

I have no pictures which I can show you.

That's all right. OK, we'll get started. [BACKGROUND NOISES]

They are only very handsome people which are dead, so this I can bring here. But these are very handsome people. And when they were alive, it was everything good on the picture.

OK, we're all set. All set, Jack?

Mhm.

Good. Dr. Keleti, when were you born and where?

I was born on May 30, 1925, in Czechoslovakia, east Slovakia. The name of the city is Michalovce.

Could you spell that?

M-I-C-H-A-L-O-V-C-E.

Was it a large city?

No.

How about approximately a size?

Maybe, at that time, maximum, 10,000, 11,000 inhabitants.

Were there many Jewish people in the town?

Yes. Yes.

Approximately how many Jews do you think--

This I don't know, because when I was five years old we moved to Spisská Nová Ves, where I describe everything. There were 850 Jews in the other city. This I know. But I was too young, that I remember or something, how many Jews were in-- much more.

What was your father's name and his occupation?

My father's name was, in English, Louis. But you know, Louis, so translated.

His occupation?

Pharmacist.

Pharmacist. Where and when was he born? Just the year.

I know even the day-- March 1, 1886, Uzhorod.

How do you spell that?

U--

S-H?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--Z-H-O-R-O-D. It belongs now to the Russians. Before, it belonged to Czechoslovakia.

What was your mother's maiden name?

My mother's maiden name was Silberstein.

Silberstein. And when and where was she born?

She was born on 11th of February, 1900, in Betlanovce, county Spisská Nová Ves, where we lived. Betlanovce is a village.

That was in eastern Czechoslovakia?

Too in eastern--

In Slovakia.

--in Slovakia, yes.

Right.

A part of Czechoslovakia-- and, before, a part of Austria-Hungary.

What language was spoken at home?

At home, first we spoke German, because, from the Sudetenland, from Czechs, we had maid-- not "maids," rather, with children, so Fraulein was the name. And they were German, so we spoke perfectly German. Later, we spoke Hungarian.

Did you live in the Sudetenland?

No. No.

Is it [CROSS TALK].

Sudetenland, we are going to the Czech-- no no, part. It belongs to the Czech. It is Czech, Moravia, Slovakia. And around Czech and Moravia is the Sudetenland. Which is really, unfortunately, German. The majority was German.

How many children were in the family?

We had two. My parents had two children.

A brother, a sister?

My sister, she was killed in Oswiecim--

I see.

--in 1942

In Auschwitz.

Yes.

Oswiecim. Yeah. What were their names?

Well, my name is Georg.

No, no, I mean and your sister's name.

Well, sister, Lya-- Lya-- L-Y-A.

Dr. Keleti, describe if you can the amount of or extent of Jewish ritual and law which you observed in your home.

Till the second war, we practically kept everything. We had kosher at home, which was more expensive. We bought, there were two kosher butcheries in the city. And we even changed [NON-ENGLISH] for Pesach. Really--

You observed all the--

Yes, Friday in the evening-- I described in my book-- I went to the synagogue. I had a good voice. I was in the choir of the synagogue.

But really, myself and my father, here outside we were very, very religious. But inside we were not very religious.

But you observed the traditions.

Yes. We were fasting, Yom Kippur, and so on, until-- this was very until they didn't kill so many people from our family. After the war, my parents survived. So we didn't keep anything. We were very angry, somehow, angry that God didn't help us. [LAUGHS]

How about your education? Would you describe--

Education? I finished four classes of high school, which was named "gymnasium" in our country. But here is gymnasium where they make exercises, but it's interesting--

Gymnázium, then.

Yes, yes, gymnázium. And I interrupted-- they interrupted, because Jews could not farther continue the studies. So I learned at a printer. I am a skilled printer. And within one year, I saw how hard is the life after the German lost the war. I made, within half year, all four high-school classes and finished my studies within one year.

In Europe is a very difficult exam, after the high school, before you finish the so-called matura. It doesn't exist in the United States. But I made everything up.

We were about 60 Jewish children, all who survived, in this class. And they were very tired from the camps and so on. Only four finished. And I was one of these four, because I thought that it's extremely important and the life is easier than to work hard.

You went on to the university, then.

Because I was already older than usual, I went--

At that time, you were about 20 years old.

Yes.

In 1945.

20 years old. So I really missed already. And then, 21 years old, I began as a pharmacist, because they

thought the easiest is to finish pharmacy. So it was one year you had to work in a pharmacy and then three years university. After one year that you are accepted to the university, you have to make again a very difficult exam.

So I finished pharmacist, but then later I continued and made a doctor degree, a PhD, from Microbiology. And later, in '61-- which doesn't exist here-- I had a further degree named "Candidate of Sciences." So I got a Candidate of Biological Sciences.

What university in Czechoslovakia did you go to?

It is named Comenius University, in Bratislava.

Comenius.

Comenius.

In Bratislava.

Bratislava is the capital of Slovakia.

Right. Did your father and you belong to any political organizations?

Not during-- no, never, but I belonged later to a very left-oriented Jewish organization, Hashomer Hatzair.

Yeah. Which many, many of the Hatzair people went to Israel.

Many people went to Israel, but we were not very happy. Nobody told us-- the leadership, part of the leadership, went in time out. And somehow they have the feeling that it will be very bad. And they didn't tell us. So we remained at home, and we were against that--

So you really were not aware of this exodus.

No, no-- that it will be so bad, no. Because he told us that we will go for work and even it was so funny-- that you can take with you 50 kilograms of your belongings, and so on. And even the Jewish physicians examined the people, whether they are healthy for work. And I describe everything. [LAUGHS]

And one guy we never knew, a young guy, they found out that he had epilepsy. So the physician told, OK, you are not accepted for this work. Of course, later, as I describe, they deported everybody.

But their whole game was that they are told we are going to work to help the German in the war effort.

Yeah, but on the exodus to Israel, you really were never-- even though they had representatives of Israel there--

It was--

-- or Palestine, at that time--

It was interesting. In the Slovak uprising, I was not there. I describe this too. Even Israelis participated and on the--

You cover in that--

Yes, I will not read so much. I will read four pages.

That's fine. Well, not now.

All these deportations. No, no, no, no. I will answer all your questions, when we will have time.

Did you and your family experience any antisemitism before the Nazi--

Yes. This I describe from my young age. We were extremely depressed. In my book, I repeat all the verses and all the speech of Christian children when we went to the Jewish school. It was terrible. When we came out, the same, in the street-- during the so-called democratic first Czechoslovak Republic. The same was antisemitism was mainly amongst the Slovaks was always--

At the time of the Munich Pact, in September 1938, did your father and mother consider leaving the country then?

Yes. Mainly my sister got the first an affidavit, as I described too, from Kansas City, where my mother had a cousin. They owned a very big butchery. They were very rich.

But the quota was so bad that my sister was already dead a long, long time-- in '46 came that she can go to America.

