

Good afternoon, and welcome to the United States Holocaust Museum's public program, First Person. This year's programs have been generously funded by the Louis and Doris Smith Foundation. First Person is a public program that takes place throughout the season at 1:00 PM here in the Rubenstein Auditorium.

This one-hour program features the experience of a Holocaust survivor. Within that time, we will have a question and answer period at the end. In honor of the survivor, we ask that you stay for the entire program. Any passes for the permanent exhibition will be honored on or after the hour printed on the pass. So if you have a pass for 1:30, your pass is still good once the program concludes.

Photography is not permitted during the program. And we ask that you turn off all cell phones and pagers. Your response to the program is very important to us, so we ask that you fill out the response form you received when you came into the auditorium and return it to the attendant when you exit. Our speaker for this afternoon is Dr. Fritz Gluckstein. To give you a historical context for his experience, we have prepared a brief introduction.

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims. 6 million were murdered. Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or dissemination for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

What you are about to hear from Fritz Gluckstein is one individual's account of the Holocaust. Fritz survived the Holocaust by managing to stay in Berlin throughout the war. As you will hear today, despite several arrests and other close calls, Fritz remained a part of labor details until liberation by the Russians when they took Berlin.

Fritz Gluckstein was born in Berlin, Germany, on January 24, 1927. He was the son of a Jewish judge and a Christian mother, Georg and Hedwig Gluckstein. These contemporary photographs show places where Fritz lived, attended school, and played. As a child, Fritz enjoyed family activities, friends, and school gatherings.

After the Nazis came to power, Fritz's father lost his job as a judge. And because of his father's and mother's background, Fritz was considered a Geltungsjude, a counted Jew. The Nuremberg racial laws based Jewishness on genealogy and religious practice. This is the star that Fritz, as a Geltungsjude, was required to wear.

In 1942, his Jewish school was closed. And he was sent to work at a Jewish cemetery. Later, he was forced to work in a factory and then in a cleanup crew for air raids. Throughout these difficult times, Elfrida Dressler, Fritz's aunt, provided the Glucksteins with much needed extra food as their rations continued to decrease.

At the end of the war, Fritz's parents stayed in Germany. And Georg Gluckstein resumed his judicial career. Fritz decided to emigrate on his own to the United States and arrived in the US in 1948, where he studied veterinary medicine.

Today, Fritz Gluckstein lives in the Washington, DC, area with his wife Maran. Following his arrival in the United States after the war, he eventually became a doctor of veterinary medicine. After a stint in the US Army, Fritz began a long and distinguished career with the federal government, where he became an expert on diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans, like mad cow disease.

Fritz is a self-described opera buff and a football fan. He volunteers each week here at the museum translating letters and other documents written in German. He has a daughter, Ruth, and two granddaughters, one who is 6 and another who is 3 years old. With that, I would like you to join me in welcoming our First Person, Dr. Fritz Gluckstein. Fritz, would you please join me?

[APPLAUSE]

You just turned six years old when Hitler came to power.

That's right. At that time, everything was normal. And actually, nobody dreamed of Hitler.

Your father was a judge and a decorated World War I vet. Can you tell us something about your father?

Yes, my father actually considered himself a German. He was quite patriotic. In fact, I remember national holidays, he put out the flag and even taught me how to salute the flag.

And when the Nazis came to power he lost his job. And the first day was dismissed, they told him, you better not leave by the front entrance because out there is a demonstration by storm troopers and you might get into trouble. But my father said, I came in by the front door. And I will leave by the front door. And he left. Actually, it is interesting too. He lost his job in 1933. In 1935, he got a decoration in the name of the Führer for being a front soldier.

Wow. And can you tell us something about your mother?

My mother was not Jewish. And actually, my just mention here, my mother's relatives really stood by us. It wasn't always the case in other intermarriages.

But I must say, once my father lost his job, we had to move to a small apartment. Money became quite a problem. But my good aunt took care of everything from shoes to birthday parties.

That was the aunt we saw the photo of?

That was, yes.

Could you tell us something about your experiences with antisemitism before the war, from 1933 to '39?

