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## Philip Kraus, January 1974

Philip Kraus

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L.B. ...yeah, it'll pick me up, it's very good. Now let's see if we're being picked up. (Tape off). Those wheels are turning... Now, will you be good enough, just, we'll start, you give me your name....

P.K. Philip Kraus.

L.B. Philip Kraus. And, if you could tell me the year that you were born.

P.K. Uh, 1896.

L.B. 1896, and where?

P.K. In a town called Zolkiew, Z-o-l-k-i-e-w.

L.B. Is that anywhere near Kiev, itself?

P.K. No, that is near Lvov.

L.B. Oh.

P.K. Near Lvov.

L.B. Near Lvov. So you were born...let's see, I have to find it...

P.K. In the Aust...uh, Galicia.

L.B. You were born in Galicia.

P.K. Yeah. Today it, now it belongs to Russia.

L.B. Is Lvov, Lemberg?

P.K. Yeah, yes.

L.B. O.K. So, at the time that you were born, that section was the Austro-Hungarian Empire?

P.K. Right...yes.

L.B. Ah, now I know what I'm dealing with.

P.K. Yes.

L.B. Right, O.K. Uh...so it was called Kiew?

P.K. No, Zolkiew.

L.B. Zolkiew.

P.K. Zolkiew.

L.B. Zolkiew.

P.K. Pronounced, Zhul-kev.

L.B. Zhul-kev.

P.K. Yeah, but now they changed the name, the Russians changed the name. If you will look at the later, uh, map, you will not find the name Zolkiew, because Zolkiew, the name Zolkiew is after a Polish general. So they...named it a different name.

L.B. So you're actually a Galician?

P.K. That's right.

L.B. All right. Now, how big was your town?

P.K. How big was my town? I...(shouting)...Jean. (shouts to wife)

J.K. Yes. (obviously a friend's name)

13 P.K. Uh, uh, uh...Shmuel said, told us how big the town was. Do you remember?

J.K. Who told you?

P.K. Israel.

J.K. No, I don't remember him telling, but I think you said something about 10,000.

P.K. 10,000.

J.K. You said...

P.K. Yeah, about, I think so.

L.B. Before the War, when you were born?

P.K. Before, yes.

L.B. It was...it was about 10,000...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. That was a good-sized town.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. It was not all Jews, or was it?

P.K. No, no, no.

L.B. All right, now who lived in the town?

P.K. We had Ukrainians, and Poles.

L.B. So you had 3 ethnic groups?

P.K. Right.

L.B. Ukraines, Poles...

P.K. Poles.

L.B. ...and Jews.

P.K. Jews, yes.

L.B. Right?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. And, what was the rough percentage of Jews?

P.K. The rough percentage of Jews in the town, I would estimate to have been.....  
50%.

L.B. 50%?

P.K. Yeah. No, no, no, no, no, that's too much...

L.B. Now, this is before the War?

P.K. No, before the War, I'm talking...

L.B. Before the first War, yeah.

P.K. Yeah. Uh, let's see...30 and 30 and 40, yes, I would say 30%.

L.B. 30%?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. All right. Now, uh...so, then, you have 70% non-Jews.

P.K. Non-Jews, yeah.

L.B. Roughly...if you can, would you say that the, um...economic position of the Jews, with respect to the non-Jews, was what? Was it better, was it worse, was it the same, or couldn't you say for the group as a whole?

P.K. No, I couldn't say for the group as a whole, no, no; because we had some, uh...pretty well-to-do Jews...we had some poor Jews, we had some well-to-do Poles, and we had some poor Poles, and so on...

L.B. All right, now then, tell me first about the Jewish population, and let's start with you, if you will.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Uh, what kind of a house, or apartment, did you live in?

P.K. We lived in our own house, always have lived in our own house. I, um... come from parents, we lived together in the same house with my grandfather, always. I come from a home where we, uh, my mother gave birth to 11 children, but there remained, of the 11, we remained, uh, let's say, uh, before the War...or during the First World War, we remained, uh...huh.....uh, 5...My, uh, 2 brothers, and 2 sisters, 5.

L.B. 5 children?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. All right. So she lost 6 children.

P.K. Yeah, when they were small, because there were always, uh, breakouts of epidemics on small children...

L.B. Typhus...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. So, uh, you lived in a house, and the house was made of what?

P.K. Of wood.

L.B. Of wood.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. And, how many rooms did you have? (Pause). Do you remember?

P.K. Yes. 1, 2...I would say 4 rooms.

L.B. 4 rooms, and that would be what?

P.K. Well, uh, a kitchen, and a...there, a kitchen is a, you...

L.B. <sup>641</sup>? Part bedroom?... It could be anything ...

P.K. Uh, that's right, and we, uh, and, not only were we...uh, 5 children, but, uh, I don't ever remember our house being, going to sleep with only the 5 children and pa...and the father and mother, there was always somebody else. Somebody else, was it a cousin, was it an uncle, was it s...it was one. And cousins and uncles, we had them...ve...many, very many.

L.B. All right, and they lived in, in the same town?

P.K. They lived in the same town, yes. Some, one, some lived away, so if he came, if he came to the town, he stayed over by us, and...that's the way it was.

L.B. And, so, how would you try, like, how many bedrooms, 2, 3?

P.K. Oh. Um...3 bedr...

L.B. Don't count the kitchen, we'll keep it separate...(Laughs)

P.K. Kitchen's also a bedroom...

L.B. Yeah. (Laughs).

P.K. You, you can say 4, because the kitchen is also a...uh, in a kitchen, it wa...uh, it's hard for me to describe to you, like, we had a, we had the room, and in the room we had the, we had the, the stove, called, uh, the wood stove...

L.B. Yeah, what did you call it, tell me, I want, that's what I want to know.

17 P.K. The gribeh.

L.B. The gribeh, O.K.

18 P.K. Yeah, the wood stove. And, in the back of the wood stove was a, a very big oven where you baked the bread...and, uh, all around it was, uh, nothing was left empty, I mean, wasn't, no room to dance. We had a bunkbetel, which opened into a, it opened and shoved out...

L.B. Like a trundle?

P.K. Huh?

L.B. Like a trundle?

P.K. I don't know what...

L.B. Where one fits underneath another, you pull it out.

P.K. Yeah, made with a cover, so when you pull it out, you sle...sleep in it.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And then we had 2 beds, and we had a sofa.

L.B. All in the kitchen?

P.K. All that was in, in the, we called the kitchen.

L.B. Right.

19 P.K. The kitchen, there's no such...the, the begreif, you know what, what I say? Uh, the, I forgot how to...

L.B. Is that German?

P.K. No, no, the, no, the...the understanding...wasn't there, that we have a kitchen, it's not, uh, it's a k...it's a r...

L.B. It's a room.

P.K. The kitchen is only the part that you cook in, that's the kitchen...

L.B. That's what I mean, right.

P.K. The rest is to be used.

L.B. Right. Now, was there any separate place, like a salon or a diningroom or a parlor?

P.K. No, we had another room, yeah, which was, uh, which was partitioned, and another room which was partitioned, by, the partition consisting of boards, and whitewashed, and, that was the partition. Then we had another room which was completely separate.

L.B. And what did, what was that used for?

P.K. To, for a bedroom.

L.B. Right. Now, in one of the, uh, people that I interviewed, we were talking about entertaining, habits, and so on, why uh...children, as a rule, did not bring their friends home from school, and so on, they met them outside...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. ...and young people also. And, uh, this person said there were several reasons, first of all, the space was so small...

P.K. No room, sure.

L.B. ...the families were so large...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. And, uh, so customarily, you met your friends outside the house.

P.K. That's right, yeah.

L.B. So there was no place, like here where people would sit down and entertain?

P.K. No, no, no, there was no...there was only place, there was only place enough, for enough people of the family to get together and eat together or, or tell each other things, uh, but, from, bringing in friends, there was no... and the cousins can, uh, could come and move in by the gross...

L.B. Right.

P.K. But there was always room for them.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. But, to play, or to...like we have it here, no.

L.B. Yeah, yeah, that's very, I didn't realize this until the last few months.

P.K. Yeah, no, we had, we didn't have such...

L.B. It's very, you know, it's very different. But, uh, as a result...

P.K. No, no, entirely different...

L.B. ...would you say, family life was more close?

P.K. Ohh yeah, ohhh, oh sure! If anyone of the family would have any problem... it was shared amongst all, not only the brothers and sisters and father and mother, but the uncles and the cousins and everybody...put his ear to it and gave his suggestion, and whether he liked it or not he had to listen to it.

L.B. Right, right. So that's really the extended family...

P.K. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah...yeah.

L.B. Now, what did your father do, for a living?

P.K. My father had a...bought geese, from all around the neighborhood, and these geese were fed, we had places for them...and when the time came, we, father sold the meat of the geese to those that sold it to the women.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And we retained the fat. This fat....uh, was the time of the year where we had a big, um...call it a barn, yeah, and on the long tables, I remember, and the poor women would stay and work and cut this, and was, uh, cooking with the, uh...

L.B. Cleaning the fat.

P.K. Yes, and, uh, then it was melted and shipped in, in new...tubs, tin,,tubs, with covers, and after this was made, it was shipped to Germany.

L.B. So that would be goose fat?

P.K. Goose fat, yes.

L.B. What did they use it for, cooking?

P.K. In Germany, yes.

L.B. In Germany they used it for cooking?

P.K. Yeah, by us too, yes.

L.B. And you used it for cooking?

P.K. Yes, yes.

L.B. And then there would be some residue...

P.K. Die grieben.

L.B. Die grieben.

P.K. Yes, that's, that, that we wouldn't ship, that goes, that went to the restaurants and so on...

L.B. You sold it?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Now, what about the feathers?

P.K. Oh, the feathers? That's, that was a different story, the feathersthen, uh, we, uh, collected them....and, huh, some, some, some we sold, with the feathers and everything to the, to those that, resold them s...uh, uh....re~~tail~~.

L.B. Right.

P.K. But gave us back the skin and the fat...(Pause)...of the; different ways.

L.B. Yes. But, did you do anything with the feathers, yourself?

P.K. Uh, I do remember, but not too much.

L.B. Mmm.

P.K. Some, we did, but not too much, no.

L.B. You didn't make pillows, or ~~pillows~~, or anything?

P.K. NO, no, no, no.

L.B. No.?

P.K. We had, we did...we did have an aunt, we did have an aunt....she was a very old woman, I would say, at that time.

L.B. Yeah, she was probably 40. (Laughs).

P.K. And, but she was, she was, she was partly blind, and she would sit, I guess we would provide...that she would take the feathers and flick the feathers, you know, the, the shafts...

L.B. Yes, strip them, yes.

P.K. Strip them, and...this, she would sell...to others, to make cushions and so on, to make pillows...

L.B. Oh, because the quill part would be too stiff...

P.K. Right, yes.

L.B. ...and would pierce the fabric.

P.K. She would sit the whole day, and...

L.B. Now, um...was, this was in a separate part, this was apart from the house that this whole operation went on, the clearing of the fat...

P.K. Oh, no, no, this was in the, this was as, here, like a barn.

L.B. In a barn.

P.K. Yes.

L.B. And, who worked there? Your father...

P.K. No, no, no, no, my, my father didn't work there, my, a, a bunch of women.

L.B. But he was in charge, it was his...

P.K. No, he was, he was in, he was always on the road, he was away.

L.B. Well, who supervised the women?

P.K. My, my mother.

L.B. Your mother really ran that part of the business?

P.K. Yes, yes.

L.B. So your father ran the most part of the business, is that correct?

P.K. Uhh...my father ran the part of the business of buying the geese in the different villages and the hamlets around.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. Then, also, my father went to Germany, to deal with the, those that get the fat.

L.B. So he was like the sales representative and then, the buyer?

P.K. He was the whole thing, yes, yes.

L.B. Yeah, but your mother worked hard.

P.K. Oh, my mother, not, uh, not, not not, not only did my mother work hard, but when he, uh, found himself somehow in a jam with the, with the, uh, in Germany, or whatever...or, with, with the government, she was the one to step in... yeah, she was the one to step in. She didn't, she couldn't, she didn't write, except Yiddish.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. No, no other. And she, uh, her Polish, uh, or German was, uh, almost nil, but she...she was, you could say, a politician.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. If somebody was in trouble...they would come to her. I remember one occasion, if, if it means anything to you...

L.B. Definitely, that's what I'm here for...

P.K. One occasion, I remember, uyh...

L.B. I want to make sure it's turning...yes.

P.K. I remember one occasion, that one, sometime, one, in the middle of the night, somebody knocked on out windows, because we lived on the ground floor there, and says, "Aita; alta, alta. Raveve mich."

L.B. "Save me."

P.K. "Save me". So, open the door, "What is it?" "They confiscated a wagon-load of....something, flour or something, which, because whatever the Jew had done there, most of it was illegal...you see? So they confiscated it...and here's, he's, he's in terrible trouble and he's frantic. So, my mother didn't say anything; she says, she woke me up, she says, "Go to the commander of the

P.K.cont. gendarmes, and tell him that I told him....to come here."

L.B. To the house?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And it was pretty far...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. It was in the night. Well I...went, and I woke him up, and he came, and I remember her saying to him, "I want you to leave these, this here thing. And don't start all over again...(whatever it was, you know)...This has to be released, and I don't want to know, no, I don't want to have no trouble with, with people passing by the town, and you should, your, your men should confiscate it. There's no reason for it." He says, "All right, all right, Alta, all right."

L.B. Her name was Alta?

P.K. Yeah, yeah, Alta, you know why, why, why...

L.B. Alta means "old one".

P.K. Yeah, you know why, you know why the name Alta comes from?

L.B. No.

P.K. Oh, you don't. There was a, there was a superstition, or taradition, whatever you want to call it, that if one got sick, very sick, in order to fool the...  
200 Malchamovis, the Angel of Death, so they renamed him ~~Alta~~, or ~~H~~ or Alta... So,  
205 my mother was renamed Alta, actually her name was Surileh, but never, nobody ever knew her by Surileh, they knew her by Alta.

L.B. Uh huh, the renaming was so they wouldn't know the real name?