Oh, my.

And then she got really in '40-- we tried to beg our family. They were afraid that they were right when I see, now it was not so easy then to care about so many people, but it was interesting. They sent for my late sister only an affidavit, in '40 already. And the quota was, in '46 she could go. Even when they know that it was-- the what happened with the Jews and what will happen and so on.

The chapter you want to read really covers this period, doesn't it?

No, not the whole-- I would cover--

Does it cover from '38--

Oh, no, I-- no, because this would be the whole book. It will cover the deportation in our city--

Right.

--only-- because I don't want-- you will see how terrible this was a party. I want to see-- to tell you a little how it was.

Were you familiar with the-- 1943-- with the underground called the Working Group, under Rabbi Weissmandel? Have you heard of Rabbi Weissmandel?

No, but we heard-- never. Because he was a famous rabbi who told to send to Switzerland the news what happened with the Jews from Slovakia. This is very interesting. I never heard this name. We heard only what happened because two Jews escaped from Oswiecim. And they--

And that's in '44.

And they went everywhere and told what happened and what is happening. So we really know, I-- because I, in my book--

You really were not aware of that, were you?

I criticize the Jewish people, too, because we are not angels too. We are good people and bad people, like they. And so in-- there were a little concentration camp, I will tell, in Zilina, where a Jew was a very important person for them. And he was terrible-- this, we heard. He slept with young woman and with young Jewish girl, and he got them pregnant. When they were pregnant, he sent them out where no chance was to survive. Yes?

Then when, after the uprising in '44, they deported all Jews. There were no exception. I describe what was the exception. So they killed in seconds in Oswiecim when we arrived, the Jews themselves.

The Einsatzgruppen of the Nazis was in Slovakia. And they killed thousands and the Slovak uprising.

Yes.

OK.

And the Slovaks, and the so-called Hlinka Guards, who killed, too.

In 1940, there was an agent of Eichmann who came to Slovakia. And there was a Judenrat. Were you familiar with the--

Yes.

--Judenrat, with Heinrich Schwartz?

I don't know Heinrich Schwartz.

Does that name mean anything to you?

This Judenrat is still--

And Sebestyen.

Yes, his name I heard. I described, too-- this Judenrat is not very-- we don't know till today whether they helped the Jews or they played in the-- they helped the German. We don't know, because it was very hard.

See, what is 100%-- they saved their life till the uprising. Yes? All the members of the Judenrat, saved their life. They helped because they deported all Jews from the capital. Jews could not live in the capital-- in important cities.

And then they opened kitchens. Yes? And they financed that the Jews have what to eat. Yes? So in this direction, they were good. But I guess so-- mainly with the registration, the names, and so on, addresses, they helped a little. [LAUGHS]

And the Slovakia had a Nazi government, under Jozef Tiso.

Yes. This, I describe. And you describe that, too.

No, that is I will not read. I tell only one, what today, they are is terrible. That's what I write this book, because they are telling Tiso is such a good man and such a good man. I remember during the first--

He was a Nazi agent!

--the first Czechoslovakia, so-called Hlinka was a priest too. So he had a party, yes, a Slovak party. And he had always the meetings in the park before the church.

So to catch the people was first a mass, so they were very religious, everybody-- after the mass, he began to have a speech. And Tiso had a speech, and Sidor, and the speech were always a terrible-- against Jews and against Czechs. So they were not so good people, already, during the first Czechoslovakia.

Tiso was a Nazi satellite.

Yeah.

A Nazi agent.

Tiso signed-- Tiso signed that Slovakia is-- will be a free vassal state. And the first was when the war against Poland began, the Slovaks fought against Poland-- with the Germans.

And I remember NON-ENGLISH] from our airport they bombed. Hundred and hundred planes bombed Poland directly from our-- which was very close to Poland.

In 1940, when Eichmann's agent came to Slovakia, and they worked with the Judenrat, but people were sent to labor camps. Were you and your father sent to a labor camp?

No. No. This was very important. This, I will read [INAUDIBLE], first came Jews who were politically-- they were in the Communist Party or the Social Democratic Party. Such people they, put into camp-- into labor camps. Yes. But they built these labor camps-- but not people who were employed.

There is a city or a town in eastern Slovakia called Saris Zemplín.

No, Saris Zemplín are rather-- we can compare to this so-called small states, it would be in the United States, is so called areas, where the Saris is.

A lot of Jews-- many, many Jews lived there.

Yes, in Zemplín-- Michalovce is in Zemplín. Yes. In east Slovakia were a lot of Jews.

Yeah. And for example all of Slovakia, in 1930 had 136,000 Jews-- 136,000 in Slovakia--

Yes, but--

--in 1930. But--

A part, in '38, when the German took the Sudetenland, the Hungarian took a part, too, from Slovakia.

Hugarians took that--

And there were a lot of Jews too from east Slovakia.

They had a lot of Hungarians who were living in that.

Yes. Still now, it's again a very, very important problem, the Hungarian and--

Mhm. They-- in 1943, there was a Jewish underground that smuggled Jews from Poland through Slovakia to Hungary. Were you aware that--

No, I was familiar only that the Jews were smuggled to Hungary, because in Hungary began the deportation only in '44.

Right. Correct.

So in our country, in March '42, so they, when they could escape to Hungary they saved their life.

Yeah. In February, March, 20,000 Jews were deported from Slovakia.

In March began the deportation. This, I describe everything.

You describe.

This, I want to read you.

And from March to October, 60,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz.

Yes.

From March to October.

Yes.

Of '42.

And then allegedly the pope stopped the deportation. They agreed with Tiso. And then, because there were certain exceptions, which maybe I will read too, with who has not to. And then in '44, when the uprising was when was--

Who started the uprising in Slovakia?

In Slovakia, we can tell that really it was--

Spontaneous?

--a cooperation-- it is not true what they are-- between the communists and London, really. But, because it was very interesting, this was a Catholic country. Everybody was Roman Catholic. But there are Slovak Lutherans too. And the Lutherans helped us. The Lutherans were always against the regime-- the Slovak Lutherans.

Against the Tiso regime.

Yes. And everybody, they mainly. So mainly the generals who were in the leadership of the uprising were Slovak Lutherans. What--

Were you aware of that uprising, at the time?

We saw it. This, I describe in a other chapter.

Well, maybe at this point you ought to read the chapter. And then I'll come back, for example, and--

I will read, because it's not the whole-- I will read because it will be too long. If it is the sad, maybe I will--

Before [CROSS TALK].

I cried myself, [LAUGHS] when I read, but, "The Slovaks first concentrated the Jews-- the name is final solution of the Jewish problem in Slovakia-- deportation of the Jews into the death camps." There will be errors. I am not so good in English, but you will understand.

"The Slovaks first concentrated the Jews and deported the political--

Read it a little slower than that.

