HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY

OF

NAHUM MELTZER

Transcript of Audiotaped Interview

Interviewer: Sylvia Brockmon
Date: September 16, 1989

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NM - Nahum Meltzer [interviewee]
SB - Sylvia Brockmon [interviewer]
Date: September 16, 1989

Tape one, side one:

SB: Nahum, if you lived in eastern Poland in September, 1939 and came under Soviet rule, please tell me how your life changed. What was the name of your city or town? Please describe the changes you observed for other Jews. Were you in contact with friends or relatives in western Poland? Did you have any knowledge in 1939 to 1941 of the persecution of Jews elsewhere? Now, tell me how your life changed when you went into Russia.

NM: So, we lived till '39 in a little town in west Gali--, east Galicia, called Sołotwina. And I was, at '39 I was only a boy of 14. I am not ab--, I am, I do not think that I am able to give all the aspects of the changes of our lives. As a boy, my life, I feel that my life doesn't change. I was going to the-- I keep go to the, it was in, I think it was September, on September '39, I kept to go to, to the school. Certainly the life of my parents, of my mom and my grandparents, they changed a little.

SB: How did they change?

NM: Because I think that the prosperity was growing worser. There was no, the life changed a little, there was a-- but I do not think that the Soviets caused this change. I think the whole atmosphere in all the, in all Europe then, the-- we heard, not in our house, but in, I have an uncle who lived up in the upstairs, in the floor...

SB: Above you.

NM: Above us, they had a radio. And we heard with a great fear Hitler's, Hitler's speeches, and what was going on in France, and what was going on after that in '39, '40, when the occupation came, the occupation of France. And the, in those countries of Benelux and so on. And we had, it was a great fear. I as a child, I was a, I can say, it was a, it was a fear. I could feel the fear and all the whole atmosphere. My, I think my life didn't, doesn't change. I was keeping on going to my rabbi to get the lesson in *Gemara* and *Mishnah* [Talmudic studies]. I kept to go in the synagogue. I, there was back then my grandfather doesn't live, doesn't-- didn't live here that except he ate. But is was my grandmother, my grandmother and my mother. The father was, yeah, and my father. And we kept to go to the synagogue. We, our life...

SB: So your life didn't change much.

NM: Not really that much.

SB: And when did you finally get to the Soviet Union? How did you leave Poland? Under what circumstances?

NM: Then I left, at, at the first, at the beginning of, I think four-, 1941, I started to work at the Russian office called *Sagovskot* [phonetic]. There were, a Russian handled

with, with buying cattles from the peasants and sending to Russia. And I worked there as a, as a...

SB: Messenger.

NM: Messenger, or a helper of a bookkeeper. They were Russian. The bookkeeper was a Russian woman, and the director was a, manager was Russian, Russian citizen, of course, that came from Russia. And on 22nd of June, when the war break out between Germany and Russian, I was asked by my manager if I want, there to go, he told me, "We have got a order to evacuate into Russia." And so, I had the possibility to escape with them. And so I did. And he was...

SB: And what did your parents say about that?

NM: My-- I ask Mom, Mom said, "Go. If you have the possibility, go." And so I left the parents, I left the grandmother, and the uncle and all, they, they all afterwards, when I, I, they, they were, they were all vanished in the, in the Holocaust. They were, they were-- I want to say, after there I came to Poland, when I came to Poland back, in the army at '45, I went to the officers, the Russian officers in Sołotwina. There was, there was, after the World War there was, it was kept under the Russians. I went and asked what is, what was, what was, what happened with the parents and with all the family. And they said that Mom, the mother died on spring, '44-- '42, in a national, natural death, but all the other family was sent to the ghetto of Stanisławów[1], of Stanisławów. It was a great, great, great, town in the, it was the town of Stanisławów. No, and no one knows what happened with them after.

SB: I see. Now, tell me, if you lived, when you crossed the border into the Soviet Union, where did you live?

