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Ernest Lowen, April 1975

Ernest Lowen

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Interview with Ernest Lowen, Fuerth, Bavaria at his home
in Schenectady, N.Y. Xxm Interviewer - Prof. Stephen Berk

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?? I'll just sit in the background.

L.B. Now, let's...

E.L. I thought you wanted to have my background.

S.B. Let me begin, Mr. Lowen, by telling you what we are doing.

E.L. Yeah.

S.B. The precise nature of what we are doing. I am a professor of Russian History, I teach European History as well, and I also teach a course, or 2 courses, in Jewish History. And what I am attempting to do is, through interviewing people like yourself, to reconstruct, uh, the life of Jews in Europe in the period before 1939. That is, actually, as far back into the, as far into the early part of the 20th century, as we can go.

E.L. In '3-, before '39?

S.B. Before 1939.

E.L. Why? Before 1939? Why, why not after '39?

S.B. The reason for that is, there has been a lot of work that has been done on that period already, that is, Jewish life during the War, and of course, Jewish life in the United States after the War. There are many studies that are being conducted now, on that. But people have not been doing is attempting to reconstruct life, Jewish life, in the earlier part of the twentieth century. And what we would like to do is, what I am going to do is, we take this, and we make a transcription of it, we have someone type off the cassette, and we, we plan on placing these in the library, that is, transcriptions of this, in the library, for students of Jewish history and European history, to consult. Because, what you can tell us, in many cases, is what we cannot get in books. That is...

E.L. But is that fo...what I...

S.B. What you tell us, what people like yourself can tell us, uh, that information is something that we cannot get in books. That is, we want to know how the individual human being was affected by historical events. And, we hope that this will be of great importance to our students, and students will consult these, this material, At a later date...we have no direct plans now, but at a later date, we may want to publish this. Now, it is necessary for us to have some form of written consent by you, so that we can make the transcriptions.

E.L. What is that? Some form...

S.B. Some form of written consent, something in writing from you, so that we can place the transcriptions in the library, and so that students can consult them, and indeed, in case we want to publish them. So, at the end...we would give you something.

E.L. A written consent that you use it in the library.

S.B. That's your permission...

E.L. Yeah.

S.B. It's your permission to allow us to use it in the library.

E.L. Library, yes.

S.B. Yes.

E.L. But I wouldn't want it in the public, uh, newspapers or...

S.B. No, no, we will not put it in the newspapers. (Mr. Lowen begins searching

L.B. Oh, he needs his glasses.

for glasses)

S.B. Oh.

L.B. Over there?

S.B. Do you want to, uh, shut this off for a moment?

L.B. Yeah.

S.B. Which one, this one?

L.B. Yes. (Tape off). I have another tape, so we're O.K.

S.B. If you have any questions, jump in.

(Mumblings, setting up the recording, tape off).

S.B. No. Can we begin by...your stating your name and your age?

E.L. Uh, Ernest T. Lowen. Lowen, L-o-w-e-n. Over 75.

S.B. Can you tell us something about the place where you were born?

E.L. Yeah. It is, the city is...Fuerth, F-u-e-r-t-h, in Bavaria...Germany.

S.B. Is that not Henry Kissinger's city?

E.L. Yeah.

S.B. I was right.

L.B. Aaaah. So...

E.L. It's the same city. He came to Fuerth...as a young child...

S.B. Yes, right.

E.L. Or he was born in Fuerth, maybe, but his father came to Fuerth...uh, and was a very pious man. I won't say, you know yourself. It's more important...

S.B. I will, I will ask something about that later. Can you tell us something about the city of Fuerth?

E.L. About the city?

S.B. About the city.

E.L. Oh yes, I can. I can answer any question you...can give me. As long as I am able to hear it.

S.B. Yes.

E.L. Uh, Fuerth was as, medium-size city of about 75,000 people. And, uh...maybe, 2000 Jewish persons. The people lived there, for hundreds of years. We had a cemetery in which were stones of 300 years...they were undisturbed...for a time of, probably of, uh, it would be, 150 years, before, it belonged to the Catholic Church, to the Archbishop of ~~Bamberg~~ ^{Bamberg}, he was the owner. And, see nearby was another city, like here Scotia, that was Nuremburg, a big city, that was a free city, they had no master over them. But Fuerth, itself, was...a city similar to Schenectady, and very many wealthy, uh, Jewish companies and human beings lived there since generations they considered that as a matter of course, they were born there, their father was born there, their grandfathers were born there.

S.B. Can you tell us something about how the Jews of Fuerth made a living?

E.L. Oh, they made a living in all kind of ways. Very many...were...wholesalers, some were bankers, some were manufacturers, some were exporters. Then, uh, of course, uh...some were doctors, some were lawyers, some were workers, some were...in everything.

S.B. Can you tell us something about your family? What kind of a family were you born into?

E.L. My family, I have, uh, uh, ^{origin} ~~only tree~~ in years, uh...uh, uh, family tree, that goes back of at least 200 years, living in ~~Germany~~ ^{Fuerth}.

S.B. What did your father do? What was his occupation?

E.L. My father, uh, had, uh, a wholesale business in textile.

S.B. Was the family...a well-to-do family?

E.L. Oh, I wouldn't say well-to-do, but they, they made a good living. As a, for example, my grandmother had 18 children. And, to nourish them, that must have been quite a job...and her fath...her husband died with 54 years, so it was on her and grown-up children, the oldest was 20 years, to make a living for the others. I hope that answers your question.

S.B. Yes, yes it does. Now, you say your grandmother had 18 children...

E.L. Oh, I would have to look it up...

S.B. No, that's all right, that's all right...

E.L. ...18, or something like that...

S.B. That's all right, a very large family. Did most of the family remain in Fuerth?

E.L. Yeah. Yeah!

S.B. So then you had many cousins, many aunts and uncles...

E.L. Very many, yeah.

S.B. ...living in the city. Can you describe your education?

E.L. My education...was the middle...just one. At that time...in, if uh, there were, uh, 50 children in a, in a class, then maybe 1 or 2 went to college, not like nowadays, and nowadays here, the people didn't have the money to send their ki... children to college, and they didn't have the ambition to either. So, I had a, 4 years in fir...in the first school, what do you call it?

L.B. Elementary.

E.L. Huh? Elementary school, 4 years, and 6 years in a, so-called, high school.

S.B. Gymnasium.

103? E.L. Riaschul was the name...it was uh...

S.B. Riaschul, riaschul.

E.L. ...not gymnasium.

S.B. All right.

E.L. And, in coming through...I've still my last report card here...in coming through, in fair, with fair grades, I...tried, uh, to get a job...that was much more difficult than you could imagine from American point of...scene, very difficult, to get a job as apprentice, you couldn't find any, nobody wanted you.

S.B. An apprentice in what field?

E.L. I, I would have come in any field, but I couldn't get a job.

S.B. Did you have any special training...

E.L. No, uh...

S.B. ...in terms of an occupation?

E.L. ...school training, I/...

S.B. Just the school training.

E.L. I had, uh, a thing from school, I had very good marks.

S.B. Were...

L.B. May I ask a question?

E.L. We learned everything, chemistry, and physiciary, physics, mathematics, and English, and German, and everything.

L.B. Were the, were the, were the guilds, were there still guilds of any kind, in Fuerth? I mean, you say, you wanted to become an apprentice...now, would you become an apprentice, to whom?

E.L. Uh, to, in a place in a, in a business.

L.B. Oh, I see, that kind of an apprentice.

E.L. And then, uh.....finally, I got a job in the neighboring city...but I had to...tr...go with train every day, from my home...town, and from my living quarters, by train to that other city. And, say, I had to walk 15-20 minutes til I came to the office...

S.B. Now, is this the city of Nuremburg?

E.L. Yah, Nuremburg. And, had to walk 20 minutes 'til I came to my office.

S.B. Now, I'm concerned about your education, if I could just ask you some more questions about that. This was a public school?

E.L. Oh, yes.

S.B. This was a public school, your parents did not, this was not considered a private school, you didn't, your parents did not pay money for this?

E.L. Yah, that, that I don't know. I think it was, you didn't have to pay anything, I don't think so.

S.B. And this was a school...

E.L. Public schools.

S.B. And this was a school in which there were Jewish and non-Jewish boys...

E.L. Everything mixed up, yeah.

S.B. All right, all right. Were there, was it a, were there boys and girls in the school, in the class?

E.L. No, no girls.

S.B. Just boys.

E.L. The girls were something for itself all the time. Later on, if we come to it, I will tell you...girls, they was...something strange, you had nothing to do with girls..."til you went to the dancing class, and there you had nothing to do with them either, only to dance.

L.B. (laughs).

E.L. Oh, that is a story for itself, if you want to hear about that later on.

S.B. What type of, did your family provide for you, any type of Jewish education?

E.L. Yah, we had, uh, in school, religious hour, lessons, no? That was, a Jewish teacher, or, in the higher classes, everybody. But our, knowledge, in that respect, was not too big.

S.B. Now, you say, a rabbi came in to give you instruction during the religious hour?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. And, do you remember how many, was this just one hour a week? Do you remember..

