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Olga Prince, transcript only

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- LB Now Mrs. Prince, if you would give us your name. I'm going to ask you to sit over there, yes,...(To Mr. Prince: Out! She didn't sit here when I was talking to you. - General laughter.)
O.K. Now if you'd give me your name.
- OP Olga Prince.
- LB And you wanted to say your maiden name.
- OP Yes. K-o-l-k-e-r. Kolker.
- LB K-o-l-k-e-r. Right?
- OP Yes. Kolker.
- LB Could you tell me what year you were born?
- OP 1906.
- LB 1906. And you were born, where?
- OP In Diessa.
- LB You were born in Diessa. Then you're a native Diessa girl.
- OP A native, yes.
- LB You're one of the few that I've met.
- OP Really?
- LB Yes.
- OP Really?
- LB Yes. I've met one man.
- OP I've never been in a small town north of Diessa, I was, with my mother, when she was sick, we went down to Crimea, you know...
- LB Crimea?
- OP Crimea, yes. For the summer, she needed some, a certain bath, you know bath, so we went down to a small city, but that's not a small town like Poldolaki Gubernye, Poldolia, or something, that's more sophisticated. But they're small cities. That's the only small city I was ever in my life.
- LB So you're really a city girl you're saying?
- OP Yes. And also we used to rent a cottage in Shaba, it's near Bessarabia where they have grapes. It's a grape city.
- LB Is that right? Do you remember how you spell that?
- OP Well, I suppose you spell it, S-h-a-b-o. And there we just...in Russia there's no such thing how you spell it. You spell it the way you say it.
- LB Shaba.
- OP Shabo.
- LB It was a Russian name?
- OP It was a mixture of Russian and Bessarabian, I would say. We used to have there, the grape season is August. So we used to rent a cottage there for the month of August and go down there.
- LB All right, in Bessarabia, were you near a river? or, what was the geography of that area?
- OP Well, I wouldn't say it was really Bessarabia. It was sort of in between.
- LB (Takes out map.) Now here's the Bug (river) and Bessarabia...and here's the Dniester. Now in order to get...when they were escaping...
- OP It would be someplace around here.
- LB It would?
- OP Because I don't have the Black Sea here.
- LB The Black Sea would be down there.
- OP So it would be somewhere around here, Nowhere around here, Somewhere around here.
- LB South.
- OP I think maybe I have a big map of Russia. (Goes to get map.) That's a very nice one. I'd like one like that.

- LB Well, anyway, used to...you were then on the Eastern side of the Dniester during the summer and your father would come down by train for the weekend, from Odessa. Now, you lived in Odessa. Did you live in a house or an apartment?
- CP In an apartment building. Always in an apartment building.
- LB Now tell me about the apartment building. How big was it?
- CP Well, we had thirty six apartments in the building where I ~~was~~ lived. And then they have, the apartments are built around a yard...
- LB A court?
- CP Court, Courtyard. All apartments are built around a courtyard. And this was the last one. But most of...I lived my life, my sixteen years, sixteen and a half years that I spent there, I probably ~~but~~ lived in three apartment houses.
- LB Youbid? How many people were in your family?
- CP My immediate family were five. One of my sisters died at the age of eleven of typhoid fever in 1920. But we also had...
- LB What did you have, three sisters?
- CP Two sisters.
- LB Two sisters. Three girls then. And a mother and father. Wait before we go...But you want to tell me more about your family.
- CP Yes, we also had...my mother had a very close friend who was a widow. They became acquainted when my mother came from Lithuania at the age of fifteen...
- LB Oh, she did?
- CP yes. And she worked in a restaurant. I don't know, she was a cashier or she was a waitress or something and this woman was a cook there. And she was a widow with a little child whom she had someone...she lived with someone, she paid for her, like foster parents, let put it that way. And these people were childless, so they were taking care of her child and she had to go to work. So this woman lived with us always. She was like a part of the family. And we used to call her Aunt. As a matter of fact, I also have Yahrzeit for ~~his~~ her (Annual commemoration of the death of a relative.)
- LB You have what?
- CP Yahrzeit.
- LB Oh, you do!
- CP Yes. Because when my parents died, we lost our parents. By the time I was twelve I had no mother or father. And I had two younger sisters. So, she was like a mother to us. And her daughter never had children, so her daughter and she were our... closer to us than our own relatives.
- LB Did you have any other relatives in Odessa?
- CP Oh, yes. My father's brother, and sister. And I had a grandfather, Grandmother. My grandmother died in 1913, but my grandfather died in 1921. So with him we were, we had close relationship.
- LB You did?
- CP Yes.
- LB Now, this would be your father's side?
- CP My father's side. My mother's side of the family was in Lithuania.
- LB How did she happen to come down to Odessa? from Lithuania.
- CP Well, I suppose, in those days, you were looking for opportunities where you could better yourself. Maybe, she couldn't...~~with~~ in Lithuania, although she was Orthodox, but she was very "today" as we say. She didn't like the atmosphere of the home. Her father was over-over-over Orthodox and she ~~didn't~~ decided to leave home and perhaps she thought that in Odessa she could make a living for herself.
- LB Did Odessa have a reputation for being, uh, more, less Orthodox than other Jewish communities?
- CP Yes.
- LB It did?
- CP Yes.
- LB And all...Russian Jewry knew it and Eastern European Jewry knew this?
- CP Yes. As a matter of fact I don't think I ever saw, in my life, a Hasid with a

shtetl until I came to this country.

LB Is that right?

OP That's right, I never saw one in Odessa.

LB But how about in the rest of Russia or...

OP Oh yes, in the rest of Russia, but not in my city. I haven't seen any.

I mean, I didn't come in contact... maybe there were but I, just not in the neighborhoods where I lived or where I went to school, I never saw any.

LB Now was your father a religious man himself?

OP No, No. Father was not religious at all.

LB At all.

OP And he was a... started as a salesman in shoes, Shoe salesman. And then he managed the store. And he wasn't at all religious. My mother was very tolerant. Although she was Orthodox, she kept a kosher home.

LB She did?

OP Oh yes, kept a kosher home. But if he wanted to eat something that wasn't kosher she didn't argue with him. She would say, All right you can eat it, but eat it on a piece of paper, not on a plate. I remember that, although I was very young. But I remember that.

LB What language did they speak?

OP Russian.

LB To each other? And to the children?

OP Yes, Yes. To the children. As a matter of fact, this aunt of ours, that I called aunt, she came from *Vilnyu* which is ~~ex~~ close to Poland. She also came down to Odessa because she was a widow with a small child, she came down for work. And she always spoke Jewish and she insisted on speaking Jewish to us children. And my mother always used to argue with her. Don't speak Jewish, because I don't want them to have an accent. Jews have a hard enough time in Russia without having an accent.

LB Was that her reason?

OP That was her reason. I remember it just like now. She always said, I don't want my children to have an accent. And she always dreamt that I'll be a pharmacist.

LB Is that right? You mean, your mother?

OP Yes, Why, because we had a pharmacist in our building who, they had a big drug store around the corner and they sort of took a liking to me and I used to go and they used to let me go behind the counter, there they had to mix, not like here. You get everything from the factory. So, he used to let me mix, so he says, When you grow up I'll take you into the drug store and I'll make a pharmacist out of you. So that was my mother's dream. And she didn't want us to have a Jewish accent.

LB Now did you have any Jewish education then?

OP I went to Jabotinsky School. They were *Paolo Zion*, my father was, but he wasn't religious.

LB Ahhh! He was Paolo Zion? Oh.

OP And his, Jabotinsky's sister had a girl's school.

LB Now tell me what kind of a school it was.

OP It was a gymnasium, with full rights.

LB What do you mean by full rights?

OP Well, in Russia, it was... we used... do ^{under} understand a little bit...

LB Well, try me.

OP *Pervaya Odesskaya Zhenskaya Gynmasia* (First Odessa Women's Gymnasium)

LB That's the first...

OP *Odesskaya*... on our, we used to have the gerd, what do you call it in English?

LB A medallion?

OP A medallion. So we had the initials P-O-ZH- G Jabotinsky Kop. Kop was her married ~~name~~ name. She was a widow and she had this school.

LB Mb In other words, if you graduated from that ~~school~~ gymnasium, then you could go to the University.

OP I could go straight to the university.

LB It was a private school?

OP It was a private school.

LB And, was it mostly Jews that went there?

OP Only Jews.

LB Only Jews.

OP Only Jews. Because nobody was interested to go there.

LB Was it Zionist oriented?

OP Oh yes.

LB So, tell me about it. That's interesting. Because Jabotinsky was a brilliant man. Was his wife...his sister an interesting woman?

OP Oh yes. She was and I remember as a child, he used to come to visit. ~~He used to~~ lived in England most of his life ~~and~~ and he used to come to visit, to see his sister and his mother and the mother lived with her. And he used to lecture to us. Tell us all about Palestine and how the dream, the dream is that some day we'll have a Jewish land of our own and all that. I remember him as a youngster.

LB You don't have any pictures of him?

OP No.

LB That's too bad.

OP Whoever thought...and then in 1919, she had one son, in 1919 he left for Palestine

LB Her son?

OP Yes, so we all went to the ship to see him off. Practically the whole school was there to see him off when he went to Palestine. And then the school closed in 1920.

LB Well, wait, wait. You're getting ahead. Tell me more about the school. Was it all girls, yes Zhenskaya...

OP All girls.

LB How many students were in the school?

OP Well, I would say we had eight classes, which was elementary plus high school...

LB Was it eight years then?

OP No, it was ten years. Because we had kindergarten two years. It started in kindergarten.

LB So you started in that school...

OP At the age of six.

LB And you went through for ten years?

OP No, I didn't because the school closed in 1920. So I was able to have only two years high school. And then the school closed. The Revolution. *It was during the Revolution.*

LB Right, Right. But it should have been a ten year course. When did the school open do you know?

OP Actually, it would be more than ten years because...~~no~~ yes, I started in 1912 and it closed in 1920 so for eight years I went there.

LB When did she open that school?

OP I wouldn't know.

LB You don't know how old it was by the time...

OP No, No. Because her husband had a school of his own for boys. But she was a widow.

LB His school also on the Zionist idea?

OP Oh yes. They were all Zionists.

LB Did you learn Hebrew in this school?