NM: After a couple of days, I think three days or four days maybe, the manager said to me, he said, told me, "You can go. You are free. We are not-," there, there was a bombing all the time was a bombing from the German airplanes. The planes, they were bombing all the times. And, I as a boy of, only, not, not, even 16. I, and all the refugees, what I see, I get with them and we went to east, to escape from the Germans. And all the time, I came to the, to, to, I, passed, crossed Vinnitsa and Kiev, and so we escaped.

SB: Now, when you say, "We," who are you talking about? Were you with other Jews, or just...

NM: I, no, I don't, no, not with other, there were Jews and Prussians, and I think wounded soldiers, and citizens, citizens of Ukraine. Citizens...

SB: And you were all going to escape the bombing?

NM: Going, escape from bombing, and escape even we, we are keeping to go to the east to escape from the front. Of course, by, after that really it was the only possibility to go. There was, by train, only by train. But the trains were working very, very bad, there

[1]Stanisławów –Polish spelling of this town; also spelled, Stanislav, Stanisle [Yiddish] and known as Ivano Frankovsk [Russian]. www.jewishgen.org

was a great crowd with other refugees, with all sort of refugees. And all the time there was bombing, bombing by the German airplanes.

SB: [unclear]

NM: I, yes, I think in September, it was September. I was in *kolkhoz*.[2] My intention was to come to Uzbekistan, where I, I heard, I had heard that the Jews, they are going to, going there, because this is a place that's much, not so cold as [unclear]. But, unfortunately, I went, I, the train I went to Saratovsk--, the region of Saratov. And there I was, I began, I was, I was, was already ill. I was, sw-, sw-, *geshvolen*...

SB: Swollen.

NM: Swollen from froze, from the cold...

SB: Cold.

NM: And from frost, and from hungry.

SB: Now, let me ask you this one thing, there were, there were other Jews with you going? I mean, did you have any contact with other Jews?

NM: It's a real-- you cannot see after a one, after a bombard, a bombard--, no...

SB: After bombardment?

NM: After bombardment, they, all they, spread...

SB: Spread.

NM: It's nothing, you are now with a group, and after bombardment, one, all, all, each one went to his way.

SB: I see.

NM: I, a boy, a friend to go from Bialystok, it was a Jew, I was friends with him. But I think that the friendship only last a month, maybe.

SB: And then you were separated.

NM: Yeah, I was separated. I came to the *kolkhoz,* I am single, one single, and it was-- I want-- I was in the train, and I felt, I felt that I'm not able to go anymore anyway...

SB: I see. Now, were you sent to a *kolkhoz* or did you just happen to...

NM: I, it just happened that I came to the *kolkhoz* and they asked for a, for help.

SB: And did they know that you were Jewish?

NM: Yeah.

SB: They knew that you were Jewish. And did, you didn't have any contact with any Jews from Poland...

NM: No.

SB: From 1940 to '41?

NM: No.

SB: And, did the Soviet government, as far as you were aware, or the Communist Party, ever criticize Nazi policy towards Jews before 1941? Were you aware of that?

[2]*kolkhoz* – collective farm in the Soviet Union (Russian).

NM: I was a child.

SB: …you weren't, you were just too young.

NM: …no, no, I am too young, I am [unclear]. I want only to say here, that this *kolkhoz*...

SB: Yes?

NM: They actually, they actually *ratavet*[3]…

SB: They saved your life.

NM: They saved, they saved me. They give me, first of all they give me a place where to, where to sleep. They give me blankets to, to, to-- I was very, very frozen, a place near a stove. And they give me also to eat, that was [unclear]. It was a Russian soup, called *shchi*[4] [Russian cabbage soup] all the time and a little bread, and that helped, helped me to, to survive I think.

SB: And they really saved your life.

NM: And after, after, yeah, I can even remember. There came some, some members of the police, I think, and they asked me if I am not, if I am not, as, they want to know if I am not a spy, if I, if I come from a parachute or so on. But I said, "I am innocent. I am only, I'm a refugee." And so they were convinced that I'm really a refugee, and they left me. And after that I came to myself, I had to attend to myself, and in a healthy condition I began to work at the tractor, tractor...

