Tape four, side one:

JF: This is tape four, side one, of an interview with Mr. Walter Silberstein on November 17, 1981. You were talking about the Trans-Siberian Express.

WS: I will only tell you something what my parents told me. That in Moscow, there were about forty people on that train, forty, forty immigrants. That most of them went to the German embassy in Moscow and got money, got assistance.

JF: From the German embassy?

WS: My father wouldn't go. He said, "No, I never go to them and ask for money." Because they were all short on money, you see. Everybody could leave with ten dollars, ten American, no, ten *Marks*. Ten *Marks*.

JF: How do you explain that?

WS: Huh?

JF: How do you explain that?

WS: What?

JF: That the German embassy would give them money.

WS: Yeah. They gave them. They did it always. They were German citizens, they had the German passport. The rule, the general rule says that the embassy has to give support to German citizens who are in need in a foreign country.

JF: But Hitler had not...

WS: They were not Nazis, by the way.

JF: I see.

WS: They were always not Nazis, all these people were not.

JF: Hitler had not made such an order that this would, this kind of aid would not be given to Jews.

WS: Yeah, that came later.

JF: I see.

WS: Yeah, but that was very easy to do. He took away the citizenship. So then they couldn't get it any more.

JF: But in 1940 they were still able to do this.

WS: They took it away. This was also the same thing with the Japanese. You see, as long as you had the German citizenship, they didn't do anything. Only when Germany took the citizenship away, by one short order, huh? Every immigrant, every Jew who immigrated, wherever he lives, wherever he went, lose the same minute, is losing the same minute the citizenship. So we were free. They could do with us what they wanted.

JF: You had started to say that your parents went for some time by train and then there was a period of time by boat. At what point did they switch to the boat?

WS: *Das war in* Dairen. Eh, I don't know what it's called. They changed the name so many times. I might look it up.

JF: O.K.

WS: You see, in the old times, the so-called Siberian Express went through till Shanghai. And then, what is the name of this harbor?

JF: This had stopped by the time...

WS: Oh, this was long before already.

JF: Mmm hmm.

WS: And because they were always wars and battles go on there, this was stopped, I really don't know when, but years, years before Hitler came to power. This was in Manchuria, huh? So they went through Manchuria to, I forgot what is the name of this harbor. And in that harbor there was the end of the trip, and they had to take a boat. The boat took two hours. This was very primitive at that time. This was not a ship in our sense.

JF: When they arrived in Shanghai, you were living where at that point?

WS: In Hong Kew.

JF: In Hong Kew. And this was in a room in Hong Kew, or...

WS: I lived in a room, and I had rented my parents also a room.

JF: Mmm hmm.

WS: We thought later to settle somewhere better but my parents didn't get their baggage.

JF: Never?

WS: There were a lot of people.

JF: They never got their baggage?

WS: They never got it. Only what was, only the hand baggage they had.

JF: Was your father able to work right away...

WS: Yes.

JF: With the Jewish community?

WS: Yes. Yes. They were in a way waiting for him. And another one came after my parents. This was Dr. Kantofski. [Kranzler: Dr. Georg Kanterowski, p.413] I think you found his name in. He came after my father. And there was another one. They were, altogether were six. There was a doctor I have never seen him. He was before me in Shanghai. He was a young man, Winter, I think, Dr. Winter was his name, and he, he was only a short time in Shanghai. And then he got a visa for America. And there was a Doctor Teisner. [Kranzler: Rabbi Willy Teichner, p.413] He was also a very young man. He was there before my father came. My father knew him, and he died there on. This was a very tragic thing. He died from yellow fever, I think. He was maybe thirty years old when he died. And there were four rabbis. Two were Orthodox, and two were Liberal, or what you say, call here, Conservative. But in the whole, I would say there were not enough rabbis for us. And we were about 23 to 25,000 immigrants. And with all the weddings and divorces and funerals, they had a lot to do.

JF: Can you describe your living quarters to me?

WS: Hmm?

JF: Can you describe your living quarters to me?

WS: Now, they were very, very primitive.

JF: Can you describe them? Was there any...

WS: We didn't have...

JF: Indoor plumbing for instance?

WS: We didn't have a WC [water closet]. We had nothing. We were happy when the water didn't come through the walls. Huh? We had the cooking and everything, cooking, washing, in one room.

JF: Were there stoves available to you?

WS: No, they didn't have stoves. They had these so-called Chinese stoves. It's very difficult to describe them.

JF: These were heated by coal, these stoves?

WS: Yeah, by, and sometimes you have to make the coal ourselves from coal dust. With water, and then...

JF: Squeeze it together?