Yes, actually it started bit by bit. It started out benches in the parks for Jews, yellow colored benches. And the Jews were not permitted to sit elsewhere. In restaurants, you could see signs, Jews are not welcome. Or Sundays, you took a tour in the suburbs or little towns, lo and behold, the sign, Jews are not welcome here, you found that more and more.

In Berlin, in 1936 the Summer Olympic Games were held in Berlin.

Yes.

Could you tell us something about this?

Yes, it's interesting. In '36, in the summer, all the signs disappeared. You could go everywhere. Of course, people didn't want any incidents.

And in fact, interesting what happened-- never been reported-- the Olympic Games, was a soccer match between Germany and Norway. And Germany was highly favored. And Hitler went there to see, to be there to celebrate the German victory.

But what happened? The German team lost badly. And Hitler left at half time. And the irreverent German in Berlin said, well, look, old Adolf, he took all, they had to go there, look, and they lost. And they actually were amused.

You were 11 at the time of Kristallnacht. How did you experience that and realize what that really meant for you and your family?

Actually, I would say perhaps it was a turning point. Before that, people believed, well, it can't be too bad, after all the Germans, look, what has he given to the world in science, in culture, art. It simply can't-- this will pass. But actually, it was realized once the Kristallnacht pogrom, meaning the breaking of windows, the burning of synagogues, and many men were imprisoned in concentration camps.

I remember in the morning, I went to school, and I saw the broken windows. And it took some time to realize what actually had happened. That too is a point that's rarely mentioned. How did they know what windows to break?

Well, months before, each Jewish store owner had to have his name in white letters along the left corner of the window. So they just looked at that the day a German embassy official was murdered in France. And they took that-- that was enough reason to start a pogrom.

And you continued to go to school during this time.

Yes. In fact, I was very lucky. I started school at six years and went to a public school. And this public school I went to was I was very lucky. I was not harrassed. I didn't even have to raise my hand in the solute or sing patriotic songs.

My homeroom teacher was a party member, treated us like-- about 5 or 6 Jewish students, didn't treat us any different. I might stress here the fact that someone was a party member did not mean that he was a dyed in the wool Nazi. Quite a number of people who joined for economic reasons.

Suppose someone's being told, look, you join, otherwise we send you to Podunk Junction and no more promotions. Well, two children, mother-in-law lives with him. What is he going to do? Well, he joined. And I can tell you some of the most vicious antisemites and Nazis were not party members.

But after a while, after about three years in the public school, the principal couldn't keep out some of the antisemitic elements. And I had to leave school and went to a Jewish school. And that was interesting too. It was a Jewish school, but it was a German school.

We learned German history and German literature. And the discipline was German. That in recess, we had to walk around in a circle, eat our lunch running. Well, you had to stand in the middle until recess was over. Later in high school, it wasn't too bad.

And for instance, if you caught sneezing without getting a handkerchief out, well, Gesundheit, old pig. Or laughing aloud was not permitted. You laughed silently.

And there's still one thing I can't do. I still can't do this. Why not? If you did that, somebody came and asked, ah, you're going on a trip? Why going on a trip? Well, you packed your hands already.

[LAUGHTER]

I still can't do it.

[LAUGHTER]

And what about the time when you were telling about not receiving report cards.

Yes. At the Crystal Night, many Jewish members-- actually, at random-- sent to the concentration camps. And half of our teachers wound up in the concentration camp. And I remember taking home a note saying that because of the special circumstances, report cards will be late this time because the teachers were at a concentration camp. I remember that.

So Kristallnacht really was a turning point in the events there. And a lot of people, especially a lot of Jewish families, tried to leave.

Yes. But, of course, it wasn't that easy. For the United States, you need an affidavit. And when the time-- if you had an affidavit, you had to pay for your passage to America or even travel to other countries.

OK. You said that with the start of the war in 1939, things really changed--

Yes.

--for you and your family. Could you tell us something about that?

Actually, shortly before, we had to-- all Jews were issued special identification cards with a big J on it. And Jewish male had to take the name Israel, unless he had a very Jewish name. Israel for men, Sarah for women. My name was Fritz Israel Gluckstein.

And whenever you went to an official police station or government office, you had to pull out the card and said, I am a Jew, and show that identification cards. Whenever you sign an official signature, you signed your name and then Jewish identification card number so and so. That's the way it was.