SB: You were driving a tractor?

NM: No, but first it was winter. I must to learn it first.

SB: I see.

NM: And this is a, so there are, you know as a garage, a great garage with tractors. And then I learned how to use them, how to repair them and so on, so.

SB: I see.

NM: And I became a tractorist in the spring of '42, the first spring when we went to-- it's not spring, really, really spring became in Russia in this, in this, in this in this area begins in the end of-- in the middle or the end of May, maybe, then I began to plow the, the...

SB: To plow the ground, sure, yeah.

NM: The ground where it was...

SB: So that you actually worked. It took you how long to get well, a couple of months?

NM: Oh no, a couple of weeks I'd say.

SB: A couple of weeks, and then you, and then they welcomed you as a worker in the *kolkhoz*…

NM: …yeah, I stayed in the *kolkhoz*…

SB: …and they trained you to work there.

[3]*ratavet* –saved, rescued (Yiddish)
[4]*Shchi* – cabbage soup (Russian)

NM: …in the-- it's not in the private room, it's what…

SB: Yes.

NM: Where the, all the workers, with all the, they, they have, they have to do it, *ubezhishche* [boarding house] called in Russian, you know.

SB: Oh, and they had a very, a friendly attitude to you as a refugee?

NM: I think so. I think so.

SB: Uh huh.

NM: I was already, then I began to, to read the newspapers. I read *Pravda*[5], of course I was very, very interested in what going, what was going on at the front. I was very, very happy when the Battle of Stalingrad, ended, how it ended, with the great victory of the Russians. And...

SB: Sure.

NM: And then, we, there also was a rumor about what is going on in the occupied territories. Ilya Ehrenberg...

SB: Yeah.

NM: First I, I, I followed his, his...

SB: Articles?

NM: His articles in *Pravda*-- I don't know, I don't know it was in *Pravda*, maybe one of the papers, the Soviet papers, and I was interested, I was, you know, I, I heard every, every article it was for me, he was also a great, great educator, and a great patriot of Soviet. And he was a Jew! So, he always, he kept the, the, the...

SB: The morale.

NM: The morale, yes, was what. And I followed his, I, of course, every, every information that came from [unclear], from the front. But, it was interesting, that it was from there. And, after the Stalingrad, there was a hope that maybe the situation will be changed, that the winter would…

SB: Hmm.

NM: But we have, we know, from the people we know what is going on, most, more or less in the occupied territories in Russia. But about the Holocaust, there was no-- death was not, not, not...

SB: …nothing [unclear] in Russian.

NM: No, no.

SB: Were the people from the *kolkhoz*, did they discuss the war in Poland, and how Hitler...

NM: I think they were very, very poor people.

SB: And they...

NM: They were not, not discussing...

SB: They were not involved in a political discussion?

[5]*Pravda* - Communist Party newspaper in the Soviet Union. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

NM: They were all the time busy with, with work, with their families. I only know, there came, once came a wounded soldier, and he stayed also in the *kolkhoz*. Maybe he was born in this *kolkhoz* maybe, because I know he was very, very afraid that he would be able to be, to...

SB: Sent back?

NM: To be sent back to the front. He was in a great, great fear that it will come and they migh- so he did everything to stay, to stay...

SB: To stay in the *kolkhoz*, yeah. Were you told what your future might be in the Soviet Union? Did they ask you to get used to the idea of staying in the Soviet Union?

NM: No.

SB: It wasn't...

NM: No, nothing.

SB: Was never mentioned.

NM: There was no mention of it, there was no time. I only know, there was a time in '42 that all the citizens, all the inhabitants of the *kolkhoz* were sent some kilometers from the *kolkhoz* to dig ...

SB: Ditches?

NM: Ditch, yes, against the tanks, against-- for soldiers as well, and make disturbances, you know, against tanks, with the...

SB: Yes. They were making...

NM: They were a road about ...

SB: They built tank traps...

NM: Yeah, yeah, we were worried that the Germans came [were coming] in...

SB: Were coming in.

