

This is tape 2 side A and we were talking about 1942. And we were talking about the conditions there. You said--

The condition was everybody was working for the Romanian government. All the Jews were afraid and oppressed because it's coming-- every day, it's coming other low for the Jewish people.

Such as?

Such as--

What were some of the restrictions?

Restriction, you have to give clothes. You have to give money. Sometimes, it's coming words from not in the paper because they don't send in the paper, but words from one family to the other, from the Jewish community we have to send money or we have to give some jewelry because the Romanian government want some jewelry because they want to make some money.

You see the other day a Jewish family was picked and sent down to-- sent in Transnistria, over the Dniester. Any time that you heard about something, they were sent over the Dniester is almost equal they go to die because over the Dniester the condition was so bad, they don't send women. They sent only men.

They were forced, they said it's something concentration camp. They have to work 12 hours a day. And very few people, they are coming back. After the war, there are some people what they are coming back because the Russian troops, when they are coming, they pick up them and they go with them and they-- and Romania. But before the war was ending, nobody is coming back from Transnistria.

Now you said you had no radios, no newspapers--

We don't have, no, we--

What did you know or what did your family know what was happening in other countries in Europe at that time.

I know what's up-- what's going on on the other part of Europe and what's going on with the American army and the other army where they're coming little by little to liberate. Because I have a friend, a Romanian friend. I know he's in New York. His family, I said Romanian people, not Jewish.

But they have a big radio what in the night time, we go there and we are listening the BBC, British Broadcasting. And from there, they have a special hour when they broadcast in Romanian language. And to hear from there and to know from there what's going on in the rest of Europe.

So did you know what was happening to the Jews in the other countries?

No, because they don't-- the English people, they know what, they find out with the American, they find out later what's going to go.

So at that point, your family did not know.

No, no, we know only from the BBC what's going on--

--military?

--with the military side. But what's going on with the Jewish, we don't know.

You did not know then?

No, no, no, no.

OK, so you continued in school. Were you ever afraid that you yourself were going to get picked up?

No, I was not afraid because in Bucharest after the Legionnaires, after the head of the government, Antonescu, he take the power. And he put the army against the Legionnaires. And he killed the Legionnaires.

And he got rid of them. They were not more picked up Jewish people in Bucharest. They were picked up only-- I heard of it-- in the other part of Romania what they don't give enough money or they make something against the Romanian government, they were picked and sent in Transnistria. And Bucharest was, as far as I know, because I was living only in my little part of-- I don't know. It was not nothing-- they don't put nothing on the newspaper, on the radio that everything was not official.

Did your family know about the pogrom in Iasi?

Oh, yes, oh yes, because that's coming from family to family the pogrom in Iasi. They have the trains what they pick up, put on the train in the wagon for what they carry cows and everything. And they go I don't know how many weeks with the train.

And they don't give water and food to the people. And the people die there, women and kids and men altogether without sanitary, without nothing. And they were killed.

So they knew, your family knew about this [BOTH TALKING]?

Oh, sure, sure.

And what did they say to you?

Who?

Your family.

What they say to me?

Yeah, I mean, how--

I was big enough to understand without they to tell me what's going on. And what they remember is also--

Was there more anti-Semitism in school?

There was not anti-Semitism because it was a Jewish school.

Oh, the high school was a Jewish school?

The high school, that was [PLACE NAME]. After 1944 and the school-- they are coming little by little-- was also Romanian kids. But before the war, it was only--

And what craft did you learn in school, you said?

The craft I don't know in English. You put some piece of metal in this-- going like this. And there are special tools, special--

Tool dying. Tool dying.

And you take the metal. And you make different form from the-- I don't know what they name in English this. I try. I don't find my-- I have a Romanian-English dictionary, but I cannot find it.

So now comes 1944.

No, before '44. Starting late '43, early '44, it's coming day and night bombardments.

Right.