OP Well, unfortunately I wasn't a very good student. We had Hebrew definitely. We

- had Hebrew, And we also had Jewish history taught in Russian.
- LB What was the language of instruction?
- OP Russian.
- LB It was.
- OP yes, And we had a full curriculum.
- LB What was the curriculum?
- OP Everything, uh...
- LB Everything could be anything...
- OP Well, you know, arithmetic, Russian, geography, history, algebra, everything...
- LB Now you started in, what year did you say you started school?
- OP 1912 at the age of six. We had two years of kindergarten.
- LB You started at the age of six, 1912 and you went for eight years, which brings you to 1920, O.K. So you were fourteen, Now during...by the time of the last...by the last year, do you remember what you were studying the last year?
- OP Algebra, geometry...
- LB What about literature? What kind of literature?
- OP Oh yes, Russian literature, Jewish literature... *in Russian.*
- LB Jewish literature and Russian.
- OP That was taught by a different teacher, a young teacher I remember his name was Ribelsky. Yes, I don't remember his first name. But we had a movie in Odessa which was probably maintained by the Poale Zion because we used to have movies there, about Palestine and it wasn't a talkie in those days. They showed the land of Palestine and what the early settlers were trying to do there and he would lecture at the same time, tell you everything that's going on, this teacher, this young teacher Ribelsky. And he taught in our school Jewish history and Russian.
- LB But how can you teach Jewish literature in Russian? In other words, there was no Yiddish.
- OP No, maybe it was not literature exactly. Maybe it was Jewish history.
- LB Oh, that I can understand. That makes more sense.
- OP Jewish history.
- LB Now, did you do any Jewish literature? Because there was a Jewish literature by this time, Sholom Aleichen, there was Peretz...
- OP Yes, I suppose in Hebrew but as I say...
- LB No, in Yiddish.
- OP No, in Yiddish. We had no Yiddish at all. No.
- LB What was the feeling about Yiddish?
- OP As I say, a lot of the people didn't want their children to speak Yiddish and in that particular city because they didn't want them to have a Jewish accent.
- LB No, I'm talking about in the school itself. Was there a philosophy, whether it should be or...
- OP No, I don't remember any discussions about that. But all the teachers were Jews.
- LB All the teachers were Jews. The teachers, would you know whether the teachers themselves knew Hebrew or were they all mostly Russian speaking.
- OP No, I wouldn't say so. All Russian speaking. Even our French teacher, was Russian speaking. She was a gorgeous woman.
- LB So, it was Russian. Essentially Russian.
- OP Yes.
- LB Is there anything about the school that you can remember that was, that would highlight it, in your head?

OP Well, it was, we had all the holidays, I mean holidays like Purim and Chanukah we had a big balls...

LB Oh you did?

OP Yes. And we had no School on Saturday, on Sunday we had school. Yes. That was permitted from the government. All Jewish schools were permitted to be open on Sunday because they were closed on Saturday.

LB Were they, in a sense, were they talking up the idea of getting these young people eventually to emigrate to Palestine?

OP Yes. Yes.

LB Then in that case, I'm trying to remember whether Hebrew was, by 1912, Hebrew was already being established as a modern spoken language.

OP Oh yes. Yes.

LB How why didn't they teach Hebrew there?

OP They did teach Hebrew. But I wasn't a very good student.

LB Does that mean that you didn't take it or you didn't learn it?

OP I didn't learn it. I didn't do my home work.

LB (Laughing) Oh?

OP Oh you had to take it. The only thing you could choose from, choose as between German and French. You could either take German or you could take French.

LB But you had to take Hebrew.

OP Yes, but you had to take more language. Both if you wanted. But you could take one only, if you wanted.

LB But Hebrew you had to take.

OP But Hebrew you had to take.

LB Oh, that's what I was wondering...you know, teaching everything... in Russian...

OP Hebrew you had to take.

LB You just didn't care for it.

OP In general I wasn't a good student. I wasn't...I admit, a good student. And when I came to this country I became...I was forever going to some school.

LB Yes. Yes.

OP Studying something.

LB That's very interesting. Well, what were you interested in?

OP I wasn't...I don't know...I just had a lot of friends and...was just an average girl. I just didn't like to study. And I remember when I was a little girl on the way to school there was a...one block that was all military stores. And I used to stop and look in all the windows. I was interested in fashion, let's put it that way. And my mother used to say to me, If you're not going to do your homework some-day you're going to be a milliner. You will make hats. And then, what it turned out, that I came to this country and became a milliner.

LB (Laughing) You see? Mama knows best.

OP Yes.

LB That's funny.

OP And then I started evening school. I went to City college to study...and all that.

LB Well, that's already...we're still back in Russia. So the school was in Odessa. You were a day student?

OP A day student, yes.

LB Did they have boarding students too?

OP No. No boarding students.

LB So, in other words it was really only then for people who either lived permanently in Odessa...

OP No, there were people from the small towns like, Pololy or even further, that
Podol

either lived in Odessa, boarded with somebody, they were wealthy enough...

LB They would bring the children in...

OP They would...like, let's say, should I mention the name, Paula Shochet, she (another respondent) went to school in Odessa, not a Jewish school, a regular school, also a private school, but her family boarded her with somebody and they if they were not wealthy enough to have them live in Odessa, they would have a teacher at home and...externa...they used to call it externa...and study and then come in and pass their exams and get the diploma.

LB From the Jabotinsky school?

OP Yes, yes, Or even from other schools.

LB I know, but mostly I'm interested in the Jabotinsky school right now. What I want to know is, was the school well known.

OP Oh yes! It was well known all over Russia. Oh yes.

LB O.K. And so, did students come to Odessa to go particularly to this school?

OP Oh yes. Sure.

LB They did. From what kind of children came, do you remember? Were they rich, were they poor?

OP Well, if they came and lived in Odessa they had to be rich because they had to live with somebody and they had to pay.

LB Well, then what percentage of the students were...

OP Not a very big percentage.

LB But there were some.

OP There were some.

LB From outside of Odessa.

OP

OP Yes.

LB Most of the students then, lived in Odessa.

OP That's right.

LB And what were most of those students, could you say? What income, or what, were they middle class, were they...

OP The ones that lived in Odessa?

LB Yes.

OP Yes, I would say middle class. There were some very wealthy. But I certainly wouldn't consider that we were rich. We weren't rich.

LB Suppose a poor Jew wanted to go to Jabotinsky school...

OP They had scholarships.

LB They did.

OP Not so much scholarships, I wouldn't even call them scholarships. Subsidies.

LB Who provided these?

OP Rich people. Rich Jews.

LB Did they have the "eating days", you know, like they used to have for the Yeshiva bucker. They would have what they call an "eating day", so Monday you would eat with this family, Tuesday with this, Wednesday with that...

OP No, no, no. They had. But the Jews always took care of themselves. It was organizations...I remember, a girl that was sitting next to me said that she eats at a certain kitchen where...

LB A "menzer". In Austria they called them a "menzer".

OP She used to go to eat there. But that was in a different neighborhood altogether. She used to go to eat there her lunch and then go home or dinner already because we were through with school about three o'clock. She used to go there and have a full meal and then go home.

LB So, in other words, she couldn't get a full meal at home?

OP That's right.

LB That's what it sounds like.

OP And she had, she was on a subsidy.

LB And she was at the Jabotinsky school?

OP Yes, and she didn't pay.

LB She did not pay?

OP She did not pay. There were very wealthy Jews in Odessa, mostly they were in dry goods business. They had dry goods stores. There was one girl in my class, *Shur* (?) they had one of the biggest dry goods stores in Odessa. They were very Orthodox. Her father contributed a lot of money to the school.

LB Is that right? So even though he was Orthodox, he was a Zionist?

OP Yes, he was a Zionist and he was Orthodox and lived very rich. Had very very big dry goods store. Fashionable dry goods store.

LB Tell me something, Mrs. Prince, would you have any idea, and I know it was a very confusing time, because you started just two years before...you started school just two years before war broke out, uh, do you have any idea what percentage of the students from this school actually emigrated to Palestine?

OP (Pause)

LB While you were there, did you hear of anybody going?

OP No. No. No.

LB You didn't? Or young people who had gone?

OP No. Maybe it's just that I was too young. Maybe of the older girls...

LB Oh, I see, you were only six, Yes.

OP Of the older girls who were already in the eighth or upper grade, that would be equivalent to high school, maybe there they had discussions and talking about going to Palestine but in our grade...

LB But you were, for eight years and during that time you never...you don't remember, there

OP No. I only remember when Mrs. Kop's son went to Palestine.

LB That's the only...

OP Yes. But there was always discussion, as I say, Jabotinsky used to come and talk to us and there all discussions...

LB Did you understand what he was talking about?

OP Oh sure! Sure!

LB Did you go home and talk to your parents about what you learned at school?

OP Yes. Yes.

LB You did. And what was the feeling at home?

OP My mother was very, education to her was the uppermost in her life. I remember winter, where you couldn't walk out in the street practically..

LB ~~Even~~ Why not?

OP Because the snow was so deep.

LB In Odessa it was like that?

OP Yes, Springtime was early in Odessa because in May we already wore white blouses and blue skirts instead of the regular uniforms, but like January, the snow was very, we had a lot of snow, and this aunt of mine, although she was no blood relation, but she was closer to us than a blood relation, she would say, Oh, maybe she shouldn't go to school today. Mama said, No. Education is very important. This won't hurt her. She used to dress me while I was still sleeping. When I was all dressed she would get me up and give me my breakfast and dress me with my mittens and everything and send me off and I walked, I never took the street car. I always walked.

LB How far was it from your home?

OP About six long blocks. About six, seven long blocks.

LB How about your sisters. Were they sent to the same school?

OP Well, my, no. First of all, my middle sister the one that died in 1920, she ~~was~~ was enrolled in a different Jewish school.

LB What was that one?

OP Gester.

LB Gester? Was that the name of the person?

OP Yes, the name of, it was the second name of the person that ran the school.

LB What kind of a school was that?

OP It was also a Jewish school but it wasn't as well known, it was well known, but it didn't have the same name as Jabotinsky. I don't know why she was enrolled there but that's where she was enrolled. And when the war broke out, my father was drafted, he was a very young man and somehow she never started.

LB That's your second sister.

OP Yes, My second sister. The other one, was too young and she never went to school in Russia. She never went to school until she came to this country, at the age of twelve.

LB So, you were really the only one that was educated at all in Russia?

OP Yes, that's right.

LB You had your eight years there.

OP My mother died in 1917 and it was too much. My father died in 1918 and then there was the Revolution and you didn't think of things like that. They had a tutor at home. They learned how to read Russian and how to write. That's all. And the other one died in 1920 and this one came here and started school here.

