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Harry Cokin, transcript only

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Cohen
Harry Cohen
Interviewer: Lucille Brown

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Q. So, hello?

A. Hello.

Q. Just relax. We'll start, these tapes will go into a collection at Union College and then they will be printed up.

A. For posterity?

Q. Yes, and for the students. Especially for the students. To listen to, so that they will learn history from the people who experienced it. Do you understand?

A. I do. I hope I do. However, commence.

Q. Alright, so we commence with your name.

A. That's easy, Harry ~~Cohen~~ *Cohen*. Hirschel.

Q. And when were you born?

A. In the last century, 1896.

Q. Same as Mattie. Same year.

A. Approximately so, yeah.

Q. And where were you born?

A. You mean the location? It is something like White Russia, and you want the city too? A very small town by the name of Senno. I'm giving you the Russian spelling.

Q. What is the polish spelling?

A. No, I say Russian Spelling.

Q. There was no Polish spelling? I have three maps, I left all of them home.

A. Let me see, this is..

Q. Its not quite White Russia though. Its eastern. I

think ^{that's too} ~~there is~~ two eastern.

A. See Gomel, ^{Chernigov, Mogilev} ~~Sharego, Meleiv~~, that was..

Q. Is that where you were?

A. No, this is a part ^{Senno} center, was a part of that state.

You see Senno a was a part of Mogeliev.

Q. ^{of} the province of Mogeliev?

A. Yes, but Senno I don't see. I see Gomel, I see Chernigov.

Q. It might not be..

A. Poltava is already the southern part. ^{EKaterinoslav...} This is already.

Q. Here is another map. Its a little darker. You're all prepared. I just love it.

Q. Now ^{Kursk, Orel} ~~Kuska, Mielensk~~. Smolensk.

Q. Is that not good?

A. ^{Vilna, Minsk, Bobruisk, Mogilev} ~~Veena~~ means ^{Bubruisk} ~~Moegieve~~ again. And ^{Vitebsk} ~~Weysk~~.

You don't have to stretch ^{the second syllable,} the first one.

Q. ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vchevek~~.. she was born in Vitebsk.

A. but I don't see Senno because..

Q. Its probably too small.

A. This right. Now ^{Bobruisk, Minsk, all these} ~~Bruysk~~ means oldest town?, city cities,

are very well familiar to me.

Q. Which was the nearest to your town?

A. ~~Vechipek~~. Vitebsk.

Q. Yeah and thats White Russia.

A. Yea.

Q. And that means that at one time that was part of the Kingdom of Poland?

A. I'll tell you many centuries ago. But otherwise, otherwise it was a part of Prussia, Russia, ~~XXXX~~ 1795. *Since Russia acquired the whole thing*

Q. 1795 or 1798?

A. Approximately so.

Q. So you were born in 1895 and in a town of Senno and what was the population of the town?

A. Are you referring to the Yiddish population?

A. Well first, tell me the Yiddish population.

A. Maybe, well about a thousand or so.

Q. Thousand people?

A. Yeah, and I'll tell you why I am sort of doubtful and undecided. By some sort of a chance, unexpectedly, I ran into the, encyclopedia britannica, Over there I unexpectedly, I discovered the name of Senno. And they stated ~~for~~ ^{that} the population of Senno consisted of four thousand, which I would violently deny.

Q. What year were they talking about?

A. Its, I'll tell you, it was the ~~third~~ ^{tenth} edition which was published I think in 1890 or something like that.

Q. Cause the 11th was already 1911.

A. Right. So I don't believe it makes much difference does it?

A. Well no, you see there was a book written recently, called The Jews of Poland, by a man named Bernard ~~Winerth~~ ^{Winerth}. You know

the book I'm talking about? I really enjoyed it and he, his estimates of the population of what he called Poland at that time, that was before the partition, varied from what the official estimates had been up until the time he wrote his book. He said there was really no way of knowing what the real population was.

A. Right. You see, relevant to the location, in this case, ^{let's say Sanno!} after the first world war, and after the second, the thing had been twisted up, Russia was we all know, had Poland, ^{Lithuania + Latvia + Estonia} and all of a sudden after the first world war, Poland became independent, ^{Nicholas} that is according to ^{War he said,} ~~the~~ ^{He call it} the second. During the war he said, Well I'm going to give them their independence. Okay. After the second world war, things had ~~kind of~~ sort of turned up ^{up} ~~half~~ side down and Poland, to ^a sizable chunk from White Russia. Latvia became independent. And they took a sizable chunk and particularly, they ripped it off from ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vestisk~~, the state of ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vestisk~~.

Q. Is that right?

A. And today you know, it belongs again to ^{Mogiler} ~~Russia~~ ^{Russia} as a net result, they took a part of ^{Mogiler} ~~Mogoliev~~, of the state of Mogoliev, and added that to ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vestisk~~, that is to the state of ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vestisk~~. So otherwise, ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vestisk~~, probably would be half of what it ~~is~~ was. And well today they still have it the same way they have divided it at one time.

Q. Between who? Russia?

A. Russia owns it now. Russia owns ^{Lithuania} ~~Latvia~~ and Poland

~~and Lithuania~~ ^{Estonia} and ~~Poland~~. And Poland, although Poland is independent, but ~~here~~ ^{Gehrig} it is supposed to be the boss, ^{Gehrig} scared by the way the secretary of the party in Poland, says something like Breshev ^{is} is now...he thinks so you know, but the bosses say you will ~~murder us~~.

Q. So you come from Senno. I want to make sure that's turning and you think there were about a thousand people.

A thousand Jews. How many non Jews?

A. I probably would say, another 1500. However, they did not live in the same confines the Jews lived. It was at one end of the town and some at another end of the town, they had sort of like ~~terror~~ ^{desfer}, you know what I'm talking about?

Q. Villages.

A. Yes, and they had it four parts of the town, ^{situated...} And I could not tell exactly what, approximately a guess, a reasonable guess,.

Q. 1500.

A. Approximately, so yes.

Q. So what you're saying is the Jews all lived in one part of the town..

A. In the center of town.

Q. And the non Jews lived in four different parts.

A. That's right. Because non Jews had been farmers and ~~they~~ ^{rather on} had the wealthiest ~~side~~ ^{side}, so you know, you couldn't do farming in town. So they at the outskirts ~~of~~ and this is it.

Q. Now what nationality were the non Jews? Were they.. Ruthenian or Russian or Poles or what?

A. Primarily Russians. Or lets see, White Russians. Again and again you know I was surprised about the White Russians and they have a language practically their own. Which there is very little from Russia. I always thought that ^{this is} ~~was~~ a very crude Russian. But, the ^{Council} ~~council~~ from so called White Russia, which was at that time in ~~the~~ Riga, Latvia, where we came from, well we lived in Riga, Latvia prior to our coming here. And I needed a passport in order to have ^{granted} ~~rendered~~ a visa and I had no passport. My reason for coming for to ^{Latvia} ~~Latvia~~ was I claimed I come from ^{Riga} ~~Riga~~. We come from ^{Riga} ~~Riga~~. So they let us in, but then we had to prove it. WE couldn't. At least if I could speak German, I know some, but not enough. So as a net result, I got in touch with my brothers and that is a story in itself. I never knew their addresses, although I had ^{five of them residing} in one town and three sisters in the same town. In this country. In the state of Rhode Island. Pautucket Rhode Island, did you ever hear it?

Q. Sure.

A. My town? Pautucket?

Q. Its a big town.

A. Yeah, how did you happen to know it?

Q. Its on the map. Americans from the northeast would know Pautucket, Rhode Island.

A. Now I'll tell you that you probably know it because I come from there.

Q. So you come from Senno and you have a thousand Jewish families and, approximately, and most of the people around you were White Russians, ^{the} and non Jews.

A. Well I'll tell you. The ethnic grouping, we had, ^{lets} say, Catholics, ^{we} had some Poles. Now again you know, it would lead me very far from, I have to deviate from, we had very wealthy farm owners. ^{Pritzim} Pritsin. You know what a ^{Poretz} Polits is? The ^{Poretz} Politt is ^{she} a owner of a big estate.

Q. That's in Russian then? ^{Not in Polish}

A. Yeah, ^{a Poretz} ~~Polits~~ is in Yiddish. But in Polish they call them a ^{Pan} ~~pan~~. Now it so happened and that goes back you know, ^{the} let say 16th, 17th century when they, the ^{Pritzim, the} so called land owners..

Q. ^{Dvoryanim} ~~Dvoryani~~, wasn't it? ^{wealthy}

A. ^{Dvoryanim} ~~Dvoryani~~ is a Russian, not a ^{prince,} ~~prince~~ but nobleman. We had ^{Khrestiani} ~~christianai~~, that means peasant. Then, the city dwellers...

Q. Gorodnckis. I don't remember that.

A. But I'll tell you many years back, the ^{Czarist} government, I think I would run back, lets say to ^{Alexander} ~~Alexandria~~ the 1st. That was the beginning of the last century. He sort of, and a little bit before that, it was the ^a ~~the~~ ^{Czarina} ~~the~~ ^{heavy} ~~the~~ ^{panstva,} ~~the~~ ^{panstva,} Catherine the Great. She gave, ~~had~~ the estates to the Polish, to the ~~pan~~ ^{panstva,} ~~pan~~ ^{the pritzim'} ~~pan~~. And I'll tell you, ^{since then they lived in their} they ~~leaving~~ ^{the} own estate- they had Russian slaves and for one reason or another, the Russian

government tolerated it and not only that, he even probably supported it. That was until Alexander the 2nd. Almost the same time, ^{Lincoln}~~we come~~, nearly the same, ^{it was}~~because~~ in the middle ^{of the} 1860's, ^{about the same time} Alexander the 2nd, freed the so called Russian peasants from slavery. I'll tell you, the nature of the slavery of the Russian was very much different from the slaves here, you know. But they have still ^{been} ~~being~~ something like slaves. But I'll tell you this is ^{totally irrelevant to Jews,} ~~certainly an element to choose.~~

Q. No, not completely. But ^{it's} okay. Now tell me about your family. You said you had five brothers and three sister?

A. Actually I had six. ~~In 1917.~~ ^{And 5 was the seventh.}

Q. So there were ten children?

A. Eleven. Seven brothers, four sister. One I never knew. Never and imagine she lived in the United States and she passed away, prior to my coming, and I never knew her. However, her children, ~~some of them, or one of them,~~ is residing here, and she comes to visit me frequently. This besides the point again.