NM: From Hungary.

SB: Were you called up to serve in the Soviet army?

NM: Not, in the Soviet army. I was called when I was 18, and in the beginning of, I think in the end of '43, or the beginning of the '44, I was mobilized to the new army, Communist, Polish army, which was organized in Russia. It was not the Anders' Army which left Russia in '42, or '41, '42, I don't know, through Teheran, through Persia and Palestine, to England or to Italy, I don't know exactly. But this was as a new army, under the commandment of Vanda Vasilevskaya, she was a Polish Communist, and Gen - General Zygmunt Berling. There were organized some divisions. I was already in the third division. Third part.[6]

SB: Of this Polish Communist army.

NM: Of this Polish, Polish army.

SB: Communist army.

[6]The Polish-organized 1st Tadeusz Kościuszko Infantry Division of the Soviet-Polish armed forces. Established 1943 under Stalin's approval.

NM: And with this, and, at the beginning of, I think in the, in April ‘44, I began to fought in the army. I began...

SB: What were your experiences in the army? What were your experiences...

NM: Experiences, we had...

SB: When you said, you began to fight in the army...

NM: Yes.

SB: What were they?

NM: At, at the beginning of ‘44, we were mobilized and went to Sielce. Siecle is a place near Moscow, 140 kilometers from Moscow, north from Moscow. And there was a place where we made the, the recruit, *tironut* [initial training] in Hebrew.

SB: Yeah, well, you recruited the other people into the army?

NM: Yeah, no, no, no.

SB: What do you mean?

NM: Can we stop a minute? [tape off then on].

SB: So, tell me how, what were your experiences in the army? You were mobilized...

NM: Mobilized on, I think in the beginning on, in the beginning of ‘44, and I, we went to Siecle, and there was, I was training for two months, or two-and-a-half months, in the artillery, as a, as a-- and so with that third division, we went to the front. We were sent to the front. And the front there, at the beginning, at April, maybe, or March, April of ‘44, was more or less when the border between Poland and Russia was till that, till 1939, the old border...

SB: The old...

NM: Between...

SB: Between Poland...

NM: Poland and Russia, then, then. I went, we went, I was under the commandment of a First Belarusian Front, under the commandment of Marshal Rokossovsky. All the staff was Poland, we went, the little staff there...

SB: Was Polish?

NM: But the officers, most of the officers were Russian, and most of them with Polish names. That means that they’re...

SB: …originally their families...

NM: …maybe they were, they were, they were Polish. So, my, my officer, my directly commandment...

SB: Commander.

NM: Commander, commander was called Yaroshevski [phonetic]. He was a Russian. He was a Russian. And we spoke of course Russian. There was a little Polish. The commander was Polish, half Polish, half Russian.

SB: Did you receive any news of the progress of the war from 1942 to '44, about what was happening, how the Germans were occupying different countries? Did you receive that news?

NM: Of course.

SB: You did receive that news.

NM: Of course. I said, I followed, with very, very great in interest.

SB: Absolutely.

NM: All the time.

SB: And did you, or anyone you know, join the Posufski [interviewer later corrects to Kościuszko] army? What does this name, here, [tape off then on]. How do you pronounce this again?

NM: Kościuszko.

SB: Did you or anyone you know join the Kościuszko army?

NM: Of course.

SB: All right.

NM: Kościuszko is what is the army. Kościuszko.

SB: I see.

NM: Kościuszko was only the name of the *First* Division.

SB: I see.

NM: I was in the Third Division, called Traugutt.

SB: Right.

NM: Traugutt. It's the same army, was the Communist Polish army...

SB: I see.

NM: Which organized in, in Russia.

SB: I see. Were you in any way influenced by the Communist propaganda, or the new life in the Soviet Russia, in Soviet Russia, in any significant way?

NM: Of course. Of course.

SB: Ah.

NM: The *kommissars* [Communist political officers], they were, they were all the time were meetings and they were, we had explanations about the, not so much about the life in the Soviet Union then, but more...

SB: Okay, go ahead.