LB O.K. Is there anything else about the school that you remember? You don't happen to have any, oh, what can I say, you don't have any, like course book or catalog ANYTHING LEFT from there.

OP No, No. I might have a picture, but I personally don't have it. My sister probably has it.

LB Now, you say your father was a salesman...

OP And then he was a manager.

LB And you were comfortable?

OP We were just middle class.

LB Middle class. How large was your apartment?

OP We had four rooms, I mean four rooms by standards of the United States. There you would call them three rooms because the kitchen was never called a room.

LB So, the girls slept in one room?

OP The girls, with my aunt, we slept all in one room.

LB Oh, all of you slept in one room.

OP Yes, Yes. And my mother and father. And then we had a dining room and a kitchen.

LB How was the apartment building constructed? You said around a courtyard...was it made of brick?

OP Well, you couldn't see the brick from the outside. ^{interiorly} The inside was brick but the outside was stucco.

LB Is that right? It was covered with stucco?

OP Yes.

LB And how many stories high?

OP Three.

LB Three.

OP Three flights up.

LB Was this in a Jewish neighborhood? Did you live in a Jewish neighborhood?

OP No.

LB Was there such a thing as Jewish neighborhoods in Odessa?

OP I wouldn't say so really. Because there was a neighborhood, like say...

(End of Tape -Side 1)

LB Oh, let me ask you this before we go back to the Jewish neighborhood. Would you say that the Jabotinsky school, your going there, did it have any lasting imprint on you?

OP Definitely.

LB In what respect?

OP I remained a Zionist for the rest of my life.

LB You did?

OP Yes. I was, I was soaked in it, as you say, in Zionism.

LB And this was acceptable to your parents?

OP Oh yes.

LB Yes. O.K. And, but did you ever consider going to Israel?

OP To Palestine?

LB To Palestine, yes.

OP No. Because I had no one there.

LB You had no one there.

OP I had no one there and I, by nature I'm not a pioneer. I was brought up in an atmosphere of, we weren't rich, we were always middle class, but we always had everything. And I was spoiled as a child, I was the first child and I was reared in not complete luxury, but having everything. And I wasn't a pioneer by nature, I always dreamt of better things in life.

LB You mean material things, you mean.

OP Yes. So, I don't think I could have gone and be a pioneer there.

LB I see. Well, that's a very honest answer. Now, tell me, we'll get back to the neighborhoods in Odessa. I asked you if there was such a thing as Jewish neighborhoods.

OP No, I wouldn't say so. Because where my grandparents lived, for instance, it was the like, let's say, Delancy Street (N.Y.C.) or something like that.

LB Like the lower East Side.

OP Like the lower East Side but it was a mixture. There were a lot of Gentiles living there too. So I wouldn't say there was any particular neighborhood where there were only Jews. Like they have here in New York, they have Borough Park, where you go there, so you're going to their Shas'arim in Jerusalem. We had nothing like that.

LB But you see in the early twentieth century there were sections in New York City that were Irish or Italian or...

OP But that's because in the United States people came there from all over the world. But not in Russia.

LB No. But then you'd have Jews and Russians.

OP Jews and Russians. But they all lived in the same neighborhood.

LB In general, let's take your parents generation, if they walked down the street in

Odessa, would be there be any way for a non-Jewish Russian to identify them as Jews?

OP No. Not my mother and father. You could see by the picture.

LB That's why I asked you. Because I couldn't tell.

OP No, No.

LB The picture was what put that question in my head. So they dressed, they spoke and they acted...

OP Very fashion minded. My mother was very fashion minded and so was my father.

LB Oh, your father too.

OP Yes. Yes. As a matter of fact, after my mother died, and it was during the Revolution of course, we couldn't, there were no stores where you could go out and buy clothes and have things made. There were trunks and trunks of her things and I

used to open up the trunks and ~~was~~ remodel, at that age, remodel something for myself, for my sister and she wore very expensive, good things. And there was a lot of jewelry left. So that was what we existed on. We really didn't have a very very bad time of it, during the Revolution, because there was a lot of jewelry left from my parents.

LB We'll get to that. Now, how about your grandparents, were they, now this was your father's parents, were they Orthodox?

OP No.

LB They weren't either?

OP No, I suppose my grandmother kept a kosher home but that's as far as it went.

LB Did your father go to shul at all?

OP No, I don't remember my father ever going to shul.

LB Did your mother go to shul.

OP My mother did. She didn't go like for a whole day to sit *and sit for a whole day* to shul, but she'd go.

LB Did she bench light (bless the Sabbath candles) on Friday?

OP Yes, Yes.

LB She did. And the home was kosher. What about in your grandparents, your father's home, your father's parent's home.

OP I don't remember, well I didn't live with them so I can't...but I don't think he ever went to shul either. Maybe he did. I don't know, I really don't know. But I don't think so.

LB Did your grandmother wear a sheitel?

OP No.

LB Your grandmother did not?

OP No, No, My mother's did. But I never knew my mother's parents. They did. He was very Orthodox.

LB Oh, she told you this.

OP Yes. I saw pictures of him. As a matter of fact, my sister has all our pictures. I have an album that my father gave to my mother before they were married. And when she was here last week I said, Do you still have...The album was falling apart because it was over seventy years old. But all the pictures, the reason things are with my sister is because, this is maybe a little premature, I wouldn't talk about it now.

LB I'll make a note - album, O.K.? Now, so really there was no history of Orthodoxy as far back as you can remember except on your mother's family's side and that was so far away you were never in contact, at all. And in the Jabotinsky environment was there anything about religion at all?

OP Yes, we didn't go to school on Saturday.

LB But was there any religious instruction?

OP No, No religious instruction. The only thing was in the morning, the morning before we started school, first we sang "Bozhe Tsar, Khrani

LB I don't know that. Oh, something about God...

OP *Bozhe Tsarurja Khrani* First you have to sing that, if you didn't want to be killed. Then you sang "Hatikva".

LB Hatikva. Oh, you did?

OP Oh sure. Before school started every morning.

LB But no blessing. What was the name of that, God save the King?

OP *Bozhe Tsarurja*
Khrani.

LB Khrani?

OP Khrani. Savo. Look over him.

LB Tsar. Oh, Tsar comes in the middle. O.K. Oh, it's a command. It's the imperative form. That's very interesting. So, that was part of the...

OP My mother was so, uh, smart, and uh, she wasn't ignorant. She wasn't old fashioned.

That in 1916 I remember, this aunt of ours took us to visit her daughter who lived at that time, during the war, in a suburb, where her husband was stationed. He was ~~x~~ in the army. And she had a cottage near him. And she knew that they would serve us food, so she called me on the side and she said, If they'll give you pork to eat, eat it, because you don't have enough fat in your system now. During the war, it was hard to get oil and things like that. Eat it. You need it.

LB Now your mother told you that?

OP Yes, I'll never forget that.

LB The children came before any rules.

OP Yes. *that's right*

LB You loved your mother.

OP Oh, She was, she was really something. (Long pause)

LB So, how did your mother spend her time? Was she taking care of the house and the younger children?

OP Actually, my mother was a sick woman. She got sick when I was probably about six years old. She had a stroke.

LB She did? She must have been a young...

OP She was about 32 or 33 years old when she had the stroke.

LB Is that right?

OP And this aunt of ours, she lived with us, she's the one that kept house. My mother used to cook, look after the children but one arm she didn't use at all. One arm hung like that. On the right side of her. And I used to take her to doctors for therapy, electric therapy. And then she got a kidney condition and this is what eventually killed her. She was only about thirty eight years old when she died.

LB She died of a kidney condition?

OP Kidney and *the heart*, and the heart was affected. So she died at age of thirty eight in 1917 and my father came back from the, he was never sent overseas, he was about maybe thirty five when he was drafted, something like that. With three children. So he was never sent overseas. But he wasn't home much. And then he came home for my mother's funeral and then he was discharged, when the Revolution started, and he died in 1918 of a heart attack.

LB Heart attack?

OP Yes. He was about forty one years old.

LB (Long pause) If it isn't one thing, it's another. It must have been terrible for the children.

OP It was. But we had, as I say, this aunt with her daughter and ^{and} most of my father's sister and brother and my grandfather was still alive.. My mother's niece and nephew. They all sort of looked after us.

LB They did.

OP Yes.

LB So there was family feeling.

OP Oh yes. Very close family feeling. ~~xxx~~

LB It's the same but it's better than nothing. And this aunt must have been very important to you.

OP Oh yes. She was so important that when we came to this country we never stopped sending her, till she died, my sister and I used to send packages. Money and packages that she could sell there..and live on. She died in 1938.

LB I see. So when the war broke out, you were still in school. The school didn't close. It kept going. And from what I've been hearing from different people, Qnessa does not seem to have suffered too much during the war.

OP No, No, No.

LB Somebody else told me that. It's not just your husband.

OP Qnessa didn't suffer during the war because we were too far away from where the war was. Now during the Revolution...

XXXXXXXXXX

LB Yes, I know. Lets talk about during the war years. I'm not talking only about the fighting but I'm talking about food shortages...

OP There was food shortages like I said, oil, maybe sometimes sugar...

LB But there was no starvation.

OP No, No. Not until after the Revolution.

LB After the Revolution.

OP Yes, it started. When the Revolution started, that's when the trouble really started.

LB So until 1914, let's take it till Kerensky, everything was all right. What was the feeling in Qissa? Let's first take the Jewish community as far as you knew it. Uh, no, let me ask you something else first. Uh, I must be tired today. You didn't go to shul, right?

OP No, I did. I said Kaddish for my mother and father. Although my father never went to shul. But he knew the Kaddish. I suppose he said Kaddish for his mother because she died in 1913, so he wrote out the Kaddish for me in Russian...

LB He did...

OP The Kaddish. And I said Kaddish for my mother. And then when he died, I said Kaddish for him.

LB At home or in the...

OP No, I used to go in the morning, before going to school, they used to wait for me already. If I was five minutes they'd wait for me.

LB In the shul?

OP Yes. They knew that I'd be in right away.

LB Now where was this shul?

OP The shul was about two blocks away from where I lived.

LB So there were Jews in Qissa that went to shul?

OP Oh sure! Oh sure! And I'd say Kaddish and in the evening, if I was forgetful, or forgot that the time was close, so one of the boys would put me in front of the bicycle and bring me over to the shul to say Kaddish.

LB Did you say Kaddish twice a day?

OP Yes, in the morning and in the evening.

LB Oh, you did say...

OP Yes, Yes, Yes.

LB For a non-Orthodox girl that's quite a lot.

