Milton Prince, transcript only

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Milton Prince

LB Now would you say your name for the tape Mr. Prince?

MP What?

LB Would you tell your name? In the machine.

MP Milton Prince. (Tape off for testing)

LB All right. Now your name is Milton Prince and if you would tell me what year you were born...

MP 1900.

LB 1900 and where you were born.

MP In Russia.

LB And specifically where?

MP Small town, Knyazha.

LB Which means "king" doesn't it? Knyazh? Doesn't it mean "king"?

MP Knazh is a...

LB Now let me put your name down so I can keep track of things I want to ask you.

Knyazh?

MP Knyazha.

LB How would you spell that?

MP I'll tell you only the way I write out and I'll be able to spell.


LB What was the name of the nearest big city?

MP Real big city, Tolchin.

LB Tolchin. I never heard...

MP Tolchin, there were my parents were...Otherwise you know Europe so good?

LB The part that I'm interviewing about I know pretty well by this time. Yes. Is this in the Ukraine? It's not far from Priluki. Again the same thing. It's a couple hundred miles away.

LB How far were you from Vinnitsa?

MP Not far. That's right. You could put down, better, instead of Tolchin, put down Vinnitsa.

LB Vinnitsa was also about as close as Tolchin?
MP Yes. No. No. No. I believe Tolchin in nearer. How you want to know how to spell Tolchin?

LB No, I know how to spell it. And I know how to spell Vinnitsa. I just wanted to get some idea of where it is. It's in the southernish part of the Ukraine.

MP It's also Podolia Gubernya.

LB Yes. I don't think it's on this map. This is mostly Poland.

MP Map. You're going to look on a map. Tolchin maybe on the map. Even Tolchin is not there? Knyazhe for sure you wouldn't find. Because it was such a big city—before you walked into the town... the city was maybe a population of about 300 families.

LB That's the next question. About 300 families. O.K. now could you describe the layout? Was it a shtetel, first of all?

MP Of course it was.

LB And what was the physical layout? Of the town? Was it like straight up and down streets or...

MP No, no, no, no. Not straight up and down. It was like, here we would call the main street. There were stores. The stores were really built up by the people that owned the ground; the pomeschik; the graf, if you know that.

LB To the lord. A graf is a lord.

MP A graf is a lord. That's right. And he built them then the stores and he used to rent them out to the people there.

LB The graf was a Russian then? Or a Ukrainian?

MP Sure. They were too rich they should stay there. They never lived in Knyazhe. Naturally, But they lived somewhere in maybe in Poland or somewhere.

LB That's it. See, a graf usually a graf is a Pole. That's why I wondered.

MP Yes. I want that you should know that. You should know that. Any graf, Graholski, Zabanski, ski, ski, ski, is Polack. Ou is Rumanian. Then you know that for instance, ours was Zabanski. Graf Zabanski. Graf Voholski. Graf and graf and graf. But our graf was Zabanski.

LB So he probably was a Pole.
'Cause they don't know. They thought that they have everything there, for instance the forests.

That word I don't know.

The forests.

Oh, the forests!

Biggest, there were tremendous forests. And especially in our neighborhood, there where we come...where I come, not where we come...very big forests. They sell they have even their own...how to explain...(to his wife who is sitting there)

No. Don't ask her. Because I'll talk to her tomorrow or Wednesday. This is one person on a tape.

I want to ask her how to explain...they built in the forest, a home. A sobniak. That means special for them. Nobody lives with them. And they lived there six months in the year, they're coming down and they're living in the forest. And the forest is growing there pine. There where they built it, full of pine. Very, very interesting. And then brought some fruit down there. And then they're going away somewhere. They're playing the rest of the year, they're playing cards somewhere, maybe in Poland or somewheres else. Nobody knows. They leave a watchman.

Was the watchman usually a Jew or a Pole or a Ukrainian?

Most of them Ukrainians, but a Jew took the...he was the head of the...he had that. The watchman was of Christianity. You know, not Jews. But they have Jews, they should watch them. They should be above them. Always without a Jew, you couldn't turn around there.

So, the Jew was...there was a special name for them. He was, like the superintendent.

A superintendent. That's good. Yes. We used to call him, it's a Hebrew word, Maimen. Ah ḥagaleibteh. A superintendent. He was the superintendent.

That's it.

Mamen, you called him?

Mamen. It's a Hebrew word. A fargleibter. You know anything about Hebrew?
LB Yes but I don't know that particular word, O.K.

MP Ah maimen. Er is ah maimen gevehn. Because the graf, when he left the home, he supposed to be there and he should take care of everything, what's going on there. Because he didn't take beside the furniture and beside the...they left horses, pigs, cows. It had to be taken care. Somebody supposed to be taking care. And in Russian, they said Opravlyaiatsche. (Phone rings. Tape off.) See, he's supposed to be like a, sort of like a manager. And he used to manage that. After all, he left that everything there.

LB Did he collect the taxes too? This Jew? Did he collect the taxes also, the Jew?

MP No such thing. Taxes.

LB No more, eh?

MP But he used to collect the rent. Not taxes, but he used to collect the rent. For instance even the homes. We have a home there. There usually in small towns that's the style of the small town, when they're building a home, it's a duplex. One for themselves and one they should rent it out. For instance, we have a duplex there too. We were paying to the manager how much, I don't know, I wouldn't mislead you with how much we used to pay, but they used to pay me the rental for the ground.

LB For the ground. Not for the house but for the ground.

MP but the ground was there. He used to collect. I suppose he knew where to send it. He had an where to send it to them and he used to send the money once in a year, whatever it was. As well for the stores. Then they had, for instance, how small the town was, it was a lively town.

LB It was.

MP Very lively. Very lively. Of course, I was, I really was brought up in Krizhopol. That's three miles, three versts from Knyazhe.

LB What's the name of that town?

MP Krizhopol.

LB Krizhopol. So that would be K-r-i-z-h-o-p-o-l. (Kryjapol)

MP And in Krizhopol, we used to call it there, Malenkalia Giessa, Small Giessa. Why?
Because there was, we had already there paved streets.

LB Where, in Knyazhe?

MP No, in Krizhopol.

LB Really?

MP Not exactly paved like here. But so the mud shouldn't be so much, you fall step in you shouldn't fall in...in Knyazhe you fall in, you couldn't get out from there. To help you there. But not in Krizhopol. Krizhopol, they used to call it mostavaya. We had a mostavaya, already. In Russian that's a mostavaya.

LB A pavement?

MP A pavement. The street. And we had trees from the station. In Krizhopol we had a stansia (station) the train used to pass through there. The train passed through Knyazhe too but they never stopped there. They didn't have a station. But in Krizhopol they had a station. And there the street was paved. It was like the main street way up and then we had another street, also, back and forth like a cross. Both streets was paved. And the main street was the main business there and the bazaar. Knyaze was also a bazaar. But Knyazhe bazaar was more interesting than in Krizhopol. You see why, because in Krizhopol was more preparation. They built up more...they took away more ground for building of homes. But in Knyazhe wasn't so built. They had about 200 hundred families, is x 200 homes. Maybe not even 200 homes because most of them, they lived, two in a duplex. But in Krizhopol, it was entirely a different life. We had the pitovnik they used to come down even from Odessa, actors, to play there...

LB Pite. Pite. That's to play, isn't it? No. Pite is to drink. Isn't it? How do you say to drink, in Russian?

MP Pite.

LB Pite.

MP That's on the station. On the station when you're waiting for the train, then you
can go to the buffet. Then you can have a *Pita*. A drink or whatever you want there.

LB Then what's this? A *pitolnik*?

MP *Pitomnik*.

LB *Pitomnik*. O.K.

MP That's a garden. It was a beautiful garden. And that garden there really was paved. There was paved like here. And in the *Pitomnik* they had a theater there and all the from Russia, from all kinds, I don't know from where, maybe some from Qiessa, some maybe from different cities, they used to call them *Lyubitelnies*.

LB *Lyubitelnies*?

MP Yes. *Lyubitelnies*. It's not exact actors. *Professional*. They themselves...

LB *Amateurs*.

MP ... *Amateurs*. Yes. But more than *amateurs*. We also had *amateurs*. Also we used to play theater, but not... they would have a real... with music and all the *pritzim*.

You know, the *panes*...

LB The rich people then.

MP Oh yes. They used to come there to see the play. Because they... for instance they could go to Leningrad, at that time was *Petrograd* before I left there was *Petersburg* really, then it's *Petrograd*, from *Petrograd* became Leningrad...

LB Yes. Let's go back to the players.

MP Yes. And they used to come to the plays. We kids wanted to see also a play. But we didn't have the money to go in there. Then we used to go around, and we were like the slaves there. They let us in, providing we should do something on the stage, to help them, you know what I mean. They would give us *passes*. Look, how many boys? We were maybe about fifteen boys and they could use only ten. Is forty boys. What did they do? We were, you know, wise guys, kids, I tell you, I went that in there and my friend should **stay outside**. We used to go in the back. We used to open the window. And through the window, one was laying on the floor and one picked him up and then he used to jump in... in the theater. You know, that's also in the small towns. Could be that. But it was a very
interesting life. It's too bad it was no good that the Czar, it was bad but it still was better than what the Revolution, after the Revolution, in the beginning of the Revolution, was very very good. Ah. We could turn around. And we could walk, and we could see. We could go to Odessa and we could go to places like this. For instance, like Jews wanted a lot to go to Kiev. Only certain privilege, certain people had the privilege. Very rich people or the remeshinkis.

LB Say that word again.

MP Remeshinkis. Remeshnik. Why, do you know anything in...

LB I know some Russian, but I don't know this...this would be the businessmen or the traders.

MP Working people.

LB Oh. Rabochniks-

MP Rabochinado. That's right. They had the privilege to live even in Kiev. We didn't... And after the Revolution we could go to Kiev, to Moscow, to Leningrad and any-place we want to. But since with Stalin. It was terrible. It was worse than by the Czar. At least we knew that there we weren't allowed to go. We went to Vinnitsa and that's all. We could go to Vinnitsa. We were satisfied we could go to Vinnitsa. We could go to Zhmerinka from there. Paula, I believe, Zakh She comes from there I believe. (A referral for the interview). We could go to Odessa. We lived in Odessa. Go to Odessa. It was out of the question. It was a paradise there.

