

HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

INTERVIEW

of

EVA ANGRESS

OCTOBER 28, 1991

by

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1 MS SILVER: I am Lani Silver. I am with  
2 Ruth Tanner. We are interviewing Eva Angress, October 28,  
3 1991. We are in San Francisco at Michael Young Shankel  
4 Communication. We are doing this for the Holocaust Oral  
5 History Project.

6 Eva, I am delighted to talk to you and maybe you  
7 would start by telling me a little bit about your child  
8 hood, when you were born and where you were born.

9 A. Well, I will be happy to do that. I was  
10 born in August, 1921 in Berlin, in a part of the district  
11 of North Kern, where my father, who was a Rabbi in that  
12 district, functioned in that capacity.

13 Basically I had a happy childhood. Surrounded with  
14 love, which I think is always the key word.

15 I had a brother who was eight years older. I, of  
16 course, looked up to him, adored him. As we got older  
17 there were conflicts there because he had communist  
18 leanings and they were certainly in conflict with my  
19 father's views. And that is something that clouded my  
20 childhood to some degree. He made a great impression on  
21 me. I think he was the real idealist communist that we  
22 don't really see much now days anymore, because that the  
23 world has changed. We are going back to the twenties. I  
24 would learn songs that still are considered the Soviet  
25 National Anthem.

1 I would, of course, memorize them in German because  
2 my brother sang them. This was important. So I was  
3 considered the good little girl, the good student and  
4 things went along all right. I had non-Jewish friends, I  
5 had Jewish friends. I knew everybody in the congregation.  
6 They knew me.

7 To continue, where shall we go? I went to a school  
8 where my brother had gone and probably got his leftist  
9 ideas there mostly, which was renamed the Karl Marx  
10 Schule. It was originally (name in German), which means  
11 it was a high school in the German sense with Latin and  
12 French and English and real conservative curriculum. My  
13 father was teaching at the school in his capacity as a  
14 Rabbi. So he also taught in our school. The pastor would  
15 come to the school, Rabbi would come to the school. I  
16 don't know about the Catholics. They didn't have many  
17 Catholics. Our part of town was really quite leftist. It  
18 was in part a very poor neighborhood, not necessarily all  
19 poor. You also had civil servants, small shopkeepers.  
20 But it was always considered officially red. Red North  
21 Kern. I will get to that later.

22 When I got back there on a visit just two and-a-  
23 half years ago that was borne out.

24 So let's see. The director of the school, very  
25 interesting man, with very progressive ideas. Since my

1 father was on the school board in North Kern in Berlin  
2 they knew each other. He was in favor of changing the  
3 name to Karl Marx Schule. My father advised against it.  
4 He said that wouldn't be good for publicity. I remember  
5 hearing talk like that.

6 They did it anyway. So after two years of high  
7 school there where we had all sorts of things that you now  
8 days have in American schools, it was that progressive at  
9 that time already, all of a sudden when Hitler came to  
10 power, of course, a different wind was blowing there and  
11 things changed radically. Dr. Carlson, who was the  
12 director, heard through the radio that he was fired. So  
13 it went. The Jewish teachers were dismissed, et cetera,  
14 et cetera.

15 Q. Before we get to that, his coming into  
16 power, I wanted to know a little more about you were in a  
17 very interesting position in Berlin coming from this  
18 rabbinical family.

19 A. I never thought so but I probably was in  
20 retrospect.

21 Q. Who were some of your parents' friends or  
22 what was your household?

23 A. My parents had a lot of the Jewish doctors.  
24 I don't really know why there were so many Jewish doctors  
25 there. Maybe because of the poor segment of the

1 population who had, what do we call it? Socialized  
2 medicine. They would come to the doctors and the Jewish  
3 doctors did well. They were the friends.

4 Then my father was active in the B'nai B'rith.  
5 That wasn't really restricted to the district. In other  
6 words, he would also function in town, he would also teach  
7 at some other high schools in town. You know, wider  
8 Berlin area. So there were his other colleagues that I  
9 knew then who came for dinner or supper or whatever.

10 There were other high school teachers, as we called  
11 them studenraisen. There were through B'nai B'rith mostly  
12 business people. It was varied, really.

13 Q. What was, did he have a specialty in his  
14 rabbinical work?

15 A. A speciality in his rabbinical work?

16 Q. He was a teacher?

17 A. I don't think he was ever a good speaker.  
18 He always spoke too long. I know my mother and I would  
19 always look at each other. Is he finally going to finish  
20 this?

21 One of his famous quotes, and I will say that in  
22 German because a lot of people can understand.

23 (Insert the quotation in German)  
24

25 That means he can talk about anything, but not

1 beyond 20 minutes. It's a pun in German. It wouldn't  
2 read too well in English. He was aware of that. But he  
3 got so involved. He was so serious about what he felt he  
4 had to tell them. He was wonderful with children. He  
5 always organized Hanukkah plays, I remember. He would  
6 direct them and he was on the stage back and forth and it  
7 was great fun. They came from other parts of Berlin to  
8 our Hanukkah festivities. It was always wonderful. I  
9 have some current people in San Francisco who remember  
10 that.

11 Q. Were there values that he tried to instill  
12 in you? Were there things that came up?

13 A. Probably by osmosis. Education was the  
14 important thing. It was unthinkable I wouldn't continue  
15 schooling and get as far as the gynasium, which was the  
16 end of the high school curriculum, and go to University  
17 and pursue a profession. That was a foregone conclusion.  
18 You just didn't even doubt that. He himself had a Ph.D  
19 from Heidelberg.

20 He was from poor beginnings. His father had been a  
21 cantor. He was the youngest of I think six. I am not  
22 sure. I know a couple of them died early on. So I didn't  
23 know them all. I never knew my grandparents. They were  
24 already gone when I was born.

25 He was very good with the young people. He was

1 very good as a counselor for people who would come and  
2 seek his counsel, and they all did.

3 Q. Was there a synagogue where he was?

4 A. There was a temple, yes.

5 Q. What was the name of that?

6 A. Jewish Geimine North Kern. I revisited  
7 there. They have now Jehovah's Witness in there, which  
8 strikes you as a little odd when you come. Of course, I  
9 spent a great deal of my childhood there.

10 In 1935 when I was 14 things were not so much fun  
11 anymore. There were, of course, some kids of the  
12 non-Jewish children who were anti-semitic who, you know,  
13 came up with slurs. Nobody ever did me any physical harm.  
14 However, it became uncomfortable.

15 One day, I think he was still teaching there at  
16 that point, but he saw the bulletin board and he saw the  
17 articles from the newspaper, Der Sturmer. I can't really  
18 translate that. It was well known depicting caricature of  
19 Jews. He said that's it. Now you can't stay here any  
20 longer. If they condone this out you go.

21 We did have what you would call a homeroom teacher,  
22 who was one of the old group and who knew the family. He  
23 asked me every once in a while is anything wrong. And  
24 tell me about it if there is.

25 I can't say that I personally suffered. Because of

1 the fact there were so many leftist people in the school  
2 and because of the home atmosphere there really wasn't  
3 that much of a problem. Nonetheless, it was decided  
4 enough was enough. Let's put her in another school.

5 So I went to a school far away, clear across town  
6 in Berlin, a private school called Tesla Schule where I  
7 was very happy. At that point a lot of children from  
8 other schools had also come in. We had good teachers,  
9 because they all had to find different employment.

10 Now unfortunately that school ended before you  
11 could go all the way to the gynosium. Of course, there  
12 was no question you had to have the gynosium. The other  
13 school that would be in the same area, it was really a  
14 lovely location in the suburb of Berlin. I took the  
15 subway every morning, seven o'clock. Didn't think too  
16 much of it. It was a long commute, I guess, for a child  
17 but I did it. The other school I couldn't go to because  
18 they had been feuding. There was another one that opened  
19 up for six months, where I wasn't doing well and my mother  
20 told my father, don't you see the child isn't doing well  
21 there, it's not her type of school. Let's take her out.

22 So I went to another school called the Schule,  
23 where I had another year and-a-half of very, very good  
24 teachers, good friends and in fact the few of us who are  
25 still around, we do keep in touch. We have had reunions



1 and that's where in 1939, March 39, I can tell you March  
2 3rd, 39 in front of a commission that came to the school,  
3 like a small board, I still passed the gynasium there,  
4 which was wonderful except it hasn't really done anything  
5 for my career. It would give me credit in college here,  
6 but I have for personal reasons not to have the chance to  
7 continue ever. Things then got out of control.

8 All right. Where are we? During all this time we  
9 knew we had to leave Germany. Now I should perhaps say  
10 that my brother early on in 1933 couldn't stay because he  
11 was known to have these leftist leanings. Of course, it  
12 was imperative that he leave. So he, through my father's  
13 colleague in Prague, was sent to Prague to study at the  
14 German University there. You see education was always the  
15 important thing. One didn't just stop at a certain point.

16 He enrolled for about a year I think at that point  
17 in Berlin at the University for law and economics. So  
18 that's where he went.

19 Then we went visiting to Czechoslovakia regularly  
20 at least twice a year or so. Sometimes my mother went  
21 alone, sometimes I went with her. We combined it with a  
22 summer vacation, went to Marine Butt, which you may know  
23 from a movie only, which was a very well known spot.  
24 Today I don't think it's as elegant as it use to be. Had  
25 a great time there as a teenager. Learned to dance there.

1 We went to dances in the morning and in the afternoon and  
2 in the evening, so I had a good time, no complaints about  
3 that.

4 Then we went to Prague in the winter sometimes. We  
5 got to know the Chief Rabbi of Prague quite well and his  
6 daughter, who was a doctor in the Sommen Mariebrau in the  
7 winter in Prague.

8 So our connections were always widespread. It  
9 wasn't such in our district in North Kern.

10 Q. What else did you see before 39? What else  
11 did you experience in the city of the Nurenburg Laws?

12 A. Of course, one of the things that cut into  
13 the household was you had to dismiss the maid. You  
14 couldn't have a full time maid anymore, unless she had  
15 been with you for a certain time. If she was 35. Other  
16 than that, she had to be over 45. I don't exactly know  
17 how it was.

18 We had somebody come in during the day, but that  
19 was pretty drastic for that time when mother wasn't really  
20 use to doing that. My mother did a lot of volunteer work  
21 it was called. It was an obligation of the women who a  
22 lot of them were very intellectual women. She had to  
23 follow-up on welfare cases. I think they did that quite a  
24 bit.

25 I also remember, to get topical, that there was a

1 lot of talk about paragraph 218. I asked my brother, who  
2 was still at home at that time, who was a law student,  
3 what that meant. So he showed me the civil code, which  
4 didn't mean very much to me, being as young as I was. He  
5 explained that it had essentially something to do with if  
6 you don't want a baby you don't have to have a baby. So  
7 in other words, they were already in those days really  
8 supporting anti-abortion activities. Didn't get too far.  
9 It was still very illegal in Germany. Although I think if  
10 you were monied you could find a doctor friend who would  
11 help. That's the way it usually works, of course, as we  
12 know.

13 So I have little memories of that. Other than  
14 that, you didn't speak in front of the children as much as  
15 we do now. One of the famous sayings at lunch or dinner  
16 was (quote in German) "Not in front of the child."  
17 Sometimes I found out in a round about way what they were  
18 talking about, but it was not considered necessary the  
19 children should know everything. I think we were kept  
20 pretty naive in many ways. Whether that was good or not  
21 is another matter. Sometimes our kids know too much.