OP But Kaddish was something, even though you weren't Orthodox, but Kaddish is Kaddish.

LB You're right. It is.

OP ~~Always~~ Although my father wasn't Orthodox...

LB You felt he would have wanted you to say...

OP Yes. And he's the one who wrote out for me the words in Russian to say Kaddish for my mother.

LB Did he say Kaddish for your mother?

OP No, I said Kaddish.

LB Why didn't he say it?

OP I don't know, I don't know.

LB Isn't that interesting. Did you ever think of this?

OP Never thought of it. I suppose it was understood that it's got to be a child. In those days, maybe it was understood that it's got to be only a child that's got to say Kaddish. Not the husband, I know the husband says it too. Not only the hus-

Here,

band, the brother, or anybody

LB Any relative. That's very interesting. Who says Kaddish?

Olga

Who should say Kaddish? Right? (Long pause.) RMXm. O.K. So your father wrote it out for you to say. And he said it for his mother.

OP Yes. He said it, I suppose so, because he knew it by heart.

LB Oh, you never...you didn't know that he said it for his mother?

OP I didn't know. But I assured that ...

LB Yes. But you don't know.

OP No. I don't know. I suppose that he got some Jewish education. Otherwise how would he know it? Although my grandfather was, had, I think I have a picture of him here. (Looks for pictures) Here. There's my grandfather and grandmother.

LB These are your father's parents.

OP Yes. That's my father's youngest sister. She died four, five years ago at the age of seventy five. Died there in Olessa.

LB She was still there?

OP During the war she lost three girls all in one shot. During the second world war. They were being evacuated to Siberia and a Rumanian bomber bombed the train and all the three girls were killed. And this is I,

LB Gottlieb, Gottlieb is the name of the photographer.

OP Yes.

LB Oh, isn't that cute. ~~xxx~~ But your grandfather's beard looks as if it was never cut. Or maybe it was. What do you think?

OP I don't know. I really don't know.

LB That beard doesn't...

OP That's right. It looks straggly like it was never cut.

LB Yes!

OP You see my grandmother never wore a sheitel.

LB That's her hair.

OP Yes.

LB That beard looks untouched.

OP And this is I with the maid.

LB Now was the maid Jewish?

OP No, Polish.

LB Polish.

OP Yes.

LB Now let's see, where am I now? Oh, we were talking about Olessa during the war.

OP Oh, here is I with this aunt I'm going to...

LB Ahhh! A sweet face. Yes. And you were a cute baby. (Pause)

OP You can read a little Russian?

LB Yes, I can read it. (Pause) Actually, is this the old alphabet? Let me shut off... (Tape off for a minute)

Now, wait a minute, what was I going to ask you? Oh, shoot, I don't think my brain is working today. Something about Jewish neighborhood...No, no, no. Wait a minute. You said Kaddish for your mother. (Pause) Before the Revolution and among the Olessa Jews you knew, what was the feeling about the Czar? Let's say in your family?

OP Yes. Well everybody, there was no, nobody discussed the Czar. In general, there was a feeling that there was anti-Semitism. Because I remember in 1917, and I suppose you remember the case of...of...what was his name?

LB Beilis.

OP Beilis. Yes, I remember the, the Janitor's wife walking around ^{superficially} the yard, when they had to bring out the verdict whether he was guilty or not guilty, and saying, You just wait and see, if he's found guilty all the Jews are going to be killed.

LB She was not a Jew then?

OP Naturally, a janitor's wife. So, everybody...

LB She said that to you?

OP To all the kids that were playing in the yard.

LB Sweet lady?

OP Yes. So we all knew that there was anti-Semitism, and all that. But who ever thought of Revolution? The feeling was that he was a stupid man.
(Cross conversation)

LB I'm just talking about the feeling in Odessa.

OP That he wasn't running the country. Somebody else was running the country.

LB Is that right?

OP That's right.

LB They were right.

OP That's right. Rasputin...

LB And Madame.

OP That's right. He was a stupid man. He was, I remember in 1916 when he and his family came to Odessa, and all the schools and whatever soldiers there were, they had to go out. We had like a "pole," like a big field and our, we, the schools were on one side and the soldiers were on the other side. I remember waving to my father. He was standing on one side and we were on this side. And the karleta, the limousine, pulled by horses in those days went by us and they were a very handsome looking family.

LB They were beautiful...

OP Yes. But we all had ^{sort of} sort of disgusted. We knew that he was nothing. He was a little man, good looking with a little beard but it didn't amount to a thing.

LB You see, in the "Klein shtetlach" they really hated him and I just wondered if that same feeling...

OP Well, they did, we did, we despised him. Lets put it that way. Despised him more than hating.

LB Did you feel much anti-Semitism in Odessa yourself?

OP Not as much as in the small towns.

LB You felt, ugh ugh, I don't want to tell you what you felt... O.K. in other words I don't want to put words in your mouth.

OP No, no, no. We didn't feel it. We didn't feel it.

LB You know it was...

OP We know there was anti-Semitism but we didn't feel it so much.

LB Your father didn't feel it at work or anyplace?

OP No. No.

LB What about in the army? Did he ever report anything...

OP Never discussed it.

LB So didn't.

OP No. No. Never talked about it.

LB But you were conscious of the Beilis trial?

OP Oh, sure.

LB Was it discussed at home?

OP It was discussed at home and always, there was the papers. We couldn't wait to get the paper and see what's going on.

LB So it was really a big thing.

OP A big thing. Oh yes.

LB For just the Jews? Or for everybody?

OP Well, I suppose for the Gentiles too because they were looking forward to killing the Jews if Beilis was found guilty. The ignorant Gentile...

LB I understand. Did you know any non-Jews?

OP Yes, as a matter of fact a lot of my friends...

LB I was going to ask you, "You didn't go to shul. The place to make friends would be at the Jabotinsky school and that would be all Jewish children.

OP No, but I had very few friends from school.

LB So where did you make your friends?

OP In the, in...

LB In the neighborhood?

- OP In the neighborhood. We lived, in that building where we lived.
- LB So you had friends that were non-Jews.
- OP As a matter of fact, two boys were Gentiles and one girl was Gentile but it so happened that I found out afterward that she came from a Revolutionary family. Her uncle was in Siberia.
- LB ~~What?~~
- LB You mean a Bolshevik? No, not necessarily a Bolshevik,
- OP No, he was a Bolshevik. So, she came from a Polish background but they were Communist. But we didn't know in those days. We didn't even know what Communist means because the, the first thing I remember about the Revolution, I remember Kerensky, on my way to shul, in the evening to say Kaddish, there was a theater, the Jewish theater. It was called, where Jewish plays were put on and all that. And he was coming in there to speak.
- LB Kerensky?
- OP Yes. The people were carrying on their shoulders, carrying him in from the limousine into the theater and I wanted to see what he looked like. I was that size (small) so I pulled him by his coat. *He should look down.*
- LB Oh, you did? (laughs)
- OP Yes, I wanted to see what he looked like.
- LB You pulled his coat-tails.
- OP And then years later, about 1945 during the war, we were all working for Russian war relief in the Park Central Hotel on Seventh Ave. we were to a banquet, he was sitting at the table next to us, ~~was~~ an old, old, old man.
- LB Yes. Yes. Oh, at time you were only about eleven years old anyway.
- OP When the Revolution broke out I wasn't quite eleven because it broke out in March and I was, turned eleven in June.
- LB Right. And your mother had just died.
- OP Died about a month after the Revolution.
- LB A month after the Revolution.
- OP And she was so happy. She said, my children will have a much easier life. (Pause)
- LB I see. So, actually the only way you have of evaluating or the only way you had then of evaluating the Revolution would be what you heard from adults. Or what you saw happening in Odessa.
- OP That's right. I remember that I heard of the pogrom in 1905, before I was born.. Yes, but you always kept hearing that.
- LB You did hear that?
- OP Sure. Because my father was born in Balta but he was brought up in Kishinev.
- LB Oh, he was?
- OP Yes. And he came to Odessa about 1903 or something but his family was still in Kishinev. They came after the pogrom. And I remember my mother telling me that my...not telling me, but talking about it, that my mother was pregnant with me during the pogrom. The pogrom was 1905. The end of 1905 and I was born in June 1906 and they hid ~~me~~ ^{her} so they wouldn't find her because they used to cut their stomachs open and take the children and throw them in the air and kill them or something.
- LB So, who hid your mother?
- OP My ~~father~~ father. And he had a younger brother.
- LB Oh, your father was in Kishinev during the pogrom?
- OP No, no. He wasn't there anymore. His family was there. His father, his...
- LB So how was it that your mother was hidden then? I don't understand.
- OP In Odessa. We had a pogrom in Odessa too in 1905.
- LB Oh, you did.
- OP Sure. Of course. About, I imagine it must have been about October or November something like that, December. Sure there was a pogrom in Odessa.
- LB I see. Did you hear talk of that?

OP Oh yes, Always.

LB Can you tell something about that? I guess that didn't penetrate into my head.

OP I remember them telling me that my father's younger brother, who was also in Odessa, he was a kid that time, maybe thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old, something like that, and he was one of the tough guys. So he used to go out, and you know he didn't look very Jewish, so he used to go out with his friends and grab a couple of those pogromchiki and pull them into an alley and kill them.

LB Is that right? So there were kids in Odessa that were fighting back?

OP Oh yes, Yes, Tough kids,

LB Were they organized?

OP They weren't organized, Who was thinking of organizing in those days, I mean kids of that age, He didn't belong to any party or anything like that, But just among themselves, But they had to pay their back.

LB How bad was the pogrom in Odessa, do you know?

OP It wasn't as bad as Kishinev, That I know, ~~Бессарабия~~ Of course, I wasn't born so I don't, I can't...

LB No, from what you heard,

OP But from what I heard it wasn't as bad as Kishinev, Kishinev was the first one, so it left a lasting impression, on everybody,

LB I see, that's why I got confused, I...

OP The first one in a big city, The little cities didn't have pogroms until during the Revolution.

LB That's right, O.K. So Kerensky came to Odessa and he spoke and then there was a period between Kerensky and the Bolsheviks, right? Do you remember that at all?

OP Well, I remember it was from March to October, That's all, And then there was fighting, The Bolsheviks were fighting the Social Democrats, was Kerensky, and the White armies, So then when I was already about thirteen years old, because I must have been thirteen because my father was dead already, when you left school in the morning, you never knew when you come home what, what, who's going to govern the city, And that morning I left school and about a block away from school, ~~fight~~ fighting started, between the Whites and the Bolsheviks, So, we couldn't get to school already, because the street was blocked already, So ~~we~~ cross the street was a bank, So everybody ran into the bank,

LB The children you mean?