E.L. One hour a week, or 2 hours a week, that was the most. That was for the Gentile children's, *the same thing*.

S.B. And this was the limit, this was the most that you received? Your family...

E.L. What I had. There are people who went to the school where Mr. Kissinger went, they had maybe 10 hours. That was a Jewish school.

S.B. That was a Jewish school, yes, but you did not go to a Jewish school.

E.L. Noo, Kissingers went to, because the times were different.

S.B. Yes, yes. And how would you characterize your family's religious background?

E.L. Ummm, like here, let me say, it's a Conservative. Not like Reform, because Reform didn't exist at that time, except in a few big cities.

L.B. Can you get a year, Steve?

E.L. Conservative.

S.B. All right. Do you, uh...how often did your family go to the synagogue?

E.L. Like the people here go.

S.B. Like the people here.

E.L. Uh, Saturday sometimes, but mostly only for the Holidays.

S.B. Did you observe the Kashruth?

E.L. As I was young, yah, my mother did.

S.B. Your mother did. Did your mother come from Fuerth?

E.L. My mother came also from the city, yah.

S.B. All right. So both your mother and father came from the city.

E.L. Both came from the same city.

S.B. And you...went to an elementary school, then to the realschul...

E.L. High school, yah.

S.B. Right. And you graduated from the realschul...

E.L. Yeah.

S.B. And you were, uh, about 16 years old when you graduated?

E.L. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$.

S.B. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, from the realschule. And then you attempted...

E.L. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$, I attempt, school years is behind me.

S.B. That's right. And then you got yourself a position, you got yourself a job.

E.L. I got a job, yah.

S.B. Now, I would like to ask you some questions about relationships with non-Jews, in the period through your school years. Do you have any experiences of anti-Semitism? In those years?

E.L. No. (long pause). I wouldn't say this, no.

S.B. Now, do you remember any abrasive incidents, were there, was there any difficulty?

E.L. O.K.! In...in, uh...gymnastic classes, sometimes, the Jewish children, including myself, were not the biggest success. Those, uh, teachers, sometimes made a, a, remark...

S.B. But there was no violence?

E.L. Violence?

S.B. No, nobody was beaten up, um...

E.L. Violence in school, didn't exist.

S.B. No, I mean outside of schools.

E.L. Outside, no.

S.B. On the way to school?

E.L. Oh, no.

S.B. No.

L.B. But to, with the mouth...

E.L. Hmm?

L.B. Ey, by mouth, then, the teachers, would, uh, would you say the teachers, uh, would differentiate, then, between Jewish boys and non-Jewish boys?

E.L. No, I wouldn't say so.

L.B. No. But, you, you remembered something in a gymnastics class.

E.L. All right, yes, but...

L.B. Yeah.

S.B. All right, so...

E.L. They made some jokes, I don't know, uh, that was maybe a little...uh, anti-Semitic, uh, colored, but...you were not so sensitive... Sure, there was, a certain kind of anti-Semitism was, uh, there in the people, but uh.....hardly remar...uh, noticeable...

S.B. So it's fair to say, then, that in your early years, anti-Semitism was not an important factor...of life?

E.L. Oh no, no. Not an important...as I say, it, it was, I wouldn't say it was nonexistent...sure, uh, there were single people who, who didn't like Jews, maybe they were, the ~~people~~ working, and uh, they were not satisfied or something like that, and they were...unfriendly to Jewish people, but.....I didn't have any bad experiences. I had goo...Gentile friends, and...

S.B. Did you, you say you had Gentile friends, did you mix with Gentiles?

E.L. Mix?

S.B. I mean, did you go to parties...when you got older, when you got into...

E.L. Parties? There were no parties in that, in school. School was school. There were no parties.

S.B. When you reached, let us say, 13, 14 years old?

E.L. Oh, you mean private parties?

S.B. Private parties.

E.L. That didn't exist either. If somebody had a party, let me say, if they had a daughter and they made a party, that means that 2 or 3 boys were there, where the girls were, and the whole city talked about it...

L.B. (Laughs).

E.L. ...what do you think about it.

S.B. All right, then...if we talk about boyfriends, boys that you played with.

E.L. Oh, boys.

S.B. Boys. Uh, were they Gentile boys?

E.L. We, we had no arguments, but, we were not tightly friends.

S.B. But, would you say that your friends were Jewish?

E.L. (Long pause). I wou...there was not so much in Germany, there was no, mu... not so much like here, this Community Center, and things like that didn't exist. Whatever you did, you did in school.

L.B. All right, that's, in other words, wha...do, are you saying, that there was no, when you were a young boy, before you got your job, there was really no social life after school except in the family?

E.L. There was no social life.

L.B. It was mostly in the family, is that correct?

E.L. Sure, yah, yah.

L.B. Is that what you wanted?

S.B. Yes, yes, that's...

L.B. So, your whole life, outside of school, was centered...were there any brothers or sisters? Did you have brothers or sisters?

E.L. Yeah, one brother and one sister.

L.B. You had one brother and one sister, a mother and a father, and you all lived in one house, right?

E.L. Yah, yah.

L.B. All right. So then, your social life centered around these people, plus your aunts and uncles and cousins, etc. Is that correct?

E.L. The social life was, with the relatives, was not so tight. Uh, they, everybody had to do for himself to make a living, and, you saw them sometimes, for instance, a grandfather, my grandfather went with me for a walk, but, he didn't ask, "Do you come along in school?" or "You don't come along". Everybody took care of himself. They didn't...that was, they talked about the weather, about the garden, or about what the rabbi said in the sermon, but they didn't go into depth in your, uh, in your interests, what is going on in your mind.

L.B. Were you lonesome?

L.E. Hm?

L.B. Were you lonesome as a little boy?

E.L. No, I was not lonesome, I had to...

L.B. No.

E.L. ...my work to do, I had my parents around me, and I had a, a few friends or people with whom I can talk, I was not lonesome. (Long pause). The main thing was school, your day was filled with work and school. And was every...everything out, extra-ordinary strict. There was no going against the teacher, or anything like that, that just didn't exist, didn't come into the mind of a boy or of a child. What the teacher said that was...first command, it went over the commands of God.

S.B. Was your father concerned with politics?

E.L. No, no...

S.B. Was there...

E.L. He was concerned to make a living.

S.B. Oh, so he was, there were...

E.L. And you couldn't do that.

S.B. There would be no, then, no political discussions in the house?

E.L. Oh, no, no.

S.B. Nothing at all.

E.L. Politics, uh, played at that time, not a big role as it plays nowadays. As I say, you had to make a living, and that was very, very difficult.

S.B. In the period in which you were growing up, many things, many important things were happening in Europe, and also within the Jewish community. Do you remember any of those things, in the sense, for example, uh, the Zionist movement was forming in this period...

E.L. You know, I don't remember everything, I remember that there was a big...uh..... thing, uh...against Jews, in Russia, in 1906. Kishinev.

S.B. After the Kishinev Pogrom.

E.L. That was something my grandfather, uh, talked with me. But he never asked me, "How do you feel?" or "How is your girlfriend?" or things like that, that didn't exist.

S.B. But you remember that the Jews, or at least some of the Jews of Fuerth, uh, knew about the Kishinev Pogrom and were upset about it, is that right?

E.L. Oh, sure, sure.

S.B. Can you describe, to the best of your knowledge, the reactions of these people, to what was happening in Kishinev? That is, what happened, outside of the fact that your grandfather spoke to you?

301 E.L. No, you see, there were, in Germany there came many Russian, or Polish Jews through, and...they found willing exce...reception, and contrary to what they tell, you hear very often they were taken care of...and, uh, they were treated fairly, but they were different kind of people at that time, right, they came, very, very poor, and they didn't know what to do with themself...themselves; so, what could you do with the people? You could ^{help} ~~help~~ them, and that was done, absolutely done...but not, naturally the people were ^{all} ~~all~~ very satisfied with that, they wanted to stay, or they wanted to, to make a living. In fact, everybody was busy with his own making a living, so they couldn't go into the depths with this thing. So they didn't stay too long and went on to another city.

S.B. So you did have Russian and Polish Jews arrive in Fuerth?

E.L. Especially in Polish, Russian I don't think so many.

S.B. And you had Polish Jews arriving in Fuerth...

E.L. Oh yes...

S.B. ...in the period before the First World War?

314⁷ E.L. ...and some, and some stayed there, and did very well. I know, a few years ago we had here a singer, ^{his grandfather lived ne...near us.} He, I don't know, you were not here at that time...I guess...uh, as a Cantor, on the Holidays. His grandfather had a milk bu...milk bu...business, in, in Fuerth. And I reminded him, because he had the same name as his grandfather, that they were living near me. And, uh...what else did you ask?

S.B. What about the Zionist movement?

E.L. That, uh, it came up, that.....this was something new, but, there again, most of the German Jews, they're busy with making their own living, and they were.....uh, uh, interested to make that. I don't think they took, in the beginning, too much interest in the Zionist movement.

S.B. Did you know of Herzl?

E.L. Whom?

S.B. Herzl.

E.L. Oh, yes.

S.B. You knew of him...uh...in Fuerth?

E.L. And I knew more about him, uh, in later years, as I was grown up.