22 Where do we go on? 1939, leaving school. In  
23 between I was put to work writing letters to relatives  
24 that we did have in the United States. Of course, the  
25 object was possibly for my father to have a contract with

1 a congregation. That was a bit tricky because he didn't  
2 really speak English. He had some smattering of English,  
3 but it was very poor. He never really learned English  
4 well. He was the old Greek, Latin, some French scholar.  
5 That wasn't his thing at all. He was good at math and  
6 Latin and he would coach me.

7 If I didn't want to be bothered -- I was a good  
8 student. If I didn't want to be bothered -- I mean I was  
9 a good student while he did that. When I didn't want to  
10 be bothered, well, my grades dropped. I wouldn't tell him  
11 anymore that I had a test.

12 Anyhow, later on after 1939, what did I do? Yes, I  
13 was enrolled in the school that this Jewish congregation  
14 in Berlin had under their auspices where you could put  
15 together your courses. I chose language courses,  
16 shorthand in German, English and Spanish. The German  
17 standard shorthand is very good in that it lends itself to  
18 application to all languages. Pretty smart. It was no  
19 problem. You could go with it all. I took intense  
20 Spanish for a year. We didn't know where we were going to  
21 end up. Languages were important. I took advance course  
22 in English to continue and I should perhaps mention the  
23 school where I was, Deutsch school, had at the same time  
24 also the Cambridge school certificate examination. You  
25 could actually pass that examination.

1 I have to say for the record and posterity I  
2 flunked it. I took it at the time right after  
3 Kristallnacht in December 1938 when my father was taken to  
4 the concentration camp. I am back dragging a little bit.

5 We heard about it through neighbors about this was  
6 planned. My father thought it would be a good idea to  
7 leave the house. He went to one of his oldest sisters,  
8 who lived alone, who was widowed I believe at that point,  
9 and he stayed there. But then, well, he wanted the  
10 comfort of home. After two days he came back. He was  
11 barely there when the doorbell rang and the Gestapo man  
12 came and said I watched across the street until you  
13 returned home. He was in Sachsenhausen for six weeks.  
14 This was not too far from Berlin. Quite a few people were  
15 there. There was frantic telephoning among the wives,  
16 because as one or the other was released -- In those days  
17 they still released you from concentration camp after  
18 Kristallnacht.

19 In those days women hit on the idea, I don't know  
20 who advised them, if you book passage to say Shanghai or  
21 somehow show papers you would leave they would let you go,  
22 which apparently was true. So they would all constantly  
23 be on the phone with each other and consult with each  
24 other. My mother got steamer tickets on the Contabienca  
25 line leaving from Genoa sometime early in 1939.

1 Well, indeed he came home after six weeks, probably  
2 on the strength of the tickets. I will never forget how  
3 he looked. He was pretty awful, pretty pathetic. You  
4 know, no hair and all his clothes stank to high heaven.  
5 They put them through some kind of disinfectant probably.  
6 It was awful. He came home, up the stairs a broken man.  
7 And was in bed a few days and our doctor came and checked  
8 him over and so forth. But then, of course, he recovered.

9 Then the reality set in and he said "Go to  
10 Shanghai. What am I suppose to do there?".

11 Well, you know what he did, he took the steamer  
12 tickets back. He said I am not going to Shanghai. Well,  
13 I don't know. He was not a stupid man. He was just  
14 afraid, I think. He was afraid. He had a family and what  
15 was he going to do? How was he going to make a living in  
16 Shanghai China? This wasn't just the way we live today  
17 where we can send a fax to Shanghai and it will be there  
18 the same instant. You have to put yourself in that  
19 position. So we didn't go. But we did give up the  
20 apartment. Furniture was warehoused. We lived in two  
21 very nice but rented, furnished rooms in the western part  
22 of Berlin because our synagogue had also been torched. It  
23 wasn't completely burned down. I think the reason was it  
24 was among apartment buildings and they didn't want to  
25 destroy them. But it was vandalized and torched to some

1 degree also. So there was no more service there at all.

2 So from then on he functioned at other synagogues  
3 that had not been damaged. It was sort of an unreal  
4 existence. I continued to go to school in my courses.

5 Actually, I think I am getting the cart before the  
6 horse here. Kristallnacht was November, 38. We moved in  
7 November, 39. I left school only in March, 1939. Then  
8 enrolled in language courses et cetera, et cetera.

9 Well, we continued to live and try to get out.  
10 Meanwhile, my father's brother -- He had an older brother  
11 who was living in Berlin at that time with his married  
12 daughter. He had made up his mind to go to Shanghai.  
13 They had no affidavit of support from the United States,  
14 which we did have.

15 The problem was that my father was on the Polish  
16 quota. Apparently at that time at least they took the  
17 year 1924. While he had a German passport and that part  
18 of Upper Silesia was German at the time he was born, after  
19 World War II and after the Versailles treaty in 1924 it  
20 was Polish. So the Polish quota applied, which of course  
21 was always very over crowded. It meant a very very long  
22 wait.

23 The contract negotiations had not materialized with  
24 some congregation. He could have gone outside the quota.  
25 That was the object. My mother had a cousin in New York,

1 who was really trying to help. It was Eric Cohn, who was  
2 the President of Goodman Mansews. He doesn't live today  
3 anymore. And he finally did send a contract with a  
4 congregation. However, the American consulate in Berlin  
5 did not recognize that anymore. They thought that was a  
6 fake contract. There were too many of them already. That  
7 just didn't quite work. So here we were.

8           Meanwhile, my uncle left for Shanghai. I remember  
9 taking them to the train. I remember that we all in a way  
10 felt sorry for them. But then again reality came and we  
11 were corresponding with them. At that point you needed a  
12 Japanese permit already to get to Shanghai. It wasn't  
13 that you bought a steamer ticket to go.

14           Also, I don't exactly know what the date was when  
15 Italy got into the war. But you couldn't get out through  
16 Italy anymore either. So there was only the land route  
17 open.

18           If you recall we were good friends with Stalin at  
19 the time. When I say we, I mean Germany was because we  
20 were still there.

21           Now the question was would we go to Shanghai? We  
22 got the permit from my uncle. But lo and behold he didn't  
23 have my brothers name on it, who was still in Prague at  
24 first. Then after Hitler took over Czechoslovakia it was  
25 all arranged, he was suppose to go across the border to



1 join in France.

2 Well, it was just before the war started in July or  
3 August, 1939. His luggage went through. He could not.  
4 The men met him at the border and said it's too dangerous.  
5 We can't take you across anymore.

6 Well, there he was. All of a sudden he showed up  
7 in Berlin after having been in Prague. In other words out  
8 of the country for so many years. The Jewish authorities  
9 that were working on cases like that had certain labor  
10 camps where they put people like that, which were not  
11 really under Nazi supervision. You make them disappear,  
12 so to speak.

13 So he went to a place, a labor camp in Beitefeldt,  
14 I think it was. He was there and we thought, well, we  
15 will now go to Shanghai and try everything we can to get  
16 him another permit and have him come.

17 Well, it was all very confusing. Well, every day  
18 regulations changed. We needed a transit visa through  
19 Soviet Russia and we needed one through Manchuria.  
20 Manchuria was almost entirely under Japanese control at  
21 that point. Don't quote me on the history, but I think it  
22 was at least the Fuegel plan sets out that too.

23 Anyhow, in order to have a visa through Manchuria  
24 you needed \$50.00 per family. Not per family. \$50.00 per  
25 person, deposited in Manchuria. Again, now days that

1 wouldn't be so difficult. But that meant sending a  
2 telegram, explaining in New York and having them do that.  
3 I believe there was also something required for Russia,  
4 but that really wasn't the important problem. The problem  
5 was that my father had heard that you don't get, as a  
6 Rabbi, you wouldn't get a transit visa through Russia. So  
7 when his passport was issued he had put instead of  
8 profession he put teacher, not Rabbi.

9 So he got up to the consulate in Berlin. They told  
10 him you are not a teacher, you are a Rabbi. We have a  
11 list of all clergy. We won't give you a visa. That, of  
12 course, meant that we wouldn't be able to leave.

13 He came home crushed, but not quite because that  
14 day, and this is where the miracle comes in. He told that  
15 story from the pulpit several times. In the subway he met  
16 somebody that he knew from his youth, who had come to his  
17 parents' home sometimes and had eaten there and had been a  
18 poor guy and he said what is the problem? Why do you look  
19 like that?

20 He said, Well, he told him what was going on. He  
21 said I know people at the Russian consulate. I will fix  
22 it. He did. So we did get the Russian transit visa, we  
23 did get the Manchurian transit visa. On the land route,  
24 of course.

25 We left on train at night. At that time we had air

1 raids in Berlin. We were actually every night in an air  
2 raid shelter. We were segregated from the gentiles in the  
3 air raid shelter, which was just as well. They had to  
4 sing and we didn't have to sing, so that was all right.  
5 But there were several Jewish families in the house where  
6 we lived at that point. So we left.

7 Just last night we read some notes on my trip. I  
8 made notes on the train, because I had left a boyfriend  
9 and I left other friends. It was sad. It was sad to  
10 leave. I remember that my boyfriend came to each station.  
11 There were several stations within Berlin. He always took  
12 the elevated to the next station to see me once more. I  
13 never heard from him anymore and I am sure they never got  
14 out. I doubt that they ever survived. But that was the  
15 sad part.

16 So it was rather unreal. The idea of going on  
17 trains and getting to a far away country in some ways,  
18 don't forget I was 19, it was an adventure. While it was  
19 sad, I also had some good times, enjoyed Moscow. We were  
20 in Moscow for a couple days. We had a grand tour of the  
21 Moscow subway, which I think they are still proud today.

22 Of course, all of this was paid for with German  
23 money. So the interest which today, the travel agency and  
24 all through Russia, sent a guide. She was wonderful.  
25 Spoke fluent German. Took us all over to the things we

1 were suppose to see.

2 Then we got on the TransSiberian Express. I rather  
3 enjoyed that. We had a wonderful apartment with my  
4 parents and I and there was always one Russian soldier  
5 there. In other words, there were four. If we would have  
6 booked first class we would have been separated. There  
7 were only two in first class. So second class I think, I  
8 guess that's what it was, anyway my father made a point  
9 that we should be together at all times.

10 Of course, we had coupons to go in the dining room.  
11 It was fun. All of a sudden there was so much food, which  
12 we hadn't had because we didn't have much food anymore in  
13 Berlin because we didn't get as much coupons, food coupons  
14 during the war as gentiles did. Also we had to go  
15 shopping from four to five in the afternoon. The produce  
16 was gone. You maybe got some, oh, rutabaggas or  
17 something, potatoes. It was pretty rough at that point  
18 already. You really couldn't get things.

19 Well, back to the TransSiberian Express. I had  
20 taken three months of Russian, knowing that we were going  
21 to Shanghai and going through Russia and also probably  
22 mainly because I had a boyfriend who was Russian. So a  
23 little bit of that stuck. Today I have forgotten most of  
24 it. But I was able to converse a bit with the Russian  
25 officers on the train and they taught me to drink vodka.

1 They told me it would be good for us because everybody  
2 gets sick on the train, which was true. Everybody got  
3 diarrhea after awhile and I held out until the last.

4 My parents didn't worry about me because where  
5 could I go on the train? I went to the dining car. Drank  
6 vodka. Not over ice. Just little water glasses. It was  
7 all rather pleasant. Except for the last day when the  
8 fellow who was in our compartment stole my watch.

9 In other words, I had always had it next to me at  
10 the night stand and there it was. It was gone in the  
11 morning. Although the night before he said he was going  
12 to take me to Vladivostok and he wanted me to marry him.  
13 I guess that didn't keep him from taking my watch.

14 All right. So we got to the Manchurian border and  
15 we went on more trains. We got to Dyran, southern tip of  
16 Manchuria and boarded the ship. It was called the Santa  
17 Maru, I believe, a freighter. More food. Then we arrived  
18 in Shanghai.