OP The children, Whoever was walking in the street ran into the bank and we were there for about two hours, Then they, we, they said, You can go out, It's quiet here, So you couldn't go straight with the same street, Because if you walked with the same street, he would be fighting, so you had to take this street, Then when you came to this corner, there would be fighting, so you had to take the next street, And by the time I got to the house, I must have gone through extra twenty five blocks, Just changing streets where there was no fighting, They were on horses,

LB So the fighting was actually in the city of Odessa.

OP All over the city of Odessa,

LB That's funny, I interviewed a lady yesterday...

(Tape ends)

Side 3 000

LB She told me, that while she was there she remembers Odessa was shelled once from the Black Sea during the war but she didn't remember any fighting.

OP Fighting? There wasn't too much but that particular day I'll never forget, By the time I got to our street, I was so exhausted that I hit my forehead against an electric pole, It wasn't electric in those days, gas, I suppose, And when I got into the house, they put me to bed, I found out that a cousin of mine, who lived in the same building with us, went to look for me,

LB Ach!

OP As a matter of fact, he died only three years ago here in Boston. So, it was a memorable day.

LB Now the fighting was between the Bolsheviks and the Whites,--

OP The Bolsheviks and the Whites at one time and...

LB The Bolsheviks and who? The Social Democrats?

OP The Social Democrats. But by that time, but the Social Democrats they didn't...

LB They didn't fight very long.

OP They didn't fight very well. They didn't last long. So and then in 1918 before my father died, he died in September and this was in the summer because I remember the windows were open and we were eating dinner on Saturday afternoon in the dining room and we had bottles of, they used to put up, blueberries to make, uh, liqueur, Vishniak, Vishniak. So, somebody, we had, what do you call it, uh, powder, gun powder factories at the end of the city. Somebody set them on fire. And the whole, all the windows in the whole city, every body time a shell exploded all the windows were flying. People were walking in the middle of the street, in the gutter. They couldn't walk on the sidewalk. And as we were sitting and eating, the bottles with the vishniak hit my father in the back. And the windows were all shattered to pieces. It was 1918. It was summer.

LB He was still living.

OP He was still living. And then he died in September.

LB But this spelling, was that also, like Civil War?

OP Oh sure. Somebody set it on fire. It was all civil war.

LB Now how were conditions during this civil war period? Did they worsen, were they worse than during the war itself?

OP Oh yes.

LB They were.

OP Oh sure. Because during the war itself we didn't have any fighting in the city.

LB How about your food supply and so on?

OP During the Revolution? Terrible. Although we ourselves, actually, never starved.

As I said, we had jewelry. We were always able to sell a piece of jewelry and buy .

LB Your mother did have sufficient jewelry?

OP Oh, a lot of jewelry.

LB And there people who would sell it, who buy it for food?

OP Oh yes. Oh sure. We would sell the jewelry, of course.

LB But I mean, there were some places you couldn't even buy food for jewelry.

OP Yes, but you paid a big price. And the food, of course, was, they made bread out of, uh, what do you call it, peas, green peas flour. I remember one Passover the rabbis allowed, there was no white flour to bake matzoh, so the rabbis allowed them to eat the bread made out of green peas. And one Passover they allowed them to eat, there was nothing! And my uncle, my father's younger brother was that time in the food business, wholesale. So he sent us a bushel of apples. So that's what we ate the whole Passover is apples.

LB So, in spite of all the assimilation and everything, still you celebrated Passover.

OP Yes. Because, because of Mima, Mima we used to call her.

LB Mima?

OP Mima we used to call her.

LB Your aunt?

OP Yes. Although if my mother was alive we still would.

LB You would have.

OP Yes. And maybe my father too.

LB ~~My father~~ father too. You don't know.

Maybe your

- OP We just didn't believe in organized religion. Lot's put it that way.
- LB Yes. Yes. Yes.
- OP So, but 1919 was the worst year for food supply. 1919 people were really starving.
- LB In Ojessa.
- OP We saw people, and there was no way of burying them, so families used to take take their own dead on pushcarts and take them over to the ~~cemetary~~ ^{cemetary} and dig a grave and throw them into the grave.
- LB They died of starvation or sickness...
- OP Sickness. There was cholera. There was typhoid fever.
- LB So there was an epidemic then? In 1919.
- OP And then the, what do you call it, the, what they call now the ^{Spanish} flu...
- LB Influenza.
- OP Influenza. Terrible influenza. And I remember I had a cousin, who lived about a block away from us. They had a little shoe store and I was sitting near the, inside, but near the window, near the door and the door was a glass door. And I saw a dog dragging a woman's head. Probably died in one of the apartments and dragging and he was, you know. So a couple of boys went over and grabbed the head because they eating...
saw gold teeth and they were pulling out the gold teeth from her mouth.
- LB How old were you then?
- OP (Sighs) Probably about thirteen or fourteen years old. ~~See~~ Things like that you saw.
- ~~Next~~
- LB Now, had your sisters, your sister you say died, oh she was...
- OP In 1920.
- LB Did you stay in Ojessa? You were still going to school all this time?
- OP Yes, she was still, no, we didn't ~~xx~~ have it so terribly bad because I remember the doctor coming every day...
- LB But you were still going to school?
- OP Yes, until 1920 I was still going to school.
- LB Now, who supported you after your father died?
- OP As I said, the family. The family, the jewelry...
- LB Oh, they paid the rent...
- OP The family, the jewelry was being sold. At that time I don't think you paid rent any more. Because the...
- LB When did the Soviets take over Ojessa? Do you remember?
- OP In October. In October 1917.
- LB You mean they took it right away?
- OP They took it right away. There was fighting the whole, from March till October there was fighting between the Social Democrats and the soldiers, the Bolsheviks and then they finally settled. In October they finally took over the whole country. Of course, in the small towns, I don't know.
- LB There was civil war till 1921.
- OP Yes. In small towns. But in Ojessa...
- LB It was settled?
- OP In October.
- LB But there was fighting, you were telling me, in the streets, between the Whites and Bolsheviks.
- OP That was about 1919.
- LB Oh, that's when the Whites were already being driven down toward the Black Sea.
- OP Yes. Yes. Yes. That's right. And of course, there was shelling from the boats. The Whites had the boats, the navy, the Whites, so they were, from the ^{Sea}, shelling the sea (sic). I mean the city. *Black*

LB All right, so you continued...now in order to continue going to school, somebody also had to pay the school.

OP I don't remember whether we paid or not. No, by that time...

LB Oh, I see. I see. You don't know whether you paid rent, You don't know whether you ~~paid~~ paid for schooling either.

OP No. No. Rent, I know we didn't pay. Because they were the bourgeois, they probably left with the White Guard or killed.

LB The owners.

OP The owners.

LB Why didn't they throw you out? Your father was a tradesman?

OP Yes, but that...maybe, when my father was alive, he was still paying. I don't know.

LB You understand my question?

OP I understand, I understand, your question. But I don't, I myself until my father died didn't know ~~anything~~ any transactions. ~~Except~~ I didn't know anything.

LB I understand. I realize that you were too young. I just thought maybe something, maybe later on...

OP No. No.

LB You discussed it and you found out.

OP No. All I know is later on, when I was about fourteen years old I got a desire to study ballet.

LB In the middle of all this? (Both laugh.)

OP In the middle of all this.

LB Maybe that's the reason.

OP In the middle of all this I wanted to study ballet.

LB (Laughs) Oh, that's cute!

OP (Laughing) So you can imagine how they spoiled me. They used to sell a piece of jewelry after every month to pay for my ballet dancing, the lessons.

LB (Still laughing) Oh, Mrs. Prince. That is priceless. Honest to God.

OP Isn't that something?

LB It's just like a kid!

OP Yes.

LB And yet, maybe, you know, maybe that's what saves you...

OP Keeps you going.

LB That's right. That's right.

OP I was very spoiled. I was the first child and I was pampered. And they were very good to us. The family and these, Mima with her daughter, I remember the daughter, she used to, uh, come and stay with my sisters, the two of them had typhoid at the same time because they were only fifteen months apart...

LB Now, who had typhoid? Your sister?

OP Yes,

LB And Mima's daughter.

OP No, NO. No. She ~~xx~~ used to come and lay with her in bed...

LB Mima would lay in bed with...

OP No. The daughter would lay in bed with her to comfort her because she was crying.

LB Oh! Oh!

OP And the reason she died, my sister, is because she had, her heart was weakened just before my father died in 1918, in the summer of 1918, she had diphtheria. And I remember, the cousin that lived across the hall from us, my mother's niece, she was very mean. She had two children. So she said to my father, Put her in a hospital. ~~And~~ he knew that the hospitals, if he put her in a hospital she wouldn't survive, because there were not enough nurses, not enough medication, or anything.

LB For the diphtheria now?

OP Yes. So he said, You take your children and you have a brother here, and let them stay. Because I took my children, we were staying with this aunt, she was married already at that time, so he says, Do that. And he went into the man who was in charge

of the neighborhood, uh, if anyone was sick or something, he was a tailor and he explained him the whole situation, if I put my child in the hospital she'll die. So all the neighbors took their children and put them with some relatives. Till...

LB A kind of quarantine.

OP Yes, Yes.

LB Yes, I understand. They emptied out the neighborhood.

OP The whole building. So that she could stay home.

LB Jews and non-Jews, both.

OP That's right. And that she could be kept home and be taken good care of. The doctor came every day and she got the injections when she was supposed to get and everything. But, her heart remained weak.

LB Yes.

OP So that's when the two of them had the typhoid and I saw what typhoid fever...

LB Which two had typhoid fever?

OP Both sisters had typhoid fever.

LB Both sisters. Oh?

OP Only fifteen months apart.

LB So one died and the other recovered.

OP Yes.

LB I see. So actually one disease after another came.

OP That's right. And I got typhus. Which is a different type. One you get from something else and one you get from something else. I got typhus in 1921 when I was already about fifteen, almost fifteen years old.

LB All right, let's see...we're not doing too badly keeping this in some kind of order. I, I,...life managed to go on.

OP Life managed to go on.

LB You had your ballet lessons. You went to school. Even though your sister died?

OP No, this was before my sister died.

LB The ballet lessons?

OP Yes. Before my sister died.

LB But it was after both your parents had died...

OP That's right.

LB It was the Revolution and the fighting and the war and everything...

