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Max Chutz, October 1974

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L.B. ...testing, can you hear me, can you hear me? 1-2-3-testing...(Tape off).
1-2-3-testing, 1-2-3-testing, can you hear me? 1-2-3-testing...(Tape off).
I have already tested this Max, now would you...
M.C. Oh, this is the microphone, here, right?
L.B. Yeah, we just talk like this. I want you, just to start, and tell me your name...first, for the tape.
M.C. My name is Max Chutz.
L.B. And, uh, when were you born?
M.C. I was born October the 17th, 1912. In a few days you have to come back and congratulate me...I'm going to be 62 years old...
L.B. Very good.
M.C. ...and still going strong.
L.B. Very good. And, where were you born? What city...
11? M.C. I was born in tseinten bitsiurk, Vienna, Austria.
L.B. Is that a, is that a district of Austria, uh, of Vienna?
M.C. It's a district of...yes.
L.B. Which, which number, district is it?
M.C. The tenth, tseinte bitsiurk...
L.B. The tenth district.
M.C. You don't speak German, by any chance?
L.B. Now, that you say it, I can, I, I...
M.C. The tseinte bitsiurk...
L.B. Uh huh.
M.C. ...tsein...
L.B. Ten.
M.C. Ten.
L.B. Yeah. O.K. Now, the Jewish district in Vienna was which one?
16? M.C. The second district, the second, Leopoldstat, Leopoldstat.
L.B. Mm hm.
17? M.C. We called it, as a nickname, we called it "the insle", the "insle" means "the island"...the mo...the island, no, no, not "eye"...
L.B.. But "high"?
M.C. No, no, an island.
L.B. Oh, an island.
M.C. ...land.
L.B. Where all the Jews lived, in other words.
M.C. Mm hm.
L.B. Now, let me stop a minute. (Tape off). And, I hope this thing works...
Now...so you were born in Vienna...now, tell me, let's start, you tell me something, how many people were in your family...
M.C. Well...
23? L.B. You were born, in 19-, now *let's* again, 1912, right?
M.C. Mm hm...well, we were f...my father, my mother, we were 4 brothers...and we had, uh...well, we had a maid living in our home, uh, that took care of the children.
L.B. Mm hm.
M.C. ...which almost was a family, she was no blood relative, but she...well, she's really not the family. We were 4 brothers, Mom, and Dad.
L.B. And, um...were you the youngest, the oldest...
M.C. I was number 2.
L.B. You were number 2. And, um, you say you lived in a house?
M.C. Mm hm.
L.B. What kind of a house was it?
33? M.C. Well, we lived, as I said before, in tseinten bitsiurk, we had an apartment, we paid rent...we had a, in the kitchen, a cabinette, which is a...a small bedroom, we had a, a separate big diningroom...and we had 2 separate bedrooms...additional. So, offhand, 3 bedrooms, diningroom, and kitchen.
L.B. So your mother and father occupied one bedroom.

M.C. One bedroom.

L.B. And then the boys...

M.C. The boys were spread, spread out; the girl had the little bedroom.

L.B. In the kitchen?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. I see. And, um, you lived in an apartment house.

M.C. Right.

L.B. Now, so this was really, you were urban people, is that right?

M.C. Well, the tseinte bitsiurk is, um, is on the outs...it's not, it, it belongs to Vienna, but it's not in the dead center, it's more around, on the outskirts, I would say. Right?

L.B. I don't know. Could you tell me something about the district, because each district is different, then.

M.C. Well...the tseinte bitsiurk was, um, a...a lot of po...potali...po-tal-iariat.. how do you call this?

L.B. Proletariat?

M.C. Proletariats were living there.

L.B. Workers, there.

M.C. And to give an...workers...give an idea, there were a hundred and uh, 135,000 people, and only 50...Jewish fam...135,000 families...

L.B. Families.

M.C. ...and out of this only 50 Jewish people, 50.

L.B. People or families?

M.C. Families.

L.B. Families.

M.C. Families, all together. I, I went to school in tsein bitsiurk, um, and I was the only Jewish boy, for an example, in the class, in a, in a school of about 800 non-Jewish people.

L.B. So you lived primarily in a non-Jewish neighborhood.

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. And, um.....um...whom did you play with? Did you play with Jewish children or non-Jewish children?

57. M.C. Well.....uh, I recall that, uh, I became a member in the Roden Fiten, which was something like the Boy Scouts here...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...but the political affiliation was Sociale Democratische...Social Democrats...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And, the youth movement, uh, group, was the Roden Fiten, which is...the, the "Red Fox", far away from Communist, was definitely strictly Sociale...Social Democrats.

L.B. The red what, now?

M.C. The Red Fox.

L.B. Oh, fox. O.K.

M.C. Fox, you know?

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. And uh, my, my youth life really was, uh, uh, we did alot of, uh...Mof, uh, mountain-climbing, swimming, skiing, sport was really my...I...grew up in an atmosphere of, uh, uh, cleancut, sport activities, more than political activities, although it belonged to a...it was an arm of, uh, a political, uh...

L.B. Organization.

M.C. ...organization, in Vienna.

70. L.B. So this, uh, uh...excuse my pronunciation...it would be Roite Feiten...

M.C. Rote Feiten.

L.B. Ro-te?

M.C. Rote Feiten. Feiten...uh...

L.B. Feiten?

M.C. ...how do you c...a hawk...

L.B. Oh, a hawk.

M.C. ...a hawk... not an, not...not an...

L.B. Not a fox, a hawk.

M.C. No, no, I'm sorry...a hawk...

L.B. "The Red Hawk".

M.C. H-a-w-k.

L.B. And this was like the youth branch of the Social Democratic movement.

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. Which was a political organization.

75? M.C. Yes. And, I could have joined the Macabee, which was the sport, uh, organiza-
77? tion of Jewish, but we were so far away from it that I joined...rather, the Arbiter
Tunfereinde...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. The Arbiter Tunfereinde, again, it's a, it's a Social Democrats, the sport, uh, division of it.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And I became very active in li...light athletics, in, in swimming and skiing and boxing and...anything, I became the biggest rowdy in the school, Thanks God.

L.B. You did? Now, how come ~~you~~ family lived in that district, and not, say, in the Jew...in the second, in the Jewish district? Why did they, how did they happen to come to that district?

65? M.C. Well, I'm not quite sure. You see, my parents...they originally, they come from, uh...Yekaterinaslav, which is Ukrainski gubernya; and I think my parents came to, um, Austria, after the big pogroms in 1905 and '06 in Russia.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. They came to Vienna in 19-...1910, we came to Vienna. Why my parents settled in, in tseinten bitsiurk, I really could not tell you. Uh, I only know that my father was working in a...big steel factory as a...laborer, and he worked himself very fast up, he became a foreman...then he went into business, soon, I think, uh, uh...the circumstances, why he ended up in tseinten bitsiurk, I have no idea, I was not...

L.B. Did...

M.C. ...I was not alive at that time, yet.

L.B. But, they didn't talk about it?

M.C. No, really, not.

L.B. Now you're, what you're saying, then, in 1905 were the pogroms...

M.C. 1905 and 1906.

L.B. 1906...and when did they come to Vienna?

M.C. They came to Vienna in 1910.

L.B. 1910, that's before the War.....before the First World War. Now, if you say that it was largely a working class district, and your father was a working class man, that would...is that a possible...

M.C. Most po...well, he wasn't, uh, from what I know, out of the stories that Mom tells us...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. ...he was a merchant in Ukraine, in Russia..

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. Uh, he was dealing in wheat...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...in, you know, in agriculture products.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. Why he suddenly decided, uh, why he decided to come to Vienna, why he decided to become a laborer in a factory, which is really not like, uh, Jewish...

L.B. That's right.

M.C. ...why, it's, it's uh, it's unknown to me, I really have no idea why...Because, when I was born, only...1912, a few years later, only...so I...

L.B. After they came?

M.C. After they came.

L.B. Did they tell you any stories about life in Ekaterinaslav?

M.C. Ohyeah...they were, half the family was slaughtered by the Cossacks, all right, and uh, they got very scared...I also, I don't know how much is true of it, I believed it, uh...uh...my father had to get away from it because he had some incident with some, uh, Russian officer, and I think, the Russian officer, after the incident...uh, didn't live very long. (Laughs). It's a funny...he...I'm serious.

L.B. Yes.

M.C. He, he had a big fight and I think uh...

L.B. You think your father killed him?

M.C. Well, I don't know if it's killing, but if he just put him to sleep for permanent, you know.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. And, uh, I mean, I've heard it so often that I don't think it's just a story, and he had to disappear.

L.B. Oh, I see.

M.C. He changed his name.

L.B. He did?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. Do you know what the name was before?

1207 M.C. His real name was Nisinoff.

L.B. Now...did he change it legally, then, when he came to Austria?

M.C. No, I think he picked up papers from some, somebody who died.

L.B. That's very common.

M.C. Typical Jewish, uh...

L.B. No, it's no more Jewish than anything else.

M.C. Is it?

L.B. No. A lot of people had to do that. When there's a war you do anything.

M.C. Well, then happened another little thing that, uh, is very unusual. My father, I had only one father, and one mother...

L.B. Mmm.

M.C. And, my name should really be Nisinoff.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. But they were married in Russia, by a rabbi...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...when they came to Vienna, they neglected...uh, to, uh...to marry again, so that it becomes...uh, accepted, and uh, legally, uh, in Austria, which they never did.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And then, came the time that we children had to go to school....and, uh, my parents could never prove...that they were legally married. So we were...uh, entered in the schools as, uh...Max Chutz, C-h-u-t-z, which is actually...the name of my mother, when she was not married.

L.B. Aaaah.

1311 M.C. And, uh, you could really say that I'm a ^{mamso} ~~mamso~~, really not, but, you know...

L.B. I know.

M.C. ...when you go...

L.B. Well, for yo...for the students, ~~who~~ ^{who} ~~may~~ ^{may} hear this, a "mamso" means a "bastard".

M.C. Well, a bastard is somebody, a child who comes out, out of wedlock, right?

L.B. Right, right.

M.C. Well, I, I did not come out of wedlock, I mean, I had my real father, I had my real mother, only the Austrian authorities never, uh, accepted a marriage, carried out by a Russian rabbi.

L.B. Uh, did your parents have papers?

M.C. They had the papers, you know, that they were really married, but they were not, uh, recognized in, ~~the~~ ^{by} Austrian law.

L.B. Is that right? That's very interesting. Did it affect your life in any way? Did the other children know?

M.C. It did not affect it, because I found out much, much later that my name was actually supposed to be Hi...Nisinoff.

L.B. So your, your parents didn't bother telling you because there was no sense in uh...

149 M.C. It, it was, all my papers are "Chutz", right? Kutz,? *Kaf. Var, Zaddik* in Hebrew.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

M.C. And, uh, it didn't bother me too much, uh, when...the kids in, in, in school found out that I'm Jewish, and, uh...and they decided one day that they "ould beat me up, I, I simply stood my ground and uh, and, uh, as I told you before, I was the biggest rowdy in the whole class, in the whole school practically, I was a big hefty character and I could beat anybody if necessary. So, the name, or being Jewish did not affect me very strongly, on the contrary. I had, uh, one day, a very big fight, outside the school, when they decided they would beat the Jew-boy up... I broke one fellows back and I was thrown out of school, but I had a lot of friends afterward, they respected me...maybe not so much out of fear, but that's a, that's a funny, it's a, I can't, I can't describe it right now...

L.B. I know.

M.C. They just, I couldn't run...and I refused to run, so I...

L.B. But, it was not on the basis of the fact that your name...that it was...

M.C. It had nothing to do with the name at all.

L.B. No, no, no, it was the fact that you were a Jew.

M.C. Yes.

L.B. Now, in the district, itself, was there a lot of anti-Semitism?

M.C. I, I personally never felt any anti-Semitism, until 1933.

L.B. Well, but you say that you had fights at school, that there were...

M.C. Well, this was more...it had, I think it had nothing to do, really, the kids were, were relatively young, I think it happened when I was 10 or 11 years old. What does a 10 or 11 year old kid know about anti-Semitism, except what he hears in his own home from some of his parents, without really knowing what is behind it.

