



ALFRED LIPSON

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#128

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WH: Narrates: "What fantastic stories. And I have to get down how Mr. (A). Mr. (A) was a Radom survivor who was poor. He had no money and he came in and what he did was, he was, he participated in a syndicate. He took money from the Radom survivors. They were in the grocery business. And they had cash. Groceries, other stores, and they couldn't take it to a bank. Because it was not taxable. So they gave him the money to invest. They didn't trust him that much, says Mr. Lipson, but they had no choice. So, they gave him the money and he started syndicates, which meant that he was the eleventh person and let's say that they had 10 people, \$25,000 each, \$250,000, he would be the eleventh person. He made a lot of money from these buildings. He's a tycoon. he's a multi-millionaire. He gives \$18 - 25 - he gave \$18,000 to yeshiva but really had a higher thing for a tax receipt, but anyway, it's obvious Mr. Lipson doesn't like him too much. And he seems to have something against intellectuals. He always says, 'What do you have to publish Dr. Wineapple for? We don't Doctors! We are plain people, we Radomer.' So, anyway, the Radom people published - you know, they gave him the money and he was the silent partner, in return for which he managed the estates. He became a tycoon.' But, 'said Mr. Lipson. 'He keeps it for himself. He doesn't want to give any of the money away, because his wife doesn't let him also. He's a very tough guy, his children are very much afraid of him. He sold a motel for maybe 10 million dollars, probably near the airport, and he had money for transients. In the beginning the money was good. People made 15% back on their investment, but then it dwindled to 5, 6%."

WH: "Have you always been doing this kind of work? Publishing and writing and - ."

AL: "Yes, while (inaudible) in a textile establishment and it was wholesale and later I get into a retail department and that's -."

WH: "Textile meaning what kind of textile?"

AL: "Textile meaning remnants, fabrics for home sewing. People come in and buy enough material for a dress or a coat...and I had retail department where I had working, about 6 people. And in the back of the place, I had a warehouse where I was shipping coupons, remnants, premarked, premeasured, price tag on it that said \$3.95, \$6.95, for the piece. I was serving retail stores mostly in New York and a few chains, like M.H.Lamson...Grant stores and other stores in Long Island."

WH: "Where was the textile place?"

AL: "On Broadway and Canal Street...later I moved to Bayside to be near my home...and then I enlarged it and I moved to Little Neck on Hillside Avenue...a big store...from 'Al Lipson' becomes 'Allison.'... Allison Textile Company...(wholesale)... plus in the front was a retail...I employed 6 people, later it was 8, four of them were Radomer women and their children, part-time students."

WH: "Where were you during the war? Were you in the Radom ghetto?"

AL: "In 1939 the war broke out, I was in Radom...and the ghetto was established in 1941...I was still single. We were a large family...I was born in 1920...we were 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls...and my parents... when the ghetto was opened, we all squeezed in into 2 little rooms, the eight people. We were fortunate to be together."

"And somehow, by luck, or advance planning, so to say, we survived all those deportations, and the largest deportation was in August of 1942...on the day when they put in the big lights in the square, and we knew what this meant. That this were preparations for selecting and screening, and conducting deportations, so that day...I walked out of the ghetto to my place of work. I worked in a German furniture factory, and I was his accountant, bookkeeper...I spoke German well...and I also knew bookkeeping which I learned...from my girlfriend's father, in our spare time, we had nothing to do at night. Some people were playing cards. He taught me the basics of bookkeeping, so I got a job in a German factory...a civilian, a retired German policeman opened a factory and I was his manager. That particular week of the deportation, which was August, he went away with a girlfriend, he left his wife home, and went with the girlfriend to (?Cretesa?), a resort place in southern Poland. I knew the boss wasn't there. I decided to go there not (inaudible) myself, but I took out my entire family through several gates. But for this purpose, I had prepared special passes. When the boss was signing those passes, to get out of the ghetto to work, I put in underneath blanks, then I filled in the names of my brothers and sisters and my parents...I took them all out...these were special passes for emergency for night work. We walked out legally through the gate, on the strength of those special passes, with all the swastika stamps showing that the bearer of the pass is entitled to go to work...and this way, we saved our lives, while most of the people in Radom were deported in three days and three nights, in that August. We were 35,000 Jewish people...30,000 were deported in those 3 days."

"They left behind only 5,000, I was one of the 5,000 left behind because I was hidden...and my present wife and I decided to get married. First of all, it was because of love, secondly, it would not complicate the living quarters, because she and her family had more room than we had, so I moved in to their quarters and we had a separate room...and my entire family was present at the wedding. With a rabbi, Rabbi Mayers Slotnik...(Mrs. Pasternak is the daughter of Rabbi Slotnik)..."

WH: "Did he live through the war?"

AL: "No. He was killed...and then...the cream of the youth, skilled, young people, young men and women, were taken to another camp which was the munitions factory...and they employed us all there...in Radom..."

WH: "Relatively speaking, quite a few people from Radom survived."

AL: "Because of the munitions factory."

WH: "Also, wasn't there a printing press in Radom."

AL: "Yah. Only about 100 people worked in it. They are not from Radom, they were brought in from - (Maidoneck) Warsaw."

WH: "I read about it the Holocaust Kingdom book by Alexander ?Donit?...I read how ?Vlaka? Meed visited the people..."

AL: "Exactly...she was there and I knew about it...(AL requests tape recording to be turned off)."

WH: "What was your position at the Radomer society, you're a founder?"

AL: "I am one of the founders. I was the first elected president of the Radomer society when we were 600 strong. I did the publicity, the mailing the newsletter, and then the Voice of Radom. This was...with '53 or '54."

WH: "That's when you founded the society."

AL: "Yes. And I was the first (inaudible) president."

WH: "...the Radomer society, is there anything unique about the Radomer society, anything special about it compared to other societies?"

AL: "No, it was a younger element first of all. But the reason that Radom got known, is because of the publications. Not that I'm trying to get credit, but show me any other society that publishes - every month...ten times a year...but I disrupted my relations with Radomers completely, I don't go to meetings, I'm not a member any more. I didn't want to be a member because of a conflict with (A). Okay?"

WH: "I see."

AL: "I told you, it started with a picture of his wife. So he said, 'I cannot be editor anymore.' But, you know, being an editor, is the power of the press, because everybody wants to be mentioned. So everybody liked me. And everybody respected me. And I had enough power. So, why do I mention the word 'power?' Because after I quit as president, (inaudible) I had to make a living, and I was struggling. I was really struggling, but I was devoted - writing to me, this is my vocation. Which I could not pursue, because of the demands from making a living. But as soon as I could afford to hire an extra person or two, I would sit and work on this, while they were busy with the business and I had 4, 5 Radomer people, husband and wife (inaudible) working for me, and I trusted them 100% and I would work on this, and write articles, I could devote my time to this, publishing of this book. Write my own (inaudible) to the Jerusalem Post, (inaudible) and other publications. This was my love. Of course, in high school, I was the editor for paper already."

WH: "You had this love for intellectual things already in high school."

AL: "Yes. But (inaudible) I was hated. Because they had, they carried over from the camps, hatred of intellectuals. They said that the intellectuals had it good because the jealousy during the war, cause as intellectuals, those who were still alive, fared better than the people without an education."