OP And I still had my ballet lessons. For about six months I was taking ballet lessons.

LB From a private teacher?

OP From a private teacher. A ~~very~~ private school. It was a school. And then I dropped out. I saw I wasn't going to be a ballerina. So I dropped out..

LB You sound like a realist, Mrs. Prince.

OP Oh, I was...oh...given in too much.

LB Were you?

OP Yes.

LB Well, I don't think it did much harm. From the sound of it, (Both laugh)

Now tell me, why, in 1920 your schooling stopped, the school closed then?

OP Closed and she went away to Palestine. Yes, most of them..

LB Oh, was she forced to close the school?

OP No-o-o-o I don't think she was...I imagine, Yes. She was forced because there was night school. The government ran night schools. And I remember that for about a year I did go to night school.

LB After she left?

OP Yes, Yes. Not the same school. But there were courses, *night courses* somewhere I took ^{night} courses for about a year. Then I stopped that too.

LB How, uh... how...

OP All schools closed. Not only that school. All schools closed.

LB They did?

OP Sure.

LB Why?

OP Because, first of all, I imagine the Bolsheviks didn't believe in private

schools. Because private schools ~~королевские~~ were only for people who could pay. Mostly. And they didn't think it was necessary. The government had to run it.
LB Well. But then they didn't have to close. They could have just taken over the running.

OP No. But they didn't. She just closed it and went away to Palestine.

LB That particular school. But you said all schools closed.

OP All schools, all private schools closed.

LB All private schools closed. Oh. But there were public schools.

OP There were always public schools. But who went to public school? Only the peasants, well, no, in Odessa we didn't have peasants. But very poor or the children of the laborers, the janitors. Children like that went to public school. Very few Jewish children went to public school.

LB In Odessa?

OP In Odessa. Because there, it was just, not even an elementary education. Just a four year course. You learned to read and to write, that's all. A little arithmetic

LB But when the Soviets took over, it had to change.

OP Yes.

LB But you couldn't remember what actually happened when it took place in Odessa?

OP No. Because...what?

LB As far as the schools were concerned.

OP No. Because we left in 1923. The beginning of 1923. But then everything was already settled more or less.

LB Yes, but you were already out of school for some time, three years.

OP I was already...

LB Now, what happened after you quit school? After you quit school?

OP After I quit school I was teaching little children, reading and writing, making a little money that way.

LB 1920, you were, uh, fourteen.

OP Yes. I was teaching little children. I had a little class. Teaching children to read and write.

LB Is that right?

OP That's right!

LB You taught them Russian?

OP Russian. As a matter of fact, my uncle, my father's brother, had a sister in law who had a cook's job in Vinnitsa, in an orphanage. I don't know whether, it wasn't a Jewish orphanage, it was... ^{before} the Revolution it couldn't be a Jewish orphanage. But she was a cook there. And she used to come home occasionally to see the family. So she ~~at~~ said she could get me a job there. I was sixteen years old. She could get me a job there, also in kindergarten. To teach in kindergarten.

LB That's 1922 then.

OP Yes. To teach the kindergarten. And she got me the job there. To teach the kindergarten. And I had to get a ticket on the train to go which you couldn't just walk over to the, to the window and get the ticket. You had to ~~start~~ stand in line for three days to get a ticket.

LB That's right. People were trying to get out of Odessa.

OP To get out of Odessa. So, I, but, people that were standing, everybody that would go home to eat and you watched their line for them. So, for two days I was standing there but I didn't sleep there. The men used to sleep but they'd keep the line for the women. The women would go home to sleep. And one day, on the third day, in the meantime, we already made contact with our relatives in the United States..

LB Oh, you did.

OP Yes.

LB Who were these relatives?

OP I'll tell you. So, one day I went home to eat and I found an affidavit. I never went back in line.

LB You didn't need it then.

OP No, didn't need it because *by that time* I knew I was going to the United States.

LB Oh, I see. So, you never took the job as...

OP No, never took the job in Vinnitsa, never went to Vinnitsa and started working on the papers.

LB I see.

OP And how did it happen? I knew that my mother had a very rich brother. I mean, I didn't know how rich he was. But I knew she had a, a wealthy brother in the United States. She had a sister in the United States, but about the cousins I didn't know. But I also knew that my father had three sisters here. One day I was walking and I was going to mail a letter from one of my aunts, my father's older sister...

LB In America?

OP In America. And I met a woman who was my mother's friend. They were, they grew up together. And she asked me where I'm going. I said I'm going to the post office to mail a letter to my aunt, in New York. So she started to cry. She says, You know I have a sister in New York. I haven't even got the money for postage to mail a letter to her. Would you permit me to put a few words in your letter? I said, Sure! So I opened the letter, and because there ~~I~~ was no stamp on it yet, I had to go to the post office. So I discarded that envelope and she put in a letter to her sister with the address and everything and I wrote the address again and went to the post office and mailed it and asked my aunt if she could drop a card to those people, they should come and pick up the letter. It so happened that they both lived in Brooklyn. And these people came to pick up the letter on Sunday. And she sees on the envelope, you know those, they had, uh, uh, town house in Brooklyn. And in the living room there was a mantel piece. She sees a picture of my mother, my father, the wedding picture I guess. She says, My God! Who's that? She says that's my brother. She says, I grew up with this girl. So my aunt starts telling ^{us}, you know there were three girls left and one died and she says, Do you know that they have a very rich uncle in Boston? And I'm going to get in touch with their cousins, their *also* cousins, and I'm friends with one of her cousins here in Brooklyn. I'm going to get his address and I'm going to write to him.

LB Well, how come the aunt didn't know about this uncle?

OP She didn't know!

LB It was on the other side of the family.

OP It was on the other side of the family.

LB Ahhh! I see. This was your brother's sister.

OP This was my father's...

LB Your father's sister.

OP My father's sister and my mother's brother.

LB Right. O.K.

OP So, she got, through my mother's cousin, she got the address and wrote to him and he immediately sent us, he wasn't even a citizen. He was in this country, at that time, about ten years. No, more than ten years. About 1903 probably, about twenty years. He was originally in South Africa. He was here already about twenty years.

- He wasn't a citizen. So my father's... one of my father's sisters, so her husband sent the affidavit and he gave the money. That's how we came, here.
- LB Now, tell me something, you said the lines were very long, at the railroad station, in Odessa. Now this was what period?
- OP 1922. That, I remember, well this was from the time the Revolution started.
- LB Allright, but you said things were actually, had settled down in Odessa?
- OP Yes but still, everybody had to get out.
- LB Where were they going? Where was everybody going?
- OP Where was... Well, they were going, first of all they were going to small towns, to exchange valuta, you know what that is?
- LB Yes, yes.
- OP Everybody was speculating in something. Otherwise they couldn't make a living. As a matter of fact I remember before my father died, that summer, he also to Krizhopol, because his aunt lived there. My mother's, my father's mother had a sister in Krizhopol and my husband was brought up with her grandson. This I found out years later. So my father went to Krizhopol also to do some speculation with valuta, and while he was away, our building was being attacked by some vandals, let's put it that way. They wanted to rob the building or something, and we had the Domovaya Okhrana. Every building had their own police. We chose a board and the police all young men, were guarding this building. Because the police wasn't functioning.
- LB What was the name of that?
- OP Domovaya Okhrana.
- LB Oh, doma is house... Domovaya Okhrana. So Okhrana is really the police.
- OP Yes. But they were the young men of the building. And this happened that one night they wanted to break into the building and rob everyone in the building. And there was shooting between the young men from our building and the hoodlums. And I went over to the, not to the window, but to the entrance to the building, and I see father coming. He came in on the night train.
- LB Yes.
- OP And I started to scream. I was afraid that one of our boys is going to, accidentally a bullet is going to hit him. But he was lucky. He got in. But he died a few months later. But that's the way it was going on. Everybody was going some place to exchange ~~money~~ money for foreign money, to buy something...
- LB So, it wasn't really quiet.
- OP It wasn't quiet at all.
- LB How long did this go on?
- OP It went on for about five years.
- LB Yes.
- OP It went on for about five years.
- LB It must have been hell.
- OP Hell? Hell on earth. And then when people started getting affidavits from the United States, so you had to stand in line for days, when you went to apply for a exit ~~xxxxxx~~ visa.
- LB Now was it only Jews that were trying to leave?
- OP No, no, no. Everybody.
- LB Everybody.
- OP Everybody was trying to leave. And especially if they were Gentiles that were middle class. Maybe if they were very rich they were shot. They knew about them and they were shot. Jews were shot and Gentiles were shot. If they were very rich.
- LB Oh I see.
- OP When the Soviets came in. But then, the middle class, everybody was trying to get out. But in fact they were mostly Jews because who had relatives in this country mostly? Jews.
- LB Jews. ~~xxx~~ Was there a large... Would you say Odessa was a sympathetic to the Bolsheviks?

On the whole? Or not?

OP It depends who it was,

LB I mean, as a city.

OP As a city?

LB I mean, you could tell? Couldn't you?

OP I wouldn't say...

LB No, you can't tell, because it goes back and forth and back and forth.

OP No, you can't tell, ^{in the city} you don't discuss anything with anybody, because you don't know who you're talking to. You're afraid even to open your mouth, ^{and know} what you think. You don't discuss. You just live to survive. That's all. You only worry about, you try to find out what bakery is baking what, when. Before my father died, I remember there was a bakery across the street from us. ^{He} stayed a whole

night in line to get a bread. And in the morning, I replaced him. Then you found out a bakery about three blocks away was baking and you were standing in line there. That's the kind of life we had.

LB And whoever had flour, baked.

OP Yes, but where...

LB Yes but you didn't know.

OP That's why they had to go to the small towns. They would bring salt to the small towns, bring flour back. Because we had salt from the Black Sea.

LB Oh.

OP So, we'd bring salt there, bags and bags of salt and bring back flour. (long pause) That was the life.

LB What year was it that you finally left? 1923 was it?

OP January the 23, 1923. (Both laugh)

LB Just you and your sister?

OP Just I and my sister.

LB In '23 you were...

OP I was sixteen and a half and she was twelve and a half.

LB And you took the journey where?

OP We went to Constantinople.

LB You did?

OP Yes, because...

LB Did you have a passport?

OP Yes, sure.

LB They let you go. They let you go, without any problem?

OP No. Because they, they weren't interested in having children they would be responsible for.

LB I see. Yeah, yeah.

OP So they were glad to get rid of...

LB It isn't as if you were a young, healthy male.

