

OK, Jill, you can start anytime.

OK, today is Thursday, November 21, 1991. We're interviewing Henry Deutsch for the Holocaust Oral History Project here at Temple Beth Sholom in San Francisco. Assisting with the interview is Eric Saul.

OK, could you just tell us your name, your birth date and where you were born?

My name is Henry Deutsch. I was born in Vienna May 28, 1919. And actually my given name was Heinrich and I anglicized my name in Panama to make it easier for people to know who I am. And I was matriculated in the Israel kultusgemeinde in Vienna the name of Heinrich, Heinrich Yuri Deutsch, May 28, 1919.

OK, now you said you wanted to--

Yes I'd like to paint a picture as far as I remember back. First of all, I would like to make a statement as to the fact that this is a very painful episode for me to talk about. It touches my very soul and heart.

The fact it happened to our people, they have to be remembered for old times. They cannot be forgotten and shall not be forgotten.

And the only reason I'm doing this, doing this interview here is I wanted to have future generations have an insight as to the happenings in Europe after the First World War.

I was born into a family, a very well to do family of merchants. My father was the heir to an uncle of mine into one of the largest textile companies in Vienna in the whole Austro-Hungarian Empire. This was long before I was born, that company existed. It was working, was working in now Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, and of course, Austria.

The family I was born into was a Jewish family. My grandmother on my father's side were shtetl and kept a kosher house. However, my father and mother, they were much more secular Jews and I was brought up a secular Jew.

Not meaning that I was not given Jewish education. Actually, my professor in high school of Jewish was Dr. Frankfurter, a rabbi, And he was the brother of the Felix Frankfurter, the Supreme Court Justice in the United States. He was the brother. He was the one who taught me my Hebrew.

I have to paint a picture that Jews in Germany and Austria were so far assimilated that they became first citizens of the country. And we didn't know much more about Jewishness that we were Jews as a religion. That is, not a conscious Jew, but a religious-- it was a religion like Catholicism or Protestantism. We were Jews.

Now the country of Austria has a very long history of antisemitism goes way back. In some instances, it was more latent and others it was much more open. And of course, the year 1938 brought it out to an effect never seen before, not even in Germany. It was much worse in Austria than in Germany.

The Austrian people, the history says that Maria Theresa was one of the greatest empress of Austria. She was an antisemite. And her son Joseph II, he was a very liberal man. He was a Mason too. And he was Jewish-friendly. And so it went, up and down, up and down for the Jews of Austria.

And we, the Austrian Jews, we always tried to assimilate within the country. We didn't try to say that we are Jews first and then Austrians. We said we were Austrians, and secondly we were Austrians, and third we were Austrians, and fourth we had the Jewish religion.

Now, I can go back to my very young years when I was in high school, we had professors who were antisemitic and they made it well known that I was Jewish in front of all the class. I was made sometimes a laughing stock.

He came out with sayings, trying to copy Yiddish, which I personally never spoke until I reached Panama. I was perfect

in Yiddish and I speak Yiddish. But I didn't speak it in Austria. Yiddish for me was a language which the Jews from Poland and Lithuania and Russia and Romania who immigrated to Austria brought with them.

The second district in Vienna was the Jewish district. My grandmother lived there. She observed every holiday, on holiday she went to shul. My father, my, my brother and I we went with him to visit her.

And we were members in the Seitenstetten Temple in Vienna, which is-- well, if you can talk about the elite, it's the elite of Jewish life in Vienna. Used to be. And this is for the first time I saw Baron von Rothschild on holidays with his top hat. And I was quite impressed with that. And we observed Pesach, we went to Seder every year to my uncle's.

My life there in school was intermittently shown that I was Jewish in a very negative way. Then I joined the Boy Scouts in Vienna. And I have a letter here from my troop leader who immigrated to Athens, to Greece, after 1938. The fact that as a Boy Scout we went on summer camps. We went to summer camp in Italy in the year 1933. And in 1933 we were invited by the Youth of Mussolini. Already there was, the relationship between Mussolini and Austria was much better than Germany and Italy at the time because Hitler already was there. So the Balilla, the Youth of Mussolini, invited us over to visit them, which we did.

We went to Northern Italy and on the way to Venice or Milan or whatever, when all of a sudden, we saw a concentration of military tanks and units massing at the border of Austria.

What happened was that the illegal Nazis in Vienna had murdered our chancellor Dollfuss, sorry, Schuschnigg wasn't on the scene yet. Dollfuss. And were trying to make a putsch to take over the government for Nazis. And Mussolini didn't agree with that, so he massed his armed forces to intervene. He didn't want Hitler in Austria.

I have to give you a picture now as to the political life of the Nazis in Vienna. The Nazis in Vienna were always illegal. They were not permitted to function in Austria. But they were the strongest and the most radical elements in Austria.

The Social Democrats, of which we were not members but my father voted Social Democratic all the time. The Social Democrats were not as well organized. And then we had a third party, which was the Heimatschutz, which was a little bit on the fascist side of the Austrian government. They were also fascists, but not as-- much less even than Mussolini.

So they fought each other, the amateurs and the Social Democrats, the Schutzbund. It actually came to war. I remember when I was a child the cannons were brought up to the streets below where we lived and they were shooting into the 21st district, which was a stronghold of the Democrats. And they really bloodily suppressed the Social Democrats. They suppressed them. So the Social Democrats didn't have any force at all in the government or political life.

The Nazis were helped from Germany. There were financed from Germany, they had uniforms. Their ideology was there, and the latent antisemitism in Austria helped them to get more and more converts and their work became quite outspoken.

It was a time, I remember when I was still small, I don't remember exactly how old I was, when my father and I, we came walking. We didn't have an automobile these times, nobody had an auto so we walked most of the time. And there was a demonstration by the SA, illegal SA, there in full uniform with torches.

Well, all of us were afraid. They didn't do anything. I mean, we were just walking in, they marched there. They sang songs, Nazi songs, but we were afraid. I mean, I didn't know as a boy I was-- what's going to happen. What's going to happen after 1938 comes later.

So the Nazis killed Dollfuss and wanted to make a putsch and take over the government. That didn't materialize, they couldn't do it. The professor Schuschnigg took over and he became chancellor of Austria. And he started a new movement now called the Vaterlandische Front, which means the Patriotic Front, of which I became a member. Patriotic Front.

I want to point out the difference between nationalism and patriotism. With patriotism, I agree 100%, you can be a very

good patriot and it's a good feeling to be a patriot. But once you become a nationalist, you become violent. You become aggressive. So this is a big difference between nationalism and patriotism.

Now the Patriotic Front I belonged to was fighting actively for a independent Austria, independent from Germany and France. In February 1938, Schuschnigg was called to Berchtesgaden by Hitler and called on the carpet. And it was really a very sad sight to hear that because-- and he stood up to him. He scheduled a plebiscite for Austria on March 13 to vote. Are you for an independent Austria or not? Vote yes or no. And this was the death stroke for Hitler because he knew that the Austrians might, I didn't say they would, but they might.

Now, I have to say something about the Austrian people too, because the Austrian people, and I cannot generalize it by no means, there were some very good Austrians, very good Austrians. And I can't say at this point what percentage were the bad ones, what percentage were the good ones. The fact is that the bad ones took over and the good ones disappeared.

So on March 11 after Hitler had given an ultimatum to Schuschnigg. Schuschnigg resigned and he already had in the government upon Hitler's demands a man by the name of Seyss-Inquart who was made Chancellor of the Interior, which is the key post. He controlled the military, he controlled the police.

On March 11 we were sitting in my uncle's apartment, having dinner with the radio on.

Everybody was-- before that, I have to mention that we had demonstrations in Vienna of which I partook, pretty violent demonstrations against the Nazis. We were marching on the Karntner Strasse, which is the very elegant, the most elegant street in Vienna, purchasing and buying street for stores and so on.

And on one side the Nazis marched, on the other side we-- they felt the Patriotic Front-- and the Social Democrats joined us. They had the three arrows on the lapel. And it was pretty bloody. We bloodied the noses of the Nazis then. So this was another reason for Hitler to say that German blood is flowing. German blood, it was Austrian that--

It was the Austrian Nazis who were bloodied, not the Germans. Maybe they had German instigators there, but was mostly Austrians. So Schuschnigg resigned on May 11, and we heard that on the radio. And his last words were "God save Austria." In this moment we all stood up.

We knew that-- my mother was there my brother and I and then there was my uncle, my aunt his wife, their daughter. And we knew that we young men had to leave. That from one day to the next we were not sure about life. We were free to be shot or killed or aggressively attacked by anybody without any reason or rhyme. What will we do? Where will we go?

And I come to a point now which probably I should say a little later, but I blame the rest of the world the same as Germany.

The world was closed to us. No country would take us in.

My mother had a good friend of hers who was a singer in Vienna. And her brother had left Vienna the '20s, '22, '23, and went to Panama. There was an idea came up that maybe we could go to Palestine. It wasn't Israel, it was Palestine. My brother and I could have gone, as hard as it seemed, but without my mother.