Yes. "The Slovaks first concentrated the Jews and deported the political, not reliable persons. The representatives"--

This is 1942.

1942. "And the officials of the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party. In this group left also the country the manager of the big sawmill of Mr. Kurták, who were married, had two children, whose only

surviving son was one time the mayor of the capital of Slovakia, Bratislava. The people were, in the beginning, transported into concentration camps in Slovakia, in the cities Poprad, Zilina, Sered, [NON-ENGLISH], Nováky, Patrónka, Bratislava, and then into the worst starvation camps-- mainly in Poland-- Oswiecim, Lublin, Majdanek, and so on.

The second group of Jews who were deported were single girls of Jewish origin, age 16 through 50 years. Now had to be deported also my late sister, who was my only sibling, four years older than I was. According to the official news, all the Jews had to go to work, and everybody can take with them 50 kilogram of personal baggage. My late sister was tall. She was a little rounder than thin. She had natural blonde hair and was quite pretty. She was smart."

Take it easy. Just stop for a moment. [BACKGROUND CHATTER] Want some water, Georg?

No. We can go. "And she liked, like all young pretty girls, handsome men. That time, she had a boyfriend whose name was Judis Bum, and he had a very rich aunt named Mrs. Polack. Mrs. Polack was terrible against her nephew, that he wanted to marry my late sister, because that he was allegedly very young for marriage. He was at that time 23 years old.

When he would marry my sister, he could save her life, because in the second group of Jews who were transported"-- the first were the political-- you know, this what they marry, "transported" to the concentration camp in Poland. They didn't take, in the first round, married Jewish women. Judis survived the Holocaust, finished his studies as a physician, and he works as a physician somewhere in Slovakia.

My mother sent my sister to hide in Michalovce, to the late sister of my father, Rene Galfalvy. She was the wife of a Hungarian gentry, a Christian, whose profession was veterinarian.

Veterinarian.

"I don't know why, but my father's sister sent my late sister after about two weeks back to Spisská Nová Ves, to our parents. My mother tried to fell on her knees and ask that the teacher's son Szekeres marry my sister and save her life-- temporarily. It had to be only a marriage on paper.

Szekeres son was about 37 years old and suffered from multiple sclerosis. Szekeres son rejected the proposal, but later he was also deported to a concentration camp, where he most probably was killed.

And so on the end of March '42 came to our apartment members of the FS," which was the German Staffel-- Germans in Slovakia-- "and the Hlinka guard and one official gendarme to pick up my sister. The county office had an accurate register about all Jews in the county, their date of birth, and addresses, who lived in the county of Spisská Nová Ves.

The girls for deportation slept the first night in an old military barracks close to the railway station in Spisská Nová Ves. And on the next day, Saturday afternoon, they were in personal trains transported to the closed city of Poprad, under the beautiful Tatra mountains, 24 kilometers from Spisská Nová Ves. In Poprad was a local concentration camp for girls from east Slovakia.

I saw my sister the last time in my life on the yard in front of the railway station. She was not even 21 years old. Whether she survived her birthday, June 25, we don't know.

She was deported then from Poprad to Oswiecim. She kissed me the last time and told me that I have to be a good boy and also good to my parents. I was not a very obedient child.

It was the last time that our family talked to her. And I can tell only one thing. We gave her up. We presented her directly into the worst death which the history of mankind knows.

She wrote once more a beautiful letter from the military barracks in Poprad, where the concentration camp was located in Slovakia. We could not visit her in Poprad, even that it is very close, because at that time was already a law that said Jews could not travel. Her last letter was kept by my late mother till her death as a

greatest treasure.

About after one week, the girls were deported from Poprad to the death camps in Oswiecim. We tried to write her letters, postcards, little parcels, but she never gave us an answer. I don't know when and how she passed away.

Or in 1943 appeared in the newspaper of the official government of Slovakia, Slovenská Pravda, an article with photographs-- a camouflage-- that the Jews have a good life, how they work, and nurses in white robes-- Jewish girls that were smiling on the photograph. After the article appeared, my father told me that my poor sister is not anymore alive, because our beautiful cousin Erzika Silberstein, who survived the Holocaust, wrote a letter-- they put flowers onto the grave of [PERSONAL NAME], which meant indirectly that my sister died in the death mill in Oswiecim.

It happened later that the teachers"-- "a daughter of a tailor of Spisská Nová saw my sister on the Polish-Slovak border, which was, of course, not true. Only after the war, after the victory of the Allies, told my mother, also my late mother, that my sister is already dead. We don't know whether she died from typhus, from exhaustion, hunger, or from another disease.

I was, my whole life, not interested or better telling afraid to ask the survivors how she passed away. I wish that her ashes are resting in peace. I wish further for her to dream about the beautiful life which she liked so much.

My sister, as a matter of fact, had a valid affidavit to the USA. She got the affidavit in 1940, from our late aunt Lepri in Kansas City. She was an owner of a big butchery and slaughterhouse there. But the immigration quota for Europe was so low that officially she could emigrate in only 1946, when she was unfortunately already long dead. There were no exceptions for Jews.

What I will write now, I don't think that any censorship will allow to publish, whether in a communist, socialist, liberal, or fascist regime or in a democratic state, for the cruelty was to the members of the Slovak Hlinka guard, the Hlinka Youth, the members of the Slovak [INAUDIBLE] Hlinka Party, has done against the Jews, with the fact that they participated and approved the deportation of Jews into the death camp, including also into the lists the Slovak policemen and gendarmes who didn't protect the Jews but in opposite they tried to help to murder and deportate the Jews. Actually I include further to the list the members of the Deutsche Partei, German party in Slovakia.

I hate the idea of a free Slovak state whose fathers, uncles, and grandfathers made the great sin against all laws of the humanity. I feel further that I am, in my feelings, still a Slovak, and I love Slovakia as no other country in the world, but I hate the scoundrels-- which I don't know what kind of mother created. When there is a God and there is somewhere a heaven, then Hlinka who thought inciting against the Jews, Tiso and the others, who are guilty for the death of my sister and further 70,000 innocent Jews, they all will burn for the eternity in the hell.

After the liberation, by the Russians, of Spisská Nová Ves, on January 26, '45, when our family found already out about the terrible death of my sister, one Sunday evening came to our apartment, which was very poor. At that time, this was rented for Mr. Ritzinger, who was before a Hungarian, later a German, but he was a fat man who didn't come to us-- who didn't come to us, a schoolmate from my late sister, named Truda Les, who was married to George Dubinsky-- also a Hungarian who changed it to German and who participated enthusiastically on the deportation and beating of the Jews in Spisská Nová Ves.

My father was in bed, because, when we returned from our hiding, it was very cold outside, in the middle of the winter, and my late father got a frozen thumb on his foot. And half of the thumb fell from the sole down.

