

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Cecilie Klein-Pollak**  
**February 24, 1998**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Cecilie Klein-Pollak, conducted on February 24, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview

## **CECILIE KLEIN-POLLAK** **February 24, 1998**

### **Beginning Tape One, Side A**

Question: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, **Jeff** and **Toby Herr** collection. This is an interview with **Cecilie Klein-Pollak**, conducted by **Arwin Donohue** on February 24th, 1998, at Mrs. **Klein-Pollak's** home in **Hellendale, Florida**. This is a follow up interview to a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum videotaped interview, conducted with Mrs. **Klein-Pollak** on May seventh, 1990. The Holocaust Museum gratefully acknowledges **Jeff and Toby Hur** for making this interview possible. This is tape number one, side A. Okay, first of all, would you state your full name at birth and -- and tell me a little bit about how your names have changed, it seems like you've had several names over the years and what your name is now.

Answer: I was born -- my name is **Cecilia Goldensile**, the maiden name and I was born in 1925, April 13. My home was **Yasinna, Czechoslovakia** and when I got married, my name changed to **Klein**. My husband, unfortunately died 13 years ago. I remarried three and a half years later, to my present husband, **Isaac Pollak**. This is why I use both my names, because I never wanted to erase the name of my first husband, whom I loved very much and had a wonderful marriage. And I was married to him 39 and a half years.

Q: And also, for the record, your father's full name and your mother's full name, including her maiden name.

A: My father's name was **David Goldensile**. My mother's name was **Hosa Einhorn** and they -- my father, fortunately, passed away a natural death. My mother was killed in **Auschwitz** with her grandson in her arms. She took her grandson so that my sister should live, because

young women with children were destined to be killed the same way as older people.

Though my mother was by no means old, she was 56 years old, but this was considered by the Nazis, old. Even 40 year o-old was -- were killed, had no chance of surviving.

Q: Were you parent -- your parents were from the town **Yasinna, Poland** --

**Czechoslovakia**, as you mentioned. Had your family lived in that area for a long time, for generations before or did they come from elsewhere?

A: No, not into -- not to **Yasinna**. My -- my parents -- one of -- my mother came from a small town which was at the time **Romania**. I can't re-remember exactly, the name of the town. And my father was born in **Poland**, but he was only two years old and he came to the area that was **Yasinna**. At the time when my father came to **Yasinna**, that part was not **Czechoslovakia**, it belonged to **Hungary**, but when I was born, it was of course **Yasinna**, by then it was already **Czechoslovakia** in existence, modern, since 1914. So we were taken away, I mean, I left **Yasinna** because I had to run away from **Yasinna** in -- in 1940, so that is about 26 years, was in existence, **Czechoslovakia**.

Q: What language did your family speak at home?

A: We s -- our mother language was Jewish, but we spoke several languages. Is -- my father was perfect in German, in fact he was teaching German and so we spoke Jewish, we knew German, Czech. And then when the Hungarian occupied us, I really had to make a crash course, learning very quickly Hungarian, which I did for just to survive, because if I went to hide, I had to know the language. And being I was so young and I had -- I really had an aptitude to learn quickly languages and I learned it within a few months.

Q: What kind of school did you attend, did you attend secular school or Jewish school?

A: No, Czech, Czech. There was Jewi -- there was no Jewish school, there was only, if -- if you wanted to privately then you -- you went to, you know, like for people [inaudible] have to learn how to -- how to pray, but that was not in the schools. We had just Czech schools and also Russian, because in our town there lived a -- a great many, they were U-Ukrainians lived in our town and they lived mostly in the hills, not in the center of the town. So they had schools for them also and there were some children that preferred to go to that school. They had a choice, to go either to that -- to the Russian school or to the Czech school. I went to the Czech school.

Q: Was there a significant Jewish population in **Yasinna**?

A: Yes. It was a small town, it was about, I would say -- we -- we were -- it was only about 12,000 occupants and approximately I would say that 50 percent were Jewish.

Q: Was there harmony between Jews and non-Jews in the town, would you say, before the war began?

A: Th-Th-The Czechs were very liberal and we had no anti-Semitism as far as the Czechs were concerned, but the Ukrainians were anti-Semitic, however they had absolutely no power, because they were not in power. The Czech government was in power, so there was, I would say there was pretty much what you would say, harmony. We were not usually great, I mean we did not socialize a lot, but on -- just on friendly basis, to say hello. But it - - somehow it was that Jews were mostly socializing with Jews and it was also, you know, they did not care too much for education, where we are very education minded. So there would have been also a gap, as far as on an intellectual level.

Q: Did that change -- did the harmony between Jews and non-Jews change after the Hungarian occupation?

A: It -- as soon as the Hungarian occupied us, they implemented the same laws what the -- what the Nazis did. So when they -- before -- before their occupation, the Ukrainian took over because the -- the Czechs had left, they -- they -- there was no Czech government any more and th-they -- so we were really in peril, because they were going to kill all the Jews in the town. And -- so we were really very glad when the Hungarians came in because we thought that they are much more civilized and much more organized government, but we found out very soon that this was not the case. My father was born in -- in **Poland**, but he was only two years when we came -- when he came to **Yasinna** and he had Czech citizenships. They took away our Czech citizenship and eventually, a few months later, when I went to **Plata frip** -- no, before that. As soon as the Hungarian came in -- I was 14 y -- not even quite 14, but -- but close to 14 and I was still in school, of course and I didn't even finish the eighth grade, because I was -- in the eighth grade it was like -- like here a high school, because our level of education was always very, very high. Let's say if you had high school in -- in **Czechoslovakia**, then it would be here -- like here two years of college. Because we -- this is how they taught, because we didn't have like college and right by us -- right after college, you -- after high school, you could go into medical school or to law school. Like my brothers. They studied, one studied law, one studied a dentistry, but it was right after they finished high school. They didn't have to go first four years of college and then four years to become a dentist or four years of college and three years to become a lawyer. From as soon as we graduated high school, you could go in right straight to law school or to medical school. But then we -- I was -- all the Jewish children were thrown out of school as soon as the Hungarian came in and we were sent out, they sent me -- we could not return to classes the next day, so -- so of course we had nothing to do. So one day I went

to play to a friend's house and when I came back, m-my house was -- the door was open and my mother and my sister **Mina** were gone. And we had three tenants in our home and they came to tell me that they were taken away by the police because they had no -- they took away their citizenship paper, so they were considered as aliens and -- and they -- and I ran to the police station, but my mother motioned to me I shouldn't come near, because she didn't want me to be arrested too. And there was already my brother's friend, who was a lawyer and he came over to me an-and he told me -- he bent down with me and he told me I sh -- because I wanted to go right away with my mother, I was very attached to my mother. Told me if I'll be on the outside, I'll be able to -- to help more and -- and I -- by then I had a married sister, so I really had this -- who to stay. And -- an-and -- and so they will take th -- away and I remained alone, for the -- at the age of 14. But eventually, my mother got and my sister, a six months extension. And this is -- when they came back, we had to make plans to leave **Yasinna** because in six months they would -- they were the only ones really to get that extension, all the other people that were arrested at that time, when my mother and sister, they were taken over the Polish border, after a few months being kept ch -- in jail. And most of them got killed.

Q: Before we go on with that, I wanted to ask about your -- y-you were the youngest of six -  
- six children?

A: I was the youngest of six children.

Q: And could you say -- tell the names of each of the -- of your brothers and sisters and just -- just tell me one by one, what th-the fate of each was, and --

A: **[inaudible]**

Q: What the fate of each one was an-and their ages, relative to you.

A: My -- my oldest sister, name was **Fran. Badushnee vas fragy**. She had three children, ages five, eight and 11. Her husband's name was **Abraham**. They were all killed in **Auschwitz**. Because she had children and any woman -- all the women with children were killed. Her husband was in a concentration camp until -- almost til the end, but about a couple of months before, they -- they drowned him in a barrel of water, which took a horrible ti -- which was a horrible death, even worse than -- than his family's deaths. For some minor infraction which probably was -- was nothing. They -- they were just killing people at random anyway. Sometimes they killed them just out of sport. But maybe he -- I don't know, maybe h -- maybe he went out an-and he wasn't allowed to go out from the camp or what-whatever, outside. The f -- the reason I don't know, but the people that came back had told me about his fate.

Q: Was he in **Auschwitz** also?

A: He was in various camps, but I -- a-at this point I don't even remember. This did not happen in **Auschwitz**, this drowning. It happened in -- in a different camp. But it's so many years ago, I -- I really can't tell exactly in which camp it happened, but I was told by the people that had witnessed this terrible incident. My -- my brother, **Haim** -- yeah my sister was approximately at the time when she was killed, 31 or 32 years old. My brother **Haim**, he was a dentist and he was first in a labor camp. They took him -- the Hungarians took him away and he got sick and he was in a hospital and they eventually, they burned down the hospital with all the patients and he was one among those patients, so he was burned alive in a hospital. And his wife, **Shoshanna**, she went -- she went to **Auschwitz**, but in the train she went berserk and she had no children and she was young, she may have had a chance to live



a little longer, but they killed her up-upon her ar-arrival because they -- they -- they saw that she wasn't normal. But this happens in the train, so she was killed.

Q: How old was **Haim**? How much older than you was he?

A: **Haim** was older, 11 years. And **Menachim**, who had a chance to also go to **Palestine**, before -- before -- he had been -- been -- because he was in **Prague**, he was studying law, so he left for **Palestine** and he's older -- he was older 13 years than me. So actually he and **Parela**, they're alive. **Parela** is five years older and my sister **Mina** was -- is three years older.

Q: Were you particularly close with any of your brothers or sisters?

A: We were very, very close. In fact my brother was almost to me -- he took over, actually, the duties of our father because I was only nine years old and my father had passed away. And he -- he arranged that eventually I was going to study in **Prague** when I finish the eighth grade, because after eighth grade, you had to leave **Yasinna** because there was no higher education. So y-you had to go -- go to a bigger city for -- we called the gimnasium, which was you know, the high school. And he -- he was always bringing me presents and we were -- we were a very, very closeknit family and very devoted. I will show you how devoted my brothers were, that **Haim**, he had also a chance to leave for **Palestine** because he was also, he was in **Prague** and after that he went on a **hackshara**, which was a -- you know, this was like a place where you were trained in -- in toiling the land and -- and preparing yourself to leave for **Palestine** where you will be able to help build the country and he had a -- and because he was a **farshara**, so he got a certificate to leave for **Palestine**, but in-instead he c -- he -- and -- but he came to say good-bye to us and then he came, he decided not to leave because he thought he'll be able to help us and he didn't want to leave

us alone, so he stayed and -- and this is why he paid with his life, because he wanted to help his mother and sisters.

Q: And it was **Haim** who you were saying was so helpful with -- with you, becoming like another father after your father had died?

A: I-It -- It was **Menachim** and father, **Menachim** did also everything but in fact, **Menachim** all these years, was so unhappy because he felt that he should have been there for us and -- and I kept away -- I always had to -- had to tell him that this was the greatest thing that could have happened, because if -- if not he would have also perhaps perished and this way at least we had a-another family member survive. But he felt guilty all these years and he didn't know himself how -- how to help us after the war. My -- my brothers and sisters and my mother, they were the whole world to me. There was no better people on this earth that -- that I know, even -- for instance, **Mina** lives in -- in **Israel**, but we see each other twice a year, because I go there every year and when I come back, she -- I-I take her with me and we always -- i-if-if one didn't have, we always shared everything. While my husband was alive, whatever he bought me and if -- if they couldn't afford, he would always buy for my sister, because he knew it meant so much for me to enjoy it if she had it also. And we remained like this, very devoted to each other. And therefore, I d-d -- by having my family killed, they really destroyed my life also, because even -- even when you live and when you and -- and when you have already everything, but we could never fully enjoy anything, because we -- we lost so much in our lives and -- and we could never -- you can never get back. Can get back material things, but you simply cannot get back family and -- and it wasn't only the family, it was to -- to watch the terrible things that were done while we were incarcerated and to see people being killed so senselessly. It -- it remains with you

the rest of your life. The nightmares never go away. The screams never fade in your mind and the nights are the ones that bring everything back to us, to all the survivors. I think when I speak, I speak for all the survivors. There isn't one survivor that is really a healthy person. But we have always lived our li-life decent. We never went out to murder just because we were murdered. We never became -- be-became criminals, just because such criminal acts were done to us. We brought our children up with values, with love and with respect for all humanity, for all races and because we know what it means to be a bigot. And though it still today, much hasn't changed, there are people that have the audacity to deny that this ever happened. We, as survivors can render them liars, because we are here as witnesses. We are the proof of those atrocities that were committed. And all our loved ones, they're not here to talk about it, but we are and though it is very painful for us to go back and to open our wounds, we're willing to do it, for the sake of future generations and history, so that our voices will be heard and those liars will be -- will be put to shame, that they can yet not even repent that was done to us. Because these are the people that would do it all over again, so unless they are going to be somehow silenced and unless all of the generations that will come after us, will be able to prove with our testimonies that this really happened, there will be many books written that people eventually will believe it because how -- how -- how would they otherwise know what a w -- that it wasn't, that it was different than what they are reading to the books? So I'm very pleased now that the schools are finally having programs and that they are teaching us, because for the first 35 years it was utter silence. Nobody even knew anything about the Holocaust. And if somebody in the movies, the -- the books that were written, read by us, will vouch by us. I-I remember that people would tell me that -- all weekend, it's too painful, we cannot go to see -- that's if they

made the Holocaust movie or we cannot read those book, it -- it's -- it's makes us very sad. It would be very upsetting to me to hear that, because if we could go through what we did, what we had to go through, then can't you at least watch it, can't you at least familiarize yourself? We couldn't even talk about it because -- because it was so painful to us and because we had to rebuild our lives and because we wanted to have a normal life. As mu -- as much as we could have a normal life ourselves, but people don't even feel like to -- to know about it. So finally, they have now Holocaust memorials that -- that people can take their children to -- to show what -- what **bessiality** was conducted on human beings. And what can I add to this except that -- that we hope that this will never happen again and if you have any questions that would like, you should -- you should ask me and I will tell you, if you want to know about my -- my life after, then -- then I will tell you about that. All right with -- you got that and now I speak af -- about my life after -- after the concentration camp.

Q: I have just a couple of more questions about -- just to clarify and -- and you -- you really -- I thought your first testimony on the video tape was -- it was very clearly presented and you -- and you -- there are going to be gaps in this story of course, from your wartime experiences, but there were a couple of things that I wasn't sure that -- about and I wanted to ask you about now. Y-You of course told the story about how you got to **Budapest**, you were trying to find a way to help your sister out of prison, you thought -- had thought she was in prison in **Budapest** and -- and you told the story of how you found her and how you were cheated out of your money and -- and -- and -- and so forth and that you found a lawyer who agreed to try to obtain her release. I wasn't sure --

A: [inaudible]

Q: Yeah.

A: I never forgot these names the w -- I have now such a bad memory because wi -- with age, you know, your memory's not as good, but I will forget what was yesterday, but I can't forget what -- what happened.

Q: You mentioned in your video testimony that this lawyer was able to obtain your sister's release after six months. And what I'm unclear about is, why at that point you remained in **Budapest**?

A: I had no paper -- I had no papers. I could never go -- go back to my hometown, my hometown was **Yasinna**. My sister went back to my hometown, to her children, she had -- she had three children. And by then her husband was -- was, not any more with her, they -- they took him to a labor camp. And he never came out of that labor camp. This was the husband that was eventually killed so brutally wi -- that he was drowned in a pail of water. But I s -- told mys -- but I went at night, I -- I went at night to my sister's house. I -- I wrote this in fact, in my book and -- and we spend -- I spend there -- I arrived at night and I spend this of 24 hours and -- and left again, just -- just to see her once again and this was the last that I ever saw of my sister. And I had to remain in **Budapest** because this was a big city where I could, you know, lose myself where -- where -- where -- and I was -- I didn't even look my age, so I-I hoped that I was not going to be picked up and asked for papers, but once I-I did, I mean I was picked up. But somehow I managed to talk myself out, you know, but **[inaudible]** the papers and I'm going to -- I-I -- if you want me, I tell you this incident, but -- but if you want me to talk about something else, then -- then I'll talk about --

Q: No, that's all -- that -- that made it clearer, I was just wondering about that one thing.

A: Because I had no papers, I could never go back, you know. I had to be there, by my -- and I was by myself.

Q: I ima -- I think it's probably in your book, but it's not in your first -- in your video testimony, how it was that you met **Joe**, your fiancé and when.

A: I -- all of us in **Budapest**, without paper, actually that -- hiding, but not like some people were hiding, you know i-in one room or were behind a wall. I was also hiding, but I had to - - I could walk the streets and if I would be, i-if they would ask me for papers, I would be picked up. But I still had to also look for some work, because I needed to live and to -- and to pay rent. So first I -- I worked in many different places and then finally I got to work in -- I got a job in a dental laboratory, because while I -- when **Menac** -- when my brother **Haim** left and he was the one that helped us all along until -- until they took him away, he made arrangements for me and my mother to leave for **Vimiritas**, which was a big city in **Hungary** and made arrangements where he used to send his dental work, in to that laboratory, that I should learn to become a dental technician, to be a-an apprentice. So I had a little idea, I had some idea about dental -- dental technician work. I wasn't yet -- well, I mean I wasn't proficient in it, but I knew a little bit because I -- I only learned like eight months. And after that I had to leave f-for **Budapest**, hoping that I can help my sister out of that jail. So I tried to find work in a -- a laboratory, but for awhile I couldn't and eventually I did find work in a -- I was accepted in a laboratory and my husband -- my fiancé, who eventually became my husband after the war, and to say good-bye to my mother, who lived with my sister and whose -- she also had no papers, but that's why she was not in our hometown, she was with my sister and was with **Mina** and she showed them my picture. **[inaudible]** this is my beautiful daughter and she is working in a dental laboratory where

[inaudible] because we were like distantly related like sixth cousins removed maybe, you know. But my mother knew his father and -- and anyway. So he came to look -- he looked me up and [inaudible] from my mother -- and he was a dental technician, so he worked in a laboratory and -- and this is how we met. And eventually became engaged.

Q: How long -- how long had you known him before you got engaged?

A: I -- about -- close to a year. He -- we worked in the same laboratory.

Q: Was that coincidental that you ended up working --

A: No, he left a much better paying job, because he w -- he was a full fledged dental technician and I was just so-so. I didn't know that much. So h-he left a better paying job to come to work in that place where I worked, only that he should be near me, because he fell in love with me very, you know, much sooner than I fell in love with him, because I was so homesick for my mother that all I could think is, you know, my mother, my sister, I -- I didn't pay that much attention yet, to boys.

Q: Had you had plans at the time you got engaged, of when you would get married, or was it indefinite?