My mother would have to go to England as an employee of a household. And we didn't want to split the family, so we decided against that.

And then this friend of my mother's came in, Elza Kaufmann is her name. Was her name, she's not alive anymore. Excuse me. The idea came up that we could get help from him to go to Panama.

So we got in touch with him and yes, he would have to put up a deposit. Minimum \$50, \$60 at the time. And there was a group of 26 people who took him up on that and he got that for 26 people.

But there was no Panamanian consul in Vienna. We had the permits, but no visa. So one of the group of the 26 went to Hamburg where the nearest Panamanian consulate was, and he got the visa for all the 26 of us. So now we had our visa. And then we booked, then we booked on the Viglio, the ship Viglio out of Genoa in the month of September.

But we didn't want to stay in Vienna one day longer than we had to because we never knew. The picture in Vienna became so grim. Now I have to paint the picture in Vienna after 1938 because we Jews, like I said before, we were just free as-- I mean, nobody really had any recourse to anything there. The minute they knew you were Jew, it doesn't matter whether you were killed or you were mistreated or you spat up on or whatever. Smart vignettes from that era.

My cousin, I have a picture of him here. He was caught in the street in a roundup with Jews. He was given toothbrushes and he had to clean the streets or the jackboots of the SS.

We had we had dinner at my uncle's one evening, it was my brother and I and there was my uncle his wife and his daughter. We sat down for dinner and all of a sudden there was a knock on the door, pretty loud and persistent. My uncle opened up, there were three SS out there with rifles and bayonets, jackboots and everything. Stormed into the apartment looking for God knows what? Money, jewels? They turned the whole apartment upside down.

I went into the bedroom and everything was just left in shambles. My brother was so much younger than I. He knew that my aunt had hidden her jewelry in an upholstered chair. And he was so afraid, he wanted to get rid of them. He said I'll show you where the jewelry are. He pulled them out, they grabbed and ran out and we never saw them again. We were lucky that nothing else happened. So actually, he could have saved us from worse things. But that just goes to show you, there was no recourse to do anything.

My uncle lived in Molkereistrasse in Vienna, which was next to the Morzinplatz, which were a highly hotel, a huge hotel there. The hotel was the command center of the Gestapo. So you know where we were.

These are things from which really is painful to talk about. I mean-- my father, I have to go back again to my father's early life, long before I was born. He was a good Austrian citizen. He was in officer in the Austrian-Hungarian army. He served at the Russian front. He was taken prisoner. He was sent to Krasnoyarsk, to Siberia.

He wanted to go back to Austria, so he grew himself a beard. He spoke four languages, he'd learned himself Russian, escaped and got back to Austria. Just goes to show you, a patriot not a nationalist, patriot.

This is what hurts. Part of my uncles, they were serving as officers in the army. One of them was severely wounded in Italy, in Isonzo. Others served on the Eastern Front. First World War, not second, of course. So the family, like I stated before, was patriotic Austrians, and this is what happened.

Well coming back to 1938, when we decided to go to Panama. And my mother my brother and I we decided we want to leave Austria as soon as possible. Better a day ahead than a day too late. So where do we go to wait for the ship to leave in September? We had gotten back to Vienna in 1937. We had lived in Budapest, Hungary for two years, and we got back in October in 1937 to Vienna. So my mother thought that we could go back to Hungary, we still had a permit, and stay there until the ship leaves and then go to Italy.

Now I want to-- well I should not read the letter from Czechoslovakia do I?

Go ahead.

One of my uncles, my mother's brother, lived in Prague. And my mother first thought that maybe we could go to Prague and wait there. So she wrote him and he wrote back to her. No, I'm sorry. This letter is dated September. That is referring to our previous asking him to go to Czechoslovakia. This letter, both these letters reached us in Geneva shortly before the ship left.

It's says, "Dear Vilma," that my mother's name. "We received your dear letter and with my best intentions I can't give

you any advice. I'm sure that the political situation will remain quiet, but nobody can be sure. I would be very sorry--"

This is before Czechoslovakia was taken. Czechoslovakia was still independent, but there were questions regarding the Sudetenland. The Germans wanted the Sudetenland, which was still not given to them but later, Czechoslovakia became also a victim.

That's why it says, "I'm sure that the political situation will remain quiet, but nobody can be sure. I would be very sorry if we could pass up the opportunity to see each other. But I don't want to accept the moral responsibility for it. I can understand you wish that we should follow you." That is come with us to Panama. "I hope that it will be possible to visit you once, but I hope to be able to stay here for the rest of my days."

And he did. He was killed.

"I wrote to Lisy," another aunt of mine, "a few days ago and thought that she also was affected by the happenings. Today I received the letter from Julius," a very good friend of my parents, "and yesterday Ygaza Weiskopf," who is family of ours, again, "brought personal greetings and report from you. Ana Klein's husband," friends, "was here yesterday. I was not home and promised to call again. I believe that they are going to Australia. I did everything I could regarding representations."

That is, my mother wrote to him. If we go to Panama to start living there, we should get representations or become somehow active to earn some money because we didn't have any.

"I would, however, prefer to see the boys," my brother and me, "doing other things and making a living through commerce. But I can't make a judgment from here. I see it very difficult to get representations for the boys, one at 16 the other 20." I was not 20 years old as that says. I was 18, I was not 20.

Excuse me. These things like this should be shot out. OK.

"They don't get representations at that age. Therefore, I turn it over in your name. The difficulty is that you have never worked in any business and therefore you don't have any references. Maybe when you are there it would be easier and that will always help.

Meanwhile, I have written to various industries, glass, porcelain, and tableware. I went personally to the chamber of the glass industry in Prague and I shall make copies of 40 German and 20 Czechoslovakia circulars, which the secretary will send to all companies. I also wrote to engineer Latina of Cosmos of Olmitz, who manufacture all kinds of machines like meat grinders, et cetera.

Besides I will go to the messe," trade fair, "and I will research about steel silverware. I would not start anything in manufactured clothing, these items are too heavy and you can start this once you're there.

Even if I look at this pessimistically, and did everything I could, you also have to figure that with representations for overseas you will have to wait a long time for the commissions because of the time elapsed from the sale till the goods are delivered and paid for. It will be five to six months. Even if you are very busy now, I would like to ask you to write soon again embrace you and the boys in all my love."

And then his wife added on, "Dearest Vilmachen, I hope that by now everything is all right. We can safely say that we are thinking about you continuously. Even if you can't decide to come here, I'm very sure that we shall see each other again. The world has become much smaller because of the big events.

But maybe you will reconsider. I was very happy to have met with Klein, he's a very nice mensch. I'm still expecting a letter from you, Julius, regarding you and the boys. I'm very optimistic, and now we are waiting for important news from you. I kiss you and the boys with all my love."

This was written on the 7th of September. No, I'm sorry. The ninth month is September isn't it? Yeah.

The next one probably reached us in Panama already because this was written on 24th of September and we had left already by ship.

Same brother, Arthur in Prague. His last letter.

"Dearest Vilmachen, I'm so happy that you finally are before your great trip. I'm sure that everything will be all right over there. We would have liked to send you some money for the last few days, but unfortunately this is not possible. So far we are all right. Here we have a mobilization but everything is quiet and goes smoothly.

I'm very sorry that we did not see you before your voyage. But you see that we had advised you correctly. Goldschmitz," that's Julius, "are in Prague and I hope to see them on Monday. They will be leaving for Hungary immediately. Vilmachen, I wish you and the boys the very best for the future, and hope that we shall see-- see each other again in happier times than these. Good navigation. Many loving kisses from Uriella Auld." That was his wife.

Now he writes, "Dear Vilma and boys, when I received your dear card from Genoa today, a big stone fell from my chest. Before anything I have to tell you that the Goldschmitzs arrived in Prague on 15 of September and were immediately arrested at the airport because they did not have the necessary papers for entry and to stay and they are still in detention. Julius was able to call me from the police station and they started immediately everything to get out.

They're victims of a con gang who got 1,100 marks from them in Vienna, where it promised that they were supposed to be received in Prague by a lawyer who was supposed to arrange everything legally. The lawyer was there but was unable to do anything. So I had to get another one who promised me today that he received the word that they were to be released on Monday.

Until now there was always a danger that they would be exposed to Hungary, but I was able to arrange that they would be taken to the Hungarian border. And not by uniformed guards, but by a detective in mufti at their cost. You cannot imagine how much work I had this week. I did nothing else from morning til night with the case.

On top of this, I did not receive any money from my cousin Katya from Ivanovich and I had to pay everything myself. Yesterday I received--" Excuse me.

"Yesterday I received 2000 kronen, but these are gone already. This case will cost a lot of money. You can't imagine how much they've suffered.