WS: Together to little eggs, and dry them, hmm? And we were heating by, by mostly wood, wood. And it was very primitive.

JF: Did you live in those conditions throughout the time of the ghetto also?

WS: I would say yeh. I would say yes. Of course there were people who were well-off, but this was from the whole immigration, maybe, not more than five percent, maybe less, who brought money with them, or they got money from relatives, or they had a good job. There were very few. You must understand, we had about 200 doctors there, 200 doctors. And I would say only 20 to 30 percent of that doctors were well-off. The other doctors went begging on the streets, and they went barefoot. I have seen the cases, huh? They couldn't make a living, not at all. There were, I mean, sometimes special reason that they had to do. There was one doctor, was a very young man, and a very bright man, and a very special doctor. He had immigrated to Dutch colonies, what is that, em, Sumatra or Borneo or somewhere. And when the Japanese came, he had a good job there, and he was a specialist for that tropical diseases. But he became accustomed to that, you see, he had dope, huh? But I learned there, everybody told me, people who lived there for a long while cannot live without that. They have to take opium and all this. So he came back, and he couldn't get settled and lose that habit. And this was one of the worst things I have seen.

JF: He was no longer able to get the drug that he was addicted to?

WS: No, he had to buy it, and everything he had, he was selling and selling. And in the end I was so friendly with him, and I tried to save him and it was impossible. He died on the street, and went in the winter barefoot and was begging [unclear].

JF: Why did he come to Shanghai?

WS: Yeah, they threw him out.

JF: Oh, I see.

WS: The Japanese threw him out when the Japanese took over this. Right in the beginning when Japanese went in the war, they threw him out.

JF: The conditions that you're describing now where the doctors are begging on the streets and this...

WS: This begging, this was only a few.

JF: A few.

WS: But the other, in between, they just made very poor living and they had patients and didn't get paid, and all the people also were poor. And...

JF: Are you talking now before the war...

WS: No, this was...

JF: Or after?

WS: This was already before the war, too. This [unclear] this really had not so much to do with the war, but, of course, there were other doctors who were there before, I think I told you that in the beginning. There was a kind of a colony, about ten, twelve doctors, who came right '33. And they were settled there, and they made there good, a good clientele, good patients there. They had the rich Chinese. And all these people, hmm? There were some dentists, and they made it. But, I told you, this were not more than 20, 25 percent. The others, up to some exceptions which I told you, couldn't make it right to keep their nose out of the water, I would say, hmm? They had to struggle.

JF: Can you tell me now about the formation of the ghetto and what happened to you?

WS: It really, it wasn't a ghetto in the way you would tell it a ghetto. It was a part of the city where everybody lived. The Chinese, most of all I would say, at that time the Japanese lived there. And English, Russian, everybody. The not so-well-off class of the people, I would say, of the population lived there.

JF: This is in part of Hong Kew?

WS: In Hong Kew.

JF: In Hong Kew.

WS: Yeah. And there, we were only restricted to this part, but this was such a big part, I would say, you can compare, when you say here West Philadelphia.

JF: Was this the section where you were already living, or did you have to move into it?

WS: No, I think I told you. First I lived in the French sector, and then I went out of money I had to move to Hong Kew because it was cheaper. I lived there already, and, I would say, at that time when the declaration came, the declaration of that ghetto, there lived already eighty percent, eighty percent of the immigrants lived there. And then they had to move in, but also not all. There was also a limit. That same immigrants who kept come in, I forgot the date, they could still live outside. That means the first settler of immigrants could still live on the. But I would say about 97 to 98 percent lived in, in that so-called

ghetto. But you had not the feeling you were in the ghetto. You could move around, free and out.

JF: You mean you were free to move in and out of the ghetto area?

WS: No, no. I come to that. I mean the so-called ghetto was such a big area that you can compare here to West Philadelphia, including Overbrook and Overbrook Park. It was a really, you could go for miles in that ghetto.

JF: I see.

WS: And you have everything. I mean you didn't miss it. The only thing was to get out. In the center city or to other places you had to get a pass.

JF: Was that difficult to come by?

WS: This was difficult. And I was once beaten up by this Japanese guy who was in charge of that.

JF: Which Japanese was that? Which man was that?

WS: Ghoya. He's in the book here.

JF: The "King of the Jews," he's been called.

WS: Yeah, but after the war he was a freed man.

JF: Tell me about your...

WS: And this was told to the Jews, "Don't do him anything." He was a spy. He worked for the American. And to hide that, on the outside, he was so rough. To hide that for the Japanese he was such a rough guy.

JF: It was proven that he was a spy for the Americans?

