

Interview with SIMON STEMER  
Holocaust Oral History Project  
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Q: HELLO. IT'S DECEMBER 13TH. I AM HERE WITH THE PRIVILEGE OF INTERVIEWING SIMON STEMER. MY ASSISTANT, THE SECOND PERSON WITH ME, IS CHARLIE GARDEN. BARBARA (DUSEL) ANDERSON IS OBSERVING. MICHAEL GALCHINSKY IS OBSERVING, AND WE HAVE DONE PART I WITH SIMON STEMER YESTERDAY, AND TODAY WE ARE GOING TO DO PART II, AND I WANTED TO ASK YOU HOW YOUR NIGHT WAS LAST NIGHT; WHAT YOU FELT.

A: I come here. I was not able to eat supper. I was very tired. I had a tea, cookie. I was feeling tired, and I don't want to go to bed. I want to go 12:00; maybe I will sleep better. I was not able. 11:30 I went to bed. I was sleeping ten minutes. I got up. A little bit headache, turn over the other side, slept a little bit.

It was till 2:00, 3:00 later it start to come back dreams. Like I saw my mother and my sisters. I saw the dream was very hard for me, and I was like this till 7:00. 7:00 I got up, and I start to do what I am doing everyday, and later went to play a little bit with Rosalie. I took a walk. Now I don't feel so bad. I am not complaining. I feel all right now.

I was very tired, depressed over everything. I was remembering. I was dreaming I hear the German coming in with the heavy foot they have. They have nails on the shoes, and they coming in the Ghetto to get the people.

They are marching in. This was knocking up in me. These dreams I have a long time, only now it come back and was for me very hard to get up. Only I have to get up. I will not stay in bed. I daven. I ate breakfast. Later we went for a ride with Rosalie. I walk a little bit, and now I am here.

Q: SIMON, YOU DAVENED THIS MORNING. ARE YOU A RELIGIOUS MAN?

A: I am religious now. When I had my business in Chicago, I never opened Saturday. Only when I come to Miami, no business can make it not to drive the car on Shabbis or to go with the bus or somebody take you. It's not for me very interesting. I am going around to shul, and Shabbis is Shabbis till it gets dark, the time they (spoke in another language). Only I have to -- really when I come to the United States in 1947, I was thinking I will be religious because my family, they were very religious people. My father was a scholar, my uncles.

I come here, and I got a job by a department store, a Jewish department store. He was closed Saturday, holidays, and I was in Germany -- here he paid me \$35. When I was in Germany, it was \$35 possible to make in two hours if you want to do something. It was a possibility.

I come here already to the United States. My mind was always to come to see my cousin in the United States. I come here. My cousin give me -- he have a

candy store. He lived upstairs. He give us the room downstairs. It was very nice for him, and he give me -- about four weeks he give me food, supplies, everything, and later he went with me to get a job.

I was working over there on this job very hard. I was getting \$35. There was with me a manager. He didn't do ten percent what I did. He got \$110. I was a little bit -- for me a little bit hard to understand this thing. Only he was the manager. I cannot do the boss what to do. So I am working good. I am a good worker.

He come with the proposition, "I want to take you in for a partner." He have two sons. My son stayed on me too much. They educated. He will take me in for a partner and get already a lawyer.

I come home, and I told it to my wife, and I told it to the cousin. He said, "If you will need a lawyer, we will get a lawyer for you. We will have to see more steps." This was just a promise, and another time he promised me he will take me. When my son got born, as I told him, "Robinson, my family got bigger." Maybe he can give me a raise. He said to wait three months. I was waiting three months. He start to give me better wages. He start to raise me the wages.

When I was over there till the 20 months I got \$70 net, and he give me \$50 a check. He didn't have to pay too

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much tax, and he have me \$20 cash, and I got \$70. It was already a possibility to live, only I don't come here to work like a mule. Over there in the stockroom especial he make me to manage the carpeting. He had a carpet department, and it was very hard.

I was thinking to go something in business. I was already 21. I start to look for a business. My cousin -- he know for some kind -- if you know Chicago, Division Street, Division and Walcott across the street Anderson School, this store was for sale. They want \$7,000. I have my own money. I bring some money from Germany, and we eat it up some money from this money I bring, and the time I make \$35 was not enough to live.

This man want \$7,000, and my cousin said, you know, this is a good store. He know it's a good store. I went to this guy Sam; talked to him. He said, "If you come give me \$7,000, it's good. I will not take less."

Well, I start to think how to get the money. I have \$1500. Yeah, I forgot. I saw a grocery store. They want to give me a mortgage to take the store and later to pay them out. My cousin's wife said, "Any time you will need \$5,000, we will help you," and later when I have this store, I start to ask some money. I'm a greenhorn. I should wait a little bit longer. I don't have to rush to go to business. I have to wait. I have to not to be a greenhorn. I was a greenhorn.

I talked to the tobacco man. He said he would borrow me \$3,000, and I will pay him \$25 a week. So I had \$4500. I come to work as I have -- I have over there a man, Mr. (Bizoff). He said, "Simon, what is the matter? You don't look so good." I told him the story. He said, "I have a thousand dollars. I will give it to you. I will borrow it to you. I don't want nothing."

I was still short \$1500. I go to my cousin. "Louie, I need \$1500." He went with me to the bank, and he signed, and I took out \$1500 to pay \$50 a month. 30 months to pay \$50. I did that. Later I hear when he come home, his wife was giving him -- and I got the store. I bought the store. Later I heard his wife give him such a hard time because, "As a greenhorn, he lost the \$1500. He will lose all the money, and you will not get back your \$1500."

People coming -- they come from here to me to tell to him, and they come from him to tell it to me. This is in -- we got mad. I don't go to him, and he don't go to me. We got mad. Sometimes I was meeting him, and he went shopping for Christmas. I take him. I ask him to take me the same time because I was a greenhorn. The man told me -- there was a fountain. The man told me to take in \$800 a week. I said, "Sam, you will guarantee for \$800?"

He said, "If you will take in \$700, will be -- you will make a living." The first week I took in \$680. It was not far from the holidays. Business start to be a little

bit better. Once start the holidays, the landlord was coming in, the landlord where I was working. I said, "Sam, I will close for the holidays the store."

He said, "Don't do it because I was always open. The neighborhood will find out you're Jewish. You will lose a lot of business." I don't listen to him, and I keep close Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and I open up later the store after the holidays.

Business start to get better. Business start to get better. I was -- I work in the store very hard. My wife worked hard. I took in a Polish woman to the kids. She helped me out in the store. I worked out the store little by little, worked out, and it was going good.

In 1952, I borrowed a property from 10 properties, apartments.

Q: YOU BOUGHT?

A: A property from 10 apartments. I call up my cousin, and I told him. He asked me, "Where did you get the money?" I said, "I don't stole the money. I made it. I have the money." Listen, my cousin's wife got still mad, more mad. She already was in the candy store about 15 years, and I am just three and a half years in the candy store, and I can afford to buy a building of 10 apartments.

Oh, listen, over there in this store I have a lot of space. There was living quarters. Big, (ofen). I extended.

Two times I extended the store to make it bigger till I work it out. Took in \$3,000 a week. It was already too hard for me. I took in a partner. This was in '56.

Q: WHAT KIND OF STORE WAS IT?

A: Hu?

Q: WHAT KIND OF STORE?

A: This was a candy store with a fountain. This was a candy store with a fountain. I work it out. I took in grocery. I took in some clothing. I took in different things, the satchels, and I make bigger the store, and I do good business, but it was already hard for me and my wife and to live with the kids in the back. We were thinking already we have an apartment building. I can live in my building, and over there is a better school.

My wife's lansman, he bought -- he have a store, and he give me \$5,000 for half the store.

Q: YOUR COUSIN?

A: No. My wife's a lansman.

Q: WHAT'S A "LANSMAN"?

A: A lansman is from that same town where she is. He give me and we split. Like the store was open from 10:00 -- from 7:00 to 11:00. We split from 7:00 to 3:00 and from 3:00 to 11:00, and the other day he come from 7:00 to 3:00, and I come 3:00, and I stay the other day till. . .

The business was going very good. We make very good.

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It was a big success. Later, you know how is in United States, you live in a neighborhood -- this was not in Europe -- the neighborhood start to be not so good. My wife start to say maybe we'll buy out of the town.

If you know where Lincolnwood is, we bought a home -- we need a home, a better school. Lincolnwood have a good school -- the kids to go to a better school. We bought a home over there in 1959 for \$32,000. I want to pay the cash for the building. The lawyer said -- the lawyer said don't rush. Take it. All right, I took a mortgage for \$20,000, and I paid, and we moved in, and we bought everything new. We don't have nothing. We bought everything new; furniture, carpeting, painting.

If I live over there -- over here one car is enough, and if I live over there, I will go in the morning, and how my wife will come. I have to buy a new car for my wife. I bought a new car. I have a garage. A year and a half later, we bought it with my partner a property for 23 flats with the partner. In this building was 23 flats. We was partnership, and we lived over there in the new home.

In this time, this was in '59. The old newcomers was wondering how you come you have already a building and moved in in such a beautiful home. In this time was \$50,000 a lot of money. This house cost more -- was costing with decorating, with furniture, with everything, was costing

more. All of this we got it. We got it.