19 My uncle was there with his family. There he had  
20 already rented a room for us. Well, when we saw the room  
21 though in the part of Shanghai that was very poor, bombed  
22 out part that we know as Hon-ku. We looked at it and we  
23 didn't know whether we should cry or laugh. It was  
24 unthinkable. Even though we didn't live in a big  
25 apartment anymore in Berlin, that you would live in a room

1 like that? Well, we didn't for very long. We found  
2 something a little better.

3 Again, I hate to say this, but I had a pretty good  
4 time because I was a young girl. I met people who were  
5 friends of my parents' friends, or their friends lived in  
6 town. There were also some very well to do people in  
7 Shanghai who had been there from 1933, 34. Some of the  
8 doctors my parents knew had gone there early on because  
9 they didn't have to study anymore to practice in Shanghai.

10 So I was taken around and at the same time was  
11 looking around for what would I be able to do here. I  
12 knew shorthand. My typing was marginal. My father, in  
13 his capacity as a Rabbi, called on several people that  
14 were recommended to him as being outstanding in the Jewish  
15 Shanghailander community.

16 Like, for instance, Mr. Khaduri. The Khaduri  
17 family, they are sopharic jews, had always done a great  
18 deal for education wherever they were, whether it was  
19 India, China. They helped build a school in Shanghai for  
20 refugee children.

21 When my father asked him, he paid a courtesy call,  
22 what would I be able to do? They gave me a typing test,  
23 which I flunked.

24 He suggested well, we really have to see she has a  
25 typewriter at home and we will rent a typewriter for her

1 so she can practice and see what she can do. I think this  
2 was very constructive.

3 Q. What was the name of the school that he  
4 founded?

5 A. He founded what was later called the SJ.  
6 Shanghai Jewish youth. We called it the Khaduri school.  
7 It had initials. It's very easy to establish what they  
8 were, except I can't right now think of the correct  
9 letters.

10 Q. Can you tell me anything about that school?

11 A. That school, yes. The head mistress was  
12 Louise Hartwick. Mrs. Hartwick, I guess my parents knew  
13 her. Anyway they must have been friends. Actually the  
14 idea was maybe I could teach kindergarten or teach English  
15 and so forth. She didn't think I really had enough  
16 qualifications. They had enough teachers. They had quite  
17 a few very good teachers. Children got a good education  
18 there. It was a nice school. It was all built like a  
19 community center for performances, for weddings. Later I  
20 was married there, et cetera. It lent itself to many  
21 purposes, which was very much needed.

22 Of course, we were much later than the rest of the  
23 immigration. Most of them had arrived, apart from the  
24 real early ones I was mentioning, like the doctors and so  
25 forth, talking about those that came in 1938, 39. That

1 was really the bulk of the immigration had come by ship.

2 Q. When did you arrive?

3 A. We arrived in November 1940. November 11,  
4 12.

5 Q. When had you left Berlin?

6 A. In October. October 17, I believe.

7 Something like that approximately. If you need the exact  
8 dates I can provide them.

9 Q. When you landed in Shanghai what was the  
10 first thing you saw and thought?

11 A. Of course, you don't get in the open ocean.  
12 You get in through the Wong Poo River, which is very  
13 dirty. You see all these Chinese junks and there is a lot  
14 of dirt all around and you see the wharf. You don't see  
15 this grandious water front. You see the so-called bund,  
16 which is big older buildings, which are today still  
17 unchanged. I haven't been back but I have seen pictures.  
18 The bund is still there. Like the Embarcadero. They call  
19 it big bund. B u n d. That I saw later when I went into  
20 town and I was taken all over.

21 As I say, I was trying to get some kind of a job  
22 but I wasn't that qualified. Basically I had been in  
23 school. I hadn't really ever worked. What finally  
24 happened was there was another committee, the I C,  
25 International Committee, under the auspices of Sir Victor



1 Sassoon. Sir Victor Sassoon and his family owned most of  
2 Shanghai real estate. He was a philanthropist as well.  
3 He founded the so-called International Committee known as  
4 the I C. They branched out doing all sorts of things.  
5 They had a group of people, good group of people who ran  
6 the office under the manager Paul Komar. K o m a r.  
7 Hungarian background. One of them, Walter Frank who lived  
8 in Berkeley, who I believe you have interviewed. He was  
9 in the office. I think he did accounting. He did a lot  
10 of other things to. He was a very bright young guy. I  
11 still have a picture of him with me.

12 I am getting ahead of myself again. I was hired as  
13 an English teacher of basic English. Somebody had put a  
14 bee in Kormar's bonnet, so to speak, that one should teach  
15 all these people English, which was very good, but with a  
16 special system. There was a system called basic English,  
17 which consisted of eight hundred fifty words. I had heard  
18 about that in Berlin. I don't know why but I heard about  
19 it. It was in the air, I suppose.

20 With those eight hundred fifty words you can really  
21 say everything you want, unless you get technical. We  
22 don't need all these grandious words. However, it was a  
23 little difficult to teach people who knew some English, no  
24 you can't use that, but you will have to use these words.  
25 Nonetheless, later on I met people who said I learned my

1 first English from you and that was quite good.

2 It lasted a while. I don't know how long. I was  
3 fired under the pretense the economy was bad and they just  
4 had to lay off people, which wasn't true. The truth was  
5 that my father had given a sermon during a time when there  
6 was a hotel strike in Shanghai. In other words, people  
7 weren't really unionized, but nonetheless they wanted  
8 higher wages and better conditions. All the hotels, major  
9 hotels I should say, were under Victor Sassoon ownership.  
10 Somehow, somebody must have said that is Rabbi Doctor  
11 Kantorrosky. He gave a sermon on the high holidays that  
12 strike-breakers are really somebody to look at, that it  
13 was immoral to be a strike- breaker. Of course, he had  
14 indeed given such a sermon, but had never given it a  
15 thought how it would affect my job. I am sure that's what  
16 it was. Because there was no other excuse for it. It was  
17 almost funny actually in retrospect.

18 Q. How did you react then?

19 A. Well, I was somewhat shocked. I didn't  
20 have a job.

21 Everybody at the I C was paid equally, whether you  
22 were -- They had, they called it Schitzka. They had a few  
23 lawyers, who would decide like a small claims court on  
24 cases that came up among landlords and tenants. People  
25 lived too close together in Shanghai. There was a lot

1 going on. People were not angeles or saints. People  
2 fight, whether they are jewish or otherwise. So each of  
3 us got the same salary. So that was a big help.

4 My father, I don't think at that point was paid  
5 much or very little by the congregation. I am sure the  
6 congregation was subsidized by Shanghai Jews.

7 Anyway, then I looked around what can you do?  
8 Somehow or other I got a job with what was called Heitsem,  
9 which is known as highest. The local office for the  
10 English correspondents. So that lasted for awhile. Until  
11 war broke out. I am talking now about the Pacific War  
12 after Pearl Harbor, which to me will always be December 8,  
13 which here was December 7. But because of the  
14 international date line you have a different date.

15 So here I was. At that point I was already semi  
16 engaged to my husband, whom I had met through friends and  
17 they lived nearby. I remember in the morning we use to  
18 walk to work together into town. We turned back because  
19 we didn't really know what was happening. We didn't have  
20 a radio at the time. But we had to turn back because you  
21 couldn't even get across Garden Bridge. Garden Bridge was  
22 the connection between our area in Hon-ku, or the wayside  
23 district, as it was called by Shanghailanders, really.  
24 But we called it Hon-ku. The actual town of Shanghai,  
25 international settlement and French town. I won't go into

1 all those details at this point because that doesn't  
2 really have that much to do with it.

3 Anyhow, here we were. Then, it slowly started to  
4 evolve that there was no more English correspondents. Our  
5 manager, Russian jew by the name of Mr. Bierman, gave me  
6 notice and said we won't have any correspondence with the  
7 United States anymore.

8 Here I was again without a job. I don't know at  
9 what point, but I was then rehired at the I C because  
10 Komar was not there any more because Victor Sassoon was  
11 not in charge anymore. He was an enemy alien at that  
12 point. I was rehired as secretary to Mr. Parrott. Robert  
13 Parrott was manager of the IC. Installed I believe by the  
14 Japanese, as I recall. So I worked for him for awhile.  
15 Even that didn't last that long.

16 I think I was still there when we got married. Bob  
17 and I got married in January 1943. January 31st. As it  
18 happened, we got married. We finally got a room on one of  
19 the streets called Dent Road. Two weeks later, I think it  
20 was February 18, 1941. No, 4th is when the war started.  
21 Must have been in 42. When the proclamation by the  
22 Japanese came out we all had to live in a designated area.  
23 The designated area was just across the street from where  
24 we were. So we were on the wrong side of the street. So  
25 of course we had no money. That became a real problem

1 where are we going to live?

2 Then one of my husband's aunts, who had exchanged  
3 her house for a house in the district, gave us a very tiny  
4 room, without key money. Key money was the key to it. If  
5 you didn't have any key money you couldn't get a room or  
6 apartment or whatever. Don't think there weren't nice  
7 apartments in Hon-ku. There were some fairly new houses.  
8 Some people who brought money with them Europe -- Some  
9 people managed somehow or other or had money abroad for  
10 some reason, business people, they could live quite  
11 comfortably. Some others were still in homes. In other  
12 words, like camps and bunk beds and so forth. The more  
13 fortunate ones, as we were, somehow had a room somewhere.

14 Q. The less fortunate ones?

15 A. The less fortunate ones -- Nobody was on  
16 the street. They were in camps. We called them homes.  
17 There were several of them. That is how the whole thing  
18 started I believe when people first arrived. I am sure  
19 that was all subsidized originally by Shanghai Jews.

20 Don't forget there was a large Russian Jewish  
21 community and large sopharic Jewish community that had  
22 been there a long time. The Russians since 1917 since the  
23 revolution and the sopharic jews had been there. They  
24 weren't all wealthy. They are weren't all Victor Sassoons  
25 or Khuduri or Ellis Heim. Ellis Heim was the one

1 connected with Jardan Maltisine. I was in his office once  
2 and I was in total awe. I came in and his desk was way  
3 over on the other side. I mean I wasn't use to anything  
4 that glamorous.

5 Now days I think we would not think this was that  
6 glamorous. I had never seen anything like that. So these  
7 people though had somehow felt a moral obligation to help.  
8 Here was this huge wave of immigration that came during  
9 those years.

10 How did we survive in those days? Well, I don't  
11 know. Somehow everybody managed with a little money that  
12 we made here or there. Some people sold their belongings.  
13 I remember it broke my father's heart he had to sell some  
14 books that we brought along because that was something he  
15 really didn't want to do. But he did. I remember that  
16 once my shoes were sold and I sold my camera. Somehow you  
17 managed. You don't even cry about it because it was just  
18 a matter of necessity.

19 Q. What happened to your father?

20 A. My father, there were at that point four  
21 rabbis that worked for the Jewish communal organization I  
22 think they were called at that point. I have papers to  
23 support all that. They are all in my trunk, but you won't  
24 want them now. You may want them at some other point.

25 Whatever salary it was I am sure it wasn't very

1 much. Somehow or other he was working for them and they  
2 held regular services. I don't think they were reformed  
3 service. There was a liberal service, which was something  
4 like our conservative, I would say. Of course, there was  
5 the ultra orthodox. Then there were a lot of the shiva  
6 people who came in via Japan, as you can read in the  
7 Fuegal Plan, and was mentioned in the movie we saw  
8 recently within the framework of the Jewish film festival.