And once the war started, ration cards were issued. Jews had special ration cards. We were allowed-- could only go to buy food between 4:00 and 5:00 in the afternoon. Sometimes my mother, of course could go at other times. And very often, they still keep her out. They'll let me have your ration cards of your husband and son. And of course, the first rations, first no white bread and then no meat and less and less food. And there, of course, my good aunt came in and helped out.

At this time, it was also required for Jews to give up a lot of their valuables, furs, jewels, possessions, even pets. And you lost your dog.

And that's correct. Furs, we-- furs, opera glasses, all optical instruments, and so on, and pets too. And we lost our dog, Tommy. Well, this dog was trained. If you gave him something to eat. And as that's from the Jew, he ate it. But if you said that from the Nazi, of course, he didn't.

[LAUGHTER]

Geltungsjude, meaning as we talked before, counted as a Jew, was something that was really significant to your experience in Berlin in the war. Could you tell us more about that?

Yes, actually, the Geltungsjude, meaning counted as a Jew. Now, there were actually two kinds of intermarriages, mixed marriages. There was intermarriage without children. The Jewish partner had to wear the star. An intermarriage where the children were raised Jewish, the children were considered Geltungsjude, count as a Jew, had to wear the star. The father had to, or mother, the Jewish partner, with the star. And they were subject to all regulations, edicts, and whatever forced labor.

And then there was the so-called privileged, mixed marriage, meaning that the children were not raised Jewish, where the children didn't have to wear the star. The father or the Jewish partner didn't have to wear the star. And usually, they were not subject to all the edicts, therefore privileged.

And you had also told a story about the sewing of the star. The stars had to be sewn on--

And of course, in, I guess, '42, we had to wear the star, had to be worn right here, and had to be fastened securely. A nasty policeman came with a pencil and tried to get behind it. And so help you if you would get a pencil behind there. It had to be worn at all times.

Could you tell us about how you experienced when the deportation started to begin in Berlin?

Yes. The deportation started actually quite orderly. People received so-called lists, meaning they had to give an inventory of their belongings. And then at a certain date, police, actually usually ordinary policemen came, sealed the apartment, and the people had to go to the nearest collection point, either a school or a synagogue. From there, they were deported. Of course, later on, they were picked up in the street.

You were able to go to school I think you said until June 1942.

Yes, in 1942. Actually, school was an oasis. Once we were inside the school, well, we forgot misery of every day. And at that time, I never realized that the teachers who came every day were heroes, everyday heroes.

They didn't know what would happen to them. They could have been deported at any time. But they still went on teaching. And there too, of course, at times came in the morning and your neighbor wasn't there. And you hoped he was sick, but very likely he had been deported.

After the school closed and you had to start working too, you also had a couple of close calls with deportation.

Yes, actually first, I worked at the Jewish community, at the community center, at the cemetery. And then actually what happened, my mother at one time accompanied some friends to the collection point. And there the Gestapo said, what are you doing here? Ah, ha, you have a Jewish husband and a Jewish son. They will have to report tomorrow morning at a collection point. In this case, it was an old people's home.

And at that point, a notorious Viennese Gestapo captain by the name of Brunner had arrived more or less to teach the Berlin Gestapo what to do. And he kept us there. And I remember, actually, we were not permitted to lie down during the day. And whenever Brunner came around to catch people lying down, just before policemen came around and said, get up, he's coming.

And it's quite remarkable. Had the policemen been caught, at least they would have been wound up at the Russian front. And there too after a few days, I was called down for an interrogation. And I remember my father and all the gentlemen telling me, well, Fritz, no heroics, no attitude, answer the question, no more or less.

And still walking in there, the Austrians Brunner and some of his assistants were sitting behind the desk. And lined up right at the wall, there were the German Gestapo, more or less to watching how it's being done. Well, I was lucky. They tried to trick me. But he let me go and my father too.

And I remember the day exactly. It was my 16th birthday. I never forget it. And after that, I had to work in a factory.

Could you tell us something about that and the factory Aktion?

Yes. Actually, what happened there was a so-called the notorious factory Aktion. Well, it happened one Saturday morning. I still remember, we worked at a factory making instrument for the air force. SS officer comes in, everybody out. We were put on trucks and driven to a collection center.