S.B. Yes, yes.

E.L. At that time, as I was a child, I didn't care about politics of any kind.

S.B. All right.

L.B. Excuse me, Steve, would you just check and make sure that's running.

S.B. All right.

L.B. Is it running?

[Checking tape recorder]

S.B. Yes, it is. Is it fair...or let me put it, the question, this way... Was your family, and were you, secure...in your Germanness? That is, did you consider, you considered yourselves to be German, is that right?

E.L. Yes.

S.B. And, as far as you s...you can remember, that is, you did see yourself, and your parents saw themselves, living their lives out in Germany?

E.L. Of course. There was no reason to think otherwise.

S.B. Did you have any family outside of Fuerth?

E.L. My brother lived in Berlin, my sister lives, lived in Nuremburg, but, otherwise, not many, if any, I don't remember.

S.B. Was there any...Social Democratic element in Fuerth?

E.L. You mean, Communistic?

S.B. No, Socialist.

E.L. Socialist.

S.B. S.P.D.

362⁷ E.L. Socialist, oh yes.? We like, today, in ^{Germany}, Sociale Demokraten, Socialist, the movement is, uh, main...uh, the, from the workers...and there were, sure, there belonged Jewish people to it too, had some, had, uh, uh, big voice in it.

S.B. Do you happen to know if your...how your father voted, or if he voted?

E.L. He voted, uh, Democratic.

373⁷ S.B. He voted Democratic. Does the name, or did the name, ^{hwalrt} ~~Al~~, mean anything to you?

E.L. How about?

S.B. ~~Al~~ Ahwalrt.

E.L. Ibat?

S.B. Al-vat. Ahwalrt. A-h-w-a-l-r-t.

E.L. Ahl-vat?

S.B. Yeah.

E.L. No.

S.B. So there was no...uh...you were not worried about anti-Semitism? Again, I'm going back to this, in Germany.

E.L. Not in that years, what you ask for. There were anti-Semit...^hh, -mitism, in, before I cou...was born, I guess, in Austria, there was in Vienna, there was a mayor who was^hanti-Semitic, as far, as far as, I remember that my parent, my father told me.

390' S.B. Yes, that was Mayor Luaga.

E.L. H^hh?

S.B. Luaga.

391' E.L. Yah...?

S.B. Yeah, yes. Now...

E.L. But in Germany there were Kai...Empore^ss, and there were kings, and...if they didn't want that, in Bavaria there was a king, or a king representative, and they came to Fuerth, into the synagogue...

S.B. Who came to Fuerth?

E.L. The king.

S.B. Now, the, the, the Kaiser, you're talking about?

E.L. Not the Kaiser, the Kaiser was from the, from the.....the highest in...

S.B. Oh, you're talking about the King of Bavaria, all right.

E.L. ...all of Germany. I say...from Bavaria, yes.

S.B. And you say he spoke in the synagogue?

E.L. I didn't say he spoke...

S.B. Oh, I'm sorry.

E.L. I think he came once.

S.B. And, was this when you were a young man?

E.L. No, no, no, I was not born.

S.B. You were not born, this was before...this was before.

E.L. I'd say they are not anti-Semitic. The Hohenzollern was the name of the House.

S.B. Yes.

E.L. And they were not anti-Semitic at all.

S.B. Did your father speak at all about the Kaiser? Um, did, was there any talk, about the Kaiser?

E.L. Who, that was not so important, as I say...I had to do with making a living; politics, Kaiser, uh, did...or...parliament, that was, in the fifth grade, first a man has to have something in your pocket. And that was difficult, to make one dollar.

L.B. Excuse me, why was it so difficult then?

E.L. Because, the competition was very big.

L.B. Were you competing with Jews and non-Jews, or...

E.L. Oh, sure.

L.B. You w...it was a general competition, then?

E.L. Oh, sure.

L.B. And who was your market, who was the market?

E.L. The market, as I was...uh...grown up, I had...made the market wider, uh, see.. Before the whole market, what we tried to work on was...maybe 100 miles from the home town. And...

L.B. So it was a local market.

E.L. No, you couldn't say local market, 100 miles was a lot with a horse...

L.B. Oh, yah.

E.L. ...and a thing, no? Or 200 miles...but as I grow up, I went away from that ide I travelled in all of Germany, or in large part, and...and I had a specialty, and so I made...very much better.

L.B. But your father, we were talking about, was struggling, and the reason was...

E.L. The older, yes, the older generation...because there was so much competition, that is incredible. We had, in that one town...I was not born at that time, maybe 50, uh, wholesalers, in the same stuff. And, as I got, was grown up, there were, from the 50, maybe 10 left. They all disappeared, couldn't make a living.

L.B. And, these wholesa...

E.L. And it was similar in Poland, this condition, in that respect was, in Poland, very similar. There were, in Poland, I was once in Poland because, uh, I was near the border... And, it was a Jewish city from 100,000 people and 99,000 were Jewish people. There, on the street, ⁴⁶⁵ they stopped one stopped you, you should buy a newspaper for 5¢. And, if you didn't buy it, he was behind you for 10 minutes 'til you buy, bought it for 5, 5¢. And then, 2 other ones came, and beat him up, they want part of the 5¢. You have no idea what is poor...

S.B. (Pause). Did you, in your education, in your religious education, did you learn Hebrew?

E.L. No. Only as uh, prayers.

S.B. Only for the prayers.

E.L. What we learned. We were able to read the prayers, and we were able to translate some into the other language.

S.B. Now, if my calculations are correct, by the time that you graduated from the Realschule...this was, well this was not very much before the First World War.

All right, my, my question to you is...uh...did you, was there a feeling in, of your generation that something was imminent? Did the War come as a surprise to you?

E.L. That's difficult to say today...

S.B. Today, I know...it is...

E.L. ...after such a long time. Uh, if you want to say the truth, uh...it surprised us, yah.

S.B. Can you remember, again, going back to that time...Do you remember, growing up, any hostility directed towards other countries? Was there a hostility, a, a fear, or a dislike, for other countries, other peoples?

E.L. Fear...for other people?

S.B. No, fear of...other people...

E.L. Oh...

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(Tape ends)

Side 2

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S.B. Excuse me, yes it is.

L.B. O.K.

S.B. I mean, before the War. Was there any anger directed, for example, to the French, to France, to England?

E.L. There was not much friendship at that time between Germany and France, but... why, because, the last war was 1870, and that was uh...about 40 years later.

S.B. Yes.

E.L. 44 years later.

S.B. You said that you had...

E.L. I came to France, too. There were, the Jews were very...French, they wanted to hear only French, and they don't wanted to know anything from Germany. See, I remember, I came to France...to buy things.

S.B. And this was before the War?

E.L. That was before the War. And in the War, no, not in the War, before the War.

S.B. And, before the War, when you went to France, uh, you dealt with Jews and non-Jews, or just Jews?

123 E.L. There I dealt with Jews, that was in Mulhouse, Uh, there were...the Jews...in the textile business, and I had...I wanted to buy there, bought there...and...

S.B. So, this was in Alsace?

E.L. Alsace, yah.

S.B. Right, so they spoke German.

E.L. No, no, they spoke...preferably, uh, French. They did, if they couldn't talk in French, they talked German, they didn't want to be German, but at that time they were German. I think it belonged to Germany at that time.

S.B. That's right.

E.L. But they were in their heart and in thier daily things, uh, French. Isn't that right?

S.B. That is right, that is right.

E.L. Yes, at that time I was, yeah.

S.B. Right. Now, you mentioned that you had a brother and sister, is that right? Did they receive the same type of education that you did?

E.L. Yah. My brother, sisters...they didn't get education. They were in a mi... girls' school, where Mr. Kissinger worked, anyway...the older gentleman...in the beginning, in a girls' school, and they learned...a little bit of everything, when, then, altogether not much.

L.B. (Laughs).

S.B. So they went to a religious school?

E.L. No, no.

S.B. No.

E.L. He was not...always in the religious schools, he was...only in the beginning, and then he came to a city school, a maiden ~~school~~ ^{School}, a girls' school.

S.B. And how long did your sister remain in school?

E.L. Hm?

S.B. How long did she stay in school?

E.L. The same...

S.B. The same.

E.L. About 10 years.

S.B. And what did she do, when she left the school?

E.L. Oh, that was a different life, girls didn't work, no? They learned household duties...and they learned a little bit...music, and I don't know what they did, they waited 'til they found, um, who, ha...married them. They went to dancing school...

S.B. They sat and they waited.

E.L. Hm?

S.B. They waited.

E.L. Oh, sure...

S.B. They waited to get married.

E.L. ...that was the usual thing. They, nobody went to work at that time. That started later, that the girls also went to work.

S.B. I have just one more question on, on the Zionist movement...and that is, was there any sympathy for Palestine? Did people give money to Palestine? Do you remember your father giving money, did you ever give money?

E.L. There were no collections...

S.B. There were no...

E.L. ...Like you have today. There were, there were no collections from the Jewish community at all, because...the Jewish community was maintained, of means, of the State. The State paid everything. And the State, on the other hand, collected it from the person. You had, on your tax declaration...so-and-so many % belonged to the Jewish, uh, community. And if you said you are no Jew, you are no Protestant, you are no Catholic, that doesn't exist, everybody had to belong to a religious, to one religion, and had to pay the tax. You couldn't say, "I am no...have no... religion".