OP No, No. That's right. And it was, the money from the United States, it took a very long time in coming. You know the mails weren't good. First of all our relatives were sending us the packages that Hoover worked out.

LB Yes, the food.

OP The food. We were getting a lot of those packages. And we were selling some of it and living on that money and then, in the end of 1922 when I already had my exit visa, which if you didn't leave when you were supposed to, every month you had to pay a fine, and here the money wasn't coming, coming. So when I had typhoid, I was in the hospital, not in the big hospital but a private house turned into a hospital during the Revolution. So there was a woman and in the bed next to me, I wasn't critically ill, but she was critically ill. As a matter of fact she lost her hearing. And when I started to walk around I used to feed her and all that and she told me her story. Her husband ran away with the White Guard. She was Jewish. But her husband ran away with the White Guard to Constantinople. She had a little boy. She was a manicurist. So, we became friendly and we used to visit each other, she was about twenty six, twenty seven, I was only about fifteen.

But we used to visit each other. And I once told her when I saw her that I can't get out. I have the papers and I can't get out because I haven't got the money for the voyage. You have to pay money on the ship. So she said, You know I have an idea. My husband sends me money every month, from Constantinople with a small freighter that runs between Constantinople and Odessa. And the owner, Zhakovsky, I remember was his name...

LB Zhakovsky?

OP Zhakovsky. He was a Jew. He, I'll take him over to you. I mean I'll take you over to him and I'll ask him, maybe he'll take you to Constantinople and the money will come quicker to Constantinople than it will come here. And then you can pay him. So and he had an office in a private apartment. So she took me over there and she introduced me and told him my story. He said, Sure I'll take them.

LB Didn't you have to pay him?

OP No.

(Side ends)

Side 4

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LB Now you didn't have to pay him because the Jewish Committee...

OP Now when we came to Constantinople he told the Jewish Committee that he brought me there and the first money that comes from the United States, he has to be paid.

LB Now there was a Jewish Committee in Constantinople?

OP Oh, sure?

LB Was it the HIAS or what?

OP Well, it was run by the Joint Distribution.

LB Oh, the Joint. LB

OP Yes. The Joint. /So that's where he took you then.

OP He took us, as a matter of fact, we were drowning on the way and but when we came into Constantinople, let me tell you. So we made up that next time the ship comes in, we're going with him. But, you had all the pictures, all the family pictures you had them sealed in the, we used to call it the Comotone ^{on the} ship's register, there's an office. A big office. And they had to look and see what you're taking out from there. Whether there were any valuables or anything. So ~~then~~ they saw they were only family pictures, they sealed it and everything, here I'm walking back home and I see a little girl. She looked to me like a little girl, her hair was shaved, but she was my age. And she was crying. I said, What are you crying? So she told me the same story, That my story. That she's got a brother and a sister younger than she. Her parents died and she's also waiting for money for her relatives. And she can't leave. So I take her also to Zhakovsky and I tell him, Mr. Zhakovsky, this little girl has the same story. He says, I'll take her too. And so we're all leaving on the same ship. The ship, sixty tons. Sixty tons. You can imagine the size of it. It wasn't bigger than this room. And before we entered the Bosphorus, from the Black Sea, there was a big storm, and we almost went down. Well, we didn't. And we came into the Bosphorus, The Bosphorus was very quiet. And we had to be quarantined for two weeks. Because of the epidemic. And then we come into Constantinople so the representative from the Joint Distribution comes out on the ship and interviews everybody. He's a Russian, also a Russian fellow. Jewish. And asks us our story. So I tell him mine and she tells him, ^{you're} you're a good candidate for my mother. She'll have something to cry about. My mother has a big apartment she rents out rooms and I'll take you to my mother. I won't take you to a hotel. And he lived with his sister, a widow. She was a doctor.

LB Did you know the man's name?

OP Greenberg. Sure.

LB Leva Greenberg?

OP Yes, As a matter of fact I tried to look him up when we were in Israel. They were waiting to go to Israel, to Palestine, ~~he and his~~ mother and sister. So he registered us in the Jewish Committee and we started going there every...first of all, they gave us ten lira, so you have something to live on, in the meantime.

LB Yes. I was ~~going~~ wondering about that.

OP Or ten dollars maybe, or ten dollars I think because ten liras wouldn't amount to much. And when the money comes from the United States they deduct it. ~~XXXXXXXX~~

LB Because they have to notify the people in the United States to send it to a different place.

OP Oh naturally. Sure. My uncle immediately, we got two hundred dollars from my uncle.

LB Oh, you did !

OP Sure, and maybe in five days we got by telegram we got two hundred dollars. I paid off Zherkovsky, and paid off the Jewish Committee the ten dollars and you go every day there for mail, because the mail used to come there. And there were, you know, clerks, so the first clerk that I went over, was a fellow about twenty one, twenty two years old. He was the brother of one of my school mates. Because he looked exactly like her. I asked him, I forgot the name now, I asked him, Are you a brother to this, this *girl*. He says, Yes. But they were still in Odessa. He was able to get out. And they were still in Odessa. So, we got stuck in Constantinople for seven months, because, we came there in February and in April the Russian, quotes...

LB But you got your money right away?

OP Yes, we had something to live on. The Russian quota was closed.

LB That's right.

OP And then, when the quota was opened, so they first let in children to their parents, then parents to the children, then sisters, but ~~we~~ ^{nieces} were the last. When we finally got out visas, it was already August. So we left in September. And I was, even that time, I didn't want to travel a whole month on the boat, because from Constan-

tinople to New York was a whole month. And those days, thirty days you have to be on the ship, and besides that, I said, Why shouldn't I see what Paris looks like? So we went from France.

LB Did you take a train?

OP No, we went, took a boat one week to...

LB Where did you stop at Marseilles?

OP Marseilles, and then from Marseilles to Paris. We were only one day in Paris. We came in in the morning and we left at night for Cherbourg.

LB You and your sister?

OP Yes. Come into Cherbourg, the Russian quota is closed/ again for five weeks. So we got stuck there for five weeks.

LB Now who took care of you there? Or did you have enough money?

OP Well, we had money. And we're staying ^{at this} also Joint Distribution, ^{is remaining} in this hostelry.

LB But what language were you speaking all this time? I mean...

OP Russian. There were translators. Always translators.

LB But I mean, like when you went from Marseilles to Paris, there were no translators...

OP Yes, there was, somebody, somebody was always in charge.

LB Oh, in other words you didn't go alone, you had to go in a group then?

OP Yes, sure in a group.

LB Oh, I thought you and your sister took off and went to Paris.

OP No, No, No. A group that decided to go through Paris.

LB O.k. O.K. On the way to America/ they decided they wanted to see something.

OP Yes, Yes. So we stayed in Cherbourg for six weeks and finally we got on the boat.

So the, the captain decided that ^{if} /no's going to go to New York, he might, the Russian quota might close again. So Boston was closer. So he went to Boston.

And docked in Boston. And it so happens it was alright for us because my uncle lived in Boston. So as soon as we got in there, we came in on a Thursday, the first of November, 1923, and I had a cold. And I was laying there on the bench,

or I think I must have been running a temperature and they wouldn't let anybody come until Sunday. So on Sunday ^{my} uncle came with his chauffeur and his wife and

and his salesmen and a translator because we hardly spoke Jewish and of course English we didn't speak, but he had his head bookkeeper, his head accountant was a Russian man and settled in the United States, so he came with him. So that's how ~~we~~ started. We stayed in Boston for about five weeks. And then we went to live in New York with my father's sister.

LB Tell me something, Mrs. Frinco. You tell this, and you are a very good rememberer, you have an excellent memory and it's very clear and very objective.

OP You know that I talked some to Russians, some that come in here now from Russia. From Odessa. A lot of people here from Odessa.

LB Is that right?

OP A lot of them. Especially two, three years ago there's an awful lot of them from Odessa, coming in. So I asked them about this and that and in the end he says, Why you remember more than I do! I just left and you remember more than I do.

LB You have an excellent memory and not only that but you have a nice, clear way of telling it. And you say, for example, you were spoiled and so on, but look at all, you weren't so spoiled.

OP Well, you learn. You learn. Life teaches you. I came and we lived with my father's sister and I was disappointed, with her. Because I saw that she was materialistic. That she knew I had a rich uncle and she thought that maybe she could ^{benefit} ~~benefit~~ to something. ^{It wasn't} And, the same sister... *the original sister that*

LB Made the contact.

OP Yes. No, it was the middle sister. And I saw that they were materialistic, maybe they'll benefit something, from my uncle, and ^{immediately} ~~I needed them~~, I was only seventeen years old...

LB I think you were a pretty shrewd gal, myself. (Laughing) Auf meiner kinder gezugt, (My own children should be like that.)

OP So, I became closer with my older aunt, the one that made contact originally, we moved from this one, we moved to the other one. And then...

LB How did your little sister turn out?

OP She turned out all right, except that her eyesight, she's almost blind. You know,

that she needed glasses. I remember when she was about nine years old, we had at that time was considered the biggest eye doctor in Oressa. He said that she needs glasses, but he said, Where are you going to get glasses now?

LB When she was nine? That would be what year?

OP When she was nine. That would be about 1919. She was born in in 1910.

LB So there was no place...so that kind of thing you couldn't get?

OP No.

LB Even though you weren't starving you couldn't get eyeglasses.

OP No, No. You couldn't get eyeglasses. And she didn't get eyeglasses until she came to this country. And she had, evidently, a very serious condition.

LB She did,

OP And it began to develop after she gave birth to her son. Because she had it before, she was already operated a couple of times. But she could see. She ~~was~~ wore glasses she could see well. She was alone. She worked and everything. But after she gave birth to her son, when she was thirty two years old, she began to lose her eyesight.

OP

LB And you feel it goes back to that time?

OP Yes. My mother's grandmother, my mother's mother was blind. As a matter of fact, my uncle, that lived in Boston, he was the youngest of all the children, when he was born she was already blind. She never saw him. When I used to ask my mother, How did grandma get blind? So she used to say that, she probably didn't know, she knew that she bent down, when she had a cast iron frying pan on the stove, she bent down and accidentally hit her eye. That's how she got blind. But maybe she couldn't see it and that's why she hit it. She had *retinitis pigmentosa*; did you ever hear of that?

LB No.

OP *Well it's* the hardening of the eyeball and that's what she had. Maybe that's what my grandmother had.

LB So it might be an inherited thing.

OP So, all the doctors that she was going to, they all asked, Was there anything like that in your family and we couldn't tell because ^{we} we ever heard was that she bent down and hit her eye, And that's what she ^{thought} thought...