Later on we bought it with this partner, this building, and in '59 -- this was in November '59. We moved in in May -- this was November -- my wife took my son to the barber to take a haircut Friday, Friday afternoon, and she went to pick him up. She went out with a car and the other car comed across, and she got killed. The girl was 13 and the boy was 11.

I was in this time just like a dead because she was my right hand. She was for the kids, for the house, for me. She was a big support for me. Was for me not possible to exist. I went over there to the doctor, to the doctor, and I told him, "Doctor, it is not possible to exist." He said, "Mr. Stemer, you have two kids, and you have to live."

I start to take a woman in the house to be with the kids, to feed them, to be in the house, sleeping and everything. It was enough space. In one year I got in ten housekeepers. Everybody stoled. Everybody took what they want and still they don't like it how much you pay them. I pay them this time \$50 a week. This was in '60, '61. What they did was not so good.

Later I find a woman. She have a boy from 7 years. We got married. The second marriage is not the first marriage. In Yiddish they say (spoke in another language). You understand?

VOICE: IF YOU GIVE, YOU GET.

A: If you give money, you are a good husband. If you don't give so much money, you are not a good husband. Before we got married, she want marry me with not to make nothing. She is my wife. I went to the lawyer, and he said, "Simon, it's not good. You have to make an agreement in case you pass away what she have to come, not to take from everything."

When we started to talk, she said to give her \$50,000. I will not sign it. Forget it. She said, "I am not got the value. You got the value more or I will not sign for 50,000." I signed for \$20,000. We got married, and like you say, like you hear, if you give money she is (inaudible). For the kids she was good. For the kids she was good. She helped me little bit in the business. Not like the other one. She was not a businesswoman. Only when somebody from the family is in the business, if it's to help, it's better if somebody is in.

This woman was so strong. If two years ago, a year ago before she got sick -- she got kidney trouble later -- if somebody will tell me I will live and she will pass away, I was hiting them in the face because I was not a strong man, and she was a strong woman.

You will have to understand, every day we go in the morning to the car. Later she took the car to do the shopping. She cooked. She come to pick me up. It was all right. Only for the kids, they never mentioned a word if

the mother was living. She was very good for the kids. As for me, if she was good for the kids, cost me another \$20 a week. So because that's all was -- it was the question of money.

Saturday was a heavy day in the store. If I come in the morning to the store, if I come home 6:00, I was knocked out. I have to lay down to rest up. She comed home. She warmed up supper. We had from yesterday prepared, and we ate supper. She washed the dishes, and later we go out. We had four couples that was getting together every Saturday night. One time my house, one time. One made a better supper. The thing is if you have company, if you make this, the other one make the other time better and the third time make the other better. One was making better with the other one.

In the '70's, I was to be able to retire. I was already 65 only I have -- but in the meantime, the kids got married. Rosalie got married. Alex got married. She was very happy by the wedding. She was standing up like a real mother. Saturday we come home. She warmed up the supper. She washed the dishes, and at night she called me to eat, and we ate up, and later we go out. She don't need a rest. She don't need -- she was so strong.

Four years or five years before I retired, I was to be able to retire. I was thinking that store is not a very hard store. I will stay another year, another year.

We will put another couple thousand dollars in the bank, and later when we retired, we will spend it. I retired probably -- probably was it in '77. One time we went to Las Vegas. I like to go to Las Vegas. She like to gamble too. We were in Las Vegas. One night she won hundred dollars. Quarters. It was already 11:00. I was already tired. I said, "Toni, maybe you will go up." No she will still gamble a little bit. I went up. 4:30 she come up. I ask her, "What did you do?" "Everything is gone." Well, this is when you like to gamble, you spend the money.

When I retired, I went with her to Los Angeles. Later we come to San Francisco to Rosalie, and we come back from Rosalie, we find out she have kidney troubles. Dialysis. This was in '78 or '79. She have to go three times a week of dialysis. She was already knocked out to go some place. It was not possible to go.

Well, listen, she was going on dialysis. She was not feeling very bad the first three years. It was not possible to go no place, only still Friday, Saturday night to go to a movie was still time. This was in summer, and I took her to dialysis. If you know one of the biggest hospitals in the south side on Wabash Hospital. A big hospital over there.

VOICE:       MICHAEL REESE?

A:       Michael Reese, yes, that's it. I took her in the emergency, and after noon I went to bring her home, and

she rest up. She cook. She eat. She like to eat a lot of salts, and she was already sick. "It's not good for you salt." I told her, "It's no good for you salt." She said she likes salt. What can you do. She like to eat salt.

Before the winter come, as I was thinking, it would be for me very hard to go in winter. She need dialysis, and you never know over there how this is. We will go to Miami for three months. When I come in '79 from Miami, it was nothing to get. Not for three months not to buy something. Was nothing. Everything was her.

I find a place in the isles over there not far from shul. I come to rent the place. The landlord said he want us to rent for a year. "If you want for a year, you rent it. If not, I get another one." I told him I want it. I don't have no choice. I rent it for a year, and then later we will see what we have to do.

Meantime, when we come to Miami, she liked better the dialysis here. She liked it better. We stayed a year. In this apartment I stayed another two years. It was furnished. Later we changed. We took a bigger apartment. Over there was one bedroom. We took a two bedroom, and the kids come to see me -- Alex, Rosalie -- and we go to dialysis.

It was taking seven years. Seven years she was already very sick. Meantime I got sick. Heart condition. My son was -- he said, "Daddy, you will call me how you

feel." I call him a couple weeks later, "Alex, I don't feel so good." He said, "I will get somebody -- doctor -- to make a baloon," and he prepared the doctor, and he come to Miami and picked me up, and we went to his place. He have eight hospitals what he is taking care. He have people working with him.

He took me over there, and they took me in for the last diagram electric. He comes out, "Daddy, it is not possible to make a baloon. It's too late. You need operation." This was in '84. This time was not so much popular the operation from the bypass. He said, "If you will not take the operation anyway, all you will wind up in an old age home, or you will die because it's not possible."

I decided I will take the operation. The operation took five and a half hours. They make four bypass. Rosalie was over there, and after the operation, they took me in the recovery room. I was sleeping till 1:30. I open up the eyes 1:30. They just comed in -- Rosalie and Alex. Well, I was in the hospital 16 days, and I come home by Alex's house, by his house, and they give him from the hospital a nurse to take care of me. She took me for a walk. She watched me.

Later one time I ate up breakfast, and I don't feel so good. Yeah, I was 16 days in the hospital, and I come home. I don't feel so good. The wife called ALex. Alex said not to move, how you are to say. He will send the

ambulance. It was a complication. I went in the hospital it was 17 days. It was much worser like the first days what I have after the operation. I was not be able to move, and I was not be able to eat. It was very bad.

He comed every day. I have two doctors what they come to see me what they operated on me, and he comed every day to the hospital, and he said, "Okay, Daddy, you will be all right. Daddy, you will be all right." After the 17 days, I was very knocked out. They don't want to hold me more in the hospital. They cannot hold me more in the hospital. He took me home. He took me home. I wasn't a day home I got a call from my brother-in-law -- my wife's brother -- "Toni is very sick. She have to go to the hospital and very sick."

I said, "Alex, take me home how I am." I was not be able. I comed home. I have a key, and she is not home. I took in a woman for four hours a day. I paid her \$6.50 an hour. Later she comed home, and she was doing a little bit, only she was sick, and the woman was staying, and later I got one woman, I got another woman, and I was feeling very sick, and I told this to my Rosalie. She said, "Alex said it will take six to nine months you will be better." I was not thinking I will live six weeks. My legs were swollen.

Only if I have -- the woman was a little bit for me easier. She cooked. We eat. She come home from the hospital, and I was feeling better, and she went back in the

hospital. She was feeling bad, and she was, say, 42 days in the hospital. The bill was \$78,000. Only I have the house. The insurance -- she got Medicare. She got insurance. They paid up, and she passed away. Passed away. This was right not too long after the operation. Maybe about two months. I gotten bad feeling. I was feeling a little bit better. Listen, we had the funeral -- went to the funeral, and I come home, and the kids went home, and the Rabbi (Brack) had in a minyan to daven, and I stay in Miami because I have a home over there. I sold it in '85.

I come to Miami, and I like it better I like it in Chicago. I went home. I sold the home with the furniture, with everything. The kids took something. It was beautiful furniture, and I sold the home, and I come here, and I live here. I stayed by myself. I have a woman from Canada. She was coming and going. We meet like the holidays. I go to the hotel to the Caribbean or the -- what is the other one. I go for the holidays, and I meet over there a woman from Canada. We was going, coming. She was going home. She was coming back.

Last year she said to me when she went back, to go with her to Canada. She is an American girl. She have sisters with brother-in-laws with cousins. I said, "Betsy, what would I do over there? I don't have what to do." It was not a place. Here I'm in Vincent Tower. Is a lot of

newcomers, and I know people. She have family over there, and I don't know nobody over there. I don't go.

Well, she come back, and she go back. She want to get -- now, I'm alone, and I manage. I cook. I bake. I give one to my neighbor. I bake mandle bread. I give her one time to try the mandle bread. She made me popular. The other neighbors, "How come you don't give it for me? How come you don't give it for me?" If I am baking, I give it to them too. If I am baking, I bring to Rosalie mandle bread. If I am baking, I give to Alex mandle bread.

