

OK. But there's a time lag there, and you had made your way to Israel.

OK. So I didn't make my way to Israel yet. I was going out every morning early, six o'clock [AUDIO OUT].

Comfortable. But even though the Czech population is very democratic, very tolerant, something caught on them, too, because they were occupied by the Nazis. They were jealous, of course, because we just came home from the concentration camp, and everybody has nice outfits.

For one thing, my sisters were home dressmakers. Anything they put on, they always said they're beautiful, because they knew what color goes with what.

They were still single. You were still living together, the three sisters and yourself?

We were singles until '47, end of '47. Then I had that store, and I had enough money, so I could marry off that sister and could help them out.

That was the youngest sister?

The youngest.

The other two?

The other two got married later. The oldest one got also married in Czechoslovakia. He was pretty comfortable, too. He had a soda factory in Podmokly.

Where was I? Yes. So I didn't think of it at all, to leave the country yet. I couldn't think of it to leave the country, because I didn't have the visas.

Everybody, most of the people were going to America. To Israel, you couldn't go because there were a quota. They wouldn't let them in. Took them to Cyprus. I gave up about looking about it, cousin of mine.

One day I had a call from the HIAS from Prague. I should urgently come to Prague. Because she didn't know the names of the younger children, she knew the ones she grew up with, my oldest brother and my two sisters. She asked do you have a sister Mary? Do you have a sister Piri, your brother Samuel, and the father?

I said yes. He said there is a cousin of yours from America who is looking for you. When I send the letter, I got a paper. But by that time, the number was 2,400, and they had only a quota for 100 a year from Czechoslovakia. So there would have been 24 years until I can come out.

But I didn't have for a minute, though, that I will leave Czechoslovakia. Because I was always a Zionist. I said there will come a time when I will go to Israel.

But in March, in February 28 in 1948, suddenly the Russians encircled the country with tanks and gave the government an order. You become communist, or we invade you. The government was a coalition, the socialists with the communists. The socialists were also infiltrated by the communists, and they just gave up and they were communists.

Next morning, I'm going to my store. Unfortunately, I just made a coat, fur-lined, made to order, cost me a fortune to tailor. I was always sensitive to the neighborhood. When I made my suit-- here, this is my sister in 1947-- if I made already after I equip them with everything, and I started to buy something for myself, I never took it home. I never took it home in day time, and I never put it on to go out on the street. Because I didn't want the jealousy of the neighborhood, or the neighbors, or the Gentiles, that here I am here three years, hoping I have a beautiful suit like this.

That's why I left that coat in the store to take it home after dark. I was just going when I went home a big apartment

house. I was always just quietly going in so people who shouldn't see me. Unfortunately, I forgot the coat and everything at home.

The morning, I come to the store. There were Russian soldiers, everything belongs to the government. I said can I take my coat home? No way.

The bank account, the stores, the warehouses, everything is blocked. I'm out completely, nothing left at all.

Everything was confiscated?

Except I had a few dollars, of course, hidden, because we have were expecting always something could happen. So I was really terrified that the communists came in. Because I had a girlfriend from Budapest in the city who was going out, and the mother was courted by a Czech high ranking officer who was in the Czech army in London. He was a very ardent communist because he knew communism from the books, reading Marx.

But I met him in the house, and I tried to explain what communism is, and no way that I can agree with the idea. Here, suddenly, the communists are in power.

By walking home, I met the man on the street. I was really terrified that he will give me away, that I'm an anti-communist. He says I want to talk to you. I'm very disappointed.

Can you imagine? We had our first meeting of the Communist Party yesterday evening. The first resolution was first to take everything from the Jews. Then I realized the other four or five wholesalers were kept in.

They took my store right away. I think to myself, we're just three years out of the concentration camp, and we have the same thing all over again. They get everything from us, again.

So they tried all kinds of things. They were very easy to sell out all those warehouses I had. Everybody else said they made one store out of it on the railroad station. The confusion, they didn't know what it is.