This various collection center I wound up was a former entertainment hall. And lucky-- in fact, I have always been lucky. My name Gluckstein means lucky stone. And always been lucky.

And there, they let me go. Actually, I was interviewed by ordinary policemen. They let me get out of here. They let me go. It was 8 o'clock at night.

And by being out at 8 o'clock, I broke the law. No Jew was permitted to be on the street after 8 o'clock. In fact, this was not official. If you went to the police station and asked for permission to stay out late, they didn't know about it.

This was a law passed more or less by the Gestapo, enforced by the Gestapo. And it wasn't written down. By mouth, word of mouth had don't be out after the 8 o'clock. And we weren't permitted to certain parts of Berlin either. Not officially, but every Jew knew you don't go certain streets.

And they let me go. My mother wasn't home. She visited an aunt in Silesia.

Now, it was the end of the month. Somebody to get the ration cards. Well, I set out next morning with the ration cards. Lo and behold right in front of the ration cards distribution office was the van. Every one with the star was put in the

van, put into a collection point.

Because of my non-Jewish mother, they put me in another van and sent me to downtown, Berlin downtown, to a building belonging to the Jewish community. And there they kept all the Jewish partners and children of mixed marriages, kept us inside. It was quite crowded and spent our time speculating what would happen. And standing in line for the toilet facilities-- obviously, the building had no facilities for so many people.

And at that time something remarkable happened. Outside, the non-Jewish women demonstrated, asked for their husbands. They defied first the police, then the SS Gestapo. And it's said that Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda and so-called Folk Enlightenment felt, well, it's a bad time right after Stalingrad. We can deal with the people inside later.

And so let us go. And I went downstairs to be released and found my father. And then we were released one by one. And why? Because the release paper had to be signed by a sergeant who was in charge.

I remember my father left right in front of me. And while he was signing my father's release slip, he sneered, a judge you have been. I'm quite sure you ruined the lives of many people. Well, my father, I hope not. And we left. And after that, we were assigned to labor gangs to clean up after air raids and tear down ruins and so on.

In these your experience, you probably you came in a lot of contact with people in so-called mixed marriages. Was it your impression that their German-- or their Christian relatives were as helpful as your aunt had been or--

It varied. I was lucky. My mother's relatives were very helpful, really stood by us. And in other cases, sometimes you completely abandoned the relatives, nothing to do with it. It happened. I would say, for being asked, it was 50/50, I would say.

Also, you were telling me about during these work brigades about the adults being concerned of the children out of school in these work brigades and not getting the education--

Yes.

--they need to get.

Well, they had to work brigades. And of course, you had lawyers and scientists. And they said, well, the young people don't learn anything. We have to do something about it.

Well, we started a kind of instruction there. What happened? We came, young people we had a wheelbarrow. While your wheelbarrow was being filled, you were given a problem, which you had to answer when you came back with the empty wheelbarrow.

I remember happened to me. While I was filled up, they asked me, when you come back, you will name the Great Lakes of the United States. How many of you can name those? [LAUGHTER] And so I did.

It was of course interesting too. You must imagine, a young man, quite protected, now in the labor gang, the rough language had to be explained to us, which came in very handy. Because later on when I came back, I worked in Saint Paul in a factory. And there they said, let's embarrass the young fellow. If we teach him certain words and he will use those words and be embarrassed. It didn't work because those words are of Anglo-Saxon origin and quite similar in both languages.

[LAUGHTER]

You also said in part of your labor details you were sent to what you called a catastrophic mission, the bombing of Eichmann's headquarter.

Yes, actually, we were bombed out twice and stayed until we found new quarters in the Jewish hospital. Went to work

one morning. And again, a moving van, everybody was grabbed. Here, get on.

What had happened? The headquarters of the local Gestapo chief, Eichmann, who was in charge of the deportation, had taken a hit. And they needed people to clean it up.

And there, too, lucky again, at that headquarters, my supervisor was a young lieutenant, a lieutenant who didn't belong there. Always polite, never a harsh word. I still don't know how he got into the SS. But then to work the case was some enlisted men who-- guards-- exchanged every two hours. One was very nasty.