A: No, we -- we -- we had planned t-to get married, but not before the war would be over, for it was something normal times. But eventually the -- the Nazis came into **Budapest** because they felt that the Hungarians are not doing, ar-aren't doing enough against the Jews, that they're not sending them out quickly, I mean because **party** somehow the -- the -- wasn't willing yet to -- to -- to send them out, to -- to take away their businesses and -- they did things to -- to the ones that didn't have papers, but the ones that were born there, they did not, they left them the businesses and they left them -- they let them stay in **Hungary**. Then the Nazis came in and they did [inaudible]. And of course then I knew there was no

way for me to -- to remain in **Budapest** any more. So I wanted to be with my family, so this is why I went back.

**End of Tape One, Side A**



### Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of an interview with **Cecilie Klein-Pollak**, this is tape one, side B.

You described in your video interview, returning to **Hoost** and rejoining with your family there and that you were immediately put into a ghetto.

A: A few weeks later.

Q: Okay. Would you describe a little bit more about th-those six weeks that you spent in that ghetto?

A: In the ghetto? We were in once -- one room. We were -- my family, my -- my sister, myself, my brother-in-law, their -- their baby and one more family and some slept on -- on the floor because we didn't have enough beds, on -- and we were very crowded, we would get -- food was being -- there was like a kitchen -- I'm sorry -- and everybody also brought th-their own food, prepared. We had -- my mother made a lot of like toast, you know, they called it **sweebark**, what can stay and dried noodles and whatever we could -- that wasn't perishable and we brought it with us, so for awhile we still had our own food, and after that is -- there was from the -- I -- I can't remember exactly, h-how was th-the food situation, but somehow everybody still had something what -- what to eat. And we would play with the children, we organized a -- like play groups and we -- we -- we tried to teach them Hebrew songs and we -- we would sing to them and -- and we would -- we would just -- th-there was no -- nothing cultural, because nobody had any -- we didn't have that -- too many books, a few toys that people would bring for their children or -- or children's books. But we were hoping that -- everybody hoped that this will not last long and that eventually you know, we will all return to our homes. Nobody really believed that we are going to be exterminated. Everybody still hoped that, even when they -- when we heard that people were taken away,

we thought that they were placed in, say a -- an -- they would say a campfire, you know on -  
- in a camp or -- or that they were taken for work or -- nobody believed that this -- that this -  
- in the 20th century, that they would really kill women and children. Because my sister had  
a chance to go in-into hiding. I had a chance to go into hiding, but I didn't want to go into  
hiding with his -- my fiancé's family because I wanted to stay with my mother. So he went  
back to his family and I stayed with my mother and my mother wanted very much I should  
go into hiding, because she was not -- I guess my mother did believe that may -- you know,  
come to -- to that -- that we may have -- not be able to survive. But we were too naive and  
too -- too optimistic to believe that this will -- can happen. So my sister didn't want to --  
again, nobody wanted to leave each other and that's what -- why we stayed together and  
nobody went into hiding. And with a little child, would have been really impossible to go  
into hiding. But for instance, my mother could have gone into hiding with me, with -- with  
my fiancé's family but she refused and I refused and in a way, we didn't -- I-I was glad I did  
-- I didn't go into hiding because then I would have always had this, you know, I would have  
a guilty conscience, thinking that maybe if I would have been there, maybe I could have  
been of help. And this way I know that there was nothing that anybody could do to help, not  
even for the closest and for the most loved one in the families. Now my fiancé and his  
family did go into hiding and they hid also a lot of other families and the rabbi with his  
family, because my father-in-law was very wealthy and he gave a lot of money for the  
people, you know, that -- that hid him. And then, they -- what they did is, eventually they --  
they went to the authorities and -- and gave them out, after they had taken everything away  
from them. So -- so they were yet brutally beaten before they send them to the -- to the

ghetto and then -- and then they send them to **Auschwitz** to be killed. So there was no -- even the ones that were -- were in hiding were not safe, that they would survive.

Q: And whose -- in the ghetto, were there -- were -- was anybody working during the day?

A: No. Nobody was working, we were just really -- nobody was working and you really had nothing to do and we were just marking time. And -- and this was really still my -- my happiest time while I was in the -- in the ghetto because I was with my mother, I was with my sister and -- and her family. I mean, not with my sister the one that was the three children, but with **Mina**, because we were not in the same ghetto, my sister was in a different ghetto and we were in a s -- different ghetto. And so she was killed with all her children and my mother had a chance to save my sister by -- by taking h-her child. And of course you never get over losing a child. My sister didn't even want to live aft-after she eventually knew what happened to her child. And she always made herself, she always thought that maybe mother would have survived, th-that mother got killed because of her, which that's not true because mother could have never survived, they would have taken her to the gas chambers even without her child. But it -- the point is, sh -- I can't convince my sister because she is s-so determined to feel guilty about it. And she was very, very sick and -- and she could never have -- and the saddest part is that she could not have any more children. She had only that one child. And I loved my sister so much that I always told my husband that I'm going to have one child just for my sister, to give it away to her. But of course, you know, til you don't have a child, until you're not a mother, y-you don't know that you really can -- cannot do that. That no mother can give a baby, a -- a child. And it was not easy for me, I-I don't have my children, the three children by choice that they are 10 years

apart, because I -- I was very sick and I-I-I couldn't have children and I -- I -- it's --when we came out, we were always very sick, my sister and me.

Q: We'll talk more about that in a little while and I wanted to ask you before we -- we move on and I do -- I also have questions about **Mina**, but you mentioned that you family was very Orthodox?

A: Yes.

Q: D -- were you able to keep kosher through the time in the ghetto or how did -- what happened?

A: In the ghetto, yes, but not -- but of course after that, not even -- I didn't even keep kosher after I got liberated. One -- partly because of being re-rebellious about what happened, being very mad at God and -- and just not -- and also partly because we -- we were so hungry that we would eat anything, we were -- we starved for so many years and -- and -- and you -- you just ate whatever you could get. But eventually I turned back to **galichin** which we will come to it if, you know, in my interview, I will -- I will explain why and how.

Q: And you're -- du-during the ghetto, did you also observe the Sabbath and --

A: Yes, because my mother was very religious, I would never have done anything to hurt my mother's feelings. I was even observant while I was in **Budapest** with-without my mother and even then I was so hungry, because I did -- I didn't have enough food and -- but I would never eat non-kosher, even there. I-I ate just -- sometimes I lived only on bread and margarine and I would buy myself, for like five cents, a cookie, because I remembered my mother would say, "Don't eat sweets before dinner, because you won't have -- you won't be able to eat." So I thought, "If I'll eat a cookie, I wouldn't be so hungry, because the sweet is going to -- to chase away my hunger." But unfortunately it didn't. I -- in -- in the camp, I

was always so sorry. Why didn't I at least drink more water, because you know, we couldn't just drink water whenever we want a drink. We suffered a lot of thirst and -- and -- and I also would buy myself lot of clothes, then -- **dapootib** because I would tell myself, if I will be shabby, then I -- somebody will ask me for papers sooner, because I will be more obvious if I look shabby. But -- so I would buy myself, rather -- let's say a skirt or -- or -- or whatever, something to wear or shoes. And -- and not food. And then I was so sorry, why didn't I -- **hadder**, buy myself food and -- and not starve so many years already in **Budapest**. But you know, when you are young, you want to look pretty and you rather not eat.

Q: So, let's go on then to -- we know how you arrived in **Auschwitz** and what -- and the **[indecipherable]** story of your arrival and after you had been there, d -- were -- you described your -- your da -- your daily life a little bit, how you had gone first to **Birkenau** and then you, after you had been there for maybe a few months, you were --

A: **[inaudible]** from May until end of October. May, June, July, August, September. October or -- or even November. I think it was end of October, approximately, because I was in -- in **Nuremberg** in -- in **[inaudible]** January, February, March. Yeah, end of October. I mean, I can be, you know, it-it's hard to remember the -- the exact date and -- and you -- you wanted me to describe h-how -- how I left --

Q: Actually I wanted to know --

A: I remember standing in front the gas chambers **[indecipherable]**

Q: Yeah, I wanted to know, while you were in **Auschwitz**, did you -- a little bit more about your daily existence. Did you have to work at all while you were there or did you -- were you hiding most of the time because of the --

A: No. No, that isn't -- wasn't -- no -- no -- y-you couldn't hide in -- in **Auschwitz** your day started at 4:30, you were chased out of the -- we were thousand in one stable and 10 in each three layer bunks. We were standing **say lappelle** as soon as we got -- as we were chased out. We didn't have to dress because everybody slept in that one dress we had. We had only one dress and there was nothing under, we had no -- no panties, we had no slip, just that one dress. In that you slept, in -- in that you wore and eventually became infested with lice. Completely with lice and -- and this was eating you up. So the min -- every minute that -- that you had free, when you were in the bunk, you would take off your dress and you would try to -- to get the -- the -- the lice out, which was a futile job. But we would stand for hours to be counted because to count -- there were 30 such barracks, they had to count 30,000 women, all women. And if one was missing -- and if -- if she was missing, it was only that she went to the electrified wires, to kill herself, then -- then you would stand so long until they -- until they -- they found the corpse or they would think you know that somebody ran away, which was no -- no chance of running away. People only worked -- the ones that worked were either in the kitchen, and I wasn't lucky enough, you know, to be -- to be chosen to work in the kitchen, or they worked by -- which -- they -- that was called **Canada**, where they sorted out the clothes and all the stuff that were brought in by the -- by the people that arrived on the trains, because everybody came with a suitcase of something. An- And some people had valuables still, I mean hidden, like I -- we had hidden in one bar of soap, large diamond earrings. But we threw away the bar of soap, because when -- when we arrived and they took us to the shower, you know, to be showered and we had to un-undress completely naked and they shaved us all over and -- and they said, if every -- you cannot have nothing with you -- you have to walk in just completely naked and you will not get

back your clothes anyway, so I was afraid to have that cake of soap, so I threw away the soap right there and -- and I -- and I had nothing. But eventually, no they -- they took all these things and they were looking for, you know, for -- for valuables and people had sewn in and some had in clothes, sewn in something, you know. So they had people working sorting out and -- and finding and also taking away the clothes, which was eventually shipped to **Germany**. So, this kind of work. And then some may have worked somewhere else, but -- but in **Birkenau say lager**, where I was, nobody was taken for work. They were -- always made selections, who each went straight to the gas chambers, or sometimes they did select, but you never knew what a t -- they selected to take for work deep into **Germany** or whether you were selected to the gas chambers, so the block **avdest** always told us, don't el -- volunteer. If you're taken, you're taken, you have no choice, you know? So we were told not to volunteer and we didn't volunteer. But we always knew when they were taken to the gas chambers, because then they t-taken the people th-that they were selected to the gas chambers, they would make a ring, from the **oneth** of the **remaned** and this is how they took them to the gas chambers, nobody should get -- I'm sorry -- nobody should be able to run out from under that ring. And it -- as you read probably in my book about that girl that ran out and -- ballerina that I wrote a b -- poem about a ballerina. She was beaten to death because she was -- she ran out.

Q: You -- that -- that was the only question about **Auschwitz**, so now we'll jump o-over to when you were leaving and you -- you described being on the train, heading towards the ammunition factor-factory --

A: **[inaudible]**

Q: And -- and your -- you're with **Mina** your sister and you became very ill and described how **Mina** --

A: Yes.

Q: Sort of came to life in a way, where she had been --

A: [**indecipherable**], that's right, it was just like a miracle, because **Mina** was -- was in such a depression, she -- that she didn't want to eat and there, noth -- you killed yourself, I mean, to get -- to get the food. People became completely dehumanized. We were called the two good sisters because we took care of each other. And others were stealing from each other, w-would eat up ea-each other's food. And this never happened, you know, between me and my sister. I would -- I would force oo -- er -- mouth open and put in the margarine, you know, it -- it should melt because in order that she should have something in her and I would change my piece of **roosh**, because sometimes one get with the **brudder roosh** the one, I got margarine, but everybody wanted the **roosh**, not the margarine. I would go and change my **roosh**, which was such a, you know, big deal to receive that slice of cold cuts [**inaudible**] for a piece of margarine so that I should be able to give her my margarine plus her margarine, it should go down her, you know, it should melt and -- and she'll swallow it and she only wanted to go and kill herself on the electrified wires, so I-I always kept a tab, you know and always was able to talk her out of it and yet, when -- when I became so ill and you see, you were not allowed to talk to German -- to any Nazi. You were not allowed to talk to an **SS**. You -- he could kill you if you were only -- th-that was like hierarchy. The block **gelderstad** could talk to him. There was only who could, you know, talk to whom. And -- and then I was so ill and -- and the train, this **SS** was eating an apple and she went over and she said, "Please, could you give me a piece of apple for -- for my sister," because



she didn't even know that she is not allow to approach him. And he slapped her so hard I was just happy it wasn't a **Nashis**, because a **Nashis**, he would have killed her. There, on the train, he only gave her such a slap that sh-she flew all the way to, you know, to the other side of the -- of the train. And -- and this is when I told her, you know, was all -- you were not also allowed to divulge if somebody was sick, because if you were sick, then you were not of any value that y-you could possibly still work. Then they killed you anyway, you know, so nobody would be divulging to an **SS** that somebody is sick. They -- they, this was always the biggest -- the biggest worry of -- for each of the prisoners not to be sick and if you were sick, you never admitted that you were sick. If you were dying, you -- you came out to stand **say lappelle**. If not you were right away dragged off to the gas chambers or sometimes for one, they didn't even drag you off to the gas chambers, they would just beat you to death right there. So I -- I -- I told her and then, to my sister that she should never, you know, do that and -- and she even took off her coat, you know, to cover me because I had a high fever and -- and somehow it just, it really, it -- I think whoever is alive, it is either way, by sheer miracle. It -- It wasn't because one was smart or one was, you know, so brave. It was that sheer luck and -- and also of course, you have to have -- you had to have a great will to want to live. And this I -- I certainly had. I was so determined to live. Because somehow I thought just because nobody knew, you know and we -- we were so completely unaware of what was going on and I thought that the whole world is like this, nobody knows. Som-Somebody must come back and -- and tell, you know, what happened. But we found out soon that it was just -- it wasn't ignorance, it was just complete disregard and unwillingness on the part of the rest of the world, that they should want to do something to stop this killing and these murders. Nobody cared what is happening to the -- to the Jews.

Q: Let's get to that later, too. That's really an important part of your experience to discuss, is how -- how you discover what -- what people knew about what had been happening during the war. But before that, did that change in **Mina** last, wh -- you -- I mean that was such a -- a turn around --

A: Yes.

Q: As you describe, almost miraculous. Did she really sustain that from then on?

A: Sh-Sh-She -- She eventually became, you know, more or less like me, that -- that she was -- that she -- they took her to work, so sh-she worked, just like me and -- and she was -- she was eating and, you know and she was -- she -- but she was much more fearful than me, I -- I was much more, you know, trying organize, organize meant there, a nicer work for stealing, you know. To steal, let's say, if -- if we went to dig out potatoes for the -- for the German -- for the Germans, for their kitchen, let's see, I would try -- before we left for **Nuremberg**, so everybody got a coat. Top o -- besides that one dress, we got a coat and my coat had a hood and that hood saved my life. I -- we went to the kitchen, I-I mean they took us -- that was done on Sunday because during the weekday they wouldn't waste the time that we should go to dig out potatoes for the German kitchen, but on Sundays, that we shouldn't, God forbid, have it too easy and -- and to relax, so they would take us either to dig -- this was a very -- everybody wanted to go to dig up potatoes because you saw that you had a chance, you know, to eat a potato or -- or to steal a potato and bring it in and we would eat it raw because this was no -- no problem, th-that we had to cook it, we thought this is the very delicious food. So we went that Sunday to dig potatoes and I dug some potatoes and I took a few and I put it in the tip of my hood, not in -- in the pockets. Somehow I don't even know where my -- that I -- I was so smart to do that, not to put nothing in the pockets, but in the

hood and it was cold, so it was okay, you know, nobody would think why I have the hood on. And -- and **Mina** back me, "Don't do it," because she was afraid, I shouldn't be caught and two other sisters took also some potatoes and they put them in the pocket. They didn't have a hood, they had pocket, so -- so and -- I saw **Mina** so afraid, so I didn't even let her stand with me, I said, "You know what, you're not going to stay with me," because I was afraid that she would keep looking at me and that -- that her looks and her fear shouldn't give me away. So I told her I'll stay in the front and she'll stay in back -- in back of me with another, these other girls, because if she'll be in the front, she's going to turn around always. So I didn't want all that should happen. So as we were going in to the camp, they started to search everybody's pocket and they came to those two girls who had pocket, who had potatoes in the pockets and they made her -- them throw out the potatoes on the floor and they beat them, they were already half dead. They beat them so much that we never saw those girls again, I mean they killed them. That -- they took then four girls, two girls had to take one by the foot and by -- by the head and -- and two other girls, to carry in those two sisters to their headquarters and they were never seen again, they killed them. And that -- but while I watched this, how they are beating them and the screams and I think okay, this is going to be now my finish. Why didn't I -- I listen to **Mina**? But they search my pocket, I -- I had nothing in the pockets and I came in with those potatoes. This made such an impression on me. First of all, we ate those potatoes and my sister said they taste like **norts**. I said I -- they taste like apple. And -- and -- and I even shared, you know, some with whoever was under -- under bunk and -- and I always wondered, because you completely lost the normalcy, why didn't we ever eat raw potato at home? I made up my mind, I said to **Mina**, "You know when -- the first thing I'll do when I get home, I will eat all the potatoes I

can buy.” Never even thought, you know, potatoes have to be cooked, I'm going to cook them first and eat them. “**Mina**, we will eat all the potatoes.” It made such an impression on me that when they broke open already our -- our camp to liberate us, you know, the partisans and they broke open the **ledgers** and everybody was running to the **ledgers** to get - - to get salami and bread. I ran to that field to dig out raw potatoes. And **Mina** had sense enough, she ran and she brought a bread and a salami and she looked all over for me, she couldn't find me, but she thought about those potatoes and she came and she found me digging there, a whole bunch of potatoes. And she said, “**Cecilie**, we don't need those. We have -- go and get -- get some --” I said, “No.” I said, “ I don't budge from here til you don't help me bring in those potatoes.” She -- she helped me bring in those potatoes. And by the time I came to those **ledgers**, nothing was left. So luckily that she had a -- a bread and -- and I'm just saying that how our whole thinking -- how everything changed, from normal and to become -- t-to think differently, to taste -- our tastes were different. Our -- our whole outlook of life was different. I w -- I would tell **Mina**, the only thing that I wish if we are liberated is -- an-and I completely discounted everybody, only me and **Mina**, like nobody else exists any more, that we should have one room to ourselves, just me and you and have a radio -- for some reason I craved music. And -- this was my biggest mission, that's all -- you know, I couldn't even think any more of the rest of the family, whether anybody is alive, because I never really, you know, thought that anybody is going -- lives and that we will -- I never thought that we will be a -- remain alive. I thought -- I built somehow, a world for myself, just me and **Mina** in it and -- and some music and -- and -- and all the rest somehow, I never even thought any more about my fiancé, you know, like having -- like having aspirations, I want to become this or that or -- or -- or get married or -- or have

children or -- just me and **Mina** to live and outlive our -- our lives, just the two of us. In a room by ourselves with music. And of course, life goes on and all this changes.