This is the life of a poor man. Poor Simon. It's very hard to live alone. Very hard. Especial Saturday and the holidays. There is not a day -- in the Winston Tower, very good. I give up last April, I give up the car. I pay \$1800 insurance. I am one man. I was not going too much because if the other lady was, we still -- the Canadian was still going -- she left, and I give up the car and I take bus transportation.

In the daytime, I go to one mall, to another mall. I go to the bank. I have cleaning woman one time a week, and this is going like this, and holidays when you sit a whole day home, like Rosh Hashana, I was in the hotel. For Pesach I go always, and I was for Sukkos in the hotel because I feel not good I sit home. The kids not a (inaudible).

Rosalie come yontiff. She was the second days from Pesach, and she was from Rosh Hashana too to keep me company. This is the way it is going. Can't do nothing better. We have to take it like it come.

After all this what we went through, I always was figuring to have somebody and to go to enjoy. Now the kids said, "Daddy, spend the money." What can you spend the money alone? Where will you go alone? If you have a car, maybe you can pick up somebody. You go take taxis and take somebody to a show, to a theater. I like to go to see an opera only I not be able to do it. I am not going. I don't feel to go alone. To a movie I still go alone, but to go to a stage, I am not going. I stay home, and the time is passing by. I have a cable television and watch the cable, and the time is passing by.

One time I go to Rosalie. One time I go to Alex. I come back from Rosalie, go to Alex. What can you do? Cannot be better. I try the best. The kids holler, "Spend the money. We don't want the money." She got a good job, and if he is a doctor, he just build up a building with 6,000 square foot. Before he have 3,000. He have six people. Now they took in another four people because they have a big place. They need it, and he is all right. Only a girl is still different like a boy. Rosalie is calling more. She comes more to see me, and it is different.

If I go over there, I stay three, four days. If I go Thursday, I go back Monday. This winter he told me, "Daddy, maybe you will stay with us." They have a very big home. He have eight bedrooms, five washrooms with a finished basement with all sporting goods over there.

I asked him, "Alex, what will I do? It's 25 miles from a city." He lives in a suburb. What will I do all day? "All right," he says. There's a woman in the house what she take care of the kids. They have a baby of a year old. I don't have what to do over here. Here I still have poeple what I go to them, what I know them. If I go in the morning to the shul, I have some people what I talk to them. If I come back from shul, I go down in the lobby, you still meet some people. You say hello.

It's not a very good place to live in the Winston Tower because there's a lot of sick people. Like we say this building is 16 years old. If people come here 16 years, they were younger. Now they are older. They got sickness and dying and this. One time I sit in the day in the lobby in the morning. I have to wait for somebody. I see people, they coming with vans to take the people. They coming with cars to bring the people.

I ask Bob, the doorman, I asked Bob if this just today, or is this everybody because I am not sitting every day an hour. Hour and a half I was waiting. He said it's every day like this. Only listen, what can you do? I am

old too. If time is coming, time is coming. For me is not -- I am ready.

Q: YOU MUST BE SO PROUD OF THE COURAGE YOU SHOWED DURING THE HOLOCAUST. YOU WENT THROUGH SO MUCH. DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU BECAME A STRONGER PERSON THROUGH THAT?

A: If the kids are married, they have their own trouble. What did my son -- even he is a doctor, made good money, have trouble anyway. He is not like the daughter, and she is a good girl, only I can't ask from you more what she give me. She ask me always to come. Now I come. I go back Monday. She want me to stay another week. I said, "Rosalie, I will not stay. I have the ticket, and I have to do something home." The home is I am home. It's good here, but it's better to be home.

Q: YOU LIKE BEING HOME?

A: Yes. Sweet home.

Q: SWEET HOME?

A: Yes. Bob Hope was one time in the television, and people asked him questions. They asked him, "Bob Hope, you travel a lot. What was the best place to go for vacation?" He said, "The best place to go for vacation is stay home." This is I am staying home, and the time is passing by.

I enjoyed -- I go to the shul every days, Saturday, only still alone is alone. What can you do.

Q: AREN'T THERE A LOT OF PEOPLE TO MEET IN MIAMI? AREN'T THERE? MAYBE YOU WILL MEET SOME NICE WOMAN.

A: I will tell you. A couple months ago, I was in (inaudible), and I lived in the isles. Over there was living next door to me a woman. She is from Canada. Very nice woman. Mrs. Feit. "Simon, maybe we will get married." Nice woman. Canadian born. I have maybe another one which she want to get married. A (greena) that wants to get married. Only my age, what will I go play now game to be -- to a vibe you have to be nice. You have to give her a kiss. You have to bring her flowers. You have to tell her she is nice; she look good. Even if she don't look good, you have to tell her she look good. It's not for me this small business.

According my understanding is too late for me to think of getting married. I am telling you, this woman from Canada is very good -- this what she told me -- in (inaudible). "Simon, maybe --" because she know me from over there, and her siser-in-law was my landlady. She know me. Only it's not for me. Too hard for me. You have to please -- a vibe is like a vibe, and a woman -- second marriage is like a lady. You have to go shopping for her. You have to cook for her. She will eat, only you will have to cook. I be able to cook only I won't take in a woman in the house to please her so good. I know I not be able to do this what I was doing this 60 years ago.

60 years ago I was able to take out a nice girl. I forgot still to tell you this vibe what I got married, the

first wife. This is belong to the group. We know each other five years. I met her when we went to a convention, a Zionist convention. We met over there. Later after this is I was passing by to go to another town to buy merchandise for we have a grocery store. To buy merchandise, I stop over there. I talk to her. She was coming -- she had relatives in (Krazenstadt). She was coming.

Before she have -- we start talk about getting married, she have a mother. She said the brother is older. She don't want to give the privilege the younger daughter to get married before an old brother. Only the time from before the war was already about six months before we were starting to get married. We was thinking to get married. In the meantime was the war. We was not getting married.

She was from a family, they have a grocery store too, and they have a little place what they was buying wheat from the farmers. She have a sister. One was married what she lived in the same town. I think she had five kids, six. She have another sister that she got married. She had two kids, and she was home, and a brother was home. I have -- I had two brother, two sisters. One brother have six kids. The other one have two kids.

Nobody from our family got left. She was one from the family got left, and I am just one from the family got left. This is when I come to (Stechen) when I told you I

don't know if she is alive when I was liberated before because I was liberated in '44. She was in '45. I have this -- my store in Stechen, come a telegram, come I am here because I was over there asking for her other girlfriends what I saw them.

I lost the store, everything, and I went, and we got married over there. Later we got married it was just a wonder we have so many kids with brothers, with sisters. Nobody is alive. She have father and mother. Nobody is alive. Her brother got shot. He was running away. The German was taking people to war to kill. He was start to run away. He got shot in the place. The mother went out. She start to holler to the German, and she said, "If you shot my son, you can shot me too." He shot her too. Only this was if I was one from my family alive and later she was one from her family alive.

You have to understand what our friendship was, how this was. They said it was beshert. We know each other a long time. We want get married, and after the war -- and after the war is a lot of people when they are from the war, they got married. They find the right girls because nobody want to be alone.

I was staying -- was in this time when I was in Lublin was enough girls to get married, only I said I will wait, and I wait when I got this. Later I bring her down to

Stechen. She was for a little while in the store with me. Later we sold the store, and we went to Berlin. Yes. Meantime, she was pregnant. The daughter was born in Germany, and we usual all when they come -- they went -- they have over there (spoke in another language). All the people, when they come from the concentration, they get together over there.

We was living private, private, so she like it, and we live like this, and we got married, and we was in Berlin, and we come here. We get the papers to come to the United States. When I come to the United States, I come to my cousin. My cousin come in the train -- my cousin was a soldier in Washington. He come to New York to pick me up from the airport. My cousin -- he come with a train to meet me -- I don't know -- some place he meet me, and later I was over there.

Nu, listen, later happened this. She got killed, and we went in the business, and we were doing very bad only what can you do.

Q: WHEN YOU WERE IN STECHEN, WHY DID YOU SELL THE BUSINESS AT THIS POINT?

A: In Stechen?

Q: YES.

A: Because we want to go to the United States.

Q: WHEN DID YOU SELL THE BUSINESS?

A: In 1947. In Germany.

Q: WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

A: We got married in 1946. Yeh. No, we got married -- yes, 1946. She was liberated in the last month from '45, and I come over there from the beginning from '46. We just got married over there.

Q: WHERE WAS SHE?

A: She was in concentration camp, yes. With her was another story. She was in the concentration camp. Is one time they ask who know nursing -- to be a nurse. She said she know to be a nurse. She and another girl friend, they went -- send out 12 girls with an SS man with a dog. In the meantime, she don't know where they going. In the meantime, she was in (Hershbach). This is in Germany. They stopped over there. They have to go on another train -- from one train to another, and she and another girl, they skipped out from the group. They don't find her, and like they have clothes because they was going to (spoke in another language).

You see it like yours here. Only she have behind this she have clothes. She was dressed behind it. Over there they went in a home, and it was from (Von Renving) a home. Von Renving was a minister. There was over there a home, and they don't have food at all. They give up the Polish, and they don't understand one word German, and they

start to work over there. Is the police come to check how they come over there. They told them in Polish they got lost from the transport, and they don't know where to go. They were with a transport with the Polish girls to go, and they went down to some station, and they got lost.