LB Tell me something. Now let's not get carried away. The first question I want to ask you, you sound as if you lived in two towns at the same time. How could that be?

MP That's also a good question. We have our home in Knyazhe. Then, we didn't go...you know the children growing up and my father is passed away and my mother said, What are we going to do? I'm talking with...I want to mix it in.

LB Well, take your time because we have time.

MP We were ten brothers and one sister.

LB Good. Yes. And your father died, early? Did he?
He was forty two years old. And he comes out from a very, very...not from a rich family but from a very, very rich family. He himself, he was rich in children. But they drafted him...they were rich in everything...for instance, he had a brother in Olesssa. He was one of the, he had the privilege to go over all Russia. Because he was a permguildi kupetz, He was a very rich man.

Say that other word again.

Pervii

First.

Kupetz.

Oh, in the first guild. Yes. Yes.

Kupetz. It's just like he had a wholesale (Pause)
grocer. What do you call that, the merchandise, not grocery is just a retail store.

No. Wholesaler.

But one of the biggest in Olesssa.

Like a distributing...

Yes. They used to send practically all over Russia.

Was his name Prince, also?

No. My name is really not Prince.

What is it?

My name is Khina. Spelled C-h-i-n-a.

Yes.

But when I came here and they said, Don't say that here China. Because here China is China. At that time, when I came, 1923, they're going to laugh at you, what kind of Chinaman are you? I didn't take out my papers yet. When I'll take out the papers, I'll pay the two dollars...I had cousins here. Their name was real, was Sh prince. So why should they think I follow them. Cut off the Sh and I be Prince. And I had the name Prince. That's what it is. (Laughter) For instance, he employed like sixty five people in his office. Not exactly in his office, but in the warehouse.
LB Now his place was in, what city? Was it in Qiessa?

MP Qiessa.

LB Yes.

MP He himself was one of the directors of the Azofski Donskoi Kommertseski Bank. That’s the largest bank in Qiessa.

LB That’s from Azof and the Don? Commercial bank.

MP Azofski Donskoi Kommertseski Bank. He was one of the board of directors there.

Mind you, if he could be there...if he had, for instance, like in Singapore, he had plantations for pepper. He had in China, plantations for rice. Then he had plantations for vanilla.

LB Now this was an uncle of yours?

MP My father’s brother.

LB All right. Now did you...let’s not get too far into...you see there’s a lot of material, obviously. You started off, now I’ll mark down this is Mr. China, right? If he was this rich a businessman, where did he have his permanent home? In Qiessa?

MP In Qiessa. Sure.

LB Was he an assimilated Jew?

MP No! Very, very religious.

LB He was.

MP A hundred per cent. Saturday, you couldn’t, the boys, in the offices...they used to call us even from the warehouse, the boys. In the office, he didn’t employ so many. But together, with the boys at from the warehouse about sixty five people. But Saturday, we weren’t allowed to...even a pencil to lift.

LB Did you work in the warehouse? Did you work for him in some...

MP I’m coming to that too.

LB Oh. O.K. Did he hire only Jews in his business?

MP Not only Jews. He was afraid, maybe strangers are going to rob him. He, I must admit that, he had always the family. From his family we were very little. From his family. Because from my family, the very fact that they were rich,
they didn’t have to come to him. But from my family, from my aunt’s side, they were very poor. It’s sixty five people he employed. Maybe we were, from our side, maybe about six. And the fifty nine from the other side. And they were stealing right and left.

LB Anyway?

MP See: He was making enough. But still and all, when you would tell B’ni Moishevich, that means for instance, my brother, he steals, he’ll say, You don’t know what you’re talking about. He was thanked for that. It’s impossible. You could never make... he would never believe they’re stealing from that.

LB You mean that a family person would steal.

MP Yes. For instance, I saw once a thing which really, I was a kid... first of all, I want to tell you, my father, he should rest in peace, there’s one thing, the family was very, very close. His family. He went to Odessa, I had an older brother before me, you know from the ten brothers, you figure... I have even the pictures and everything. There’s nobody left. I’m left the only one. And he came to Odessa and he said to my mother, Pessie... my mother’s name was Pessie, he said, Pessie, I want to go to Itzik. His name. Of course, there it was Yitzhaki Abramovitch in Russian. But we called him Itzik. Not we. My father called him, because it’s his brother. He said, I want to go to Odessa. I don’t see why the way I said I had an older brother than I am. He could find a piece of paper when he was a kid seven years old, he started to read... even he couldn’t read Russian, a, b, c, ... to put it together. A Jewish paper. He was studying by himself. My father also was, the whole family was very religious. When it comes to Hebrew, my father used to... when he passed away...

LB What did your father do? Did he teach you Hebrew? No.

MP That’s I just want to tell you that. When he passed away, he saw the mother, you know the mother she was crying, the oldest brother was in the United States already, and she called us over and she said, See, where he left us? I start to realize now, when she said to us... David, the oldest than I am, before was Yid. They were Jews. Because they were studying. They knew that
First of all he had already, "smichus"...

LB It's the rabbinical... He could be a rabbi. He passed his test.

MP My father could be a rabbi. He had the smichus. But he didn't want it. Because he said that in a small town, the whole, everybody will say something to him they will im zugendais. Dem ruv, they can say anything they want to. Because he'll listen then. But he didn't want to listen. But he said to my mother, Pessie, I want to take David, he sees he's so anxious to read and to learn and to study. I'll go to my brother Itzik in Qessoa and I want to see what can he do for him there? Sure enough, she said, Why not? If you want to go to Qessoa and they went to Qessoa and they brought the little kid, maybe he was about eight years old. Don't think he was twenty nine years. About seven or eight. No, about eight years old. And he brought him in and Itzik asked him, Vus ken ich empes tun far dir? What can I do for you? He told him plain. I want, you have two sons only; two daughters. They were educated. So they made them...
The two girls, one in fact committed suicide in the Universitat, because she was in love with a Gentile boy. He said, he would rather see her dead than... Now it's a shame to say that. What do you mean? A Gentile... a honor, you marry a Gentile boy or a Gentile girl but that time, you know it's sixty, seventy years ago... Well, then what do you want that he should do? He said, I brought you over David, you should make from him a mensch. What that means, a mensch? He should give him the same gymmase as his sons, were studying. Let him at least have one educated boy too. He said, Yes, I'll do it for you. He left him there, and he was working. And in the same time he was going in school and he was in board. But mybuncle was paying everything for him.

Everything...

LB So he didn't live with your uncle?

MP He was living in twelve rooms and there were four of them!

LB That's what I'm saying.
Milton Prince  

There, when you're rich, you're rich. You know what I mean? They lived in entirely different. He said, Yes. You can leave him here and I'll make a mensch from him. Start to go. And he was really a genius. Especially education. He took up very fast. And they kept him with the gymnasium. He said, Uncle, I don't want to go any further. I don't want to be a doctor. I want to study as an accountant. A career, a CPA. When I'll be an accountant, at the same time he was working in the office, to earn something for himself, and he said, I want to become an accountant and I'll be able to work in the office and then I'll be a something. He said, All right. He became an accountant, then he wasn't...we used to call him Dovid. Dovid Moishe, because he was like in Europe, in a Klein shtetel, he would be Dovid Moishe. But there he was David Moisevich. (Pause) And he was working for them. One day, after the Revolution...no, no. Before the Revolution. I said to my mother, I don't feel, because I was very tired in that respect, business, business, business, since I was born. I had to go in business for myself with somebody and I was doing that. I said to my mother, Why shouldn't I be in Oiessa? Let me go to Oiessa. Maybe near David Moisevich. Near my brother. Through him I'll go into China (Khina) too.

He used to call, not Khina, but Khin. I'll go to him, maybe he'll take me. Sure enough, I went to Oiessa and turned around, my brother turned around.

He says, What are you doing here? I say, Nothing. Nothing. wrong. Because he got scared. Because...I say, I came to Oiessa because, I made up my mind I want to be in Oiessa too. If you're in Oiessa, I don't see why I shouldn't be in could Oiessa. At the same time, maybe you/get that job for me here by Khin. He said, It's possible. I got to talk it over, with Khin. Khin had a separate kabinet. To sit with the boys together, in the... Then he said, Come tomorrow and give him another day to go the same time...I couldn't stay with my brother in the same room. It's not nice. It doesn't look nice. You know, the...an accountant. There, an accountant it's not like here an accountant, nothing. There an accountant was like, like a professor. God knows, they look up to him. Here I'll come
from a small town and you know, if you give me another day, I could stay. Overnight, he said to me, I'll...George, I'll talk it over with him and I'll see what I can do. Sure enough, comes tomorrow morning...he said, nine o'clock in the morning. Came tomorrow morning, the following day, I came there and they said, Yes, you'll be able to work here. And I started to work. It was big and the business was so big...price kurranten (current), they used to send out...catalogs. All over Russia. He employed three boys, not employed...from the boys we were three boys to go only to the post office three times a day to mail the catalogs and to bring out the mail. He had his own box, naturally, in the post office. He knew already the number from the,...I still remember it, the telephone, from the number but I used to...maybe it was a little incidence in the family, things like I used to follow my brother, I used to like to read addresses. You know, after all, I came from a small town. I could read and write Jewish or a little Hebrew but not for Oiessa. My Russian wasn't good for Oiessa. But the same time I liked to see where they're sending, Just I liked to see where they're sending out...they used to send out three times a day mail. And one just happened, on my luck, they give me mail...

(Tape off) Ended
Side 2 000

LB Now you saw something in the mail.