Q: Do different -- do foods, like potatoes bring back memories for you whenever you eat them now?

A: No, no, this -- not. Memories only that -- that never leave me is -- oh -- oh, what happened -- is a lot I-I cannot bring back. All this I-I know was just a certain hallucination. I mean about being just two in a world. And -- but I am -- but I am very glad that I -- I am alive, because -- because there was a time that I -- I didn't want to live, even after -- after the -- I mean I -- twice I attempted suicide, wanted to kill myself. Because I-I just somehow couldn't -- **vatmany** become normal again. I couldn't visualize my life without my family. I-I miss them so much and -- and even my normal feelings, you know, that I was in love once with m -- with my fiancé, somehow everything was dead when I -- when I was liberated, there was n-no, I-I-I had no feelings. I didn't even know why I'm getting married, but I was getting married because we were engaged. An-And I was even wondering whether -- whether I will ever feel again, you know, have feelings of whether it's sex, or feelings of whether I -- whether I'll have any feelings of -- of love, whether I can -- can live it -- in this world again, that I can find any reason for living. But then you -- I feel that I did accomplish a lot because I -- th-this way if I would die, there wouldn't be my children, my grandchildren, the names of my family. You don't make any contributions to -- to society. There is th -- y-you just somehow -- you stop be -- stop existing, my family would stop existing. And this I never wanted it should happen. They were very, very important and somehow as each child that was born, I feel a n -- their name is -- is -- and then I call my -- my -- like, the last child that was born now, to my youngest son, she's named after my sister

and after my mother. It is like -- like they're here again, you know. And -- and I still -- I -- I was able to be somehow like a witness. I was able to -- to write two books, I -- I was able to contribute something that I think is -- is worthwhile. I -- my children are wonderful human beings. They're all professionals. They -- they all, you know, they never heard me say that you have to hate anybody or -- or they, I mean what I feel is something else, but because to hate is self-destructive. It's -- you -- it's self-destruction because if you love, then -- then you love only -- not only yourself, but you can love other people as well. And to love is so much, you make the world so much better than to hate. But the damage that was done to us, I can't love everybody because there is a society that -- that does not deserve to be loved, even though, let's say they're children and it's not their fault, but somehow it wasn't -- we were children also once, and we didn't do nothing. Our parents never did anything and we were s-so destroyed. I mean, the thing is -- the destruction is, that though I -- I could afford everything, thank God, because my husband was, I mentioned, very successful and -- and we did a lot of traveling and we did a lot of, you know, charity and we -- we help a lot of people, my husband was very charitable. But whatever I did, wherever we went, I could never fully enjoy. I -- I remember we were in -- in **Spain** and it was my anniversary and my daughter wanted to s -- help and came specially. She was already engaged, she was going to get married. And she came to celebrate my anniversary -- we're very close with my children -- to celebrate my anniversary and to spend the vacation with us. And we went in the very beautiful restaurant by the ocean and I -- I'm always very sad inside. I can -- I can smile but I can never really laugh, you know. Like I -- I envy people if they laugh ha ha, you know, really loud laugh, never in my life after, I could not, no matter -- no matter what joyful thing

happened to my life. And then came in a whole table and they spoke German, so they were from **Germany**. A whole --

**End of Tape One, Side B**

### Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of an interview with **Cecilie Klein-Pollak**. This is tape two, side A.

A: I-I will tell you of incid-incident that how I can enjoy everything what is offered to me in life, because of what happened to my family. And ber -- back -- and also what happened to us, because then you'll see that -- that when you know, that all the fam -- most of your family was killed and -- and when you remember the screams of all those people that I watched being killed and beaten to death, you always tell yourself, "How can you enjoy now, you know, how can you have a good time?" Now here, what happened I -- I was with my husband in **Spain** and he wanted we should celebrate our anniversary and my daughter even joined me, she flew down to be with us, because we are very close to our children and she was engaged, she was getting married, so we thought she should have just one vacation still with us alone and as we were sitting and -- in that beautiful restaurant, right by the ocean, a group of German people came in and -- and they were so happy and they were -- they were singing and they were -- and they were having such a good time and here I felt so sad in my -- and my heart was so heavy and they reminded me of the difference -- how my fam -- how -- how I feel and how my husband must feel and -- and after all what happened, how they are feeling, how -- wh-what a -- how -- how happy they are, how they can enjoy and how we cannot enjoy anything, even though we could have now everything. And -- and I just couldn't even finish my meal. I told my husband and my daughter I-I have to get out of here, because I-I have a headache and of course they knew right away that it's not a headache why I am getting out of there and my husband -- I made him just pay and leave the -- the food there and we went home. And as I was coming back to this beautiful hotel that



we were staying and by the swimming pool I went out and I just -- and I wrote a poem, because the only relief I would get when I would be very depressed and -- and would think of wh-what happened to my family, that I memorialize them in my poems. And -- and I will have to read to you this poem I wrote in this beautiful resort place, instead of enjoying it, this is what -- what -- how I felt and this is what I wrote. “**Out of the Ashes.**” “From our ashes, we'll rise up and cry out to the world, on our ashes you are treading and make you face your guilt. Our ashes will remind you of our gruesome past. We will fill your **pols** with ashes and refuse to let you rest. Our bones will make you **oerswel**, of our tortures they will tell. As your salty tears will flow, we'll strike back for every blow. By your children, you will be called to task. “Why did you kill them,” they will ask. Your children will bear the shame, you the parents they shall blame. We will tell them that we were human too. We lived, we laughed and loved like you. And rejoiced with our children in being a proud Jew. For this we were slain. To kill us all became your goal, though our flesh was dying, you can not -- you could not kill our soul. When you burned us to ashes, a little spark was left. The little spark rekindled into a great big flame, a great new generation out of it came. This new generation was sent forth to win our land. They fought for it bravely and build it up from sand. To this land, our ashes were taken, put gently death to rest and our children walk proudly, for we have **Israel** at last.”

Q: That's -- it -- it -- it's such a victory, in a way to -- to write something like that, that --

A: I -- I always, I wrote -- i-if I'm -- if I'm made a birthday for my children and my -- my family couldn't be there, I wrote a poem. If my -- and at my first wedding that I made to my son and my family couldn't be there, I wrote a poem. This is somehow, I think how it keep me sane. The -- the outlet that I had in being able to -- to express myself. And I -- I manage.

Q: When did you start writing poetry?

A: I wrote poetry, yet -- wh-when -- the first poem I wrote is when they took my mother away. That time I wrote in German -- in German and Czech. And then I wrote even poetry, I have a whole stack of German and Czech poems that I didn't have pencil and paper, but I composed it in the camp, when I was in the camp. And this actually saved my -- my life also. I don't know whether you read about it in the book, because -- because the -- the block **geldest**, she considered me like a talented child. I wasn't a child, but I looked like a child. And -- and some -- and she knew that I write poetry. I mean she never gave me a pencil and paper, but she would tell me that if I have a poem, I should come and tell it to her. And so -- so that when they would make the selections, you know, for the gas chamber, eventually she would hide me. In one of the blocks, they had a whole big block -- a block is those stables, you know an-and -- and but we were living, but they had one that they kept just for blankets, they would se -- collect those blankets and then ship them to **Germany**. So when they would come to select for the gas chambers, the people that were already deteriorated and I would, by then already was a candidate, she would hide me under those blankets, me and my sister and when the selection would be over, she would get me out. So that's really how I -- she really is responsible for s-saving my life, not to be selected because of those -- because of poems. But of course, eventually, when I knew English, I wrote down in English, because you cannot really translate poetry, it loses in translation. It's only that when I wrote a book, I have that one -- one or two German poems, so I -- I just wrote a few lines that I -- in translation, but -- but this is -- these poems I wrote all after, you know, after I know better English and so I -- I -- and by each time, that made me very, very sad, **[inaudible]** I wrote a poem. If I'm happy, I don't write. When I'm very sad --

Q: When you wrote that poem at the -- after the restaurant experience, did you share it with your family?

A: Yeah, with my husband? Oh, yeah, I sh -- I shared all the poems, yeah. In fact my -- my sister -- I never even h-had intentions of -- never even thought of publishing it, but my -- my s-sister, I always sent her the -- the poems so and so and my brother, so they -- they wanted to surprise me, so they ask me so -- so they had all my E-English poems and they wanted to publish them, they -- because it was published in **Israel**. So nobody would publish nothing that I wanted to publish here, so -- and I -- so -- but they wanted to surprise me, but then they didn't want to surprise me because they thought in case I have something that I want to add, you know? So they let me know that they want to publish it and I -- that a -- I want to send them something. So I was glad, because this way, I -- I wrote, you know, like wh-what I wanted to write, to add to it, about each member of the family, I -- I added and I still had a -- a couple of poems that -- that I added, because here it -- it gives just an outline abou-about my brother, you know, about each member of the family, I-I wrote something, so --

Q: Will you go ahead and read for the -- for the tape, the title of your -- of your book? This one.

A: This one is? I -- I published, "**Poems of the Holocaust**" is the title and then I published my memoirs, which is "**Sentenced to Live.**" And -- but --

Q: When were -- when was -- were they each published?

A: This was -- this was published -- first it was published about 20 years ago, but since then it was published twi -- you know, what my sister and brother published, was not -- it -- it was a very rough publi-publishing, you know? It was not by any particular publisher. It -- it

was somebody that had, I guess, a printing -- a printing **int**, they printed it up and put a cover on it. But then somebody has seen th-the poems in **Israel** and he asks permission to publish it. So thens he pulb-published it, you see, in 1988, no, in -- in 1985 and then he published -- he sold them all out and he published them again in 1988. So it's -- it's 10 and -- and 13, you know, he publish it -- but -- but they were published already, like almost 20 years ago, the -- the first. And he already since then published a few times more. Cause he sells them all over, he sells them in **England** and the **United State**. I just, sa -- I just have nothing o-out of this, in fact I buy m-my own books back from him, you know, when I'm in **Israel**, I buy and I give them to -- out to friends or -- or -- because I -- I didn't want to, you know, hear nobody was interested to publish it. I mean, he doesn't have th-the rights or anything, I -- I have the rights, but I-I didn't try, even. Because once I -- I -- I send up a poem and they didn't even publish it, so -- or -- or I got back that it's too sad, something like that and after that I -- I wasn't in the mood even to -- to make an attempt. So it's like -- it's this being read and being sold, I -- that this is not from what I want to make money anyway, so, you see, th-th -- from this I could have and I gave the royalties, in fact I -- I even gave a donation 10,000 dollars, to have it -- you know to help publish this book, because the --

Q: You're talking now about “**Sentenced to Live**”?

A: “**Sentenced to Live**,” yes, because it was published by **Olaf Kisibery** in **New York** and - and I didn't have th-th-the money and -- and they were after me, they want to -- my book to publish and I -- because I -- I really was going to publish it with -- this was another publisher that -- that was interested and wouldn't have cost me nothing, but then I felt I want it in a place that is -- has some -- some sentiment to me, you know. They were only publishing books from Holocaust survivors and make -- I wasn't interested in the money. So

I -- I gave them a donation and they published it. And then -- and -- and they closed out, they -- they actually -- the Holocaust Memorial in -- that hall **ifine** -- Washington, bought up there all the rights and all the -- the books and they started to sell them and being that we did have a contract like for royalties, I -- and they wanted to sell me, I-I wrote them a letter that they don't have to send me and I -- I am donating it, it's all theirs, they can keep the money. So they always send me, just the end of the year, just to see how m -- how much they sold and their little touch about the, you know, the amount that they are selling. And now they wrote me that they don't have any more, that they're thinking of **ra** -- and even from them, when I order, I-I pay my own books, and because I -- I want to -- there should be enough left, you know, if it's not going to be ever printed again, or whatever. I -- children, grandchildren and their grandchildren, let them have.

Q: When was the, "**Sentenced to Live**" published, first?

A: **[inaudible]** 1988, 11 years ago. No, 10 years -- it's now 19 -- 1998, 10 years ago.

Q: I'd like to jump around with that one a little bit, too an-and talk a little later while sticking with the chronology about your experience of writing the book. But first let's -- we -- we were talking about -- y-you had told me a little bit about your -- your transport from **Auschwitz** and we do have that story on -- on the first tape. And we know that you -- you were transported to a munitions factory in **Nuremberg**.

A: Yes.

Q: And then -- and then you were on another --

A: Yes.

Q: -- transport.

A: **[inaudible]** to -- to **Hallechin**.

Q: **Hallechin?**

A: That was **Sudetenkabete**. That was **Sudetenkabete**, you know, that was part of

**Czechoslovakia**. And this is where --

Q: And then you were liberated there?

A: This is where we were liberated.

Q: Why don't you describe that day that -- that you were liberated by the Russian partisans  
**yer**. What -- what did they look like, what did you see, what did you feel?

A: Yeah, okay. We were locked in, in the -- in the barracks and we didn't know why, because usually they would come every morning and they would t-take us out, even though the factories were already bombed and they didn't have any work for us, but they would take us either to dig ditches, or to clear rubble, take from one place big snowstorm, another place, only that, you know, that we should be doing something which is -- which is very hard wh -- especially when you are in such weakened conditions. What -- this was another part of -- another way of -- to torture us. So -- and w-we had no idea why we were locked in, why they didn't come for us. Everybody was very apprehensive, but you know, whatever will be, will be. Nobody knew what's happening. What they did is they -- they were running away because the -- the British were supposed to come and liberate us, but that was still three days away and they knew that they h-have time, you know, still to -- to accomplish what they want, which was -- there were three camps, of which we were unaware, we only knew about our camp, about the Jewish. Jewish, a Polish and a French. And they were going that night, when we were -- th-that morning when they locked us in, they already left their -- their headquarters and they were already in the woods. But, at the -- you know, in the woods, from where th-they were going to run away, but they came back to eat lunch. And in

the evening, they -- they had planned to burn down our camp, with -- with us, with -- with all our --the -- with all those living, th-those three camps. So what they did is, they had surrounded each camp with wooden logs and soaked them with a certain lighting fluid. And -- and they came and they were going to do that in the -- at night -- in the evening and then run away completely. So, but they came back to eat lunch. Meantime, one of the -- somebody send word to the partisans, th-that this is going to happen, somebody that knew their plan, which was, we understand, one of the women **SS**, she was from Czech -- she was like a mixed marriage, from Czech and German parents. Either she wanted to save us, or save herself, that I-I -- we will never know. But she had betrayed this plan and therefore the partisans couldn't -- didn't want to wait for the, you know, so the partisan surprised them while eating lunch. They took all the **SS**, they -- they -- they broke open our camp, they broke open the **ledgers**. When they broke open our camp, they showed us how our -- what -- what the plan was, it was still smelling from that fluid that they were going to commit this murder. In fact, they even said that whoever wants, can go and do whatever they want -- whatever we want to those **SS**. Some went and -- and cut their hairs off, you know, but I -- but I -- I told you what I did, I ran to the -- to -- for the -- for the potatoes. And -- and we had -- one girl was dead because she got killed just a day before from the bo -- from a bomb, you know. And as they were taking us already to -- to that rubble and they started to -- the bombs started to -- to fell, so they told us, everybody should drop to the floor. We all dropped to the floor and when we got up, this one girl was dead, she was maybe 19 years old. So we had a dead body in our -- in our camp. So we first asked them, you know -- well, first of all when they came, you can't imagine what we -- we -- first we got scared, we didn't -- you know, they didn't have regular uniforms. One had a green jacket an-and black pants

and one had just civilian clothes and -- and one had an army coat and one had -- th-they -- they weren't like a -- an -- an -- an army, but then they started to speak Russian, you know and -- and th-they couldn't -- th-they were absolutely shocked. Everybody was so excited and crying and -- and we first asked, you know, we want to give her a burial, so we first -- we buried her right there. In -- in -- in that courtyard. And they told us that they have to -- to leave, they are taking with them, the -- those -- some they killed, I'm sure. No, I don't think - - know whether they didn't kill all, but I da -- I don't know what happened to them and I couldn't care less wh--what happened to them. But we were afraid they should leave and we started to beg them, "Don't leave us, but maybe there are some still hidden in the -- in the woods and they could come and -- and hurt us." So they said, "Don't be afraid, we -- the -- the French **camver** all man," this was a man's camp. They are leaving arms with the French and they will guard ours and the -- the women's c -- the two women's camps and in a few days they told us, the British will come and liberate us, you know, formally. And -- and th-this is what really happen -- how it happened. So those few days we had what to eat because they broke open the **ledger** and I certain -- had enough potatoes to last me for -- for a -- for months. And -- and then when the -- when the British came, they put up a regular kitchen and they -- they made those regular meals, but we were so -- without any discipline and without any, you know and -- and in such fear, all this, that we -- that we will not have what to eat, it was so imbedded in -- in our minds, that when we would come to -- to the meal, everybody would take -- would want to take the bowl with them, because this was a very important tool, cause we were afraid that we are not going to have that bowl and -- because this how it was in **Auschwitz**, if you didn't have that one cup that they gave us, then y-you would have been starved, because you wouldn't even get that -- that one, you know, the meal



without the one -- the soup what we were getting once a day. So we would all take it out the bowl, because we thought that we are hungry, we will go in now, into the village to ask for food, you know. And they would beg us, they would say, "You have to leave," yeah, th-the spoon, we would take everything with us. "You must leave it -- because if not, you're coming back tomorrow, we won't have what -- what to give you." Nobody listened. It was like talking to the wall. So what they would do, they would station themselves in the front and like for children, they would say any more, anything, don't take. Because they knew we are taking it, they would take away from us, the -- take it away and that was a repeat, every single day, until we got used to, know -- you know, until we saw that we getting normal, three -- . Yeah, they would always beg us, "Don't go out and eat, you know, anything else," because -- because our bodies were in such a state, that by eating too much or -- y-you would get sick and you could die, because our resistance was so low. We had people that died because they -- they went into the village or went you know an-and got food that was -- that they shouldn't have eaten. An-and they got sick an-and died. "Just eat what we give you, we give you nourishing food and -- and you will always have enough, you know and we cannot give you a lot at one time, but -- but as you build, you're going to be built up and you're going to stay here as -- as long as you need to be." Because nobody was in any traveling condition. We stayed there at least four weeks, until we could travel. And then everybody got a -- like a voucher, you know and it was what -- we could travel free and everywhere. And everybody wanted to go back to look for some relatives. Our destination was to go to **Budapest**, because this is where I was last and we had made up with my mother and you know, with -- with fam -- with the family that whoever survives, we should go and look for each other in -- in **Budapest**. But -- but we -- I-I never g-got actually. I-I

mean I eventually got to **Budapest**, but what happened is that when we were -- when we went back, already after the -- the camp, a-after we were already able to travel and we got some -- they gave us also some money to -- to have, you know, like if you want to buy yourself a drink or -- or, you know, something. So we -- we could travel free everywhere and we were -- me and my sister, we were going a-around away to **Budapest**. And at **Prague** the train made a stop and the redcoats was giving out sandwiches, so I went down to take a sandwich from the redcoats for me and my sister. My sister stayed in the train. So it came over to me a -- a young man who recognized me and he -- everybody would come to the trains to see whether, when the trains would come in with -- with refugees, they would -- actually we weren't refugees, we were ex-prisoners, would come in, they would come and ask whether we have seen this one or that one, you know, to get information that somebody is alive. And -- and this young man came over and said, "Are you," that I am **Joe's** fiancé, he recognized me. I said, "Yes." He said "Well," he said, "**Joe** is here, in -- in **Prague**. He's alive and he's in, it's called **Harrick**," that was also where you went for recuper -- to recuperate. They had places for people to recuperate. He said that he -- he used to go every day to the trains, but he stopped going because last time when he went to the train, he was told that -- that me and my sister, that we were killed. That -- because we were taken, we were really on the way to the gas chambers at one time, I mean before we went to the -- to the -- to **Nuremberg**. But th-they, th-th-the gas chambers were full, so they --they didn't want to wait hours, so they had a transport to -- to take the next day, you know, for work. So they made us switch, they took us for work and they took th-that transport that was supposed to go to **Nuremberg** to the gas chambers. That's why we remained alive, but whoever saw that -- that transport going to the gas chambers, told them that we were killed.

