

Interview with EDWARD PICCIOTTO

Holocaust Oral History Project

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1 BY MR. AYRES:

2 Q. I AM GENE AYRES, AN INTERVIEWER WITH THE
3 HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF SAN FRANCISCO,
4 CALIFORNIA. TODAY WE'RE TALKING WITH EDWARD
5 PICCIOTTO. ASSISTING IN THE INTERVIEW IS LOIS
6 KERNAN. JOHN GRANT IS THE PRODUCER.

7 GOOD AFTERNOON, MR. PICCIOTTO.

8 A. Good afternoon.

9 Q. LET'S START BY YOUR TELLING US THE PRECISE
10 DATE OF YOUR BIRTH AND SPELL YOUR NAME FOR US AND
11 SAY WHERE YOU WERE BORN.

12 A. I am born in Aleppo, Syria, by Italian
13 descent, a very large family of Italian descent.

14 Q. WHAT'S THE DATE, PLEASE?

15 A. I born 1909, December 1909, (NAKAR), which
16 is the 2nd day of December, 1909. I am the third
17 son of Solomon Picciotto.

18 Q. WOULD YOU SPELL YOUR NAME FOR US, PLEASE?

19 A. Edward Picciotto, P-i-c-c-i-o-t-t-o.

20 Q. WHAT WERE YOUR FAMILY'S CIRCUMSTANCES IN
21 ALEPPO? WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO?

22 A. My father was a commercial, he used to deal
23 with import/export in Aleppo, Syria. He was not
24 very well-off but very, very well known, and he was

1 very much considered in the community.

2 An example, when there is a collection for
3 some special holiday or something, they used to call
4 and to ask him how much are you going to pay. And
5 he said don't ask me how much I am going to pay,
6 fill whatever you can do, what you are short of your
7 budget, you come to me, I'll fill the budget. That
8 mean always he give much more than what he has. He
9 was very much considered in the community.

10 Q. WAS THERE A LARGE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN
11 ALEPPO?

12 A. There was 22,000 Jewish people there. There
13 is a synagogue in Aleppo, Syria, one of the oldest,
14 if not the oldest one in the Mideast.

15 There is also in the city something that I'd
16 like to mention. Up in the citadel, which is a fort
17 up in the city, there is big stones carved with
18 Abraham (ROBINO) milking the cow, that's why the
19 name of Aleppo came from this milking the cow, which
20 mean in Hebrew -- in Hebrew they say -- well, I
21 forgot, but in Arabic they say (HALAB SHABA), which
22 is milking the cow of Abraham (ROBINO), it is very
23 sacred. This is one of the detail of the city of
24 Aleppo.

1 Q. WERE THE JEWS OF ALEPPO MOSTLY SEPHARDIC?

2 A. Only Sephardic.

3 Q. ONLY?

4 A. Only. If by accident an Ashkenazim would
5 come, they feel he is already Sephardic. Is only
6 Sephardic. The community would be divided in two,
7 the native, which they called them the (MORISHKO),
8 and the foreigner, they called them the (FRANGI).
9 The foreigner, even though they are born for many
10 generation in Syria, they are still considered
11 foreigner, and they are much more advanced in
12 education, and fare well, and everything. They used
13 to have a big difference with the natives because
14 the natives were scared from the Arab, while the
15 foreigner were not, they were protected by their
16 foreign country.

17 Q. YOUR FAMILY WAS ACTIVE IN JEWISH AFFAIRS?

18 A. Very much so. My father, he never accepted
19 an official position in the community, but he was
20 considered one of the head of the community. He
21 used to give a lot. Specifically there is an
22 orphanage there which they call the Orphanage of
23 Solomon, I mean it's completely dependent on him.

24 Q. NOW, HOW MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS DID YOU

1 HAVE?

2 A. Five brothers and two sisters. And they are
3 still living, all of them. We are now actually
4 everyone is in a different country.

5 Q. GO AHEAD AND DISCUSS HOW IT WAS WHEN YOU
6 WERE YOUNG AND GROWING UP IN ALEPPO.

7 A. Well, I will give you an idea, something
8 when I was nine to ten years old. My father's
9 office was in the suk, inside of the town. So by
10 Friday, usually he take a carriage, horse carriage
11 to come back home. So on Friday, I used to go clean
12 his office, working, after my bath, because
13 el Shabbat and all, so I used to go there to come
14 back with him in the carriage. And I had to travel
15 to go to suk.

16 And there was two Arabs, maybe 40, 50 years
17 old, sitting on the floor there talking. When they
18 saw me, they turn and tell each other look at this
19 son of so-and-so, this (YEHUDIN KEL), that mean the
20 dog of a Jew, how he is walking pridely with his
21 head up. And they took some mud, they took some mud
22 and they throw it on me. So when I arrived to my
23 father, I was really completely out of control, so
24 from this day he say you don't go out and no one

1 from the family go out if is not accompanied by a
2 mature, by an adult. This is what they used to do.

3 But later on, then when the question of
4 Palestine started, the riots start almost every
5 Friday, after the mosque, they used to go right
6 after the French, the French people or the French
7 army, they used to let them go up to a certain
8 point. When they reach this point, so the (?) or
9 the soldier, they used to stop them, they won't let
10 them go near the Jewish people.

11 Q. WERE THE JEWS IN ALEPPO IN THOSE DAYS, DID
12 THEY LIVE IN A JEWISH QUARTER AWAY FROM THE ARAB
13 POPULATION?

14 A. Yeah. There is three section. In the
15 beginning, 1909 on up to 1916-17, they used to live
16 mostly in the ghetto. And the well-to-do or the
17 foreigner used to be -- to live in the (HAN), which
18 is larger and larger court, and daytime, downstairs
19 there are all offices, and upstairs there are the
20 houses.

21 Q. SOME WELL-TO-DO JEWS LIVED IN THAT AREA?

22 A. Only the foreigners.

23 Q. FOREIGNERS?

24 A. The Jewish foreigners. The well-to-do, even

1 they used to live in the ghetto. The ghetto is
2 divided in two also, the well-to-do and the poor
3 people. They used to -- even the ghetto has two
4 gates, north and south, after 6:00, 7:00 o'clock at
5 night, they used to close it. And the ghetto has no
6 window outside. All the windows, all the doors
7 inside.

8 Q. WHY DID THEY DO THAT, CLOSE THE DOOR?

9 A. They close the door for security. They were
10 scared that they will get -- nobody dared to get out
11 after 6:00, 7:00 -- after 9:00 to go out, let's say.

12 Q. WAS IT ALWAYS THAT THE JEWISH POPULATION AND
13 THE ARAB POPULATION DID NOT GET ALONG IN ANY WAY?

14 A. They get along not socially; they get along
15 in business. Socially, you don't see; very, very
16 seldom you find. Socially, they don't mingle;
17 completely opposite. Their social life, the Jewish
18 social life was very, very good, but also scary.

19 Q. IN WHAT WAY?

20 A. They were scared of the Arabs for their
21 jealousy. The Arabs, that's one of the reason they
22 were divided between foreigner and native. If the
23 Arab see a wedding with a lot of festivity and all,
24 they go in and they break everything.

1 Q. EVEN IF THE WEDDING TOOK PLACE IN THE JEWISH
2 QUARTER?

3 A. Only in Jewish quarter, they don't dare to
4 go in.

5 Q. WHICH ONE OF THESE SECTIONS OF TOWN DID YOU
6 AND YOUR FAMILY LIVE IN?

7 A. No, we lived outside. We lived first, in
8 the beginning, in the (HAN). And then later on,
9 when more or less 1918, '20, start to be a little
10 bit looser, that mean they were a little bit less
11 anti-Semitism or less anti-Jewish, they start to go
12 out and they form, the well-to-do people, they
13 formed a new neighborhood in the suburb of the city,
14 that where we lived.

15 Q. GO AHEAD AND DESCRIBE HOW IT WAS. NOW
16 YOU'VE TAKEN US UP TO THE POINT WHERE YOU WERE ABOUT
17 NINE OR TEN. YOU WERE IN SCHOOL, I GUESS.

18 A. I was in school at (?), which is a French
19 school and teach Hebrew at the same time, and
20 Arabic. And later on, for my secondary and my
21 college, I went to (?), which is a college put by
22 the French government. And they put it in the
23 Muslim or Arab neighborhood because they say the
24 Jewish people and the Christian, they teach

1 themselves, they don't need us, we need to teach the
2 other people.

3 Q. WHAT LANGUAGE WERE YOUR CLASSES IN?

4 A. French.

5 Q. IN FRENCH?

6 A. All French. And an hour or two a day Arabic
7 and an hour or two Hebrew.

8 Q. THE HEBREW EDUCATION, WAS THAT PROVIDED BY
9 THE SCHOOL OR DID YOUR FAMILY --

10 A. By the school.

11 Q. BY THE SCHOOL?

12 A. By the (?). By the school, they have their
13 own (?). But they teach Hebrew without
14 understanding. You learn to pray but what you are
15 praying for, you don't know. It's not actual modern
16 Hebrew that they teach us. But when I went to
17 Israel, I started to understand, because I learned
18 Hebrew there, I started to understand what I used to
19 pray for.

20 Q. LET'S GO AHEAD AND GO INTO THAT. WHEN DID
21 YOU LEAVE SCHOOL? AND EVENTUALLY DESCRIBE HOW YOU
22 CAME TO LEAVE ALEPPO.

23 A. In the summertime, my brother had a business
24 of custom broker. In the summertime, my father told

1 me go ahead with your brother and see what you can
2 do. So I start to help my brother. And the
3 business was not so good. My brother had to go to
4 Alexandretta, to another city, to open another
5 branch and see if he can make better money. And I
6 still there. So they decided or I decided I like
7 that work, I like many of the people, I was young
8 boy, considered already as a man working, so I left
9 the college after two years college, I left college.

10 But after that, after maybe less than a
11 year, I had an accident -- not accident, I may say
12 an incident that make me leave Aleppo. I witness a
13 murder by a very wealthy Arab throwing off from the
14 roof his maid, his Armenian maid, a young girl. We
15 were only three people in the street who saw them,
16 one teacher of the school and one -- and the driver
17 of the carriage that was carrying me back home and
18 me. We knew that the driver disappeared. We knew
19 that the teacher has been killed.

20 So my parents, they were scared. First of
21 all, they sent me two weeks away to the mountain.
22 And then when I came back, they decided is not
23 possible to stay in the city. We were scared. So
24 they said maybe it's better if you go to Beirut, but

1 one of the family said Beirut is too near. So we
2 decide I went to Haifa. But at this moment the
3 situation was very bad. And my father took me to
4 his room and he told me I know you have to go but
5 only I have this, he gave me three Italian -- no,
6 Turkish lira, which is three coin gold, and he gave
7 me for the fare. So I went to Haifa with this
8 capital.

9 Q. IN THE INCIDENT THAT YOU WITNESSED, ARMENIAN
10 GIRL?

11 A. Armenian girl.

12 Q. SHE WAS NOT JEWISH?

13 A. No, no, no. Armenian, Armenian.

14 Q. WAS THE RICH ARAB WHO THREW HER FROM THE
15 ROOF --

16 A. It was a very powerful family and he was
17 head of the family. His house is very, very big.
18 You don't know how many wife he has. And I don't
19 know what happen, why, but they were fighting up on
20 the roof and he throw her off from the roof.

21 Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHY HE DID THAT?

22 A. No, no. Nobody would dare to ask or to find
23 out.

24 Q. WAS HE GOING TO GO TO TRIAL FOR THIS

1 INCIDENT? WAS HE EVER CHARGED?

2 A. No, no, no, no. Nobody, even the paper
3 won't talk about it. No. He was very, very
4 powerful.

5 Q. NOW, THIS WAS WHAT YEAR?

6 A. This is in 1932.

7 Q. AND ARE THE FRENCH STILL --

8 A. The French were there. But the French
9 cannot do anything in this situation.

10 Q. AND DID YOU THEN BELIEVE THAT THE OTHER TWO
11 WITNESSES HAD BEEN KILLED?

12 A. Because of him, yes.

13 Q. YOU BELIEVE THAT?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY EVIDENCE TO THAT?

16 A. No, no. There is no evidence, you know. By
17 the words of the mouth of one man to another.

18 Q. AND THIS IS WHAT MADE YOU LEAVE ALEPPO?

19 A. This is one of the reasons that when I went
20 to the mountain for two weeks escaping there, I
21 start to think to myself what am I doing in this
22 city, I have no future, I have nothing, and this.
23 When I was on the mountain, I decide to myself I had
24 to get out. So when I went back home, we had a

1 family consiglio, what we call it, family meeting,
2 with the principal of the school and some friend,
3 and all they decide I should go.

4 Q. WAS IT SO IN THOSE DAYS THAT A RICH AND
5 POWERFUL ARAB COULD DO THINGS TO THE JEWISH
6 POPULATION?

7 A. He could do anything and nobody can bother
8 him.

9 Q. IS THAT RIGHT?

10 A. Anything at all and nobody can bother him.

11 Q. THEN YOU WENT TO TEL AVIV?

12 A. Then I went there, so I went to Haifa. In
13 Haifa, I start to work for more or less the same
14 business like mine, as custom broker, as an
15 employee. And then three or four months later, I
16 open my own office and I start to work. And then
17 when I found myself a little bit settled and a good
18 position, I start to go to the community, to the
19 committee meeting, I start to mingle, more to
20 involve myself with the community.