MP I was reading the addresses. I just happened to see one address, Vinnitsa, Vinnitsa spelled with two "n's". You should know the difference. But we didn't know with two "n's" or...Krizhopol is the way I spell it and it's all right. I came to Khin and I didn't say anything. You know, I was working. But Khin had the habit, he was a very, not because he was my uncle, at the same time not because he was rich, but because he was a clever man. He was a business man. He was every morning, like a clock, when the boys were in the...you know, the boys, the officers, I call them the boys in the office. They were sitting everybody in the books...he used to come in from his office, from his he used to come in in the morning, he used to say, Good morning, boys. In Russian.
"Zdravstvyute rebyate. Uchitse." Three words, "Hello boys, Study." To me
was something... I said to myself, What, are you crazy? But to myself, said,
But I wouldn't say anything and I wouldn't ask because
One day, one week, two weeks, three weeks, six weeks. I said to myself, Nu, I must ask
my brother. What does that mean? Zdravstvyute rebyate. Uchitse. And he used
to go, and he used to mind his own business. He said that, and I talked to my
brother, I said, David Moisevich, Abisnet, Explain me. What he means with that?
What is it? He couldn't talk any more? He said, He knows what he's talking.
I say, Why? He says, When he studies the customers that means. When a customer
comes to buy from you a carload, sugar, five hundred bags, but the whole car-
load, maybe you make twenty dollars. Rubles, naturally. Try to sell only ten
bags rice, you'll make just as much, don't forget, with ten bags rice, accord-
ingly you'll make a hundred times more, if you make only ten dollars, you'll
make more than the twenty dollars on the five hundred bags. And nobody from
the comparison, they wouldn't talk that he sells, Khina, that he sells carloads
sugar, you know what I mean?

LB No. I don't understand that at all.

MP What is to understand that? I asked my brother...

LB I understand that part. I understand the difference... If somebody wants to buy a
carload...

MP He'll sell it. He's going to sell it. But he wasn't interested to sell you a carload
sugar.

LB And you mentioned rice instead of sugar.

MP He was interested to sell to you better only ten bags rice.

LB Why?

MP Because in the ten bags rice, it takes a pushcart, they hire a pushcart and they
deliver to them and nobody even pays attention. What Khina sends out from
the warehouse. But if you send out a carload with sugar, that's five hundred
bags, it'd be ten trucks.
LB So he'd prefer to sell in small quantities, is that what you're saying?

MP You can sell even carloads sugar too. But first try to sell not... forget about sugar. Try to sell something else. Because there was enough merchandise different types. For instance, like he used to buy by the carload, raisins, zinc. (He asks his wife what zinc is from the Russian.)

LB Zinc is a metal.

OP Yes. A metal.

MP He had a for that too. Try to sell better zinc.

LB In other words, don't keep selling sugar.

OP No. In other words, you can make more money, or just as much money just selling ten bags of rice as you would a carload of sugar.

LB That's what I thought.

MP That's what he meant, Uchitse. Now I started to think to myself, He's not crazy. Because he explained it to me, I said, I was working there about six months...

LB I'm going to stop you now and I'm going to take you back to the village. Now I still don't understand. So, when your father died, then your mother apparently must have taken the family from Knyazhe to Krizhopol. All right.

MP And she sold the Knyazhe duplex.

LB She sold the Knyazhe duplex.

MP She got to have the money.

LB Right.

MP And she bought ground.

LB She bought ground in...

MP In Krizhopol. She built a new duplex, we should be able to live in one side and one side we should rent out.

LB And is that what happened? Now how many people lived in this house in Krizhopol?

MP How many families?

LB No, in your section, on your side of the duplex, how many people were in your family?
MP Oh, in our family?
LB You still had the ten children, but it was only your mother now. Right?
MP Yes. But from the ten children we were already about six. Seven.
LB All right. Now let's see. Now you tell me you were born in 1900/ Now, and you
were born in Knyazhe, right? Now, let me ask you, did you go to cheder in Knyazhe?
MP Yes.
LB You did? Starting from when to when.
MP I was three years old, going in cheder already. Till, maybe till seven years.
LB Then did you go to any other school after that?
MP No, only from listening to you, from listening to her... because...
LB All right. You were self educated then.
MP Self educated.
LB O.K. How old were you when your father died?
MP I?
LB Yes.
MP Maybe about nine years. I don't remember. I believe about nine years old.
LB Now, after cheder finished, you were let's say about seven to eight years old...
MP I don't remember exactly.
LB I understand.
MP I know that I was a young kid.
LB Right. Now, was there some reason why you did or did not go, is there some reason
why you did not go on to more schooling?
MP Got to bring in a couple... the mother should be able to make a living... with what
she's going to support...
LB But your father was still living. Right?
MP When he was still living, also he wasn't making too much. But at that time I was
going in cheder, too. In fact, my older brother was...
LB No, no. Let's stick to you. Mr. Prince. You finish cheder. You're about seven or
eight.
MP Eight. Yes.
Eight. And you could not go on to school because, actually, the family needed for you to go out and make some money...

Not needed. I tell you truth. I wasn’t even interested at that time to ask my mother, if she needed more money or not. I wanted to make money. All I wanted was to make money.

O.K. Now what did you do after the age of eight?

Krizhopol, Krizhopol was a factory. A straw factory.

Straw?

Straw. You know from straw.

Yes? What did they make from straw?

Bottles. Hats for bottles, for wine bottles.

Caps...Oh, I see.

You never work in there? But I hear of something and I don’t remember.

You worked in this from the time you were eight?

In the straw factory. They don’t ask you, you can pull the straw, you can do something...

How many people worked in this factory?

Ch yes, there were working about fifty people.

Were they all Jews?

Only.

Was it owned by a Jew?

Yes.

And what was it, hand work or was it there some machinery?

Machinery. Certain machinery. It’s still machinery too but not exactly...

It’s not complicated machinery.

No, No. Anybody... in two hours, they would show it to you, in an hour you would know how to do it. To any machine, you walk over, you know how to work.

All right.

Everybody had his own place to work. Not everybody... one was pulling the straw. One was opening the straw. You know the straw used to come in big bunches.
you take it from the field.

And then they're drying out the straw and they used to pack it...

LB Bale it.

MP Yes. Not exactly bale but...and they used to bring it in. In the factory. And he

used to that and we, we used to...we know already which is easier to work on

the straw and you know that...

LB So that's what you did for about a year?

MP Something like that. Then came a mother's a brother, he was in a different town.

My mother's a brother came in from a different town.

LB Your mother's brother,

MP Yes, he also, really, from the lumber business. From my mother's side, they're from
generations...

LB They were in the lumber business.

MP In the lumber business. Not only in lumber. They had

that's lumber that's tar, tar there is not for the roofs, tar

is there for the wagons. They got to smear, what do you call it, the inside

the wheels should...

LB So they would turn?

MP So they should turn. And leather. See. They were rich. That's why I'm saying

that they were...He comes and says to Pessie, being my father passed away, he

said...

LB Now wait a minute, your father hasn't died yet. I haven't...Your father hasn't died

yet. If you've only worked for a year, then your father hasn't died. How old

were you...you said you were ten or so?

MP I believe I was younger, I believe I was eight years or so, I can't remember.

LB You don't remember.

MP Not exactly. I can't remember. I know I was a kid that time. But I know that when...

LB Well, when you went to work in the straw factory, for example, were you already

living in Krizhopol?

MP Krizhopol. Yes.
LB So then your father was already...

MP My father wasn't living anymore.

LB So he had to be dead. Right?

MP Yes.

LB All right. So that makes it quite a bit younger, that you were quite a bit younger when your father died. Right?

MP That's what I said...

LB Now let me ask you this too. I want to get back to something else. Your father and your family, were they very religious?

MP Yes.

LB Was your father a Hasid?

MP Hmmm?

LB Was your father a Hasid?

MP Yes.

LB He was.

MP Yes.

LB Do you remember your father?

MP Of course!

LB Right. Did he wear...did he have pais?

MP No, no, no. But he wouldn't believe to razor his beard. He wouldn't take off his beard. He wouldn't cut the beard.

LB He wouldn't cut his beard.

MP Oh, no, no.

LB Did he wear a caftan? And a shtreml? And all that?

MP No. No.

LB No.

MP He wasn't so extreme. You see, his father, my grandfather, he was already the Hasidisher, like here, the Satamara, whatever is there, shtamle. Yes. He was there. First of all, he was a rabbi. He really was a ruv.

LB Your father?
MP Yes, but he didn't want to be bothered with that. But then Khina, when he came to Odessa, he told him the story that he wants to make a living, he said that, he should give me sort of agency.

LB Now wait a minute. It's very confusing, Mr. Prince. I can't follow you. So you just listen to my questions, O.K. and answer them.

MP Go ahead.

LB Now your father was very religious. Did he go to shul? Did he go everyday?

MP Every day.

LB Mr. Twice a day.

MP Twice a day.

LB And your mother? Too. I mean, your mother was religious?

MP She was wearing a "sheitel", but...

LB She didn't go to shul.

MP No. She was going Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

LB So she went when the women were supposed to go.

MP Oh yes!

LB Now, was the town, now first you were in Knyazhe and then you were in Krizhopol.

Were both towns religious towns? Were they both...

MP In Krizhopol was more already lively. Not all of them...

LB Oh, it was?

MP Oh, yes. It was a town, they used to call it a small Odessa.

LB I know. Odessa was quite assimilated. But Knyazhe was much more Orthodox?

MP Mostly.

LB Mostly.

MP Mostly.

LB And Krizhopol was, what, then? ...Well, if it was more lively, how would you describe it? What do you mean by more lively?

MP I mean there were real stores there, Real buildings. You know, the buildings...

LB No. I'm talking about religion now.
Milton Prince

Religious. It was religious. And some of them, they didn't believe in that. We had already, for instance, like, the drugstore, she was smoking/already. And everybody was saying, smoked a cigarette on Shabbos. I couldn't believe, myself, I must see that. I couldn't believe it! How can she smoke a cigarette? A woman, besides that? And she should smoke a cigarette. Ah!

I was so happy, I saw the way she was smoking.

LB You were embarrassed?

MP I should say.

LB Yes. So, in other words the pressure in Krizhopol to conform was not as strong.

MP Oh, no, no, no.

LB It didn't work. It didn't work.

MP Different ways.

LB Yes.

MP It's entirely different. You wouldn't see so many sheitlach like you would see in Knyazhe. They wouldn't run, my mother for instance, Friday night, she got to bentch licht. What do you mean, Not to bentch licht? (Bless the candles.)

In Krizhopol, is...they come and there's a delicatessen, a Gentile delicatessen store...