So my fiancé stopped going to the trains. So he told me that -- that I should -- that he's going to take me to where my fiancé, so of course I went there right away to **Mina** and told her we are not going to **Budapest, Joe** is alive and he -- and he took us to where my fiancé was and this is where we stayed again, like four weeks.

Q: Do you remember the moment of being reunited with **Joe**?

A: But the thing is this, that I still had never -- I told you something, that there was something very dead in me, you know? Nothing, you know, completely alive. I was very happy that he's alive, but I -- I couldn't even think yet, like in the terms of fiancé, that this is really somebody that I'm going to live my life with, you know? I di -- I wasn't yet -- I didn't have yet all those normal -- normal feelings. But of course I was very happy just -- just to know I'm -- I'm not alone, you know. That I have somebody, that I have somebody that -- that belongs to me. And what's -- what I want to just show you the -- the -- how -- how one can become, from a very, you know, the way we were brought up, that you never touch something that doesn't belong to you, or -- or -- or you were -- we were brought up to give, not to take, you know. Only to do charity and to help others an-an-and m-my mother was -- was such a charitable person, we -- we had three tenants in our house, they were so poor and we are -- were certainly not rich either and not even one paid rent because they didn't have money, my -- my -- here you would be on the street if you don't pay rent. These three renters were living all these years without a cent paying rent. So here, now here so -- this gentleman is taking the names, you know, registering me and my sister and he sees the name **Goldensile**, you know and he says to me, "You know," he said, "I had a very good friend, **Menachim Goldensile**," who's my brother, "we were studying law together." They were i- in law school together. He said, "Is this any relative of yours?" He is asking me. I said,

“This is my brother. In fact he's in **Palestine**, you know.” Because he said, “What happened to him?” I said, “He's in **Palestine** and -- and he's thank God alive.” He said, “Oh,” he said, “you know, everybody is allowed to stay only here, two weeks, but you can stay as long as you want and with your fiancé.” And he is so happy that his sis -- you know, **Menachim's** sister is there. And -- and he brings us and makes a beautiful cake, you know, like a welcoming and -- and t-to celebrate and -- and brings wine and -- and brings us the best food and every day comes to visit us and -- and is in seventh heaven that, you know, that he can help us. But after four weeks, my sister says, “I don't want to stay here any more. I -- I want to go and look for **Nate**.” **Nate** was her husband, you know. She knew that the child is not alive, but maybe her husband is alive and so she wants to go -- we should go to **Budapest**. So I said, “Okay, we are leaving, we will leave then tomorrow.” And the bed had very good blankets and we have nothing, we are just, you know, we -- we have nothing, we don't own anything. So I said, “Yes, oh, you know what?” I said, “But you will stay, we **rowed** the stairs, like a hotel, you know, it had a few flights. I said, “You and **Joe** go down to the front, I will throw down the blankets and then I'll just walk out,” because I was afraid he will want to take us to the station if I will say, you know, we are -- this way we are going t-to the subway, we go over the subway, he would have driven us to the station. Without saying a good-bye, without saying thank you, just throw, I threw down those blankets and off we went and never thinking -- oh my conscience didn't bother me, y-you know, here -- I am -- I am stealing here blankets, I still called it organizing, I was still camp, you know, th-that if you need something, y-you -- you have to get it because you can't be without it, y-you want to survive. I'm still -- on that -- on that survival mission, you know? And what do you think, we come to the train and -- and we -- we cover ourselves, by the time in the morning

we wake up, no blankets. Somebody else took them away. Th-This is -- this is what was happened. Until we got -- we got completely, you know, normalized. Until we became civilized. We were -- we were not civilized. I -- I would never believe that -- that somebody can take away everything from you, you know. That you can become a complete different person. That's why, when people, you know, even our own people that were there, that were in charge, were brutal and -- and were -- and -- and were beating and -- and doing all horrible things, that prisoners themselves, to other prisoners, I only could understand after -- after those blankets and after this that -- that how I had changed also. Then I sort of said, these people were already there four years, they had nothing -- they had only their lives, they had nobody and they had any more, there were no feelings. You have no feelings, nothing can bother you. Killing becomes like -- like you would kill a chicken and you -- you just want to eat a chicken. They could kill because they want to live. And -- and -- and -- and I will never, never blame those people that were made into those animals. I blame those animals that made them into animals. Because only them, because I-I know how a person can change and that is only my experience, but never to the -- I never changed to the -- that I should be able to hurt somebody. I -- I changed to this, that I should not respect somebody else's property, that's what I meant. But if you can do that and maybe years later you can -- you can do more. You notice that? This is -- this is what my -- what I assume. So anyway, now we are already on our way, because I know you want the life after, okay? Now we are on our way to **Budapest** and luckily, my -- with **Joe** an-and without those blankets and now we arrive to **Budapest** and my sister knows -- has a cousin for -- to her husband in **Budapest** and sh -- we arrived at his cousin and her husband had arrived the same day on the -- the reason we didn't see each other is, but he was traveling on the roof of the -- of the

train, you know, because people were -- were -- it wasn't normal times and we didn't have enough -- transportation was very scarce, so whoever could go into the train went into the train and who couldn't go into the train was traveling on top of the roof and he was traveling on top of the roof and he arrived the same day -- we came on the same train. And this is how my sister found her husband. We were maybe the only two people, that I found my, you know, my fiancé the day I arrived to **Prague** and she found her husband the day we arrived to **Budapest**.

Q: Where -- his name was?

A: **Nathan**.

Q: And where had he been?

A: He was a dentist. Oh, he wh -- where he was? He was also in concentration camp, he was in -- in many, in **Auschwitz** -- I'm sorry, in **Auschwitz** an-and in many different ones. I-I don't know exactly now the names.

Q: What -- what had **Nathan's** experience been? I mean, not **Nathan**, what had **Joe's** experience been during the war?

A: **Joe** was in -- also he was in -- in **Auschwitz** and he was in -- he was -- just a moment, I had it here someplace even, written down, cause he was in quite a few camps. He -- he was - - he was working as a -- he was a dent- technician, but he was working as a locksmith. I mean, you had to say something that you are and somebody told him he should say he's a locksmith, you know? So they -- because if not, then -- then they could -- they thought that this is what they need and they let him -- then they let you live for awhile, until you are able -- able to work. So he was in --

**End of Tape Two, Side A**

### Beginning of Tape Two, Side B

A: At one point -- is it -- is it going again? [inaudible]

Q: This is a continuation of an interview with **Cecilie Klein-Pollak**, this is tape number two, side B. So, y-you were saying you didn't -- you don't know the exact names --

A: No, yeah but -- but it -- towards the -- towards the end, when they would take either on marches, you know, they would take on death march or -- and whoever survived the death march, survived it an-and who didn't -- if -- if you couldn't walk, then they -- then they shot you. So i-i-it -- this -- what happened to **Joe** was that they were on a death march and then -- it was already, it was winter and they had -- they had, yeah, in **Buna**, he was in **Buna**, that I re -- I remember. They took him on a death march and many that couldn't walk, they shot and then they took them to a train and they told everybody to run on the train. Whoever could run up, was on the train -- it was cattle train, it was open. And whoever couldn't run, they shot. In fact, one was a very good friend of his and a very religious guy and he was so hopeful that, you know, that he is going to survive and he gave them so much courage and so much, you know, hope. And he was by the train, but h-he couldn't get on quickly and -- and the **SS** shot him. But anyway -- I'm -- I'm sorry -- on that train, they were traveling w -- in the open wagons, in the open cattle trains, for many days and -- and **Joe** went completely out of his mind and he wanted, h-he thought he s -- that he has wings, that he wants to fly and he wanted, you know, like to jump out, but he had a very good friend in the camp. You could only survive, either you had somebody in the family, like a sister, or you made yourself or you became a friend with somebody and that one looked out for each other, you looked out for each other and that -- they were like two brothers. If his friend wanted to -- to -- once, to kill himself, because his -- his brother died, so **Joe** kept him from, you know,

from running to the w -- whatever he wanted to do. And -- and now, **Joe** -- when **Joe** was trying to j-jump off the train, he saw all of a sudden that -- that he is getting up and his outstretched hand, he right away realized that he wants to, you know, jump, so he -- he pushed him back and he sat on him. He s -- he s -- he pushed him down and he sat on him, literally and he had like a lit -- a -- he had a cup -- a cup and with the cup, he -- the cup had a string and with the cup he took a little bit snow, you know, he let it drop, for snow and he gave **Joe**, you know, like snow to, like to revive him, to get more to his senses and -- and -- and he -- he saved his life. And they saved each others lives. Anyway, when **Joe** was liberated, he couldn't -- he had typhus and he couldn't walk, he -- he only walked on all four, you know, like -- like an animal, h-he couldn't stand up straight, but he survived and he was in that **Harrickton**, there he got, you know, he recuperated and -- and -- and we arrived to **Budapest**, **Mina** found **Nathan** and -- and **Joe** wanted to get married, so we got married in **Budapest**. Our -- we had, of course, nothing. We had -- we had no wedding a -- we -- we went to, first of all to a rabbi, that made just, you know, ack -- I don't know, you wouldn't know, probably, but a canopy, you know.

Q: A **hoopa**.

A: A **hoopa**. Oh, you're not Jewish, so I-I assume you wouldn't know much about our religion, but anyway, **h-hoopa** and -- and -- and of course we went also to the, you know, legally we got married. We had no -- no -- we had -- we didn't have what to eat, the -- h-her cousin made -- we -- I had to fast because our religion tells us to fast that day. At the wedding was only my s -- my sister, in fa -- it was very comical because we went by s -- by subway and my husband had a -- he had a nice suit because he went back home and he retrieved some -- something, but he had those heavy boots on, you know? And in the



subway, he meets a friend and he says, w-we are going to the **hoopa**, by subway and he meets a friend and he says, "Oh **Joe**, you're alive, oh I'm so happy." And **Joe** is so happy with him and he even forgots -- and they are so excited with each other and I have on this -- a white suit that borrowed my sisters -- her brother-in-law was hidden, so he had a little money, so he bought for my sister a white suit, so my sister borrowed me the suit and I w-with some bob -- pins, hooked up, you know, that skirt and everything was falling off me, a b -- a big jacket that didn't fit me and somebody lent me a little white hat with a little veil and this is how we traveled to that **hoopa** and he asked **Joe**, **Joe** asked him, "Where are you going?" This guy says, "Oh, I'm going to somebody's wed -- to a wedding." He asked **Joe**, "Where are you going?" **Joe** said, "I'm also going to a wedding." "Whose wedding?" He said, "My wedding." "Oh," he said, "then I'm coming to your wedding." **J-J** -- so **Joe** said "Fine." But this guy tells him, "**Joe**, these boots -- i -- in these boots you are getting married?" He said, "Well, I don't have any shoes." He said, "Okay, we'll change." He had shoes, so he gave him the shoes. He ga -- his boots, he gave him the shoes and everything in the subway and just -- it's comical, because the wedding's a time [indecipherable] my children, you know, in this -- now, this is my wedding. And -- And now we have already the **hoopa** and -- so this cousin made -- made food -- she prepared food for everybody else that was in our wedding co-company, these three people and for us she made a piece of fish and that was -- after I fasted the whole day, that was a whole food. And we had no money to go to a hotel for our wedding night. **Mina** had one room, with whom I stayed, you know. So we put -- took a white sheet, a sheet that we split the room in half so that one bed is here and one bed is there and this was our wedding night and all the time I'm just thinking how

hungry I am. So you can imagine how romantic this wedding night was but -- so there -- this was our wedding, but --

Q: What were your feelings as you were experiencing?

A: I -- I was very shattered at the **hoopa**, that -- that -- that nobod -- you know, that my family i-is -- is killed and -- and I was just thinking about th-the wedding that my sister had, you know, when -- at home when she got married and it was a very sad day for me, but -- but you know, the -- the feelings right now, th-this -- this is part of -- of this -- this process, th -- that w-we still have to be hungry, at -- at our wedding night, we still can't even afford, you know, to have just a little privacy, just to have a -- a room to ourselves and -- and this is how we -- we stayed -- we stayed there for a -- awhile, because we had to -- they thought of maybe was the working a little bit, but then they -- they couldn't get work, so -- so we went -- they went back to our -- **Joe** went back to his hometown, because they had hidden, you know, like some valuables and they were well-to-do people, but they had houses an-and fields and all that, but everything somebody else took away and when -- when he came back. So he thought he will bring back something and meantime, before he went, we went to **Czechoslovakia** to see where we could live, you know. T-T-To get -- because I never want to go back to my hometown, I wouldn't go back to his hometown either, but we went, somewheres not far from **Prague**, like we lived in **Varstow** for awhile. So we went just to find out what the situation is, wh-wh-what we can get as far as, you know, l-living quarters and -- and job, but w-we came back to **Budapest** f-for my sister and -- and **Nathan** and **Joe** each went to their hometowns, to find -- to see what -- what they can salvage, what they can bring back, you know. Maybe they can sell something and get some money. When **Joe** came back, the maid was living in their house and she didn't even -- she didn't even let him in. He

said he wants just to go, you know, to go up to the attic, j-just t-to look for -- to see something in the attic. She wouldn't let him go up til her husband doesn't come. And after all -- h-he -- they had lots of fields and all that and I'll bet he could make -- he couldn't go in and sell nothing, because in time the -- this became **Russia**. The **Russia** took this away, this part. And in fact, they didn't even let, want to let him go back. They -- he was afraid even to -- to go in, you know, once he felt it -- to go up with him, because what happened was a lot of people got killed, like in **Poland**, I don't know h -- 60 people at one time they killed, because they came back to their hometown and they -- and they thought they're going to get back their -- they didn't want that they should go ask back for the properties. They -- th-they hacked them to pieces. So he wasn't going to get himself killed over property. All he wanted is just to go back already, but the -- th-th-they said, the Russians th-that occupied, said that they need dentists there. Th-They -- by them, dental technician, dentist, everything was -- was to them the same, you know? They said, "Oh, you're a dentist, [indecipherable]." "No, no, I'm a dental technician." "Oh, that's the s -- it doesn't matter, we need you." He said, "All right, then I go -- I want to go back for my wife." "You tell your wife to come here." They wouldn't let him go out -- go back. So he had to -- he had to steal himself away, over the border and -- and it took him weeks and weeks and we didn't know what happened to them, until they came back. So they finally came back and **Nathan** came back also, also back like that -- th-they had to steal themselves back. And we came to -- to **Czechoslovakia** and there they gave us -- everybody that came t-to **Czechoslovakia**, especially to the part, **Sudetenkabetete**, that the Germans had taken away all -- all the housing, you know, from -- from the Jewish people. They took away their housing, they send them out -- they took the

Germans out and they gave us a very nice villa, without -- we didn't have to pay nothing. I mean, to live in.

Q: What was the name of the town?

A: **Varlensdorf, Varlensdorf.** So my sister, you know, we both shared it, she lived upstairs, I lived downstairs and we even had one kitchen, I'm sorry -- we didn't have like she cooks, I cook. I was the one to go shopping, she was the one to cook, I didn't know how to cook. My brother-in-law was a dentist and my husband was a dental technician. So first they both worked for the -- it -- it is like you have here, like there is socialized medicine, you know? So he worked -- my brother-in-law worked as a dentist and he got a salary and my husband worked -- did the technical work and they got of course, salaries. Me and my sister started to work also, we worked -- each got a job in -- in a bank. And -- a-an -- but then I -- but then we became both, very soon too, she became very sick and I became sick. I had tuberculosis, which I didn't know, you know and -- and she had some internal, what was -- running such high fever that everything in -- in her had turned upside down and she had operations and she almost died, she was -- very few people survived it. I forgot the name of that illness. And I got pleurisy fluid, so I was already then sent to a sanatorium and I had -- I -- and then I became pregnant and I had -- very soon I had my son, my first son. And -- and this, my tuberculosis became worse, apparently from -- from giving birth, so they send me again to, you know, to -- to get well, but there they didn't have medications, they only, bed rest, you know and -- and fresh air in -- in the high mountains, so **Mina** was taking care of -- of **Peter** while I was away. Then I came back and -- and eventually, my husband had here an uncle in the **United States**, so he sent him papers and -- and we came to the **United States** and my sister went to **Palestine**, because we had there my brother and sister. In fact I also wanted to

go to **Palestine**, but my husband wanted to come here, because he said that here -- here the technical work is far -- far more advanced than in **Czechoslovakia** and he wants to have this experience and -- and he has the only -- he has one uncle that he would like to meet.

Meantime, we had a very, very bad beginning here, because when I came out, when we came back -- when we came here to the **United States**, who -- who didn't have relatives?

There is a **hires**, you know, an organization that helped the refugees bring over and they took care of them until -- until they got a job and housing. But if you got from a relative, then the papers, then they were responsible for you and you couldn't get any help from them.