WH: "...I thought that trade people had it better..."

AL: "Yes, skilled people. But, take the people 18, 19 they didn't have the skills yet... first of all, the intellectuals became the leaders in the Judenrat. Doctors, engineers, professionals. They were the leaders, especially in Radom. I had a personal story with the Radomers. What was this? I will tell you. (inaudible) When I quit as president, there was a clique. (A), (B), a bunch of tailors, from the (inaudible) left. We were above politics. We, meaning myself and my friends. We were a large group of friends. More or less intellectual, because we all were the graduates of the (inaudible) high school which was - one of the best, like a college, almost...as a matter of fact, 2 years ago, there was a reunion and they call it the reunion of the (?) high school...like Jules Seidenweber, professional ... an electrical engineer...his wife made in economic, one of the few women."

WH: "So they had a resentment against the intellectuals."

AL: "So I'll give you this as an example. We organized this reunion in Jerusalem 2 years ago and it was publicized here, it was boycotted completely by the (A), (C) clique. They said, 'Look at this. The intelligensia machzor, a reunion!' You understand that?"

WH: "Yes."

AL: "And they boycotted that. And the leaders of this changed the name, not the reunion of the high school because it would be mostly doctors and professors At Hebrew University at Tel Aviv, now, because those that moved to Israel amounted to something. To work in America, very few of them...(AL shows WH a picture of the graduates - on page 25...). They changed the type of this reunion, the reunion of the Zionist Youth, because already people started telephoning, 'What are you trying to do? A reunion of the intelligentin? We going to come in and break down the doors!' They threatened, they threatened...not Israel, the Americans were writing letters, they will come, 'Because we don't want it!' It's like we were isolating ourselves from the simple people. So the organizers at the reunion changed it to the Reunion of the Zionist Youth of Radom. And I was there too, and so was Jules, was there too, and it was then later, billed as the 'Reunion of the Zionist Youth.' So anyway, this clique of (A), (B), and (D), and all the Zionist party to your Left took over and it became a clique of the radical Zionist. I'm talking about 20 years ago."

WH: "So what happened? Did they start a new organization?"

AL: "No, the same organization, but they forced themselves - until some people resent it, they say, 'We want to make it a nice, pleasant - .' First of all, there was only Yiddish speaking. But there was a new generation of youngsters who were 15, 16, up to 18 years who didn't know Yiddish from Radom. People who later fought in Korea, became completely adjusted Americans, who didn't understand their right, and didn't understand a word Yiddish, but they insist, and (inaudible) spoke up. In English, they would shout them down. "

"So they got together, they said, 'Let's get one of the people from that generation. A younger generation, a least 10 years difference, now we'll get 58, while (A) is already 78. That's 20 years difference, and they selected as their leader, (E). Who is a good friend of mine, and I was all for him. We made a secret meeting to prepare an election, there was no election held for 15 years. In fact, they were electing themselves at the meeting. And they presented themselves, because they knew that when it came to the public, a public election, an open election, it would never succeed. And I was on later as a member of the Board, I was always saying, I know how to write, and how to figure, so we were a committee - 4, 5, 6 people sitting and counting the ballots. And, we count the ballots, and we make the totals, and (E) got 80, and (A) got nine. So somebody walked up, to the microphone, to announce the results and said, (A) got 90 and (E) only got 80. So (A) said, 'I'll take the seat.' Said to this guy - 'Why did you do it?' I know he's only made out - .' 'Don't say anything! It's on a (needs spelling: broch!).' A 'broch' means we are tragedy if (A) is not elected. Okay?' "

WH: "Anybody could count - 90 and 80 is 170."

AL: "Nobody cared! They had danish and coffee, and playing bingo in the meantime, while we were counting the ballots. Anyway we got together privately, about 10, 15 people created a committee to elect (E), and I was asked to conduct the publicity, so I wrote a letter, it was To The Editor. I wrote a letter, and signed, Alfred Lipson, Editor of the Voice of Radom. And I recommend for this and this reason. I wrote what I told the membership. (E) deserved to be elected because of his personal qualities. We want to break up the monopoly. "

"There was no election held for about 15 years. That was the new election, and so on. And (A) got this letter, and he almost got sick. And he came up to me, and he says, privately, nobody was present. 'I'll (inaudible) a few goyim to push (B), I am going to bury you. In Yiddish, (inaudible) far grubbin.' Like Khrushchev said, to bury you. So, 'What do you mean, you'll 'bury me?' 'If I'm running for the presidency, I want to be elected,' (A) said. 'I want to be elected. And (E) will not come in. Where was he all these years?' Because (E) was not active. He didn't mix, he didn't come. He was sort to say, drafted by us to come in. He was a popular, handsome person, with a good command of English, and a veteran of the Korean War, born in Radom, from very wonderful family, a beautiful wife, also from a nice Radom family, anyway, he came to the elections, there was such chaos, that he, (A) he got the two bullies, I don't know their name, we call them bully, it doesn't matter. He got himself the two bullies, promised them jobs, and they remembered, if he's elected there, one of the bullies, (F), he wants to be the Treasurer, he wants the money. The money, because the organization was very rich. They had at that time, \$100,000 collected through all these years. So he said, 'Okay, if you help me be elected,' whoever told him, you will - he later told us in public because he didn't get the job. He said, 'Here, (A), you promised me that I would get the Treasury, and now you renegeing your promises!' There was a fight, a fistfight, but (A) was elected, because these bullies were (inaudible) ballots all filled in, everybody crossed out except (A) and were stuffing the box held on the lap, was held on the lap by a third bully. "

"The people weren't afraid to fight because because they were bullies...see, (F) is a poor guy, and he was relied on (A) paying him off. And he remembers, and he was (inaudible: hitting tables with his fists.) 'So where's that payoff you promised? where's the payoff?' So he gave him some money, he need money, he work for a brother-in-law and the guy, really struggled. He worked all these years as a presser in the garment center in the steam, and he steam pressed, do you know what means? So, listen somebody told him you get \$500, or \$1,000 so he - they brought down, in several station wagons, they brought down the heads, people to vote. Even though they weren't members, but they were stuffing the ballots. And I called over (inaudible-?E?). 'What's going on? I need (E).' He said, 'I don't know what to do. I get a knife in the stomach if I - .'"

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WH: "Did you believe that?"

AL: "He was afraid, so we walked out. We were afraid. The guy's capable. (F) once hit an old old man, one of our founders, one of the nicest people, from the original leaders. Not my generation, an older generation. He hit him with an umbrella because this man insisted how Lipson should be president for another two years. So this guy, (F), hit him with another umbrella (inaudible-needs translation). Now, we the people are taking over. The simple people. The presses. Okay? This were the struggles, and my wife urged me, what do you have to come in with these people?' I said, 'I'm trying to educate them. I'm trying to lift them a little bit.' And truthfully, because I love this town, I devoted time sitting for 3, 4 o'clock in the morning."

