

OK. Actually, it's probably getting real close to the end now. Let me ask you a couple of questions that I've asked before because it was so long ago that we did this so I don't remember every question. Did you attempt to get anything back, any possessions from friends and neighbors after the war?

Well, as you know, part of the history, the history of the restitution, Ben-Gurion met with, Adenauer . I think in the Waldorf Astoria in New York, and they came to an agreement that the Jews personally and the Jewish state should be restituted. Money should be given what the Germans had done. So I having lost my parents, I received-- I had a share with my two brothers and so forth and loss of education. I received a sum of money but not really very much, maybe \$12,000, \$10,000. I don't remember exactly.

And my wife received some money but nothing in ratio, in comparison, to what we should have got. My wife, for instance, she had to start work in agriculture at the age of 11 or 12, and she had no education, formal education, whatsoever. So we received some money.

We had a house. We still have a house in the town I was born in. And when I was back there 1 and 1/2 years ago, I went into that house. This is almost the only house of the Jews who lived there which is still inhabitable.

The other house, our old haunts-- I went to several houses of people I knew-- and they were just shells. Similar to East Germany, didn't build or repair anything at all. It's unbelievable.

But our house still stands. And there are two people living in it. A girl downstairs. And it is a really not a bad house and nothing to shout about, but it's not a bad house. It's very close to the center and with a little bit of a imagination I could say that with the reunification of Germany, they are building, the house will have potential value.

Maybe they'll tear it down and build a -- I'm sure in time to come, it will go up in value. So I contacted the German authorities, and they received several letters. And then they directed me toward the city itself. And I have written them a letter.

In the meantime, you know, asking for that house back, but in the meantime, I have received no response. And if I do, it'll probably be a prolonged-- I don't know. I know it's going to be.

It's not fair. It's our house. And when I knocked on the door to go in, I had to ask permission but I could have a look at the house. And I, you know, I showed you photographs of that house.

You know, I went there and I saw in my mind my family sitting on the Shabbat table with the candles on. I saw my father and my mother and all the children. And my father made kiddush. I saw all that.

My mind I saw I slept in my parents' bedroom. I saw the kitchen where my mother made the food, and I went into the yard where we used to split the wood for the and you know where we used to heat the stove with wood to do in those days to cook the food. It's all the same. Nothing has really changed except it was dilapidated a bit. Same house.

And I remember I was 11 years old when I left, but I remembered it very well. I didn't remember the slanting roof. But I sat opposite at my friend's house. He lives opposite.

I sat at the window for hours looking at the house, and I saw my mother coming out of the house dressed with a hat and a coat and have bag going shopping. I saw her. I saw, you know, in my imagination, I saw her going out.

And I saw my father and we had a shop there. Customers as you know I have a hell of a vivid imagination. I saw the customers. We had a shop. And they all came in, and they bought things and so forth.

And then I had to knock on the-- I came the first day. There was nobody there. The first thing I did when I came off the plane in Frankfurt, I rented a car in Frankfurt. No, no. In Frankfurt, and I took a plane to Hamburg. And I rented a car, and I went over the border.

It wasn't-- I needed a visa in those days, wasn't unified. The first thing I did, I had been six hours from the plane and another two hours from Frankfurt to Hamburg, another three hours driving with the car. Before I did anything, I went to our house.

And then I was standing in front of our house. I couldn't believe that I had reached it. I just dreamt all the time that I was standing in front of our house. And when I was about to enter, I always woke up. I was never able to enter.

And there I was actually in front of our house. I couldn't believe it. Couldn't believe. I had to pinch myself to believe that I'm standing right in front of our house.

So there's absolutely no justice may be in this world. Our house, it's my house. I suppose it's my house, belonged to my parents.

And there were two strange girls living in that house, and I had to ask permission to whether I could look, and they were very nice. They let me look around. And I went up to the loft, and I went down to the cellar, and I went up the stairs, and I went to every room, and I photographed every single room.

And I was shaken. I mean, I didn't show it, but I was really shaken. Completely, I was shaken to my core. It was a horrible experience. I didn't feel well there.

The food was bad. And I don't touch their food and I don't touch pork. I never touch pork. I'm not that kosher, I will never touch pork. And everything in Germany's pork was awful. The smell of it, I couldn't take it.

And then I asked only for vegetarian. They haven't got-- Cheese, they have cheese, but the cheese is so bad that it caused me such heartburn. Every night, I went to sleep, the stomach juices came up.

Then I went to the shop. I bought milk. I only drink milk and milk in order to soothe the terrible revolution in my stomach. It was burning inside me. Couldn't take it anymore.

So that reminds me of a story which happened to me the following -- I know whether I told that story. I'm full of stories.

When I left that day, I loaded my baggage onto the car boot. I had gone to Did I tell this story? German markings on there. And I was about to leave this little town to West Germany, to Hamburg, and then fly to Frankfurt and from Frankfurt, Tel Aviv.

