Interview with MARGARET BENDAHAN

Holocaust Oral History Project

Date: 8/28/1991

Place: San Francisco California

Interviewer: Emily Silverman

Transcriber: Diane Moreno

MS. SILVERMAN: WE'RE HERE WITH THE HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. TODAY IS AUGUST 28th, 1991 AND WE ARE INTERVIEWING MARGARET BENDAHAN AND THE INTERVIEWER IS EMILY SILVERMAN.

OKAY, MARGARET, WHY DON'T YOU TELL US WHERE YOU WERE BORN AND A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR FAMILY LIFE AND CHILDHOOD.

A. I was born in Kemnitz, Saxony in Germany. I had a very happy childhood. I was the second born.

Q. WHAT TYPE OF SCHOOLING DID YOU HAVE AND A LITTLE BIT ABOUT -- WAS YOUR FAMILY OBSERVANT JEWS OR SECULAR?

A. I went to a private girls' school in Kemnitz until my 16th -- 17th year and then I was sent to Switzerland to household school in (Les Anpree) where I learned French and chores about the household.

Q. WHAT TYPE OF PROFESSION WAS YOUR FATHER IN?

A. My father was -- gee, what is it in English? Strumpf und (wert waren) Fabrikant.

A. Fabrikator in stockings, gloves. He had a lot of export business with France, Switzerland, Italy.

Q. DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER SIBLINGS BESIDES -- YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU WERE THE SECOND BORN?

A. Pardon?

Q. DID YOU HAVE ANY OTHER BROTHERS OR SISTERS?

A. I have a brother. He was one year older. I have a sister -- she's about six years younger than I am.

Q. WHAT TYPE OF JEWISH LIFE DID YOUR FAMILY HAVE; DID THEY OBSERVE THE HOLIDAYS OR --

A. Just observed the holidays; that's all.

Q. LIKE WHICH HOLIDAYS?

A. Both holidays. My late father was not Jewish; my mother was Jewish.

Q. OKAY.

A. So we observed both holidays -- the Jewish holidays and we observed the Christian holidays -- both.

Q. WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WHAT THAT WAS LIKE? LIKE WOULD YOU PUT UP A CHRISTMAS TREE AND WOULD YOU LIGHT HANUKKAH CANDLES, OR MAYBE DESCRIBE HOW --

A. We were used to that from childhood on so there was no special excitement.

Q. WERE YOU GIVEN BOTH A JEWISH AND A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION? WHAT TYPE OF RELIGION?

A. Mostly Christian education --

Q. OKAY. WERE YOU SENT TO --

A. -- because father was head of the household. Father was a Christian.

Q. WERE YOU LUTHERAN? WAS HE LUTHERAN OR EVANGELICAL OR CATHOLIC?

A. Father was Protestant, Evangelist -- Lutheran religion.

Q. WERE YOU SENT TO LUTHERAN SUNDAY SCHOOL?

A. Well, once in a while, but not too often as I recall.

Q. WERE YOU EVER TAKEN TO SYNAGOGUE?

A. Very seldom -- later on in the later years not in childhood days, yeah.

Q. HOW DID YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF? HOW DID YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF? JEWISH? CHRISTIAN?

A. There was no speech about it in those days when I grew up. What are you? What is your religion? Nobody asked anything. That's why it was shocking when Hitler came and we were told we were just a mischling not full German or whatever.

Q. DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN HITLER CAME TO POWER AND HOW THAT AFFECTED YOU AND YOUR FAMILY PERSONALLY? WHAT WENT ON??

A. It did affect us very much. Father lost a business because -- on account of Hitler's regime then in those days. They did not buy the merchandise from Germany -- the French and the Swiss and the Italians. So father had to declare

bankruptcy and it was very hard on all of us.

Then I recall we had the Gestapo coming to the house and saying this is (rausen schande) your father and your mother.

I says, "I can't understand. This is father and mother. How can they be (rausen shande)?" Father was an older man. I don't know how old father was, but he has had a stroke from all the trouble. In those years he was hardly able to talk -- to speak. It seemed the stroke affected his speech -- the whole body.

So mother was ordered by a postcard to come to the Gestapo headquarters in Berlin. I forgot the street where it was. But I went with my mother, and she had to bring her birth certificate. They were talking in a very -- gee, how should I call it? A very upsetting way. Very arrogant -- arrogantly. They mentioned that, mother, you will hear from us. So of course my mother was afraid that something would happen.

She has heard lately that one of her relatives, which was an uncle, I think, Louie Joseph has been killed in a concentration camp. I forgot which camp that was. His wife, Caroline, got a postcard to pick up the body. That I remember. But I don't know what year that was. That must have been in '30, beginning of '30.

Mother visited several of her friends and I went with

mother until we saw -- Ben Joseph was his name -- and Mr. and Mrs. Jeffe which was a second cousin from my mother, but I don't remember the street. They lived in Berlin.

Through the help from my late father's sister who happened to know one of the Nazis -- I don't know who it was. I think his name was Frank -- one of the big shot Nazis then. We wrote to my late father's sister about the (rausen schande), that they were going to arrest father and mother and put them in a camp or whatever, and that maybe she could be of any help in that case, which she probably did. Then later on they left us alone.

But I got a card, I have to report with my passport to the police station. So I asked my sister. She's a little more -- how should I say -- peppy or clever maybe, than I am. She says, "I'll go with you." In the meantime somebody told me about that job with the German Lufthansa.

"That would be a good job for you", they told me, "because you know languages. You speak French. You know a little English from school, and you speak German and you have been traveling. So why don't you apply for that job?" Which I did and I got the answer right away. I had to report and introduce myself.

In those days -- it was in the '30's sometime -- '32, '33 maybe, nobody asked who are you, what are you or anything. What is your religion? Nothing. So I liked that very much.

But when I was told to come with my passport to the police station -- oh, no. I had to hand in my passport. Excuse me, that was it. I went to the police without my sister. I had to hand in my passport.

I says, "Why? Why do you take my passport away?"

"Well, orders. Don't ask any questions. Orders,"

"Okay." So the passport was gone.

Then in the meantime, I got that job with the German Lufthansa.

The instructor said, "Well, we're going to fly over to Copenhagen, Stockholm to get you acquainted with the flying and with the other stewardesses in different countries. You all have a passport, I think?"

They all said, "Yes."

I thought, "Oh my God, I don't have a passport." So that was then my sister says, "Come on. I go with you to the police station and if they ask any questions we say, 'Yes, we're Aryish -- Aryan.'" That was the word, Aryan.

So we went over there and there was a policeman and he said, "Well, I don't have to ask any questions. You both look blond with the blue eyes." I never forget that.

My sister said, "Yes."

"And you're the real Germans. You work for the Lufthansa?"

"No," she says, "My sister does." So with that I got

my passport.

That was a trick which I always kept to myself. I couldn't tell anybody later on, you know, put the "J" in or something. I was looking for that passport yesterday until late at night and I couldn't find it. So -- what happened?

So they put down in that passport -- they said, "What work do you do?"

I said, I'm (unter stevdel) en da Deutsch Lufthansa." So he put that in that passport.

When I wanted to leave the country, the guy said, "No. We cannot give you an ausreizer to leave the country."

I said, "Why not?"

"Because you see this here? It says (unter stevdel) en da Deutsch Lufthansa."

"Well," I says, "I'm not there anymore."

"Oh?" he says.

"No," I says. "Now I am working for Electrola" -- which was a music company in Berlin and I worked for them years before Electrola (Kauferstendam). So when they heard -- or when the boss from Electrola heard that I was thrown out from the Lufthansa on account of not being Aryan, he took me right away back in the store and I was happy about it.

He said, "That doesn't make any difference with us who you are, what your religion is, or if you are Aryan or not."

I says, "Fine."

But I wanted to leave the country. That was too much for me to be thrown out because you are partly Jewish. You are what they said a mischling. I mean to some people it didn't bother, but it bothered me.

So I wanted to leave the country. I went to the American Embassy in Berlin and stood in a long, long waiting line to get in to be heard. When it was finally my turn, they says, "No, you cannot get a visa."

I says, "Well, I have a grandmother in New York and from my late father's -- from my father's side a cousin in New York, a Dr. Yeager." A famous (kirurg) I heard. I never met him.

My father had a ladyfriend in New York because he has been in America many, many years ago before learning the language. So was my late father's father also in America -- in the United States on business. He was in the same trade, stockings and gloves fabrikacion.

My father sent a note to his ladyfriend he knew from years ago. I have a daughter. She would like to go to America. Could you help her? I don't know if he explained why and what. I don't think he did. The reasons -- so she showed the photo to her son and her son was so enthralled about the photo that he says, "I want to marry that girl." Just like an old (schmooker) --like an old man. Like a

(schmook) kind of. My English wasn't good enough to write to him, so he more or less correspondence with my father. He spoke fluently English. He sent a paper that he has the photo; that he wants to marry me signed by a notary -- his promise.

So my mother says, "You know what? We're going to the Jewish Committee. I heard from friends of mine that they arranged things. You can make it to the United States or to any other country." That was in Berlin 1937 -- '38 it must have been.

So we went to the committee and they said, "Well, we can get you a job to go to England as a maid.

No," I says. "I don't want to go to England as a maid; I want to get married."

They said, "Well, can't he come over here?"

I says, "No, he can't come over here."

So they said, "There is a place we can get you a visa which is Panama and he could come from the United States to Panama -- that's American soil. He can get married and bring you back to Connecticut." He was from Connecticut, the young man.

So I got the visa for Panama in my passport. I went to the travel office and they said it has to be paid in dollar. So my father wrote that I could only leave if it has been paid in dollars. So my late father's lady friend paid

the trip. I think it was over $600 or something in those days.

I went to the travel office in Berlin and I says, "Well, can I take the boat from Hamburg?"

They said, "No, we have a war going on in case you don't know."

I said, "Well how do I go to Panama then?"

"Well, you have to go the other way through China -- Japan."

"No," I says. "I don't want to go that way." Finally as if I had some voice telling me something goes wrong -- you know, can happen. What do you call that some --

Q. PREMONITION?

A. Yeah, premonition -- premonition.

They said, "Well, this is the only way."

I says, "Well, so I have to go that way then, fine."

I had to take the train from Berlin -- I don't know -- what day was it? It was December. It could have been the 12th -- 12th of December, I think. But to get the ausreizer visa, that was the hardest part, you know.

In those days it was already then 1940 that I had the visa for Panama. I went to the -- ausreizer visa. That means that they let you out. I went there with my passport and with the letter from that so-called fiance. Mr. Livingston was his

name. Hendrick Livingston, yeah. They looked at the passport and they must have read, you know, unter Lufthansa.

"You don't get a visa."

I says, "Why not?" He took the passport and went to some other guys in that same office.

They said, "No."

So I went home and I cried and mother says, "Well, listen. We have to think of something. We have to do something to get you out."

We went to the Jewish committee and they said, "Well, we have no connection with that certain department where you get your "okay" to leave the country."

So mother thought of somebody at Electrola -- at that music store where I worked. He used to come and buy records and when he came in he said, "My liebeskind" instead of calling me before that, Miss Lieberskint.

He says, "My liebeskind." That means "dear child", no?

"Do you have any exciting new records?"

"Yeah," I says. "I always have some new records."