L.B. So that's about 1922, you're talking about, if you were 10?

M.C. About, yes.

L.B. Right, yeah. So in, in other words, they had, they needed an excuse to fight with somebody...is this what you're saying?

M.C. Well...

L.B. So they said, "Well he's Jewish, let's fight with him."

M.C. ...there was one big, one specific big bully, who was a head bigger than me, and, uh, uh, he bragged, he bragged, and they found out the Jew, "Well, let's beat the Jew up", you know, right, this was a very...uh, I never heard it very much, uh, in, in my class, but I...first of all, I was born in Vienna; I, I speak...dialect like any goy...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And, uh, I didn't look exactly Jewish, I didn't behave like Jewish, I was a, I took part in boxing and fighting and, and throwing stones, and breaking ^{windows and turning} benches up in the park. I was an, a, a redels...I was a redelsfuehrer, I did not acted like a sissy, exactly.

L.B. What's a redelfire?

M.C. A fedelsfuehrer is a group, uh, one who, uh...who is the head of a...how do you call this here now, do you have gang leaders, right?

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. Gang leaders. And, uh...

L.B. Oh, then, so you were, uh, oh I see, a "fire" is a leader, right?

M.C. A fuehrer.

L.B. Fuehrer is a leader, right.

M.C. Ruehrer, you have heard the name "fuehrer", right?

L.B. And a "redel" is what?

M.C. A re...a redelfuehrer, it's a group, you know, a gang, rather...

L.B. Uh huh.

M.C. It's amazing how I still use some of my, you know, I haven't been speaking German for many, many years, but...there are some things that coming back automatically when you think about things...

L.B. Well, we found that when we talked to people about their youth, they automatically think in that language...in other words, if they're European born, if they were born and they were brought up with the German language they start thinking in German, they can't remember English words; if they spoke Yiddish, they start speaking Yiddish, if they spoke Russian, they start thinking in Russian. So the, your whole...uh...the feeling that comes back brings the language with it...as you think back.

M.C. It is amazing, you know, and, uh...I left Austria, the first time, in 1931, the second time in 1933, so I'm really almost 40 years gone from, from Austria. But, when it comes to, to, and in my profession I have, I do a lot of calculating, figures, and, and estimating, this is amazing, when it comes to multiplying, deducting, or adding, whatever it is...I have to do it in German.

L.B. Yes. So, in your home...you did not speak Yiddish?

M.C. No, no, my parents spoke Russian...between themselves.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. And, for some reason, I'm surprised, they spoke German.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. And, uh...no, thank you. And, uh, I, um...I speak Yiddish, today...and if you were to, to ask me where I picked it up, I'd have to say I picked it up in Israel, definitely, not in our home.

L.B. Did your parents know Yiddish?

M.C. Uh, I th...yes...but for some reason, when they talked to us children they spoke in German...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. ...in very good Viennese...it's the, the, the m...the main thing is more or less, like German...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. ...but the difference between Viennese and...and, uh, and the pure German could be something like the Scotch dialect...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. ...and with pure English.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. Um, uh, this...

L.B. But, between themselves they did not speak Yiddish?

M.C. Russian.

L.B. Russian. Were they, um, uh, observant Jews, in a religious sense?

M.C. My father was a, definitely, very observing Jew.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And, uh...the holidays were strictly kept, uh...I, I don't think, very Orthodox, but, uh, the house was kept kosher, ~~was~~ in our home...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. Uh, the holidays were, we could not go to school, we could not drive, we could not work, we had to be with Dad in Temple all day long.....and came Yom Kippur there was definitely no food...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And, a few other thing...came Pesach, there was no bread, the house was cleaned from top to the bottom, but...then, it became actually a little bit weaker from year to year, you know, it, uh, disintegrated in, uh, in assimilation, uh, to live more or less, um, um...you know, the fact, as I told you before, we were only 50 Jewish...

L.B. 50 families, right.

M.C. 50 families, we had very, very few Jewish friends, I had not a single Jew friend at all...in...in my youth...

L.B. You did not.

M.C. I, I had only, uh, only non-Jewish, who were my friends.

L.B. All right, now, let's uh, go back a minute. You say, you kept the holidays, did your father observe the Shabbath? Did he wear a yarmulke?

M.C. No.

L.B. Did he wear pais, and a...and a...

M.C. No, no, definitely no, no.

L.B. He didn't wear any of the traditional Russian Jewish...

M.C. No, he did not.

L.B. ...religious costume?

M.C. He was a very modern, very modern, progressive Jew, I would say.

L.B. All right, so he didn't, he shaved his beard.

M.C. Oh, yes.

L.B. And his hair was cut.

M.C. Yes.

L.B. Right. And he didn't wear any of the, uh, medieval...costume...

M.C. No, no, definitely not.

L.B. He dressed as Viennese worker.

M.C. Absolutely, absolutely. And, actually, you know, if I compare sometimes the way that I dress and the way he dressed I could learn a couple of things from him really.

L.B. He was a good dresser?

M.C. Oh, he was a fantastic man.

L.B. Now you said your father...was, uh, observant, and the way you said it, uh, I wondered, maybe, was he more observant than your mother, is this sort of the way you were saying it?

M.C. Well, modern...you see, you are an American, therefore, there is a, I would consider this to be more a 50-50 situation in, in most of the American families.

L.B. It isn't always, usually, in almost all families, whether they are American or not, women, as a rule, tend to be more...churchy, church-going, than the men. Now, in the Jewish families...if they were very Orthodox...then they might both be, I mean, the man would play his role, and the woman would be observant in her role. But you, I've talked to women, for example, who refused to cut off their hair,

263? they wouldn't wear a sheitl, and this was in the Ukraine...

M.C. My...

L.B. ...a long time ago.

M.C. My mother observed the holidays...but she was definitely following, following my father. My father was the religious person. And I would say...out of, definitely more out of tradition than out of, uh...conviction.

L.B. You mean out of religious conviction?

M.C. Out of religious conviction.

L.B. So he felt identified as the ethnic...

M.C. He, he couldn't, he couldn't visualize, exactly, out of ethical education, out of...tradition, right...He was used to, he was brought up in a religious home, and, uh, he followed, uh, in what he was taught, and, you know, from year to year it became...when, uh, modern, modern life gripped the whole family, and we were practically living around, uh, people...you know, if you lived in a communische, if you lived in a commune where everybody...observed certain rules, you go along with them...

283?

L.B. That's right.

M.C. When you live in a commune where all the people next to you are non-Jewish people, then, you, you're not...pressing it specifically, you are, you're...in your own home, behind your closed doors, you can do anything you want.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. The moment you open up the door and you're out in the street...you don't go around with tsitsis, or with, with..., you know...

291?

L.B. Yes.

M.C. Although we, we never had any bad experience...until Hitler started coming to be big...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. Um, somehow we tried to adapt ourselves, when you're in Rome you like to become a Roman.

L.B. Right. Now, did your parents have Jewish friends?

M.C. Yes, they came from a different, far out, on the other side of Vienna. They played cards and, and, very...I would say, maybe, uh....God knows, 4 or 5 yea... times a year, they got together, either we went to them, or they came to us.

L.B. But, I mean, uh...I don't know, you know, European friendships are different from the way, uh, we, uh, deal with friendships here. Uh, in their daily lives, and in their daily, um...

M.C. Dealings?

L.B. ...dealings, did they tend to stick more with the Jewish community, or with just, whomever they came in contact with, which would be mostly...

M.C. Well, in our specific case, there was really, very, very few, we had contact with automatically...I think, definitely, 90% of our contact with outside people were Non-Jewish.

L.B. Did they belong to a synagogue?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. Now, where was the synagogue, in the tenth district?

M.C. In tsein...in tseinten bitsiurk, in tenth...

L.B. So, they would meet with the Jews on the holidays?

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. In their district?

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. But it, really had no contact with them other than this?

M.C. No.

L.B. Is that true?

M.C. Very, very, vey, very little. I think, some of the business connections my father had may have been Jewish people.

L.B. Yes.

M.C. Jewish, uh, businesspeople.

L.B. That's interesting. And, how did your mother spend her day? Do you remember that, at all?

M.C. Well...

L.B. If there's any question you don't want to answer, Max, you don't. O.K.?

M.C. No, no, no, that's not, ^{there's} no specific secrets...my mother...

L.B. It's not a secret, sometimes people don't, they ^{just} don't want to remember certain things.

M.C. Well, I really don't know how she spent her days. Uh, she had a maid, living in the house, which took care of the cooking and cleaning our home. The maid even took care of, uh, of the boys, making sure that they are well-fed and well-dressed. My mother was a very, very...a beautiful woman. She, they called her the Gypsy Queen, and she wa...I'll, I'll show you a picture, she's a fantastic, good-looking woman. And I don't know what she did with herself, really not. I, uh, I know that uh...

L.B. You were too busy being a, a ~~red~~sfuehrer... (Laughs).

377. M.C. Well, well, I'll tell you. You see, the, the, when I went in school and ^{late five} Uh, I spent very, very little time in, in our home; I was either, weekends I was, it was, in winter I was skiing, or playing ice hockey, in the summer we...were mountain-climbing, so out in the woods in the mountains, or, or ~~swimming~~, or whatever it was. I was very little home...And, uh...and so my brothers, too. So, I, I really, when I compare our family life in Vienna, compared to what we have here, ~~there's~~ there's a difference like day and night.

L.B. Now, how?

M.C. We, we are, we know exactly what our children are doing, we ask them how they are, what they are doing, and are they happy, and they unhappy. We converse with

M.C. cont. them, we show an interest in, we try to guide them. Unfortunately, I, I really could not say the same thing happened in my family in Vienna.

L.B. Is that right? Now, was that...was that circumstance, or, was it the nature of your parents as people, or was it you, the nature of the children...or of the time? What was it?

M.C. Uh, I, I think, first of all, my father, after he left the factory, became a businessman. He opened up, um...he opened up a supply house for...factories, and, in steel and in metal he deals, and he became a very successful businessman. He was a very, very hard worker, he left very early in the morning, came very late home at night. Uh...we boys, either we had school, or after school we had meetings with the, with the Roden Feiten. Uh, weekends we were out, skiing or whatever the sport activities were, at the same time. And, uh, it was very different than what we have here. Over here we enjoy the, the going out with the children. Over there, uh, it was two separate lives, the parents had their own life, and we children had our own life, and uh...I feel very strongly that uh...uh, I think, I personally, have been strongly influenced more...by, uh, by my activities in the Roden Feiden, for an example...uh, or my other friends that I had, more than I have been by guidance through my parents.

L.B. Mm hm. Would you say that you were happy in your home?

M.C. Oh, yes. Uh...I was so little home, you know, that uh...

L.B. Well, I mean, for example, some kids will join all these things because they're unhappy...at home, so they deliberately go out. Others, just by chance, you know, they get involved in a group, it isn't that they're unhappy at home, they just find their natural interests lead them somewhere else.

M.C. Uh, uh, I, I'm not sure if this is too dramatic, but I think I had almost 2 homes. My home, where I came for clothes and food and a roof over my head...and my real life, the one ^{that} was, really, you know, keeping me going, and so on, was my activities that I had in youth movements.

L.B. Your friends.

M.C. My friends, uh, a little bit later, the girls...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. ...which, um, Oh brother...excuse me, Oh sister...(Laughter).

L.B. O.K., all right. So, um....I was going to say, you know, for a workingman's family, the activities that you outlined...sound, um, quite, uh, unusual, don't they? In other words, if you were skiing, and swimming and mountain-climbing...

M.C. No, by the time it came to this point, my father was pretty wealthy.

L.B. Oooh.

M.C. I, I mean, uh...

L.B. Well how long was he a workingman?

M.C. Uh, well, let me see...

L.B. He came in 1910....

M.C. '10...I believe, he was working in this factory until 1918. In 1918, uh, suddenly my father disappeared. He disappeared, I, I'm, I'm, I was only 6, or 7 years old at that time, right?

L.B. Right, mm hm.

