

JOSEPH/VERA EDEN

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#57, #58

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INTERVIEWER NOTES:

"...Joseph was born in 1920 in ?Calozney?, Hungary...in his childhood his parents were not especially Orthodox...they were Zionistically inclined. He lived there until the war broke out and stayed there throughtout the first parts of the war and he was eventually sent to a work camp where he repaired automobiles. He says that he describes his life as pretty ordinary and said that he actually got away with a lot of stuff because the Hungarian guy that was in charge really despised the Germans, and tried to save them.

When the war broke out and the Germans came to Hunnary at that point he escaped ove the border into Russia where he eventually signed up with the Czech army and fought there. As for Vera Eden, she grew up in ?Munkoch? and...was involved in the Zionist movement there, too, and was born in 1927...and then after the war, the two of them met later on in Israel. Both of them decided to go to Palestine. They went to Palestine because they were brought up a Zionist and that was their intentions all along. And he came to Palestine and worked as a...social worker and eventually achieving a position of being in charge of 250 workers, a pretty good job. And she was a teacher. She actually had come a little earlier in 1947....they met after the war and got married. Their first two children were born in Israel. He was a tank gunner in the 1956 ?inaudible- campaign? and then they actually came for a visit for 2 years to America, figuring that they were young, they would do alright, and that visit event...is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

Five years, six years, the truth was, that the reason that she didn't return as she admits, that was because she was afraid. She was afraid of the army for her children. She felt that with three boys it was a real chance to live in Israel. So she stayed. What happened to her sons? Her oldest and youngest son are both lawyers. One from Syracuse and the other one from Florida. Her middle son is an interesting case. A very, very smart National Merit scholar, but who decided that he wanted to be independent and do his thing. His counter-culture response is to become a mailman. Which he is in New England. He's now a New England mailman, even though he won a National Merit Scholarship...Jewish parents are not happy that their boys are not married, but, they say that their children are close to their family, and they like them pretty much. So, so much for that.

When they came to America, they had friends and they basically hung out with the people from their own hometown. From other social circles they had, - they didn't hang around too much with Americans, because they didn't feel that they had a lot in common with Americans. Talk about baseball, or whatever the case might have been. When they came to America, they came by plane, uneventful...they had visas...they came in 1958. At first they lived in Cincinnati and two other places before finally coming to New York. And they moved a year ago from New York because of the family business...to be near the business and that's been important to them...

When it came to the question of religion, one of them doesn't believe in religion, one of them does. Actually, neither of them really believe in religion. They joined a synagogue only for (inaudible? congregate?) reasons. They believe that it's kind of hard to accept all that stuff. Both cases, Joel's entire family, brother, sister and parents were killed. Her brother survived the war, Vera's brother lives in Israel...(they were Zionist)... They made a point that they wouldn't go see a psychiatrist or a psychologist. Because it's not something that you go for help. They (inaudible) have this idea that you help each other. That was their attitude. They had nightmares sometimes, but they (inaudible-?handled?) it for the most part...that's pretty much it."

END OF SIDE ONE. TAPE ONE.

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SIDE ONE. TAPE ~~TWO~~

WH: "In America, how many people would you say exist in this group of yours, - these close friends, how big is your group?"

VE: "Seven...we have the Hungarian group, we have a Hebrew group, (Inaudible)..."

WH: "The groups are related in your case according, to Israel, your hometown, home country, school and family."

JE: "And friends...50 years ago...we are meeting maybe 25 years, every year at least three times a year...from my... Hebrew High School..."

WH: "You get together three times a year."

JE: "At least three times a year. (inaudible)..."

WH: "...in homes...what do you talk about?"

JE: "We talk about all kinds of problems. (VE: About politics, about those days...about the good old days, about the bad old days, (inaudible)...it is completely different, you know, we never talk about football, or for baseball."

WH: "But you don't talk about soccer either?"

JE: "Sometimes, but very rarely. We played soccer, I played soccer."

WH: "When you say you talk about the old times, do you talk about what this teacher was like?"

JE: "Yes, about what the teacher was like, (VE: about 'nostalgia') the kind of entertainment that we had, how we chased the girls, how we went swimming, you know, and...about Israel, we talked about our politics. For or against ..."

WH: "It doesn't make a difference, in your friendship circle, if someone was to the Left...the Right...your friendships are not based on that?"