4 o'clock in the afternoon, they still don't know the merchant came, they told me. 4 o'clock, I'm still standing. I don't have my merchant. When I was in the store, 6 o'clock, they opened up, everything ready to sell.

So one day, that communist [? hiring ?] officer comes over to me and says, well, we talked yesterday in the meeting that we are in trouble. We don't know where to get the merchandise and how to get it and how to distribute it. The only man who will be able to do it will be Mr. Weinberg. You will have a deputy, some people come to you tomorrow to offer you, you should take over the store.

So they were going to set you up in business--

Right.

--despite your being a Jew.

But I kind of was a little bit afraid of it. Because something happened before that I had some threats from that brother of the police commissioner. I talked to that man, to that communist, and he says I will arrange for you a meeting with the party in Prague.

Somebody from Prague came over to my home. They asked me the questions, how they are bothering me. He said, well, we're going back to Prague. Every time you leave home, you tell your sister where you are going and what time you will be back.

If you are not back in time, they should right away notify me in Prague. I said what is it for? What is it all about? He says well, we have a system here, the communists, that anybody can catch you on the street, pick you up on the street,

and you disappear, and nobody ever will hear from you.

So I already see that something is wrong, and I don't want responsibility. Then I knew if I show them where to go, where to buy, they don't need me anyway. They kicked me out.

By that time, the resolution came through that there will be an Israel. Independence was already, it was an independent state. I knew I can go to Israel.

The Czech government allowed to create a Jewish brigade in Czechoslovakia. It was all done secretly. They evacuated five villages on the border.

We had complete military training. We had people from Israel there. We had high-ranking Czech officers there.

They encouraged us very much. One said I was to Israel and I see the beautiful country. He said those Jews don't even look like Jews. They're all snub-nosed, all blonde, and their beautiful kids.

So we were very much encouraged. I managed to get out some stuff from Czechoslovakia because I had the money. I spent the last penny, because I was afraid to take money with me. I was always, somehow, they taught me to be straight, nothing hide.

So at the end of the training, they told us anybody who has a trade can take with you the tools to the trade. My brother-in-law wasn't with me. He was married by that time. He had a baby.

There was a carpenter, one high-ranking Jewish officer who was with us from Russia, who became an officer. He was a carpenter. He had a carpenter factory in the city. He said could you please tell me what are the items that I have to buy, the saws and all that stuff.

So I said, all right. Here's my copy. You can copy what I'm writing. Here he writes down a saw, 150,000 crowns, bench that much money, comes up \$1.5 million.

I said what are you doing? They told you that you can take tools. They didn't tell you that you can take a factory with you. Don't bother me with this. I am a high-rank officer, and I know what I'm doing.

Luckily, I didn't listen to him. I wrote down all the same items, but I wrote \$5,000 and \$3,000, all the whole merchandise, and my clothing, whatever else I have, possession, 20,000 crowns. Excuse me.

About four days later, all that papers we made out came back. Called my name, Weinberg approved. In a few minutes, they call Klein, officer, disapproved. He couldn't take out anything.

So my brother-in-law by that time was a carpenter. He build a wooden house, windows, doors on it. He made around the house two iron rods to hold it together.

They called from the duty people came down. I had to pay a million crowns to let it through. Because they said what kind of-- this is not tools, this is a factory.

I was running around because the time came they told us we have to leave, the end of December. I had only two weeks' time to get them paid, any price they wanted. One tool wasn't even painted yet in the factory. It happened so that they let it through. About a year later, it arrived in Israel.

When I arrived in Israel, they took us straight to the military camp, to stay there, out in the front. My brother-in-law was already in Israel at that time. He had already a job. But he couldn't get a partner. Because all these carpenters didn't have space enough to put in all these tools, all these equipment.

Then there was an article in the paper, a Hebrew paper, that a village in the south-- at that time, it was still the desert,

Kfar [PLACE NAME]. It was mostly an American-established, American immigrants, they need all kinds of tradesmen, also a carpenter. They give them two dunam of land, which is half an acre of land. They can build themselves a place to work and for a house. They build them a house of two rooms.