And we -- we could not even though we had **Czech** money, but the **Czech** money had absolutely no value and we couldn't bring out nothing. W-We came with -- wi -- that

**[indecipherable]** -- we converted, we had 13 dollars. Th-That was all our -- we -- we had stuff like clothing and you know, because, from working we -- we could buy that in

**Czechoslovakia**, but we didn't have money. So, with clothing what can you do and we had

brought out crystals and things like that, but this has no value. So when we arrived, we

thought, you know, we're arriving and somebody's going to be waiting for us. And here, I

don't speak English, my husband doesn't speak English. Yes, no was our vo-vocabulary. We

s -- we spoke five other languages, but -- but not English. So any -- then we arrived, this --

we happened to have an Italian tax -- taxi driver. We have -- you look -- my uncle had five

children, all married -- not even one came to -- to wait for us. And when we arrived, we

arrived on -- on a ship that was -- that they ditched already, I mean that was an army ship

and they -- w-w -- it was their last journey, they -- they were not going to use it any more.

So we were even, not together th-the whole time and my little boy, who was two years old,

was -- got sick and he was sick the whole time on th -- he was in the hospital in -- on the

boat the whole time and a-a -- we were -- my husband was sleeping on the floor on -- on -- in one **bicabo** hold, you know, it was just on the fl -- on the floor, on -- on mattresses. And I was sleeping with a -- with a whole bunch of -- of other women. In -- in -- in the other hold was chickens, it was a-- a terrible journey and -- and we arrived to **Halifax** and from **Halifax** we had to take a train that was more than 24 hours and luckily we still had money for the train, plus 13 dollars and when we ar-arrive to the -- to the station, you know, wh-where the trains are arriving and we are looking for any of our relatives being to pick us up, nobody showed up. Nobody came t-to -- to wait for us, so we had to be two car -- we had an address, uncle's address, so we took a -- a taxi and this is an Italian guy and he doesn't speak and we don't speak Italian. And we give him, just we show him the -- the address and w-we -- we looked a sight, was, you know, we were sitting up so many hours and tired and -- and the child is sick and -- and he comes with us to **Brooklyn**, this is where my u -- where my uncle had a -- a very beautiful house. That time that was in a very fancy neighborhood in **Brooklyn**. And -- and somebody and we ring, ring, no answer, so the neighbor, he knocked on the door, the Italian guy knocks on the door and she said, "No, the **Kleins** left for **Florida**, they're not home, they w-we-went away for **Florida**." They know that we are arriving the next day, they get a cable, none of the children are waiting for us. The -- his uncle picks himself up with his wife and leaves for **Florida** and -- an-and because he didn't want to be bothered with -- with -- wi-with refugees. That is his nephew, his brother's son. But he gives him the address of his son's office in **Manhattan**, he's a very rich man, I mean he was in -- he's a real estate ma -- th-the uncle, in real estate an-and he has an office in **Manhattan** and his son has an office. So he gives him the number, I mean th-the address and here I'm only worrying, with those 13 dollars, taxi -- how we going to pay this -- this

taxi? I was afraid what is going to be w-without -- with the, you know, how are we going to pay for all that? But he came to -- comes, takes us to th-the son's office. The son has the keys from this house, from the uncle's house because he left them, the keys, that we should move in the meantime there and hoping that by the time he comes, we'll be -- we'll disappear, we won't be there. So -- and we -- th-th-the son gives us the key and tells the taxi, he paid the taxi and tells us that his father will -- lef-left us the keys and they will come and visit us in the evening. Never even asked, "How are you? How was the trip?" H-How -- an- and we come, there is nothing to eat, you know? And we -- and we had those 13 dollars. This is -- this is with what I'm going to -- to live in an empty house with -- with a sick child and with people that care so much, that never came even to -- to wait for us.

Q: Did -- was there --

A: I was devastated. You know, you arrive -- I remember that this was the worst -- one of the worst times aft-after concentration camp. Th-Th-The complete disregard, you know. Because we were always so friendly, mine, w-we always helped so much, you know? We helped for -- for strangers, I'm telling you that three tenants lived in our house, ever -- never to pay rent. My mother used to cook more food than -- than she needed to bring down to the tenants children because they were so poor. And here, relatives, after losing everybody, I mean they were not ignorant, they know wh-what happened. They -- they know that the family was killed. They are not anxious to see, they are not interested to -- to see somebody an-and -- and cheer up those people, to know we are here for you, I'm glad you survived? That's why we couldn't talk about th-th-the past. Who cared? If -- if relatives don't care? So -- so my husband also was absolutely -- he felt terrible for me more, because I -- I wanted to go to **Palestine**. I -- right away -- he told me, see? You wanted to, this is where you wanted

to come? I wanted to come where my family is. This is family? There must be **silica**, there must be a reason why my uncle left, maybe he's sick, maybe -- he was funny, he was an unusual, wonderful, good person, my husband and he still believed that there -- there is a reason. But eventually he even -- b-but now we are anyway in a situation that we don't even have -- have money w-we want to go to -- to **Palestine**. So he said, "D-Don't worry, I have a good trade and I will get a job," and -- and he was trying, you know, to do his best to cheer me up, but then th-th-these -- these -- his children came and I had such -- I mean I never had felt any more animosity than -- than for this family, who could treat us so shabbily. But there was another part of the family, th-that we just got to know that were very kind people, that were not, you know, th-they were not rich and they couldn't help us financially, but -- but they -- at least they were -- they -- they helped us, you know, with a nice word. They would say, "Don't worry, every beginning is -- is very tough and -- and you'll see that everything will turn out good" But this whole other family, you know the -- all those children, they just came, saw us, good-bye and -- and left and here we are with those 13 dollars from that time. So I would go and buy for us, for 25 cents, a lung, because that was the cheapest, so that I could buy for my child a lamb chop, you know. For him I tried to buy an orange, a lambchops, you know, that -- that he should have what to eat. He was very sick, I have no money for doctor and my -- that other family that I told you that they were very nice and kind would come an-and -- and -- and visit us and -- and my husband was trying to get a job, but h-he couldn't -- i-it was very hard to get that time a job as a dental technician and we cannot get nothing, you know, to the **hires**. So there was another cousin that she -- she lived in -- in **Allentown** somewheres. So -- no -- so-somewheres on -- in -- in the country. And so she came once and she brought a big package of food an-and brought --



bought stuff and filled up my **Fridgidaire**. And -- and helped us that way. And th-then, m-my husband, no matter how he tried, he couldn't get a -- he couldn't get a job. So he s -- he was sure that when his uncle will come, he has connections, he will -- he will get him a job. But as soon as -- as his uncle -- finally his uncle arrives and his uncle tells him, in no other terms, he said, "Well," he said, "I thought by the time I'll come, that you will have moved out and that you will have a -- a job." I said, "Look," I said, "**Hitler** wasn't kind enough to supply us with money, so -- and that we could move out," I said. "And," I says, "you send us papers, we had no way of getting, you know, of getting into the **hires**." I said, "But we are not going to stay here." And I told him and I called up the **hires** and I-I told them my situation and I told them, "Look, we haven't got wh-where to be, I have a s -- m-my child is sick, we have no job, we haven't got where to be. You -- you helping for so many people, I want you to come through an-and help us also." They said, "Well, they're really responsible, but since your situation is that, you know, bad, then you have to -- if you sign that you are going -- that we can send you wherever we want, that you're not going to stay in **New York**, because in **New York** is very difficult to get jobs and **New York** is very difficult. We have - - we placed already too many people. It's easier for us to find you something in **Dallas, Texas**. And if you sign that you're willing to leave **New York**, then" -- because all along, because I had contacted them already and they said -- told me the same thing, but I -- but my husband said, "No, let's wait for the uncle," he -- he wanted to stay in **New York**. **Joe** wanted very much to stay in **New York**, so I -- I said, just finally said, "I am going to sign anything they want." And -- and we left and we told them, "We sign, you can send us wherever you want." They gave us right away a room in -- in **das** hotel, was a -- a very dilapidated hotel, but they had there all the refugees in -- in one place and they had a -- a --

a dining room for us and we could have three meals and -- but they -- before they -- so I signed, but then they said to me, "You know, you have to go to the doctor, because you need to be examined and you have to be in perfect condition and we send you, that you're healthy." And when I came to the doctor, the doctor gave the -- this -- t-told -- t-told -- g-gave the report that I have tuberculosis and that I have to be hospitalized, it is dangerous for -- for my child and that I need to **carrier** test and I was positive. That I cannot be send no place and so they couldn't send me away to **Dallas, Texas**, so instead they -- they got me into a sanatorium and of course my -- the worst nightmare was for me that now I have to leave my child, you know? And he has to be placed, he had to be placed in a -- in a home.

Q: Let's pause here for a minute and I have some questions about the -- about even before you actually took your trip to the **United States**, you mentioned your -- what year was **Peter** born, your son?

A: He was born December 28th, 1946 and we came in 1948, on his second birthday, December 28th, 1948. He was exactly two years when we arrived.

Q: You mentioned about right when the war ended, you were in a state of mind where you -- you couldn't imagine the future and you just wanted to be in the room with your sister and -- and you weren't thinking about marriage and you weren't thinking about children and family and the whole thing. And then you were also describing how you felt a -- a little numb during your wedding. Was there a decision made in having a child, or did that just sort of happen to you also?

A: **[inaudible]**, no I was very inexperienced and I didn't, you know, think of that there was such a thing of -- of using birth control, because at the time I really -- I -- I wasn't really -- I didn't know really how to be yet, a good mother. I was -- not only was I too young, because

I was young, I was 20 when I married and I was -- and I was 21 when I had my -- my son. And -- and I-I was not yet -- I didn't have enough yet, life experience. I mean, that -- that I should know to be a -- to be a careful mother. My lot was that **Mina** had already a child, so she bathed the child, she -- she -- she handled him. I was afraid t -- I let her do everything and she was very happy to do everything for the child because she missed so much her child that she sort of -- she almost had a nervous breakdown when I left with my child, because it was like taking away her child. Her husband had to -- to put away -- to hide all the pictures because sh-she didn't stop crying. She'd stop -- didn't stop crying for me also, but even more for -- for **Peter**. **Peter** didn't even know wh-who's the mother, he had two mothers. I was the one to -- to dress him up nice and to go with him for a walk and she was the one, you know, to -- to nurture him, to -- to give him the best, to feed him, to, you know, t-to do the things that -- that the mother is -- is supposed to do. To play with him. I brought him one day and - and I left him because I also saw that she has so much, you know, she comes so much alive when she is doing that for **Peter**. Because also, when she moved away, eventually my brother-in-law got, after another dentist, a very nice -- for himself, an office th-that he didn't have to work for the -- you know, for the socialized, he could do private work for himself. And so they had a beautiful house with a -- with an office and it was a -- a couple of miles away, a few miles away. So my sister always asked me for her -- for **Peter** and I would always let -- like really he was more w-with my sister an-an-an-and I was -- my -- my husband liked very much to go to -- to those soccer games, you know, there -- it was a big sport and s-so I -- I always went with my husband, you know and I -- and I let her have him. And then when he came back to me an-and then, of course, we took him always back. But then when I left, she was left with a very, you know, s-she was hurting a -- a lot for my

child. And -- and **Peter** didn't care either way, because **Peter** loved us both, he -- we were always both with him together. But I'm just saying that I was not yet a really responsible mother, you know? This came - this came later on. But of course I loved my child, this was - - to me this was a miracle when -- when he was born because you know, it was -- he was maybe w -- the first children born after -- after the -- the Holocaust. So then, when -- when I had to -- this was a-an absolute nightmare, I-I couldn't -- I-I said to them, "No, I am not -- I'm not going no place. I cannot -- I'm not going to leave my child, I have nobody to take care of." They said, "Look, what do you want, you want," you know, the doctor spoke to me and also th-the ones from **hires**. "If you love your child, you don't want your child to -- to get infected and -- and then he will get sick also. This way you will cure yourself and -- and we have homes for children." So they -- they took me to see the home where he's going to be and that he will get used to it and -- and so when -- so we came to that home and I took him still the first time back, you know. And they let him of course play and with toys and -- and with other children. And then I came back and then I-I -- I came the day that I had to leave and we went back to that home to leave him. And I remember there was one girl, that she -- she liked him very much, right from the beginning, a young girl that was helping with the -- with the children. And he was -- he was a very, very beautiful baby, he was very good -- th-the baby, I-I mean he was two years old. He was very advanced, he spoke, but he -- he spoke only Czech. He didn't even know English yet. And he -- she came with him to the -- there was like a gate, you know and -- and I went back into the car and I cried the whole way home and then I -- I left for -- for the sanatorium and then **Joe** would always go, every week. The only time -- they got him a job, they got for **Joe** a job in a dental laboratory. He was making 35 dollars a week. And they got him, you know, so he moved out from the

hotel, he wasn't going to, you know, be a burden on them that they should still have to pay his food and hotel, so --

Q: Was that the Hotel **Marseilles**?

A: **Marseilles**.

Q: Yeah.

A: I think I say right. And so -- so he had by somebody a room, you know and he could only visit **Peter** on one day a week, because -- then he came to visit me. One day he visit **Peter** and -- and one day me. So after a few -- a couple of months, I am told that they're going to put him in a foster home and I didn't want -- I wanted -- I didn't want him to be changed because I thought that he is used to this home, with the children and there's this girl that she liked him so much and she -- **Joe** always told me about h-how this girl was always taking care of him and how much, how he follows her around that -- and -- and so I -- I was very apprehensive that he should be changed and get another home. And I don't know what kind of a home he's going to get in. Tis like -- like I had like a premonition you know. So, but they tell -- they told me there was no way, th-th-they keep maximum two months in this home. After that, child must be placed in a foster home, because it is a more normal atmosphere for the child and this is a foster home where they have already two or three other children, I think three. And -- and they have a -- a dog and he will like the dog, you know they, they persuaded me -- and he will have fr-friends right away, these children are also foster children, because they don't have their own children. And -- all right, so. Then, **Joe** --

Q: Let's pause, because the tapes --

**End of Tape Two, Side B**

### Beginning of Tape Three, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of an interview with **Cecilie Klein-Pollak**. This is tape number three, side A. Okay. Before we go forward, I would like to know what your expectations were of the **United States**. You mentioned that you wanted to go to **Palestine**, partially because your family was there. Did -- did you have ideas about what the **United States** would be like and hopes and fears about that?

A: I -- I really didn't have any positive plan at that time. We just looked for a place where it is democracy, so that we will be able to bring up our children free of prejudice, where we will have all the rights to educate them, to -- so that they should be able to have their choices. These are -- were my expectations. I wasn't afraid that my husband is not going to make a living, because he was very conscientious and ambitious and he was very smart and knowledgeable and I had all the confidence in him, so I had no special fear. My disappointments were these -- the way we were accepted here and the way we were here treated and -- and also I must say that as soon as anybody thought of -- of was that we are refugees, we were taken like we are -- we don't know anything, we are like from -- from the woods, that we have no idea of civilization, I mean some people would ask me -- when I went into a car, whether I have seen already something. Or as soon as th-they heard an accent, they -- they really didn't -- didn't try to -- t-to be very nice to us. Th-They -- they were -- they did not like too much Europeans. This is what was my impression. Until -- maybe I didn't meet the right people in the beginning. Eventually, I understood also that it was largely our fault too, that we felt excluded because we felt so different from -- from you people here in the **United States**, that you had such normal lives and -- and we had such different and difficult and -- and -- and sad lives, that we cannot -- we don't fit in to you,

you know, into your company. And that showed me many times. For example, when I had children and we went t-to the mountains, you know, we had a bungalow and there were refugees, wi-with a accent like me, people always sticking together and American people would s-stick together and we could never -- we never had like a common ground. I remember that once, which was absolutely very comical, because they would stage shows themselves, you know, it was a bungal -- colony, so we had like a club there and they would stage shows and they -- and my husband was always a great participant, so -- and he had a very beautiful v-voice and my husband would be singing and -- a-and we tried really to participate, to be one of the crowd, we -- well accepted. But then -- and then once, they said, "You know, why should we all s-sit separate, so let's push all the tables together." So they push all the tables together. And what do you think? On one end, all the refugees, you know? All the ones with the -- wi -- that are from **Europe** and on the other, all -- all the Americans. And something else, eventually more Americans would go away, you know, more European came in and then, like five, six years later, it was mostly, practically, hardly any American people. Because you had more in common, the American people had more in common with the American people. The European people had more in common with the European people. We somehow, you know, if we are in -- in one room, you just look at an-another one and you know exactly what his life has been, you know? It is like -- like a-an open book. We pretend very much to be like you, but it -- it isn't, it can never -- it can never happen again, not in our lifetime. When -- when I had -- when I came back from the sanatorium, f-first I wanted just to continue with the sanatorium because this I fear -- find was a very important and very terrible part of my life, here in the **United States**, but when they put **Peter** in that foster home, all those children were mistreated. They were

undernourished. They treated the dogs very well, but my child was very, very badly treated. I only found out when I c -- after a w -- awhile, when I got better, they would give me like a pass to go home for the weekend and **Joe** would go, of course, to -- to visit **Peter** and take him out for the day and he couldn't notice anything. Because he would take the child out, he wasn't going to spend with him in -- in the house. But when we took him home, when I came home for the weekend, as part of an activity that, you know, as you get better, they want you to s -- because we are a lot i-in the beds and they want you should start getting used to normal life again, so -- this was already after I had been there a year, so then I came back -- when I s -- came out for the weekend, we took **Peter** home and he was filthy, like he would never have a bath and he was all scratched up and he had temperature. So when I -- so of course I bathed him and I put on clean clothe -- underwear and when I came back and -- and told that woman, I said that, "He's got temperature, would you please put him to bed?" She tells me, "I'm not going to go up and -- and down th-the steps. He had temperature before and it goes away." Th-This is what her answer was. And also when I came there, his -- he had curly hair, his hair was so n -- you know, in knots that -- that she didn't even make an attempt, you know, to have him nicely combed, washed, nothing. So when I came back to the sanatorium, I was very upset, I -- I -- of course I had no choice but to leave him there, I went to the social worker and I told her I want him changed, I -- by no way do I let him stay there. If he is not changed, then I have no choice but to -- but to go home and -- and take care of him. They didn't want me to, you know, to throw away th-the opportunity to cure myself, so she -- she told me that they're going to investigate and -- and they did investigate. First -- first of course, the social worker said she came, she couldn't find nothing, that the other woman told her I must be jealous of her, that she's taking away the love of my child. I



said, "All I want is that somebody should love him while I can't be with him." And -- and I insisted on him being changed, so then -- then they changed not only **Peter**, then they send somebody else. I told her, I said -- she said -- "The social worker doesn't think so," I said, "The social worker is not going to think so, because she placed him there. You send somebody else, that didn't place him there. Then, let them find out how well they're taken care of." And that's what she did. They found that all the children were undernourished. They -- mal -- malnutrition, they were mal -- malnutrition. They took away all the children from her and they placed each child in different homes and that time, his home was a much better one. And -- and then I came -- I came home, after I was there a year and a half, I came home, I took my child back and my child -- this is only how I -- and I know it -- saw it there that I'm very different because when everybody else would -- were telling joke and would laugh and I couldn't laugh, I couldn't even crack a smile and they would all -- and nobody knew what, you know, about my -- my experiences, so they would always tell me, "Why -- this is -- was a joke, why don't you laugh? Why are you always so serious?" You know. And I -- and I di-didn't respond too much to -- to that. I-I would also suffer a lie because they would have, you know, grandmothers come to visit them and -- and they would tell all the jokes from their children and -- and I -- and there was nobody, bu-but the joke wouldn't, you know, there was nobody telling me how well my child is doing and I would always listen to them, thinking, what **Peter** is -- must be doing already now, because y-you know, if -- if they would say how clever they are and I would think about my child, that I am missing all this, I don't know his progress. So it made me very, very sad, but what I did know -- the people shouldn't even talk to me, so I took a dictionary, **Joe** bought me a dictionary in

Czech and in English and I studied language. So that within eight months I -- that I was there, I spoke, I -- I read and I could write English, you know, so--

Q: What language did you speak when you arrived to -- with **Joe's** relatives?