Two elderly men passed me. And one of them came up to me, and he saw the car with the West German markings. And he grabbed hold of my hand and said in German, he said to me, how do you do? Where you from? From Munich? From Frankfurt?

I said, no, I'm from Jerusalem. So like saying Jerusalem, like you would say, for instance, if you would say, what language do you speak? You say in English, it sounds like Greek to me. If, you know--

If you say it to somebody in Germany, you're from Jerusalem like-- there's a German saying, where are you from? I'm from Buxtehude, from Honolulu. You know, it's like a joke.

He said, what do you mean you're from Jerusalem? I said, well, I'm from Israel, I'm from Jerusalem. So he turned to his friend and said, [SPEAKING GERMAN]. He's nuts. You know, he's sort of impatient with him.

I didn't want to answer him but, in fact, I am from Jerusalem. You know, I spoke German. He gave me up as a bad joke.

So anyway, I took the car, and I drove towards the border in order to-- And I had still some East German money, and I was hungry. I hadn't eaten, you know.

And I thought-- and I came to the border crossing and-- on the East side still-- and I asked is there a restaurant Yeah, Huge restaurant. You can go in and eat.

I went into that restaurant. It was full with people, and the same smells, poor, poor. It was smelly.

You go to an American restaurant, there is no smell. It's beautifully clean. Every restaurant you go into in America, no smell, nothing from the kitchen. It is beautiful.

The service is good. Immediately they pour cold water. Would you like coffee, sir? There's no such thing there.

So when I smelled that, I said, well, I have still some German-- East German currency. I want to get rid of it. So I said to the waitress, where can I sit down? She said, sit down there.

There you have to join tables. You can't sit by yourself on one table like in America. Say you have to join somebody where there's a single seat, and there are three or four people, you have to join them.

So there was a man. There was a table for two. There was a man sitting there. And there was one seat, and he sat there. And the man was eating.

And then the waitress came up to me and said, what would you like? I said, have you got the menu? And I looked again and schwein this and schwein that. You know, pork this, pork that.

I said, well, have you got something vegetarian? She didn't even know what I was talking about. I said, well, maybe bring me some cheese.

And I had this experience cheese already and I said, maybe here, they have decent cheese. What's the big deal? Cheese is made out of milk, so what can go wrong with cheese, for crying out loud?

So the man says to me, in German he says to me, don't be concerned. She doesn't know what kosher is. I looked at him. You know an East German should know what kosher means.

He said, no, I'm from Hamburg. I'm West German. So he knew what kosher means. He knew what kosher was. I was a little bit pleased about the man who knows what kosher is.

So she brought me this cheese. It was the same cheese. Oh, not today. And he had a big meal. And then he turned to me, and we talked a little bit.

And then he said to me the following. He said-- he asked me first, where I was from and I explained to him, and I asked him. Then he said, I got a terrible problem. Maybe you could help me.

I said to him, I don't know. Maybe you'd tell me what your problem is. He said, you know I'm married, and my wife is gone now. And I'm on a visit to East Germany, but I have a mother.

She's very old. And she used to be a big something in the Nazi party, and she still lives in the glories of the Nazi party. And every time I have visitors in the house, she bursts into the room, and she raises her hand, and she shouts, Heil Hitler. What shall I do with such a woman?

I said, I'm [INAUDIBLE], take a revolver and shoot her. I said, look, she's your mother. You've got to honor your mother.

I mean, your mother apparently is not quite right in the head. I mean, if she does such a thing. He says, well, she isn't.

Either you can do one or two things. Make sure when you have visitors to lock her into a room then she doesn't come, or send her to a home. He says, that's a good idea. And it's sort of-- it's a brilliant idea to come up with such thing. That

was another little experience I had before I crossed into West Germany.

You know, the experience I have every time I'm in Germany, I'm very annoyed, always very angry. I speak to people angrily and so forth. Terrible.

I should not go, really. I've been many times back to Germany in the meantime, but I feel so angry when I'm there. It's unbelievable. I look at the people who probably have nothing to do with the Holocaust. They're too young or--

I know I went onto a wrong plane. I had to board a plane, and I went to the wrong entrance. And the number on my ticket didn't tally with the number on the seat. And it says, you're on the wrong plane, and I quickly went off the plane. It almost took off with me to a different destination.

So there was a stewardess on the ground. And she said, you went-- I said, and I was annoyed. I was annoyed. I mean, it was my fault.

So she turned to me and she said to me in German, why are you so annoyed? It is no problem. I've already phoned for a bus to take you back to the-- what do you call it? To the-- you know, where the people are.

Terminal?

Terminal. To the terminal. Don't worry. You have plenty of time to catch your right plane. But why are you so annoyed? Why are you so angry?

So I said, do you know why I'm angry? I said, I'm angry because I came back to Germany. She knew looking into my passport or something that I was an Israeli. I have an Israeli passport. I said, that's why I'm annoyed.