21 And there I have very too many complaint
22 that, on Sephardic, they were not well treated by
23 Histadrut. You know what is Histadrut, the
24 federation of labor in Israel. So I went -- I was

1 already member of the Histadrut. From the beginning
2 I became member. So I went to see the secretary of
3 the Histadrut. I complained, I complained. He told
4 me listen, it is not our country yet. We are
5 involved with something much more important than
6 your little problem. I say my little problem, they
7 are the lives of those people. He said all right,
8 what do you want? Do you want to be the secretary
9 of the Histadrut, the Sephardic section? I said all
10 right, I'll become, on one condition, if you give me
11 someone to help me out because I am not going to
12 spend my days here. He said okay, I will give you a
13 secretary. So since then I start to work, when
14 somebody come to complain, I used to call on anybody
15 to start to send another worker to replace him. So
16 I helped them a lot in this situation. I spent
17 almost two years as secretary.

18 Q. I WANT TO GO BACK TO WHEN YOU ENTERED
19 PALESTINE, AND THE BRITISH WERE THERE, I GATHER.

20 A. Right.

21 Q. DID YOU NEED A PERMIT TO ENTER?

22 A. Absolutely. I went there illegally. I went
23 as a tourist visa and I stayed without saying
24 anything.

1 Q. WAS THAT HARD TO DO?

2 A. It was in the beginning hard. After three
3 months, I had to go out and come back to have
4 another visa, after three months, and then I stayed
5 put there. So they couldn't find me. Only it was
6 hard when I start to open my own office. I start to
7 open my own office, I had to go and to ask
8 permission. If I go to the government to ask their
9 permission to open my own office, then I will have
10 to tell them from where I was and what. So I had to
11 borrow a name of another man and I opened the office
12 under a third party.

13 Q. BACK IN ALEPPO, WHAT WAS YOUR NATIONALITY?

14 A. We are always Italian. We never lost our
15 citizenship. There is a law during the Turk, a law
16 all the European, they are entitled to be citizen as
17 long as they want. And if they want to change, they
18 will have problem.

19 Q. YOUR FAMILY CHOSE TO REMAIN ITALIAN?

20 A. They always remained Italian. And even when
21 I came to the United States in 1959, I was Italian,
22 up to 1968.

23 Q. SO WHEN YOU WENT TO PALESTINE, DID YOU HAVE
24 A PASSPORT?

1 A. Passport, Italian passport.

2 Q. AND DID THAT DO ANYTHING FOR YOU WHEN YOU
3 WERE IN PALESTINE?

4 A. Yeah, it helped me a lot to get the agency,
5 Italian agency, the (LOITERESTINO) shipping company,
6 the agency, it helped me not for my own good, for
7 the sake of the emigrant, of the refugee.

8 Q. YOU WERE A CUSTOMS BROKER, DID YOU SAY?

9 A. Custom broker.

10 Q. IMPORT/EXPORT?

11 A. Import/export.

12 Q. WHAT KIND OF THINGS WERE YOU IMPORTING AND
13 WHAT KIND OF THINGS WERE YOU EXPORTING?

14 A. Textile, mostly, mostly. But custom broker,
15 I used to -- even hardware, or any kind, I used to
16 have customer and I used to do all the formality of
17 the customs for them, what we call the (TRANSITERE).

18 Q. MOSTLY FROM EUROPE?

19 A. Mostly from England and a little bit of
20 Europe, but mostly England.

21 Q. AND NOW WE'RE IN PALESTINE, AND IS IT IN THE
22 1920'S?

23 A. 1930.

24 Q. '30?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. WE'RE UP TO 1930.

3 A. Yeah, 1933.

4 Q. IN '33. BY THIS TIME, YOU WERE A YOUNG

5 ADULT?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. AND NOT MARRIED, I GATHER.

8 A. Not married.

9 Q. WERE YOU AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN

10 EUROPE?

11 A. What was happening in Europe, yes. That one

12 of the reason when they asked me are you willing to

13 become one of our member and are you willing to

14 sacrifice to help out the Jew, I say whatever any

15 Jews is ready, I am ready too.

16 Q. HAD YOU HEARD OF, IN 1930, HAD YOU EVER

17 HEARD OF ADOLF HITLER?

18 A. We heard, absolutely, yes, sir, in 1930.

19 Even in Aleppo, we knew about him. When he came to

20 power, we knew about him, but we couldn't do

21 anything then.

22 Q. THAT WAS 1933?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. YOU MENTIONED YOU WERE APPROACHED BY THE

1 HAGANAH.

2 A. The Haganah, yes.

3 Q. WHICH WAS THE UNDERGROUND?

4 A. Right.

5 Q. AND GO AHEAD AND TELL US WHAT THEY PROPOSED
6 FOR YOU AND ALL ABOUT THAT.

7 A. Well, one day the secretary of the
8 Histadrut, around noon, he called me. I thought it
9 was something for the other question. So I went
10 there and I saw two men, they are sitting with him.
11 So he introduce me and he said these men, people are
12 from the Haganah. I was really shocked. I didn't
13 expect. I know about the Haganah, that's all, by
14 reading about them, but to know them.

15 So they start to ask me what is my
16 background, what is my work, and if I was happy in
17 the shipping -- in the custom broker. I say yes.
18 They say well, are you decided to sacrifice yourself
19 even to go to jail? I say I am ready. And what had
20 happened, once I went to jail for that. So they
21 told me all right, there is a (LOITERESTINO), which
22 is Italian company, we want you to be their agent.
23 I said well, I will be very happy to be their agent.
24 They said okay, we will give you a letter to the

1 Italian consul and you go to meet him and you tell
2 him you are Italian, take your passport with you and
3 everything.

4 So I went there with the letter, I went to
5 see the consul. The consul was very, very dry, very
6 Fascist. And he said how do I know that you are
7 Italian? I said okay, you find out, here is my
8 passport, write to Livorno, because our documents
9 always are in Livorno, write to Livorno. And he
10 said okay, I will answer directly. Thank you very
11 much. So one week later, he got the answer from
12 Livorno that we are Italian, all the Picciottos are
13 Italian, so he couldn't refuse to make me the agent.

14 Q. DID THE HAGANAHS TELL YOU WHY THEY WANTED
15 YOU TO BE THE AGENT?

16 A. Yes, they explained to me. They explained
17 to me you are going to help us to bring illegal
18 emigrant, illegal refugee, and many times going to
19 be danger. I say okay, I am ready, there is no need
20 coming after me at all.

21 Q. WHEN THEY SAID ILLEGAL EMIGRANTS, IT WAS
22 CLEAR THAT THEY WERE JEWS?

23 A. Jews, illegal, Haganahs Jews.

24 Q. YES, OF COURSE.

1 AND ALSO DID YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THESE
2 EMIGRANTS WERE IN SOME DANGER BACK WHERE THEY WERE
3 FROM?

4 A. In Europe, all, we read papers there, and
5 absolutely, we knew all what's going on. And I was
6 very happy to be able to do this.

7 Q. GO AHEAD THEN WITH YOUR STORY.

8 A. So many times, one of these night, usually
9 the Haganah or the Histadrut, they used to bribe all
10 the officers on the boat or the immigration officer,
11 they used to bribe them. But one time there was two
12 new officers, they didn't get bribed and they found
13 out what I was doing, so they arrested me and I went
14 to jail. They fingerprinted me and they took my
15 picture and everything.

16 The one who had taken my fingerprint, Arab,
17 I told him I have 10 pound in my pocket, take it.
18 He said all right, what shall I do for you? I said
19 this is a phone number you call. So I gave him the
20 phone number of the Histadrut. So he called them,
21 he said Picciotto is in jail, that's it, and he hung
22 up. They send there in the morning, someone come in
23 and say you are free. What they did, how they do
24 it, I don't know.

1 Q. THE OFFICERS WHO ARRESTED YOU WERE
2 PALESTINIAN POLICE?

3 A. Well, yes. No. They were Arab police, yes.

4 Q. BUT THEY WERE NOT OFFICERS OF THE SHIP?

5 A. No, no, no, no, no. The government.

6 Q. NOW, TELL US HOW MANY ILLEGAL PERSONS YOU
7 AIDED TO GET INTO ISRAEL AND WHERE THEY WERE COMING
8 FROM, WHICH CITIES AND WHICH COUNTRIES.

9 A. Mostly they were Eastern European, Rumanian,
10 Czechoslovakia, some even from Greece, from
11 Salonika. In one boat, we were able to bring maybe
12 400, 450. In one boat, maybe less than a hundred.
13 Depend from the shipping, from the beginning, the
14 source. But many times, at least an average of two
15 to three hundred thousand on every boat.

16 Q. AND HOW MANY LEGAL PASSENGERS?

17 A. Legal, out of 700, they used to come 300
18 known and 1,100, 1,000 emigrant they used to come.

19 Q. HOW DID YOU WORK THIS?

20 A. Work it?

21 Q. HOW DID YOU MAKE THIS WORK? HOW DID YOU
22 HELP THESE PEOPLE?

23 A. Because I used to go up before the ship come
24 in, my duty as an agent is to take the pilot, to

1 take the head doctors for inspection of the boat,
2 and I used to go out of the harbor to receive the
3 boat. When I am already on the boat, they used to
4 tell me how many there are. So in this way, I have
5 to send a messenger to tell them we have 200, we
6 have 300, we have -- so sometime they sent me, with
7 the same messenger, they sent me all the visa
8 needed. Sometime they say okay, we are going to
9 disembark them out of the harbor. And so the
10 company more or less knows, and I am sure also the
11 Haganah or the Histadrut, they used to bribe even
12 the captain of the boat.

13 Q. DO YOU THINK THE COMPANY WAS BEING BRIBED BY
14 THE HAGANAH?

15 A. The official company, no. The personnel,
16 yes.

17 Q. YOU SAID A MOMENT AGO THE COMPANY PROBABLY
18 KNEW THESE PEOPLE WERE ON THERE.

19 A. The company in the Italy or the official
20 company, the bigshot of the company, they didn't
21 know. The little one, yes. The one we are dealing
22 with, they knew.

23 Q. AND THE LITTLE ONES WERE THE ONES THEY
24 BRIBED?

1 A. Exactly, they are the most important.

2 Q. DID YOU EVER TALK TO ANY OF THESE REFUGEES?

3 A. Oh, yes, many times, many times. They used
4 to speak -- some of the Rumanian used to speak
5 French, so I was able to communicate with them.

6 Q. WHY WERE THEY FLEEING, DID THEY TELL YOU THE
7 STORY?

8 A. They were fleeing from they said they were
9 suffering, they were hungry, they didn't have a job,
10 they were persecuted, and they are fleeing.

11 Q. WERE ANY OF THEM CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT WAS
12 HAPPENING IN GERMANY?

13 A. Mostly they were scared for the future in
14 Europe. Mostly all of them, they were scared.
15 Many, they came with the kid because they say it's
16 okay for us, it's nothing, but how about our
17 children. They were very much worried what is the
18 future of Europe.

19 Q. YOU SAY THERE WERE SOME FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA?

20 A. Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Poland, lots of
21 Polish, and many Salonika, from Greece.

22 Q. NOT VERY MANY FROM GERMANY?

23 A. Germany, very, very little, very little,
24 maybe two percent.

1 Q. DID YOU TALK TO ANY OF THE GERMAN JEWS?

2 A. No, no. Because I didn't speak German, they
3 didn't speak anything else but German. The only two
4 languages it was hard for me to learn was German and
5 Russian.

6 Q. SO HOW LONG DID YOU CONTINUE IN THIS
7 POSITION?

8 A. I stayed more or less 14 to 15 month. When
9 there was no more, when the British cut with their
10 white paper, they cut the immigration, so there was
11 no more immigration. It was with the permission of
12 the British government that all the people, they
13 were coming, official, the one who had visa. But
14 after that, after the '34, they wouldn't let anyone
15 come in.

16 Q. MR. PICCIOTTO, CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT HOW
17 MANY ILLEGAL REFUGEES YOU HELPED GET INTO PALESTINE
18 EACH WEEK?

19 A. Approximately, we may say twice a week, it
20 come -- the boat come in with two to two hundred
21 fifty illegal, that mean an average of 500 a week
22 illegal, but coming with 800 or 900 legal, which is
23 help to bring them in.

24 Q. WERE THE LEGAL PASSENGERS ALSO JEWISH?

1 A. Some of them, yes. Some of them they have
2 their visa, their official visa and all. Some of
3 them, no. A good part of them, sure, a good part of
4 them, they were Jewish.

5 Q. WERE ANY OF THOSE PERSONS COMING FROM
6 GERMANY?

7 A. Not from Germany. From Rumania,
8 Czechoslovakia, Poland, a lot of Polish, a lot, but
9 they had the permission to come in because at this
10 moment the government, the English government, they
11 let them get in. Not enough, but it was something.