JE: "No...we talk a lot of politics...but it doesn't break up the group...we might have some strong discussions...but it won't break up the group."

WH: "What about synagogues?"

JE: "Synagogues have a much less role in our life than the American. - Why? Because ... (VJ: In Israel, you know what the situation is, most of the people are not Orthodox)... - the synagogue was not the center...I'm not defending it. It took us years to join a synagogue...now we are members. But it took time to change. But the synagogue was something that was - first of all, it was hostile to our thinking, to the Zionist movement. The synagogue, in most of the cases, was hostile. You got two kinds of synagogues in middle Europe...first the rabbi's, the chassidic ones...it was very far from us, although we were very good friends..."

WH: "You have people in your circle now who are Hasidim?"

JE: "I have on the phone...and they are very good friends of mine. And they live in Boro Park and they live in Monsey and in those places..."

WH: "...to me, it seems...that you have in incredibly strong group life, that you continued here."

VE: "I grew up, I say always, 'In a tribe.'"

WH: "And you stayed in it."

VE: "In a very close-knit tribe."

WH: "And this helped you survive the loss of your family...these people became your family."

VE: "That's right...(JE showing pictures: ...here's a Hasid. We have nothing in common, and - another thing, we have no differentiation in term of education. We have, some of these people have very, very primitive. - Very, very...)"

WH: "You didn't go to school with these people, how did you know them?"

JE: "...we are from the same village and we became friends only after the war. Before the war, we had nothing to do with them...we knew them from the street."

WH: "But yet there's a feeling, a strong feeling, of having something in common with them, even if their values are different. Did your feelings...about religion in any way change as a result of the war, when you thought about why this happened?"

JE: "No...(inaudible)...I wasn't a religious person before the war, and still not. I wouldn't say that I'm a religious person."

WH: "Do you believe in G-d?"

JE: "I have some doubt."

WH: "...do you believe in some abstract Being?"

JE: "What I believe, that as Jewish people we have to belong somewhere. And, in many respect, the synagogue in this country took over a few functions that we had in Europe. For example, a political function. I think that without a synagogue, and the political - my thought is of the synagogue, Israel wouldn't exist...(inaudible-3 billion dollar?...) and ...the moral support that the American give to Israel. The synagogue and the Jewish people here have something to do with

"So this ALONE, will be enough for me to support it. That in addition to this (inaudible) the only organization that it is really, to do something about Jewish education. This is where Jews get together, we support when we hear things what's going on, so I have a certain respect to the synagogue, even if I am not a religious person. But I think that it should exist, it has a legitimate purpose and a good purpose that I am supporting, wholeheartedly."

WH: "How do you feel?"

VE: "Well, you know already, that I wouldn't say that without the synagogues Israel wouldn't exist, it is a far-fetched...(JE: It may be a little far-fetched, but certainly not - .)."

WH: "But you belong to the synagogues for social reasons..."

VE: "Yes, for sake of belonging, for sake of identity, for the sake of supporting the Jewish life and organization."

WH: "You belonged to a Conservative temple in Jericho..."

JE: "Yes...but it took us about 10 - 15 years before we joined...we felt the Americanization..."

WH: "...could you belong to a Reform temple...?"

VE: "No...- but, I didn't think about it. But, I could do that too. I believe that all three are doing, has the same goals, in different way, getting to it. (JE: We have kosher. Our kitchen is kosher, but maybe not because I believe that I will go to Heaven because I have a kosher, we want to recreate the kind of atmosphere for our children, and for ourself that we had at home. (inaudible)...but outside I will eat almost everything, except that I won't eat chazzer, I won't eat shrimp, anything that is not kosher...anything that is obviously not

kosher I won't touch."

"Again, not because of religious reasons, that G-d will punish me, but that - it doesn't fit into my way of life."

WH: "Would you say that this is true of most of your friends?"

JE: "No...many of them feel differently...there were people who came from the same background that became very religious. There are others who are trying to get away from their Jewishness completely. But if this happen, I don't want anything to do with them...and I know people from both ends. We are good friends with both, I don't agree with them, but - they still are our friends. (inaudible) It's very difficult to judge people according to your own values. You know? And we are not doing it. We are accepting people for the way they are."

WH: "Do you think what happened in Europe, has any possibility of taking place here?"