Both of them are in different rooms. The building is quite modern, but this is the extradition station of the state and only prostitutes, homeless, and criminals are there. As you can see, the public there is not first class but there were also a number of acquaintances there, Yulia Diamond, and Brauer, a singer who came together with Hilda and is still there. I know from Goldschmitz that you went to Hungary and Irving," that is us.

And Irving, that's another brother of my mother in Vienna who was working for the Jewish Health Committee, the help committee, the Irving.

"Irving wrote that you are gone from there already and that he was without any news from you. You can imagine that I was very worried about you, especially as I saw the suffering of the Goldschmitzs. I also cabeled to England and wrote by airmail if they could give them a visa, but I have not heard from there yet.

I am very happy that you are in good health in Genoa with the boys. And wanted to send you by money order 50,000, no 50, of kronen, but because of yesterday's mobilization all money orders out the country were prohibited, and only with the permission of the National Bank would I be able to send something. But that would not have arrived in time. I will try to send you some international postage stamps."

I put a question mark in there because there are no international postage stamps. I'm a stamp collector, I should know.

"And if you are unable to convert them into money you could always use them for postage. Also I recommend that you go to the Jewish community in Genoa, they surely will give you some liras. I'm very sorry that I can't send you at least a little bit. On board the ship you have everything free but you will always need a few pennies extra. That you were unable to say goodbye to Arthur--" that's the brother in Yugoslavia.

We had a brother in Yugoslavia, a brother in Czechoslovakia, a brother in Vienna. And I'll let you know what happened to each one of them later.

"That you were unable to say goodbye to Arthur and me shows the tragic of today's times. But the main thing is that one is healthy and that you will have a better life in Panama. You did everything so efficiently, to be admired. And I don't know if I is a man, who has other connections and experiences, would have done as well. I'm really proud of you, Vilma, and I'm not worried about you and the boys in Panama in the future.

Even with Panama so far away and with completely different living conditions, you will be able to manage. Please write to us immediately upon your arrival by air mail only. Otherwise, it will take too long.

You will be able to get some representations and I will do everything once you are there. Until then the situation here will be cleared up but now you can't make any plans for the next half hour much less for tomorrow.

The Czechs are an admirable people whom I have come to know and sympathize in those 19 years I've lived here. But what I have learned here during the last few days made me a glowing patriot for the country and its people. You cannot imagine with what discipline and order the people of Prague demonstrated for the liberty of this state.

These demonstrations were not organized by any party but were the genuine expressions of a true plebiscite. These people will defend their country, these people will defend their country and their right to the last drop of blood if it comes to a war, which I don't expect. There were no incidents with the police.

As we saw the people coming together from various directions, we stood at the window. A few good-natured people called out to us, Jews come with us into the streets it's also for you. Harry doesn't speak Czech and the worker of stepped on his foot. Harry turned around and the worker tapped him on the shoulder and excused himself. You were among brothers who all had the same pain, as we heard about the acceptance of the plan to turn the German territories over by Churchill."

I put a question mark here because Churchill didn't do it. It was not Churchill, who was, he's in our time.

Chamberlain.

Chamberlain, it was Chamberlain.

"Dear Vilma and boys, I embrace you in spirit on European soil and hope that you shall-- hope that we shall keep--" I'm sorry.

"I embrace you in spirit on European soil and hope that we shall meet again very soon somewhere in the world. The world today is not small anymore and therefore I won't say goodbye, I will always be with you--"

The world today is not small anymore and therefore I won't say goodbye. I will always be with you in spirit and hope that you will write often. Send your letters always to one or the other, we will forward them. You don't have to worry about us we won't share the fate of the Goldschmitzs. And there should be a change, which I don't expect, we won't get lost. I kiss you all."

We never saw Arthur, we never saw Vera, we never saw any of the family. They were sent to the concentration camps and perished. One of the daughters, Helga, escaped and was spared the fate of the parents and her sister. She joined the partisans and fought the Germans.

After the war we received, not we but my uncle in New York, Irving, received a letter from her giving us the details of the fate of her parents her sister and herself. I wanted her to that letter and was unable to find it. I will keep on looking, if it comes to a second session I'll bring it with me because this letter is a document of the time.

She became a communist, which is most natural having gone through these things. She had to have something to hold on to. So she became a communist. And as I heard she was still living and I haven't heard from her for a long, long time.

Now to the fate of the other uncles I talked about in that letter. Uncle Irving, who used to work with the Jewish Help, Hilfes organization, the Helps organization in Vienna. He left and he went to New York where he passed on a few years afterwards, being ill.

My other Uncle Arthur, from Zagreb and his wife and son, they left Yugoslavia and they went to Uruguay. He was an electrical engineer. He started a company in Uruguay, very successful, but they did move to New York also. And we had a family reunion in New York in 1948.

My brother got married in New York in 1948 and both my mother and I came to the wedding. And the family was together after many, many years. The family that was able to save themselves.

As far as the other uncle of mine, Yosef on my father's side, the one we had celebrated pesach with and had the Seder evenings at their home, he was-- the business he had, he had a very prosperous business. And it was taken away from him.

So he tried to turn it over to his confidante who was able to sign checks. He had an employee who was more than an employee, who was more of a partner, but he was still-- so the Nazis took both of them and took him to court. And I have the court document also at home and I couldn't find that either. I mean, all these important documents I was unable to find. I looked all over. If I do find it I'll bring it.

In that court document the outstanding feature which struck me terribly was the fact how it was done. Of course, there was absolutely no justice for any one of them. I mean, they want to take over the business, that's what they did. But how did they refer to my uncle? The judge himself addressed my uncle in the third person. He never said Mr. Vaskopf, his name was Vaskopf. He said the Jew Abraham Vaskopf. Another very painful episode.

Both his wife and he-- Oh, my grandmother was still alive before we left, little episodes in Vienna after 1938. My mother wanted to go for her for a walk to get out. She was an elderly lady. So they went to a park and sat on a bench. Along came a few Hitler Youth and said this bench is not for Jews get up you Jews. Had to get up, an old lady.

I mean these are little episodes in Vienna. You couldn't do anything but follow what they said, if you don't want to get into bigger trouble. Because if not, they go to the next man he takes you in and God knows what happens.

Both my grandmother, another daughter of hers, sister of my father, he and my Uncle Yosef, they also disappeared. Actually, I saw their record. I have a friend here in San Francisco who has a book of the Austrian Jews who were sent to extermination camps and both of their names appear in there with the dates and everything. This is documented.

On my Czechoslovakian side I didn't know. I wish I would know what happened, really. I mean, I could stand it now I guess to know what happened to my uncle and aunt and their daughter. And anybody who sees this film the name was Rena. That is, Vera Rena, she was Vera Rena. He was Max Rena and the daughter was Leah, Leah Rena. And if anybody can find out what happened to them, I know they're not here anymore, but if you can find out I'd appreciate it. I would really need for my own soul.

Now, what happened to us? I went to school in Vienna and at the time the Nazis came I was already graduated from school. I was attending textile academy. Because everyone of my part of my family was in the textile business.

So I was supposed to learn the textile trade. Not the trade, but the manufacturing end of it. So I went to textile academy.

And of course, after the Nazis came, one day I tried to get into the academy. There were uniformed boys standing there and the men standing there and they said are you Jewish? I said yes. You can't go in anymore. So I didn't attend school anymore, didn't finish.

I was a boy scout in Vienna. And one of my very good friends was my troop leader. We became very close friends as a matter of fact. In 1938 he was able to live with his brother Paul. His name was Carlo, Carlo Canetti. And he was able to get to Greece, escaped to Greece.

But of course, Greece during those years was a country independent. But during the war years, first Italians took it over and then the Italians were suffering defeat after defeat. So the Germans came in and took that over and they finished them off. But both of them went on to the partisans too and they were also shot. I mean, they were--

I have his last letter here from him. You want me to read it?

Would you? Yes.

This was dated August 5th, 1940. It's a very long letter. Oh no, that's my wife's transcription. I had to translate it into English.

It says, "Dear Hetti," now Hetti was my boyscout name and it might sound like a girl's name, but we had names for ourselves.

"I received your dear letter sometime ago and would like to take the time to inform you about everything. Even if I don't have your letter at hand I will try to answer all your questions at the end of mine. First to you. I was very glad to hear from you after a long time and excused this because we are very busy and tired. But you wrote anyway, and this is most important, not to lose the contact with one another. I am in contact with Kurt Coma," that's my cousin they have pictures of him here.

"In every letter I had asked about you, but was unable to get some information. It's interesting that you also write about Booby." Booby was his name, his boyscout name. "Don't you see each other? Now there are two cousins in far away countries and one doesn't know about the other. Well, let's leave this point.

I was very happy to have heard that your dear mother had married again and you have now a father whom you like. Congratulations. How do you converse with your father? In Spanish?

In all cases, you have a home again and this is worth a lot. We others roam in the wide world, rent furnished rooms, move in and out but have not found a home yet. This will probably be the case until we marry, but until then.