WS: Oh, he ran around, and he was good for the Americans. I have seen him myself.

JF: Where did you see it?

WS: I saw him running around, and he was shaking hands with Americans.

JF: Did you know anything of his spying activities during the time of the ghetto?

WS: Yeah. You see there was, this is also in history always the same thing. There was the Chief of the Gestapo. I forgot his name. They had the Gestapo there, and he was the Chief of the Gestapo. And he always ran around in S.S. uniform. And the German people, the German population there; they hated him, and they were so afraid of him. His wife, I think, was French. He was with a French girl married. And when the war was over, you wouldn't believe it, in the same minute he was the best friend with the Americans.

JF: This Gestapo officer.

WS: And then it came out; he was a spy. He worked for the Americans.

JF: So this Gestapo officer and Ghoya were both spies?

WS: Yeah. Yeah. This one was, too. I mean, I have seen both of them later together with the Americans. I've seen them.

JF: During the time in the ghetto, you observed Ghoya being friendly with Americans?

WS: During the ghetto?

JF: During the time of the ghetto.

WS: Now, what you mean. I tried to get friendly with him. Everybody was afraid of him. I, I...

JF: You didn't know at that point.

WS: Hmm?

JF: During the time of the ghetto, did you have any knowledge of his involvement with the Americans?

WS: No.

JF: This was later you're talking about.

WS: This was later. It came out after the war.

JF: O.K. Tell me about your encounter with Ghoya when he beat you up.

WS: This was the first time I applied for a visa. I remember exactly it was on *Erev Yom Kippur*. I was called for my, I made application some weeks ago, and it took awhile, and then I was called. And I came in, and all of a sudden I didn't know what he wanted. You see you have to come in. You have nothing to have in your hand. When you have a coat, you have everything to leave out, hmm? The only thing what they don't want from you is to keep off your, take off your shoes. And your other [unclear] you have to take off. And then you have to bow, and to bow, I didn't bow enough. I don't know. The girl who was working with him was a Jewish girl. She was a daughter from a doctor. I asked her later, "What he want? What I did wrong?" And she said, "You, you, [clears his throat] made some noise." And the [unclear] Japanese have a, how you say, complex. *Na, minderwertig*, inferiority complex, in English, em, min, ah...

JF: A mental?

WS: Yeah, a complex, and they feel, ah, I cannot come on the word.

JF: A suspicious?

WS: Hmm?

JF: A suspicious?

WS: No, no. They think you respect, you don't respect them. How you call that? It's a complex.

JF: Oh, inferiority?

WS: Inferiority complex.

JF: Inferiority.

WS: Every Japanese has an inferiority complex. So, [clears his throat] maybe I, maybe I did it, and he thought I was making some fun or what. [makes sounds aping Japanese] Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, out went my paper–and that was that.

JF: He hit you.

WS: Yeah.

JF: He slapped you around.

WS: He threw me out without a pass.

JF: He never gave you the pass.

WS: No. No. No. No. And so then what could I do. About six weeks later I was called to the Jewish, to the Community, and they had a whole list. And they asked me, "What happened to you with Mr. Ghoya?" He didn't give; I told the story. And so they said, "Here is the list. He will revise it. You have to go again. But you have to tell them some, some explanation." So I had applied, I had applied for, for book dealer, hmm? For book dealer, and they gave me now the application. The Japanese, I couldn't read it the translation. They had taken it down as "bookkeeper". So when I came to Ghoya, at that time, he was very nice. You never could know in which mood he was. And he said, "What do you mean? Why [Japanese words]?" I said, "It was a mistake. I applied as a book dealer and not as a bookkeeper." So, and, oh, he was laughing. "Oh, such a mistake! Oh, yeah, yeah. Here is your pass." But I had to go every month, every month, for a new one.

JF: And you were permitted then to be a book dealer with that pass?

WS: Yeah, yeah, no, not a book dealer, to leave the city.

JF: To leave the city. And what did you do when you left the city?

WS: But I must be back in the evening.

JF: What did you do when you were out of the ghetto? Where were you going?

WS: No, I got everywhere where I had to go. I didn't go every day. When I had business, of course.

JF: This was the period of time that you referred to earlier when you were dealing in second hand books?

WS: Yeah, yeah!

JF: Yes.

WS: It started, this was in fall of '42 til the end of the war. And, I would say, I never had after that some quarrel with him, because he knew exact, they had a very good memory. When he saw me, he knew he had once quarreled with me and that was that. But a lot of people had later quarrel with him. Everybody was afraid days before he had to go there, because you never could, he could put you in jail. He could do everything.

JF: What language did you speak with him?

