

1-20-1975

## Dov Kam, transcript only

Dov Kam

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalworks.union.edu/berkoralhistories>

---

### Recommended Citation

Kam, Dov, "Dov Kam, transcript only" (1975). *Lucille W. Brown and Stephen M. Berk Oral Histories of American Jews*. 30.  
<https://digitalworks.union.edu/berkoralhistories/30>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections And Archives at Union | Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Lucille W. Brown and Stephen M. Berk Oral Histories of American Jews by an authorized administrator of Union | Digital Works. For more information, please contact [digitalworks@union.edu](mailto:digitalworks@union.edu).

L.B. Give me your name for the recorder.

D.K. Yeah, my official name, the passport, is Sam Berko Sam.

L.B. Sam Berko...

D.K. Berko, Berko, in Russian "bell" is "berko"...Sam Berko Sam, that was on the Russian passport.

L.B. Well, what do you mean, your official name? Is that your given name, your real name? Why do they call you Dov?

D.K. Well, when I came to America, they, a different story, a long story. So, when I had to register, so, to put my, a different name, Sam...never write, never write a name, Sam.

L.B. Why?

D.K. Well, I'll tell you why. I, I came here on, on... *I'm a* stowaway.

L.B. You came as a stowaway?

D.K. As a stowaway.

L.B. Ahh.

D.K. That was in 1925. Then later...uh, all the stowaways were legalized.

L.B. Right, right.

D.K. I'm a citizen, now. But before they legalized, a few years, so I had to change my name because the police were looking for me, you know.

L.B. Under *Beryl*

D.K. The company, the company, the ship's company, uh, ~~Single Ship's Company~~, uh, *The Red Star Line* the company. So they recorded in, uh, the police

department, they should look for me, a man...on their ship. So I was afraid to go by my, my real name, there, so I changed my name. And since then, the name is changed, the name's changed.

L.B. But you're not really, oh, you mean that on your...

D.K. Officially...the passport, it's not...

L.B. Officially it's Sam...

D.K. ...not my name...

L.B. Sam...

D.K. Sam is not my name, because my father is Sam, and mine son is Sam, and I'm Sam.

L.B. And that's not very Jewish, is it?

D.K. Sam, my father is, uh, um...my grandfather was Shmuel.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Und my father is Shmuel.

L.B. Right.

D.K. ?

L.B. Right.

D.K. Und I am, uh, Shmuel, Sam...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Sam, and my son is Shmuel, Sam. Sam, 4 generations, same name.

L.B. But according to Jewish tradition, you're not supposed to name...

D.K. No, no such a thing, that is just, uh, a superstition.

L.B. A superstition.

D.K. Yeah...

L.B. Oh, O.K., but you didn't pay any attention to the superstition.

D.K. No.

L.B. Oh, O.K. Now tell...us, uh, what year you were born, please.

D.K. Uh, according to the passport, I was born in 1893.

L.B. Is that correct?

D.K. Really I was born in 1895, but in the passport it has 1893, *for a certain* the reason, to legalize myself, that, to move it a couple years. So, in the passport I'm in July...8, 1893.

L.B. But really you're 2 years younger.

D.K. Two years younger, and not in July, I was born in March.

L.B. All right, so, 1895...

D.K. It is 80, 80 years old.

L.B. So you're going to be 80 years old?

D.K. 80 years, yeah.

L.B. I see. And now, tell us, uh, the name of the town that you were born in.

D.K. Porosozova.

L.B. Porosozova, and that's in White Russia.

D.K. White Russia.

L.B. And, uh, it was part of Czarist Russia.

D.K. It was part, yes.

L.B. Right?

D.K. Uh, uh, yes, now it's Russia, too.

L.B. Now it's the Soviet Union.

D.K. Soviet Union.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. O.K. Now...

33 D.K.!

L.B. All right, I'm going to stop this for a minute. (Tape off). Now, we'll start... Now, in your town, of Porosozova... how many people lived there?

D.K. Uh, this town was... 550 families, 300 gentiles, 300... gentile families, mostly Catholics, and a, about 150, 155 Jewish families.

L.B. That's very unusual.