I'm not annoyed about the fact that I went on the plane. I think this is a punishment from heaven, I said. That I went on the wrong-- everything goes wrong here in Germany. I shouldn't have come back. She was a young girl, maybe 21 or 22, so forth. She didn't say one word. Maybe we shouldn't go to Germany. Well.

Did you ever seek psychiatric help after the Holocaust?

No. I don't think I needed it. I think myself to be completely balanced and normal. I don't think anything's wrong with me.

I'm very pragmatic. I didn't feel that I needed any. After all, I didn't go through the camps. And I don't think the inmates of the camps, the survivors' camp did get that kind of treatment, so why should I?

It's never been-- I don't think necessary for me. I feel I'm a happy person. I don't feel sad. I don't feel-- despite the fact that--

I think I've been strengthened so for all this. I'm a much more conscious Jewish person today. I'm very proud Israeli. Very proud to be Jewish.

I've come to America. I've seen the Jewish community in America. I'm very proud of them. I go to synagogue. I have lots of contact with Jewish people, and I see in every Jewish person something very, very, very, very positive.

I mean, we have all our failures and some people are not that what we want them to be. But on the whole, I've met wonderful American Jews, the best, strong people, intelligent people, cultured people. I can only be proud of my life, honestly. It's not only the Israelis who are good. I think American Jews are first class. I've great admiration for them.

Thinking back, who was most helpful to you?

It depends where you mean.

Coming out of, you know, during the time while you were still in Germany.

You know, this is a profound question. I can't think of a single person who was except the institutions and the-- who did get me out of Germany, you know. Probably it was the Jewish community in conjunction with the British government. So it was an impersonal thing, but to think of a person who was helpful to me, I think it was from my own initiative that I-- whatever I did, whatever it is, whatever I may be, it was only through my own-- through my own work and through my own self development.

I went-- I left my parents at 11 years old. I've never asked anything from anybody. I've always felt uncomfortable when somebody was giving me something, which-- I feel uncomfortable when somebody gives me something, takes me out to dinner. I'd rather pay for it. I feel awfully uncomfortable if I'm given something.

Not that I've been given something because I'd rather give and take. But the bottom line is that there hasn't been a special person or a special case where I have been given help. Everything has been done through my own initiative.

Did anyone you considered a friend betray you during that period of time?

Yes. And I think all of us here or anywhere have this kind of experience. You make friends and sometime or another, they-- you have a kind of a feeling that there should have been loyalty. There wasn't quite the loyalty you expected but then as you grow old, you don't expect maybe so much loyalty. You take things as they come, and you are more forgiving. So I don't expect so much of people today.

If you want to live together with people, you have to be-- you have to give. And there was a time and stage in my age when I was not able to, that I wasn't flexible. I'm very flexible today. I can see in people that they are people, and they have their mistakes, and so I have mine. So I will not be too harsh in judgment of people. It's OK. I have many friends.

Did you attend the Holocaust survivors' conference in 1985?

Where was it?

I think that might have been in DC.

No. No. No.

Did you go to the one that was in Jerusalem in, I believe, '81?

No. No. No, I'm not a survivor, so-- I'm not a Holocaust survivor or am I?

Yeah, we consider you a Holocaust survivor.

Yes, well, I've never been.

Because you were forced to leave your home.

I see, no. No. I have never been.

Do you have any questions?

They may have been covered before, but first thing, why do you go back to Germany?

Oh. I tell you why I went back to Germany. The first time I went back to Germany was after the Six-Day War. It was in '67 when my wife had received from Germany because she had something wrong with her health because of the persecution, and she received what one called health-- for health, you could go to Germany to a sanatorium.

So we went there, had some terrible experiences, and I swore to myself that I'd never go back. I'd never go back. I tell you this small experience.

I stayed in a kind of a pension. And I had agreed with the woman, the owner of the pension that I would pay her so much money. And I'm fundamentally a very decent and honest person. I don't think I've ever cheated anybody.

And when it came to paying, she quoted me a higher price. And I said to her, I think you're mistaken, that we agreed upon a price. I think that's a natural thing to say. And she ran out, and her husband came, and he looked at me with fire in his eyes. And I knew immediately that trouble was brewing.

And I said, why are you so excited? I had an agreement with your wife that I would only pay so much. And now she comes out. Maybe she's mistaken.

And he said-- he didn't even react to that. He said, if you don't pay, you will not take your luggage out. Just arbitrarily like that.

I said, I wasn't talking about that. I wasn't talking about not paying you. I was just-- there seems to be a misunderstanding. No misunderstanding, in a terrible way.

And I have a good relationship when it came to money. Because he jumped to the conclusion immediately when it comes to money, the Jews are all no good. That's the conclusion he came to, which is, of course, an antisemitic one, which is an outrage.

So I paid. I wasn't going to create a furor and give my country a bad name for a few pfennigs although I'm a man of principles. You know I wanted to. I was insistent. I said, you know what? Keep your luggage. I'll go to the police. But I didn't want it. I didn't want to create for a few pfennigs.