WS: English.

JF: In English. Did you have any other experience with the Japanese authorities in the ghetto?

WS: I was beaten up once again during an air raid. The guy I didn't know. I had air raid patrol to make, and I was smoking. And it was a blackout. And the guy thought when I was smoking, they can see it up in the air, so he was beating me up. That was all. He didn't say anything to me. It was only [unclear].

JF: Can you tell me what you know of the *Gemeinde* that was formed in the ghetto? The Jewish community organization?

WS: Yeah, in which way?

JF: Any experiences that you might have had with them?

WS: Well, my father was a rabbi there. They were mostly sustained by, supported by Jewish organizations from outside the Shanghai, and voluntarily gifts and donations. This was the only way to sustain them.

JF: How were...

WS: Cause his salary, I think, my father got at that time $30.

JF: Thirty dollars?

WS: Thirty dollars the whole month.

JF: Mmm hmm.

WS: I mean compared to American...

JF: Yes.

WS: So it was dollars. In Shanghai dollars this was much less.

JF: How was the money gotten to the *Gemeinde* from outside of Shanghai?

WS: Yeah, till the outbreak of the war, I mean the American-Japanese war, it came regular. And then...

JF: But in the ghetto.

WS: There was a short intermission where it didn't come anything. And of course [unclear] did not come anything, but I think I told you before already. There were some Chinese merchantmen, very, very, rich men, who gave them money. And they were so sure that America would win the war, and they got it back, interest and capital.

JF: So it was through these Chinese merchants...

WS: Yes.

JF: That the other organizations outside of Shanghai were able to get money into the city.

WS: Yeah. They paid it in Shanghai to the Jewish organization and they got receipts for that, and this was going on two, three years, and after the war they were paid off, of course.

JF: When the ghetto was formed, what was the feeling among the Jewish community about the ghetto? Were they frightened that more was going to happen to them?

WS: It was so, I would say, the people who lived that ghetto or in that region already were not so afraid, because it wasn't any change for them. And I think I told you that about when at least one third of the people never went in town.

JF: So for the people who had been in Shanghai before this period of time...

WS: Yeah.

JF: They were not frightened.

WS: In Hong Kew.

JF: In...

WS: In Hong Kew, in that region. In that region, there was no change. They lived there, they had their business there, or no business, and lived in the camps.

JF: And they were not alarmed by the ghetto?

WS: No. Not really. The other people were so far alarmed because they had to give up everything outside what they had there, their shops there.

JF: The people who had to move into the ghetto.

WS: Yeah. And that was very hard, because they lost the little bit what they had already. They lost it. I wouldn't say all of them, but part of them, because they had to sell it. And they had to give up their businesses there.

JF: Was there fear on these people's part that there would be camps, concentration camps, or experiences like in Europe?

WS: At that time there were rumors, but we found out already that these were only rumors, that the Japanese wouldn't do it. In fact, when we moved over in the ghetto, it was clear for everybody that the war for Hitler and the Japanese was lost. And we knew that the Japanese was not so senseless to do things under that aspect. You see, I remember we were still outside the ghetto. We had to go in the ghetto, but we still lived outside when Italy went out of the war. You remember when the capitulation was? It was in September, I think, September '43 I think was it, hmm? No, you didn't live at that time. '43 I think it was. In September, when all of a sudden the capitulation of Italy came, and at that time the Japanese were very, very weak already, because we had a big colony of Italian people there and soldiers. They were, of course, they put them all right away in camps. They are all of a sudden, overnight, they were enemies. Before they were friends.

JF: What kind of camps?

WS: This was as a prisoner-of-war.

JF: I see.

WS: ‘Cause these were soldiers, as far as they were soldiers. There were maybe a thousand, two thousand. They were soldiers, they were friends, and all of a sudden, overnight, they put them in prisoners camps.

JF: Where were these prisoner-of-war camps located?

WS: Outside.

JF: Outside the city.

WS: I've never seen one. Some miles, ten, twenty miles, thirty miles outside. I remember we had a ship in the harbor. This was stranded. It couldn't go out. This was the Conte Rosa I think was it, or Conte Verdi then, I don't know the word right, three "Contes"– Conte Rosa, Conte Verdi, and the Conte, em,

JF: This was an Italian ship?

WS: Yeah. Good liners. At that time luxury liners. That last one was stranded when Italy went in the war and the ship just came in. I remember, when it came in, friends

of mine were on that ship and then that ship couldn't leave, and all the time it was anchored on the *Bund* [Shanghai harbor highway].

JF: When you say friends of yours were on that ship, do you mean that refugees were still coming in?