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"The printer was sitting there waiting, idle, saying, 'Hey, Mr. Lipson, we can't keep the presses! Give us another few pages!' That's how it was going on. It took me a year to do it. So. In the meantime, I dropped the voice of Kaddish. And I started writing on my own, and suddenly I got successful. Jewish Week was publishing every month was an article by Al Lipson. When they saw this, (F) and (A), went to the Jewish Week and they said, 'You know who Lipson was? Lipson was a kapo in the ghetto.' First of all, there were no kapos in ghetto. So, '(inaudible) people (inaudible) know that you are lying, and tell the right lie. (inaudible). Policeman. Kapos were only in concentration camps in Germany...so somebody said, 'There were no kapos.' He said, 'Alright, so, he was in Judenrat.' I was 20 years old, I was in Judenrat? What's he talking nonsense? 'So, he was a policeman.' And they said if you, they went to the Jewish Week and they threatened that they would blow up the entire office and they would demonstrate in the front, and drag the - and break the furniture if they continue to publish Lipson's articles. So the (inaudible) editor that time was (G). And (G) is a survivor. And he knew that there is something there. He interviewed these people and start asking them questions, but then, he called me up, I should come up and talk to them. And I proved to them, they picked on the story I wrote a moving story, it was published front page, starting on front page, and then inside, story of a Yom Kippur service in the (inaudible-vinyam?) camp. I was present, I was there, and they say that I invented the story."

WH: "Where was the (inaudible-Vinyan?) camp?"

AL: "Near Stuttgart in Germany...this was one of the camps before Dachau...and I witnessed this one, because my father was a very Orthodox person, a rabbi's son, and he ask me now, it's Yom Kippur, come we are having a little service. We even have a Torah scroll.' And I was anxious to know about the Torah scroll. And I found out, and after the war, there were - Joshua Rothenberg, (inaudible) opened an office to interview these people to tell us their story, quickly before they forget it, before they immigrate, and there were two people who told us how they smuggled a small Torah scroll from Radom, to Auschwitz, to (?Vinyan?) and there I was, they opened the scroll, put it into one of those bunks, and there was a guy who later died in Israel (inaudible) (?). A cantor. And he was performing in a community service and I described it in one of my Jewish Week's stories about the (?) camp. They said, 'He's a liar! There was no - we were in (inaudible- ?Vinyan?) There was no community service.' Of course, not everybody knew. Only a small group of Orthodox people and my father (inaudible) invited me and I was there, and I even said, 'I wasn't religious,' so I asked a few friends, I said listen, 'If somebody walks up, an S.S. man or who knows, let's stand in the front and guard this particular barrack and give them a warning, they should hide everything and stop the services before the S.S. man walks in.' So we kept guard, standing there until it was over, and then, I walked to my other barrack with my father and I had a whole discussion. And I described it in this article, which I will give you in a moment. "

"So they said it was alright. So the publisher, (inaudible)...said, 'Why do you tell us a lie? Not that I care, because it was a nice story, we would be glad to publish it, but why should you invent story about - . How do you invent such a story?' So I showed him here, there's a Yiddish part too, I showed them the depositions given in Stuttgart in 1945, by the people who tell of the stories. 'Right here, I wasn't the only witness. There were more witnesses.' Okay. Anyway, they started a campaign, and (A), told me, 'I'll bury you!' And he tried to bury me by saying, (inaudible) he wrote a letter to all Jewish societies, all Jewish organizations, including the World Jewish Congress, including the B'nai B'rith, 'Do you hear me?' (inaudible) I have that letter that he wrote that 'Al Lipson has given up this in order to publish articles, and he's telling lies, and he was a kapo in the ghetto, he was a policeman.' (inaudible: The fact is, that my brother Zayde was) 'So what!' When I confronted him later, 'It's alright, so what! What difference does it make, his brother, he - they both are horrible people.' The fact that my brother was there was (inaudible - not). I struggled too, working in stone quarries and so on. Working in the furniture factories and munition factories, but they accused me. So, (G), they all - 'you in trouble. Go,' they would say 'yes, you go to Jewish Reconciliation Board and sue them.' And I did that. I told them the whole story, and they asked them all to come. All the others who signed the letter refused to come because they didn't want to - they knew it was invented. (A) is so tough, (inaudible) he is more powerful than me, and he will convince the Jewish Reconciliation Board' and he told them some lies."

"And then I asked the question, 'Were you there?' 'No.' 'Where were you then?' He was in 'Buchenwald.' I said, 'How do you know about this?' Then he brought in another guy. And I ask him, 'What's your name?' I didn't know the guy. 'were you in the Kaddish ghetto? Do you know that I was a policeman?' He said, 'Of course I know!' 'How do you know?' The lawyers ask him. 'Because (I) told me so.' 'Where are you from?' 'I am from Lublin. But I know that I can swear!' 'Swear to what? That I was a policeman? How do you know that?' '(I) (inaudible) told me so. And I believe (I).' So this is the approach that people have."

WH: "Did (I) show up?"

AL: "No. He refused to come. And neither did (F). They said that they don't recognize the jurisdiction of this court."

WH: "What is this court?"

AL: "A voluntary, maintained by the Federation."

WH: "Who were the judges?"

AL: "Social workers, young, aspiring lawyers."

WH: "When did this happen?"

AL: "About 4 years ago. While I worked for Ben Meed already. The fact is, I'm not keeping in certain sequence, but I worked for Ben Meed, publishing we did together, and helping in the office as a volunteer. A delegation of certain people came up in Ben Meed's room, while I was in the other rooms. (inaudible) They made an appointment to come up. Among them, the leading person was (A)."

WH: "Who was not too fond of Ben Meed either."

AL: "Not since then, because Ben Meed didn't throw me out. They demanded it, that I be thrown out, so Ben Meed said, 'Listen, how many is it that (inaudible) work for the Radomer's, who was a president, and so on. Thirty years? If you could keep him 30 years, I can keep him for a few years. I can use him here. But so far, what's the proof?' They said, 'What's the difference does it make? The man is no good. The man was a policeman.' He said, 'Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Do you have proof? Mr. (A) I heard that you were in Buchenwald.' He knew it, Ben Meed isn't stupid. 'Yes, but I know from (F) told me so. People who were there told me so.' 'It's not enough.' 'So why do you lead an organization?' 'Why do you swear to it?' Anyway, Ben Meed said he will look into it. And he questioned some people who he found more objective, like (E), (H), and a dozen others who knew me from day one to the last day (inaudible) for 6 years. (inaudible)... and it's just that these people are vicious and they explained to him that (A) is the type who told them, the same people, who came to defend me, said, they ask (A), 'Why do you do it to Lipson?' He said, 'So what? It's a free country, I can say what - they put me in a concentration camp? Because I'm telling a lie?' He told them so privately. 'So what? I promised him that I would bury him, so that's what I am doing.' "

WH: "And this is (inaudible) because of this stupid picture business."