As you can see I'm not writing with ink and this is because now I am," tiddles, "at home. By the way today is September the first, one year of war." It was already war. "And your letter's still here. But today I will finish it because it is Sunday and it is time that you get my answer.

You may wonder that I'm writing from Athens since I had been in Thessaloniki for such a long time. It is true that I went to Thessaloniki from Vienna through Belgrade where we made a living by giving classes of commercial correspondence. We lived quite a ways from the center of the city almost in a rural area with the family of a teacher where we had two small separated rooms.

Slowly we started to learn the language. Slowly we found work and hope that finally to be rid of some of our troubles before the war destroyed all our hopes and took our jobs. So it was for 18 months until February. We barely made a living. Therefore,

And because of other reasons I went to Athens, the beautiful capital of Greece. After one month my brother Paul came also. We worked in various offices and made pretty good money, but the world politics again took a hand in our lives. The attack on Belgium, Holland, and France began. And because of the connected slowdown in the industries, we lost

our jobs again. I am now a salesman in a ladies dress store where I make very little money, but I have also an office where I write the correspondence for foreign countries and also give lessons in German.

Paoli, the brother, who is presently quite ill he had a flu with infected sinuses and pain in the kidney. He is getting better slowly. He's continuously asking me to bring him a piece of cake from the store. He was also fired and makes very little presently, which makes our present condition not to be envied. But in one of our old scout songs it says--"

I have it here in German and English, you want me to read it in German too?

Yes.

[SPEAKING GERMAN]

Translated it means if everything goes its own way a true man stays always on top. He travels through the wide world no matter how the die rolls. We had sung that song many times in our group. I never knew how this would apply to this situation, you know?

"What else shall I write to you? During the winter I went skiing, also from Thessaloniki and during the summer I also did some sports. We don't have many acquaintances, we left most of them in Thessaloniki and we have not been there too long.

Our Father, who lives in Constantinople, was with us in Athens for the Easter holidays when we spent some 14 beautiful days together. He was until now a business manufacturing shoe laces and made all he needed to make a living. Now three weeks ago his partner was drafted in the army and had collected all monies before him. Now my father is exactly where he was two years ago and he has to start all over again, like us.

Now I have given you everything about us and want to inform you about our people as far as I know."

Now he gives us a list of members of our troop, where they are.

"Norm, he was in Belgium and came to New York with his family from where they were shipped by the committee to Los Angeles I don't have any letters from him. Edith, his sister, she stayed in New York with Otto Schoenwalder. Kurt Reiser lives with Richie in New York, both employed and make a living. Streisel is a pastry chef in New York hotel and makes more than the rest of them.

There are also a number of others in New York such as Kit, Selinski, Marketzelt, et cetera. Peter Lilienfeld is in Vancouver, Canada but does not write for a month. Elrich Francos lives with his family in Chicago. He does well, he is studying. Elrich Neuberger was with his brother in Uruguay, first doorman in a hotel, then entrepreneur, and was cheated by a con man, then again doorman. He is in Buenos Aires now for some time. Veneto, he was a very good friend of mine, "he was in Utrecht, employed by the refugee committee and wanted to go to Brazil. I don't have any more news from him.

Levi was in Paris and Constantinople. He wants to become a musician. Walter Maier is in Palenstine, from whom I don't have any news. Dick and Penhauler are in England, but I am without any news. With this I'm closing my report and hope to hear from you soon. Your friend, Carlo.

"PS, many greetings to your parents, Herbert," that's my brother, Herbert, "and Booby." That's my cousin, Kurt Coma. "I'm still collecting stamps and would like to ask you to send me new ones. If you should have other interests I shall reciprocate. I also include an old picture of our scout group."

I have that picture here. And I think you can take, a little later on, you will take a picture of it.

Now, this is another destiny which was fulfilled in Greece. He was, joined the partisans, was captured, and shot.

Carlo?

Both. Carlo and Paul.

Was he Jewish?

Oh, yes. Oh, yes, both of them. He was Sephardic too, actually. Carlo Canetti is a Sephardic. He came from Greece. I think it was Greece he came from. But those people came from Spain, Greece, and Holland. Those are the Sephardic type Jews. Not the Oriental, but the Sephardic. OK.

This is all what happened to us before we actually left Europe. Now we came to Hungary. And we were not given the permission to stay there. We had to leave. In the year 1938 the system of transit was not what it is today. There were no planes you could hop on and fly over a country and get in another country. You had to go by train.

Now, what we didn't think about was that Hungary-- we had to go to Italy to board the ship. What we didn't think about was the fact that Hungary doesn't have a border with Italy. So we had to go to Italy either through Austria or through Yugoslavia.

To go through Austria was impossible. First of all, the exit for Austria was not as easy as everybody thought. First of all, both my brother and I had to show the Austrian authorities that we were full-blooded Jews, not half Jews, not quarter Jews, not 3/4 Jews, 100% Jews. Both my parents, Jewish.

We had to show that, otherwise they would never let us leave. Because we would, at that point in time, there was still military service for half Jews, or 3/4 or half or quarter Jews. You see, the divisions they put us Jews in was unbelievable.

They didn't say that you're Jewish. How much percentage are you Jewish? How far back to your Jewish parents go? I had to bring it, show they authorities that I am 100%, 100% Jew. Which I did. That's why we were allowed to leave.

Now leaving, we had to sign a paper that we shall never return to Austria, which we gladly did. We didn't want to go back to Austria. We didn't want to. Let them have their own problems, I didn't want them.

So what do we do? We were in Hungary. We had to go to Italy. So we went to the Yugoslavian consulate. And I have a paper here, which was never filled out to get a transit visa, which we were not given. We weren't given a transit visa.

But the Yugoslavian consul, or the diplomat who was in Budapest at the time, was a big-hearted fellow. He said, I tell you what you do, we put you on a train here in Budapest that goes to Italy through Yugoslavia. You don't have a transit visa. When we get to the border, we put you in a car. We seal the car so you, heaven forbid, escape. And when you get to the Italian border we open that seal and-- imagine, being driven to Italy like cattle. Idiots.

So we did take that up and we went from Budapest through Yugoslavia to Genoa, no, to Milan. We stayed in Milan a few weeks. Because we could have gone to Genoa too but we wanted to, since we were there, I knew Milan, we had been to Milan already. But we wanted to get to know it a little better.

It was a little freer country already. We were a little bit, feeling a little bit more on top of things, not being under the threat of death or worse, you know? So we stayed in Milan for a few weeks and then we went to Genoa and stayed in Genoa another couple of weeks before the ship was supposed to leave.

Now all the 26 people who came on that transport, they were all meeting in Genoa and we boarded the *Vigilio*. I forget the exact date, it was in September but I forget the exact date.

Now, an interesting sideline, which might be funny and might be throwing a little bit of humor in the whole thing, if there's such a thing possible. My mother was always an entrepreneur. She wanted to-- what can we do in Panama? So the brother of Elza Kaufman wrote back. He says here in Panama we don't have any geese. Maybe you can bring some

geese over here and start a geese colony or start something new? People would like to have geese here.

So sure enough, my mother bought a male goose whatever they're called, gander? Gander. Then she bought some female geese and they were loaded on the ship together with our belongings, which we had in crates. The funny part I have to go ahead now and we unloaded the stuff in Cristobal in Panama already, when we got to Cristobal and I have to go ahead.

When we got to Cristobal, we were standing at the pier and our stuff was unloaded with the wrench, with the thing. And crate after crate came down. Some people standing next to us, and they were saying what happened? What are these? And then all of a sudden the geese up there they started snattering and yattering and crying. And he said that must be a film company. I said, no way. Anyway this is a funny joke in the set up.

So in September we did leave the European continent on the Vigilio. The Spanish Civil War was still raging. I mean, it just goes to show you that things are not as easy as they are now. And who thinks about these things? So the Vigilio was afraid to travel with lights on because of submarines, of German or Spanish submarines, being shot at or something, you know? So we turned the lights out and we, in the darkness, we went through the Mediterranean.

Finally we hit-- no, we landed in Marseilles, in the French port of Marseilles. That was one landing we made. And then from Marseilles we went through the dark, through the Mediterranean, through the Straits of Gibraltar. And when we finally hit open ocean, the Atlantic, our next stop was the Canary Islands. And from there we went across the Atlantic, we landed.

The next stop, first stop in the Americas was in La Guaira, which is Venezuela. And then we went to Cristobal and then we unloaded our geese. Now we are in Panama.

Maybe you have some question now before I go into Panama because I think now I demonstrated, at least to the best of my ability, I'm sure there are things I did forget and not bring up, the situation in Europe and the way we left and what happened then. So maybe?

OK, yeah I'd like to go all the way back to your childhood and talk in more detail about what your everyday life was like in Vienna. As far back as you can remember, what your relationship with your family was. Who actually was living in your house with you, your father, your mother, and your brother?

