

1 BERNARD ORGANEK

2
3 MS. BURRINGTON: My name is Maria Burrington.
4 It is June 12th, 1990. I'm interviewing Bernard OrganeK
5 at the -- for the Northern California Oral -- Holocaust
6 Oral History Project, at the Holocaust Center in San
7 Francisco.

8 Good afternoon, Mr. OrganeK.

9 MR. ORGANEK: Good afternoon.

10 MS. BURRINGTON: Q. Can you tell us when and
11 where you were born?

12 A. I was born in February -- 2nd of February in
13 1923, in {}GERA, Germany. This is the province of
14 {}Thuringia, and was originally -- taken in 1945 by the
15 American Army, was given in exchange to the Russians for
16 West Berlin. That's very close to the western --
17 east/west border.

18 We left in 1934 because my father was born in
19 Poland and he was a sympathizer of left causes, and he was
20 on a list to be picked up, and was told by somebody in the
21 police that he's on the list. So from one hour to the
22 next he went to Poland.

23 We were born -- we were stateless because my
24 parents had not registered their affiliation by the end
25 of the Second World War. And we never had German
26 citizenship -- and Polish citizenship we did not get --
27 because he didn't register.

28 In 1934 we tried to join our father, and after

1 the third try we were able to pass the border without
2 regular papers -- Polish papers or permits -- and we
3 joined our father in {}LORCH, where he had taken residence
4 in the meantime.

5 I'm going to skip all those little things what
6 happened in Lorch between then and 1939, when the War
7 started with Germany -- when the German invasion started.

8 Q. Could I ask you about your life as a child,
9 growing up in Gera?

10 A. As a child, the first years were very easy, even
11 we were called {}"Jude" quite often. But the
12 anti-semitism in those towns were not too strong until
13 Hitler came to power, and we had problems in school or we
14 were not permitted to participate -- we were not permitted
15 to do almost anything -- and we were ostracized,
16 basically, in school.

17 Q. How many people were in your family?

18 A. In our family consisted of my father, {}Chaim,
19 my mother, {}Gietl, my older brother, {}Leo, myself, and a
20 younger sister, {}Esther. She was five years younger than
21 me, my brother's two years older than me.

22 Q. And what did your father do?

23 A. In Germany, he was basically a tradesman in all
24 kinds of businesses, did very well at one time. During
25 the Depression, he lost quite a bit, including his house
26 what we owned, but he worked himself up again and did very
27 well. And his downfall, that he had to leave at this
28 particular time {}was he was supporting the Social

1 Democrats, a certain organization which were on Hitler's
2 "no-no" list.

3 Q. Was your father political -- your father was
4 politically active, you mentioned.

5 A. He was active, yes.

6 Q. Did your father feel that the persecution was
7 more anti-semitic or was it political or a combination of
8 both?

9 A. No, this was strictly anti-semitic. Political
10 was even harsher -- at this particular point, the
11 political was even harsher than the anti-semitic. The
12 anti-semitic was in our daily life, but anybody who was
13 political at this time -- on their lists -- they were sent
14 to concentration camps, harassed -- all kinds.

15 But we found, also, those -- most of those that
16 used to belong to the Socialists and Communists in 1933,
17 all of a sudden they appeared in brown uniforms. There
18 was quite a change of the population, what the Germans
19 call "Mitlaeufer" -- "Mitlaeufer" -- {}DOS,ASCII,AE-A/UML

20 Q. What -- {}TEST PRINT PAGE

21 A. "Mitlaeufer" means "going along with whatever it
22 is." They saw where the wind was blowing, so they left
23 the one party and went to the next.

24 Q. "Mitlaeufer."

25 A. "Mitlaeufer."

26 Q. You were a young boy then, but your father was
27 very astute -- I think you told me earlier that your
28 family also had relatives who were indicted for attempts

1 on the life of the Csar.

2 A. Oh, yes. My father's oldest sister was a
3 revolutionary in -- still -- back from 1905, against the
4 {}Tsar. And they were indicted. And this is the reason
5 they left Poland at the time. My mother's oldest sister's
6 husband was in the same category, and they escaped --
7 Poland -- was under Russia at the time -- and they went to
8 Germany.

9 My father was inducted into the Russian Army in
10 1914, and in one of the battles he became a prisoner of
11 war in Germany. He escaped the German prison camp and
12 went to his sister.

13 My mother was born in {}ZWINSKAVOLA, Poland.
14 When the Germans marched in, she also left {}there to
15 visit -- to go to her older sister. And this way they
16 met. They got married in 1918. {}PHONETIC, GLOBAL CHNG

17 Q. And they came to Gera in --

18 A. They came to Gera -- my father, after escaping
19 the prisoner-of-war camp, my mother to visit -- to go to
20 her older sister. They are both natives of Poland.

21 Q. Do you remember as a child your parents talking
22 about the changes going on in Germany? And do you
23 remember what they told you as a child about how to
24 protect yourself from anti-semitic remarks? Do you
25 remember --

26 A. He -- basically, my parents were very active
27 politically -- both of them -- the whole family,
28 basically, was.

1 At the time, there was not so much the pressure
2 in the late '20s and early '30s. There was more rowdiness
3 against the Jews. It was not uniform policy, because it
4 was under the so-called "Weimar Republic." It only
5 started when Hitler was elected Chancellor and they burned
6 the Reichstag. This is when all those other things
7 started that the anti-semitic {}_____.

8 Hitler's "Mein Kampf" was discussed many times;
9 but everybody said, "This is just something what nobody
10 could believe. This is a maniac writing." Nobody even
11 thought that this would have been any bearing even after
12 he takes power.

13 Q. Do you remember discussions about "Mein Kampf"
14 in your home --

15 A. Oh, yes.

16 Q. -- do you remember people talking about it?

17 A. Oh, yes.

18 Q. Did your parents have friends come over?

19 A. Oh, yes. As I mentioned before, my parents
20 were very active, and we always had an open house and a
21 lot of visitors and discussions every night. Tea and
22 discussions was part of the menu.

23 Q. And you remember hearing that this man, Hitler,
24 and "Mein Kampf" was -- it was ridiculous, it was the
25 ravings of a madman, or something like that?

26 A. It was strictly madman ravings.

27 Q. So you weren't afraid, then, as a child?

28 A. Basically, we were not afraid as a child. We

1 got always "Juda" and little things like this -- somebody
2 got aggressive against me, but I always managed to hold my
3 own. I'm a little bit on the -- was a little bit on the
4 aggressive side, so I gave back whatever I received.

5 Q. Did your parents tell you that was okay?

6 A. This was okay at this particular time. After
7 1933, that was not acceptable anymore, because if you were
8 a Jew and you did something -- you're away to some kind of
9 a home for children, or your parents being arrested
10 because of you was very -- was on a daily basis. You had
11 to be very careful what you said, where you said it, and
12 to whom you said it.

13 Q. So after 1933 was when you started seeing a
14 significant change in the quality of your family's life in
15 terms of -- the danger became --

16 A. Oh, yes. It was also economically --

17 Q. What happened?

18 A. -- my father couldn't do his business anymore,
19 what he did, because people did not buy from him as much
20 as used to be. And economically it went down quite a bit.

21 Q. Where were you going to school at this time? In
22 a public school?

23 A. This was public school. It was strictly public
24 school. There were no other schools around.

25 There was a Catholic school, and I definitely
26 would not attend one.

27 Q. At {}one point, weren't you segregated and sent
28 to another school?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Never?

3 A. This was the early part, and we were not removed
4 from school yet. This happened in later years. This
5 happened in 1936.

6 Q. Did you and your brother -- how did your
7 classmates treat you -- I mean, before and after 1933?
8 Was there -- could you discern a difference before and
9 after?

10 A. Oh, big difference.

11 Q. Can you tell us about that?

12 A. Everybody was singing "Mein {}STEPANHO" and all
13 those little songs -- the Nazi songs. Most of the
14 classmates took a distance from us, threatened us, a few
15 little beatings here and there. It was coming.
16 {}PHONETIC

17 Q. You never had anybody stand up for you? Or you
18 never had anybody --

19 A. There was nobody even willing to stand up for
20 anybody. Kids are aggressive when they are in the
21 majority, and they are cowards when they are in the
22 minority.

23 Q. What about the teachers? How did they treat
24 you?

25 A. This was a mixed thing. We had some teachers
26 what were part of the Hitler movement, and we had some
27 what pretended to be, but in -- privately, they told us,
28 "Just take it easy; it's going to change." {}There were

1 such{} around, too -- so much as they were in the
2 minority. But we had some teachers what were very
3 supporting and trying to help us. But the majority of the
4 teachers were not.

5 Q. One man I know who was living in Germany at the
6 time -- he was about your age at this time -- he felt
7 resentful of the fact that he was Jewish, and he wished he
8 could be like his German classmates, because he really
9 thought of himself as very German.

10 Did you ever feel --

11 A. Oh, no.

12 Q. -- put upon or anything like that?

13 A. No. We were educated -- not religious -- but
14 very much as Jews, the whole family. We never felt -- we
15 always -- basically, I thought myself better than the rest
16 of them, because -- in my schoolwork I was superior. With
17 everything I did, I was doing quite well -- except
18 singing.

19 And some of those classmates -- bullies --
20 so-called "bullies" -- what they are bullies regardless
21 how the weather is -- resented me very much because I was
22 one of the smaller ones, one of the -- in the early part
23 of schooling, I was called the "teacher's pet" because I
24 did know all the answers -- I could read at the age of
25 five before I ever entered school -- and quite a few of my
26 classmates resented me then.

27 And it got worse as the Nazi movement
28 progressed.

1 Q. Did you ever cry? {}_____? Didn't any of this
2 abuse by teachers and -- you were only a little boy --
3 didn't you ever go home crying sometimes?

4 A. Not really. I tried to do my best. We were
5 brought up to know who we are and just -- the other ones
6 are just jealous. And it was -- {}points -- {}crying, I
7 felt like it. Let's put it this way -- I suppressed it.
8 But {}crying I did not. {}SENSE THIRD SENTENCE

9 Q. And your brother, did he --

10 A. He was about the same way. He was the best
11 student in his class at all times.

12 Q. And your little sister?

13 A. She was not of school age yet. She was born
14 1928, and she was supposed to start school, and we left
15 Germany.

16 Q. You left Germany in 1934 --

17 A. '34.

18 Q. -- and you went to Poland --

19 A. We went to Poland --

20 Q. -- to Lorch?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Where -- did your father have family there? Why
23 did you go there?

24 A. Basically, my father originally was born in the
25 little town of {}LAGE -- by the name of Lage -- but his
26 parents moved to Lorch when he was very young. He had all
27 his education, and also family -- he still had two
28 brothers -- in Lorch. This is the reason he went back to

1 Lorch, and this is a city he did know. And we joined him
2 there.

3 Q. What kind of a community was Lorch in 1934?

4 A. Very poor. Living conditions were extremely
5 bad, usually one room per family -- especially when you
6 come out -- without any resources -- from Germany. We had
7 a very hard time to get started. But my father made
8 progress, my mother started to work, I started to work at
9 the age of 13 -- this was 1936.

10 Q. What were you doing?

11 A. I was going into apprenticeship as a tailor.
12 This means at no pay. And second year I got \$5, what was
13 equal to about \$1.25 a week. By 1939, I was
14 well-qualified as a craftsman in tailoring.

15 Q. Did you get to know your father's family there?

16 A. Oh, yes.

17 Q. Who was there -- who was {}____ family?

18 A. His -- my father was the oldest of three boys;
19 he had still a younger sister and an older sister what
20 originally was in Gera.

21 His older sister -- in 1933, she was very active
22 in the communistic movement, and her husband; they went to
23 Russia. And they were some of very few who could go to
24 Russia at the time. But they've felt bad about it ever
25 since. This is a different story
26 altogether.

27 The other brothers -- the two brothers what
28 lived in Lorch -- one and his family -- wife and two

1 children -- did not survive. The second brother managed
2 to escape to Russia, and his wife and child did not
3 survive.

4 Q. What did your father's family do, and what
5 was -- did you like having this large family around you?
6 Were there --

7 A. Oh, yes. Basically, we were very family-
8 oriented. In Gera, itself, we had a lot of family --
9 brothers and sisters of my mother and their children --
10 and also, as I mentioned, my father's older sister was
11 there, and her children.

12 So we were very family-oriented. We saw each
13 other on a daily, weekly basis. As the kids would say, I
14 grew up with my cousins, like "their house, my house" --
15 was the same thing.

16 Q. What did you -- was your family getting any
17 news about what was happening in Germany? Was your
18 family -- particularly your father and mother -- were they
19 following the worsening situation? And were they talking
20 about it with the children?

21 A. I would say they were basically talking between
22 themselves, but the children always were listening. We
23 were not excluded.

24 And as I mentioned before, they were activists.
25 And as such, they did know exactly what's happening. And
26 they had their opinions about it what they voiced in the
27 home. And we did know where -- what the stand was at the
28 time.

1 Q. Where did you live in Lorch? Did you live in a
2 Jewish neighborhood --

3 A. Lorch was basically -- there were three
4 neighborhoods. There were Poles, Germans, and Jews. And
5 we always lived in the Jewish neighborhood.