LB In Krizhopol?

MP Yes, Sure. Hazir Because he used to own pigs, Buty and sell, he used to kill and sell in the store. And the same time, he used to make, like here, ham. It was his ham. They called it vichinada. It was out of this world. But I was afraid to eat it. I'm a Jew. I should be eating it? I was afraid even to look at that. Of course

LB So you were raised that all these things were sins? That...you were raised that way?

MP Yes.

LB But did you gradually get away from those feelings?

MP Oh, yes.

LB By what age?

MP Maybe nine, ten years.
LB:Probably right after your father died, is that what it sounds like.

MP:Right. Right. Right. Then we were freely. But, in certain ways, I must admit it, I still like...I feel it. For instance, I wouldn't go every day, and every night and every morning to go to shul, but to Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur, till I got sick, I was going in shul. I used to take a ticket and sit the whole day, there, Yom Kippur and...even now, I would like to. In fact, again the same thing, the way you said, I'm mixing you up...Here, I got a tape. When I hear a cantor, I put it right on the tape. And I got the records on my hi-fi, is the most of the best cantors. And I still love them.

LB:Did you have cantors in Krizhopol?

MP:What?

LB:Cantors in Krizhopol.

MP:You heard about Belarski?

LB:No, I don't know that name.

MP:The singer Belarski?

LB:No.

MP:Belarski was the brought up with me together. He went in cheder with me together. And he became famous. He just passed away, two years already. Here, but he became very, very famous here. Belarski. See, it was entirely already, we used to go already, in my time when I grew up, we used to smoke already in the street. It after the Revolution.

LB:Now, we're not at the Revolution yet. You're only ten years old, and the war hasn't broken out yet.

MP:Oh, you mean when I was a kid.

LB:Yes. Now we're talking...I'm still back there in your childhood.

MP:It still was in me. I shouldn't...Over there, on the next street, there lives a family, she converted. She's Jewish. She converted for a Christian. I was afraid to pass by the house, maybe she'll touch me.

LB:Is that right?

MP:Yes.
LB That's an old feeling, Mr. Prince.

MP Yes. Yes.

LB It's very interesting. Those feelings are very strong. I don't think you ever get rid of them.

MP You see, I learned a lot of things, as little as I was. For instance, see I'll give you an example like Pesach. You couldn't duplicate our Pesach, what we made. That was a real hundred per cent traditional Jewish Orthodox, but not fanatic, like the father was like a king. And my, my, mother was like a queen. And the children, they say the Hagadah like ...

LB The children were what?

MP We were saying the Hagadah.

LB The Hagaddah.

MP The Hagadah. We say Hagaduah. And with the Kashas and with everything, you know, we used to do it slowly, (sings and illustrates the portion about the ten plagues)
And then another thing. Then I'll jump to 19...

LB No. Don't jump. Tell...

MP Yes. Yes. I'll tell you why. We were invited for the first night, Pesach, here to the Schochets, for supper. And he says, he was sitting and he said, saying the Hagadah. And I didn't see the Hagadah, God knows, how many years. And then come to a certain part. I still remembered it, the melody we were singing there. I said, Eh, Israel! I want to sing that. He says, Yes. They all of them, you know Mrs. - what's her name, Kaufman, Mrs. Kaufman...no, no, no. What's his name? The sister-in-law...

LB Bupsie.

MP Yes. You know. She couldn't get over it. I said, Yes. I didn't open the Hagadah, maybe about sixty five years. And I didn't look. But I still remember, saying the way, with the point...the way they were singing by us in the...See, that's why I said that's it's in me. I still can't...I've never touched ham. Even today.
LB What else...what are some of the things that you remember as being very im-
portant, you know, in this respect? For example, one person said that they could
never go past a church without spitting. That was one thing.

MP Yes. Yes. Yes. Especially when a priest passed.

LB Then you had to spit also? Oh, you did.

MP Übergarten ah shtraw.

LB What's that?

MP To pick up a straw and turn it over.

LB Over your shoulder?

MP Sure, because a priest went by!

LB So a piece of straw over your shoulder, that was...

MP That was kosher. See, that's...it's a lot of things.

LB Yes. It's very interesting though. Because almost all people have something like
that.

MP And I'm still believing certain things...

LB Yes, for example.

MP For example.

LB Does your wife keep a kosher home now?

MP No.

LB No.

MP First of all she...

LB She's from Odessa anyway.

MP Besides that she's from Odessa, she's a very good...but she don't believe in...we
buy kosher meat. Not because it's kosher. First of all, the meat that we buy kosher,
it comes to the house, it's treife. Because she doesn't make it kosher. Salted, with
the water, with the...then it's treife.

LB It's not kosher the way it's supposed...it used to be. All right, now let me take
you back again. There you are in Krizhopol. And you're working in the straw factory.
Now what are the other children doing? Are they working in the straw factory?

MP No. They went to cheder yet.
LB You were the second oldest?

MP From... when we remained in Krizhopol, I was the third from the oldest.

LB The third from the oldest. David Moisevich was in Oiessa and the other, we used to call him the Chnyukerel... we used to laugh from him, because he used to daven like day in and day out...

LB He was a Chnyuk? (a kind of fool)

MP You know what it means?

LB Yes, I know. Sort of a foolish one.

MP Yes. He was nobody's fool but he used to...

LB I know. I know. So what happened to him?

MP He got killed. They all got killed. That's what I say. I'm left of all. We were all the four brothers. Three passed away, the older three, what I have here. And the other got killed and the mother and the... also in Oiessa. All of them.

LB All right. During the second world war, you mean?

MP By Hitler, yes, sure.

LB By Hitler. So then they must have stayed in the Soviet Union.

MP Of course. They were in Oiessa. They didn't I suppose, have a chance to escape from Oiessa.

LB And they didn't come here to the United States either?

MP No. That was my fault. My fault. I don't blame myself. It's foolish to blame myself. It's too late now to think about it. But I think more than that. And then they weren't interested. They lived there. The brother, the youngest brother was a doctor. It's not only a doctor. But he invented, for instance, like a certain, he had his own invention (noise from the sink. Tape interrupted.)

LB That kind of a life is hard for you to explain.

MP especially. That's why I would stop you. Just if I told you that my daughter gave me that for... (a tape recorder) and I got tapes. I wish I should give you better from the tapes. You'd know more. You'd have a better idea, than I'm talking to you now.

LB But I might not know what I want to know.
Then I'll stop. But you can listen to them.

I see. Well, you let me do my way, O.K.?

Go ahead.

All right. Now, the house that you owned, that you lived in in Krizhopol, you were seven children and your mother left there, right? How big was that house, do you remember? How many rooms it was?

There is not such a thing. There are two rooms, a that means a bedroom. And a living room. The living room did most of them, they put up curtains (?) and they sleep.

O.K.

There's not that the boy's got to have a separate room and the girl's got to have a separate room.

And you probably had one big table...

Yes, we were sitting all there. But one thing I must tell you. We had, that time, bigger respect than the children here, with their education, for their parents.

Yes, I'm sure. I'm sure that you did.

A hundred per cent, not only sure, but a hundred per cent sure. My mother was saying something, was a law. Mama. See. No question. And when my father said something... when he said, this... the king! You know, xumm Saturday when he comes from shul, we got to be all by the table.

Is that right? Yes.

You got to wash and make a moitze (blessing over the bread) and everything. You're not supposed to say anything unless the father ask you.

I've heard that before. Are you talking, at the table or anytime?

At the table, everything.

At the table? You couldn't talk unless the father spoke to you?

Because you're eating. If he asks something, we'll answer him. And what do you think was the questions? What you were studying all week, what you were doing in cheder. Everything, but not from the street what you're running around.
A little episode, I must tell you that. And I thought I'll bring it to that...
Maybe I was five years only. We were going in cheder. Used to come out, the farmers, Used to bring out melons, honeydews. You know...three of us. We went under a wagon, we saw the farmer not there, we stole a little melon. And I was the wise guy and I grabbed it from the boys and I runned home. And I said to my mother, See, what I brought you, I thought she would be in heaven. My father said, You'd better give it back, because if you want to be alive, I'll take off the belt, he said. (To beat the boy), I couldn't make it out. I don't ask him nothing. I saved him a penny, but whatever it is, which it was altogether. Gonevin! (Thieves) You're a gonif. You steal. You bring it back, I was crying for the boys, they should take it away from me. You see, that's how it...

LB Yes. It was different. Yes.

MP See, That's why it's a different life over there. But not fanatic. That's one thing. Not fanatic.

LB Now what do you mean, not fanatic?

MP Oh, for instance, like some of them, they used to daven...they used to shuckle (move back and forth in prayer) they used to break the wall. He davened but if he couldn't go to shul, maybe he wasn't feeling well, or it was raining or something, he was davening in the house. He was davening...see, religious people, very religious people, they davened in two pairs of tefillin.

LB Oh, is that right?

MP See, my grandfather, he should rest in peace, before he left..he went to Israel, to die there. He didn't want to die here.

LB He did die in Israel?

MP Yes. der Hsuid. He was one of the high Hasidim, from the high class Hasidim. By his rebbe, by the Tolner rebbe.

LB Tolner?

MP Rebbe. He gave him a second pair of tefillin. He should have his tefillin. And I'm brought up that way. I can't help it.

LB No. No. Well, there's nothing wrong with it.
MP. It's nothing wrong, but for instance, like, again the same thing... I got to
mix it in now. My daughter should be well. He got a big position. He's the presi-
dent from a certain company. He goes to Europe. He goes to Japan. He goes to...
Now about four weeks ago, five weeks, my daughter calls me up. They got to go to
Europe to London, Paris, Germany, Rome, Milan and then I said, Lillian, How about
to go to Israel? You will know at least something about Israel because you were
brought up by me. Till I gave her more...or less. She didn't get the Jewish education
by me. That's also a reason. But at the same time, she knows Jewish history,
more than average. How about Bernie? What are you going to do? Let me see the im-
pression you're going to have from Israel. Sure enough they listened to me. They
went to Israel. If...they had time to be in Israel a week. Then she wrote me letters,
(moves to get up for the letters)...