We had, like I said, our family was very well-off. We had a huge apartment. In Europe people don't have their own homes like the American dream here. I have my own home now. I joined the American dream here. But in Europe nobody had their own homes except very wealthy people. My grandparents had a villa in a very well district, but we didn't. I mean, we were not that wealthy yet. We were never supposed to, and now [INAUDIBLE] anyway.

No, we had a very, very large apartment, my mother, my father, my brother and I. We had a nanny, who took care of my brother and myself, and we had a cook, a young lady who did the cooking for us. Oh, that brings me to a very interesting point. Life in Vienna under the Nazis, with the Nazis, OK?

We had the whole floor of a huge house as the apartment. To the back was a smaller apartment. And that apartment was inhabited by a couple. And that couple, both of them were Nazis, very illegal Nazis, very, very fervent Nazis. Very, very fervent Nazis.

And our cook, she didn't sleep in our apartment but she had a small room in theirs. And he was a bad man. He was really bad, in every respect. He tried to rape her. And there was a big argument between my father and him. Of course, my father was always the Jew then. He was right and my father was wrong, of course.

In 19-- I didn't want to go to Vienna ever, but I wanted to visit the grave of my father. He's buried in Szekesfehervar in Hungary. And I had my mother's ashes with us.

No, that was the second trip. The first trip I went to Vienna, to Budapest, and I went to my old, to the house we lived in,

and I went up to my apartment. It was closed. Then I knocked on the door of where the ex-Nazis lived. And nobody came, and I knocked again, and nobody came, and I again.

And then finally a voice behind the door said, who is it? In German, of course. And I said, I told her my name, under which she knew me then. My name was Bushy, Bushy. I was called Bushy by everybody. And she said, oh my God, Bushy's home. I said Bushy's home?

Anyway, we went in. And my daughter was with us. My wife, my daughter, and I went in there. And I broke down there, there I was completely, I mean, I really broke down. She told me about the Jews who jumped from the sixth floor to their death. They didn't want to be taken. And she spoke in such a everyday tone. These things happen every day, you know? I asked her about her husband, he was dead. I didn't even ask her how he died, I didn't care. I mean he's--

But just goes to show you how old things sometimes work out and bring a different picture into focus. I have a completely different mind of the whole thing. I'm sure she's not alive anymore either.

How my life was there? Well, my brother, my parents, and I, like I said, we had the nanny, Lola, who was with us for many, many years until the time we went to Budapest, which was 1935. She was with us. And we loved her. We love to just like a parent. Elderly lady, very, very nice. She was Catholic. Very nice, I mean, she really loved us too.

See, this is the contradiction in Austria. You have the Austrians whose antisemitism is furthered by the Catholic church. This is the reason, the main reason in Austria, the Catholic church. The one who instigates, who tell the people that we Jews are Christ murderers. I was told to my face, I told him I wasn't even there. I was a kid. I wasn't even there.

But this is the contradiction in the whole thing. And then there are so many nice people there, good people there. So I hate to generalize and say every German or, like the Nazis did to us, all the Jews, you know? All the Jews, there's some good Jews and there's some bad Jews, right?

Now life in Vienna, like I said, we were secular Jews. We were not very religious. We knew about religion. We went to visit my grandmother for the holidays, Rosh ha-Chanah, Yom Kippur. We went to shul, we went to Seder and we learned our Hebrew and [SPEAKS YIDDISH] we all said. But we were Austrians.

Now, let me tell you, this is the change that was brought in me, the Holocaust, what it did to me, it brought out a conscious Jew in me. I came to Panama and I was [SPEAKS YIDDISH] I don't know whether you speak Yiddish or not, [SPEAKS YIDDISH]. But I didn't know what was what until I joined up with all of the other Jews from all over the world.

And we had mostly Eastern European Jews, they were the Yiddishkeit, the menschkeit. And I became one of them. I learned Yiddish, I learned Yiddish. I loved it. Yiddish was for me the heymishkeit, the shtetlkeit, which I never knew in Vienna.

So at this point here, this makes it so much more painful for me to talk about this sort of thing because there's a certain guiltiness, that we didn't have that. And it was not because we didn't want it, wasn't given to us. But we became part of it after what was done to us.

Our life in Vienna, very, very protected. We went to school. We went to all kinds of sports, tennis, swimming, fencing, horseback riding. I mean, it was just the life of Riley, right? Life of Riley.

And nobody had any worries except when we went on the street and we saw the Nazis. We read about the Nazis and we read about the Germans electing Hitler, not electing Hitler, rather Hitler coming to power by force, you know? All of these things disturbed us, but then we closed the door behind us and we were home and we forgot about that.

We went to the-- of course, being in Vienna, we went to the opera. I'm deeply involved in music even here, music, opera, theater, stage, painting. My father, our father took both my brother and myself every Sunday to a museum. We had the most gorgeous museums in Vienna, the art, the most famous art in the world.

The Museum of Natural History in New York is nothing compared to what they have in Vienna. I went to New York into that museum. I even went to the-- but the only thing in Washington, the Smithsonian, is bigger. But believe me it's done without taste. The Smithsonian is everything thrown together without any rhyme or reason. Whereas in Vienna it has a little bit more.

The culture, European culture is there. It always was there, is there, but it is tainted. It is tainted by this anti-everything. Except myself, I'm not anti myself. But they are anti everything else. They're anti-foreigners, they're anti-Jews, of course, and anti this and anti that. But everything myself, I'm not anti myself.

But the cultures that you talk to in Austria, and he may be the most charming fellow, he's talking and he's charming. He has a charm. I know it because I had it, they tell me I've had it. I don't know maybe I did, I don't know. Again, one of those assimilation things.

And the-- life in Vienna like I said, protected, well educated. And torn out of this milieu if you will, by force into a life in Panama, which you can't even compare to anything. Because you don't-- have any of you been to Panama? No. Panama is completely, it's a 180 degree turn around.

Not only the climate, I'm not even talking about the climate, you get assimilated, acclimatized. The lifestyle, the language, I had to learn two languages at the same time, English and Spanish. So I had to learn that. I had to get used to the life there, to the people there, to the idiosyncrasy of these people. And I did, I lived there for 21 years.

When I came to, in '59, we came to the United States. Ever since we have lived here. But Panama, I will never have a bad word for it. Because the people of Panama took us in. The people of Panama were good to us. We made a living. We made a very good living. We made a standard there which according to us here might not be what we expect, what we'd like to have, but over there it was. And especially coming out of the cesspool of Europe, it was really fantastic to come to Panama.

Well we went to Budapest in 1935. Budapest, the whole life just continued like this. We did everything. I had to work too, by the way. It was not everything planned, no work. I went to school, I studied, and I had to work in my father's store. As a matter of fact, in my uncle's store too. Not a store, was not a store. It was a wholesale huge place. I mean it was. They sold wholesale only. And my father, of course, was manufacturing still. So it was a really big operation. That's as much as I can say about our life.

Did you have, when you were a young child, did you have a lot of mostly Gentile friends? Mostly Jewish friends? A mix?

We had mixed, we had mixed. Probably with the Jewish friends we were closer, a little bit closer. But the group I have here is all Jews, we were all Jewish. We were much closer. But we had Gentiles too, We had Gentiles. This is why I say, the assimilation effect there. But the closer relationship was always with Jews. Much closer than with Gentiles.

As a matter of fact, my brother had his best friend, this was exceptional, he was not a Jew. He was a half Jew, that's what, he was half Jew. Here we are, either mother or father, you know? But he was only half Jew, but he was his best friend.

In my group we had the, boy scout troop was almost 95% Jewish. And in my school the friends I assimilated with-- we were subject-- I had to by force because the others were on the other side. We had this discrimination from the professors already. So they looked upon us in a different way and I looked upon them in a different way. Maybe not knowingly, not willingly, but it was there. So the closeness of friends was always more between Jews.

Did you notice a change as you got older and Hitler came to power, did you notice a change in attitude of the Gentile people that you know towards you? Or was it always?

No, I never noticed a change of the Gentiles toward me. As a matter of fact, it was an old joke going around in Vienna.

That a Jew was a good friend with a Gentile, you know? And the Gentile said when he was talking to somebody else, he says oh, my best friend is a Jew. I mean it was that type of situation.

He always treated me right, even those Nazis next door, even those Nazis next door. Knowing we were Jewish, and I knowing that there were Nazis. It was not a close relationship, by no means, but when we talked to each other, we talked to each other as human beings. We were not looking down upon him, he was not looking down upon us. So no, I did not notice any change of the Gentile people I knew.

After Hitler, of course after 1938, yes, after 1938, yes. After Hitler came to Austria, that was a different story. I'm talking about 1933 to '38. But 1938, after the Nazis were in power, then you were really exposed and you never knew what's going to happen.