Okay. It was Von Renving. He was a big minister. My daughter, she was last year -- last year she got \$3,500 from some -- I don't know whom -- to go to Europe from the Holocaust. She was ten days in Israel and ten days in (Tenamar). She went to see the Von Renving's family. She told her the mother was over there, and they were very nice to her. Von Renving was a minister only he was against Hitler. They send him out there some place, and he is not dead, and the lady that she was over there -- the mother is dead too, and what they have over there a big family. They took over the farm. Only they -- she was doing a lot.

When they went in in such a home, they have very good to eat and to sleep and to dress. They were Von Renving, and this was later we got married, and we come to Chicago, and we come to Berlin, and from Berlin we come to United States.

Q: WHERE DID YOU GET MARRIED?

A: Right over there when she get in Chelm, a town not far from where we live. Over there was some Jewish people.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR WEDDING DAY LIKE?

A: Not a big wedding. They bake; they cook. This

was a (shoicat) to give us (hibicadishin). It was not a big ceremony where we were. I was glad I got like this. We wasn't looking for -- later we went to Berlin, and in Berlin we lived. We made a living, and later we want to go because we saw the soil from Europe is all over blood. We don't want to stay more in Europe.

Two years ago I was in Israel. They have the memorial there over there in the (Gastafa). Yeah, it's impossible to believe this was before. It is a memorial day. I go over there. I enjoy it. Some guy comes I don't saw a long time. The old people. I have a lot of friend in Israel, friend from the old country.

I have to tell you, in this two years what I was over there, all my friends passed away, passed away one after the other one. They was not youngsters. They were maybe a year younger like I am, only I was thinking to go to live in Israel is when my wife still when she was alive. The second wife.

We went to Israel, and we decided to live in Israel, and we took things to have enough to go in and live. Only for her we have over there a cousin in Haifa. She saw how hard the cousin is going in Haifa shopping and how she bring it home, and she lived on the second floor and the daughter on the third floor. She said it would be for her too hard to come back to Israel.

When I was last year in Israel, I was thinking to

stay in Israel, only the kids want me to come home. So I went over there to a (lanslady) to if I die -- I don't know for how long I will live -- I want to be buried in Israel. This my kids want me to be buried -- my first wife is laying in Chicago. Over there I bought six lot. From the beginning, I was thinking will be two for me, two for the son, two for the daughter, only it's not like you think. You was thinking different and worked out different because my daughter want me to be here. My son want me to be here, only I decide I want to be in Israel because the kids here -- in Europe my father was dead for years is I know every Yom Kippur I went to the cemetary. In Europe a lot of people go Yom Kippur to the cemetary. This is just the way. Here my daughter -- she comes sometimes, and she have time she take the brother and go to the cemetary, only this is just once in a while.

I was paying over there \$50 for flowers to make sure nice. I see nobody is going of the cemetary what I was bringing -- I was coming up when I was still in Chicago. I give it up. Lately two years ago my daughter was -- she renewed. Now she renewed to make flowers, and she is paying \$65 a year. Well, listen, I am not against. She want to renew the mother's (kiver), she do it, only my son doesn't have too much interest. He lived in Chicago.

Even for the boats for Memorial Day, they -- for Memorial Day usually a lot of people are going out to

the cemeteries, but I was in Chicago, I see a lot of people, only he is not too much interested in going to see the dead. He want to see the live. He is not interested to see the dead. I make it up my mind. I hope they will -- they will keep it. What I said is I want to be buried in Israel. They will not change my will. They can do.

Q: AND TELL ME WHY YOU WANT TO BE BURIED IN ISRAEL.

A: Because I see here the kids are not coming to the cemetery. They don't come even to say something. In Jewish they say -- excuse me -- they say they don't come even to (spoke in another language). I like Israel. All I all the years wanted to go to Israel. I want to live in Israel. The reason is because after the war, a lot of people went to Israel. Why you don't went. Because I was thinking I want to see my cousin. I want to see my cousin in United States. This why I come, but my mind was always to go to Israel, and I go. I like to be buried over there. Is a lot of people living here in the United States, and they get buried in Israel.

One thing I forgot to tell you from my boss. My boss -- now I remind myself. My boss is buried in Israel too. After I go to the store, I called up the store, and I said I am not coming more to work. I have my own store. This I told to the kids, and in the night he called me up. They call me over there Shim-Shim. "Shim-Shim, I promised you so much things, and you went to buy a store."

"Robinson, you promised, you promised only from this wages you was paying me was very hard to make a living." So I decided I will go in the store. Some people said I have a good job. In this time in the '50's, in the '40's, if I got \$70 clear, they said a good job. I tell Robinson I could not make a living, and I get tired working in the store.

"How much -- if you for your own how much you making you better like to work for somebody. Even if I give you a hundred dollar would be better." He called me.

"Shim-Shim, I want to ask you one thing. Close the store Saturday." I told him, "Mr. Robinson, I owe so much money, and Saturday the most business. If I will close Saturday, not I will have to pay the people and not I will have to live," because Saturday was a big day.

So I just went away. My boss start to be short in money. It's somebody told him Shim-Shim have money. He come to Shim-Shim. He talked to borrow him \$5,000.

"Mr. Robinson, how do you know I have \$5,000?"

"You have it. You have it. I know."

I said, "Mr. Robinson, I will borrow you \$2,000. I don't want interest. Give me 20 checks of hundred dollar a month. You pay me out." He was borrowing money from the shoichat, from the (Harbonom) and paying high interest, and later he went bankruptcy. They paid me up \$800. Later he went bankruptcy. From bankruptcy was the first time --

first I was getting over there a little bit merchandise because I have -- I live -- I don't bring this up because I was hiding last seven months by a Gentile. When I come out, I was hiding by this Gentile. I was sending him, and they give me -- they send me in \$200 when they got settled for 20 percent. They send me in \$200, and the other one is -- and I was always thinking this Robinson have money because I work in the back in the stockroom in the back. I don't sell merchandise to go out over there. How it can be bought. It was all a lot of money, only I saw last he was selling lamps on (Mexa Street) staying with a stand, and when he passed away, I know he was not rich. He was not rich.

This is everything coming in this time. Yeah, this is in United States sometimes you rich and sometimes you get broke. You once in a while -- he was giving so much donations, you don't have idea. If somebody come without a beard and he want a donation, he give them \$18. Somebody come with a beard, he give them \$36. Later Harbonom -- he was belonging to the (Harboons), (Kikay). He was with them. He give a lot of money to them. What happened to this money is impossible to know. I could not understand.

He have the two sons. I was in Chicago, I was meeting them. We was coming together this Jewish United Fund. His uncle was over there president, and they make a dinner. They come. They making a living. One is in the

market from the commodity. Maked a good living. The other is making -- he got a carpet business.

It is such a funny thing. Moish -- my son have a friend in Chicago -- from Chicago. He living not far from him. His friend -- his father was a rabbi not far from the JCC, you know. He was a rabbi over there. If the friend went to (Manak Lavason), he went too. He went too. He had over there -- Dr. Stemer they call him. Moish -- Moishe.

The Robinson's son was over there. He said he go over to my son. He ask him, "Is Shim-Shim Stemer your father?" He said, "He is my father. He is my father," and "He was a good working man." He ask him, "How was my father?"

"He was a good working --" after so many years, he was a good boy, Moishe, only after so many years, they got together and they -- and they talked. It was coming different things. I never believe it my son will meet some time Robinson's son if I am not in Chicago. If I am in Chicago, maybe we come together some place, only they making a living only they not -- they not rich. They making a living.

Q: WHEN WAS MR. ROBINSON YOUR BOSS? WHEN YOU WERE WORKING IN THE CARPET STORE?

A: Hu?

Q: WHEN WAS MR. ROBINSON YOUR BOSS?

A: Mr. Robinson was my boss when I come from '47 to

'49. I was 21 months in the country, and I bought a candy store, and I don't know. I am not speaking now good English, and at this time I don't know nothing, only I have over there my store in a Polish neighborhood because I took in a Polish boy, a school boy. He talked Polish, and he talked English. This boy helped me a lot. He stole from me a lot of money. It was not taking too long he bought a new Pontiac. I don't have this time a car, and he have already a new car. It was not from the wages I pay him he bought a car, only he was -- he helped me out.

Working people what they work from me, they stole from me a lot of money. Well, listen, I don't have no choice and so it go, and it's hard to find a person what they work for you to be hundred percent honest. When it come to money, it's everybody gets something, some hold of some. This is my policy.

Q: YOU SAID THAT YOU FORGOT ABOUT THE NINE MONTHS WHEN YOU WERE HIDING WITH THE GENTILE?

A: Yes. I don't told you about it.

Q: TELL ME ABOUT IT.

A: I told you when I come, they keep me in this -- I give it up.

Q: IN THE BUNKER?

A: In the bunker. When he left the bunker, when he left, he give it to another bunker, and he put it in wheat and water. After this is she had passed by, and for him I

sent the package, and the all other people, some of them they died already. They live in Israel. Two young boys I saw when I was in Israel, I saw (Dr. Shamberg).

Q: THE DOCTOR. HE WAS HAVING A ROMANCE --

A: He was with me in the bunker. He was in the bunker with me, Dr. Shamberg.

Q: WASN'T HE HAVING A ROMANCE WITH --

A: How do you know?

Q: ROSALIE MENTIONED IT.

A: I mentioned it?