So the next morning, I paid him. And when I left, out of almost-- out of embarrassment, I spoke to him, and I had something on my hand. I had something, a kind of a rash. And I was going like this all the time. It was itching me.

So he mimicked me. He said, oh, you Jews like money, even like this. When I was scratching my-- I was itching here because I had a rash. He mimicked me, and he said, oh, you Jews like money, even like this.

Of course, I see what the Germans always did. They made this movement, Jews like money. Like this, they used to. I remembered as a child when they talked about Jews and money, they used to go like that. Well, that did something to me. Something went right into my brain when he did that.

And he was in Stalingrad. He was captured and then he came back. And he went through terrible things himself. He hadn't forgotten his antisemitism.

And I said, tell me-- I was really mad at him. And I said-- whatever I said, I don't want to mention it, but I was really rough on him then as I cursed him like hell. Bastard. He got the money, and we just [INAUDIBLE]. Of course, he might have said dirty Jew or whatever he-- you know. He probably did say that. He probably told all the guests what the Jews are. Who cares?

That was a terrible experience and you know I'm a man of goodwill. Very good relationship until it came to money. When I said, there is a misunderstanding about this thing. And I think it's my valid right to question if something was wrong. But he associated money with Jews in the most terrible manner.

And that, you know, it really mattered much to me. I had my-- and my flag. And I had my national anthem. And I had my country so the lunatic there. Who cares for him?

I had very, very literally -- but I said-- again, I said, you know, we shouldn't have come to Germany. It was a

punishment from God. We shouldn't have even-- we should have taken our convalescence-- you can take it in Israel, too. You don't have to go to Germany. My wife wanted to, so I went.

But in the meantime, every time I went to Israel, it's a long journey, 16 hours, 18 hours. So I made a stopover and came over with Lufthansa. I think was maybe the cheapest price so maybe I'm not such a man of principle when it comes to money after all.

So oh, we stayed the night over in Frankfurt. And then I go into a hotel in Frankfurt and then people speak to me, and I speak to people, and I sit next to people, and I, you know-- So I've been back to Germany several times. And then, of course, I went five days to East Germany.

So I walk around and memories flood my brain. Maybe doesn't matter, really. Maybe I shouldn't go or maybe I should. I don't know. It's not a crucial question.

My other question is also there was a plan, I believe, by Morgenthau after the war to make Germany an agrarian society. Certainly nothing like the Marshall Plan. Would you have come here? Would you have thought then, and do you think now it would have been a good idea?

No. You know, I'm not an expert in economics. The fact that they would not be ever an industrial society or will not get help. They basically would have to pay and live poorly for quite a number of years. Well, my instinct would say to me that they should be punished like hell, that they should live really the way they did, what they did to us. But it never works out that way.

I know too little about the Morgenthau Program I know a lot about the Marshall Plan, and it did a lot to raise the living standard and not only of Germany but the whole of Europe. In '45, I was in Europe. I was in Holland and Belgium and Italy. And I was in the army.

I saw the destruction of Germany. I think that if they wouldn't have helped Germany to rebuild, it might have affected-- in Japan, it might have affected the living standards of many, many people in the world in the wake of making them [INAUDIBLE] in the country of Germany, which is an industrial country. Who am I to say, I like the Germans punished. In which way, I don't know. Maybe do some good.

You see, after all, I mean, even it might have an effect if Germany would have been a poor country, an agrarian country. It would have been a reflection even on my own country. Maybe my country wouldn't have had this restitution money.

People [INAUDIBLE] the creative industries with it and all kinds of things with it. And the living standards sort of went up quite a bit because of that. Who am I to say? And after all, one has to take into consideration in order to be fair. What does a new generation-- are they at fault what their parents did?

You know, it's such a difficult question to answer. You know, I've spoken to so many young Germans. Nice people. I know many, many Germans who are nice, who were filled with remorse what they did, what their country did.

Even in East Germany, while I was standing in front of my house ringing the bell, the very first moment I arrived, a girl arrived. And she also rang the bell, and I said, who are you? And she was an insurance agent. And she was also trying to reach those two girls. And then she spoke to me and she says, who are you?

I looked strange. Maybe a little bit-- maybe my [INAUDIBLE] you know, I looked different. Different. You can-- maybe my dress was a little bit different, not quite East German. I had a West German car then. And I told her who I was. I lived in America, but I'm an Israeli, and I was born here. And this is our house.

So she started to cry, real big tears. And I must have been woman of maybe 28; she had two children, very nice looking, very quiet. She looked a nice girl, a real nice girl, and she cried when I told her my story. Didn't take long, 4, 5 minutes. I gave a background, and she cried so much. And she said, oh my God. What we Germans did to you will be, I can't--

So, you know, I'm full of this dilemma. I wish upon those dogs, those monsters the worst. Can you blame-- I've written a-- I've read a book about the children of leaders, of the German leaders. There's a book written by an Israeli psychiatrist. He interviewed the children of these monsters, of Hess and of-- no, Himmler, his children died of-- all kinds of children of these German leaders.