D.K. Yeah. A third Jewish families.

L.B. So, you had 300 Roman Catholics... and 200 Jewish families?

D.K. No, 150.

L.B. 150.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Were these, uh, gentiles, were they mostly Polish?

D.K. Uh, Catholics were mostly Polish.

L.B. They were mostly Polish.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. Did you have any other, uh...

50 D.K. We had a few, uh, uh, Russian, you know, Orthodox, Russian Orthodox,

61 Uh, let's see, the postmaster, uh, the *wradnik* policemen.

L.B. Oh.

D.K. The policemen, and, uh... just the, um, uh...

L.B. Officials.

D.K. Officials, officials were Russians.

L.B. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

D.K. Otherwise were Polish.

L.B. Was Porosozova later given into...

D.K. To Poland.

L.B. It was given to Poland?

D.K. Given to Poland... between the First World War...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. In the Second, uh, World War, it was Poland.

L.B. But, before the First World War, it was part of Russia.

D.K. Part of Russia, and now it's a part of Russia.

L.B. It's no, well, is, is it part of Poland, which has been taken over by Russia, or was it given back to Russia?

D.K. After the First World War...

L.B. After the...

D.K. ...Russia took it away, from Poland.

L.B. After the Second World War.

D.K. After the Second, yeah... in the Second World War...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Right after the War started, with Poland.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. So they took it away, this part, and they never gave this part back to Poland.

L.B. What's the nearest big city?

D.K. The nearest city is Wolkovisk, Wolkovisk, Wolkovisk is the...the, uh, the county...of Koroszoza...

L.B. I don't see it on my map. How far are you from Bialystok?

D.K. From Bialystok is 12 mile, Russian miles.

L.B. So that's not too, uh, I see where you are. O.K. So, you were pretty close to Bialystok, then?

D.K. Yes.

L.B. All right. Uh, actually, you come from pretty much the same district as Mr. Bachrach, then.

D.K. Not far away.

L.B. Not, not exactly, but within the same...

D.K. No, no, yeah, about 12, 15 miles away.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Russian miles.

L.B. Right. A ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup>.

D.K. Uh, no, not a...

L.B. Not a ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup>?

D.K. A mile is 7 ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup>.

L.B. Yeah?

D.K. A Russian mile is 7 ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup>, a ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup> is a mile and a half American.

L.B. Oh.

D.K. American mile...is a ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup>, is a mile and a half. And a Russian mile is 7 ~~west~~ <sup>west</sup>, there's about 10 American miles...

L.B. Oh.

D.K. ...in a Russian mile. You never knew that?

L.B. No. So, your, the population in your town was very lopsided, as far as the Jews were concerned. It was not a shtetl, then?

D.K. No, it was not so unusual...uh...it was about a third Jews there.

L.B. Yeah, but it was not a self-enclosed shtetl, was it? It was a, a, one town, with all these people, mixed. Is that right?

D.K. That's right.

L.B. Did the Jews live in one part of the town?

D.K. The Jews lived in the center of the town, and they were all the business people, storekeepers...and, uh, what do you call it, um...the remeszeniki, you know what remeszeniki?

L.B. No.

D.K. Remeszeniki is, uh, a tailor, a shoemaker...

L.B. The artisans.

D.K. Huh?

L.B. Artisans.

D.K. Artisans.

L.B. Right.

D.K. The Russians call it remeszeniki...artisans. There, the Jews lived in the center of the town...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. The business section, and the...the gentiles lived, uh, around them, you know.

L.B. And what did the gentiles do for a living?

D.K. The gentiles, they were all farmers.

L.B. All farmers?

D.K. All farmers, all of them farmers.

L.B. And how, were there churches there, too?

D.K. There was one Russian church.....and a Catholic church.

L.B. One Catholic church.

D.K. And one Catholic church.

L.B. Mm.

D.K. In fact, were 2 Russian churches.

L.B. 2?

D.K. 2, because...in, in the little towns around, you know, in the villages...