NM: But more what is going on in the front.

SB: I see.

NM: And they give us such hatreds to the Nazis, and we were explained, we, we heard, first of all we heard what was going on in the occupation, in the occupation territories. There was now, now, we [unclear] that they did, and we, all that we know what is, how they killed all the citizens. We heard about the killings of the Jews. There was already known what is going on in the ghettos, [unclear]. So the-- and asked-- I was, of course I was influenced about it, but I was sure that our [unclear] was right.

SB: I see. And did you decide to return to Poland after the war, or were you asked...

NM: Oh, there was no choice. This is, was no, I was going with the army.

SB: I see.

NM: I was going with the army. I crossed Poland at, in, in I think in summer, '44. I was already we stand in Warsaw, not in Warsaw, but in the, one of the neighborhoods, one of the neighborhoods, Praga, called Praga. And then began the attack to, to occupy this-- yeah, here, I must to see, must to say that there was, when we come closer to Warsaw, there was a riot, a riot, a, of the Polish army, national army and, against the Russians.

SB: A rebellion?

NM: A rebellion, there was a rebellion.

SB: A rebellion.

NM: Yes, yes. And they thought that with the coming of the Russians, they will help them, the Russians will help them. But the Russians left them so fighting alone, no help. And that's just, and, so on. I meant only a remark. But I want to say after that, at the begin-- at autumn, '44, then begins the great offensive of, from, from the Vistula from Warsaw, and I saw him. I went with the army till, at 19th of May, '45. There was a, we had a great, how to say it, *défilé*, no, no, *parade*, I don't know how to say it in English. It was the day when they were, were, when the war was, came to an end.

SB: An end. When the war...

NM: Came to an end, yes. And then I stand, I was oh in Biesenthal. It's not far from Brandenburg, and not far from Berlin. There, then, there I ended, I was in the, and the war comes to an end.

SB: The war came to an end.

NM: [unclear] Adolf Hitler.

SB: And, you decided to stay in Poland?

NM: I had no desire, no decision about that. I was forced to stay in the army we were...

SB: In the Polish army.

NM: In the Polish army. We went back to fight the Banderovtsy.[7] It was *Ukraini* [Ukrainian], a *Ukraini* riot, the rebellion.

SB: The...

NM: Yeah. They were against the Communists.

SB: Okay.

[7]*Banderovtsy,* also called Banderites – refers to a revolutionary Ukrainian nationalist group (named for their leader, Stepan Bandera) which fought for the independence of Ukraine, but also joined the Nazis in fighting both Soviets and Jews. (www.ushmm.org, Holocaust Encyclopedia, "Stanislawow" and Philip Friedman, Roads to Extinction: Essays on the Holocaust, Philadelphia: JPS, 1980, p. 257-8, and www.encyclopediaofukraine.com, "Banderites")

NM: And we fought, we spent, I spent after the war, we spent in Lublin, in Majdanek, there was place in that concentration camp. And there I saw what, what happened, that there was, all the, all the signs, all that we could see all the crematoriums, all these things after. Then just after the war, we stand at Chelmno and Lublin, and Zamość in these places. And then I have no, I had no place where to go. I, as I thought at the beginning, I wrote to the office of, in the Sołotwina, and I heard-- it was Russian, it was Russian of course, there now. And I heard what happened to my family. I had no choice. So I decided to stay in the army for, as a...

SB: As a recruit for...

NM: No, not recruit, eh...

SB: All right [tape off then on], yeah?

NM: I, then I decided, I had not to go, I had no place to go. There is nobody left. There is no family. I was too young to make a decision to go to another place. I decided to stay. It was for me as a single it was to me, the army was for me, it's like I know, like a home, like, like, I was, I...

SB: And what did you do in the additional three years after the war in the army?

NM: In the additional three years, I became a sergeant major, and I was a constructor...

SB: Instructor.

NM: Instructor in, under officers, artillery course for artillery recruits, for the new soldiers in artillery. And there I was transferred not in, there was, as I said, not in Lublin and Zamość, in town, but to the oc-, to the, liberty places by the Poland, from the Germans in *Nieder* Silesia, in Silesia, not Upper, but...