AL: "Well, they had another story. The picture was started, and later, the (E), and (?) who I supported (E) and wrote that letter to the membership, and this killed him, this letter, saying that his leadership is no good, and he has to be replaced, and it's about time that we had a democratic election after 12, or 15 years. "

"They didn't like any opposition. And there was another case. While I was editor, and being invited to all (inaudible) place, with (? speeches?), there was a Radom organization that established itself in Florida, North Miami Beach, and they hold their risikon memorial (inaudible) in the winter when they have most of the people present. So they have it at the - one of the large hotels, and I was suppose to be the key-note speaker. And that time, I had gotten some documents, a young Israeli had written a PhD. and it was published in one of this (AL rattles papers) the month before, I had published excerpts and PhD. on Jewish history, and the history of the Judenrat, - in the ghettos. And he did Warsaw, (inaudible-Galvastock?), and Radom...and the man came to the conclusion, based on the archives he found in Warsaw and Yad Vashem, that Radom was the best run camper, with the people, Judenrat were long time idealist, on the Zionist organization, and the Orthodox group, they were not corrupt. On the contrary. He says, 'There was no, like in Warsaw, the - dead people were lying on the sidewalks, and nobody bothered even to pick them up, and people were dying of hunger. There was no such case in Radom where there were kitchens and everyone who wanted soup would get it free and there was always a collection being made between the rich, who were sharing and giving it, and they still giving food to the poor in Radom.'

(inaudible)..."

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WH: "What's the total membership of the Radom society?"

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AL: "When I was president it was 600. Now, maybe 50...I was the founder...in the 1950's..."

WH: "...when you refer to the 600, you are referring just to New York?"

AL: "Yes. The national society was much larger. When I started the paper, I had 1500 subscribers, because it included Israel."

WH: "This was published in New York?"

AL: "Yes. There was large organization in Canada...including even Argentina, and Australia."

WH: "How many would you say survived Radom at the end of the war?"

AL: "I would say 1,000...out of 35,000..."

WH: "Why is it so difficult to get the second generation involved?"

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AL: "...they are the yuppies, and they can't afford the time, and the means, they don't struggle so much anymore...(inaudible)... it doesn't click. It depends also, it depends about the caliber of leadership in certain cities. You'll find a large group in Boston, and very few in New York, and this was my struggle....I tried to get a better meeting place (to get the young people to come) ...the Fifth Avenue Synagogue...and (E) joined me in this effort, and he'll be my assistant, and I said, 'If I'm the Chairman, I would organize it, and I cannot rely on people like (A) to do it because they are not interested.' So (A) got up and said, 'No, I'm not. And I don't want and I vote against it, because I am not ready for my children to inherit the organization.' "

WH: "What did he mean by that?"

AL: "He means the treasury. I said, 'The children can wait another 20 years. I don't want my children to come there. I (inaudible)my children to take over the leadership.' I was advocating that they should join us and carry on our legacy and get involved."

"He said, 'What? my children - (inaudible)my sons to get involved, and I just want them to inherit me in my business and I want them to inherit the society business.' This is exactly, I can bring you a dozen witnesses when he said it. It was at a (inaudible) committee meeting. And he said to me, 'Al, if you get ten children to that meeting, in the Fifth Avenue Synagogue, hair will grow on my head!' And everybody remembered, and they were later laughing. I went to the Fifth Avenue Synagogue to the conference, and we established a date, this and that, what will be the course. I said, 'What you mean the course? You going to hold - .' 'It's not a party. It's a Holocaust commemoration.' 'No charge. As a matter of fact, (inaudible-? Cantor Mulavani) we can call him in, maybe he -.' I said 'I need a Cantor.'"

WH: "What year was this?"

AL: "Only about 10 years ago...Cantor Mulavani came in...and he says, 'for Yiskor, I don't accept any fee, I would be glad to (inaudible)...' and I organize it, print special invitations...special for the children. And we had 110 young people...in their 20's and 30's...and 40 of the old timers. The - just the clique didn't show up in order not to - ."

WH: "To boycott it!"

AL: "In order to boycott it...and it became a tradition for the next 5 years and then it fizzled out."

END OF SIDE ONE. TAPE ONE.

SIDE TWO. TAPE ONE.

WH: "...what about the organization - ."

AL: "First you have to complete the story. I wanted to go, my family, my children said, 'No, take him to court. No such thing as silence again, behind closed doors for the Jewish - (inaudible) Reconciliation with a guy like (A) because he will abuse me, he will make me sick, he will carry on the campaign. No matter what the Jewish Reconciliation says.' So I went to (J) with whom I was very close in working for the organization, for the American Gathering and he is a good lawyer. And I had a long session with him at his law office and he dissuaded me from going to court. He said he had a similar case with his father, who's not alive, (K) and people, just because you were successful, make a (inaudible) successful leader. People were jealous, and they tried to run him down."

WH: "...it seems to me that in the survivor community, about the worse thing that you can say about somebody, is he was a kapo during the war."

AL: "You hit the nail on the head. Somebody told Ben Meed, and he's trying to say, 'Well, why, but why,' They said, 'To destroy a Jew, in survivor's group the only thing that they will do, (inaudible) is to say is a kapo or a policeman. Somebody compared it, let's say, Koch was running, - not to say that he was, how do you destroy a - ?"

WH: "Say he was a homosexual."

AL: "Say he was a homosexual. Exactly. And a survivor, you can say, 'Lipson's a homosexual,' right, but it won't have any affect. But, to say 'he's a kapo,' he's finished. That's what (A) had on his mind, when he said 'We'll finish Lipson,' he said it, and there were 100 people at the General Meeting, when he went up there, when some people came into criticize him, 'Why are you destroying Lipson?' He said, 'I'm here to finish him.' "

WH: "Your brother was younger or older?"

AL: "A younger brother."

WH: "So how could he have been in the police?"

AL: "... He was 19 years old. But this guy was a policeman, like you are a policeman. I remember stories - people are telling me. First of all he was standing near the gate to watch people shouldn't come in or go out. He always had 3 girlfriends talking to him and at night, if he had night service, the butcher would come in with a cow to smuggle in a cow you know, for kosher - meat. For the Orthodox...and he would turn away..."

WH: "Is your brother still alive?"

AL: "Yes. He and his wife are good friends with the (A) because they were somewhere together (inaudible)...(A)'s wife and my brother's wife were best friends in (inaudible-?Starovicha?) in one of the camps, so every time they in New York, they used to go visit (inaudible) and the (A)'s came to my sister-in-law's funeral. You know, where I was there too, but my brother's house is very respected. Even though he was a policeman. Now, I was not a policeman, and I'm telling you I was not, never, 'cause then, people who know me, know where I worked, continuously."

"I had all the people who remembered, who worked with me, and they vouched to Ben Meed and (J) 'Listen, you bring 15 witnesses who will vouch for you. (inaudible) But before this (inaudible) be over, you'll be a dead man.' "

WH: "The aggravation."

AL: "The aggravation. And, you know, for (inaudible-? parrnoses?), that's now his father suffered. 'Cause he gave me an example, imagine, the headline in the Jewish Week and the Jewish Press, 'Lipson Claims He Was Not a Kapo.' "

WH: "And it sounds like you were."

AL: "...That's right."

WH: "And what about your brother, did he take your side? Did he go to (A) and tell him off?"

AL: "Of course he did. He disrupted relations with him."

WH: "So, he WAS good friends with him, not that he IS."

AL: "No, not any more. No. She came only to the funeral, (A) didn't come. Only the wife came."

WH: "...what about (L) where does he fit in with all this?"

AL: "I have no idea..."

WH: "It seems like he has almost has a competing organization with Ben Meed."

AL: "Yah...(inaudible)...when we started the center, somebody gave an idea, invite (L) as the key-note speaker at the opening ceremony...he accepted...and he gave \$50 a donation to the opening of the center, while my son gave \$4,000."

WH: "He made good money in the diamond line."