6 In Lorch, anti-semitism was very strong at the
7 time. If you lived in the Jewish neighborhood, you were
8 Jewish; you tried to stay in there, because if you went to
9 a Polish neighborhood, you got beaten up.

10 Q. You didn't have -- at that point, when you came
11 to Lorch, you weren't experiencing that in Germany; were
12 you?

13 A. No.

14 Q. But you were --

15 A. Lorch was worse at the time than Germany -- at
16 this time.

17 Q. Did your family talk about leaving? Did your
18 family talk about what they would do? Did they have any
19 idea of what might -- of what was to come? What do you
20 remember as a child? And do you remember discussing it
21 with your other cousins and your brother and sister?

22 A. Basically, everybody was ready to leave. It was
23 just closed. Everything was closed up. America had their
24 quota, and you had to have close relatives in order to be
25 sponsored. Most of the world didn't want Jews in at the
26 time, either.

27 We were -- one of my mother's sisters had
28 emigrated to Uruguay, and she sent papers to my older

1 brother, because families they would not permit; but, as
2 a child, they could take somebody in. But because my --
3 we had stateless papers, and never the real Polish
4 citizenship, we could not get a traveling document for my
5 brother to leave. And so his exit was closed, too.

6 Q. And what year was that, when he -- when the
7 family attempted to get your brother to Uruguay -- what
8 year was that; do you remember?

9 A. This was starting from 1936 till 19 -- until the
10 War started. And we didn't succeed. We had, basically,
11 the affidavit or whatever papers Uruguay wanted at the
12 time -- those papers were all there -- but we were not
13 able to get traveling papers for my brother to leave.

14 Q. Do you remember hearing about the Anschluss in
15 Austria?

16 A. Oh, yes. All those political happenings, we
17 heard quite a bit about it. In our family, we read about
18 three or four newspapers a day, plus -- as I mentioned
19 before -- all the people who left Germany at the time --
20 Jewish people -- we had, like, a {}"cuphouse" (sic) in our
21 house. Everybody came in discussing the latest things
22 what was happening, and we were very knowledgeable of what
23 was happening between the Anschluss and {} _____
24 and everything -- Hitler's demands and --
25 {}COFFEE HOUSE?

26 Q. And {}Kristallnacht, do you remember hearing
27 about?

28 A. Oh, I -- did I hear about it, Kristallnacht? --

1 oh, my. The rest of my family who were still in Germany
2 were shipped out with 20 Marks in {}his pocket and one
3 suitcase {}. And we had -- after Kristallnacht -- in our
4 one-room apartment, we had 18 people living there: My
5 father's youngest brother, with wife and two families; my
6 grandmother; two cousins; plus some friends -- whoever --
7 whoever didn't have anyplace to stay. We had like an open
8 house. Our floors were packed.

9 Q. So, right after Kristallnacht your family
10 received an influx of other family members and even
11 friends from Gera?

12 A. From Gera, and also other places of Germany
13 where those relatives used to live.

14 Q. So you were -- you were how old then -- you were
15 15 years old?

16 A. At Kristallnacht, I was about 15 -- not quite.

17 Q. What was your reaction to this? You were a
18 young man --

19 A. I was ready to take a gun and shoot somebody
20 else.

21 Q. Did you ever talk to your father about joining
22 any kind of, you know, an army -- a resistance -- or
23 going somewhere to train or anything, or --

24 A. Oh, at one time we wanted to go to Spain, and we
25 wanted to join the Republican Army. We were just too
26 young, and my father just laughed about it.

27 Q. So you were 15 years old when Kristallnacht
28 occurred.

1 And then the Anschluss in Czechoslovakia -- were
2 there more relatives and more friends --

3 A. No.

4 Q. -- no -- after that?

5 A. It was basically -- all our relatives came
6 Kristallnacht. They were the ones who still had
7 maintained Polish citizenship and had stayed in Gera.
8 {}They shipped out everything. They came in, get ready,
9 pack a suitcase, 20 Marks per person, and they just {}haul
10 them by train to the border and dropped them there, and
11 had them march towards Poland.

12 They were lucky when they came in right away,
13 because afterwards Poland put down a little -- its army,
14 and they didn't let anybody in, and people were sitting
15 there for weeks in a no-man's land.

16 But most of my family were lucky to have broken
17 through and came to Lorch right away.

18 Q. So you had 18 people living in your house?

19 A. Eighteen people in one room.

20 Q. How long was everybody in this situation? Did
21 they find rooms in Lorch?

22 A. Oh, yes. At the time, the Jewish organizations
23 made up places, and then they found their own, and they
24 started to try to live, again, a normal life.

25 Q. Am I correct in assuming that your family and
26 your family's friends weren't the only people coming to
27 Lorch? There must have been other families?

28 A. Oh, there were thousands.

1 Q. Thousands.

2 A. Yes. And once they had made up a special home
3 with a soup kitchen, and supplying people with food and
4 clothing -- whatever. My family were not the only ones.
5 But my family had someplace to go to. The others didn't
6 have anyplace to go to.

7 And they became, from Day One, burdens on the
8 Jewish community -- what did their very best, because it
9 was -- as I mentioned before -- a very poor community. It
10 didn't have much resources.

11 Q. There was no outside help; all the help that was
12 being given to the new arrivals was strictly coming from
13 within the community?

14 A. Strictly from within the community.

15 Q. Strictly from within the community?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. So did life significantly change, let's say
18 after Kristallnacht, in terms of the numbers of people
19 living there? And it was an already poor community and
20 being made poorer by the arrival of all these people who
21 had nothing?

22 A. Right. What it was -- two of my relatives --
23 one cousin and one uncle -- were permitted later on to go
24 back and liquidate their business for a short time. But
25 the problem was, they liquidated their business -- they
26 couldn't take it out either, but they could ship out the
27 household things.

28 To add insult to injury, the Poles -- the

1 Custom -- kept the household things in bond -- with all
2 black -- what kind of {}gold {}_____ ware.{} One of
3 my cousins, when the War broke out and the Poles went to
4 the customhouse and {}wherever, taking out everything that
5 there was -- actually, it was a little bit of anarchy --
6 the Polish army had basically given up, the Germans were
7 not in -- he was trying to get some of his belongings, and
8 he was lucky enough to be arrested, which -- {}have the
9 time to get his own stuff. Everybody else {}_____,
10 they saw a Jew there taking something, even (if) it was
11 his, he was arrested. But they let him go after two days.

12 Q. Do you remember the Nonaggression Pact being
13 signed, and that being discussed in your home?

14 A. Oh, yes.

15 Q. And what was the reaction, I guess, your parents
16 had?

17 A. It actually was extremely anti-Russia --
18 anti-Communist. As I mentioned before, my parents were
19 a little bit on the left-leaning side, even they were not
20 members of any parties. But you would call it, here,
21 "left liberal."

22 After this Pact -- this was devastating -- we
23 know what was coming. We {}_____ -- before they had this
24 French-English commission, generals going there to talk to
25 Russia about the Pact, and they were trying to make a pact
26 what was not ironclad -- and when this fell through, we
27 didn't feel so good about it. And when we heard about
28 {}LEBENSRAUM -- signing this particular pact -- it was

1 chaos in the family between the {}_____. And as I said,
2 we had quite a few people always coming to our house --
3 quite a few of them were Communists -- they say they are
4 putting their head in shame.

5 Q. They felt betrayed?

6 A. They felt betrayed. How could the so-called
7 Communist Working -- People's Party -- go together with
8 the ultra-Fascists?

9 Q. And do you remember -- did you -- did you
10 feel -- how did you feel at that point about -- about the
11 Soviet Union? {}_____ -- you were 15?

12 A. I -- how I felt about the Soviet Union? I
13 didn't -- we still had some kind of what was told us that
14 most of the world was gullible, because there was so
15 closed up a society, and nothing really came out of it --
16 we still had the idea it would be better over there than
17 in Poland. Not that we were for it, but because it -- it
18 still would be better, because in Poland you were a Jew,
19 a {}"JUT," all the time. Over there, according to
20 propaganda, there was no hatred {}about -- racial hatreds
21 and so on. {}PHONETIC

22 I found out different afterwards.

23 Q. Did you -- did -- the life since all these
24 people arrived, and the {}life {}_____ -- was food
25 running short? Were medical supplies? How would
26 people -- do you remember your mother not being able to
27 get food in the grocery store?

28 A. No. Food was actually available in the grocery

1 store; the money wasn't available. It was a little bit
2 tight economically. Not that we did very well, but we
3 were holding our own by this time -- between 1934 and
4 1936.

5 Q. You were working as a tailor's apprentice?

6 A. A tailor apprentice. I basically got five
7 {}_____ a week, plus I got tips. When you brought
8 finished garments to your customer, you got a tip.

9 My mother worked at home; she did artistic
10 weaving. When somebody got a hole in a garment, she did
11 it with a needle -- repaired, what is very complicated.

12 My father had a job, and besides having the job,
13 he did a little bit selling, buying here -- what
14 {}_____ called a {}"LAEUFMINCH." He did everything
15 possible to support the family. {}PHONETIC, ASCII UML-A

16 Q. And your older brother?

17 A. My older brother had a job, too, and he made
18 some money, too. But the way we were doing it, every
19 penny anybody made went home. If you got enough money for
20 a movie a week, you were lucky. And it's not like our
21 kids have it; we washed the floors, we helped anything
22 else, because my mother was working at home and she didn't
23 have the time to do it. I helped the cooking -- whatever
24 needed.

25 Q. So then you had a life, at least your family was
26 getting by, they were surviving?

27 A. We were getting by.

28 Q. When did your family's life -- when do you

1 remember first -- do you recall what it was like when you
2 first felt threatened by events, and you really thought
3 your family and your lives were at risk?

4 A. This happened when the Germans marched into
5 Lorch.

6 Q. What day was that?

7 A. This was in 1939 -- I forget the date. This was
8 only about five days after the War broke out. There was
9 no more bread available, and there was no more anything
10 available, even if you had some money.

11 Our business, this means -- we still had
12 additional family in the house, plus then from
13 {}ZWINSKAVOLA -- what is not far from Lorch -- some
14 relatives of my mother's -- who ran away from the
15 Germans -- came to Lorch, and they were there now {}some
16 in our house -- we had 22 people in our house then, that
17 we tried to supply with food. And it was mostly standing
18 in lines and trying to {}_____.

19 One of those bread lines -- one of the Poles
20 pointed out to a German -- this was military police --
21 to my brother and myself and a few others -- "They're
22 Jews." And they pulled us out from the bread line and
23 they took us where they had -- the military police had
24 made a -- I don't remember {}the others{} anymore -- in
25 {}Piotrkovska, they had made a headquarters. And before
26 the war started, they had ditches -- the Poles built
27 ditches -- {}anti-air ditches. And in this particular
28 place, there were about 40 Jews. And they called it: "We

1 want to teach the Jews how to work."

2 So there was one group had to pick up big
3 boulders from one place and bring it over there. Another
4 group had to take the same boulders from over there and
5 bring it over here, while behind everyone was a German
6 with a gun, hitting you in the back -- "Faster! Faster!
7 You're too slow, Jew. You have to learn how to work!"

8 And then they told us we were supposed to close
9 up the ditches with our hands -- and this is red clay, and
10 was already two weeks out of the earth, what was
11 impossible to do with your hands -- and you got beaten
12 constantly.

13 Then they said, "You Jews all need a haircut,"
14 and this means this one guy jerked your hair and the other
15 one, with a dull knife, cut it. This was like pulling out
16 your brains. And we didn't get any food. We were put
17 together in one room.

18 The next day, the same story started. My
19 brother and myself, we were in one corner -- working
20 there -- and while the guy who was watching us went away,
21 we just run. Piotrkovska -- after we got out of the
22 house -- Piotrkovska is a busy street -- we just
23 disappeared within the people. I don't know if they went
24 after us or not. But, anyway, we managed to get away.

25 We went home, and my parents were very {}good
26 about us -- because we had left the day before, early in
27 the morning. We were discussing what's going to happen,
28 and the consensus was this: We were the most vulnerable

1 ones; we should try to get away to Russia, to the Russian
2 part. Actually, the whole family wanted to go; but my
3 mother was, at the time, sick. She had a gallbladder
4 condition, and she could not walk. She couldn't take any
5 large strain. And this was at a time you were supposed to
6 wear a yellow band; and we took our band off and went to
7 the train station at the risk of our life. And we took a
8 train to Warsaw.

9 From Warsaw, we walked 40 kilometers to the
10 border with the Russian-German demarcation line. We
11 smuggled through during the night. We saw the Germans
12 with the dogs and so on. We were laying low. And we had
13 a Pole who was so-called going to {}_____ us over. What he
14 basically did, he took away whatever we had and he told
15 us, "Just go this way. Don't go any other way, just this
16 direction, and you'll make it." And this was two young
17 boys: I was, at the time -- 1939 -- I was 16, my brother
18 was 19 -- 18. And we made it to {}Bialystok.

19 In Bialystok, we were basically living on the
20 street. It was in November and quite cold. We didn't
21 have any clothes, we didn't have anything. We tried to
22 make a living, thus: We stand in line buying something
23 what was in the stores, we selling it and standing in line
24 again, and get it again. And this way we were able to
25 feed us somehow until the Russians brought us commissions
26 {}for recruitment for the coal mines. And we signed up.