L.B. Did the Catholics and the Protestant have to pay a tax for being a Catholic or a Protestant?

E.L. They were not, uh, treated different, they, there was a, a religious...amount, a, a religious tax...for everybody.

L.B. For everybody.

E.L. And it was...

L.B. Was it...the same...

E.L. ...Conferred to the religious community to which they belonged.

L.B. But it was not more, or separate, for the Jewish community?

E.L. Oh no, oh no, no. As far as I know, I wouldn't swear to it, but why should it be more for Jews than for the other one. They paid only, the State paid only out of

E.L.cont. the Jewish community, what they got from Jews, they didn't pay, take the money from the Protestant and gave it to the Jews. If the Jews in Muert had a million dollars, so the community got a million dollars, maybe they kept for themselves something, that I don't know. But, anyways, the State paid all the expenses of the religious, uh, thing.

L.B. M hm.

S.B. So there were no collections then, for Palestine?

E.L. I, not that I remember, maybe there was, later on, yes.

S.B. Now, how did the coming of the War...affect you? What was the impact of the War on you, and your family?

E.L. That wa...had some effect, of course, of, uh, any family living in Germany. First, we had to go into the Army, and, uh, there was no business after one, two years, there was no merchandise. There was hardly anything...to buy, like meat... was very difficult after 2, 3 years...you got ah, per week, let me say...an eighth of a pound of meat per person. And, in Germany, the...the rules were observed absolutely...strictly...very little on the side. So we, you had to, you got a tenth of a pound of sugar, and so, everything was rationed.

S.B. So you were...

E.L. It was one of the things which, uh, war brought up, but, uh, natureally, the, uh, boys were taken into the Army. I was taken, uh, one year after, my brother was taken immediately.

S.B. Did you serve in...combat units?

E.L. No...my brother, yes.

S.B. And where ere, where did you spend, where were you stationed?

E.L. I was, uh, in, uh, I was, uh, command...up-commander to the.....to a high..... high authority.

S.B. And where, what part of Germany?

E.L. Nuremburg.

S.B. You were in...

E.L. No, in Mu...Munich. I came to Munich first. And there I was for 4 months, and then they transferred me to a new unit in Nuremburg. And...there, little by little, started a certain kind of anti-Semitism...later on, in the years 19...17.

S.B. All right. Can you tell us about that?

E.L. Sure, uh, a little story, which was true but it shows that... In the underground they said, "The Jews...don't belong to Germany. They should go to Palestine." And they said, uh, "The Jews don't like the War, they....they want to see...that we don't are victorious, and we want to be victorious." They started, so, was once a, a little story... I came forward very nicely in that Authority..and, uh.....in, on a...Yom Kippur, once, I was, uh, furloughed for the day, and, uh, suddenly they had it seems to me, uh, inquiry, how many Jews are in that Authority. And...each apartment, department, uh, had, had to report to the General who was in power, the amount of Jews. And they were so...? ~~exact~~ that they wanted to have the confirmation of each of these Jewish men that they are Jews. So, I was? [not] in, in the office. So, they called up my home, and there was, on Yom Kippur, only the maid there; and they said, "Where is...?" She said, "It's a Holiday today, and he is in the synagogue." So they said, "He has to come immediately, to Nuremburg." So, she didn't know what to do, she came to the synagogue and, and got me, and told me I have to come immediately to Nuremburg. I never travelled on that day in my life, but, of course, if the government tells you something, you did it. So I came in, and, uh reported to my head, to the head of the department, and he said, "Nice to see you. Are you Jewish?" I said, "Yes, of course I am." He said, "That's all I want to know. Goodbye." (Laughs). He made me come in, for a, couple of hours, and only to report something he knew exactly.

S.B. You said that, uhhh...people were saying these things...

E.L. That was 19...19...17. Not too long before the War. Something wrong with that?

S.B. You said that, uh, people were saying these things about Jews...that they didn't want the War to...Who?

E.L. Yah, I had a few gentlemen in the office, and another Jewish man, and he... always talked of Israel, of uh, Palestine, no. And so they came to the idea... he went away, I think, maybe, he went to Palestine or something... And he probably would say, "That is not my home anyway, I go to that-and-that..." And so, later on, they said, "Why don't you go where you belong, too? You should go to Palestine."

S.B. These were other soldiers that were saying these things?

E.L. Yah, these were, not soldiers, these were high... higher officials.

S.B. Were they Army people, were they military people?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Oh.

E.L. No, they were private peo...eh, they were... Thank you. They were military people at that time, yah. You want a glass of water, or anything...

S.B. No, no thank you.

E.L. Mrs. Brown?

L.B. No thank you.

S.B. And how did your family manage during the War? Your father?

E.L. All right, he... they were very thrifty people, they made the best... they didn't need much, and I didn't need much... with them, I lived with, I got about \$35 a month and I could live on it.

S.B. And your father's business... did his business, did he still stay in business?

E.L. Business was none... in the last 3 years there was no business, there was no merchandise, you couldn't buy anything.

S.B. Now, in 1918, there were... many revolts in Germany.

1637. E.L. Yah, I told uh, Victoria of it, sure. 1918, it was similar... it, November 1918, it was similar, it was as, going on this week in uh... Eur...

L.B. Vietnam.

E.L. Vietnam.

S.B. All right, can you say something about this, 1918?

E.L. We talked about it today, I told... the lady. You mean, at the end of the War?

S.B. At the end of the War, and....

E.L. It was similar what you hear now. The soldiers and the wives of the soldiers, and not soldiers, everybody started looting...

S.B. Now, where? Did you see any of the looting?

E.L. I saw some, yes.

S.B. Where?

1637. E.L. I, for instance... in that, uh, big establishment where I worked, one mid... noon-time, was outside a big ~~case~~ with shoe soles, that was at, 12:00 ~~case~~ we went to lunch. And at one o'clock we came back from lunch, that shoe ~~case~~ was open and nothing was in anymore, everything was out.

L.B. So the soles of the shoes were stolen?

E.L. Yah, not shoes, soles of shoes.

L.B. Yeah, just the bottom part, right.

1637. E.L. Nothing I, um, in the evening I saw a few times, in ~~bar~~ barracks, where, nearby where I had my room. I passed by an a barrack, an Army barrack, and... there came women, and men, and children, out and had guns, and everything, stolen.

S.B. This was in Nuremburg?

E.L. That was in Nuremburg, yah. Where no real government is, where no police is, uh, untouched, and, uh, goes about their obligations, there you find the things. I lived through the same thing, I had a house, in Holland... and there they knew, that is a Jewish owner, Holland was no anti-Semitism... they knew that is a Jewish owner of that building, and they knew that owner doesn't come, and they knew that the Jews in Germany are persecuted. So, everything what was in that house disappeared. And, ~~office~~ was the mayor, and we, the mayor was asked, "Where did, uh, who, who picked that stuff up? You must know it, you have, opposite, your... office." He said, "I don't know anything."

S.B. Now, this was in the, this was when? This was in the 1930's.

E.L. Oh, what I said just now, that was later.

S.B. Yeah.

E.L. That was during the Second World War.

S.B. Right.

E.L. But I only wanted to prove, there's no order, in the government and in the, uh, police...there everything can happen. Your life is not worth a penny if there's no order in the government, and, uh, and no, uh, handling of, from the police.

S.B. Now, when the people were rioting in Nuremburg, and they were stealing... there was no, no police came out in the streets to touch them?

1997. E.L. No, not in that particular, that was maybe only 3, 4 days, then it got quiet, more quiet again. That was at the end of the War, the Emperor flew to ? disappeared. The police was uninterested because they couldn't uh, dominate the masses.

S.B. In this period...

E.L. That was in November, '18.

S.B. Right, in this period of November 1918, a period of anarchy...

E.L. A kind of anarchy, but that was short-lived.

S.B. Yes. Was there any action against the Jews? Anything specifically aimed at the Jews?

E.L. No, not, uh, that I know, I wouldn't...

S.B. No, in your experience.

E.L. Um?

S.B. In your experience. You did not see anything, people weren't saying anything about the Jews?

E.L. Oh no, no, there was not such a strong feeling against Jews, uh, amongst the people. The feeling in no...against the Jews, in larger...uh, amount, came only later on, after 19.....24, when, uh, when Hitler and his groups came out...1925.

S.B. All right.

E.L. They made that, and as the War ended, there it started, there...you could hear sometimes, "Jews can't go there, and Jews can go there."

S.B. When the War was over...the Kaiser went away, and there was the Armistice, what did you do?

2197. E.L. My personal experience. All right, that was...I worked first, in a place, for a few years, as apprentice, as I said, in Nuremburg, no.

S.B. In what kind of a company?

E.L. In a company which exported, uh....items for, uh, giving as a present to customers...items, uh, let me say, you bought a ~~present~~ ^{this}, and you got a calendar, or you got a pocketbook, or some, extra, a, a smaller items, which were given by businesspeople or companies, as presents. There I worked for 4 years, maybe 3, 4 years.