JE: "No. No, we have different opinions...I would say, on this question, we had a few discussions around it. I strongly believe that it is impossible. Impossible, why? Because the constellation different. In Europe, and in most of the country, there is a big majority, and a small minority Jews. Here, you have hundreds majority, there is no - everybody is a minority (inaudible). In fact, sometimes I am saying that I am in the United States for already 30 years, but I have never seen an American except the Indian. Everybody is a Jewish-American, or a Polish-American, or a Czech-American, and so on. So the constellation is different. That is very difficult to put together a hate group, where 60% at least, or 50% will take over and - (inaudible)...I know there is anti-Semitism in this country. But different type. I am not afraid of this anti-Semitism."

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SIDE TWO - TAPE ONE

WH: "It's pure coincidence?"

VE: "Pure coincidence. I didn't do ANYTHING special, I mean, besides the running, and trying to stay alive like everybody was trying. Pure coincidence. I was sick there, my cousin was sick there, it was a coincidence that she got well, what can I tell you, no medicine, no - nothing (inaudible), cold, no clothes, no food, and I don't how (inaudible) we got better, so it's not because of the doctor, it's not because of the medicine, it's not-I don't know because of what. A will to live. Many who had a will to live did not survive, we know that - (inaudible)."

WH: "...was your faith in G-d affected or influenced by the war?"

VE: "I would say to a certain degree. I mean, I wouldn't come, like how some people come and ask, 'How did G-d do this to us? And because of that, I don't want to know anything.' I wouldn't say this, because, it was man-made. It was man-made. If I would believe in a G-d who directs every step of every person, that's different. That's a philosophical question, what G-d is to everyone. But it affected me in a way that at home we were...very, very observant. And coming out from there, everything seemed to lose it's value. Everything became like ridiculous. No only what - ever they did because of the religion, to have a regular wedding, to wear a wedding dress, to buy something nice, to get aggravated because I broke something, would - because I lost something, or - or - everything became nonsense."

WH: "Everything became nonsense."

VE: "Everything became nonsense compared to the life we had, and how many times where we thinking, 'Oh, my G-d! Why did I need three dresses? Can be here one for a year, with one, why did we need this, why did we need that. Well, who needs it. Who - who needs those things, and - I don't know.' So, everything became worthless, sort to say, compared to - ."

WH: "Unimportant."

VE: "Unimportant. I wouldn't say that things didn't change through the years after - there were certain things did become very important. But especially the connection with the children, with education, with this material things, still don't matter to me. And I think it's part of this - background. It was so - some people came right from there with just the opposite. Wanting to have more and more and more. And some people came out, it was different...I'll tell you a very interesting story. I have a niece, my brother's daughter, in Israel and she is - studying archeology, antropology, and - in September she went to Budapest, there was a convention of antropology, and she was (inaudible) to give the opening speech. And when she came back I told her, 'You see, THIS is my revenge. That you, who's father was thrown out from there, you go back to give a speech and to participate.' So, this is my revenge. Not what kind of house, and what kind of wedding you are making. To the contrary. I don't like these things. I had - both my sons, I didn't want to make them an elaborate bar mitzvah here. I took them to Israel instead..."

WH: "...are you...sorry that you didn't go back...(to Israel)...do you have some regret?"

VE: "A lot. Definitely."

WH: "...when you think back, on what you did in your life, what is it that you are most proud of? What achievement? What accomplishment are you most proud of?"

VE: "...getting to Israel and living my life there when I felt that I'm doing something. That I'm part of something. I was teaching there also...I was teaching children from all over the world... (inaudible). Every children from Rumania, from Hungary, from Czechoslovakia, from Tunis, from China, from Morocco, - unbelievable. And we had to teach them. And then I was...teaching Yeminite children, and that was a period that we all felt that we do something."

WH: "...is it your opinion that the survivors in some way have different value system than say Jews who were born in America, who were brought up in America? Do you see it in some way?"

VE: "Yes, to a certain degree...different values. I'm not saying for better or for worse, but different. And even those who came here, and those who went straight to Israel and live in Israel, are different..."

WH: "In what way do you think that you might be different from the average American Jew...?"

VE: "First of all, identification. I identify strongly with Israel. I live here, and my home is there, if you understand what I mean...and material things, I don't know, it don't mean much to me. But, that's an individual thing - I'm not sure if this is part of the story or

WH: "I don't know. I see your home, for example, that it's tastefully furnished, but it's not fancy. You didn't bring in the big chandeliers... you made a comment before that over a period time things change, in other words...isn't it interesting how, as people get more accustomed, they begin to forget how difficult they had it then..."