27 We had more lice than clothes. We were living
28 on the street. People living {}_____, never baths, never

1 anything. That was very bad conditions.

2 Q. You were 16 years old --

3 A. I was 16 years old --

4 Q. -- and your brother was 18 --

5 A. -- 18 --

6 Q. -- you went to Bialystok to -- and you -- you
7 made your way -- you walked from the border -- you
8 walked -- first you walked 40 kilometers from Warsaw to --
9 to the border?

10 A. No. From the border, we -- after we got over
11 the border, we jumped on the train.

12 Q. You jumped on the train?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. You -- right -- you jumped -- you didn't pay
15 your way on the train?

16 A. No.

17 Q. You just jumped right on the train --

18 A. Jumped on the train. That's right.

19 Q. -- and you ended up in Bialystok -- you --

20 A. Right.

21 Q. -- that's where the train ended its --

22 A. Right.

23 Q. -- journey?

24 A. Right.

25 Q. Did you speak any Russian? Did you speak any --

26 A. No.

27 Q. How did you communicate with anybody? How did
28 you eat? How did you --

1 A. Basically, by -- the language I mostly spoke was
2 German. While I was in Lorch, I learned Yiddish. I spoke
3 very little Polish because the Poles did not admit us to
4 school; we were too old for the first grade and didn't
5 know enough for the grade what we were supposed to {}_____.
6 The Polish what I did know was just from learning myself.

7 I became very fluent in Yiddish, in reading and
8 writing. We always liked to read, and our house always
9 was full of books, and these were the only books
10 available -- in Yiddish -- so I was very fluent. And I
11 belonged to the book -- library, what was -- for 50 cents
12 a month you could take as many as often as you needed --
13 books. So we joined there.

14 Most of the people we talked to was Yiddish.

15 Q. In Bialystok?

16 A. In Bialystok, this was millions -- it was
17 thousands and thousands of people who spoke Yiddish.

18 Q. So because you did speak Yiddish {}_____,
19 you were able to communicate with some people?

20 A. Oh, yes. Oh, yes, with almost everybody.

21 Q. You had one -- you only had the clothes on your
22 back?

23 A. Only the clothes on my back.

24 Q. What were they? What were those clothes? Do
25 you remember what they looked like, and how long you had
26 them?

27 A. They -- oh, I remember very well. I had one
28 suit and one overcoat, one pair of shoes, one pair of

1 socks, one pair of underwear. And this was all that I
2 had.

3 Q. And you wore it all the time?

4 A. I wore it all day and night.

5 Q. For how long --

6 A. Because if you took off, somebody took it. You
7 could not take it off.

8 How long? We were in Bialystok about -- until
9 the 29th of December.

10 Q. That was how -- you -- from the time you --

11 A. From November --

12 Q. From November --

13 A. Yeah. We were about six weeks -- I would say
14 about six weeks.

15 Q. -- you were living in those clothes?

16 A. Always the same clothes.

17 Q. And you -- you went -- how did you eat? Did
18 people give you food?

19 A. No. Nobody give you anything. As I said, we
20 stand in line, we bought something, we sold it, we stand
21 in line again -- with a little profit -- with whatever
22 profit we made -- we lived on. In Russia, they call it
23 "black market," and for this you could get eight years.
24 But we were not aware yet what {}worse would come.{}

25 Q. You were {}16 and 18 years old, and you were
26 living on the streets.

27 Do you remember: Did you sleep in doorways, did
28 you sleep in a park -- did you -- anywhere?

1 A. Doorways, synagogues. Did you ever try to sleep
2 on a synagogue bench where you put the papers and books,
3 {}_____? We've had to sleep on there, too. Wherever
4 you could find a place, you slept.

5 Q. Now, you always stayed with your brother?

6 A. We always stayed together.

7 Q. You always stayed together.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Did you -- were you afraid of --

10 A. At least, I have to say one thing: We not --
11 not always stay together. At one time, my brother, having
12 so -- as Jews, we are not being persecuted -- try to go
13 back to Poland, to Lorch, and try to get my -- our -- the
14 rest of the family out -- the rest of the family back. He
15 was not able to cross the line; he was caught by the
16 Germans, he got extremely bad beating, {}put in{} the
17 no-man's land -- because the Russians had at the time put
18 up a barricade, too, and didn't let anybody in anymore.

19 And after four days being in this no-man's land,
20 where there were so many thousands, we just walked through
21 the Russian line, and we walked over and we came back to
22 Bialystok.

23 Q. How did he find you?

24 A. We had certain place that we were so-called
25 "hanging out," and this way he found me.

26 Q. What did you eat? Do you remember -- I mean --

27 A. Bread.

28 Q. -- the things you ate?

1 Bread. Right. Nothing else in your diet?

2 A. Onions.

3 Q. Onions.

4 And you lived on bread and onions?

5 A. Onions, yeah.

6 Q. Not that much --

7 A. {}_____.

8 Q. A 16 year-old boy would want to have a little
9 more than that.

10 A. Yes, I would have loved to.

11 Q. {}Talking about the coal mine,{} when people
12 came to sign up people to work in the coal mine --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- given your experience on the street, did you
15 and your brother think this was a wonderful --

16 A. Anything to get off the street. We did not know
17 what a coal mine was, we did not know what we got
18 ourselves into. It was something to get off the street.

19 Q. So, do you remember what they told you? Did
20 they tell you you were going to work in a --

21 A. Oh, yes. "{}If you are going to get chosen, you
22 are going to get food, you are going to get a salary, and
23 we are paying very well, you are only going to work seven
24 hours a day, and it's not like in the capitalistic
25 world -- you will only have a five-day work week."

26 What they forgot to tell you: This is not five
27 days and two {}weeks' rest. This is five days, and the
28 sixth day you go back working. They didn't tell you this.

1 seven day -- hours -- working is after you -- it took two
2 hours to get into and three hours to get out again. So
3 these are the things they forgot to tell you.

4 But any change was a change for the better,
5 because it was cold, we were dirty, we were hungry.

6 Q. You were -- how did you get -- where did you go
7 from there -- you went to a city near Perm. Now, the name
8 of that city was --

9 A. {}Wernaya {}Gubacha. What that means is the
10 "higher Gubacha."

11 Q. Can you spell that for us?

12 A. It's a little difficult, but I will try.

13 Q. We'll try.

14 A. Yeah. "Wernaya" is spelled W-e-r-n-a-y-a, and
15 "Gubacha" is G-u-b-a-c-h-a. This {}is near{}
16 {}SVERDLOVSK, a major city there, and {}BEREZNIKI-RYUN --
17 this is a minor city, close by. {}PHONETIC

18 This is in the northern Urals, close by quite a
19 few labor camps -- working in the forest to find wood for
20 the coal mines. At the time when we signed up, we were
21 not aware of it. This is something we found out later on.

22 The coal mine, when we got there, we got --
23 everybody -- one warm jacket, a warm pair of pants, a pair
24 of rubber boots, socks and a set of underwear. And they
25 also gave us a package of {}majorka, what is a type of
26 Russian tobacco. We were non-smokers, but -- {}we didn't
27 know it -- this was as good as gold. We had just given it
28 away because we are not smoking. Next day, all the

1 Russians came and they wanted to give us bread for it,
2 because they didn't have any majorca, already for weeks.
3 This was something very special given to us, but we were
4 not aware of it and we just gave it away. {}MAYORKA?

5 Q. {}, you arrived and you gave away your
6 currency, basically.

7 A. Basically, I gave away my currency.

8 Q. Gave away your currency.

9 When did you start work in the mines?

10 A. We started working two weeks after we got there.
11 I had represented myself as the age of 18, because
12 according to the law, I was not permitted underground.

13 Q. Did you look like you were 18 years old at this
14 point?

15 A. No.

16 Q. You looked --

17 A. I looked like 15.

18 Q. You looked like 15. You hadn't been eating
19 very well.

20 A. I haven't been eating, I was small -- stature
21 was small, anyway -- and nobody would have believed that I
22 was 18.

23 They needed workers; they'd take anybody.

24 Q. As long as you said you were 18, that was good
25 enough for them?

26 A. It was good enough.

27 Q. And so you got to Wernaya Gubacha --

28 A. Wernaya Gubacha.

1 Q. -- and you started working in the coal mines.
2 Can you describe -- it was a major complex; was
3 it not?

4 A. This is one of the oldest mines. This mine was
5 about 80 years old. This means it was worked out in large
6 spaces. It means -- in a house, this means 20 people in
7 one room. Everybody had a {}____; on a hook next to the
8 {}____ there, he could hang up whatever he wanted to hang
9 up.

10 When we went to work, we had to go down the
11 mountain. It was very snowy up there and very cold. You
12 had to go to work up to the temperature of 69-minus
13 Celsius. At 60, they let you stay in your barracks.

14 We went down there -- you had to get --
15 everybody got a working number with a tag -- you had to
16 get -- you got tags for your lamp and for your tools. You
17 had to turn in your number, you got your tools, then you
18 had a little meeting with the foreman and he told you what
19 to do for the day.

20 And then, as the train came in, and it took you
21 about three kilometers inside to the mountain. From
22 there, there were three levels: 105 meters -- 1,050
23 meters -- 2100 and 3,000 meters. This was one of the old
24 mines; you had to walk down by stairs. The only thing
25 that went -- goes up mechanical was the coal.

26 From when you got down, you had to go down to
27 the place of your work. Sometimes you had to crawl --
28 sometimes on your knees -- sometimes you could walk

1 straight, and sometimes bent down -- just depends how high
2 the coal was what was taking out of there.

3 When you got to your workplace, the shift before
4 you was permitted to leave.

5 Q. Was there -- what -- three shifts?

6 A. It was three shifts: twenty-one hours, plus one
7 shift -- seven hours -- there was a maintenance shift.
8 They worked three hours with nobody present, none of the
9 production workers present, and four hours they worked
10 with production workers present.

11 This work, I got this nice job of carrying the
12 dynamite down into the mine.

13 Q. How stable was it?

14 A. Oh, it was very stable.

15 Q. Was it stable enough --

16 A. Yeah, stable dynamite. There was no problem
17 about it, of it's going to explode. It was just something
18 where you have to carry it. But because of it, I did not
19 have to work on production. What this was so-called
20 "lighter" part of the work.

21 I always had to maintain the dynamite down
22 there, give it to the one who ignited it. I worked as a
23 team with him. And I helped him push the dynamite in
24 there, supposed to be there, the holes were drilled. And
25 then I was responsible for the dynamite what was left
26 over, to take it out again.

27 Q. And your brother -- what would your brother do?

28 A. My brother at the time was working as a

1 production worker, which means he had a certain {}norm of
2 shoveling coal. If you shovel 100-percent, you probably
3 earn enough to eat. If you shovel 110-percent, this
4 was -- the salary was on a progressive scale -- you got
5 quite a bit more -- not only 10 percent more, you got
6 about 50 percent more. But if you were not strong enough
7 or you did only below-100 percent, you were "up the
8 creek."

9 Q. How did your brother do?

10 A. Not so good. If he did 100-percent, he was
11 lucky.

12 Q. He just wasn't as strong --

13 A. He was not as strong.

14 Q. He had been living on potatoes -- on bread and
15 onions?

16 A. It had nothing to do with -- he's not built as
17 strong. It's simple. Some people are built strong
18 enough, and some are not.

19 But the thing was, in the mines the ones who
20 appear strongest, {}when got {}down {}on what food they're
21 getting: they actually got weaker and sicker than anybody
22 else, because they needed more food to maintain themselves
23 than we who were smaller, who didn't need as much. And
24 the rations were not -- the food what you got was not
25 enough.

26 Q. You were {}_____ of the barracks before you left?

27 A. No. Basically, you had to buy your food. And
28 the way it worked, you went down to the restaurant in the

1 mines, and you bought your food and your soup or whatever
2 was available. But with the money you had, you only could
3 buy so much, and it was not just enough to survive.
4 {}____ you also could get some money in advance. I
5 {}always lived in advance;{} I never could make ends meet.

6 After about three months on this particular job
7 I got sick, and the doctor said I have to work on light
8 work on top -- on top of the mine. The light work
9 consisted of bringing the big trees what they're cutting
10 up and use for building up the mine --

11 Q. Scaffolding?

12 A. -- scaffolding. And I had to bring this down
13 into the mine.

14 Q. This is the light work?

15 A. This is the light work.

16 Q. Bringing timbers?

17 A. -- timbers. This was trees. It's basically
18 big trees. Two of them with hooks that you hook this and
19 drag it into the mine. And this was "light work." After
20 a little while, I got enough of it.

21 As previously mentioned, there's one of my aunts
22 who was a Communist -- they had left Germany in 1933 and
23 went to Russia -- I escaped from the mine without any
24 papers and went to visit my aunt in Moscow.

25 Those people, they're scared unbelievable. My
26 uncle who was at the time in the {}Third International --
27 this was a German section of the Communist party in
28 Moscow -- was a functionary -- was denounced in 1937 by

1 somebody, and he was shipped out to Siberia to the gold
2 mines. Because they did not denounce the husband and
3 father, they're the enemies of the People, and they were
4 under very harsh conditions, even they had their
5 apartment.