P.K. No, no, no, no, the, the Malchmuvis should make a, should, he goes for Surileh, but he doesn't find her, he finds Alta.

L.B. Right, that the, right, that the Angel of Death shouldn't know her real name, right?

P.K. (Chuckles). Right.

L.B. Right, because there's magic in names.

P.K. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

L.B. Right, that, that's good. So, she settled with the gengarmes, the chief...

P.K. She, she, he went ahead and released it, that's all. Now...

L.B. See, now, what you had there, you had police.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. And the police would help the Jew, right?

P.K. Uh, yes, in a way, yes, but...uh, one had to, there was, always had to be one who negotiated with them. Now, for...

L.B. Did your mother have to pay him off?

P.K. That is her, that, that I never knew, nobody ever knew, she, she was, she was with the governor, and she was, uh, with, with the Ministry of Railroads, if I remember correctly, because it was, it was be...after the War finished, the First World War. At that time, a lot of people wanted to go to America, and at one time, came, for 21 people, the, uh, permis...permission to go. But at, at the same time, if you have heard about it, General Haller, who recruited boys, in America, for...the army, to fight in the new Poland against the Ukraines.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. They wore different uniforms than the other Polish army, and these Haller boys, whenever they had a chance, going with the train, what they couldn't do in America, they have done there. Now the, the, daily occurrence was that they threw the Jews out of running trains.

L.B. Now these were the American boys....) the Polish boys...

P.K. Right.

L.B. ...that were recruited?

P.K. Right, yes. So, at one time, when 21 people in our town came, and they were...they had the visas, and permits to go, to leave for America, the problem was:

P.K. cont. How are they going to go, they're afraid to go with the train from us to Warsaw, which is 24 hours right. So, they came to Alta. And Alta went to Lemberg, to Lvov...to the Ministry of Railroads, and she came back, and this was the thing, "We are going to get a car, a passenger car, with the doors locked, and we will have the key. Now, you go into that car, you ride to Warsaw, you have nothing to be afraid of." "But we are still afraid." "You're still afraid, all right, so I'll send..." She'll send me with...so I went with them, and I was the, the car, the key-keeper, and uh, and so we brought them there without any trouble whatsoever. How she had done it, that I don't know

L.B. It's too bad you don't know...

P.K. No, I don't know...

L.B. It sounds like a fascinating...

P.K. I only, I only know one thing, one thing I do remember, personally...We went once, in town, and it was...the...he was then, he was then s...to be the, uh, um, head of the whole region, like the governor, and he went with his wife, and here my mother and I come, I was a little boy, maybe 12 years, 15 years, and they stopped and they talked, she could, my, uh, with her Polish that she talked, her, and she talked, and she said to him, "You know, I don't like your hat." So the wife turned around, she says, "If Alta don't like the hat, I think she's right." He says, "O.K."

L.B. You know why it's interesting? There were so many women, then, that did so many things, under such incredible...uh, obstacles, and hardships...

P.K. Yes.

L.B. ...that, uh, you wonder...I wonder, now, why, sometimes, myself, with the cry for Women's Lib, why there has to be so much noise...

P.K. Well...

L.B. And when I, when I hear some of these stories, what the women actually accomplished...

P.K. Oh, some women have done, uh, well, for instance, I was in the, on the Italian front...

L.B. This is in the First World War?

P.K. First World War, I was on the Italian front, and for some reason or other, mail did not reach them. (Pause). She went to Vienna, through somebody's pull, and in Vienna, she got a permit from the general headquarters of the Army to go and visit me. But even then, she could only go that far, not into the shooting area.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. But after she came there, and they stopped her, she says, "You can't stop me, because if you will stop me, General So-and-so, wrote this so-and-so, he told me I have to go to see my son." And she came, they let her, right into the shooting front.

L.B. It sounds like Eleanor of Aquitaine.

P.K. I cannot, I cannot understand it until today, I wish I would be able, today, to ask how...I mean, there was a lot things that she had done, and people depended on her.

L.B. Yeah. Were you her oldest?

P.K. No.

L.B. Somewhere in the middle?

P.K. First of all, I had a sister, uhhhh, which died in 19...17, yes, during the War...she died, she was, she was 2 years older than I am. And then there were others who died before.

L.B. You were her oldest son?

P.K. I, yeah, the oldest son.

L.B. O.K. So, your mother, then, ran...this whole operation with the fat, and the, uh...

P.K. The inside...part of it...

L.B. The inside portion, in the back of the house, right. Uh...what, what language did you talk in the home?



P.K. Yiddish.

L.B. You did speak Yiddish?

P.K. Yiddish, yeah.

L.B. And your mother spoke Yiddish, you say she spoke some Polish?

P.K. Yeah, some Polish, some German, but not, uh...

L.B. Some, but not...but your father had to speak...

P.K. Oh, my father, my father, yes, my father, he did, not Polish but German, yes.

L.B. He spoke German.

P.K. He had to, yes.

L.B. Did he know any other language?

312 P.K. Uh, I would say, Hebrew, not modern Hebrew, but...?

L.B. Yeah. And, uh, was the home a, a pious home, was it a religious home?

P.K. Oh, yes, yeah sure...

L.B. It was. And you were Orthodox?

P.K. Oh yeah.

L.B. Did your father wear a beard?

P.K. I wear, I wore payis, too.

L.B. You wore payis?

E.K. Yeah.

L.B. You were Hasidim?

P.K. Nnno, not in the sense that we know them today.

L.B. No, no.

P.K. No, no, but I wore payis.

L.B. You wore payis.

P.K. Yes.

L.B. And you wore the shtremel?

P.K. Not me, no...

L.B. No.

P.K. My father did.

L.B. Your father wore shtremel.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. What kind of a, an outfit?

P.K. Oh, uh, long, my father, you're talking about, my father? Yes, oh, long.

L.B. Even when he went to Germany to do the trading?

P.K. No, when he went to Germany he had his beard, yes.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. And his payis, yes, but he didn't, he took, took off the long, uh, thing...

L.B. Coat.

P.K. ...and he put a...

L.B. A short jacket.

P.K. ...a little shorter, more modern.

L.B. And how did you dress?

P.K. I dressed, uh, until after 13, completely at my father's, <sup>will,</sup> uhhh///then I started making the revolution.

L.B. I know, but let's go back to before the revolution. (Laughs). So you wore a li...you wore a long coat, or did the boys wear short coats?

333 P.K. No, no, no, no, uh, I didn't wear that long <sup>Hasidim</sup> coat, no, no, no. I did wear, once, I did wear the, what do you call it, the, the long thing with the <sup>Gartel</sup> but not, I don't remember very much, uh, very much wearing of...it.

L.B. But you did have the payis?

P.K. Payis, I had...

L.B. What else?

334 P.K. Oh, uh, with the...tsitsis.

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. Oh, that I had to wear, yes.

L.B. All the time?

P.K. All the time, yes.

L.B. And, Shabbos was observed?

P.K. Oh, of course, sure.

L.B. So, did your father go to shul every...

P.K. Oh sure...

L.B. ...every Friday?

P.K. Sure...sure, he would not only, went every Friday, he went every day when he was home, sure.

L.B. He did?

P.K. Oh yeah.

L.B. What about your mother, did she go too?

P.K. My mother, uh, Saturday she went; but, my mother was, um, how you, how would I say, today you would call her a very, very liberal person. Now, when I started, uh, my revolution against religion...um...she knew it, and...my  
347 father, somehow, when he, when he started getting wind of '... ?

"Let the boy choose his own life. If that's the way he feels about it, let him, he's not going to go wrong." Now, for instance, I once, of course, we hear remarks, we, uh, when we pass by a church, that, and we listen to the music of the organs, that our prayers are not going to be listened to, in heaven, for 40 days, and so on. Did you ever hear that? No. Well, this made me very, very curious, because of this, would I have never heard this -- nothing. But since it was so, I had to listen to that music.

L.B. Yah.

P.K. And I, not only did I have to listen to the music, but one day I...<sup>they</sup> used  
360 to call the church, the timmeh...no...no...

L.B. I never heard of that.

P.K. Jack would know. (a friend)

L.B. Yeah, but it comes from the same part.

P.K. The timmeh means the, the, umreinkeit, umreinkeit...it's "unclean"...

L.B. Oh.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Oh, I see, like "traife"

P.K. Yes. So, because of this, I finally made plans...to go and see the church, the inside of the church, which was, which the thought, in itself, was terrible. The thought, in itself, I got scared for, of the thought. But, the more I got scared, and the more I thought of it, the more I wanted to go. And I did. Now, when I did, I watched, naturally, that nobody should see me go in, because, a small town, everybody would know me.

L.B. Mm.

P.K. And I went in, and, oy, whatever I saw there. But, when I went out, I was so...overtaken by the whole thing, that I saw, that I forgot to watch, exactly, that nobody should see me, and I stepped out, and be...until I came home, my father knew already.

L.B. (Laughs). They didn't need a telephone.

P.K. And...

L.B. This is the Catholic Mass that you went to, right?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And, my father knew already, and, uh, when I came home, he says, "What are you doing? You're bringing shame on my head." I couldn't understand why I bring shame, I couldn't really, uh, grasp it. And, then he turned to my mother,  
380 and he said, "You are going to make him...shmut." You know what "shmut" is?  
"You'll make him convert."

L.B. Ah.

P.K. "You're giving him..."

L.B. These words, I don't, we haven't, were not used in my family...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Because they are from Galicia, not from the Ukraine.

P.K. Your...your family's from Galicia?

L.B. No...my family is Ukraine.

P.K. Oh, from the Ukraine, no, it's a different, a little bit different, yeah.

L.B. Yeah, yeah, yeh.

392 P.K. So, say...say, like...<sup>He git dir</sup> "Migiteh nurde shmat...", that means, "give into you, everything", so that...

L.B. Yes.

P.K. "Even so far as, he goes to convert." So, he said, because she didn't make such a big thing out of it....she will, she didn't make such a big thing out of it, she, so he said, "On account of you, he's going to convert."

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. There was, uh...friction...because of this.

L.B. Did you find the service impressive?

P.K. No, I found it new...I found it different.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

P.K. And, I, uh, and the, the, uh...priest greeted me very warmly; of course, they had, uh, good reason for it. But otherwise...on the other hand, uh, talking about the priest, warmly, I was in school....and, um...on the blackboard, <sup>at</sup> one time, the teacher, which I still remember his face and his name, Gromski was his name....asked, "Who can answer that question? Who can go ahead to the, uh, blackboard?" And there was, for, uh, silent, nobody, so finally I raised my hand, and he says, "Let's see you do it, Jew." "Jew", in itself, would not be...but

400 he called, a Jiddik...

L.B. Jid...

P.K. Jiddik.

L.B. Jiddik...

P.K. Yeah, uh, yeah...

L.B. "A little one".

P.K. So I went ahead, and I done it. So he says, "Oh, that's nice." And he took my paye, and he sort of...like, "Nice, nice..." and he took my paye, and ga... and, and blo...blood started running. (*Slapped his face*)

L.B. That's some....little...

P.K. Yeah, for recognition, that was the <sup>recog</sup>...that was the opposite of the recognition, because he didn't like that, that I could do it.

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. And, I came home, and my father was home at that time, and he says, "What, what, what did you, what did you do now?" I said, "I didn't do anything, I just told him..." He said, "If he done, if he had done it to you, you probably deserved it." I was, that was this, uh, those times...te...terrible...oh...oh...

L.B. I'll turn this off. (Tape off). (*Respondent was taping along with me + had to change reels*)

L.B. Right....is it going, right. And, um...that you were, came from an Orthodox home, and uh...I would like you to tell me something about your schooling, how it started, where?

P.K. Uh, it star...I was in school in my town, in Zolkiew...and, uh, then, when...

L.B. What school? What kind of school?

P.K. In...public school.

L.B. At what age?

P.K. Star...uh, first I started cheder, naturally, ~~was~~ <sup>at</sup> 4 years...

L.B. All right...

P.K. When I was 4 years old.

L.B. 4 years old, O.K.

P.K. Yeah, I started cheder. And then, at 6 years, I started school.

L.B. Public school?

P.K. Public school, so we had cheder and school.

L.B. Right. What did you learn in public school?

P.K. Uh, until, uh...

L.B. What did you learn in public school?

P.K. What did I learn in public school? Huh, reading, writing, arithmetic, the, the beginning, you know.

L.B. In what language?

P.K. In Pol...in Polish. Uh, we also had a German...a German...instructor, and we also had a religious, a Jewish religious instructor...hour...

L.B. In the public school?

P.K. Yeah, yeah.

L.B. So, the Catholic children had Catholic religious hours?

P.K. Yes, yeah, it was a Catholic school, was crosses in every room. But we had...uh, I don't remember whether it was twice a week or 3 times a week, came a religious, called him "a religyonzlier". And he gave us religious instructions, not, uh, the same as we, as I went to a rabbi, you know, to learn; but he gave us, in, in the Polish language...religious, official re...uh, religious instruction, which the government recognized, and they paid him for it.

L.B. Now, were the teachers of the secular subjects, like reading, writing and arithmetic, were not Jews?

P.K. No, no.

L.B. They were Poles, they were Ukrainians, or whatever?

P.K. Yes, yes, yes.

L.B. But your religious teacher was...

P.K. A Jew, yes.

L.B. ...was a Jew?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. Now, in your pu...in the cheder, of course...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. I...if, if a third of the population was...Jewish, you must have had a total population of about 3000.

P.K. I would think so, yes.

L.B. Right?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. All right. And, uh, in cheder, every Jewish boy went to cheder?

P.K. I wouldn't say every, every, because those, um...uh...whatdo-you-call-'em, the Jews that were.....oh, I forgot the word for it...

L.B. You don't mean Hasidim?

P.K. No, no, no, the other, the other side of it.

L.B. You mean the li...the assimilated?

P.K. The assimilated, they, they didn't send them to cheder...

L.B. O.K.

P.K. But they still had some private, uh, instructors for them.

L.B. All right. So, of the Orthodox and the Hasidic Jews, their boys went to cheder starting at about age 4 or 5?