Nighttime--

This is the British air force?

British and daytime the American. And the first time when I saw the B-40-- the B--

B-41?

--40, --42, --40-something. I was--

--B-47.

--47.

B-47.

I was lying on the ground. I remember it was late spring. I was lying on the ground. And I see on the sky hundred of big American bombardiers. Where they are coming, they have an air force base in Foggia, Italy. And they are coming from there. Romania was big oil fields.

And before the war, Romania was big oil producer. And the war time, the Germans, they pump as much as they can from the oil field. The oil field in Romania was around Ploiesti, Campina.

And they are coming from Italy over Yugoslavia to the oil field to bum the oil. They bomb also-- and Bucharest was a big rail station. And I remember I have some friends in the part-- this part of Bucharest. I was after a big American bombardment. All the railroad was like this. Because they go and they drop bomb to cut all the communication.

And Romania was close to-- downtown Romania was a girl orthodox girl high school, all the girls from there, they carried crosses with Romanian flag band. It's red, yellow, and blue and with the cross. And the Romanian government, they close the school. And they put in the school was a camp for all the American pilots, what they--

Prisoners of war, you mean?

Not-- the pilot, what they shoot their plane. And then the pilot, they take them and they put there--

As prisoners?

Prisoners, around the school was the 100% safest place. Because when they are coming-- not a bomb, they put there because they know there that their boys there. And I remember this. And it was hard time. Because we cannot sleep in the daytime. We cannot sleep in the nighttime. It was almost around the day bombardments.

Were there bomb shelters?

We have in our backyard, we have in our house a back yard. And we dig a long hole. And they covered with some wood

and the dirt above. Anytime there was a bombardment, we go there. And I have our little injury here because one time, I go too late in the shelter.

And a piece of metal from an American bomb what was close to us when I started going down-- and that was late '43, early '44. I remember it was a day in 1944, summer '44. I was in downtown Bucharest when they are coming, the Russian troops.

And that's not important because they are coming with tanks and-- my father, he was-- because my father was born in Russia, Bessarabia at this time. And he was born-- was Russian. He speaks Russian. Immediately after the Russian coming to Bucharest was a big black market with watches. Because they don't-- for the Russian at this time, it was a big deal to have a watch.

And they pay a lot of rubles. And they exchange their rubles and to have watches. And they sell them all lemons. My father because he was-- he was-- his heart was always close to the Russian because he was born in Russia.

Sometimes he forgot he was a Jew. But for all the people around the world, they have to understand because the Jewish, for the Jewish people and Romanian, the part of Europe what was before the German was the Russian were for the Jews and they are coming.

They were their gods. Because they liberated us from our big oppressor which was the German and the Nazis. I don't want to-- excuse me-- that was later one of the reason because a lot of Jewish people was involved in the communism.

Ana Pauker, I don't know if-- she was big rabbi daughter. And she was the biggest number one Romanian in the Communist Party. Was Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the general secretary because he was Romanian name. But the big, the powerful man at this time in Romania was Ana Pauker, a rabbi daughter, French teacher in a Jewish high school. She was born and raised. He was in Stalin's entourage, was Jewish. I don't want to excuse her because she killed, not with her hands, with other hands, a lot of Jewish people.

What did you feel like when the Russian tanks were coming in?

Heaven, I felt heaven. Because I have on my mind, nobody will kill anymore. But later, I find they don't kill us directly, but indirectly they will kill us. I remember, again, my father was a Russian [? spy. ?] I remember one day, my father is coming from work with a Russian polokovnik, Russian colonel, very friendly with him. He's coming. He's coming. My mother, second mother, third mother- I don't know- put a big table. We have a big party with the Russian. Jew--

This in '44?