Of course, I told him to accept it and go down. It's a village. It doesn't matter.

It didn't take two or three years that he was working with 50 people and built, always enlarge the place. They build about three miles away a city, Kiryat Malakhi. At that time, he didn't build any more furnishings, but he put in all the windows and the doors for the government.

This was between the years 1949 and 1952?

1953, yes. I arrived in Israel after the army. I served near the Jordan border and also in Ashkelon I was stationed. That was the Negev, the headquarters for the army, the Negev.

I was the first one to know that Eilat was captured. It was a surprise. They went down by Jeeps, and they put down wirings on the sand. That's why the Jeeps could get down and surprise.

I was stationed at the Morse. I had to interpret the Morse signals because I was one of the few in the company who knew a little bit Hebrew, or Hebrew reading, writing from the yeshiva. So I ran to the commander, Eilat is ours.

After a year, my sister, as I said, moved to Kfar Warburg. They lived first in an Arab-abandoned house in Tira near Haifa. So I stayed with my sister for two or three weeks, and I just couldn't get a job. I finally decide, well, I came to Israel with the idea to build roads or houses. Doesn't seem to work out.

I went to the fruit market. The first guy came in, I said do you have a job? I'm retired. I just came home from the army.

Man says, well, I need a manager in the warehouse. Fine. I was there for three years. I had a very good job there.

What brought you out of Israel? How did you get to America?

OK. Meanwhile, my sister married in Haifa to a Viennese man, young man, very happily married. They had a child. Right after the childbirth, she got very sick. They couldn't diagnose what the problem is.

Finally, they had to take her to the hospital. She had consecutively nine operations. The husband was working as a Merchant Marine, the Israeli ships. He was away for months and months.

So you were raising the child?

So I took the little child. I took him to a children's home. After work, 5 o'clock afternoon, I had to travel about a half an hour to the home, bought him some toys, and spent some time with the child. But I always had difficulty to leave him because he was carrying on. No matter how I wanted to distract him, to give him a toy or something, he was always looking sideways if I'm still there.

Then finally I said it's no good. He wasn't taken very good care of there. It wasn't the love the child needed. I found a family in Haifa who took him in. I paid the family monthly.

But it came so bad that I would bring the child to the hospital, he wouldn't want to go to the mother. The mother cried. My own child doesn't want to see me. The child didn't know at all the mother.

She was constantly in and out of the hospital. Once I came to see her after work. I take leave about an hour early so I could go in yet before 5 o'clock. She didn't respond. She didn't know that I'm there.

I see a lady next in bed to her, and she was-- so after she stopped, I said, are you sick? Can I give you something? She

says no, no, I'm praying for that lady next bed because she's an angel. After every operation she had, a day later she got up and walking around the hospital, anybody needs water or help.

So you took her to this country for treatment?

That afternoon, finally, she woke up. She says, I will be fine, Harry. Go home.

But I felt something is wrong. I went down in the garden, hid behind a bush. Her bed was next to the window. So I was reading the paper and always looking up, what's happening. Suddenly I see there are six or seven doctors around the bed.

So I run up. I said to doctor, was it very bad? He says the only thing that can help her maybe you can take her to America. I couldn't take her to America, because I didn't have the money.

You needed dollars. I had only Israeli pounds those days. They didn't have exchange yet. They said we can't do it. We can't give you dollars.

I went home to Tira. I lived then in that apartment where my sister vacated in that village. I went home to that village.

I undressed. It was about 9 o'clock in the evening. I said I can't stand it. I have to go back to see her.

I arrived in the place and they wouldn't let me in. I was waiting around. An ambulance came, and they had to open the gates, and I sneaked in.

I arrived at the second floor. The light was on in the floor, but not in the rooms. I was standing there, afraid to go in, if she's alive yet or not.

Then I hear my name. She calls me. The first thing I come in, and she says, oh, look at that poor man walking in the balcony. He suffered so much.

And just to show you what a soul she was, she said I was very unhappy that I sent you home because I knew how badly you would feel about it, that I'll die and you weren't here with me. So I had to do something quick to get some money together over here.