Q: ROSALIE MENTIONED IT.

A: Oh. She mentioned everything?

Q: JUST THAT.

A: I was not mentioned this thing. Now if you know something, she told you. He was when he come over there in the other side moved -- he was a doctor. He was taking care in this (Leo Kachinsky's) vibe, and they was living in a suburb, and he was over there with them. Later the Ukranian pushed out the Polacks from the Sobone. The Polacks have to run away to the town to (Luten). There was enough property. Moved into a property and lived over there.

This doctor want to help out this guy Kachinsky -- the family. This what he looked for, people that they have money to go (stavid). This doctor, he was a very nice man. I cannot say not a nice man, only every night he went up with his vibe. Leo Kachinsky's wife was Sosha. He went up

to her. Listen, this is his business. This is not my business. If I am staying over there, I am staying.

One time this happened. The guy Kachinsky comed up -- come down and said to the doctor in Polish (spoke in another language). "You will not have, and I not have. Sosha passed away." This doctor start to cry. Was over there a little (frow). Rochel was her name. She asked him, "Doctor, what are you crying?

"Sosha passed away. Sosha passed away." He said, "She was for me better like a mother, what a mother is doing for a son," and he said education what he got from her is everything thank the mother. He was talking. The mother pushed him out to be a doctor.

One day only he was crying, and she asked him later, and later what was going like this, and Kachinsky was taking care. He was not be able to give for everybody food. If she was alive, he was afraid for her. If she was not alive -- he split it. He give her three, the other lady -- the other one -- he get for four, the other one got for two, and another one get for two. He was afraid. He paid it.

Meantime he give away a lot of money, a lot gold pieces for the other people. Meantime was not taking too long the Russian come in. They don't need that too long, the other people. The Russian coming.

When I comed over there, I had a good time. He had a very nice woman. A nice vibe. A Jewish girl. A

smart girl, and I over there. Now, I told Rosalie, "If you in Israel, call up Dr. Shamberg." She called him up, and he was very nice to her and ask her how this is. He just wondering why he don't went to the United States because when I was over there, I told him how my (zien) -- my son -- was doing. He have one son. They have one son. In Israel was hard for him to get education. They send him to Italy, and he is a doctor. He is now a doctor. He finished in Italy. Why he don't went to the United States because United States the doctors make better like they make in Israel the doctors.

In Israel -- he have an office. He don't have too many patients because over there the (Kupat Cholim) is taking in everybody. If you are Israelie and you work some place, they give you everything what you need. Some paying people you have in the office, but not too much. After work, he come in the office two days. Wife go with him, and this is the life.

Q: SIMON, I WANT TO ASK YOU WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FAMILY. WHAT DID HAPPEN TO YOUR MOTHER AND YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. WHAT DO YOU KNOW? HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?

A: When I come -- when I come to Krazenstadt, I see nobody in. I went to the (Krazensaur) after I was liberated. Nobody was in, and we know what happened. Was over there some people a place what they have like they have at the other places, and they have gas, and they burned them

up.

In '42, in 1942, the whole town was sent out. Was packed in wagons, and they come to (Sabeba), and over there they got killed.

Q: WHERE DID THEY GO?

A: Sabeba was the place.

Q: (SIMAFOR)?

A: Yes. It was a small place. They killed over there a million Jews. 900,000 Jews.

Q: WOW.

A: It was not far from about 30, about 20 miles, 30 kilometers they sent over there. They sent the whole family.

Q: THERE WAS THE WHOLE FAMILY?

A: Yes.

Q: YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE.

A: My sister was in Lodz. She got killed over there. If she is not alive, she got killed.

Q: DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING HOW SHE LEFT HOME?

A: No, nothing. Well, listen.

Q: HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT SHE WAS -- YOU FOUND OUT THAT SHE ALSO WAS SENT AWAY?

A: Well, if nobody left in Lodz, no poeple. No people to ask. If she is not coming up -- like in the beginning, they have registration in (Vashaw), there was registrate the people what they come, and nobody showed up

is there. The dead people, they don't show up. Yeah. In Hebrew is an expression. (Spoke in another language.) The dead people, they don't have to pray. Who is dead is dead. They can't -- everybody got killed over there.

Q: AND WHEN YOU WENT TO BERLIN, HOW LONG DID YOU STAY IN BERLIN?

A: Oh, about a year. Maybe a little bit more because I come over there '46 to Berlin in the beginning, and in -- my vibe and I went to the German Council because my vibe was pregnant. That was -- the very early months. If I was over there and we was here. In the 21st of July, we was here in Chicago. Yeah.

Q: HOW WAS BERLIN? DID YOU BUY A SHOP IN BERLIN?

A: Hu?

Q: IN BERLIN, DID YOU GO INTO BUSINESS?

A: In Berlin, we did business, not to go in business. If I was not getting the permit to go to Israel -- to go the the United States, I was thinking to open up a store. Only if I got the -- they call me to go to America, so I -- we make a living in Israel -- in Germany. Not that store. It was some kind of way to make a living. Not to steal.

Q: WHAT THEN? WHAT DID YOU DO?

A: What do you do? You have money, and you don't know what you have to do with the money. You don't want to have the Deutsche mark. You want to buy dollars. You have a friend Simon. You say, "Simon, maybe you know where I can

get dollars." Simon have another friend what he have the dollars. I took from him the dollars. I sold it to you, and I make the money, and something maybe you buy from the German was bringing in some diamond or something else, gold or something like this.

Over there was the Russian opened up a place what they bought gold, diamonds, dollars for the German mark, and they sent it away to Russia. We sold it to them too. If I have something I went to the (Commissia) they call it, and I sold it to them, and they pay money, and I have money. I was not without money. I was never short in money. Nu, listen.

I was in -- when we lived in Europe a very poor life. Even we have a grocery store. Even we bought a chicken for Shabbis with fish. And the people was thinking that my mother is a rich mother, rich because we have a business. It was not so. We ate, only it was not such a comfortable life. It was very poor life. Very poorly -- very poor.

The people was living very poor in Poland. Even this one that they have money, it was we say in our town was 400 families. Is we say maybe 8 were rich, and we say 200 was middle class, and maybe 300 was poor. The people were tailors or shoemakers. They don't make too much money. It was very very poor country.

If you go to fix a shoes or if you go to make a

pair of shoes, they don't make too much. Even you go to a tailor to make a suit -- it was not like here you go in, you buy a suit. You have to go buy material, and you give to the tailor, and he make you a suit. Yeah, this is.

I will tell you we have the grocery. We have Jewish customers, and we have Gentiles. The Jewish customers had in everybody. If he spent two zlotys he was short 20, 30 cents. He don't have more. He needed things, and this was going like for years everybody was short and nobody comed in to pay. They don't have it, and they was always short. If somebody comed in to buy -- we have over there a neighbor who have a daughter was Cecil. She was buying for the house. When she come in even to buy for 20 cents, she have 18. She was always short, always short, and if she is short today, she is short tomorrow more, more short, and they don't have to pay.

The Gentile -- we give the Gentile credit. Of course, when it come before they cutting the wheat, they don't have -- they taking on credit. We got people what they work in the government. Come the 1st, they pay. The farmers were paying later, only they pay. Only the Jewish life was very, very low standard, very low standard. I would not say -- I will not say it was not Polish people what they were what they were poor.

Like we say, we don't have gas heat or electric. We have to buy wood, and the farmers bring out

little buckets of wood, and you take the janitor what he was over there. Here they call him an engineer. He chopped the wood. He took a zloty and a half. He chopped a whole day with the vibe. They took a zloty and a half. A zloty and a half was you could buy four pounds sugar or four pound meat. This what they can buy. They were poor people by the Polish people too.

There was our Poland everybody was singing it was good in Poland for some people they have education, they get government jobs or who was a farmer, but not everybody can be a farmer and not everybody can be an educated man. Like a working people we say went to work any kind of work. To put together plumber in a place or to carry. He was getting two, three dollars -- two, three zlotys a day. What can he do with two, three zlotys. They have a family maybe four, five kids. It was very hard life. For the Polish too. For the poor Polish was hard.

Q: WHAT WERE THE FIRST SIGNS OF DANGER OF THE NAZIS COMING?

A: About '38 it started.

Q: NOTHING BEFORE '38?

A: Was people -- I don't know if you know. Von Renvig -- what was his name? A German minister. A German minister come to Poland. I forgot his name, and he come to Poland to shot animals. Poland have a lot of woods. (Ribintroff), and he was living good with the Poles.

This time they start to live good. When this time they start to come in the anti-semitism. When they start, the Poles start to be friends with the Germans is the Pole learn from the German. Hitler was already in the (raff), and they learn at this time. It was always anti-semitism when, but they don't show it up. Like we say in 1939 -- this was in '38 before Christmas, the college boys were standing by the Jewish stores. We have Gentile. The Gentile don't want to go in more. If he say it was not nice for him to go in. In this time they started '38. The minister in Poland -- I don't remember his name (spoke in another language), he said you can make a boycott on the Jews. Not to hit the Jews. Not to hit the Jews.

One night we were the boys in the night, it was over there a park in the middle of the city. We have a nice town. It was in the night we walked around. It was '38. I walked with one guy. He is still in Israel. His name is (inaudible). It was maybe before 11:00 or maybe after 11:00. Some two guys coming in from the park, and they hit the other guy. They don't hit me. They hit the other guy. This was anti-semitism.