WS: Yeah. I told you, til the time the moment when Italy went in the war; then it was over.

JF: The ship...

WS: The ship came in May or June, I don't know. So around that time '40, '40, 1940. This was the last trip of that ship, when there were all trips over by ship from that...

Tape four, side two:

JF: Tape four, side two, of an interview with Mr. Walter Silberstein on November 17, 1981. So the reason that the ship was kept in the harbor was that it was dangerous for this Italian ship to be sent.

WS: Yeah, it was impossible. It was impossible. They would wait for it. Right on the, as soon as, comes to the open sea, they would, this was impossible. This was the only ship that was caught in the harbor. There was a German ship too that was caught in Japan. That also couldn't leave. It was all during the war in, I think, in Kobe, couldn't go out. So the only time they used that ship was for the exchange of the diplomats. This was about half-a-year later. This ship was sailing under a special flag, and everybody knew that. That ship brought out the British, French, American, and all the diplomats in exchange for the Japanese. They went over to Madagascar, I think, brought them all over with their families, with everything. And there they had concentrated all the Japanese diplomats from Europe, and they brought them back. So on the same day, on the same day, when the capitulation was I, would say in the same minute, they scuttled the ship that the Japanese shouldn't take it. So it sank, but only half, and it was laying there til the end of the war, in the middle of the harbor, the half of the ship.

JF: During this period of time of the ghetto, were you aware of any resistance on the part of the people who were there?

WS: What people? Chinese?

JF: No, no. The Jews.

WS: No. Resistance against whom?

JF: Being in the ghetto.

WS: No.

JF: Was there any kind of fight that they put up?

WS: It was senseless.

JF: It was senseless.

WS: This was senseless.

JF: Was the Jewish *Gemeinde* in charge of the police, or were there Japanese police as well in the ghetto?

WS: No, the Jewish community had nothing to do with the police. The police was completely in Chinese hands.

JF: In Chinese hands?

WS: In, eh, yeah. This was completely in Chinese hands, at least *de nomine*, [official/in name], at least official. Of course, when the Japanese came in, this was under their control.

JF: In the ghetto?

WS: In, all over.

JF: So...

WS: All over. The Japanese had the last command.

JF: Who were...

WS: The Chinese police did the same duties and service as they did before, but all the commanders and everything came from the Japanese.

JF: So the policemen were Chinese in the ghetto?

WS: In the ghetto this was more Japanese. This was, the police was completely mixed. I think I told you in the beginning in the police were Chinese, Indians, Russians, Russians were in there, Jews...

JF: There were s-...

WS: And also Germans.

JF: There were some Jews involved in the police?

WS: Yeah. Not many.

JF: Not many.

WS: Three, four, five, I would say. And the German, every nationality. When the Japanese took over, I think they didn't throw out anybody. The Germans they didn't throw out. The French were not in that. The French were in the French sector, and the French sector official went with Vichy. They declared themselves officially to go with Vichy. You know Vichy? I don't have to explain. And so they didn't do them anything. And in the settlement, there were not much change in the police. The only change was, I think, but I'm not quite sure if that was during the war or after the war. This I cannot remember so exactly. That they took out the Indians, the Sikhs. This was a special tribe. They were famous for their loyalty to England, the Sikhs.

JF: What did they do with these people?

WS: Nothing.

JF: They just kicked them out of the police force.

WS: Yeah. I'm not quite sure, but at least I know that after the war they were gone. After the war. I don't think they shipped them out during the war, because there was no transportation at all. I mean when Japanese took over. I think they still were in duty. They were the best policemen that, that...

JF: The Indians that you're talking about?

WS: Yeah. That was maybe that principal reason that they let them stay. We had only the *Pao Chia*, the *Pao Chia*. I think in the book he writes about the *Pao Chia*.

JF: And who were they? Can you describe them?

WS: No, the *Pao Chia* were everybody. Not only the Jews, the Chinese, too.

JF: These were all of the police?

WS: No, this was not police. What really the reason was for that I don't know. This was a kind of civil organization installed in, the main reason for the outside was against the air raids.

JF: And what was their job?

WS: But they were, in the beginning there were no air raids. Sometimes there came airplane, and nobody didn't know what it's a Japanese or American or what. Sometimes a bomb fell somewhere. So everybody had to do, in the age between, I think, 20 and 40, between 20 and 40, every male person, Chinese and Russian and Jews, everybody had, I don't know, two hours or four hours, that I forgot, in a week. And this was organized. And the organization of that was given to each specific group.

JF: Each specific Jewish group?

WS: Jewish group, Russian group, Chinese group.

JF: I see.