S.B. Now, this is after the War?

E.L. (Long pause). No, after the War, no, no, that was before the War...3 years.

S.B. All right.

E.L. And then I worked for a few months at my....brother-in-law, because he gave me more money. Because he said, "Why do you work for, for 10, 15, dollars a month, I'll give you 40." So, I wanted the \$40 so I went to him, and after 3 months...2 months he said, "I can't use you, you can't do anything." So I ha...was on the street again.

S.B. Now, this was also before the War?

E.L. That was before the War.

S.B. All right, now, my question is, after the War...you were discharged from the Army?

E.L. I was discharged, 1919, yah.

S.B. All right, and what did you do then?

E.L. Then, I went where I was before the War a few years too, at my father's business. This is where I stayed as long as I was in Germany.

S.B. All right. And you helped expand the business, is that what you said?

E.L. Yah. That was 120 years old.

S.B. The business was 120 years old?

E.L. Um hm. 1835. (Pause). No, that was 100 years.

S.B. 100 years old, and this...

E.L. No, 1827 it was, excuse me.

S.B. And this business had been founded by your family?

E.L. By my grandfather, yah.

S.B. And how...could you describe your life in Germany, in the years just after the War? This is the time...

E.L. Oh, then I married...that was the main thing. In Germany, especially amongst Jews, you had crazy ideas of how to marry. That is something what make me angry, since I live, and uh, as long as I live. Uh, a Jewish man was only allowed, ~~wasn't he?~~ ruled, to marry with 30 years.

L.B. Say again. What?

E.L. He couldn't marry before he was 30 years old.

L.B. In Germany a Jewish male could not get married...

E.L. Oh, Gentiles didn't marry so young either...but Jews...

S.B. No, this is not a law he's talking about.

E.L. ...had, uh, special rule...not written rule, but that was custom.

S.B. This was Jewish custom that you're talking about.

E.L. That was custom. Marrying before 30 years is not, you can't marry, you have to wait until you are 29 or 30 years old. So...Makes really what happened between 18 and 30, that was not always very nice, because, nature wanted to have a girl, and you couldn't. And the girls were kept so strict, if some boy, a girl got a kiss from a boy...and the girl was out...

L.B. ...cast.

E.L. ...of society. And, so, I married also, only as I was 30 years old. When, all right, uh, you asked what I did, I married 192...2 or '24, '22 I guess... ~~that's~~ another life started, uh, I was in my father's business, and expanded it very much and very nicely, was very liked by my customers, and very liked by the, the makers of merchandise, and so I came along very nicely.

S.B. Let me ask you, in the period after the First "World War...

E.L. Yah.

S.B. ...this was a period when, I'm sure you know, groups of German soldiers, the ~~Frei~~Freikorps people...

E.L. Yeah, I remember.

S.B. ...roamed throughout Germany.

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Did you, were there any of these people in Fuerth, Nuremburg, was there any trouble?

E.L. Talk?

S.B. No, oh talk, or uh, violence?

E.L. Violence?

S.B. Was anybody shot, by the Freikorps people?

E.L. That was not of importance, they were, in the beginnings, they shot once into that building where I worked, I mean, in that government building. And so, we laid us, under the, on the ground, and that was over again, otherwise I don't remember anything, of attacks from this, groups. Luxembourg, you mean, and ?

S.B. Well, I, I mean...

E.L. Rosa Luxembourg.

S.B. Rosa Luxembourg, but I mean the people who killed Rosa Luxembourg.

E.L. I don't know who...

3.0 S.B. People like, the people like Kapp.

E.L. No, I don't know...

3.0 S.B. No, there was no ?

E.L. I don't remember anymore.

S.B. Right. So there was no, when the War was over and you set up business, you went into your father's business, uh, you, would you say life was quiet, in Nuremburg and Fuerth?

E.L. Yah. Life was.....always, you had to make a living, a day was filled with trying to make a living...and that, was difficult.

S.B. Can you describe, you say your day was filled with trying to make a living.

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Can you describe that day...when you got up in the morning?

E.L. Yeah, I got up, 7:00, and I do business at 8:00, ^{or half past 8}

S.B. And you stayed till?

E.L. Stayed till 12:00, then from 12:00 to 2:00 you went home, with your feet, not with a car...to get something to eat. As long as I was in Nuremberg, I had to drive, uh, take the train home again, the same thing as, uh, I went home at 12:00, uh, 11:58, so I had to leave the place at 11:40 in order to run to the train, and then at, I came home at 12:15, and at 1:15, my train went back, I didn't eat in the town where I worked, that was, would have been much too expensive, so I had to go home to eat.

L.B. It would have been more expensive to eat in Nuremberg, than to take the train.. and go home?

E.L. It was cheaper, much cheaper. You didn't spend 25¢ or 50¢ for eating out, you didn't have...

S.B. In the early 1920s...

L.B. Steve, he didn't go through his day...

S.B. Yes, go ahead...

L.B. I wanted to ask him that, too...

S.B. Go ahead.

L.B. Finish, now, you go back from lunch, after lunch, is what time?

E.L. Again, 1:15, the train went up, 1:15, then I came at 1:35 to Nuremberg, then I walked to my place of work again.

L.B. And you stayed there until...when?

E.L. Till 07:00, 8:00, 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, and then you had to wait until you get another train home again.

L.B. What, about what time would you get home?

E.L. Oh, it's different, 7:00, 8:00.

L.B. Now, you're talking about your parents' home, now?

355? E.L. Yah, yah,?

L.B. All right. And then, once you got home, you were too tired to...

E.L. You didn't go out.

L.B. You, you didn't go out.

E.L. Maybe you went out, all right, sometimes, maybe you went out, you went to a coffeehouse and ordered a coffee for 15...pennies...and, uh, then talked to the, a little bit, to the other boys on account of the girls, which they want to see. And then, played cards, and then you went home again.

L.B. And then you went to sleep.

E.L. Yeah.

L.B. And then, the next day you started over again.

E.L. The same thing, including Saturday, Saturday was also work hours, at least till 12:00.

L.B. And what did you do on, on a Sunday, let's say, how did you spend your day, your free time?

E.L. As long as I was single, I went with my girlfriend, in the neighborhood, in, walking, uh...or so...and trying to have a good time. Then, in the evening we went to a theater, or...what outside, and then, I don't know what happened then.

L.B. And then, when you married, you married, in, after the War, in 1922, you said?

E.L. The real war started, uh, ended only 1914.....1924, because, between the end of the War, '18 to '24, Germany had nothing, there was not enough food, there was no material, no yard goods, just nothing, because the money was nothing worth. There was a scarcity with everything, and that made, probably made the people furious, that later on they followed the, the, ranks of Hitler. Uh, it was a very bad time, uh, no work, uh, no, it was very bad, business, till 1924. In 1924, the money started to be of value again, everything got better, or '23, when was it?

S.B. In... '23, the inflation.

E.L. The money was of value again.

S.B. That's all right.

E.L. It was a terrible thing, was that inflation, you couldn't imagine. You went

E.L.cont. to the market, in the morning at 10:00, you bought a pound of butter, it was 125 marks, no. And then mother told you in the afternoon, go over and get another pound of butter, it was 450. We had girls in the store, in business, they uh, went out, they said they can't go home. There were numbers, let me say, somebody had to pay 1,590,000 dollars, marks. They couldn't...took that anymore, that, that we don't know how to do that.

L.B. Yeah.

S.B. What about your, your savings?

E.L. Savings?

S.B. Did you lose all your savings, because of the inflation?

E.L. I think we had no savings, I really, I don't know. If somebody had savings... my brother-in-law, for instance, he was a very wealthy man, before the War, and as the War were over, he had nothing. Uh, uh, he had bonds of 1000 marks, they were, after the War, maybe worth 50 marks. Not like here, that you could buy something, that is 90, goes back to 60 or 70; but say it went down from 100 to, to 5.

+34. S.B. Now, in the early 1920s, a number of people were killed...~~Rathenau~~...~~Rathenau~~

E.L. And killed themselves...

S.B. Yeah, well, men like...

E.L. Killed themselves, too.

S.B. And killed themselves. I have in mind, for example, a man like Walter Rathenau

E.L. Yah, he was killed, yah.

S.B. Now, he was killed. Did...did this make an impact on you, were people frightened

E.L. When was that, anyway?

S.B. In the early '20s, I think.

+4. E.L. As the Everht government was.

S.B. Yes, this was in the period of the Everht government, that's right.

E.L. No, the people were indifferent, as, uh, everyday something else happened, and that's a case of, just didn't make much impression, or so.

S.B. Did you know, you were in Bavaria, you were in Fuerth, did you know of the Hitler putsch...in Munich, when it happened?

E.L. Yah, maybe we, we read something about it, or we heard something about it, but at that time, that was a beginning, you didn't take it as serious, you lived on, your daily, uh, routine. You took notice of it, before the War ma...many people killed were killed, many boys didn't come home...and, you were cool about things like that. That that man was killed, nobody cared, another...a man was sitting on his place.

S.B. So, uh, National Socialism, then, was not an important fact, in Fuerth?