AL: "Shaeffer pen...he's at least the American representative of Shaeffer pen...he has a suite of offices on Fifth Avenue. I was there, and he wanted me to stop this with Radom, he wanted me to do (inaudible) in the Resistance for \$25,000 a year. Imagine how stupid I was, I say, 'I can't, how can I throw away? This is my baby!' I've done it for 26 years at that time. But (H) was sitting at the conference (inaudible) 25,000 - he just published 10 copies."

WH: "He seems to be very involved with the Yad Vashem."

AL: "Yes."

WH: "That seems to be (L) main - ."

AL: "Yes. He ended up with (inaudible) Yad Vashem. But, before that, he was active with the American Gathering. But somehow he didn't get any honors from Ben Meed. But anyway, I don't know why we ended up on personal things, we're not on our subject."

WH: "In a way, it is a subject, because I am interested in the social relationships that the survivors had after the war, and I think for the historical record, every single community has conflicts and it is a part of the story also...I have a whole chapter called, 'The Social Relationships of the Survivors.' What you told me I think is a very, very important chapter in the post-war history of the survivors. Why? Because the conflicts between workers and intellectuals have been going on for centuries. You really crossed both boundaries. Why? You didn't become a professor here. You had a textile factory. But you also had intellectual ideas and interests, and this blanket condemnation from the intellectuals that I see engaged in by the survivors, it's the kind of jealousy that exists today also."

AL: "Excuse me for interrupting. But, you are opening my eyes, that this is not just an event concerns the Radomers, it is an overall thing. But, I explained it from the experience in the ghetto, I told you, because the intellectuals were in the Judenrat, the intellectuals had better positions in the ghetto because they were clerks, they were sitting behind the desks, they were -for instance, there was an (needs translation: arbiters....). Very early in the history of the ghetto it was great chaos as far as the supply of labor to the Nazi's concern. They would come in every day from different units...a train came in and they needed quickly to unload furniture for the officers, they would come into the ghetto, and grab people in the streets with bayonets, round them up, until they had whatever they needed, 50 people, a 100 people, to unload it...I'm trying to show the development, and it was terror. The ghetto was terrorized...and the Judenrat made a deal with the Germans...don't beat them up...and we'll give you all the workers you need...and so they made an agreement, and the Germans appointed one guy to be in charge of Labor...and every day, according to German needs, they will supply laborers, providing Germans don't beat them, and they'll be paid by the Judenrat... (inaudible)...it was an excellent idea. This office employed about 40 people, it was lead by Professor Wardsman...and I remember one evening... 'Professor Wardsman wants to see you.' Big deal, you know what I mean? This was already 2 years since he was my professor...(in high school)..."

WH: "What did your father do?"

AL: "We had a (inaudible) factory...he employed a 100 people - with a partner...Orthodox with a beard..."

WH: "Do you belong to a synagogue today?"

AL: "Yes. Bayside Hills. 48th Avenue...I have two sons and four grandchildren."

WH: "So you have nachas."

AL: "Very great nachas."

WH: "Despite (A)."

AL: "This was my greatest accomplishment. These two sons. One (David) is a plastic surgeon, in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and the younger one, Steven ...he is a graduate of Harvard, a PhD. in nuclear physics. His wife is on the faculty (at Harvard), she has a PhD. in (Physical) Anthropology...(and Palentology)."

4 WH: "Are they Jewish, your daughters-in-law?"

AL: "...married Jews, yes. Matter of fact, the older one has a kosher home...and my son's wife, her father is... Leon ?Groiser? who is the Chairman of the Department of Architecture at M.I.T. The mother, Sue's mother is the secretary to the president of Brandeis."

WH: "So you consider education very important."

AL: "Very important."

WH: "And you made it a practice, you stressed the value of it."

AL: "That was our greatest effort, was to send them to school."

WH: "Where did they go to school?"

AL: "Both went to Bayside High. Steven's name is on the plaque because (inaudible) he was admitted to Harvard and he was the valedictorian...(David) went to N.Y.U and Albert Einstein School of Medicine...and intern at Bellevue and Medical Center...a total of 8 years of - and I had to support him, his wife and a baby through the years."

2
WH: "Now, this work that you did, it's really a side thing, doing the Voice of Radom and working with Ben Meed."

AL: "I did this in '63..."

WH: "You also edit, you also published this newspaper for Ben..."

AL: "Yes...(AL fumbles papers)."

WH: "What was it called?"

AL: "'Together,' this was my idea. The idea of publishing, I came to Ben Meed, I said, 'Ben, I don't want to do clerical work here. I am a writer. I like to publish.' He knew about the Voice of Radom. 'I do some Voice of Radom' (inaudible) on a larger scale, because it's going to more people...(inaudible)...(inaudible)...' he said, 'This is your problem. I'll be the editor.' So I published it. (AL rattles papers.)."

WH: "Did you do it on a volunteer basis?"

AL: "All on a volunteer basis. It cost me commuting...a fortune. Or coming by car and parking. Because by then, I retired...at the age of 63, in order to devote myself to writing articles and so on."

WH: "What did you do with the business?"

AL: "I sold it...(H)'s son bought it from me."

WH: "Does he still have it?"

AL: "He reneged on the notes, tore them up and left it. Walked away with a balance of a loan, of \$150,000."

WH: "And didn't pay you?"

AL: "He paid me very little because he kept it only for 2 years, and I was sweet-talked by (H), who was my, and my brother's good friend and stockbroker. And I told (H), 'Listen, I'm giving him a \$225,000 business which was worth \$400,000.'"

"Inventory along was \$400,000 and I gave it to him at \$225,000 to get rid of the shmattes, my son insisted, 'Daddy, please, get out of the shmattes. It's not for you. You're wasting your time. You love this literary work, reading, publishing, relax, you have enough. You don't have to provide for us any more.' I had two PhD's I raised. 'Why don't you do it, do now what you like to do best so you don't have to struggle with shmattes.' So this (H) bought me his son, he guaranteed orally, and I believed him, and the notes were not registered notes, and my lawyer who drew up the contract, didn't make provisions for failure to pay the notes. But I was in Florida for the winter, in '87, and the notes didn't come in, he used to send me the monthly payments. So I called him up, he wouldn't pick up the phone...so I wrote him a letter and enclosed a self-addressed envelope, so then I go back and I caught him. He promised, 'Oh, next week you getting two notes.' I'm waiting, 2 weeks, 4 weeks, anyway what shall I tell you. (inaudible) I returned in April from Florida and I walk in to the store, it was sold out, empty, taken over by the landlord. He owed the landlord, the IRS, for labor taxes, sales taxes, the state took over, so I tried to find him, he escaped and ran away, nobody knew. I contacted (H), he says, he took money from him too. 'He owes me money too, I can't help you.' This was the money for my retirement, that's why I could splurge, and be a volunteer in all these places. But my son said, 'Daddy, please, don't worry about the money. You gonna eat yourself up over \$150,000. What you worried about? We make more than we need,' the surgeon, he makes more than this, and you know, in one year, 'you going to worry for your life? Don't worry.' "

"And I have some investments I made, that I get dividends and that's what we learned, and we live very modestly."

WH: "(H) was your friend."

AL: "Yeh. But he's no longer a friend."

WH: "How could he be after that."