That same man I heard -- or he must have come to Electrola and he said he is now with the -- what was it -- the German police, not Nazi police. German police in Berlin -- in the office.

My mother thought about this man. Can you imagine?

Oh, she was bright, my mother.

So she says, "You go there. You go to that main big police station in Berlin." We lived in Berlin then -- father, mother, me, Hilda.

"And you talk to him. You tell him what the deal is. That they threw you out at Lufthansa without giving anything written and just that you are not what they call an Aryan, that you're a mischling." I did that like she told me.

I went there I says, "I'd like to see Mr. So-and-So." I better not mention the name, but he might not be around anymore. But that's not important, is it? I told him the case.

He says, "Oh, I have a friend there in that office who gives the ausreizer visa to leave the country. I'll talk to him."

I says, "Really, would you do that for me?"

"Yes -- yes, sure my liebeskind." For my liebeskind, I'll do that for you." So he must have called up.

"You go there right tomorrow morning at nine o'clock." I think it was -- nine or ten.

"You go there and take your passport, and tell them to change that right away. You are not with the Lufthansa anymore. I talked to him on the phone and he's going to change it." It was crossed out and it was done. He wrote down (buro angelstelte) -- worker in an office.

So I got the stamp that I can leave the country, but then I had to go -- I don't think I brought the papers -- to the (Ris Musik Kama) to the (Ris National Gallis) -- God knows what that was -- and another one inspection. On each of those places they asked me why I leave?

I says, "Because I want to get married."

In the (Ris Musik Kama) the man said, "What kind of --."

Oh, I had to write everything down. What I planned on taking with me. So I had, of course, working in the music store, I had several classical records and some light operatic music from Richard Tolbert who was a great singer. Joseph Schmidt, Jackie (Poru) and some classical records from Mendelson -- the composer Mendelson and, of course, Beethoven.

He went through the whole list and he said, "This you cannot take with you, and this you can't, and this, and this, and this and this." I says, "Why not?"

"Because they're all Jews."

"Oh," I said, "That doesn't matter. What's the difference? I like those."

"No." He crossed it all out. So certain things I was just not allowed to take with me -- just only so many records and not more. Music sheets the same thing. I liked to play piano and sing. So what else can I say?

Oh, and then on clothing. I could take two coats and

one suit and three pairs of shoes and underwear. This and, of course, I had some towels which was for the -- what you call the dowry when you get married -- and some table cloths, little embroidery things, only so many pieces and the rest was crossed out. That stays here. The same way with the money. I don't remember. It was very little -- $10, I think. The mark traded into dollars for that long trip from Berlin to Panama.

So, anyhow, I left Berlin. Mother came with me to the train. My friends were afraid to come to the train to the vahnhof, I think it was. But mother was there and it was very hard for me to leave father and mother behind. Especially, I didn't know what will happen to them.

But mother said, "At least one gets saved from the family."

So I left Berlin in the train and I had a sleeping compartment then and the train went through -- I think it was -- I don't know.

The conductor said, "The train is going through Poland." There was some Nazis also in the train -- some in uniform -- Nazi uniform.

They said, "Nobody is opening any curtains." The curtains, you know, they had kind of sun curtains in those trains in those days.

"The curtain will be down and nobody is allowed to

look out." I couldn't figure out, but I knew the Nazis were already in Poland.

I only heard the news from my mother. She used to listen to my radio. I had a nice radio, Blaupunkt. There were no television in those days. She would sit and listen even if somebody would have reported that she was listening to foreign station. They would have sent her to some camp. But nobody did hear it and she told me the latest news always.

So then the train ran through Poland and then -- I don't know, it was hooked up with another train. I guess they have different lines in Russia -- different tracks, I should say. There was a Russian soldier with a bayonet stood there. I thought, "Oh my God, what's going to happen?"

The one that took take care of the sleeping departments, he said to me, "Aren't you scared going by yourself to Russia?"

I says, "No, why should I be scared?"

He says, "I'm going to introduce you to a young man who is a student from the southern part of Germany and he is also alone. So that you're not all by yourself."

I says, "Well, I'm not afraid."

"Well, but it's better you know somebody and this was" -- but that's not important, is it? So he introduced me and that was a student from Stuttgart, or someplace down south, and the trip continued.

He was in the same -- well, the train was hooked up to a Russian train. They were different. There was no sleeper. There was a bed here and a bed above, and on the other side in the same compartment two beds, too. I said I wanted to have my own place.

They said, "That's impossible, we don't do that here." It's funny how you remember certain things.

So the young man said, "You want to sleep upstairs Frau Liberskint, or downstairs?"

I says, "I'd rather be down."

So he says, "Then I go up there first."

Next in the same compartment was a married couple from Berlin, I think, yeah. A Jewish couple, very nice people -- I forgot the name. I think Mr. and Mrs. Jacoby, if I'm not mistaken. But they went to the United States directly they told me or to Shanghai; I don't remember. After all it was 45 years ago, you know. So many different things happened again in the meantime.

So I arrived in Moscow and I was told at the travel office, you have to wait three days for the South Siberian Express which comes only on certain days, and the hotel was included. I think it was Hotel Metrapol and I even went to the theater. There was a theater -- opera ticket included in the whole deal and I saw Eugene Auneegin -- Eugene Auneegin. Of course, it was all in Russian, but the music was beautiful

and so was the ballet. In daytime we were taken by a tourist lady in a car and she showed us several places in Moscow. After three days the trip continued through Russia and it was bitter cold.

In Moscow it was bitter cold too. People were standing in long lines, I heard, waiting for food. Then the train stopped someplace -- I don't know where it was in Russia and you couldn't get out of the car because it was bitter cold. I tried to go out and I caught a bad cold then.

Then we came to Manchuko -- to the frontier. (Utpoor), I think, was the place. Into Manchuko, Korea and then across, I think it was Japan Sea up to Koba, Yokohama. Yokohama was the destination because the ship was suppose to leave Yokohama on the end of the year 1940, the 30th or 31st.

So when I arrived in Yokohama -- and the deal was the Grand Hotel Yokohama. I had a room booked there. That was booked through the travel agency. So the next day I went over to the NYK which was the Japanese shipping line. It was booked from Berlin by a Japanese Shipping line and the ship was Rakuu Maru. I had my -- now what is it? It's not the ship's ticket. It's the -- what do you call that? The order, so-called, that you are allowed to leave the ship known by the name of Rakuu Maru on the 30th or 31st of December, 1940 and it was all paid for too in that travel office deal.

I go there and they said, "No." They said something

in Japanese.

I says, "I don't understand Japanese."

My English was fairly -- not fluently -- but fairly. I could make myself understanding and listen what they said to understand what they meant.

To make it short they said, "No, you can't take that ship.

I said, "Why not?" -- the visa or something.

I said, "I have a visa and here, it's all paid."

"No." So what should I do?

There were several immigrants in the same hotel and they saw me crying. I was very upset and I told them so-and-so and I wanted to go to Panama to get married.

They said, "Why don't you go to the American Express? They speak German there and they speak French, and they speak English, besides Japanese."

So I went there. There was a young man and I talked French with him.

He said, "I don't understand. You have a visa and you have the passage order." The passage order is for the ship.

"Well," I says, "Maybe you could come with me and talk to those people?" Yeah, he did so.

"No," they said. "No, the visa is no good."

So he says, "You know what you could do? Go to the

Panama Counsel here which is the minister from Panama and talk to him." So I asked him if he would be kind enough and go with me. He speaks better English than I do and he did.

So the minister said, "I don't understand; what's wrong?"

I said, "I don't understand it either."

He said, "I can give you another visa in your passport." So he put another visa in and I had to pay the last money I had. I think it was $15 -- yeah, $15.

He says, "I tell you what. You go to the hotel and tell them to take all your luggage on the ship and I'm holding the papers back. You see the ship goes to Panama. I'm holding the whole board book back until you are on that ship. They have to take you."

So I did. I had all my luggage shipped over. I didn't have so much. I had a trunk, ship's coffer, suitcase, and a little suitcase and another little one.

I was on the ship and it seems some guy came over and he said he wanted to see my papers. So I showed him the papers.

He said, "No, you can't come. We don't take you."

I says, "Oh, yes. I went to the Panama minister and he said they have to take me because this is a Japanese ship and it's landing in Panama."

"No," they said. "No, and if you're not leaving

right away, I'll have you arrested by the harbor police."

So I got scared -- kind of and I says, "All right."

I didn't want any trouble in a foreign country with the police or what. So I had my luggage shipped off the ship and there I stood and the ship left. That board book was delivered in the meantime, you know, and they left and there I was. So what to do?

They said, "Well, go to the Jewish Committee. That's in Tokyo."

I said, "I don't even have the money to go to Tokyo."

They said, "There is another thing you can do. You have no "J" on your passport?"

I said, "No."

" Well, then you are not Jewish."

" Well," I said, "You can call me whatever you want. I'm half-Jewish. My mother is Jewish."

So they were very doubtful, but they referred me to see that -- what was the name? Mr. Boles, I think. He is a Quaker. Well, everybody in Berlin knew what the Quakers -- they helped a lot.

I said, "Yeah, but I don't know my way around -- nothing and I have no money and nothing."

So there was a young man from Frankfurt and he said, "I'll go with you and see the Quaker." He was Jewish too, but I forgot his name.

The Quaker said, "Well, did you go to your German Consulate? You are German and you have a German passport and you are not Jewish. So you wouldn't have any trouble here in Japan."

I says, "Well, I was wondering, could you help me to go over to Panama to meet my fiance?"

They said, "Well, there is nothing we can do. We can't help you with money. The way your situation is you have to stay here now until your fiance does something from over there."

I said, "All right, fine."

"So we can help you and put an ad in the paper for you." So they did.

They said, "The best thing is you take the job with that German man."

His name was Alvin Morgan, and he came over to Japan. I don't know what his job was, but he worked for some German company probably. I never asked him, "What do you do, or what is your job?" He came with his little girl and he says he would like to have a governess for his daughter. His wife went to America and he's alone with the daughter.

I says, "Gladly, I have done this kind of work before as governess."

So I stayed with that family. How long did I stay? I don't know. A year -- a year and a half probably.

More or less, I met a lot of very nice people. There was no war with America yet so there were still quite a few Americans there. Also, I met quite a few people from Germany. They were detained in Japan. They all hoped -- Jewish people -- they hoped to go either South America, or North America, or Central America or someplace.

So I got a postcard from Tokyo. I should come to Tokyo for an interview. I don't remember the address -- what it was. It was a Nazi, some kind of office.

When I came there, they said, "What do you do here?"

So I told them my story: I'm engaged to be married and I had trouble with the visa, I got another visa and so I just wait that my fiance can arrange something.

"Well, we have heard that you have been seen downtown with a lot of Jewish people."

"Oh, yes," I said. "Why shouldn't I meet them. I'm a stranger in this country and they're very nice people. I know some. They traveled with me by train and some are here and wait for their visa to continue their trip."

"Who are they? What is their names?"

I says, "Sometimes I don't even know the names."

They asked me questions. "Well, on what do you live?"

I says, "Well, I have that job with that German family and taking care of the little girl."

They asked thousands of questions. So I didn't mention anything that I'm not a full Aryan. I thought why should I? It's nobody's business but mine.