This is very interesting. Trudi came with a Russian officer of the NKVD-- Russian secret police-- and the officer asked my father whether he can tell a good word for Trudi's father, was also a German. Mr. Les was a member of the German party, and the Russian secret police wanted to put him into jail and deported into Siberia. My father mourned still for my late sister, and therefore he began to cry.

I saw-- I saw something which I will never forget in my life. The rough secret police Russian officer began also crying [CRYING] and pat the head of my late father's-- namely, my father show him the wound on his leg. I think that Mr. Les was never deported.

To our greatest surprise, a Russian officer brought, the same night, a Jewish military physician, a radiologist who brought my father a sulfonamide powder. And the wound of his frozen thumb healed very well. I wish that these two Russian officers have always a good life.

The husband George, of Trudi Les, escaped to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, where the police caught him, and the so-called national court sentenced him to seven years in prison. He was released after five years and is alive most probably, with his family, till today. George's parents, his father was an excellent judge who was retired but were deported after the liberation of Spisská Nová Ves to Spisská Huta, where was temporary concentration camp established for Germans and Hungarians, swear at his son on his deathbed. He died in Huta for the son's sins against humanity.

Now came the time for deportation of myself, Georg Keleti, a 17-years-old laborer in a printery. And the next day came that the time of a single deportation, young men into concentration camp, or all men from 16 til 50 years-old-men and also childless couples at the same age.

I went the same day, calmly, to work into the printery. And the bosses sent me the day to deliver printed forms into a co-op named "Future."

What year was that?

'42.

'42.

"On the way to the co-op, I was caught by a very handsome man named Martanczyk" I remember all names. "Martanczyks were farmers. They owned 25 hectares of land in the same village of Betlanovce where my late grandmother owned an estate which was managed by my late uncle, who was childless, and his name was [PERSONAL NAME]. The Martanczyks family was jealous and wanted to own a part of the estate from my grandparents"-- "from my grandparents. Martanczyk was catching young"-- [INAUDIBLE].

No, I have-- I will tell it by heart. Martanczyk was catching young Jewish boys, and he got for each boy \$0.01-- one crown.

One crown.

He took me home where, in my house, were expecting me already a gendarme, a German FS, and a Hlinka Guard member. And my mother tried something which was unbelievable. She ran to my boss, who was a Lutheran Slovak-- into the printer. The boss went to the head of the county, a county head. And the county head decided-- because he told that he needs me-- it was not true-- that I can go. So I was released, and I won the first round.

To tell the truth, the Slovak state had to pay for each deported Jew 5,000 crowns, which is about 500 DM. No, I will finish a little--

Who did they pay that to-- to the Nazis?

For the Nazis.

Yes.

And the end is-- in June came the deportation of all people. Then we saw what happened, because there were all invalids. There were a man seen who had no legs, who sold newspaper on the street. He was deported. So everybody was deported who had no exception.

The exception-- the exception was the following.

You're still in '42? Or are you in '44?

Still '42.

Still '42.

'42. And the exception was the following, mixed marriages, Jews and Christian. Each spouse, when they were Jewish. Oh, can I have a little--

Water?

--no, no, paper-- a towel or something.

Oh, sure.

[INAUDIBLE].

Both when they were Jewish. "All Jews who were baptized before the year '37. Further was a so-called highest presidential exception before the deportation. This exception was signed by the president of the Slovak Republic, the priest Dr. Tiso. The big presidential exception was given for a person who had great merits for the Slovak state or was a world-famous professional. But in the majority, this exception was provided to very rich Jews who bribed the echelon politics with much money, expensive furs, and jewels.

My uncle, Desider, who was a physician, had also this exemption. He was the family physician of many high politicians also during the Slovak state. So my uncle was therefore saved. He got the exemption therefore.

A few Jews saved their life before the deportation so that they got identification cards, or both fake identification cards from Christians, and behaved and lived like not-Jews. They named but they so-called Aryan papers. In the-- and this is the last part-- "into the concentration camps"-- "into the concentration camps abroad were also not deported three classes of Jewish soldiers, who were on mandatory military services but as Jews served only in labor military units.

They built irrigation facilities in the western part of Slovakia, named Záhorie. They were not deported until the Slovak uprising. They can be thankful namely to the Lieutenant Colonel Dr. [PERSONAL NAME], who was later the general procurator of the Czechoslovak Republic, a general of the justice service, and later law professor. Unfortunately, during the communism, he was accused of bourgeois nationalism and sentenced into prison and later released as innocent.

Beside this were the so-called little exception provided by various ministers of the government of the Slovak state. They called them "white" exceptions. The Jews with the little exception were wearing only a small yellow-blue David star with a name economical Jews.

OK, so that is what-- it was a transport in [PLACE NAME], this area. But this I have--

I understand, from the end of July to the middle of September, the transports stopped, because of worldwide condemnation.

They told us that--

Let me get you some Kleenex.

And then were usual, like you tell October transport, weekly, when they caught somewhere on the street and so Jews, without exception. And this lasted then from October till '44, till the-- October, till the uprising. And after the uprising, they deported all Jews when they caught them.

And they shot a lot of Jews. They shot so many Jews before the capital of the uprising-- was a village, Kremnicka. They shot so many that the river, named Hron, was 10 days red from the blood of the Jews who were in the river. It was about 2,000 Jews were shot-- children and [CROSS TALK]--

Were you aware of the underground? There was an underground--

There was an underground--

--called the Working Group.

What, Jewish underground?

Yes.

In Spisská Nová Ves remained so few Jews, most probably it was not there. And my boss, who saved my life, he was in the other underground who prepared the uprising.

Now, you went into hiding, at some point, didn't you?

Yes, we--

When did that happen?

This, I described too, but I will not read. Is too long. We were very, very poor. My father was hiding that, so they took our all furniture away and so on.

And when it came to the-- when we saw that we will lose the uprising, we went into the hiding. And we were hidden on an attic of a little village, where we were from September 3 till December.

September 3, 19--

'44.

--'44.

My father, my mother, and myself. And it was a sheep-- no, who prepares sheep cheese--

Who were the people who hid you?

He was, before, with my grandmother, the head-- or the sheep pastor. I don't know in English--

Sheep farmer?

Sheep-- no, who takes a sheep outside, not to eat--

To the, where the sheep are slaughtered, you mean?

Not slaughtered. They were mainly for milk and cheese.

Right, right, right.

In our country, and for wool. So they were living in the-- he was in the-- half a year in the mountains, that the sheep get very good for grass and so on. And that they had such local. And then they were down.

But we were in a village which was not connected with the main ways, so main route. So therefore there were no German soldiers. They fed us, but then they kicked us out in December. And--

December of '44.

And we committed suicide, and we were in coma for two days, three days. This, I describe. But--

You mean the man who hid you committed suicide?

No, we committed suicide. When we returned, yes, in the-- they gave us the big barrel. They kicked us out from the attic. And we committed suicide.

And somehow, three days, we were in coma. Then we woke up. We didn't die. We took sleeping pills made fun of them.