M.C. I know, out of stories, out of uh, facts that my mother ^{told} ~~taught~~ us, my father went back to Russia to visit relatives...and uh, he became...caught in the Revolution which took place in Russia in 1918. And, he, uh, I think he was arrested and he spent almost 3 years in Siberia...And I do remember one night, when there was a knock on the ~~door~~ in Vienna, and my father came back 3 years later, 1921. Uh...I'll never forget that evening, it was funny you know...and, and after that, I don't know what time has gone by, but then he opened up a little business, and it grew, and grew and grew, and when I was 10 and 12 and 14 years old, you know, when the time of bicycle and motorbike and skiing and swimming and all this come...he was a very successful man.

L.B. Now, wait a minute, you're not going to get out, you know, My gosh, there are a lot of questions. Uh, and you please help me, because I may not be too strong on

L.B.cont. uh, the exact history of this period, O.K.? Now, first of all, let's go back to one particular thing, I, I mark down what I want to ask you, later. Um, you were born in 19-...

M.C. '12.

L.B. '12. In 1914, the First World War breaks out.

M.C. Would you believe something...

L.B. What?

M.C. Lucille?

L.B. What?

M.C. I remember...and I must have been 2 years old, because it was 1914....

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. I remember my mother holding me on her arm.....so I could not have been too old, because I was always a pretty solid character. I remember soldiers lining up in front of our house, in gray uniform, with red carnations in their...lapel, you call this lapel?

L.B. Mm hm, mm, hm.

M.C. ...in their lapel, it was the outbreak, when Austria entered the War, it must have been 1914, and I was about 2 years old at that time.

L.B. Now, you, uh, it's too much to ask whether you remember anything about what happened in the family or in the city or in the country, during the 4 years of the War.

M.C. Uh, mm...I remember that we had to line up in the school...the school that I went later on, down in the basement, for black coffee, and I remember that they distributed, uh...the same sugar that you can buy now, in health stores, the brown sugar. And the funny thing is, I remember a pair of heavy Belgian horses standing in front of our home, I can practically see them in front of me; and they had a malkorp, how do you call this in English? Uh, some sort of a muzzle that hangs down, where you can put the food in for the horse.

L.B. Oh yeah, a feedbag.

M.C. A feedbag, exactly.

L.B. Right.

M.C. A feedbag, full with that red sugar...it was, the molasses was still dripping out of it. And I remember, a little bit later on, I don't know it, it was months or a year, the same sugar was put, given as a ration to the Austrian people. They lined up for black coffee, for hot coffee, to be given to the population, and a certain amount of ration of that, that red sugar. This about all I remember out of the War, I don't, I...

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(Tape ends)

L.B. All right, now I'm going to play it back. Can you hear me? Can you hear me? (Tape off). Now, we should be recording. Now, um, your older brother was how old?

M.C. We have a unusual situation in our home, you will be laughing about this here.

L.B. No, what?

M.C. My mother was born.....January the 1st, 1987.

L.B. 18 hundred 97.

M.C. Sorry, 18 hundred and...

L.B. 87.

M.C. 87.

L.B. Right.

M.C. January 1st.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. My father was born December 31st...I think there's 4 years difference between then, he's 4 ye...he was 4 years older.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C./ I have brother number 1 who was born October 17th, 1909, in Russia.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. I was born October 17, 1912.

L.B. (Laughs). Yeah.

M.C. I have brother #3...who was born May 10, 1925.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And brother #4, who, is not anymore alive, was born, uh, May 10th...

L.B. Oh, that's funny.

M.C. ...and I forgot the year. So...^{bro}ther one...

L.B. You had like 2 sets of twins, almost.

M.C. Yeah, and between mother and father it's only one day in between, so it is really....

L.B. But, uh, what I'm, was trying to get at, your brother was too young to be in the army. What about your father, was he ever in any danger?

M.C. He was not yet an Austrian, he was a Russian.

L.B. Did he ever become an Austrian citizen?

237 M.C. Noo...he was a, uh, how did you call this...in German he was "shtatenloss", they called it in German, which means a person with no, with no, no nationality.

L.B. But they permitted him to stay?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. They didn't give him any problems?

M.C. No.

L.B. Not even after the War?

M.C. Not that I know of.

L.B. So, did that mean, how did that affect his children, what status did you have? If he was shtatenloss, what were y...what were you? You were Austrian born.

M.C. Well, I was, I was born in Vienna, in Austria, so I think that, somehow that straightened out some of the problems.

L.B. So that you were an Austrian citizen?

M.C. But I am, I have a birth, I have a birth certificate...

L.B. Yes.

317 M.C. ...which says, in German it says, "De son of the unaliesischen, frau ~~Es~~ Esvira Chutz;" which would be in English, "Son of the unmarried woman, Esvira Chutz". That was the only thing that is like a black sheep, or a, you know, tarnished, like.

L.B. Well then, all of your brothers, except your oldest, your oldest brother didn't have a paper like that. Now only, only the....

M.C. My oldest brother has a Russian, a "ussian certificate...which is not being, uh, I don't know if he translated this into German or what, if there was any necessity for it, I don't know.

L.B. But your other 2 brothers must have the same thing on their certificates.

M.C. They had exactly the same thing as I have, yes.

L.B. Right, I see. Now, um, let me see, where...what did I get to...Oh, so your father was not taken into the army and, was, did you have any family at all, in Vienna, or in Austria?

M.C. Nothing, no.

L.B. You were all alone there?

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. The only family you had was back in Russia?

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. So...and you don't remember...do you remember anything about the feelings in the family during the War? Did they, uh, were they pro-German, or, or did they love the Kaiser, do you, do you have any feelings, was there talk later?

M.C. I believe they enjoyed very, very strongly the, the total life in Vienna.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. I mean, they enjoyed the conveniences they had, they enjoyed the, uh, economica uh, possibilities, and my father proved it by becoming pretty well established later on. Even now, my mother's still alive...

L.B. Oh, is she in Israel?

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M.C. No, she's here with us...

L.B. Oh.

M.C. ...Well, not in our home, she's in, in Daughters of Sarah, an old age home, she's 86 years old now.

L.B. Ohhh.

M.C. And, uh, she still speaks about Vienna, what a wonderful life she had there, so she was principally pretty happy. We never felt any anti-Semitism...until 1933.

L.B. Yeah, but that's not, you know, I want to get this other...you, you, you didn't feel anything there, really?

M.C. N...only in my class...

L.B. Well, they...

M.C. All right, but this was, I would...I would, um, I would say that this was really not an...anti-Semitismis, anti-Semitismos, rather, it was a typical, a typical childish outburst of, uh, "Let's beat somebody up, let's have some fun".

L.B. O.K.

M.C. Luckily, it didn't turned out the way that they had in mind, right? And I became a big hero.

L.B. Well, that's good. But I, what I want to know is whether you heard anything about their feelings during the War. Were they, uh.....many Jews were pro-German, I mean, because, uh, if they lived in, uh, in Austria, or the, uh, Austro-Hungarian Empire, any portion of it, they preferred the Germans to the Russians.

M.C. Well, there is no doubt in my mind that, uh, my parents were very, very pleased in Austria, they came with practically nothing to Vienna, and within a very very short period, period, they were able of educating their children, and we were well-dressed, we had no specific problems. My father, without speaking the language, I'm sure, I don't know if he knew German before, I doubt it; but, he came to Austria having nothing, knowing nothing, and he worked himself pretty fast up...

L.B. So, you would say they were pro-German. They wanted the Germans to win the War.

M.C. I'd like to different between German and Austrian...

L.B. O.K.

M.C. ...although they speak the same lang...almost the same language.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. Uh...I think, uh...there is a little difference between them, there; the Austrians, although, when Hitler did came to Austria, they, they were as vicious like the Germans, but the general attitude of Austria was, uh, not as severe, and not so regulated, you know...Prus...Prussian, uh, indoctrinated than, than the Austrian, than the Germans were. And, I think my parents felt very, very well in Austria.

L.B. All right. The only reason I said "German" was because they were both fighting as allies, during the War, they were fighting together...that's, I, and....

M.C. Yes, no, I had no...

L.B. ...you usually say it was the Germans, uh, against the West, you know, even though, uh, Austria-Hungary was a, you know, a huge empire, that's all. I did, I know there's a difference between the Austrians and the Germans.

M.C. Yeah.

L.B. So, um.....do you remember anything...now, after the War would be 1918.

M.C. Mm hm.

L.B. I'm, I'm going to have to go into your schooling, too, but I'm interested. Your father decided to go back to Russia?

M.C. For a visit, he had in mind to be there for maybe a month or two months.

L.B. Was he worried about his family there? What was it that...

M.C. I really don't know why he wanted to go back, he, I think he disappeared pretty fast...from 1910, the first time....you know, you remember about the incident...that he had with some Russian officer...

L.B. Yes, yes, yes, so he might have had...

M.C. And, uh, I think, he, he needed to take care of some of, of whatever he left

M.C. cont. there, or maybe after being away from, from, uh, from Russia for 8 years, 1910 to 1918...and after the Revolution there was a change of government, right, maybe he felt pretty secure...that, uh, now let's go back and, uh, you know, kiss everybody "goodbye", the last time I didn't have the chance of doing it.

L.B. Right.

M.C. So, he went, he never expected to be away for 3 years.

L.B. Now, what happened to him? Did he ever say?

M.C. He got, he got arrested.

L.B. By whom?

M.C. By...um.....I believe, you see, he came out of, from, Russia, they were pretty, they were merchants...in Austria, at the time when they left there. When the Revolution came out, a merchant was not a very desirable person.

L.B. Right.

M.C. Right? You had to be a prolet^{arian}, you had to be a worker then, you, you are becoming a high-class citizen. I believe when he came back, and uh, some authorities found out...that, here we got one of them Jewish merchants back again, right, he was arrested, not what he did to a Russian officer...

L.B. No.

M.C. ...because I think they never found out about it, I really don't know, I was too young about this here. And, he was taken into Undesireable Person, and Russia is a, at that time anyway, maybe even today, without much question he was put into a work camp, in a labor camp, and uh...uh...he was sent to Siber, and uh...

L.B. So this was under Soviet, uh...Soviet, uh...

M.C. Government.

L.B. ...government.

M.C. Definitely.

L.B. And that was Soviet ju...justice, that was...

M.C. Ho...ho...ho...how...

L.B. ...in other words, was he arrested as a Russian citizen? Or as an Austrian?

M.C. How about, how about Russian injustice?

L.B. Well, all right, (laughs)...whatever, you know, you can use the word. Um...

M.C. He was arrested by Russian authorities as, as, as...

L.B. On what grounds?

M.C. Um, as a suspicious character, he couldn't prove where he was during the, during the time before, right, and he most probably was very happy to hide some of his whereabouts...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And, uh, uh, and so he, you know, there's not, it's not like in, in America...

L.B. No, it isn't.

M.C. ...where you have a very democratic, uh, way of life, that you can, you are protected, you have certain rights; over there, if something doesn't fit you, you get lost.

L.B. So, he was there for 3 years in a work camp.

M.C. Mm hm.

L.B. Did he tell you any of his experiences? Tha...I mean, that you would care to share with us?

M.C. It wa...it was really, labor, it was a very, very, very severe situation. They had to, they had to, uh...I think, for, for the total time he was there, he worked in...in a mine...half the time he worked in the mine, and the other half, I think he was attached to a lumber-cutting crew, and they were cutting lumber and the lumber was shipped down to the central part of Russia.

L.B. Did your mother hear from him during this time?

M.C. Not, not a word.

L.B. Not a word. She didn't know if he was alive or dead?

M.C. She did not.

L.B. How did she support herself during this time?

M.C. My mother was a very, um...my mother, what did she do? My mother, after 1918, after the War stopped, she, there was very little in Austria available, no food, no

1437 M.C. cont. nothing. And, um...she was travelling to Burdenland, which³ between Hungary and Austria...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...it's a little....actually, I think it belongs to Hungaria. And she was buying, uh, uh, she was taking down, what was she taking down? She was taking down to the farmers there, tobacco, and, uh, sugar that she got from the army in Vienna, and exchanged it against butter and, and eggs, and, and things that...

L.B. That city people need.