E.L. No, at, at times, it was important, 192...8, '29.

S.B. But not in 1923?

E.L. No.

S.B. And not in 1924?

L.B. Wasn't there a Communist takeover in Bavaria?

S.B. Yes, yes, yes...So...

E.L. Get powerful...the first time you heard that was, a putsch was been made in... Munich, as far as I remember, that was, I think, '24 or so, the Hitler putsch...

S.B. Yes.

E.L. ...but he was not successful at that time. Then, you didn't hear too much of him, but later on, so many people were out of work, they followed anybody who said, "I will bring, uh, you, happiness." I had a customer, her son was out of work for years, or he never had work, so once, 6 months later, I came again to her, with, in *Salzer*, and, I said, "How's your boy?" "Oh, he's fine." I said, "I'm glad for you, you waited long enough." "Yah, you know, he's at the SS. And he's a big man, now." H6? They collected the people, were, were, who were unsatisfied, and angry, and so they got a lot of people together.

S.B. But, again, this was at the end of the 1920s, this was not, it didn't make any impact on your life earlier, 1923, 1924?

E.L. No, it made an impression on me, privately...because, I lost a child around that time, that I remember. But, otherwise...the political...

L.B. ...going.

S.B. And now you are.

E.L. People were not so politically minded, as here. Many people, especially women had no idea of any politics.

S.B. What about Communism? Did it make any impact upon your life?

E.L. No.

S.B. What about the Russian Revolution? in 1917? Did, were you concerned about it, was your father concerned about it?

E.L. No.

S.B. All right, and there was a Communist...

E.L. Russia was far away from us...what did we care what's going on in Russia, except something like that 1906, uh, my grandfather told me about it, right. But, you didn't care what is happening, if you are not politically minded, as the people at that time were, they were busy with other things, so, they didn't care, they didn't read too much paper, and if they read it there was not too much in it. So, they always had in the foreground, the task of making a living for their family. And, many couldn't do that, or many did do as if they could, and one day it came, and they had nothing, and they killed themselves. That was also, there was a time, I don't know when that was, i...I think, 1926, or 7 or 8, when do, did you have here, the drop?

L.B. The...the depression...

S.B. 1929.

L.B. ...'29.

E.L. So, and in Europe, it was, uh, about 1927. The Americans put a lot of money into Europe, into Germany and in other countries, right? Because, here they had a lot of money, they wanted to invest it, in, at a good, uh, uh, thing, and they... allowed people to invest a lot in Germany. So, let me say, they gave, to a bank, \$5,000,000, all right? The bank gave it to their customers, the customers built, uh, built manufacturing places, or bou...bou...built houses. Then, 2 years later, the Americans said, "We, we approach trouble here, we want our investments back." So, now, that, the German bank said to their customers, "You, we, I borrowed you 100,000 marks, I want 50 back in the next 2 weeks." That started...trouble in Germany. My own bank called me in 3 times, I owed them 5000 marks. They were Jewish directors there. And, say, once I got a letter, "Come in, we have to tell you something." I came in, he said, "Uh, 5000 marks is too much credit, we can't give it to you. You have to pay 2000 back within 2 weeks." I said, "What should I do with a, as a wholesaler, with 3000 marks?" He made like that (Gestures). He wanted to tell me, "To hell with you, whatever you do that is your business." Two weeks later I got another letter, "You owe us 3000 marks. Come in, we want 2000 back." And that came through the conditions here, because they, banks had to pay back. So, that brought many people on the streets, the people lost their jobs, and the, the owners of the, uh, business, had no money anymore, so they killed themselves...dozens...because they had no money anymore, huh?

S.B. So there were lots of suicides in, in Fuerth?

E.L. Quite some, yeah. Because they couldn't go on with their business, they couldn't make a living, and they didn't know what to do with it, uhh...uh, through the conditions. As I say, in small...uh, say, I lived through that myself. I didn't, not believe it. I went, at that time, to another bank, to a smart banker...and told him the story, "Yah," he said, "We know that." Uh, and he gave me, immediately, 50,000 marks credit. But...

S.B. Now, why did he give you the 50,000 marks credit?

E.L. I couldn't answer that. He had it, he was probably not owing money to the, in that way, you know. That...bank, what I said, that was a big bank.

S.B. So your business...survived?

E.L. Oh, you, we had no trouble at all.

S.B. Now, this is also the time, that you said, and, of course, it's uh, this is...

E.L. That was before here, that, uh, the breakdown was...

S.B. All right, all right. Now, when did...the National Socialists...make an appearance in Fuerth?

E.L. Oh, they made an appearance about, uh, that time, '25, 1925, '26, and got more and more. 1932 was the high point.

S.B. And how, did you, personally, manage, and how did the Jews of Fuerth manage, in this period? Before, this is right, just before the Nazi takeover in January of 1933.

E.L. I couldn't answer that exactly. Before 1933?

S.B. No, you say that the National Socialists made an appearance in Fuerth in 1925.

E.L. Yah, but, in my case, they were not as strong that they influenced my customers. I didn't have very much trouble at that time, only later. Later on, some, uh, very nice customers got entirely insane. Once, one customer wrote us...uh...we came much to small, uh, towns, villages, and he liked me very much, I came myself to him. And once he wrote a letter, "From now on, everything what we, I have in my store, must be Christian, must be Christian, Gentile. I don't...my feed must be Gentile, my, my tablecloths must be Gentile...and, uh, and..." Such stuff, crazy stuff...

S.B. Now this was after the Nazis came to power, or before?

E.L. About that time, yah.

S.B. Right about...

E.L. About '33. They got influence, I didn't know, the...uh, they called it, not, uh, they called it.....it must be Christianized, everything must be Christian.

S.B. Now...

E.L. It can't be anymore Jewish.

S.B. Now, before 1933, was there violence in Fuerth? Were you boycotted?

E.L. No, no, the violence started only after 1933. Before, was in Fuerth nothing at all.

S.B. Did you vote in the elections?

E.L. Yah, in 1932.

S.B. Whom did you vote for, if I may ask?

E.L. Oh, no way the Nazis, probably I voted for the Center one, that was the Catholic Party.

S.B. You voted for the Catholic Party?

E.L. Probably, yah. They were the, powerful in, in Bavaria, and, and they were peaceful.

S.B. And you, uh, you wouldn't have considered at the time, to vote Socialist, or Communist, or...

E.L. Communist, no...

S.B. Never Communist?

E.L. I, I don't know, Communist was...not important at that time. No, there were, I don't think there were many, Communists were Jewish people too, but I don't know that... As I say, it was not in the foreground, for, uh, of my life, uh, politics. I didn't care, 'til I faced the consequences of the change, till 1933.

S.B. All right, until 1933, or before 1933...were you aware, and were your, was your family or friends, were they aware of what the Nazis stood for?

E.L. Not 100%. They thought, some thought, "Let them try, let them try, they will see that they can't do anything." Some other ones.....then, the biggest manufacturers, uh, they were not aware of what could come out of that, that power. How, how should you know? The, uh, for hundreds of years there was not an uproar like that, so they said... I talked with a very big manufacturer, with thousands of workers, he'll say, "Eh, that will go over again. They can't...what will that little painter, what should he do, he is a nothing." And, so, they didn't recognize till the power of the masses, which he made greedy, came into...effect.

S.B. Now, was this manuf...manufacture that you talked to, was he Jewish?

E.L. No, no.

S.B. Let me ask a, another question that may sound ridiculous, but perhaps is not. Was there any, did you know any Jews...that supported the Nazis?

E.L. Oh, there is a story... I don't know any. They, you hear, in the beginning I

E.L.cont. heard stories that the Jews, uh, supported and gave money to the Nazis, I do not know one case.....I couldn't tell you any case, and I think, uh, people had, would have to be ~~greedy~~ ^{greedy} to have done something like that, but...as far as I know, not one.

S.B. All right. On January 30th of 1933, the Nazis took power...

E.L. Yah.

S.B. What happened to you, and what happened to the Jewish community of Fuerth?

E.L. You know, the same, the trouble started.

S.B. Now, what do you mean by the trouble starting?

E.L. All right, uh, um, uh, the...on the first of April, 1933, they made, uh, known, uh, that, all the Jewish stores, uhhh, ah...have a post before the door, entrance, that no Gentile can go in.

S.B. And this was done in Fuerth?

E.L. In any city, not in Fuerth alone. In any city of Germany.

S.B. Did they do this to you, to your business?

E.L. I had no store. We had wholesale.

S.B. You had whol...but you had an office?

E.L. Hm?

S.B. You had an office.

E.L. Office, yah.

S.B. Did anybody put a sign outside your office?

E.L. It was only for retail.....a wholesaler, or a ba...uh, or exporters, that, there was no retail, no public traffic, they uh, uh, didn't do that. But, sure, I had to suffer too,?

S.B. For, can you tell us about it?

E.L. Oh sure. (Long pause). First, I personally, did...a thing, which was, uh...
1487 clever. I had my main business place in Bavaria, and we had a branch in Upper Silesia. And Upper Silesia was under the protection of the United Nations at that
1489 time...not the United Nations, Friegebund was the name...

S.B. The League of Nations.