MP No. Just a couple of words. She writes...they couldn't think any better. Bernie's
crazy, she said, about Israel. But for his business, maybe he's going to have a
connection there with an inventor, for his line. Now, especially
my older granddaughter...

LB Yes, but we've talked about this.

MP And now she's in Israel.

LB Yes, I know, I understand the problems. Believe me, I understand them very well.
But you see, you come from a family where your grandfather was so religious that
he had two pair of tefillin and one pair was given to him by the reb. And here, you
come with your granddaughter and you're lucky that she went to Israel. Right?

MP That is true.

LB Right. I understand it. And your son-in-law couldn't be less interested. But now
he's interested. Before he was not interested.

MP See, my daughter, I used to say to her, Lillian you don't want to go. Send Mary to
Israel. Oh, don't even talk about it. Don't even mention about it.

LB I understand. I do understand the problem. All right now let's go back. Now here
you're all living here in Krizhopol and things are not so good for the Jews. Or are
they O.K., for you? How was life there...

(Tape ends)

LB O.K. Now between the Jews and the non-Jews, you say you didn't bother with them very much.

MP On the average, was very good.

LB It was very good?

MP Yes.

LB But there came a time...did it change at any time?

MP After the Revolution.

LB All right, now when the war broke out in 1914, the first World War, did that affect you in any way?

MP Just that we were, that time, the day when the war broke out, we were in the station to go to United States.

LB Is that right?

MP It just happened that day, we were in the station.

LB You were all, the whole family was planning to go?

MP All ready.

LB Your mother too?

MP My mother with the children. And it just happened, after me, another boy Laba, my brother, he was wild. In what respect was he wild? He was different from all of them. I was afraid, I was shy in that respect. His best pleasure was horse back riding.

But he didn't have a horse. But then he got combined with his friend and they caught somewhere a horse, and they were riding...horseback riding. The day before we got to go, we're on the station already, you know with all the packages...all of a sudden, my mother turns around, She says, He's not there. Because first he was riding and then he went off and the other kid went up on the horse and they were riding. Then the horse hit him in the back and knocked him out four teeth and they took him to the doctor. And we didn't know nothing. Because my mother and the kids, for sure we were happy, we're going to America. And my mother, she was busy with her-
self. She didn't know, they got to watch the company should be together. She sees Labie not there. She start to ask and then, she ask a neighbor. She said, What are you looking for? She said, What do you mean? I'm looking for my Labie. We got to go. If not for him they would be alive.

LB They would be alive here.

MP That shows. She says, What do you mean? Labie is in the hospital. She says, Labie's in the hospital? What do you mean, Labie's in the hospital? She tells her the same story. He was riding with so and so on the horses and they made him twelve stitches and he was three months in the hospital.

LB Now do you think, if he hadn't run away, do you think, considering that war broke out that day, you still could have gotten out?

MP What do you mean?

LB Out of Russia?

MP That time? Oh, yeah. Yeah!

LB You had passports and everything?

MP Everything.

LB Ugh. That's terrible.

MP Everything was complete. We were on the station to go just to wait on the train. What I tell you is a fact. Meiner landsmen (his countrymen) whatever went, a couple of them went to the United States, they escaped from there, they were just in time.

LB So what happened then, after that? So then you had to stay there?

MP Sure.

LB And then the war continued and what happened to you? That means that by that time you were already fourteen years old, fifteen, sixteen...

MP Then I was working on the lumber yard by my uncle.

That what I started to tell you. I had an uncle, also my mother's a brother, he had a lumber yard in a different town. Prostinyet. He came to my mother to Krishopol. He said, Fessie, I want to take off from your hands a esser. You know what that means?

LB An eater.
MP An eater, I'll take Mischa to me, and I'll pay you and I'll dress him and everything and it will be a piskele veiniker.

LB Yes. One less mouth.

MP One of my brothers, I believe that's even before that yet, I tell you...

LB It gets mixed up.

MP Yes. Because it was too much complicated there. And my brothers said, What are you going to give him a ? He said, he's going to give him three, three rubles not three dollars. Three rubles a month, that means thirty six dollars a year. And with board and everything, couldn't be any better that time. And he'll take me to Prostinyets. My brothers said yes, but uncle give me first the thirty six dollars. Because, no, not because he was afraid of him. Because Milton, Mischa, Really, doesn't need the money. /What did I need the money there? When everything...

LB Is taken care of.

MP Is taken care of. He gave them the money. And I went to Prostinyets.

LB And you worked there in the lumber business?

MP Yes.

LB So, you stayed there how long?

MP How long? I was, in six months I was a complete manager. In six months time.

So much I took into my head. This got to be, I grow up in the lumber business...

if /I got to grow up, I got to go in lumber business. Regardless.

LB What year was that? Do you remember?

MP I believe in 1911.

LB No the war had to start.

MP That's what I said, I believe that was before the war yet. Here I got more. (Points to own tape recording) See, when the war started...

LB You told me that the first day when war was declared, your family was ready to leave for America.

MP This was before yet. And after the war, it started the Revolution, then we moved all to Oiesa. That's right. After the war, we all moved to Oiesa. Because what's the use...we had a home in Krizhopol...we sold it because we were supposed to go to
United States. We were living temporarily in a room there and a room here. There we didn't sleep. **Wie zoy zugt man** (How do you say it?) We didn't sleep here, they didn't eat there. You know what I mean? It was no life. I said to my brother, to my brother I talked it over. Let's move to Odessa. Because there's less danger in Odessa.

Whatever we'll do they'll do. And we moved there. And of course, my mother, what is she going to say? No? Where the children want to go, there she'll go with us. And then start the... the Revolution start...

LB Oh, the Revolution... that was 1917. So you were already in Odessa when the Revolution started?

MP I was since, I believe, since 1914. That's what I said. It's impossible for me... for her (his daughter) I took time on the tape practically from the first day I was born.

LB Yes. Yes. Well continue. Go ahead. (Interviewer was having great difficulty keeping the time sequence straight and keeping the respondent to any chronological sequence of events in the telling.)

MP Next I was working by my uncle...

LB No, you're in Odessa and you worked for your uncle there?

MP No, after the Revolution, no. Until the revolution, I didn't work...

LB No, what happened during the revolution? I wanted to know what happened during the Revolution.

MP During the Revolution? Oh. My brother, that fellow, that Labe, Leon, he opened there... he used to have charcoal to sell. He opened a store for charcoal and wood. That was the store. Then he made a big success. He had about five stores. He was a young boy and he made a success. My head was flying. It wasn't in one place. I couldn't... I started to deal with foreign money. See. Volutas. Here to buy. Here to sell. Here to buy. You know, through friends... I got acquaintances. Then I said to myself, why should I stay there one place I know where to go. Because Odessa's big, I know one man who will buy from me. Maybe give me the right price. Maybe not. But I was making out very good. I go back to Krizhopol.
I'll be alone there, and I'll find out who'll buy, will buy from me the voluta, when I'll buy, from whom I'll buy, I'll go to these people. Whatever they got.

LB Now, what is voluta?

MP Foreign money.

LB In a small town like Krizhopol, who's going to have foreign money?

MP You'd be surprised.

LB Yah?

MP Not too much. Not too much. But they have their own. For instance, like they have the five dollar gold pieces, I was buying that too. Everything. Because that time was Kerensky... and Kerensky was only paper. Everything was paper. Shmatas, mir fligen es namen... We used to call it rags. But they had the gold. They wanted to sell it because they want that...

LB The Kerensky ruble?

MP Yes. So I say to myself, I'm making money. Then I figure, why should I stay here?

I'll go in different towns. Then I go in a town where I was managing already a store from lumber. A lumber yard I was managing when I was fourteen or fifteen years old. And I go there and I got acquaintances there, with people, I'll go there, maybe I'll make it out there too. Maybe I'll buy there. If not, I'll go back to Krizhopol.

LB Now tell me something. When the Revolution is going on were you paying any attention to the political life, you know the political ideas of the Revolution?

MP No-o-o-o. No. No. No.

LB No. None of this touched you.

MP No. No. No. I was young. First of all I escaped from the army.

LB How did you escape from the army?

MP Escape is also a question. They put in the train, so many boys, I sneaked out from
the train and I walked away.

LB And they didn't catch you?

MP God forbid. When they would catch me, they would shoot me, did you.

LB Where/where you go? Where was this, in Qiessa that they picked you up?

MP In Qiessa. We were about ten boys, nine or ten boys that time when we escaped, we said, what little money we had, it was in July, we weren't afraid...as young we are. We can't walk. Whatever we'll leave, we'll leave. Let's walk, let's walk to the small towns and on the fields where the wheat's growing should go in the wheat, nobody should see us. We were walking about a week or ten days, maybe, till I came to Krizhopol and then somehow got together with boys and start to deal with the voluta and then I came to Skifka (?)

And I came home, and I tell you, I figured to myself after all I know a family, it's so good, let me go in to see the sisters. Because when I was in the lumber business. Not I, because I was managing only, From Krizhopol he had a branch in Skifka. Let me go in to that family because when they had a fire in the duplex...all burned down. The family, it just happened, the father and mother, something, in three months time they both passed away. And the children, they left over with like nothing and here was a fire because it was cold, winter, and they were putting straw in the stove. They put in so much straw it should be warm and they got to make a fire, and everything was burned down. Then I helped them out with lumber, as much as I could. Naturally, it wasn't mine. I told them as much as you give me, then you'll pay me off, and I'll try to explain to my boss and this and that. Then we got friendly, very very friendly but now when I came to buy voluta, I thought, let me go

And I walked in and I see and I asked them. Maybe you got something to sell or what. They got scared. They see me. They know that I'm in Qiessa. And I see the bundles. Packed in bundles. A couple of valises, I say, Where you going? One of the girls, she should rest in peace. She passed away. She was living in Philadelphia and made a big success there. And she was at my daughter's wedding, here. She wanted to go/the United States, the whole family. I said, If you're going to leave everything,
She said, I'm going with you. What do you mean? They asked me, What do you mean? And how's your mom. She's going to be off her mind. She thinks you're in Krizhopol and all of a sudden you'll go to Rumania. We couldn't go straight to...