A: They spoke Jewish. **Joe's** relatives were Jewish and with my child Czech, he knew only Czech. But a child learns quickly, I -- you know, within a few months, within two months, he -- he probably spoke English. I know he -- the Czech he forgot completely. So w-w-when I came back and my -- my child would play with other children, you know and then when he would come home from that home, he would say to me, "Mommy, why don't you smile like **Eddie's** mother? Mommy, are you going to die?" Because h-he knew already, you know, that I -- I was sick and I would tell him, "Of course not." And then I made up my mind that I want to be like all the mommies here in **America**, I'm going to smile, I'm going to do everything. I'm going to -- to -- I started to go to a -- a psychiatrist. Everything was arranged because we had no -- no means, you know, no money. I-It was arranged through this **hires**, they got me -- they wanted me a long time ago, but you know, I-I wasn't ready. I always thought to myself, I have to see guy and he's going to give me back my family? A psychiatrist, you go, you don't know why you are or how you are. I knew why I am the way I am and so what is he going to do? He can't replace nobody and he can't help me much and -- and therefore I didn't believe too much in psychiatry. But I thought to myself, for my child's sake, you know, I've got to do something. I want to -- want to be able to do everything -- I-I right away l-learned everything, s-so that I-I should be able to do with my children. I mean I used to ice skate when I was a child. I-I went back t-to, I went to -- I couldn't go t-to night classes because he was little and we had no money like for babysitters, so -- but as soon as I could, I take courses, I would -- I learned how to -- I-I would take him

places, to **Manhattan**, to -- to -- to those, sometimes the church gave a -- a -- a children's show and sometimes temple was something and I occupied myself a lot with this -- my child. But ei-eight months later I -- I had a -- a relapse an-and I had to go back and this is when -- this is my -- my first impulse w-was this is when I thought of suicide, because I didn't want to have to leave my child again, I didn't want he should have to -- to be in foster homes, I didn't want -- I didn't know how many times I'm going to be up and down -- in and out of sanatoriums. And I thought this way, you know, he's young, **Joe** is young, he could remarry, he will have one mother and someone who du -- that can laugh and be cheery and - and -- and my husband was absolutely, he was an unusual, wonderful, fabulous person and h-he was, oh, he was always the first one to -- to -- to be, when the -- you know, when the visiting was. He w-would always buy me presents even though he didn't have -- he would live on -- on bread and margarine always, to bring me something nice, you know, just t-to cheer me up. And he'd always tell me how great **Peter** was doing, bring me all his pictures and -- and always smiling. He -- he was never a down person, he -- how -- how he remained so -- I-I want to say perfect, I-I really don't know, but -- but -- but he did. And -- an-and he was very, very much in love with me and if he alw -- and he was a person that could show a lot of love, because some people can love and not be able to show, but -- but his love really pulled me through and -- and so he -- he was always, you know, very hopeful and always told me -- always planned wh-what we are going to do and how we going to live our lives and how wonderful it's going to be when -- when I can get back. So when -- when I had -- so he told me he's not going to go to a foster home any more, that he made arrangements like next house, they were a family with two children and they say he can see him every single day when he comes home from work and take him back to the house and I should -- so that

there -- so I brought him there and -- and when I left him and -- and **Peter** was all so -- I remembered that h-he didn't cry when I left him, but -- but you could see that he -- i-it isn't because he's not going to miss me, but because he was like in shock also, you know. With again being left, because I knew how he was afraid that I'm not -- going to die, you know, he asked me when I was home and now I'm going a-away again. And this is when -- when I came home and I asked the psychiatrist, I told him I can't sleep -- he sh -- he didn't have any, you know, he never suspected that I have anything in mind and I had sleeping pills from before and I told him I don't have any, he should prescribe new sleeping pills. I took out a whole bunch of those sleeping pills, I took them -- I -- I prepared all of them, I had maybe 50 of them. And I thought I'll -- when I go to the sanatorium, I'm going to take them all and -- and I'll die. And my husband brought me a very beautiful bed jacket and he wanted me -- not to give it to me here, he want when I'll open the suitcase I should be surprised, he always loved, you know, surprises. And he -- and again and a beautiful letter he wrote me, you know, that I should have what to eat again and about his love for me and all that. And when he put it in and somehow, I don't know how -- how he looked where to put it, I guess he wanted to put it a little bit underneath, he found these pills. And knew right away that in -- in a sanatorium you don't need pills, you don't take any medication, because if you can't sleep they give you pills, you know. So he right away guessed my intentions, of course he took them **upthay** and -- and he was crying and he begged me not -- not to -- what -- what kind of -- wh-what I would do to him and to the child and to my sisters and would I do that and -- and made me swear that I will never, you know, attempt anything like that. And this is really an -- I -- tha-that's how I -- anyway, I went back and when I came -- but it didn't work out very well with that family, because they would take for instance, the

children to the movies, they would leave him alone. They -- he didn't brush his teeth once, so she -- she brushed it that she made it bleed and -- and he was already old enough to tell **Joe**, so my sister **Mina** came to stay with him, her husband let her go and stay here so that she should take care of the child. And she took -- took back **Peter** and she stayed here a whole year until I didn't come -- come home. And then, I was still not -- not well enough, but they let me go home because I-I -- I wanted so much to go home, but only if I don't take care of my child. So my sister took him with her to **Israel** and -- by then he was already -- she enrolled him already in the first grade and so that I could still recuperate an-and not do anything and not -- to have complete peace and not always -- I was taking -- **pneumothorax**, you know, I had to go once a week for -- because my lung was collapsed and I took that -- I was still an outgoing patient fo-for three years after I came back. So they wanted I shouldn't have any stress and -- and we -- so, when was I told them that my sister would take him back, because he was so used to my sister, it made no difference to him whether it's me or my s -- my sister. And she was more than -- than willing to do that, so I came home and -- and after that I -- after -- when it was vacation, I went to **Israel** and stayed with my sister, visited with her, like three months and took back **Peter** and then we -- I -- I never had any more problems with tuberculosis after -- after the three years were up from this, you know, after they start **pneumothorax**, except that I would go -- go for thr -- for the checkups. I went only for checkups. And -- and I was very anxious to have lots of children, because to me somehow, it meant that every time a child is born, was like I'm bringing back somebody from, you know, from the dead. It w -- it became -- it became to a point, it became an obsession. It wasn't any more just normal, because the doctor forbid me to have more children. He said that for my condition, I -- it's very bad, because I could -- I

could get sick again and I have a child, I shouldn't have any children. But I was so determined to have more children that -- that if we would travel in the car, you know, and -- and I would travel with **Joe** in the car and I would always look into other cars and I would see a few children, I would always count, I would say, "Let's see, there are three children, four children," and I would say, "**Joe**, look, look, in that -- this car." I thought that he can read my mind. He say, "What's that, oh it's -- yeah, it's a Cadillac." I said, "No, not what car it is, four children, these people have four children, we have only one." He would say, "Look, we have one child, he is wonderful, he is beautiful, he is healthy. If you want more children, we'll adopt." I said, "Never." I said, "I will have m-my own children." And I would not use anything, making him think that I'm using, I should become pregnant. I would become pregnant and maybe because I want it so much, I would lose -- I would lose my pregnancy. But then I would come to the doctor, he would say, "I -- didn't I tell you not to have any more children?" So I would say, which wasn't true, because we had -- at that time he wanted all religious, I didn't observe anything. I said, "We are so religious, and in our religion, we're not allowed to --" You know, because he said, "Well, I give you a -- you ha - - you have to use something." I said, "In our religion," I said, "we can't use something." He said, "So you want to kill yourself?" I said, "It's up to God." I -- all of a sudden I became a God's person. I said -- he said, "Well, then let me -- you know," he said, "I know your religion," he said, "and your religion s-states that -- that if it's for the health of your mother, you're allowed t-to have an abortion." I said, "No," I said, "I am so religious that this part I don't -- I-I-I -- I don't agree, I'm not going to have any-anything killed," I said. "All right," he said. And he was -- be very mad at me. But then I would lose it. And this happens three times. Each time I lost my pregnancy, it -- sometimes as late as in the fifth and sixth months.

Then, with my second daughter, with my daughter that was eventually born, I stayed nine months in bed. I had a nurse come twice a week to give me injection, the doctor would give me -- to -- to -- to make the house calls, you know, the examinations in my house. And -- and this is how I -- how I carried her out and then I was very happy that I -- I have my daughter and I-I named her after my mother and -- and then **Joe** became -- established himself. He opened up his own laboratory and he did very well financially and our children were doing well -- **Peter** was very -- doing very well in school and we lived a very normal life, except that I was -- I was always very sad in me. Whatever I did, the trips that we take - - that we took, no matter where we went, it -- I could never enjoy it fully. Because if -- if I even watched a show and -- and then I -- I would -- it would come in, like -- seeing my mother with her grandchild or -- or thinking about my brother [**inaudible**] that how -- how this must have been, what a terrible death this must been. Always I spoiled everything myself. Nobody did it for me, I did it myself. I don't know whether it was sort of like a -- like I have to punish myself, that I have now a good life or whatever it is. But that's -- but that's how it is. I can't explain it, I don't know whether everybody feels the same way, but this is -- I never spoke about it because I didn't want to upset my husband, he's trying so hard, you know, to give me everything and t-to have a wonderful life and -- and he would bring down the stars for me if he could. And -- and yet, he always would ask me, "Why are you not happy? Look, we -- you have every reason." And -- and -- and logically, I had every reason, but I just, I-I couldn't. I would have such depressions. Sometimes I would have depressions that I couldn't answer the telephone. My husband, poor man, h-had -- didn't have a-an easy life on account o-of me, because he was always so involved about my well being that he -- his whole mind revolved around me. So I-I would get into depressions and I

w -- I couldn't answer the phone, I-I couldn't take care of my children, I had already that time two children that -- and I had already what I wanted so much. I couldn't see people, I -- an-and we went everywhere, to shows and to -- and I would go, I -- I -- and I would entertain and nobody would really know what -- ho -- what battle I-I am waging within myself, battle to live or to die. I-I wrote a poem, "**Depression**," I wrote a poem, I'm going to give you a book, okay? I -- I don't have too many any more, but -- but just -- it will give you an insight that what -- even though -- that we have everything, you understand? Financially, wonderful children and beautiful grandchildren. That they -- my children are very close to me. They're all professionals, my grandchildren are -- are lovely. We have no drug addicts, I don't have to worry, you know? Yet, what happened has completely taken away the good life that I could have enjoyed. It's -- a-and yet, I learned how to dance, I learned because -- I le -- I'm telling you, I learned everything, to play bridge, even to swim, which -- which I-I d-didn't know any of those things. I -- I always -- th-the only real enjoyment came always, only for my children. At their graduations, at their weddings, at their -- at their, you know, births of their children -- I -- I make it for my children always, very easy. Everybody tells me that's -- that's calling spoiled and I don't care. If I can give them a good life and I can see it, then I don't want to have to be dead that they should have -- that -- that I should help them with the money. I do all that while I'm alive. I do all that while I'm alive. I don't care th-that they are -- you know, that they are not saving like I would have liked them to, but if they are not, I -- I'd like -- I am glad that they have a good life. I am glad that they have everything what I didn't have. I never told them, "You know, when I was young, this is what I did or what -- when I was your age d --." I never -- I never put any guilt trips on them. I always led them at their pace. When to call, how much to call, when to visit, how much to



visit. I -- I -- I want them to know that when -- when -- when I die, they are not guilty of anything, they didn't have to do anything more. All they have to do is, they should be happy and that makes me happy. And -- and now that -- that they are -- that they are adults, they know, of course about everything, because even through reading, even through -- I used to speak in schools, I used to speak in -- in colleges. In fact, my children were so little that my daughter once -- and I never let them listen to the tapes -- that she -- after I spoke once in **Queensborough** Community College and -- and I wasn't home and she was in my house, she took the tape -- because I taped, because I wanted the tape should go to libraries, you know, those audio tapes, like yo -- like you have. And she was crying because she listened to this tape. And -- an-and one other incident is, when my daughter was in high school, her social worker called me and she told me, "You know Mrs. **Klein**, I had to call you because your daughter is very unhappy and -- and -- and I have to talk to you because she tells me that she i -- when she is home, she always has to be happy. If soon she is not happy, then you are very upset. And she doesn't want to upset you so she -- she pretends to be happy, but she is not and she's upset why -- why you have to be upset if she is moody or -- or --." So she tells me like this, "Haven't you ever been a teenager? Don't you know that teenagers, they have ups and downs." And then I was think to myself, "A teenager, think. I have never been a teenager." Wh-When I was 14, my mother was in -- in -- in a jail. When -- when she came home, we had to run away. I -- I -- I couldn't go -- go outside for eight months, when my brother found us somewheres, a room. I had no friends, because I couldn't have friends, because I-I-I was always in hiding and running. When was I ever a teenager? I -- I thought to myself, "I really am making my daughter crazy. I want something that nobody can -- can give me." And then she wanted to go t -- away to college, I right away said, "Yes, this is the

best thing for you.” But she was with me on the phone, every single -- and I never told her, “Call me every day.” But she called me, she would tell me everything and we were so close, that -- an-and I don't -- and I -- and I never, you know, was holding on to my children that I shouldn't let them move away or -- or tell them, “Don't do skiing, you'll break a leg.” Or don't -- I want them to know everything, to learn everything and to have everything. And -- and a -- and that's why I never told -- talked to them when they were small and never, if my children would ask me, you know, “Where are my grandparents, because this one has grandparents.” I would always say, “They are in **Czechoslovakia**, in heaven.” Because if I will say they are here, they would want to go to visit their grave or something, you know? So this is how I had planned my life, this was my plan from the beginning, concerning my children. And I think I accomplished what I wanted to accomplish, because they are wonderful people and they are very, also -- they have a lot of -- th-they are very sensitive people. Th-They are very -- people that will help anybody that needs -- my -- my oldest son is a dentist, he did for people so many jobs that he never charged a penny that couldn't afford. And my youngest son is a lawyer, but unfortunately he's not working in law because he couldn't -- when he finished, the law profession was so overwhelmed with lawyers, he couldn't get a -- a job. He got a few very -- I mean very -- jobs that were very insignificant and h-he didn't like them and so -- so he's not working as a lawyer, but he -- he would give his shirt off, if he can help somebody. If there was -- once a -- a woman by mistake called him, that she called somebody else, but his phone answered and that time he didn't even work and I was completely supporting him because he couldn't get a --a job as a lawyer, he was already that time a lawyer. And she is in **Brooklyn** and she wanted to go to -- her husband had left her and took the children and she wanted to go after her husband and she

didn't have money and my h -- son's w -- this is -- son is religious and this is why, we'll come back -- why I became again religious and she's stranded and he asks -- he calls me right away back, he tells her to -- to wait by the phone, he's going to call me back and he tells me, "Mom, what shall I do, th-this lady is -- and it's Friday, you know." And he even talked to the synagogue, they said they don't want to get involved because, you know, she wasn't a religious person. He went, picked her up, took her to his house for -- for -- for the Shabbat. I told him I will return his money, h-he should buy her the ticket, wherever she wants to go. He took her down to the, you know -- after Shabbat, he took her to the airport, bought her a ticket and sent her where she wanted to go for -- to, you know, after that husband and children. Th-This is how far he would go out of his way to help people. I'm just showing that my children are not at all selfish kids. They are very aware of -- of being fortunate that th-they can help others and that I always told them and my mother told me that. And we would complain why the richer people -- and we weren't rich at all, that my mother is -- is not having any money -- income, you know, from the house where -- where I needed, if I wanted something and she couldn't afford t-to buy it for me, we would say there are richer people, my mother always said, "You should always look off, but you can do not but one that doesn't do and -- and God will reward you and you should always be happy that you are the one in a position to help and that you don't need. And that it's not the other way around." And this is how all my children are. So I'm very proud of them.

Q: Why don't you say your daughter's name and when she was born and then your second son's name.

A: Okay. My daughter's name is **René** and she was born September first, 19 -- 1956 -- 1958. No, no -- 1956, 1956 because **Peter** was born in '46, it's always -- and my son **David** was born July ninth, his name is **David** and he was born in 1966.

Q: So exactly 10 years between each child? And how did you -- di -- after **René** was born, were you immediately trying to have another child?

A: No, I was already very, you know, I -- I was already relaxed, I-I have at least two children. In fact, something th-that happened is that I was bleeding profusely after -- I had a hemorrhage after **René**, a few weeks later and they had to rush me to the hospital and I almost died from loss of blood. And then -- it took me months to recuperate and then for some reason I didn't have, for ov -- almost -- almost -- more than nine years, I didn't have the period. So I thought that they did something, that the doctors did something internally from me, that I cannot have children. So we -- we never watched. And -- and 10 years later, I became pregnant and I was very happy, but the doctor said that this child -- you're not going to go to bed any more. If -- if it works, it works and if not, not and it worked. And -- and he was born and this was one of the happiest days of my life and I even -- y-you will read in my book, I called it miracle baby and I-I wrote a poem about -- about him.

Q: Do you want to -- to talk about your experience with religion now?

A: Yes. My -- we were -- I mean, tradition -- we -- we kept --

Q: Oh, I'm sorry, the tape's about to end, we might as well wait for the other side.

**End of Tape Three, Side A**

### Beginning of Tape Three, Side B

Q: This is tape number three, side B of an interview with **Cecilie Klein-Pollak**.

