

Bernard Pasternak

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Americans liberated 20-year-old Bernard Pasternak at Buchenwald concentration camp in April 1945. After some stay in a hospital, Bernard reunited with three of his sisters. They traveled together to their hometown (Felsoviso) in Romania, stopping in Prague and Budapest. Once home, they found their brother and later learned that their father had died in Theresienstadt. In the fall of 1945, Bernard, his brother and two of his sisters traveled west through Hungary and Austria, in an effort to reach the American zone. They made it to the displaced persons camp in Salzburg (Austria). Bernard was a passionate Zionist, wanted to go to Israel, and had clandestine training to be a soldier. While in Salzburg, he and other Jews in the camp engaged in acts of revenge against Austrians and Germans.

Bernard had an aunt in the United States who suggested that he and his siblings come to that country. His travels to New York through Italy took him a year and a half, and he arrived in December 1949. He began dating another Romanian survivor and they married in 1953. Although Bernard's Orthodoxy faded after the war, his wife was religious and wanted to raise their children Orthodox. They had three sons who attended the Yeshiva, a Jewish private school, and the Yeshiva University. Bernard worked successfully in high positions at a metal plant. He reluctantly went to Germany on business trips, but did not want to touch German currency. He still lives in amazement that he is free.

*Note: This interview focuses on the interviewee's post-Holocaust experiences. There is an earlier interview with this interviewee. It can be accessed by requesting RG-50.030*177.*