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. ...were a lot of Russians there. So they used to come, on Sunday, they used to come to the tserkva, tserkva is a Russian church, is named tserkva.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And a Polish church is named Koszol. Soc?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So that's where the 2...paraslavny?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Because, on Sunday...from the, uh, from the villages around, used to come, Sunday, used to come for services.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But the, the Catholics, there was a big, uh, uh, church, a Koszol.

L.B. It was a big church?

D.K. A big church.

L.B. Were, uh, were the Russian Orthodox churches small?

D.K. They were smaller, yeah, because, uyh, uh...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. It was only used for Sunday, the Russians...

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. And the, the, um...the Polish were used every day.

L.B. Right, for the masses.

D.K. Yeah, they just have...300 families in the town.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And, then there used to be Catholics around, too, in the villages...

L.B. Right, right.

D.K. ...who used to come to it. That was a big one.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. And then, there were, the Russian, the promeschiki, the pritzin...You know what a promeschiki...

L.B. A promesch...

D.K. Is landowners, big landowners, they call a promeschik in Russian.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So they were rich, and they used to give a lot of money for the Koszol, for the...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...for the Polish...Catholic church.

L.B. But they weren't Catholic, the promeschiki.

D.K. Promeschiki were all Catholics.

L.B. They were?

D.K. That's right. All the promeschiki were in that one...promeschik, uh, are Russian, all Catholics...all Poles...

L.B. So they were all Poles.

D.K. All Poles.

L.B. Ohh, all right.

D.K. All Poles.

L.B. O.K. Now...

D.K. So that, so that's why they have a, a large church, a...a Catholic church, a large one, a Polish Koszol, Polish.

L.B. Uh huh. Now what about the synagogues? How many synagogues were there for 150 families?

D.K. The synagogues, we have 2.

L.B. 2 synagogues?

D.K. 2 synagogues.

L.B. What kind?

D.K. One had a cold one.

L.B. A cold?

D.K. Without heat, without heat, I mean.

L.B. That's a shul?

D.K. That was a shul.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. In the shul we used to doven only on Yom Tov...uh, Yom Tov was...a lot of people came, so we, we didn't, uh, couldn't, uh, maintained the bismedrish, so we used to use both of them. But the whole year, they only used the bismedrish, because the bismedrish was warm, they had stoves there. Now...

L.B. Now, Mr. Bachrach said that the Bes, bes<sup>kes</sup>nesset...was the one which they heated, but the bes...uh, besmedrish, uh, was the same as the shul, and they didn't heat that. He said there were 2 kinds...

D.K. No, the bismedrish...no, they used to doven every day, and they used to heat it. And the shul, the bes<sup>kes</sup>nesset...no, it was only used on the holidays.

L.B. So he got, he, he's saying, it's just the reverse of what you're saying.

D.K. That's right. But I'm right.

130 L.B. (Laughs).'

D.K. What do you call a bismedrish, what do you call a bismedrish?

L.B. It's a house of study.

D.K. Yeah, yeah.

L.B. Yeah.

131 D.K. Bismedrish, you have a warm, you have to have a warm place. It's a <sup>chevra</sup>cheva Reshat, there...

L.B. Right.

132 D.K. Chevra mishnayas, chevra shurano, you know what this means?

L.B. You'd better explain what this...is.

D.K. Yeah.

133 L.B. No...explain. What's a <sup>chevra</sup>cheva mishnayas?

134 D.K. A <sup>chevra</sup>cheva mishnayas, you know, the, the? , you know what ~~it is~~ it is, the talmud..

L.B. Yes.

D.K. The Talmud is divided in 2 parts; first the Mishna...

L.B. Mishna...

D.K. Mishna.

L.B. And then the Gomorrah.

D.K. Mishna, and then we come, Gomorrah, it was a...comments on, on the Mishna.

L.B. Right.

135 D.K. So, the ones, they, they know better, they learn more, they used to learn the Gomorrah, <sup>chevra</sup>cheva Reshat. And the one, they, uh, in the, uh, youth, ~~it used to not take us so long...you stop early, so we couldn't understand Gomorrah...you only understand Mishna. So they have a chevra mishanayas, and a chevra...shas, they used to study the Talmud, the Gomorrah.~~

L.B. So, they're 2 groups, then, 2 st...2 study groups?