12 Q. THESE ARE THE YEARS 1933 AND FOUR?

13 A. Three and part of four.

14 Q. AND AS YOU SAY, YOU WERE WELL AWARE OF WHAT
15 WAS HAPPENING IN EUROPE?

16 A. In Europe, yes, yes. And everybody knew.
17 We used to talk about it. And because of the riots
18 in Israel and Haifa at this moment, we knew more.
19 For instance, the involvement of the mufti of
20 Jerusalem with Hitler, with Germany, and all this,
21 the persecution is very big in Israel at this
22 moment, that's why we knew what was going on.

23 Q. THESE WERE MOSTLY ASHKENAZIM?

24 A. Yes, 99 percent, 99 percent Ashkenazim.

1 There were maybe no Sephardic at all, only, I'm
2 sorry, the Salonika, the Greek one, they were
3 Sephardic.

4 Q. WAS THIS ANY KIND OF PROBLEM AT ALL BETWEEN
5 THE TWO DIFFERENT BRANCHES?

6 A. No. Problem, in general, there was no
7 problem. Only in detail, yes. In detail, it was a
8 very big problem because the Ashkenazim were much
9 better organized, much more wealthy, much -- they
10 had much more each other. The Sephardic was no
11 education, they were no money, and they used to work
12 what the today Arab do, that mean the very hard
13 work, the bricklayer, the man who could lay the
14 garbage, and they used to do anything, the
15 Sephardic, they didn't know anything else.

16 Q. YOU WERE THE EXCEPTION TO THE SEPHARDIC?

17 A. I was the exception because I had my
18 education.

19 But the Sephardic, they came, they came from
20 Damascus. Damascus, for instance, Syria, Damascus,
21 Damascus, they didn't have a very good education.
22 And their community also was smaller than Aleppo,
23 and there were many North African also, but mostly
24 no education at all. And the people from Salonika,

1 from Greece, not even ABC, they didn't know anything
2 at all. And those were the most hardworking people
3 physically.

4 Q. YOU WERE A SINGLE MAN AT THIS POINT STILL?

5 A. Single man, yeah.

6 Q. AND WHAT WAS YOUR SITUATION IN LIFE, WERE
7 YOU MAKING A GOOD LIVING?

8 A. I was making a very, very good living. Not
9 only a good living, I start to make money. And when
10 I took the agency, Italian agency, I sacrificed a
11 little bit of my own business to be able to carry on
12 with the agency, which didn't bring me anything
13 almost. But I was doing so well, when I left, I was
14 sorry to leave but I had to leave.

15 Q. WHEN YOU LEFT TEL AVIV?

16 A. I left Israel.

17 MR. AYRES: Lois, do you have anything
18 you would like to ask?

19 MS. KERNAN: Yes.

20 BY MS. KERNAN:

21 Q. YOU ESTABLISHED QUITE CLEARLY THAT THERE
22 WERE VERY, VERY FEW PEOPLE FROM GERMANY.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. DO YOU KNOW THE REASON FOR THAT?

1 A. The reason, they used to consider themselves
2 what we understand more German than Jews and they
3 didn't expect what happened to them. That I think
4 this is one of the most of the reason. I knew one
5 that I met now in San Francisco again, he came to
6 Israel, he said he didn't know himself that he was a
7 Jew, only because they start to persecute him that
8 he escape and he came to Israel.

9 Q. I GUESS THEY WERE THE MOST EDUCATED AND THE
10 HIGHEST CLASS OF JEWS TO COME FROM EUROPE.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. I LOOK AT YOU AND I SEE YOUR BLUE EYES AND
13 HOW FAIR SKINNED YOU ARE, SO I GUESS NO ONE ACTUALLY
14 WOULD EVER TAKE YOU FOR SEPHARDIC TO LOOK AT YOU.

15 A. And many times I used to hide that I was
16 Sephardic. I used to hide because the Sephardic was
17 looked upon as inferior, as second class, even in
18 Israel, or in anywhere, in Argentina, or anywhere I
19 went around the world, it was the same thing.

20 Q. SO ACTUALLY, AND CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG,
21 ACTUALLY, IT SEEMED, FROM WHAT YOU WERE SAYING, THAT
22 YOU WERE SEPHARDIC MOSTLY FROM ADOPTION, BECAUSE YOU
23 ARE ITALIAN.

24 A. No, no. We are Italian, and most of

1 Italians, they are Sephardic. They are descendants
2 from Spain and they are all Sephardic. Most of
3 Italians.

4 As a matter of fact, Livorno used to be the
5 city of the educated Jewish people there. They used
6 to be the biggest printer in Jewish prayers used to
7 be in Livorno and they were all Sephardic.

8 Q. WELL, I FIGURED IT OUT THAT YOUR SIX
9 LANGUAGES ARE, I MAY BE WRONG, THIS IS MY GUESS,
10 FRENCH, ARABIC, HEBREW, ENGLISH, JAPANESE, AND
11 SPANISH?

12 A. Spanish. Italian.

13 Q. SEVEN, OKAY.

14 ALSO, YOUR FATHER, ONCE YOUR FAMILY SETTLED
15 IN SYRIA, SO IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR FATHER HAD SISTERS
16 AND BROTHERS ALSO?

17 A. Yes, yes. It was a large family, had five,
18 six sisters, I think, and a brother. But in 1920,
19 the Jewish really start to immigrate. And my uncle
20 supposedly was going to go to United States, he
21 found himself in Mexico without knowing it at all.
22 And many other people, they immigrate, many, many in
23 Syria and Aleppo.

24 And today, the Syrian or the Aleppo people,

1 in New York, for instance, in Brooklyn, they have
2 nine or ten synagogue. It's a very big, very large
3 community. It's the same thing in Buenos Aires,
4 Argentina, or in Rio.

5 Q. ONE LAST QUESTION. I KNOW THAT WHEN THIS
6 ARABIC MAN KILLED THIS WOMAN --

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. -- AND YOU SAY THEY GOT RID OF THE OTHER TWO
9 WITNESSES VERY QUICKLY, WAS YOUR COMMUNITY SO STRONG
10 THAT HE COULD IDENTIFY YOU AND HE COULD IDENTIFY --

11 A. We were scared he could identify us,
12 absolutely.

13 Q. BUT DID YOU --

14 A. Maybe he talked before he killed the
15 teacher, who was this man in the carriage, or when
16 they killed the driver or something. We were
17 scared.

18 Q. I KNOW THAT YOU KNEW HIM BECAUSE HE WAS SO
19 POWERFUL --

20 A. Exactly.

21 Q. -- BUT I DIDN'T KNOW THAT HE WOULD KNOW --

22 A. Oh, yes, they know. It's a big, large,
23 small town, and they know everything there.

24 MS. KERNAN: Thank you.

1 MR. GRANT: I have one or two questions
2 on this chapter.

3 MR. AYRES: Okay. Go ahead.

4 BY MR. GRANT:

5 Q. WHAT WAS THE ACTUAL PROCESS OF DEBARKING THE
6 ILLEGAL REFUGEES WHO WERE BEING SMUGGLED INTO
7 PALESTINE, WHAT WAS THE PROCESS TO GO THROUGH TO GET
8 THEM INTO THE COUNTRY?

9 A. Sometimes we used to get the official visa
10 by the Haganah or they used to give us the official
11 visa. And I used to take the visa myself to leave
12 them because I go first to the boat, to give them to
13 every one of them. Sometimes we used to debark them
14 out of the harbor in the small boat and they come to
15 the beach. Sometimes we used to go to Trieste and
16 we take with us girls, a few girls, not married
17 girls, we used to marry them and bring them as
18 husband of Palestinian so they could not refuse
19 them. In many way, this is more or less this is the
20 way we bring them.

21 Q. AND WHAT TYPES OF ANTI-SEPHARIC PREJUDICE
22 DID YOU EXPERIENCE?

23 A. Social, mostly, mostly social.

24 Q. CAN YOU GIVE ME A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE?

1 A. A specific example, one day a friend of mine
2 came in crying, he's a bricklayer, he came crying
3 that he lost his job, and his boss, he won't pay him
4 the last two weeks that he was working for. And the
5 second day after he fired him, the Histadrut sent
6 them another worker to his place and say to ask why
7 you are asking for a new worker, they replace the
8 Sephardic like nothing. This is one of the reason
9 that I got mixed or I got involved with the question
10 of Sephardic and Ashkenazim, to help out the boys
11 not to lose their job.

12 BY MR. AYRES:

13 Q. MR. PICCIOTTO, YOU MENTIONED GOING TO
14 TRIESTE, AND I GATHER SOME OF THE SHIPS BRINGING
15 REFUGEES LEFT TRIESTE.

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. WHAT OTHER CITIES DID THE SHIPS COME FROM?

18 A. Brindisi, Venice, depend, every week depend
19 from where their company they have a lot load of
20 shipping to do, so they will go.

21 Q. OF ALL THE REFUGEES FROM THE DIFFERENT
22 COUNTRIES, DO YOU RECALL WHICH ONES SEEMED TO BE IN
23 THE WORST CONDITION?

24 A. That was the Polish.

1 Q. EXPLAIN WHY. WHY WAS THAT?

2 A. They were poorer and they didn't know any
3 other language than Polish. It was very, very
4 difficult to them. And they were crying about
5 Poland, what they are losing. They were crying
6 about their home, much more than the Rumanian. The
7 Rumanian, for instance, they used to speak French,
8 besides the Rumanian, and they used to be more
9 practical and more up to date or whatever. But the
10 Polish was really a sad situation.

11 Q. DID YOU GET THE IMPRESSION THAT THE POLISH
12 JEWS HAD A FEAR OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN GERMANY AT
13 ALL?

14 A. They would worry about themselves.

15 Q. MOSTLY ABOUT THEIR CONDITION IN POLAND?

16 A. Mostly about their condition, mostly.

17 Q. YOU SAID A MOMENT AGO THAT YOU WERE ABOUT
18 READY TO LEAVE ISRAEL. AND WERE YOU HAPPY OR
19 UNHAPPY ABOUT THAT?

20 A. I was very happy and I was making money.
21 But I got a letter from my father, he needed my
22 help. Because he is an importer and he need someone
23 to go to Japan, to be his agent to export
24 merchandise for him. And I had to go back to

1 Aleppo, meet him and see what the situation. And I
2 realize he need me absolutely. So I didn't care
3 about my business, I didn't care about anything. So
4 I said -- I went to Japan for him.

5 Q. WHAT YEAR IS THIS?

6 A. 1938 -- no, I'm sorry. End of 1936, '37,
7 and parts of '38.

8 MR. AYRES: Do you have any questions?

9 Go ahead.

10 BY MS. KERNAN:

11 Q. NOW, YOUR FATHER, YOU SAID, WASN'T VERY
12 SUCCESSFUL IN THIS BUSINESS?

13 A. At this moment, it was the consequence of
14 the whole world crisis, 1930 and up, the business
15 start to be bad and bad and bad. But in 1935, end
16 of '35 and '36, the business of my father became
17 very, very bad. So he needed someone to export for
18 him some merchandise to help him out.

19 Q. IN OTHER WORDS, YOU LEFT YOUR GOOD BUSINESS
20 TO HELP YOUR FATHER'S FAILING BUSINESS?

21 A. Exactly, yeah. Right.

22 Q. WERE ANY OF YOUR OTHER BROTHERS, I GUESS,
23 INVOLVED IN YOUR FATHER'S BUSINESS?

24 A. No, no. All of them, they were -- the older

1 one was already married and worrying about his own
2 family. The younger one, 1947 he went to England to
3 see -- he was married also, to see if he can do it.
4 He couldn't -- well, it was tough for him. And the
5 other ones were too young, too young to help him
6 out. I was the only one who could help him.

7 BY MR. AYRES:

8 Q. MR. PICCIOTTO, AS A SEPHARDIC JEW, DID YOU
9 HAVE A SPECIAL FEELING FOR SPAIN?

10 A. No.

11 Q. NO?

12 A. No.

13 Q. YOUR FAMILY HAD BEEN GONE TOO LONG?

14 A. Never. No, not at all. We don't realize
15 that only by the history we knew that we were out of
16 Spain and all this stuff. But we didn't have any,
17 any relation or any knowing about Spain at all.

18 Q. IN 1936, WHEN YOU WERE ABOUT READY TO
19 LEAVE --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR BEGAN.

22 A. Began. We knew about it and we realize that
23 the civilized -- the world where I guess the
24 Fascist, or we knew about this.

1 Q. WHAT WERE YOUR POLITICS BACK IN THOSE DAYS?

2 A. At this moment, to tell you the truth, we
3 were apolitic, we were not in politic at all.

4 Q. WITHOUT PUTTING A NAME ON IT, WOULD YOU SAY
5 YOU WERE LEANING TOWARD THE LEFT OR THE RIGHT?

6 A. We were leaning toward -- no, no, no. To
7 the left.

8 Q. YOU WERE AWARE THAT --

9 A. We were admiring the American, the people
10 who went to help out, we were admiring. Mostly all
11 of the community were the left.