M.C. ...you know, she became a merchant of exchanging, exchanging foodstuff, and she made a living from ~~that~~ ^{that}. She, she, she was carrying heavy bags, and, you know, going, like, like even, almost like smuggling.

L.B. It was?

M.C. Oh, it ~~was~~ smuggling.

L.B. So she ~~was~~ an enterprising woman, herself?

M.C. Yes, I think she was.

L.B. So, by that time, you were only 6 years old, you could hardly help support the family at ~~at~~ that time.

M.C. I could not.

L.B. Neither could anybody else. Your ~~oldest~~ brother was 7, and the other 2 were younger.

M.C. Yeah, exactly.

L.B. So she had 4 little ones.

M.C. Yeah.

L.B. Now, how did your father get out of Siber...do you know where he was in Siberia did he ever tell you?

M.C. I don't ~~know~~ exactly where he was in Siberia, but I know that he, uh, the way he got out of it, he uh, disappeared one day when they were out in the woods, and he had to...he came to a...uh, he was, he disappeared from a working crew, and he had to, he was hiding, I think, a whole night in the forest, and then, early in the morning he was swimming through a stream in ice water, and uh, he came eventually to Stettin, which is uh, uh, I think it belongs to, uh.....to Latvia, or Lithuania.

L.B. I don't know, I'll look on the map but I don't think it's here. Stettin, it seems to, it sounds German...

M.C. It is, no, it is up in the Baltic Sea.

L.B. Well, it's not on this map...but he would have had to come all the way this way...across what is Poland...

1447 M.C. He came somewhere here, from White Russia, over to ^{Lithuania}, on the right.

L.B. Aaah.

M.C. He came over here, somewhere here. And from here, I don't know how he found his way to Austria, I don't know.

L.B. Yeah, he had to go this way.

M.C. Yeah.

L.B. (long pause). Was he a strong man?

M.C. I, I, he must have been a strong man, ^{to} to overcome all the problems, there was very little food in, in Siber, and uh.... He was not uh, heavy-built, but I think he was a very strong man, physically strong.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And very determined, he was a very ^{hard} hard worker.

L.B. Mm hm. Di...uh, I, you know, I don't want to push this, but I just wondered if he told you any other, uh, anything else that sticks in your mind about that time?

M.C. In Russia?

L.B. Yeah, about this whole episode. Anything, you know, that makes it, uh..... stand out in your mind, like the 2 horses, tho...that's the kind of thing people remember.

M.C. I remember them still...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. ...heavy, heavy horses, and, and, about the War-time, this is, I remember, I

M.C.cont. remember soldiers lining up, which must have been 1914...because I was little enough for my mother to hold me.

L.B. But about your father's, uh, uh, disappearance, what did you think?

M.C. I was too little, I accepted the fact, you know, uh, I, I mean, I really don't.

L.B. What did your mother say?

M.C. Well, my mother said, "Daddy's in Russia, visiting the parents", right, "He'll be back shortly". And then it became another week, and another week, and another month, and...we, we went to school, and we were busy with our own things, and, somehow, you know how children, children adapt themselves very fast to a certain situation, and, uh.....I remember very well one middle of the night, when the, there was a knock on the door...we were living in tseinte bitsiurk still, and suddenly my father was there. (Pause). I was 9 years old at that time.

L.B. Yeah. (Long pause). Now, do you mind telling me something about your schooling next? What kind of education did you have? Did you, you went to...what kind of school?

M.C. Well, at that time, you had to do, you had to do 8, 8 years of elementary schooling...like what you have here, right? To, to take...

L.B. Public school?

M.C. Public school, right?

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. I took 8 years public schooling in Vienna.

L.B. In what language?

M.C. In Austrian, in German.

L.B. In German. And what did you study? Do you remember what subjects, when you were studying?

M.C. Um, well...

L.B. (Laughs).

M.C. Uh, no, you just go to the s...general education.

L.B. I know, but what, what subjects did they teach you?

M.C. Well, we, we, we had history, we had algebra, we had, uh...

L.B. You had Austrian, or German history, or what? Or y...world history, European history?

M.C. Wo...wo...world, European history, concentrated on, on European, right?

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. And, uh, um...you had, for an example, uh, geometry, you call it, right?

L.B. Well, we say (Soft "g") geometry.

M.C. Geometry.

L.B. Yeah. But you have the hard..."g"...

M.C. Your English is, your English is funny, isn't it? Or is my English funny? (Laughter).

L.B. No, no, nothing's funny. (Laughter). It's just different

M.C. Uh, you know, I don't remember all the, the specific details in, in, uh, in elementary school, that I learned.

L.B. Uh huh.

M.C. Um...afterwards, I came out of school, like you came out when you were 13 years old...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. ...and then, either you go for higher education...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. ...or, or you learn a trade.

L.B. All right, and, when you were 13...that was 1925.

M.C. 1925.

L.B. Right?

M.C. I believe that, immediately coming out of school, I, my father, at that time, was already in business...and, uh, I believe I spent, uh, maybe half a year, or a year, I spent, somehow helping him in his business. And then, you know how Jewish mothers are, they, there were 3 children in...had to make up their minds what are

M.C. cont. they going to be, and one tiny little one who was nobody yet.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And...mother wanted us to be doctors and lawyers, right, it w...a real Jewish mama, but my father said, "I want my children to learn a trade first, if they like, after they know how to use their hands, if they like to become doctors, it's O.K. by me." And he decided, at that, that was authority, there was no way to...to say "No" to that. And he decided each one of our children had to learn a trade. So, brother #1 became a mechanic for automobiles...in a factory that, uh, built, uh, Austrian cars, and he became, he's, even today, a first-class...car mechanic. He's not doing it anymore, but he, that's his trade that he learned.

L.B. Where does he live?

M.C. He lives in Sarasota, in Florida.

L.B. All right, O.K. And brother #2, was you.

M.C. Brother #2, this is me. Uh, I don't know why, but father decided, you become a plumber.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. So, I became an apprentice as a plumber...while being a plumber, in Austria it's a little bit different than here, you do 4 years--4 days per week, you are on the construction job, and 2 days to go to a technical school. And after 3½ years you become a journeyman.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. So I have, uh, 3½ years apprenticeship, with, uh, technical schooling, in that specific line.

L.B. Mm hm, mm hm.

M.C. After that I took one year...a...a master course, they call it, and I have a degree in sanitation and in hydraulics.

L.B. Does that mean that, that you become what we call here a master plumber?

M.C. Yes, I have, it became...a, a diplomed plumber...it must be something very like that.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. I specialized on, on, on hydraulics, pump-stations, and so on.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And, uhm...

L.B. Brother #3?

2141 M.C. And brother #3 became a, a sucherbaker...a sucherbaker is a...uh, how would you say, uh, we call this in English, a fellow who makes...uh, tortes, and bakeries, fine bakeries, uh...

L.B. A confectionary baker.

M.C. A confectionary baker he became, why, don't ask me.

L.B. Sweet baker, yeah, sweets. Sucher, sugar, huh?

M.C. Sucherbaker.

L.B. Uh huh.

M.C. And, brother #4 was too small at that time, to...to learn any trade.

L.B. Now, was there any problem with the Jews getting into these trades? Because, your older brother had to go through an apprenticeship, too...

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. ...and then a journeyman...

M.C. Exactly.

L.B. Right?

2267 M.C. We were never recognized as Jewish, and the name doesn't sound, if I would, my name would have been Goldbaum, or Hirschensweig, or ?Kanalqiter, or any typical Jewish name, it, it would have been obvious maybe; the fact that Chutz is a very, you know, it is nicht a hier and nicht a hein. (Not here, Not there)

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. Uh, they never recognized it, and we, we were hard workers, I became, I could do, uh, unbelievable things when I was a kid, I mean, when I was in apprenticeship. And uh, so...we had really no specific problems.

L.B. Would other Jews have had a problem if they had tried to enter the trades...

M.C. It was, it was very...

L.B. ...if they had, if they had known they were Jews?

M.C. ...it was very unusual for a Jew to take a trade...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. ...for physical, manual work. When the company I worked for, when they found out that I'm Jewish...they couldn't believe it, they said it's impossible. And, uh... but it worked out fantastically for me, because, later on, when I came to Israel and I had a trade and I knew what I was doing, it was...I, I could do better than a doctor or lawyer.

L.B. Right.

M.C. So, uh...I had no specific problems, again, as a, as a Jew working in construction business.

L.B. But, look, Max, the reason you say you had no particular problems as a Jew was that nobody knew you were a Jew.

M.C. I, if they would have known that I am a Jew, I'm convinced I would have had problems.

L.B. Yeah, all right. Now, see, this is what I'm trying to...see. I don't want to put the words into your mouth.

M.C. No, no, I'm sure...because I have seen how other boys, Jewish boys...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. ...were treated, you know, the sissies, the ones that were afraid to stand up...for things. Uh...there was discrimination, without...the typical German hatred against Jewish, but there was definitely discrimination existing. I personally had very, very little trouble...somebody, God forbid, later on they have taken his teeth out.

made a remark I

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. But, for some reason, it worked for me.

L.B. Mm hm. So, then after elementary school, was...Hannah going? (Tape off) *(asked her)*

M.C. Are you warm enough, now?

L.B. Oh, I'm fine, yeah. This conversation... Um, after you finished elementary school, then...uh...let's say the academic side of your schooling was permanently finished? As far as, you know, formal schooling was concerned. Or did you ever go back, did you go to gymnas, or...uh, anything like that?

M.C. Uh, no...

L.B. Or the opportunity didn't present itself?

M.C. No, the fact that I started off in construction, right, and I took that master course, which gave me a diploma which I ~~was~~ have never utilized in any way.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. But, that was about the total, uh, education I had, right. The, the master course would be equivalent to a, a, to a, uh...technical education that you would get in one year, for an example, here from the R.P.I.

L.B. Right.

M.C. Something like this, here.

L.B. Right. Now...in addition to this, uh, public schooling, uh...did you have any Jewish education, at all?

M.C. Well...when I became 13 years old, I had to have Bar Mitzvah.

L.B. Yah.

M.C. And I had to lay tfillen.

L.B. Right.

M.C. Tefillen.

L.B. Right.

M.C. And my father insisted on it, and I laid tefillen maybe for half a year, every morning...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. ...and I was praying in Hebrew....

L.B. So how did you learn that?

M.C. ...very, very fluently...I had a private teacher, who was teaching us, to learn Hebrew.

L.B. When, how...that's what I want to...

M.C. Before it came to the, uh, maybe half a year, or a year even, ~~some~~, before I became 13 years old.

L.B. But you didn't have anything, uh, for example, there were some Jewish children who would go half a day to the public school, and another half a day they would go to a, a Jewish school.

M.C. I had, I had, I had to go to the Temple twice a week. Uh...

L.B. From what age?

M.C. In the last, uh, in the last...I think, when I was 12 years old, between 12 and 13 years, for a whole year...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...I had to go to the Temple, and there was a rabbi teaching the children, to, educating them in Hebrew, and in Jewish laws, and, and, and the whole thing...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...And, it prepared us for the Bar Mitzvah.

L.B. Now, i...so you were Bar Mitzvah in Vienna?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. And that would be, uh, 1912, that would be 1925 again, right?

M.C. Mm hm.

L.B. Now.....even though you lived amongst non-Jews, you were never regarded as Jews...uh, you were in occupations that were not Jewish...

M.C. Mmhm.

L.B. ...uh, your Jewish education began at 12...

M.C. Mm hm.

L.B. ...So that, you know, it, to some extent, it ended at 13, at that time...

M.C. Mm hm.

L.B. Did you all, as a family, did you feel you were a Jewish family?

M.C. Oh, absolutely. This is what I mentioned the very beginning, you know...

L.B. Yeah, O.K.

M.C. Behind our front door, when you entered our home, it was a Jewish home.

L.B. All right.

M.C. Definitely. The moment you moved out, you tried to adopt yourself to your surroundings, and, uh, and, although we never...were hiding the fact that we were Jewish...

L.B. No.

M.C. ...we were also not pressing it...

L.B. I understand.

M.C. ...and advertising it too strongly.