L.B. League of Nations.

E.L. League of na...League of Nations. And, the League of Nations dominated a small part of Germany, Upper Silesia, till 1937. And also, I moved my...uh, branch to Upper Silesia, and I moved myself to that place. And in that place, that was near the Polish border, I had no trouble at all till 1937.

S.B. Now, you say you moved your place...

E.L. Your branch, my branch...

S.B. Your branch, and you moved yourself?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. You moved your family?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. So you moved out of Fuerth?

E.L. Yah. But, my business...the, the main headquarters, were, as before, in Fuerth, uh, bookkeeping and everything was in Fuerth. And I came to Fuerth from time to time, and was in...informed of everything going on, by mail, and telephone.

L.B. Who stayed in Fuerth, to keep track?

E.L. Hm?

L.B. Who stayed in Fuerth to manage?

E.L. I had...

L.B. A non-Jew?

E.L. Oh, I had 40 people.

L.B. Jews, or non-Jews?

E.L. No Jews, no. A Gentile lady was the head.

L.B. And she knew what you were doing, and she continued to work for you?

E.L. Yah. They all continued; we had one lady, she was a honored member of the Nazi Party, and she worked in our place too, and made, never trouble.

S.B. So, what year did you move to Upper Silesia?

E.L. 1935, I moved to Upper Silesia.

S.B. And...what made you move, the general persecution?

179? E.L. Yah. I was afraid something could happen, so I saw, I have there a business anyway, and uh, the people of that business, we were ^{residents} ~~residents~~ before, that is not Upper Silesia, that is also Silesia, and, it's now Polish. And, uh, I located there, from Leibnitz to ^{Boleslaw} ~~Boleslaw~~, to the, ^{Katowitz} ~~Katowitz~~, you know Katowitz?

S.B. Yes.

170? E.L. On the Polish border there...near Katowitz. And, uh, I moved the business there, and I moved myself and my family, there, and my daughter went to schools there, and everything. And there was a rabbi, we asked a rabbi at that time, before I moved there, "What do you think of my idea?" "Is an excellent..." I said, "No, but if the Nazis are going on like that, what ^{chance} ~~chance~~ has the Jewish people here?" He said, "Then we beat them on the fingers, they won't do anything to us." And they didn't do anything till 1937. And in 1937, that was out, that protection, the next day everything was...uh, like in, oh, other parts of Germany.

L.B. In other words, the League of Nations left in 1937?

E.L. That ended...

L.B. It end...the mandate, their protectorate ended?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Can you tell...can you say what it was like to live in Fuerth, between 1933 and 1935?

E.L. Bad.....bad. I d...they did everything, 1933 it started with that, uh, banning of Jewish traf...uh, uh, traffic into the stores, and then... They still came, and wanted...contributions for, for a lot of Nazi things, and if you didn't give anything then they threatened you, and if you gi...give them something, then they, uh, it's al...was always not sufficient, and so everything happened, uh, I can't say, uh, things altogether. They promised and didn't keep their word, they gave out orders that nothing should be done against Jewish companies which are honest and they have no trouble otherwise, but nevertheless a lot happened. And, if somebody complained, they threw him out of the window...or they came later on, they came and said...They didn't come to me, because I had no house in Germany, but I know cases in Fuerth where they came, brought a piece of paper, also with business, and said, "From tomorrow, beginning, ^{your} ~~your~~ business belongs to the Party." Or they said, "I heard you want to give your business to the Party." The man said, "No", or, uh, I have no idea. So they said, "It is 11:00, we come at 2:00, again. If you don't follow, the idea that you give your business to the Party, then you have to carry the consequence. And then, if they came at 2:00, the people signed that they feel right at giving to the Party, because they needed, and they, they confiscated all the Jewish business who, which were, ^{there} ~~stayed~~, at the end of '38.

S.B. Did anybody else go to Upper Silesia with you?

E.L. Hm?

S.B. Did anybody else go to Silesia, with you? I mean, friends, or other businessmen?

E.L. No, oh no. Why should they? They had no connection, I had that connection, because I had a, the branch in Silesia. That was, maybe good, maybe not good, otherwise I would have maybe immigrated, 1935.

S.B. Did you know anybody who emigrated, before you went to Silesia?

E.L. Oh, did, in my home town?

S.B. In your home town of Fuerth.

E.L. Oh, yeah, sure, many.

S.B. When did they start to go?

E.L. They started going little by little, 1933-4. Disappeared, one disappeared today 2 weeks later you heard of someone else, and then you heard...uh, that that-and-that people emigrate...as I did, I emigrated with the 100% permission of the government, I had all the...uh, permission, permits, what I needed. I mean, I didn't go away, as many did, in the middle of the night.

S.B. When the Nazis came in, to Upper Silesia, in 1937...

E.L. Yah.

S.B. ...what happened to you?

E.L. Nothing, there was a...I, there was once, in November, 1918, there was a big.. pickup of Jewish people, uh, all over Germany, Also, we had...

S.B. This is November, '38?

E.L. Yah, November 30. Uh, but we lived outsi...outside of the city, and, remarkably they didn't pick me up.

S.B. Now, this, you're talking about Kristallnacht?

E.L. Yah, yah.

S.B. And, you were in Katawitz, on Kristillnacht?

E.L. No, I was...I don't know where I was. No, I was at home, but they didn't pick me up, we lived, uh...maybe 2 miles outside of the city. I don't know why...

S.B. That's the city of Katawitz?

E.L. Not Katawitz...

L.B. No, he said it was...

E.L. ...Beuthen was the name.

S.B. That's right.

L.B. What?

E.L. I said it was near Katawitz, 10 minutes from Katawitz...

L.B. What was the name...can you spell the city please?

E.L. Beuthen, B-e-u-t-h-a-n, -e-n, that is now a Polish name, I don't know what it would...

S.B. Did they pick up anybody else...

E.L. Oh, yeah.

S.B. ...that you knew?

E.L. Huh?

S.B. Did they pick up anybody that you knew?

E.L. Oh, yeah, sure. They picked up 95.-8 % of the Jewish population.

S.B. And they did not...

E.L. Men, of the men.

S.B. Of the men.

E.L. I was an exception, I don't know why. I was never picked up, anyway, uh, they picked up the, in Fuerth, the members from the B'nai Brith, I was on a trip. And they came another time, to my home, to pick me up, and I was on a...a business trip.

S.B. Now, when they came to your home to pick you up, you were where? I mean, where were you living, where was your home at the time?

E.L. In Fuerth.

S.B. Oh, this was in Fuerth. So they did come to pick you up once?

E.L. Twice.

L.B. Twice.

S.B. Twice, they came to pick you up. And, so, the Nazis are now in Silesia, you're in Silesia, what do you do?

E.L. What do you mean?

S.B. I mean, what, what, what happened then? We're in 1938.

E.L. The, uh, that was shortly before I...

S.B. Kristillnacht.

E.L. ...before I emigrated.

S.B. Yes.

E.L. If I stayed later, I got my, my permit, uh, to go to uh, United States, and that was uh, 5 or 8 days before, that, Crystal Night, or what do you call it?

S.B. Crystal Night, Night of, yeah, Crystal Night, we call it. So, you ma...can you describe the process through which you got your permit to come to the United States? Where did you go, who gave it to you?

E.L. My wife had, came from a family, and...this family sent to my wife's parents, sometimes, during the First World War as Germany was in bad condition, this family sent sacks to that family of my wife's parents. And my wife knew the name of these people, they came from the town where her mother came from, no? And so we wrote, I have it here, they wrote a letter to that association in Berlin which had the contact with the United States, and told them the name of these people, and, they should find out where they live. And, they found out, they live in Cincinnati, and, after 6 or 8

E.L.cont. months I got the answer, that the, the name, in Cincinnati, and we wrote to them, and, uh...this family in Cincinnati, very wealthy people, were not disinclined to give us a permit. But, I had a nephew in, in United States, a young doctor at that time, and he went to them, and told them that I had money here, and they wouldn't, wouldn't have to, uh, fear any, our publications, but they should give us the permit, and they did, and that helped us to come over.

S.B. Did you have money here?

E.L. I had money, yah. But I brought the money out, in the danger of being killed if I would be caught.

S.B. Now, uh, 2 questions. You say you had money here?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Where, in New York City?

E.L. I had the money at my nephew, from which I just talked, I sent my money to him, to the young doctor.

S.B. When did you send it to him?

E.L. Between 1933 and '38.

S.B. Is it fair to say, then, that you thought, as early as 1933, of coming here?

335 E.L. Yes. I, uh, uh, I tried to bring money out, I wanted to have a, a pillow, if I had to go out. I told you, I had a house in Holland, too, for that reason. I had the house in Holland only for that reason, to have something outside of Germany.

S.B. When did you buy the house in Holland?

E.L. Holland? '34.

S.B. So you bought a house in Holland, and you sent money to your nephew?

E.L. Not much, but it helped us a lot.

S.B. And, now, so you made, uh, you made this contact, with the people in Cincinnati.

E.L. Yah.

S.B. And your nephew went to them, and they gave you a permit.

340 E.L. You have a good head here.

S.B. No, no I'm, I'm just, reconstructing...