12 Q. YOU KNEW, OF COURSE, THAT FASCISM HAD BEEN
13 IN ITALY FOR SOME TIME?

14 A. Exactly, Franco and all this, we knew about
15 it.

16 Q. AND HITLER AND THE IL DUCE?

17 A. Exactly, the il Duce, what happened with
18 their plane and all, we were -- we knew about it.
19 They ran a good newspaper there.

20 Q. DO YOU RECALL THAT YOURSELF OR PERHAPS OTHER
21 PEOPLE LIKE YOU IN PALESTINE WERE CONCERNED THAT
22 HITLER WAS HELPING THE SPANISH, THAT IT SEEMED LIKE
23 THERE MIGHT BE A WORLD WAR COMING?

24 A. No. They were not concerned for one reason.

1 The situations in Palestine at this moment were so
2 bad, they were concerned about everyday living.
3 Because every other day, every three days, it was a
4 riot, in Haifa, in Tel Aviv, or in Jerusalem. It
5 was a riot, but a riot not like the French in Syria,
6 a riot, the British, they used to let them go, and
7 thank God for the Haganah and the Histadrut that
8 they were able to defend themselves.

9 Q. WHO IS RIOTING AGAINST WHOM?

10 A. The Arabs against the Jews. The Arabs, they
11 use many times girls of 15, 16 years old, Jewish
12 girls, they used to hold their rifles and stand up
13 against the Arabs.

14 Q. THE ARABS, WAS IT THEIR INTENT TO TRY TO
15 KEEP ALL THE JEWS OUT?

16 A. To kill all of them, to kill any Jews as
17 possible.

18 Q. WAS IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU OR ANY OTHER JEW TO
19 MOVE AROUND WITH SAFETY?

20 A. Yes, it was difficult. We had to be careful
21 to not go to the Arab neighborhood. But when we are
22 out, and if there is any emergency, the siren start
23 to wail. And we used to run, we know everyone where
24 is his position, where he should take the bus. We

1 used to run to take the bus to go up to the (HADA),
2 up to the Jewish quarter.

3 Q. WAS THE HAGANAH A SOLID FORCE IN PALESTINE?

4 A. Absolutely, it was very, very strong force.

5 Q. WERE THEY ABLE TO PROTECT THE JEWISH
6 POPULATION?

7 A. As much as possible, yes, oh, yes. Yes.

8 As a matter of fact, one night, it was a
9 situation, very, very difficult situation I had
10 myself, which I am not a fighter, I had to go to my
11 position and they gave me a gun that I didn't know
12 how to use it. And I went to position, they gave me
13 a position to the other side of the city where the
14 Arab couldn't come. And every single one, every
15 single male had a position to go to fight. And in
16 the morning, a girl came to replace me.

17 Q. WERE THE ARABS IN THAT COUNTRY, TO YOUR
18 KNOWLEDGE, WERE THEY EVER GETTING ANY HELP FROM
19 GERMANY, FOR INSTANCE?

20 A. From Germany, the help they got is
21 political, mostly political, through the mufti. But
22 with the people, they didn't know anything about
23 Germany, they know themselves and their hatred and
24 that's all.

1 Q. THEY WERE ACTING UNDER THEIR OWN MOTIVES?

2 A. Absolutely.

3 Q. SO ABOUT THIS TIME, YOU WERE PREPARING TO
4 LEAVE AND GO TO JAPAN?

5 A. Yeah. By end of '35, when my father wrote
6 me, and so I was ready and I went to Japan to help
7 my father, where I stayed almost two years in Japan.

8 In Japan 1938, the war came on, start to
9 come in, the bombing of China was already we knew
10 about everything, and so I had to leave. I left
11 Japan hoping to settle in South Africa. When I
12 arrived to South Africa, there with my Italian
13 passport, I applied for residency. They refused me,
14 saying that they are allied and against the Axis, I
15 guess the Italian, but officially this was, but
16 really because I was a Jew. I went there to the
17 chief of the community, to the head of the
18 community, I told him I want their help so I can
19 stay in South Africa. And so they told me we are
20 worried about ourself, how is it going to be with us
21 if Germany win. We cannot help in any way because
22 here they are all under Jewish anti-Semitism. They
23 couldn't help me. So from there, the only country
24 that I could go without having a visa, it was

1 Argentina.

2 Q. BEFORE YOU GO TO ARGENTINA, WE WENT OVER
3 JAPAN RATHER QUICKLY. I WANT TO GO BACK TO JAPAN
4 FOR A MOMENT.

5 A. Sure.

6 Q. AND YOU WERE OPERATING IN WHAT CITY IN
7 JAPAN?

8 A. Kobe.

9 Q. KOBE?

10 A. Kobe, Japan.

11 Q. AND HOW WERE YOU MAKING IT THERE? WAS THERE
12 ANY PROBLEM WITH ANTI-SEMITISM?

13 A. No, no. They didn't know anything about
14 Jewishness or anti-Semitism. At this moment, they
15 didn't know anything.

16 Q. YOU WERE A WHITE FACE, THAT'S ALL --

17 A. White, that's it.

18 Q. -- WITH BLUE EYES?

19 A. Right.

20 Q. SO THERE WAS NO ANTI-JEWISH FEELING?

21 A. No. Not only there were no anti-Jewish, but
22 the people, at this moment, the Japanese people were
23 very, very, very social.

24 Q. SOCIAL?

1 A. Social. And very open-armed. If you win
2 their confidence, if you win their friendship, it's
3 forever. That means they sacrifice themselves for a
4 friend.

5 Q. WAS THERE ANY DISCRIMINATION AGAINST A WHITE
6 PERSON, A EUROPEAN TYPE PERSON?

7 A. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

8 Q. THE MILITARISTIC ELEMENTS IN JAPAN, WERE YOU
9 AWARE OF THOSE?

10 A. I was aware of that and I was aware of the
11 police power. And we were -- everybody used to be
12 scared to run from the police, even the Japanese
13 too. No, the dictatorship of the military, you can
14 feel it. Even in 1937, you can feel it. When you
15 go near the police station, you can hear, two or
16 three blocks from the police station, you can hear
17 the voices of people who are crying for help or
18 crying for what they were beating on them, or
19 something like that.

20 Q. WAS YOUR STATUS AS AN ITALIAN CITIZEN, DID
21 THAT DO ANYTHING GOOD FOR YOU IN JAPAN?

22 A. Nothing, nothing at all.

23 Q. THE JAPANESE HAD NO SENSE THAT SOMEDAY THEY
24 WOULD BE THE ALLY OF ITALY?

1 A. No, no, no, no sense at all.

2 The only incident I had, but not from the
3 Japanese, from my own consul, there was a
4 commission, Fascist commission coming to Japan and
5 there were not enough Italian to receive them. So
6 the consul called me, said we need you, we need only
7 Italian, we need you to receive the commission. But
8 you have to wear the Fascist uniform. I say I'm a
9 Jew and I have never been with Mussolini and I am
10 not going to wear it. They said okay, when the time
11 come and you need your passport, you go to the
12 Japanese government to ask for your passport. They
13 treat me this way.

14 So I went back home, I ask a few friends
15 what shall I do, what shall I do. I had to accept
16 to wear my Fascist uniform. I went there. He sent
17 me to a tailor, he made me a Fascist uniform and the
18 hat and everything to go out to receive the
19 commission. This is only incident we had because of
20 Fascism.

21 Q. WHAT DID THE UNIFORM LOOK LIKE? WAS IT
22 BLACK?

23 A. Black uniform with the black hat and the
24 emblem of the Fascism on it. It was an experience

1 also.

2 Q. HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU HAD THAT UNIFORM
3 ON?

4 A. I feel very bad. But I have such a good
5 time that I was very happy. I was a young man and
6 every night a banquet and they used to bring you the
7 Geisha, they bring you girls to make you happy. So
8 I spend the most beautiful eight days there with the
9 commission.

10 Q. WEARING YOUR FASCIST UNIFORM?

11 A. Yeah, wearing the Fascist one.

12 Q. THAT'S THE WAY LIFE WAS FOR YOU IN JAPAN,
13 YOU WERE A YOUNG MAN?

14 A. I was a young man.

15 Q. NOT MARRIED?

16 A. My social life was very good. In the first
17 six months, I didn't communicate, I had a Japanese
18 who speak French. But after six months, I decided
19 that time to start to speak in Japanese. I fired
20 the secretary. I told the man from now on we speak
21 only Japanese. And from there on I spoke only
22 Japanese. And which helped me a lot. I had a
23 Japanese girlfriend. She wanted to learn French. I
24 learned more the Japanese than she learned French.

1 Q. AND YOU SAY ALL THIS CAME TO AN END WHEN
2 JAPAN INVADED MANCHURIA?

3 A. Manchuria, when they were bombing Shanghai.

4 Q. WHY WOULD THAT CAUSE YOU AS A EUROPEAN TO
5 BE --

6 A. We saw the war coming and we saw that the
7 Japanese going to be with the Axis and we were
8 scared for because we were Jews.

9 Q. HOW COULD YOU TELL THEY WERE GOING TO BE
10 WITH THE AXIS?

11 A. Everybody was talking about it. 1938,
12 everybody was talking about that that they were
13 going to be with the Axis. It was something very
14 well known. And so I had to escape almost.

15 Q. IN 1938 --

16 A. 1938.

17 Q. -- WERE YOU AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN
18 MUNICH AND EUROPE AND THOSE PLACES?

19 A. Exactly, what is going on in Europe, what's
20 going on -- that's why I got a letter from my father
21 that said we don't want you to go to Europe, we
22 don't want you to come back to Syria, find a place
23 where to go, but get out from Japan.

24 Q. YOUR FATHER IS STILL IN ALEPPO?

1 A. Right.

2 Q. AND HE TOLD YOU TO GET OUT OF JAPAN?

3 A. To get out of Japan.

4 Q. YOU WERE WILLING TO DO THAT?

5 A. I was willing to escape. I was happy. I
6 had, as I said, my girlfriend, and we were very
7 happy. But I was scared of my life. Somebody else
8 remained there, a friend of mine, they remained
9 there, they went straight to jail. After I left a
10 month or two, they put them in jail.

11 Q. WERE THERE VERY MANY JEWS IN JAPAN THEN?

12 A. Not too many, no. No. Only mostly in Kobe,
13 some in Osaka, Tokyo some, maybe, maybe 3,000, 4,000
14 people.

15 Q. AND SO IN 1938, YOU TRIED TO GET INTO SOUTH
16 AFRICA?

17 A. Exactly.

18 Q. AND THAT WAS UNSUCCESSFUL?

19 A. It was impossible because -- and so I had
20 to -- I stayed only one week and then I had to
21 leave. And I went to Argentina.

22 Q. ARGENTINA, WHERE THEY WERE ACCEPTING PEOPLE?

23 A. With open arms.

24 Q. BECAUSE YOU ALSO HAD AN ITALIAN --

1 A. When they saw my Italian passport, they tell
2 me welcome to Argentina, Italian, that's it.

3 Q. EXPLAIN WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE MAKE UP THE
4 POPULATION OF ARGENTINA. A LOT OF ITALIANS, I'M
5 SURE.

6 A. In Argentina, you had to consider Argentina
7 Buenos Aires because out of Buenos Aires there are
8 still some Indian, some mixed blood. But in Buenos
9 Aires, you can find 30 percent Spanish, 30 percent
10 Italian, which make already 60 percent, and the
11 other 40 percent English, German, or other
12 nationality. And mostly they speak Spanish like
13 Barcelona, very, very good Spanish, but still it has
14 some slang.

15 Q. CATALAN?

16 A. Catalan, but not as good as Seville or as
17 Madrid. They have their slang. But life of today I
18 think, with all their difficulty, life in Buenos
19 Aires, it's very, very pleasant.

20 Q. IT'S A RICH COUNTRY, ISN'T IT?

21 A. It's a rich country. Used to be they called
22 it the granero, that mean of the world, that mean
23 the place that -- they used to feed the world with
24 their grain, with their wheat and all this. Now

1 they are the poorest.

2 Q. SO THERE WERE A LOT OF ITALIANS WHEN YOU
3 ARRIVED?

4 A. A lot of Italian and a lot of Spanish.

5 Q. AND HOW MANY GERMANS WERE THERE THEN, WOULD
6 YOU SAY?

7 A. There were in Buenos Aires, for instance, a
8 full neighborhood of Germans. And they were knit
9 together, you cannot break their circle --

10 Q. CLOSELY KNIT?

11 A. -- to go in, no way, no way. And they keep
12 for themselves, their church, their way of living,
13 everything, their school, German.

14 Q. AND HOW MANY JEWS WERE THERE IN BUENOS
15 AIRES?

16 A. Jews, there were, at this moment there were
17 over maybe 300,000.

18 Q. THAT'S A SIZABLE POPULATION.

19 A. Yes, yes.

20 Q. WHEN YOU ARRIVED, DID YOU FIND THAT WHAT WAS
21 HAPPENING IN EUROPE, IN ITALY AND GERMANY, THOSE
22 THINGS WERE BEING FELT BY THE GERMAN AND ITALIAN
23 POPULATION?