SB: The Lower Silesia.

NM: Lower Silesia. And I stand till '41-- '48, till '48, I think the beginning of '48. There I became ill. They found that I am suffering from high blood pressure, and so I was discharged. I was for months in a *Kurot* [Russian: spa], spent four months in a *Kurot*, in a...

SB: In a, to a hospital?

NM: To a hospital and so, yes. And after then I got a *Posten* [German: job]...

SB: A release?

NM: No, no, no, a job.

SB: Oh.

NM: As a personal officer, not of personnel, the chief person in a factory of confection, in, Under Silesia [Lower Silesia], in a place called Żarów.

SB: And then what made you make a decision to come to Israel?

NM: I know, all the time I know that I have an uncle as a, he married in beginning of '39. He was married when he was in Poland, in Sołotwina, and he went with his wife, went to Palestine then, as a certificate, as a-- I don't know, he went, he got an legal certificate from the Britain. And they went in '39. They went to Palestine. I know that

they are, I didn't know what his address exactly is, but I could remember from the correspondence by him and his, and his mother, my grandmother of my mama, I knew that they lived in Hadar HaCarmel, Haifa. And so at '48, or maybe '47, I went to the Joint[8] and asked them that I have an uncle, I have an uncle, called Dr. Haim Shapner, who lived in Haifa Hadar HaCarmel and please if you can, please give me the correct address. And so, after a month, a couple of months, a couple of months I think, I got two, two letters-- one from the Joint, and the second from my uncle. The Joint told, the Joint told me in the letter that my uncle, Dr. Haim Shapner, is living in 77 Yosef Street in Haifa. And from the uncle, yeah, here I want to mention that I, when I came to the, when I was mobilized to the army, I changed my, I changed my name. I was called Maltzer Stanislav [phonetic], because I knew, I was told, that if I am, I am fall in the, as a prisoner in the German hands, all the Jews they are killing on the place. And so I made it myself as not a Jew, at, formally, not as a Jew, but I changed it to Maltzer Stanislav. It's a name, and so I hoped if I, if I falled in the prison, I can, maybe I have a...

SB: A chance?

NM: A chance to survive. So, I got a letter from my, also from my uncle at the same, at the same time, on the same day when I get a letter from the Joint I got also a letter from the, from my uncle, who asked me, that he was asked by the Joint that someone called Maltzer Stanislav is looking for him, but he don't know exactly what, what...

SB: What's the relationship?

NM: What was the, who I am. And he asked it, too. And then of course it comes later I told him all of this, and then I got an answer from him, he was very, very surprised, because, my great joy, the, the joy of him and my, we were very, very grateful and so, I-- after there was, I was discharged from the army, I looked for a, looked for a possibility to get legal to come to Israel [unclear]. And...

SB: [unclear].

NM: Yeah. And when they, when the Polish authorities recovered that I asked for a visa to Israel, this was after the, the, the Israel State was established...

SB: The War of Independence...

NM: Yeah, this was in '48, in late '48 or the beginning of '49, they discharged me from this place, as a, as a chief personnel of them, and they give me also as a bookkeeper, as a bookkeeper in another place, because this, the first day, the first, place where I, the first post where I worked, this is, was a, connected with a, with, no, with personal security authorities, with the Polish, with the ar-, with the Polish authorities. And I couldn't work as a Jew, who makes an escape from, from, from...

SB: Wants to leave the country?

NM: Wants to leave the country, I couldn't do it. So I was occupied as a bookkeeper, as a help for a bookkeeper, of course there I learned bookkeeping, in a little

[8]Joint – JDC, Joint Distribution Committee, an organization founded in the United States to help Jews overseas. (www.ushmm.org)

office in Żarów at this time.

SB: And then you finally got the permission to leave?

NM: And finally I did. I, finally I did, in the 15th, I believe it was the 15th, I got the papers, but legal I came by ship, by ship, and by, on the sea, by ship from Gdansk. It is a port in the Baltic Sea, crossing the Channel, the [unclear] Channel, ocean, Atlantic Ocean, and Mediterranean Sea, and came...