It's happened in a lot of cases I know. I told you about those demonstrations I was involved in 1938 in March. We had the red, white, red band here, which was the Patriotic Front and the Social Democrats had the three arrows here, and on the other side where the Nazis with the illegal NSDAP emblem, which was the Nazi party emblem.

On the 11th and 12th it was like this. On the 13th, a big majority of the people who had red, white, red and the three arrows here turned it around and in the back of the lapel they had the NSDAP, they were already illegals. Not all of them, I don't say all of them, but a lot of them. They were illegals. You never know who you talk to.

You said that when you read about Hitler, when he came to power in 1933, you were about 14 then.

Yeah.

And you weren't that worried, it was distant. When did it feel threatening to you?

Well in 19-- when Dollfuss was murdered and we saw the troop movements of the Italians on the border. And they were trying to take over Austria, then it became more clearer to us that there was a danger. But the danger became more and more prevalent as the years went by until 1937, 1938.

Even 1937 was not that bad because we did, in fact, go back to Vienna from Budapest. Otherwise we wouldn't have gone to Vienna. And we were still thinking it's all right. But 1938, it started January, February, and then, of course, came March. So this is when it became really urgent. And of course, 13th of March, it was the breaking point.

Even earlier than that, did you know of any people whose belongings were being confiscated?

No, not in Austria.

Any people that--

No, not in Austria.

When were you barred from school?

After 1938, after March 1938, when the Nazis were already there.

I wanted to know more about the demonstrations that you were involved in. How did you get involved in them? Who organized them?

The parties. The Patriotic Front, which was the dominant party at this point. You see in Austria, like I said before, there were the Social Democrats, which had a militant organization called the Schutzbund. Then there was the Heimatschutz, which was the fascist-type organization.

It was not really very antisemitic at all. And what they wore is the feather of a cock on their head, so we called them

Hahnenschwanzler. Hahnenschwanzler is the cock feather, the feather of a cock of the-- tail feather of a cock.

And no. And then the Patriotic Front started relatively late. It was more or less a roof organization of the Social Democrats, the Schutzbund, and the Heimatschutz. And to unite the people, because the Social Democrats were really running to ground, into being nothing by Dollfuss. He shot and cannoned them in. So they were really persecuted and they were really made illegal, as far as that goes.

But then Schuschnigg wanted them back again because they were his help to get a front, a united front against Germany. So he called them in and then he formulated the Patriotic Front. And this party then started organizing the demonstrations. We all heard on the radio demonstrations going on. We were in our prime year for these things. So what happens? We will kill ourselves a few Nazis, you know?

Can you describe a demonstration? Give me some details, what was it like, what went on?

Yes, you lose your identity. In a demonstration, you lose your identity. You become part of it, of a mass. I don't want to be in it again, ever. Because you lose, you can't think your own thoughts anymore. You become part of a huge mass and this is what happened to the Nazis, the same thing, in Germany, same thing.

It's, how shall I describe it? It's a well, I described it best. You lose your identity. You become part of the mass. And what the mass shouts for and growls for, this is what you do, whether it's right or wrong, whether you think it's good or not, but you're always there to do it with them.

I don't want to do it again. I don't think in the United States people would do it either. I don't think so.

Explain that more, what do you mean?

Yes, the people here in the United States are of a completely different breed than Europeans. You don't have this. You think a little bit more. Before you do something, you rationalize more. Maybe we rationalized too, but then we became, under pressure, we became a mass. We were under threat of being run over by Germany, OK? We wanted to defend our country, Austria, and wanted it to remain independent, which was our main goal.

This is what my uncle writes hear, about the Czechs, remember that in the letter? Same thing. Very well-organized, and very patriotic, and they would give their last drop of blood for the freedom of the country. He writes the same thing here. It's the same thing. And here the United States, fortunately, you have never been under this type of pressure, under this, in these circumstances. You have never been in these circumstances, fortunately.

So even when you demonstrated it was as an Austrian Patriot not as a Jew.

Oh yes, no, Austrian Patriot. This is what I said. I became a Jew in Panama. Well I know it was Jew always, but I became a Yiddish boy, a Yiddish mensch in Panama.

Can you describe any other antisemitic things that you remember as you were growing up, that sort of precursors to what happened?

Well, I told you about the school when the professor got up and he singled me out trying to imitate Yiddish. And the whole class howled, of course, because he pointed me out as a Jew, you know? And the whole class howled except the Jewish, few Jews we had there, probably, other Jewish.

Yes, yes of course. This picture you saw of the summer camp I went to, I was much younger then. What year was that? Anyway, we'll get to that a little later. I was maybe 14, 15. I always had curly hair. My hair was standing up, maybe too much. My wife says still my parents would have cut it. Made it look better. But I didn't and they didn't and I looked the way I did, I didn't care.

And the name they gave me in that camp was not anything connected with my hair, it was a name connected with my

religion. They called me the Reserve Moses, referring to the Michelangelo Moses who had his hair in horns, of course. So this is another sign, not ill-meant. It wasn't meant ill. It was meant in a funny, in a good-humored way, but still the Jew was in there.

So it's part of the upbringing of theirs. The Jew is the one who stands out. The Jew is the one who can be ridiculed. I'm talking about still the times when it's not 1938 yet. It's talking about the time when it's still Austria. And Austria was-- and again, I point out that the I blame the Catholic church in Vienna, in Austria very much for that.

The head of the church, actually, during the Hitler time was a Cardinal Innitzer, and he sanctioned the Nazis. And he didn't officially sanctioned the concentration camps and the killings, but he went along with the Nazis. And so did the Vatican for that matter. Vatican didn't do much about it either. I mean, not that they openly did it, but they didn't do anything against it.

But for that, coming back, I blame the whole world, because neither the United States, nor England, no country in the world would take us in. As a matter of fact, they sent shiploads back to Germany to be killed. Cuba did it, the United States did it. So we were really alone, really alone. But this brought us closer, all of us, the Jewish colony in Panama. Of course, I can only talk Panama, I was there, was so much closer because of that. We received ships after the war from Shanghai.

And there were, I remember one ship specifically, left Shanghai with old and sick and infirm people and they went through the canal and landed in Cristobal. We lived in Panama City on the other side, on the Pacific side. So we loaded trucks and cars and everything with blankets and food and everything and went over to the other side. And we went aboard the ship and we alleviated the suffering of those people.

This was because of what happened to us, the cohesion of the people was affected. And this is what was needed. And this is why the state of Israel exists between you and me. This is why the state of Israel exists.

I want you to talk more even about when the change did take place. 1938 came and then, as you said, the changes started taking place. Describe what that was like. While you were still in Vienna.

Well, in 1938, like I said, March 13 was the deadline. Next day we saw German troops on the street. Our first thought was we had to leave as soon as possible. I mean, there was no way for us to stay one day longer than we had to. First we were looking for a country to go to and then set in motion all the necessary steps to do that. But of course, this was not 24 hours a day.

We had other-- we had meetings, this group. I have a picture here of. This is interesting. We met, all Jews by the way, in a house maybe on the sixth or seventh floor with windows out to the street. And it was the day when Hitler was received in Vienna, when he was driving in his open car in Vienna.

And he was passing underneath the window. And I said if I have a flower pot that can drop it on his head, maybe we all get killed, probably. Maybe I kill him too. It would have saved something, you know? But I didn't do it. Nobody did it. We didn't have flower pots, maybe. On the other hand, I don't think we would have dared. I don't think we would have dared. We were scared. We were scared. Really scared.

Tell me even in more detail, if you can, what were the things that happened that you saw, that you heard about, that made you scared, that made you realize?

Well, the fact that I've seen them, Jews rounded up on the street, pulled by their beards if they had beards. And made to clean in the streets with toothbrushes, clean the boots. Of course there were no more-- in the beginning, in Germany, they had those painting of the swastikas and "Jude" on the storefronts. That wasn't necessary then anymore because they were already in charge.

I left before the Kristallnacht, I left before. I wasn't there when they broke the windows in the synagogues, burned the city synagogues, I wasn't there anymore. That was in November and I left in September. So I wasn't there, so I couldn't

say.

What made me scared is the plain fact that the street was filled with brown and black uniforms. The street was full with youngsters in the Hitler Youth uniforms. The fact that everybody was in the street cursing the Jews and calling Jews to not to kill, but to do something, and to take away, you know? Like when I told you about my uncle, when they broke into the house and made a shambles out of it. I mean, this was, was that not enough to be scared?

I was 18 years old and I didn't have a gun and the bayonet. They had it. And they didn't have any permit to come in anyway.

I mean, you were completely without any rights. You didn't have any rights. You were Jews, so you were Jews. And as Jews you were set upon. Isn't that enough to be scared? You didn't need many more examples of that. My cousin was caught on the street. I wasn't caught in the street, never I mean, I never had to shine the shoes.