AL: "Ahh, another problem. (inaudible) I have a third brother, Sam, he lives in Bayside. Since I was (H)'s client, he got my other brother, too...and my brother is a big gambler, especially with his wife. (inaudible) And they were doing business with (H). (H) was making hundreds of thousands of dollars in commission. And my brother was dealing ten thousand shares, fifty thousand shares, a day! Buying in the morning, selling in the afternoon, rebuying again, and was spending his day - my brother has a leather factory, he inherited the business from my father, (inaudible) leather, and he spent most of his time dealing until there came - in '88, the October...crash...and he was dealing options - lots of options, (H) was pushing. (H) was on the phone with my brother between 10 and 4 every day, and selling and doing things that my brother never asked him to do. (H) has a tendency to be very loose with somebody's money. He did it to my cousin who just called me before you came, (inaudible) he's doing the same old story. He's selling and buying for him, without asking him advice. So I said, 'So, why do you deal with (H)?' Anyway...it turned out that (H) had bought a lot of things beyond the legal requirements of margin. My brother is not out to watch for margin. Who should watch?"

WH: "A stockbroker."

AL: "...a stockbroker should watch it. But he's so greedy, kept buying, he figured, 'Well, tomorrow,' he would sell it, and get the cash at the top of the margin. That's what (H) thought, and that's when it went down, so the company sued my brother. The company (inaudible-?with? ?was?) (H), ?Grunteel?, it's already in the lawyers hands ever since, and it's almost a year."

WH: "Suing him for what?"

AL: "Suing him for - \$100,000, margin requirements, because they were stuck with it, they sold the next day, everything was sold and they were short to cover it...(H) left the company also because of it. Because my brother filed a counter-suit..."

WH: "Isn't (H) with another company, Stern's?"

AL: "Right, he changed, because ?Grunteel? has this lawsuit against my brother...so here I got this poor experience with his son, who ran away (inaudible) he left his wife, he sold the business and everything that was left, he got a lot of cash, the son. He sold my business for cash. He ran a sale for two months while I was in Florida because his wife had left him. And she was suing him for alimony. So he decided to relieve himself of all assets. He sold his car, his sold the boat, and he sold my business...(H)'s young son..."

WH: "He sounds like a no-goodnik."

AL: "A drug - he was involved about, 8, 9 years in drugs in South America. But then he settled here, and his mother died, (H) died because of all this aggravation with his son, the only son, they have a daughter, the daughter is not on speaking terms. Doesn't speak to her father, to (H). (H)'s daughter doesn't speak to him, every since the mother died, which will be about 15 years."

1
WH: "So his wife died young."

AL: "Very young."

WH: "...now, (A) told me something that he was in the coonskin cap business, did you know that? I think he was a furrier..."

AL: "That's possible. And he failed..."

WH: "Do you know (inaudible-Hirsch Altouschy?)."

6
AL: "Yeh. I'm very friendly...he's a very intelligent person, but he's the kind of people who are condemned by (A) as intellectuals. It reminds me, talking about intellectuals, one of the letters that were written not by (A), because (A) got a court order from the Reconciliation Board, if he ever comes out with any statement against me, then the Jewish Conciliation Board will handle it as the power to give it to the American courts, to enforce their verdict. That's what they told us at the meeting."

WH: "I never heard what the judgement was."

AL: "The judgement was, a divorce... 'tell you what, we have no experience in this kind of an affair. We're going to apply our divorce proceeding. We're going to divorce you from the Radomers,' and the Radomers were given a written verdict, if they EVER come out with any renewed accusations against me, then the Board will enforce, though the court a verdict against the Radomers, and especially (A), so (A), he knows, he cannot touch anymore... I want to say, BUT, see, this guy (F), and his two croonies, they heavy drinkers. (F), as a group there, they know him as a drinker. At every meeting, they end up with a bottle and playing poker, and sometimes had to be carried out."

"(F) and (I). (F)'s daughter or somebody, his son must have written a letter because it was a well-written, good English, because they cannot write...wrote a letter that said, 'Even if he was not a policeman, he was an intellectual.' About Lipson. And I have those letters. I have a pile of his letters that my friends kept sending me. They were getting this hate mail against Lipson, and they were sending me copies. Some tried to say that nothing is happening, they didn't want to hurt me. But, for instances, (M), who was an officer at the Cracower society, and I was dealing with him through Ben Meed's organization because he was my printer and every little brochure, every leaflet, and every letter I was designing, was printed by (M) Understand? He was the printer for the organization and we became very friendly. And he says, 'I don't want to upset you, but I got some nasty, hate letter, signed by a guy named (F). And one by a guy named (A). This was the original one. (F) continued (A) work under his name. Because he was not part of - the lawsuit, he refused to come. They cannot force anybody to come, the Board couldn't force him, and that's where there was the letter, he says, 'Even if claims he was not a policeman, then (inaudible) he was an intellectual.' Intellegensia."

WH: "How long ago was a letter like this written?"

AL: "This happened after I joined Ben Meed and started writing articles for the Jewish Week and for (inaudible). That was 6 years ago."

WH: "But Ben has defended you all throughout?"

AL: "Well, Ben, a little, I had a problem. And my wife still carries a grudge. And once you asked, I am candid with everything I am talking to you. See, there were - I told you, 7 people came. Men, women, led by (A), that he should dismiss me, (needs translation), it's a shame when a Jewish organization to employ a former policeman. And started the one or two hours he gave them, and I was working there, he didn't have 5 minutes for me. I wanted to discuss with him, he was always on the phone, can't talk to him. For them he had two hours, and, because it was a heated discussion, he said, 'I want proof! Give me proof. And I will dismiss him. Give me proof.' But they didn't have proof. 'Cause none of them were claiming that they were with me, or even if they were with me, they wouldn't commit themselves that they were direct witnesses. Only hearsay. (F) tells me.' (F) wasn't there. Mrs. Pasternak, who's father married me, in the ghetto, she wasn't with me, and she came to Ben Meed. Anyway, later, when he told me, he called me in, and he told me, 'Hey,' this is what happened. I say, 'You gave them two hours of your time, and you listen to this baloney!' 'Well, I had to give him.' And he said, 'Was there anybody else, a witness, I don't believe that they would say such a thing.' Well, they did say (N)? 'So, (N)? was here, too?' 'Yah, he had let them meet him.' So when it finally - ."

WH: "He's not from Radom, is he?"