Q. Now and then a mother and father? Your mother and father. You all lived in one place?

A. In Senno. Now at the beginning of the century, 1904, my first brother, that is escaping from conscription, "maybe we should talk Yiddish?"

Q. No, because these will be English...

A. Escaping conscription, which was very undesirable for Jews.

Q. Why?

A. Because they have been oppressed. A soldier you know ^{are hardly} while conscripted, so they ~~highly~~ tolerated. They called him ^{zhid.} ~~sheed~~. And ~~sheed~~ of course is a ^{very} poor expression for a Jew. By the way, ^{zhid} ~~sheed~~ in itself is not so insulting, because the word ^{zhid} ~~sheed~~ is stating from the Russian word, ^{zhdat, zhdet.} ~~shetz,~~

A Jew is waiting for Messiah. But the Russians in polish, in poland there is ^{no other} another word ^{but zhidi.} for ~~sheed~~, in Russia they have ^{evrei} ~~sheed~~ and then ^{zhid.} ~~sheed~~. Well ^{zhid} ~~sheed~~ was already the offensive name. I'll tell you, a Jew had no rights in Russia. We had lived in certain sections of the land, in several states, about four or five states and a Jew could not go, lets say, to ~~leave~~ live you know..

Q. He could not go out of the ^Pale.

A. He ^{could} ~~couldn't~~, but again a peculiarity. A worker ^{could}.

Q. What kind of worker?

A. any kind

Q. But he had to have permission?

A. no, no. I could come, lets say to any town, of-in Russia, besides Leningrd. MOScow yes, because Moscow wasn't so holy as it became later. It was Leningrad. By the way it was ^{Peterburg} ~~Petrograd~~, then it became Leningrad. No Petrograd. Petrograd became during the first world war because the other.. ^{Peter} ~~Petroburg~~ because Peter the Great built, that is why is called ^{Peterburg} ~~Petrobur~~. So during the war, they changed it, so it will not have a German ^{word} in it. During the revolution, it became Leningrad. Now its up to Lenin. Till this day.

Q. Tell me about a Jewish worker that you feel that he could move of the pale.

A. He could move out of the pale.

Q. How?

A. He didn't have to, ^{if} he's a worker, shoemaker, carpenter or a tailor, however he could not set up his own shop. He had to be employed as a worker.

Q. By somebody else. How would he know if he had a job? Suppose he picked himself up and went to Kiev. Would he ^{know} know that he had a job when he got there?

A. No, but I'll tell you. He could ^{ride} ~~write~~ anywhere he want. He couldn't sleep or stay overnight, lets say in Leningrad. But if he's a worker, and he landed a job, then he could reside in Leningrad, ~~No~~, Leningrad no; Moscow yes. And all the other cities.

Q. But realistically, how much chance was there actually of picking up, moving and finding an other job?

A. I'll tell you. This is a problem in iteself. And it a has to do an awful lot with the Jewish history. ^{Look} ~~book~~. I do not go too far and I'll take my city, ^{Senno} ~~Sennev~~. And this is highly unfortunate, but this is how it was. ^{Senno} ~~Sennev~~ as I told you was a bout a thousand Jews. Approximately. No industry. Nothing except a whiskey brewery, ^{a vodka} ~~and what a~~ brewery. Course you could not expect to be employed there and how many have ^{been} been employed there. ^{So, lets say} ~~Realistic~~, 50. No other industry.

I tell you I said ^{Senno} ~~Senno~~, ^{and now} ~~their~~ not apply the same idea to ^{any other} ~~another~~ town. Same thing. Now, so we have a few shoemakers a few tailors, ^a couple of cabinet makers, carpenters and a couple of smiths. Blacksmith and thats all. Now look what happened. When the population, it grew, inevitably, a young man, what was he to do? Lets take my family now. I tell you - I am judging because I wasn't in that yet. I don't know, fortunately, or unfortunately, I was an adopted child by a wealthy parents. Reasonably wealthy. Why? Thats a different story.

Q. We'll do that later. First lets take this hypothetical case.

A. Now they had nothing to do, no employment, they could not become shoemakers, carpenters-or-we had enough. How many do you need to accomodate the needs of..and then the time of conscription came. You know as well as I do that at one time they wouldn't take Jews in the army.

Q. Now you're talking about the Russian army?

A. Uh huh. But the Jewish activists worked so hard to convince the ^{Czarist} government, "I take them," because it would be still worse if they wouldn't. Otherwise we had our legal right, ^{officially, we serve in the army -} ~~or throw this tyranny..no,~~ Jews did not want to serve in the army. It was very far from pleasant. A Russian peasant, on the other hand, looked forward to because no matter how bad it was, it was very much better than ^{way back} ~~staying~~ in his home - on the ^{farm} ~~farm~~. And besides they ^{felt} ~~filled~~ sort of elated. They

are serving for their country for the Czar and ^{well,} while they get bread and boots, otherwise they ^{were lopstchas} were luxuries, I don't know, its something that a peasant..

Q. Like this? draw the straw and wrapped around the leg, thats a lopcha?

A. This ^{part} spot was a lopcha.

Q. ^{the sole?} The bottom part?

A. No the shoe, because it was woven from the back of a certain..but they have wrapped around, up to here. That was called onuchi. And after they put on that particular galopchi, so they had ^{strings} ~~strongs~~ that they wound around-and thats the way..it was boots. Only wealthy peasants had boots. Now look, in other words, Jews had nothing to do in the town. I say my town. All of them are in the same condition.

Q. Why didn't they move out then?

A. ~~Why?~~ Where?

Q. Thats wht I asked you. You said they could.

A. They could. Provided they would be some sort of worker. It could be a tailor, it could be, you know, ^{but} it was no point in learning anything, because they could not get employment. AS a net result, my family,-I had six brothers as I told you, besides me. The oldest one lived in a different town. I'll talk about five besides me. I was a small kid then. But we have not been brought up together. Thats a different question. What could they do? So they started to peddle. Now the nat-

ure of peddling is not like we are accustomed to peddling here. It was a different thing you know. They had to have horse and wagon and they would load it with *herring*, it could be. Anything ^{edible} and anything that the peasant girls would wear, a *chinkey farchenki* (?)

Q. You mean a kerchief?

A. A kerchief. And, that was *one instance*. But the others - now my brothers ^{for instance they} had been peddlers but I'll tell you the nature of their peddling was in a sense, nearly the same as a rags peddler here. *But, here is a "nut"* Bucks. ~~It is a buck~~ in it. A rags peddler here, gets whatever old clothes, ^{Over there,} the idea, they bought new cloth, ^{that} the peasant girls wove and they bought it as rags, ^{It was} pure linen by the way. And then they sold it to some dealers, that was the difference. ^{an} And other thing they bought...

Q. Wait a minute. So actually they were not peddling rags is that what you're saying?

A. I'll tell you. I compare ^{it with peddling} ~~that with~~ rags because they bought cloth from the peasant girls. Well you dont' want to call it rags, well okay.

Q. I'm asking you?

A. I would compare it you know. Here we ^{bought} ~~get~~ a old clothing, ^{an} Old, ^{are} needed, ^{shirts, you know} There, the peasant girl would weave, by the way over there, they never bought anything ready. They did their own weaving. They had looms and they ^{wove} ~~were~~ *nantecha*, towels and some cloth that they made shirts out of, undershirts.

I'll tell you to tell and describe it would take ^{literally} probably ^{Literally so} years. ~~We could always sew.~~ ^{they even bought} ~~The year involved~~ overcoats, cloth for overcoats. It was cold, armoock serimoga ⁽³⁾ This is what they made overcoats, the peasants. And is it running?

Q. Its fine. Just have to keep an eye on it. Its alright. I'll keep an eye on it.

A. Now they peddle that and the peasant girl who want a hankerchief, who wants something ^{else} ~~other than~~ the peddler had, it could be, a fancy piece of soap. Now remember they had no soap, ^{the porim.} Another thing they bought was hair from pigs. And that went, not for the Russian inhabitants, but it went to Germany and they made, you probably used one of those brushes. That was, and then they would buy skins from ^a cow, ^{from} calves and probably a couple of other ^{things} types. That's one type of peddler. The other type, ^{he went} ~~is in and out with~~ ^{herring} and I'll tell you, a Russian peasant was very very fond of herring, why? Because salt, do you ^{know} that the Russian peasants did not have salt? And if they did, it was going after it to town, which was about 10-15 ^{versts or} miles away and the money. ^{and I'll tell you} And ~~out there~~ the money was ^{never} ~~never~~ ^{negligible.} but even negligible, ^{So} salt became something exceptional - herring. Now they would deal with herring. The Russian peasant girl would probably hve a ^{vozel} doll or two or three or even a piece of cloth and she would trade

trade it, not sell it, trade it with the peddler, it would
be for herring, ^{it} could be for a kerchief, ^{and whatever other...} and yes, combs.