A policeman come say why you going so late in the night in the street. This policeman say. He is a government because he know you have to be -- you have to hit the Jews. This started in '38. They said you can make a boycott and not to hit them.

Is like it was a (Mrs. Prisky). She was a senator. She was against killing the cows like the Jewish are killing. It's too much pain for the animal like the Jewish are killing. They took it to the Senate, and they passed by from the 1st of September is not allowed to kill the -- the Jew to kill the animal. Then they all go washed out. Chicken you can eat, only red meat or other one you can -- was we not allowed. People was thinking they will get -- they will order from other lands, like from Belgium. Like over there they have enough from England or some of the other countries. This what they figured out, but it don't come to this. It don't come to this.

It was very, very anti-semitism start from this time when Ribintroff make with Poland an agreement. Poland was a country they have 30 million people. When Hitler come to the power, he want to take the Rhine. Was over there the Rhine. Hitler want to take the Rhine. A piece he give to Poland, Hitler. He said Poland is a big country. She is entitled to have, and after he took the Rhine, he take -- he will not no more. He will not do.

Later in '38, they went to Czechoslovakia. He started the war, only this was from the beginning. He give him a push. He give him a get like you say, and the Poles was listen to Hitler's Torah. They learned from him.

Well, listen, in Poland was three and a half million Jews. A small country. In (Vashaw) alone was

250,000 Jews, maybe 300,000, only this they want to give the Polish people -- the German teach the Poland, and before the war -- they started before the war the Germans said the Polish military shot a German soldier. This what they said. If they shot a German soldier, they have the right to go fight with Poland. If this was truth or not, they said it. They bring it in the radio what the Germans said.

In one country what was good, the Jews was the people what they live in Germany. In Germany the people -- if you have friend Gentile, you were going to him. He was coming to you. You work with them, and they was friendly living. Like we said here in working place, you have a Gentile was friendly, only if you come after work, you don't have too much to do with this Gentile. Over here they was together. They was living together. They was telling they went around to collect money for Israel. They said they have here Israel. They don't want another country. They have good over there. They don't need Israel. This was the German. This was the German Jew. Over there was (spoke in another language) they call it over there. The wall was over there made. Over there was the Polish immigrants what they come over there the German called them (in Yiddish) because over there was the people what they immigrate.

This what was in Germany. All of it after '33 who was smart, he left there. From Germany was a possibility to go to Israel or to go to China. From Poland

they don't have the possibility to go no place. Like the war broked out, when they start to run, everybody just run just to the Russian border. They was thinking the Russian border would take them in because the Communist, they -- people what they trust other people. They like people. This what they was, only if they come out the war, the people went home. The people went home, and they got killed, which a lot of Jewish people they got killed because when they went to go to the border, was not easy for them. They don't have transportation. Was no buses, was no cars, and was no trains. You have to walk, and you have to walk it was maybe 120 miles, maybe 180. Some people they had maybe more.

Some people come with German with the red dot, and they come. It was for them very hard. They got hard, and when the German come in, they said home, they will stay home, and they don't go too much. Was a possibility.

From our town, we say -- I will say from our town when to the Russian border on the other side about a hundred families, the poor families, the tailors, the shoemakers, the carpenters, they don't have what to lose. They don't have nothing to pull them. They went. These people what they have a little bit income, different income, they don't work so hard. They work hard, and they don't have nothing.

The Russian, when they start to leave our town, they give trucks. Who want to go on the other side would

go. Not everybody want to go. They want to stay. Only the poor people -- hundred families for sure -- what they -- now they went to Israel. Some went to Canada. They were all right. Later they sent them to Siberia, only before the Russian would take in everything. We was sending Siberia -- they live in Siberia. I will not say they died. They don't died in Siberia. Siberia died a percentage. Two percent, five percent, ten percent. Only 90 percent was alive. They died. Was some people from our town. They was not able to take this life over there -- the cold weather, the war -- and some people they got used, and they live in Siberia. They live in Siberia.

(Taka) this guy what he is in Israel -- Chuck -- he wrote a letter when we were in the -- he was already over there, and he have the right when he was by the Russian, he wrote a letter in May -- they still from the snow in May, and we go in the snow, we still going to walk in the snow May. They have over there about three months summer, like in Alaska. Alaska they still have the same thing.

One thing I am just I can't understand. The Jewish people have educated people, smart people because who is a smart man -- who see what will be tomorrow is a smart man. Why the Jewish people they know what Hitler is. I will not say the poor people. Educated. The professors, the doctors. Some were some professors and doctors. Why they don't saw before what is waiting for the people if they

stay. We say in French they took the people from French, in Hungarian, in Czechoslovakia. Why these people don't come out before the war, just it's very bad for the Jews to stay in a place by Hitler. Nobody comed and telled us. I am just wondering.

From all those years that Hitler come, maybe I don't know what Hitler will be like Einstein. Einstein is a Jew. He was a Jew. He was I don't know what kind of Jew, only they call him a Jew. In '33, when Hitler come to power, he left the United States. He don't want to be with Hitler. Maybe some more educated people from Germany left, only it supposed to be in this time I am wondering nobody comed and say, "People, we have to run away. We have to do something because Hitler is coming, and he will kill the Jews." Nu, nobody comed, and nobody said it. I am still wondering now.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY THEORIES?

A: Hu?

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY?

A: No, I don't have idea why. I am asking why. I am asking this thing why they don't come and say. There was conventions. They did the Zion Organization. The (Chalutz). The Chalutz want to go to Israel. They don't allow them. The Chalutz -- was a lot of Chalutzim want to go to Israel, but they don't allow them. They still don't protect themselves to be sure if the war will come, they

will be -- and they will be killed. This is real.

In the first world war, I have uncle (inaudible). He left with the Russian when they left that time. He come back in '21. These people what they were in the place, they start from the '18, 1918 to do something. He come back. He lost those three years. All right, he went later he made business. He made a living, only the people thought if you stay in the place, maybe the war go through, and it will be better, only this was a wrong figure. It was a wrong figure.

Really the Jews, the poor Jews, they was looking to be a war. They don't know they will get killed because they was living very bad. They was thinking there will be a war, it will be better. There will be Communist would be better.

A lot of Jewish people in the age from the 30's till the 40's from the 25, they was -- they was thinking will be Communist. They don't know how Communist is. They was reading Karl Marx. In Poland was not allowed to read Karl Marx. When I come to the United States, I read Karl Marx.

Karl Marx was just a man he saw had to be a living for all the people straight. They got to have nice rooms. The rich one don't have to live better like you want. It's the people they know they want to be Communist. Only now you see what with the Communist. The people, they don't

know before what the Communist will bring out after 70 years.

The first from the beginning they said (spoke in another language) they call it. After five years will everything go terrific. They make one (spoke in another language). It don't work out till now. Till the '70. No. What we can do.

Good we got now a country. If we was be having in this time a little country, maybe was not be killed so many Jews. If they have airplanes and was possibility to bomb the gas chambers, Auschwitz and the other one, maybe was not killed so many Jews. Only we don't have at this time the country. We have it now. Now is just (spoke in another language). The Jews in Israel, they still holding up, and Israel is a lot of rich Jewish people.

Wanting when I was in Israel -- I don't know. You was in Israel? I just wondering they don't get too much paid. Big paid. If you coming in the street, you see elegant man and woman clothes. Everybody is going dressed nice. You don't see it in the United States. They don't have interest in the United States for this.

In Israel everybody is living good. They living. If you ask an Israelie if he want to come to the United States, not everybody will want. I say some of them they come. They said 300,000 people. I think more like a million people, and they all come with money. They build up

stores in Florida. Beautiful big stores.

I went in this week -- two weeks ago in a store to buy something. I see a mezuzah on the wall. Later I saw the mother walked out. She kissed the mezuzah. Later I look on the wall, and they say they closed Saturday. They bring money, and they make a good living, a family, and they have close up Saturday, and they make a living. They come with money. A lot of -- I don't know how this is here. They have here big places nice. Over there in Florida they have beautiful places. A lot of money.

Q: I WANT TO ASK YOU ANOTHER QUESTION, AND THEN I WANT THE THREE OF YOU TO ASK ANYTHING YOU WANT. TELL ME ABOUT WHEN YOU WENT TO THE WASHINGTON, D.C., CONFERENCE.

A: Washington, D.C., was a place what you saw the people have interest after the war to meet one the other one. Over there you saw people which you don't saw for years. You come over there, and you was -- they were good arranging. They gave you not very high transportation, not very high rooming, but I stay by a friend, only the people -- I think so. They all what they were over there, they were happy to see it.

I wish they can make it again some place. I would like to go to see again. To get together was (spoke in another language), and everybody was not angry. They just was sometimes angry they don't get the tickets to the show. Some of them don't get the ticket. They got a late ticket.

This was they was angry, but later they made another show they made it up.

This was the time they just was a little bit running around nervous they don't get the ticket, only they make two times in the day the show. They took in another one. The people -- the food was good, and the speakers was good speakers. We saw night shows, and we saw a lot of people what we didn't see them for ages, and I think if they will make it now, I think the second generation would be more interesting to go on such a things like it was last time.