That was '44 immediately after the Russian, they are coming from Bucharest. He was a Jew. And he said to us in Yiddish, "I'm a Jew from Kharkiv. All of my family in Kharkiv-- parents, wife, kids-- were killed from German. I don't have nothing else in my heart, only to go in Berlin. And after, I have to make what I have to make. And after, I can die. I don't care. But for you--" he said, and all my life I've had his words in my head, "for you [INAUDIBLE] leave."

And everybody was looking, why? You are coming. You are here. You liberated us. Why we have to leave? And he said, you don't know what's in Russia, what's over the big liberator and big communism, big anti-Semitism, is the biggest anti-Semitism in the world is in Russia." Later, we find out. But in this time, we cannot understand why.

OK, it's 1944.

That's 1944.

And then what happened? Your life, the Russians had come in. You stayed in school. Your father was continuing to work.

--to work.

Did you have enough food?

Little, but OK. They send in Romania Russian advisors. I was working in 19-- no, they send in, they send in Romania Russian advisors. And was not in '40-- '44, little by little-- in [? '44, ?] they start to take everything.

Because the Romanian army, they make so many damage in Russia and they kill so many people, the Russian people. And they take everything from them. The Russian, they are looking for revenge. And they take from Romania everything.

They rationalized food. We don't have more bread. And then was the fascist government, we have bread. We have not too much sugar, not too much oil, not too much meat. On the black market, you pay them, you can have.

But when the Russians, they are coming, they take everything. We don't have more bread. We have corn meal baked in the oven. Because there was not more bread. Nothing, they take everything. And because it was not two rules, one for the Jewish people, one for-- everybody was on the same [? bus ?]. And it was starting bad, bad time.

We were not afraid to be killed. But we feel on our stomach and our everything was not more clothes, not more food, nothing was [INAUDIBLE]. And that started little by little to grow up-- not directly the communism parties, but what they named the progressive party, that was the beginning of the what later what was the communist party.

And because all the Jewish people were-- in Romania were-- not all of them, it is not right to say all of them, 80% was with the Russian, all the Jew I have, colleagues in my high school would later become big security officers in the Romanian security. Do you know what was the Romanian security? That was KGB, like KGB in Russia was Romanian security in Romania. And colleagues, Jewish people what I have-- and I sit on the class with other guy, Goldenberg Solomon, Goldenberg Jew.

Later, I meet with him. And because later I become a Zionist and I was in a youth Zionist organization, he's looking to me like enemy. He was a security officer, a captain or something, [INAUDIBLE] something. And he was looking to me like his enemy. I remember I have other colleagues, one or two year older than me, [? Leonoble ?] [? Barbo. ?] He was--

Are you talking about before the war is over--

No, no, no, no, after the war was--

Well, let's do '44-'45 first.

'44, the war was over.

Over.

Because in '44, for Romania, the war was over. The Russian troops were in Romania.

Right.

I'm talking about after or before--

OK, so now it's '45--

After it's '45 was freedom, especially for the Jewish people. We don't feel more oppressed. We don't have more-- we are not more afraid to be killed. Or everybody was starting to make some business with something like this. But was the big problem in our life with everything because--

Such as?

Such as food, such as--

What was it like to feel free?

To feel free-- for me, because I'm 44, I was 15.

Did your life change a lot?

No, it was not too much changing in my life. Because I was working, I remember, in the same store what my father was working. I helped them to make some money. I remember I had friends. We go together on Friday evening or Saturday evening was special places. We go to some clubs. We have little parties. We dance.

And they are starting with the American music. "Chattanooga Choo Choo" and everything, what is coming from there. And we can enjoy. Later, it was hard to find something like this. Because the communists and the Russians, they take little by little. And everything was cut. But at this time, we have-- we feel the freedom.

And you felt comfortable about being Jewish on the street?

I remember at the high school--

'45.

--I have a music teacher. I don't remember his name. He was also in the big Jewish temple in downtown Bucharest, Temple Coral, he was the music arranger. And because I need some money and I have my voice was a good voice, he have for all the huppahs, all the weddings boys in the choir.