LB I know, I know. We went to... I said, Don't ask any questions. Let them think I'm in Krizhopol because I didn't go every day back to... Sure enough, if you want to, then here tonight, wait here, at night time we'll talk it over with that man...

LB The smuggler.

MP The smuggler. The guy who took them over. That's right...

LB So you went with them?

MP Went with them. Then I came to a small town and I didn't know what to do. I got to live...

LB You mean, in Bessarabia.

MP I got to live from something. I said to them, I know very well in the lumber business.

Really like an expert I could sell myself. Even when I was only seventeen years old. But I knew very well the line. I said to them, How about I should find you somewhere a lumber yard? I'll be able to work and I'll be able to earn something. Whatever it is, I'll make a living, for myself. Asked a couple of people there, they said, No. It's too small a town. But there's another town... maybe you heard of that?

LB No.

MP Also Bessarabia. That Kalin (?) has a big lumber yard. Tremendous. I said to myself, Then I'll go tomorrow with my friend and sure enough, we came there, and before you're coming into town, the lumber yard is on the road. The lumber yard, they told me it's a lumber yard in Tremendous. so many people, so I was looking around, so I couldn't count, about forty people were working there. I never saw that in my life. Forty people in one lumber yard. I said to my friend, How about, tomorrow morning, we'll go over there again? And let's see, maybe I'll find out. We went there, when we walked in, in the gate, you know in the lumber yard you got to open the gate... three men stayed there by the gate, and they're
talking. Naturally they're talking between them. And at the same time I see that the poirim, you know, the farmers that are working there, they're farmers, you know the Gentiles...

LB Yes. The peasants.

MP They don't need that money. They could use the money, and it's natural. But they wanted, but they have small farms. They're coming in the city. They selling what they bring up from the farm and at the same time they're working here and they're making an extra dollar. I said to myself, Max, see that lumber what they're carrying...

And I didn't pay attention, I didn't pay attention to the men and they didn't pay attention to what I'm talking to my friend. And I said to my friend, Max you see that lumber what they're carrying there, they don't know what they're doing. I said, Where's a boss here? This lumber belongs over here. They can make an extra few cents.

LB So, in other words, you had the thing all organized already. Right? In your head.

MP Oh yes. Wait a minute. It's not everything yet. And then I said, This lumber belongs over there. Then I saw a pile with lumber. In Europe they make furniture, not like here in the factory. The factory cleans and everything. There, they...

LB Had to do it by hand?

MP By hand. I see that lumber what's laying there. This is a certain wood, specially for furniture. It comes out like a steam. I say, Max, see that lumber. It comes out like a steam from there. And two weeks later, or a month later they'll have to sell it for a half to the carpenters and they wouldn't like to take it. Why? Because if it's raining and the rain goes through, then the lumber gets blue. And when you start to clean that, you can never clean out the blue...

LB Mr. Prince, I'm going to have to take you off the lumber business, as interesting as it is, I'm sure. I'm sure that you're an expert on the lumber business, really. But what I wanted to know, you see, I wanted to know whether, once you got into Bessarabia, did you ever go back to Russia?

MP No.

LB That was it?
Milton Prince

The next thing - to the United States.

So from there you came to the United States. You were actually...you came to
the United States in what year, 1923? How long were you in Bessarabia?

About three and a half years.

So you got there in about 1919.

Something like that.

All right. Now the revolution came in 1917. Between 1917 and 1919 and the time
that you crossed into Bessarabia, were you...you were in Krizhopol? That time?

Krizhopol. Moskifka (?) All over. The small towns.

You were all over.

Because I was buying the...

The voluta, right. Now did you, during this time, did you have any, in your head,
did you have thought of the political situation?

No.

You didn't pay any attention to it at all?

No. No. I was a young boy and I wanted to make money. I was interested to make
money.

I see.

 Came to Olessa. Here. I had money. Because, they were starving there.

That's what I wanted to know. Were you starving too?

Yes. We, no. We had the best time. I wouldn't say the best time. Accordingly, we
were better off than the all the rich people that used to be.

Who is "we"? Your family?

My family.

How come?

Oh. Again the same thing. For instance, like if they were starving, they couldn't
got bread. I got, also with the boys and said, Where are you going? Where are you
going bread? They said, It's very simple. There in Kherson, another city, you go
by boat. They taking by ship. Kherson. And they're going by ship. In Kherson, they
still have flour there and they're selling it to Olessa. Who comes to buy there,
they sell it. I say, I'm going with you too. And then we used to bring the bread rolls and we used to sell it on the bazaar. On the market. And we used to go every day. Same time I used to have bread enough for my family. You know what I mean?

LB Now wait a minute. What you're saying is that you were sharp enough to see...

MP I was too sharp. That's the whole thing.

LB Well, wait a minute, I mean, you can tell me that too. But what it sounds to me, is that you seemed to have some sort of sense of where to find things and where things were happening and how to go about getting material to your family, so that they wouldn't suffer too much. Is that correct?

MP Right. Exact. And I was for all of them, I was the ruler, I was the advisor. Above all of them. Even for the older people.

LB Now why do you say you were too sharp?

MP That's the whole thing. Before I'm doing something, I see already what's going to be. It's like we were going to Kherson to buy bread. We were buying bread as much as we could. We used to come with sacks. Ten breads (?) as much as we could gather them. Once we came and the following week, or two weeks later, I don't remember, or a month later to the same baker. He said, No. There's a ukase, a law come out, not to sell out of Kherson. Because we are short, we're running short of flour ourselves.

LB I was going to say, this is like a black market almost, what you were doing.

MP You couldn't call this a black market.

LB In times of a revolution, anything can happen.

MP The only thing was the black market.

LB I'm not judging it. I'm just saying...

MP Everything you caught, whatever you bought or whatever you sold, it was black market. Otherwise you couldn't get it. You couldn't go into a store to buy bread.

LB Otherwise you would have starved. I understand.

MP Right. For instance, when we came to the...

LB But what I wanted to know, is that the Soviets at that time, were not in full control because the Civil War was going on.

MP Yes. But not in Odessa.
LB Not in Glesa. So that's why you still had the opportunity...now tell me if I'm wrong, to operate as a sort of independent, uh, businessman.

MP Businessman, yes.

LB Is that correct?

MP Right.

LB But once they would move in, as they did...it had to be the Soviets, was it? in Kherson, that issued the ukase?

MP All over, they overlooked that. Because they knew that you're starving. They were overlooking a lot of things. They had to overlook. Because they were starving. Everybody was starving. They didn't like the idea we go into Kherson to buy bread to bring it into Glesa. Because...but once we came to Kherson the baker says, No. We have a rule. We shouldn't sell more than one bread. We start to turn around. One bread. The expense!

LB Yes. Just coming.

MP I mean, not only...we're going to lose. It doesn't pay. *Mmm* Then I said...That's what I said, they called me the wise guy...I said, I have an idea. One bread, yes. But they didn't mention the size of the bread. No. Make up in a pan, all the pans, tin pans you know, for dough, the bread should be ten, twelve pounds. It should weigh ten, twelve pounds. It's one bread. They didn't mention it's got to be two pounds or twenty pounds. Make us ten pounds of bread, Then we got to stay overnight.

LB Until it rises and all that, yes.

MP And we came in the morning and we got it, yes. A ten pound bread. And everybody was happy.

LB And then you would cut it up as if...

MP Yes. Sure. And we came and we took that bread and we brought it to Glesa.

on the market there, where we could sell it. Black market, the way you said that. It was a real...everybody was glad to grab it. Everybody has his own customers already. And I sold it, that bread...

LB Now look at all the different businesses you were in, in a sense. You were in
foreign currency. You were buying and selling bread. You certainly know, learned quite a bit about the lumber company, uh...

MP Forget that lumber company. At that time you couldn't get any more lumber.

LB I understand. But once you got back into Bessarabia, then you... Now, what else were you doing there in Odessa during this time period to keep your family comfortable? It sounds as if you were quite enterprising.

MP I asked again, a friend, What are you doing now? He said, We're working in the offices. He said, I'm selling George Boardman's chocolate. That's a well known concern. Used to be in Moscow.

LB George Boardman's chocolate?

MP Chocolate. Yes, eating chocolate, like, here, Hersheys.

LB I know. It sounds like an American or an English name.

MP I believe it's from Switzerland.

LB From Switzerland. O.K.

MP George Borman.

LB Borman. O.K.

MP That's a well known... His chocolate was well known. I said, What are you doing?

LB Where did they get chocolate?

MP In the warehouse. They still had it. They used to come from Moscow, from Moscow they used to go and get it. He said, We're going to George... the wholesale place and we're buying a certain amount. Then we go to the little stores and we sell it. We're making a living. Then I saw once, also from the friends... you know, young kids,...

LB Who are these friends?

MP Mine.

LB I know. But where did you meet them?

MP In Odessa. We were working, for instance, I was working by Shechter, then I was working by China, for instance, in the post office, you meet twenty boys there.
MP We became friendly. Not exact friends but we became friendly. Especially Saturday and Sunday. The stores, the offices are closed. We didn't have what to do. Then we start to look and then I asked a friend of mine, I ask him, What are you doing? He sells pencils. I said, Pencils. What are you going to become a greengrocer to sell the pencils in the streets? He says, No, no, no. He says, There's a well known...it's wholesale and retail, paper business, Ivan Mich. You go over there. You'll buy by the gross and you'll go to the stores and you'll sell them to the offices. And you'll sell them. You'll make a nice living.

LB So even pencils were in short supply.

MP Everything! No such a thing. Even water was short. Pencils! Pencils is gold already!

LB Everything.

MP But what were shoes? Anything.

LB And yet these boys were in business.

MP Yes.

LB How old were the boys?

MP They were also my age.

LB I know. But how old?

MP Seventeen or something like that. Maybe one younger, may older, but real Odessa boys...

LB What does that mean? Real Odessa boys? I've heard that before.

MP Oh. Yes. See, Er geht a klein shteteldiker. (There goes a small town er). They recognize in your nose, you're a greenhorn there. You know like here, you're a greenhorn. And there, ah - Klein shteteldiker. (Small town)

LB A small townier.