9 I forget what it was called, but it was quite well  
10 done. We talked about that. So there were different  
11 factions. They didn't all like each other. The Viennese  
12 and Berlin people didn't like each other. Nonetheless, we  
13 had very close friends who were our neighbors who were  
14 from Vienna and I am still in correspondence with them.  
15 They live in Sidney and we were very good friends. But  
16 people are people and they are human. They weren't always  
17 on excellent terms.

18 Q. What other relationships do you know about  
19 or remember that were or were not on good terms?

20 A. Well, not on good terms really isn't what I  
21 want to talk about. That is really negative. A lot of  
22 people found that they really had no skills at all. The  
23 ones who did best were the ones who knew a trade, whether  
24 they were plumbers or shoemakers or whatever else there  
25 was that you needed to know. Those people were lucky.

1 They managed. But there were those others that just  
2 didn't fit in anywhere.

3 Now we had, as I mentioned earlier, some lawyers in  
4 the so-called Skiekska, the little court we had there. It  
5 wasn't that little. At that point we were twenty thousand  
6 refugees. So there were always cases to be settled and so  
7 forth. But there were other lawyers that weren't working  
8 for the Jewish community and they really had no visible  
9 means of support.

10 What I was getting to was a lot of the wives worked  
11 in bars in town. Some of them maybe in some different  
12 capacity. There was always gossip, which wasn't  
13 necessarily true. But for many it was the only way really  
14 to survive, to bring some money home. There were  
15 divorces, of course. Other than that, shall I go on  
16 personally or in general?

17 Personally? Well, meanwhile we got married. We  
18 were very happy.

19 Q. How did you meet?

20 A. Oh, how did we meet? There were little  
21 groups that had formed. When we got there, which was late  
22 in the game, as I mentioned, there was already a B'nai  
23 B'rith and there was already an obersliderversein. That  
24 was the member who had come from Upper Silesia, like my  
25 father and quite a few others, who may have lived



1 somewhere else but came from there. They had their  
2 evenings. Particularly in the summer. It was so hot.  
3 There were out door cafes and you would sit there all  
4 evening with one. Yeah we did have Cokes. Something on  
5 that order that was locally made.

6 So I went along with my parents. I didn't really  
7 have anything else to do in the beginning. So then he  
8 went along with his parents and finally after a while we  
9 decided we don't really need this anymore, we can go on  
10 our own.

11 Before that I had dated some others and really had  
12 had a good time in that respect. When you are young you  
13 somehow get your fun where you get it.

14 Then, of course, eventually the letters from  
15 Germany stopped also. One didn't hear anymore about  
16 friends. So everything became very small, very  
17 concentrated.

18 Well, as I say, after the proclamation we moved --

19 (At this time the hearing was recessed)

20 Our life became a little more regular. My husband  
21 had at that point a job as bookkeeper. He learned some  
22 bookkeeping meanwhile from somebody in a firm in town that  
23 actually they were Russian Jews. So they were not  
24 considered enemy aliens. The parent company was Lidell  
25 Brothers. Of course, they couldn't operate anymore

1 because they were British. Somehow they did a little  
2 business. I don't quite know what they did, but he had an  
3 income of sorts. It wasn't a good income but it was local  
4 currency and it was an income.

5 I worked for a short while then again for Highas.  
6 Some reason or other, correspondence, they needed somebody  
7 to sit in the Hon-ku office. At that point we needed a  
8 pass to get into town. The king of the Jews, you heard  
9 about Mr. Guyo dispensed the passes. At some point he  
10 probably -- I had met him before through the I C. For  
11 some reason he didn't want me to have one. He just  
12 refused it.

13 I was then sitting in the Hon-ku office, the  
14 Heet-su office they call it. Heet-su is the Hebrew name  
15 for it. I was sitting there for communication and for  
16 collecting monies. The gentleman shiva boys had loans and  
17 they had to pay them back. Every month they came in and  
18 they paid. Somebody came from the town office and would  
19 pickup the receipts and whatever else I had to tell them.  
20 It was bitter cold that winter, I remember. We had no  
21 heat. I had some gloves made where the fingers stick out  
22 so you could type. It was pretty damn cold. Shanghai has  
23 a miserable climate.

24 Then also the people who really had nothing at  
25 least got one meal a day through the so-called kitchen

1 fund, which had been founded during that time. You would  
2 go and pickup -- You would go with a caserole or something  
3 and pickup the soup that was doled out and so forth.

4 We pooled resources and we ate our dinner at lunch  
5 time usually. We would come home for lunch. We ate at my  
6 husband's parents. So you would pool all resources.  
7 Resources wasn't just the food. It was also fuel.  
8 Electricity was rationed. Obviously we had no kitchen.  
9 We had only either a hot plate or you would have a very  
10 crude Chinese stove you would fan outside with some very  
11 inferior coal so it would burn.

12 It took a little -- It's hard to imagine this.  
13 These are things maybe the boy scouts learn when they go  
14 on trips, which really became an every day matter. They  
15 weren't anything -- It wasn't very convenient, let me put  
16 it that way. You didn't just push a button. I still to  
17 this day haven't forgotten. I am always very grateful I  
18 can turn the thermostat up if I am cold.

19 All right. So this went on and on. We pooled  
20 resources for supper in the evening with our neighbors.  
21 Sometimes they had some coals and sometimes we had, in the  
22 winter time particularly.

23 Then, of course, the air raids started. While we  
24 were very happy to have the Americans come over finally  
25 and maybe get the upperhand, we also didn't want to get

1 killed. It was pretty unnerving. Here it was again in an  
2 air raid. Except we had no air raid shelter to speak of  
3 really.

4 We went downstairs or stayed in our room. What was  
5 it you were going to do? There wasn't much you could do.  
6 So it went.

7 Every day there were more rumors about this and  
8 about that. Somebody heard something through the Swiss  
9 consulate. Somebody heard something through a radio  
10 station from overseas. It was very often wrong.

11 Meanwhile, the Russian radio we somehow got -- I  
12 don't know if that was a local station or not. And they  
13 were giving their victories in Europe then. I remember  
14 the word pre-cast. That meant announcement. Pre-cast  
15 meant a victory. They had taken another town. Things  
16 were looking up a little.

17 They looked very, very bleak for awhile, both for  
18 the United States and in Europe. You know all that from  
19 history.

20 Well, finally, the night of August 6th, which  
21 happens to be my birthday, the flash came through, don't  
22 ask me how these flashes came through. One just heard  
23 somehow or other that something had happened. Obviously  
24 that was Hiroshima, but we didn't know it and the Japanese  
25 were giving up. The next day they hadn't given up. They

1 were again with their bayonets at the Goyen Garden Bridge.  
2 But then something else came through and all of a sudden  
3 the war was over.

4 I know that we sat around and drank vodka from  
5 coffee cups, because we had no glasses. Vodka was cheap.  
6 That was something we always had. Of course, it's very  
7 hard to describe that mood. Never again in my life have I  
8 felt that kind of mood. Maybe when my first grandchild  
9 was born. But the general spirit, with the war finally  
10 over after all these years, it was incredible.

11 Then it didn't take long and here were the good  
12 looking American boys and they were in the streets of  
13 Shanghai. I mean this was incredible. Here I was working  
14 for Highas for a very small amount of money at that point.  
15 I was working. As a matter of fact I did get paid in  
16 Swiss franc. I remember it was 50 Swiss franc a month. I  
17 imagine that came via the United States. I am not quite  
18 sure how they got the money. It was better than to be  
19 paid in Shanghai currency obviously. But then everybody  
20 started stampeding for jobs with the U.S. Army because  
21 they paid very well. Well, not to American eyes. But to  
22 us it was big money.

23 When Rabbi Fine, who was the chaplain of that  
24 particular troop, came to Shanghai and came to Hon-ku as  
25 well, my father met him and I went with him. He thought

1 why don't you work with the American Red Cross. That  
2 would probably be a good job for you. I went to see Red  
3 Crawford. He was a jolly gentleman.

4 I worked in the field directors office for almost a  
5 year at the fantastic pay of ninety U.S. dollars a month,  
6 which was wonderful. It was so much money, you won't  
7 believe it. Of course, Bob was working. I think at that  
8 point I had more money than he had. It was just a great,  
9 great time.

10 Of course, there was a cloud because one didn't  
11 really know what had happened in Europe. There were  
12 rumors. But nobody really wanted to believe them. Except  
13 we feared the worst. And the worst eventually was proven  
14 right, as we all know.

15 Q. What was the rumors?

16 A. That people had been killed in the  
17 concentration camps in mass graves. I don't really  
18 remember details, but it came pretty close to the truth.  
19 It slowly, slowly evolved.

20 Q. Do you remember hearing about it for the  
21 first time?

22 A. Oh, yes.

23 Q. What happened?

24 A. Well, nothing happened. Nobody wanted to  
25 believe it. Then of course there was the frantic search

1 to find out what really did happen. We didn't really hear  
2 any details. It sort of all came out bit by bit.

3 It came to the point we couldn't even mention my  
4 brother's name in front of my mother. There was just no  
5 way. You couldn't even mention his name. His name was  
6 Hans. We called him Hansie. It was a taboo subject.

7 As the story unfolded in all it's cruelty, my  
8 father tried to get some information through an office  
9 that had opened in Paris. He finally -- I am not sure if  
10 he got that in Shanghai or if we were already here. He  
11 got a date that he died of pneumonia in Auschwitz in 1943,  
12 September 2nd. Germans are very thorough, you know. We  
13 heard nothing. The last thing we had heard was in a Red  
14 Cross letter in 1943 where he was still in the labor camp  
15 I mentioned earlier where he said we are leaving tomorrow,  
16 probably -- Frate was my mother. The old region, Upper  
17 Silesia, which was Auschwitz, which was later confirmed.

18 I not too long ago met a woman who actually was in  
19 the same transport with him and knew him quite well. So  
20 that was the other side of the coin. There was that big  
21 cloud what happened to everybody.

22 There was hardly anybody that didn't lose somebody.  
23 This included also my father's relatives who had stayed  
24 behind, other than the uncle who made it possible for us  
25 to still leave who was in Shanghai with us.

1 Q. What relatives were those?

2 A. There were three sisters, who were all in  
3 Berlin at that time.

4 Q. Your father's?

5 A. My father's sisters.

6 Q. What was your father's name and their name?

7 A. My father was Gegor, or George, as he made  
8 it later, Kantorrosky, with a y at the end.

9 Their names? I think his oldest sister was Ada.  
10 Her married name was Rosenthal. She was married to  
11 Theofil Rosenthal. They had a department store in a small  
12 town in Silesia, very well off. Because of all his  
13 gentile friends he said nothing will ever happen to him.  
14 It did.

15 He had a sister who was widowed. Her name was  
16 Aurelia. They lived also in Berlin, where he had hidden  
17 prior to being taken to the concentration camp.

18 There was another one, Mrs. Wolff, who had also  
19 lived in a small town with her husband. I think that he  
20 wasn't alive anymore at that time. I mean the husband.  
21 My father's brother-in-law. They had a shoe business in a  
22 small town in Silesia, as well. All of these people who  
23 had small businesses in the small towns did quite well.

24 Very often they would send their children to the  
25 bigger towns to universities. There were children



1 everywhere. The one that had survived was Heintz  
2 Rosenthal. My daughter still visited him in Berlin. He  
3 never did want to leave Berlin. His wife did not survive  
4 and he later on remarried. I was hoping to still see him  
5 one day, but I didn't anymore. He was quite ill and he is  
6 gone.

7           There was another one who also in the mean while  
8 has died. Aurelia's son. He studied law and he was a  
9 lawyer. He also didn't survive. There were some nasty  
10 rumors about the latter one that he coloborated. I don't  
11 know if that was true or not. People perhaps under  
12 certain circumstances can be excused for doing all sorts  
13 of things to save their skin.