A: We were always traditional Jews, but not religious Jews. We did keep holidays, an -- but we did not keep all the dietary laws. We did not keep the, you know that I traveled on -- on Shabbat when -- whoever is religious, does not do these things, but I always had a kosher home, but outside, I was not observing what I ate. Then my husband -- w-we -- we had -- we moved a very nice house in **Great Neck** and then we changed houses to -- to a nicer area in **Great Neck**, because my husband wanted very much to live there. So we moved and -- and after, about -- we didn't even live there a year, my husband got cancer and -- and he didn't have very long to live. My son **David**, we -- was -- was already **danear** religious, because we sent my children, all of my children, we sent to religious school, like **David** went to **Yeshiva**. My oldest son **Peter** went to **Yeshiva**, but **Peter** didn't like **Yeshiva** and -- and didn't remain religious, he didn't keep anything, but we wanted to give our children the choice, that they should be able, if -- if they want to be religious and my husband went also to a **Yeshiva** when he was young and we wanted them to have the same education and then whatever they do with their, you know, whatever they do, we can't always control. So my son **David**, he loved **Yeshiva** and he became religious right from the beginning, as soon as he started at school. And this the -- full time day school, where they have both, you know. Half a year -- half a day is devoted to religion and a half a day is to secular studies. And when my h-husband got very sick, my son **David**, he used to go to rabbi's, to -- you know, they should pr-pray for him and asked his -- ask-asked my son whether his parents are religious and he said, "They are not." So h-he told him that maybe God would help if -- if the parents became religious, **Shomu** Shabbat. **Shomu** Shabbat means that you keep -- you

keep the Sabbath, you -- because there are degrees of religion -- there is very religious and very religious, you know? **Amada religiouson**. So when **David** came back, my husband was already very sick and -- and he wasn't going to -- and I told him not to bother my husband, you know, because if he's religious, on -- on the hol-holidays, not allowed to watch television, you know. I wanted him to be able to occupy, you know, not to think always about his sickness. So **David** told me what the rabbi said, and he said, "You know, why don't you become religious, maybe this will help Dad." And they are very, very close to their father and they loved him very much and -- and I loved him very much, but I knew there is no hope. But I didn't want that my son should ever think for one day that I didn't try to help his father -- to save his father. If he believes so much that -- in the rabbi's, that **Hallechin** is going to help his father, I didn't want that when **Joe** will die that **David** should ever think once, you know, if his mother would have become religious, maybe his father would have lived, or would have lived longer. I told **David**, if -- if this will help your father, I'm going to become religious, I'm going to keep everything. Unfortunately, I don't -- we have to be prepared, because I didn't want him to be so disappointed, because I knew what the score is. I said, "But I am going to -- you can rely on me, I'm promising you, I'll become religious." And this is how it was, this is how I turn back to -- to observing the Sabbath and outside I don't eat, ever, a-anything that's not kosher. I-I travel a lot, even now, but I only eat always fish and you know, salad, baked potato. Wherever we are, when we are not in a kosher restaurant. And my son became always more and more religious. This is how -- how he is happy in his life and religion really helped a great deal for me, in a way -- that my son was religious because his father died when he just entered college, it was his first year of college and though he wanted to go away to college, but because his father died, so he didn't

want me to be alone, so he stayed home and he went to Queen's College, instead of going away, you know. And -- and he was the one, the strong one in the family when -- when this -- when the de -- when my fa -- when my husband passed away. Because my daughter got sick after his death and my older son could not accept it. **David** was the only one, the strong one and the one that -- that accepted it and that he always felt that there is a reason for everything, whatever God does and he was the one that could -- th-that could give courage to my other children and -- and he wrote such a beautiful letter to my daughter that she keeps it to this day, because he wrote her that, first of all he would -- he -- he believed that if somebody who is -- cries too much and -- an-and is mourning so much for a -- for a loved one, that his soul can't rest in heaven. This is how he believes. So he wrote, he told me once, "Mom, you loved Dad so much, then you have to want to give him also, peace in heaven. Y- You can't -- you have to accept and -- and you have to go on with your life and -- and -- and -- and you cannot keep mourning all the day and night. You must -- you must do that for Dad." I-I wish I could feel the same way my son feels, but -- but I don't, but I -- I observe whatever i-is possible, as far as I can observe. But what he wrote to -- to my daughter is -- is -- I really want to show his -- h-h-how a religious person can help others who are not religious. And he -- and how he can accept the unac -- the unacceptable, like it was unacceptable for my older children. He wrote her, to his sister, "Dear **René**, look how much more you had in life because of Daddy, than me. Daddy was there for you when you graduated college, he was at your college graduation. When you was engaged, he was at your engagement and he -- you were married, he was at -- he was at your wedding. When -- when you gave birth to your children, he was at their, you know, at their birth. Now I -- I am just -- I-I am just starting now college. He's not going to be there when I graduate, he's not

going to be there when I get married, he's not going to be there when I'll have my children. And I accept because you cannot bring -- you cannot change what -- what God designate for each person, but Dad always told us --" and this is really what he told the family always, "I'm not afraid to die, I had a wonderful life and a wonderful marriage and -- and I -- " he was 63 years old, "and after all, some people live 80 years and they have a miserable marriage or they have no children or they have children that are -- that are in jail or th -- I had everything, I-I have no worries, no financial worries. I always -- I always was able to do everything that -- that I wanted for my family and with my family and you must accept that and I -- I'm accepting and I want you to accept." And he reminded this to my daughter, and this was an 18 year old and -- and I would like to see which -- an 18 year old that is not religious would be able to do that an-and to have the strength and the -- and the wisdom to - - to talk like that or to write like that or to feel like that and to think like that. And -- and I could have had a lot of problems if it would be not a religious child because he could have been a rebellious and **metagart** an-an-and become either a drug addict or -- or **fidon** or not want to go to school or -- h-he did everything what he thought would have made his father proud or his mother proud. For instance, he wanted very much to move to -- to **Israel** af- after -- after he graduated college. And -- and I told him I will never stand in his way, he can always live in **Israel** if this is what he wanted, but I want him to have a profession. He must first choose a profession. If he finishes his profession and he wants to go to **Israel**, I will never say no. So, h-he -- he accepted my wish, that he should have first the profession and he studied law and he finished law, but then he got married and you know, and then -- so he goes instead -- right now he goes every year to **Israel** to visit, which I also go. So -- so



when you have rel -- a religious son, they're somehow more apt to listen to -- to their parents, you know and to -- and to grant their wishes than -- than when you're not religious.

Q: When I hear you talk about that, I wonder if it might have changed your own feelings about God and your relationship with God.

A: As I said, I do all these things, but I don't feel the way my son feels. I don't feel that religious inside me, you understand? I would never go back on what I promised my son. That I have never done and I would never do it, because my -- my nephew from **Israel**, my brother's son, was the Israeli consul in **South Africa**, in **Johannesburg** and that was about 10 years ago, we went -- I went to **Johannesburg** with my sister to his -- his son's Bar Mitzvah. And we were staying in a hotel and -- th-the Bar Mitzvah was done so that where I could walk, because I'm not allowed to travel. But then he had a big party in his house, where he had all those dignitaries, be-besides the -- and he wanted so much I should come to his house. And I would have, but I couldn't -- it's not the walking distance, I would have had to travel and he tells me, he said, "You know, **David** is not here," you know, my religious son. "**David** is not here, you could come, nobody will know that you traveled." I said, "I don't do that any more for **David**. I do that that if I promise something I -- I have to -- I live up to my promise" and I would never go and I never went and I didn't go. I'd rather miss, I -- I do, I -- I --I mean, this is my character, that I will never disappoint or I will never go back on something that I make a vow o-or a promise.

Q: Do you still question -- do you have any anger at -- at -- at God?

A: I-I-I have anger. I-I have anger, I have anger not so much a-at God, because to me God is not, you know, I don't see God as a -- first that He can say -- He can, like -- like when we learn that -- that he split them, th-th -- you know, like Passover, that he split water an-and

all the Egyptians drowned and -- and the Jews went out from bondage and **brucha** 40 years in the dessert until **Moses** brought them to -- to the Holy Land. To me, this -- God is a spirit. I am Go -- I am mad at every government, at every country, at everybody that had the power to do something and didn't do. The **United States** didn't -- didn't let in -- didn't do anything to help th-the Jewish refugees. Every country willingly gave out the Jews as soon as the order came. It's true there are a few -- what do you call them? W-We called them the righteo-righteous gentiles, I give them all my credit. I-I think they were very brave and wonderful people. But there were very, very few to do that and -- and -- an-and they deserve far more credit because they really were -- were -- could have paid with their lives, but the government wouldn't have paid with their lives. All they -- all they had to do is open the gates, let us in. Bomb the -- bomb the tracks that go t-to **Auschwitz**. If they would have bombed those tracks, then the mili -- at least of one million of people would have been saved. The Hungarian people were only one year, that they, you know -- it was on -- they were people only one year, but they managed to kill most of them because th-they were not even trying any more to send them to work, they were only killing them. If they would have bombed the tracks, they couldn't have taken them t-to **Auschwitz**, to the gas chambers. I mean, nobody di-di-did anything. In fact, an-and it wasn't that they didn't know, they buried all the knowledge, th-the state department buried among them, that **Roosevelt** shouldn't even know. But then they came to **Roosevelt** and -- personally and told him about it and he wasn't willing to do anything either. S-So of course I have anger. **England** could have saved mil -- quite a -- how many -- a half a million or -- he -- f-for some -- I think they had to give **akem** amount trucks from them, trucks -- I can't remember exactly how many, 500 trucks or -- for -- for trucks and -- and -- and money, they could have -- they wanted to give out the --

the Hungarian Jews, but nobody -- who -- who -- who would let them in? Nobody did anything and on those I'm ma -- I'm mad at all the people that could have, like all the politicians that -- at -- at every country and -- but not at -- at God. God, to me, is a spirit. He's not a human being that he comes down and -- and he's going to smite this one and that one.

Q: You described coming to the **U.S.** and -- and how disappointing it was to not be met with people who were really understanding an-and -- di-did anyone ask you what happened to you?

A: No -- th -- not -- th-th-they asked but -- if somebody wanted to say something, you better forget about it, don-don't dwell on it, the -- I will tell you something, in sanatorium, when I was in sanatorium, they had once shown a movie that had to do with the -- with the Holocaust and then wh-what I heard was complaints. "What's -- what do they give us su-such propaganda, this a propaganda, this never happened. Look it is what they can give." They didn't even believe it an-and I cried all night because I couldn't even talk about it and that's why I couldn't even become close, you know, to the people that -- that they didn't even -- they didn't even want to know. An-And -- and I know then I used to play in -- and I l -- I lived in **Flushing**, I played Mah Jong, you know because I told you, I learned everything, I did everything and -- and it was the **Eichmann** trial was on and I was watching every -- every night the **Eichmann** trial. And then -- these were American people of course and they tell me -- and I said, "Are you watching the **Eichmann** trial?" "No, we -- we can't, it-it's just against us. We c -- we can't look at it, it's too -- it's, you know, it's too sad." This when I thought to myself, "What kind of people are these? They don't even want to know, they don't want to know. They don't even -- they can't -- they only want if they can have parties

and if they can laugh and if they can have a good time. So what if it's too sad? They deserve your sadness. They deserve your tears. You are here.” You -- you -- y -- once -- once -- told me once, “You know, we had it very rough too. We -- we had to stand in line,” for sugar or for meat or for something here in the **United States**. Th-This is why I-I wrote a poem about that too, because it just mind-boggling to me. I know if -- if I watch those, you know, those children on, whether it's **Biafra** or -- or **Angola** or anywhere, my heart goes out to them and I watch and -- and I-I have such pain and I send donations to them. I-I-I care about not only what happened to us, I care everything that is happening now. O-Or when was happening, you see, **Israel** was taking in from **Bosnia** and people -- why people think that as long as they have it good, then that's all that counts. There's not I can do a lot for Bo -- f-f-for those children that are **istan** but it reminds me also o-of us, of those children, I mean the feelings of -- of pity came back to me. I just said that the enjoyment never came back to me.

Q: Did you have other experiences of people saying directly to you, this didn't happen, this is propaganda?

A: I-I-I-I had -- I had so-something wor-worse happening and that was in -- in -- in -- we lived that time in the **Bronx** and I had from **Czechoslovakia**, feathers, you know, and with very big covers, an-and so we went with my husband to have made quilts out of it and we chose a material or whatever. And then when we came back, they -- they changed the feathers, because our feathers were, you know, those -- that's from goose, were very good feathers and they gave us very bad feathers back, you know, with a different material and we said, “You know, th-these weren't the quilts that we ordered.” And she got so mad, she said, “You know, you shouldn't have come back for -- f-for --” because as soon as we have an accent, they know that -- they know there was a -- a camp and that there was an

**Auschwitz** and, "You shouldn't have come back from **Auschwitz.**" This is what -- what they told me. You know what? W-W-We left them there, we were so upset, w-we walked out, we didn't want to get th-the quilts, we left it to them. And then there is, of course -- you think is it that I used to -- my depressions only stopped, you know when? When they started to -- t-to be **availof** -- heard and -- and to start making it publicly, like -- like schools started to ask us whether we want to talk to the children or -- or when they started to -- when they started to do something about the Holocaust to be remembered, because I always used to think that when we die, not -- nobody will ever know because we weren't able really, that much, you know, to talk to o -- to our children. We wanted them to be happy, we wanted them t-to be like -- like all the other kids, not to have this kind of pain and whe-whether it was right on our part or not, but -- but I wanted there should be some avail -- or some other that there should be -- they should be remembered. So I thought to myself that all these lives lost an-and there will -- nobody even -- maybe my children will light a candle because that much they will know, but what about the world? Nobody will ever remember them and -- and -- and then th-they will -- then those lies that will start circulating that it never happened and this -- this is also why I used to have these depressions -- it was -- it started to be, you know, like publicized and memorials are being cr-created and -- and there is something being done about it and schools are -- the children are learning in the schools and it's being passed on from generation to generations and -- and everybody's aware. I -- my depressions left me. I-I don't have depressions. I have the sadness, I have the emptiness, I have the -- the -- I-I miss them. I-I always will. I will never -- they can never be replaced. N-None of my children can replace it, none of my grandchildren. They -- I had them once and -- and I-I loved them with such a love that it's hard to express. So this is my tragedy and

thank God I am not so young any more, I am -- I am 72 so -- so if there is such a -- my religious son believes that they're all in heaven and that you meet. I-I hope it's true, for -- for my sake and if there is such a thing, then I -- I'll happily die and there isn't such a thing, then I-I lived my life and -- and I think whatever I could die, I contributed and -- and it wasn't in vain and -- and my children will -- will carry on the names and -- and our heritage.

Q: When did you write your book, "**Sentenced to Live**," your -- that's really an autobiography, isn't it?

A: It -- it -- I'll be always sorry and I'm never really happy with it because I wrote -- I wanted it like a three, four hundred page book and it would have been, because I have written everything much more, you know, I-I wrote a lot about -- about -- how -- how -- about my life, how I felt, about -- about everything and -- and then somebody read it and advised me that I should not -- I should just write it to this -- to this period, you know, finish it at the period that I did, no-not to write the rest of my life, because -- and also I wrote with a lot of -- more emotion because I-I used to, you know, always -- like when somebody dreams o-of, o-or imagines th-the -- whatever, you know, about the life -- about what -- what kind of a life they're going to have as -- with their **Prince Charming**, I was always, in my mind, thinking only about -- about everything I will do for my mother and -- and how I'm going to make -- make her happy someday and -- and how she's not going to have to suffer so much because -- because well, we were in hiding. Sh-She -- sh-she didn't eat, sh-she would give away her last bite to me and -- and she cut up her only dress to make me -- my **hant** a -- a nice dress and never remarried because she didn't want us to have a stepfather and -- and she was a widow at 43 and she did so much f-for her children and I always planned and I always saw in my mind only how h -- what I am everything going to

do for my mother. That's why I was so -- that's why I'm so unhappy all my life, that I couldn't -- not only couldn't I do nothing, but the terrible fate, I mean that she had, that she died such a horrible death an-and with her grandson, to know where she was going, that she -- because she knew where -- where she was taking her grandson. So -- so I heard all this and then, whoever added, I mean he is really -- I-I'm not going to say that he's not -- in his opinion probably he was right, but I shouldn't have listen, I should do what I thought was right. He said, "I-It's too emotional, y-you want these books to be able that children in school should be able to read and -- and you write better another book apart, you know, another book and the --" I should make another book, let's say after -- after the -- the -- the Holocaust, about the -- the whole life, you know, what happened and how we lived our life and all that, but you know I -- I never did it after any more and if I would have done it the way I wanted it, it would have been the way I wanted and I would have had more satisfaction out the book. This way, it's a book, I mean, whoever reads it, likes it because they don't know, you know, it -- I am the one that is not that satisfied with the book.

Q: And what spurred you to start writing it?

A: Because I always felt that I have to put something on paper because if -- I-I can't, if not I'll explode inside. You see, this is for me a kind of release. The poems were a kind of release. Th -- Until -- I didn't speak in schools, to -- even speaking in the -- in the classrooms was for me a kind of release. The first time, I thought, wh-when I was asked for the first time, because nobody really taught it, it started really, the schools started in -- in the **Great Neck**, the principal is a member in our synagogue and -- and he knows I am a Holocaust survivor and he came over to me and he asked me whether -- and I also, they -- they had my poems you know, in the bulletins, this one, that one. He came over, he asked

me, could I speak to his class? First I said no, then I said yes, then I said no, then I said yes. I couldn't, you know -- then I came home and I thought to myself, "How am I going to? I-I wouldn't be able to, it's -- it's just too painful, I -- I'll -- I -- and I -- in -- in all the years that I spoke I never cried in front of children. I always was able to speak very well and you know, and -- and take answers and questions and everything. Giv-Give answers to questions. So, but then I told him, "Okay, I'm going to speak." And the first time I spoke, first of all, the children were mesmerized. Nobody -- he said -- an-and he took all the classes at one time because he was afraid I'm not going to come back maybe to another class, you know? And -- but I had such a headache, I had such a splitting headache that I thought my head will explode, because that was, you know, the fi -- the first time. And going back and t-to -- to everything. So and then -- then of course I got home and I took something and -- and for days I couldn't sleep, it wa -- it was very emotional. But then I got used to it and -- and it was okay. I didn't have any more headaches. I-I would -- I -- once a year when I spoke actually in **Queensborough** Community College, I -- I spoke front -- in front of 37 teachers once, it's th-three hours straight. An-And the funniest thing you -- was one of the teachers se -- you know, I gave - I say now you can ask me questions. "Mrs. **Klein**, what was your, you know, what kind of reli --" you know what -- when you have like you have, here in the **Jersey**, you have television or you go for exercise, what do you call it?

Q: Hobby.

A: No, not hobby. What did you do, like what kind of -- of --

Q: Pastime?

A: Of --

Q: Recreation?