L.B. Right. All right. Now, um, let me stop a minute 'cause...(Tape off).

M.C. I'm not bashful, don't worry.

3847 M.C. Oh, it's good for him, then he can sleep at night, he, he doesn't fall asleep, so, he doesn't sleep... *(Wife interjects to question whether I was upsetting him.)*

L.B. We all have that. My father couldn't sleep a who...after this, he couldn't sleep. That's why I asked you.

M.C. No, no, don't worry.

L.B. All right. (Pause). Umm...oh, yeah. Now, your education was such-and-such. If you think back, was your father educated, and how? Did he read...um...and write?

M.C. In Russian, fluently.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. In German, he was reading German newspapers.

L.B. All right.

M.C. I believe he had a problem in writing.

L.B. In writing Russian or German?

M.C. In the German, no...in the Russian no problem at all, on the contrary. From what I hear, he was very well educated in Russian.

L.B. You don't happen to know what his education was?

M.C. No.

L.B. All right. Did he come from an, a very Orthodox background?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. He did. So, did he know Hebrew?

M.C. Well, he, I think, I don't think that he was able to speak the Hebrew that I talk, for an example, right now with Hannah.

L.B. No, no, no.

M.C. But he was, very fluently in, in, in reading, uh...the prayerbooks.

L.B. Yes.

M.C. Only in Hebrew, not in, like we have it in the Temple here, half English, half Hebrew.

L.B. Right.

M.C. There was no other language, except Hebrew. And he most probably would be, was able to translate it to what it means.

L.B. Yes, uh, did he know Talmud at all? Had he studied...

M.C. Absolutely.

L.B. He did?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. So he was quite, uh, well-educated, then? You would say.

M.C. There's no doubt, no doubt in my mind.

L.B. Yeah. What about your mother? Do you know anything about her...

M.C. I think my mother was, uh, in respect with education, she speaks, even now, Russian, with Hannah.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. So, the, the language, I think, uh, uhm, I don't think...

L.B. Did she have a formal education, because women, you know, they did not always have that...

M.C. Uh, I am not quite sure, I think she went to Public school, in, in, in Russia, in the Ukraine.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

M.C. But that was about it.

L.B. But, ih, now let's see. So your father knew...he could read and write Russian, he could certainly read Hebrew, the prayers...

M.C. Mm hm.

L.B. ...and he knew Talmud, you say.

M.C. Absolutely.

L.B. He could read German, and do su...uh, sufficient writing, after all, to be a businessman you have to do some writing in German.

M.C. I think he had a problem, we would always, we did the writing for him, in German.

L.B. O.K. Uh...Yiddish, you're not sure of?

M.C. I, I don't recall that we spoke Yiddish in our home.

L.B. And that, you never heard them speak, you don't know...

M.C. They, they speak Yiddish, because my mother sometimes speaks Yiddish with Hannah...now.

L.B. Did they read Yiddish?

M.C. No, definitely not.

L.B. They did not?

M.C. No.

L.B. All right. Now, what kind of reading did they do? Do you know?

M.C. My father, what I remember, he read the Austrian newspapers.

L.B. Which one?

454 M.C. Um...the "Abenblatt", which is the evening paper.

L.B. Now, what political, uh, color was that?

M.C. So...Social Democrats.

L.B. Mm hm. And, what else did he read? Did he read any magazines, or any books, that you remember? Did you talk about these things, or...

M.C. I mentioned before...

L.B. Yeah, right, I caught, I caught it. (Laughs).

M.C. ...the relations that we had in our home were very, very different than what, for an example, we have in our own home here.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

M.C. We really have, in, in our home here, we have a life that, the children are part of our daily life.

L.B. Yes.

M.C. Over, uh, I definitely, I maybe, uh...Well, anyway, it, we had our own lives, really, the parents they were one group, and, uh, they took care of food and clothing, and we lived our life completely different. I'm surprised that, uh... without actually, I have a feeling I have been brought up by youth movements, more than, than by my parents.

L.B. Well, it's true...it's also true here in the United States, today.

M.C. It is?

L.B. Yeah, that a lot of the influence on young people, especially adolescents, is from the peer group. And then, uh, they, they, they say, "Well, the parents don't know anymore, only our...our age group knows." But, anyway, now I want to get back to this, um, business with your father. Did he have any political convictions that you are aware of? For example...uh, when the Revolution took place, now you were such a little boy then, you know, that I can't expect you to remember, but maybe you've heard some rumblings, maybe later, or somebody said something. When the Revolution, the first Revolution, when Kerensky came to power, and then there was the second when the Bolsheviks came to power. Do you know whether your father had any feelings at all about the Communists, and, and, and the Communist Revolution?

M.C. Offhand, uh, uh, I believe that uh, he was not exactly in love with them, because they took properties away from him, he was an outcast, him and the family, because they were, relatively wealthy there, and everything with wealth was... despised. Uh, uh, I would say, uh...he...

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(Tape off)

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L.B. 1-2-3-testing, 1-2-3-testing, Can you hear me? 1-2-3-testing, 1-2-3-testing. (Tape off). Yes?

M.C. Yes.

L.B. Right? So, um, now you feel he had no great love for them. Umm...did he... did he view their supposed attitude toward the Jews at that time, was he aware of, uh, of what was happening in the Jewish world at all, did he keep up with that? Was he in any way interested in Zionism, or a national movement for the Jews... anything of that nature?

M.C. Uh, uh, I am su...

L.B. As far as you know.

M.C. I'm, I'm sure that he really may have...uh, had very little knowledge about an existing Zionistic, uh, Zionism, organization. Uh, the place where he come from, uh, I think, uh, Yekatarinaslav, was not a very big place.

L.B. No, but now, in, in Vienna, now wait, just a minute...(Tape Off). Now, are we turning? Yes. Now, in Vienna...did he, um, after all, where was Herzl from?

M.C. Herzl...from Vienna.

L.B. Right. So? Uh, and there we...there...uh...the, uh, first Congress took place in Basl, right?

M.C. Mm hm.

L.B. And the second, in Zurich, was it?

M.C. Switzerland, yes.

L.B. Yeah. So, uh...which is not too far. Did he, was he aware of this, or was it outside his sphere of interest?

M.C. cont. I'm pretty good in sketching and things that seem to be coming naturally. M...I had the same thing when I was a little fellow, 13, 14 years old, I did terrific sketches in, in, in the trade school that I went afterwards I made sketches for the military personnel who were in the same school. And, ~~they~~ pick up excellent grades, and I, I, because I was...because I was Jewish, uh, I, uh.....I, uh, didn't got the grades, but this is besides the point...Uh, if my parents would have kept their eyes open, they would have said, "Hey, this little fellow here seems to have certain trends to become unusual in certain ways, let him, let him, direct in this direction and get a better education in it"; which they, mmm...I don't like to say, neglected, but they missed that opportunity in, in pushing me in this direction. I could have been, maybe, a good architect. But...

L.B. It's probably outside of their experience, even.

M.C. Could be, so, so I'm not, what's gone by, it's gone by.

L.B. Mmm, right.

M.C. When we noticed our little girl, that she had the same tendencies as I had, we made sure that she becomes...educated, she expands in this here, right. So, I think.....we pay a little bit more attention to our children than my parents paid to us. And if this is because, uh, of, uh, circumstance, of being in a new country, uh, trying to establish themselves, or if it's just maybe a little...um, you could hardly say indifference, I mean, what parents are indifferent to their children?

L.B. Mm hm, mm hm.

M.C. But, maybe they were so occupied with trying to make it...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...and, on the other hand, we children were pretty independent, we could take care of ourselves. And maybe this was a combination of, this is what brought...brought it what it is, and we haven't done so bad.

L.B. No.

M.C. My big brother is today, he's a doctor for cars, and he comes for consultation, makes economically fantastic...and I haven't done so bad, I make, although I'm not an architect, I make more money than an architect makes, maybe, and, and money's really not, uh, not, uh...well, money is very important...

L.B. Yeah. (Laughs).

M.C. ...but it, it is not, it's really not the final aim in life, you could be very happy with little money, you could be very unhappy with a lot of money.

L.B. Mmm. Now, uh, Max, I want to know whether, at any time, during these years, let's say up til your Bar Mitzvah, um...you...found yourself interested in the Jewish life, Jewish problems? Or wh...or did you ever? And, when.

M.C. Well...you see, the funny thing with me is that I...I became, my f...I was one, one Jewish boy in a school of 800 non-Jewish...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. So, if I had a few friends they were not Jewish people. When I started boxing, boxing, what Jew goes boxing in Vienna, right? So, this was not exactly...when I started learning a trade...and, the few Jewish boys that I met when I went to, to the Bar Mitzvah training school, in the Temple, right...when they saw me, with the blue overalls, riding the tramway in, in Vienna, the few Jewish friends I had, they said, "Have you seen the son of the Chutzes, he had to go to work?" You know, then they dropped me like a hot potato, and, the heck with them, nobody drops me...So, if, if there was a little bit of a opportunity maybe to establish a certain Jewish friendship, the moment they found out that I'm going for physical hard work, this is below their dignity, you know; so I became again, uh, uh, separated from the little strings that I had, maybe, with Judaism.

L.B. Yes.

M.C. And I became, uh.....I became, uh, a Viennese, with uh, outside my home I was a Viennese 100%, when I opened up the door I became Jewish...also, not very strongly, but I became Jewish. The maid that we had in our home, she was a Catholic girl...she had her own life. Uh, um...and, as I said, from year to year it became a little bit weaker and weaker and weaker...

L.B. All right, now then...what you're saying is that you really had no interest in Zionism, or Istael, or Palestine?

M.C. I really didn't know...

L.B. You didn't know.

M.C. In fact, I didn't know, at that time...

L.B. Right.

M.C. ...that there was a Palestine existing.

L.B. Right.

M.C. I didn't know about, uh, Zionist movements.

L.B. Right.

M.C. There was a Jewish organization in, in Vienna, existing too far away from where I lived...to make it easy for me to get acquainted with them. The, the few Jewish boys, friends, that I could have, they dropped me when they saw me working physical work on construction jobs.

L.B. Right, right.

M.C. And my attitude was, you don't want me, the heck with you. And, uh, I uh...I developed into what I am today...

L.B. That's very clear. All right, now, i...I'd like to take you past 1925, past the age of 13, if you will. Now, what happened to you after Bar Mitzvah? You went t...you became an apprentice, and then you were a journeyman, and you finished your technical education, uh, as a master plumber and as a, uh, hydraulics...and, um, it's hydraulics engineering of a kind, isn't it?

M.C. Sanitation, and hydraulics, yes.

L.B. Sanitation and hydraulics, all right. Then, what did you do then?

M.C. I worked in Vienna until 1931. (Pause). In my trade.

L.B. Now, were you aware of what was happening in European politics during this time?

M.C. At 1931? Oh, yeah, sure, very little, because 1927, for an example, there was that, uh, you must know about, uh, Vanzetti? Two labor leaders, uh...

L.B. You're talking about Sacco and Vanzetti, in the United States?

M.C. Yes, in the United States, and it created a big problem in Vienna...

L.B. Oh, I didn't know that it did. How did it happen?

M.C. Oh, oh, there was big, big demonstrations in Vienna, and there was about 1000 people died in Vienna, on that day when they were hanged, or shot, or what...

L.B. They were ex...uh...

M.C. Ex...electro...

L.B. ...no, they were electrocuted...

M.C. ...electrocuted, yes. And, there was big dem...

L.B. No, tell me about that. I don't know...

M.C. There were big, big demonstrations in...

L.B. By whom?

M.C. By pro...pro-Sacco and Vanzetti, uh.....you see, this is so long back now, I really don't know, but, uh, I do know...

L.B. What part...was it a political party?

M.C. A political party, absolutely, and the police, and...

L.B. Do you know what party?

M.C. Uh, I believe it was Social Democrats.

L.B. It was not the Communist Party?

M.C. No, no, the Communists were never very strong in, in Austria. And, uh...but there was a big demonstration, police uh, uh, intervened, and, uh, I do know that, uh, almost 1000 people died on that specific day, when the demonstration broke out...

L.B. Now was this...