I met a family -- Mr. and Mrs. Berg. Mr. Berg was -- spoke German and she spoke German. Mrs. Berg was Jewish and Mr. Berg was -- you call an Aryan. He was a newspaper reporter for a German paper. I think the Frankfurt Sider. Later on he ended up in prison too.

From that young man of the American Express -- his name was Ludi Frank -- he took me to his family. He had a brother and wife in Yokohama. Knowing that I was all by my little self, he took me -- introduced me to his family. There was Hugo Frank and Alice Frank and their little daughter, Barbara Frank. During the conversation they told me Ludi and Hugo Frank were brothers. His father was Jewish and their mother was English.

The same way with Mrs. Berg. Mrs. Berg was Jewish, full Jewish, and Mr. Berg was an Aryan -- the newspaper man. They had two daughters, Irene Frank and Marlice Frank. I became a good friend with Marlice Frank and a good friend with Hugo Frank's wife. Her name is Alice Frank. She lives here in America now with her daughter. She's still alive, yeah. So all this they didn't like -- that office in Tokyo, that nationalist office. I had to tell them with whom I'm friend and all that and I thought it's nobody's business, but my own.

Some of the immigrants were lucky enough. They could leave Japan. Some even went on American ships over to the United States and some maybe to Mexico or South America; I don't know.

Before I took that job at this German family with the little girl, I went to the German Consulate. Somebody told me you should go and see the German Consul and ask him to help you with the continuation of my trip to Panama.

So I went over and he says, "You have a passport?"

"Yes," I said. He was sitting there with a Mr. Salheim. Dr. Salheim was that man's name -- the Counsel, General Counsel from Germany.

I said, "I would like you --"

"Well, we can't do anything for you. We can't help you with money or something."

I says, "Well, I didn't come here to ask you for that. I ask you if there is a chance that you being the Counsel could talk to the Japanese shipping line so that I can continue my trip?"

He says "Where is your fiance? Why didn't you get married to him in Berlin?"

I says, "Because he's in America."

"He's in America? He's a German?"

"No," I said. "He's American citizen."

"Well," he says, "Then in that case we have nothing

to do with you." That was the answer he had. I forgot to mention that before. So that was it.

So I had that job. But I, for some reason or other, I wasn't happy there. The little girl was all right, but, the man, he was kind of strange. So I was lucky enough. I met through a friend somebody who said he is the Counsel from Mexico.

He says, "What do you do here?"

I says, "I came from Berlin and I have trouble with my visa to continue my trip to Panama to get married." I told him that I'm partly Jewish.

So he says, "Well, a young lady like you --"

I wasn't so young anyhow, but I was not old yet. Sometimes I tried to figure out how old was I then. I must have been in my 30's when I was in Japan. Six years of my life I had to spend there.

So this young man -- he wasn't young either. He wasn't old either that Mexican Counsel.

He says, "I came here with my mother. My mother is an elderly lady. She's in her 60's and I would like to ask you to be her, if you would like to do that kind of job, ladies companion."

I said, "Yes. I never had this kind of job yet."

He says, "You could accompany her for walks and she has to see the doctor every so often."

I says, "Wonderful, yes."

"You would have to live with her. You get your own room and all that."

I said, "Fine."

So I quit that job with the German man and I went to the lady. Her name was Madam -- Senora Gutierrez Macias Rodriguez. There were three names: Rodriguez Gutierrez Macias. Very nice lady.

She says, "Margarita, you no say, 'Tu no sabes.'" That means, I don't understand and you don't understand. She spoke only Spanish -- just a very few words in English. My English was very poor then also. It's because all I learned in school. Then I was mostly together with people who spoke German. In Japan were a lot of immigrants and some who were in the same boat like I was what you call half-mixed.

So the years went by. I had no trouble whatsoever, and all of a sudden it was 1941. So I wasn't with that German too long -- with that German family. I just remembered because I was with the Mexican lady in Yokohama and we met her son. He said the war broke out December the 6th, 1941 with America. So we were all upset. Very upset. What to do now?

But I was asked to stay with them -- with the Senora. So the Mexicans had to go to Tokyo and the Senora said, "No, Margarita comes with us." She's going to take Margarita with her to Mexico, fine. That was just another dream. We had to

stay in Tokyo in the Mexican legation and we were not allowed to leave that property. There was a Japanese policeman stationed right in the legation. The radios were taken away. So they had no contact with the outside world. Of course the Mexican minister talked to -- I think the Swedish were in charge of those exchanges with American diplomats, and Mexican diplomats, and whatever there was. Everybody was very much afraid what's going to happen. Even they were very Catholic, but they had a very little belief in those days I noticed.

So we were interned and the Swedish minister or one of the Swedish workers came and said, "Who do you have with you here? A German? What is she doing here?"

The Counsel said, "Well, she is with my mother. She's a ladies companion. My mother is an elderly lady and she needs someone to be with her at all times," and that's how I was there with them.

There was the Mexican minister and his wife, and there was the Mexican military attache with his wife and daughter, and the secretary from the Consul, and the secretary from the minister, and Margarita. So they were going to take me over to Mexico with them, but it was impossible. The Swedish minister said she had to leave right now before you go -- before there is any exchange -- shipping Japanese to their country and the American and Mexicans to their country.

So I had to leave and I didn't know where to go.

People who lived in Yokohama, they had to leave the city when the war turned kind of critical, I guess. The foreigners had to get out of cities like Tokyo or Yokohama.

So I found a place to stay in Yokohama, but I forgot the name. I think Leonard. I heard the lady is American and her husband is Japanese. They had a chicken business selling chickens or selling eggs, and he had to give me a place to stay, a room. So that was 1941, yeah.

The Mexicans left me some food so I have enough to eat for some time, and they left me a bicycle so I can go around on the bicycle to give lessons in French. The Japanese took lessons in German and some took English, beginner English. The nuns gave me a job in tutoring the piano and tutoring French in their convent. So I could make my living, barely, and pay my rent and my food.

I was on my own until 1944. I went to see a friend, a lady. She was a German. Her husband worked in some German place. I was suppose to meet her downtown in Yokohama in the shopping center, and I said, "I'm leaving now and I'll meet you downtown."

She says, "Yeah."

So I come out of the house and a car stopped. Two Japanese came towards me and they said, "(Liebeskintda)."

So I said, "Yeah, that's me." They said something and I said, "(For gadi masen)" -- I don't understand.

Again they said something and I says, "I don't know what you're talking about. "For gadi masen." They took a sign out and showed me the police sign.

"Oh," I said, "Police (desaha)" and they pushed me right in their car and sit on the floor. I had to sit on the floor, and I said, "This is funny; what's going on?

They took me to some building. I didn't know what it was.

They took me out, put me in a room and told me, "Wait, wait," and I sat down on a big table.

I waited and waited. I don't know how long. It was kind of getting dark and I still sat there. They said if I want something to eat? No. They pretended they don't speak English at all and I told them -- I don't know what. I knew very little Japanese because I had no Japanese friend. I can't talk to them and they didn't want to speak English in those days.

So anyhow I sat there and then in the evening two two officers came in in their uniforms and they spoke Japanese and I didn't know what. Then they said I had to come with them and they took me down to the jail. It was kind of down like in a cellar and I had to take my ring off and my watch and they put me in the cellar. That's where the horrible things started -- torturing. Not the same day, the next day -- right away.

I was locked up in that cellar. They had no steel bar. They're all wood and had a little hole there where they would put the food in. So then I was interrogated every day and every day, one day after another. I have it written down. Maybe it's easier to read it to you. They tortured me.

Q. DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE READING IT?

A. Yeah, thank you. Shall I continue?

Q. GO AHEAD.

A. Somebody typed that for me.

To the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers in Tokyo.

Subject: Claim Against the Japanese Government, and different names that are mentioned.

I was thrown in the (Kampeti) Prison which was the headquarters -- Japanese police headquarters. Kampeti they called it. I got the names from different -- who mistreated me.

(Yamani) was a Public Prosecutor. (Yasushi Syguzo) was the Exwarrant Officer. (Meto), Exsergeant, Kampeti headquarters. (Minoru Mitsuhashi), Exwarrant Officer from Kampeti. (Kikuji Henuma) was the so-called interpreter. According to one of those fellows, Syguzo, he interpreted through Henuma -- through that interpreter that I was arrested by the Kampeti on orders from the Gestapo which a was Lieutenant Hammer and the bloodhound from Warsaw was called

Mr. (Mysinger).

The above-named persons are in connection with maltreatment during the time of the arrest from August 30th, 1944 to December 12th, 1944 at the Kampeti headquarters in Yokohama. Then she was transferred to (Gumiachi) Prison on the 12th of December, 1944 and she came out of prison September 3rd, 1945.

As stated hereafter: Damage of health, heart and lung troubles. See Captain Furbach's statement. Womb displaced and pain on account of cannibalistic torture. Much loss of blood and stop of menstruation for one year. Operation necessary. See statement of Chief of Medical Service.

Tooth troubles; intestine troubles, dysentery; dirty jail conditions -- caused by bug bites after infection. Stomach troubles painful while eating her meals. Eyes infected. Broken thumb; other finger bone smashed. Visible and pain still now.

In order to make me confess and sign a false statement in prison, I was maltreated during the detention at the Japanese Military Police headquarters and at Gumiachi Prison, Yokohama. I was hit over the head with a Japanese bamboo sword by Syguzo, Meto, Mitsuhashi and also Henuma. I was beat terribly with hand and fists by Mitsuhashi.
I was kicked with riding boots by Mitsuhashi, Syguzo and Meto.

I was beaten with leather belts by Syguzo and (Sito). I was beaten with bamboo sword by four men on my nude body, including Syguzo, Meto, in presence of Henuma. Henuma was the interpreter. I was beaten with the table leg on the body, on the head, and in my face. Morasi and Meto were present. I was beaten with thick ropes mostly when naked -- all naked. They ripped everything off my body.

Water bath was Meto and Syguzo handcuffed me and pushed me into dirty stinking water. Head kept underwater until I fainted; then beaten until I came to. Body, hands and feet were firmly tied together and water was poured into my mouth and nostrils. Meto was sitting on my breast and on my swollen belly.

Tied whole body, hands and feet together and burned the hair between my legs with a candle -- a lit candle. Made me kneel for several hours on two crates and on the top of the cover of a wooden barrel. Put burning matches on my arms and knees which were tied. Also put out burning cigarettes on my body until I fainted. Marks of these tortures are still visible and will not disappear.

Reference is made to attached reports by the Regiment Surgeon -- American Surgeon Captain (Furbach). He was the Chief of the medical office. Captain (Guypease) in Saint Luke's Hospital in Tokyo.

Syguzo pulled me by my hair through the interrogation

room. He tortured with the end of a bamboo stick up and down my spine. He tied my hands in the back and to a push window -- you know, up and down, which was pushed up and down -- I don't know. Syguzo and Mitsuhashi beat fingers, which left marks, with thumb hit so hard -- that's this finger -- that the bones sprang apart or what -- the bones sprang into two. Marks will not disappear; still notice pain now occasionally. They made me kneel on a barrel top with pointed planks and Meto was sitting and riding on my back so that I could not walk for several weeks owing to swollen feet and legs during all those inhumane repeated beatings and torturings, especially beatings over my head.