And the other, whenever we took a break, he found something across the street to observe. The man made a point of not harassing us. Why? I still wonder how did he get into the SS. Sometimes may circumstances.

And after the war, you were interviewed about your experience--

Actually, what happened after the war, the consulate, I mentioned that I had worked at the headquarters. Just wait a minute, why don't you wait outside for 15 minutes. And I came back in, and there were people what--

OSS.

OSS, and they wanted to know what headquarters, how the rooms, whom did you meet, what were their names and everything. I don't know about the reason. But so I told them.

You had also said that humor was very important, not only education--

Yes.

--but humor in getting--

Actually, humor helped. A funny story could get you over some really difficult times. Here are one of the jokes that-- actually, not just among Jews, actually in the general population.

Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, fell into the River Spree. It's a river that snakes through Berlin. And a young man pulled him out. Oh, said Goebbels, thank you very much. You saved my life. What can I do for you? Well, said the young man, I only want one thing, a state funeral. Now, why would you like a state funeral? Well, he said, if my father finds out I pulled you out of the river, he's going to kill me.

[LAUGHTER]

Or SS man, I am going to shoot you. But if you can tell me which one of my eyes is glass, I let you go. Oh, said, the prisoner. That's easy. It's your right one. Now, how did you know? Well, your glass eye, your right one, it looks so human.

[LAUGHTER]

At this time, things were really, really bad. And you had mentioned some of the food situation. What was--

Yes, the food situation was pretty bad. Without my aunt it would have been very bad. What did we eat? Fried potato peels, fried in salt. And actually, we used mineral oil to fry potatoes and even castor oil. Once you heat a castor oil, some of the properties change.

And there too is a joke. You know what ersatz substitute is? Substitute this, substitute leather, substitute so on. When will the war be over? Well, when the British eat rats and the Germans eat rat substitute.

[LAUGHTER]

You talked also about a way of doubling the meat rations that one of, I believe, your relatives was able to do that with the horse meat.

Ah, yes, this is an interesting story. At the time, horse meat, many horse butchers and-- you could double the ration. 100 grams, let's say, beef would mean at least 200 grams horse meat. And distant relatives at the time-- you still had meat ration cards-- fed her family meat.

And they couldn't figure out how do you manage those wonderful portions? Well, he said, the butcher is very friendly. He never realized they were eating horse meat. Actually, you can't tell unless it's horse meat. It's not easy to tell.

You've said before you survive because of three things your-- mother, luck, and Marshal Konev.

Yes. Always been lucky. In fact, let me mention that business once I got caught without the star. I had to go to a place. We had stored some material after being bombed out. And I went there to get it. And lo and behold, was stopped.

I knew right away, Gestapo. You could tell. And why did he stop me? Well, what was a young guy doing out of uniform? Showed him my exclusion papers. And he knew right away I should have worn the star.

And now something happened of course. It was for sure. He looked at it. And he stepped back and looked me over. But I think he was deliberating whether the German or Jewish blood is predominant. Well, apparently he was satisfied, turned around, and let me go. And that was a good luck again. Time and time again, I was lucky.

Now, Marshal Konev, why Marshal Konev? Marshal Konev came into Berlin very fast so that he couldn't get to the Jews. There's a little story attached to it.

I think it's, what, '43, '44. The Russians were on German soil. The British, American, French already across the Rhine. And they took us away from our labor gang to build foundation of a new Berlin to be erected after the war. We did that for a week.

And then they took us to the southern part of town to do Panzer tank obstacles. I remember it was a big sign when we arrived. Well, I translate. On to work. No shirking. Death to Soviet Panzers lurking.

Well, what did we do? We dug ditches and put iron girders in the ground, 45 degrees. And after a day, we are done with that. We left and said now, how long will it take the Russians to get through those obstacles? Well, we decided 31 minutes. Why 31 minutes? Well, the tanks will come to the obstacles, stop. The crews will laugh for 30 minutes and will take them 1 minute to get through.

This actually probably what happened because they got in so fast there was no organized resistance in the southern part. And I was lucky again. I always feel we had a small part in the liberation of Berlin. We didn't do a very good job with those obstacles.