A: Recreation, recreat -- “What kind of recreation did you have?” That was after I spoke three hours about **Auschwitz**, about -- about the killings, about -- about the beating to deaths, about t-the -- you know, when you would go to those showers that they've -- to f -- th-the -- once -- once **aforweese** about the showers was a form of torture, because they would first let th-the hot water that you burned your skin an-and -- and you ran out, so they beat you with the -- with those whips and then the cold water. Nobody wanted to go, they would hide. So then he asked me what kind of recreations, I thought, well, tell **yitmut**, “The recreation was that we would try to see and count how many lice we have killed that day from our -- from the seams of our dress. The other recreation was watching two sisters being beaten to death. The other recreation was that -- that when I -- when they caught me with a bread, I-I was beaten up so badly that they broke, you know, a big spoon that y-you -- you are cooking for the whole army th -- and that I thought that they are going to kill me with it, but how I survived it is just really by miracle.” I said, “Isn't that enough recreation for you?” And then the teacher, the other teacher came in and said, “Mrs. **Klein**, he's all -- he's not a very bright man, don't take him,” but I just thought, what kind -- what kind of a question is? I could see ask something, ask when did you get up or what was your food, or what was your, you know, th-they take you for work or didn't they take you for work or -- or what are your feelings, what -- ask an intel -- you are a teacher, ask an intelligent question. What kind of -- what recreation wo-would -- would the Nazis if -- if they made tests on the -- on -- I have a friend that she had her, they were twins, **Mengele** make -- made tests for them, they would take out the blood from them, you know and the -- and the mother was luckily a nurse, so -- so sh-she would take out from herself blood and -- and -- and inject it back into the children. I mean how many -- how many twins s-survived? I mean they made -- they

made experiments what they make on -- on -- they made on humans, but they make here on mice and on rats. I mean this is -- that they would take children, they would put them, freeze them, then unfreeze them, th-then -- then -- then kill them. They would see -- th-they would count how long it takes for somebody to die in the sun, how long it takes for somebody to -- to -- to die i-i-in -- in -- in, you know, fr --in the freezing weather. I mean, this -- this kind of brutalities were -- were committed on us. There -- there was th-th-this **SS** woman that was riding around on a horse and -- and -- and she would just de-decide that -- to go and -- and kill somebody, trample with that horse to death, a -- a -- a prisoner. They would let the dogs tear to pieces prisoners. I-I will tell you what happened to my brother-in-law, the one I told you, **Mina's** husband. The **SS** gave for the dogs, food. And -- and he saw this bowl with the -- with the food. And the dog ate, ate and then -- and then had enough and -- and left. Left over something in that bowl. My brother-in-law stole himself, you know, crept to this bowl and took out the rest of the food and ate it quickly up. The **SS** came out with that dog that had eaten before and -- and my brother-in-law was sure that he's going to tear him to pieces because this used to be a big sport by them. And told him he should kneel in front of the dog and he should say, let's see, like **Herr, Herr** is Mister, you know, like Mr. **Klein** or Mr. Dog, you know, Mr. Dog an-and beg forgiveness and beg apology and apologize to him, kneeling and -- and prostrate yourself and -- and then beat him, beat him so badly with -- with th-that, that people had to carry him in, but they didn't kill him. This is -- this is the -- this is what they did, because he -- he took -- yeah and I had to t -- to talk about himself, **Ishfa fluta yuda**, that means, "I, the lowest of the Jews that -- that has ever crawled on this earth." This is what -- everything he had to tell t-to -- to the dog an -- and -- and **Herr do -- Herr**, you know wha -- this is wh -- wh -- what diabolical creatures, that they weren't --

these were -- these were and these were people that some were doctors, some were engineers, s-some were teachers, some were businessmen, but they loved the dogs and they loved their families and this is what they were able t-to -- to do to people. My -- my sister has a Polish housekeeper because the one, **Parela**, that lived in -- in **Israel**, she moved eventually to the **United States** and she lives here and my sister is sick, sh-she has Parkinson's. So she has a Polish woman. And her husband was one of the people that would -- the -- a train engineer, you know, that would -- manned that he manned the trains. So she told her that the Ukraine's, because sh-sh-she's Polish, I'm sure that the Poles did the same thing. When they took together -- when they took the Jews, you know, they took them together t-to be put on the trains, that some went, they took their eyes out, while alive you know, took their eyes out, cut their tongues off. This is what her h-husband witnessed. Cut their penis off. This is what they did to -- to -- to -- to our people and th -- and th --

**End of Tape Three, Side B**

### Beginning of Tape Four, Side A

Q: This is tape number four, side A, a continuation of an interview with **Cecilie Klein-Pollak**. I -- I see the photograph on the cover of your book, "**Sentenced to Live**" and I recognize it from the film at the Holocaust Museum.

A: And this is why they put it there. They -- they took this from my cover, they made a very huge -- I mean they had it also probably from the **Auschwitz** album, there's an **Auschwitz** album and this is where they -- they have this photograph from. They put this in the Holocaust Museum. There's also one large photograph that I am -- there are a group of women and I am one of the -- one of the women, one of the girls standing there, I don't know, you probably wouldn't recognize me because, you know, so many years, but I recognize myself and so they had taken this one out also and they have a display there and my -- my mother, sh-she's 55 or 56 [inaudible], but she looks like 90, see? Because she had **anjus** that my brother made her and then they -- and then they chased her out, you know, from the ghetto, sh-she forgot it, she wanted to go back in, they didn't let her look for that, which wouldn't matter anyway, it was -- would have been only for a few days, because after -- after that, after we arrived, they killed her.

Q: So this is a photograph of your mother with **Danny**, with --

A: Yeah, yeah --

Q: With **Mina's son**.

A: Sh-She is -- she knows where she's walking, she knows where she's going. No -- no -- nobody else -- you know why she knows? Because in the train when my brother-in-law -- when those prisoners came on -- on the train to chase us out and tell us to leave everything, one prisoner -- my brother-in-law still had a watch and he gave it t-to this prisoner and he

told him, "Tell me what's going on here." And my mother was standing next to my brother-in-law and me. **Mina**, as soon as the train opened, ran down with the child to get some air, because it was, you can imagine, traveling so many days, so many people and -- and it was horrible. Th-Th-The trip in itself was -- was an absolute horrible experience. So he said, "If you have children, give the -- give the children to mothers with other children, because if not, your wife would -- would be killed with the child and women with children and older women are being gassed, so --" And my mother heard this, she ran down and I heard it too, but I didn't -- I couldn't even believe it, you know? I -- I thought, "This is -- he's -- he's saying something crazy." I ran down after my mother, I came over to **Mina** and my mother came over to **Mina** and tells her, "Darling, I just heard that women with children will have it very easy, because all they will have to do is take care of the children. But young people will be sent on hard labor," and she said, "and I'm not well enough to go on hard labor. Let me have your child." But **Mina** even -- she didn't have a -- a clue yet what she wants to do, my mother didn't ask her, removed the child from her arms. And as soon as she had the child, she -- she was pushed to the side where the women with children were and she yelled out to me, "Take care of your sister," to me, you know, because she knew what my sister will -- will suffer when she find out. So she knew where she was going.

Q: How did you -- how did you discover that photograph?

A: Actually, my sister discovered it. She -- she -- in **Israel** she was watching television and they gave that movie, "Worlds of War." Worl --

Q: "World at War"?

A: World --

Q: "The World at War."

A: "The World at War," yeah. And it flashed on the -- on the television screen and my brother lived [**indecipherable**], my brother passed away since then and he just thought, "Oh, I hope **M-Mina** didn't see it," and he called right away **Nathan**, her husband to make sure that he doesn't put on television and he says, "**Mina** is in shock and -- and she saw it" and and sh-she -- she -- that time she got -- she got a -- a stroke. I mean, she came out of it and -- and -- and then when she got better, she went to the television media and asked for -- told them. They wanted she should talk about, but **Mina** never -- never could talk anything about it. Not only wouldn't she talk about it, **Mina** completely wiped out everything that happened before, only that she knows she lost her child, but she doesn't remember anything, anything -- everything that I am telling you, about seeing these girls beaten to death, about - - only -- she remembers only just that I was beaten, because the only -- this made impression d-de -- on her. And everything else she completely blocked out. So then th-they made -- they gave her a big photograph and I have it a regular ph-photograph now, you know, at -- at home. And from that photograph I-I gave the **strudel** to my -- to the publisher that I want this as my cover. An-And this photograph is also here, because I don't want it should -- it should, you know sometimes this gets stolen or -- or the other one it has a -- a cover again in cloths. So -- so I-I have it here, inside the book. [**inaudible**]

Q: That's just -- that just must have been so amazing to see that photograph.

A: So shattering. [**inaudible**]. I'm glad I have it.

Q: That -- that section of the film that plays at the Holocaust Museum is just so powerful and devastating when you tell the story of what -- what happened to your mother and to your nephew. I wondered if -- if people ever recognized you from that film, after the Holocaust Museum opened? Strangers?

A: Well, yeah -- no -- no, p-people that know me recogni -- they always come and say, "You know, I saw you on -- on the --" B-But I'm there very little, only in the middle and then in the end. Did you see the end, what I --

Q: Well, even though you're not -- you might not spend a lot of time on the screen, i-it's a very powerful impact [**indecipherable**]

A: I-I think the end I-I-I find everybody says that it's very powerful, the end when -- when I tell them that when they bring their children, you know, to the museum, then they will see all these shoes. Did you see that end?

Q: Yeah, I -- I saw the whole -- I've seen the whole thing several times.

A: What it means to us is one thing, what it means to other people is another thing. I-I included a few po-poems in my book and this is one of my poems which is in my book, "**Sentenced to Live.**" I-I named it "Promise." "I shut away and locked the painful memories. I begged you, give me peace, but you ignored my pleas. I saw my mother's face and then I heard, **Celia**, bear witness to our murder. I lighted a candle every night, I **davenned** in temple and prayed for your plight. You followed me chanting the same request, tell them, tell them, or we cannot rest. Day and day I found an excuse, but you haunted me always, so it was no use. I tried to describe it, but could not express the torture, the fear, the hate, the distress. I'd **shat** at you -- I'd shout at you, please just leave me alone. I put horror behind me, I have a life of my own. When I hum to the children, you sang along, tell them, tell them in your song. Why should the young ones suffer our pain? What good if they know, what do they gain? You look at my soul with a deadly stare, if you don't tell them, how can they care? We must be remembered, all must know, of that season of hell 40 years ago. Tell them **Celia**, tell them now. I lifted my pen, I will, I vow."

Q: How did you tell your children, how did they learn about your experiences during the Holocaust?

A: My children really learned the first time when I started to speak at schools and my son was in that school, but whenever I spoke in his class, I didn't want him to be present, so he was not present. But when I would have tapes and they would just go take the tapes and listen to -- to them. And also, when I started to -- when I published my poems, when I published my book and this is how they came to know. But not -- I will tell you something, every child that lives with a survivor, knows quite a bit even if you don't talk to him, because of the way we are -- some parents are overprotective, some are fearful, some are very nervous, some are sick and -- and they somehow know that -- that this is from -- from way back.

Q: Was it difficult to -- to actually let them hear the details of what had happened?

A: Not -- not as adults, now when they're adults I feel they had the formative years, you know, where -- where they are done and -- and as adults and now that they have children of their own and is okay for them to know and -- and they can handle it now much better. And -- and also this -- a few generations removed, which we have now already grandchildren and it's never, you know, t-the same as -- as when it is -- when you live with that person.

Grandchildren don't live with their grandparents. It's one thing to know and it is one thing to -- to have to be raised by -- by the parents of Holocaust survivors, that went -- saw so much, it's somehow, it gets to -- to your children because in many ways we couldn't do the same thing as the American parents did. We were more often sick, we were more often -- we were, like I was away for so many years. It certainly was a bad time for my youngest child - for my oldest child and I always worried what effect this is going to be on him. And -- but



all in all, thank God that it didn't turn out as bad as I was afraid i-it would. I'm -- I'm sure that it left him with some, you know -- if he's not **kirtis** -- he doesn't like to appear in -- in front of a lot of people, let's say, as a speaker. I can do all that, but m-my oldest son was always very nervous to -- to give a -- a speech or -- or to -- but now h-he overcame already, because as a dentist he sometimes had to go to conventions and -- and -- and also speak and -- and explain certain methods, because he's a s -- he specialized in anesthesiology and -- and there aren't that many in this country, only about 50, you know, that apply anesthet-anesthesiology in their dentistry. So he even, in fact he even told me once that h-he took up acting j-just, you know, for a-a-an outlet, in order to overcome his stage fright, you know? So there is something always that -- I-I find that the best adjusted of my three children is my youngest son. He can -- he's a very good speaker, he is -- he -- he's a -- and also, you know, he's involved because he -- he was always helping cancer children, h-he was a volunteer counselor in a camp for cancer children and then he would go to visit them in the hospitals and to go -- unfortunately to their funerals and to go and then they -- they honored him in -- in one of the hotels and there were like 2000 people, was a very, very rich place. It was, of course, to get -- it was a fundraising, he went and he gave a speech that everybody got up and -- and gave him a standing ovation, it was -- all over was his, you know, on the wall they had those blown up, like video of him because if not they couldn't see him and -- and hear him because it was a -- a huge room. So -- but he has no problem about speaking and I'm very pleased.

Q: Tell me about your -- your second husband and also about your move to **Florida**

**[indecipherable]**

A: M-My second husband is also a Holocaust survivor. I feel I could never marry anybody else, I don't think anybody else -- you know, y-y-you have to be able to -- to understand each other and -- and to live with each other and -- and h -- and he was one of the longest people in -- in a camp. He was five and a half years in **Buchenwald**. And I-I married -- I married him three and a half years after my husband died and we are almost married now, it's going to be 10 years. He is a very apt person and he also wr-wrote a book about his experiences, I think this is what we, you know, if y -- somehow -- this is really how we met, because he didn't know how to go about publishing his book. And -- and so we had a lot in common and he's retired already 15 years, so we live partially -- a half a year we live, about seven months we live in **Great Neck** and five months we live in **Florida** and don't make this -- as a table -- we have only to talk about the Holocaust just because we are both Holocaust survivors. We usually don't like to, you know, keep this as a regular conversation. I talk about the Holocaust only if -- if I have a reason for, like -- like this is a reason or if it comes up sometimes, of course when you are with --with friends and somehow you -- you remember certain things and -- and conversation leads to it, but I'm not -- I-I -- d -- I don't like just to, you know, keep this as a daily menu on my agenda.

Q: What do you do with your life on a daily basis now, just --

A: My husband is a average tennis player, so a half a day he plays tennis. I also play a little bit tennis. We play bridge, we -- we go -- being that we are in a community here that they have all kinds of -- I-I belong to **Hadassah**, we have functions, we attend, we be-belo -- I belong to every organization that -- whether it's Holocaust, whether it is -- the Holocaust, if you're a very big organization, it's called -- **Eidnow**, in fact we have big parties there to raise money for **Israel** and I-I keep busy by -- also my -- my sister, unfortunately is not

well, she lives a-across the street so I try to help her out a lot, I go out shopping for her, I spend time with my sister that comes here from **Israel** and is here. We go swimming, we -- we try to live a very -- here we have friends, we entertain.

Q: Which sister lives across the street?

A: The one that was once in **Israel**. And **Mina** just comes, **Mina** lives in **Israel** and she comes here to spend winters with us, because her husband also died, he died two year -- three years ago. So sh-she -- we go there -- I go there once a year and she comes back with us.

Q: I just remembered there's one question a little further back that I had wanted to ask and you had mentioned it was either in your book or in the first -- in the video, that you went to the world gathering of Holocaust survivors, and that it made a very -- in **Jerusalem** and it made a very big effect. Will you tell a little bit about that?

A: Yes, th-this was the -- this was the first time that there was going to be a -- a Holocaust -- s-something public, you know, a Holocaust reunion. It was called the World Gathering. And I-I flew to that and my daughter was supposed to come with me and lo and behold, she had moved that time, because her husband had just finished his specialty as a -- as a dentist and a root canal and she moved back from -- from **Pennsylvania** to **Great Neck**, to my house and she left her passport in the furniture that they had stored in -- i-i-in **Pennsylvania** and we came -- she came with the suitcases to my house and without the passport. And I remained with the tickets and with a hotel reservation and I went there myself. And this is when -- when we went to, you know, it was a very moving experience, because it was the first time that ever -- that this was publicized and that we had workshops and that we had speakers and most of all that in six languages, it was handed down, th-the remembrance

from -- from generation to generation and I -- when I saw those candles, it was like everybody lit a candles and it was like all these candles were shining as stars for the six million and it was one of the most moving and heartbreaking experiences for all of us. There were people that hadn't seen each other 40, 50 years that found each other -- that was 50 years, it was -- I think it was all together one time. I'm not even sure, that was in 19 -- I think 1980, because --

Q: I'm not sure of the exact date, I think it was around '79 or '80.

A: Yeah, a-around there. And after that I have -- I-I have always attended every gathering.

The one that was in **Washington**, the one that was in **Philadelphia**, [inaudible]

**Philadelphia**. And anything that has to do with the Holocaust I am very partial and support it -- supportive.

Q: Did you ever return to -- to **Czechoslovakia** or to your -- to eastern **Europe**?

A: Yeah, so far I-I never did. I -- to my hometown I-I-I never want to return. I never want to walk those streets again, I never want to see the house again. But I would like to return once to visit the camps and I'm getting ready for it, perhaps -- not this year, maybe next year.

Because I would like to go with one of my children. So I have to wait when -- when they can make it because, you know they're all -- they're all -- they have s-small children and little kids really are not yet -- I don't want them to come. But I would l -- want my adult children to come. So I hope to go next year, not this y -- not this coming year. Un-

Unfortunately my present husband has cancer also now. But -- but he is in treatment and he is doing much better.

Q: What is your present husband's name?

A: His name -- my present husband's name is **Isaac Pollak** and -- and he -- we have a very good life together and we each made a new life, knowing that we cannot bring back the spouses and we each had very good marriages before, so this is wonderful companionship that we have and -- and my children are very happy about it, they were very supportive and they wanted f -- and they like my present husband and he likes them. And we hope that our suffering will -- will be the last and that a future generation will never have to experience what we had to and -- and that they will really uphold the memory of th-the six millions and that they will remember not only the six millions, but they will also remember the survivors because we had -- our lives was never the same and -- and this is just part of history and -- and so that they should know what happens when -- when such -- when such terrible tragedy hits our -- our -- a people and they should always remember that we are all born the same and we all have the right to be free, to educate our children and freedom and to worship and -- and this will -- may -- and if they will remember and all the nations will remember, then they -- there will be a much better world for their children to live in.

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

A: I -- I am just very grateful that -- for the work that all of you are doing and -- and I feel that you are our saviors by doing that, because if we wouldn't have people like you, then there wouldn't be remembering -- Holocaust memorials because there wouldn't be -- who would take care of this, so I thankful all the people that are involved.

Q: Thank you very much.

**End of Tape Four, Side A**

**Conclusion of Interview**