And last year, I was in Romania and I was in the same place. And I have [? Coral-- ?] [? Schwartzmann, ?] [? Schwartzmann, ?] that was his name. And to make some money every Saturday-- in Romania, the Jewish wedding was Saturdays.

And we go there on the second level. And we have our little organ. And we have the boy chorus. And we enjoy the time-- except the food and something else. But once we feel freedom and we saw some American boys-- not too many--

American soldiers.

--American soldiers, [? Ameris ?].

Could you speak any English--

No, no, no.

--at that point?

Later, I go to and I have-- after this, I have problem. I go to the American library when the communists take the power. They have the list from the American Library.

OK, now let's, now that the war is over, let's just talk generally what happened to you in your life.

What's happened to me?

How long did you stay in Bucharest?

Until 1976.

All right, so the war is over. And what did you do? You stayed in school for how long?

I stayed in school until--

What year?

OK.

Till '46.

And then what did you do?

Still I go to work and I was a-- one of the biggest Romanian factory what they built. Train, locomotives, and wagon was the name they give [INAUDIBLE] that's manufactured 23rd August, that was they put the name and they liberate, the Russians [INAUDIBLE] factory 23 August.

I was there. And I was working on my craft, my craft what I know. And I make some money. I helped my family.

And I remember-- I don't know the date when they change the Romanian currency. Because it was a lot of rich people, but they have money. And to cut their money, they make so monetary reforms to cut their money. And I remember because we were worker there.

And all the communist bosses, they are coming to attract the workers to their party. And it was money reforms. They give us money. Because we were the later worker parties. And then I give my-- and I take the money, the new money, fresh, fresh money. And I give my father-- he was-- because he was working for private, they couldn't.

But he was working for the government factories. I give his money. I go with him. And we have not in the neighborhood, but not too far from an open market.

And he can buy with this money food for I don't know how many months. The rest of the people we have in our neighborhood, some Jewish, some little businessmen, they were bankrupt. Because they cannot exchange their money. That was one of the way to cut there.

So then you were working--

They started to attract me to the Youth Communist Party. Because I was working. I have all the-- I was the big icon because I was educated. I was a Jew. Because I was a Jew, they are not afraid I was a Legionnaire or a fascist. And I have all the cards in my hands.

And they start to attract me to the young communists. But I don't like them. I dislike them. And I go little by little to our young Zionist organization. The name our organization was-- that was part of my party. I was in a kibbutz Beit Horim. Maybe later, I don't remember.

It will come to you.

I don't remember.

And I was attracted there. And I feel from the beginning so much they educated me. And I have so many friends there. I want to give my life for the Zionist organization.

There was no problem of that--

Was not a problem, was freedom. There are coming, all the big people from the communist organization. They have

money coming from the United States, from the Jewish agency. And I was an [? ashkara. ?] And in the countryside of Romania, we have kibbutzim there. And that was till '49 when they cut, the communists cut all the Zionist organizations.

Everything was cut. And the-- not the big bosses, the people, the biggest people in the community organization, they put in the prison, they put them in the prison. And the prison, Romanian prison, they put the Jewish people what they have-- what they educate the young Zionists, they put them in--

The Zionist put in there, in the prison.

They put in the prison was a Hashomer Hatzair. Hashomer Hatzair was left hand Zionist organization. And I have friends there. Later when they cut the Zionist organization and they don't give them the green light to leave Romania, later they are coming-- they are becoming communist. And I have heard people, Jewish people from Romania, what before they were Hashomer Hatzair. Later, they were student in the Soviet Union. And they make engineering in the Soviet Union because they were smart people, educated people, and they need these people to be leader, bigger bosses in the Romanian factories and everything. And they were the best.

Let's go back in time a little bit after the war when you and your family heard about what happened to the other Jews in Europe and the camps. Do you remember hearing about that, finding out?

Later--

Do you remember what it was like to hear?