I cannot remember the facts as well as before. I cannot recognize people as quickly as I used to. From the 3rd of September '45 until February '46 I had to recover from the tortures and little by little I could walk again. It was not before February '46 that I could start walking again and even then I was under treatment by the 161 Station Hospital at Fujisawa. My recovery was aided greatly by the kind assistance of CIC officers and United States medical examiners.

When I was confined in Gumiachi Prison in a small solitary cell -- I think it was ten by three or something -- by myself again, I had to kneel on the tatami, which is the Japanese mat from 7 a.m. in the morning until 7 p.m with my

legs bent in the Japanese style which I, being a foreigner, call torture. I also experienced several heart attacks suffered from lung troubles and serious dysentery.

Due to the severe tortures and from fear of further maltreatment, I attempted to commit suicide first in October '44 and again during the following weeks. I took a pocket knife which the Kampeti officer left on the table in the interrogation room and I tried to cut my wrists and the main vein. I didn't realize it wasn't sharp enough. The malnutrition was I lost at least 50 pounds of weight. Lunch consisted of a bowl of barley mixed with soybeans. For breakfast and supper I was given, in addition, some watery soup with vegetables leftovers in it.

Through (Mr. Pistalasi), a Swiss delegate of the International Red Cross and Miss Ruth Stern, a friend of mine, she paid totally 400 yen for special food to be sent to me. A donation would have lasted for at least five months, but I received special meals only for about 45 days. I was always so hungry that I thought I would eventually die all the more as I suffered very badly from dysentery for several weeks.

Condition of the Jail: Kampeti -- almost for the duration I was in solitary confinement -- the cell was ten by five feet. The toilet Japanese style -- just on the ground, you know, like a big basin. It was in the same cell and it was overflowing with stool and stinking with worms all over

the place. Furthermore, white lice, bedbugs, fleas everywhere. There was very poor light in the small cell which affected my eyesight.

Then the other prison, Gumiachi Prison -- there was a big prison compound. I was also imprisoned there in solitary confinement. It was a two mat cell. Japanese floor, six by six feet. This place was not as dirty as the Kampeti room, but there was no heating in wintertime and summertime eventually was very poor ventilation. Food was absolutely insufficient. I was taken for a walk about twice a week for five minutes. I had a bath once a month in a Japanese bathtub after fifteen Japanese woman prisoners too had had their baths in the same water. So -- that's it.

After my release from prison, I found almost all of my personal belongings missing from my home. Total amounting -- oh, this I sent to the German restitution place. Some things I found from that lady that used to live with me in the house, but a lot of things were just gone.

But how I survived? I don't know; it was a miracle. I prayed a lot, but it's hard to describe what I had to go through. I think my belief in God helped me a lot. But there were always times when I asked myself: Why doesn't God help me? Why doesn't the Lord help me at all? What have I done to be in? There was no answer. Even now after so many years I can't forget, but I try to.

The only thing was I was tortured to sign a confession that I have done spy work.

I said, "I have not done any spy work. How can I sign?" They wrote down in the Japanese writing all the time while one or the other tortured me. After I think I was three months in that military Kampeti cell that interpreter said, "You better sign."

I said, "How can I sign? I haven't done any spy work. What can I sign? I'm a spy?"

"You better sign," he says. He talked me into signing -- too much torturing.

"You will be sent to another prison, and then you will be tortured again. Just sign -- sign the paper." A book this thick. I don't know what they wrote in it in Japanese.

So I finally said, "All right, I sign."

I signed because he said, "You will be sent out to another place -- to a better place," he said.

So then I was sent to another place. They put a hat on my face and it seems to be the style. Prisoner should be seen or what -- I don't know. And transferred me to another prison -- a big prison compound.

But like it says here, I had to sit the Japanese way of sitting. Do you know what that is? The women sit that way. I can't do it anymore. You sit like this. [Demonstrating.] Ooh! That's painful. Thank you, Dear --

from morning till night. Then you move on this side, or you move on that side and somebody looks through the little window or what, and they say "(Dame. Dame dis, dame dis.)" That means, don't do that. Sit the way you're told to, which I think is also torturing. But they didn't hit me over there, or they didn't beat me with bamboo sticks or cigarettes and all that.

Then I finally came out. I couldn't see anyone. I heard the American planes. I heard planes and I could figure out they must be Americans, but they were way up. I had a window in my cell. I had to sit this way like I look at you and behind me was a window with bars, and I was not suppose to get up. There was a toilet seat in that little cell which was a relief. At least I could get up and sit there for a minute or so. I heard the planes and I started praying and praying. I thought, I hope nothing happens to them.

Then once there was a big commotion in the hall. I don't know what was going on. They spoke Japanese.

I asked them in that other prison compound, I said to a guard -- a woman guard -- "Could you give me some work to do? Just doing something not just to sit there?"

"No dame dis."

So I says, "I would clean the hole or clean something -- the toilet." I was refused to do anything except to sit.

Then the delegate from the Red Cross he came to see me one day. But I was scared to say anything because I still remember that beating -- that torturing.

The interpreter said to me, "There's one from the International Red Cross, Geneva, is coming to visit. You're not allowed to say any word. If he asks you how you are, you say, 'I'm all right.' Don't speak what happened -- nothing."

So I was afraid to mention anything from that torturing, but I asked him if he could send me some food. I think I saw him just twice or three times during the whole -- not in the military prison but in the other compound there.

Then when I saw him the third time, I told him -- I says, "Could you do something for me? They gave me a trial and I was sentenced to six years in prison." So he said, yeah, he will see what he can do.

Anyhow, I sat there until the 3rd of September when a friend came -- a Mr. (Gugglemeier) from a friend of mine, the husband. I was a friend with his wife, and he came to that Guimachi Prison. He told me later he was looking for another friend of his -- a Mr. Meyer. His name was Hans Meyer who was also in prison. They said, "Oh, he is released since May. He's someplace."

So then he's remembered Frau Liberskint and the guard said, "Yeah. She's here; you can't see her."

He said, "Yes. I have to see her. And if you don't

let me see her, then I have to call the General McArthur. He's going to send up some of this soldiers."

So the guy must have gotten scared, and he said, "All right." So he got me out of my cell and took me to some visitor room I guess it was, and there was Mr. (Gugglemeier). He said, "What are you doing here? Hitler is dead and the whole gang is gone. Nobody knows where they are. What do you do here?"

I says, "Can you take me out?"

The guard says, "No, no, no, no. She has to stay here."

It seems I heard later on the war was over in May or June with the Nazis and the Japanese, wasn't it? They let me sit there all by my little self because I had no relatives there, nobody who could come and claim me. It was just by chance that he was looking for a friend of his that he remembered that I was also detained.

So he says, "Oh, I brought some bread. Would you like?"

The guard said, "No, no, no, no."

He says, "She might be hungry."

I says, "I'm very hungry."

I remember the same evening some prison guard opened that little door where they shove the food in the evening. He threw a bundle of -- something. So I unwrapped it and it was

ORDER THE JAPANESE TO ARREST YOU?

A. Being a spy. That's what they said.

Q. THAT'S WHAT THE GESTAPO THOUGHT?

A. The Gestapo -- I have a very interesting article from Mr. (Furster). Mr. (Furster) -- see I had friends. I made a lot of friend in that rotten place there in Japan, but a lot of friends too.

I met Ruth Sterling. We became very good friends. She and her brother came from Vienna -- no, from Russia, really. I think I met them at the Jewish Committee. Ruth -- yeah, she was a friend with Mr. (Miburn) and she invited me over to their place. Their father worked as an engineer for Mr. (Furster). I didn't inquire who is Mr. (Furster), or what do you do, or what kind of business do they have. I wasn't interested in that. I was just interested in my friends, getting together and talking about the days they passed over in their country and days I passed in Germany.

So that Mr. (Furster) I heard was thrown in jail. I says, "Mr. (Furster)?" But he was the boss from Ruth Stern's father.

I says to Mr. Stern, "What happened to Mr. (Furster)?"

Word goes around. Yokohama is not a big town. It's a town but not as big. They know these people and they know those people.

They said, "He's a spy."

I said, "Mr. (Furster)?"

So Mr. Stern had lost his job because I heard from Mr. Stern, Mr. Furster, he employed all kinds of people not only Jewish people like immigrants. He also employed Swiss or he employed Portuguese. He didn't mind who is who as long as they could do their work in his business. But the German's didn't like him because they told me he was from one of the states either the Baltic States, or either Estonia, or Lithuania or someplace. I never met him. But I knew he has a business and Mr. Stern work there for years.

There was a time when Japan sent all the people with the "J" in the passport out of Japan to Shanghai. So I knew quite a few people. I befriended them in Yokohama.

They said, "Oh, I wish you could come with us." So I even inquired if I could go to Shanghai and they said, no. I had to stay in Yokohama. Why? I don't know. I guess I was watched by the Gestapo or Japanese. I don't know. I never inquired how come, but I would have gone to Shanghai with them. Then I never heard from them. I wonder where they are.

But I still am in letter exchanging with Ruth Stern. She lives in Chicago. She's married there and then her brother lives in Israel. He came visiting me about five years ago with his wife. He's happy in Israel he told me. I should come over too sometime visiting. In fact I wanted to go this

year with (Erna Sperry) and she passed on. She made those trips to Israel every year, I heard. I thought, well, this time I'll go with her and, unfortunately, she passed on. She was very sick.

You know Erna Sperry? She was our director in the Montefjord Senior Center, yeah. Very nice lady, the wife of Rabbi Sperry.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU WERE RELEASED FROM THE PRISON?

A. Pardon?

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU AFTER YOU WERE RELEASED FROM PRISON? YOU WERE HOSPITALIZED AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

A. Oh, they were going to send me on the American hospital boat. I forgot the name of it.

The CIC took me there and they said, "This is the case. You have to take care of that lady and she went through terrible times."

They said, "Well, what kind of papers does she have?"

"She has her passport, her German passport."

They said, "But then she can't be here on our ship."

"Yeah, but this is a special case," they said, "because she went through so much on account of being partly Jewish."

"Well," the Captain said, "But we have so many of our American prisoners who have been mistreated; the boat is full.

You should take her down to Tokyo to the St. Luke's Hospital."

There was the same again. I had that German passport without a "J" which did not help me at all.

So they said, "No, we can't do anything."

I went to the American Red Cross and asked if they could give me any medicine to get me back on my feet. I was kind of weak too and I lost so much weight.

The same thing. "What kind of papers do you have?"

I says, "I have my passport."

"Well, show us your passport first." I showed them my passport.

They said, "No, you don't come in our rubric that we can hand out medicine to you."

I never forgave them that. You know who brought me medicine? You wouldn't believe it, the Catholics. They had a Catholic school there which was called St. Joseph's College, kind of.

They heard about my case and they said, "I'll bring you some medicine; we'll get that." They get it, but I didn't get it by myself. Maybe I didn't go to the right person. Who knows?

Then I had two girlfriends that were French. They were partly French and partly Japanese. The mother was Japanese and the father was Dutch. I always spoke French with

them, nice girls. The (Mather) girls, Edith Mather and Harriet Mather. There are both not around anymore.

They said, "Well, wait another month and when you feel a little better, a little stronger -- keep on taking your medicine -- we'll get you a job with the American Red Cross."

I said, "What? Yeah, gladly -- I'd gladly do that." I had to live from something; I had to make my living.

So they got me a job in the Field Director's office -- no. First, I was in the donut factory. The American Red Cross would ship those big machines over that make the donuts and they would make donuts by the thousands of dozens for the GI's and the flyers and what had you. They said if I can type here.