So after Berlin was occupied by the Russians, were you mistreated? Was any mistreatment or was there convincing them that you weren't German--

Of course, they didn't quite know. The Russians, I was lucky too, they just came in. And of course, the Jews, all Jews, but we showed that the star and there was one neighbor who could speak Russian. And they let us go.

There too, we talk about luck with what was the final bombardment. And of course, there was no water or anything else. And you had to get water from a water pump. There were many horse drawn vehicles in Berlin, and they had pumps.

And you waited with your two buckets, along with the shellings. And you ran out, filled your buckets. On the way back, the shell came down to hit the ground, spilled half of your water, went back filled, it up and you got it.



And there what happened, I was waiting with another neighbor to run out. Suddenly, shell came down, he was killed. I'm still here. Lucky.

Wow. So after liberation, things still aren't easy, are they?

No, of course, liberation wasn't-- everything wasn't hunky dory, not at all. Then, it was quite difficult with food. The occupying powers took turns to deliver the food to Berlin. If the Russians were in charge, it was dark bread. The Western power, American, was white bread.

About that time, the first care packages came. And I remember it was K rations which had enough food for two men for one day, everything. And there was the cigarettes.

At that time, cigarettes were the currency. And I still remember the various brands of cigarettes. All cigarettes were welcomed. But there were difference. Camels, there were the [INAUDIBLE]. Camels, Lucky Strike, Chesterfield, Philip Morris, Pall Mall, Old Gold, and the last was Raleigh, I still remember this.

And I still remember when I came over-- it was in '48, a boat-- before we got up to the boats, somebody said, now ladies and gentlemen, once you're up there on the boat, a cigarette is just a cigarette, no longer a currency.

[LAUGHTER]

And at that time, light suddenly went out for some reason. And there was no heat. It was quite-- I can imagine all the water lines froze. The sewer line froze.

And not very delicate, but if you lived out in the country or in the suburbs, you could dispose of things. But what did you do if you lived in the city? Well, it isn't reported what happened. You could see a very nicely dressed people with little packages which were deposited in front yards and parks. As long as it was cold, OK. I don't have to elaborate what happened when spring came. And-- do we have a time?

Mm-hmm.

Still story going around, people had a party, wonderful cake, in America. One piece was left and nobody takes the last piece of course. The lights went out, and there was a horrible scream. And now there are two versions. One tells, everyone grabbed at one with a fork. And the other version is everyone grabbed by the fork and one with the bare hand.

[LAUGHTER]

So, yeah, as you said, after the war, your father was reinstated as a judge.

That's correct. I went back to school actually afterwards. At that time, no heat or light. Very often, I did my homework going in the subway or a subway was running back and forth, light.

Yes, my father was reinstated. But I felt I wanted-- staying in Germany, I did not consider it my duty to rebuild Germany. And I took steps to leave.

When my father said, look, if I were 10 years younger, your mother and I would go with you. But I'm a lawyer. I'm a judge here. The law is based on old Roman law. In the United States it's based on old English law, a completely different philosophy. You go.

But, he said, Fritz, I hope you will take a profession that is not limited to one country, like law. In other words, choose a portable profession. Well, so I did. I became a veterinarian.

OK. Yeah, you said you spent your 16th birthday being interrogated by the Nazis, but your 21st birthday on the ship to the United States.

21st birthday, on a ship, I arrived here. I remember on the 30th of January 1948. And at that time, you won't believe it, New York was quite something, lights and food and windows with velvet you could buy.

And one thing impressed me. Out on the street I saw packages stacked next to mailboxes for pickup. And I wondered, won't they be stolen? No. Mail fraud, mail theft is a federal offense. And it's too risky. Therefore, you can leave them. Now imagine now how long would the package stay there next to it?

[LAUGHTER]

Do you know of other children from your school or neighborhood how many of them survived?

Yes, actually, I went to Minnesota. I was asked actually where I wanted-- at that time in New York, it was a Jewish organization that brought us over. And then Jewish communities agreed to take a certain number of refugees. And I was called in and was asked, do you want to go to Detroit or Saint Paul?

Well, I had read quite a bit about the United States. And I said I go to Saint Paul. Although I knew it would be cold in Minnesota, but I didn't realize it had only two seasons-- July and winter. But I made a good choice. And I went to Saint Paul. A classmate of mine, actually, wound up in Minneapolis and another one in Saint Louis.