6 I went over there and stayed with them a few
7 days and went to the Department of Mines, what was the
8 jurisdiction I came under, complained about the
9 conditions. I was promised that they were going -- I
10 just should go back, they're not going to penalize me, and
11 the conditions are going to change, and I got a special
12 letter, and I came back -- and nothing got better.

13 But I found one man who was a foreman of the
14 section of getting air down into the mines and getting the
15 air there it needs to, and after talking to him and
16 {}buying him some vodka, he took me into his department.

17 And this was -- sometimes he had to work very
18 hard, because something happened and you had to do it.
19 But most of the time he took us out of the way and let us
20 sleep. And, for this, twice a month when the salary came,
21 we had to go to the store, buy as much vodka as we could
22 get, go to this house, and everybody was drinking --
23 {}without any bread, {}without tomatoes -- {}and everybody
24 was drunk.

25 Q. Now, did you have to drink with them?

26 A. I had to. And this is {}"bottoms-up."

27 Q. And you were how old at the time?

28 A. Seventeen.

1 Q. And your brother, was he part of this? Or --

2 A. No, he was still --

3 Q. -- he was still in the production lines.

4 So you were made to -- you were drinking with
5 your -- man that you {}_____ boss --

6 A. Yes. But then my brother and myself, we
7 decided, "This is not a life."

8 Q. How long had you been there at this point? How
9 many months had you been there, do you think? About six
10 months?

11 A. -- we're talking about six, seven months --
12 "This is not the way I want to live" -- and without any
13 papers, without anything, we went to Perm.

14 And we went on a boat towards the -- {}Kama --
15 oh, what's the name of it? -- I forget now -- on a
16 riverboat. And we went up to the Volga, and from the
17 Volga we went up to another place, and we were caught and
18 we were shipped back to the mines.

19 Q. To the mines.

20 You said that there were labor camps nearby --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- and one thing I want to ask about, and that
23 is: Did you see the people in the forced labor camps?
24 Did you see them going to work?

25 A. No.

26 Q. You didn't see them going to work?

27 A. No.

28 Q. The people who were in your coal mine, many of

1 them -- I take it -- signed up to do this because they
2 were {}_____?

3 A. No. The only -- {}why they signed up {}is
4 {}because -- the rest of them -- was a group of people
5 what had signed up {}in Bialystok -- the rest of them, in
6 {}, when Stalin tried to send everybody to the
7 {}KOLKHOZ -- in the {}Resistance -- they {}were sent out
8 to Siberia and to Ural Mountains.

9 None of those people out there -- none of those
10 workers -- was a free person. They were not in prison,
11 but they could not travel. They had 10 kilometers. This
12 was the range what they were permit to travel.

13 Q. And they lived in the barracks with you? These
14 were the people?

15 A. They {}lived in barracks and houses, depending
16 how they made their life in the meantime. Because they're
17 there already a long time.

18 But none of the workers in the mine {}were free
19 people.

20 Q. Who were the free people?

21 A. They were not.

22 Q. They were not free people?

23 A. They were not free people.

24 Q. They weren't in forced labor camps, but they
25 were still not free people -- they had restrictions on
26 where they could go?

27 A. Yes. This is called {}"Wерна Дазилка."{}
28 {}"Wерна Дазилка"{}? {}PHONETIC

1 A. Yes. This means you are sent to a place and
2 you had to stay there. You cannot leave there. You do
3 not have a passport.

4 In Russia, there is a passport law that
5 everybody has to have a passport what has to be changed
6 every five years. And whatever you do and wherever you
7 live, it's being entered in the passport. So when you
8 come up to the five years, you will get your new passport.
9 Your life is right -- open, {}when you get it.{}

10 Q. Were you and your brother afraid that the same
11 thing was going to happen to you -- here you are 16 -- a
12 17- and a 19 year-old -- were you afraid that that was
13 going to be your fate?

14 A. At certain times, you don't care what's going to
15 happen to you. You are trying to do what you think is
16 best for you.

17 Q. Uh-huh.

18 A. Anyway, we were sent back to the mine. I had
19 stopped working a little bit before. I just said, "I'm
20 not taking it anymore."

21 And {}then they came out with a law{} if you do
22 not -- if you come three times too late to work, or three
23 days not to work, you are being fined up to 25 percent of
24 your wages -- as a fine -- whatever you earn, twenty-five
25 percent -- and this is for one year.

26 When we were shipped back, because I had stopped
27 working before this law came out, I was not under this law
28 and I got my {}full pay back. My brother, he had left

1 after this law came out, so he was deducted 25 percent of
2 his wages as long as we were there.

3 And what was worse: When the contract was up,
4 his time was not up; so they were going to retain him
5 until he is finished paying his penalty. We did a little
6 trick: After I got my payment, and I had my papers
7 all ready -- to get my papers through {}TOWL, we took the
8 inside of my book and put it in the inside of my brother's
9 book, and he got his papers like this (indicating), and
10 the minute he got his papers, we were out. {}PHONETIC

11 Q. How did you leave --

12 A. By train.

13 Q. By train.

14 And where did you go from there?

15 A. We went to Perm; and, again, from Perm we went
16 to Moscow.

17 Q. Did you look up the relatives again?

18 A. We looked up the relatives. In Moscow, you
19 could not live, so we moved -- you had to live a minimum
20 of a hundred kilometers from Moscow, so we moved to a city
21 what was 108 kilometers of Moscow.

22 Q. At this point -- what year is this -- it was
23 was 19 --

24 A. This was in 19 -- we finished our contract in
25 19 -- beginning of 1940 --

26 Q. Had you been able to get in touch with your
27 family?

28 A. -- 1941. That's the only thing, we could not

1 get in touch with our family.

2 Q. So nobody in Moscow had heard from your
3 family -- in Russia?

4 A. Nobody. But we managed -- from whatever meager
5 things we had -- we managed to send a few packages. And
6 according to people -- survivors -- what I met afterwards,
7 {}two of those packages actually got there.

8 Q. What did you send them?

9 A. Food. We didn't have enough, but -- you know
10 how it is.

11 Q. (Inaudible). And they did get the packages?

12 A. They got two of them.

13 Q. Two of them.

14 A. Yeah. Out of five, I believe two got there.

15 And this was beginning of '41, when we got out of the
16 mines.

17 Q. Uh-hum.

18 A. And we started working in this town not far from
19 Moscow.

20 Q. You said it was about a hundred kilometers?

21 A. A hundred-eight kilometers -- in {}IVANOSKOY-
22 {}UBLETSK. I forgot the name.

23 Q. {}IVANOVSKOY-{}ORGONOV (sic).

24 A. {}IVANOVSKOY-UBLETSK.

25 Q. Uh-huh.

26 A. Yeah. I joined a cooperative as a tailor, and
27 my brother went into a textile {}_____. This is weaving
28 of fabrics and so on. He went to learn maintenance of

1 machinery. He actually did four hours' school and
2 four hours working at the factory.

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. And for this one, he got -- because he was still
5 considered a student -- he got the minimum wages. But
6 we lived.

7 Q. Where did you and your brother live at this
8 point?

9 A. We rented a room in somebody's house. It was a
10 family who had a two-room house, and we rented one room.
11 We lived there.

12 Q. How were the Russian people to you after the
13 efforts {}_____ Germany and the anti-semitism of Poland?
14 What were you finding?

15 A. At this point, it was delightful, because we all
16 had our own problems and nobody made any remarks. Once in
17 awhile, you heard somebody saying, {}"Jut." And
18 especially, we were not the strongest people and the best
19 workers -- they made a little fun of us. But they would
20 have made fun of somebody else, too, but because they had
21 the name of "Jut," "Jew" -- {}around.

22 Q. But you still weren't finding -- at this point
23 there were still -- after what you'd experienced in
24 Poland, it was --

25 A. Oh --

26 Q. -- night-and-day difference?

27 A. -- night and day. Night and day. We felt more
28 of the anti-semitism after the war started with Germany --

1 even it was very much suppressed -- had lifted the hat.
2 We were not so much, you know, out; but {}the personal --
3 certain people, the way they talked to you and what they
4 said to you, you know where you stand.

5 Q. So, you {}had returned{} -- so you were living
6 in {}IVANOVSKOY-UBLETSK --

7 A. {}UBLETSK.

8 Q. -- and you were getting back on track with your
9 work as a tailor, and your brother was going to school --

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. -- and you were {}renting your {}home, and you
12 felt safe for a change --

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. -- relatively safe -- and your brother.

15 And did you -- did this family make food for
16 you, or did you notice (inaudible).

17 A. No. {}If they{} -- you had to buy your own.
18 You were on your own.

19 Q. Had your diet improved from onions --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- and bread?

22 A. Oh, yes. It improved. As good as diet at this
23 time was in Russia. It was not great. I know during five
24 and a half years in Russia, I hadn't eaten one single egg.
25 The meat was something you dreamt about. But you had
26 enough borscht, and you had enough bread. And as long as
27 you have -- once in awhile you could buy a piece of
28 sausage or once in awhile you got some sugar, so --

1 Q. That was that?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. That was still better than eating the onions and
4 the bread --

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. -- is that what you'd say?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. What happened then?

9 A. Um, then after a few months, Hitler invaded
10 Russia.

11 Q. {}"Barbarossa."

12 A. Yeah. And we signed up to join the military to
13 fight against them.

14 Q. Were you pleased at last you could do that?
15 Did you feel --

16 A. Yes. We felt --

17 Q. -- you talked about how you --

18 A. -- we felt like now maybe, even with all those
19 things what happened that they got such a big march
20 forward -- maybe we can do something about it.

21 Q. Uh-huh.

22 A. But because we were from a foreign country, they
23 did not trust us with arms, and they put us in the work
24 battalion.

25 And this work battalion went to Moscow, and
26 there -- on the way to Leningrad -- about 10 to 20
27 kilometers northwest of {}Kalinnin -- the Germans poked
28 through the line, and our battalion never made it. We

1 were shipped back to Moscow {}and stranded/on the
2 standard.{}

3 At the time, there was a large amount of train
4 traffic going to the east part of Russia, evacuating
5 families, factories and so on -- and we jumped from one
6 train to the next.

7 Q. Now, when you returned to Moscow, you returned
8 to Moscow station?

9 A. We were in Moscow station, and they dropped a
10 bomb on the train, and we were on our own.

11 Q. And everyone in the transport company that were
12 with you in that company, for the work transport, was on
13 their own?

14 A. They were on their own.

15 Q. Now, did you and your brother -- did you decide
16 then and there, "We're going to go east," or --

17 A. Basically, we {}went to get{} our family.

18 Q. Uh-huh.

19 A. They were evacuated; they weren't there anymore.

20 We were in Moscow when the Germany army moved
21 within 15 kilometers of Moscow -- we were there.

22 Q. Uh-huh.

23 A. And it was chaos, so everybody wanted to get
24 out. And we decided, "Let's take a train." {}Announcing
25 going east is going Ural Mountains, Siberia -- we had
26 enough of the cold -- we went southeast.

27 Q. How did you know the train was going southeast?
28 You just were able to --

1 A. We knew a little bit of geography, let's put it
2 this way.

3 Q. No, I mean --

4 A. (Inaudible)

5 Q. -- but your Russian -- at this point, how was
6 your Russian --

7 A. Oh, my Russian was pretty good.

8 Q. -- at this point?

9 A. At this point (inaudible).

10 Q. So you were able to tell {}in which direction{}
11 the train was going to be going, and you hopped the train?

12 A. We just jumped train from station to station.
13 And these stations, they were backed up from so many
14 trains, so we went to the first one and jumped on the
15 first one that left.

16 Q. On the roof or as passengers?

17 A. There's no passenger trains. This was a cargo
18 train. People were evacuated in cargo trains. Passenger
19 trains were only for the military and high-falutin'
20 people. And everything else was in cargo trains.

21 Q. When people were being evacuated, was there
22 any kind of organization to this at all?

23 A. People being evacuated, they had some
24 organization, what they put them in the trains to a
25 certain destination, and they put in the cargo train a
26 little iron stove there they could keep themselves warm.

27 And we jumped on those trains, and we jumped on
28 cargo trains, and we jumped on whatever train went in the

1 direction we wanted to go.

2 Q. Now, when you got back to Moscow and you checked
3 and found your family was gone --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. -- and you went back and said, "Okay. Let's
6 get on the first train we can going south" -- you were
7 tired of the cold -- what -- did you take anything with
8 you? Did you have anything with you?

9 A. We didn't have anything.

10 Q. Anything. You just had the clothes on your
11 back --

12 A. We had the clothes on our back.

13 Q. And how long were you traveling like this with
14 {}the clothes on your back?

15 A. Well, it took us -- I would say -- close to 20
16 days to get to {}Tashkent.

17 Q. And you ended up in Tashkent?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. In {}Uzbekistan?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And how did you -- on this journey {}with the
22 clothes on your back, how did you eat?

23 A. The same as we usually did before: We went on
24 this -- when the train came in the station, we went out to
25 buy something, and we sold it to the people who did not
26 leave the train --

27 Q. Uh-huh.

28 A. -- with a little bit of a profit. And this way,

1 we went through. The same thing, black market.