I says, "I do a little typing. Not fluently, but I type."

"Then you could work in the donut factory's office."

"Fine," I said. Everything smelled donuts. I still can smell it now.

So I worked in the office there. Then in the meantime they had American Red Cross girls coming from the United States to do the kind of work in the office so I was transferred to the Field Director's office which I liked too. It was very interesting. Later on they had also two more girls coming from the United States. I worked for the Club Director, American Red Cross Club Director in the American Red

Cross Club. I got paid in yen. It wasn't much, but any little bit helped.

I rented a room together with my girlfriend, Alice Frank, in a Japanese home. We got a room together and the rats came in the room. She let me have her bed from her sister. She let me sleep in the bed, a regular bed, and she slept on the floor. Boy, Alice I never forget her. She had a daughter. The little girl was four years old, I think. They had killed -- tortured her husband to death at Kampeti.

His name was Hugo Frank. I mentioned him before -- good friends of mine -- him, his wife. So she had to take her little girl to an orphanage home. There was no money because she had to go to work -- Alice. So the Red Cross took her and -- was taking care of the coffee machines in the Red Cross Club. That was it, yeah.

Oh, and then from Mr. Berg, the man with the Jewish wife. They threw him in jail before they put Hugo Frank in. Told me, "Did you know -- you knew Mr. Berg?"

"Yeah," I says, "What about?"

"He's in jail." I says, "Why? What did he do?"

"He's a spy."

"No," I said. "He's not a spy. That's what they say. Then soon I asked somebody, I says, "Where did Alice Frank go with her husband and the little girl?"

"Oh, they move to the side of (Karisaba)" which was a

kind of resort place where the wealthier foreigners spent the summer months because in Yokohama it gets very hot, subtropical climate there.

I was told, "He is in jail, too, because he is a spy."

So Mr. Berg they said was a spy. Hugo Frank they said was a spy. I says -- and they were all friends of mine.

But I said, "Gee, why would they throw him in jail? Spy? I don't think they are spy, or they could be spies."

"Well --" people said. They shrugged their shoulders. "Who knows?"

I think they were put in jail already in '43, if I'm not mistaken. I was thrown in there when the war turned really -- I heard later on -- the war turned bad in 1944. So it seems that there was a list somebody discovered.

That Mr. (Furster) he was let out again after he was in as being a spy. He had a Japanese wife and she could go here and there, and there, and there, and talk to the people that her husband had his business and employed these and these people, and the German's didn't like him for that reason. Otherwise, he was not a Nazi and they disliked him.

I never went to the German house. They had a German kind of a meeting place or club place where they met. I never went there. So I wasn't liked by them either.

All my friends, like that Mr. Meyer too, he was also

thrown in jail who was a friend from the girlfriend's husband. That Mr. Berg -- that newspaper man, he came out all right. I heard later on. But then they brought him over to the United States. His step-daughter was here and her husband. They brought the parents in and later he was so bad off. You know where he died? In Napa -- in Napa. He couldn't survive, I guess. He was longer in jail than I was.

Hugo Frank, too. They had French people in there. I guess some who were for Vichy or against Vichy. I don't know what the deal was with the French. He was in jail. I saw him when they had the air raid and they opened the cell door and we had to stand in the hallway. I saw Hugo Frank with a beard and very thin face.

I saw that Frenchman. I forgot the name -- Boise, I think -- Mr. Boise. I didn't see Mr. Berg. Then they put us back in the cell when the air raid was over. So they killed that Mr. Frank, unbelievable. None of them was a spy. None of them.

End Videocassette 1.

Begin Videocassette 2.

She said, "They came to the house with shovels. They were digging."

I said, "Digging for what, for the body? For my body?"

"No, they were digging for transmitters." They

thought maybe she is a spy and has some equipment. She gives news or something.

They had one big case while I was there. I heard about it. There was one -- was it a minister or was it a Counsel who had connection with a German? The German would give some spy work to the Russians. They shot him on the ship. It was a German. I heard that later on, but I forgot the name. They sent that boat (Schaffner) or what he was, minister or something. They send him out of Japan. Either they sent him to China or to Germany. That, I don't know.

Then before it came to the trial I had to see the prosecutor. Prosecutor -- is that the word?

Q. Yes.

A. I told him. I took my heart in my hand and I said, "Listen. I only signed that I'm a spy because I was told that I will be transferred from this prison, Kampeti, to another better prison."

He says, "Yes, but you signed it. You signed it."

I says, "They beat me so hard. That's why I signed I. I couldn't take it anymore."

"Yeah, but you signed it."

Then they had a big trial. I was taken to a room. It was kind of a trial room -- a big place. A lot of people were sitting around in there. I sat. I had cuffs on. Yeah, I had cuffs. I didn't know what they was talking.

Q. WAS THIS TRIAL WHILE YOU WERE IN PRISON?

A. Yeah. In Gumiachi, not Kampeti. There was one little desk there. The judges, or whatever they were, they sat there. They said something. First, I had to get up and then I could sit down. I didn't know what they were talking about. Then when they were finished talking there, this one sitting on that extra little desk, he came over and he says, "I'm your interpreter. The thing is you are sentenced because you are a foreigner for six -- for doing spy work six years in prison."

I thought, "Oh my God, six years."

They took me back to my cell. I think I told that to the International Red Cross worker.

I told him, I says, "I was sentenced to six years in prison and I haven't done any spy work." I had to go through so much; I don't know.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET THE HELP OF THE RED CROSS? HOW DID YOU ELICIT THE HELP OF THE RED CROSS AFTER YOU WERE LIBERATED OR FREED?

A. The American Red Cross?

Q. YES.

A. My girlfriend, the French girl. They worked there as a secretary. She used to work for banks in Yokohama. She was born in Japan and she was a secretary. When the banks closed, she had to do something else. She worked for for the Red

Cross as secretary. She asked if they could employ me because I had to go through so much. She got the job for me. So I had to introduce myself and they took me.

First to the donut factory, and then the field director's office, and then to the club director's office. Yeah, I think I told you all.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET THE RED CROSS TO GIVE YOU THE TESTIMONY THAT YOU READ ABOUT YOUR IMPRISONMENT AND TORTURE? HOW DID YOU ELICIT THE HELP OF THE RED CROSS TO GET YOU MEDICAL HELP AND TO --

A. That was the Red Cross that helped.

Q. SO HOW DID YOU GET MEDICAL ATTENTION?

A. That was the War Crimes Commission. The United States War Crimes Commission.

Q. EXPLAIN MORE YOU GOT --

A. Captain (Cross) was his name. He heard about my case. I don't know from whom.

He said, "We are going after the war crimes people here in Japan and your case I'm going to hand this over to the CIC to get a hold of the people who mistreated you." That was Captain Cross. But later he was transferred to Germany -- to Neuremberg to help there. He was a lawyer from New York he told me.

Q. YOU SAID YOU WERE HOSPITALIZED FOR A WHILE. AFTER THE IMPRISONMENT WERE YOU HOSPITALIZED?

A. No. I had no money to be hospitalized. They were going to send me on the hospital ship to America right away and I thought that would be wonderful. But they had so many American citizens who were mistreated while being prisoners of war that they had no place for so-called Germans.

Then they tried to -- CIC took me to Tokyo. They drove me over there and they talked.

Each time they said, "Well, do you have papers, passport?" I always had that German passport with no "J" inside. So I didn't want to explain everything.

They said, "No, our American citizens come first. So in your case you would have to go to the Japanese hospital." But if you have no money, nobody takes you. I had no income because I lost my job, see.

Q. WAS IT THE CATHOLIC NUNS THAT GAVE YOU SOME MEDICINE? DID THEY TAKE CARE OF YOU?

A. Well, the Brothers.

Q. THE BROTHERS. WHERE DID YOU STAY DURING THAT TIME PERIOD WHEN YOU WERE TRYING TO REGAIN YOUR HEALTH? HOW DID YOU SURVIVE?

A. There was a family. (Hydrish) was their name. She was Hungarian and Jewish, and he was a German.

Later he told me, he says, You know I'm a Communist."

I says, "You are?"

"Yeah," he said. "You know the family (Apps)"?

"Yeah," I says. "They invited me sometimes over for dinner" because I lived in a room where I couldn't cook. I just had to fix something for myself.

Sometimes whenever I gave a lesson -- a French lesson to some lady and another lady, then they would ask me if I would like to have something to eat.

I said, "Yeah. If you have something, sure." So sometimes they gave me something to eat and sometimes not, but that family invited me.

They said, "Come on over for dinner. My wife is a good cook. They were four Apps."

In the end when everything was over and I was out of prison, they said, "Did you know I was Communist?"

I said, "You are?" I didn't know.

They asked me if I know any Communists, but nobody would tell me. Friends of mine where I had so-called hospitality that they would say, " Listen, I'm a communist. You're not a Nazi, and I'm a Communist." Nobody said nothing. So they told me that after the war was over, strange.

They were nice people. I don't know what happened to them. They went back to Germany, I think. You lose all the contact then.

So I got my meals in the mess hall -- in the American mess hall. I thought, "Gee, is that possible to get good food now every day while you work for the American Red Cross?" So

then slowly I recovered and I don't want to be remembered.

My son said, "Mom, write everything down for me, please." But I couldn't do it yet because it's still kind of -- it's like a wound that does not heal. It's in your inside.

So did you want some more?

Q. YOUR FRIENDS -- MR. (BOELKE), HUGO FRANK, YOU, MR. MEYERS, YOU SAID THAT SOMEBODY KNEW THAT THERE WAS A LIST OF PEOPLE. CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THIS LIST? DID YOU THINK BEING HALF-JEWISH HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE GESTAPO WANTING YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARRESTED BY THE JAPANESE?

A. Yeah. This Mr. (Furster) he -- I think he went with his wife and children to Germany. He wrote me from Germany. He said he found out that there was a list handed over to the Japanese authorities and on the list were names given from the ones who were Jewish, or half-Jewish or disliked buy the National Solistik Regiment something. That list was handed over to the Japanese and they just took and arrested people.

When the war as over Mr. Pistalasi told me that Mr. Mysinger, they got a hold of him. The "bloodhound" from Warsaw. They called him that. He was in prison in Tokyo, I think. They had a big prison compound. It was his job to visit the prisoners, that Mr. Pistalasi did. That guy was just crying like a child. "Help me, help me." They are going to ship him right over to Warsaw. Later I heard that on the

ship he committed suicide. So they couldn't get a hold of that man because he's the one that did seemingly all the atrocities in Warsaw. For that reason they gave him a big job to Japan, head of the Gestapo.

Q. HE'S THE MAN THAT YOU THINK MADE UP THE LIST TO GIVE TO THE JAPANESE TO HAVE YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS ARRESTED?

A. Yeah, I was on the list.

Q. IN JAPAN AT THIS TIME I GUESS IT WAS PEOPLE LIKE YOU WHO WERE HALF-JEWISH OR MARRIED TO A NON-JEWISH. ALL THE OTHER JEWS HAD LEFT ALREADY FOR SHANGHAI. SO YOU THINK IT WAS THIS GESTAPO GUY WHO WAS TRYING TO GET RID OF ANY OF THE JEWS THAT WERE LEFT?