A little while before that, I found out that I have an uncle. That cousin of mine, [PERSONAL NAME], wrote me that I have an uncle here in New York. I write out a letter and I say my sister is mortally sick. Please send me the money. I'm coming to America and I will pay you back every penny for the trip.

About a month later, I'm getting a letter with \$20 in it and not a word, just the address they send it, not a word in it for who and what. So I managed to get a permission to Canada. I was lucky enough to get a merchant ship to go to England.

On that ship was Ben-Gurion's daughter, Mrs. Golda Meir. It was really a beautiful experience because we had only 11 people with the captain on that ship. We got to know each other pretty good. We were about two weeks on the trip.

She was very plain and very lovely. She berated me. Why do you leave. Israel?

I said, well, I want to save my sister's life. There's no way. I wanted some money from the government. I couldn't get it.

So on the ship was also a couple from London. Where are you going, and where are you from? So I told them my story.

They invited me to their own home. I kept insisting, how can I? I don't know you. How can I accept this?

Well, they said, I'll take you to the shelter. If you want to live in the shelter, then OK. If not, you can change your mind. So finally, I agreed I go to them.

They took me to the London consulate-- to the Canadian consulate. The man who gave me the permit to go to Toronto had to write me what kind of relations I am. Because that was the only way I could get in there. But the man who arranged it apparently didn't send him the money. I wrote him a letter and he wouldn't tell me what he said, what kind of relations I am.

Waiting that waiting room, the man who interviewed the people opens the door. Is there anybody who talks Yiddish? I said yes. Here I am.

He said this man claims that he can write and read in Yiddish. If you are illiterate, they won't let you in. So I said I will test him.

So I tell him a sentence, write it down. So I said something in Yiddish, and the poor man wrote down something, no way you can read it. He didn't know what he's writing.

So I looked at it. I said fine. That's fine. That's what he wrote, what I said. And he was let through. So finally, I came next on order.

When are you born, all this stuff. Who is the man who is taking to England? Well, I didn't know. I had no idea. I said my cousin.

He had a note to cover, that I shouldn't see the page. He looks at me, and looks down, and looks at me, and says, OK.

So I was in Toronto for only six months when finally, they couldn't let out, they wouldn't let out anybody from Czechoslovakia. So the numbers came quicker, and I got my permit to come to America six months later.

You were taking your sister with you?

No, no, no. I had to make money to bring her over. So in Canada, I rented a room for \$5 and walking around to get a job, no jobs. Finally, I remembered I know about eggs, how to candle eggs. I walk around from one place to the other, do you need any wholesalers, Jewish wholesalers? No, they all do it themselves.

So finally, one guy says, I have a friend who is working, a Jewish man, he is working at the Dominion stores in Toronto. He gave me his address. He says, go over there and ask him if they need any help.

I went over, and I-- trusting man-- knock on the door. The man comes out in winter time. It's freezing. He didn't invite me in.

He comes out, what do you want? I said, well, somebody told me that you are working there. Is there any jobs?

He said yes, we need jobs. Do you know the job? I said, yes. When did you work last? I said about 20 years. He says make sure you tell them that you didn't work for 20 years. I accepted the advice.

[INAUDIBLE] side. Oh, OK.

I went for the interview, and the man says, the manager, well, how long didn't you work in that job? Do you know the job? I said I know it very well, but the last time I did it, it was about 20 years.

The guy goes up and says, well, I'm very sorry. But we need it very urgently. We can't afford to teach you again. And I don't have a job.

Then I realized that the man did it on purpose because he was the only Jew in that place and he thought maybe I'll bring shame on the Jewish people.

We're going to have to skip over some of this information, although it's certainly very interesting. But you were in Canada then for six months before you came to the United States?

After six months, I sent the money to my sister. I worked overnight, nights, and as much overtime I could. I sent her the money.

She was here three days before I arrived and I was able to come to this country. I came to New York by train. My cousin was waiting for me with my uncle. She said this is your uncle. But I'm very sorry. I always wrote you that you live with us, but my two daughters came home from the college and I don't have enough space.