24 A. No, didn't bother them at all. I mean they

1 didn't react. They didn't react what's happening in
2 Europe. Only the one who reacted are the military,
3 the military, the far right, they reacted. Even
4 later on in 1941-42, when Peron came up, the
5 situation was very, very bad for the Jewish people.

6 Q. YOU FOUND NO ANTI-SEMITISM FROM THE GERMANS?

7 A. Anti-Semitism always has been in Buenos
8 Aires, always. It has been since maybe 1800 or
9 before. The anti-Semitism exists. But I realized
10 that you can be friendly with some Argentinian, they
11 don't think anything against the Jews at all, they
12 are very friendly, they are -- socially they mingle
13 with them and everything. But in general, there is
14 a lot of anti-Semitism.

15 Q. THE GERMAN POPULATION WEREN'T HAPPY AND
16 CHEERING FOR ADOLF HITLER?

17 A. They didn't show it. They didn't show it.
18 They kept for themselves. If they had something
19 inside of their own neighborhood, but we didn't know
20 about it.

21 Q. AND THE GOVERNMENT --

22 A. If you see a parade of Argentinian army, you
23 think you are looking at a German parade with their
24 (KOSKET), their coat.

1 Q. THEY WORE THE SAME KIND OF HELMET?

2 A. Exactly the same. Because most of the
3 officer, they go to Germany to learn. Most of the
4 army officer, they are mostly a student of Germany.

5 Q. WHAT WERE YOUR FEELINGS WHEN YOU WOULD SEE A
6 PARADE OF THESE GERMAN-APPEARING SOLDIERS?

7 A. My feeling was really to escape from there,
8 not to look at them at all. And I used to tell my
9 boys, even if they were little, if they seen by
10 accident something, to go back home.

11 Q. MR. PICCIOTTO, JUST A MOMENT AGO YOU
12 MENTIONED YOUR CHILDREN. TELL US WHERE YOU MET YOUR
13 WIFE AND WHO SHE IS AND WAS AND WHEN YOU WERE
14 MARRIED.

15 A. I met my wife in Buenos Aires by the end of
16 '38. It was -- I was pushed by my father, by my
17 friend, that's time to settle down, make effort with
18 whom you are going to get married. Don't get mixed
19 up with some low class. We are a very good family.
20 But my father wrote me a very, very strong letter
21 telling me that he feel that he was at his end and
22 he wanted to know I was married. The pressure was
23 very high on me.

24 So I made a marriage with a very good

1 family, one of the best families of Buenos Aires,
2 but origin from also Syria. She was a little bit
3 older than I was. At this moment, I thought she was
4 a little bit. And it was a marriage of convenience.
5 I had from this woman, I had three boys. The third
6 one came because she wanted a girl.

7 And my business was very flourishing, I did
8 very, very good. And I built up a beautiful house
9 with a swimming pool and all of this in the suburb
10 of Buenos Aires. And we were very happy until three
11 or four years after our marriage, my wife's mental
12 health start to deteriorate, more or less I may not
13 say sickness but which bring me 1955 I have to leave
14 home.

15 But during this time, I was very much
16 involved with the community. I was the founder of a
17 club, Sephardic club. I was one of the founder of
18 the Sephardic cemetery, a member of the (?) of
19 Sephardic. And I was a member, founder of a school,
20 secondary school for Hebrew in Buenos Aires, up to
21 19 -- more or less 1950, 1951, when I stopped to get
22 involved because of my personal life. And this is
23 the story of my three children.

24 Q. OKAY. BACK TO 1938, YOU ARRIVED IN

1 ARGENTINA '38?

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. THINGS WERE HAPPENING IN EUROPE THAT CLEARLY
4 YOU WERE INTERESTED IN.

5 A. We were interested and not interested. We
6 were interested to know what was going down but we
7 didn't get involved. Even the community, the Jewish
8 community, they didn't get involved. We used to
9 make, once in a while, some collection to send to
10 Europe. But not knowing what is really, really the
11 matter, the situation so bad. We knew that they
12 were persecuting, there was persecution, but like
13 you are hearing from something from very far. We
14 used to make at least three or four collection a
15 year to mail it to Europe. And then everyone, if he
16 has some relative or some connection, friend or
17 something, we used to send packages, food packages
18 and clothes, or something like that. Even to
19 England, they start to be short of food, I have to
20 send some package of food to my brother.

21 Q. IN THE LATE '30S, HITLER WAS ALLOWING JEWS
22 TO EMIGRATE. WERE YOU GETTING ANY EMIGRANT JEWS
23 FROM GERMANY?

24 A. Jews, no. Emigrant Jews, German, no.

1 Q. NOT IN ARGENTINA?

2 A. Not in Argentina.

3 All the immigrant, German immigrant, all
4 they were that come, they came from the Nazi, all to
5 escape or to hide or to retire.

6 Q. SO STILL IN THE LATE '30S, WERE YOU AWARE
7 WHEN KRISTALLNACHT HAPPENED IN NOVEMBER 1938?

8 A. Yes, yes, we knew. As a matter of fact,
9 this night we didn't sleep because many of us, we
10 had the shortwave radio and we used to listen and we
11 knew it was all coming from the German and we knew
12 all the detail when Kristallnacht.

13 Q. AND YOU KNEW THAT JEWS WERE BEING THROWN IN
14 PRISON?

15 A. Yes, yes.

16 Q. WHAT WAS THE MOOD OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN
17 ARGENTINA? DID YOU FEAR FOR THE JEWS OF GERMANY?

18 A. We feared for them very, very much, we
19 feared for them. Absolutely, we feared for them.
20 But we cannot raise our voice. Don't forget our
21 government, it's pro Germany. And our government
22 was dictatorship. We didn't have a democratic
23 government. We didn't have -- we couldn't even say
24 that we were making collection for the Jews in

1 Germany.

2 Q. THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT PERMIT THAT?

3 A. No, won't let us.

4 Q. DID YOU HAVE ANY KIND OF JEWISH NEWSPAPERS
5 OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

6 A. Yes, we have the Jewish newspaper, we had it
7 always.

8 Q. WERE THEY ABLE TO PRINT ANYTHING ABOUT WHAT
9 WAS HAPPENING IN GERMANY?

10 A. No. They were censored.

11 Q. THEY WERE CENSORED?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. AND ANY SORT OF PUBLIC SPEECH AGAINST WHAT
14 WAS HAPPENING IN GERMANY?

15 A. Nothing.

16 Q. NOT ALLOWED?

17 A. Not allowed. And nobody would dare to do
18 it.

19 Q. WHAT WOULD THEY DO TO YOU, THROW YOU IN
20 JAIL, DO YOU THINK?

21 A. They were scared. They were scared. And
22 jail or persecution or they will cut down your way
23 of living or your business or whatever.

24 Q. SURELY SOME OF THE JEWS IN BUENOS AIRES HAD

1 RELATIVES STILL IN EUROPE.

2 A. Some Jews in Buenos Aires, they had
3 relatives in Germany and they tried to help them
4 out, to get out, but they couldn't bring them.

5 Q. BY THEN ARGENTINA WAS NOT ACCEPTING ANY
6 JEWS?

7 A. No way. I was lucky because in my passport
8 they don't say Jew. In the Italian passport, they
9 don't mention the religion.

10 Q. YOU WERE FOLLOWING WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN
11 ITALY, I'M SURE.

12 A. Oh, yes, absolutely, yes, everything that
13 was going on in Italy. I had some cousins, some
14 relatives that disappeared completely, but this is
15 after the German took over. Before that, Mussolini
16 was not so bad for the Jews.

17 Q. DO YOU REMEMBER -- WELL, WHAT WAS YOUR
18 FEELING WHEN GERMANY INVADED POLAND?

19 A. Already we were -- our feeling was saying
20 that the world war is coming. Even though this
21 Chamberlain went out to make peace, nobody believed
22 in peace and everybody was worried about, and many
23 people start to buy up merchandise, buy up to save,
24 because the war was coming in Europe.

1 Q. DID YOU THINK ARGENTINA WOULD GET INVOLVED?

2 A. Argentina, we were -- officially was with
3 Germany and we know they were going to get mixed up.
4 And we know all the food that they used to send
5 them, they would send a lot of help to Germany.

6 Q. YOU COULD SEE THE GOVERNMENT SENDING FOOD
7 AND AID TO GERMANY?

8 A. Absolutely. Oh, yes, oh, yes. Yes.

9 Q. WOULD YOU SAY THAT THE GENERAL POPULACE WAS
10 ON THE SIDE OF GERMANY?

11 A. No, no, no. The general populace, they were
12 not in favor of Germany.

13 Q. JUST THE GOVERNMENT?

14 A. Just the government.

15 Q. SO WHEN WORLD WAR II ACTUALLY BROKE OUT, YOU
16 WERE THERE UNABLE TO SPEAK OUT BECAUSE THE
17 GOVERNMENT WAS --

18 A. Nobody would dare to open our mouth,
19 nothing. On the contrary, we used to live mostly in
20 closed houses.

21 Q. WAS THERE A JEWISH SECTION OF TOWN IN BUENOS
22 AIRES?

23 A. There is three or four section. It's very
24 big. You have the Sephardic section, you have it,

1 and the (ANSI), barrio (ANSI), they call it. You
2 have barrio (?) on north side, all the Ashkenazim.
3 You have the (KAJOL), another also Ashkenazim. It's
4 a very, very big city, a very big section, and we
5 had a lot of schools, Hebrew school for both side,
6 not only Sephardic but Ashkenazim.

7 And in general, to show you how
8 anti-Semitism, how in Argentina, they used to call
9 the Ashkenazim the Russos, that mean Russian, and
10 the Sephardic Turkos. This is way to, how you say,
11 to lower their class of the people.

12 Q. YOUR BUSINESS WAS MOSTLY WITH ITALY?

13 A. My business was -- in the beginning was with
14 England, I usually import merchandise from England.
15 Then when the war start and the importation start to
16 be difficult, I made my own factory.

17 Q. EARLY IN THE WAR, IN 1939, IN DECEMBER,
18 THERE WAS A GERMAN BATTLESHIP THAT APPROACHED THE
19 WATERS OF RIO DE LA PLATA.

20 A. I am glad you mentioned this.

21 Q. TELL US ABOUT WHAT YOU KNEW ABOUT ALL OF
22 THIS.

23 A. What we knew, the battle was going on. And
24 it was almost like a holiday for all the Jewish

1 people to know that the German are taking it very
2 hardly. And we stood the whole night. And many
3 people stood on the roof because you can see from
4 the Rio de la Plata, stood on the roof to see. And
5 when we knew that the (RAFSPIK) went in, it was a
6 holiday.

7 Q. THE (RAFSPIK)?

8 A. Absolutely, the (RAFSPIK), it was a
9 really -- a holiday for everyone.

10 Q. WHEN THE BRITISH WERE CHASING THEM WITH
11 SEVERAL SHIPS AND THE COMMANDER OF THE GERMAN
12 BATTLESHIP CAME TO TRY TO GET SOME TIME, WIN SOME
13 TIME, AND DO YOU RECALL HOW YOU VIEWED -- THE
14 GOVERNMENT --

15 A. He tried to hide, he came into Rio de la
16 Plata, he tried to hide in the Buenos Aires port
17 harbor, then they found out if he come in, is going
18 to be circled by the British, so he had to get out
19 very, very quick. And that then when they found him
20 and they sunk him.

21 Q. HE WENT TO MONTEVIDEO; CORRECT?

22 A. Yeah, correct.

23 Q. CAN YOU SEE MONTEVIDEO --

24 A. Yes, you can see it, if it's a clear day.

1 Q. -- ACROSS THE RIO DE LA PLATA?

2 A. Across the Rio de la Plata, yeah.

3 Q. WAS URUGUAY ALSO IN FAVOR OF --

4 A. Uruguay was Switzerland of South America, it
5 was very neutral, not to Germany, and it was really
6 a pleasure to be there.

7 Q. AND THAT'S WHERE THE GERMAN CAMPED AND
8 EVENTUALLY SCUTTLED THE SHIP. IS THAT CORRECT?

9 A. Yeah, exactly.

10 Q. AND IT WAS A HOLIDAY, YOU SAY?

11 A. It was a holiday for all the Jewish people
12 there. Everybody was talking about it in the club.
13 We had a toast. And it was something really
14 exciting.

15 Q. COULD YOU SEE GUNFIRE BETWEEN THE BRITISH
16 AND --

17 A. We saw it, exactly, as I said, from the
18 roof, we saw how the bombs exploding and everything.

19 Q. DID YOU SEE WHEN THE MAN SCUTTLED HIS SHIP,
20 DID YOU SEE IT BLOW UP?

21 A. No, no, it was too far. But the light and
22 the thunder, we saw it and we heard it.

23 Q. YOU KNEW IT INSTANTLY, THOUGH, DIDN'T YOU?

24 A. Oh, yes, yes.

1 Q. YOUR RADIO WAS --

2 A. We knew every single moment what's
3 happening. And if sometimes the (RAFSPIK) was
4 winning and we knew about it and we were silent.
5 And then when come the end, it was a holiday.