Something in late '45, '46, little by little, we find out what's going on with other Jews from--

What had happened.

--what's happened with the other Jews from Europe, especially from Germany before [INAUDIBLE] war what's happened to all of the Jewish, what the Jewish people, the Russians and the German was there and they killed them all. And after this, we find out what's happening, Anne Frank and what's happening with the Jewish people from Italy what they call them under [INAUDIBLE] and--

So that took some time after the war for you to--

Some time--

--for you to hear.

What I want to mention because my second mother, she was from the part of Romania what was under the Bulgarian rules. And they have in Bulgaria her family. We find out after the war, the Bulgarian army-- not only the Bulgarian army, the Bulgarian people have a lot of respect from them. They save all the Jewish community. They don't kill Jews in Bulgaria.

And this time was the King Boris in Bulgaria something, Bulgarian army. They save Jewish people. They save-- and I have a lot of respect for the Bulgarians. I meet here some Jewish Bulgarian people.

This is tape 2 side B. And you had said you were a member of the Zionist group.

I was a member of the Dror Habonim.

We're talking about after the war now.

We're talking about-- we're talking about '46, late '46. I was in the Zionist group. I was very happy. I have a lot of



friends, girls and boys, young men. And I enjoyed the time when I was in the Zionist organization. I was working with my father. I was working with-- spending time without making nothing, something like this.

That was the '46, late '46. And I have girlfriends and boyfriends. And I remember because I was in the technical school there are coming people from around the school there was some Jewish people and we make some-- I work for them to make some money.

And I was [? akshara. ?] [? Akshara ?] is-- I was in Bukovina, other part of Romania, to have, to be trained for that. Because our goal was to leave Romania and go in Israel to work in the kibbutzim.

And to work on the kibbutzim, you build an [? akshara ?] in Romania to have the training on the field to milk cows, to all kind of-- but was problem on the kibbutzim because was all over Romania no food, no food. And we have a problem there. And I have some health problem. And I'm coming back to my father house.

And I was in a Jewish hospital because I have some-- the youth have acnes. You don't have acne. I have big like acne where they have to operate me. That's coming all from the bad food. If you don't have enough calcium, enough protein. And a big, big problem.

And I was very depressed in 1949 when they cut the Zionist organization. Because I was always I was thinking, I am a Zionist and I have to go to Israel. And they cut the Zionist organization.

One of the reason because they cut was to [? dump-- ?] because they find out little by little, Israel is more attached to the United States than to the Russian, that was the main problem. Israel was more attached to the United States than Stalin, the representative voted the United Nation to establish the state of Israel, one of his goal was Israel was to the left side and he will-- when Israel was attached more to the United States. The communists find out they don't have to subsidize there with what? With people, cut people, don't more immigration to Israel. And I was very depressed.

And I don't know what I have to do. And because I have to-- to make money, to make a living, I go in a Romanian factory, the 23 August factory. And I was working there. And I make some money. I have mine. I helped my father, my family. And that was the life in Romania for this time. I changed. Because I don't like too much to be a craftsman.

And my aunt then some relation with big boss, a communist or Jewish guy who was the CEO-- see if you can name it, a big director, a big chairman, on other manufactures in Bucharest, the Republica, Republic, part of the name, of the pipe, big pipes for the oil fields.

And I was moving there like a draftsmen. I started working because I had from the high school, they teach us drafting. I have the skill. I go there and I start working like a draftsman. And I make more money. I have other kinds of living. I was not with all the dirty people, all the low level people in the factory. I was in the offices.

The guy's name I want to mention his name because he was a good man helping people, [? Pesa ?] [? Vexsler. ?] That was the chief engineer from the Republica factory in Bucharest at this time. I believe he's a long time dead. But he was a good man, a helping man.

He helped. I sent him a letter. And I say, I'm a Jew, such and such, I was in a Zionist organization. I cannot find more-- I want to work. He hired me. And I worked for him.