AL: "No. He was there, present to listen to the complaints about me, and to use their judgment whether to employ me as volunteer, as editor of the paper. Editor of the 'Together.' Well, after this publisher and editor of the Jewish week, advised me to go to the Jewish Reconciliation Board, I said, 'Well, they may even deny that they were ever here. They need a witness. Ben, I don't want you to go as a witness, give me a short statement. 'I, Benjamin Meed, state that these and these people,' give me the names, because he had the secretary write down their names. That these people came to me and they claimed that 'Al Lipson was a policeman or a kapo.' That's all. They made accusations against Al Lipson. I wanted it in black and white, because I could never really pin him down, because they were very abusive in those letters, but they never said it. They never said it. He was 'this and he was that,' but (A) in his letter, was so careful, that the word 'kapo' or 'policeman,' was not mentioned. Never did. (F)'s later, said, 'and if he wasn't a kapo, he was an intellectual.' But I want it in black and white, so I can nail him down in the court of law, even, but by accusing me, because I could produce a hundred people, and a hundred people from Israel. I got a hundred signatures from Israel. People in Israel were not afraid of (A). I must explain to you, once you got me on the subject, it is a little hurtful. It all comes back. (AL gasps and catches his voice. Similar to indigestion.) It was a nightmare. There was, - I had some friends in Israel who heard about it. One was (D). When he was still alive. (inaudible) (P), is a professor at Brandeis from Radom...(D) is the father of (P). "

"(P)...worked with me on this book on collecting data in the D.F. camp in preparation the history of Radom. Where he later didn't want to have anything to do, because the Radomers insulted him. He threw it in my lap, and says, 'Hi, it's all yours. You write it. The Yiddish part. The English I'll write by myself.' We were collecting everything in Yiddish, because they were Yiddish speaking people, in Stuttgart. Get me? This is, Yiddish must be witness testimonies. Now, listen to me. His father, the old man, but the most respected person of Radom when he was president of Zionist organization, and a personal friend of Ben Gurion, the same generation, a member - a person who went to ?Bazel?, to Zionist, to Congresses, he died at the age of 96. But at the time when this happened, he was still the president of the ?Irgun yartze Ardon? meaning, the Radomer Society in Israel, which is larger than here. Because it encompasses several generations in Israel, from before the war, 1920's, 1930's, and post-war, and he was the venerable president. When he heard what they doing to me, and he knew because even from his son, his daughter, (Q) lives in Washington, D.C., she went through the camps with me and my wife, and she knew every - because we were the greatest friend. (inaudible)...now she brought to her father, 'Do something! Use your prestige.' So, he got together the people who were with me in the camps. He wanted to know for himself. He wouldn't defend me one iota if he had any doubts. He wrote me a letter. I have those letters. "

He said, 'if you had been a kapo, I would have known, and I would not defend you. But - ' he checked with a hundred people, he called them in...(inaudible)...he called a meeting...(inaudible) 'you know Al Lipson? He's the nicest of guys. A brilliant guy. He knows four languages fluently. And, I worked with him together. He worked in the stone quarry. I worked with him in ammunition, I worked with him in furniture. He was a kapo? What do you mean? He was a kid! A youngster. He was 19 years old. There was no kapos (inaudible), sign it.' 'With pleasure,' I told him that I'm having trouble, that the Radomers object, and are giving me trouble. He send me all this, and they went to a notary public, and had it notarized, all these signatures. I produced it, at the Recociliation Board. I had 25 signatures from Australia that somebody collected there from people...my wife has a brother in Australia..."

WH: "You were made about Ben Meed giving them so much time?"

AL: "Yah. I asked him one more time, and I said, 'Please, I'm going there give me black and white that they called me a kapo, because - I told you (A)'s letter did not contain a word...(inaudible) Ben refused to give me even a statement. I said, 'Ben, I would have to call you as a witness in person.' 'Al, don't do it to me. I can't, but I'll tell you what I'll do for you. (N) was a witness, he heard them say, accusing you of being a kapo, a policeman. He will testify and he will swear at the Reconcillation Board.' And, (N) agreed. When it came to the (inaudible) session, where I produced (N), and one of the young lawyers says to him, 'Mr. (N), you were there, did they specifically, did Mr. (A) specifically say that Mr. Lipson was a kapo or policeman?' "

"He said, 'I'll tell you the truth, I cannot say it. Because if I say this, I would like a kapo myself. I cannot accuse Mr. (A) of anything. I don't remember. It's already a half a year, I cannot recall.' (Deep sigh.) WOW: (spoken with a heavy whisper): my wife was there, she start to cry. (E) was there on my side. (E) says, 'Wait a minute. Mr. Meed told me that the seven people called him 'kapo' and you were there and you didn't hear?' 'Well, maybe they said it when I went to the bathroom.' And I went in the next day, (N) used to come in every day, (inaudible) I refused to shake hands with him. I said, 'You betrayed me, you were lying, you were suppose to cover up for Ben Meed.' So I told Ben Meed, 'I'm leaving. I cannot work for you. I cannot be a volunteer when you cannot help me in my hour of need.' "

WH: "So what happened, you're here, you still edit the paper?"

AL: "I left. I left and I came here to work. But then, you know, time pass, (inaudible-?Ben) called me out, 'I need a letter to be written. I want you to do this. Come in.' I say, I am here. I made a committment. I cannot leave. 'Give me one day a week.' I say, 'I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you one day this week, no further committments.' I would come in, but I have a soft heart, and he'll say, 'next week I want you to do a brochure about this - a four page brochure.' 'Okay.' So I went. So, I keep on going. Now, the 'Together' was taken over by Michael Birnbaum, in Washington and I dropped it. I said, 'No more.' He took it over, it was being published in Washington, until this year. This year, he has so much work with the museum, he said, 'I can't do it. Give it back to Lipson.' "

"And Michael asked me, 'Al, do me a favor, I can't. Please accept it. Ben Meed will even pay you.' I said, 'I won't do it for money. Because money means a commitment. I will do it as a guest editor.' 'No, no, remove Michael's name, and put yourself - . . . see, I don't care for those things. So I put myself in as guest editor for the previous issue. But now, Michael Birnbaum wrote me now, 'Al, why do you have - what do you mean, Guest Editor?' Because I say, (inaudible) a commitment there, then I have to do it the next month, for the next quarter, and I have my own agenda."

END OF SIDE TWO. TAPE ONE.

SIDE ONE. TAPE TWO.

WH: "...this matter about being a policeman or whatever. it seems such an easy matter to prove or disprove in the sense that there are lots of people from Radom who are around when you were there...who know you weren't there, so what's the big deal?"

AL: "So that's what Ben Meed tried to find out, and people told him finally. That most of the Radomers who are alive are clients and investors with (A). I get a dozen telephone calls from people. Mr. (inaudible) had two brothers who went went through with me...and they were my age, and went through from 1939 until 1945 together, every step, and I wrote them notes, 'Please help me out in this controversy with (A). And could you be a witness. And if you wish, sign the enclosed statement.' A short statement. 'I know from being with Al Lipson through the war, I know he was never a policeman or a kapo.' He calls up, and he broke down in the middle of the conversation. He said, 'I had invested with (A) more than \$100,000, my lifetime savings. If I do that, he will take the money away.' I said, 'What do you mean, take the money away?' He said, 'I have no receipt.' "

WH: "Because they couldn't give him a receipt."

AL: "This is (inaudible) lives in Flushing. I got the same reply. People called me from California, 'Al, I love you, really love you, but I can't do it because it's a question of big money that I have invested.' "

WH: "So what you are saying is, this is an example of a powerful man, punishing you for having the nerve to take him on."

AL: "Listen, you know, you want to speak to an intelligent person? A bigger intellectual than me? I would contact you with (E). First of all, he speaks better English, good vocabulary, and he has an excellent inside, he's ten years younger. You have a person who will contribute a lot. And he's not in Florida. He lives in New Jersey, but he will meet you in New York...he's a survivor from Radom, he's one of those who was going to be the president, and ask him about the subject of the Radomers because he completely cut himself off from the Radomers. He wouldn't attend the meetings...he was going to be president. Finally (A) kicked him out."