I have forgotten exactly but in order to quote, but it's terrible what they even go through, the children of the German leaders who are still alive. One is a minister of a church. They're all full of remorse, what their parents did. So who am I to say? Difficult for me to say, really.

Going back to your arrival in the-- to Israel and the time after that in '48 after the independence and after the armistices, what was life in Israel like? When you went on the kibbutz, you were then on the kibbutz, what did you do? How was the social life?

You mean specifically in the kibbutz or generally?

Specifically because you were specifically in the kibbutz in '48. Let's start from there.

Well, it was a time of upbuilding of the state of Israel. You know it was the inception, the creation of a new state. And surprisingly, all the institutions worked. You know, like the ministry of the interior and the ministry of the food distribution. Everything worked first class in Israel.

You know, one always says about the Jews, they are disorganized and, you know, Judenschule they used to say, but everything worked well in Israel. The bus service was first class and the-- well, in short, everything was fine. And there was an aura of idealism in Israel, which, unfortunately, isn't there today as it was in those days.

People were pioneers. They were prepared to go to the desert and make the, metaphorically, the desert bloom. We were all prepared to do many things which today we have become much more a society of materialist, much more. People are more out for worldly things.

But those days, we were very, very patriotic. We were prepared to go to the army. We were prepared to go to the ends of Israel in order to create a new state. And people maybe asked for less but then we Jewish people are very active, and we are very-- seeing that Israel is fundamentally a poor country, we all have a high living standard. Everybody wanted, you know, good living standards and good food and good clothing and a vacation here and then. And I think Israel has achieved it.

I went back five, six months ago to Israel, and I went to Tel Aviv. And I went-- I mean, you have malls like in America, beautiful malls and aesthetic, beautiful cafes and restaurants. And I mean, the service is good.

I mean, still, a lot has to be worked for. Many things have still to be done, but then you have to take into consideration it's a country of immigration. It's so many diverse cultures come to the country with their own ideas of how to make things work.

And there are cultural issues in Israel. So it makes a little bit for harsh living. But hopefully, you know, this time to come generation and integration. Hopefully, things will come a little bit more gracious in Israel. In the meantime, we have to swallow a bit.

When you came, you mentioned a German or kibbutz that was

Yavneh.

That was made by German-- people from Germany. What was the language? What language did you speak?

Hebrew. He spoke Ivritz. I didn't speak so well Ivrit, but I had learned Ivrit when I was in the Jewish Brigade. And I had the rudiments of Ivrit. I spoke a little bit, but they all spoke German. So just in case I couldn't get through with Hebrew,

I spoke German.

I'd never forgotten my German although I was only 11 years old when I left. But I tried to speak Hebrew, and I mastered it in a very short time. It's not a difficult language, Hebrew, by the way. It's phonetic and it's easy.

In those [INAUDIBLE] kibbutz, in another kibbutz was there a lot of, I mean, were there are a lot of meetings to decide what to do, how was that being handled?

Yeah, it's called an assepha. It's called an assepha. It's a meeting. Every week, the members of the kibbutz used to assemble and the problems and the whatever came up, we used to sit down and discuss them.

Although I was not a member of that particular kibbutz, so I could not have the right to vote. But I used to take part in order to listen in. And it was divided into committees and a secretary and so forth. It was a well organized society which, to this day, works very well indeed.

In fact, I was back five months ago when I went to Israel. On my last visit, I went back to the kibbutz which I was a founder of after many years. And I came back, and all those memories flashed. My two sons were born in that kibbutz. Not in the kibbutz -- I was a member of the kibbutz. They were born in Tiberius.

And I received the most beautiful welcome that it was moving when they saw me and they all embraced me and kissed me. They had no, you know, after all I had left the kibbutz, and I had left the country even. So I was a kind of a [INAUDIBLE] which I don't like that word because I don't consider myself a [INAUDIBLE] because I'm only here on a visit, so to speak, and on a long visit. So I'm definitely going back to my country.

But it was a most wonderful visit. All those people brought back these wonderful memories of the kibbutz, the establishing of the kibbutz. Probably went and we erected the first fence and the watchtower and the water tower and we created an effect that was [INAUDIBLE] by the Arabs. They woke up the next morning and there was a Jewish settlement.

And it's a beautiful kibbutz today. It has a most wonderful hotel, which looks upon the Kinneret, upon the Sea of Galilee. And what amazed me most was we had hard times in the beginning, really hard times. And the food was a lot less then. It was poor.

The food we were served was maybe a five-star hotel. The breakfast and the supper and the dinner was-- you could choose what you wanted. Wonderful. I couldn't believe the food, much better than each day.

In fact, I went with a lady. She's a lawyer. She lives in Berkeley who I've met in a synagogue, and she was, at the same time, in Israel. And I took her along to the kibbutz. And she was she was-- it was a highlight of her visit to Israel.