14           So my father's family really was wiped out. They  
15 were not younger. They were all older. My father was the  
16 very youngest. They would not today be alive anymore at  
17 all.

18           My mother had only one sister and one brother. The  
19 brother died as a youngster of pneumonia. They didn't  
20 have penicillin in those days. The sister was older and  
21 died still in Germany. She hadn't been well. She had a  
22 heart condition. So there wasn't anybody on my mother's  
23 side that was lost, other than some cousins.

24           Incidentally, an interesting point, my mother had  
25 some cousins who were in the U.S. Diplomatic Service. She

1 was a Nasurfelt. They had always been on friendly terms  
2 when they visited. One was at the consulate in Berlin for  
3 a while. They were not ethnically jews. They were not.  
4 They had converted. Otherwise you couldn't in those days  
5 have been in the diplomatic service. There is just no  
6 way.

7           They sympathized with our plight, but they said  
8 there was nothing they could do. Whereas, the relatives  
9 on my father's side, who had immigrated from Poland, I  
10 think from Poland. There was always a border dispute  
11 anyhow in the previous century. Even though they didn't  
12 really know us, gave us affidavits of support. They lived  
13 in Arkansas. One of them was in the House of  
14 Representatives. They were very friendly.

15           I never unfortunately met them. By now they are  
16 all gone. My Brooklyn cousins have met them. I have some  
17 pictures. But they were helpful. There was some talk  
18 whether we should perhaps go to Arkansas after going to  
19 the United States. I think we didn't quite want to  
20 consider that.

21           All right. So we were still in Shanghai. I was  
22 working. There was the problem of the Polish quota to be  
23 considered, even after the war. Quota numbers were an  
24 important thing. My mother and I could have left. My  
25 husband also was born in part of Germany that was Polish

1 in 1924. We didn't want to separate. We didn't do that.

2 Of course, again we were going to wait it out. My  
3 father formed a committee and tried to promote the Polish  
4 quota. I found some letters to that effect again when I  
5 went through some old papers, and went up to the consulate  
6 and did what he could. Finally somehow or other it was  
7 resolved. I think they did away with the numbers for the  
8 group at that point. I am talking now about end of 48,  
9 early 49.

10 You must not forget here is history again. We were  
11 just about to be taken over by communists in Shanghai.  
12 They weren't quite there, but they were pretty close.

13 Chaing Kai-shek regime was coming to an end there  
14 too. Well, finally in April, 1949 we got the American  
15 visa. Incidentally, all along my husband's parents said  
16 what are we going to do if you get a visa?

17 We said you must have some relative. Everybody has  
18 some relative in the United States. So my father-in-law  
19 said there was, of course, Sig Idelman, but he wasn't  
20 Jewish anymore and he became a pastor and he went to  
21 Chicago a long time ago.

22 Well, I said let me try and find out. At that time  
23 I worked in the Red Cross field directors office. We made  
24 inquiries. Indeed I found Sig Idelman. Sig Idelman gave  
25 an affidavit for my in-laws. It was very helpful, really

1 quite helpful for awhile. I think that was wonderful. We  
2 were with Sig Idelman and with the affidavits that my  
3 in-laws got. So they were a little later. They got their  
4 visa a little later. We were already on the President  
5 Wilson in April 1949.

6 By that time I knew I was pregnant. But the rumor  
7 had it that you shouldn't tell this to the American  
8 authorities because they might hold up your visa. Of  
9 course, this was a stupid rumor and it wasn't true, but  
10 everybody is afraid. We had been afraid for so many years  
11 it became second nature and you didn't talk about it.

12 I didn't feel very well. But we did leave. I  
13 don't know if it was the sea sickness or if it was the  
14 baby. Anyhow, I almost lost the baby. That would have  
15 been David. But I didn't. When we docked the ship's  
16 doctor said to me, "You know, I had to give you morphine  
17 to put your uterus at rest or you would have lost this  
18 baby." I was pretty sick. If I wanted to talk to my  
19 husband I had to call the bar. That was the only way I  
20 could connect with him. But we made it.

21 Then we arrived here and, of course, things went  
22 along not quite smoothly in the beginning. He had trouble  
23 finding a job really. He was at that point maybe too old  
24 to be a beginner and everybody wanted a little experience,  
25 which he didn't have. I couldn't take a job anymore

1 because I was expecting. So we had at that point some  
2 savings.

3 I had worked for a Swedish import export firm for  
4 the last three years in Shanghai. I had my salary  
5 transferred to the Bank of Canton in San Francisco. So we  
6 had a bit of money, which we had hoped could be put into a  
7 car, an apartment or house or whatever. But it wasn't to  
8 be. We really finished it with not having insurance and  
9 having a baby. It was a rough beginning. Well, it was  
10 rough for quite awhile actually.

11 Q. Before we go into San Francisco let's go  
12 back and do a little more Shanghai. Tell me, I have about  
13 ten questions and maybe you do too?

14 MS. TANNER: I wondered about the living  
15 situation in Shanghai. Was that provided by the  
16 government of Shanghai or did you find your own?

17 A. No. I thought I mentioned. My husband's  
18 aunt had given us a room in her house. Those houses, you  
19 didn't really own them. They were leased. They had long  
20 long leases. Meanwhile, they were collecting rent. In  
21 other words, a little house that we today would consider  
22 suitable for a small family had maybe five, six rooms and  
23 not really a kitchen or anything. They were really bare  
24 walls. That is where everybody rented a room and you paid  
25 rent.

1           The people who had houses obviously had a little  
2 money somehow abroad. Somehow or other they managed. My  
3 in-laws had a house too. I always refused to move into  
4 their house, although it would have been the obvious thing  
5 to do. I said No, that's not a good idea. I think I was  
6 happier for it and I was respected for it. I would never  
7 suggest old and young live together. I don't think it's a  
8 good idea.

9           Q.           How much was your rent?

10          A.           I have no idea anymore. To tell you the  
11 truth, whether we paid anything I do not know. I didn't  
12 really concern myself that much with money matters,  
13 because, other than making it, I never did. My husband  
14 was the accountant, remember. I don't know.

15                   MS. TANNER: Did you take any possessions  
16 out of Germany?

17          A.           No. Since we went the land route we could  
18 not take a lift van out any more. Most of our friends who  
19 left earlier they took furniture and so forth. They took  
20 a regular lift van. A lot of them lost everything.  
21 Somehow, either through theft or otherwise.

22                   We packed the big steamer trunks. The important  
23 thing for my father was to have books. Guess what was in  
24 the steamer trunks? Clothes, well, we took our clothes.  
25 We didn't have too many clothes because we couldn't buy

1 clothes. Just didn't get any kind of a coupon during the  
2 war to buy anything.

3 There was a bit of a black market just to buy some  
4 stockings. We didn't have nylons. We had silk stockings.  
5 Other than that, we had our dishes in the steamer trunks.  
6 You weeded out the most important things. Silver we  
7 didn't have anymore. We had to turn it in. Except for  
8 each of us got I think one place setting that we were  
9 allowed.

10 My father, this is rather interesting, a little  
11 side story, had also given his candle sticks that had been  
12 in the family and kiddish cup and little spice box that  
13 you have for hafdala and sent them in. He made an  
14 application that he needed these for his functions as a  
15 Rabbi, at weddings and et cetera. Would you believe we  
16 got them back. Totally battered, full of holes, but we  
17 got them back and we had them restored. My daughter has  
18 the candle sticks. My son has the kiddish cup. He packed  
19 it in the recent fire first. So there are little things,  
20 side lights.

21 I would love to know where my father buried his  
22 father's gold pocket watch, because he did. He didn't  
23 want to give it away. He buried in the backyard of the  
24 one house where we lived in Berlin at that time. I knew  
25 the house number. I didn't go there when I was back in

1 Berlin because I didn't know where. I couldn't dig up the  
2 whole back yard. I didn't know if the house was still  
3 there. I know people who have found things that they  
4 buried because they didn't want to give it away. I am  
5 sorry I didn't know.

6 Q. What happened, what was some things that  
7 happened to your father in the nine years you told us  
8 fascinating things what happened to you. Did he become a  
9 working Rabbi?

10 A. Oh, yes, he was one of the four rabbis that  
11 functioned for the communal association European Jews in  
12 Shanghai in the district. He was plenty busy. People  
13 died. We had epidemics.

14 Usually they had to walk all the way to the  
15 cemetery because during the war there was no other  
16 transportation. Of course, we had services all the time.  
17 People did get married. People still had babies. Life  
18 goes on under all circumstances. Just as we call the  
19 Rabbi in now for life cycle events, as we call them, they  
20 always did.

21 My mother was quite sick. My mother had been ill  
22 as a young woman already with asthma and an early heart  
23 condition. So she was not doing well during those years  
24 at all. She also contracted some illness that is I think  
25 perculiar to the tropics, call sprue.



1           One didn't realize it at first. Our doctors may  
2           have been good doctors, but they didn't know anything  
3           about the tropics. It took a while for them to learn.  
4           One of the four rabbis incidentally died in one of the  
5           typhoid epidemics and that was very, very sad. He was the  
6           youngest one of them. Rabbi Teichner.

7           Q.       Do you remember the other rabbis names?  
8           Tell me again who employed the rabbis.

9           A.       The congregation. They must have had some  
10          subsidies somehow and I can't give you detail on that. I  
11          don't know who would know really. You may find some  
12          people who know who subsidized that. Somehow or other  
13          they functioned.

14          There was an older man, Dr. Silverstein. Then  
15          there was another one, a doctor, orthodox man, Dr.  
16          Zietien. I thought he lived in El Paso, but I don't know  
17          if he is still alive to tell you the truth. I talked to  
18          him on the phone a few times. They are all quite  
19          friendly.

20          I was married by four rabbis. Believe me it was  
21          all torture. I have no idea what any of them said. It  
22          dragged on and on.

23          MS. TANNER: I would like to know if you had  
24          the opportunity to mingle with the people of Shanghai?

25          A.       Where.

1 MS. TANNER: While you were living in  
2 Shanghai.

3 A. You mean the local population? To some  
4 degree, yes. Of course, the Chinese were all around us.  
5 Some of the Chinese that worked like houseboy or alma, if  
6 they worked for to you clean house or something like that,  
7 they learned German quite well, believe me. A few of us  
8 learned Chinese too. We didn't really have, during the  
9 war years, any specific relationships with any Chinese.  
10 We had some later on. Through my husband's office we met  
11 a good group of people who were more like the mixed group,  
12 real Shanghai group, they called them half cast, if you  
13 wish, Euraseans, and I still keep in touch with some of  
14 them at this point.

15 The Japanese, of course, they were the ones who  
16 were exchanging houses then. We had to be in the  
17 district. So whoever had a house in the district that was  
18 Japanese gave it up for something maybe much better in  
19 town. There was a lot of going back and forth about all  
20 those things. It became a little complicated.

21 Other than that, during war years there wasn't too  
22 much contact with the population per se. Afterwards there  
23 was.

24 MS. TANNER: Were you accepted? Were the  
25 Jewish refugees accepted.

1           A.           Well, we were in a strange position. The  
2 white man unquote was always the ruler before. When we  
3 came all of a sudden here were these white people who had  
4 no money. Now this was unheard of. They really I am sure  
5 got a very skewed view of things. All of a sudden, what  
6 is this? All this white trash. What are they doing here?  
7 So that became confusing.

8           Some of them were rather loyal. Even if we had  
9 very little, somehow you managed if you were working to  
10 have somebody clean your place up. I found them very,  
11 very friendly and easy to deal with. You had to learn,  
12 the little Chinese I picked up was how to bargain for a  
13 rickshaw ride. Let's say, if you had a typhoon. We had  
14 typhoons, believe me, and everything was under water. The  
15 rickshaw guy would come to your front doorstep and you  
16 would bargain the fare.