A. Yes, because my mother came here to America in 1948 and I met some very nice people after I got married. We moved to Reno because I couldn't take the climate in Stockton.

My husband says, "Well, we move to another place and we see if I can find a job in Reno." We moved to Reno with the baby together. The baby came and I met a very nice family. They were also from Germany, Jewish people.

They said, "Margaret, you have to file a claim against the German government."

My husband says, "Don't do that. Don't bother with it. Forgot about it."

I says, "I cannot forgot. Maybe I should do that." They really gave me hope to file a claim.

I says, "If something comes out, all right, it's fine. But if not, it's fine too."

So I wrote to -- how did I get that lawyer? Oh, through my mother. My mother had filed a claim because she lived all those years during the war with the Nazis over there, but she was lucky enough. She got out of Berlin in time and she moved to a town where nobody knew her. So she was in hiding all the time. She lived in the southern part of Germany, but luckily she survived.

My sister too. My sister got married down there someplace, yeah.

But how that Mr. (Furster) found out, I don't know. But he found out somehow that there was a list which was given to the Japanese. Only certain people were picked out and thrown in jail.

Q. HOW DO YOU THINK THE GESTAPO KNEW THAT YOU WERE HALF-JEWISH BEING THAT YOU HAD THIS GERMAN PASSPORT THAT HAD NO "J" ON IT?

A. Oh, yeah, that's what I was going to say. They came to my parents when father was still alive. They said they didn't want to talk to her, they wanted to see Herr Liberskint. So they pushed my mother aside. Father came in the room.

They said, "Where is your daughter, Margaret?"

He said, "She went to Japan."

They said, "Unser fang aum reichen weit". That means, "Our fang arms reach far away."

When I had to give under oath what happened to me to the German restitution people, my mother had to tell them that too. So that shows you that the whole thing came from the Nazi side, yeah.

Q. YOU DON'T THINK THE JAPANESE WOULD HAVE ARRESTED YOU IF IT WASN'T FOR THE NAZIS?

A. Yeah.

Q. ACCUSING YOU?

A. I think so. But you see the war turned bad for them and the Nazis to. So they thought why not? What do we lose? But I heard they never paid a dime for what their people did to the prisoners, the torturing and all our loss of life. They never gave a dime.

They said, "This is all German's side. The Germans did that. That was orders from the Nazis." So anyhow, now I get a little restitution money.

But my girlfriend never filed a claim, the one that lives here.

I said, "You should have filed it. They killed your husband."

Q. ALICE FRANK?

A. She said, "Well, she didn't know." She didn't want to get in trouble with the Japanese because she was born

Japanese and still lived over there. She didn't file a claim. She just didn't do it.

My claim went for about twenty years. You wouldn't believe it. It went from court to court in Germany because they couldn't figure out in my passport.

They said, "She traveled here; she traveled there. She went to Switzerland. She went to Italy. She went to (Czeckoslovaski)."

I liked to travel and I was sport. I used to go skiing. I took off. I had two weeks vacation from Electrola.

Then I said, "Can I take two more weeks off without paying. I'd like to go skiing in wintertime."

They said, "Sure, it's all right."

So I went to different places for skiing and I had a good time. That kept me in good health. Maybe that's how I could take all what I had to go through. I don't know.

How come I had a passport without "J"? I couldn't tell them, but it was a tricky thing I did. I can tell you now. They didn't want to pay. But finally I had a good lawyer and they finally -- they had enough documents and all my friends had to say what they know about me. That was the smallest beaten out of me to sign a confession.

Once they came with a long Samuri sword and they said, "So you're the spy? We're going to chop your head off right here."

I said, "Well, but I'd like to write a few words to my mother that I haven't done any spy work so that she knows." I wrote on a piece of paper. That was just another way of torture you, kind of, inside.

They went through my papers and my photo. They threw the photo down where my mother was with me on her arm.

They said, "the Jewess" and they spit on the picture. Certain things gets you inside. You cannot forget.

Q. WAS THAT THE JAPANESE SPITTING ON -- THIS WAS WHEN THEY ARRESTED YOU?

A. No, When I was in the torturing room.

Q. DURING YOUR WHOLE PERIOD IN JAPAN, DID YOU HAVE ANY CORRESPONDENCE GOING ON WITH YOUR MOTHER OR YOUR FAMILY?

A. Not one word. The last postcard I got from my mother was in -- I think it was December '41 when the war broke out -- 1941 that father passed on. He died, my father, in Berlin.

Q. OF BAD HEALTH?

A. Yeah, bad health. He had a stroke before and then maybe they kill him even there; I don't know. She had to take him to the hospital. They was one --

My mother said, "Before you go to America I take you to my cousin down in the old people's home in Berlin." I forgot where it was, what street.

What was their name? (Tushenuna). I think it was

(Tushen) and her husband. I said good-bye to them. Yeah, nice couple. They wished me good luck.

After the war was over mother came here.

I says, "What happened to Tushenuna? What happened to the two sisters in Berlin? I forget their names. The (tupshen) they called them, two twin sisters. Relatives from mother, second cousins, yeah.

She said, "They were taken out of the old people's home in Berlin, (Tushenuna) and her husband. They are sent to concentration camp in Buchenwald," I think. Took them out of the old people's home.

Tushen survived. Mother met her when the Committee helped her to go to Switzerland to get back on her feet before coming to the United States, mother.

There was Tushen. She survived that Buchenwald camp, but her husband died of typhoid. She was saved after the war was over and sent to Lugano. They was several survivors from Buchenwald. They were sent to Switzerland. But now Tushen died too. Her husband went to Shanghai and the other son went to, I think, England. Haus Strunger was his name. But they're all gone, they're not around anymore. Only I'm still around. I wonder for how long.

But my grandmother in New York. She lived up to a 103 years. Long life, yeah, and she never forgave her daughter. I have to tell you that, that she married a

non-Jew --

Q. CAN YOU TELL ME HOW YOU GOT TO AMERICA AFTER?

A. -- and she didn't want anything to do with us children because we were not Jewish. She must have been very orthodox. I met her once years ago, our grandmother, Tony.

The Quaker went to her. The Quaker had connections from Japan with the United States. So to help me to get out of Japan to continue my trip they went to my grandmother in New York. She lived in New York in a hotel. Grandmother said she has no grandchildren.

So the Quaker said, "What's going on here?"

So I told him, "Well, my mother is Jewish and that makes me half-Jewish so for that reason she never forgave her daughter on account of her religion." They couldn't understand.

Quakers are all right, but they're a little strange in certain things. Either they believe, or their constitution, or what -- I don't know. They couldn't understand it. They thought maybe I tell them a flip or something. But that's the way it was, unfortunately.

She lived here for many, many years in America. America should have done much more for all the Jews, and the half-Jews or the quarter-Jews, or whatever, and they didn't. You're young, you don't know. That's the sad part. Could have helped many many, many, many Jews and they didn't do it.

That's the black spot in American history. But don't bring that in the paper in the -- whatever you do -- in the book. That's just what I say to you. You hear me? I'm glad to be here. Glad that I finally was able to make it and that's all I have to say.

I always respected Jewish faith very much even I wasn't brought up with it strictly. But I like the Jewish people, I like the faith, everything they do -- everything. Sorry for all the things they had to go through.

I go to the Holocaust once in a while. They used to send me little notes. I saw a film sometime ago and they said they're happy to see us coming. We even have some refreshments after and we can get acquainted. But after I saw the film, I had to leave. I couldn't stay. Couldn't even stay for refreshments or get acquainted. I don't even -- that's such a terrible thing. Many times -- I don't know.

When I went to the Senior Center, people look at me and say, "You're not Jewish."

I says, "Why do you say that?"

"You haven't said a Jewish word."

I says, "Do I have to say a Jewish word to be Jewish?"

That's the trouble when you're a mischling. Well, I don't want to say, "Listen," explain everything. Why should I? Is it necessary? I am what I am. It's the inside that

counts, isn't it?

Well, do you have anymore?

Q. CAN YOU TELL US HOW YOU GOT TO AMERICA AFTER YOUR YEARS IN JAPAN? WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU WORKED FOR THE RED CROSS AND HAD YOUR JOBS?

A. I met in the Red Cross Club an officer. I told him my case. How I was stranded, kind of, in Japan. He said he's going back to the United States if he can do something for me.

I says, "I wish you would, but I have relatives from father's side in California. Could you do me a favor and look them up and tell them what I had told you? What a hard time I had being here in this place -- country. Maybe they would make out an affidavit of support that I can enter the United States."

So he did me the favor and he went to see that cousin of mine. He is a first cousin in San Mateo now. He was the Secretary for the Pacific Milling Company here in San Francisco. I gave him the address.

When my father wrote to them years ago that I would like to go to the United States if they could help me make an affidavit of support.

They said, "No", because it's kind of a responsibility to bring somebody in", and they don't know if I wouldn't become a public charge or blah, blah, blah. They wouldn't do it.

But I had the address and I took it with me from my father. So I sent that officer to look up that -- his name was Oscar Lieberskint. That's from father's side, a relative.

He went to see him and he said, "Why sure. He will do anything he can to make an affidavit of support."

He asked the sisters. He has one, two, three sisters here. But then their husbands all said, "No, a German here?" They didn't want to have anything to do with Germans, and they don't know me. So they thought it was too much a risk.

But that one cousin, he made an affidavit. So I brought that in to the Counsel in Yokahama, American Counsel.

He said, "That is not enough, that affidavit."

I says, "Why not?"

"Because he has two daughters and a wife to support. So you would have to bring another affidavit."

So he asked his wife if she could make an affidavit, and that was not enough because she just was giving lessons in piano and singing. So she had her old father living with them and she asked that father of her's. So I had to have three affidavits just to come here into the United States.

So I stayed with my relatives for a while over in San Anselmo. They had a little house in San Anselmo. My cousin was a veteran of World War I for the United States Army, born here in this country, and they had a little house there.

Soon I met my husband here in San Francisco. After about a month or so being in this country, I met my husband, yeah. Santos.

Then he says, "Why do you have to stay in San Anselmo.

I says, "Well --"

"What do you do here?

I says, "Well I'm new. I'm a new American.

"What do you do?"

I says, "I do baby-sitting."

"Baby-sitting. For whom do you baby-sit?"

I says, "Well, this is a job. They do that over here I heard." My cousin's daughters they were teenagers then. They went to high school both of them. They did that.

My late cousin's wife said, "Well, Margaret, to make you feel better and make us feel better, maybe you can pay $20 a month for living here with us and eating."

I said, "Yeah, but I have to make some money first."

I had no money. I paid my own trip from Yokahama here to San Francisco. All I was paid was in yen. In those days they wouldn't change my yen into dollars. It was against the law. But the Red Cross girls were nice.

They said, "Well, we buy little things here. So if you want to change some yen, we give you dollars then you can pay your trip to go over."

I said, "Fine." So I did.

Yeah, souvenirs. So I did baby-sitting and I did some housecleaning too. In fact, window cleaning, washing windows in some families out there in Marin County, in San Rafael and in Mill Valley. I took the bus back and forth. They paid the bus fare, too, in those days.

Then my husband said, "Well, I mean with your education you don't have to do that kind of work. What else can you do?"

I said, "Well, I used to work in a music store?"

He said, "You look in the paper. I'll look in the paper too. Maybe you can work in a store here?"

I said, "Yes."

So I think I went to the telephone company.