D.K. 2 study groups. There are more than 2 study groups, but this is the main ones.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. There are study groups, you study <sup>Shullchan Aruch: Shulchan aruch</sup>shuchan, shuchan means "the laws".

L.B. The shuchan a'och, we call it, yeah.

D.K. Shuchan a'och.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Yeah. That was the, the, the lower part...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. You couldn't understand Mishna...

L.B. Right.

136 D.K. But, according to, to high laos, you know, the, this, you had...you gotta do this way, you gotta do this way, you've got to ~~be~~ put on the tefillen this way, uh, you gotta, ummm...to serve kashrut...a certain way, because they didn't know, ugh, you know, the...the' ...uh, the', you know

137 what I mean? You know, they have 3 classes...they have the balabadaim, the hoshra balabadaim, the lomdim. And they had the middle ones, they used to <sup>read</sup>read a little bit. Uh, they used to not! ; you know what!

L.B. No, you're gonna have to explain all this. Now this is all brand new, I haven't heard this at all.

D.K. No, uh...

L.B. Now the...

D.K. All, all this will be on the record.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. So the first group is the highest?

D.K. The highest group...

L.B. The balababim.

D.K. They used to know what they dovened, they used to understand what they prayed, they know, uh, uh... ~~Hebrew~~

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And they know Talmud.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. They had, uh, you know, with them you could, uh, study Talmud.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Then we had a middle class, a middle class, I mean middle class, I don't mean in, in money...

L.B. You mean, uh...you mean in terms of learning.

107 D.K. 1

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...know Mishna, and, and, uh...

L.B. Torah.

D.K. The, the, the uh...the Siddur, they dovened...

L.B. Yes, yes.

D.K. They...understood a very little...

L.B. Yes.

D.K. ...what they say, a little bit.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. And then, there, another group, they know very, very little, almost nothing.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So, for them, uh, you had to teach them the words.

L.B. And that's what the shubhan aruch was for?

D.K. That's the shubhan aruch.

110

L.B. Now, I've heard the terms, the <sup>yiddin</sup>prostejeden and the <sup>yiddin</sup>grubejeden.

D.K. That's right. The prostejeden, they used to, uh, with them they had to teach the shubhan aruch.

L.B. Irostejeden didn't know anything?

D.K. No.

L.B. And, but what about the grubejeden?

111

D.K. The jungen, yeah, the grubejungen, we call it, <sup>amaratzin</sup>amaratzin

L.B. What's da...damaratzin?

112

D.K. A'm h'aretz, am h'aoretz means a...poyrim...you don't know anything, a poyrim, you know, a grubejunge.

L.B. Oh, a grubejung.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Oh, but that means he, uh, knows absolutely nothing. Right?

D.K. Not nothing, they used to, they knew Hebrew...

L.B. He knows Heb...

D.K. He used to doven, but he didn't know what he was saying.

L.B. So, which group is higher? The grub...

D.K. Higher is the...

L.B. Iroste? No, grube?

D.K. No, no, the, the lomdim, the lomdim.

L.B. Lomdim? Oh, the student, that's from Tal...from, the student, to study.

D.K. The one, the, the studying, the youth...

L.B. Yeah.

L.B. Now, how did the people feel toward the Hasidim, uh, the Misnagdim, in your town? Did they feel they were...

D.K. There were no Hasidim in our town.

L.B. Yeah, I know...but they knew about them.

D.K. Ah, of course they knew about them.

L.B. So, how did they feel about them? Did they think they were...uh, ignorant?

D.K. Not ignorant, but...they are lower than Misnagdim.

L.B. Lower, all right. (Tape off). So, your father changed, from being a Chusid...

D.K. From being a Chusid, to a Misnagid.

L.B. Did he mind it?

D.K. No, he didn't mind it, because he, he was not, was not a fanatic, anyhow.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. He was a modern man, because he was in America. He, he didn't like it, he came back.

L.B. Oh, he had been in America?

D.K. He'd been in America. Uh, he left for America when I was 2 years old, I remember.

L.B. Now, what year is that? That would be 1897.

D.K. Uh, som...something like that.