It was some young people. Not too much. Some young people. Yeah, Jewish with (spoke in another language). They treat you right. You want to go for an interview, you go. You don't want to go, you don't go. They treat you nice. I was very happy I went. Very happy. Listen, what can you do. To hear like this senator -- you remember he comed out and he speaked Jewish?

Q: YES.

A: For the people, they feel little bit difference they see a senator, a young man he is speaking Jewish. He still have interest in Jewish life. And like Bush was talking and Reagan was talking. Listen.

Like they was talking, they got the buildings over there. Bush promised to get the building for the museum. They bought two buildings. When they bought it, they was

afraid they will need seven, eight million dollars to fix it up. Now I hear it's already about \$150,000 not enough.

Q: \$150,000,000.

A: Hu?

Q: \$150,000,000.

A: Yes, yes. I read over there was some people they get 70, 80 thousand dollars a year working over there. They get paid. They get good paid. Educated people, they need them. Arrangement for everything. Architect or somebody, and they pay, and they got the money. They collecting.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 2: I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER IN THERESIENSTADT. YOU WENT TO (CHADER)?

A: I am sorry, I can't hear you.

Q: DID YOU GO TO CHADER? YOU WENT TO SCHOOL IN THERESIENSTADT?

A: Yes.

Q: DID YOU GO TO CHADER?

A: Yeah.

Q: WHAT WAS THAT LIKE? HOW MANY YEARS?

A: When I was 3 years old, my father was alive. He took me with a tallis to this Chader. Well, listen, they was over there old (Malamdin), and they teached the kids. Later you go to a higher one, a higher one, only I will not say it was a good system like they teach.

When my kid went here, they start the Chader, they start to learn. It's like they learn here sha, she, shu. As

I saw, I don't know because over there they learned aleph, bais in the old country, and here they have a different system, and I was not believing they would be able to read to daven. A couple years later they was (Chasunim) in the shul.

We lived over there in the shul, and they went to the school over there to Hebrew. They were Chasunim. They was davening and praying good. This was very poor Chader. I remember when it was we were Poland already, I brought two dollar -- two zlotys to the rabbi, and the rabbi had maybe six, eight children, ten, and it was not a system like you learn here the kids are sitting by the table, and the rabbi is talking, and the rabbi tell you to watch, and the rabbi want you to make lectures.

Over there the rabbi called you in. He learned with you. You go away. He call in another one. This was in the morning. Afternoon later you go home for lunch. Afternoon you come back. The kids what they was after learning, they don't have what to do. One fight with the other one.

It was six, eight hours in the Chader, only they don't learn too much. I will not say there was no learners. There was Yeshivas. Not everybody is sending kids to Yeshivas. Over there in Europe, if a boy want to go to Yeshiva, he don't have a place where to sleep, and he don't have a place where to eat.

I don't know if you hear Rabbi Shapiro. You hear from Rabbi Shapiro? He said one thing is a (spoke in another language). In the stores like this, they took in the Yesheva boys to sleep in the stores, to watch the stores, and they have to eat. One day (du), one day (daughton).

Not everybody was be able to take it. They don't have like do here. You go in, you got a Yeshiva. You have money, you pay. You don't, you don't pay. It was a difference, a difference style from teaching and a difference learning.

The Yeshivas -- was Yeshivas. I will not say. Rav Shapiro when he build up the (spoke in another language) Yeshiva, the Yeshiva was start to build in '28. Is the (Huvitz Chiam) was over there. Huvitz Chiam was there. In '33 they opened up the Yeshiva, and what it was over there opening the Yeshiva out of this world. Gentile and the Huvitz Chiam, they have a very good speech. A short man with a small beard, only speaking he was good.

Rabbi Shapiro have three speechs; in Polish, in Jewish and in Hebrew, and what they have over there in the Yeshiva, every two boys, they have a room with (spoke in another language). They have swimming pools in the basement, swimming pools. Like you call it a mikvah, only this was a swimming pool.

They have 400 kids, and they have nice areas for

eating. I live about 30 miles from Lublin, and I was always going for merchandise over there. I was going to buy over there. Over there they build up (spoke in another language). They have a man from Hungaria or Czechoslovakia. He was over there. He was conducting how to make (spoke in another language) was so made exactly like you see it in (Hibbish). Was good to see. Was beautiful.

When you come in the (Bismarish), in the shul, was a nachas. You was hearing cheers. You was hearing -- (spoke in another language). When I went to Lublin, and I went to see the Yeshivas (spoke in another language). I enjoyed every minute I was over there. It was a pleasure. You go and talk to the kids and different things. They ask one time Rav Shapiro Poland was a small country. What do you need 400 (rabunim) a year. He said, "I am teaching the rabunim. If they will not be rabunim, they will be (mavenav) of rabunim. They will know what it is." They ask he took in most (rabunish). (Spoke in another language). Leave him know something. Leave him be educated. Leave him to know what is a rabbi.

Rav Shapiro was such a beautiful person. Out of this world. He said before he was starting the Yeshiva, he was from one small little town. He went in another little town, and they asked him, "Rav Shapiro, what are you jumping from one town to the other town?" He said like this: "A nail, if you put it in a boat, if he don't have a head, you

cannot take him out, and you put in a nail with a head, you can take him out. You can use on another wall."

Going of another place, this he was going of another place. Rabbi Shapiro (spoke in another language). He got a place from liquor. He was a rich man. He give the land. He donated the land. If he have the land, he start to collect money.

Over there you don't get mortgages like you get here. Here you go to construction, you get a mortgage. Over there you don't get mortgages. You have to have everything cash, and he made it. Was this time figure out impossible to believe it what it was over there. It was so beautiful, so nice. I am just -- I just was wondering how you can bring this everything together what he bringed together. Was a pleasure to go in and to hear how the (talmudum) learning, how the boys -- was a pleasure to go in. I enjoyed very much. I don't know somebody he will, but for me I just was in the town I took off time, and I went over there to see. Yeah. Was a man only was not bad. Lately they was still running it, only the war.

Was a Rabbi Hershberg. You hear of Rabbi Hershberg? Rabbi Hershberg, he said -- I know him from after the war because I have a friend what he was a cousin to Rabbi Hershberg, and I know this Rabbi Hershberg. He want -- he said he was the second one from Rav Shapiro. This what he said, and he want to go to take up this

building to be for Jewish things. Was over there Polish with the government.

I have a building in Krazenstadt. I went to court, and I have the papers, and I want them to pay me rent, to pay me rent. They have the office, the main office for Lublin. Over there was the post office. They make from this building a post office. Is this guy what I talked to him in Lublin, he said, "All right, come in a week or two."

I come, and two weeks later he said the Russian laws -- was Russian Poland. If 30 people, more like 30 people government worked in a building, this belonged to the government. I don't have nothing to say. (Spoke in another language.) The same they have for Rabbi Hershberg. Later he was Rav, Rabbi in Mexico, and he passed away. He got sick, diabetes. Was a wonderful man. This rabbi was a man what everybody like him. He was so good. Everybody liked him, only he passed away. Yeah, what can you do. People get born to die.

Q: GO AHEAD.

A: One year they pay the vibe wages. Later they said they need another rabbi they cannot do. They give her \$10,000. Okay.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 3: I WANTED TO ASK YOU: I NOTICED THAT AFTER YOU HAD TALKED -- IT WAS JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO -- I THOUGHT I SAW WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT AFTER YOU HAD COME TO THE UNITED STATES --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT YOU COULD READ BOOKS OR READ AUTHORS YOU COULD NOT READ IN POLAND, AND THEN YOU STARTED THINKING ABOUT TODAY IN POLAND AND A BIG SMILE CAME ON YOUR FACE.

A: I don't understand. I don't know what she said. Tell me. You tell me.

MS. SILVER: YOU WERE THINKING ABOUT POLAND AND A BIG SMILE CAME OVER YOUR FACE. SHE SAID WHEN YOU CAME HERE, YOU READ AUTHORS THAT YOU COULDN'T READ IN POLAND. IS THAT TRUE?

A: No. When I live in Poland, they was killing me if I stay over there in Poland. I was several times when I was in Lublin, I was several times in Poland, only was not a place for to live the Jews.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 3: NO, I MEANT WHEN HE WAS TALKING ABOUT AFTER HE WAS -- AFTER IN AMERICA WHEN HE WAS REMINDED --

MS. SILVER: YES.

INTERVIEWER NO. 3: THINGS HE COULDN'T READ IN POLAND OR THINGS THAT WERE NOT AVAILABLE, BUT A SMILE, A HAPPINESS OF THINKING ABOUT POLAND AT THAT POINT I NOTICED CAME OVER YOU.

A: If you born in a town, you still feel something. You have soemthing in this town. Four years ago I went with my daughter to Poland. Was nothing to see. We was in

(Dommick). We was in Lublin. We went to Krazenstadt. I know there was nothing to see over there, only it was --

(Tape 2 of 2)

-- if you live for years in a place, you move out from the place. Passing by several years, you like to pass by the place. You like to see it. You don't know who live over there. You just say to somebody I lived here. I was living here. I showed my daughter I live here in this building. I have here my business.

It's a different feeling when you come to all the places what you was used so many years, and you was living over there, and you was born over there. It was a big thing. People were going to see places for years what they like to go. Yeah. One thing I say, United States is the best country to live because in the time from the war, I was doing a lot of traveling, and after the war, according to here from all the places where all the Jews are now is the best place to live in the United States. We hope will be such a place for later. Will not change.