Q. Trinkets?

A. Yeah, so that was the life, then, in Russia. And my
brothers, as well as others, have indulged in this type of
business. Must I tell you that no riches have been in-
volved in it? Now the time of conscription came. They
didn't want to go. I'll tell you not all wanted to go

So I'll tell you, a good many have injured themselves, so an eye... this in itself is history.
to America. For two reasons. One, money; ^{at times he probably had a girlfriend.} ~~the other is~~
history. Its very closely connected with a lot of the Jew-
ish population of Russia. ^{an awful many} ~~And not too many~~ have injured

themselves, in most cases, permanently, because if they made...
^{if they injured} ~~injury~~ of the eye, so it stayed injured. The only thing is

if they have a rupture, it could be corrected, but in those
days, couldn't even think of an operation. You know what it
means an operation, ^{so ruptured, or to have been ruptured.} ~~rupture operation.~~ But Kaufman

had an operation, rupture operation, He stayed in the hospital
for days and he came back and he did his work in the building.
But many years ago, it ^{was} as a business for months, and even

then, it wasn't advisable. Now as a net result, this is the
type of injuries. ^{Eye} ~~Alright?~~ Rupture, sometimes they would
injure one of their toes. All to avoid conscription. That
is, they would be disqualified. But I'll tell you, all did
not intend to and did not care too much and besides, ^{if you} ~~if~~ you
had to hire a fella and it would cost money to ^{commit these} ~~his~~ injuries.

Q. To you?

A. Yeah. Now about the end of last century, close to it, Jews could not see the wisdom in injuring themselves and then what, so they ^{are} ~~other~~ disqualified and then what? They couldn't ^{many} ~~make it~~ because they had nothing to provide themselves with. To go peddling, after all, there is a limit.

Q. How many peddlers can?

A. To become a shoemaker or a tailor, well how many can the city support? But primarily, it was a question of evading conscription. Now the ^{exodus} ~~exit~~ is commenced. You have no idea how many Jews left Russia. Do I have to tell you?

Q. No, you ^{are} ~~were~~ saying that these Jews, about the end of the century, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th left for economic reasons? Now you correct me if and to avoid conscription. Now this would be, just prior to the Russo-Japanese war? Does that enter into it?

A. Yeah, now about the Russian-Japanese war ^{look place} 1904 approximately. Where am I getting all these facts? ⁱⁿ ~~I don't know~~ What the matter with me?

Q. Its in there. ^{all} ~~Oh~~ you need to ^{do is} start talking, and it all comes out. So are you including that number in there? The number that left to escape conscription ⁱⁿ ~~into~~ the Russo-Japanese war? Are you ~~including~~ including them in there?

A. It commenced a bit early. Before this, probably in the middle 80's. It was another sordid thing.

Q. Thats ^{POGROMS,} ~~pogroms~~.

A. Thats was ^{craship} under the ~~guideship~~ of Alexander the 3rd. Poor fellow.

Q. This was before, that was 1881, 1882?

A. Right.

Q. Yeh cause my friend is going to write a book on that.

Q. And this is when the heavy exodus commenced. Now I'll come back to my brothers, to my family. Five Brothers, the oldest one lived in a different town. Very poor fellow and he lived probably ^{about} 35-40 miles away from our town, that is from ^{Senno} ~~Senno~~. He lived in ^{Charre (?)} ~~Charrev~~. He was extremely poor. And by the way, I said we had eleven. Four, my father had with his first wife, ^{That} included three sisters and one brother. With his second wife, we had six brothers and one sister. And they indulged themselves, ^{What} else could they do? Aside from father and mother died, as I remember tell ^{ing} you, you know when I was about six, seven months, she passed away.

Q. No you didn't tell me.

A. I didn't? Yes, this would be directly to do with me.

My mother passed away at the age, she was ^a reasonably young woman, so they tell me. I must ^{have} been about six, seven months old.

~~This~~ Distant relatives, from the same town, negotiated with my mother and father, prior to my birth. They had a son and he passed away. So they want to provide themselves with

^{Raddish}
a ~~cottage~~, how know what that means?

Q. Yes yes.

Q. The only way is to adopt some ^{one} and it was not to^o easy and I'll show you how. The, at least, they couldn't ~~adopt me~~, well, after all how could they? Mother was alive yet, so I'll tell you what they negotiated for, what I would say a generous sum of money. I should be named after ^{them}...

Q. Dead son.

A. Well, this was not too hard to accept. The only thing is, my name, as I remember telling you, was Herschel. Their son's name was ^{Sholem} ~~Scholom~~ Herschel. And I happen to have a bother Scholem. So ^{I'll tell you,} tentatively I could not, ^{bear both names,} so I stayed with ^{one} name, Herschel. When my mother passed away, these same people reasonably wealthy, according to the ^{standards and} ~~conceptions of the time~~.

Q. I know, yeah.

A. They ^{started} ~~sited~~ to negotiate with my father. ^{and} I remember, my father was, ^{aside} ~~aside~~ from being old, sick and he could not provide for his family, consisting of ..

Q. Eleven children.

A. No, because some of them have been away already. But at least seven. So the oldest brother started to go peddling. He ^{dragged} ~~traded~~ in the next one, you know what the life was. Terrible. So they tell me. Now my sister, took care of me. At one time, she would cook milk on a ^{Pripachik} ~~prepachek~~. Do you know what that is?

A. Well that's a hearth. That's the open hearth.

A. Yeah, and she cooked milk, on a tripod. How do I remember all this?

A. I'm glad you do.

A. Well I'm telling you, what I have been told. And in those days, having chickens in the house, was a common thing. Where else? So while the milk was boiling and she held me in her arms, a chicken flew by, turned over the milk and I was scalded, almost 100%. ^{while} ~~Well~~ I was a baby of five, six months, something like that. Needless to say it was a tragedy for all, except me, because I didn't. ^{know}

Q. I'm sure you cried.

A. Cried yes, I presume so. Now the ^{childless} ~~Gales~~ family, that is our ^{relatives} thought that now is the time to negotiate a deal. They did before too with father and they offered to them a liberal sum of money. And remember, this is something that I keep thinking about, whenever I have the disposition of, how come a man having so many children, ^{un} aren't able to provide? And he had a chance to get rid of one, ^{so} they came and offered him, he says No. No. How do you like that? You know it's a little bit unbelievable. Why? I fail to understand. He ~~so~~ was in a great need of money, He was unable to provide. He was ^{lying on} ~~saying~~ ^{on} the oven and he was offered a very reasonable sum of money. I couldn't tell you exactly, ^{when} No, he wouldn't part me. But ~~then~~ I was scalded. And I was nearly dead, ^{with remote} Very few possibilities of re-

covering. Well, he said alright. And she, I called ^{them} ~~her~~ father, mother of course, they took me away to their home and it took months and months ^{and months} to bring me back to health. In those days they did not have things like bottles with nipples. Naturally all babies have been breast fed.

Q. And they had a wet nurse for you?

A. Uh?

Q. Did they have a wet nurse for you?

A. I don't know. One thing is sure, this is what they told me. I would refuse to take anything. So they had, ^{a tsieg} a goat tied at the feet and I would suck the goat, so they told me.

Q. Nurse from a goat.

A. Yeah, consequently, they brought me back to health.

Now that is my story. Now just the very early beginning.

They gave me some sort of ^{well,} ~~wealth~~. They don't want just a common ^{Kaddish} ~~cease~~ you know. They want ^{a tsatski. why not a rabbi?} ~~asset~~. So I got a

reasonably good Jewish education, as relative as it was provided ⁱⁿ ~~with~~ those days and years ^{by a melamed, in a cheder}.

Q. Were they in the same city as your father?

A. Yeah.

Q. So you saw them and your father? When you were growing up?

A. Hardly. This is again something, when it comes to my mind, I keep on thinking from a psychological point of view. My brothers, except one, when he was hungry, he would

come and get a meal, a bite, something like that. They wouldn't come to visit me.

Q. They would?

A. No, no. I didn't know anything about them.

Q. Did you know that you were adopted?

A. Uh, remotely. For instance..

Q. Did you call them mother and father?

A. Yeah.

Q. Did you love them?

A. Of course as much as a child would ^{love} ~~have loved~~ his parents. Now when my father passed away, ^I ~~it~~ must have been about five, so one of my brothers ^{in laws. after all, I'm his son,} I'm his child, I'm his son, I have to come and say ^(?) Kaddish you know. So he called at our house and he says, alright take him. That is to see the dead father. I had a very remote idea of things you know. So he took me by my arm and he led me to the house. It wasn't too far away, but reasonably far. I walked in the house, in those days you know, the dead body would be lying on the floor..so everybody cried, I started to cry. Not knowing why. And then they let me out.

Q. How old were you then?

A. Five years.

Q. Five? A pitsinka.

A

Yeah

A. And they let back home. Without knowing anything and I don't remember too much about it anymore. Apparently he was buried, but now my story is different from my brothers. My brothers unfortunately, by the way, no longer, no one is alive. They are all gone. In the state of Rhode Island, in the very same city. We lived all in the same city, Pautucket Rhode Island. I'm the only survivor. I couldn't tell you for how long. So they gave me education as I told you.

Q. Tell me something. Before you go on. Was your natural father, lets say your real father, we'll call him that, was he a pious man? Was he a religious man?

A. I'll tell you. Pious is one thing. Religious is another. He, as it was, adopted and accepted in those towns, of course, he was religious. *Did he know anything else, I?*
goren da Yidi ah *shy! ah boy gett in klisten. Ah Yid gett in shul.*
That's all. Well its like this. My brothers, as I remember, I tried to tell you, unfortunately, all members of my family * have been almost illiterate. And why did I say almost? They had been illiterate and yet and yet when they came to this country, being illiterate, remember two of them or three wouldn't even sign their name. They started peddling. Now remember, totally illiterate. By the way, my oldest brother, was, had a very sharp head on his shoulders and *unusually.* ~~usually~~ I keep on admiring him. His logic apparently there's nothing to do *with* whether you're able to write

something and it is given, as I would call ~~them~~ ^{him} a ~~hooper~~ ^{chacham}.