So all the old [INAUDIBLE] comrades the members of the kibbutz that night we met and we exchanged memories and spoke of the good old times. I gave a little talk. And I'm in correspondence again. You know, I recreated the bond between myself and the kibbutz. It's really a wonderful life to live in a kibbutz.

Why did you leave?

Why did I leave? Well, I suppose maybe I made a mistake. I shouldn't have left. But I felt there was a kind of a-- the kind of kibbutz-- I'm a very-- a person who wants to do things, who wants to get on in life. I have great ambition.

In the kibbutz, you cut down your ambition, you can't-- the only thing you can do-- I used to be a truck driver in the kibbutz. And then I was a as I said, a commander. And that's all you could ever reach, but I wanted to reach more. I want to reach for the stars.

And I am a very driven person, very dedicated. I work very, very hard, you know? The man [INAUDIBLE] for the kibbutz, for the country. And I was a little bit crazy.

And there's some people who didn't, and they had the same living standard as I. And I found that it's an inequity and an injustice. I working so hard, have the same kind of results of a person who doesn't do nothing. So I felt immature in a way. Again, I wasn't flexible enough. I felt that me working so hard and doing so many things, I deserved more.

And I thought that we'll see something was missing that kibbutz, that didn't give scope to a person who wanted to reach the zenith. I reached a certain line, and you couldn't overreach that line. So I said, I need to go and do something more than that. So I left and that's-- I did what I did.

And I became a plumbing contractor, and I did OK. I had two children, and I educated-- I had a very nice house in Israel. And I had a comfortable life. I made myself a comfortable life. In a way, I succeeded. You know, top of the world with enough, a nice, comfortable life with friends and activities. Nothing was missing in my life. Moneywise, it was fine.

I came at quite an advanced age to America, and there's nothing missing here for me as well. You know, when I was-- how old was I? 54, I think I came to America. I immediately started to work for somebody and then I gave that up and became independent.

And I have a house today and a couple of cars today and nothing missing in my house. So this is the kind of person I am. That's why I left the kibbutz. It restricted me. But again, maybe I shouldn't have.

Did you have any more questions?

Well, personally, what are you most proud of in your life?

Tell you that very easily. The two most proud moments of my life were the following. The most privileged was that I was present at the establishment of the Jewish state when Ben-Gurion declared the state on the 15th of May. Was it '48? And I was present at the establishment of a Jewish state. It was an unbelievable privilege for me.

And the moment when Moshe Dayan put the officer's thing on my shoulder. I became an officer. I went to an officer's course. Moshe Dayan was the commander-in-chief of the Israeli army, and I was an outstanding cadet.

And he took the he took off the white -- you know, the white on the epaulets, the white kind of a piece of material. He took it off and he put on my first insignia that I became an officer in the Israeli army. That was also an unbelievable fact that I was here, an officer in the first sovereign Israeli army. Two outstanding moments in my life.

May have been cut off before. What-- well, it's a funny question. Can you see anything that was, quote, good that came after the Holocaust? What was the good, so to speak, if any?

How can-- well, it's good. It's terrible. It's the most horrific experience that anybody can-- affected the Jewish people that-- a third, every third Jew was killed. Third. Yeah, we were 18, 16 million we were at least. Close to every third Jew was annihilated in that. One half million children were gassed, were killed.

Good, well, hopefully, it united the Jewish people against all the dangers lurking in the shadows for us. We've become a careful people. We can see it in the politics of Israel today, that we are so careful about our security, may be overcareful. I don't know.

I don't think anyone can be overcareful. But, of course, maybe some people deny the Jewish state came out of it. Some people say not so. Even if the Holocaust would not have happened, the Jewish state would have happened in any case. It was ripe for it. But maybe not.

But I can't quite answer that. I don't think much good can come out of anything like that. Maybe some positive things came out that people-- you see, I remember when I was a child and when one spoke to Jews, many said, I'm not a Zionist. I don't believe in a Jewish state. I want to go to Mexico. I want to go to the Argentine. I want to go to America.

I want to go to Canada.

Even so, many people want to do that today. Any responsible Jew will never say I'm not a Zionist. So all for the Jewish state, if they have any sense. A person who has no sense, I mean, I can't talk about these people.

If any person denies and says, I'm not for Jews, then he's nuts. He might not want to live there. He might not even be a Zionist. But to say I'm against the Jewish state, then that person is not normal because if that same person who's Jewish and something is done to that person, he has a whole Israeli army behind him. They will do everything in order to save him like they saved the Jews in Entebbe and so forth.

I don't have to go into these. If anybody maintains and says I'm not for a Jewish state, then I have nothing to talk to them. This is not normal. So that has maybe come out of the Holocaust. All Jews, or normal Jews, will never be against the Jewish state like in the olden days.