SB: Came to Israel.

NM: Then to, to Haifa. It was leaving on September 15th.

SB: Perfect.

NM: [tape off then on] Yes, and of course the meeting with the uncle was such a, such a...

SB: Joy.

NM: ….touching, such a [unclear]. It is undescribable. After a little, a couple of days when I came to Haifa, I began to learn in Hebrew in a three months' course, a daily course, was a great, intensive course. And so I learned after three months I occupied in the language, more or less, and I begin to work as a bookkeeper in the, in a company, Solel[9], a building company.

SB: Now tell me, do you feel that you have any effects on your health from the life that you were forced to lead? After you, what are the after-effects in your life?

NM: Of course. I think, oh, I think the blood pressure. This came from the situation, from the, I was alone, and I was, I was without family, without support. Don't forget that all the time when I was 16, I was alone in the *kolkhoz*[10], it was a suffering, [unclear].

SB: Now you didn't mention in your recording here what happened to your father. You say your mother died a natural death...

NM: Yeah.

SB: But what happened to your father?

NM: I know that he was sent from Stanisławów to Lemberg [Lvov], to that, and there in the ghetto I think in Lemberg[11] he was in a, as all the Jews, they were, they were killed.

SB: They were deported...

NM: …I think...

SB: …from the ghetto to...

NM: …they were deported maybe to Majdanek.

SB: To Majdanek.

NM: All the Jews from this, the, the nearest concentration camp was Majdanek,

[9]Solel Boneh company which organized Jewish laborers for building projects in Israel.

[10]See footnote 2, page 3.

[11]Mr. Meltzer's personal history form indicates that his father died in the Kuty Ghetto at the end of 1942. Kuty according to www.jewishgen.org is located 52 miles SSE of Ivano-Frankivsk (Stanisławów).

and I think...

SB: And then would, do you think that your, any other family, from your extended family, your aunts, your uncles, and all of the others would have, or also from the ghetto, were...

NM: All, all...

SB: Or...

NM: Of them were vanished from-- you say vanished?

SB: That's right. That's were all with...

NM: All of them, all of them I think.

SB: Alright. And you feel then that your high blood pressure certainly is a result of the pressures...

NM: Of course. No, no, no, no, it's not only the, the high blood pressure. This is, all the feelings, I think, they are also, the, the, how to say it...

SB: The emotional?

NM: The emotional. It comes, you know, of my, of my, I cannot see, I cannot see a film and movie, last weeks we saw about the work in the, in the city of [unclear].

SB: Yes.

NM: It's called...

SB: The *War of the Worlds*.

NM: The *World and the War*[12], yes. I couldn't, I could only see the three first...

SB: Chapters?

NM: Chapters. And at the beginning of the war, the occupation of France, I could see that I, I was feeling emotionally and in the battle of, this was the battle of Stalingrad, I could see the falling of German. But the last chapter, what was going on in the concentration camps, I know, and I didn't open the television. I couldn't open it. I tried, I have enough what I have seen in Majdanek when I was standing there for a couple of months. It's enough.

SB: And you think that has affected the rest of your life, eh...

NM: I think it will follow me to the rest of my life, I think so. I am sure. [tape off then on] Not exactly only my life, but my wife's life. She also lost her family in the occupation, she didn't suffer directly from the Germans, but I think the atmosphere of the concentration camp, what we heard after from the survivors, and from the, from the all, what is written in the books. We are, we are I can say we are obsessively we are reading. I cannot see, but to read what was, what went on there, I, I read it, I, I read Elie Wiesel. I read Friedland[13], books and so on. But I think it's not only our feelings that it's, it adds an influence, but the influence of the Shoah [unclear] our, our sons. And I think it will keep, I, I think for, for eternity.

[Tape one, side one ended; end of interview.]

[12]Possibly *The World at War*, British documentary series.
[13]Possibly Saul Friedlander.