2 Q. At this point, did you learn that the penalty
3 for black-market activities were (inaudible)?

4 A. (Inaudible)

5 Q. At this point, you knew but it didn't make any
6 difference?

7 A. It was -- you had to eat.

8 Q. You had to eat.

9 A. Yeah.

10 Q. Were you a little afraid of -- were you more
11 afraid, as a child living in {}Russia -- of going into a
12 Polish neighborhood, than you were of getting caught by
13 the Soviet authorities for black-marketing?

14 A. Your daily life, you were -- whatever you did,
15 you were caught, you were getting eight years.

16 In Russia at the time, they had one {}rote
17 saying, like, "In Russia, there are three categories of
18 people: People who have been in prison, people who are in
19 prison, and people who will be in prison."

20 And you had to take your chances. That's all
21 what it is; otherwise, you don't eat -- otherwise, you sit
22 someplace and you die of starvation. There are thousands
23 and thousands of people did.

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. There was not -- it was no picnic. People died
26 of all kinds of the slightest disease. The resistance
27 wasn't there. And, normally, no food -- nothing -- you
28 died.

1 Q. Was it very quickly that you began to see the
2 suffering of the Russian people -- must have been 20
3 million people died in World War II -- Russians died in
4 World War II -- was it very quickly that, because it was
5 already such a weak economy, there were very little
6 resources -- that the war just started --

7 A. The war did a number on it, yeah.

8 Q. Immediately?

9 A. Immediately. Because the economy wasn't good
10 before. Everything possible what was available was given
11 to the army, and rightfully so. So the civilian
12 population got what was left over, and this was almost
13 nothing.

14 Q. Do you remember anything like -- like -- on your
15 journey, seeing families who were fleeing -- and even
16 though you had already been through so much already,
17 feeling that, for you -- really -- you know, memories of
18 seeing these families leaving -- that -- is there anything
19 {}in your memory{} of that time and those trips -- of
20 seeing families leaving -- that still is with you today --
21 that you can still recall?

22 A. Many families were leaving, and you also have
23 to -- there was something else what was very bad: When
24 you came on the train to the station, you never did know
25 how long the trains was staying there. You tried to find
26 out: "How long are we going to stay?"

27 And they could have told you, "Maybe 10
28 minutes," and you left to get some food and you came back

1 and there was no more train. And they could have told
2 you, "We are leaving in a minute," and you stay there for
3 five hours.

4 There was a chaos there. There was no --
5 whatever they had to open lines and let the train through.
6 And then, all of a sudden came a train that had the
7 right-of-way -- this one went first. If it was important
8 to the military, or it was the government or whatever,
9 they had right-of-way. So you never did know.

10 It happened many times, this. I lost my brother
11 because he was on one train and I was scrounging for food,
12 or he was someplace else and he made the train back and I
13 didn't. But we had our arrangement: "This is the
14 destination we go." And the first thing what we always
15 did when we came on a station, we took the number of the
16 train. We went to the locomotive, and we
17 said, "What number is the train?" and so we know this
18 train left so-and-so. Then I came to the next station, we
19 (}maybe get another train, I could follow up and say --
20 ask the stationmaster, "Train number so-and-so, where is
21 it?" and they could tell me.

22 But this way -- you have to see -- cooperation
23 was very great at this time. Everybody was trying to help
24 everybody. And what you're saying about the families:
25 Many a family lost their father, mother or kids at this
26 particular time, because they went away and they did not
27 have the same ways that they needed that we make sure who
28 knows the number. They never found their train again.

1 And families got disrupted this way.

2 It was not a very good situation. It was very
3 difficult. It's very easy to talk about it, but living
4 through it is a different story altogether.

5 Q. Did you and your brother -- you and your brother
6 were separated, then, at points, on this train?

7 A. Many times, yes.

8 Q. Were you ever afraid -- or your brother ever
9 afraid -- you wouldn't see each other again?

10 A. No.

11 Q. You always knew, because you were very organized
12 in your plans?

13 A. Yes. We know this -- our destination is such --

14 Q. Tashkent?

15 A. -- Tashkent, the city. Whoever gets to the
16 station at Tashkent first is going to --

17 Q. Where did you meet in Tashkent?

18 A. At the station.

19 Q. At the station.

20 Anyplace in particular that you --

21 A. No.

22 Q. You knew you'd find each other?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Um, so after this journey of 20 days, and being
25 separated -- you never were afraid -- you always knew that
26 the two of you would be back together again?

27 A. Right.

28 Q. When you got to Tashkent in Uzbekistan, did you

1 know anything about Uzbekistan and Tashkent?

2 A. No, no.

3 Q. Okay. What was it like when you got there?

4 A. Miserable.

5 Q. Miserable.

6 A. Tashkent is considered the major city. You have
7 to have special permission to live there, what we did not
8 have. So we paid for nightly sleeping either in the
9 {}tannhut -- this is a teahouse -- or somebody who took in
10 people -- illegal -- to sleep, and collected by the night.

11 And we basically lived the same way we did
12 before, risking eight years on whatever we did, because
13 work was not available. You could not get into anything.

14 After a few months in Tashkent, I got sick with
15 typhoid fever. I was picked up on the street -- this was
16 an epidemic -- was picked up in the street and taken to a
17 school what was made as a temporary hospital. My brother
18 tried to find me, and it took him 10 days to find me,
19 because nobody didn't know where anybody went. He went
20 from hospital to school to school to hospital.

21 Q. He knew you were sick?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. He knew you were sick.

24 A. {}He was to pick me up -- it was hot{} -- and
25 the {}_____ just put the sick people in there from the
26 street. I couldn't walk. I was unconscious.

27 {}SENSE ON FIRST SENTENCE

28 Q. So do you remember being on the street and then

1 being unconscious and waking up in a hospital?

2 A. I remember this: When I got to the hospital,
3 they put me in the bathtub. I remember this nurse put me
4 in the bathtub. And next time I woke up was five days
5 later. I was unconscious, but at one time --
6 subconsciously -- I heard the doctor said, "The only thing
7 is, he has to drink a lot." This was the doctor, to the
8 nurse.

9 And subconsciously whenever they put the straw
10 or anything into my mouth, I started drinking -- until
11 five days later I woke up. And all of a sudden, I saw the
12 same nurse who was giving me {}an ice{} -- and I know it
13 was during the day -- and I said to her, "How many hours
14 do you work?"

15 And she said, "Oh, I just got on."

16 And I said, "That's impossible. You just gave
17 me a bath before."

18 And then she said, "Oh, this must have been five
19 days ago."

20 Q. And your brother was still looking for you?

21 A. He was still looking for me.

22 Q. What was your reaction? Did he come to the
23 hospital and find you in the hospital in your bed?

24 A. He found the hospital. He couldn't come into
25 the hospital, because this was contagious.

26 After he found me in the hospital, he sent me in
27 a loaf of bread, a big jar of jam and a jar of sour milk.
28 Our diet in the hospital consisted of a slice of bread in

1 the morning, tea about 10:00 o'clock -- this means cold
2 water -- a slice of bread with the soup for lunch -- the
3 soup was the same thing like tea, but had a different
4 taste -- and a slice of bread in the evening.

5 He found me right after the first breakfast --
6 so-called. I finished the loaf of bread, the jam and the
7 sour milk. Right after I finished slice of bread, I
8 finished the tea, and I has hungry in the evening again.

9 My body was completely worn out. You lose
10 everything. After this disease, I had to learn how to
11 walk again. You get out of bed; you can't stand, you have
12 to learn it again.

13 Q. You had to learn to walk again?

14 A. I had to learn to walk again.

15 Q. Physical therapy?

16 A. No physical therapy. As they say -- you go --
17 "You are in the hospital" -- "You can get up. Now you try
18 to get up." And you can't, but you try anyway.

19 And after a few days, after there's no more
20 danger that you are contagious, they set you out if you
21 can walk or not. They don't have room there. There are
22 thousands waiting for your bed. I got out --

23 Q. To your brother?

24 A. -- to my brother.

25 And he got sick, but I didn't know right away
26 what hospital he went to, and we had -- by then, we had
27 some -- some friends -- some people what we did know, and
28 I was able to get from them some help to give to my

1 brother, because I was not capable of earning anything
2 myself. I was physically -- these friends helped.

3 And this I have to say, is: When you have
4 friends, you have friends. And this -- regardless -- if
5 you {}have a little piece of bread, you shared this little
6 piece of bread. Or you had a big loaf, you shared the
7 loaf. It was: Everybody helped everybody, otherwise none
8 of us would have survived.

9 My brother, after he got out of the hospital,
10 became night-blind for lack of vitamins. As soon as it
11 got dark, he couldn't see. I was his seeing-eye dog: I
12 was carrying -- leading him along when it was dark.

13 And we survived one way or other, until the
14 Germans discovered the grave of the Polish officers
15 in {}Katyn, and they said {}the Russians{} did it, and
16 they provided proof. The Russians said they didn't do it.

17 Q. Now, had you heard about this in Tashkent?

18 A. We heard very little about it, but we did know
19 something was going on. And there was, then, the break
20 between the Polish government in exile in London and the
21 Russian government -- was a break -- and they forced us to
22 take Russian passports.

23 Q. Uh-huh.

24 A. We refused. I was caught on the 8th of May,
25 1943, without papers, was arrested and sentenced to two
26 years' prison camp. My brother was arrested the 17th of
27 May, 1943. He came, by luck, to the same prison camp.

28 Q. That was unusual?

1 A. Very unusual.

2 Q. What was your -- your crime was -- was
3 refusing --

4 A. Refusing the Russian passport.

5 Q. Uh-huh.

6 A. They basically did not sentence you for refusing
7 the passport. They sentenced you for not having a
8 passport.

9 Q. You were at this camp -- at this point --
10 1943 -- you haven't seen your family in years -- um -- you
11 and your brother have managed to survive so much -- at
12 this point, weren't you thinking this might have been it?
13 That -- could you survive this, too? You had just gotten
14 through typhoid --

15 A. {}It was{} a fight -- a daily fight for life.

16 Q. A daily fight.

17 A. It was a daily fight for life.

18 In prison camp, I had it a little bit easier
19 because I was a tailor. I was the only tailor in camp,
20 and as such I could help my brother to get better jobs,
21 too -- like, he got a job in the bakery.

22 He was caught stealing bread. Stealing
23 bread? What does it mean? It means when he went home he
24 took a little bread along. For this he was put ten days
25 on bread and water, and on a {}slate floor. This was a
26 prison within the prison.

27 Q. Where was the prison located?

28 A. It was outside of Tashkent.

1 Q. So this was near to where you were -- how were
2 you -- what was -- forgive me -- but I'm not familiar with
3 the climatic conditions -- I know that --

4 A. Hot.

5 Q. -- there in camp it was very hot.

6 A. Hot.

7 Q. And in the winter?

8 A. Rain.

9 Q. So at this point you were in a prison camp
10 outside of Tashkent?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And how big was this prison camp?

13 A. This particular camp had 600 men and 3,000
14 women, with a separation between the men and women -- a
15 guarded separation.

16 {}END TAPE, SIDE THREE

17

18 Q. Three thousand women and 600 men?

19 A. Men, yes.

20 Q. Isn't that unusual for a prison camp?

21 A. No.

22 Q. It just happened to be {}CHICKEN FOR EURASIA{}

23 {}PHONETIC

24

25 A. This was one of the easy camps. It was a
26 textile camp --

27 A. Uh-huh.

28 Q. -- what main production was making yarn and

1 making -- it was felt shoes -- it was for the army.

2 A. Uh-huh.

3 Q. This was {}_____. Then they had also a weaving
4 department what was outside the camp. You had -- they
5 took them out every morning to work, and put them back in
6 the evening. I never left camp because I was, as I said
7 before, the camp tailor.

8 As a camp tailor, I could do for people
9 things -- and I got a little bit extra bread -- even for
10 the guards and the {}_____ what were in charge of the
11 camp. I did for them some work.

12 At one time in the camp, they were giving out
13 new mattress covers because we were living on straw --
14 sleeping on straw. So they were giving out covers so
15 everybody has a cover to put the straw in there. We know
16 something was going on there, because otherwise they
17 wouldn't: There came a commission. And they showed them
18 the living conditions: Everybody had clean straw, and so
19 on. The minute the commission had left, I took -- some
20 people gave me those covers, and I made {}suits out of
21 them.

22 Q. What was the color of the suits?

23 A. White.

24 Q. They were white suits. You made white suits out
25 of mattress covers?

26 A. (Laughs)

27 Q. What kind of material was it?

28 A. Cotton.

1 Q. Were they cotton -- were they cotton suits?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. What did you use for the buttons?