VE: "Well, lucky that people can forget. They must forget. How could you live with that all the time?"

WH: "On the other hand, if you talk with your friends a lot...doesn't the talking eventually turn to the war?"

VE: "Usually...but interestingly enough, not so much with the women, we rarely, when we get together, we rarely start talking about Auschwitz. But the men! ALWAYS end up in the (? needs translation) working camp. ALWAYS!"

WH: "...are you only referring to the men who were in the work camps...not in Auschwitz?"

VE: "Most of them, his generation, most of them were in the work camp..."

WH: "...I wanted to ask you another question, about your own work as a Social Worker, what do you see as the attitude towards Social Work, Psychiatry, Psychology on the part of the survivors that you know. Do they view it as something that you can really go to somebody like that if you had a problem about the war? Do they believe in it as a form of therapy?...I don't mean in your own work, I mean in conversations with people...you friends, if they had a problem, would they go to a psychiatrist?"

JE: "I have two kind of people. You know, the Europeans are not very geared towards counselling. I don't know any of my friends that ever went to see a psychologist - and you have two kinds of people. One that gives up, and he feels himself like a failure, he cannot cope with anything. The other felt, maybe a little more self-confident, and they say that 'I don't need anybody, I can take care of my problem.' You know? And very few that will recognize the need for counselling. I don't know anybody that ever - (inaudible). Emotional problems in their minds, is something that you have to cope yourself or you can't cope with it or you can. But you don't go - for help. You go with a typical problem...(VE: I'll will tell you why particularly this group...when we came out from Germany and from Auschwitz, who was talking to us in this terms? The tragedy was so great, and so overwhelming, who was coming to us to help in this way? Psychiatrists, psychology, - here they came back to their own family, to their own surroundings, to their own land, and we hear how difficult it is, - and here are the army of psychiantists to help. But, we were not used to it. Nobody came to us saying, 'You need counselling. You needed it to be- you were no, you had no family, you had no land, you had no country, you had nothing and nobody - (inaudible)...we started helping each other.)..."

WH: "So what you are saying is, that you met the needs that you have in this area because you had friendship for each other. You had a support group."

VE: "...this was the only way to meet our needs. Nobody was concerning about our psychology... - nobody was concerned about it. We survived.

That was the main thing that we survived."

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.

WH: "...do you think that it would have been better if they had been geared to it?"

VE: "I don't know. I'm not sure. - I really believe in support groups, very much. And a strong support from friends...actually those people who came to Israel, strangers, formed families. And if you can see in Israel, how the family ties are still strong, not here, not like here. But of course, there are other reasons also. Not having the distance, etc.,...(JE: We...have friends, 50-60 years that we are together (inaudible) and they will go for us into the fire and we go for them the same (inaudible) way. In the United States, here, and that's a little different. The way of life, is such that you have to get separated completely from friends. And you have to get...friends quickly. People that came from the same background that we are, for us, may be a little difficult to get attached to new people, but once we are attached, this is forever. Forever. Though sometime people say - 'How come that you have so many -?' When we are getting a lot of guests here. Almost every week there is somebody here. And, for example, just 3 weeks ago, we had a family, a husband and wife, who - met 40 years ago in Germany. But we are friends. And they were here for 3 weeks from Israel. And this is natural that they come to our house. And when we go, we will go to them..."

WH: "And if you were to stay in a hotel they would be insulted."

JE: "I never stay in a hotel in Israel - there's no such thing. This would be unthinkable for the group to go to a hotel."

SIDE 1 TAPE 2

WH: "Why?"

JE: "Well, I'll tell you why. I'll tell you exactly why. Because I would be worried, only when the N. Y. legislature will pass the first law against any kind of minority, then I will worry. But because (inaudible) my neighbor hates me, because I am Jewish, that is nothing. I hate him back. And he hates me back, and that is not dangerous. The dangerous part is when in the Congress they will bring the first law against the Indian--"

WH: "But you don't think that that could ever happen?"

JE: "No. No. It can never happen in this country."

WH: "Why?"

JE: "Because it is a country of minorities. So that it is much more difficult to put together a coalition that will surpass another minority. And, - for example, if you had asked me about England, I said, 'Yes.' In England it can happen. In France, it can happen. In Germany can happen again. But not in our c--."

WH: "What about the Blacks in this country? They're different, aren't they? They look different?"