How long did you stay there?

I stayed there from 1948 to '50. In 1950, I move from there to was the Institute of Project-- Study and Project of Romania [? electification. ?] That was a big, big office. Because the communists, they want to-- one of their goal was to electrificate Romania. Because for their future, they need factories. They need heavy industry. And heavy industry is the other word is electricity, more electricity, more power. And I start and the short term for this was ISPE, I-S-P-E.

And I started working there like a draftsman. And little by little, I go up. And I was a designer and a senior designer.

When I left Romania in 1976, I was-- I was a senior--

So you stayed with that until 1976?

26 years from 1950 to '76.

And then what happened in 19--

1950, I was working, I was a lot of Jewish engineers. They helped me there. And I was working. I meet my wife. Because she was working like a estimator there. I meet my wife there in 1955. My father with his wife, my stepmother, his third wife, and my sister, they put the paper. And they have the approval to go in Israel. I can't-- my sister was a minor.

And she put-- she was on the same paper with them. I was major, I cannot put the paper. I put my paper. And I cannot-- they don't give me the approval to leave Romania because I was working for this damn project. And I was working for electrification. And for this reason I know secrets. And they don't give me the green light to leave Romania. And they leave, they left Romania in 1955.

And they have a hard time in Israel because at this time, Israel was not enough buildings. They [? Yokne'am ?], I visit [? Yokne'am ?]. They were living in [? Yokne'am ?]. That's between Tel Aviv and Yerushalayim in a little town. They were living in a tent. And my sister, she was in army.

She meet a guy and she wanted to marry him. My father said, no because his wife, she don't like Israel. She was Jewish, she don't like Israel. And she wanted to come back to Romania. And they are coming back to Romania. That was--

Three of them come back?

--between all three of them. There was very, very, very few Jewish people. All my friends, all my family, all my neighbors, everything-- everybody was leaving for Israel. And they make a living there. My father, his wife, and my sister, my sister, she don't want to come back.

Because she want to marry. She met a guy there. My father said, no, you are coming with us. And she's coming back.

And they left Romania in 1950 and they are coming back in 1955.

Now when did you get married?

I was married in 1956. My wife is not Jewish. She's a Romanian Christian. And--

And then you stayed until 1976.

I stay.

Did you have any children in Romania?

I have two children in Romania, my daughter Irina, she is born in May 29, '63. And my son, September 29, '67. And--

And then in 1976, you said you left Romania?

And I was working for them. I don't have a bad time. I have consideration there. I have respect. I was working hard. And I have a problem. I have a problem, I told you before, because in 1945, '46 I was to find out about the United States, about what's going on.

They have American library in downtown Romania-- in downtown Bucharest close to the American embassy. And I

was there. And I see movies, books. And they have the lists after the communists take the power, the security take the lists.

The list of what?

The list of names, who were--

Oh, who came there?

Who came there because after the communist take the power, everything was imperialist, capitalist, profit, the bigger troublemaker in the world, that was all the name of the game. And they called me to the security. And they gave me a hard time.

In what way?

In what way? You have to shut up. You have to go to work. And don't raise your eyes. You want to read the American, the big imperialist literature, you want to be an American spy? And I was working hard.

In 1950, '51, I go youth communists because it was a [INAUDIBLE]. When they find out I have my family in Israel, they expelled-- they take-- they expelled me from the communists. Because everything what was Israel was imperialist and Israel and the United States was one piece for them.

And I have some hard time, but because I was a hard worker and I go all over Romania with engineers and we make work and to make big factories and I meet in the Romanian country, which I was in North Transylvania, and I meet with very religious Jewish people there, in north Transylvania. They were cut from everything, from everything. I meet with all kinds of people. I go and I see a lot of obelisks and monuments from what they built there for the big Jewish community in north Transylvania what was part of Hungary.