Now they get so much anti-semitism, what can you do. Like this guy give out a book there was no Holocaust. The Jews was just bringing up a thing. What can you do. It's very very hard to understand. Well, we hope for the best.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 2: WHEN YOU WERE LIVING IN LINCOLNWOOD, WHEN YOU WERE LIVING IN LINCOLNWOOD AND THEN

Stemer--60

CHICAGO, WERE YOU INVOLVED WITH OTHER PEOPLE WHO HAD COME FROM POLAND DURING THE WAR?

A: Oh, my friends, sure, they -- sure, I live over there. It was people in Chicago, and we get every Saturday was we get together. We talk a little bit, play a little bit cards, we ate, and in the meantime, we have over there clubs.

Like was a Ben Gurion Club. People once in a month have meetings. They come together, different kind of people. Like they have here the social clubs. They give coffee, cake. Before some kind of speechs and later they play a little bit cards. This is -- this was in Chicago was -- I don't have the people -- my friend don't live in Lincolnwood, they live in Chicago, only we get together. Some friend live in Skokie. Not all the friend live in Lincolnwood, but we get together. We get together in the clubs.

We have over there a club 15 couples. Was somebody's idea -- they live now in California -- to get together and to pay \$50 a month to buy stock. Not so much the stock, like the 15 couples getting together once in a month. Come together 15 couples. We talked. Some was interested if the stock made money. For some was no interest. Was happy he give \$50, he meet some friends. Was a pleasure.

Here in Miami is a man coming wintertime. He

belonged to the club too. Now is no more club. Some people passed away. Some people moved. No more club. He always say, "Simon, you remember the good time what we have with our club?" Was beautiful. My wife, she was a very good -- she was a good cook, only she made chulent was out of this world. If she know they come to my house, they will have chulent. Everybody make nice dinners. Everybody prepared for 15 couples dinner. Not like from here you get it from the catering. Over there everybody cooked, and they -- we made only when they come to my house, they have -- they know they will have chulent.

I have when I lived in Lincolnwood, I have a very nice backyard. Sunday I work in my store till 5:00. As I called the friends, we make a barbecue, we play, we talk. Was I make a lot of times we get together. We got -- life was not so bad to live in Chicago. Was a place to make a living.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 2: ONE OTHER QUESTION ABOUT CHICAGO TOO. WERE YOU IN LINCOLNWOOD, LIVING IN LINCOLNWOOD WHEN THE NAZIS CAME TO SKOKIE? DO YOU REMEMBER THAT?

A: Oh, yes, sure. This was not far from my home. Maybe a half a mile what it was. I was living -- and I was over there.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 1: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THAT?

A: If they was be allowed to march, was not very nice for the Jews. Must be getting more popular. Like this they

still existing only not so popular. The Jews worked on this not to allow them to go in and have speeches. They want to have speeches over there. Who know what kind of people they bringing in, only this was a big thing for the Jews what the police held them up, and they don't allowed them to go in. They tell them to go back. Was a big thing.

INTERVIEWER NO. 3: I WAS GOING TO SAY I WAS ABOUT THAT TIME IN SKOKIE.

A: Yes. Yes, I lived not far from over there. Lincolnwood is together with Skokie. They in the same border, only Skokie from 70,000 people and Lincolnwood have 12,000 people. Skokie is a big suburb. The biggest suburb they said in the world is Skokie.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 3: I WANTED TO ASK YOU I KNOW WHEN YOU SAID YOU AND YOUR WIFE DECIDED YOU WANTED TO COME TO THE UNITED STATES OR AMERICA, THAT YOUR ONLY COUSIN WAS IN CHICAGO LIVING HERE?

A: Huh?

Q: YOUR COUSIN, YOUR ONLY RELATIVE HERE WAS LIVING IN CHICAGO?

A: In 1922 -- '21 or '22, in Poland start to be a government, they start to call in for military, and this time he and his friend, they left Chicago, and they come to Canada. From Canada they come -- they left Krazenstadt. He comed here in 1921 or '22 they were in Chicago, and they come to the united States, and this time maybe was in Canada

maybe 10 million people. This time was not so big Canada like it is now. Difference.

Q: THE REASON, AND THEN I REMEMBERED AFTER I ASKED I WONDERED WHY YOU SETTLED IN CHICAGO AND MAYBE NOT NEW YORK OR SOME OTHER PLACE, BUT --

A: Huh?

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 1: YOU HAD RELATIVES THERE. I WANTED TO ASK YOU AFTER THE WAR, WAS IT HARD FOR YOU TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

A: After the war was not a night what I be able to sleep. I just have the war and the German coming in with the heavy steps, and they taking out the Jews. They shot the Jews. The Jew was nothing in the time from Hitler. Everybody can kill a Jew was nothing. They learn it. After this was for me very hard a long time. Long long time, but I was not be able to sleep in the night and to remember.

Q: HOW LONG?

A: Oh, maybe till about 10, 12 years what I don't have so many dreams, and I don't see it so much. You see it real. You think you see it real and you see the (daque), and you know what they will do with you.

For me was the worst thing -- it was not so bad for me if I got killed. All right. It was for the worst thing what they have to get naked, and they will kill you later. This was for me the worst thing, only this was going for years. Years I was be able to sleep. Sometimes I was

hollering, "Help, help, help," and my wife, she wake me up, "What did you holler?" only this was a lot of times, a lot of times.

Until today I remember every day. Every day I remember what happened to Jews, what happened to my family. We have such a family, and now you -- you have friends, only it's not what is a family. Especially when my wife passed away, I don't have nobody here. It was for me from the family was for me very bad. I was feeling -- I don't know if the family was be doing for me. I was thinking if I have a brother, if I have a sister, if I have an uncle to whom to talk. Maybe somebody will come in. Maybe I will move in today to be with the people. I was very very depressed in this time what I don't have nobody.

Till now. Now it's same thing. I think if I have a family, the night I call them up or come over or I go over. Like in Europe, family was very close. They was going. They don't have to wait for invitation or to get a call I will come. You come. They eating, you eat. You want, you eat. You don't, you don't. It was a different life.

I still thinking every day, every day. Same thing. Not going away. Hard to live in United States is little bit different. Families, the brothers, they don't know too much the sisters. They don't know the brothers. If you make a party, you come if they call up. Only in

Europe was different. I don't know if I have a family if they was be living like I understand. Maybe they was be changing to life like the American, American style, I don't know.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 2: WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE (WIEDERGUTMACHUNG)?

A: Wiedergutmachung --

Q: WHAT'S YOUR THINKING?

A: I will tell you. They start in '59 to give out Wiedergutmachung. My first vibe was alive, I said they don't have enough money to pay for my family, and I was staying away till 1965. People tell me because I saw Ben Gurion said you have to get out from the German what you can. When (Ottawa) was German council. Ben Gurion was very good with Ottawa. He said you have to get out the money what you can. So I will start to take from them the money. Is I went to the doctor. I sent away papers. They send me \$2,000 or \$3,000 for all this time. Later I apply, and I went to a doctor, and he give me 25 percent. I was getting \$200, \$300 a month. Maybe four or five years they start to pay me more. \$500, \$600, \$700 a month, \$800. If they pay me, I am taking. I don't know what is, but I am taking.

They don't have -- what they is paying, this is nothing. You can't buy for money this was I was in war. They can't buy with money the blood you took away from my family. What they killed my mother, my brother, my sister

with the grandchildren. They don't have enough money to pay, only now they give it is everybody said is not making a (luch).

INTERVIEWER NO. 1: THAT'S ROSALIE. HE IS GOING TO GET THE DOOR. ROSALIE IS JUST --

A: Oh, Rosalie is here. See, I am a little bit far away. I can't hear.

Q BY INTERVIEWER NO. 1: AND YOU GET SOME PAYMENTS NOW?

A: Oh, yes. \$800 a month. Well, listen, the war, there was payment. They sending in the check. I take it, only nothing -- I am not too much excited by the check. I am not too much excited. For me it is not a big thing. Maybe for these people what they need it, it's something different. I can make a living without this check. If I don't get the German check, I can make a living, only if they are paying out checks and the people said we have to take it, you take it. I learned this from Ben Gurion.

Q: WHAT ABOUT BITTERNESS AND HATRED? ANGER? ARE YOU FULL OF BITTERNESS AND ANGER?

A: I feel just bad. I feel sometimes very bad. Cannot find a place for myself. I have to take the bus and to go to a mall. Spend over there a couple hours and come back and a different went away and a different thing. Yeah, this is -- what can you do. It's beshert. You cannot -- you cannot go across what is going. This you have to take

it.

It's going like this, only you not -- you have to be satisfied and you're not satisfied. Like Rosalie said, she is happy. I have to be happy too. That's what she said. Well, I don't feel it. What can you do. I tell her I don't feel it to be happy. Cannot be happy.

No, if my first wife would be alive and you come in the old age, you come into the house. If she is not alive, what can I be happy. What kind of happiness after such a thing what I went through and of my old age. I am not a younster. My old age to come see this, everything is very -- it's not so easy to go through. I don't wish it nobody to be alone. They say in Yiddish (spoke in another language).

INTERVIEWER NO. 2: A STONE IS ALONE.

MR. STEMER: What can you do. Okay?

MS. SILVER: OKAY.

MR. STEMER: You got it?

MS. SILVER: THANK YOU SO MUCH.