WS: They had to organize it, to call the people, and to make a schedule, and it's your duty.

JF: So everyone was involved in the *Pao Chia*.

WS: Everyone. Everyone. I think the main reason was, is to get the influence and a kind of grip on all the male population.

JF: I see.

WS: You see on that way they had them all registered. They had the lists. And maybe somebody was doing something wrong or he didn't come to the duty. This was very, this was very punishable.

JF: This was under the Japanese control?

WS: This was under the Japanese.

JF: What was your experience with the *Pao Chia*?

WS: Hmm?

JF: What was your experience?

WS: Yeah, I had to go.

JF: What was it like?

WS: I say I cannot remember. Was it two hours or four hours? I think it was four hours. That means two times, two hours a week. And we got the band, here, [he means an armband for identification] and we got the night stick.

JF: And what did you do?

WS: And we had to report, and then we were put on a place. And mostly, I wouldn't say always, mostly I had together a duty with a Chinese. And then there, I don't know if from the beginning on or later, they built small huts, huts.

JF: Huts?

WS: Yeah, where you could sit in when it was raining and so. And you had, there was also something, but I don't think this was the reason. The, most of that posts were on the border, on the border of the district of the ghetto. We had, there is also something I have to tell you. For a Japanese you have never to use the word "ghetto." He could beat you down when you said "ghetto."

JF: Why?

WS: This was, you have to say "district."

JF: Why was that?

WS: Now they wouldn't say they put the Jews in a ghetto.

JF: It was...

WS: It was the district.

JF: Was this bad public relations or something?

WS: They knew that was bad for them that they did it, so they have not to say "ghetto."

JF: Right.

WS: You had to say "district." And then it was mostly on the border. Mostly on the border, but on the border was always, on each street was a, in outside direction, and you had, you had to ask the people for the passports.

JF: Was the border of the ghetto sealed in any way...

WS: No...

JF: Or was it just guarded?

WS: It was not sealed. This was only by signs on, at the end of the district. Signs, I would say that was for the people who was not quite familiar with the [unclear] were not visible, hum? Only you had to show them that. And then we have to ask the people for the passport, but it was also a rule you had not, we, the Jews, had not to ask a Chinese. For that reason was the Chinese.

JF: Wait...

WS: Not to interfere with the Chinese.

JF: Wait, the Jews were not allowed to ask the Chinese for their...

WS: No, they, because for that reason was the Chinese guard there. The Chinese had to ask him.

JF: I see.

WS: And the Chinese also had no right to ask a non-Chinese.

JF: The Chinese were kept to their own.

WS: Yeah. But we made it a [unclear] duty. And we had to, what was more, everybody became a pass in Shanghai. Also the non-Jews.

JF: What do you mean?

WS: Every, all the Chinese, everybody became a passport, or a certificate, something. Hmm? Because, I think, it was always a big pleasure for me. Outside from the district we could not, for a long time we lived there, on, near the border, but the border side which goes out in the country, not in the city. There is a bridge. On that bridge was the border. And I made there, I had a, for months and months I was in the same place for my duty. And outside, far outside was a German factory, a chemical factory, with German engineers and so. And they always came in town, and it was always a pleasure for me to halt them. I knew who they were, hmm. But I had to, was my duty, and they got so excited, and I knew there was one lady, I think she was a Nazi; she said, "I have shown you mine,

my pass by now you have to know me." I said, "It's my duty. I have to ask you. The Japanese want it." When I say "Japanese" she was quiet.

JF: So...

WS: The Germans also were afraid of the Japanese. Everybody.

JF: So this, this, eh...

WS: So then, after two hours they came back.

JF: Mmm hmm.

WS: I wrote them up to show me the passport. I was so strict with their people [laughs].

JF: So this organization, then, provided the actual guarding of the perimeters of the ghetto, as well as the, serving for the air raids?

WS: Yeah, yeah.

JF: To warn people of the air raids.

WS: Yeah.

JF: And was there any supervision over you in your guarding?

WS: Yeh. We had a man, and he was, [laughs] he was one of the few German officers in the former *Reichswehr* [German Army]. I, he was a half-Jew, and he was the commander of that. He was a real, real German officer, a young boy, he was maybe thirty years old. He was a lieutenant in the *Reichswehr*. Up to that time I really did not know that Jewish officers were in the *Reichswehr*, but he was one in the, he was my section commander.

JF: You mean one of his parents was Jewish?

WS: Mmm?

JF: When you say a half-Jew, was one of his parents a Jew?

WS: His father was.

JF: His father was Jewish.

WS: Yeah, he was baptized.

JF: I see.