P.K. Yes, 4...

L.B. At 4...

P.K. Not later than 4, yeah.

L.B. All right. And, uh...then they went to, uh, Austrian public, uh, Austria, Austrian...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. But it was in Polish, 'cause you were in the Polish section?

P.K. Polish, everything was in Polish, yes. Polish or Ukraine...

L.B. Or Ukraine, some of the schools taught in U...the Ukrainian language?

P.K. Uh, some, no, no, but you heard it talked all over. I mean, it wasn't official, official it was only Polish and German.

L.B. Oh, is that right?

P.K. Yeah. But, wait a minute, I don't think it started German in the, in, in the first years, maybe a little later it started in Polish and German. A little later.

L.B. Because the official language was German.

P.K. Was, little, official language was, uh, German.

L.B. Right.

P.K. No...no, it was Polish...but with German.

L.B. Not at the Austrian court.

P.K. Huh?

L.B. At the Austrian court, the language was German.

P.K. In the Austrian court, by us, was Polish.  
L.B. I don't mean the law court, I mean where the Emperor was.  
P.K. Oh, no, no, was German, Austria, sure, sure.  
L.B. Right, right. But, in you section of Austria-Hungary...  
P.K. Polish.  
L.B. ...was Polish?  
P.K. Polish, yes.  
L.B. Right?  
P.K. Yes.  
L.B. O.K.  
P.K. Yeah.  
L.B. So that was the official language in the, in the courts, and everything?  
P.K. Yeah. In the army, on the other hand, was German.  
L.B. Yeah.  
P.K. Although, Poles came in, they ~~could~~ couldn't speak one word<sup>d</sup> even, but...  
right from the beginning, was German.  
L.B. I understood that everybody had to learn German at some time.  
P.K. Yeah, later, when you...  
L.B. Ahh.  
P.K. Later, in the later studies, not in the first 2 years, or so.  
L.B. All right, so you started public school at 6...  
P.K. Yeah.  
L.B. You learned reading, writing, arithmetic, and religious studies. For how  
many years was that?  
P.K. Until I was, uh...14.  
L.B. 14, that brings us to what year?  
P.K. No, no, no, no.  
L.B. No?  
P.K. No, 12, 12.  
L.B. 12.  
P.K. Right.  
L.B. 14, you should have already been in gymnasium.  
P.K. That's right, 12, after 12, yes, 12, yes.  
L.B. 12, and 12 is what year?  
P.K. 12?  
L.B. Would have brought, to what year? You were born in...  
P.K. Oh, I, then I, then it would have been, 1896...1908.  
L.B. 1908.  
P.K. Oh-8.  
L.B. And you were 12 years old. Did you continue your schooling, after that?  
P.K. Uh, well...I...was a problem, because I wanted to go to high school.  
L.B. Yeah.  
P.K. And no decent, no decent religious Jewish boy would dare to go to high  
school in the, the same town.  
L.B. Why?  
P.K. Why? Because, in the high school, first of all, they didn't recognize, uh,  
Sabbath.  
L.B. Mm.  
P.K. So you had to go Sabbath. So, who, uh, what religious parent would allow  
his kid<sup>d</sup> to go, Saturday, school. But, some did, but they...sent them away to  
the bigger, the big city.  
L.B. Now, this would be a public gymnas, is that right?  
P.K. Yeah, yeah, yah.  
L.B. A government gymnas?  
P.K. Yes.  
L.B. Because they also had...higher...  
P.K. Private...private, yes...

L.B. ...Hebrew...

P.K. Yeah, yeah, yes, yes, yes, private.

L.B. But this is what you wanted?

P.K. Fri...in, publ...yes, yes.

L.B. A public gymnas?

P.K. Yes. My father didn't think it was necessary, for me, and therefore, he didn't want to pay.

L.B. Right.

P.K. So therefore, I said, "I want to go. I don't care what, where. I want to go." So, and, finally, I did go.

L.B. Excuse me, if, you say he didn't want to pay, did you have to pay at the public gymnas?

P.K. We had to pay, well, first of all, not only had to pay, but we had to pay, he had to keep me, keep, keep me, because...

L.B. Keep you, yeah.

P.K. ...when a boy is 12, 13 years old, uh, and he doesn't, and he doesn't go, he doesn't continue the Jewish studies, which I....definitely didn't want to.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Unless I go to the gymnasium.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. So...finally, I did go, and, I had a lot of trouble, going, because I had to go, the payis, you know.

L.B. You had to cut them off.

P.K. No, didn't cut them off, no. I had to go Shabbos...and, every Shabbos was trouble, I mean, home.

L.B. Did you go from home to the gymnas in your town, then? Oh, that made it harder for you.

P.K. It just so happened that, when I was about to, when I was, uh, about to leave public school, that they...have...uh...insta...uh, had, had, uh, opened a high school, the first high school in our town. And I said, "I want to go." And there was a question of, "What do you...how can you go? No Jewish boy goes to high school here. You'll have to go Shabbos." So I say, "I want to go to high school, and I don't..." And, finally I...I went. And then, I...finished high school...if you can call it finished, I finished high school when I was not even 16 years old. Because then, they skipped there, skipped classes.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. I finished. But then, uh, then was, uh, War talk.

L.B. So then, wait a minute, that's 1908, that's 1912, already.

P.K. 1912, 1912 was already...

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. Uh, clouds, war clouds. As a matter of fact, they, uh, they mobilized the Army already, in 1912, but then it was...off...

L.B. Quiet.

P.K. Yeah, and meanwhile I...was, uh...very much, it was too much for me to...uh...go through; so I left my town, and I went to Lvov...to the big city. Uh, in the big city, I encountered a lot of hardships, because I wanted to continue...

L.B. Continue what? Your education?

P.K. Yeah. And, I could have, I mean, my, I had the, I had the possibi...my, my own...uh.....I mean, I went through certain tests, in, in, in...in...Lvov, in the college, and...

L.B. Did you take your maturas?

P.K. Uh, no, I didn't, but when I...was through, and I came there, I wanted, I didn't know where to go, because I come from a small town. So, I went to the college, to find out what to do. So they gave me certain tests.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. And, they told me that...it's O.K.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. That I can do it.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. They will arrange for me. But, when the war talk started.....then, it was hard for my father to go to, in the business in Germany; so I simply had to leave, to drop everything, and go and see, to make a living for myself. And with making a living for myself, that was the end of it. And then, in 1914, the War started, and...they called me in. Called me in, and, uh, and I was in the Army...but, I was in the Army no longer than a few days, and the Russians marched in. And I happened to be....by myself, in a certain street...and, uh....

L.B. Where were you stationed at that time?

P.K.. In Lvov.

L.B. Oh, O.K.

P.K. Yeah. And I happened to be by myself, and I saw that the Russians are marching in, I saw them from in a long street, I saw them come marching in. So, instead of me going back to my base, I went into the first Jewish house that I could, and I told them, "Please help me. Give me something to wear, so that I can throw off my uniform." And, any Jew would help in a case like this.

L.B. Hmm.

P.K. And, I remained in Lvov, with the Russians, until they left. And, when they left.....no, no, wait a minute, I'm catching <sup>one</sup> to another..

L.B. That's what happens...

P.K. In 1914, before the War started, I was in Germany.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And, when I was in Germany, before, the War broke out, they killed Franz Ferdinand...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And the War broke out. I didn't want to go home. I want to do everything, I shouldn't have to go in, home, to the army, to the War.

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. So.....a German, who has, who was the, uh, innkeeper of something, he... um...told me that the best thing for me to avoid to go home is, "Go and volunteer into the German Army. "Since you are not a German-born, and since they don't take, yet, your age, then they'll give you a pass, and you'll be able to...stay." The police gave me a notice I should, I must leave Germany. And when he, when I told him this, so he says, he, he advised me to do this. And I didn't think too much about it, and I went. And, as I went into the German barracks, and in, 15 minutes later, my head was shaved and I was already a German, uh, in German uniform, and uh, goose-stepping. And that happened, I, I was there for 2 weeks, until they let me go out, the first 2 weeks they keep you in boot camp, training. they don't let you go out; after 2 weeks they let me go out, and I, when I went out, I went to the Austrian Consulate...

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. ...to, sort of, complain, but they....He says, "All right, you go back. You don't take off your uniform. You go back, and I'll do the rest." Well, I went back...and, 3 days later they called me into the office, and they took my, uh, civilian clothes, they threw it at me, and one of them says, "All right, change." And, so I figured, all right, I'll do anything, as long as I go home. But, uh, instead this, they....a patrol, a...few waited for me, and they took me up to the Austrian Consulate, and I figured, from there they'll let me go, but no, they didn't. Then they had a, a, uh...a zamulpunt, uh, they had a room with other boys like me, from different parts, you know...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And they collected us, and then they collected, they got a group of, let's say, 20 or so, and they send us to the Austrian border, but not, not by ourselves, under guard.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. And, as soon as we came to the Austrian border, each one was, a reception committee was waiting for us...

L.B. You were drafted into the Austrian Army.

P.K. Each one, not drafted, each one was sent to his regiment, where he belonged...because each, each, uh, they asked, uh, uh, "Wha...uh, what regiment..." if, let's say, if I wouldn't tell them, "What regiment was your father in, or your..." So I tell him, so he sent me to my regiment, and there I was.

L.B. So you were actually in the German Army for 2 weeks.

P.K. Yeah, then I was in the Austrian Army.

L.B. And then you were in the Austrian Army.

P.K. Yes.

L.B. Now, you said you had a hard time in, uh, in Lvov...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. ...af...after you left the, uh, gymnas in, uh...

E.K. Yeah.

L.B. ...Zolkiew.

P.K. Yeah, I had a hard time going, doing what I want to do, study.

L.B. Did you, by this time, were your payis off?

P.K. Oh yeah, oh yeah, sure, oh yeah, before that...before that, that's why, that...

L.B. So, there was trouble at home, really.

P.K. Yes, yes, was trouble at home, yeah.

L.B. And, your father didn't see that it was a new time, or...he couldn't understand. But your mother could?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. As a matter of fact...as a matter of fact, that, uh, a one, it went on almost every Saturday, in the morning, when I got up and put my uniform on.

L.B. Yeah.

Test P.K. My father, he would always say to the mother, "You see, you see...Macht a goy  
You don't understand? <sup>fun im"</sup>

L.B. Yeah.

[You are making a 'goy' of him]

P.K. And I just learned to ignore it, for a time, for quite a time; and, uh, one day, uh, it came a little bit sharper, so I said, "Loo<sup>k</sup>, I don't want you to, to, to say anything to my mother..."

L.B. "...that you can't say to me."

P.K. "...because of me."

L.B. Mm.

P.K. So...

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(Tape ends)

During the pause there was conversation about intergenerational conflict and children who refuse to follow the way of their parents.

Side 2, 000

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. All right. We'll stop...(Tape off).

(Blank from 1-3)

L.B. We can record. Oh...(Long pause). O.K. You know those, uh, those differences leave, uh, terrible scars.

P.K. Oh, they...

L.B. You know, you feel abad years after if you, unless you have a chance to resolve them. Were you ever...ever ab...

P.K. Yeah, it did, it did...

L.B. Oh, that's good.

P.K. It did. No, no, I didn't resolve them, I really don't...

L.B. No?

P.K. No, I don't think I resolved them, because, uh.....See, I was a disappointment... (Very long pause).

L.B. Everybody is.

P.K. I was a disappointment to my father, he...

L.B. He wanted you to be a pious Jew...yes. (Pause). That's too bad.

P.K. Well, those things...



L.B. See, he also disappointed you.

P.K. Yeah sure. (Pause). I felt I could, I, I lost interest in the whole thing, because, I'd done some...some deep investigating, on my own way, and I, and I still couldn't find myself in...in religious matters, or become a rabbi, that he wanted very much.

L.B. Actually, it would have been easier, perhaps, there's such a controversy still raging...I know, myself, I say to my children, and it was after much infighting, between myself, I have 3 daughters, and my daughters. First I tried to force them...and then I decided, you know, it doesn't do any good, it just breeds resentment.

P.K. No, no, no.

L.B. So, I said, "If you go, you observe the rules. If you don't go, then don't go."

P.K. That's right, that's right.

L.B. And so, what's happening is a revival of interest, it comes naturally, I'm interested, they see, they copy...but only because they want to.

P.K. That's right. If they don't want to...

L.B. If they can't find the way...

P.K. No.

L.B. ...then they have to find another way. I can't...

P.K. Right. That's...that's the only way. And the more resistance the, the youngster will find...the more he'll, he'll want to go <sup>a way</sup>.

L.B. Right.

P.K. The less resistant, the less, the, the, the less you'll be revolution...uh, revolutionizing.

L.B. Well, my rabbi thinks otherwise...

P.K. Yeah, of course, he thinks otherwise...

L.B. ...but I hear him saying different things, and, uh, you know, I've had lots of fights with my rabbi over this, but, uh...he understands. Uhh....you know, you, what they say, "You can lead a horse to water..." (Laughs).

P.K. That's right, that's right. You see, it, uh, we are, we are made, I don't know, we are made different, our, uh, chemicals, our, the composition of our chemicals are different, and...and we work different, that's the way it is. My mother, my mother was really the one person that understood me out, in the whole family. My uncles were against me...(Pause)...everybody, except my mother.

L.B. Now, tell me, what happened, what was your, uh, the family's, the relative, we'll get back to this again, but I want to cover a certain amount of ground; what was your family's relative, uh, let's say, economic and social status, in the Jewish community? Was it middle, was it low, was it hi...very high?

P.K. No, I wouldn't say, my, my...my own family, or the uncles?

L.B. Yes...no, your family.

P.K. Oh, my family....uh, I would call it low-middle.

L.B. Low middle. So there were many, there were many or some Jews that were poorer than you?

P.K. Oh yeah, oh yeah, yes.

L.B. Many, or some?

P.K. (Pause)...There were quite a few.

L.B. Quite a few. They had trouble making a living?

P.K. Oh yes, yes.

L.B. Were there many, or some, who were richer?

P.K. Yeah, more, more were richer.