17           You had your rickshaw ride all set. You got in the  
18 rickshaw and in the middle of this pond, if you will, he  
19 would turn around and he would up the fare. So what were  
20 you going to do? Were you going to be dumped?

21           Of course, those things didn't happen that often  
22 but they did. Of course, that was the lowest of the  
23 lowest. You were dealing with the coolies there. That  
24 is, of course, another story.

25           Q.           Was there a consciousness, a discussion of

1 racism back to some of the leftist issues you had been  
2 raised around?

3 A. No. No, not at all. Shanghai was always a  
4 money town always. It's still today still, I believe,  
5 inspite of all these years under the different government,  
6 different from the rest of China. I don't really know the  
7 rest of China in all fairness, but that's what I under-  
8 stand. It was a town where morals were low, if you will.  
9 Prostitution was all over. It was known to be that way.

10 I think my father didn't want to go there in the  
11 first place. It always had a terrible reputation. What  
12 am I going to do in Shanghai? This isn't where we want to  
13 live.

14 Q. Were there Jewish prostitutes, beyond the  
15 rumors you heard?

16 A. Rumors. I don't know. If there were it  
17 was probably from need because there was no other way of  
18 employment. There were supposedly quite a few white  
19 Russian ones. But I can't really swear to that. That was  
20 the talk.

21 Some of the restaurants and bars in town had night  
22 clubs and had Russian women serving, you know, drinks and  
23 that sort of thing. How do you know how far this went? I  
24 was much too naive in those days.

25 Q. Were there criminal activities? Did the

1 Jewish community get involved? Was everyone so poor?

2 A. We had a thriving community there. We had  
3 theater and opera and we had all sorts of things going.  
4 We had night clubs. We had sat for afternoon tea on the  
5 roof garden.

6 Q. Which roof garden? Was that the name of  
7 it?

8 A. Yeah. What was it called? I don't  
9 remember at the moment. We went and sat in the afternoon  
10 and went dancing. There was a lot of fun too. There were  
11 soccer games. We went every Saturday to soccer games.

12 MS. TANNER: Did the Jewish people speak  
13 Chinese.

14 A. Not really. Some of them did. If they  
15 were in touch more with jobs in town. You picked it up  
16 almost by osmosis. My husband had a cousin, still around,  
17 not in very good physical shape at this point, but they  
18 are still there. He was on the Shanghai police force,  
19 municipal police. Of course, he had to speak Chinese  
20 fluently and he did.

21 The other cousin who lives in Los Angeles now, were  
22 whom I have contact, he spoke very well. He was teaching.  
23 They lived in town. He was giving English lessons to  
24 Chinese and he picked up quite a bit. He spoke quite  
25 well.

1 Q. What did the policeman say about his job?

2 A. Jerry never talked about his job. He was  
3 always very close up about it. He was there through the  
4 war years. He was stationed in Hon-ku. He was still  
5 working for them.

6 Q. Did you pickup other things, even though he  
7 wouldn't talk about it? Did you know what his job was  
8 like?

9 A. I am sure it was difficult. After all,  
10 everything was under Japanese occupation forces at that  
11 point. I don't think he himself had any hardship, as far  
12 as I know. He was a lowly policeman, if you will. At  
13 least he had a salary.

14 Q. Was he policing the Jewish community or the  
15 general community?

16 A. General community. The Jewish community as  
17 well, of course. There were several of them. He wasn't  
18 the only one. I know of two others.

19 Q. What was his name?

20 A. Jerry Schaie. S c h a i e. He is in a  
21 retirement place in Santa Rosa. Unfortunately he is not  
22 very well. He should have been interviewed long ago. But  
23 today it wouldn't work anymore. His wife is there too. I  
24 don't know what is going to happen there.

25 They have one daughter, who was born in Shanghai in

1 1946. She lives in Santa Rosa. That is why they were  
2 there. I think you have more questions.

3 Q. I do. You were saying what the major  
4 Jewish institutions were of the city. You named many of  
5 them. What were they?

6 A. Are you talking about the refugee community  
7 or are you talking about the Shanghai Jewish community at  
8 large?

9 Q. Let's do both.

10 A. Well, the Shanghai Jewish community at  
11 large had several temples. One was Seymor-ru temple.  
12 There was a Reverend Brown. I met him with my father. I  
13 was always going along for interpreting also. I got to  
14 know all these people.

15 Q. Reverend Brown?

16 A. Reverend Brown, yes.

17 Q. What was his first name?

18 A. I don't remember. Somebody else might. I  
19 don't know. I don't really know why they called him  
20 reverend either. That is how I knew him.

21 Q. He was a Rabbi?

22 A. I imagine he was a Rabbi, because it was a  
23 temple.

24 Now my cousin, the policeman, he got married, my  
25 father married them at the Seymor-ru temple. That was

1 possible. They lived in town.

2           Until the proclamation I was talking about earlier,  
3 which was, I think it was a Japanese Army and Navy, if I  
4 am not mistaken. I think it was both. The Navy was the  
5 worst.

6           Q.           The worst in which way?

7           A.           Cruel. If you for some reason or other  
8 were brought in to confinement, there was several people  
9 that had to suffer through that.

10          Q.           What happened?

11          A.           They were beaten and so forth. I don't  
12 know that firsthand, of course. There were also people in  
13 jail in Hon-ku itself. I knew my father visited and was  
14 allowed to visit. Conditions were rather deplorable. You  
15 have to imagine heat or cold as the case maybe,  
16 practically no food, bugs and rats and whatnot. They came  
17 out all right.

18          Q.           Any other major synagogues? That was one?

19          A.           I think the sopharic community had their  
20 own temple. I don't know what they were called and to  
21 tell you the truth I don't know where it was. I am pretty  
22 sure there was a sopharic community. The service was  
23 slightly different. The background is different.  
24 Sopharic community tends to have their own cordish in the  
25 middle or center of the room. We have one here in San



1 Francisco on Fourth Avenue.

2 I don't really know what other institutions there  
3 were, specifically Jewish institutions. I think Shanghai  
4 was really quite liberal. You were a Shanghailanders, you  
5 were a Shanghailanders. You were accepted everywhere. We  
6 unfortunately came too late. Those people who came  
7 earlier, the doctors I was talking about, who came in  
8 1933, 34, they did not have to move into the district.  
9 They were already considered Shanghailanders. They came  
10 early and they lived in very nice apartment buildings.

11 In fact, when I came down with diphtheria, I think  
12 in 1942, which wasn't readily recognized because we hadn't  
13 had diphtheria for years, my father had the glorious idea  
14 to call Dr. Glass from Bubbling Well Road, who was a  
15 pediatrician, and he, of course, had a car and came over  
16 and took one look. He said I don't care what the Health  
17 Department said. The culture was negative. You have  
18 diphtheria. I got a shot and I was all right.

19 These people continued to live a pretty good life.  
20 There were always doctors needed. There was, of course, a  
21 fairly large German community. Now some of them I think  
22 were all right. You are asking about relationships with  
23 our people. They didn't necessarily mix. I am sure they  
24 were afraid at that point too.

25 Certainly the German Consul had a lot of pressure

1 from Germany to get with it and he put the pressure on the  
2 Japanese and it never quite happened that we were put out  
3 to concentration camps, but it was in the works. There  
4 wasn't really prejudice in Shanghai. That was one of the  
5 things that was absent.

6 I think one of the things we thought about and we  
7 talked about something, communism would blow over and it  
8 would be the way it use to be, we would be American  
9 citizens by then and my husband and I thought it would be  
10 rather nice to go over again for while for an American  
11 company. The things that people do now.

12 Except I think it's not as enjoyable now days. Those  
13 days you could have a good time.

14 Q. The fourth Rabbi, I wanted to get his name  
15 on the record. This was the one that died?

16 A. Willi Teichner.

17 Q. Was it --

18 A. Rabbi Alvin Fine was the chaplain who came  
19 over and eventually became the Rabbi at Temple Immanuel,  
20 as you probably will recall being a San Franciscan. I  
21 have seen him, of course, in between and I saw him not too  
22 long ago when he was here for whatever anniversary it was  
23 that Temple Immanuel had. I talked to him. You may not  
24 remember me but my father was Rabbi Kantorrosky. Oh,  
25 Shanghai. Of course, I remember. He is retired now.

1 Q. Three synagogues you were laying out, was  
2 that for the old community or was that the refugee  
3 synagogue also?

4 A. You are talking in town?

5 Q. In town.

6 A. Well, you could attend if you wished, if  
7 you lived there. Of course, nobody from Hon-ku would go  
8 to Seymor Road to the international settlement and go to  
9 services there. That doesn't seem to make sense.

10 A lot of people when they first came lived in the  
11 international settlement or in French town. Several of my  
12 friends did. There was always back and forth somehow. It  
13 wasn't totally restricted. Some people may think so, but  
14 it wasn't. Except later on you had to have a pass to get  
15 out of the district. We are talking pre-war, pre-Pacific  
16 war here.

17 Q. Can you tell me more about Mr. Goya?

18 A. Goya? So much has been said about him. I  
19 don't really want to elaborate any further. I didn't  
20 really know him any better. You may have recently heard a  
21 tape or I heard it about it on All Things Considered. I  
22 can't really add more to that. I didn't know him  
23 personally other than I had met him at one of those  
24 meetings at the I C.

25 They were under Japanese control at that point. He

1 very much took out his moods on the people who were  
2 waiting in line. I think he sort of enjoyed being the  
3 King of the Jews, as he called himself and had them at his  
4 mercy, so to speak. If you didn't get a pass you lost a  
5 job. There weren't that many jobs to begin with in the  
6 war years. So that's really where it was at. He was a  
7 very small stature, very ugly. This way he had power.

8 Q. Were people grumbling about him?

9 A. Oh, of course. Goya was the talk of the  
10 town, obviously. Certainly. I can't give you any further  
11 details. You heard probably interviews about him. They  
12 were more of a personal nature and I can't amplify on them  
13 at all.

14 Q. He was the head, the director of the IC?

15 A. Oh, no. I don't know what his title was.  
16 He was in charge of the office in Hon-ku that would issue  
17 the passes to the refugee community, if they applied for  
18 it.

19 I am sure there were many that never applied  
20 because they didn't have a job to go to anyway.

21 No, the I C was something entirely different. The  
22 I C was the International Committee originally founded by  
23 Sir Victor Sassoon. He had Paul Komar, who had come from  
24 Hungary, but I think had been there for sometime as  
25 manager. He was then let go. And had a Mr. Parrotts

1 there, Robert Parrotts, whom I worked for.

2 Q. Why was Mr. Komar let go?

3 A. I don't know. Probably because he was a  
4 friend of sir Victor Sassoon. I don't really know what  
5 his nationality was. I know he was a Hungarian name. May  
6 even have been a British subject. I can't tell you.

7 The one who would know that better would be Walter  
8 Frank. I just talked to him today.

9 Q. Who else worked at the I C?

10 A. I just found a letter where everybody  
11 signed when we got married. I have that letter. You are  
12 welcome to look at some of the documents, if you will.  
13 There was a Mr. Guttman, there was, oh gosh, I have forgot  
14 the names. I looked at the names the other day. There  
15 was, of course, Walter Frank, who was different at the  
16 time.

17 Who was the woman? She was a crack- shot  
18 secretary. I think she worked in Berlin for some  
19 electricity company. She was very good, very nice person.  
20 Names are not my forte at the moment.