Q. A wise one.

A. People would come and seek his advice. But he was ^{only} ~~one~~, ^{she oldest,} the others have not been fools either. And in spite of the fact, they have been all illiterate, they all started in peddling junk and some of them built up fortunes.

Not in the junk business, in the furniture business. How, ich weiss nit, me too. But I didn't build up a fortune as you know. But I ~~built~~ ^{peddled} rags. ~~That~~ ^{that} was, I arrived in ~~the~~ ^{this} country in 1922.

And they have been already prominent people you know.

And, when I arrived, we started, I came with my wife, ^{we had} a son, unfortunately he's gone. ^I Said look, what am I going to do?

And back in my mind, I was a little bit silly and naive.

And somehow I felt, ^{when I'll} well, ~~we~~ ^{we} all come to this country... By the way they sent me money and they brought me over. While we ~~resided~~ ^{resided} in Latvia, because from Russia we couldn't. We resided in Latvia already. Did you hear of ^{Riga} Riga?

Q. Oh yeah. When did you leave ^{Senno} Senno for Riga?

A. No, no. ^{we} Senno left for ^{Vitebsk} Vitebsk, ~~that~~ ^{that} was in 1910. I left ^{Senno} Senno for ^{Vitebsk} Vitebsk.

Q. And when did you leave ^{Vitebsk} Vitebsk for ^{Riga} Riga?

A. No, wait, wait. We had some other towns, ^{we} we lived in ^{Saratov} ~~Sarativ~~, that was on the Volga. Not far from ^a Stalingrad. Do you remember during the war the famous city. [?] And by the way I served in the army in Stalingrad.

Q. In which war?

A. Of course the end of the second. After the revolution. We came in 1922.

Q. The end of the first.

A. The end of the second. Excuse me, what's the matter with me. And..

Q. Wait, let's go back. You're adopted by this family, right? And they send you to school. What school did they send you to?

A. ~~Heider~~ ^{Cheder}

Q. First you go to ^{cheder,} ~~Heider~~, then where?

A. I'll tell you. Not that we had a school. The gentiles ^{of} course built it.. *Gorodskaya uchilitsa.*

Q. What is this? Say it again?

A. ~~Gorodes goyan~~ *Gorodskaya uchilitsa.*

Q. City school. ~~Ochilitsa scha~~ *Uchilitsa, right.*

A. I was not big enough to enter that school and besides they didn't believe in it.

Q. Because you had to go to school on Saturday.

A. Besides that, I went to ^{cheder} ~~Heider~~ but in order to know something of the Russian language, they hired a tutor, do you understand, he taught me Russian. As much as it was possible. I say why? Because at this age of about 13, they passed away, this is when the trouble started. Now I was left a child about 13. So they tell me that due to the

negligence of my uncle, who was my so called executor, after father and mothers passing, they did not adopt me legally. If they would, my name would be ^{Rasnik} ~~Rasneck~~ instead of Coken. As a net result, again you know I keep on thinking, that is from a psychological point of view, not that I regret, and all that, why do people think in terms as they have, which is to my way of thinking today, totally illogical. Now they brought me up as I told you and at the age of 13, she passed on first. ^{of} Course I called her mom, mother. No will, but she had some of the estate, big house. ^{One. Sheek} ~~She a~~ had several. She bequeathed it, mind you orally, or verbally to her brother. Very shortly before her passing. Lets say hours and it was recongized in court. He got it. Okay. About six, seven or eight months went by, I cannot be very exact, and he, ^{mein fate} ~~my fate~~, or the one I called, remarried, he must have been about in his mid 60's, sick or sickly. And he married a girl. ^{Even} when I say girl I mean a maidle, instead of a ^{reitel} ~~wible~~. You know the difference between the two?

Q. Well she must have been quite young.

A. I didn't say ^{quite} young. She was probably in her early 30's. He, according to our standards, in this country ^{id for} we call a spinster. And she came from ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vetifsh~~, the girl in question. And a deal was made that, she upon his passing, is to receive 500 ^{rubles} ~~rubeis~~. From the estate. Well okay

she agreed to it, fine, but my question was, and whats about the rest of it? Did he leave a will? No. And look how things ended up. He lived with his new, by the way, she was a reasonably fine girl, she helped, you know, she recognized me as a member of the family. Well, he too ~~have~~ ^{maybe} ~~made~~ me about seven months after ^{their} so called wedding, he died. I was left a total orphan. But remember that isn't all. This isn't why it is so intricate. Prior to his passing, neighbors knew that he has no will. And no heirs, mind you. No one. So they would stop me, because they knew his condition that he's about to. I think he contracted pneumonia maybe, I don't remember now. They knew, you know how in a small town, not all they did, ^{whats} ~~but~~ being cooked..so they would stop me as a small boy, 12, 12 1/2 and they wanted to do me a favor. *Zul der taten er zul dir ^{appes} ~~sum sum~~ ^{upzugen}.*

Do you know what I mean, in this ^(s) little bit intricate you know? In Yiddish you know, you say ^{upzugen} ~~upzugen~~, it means bequeath. ^{upzugen} ~~upzugen~~. Because you know ^{he} ~~she~~ is pa-ssing. And you'll be left total. Now the idea is, suppose ^{he would} ~~who~~ it was, he'll have to make it legal. But that isn't ^{all} ~~talk~~. Again ^{you} know I'm touching on a psychological point. While he was about to finish his life, his wife, noticed that he's hmn, so she says to me, look ^{zits leben dem taten. sit near} ~~let nahlin imen toden.~~ ^{Seat} with your father, I will run over and see if I can get a doctor or the ^{felsher} ~~feshiv~~.

- Q. Whats a ^{felsher} ~~feshiv~~? Like a barber? A bleeder.
- A. A ^{felsher} ~~fisher~~ is something like a highly trained nurse.

But as he was closer to a doctor, than a nurse would.

A ^{Falscher} ~~falsch~~ had no right to prescribe to make prescriptions.

But he could diagnose, doesn't cost anything. To write prescriptions, that was already the job of a doctor. And if ^{he} ~~he~~ would write a prescription, and even our real doctor wrote a prescription, he have to fill it by ^a ~~the~~ legal pharmacist and only one we had in ^{Senno} ~~Senno~~, one. ^{IT} ~~There~~ was something like nearly ^a government job, but appointed by ~~a~~ Jew having those pharmacies, ^T They could not fill anything.

Anyway this is besides the point.

Q. So you told to sit near your father and she will be [?] ~~runing~~..

A. Excuse me for deviating you know, because I like to catch on..so after sitting for a while near him, and I see the fellow, ^{after all, I was a kid,} but I could notice that he's closing his eyes, nearly stopped breathing [~] something, so I thought look, there's no use to kid around you know. I'll have to ask him. This is the point that I'm trying to make you knw? Consequently, I ^{assumed} ~~got~~ enough guts and courage and I said to him, ^{Zug mir etwas up.} ~~I~~ ~~ate,~~ ~~sum~~ ~~republic~~ ~~sub?~~ That was the way of asking him to bequeath something. When he hears, so look what he says. ^{Arust (Out)} ~~Arust~~ He rose a little bit. ^{Arust. (Out)} ~~Arust~~. That is, ~~to~~ get out. Maybe two minutes later he was dead. To this day I cannot figure out why he did what he did, [?] because assuming he would say alright my son, ^{ich will dir upzugen, nem.} ~~da~~ ~~republic~~ ~~man~~. So what would it

mean[?] nothing. Could I come in ^{to} court and say, he bequeath it to me?

Q. No I don't think you understand. You see, by asking him, you were telling him that he was dying. And that is what he didn't want to hear.

A. Well..

Q. And you know something, people in..people, young people, in the best of health, do not wish to be reminded that they should make a will.

A. you are right. However he..

Q. But this must have hurt you terribly.

A. Apparently he did, but didn't he think about ~~whether~~ ^{what the result will be} ~~of~~ his estate..

A → Q. People still don't think about it. Don't they die now without wills? All the time. ^{A.} So look what happened. ~~Needless to say~~ ^{of course}, get out, ~~and~~. And he passed

away. Now as you well know, of course its customary to have a ^{minyan} ~~menorah~~. A ^{mourning-} ~~mourning~~ during the mourning period. So,

neighbors would be called in you know. Now he had a habit, he would buy religious books and the first page would be a

clean one. And he had a habit to sign on every page, on every clean page, in Yiddish, ^{Benjamin Brevianki} ~~he-nomen, bre-brauch-vreshnik~~ ^{Razhnik}. That

is ^{Benjamin} ~~Mejon~~ was hi first name, ^{Brevianki} ~~Brebrauch~~ was his fathers name,

Resnik was his family name. In Yiddish ~~he~~ of course. On

all, in all those books, apparently he must have had in mind,

to have recognized ownership, thats mine. ~~she~~ *Can't* touch it. And when the people came to *daven*, they had been aware of it. You know what they did? They ripped out those pages and they filled in promissory notes. And it was recognized ~~by~~ ^{by} the court.

Q. You mean as if he owed them money? *And signed it on that...*

A. Yes and another thing, no one challenged because there was no one to challenge.

Q. Thats ~~not~~ *theft*.

A. Course it is. but the idea, the condition was such, no one could challenge it.

Q. *there was nobody there who was of a majority.*
PART II

Q. Now in other words, what happened now, I'll just summarize to make sure we didn't miss anything. He had, your adopted father, had his name written on the first clean page of every book in the house. And signed. And those who came to pray for him at his death, wrote in promissory notes above it ~~at~~ and those were honored by the court.

A. Yeah they have written it in Yiddish by the way. And the court recognized it and although it was totally dishonest there was no one to challenge it.