They said, "No. With your accent -- we only take people that have no accent. You have that certain accent when you speak English."

"Well," I says, "I can't help that." Then I went to some insurance company.

I says, "I'll take any kind of job."

"Would you do filing too?"

I says, "Sure."

"Well," they said, "you filled out the form. With your education you could get something better." Wasn't that nice to say something like that? I forgot the company -- that

was some insurance.

Then I went to I. Magnin to the personnel office and I told them part of my destiny.

They said, "Well, what kind of a store -- have you done any clerical work?"

I says, "I was a saleslady for almost 11 years in Berlin."

"Oh", they said. "Have you ever sold clothing? Shoes? Underwear?"

"Well," I said, "This couldn't be too difficult to do that." So they gave me the job.

I worked at I. Magnin's and later on I worked for Hills Brothers, for Robert Kirk Brothers, a British company. I even worked for Weinstein's on Market Street. This old store. You probably don't know the store anymore. So long ago. I did all kinds of work.

Then I got my baby. We got married, my husband and I, and the baby came. I was wishing for a baby while I sat in prison. I got that wish fulfilled, yeah. I got a nice little boy. He was just a little late in life. Unfortunately, my husband passed on after 11 years married. That was another shock. So I told you all.

Q. HOW DID YOU RENEW CORRESPONDENCE, FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOTHER AND SISTER AND BROTHER AFTER THE WAR? HOW DID YOU MEET UP WITH THEM AFTER YOU WERE LIBERATED?

A. Through a friend in Switzerland, I think it was. I have to ask my sister. I forgot. But they heard from Switzerland and I wrote to Switzerland. But how I knew that address? That I don't know. Or was it the Red Cross? Maybe they wrote to the International Red Cross? I don't know for sure. That I forgot, that part. But we got in exchanging letters right then, yeah. Right after the war, not in Japan. While I was in the States I heard from them. I don't know who it was. I think it was the Red Cross -- the International Red Cross.

Q. BOTH YOUR MOTHER, YOUR SISTER AND YOUR BROTHER?

A. No, only mother and my sister. Through the Committee. I had to pay $600 -- $600 so that they could get mother out of Germany over to Switzerland.

Q. WAS THIS AFTER THE WAR?

A. Yeah, I was working then. I had a little money saved.

Q. WHY DID THEY NEED TO GET YOUR MOTHER OUT OF GERMANY INTO SWITZERLAND BEFORE YOU COULD BRING HER OVER HERE?

A. Mother was way down in weight and she had some trouble with her lungs and the heart.

They said, "You will never pass your examination -- your physical examination with America to get the visa. So we send you to the home where we have some people who survived the Holocaust, who survived the concentration camp."

So they sent my mother to Lugano and they didn't take the sister in there because she was a mischling. She got a job with children and she lived with the family and children.

Q. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOTHER, YOUR SISTER AND YOUR BROTHER DURING THE WAR?

A. Mother was in the hiding. I told you.

Sister had a boyfriend she wanted to marry. He was a young fellow who was in (Gerrings) flying deal -- a flier. So she went to the City Hall to get married and she had to show her paper from mother, the birth certificate -- mother and father I think.

They said, "You are not an Aryan. You cannot get married. So that was it." So she was heartbroken.

The brother was drafted as a soldier in Hitler's army being a mischling. From the beginning on, that must have been '38 or '39 the war. He never got up in rank. That was the brother. He was sent to all the places in France, in Holland and later he was sent to Russia. He told me there he got the yellow fever in Russia and that way they sent him back to Germany to a hospital or (latzarett) or whatever. Towards the end of the war, after he came out of hospital, he told me he was sent in the army again. Then he was taken prisoner. I don't know where. He was taken prisoner into France. But where that was, I don't know. Was it in France or was it in Holland?

He said, "All the big officers left us -- the army, and we were taken prisoners, in France, by American army."

I don't know how long he was a prisoner there. He wasn't sent to the United States because he spoke fluently English. He was in America before the war. As a young man, 1929 I think, he was here. He got a better treatment of being a mischling than he ever got before.

So it seems they turned it the way they wanted. If you're not a real Aryan they throw you out of the Lufthansa.

The sister wanted to marry a so-called Aryan.

They said, "You cannot marry him. We give you no marriage license."

Then the brother was drafted in right from the beginning. It shows you they turned it the way they wanted.

I was thrown in jail for being a mischling. But some went through worse things than we did.

But still I think I lost a lot of friends. I had good friends in Berlin. Mother says they were picked up by the Gestapo, sent someplace. Good friend went to Australia. I never heard from him. I don't know if he made it or not. He had his old parents shipped to France, but the Nazis went into France. I don't know if they made it too or not.

I was invited one day by the German Senate to come to Berlin as a guest, and I tried to find out about some of my friends. Impossible. Some I don't know the first name. Nice

couple in Berlin. They sent their son over to England. He was a child, a youngster -- 14, 15 years old. They stayed. They had a beautiful villa in Berlin in the outskirts. I went to say good-bye to them.

I said, "What are you going to do?"

"Well, our parents are in the southern part of France, so they are all right."

I said, "And your brother went to Australia?"

"Yeah."

I says, "What are you --"

"Our son went over to England on the children's transport. The two of us -- my husband gave up his business, everything, so what should happen to us?"

I don't know. I never heard from them. I only remember the name, Bendix.

So while I was in Berlin as a guest I tried to find out from other friends, but it's hard to find out. It's so many years ago, right? Me being in Japan, they didn't know where I go. They thought I might be able to go to the States or to Panama, but no. No letter, no correspondence, nothing. That's the sad thing, but that's the way it goes I guess. There's a war -- between the first World War, the second World War. You wonder, what comes next?

The only thing with my mother was that she was able to leave Berlin. Seems that's the worse place to be. When I

was still there, 1940, they had those air raids in Berlin. You wouldn't believe it. We had an air raid shelter in the house. Mother's apartment was up on the second floor, mother and father. Hilda was gone to Munich. She didn't want to stay in Berlin. Oh, I think the boyfriend or her fiance was down there -- Munich.

The air raid alarm was for Jews who had a special cellar. Down in the cellar was a special little place for Jews and father could go in the other cellars. Father was so weak and sick.

He said, "I'm not going down anymore."

He went down once. Once he went down with mother and it was such a small, uncomfortable place and he felt so sick, I remember. I went with them downstairs. We had several air raids then, 1940, but later I heard it was worse.

The house mother lived -- well, father was gone then. Father was not around anymore. Brother was in the army. The sister was in Munchen. I was in Japan.

I still could write mother that I'm stuck here and I'll make the best out of it; don't worry. But the mail didn't go through. Mother said she wrote every week how father -- how his health is slipping. She does the best not to take him to the hospital. But in the end she had to take him in the hospital and that's where he died. My brother was able to come from the army out to father's funeral. Yeah,

that was it.

He says, "Mother, you have to leave Berlin. You go some place where nobody knows you in the southern part of Germany."

I think they went to (Robensberg), mother and Hilda. Mother got no cards for the food, she told me, because she wasn't registered. She would register with her name and they might have thought something was wrong.

She worked as a sewing woman. She was very good in sewing and mending clothes. She went to those wealthy, peasant people out in the hills someplace. I don't know that part of Germany where mother was in hiding. That's how she made her living. They had enough food. They gave her something to eat while she did the sewing and she survived. That was the main thing.

Anything else you wanted to know?

Q. WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE FIANCE IN AMERICA, HENRY LIVINGSTON, WHEN YOU FOUND OUT YOU COULDN'T GO TO PANAMA AND YOU WERE STUCK IN JAPAN?

A. Yeah.

Q. DID YOU ATTEMPT ANY CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIM OR ASK FOR HIS HELP?

A. He sent me a little money over to Yokohama. Then I wrote him that I went through the most h rible time of my life in Japan.

"I had planned to get married to you which I wrote you in my letters. I had hoped that you could do something for me to get the visa to come to the United States and we get married right there. But either you couldn't do anything, or it was just not in your possibility to do something for me. For that reason I am kind of angry and sad.

"On the other hand, I blame you as I thought you should have done something because I landed in Japan end of 1940 and there was no war with the United States. The war broke out in 1941. So it was fate that we were not suppose to meet." That's what I wrote him.

Then he wrote to me, which is not right, and I sent him back that shipping order which I did not use from Japan and I asked him, "You collect the money. Write to the shipping company to get part of the money back." That's all. Then I didn't hear from him anymore, and I didn't write anymore either. That was the end of it.

In a way I blamed him. On the other hand, I thought, well, maybe it was impossible to do anything. I had a German passport. It was one of those things. Right? Then I thought it was risky anyhow to marry somebody you don't even know, you never met, right? You smile. Many Americans could have done that, marry one of the Jewish girls by letter to save them from those horrible things they did -- horrible things.

Q. I'D LIKE TO GO BACK TO YOUR PARENTS. I WANT TO KNOW

WHAT WAS YOUR MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME AND HOW DID YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER MEET AND GET MARRIED??

A. How? They met in Stuttgart and they fell in love many years ago.

Q. BUT IT MUST HAVE BEEN A BIG THING FOR YOUR MOTHER TO MARRY SOMEBODY WHO WASN'T JEWISH FROM HOW YOU DESCRIBED YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S BEHAVIOR THAT SHE DIDN'T ACKNOWLEDGE YOU OR HER?

A. It must have been, yeah.

But she says, "We just fell in love, your father and I." I remember her saying that.

Q. WHAT WAS YOUR MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME? WHAT WAS YOUR MOTHER'S FULL NAME?

A. That's her maiden name, Joseph.

Q. JOSEPH?

A. Yes.

Q. AND HER FIRST NAME?

A. (Margarith) with a t-h.

Q. JOSEPH?

A. Joseph.

Q. SHE WAS BORN IN 1893?

A. That's why her mother never forgave her, that she married a non-Jew.

Q. WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

A. In Kemnitz.

Q. WHAT IS YOUR BIRTH DATE??

A. December 20, 1908. A long time ago, almost a hundred years old.

Q. THAT'S VERY HARD TO BELIEVE. YOUR BACKGROUND IS SO INTERESTING. YOU SAID THAT IN YOUR FAMILY LIFE YOU WERE BASICALLY BROUGHT UP AS A PROTESTANT.

A. Protestant. That was father's religion, yeah.

Q. YOU NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT YOU WERE A JEW OR PROTESTANT? IT JUST NEVER BOTHERED YOU?

A. Nobody talk about it. Father didn't; mother didn't. They were just happy together until Hitler came.

Q. WHAT WAS THE PRIVATE SCHOOL THAT YOU WENT TO? WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THAT SCHOOL?

A. It was called (Britinschuler) Private School for Girls.

Q. IN BERLIN?

A. No, in Kemnitz.

Q. IN KEMNITZ?

A. Kemnitz, that's Saxony. That's near the Czechoslovakian border. That place was occupied by the Russians.

Q. IN YOUR SCHOOL, WAS IT MIXED? WERE THERE JEWISH GIRLS AND CATHOLIC GIRLS AND PROTESTANT GIRLS?

A. Yeah. We had one girl that was Catholic and two Jewish girls. Very nice girls. Sara Heller -- I remember the name. What was the other one? Rosy something.