L.B. So, then, actually, the population of your town was quite well-off, relatively well-off?

P.K. Uh, relatively speaking, we were well-off than other towns, than other small towns around us, yes.

L.B. And how were you, could you say, with respect to the gentile population?

P.K. We had, we had relatively good relations, relatively...

L.B. Yeah, you had good...

P.K. ...until the Polacks came. Even then we...

L.B. That was after the War?

P.K. Even then, it was...relative calm, you know, and respect. But, there were, here and there, uh...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. But, no, we had no trouble, no, it was a very respectable town.

L.B. But what I'm asking, also, is...with respect to status and income, and being able to make a living, did the Jews do...better than the gentiles, or worse, or...

P.K. No, the Jew...the Jews, the Jews, uh, ha...whatever the Jews had done to make a living was entirely different of what the gentiles had done. The gentiles, most of them...were government employe~~s~~as, most of them.

L.B. O.K., Mm hm.

P.K. Uh, some of them were, uh, uh...engineers, and 'soldiers'..the professions... But the Jews didn't, were no such thing, uh, yeah, we had one who was a, who was a...a, uh, I don't know how you would call it here, he, he was, uh, like a general, but he was in the Court, he was the highest member of the Court, and he, we used to call him 'muszka'. You ever hear that, the word, muszka?

L.B. No.

P.K. Muszka means a, uh, Uncle Tom.

L.B. Ah...yes.

P.K. Yeah. But otherwise, the Jews were, in thier doings, they were a separate, a separate thing...in their doings, in their, uh, conducting, to make a living, they were entirely separate.

L.B. Well, we would ask some people, for example, my father, you'd ask him how the Jews in his shtetl, which was very, very small...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. ...compared with the neighboring peasants, and he said, no matter how poor they were, they were better off, they felt...whether this is true or not...

P.K. Who was better off? The Jewish...

L.B. The, the shtetldikke Jews, in the Ukraine...

P.K. Yes.

L.B. Were better off than the surrounding...

P.K. Oh yeah, yeah, I would say, oh yeah, yes.

L.B. Now, this is what I want to know, can you make any such comparison for your town? And you were in another part of the world.

P.K. With regards to the, uh, surrounding...

L.B. The Jews, and the non-Jews in the city...

191 P.K. The Jews, and the non-Jews in the city....uh, it's very hard, I'm trying to think back, all those things, the Jews and the non-Jews...well, I would say that, in this, in the town, there was more, uh, evident poverty amongst the Jews than amongst the...

L.B. There was?

P.K. ...gentiles, yes. On the other hand, it was also evident...uh...riches... yeah. There were Jews that made very well, had very big beautiful stores. As a matter of fact, all the...

L.B. They made, they made their money in, uh, mostly in merchandising, ~~merchandising~~?

P.K. In merchandiz...mer...yeah, most...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Well, they were, they were craftsmen, too, they were...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. ...shoemakers, and uh, and...tailors, and...

L.B. But the rich Jews?

P.K. The rich Jews, the rich Jews were...mostly, big stores, and so on. Big stores...huh, what you called then big, now would be nothing, it would be a little store.

L.B. Yeah, O.K....right. Now, um...the Jews in your town were mostly Orthodox Jews?

P.K. Well, when we say Orthodox, today, we have a different, um, conception.

L.B. Yeah...well, tell me what you think, wha...what you picture.

P.K. Well, i...if, if it's Orthodox, o...of today, then I was no Orthodox, neither was my father; but if it's Orthodox of that, of those times, then we were Orthodox.

L.B. Well now, what's uh, what would be different?

P.K. Le...let's put it this way...no...let's say, we had...2 kinds of, uh, 491 synagogues, by us, 3 kinds as a matter of fact. We had the 'klose, the kloisel, this is meant for the Orthodox, for the Hasidim...but, again, it's not the same sort of Hasidim...that we know now.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. They were, they were, the, they were businessmen, as, in, in the street, as, as everybody else; but they, they...gathered in their klose...kli...in, nicht a kloisel.

L.B. My fa...my father had, in his shtetl, had a kloise and a kloisel.

1047 P.K. Yeah, a kloisel, uh, a kloisel, "iz gevezem ah shtiebel" (was a shtiebel)

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Yeah. And then there was the main shul, the main synagogue, there were more, more than one, there was more than one. Uh, by the way, this one, uh, synagogue, I guess, if you look up, uh, Zolkiew synagogue was a very historical thing. Uh, uh, it was built in the, uh, year of, in the 1400s by King, by a Polish king, and uh, it was preserved through all the different kinds of invasions that we had in our town, the Turks and the Tartars and...uh, was, the government always preserved, that nothing should happen to that shul. And, uh, til now, I have heard different, um, versions of what happened under the Nazis, and I still don't know.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. But the, in, in New York, in the museum...

L.B. Which museum?

P.K. In the New York Jewish Museum...

L.B. Oh yes.

P.K. ...you will find, they have um...uh...a painting, or a picture of that shul, in, in uh, the whole thing, what's all about; was a very big, very big thing, and it was built like a fortress...the walls were about, uh, they say, about 8 to 10 feet thick, and uh, as I said, it was built by this king, and the legend goes that after he built this, uh, shul, because he was, uh, it was another thing that goes back, uh, where he comes from, the, he was, he was, uh, nobody knew where he comes from, and then in the wartime, they, in the Polish War, he went...and he became, he came back a general and then he became King, and he married, naturally, a...a non-Jew, of course he was a, no...nobody knew what he was.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And, uh....she, because he built that shul, she built a church. And the legend has it that, and one of these....uh, like a, like a fortress comes with, 1051 with a, with a, with a....oh, huh, a-turim, you know what a-turim is? Like...

L.B. A tower?

P.K. A tower, yeah, those tower...turret, yeah. On top of this was a golden ball which, I don't know how big it was, it was supposed...so goes the legend. Then... after he died, they, the gentiles, took the golden ball off, and they put it on the church that she built. And, for years and years that fight went on, back and forth, whether of not this belongs to them or...and so on...

L.B. What was the king's name?

1052 P.K. Subieszky. Sobiecki.

L.B. Uh huh.

P.K. Jan Subieszky. Sobiecki.

L.B. Uh huh.

P.K. I mean, I couldn't, uh, I, I'm only talking what I, what I was born with...

L.B. What you heard, yeah, yeah.

P.K. ...what I heard all, all the time. And this Jan <sup>Sobiesky</sup> Subieszky was a, a little boy, which served in a little, in a house, in a Jewish house....just an errand boy, in a little house.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. And one day, so goes the legend again...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. A ra...a, a pious Jew, a rabbi or whatever he was, came into that Jewish house, and noticed that, on the 'pekallik, you know what a pekallik is? On top of the oven...

L.B. Yeah, yes.

P.K. Uh, he, he saw the...uh...what do you call the...halo?

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. This halo...she says, "Who do you have there?" He says, "Ohh, a boy, the errand boy." He says, "No, no, he's not an errand boy...he is...a...godly person. He's ma...uh, he's...so you'd better ta...take him down, and give him..." So he took him down, and, and so, and they cleaned him and washed him, and they and they gave him, they didn't, tell him to do those things, now, til finally he became the King, and, for appreciation of that he built the shul. So, so goes the legend.

L.B. That's a nice story.

P.K. Yeah. And, and ino our town, by the way, was his, uh, palace.

L.B. Also?

P.K. Yeah. His summer palace.

L.B. Mm hm. (Pause). All right, so, you say...it's hard to compare, then, the relative standing of the Jews and the non-Jews in your town, right?

P.K. It's, uh...

L.B. The non-Jews were mostly government people...

P.K. Mostly government people, and...

L.B. And the Jews were mostly business, or working, people?

P.K. Uh, yes, right. We had some, we had Jewish doctors, there, we had Jewish...

L.B. You did?

P.K. Yes, we had Jewish doctors, Jew...we had one Jewish drugstore....yes, we had one Jewish drugstore, one...ome, more than Je...one Jewish doctor there, we had a few Jewish doctors, we had gentile doctors, too.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. As a matter of fact, one Jewish doctor...I found out that, uh, he, when the Nazis came into his office...to arrest him, and he knew what to expect... so he took out, he took some strychnine, into his mouth, and uh, and the 2 Nazis that were there, he shot them, he said, "You're not going to get me alive!" And he fell dead...committed suicide.

L.B. This was from your town?

P.K. Yeah. That was in, during the Nazis, which I, I was here, uh, I found it out, through somebody else.

L.B. Now, when the, when the War started....you had been in Germany...

P.K. Yeah. I ran away to Germany, by the way in the middle of the school.

L.B. I expected maybe you did.

P.K. Yeah, because my father, my father hit me, when...

L.B. Yeah, yeah...

P.K. ...when I, I said he shouldn't talk to mother...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. ...so he jumped, jumped on me, and from this, he sa...he never, he never hit me, that's one thing, never. And when this happened, I was shamed, and I took off the uniform, tor<sup>o</sup> off the uniform, and immediately I went to Germany. And, that was, that was that.

L.B. That's not the only family this happened in.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. So, there you were in Germany, and then you go, go into the German Army, and you come back...and you're immediately shipped off to your regiment...

P.K. And I'm....uh, yes. And then I'm...

L.B. Now, wait a minute, your family is still in...  
P.K. In Zolkiew, in Zolkiew.  
L.B. Zolkiew?  
P.K. Yeah.  
L.B. But, when the Russians come...  
P.K. They're still in Zolkiew.  
L.B. ...they stayed?  
P.K. Yeah, sure, yeah, they stayed.  
L.B. Because other families didn't stay.  
P.K. No, no, no, we stayed, no, they, we stayed.  
L.B. Why did they stay?  
P.K. They stayed because they didn't have, uh, they didn't want to, they didn't run...there was no reason for us to run. I mean, the, the Russians didn't do anything bad to anybody of us...not, not in Galicia. In, uh, Russia, yes.  
L.B. Well, there are Galicians that ran, and they would up in Moravia.  
P.K. Oh, some ran...  
L.B. Yeah.  
P.K. But we didn't, we didn't, we didn't run, and uh, I, we never felt the reason, the, the...urge, the, the necessity. We di...uh, actually, didn't feel the...  
L.B. Did you hear stories from, uh, of what was happening to the Jews in Russia, at all?  
P.K. Oh yeah.  
L.B. But it didn't frighten you?  
P.K. No...no. Because our town, as I said, our town, in the worst times...worst times all around us, but our town was sort of different than all the other towns...really.  
L.B. So you sort of felt as if there was a charm over you, in a way. You didn't expect anything bad to happen.  
P.K. No...no.  
L.B. Did anything bad happen when the Russians came?  
P.K. No, no, no, not at all, no, nothing whatsoever, absolutely nothing.  
L.B. Now, after a while the Russians were pushed back.  
P.K. Yeah.  
L.B. After how long?  
P.K. Uh...  
(Tape off)  
L.B. Are we on?  
P.K. Yeah.  
L.B. O.K. So nothing happened bad to your family, while the Russians were there?  
P.K. No, no.  
L.B. Nothing happened to the rest of the Jewish population?  
P.K. No, no.  
L.B. Nothing happened to the Poles, or the Ukraines?  
P.K. No, no, no.  
L.B. There was no looting, no burning?  
P.K. Noo, no, no, no, not in our place, no, no.  
L.B. And then what happened, then, who pushed them back? The Austrians?  
P.K. The Austrians, yeah.  
L.B. And did, how were things when they came in...  
P.K. When the Austrians came in, back again?  
L.B. Yeah, yeah...  
P.K. Nothing.  
L.B. The same as before?  
P.K. Of course, it was hard to make a living.  
L.B. I understand.  
P.K. It was hard to make a living because there were, there were shortages in everything; and especially for us was, uh, real bad, because we had to go, to do those things in, uh, Germany, with, out...outside of our country, and, of course,

P.K.cont. uh, was no railroads, no...so we had a, a tough time, economically, but otherwise, uh...nothing bad.

L.B. Now, you were in the Army at this time...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. And your parents were trying to make a living, and feed themselves.

P.K. No, I was in the Army, after the Russians came, uh, I was in the Army, then the Russians came, and I remained with the Russians, I didn't go back to my regiment.

L.B. Right.

P.K. Then the, the Russians were there approximately a year, and after the Russians left, they took me back into the Army, and there I was in the Army until 1918.

L.B. So you were in the, when you got back into the Army, again, where were you sent then?

P.K. I was sent to Hungary, for training, and from there, I was sent to the Russian front, and from the Russian front I was sent to the Italian front.... Yeah.

L.B. Now, how did you feel about the War? Were you loyal to the Kai...to the Emperor? Or did you feel, have no feelings at all?

P.K. No, no, no, I always ask myself the question, "Why am I in here? What have I to gain, and why am I killing people, and why are they killing each other?" And, it came, once, to a climax, with me. Uh, and the climax was that, at one day, there was a Italian officer laying wounded between, in No, in No Ma...in No Man's Land, and he cried for help, and we sent out a Red Cross, uh, 3 men, and as they came close to him, he took out a gun and shot them all. And naturally, this had to be reported to the Chief Commander, and the Chief Commander, whoever it was there, a...above him, or...We got an order, our commanders got an order, that we do not take.....ohhh, I miss the words...~~the~~leufer, you know what? Every night, there would come one...running to us with his hands up, he didn't want to fight no more.

L.B. Yeah, yeah, no pr...no, uh, surrender, no, no prisoners who surrendered.

P.K. Fris...uh...we shouldn't take them no more.

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. But we got them every night, we got...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Ours too, left, uh, some...So, we got that order, and...

L.B. What the heck do they call them? They're not refugees...deserters.