21 Q. You have done pretty great. You have said  
22 a lot of names I haven't heard before.

23 A. Good, I am glad. Then I can fill you in a  
24 little. I don't really remember all the details.

25 In those days her name was Olga Munheim. Today she

1 goes by a somewhat different name and I forget what it is.  
2 Her husband has died meanwhile, but she is here in the Bay  
3 area.

4 Q. You worked for Mr. Parrott?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Who was the director?

7 A. He became the manager, who was accused  
8 later of collobation with the Japanese and who played a  
9 somewhat shady part. I don't know really how much. Let's  
10 not forget I was pretty young and completely unschooled in  
11 politics really, other than what world events had brought  
12 us. He finally discharged me at a time when I really  
13 needed a job. I think he did because he was going through  
14 a divorce or wanted a divorce and was carrying on an  
15 affair with somebody and thought that I was telling his  
16 wife. I liked his wife. I didn't really know about the  
17 affair. But these things would happen.

18 Here again, I lost a job because of circumstances.  
19 Maybe it was just as well. Who knows.

20 Q. What were the rumors about his shady life  
21 or was that?

22 A. Actually I think some Japanese authorities  
23 must have put him in the job. I am not quite sure exactly  
24 how that all worked out. He never got a visa for the  
25 United States. He went to Australia. I don't think he is

1 around anymore. He tried to prevent my getting a visa,  
2 thinking that -- I was interviewed and had to go to  
3 Chinese court after the war and tell them what I knew,  
4 which really wasn't very much. Letters I typed and so  
5 forth.

6 The very fact that I had to appear in court, you  
7 can't always say no, I don't remember when you are in  
8 court of law. Of course, that must have made him furious.  
9 He denounced me to the U.S. consulate. My visa was  
10 actually refused at the time. I didn't get that at the  
11 time. It seemed so important. I did get it. I think it  
12 was my father went there.

13 Q. What did you say in court?

14 A. I don't know what I said in court to tell  
15 you the truth, it's too long ago. We are talking about  
16 the end of 1945.

17 He was let go. They didn't do anything to him.  
18 They couldn't prove anything probably. I think there were  
19 some letters written that probably I remembered and they  
20 asked me about. I remember somebody came in my house. It  
21 was most unpleasant. I can't give you anymore detail. I  
22 don't really remember the detail. He didn't have that  
23 good a reputation within the community because of that.

24 What did they call him? A lady from Australia will  
25 remember. How do we translate it? The gray eminence.

1 Behind a statesman, who did things in secret. What  
2 statesman was it they were talking about?

3 MS. TANNER: I don't have a clue.

4 A. We are talking about the Austrian monarchy,  
5 of course. I don't know which statesman it was they  
6 talked about at the time.

7 MS. TANNER: That got that title, you mean?

8 A. That's right. That was his nickname. I am  
9 sure he pulled some strings. He claimed he did all the  
10 good things for the community. Who am I to say otherwise?  
11 I don't know.

12 Q. The I C was responsible for managing the  
13 Jewish community?

14 A. Oh, no. You mean what was the actual  
15 function of the IC?

16 Q. Right.

17 A. When they were first started I think they  
18 tried to locate people in jobs, also they ran a gift shop  
19 in town. Mrs. Alturies ran the gift shop. People brought  
20 their things they brought from Europe with them and they  
21 sold them in the gift shop, which was a service. Where  
22 else would you go to sell your things? I don't even know  
23 if we had auctioneers in Shanghai. Maybe there were.  
24 Maybe Butterfield. I am not sure. They must have had  
25 some other functions.



1           The very idea they wanted to get into education and  
2 teach people English. I don't really know what other  
3 functions there were originally. Again, I have to refer  
4 you to Walter Frank, who could probably elaborate a little  
5 more on that.

6           Q.       Your job was secretary?

7           A.       Yes. At that point. Not very long. My  
8 typing had improved by then.

9           Q.       Was there something comparable to a Jewish  
10 center?

11          A.       Community center or something like that?  
12 Well, as I said the school lent itself very well to that.

13               Well, also we had some movie theatres within the  
14 district that were rented out. For instance, for the  
15 Jewish holidays everybody would want to go and that's  
16 where you went. Wayside theatre was the one on Broadway.  
17 Broadway theatre was on Wayside. It was upside down. We  
18 had places where we could have some entertain and we had  
19 some pretty good talent. They put on good performances.

20               Otherwise, there were coffee houses along Chewson  
21 Road. That was the hub where you would meet everybody.  
22 There was Vienna coffeehouses, of course, whatever they  
23 were called. I don't quite remember. There was a little  
24 night club called the White Horse, with a very good piano  
25 player where you could go and sit with a Coke all evening

1 pretty much.

2 Q. Do you remember the piano player's name?

3 A. Rena. Rena. But he doesn't live anymore.  
4 He died. Well, you said you had other questions.

5 MS. TANNER: Did anyone in the Jewish community  
6 have friends and want to say in Shanghai?

7 A. Well, some of us did. We talked about it  
8 quite a bit with some friends that it would be really  
9 great, except you must not forget we had again had another  
10 political faction to contend with. We didn't know what  
11 was going to happen under communist rule. We had no idea.

12 As it turned out at that point nobody wanted to  
13 stay and nobody did stay. We certainly entertained the  
14 thought. We were pretty comfortable at that point. Bob  
15 was working for the British company. I was with the  
16 Swedish company. We did all right. We moved into town.

17 The first thing I thought when the war ended I  
18 don't care where we live, but I have to a decent bathroom  
19 again. That was the first thing we did. We rented a room  
20 in an apartment that belonged to people we knew who lived  
21 in a high rise downtown, which was very convenient,  
22 Hamilton house. We didn't cook anyway. I didn't even  
23 know how to cook. Kitchen was immaterial. We had a  
24 bathroom. That was wonderful. Hot water. Tiles. It was  
25 just great. But certainly we thought about it and thought

1 about coming back, as I mentioned earlier.

2 MS. TANNER: Do you have good memories?

3 A. Oh, yes, except we thought maybe it's never  
4 going to be the way it was again. As it turned out it  
5 never was. Besides which, my father was very, very  
6 anxious. Again, number one, he was always fearful. There  
7 was also the threat of communism again and here we are,  
8 what are they going to do to clergy? So he was not  
9 comfortable with that. We were all on lists at that  
10 point.

11 Prior to our American visa, before we knew they  
12 would come through, we were on lists to go to Isreal.  
13 Don't forget, Isreal had just become a state. We were to  
14 go to Isreal. We were on the list. My husband really  
15 wanted to go. I said it's going to be so tough again,  
16 let's not. Let's try not to. Let's wait it out. We did  
17 wait it out.

18 Now the cousin I mentioned earlier on the police  
19 force, he didn't wait it out, although they had relatives  
20 here. They went to Isreal under rather poor conditions  
21 for two years, living in tents, et cetera. Quite a few  
22 people did go to Isreal and stayed there. There comes a  
23 point when you finally want some creature comforts again.

24 English was never a problem for me. So it was more  
25 of a problem to start all over in Isreal. I never changed

1 my thinking over the years because of all the things that  
2 happened, but I wasn't raised as a zionist. My father was  
3 anything but a zionist. There was what we called the  
4 Central -- The Association of German Citizens of Jewish  
5 Faith, which says a lot of what they meant. They felt  
6 they were German of Jewish faith. We were taught  
7 otherwise later on. So zionism was not our credo at the  
8 time. They felt differently about it.

9 Q. The Sassoon family, I'd like to hear more  
10 about that.

11 A. Victor Sassoon. Well, anybody who had in  
12 any way lived abroad or in England had at some point heard  
13 that name. I don't know anything about their family per  
14 se. He just owned a lot of the real estate in Shanghai  
15 and was rather omnipotent in that respect.

16 A cousin of his, much younger, maybe he was a  
17 nephew, I am not sure, of the Italian branch of the  
18 family, they became friends of ours. They live in  
19 Toronto. His name was Salinas. He married a German  
20 Jewish girl. The daughter of the people where we lived in  
21 Hamilton House later after the war.

22 Now they were British, though also interned in the  
23 war. I know the little girl came back from internment  
24 camp and she saw a toilet she said on, this is nice. I  
25 can wash my hands here. So she had never seen plumbing.

1 They were in a British camp. They went to Canada, because  
2 she developed T.B. during the war. Her name use to be Eva  
3 Hunchkiss. She had married Amando. That is why her  
4 parents lived in the house of course was a Sassoon  
5 building in the Cathy Hotel. I don't know the details  
6 about them, no.

7 Q. You didn't know them?

8 A. Sassoon?

9 Q. Yes.

10 A. No. No. I didn't reach that far up.

11 Q. Did your father?

12 A. No, I don't think he ever met Sir Victor.

13 Sir Victor, I think, lived as a bachelor for many years.

14 I don't know where his family went or anything. I just  
15 knew about the Salinas family.

16 I just recently heard from Ted Alexander from the  
17 congregation that he visited with them and I was pleased  
18 to hear they are well and everything is fine.

19 MR. GRANT: You mentioned when the  
20 immigrants settled in everybody was living in close quarters  
21 there were people that functioned as dispute settlers of one  
22 sort or another. Just give us a little sense what were some  
23 of the routine kinds of disputes that they settled.

24 A. Well, John, I can't really tell you what  
25 disputes. I just know there were several lawyers. One

1 was Viennese, Dr. Leonard. He is chauffeur of Mrs.  
2 Alexander, Gertrude Alexander, I am sure you have met. He  
3 was one of them. There was a Dr. Felbough. I have no  
4 idea if he is still around anywhere. They were employed  
5 by the congregation. I don't know what disputes there  
6 were.

7 Let's say, a small thing. I don't even know if  
8 ours went to this court. I think we settled it. My  
9 parents where we lived on Copping Road had a Japanese  
10 landlord. There was a problem about the pipe on the  
11 stove. There was a constant squabble about the pipe, that  
12 we were not suppose to take away for some reason or  
13 another. Search me today I don't know why. It became a  
14 household word, if you move the pipe we will go to court.  
15 They were little things.

16 Of course, there were divorces also. That could  
17 have happened. Or some exchange of property in some way  
18 or other. Gertrude Alexander might elaborate a little on  
19 that, if she knew. Actually, she worked with her father,  
20 but I don't know. I was not interested in law, I think.  
21 At least not at that time.

22 MR. GRANT: On the ship coming over can you  
23 give us some sense what a typical day was like?

24 A. What ship coming over from where?

25 MR. GRANT: Coming to Shanghai.

1           A.       We were only on the ship for two days. We  
2 came the land route on the TransSiberian Express which is  
3 one trip I do not have to take. Through Manchuria by  
4 several trains.

5           Then the last leg of the journey we boarded a small  
6 freighter for I think two nights. Just about two days. I  
7 remember that at every meal there was one curry dish. I  
8 think from that time stems my enjoyment of curry. I never  
9 had curry. You didn't eat exotic food in Germany. German  
10 food was rather blah.

11          Q.       Were there valued things that had Chinese  
12 on it and Hebrew? Do you remember seeing things that  
13 combined the two cultures?

14          A.       I don't think so. I am not aware. I can't  
15 tell you that.

16          Q.       In Highas what was your job there?

17          A.       Taking dictation from Mr. Bierman. I am  
18 talking about the first time I worked there and trying to  
19 make an English letter out of it, which was rather  
20 difficult because he dictated essentially in Yiddish,  
21 which was something I didn't know much about. I sometimes  
22 took my dictation home and studied over it. It became  
23 rather hilarious. It was sometimes rather complicated.

24          Well, writing to people in the United States or  
25 writing on behalf of applicant that had come into the

1 office. There was an office in town, a small office where  
2 we were working. There were about six, seven of us I  
3 think. One Russian bookkeeper, older guy. At least he  
4 seemed old to me at that point. Who else was there?