And there too, what we did, the friend and classmate in Minneapolis, we met sometimes for dinner. And I remember, one day we went to a Chinese restaurant. And at that time you just ordered a complete meal. And we were all done. And the waitress put the check. And he said, we start all over from the beginning. He didn't believe us. But that was the beginning, we could eat as much as we wanted.

And how did things work out with your parents and they staying in Berlin?

My father actually was reinstated. Actually, while I was in the army in Fort Dietrich, they even came over here. And, well, for them, they picked up again. Of course, was quite painful. Just when things got better, I left. But that's the way it was.

OK. Thank you. Now I'd like to invite the audience to ask any questions if you have any. If you could keep them, keep the questions brief, that would be very helpful. And I will repeat them to make sure that everyone can hear the questions and especially that Fritz can hear the questions. Yes.

Do you think it was easier for you to come to the United States because your mother was not Jewish? Or was it easy for people to come from Berlin to the United States when you immigrated?

She asked, does Fritz think it was easier for him to come to the United States because his mother was not Jewish?

Actually, that has nothing to do. But easier, I was lucky too. After Berlin was divided into three sectors-- four, American, British, French, and Russian. If you lived in the Western sectors, it was quite easier to come here. Somebody living in the Russian sector was quite difficult. I was lucky again in the American sector. But that was only-- my mother actually had nothing to do with it.

Yes.

What were your favorite toys when you were little?

Pardon?

What were your favorite toys to play with when you were little?

Oh, it probably was-- I tell you, at one time, I wanted to become-- I wanted to become the sailor. And I had actually

ships models of, well, various ships, battle ships and actually passenger ships. And actually-- well, at one time, I believe I even ran around playing soldier if [INAUDIBLE] when every little boy did that.

By the way, talk about soldiers, after the war in Berlin, we had the various occupation forces. And the guards paraded. And who were you saying? Who out Prussianed, who out Germaned the German in discipline, what army? The Americans, the French, British, the Russian?

The Russians.

The British by far. You couldn't believe it. They absolutely even-- all the German soldiers, the British I tell you.

Yeah, in the back.

Sir, considering that your education was interrupted, did you have any difficulty getting into school in Minneapolis in Minnesota?

No. Actually, I had difficulty. However, I had to appear before a board of residency because it was important that I pay resident fees. And I had to be before a board and to convince them that I came to Minnesota to live, not to study. But I satisfied them. And I was recognized as resident.

Yes.

Did you ever feel that you were very close to being sent to a concentration camp?

Oh, yes. Yes. Once, I mentioned with that Brunner when the time, of course, I got caught without a star and while sitting in the Rosenstrasse, that women outside, but we didn't know-- at least, I didn't know it. Our window wasn't big. What did we do sitting all day? Speculating what would happen. Or when they put me on the truck in the factory.

And I was lucky. And all people who lived in Berlin were lucky because close to the center of bureaucracy. There they followed the regulations. Outside somewhere in the boondocks, the local party and Gestapo chief very often didn't pay attention. And it happened, people were deported they shouldn't been.

Yes.

Did you ever see your parents again?

What?

Did you ever see your parents again?

Yes. Actually, they came while I was here at-- I was here at Fort Detrick in the army. They came back, visited here, yes.

Yeah.

How do you want to see people remember the Holocaust in 50 years?

Pardon?

How would you like to see people remember the Holocaust in 50 years?

See to it that's never happened again. That is all. But unfortunately, apparently, we don't succeed what's happening right now around the world. We haven't learned anything.

Yeah, in green.

What taken away from Jewish people?

What was taken away from the Jewish people?

Taken away?

Mm-hmm.

Well, actually, let's face it, people who are sent to concentration camps, everything, including their life. Otherwise, well, they lost their property. They lost-- in fact, if they had-- Jews had money, they had to deposit it in a bank account and permitted only to withdraw a certain amount every month. Well, I would say some people lost their life, but most people property, what they owned.

Yes.

How much information were you able to get about what was going on around in Germany while you were in Berlin? How much-- we're so inundated with news, et cetera. How much information did you know about what else was going on outside of your city?

You mean how the war was going?

Yes.