And they killed. They sent them to concentration camps. And was for me was that has to be, I have to stay there for all of my life. There is not other way. I try over the year to push again my paper to leave Romania, always I have, "no, no, no, you are a need for us to build Romanian electrification. You have to stay to help us." And they give me in Bucharest outskirts an apartment.

They give me with rent brand new apartment. Every institution, every office, they give their profit to the government. And the government, they built buildings. And they said, your institution have five apartments, you have to give to your most precious, what everybody what you think is a need for them. And they are working hard for you.

The reward was you give them an apartment, not own apartment, to pay rent. They give me apartment, nice apartment. A nice, small, but a living room and two bedrooms. In one bedroom, I was living me and my wife and the little boy, the other bedroom was for my daughter brand new.

At this time, when I'm looking back, that was a nothing. But for the time being there was something. And I said, that's my life. I have to spend it. In 1976, early '76, I receive a letter from the Romanian police that they are handling the paper. Mr. Ghelman-- Then, I put the paper, I put the paper to leave for Israel. Mr. Ghelman you have the approval to leave for Israel.

I want to mention in 1964, '63, '64, my sister, before this, she married a Jewish guy in Bucharest. They have a child. They had boy. And they left for good in Israel.

And you have to go-- you have that approval to go in Israel first time. I write a letter to my sister and say I'm coming. And she said, Ionel, because you are a Jew, you are Jewish and your wife is not Jewish. It is not the best for to come to go to Israel.

Because always, I have two kids, always, the kids and Israel, they-- because it is, Israel, the religions part is ruled by the

rabbis. And always, the rabbi said the religious, the kids religion is mother's side. They will not have a hard time, but it is not the best for them. So I said, what I have to do, I go to the Romanian police. And I said, I don't want to go more in Israel.

They guy said, was a colonel, Mr. Ghelman before they don't talk with you with mister-- mister was a forbidden word, [INAUDIBLE]. Mister because when you have the approval to left, you have not [INAUDIBLE] a camera to be there. You are mister. Mister, are you crazy?

I said, look, if I can go somewhere else? They said, "no problem." Make a piece of paper and said, "Where do you want to go?" And you will have-- you will have approval. Later on, I understand why.

Because in 1975, United States give Romania the most favored nation. Instead of this, they said you have to give the green light to so many, not Jewish, Germans. And Mr. Ceaușescu for this, for bucks, because he received greenbacks, he said, that's the best trade for us, people for money.

And I said I want to leave for the United States. In the next two weeks, I have the old passport, what was Israel, erase Israel and put USA. I go to the United States embassy because I cannot have directly the entrance to the United States, not what's going on in California. They go over the fence and they are in the United States. And you cannot do-- you have to-- I have to go to the official way. I go to the American embassy and was at this time in 1976, it was a vice consular Jewish guy. I don't remember his name.

He said, you cannot have the entrance, but there's HIAS in Paris. You know what is HIAS? You have to go to Paris. So I sell all my belongings what I have because I carry only some suitcases and that's it, nothing else. And we go to Paris.

But to go to Paris, I have to go to Hungarian embassy to have the transit. And I have to go to the German. I don't have problem with Hungarian. I don't have a problem with France. I have a problem with German. Because at this name was West Germany. And West Germany embassy said that you don't have our visa because a lot of Jewish people, they have the transit and they go down and we don't have more money to work. I said, that's the only way. I wait I don't know how many years.

So I go back to the United States embassy. And the guy who I told, he said, look, I give you a not a permanent visa, only a visit visa. Go to show to the German embassy. You have our green light. Finally, finally they give me for 48 hours transit visa. And I sell everything. We have a sleep car, I pay for.

And we go to Vienna, to Paris. We stay in Paris. We go to Paris and Paris to the United States embassy. They send us to-- they have a doctor to have the medical examination. We stay in Paris 6 and 1/2 months until April 1978. I want to mention, we have the best living in the world in Paris. HIAS was the official, COJASOR was the Jewish community, French Jewish community offices what they give us money. And they rent for us. And they pay for us apartment.