Oh! I see.

And then-- it was very interesting. This I described, but it would be too long to read everything, because is a whole book.

So we went. In this Spisská Nová Ves was an exception. The German, after the uprising, they left. They sent from the airport, where was a camp, concentration camp, all old people home who remain. They didn't kill them.

And we had an old aunt, 93 years old, which we-- she was 89, then-- which we didn't take with us. So she was in our apartment. But in the front room were three German-- one Gestapo, one Lithuanian SS, and one German SS. They lived with her, and they didn't do her.

And we came through a village where they didn't found out that we are there. And I had there a friend who told me which entrance in the city is not guarded by Germans. So I--

So you lived-- your apartment was in the same building with some Nazi [CROSS TALK].

Yes, so we went-- not directly from the main entrance but from the rear, we went into the apartment. And my old aunt was not afraid. So we were hidden in one room, and in--

There was a kitchen. And in the big room were the three Germans. And they never found out that they lived together there one month and two days.

There were extremely important philosophical discussion between my aunt, who was very smart, and the Germans. Once, she-- in the end was evacuation, before the-- the Russians were very close. So she asked him, have I to evacuate myself?

Hold on, Mr. Keleti. OK.

Have I to evacuate too with the other people, with the--

"Have I to" what?

To leave the city.

To leave.

Yes, evacuate with the other.

Evacuate.

Evacuate, too. And the German SS told me aunt, you have not to-- we heard this-- evacuate, because you will have a better life with the Russians. [LAUGHS] You stay here.

The second was very important discussion, which is, when I put to write something in a newspaper, very interesting-- between the Lithuanian SS and my aunt. He began to talk about--

Was one of the soldiers a Lithuanian SS?

SS-- who lived in the-- and he told, you know what, aunt? We had a good life when we were free. We had a good life. We have the bad life with the Russian, and we have a bad life with the Germans.

I am extremely sad that I am in SS, because they will kill me after the war, because we will lose the war, the Germans. My brother is happy. He is in America. He is in the American army and fight against the Germans. This was the word what we heard. [LAUGHS]

In other words, you were in the--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Did the Lithuanian know you were in the room?

No, never. Once, she was so, she want to change the German his pants in my aunt's room. And she didn't allow to go him in. And we survived.

We had not what to eat. My mother was so--

Your aunt was a remarkable woman!

Remarkable. She lived--

Remarkable woman.

Was a God give-- [LAUGHS] I am not a very religious man, but God is-- he gave her a life of 93 years. She was absolutely not afraid when we come. She was calm-- 90 years old, absolutely calm.

Well, what did she do for food? And how did she get food?

My mother went out--

At night.

--went out, yes. And she took-- it's like a peasant, went out and went to-- first of all, they left-- I don't know-- the young other pharmacist, the German left alive. He was a pharmacist. He gave us all medicines what we needed for free. And then the Jesuit priests-- we didn't know that the Jesuit priests are not anymore so bad Jesuits as it was during the medieval, when in Spain--

The Jesuits.

--they killed all Jews when they didn't baptize. But today the Jesuits are one of the most progressive. And so they helped us. They sent us a little food. They were--

And she never told anybody that we are hiding. And then the German left, you know. They left one day. But we heard already the fight between the Russian and the German.

And we were alone. So we went for the three days into the basement. There we had beans and all things. We cooked what we had, and we were three days in the basement.

On 27 of January, I heard--

In 1945.

'45. I heard the drummers. You know, it was, before, a drummer told all news and so official things. And the drummer told, to my greatest surprise-- and he was with two Russian officer together. And he told, the head of the Russian army give an order-- that first here--

It was very interesting, too. The Catholic [INAUDIBLE] mass someday will be as usual. And the second-- I remember, there were 12 points. The second were-- however, the shops and stores are empty. And all stores and all [INAUDIBLE] has to open everything and begin to work. These were very interesting two orders of the Russians, immediately when they come.

I didn't do the right. I ran out, because I lost about 60 pounds. They ran out. And to my greatest surprise, in the opposite was staying an [NON-ENGLISH]. [NON-ENGLISH] were people who took over Jewish-- these are businesses, only therefore because they were not professionals-- because they were Christians. Yes?

And they got the business, then. They were either Germans or Hungarians or--

Well, how did the Russians treat the Jews?

In that time very good-- excellent. We got a little-- such a good feeling, because they were very close, about 40 kilometers, the front was stopping, you know? And they didn't go further, about-- how long-- about four months. So they put into jail all Guardists who were so brave and remained-- they were thinking that nothing will happen-- and all Germans, who made so bad things to the Jews. And then they took them into Siberia-- not to have an enemy yes, between traitors close to the front.

But they didn't take any Jews, or they didn't do anything wrong to the Jews.

But the Russians treated the Jews decently.

Absolutely, absolutely decent. We cannot-- you can see that the NKVD is the same what was KGB. He was crying when he heard what happened with my sister and so.

You stayed in this small town, then.

No, in Spisská Nová Ves part.

How do you spell that, Spisska?

S-P-I-S-S-K-A N-O-V-A V-E-S.

Right. Mhm.

I will give you, when I will have it translated into English. So I will give you a copy of the book--

Very good.

Before--

How long did you stay in Spisská when--

Spisská Nová Ves, with really until I was 20 years old. And then I went to continue my studies, to try to make in one year all four years of the high school.

Your parents stayed there too?

My parents stayed there very long. And then they moved to the-- they bought a house. They moved to the same city where I was, in to the capital, where I was later an assistant and an associate professor at the university.

In Bratislava?

Yes. I described, too, they were beating the Jews too after and that's the same. I have a chapter that the beating and killing, murdering of the Jews is continuing after the liberation, too.

How about the man who worked for your aunt? And he took care of you. Then he kicked you out, in December of 1944.

No-- for me, no, no. For my grandma, before. No, so-- so-- we were good friends, but we went when they really would-- we would give them a lot, but really they-- they kicked us out. So really they didn't save-- it was only a miracle, that we saved our lives, that we returned to our apartment, and they didn't catch us, yes? But--

Right.

For three and a half months, they helped us. But then they were not really--

Did something happen that caused him to change his mind?

No, no, they never found out, the Germans. And they came to our pharmacy, to buy. My father gave them free medicines. They were nice people. But nothing happened.

Was your father able to work in Spisská Nová something?

Spisská Nová Ves.

Spisska.

Nova. We got--

In pharmacy?

We got an order, that we have opened the pharmacy. Now our [NON-ENGLISH] was a German, and he took away with a truck all the expensive remedies and all expensive things. So it was practically empty. So you remember, in Europe you prepare yourself a lot of remedies.

So we had no sugar. So there was a factory of starch. And so we prepared, instead of sugar, with starch sugar. We got a little alcohol. So alcohol is very often in the medicines, too. So--

And I worked, really, because the printery was open, too. I got already a whole salary, a nice salary, so I worked so much that till 2 o'clock, I worked with my father, then in the printery. And it lasted till I didn't begin to study.