Q. So did that leave you without a penny?

A. The only one who got it was his second wife. She got 500 ^{rubles,} ~~rubles~~. And I'll tell you in those days, I'm going back to 1907, that is the year he passed away. Prior to that I was not a very good student. You know how a child is. So in order to be *secure* ~~that~~ I'll be holding on to something re-

religious, I was taught to make philatories.

Q. *To lay + Allen* yeah.

A. Now look..

Q. Was your adopted father a religious man?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. Did he go to schul?

A. Oh God yeah. Of course.

Q. Did they keep a kosher home?

A. No, no, no. *It was unthinkable, I... (Must mean "yes")*

Q. Was he a ~~minogete~~ *Mitnagid*?

A. No.

Q. He was a ~~haussef~~ *Hasid*?

A. Yeah.

Q. In white Russia?

A. So what?

Q. I didn't know there any ~~cosignas~~ *Hasidim* there? I thought they were given a very hard time.

A. We had ~~minogesy~~ *Mitnagdim* and ~~hausen~~ *Hasidim*, but then very few, very few knew the difference. We had one ~~min overesch sonu~~ *Mitnagdisher shal* done.

And the difference was that ~~it is not that~~ *a little* a style of prayer ~~the Mitnagdim, their~~ was ~~illegal~~ bit different. Just a little bit. ~~Hausesf~~, we

said in ~~tousche~~ *(?)*, ~~gessa lit a hoe~~. That is the beginning of a certin prayer when you say ~~tessa~~ *Kesev (?) that is the prayer -*. But ~~thun~~ *by them, it* ~~it took~~, was ~~not renesh haub negeeshe~~ *(?)*. By us it was ~~Gesso~~ *Kesuv*, Shall I

~~transalte?~~

Q. Yes, please.

Q. When you say ^{Kesser} the Jews, & say gueschev, ^{a Kdusha.} Do you know what ^{Kdusha} ~~deuschay~~ is? Anyhow, this is a prayer that you say ^{in Shul} ~~deuschay~~, when they state, when they stand at ~~summary.~~ ^(?)

You don't know that either?

Q. no.

A. Anyhow, so this is what they say, ^{Kesser means a crown. They address God.} the crown they ^{The Mitnagdim, No.} ~~praise God~~ and so they say, you gave us a crown. They didn't want it. They denied it and they said, we admire you, we ^{adore} you and we think you are very holy. Now don't ask me the difference between these two. Its a question of approach. I'm not going to elaborate on it. Because..

Q. In other words, by the time that you were growing up, the differences between the ^{Mitnagdim and the Hasidim were} ~~midnasim~~ ~~were~~ ~~hausedim~~ pretty well resolved, is that what you're saying?

A. Not at all. Except in our town, there was no difference. ^{No feuds.} You know..no, as well as in a good many others.

Q. Cause I have heard stories from people, oh lets say one, the woman came from ^{Mitnagid} ~~megnothe~~ family and lets say the boy who came to court her was a ^{Hasid} ~~hausel~~ and he would have to become a ^{Mitnagid} ~~megnothe~~ in order to marry her. And in White Russia.

A. Listen the way you are saying it, is as though one of them would have to convert to Judiasm.

Q. This is the way they felt.

A. I'm not going to elucidate. ^{Hasidism Mitnagdim} On ~~Hauser~~ and ~~Megnothe~~ because it was, this is a thing in itself. ^{And it} ~~That is~~ would

take a long while to familiarize you with it. And I can-
~~assure you...~~ ¹⁰⁰ ~~not...~~ You can stop my ¹⁰⁰ Jews, on the street here and ask

them what is the difference between ^{Hasid} ~~Hasid~~ and ^{Mitnagid,} ~~Mitnagid~~

and they wouldn't know. I don't blame them. I don't

blame them. Only those who are familiar with it..but ^{the so-called learned men,}

listen ^{we} ~~they~~ are not going to elucidate on that. AS a

net result, after his passing, and after the estate was

literally robbed away, I was left floating in the air. I

touched on ^{phylacteries, you know, they're called phylacteries} after, they put in, inside, prayers. Otherwise

they are called ^{batim} ~~batim~~. ^{Bays} ~~Bays~~ means a little house, a

little square, something like that. But when they put in

those so called ^a prayers, inside and..they put on the... ^(?)

then we call it ^{fillin} ~~fillin~~ or ^{phylacteries} ~~schlaks~~. Where the word ^{phylacteries} ~~schlaks~~

~~comes~~ comes, I don't know. Anyway this is besides the point.

Now what am I to do? Thereafter? I couldn't do anything.

Q. So what did you do?

A. Strange as it is, you know, ^{although as} ~~or worse~~, many brothers

as I had, at that time, in the very same town, they didn't

even show up to find out. Whats wrong, what I'm to do, ^{where will you live?}

^{To this day,} No. I keep on thinking of it.

Q. Well in all that time, had you ever been brought to see them?

A. ^{I was} ~~I was~~ not big enough you know, they have already adults. Whereas I was a child yet. They should know.

Q. It was their place to come to you. *That's what you are saying.*

A. Um..Well anyhow they tried to see that I should be provided and I tell you, I still did not complete my studies. I did something, so they ~~made~~ ^{essen feg.} something like ~~est and easy~~. Every hear of it?

Q. Yes.

A. And I had seven different houses.

Q. Who made this?

A. A very good neighbor, a tenant of the house I lived in, ^A very nice lady and I was provided with board..

Q. And where did you live? Each night you slept in a different house?

A. No, ^{soo} ~~only~~ ^{will they} tried to make some sort of a..at first I slept in the same house, ^{they} had already different people who came in. I still hang on there until I was kicked out. And from ^{there} ~~that~~, at the age of about 15, I left ^{Senno} ~~Senno~~ and I cam to ^{Vitebsk.} ~~Vitashok~~.

Q. On your own?

A. Naturally. ^{and if} Course you know by horse and wagon, because we had no connections by train.

Q. So what did you do in ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vitashok~~?

A. In ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vitashok~~ I worked in a shoe factory. And strange as it is..

Q. I'm trying to figure out what year we're in. We're in about 1910.

1910

A. You're right. And that was about the time a piece of mine, she's no longer among the living, who lived and worked in Vitebsk, in ^{her} house, ^{her sister ran} insisted to rent a tailoring shop. So the whole family worked in it you know, and my niece, at that time, a good deal older than I was. So while I came to ^{Vitebsk} ~~Vitashok~~, well, ^{I'll go and I'll} visit her. I did. On the second, third day I don't remember exactly, she was there. ^{It's not too easy to explain, that I fell in love with her,} without saying one word to her.

Q. And you were what, only 15?

A. Yeah in my sixteenth year. ^(Wife interrupts) And I tell you, this is actually beside the point. She never liked me. No girl, ^{look here} you know? I ^{would be} ~~was~~ under the impression ^{that you are} ~~she got~~ married. Are you?

Q. Am I married? I was, I am divorced.

A. What I'm trying to find out, is this. Prior to you falling in love with your husband, ^{He} fell in love with you. Can you explain why?

Q. No. I mean I probably could, but..

A. I'll tell you what you would say. First you fell in love, as you well know. Do I have to tell you that? And then you find the qualities. In most cases, qualities. Although, a more simple thing, ^{Do you have a preference} ~~really~~ pre-alance for a color. Do you like a certain color? ^{Blue, white, red, pink?}

Q. Sometimes.

A. You do? Can you explain why? Mind you, such a minor thing and yet we don't know, ~~We~~ can't explain. Now why do I say what I do? I fell in love with her, ~~She~~ was not even aware of it. But when I tried to convey my..no she didn't want me. Why? There is no way to explain. And I followed her. ^{From Vitebsk Saratov} ~~We~~ went to ~~Serrator~~ which is a city on the Volga.

Q. Why did you go there?

A. Oh we lived there for about six, seven years.

Q. Why?

A. Because. ^{Vitebsk...} that was during the first world war. Conditions had been terrible. Cound't get bread, couldn't get anything. ^{Whereas in} ~~Serrator~~ ^{Saratov} which is central Russia, they still had enough bread, they still had enough sugar, they still..so we went there.

Q. How did you go? Were you not constricted?

A. No I had a false passport, devised.

Q. Where, in ^{Vitebsk?} ~~Visheek?~~

A. Yes and I was a good deal younger, that is according to the ~~stat~~ment of my passport.

Q. How did you get your passport?

A. Well we had people who did it. For money of course.

Q. So what was on your passport?

A. my passport said I was about three years younger.

Q. I see.

Q. Okay. .

Q. So you and this, Mrs. Coken, except you weren't married yet. And who else? *Who else went? Just the two of you.*

A. NO I went first. Her brother lived there, Her sister live there. Later on ^{in Saratov,} which is adjacent, almost adjacent to Stalingrad. Which is called Volgograd now. That is, ^{They don't want} ~~not~~ Stalin any more. Volgo means the river and grad means city. Now

I tell you, she did not want me. Not that I didn't understand - but I didn't like it. And she had her own thoughts. Why, don't ask me. Mybe she herself, would be unable to explain. And I followed in pursuit ^{not followed. Pursued.} And was vigorously, too. She resented it all the way through, until quite a while. I was a ~~border~~ ^{boarder} in their house.

Q. What did you do in ^{Saratov} ~~Saratov~~?

A. I worked in a shoe factory.

Q. And you were able to find employment there? What kind of town was it? Was it a farming town or industrial town?

A. Industrial. ^{town} Yes.

Q. And this is in the middle of the war now right?

A. In the middle of the war, yeah.

Q. What year?

A. In middle of 1915. First world war. Which started in Russia, August 14, 1914.

Q. August 4, no in Russia the 14th. They invaded..

A. ^{August 1} It could be ~~1st~~, ...then of course the others joined.

Like England, France, and all that. So..