Actually, the Viennese are funny people, funny people. I stood in line for my passport I had to get-- not for my passport, for exit visa, for my exit visa. And there was a long line of Jews standing there and one of those Viennese fellows came by and he looked at me and says, well why don't you go where the other people stand, those are for Jews. I said, I'm a Jew. He left, he didn't say anything anymore, you know? But he pulled me out from these other people said, you go over there, you don't belong here, these are Jews. This is scary too.

Why, like in this country here when you had the Black and the white population. You had Blacks go to the back of the bus or couldn't go into there. In Panama, the Panama Canal zone, up to late up to 1940 or '41, '40 I think it was, they had the gold and silver roll. The gold roll was for the whites and the silver roll, it was for the Blacks.

They get paid the same wages, not the same wages, but the same money, the same currency. But one had to stand here in line for his money and the other had to stand here in line, you know? It's not much better here or there. It used to be here.

Was your father able to work up until the time you left?

My father died in Budapest. He passed away, he died in Budapest. We left Vienna in 1935 and he died in 1937 in Budapest. He never came back to Vienna, we buried him there, and then my mother my brother and I came back to Vienna. Yes he was-- he never saw the Nazis. He never lived under the Nazis. He was gone already when the Nazis came.

But of course, again, we are talking about Hungary. Hungary is also antisemitic country, strongly so. For that matter Poland, Romania, Lithuania. You talk about these Eastern European countries, they're not much better. And if you go back and read some books, the Germans had help in the concentration camps from Ukrainians and from all of these people here, antisemites who were put to work to gas and kill those people.

I mean, it's not, it's not a phenomenon just to certain people, you know? It's a phenomenon all over Europe. The French, look at the French they turned them over Jews to the Germans. Strongly antisemitic, the French. The Dreyfus affair, which you remember, I'm sure.

My cousin, this I forgot to say, that my cousin, Uncle Weisskopf's daughter. I mentioned her, that she was with us when they broke in and she was with us when the news came about the fall of Austria, and she was able to escape. She went to France and she hid in a convent for years. The nuns hid her.

Then she got out. She she's a very well educated person and she taught at the university in Biarritz. It was run by Americans, by American military in Biarritz. And then she was brought to the United States with the help of the Navy Secretary, whom she met there, whoever it was at the time. And came here and then she taught at other colleges here in the United States. She lives now in Los Gatos. She married the dean of the language department of San Jose State. He died, he passed away now. And she lives in Los Gatos now. Another member of the family who was saved.

What's her name?

Litzzy, Alice, Alice. She her name is now Newby. That's the name of her passed husband. And her name was Weisskopf, the same as my uncle and my aunt, Weisskopf But she had changed it after that to Whitehead. She translated literally from Germany to English Weisskopf, Whitehead. Which I would have never done. I mean, my name is my name and I would never have translated it. Except my first name, that I did. Heinrich is a little bit too tough, you know? So I translated it into English, anglicized my name.

When you came back to Vienna after leaving Hungary in 1937, how did you support yourself? It was just the three of you?

Yes, my mother and my brother they lived in one apartment. They took an apartment in Vienna. We didn't know exactly what we were-- by the way, my mother, yes, she made a good living. She played very excellent bridge. Well, she made a good living doing that. Because she taught bridge and she ran a bridge club. She made very good money doing that. Boy, was she good, she was really excellent class player. I did too, by the way.

And I stayed, I was put up in the Vasco family. I was given a room to sleep and I was fed. I went to school and I worked in the manufacturing business with my uncle, helped out there for the beginning.

But we never knew how fast it would end. I mean, it was only October of '37 and then in March everything fell together anyway. So it was really just a very short transition period. I couldn't tell you exactly what the outcome could have been or would have been if it would not have come. You know, I don't know.

And we would have probably made some kind of arrangements for my brother and I to live together, probably. My uncle was very interested, he didn't have a son, maybe. And he wanted me to work with him so probably I would have brought into this family's business then, because our business was already gone.

What happened to the business?

Well, our business after the First World War started already to be run down. The First World War was the start of the death blow of the big company of my family. My family's business Heinrich Deutsch and Company in Vienna was a name which was well known, very well known name. And after the First World War, of course, Austria-Hungary broke up into different countries. Czechoslovakia became Czechoslovakia, Romania became Romania, Hungary became Hungary.

This was the start of the deathblow of the business. So the main seat was still in Vienna, but we had still-- Czechoslovakia and Romania didn't exist already then anymore. And then Budapest was the second one, then Vienna folded and that's why we moved to Budapest, to Hungary. And then this folded too.

So it folded before your father died?

Yes.

I'd like to know in more detail what kind of preparations you took for leaving, how you contacted the man. Why Panama?

OK. The way it was, that we didn't have anywhere to go, we took any straw that presented itself. My mother had a good friend, Elza Kaufman, she was a pretty well-known singer in Vienna. Her brother had left for Panama in the '20s. He was what they call the black sheep of the family, OK?

And having lived in Panama for 20 years he was already Panamanian citizen, he had his own farm already, he was pretty well-to-do. I mean, he was not rich, but he was well-to-do. Furthermore, he was a foreman, working as a foreman. He was not an intellectual, let's say as such, but he was a foreman in the Canal Zone Company, paid very good wages there as a foreman, you know?

And when the situation was such that we didn't know where to go and what to do, Elza Kaufman wrote to her brother that we had a number of people here who didn't have anywhere to go, if he could help. So he put up a deposit. I forget it was, \$50, \$40, \$50 for each person. There were 26 of us. And he sent us the papers to immigrate.

Now to get the visa, we had to go to Hamburg. Because in Vienna we didn't have any Panamanian consul. So one of the group of the 26, one of them took 26 passports, took them to Hamburg, had them stamped there and came back. Once we had the visa, then we started, my mother took most of the thing. I mean, I should have done more.

I mean, I'm sorry to admit with 18 years you should do more than I did really. But you have to take in consideration that 18 years in Vienna 1938 not what is 18 years in the United States today. When I see my son at 18 years, he's 25 now, he's much more of a man than I was ever at 18. Well, not ever, but when he was 18 it was more of a man than I was, and he did more things than I did. We were innocent babes, really. European upbringing, we didn't know anything.

Anyway, my mother did, really, in the letter of my uncle it's testified.

She took immediate steps to get to a boat, to a ship. How do we get to Panama? So she went to the Italia line and booked on the Vigilio which was supposed to leave in September, . It was already done in maybe April, May, I don't know. And we paid everything there. The only thing we could do is pay.

I think it was a minimum amount, 100 shilling, 100 lira, 100,000, very minimal, as board money for each person. So she paid that too, otherwise we couldn't take any more money out. We were only allowed to take out personally with us about \$10, equivalent of \$10, that's all.

Nobody allowed any money out. Actually I had a stamp collection, which was not worth that much, but it was stamps anyway, and there was a certain value to it. To get it out, I had to go to an evaluator, get the stamp collection evaluated, which he undervalued. I ask him to, undervalue it. Then wrap it and seal it so nothing can stick in there. And then I was allowed to take it out.

My mother did something else. Now we can talk about it, we were shivering in the boots. We were not allowed to take out any jewelry, and she had some fantastic jewelry. A huge diamond ring. She had a what do you call it? Rain, against the rain, what is it?

Umbrella.

An umbrella. And the umbrella had a leather knob. And she opened the seams of the leather knob, stuck the diamond in there, and sewed it up again. She had a beautiful bracelet of diamonds and rubies. She took the handle of the suitcase, opened the seam, put it in there and sewed it up again. She did all of these things. She was really great, my mother was absolutely great. She was fantastic.

Anyway, this is what we had to do to go. All of these things take preparations. And some of our belongings were allowed to take. How they got from Vienna to Genoa, I still don't know. Maybe they went by a tracking firm or something. I don't know. We left without the crates to Budapest. We didn't have any crates with us. But the crates were there when we got to Genoa. I mean, some of our furniture and rugs and pictures, we had some fantastic rugs, and they were all sold in Panama in the beginning. The jewelry was sold in the beginning. Because we didn't have any money. We had to eat. I come to Panama later, I mean this is in the second part of the interview I guess, because Panama is a very interesting story. Very interesting story.

Yes, I'm looking forward to that.

Very interesting story.

Were there some failed attempts to go somewhere else? I mean, you said nobody would take us, so did you try and go somewhere else first?

Yes, yes.

Tell us about that.

Well, first of all, the United States, you had to have somebody here sponsoring you. Then you had to have, I mean those were the legal ways. If you didn't have anybody here in the United States, which we didn't, you just couldn't get in. We didn't have the money to put out. I don't even know if it was possible to. Oh, everything was on the quota system besides, quota. Every country had its own quota. And the Austrian quota was tremendously smart.

Actually, I had applied, we had applied in Panama to immigrate to the United States from Panama in the year 1945, after the war, '46. We applied to immigrate to the United States. My brother, like I said, got married in New York in '48, and because of that I had to renounce my application, annul my application. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been able to go to my brother's wedding in New York.