How did you get to Spisska? How did you get--

Yeah, so, because in Michalovce my father was afraid, and he made a very bad business. He bought-- he sold his pharmacy and bought for very, very expensive the Spisská Nová pharmacy, which was not so good.

He bought the pharmacy there.

Yes. Again, how was the home? My mother got from her father-- how you call this in English-- money, when you get married now.

A dowry.

Yes, 150,000 crowns. So this was always the basis, how to-- [LAUGHS] in the old time.

So that was his capital?

Yes, and from this he bought the pharmacy in Michalovce.

How long did you stay in this town, Spisska Nova Ves?

No, I was-- after the-- I really didn't-- in '45, the fall, I left and began to study. And then I returned for one year again, because I worked in-- because for the study you needed to work one year in the pharmacy--

Pharmacy.

--my father's pharmacy.

Right. You went to West Germany, for--

I-- I--

How long did you stay in Slovakia?

In Slovakia?

You were there--

No, in West Germany, I went no therefore. I went only--

1968.

'68 therefore, because it was so very interesting. A lot of Jews, when the Russian occupied Czechoslovakia on August 21, 1968, were afraid and left again the country. But in my case, it was a little different.

I was a very good microbiologist. And I got this Humboldt award, stipend, so and so, only I didn't know, before. So I had so and so to go to Germany, to work, the very--

What year was this?

It was in '68, by an accident.

But what you did between '45-- you went back to school? But--

I went back to school.

But when did you finish school?

I finished so that in in '40-- yes-- in '46, I finished the high school.

And then you went to university?

And then I had to work one year in my-- went to Spisská Nová, one year.

Then I returned.

Bratislava.

Returned to Bratislava, finished in '50 the pharmacy study. And then I got a position at the university. And during the work, I made my doctor degree, a PhD.

But you-- then you stayed 18 years at the university.

I was 18-- yes, I was at the university 18 years, practically 21. It was official. I told officially that I am really-- will return, yes? From--

You got your PhD at the university in Bratislava.

Yes, and--

In microbiology.

Microbiology. Yes.

And were you on the faculty there?

Yes.

Until '68.

'63, I-- it is a little different, in-- like here, that you get your associate professorship when you have a lot of work, and then it's a committee, [INAUDIBLE]. There, you have to defend one work before a certain committee.

Right.

And then they vote for you.

You had to defend your thesis.

Yes, yes, it is a different, [INAUDIBLE] thesis. So-called docent is the name.

But you spent 18 years at--

I was 18 years there fore, and I was extremely happy-- first time to go to work in a very-- into abroad, yes?

Your wife, you married in 1956.

I--

She was not Jewish.

No.

I see.

But we had no-- no marriage, only before the judge of magistrate.

Yeah, you were married by a judge.

By a judge.

You were not married in the synagogue.

I was not married in a synagogue. It was not married in the Catholic-- I was--

Your wife is Catholic.

She doesn't-- Slovak Catholic-- she doesn't belong to any--

Because as you said before, after the war you and your father and mother were not very religious.

Absolutely not, because--

You had no affiliation.

Yes, because we--

You had no affiliation at all with a synagogue or anything.

Oh, we gave money for Israel and so, because when Father had his--

Did your parents live with you in Bratislava?

Not with me. They bought a house. My mother and my father passed away in Bratislava My mother passed away only now in '89.

I see. '88, you said.

'88.

Passed away in '88.

Yes, '88. And--

Now, what made you go to West Germany?

I got the official-- as I told you-- which was, again, an award-- the Humboldt stipend-- Humboldt associate professor stipend. And [LAUGHS] I never--

Today, I see that she was right. I wanted always return to my faculty and so on. And she didn't want, my wife. So she pushed me, even when I had no position and so on.

And then came a professor from Pittsburgh named Feingold. And he had a lecture in Freiburg. And we talked together--

Feingold? What was his name?

David Feingold.

David Feingold. He's not a urologist. He's a--

I know.

--a PhD. He came to--

He came to lecture there.

In Hamburg.

In Freiburg.

Oh, Freiburg.

And I invited him for a good European meal to our house. And we talk about the whole, and they needed

something. And I didn't understand what does it mean, assistant research professor. That means much less without tenure.

And I agreed to come. And we came there to Pittsburgh and stayed in Pittsburgh. There were a lot of up and downs. I was unemployed, two or three times. Today, it's very up.

You stayed in Germany two years. You came to America in 1970, then.

Yes. And we stayed two years and one month.

In-- in--

Freiburg.

You were in Freiburg.

Beautiful city on the border of--

What university was there?

We were not on the university.

Oh, you were not.

We were the Max Planck Institute. It's very famous.

Oh! Right, the Max Planck Institute. I've heard of that. Right.

Very famous institute for all--

Oh, yes.

Society for--

Physics and microbiology.

Physics, even, everything, they have-- yes. I don't--

Your children were born, then, in--

My both children were born still in Slovakia. My daughter is in Denver. She's a physical therapist. And my son is here in Montefiore, a physician.

Right. Well, you talk about the Jewish codex, of the so-called Slovak Republic, when-- what is the Jewish codex?

This, I describe. But I will not find-- it would be last very long. I will describe you very slow. This was in 272 laws.

This was in 1942.

Two-- it was the worst--

'42.

--anti-Jewish book with law--

Regulation

--regulation-- in the whole world. It was never where even the deportation was approved. The Slovak parliament-- this, I described-- had 63 members. And it was very interesting. From the 63 members, nobody protested against. Only two priests went out, purposely not to vote for this.

The two priests are dead, but they got them, from Israel, the highest award what exists, that they didn't vote. Otherwise, from the 63, 61 voted for the codex. It is relatively described in the lexicon as the worst anti-Jewish laws.

Worse than the Nazi Nuremberg laws.

More. More. Were the worst.

More so than the Nuremberg laws.

Well, because that were, I guess that the Nuremberg were not approved the deportation of Jews.

Well, the Slovaks really did not learn from the Nazis. They were equally as bad. They could teach the Nazis about Jewish relations.

That's what that the world has to know what are the Slovaks. Not-- I tell-- 90% are good people, but this 10% makes up a lot. They are nature-- they are one of the worst antisemites.

Well, what happened to Tiso when the Russians came?

He ran away. And then the Americans-- which, of course, today it's extremely returned, to the justice.

He did what?

They caught him, I guess so, in Austria.

I see.

And the US Army returned him, and he was hanged. He was hanged. And this is make known today they are extremely against--

The Slovak Nazis were really very good partners with the Nazis.