E.L. Oy, oy, oy.

S.B. And...

E.L. Isn't it?

L.B. Yeah.

S.B. You then....did you deal with American officials, at any time, in the Consulate?

E.L. Yah, sure.

S.B. Where?

E.L. In Berlin.

S.B. In Berlin. How would you describe their conduct?

E.L. Correct.

S.B. It was correct?

E.L. Oh, yes.

S.B. It was not condescending?

E.L. No.

S.B. It was proper?

E.L. Proper, yah.

S.B. And, when did you apply...for your permit?

E.L. Oh, we applied, maybe, in June, in 1938, and we had to wait 6 months.

S.B. And you got your permit...

E.L. In November.

S.B. ...in November?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Early November. And then?

E.L. Then I had still to do with German authorities for a few months, till everything was in order. And at the end, they took away all the...jewels of my wife... Oh, then we got permission.

S.B. Can you describe your actions, or your relationship, with the German authorities were they proper?

E.L. No, they were not proper. As the human beings, they were proper for the time in which I, I had to go through. They were inhuman, in...inhuman.

S.B. When they spoke to you?

E.L. That depends on, some were decent, some were less decent...that didn't kill me, but they treated me as a...a different human being, there were, uh...what was the name? There was a name for the Jews, and for the other people, what was the name? Aryan.

S.B. Aryan, they were Aryan.

E.L. Aryans, uh, Gentiles people, and all the other people were Aryan, and the Jews were nicht-Aryan...

S.B. Nicht Aryan.

E.L. Non-Aryan, they were different. (Long pause). They had different blood.

S.B. Did you have a family, at the time?

E.L. One daughter.

S.B. One daughter. And, uh...she, I would imagine, was in school?

E.L. In school, yah.

S.B. She was in school at, at the time. And she had...did you have trouble in the school?

E.L. Yah...

S.B. Can you describe that?

E.L. At the end of the school, she, she was in school in, in Upper Silesia, at that time. And, there also, at the end celebration, that uh, all the Jewish children had to go out of the hall...and things like that, crazy things.

S.B. Did you take her out of the school?

E.L. Not out of the school, the school was, uh, at the end celebration, of the year, the Jewish children were not allowed to be in the, uh, room.

S.B. Now what year was this? This is 1938?

E.L. I couldn't...that was '38...

S.B. Yeah. Did you ever, because a lot of German-Jewish parents took their children out of the German schools, like the Kissingers, and placed them in Jewish schools. Did your daughter attend the Jewish school?

E.L. No, my daughter was...wait a moment...(Long pause). She was not anymore in school, she was, at that time, 1938, in England, that was before, not '38. In that year she was in England for, in a, in a Jewish school for 9 months or so...

S.B. How did she get to England?

E.L. ...to learn the language.

S.B. How did she, who sent her to England?

E.L. How?

S.B. Did you send her? Was this...

E.L. I didn't pay officially, somebody else paid for it, according to the...to the... conditions, right. I paid for it, but, I had to say, my tax declaration, somebody else paid...because I...

S.B. But you made sure that she went to England?

E.L. I really brought her over.

S.B. You sent her to England?

E.L. Yah, we made sure.

S.B. And, she went, in 1938, to England?

E.L. '37 or 8...

S.B. '37, '37 or '38.

440?
441? E.L. And, it may be '37, and '38 she was in Frankfurt in a Jewish? School,

L.B. She's back in Germany, then?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. She came back from England, and went...

E.L. Yah...

S.B. ...to, to a German school in Frankfurt?

E.L. For the last year, in Frankfurt, yah. That, it was the year where we emigrated, 1938, when we got the permission...

S.B. You got the permission, but then you did not emigrate until early 1939.

E.L. In January, 1939.

S.B. January, 1939. And, you came to the Un...you came immediately to the United States?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. And you gave, it is true, the Nazis made you give everything up?

E.L. No, not everything, but... That is a story for itself. As we went out, we could take along everything, still everything except jewelry. But...the values, my securities, and these things, the...I couldn't take out, or they were, I couldn't take out, and they confiscated all the values later on.

S.B. Did they allow you to take out money, cash?

E.L. Yes, they allowed me to take out so much that I landed in Europe, in... New York, with empty pockets. I didn't have...one dollar. I, everybody got 10, \$10.

S.B. Oh, so, they didn't allow you to take out anything?

*11' E.L. *What was all*. I got \$30, and, I think, \$50 more, for something else, that was all. But, uh, uh, we arrived here, I got money immediately from my nephew, because I had it here, right? But, from Germany, I didn't have a penny, because the \$10 was not enough on the boat, to pay the [?]. But we had our ticket from, uh, from Germany, right. The tickets we paid in Germany in Deut...German marks.

S.B. So you, your wife, and your daughter...

E.L. Yah.

S.B. ...left Germany, and came to the United States, in January of 1939?

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Did you ever, in the period after 1933, give any thought to going anywhere else, besides the United States?

E.L. No.

S.B. You never thought of Palestine?

E.L. No.

S.B. Or of England?

E.L. Where?

S.B. England.

E.L. England?

S.B. Yah.

E.L. No, I thought, the right way is to go to a bigger country, but to a smaller town, and that is what I followed.

S.B. Why to a bigger country?

E.L. Why to a bigger country? Well, because you have more chances in a bigger country than in a smaller country, and especially in such a big country as the United States, I thought many people had a good chance, so why, uh, shouldn't I go there, if I get, uh, permission.

S.B. Now, you say...

E.L. It was difficult to get a permission to go to any country.

S.B. Now, you say "a good chance". A good chance to do well, economically?

E.L. Sure. (Long pause). I used my knowledge from over there, I started here with a ~~business~~ business, in small amount, in that line, in which I worked over there.

S.B. Did any, uh, you must have still had relatives in Fuerth. Did they...

523 (Tape ends)

Side 4

000

S.B. Yes, but I mean, when you left...

E.L. Yah.

S.B. Uh, did, did other people in your family also leave Fuerth? You say your grandmother had 15 children, there must have been a big family.

E.L. All right.....that was like the wind, were in all, wind, uh, some were killed, some were in camp, some were going to Holland, some went to...Sweden, some, uh... that I can't say, uh...Family, near family was hardly any there except my sister,

E.L.cont. and she...uh, went away later, next year, to, a year later. And my mother was still there, in an old age home; and she died, luckily, in that old age home, in 1940.

S.B. All right. Now...

E.L. They picked up the people of the old age homes, or orphan homes, just as well. We had an orphan home in that town, maybe 100 children, they picked them up and brought them concentration camp, nothing came back.

S.B. Now, you said, you had bought a house in Holland, you never thought of emigrating to Holland?

E.L. No, I never thought of going for, for good, to Holland, but I wanted to go till I got my permission to go to United States, into Holland, in my house. And they didn't give me the permission, the government refused permission to go into our house, notwithstanding that I had a, a good information from the mayor, nevertheless they refused it, because it was wartime, and they don't want anymore strangers in, in Holland.

S.B. Now this was...

L.B. So it was the Dutch government that refused you?

E.L. Yah.

L.B. Even though you had bought your house?

E.L. Mm hm. I have the thing here, if you want to see it, but that is not...

L.B. Yah, no, show...

E.L. ...interesting for you.

(Tape off). (Mumblings, long pause, tape off again). (Discussing Mr. Lowen's records).

E.L. And ~~and~~ since that time, to, total, uh, complete movement started from villages to cities. Is that right, 1836, Napoleon?

S.B. No, no, 18...about 1806.

L.B. '06.

S.B. Napoleon died in 1821.

E.L. When when was that law, that everybody had a name, and everybody should be free, 18...

S.B. This is, uh, while Napoleon is alive, it's about 1806.

E.L. Sure, O.K.

S.B. This was compiled...in the synagogue?

E.L. The Jewish community...

S.B. The Jewish community, the Jewish community, and...

E.L. They had the books.

S.B. They had the books, and they kept records like this for everyone?

E.L. Everyone, yah.

S.B. This is very important.

39' E.L. (Long pause). Do you want to?

40' ? ? No, thank you, unless you want.

L.B. Do you want a copy of that?

S.B. Could we have a copy of this?

E.L. Uh, I will, you can make a copy of it, yah. But, that i...that is not all, is it?

L.B. Well, that's all you gave us.

E.L. Oh, yeah, but there's ~~is~~ more...

(Tape off)

E.L. But I saw them, every Saturday, as Mr. Kissinger and his little wife walked along the street, Saturday afternoon.

S.B. Did you know the boy? Did you, did you see the boy?

E.L. No, all right, there was a boy, I didn't know him. I didn't know the Kissingers either, I, I knew this is a Jewish teacher, and he came from a small village to Fuerth, that's all.

L.B. Do you, uh, do you want us to go now, because it's 10:00, because I wanted to ask you, you were going to tell us something about girls.

E.L. About what?

L.B. Girls, you said, "Ach, I'll tell you another story about girls."

E.L. Girls.

L.B. You want to wait until another time?

E.L. Yah.

L.B. All right.

E.L. (Long pause). So, if you want anything else, you are free to come at any moment.

L.B. Thank you very much.

55 (Tape ends)