Q. CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF KRISTALLNACHT?

A. I worked in that musical store on (Kaufersendam) on the main part in Berlin -- the better part -- the western part of Berlin. Next door was an Italian place and then next door was a friend of mine. Father did business with his father and the son was in that business. They had a very nice clothing store right there on (Kaufersendam).

The windows were all smashed in. They put signs up. Next day when I went to work, took the subway, there were big signs, "Don't buy in Jewish stores." They smeared on the windows "Hei Hitler" slogans. It was terrible.

Mother says, "Don't go out; stay home, stay home."

A. I says, "I have to go to work."

Then they came in the musical store -- some Nazis in black uniform. They would go through the records. They were all on the wall on shelves. They took out certain records which were Jewish records, or Jewish composer or Jewish singers -- opera singers. They smeared all over, "Out with the Jews. Hang the Jews," and words like that.

Then the director came from the store, and he said, "Listen, you shouldn't do that."

"Well, we're going to smear that on you too. " He seemed to be Jewish I don't know; I didn't ask him.

Then they marched out and another club of those

people came in with their black boots, black coats, swastikas all over. He sent us home the next day around noontime. He sent us home so that we wouldn't get in trouble with those people.

He said, "Don't come for two days until everything quiets down."

Mother says, "Don't get out of the house."

I says, "Well, we have to buy some groceries."

"No, we can live on what we have in the house."

It was terrible. It was terrible. I never forget that day, the Kristallnacht. I forgot the date it was, but I remember.

Q. DECEMBER 13th.

A. When it happened, yeah. One of my girlfriend, she worked with me in that music store, Ava (Hupfel). I think her father was Jewish and the mother was not.

I asked my mother, I says, "What happened to her?"

Mother says, "She committed suicide."

"Oh God, she committed suicide", I says.

And another one, Eva (Brila). She told me she is half Jewish. Her father was Jewish and the mother was Christian. She used to call up mother after I had left. Then she didn't call up anymore.

I says, "Mother, what happened to Eva?"

Mother said, "I don't know. She called up for a long

time, ask me how you were and if you made it over to America or not. Then she didn't call anymore."

So I lost all the contact with all my friends. Another one who had kind of a car business, he married.

I says, "Mother, what happened to Fritz Polar?"

She says, "He married a nurse from the Jewish hospital and then they were picked up by the Gestapo."

So I don't know what happened to them either. Nice couple. So many of my friends -- oh, I mustn't even think. Then I think, maybe they survived? But how would I know? How could I find out? I tried in Berlin, but it's almost hopeless. There are too many looking. That's the sad part. Being in Japan you lost all the contact.

I hope nobody has to go through something like that again, but you don't know. You don't know. Maybe good thing we don't know what the future will bring, right?

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION LAST WEEK?

A. We live in a very interesting time, I must say. I'm not much of a politiker, but let's all hope for the best. That people who want to get out, like in Russia, can leave without any troubles. They had the hardest time to begin with. To get out from there and with the Communists -- well, we don't know what's going to happen. Nobody knows -- and with Israel.

Q. HOW DO YOU FEEL TOWARDS ISRAEL?

A. I feel with them, but the ones that are there seem to be happy -- happy to be there. Especially that friend of mine I know from Yokohama who came visiting with his wife.

He says, "We're happy there, but we don't know what's going to happen."

They live in -- what is the name (Nahariyya)?

Q. NAHARIYYA?

A. Yeah, Nahariyya which is a dangerous spot too.

Q. GETTING BACK TO YOUR LIFE. WORKING AS AN AIRLINE STEWARDESS FOR LUFTHANSA, HOW EXACTLY DID THEY FIGURE OUT THAT YOU WERE NOT A FULL ARYAN, OR A MISCHLING, AS YOU SAID? CAN YOU EXPLAIN HOW DID THEY GET THAT INFORMATION?

A. Well, it was written in the paper -- my name. When I was with the Lufthansa some fellow came and introduced some of the stewardesses, where they come from and what they know, what they don't know, who they are.

One said, "What is your name?"

I says, "Margarita Lieberskint."

They said, "Well, what kind of job did you do before?"

I says, "Oh, I was a governess with children. I was in Switzerland and so on in the (Pontsaintnot). I learned French. I was in Paris as a companion."

So he had nothing better to do than to put the whole

(schmere) in a Nazi paper which was (Fulkashabacken), the worse Nazi paper. There was another one, the (Sturma), I think. But he put it in that Fulkashabacken. I didn't read the paper. One day I was called to the press department and I go there.

He says, "My name is Stern." I forgot the first name -- Stern. "I have to let you know that you have to discontinue being with the German Lufthansa as a stewardess on account of your being non-Aryan."

I says, "Non-Aryan."

"Who's the Jewish part?"

I said, "My mother is." I must have asked him. I don't remember that, but I must have asked, "Who told you what?"

He must have said, "Somebody denounced you."

That's what he said, "Somebody denounced you to the Head of the German Lufthansa, to the Director, or whatever."

So that was it. I went home and I cried my heart out.

Mother says, "Well, how come?"

So she had a girlfriend across the street, my mother in Berlin. That one said she had a brother-in-law, or somebody from her family, and that one read my name in that Nazi paper. I have the copy from that. She had nothing better to do than telling the Head from the Lufthansa about

me. That's how it came.

Q. THEN THEY STAMP THAT INTO YOUR PASSPORT?

A. That was before the passport. That was when I was in the courses from the Lufthansa. When they tried out if we can take the flying up or flying down. All those excursions. They made one to Vienna and one to Amsterdam.

That's when I had to have the passport so they put in (unter stevdel) de Lufthansa. That was when I was with them.

Q. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? CAN YOU TRANSLATE FROM THE GERMAN?

A. That she is employed by the German Lufthansa.

Q. AFTER YOU WERE DISMISSED FROM THE LUFTHANSA, DID THEY STAMP ANYTHING IN YOUR PASSPORTS?

A. No.

Q. WAS IT THE PRACTICE IN GERMANY AT THE TIME FOR MISCHLINGS TO HAVE J's PUT INTO THEIR PASSPORTS, oR THEY DIDN'T BOTHER, OR SOME OTHER STAMP THAT WOULD POINT OUT --

A. The ones I talked that worked together with me, they had nothing stamped. They had no passport. They never left the country. They were working girls and I never asked them.

Mother had to wear that sign and she had to come in and have her photo taken -- the left ear. I don't know what they found with the ears on a kind of identification photo. She had to carry that with her at all times.

Q. WAS THAT IDENTIFICATION FOR YOUR MOTHER SHOWING THAT

SHE WAS A JEW?

A. Yeah, she had the armband here and she had to wear a star.

Q. YOU DID NOT, YOUR BROTHER DID NOT, AND YOUR SISTER DID NOT HAVE TO WEAR AN ARMBAND --

A. No.

Q. -- OR A JEWISH STAR?

A. No.

Q. AND YOUR FATHER DID NOT?

A. They didn't know. They didn't know.

Q. THEY DIDN'T KNOW SHE HAD CHILDREN OR THEY JUST DIDN'T KNOW?

A. They must have known she had children. Hilda had no passport, my brother either. That would be if you applied for a passport, you had to bring certain papers from your father and your mother. The only one that was in trouble was me because I traveled here, I traveled there.

Q. BUT IN GERMANY AT THE TIME WHEN JEWS WERE BEING ASKED TO WEAR ARMBANDS AND BEING FORCED TO WEAR YELLOW STARS, YOU AND YOUR SIBLINGS AND YOUR FRIENDS, WHO WERE MISCHLINGS LIKE YOU, YOU WERE NOT ASKED TO WEAR YELLOW STARS?

A. No, no. We were asked to come, in case of an air raid, to carry the buckets. They had to stand in line and pass the buckets with water.

My sister says, "I'm not going to help with the air

raids; I stay home."

I said, "No, come. You better go; otherwise we get in trouble."

Then they send a card to her that she pass the courses. I was handing out the water buckets in case of an air raid.

She says, "You see. I got the card that I passed the courses and you worked there. You went there every evening and helped there with the buckets.

"Well," I says, "I'm the dumb one; you're the clever one."

Q. SO THERE WAS --

A. No. It was only when you come to a place like the police. You have to ask for a passport, or my sister when she wanted to get married that they said, "Hey, no, you're a mischling -- out."

Q. WERE MISCHLINGS ROUNDED UP AND TRANSPORTED WITH OTHER JEWS?

A. That I don't know. While I was there, no.

Q. OKAY.

A. There were two mischlings working in that company where I worked. One killed herself and the other one, she used to call up mother and father and ask about me. But later on my mother didn't hear anymore. Either she killed herself or she was picked up. I don't know -- or she moved away,

could be too.

Q. DID YOU EVER HEAR ANYTHING, EITHER THROUGH YOUR MOTHER OR MAYBE THE TIME THAT YOU WERE IN GERMANY OF SPOUSES, THE NON-JEWISH SPOUSE -- THE ARYAN SPOUSE, PROTESTING WHEN THEY TRIED TO DO SOMETHING TO THE JEWISH SPOUSE?

A. No. Everybody was afraid. Because word went around about those concentration camps that they hit you, torture you. So everybody was very much scared even to say a word.

There was one family I was a governess for the little girl. Her name was Dr. (Rothstein) or (Rosenstein) and he went to Holland from Berlin. His wife was an Aryan. She stayed in Berlin with the little girl. She asked me if I could do them a favor. I says, "Sure what can I do?" I says, "How is your husband?"

"Oh, he's still in Holland and he hopes to go someplace," and she's sending him money.

She says, "There is a family and they are bad off. I was wondering if you could help them out with something?"

I says, "What do you mean by helping out? I gladly help, but I have to know what is it?"

She said, "Just to take a suitcase over to them. They have a few things here in Berlin. We pay." They would pay for the the train trip to Amsterdam.

"Maybe you have a sister? Maybe she could come too and bring another suitcase?"

"Yeah," I says, "We can do that."

So that was the only time we were able to help, really. So we took a suitcase. I didn't ask what's in there, anything. They could have packed God knows what in. We could have been stopped on the border somewhere. But we were lucky that time we brought that over. They paid us the trip back and I stayed with the little girl a week or so, yeah.

Then we went back to Berlin. No, that was then when the war broke out. My sister had to go back. She worked in an office. She had to go back to work in Berlin.

The war broke out and my mother sent me a cable; I should stay there. I stayed in Amsterdam and then some family told me I should go to Rotterdam; I get my permit to stay prolonged. So I went there to get the visa prolonged because they were very strict then. They had a lot of Nazis in Holland in those days.

I go to certain office to ask for the permit to stay.

The guy said, "You have a war in your country. If there would be a war in my country," he said, "I would be the first one to help. So if you're not leaving this country by midnight we have you arrested right here." I never forget that.

So I says, "No, I was just going to ask if there is a possibility that I stay a little longer."

That was the answer, so I left the same night. Went

back to Berlin. I had hoped I could stay a little in Holland and then get a ship or somehow to someplace.

Q. GET OUT OF EUROPE?

A. Get out of Europe.

My mother said, "Why did you come back; couldn't you make it?"

I says, "No, there are Nazis in Holland too. Same crowd you have here." Certain things you remember so clearly.

Now I remember the name from the girl I was a friend with in school, Rosy (Simf) was her name. I told you the other girl was Sara Heller and Rosy Simf, yeah, nice girls. I wonder what happened to them?

I talked a long time.

End Tape No. 2.