It was so that they got only the autonomy in '38-- not yet Slovakia-- and already I describe, too, they were staying before our pharmacy on that day, Saturday when the day of the market-- once a week was a market, yes, in the middle-- and tell everyone, don't go to buy to the Jew and so on. Already during the--

It is a little more that we have to know about the whole thing. Here in Pittsburgh was signed a Pittsburgh agreement, in 1918, where they told that the Slovaks will get a parliament. There were Slovak courts and everything, when the Czechoslovakia will be--

In 1980.

1918.

'18, right.

And Masaryk, the famous philosopher, signs this, with Czechs and Slovaks, here in Pittsburgh.

Yeah I know. I know about that.

And unfortunately-- what I write it-- they didn't kept this, which was a great error. And this developed the whole Hlinka party and the whole Hlinka this. This was a bad thing for the Jews, too, that the Czechs made a great error, that they didn't kept.

Well, the Czechs have been good people to the-- there was never any real bad antisemitism amongst the [CROSS TALK].

Oh, like-- so Masaryk himself is famous. There were an anti-Jew so-called Hilsner, famous, during the Austria-Hungary, like Zola protected Dreyfus. He's kept it.

Yeah, right, right.

Masaryk as a professor of philosophy protected Hilsner. They told that he murdered a maid, this Hilsner, and the Jews are putting blood into matzahs.

Yeah.

We have to. And he protected, and he told the truth.

Yes.

So in opposites even. But like I write in the book, too, a very-- very interesting thing. My grandfather, late grandfather, had the estate, and they were very good friends with a Christian owner of the estate. And they prepared alcohol, too, from the potatoes, and they sent in the refinery. And they both were members of the board of the refinery.

And once they sit before the house, and they spoke together, and they spoke about a third board member. And my late grandfather told this Mr. [PERSONAL NAME], who was a Gentile, this gentleman he was sitting, is a great antisemite, yes, a third member of the board. And Mr. [PERSONAL NAME], the Gentile, his friend, answered, [SPEAKING GERMAN]? You don't speak German. Right?

No.

So I have to tell you. Do you know what, Mr. Silberstein? How many Christians, so many antisemites? [LAUGHS]

Oh yeah.

So this is a-- this, I write too in this book. So it is not 100% so, but a little-- we are strangers, for the Christian-- mainly for the primitive people.

Is your book going to be published in-- what? Slovak?

I got a very good-- from I don't know where.

In what language is it going to be?

I will write it-- it is in Slovak. I will write it, nicely type it. I will--

And then will translate it into English.

And then I translate it into English, and some English will correct it, and then I will type it. Allegedly, it will-- both. I will send, to Los Angeles, a copy.

When did your parents die?

My father died in 1970. He was 84 and 1/2 years old.

In Bratislava.

Yes, and mother, 80-- was 88 and 1/2 when she died, in '88.

In Pittsburgh--

In Bratislava. But--

Did they come to Pittsburgh with you?

My mother was, six times, to visit, visiting me.

I see.

But my father was not anymore alive.

But she lived in Bratislava, though.

But she lived in-- she wants to come. This was too--

She died in 1988.

My wife didn't want her. This was too a big fight between my wife and-- she wanted to come to me, because she was totally alone, you know. This is always-- mother in-laws and so. [LAUGHS]

So your mother really never approved of your marriage, did she?

No. She approved. She liked her very much. No, no, no. She approved the opposite. Her mother didn't come to our wedding.

I see. Are your children raised in the-- raised as Jews, though.

So they are not Jews, but they have a Jewish feeling. My son came to [INAUDIBLE] Jewish school, so he had-- he bought a menorah, [LAUGHS] and he had-- and he is a member, I guess, of the Holocaust center in Los Angeles. I am not, but he is-- he was also literature.

My daughter-- they had not-- no troubles, that they were half-Jews, you know that, so they don't know what is the whole thing.

Do your children know your history?

Yes--

Have you ever told them what you're--

--yes--

--talking about today?

--not so much as I describe. Somehow, you know, when I saw this, that the Slovaks are again loud and makes this that everybody is sorry about them and so, I feared to have to my duty to describe. It was in my self, that it has to come out, the truth. There is not one lie. It's a truth.

And I-- I'm reading now Slovak newspaper. They are lying about the whole thing. They are giving the hand to the Jews, yes, but they are lying. You know?

And the world has to know the truth. I write that the book is a contribution to the history of Slovakia-- in parentheses, to the so-called Jewish question-- the Jewish problem-- part autobiography.

Well, they were only-- out of the 136,000 Jews in Slovakia, only 25,000 survived.

Yes. And to survive not there mainly, because they went in time-- a lot went to the West--

Sure.

--and to Russia, for example. So they went to Siberia and so. It's a sad story.

Very.

But we had not-- we have not to-- we have to remember, because slowly the everybody will lie, Yes? And the truth will not come out.

Well, the Slovaks have-- as you say, and you're the one to write the history-- but the Slovaks have a long history of antisemitism.

It all--

It's pretty bad.

In the whole Slovak literature, you can read-- this, I described too-- in all-- there are so many Shylocks, like in Shakespeare, Shylocks, that it is unbelievable. In all literature--

You mean, Slovak Shylocks?

Slovak, Jewish Shylocks, yes?

Oh, Jewish Shylocks?

Yes. So there are, you know-- mainly the bad man is the innkeeper in a village. This is a bad Jewish man who sells alcohol to the poor Slovaks, and then he charges more. And when he's drunk, he sells water with a drop of alcohol and put on to the account of the client. [LAUGHS]

But this is not true, though.

It is so-- I describe so. Not only the Jewish innkeeper made the same thing. The same thing is making the Slovak Christian innkeeper.

Of course.

Always. When someone is drunk, he gives him water a little few drops of alcohol, and then he charges him, and the same even the Communist state innkeeper. So this is not only the Jewish. This is a habit which is, in the whole world, very well known.

Of course.

Because I cannot tell that Jewish didn't do it, generally. They have done the same as everybody does today, too.

Georg, what has it meant to you to be a survivor?

First of all, we were extremely happy that we survived, because we committed two times suicide, and really this-- and we survived.

With sleeping pills.

Yes. Phantom. And generally the life is very nice. Life is nice. And we were once when we were the happiest when, in '67 and '48, the Jews or Jews, Israelis won the war, that we proved that we are not so cowards that we are letting us only to slaughter and to kill-- that it's not true.

But we hope that we will survive. And they cheated us. And I guess so, it is a duty to remember. And the next and next generation have to know what happened with us.

Because I write, we were not only my grandmother was killed. I have five aunts from one side, six uncles from the other side, a lot of cousins, and so on. So, from the closest family-- but we were only four-- was one member killed-- my sister. But then were a lot of uncles and aunts and so on. And we have not to--

We have always remember, because they were very diligent and working people who didn't steal money or-- like they describe us. Yes?

And what has America meant to you?

First I was very-- I was not satisfied with America-- years and years. And the satisfaction with America-- that, how democratic America, how a good country-- came really-- you will laugh when-- when they kicked out the communists. And I saw that the Slovaks are again the same-- the grandchildren, the children, and nephews of the same Guardists are again on the power. Then I saw, this is really a good and a fair country.