L.B. Right, yeah.

D.K. Then he was 4 years here, and he came back.

L.B. Why didn't he like it here?

D.K. He didn't like it, there, I don't know, because...uh, I'll tell you.

He went to America because...we had a fire in our town, and our house went down, and we had to rebuild it, he had no money. So he went to America to earn money...

L.B. Right.

D.K. ...to pay for the house.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So when he paid, he paid off the house, he came back.

L.B. Right...right. A lot of people, apparently, did that; they went to make money, and then they went back.

D.K. That's right. I say, my father was here about 4 years, that's all. When he came back, uh, I was already a little boy in cheder.

L.B. So, let's go back, now. There were 2 shuls...no, there was a besamedrish...

D.K. A besamedrish.

L.B. Right.

346 D.K. Und...we call it a <sup>Kalki shul</sup> kalchashul, a besakenesset, the <sup>Kalki shul</sup> kalchashul.

L.B. The ka... "the cold shul".

D.K. Yeah, the, the cold...

L.B. The one that's not warm.

D.K. That's right.

L.B. The <sup>Kalki</sup> kalchashul, it's cold.

D.K. The <sup>Kalki</sup> kalchashul, yes.

L.B. Right. And, everyone went to the same...things, there was no difference. Like, the rich people didn't go to one place, and the poor people to another?

D.K. No, no, everybody the same place, same shul.

L.B. Because, you know, in some towns, there were different, uh, shuls...

D.K. Yeah, a shul for shneider, a shul for shiester...

L.B. Right.

D.K. ...a shul for...for shmeiden, a shul for balagolis...

L.B. Yeah, yeah, what's a balagolis?

D.K. A balagolis, it's a taxi drivers.

L.B. Ahhh.

D.K. A taxi driver, or a truck driver.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Truck driver, we call a balagolis.

L.B. Yeah. But you didn't have this, everybody went to the same town...

D.K. Everybody...

L.B. ...uh, same shul. Now, what did the people, the Jews, in your town, do? To make a living.

D.K. Uh, they were businesspeople, a lot of them, most of them were storkekeepers, and then there were artisans, shneider, shoester, you know, and so forth.

L.B. Hm hm.

D.K. Uhh, blacksmiths...and peddlars.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Ieddars, they used to go, uh...they had a, a, a horse and wagon, and they used to take a little merchandise, and go to villages and sell it.

L.B. And what kind of a, what kind of a living did your father make? What did he do?

D.K. First he had a store.

L.B. What kind of a store?

D.K. Well, uh, here I would call it a general store.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But the general store is that big, I don't think, there, for \$200 merchandise there, the whole store. And then we used to, um, to buy, uh, skins, by the butchers, we used to buy the skin from the, um, uh, um, from the calfs, and from the, uh, oxen, you know, by the butcher. And...

L.B. So, what did, what did you do with them?

D.K. Then we used to sell it, um...a tannery, in a different town.

L.B. So you were just a middle-man, in the buying of the skins?

D.K. A middleman, yeah. Uh, buying the skin, we bought it, and sell it.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. We bought it by the butchers...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...and sell it, uh, uh, to, in, to a tannery in a differnt town, in Wokovisk, or in some other town. A lot of towns, you know, had tanneries.

L.B. Yes, yeah.

D.K. He used to sell it there.

L.B. So he had 2 businesses?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. In a way, huh?

D.K. That's right, yeah.

L.B. And you...lived in a house?

D.K. In a house, yeah.

L.B. Could you tell me what kind of a house? Was it wooden, or, was it...

D.K. Mmm, it was a brick house.

L.B. A brick house.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. And how many rooms?

D.K. A livingroom...and 2 bedrooms, and a kitchen...and a succoh. You know what a succoh...?

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. The succoh was there all year round?

134<sup>1</sup> D.K. All year round. We used to open up the 'fheze' , you know?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. That was the succoh. And a little garden, a little one.

L.B. A little garden.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. And how many children were there in the family?

D.K. 4 children, 3 boys and 1 girl.

L.B. And your mother.

D.K. My mother and father.

L.B. And your mother and father. And then your father...who was the youngest? Were you the youngest?