Well, of course, officially everything went well. But you could read between the lines. And people listened to the British and the foreign broadcasts. And you had an idea of what was coming.

And, of course, you already had an idea things were getting to the end. I remember, when did we know that the war was almost over? Working at the labor gang, and lo and behold, there were some trucks moving, pushed by SS men. Well, we knew if the SS, if they don't have any gasoline, then the end is here. And so it was. Yes. That was really--

And yellow.

What were your thoughts when you found out that the German government was systematically killing people in your country?

Well, actually, this came slowly to us. At the beginning people thought, well, we are resettled to Poland. In fact, we had rucksacks ready. We expected to be resettled too. But then we got postcards and sometimes even sent some food we could spare. But pretty soon then the postcards weren't answered. And we got a pretty good idea that something was going on.

The full extent of what happened at Auschwitz and other camps actually, at least, I-- we had an idea something was going on. But didn't know for sure yet. And of course, we always-- sometimes very difficult-- you always had hope.

You had a question right there.

Yes. What was known about the young teenage boy who shot the officer in Paris that started Kristallnacht? And what was the sentiment about that youth based on knowledge back in Germany among the Jewish community?

Jewish community-- actually, I suppose unfortunately the official shot was not a Nazi at all, just the opposite, vom Rath. Well, it was quite obvious the people, they were waiting for an occasion to start the program. But as you mentioned, it was more or less '38 with the program, people realized it is not going to pass. We realize that would be very bad.

Yes.

So what extant was it racial and to what extent religious?

To what extent was it racial and to what extent was it religious? Are you--

The motivation of the Nazi.

The motivation of the Nazis.

The motivation was racial, not religious at all. In fact, they played down religion. Christmas, they didn't like it. Winter solstice, no, they didn't like it at all.

What it made a difference whether the mixed child was raised Jewish or not Jewish?

What?

It made a difference whether the mixed child was raised Jewish or not Jewish. In what way a difference?

Yeah. And whether or not they had to wear the star.

Yes, if the child was raised Jewish had to wear a star. If not, didn't have to wear the star and actually did not have to-- the children didn't have to work labor gang. However, even in the privileged intermarriage, the Jewish partner had to be on the labor gang. There, we had the labor gang where people wear stars and people without stars.

And of course, we had one fellow who didn't want to admit he was Jewish. He came very early in the morning. He came tie and coat, changed, did his work. And then at night, put on tie and coat and went back. Nobody would know that he was Jewish. We said, well, we're going to fix him. We're going to visit him with all our stars show him. But we didn't do it, of course.

Just as a side, I'd like to say you can learn more about that in the special exhibition, "Deadly Medicine." And Fritz's family photos and something about his life is in that exhibit too. It's just around the corner actually. Yes.

In followup to my son's question, so many personal items in your property were taken away. And then what happened when the war was over and people came back? I mean there was no recourse to regain your possessions and your money, right? Even the money that was deposited in the banks?

Yes. Actually, of course, most of the people didn't come back. Some people came. If they were fortunate in the Western part, they could regain actually quite a bit. In the Eastern Germany, it was more difficult. And there was some compensation. Yes, even I got something for loss of educational opportunities and some forced labor.

Some effort-- actually, I must say if you go back now to Germany, for instance, go to Berlin, you find a sign close to one of the main subway stations, a big sign, said, place sites of horror never to be forgotten. And they list all the concentration camps. And there is one part of Berlin, the so-called [NON-ENGLISH] quarter, many Jews lived. And there are signs at that and that date, our Jewish fellow citizens were not permitted to keep pets. And farther down another sign, on that and that date, our Jewish fellow citizens were not given white bread, or so on. Efforts are really made to-- I'm quite sure the new generation in Germany. I'm very hopeful.

OK, I'm afraid we're running out of time. But I would just like to thank you very much for attending our public program. I'd also like to thank Fritz Gluckstein for sharing his experiences during that time. And as is tradition with First Person, we like to allow our First Person to have the last word. And with that, I'd just like to pass it on to Fritz.

Well, my motto is don't do unto others what you don't done to yourself. If you follow this, I think it would be all well off. And I always feel, do it now. Write that letter. Make that call. Visit your friends. Do it now. Don't put it off. And if you have two bottles of wine, drink the better one first.

[LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]