And I was so many times down. When I would be down in Europe, I would be a poor man and I would lose everything. But when you know a little more, and you know a little more than any other else, yes, you are again-- you are again up. This is really a very, very good country, which I never believed-- believed--

You did not think that a country like America could exist in the world. Is that what you're saying?

This, I see now. When you are a little more diligent and know a little more than other, you are-- I am extremely happy. And I told, when I was now in Slovakia-- I saw the whole thing, in March. Now I was. I thought, when I have to lick the street to survive, instead, I have no work, I would never return. Rather, I would lick in Pittsburgh the streets, like to return again to Europe. Today I-- the last three, four--

Are you saying that America restored your faith in people?

America restored--

Your faith in people. In other words, coming out of your background during the Holocaust, you lost faith in people being good.

You will-- the first round, it was-- when I came to America, happened with me a very sad thing. I was in the party, the Communist Party, a member, because we thought, when the Russians saved our life, our duty is to be in the party. Yes?

I see.

And I wrote down that I was in the party, when I had the first interview in the consulate in Switzerland. I wrote the truth.

Right.

Then we sold everything. We had no apartment. It was so-- we had already the ticket to the plane. And had again an interview to fill out something in Frankfurt. And there was written, when you are a member of the Communist Party you cannot get immediately a visa.

That's right.

But we have to wait of the decision of Washington. So I lied. And I lied that I was not.

That you were not a member of the party.

Yes, not a member. Now-- but I made the great error. [LAUGHS] It again was.

What happened?

But I made the great error. I had, with a Polish lady-- was a Polish American lady-- I thought that everybody is a philosemite. I had the interview here on the immigration office, and I told all the truth-- that I was and everything. So.

So I had to be, three years, deported from here-- normal deported, like I was deported from there, because I lied. Yes. And then was an excellent lawyer who helped me-- a lady. And after many--

So I really got only in the [INAUDIBLE]. So I was afraid for the whole family.

You were never deported, though.

I was-- because I-- I-- I fought back.

This lawyer--

Helped us. So first my family got the so-called green card. And then, one year later, I got. When I had my last court case with the immigration judge, so he was so sure that I spoke about my patent-- anti-cancer drug-- with him, not what I lied or not lied. She made a very bad this.

So I thought that here are antisemites still. She made a very bad thing. So I got that I have to leave the country within, in '70-- no, '71-- till October, I have to leave-- even they wanted to pay my [LAUGHS] expenses and so on, to only-- to leave and leave. So I had the trouble. So--

And then, when I was unemployed, you know, here, three times, so it was very hard to survive. I survived this row, too, to stay there with the people. Then I met various who read books and this.

So I saw the life too. But somehow, when I got old, now the last four years, I am quite lucky. Financially, I am quite good. I have saved money.

And at work I got again that I am not anymore an adjunct associate professor because I work good. I, even I am 65 and 1/2, I am again an associate professor. And so I am happy. Now I see, when I think, the whole thing, that this is really the best country what--

But you never became religious again. But you really were never religious.

After I went to Dor Hadash, they were very nice to me. Dor Hadash is a very progressive--

Yes.

And there I, when my father died, I one year I told Kaddish.

You say Kaddish?

Kaddish, and they didn't want from me anything. And I-- because they saw that I have not so much money, and they-- I could eat, Shabbos was. So I went to this.

But from the time I am-- I am not-- I am not-- this is a sin, too, but I tell the truth. I'm not a great believer. I am a Jew in my heart, that I am for the Jewish state. And I will never lose this. I am-- I have a rather a

Jewish nationality--

Right.

--like a religion.

Half-- 50% of the people in Israel are like you.

This

Secular Jews.

Yes, but they are in their heart. And they will fight and die for Israel, but they are not religious. I was extremely wondering--

[INAUDIBLE].

--when I saw my street this, that American people can be so religious. Again I see, with the long beard and 12 kids and 14 kids and-- and so, that this exists in America, which is one of the most progressive country of the world. And you see such--

But America consists of every kind of person.

This, I found out. You have these evangelists and these groups and so on.

Are you hopeful for the future?

Yes. I like this-- for the last four, five, years, I like this country very much as no country. Because this is really a free country where you can tell what you want and to make what you want.

So I-- and that what I write the book not so much for money or something-- that the world has to know the truth. Because they lie again, that Tiso protected the Jews and so on.

Do you feel that survivors of the Holocaust in the United States should make their influence felt, should work and speak and organize to tell the story of the Holocaust, so--

Yes, and the history and everybody has to know.

You feel that survivors should do that?

I guess so. This was the first country where I heard that they told-- even the Germans, I was two years over, didn't tell that gas chambers were not. But this was the first that you heard, that a big group of they told that this is not true, this on the-- So we are in the same, like, like Streicher, in Sturmer told, that it is not true. It is-- it-- we have to explain. And mainly I am afraid, when we will not be here anymore, what will happen.

Would you be willing to speak in the schools?

Why not? It is my duty. I told-- my wife is angry, that they will kill you, the Slovaks, or do something. But I thought, I don't care anymore.

Slovaks will never hurt you in--

I don't-- because see, I tell the truth, how this, what they are done. And--

But it is--

It is very important. It is my duty to tell everybody what happened, because that it never happens again. Because it can happen again.

Exactly. We have a number of survivors who do speak-- go to the schools and speak to the high-school students and so on. And this is-- we think this is very important.

It's mainly the intelligentsia who made something already, yes, and who-- it's very important to tell--

Yes.

--what happened.

What does the state of Israel mean to you?

It's extremely important that the state-- I am very afraid what will happen-- what will be.

You've never been there?

I, well, never been there. I was visited with my friends, from my friends-- they came to me. And I am proud that it is, but it is very, very, very hard, the whole story, because we still [LAUGHS] subsidies were to the food in the Communist country. We gave them subsidies from here, which is very difficult. How long will it last? [LAUGHS]

Well, thank you Dr. Keleti.

Oh, so-- I'm Georg. You can call me when you--

Georg, it's been a wonderful interview. And your story is a very important story. And it's very important that this tape-- which we hope will be used in the future by students and scholars who are working on papers and books on the Holocaust. But it is exceedingly important that your story be on tape and held available for future use.

When I will have the English translation-- everything will be together-- I will bring a copy. And then, when it will be published, I will try to approach the people in Los Angeles what is their opinion. Because this is a part which we don't know so much. This is not directly Germany or Poland.

Right.

This is another country where the whole situation was very, very bad. Mainly, like you mentioned, this Jewish codex was the worst in the world. It was not the worst thing. And logically, that each lawyer and each gendarme and each policeman can follow the laws against the Jews.

Thank you very much, Mr. Keleti.

OK. so I'm sorry that I was so long.