JE: "Have you seen any law against - (inaudible) between me and them?"

WH: "No."

JE: "So, I am not worrying about them. In fact, they have so many privileges, that - we never had before."

WH: "Do you think that they hate Jews more?"

JE: "OF COURSE THEY HATE JEWS. But I am not afraid of them. I am not worrying about that. I hate them back. So if they hate us, I hate them back. But that's not dangerous, I'm not going to send them to

Auschwitz or a kind of Auschwitz - they cannot send me (inaudible) and
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they cannot create that kind of Auschwitz. They will be able to. Because there will always be a hundred other minorities that will see and defend it. So, it is not a serious threat. It is a threat. Yes. They can - make a (inaudible-christ?) on my door, they can beat me up - that's nothing. That's not serious. I can do the same thing the other way...I will worry when the first law against ANY kind of minority will pass in the legislature. All the rest is gornished. Nothing serious in my eyes."

WH: "...the skinheads..."

JE: "The group, will fade away in 10 years, you won't hear it even then. They will never have a chance. They had never - they have no chance to be a real political force. This is the garbage. The different thing that in Germany, the garbage took over. But here the garbage has no chance to! Because what they will start to - the Jews, they can fight with the Jews, but I don't think that - they always will remain a minority. And they will never get real serious political - to hurt the (inaudible) group you have to have political power, and they have no chances..."

WH: "How about your children, do they ever think about this?"

JE: "My children, I think they are even stronger believer than I am in the American system."

WH: "Did you ever tell them about the war - openly?"

JE: "Openly, yes, of course."

WH: "You didn't take an attitude that you wanted to spare them?"

JE: "No, no, no. We were talking about it quite openly and they know my ideas...- ."

WH: "Are their attitudes the same (inaudible) about the war?"

JE: "I think even more so. More so."

WH: "But they agree with each other?"

JE: "More or less, yes."

WH: "Do they get a long well with each other?"

JE: "I wouldn't say that. The middle one is in the middle, you know, the older and the younger, they get in fight...a strong sibling rivalry between them..."

WH: "...you experience during the war was not really that bad, and yet you still have this feeling, you can still dream about that someone is trying to persecute you."

JE: "During the war, (inaudible)...I was never thinking consciously. I was never afraid. Even in the war. It never occurred to me that a bullet can hit me. And I was in a situation, for example, the first few days when we got to Russia where they put us between two lines, here the Germans were shooting, and from here the Russians were (inaudible) and we were in the middle, to bury corpses. But somehow, I believed that I am not going to get it at first. - Maybe it's a kind of self-protection, you know, there's a kind of denial that keeps you - to survive."

WH: "That's different from your wife."

JE: "We have different - my wife is more pessimistic. She was more hurt by it I think, than myself. Somehow I - also, maybe has to do with my parents were basically optimistic people. Her's, not so."

WH: "Were you optimistic as a kid?"

JE: "I think, yes...it seems to me that we had a lot of singing, a lot of joking, between ourselves. I grew up between jokes. Every day - and people who came here, they always - they had very much the same feeling. But not from everywhere. But in our village, relatively speaking, - we were very, - in good shape. Until the war."

WH: "It seems to me, that in a way, you're being friends with the - say, the people from the village who are different, you know, who like (inaudible) Hasidic, for example, is in a way, a way of saying that all that doesn't matter, what matters is that we came from the same community, from the same town, we had similar childhoods, and that what you believe in today is not really what's so important, even your way of life, it is the fact that - ."

JE: " ...but even between the Hasidic people, there is a lot of a kind of joy. They also had a kind of life that was satisfying in some way...(inaudible)..."

WH: "...I think to myself, that a book like this wouldn't be complete if I don't interview some Hasidic people also."

JE: "...I agree with you ...I gave a lot pages to the Hasidic people because they were part of the community and a very important part of the community. So I felt that they deserve something like this memorial book, they deserve a good part of - ."

WH: "And were they appreciative, did they like the fact that they're in there?"

JE: "Yes, they do."

WH: "...I have to tell you that I am so impressed that you did this book, but what I wanted to ask you is, what possessed you to do it? I mean, there were 500 people from this town, and you alone, decided to do the book. And I'm curious to know, what your real intention was."

JE: "The first thing was, the family went through it....(inaudible) ...we have the obligation to tell it, the story. That was the second one. Third, I felt that I'm (?not?) the only one that can do it. Really. Half of them hardly can read and write. The other half, they were not home, or they don't know so much..."