Very bad experience, right, very bad impression, the acceptance--

You weren't welcomed?

The welcome. One thing I said, can you tell me who sent me the \$20 when I asked for the travel expenses. Oh, Uncle Sydney from Florida was here. He gave \$10 and I gave \$10.

So I said OK. I have \$20 with me. You have your \$10, and I will give back the \$10 because I didn't ask for charity. I asked for the trip to be paid.

She said what do you talk about? \$10 is a lot of money in this country. And they were very well off. The other one was a millionaire.

So my uncle asked me what do you want to do in this country. I said, well, I want to go into business, because my mind was work in business. What do you talk about? You can go into business.

Here is a different kind of business. You have to earn your own money, go to the factories, earn your money, learn the language. Then you can open your own store. Of course, he was afraid that I will ask money from him.

You proved them all wrong there.

I went to see my friends who were here with me in the concentration camp. The first thing, do you need money? You can have money to help you out, to start something.

I said what are you doing? I'm working in a factory. I said you are the same businessman I was. Why do you work in a factory?

Well, you know, I'm married. I have a child. and this is sure, so I'm afraid.

So finally, I loaned \$15,500. I bought a little store downtown.

Your sister in the meantime sought treatment?

The sister in the meantime was taken to the Beth Israel Hospital. When I first came to see him, the doctor took me aside and says, I'm very sorry to tell you. It's too late. If you want your sister to see her family again, send her back to Israel.

I had a heartbreaking time. Because she was still walking around, very good-looking. I took her once to a dance here. Why do you want me to go back?

And I couldn't explain to her why. She said you don't want me here. You want me to go back.

So finally, she died a half year later. I met the doctor again. I told him that she lived another half a year. He said we didn't realize that she had such a strong heart. We would have tried to operate on her if we would have known that.

I was six months in that store. It turned out very badly. I made a good business.

I found out that this country is no different from any other countries. As long as you give peoples money's worth, you tell them good morning and thank you and a smile on your face, you do business.

Throughout all this time you remained single?

Yes. I remained single because I had a girlfriend, and she was sent to Auschwitz, and she was killed, too. Anyway, after six months, the summer came and there was no air conditioning. There was no windows in the store, no ventilation.

I was just impossible in there. Merchandise suffered because it was all mostly fresh butter and eggs. Then a man came along one evening and he insisted I should sell the store because he heard the store is doing very well. I wasn't going out any place. I even watched how much breakfast I had, how much milk I put in my coffee. Because I wanted to pay off the \$1,500 to my friends.

By the time that man came to buy the store, I was clear. He says, well, what would you like to have? I insisted I don't want it. I was hesitating.

He said, well, if you would like to sell the store, how much would you want? So I said to myself, maybe I say \$2,000 and he gives me \$1,000, I'll take it. I said, well, maybe for \$2,000 I'll give it away. He reached in his pocket and counted out \$2,000.

Then, one week later, I see an ad in a Hungarian paper, a store for sale in Astoria, which was a better neighborhood than I was in. I went over, looked around, no merchandise in the store.

I went to the back room. They had there a place where to put up, down, and stuff. He had a door and a window in the back room.

I said that's what I needed, first thing. All right. I agreed to buy this for \$1,200. I had a few dollars left for going for the merchandise.

I had a customer come in, and I recognized that she is Czech from her accent. We had quite a bit in common. About three or four weeks later, I went to the temple on Rosh Hashanah, coming out of the temple and she's right beside me.

She said are you Jewish? I said yes. But are you Jewish? What are you doing here?

So she said, well, I didn't know that you are Jewish. I didn't want to tell you how come you bought that store. There were 13 or 14 owners in the last few months and nobody can make a living. You'll lose all your money.

So that didn't bother me too much because this was my own money. If I lose it, that's it. I lose my own money.

But in no time, I had people standing in line for my merchandise. In fact, I started to sell because it was mostly Hungarian people, Jewish people neighborhood. I found a very fine Hungarian bakery, and I sold a tremendous amount of strudels.