WH: "Did he say anything against him? Did he say he was a policeman, too?"

AL: "Not with him. Couldn't...he was 13 years old."

WH: "I wanted to ask you, why, how did it happen that this group of survivors that I'm always meeting here, and in general around the country, so many of them are Polish. What happened to all the Hungarian survivors? I mean, I understand that a lot of the Hungarians are Hasidim...I have interviewed Hungarian survivors, quite a few of them, and I have talked to Hasidim, who are Hungarians, but the overall, do you think that the number of survivors in America who are of Polish origin is greater than the number of Hungarians?"

AL: "Yes. Definitely much larger."

WH: "Even though the Hungarians were the last to be deported?"

AL: "They were the last to be deported, but their losses were very heavy. And many more Polish Jews survived than Hungarian. The Polish community was the largest in Europe. The Hungarians had a total estimated of 800,000 and 900,000, between certain Rumanian territories, it's 900,000 otherwise it's 800,000."

WH: "Didn't some go back?"

AL: "About 450,000 were killed, so the estimate that there was 100,000 survivors in Budapest and maybe 50,000 - now, very few survived in the countryside of Hungary. They were deported. They were working on those people. Budapest was held back because of the presence of the Ambassadors, Sweden, Raoul Wallenberg, the International Red Cross had offices, Switzerland had rescue department there, so somehow the Germans did not - so 100,000 survived, BUT from those who had been deported from the countryside, a hundred thousand may have survived there too, so that's 200,000. And in Poland, more survived."

WH: "So you're saying that only 200,000 out of 800,000 Hungarians (inaudible) survived."

AL: "Yes."

WH: "And from Poland, maybe 300,000 out of 3 million survived."

AL: "Right."

WH: "...a lot of the Hungarians returned - ."

AL: "Returned and stayed there. The Polish people (didn't)..."

WH: "About yourself. It seems to me that it is very unusual - I assume that when you came here, you went into business."

AL: "Yes. Not immediately. I worked on a job...I was a clerk-bookkeeper working for my relative who brought us over from the D.P. camps to the United States. The relative, ?Ike? ?Kirschenbaum?."

WH: "You came to New York?"

AL: "To New York. And he had an office in the Empire State Building. I worked there. Within one year, he died, a few weeks after he sold the business. He sold the business, within about 9 months of my arrival, retired, and died. The new owner was a stranger to me, came in, saw the quality of work I was doing in the office, (inaudible), and accounting, pricing...they were manufacturing leather coats, leather garments, and sheepskins garments for mail order houses, our major customer was Sears Roebuck, and Montgomery Ward and Spiegel and others...Mr. Jacobs who took over after my relative's death, recognized my ability, and he made me Office Manager immediately, so within a year and a half, maybe two, after my arrival in the United States, I was elevated to a higher position above all the, two dozen people who work there, all were Americans."

WH: "How did he feel about the fact that you were elevated?"

AL: "Horrible. I was ostracized. But it didn't take long. They later discovered that I had a nice personality, I was not trying to use my authority or my power. You understand? I mix with them. I tried to be one of them. Until then I was not one of them. I was the refugee. I didn't have a name. I was a refugee. But I did not - I forgave them all this treatment, and I got the job, and I treat them fairly, - for instances, told them to go home earlier, or you don't have to come in, you don't have to report, or you're sick or something, a child at home, whatever. In other words, I showed a human face."

WH: "Were they mostly Jewish?"

AL: "Yes except for the telephone operators, secretaries. The sales people...people who worked there for 20 years already, old-timers...we worked out a personal relationship, that I became their greatest friend. Invited me to their homes. I did take a short course in Office Management for the job, the boss suggested it, at City College. But I did not go and take any Humanities or anything else. I was self-taught."

WH: "...what do you think you would have wanted to be had the war not cut short - ."

AL: "Well, I had applied to Paris...to the medical school...I wanted to be a doctor, very much..."

WH: "And yet you managed here to write, to publish, to do all these things."

AL: "I do it. I may not be able to do many other things, it is because I had the love and the ability for it, and the ability for languages. I speak German more fluently than English. Because I took a five year course in High School. Five years Latin and German."

WH: "The Eichmann Trial - ."

AL: "It was really, was the - I think the major factor was the denial of the Holocaust. It started with ?Butz? from the (inaudible- ?chester) University and then others, and this to the survivors was a slap in the face. It was the greatest insult, is to deny their suffering. And I am surprised at it. Because it didn't bother me, but there were cases, in reading details, it was different from the headline. But when I was reading the detail work of these people, like (inaudible-Crousseneur?) and I read (inaudible) the Forward by a former Israeli professor who (inaudible) those Liberals (inaudible)...book, a former Israeli professor in one of the Boston Universities, when I saw this, I got alarmed. I started writing and thinking about this subject. Now, this was as I said, one of the causes, because the people - in this case I must talk up. I speak up. And I listened to a few people, when they speak up, the first thing they say is, 'denial.' And I speak up. Secondly, it was the - another cause was the children grew up and they started hearing - read and hear and view on television, especially the Holocaust series on NBC and the children saw that, for them it was an eye-opener. They would say, 'pop,' 'mom, you never told me. You never told me about these things.' 'Well, I didn't want to hurt you.' It would be the answer by the parents. 'What were you afraid of?' Well, by then the children were already either past their teens, or in their twenties, and they started to inquire, so their parents (inaudible) started telling them the stories. Some of the children started to tape the stories of their parents and urging them to speak. 'Why don't you speak up. Tell me some more.' "

"And it became a major subject of conversation to them, and got the parents and children closer. In my own case, not that I told them, but it was not a taboo subject in my house. On the contrary. Whenever a few friends, our survivor friends, would get together, invariably, this would be the major topic. (inaudible) was telling a story, and my children were sitting there, one could have been 6 or 7 years old, and the other 10 or 11, and they wouldn't get away from the table. They had to know the story of the Holocaust. And our personal stories, my wife's and my own. To such a degree, that they knew them by name and by chapter. 'Tell the story of that and that.' They gave the titles. Later when they got married, I know that the major subject of conversation with their girlfriends, and later fiancées, and wives, was their parent's experience. And those wives couldn't hear enough, the young people. So, it also got them closer. And I know, he was telling - he said, 'Daddy, I just told Shelley the story of your liberation, or the story of Radom, the deportation - .' He remembered the dates, and they got so involved in it that it became a second nature. It's a part of their education, part of their upbringing, and when they went to colleges, they joined groups, and my son became a Holocaust speaker in Boston, this guy who studied at Harvard, so when he got married, they joined a temple and the rabbi found out that they were children of survivors, he speaks for the young, he's the permanent key-note speaker at every commemoration, and he knows what he's talking about...and just to finish this subject about the children, that they caused the parents to speak up, because they demanded it. They solicited the stories. "

"My older son, for instance, spoke for the first time on this subject when I was the Chairman of the Commemoration at the Fifth Avenue Synagogue...he was the main speaker, I didn't speak at all. I was only Chairman. He spoke. And another woman, my David's age, also a daughter of survivors, and she was the second speaker. Two surviving children, because the majority of the listeners in the audience were young people."

END OF SIDE ONE. TAPE TWO.

END OF INTERVIEW.