WH: "Were there people when you approached them who wondered 'What are you doing this for?' Or did they all understand?"

JE: "No, no. They were very happy that somebody's doing it. They felt that somebody that - is willing to do that."

WH: "And you put it into hundreds of universities, right, you personally sat here and sent them out to all these universities, you addressed it to each - "

JE: "From Japan to - ."

WH: "Did you get letters of thank you's from the libraries?"

JE: "...yes..."

WH: "... (for my book) ... my intention was to find the average person..."

JE: "I'm not sure that any person is average in this group. (inaudible) They're quite different."

WH: "In what way would you say that they're different?"

JE: "...first of all, the background, the thinking, the - even the culture...different count-what area, the experiences that they went through. The Polish went through the different - the Hungarians were more or less, you can call it lucky, that they went only in 1944...(inaudible) and there's a difference to go through, for 40 years, to one year. Also depends on the background before the persecution. With what kind of moral values you brought to you, into the concentration camp, or into (inaudible) the larger. And, also the lessons that we learned over there are different (inaudible). Certain people - different people learn different things from."

WH: "I'm curious to know what you learned from it..."

JE: "Well, (heavy sigh) difficult for me to answer you - in a short question. What I'm trying to tell you, that I went to the first camp with the background that somehow, gave me the strength to survive, you know? First of all, optimistic view. And you have to survive this thing, you have to be an optimist...it helps, it helps. It helps. It doesn't mean that - people who are dying, optimist or pessimist were altogether. And to survive was always a matter of luck. Luck helps - mazel, you know? That you got to the right place to the right time....but it was easier to survive for those people that came with some optimism into it. And, and have the will to fight for - the survival."

WH: "Did you see people who didn't make it because they had such a negative attitude?"

JE: "I have seen many of those that gave up..."

WH: "Do you believe in this idea of the survival of the fittest? That the strongest survive?"

JE: "Well, that's what happened."

WH: "Or the luckiest?"

JE: "That's what happened. Luck helps. Luck helps a lot but in addition to this the will to survive and the will to fight, then you don't give up so quickly."

WH: "You're a pessimist, but did you have the will to survive? And the will to fight, anyway?"

VE: "I had to be. I am (inaudible) - that everybody has the will...(JE: I feel that my background gave me a lot of help, you know, I had the chutzpah for example, you know. For example, the only qualification that I have (inaudible) to be a mechanic, an auto mechanic, that in Europe to get a driver's license you have to - know the motor, how it works, you have to be able to put it together and so on...over there, you had to do it. So that was all my qualifications, but I had the chutzpah to say that I am a mechanic. Now, what happened - out of hundreds, about 30 were real mechanics. And the rest were real shleppers, (?mid) shleppers and they learned the trade. And really, when I left this place, I knew really a lot about the motor."

WH: "...on of the things that I'm curious about is, that all the characteristics that you exhibit, that you described to me, are the characteristics of a person who is a survivor. But most of the people who went through the war the way you did, and who understood how to survive, the way you understood - went into business after the war. And you went into a field that maybe not one tenth of one percent of survivors went into - social work. How did that happen? Why did that happen?"

JE: " - it happened with my background, the Zionist background. My parents were not poor. They were not very rich, but they - ."

WH: "What did they do?"

JE: "We had the vineyard, we had the store, we were - we had pannooses. No problem. In spite of this, I learned from my parents, that you don't pick your friends according to the education, and you don't pick according how much money they have - so, after I always - joined the (?Cho Ha ahletz?) movement, which is a Leftist movement, with the poorest kids that existed. After graduation from high school, I went to do the best, and one of my - ."

END SIDE ONE. TAPE TWO.

SIDE TWO - TAPE TWO.

WH: "...not too many social workers move to Great Neck. So you said to me that you were in real estate afterwards, like recently in the last years... how did you do it?"