M.C. ...in favor of Sacco and Vanzetti.

L.B. Was this in one particular district, or was it all over Vienna?

M.C. It was all over Vienna, very strongly in tseinten bitsiurk, where there was a lot of...

L.B. Working people.

M.C. ...factories, working people living there, I remember this very strongly. So I was, politically in, in, uh...the political education was...

L.B. That's what I'm interested in.

M.C. ...ve...very, very light, although we belonged to a certain group, and we demonstrated, and we walked out, and we, we were prepared, I would say, maybe, to become strong future Social Democrats members.

L.B. You were not yet a member?

M.C. No, I was too young for this.

L.B. Yeah, as an apprentice this was?

M.C. Sure.

L.B. I'm trying to remember, if Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted when, about 1929?

M.C. 192-, 1927.

L.B. '27.

M.C. Must have been '27, because...it was almost a revolution.

L.B. Is that right?

M.C. Oh yes. You were not around at that time, yet.

L.B. I was, but I wasn't aware. So, um....all right, that's 1927. What do you remember next? Uh, of any political import, you know, that...uh, stuck in your mind. In '27 you're uh, 15.

M.C. The most important thing I remember out of this was the beautiful Viennese girls.

L.B. Yeah. (Laughs). That's hardly political. (Laughs).

M.C. No, but it's...

L.B. It may have been important. (Laughs).

M.C. No, but it is very natural.

L.B. Yeah. (Laughs). It must have been very nice, too.

M.C. And, uh, I really don't remember anything special, um...uh...

L.B. Were you aware of what was happening in Germany?

M.C. Um...

L.B. After all, what was happening in Austria? There were problems in Austria.

207 M.C. Not yet, not yet at that time, because, uh, Austria, there were, uh, ^{Schönberg} and uh, uh, there were political upheavals there, but no...we were not too strongly affected because, the Social Democrats were always in power...and uh...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. It did not affect us very strongly. Then...

L.B. Was there a problem getting work?

M.C. Ummm...in 1930, '31, there was a crisis in, in Austria, there was very little work to be done...and this is when I decided, for an example, I didn't want to hang in my father's, uh, pocket...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. And, again, with 2 of my non-Jewish friends, we decided, let's get out of Austria. And we walked...to Africa.

L.B. To Africa!

M.C. We walked to Africa, I walked to Africa.

L.B. So, you were 19?

M.C. I was about 19 years old.

L.B. You had to walk across the water. (Laughs).

M.C. Well, not exact...I mean, when I say we walked, I mean, uh...

L.B. I know.

219 M.C. ...the total trip took almost 2 years, and, uh, most of it was done by hitchhiking, and when we had to cross the sea, for an example, we walked right through, uh, Italy, I know almost, in Italy, every little village we have gone through... 222 Venezia right down to...to Roma, Constanza, Reggio...Palermo. Then, in Trapponi we took a boat and we went over to Tunis...

L.B. Is that where you, uh, landed, is that where you wound up in Africa, in Tunisia?

M.C. Yes. And then, from Tunis we...crossed right through the Pyrenees, not through the, through the, through the...

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L.B. No, not the Pyrenees.
M.C. ...Atlas Mountains.
L.B. Yeah.
227 M.C. Constantine, Filatville, we ended up in Algiers.
L.B. Mm hm.
M.C. In Algiers, I got a job, for a Swiss company, to put pump-stations up, supervising pump-station...
L.B. Now, wait a minute, you couldn't speak French?
M.C. They speak Italian fluently.
L.B. By the time you finished walking through Italy...and all those girls. (Laughs).
M.C. This is, this is an international language. (Laughs).
L.B. Right, so you learned Italian.
M.C. I spoke Italian fluently.
L.B. Uh huh.
M.C. And, in Tunis...
L.B. Italian was a co-language with French in Algeria, is that it?
M.C. No, no, no.
L.B. No?
M.C. Used, Tunis was strong, and Mussolini, at that time, was very interested to have a lot of Italian people living in Tunisia.
L.B. Mm hm.
M.C. And you could, the police people, everybody spoke Italian in Tunisia, although the official language was French.
L.B. Yes.
M.C. And, uh...(Long pause)...And, uh, I got a, a job, my 2 friends got other jobs, one got a job in a hospital, another one became a waiter. I got a job with a construction outfit, and I had a little accident, I had an injury in the left leg...and, uh, ended up in the hospital for a short time, but then the...authorities found out that I'm a student travelling, and I had no work permit.
L.B. You were a stu...you had a student visa?
M.C. We, as a, students, we, we, posed as students.
L.B. I was going to say, how did you...yeah.
M.C. We posed as stu...you, just in your passport you write down "student", that's it.
L.B. I see.
M.C. And, uh, we had experiences, unbelievable, I can't tell you this, but, uh, it's uh, fantastic...And, uh...
L.B. Well, if we have time at the end, maybe you'll tell some, all right? But, uh..
M.C. All right. Anyway, I travelled for 2 years, I went over to Spain, and um, I lived in Spain for quite some time.
L.B. Did you learn Spanish?
M.C. Spanish and French and Italian is, uh, is very, very similar, when you speak Italian you have no specific problems with Spanish...We picked up some French...
L.B. Mm hm.
M.C. And, uh, then we went...from, uh, Spain, we went from Barcelona down to Valencia.
L.B. Mm hm.
M.C. Valencia, went to Madrid, Madrid -- Saragossa. We came back to Barcelona, we went over the border into France, southern part of France. Uh, we spent some time in Nice, in Monte Carlo. In Monte Carlo we got arrested for.....all sorts of things.
L.B. (Laughs).
M.C. And, uh...
L.B. The 3 of you were still together?
M.C. Yes.
L.B. Yeah.
M.C. We played the mandolin, guitar, and violin, and we made a lot of money by playing on street corners. I came back with a lot of money. And...
L.B. You never know which of your talents will be appreciated. (Laughs). Yes.

M.C. I think, principally...I think principally, I learned in those 2 years travelling...

L.B. Yes.

M.C. ...um, uh, not algebra or geometry or anything like that, but I learned a few things that you normally do not learn in colleges and things like this. I feel it, it formed my, uh, my, my approach to life and problems very, very strongly.

L.B. Do you want to share with us what, you know, what, do you want to say what it was that you learned? That you feel you learned.

M.C. Well, I learned...I think that...I learned to cope with problems...when you, when you have a conscience, for an example, and don't wish to go under, when you try principally to be honest, what you have to do, uh, to swim above the water, and to reject the things that, uh, to feel instinctively, that are wrong. Uh, uh, it gives you a lot of self-confidence to leave the country without a dollar in your pocket and come back with a lot of money, knowing you have lived 2 years off the land, and, and, and, made it on your own, you get, you gain a lot of self-confidence to yourself...You meet all sorts of people...

L.B. But you're saying that you're a...Wait, wait, let me clarify something. You're saying that you were able to do this, without violating your conscience, is that what you're saying?

M.C. Exactly, exactly. I have, uh.....this is something which is not for the tape, here, but...No, no, no, I'm not going to say it, I'm just telling you.

L.B. Oh.

M.C. I, um, I had been, I had been seeing, and, and, and living among scum of people, you know...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...that, you're being approached, and being tempted into all sorts of things that come so easy when you're hungry...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...and if you're capable to overcome this, right, you, you don't lose the respect for yourself...and you keep on going, and then you find out a lot of people go under, and you don't go under, you keep on going, it gives you some certain amount of, uh, uh...security, that you will be able to cope with things.

L.B. Whatever happens, then.

M.C. Never mind what happens.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. You fall always on your feet. And then we had thousands of pleasant surprises.

L.B. Yes.

M.C. And not only the, the different, uh...adventures with girls, all right, not alone this here, pleasant things that you...that you, you experience on trips like this. It's terrific, I could talk day and night about what happened on, on those 2 years, and, and still not be able to tell the whole things. It's...It's uh, I, I uh...it's unusual, it's, it's unbelievable what, uh, what you learn. There is a certain, there is a certain, um, custom, with, uh, specifically with a German apprentice, after he finishes a, uh, for an example, his training as an apprentice...it's not anymore now, it's modern times...but, many years before, after he is an apprentice, before he becomes a journeyman or he goes for master's, he has to go out on his own for a whole year...they call it, he goes, uh...off to waltz, w-a-l-z, waltz, and it means, he has to go, he becomes a globe-trotter...something like this, he has to go out and he has to make it on his own without any assistance from parents and things like this; it's an old, old established custom. It's been modernized now, by people who hitch-hike from town to town...

L.B. Yes, I see.

M.C. ...you know, from, from state to state. In my case, it took me 2 years, and I went around half the world.

L.B. Now, when you came back, it was 1933.

M.C. I came back 1933, exactly. I came...

L.B. And what was doing when you came back?

M.C. Uh, uh, 1933, already, Hitler...had a certain foothold in, in, uh, in Austria.
345 And, I had a bad accident, incident rather...my father had a business in tswelfen
bitsiurk, the twelvth...

L.B. The twelvth, I know...

M.C. ...twelvth district, and we, my big brother and I, we were helping him, and
350 we had some Nazis coming down and, and calling us, uh.....dirty, uh, So Jude, you
know, which is uh, so Jude, pig-Jew, you know...

L.B. Yes, like a sow.

M.C. Yeah, and uh.....well, at that time, uh, they were definitely in the minority,
and, I mean, we had alot of good friends there, it came to a big, big fight and we
had to carry those 2 Nazis out of our yard later on.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. And, uh, but we saw the handwriting on the wall.

L.B. You did?

M.C. Absolutely. And uh...then, there was still now work, and I was very full of...
pep and vinegar after my 2 years trip around the world.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. Then I heard about Palestine.

L.B. Then you heard?

M.C. I had about...

L.B. That was the first you heard?

M.C. ...about '33.

L.B. Whom did you hear it from?

M.C. Uh, there were quite a few Jewish people who were...

L.B. Go ahead...

M.C. ...quite a few Jewish people who were interested to...go to Palestine. And,
uh...I heard about there's construction going on, and they're looking for young
people and so on, so I tried to get contact with Jewish organizations to make it
feasible, and I waited for...quite some time to, to, be given a visa, that you had
to have, from the British, to enter Israel, Palestine.

L.B. Mm hm, hm.

M.C. And, after being, spending a few months in, uh, in Vienna, doing nothing, I
said, the heck, if I made it around half the world I certainly should have no
problem getting to Palestine.

L.B. Yes.

M.C. There was very little money available, so, as usual, I walked from Vienna to
Trieste, I bought myself a ticket from Trieste to Bierut.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. I had in mind, without a visa, to cross over the mountains into Istael. So
what, nothing to it, right?

L.B. Right over the Lebanese border, where Peggy was.

M.C. Exactly, exactly. Uh...on the boat, on the boat, we were 17...

L.B. This is from Trieste to Beirut?

M.C. From Trieste to Beirut.

L.B. Now what year is this?

M.C. 1933, June.

L.B. And you went alone?

M.C. I was completely on myself, yes. On the boat I met, um, 9, 9 boys...they came
from Poland, and had the same idea that I had, to do exactly the same thing, go
somehow...to Palestine. When we came to um, to Beirut, yeah, we came, first we
came to Haifa, Haifa port was not yet completed at that time and the boat had to
405 anchor outside, in the bay, we saw the town and everything, and...And, the next
day, the boat went to Beirut, in Beirut all of us got arrested...the passports were
taken away from us, the police came up, watching us, and, the captain or some officer
informed us that he knew that we were Jewish people with the intention to cross
illegally into Palestine, and uh...uh, we are going to be deported back to Trieste,
which created a little problem for us, and, uh, the next day the boat came back again
to Haifa, took on merchandise, and was supposed to go back to Trieste.

L.B. Who owned Trieste at that time? Was it Italy?

M.C. Italy.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. So, at that time, I decided, O.K., if that's the case, I'm not going to go back to, to...Trieste. And, uh, I spoke still some good Italian, it was an Italian boat, from my previous trip. I talked with some of the sailors on the thing, I said, "I, I'm not going back, I, where shall, I'm going to swim. Where, how, and what?" So, they gave me some wax paper and I wrapped up my, my watch and some of the...pictures and numbers, and things, whatever I had, I had it under a, a raincoat, I remember. And the Jew...the other boys decided also, all of us, we're going to jump. So when we...but, the moment the boat came, the second time, back from Beirut to Haifa, in the bay, police came up and watched us, continuously.