MP Yes. Is from a small town. But I got acquainted...

LB So an Odessa boy was a tough kid really?

MP Oh yes! Yes. Oh, with them you couldn't start.

LB Is that right?

MP No. I wouldn't fight with them. Always I was on the best...I was the best one. I
Everytime they used to give it in. I used to say something, No, you're right.

LB Were they... were they... it almost sounds like a gang.

MP No. No. No, no, no. But, don't bother me. Don't step on my toes. But otherwise they wouldn't bother you.

LB Were they religious boys?

MP No! I don't think... No-o-o-o. No, No. No. Odessa boys were not religious boys.

LB Were they Jewish boys?

MP Oh yes!

LB All Jewish? What language did they speak?

MP Russian.

LB Only Russian?

MP Russian. They used only Russian.

LB They didn't speak Yiddish?

MP No. You're a greenhorn!

LB Yes. If you speak Yiddish you're a greenhorn.

MP Like here they call it green and there, Er geht a poylisher.

LB Er geht a poylisher. (There goes a Polish one.)

MP Everyone of them... Poylisher idyut. (In Russian - A Pole goes.) Er geht a Poylisher.

LB Ch, you mean, if they saw one, they would say, There goes a Pole?

MP No... they called.

LB If you spoke Yiddish they said you were from a Pole.

MP From Poland. Even if you could be from Knyazhe. But - Poland. They didn't know what Knyazhe means. They didn't know what Poland means.

LB So to them Odessa was the whole world? Is that right?

MP Oh! And it is! There was a life. In Odessa was a life. See, when, for instance, when they used to go... they used to sell Russian kvass, you know that kvass?

LB Kvass is a liquor.

MP Not liquor. It's from...

LB It's from potatoes.
MP From bread.

LB From bread? Oh, I'm sorry.

MP Yes. And they used to sell it there by the paper stand, they used to sell it. You could buy it for a cent. A piece of bread, even in the normal times, two cents, and for a cent you get a glass of kvass and you stay aside and drink, you'd enjoy that, that the best meal you couldn't enjoy, that the best thing you couldn't enjoy as much as you enjoyed that kvass. And they used to call Oiessa, Oiessa Mama. Oiessa, the mother. Why? Something that you see in there, you couldn't see nowhere.

LB So there was a special feeling for Oiessa?

MP Absolutely! Absolutely!

LB And here you were, actually, a klein shteteldiker...

MP But I came there, I didn't stay a klein shteteldiker...

LB Wait a minute. No, wait a minute. Also, from a Hasidic family and you're very religious...you still, even to this day, you still have these feelings. You know that go back to real Yiddishkeit. And yet here you come in with this bunch of Oiessa street boys...

MP They never brought it up about Yiddishkeit, no. We never talked about it.

LB That didn't come up?

MP Never! I used to like a cantor. Shabbos, I used to go sometimes in the morning, I used to go in a shul. Yes, and I used to go to daven, to listen to the best cantors.

LB And they didn't care?

MP No. No, I wouldn't even tell it to them, because...

LB Ah-h-h-h...  

(Tape ends)
No. In certain ways I was careful. Otherwise I was open with them. I wasn't afraid because I was...like here they say, a boy from the boys. I was a kid between the kids.

Yes.

You say, Yes. Like here they say a Yes-man. I was a Yes man. What do I care. As long as they see he is right...for instance, when I quit China and I went, as I said, to one of the boys and I said, Maybe you know about a job? He said, Yes, Go over there and there there's Mr. Schechter. And they're also in the same line. And they'll take you and they'll give you a job. And as soon as I rang the bell and I opened the door, I started to like the people. And they started to like me.

What kind of business was that?

Also wholesale groceries. Not in the same scale like China.

So why did you quit China?

It's too much...the way you say, it's too much already religious. I'm in Giessa already. I'm Giessa boy and...

I see.

And it just happened, that family where that Schechter was one hundred per cent assimilated. There were two daughters and two sons. They didn't understand a word of Jewish. In fact, it wasn't only Sarah and Izzie, a boy and a girl, they were the biggest anti-Semites. See, Jewish anti--Semites. And it was Adolph and Emma was gold. You know what I mean?

You mean the other two children?

Anti-Semiten.

No, No. I want to be sure I understand. Two of the children were anti-Semites and the other two were good.

Too good. Too good. They didn't know what to do for me.

Did the two that you called...Izzie and Sarah, were they? Did they make a problem for you because...

No, No.

Ch. How did you know?
But they hate you, I knew that you can see... I couldn't walk to say, Izzie.

If I would say, when I come in in the morning, in the office and he just happened to pass by, if I would say "hello", he wouldn't even answer me.

Because you were a Jew, you mean?

Yes, Yes.

Well, who were their friends then?

Oh, from the gymazium...

They were gymazium people?

Oh-h-h-h. Of course.

Well, were their friends Jews?

Oh, from the gymazium...

Who the hell knows, excuse me for my expression. With them...

So you had very little to do with them?

I didn't want to have nothing to do with them altogether but with Adolph...

No. No. No. I want to get, this is interesting. Because I've heard this before. How do you know they were anti-Semiten?

They didn't answer you right. And they wouldn't look at you. When they were talking to you, they were looking there. (Not at the person). See, the mother, my boss's wife, Mr. Schechter's wife. I used to hate her like poison. From the first, she was an anti-Semite like the [mother] and the son.

How do you know?

Because she was a Jew hater.

I want an example, I want an example.

She was a Jew hater.

How do you know?

She knows that she needs me, more than I need her. See, and Schechter used to say, hear this See, for instance like, /I'll give you a little example. I was a snot nose, Excuse me for my expression. He used to tell me, There's not like "you" (tries to explain the difference in Russian language between the familiar and the formal use of "you" as in other languages.) You, you... there is vy and you. He used to tell me, Mr. Schechter used to tell me, Vy. (The formal, polite usage). I was ashamed for my-
self. Look, Mr. Schechter tells me Vy, Pozhalusta, excuse me. I used to remember everything. I used to say, Mr. Schechter used to come over to me, Napishi adres. You know, write out the address. I say, I'll remember. No, No. No, Net, net, net. Chto karandash... Why, there's not enough pencils for you? He used to put the hands in the pockets. Here, buy some more. And there wasn't by the gross. And, so good natured. But, with her, I would be afraid even to tell her... she, whatever she told me, I obeyed it and that's all. The hell with her. Let her get out from the office.

LB Did she come in the office?

MP Oh yes. Because Schechter himself, he had a branch... he had three stores in Kishinev. From paper goods.

LB Kishinev is already in...

MP Bessarabia. But afterwards, of course they lost everything there because... but they had, most of the time he left her with the manager. See left them there, And she used to manage. But I used to avoid to pass by near her.

LB But I still don't see how you knew that she was an anti-Semite. Maybe she just didn't like the working people in there. For example, Izzie and Sarah, were they revolutionaries?

MP Yes. For instance, like...

LB Would you answer that question. Izzie and Sarah.

MP What does that mean? Oh, Izzie and Sarah...

LB Were they revolutionaries?

MP First of all, they wouldn't like to talk even to a Jew. You could see that in their face, their nose not smelling for a Jew.

LB Is that right?

MP Absolutely. And Adolph was so good to me. He said, Milton, No, no. There I used to call myself Shlomo. Esli vy khochet. Not, ty, esli vy khochet. She was playing piano. Shw wanted to give me piano lessons. Sarah, she didn't even look to where I was walking, none of them.

LB But how do you know it was because it you were a Jew?
Absolutely. Because they expressed themselves. They were Jew haters. Not only Jewish anti-semites but they were Jewish anti-semites, haters.

O.K. In other words, you knew that.

Oh. You could... how to explain you? Like Gospodin Schechter, he was so polite. He was talking to you. If you didn't know, he explained it to you. But Mrs. Schechter...

And the other two children...

Ugh! And the other two children, Mrs. Schechter. They didn't know what it means Passover to bring matzohs in the house. He himself, he's a very, very good Jew and before Passover he said, Shlomo, I want to invite you for supper. And I'll bring matzohs for you. I said, Gospodin Schechter, Yes and I was there for supper. And with the biggest respect. You see that, you know the servants, the girls... they should see everything should be for me kosher and everything.

Is that right?

Yes. See. That means... And she wouldn't even... she avoided Gospodin Schechter because he was good to me.

Is that right?

Yes, So Izzie, he brought me an Haggadah. And I was singing there. He lit up. You could see, Pozhalasta. Sing again. You know. So know. Zhidovskaya morūsh

Ohm she did say that!

Sarah. She, plenty of times...

Translate Zhidovskaya morūsh.

Mordah. Adam's apple. This is a mordah. It looks like a Jew's, not like a person... it's hard to explain.

O.K. Now you've convinced me! Before... you see sometimes it's hard to know whether someone is really, really doesn't like the Jews or maybe...

Oh, they were Jew haters.

O.K.

I don't like a lot of people. I don't like some of them not because he's Jewish, I don't like them. But they were Jew haters.
LB They did say those things to you.

MP Not exact talking. But you could feel it, you could feel it, the way they express and the way they're talking to you.

LB You learned pretty good Russian in Odessa then?

MP Not exact but better than here, naturally.

LB But you didn't know Russian... When you first came to Odessa, did you know Russian?

MP A little bit.

LB Only a little bit?

MP That's the whole thing. That's what I started to tell you. When I came to Schechter with that letter, that address... they gave me a piece of paper, the manager, and he said in Russian, naturally, I should write out an address, Vinnitsa.

LB Now you said that was at China's?

MP No. No. That was at Schechter. I went away from China. And I was at Schechter and I got the address and the boys sent me there and they asked me, who sent me and said from that and that you know, from the same wholesale grocer, he knows, and he said that the manager Mr. Gospodin, said I should write out the... he, then he said, You know Russian? I said, No. Why not tell him the truth? Why should I... The best thing... The best swindle is the truth.

LB The best swindle is the truth?

MP Yes. Then, you can never go wrong. Because if you'll swindle, then you'll forget, just now you'll say this, then ten minutes later, you'll say something else.

LB Yes.