JE: " (VE: He went into social work for years, and when he had to retire from that, then he went into the business.)...(inaudible)...I was still an idealist for many, many years. I worked for this school district, I had students from Adelphi...(inaudible)...I worked for many years with them. But at the same time, again, a little luck, and not luck, the way you looked in it, but I figured that when I go to the pension, I won't be able to survive on my pension - not too much! But I am getting my pension, but it is ridiculous. So, about in 1966 we had an accident and we got - there I was hurt, quite a bit (inaudible). - Can you see it? Here I have a - (JE is showing WH his accident scars) - ...car accident in Canada. And we got some money. What to do with the money? We decided to buy a small house in Jamaica. At that time it was quite Jewish...a store and two apartments and we had it for about ten years. It didn't do much. But it did one thing, I learned - the real estate trade from this. Because it have all the problems that can come up in these things - and then, while we have this house, slowly we, with some Israeli friends, we put some money together and we bought a small shopping center in East Meadow, then another one in Hicksville, then 1980 came along, and my son came home from school, from Syracuse and we start to buy a few buildings in New York. So we made it. But it is again, more luck than sachel. More luck than sachel because 1980 was - ."

WH: "...(needs translation) ...is the truth. You have to be in the right place at the right time. But you also have to take advantage of it."

JE: "But - again, you see, here again my optimism helped me. Because I believed that...(inaudible.)"

WH: "...you did have to take a chance."

JE: "That you take, a chance. And some people cannot make decisions, and cannot make chance. Take chance...and I had the time also, you know, after school...I studied some, I read a few books, but the most I learned from practise. You have to know something about refinancing, you have to know about managing, but, so this, I did something from books. But not - "

WH: "Is it in your opinion, is the main thing the understanding the financial aspects, or understanding the management part."

JE: "...I got a lot of help. I get along with people. I don't have problems with any of my tenants. I never had - I'm good to them also. You know, I don't want the top dollar squeezed out of them. And I think it's a good policy. And my son is doing the same thing. The same thing, and he's doing quite well. So he combined it with his profession. He learned a few things. A few years he worked for a bank as a lawyer."

WH: "I wanted to ask you wife...whether or not what happened in Europe could happen here, and you said that your wife doesn't agree with you, and I take it that you believe that there is a possibility that what happened in Europe could happen in the United States."

VE: "After what happened to us, there is NOTHING what (inaudible) I would say, this can not happen, because the IMPOSSIBLE happened. So in my eyes, there is no impossible...(inaudible)...what happened to this democracy with the Black people only a few ago, with all the laws and all the things in the South...(inaudible)...so why cannot - why can't this happen. And that hysteria can do a lot of things. And a lot of things, a lot of minorities can unite against one of the minorities. I'm not saying that it should happen, I'm not saying, but I won't say, it cannot happen. Nothing is impossible. (JE: There is another thing that you have to consider. Even in anti-Semitism and in persecution, there are stages. - There are degrees. There is a long way from the Hungary had a law...that only 6% can go to school, a long way between that and Auschwitz, in between, you know.)."

WH: "You don't really think that these laws will be passed."

JE: "I don't even think that the first thing can happen."

WH: "...but you think it will?"

JE: "Well, it could, or maybe... (VE: It definitely could!) the worse that can happen let's say they will say that - a scenario, that in the South somewhere they will say that we have too many Jews in the medical school, so we won't take only 30% of - that can happen."

WH: "What about affirmative action?"

JE: "...that is far away from Auschwitz. This is all still a long way to go to Auschwitz."

WH: "...I don't want to necessarily say that I don't agree with you, because I'm not sure myself, but when you raised the point this way...I would say only to you this, we're a long way from Auschwitz. And I don't even see the first steps. And this is still the greatest country in the world for Jewish people, and I completely agree with that. The only thing I would say, is that when something like this does happen in Auschwitz, it never starts with Auschwitz. In other words, it always starts with a small steps...so how can we feel certain that these first steps could not be taken?"

JE: "Well, I am not saying that we don't have the first steps. And to make impossible to - the first step is important...they are different in German - the Germans, they first of all, they are a disciplined nation. They are looking for leadership, which is not here. That the United States have a two hundred year of democracy. That already makes a big difference. (his voices catches with a combination of laughter and disbelief) Yesterday - you read the newspaper that they can burn the flag...you know, this is for, - even for me, for me it's a (?Utopian?) You know...I cannot imagine a thing like this."

WH: "...are you optimist about Israel?"

JE: "I am optimist about Israel, but it doesn't mean that all the problems - some of the problems will last for many, many years. Not in our generation and maybe not in - won't be - solved even in the next generation...intifada -...Israel will overcome it..."

END OF SIDE TWO. TAPE TWO.

END OF INTERVIEW.

This is a verbatim transcript of spoken word. It is not the primary source, and it has not been checked for spelling or accuracy.