And now we don't want to live amongst Jews. We are European Jews. We are German Jews, Polish Jews, Russian Jews. I have this experience with my cousins whom I discovered in Paris. They were Communists. Said no. We are Jews, but we are French. We are Communists. And, of course, even after the Holocaust.

But in later years, they all became very pro-Israeli. And that is great that I can talk to Jews and speak to them in the same language. We have many things in common when we talk about Israel, all our eyes light up. That's fine. Even our differences about Israeli politics and Israelis' attitudes, our love for Israel transcends that.

OK, we know. Maybe many people don't like the policies of Shamir or the policies of [INAUDIBLE]. We know all that. But our love, our positive attitude towards Israel transcends politics. That's a different story.

Do you have anything you'd like to say to end this in Ivritz?

Well, I've been interviewed so many times now, I'm running dry, out of stories, but I suppose if you goad me on, there'll be more stories. I've said many things. I said things which I didn't expect to say in the very beginning. I thought when I should only talk about the experiences in connection with the Holocaust, but we have interwoven many things like politics and affiliations and attitudes.

And I'm happy that I was able to bring it up from the video. Hopefully, this is going to contribute whoever looks at it sometimes that I will help this person to be maybe a little bit a better Jew and maybe increase his love for the state of Israel. Thank you.

Do you want to read that last letter before we end?

Which letter?

That you said you got another letter back after you wrote--

The mayor?

Is the mayor in East Germany?

But it's in German. You could read it in German and then translate it.

Tough. Can you give this to me? I wrote a letter to the mayor of the town I was born, and I'm afraid I haven't got it here. And in it, I tell him that he knew of my coming to the town, and he didn't receive me as a returning resident. And it was a rather seething letter.

I haven't got it here, so it's not relevant. Anyway, he wrote me a letter back to my greatest surprise, and here's the letter. And I will read it first in German and then I will try to translate into English. It says, [GERMAN] Herr Grossmann,

[SPEAKING GERMAN].

I'll try to [INAUDIBLE]. Dear Mr. Grossman, I would like to thank you for your letter, which you wrote on the 6th of the 6th, 1990, which moved me very deeply. I have to tell you that I am the mayor only from the 22nd of May 1990. I entered this office, and I have to carry all the things which my predecessor has left me. I belong to the Christian Democratic Party who work in conjunction with the Methodist Church in GÃ¼strow since July, and we are making the first steps in order to reconstruct the Jewish-- the Jewish population of this town. I would be very happy to greet you here back in GÃ¼strow. Maybe you will find an opportunity in short time to pay us a visit again. Best regards.
[INAUDIBLE] the mayor.

Thank you. And thank you for all of your time and generosity.

Thank you. It was a pleasure.

And before you go, we need to get the spellings of about pages of--

Oh, good. OK.

Are we still on?

Let me start. Yeah, we're still on. Let me start with the names. You spell your name.

I-L-A-N-A. And my last name is spelled B-R-A-U-N. OK, and Laurie?

Mine's gonna be on the slate, so it's all written down in the beginning, but it's L-A-U-R-I-E-S-O-S-N-A. It's all in the beginning of the tape. The stuff that we're concerned with are the proper names and stuff. So what we're going to do now is read off some of the words that you used, and we'd like you to spell them for us in as close approximation as possible.

OK, fine.

[INAUDIBLE]. Are you--

Are we rolling. That's OK That's good. Just speak the word clearly and loudly.

OK. Kindertransport

K-I-N-D-E-R-T-R-A-N-S-P-O-R-T.

The Mossad. Mossad.

M-O-S-S-A-D.

Haifa.

H-A-I-F-A.

Tel Aviv.

T-E-L-A-V-I-V.

Hachshera.

H-A-C-H-S-H-E-R-A.

Alija.

A-L-I-J-A.

Exodus Agnes.

[INAUDIBLE].

Kibbutz.

K-I-B-B-U-T-Z.

Javneh.

J-A-V-N-E-H.

Lavi. .

L-A-V-I

Should we spell Galilee?

I think that's [INAUDIBLE] I don't know.

Irgun.

I-R-G-U-N.

Egel.

E-G-E-L.

Irgun Zvai Leumi.

I-R-G-U-N Z-V-A-I L-E-U-M-I.

Bren Gun.

B-R-E-N G-U-N.

Eshdod.

E-S-H-D-O-D.

Yishuv.

Y-I-S-H-U-V.

Givati.

G-I-V-A-T-I.

Ben-Gurion.

B-E-N G-U-R-I-O-N.

Kirjat Gat.

K-I-R-J-A-T G-A-T.

Chazor.

C-H-A-Z-O-R.

Ashkelon.

A-S-H-K-E-L-O-N.

Rakusen Matzo.

R-A-K-U-S-E-N M-A-T-Z-O.

Sinai.

S-I-N-A-I.

Kibbutz and rodges. The German--

Rodges. Kibbutz? K-I-B-B-U-T-Z R-O-D-G-E-S.

Tnuva.

T-N-U-V-A.

Kastel.