In other words, it was like a grocery.

It was a grocery, but I started to sell these bakery items.

I think we have to wrap up very, very shortly.

After that, after about five years, I sold that store. I did very good. I bought a store in Glendale. In Glendale, the people are very anti-Semitic. I had many problems with them because they all came out something against the Jewish people, against Israel, and I had to fight with them.



But in time, turned out to be all right. They came to accept me and take advice from me and talking about their own religion, about my religion. Except that one lady was there who will try to convert me all the time and when I found out what really her religion is and I talked to her about her religion, she kept away and she left me alone because I pointed out some items that just doesn't agree, are contradictory.

You maintained that store until last year?

I retired last year in '83, in March 15. I bought a condominium in Elmhurst. Now I'm traveling mostly, but when I'm home, I'm doing my gardening in Philadelphia.

Can you tell me what contact do you have with other survivors? You were part of a unit that traveled together for many years?

Most of them are dead. They died. They are coming an age. Last year, the first time, I was able to attend the Holocaust survivors in Washington. There were 20,000 people there. I met many friends.

You did not go to Jerusalem for the Holocaust?

No, I didn't go there because I still had the store at that time. I gave all my names, all my sisters' names in the computers. Of course, nothing came out.

Then last year I was again in Washington for the museum, because they have a new museum for the cornerstone. I'm doing best to live my life.

Now I have to tell one more story about my brother. When I came home to my city after the war, a friend of mine called me up and said I have to tell you something. Come over to my home.

Went over, he was very reluctant to talk about it. So finally, I get it out of him that he was with my brother, captured by the Russian army. They were in a concentration camp.

One night the Russian army poured gasoline around the camp and put the camp on fire. There were thousands of people, inmates, there. He says I was crawling with your brother through the fire to try to get away. I got away, but your brother was shot there on the [INAUDIBLE], spot. All these years I didn't talk about it to anybody. I said to myself, well, maybe it just couldn't happen that something like this will happen in Russia.

Finally, I had a chance this spring to attend a gathering of the people from my city. They have a get together every year.

This is the first time you attended?

The first time I got inc contact with these people. One of the families invited me, why don't you come and see us. They live in Elizabeth, New Jersey. I was there two weeks ago on a Sunday.

They invited their brother who lives on the east side in New York. They came over, the wife and children. We talk about our times.

He says any of you brothers survived. I say I don't know about my older brother. I just heard from my sisters that he was also in the labor camp. He got leave from the camp to come and say goodbye to his family because they were taken to Auschwitz.

They insisted he should stay. But he said no, I'm going where my family goes. He went with them, and he didn't come back.

I said my other brother, Philip, died in Russia. He says, I know. We marched by that camp in [NON-ENGLISH]. There

were people who were in that camp. They told me that he was burned at that camp and he tried to get away.

So you had the original story confirmed.

So I have confirmed the original story. Then he said I was with 3,000 people who were picked up on the streets after the war from the concentration camp. We were taken to Russia into the camp. After six months, from the 3,000, only 600 survived. All the other ones died from starvation.

Mr. Weinberg, you've never married?

No.

Do you maintain contact with your family in Israel?

I go mostly nearly every year to Israel. I have to show that was my sister who died after the war and after these operations.

OK. Are there any dates or holidays that evoke certain memories for you?

The only holidays that I had a chance to say Kaddish, because we didn't know when my family dies, on Shavuot, I go to the temple and say Kaddish. Then I go, of course, on the other holidays.

But we are very close. With my sister, they come over here to see me. I intended to go over to Israel after I retired, and somehow it worked out that situation isn't settled yet there. So I'm here for a while yet.

But you plan maybe someday to go to Israel?

Yes. OK. I want to thank you very much for participating. It's a rather remarkable story.

I'm very sorry. There are many other things that I wanted to talk about, the Jewish population in Europe and other thing what happened. But I know that time is limited for it, can't tell everything.

Maybe we can spend some time outside.

OK.

But they'll be using this room. Thank you very much.

OK.

Oh.