and I always wanted to study in a more cultured place than Bolivia than the city was those times. So at the age-- I helped them when we arrived. I helped them to work in the store to do many things, and I began to study at school.

I was doing very well. I learned very quickly the language. But I wanted and my parents also wanted to give me a better place for my education. So before finishing my high school in age 17, by myself, alone, I went to study to Buenos Aires.

To Argentina.

To Argentina. I entered in fourth grade of high school, and then I gave-- without studying, without going one year, I gave the exam to finish the last year. And I could enter to the university to study medicine.

Was this complicated between countries in South America to move from one country to another to study from one country to another?

No, it wasn't very hard. It wasn't very difficult. But in my case, since I wasn't-- in other words, I had to get special permission because I was--

17.

--under 18 years old. I had to get to somebody's help in a document to go to study in Argentina.

And your parents stayed in Santa Cruz? And did they continue to live there?

Yes, they continued to live there, but this is the most sad part of my life. When I was in fourth grade for the class of medicine, suddenly, I got the news that there was a robbery in their store, and both of them were killed.

They resisted in the robbery to give the key of the safe where they had everything-- money, and jewels, and everything-- because they wanted everything for us. So they both of them were killed at the same time.

I can't imagine that kind of news.

I had to interrupt my studies in Buenos Aires. I went to Bolivia to bury them and to liquidate as much as I could. My uncle, in the beginning, helped me. But it was impossible to sell everything because I wanted to continue my career in Buenos Aires. And so I decided to liquidate and to sell what I could, and I came back to Buenos Aires.

What was going on with your sister?

My sister, she was studying in another city.

In Bolivia?

In Bolivia. Cochabamba is the name. And the school, like how do you say when you leave?

A boarding school?

A boarding school. Yes. A boarding school. So when it happened, she was studying there.

How old was she?

She was 16, 17 years old.

So this is 1956, '57.

Yes, more or less. Yes. But when she finished to study in the school, I brought her to Buenos Aires, and we lived together.

And does that mean she finished the school year at that school or she finished her?

No. She finished her studies in this school.

OK. So that means she left with a high school diploma?

Yes. With a high school diploma she left Bolivia.

OK. I can't imagine what that must have been like for you. You lose your family. You lose your parents.

That's why for me it's not very easy to speak about it now especially in this tragic way. They're safe from the Nazis. They're safe from the communists, and finally they lost their life in Bolivia.

Did they ever catch who did it? Was the person or persons who committed this crime-- were they ever caught?

We offered many, many compensation, many things, but I was 20, 21 years old. And I couldn't. Many people of the Jewish community wanted to help-- wanted to give a kind of compensation to find the men, but it wasn't possible.

So the police did not find anything? Did not do anything? Was this a rare thing to happen in Santa Cruz? Were these types of crimes a common occurrence or a very rare occurrence?

No, it was very rare. It was very. It happened to my parents because they didn't took enough secure.

Security.

Security. And that's why they were managing dealing with a lot of-- not so much but with money. They did also exchange changing money.

Does that mean, like, changing currency?

Changing currency from dollars to local currency. And I helped them. Even from Buenos Aires, I sent to them. So they were too exposed, and they don't talk. They didn't take enough security.

No protective measures.

No protective measures. Yes.

OK. Did this happen within the store itself, or in their back offices, or in their home?

In the same store that we have in the backyard, we had a room where they sometimes they slept. In this room, they had a big safe. And the thieves wanted the keys for the safe. And they didn't want to give them. And I still remember when I came, the floor was full of blood of my parents.

Oh my gosh. I can see why you're very grateful to them, you know.

Still. Yes. Now you understand me a little bit better. I think that until now I feel-- and to say I have a feeling of guilt that I am guilty what happened to them because they did everything for us, and even they gave their life.

I'm sure they wouldn't want you to think that way.

So the only thing I could do to honor them because since then I felt that my life didn't more any sense to be lived, you know.

Did you feel despondent then that you can't go on?

Yes. Many times, I felt this. Yes. But I also felt that I must keep living because the only thing I could do for them is to get good grades at the university.

So is it that you feel that they paid a very high price for your education and that the least would be that you actually?

For my education. For our happiness.

Yeah. How did life-- I mean, did you have any family left? Could you and your sister still be a family after this loss?