P.K. Desert...deserters, right. We had them, at night they ran away into the... to the enemies, and they took them in as prisoners. And, uh, all of a sudden, we got that order. Well, at one, one night, I don't remember how long after we had that order, I was standing there...on the post, by the barbed wire. And, uh, a lot of dead, uh, bodies were laying there, sprawled all over the place, for many, for many, uh, uh, days and weeks. Nat...naturally, the stench was very bad...and I was tired from the whole day, and I was there, I, my watch was supposed to last from 10:00 to 12:00...midnight. And I was there...I was dazed, and, I sat down on the ground with my...uh...whatdoyoucallit...and, I put the gun under me, and I sat and I dozed. And I wo...and, something woke me up, and in front of me was, uh, I saw boots, and it was Italian boots, and I jumped up, and it was an Italian soldier. At this moment, I didn't think that I had to shoot him.... In the first place, the Geneva Convention didn't allow you to do a thing like this, but...and I gave him the order to sprawl out, and lie down with his face down, and then came to me, "I have to shoot him. What am I going to do now? I, I'm not going to shoot him." And I, I expect terrible consequences on account of it. But I still am not, I made up my mind I'll go and be stubborn, I'm not going to shoot him. He is, the man lay before me, he came, he don't want to fight no more....that would be murder. And...I gave my own interpretation, which, you know, in the Army, you don't give the, you don't give your own interpretation. Finally, uh, I gave signal, and they came and they took him in,

is?

P.K.cont. and they took me in with him. And they bring me before the commander... and the commander happened to be a very nice fellow, just a matter of luck. And, he said to me, "Do you know what you did?" I said, "Sure I know what I did. I brought in the prisoner, here." He says, "Do you know the standing order?" I says, uh, I said, "Yes, I know the standing order." I couldn't say, "No". "I, I know the standing order, but, uh...He came from behind me, I didn't hear, I didn't see, I was standing there, and all of a sudden he's, he's, he's one foot away from me. I can't shot a man...it was, according to the Geneva, Geneva Convention." He said, "Now, now wait a minute, don't start telling me all of these things. You had an order. That man should have been dead. Now, you brought him in, O.K. Now you tell me what should I do with him. Now it's my responsibility. I cannot bring him in nowheres. You tell me what to do. You brought me a problem, you solve it." So I said, "Well...you, the front runs this way. You send him there, and tell him to go straight....because there he'll encounter our line again." He says, "O.K. But you're going back for 3 hours now." "I'm glad." Huh.

L.B. So, the chance was that in all probability, the man was shot anyway... somewhere else.

P.K. The man was, the man was shot by me...Because they send him, they, instead of sending him there, they sent him on this side, and he, and they told him, "You go this, this direction." I was there on the li...on the, uh, post again.

L.B. Oooh.

P.K. And, here I see, and I watch, naturally, I shouldn't doze off or anything, and I saw, uh...a shadow, you know, a silhouette...and I opened fire, and that's it. And then, they came and they took me in, and they had a ball, you know, laughing and...I say, "What's the, what's the...reason for all that, uh, gayness?" He said, "Do you know who you shot?" I says, "I don't want to know who I shot. I don't want to know who I shot." And he told me, "You shot the same...boy." And this sort of, this thing ~~and another happened~~, made me completely, completely, desperately, anti-War. Completely. I, I was ready to, even, fight, and even if I had to pay with my life. And, I managed...I managed to...not to desert the Army...because deserting, ~~deserting~~ would have meant...when they catch you with the uniform off...even if it's one day...

L.B. You're a spy, yeah.

P.K. No, not spying...

L.B. No?

P.K. No, that's desertion. But, as long as you're with the uniform...that's AWOL.

L.B. Right.

P.K. You, you leave without an abs...without a per...

L.B. Permit.

P.K. Permit. So I was always in the uniform, but always ~~amanaging~~ to go from here, there, and from there, here, always with...with legal documents...and, until the War was finally finished. And when the War was finished, they caught me in, I was in...Hungary. And I heard what's going on in my part of the world, in Galicia, with the fight between the Poles and the Ukraines...and it was very bloody, so I didn't want to go home. So I was caught in, in Hungary; and in Hungary came the, the, the revolution, the Red Army... So, the Red Army pulled me in.....to serve in the Red Army.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. So I served in the Red Army.

L.B. Fighting the Hungarians.

P.K. No, I didn't, no, I actually, I enlisted, I, see they, they couldn't take me because I wasn't born in Hungary. So they asked me, "Either you leave...or you volunteer into the Army. And if you volunteer, we will give you, we will not send you into the front...because you are valuable to us as an instructor." Because I was an old soldier.

L.B. Right.

P.K. And, so I volunteered, and I was in...

L.B. This was, then, what? The Red, the Soviet Army?

P.K. No, not the...Hugarian Red Army, Hungary had the revolution.

L.B. Ooooh.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. After the First World War?

P.K. Yes, yes...

L.B. I didn't know that.

331 P.K. Yes, yes...yes. It was 'Bela Kuhn...

L.B. Right.

334 P.K. And then was 'Horty', the...

L.B. The opposite, right.

P.K. ...counterrevolution, yes. And I was in Bela Kuhn's army....for 3½ months, and after 3½ months, they...fell apart.

L.B. Yeah. Now what happened back, uh, back home? Where the, <sup>with</sup> in the, uh, would be, uh, Ukrainian, uh...

P.K. It...it, uh, started to be bad, it started to be very bad. But, again, in our town, it wasn't. Our town went through all these things, nothing wrong happened in our town.

L.B. And your family was all right?

P.K. Yes, my family was all, all of my family was allright, all the uncles, and everything, everything was, uh...until the Nazis.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Yeah. And, our town, it...it was...was really a, a unique town. Very, very different than all the others. The, the Polacks were respectable... gentlemen. I mean, they hated, they didn't like us, I wouldn't say they, they loved us, but they...

L.B. Yeah, no, you don't have to be loved.

P.K. For them it was a shame to, uh, lower themselves down to, uh...to these, uh, outrageous acts of, uh, anti-Semitism, so it was... Maybe when...between themselves, they talked about the Jew, whatever...

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. But they...<sup>come in and</sup> command respect.

L.B. And how did your, do you know how your father managed to make a living during all this time? Who was left home? Your mother and father?

P.K. My father and my mother...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And my younger br...my one brother was in the army, my younger, 2 years younger than the, the other wa...was, the others, the sisters were not in the army, naturally.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. So, home, was left, my....sister, the older sister, her husband went to the army, and then, a younger sister, and a younger brother. They were left home. But they had a tough time making a living.

L.B. Were they working, or were they trying to help your father?

P.K. There was no such thing as working, there was no such...they, they had no, they had no, uh...

L.B. Skills.

331 P.K. Skills, so...it was just a question of <sup>'handle-vandle'</sup>, you know what that means, uh, buying and selling, nothing, whatever you do you're not allowed to do, and, uh...uh, and, it was pretty bad.

L.B. Because the Polish government really clamped down on Jewish, uh...

P.K. Oh yes, yes...

L.B. ...merchandizing activity, after the...

P.K. Yes, yes, yes...

L.B. ...they were restored to power.

P.K. Yes, yes, yes. Yes, my, my, my mother lost all her influence, you know...

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. She couldn't do a thing, not a thing.



L.B. So you did feel that, yeah?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Some people said they didn't notice a differ...any change when the Poles came back to power, and I had read that there was quite a big change.

P.K. It wasn't a change, let's say, there weren't disorders, there were no disorders...

L.B. No.

P.K. But, the changes were quiet, but suppressive...

L.B. That's right, that's right.

P.K. Oh yes, oh yes, definitely.

L.B. No, I'm not saying there were disorders.

P.K. Definitely.

L.B. Although, in some places there were even disorders.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Because, I was, I mentioned, uh...what's his name, Morgenthau's Commission.

P.K. Yeah, yeah.

L.B. And they found quite some...problems.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. All right, now, uh, during this time, you were in the army how many years?

P.K. I was in the army, beginning, well, with interruptions...

L.B. Yes.

P.K. I was in the army, beginning 1914, and I was out of the army, 1918; then I was back in the Polish Army in 1920.

L.B. In the Polish Army? Now you're in the Hungarian Red Army...

P.K. First I was in the German Army.

L.B. Right, then the Austrian.

P.K. Then I was in the Austrian Army, then I was in the Hungarian Red Army.

L.B. Wait, stop. So what, how did you get out of the Hungarian Red Army?

P.K. Oh, they fell apart.

L.B. And then what did you do?

P.K. Then I, they I...left town, I left Hungary, because I had to leave, because <sup>Horkey</sup> was in with his m...uh, they murdered people right and left.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. So I just had to, had to run and leave everything behind me, and there I, there I was, and run and...I could have no other place to, where to run, than home.

L.B. Right.

P.K. So, I ran home. And when I ran home, then...the Poles and the Ukraines were still fighting, and finally the Poles established themselves, and it was Polish.

L.B. So then, how did you get, uh, back into the Polish Army?

P.K. Oh, the Polish Army took me as a reserve, you know, in my age, they called me...

L.B. As soon as you came back?

P.K. No, not, no, that was in 1920 already.

L.B. Yeah. So, in the intervening time, what were you doing?

P.K. Bad, bad, very bad.

L.B. Looking...to keep alive.

P.K. Was, very bad, very bad, yes, absolutely bad. Wasn't, uh, was a question, just to, from morning til night, to be able to exist. And whatever we have done wasn't allowed...no matter what we had done...

L.B. So it was illegal?

P.K. It was illegal, I mean, it wasn't illegal for everybody else.

L.B. No.

P.K. But for us it was illegal...for us it was illegal.

L.B. Do you mind telling me what kinds of things that you did that were illegal? I'd like the students to know, people to know, what did you have to do?

P.K. For instance...I was....buying <sup>vaif</sup> meat...taking it from our town, and bringing it into Lvov...and selling. This was not allowed.

L.B. Selling it for what? For kosher meat?

P.K. To the butchers, no, no, no, to goyishke butchers. Because the Jewish butcher in our town, he had, he had, he has, he had...it's not like here, he goes in a big market and buys kosher meat. He buys a cattle, and he slaughters it, the <sup>traife</sup> he sells, and uh, and the kosher he sells to the customers. So I bought the <sup>part</sup>. And I brought it to, to Lvov, to sell it to a goyishe butcher.

L.B. So why is that illegal? Only by Jewish law.

P.K. No, it, it's illegal to, for me to, to, to deal with meat.

L.B. Deal with meat, as a Jew?

P.K. Sure, nooo, as a Jew, yeah, because I am a Jew, yes.

L.B. Yeah. Under Polish law?

P.K. Yeah. Another thing, when you bring, the Jew, when you bring the meat into the big city, you had to go through certain legal things.

L.B. Right.

P.K. Now this, I couldn't...because it has to have the stamp.

L.B. Right.

P.K. So I couldn't do this. So I had to, everything had, what, whatever you have, you've done, ha...uh, was...a way to interpret, was illegal. But we, had to be done.

L.B. Like a smuggling and a black market operation.

P.K. Oh, that's right, that's, smuggling, yeah. And, as a matter of fact, in some cases, we, uh...we smuggled some...not me, exactly, because I worked, uh, this person, this thing up to another bad thing...is, uh, tobacco...and cigarettes, and so on. Some...flour, just plain flour, to bake...

L.B. Essentially, what they were trying to do is to deprive you of the chance to make a living.

P.K. Right, positively, yeah, right, yeah.

L.B. So any, anything which normally would be considered a legal activity, became illegal?

P.K. Yeah, positively, yeah.

L.B. What were you allowed to do, as a Jew?

P.K. Nothing. We were allowed to make shoes...

L.B. Which nobody could buy, yes.

P.K. ...tailoring...that's it. Yes, we were terrib...the, the, then when we re... really began to feel...depressed, uh, then we were Jews, yeah, then we...

L.B. Did you...oh, that was the first time?

P.K. Yeah, no, I mean...

L.B. Because then I...

P.K. ...we knew about it, we weren't, you know...

L.B. Yeah, yeah, I know.

P.K. But then we felt it really hard. As a matter of fact, as a matter of fact, that, one day....I came back from the big city, and boys my age, uh, my friends, tell me, by the train, they says, my, "Your mother told you, you shouldn't st... you shouldn't get off in, in town." I say, "Why?" "We don't know. She just send us to the train to tell you to...keep on going." Well, I went, and the next station I went...uh, I got off. And, I went back to...my mother, and, I said, "What is, what is, what is happening here?" He says, "The gendarmerie, (the police, in other words), is looking for you." Every house in town was turned over...for me. I said, "Why did you tell me to go away?" She says, "I, because I was afraid." I says, "NO! I'm not a..." "No, no, no, please don't go to the police!" So I didn't go, and...next day...I couldn't sleep, I just, and I went to the police, to the chief, and I says, "You looked for me, here I am." He said, "We don't need you no more." And that went on, many a times, every time I was away from the town, he looked for me all over. When I came back, he don't need me no more.

L.B. So what's the, what do you figure was the reason?

P.K. The figure for the reason was that I was, uh....they felt that I'm doing something against them...the, the police.

L.B. The Polish police?

P.K. Yeah, because I did, I did, I did gather, I did gather some information, for, for maybe, maybe I'll need it. So one day, uh, I came and I says, to the commander, "I am not going to go out of here, until you give me a paper that I'm completely free of any charge, or you charge me with something and you arrest me." "All right, if you want to sit here, you can sit here." So I sat there a whole day, until late in the evening, and...people saw me sitting there, let my mother know, she brought me ~~me~~ eat, and she said, "Why don't you go home?" I said, "No, I'm not going to go home. I, I, I don't want to live a life of a refugee. Everybody thinks that I, that I, I robbed, I killed or something." So finally, uh, we came over to close up, she says, "Are you going to go home?" I said, "No." He says, "All right. You're arrested." So they arrested me, and they send me over to the Polish Okhrana, if you ever heard of that.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. You heard of that?

L.B.  Mm hm.

P.K. All right. Now, to make it short, I was there, the Polish Okhrana, on... an investigation, and they....kept me for 38 hours, constantly beating me.... Uh, they didn't let a lawyer come to me...they hung me up by my feet with a, with my head in a bucket of water...(Pause)...and, it came so, they beat me so that, when they gave me a paper, and I was sitting like this, a, a paper to sign, I.....(Whispering)... "No"... They said, "We are going to beat you again. We are going to beat you to pieces." I say, "You can beat all you want. It don't hurt me no more." It really didn't hurt me no more.

L.B. Mm.