6 Q. DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GERMAN CREW
7 OF THAT SHIP?

8 A. Tell you the truth, no, I don't remember.

9 Q. I DON'T KNOW EITHER. MAYBE THEY WERE
10 INTERNED FOR THE REST OF THE WAR. I'M NOT SURE.
11 THE CAPTAIN KILLED HIMSELF A FEW DAYS LATER.

12 A. Killed himself, yeah.

13 Q. SO THEN AS GERMANY INVADED RUSSIA AND THE
14 WHOLE WORLD WAS AT WAR, HOW DID LIFE CHANGE FOR YOU
15 THERE?

16 A. The change for us, there were two ways, we
17 were sad and very, very worrying about Europe. At
18 the same time, the business was flourishing. So we
19 didn't feel it as much as someplace else.

20 Q. YOU'RE IN IMPORT/EXPORT BUSINESS. WHERE
21 WERE YOU GETTING YOUR GOODS FROM AND SENDING GOODS
22 TO?

23 A. I used to get my goods from England.

24 Q. DURING THE WAR?

1 A. And also from domestic, big factories. When
2 the situation became more difficult, no more English
3 fabric, so I built my own factory. I produced
4 exactly the same merchandise that I used to import
5 from England.

6 Q. WHAT YEAR DID YOU ESTABLISH A FACTORY?

7 A. Factory in 1941, yeah, 1941.

8 Q. AND IT WAS CALLED WHAT?

9 A. (PASOTEX), called (PASOTEX), that mean
10 textile of the street, by the name of the street
11 where I was. We used to make broadcloth, or what
12 the kind of English fabric we used to import.

13 Q. AND WERE YOU SUCCESSFUL AT THAT BUSINESS?

14 A. Very much so. Successful, and at this
15 moment the black market was very, very flourishing.
16 Every single man or business used to have much more
17 in the bank vault in cash, much more than his own
18 capital.

19 Q. BLACK MARKET YOU SAY, WAS THAT BECAUSE
20 OFFICIALLY THINGS WERE RATIONED?

21 A. Officially because they froze the prices.
22 They froze the price completely, giving three or
23 five percent profit. And no one can live on three
24 or five percent profit. So they used to hold them,

1 their merchandise, until the man who come here, say
2 I will give you cash, that's it.

3 Q. WAS BLACK MARKET ACTIVITY WIDESPREAD,
4 COMMONPLACE?

5 A. Widespread, all over Buenos Aires,
6 everything, the food and the clothes and everything,
7 every single thing. And it lasted five years
8 almost.

9 Q. AND THE GENERAL POPULACE, DID THEY FAVOR ONE
10 SIDE OR THE OTHER IN THE WAR?

11 A. No. The general populace, they didn't
12 worry, they didn't care about anything. If you go
13 during the war or after the war or before the war,
14 you go at 3:00 or 4:00 o'clock in the morning
15 downtown, you see people walking around, going to
16 their movie, going to the restaurant, they're all
17 very happy, very contented, and they don't give a
18 damn for what happened in Europe.

19 Q. WAS THERE ANYTHING IN BUENOS AIRES LIKE
20 BLACKOUTS OR ANY WARTIME PRECAUTIONS?

21 A. No, no. Only the precaution, when Peron
22 came to power, it was precaution of the people, not
23 the government. We were scared. One night, in our
24 neighborhood, which is there were no Jews at all, I

1 was the only Jew there, so I was scared myself, I
2 went to the police station to ask for protection and
3 they say oh, nothing is going to happen to you. So
4 I couldn't sleep the whole night. When in the
5 morning we got up, front of my house with the very,
6 very large letters, that mean the letters come from
7 one side of the street to the other, Peron, the name
8 Peron.

9 And beside that there is an incident which
10 happened two months before Peron came on. They
11 decided that all the military and the Nazi were
12 going to come down on the Jews. There is a very
13 large synagogue on (PASO) Street, between two
14 street, two boulevard or two avenue on both side.
15 In the middle of this street was the synagogue. The
16 front of the street was my office. So one of the
17 guy, one of the head community come to me, he ask me
18 the key of my office. I said for what? He said
19 never mind, tomorrow you are one of the head of the
20 community, you will learn about it. I gave him the
21 keys. And he went all around, he pick up the keys
22 of the offices.

23 And they brought up all the young people,
24 the young people who have been already trained

1 against riot, all the Jewish young boys, the (?) and
2 all this, and they put them in the synagogue, in my
3 office and all the offices around. And when at
4 midnight the mob came, they came in to burn the
5 synagogue, so they opened the offices, they opened
6 the synagogue, and all these young people, they
7 killed maybe four or five of them, they gave them a
8 really, really, very, very bad beating. In the
9 corner was a police station. They didn't move.

10 And in the morning when I went to my office,
11 the street was clean and nobody knew what happened.
12 But there were blood, but they clean it up
13 absolutely at once. In the morning, nobody knew.
14 We knew then because they were prepared, they told
15 me, the second day they told me what happened.

16 Q. YOU'VE MENTIONED THAT THERE APPARENTLY WAS A
17 NAZI MOVEMENT AMONG WHO IN BUENOS AIRES?

18 A. Among the military.

19 Q. THE MILITARY?

20 A. The Argentinian military.

21 Q. DID THEY CALL THEMSELVES NAZIS?

22 A. Absolutely. And some civilian also who
23 lives near or in the neighborhood of the German.

24 Q. AND THEY WERE AVOWEDLY ANTI-SEMITIC?

1 A. Anti-Semitic.

2 Q. AND ALSO THE JEWS HAD A DEFENSE FORCE?

3 A. The Jews at this moment, yes, we had a
4 defense force. We had a good, good amount of men, I
5 believe they had at least two or three thousand
6 young boys ready for that.

7 Q. WHEN THIS BATTLE OCCURRED, DO YOU REMEMBER
8 ABOUT WHEN THAT WAS?

9 A. I don't know -- what?

10 Q. THE BATTLE, WHEN THAT WAS.

11 A. Oh, when was, it was in 1941.

12 Q. '41?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. AND YOUR DEFENDERS, THE YOUNG MEN, WERE THEY
15 ARMED?

16 A. No. All with only --

17 Q. CLUBS?

18 A. No, no. With stick of wood. No arms, no
19 weapons.

20 Q. NO GUNS?

21 A. No guns. But they gave them a very good
22 beating.

23 Q. AND WERE THERE MANY INCIDENTS LIKE THIS
24 WHERE THE NAZI MOVEMENT --

1 A. No, not many. This is one of the most
2 really called the attention of everyone, one of the
3 biggest.

4 Now there are some, another incident, yes,
5 for instance, Eva Peron, she made disappear three or
6 four young men after she became the lover of
7 Mr. Peron. Because this young man used to be her
8 own lover, so she sent them to kill, I know two
9 young men, I know them very good that they have been
10 killed.

11 Q. THE ARMY'S NAZI MOVEMENT, WAS THAT
12 OFFICIALLY TOLERATED BY THE GOVERNMENT?

13 A. Absolutely, Peron himself, he was admired --
14 admirer of Hitler, and very, very companion of
15 Mussolini officially, no question.

16 Q. SO WHEN THE NAZIS CAME, HOWEVER, THEY WOULD
17 NOT BE THERE AS ARGENTINE SOLDIERS?

18 A. Oh, no, no, no. They keep themselves to
19 themselves, German.

20 Q. DID THEY HAVE THE TRAPPINGS OF THE NAZIS,
21 THE SWASTIKA, THE OTHER THINGS LIKE THAT?

22 A. Everything. We saw them with the Swastika,
23 with the brown shirt, yes.

24 Q. JUST LIKE IN GERMANY?

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. AS THE WAR WENT ON, COULD YOU TELL, WHAT WAS
3 THE MOOD OF YOUR PEOPLE AS EVENTUALLY THE ALLIES
4 BEGAN TO COME OUT?

5 A. When the Allies began to win, then it was a
6 way of, how you say, they had -- I should say it in
7 French. They were (ALVIETTE), they were completely
8 up with a good optimism. And we used to have more
9 reunion, more people, more -- they used to like
10 festive time for them.

11 Q. THESE ARE THE JEWS?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. HOW ABOUT THE REST OF THE PEOPLE?

14 A. The rest of it, it depend. The middle class
15 and lower class, they were also happy. The higher
16 class, the wealthy Argentinian, were not very happy.

17 Q. THEY WERE SYMPATHIZERS OF GERMANY?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. ALL THIS TIME, THE GOVERNMENT WAS
20 TECHNICALLY NEUTRAL?

21 A. Technically neutral, but officially
22 technically neutral, but inside of them they were in
23 favor of Germany.

24 Q. SO WHAT WERE YOUR FEELINGS AND THOSE OF YOUR

1 FRIENDS WHEN THE WAR ENDED IN EUROPE?

2 A. In Europe, the first thing that I did for my
3 feeling, I went to New York, I empty my suitcase, I
4 fill it up with food, and I took the plane, I went
5 to England to give food to my brother and his
6 family. And many like me, they did the same things.
7 And we were really happy, at the same time feeling
8 sorry.

9 Q. YOU HAD A BROTHER IN ENGLAND.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER BROTHERS OR SISTERS
12 IN EUROPE ELSEWHERE?

13 A. In Europe, no. My only brother was in
14 England. The other brother was in Philippines. And
15 the other brother, I brought one to me. And the
16 other brother was in Beirut.

17 Q. NOW, I THINK YOU SAID DURING YOUR STAY IN
18 ARGENTINA YOU TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD QUITE A BIT.

19 A. After.

20 Q. OH, AFTER THE WAR?

21 A. After.

22 Q. OKAY. SO THE WAR IS OVER AND YOU HAD -- YOU
23 NEVER WERE HUNGRY, YOU DIDN'T SUFFER FROM HUNGER OR
24 ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

1 A. Oh, no, no, not at all. To the contrary, we
2 were supplying food for somebody else. We were not
3 hungry, we didn't need -- even the poorer Jewish man
4 in Buenos Aires didn't suffer.

5 Q. DID YOU EVER HEAR OF ANY JEWS BEING BRUTALLY
6 BEATEN OR EVEN KILLED BY THESE NAZI GROUPS?

7 A. No, no.

8 Q. NO?

9 A. No. If there were some, they hide it so
10 good so nobody would know. I know that these two
11 men disappeared because I had a connection with them
12 and because of Peron, but not question of politic.

13 Q. THIS WAS A PERSONAL MATTER FOR EVA PERON?

14 A. Personal matter, exactly.

15 Q. DO YOU KNOW THEIR NAMES?

16 A. One (CABROSI), I don't remember the other
17 one. Exactly, no.

18 Q. THEY WERE YOUNG MEN YOU KNEW?

19 A. Young men, yes.

20 Q. WHEN THE WAR IN EUROPE ENDED AND PERON WAS
21 IN POWER THEN, WHAT WAS THE POSITION OF THE
22 ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT? DID THAT CHANGE AT ALL?

23 A. There was no Argentine government. There
24 were ministers. They all belong to Peron. What

1 Peron say, Peron does, that's it. There were no
2 Congress, no Senator, no nothing. There were
3 maybe -- technically there were, but you don't hear
4 their voice.

5 Q. HE WAS A ONE-MAN SHOW?

6 A. He was the one man, absolutely.

7 Q. SO THE WAR ENDED, NOW I WANT TO ASK YOU IF
8 YOU NOTICED THAT THERE WERE MORE GERMAN IMMIGRANTS
9 IN BUENOS AIRES.

10 A. After the war, all the German, they came,
11 they came, they went to the provinces. They didn't
12 stay -- they didn't come to Buenos Aires at all.
13 They disappeared into (?), all those, and they went
14 straight to farm.

15 Q. WERE YOU AWARE OF THESE PEOPLE COMING?

16 A. We knew about them, yes. Yes, we knew.

17 Q. DID YOU KNOW WHAT SORT OF GERMAN THEY WERE?

18 A. Exactly. We knew that they were coming,
19 escaping, because they were Nazi, escaping from the
20 situation.

21 Q. ABOUT THIS TIME, AT WAR'S END, THE WORLD
22 BEGAN TO LEARN ABOUT PLACES LIKE AUSCHWITZ AND
23 BERGEN-BELSEN AND OTHER SUCH CAMPS. DID YOU AND
24 YOUR FRIENDS KNOW ABOUT THESE PLACES BEFORE THE WAR

1 ENDED?

2 A. No. Much later, even after the war, when it
3 ended, we didn't know. Much later, one or two more
4 years later on, we start to read about it. During
5 the time that it happening, we didn't know anything
6 about it.

7 Q. AND IT WAS COMMON KNOWLEDGE AMONG YOUR
8 FRIENDS --

9 A. Oh, yes, yes.

10 Q. -- THAT THE NAZIS WERE ESCAPING?

11 A. Escaping, yeah, it was common knowledge.
12 And some people who used to live in the farms or out
13 in the province, they knew where they used to be.
14 That the way possibly that they caught Eichmann
15 because there are Jews who knew where they are.

16 Q. WERE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS, DO YOU KNOW WHY
17 THE GERMAN NAZIS DID NOT STAY IN THE CITIES?