4 A. None.

5 Q. No buttons. There were no buttons.

6 A. No.

7 Q. They weren't lined, either?

8 A. Definitely not lined.

9 Q. Not lined in Tashkent, no.

10 A. But I put pockets in there.

11 Q. Did you have {}cuffs on the pants?

12 A. Yeah, I actually put cuffs on there.

13 Q. Who were the suits for?

14 A. Whoever paid me in bread.

15 Q. Aha.

16 A. One bad thing happened about it. I was arrested
17 because they collected against -- they collected all those
18 covers, and they found some covers in the shop, and they
19 had some people in white suits {}running around.{}

20 So I was arrested and put for ten days in
21 prison. And as penalty I was supposed to be shipped to a
22 penal camp. And they wanted to ship me and not my
23 brother. So there was one woman in there -- she was
24 so-called "social services" -- not that she could do
25 anything about it -- I begged her, and she said, "I cannot
26 do anything to {}let (sic) you here; this is your
27 penalty," so {}Leo says, "I want to come along on the
28 train {}on this particular" -- "wherever he goes, we want

1 to keep together." And she managed to put him on there,
2 and we were shipped out into one of those camps where they
3 assemble {}those {}transports. {}KEEP? LET YOU STAY?

4 {}Over there -- what I forgot to mention,
5 basically, in the prison camps, is {}everybody in the camp
6 {}under the camp administration between the prisoners are
7 prisoners {}itself, and they are all more or less
8 {}chiefs, and they run the camps. People like us and the
9 political prisoners are being mistreated, getting the
10 worst of everything. {}SENSE ON FIRST SENTENCE

11 Again, I -- in this camp, I had assembled some
12 clothes and some things, because I was the tailor there.
13 Everything goes. Those criminals took everything away in
14 this assembly camp, again. I was left with unbelievable
15 things to wear.

16 And they were going to ship us out, but there
17 was an epidemic, and they shipped us temporary in a
18 camp -- a working camp what was close by, what produced
19 uniforms and shoes for the army. And we were sitting
20 there in the corner with no connection with the other
21 prisoners with the regular camp. But we managed to talk
22 to one fellow who worked on uniforms, and we told him, "We
23 are tailors." We were all tailors, all of a sudden --
24 four of us -- my brother, myself, and two others -- what
25 we made a little friendship in there. And he needed
26 people for making uniforms, and he said, "This is priority
27 for the army," and he managed to take us out of there --
28 and if not, we would be in Siberia -- this transport was

1 supposed to go to Siberia -- and we were put to work on
2 uniforms.

3 Q. And this was -- where was this?

4 A. Also close to Tashkent.

5 Q. This was also close to Tashkent?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. And this --

8 A. "ITK-13."

9 Q. "Itikatatine" (sic)?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Can you spell it for me, please?

12 A. "ITK-13."

13 Q. Uh-huh. {}Tatine -- Itikatatine?

14 A. No. The number "1-3." "ITK 1-3." This is the
15 name of the camp.

16 Q. Oh, that was the name of the camp.

17 A. Yes, "ITK 1-3."

18 Q. "ITK 1-3."

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. That was the name of the camp where you were
21 assembling the uniforms?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And this was still the hot and wet --

24 A. Yeah, but you had {}bugs. You -- the food was
25 lousy or not enough -- um --

26 Q. And you were -- you were -- you were forced
27 labor?

28 A. We were forced labor. And they also had this

1 program of "you do 100 percent, you get so-and-so much,
2 you do so-and-so-much more, you get better food."

3 Q. Uh-huh.

4 A. My brother, never having seen a sewing machine
5 in his life, did about 60 percent, and he didn't do
6 many -- he didn't get much in food. I did about 300
7 percent, so I got some more food, and we were able to
8 manage.

9 Q. What was your diet? What {} did they feed you?
10 I mean, they were --

11 A. Bread --

12 Q. -- bread -- for breakfast --

13 A. -- soup.

14 Q. Did you have three meals a day, one meal a day?

15 A. Three {}meals a day,{} but you got your daily
16 bread in the morning, what there was piece of bread.
17 For lunch, you got the soup. I ate -- also, because I was
18 {}_____, I was {}doing {}_____, got little bit of
19 cereal -- cooked cereal, little bit. This was my
20 special -- I got a little bit more of the bread. In the
21 evening, you got another soup, and I got another little
22 bit cereal, because --

23 Q. What kind of soup? Borscht?

24 A. Borscht.

25 Q. Borscht.

26 A. They call it "borscht." Sometimes something was
27 floating in there, sometimes not; just depends how {}he
28 took the {}shovel out.

1 Q. Um, but this was -- you don't -- you don't have
2 any idea -- obviously, {}it wasn't enough to keep
3 people --

4 A. You -- no -- you were not able to keep the
5 traditional {}arktipal.

6 Q. How {}deliberate was this? I mean, was this
7 something that -- I mean, this was a country at war --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- but -- but, did -- was -- was there -- was
10 there the same kind of -- um -- they needed {}your labor,
11 obviously.

12 A. They needed our labor, but I don't think they --
13 you see, it worked like this: According to the law, each
14 prisoner is supposed to get so-and-so much. But before
15 it gets to the prisoners, it goes through many hands, and
16 everybody is selling off a little bit. So you never got
17 what you were supposed to get.

18 Q. So, this was understood?

19 A. Everybody understood it.

20 Q. This was the war?

21 A. This was the war. And everybody is cheating
22 you, and you are the low man on the totem pole, and you do
23 whatever you can.

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. But we managed to supplement our food a little
26 bit.

27 What we did: From scrap fabric, we made tops of
28 shoes. And the ones in the shoe department put soles on

1 there, between their regular work, and this was sold to
2 the people who were working in the camp. And they took it
3 out, and they bought a little bit of {}bread or a little
4 bit of that, and --

5 Q. Supplemented --

6 A. -- supplement your diet a little bit.

7 I also -- I did something -- I don't know if I
8 should be proud of it or not: Everyday for your meal you
9 got a ticket with all kinds of {}cents on it. And from
10 meal to meal, they changed the cent -- whatever cent there
11 was. The soles for the shoes, they're made out of old
12 automobile -- {}PERCENTS?

13 Q. Tires?

14 A. -- tires --

15 Q. Uh-huh.

16 A. -- so I got myself some of the tools and I
17 sharpened them. From this rubber of the tire, I cut
18 myself out some stamps, and I did some reasonable
19 forgeries.

20 Q. Where did you get the paper to make the tickets?

21 A. Paper --

22 Q. That was easy enough to obtain in the camp?

23 A. Not too easy, but you could get it.

24 Q. Uh-huh.

25 A. And I made a few extra stamps for extra meals.

26 Q. Hum. Did you ever get caught at that?

27 A. No -- yes and no. They know it came from our
28 group, and we were under surveillance. And once I did

1 something what I was caught on, and they sent me into the
2 10-day prison. We couldn't afford -- all of a sudden for
3 ten days -- not to have any stamps, so before every
4 mealtime, my brother smuggled in with one of the guards
5 one of the stamps, and my tools. I made up the stamp and
6 smuggled it out again, and we kept on making those
7 tickets. But, luckily, this was shortly before our term
8 was over. And this was in April of 1905 (sic) -- 1945.
9 So --

10 Q. Towards the end of the war?

11 A. It was end of the war.

12 Q. Were you aware of what was going on in terms of
13 the Allies and in terms of {}_____.

14 A. Yes. This is one thing: You had the radio
15 blasting all day long.

16 Q. There was a radio blasting all day long?

17 A. All day long. Not that you could {}check any
18 radio, but the government bulletins for the Red Army
19 talked of they had lost and {}_____ on a daily basis.

20 Q. In Tashkent, who were your guards? Were they
21 people from Uzbekistan, or were they Russians, or we
22 they --

23 A. No, mostly Russians.

24 Q. They were Russians.

25 A. Yes.

26 A. How did they treat you?

27 A. We had no -- basically, not have much of
28 connection with the guards. The guards --

1 Q. You ran the camp?

2 A. -- they run the outside perimeter, and the
3 inside administration was criminals.

4 Q. Uh-huh. And they were there for criminal
5 actions, whereas --

6 A. Criminal actions.

7 Q. -- you were there for trying to survive.

8 And so there was nobody to appeal anything to,
9 it was pretty -- it was --

10 A. The only person what you could have a contact
11 was a so-called person who tried to -- he basically
12 organized some plays and some songs and things like
13 this -- cultural administrator, and then the security
14 administrator. Those are the two people you had contact
15 with.

16 And with both of them I had a good relationship.
17 With the other ones -- may have been operators -- I was a
18 tailor, so I could do some favors for them.

19 Q. You were there for two years and you were
20 released in May?

21 A. Eighth of May, the day of the end of the war.
22 Because of the celebration, they didn't -- they managed to
23 get me out of the camp, but not out -- completely out. So
24 one day I was between the camp and the outside.

25 Q. So who managed to get you out?

26 A. Basically, they sent me out --

27 Q. Oh, I see.

28 A. -- but they did not manage -- because they were

1 celebrating too much -- manage to complete the papers. So
2 I was not permitted to be in with the prisoners anymore,
3 but I wasn't out yet. So I -- when you see the guards,
4 two lines, I was between the lines.

5 Q. And your brother?

6 A. He was still in. He came out on the 17th.

7 Q. Uh-huh. Based on what you know about your own
8 experiences, what you know happened in concentration
9 camps, can you describe for us what -- you know -- what
10 you feel you experienced there, and did it give you
11 empathy? Or did it --

12 A. Basically, as long as we were in Russia, we know
13 about the {}ghettos/ghettoes.{} We didn't know about the
14 concentration camps. This only happened -- the knowledge
15 about the concentration camps happened when we got back to
16 Poland, when we came back to Lorch and the house what we
17 used to live, where there were strangers in the
18 apartment -- Poles. {}PLURAL SPELLING?

19 Q. And they didn't want you there?

20 A. They were the most nasty people.

21 On the way back, we were in Warsaw -- stopping
22 in Warsaw -- and you had to sleep there. And there were
23 all kinds of people came asking for papers. And whoever
24 had the gun thought he was big. Anti-semitism was -- was
25 very strong.

26 And there came a guy who couldn't read, and
27 asked for papers, and I saw him holding it the wrong way
28 around, and I was laughing and saying something to my

1 brother. Well, he must have heard it, and he said, "You
2 come along with me." We went along. Then he was going to
3 take us off the premises of the station, going over the
4 lines where the {}trains are going, and this was forbidden
5 by law, and we said, "No way. You take us in wherever you
6 want to take us in, but we're not going to follow you
7 there," because there he has the right to shoot you. And
8 we wouldn't take any chances after going through what we
9 went through.

10 Those people, they're insane.

11 When it was time to {}make us, and we just
12 didn't say, "You" -- we told him, "You want to shoot us,
13 shoot us here; but not over there. So, you will be
14 arrested for it. But there you won't be arrested" --
15 until a higher officer came along and asked, "What's" --
16 "What is the problem?" -- and {}he didn't know what to
17 say. {}MAKE, TAKE

18 And he took us back into the station, and said,
19 "You stay here in this corner, and I will see nothing will
20 happen to you."

21 Q. This was the superior officer?

22 A. This is superior officer.

23 Q. And, again in Lorch, we found, in the house
24 where we lived, the daughter of the owner -- one of the
25 daughters of the owner. She survived. And she had come
26 back to Lorch, and she was trying to take over the
27 building. And from her we heard all the stories about
28 concentration camps -- what happened.

1 And then we went to {}_____ Jewish community
2 center, what -- they had the list of -- archive of what
3 {}the Germans was left behind. And there we found out
4 that my parents and my sister, they shipped out in 1942 to
5 a camp. And there we found out, really, what happened.

6 Q. Did anybody -- did you meet anybody from Lorch
7 who were with your parents on the transport?

8 A. No. We -- from this transport, nobody survived.
9 This was -- it went to {}ZOLKIEWKA, and actually {}to --
10 they were killed by the way. Nobody survived on those --
11 from those transports.

12 But we met a cousin, afterwards in Berlin --
13 this is my mother's cousin -- and also a friend -- and
14 they lived together in the same apartment in the ghetto --
15 and she -- and that's all that survived --- and they were
16 telling us about our parents, and how they were shipped
17 out, {}and when it happened. And they also told us this
18 was {}packages -- was {}three {}packages came in, and all
19 those little things. And they told us exactly what
20 happened.

21 Q. Did your parents -- were your parents shipped
22 to an extermination camp?

23 A. Extermination camp, yes. The Germans have a
24 clear record on it.

25 Q. After all that you and your brother had been
26 through, to come home and not find your parents there,
27 were you -- did you think that maybe they -- maybe they'd
28 be dead? Were you at all prepared for that fact -- that

1 they might be dead?

2 A. After we heard the stories what happens in
3 camp, and after they had -- we found the archives that
4 they were -- actually with the date {}they had been{}
5 shipped out, and they had went, we {}did know.{} And this
6 was still in Lorch we found this out. And after we found
7 this out, we didn't want to stay another hour there.

8 Q. So, there was still a tremendous amount of
9 anti-semitism in Poland at the time?

10 A. Unbelievable. You expect, after what the Poles
11 went through over -- with the Germans, the amount of
12 anti-semitism there was was unbelievable.

13 When I hear somebody speaking Polish, when I
14 look {}at the age,{} I never trust him -- if he is my age
15 or older, I don't trust him. If he's somebody who is
16 young, born here, it's a different story. I have a
17 certain feeling about it.