P.K. I really mean it. I was, psychologically, perhaps, prepared. It didn't hurt me no more. Until they finally, finally, threw me out, just threw me out. Threw me out, so I found a Jew in the street, I says, "Look..." I was all beaten up, bleeding everywhere. And I came home, and...(Pause)...and I couldn't rest no more, until I ...will do something to this here commander. And I did.

L.B. Oh, you mean you avenged yourself on the commander?

P.K. Yeah, not avenged personal...not, not, uh, physically.

L.B. No.

P.K. No. I gathered all the information necessary...

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. He was, he was corrupt and bribed during the, during the Austrian regime.

L.B. Yeah, mm hm.

P.K. And I gathered all this information, and I...brought it to the attention of the higher authorities. And they, finally, they investigated it, they arrested him. That, that, by the way, in conclusion with 2 more polacks...I done that, with 2 more Poles.

L.B. 2 Poles, not 2 Jews?

P.K. 2 Poles, no, no, 2 Poles, yeah, yes. And then, when, when my father...found that I am doing this here thing, he says, "Gottenyus, Vest machen a pogrom in

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. I says, "I don't care what is going to happen! This man must get what he deserved." *shadt. "My God, you will make a pogrom in the village."*

L.B. Mm.

P.K. So, when he was arrested...the w...his wife came to my house, our house, and she kneeled before my father, and begged him, "Please, let your son, go my, of my husband." And he says, "You talk to him," he says. "No, he has to pay. He has robbed, he has plundered. He has robbed everybody in town. And big, big things." Uh, from us, you know. And finally he was, he...uh, arrested, and he was, uh, his, all, uh, we...all his wealth was confiscated. And all because I was a Jew, nothing else, because he had nothing against me.

L.B. But it was not only you, then, it was the whole Jewish community, too.

P.K. Of course, sure, what, what...

L.B. Because, why go to everybody's house?

D.K. Oh, that's right. Uh, the excuse was that he's looking for me, and they're hiding me.

L.B. Right.

F.K. "But, what do you want from me?" "There is, there have been..." What was I investigated about? "Were you in Hungary?" "Yes." "Did you know Bela Kujin?" I said, "Yeah." I says, "Bela Kujin, yes, I, sure..." I knew him, I knew him like everybody else knew him. Do I, do you know Pilsudski, the president? Sure. Personally, of course I didn't, uh, have anything to do with him." "Why didn't you have personally?" Oh, all these questions, 38 hours.... Just, they want to pin on me, that, uh, I was in the, uh...

L.B. A Communist.

F.K. ...A com...I was a Communist. And when I was in the Polish Army, when I was in the Polish Army, we were a group of 80, some non-commissioned officers, we, they kept us....trained us and everything, re-trained us, in other words. And, they kept us apart, away from the, uh...uh, standing Polish Army. And the Polish Army was under standing order not to ever talk one word with us.

L.B. Who's us? Were you Jews?

P.K. No, no. That was already, that was already, Jews or non-Jews, because we were under suspicion, because some of us came back from Russia and from Hungary, under suspicion of Bolsheviks. They didn't address us, ever, with any other, uh, name, than Bolsheviks, Bolsheviki. They never called us men, or anything, not whatsoever, Bolsheviks. You had to answer, Bolshevik... "Bolshevik." Huh. Yeah.

L.B. That's weird.

F.K. Yeah. And, uh, uh, oh, the punishment that they dealt out to us, us, in the army, in the army, mind, non-commissioned officers. And the punishments that they dealt out to us, hm. They even, uh, in, I heard, worse things in other, uh, places, where they called in the reserve, these uh, uh, ex-soldiers.

L.B. Were they all suspected, also suspected of being ex-Bolsheviki?

F.K. Yeah, usually, there were, there were, amongst them were some, but they didn't know who, so the, so all of them.

L.B. Yes, yeah.

F.K. And they were treated very terribly, yes. As a matter of fact, one, one, uh, time...we marched from the, uh, training grounds, and, we got an order from the, uh...to sing, the marching army, to sing.

L.B. Yeah. Am I doing all right?

F.K. Yeah.

F.K. And, somehow or other, nobody, nobody responded...

L.B. Yes.

F.K. That's all. So when we came back, they gave us...to run, back and forth, back and forth, that went on for a long, long time, until everybody was knocked out and tired out. But they didn't stop. And, uh, me being in the front line, and away from the eyes of the...lieutenant...

L.B. Mm hm.

F.K. So instead of running, usual running...(Gets up to demonstrate?)...so I went like this...

L.B. Mm.

F.K. And he noticed it. He called me back, I went back, he says, "Are you a soldier?" I says, "Yes!" "How do you run?" I says, "How? A soldier's running." So he gave me a smack in...yeah, he gave the, the others he gave an, an order to turn about face, away from me...they shouldn't see it. And, the mood was then, there, that if I would only have said one word, after he hit me. If I would have said, "He hit me! Let's get at him!" It would have been bloodshed. But I didn't say anything. And...he hit me...and...I said to him, "This is only now, and here. I'm not going to be in the Army long." He says, "Because you talk back, you're going to..."

L.B. The guardhouse.

P.K. And they locked me up, locked me up, but it didn't last long...probably... he figured that I'm not going to swallow it...so? . So the sergeant came, and he says, "What did you, what did you have to answer him for?" I said, "Look...he hit me. And no matter what, there's no standing order in the Polish Army that a, that a soldier has to be hit, especially a non-commissioned officer, with a higher rank than we were, than we came into the army." He says, "All right, you wanna work in the office? Listen to me, take in the office, you'll hang around the office." So, I go in, that's, was that, that was that.

L.B. Did it never occur to any of you, then, in, uh, in Zolkiew that, uh, you should leave?

P.K. Leave where? Oh yeah, we wanted to leave, but where could we leave? You couldn't leave anywhere.

L.B. You had nobody to, uh, vouch for you, or send you papers?

P.K. To go to...America?

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. You couldn't, America didn't let us in. America didn't let us in. They had a quota, there was a quota.

L.B. The quota was already in effect?

P.K. The quota was in effect, the quota came in effect in about 192-...

L.B. '2-...1922 and '2-...

P.K. Uh, '22, '21, '22, but at that time I couldn't leave because I had to go in the army.

L.B. No, right.

P.K. And when I was out of the army, the, the quota was there. I couldn't leave.

L.B. What about going to Palestine, did that ever occur to you?

P.K. No, not to me, not to me.

L.B. Were you ever a Zionist?

P.K. No...no.

L.B. Never?

P.K. I was not, no.

L.B. You were not influenced at all?

P.K. No, not at all, no.

L.B. Did you do any reading about it, or anything?

P.K. I...have done, not only reading, I have had some friends that, that were very much involved with it, and, somehow or other, they couldn't, I, I wasn't convinced.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. If I...

L.B. And it was all...excuse me.

P.K. If I became, uh, what I am now, with regards to Israel, it's just, uh, I would say, in the late years, since Israel established itself, and I said that, once and for all, we must have a, a Jewish place of our own. And, as a matter of fact, I even discussed it with my daughter, and my daughter says, "Well, I hope you're right, because, uh, this time, uh, in the War, Hitler had to gather the Jews from all over and ship them with trains someplace to be killed. Here, you gather yourself, someplace."

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. I says, "Well, no matter what it is, we have to, we have to have our own place. We have to fight...uh, fight for it." And that's, now I am, I, huh, I don't call myself a Zionist, but I am very much, very, very much...yes.

L.B. And, during all this time, did you still feel that, all this time, that you were a Jew, or did you...

P.K. All...

L.B. ...never, or did you change?

P.K. No, no, no, no, no, stronger.

L.B. I'm talking about all the time in the army, and all these...

P.K. Oh, no, no...

L.B. That didn't change.

P.K. I was not a religious Jew, no...

L.B. Right, you were not the Jew your father wanted.

P.K. Oh no, but I was a Jew, and more, very much so, very much so. As a matter of fact, we had a Polish, we had a Polish captain, and he was an anti-Semite. And while we were up in the front, and they couldn't reach us with food for, for a long time; and, uh, so we ate, we had reserves, you know, they, how they, everybody carries reserve...but there were about 12 or 14 boys, Jewish boys, that came, that...were strictly religious, they didn't, uh, uh...they didn't eat anything except the bread, finally they ran out of it, and we saw that they are going to die, they're gonna actually die, because a lot of soldiers did die from hunger. The reason we didn't, the reason I didn't, because I organized the Jewish boys before the time came, they shouldn't confiscate our food, and then...uh, allocate it, we, we ourselves did it, and I and another boy were the ones to....

L.B. Ration it out.

P.K. ...it out. So, but when we saw this happen, so, we, I went to the captain, I says, the c...to captain, "Something has to be done about these boys. They're gonna die, they are absolutely gonna die. It's already 14 days that we didn't get any food." So, he says, "What do you want to do?" He said, "Give him your food." I said, "You know I haven't got any food." So I say, "I want to go to the, down to the chaplain, to the Jewish rabbi in, uh..." "You want to go down? You? You eat, you eat everything." I says, "Yeah, but I am a Jew. I want to go down there." He says, "If you want to go down, go ahead. If you want to put your life on, uh, in danger, you go ahead and do it, and I'll give you a permit." He gave me a permit, and I came to the chaplain, I says, "Why don't you do something?" He says, "I can't." So, I took a...whole sackful of whatever he put in there, it's <sup>2</sup>weibaks ~~and I can't~~ ————>, and sardines, and every...oh, maybe 200 lbs., and I can't...

772

(Tape ends)

Side 3

000

L.B. ...number 2...(tape off). O.K., Mr. Kraus, if you'll sit down...we'll try and finish.

P.K. All right.

L.B. Then you went back, and the captain said what, when you came back?

P.K. Yeah, and then he, himself, the, he was an anti-Semite, by the way...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. He, himself, suggested for me, I mean, made an application for a medal, for this. Yeah.

L.B. Now, it's 1924, right? What happened then, after...the, the Poles drove the Ukrainians out, right?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. And <sup>new</sup>established the Polish government. Did you remain in Poland, in your home town?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Until...:

P.K. Until 1924.

L.B. Until...

P.K. 1924.

L.B. And then what?

P.K. Then I...went to Argentina.

L.B. Oh, you did get out of Poland?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. So it did come to you to get out?

P.K. Yes, yes, finally I went out to Argentinian, yes. And I was in Argentina for 4 years, until 1928, and in 1928 I came to America.

L.B. You were able to get an Argentine...passport and visa?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. They let you in?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. And, the rest of your family stayed in Poland?

P.K. Stayed there, yes.

L.B. That was too bad.

P.K. Yes, yes. I wanted to bring my mother here....but, uh, she, uh, in 19-... uh, 1938, when we heard what's going on, I wanted to bring my mother here, I was very desperate, so she said to me, "How can...what choice would you tell me to make? Should I go to my one son in America? Or should I stay with my t... with my one son, two sons and daughter, in home?" So she remained.

L.B. So many choices like that. And you couldn't have gotten, uh, anyone else, out, other than you mother? It was...

P.K. Couldn't get out, no, no, brothers and sisters, the quota was, uh, was... you see, only the mother, and the mother was, uh, couldn't leave them.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. That's right. She also had to take care of, of the grandchildren that remained, after the mother, the, after their mother, that died. By the way, one is in Israel.

L.B. So some got out?

P.K. Uhh...2 of those children of my sister that died, they, they had, 2, 2, she had....one was killed, and one was...one died, and 2 remained...uh, during the Nazis, and they ran to Russia....they were in Russia, and after...uh, after the War, they came, one chose to re...be repatriated into Poland.... and one...uh, came into the, uh, how do you call them, those that had no land? Uh, to Italy...uh, I forgot how they used to call them...

L.B. There was the, uh, you mean the camps that they had, yes?

P.K. Yeah. And she, I...I put, I had my, my name in the paper every day...

L.B. Which paper was that?

P.K. Uh, in all the papers.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Uh, uh, in my business.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. So it was, big name, Kraus.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. So I used to....and, at the same time, I went to look, to the <sup>HIAS</sup> and all, ev...everywhere I could, to find anybody. Finally, I got many, many, uh... people approached me, "I am your cousin...I'm this, I'm that..." And when I asked them to "Give me some sign, you know... So, finally, I got a letter from...uh... Italy, from camp <sup>Berti</sup>, "If you are...Kraus, Philip. If your mother is such-and-such, and your sister was such-and-such, then I am your neice." So...so, immediately....I send money, and immediately I done everything I could. I sent my mother, my, uh, my son-in-law to Washington, he's a, he's a lawyer, and, to see to bring in, but she told me right now, "No." The one in Italy..."I am not going to...America. I want to go to Eretz. To Israel." I'm not going to discourage her. The other one, was in Poland, and when I told her, "Come to me. Come to me, nothing to worry about." "I'm not going to go to America, living through the revolution and the War, to live through another revolution." Because she was so brainwashed...you know, she was a Communist, she was a Communist functionary. And, as a matter of fact, she...

L.B. She had gone, she, these were the 2 girls that had gone to Russia?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. The one that's in Israel, her husband and a son was killed before her eyes.

And, she's now in Israel. And the other one, had, had run to Russia with her husband,

P.K.cont. and, she came back, he was sick, and she came back in Poland, and she was in Poland until, until, ih, uh, the '50s...until the '50s. She did not want to come to America, and then I send her money to go to Israel... maybe she'll be able to live there with her sister. She was, she, she came there to inspect for herself, and she says, No, she didn't like Israel at all. And, um, then I says, "Well, suppose you come to America?" No, she says, "I want to come to America..." Not to...stay, just to come and see for herself. I says, "All right." So she came to America, she was with, with us here, 2 months, and she left completely disappointed.."

(Phone rings, tape off)

L.B. I'm trying to remember what we were talking about. That's the thing, the phone came so suddenly.

P.K. Mm hm.

L.B. Oh, you sist...your neice. The one that came here...