Sure. After this loss, I had to be for my sister the brother, the father, the mother, and everything for her.

Yeah.

She was three, four years younger than me.

And you say your uncle helped out in the beginning. Did that mean that later?

He helped us in the beginning. Yes. But afterward, he had many problems, many economic problems. And I don't know if he was obliged or voluntary. Part of the money from my parents was for him-- was left it for him.

OK.

We made documents and everything. He would pay me every month such and such money, but suddenly he didn't. He didn't do it, and then he couldn't pay me. And the relationship was completely-- with his family also.

Well, what that suggests to me then is that you and your sister are really alone in the world at that point as far as family is concerned.

Yes. Each of us has his own family. She has a husband. I have a wife. We have children and everything. But.

At that point.

At that point. Yes.

And how did you go on? That is, you finished your schooling. When did you meet your future wife?

When I was graduated already. We were living with my sister in an apartment in a very nice place in Buenos Aires. And once my sister made a party, and then she invited some friends of her's. And then some friends of her's brought to this party my wife.

OK. And what year did you get married?

When? We get married in Buenos Aires already 53 years ago.

So let me see if I can do the mathematics. That's 1966? 1960?

She's not-- she's not here. But yes, 53 years ago. It was '63, '64.

OK. Mid '60s. The mid '60s.

The mid '60s. Mid '60s.

And at that time.

It's hard to-- yes.

How much of-- how much of your early life followed you in the sense of, did you know anybody in Buenos Aires who was from Poland, or from Sarnaki, or who had been in Russia?

Yes. Very close to our city where we lived outside from Buenos Aires 20 kilometers from downtown, we had-- in Yiddish or in German it's called a Verein.

A Verein. Mm-hmm.

You know what's a Verein?

An association.

Huh?

It's an association.

Like an association for people originally from this town in the neighborhood and other small towns.

OK.

And we had like a country with a swimming pool with a barbecue, and every weekend, they met there. And many people were friends of my parents even before the war. And while I lived-- the first time when I got to Buenos Aires, I still remember that I lived about a month with a family which were very good friends of my parents from Sarnaki.

And afterwards I lived in different other places closer to University. But yes, many, many people from Buenos Aires were friends of my parents from Sarnaki.

And did you find a community amongst them? Did you feel at home?

Sure. I was going every weekend to meet them to talk with them, and socializing, and everything.

And did the conversations there-- you say your parents didn't talk about their past. They didn't talk about their lost siblings. They didn't talk about the war. But did some of these people talk about those things? Did they recall what life was like before the war? Did they talk about what had gone on there?

Not too much. No.

Not too much.

At least with me maybe because I was 20, 22 years old. Maybe among them, they were adults. They maybe they spoke but not to me.

OK. Was there news at that time again about German communities that were really communities of Nazis who had fled? Was that something that was in the news or part of public knowledge?

Yes. I know much more about that after leaving Buenos Aires. But unfortunately, Peron, which was the president at that time, he was a very good friend of the Nazis or Germans because they made very, very good business with the Germans.

And since he was military, the Argentine military got their education, the best education from the Nazi Germany. So that's why they allowed to come many Nazis like Mengele, like Priebke, like Eichmann with false papers to Argentina.

And there are many places till now that some of them are still alive, especially in the South of Argentina where the nature and the weather is very similar to their homeland to Germany. Very nice places much more beautiful than the Rocky Mountains here even in the South of Argentina.

Isn't that Patagonia?

About. It is in the south of Patagonia. It's about 1,000 miles from Buenos Aires in the south. Very, very beautiful places like Switzerland. Much more beautiful than Switzerland here.

Oh my.

Yes.

Have you traveled there?

Many times, yes. Even, I built a house there also.

Did you?

But at first in the beginning, I didn't know so much. But as the years was passing I know more and more, especially when Eichmann was captured in Argentina. We almost didn't know what was going on with the Nazis in there. But later when we came to Uruguay, we heard every year much more and more about the Nazis.

So wasn't he captured in late '50s, early '60s, Eichmann? I think I remember. Wasn't his trial in '61?

In the late '50s or the beginning of the '60s. Yes.

And you were already living in Buenos Aires.

Yes. I was living in Buenos Aires.

And this was a few years after you lose your parents.

Yes.

And you say there wasn't much news about it in the Argentine press about Eichmann's capture?