K-A-S-T-E-L.

Salame Street.

S-A-L-A-M-E.

Jaffa.

J-A-F-F-A.

Hapoel Hamisrathi.

H-A-P-O-E-L H-A-M-I-S-R-A-T-H-I.

Ramle.

R-A-M-L-E.

Lod.

L-O-D.

Maabarot.

M-A-A-B-A-R-O-T.

Mordechai Levy.

M-O-R-D-E-C-H-A-I L-E-V-Y.

Cholent. Cholent. [INAUDIBLE] cholent.

Oh, Cholent. C-H-O-L-E-N-T.

Ashkenazi.

A-S-H-K-E-N-A-Z-I.

Scfartim.

S-C-F-A-R-T-I-M.

Moshav.

M-O-S-H-A-V.

Sejera.

S-E-J-E-R-A.

Keep going. Go ahead.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

We're doing this because the transcriber really needs it.

Regoshavski.

Regoshavski. R-E-G-O-S-H-A-V-S-K-I.

Sde Boker.

S-D-E B-O-K-E-R.

Negev.

N-E-G-E-V.

Golde Meir

No.

Jonah.

J-O-N-A-H.

Benjamin.

B-E-N-J-A-M-I-N.

Uri.

U-R-I-.

Bir Kafka.

B-I-R K-A-F-K-A.

Degel Adom.

D-E-G-E-L A-D-O-M.

Kafar Aza.

K-A-F-A-R A-Z-A.

Kantara.

K-A-N-T-A-R-A.

Uzi.

U-Z-I.

Chanukah.

C-H-A-N-U-K-A-H.

Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur [INAUDIBLE].

Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur.

Y-O-M K-I-P-P-U-R.

Hagah.

H-A-G-A-H.

Bir Chamad.

Bir Chamad

B-I-R C-H-A-M-A-D.

Shma Jisrael.

S-H-M-A apostrophe I-S-R-A-E-L.

Bar Lev.

B-A-R L-E-V.

Mitleh.

M-I-T-L-E-H.

And the name of the other path of Gidi

Giddi.

J-I-D-E-H. No, no, I'm sorry. Giddi. G-I-D-D-I. Giddi.

Jehoshaphat I thought you mentioned he was the commander Jehoshaphat. Maybe I got it wrong.

No. I didn't mention Jehoshaphat.

Malach Hamavet.

M-A-L-A-C-H H-A-M-A-V-E-T.

Torah.

T-O-R-A-H.

Synagogue.

Oh, that's OK.

Litani.

L-I-T-A-N-I.

Kibbutz Jat.

K-I-B-B-U-T-Z J-A-T.

Har Setim.

H-A-R S-E-T-I-M.

Seychelles Island, they will understand?

Seychelles.

Seychelles Islands?

Better spell it.

S-A-Y-C-H-E-L-L-E and islands, you know.

Gurevich.

G-U-R-E-V-I-C-H.

Gonen.

G-O-N-E-N.

Yeshiva Bocher.

Y-E-S-H-I-V-A B-O-C-H-E-R.

Shmuel.

S-H-M-U-E-L.

Ali.

A-L-I.

Shmulik.

S-H-M-U-L-I-K.

There was a German word. Something like weltanschauung.

Weltanschauung.

W-E-L-T-A-N-S-C-H-A-U-U-N-G. It's a long word.

Riches.

R-I-C-H-E-S.

Buxtehude.

B-U-X-T-E-H-U-D-E.

Pfennigs. Pfennigs.

P-F-E-N-N-I-G-S.

Assepha.

A-S-S-E-P-H-A.

Jored.

J-O-R-E-D.

Kinneret.

K-I-N-N-E-R-E-T.

Chaverin.

C-H-A-V-E-R-I-N.

Laman Hamoledet.

L-A-M-A-N H-A-M-O-L-E-D-E-T.

Moshe Dayan.

M-O-S-H-E D-A-Y-A-N.

That's it.

Did you get the German word for Honolulu?

Buxtehude.

Buxtehude. Buxtehude is a town somewhere. Where are you from? From Buxtehude.

OK. Well, listen, I really want to thank you again. Did you just feel like you're in a Spelling Bee?

I did well in spelling, huh? I never make a mistake in English in spelling. In Hebrew, I'm full of mistakes.

You tell me approximately when this photograph was taken.

How old am I there? Probably 1935?

1935. And you are in this photograph?

The last one, the tiniest one.

The tiniest one right on-- right on-- right

The left.

Far left side of the frame? And where was this taken?

In G¹/₄strow. In the time I was born in front of the synagogue. Which does not exist any longer, the synagogue. It was burned on the Kristallnacht.

And so these are all your schoolmates then or--

No, no, no, no. All children. All ages. These were all the children of the town.

And approximately how old were you when the photo was taken?

Maybe eight.

Eight? So that was--

Or seven, seven maybe?

--is you. It's a little difficult. I can't get it to zoom any closer. That's about as close as I can get.