And they give us every month money for the rent and for food. And they put my daughter and my son-- and my daughter was in a high school in Paris in a Jewish part of the Paris [INAUDIBLE] with a lot of Jewish people and France's high school for boys and high school for girls, separated [? daughter. ?] And she had a good education there. My son was in elementary school. I don't have so much food in my life what I can buy and I have in Paris with help from the COJASOR from the Jewish community, God help them and give them all the best in the world. And I have help from HIAS.

They pay us for the airfare from Brussels. Because before when we have the approval for the entrance in the United States, HIAS, I finished with COJASOR, we don't owe them, we have everything for free, not return, nothing. They pay us train tickets from Paris to Brussels.

Because was the agreement between Sabena and HIAS. They have some deals with low airfares. And we left Paris two or three days before we have the ticket to leave with airfare. And we stay in Brussels. And we visit Brussels. And on April 1976, we left Brussels and Sabena to have coming to New York.

We stayed overnight in New York. And on April 21, we are coming up with American Airlines from [? Brussels ?] to Washington, DC.

New York to Washington?

From New York, I'm sorry, to Washington. At Washington national, we have our social workers from JCC. They meet us. They go with us. We have a rent apartment. And we go with her to rent apartment. And this time was JCC was Mrs. Brooks was head of the social agency. We have a lot of help from Mrs. Brooks.

They pay us until I find a job. They pay us for the rent for the apartment. They give us money for food. And in July '77, I stay in Paris from '76 till April '77. In '77, April 21, and July '77, I find a job at Bechtel Power Corporation in Gaithersburg. And I start working for them. And from this time, we are.

Can we just ask, discuss some of the-- your thoughts about what you went through? Does it still affect you, your experiences of what you went through during the war? Does it still affect you today?

Yes, maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong. I have some friends-- not Jewish friends. After the communism was dead in Romania, they go there and they make their own business. I said, never I will go there. Again, maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong. Because I cannot say everybody in Romania was anti-Semitic.

There was good people and bad people. I have bad time. And I have good time. I have a good time because I have the apartment in a time when other people, they don't have nothing, I have my own apartment. I can grow my kids the best kind in the world. I was working.

My wife, after she have her first baby, my daughter, she stayed home to grow the kids. And we were living with one salary, my salary. We don't have plenty of goods, but we have not good, a good living. We have food enough. We don't desire. I don't have my car there, I have the apartment. I was running in the morning to the street car. But we can make it.

But when I go back and I remember my first day of school, elementary school, when I go to my mother and I say "Mother, why do they call me Jew and they point me with a finger?" I cannot forget this. Maybe I'm right. Maybe I'm wrong. That is the reason. Because when other people go in Romania and I was last year and two years ago, and I saw Jewish from Israel, friends and not friends, they are coming from Israel and they make business in Romania.

I cannot make this. I cannot forget. I don't want to make business to find-- to see other people point to me and say, look here, this guy is a Jew and he is coming back to rob us. Because in their mind, you don't make a business to make a business, to hire people to give work To rob them, I cannot make this. I don't want to make this.

For me, it's one, Jewish people has to stay in Israel and has to stay in the States, yes. But Louis Farrakhan, bloodsuckers, bloodsuckers, from where is coming this? Who in some people's minds put, built Hollywood? Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who was Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer? A Jew, yeah. Steve Spielberg, who is Steve Spielberg, he make billions. They point at him, look, he is-- who is the money market? The Jew, I cannot enter-- for me, it's something, I'm not able to go back.

Is there anything else you wish to add before we close?

--we finish. What I want to say is, again, Romania were first I cannot say in this time all the German people they are guilty. Because the old generation was guilty. You cannot make the new generation guilty for what their father and their father make.