L.B. Now, what police, were these Lebanese?

M.C. Arab, no, Arab.

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. Uh, Palestine... Arabs.

L.B. Palestinians, yes.

M.C. Palestine Arabs. And, they watched us. But, then, uh, 11:00 at night, half past ten, actually, when the boat was supposed to leave, uh...to our horror, the police stayed on the boat, where the boat started tramping...uh, uh, travelling out of the bay. And I made myself signs up to the bay, near Haifa, there's a street going up with lights, that I remembered. The soldiers told, not the soldiers, sailors told me, "Do not swim to the harbor, they will catch you. Swim to where the big Shannon tanks are, the Shannon, the factory, next to Haifa."

L.B. Yes.

M.C. Uh, but, uh, the, pandemonium broke out when the boat started going back and the police stayed with us here, watching us. But then, we watched the police, and we saw that their motor launch was still hooked up to the stairs going down to the water. So, they must have had similar experiences with previous people who tried to jump things, you know... they wanted to prevent this. So, the boat must have gone maybe for, God knows, 25 minutes maybe, but, you know, it looked like, it looks like....

L.B. Yeah, yeah, hours.

M.C. ...like an eternity. And, uh, then we saw that uh, the police went down the steps, they were counting our heads, they went down to, the steps, and went into the motor launch. And then, about, the boys decided, "I'm not going to jump, it's too far for me, I will never make it, I'm not wanting to drown." So, I saw nobody wanted to jump, so, I dropped my coat, and I jumped. And, uh, 4 hours later, I made it to Haifa.

L.B. You swam for 4 hours?

M.C. You had to, you'd be surprised what you can do if you have to. 4½ hours, to be precise. And then I was hiding myself in one of the boats from...there was a? a, a, a, a club, a Jewish organization...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. They had their boats anchored outside, I swam back, and I was hiding in the boats, then early in the morning I went out...

L.B. You did not know any Yiddish, no Hebrew, no nothing.

M.C. Only German.

L.B. German, Italian, French, Spanish.

M.C. Yeah, yeah. Any day...morning I went out in the water again, came out and made like...a sport fan, you know...

L.B. Yeah, you were swimming.

M.C. Right. And, there was a shift, there was a...shift change, 6:00 in the morning, some boys came out of the factory, Jewish boys, they saw me...and, they knew what happened, because, because 1:00 in the morning police were patrolling the side. So then, I found out later on, that, the boat sent messages to Haifa...

L.B. ...2-3-testing. Does this thing play. (Tape off). All right, now, you told me, the boys realized that somebody had jumped ship.

M.C. Because the police were patrolling...

L.B. Right.

M.C. ...but what the police...seemed not to be taking into account, that I was jumping much further out than where the boat was really anchored, and they thought either it's a fake, or I drowned, or some...anything, you know. It was my luck that the boat actually travelled out, because it took me longer than what I anticipated...so I came to the shore much later than they thought I should get there...

L.B. Yes, yeah.

M.C. It was my luck, and this was my...

L.B. What se...what seemed like bad luck turned out to be good luck.

M.C. Turned out to be good luck, and, uh, this was my beginning in, in Israel.

And, I was taken in, immediately...to one of the boys, he, he took me to his home, and, uh...I'll never for...I'll never forget the first morning, they took me up

11-12? to Hadarah Carmel, in the Bacha Poilene, which is the workers' kitchen, and I was sitting at the table and eating and there were (Laughs) 60 or 100 people, and the water was dripping down from my pants still, and I was sitting and eating breakfast there. What a day, what a day. And, I worked, I became a...

L.B. Now wait a minute, I'll...(Tape off). I wanted to be sure that you were being picked up. Now, Max, so you had a, it was a happy day...

M.C. Sure.

L.B. No?

21? M.C. Sure, it was a very happy day. That, uh, then I was about, uh, 1933, right, I was 21 years old almost. By the way...I came to Israel June, June the 14, 1933, the same day that Aloszoroff was shot.

L.B. Now, that I don't know about.

M.C. Yes. Well...

L.B. Who's Aloszoroff?

M.C. Aloszoroff was a big political leader of Israel.

L.B. In Palestine?

M.C. In Palestine, at that time, yes.

L.B. And, uh, for what reason was he shot? I don't know this particular...

M.C. It was friction, political friction...

L.B. Amongst the Jews?

M.C. Uh, yes, but uh, the suspicion is that he was shot by British Intelligence officers.

L.B. Mm hm. What faction did he represent? What, uh, party, or what...

M.C. He was Ma Fai.

L.B. Mm hm. So you remember that happening.

M.C. Yes, because it fell exactly on the same day.

L.B. Right. So what you say, in a sense, your political education started in Israel?

M.C. Oh, not only the political alone, also the Jewish education, rather, right?

I...

L.B. Did you have schooling^{then, in 1933} once you arrived in Israel?

33? M.C. I became, I became, uh, at the very first, beginning, no schooling, I became, uh, after a few months, I became a contractor, in plumbing, I worked in H'ar Carmel. I had to change my name.

L.B. To what?

34? M.C. To Sagal....from Ch...

L.B. Why did you...

M.C. If I would have used my name, the Police, the British would have picked me up most probably.

L.B. Ohhhh.

M.C. And, uh, Sagal means, uh, "the one who came by the waves".

L.B. Is that right?

M.C. Yes. And, uh.....I had to hide myself, because, then my big brother followed a little bit later.

L.B. He did?

M.C. He came to Israel as a tourist.

L.B. When was, when was the Aunshloss? What year was that, '37?

M.C. The Aunsh...

L.B. '3-, '36?

M.C. The Aunshloss...I, I think, '37.

L.B. '37?

M.C. '37, yes. But...

L.B. All right, now, did they, were, were any of them able to get out before the Aunshloss?

M.C. Well, unfortunately, uh, uh, my mother and brother #4, they were able to leave the country before...after the Aunshloss, but before the War broke out, before 193....9.

L.B. 9.

M.C. Brother #1 came to Israel...half a year after I came to Israel. Brother #3 and my father.....unfortunately they never made it, and they ended up in Auschwitz in the gas chamber.

L.B. Hm.

M.C. (Long pause). So uh...

L.B. So 3 brothers and your mother got out?

M.C. Yeah.

L.B. Your, your father wasn't aware...or, uh, he waited too, uh, don't, don't, if you don't want to talk about it, Max, we won't.

M.C. Well, it was too late for him. We tried, we tried to get a visa for him to, to enter Palestine, but the British were...they had a strong, uh, pro-Arabic...um... policy, right, and, and you, we could not make it. We never made it, we couldn't get him out, we couldn't get ~~my~~ mother out...mother, mother made it to America...in 193....

L.B. How was she...

M.C. She had a sister here, in, in Philadelphia...

L.B. Yeah.

M.C. And the sister put up a...a, um, she, the sister, my aunt, right, sponsored my mother, and my mother and brother #4 made it to this country in, in 1939.

L.B. Hm hm.

M.C. Uh, we tried to get our father and brother #3 out of Austria, but, uh, uh, we couldn't make it, my father tried to get here illegally...and, uh, I think, whatever money was left after the, the Austrians and Germans took away from him, we spent on tickets, it never came true. We lost track of him and my brother, and then, the latest that we know, he died 1943, in Auschwitz.

L.B. Hm.

M.C. Good man.

L.B. Hm. (Long pause). So, um...your life then, your mother's living in America, and you're making a life for yourself in Israel, right?

M.C. Hm hm.

L.B. You're a contractor.

M.C. Hm hm.

L.B. And, you say, your Jewish education started then, right?

M.C. Well, again, I became, from the very first day, right, people were very impressed with the feat of jumping and swimming for many hours at night. And, I joined immediately, the Haganah...the second day, practically, I was sworn into the Haganah.

L.B. Why did you join?

M.C. The man that took me to live with him, he was a member of the Haganah, and he says, "Max, you're a terrific character, come on, we need boys like you." Right?

L.B. Hm.

g?? M.C. And, I was very happy to join, and, uh, the fact that I had a little bit of training from the Roden Feiten in Austria, when later on we became, even, we were trained in using rifles and with pistols. And I was a *draufgang*, you know, I mean, uh, uh, after what I had done I was affraid of nothing, I could do anything I wanted to do.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. I was very happy, and I was young, and uh, and, and, uh....

L.B. But I, no, it's not that I, you know, I don't object to your joining. I'm curious...in other words, here, it's not yet Israel, it's not yet a, a really bad time, what year were, are you talking about, now...

M.C. '33.

L.B. ...1933, well...it's already a little bit bad, for sure. And, uh....you're, uh, a young man, without any real, uh....Jewish, um...political education...Is that true?

M.C. Lucille, I'd like to stay honest by admitting that...the main driving force was maybe not a conviction out of becoming...a knowledgeable, devoted Zionist, or or Jew...

L.B. ~~Yeah~~^{No}, that's what I'm saying, so you join anyway.

M.C. I, I joined because I...

L.B. Your friend was there.

M.C. ...I, I live, I live in, in Palestine...

L.B. Right.

M.C. And my friend is in the Haganah, so you automatically join the Haganah...

L.B. That's right.

M.C. That's #1, I liked uh, it was no adventure, but I certainly didn't, didn't wanted to have, uh, anybody, uh, touching me without me trying to get back at him, you know.

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

M.C. And, you see, um, I remember the advice of my father...when I went to school in Vienna, I'm going back now many years, he said, "Max, if anybody touches you, or calls you, you run, you haven't got a chance." And, uh...I am not the type who can run, I can run but not for...because I'm being threatened. I, I have a, I would hate myself if I run away from...from, from problems, problems have to be solved.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. So, being able to live in Palestine, and do something about uh...uh, being active, I felt pretty good about it, you know. I was young, no connections, no, no responsibilities, and, uh, here I am, 21 years old, on my own...uh, healthy like a bull, and being given an opportunity to do something, as, that was very exciting.

L.B. No, I'm just saying that there were so many different reasons, here, you come in almost by the back door. You see?

M.C. Yeah, yeah.

L.B. That's all.

M.C. And, uh, I became very active, I became very active and I was practically my my total 27 years in Israel...um, uh, uh...even, when, 1939 I was conscripted in the British Army, and I served 5½ years in the British Army...even while being there, I can admit it right now, very openly, I stole, one night, 5 trucks of ammunitions and delivered it to Haganah, and so on. And I felt very proud of it, and very happy about it, you know. We did our share in doing it, and, uh, and there was trouble time, in 1936 was very bad. Um, there was no civilian work going on, and the Arabs created problems all over the place, and I was happy to be on the side where you, where you could do something about it, not just sit...back and, and wait what happens. And, uh...

L.B. In other words...you see, many Jews do feel, and they did feel, that they were, they felt so helpless, that they were almost imprisoned...by this feeling of helplessness, there was nothing they could do. And there's nothing that's so, makes one feel so terrible, as the feeling of helplessness. Do you understand what I'm saying, Max?

M.C. Well, uh, I, I know what you're saying, but it doesn't, in, in my...

L.B. I'm not saying that it applies to you...what I'm saying is the opposite.

M.C. ...in my...in my case, even when I didn't know that I was a Jew...somebody hit me, Brother, I hit you back twice, and then I would ask...has it been right or wrong, and I had a very different attitude. Uh, uh, I feel very strongly, you see, take, take...take my case that you could multiply, maybe by the thousands, what happened to other people. The grandparents, half the family was slaughtered by the Russians...the Germans took care of half my family in Austria. So now I came to, what did I do wrong by trying to get into Palestine...what have I done wrong, I'm not a criminal. And I was hunted by the British police, because I was an illegal immigrant, right? Uh, uh, uh, what was my aim? My aim was to, to work and make a living and establish, maybe one day, a family; and live in the land, where because I'm a Jew I'm not going to be discriminated. That was the only thing. And they tried to...convert me into a criminal...so, I don't know how you say in English, my gander get up, and no, Brother, don't touch me, and you feel good 'specially if you have thousands who feel the same way. So, uh, I think, uh, most Jewish people, and, I think, even the ones who come very lately to Israel, um, uh, I've been in Israel 27 years, and I have been, although already, maybe, grown up, but my character has been formulated to the, the extent, that...I don't wish by anybody, there is nobody in the world who can discriminate against me because I am Jewish, so maybe I am becoming aware, and very proud that I am Jewish, without being too religious...