P.K. Yeah. Well, so, she came here and uh, she was here 2 months and she was... completely disappointed in the way of life, and completely disappointed in America, completely disappointed in her uncle...which have sent money there since I left home in 1924, constantly, without being asked for it.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. And, the last night before she left, when I asked her, "Tell me, what is the matter, that you are so dissatisfied, that I couldn't please you all this time?" She says, "That's your fault." I says, "Why?" She says, "Because you made me believe that you are millionaire." I says, "How did I ever make you believe that I am a millionaire? Did I ever write to you that I am a millionaire?" She says, "Because you kept on sending money without even a...waiting for us to ask you that we need it." So this is what it was. So she kept on asking, here, ~~our~~ our neighbors, and my daughter's neighbors, "Where's my grandfather's, his real home? And where's he got his villa? And where's his servants?" That's the way it is, see.

L.B. So where did she go, back to Poland?

P.K. So finally, finally, when Poland started the squeeze, against the Jews, the Communist Poland...

L.B. Yes, yes.

P.K. Yeah, that happened...about 10 years ago, or so.

L.B. Right, right.

P.K. So...you know, there, she was, she was a Communist, she was a, she was a, an official. And so was he, because he was, before the War, he was in the, he was in the, um, in the, uh...uh, papers, in the newspapers, work.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. He was a reporter, or, or...so he worked for Poland, same thing. But, finally, when they started squeezing, they fired him,, and her. So, all of a sudden, I found that they left for Australia. There, in Australia, I don't hear from them. The, the one in Israel, very fine, very good, we constantly correspond, and everything's fine and good. But the one, this one has... disappeared completely, and I'm terribly disappointed, but I can't help it.

L.B. And so is she, probably, too. Life has probably disappointed her too.

P.K. I imagine so, but, I, when she left, I told her, "No matter what dis... what displeas...displeasures you went through here, and I went through, remember one thing: I'm your uncle..."

L.B. Right.

P.K. "...and, I'm always going to be what I always was. If you ever need me, you yourself told me, I, I sent you money and that's why you thought I'm a millionaire, which I'm not. But, if you ever need me, and you will send me, you will tell me that you need me, or you need money, I will always be open and helpful to you." She left, she never wrote to me, nothing. The sister, on the other hand, told me that she is very bad off...some, few years ago. So, uh, I says, "All right. If she'll tell me that she needs money, that she's bad off, she needs, no matter what she needs, I'll help her. But she has to tell it to me."



105 L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. Well, that's the way li...life had, is.

L.B. Uh, let me ask you some, uh...

P.K. Yes.

L.B. ...things that go further back, now, 'cause we...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Actually, it hasn't been too, uh...out of order, in the sense that we've covered certain, uh...

P.K. Oh yes, it'll have to be, uh, sorted, and things, it's just, uh...

L.B. Yeah, that's right, but it's not, uh, this is the way, uh, you remember, you see...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. And the way you talk. But, if I want to cover something specific...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. When you were little...you were going to cheder, you were going to public school, and so on.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. You played with, you had friends...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. You played with boys, right?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Was there any distinction made as to which boys you could play with and which boys you couldn't play with?

P.K. With regards to my own distinction?

L.B. Yes...no.

P.K. My, my...

L.B. In somebody's, anybody?

P.K. Yeah, yeah.

L.B. All right, how does this happen?

P.K. Well...I would hear remarks, either from my uncle, or it's from my father, "Why do you play with him? What's the matter? You have to play with, with uh, this one..."

L.B. What was the matter with the boy?

P.K. There's nothing the matter with the boy, we went in one cheder.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. But, uh...something was the matter with his, uh, with his, yichus or som... You know what yichus is?

L.B. Yes.

P.K. So, I says, uh, or he was poor, very poor or something, so...and I never could, uh, very well, understand these things, it was always a puzzle to me. And, it wa...the distinction was very sharp, all the time, all the time.

L.B. In your, it was made in your family...for you?

P.K. Yeah. It's not only in my family, it was all over.

L.B. I know, but I'm...first I'm talking about your family.

P.K. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yes, yes, yes, yes.

L.B. They followed this?

P.K. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

L.B. Because, uh, some people say, "Well, I could play with this one, I could play with this one. This one was a miller's son, this one was a rabbi's son."

P.K. Yeah, yes, yes, yes...

L.B. "This was a merchant's son..."

P.K. Right.

L.B. "But I [redacted] couldn't play with the cobbler's son, I couldn't play with the tailor's son."

P.K. Right, right, that's exactly what it was, yeah, that's what it was, yeah.

L.B. It was like that.

112 P.K. "Du bist zeyn chaver?" (You are his friend?)

L.B. Right.

P.K. No, that's, that's what it was, yes.

L.B. So, this is in the Jewish community?

P.K. Yeah, yeah, unfortunately, that's what it was.

L.B. Hm. And it was not just within your family...it was, the whole community.

P.K. No, no, it, it was generally acce...yeah, it was, that's what it was, yes.

(Phone rings, tape off)

P.K. Are you ready?

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. All right, we are...

L.B. Now, again, you see...lots of times, I, I, the last man I spoke to also recognized that there were these differences, some people refused to admit it; others felt it was O.K., it was natural, and that's the way things should be, other people feel, um...that's the way things are, but maybe they shouldn't be, and, you know, everybody has a slightly different picture, uh, of life, and how it was, and how it should be, and so on. Now, in the community, for example, uh, when you were very young, when the W...uh...how old were you when you went to, uh.....uh, Lemberg...Lvov?

P.K. You mean, leaving home?

L.B. Yeah, you were about 12?

P.K. Uhh, no, I was older...

L.B. So you weren't ready for girls...

P.K. I was older than 12...

L.B. Oh...

P.K. I was older than 12...

L.B. Were you ready for girlfriends, yet?

P.K. Oh no.

L.B. No, that's what I'm saying.

P.K. Or at least not in the open...(Laughs)...

L.B. Right, all right. Now, I was wondering if there were any, suppose your older brother, let's take him...Could he...

P.K. I didn't have any older brother.

L.B. Oh, that's right, all right. And your sister died in 1917?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. Well, suppose you were older, would there have been only certain girls...

P.K. No, I made a mistake with my sister died in 1917, no, she died later, I'm sorry, she, I was a little bit mixed up with the date...

L.B. That's all right.

P.K. She died in...I was already home after the War, sure.

L.B. Oh.

P.K. She died, I think, yeah, she died in 1920.

L.B. What I, I think, what I...want to ask is um...would there have been differences made in whom you could; suppose life had been normal, there had been no World War I...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Would they have said, "You can go out with this girl, and not with that girl...this girl, not with that girl"?

P.K. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, definitely, definitely....definitely, positively. And, uh, as a matter of fact, in my life it played the v...the very, very, uh, definite role, up til today.

L.B. What do you mean "up til today"?

P.K. Yeah...yeah, it had, it had...its repercussions...til today, until, until the last day of my life, it's, uh, it will have.

L.B. I don't understand that, if you want to...

P.K. I have the...there was a time when the, when the Jews ran from Russia. I was active, I was active in helping those, uh, refugees. And, at the same time, I, I, um, that was from the Bolshevik, uh...

L.B. Right.

P.K. ...thing, in the '20s. And, uh, I got to know a girl...and, that's all, got to know her. And, as a boy, I just....and nothing, uh, special in mind.

P.K.cont. And, somehow or other, my father, uh, got...to know about it, and he says, "I, I don't want you to...go with that girl." So, and I resented it. And the whole family, uh, on me, "Who is that girl? Who is she? Do you know who she is? Do you know who her father is?" I says, "What am I supposed to know who her father is? The girl, I'm not going to marry her." "Don't go with her. Don't even talk with her. She's a, she's a Russian, you don't know her father, you know nothing. Keep away from her." And this, perhaps, pushed me towards her. And, I'm sorry to say, and, because of this here, I said... yeah, and my father, in 1922, in 1922 he died...(Sighs)...He died as a result of a beating that the...pogromchiks gave him. And...

L.B. You had...I thought you said there were no such...

P.K. No, no, there weren't, but he went, as I said before, he went from town to town, and village to village, and hamlet...to butgeese.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And, while he went with this...uh, he had a partner.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And they...attacked him, with stones and every...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. ...br...br...brought him back, uh, bleeding, and uh...but not in our town. But, as, finally...and then my sister died in 1920, which gave him a very... a very big jolt, and in 1922...he died. When he died, uh, uh, 5 minutes before he died, he called me over, and he said, "I, be...if you are insisting to go with that girl, and you're gonna marry that girl, don't you say Kaddish for me." (Bangs on table? Long pause). Yeah...and...then, that, truly, that pushed me in to her, to her, and I married her, in spite, just for spite I married her.

L.B. What a hurt...

P.K. Just for spite...I married her, and, that was my downfall.

L.B. I hope you said Kaddish anyway.

P.K. Oh yeah, no question about it. No, I mean, that's nothing to do with the case. No...

L.B. He didn't mean it.

P.K. Uh, he mean...he said it...

L.B. He meant it when he said it...

P.K. Well...

L.B. ...but,he wouldn't want it.

P.K. And, uh, when I was to marry that girl...oh, they threatened me with all kinds of things, and then they finally gave me the final thing, "No one's going to come to your wedding, and it's no use of you making a wedding in this town." So, so I didn't...

L.B. Because she was, was she a Jew?

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. She was a Russian Jew.

P.K. Of course, she's the, she's the, she's the mother of my daughter.

L.B. This is...

P.K. No.

L.B. Oh.

2-37 P.K. So...sh...so...I married, made a mar...uh, a chippeh, by a rabbi, in Lvov. And...one, only, cousin, who was a very pious Jew, very pious Jew, he said, "I am going to come to your wedding, regardless of what they all think of, of me." He was a very pious Jew, he was a balfileh, you know what? "balfileh" is? He was a, the...uh...

L.B. The leader of the congregation.

P.K. In the shal, yeah. And, uh...he was the only one that said, "I'm going to come. Because, they're gonna be...so...back...I'm gonna come. You wanna marry her, that's up to you, that's your business, but I'm gonna come." And he did come. And my mother...uh, was pressured not to go, and we waited for her, uh, 3 or 4 trains, I mean, every 2 hours...by the fabbi, and finally she did appear. And that's all there was. And we married, and then I wish I were, ~~that I could have listened to them.~~

L.B. But you, that's not her...uh, you don't know what the reason ~~is~~ was, but you sure got off to a bad start.

P.K. Oh yeah. That's what it was, yes. And when, and...that's what it was.

L.B. Because, when you marry for spite...

P.K. Yeah, yeah. Yeah...that's...

E.B. You might have lost interest in the girl, in a month or a...

P.K. Oh yes.

210? L.B. !

P.K. No, they, they, as a matter of fact, they built up the interest.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Right from the beginning, they built up the interest.

L.B. It's too bad that people hurt each other so badly.

P.K. Yeah, they built up the interest. Now, when, when my daughter has, uh, her children, I says, "Don't push them to anything, because you'll just, you will achieve the reverse, the opposite. Don't push them...If you...I had my lesson, now, I'm giving it over to you, I can only tell you. I'm not going to tell you no more."

L.B. You can't do more than say it once. Twice, it's already...

P.K. As a matter of fact, they didn't listen...

L.B. ...you're bugging them. (Laughs).

P.K. They didn't listen to me. Because the, the boy grew up, they're, uh, push him to be a lawyer. I said, "Don't push him to be lawyer."

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. "Just go by slowly. If he want~~s~~ to be a lawyer, he'll be. If he wouldn't be, no matter how much you're gonna push, he's gonna be just the opposite. Like this, maybe he will be."

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. The result was, they pushed, and he's not a lawyer.

L.B. (Laughs)...Oh god...

211? P.K. That's what it is, uh, 'psychology...

L.B. It's not funny, it's just that if you don't laugh, you cry.

P.K. That's the psychology of, uh...works out that way.

L.B. Yeah, that's too bad, that's too bad. Because, then, once the person is dead...you never, you know, you never can settle anything anymore, that's what makes it so hard.

P.K. That's right, that's right.

L.B. So hard. I know.

P.K. That's right. Yeah.

L.B. So, all right. Now we talk about something more objective, because that's very painful, I know it can hurt.

P.K. Yes.

L.B. So, um.....did you tell me anything about Hasidism?

P.K. Uh...

L.B. In your, in your town, were there Hasidim?

P.K. Yes, there was. As I said...

L.B. You said, they were different from now.

P.K. Uh, we...today, when we think of Hasidim, we, we, some, some, our conception is different here, with Hasidim, like it was there.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. See, there, there, uh, it was different, too. Now, for instance, uh, uh, we here, what do you understand when you say, uh, Sephardic? Sephardic Jew, a Sephard...a Sephard that came from the other, uh, from the, uh, African countries, like uh, um...uh, Egypt, and, uh...and Iran, and those, they're Sephardic Jews, no?

L.B. No, it could also be, uh, anyone that originated in Spain, and then migrated to any part of Europe.

P.K. That's right, but the...oh. By us, on the other hand, we had a different conception altogether. Now, for instance, we called ourselves Ashkenazim.

L.B. Right.



P.K. Oh, , the Skvera, the Beltzer, the Kemana, the Lubovitcher, no, Lubovitcher is uh, is Russian already.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. But I'm talking of Galicia, oh, sure. Now, my, my father, as I said, he wasn't a Chusid, but yet he was. Now...

L.B. Yes.

P.K. ...for instance, when I was a child, when I was a, 'a little child of a year and a half, I had a, here, a, a sort of a, abcess over there...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. You know, a gro...uh, so, and I got sick with fever, and he was away in, uh...was away, and they called the doctor, and the doctor said, "He must go to the hospital, we must...open that..."

L.B. Cut it, yeah.

P.K. Cut it. So my mother, uh, you have already a little bit of a picture, so she said, "All right," And we came to the hospital. And, at night, my father came back, and, uh, "What's happening?" So she tells him. So, they, he takes

his brother...and *shpant en ah par* <sup>fer</sup>, you know... *(harness up a few horses)*

L.B. Oh, the, their horses...

P.K. Horses. And they run to the rabbi. Well, the rabbi said, "*Me darf nicht haben kein hospital*" You don't need no hospital, he'll be all right." So, they come back from the rabbi, uh, that all happened fast, in the middle of the night. And they go over the fence into the hospital, they steal me out, they kidnap me out from the hospital, they bring me home, and...I'll be all right. (Laughing)...And I'm all right... (Laughing). ? , yeah. So that's what he was, I mean...