Q. It was before August 14.

A. Russia the 1st of August.

Q. ^{I think it was...}
Because the Germans, the Austrians invaded.

A. The Austrians invaded..no ^{they did} not invade, because Russia was reasonably successful at the very beginning and then ^ethy started to lose, of course. *And all that.*

Q. Now tell me, lets get away for a minute from your personal life. Although its very interesting, but I want also to get some other information. You're in ^{Saratov} Serrratov, ^{Saratov} Serrrat. Where you're working in a shoe factory.. I'm sorry, Serrrat. Where is your wife working? The later Mrs. Coken. Does she work?

A. She could not get employment while she resided in ^{Saratov} Serrrat, no.

Q. Cause she was living with her brother and sister?

A. Mother and father, brother and sister.

Q. Were any of them working?

A. Yeah.

Q. Where?

A. In Serrrat *Saratov.*

Q. What were they doing?

A. Oh, the sister was a seamstress, but she chose to, she obtained a machine, -I couldn't tell you, and ^{she} made sex. SOCKS.

Q. AT home?

A. Yeah its a small machine..

Q. Now what did the father do?

A. Her father? Never did anything. He sick man, and mother took ^{was a} care of him. She cooked, baked and kept the house clean.

Q. What about her brother? *What did he do?*

A. He was about my age and he too, worked in a shoe factory, -I took him in. And I tried to learn him, because I was already more or less, ^{I was} the boss. That is the job of the boss.

Q. But who was supporting their family?

A. Its the brother and ^{the} sister and another brother who was married a long while ago and lived in ^{Vitebsk} Vitashek but he tried to evade to be constricted in the army, so he came to ^{live in} Serrat. And he first got himself a passport and ^{Saratov} the passport read that he was disqualified ^{due to} ~~because of a~~ health condition. So they of course, and I was a ~~boarder~~ ^{boarder} and I paid for my board.

Q. So all these people moved from ^{Vitebsk} Vitashek to ^{Saratov} Serrat?

A. Yes.

Q. On a chance? *Right*

A. Yes, but I made out very good In ^{Saratov} Serrat. I had a very good..

Q. How you stayed there, how long? ^{Did you stay there} Through the revolution?

A. In ^{Saratov} Serrat, yeah and after. Because we left ^{Saratov} Serrat in 1920.

Q. ^{all right, now} Tell me what happened to you there. When the Czar ⁵ government fell, and ² Krenski came into power, you were paying attention, right?

A. Attention to what?

Q. To politics.

A. Remotely.

Q

Q. Oh you didn't pay much attention?

A. I was a young fellow you know. I was 17, 18 and how could I, well I know and I was aware. Incidentally, *you know* even then I was the secretary of ~~the~~ ^a union, illegal union.

Q. You mean worker's union?

A. Yeah

Q. Was this a Bundist? or what?

A. No, no a Bundist is ^a party. The Bund. The Bund was a socialist..

Q. But its a workers party.

A. Yes.

Q. You're talking about a trade union?

A. ^{Will} No, the Bund was a different thing entirely. It was just like you say, democrat, a republican. They..

Q. They didn't have anything..didn't they try to organize the workers?

A. Yeah, yeah.

Q. But this was an independent union?

A. Yeah, but illegal. So I was an illegal secretary and I had a false passport. I served ^{for a short while} in the army.

Q. In which army, the Russian army?

A. Well ⁱⁿ the revolutionary army. After the revolution I'd say..

Q. There was a battle at ^{Saratov} ~~Serrat~~ or something, wasn't there?

A. That was a good deal ^{later} ~~later~~. That was a good deal later you know, but not during the revolution.

- Q. What happened at ~~Serrator~~ ^{Saratov}?
- A. As far as I know, nothing. We just took over.
- Q. Why does that ^{name} stick in my head?
- A. You are probably, maybe you are probably mixing it up ^{with} ~~in~~ Stalingrad during the second world war. You know the fight they had in Stalingrad.
- Q. No, no. I'm thinking of something during the Russian Civil War, ~~Serrator~~ ^{Saratov}.
- A. No ~~Serrator~~ ^{Saratov} was not affected.
- Q. No?
- A. Very mildly.
- Q. What republic is it in? Is it in the Russian Republic?
- A. Yeah, yeah. Well its deep in Russia on the Volga.
- Q. So the revolution takes place, the Bolsheviks take over and how do you get into the revolutionary army?
- A. I'll tell you. It was under ²Krenskij. And I'll tell you there was a feeling you know, the Czar is ^{going} ~~gone~~ and ~~its~~ it ^{will be a mitzvoh.} ^{deed} really a mystery. A good ~~feel~~ to enter the army, because the war was still in progress. However, we thought that it will not last too long. It lasted long. So, I submitted myself, and her brother too, which was about my ^{my} ~~may~~ age. But he was disqualified because he had a defect. I think he had a rupture, if I'm not mistaken. I didn't choose to make myself ^{a so-called} ~~a sucker~~ in Russian call it a ^{brak} ~~brack~~. A ^{brak} ~~brack~~ means something that would disqualify you.

this is what a brak is.

A deficiency, ^a discrepancy. And I did not want to submit myself to ~~nothing~~ ^{injure an eye (?)}..or anything else, but a false passport was the way out. But after the revolution broke out, eh, lets go. So we both went.

Q. Who's army were you in then?

A. Kerenskiy.

you were in Kerenskiy's army?

Q. So where did you go to fight? To Moscow?

A. I didn't go to fight anyplace.

Q. Where did you stay, in ~~Saratov~~ ^{Saratov?}

A. In ~~Serristn~~ ^{Tsaritsyn}, then, which is Volgograd, ^{now} Stalingrad before. This is where I have been sent to. And I stayed there and I'll tell you it was very easy. We didn't have to do anything. Just stay there, thats all. I must have stayed there a couple of months and I got sick of it. So I would say that I defected. If you want to call it so. I couldn't find another name for it. And I set ^{up a} ~~pas~~ passport. I was familiar with a group of anarchists, then.

Q. What kind of anarchists, Russian or Jew?

A. Jew. They probably had Russians too, ^{among them.} But primarily

Jews and they tried to help out and I had been with them on very good terms. Not that I was an ^{anarchist} ~~anarchist~~, it was a ridiculous idea. ^{You are familiar with it, are you?} But help out, I said. They had set up printing shops with ^{stamps, with...} ~~stamps~~, with... ^{Sure!} oh you are from ~~Serrator~~ ^{Saratov}, okay so we give you a stamp from another city, ^{from} far away and if you are from far away he says, get a stamp from ~~Serrate~~ ^{Saratov} and they accepted it.

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Then we got married. ^{Not that} She was ^{too happy about it. Eggs,} between yeah and no, You know, it was a very peculiar condition for her. She didn't work, ^{she} she couldn't find employment.

Q. How old was she?

A. She must have been, well she will violently deny it, ^{she} she is a couple of years older than I am. Well in this case, she doesn't hear so..

Q. Its okay, its not fair.

A. Now ^{she} did not work, she couldn't find employment, ^{lived while we (?) all together} she, but one sister got away and another sister, also went away. ^(?) She stayed together with us, and the brother..and she

was between all, that is not hurting anything..all she did is stay in line, as ^{they do} even today, ^{For everything,} you have to wait in line.

To buy bread, to buy whatever was available. And at one

point, her father, he was a very intelligent man. And he

couldn't see this condition ^{nit ahin, nit ahin} for her. ^a was not ~~that~~ desir-

able person for..but he said, ^{probably, maybe I} things ^{as} this is my judgement,

^{I'm trying to tell you what he thought} but do ha-pen to her. ^{an} Suppose I get attached to other girls? ^{IT.}

^{what will} is possible. And what is she going to do? SHE wouldn't

realize it. And I don't blame her. Look, she knows one thing, Ich will

^{nit.} Q. I don't want to..

A. Which is, I don't understand it you know As I told you before, you don't know why you like a certain color, you don't know why you fell in love. And in her case, its the other way around. But her father understood that well.

A. Yeah, when they took over, alright, several units stationed in ~~Serrator~~ ^{Saratov}, so it was very dangerous for me to hang around. So I reported myself and I said, look, I have served in the army, ^{in Kerensky's} ~~Krenski's~~ ^{Kerensky's - Bah!} Oh ~~Krenski's~~ And I ~~a~~ said I would like to enter, because due to my being very devoted revolution ^{of the} ~~of the~~ ^{hey} ~~SPC~~, said, sure, sure. I was naturally accepted and I was sent away in a place where they had a so called ^{an} ~~army~~ ^{an army like that} that they kept [^] About 30,000 stationed there.

Q. Where was this?

A. A city by the name of ^{Kuznetsk.} ~~Kusnitsk.~~

Q. ^{Kuznetsk.} Where was that?

A. Its near ~~Tambov.~~ ^{Tambov.}

Q. What part of the Soviet Union is that? South, Sounds like Central Asia.

A. Yeah not far from ^{Saratov} ~~Serrator~~.

Q. Not far from ^{Saratov} ~~Serrator~~?

A. Yeah.

Q. ~~Tambov?~~ ^{Tambov?}

A. ^{Tambov} ~~tambov~~, it was in ^{Kuznetsk} ~~Kusnitsk~~, it was near ^{where now} ~~where now~~ ^{you know they manufac-}

Q. ^{sure samovars?} No, I'll have to look at the map.

Q. So they sent me over there. Okay?

Q. For what? Training or for?

A. Apparently for training, but ^{when} ~~then~~ the time came, and I had to receive my pay, that was maybe ^{being there} ~~a~~ week or so, I had to sign for it. Well I put my signature down, so the officer said, say listen, I want to see you in my office.

Q. What name did you sign?

A. My name, Cohen. But he wanted to make me an officer. That ^{is} judging by my signature, apparently..and I got a good job.