L.B. I understand, yeah.

M.C. You know, I think I'm pretty good Jew, without going to the Temple even, uh, because if I found out, the way I live, the way I treat, the way I behave, the way I treat my friends, my wife, my family, and so on... So I have a very, uh, very, um... very, maybe, unusual attitude about what is religion, but as a Jew, uh, I feel very strongly, and, uh...I'm a Jew, and nobody in the world is going to change it.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. Uh, so...I don't know, maybe, maybe I'm uh...I don't know how to say this, maybe I'm first an Israeli...

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. ...and secondly a Jew, but it goes hand-in-hand, you cannot separate ^{t between} the two.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. Uh, this has been strongly formulated by, by living in Israel. In Israel, um, anybody you talk to is Jewish, the milkman is Jewish, the policeman is Jewish, the gonif is a Jew.

L.B. (Laughs).

M.C. Right? The revenue officer's a Jew.

L.B. That's what Peggy said was so fantastic. Yes. That's right.

M.C. So, um...but now I have come to the autumn of my life...(Laughs)...and, uh, um, you know, ^{it's very} when I talk enthusiastically about Israel, then, some people have the guts to come out with a question, so when you, "So what are you doing in America?" You know...people, some people, ask me, "What are you doing in America if you're so enthusiastic about Israel?"

L.B. Yeah, so what do you answer them?

M.C. I, it is too tough to answer this in a very light conversation, I had my disappointments with the government, at the beginning, and, uh...I ended up in Israel as a major in the Israeli Army, and I took my job very, very serious, and unfortunately, at the beginning, it was really not a question...who is doing a certain job because he knows it, but, uh, to what political affiliation does he belong to. And very often...

L.B. Even the gonif is a Jew.

M.C. Exactly. You know, very often, uh, the butcher became the mayor of a city, and the educated and capable man who could be a mayor of a city became the butcher. And, I disagreed very strongly with things like this, and I had some problems. But, my answer normally would be..."What are you doing here?" I would have to admit...

M.C.Cont. I feel strongly, if you judge up a country from an emotional or ideolistic point of view, I feel, no country in the world could compete with Israel, definitely not. You get some satisfaction of being a part...of establishing something that takes thousands of years to do it. (Pause). From an economical point of view, what country could compete with America? So, I say, after.....after living in Israel for 27 years, I'm very, very proud that I took my share, my part in...in adding to establishing Israel. And, I'm very happy to be in America here, because I live a little bit better here than I live in Israel. And to finalize this, mybe, or to summarize the whole thing in, in, in a few words, I would say...(Long pause)...mummy heart is in Israel, and my head is in America.

215? L.B. Mm hm. As *Saba* said, um, "After all," She said, "how long can you suffer?" She put it a different way.

M.C. I, I really didn't suffer, there was a pretty high government official in the last few years that I left Israel. I was running the biggest cattle-breeding farm in Israel, it was a military operation under the disguise of a cattle-breeding farm. It was my job to protect 17 kilometers of the Jordan River, between Syria and Israel.

L.B. Mmm.

M.C. And we could have no...

L.B. Cattle in Israel? You said, "Cattle"?

M.C. I had 1400 head of cattle on my ranch.

L.B. I didn't even know they had them there, because they use so much land and grass.

M.C. I had, I had 17,000 dunams of grazing land at my disposal.....4000 acres, 4½thousand acres. And, uh...and I had problems, and, uh, and uh.....and then, one day, we had close contact with some Americans, and, uh, and they saw me in action, I was offered a big job with the Agriculture Department, American Agriculture Department, I was offered jobs. And Hannah got, heard of it, and she said, "Hey, gee terrific, let's go to America." And then, eventually we ended up here in America. I had problems getting out of the country.

L.B. How...what kind of problems did you have getting out?

M.C. Is, uh, up to a certain rank in the Army, then when you're over that rank a little bit, then they like to keep the people. They're out of, this I can see, the reason for it. It didn't fitted in my plans, so I had a problem. I, I refused to, I had in mind to come over here as a tourist and see what's going on here...and I couldn't get a visa to get out of the country. And then somebody told me, "Max, as an immigrant, they cannot hold you back." But, immigration, the word "immigration" you know, for a party who lives in Israel, is something...it's like a, it's like an earthquake, it's not, uh...even if you are not very...uh...even if you're not too happy with certain things.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. Um, but then, I always said, "Well, we'll leave a door open here", right? I mean, if it doesn't work out, then we can always come back.

L.B. Mm hm.

M.C. But it worked out very well here, and I'm very happy.

L.B. Now, I'm going to turn this off for a minute, and I want to see...(Tape off). All right, so now you tell me what, what it is that you want us to know.

M.C. I, I think what I'd like to, what came as a very, very, very encouraging, as a very pleasant surprise to me, was, in 1947, uh, before the State of Israel came into the being officially...we were already out in the fields and, uh, fighting...

L.B. Who's we? The Haganah?

264? M.C. Haganah. I, I especially belonged to the Haganah, there were other organization like the Stern Group, like the Irgun *Zviokumi*, they were existing. I belonged to the Haganah. And, I was a recruiting officer, for an example, and, what a pleasant surprise I had, when, for an example, I remember we were in the Fire House...station 264? in Ramat Gan, which is an outskirt of Tel Aviv...and, when we lined up, we lined up people who wanted to join and be out in the ditches with us...and I remember...it was a, it was a custom that Jewish people, um, in Europe specifically, rather not to

M.C. cont. go to the Army, for an example. Either they paid money not to go, or they became sick, artificially sick...they cut the finger off, so they can't use a rifle. And, um, and, and this I thought, this is the typical Jew who does not want to pick up a rifle and fight. Here, in Israel, um, you, you line up people who are supposed to voluntarily come, and you have a line there, and you need only 12 people, for an example, on a specific thing, and you have a line of 60 people sitting there, waiting to be...called. And then comes to your desk, comes a man, and says, "O.K. My name is...." "Also O.K." "How are you, how many children?" "I have 4." "We don't take men with 4 children." "Why, what's wrong with me, why can't I..." When you see an attitude...from, uh, completely reversed what you expect out of Jewish people, then you find out...uh, that, that, they have changed, and they have changed to the extent that now, now he's sitting on his own piece of land, he doesn't own it but it's his country, and he's prepared, he's prepared...uh...not to let yemim... fight, but he wants to do his share.

L.B. The other one...

M.C. This is, terrible...terribly encouraging. And I had many, many situations that, uh, uh, that people got, um, wild. "How come you take the uncle, why don't you take me? What's wrong with me? O.K., I'm 48 years old, so what? So O.K. I have a family, and 4 or 5 children, so what? I want you to take me, you have to take me." And when you hear this, you know, out of a Jewish mouth, and you know what the story has been before, that gives you really a feeling, you're not alone, you really have the cooperation, and their...and, uh, you know, you, you are, you feel it's one big body, how can you, how can you...go down, it's impossible. This is #1. Uh...the actual experience, in the War itself, there's too many to be told, but, uh, again, uh, many, many people are surprised about, about, what is so unusual about the Jewish fighter, about the Israeli fighter in Israel, why is he so, so far ahead of, uh, of the Arabs, for an example, and the Jordanians which are very, very well trained by the British. Uh, I think, uh.....it, uh, it comes now, very, very helpful, that uh, the Jewish people, uh, I think they have a very inventive, uh, mind, and they make do where other people, uh, fall under, go under. Um, I remember situations here, that we had to bluff the Arabs sometimes, we have...we had self-made, uh, mortar-throwers, 2 inch mortar-throwers, we had, and we were sitting near the airport in Beth Nabalalah, we were sitting. ? Beth Nabalalah?

M.C. And, uh...

L.B. ?

H.C. ? (Laughs). You're a riot, Lucille.

L.B. (Laughs). Yeah.

M.C. I remember, and we had, the Arabs were firing at night, to us, with submachine guns, heavy machineguns, and we had old Italian rifles from the First World War, and our instructions were, "O.K. You shoot, you press the trigger, nothing happens, get that bullet out and get another one in." And if the, the second doesn't function get it out and get another one in, those bullets were all 30 years old, you know, and had been hidden down underground in wet and mud and, and, and, the Arabs had the most, latest of ammunitions and mor...latest of arms. And just to bluff the Arabs, I remember, i...in my, um...section, that I was in charge, we had, as I said, self-made 2 inch mortar-throwers, they threw up to 200 meters.

L.B. (Lots of background noise, people). I can close the door.

M.C. And, uh...

L.B. Go ahead. (Pause). Yeah. (Quiet).

M.C. Um, it was at night, and we had, for an example, we were, uh, spread out over 2 or 3 hundred meter distance, and the Arabs were sitting about 200 meter on the other side in the orange groves. So we took the mortar-thrower, for an example, and shot out 2 or 3 shells in very rapid fire, picked up the mortar, ran 50 meter to the left and, and shot from there, and then...picked it up again, and ran, so that, trying, the Arabs get an impression, "Ah hah, there's mortar coming from this side, and from this side, and from this side..."

L.B. Right. right.

Handwritten notes:
4
Unknown
1948

Handwritten notes:
Lots of
background
noise, other
people at table

M.C. And, uh...uh, so, you know, and with this ingenuity, I think, we, uh, with, uh, with uh, earnesty of people, and with uh, with, uh, a willingness to, to take, uh, fight against odds, uh...I'll never forget the night that the Czechoslovakian rifles were being, brand new rifles were shipped out to us in the ditches, Wow, what, what a...an elevation that was to us, you know, to, to, uh, receive arms that you could count on, and, and uh, it's amazing, it's amazing. And, uh.....I, I think very, I think very...proudly of the times that really we played our...our side, and uh, I had some tragic situations too. One.....one time we lost a hill position, also, near Latrune, near the...

L.B. Yeah, go ahead.

M.C. Near the monastery of Latrune. Uh, I was headquartered down...and, also in Beth Nabalah, and uh...the story goes, that we were occupying a ridge, mountain ridge, and suddenly, from the Israeli side came a group of...? Kibbutzim. And, uh, it was very unusual, they were singing, and they were dressed in Khaki, with the blue, uh...? , you know, the blue, typical Israeli color. And, uh, the, and there was, for weeks no specific things were going on, and they came nearer and nearer to the hill position, from the back, from our side, from the Israeli side. And then, suddenly...the, the groups of about 50 or 60...suddenly they...picked up hand grenades and, and sub-machineguns, the sub-machineguns they were hiding under their clothes. And it turned out...that it was Arabs...they dressed in Jewish clothes, the typical...and before the Jewish people, the Jewish soldiers, found out what it was, it was a little bit too late. We lost the hill position, and we lost about 26 people. Uh, and unfortunately...it was my job, the next day, we took the hill back again, we were fighting them off, we took the hill back, and it was my job to pick up 26 of our fallen boys. And, uh...I knew every one of them, they worked with me on the construction sites, and so on, it was a very tragic situation. Uh...all of them were...undressed, the shoes were gone...two of them had their heads cut off and the heads were not there, the Arabs took the heads, was brought to the villages, it's a...very barbaric. And, uh.....then I had 4 terrible days, it was a, such a disaster that uh...it was, it was hidden from the public for a few days, and I...I was given 2 military lorries, trucks, and I had to load them up on the trucks, the...people, the dead ones, and they packed them in ice, it was in summer...packed them in ice before I got instructions, deliver them in the middle of the night to a hospital, in ice chambers. I, I'll never forget the days when, when, when relatives came to identify them. (Long pause). Does this, does this, what war is, even the winners lose.

L.B. Yes. Max, I'm gonna say "thank you"...very, very much. I'm gonna turn this off now.

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(Tape ends)