18 I cannot go {}to {}Lufthansa. When I hear
19 German -- even it used to be at the time I was born and
20 spoke -- it's abhorrent to me. It happens once in a while
21 I pick somebody up -- I try to stay away from anybody who
22 speaks German -- just doesn't make me feel good. After
23 the war, in Germany I got in quite a few {}fracasses
24 {}about {}there. {}PLURAL SPELLING?

25 I remember there was a demonstration in Munich,
26 something what somebody did -- I don't remember the
27 details anymore -- where the German police on horses were
28 {}_____ to{} the demonstrators -- and this was after the

1 war -- we got them good -- let's put it this way. We
2 pulled them off their horses and we beat them silly.
3 There was a big fracas about it. But this happened right
4 after the war.

5 Q. Was that -- did you ever think about revenge?

6 A. Did I.

7 Q. {}Do you{} know what you'd do? And who would
8 you do it to? Who -- where would you get revenge at? Who
9 did you blame? Did you blame the Polish people? Did you
10 blame the Germans? The Nazis?

11 A. I -- always it {} me a little bit -- whenever
12 happens something, whatever they say, they don't say, "The
13 Germans did it." They say, "The Nazis did it." The Nazis
14 had the full support of the Germans.

15 After the war, all of a sudden there, nobody was
16 responsible anymore. But during the war, they were happy
17 with Hitler. When the packages came from France and from
18 Belgium and from {}_____, {}there were{} people in France
19 and Belgium that were starving, and the Germans sent
20 everything to Germany -- {}_____, "My Fatherland." This
21 was good. But all of a sudden, everybody else suffered,
22 and there was nobody ever -- everybody had a Jewish
23 friend, or somebody who {}did know somebody Jewish, or
24 whatever the case may be. Nobody did anything. {}SENSE

25 But they are all responsible. In my book, they
26 are all responsible.

27 Q. You told me earlier that you had gone to Berlin,
28 and you were still being harassed in a refugee -- where

1 were you exactly in Berlin? Can you tell us where exactly
2 that was that you were still being harassed?

3 A. This is -- we were in Berlin {}SIMDORF. This
4 was {}_____ camp. It was at the time when {}Bernadotte
5 was shot, and at the time it was still Palestine -- I was
6 on the bus -- subway -- and somebody said, "Isn't it too
7 bad this Hitler didn't kill all of them?" -- and I just
8 simply couldn't hold myself, and my fist went into his
9 face. That's just normal. The whole bus went against me.
10 They were going to lynch me about it. There they have
11 another Jew. {}PHONETIC

12 Whatever this -- I would say that the new
13 generation is different. You cannot make kids responsible
14 for what their elders did. But people my age, what
15 benefited by Hitler so much, still think he was the
16 greatest, or he was the best -- "Whatever happened?" --
17 until they finally got beaten. {}QUOTES OK?

18 Q. You went to Berlin and then you were {}in a
19 camp there --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. -- and you told me that it was the Russian
22 sector of the city?

23 A. This was when we first came to Berlin, and this
24 was in 1945 -- this {}was on {}OLDENBURGSTRASSE. This was
25 a Jewish community center. They had made up some places
26 for people to sleep on beds and so on, what came in. We
27 were harassed -- not so much by the Germans as the
28 Russians. They came every night and checking papers:

1 "How did you get out of Russia?" -- "What did you do?" --
2 Where were you?" -- and so on.

3 Q. Was the harassment -- what do you think the
4 harassment -- excuse me -- political, or was it more
5 anti-semitic?

6 A. It was more political. I would say the
7 Russians, they don't trust anybody. Under Stalin, they
8 didn't trust themselves -- let's put it this way.
9 Everybody was an enemy.

10 And after all this went on in the American
11 sector of Berlin, they opened up a camp under the auspices
12 of {}____, and --

13 {}UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINIS.?

14 Q. The {}International Relief {}____? {}CAP INTL?

15 A. Yes. This was under the United Nations.

16 Q. Under the United Nations?

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. Was it a United Nations refugee camp?

19 A. Right -- right. And they opened up this camp,
20 and we from the Oldenburgstrasse went into this particular
21 camp.

22 Q. How many of you left that camp?

23 A. I think it was about 60 to 80 people.

24 Q. Now, did you have any problems leaving the
25 Russian sector?

26 A. No. At this point, Berlin was still one city.

27 Q. At this point, you could still travel freely
28 through?

1 A. You could go freely -- go from west to east.

2 Q. This refugee camp you were in -- the original
3 one where you were being harassed -- was it primarily
4 Russian people who were --

5 A. It was not a camp. It was -- basically, the --

6 Q. The Jewish community center --

7 A. -- Jewish community had set up a temporary place
8 to -- refugees are coming in -- for them to sleep for a
9 few days.

10 Q. And did you find out if they were all Jewish
11 refugees?

12 A. Yes. They were all Jewish refugees.

13 Q. From everywhere -- in Germany and --

14 A. From Germany, from Poland -- wherever they came
15 from.

16 Q. So we're in Berlin, and you've moved over to the
17 American sector, to the United Nations --

18 A. Another camp.

19 Q. -- and what was it like over there at that camp?
20 What were the conditions? Did you have tents? Did you
21 have buildings?

22 A. No. It was basically buildings what have
23 been taken over {}by whatever it was there before -- I
24 don't know -- and there were rooms. And, basically, a
25 family got a room.

26 And one day -- I was in a room with my
27 brother -- and one day, walking in the camp, a woman from
28 behind me walked ahead of me and turned around, and

1 recognized me -- she had recognized me, actually, from
2 passing by -- and this was my mother's cousin.

3 Q. And her name was?

4 A. "Laska."

5 Q. Laska?

6 A. Yes, the {}last name is "Laska."

7 And they had lived with my parents in the
8 ghetto together, in the same room -- because they put as
9 many people as possible into one room. And as I mentioned
10 before, she was -- besides being my mother's cousin, also
11 a friend -- same age, so we had seen her quite often
12 before the war. We had a good relationship with them.

13 And she survived the concentration camp with her
14 daughter. She later emigrated to Argentina where she had
15 a brother. And she is now in the high-80's, and she still
16 lives in Buenos Aires.

17 Q. At this point, she was the person -- she and her
18 daughter -- they told you and your brother about the lives
19 of your parents. What did you learn from her?

20 A. How difficult it was in ghetto. This -- also,
21 the shortages of everything.

22 My father, in the meantime, had done not too bad
23 in business. And at one time he just said, "In ghetto I
24 don't want to be anymore. They are sending shipments to
25 the farms. Regardless of how we have to work or whatever,
26 in the farm there should be enough food and you should
27 have fresh air. So if they call me {}_____, I'm going
28 off those shipments -- I go. What do you have to lose

1 here in the ghetto?"

2 And when his turn came up, and they called his
3 name -- nobody noticed what happened -- he just went very
4 willingly to this particular transport. And we know what
5 happened to the transports.

6 And they also said after my parents left, other
7 people were put into the same apartment because they
8 squeezed people together as much as possible.

9 They went -- in 1944, they were sent to
10 Buchenwald, and they were working there. And they were in
11 one of those {}marches/marshes.{} When the Russians
12 advanced, there were lots of {}marches/marshes.{} And it
13 came to whatever town this was, and wherever they slept,
14 they just -- during the night went to a site someplace --
15 and in the morning the Germans didn't count people anymore
16 -- and left and they were so-called "free people."

17 It didn't take long {}the Russians came in, and
18 they went back to Poland, didn't find anybody, and came to
19 Berlin -- to the camp.

20 Q. Did she -- did meeting your mother's cousin and
21 her daughter help you and your brother in terms of knowing
22 what had happened? Did you feel any differently?

23 A. We had absorbed the brunt already. We did know
24 what happened. We had absorbed -- it was just we got the
25 details from before, and we got the idea this how happy
26 our parents when they received the packages -- not so much
27 that they received the packages as they heard that we were
28 alive, and that we still had food to send away. That's

1 what their main feeling about it was.

2 Q. How long did you stay at this center in
3 Berlin?

4 A. We stayed there until the Russians had blockaded
5 west Berlin, and the Germans -- the Americans started
6 the airlifts.

7 Q. Berlin airlifts?

8 A. Yeah. In the meantime, I had met my wife and
9 we were engaged.

10 Q. You met her there?

11 A. {}We met her at the -- actually, at the first
12 Jewish celebration of Hannukah in Berlin. She is a
13 survivor. She lived illegal in Berlin all -- all the time
14 she was very young.

15 Q. And her name is?

16 A. "Uta" --

17 Q. Uta?

18 A. "Uta Bernstein."

19 Q. And you met her there at the Hannukah
20 celebration?

21 A. I met her at the Hannukah celebration.

22 Q. In 194 --

23 A. This was '4 --

24 Q. -- -7?

25 A. -- '47 -- yeah. The first celebration,
26 actually.

27 Q. That was your first -- was that your first
28 Jewish celebration since you'd left home -- you and your

1 brother?

2 A. It was the first one, yes. There was nothing
3 before --

4 Q. For years?

5 A. -- for years.

6 I met her there and we going out, and soon we
7 got engaged. And when the airlift started, she was a
8 resident of Berlin, a Berlin -- and German citizen.

9 Oh, I forgot to mention one thing: We also
10 visited Gera, the city what we were born in, to find out
11 if anybody came back, and so on. And while we stayed
12 there, the chief officer of police summoned us into his
13 office, and set us in chairs, and was holding a big speech
14 how sorry they are this what happened to us and so on, and
15 they know that we are stateless, but because whatever
16 happened, they offer us the German citizenship as a gift.
17 So we got up, laughed in his face, didn't say anything and
18 just walked out of the office.

19 Q. He felt that this would be --

20 A. This would be --

21 Q. -- an appropriate gesture --

22 A. This would be an appropriate gesture to do.

23 Q. It was after your family had been forced to
24 leave -- yeah.

25 A. Yes. The family was forced to leave, and my
26 family was killed -- my uncles, aunts, cousins, and so
27 on -- the least they can give me the German citizenship as
28 a gift.

1 Q. When you laughed in his face, what was his
2 expression? Was he dumbfounded? Or was he --

3 A. Something like this.

4 Q. He still thought you'd want -- did he still
5 think you'd actually want --

6 A. We are just non-grateful Jews, that's all what
7 we are.

8 Q. Did you reach your -- and what did you -- so you
9 went to Gera -- did you find the house you'd lived in?

10 A. We found the house.

11 Q. Did you find anybody you knew from before?

12 A. Yes. The owner of the building had died, but
13 his wife was there, and they were very nice, decent
14 people.

15 And then one of the neighbors what I know --
16 this not so much old people, but they had a son two years
17 older than me, who was a Nazi. The old people, they're
18 not. We had a good relationship to the last minute with
19 them.

20 We found them, and the owner of the house who
21 was Seventh-Day Adventist or something like this -- he was
22 always against the Nazis -- so we found his wife.

23 Q. Did any of these people -- did they -- did you
24 ask any of these people: Did they know what was going on?
25 Did they tell you?

26 A. See, this is the typical thing.

27 Q. Even though these were people who you say were
28 not Nazis?

1 A. Yes. This is the typical thing, this. They
2 said everybody was talking about it, "If" -- "You are
3 going up in the air if you talk." And everybody was
4 saying: "To you is going to happen what happened to the
5 Jews." Everybody was saying it. But now everybody's
6 innocent and never did know what's happening.

7 But it was a common language in Germany, this:
8 "If you open your mouth, you're going up the
9 {}'Schornstein'" -- "you go up the chimney." It was
10 common.

11 But nobody did -- after the war, nobody would
12 admit to it. They said they know what happened, because
13 this was the talk of the town.

14 Q. So these people did say to you, "Yes, we did."

15 A. "Yes, we know."

16 Q. These are people you'd known before the war?

17 A. "Yes, we know it happened. We didn't know it
18 happened to you, and how far it happened, and to what
19 amount it happened -- but we know it happened."

20 They were honest, let's put it this way.

21 Q. Were they happy to see you?

22 A. Yes. They actually were happy to see me.

23 Q. Hum.

24 Did any of your -- did {}they know -- did they
25 tell you of any of -- did they know what happened to any
26 other neighbors they had known? Did they know anything?

27 A. They didn't know about anything. When we came
28 back to Gera, we found one Jewish man who was married to a

1 German wife, and she had hidden -- she was -- he was
2 originally from Berlin, and she had hidden {}him all those
3 years.

4 And then {}there was a {}part of the{} criminal
5 police. He was actually the one who was supposed to get
6 the Nazis. He was half-Jewish. He survived. He was part
7 of the police.

8 And this is only two people who had any
9 connection -- they had no connection to the prior Jewish
10 community -- they came after the war to Gera.

11 Q. I'm curious. I didn't ask you before, at the
12 beginning -- and I should have: Do you know how large the
13 Jewish community in Gera was?

14 A. The Jewish community in Gera -- there were
15 actually two communities: there was the one of the
16 German-born Jews, and then there was the one of the
17 Polish-born Jews. When I was {}there, there must have
18 been about 500 families, total.

19 Q. Total.

20 And did they -- did the -- um -- was there --
21 was -- was -- was the Jewish community within Gera --
22 perhaps more so within the German-Jewish community -- were
23 they assimilated -- fully accepted, or --

24 A. They were -- the German-Jewish community was
25 assimilated, but they kept -- still they had synagogue and
26 they had all the trappings and they had the Jewish
27 community. If some Jew didn't do so well, they put him
28 back on their feet. And some of them, they were put on

1 their feet every year, because they were not very good in
2 whatever they were doing.