18 A. We knew why.

19 Q. BECAUSE OF THE JEWISH POPULATION?

20 A. This is the only way to escape, to hide.
21 Because in the province, the land is so large, it's
22 so big, you cannot reach. If they are on one of the
23 farm, you don't what farm, you don't know how many
24 acres or how many miles are away, so the best place

1 to hide is there.

2 Q. WERE THE LANDOWNERS, LARGE LANDOWNERS, WERE
3 THEY GERMAN SYMPATHIZERS?

4 A. They help, they help, yes, yes, yes. And
5 after -- if there are more or less five or six here,
6 when they master the language, the first thing they
7 do, they get married to an Argentinian. So once
8 married to an Argentinian, the family of this woman,
9 they also help, he become one of them. So in this
10 way, they disappear.

11 Q. DID YOU KNOW OF ANY WELL-KNOWN NAZIS WHO
12 CAME TO ARGENTINA?

13 A. No.

14 Q. NO?

15 A. No.

16 Q. DR. MENGELE YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT?

17 A. We didn't know anything about Dr. Mengele.
18 Later on, yes.

19 Q. OR EICHMANN?

20 A. Or even Eichmann, no, we didn't know. We
21 knew there were some important people. But who they
22 are or what they are, we never knew.

23 Q. SO AT THE WAR'S END, YOU HAVE A GOING
24 FACTORY?

1 A. A going factory, yes.

2 Q. THINGS ARE GOING WELL FOR YOU?

3 A. Going very well.

4 Q. YOU HAVE A FAMILY AT THAT POINT?

5 A. Yes. I brought up a family. I brought
6 up -- I was involved with the community work, with
7 the charity, with everything, up to 1950.

8 Q. WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

9 A. Well, 1950, I start to have personal
10 problem, in the family personal problem, which make
11 me quit, I couldn't follow up. I will leave you a
12 book so you can read about this because this is not
13 very important for the general public. In 1955, I
14 left, I left Buenos Aires and I start my giro, my
15 turn around the world.

16 Q. DID YOU LEAVE YOUR FAMILY THERE?

17 A. I left my family in Buenos Aires. I left
18 them with all they need, they didn't have any
19 problem.

20 Q. DID YOU SELL YOUR FACTORY?

21 A. I didn't sell my factory because my partner
22 was my brother-in-law, who brought my whole problem,
23 which I shouldn't go into this detail. Then I went
24 to Italy. In Italy I expect to do some good

1 business and come back to Buenos Aires. My
2 brother-in-law didn't help a lot. In any case, to
3 make it short, I stayed in Italy.

4 MR. AYRES: Before you start residing
5 in Italy -- do you have any questions about the
6 Argentine period?

7 MS. KERNAN: No.

8 BY MS. KERNAN:

9 Q. YOU MENTIONED IN ARGENTINA THERE WERE ALL
10 THESE FOUR VERY LARGE JEWISH SECTIONS, AND YET YOU
11 SAY YOU LIVED OUTSIDE -- YOU DIDN'T LIVE IN ANY OF
12 THEM?

13 A. No, no.

14 Q. WAS THERE A REASON?

15 A. There was one reason. First of all, I
16 wanted -- my wife was sick and I wanted plain air, I
17 wanted fresh air, I wanted to be out of the city.
18 The second thing, the life inside of Buenos Aires
19 was not very pleasant to live, and that mean
20 apartment. Big houses in Buenos Aires were -- very,
21 very seldom you live in a big house, you live only
22 in big apartment, so I built my own house. And in
23 general the wealthy people, there were people
24 well-to-do, they don't live in Buenos Aires, they

1 live outside.

2 Q. SUBURBS?

3 A. Suburb.

4 MS. KERNAN: Okay. Thank you.

5 MR. GRANT: I have a couple questions.

6 BY MR. GRANT:

7 Q. IT WASN'T TOTALLY CLEAR TO ME EXACTLY WHAT
8 YOU MADE IN YOUR FACTORY IN ARGENTINA.

9 A. Textile, broadcloth, bedding, that sheet and
10 all that stuff, all custom.

11 Q. I SEE. AND IT WAS MANUFACTURED FROM RAW
12 MATERIALS IN ARGENTINA AND THEN EXPORTED?

13 A. From raw, I used to buy yarn, I used to buy
14 yarn and put them on the loom and make the fabric.

15 Q. AND YOU WOULD SELL YOUR FINAL PRODUCT TO
16 WHOM?

17 A. I sell my final, because I used to sell my
18 final product to industry, who dye them or print
19 them or -- in large quantity, not to the retail.

20 Q. I SEE. AND WOULD THEY BE SOLD THEN OPENLY
21 INSIDE ARGENTINA OR OUTSIDE?

22 A. Inside Argentina. All they were trying to
23 be independent at this moment from Europe because we
24 couldn't import from Europe.

1 Q. OKAY. YOU MENTIONED THAT AFTER THE WAR IN
2 ARGENTINA, YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHICH NAZIS CAME TO
3 ARGENTINA BUT YOU WERE AWARE THAT THERE WERE SOME
4 IMPORTANT NAZIS IN ARGENTINA. HOW WERE YOU AWARE
5 THAT THERE WERE IMPORTANT NAZIS IN ARGENTINA?

6 A. By the mouth, from one man to another. Not
7 on the paper or not on the radio or nothing, only we
8 used to talk, oh, you heard this, oh, you heard
9 that. And many, many young men, they used to be
10 afraid of some officer, so they used to get some --
11 also some news from them, something like officer of
12 the army, they used to be. Because some also young
13 Jews used to be also in the army because there is a
14 draft there, they have to go, so we used to know
15 more or less from them.

16 Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE ARGENTINE ARMY
17 HELPED THE NAZIS GET INTO --

18 A. Officially, no. But the big officer, the
19 high officer, they used to help.

20 Q. I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS THE APPROPRIATE
21 MINUTE FOR THIS QUESTION, BUT I'LL ASK IT ANYWAY.
22 DID THE GERMANS OR ANY OF THE OTHER AXIS POWERS
23 OCCUPY SYRIA DURING WORLD WAR II?

24 A. The German, no, but the Turkish occupied

1 Syria and they were influenced by the German. The
2 German came not as occupier, as a partner with
3 Turkey. We had, as a matter of fact, a neighbor who
4 was a German officer, not as occupier, they were
5 army, they were that part with the Turkish army.

6 Q. DID YOUR FAMILY IN ALEPPO OR YOUR FRIENDS IN
7 ALEPPO HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE GERMANS DURING THE WAR?

8 A. To deal with the German, no. Only they used
9 to confiscate houses, they used to rent houses,
10 supposedly to rent but they never paid the rent.

11 They took one of our floors downstairs, for
12 instance, an officer took it. And this the way. Or
13 they put the tent in our garden in Aleppo, they put
14 a tent and some officer, German officer to live in.

15 Q. THIS WAS YOUR FAMILY'S GARDEN IN ALEPPO?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. WAS THERE ANY MOVEMENT BY THE GERMANS TO
18 PRACTICE ANY KIND OF FINAL SOLUTION POLITICS IN
19 SYRIA?

20 A. No, not in Syria, no. Only we were scared
21 from the German soldier, but because the German
22 soldier used to rape, used to catch girls around the
23 street alone and rape them or something like that,
24 we were always scared from them. More from German

1 than the Turkish. The Turkish soldier we were not
2 scared of them like from the German.

3 Q. WHEN YOU SAY "WE," WERE YOU IN ALEPPO WHEN
4 THE GERMANS WERE THERE?

5 A. We, in Aleppo. Exactly, yes, in 1919. They
6 left in 1919. 1918 they were there, 1917 they were
7 there.

8 Q. WHAT ABOUT DURING WORLD WAR II?

9 A. World War II, I was not there, so I cannot
10 tell you.

11 Q. BUT I MEAN DID YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS --

12 A. My family in World War II, they were not in
13 Aleppo. My older brother was in Beirut, another
14 brother was in England, and another brother was
15 already in America.

16 BY MR. AYRES:

17 Q. SO WE'RE UP TO 1955 AND AT THIS POINT YOU
18 PLACE YOUR FACTORY IN THE CARE OF A RELATIVE?

19 A. I left it, yes. I left it to my
20 brother-in-law.

21 Q. YOU LEFT YOUR FAMILY WELL CARED FOR?

22 A. I left my family well provided of. And I
23 went to Italy to try to recover what I lost, because
24 I was in bad shape.

1 Q. YOU HAD PROPERTY IN ITALY DURING THE WAR?

2 A. No, no. I went there to export some
3 merchandise, material for factories that I could
4 build up again my own and to build up my whole
5 business. But the collaboration expected from my
6 brother-in-law, I didn't get it. On the contrary,
7 he sold what I sent to him and he said they were not
8 good. Well, this is detail, personal detail. So I
9 had to stay -- I stayed in Italy.

10 Q. AND HOW LONG DID YOU STAY THERE?

11 A. I stayed in Italy four or five month, more
12 or less. And from there --

13 Q. IN WHAT CITY?

14 A. In Milano. From Milano, I met some people.
15 Also some personal detail I don't know if I should
16 tell you. In one word, I went to Central America.
17 I went to Ecuador, where I had very good relation,
18 and made a plan to build up a factory, which they
19 needed very badly, with plans to build up houses for
20 the worker and everything modern.

21 When I reached the moment that I needed the
22 permission of the government, I went to see the
23 minister. And after I told him all my plan, I
24 showed to him and everything, and I formed already a

1 corporation, he say okay, what is in it for me? I
2 said for you, I give you 10 percent shares of the
3 factory. He said no, 10 percent shares is very good
4 but you give it to me now in cash. I said the
5 operation is not yet started, how can I give you
6 cash? He said okay, what will be come to me if the
7 government fail tomorrow? He say okay, what will be
8 come to us if the government fail tomorrow too?
9 Then our permission go away, so I couldn't get and
10 make it.

11 Q. WHAT KIND OF FACTORY WAS IT GOING TO BE?

12 A. Also for textile.

13 Q. ALSO TEXTILE.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. AND WHO WAS THIS OFFICIAL?

16 A. It's a minister of interior.

17 Q. DO YOU KNOW HIS NAME?

18 A. No. Even so --

19 Q. THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR IN 1956?

20 A. Ecuador, in 1956.

21 Q. HE WANTED 10 PERCENT UP FRONT?

22 A. He wanted 10 percent up front.

23 Then I went to Mexico. Mexico, I had an
24 uncle, I had relation. I built up a factory, socks

1 factory, more or less the same line, but didn't last
2 too long, for the same problem I had in Buenos
3 Aires, I had the same problem in Mexico, personal
4 problem, family problem. I left also in the same
5 way, leaving my family well-off, because I brought
6 the family to Mexico. I left them there. And I
7 went in a very, very bad shape, I went to England to
8 my brother.

9 Q. HOW OLD ARE YOUR CHILDREN IN MEXICO,
10 ROUGHLY?

11 A. In Mexico, roughly, it was in '55, 16, 13
12 and nine.

13 Q. AND YOU DIDN'T STAY VERY LONG IN MEXICO?

14 A. No. We stayed -- I stayed maybe a year.
15 And I had the same problem that I had in Buenos
16 Aires and I had to leave.

17 Q. THIS WAS YOUR WIFE'S MENTAL CONDITION?

18 A. Exactly.

19 Q. YOU LEFT YOUR FAMILY THEN IN MEXICO?

20 A. Mexico.

21 Q. WHAT CITY WAS THAT?

22 A. Mexico City.

23 Q. AND YOU WENT THEN TO?

24 A. I went to England, where I stayed maybe --

1 when before to leave -- no. I went to United
2 States, I'm sorry, where I have a cousin, who picks
3 me up on a stretcher because I was so sick. He
4 picked me up almost on the stretcher, you see it,
5 you see it in my book, and I stayed two weeks with
6 him. I recuperated my strength. I went to England,
7 stayed with my brother for a month, and from there I
8 went to Spain. Spain I started a business, not
9 flourishing but I start to do something.

10 Then I got an offer from Philippines, the
11 government of the Philippines, to manage a (?)
12 plantation. First, before the (?) plantation, to
13 manage a factory. When I arrived to Philippines,
14 the man who was in charge to build the factory back
15 up. So I found myself without anything in
16 Philippines.

17 Q. THE FACTORY HAD BEEN DESTROYED DURING THE
18 WAR, PERHAPS?

19 A. I got mixed up with the government and I
20 became a rancher. I planted cotton. I was the
21 first one who planted cotton in the Philippines. I
22 planted cotton and it was very, very successful. My
23 contract with them was for two years. But before
24 two years, I realized that they were preparing

1 people -- well, I told some people to take my place.
2 I realized I was not going to stay for longer than
3 two years.

4 So I went to Canada. I stayed nine months
5 in Canada trying to do something, I couldn't, until
6 I found someone who needed some troubleshooter for
7 his company, to go around the world from one branch
8 to another, in optical business, completely -- in
9 the optical business. There I start to travel again
10 around the world troubleshooter until I arrive to
11 check on San Francisco branch, where they told me to
12 take over until they send somebody, and I am still
13 waiting.