L.B. Life was so restricted...

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. ...by what the rabbi said.

P.K. Oh yeah...yeah. To, uh, the business, uh, the business undertaking, ask the rabbi. And the rabbi, you see, in these things...gave me a lot of, uh...

L.B. "*Heart's vertung*" (*Heart ache*)

P.K. Brain-breaking, and heart's *vertung* , you know, was a, what is it, wha... what, uh, couldn't...

L.B. You see, love was measured differently, it was expressed differently. Because your father loved you...otherwise he wouldn't have bothered.

P.K. No, of course, but he had his, uh...

L.B. Right.

P.K. My mother, my mother, may...she rest in peace, she had a...she had to dance to the music, naturally...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Not only my father, but, uh, all surrounding. But, would she have lived here, under today's conditions, she would have been perhaps, a, a leader of the... (Laughing)...of the Women's Lib.

L.B. (Laughs). Yeah, I don't think she would have had to holler, she would have just done her thing... (Laughs)...

P.K. Yeah, her way, that's, that's very right, yes, that's right.

L.B. That's how she sounds to me.

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. She'd quietly go about what she had to do.

P.K. Yeah. Uh...Jean...

J.K. Yes.

P.K. Uh, where do we have...where do we have, oh, we have it home.

L.B. What? A picture?

P.K. Home, I have 2 homes, I get so lost, and there I have the picture.

L.B. ? Ach, moneh. (Laughs).

P.K. Yeah, yeah. No, she...

L.B. Then you must be a millionaire. (Laughs).

P.K. Yeah.

L.B. Look, I want to say thank you. I won't keep you anymore.

P.K. Thank you very much, thank you.

(over)

L.B. Am I going?  
P.K. Yeah.  
L.B. It's turning?  
P.K. Yes.  
L.B. O.K. So I'll just ask you, now, uh...you, um, you came h...to the United States in...'28?  
P.K. '28.  
L.B. '28. You, did you know...what languages did you know by that time? You must have know...  
P.K. When I came to the United States?  
L.B. Yeah.  
P.K. Polish, German...Spanish, Russian...  
L.B. Yiddish.  
P.K. Yiddish, of course.  
L.B. Hebrew, some Hebrew.  
P.K. No.  
L.B. No Hebrew?  
P.K. No Hebrew, no.  
L.B. Not, you didn't remember anything from cheder?  
P.K. Oh, from cheder, yes...  
L.B. Oh, O.K.  
P.K. ...but that's not, that's not the language, that's not speaking the language...  
L.B. O.K. All right.  
P.K. ...no, say something I will know what you're talking about, not...Hebrew language.  
L.B. Yeah. All right, now what about English? Did you know English?  
P.K. English, no. But...I picked it up very fast.  
L.B. You did not go to school here?  
P.K. I, I did go to school, but, uh, I, I, Uh, uh, either the school couldn't keep up with me, or I couldn't keep up with the school, because...I went, I registered to school...to night school, you know?  
L.B. Where did you live, in New York?  
P.K. In Brownsville, yes, New York.  
L.B. Yes, oh I know where that is.  
P.K. And, I went to school, and for a few days, the...teacher...sent me to the principal, and they...they changed me from this class to another class, because it's more advanced. Then I was there a few days, and they sent me out....so, a few ti...times, they transferred me, and says, uh, "We don't have the, this kind of class that you need, we don't have."  
L.B. Mm hm.  
P.K. So, um...I just done it on my own.  
L.B. So you learned English by yourself?  
P.K. By myself, yes, by reading...signs in the subways, and, and, forcing myself to read papers, and forcing myself to read books, and I, and...that's the way I learned it.  
L.B. Did you stay in Brownsville for a long time?  
P.K. Oh, I stayed in Brownsville until...19 hundred and...forty...nine.  
L.B. 1949. Did you have a business there?  
P.K. Yeah.  
L.B. Uh, were, uh, Brownsville was mostly Jewish...  
P.K. Oh...yes...  
L.B. I remember, 'cause I grew up in, uh, Ozone Park, which is not too far from there...  
P.K. Yes, yes...yes, yes. Ozone Park is not so much Jews, wasn't so much Jews...  
L.B. No, no, but we used to, my mother and father went there...  
P.K. ...no, yeah...Brownsville, yes, all Jewish, yes, yes...  
L.B. ...you know, to do their shopping. And, was there a Yiddishist movement there, at all?

P.K. Oh yeah, sure.

L.B. Were you involved with that?

P.K. Oh yes, sure.

L.B. Oh, you were? Now, could, tell me a little bit about that.

P.K. Well, uh, first of all, I, my daughter, I sent to, I wanted her to learn Jewish, Jewish...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And, I wasn't, uh, I didn't want her to go to, uh, religious, so I sent her to Dr. Chaim Jitlovsky's school.

L.B. Yeah, no, no...

P.K. You never heard about it? That's a Yiddishist, yes.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. He was a, he was a writer...

L.B. Say the name again.

P.K. Jit...Chaim Jitlovsky.

L.B. Chaim Jitlovsky. O.K.

P.K. Yeah. Uh, his, uh, his name was very well-known. And, uh, I was, uh, I was interested in Jewish affairs, very much. I was very active, uh, but really, uh, maybe too much. I, uh, I, uh, I was drawn in...to the, be involved in the anti-Nazi movement, to a point, I volunteered for an hour, for 2 hours and 3 hours, and ended up giving up my office, and being, working for them for \$35 a week, And I, I, I went from, uh, one hall to another...in the, in the evenings...

L.B. Yes.

P.K. The Bronx, and everywhere, to speak...

L.B. Yes.

P.K. And, and explain what Nazism<sup>is</sup> in Germany. And, and we had our man there, we had our agents there, who sent us in documents, documentary proofs, and pictures, of how the things looks, and everything. And I, this was my job...

L.B. What organization was this?

P.K. Anti-Nazi Mov...Anti-Nazi, there was an anti-Nazi league that was under, under Untermeyer. And this Untermeyer League was a league, they had, they had, their policy, we couldn't accept, so.....I, and a few with me, and some rabbis, Dr. Rabbi Goldstein, he was, he was a, he had a Ph.D. degree, and, and we organized that, that anti-Nazi movement.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. And, which, we weren't in conflict with them...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. But they, they didn't base their movement on the masses of people. You know, they based their movement on going here and there's uh, Rabbi Weiss going to the president, make...being a fool, made a fool. And we, on the other hand, wan...brought it out to the bar...broad masses.

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. So...that was the difference between us. But, uh...uh, unfortunately, wherever I spoke...wherever I spoke at that time, uh...uh...it seemed it had no effect, because a lot of people, and I had the, the, the proof was there, that in many places, that I spoke, after my speech was over, some people that would know me...from before, would come over and say, "Mr. Kraus, now, you tell me the truth. You don't believe...what you told us here. You, you know it's not true, it's, it's very exaggerated." I says, "No, it is true. I brought all the documents. We don't try to make any propoganda here, we try to just...bring the light to the people, they should see what's going on...with us, and what we are to expect." But nobody wanted to believe it. And when I asked my, uh, my, uh, neices, "Why did my brothers not leave...where they were, and run to Russia." "Because they didn't believe it."

L.B. That's right.

P.K. They didn't believe it. Russia had sent there, trucks, with their loudspeakers...all over the places, and announcing, "If you want to run...to Russia, we'll give you the possibilities to run."

L.B. They did?



P.K. Yes.

L.B. What year? Tell us something about that.

P.K. Well, that's what was, that was told to me, I mean, from my neices...that Russia had come with trucks, with loudspeakers, announcing that the Nazis murdered the Jews.

L.B. From the Soviet Union this was?

P.K. Yes.

L.B. In what year?

P.K. In the years, in the, in the, '38...'39...

L.B. That's before the Pact.

P.K. Yes, bef...before the Pact.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. Yes. And they....wait a minute, the, the Pact was in '38.

L.B. No, '39.

P.K. No, '39?

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. '39. I think it was <sup>f</sup>after the Pact...after the Pact.

L.B. Does she want to tell you supper's ready, you should stop? (His wife signals)

P.K. Uh...no.

L.B. (Laughs). O.K.

P.K. Yeah, she asked whether you were in business, she asked whether, she asked whether I was in business. Yeah, I was in business, I said, "Yes, yes." I was in business.

L.B. Yeah. I didn't ask him what kind, he didn't tell me...yeah...

J.K. That's what I mean, what, what kind of business.

P.K. Yeah, so, and what kind of business?

L.B. I want to hear about this business with the Soviets, and the taking the Jews out, this is the first I've heard of it.

P.K. Yeah, but they didn't, a lot of people didn't believe.

L.B. But I, I...

P.K. My brothers included, they didn't believe and they lef...and they remained there, and that's, uh, and they were...

L.B. I never heard the Soviets sent...people in to take the Jews out.

P.K. That, that's what I heard. Not to take them out, they say, "If you want to go, we'll allo...we'll let you go, we'll help you."

L.B. Yeah?

P.K. Those that want to go. But, but, unfortunately, the, my, my family didn't, didn't choose to go.

L.B. No, a lot of Poles didn't go, they thought that it wouldn't, uh...First of all...

E.K. They didn't believe it.

L.B. ...the Germans had a good reputation from the first War.

P.K. Right, right, right. So they didn't believe, and they, they, uh, and they ended up in ashes.

L.B. Well that's interesting, that uh...

P.K. I don't know, I, I heard this...

L.B. You say...your neices told you this?

P.K. Yeah, yeah...yeah.

L.B. And they were there when it happened?

P.K. Yeah...yeah. Maybe, maybe, maybe, uh, it was exaggerated on their part, which I couldn't, uh...know.

L.B. Why?

P.K. Bec...why? Because, I'll tell you why. First of all...

L.B. Oh they were Communi...one was a Communist.

P.K. Uh, one, one, one.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. So, I don't know, maybe, no, I heard it from more, I heard it from other sources, too. Maybe it wasn't everywhere, but I heard it from other sources, that the Soviets announced to them that the Nazis are murdering the Jews wherever they come in, and uh, um...alot of people just didn't want to believe it, because they were...anti-Russian, very much.

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. They had to make the choice, the Nazis or Russia, so they chose the Nazis because they didn't think that Germany's gonna act like they acted. See?

L.B. On the other hand, I just, uh, finished reading a book that said that the Soviets withdrew so rapidly, when the Germans first invaded, that they left their Jewish population totally...unprotected.

P.K. No...wait a...but then, after the Pact, after the Pact, Germany, uh, Russia took over a good part of Galicia.

L.B. Pol...yes.

P.K. Inclu...including where we, where we come from.

L.B. Yes.

P.K. Now, they were there...since the Pact, until the War broke out in 1941.

L.B. Right, right, right.

P.K. Now, while they were there...

L.B. Nothing happened?

P.K. No...but they told them. Now, the, when the Germans attacked Poland, in '41...

L.B. Yeah.

P.K. And the Russians...knew what's coming, so they told them, "Now you...if you want you can...run back to hinterland, to Russia..."

501 L.B. That's when they...yeah.

P.K. Well, yeah. So...

L.B. So they did not just...

P.K. Who ran? Uh, some survived, some didn't, but who didn't run, naturally... uh, perished. I kept on asking, "Why didn't my brothers..." 'Cause they didn't, they didn't believe, and so didn't millions...believe. Or maybe they were so much anti-Russians, that they chose to believe with the Germans rather than...

L.B. Don't forget that, even though they were Jews, they were also Poles.

P.K. No, no, no, not in my ca...not in, no, not in my brothers' case, no.

L.B. No?

P.K. No, not in my brothers' case. I don't know whether they became, uh, Communist inclined later, but they were not, no, they were not Poles, then.

L.B. No, in other words, Poles hate the Russians, the Germans hate the Russians...

P.K. Yes.

L.B. And they were influenced by these 2 factors...

P.K. Right.

L.B. And on the other side were the Russians saying, "Come."

P.K. And, and, and the best choice, the best normal choice...except for one that had more knowledge, was the Germans.

L.B. Yeah.

523 P.K. See? But, the...probably they, uh, like Hitler said, they were spreading propoganda, in other words, scare propoganda, we are making scare propoganda, which really isn't so; and some Jews chose to believe, rather, this, than our truth that this is what's happening to us. And, uh, and, uh, and to my...deepest sorrow, I see, when we talk in America, here, about these things...the American Jew, uh, so many years later, did not change one iota...same attitude. It's not gonna, no, here it's not gonna happen, can't happen here. And I say it can. Because if it could happen, there in Germany, why couldn't it happen here?

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. Did they display any more love for us? No. It's all a, it's all, it's all a question of the time, what the time would bring, what the economic situation would be, and if it would be a...an eruption, we are the first ones.

L.B. Now, your wife had a point, she wanted you to tell me what kind of business you were in.

P.K. Oh, I was, I started in...selling...groceries, wholesale, also to a....  
a, thing, that, we were forced to be able to maneuver our ~~business~~ <sup>through</sup> to make a living, because, I came here, I didn't have any ~~resources~~ <sup>resources or anything</sup>

L.B. Mm hm.

P.K. ...retraining, or anything. And then, from this, I, I became a business broker. And from a business broker...I became a real estate broker. And I gave up the business brokerage for the real estate, because I couldn't, have so much time.

L.B. Mm hm, mm hm.

P.K. And this was my business, until I retired, real estate broker.

L.B. O.K., Mrs. Kraus? Is that what you wanted him to say?

P.K. I don't see, this has no bearing on the thing...

L.B. She wanted it down, you're tapping it...

J.K. It just seemed as though he were evading the answer...that's all.

L.B. I thought, well, he skipped, so I didn't bother him, you know...

P.K. No, no.

L.B. Sometimes people...

J.E. Because you did ask.

P.K. No, it wasn't...uh, it wasn't such a terrible, uh...important...no...

L.B. And I'll...I will...

P.K. Uh, any more question, if you, uh...

L.B. No, I covered...

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(Tape ends)