Yeah. There was a lot in the papers. Yes because for them it was like a violation of the sovereignty of the Argentine sovereignty with what the Mossad did. You know the story of how it happened.

Well, tell us. I know a little bit, but tell us. Tell us what the story was of-- how you learned of it is really what I'm interested in. How you learned of.

No. I know what the media knows because he came to Argentina with false documents with another name, and he was working like a mechanic in a company. And nobody knew about his past but the Mossad. And the reason, they knew that Eichmann came to Argentina with false documents.

So they began to look after him. And once they came to Argentina, and when he came out from his house, they came with a car and put him inside the car.

And that's it.

That's it more or less. And they took him to Israel.

And the community that you lived in, this community of Verein, and did you also have any other social circles besides that Verein that you told us about?

Yes. I had another because I was studying in Buenos Aires.

And how did people react when they heard of this arrest of Eichmann? I'm not saying what the government or what the newspaper said. But how did normal people react to this? Because they wouldn't really, you know.

They were surprised. They were surprised, but it depended who they were. If they were Jews, they were happy that it happened. It was amazing how the Mossad could do it especially in such a country like Argentina. It was one of the most developed countries in South America.

But many, many people nowadays know more and more about how Nazis came to Argentina with false documents. Priebke was, you know-- he was one of them. And even many books here in the US were written about the bunkers and

about the mansions that even Hitler made before being the governor of Germany.

Just in case he lose the war, he wanted to have something somewhere in some place a safe place.

To flee.

To flee.

And he built huge mansions. It was many, many white American writer wrote pretend to prove that he wasn't killed by the Russians. But there are different books. But the true version is that the Russians had the proof that he was made suicide, and they found even the skeleton. They match the DNA and everything.

It's irrefutable.

Also, only for money, that so many American writers wrote--

These thing.

--these things. These kinds of books. And many people, they know. But anyway, even now I still remember in my cell phone, I got a video about the Nazi tour in Bariloche. Bariloche is the name of the city where so many Nazis came to live.

There is the name.

A tour.

A tour. In this tour, they are showing all the places of the bunkers or the buildings where the Nazis met each other and the meetings they had in this city in the south of Argentina. If you are interested, I still have the video. Somebody sent it to me.

I mean, it feels very spooky. And it feels very spooky. It feels--

Spooky?

Spooky. It makes you feel insecure.

Insecure?

Yeah. I mean, what I'm trying to ask is, did it give you such a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity? That's what I'm asking.

Yes. But it's possible. It's possible. I'm not sure if Hitler-- if this property was by him. By many hierarch--

In the hierarchy. Many in the hierarchy who were Nazis?

Yes. Who were Nazis. There is another place in Argentina. Cordoba is a province in the center of the country that even now are still living many Nazis in this small town. And the government knows everything about them.

But how does it feel as a Jewish person? How does it feel knowing that this is the situation?

Sometimes there are political reasons, and sometimes there are social reasons why the Jewish community doesn't do anything. Because they can't do anything against the government.

After you finished your studies.

For example, when the [INAUDIBLE] the AMIA, when more than 80 people were killed in the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, there were two times. One of the embassy. The Israeli embassy-- were killed almost 90 people. And afterward, the Jewish community, also more than 80 people were killed. Christians and Jews.

But until now no government did anything to make the justice. In Iran-- they are sure that Iran is guilty. And the government in those times were involved together with this, but until now there is no justice for that.

For these crimes?

Have you heard about what happened in Buenos Aires?

But tell us. Explain in just a nutshell about what year and when. What year this was or if it was a several.

It was 20 years ago more or less. 21, 22 years ago. Yes. In Buenos Aires when that happened. And the president in that time was Arab descendant. The president Menem was the name of this. They were from Syria. From Syria and Lebanon. And they were anti-Semitic. This was 20 years ago more or less.

So did you used to live in Argentina at that time? Because you told me eventually you left.

Yes. I left Argentina in 1989.

So about that same-- well, no. 20 years ago would be 1999.

Before that.

You left before that. Yeah.

I left Argentina not only about that, but I have my personal reasons also here.

But after you finished medical school-- let's just talk a little bit about your professional life. You were a physician. Yes?

Yes.

And what was your specialty?

Pediatrician.

Pediatrician. And you practiced for how many years in Argentina?

28 years.