WS: He was a lawyer. The father was a regular Communist name. They were neighbors from us.

JF: Oh, you knew them at home? This family?

WS: What you mean, from Germany?

JF: Yes.

WS: No, no. I knew them there. They were neighbors in the ghetto.

JF: I see.

WS: They were lived three, four houses away.

JF: His parents lived there?

WS: His parents were there, and the two boys.

JF: But he was in the *Reichswehr*, the son?

WS: I don't know what the other boy.

JF: Now the father had not converted?

WS: I think, yeah, but at least he didn't belong to the...

JF: I see.

WS: He had his sons baptized. They didn't know anything from Jewish.

JF: The parents were not involved? Or the father was not involved in the Jewish community?

WS: No, no.

JF: No.

WS: He didn't care for nothing. If he was really a Jew or not I don't know, but by birth he was Jew.

JF: What was the attitude of the Jewish community towards a family like that?

WS: Didn't care about them. There were a lot of them. You see this Blumenthal, Blumenthal, the Secretary of, didn't you read it? He was in Shanghai, Blumenthal. Wasn't that his name? Blumenthal? [Michael Blumenthal, U.S. Secretary of Treasury '77-79]

JF: The Secretary?

WS: Of Commerce he was.

JF: Yes, he was in Shanghai.

WS: He was in Shanghai. I met him here last year, and he was on that meeting. He gave me his autograph.

JF: Mmm hmm.

WS: He was the same way. Nobody didn't know him.

JF: Mmm hmm.

WS: Of course, he was a young boy. There was, I remember, on television they interviewed at that time. Can you remember? And they take, they brought his picture, his picture from that time, when he was sixteen, seventeen years old. And he said he was delivering bread from the bakery. You remember that? And then he came back, he said, "Oh, yeah." His face I can remember. He came from this bakery that was a Jewish bakery, and he delivered the bread.

JF: Can you describe any changes during the ghetto years as far as how the people lived? What was going on with the community?

WS: No, I would say there was no change at all. The only change was that with the going on of the war, everything got harder because food stuffs became harder to get by, and the inflation, but that had nothing to do with the cattle.

JF: Were there still the schools as before the war?

WS: The school was already in that district.

JF: Mmm hmm.

WS: The Kadoorie *Shul*, and the other school too. It was a *Freysinger* school. There were two schools. They were already in that district.

JF: Were there still able to be productions, plays, and musical productions during the ghetto?

WS: Yeah, yeah. This was all the same.

JF: And your father was involved with the Jewish community?

WS: Yeah, he was the rabbi there, one of the rabbis.

JF: Is there anything more you can tell us about his experience in that role than you've already told us?

WS: You mean in this rabbinical? No, only what I know from him. I mean he had a lot of divorces, and weddings, of course. The only thing I remember was his first wedding. His first wedding [laughs] was with a guy who got married with a Japanese girl. This was his first experience. He was maybe in Shanghai one week, and this girl didn't speak German, and my father had to prepare a speech to her in English. And my father couldn't speak at that time not twenty words English. And I had to make it up in phonetic. And I was so afraid that he was delivering that. It was a terrible thing for me to hear that. But I knew this girl was so thankful to my father. To every holiday she brought him food.

JF: Did this woman convert to Judaism?

WS: Yeah. This was done already before my father came. She was converted.

JF: Were there many marriages like that?

WS: I wouldn't say many, but some.

JF: Primarily Japanese women and Jewish men, or any vice versa?

WS: There was one case, there was an Indian. He was a very rich man. He married a Jewish girl. And this marriage is still going on, I learned last year in San Francisco. I met a cousin of that girl and he told me, yeah, they were still happy. I didn't believe it at that time. There was one case, I remember, where a man *geheirite* [married] married a Chinese girl. And they had to get divorced when we left Shanghai on, this was in Tientsin. Now, you see, I come to the name Tientsin, where we have to leave the train in Tientsin.

JF: This was the town that they left the train in order to get the boat?

WS: Yeah. Yeah. So in Tientsin, it was so, there is a law in China that a woman, regardless how long she is married to her husband, when she leaves the country, her family, you know the family is a very important thing in China, I think still in all the Communist, that their family can prohibit that. The family can say, "My daughter, or our daughter, cannot leave the country." So, in this case, they went to the, yes, [unclear] already was the Communist. They went to the government and said, "My daughter is leaving the country, and stop it." And they came from the government, from Peking, came a wire on the train that she cannot leave. And the police stopped her. And the man, he was an Austrian, I think he was from Vienna. So he could go alone or he had to stay, so he want go, and they were divorced on the platform, on the–I don't know if I told you that before, how they do that in Shanghai, in China. That is a matter of a snap, you get divorced.