Yeah, because I needed a, not an immigration visa, but a transit visa, a visitor visa. So I had to renounce and void my application, then I could go to New York. And then, still under visa, Austrian visa, Austrian quota still in the Austrian quota and the Austrian quota was very smart. And still is. Nowadays I don't think you have a quota anymore, now it's caused by a lottery as I understand it.

So, yes, we did try. Like I said before, there was a possibility, the only way we could have really gotten out of the country immediately was for my brother and myself to go to Palestine as [SPEAKS YIDDISH] And my mother couldn't go there, they didn't want women or ladies, so she would have had to go to England and only as a house employee, as dusting or cooking or something in the household. Because otherwise, she wouldn't have gotten to England either.

There were other ways. Of course, you could have gone to Uruguay, which uncle did. And my other uncle Irvin, who went to New York, well he got there because he worked with the Jewish Help Committee, you know the Jewish Help, so he had some kind of, he was able to get there, you know?

No, we were not able to go anywhere and had to take what we were able to get. And we work hard to get that.

Was all of what you were, what was going on around you, your preparations to leave, was all of this putting a strain on your family relationship?

No.

How was it effecting?

None whatsoever. None. It was a strain when we left, to say goodbye to my uncle, my cousins. And this, yes, it was, that was a big strain. I mean that was probably, heartrending. I mean, to say goodbye. Because we never expected, they were already on in age. They wouldn't have left, you see? We knew that we would not see them again. Whereas my uncles like Max and his, they were much younger. This is much more heart wringing yet. We never saw them again.

Is the uncle that you're talking about, the man who tried to pass his business on to his employee?

No. That's Weisskopf, that's the one in Vienna. That's the one who was, who disappeared and was killed in-- what's the name of the concentration camp?

Auschwitz.

Auschwitz, Auschwitz, he was killed in Auschwitz and his wife. And no, this one here was the one, he tried to help everybody. I read all of the letter. He helped everybody, money wise and he did everything to get-- and then he himself couldn't get out. This is a tragedy of the whole thing. He himself could not make it. Everybody did. This family Goldschmitz Yule, Julius, they were able to get to Israel.

They lived in Israel and he started a factory to make pipes, a pipe factory. Of course, Israel was in a building era now, so they needed those pipes. He made a lot of money there. He had already also, years ago, many years ago. But he was able to get out finally from Czechoslovakia. He was exports to Hungary and then, I don't know how they got to Israel. England, yeah, they went over England then they got to-- it was still Palestine, but he was there when Israel was already a state and he had a factory there.

OK. How did you, did you take a train from Vienna to Budapest?

Yes.

How was that? Was there anything-- what was that like?

Well, my mother, my brother, and I, we went to the train station. The last goodbye was from my cousin Litzky, from the one who lives here now. She took us to the train station and we said goodbye to her there. That was also heart rending. I mean, we never knew whether we would see her again and she was much younger.

Well the minute we said goodbye, and it was not easy to do that, we sat in the train. And when the train started rolling, it was a huge sigh of relief. That finally, we are on the way out. But there was always the threat of the border, that something might happen at the border, that they might not let us through. Until after we were over the border and we were in Hungarian territory, then of course, this was the big moment. This was the big moment.

But then again it started up. How do we get to Italy? I mean, go through Austria? We wouldn't have gone. Go through Yugoslavia? They wouldn't let us through. Until we finally got-- the whole thing is, I mean, it is unimaginable the situation of those countries in these years. Because the borders were so closely guarded and everybody was jealous of its borders and there were restrictions and there were passport regulations and this and that.

It was just, we don't even know that thing here. Today, a flight to Europe, a flight to Germany, I go in I don't even have to show my passport. Which is unbelievable in these times, you know?

They looked through you. They came aboard twice. On the Austrian border, and then on the Hungarian border. And they looked through you. They looked at what you have on you, what you have underneath you. Not very nice fellas on the border.

What kind of things did they, did they ask you questions?

Oh, well, I don't remember now whether they asked me really questions like that, but I'm sure they did. I mean, where are you going? What are you? You know, I'm sure they did. I don't remember that, it was not important. Our heart was sitting up here and here, you know? We didn't have any more brains. The brains were already gone.

Where did you stay when you got to Budapest?

At friends. We had many friends there. My mother had many, many friends there. Also well-to-do friends and they put us up, they put us up. And even they tried very hard to make us stay there, that we could stay the time there until the ship leaves. They weren't able to do that.

Because your papers weren't?

Yeah, because the papers were not in order and the Hungarians did not want to give us papers to stay for, let's say it was at least two or three months, you know? It was June, July, August, September, yeah, three months. So they didn't want to give us papers to stay there. I mean, we had a problem. We had we had a big problem. And in Italy we could have stayed because we had the tickets to leave Italy. They were not afraid we would stay there.

Now Italy also is a very interesting thing. We stayed in Milan, as I said, in a small pensione. And that was when the

Sudetenland thing came up. It was very prominent, you know? I don't know whether they had already, the Germans already have taken it over or they were about to take it over. Anyway, the Italians, living under fascism, they came to us and they said, you are Jews. We are going to protect you. We're going to hide you if the Germans come.

You know, this is people are good per say. People per say are good. It's just that certain people, you know, and then again, the mass hypnotism starts and then takes over. It's certain, I would say the majority of people are good. But then there is always this big question mark.

Were you meeting other Jews who were fleeing as well, as you were traveling?

You mean in Hungary?

Yeah.

Well the friends of ours were all Jewish.

Yeah.

The friends of ours who lived there. And in Italy we didn't know anybody until we got to Genoa. Until we met up with our 26 group you know. And our geese.

What were the conditions on the train ride from Budapest to Milan? How long was that and what were the conditions, Besides that it was closed in.

Well it was closed in only in Yugoslavian territory. Actually, I don't recall any particulars because a train ride for me was a train ride. We were outside of Austria. There was no immediate danger to our lives or to our belongings. We were just glad to be away from it, except for the fact that we were locked in through Yugoslavia. Which we took in stride, because we didn't want to go to Austria, so fine, we are locked in. We didn't want to stay in Yugoslavia anyway. I mean, who wants to stay in Yugoslavia? We want to go to Italy to escape.

And when we came to Italy, Milan is a beautiful city. I mean, has so many art things and we went sightseeing a lot. I mean, it didn't keep us back. I mean we tried to forget and we did forget in fact, some of the things that has happened, had happened. And we did go sightseeing. We saw the Last Supper. I saw it already before, I had seen it before. And we went to see a lot of things, and the cathedral. Milan is a beautiful city.

And Genoa, we spent also a lot of time, in Genoa. We spent some nice days in Genoa because of the beautiful city it is. We went to a little port outside of Genoa. I mean, just to sit there and look at the sea. We had never, I mean I had seen the sea, but never knowing on the other end of the sea is my future country, you know? It's a thought, you know? Over there, this is my future country over there. And the unknown we are going into, you know.

I was not afraid. None of us were afraid. We were not afraid to go. I mean, we knew our capacity. We knew that we would learn the languages. We knew we make our living. We would make somehow make it do. And we gave strength to one another. We were 26, and one another gave us strength too.

That's another thing, if you go alone it's different. I know a lot of my friends and a lot of acquaintances of mine had to go alone over the frontier, let's say from Austria to Switzerland, illegally over the mountains in snow and ice alone. I know some of them. That's heartbreaking. You have a completely different attitude toward life when you do this. But when you're 26 people all in the same boat and you're going to the same country, it helps.

Describe for me when you first met these people and tell me about them.

That's tough, I don't remember them. I don't remember them. I remember Elza Kaufman, her husband, two sons, and her mother. That, I remember. There alone, you had five. And then we were three, that's eight. So that leaves only 18, of which I don't remember who they were. Really, I don't remember who they were.

Elza Kaufman, yes. In Panama itself, and I have to go into Panama really now because my mother and she started the restaurant in Panama City. That was the very first object. In that hot climate, the subtropical climate, they started the restaurant for servicemen, of course.

Panama, I don't know, Panama was already-- then it was not an American colony, but it was American. The Canal Zone was there and you had American personnel. You had army, you had Navy, you had airmen there. And she started a restaurant on Avenida Central. In that heat, over the hot stove, and she worked like a horse.

My brother and I, we started also working immediately. I was able to get a job with-- and the Jewish Committee helped us a lot. They had a huge Jewish Committee in Panama for the refugees. And Samuel Friedman was my first. His wife and he, they were marvelous. I started working for him. He had a haberdasher store.

And three months after I started working I had to have an appendectomy. And they took me to the hospital and paid everything. Everything was paid for by the committee. It was really great. My mother, they had a party for us when I was in the hospital. And Mrs. Friedman took my mother with the good food and everything, to that hospital to celebrate with.

They were marvelous people. I mean, it's unbelievable you know. I would have done the same thing. We did the same thing to other people, Jewish people who came through. But when it happens to you, you feel twice as obligated and twice as nice, you know?

We need to take a break.