14 Q. AND THAT'S WHAT YEAR?

15 A. End of 1959. And I became an employee \$65 a
16 week with three kids and the mother sick, a sick
17 mother.

18 Q. YOU BROUGHT YOUR FAMILY TO SAN FRANCISCO?

19 A. I brought the family.

20 After that, after a few years, I became a
21 partner. And in the end, 1978, more or less, '79, I
22 became the owner of the optical, or the company, up
23 to 1983 when I retired.

24 Q. WHAT IS THE COMPANY'S NAME?

1 A. Select Optical.

2 Q. AND YOU BECAME A PARTNER?

3 A. Beginning I became a partner and then I
4 bought the whole company.

5 Q. AND YOU RETIRED IN --

6 A. I retired end of 1982, '83.

7 Q. AND DID YOU SELL THE COMPANY OR WHAT?

8 A. I sold the company to a firm in the business
9 which lasted two years and they went bankruptcy.

10 Q. BUT YOU WERE NO LONGER CONNECTED WITH IT?

11 A. No, I was no longer connected.

12 Q. SO YOU RETIRED AND YOU'VE BEEN HERE IN SAN
13 FRANCISCO, DID YOU SAY SINCE '56?

14 A. Yeah. No, in San Francisco since '59.

15 Q. '59.

16 A. '59. I came in December '59 to San
17 Francisco.

18 Q. AND THIS IS ABOUT AS LONG AS YOU'VE STAYED
19 IN ANY ONE PLACE, ISN'T IT?

20 A. Yeah, the longest, exactly.

21 Q. DO YOU ANTICIPATE BEING HERE FOR VERY MUCH
22 LONGER?

23 A. No, no. When I took over, I didn't expect
24 to stay so long. But life was good, the kids took

1 advantage of the university, I have three of them
2 with their Ph.D.'s.

3 Q. WHERE DID THEY GO TO SCHOOL?

4 A. Now they go to Berkeley. And the last two
5 years, the two of them, they went to Santa Barbara.
6 And the one, the one in Indiana, the older one, he
7 had two Ph.D.'s, in physics and romance language.
8 The second one, he has a Ph.D. in physics. And the
9 third one in physics. But the first one, the older
10 one, he teach actually in New York State University.
11 And the second one, he is a chairman of the board of
12 the physics department of University of Victoria.
13 And the third one is director of cost accounting in
14 Alameda County in computer science. He's a director
15 for all the professors.

16 Q. HAVE YOU BEEN, SINCE YOU'VE BEEN IN SAN
17 FRANCISCO, STILL ACTIVE IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY?

18 A. Lately I start to become active with the
19 Sephardic community. I start, but I tell them I
20 won't take any position. I will help with no
21 position. They want me to be a president. Exactly
22 a week, last week they asked me to be a president,
23 and there was a meeting, I say I refuse, I will help
24 you as much as I can but I don't want to be any

1 official.

2 Q. DO YOU ATTEND A SYNAGOGUE IN SAN FRANCISCO?

3 A. Every Saturday.

4 Q. WHICH ONE?

5 A. The Fourth Avenue, (?).

6 Q. IT'S A SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION?

7 A. Sephardic, uh-huh.

8 Q. AND HAVE YOU EVER BEEN INTERESTED IN, FOR
9 INSTANCE GOING TO EUROPE? HAVE YOU EVER TRAVELED TO
10 EUROPE?

11 A. I travel, almost every other year I go to
12 Europe.

13 Q. WHERE DO YOU GO?

14 A. This last two time I went to Paris. But I
15 like to go to Florentia, to Florence, to Italy.
16 Mostly I go to Italy and France.

17 Q. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN INCLINED TO VISIT SOME OF
18 THE SCENES OF THE CAMPS THAT YOU HEARD ABOUT?

19 A. I went back to Haifa in 1973. I went back
20 to Haifa, I visited all the place I used to work and
21 all this, it wasn't very interesting but changed a
22 lot for me, changed a lot. I went to Beirut also.
23 I wanted to go to Aleppo but it was -- it is today
24 very dangerous to go. My brother went to Syrian

1 consul in New York and he asked me, he says he is
2 from Aleppo, born in Aleppo, he'd like to go to
3 Aleppo. He said welcome, why not, you will come, we
4 will welcome you. He said we guarantee you to go in
5 but I won't guarantee you to come out.

6 Q. SO YOU DIDN'T GO TO ALEPPO?

7 A. No.

8 Q. WERE YOU EVER INTERESTED IN GOING TO ANY OF
9 THE CONCENTRATION CAMPS OR ANYTHING IN POLAND OR
10 GERMANY?

11 A. No, no.

12 Q. NOTHING LIKE THAT?

13 A. I will tell you, in Germany I went once, a
14 weekend, I felt so bad, I didn't want to go back
15 there. I have some antipathy, how you say it in
16 French, against the German, or to hear German
17 speaking. So I went there to do business, I went a
18 weekend, and I never get back there. And also
19 knowledge of languages, to Poland or Rumania to go,
20 my limited knowledge of language doesn't permit me.

21 Q. YOU DON'T THINK ENGLISH AND FRENCH WOULD GET
22 YOU BY?

23 A. Well, if you want to feel really the life of
24 the company, you have to speak their language. When

1 I go to Paris, I feel like at home. And I don't go
2 to the hotel, or I take an apartment, I take a room
3 or something, and I go, I live like the people do.

4 Q. WHAT DID YOU FEEL WHEN THE BERLIN WALL CAME
5 DOWN AND THE TWO GERMANYS WERE REUNITED?

6 A. I feel -- I was scared and I am still
7 scared. I am scared from Germany to get back again
8 with her strength, with her force, with her (?). I
9 was not very happy. Even though it's very good for
10 the world, it's very good for the democracy, but as
11 a Jew, I was scared.

12 Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN
13 RUSSIA AND THE FACT THAT MANY RUSSIAN JEWS ARE NOW
14 BEING --

15 A. I am very, very happy about it, very, very
16 happy. Really, as a matter of fact, in our
17 congregation, actually, we are helping the Russian
18 to come here too. No, I was very, very happy. This
19 is a very good omen for us. Even though we are
20 Sephardic different, but still we feel the same way.

21 Q. HOW DID YOU FEEL DURING THE GULF WAR?

22 A. The Gulf War, I tell you, from the
23 beginning, with the Arabs, I was sad when they made
24 peace with Sadat because I know you can never trust

1 the man. Now, actually, the peace with Egypt is not
2 a peace. There is no war. But how many Jews that
3 went as a tourist to Egypt and no one Egyptian came
4 to Jerusalem? They don't recognize us, even though
5 we have our (?).

6 So the Gulf War, I was very -- I wrote, as a
7 matter of fact, in the Chronicle, I wrote an article
8 in the Chronicle about the war in the gulf, I say we
9 expect some nation, the United States or any other
10 nation, to recognize Israel, what they did when they
11 bombed it, their atomic factories. And this is
12 hesitation. We knew about it. Saddam Hussein, you
13 never can trust him. How we are now dealing with
14 (?), I don't know, but politic.

15 Q. HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR NATIVE SERBIANS'
16 ROLE?

17 A. I feel like any Jew feel about an Arab.
18 Even though I am born in Syria, I don't feel for
19 those Arab any fraternity or any close suggestion to
20 them, no, no way. They want -- if you live there,
21 you feel their hatred in you.

22 I had just an example, in the book you must
23 find it, I had, not a classroom, but my teen-age boy
24 friend, very friend, he used to live on the first

1 floor, we lived on the second floor. I used to go
2 to his house and the women, they didn't used to
3 cover themselves for me because I am a brother of
4 their son like this. I used to sit on their step
5 and the boy used to sit on our step.

6 One of these day he came back, he said
7 Edward, I'm going to Germany. I said for what? He
8 said I'm going to be an officer. I said you are
9 crazy, what officer? Yes, I'm going to learn to be
10 an officer and come back and kill all the Jews.
11 Naturally, you, I won't touch you, you are my
12 friend, not your family, but I'm going to kill. I
13 said from now on you are not my friend, I don't want
14 to know you.

15 Q. WHEN WAS THIS?

16 A. This was in, more or less, 1928, '27, more
17 or less.

18 Q. YOU WERE YOUNG?

19 A. I was young, more young.

20 Q. WHAT DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE WHEN YOU
21 WATCHED ON TV THOSE MISSILES COMING INTO CITIES IN
22 ISRAEL DURING THE GULF WAR?

23 A. In Israel, I felt very, very badly and I
24 felt very proud that the Israeli didn't react. I

1 felt very, very proud of them that they maintained
2 their patience, maintained their blood, because they
3 are there. I didn't expect they could stand still,
4 and I admire them for that.

5 Q. AND AT THE SAME TIME YOU FELT BADLY?

6 A. Naturally I felt bad what's happening,
7 naturally. But I was proud, I was really
8 enthusiastic about it.

9 Q. THERE IS IN MADRID TODAY OR BEGINNING
10 TOMORROW A PEACE CONFERENCE. DO YOU HAVE ANY HOPE
11 FOR THAT?

12 A. Not very, not very.

13 Q. WHAT DID YOU SAY A MOMENT AGO, YOU CANNOT
14 TRUST AN ARAB?

15 A. You cannot trust an Arab. There is a saying
16 in Hebrew, you cannot trust an Arab even if he is in
17 the grave. If you know Hebrew, I will tell it to
18 you in Hebrew. (?) That mean you cannot trust them
19 even if they are in the grave, you can't.

20 Q. IS THAT A HEBREW PRAYER? BECAUSE YOU SAID
21 YOU ONLY --

22 A. No, is not a prayer, no. It's a saying that
23 everybody, we said it when we talk about going, we
24 said (?). We lived with them. We know them. We

1 know their way of feeling. We know that for them,
2 the Jew is second class. The Jew is not a human
3 being. This is with or without war. And I am
4 talking to you when I was young, there was no war,
5 and see what they did to me. Why? Because I am a
6 Jew, I was going through the street. It's in my
7 blood to hate them. I didn't see anything good from
8 them to appreciate to say all right, they are good
9 people or even acceptable people.

10 MR. AYRES: Lois or John, do you have
11 any questions?

12 MS. KERNAN: I'm fine.

13 John?

14 MR. GRANT: No.

15 BY MR. AYRES:

16 Q. I THINK WE'VE ARRIVED AT THE END OF YOUR
17 JOURNEY.

18 A. Thank you.

19 Q. OH, NO, NO, WE HAVEN'T. I HAVE TO ASK YOU
20 WHEN YOU WROTE YOUR BOOK.

21 A. I started in 1983. I finish it in 1985.
22 All my memory, even names they are the same, I
23 didn't change anything in the names.

24 Q. WHAT'S THE NAME OF YOUR BOOK? THE CHECKERED

1 LIFE --

2 A. "The Checkered Life of a Modest Man."

3 MR. GRANT: Why don't we get a shot of
4 you holding your book there?

5 MR. PICCIOTTO: Sure.

6 MR. AYRES: Do you have your tongue in
7 cheek when you call yourself modest?

8 MR. GRANT: Who is the publisher of
9 your book?

10 THE WITNESS: The publisher, Pyramid
11 publisher in Berkeley.

12 And the editor is Max Knight. After we
13 finish and all, he send me a letter I am very, very
14 proud to have been your editor.

15 BY MR. AYRES:

16 Q. AND THAT CONTAINS YOUR ENTIRE LIFE STORY.
17 IS THAT CORRECT?

18 A. That's entire life story, from the
19 beginning. That why I said if you read the
20 beginning, it is interesting to see the life of
21 Jewish people and how they used to live and all. If
22 you are interested in the Middle East life, it is
23 very, very interesting. Even though it's my life,
24 but mostly also it's a study more or less.

1 Q. WELL, YOU HAVE THE LAST FOUR OR FIVE YEARS
2 THAT AREN'T IN THERE.

3 A. The last four or five years I am here and
4 traveling to Europe.

5 Q. ARE YOU GOING TO UPDATE IT?

6 A. No. I am trying now to write another book.

7 Q. I SEE. ABOUT WHAT?

8 A. A short story.

9 Q. A FICTION BOOK?

10 A. Half and half. From my life some anecdote,
11 what do you say, that means some jokes and some
12 short story, what happened to this, what happened to
13 that, because there are so many, (?). There are
14 some short stories that I am writing now. I have
15 about finished it.

16 Q. AND IT'S UNDER WAY RIGHT NOW?

17 A. I'm working on it, I'm writing.

18 Q. DO YOU HAVE A TITLE?

19 A. Not yet.

20 Q. NOT YET?

21 A. Not yet.

22 MR. AYRES: It could be "The Life of an
23 Immodest Man," with two books under your belt.

24 I have no further questions.

1 MS. KERNAN: Thank you.

2 MR. GRANT: Is there any final thing
3 you would like to say?

4 MR. PICCIOTTO: No. Thank you very
5 much.

6 I hope you will give me your commentary
7 on my book, which I would appreciate very much.
8 This is only condition when I give a book to ask
9 for.

10 MR. AYRES: You ask people for
11 commentary on it?

12 MR. PICCIOTTO: Yeah.

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