28 years. And eventually you closed your practice, or you moved it. What happened?

No. When I decided to leave Argentina about different reasons, especially the doctors, the medical situation, the main reason was the unions got involved, and they put the requirements in the condition how to work for the doctors.

For someone who was in private practice.

Yes. And the other reason was when I would have got paid for each consultation, converted into dollars into foreign currency, my consultation was very, very few. \$1. \$1.10. And I had already treated the children. The other reason was that we doctors were obliged to ask this and this test and not too long for each patient.

And especially we would like exploited by the unions. I felt very bad because I felt that I couldn't practice my

profession like I felt it-- like I loved it. So even when you can't don't do anything else, you must keep going and keep doing this.

But in my case, I had the opportunity to learn other things to do as part of medicine. When I was helping my father and my parents were they were working with them and when it happened to them, I must invest the money in order to be able to finish my studies.

So I had to invest money in construction and in different-- I bought some lots, and I sold them.

Some real estate.

And apart of working as a doctor, I was involved also in construction. But the inflation in those times was 50%, 60% a month, and I sold the apartments what they built. I sold in Argentine money. When I got the payment, it was nothing almost.

Yeah.

So I lost six, seven years of my life for free. And this more or less are the reasons why I got tried from Argentina. And especially I didn't see any future for my children. I told you-- when my oldest daughter came back from US, she couldn't get a job for \$150 a month.

So you moved then to Uruguay. Is that correct?

Sure.

And you've lived in Uruguay since 1989?

Yes. I remember.

So that's 30 years.

30 years permanently in Uruguay in this small city. Yes.

And what is the name of the city?

Punta Del Este.

Punta Del Este.

It's like a peninsula. It's a resort. It's considered to be the most fancy resort in South America now. And I run the nursery ornamental plants. I do gardening and landscaping for the wealthy Argentine people that own properties in Punta Del Este in this place.

So you have another business there. You didn't practice as a doctor anymore, or did you?

No. I could practice as a doctor, but I couldn't do both things together. So I had to choose this one since my second passion was always nature, and trees, and shrubs. I was doing very well with this. It was hard.

I can imagine.

Hard, physical work. But you don't have to delegate it and you wonder. For them, it's the same to know or not to know. The workers, the labor there in South America is different. It's not easy.

Did you find another community in Uruguay similar to Argentina? Again, I am trying to find out how much of your

early life comes with you. Or is it really left behind?

No. It's really left behind because I can continue the same style of life what I had during my childhood. Nowadays, everything is completely different. I have to get adapted to my children to my grandchildren.

Yes. This is the future.

This is so. I can't live only with the past.

I understand. I understand, and I accept that. What my questions are going to, is how much of the past comes with you? As you live in the present, and you are with your children, and you're with your grandchildren, what part of the past is still there?

My past is coming very, very frequently. I still don't forget. It's hard to forget.

Did you talk much, or did your children ask you many questions about it?

Almost never. First of all, of them are different countries. When they were little children, nobody allowed me to talk about it because they were too little, and it's not good to talk about sad stories when we were together with them.

Afterward, every one of the daughters came here when she was 17 years old. The other one at age 18 went to Israel. And we came to-- we moved to Uruguay. So we didn't have already almost the opportunities to talk about it.

They just come to visit us-- especially from Buenos to visit us. And we, three or four times a year, we go to visit them for a couple of days. But to be sincere with you, I don't see the-- I don't see the need to talk about that. About my story with them.

And yet at the beginning of the interview, I ask you about, why is it that you-- what's important? What's important about finding out that there is a Berko Zilberstein whom you didn't even know existed? At the beginning of the interview when we were talking about how little you knew of your father's family and your mother's family, you mentioned that only five months ago you find out you had an uncle and that his name was Berko. Berel.

And I asked you, why is that important? And you gave me a very, very deep answer as to why it's important.

For me.

For you. And so is it that, for yourself when you think of your own story, that it would be as important for the younger generations to know as it is for you to know that there was even this person who existed? You just said it's sort of like I don't see what's the point of talking about it. And yet talking about it is what tells people, well, this was part of my life.

This is part of what the experience was. This is part of our family is. This is where you come from.

Yes. But I see that, especially the grandchildren, their life or they needs are completely different now. They make a completely other life-- completely other style of life that they are more worried about other things. It's not worrying them too much.