5 Very competent secretary that made me feel very  
6 incompetent. Mrs. Fredsdorf was old. She was in San  
7 Francisco still for awhile. There is a Levi, who is  
8 somewhere on the East Coast. What was her first name?  
9 Hunt was the last name. I don't remember where she went.  
10 Everybody went somewhere. The story of the apple, all  
11 over again. Some of them you keep in contact with for  
12 awhile and some of them you meet at a reunion again.

13 We did have a region here in 1980. We had it in  
14 Oakland. I went to Jerusalem for the dinner three years  
15 ago, my daughter and I went to Jerusalem. I didn't join  
16 the group. I went to the dinner. It turned out most of  
17 the people there were younger than I was and I didn't know  
18 them. Just two years makes a difference. Today it  
19 doesn't seem to make much difference anymore. Talk to me  
20 in ten years. It probably will again. Then you  
21 rediscover people. We rediscovered Howard Levin, for  
22 instance, who is in New York. Who had a radio program in  
23 Shanghai. His name was Horst Levine. I think you have  
24 him on tape somewhere. He's been on several tapes and has  
25 been interviewed.



1 Q. At what point did you feel lucky that you  
2 were in Shanghai? Did you understand that you were one of  
3 the few remaining Jews?

4 A. Oh, yes, of course. Yes. Yes. We knew  
5 that. We didn't really know how it was going either.  
6 There were all the rumors something was brewing somewhere.  
7 It was. You were never really safe as long as there were  
8 all these successes in Japan and in Germany.

9 One thing my father always quoted, when they let  
10 him out of the concentration camp, they told him the  
11 German arm reaches far, which was very true. We hope it's  
12 not going to reach too far again.

13 MR. GRANT: I had one last question.

14 Were there any marriages between Chinese and Jews  
15 in the period you were there?

16 A. I don't really think so. Wait a minute. I  
17 think there was one that I know of. But not really from  
18 personally. I heard of one. Other than that I don't  
19 think there was much of that, no.

20 MR. GRANT: This was not one of the old  
21 timers of Shanghai, it was one of the new people?

22 A. I don't think that existed much, no,  
23 inspite of the lack of prejudice. I don't think so.

24 Q. Back to San Francisco. Your husband was  
25 having a hard time?

1           A.       To find a job. Then, the first thing we  
2 did at the hotel was to start school. Inspite of having  
3 worked as an accountant he really didn't have any formal  
4 education. He had been at the Sorbonne in Paris. He left  
5 there in 1933. He lived in Germany with his parents at  
6 Brestlau, and he left for the Sorbonne in Paris and I  
7 suspect had a fairly good time, even though the parents  
8 couldn't send money. You couldn't send money abroad at a  
9 certain point. That was a real problem.

10           Then he joined his parents in Shanghai in 1939.  
11 That was the first thing that he wanted. He thought this  
12 love for accounting, that he would be good at it and  
13 wanted to become a CPA and went to Golden Gate College  
14 evening correspondences right away. And looked for a job  
15 otherwise and had some part time jobs and so forth and for  
16 a while was working two part time jobs, going to school in  
17 the evening. That went on and on.

18           After David was born I went to work for almost a  
19 year just to help out. Then when he got full time  
20 employment he worked for a company called Ray Oil Burner  
21 Company and I gave it up. I thought I should really be  
22 home for awhile. I was home oh, about five years  
23 approximately, maybe a little longer. I don't quite  
24 remember. I started back to work when my daughter started  
25 kindergarten. We thought that would be a point to get

1 back to work again.

2 Then my husband wasn't well anymore. He was a  
3 heavy smoker, always had been. Nobody knew it was that  
4 damaging. Although his mother said What are you smoking  
5 again? He always said cigarettes, nothing more. You get  
6 fresh to your mother when she nags you. It obviously did  
7 something to his circulatory system. He died in 1960, in  
8 February.

9 I meanwhile had gone back to work, which was good.  
10 At least I didn't have to make the transition. I didn't  
11 have much of a salary.

12 Q. What was your job?

13 A. Secretarial. I thought what I could do  
14 well is working for a firm that was internationally  
15 oriented and I found something at Grace Line, a steamship  
16 line that doesn't exist today anymore. Well, the company  
17 got sold and resold, as you know. All in all different  
18 ownership and management I was there twenty-six and-a-half  
19 years. Only when they were liquidated by Crowley Maritime  
20 in 84 I left. That is when I came to Third Street and  
21 started working.

22 I knew about Monolytics. One of our people what  
23 was then Delta, Prudential Delta, was working for  
24 Monolytics. The contacts are very similar. We are  
25 consulting firm in transportation of cargo, so that worked

1 right in there.

2 I never did think I would have as much to do with  
3 numbers as I do. I never really was into bookkeeping.  
4 Actually when my husband died I didn't know how to balance  
5 a checkbook. I had no idea. He took care of all of that.  
6 I think that's a very important point that women should  
7 know what it's all about and shouldn't be left to fend for  
8 themselves all of a sudden. You would be surprised how  
9 many people there are who have no idea of what is going on  
10 in their financial matters. It's very important, from  
11 personal experience.

12 Q. And you were a single mother raising two  
13 children?

14 A. Yes. I had two young children. I came  
15 close to remarrying a couple times but never thought it  
16 would workout, go into a merger. I am pretty much my own  
17 person. I guess I like to run the show. I was known as a  
18 child also, that I always said I want to do it myself.  
19 That's the way it's been.

20 Q. Did you think your Shanghai experience  
21 made you more independent?

22 A. I don't know about that. I think I  
23 probably would have been independent regardless. The  
24 Shanghai experience I think has widened our horizons. We  
25 were appalled when we first came here and people we had

1 known had very limited conversation. They were discussing  
2 cars and refrigerators and strictly materialistic things.

3 The newspapers, our local papers, had very little  
4 news about what was going on in the world.

5 We didn't have as much television in those days.  
6 We didn't have a television at all for a while, as I  
7 recall. We really thought this was very strange. Maybe  
8 we should go back to China eventually when we can. It  
9 seemed very narrow-minded. I think that's what happens to  
10 a lot of people who have lived abroad. You can't go home  
11 again.

12 Of course, today I am as materialistic as the next  
13 guy, I suppose. We all get to be that way. You fight for  
14 survival. Now I am happy to say five grandchildren and  
15 it's nice the dining room has become too small.

16 Q. What are the names of your grandchildren  
17 and kids?

18 A. My son is David, who was born November 6,  
19 1949. He will now be 42 next week. They just survived  
20 the East Bay fire. We should have a big party. When I  
21 say survived, I knew they live in Monclair. They have  
22 three children. Lisa, 16, Aaron is 13, Jason is ten. So  
23 we had the first Bar Mitzvah in the family last February.  
24 It was very nice.

25 My daughter, whom you know, has two little boys.

1 Her name is Deborah Lee. She prefers the Lee, which she  
2 has retained the name Angress. She didn't want to go by  
3 Berliner. Not because she doesn't like the Berliner name,  
4 but because she wanted to retain her independence and she  
5 wants to carry on the tradition, which I think is nice.

6 They have Jacob, who is six and Joshua, who is  
7 four. The second names also go after grandparents.

8 Q. How did you decide what to tell the kids,  
9 your kids, about the Shanghai experience or Nazi?

10 A. I don't think this is something I decided.  
11 I think it's something that has always come out over the  
12 years. Also, as they went to school, particularly in San  
13 Francisco, there were other children from similar  
14 background whose parents had been in Shanghai.

15 One of her buddies was Judy Deutsch, whose parents  
16 were in Shanghai and so forth and so on.

17 It was a matter of course. There was no decision  
18 necessary. It was never really held back. We have always  
19 talked about it. I still get a little annoyed when they  
20 are picking at their food, remembering how we had to look  
21 at the bread in the evening and think well, can we afford  
22 another slice or will we have nothing for breakfast? You  
23 can't rub it in. That is the old story of all the  
24 children in the world are starving and you are not eating  
25 your spinach.

1 Q. What other affect do you think the Shanghai  
2 experience has had on you or your experience?

3 A. Well, you are what you are. You can't deny  
4 your background. I never have. I have always wanted to  
5 assimilate to American life as much as possible because I  
6 thought it would be better that way. I don't really  
7 believe in continuing to speak German at home. There was  
8 no need for that. But the background is there. It makes  
9 you what you are to some degree, plus your genes are in  
10 you and how you react to life in general.

11 My personal experience, of course, was a little  
12 different because I had to fend for myself as a fairly  
13 young woman. Certainly I have had different experiences  
14 in that respect.

15 I have dated both Jewish and non-Jewish men and I  
16 found that one hurdle you don't have when you have a  
17 relationship with a Jewish man. They will know exactly  
18 what the background is. But on the other hand, it was  
19 quite comfortable sometimes to not be burdened at all by  
20 all of that and be with somebody who didn't know or didn't  
21 understand. That plays into that too. It gets a little  
22 more philosophical.

23 Q. Get more philosophical.

24 A. No, I can't go into very personal matters.  
25 I think in relationships you take what you get out

1 of each person. You don't have just a relationship that  
2 one person can fulfill all your needs. There are so many  
3 needs one has and sometimes you need many people. That  
4 may get me in hot water. I think that's sometimes the  
5 case

6 MR. GRANT: I wanted to know about your parents.  
7 What was life for them like when they came to this  
8 country?

9 A. On, here. Well, it was difficult at first.  
10 My father tried right away. He tried from Shanghai to  
11 found a congregation, which he did. Congregation B'nea  
12 B'nai was his doing. He founded the congregation in 49.  
13 First service was Hanukkah, 1949. He was with them for a  
14 long, long time. Probably too long because he was quite  
15 old and sick already at that point. They always had a  
16 very busy active house, going hither and yon and people  
17 were always in the house.

18 My mother was always hospitable. Both of them  
19 would always listen to people's problems. He was again  
20 involved with all kinds of things here. It's hard to get  
21 him away from it.

22 My mother and I always told him the congregation is  
23 much more important to you than your family. He kind of  
24 resented that a little. I think that was true. I think  
25 it's true for a lot of men who love their work. This is



1 very special work. He wasn't easy to live with. I very  
2 often told my mother I don't see how you can live with  
3 him. Well, I think that holds true in many marriages, in  
4 many families.

5 I think the people who are so easy to get along  
6 with are really boring. So it makes life more  
7 interesting.

8 Q. What are your plans now?

9 A. None. I don't really have any plans. I  
10 had a birthday recently that I wasn't looking forward to.  
11 It was a zero birthday. I didn't want a party. But the  
12 kids really tried, all of them, to make it a nice day for  
13 me and it was wonderful because we spent it at Lake Tahoe  
14 together. They unbeknownst to me had gone to a  
15 photographer and had their picture taken and not even the  
16 little one gave it away, the surprise. It was lovely. It  
17 was heartwarming.

18 I think that's where it's at. That's what you are  
19 getting back.

20 If I can I would like to continue to work, maybe  
21 eventually part time. At this point, I don't get any  
22 money from Germany like a lot of my friends do. Of  
23 course, I do get my Social Security money. As long as I  
24 am working I don't have a problem. I would just like to  
25 continue. I am grateful I am doing fairly well. I have

1 my ups and downs. I would like to continue this way. I  
2 really would not want to go to a retirement place if I can  
3 help it. I always promised everybody in the office that I  
4 will just keel over my desk and that's the way I would  
5 like it, which would probably be best.

6 Keep busy, have a structured life. I mean lunches  
7 are not my thing, unless a weekend with somebody I want to  
8 meet. Volunteer work would be fine.

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