3 So they were basically taking care of the
4 members of the Jewish community.

5 And there was quite a bit of Jews traveling from
6 Poland -- going to America or wherever -- what stopped by.
7 They went from one city -- one city government ticket to
8 the next city -- with some Marks to live on. And they
9 helped them -- get them some money and tickets to Berlin.

10 And many people, too, going this way actually
11 made it from Poland to the United States or to England.

12 And I would say the Jewish community in Gera was
13 very helpful to each other and to any strange person who
14 came through the city.

15 Q. You were -- let me go back to Berlin: You went
16 to Gera and you went back to Berlin --

17 A. Yeah. We just went for a few days. We didn't
18 go there to stay.

19 Anything what was tainted Russian, we'd had
20 enough of.

21 Q. Did you -- and how long were you in Berlin? You
22 met your wife, Uta --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- and then you -- you -- how soon after you met
25 her did you marry her? Hannukah to --

26 A. Hannukah to July.

27 Q. -- July. Yeah. But it is -- we got engaged on
28 the 27th of June, to get married within about six months.

1 And then the Germans -- the Russians imposed a blockade.
2 The camp was evacuated. And, as such, she couldn't come
3 along because she is a resident of Berlin.

4 But American occupation forces -- we were under
5 the American jurisdiction -- we inquired and we could
6 get -- under German law, you need a month -- you have to
7 announce you are going to get married, and after a month
8 you can get through the ceremony -- we were under
9 the American jurisdiction, we went to the officer in
10 charge, who gives permission to every GI -- we went to
11 this officer, and he put out the order to the German
12 authorities to get us married at any time.

13 So on the 26th, I found out that I'm going to be
14 evacuated, on the 27th we got married, and on the 28th we
15 were flown out. And the funny part of it: I had put on
16 my best suit -- going on the honeymoon by plane -- and
17 they put us on a plane what had brought in coal to Berlin.
18 And {}when we came out of the plane, we were black.

19 Q. Where did you -- when you flew out from Berlin,
20 where were you flying to?

21 A. To Frankfurt.

22 Q. To Frankfurt?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. And so, by the time you got to Frankfurt, you
25 were already covered with coal dust?

26 A. Completely coal dust.

27 Q. Wasn't a white suit, I hope?

28 A. It was off-white.

1 Q. Off-white suit?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Did you continue working as a tailor throughout
4 all of this?

5 A. No. In camp we didn't work anymore.

6 Q. What did you do in camp?

7 A. What we were --

8 Q. Waited?

9 A. -- we waited for papers to come through.

10 Q. How did you pass your days -- besides courting
11 your wife?

12 A. Oh. Oh, we had all kinds of things what we had
13 arranged.

14 Q. English lessons?

15 A. A little bit. Not so much English lessons. We
16 had -- we met people, we talked, we -- somehow, the time
17 went.

18 Q. After -- I know the questions are about through,
19 but I must ask you once again: At this point -- you're in
20 America -- did you start eating?

21 A. I still cannot get used to peanut butter.

22 Q. Is that what the GI's were giving you?

23 A. We got peanut butter on a daily basis. But we
24 supplemented our things with --

25 Q. Did you eat meat for the first time in years?

26 A. Oh, yes, we ate meat. And, basically, the food
27 what they were giving us wasn't too bad, but we
28 supplemented it in addition to it.

1 Q. You didn't speak English at this point?

2 A. No.

3 Q. How did you communicate with the Americans --
4 enough --

5 A. No -- the director of the camp was a Jew from
6 New York. Everybody in the camp spoke Yiddish. This
7 was -- when we say "camp," this was not something where
8 you are closed in. You are free, in and out. It's just
9 you live here, you were being fed here, and --
10 basically -- you didn't have much to do with authorities.
11 The camp personnel, they were all refugees what spoke
12 German, Yiddish, and English. So they did whatever
13 paperwork; and whatever had to be done, they were
14 proficient in English.

15 You have to know: In Germany -- in Germany they
16 taught quite a bit of English. The only thing that I
17 didn't get any English was, I was out of school, into
18 Poland, into Russia. So I did not have -- basically, my
19 education stopped at the fifth grade. Whatever I have on
20 education is from reading and whatever else.

21 My wife actually did know some English when we
22 met. And the funny part is, when we came to New York on
23 the first trip, we went to Western Union to give out a
24 telegram that we are safely here to my brother. And she
25 was starting -- going to speak English to the clerk, and
26 he said, {}"Kann spratten Yidish?"{} -- so I said, "You go
27 away. This is where I'm coming in." {}SPRECHEN?

28 Q. Your brother and you had been so close for so

1 many years --

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. -- I mean unusually close, I think even you
4 would admit -- for -- for two brothers --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- and when you told your brother you wanted to
7 get married --

8 A. Wait a minute. This one thing he got in
9 Gera -- I forgot to mention her -- how could I? -- my
10 sister-in-law? -- she was a survivor. She was in
11 Buchenwald. And she was a survivor of Buchenwald, and she
12 came back to Gera. And when we got to Gera, he saw her
13 again. We did know her and her family. We have even
14 photographs together from pre-war -- and he met her and he
15 got married one month before me.

16 Q. Oh, so they were in Germany and they were still
17 married?

18 A. No. They were not married.

19 Q. Oh.

20 A. He met her back in Gera. And while we were
21 living in Berlin, she came to Berlin.

22 Q. And her name is -- your sister-in-law's name is?

23 A. My sister-in-law's maiden name is -- my mind is
24 going -- {}"Schaeffer."

25 Q. Schaeffer.

26 And her first name was?

27 A. "Marta."

28 Q. "Marta Schaeffer."

1 A. Marta Schaeffer.

2 Q. So, she came to Berlin after meeting you and
3 your brother?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. She came because of your brother?

6 A. The two of them, yes.

7 Q. And so she came to Berlin. And you and Uta were
8 married first or --

9 A. He got married June 27th, we got married July
10 27th.

11 Q. A month apart.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. So, Marta and your brother were back in Berlin,
14 and you arrived in New York and sent word that you were
15 back?

16 A. Basically, I lived with my brother together in
17 Berlin in one apartment what we had sub-rented from
18 somebody. Even we had -- we were in camp, we had rented
19 an apartment. The camp conditions where you lived
20 so-and-so many people in one room were not up to us. And
21 she came in, and she moved in, and -- they got married and
22 she moved in -- and I was the "third wheel."

23 Q. Yeah.

24 A. Then, as I said, we emigrated. We got married,
25 and a month later we left for {}ZNOJMO. We went to
26 Frankfurt. From there we were sent to a camp -- {}____
27 camp in {}ZNOJMO. And we had finished up -- we finished
28 our papers over there to emigrate to the United States --

1 {}what we had registered before -- and we came to the
2 United States under the auspices of {}HIYES. {}PHONETIC

3 Q. So then you came to New York?

4 A. No.

5 Q. No?

6 A. No. We were sponsored by a community in San
7 Bernardino, California. I had registered that I'm a
8 tailor, and we got the paper from Rabbi {}Feldheim -- you
9 have to have an official sponsor -- from San Bernardino,
10 California. We always are wondering: "What does a rabbi
11 want with a tailor?" But, basically, we were sponsored by
12 the community.

13 We came there, and three days after we
14 arrived -- {}by the way{}, {}by the time{} we arrived -- I
15 want to mention -- my wife was {}highly pregnant -- we
16 came on the 5th of September to New York -- we came by
17 train and {}SECHOFT to San Bernardino, and the 15th I
18 started my first job, and the 29th our son was born -- the
19 oldest. {}PHONETIC

20 Q. Your son was born on the 29th?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Your wife didn't have to suffer San Bernardino's
23 heat for too long, fortunately.

24 A. She suffered quite a bit. This is the reason we
25 moved away from there.

26 Q. Uh-huh.

27 A. She couldn't stand the heat. She went down
28 to 85 pounds. So we moved to Los Angeles. And then my

1 brother arrived from -- he was settled in New York. And
2 my uncle -- surviving uncle -- came to Patterson, New
3 Jersey.

4 And we were talking -- writing -- each other:
5 "What are we going to do to stay together?" I could speak
6 a little bit English already. My trade could be
7 transferred -- theirs couldn't -- to San -- definitely not
8 to San Bernardino -- so we decided we are going to move
9 together, and we went to New York. And my second son was
10 born in Brooklyn, New York.

11 Q. So you ended up going to New York.

12 And your brother and you were reunited in
13 New York?

14 A. Yes. We stayed -- when we got there, we stayed
15 in his apartment, then we got our own --

16 Q. In Brooklyn.

17 A. -- first in Brooklyn, then on Long Island.

18 Q. Uh-huh.

19 A. Then my brother moved to Long Island. And the
20 next -- because of business and circumstances, I moved to
21 Yonkers, which is also a suburb of New York.

22 And when my youngest son finished college, he
23 went to Los Angeles -- to San Francisco -- and he said,
24 "I'm never going to come back." We decided, in '79, we
25 are going to do the same thing.

26 Q. So you moved back in 1979?

27 A. Right.

28 Q. That's a big relocation after so many years in

1 New York.

2 A. But in New York I relocated a few times, too, so
3 to me it was -- moving didn't mean much to me anymore.

4 Q. And your wife?

5 A. She got used to it.

6 Q. Does she like it out here now?

7 A. Oh, yes.

8 Q. So you have a son out here. Do you have any
9 grandchildren?

10 A. Yes. My oldest son, who lives in the suburbs of
11 Detroit, he has two children. One is going to come visit
12 us on the 29th of this month. He's 12 years old, going to
13 be bar-mitzvah in October. And the granddaughter is 10
14 years old.

15 Q. That's wonderful. That's wonderful.

16 I want to wind up here, and I'm wondering: Did
17 you ever -- did you and your wife ever tell your children?
18 Do they know what you suffered? Do they know what you
19 went through?

20 A. We are of the ones who like to tell, and we are
21 telling them. My oldest son's in-laws are survivors of a
22 concentration camp, and they are refusing to talk to their
23 children about it -- or to anybody about it. And I think
24 it's wrong.

25 Q. Why do you think it's wrong?

26 A. I think the new generation, and any generation
27 afterwards, should know what happened so things shouldn't
28 happen again. If we are just putting it behind us like it

1 was a bad dream, that's the wrong attitude.

2 It may have been bad, but it was no dream.

3 Q. Is there anything that -- you see the world
4 changing -- you see the Soviet Union changing -- you see
5 the possible reunification of Germany -- do you have
6 any -- does that trigger any feelings in you?

7 A. Oh, yes. I'm against reunification. If they
8 are apart, they are two things. If they are together
9 again, they are going to be the strongest country in
10 Europe. And I'm very much against it.

11 But who am I to say? Bush and Gorbachev are
12 going to make this up.

13 Q. Are you -- is there anything that -- was there
14 anything that, after you found out your parents and your
15 sister -- deaths, what was the thing that you think helped
16 you get over that as much as anything? After all you'd
17 been through, to come back -- and your brother -- what was
18 the thing --

19 A. I think the only reason that -- this may be
20 it, this: From the minute I came to the United
21 States, I had a job -- or two -- mostly, two jobs -- to
22 work. They called me "workaholic," but that I think
23 has something to do -- not to go into the past and not to
24 remember things so much, at all times, is working for
25 somebody -- or two jobs -- what I mentioned before -- or
26 being in business my own.

27 I always worked 60 or more hours a week. I'm
28 now working -- this was up to a month ago -- I was working

1 44, 46 hours -- this is a month ago. I had a slight
2 stroke, so I'm down to 30 hours.

3 Q. You certainly can't tell you've had any kind of
4 a slight stroke, though.

5 A. Oh, I did. I was for eight days in the
6 hospital.

7 Q. Well, you look remarkable -- you really are
8 remarkable -- and it's all the more remarkable for being
9 here today, though.

10 A. But my memory is lapsing a little bit, because I
11 have to think my sister-in-law's name, and certain cities
12 I have been. There's a lapse of memory.

13 Q. Some of us can't remember what we walked into
14 the room for, so --

15 Is there anything you'd like to add in closing?
16 Anything we haven't covered?

17 MR. ORGANEK: Yes. I think what happened should
18 be kept alive, and so -- and it should be taught to
19 everybody in schools, so nobody could say afterwards, "It
20 never was," or "It was just the imagination of people."

21 We were lucky. We survived. And, relatively, I
22 survived easy, not having been in a concentration camp.
23 We had our hardships, but it was not life-threatening on a
24 minute-to-minute basis, like other people.

25 We came to the United States and we were able to
26 make a new life for ourselves. I have the two boys, both
27 well-educated: one is a physician, one is in business with
28 us -- we have the same business. And the opportunities

1 what we had here, you could not find anyplace else.

2 But we never should forget. We never should
3 forget.

4

5

--oOo--

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

1 MS. BURRINGTON: I think that's all.

2 That was a very nice closing -- a very nice
3 closing thought. That's what this project is all about,
4 that's what we're doing here -- John and I are doing here
5 today.

6

7

--oOo--

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28