Maybe they all of them said that it's not true. This is only my impression. My opinion. But that's what the life is currently showing me.

Of course. Of course. And no one wants their children, their grandchildren to have to face any of these types of things. No one wants that for their children. And when they have, quote, normal problems, one is grateful that their problems are normal not of this nature.

But I can tell-- I can share with you why doing this kind of work and asking these kinds of questions is important to me.

And that is how-- you know, when a person has been through such extraordinary circumstances, extraordinary situations, sometimes they're an adult. Sometimes like you, they're a child.

My question to myself is, how do you go on? How do you have a normal life? How do you still find meaning in living when such things have been the things that you've seen? Because people need guideposts for the future. If it happens again, what can I rely on? What can I count on?

In my case, I only know that in order to get adapted to this world and to my family I must give an appearance of normality. Do you understand me?

OK. I hope I do.

This is what I'm trying to do to give an appearance of normality.

And is there something? Is it only an appearance?

It's not easy. No. Sometimes I feel happy. When I see them and everything, but not always is happiness, but in the average of my life, of my time, I feel that from my side, it's almost like appearance. Because all this suffering, what I had in my life, it's very hard, first of all, to be happy now.

And when you are not very happy, it's hard to transmit it to other ones, even to your own family. But I'm trying to do the best, what I can, to give the appearance that I'm a normal person, and I feel well. I was doing everything to go on too and to get adapted to this life to this world.

Thank you. Thank you very, very much.

You are welcome.

I very much appreciate it. And I see some of the cost.

I'm sorry that is not a very pleasant story.

Thank you for sharing it.

I try to be-- in all my life, I always try to be sincere with myself and with others.

Thank you. And that's what we look for, and that's what we appreciate.

It's not very easy. But sometimes it's necessary, you know, especially if I feel that I have a good listener.

I hope you feel you did.

Thank you very much.

Is there something that I have not asked you that you would want to share with us before we close up the interview? Something that we didn't cover?

No. I think that you did a very good job. You asked almost everything, especially the most important feature of my life. But in such a short interview it's really not easy to know everything because my life is many details. These were the headlines.

Exactly.

These were only the headlines. But between these headlines are many subtitles and many details.

I can't tell you how right you are because in one interview, even no matter how long we take it, we know we're just scratching the surface. We're just scratching the surface.

You're just scratching the surface. Yeah. But maybe if for you this is enough, I'm happy to know it.

Well, it is a great gift, and we appreciate that. But yes.

Go ahead.

No. Go on.

I lost my-- it doesn't matter.

Sorry. I interrupted you.

It's OK. I forgot my train of thought.

Now I would like to know how it will be published or made this interview. If everything will be told or some things you prefer to--

No.

--to leave.

It will all be-- why don't I do this, is that I will make a formal conclusion to our interview, and then I'll explain the circumstances for the camera. We can say that this interview will be available online, and it will be viewable through the USHM website.

But at the moment, what I'll do is I'll say, this concludes the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Dr. Jaime Zilberstein on September 18, 2019 in Merrick, Long Island, New York. Thank you.

OK.

So what happens is that in about three of-- what? OK. We're opening up the interview again. And the reason why is because your daughter would like to know, and probably you've spoken about this at other points, but is there something you'd want to share with other people? With, let's say, young people with a wider public about how you see the meaning of what it is that you went through, and that your parents went through, and that so many Jews went through during the Holocaust?

Is there something you'd like to say about that to share about that? What meaning you draw from it?

In my case, the message was I could give especially for young people and also for other people that in spite of many suffering that you experience in your life there is always somebody or something that is worth to keep living because you have always something to offer a subject to give to somebody.

In this case, to my own family or to other people that experienced similar suffering as mine. There is always something in this world to keep living to be alive.

That's an important message because a lot of people feel despondent when they go through just half of what you've gone through. And yeah, I mean, earlier, I asked you one of the reasons this is important for me is because to know how should we react if this happens again in some form or another. When people who have been through it, how did they go through it?

How did they go through it?

How do they keep on going? What helped them keep on going? And I think it is incredibly helpful, A, that you're here, and that you've built a life, and that you could pass on such a message and really mean it because you know what that suffering was like. And you know what the despondency was like.

OK.

Thank you.

And that's all what I wanted to say.

OK. Thank you. Thank you.