MP But if it's the truth, you can never forget. You can never forget if it's a lifetime. And I remember till today, I see you. You speak Russian? I told him right away, No, and he said, You speak Russian? I said, No. I came from a small town but the work what I'll have to do here, the way they explain it to me, the boys, explain it, you know, from Kaufmans, from Berele Kaufman... they used to call him Berele Kaufman, they said... He said, I see that you understand. I said, Yes, I was working for China. Oh, then he's all right. He didn't want to ask any more,
LB So, all right, so you learned, you learned a lot in Odessa, didn’t you?

MP Oh yes. Oh yes. I got my whole life… I liked it so much. Oh, I liked it so much.

LB That was the best. That was the best.

MP For everything.

LB And yet, for everything?

MP For everything. For everything. For everything. For anything you think.

LB Why did you leave?

MP Again the same, it’s hard to explain. It was a different life. In the small towns a different life, like here, went to shul. You didn’t go to shul. You didn’t go. There /Shabbos… Saturday!

LB Why did you leave Odessa?

MP What?

LB Why did you leave Odessa?

MP I had to run away, because I…

LB Well, first of all you escaped from the army. Right?

MP And besides that… only for that… and the food, that’s what I wanted to bring out with that ten pound bread. Listen to that, what happened with that bread. We brought it on the bazaar. We sold it. Then we went again, they boys, the following day, we went there, we used to stay overnight there. We came back. My couple where I used to sell them, I came over there and with a smile, I got another bread? He said, No. You take that bread back. Oy, I said, What happened? When they cut the bread, inside was raw because…

LB It was too big.

MP Too big and on the outside was…

LB Brown.

MP Brown. And in Russian he started to tell me, the dough, he couldn’t catch it on. (It was runny).

LB Oh, that’s terrible. (Laughing) I can understand it, you know. It would be like anything that was too big. A good idea but it didn’t work.
It was a good idea but then I figured, Not only me, But the boys also. Then they'll have with their customers.

Oy, Right.

But it was funny with mine, he says, You take the other bread back. Never mind you brought me another bread. I said, What do you mean?

I don't understand that, What do you mean?

The following day I brought him another bread to sell him.

So he said take back the first bread.

You'd better take back the bread what you sold me the day before yesterday. I say, Why? He say, he cut it in half, is the dough on the floor. That was the ten pound bread. (Laughter)

Oh, So you were too smart. You were too smart for yourself in that time. Right.

But that's very interesting. It was a brilliant idea.

It was, It was a good idea.

Yes, Yes. You know, actually, if you had like metal leaders...

You know if you want to laugh something...but I'm not so acquainted with you...but I must tell you that I'm sorry, a little not nice, but I must tell you that. Rolls, they give us, selling, only half a dozen rolls, Even with a bread, with half a dozen rolls, they wouldn't give you as much I want to have more rolls. They bring it out from the stove and this is July. You know what I did? I said, Boys I got an idea. The pants, we used to tie it up and we used to put it in the pants.

I can believe it.

And we used to go on the boat. We couldn't bend but we used to walk like that, (Shows a stiff gait). When we came to Odessa when one piece, excuse for my expression, my mother had to take off the pants to take out the bread. All over. It's good. It doesn't smell a certain way. But they were glad to have that. Also was my idea.

So, what you're really telling me...It was...


Well, no. Because this is what helped you to survive that period.
Oh yes. Oh yes. That's why I said. That's why my mother, that time... but I don't know... would say that it was a failure or it was a mistake but maybe they had to get killed. But they could be here.

Well, you came over and who else came over?

Me.

I mean, of your family. Did anyone else come to the United States?

I had three brothers here.

Three brothers. Now who stayed there? In Russia? Your mother...

Six more, seven more brothers.

Seven brothers?

And a sister and my mother. All were married there.

Now, did they want to come?

I tell you the truth, I was estranged already from them.

Oh, you were.

You know what I mean...

You didn't keep in touch with them?

First of all, in the beginning, when I came here, my brothers, let them rest in peace all three of them, I came over with money from there. With a lot of money. Maybe ten millions, I was one in ten millions to come with so much money as I came from there.

From Bessarabia you mean?

From Bessarabia. I came with, after all my expense and everything, I came with cash money. Certified check, with eighteen hundred and fifty two dollars.

I went in business for myself. And I made a success. Different. But my head was working a little too far, too far, too far.

Now what about your mother and your other brothers and sister? You said you got estranged from them.

I didn't write to them. All of a sudden, I was here already a year, or maybe, I but don't remember, a year or five years or three years, /I remembered from the doctor. He was the youngest. I received a letter from him in Russian and all of a sudden,
in between, I’ll never forget as long as I live, in between...he writes in Russian actually, Hebrew words, Vayu kinh malekh chodesh. That means, you shouldn’t think king that a new thing has come up.

LB: Vayuker...?

MP: To me he says, you shouldn’t think I’m the same Lazer

LB: Melekh is the king and chodesh is new.

MP: That’s it. Chodesh, ah nayeh, a new one. Zust nit denken az iz ungeshtunen a nayeh kenig vus iz ungekimmen fun a...different world.

LB: Who was he talking about?

MP: Because I never wrote to them. And never wrote to me. And all of a sudden I received a letter from my brother.

LB: Oh, well, what did it mean? Whatever he was writing, writing, writing in the middle, you shouldn’t think I came to bother you, to ask you for something; for a favor. Maybe you want to bring me over. To bring him over or something. Because I was in business and I was too busy with business here. You know, it’s hard to explain the expression. Your father would know better the expression...

LB: Can you write it for me? Can you write it in Yiddish or in Russian? Can you? Because Mr. Koenigsberg will explain it to me.

MP: I don’t know how to spell it in Hebrew. It’s Hebrew words.

MP: It’s Hebrew words written in Russian.

LB: Can you write it in Yiddish? Then do it in Russian. Can you write it in Russian?

MP (Tries)

LB: No. Let me try. How do you say the first word? I’ll try and write it.

Vayukim melech chodesh. (After much trying). And I’ll ask him what that means.

MP: It’s an expression. It’s not what that means.

LB: It’s all right. Don’t worry about it. All right. So, you found this in the letter...

MP: Not I found it. It’s in the letter. He writes it this and this and this...

LB: All right. So you found it.

MP: In the middle, he said, it means, you shouldn’t think I came to bother you. That’s how somebody from a came down and he bothers you. From a different world,
I'm the same Lazer. I'm a doctor now but I'm the same Lazer that I was when you left. See. That means...

LB I understand. Go ahead.

MP And then, ...it's too much for me, when I want to talk about myself or my life, is three weeks wouldn't be enough.

LB Well, I won't be here three weeks. All I'm saying is, what happened? Did you contact your brother then? Did you write him?

MP Yes. Yes. See I sent also to Zmontor contraband. There was here a man. We used to give him fifty dollars extra, he should pay out there. And I used to send with them $500.00.

LB Did they get it?

MP That's the whole thing. See? That was Stalin's time. I sent it and he sent it. He was reliable and that David Mobewitch, that accountant, he received from America five hundred dollars cash. And they put him in prison. And I

I know that. That was my mistake. I blame myself. And why should I blame myself? I meant well.

LB You mean by sending him the money? Did you know...You had no way of knowing...

MP You think who squealed when he received five hundred dollars? From the family.

LB Is that right?

MP Because that time...revolution time...was nothing to kill somebody there.

LB I know. What year was this, that you sent that money?

MP It was in the early...in the late twenties.

LB After you were here already?

MP Oh, sure. Of course.

LB I don't think you need to blame yourself. I mean, how could you. You did what you...

MP Why should I talk to myself now to what's gone? What my mother wrote me the prison

LB So she was able to write to you?

MP My mother? She wrote a better piece than I,
LB No, what I mean is that...

MP Oh, on account of the censor? No, she didn't mention... I don't think, I wouldn't say that, I wouldn't say... They made like a covered up. They made like a... something like that.

LB In other words they were able to let you know that something happened to him.

MP And then, for a year... I couldn't... I was going around... because my conscience was bothering me. He was one of the nicest boys. Really. Not because he was my brother, and because he was David Moisevitch in Odessa, you know at that time. He was, he was an entirely different person.

LB Are you saying, Mr. Prince, that you were so involved in business here that you, maybe, what you should have done was first get your family out? Is that what you said? If... when you had bad feelings.

MP I don't know myself.

LB You don't know. Yes.

MP It's hard to say. Then I find out, my mother's brother... he lives in New Orleans, he also came the same time when I came but he went to New Orleans and I met him here when he came. Naturally he came to me, Tell me uncle, have you heard anything about your sister? That means my mother? He said to me, Milton, I must tell you the truth, I don't know about the brothers. I knew already what it means. But I know your mother and my... sister, she got killed.

LB When?

MP By the Petlurists... by the Hitler time. In the thirties, in the forties.

LB When did this brother come over?

MP He lived in New Orleans.

LB When did he come over? In the twenties?

MP He came as a guest to me, he came to me from New Orleans.

LB But he heard?

MP From his brother. From my uncle. From there, I suppose they wrote him.

LB Oh, you didn't keep in touch with them?

MP No, no. He said that... Not, he didn't mention... because otherwise I could write to
the uncles, to the brothers. I heard... somebody told me; I don't remember from whom... the momma, they got killed. They killed her. Then I say, Nu, how's the brothers? He said, I can't tell you nothing. I know only about the momma. In fact...

LB But you don't know though, do you? Because I know that my mother doesn't hear from her family but she knows they're living.

MP Oh, if you know they're living that's a different story. But when I wouldn't know they were living, I would have a chance... My son in law was in Moscow. He could be in Giessa too already as far as that. If they would live, Anybody should; live from my family. I would get in touch with them.

LB Well, but you see what happened was that at some time when they had to say if they had relatives in the United States or not, and they said No. A lot of them said, Then they could...

MP I know all about it. There is always a way if you want it.

LB Oh, I see. You're right. You see that's what I don't know. But you obviously know that there is a way.

MP But now I don't want to talk about it. I don't want... It's done. It's done. Why should I talk even to myself. My fault. Your fault. Or somebody else's. It's foolish

LB No. No. That's not what I meant. O.K. I'm going to say Thank you and I'm going to stop.