LB So they didn't know any better either.

OP Because you how many years ago. My uncle would have been now about ninety years old, and he was blind already. I mean, when he ^{was} born she was blind already. So...

LB Now, tell me...let me look on my check list. I want to see it...(Pause) We've covered the question of where you met other Jews and you met them in the neighborhood and you had non-Jewish...during the, during the Revolutionary period, during the years let's say between 1910 and '22 when all this back and forth and fighting hoodlums, hoodliganism was rampant, was there any,any...did you have any feeling that Jews were being blamed? For any of this? In other words, was there... was there any increase in anti-Semitism during this period?

OP Yes, of course. But you felt it more in the small towns.

LB No, I'm talking about Olossa only.

OP Yes. There was some. From the ignorant. Not the, the, the educated people. But like janitors, laborers. Well, I would say laborers were Communists themselves. But janitors mostly or women that came to clean your house or something like that. They would say, It's all the work of the Jews.

LB What, all the troubles was the work...

OP Yes, because there was Trotsky there, don't forget. You know, so...

LB He wasn't the only one.

OP He wasn't the only one, but he was blamed more than Lenin.

LB But Lenin wasn't a Jew.

OP I say, he was blamed more for Communism, for this, they forgot about Kerensky altogether. They blamed that Trotsky killed the Czar.

LB Is that right?

OP Yes, I mean that through him, thanks to him, our Czar was killed.

LD And Trotsky they identified with being a Jew.

OP Well naturally, he was a Jew.

LB Not in his eyes he wasn't.

OP No he wasn't in his eyes. Although my husband tells a joke, that when they came and told his wife their son was killed, so she said, Oh, Bozha noi, although they didn't believe in God, but that's what she said, Oh Bozha noi (Oh my God.)

LB In Russian. (Laughs) My God! That's not funny. No, that family was wiped out. Terrible. Well, their son was killed by Stalin wasn't he?

OP No, he was killed in the war.

LB Oh, he was.

OP Yes.

LB Well, the other joke that I heard, the professor of history that I work with...

OP He was killed by Stalin in Mexico.

LB In Mexico, yes. No, that the Jews around Lenin said, If we could just get rid of Lenin, we could hold a minyan. (Both laugh) There were so many.

OP Maybe. Well.

LB No, I want to know if in Qeesa the feeling was that the Jews were responsible.

OP I never heard that. No, I never heard that.

LB O.K. O.K. Did you know any people who were Communist? pro-Bolshovik?

OP Not in our circle. No. No. As a matter of fact, I was so arrogant, let's put it that way, just plain arrogant, when I was a kid I had so much nerve that I once I don't remember what the occasion was, I think it was something to do with that same pharmacist who lived in our building, and they were trying as even today, to save some medication, so they could sell it later on the black market. So, who, where are you going to put it? ^{W. PA} Poor orphans, who they know that nobody is going to look for. So they once bring, he says to me, their name was ^{Hir} Hironovich I want to put a trunk in yur, one of your rooms, in your kitchen. It's my daughter's, she had two daughters, it's their dowry. So I said, All right, She puts it there, and by that time you couldn't keep the apartment to yourself. So we had a boarder.

One room we had to give, ^{4/3}...

LB In other words the Soviet government told you that you had to share your apartment.

OP Oh sure. Everybody had to share apartments. There was no such thing as having an apartment to yourself. So there was a fellow living there with his mother, a fellow. He was a Jewish fellow. He was a Communist. And he, when he saw the trunk coming down, became suspicious, he wanted to see what was in that trunk, so I don't know how he broke that lock, or what or how, but he found out that there is medication there. So he squealed.

LB To the authorities.

OP He squealed to the authorities and they came and they opened it and they found medication and they didn't do anything to us, they saw that we were children, that we were kidnaped into it. And Mirovich was arrested and the head of the house committee was arrested, by that time there was no owner or anything, no manager of the building, there was a house committee that ran the building to see the garbage was taken out or something like that. So and then there was a big trial. So I was one of the witnesses at the trial.

LB Is that right?

OP Yes. And I was very arrogant. I don't remember what I said, but I was very arrogant. And one of the daughters, one of his daughters, had a boyfriend, she was studying medicine and he was studying medicine and he was sick and they wouldn't let her go to see him and I, I went to one of those Cheka offices and I saw blood on the wall. I suppose they were beating somebody so that the blood remained on the wall. And I was so fresh to them, that I don't know how I ever got away with it! I don't know how I ever got away with it.

LB Well now, what was your testimony... What kind of arrogance did you display?

OP I said, why the judge, she asked me to go and see him. Because she herself was afraid because she had the name Mirovich and her father was in jail.

LB Oh, Oh.

OP So I said, Why don't you let me go to see him? What are you going to do to him, the same thing that you did to this other man?

LB How old were you then?

OP I was probably fifteen or something. (Pause)

LB Pisk. (Mouth) (Laughter)

OP Maybe I was so arrogant because I was sure that they were not going to, because we were orphans and they wouldn't do anything to me. They're not going to put me in jail, they're not going to kill me. And so, that gave me the arrogance.

LB It's not really arrogance, you know.

OP Nerve. I don't know. Nerve.

LB It's a kind of, it's a kind of self confidence that, if you're right, then you're going to have your say and they'd better not touch you. Somehow you'll manage to fight off the whole Cheka.

OP You know, I was telling you that I saw people taking their family or a pushcart to the grave. My sister died, we couldn't get a coffin. So, this aunt of ours, her son in law...

LB You mean Mima?

OP Mima, yes. Her son in law had a few like here you would call then trucks. In those days they were horse driven carts that he was, that was his business. He used to cart things to the railroad station, to this, to that. He had two or three of them. So he took one of them and broke it up, had it broken up and made a coffin for my sister. (Pause) I never forgot that. And even after Mima died and, and they went in 1930, wait, we left in 1923, in 1924 they went to Argentina.

LB Who did? Mima?

OP No, ^{her} Daughter with her husband went to Argentina.

LB To live?

OP They thought maybe they'll be able to come to the United States but there was no way of them coming to the United States. And then they thought they'd take Mima out. So, they lived in Argentina, in Buenos Aires for eight years. And he did all kinds of jobs and there was no way and they had no one there and he still had

sisters and brothers in Russia so they decided to return to Russia in 1932.

So they went back to Russia in 1932. And my sister was in 1935 in Russia,

LB ~~Yes~~ She was,

OP Yes, she went with my aunt, my mother's sister. She went ~~back~~ because they still had before Hitler, my mother's older sister was still alive in Lithuania, with her whole family. So my uncle gave his sister a present, a trip to see her oldest sister.

LB There was no thought of getting her out of there?

OP There was a big family and she was already old and so...

LB This was in '35?

OP '35. So he gave his sister, my uncle in Boston gave his sister a *Generous* present and also he bought my sister's ticket back and forth. The rest she paid herself out of her earnings. So, she saw them all again. Saw them all, she saw Mima, she saw ~~Ella~~, Ella was her daughter, and she lived in Moscow with her husband. The daughter.

LB Where did Mima live?

OP She lived in Ojessa.

LB She stayed there?

OP She stayed there in Ojessa. And so when they were in Lithuania, they went to Lithuania. They stayed there about a month, then they went to Moscow. They stayed there a couple of weeks and then they took Ella and went with her to Ojessa and stayed in Ojessa about two weeks or three weeks, from there they went to Palestine and they were away from the United States for about three months. *From July to October - something like that.*

And...

LB And you say that your Mima died in '38.

OP In '38. And we kept sending her packages the whole time and after she died we kept sending the packages to her daughter.

LB And did her daughter survive the second war?

OP No, she in 1944 she died of cancer, of the colon.

LB That's before the war ended. Where was she living?

OP In Moscow, in Moscow.

LB What a time they had there. You weren't in touch with her during the war?

OP I was.

LB Were you?

OP Yes. As a matter of fact her husband wrote me that she died and he lived, can you imagine—they came from Argentina and they lived in his brother's kitchen. So, when she died, he was—in 1944, she was in her fifties I guess that time, he, about a year later, he remarried. He remarried... They married in 1909 and she died in 1944 you can imagine. He remarried and he wrote me, apologized to me why he remarried, ^{no mail,} I married a nurse who has her own apartment. So I don't have to live in my brother's kitchen. And then during the war we lost touch with each other.

LB That's what I'm saying, you're saying 1944...

OP In 1944 he wrote me that she died.

LB But that's during the war!

OP That's right. There was mail going back and forth. Somehow, we, maybe he died, because I didn't hear any more from him.

LB After the war you didn't hear from him?

OP No. I didn't hear from him anymore. (Pause)

LB Very interesting. Now, do you have anything more? I think you have given me the best, uh, in your little stories, the best description yet of a city during the Revolution. Because other ~~the~~ people just say terrible things happened. And terrible things happened. But you've given me ^{small} incidents, these small incidents are what ^{so dreadful} point up, make life/for the human being that's living there. When you see a person's head being dragged through the street...

OP Listen, darling, I saw, we had a big, they were combinations of cafes and fancy patisseries, what they call. There was one across the street from where we lived. So the bakery, I guess, was in the basement, where they used to do the baking and the windows, they have it here too, where the windows are on the bottom

and there is like a little, and in the street, there is like a little, you can jump down. We saw a little boy laying there, with the lice crawling all over him...

LB You mean in that little, it's like a little, what the heck do you call those things, they're right near, it's almost like a, it's so that the window can go down below the pavement.

OP That's right! A boy about nine years old was laying there covered with lice,

LB Was he alive?

OP He was alive. But people were afraid to go near him, because that's...

LB That's typhus.

OP Yes, That's typhus. And once I went in there to buy bread, you buy a quarter of a pound of bread at a time. Either they didn't have or you didn't have enough money to buy more than a quarter of a pound, I was carrying the bread like this and a kid came over and grabbed the bread from me. (Long pause)

LB The interesting thing is, that your parents died when you were so young and yet you and your sister... *You did so well.*

OP We survived because we had a lot of love. We had a lot of love from this Mima with her daughter and the family.

LB Your Mima was lucky she died in '38.

OP Yes, I always thank God that she died in 1938.

LB I mean, you don't want anybody to die...

OP Yes, but if she had to die, I thank God that she died in 1938, Because she was already seventy-five years old that time, And you can just imagine what she would have gone through.

LB Well, Mrs. Prince, I'm going to say thank you very much.

OP I want you to have a cup of coffee, a little cheese...

(end of tape)