JF: Who snaps?

WS: Yeah, they have their old Oriental law, hmm? You know this, in a way, the same as the Jews have, with the *get*, you know a *get*? You can go. The man has only to

say "you can go", then a certain, only four witnesses, and they have, and they have some railway officers who witness that and I saw it. It took two minutes.

JF: And what happened after that to the family?

WS: No, she had to stay...

JF: She stayed.

WS: And he went with us on the, the only thing is they sorted out their luggage, and they left.

JF: Now you were...

WS: I would say there were very, very few cases like that. There were maybe some between Whites, I mean Russians and us, but in a moment I wouldn't know any, remember any. It was very, very few cases like that.

JF: We had talked prior to taping a little bit about the bombing. You said you wanted to describe the experience of the bombing.

WS: The bombings were in the last four weeks before the end of the war. I think the first one was on July the 15th. And this was, this was a very bad experience. This was only small bombers, the 25, and small bombs, but there were about 30, 30 airplanes. The whole thing is, they later, they called it the carpet, you know? In the language, the military language. They rushed over a special strip, and one after another, and let the bombs fall. They call it "they lay a carpet." And you could see it later. This was all covered.

JF: Did this go through Hong Kew?

WS: Yeah. This was through Hong Kew; really through Hong Kew because it was against the Japanese.

JF: This was American?

WS: Hmm?

JF: This was American? These were American planes?

WS: Yeah. And this brings me to another thought. We had discussed that, also, I remember, with a few people in Shanghai. The Japanese used the Jews in the ghetto, or in the district, as a kind of defense. They thought the American, everybody knew they are the immigrants, so they will not bomb us. Because the Japanese, all Japanese installations were there Admiralty, the cadet school for their sea cadets. And everything was there. The big antennas for the sea radio, oversea radio. Everything Japanese was in that, and that was their aim, they aimed on that, and I would say to 60% they hit them. They hit all these installations because what was on the side.

JF: Where were you during that bombing?

WS: I just, I, didn't I tell you that? I went to a friend with books. He would sell me some books, and I had an appointment with him at 1:00 o'clock. It were a very hot day. And I was there about 12, and I thought, "Maybe he is home." But he wasn't home. And then I thought, "What I do now? It is so hot and other business I don't have in a moment. I will go home. Maybe I can tomorrow or another." And just 1:00 on the dot was that bombing, and his house went up. And I went there. I was just, I just came home

and was ready. My mother prepared the lunch, and then I heard this coming. It was so that all the doors and everything was trembling. The whole thing took about five minutes.

JF: Mmm. What about the other bombings that you referred to?

WS: Now the other bombings were in other parts of the town, but, uh, we heard them. We tried to get some shelter what we could. This one, all four, but this was the worst, because, I think, on that day were 15,000 deaths. Alone, there were over 40 of the immigrants, over 40. The president of the Jewish Community was one of them.

JF: Was one of them?

WS: Mmm hmm. He was a lawyer from Vienna, Kardegg–He was one of the victims.

JF: How were the victims and the wounded helped?

WS: Yeah. This is something also I will tell you. That was a very, very good example there how the Japanese recognized the Jewish help. We were all helping. The deads, the wounded, all were in the streets, and all the doctors they came from the other part of the city from all over to help. And the Japanese gave a big, big declaration how helpful the Jews were in cleaning up this whole mess and in helping the wounded. And they brought them all in hospitals and in the Jewish schools and in the synagogues and everywhere. This was a very good example of cooperation. And then when the war was over, there was also something remarkable. This was, I remember, the night. The people were running around there, "Japan surrendered! Japan has surrendered!" And then our [unclear] there was a boy that was a redhead. He was a *brustig* boy. [show-off]. And he ran around and saying, almost was crying, "Back with you on the trees! Back with you on the trees, you apes!" [laughs]

JF: He said this to the Japanese.

WS: Yeah, they, the Japanese didn't understand it really. They didn't speak English. Very, very few spoke English. "Back with you on the trees, you apes," he was telling. And now, we were afraid the Japanese would do something, hmm? Or the Chinese, but this was a condition of the, of this capitulation. They had to keep the order till the last minute. And they did it. Nothing happened. Nothing. We were afraid also the Chinese would do something, because this was on August the 15th, I think. And the American troops came to Shanghai on September the 6th. I remember it was the day before Rosh Hashanah. And there came and, and now when the Americans came in, they didn't take the, the, their weapons from them. They let them do their duty. They made together duty, the Americans and the Japanese, up to the last minute when the last Japanese had left Shanghai.