Q. In the Red army?

A. * Yeah I held a job up to a ^{shot} while as an officer ^{then} and all because I signed my name. That was legible, ^{if} course, and..

Q. I understand. Until when?

A. Until, and I was married already. Until I disliked the whole thing. 1919.

Q. Now what was your job in the army? Aside from being an officer, what was your function?

A. I worked in the department, that they ^{Suzastrennaia} come under.

It means everything there, food, they provide everything; ^{food} clothing, repairing; its like a ^{provaide} provraide

A. ^{It's like a} supply and I was almost in charge of it. I didn't do a thing. All day long, all I would do is lie down and read. Consequently... and it was about 200 miles away from Saratov.

Q. ~~At Brestel'tov, right~~ ^{Brest Litovsk} She was, of course, alone. And I... ^{But things were going on all over the Soviet Union. You mean to say you were lying on a couch and reading all this time?}

A. But we had the civil war.

Q. I was talking about the general peace. The general peace was concluded in 1917, right?

A. About so, end of 1917, beginning of 1918 I would say, ^{probably}.

Q. And then in 1918 the revolutionary forces began taking over, by the end of 1918, started the civil war

am I right? Which lasted until 1921.

A. Civil war started after Krensky was dislodged.

Q. That is already 1917, but it didn't really..

A. '17 of course.

Q. So when. .

A. That's the time when the civil war started, I don't even remember the names.

Q. I've heard them ^{because I've heard them} from different people. Now here you are, so why, what was it that you decided you didn't like?

A. I'll tell you why, I was about a couple of hundred miles away, she was residing of course ^{in Saratov with her folks} and we had already a son. So I was transferred at my request ^{to} at a unit adjacent, very close by ^{to Saratov} Saratov. I was able to come almost every night home, and even at that, I wasn't, I had several units I served in. One in artillery, ^{unit} all Communists you know. In ^{Saratov} Saratov, ^{proper}.

Q. What did you do in these units?

A. Again you know, supervising, yes. Then again they had been transferred to the front. Those (Braunulov and) ..it means tanks. You know artillery. I didn't want to go to the front you know. And, the commander says to me, look Harry, you don't have to worry, you won't go to the front. You'll carry on in the ^{rear} rear of it, you'll do the same thing you ^{are} are doing ^{nowhere}.

Q. May I ask you something? Many Jews felt that when ^eKrenskij came in, that it was the salvation of the Jews, let me finish. That was the first feeling. A lot of Jews also felt, that regardless of ^eKrenskij, when the Bolsheviks came in, it promised a new day for the Jews, that they would achieve first class citizenship, they would achieve their rights and so on, ^{Did} do you share any of these feelings?

A. Of course, and I'll tell you why. Because the fear of not having a passport, and I didn't have it from my youth on. Because between the time of trying to take me and adopting me, so my father did not register me. So I never had a passport. And my status was, as a ^{Brodjaga (?)} Brojaga. You know what Brojaga is? Tramp. In English tramp does not entail too much.

Q. It means a landless person, essentially.

A. No, a Brojaga, ...mans a bum. Bum, tramp, something like that. Thats what Brojaga means. And when I came to ^{Vitebsk} Vitebsk, I was a Brojaga. But I was a small kid, the pass port wasn't so essential but later on it was. Now, in ^{Saratov} Saratov...

Q. In ^{Saratov} Saratov, you already had a false passport.

A. Yeah, but then I served in the army, I didn't have to have a passport. So when I heard they are leaving fro the front. I picked myself up and I went home.

Q. Where was home, ^{Saratov} Serrotov?

A. Naturally. I used to go home every night. I was not obliged to stay. When I, when they noticed that I'm not present, the commander, he sent out a couple of soldiers to pick me up. And they did. So I was picked up by the ^{cheka} ~~charka~~. ^{cheka} ~~charka~~ meant at that time. ^(gives Russian name) extraordinary committee. Today's called KGB.

Q. KGB.

A....this was, ^(gives Russian name) well besides the point. So, I was arrested. And what happened, somehow the place where the people, the ^{cheka} ~~charka~~, their office happened to be just on the floor where my colonel was upstairs. That is, well I was sitting there and waiting, behind bars naturally. The secretary went by. ^{Shit vy delat zdes?} What are you doing here? I said I was arrested. ^{Don't worry.} Arrested? It took maybe no more than five minutes or ten, he located the colonel and he said, you know Mr. Cohen is arrested? Yeah? He went down and he saw me and he said this is my man. I want him right away. So he says, alright alright, take him. In the army at that time, ~~he~~ was the boss. So again I was free.

Q. Actually it was the army that had put the ^{cheka} ~~charka~~ on to you?

A. Huh?

Q. It was the army that had sent somebody after you. Wasn't it?

A. Naturally but its one unit and that was another unit. But look what happened. Again and again and again. One is connected to the other. I contracted fever, how do they call it? Malaria.... and its a very peculiar illness. *where from? Don't ask. Ich veis nit.*

~~thing~~. Look, today 11:00 I got fever and I'm dead sick I had to lie down ~~because~~ *of course* I was home. The following day in about two hours or so, okay, recovery. The following day, okay, the morning after, 11:00 again and that carried on that way, day ~~and~~ *after* day after day. needless to say I came to my colonel and I said, look I'm down and out. He says you know, stay home. that is, don't come in the office. Yeah but look here, I want to get killed? There is one thing that could cure this illness. The doctor, I was very close with the doctor too, quinine. But they couldn't get it. Nobody are getting quinine. I, at one time, bought some on the black market, a few pills so you know what the doctor told me? My doctor from the colonels..he said there is either quinine, *in substantial doses* or ~~change~~ *he* climate. I said what do you mean, change of climate? He says, look Mr. Cohen I'm only telling you what the condition is, I'm not tell you what to do. This is the only thing that could cure you. Either quinine and quinine you couldn't get, or change ~~the~~ *the* climate. Oh, then something came up, at the very moment, one thing sort of interlaced with the other. At that time the Soviet Union

concluded a peace with Latvia. And aside from being independent, they have one of the conditions that they are exchanging residents...I resided, lets say, in ^{Riga} ~~Ukraine~~. So I the have the right, ^{let's say} the Russian would not stop me, or people who resided there who would want to come to Russia. So that was one of the conditions. So I wnet and I claimed that we have resided in Latvia before ^{the war.} five years before the war. They accepted my statement and we left Russia for Lativa. Myself, she and our son.

Q. What year is this, now?

A. 1919 end of.

Q. Were you in any way affected by the civil war?

A. Not at all. ~~The~~, directly no. As I told you, you know they kept on fighting but my units, all the units I served in, have been stationed and I did the job I did.

Q. But I mean personally you were really not involved?

A. No.

Q. You didn't go through what Mattie went through.

Or my parents or anybody?

A. No, no shooting, nothing.

Q. Very good. Now in your unit, or in the units that you trained, were there any Jewish soldiers?

A. Uh not too many.

Q. Not even after the revolution?

A. Not here and I'll tell you why. ^{Saratov} ~~Saratov~~ was, before the war, ^{Saratov} ~~Saratov~~ was out of boundaries of Jews. They could not live there. So very few Jews resided, only those who

Nikolaevski
 said, as ~~Nikoliev~~ soldier, that meansthey serve 25 years..
 so they extended...^{the right} to them, to reside anywhere you want.
 So they had a few of those Jews in ~~Serratorov~~.^{Saratov} All the
 other Jews are not like me. Lets go to ~~Serretov~~,^{Saratov} we
 could get bread there, we could get..very few, as a matter
 of fact, you know after a while I was arrested at one point,
 that was even before the revolution, because we had some
 sort of a resstaurant and^{in the restaurant all} the Jews could congregate^{of all}
 parties, before the revolution. So I was arrested. Myself
 her brother, so then they started to^{start all} they arrested every-
 body must of had about a 100 people. While I was already
 there you know, a Jewish fella came in and he says, Listen,
 I could release you alright, but you would have to bribe
 the...^{you} have money? I did, but my money was where I worked.
~~Your~~^{Her} brother did not have any, I told him ~~that~~^{where} I had the
 money, they took it out and they gave it to him and I think
 its was about 1200 rubels. It was a lot of money then. I
 saved it for a...reason, but who wants to? He was free,
 her brother and myself. But very few Jews, coming back to
 the idea, it isn't like Jews where we come from. like Vitasfk^{Vitebsk}
 it was practically Jewish town. ^{over} Oh-but there are a few
 here and there.

Q. Did you find any when you were in the army, first
 Krenskij and then the red army in which you volunteered.
 Did you find any ~~find~~ any feelings against ^{you} Jews. Did they
 know you were a Jew?

A. Yeah.

Q. Was there any feelings~~#~~ against you as a Jew?

A. You see at times ^{it} ~~is~~ was concealed. It was beyond question. The Jew ~~like me~~ ^{is not a wanted person.} no matter under Krenskij, under Stalin or under whoever. But it was they had been tolerated a little more. Under the Czar, you knew only one thing you know, bribing, Bribing covered all *and everything. And we did*

Q. But in this situation where you were in the army you find life at least tolerable?

A. Yeah.

Q. Until you contracted malarial?

A. Thats right.

Q. And thats when you and you r wife ent to ~~Riga~~ ^{Riga}?

A. Yes and strange as it is you know, on the day, riding in the train, something like I was cured. That is no occurrence. And when we came to ^{Riga} ~~Riga~~, we had a hard time.

Q. This was now what year, 1919?

A. 19, that was 1918 Because we lived in ^{Riga} ~~Riga~~, two years, when we came ...

Q. The whole place must bhave been devastated. On the way there. The whole countryside must have been really devastated, going through.

A. Not at all you know. *Because they did not have any effect then. Not at all.* They fought in various locations but not, okay..so we did not know what to do, we came over there, to ^{Riga} ~~Riga~~ that is, ^{Riga} ~~Riga~~ we had to prove. We had to prove, lets say a couple of hundred miles before ^{Riga} ~~Riga~~, at a given station, ^{where} ~~that~~ they kept all the people who came from

Russia. And they had to prove or identify themselves, ^{whatever} before a committee, commission, So whoever was able to, was freed and they went to ^{Riga} ~~Rosa~~, or ^{other} maybe, cities, like ^(?) Kalebo... Myself, I have nothing to prove. So she, stopped the chairman of the committee, who was in charge, of releasing the immigrants, ^{if you want to} ~~and they~~ call them that. And she told him, look we don't know, we have no way of proving. If you would let us go to ^{Riga} ~~Rosa~~, over there you could probably establish..he says okay. But when we come, after a while we had to present proof and we couldn't. So again, bribes. Look a new leaf in our life and history commences there. As I recall telling you, my brothers and sisters, they all left for the United States. I never had their addresses, never communicated. We never knew about each other. I know ^e they were in America, but America? ^w There, who? In ~~Rosa~~ ^{Riga}, they had a woman, and she did something like charitable work. She would try and help out those who had relatives in the United States.

Q. Was she Jewish?

A. Yeah and she tried to locate them. So I met her. And I told her my story, she says alright, give me their names. Good. And strange as it is, totally unexpected, ^{- what do you mean -} who could I'll tell you in Russia, we had an idea, America ~~s~~ consists of three cities.

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a Boston. Something like that.

New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. This is America. And everyone who went, say listen see my brother there in America. Where does he live? In New York This was — and strange as it is, you know, to my surprise even up till today, in about four, five weeks, ^{she} she calls me, and says I located your brothers.

Q. But they were in ^{at} Pantaucket.

A. Yeah and they luckily been well known. They had businesses. And how about money? After a while..

Q. Did they?

A. Of course they send ^{to} money. They had been wealthy you know. After all, ^{re} uncover a new unknown brother, you know. It comes in the element of , whatever you may call it you know. We got money, by the way in Rega, I made already a few dollars, *my own, in business.*

Q. What were you doing in Rega?

A. I bought things and I sold, in this case it was a question of..

Q. Smuggling?

A. Well, remotely yes. But I'll tell you, it was stuff that come from Soviet Union and we bought it and he stole it, the one who was in charge of it. And we bought it from him. So we made a few dollars anyhow.

Q. This was between 1918 and 1920?

A. Yeah.

A. In the interim, I couldn't get soon enough you know the visa ^{mit alle meises} ~~begal visas~~.

Q. Let me tell you something. Okay you have about ten minutes.

A. Well I had to bribe the chief of that particular district, chief of police, cause I had to present proof, otherwise you'll be sent or extradited to Russia.

Q. Thats the last thin you wanted, probably.

A. So we recieved all the a papers needed. It took ^{exactly, nothing} ~~three~~ ^{more but} ~~months~~ ^{Letters} ~~letters~~. A letter from the governor of Rhode Island. I had an idea what it meant you know? A letter from the city mayor of Pautucket. That was all given to my brother and he was very well acquainted with them At that time I was unable to read and I didn't understand what it is in it. And a letter from the mayor. The only thing is when I came to get my visa. I brought all three letters. Well the chief of police, ^{the mayor} oh governor? thats a different story. This letter- and we got a visas Then the end of 1920, we left for the United States. Lebarber was the first stop, its a port city. In English they call it ^{Lebow (?)} Lebauf. And consequently it was very cold and things were frozen and they couldn't move, you know? They had to move through Germany thorough the ^{Kei} ~~Keto~~ Canal okay, we cam to Liverpool. From LIVERPOOL, we were supposed to land aboard a ship and so our son got sick and he had to stay three months in the hospital. You know? But I'll tell you, I was very proud at that time of our Jews. While staying in

Liverpool, the Rabbi called me in. He never met me, never, but he sent a , he want to see me. Okay. I walk in his office. He says Look Mr. Cohen, we are aware that you came and you are ^{stranded} a ~~stranger~~ here, because your son is sick, if you need money please tell me. I'll advance you. He didn't say he'll give me, but he'll lend me some money. If you need a hundred dollars, we'll give it to you. If you need more come and tell me. And in those years and days, I felt like getting charity. More so when I didn't need it so urgently. But I'll tell you I was moved by it. Total strangers-just because I'm a Jew. However he recovered and we came to the United States. Our apartment was ready for us, with furniture with with groceries for about six, seven weeks or so. All we had to do..

Q. ~~a~~ was move in. Now let me ask you something. You left the Soviet Union, things weren't really too bad. In the Soviet Union. When you went to Rega. Why didn't you stay in the Soviet Union? Why did you go to Rega for a change of climate then leave there ^{and} not go somewhere else in the Soviet Union and stay?

A. Hum..Well I'll tell you. As I told you my health was involved in it. To go somewhere so I had no idea where we would go. A Jew, anybody couldn't leave Soviet Union. We could leave for Latvia or Rega because I claimed to be a Latvian citizen. B

Q.B But you were already a Russian citizen, why not go to some..

A. No. no. That was one of the conditions. Between Latvia and Russia. Soviet Union. To release or exchange or *repatriate*.

Q. Why did you want to go to Latvia?

A. Where else could I go?

Q. Well lets think. You could have gone to Odessa.

A. Odessa was Russian.

Q. Thats what I'm saying. You don't want to be in Russia right? Why not? *That's what I'm asking you. Why did you want to leave Russia?*

A. Life was very tough and besides my condition, ~~and~~ a soldier, ^{no} and possibility of being released.

Q. Okay okay. So you really wanted to leave Russia?

A. Yeah, now mind you we had no idea that I will ever make contact with my brothers.

Q. I understand that.

A. Not the least idea of it.

Q. You just wanted to get out.

A. Yes.

Q. And what I want from you is the reason as far as you can understand, why at that point, when you were living fairly well, - am I correct?

A. But my ^{status} ~~passport~~ was still soldier. Even though I was ailing, still a soldier.

Q. And it was still civil war in progress?

A. Yes. *Civil war was in progress, yes.*

Q. And you didn't know what the future held there? *Am I correct?*

A. Yes, but I'll tell you I was terribly poor there.

Very poor and I'll tell you, I was already qualified^a worker in the factory where I worked, I was already ^a boss. Mind you the age of about 20 and so I was already ^{at} a boss.

Q. So you didn't see yourself with a future in the Bolsh^evik Soviet Union?

A. No.

Q. ~~Were~~^{were} you not a Bolshavek really?

A. No, I was arrested there too.

Q. What were you arrested for? First you were arrested cause you had a restaurant where the Jews hung out, right? Then you were arrested, were you arrested because you were an illegal trade union?

A. No, look I wa established as a rightist.

Q. Oh as a ^eKrenskij supporter you mean?

A. ^{A rightist} And not only that, but twice a I was in the Soviet. *Elected.*
As a Soviet member.

Q. YOU mean to the дума?

A. Yeah, now the Duma was..

Q. To the soviets, as a representative of what party?

A. No, of the factory^I, but that wasn't all. I was still established as a rightist.

Q. Why?

A. Because I was a member of the Bund.

Q. Oh you were a member?

A. Yeah.

Q. So you were an undesirable person?

A. Not directly, but it worked out that way. Now I'll tell you, if you remember they have defected or exploded the water works in Leningrad, in the year of 1918. At the beginning of 1918. Throughout Russia they arrested about 10,000 from each city you know. Suspected, because of ~~their~~ ^{the} Rights, did it. And mind you, I was serving in the army then, except as I told you I had the right to go home every night..they came and arrested me.

Q. As a rightist?

A. Yeah.

Q. Because you were bundist?

A. Because according to them, I was implicated in the explosion of the water work of Leningrad.

Q. Well no, I mean what connection, they don't always have to have a reason for a connection, but what connection did they offer you?

A. Because I was a rightist.

Q. In other words, by being a Bundist, you were automatically a rightist?

A. ^{yes.} And opposing them.

Q. Okay.

Q. ^{So I was arrested,} They came of course from the Cheka.

Q. So the day you were ^{that} missing or that you went home from work. ^{It wasn't simply because you went home from work that} ~~then~~ the y arrested you?

A. They arrested me at home.

A. But why? ~~Because of.~~ ^{Not because you went home?}

A. no. no.

Q. *oh,* thats what you told me originally.

A. I was arrested because I was considered as a right-ist.

Q. *I see* This was getting dangerous. This was getting hot for you.

A. right, but then I was young, not to relaize or to take advantage of being a leftist. You know?

Q. You mean *hey,* I might -as well change my colors?

A. So I was arrested. I was in jail for about 3 days.

Q. Was that when your~~g~~ colonel had you released?

A. No. That was another time, after that. Or before that. Now look, I had a very wide acquaintance with a lot of people including Bolshaviks. And some friends when they found out, Communists, that I was arrested, so they started to work you know, and I was released in three or four days.

Q. But its not very comfottable?

A. The least thing you know, you are arrested. So that was about four days I was arrested. *and* ~~should~~, she would bring me something to eat in jail. I couldn't see her; she couldn't see me.

Q. *I understand. I'm going to say...*
(Tape ends)

48a

A - Because I was in charge of a certain - you know...
soldiers, with...

(End of Tape)

Q - What year are you talking about now? 1917?

A - No, No. 1918

Q - All right. By this time the Bolsheviks have already concluded
peace...

A - No, No. Peace was not concluded yet.

Q - Yes. I had to be.

A - No. Because at that time, they fought... The general peace
was concluded by Trotsky in the year of, the end of 1917, the
beginning of 1918.

Q - At Brest Litovsk.

A - That's right.

See p. 48