D.K. No, I was the second. I had a sister, older one, and I was...the older, of the boys, I was the older one...

L.B. Yes.

D.K. And I had 2 more brothers, younger brothers.

L.B. Did you have any schooling?

D.K. Oh yeah.

L.B. Well, what kind of schooling, now?

D.K. Uh, in town, we had teachers, what do you call them, the <sup>melanline</sup> ~~loadan~~,...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. We had a cheder.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So, uh...in the town, I had, I, I went to cheder, til I was 12 years old.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. And then...I didn't have a, a teacher who should teach me, because... in my age, according to my knowledge, when I reached...12 years.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So I, I went away to a bigger town.

L.B. Oh, you did go?

D.K. Yeah, I, I went away to a yeshiva.

L.B. Where did you go, which town?

305 D.K. Radin.

L.B. Radin?

D.K. Radin.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. Near Wilna.

L.B. Yes.

307 D.K. I would ~~Over there~~ <sup>was</sup> yeshiva, they called it Chufetz Chayim Yeshiva.

L.B. Mr., uh, Bachrach was telling about it, yeah.

D.K. Yeah. So I was there...for 4 years...in the yeshiva, Chufetz Chayim.

L.B. So you were 106.

D.K. 16. And then I went to another yeshiva, too.

L.B. Where?

D.K. In Wolkovisk.

L.B. Yeah.

310 D.K. And in Slonyim, 3 yeshivas. In, I, I was in yeshivas til I was 21 years old. And then the Second World War broke...

L.B. First.

D.K. The Fir...the First World War, the First.

L.B. First, yeah.

D.K. The First World War...and...we had to run away.

L.B. Now wait a minute, let me do a little adding. If you were born in 1895.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. And you were in school...til you were 21, oh, that takes you to 19...

311 D.K.

L.B. Yeah, but that takes you to 1916. Now, the War broke out in 1914.

D.K. The War, but, uh, the War broke out in 1914, but the, the Germans didn't occupy our town til 1916.

L.B. Ah, O.K.

D.K. You see, in 1916 the Germans took it away, 1915, '16.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So, I had to stop.

L.B. Now, where were you at this time? First you were in Ra...uh, Radin. Right? Then you were in Wolkovisk?

D.K. Wolkovisk.

L.B. And the third time in Slonin?

D.K. In Slonin.

L.B. All right.

D.K. That's all.

L.B. And that's, and that was until 1916?

D.K. Yeah, until it was 1915, by the end of 1915.

L.B. O.K.

D.K. Then the Germans occupied our town...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Und, uh, I went home...to Ioroszova...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And I stayed there til the, um, War ended, til 18...1919...

L.B. Now how did you...

D.K. 1919...

L.B. 1919...

D.K. 1919.

L.B. Or 1918. How did you avoid being conscripted?

D.K. Uh, well, uh, because I was nearsighted....and they couldn't...uh, they find me, I was not, not, unfit for the Army.

L.B. You were lucky.

D.K. Yeah. I'm still nearsighted. In fact...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...I couldn't get licensed to drive a car, on account of that...in this country.

L.B. Is that right?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Hm. So they didn't take you into the Army, neither the Russians or the Germans?

D.K. Well, the Germans didn't took anyone into the Army.

L.B. They didn't put anybody...

D.K. In occupied...

L.B. They didn't...

D.K. In occupied regions...

L.B. No?

D.K. No, they didn't allow to take...of course not, that's against the conventions of war. In an occupied country, you can't mobilize the people there. And then, they wouldn't trust them, too.

L.B. Yeah, that's right. That makes more sense. (laughs).

D.K. Of course.

L.B. Now, how did you feel...after all, you were already a grown man by this time...

D.K. Yes.

L.B. 21.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. And, um...Oh, let me, uh, first, ask you about your studies. If you were in yeshiva all this time, what sort of, uh, uh, Jewish education would you say you were getting? Orthodox, traditional Jewish education?

D.K. Orthodox, it was orthodox, all yeshivas were orthodox, *Wasn't any other yeshivas* even today...a yeshiva is Orthodox. See?

L.B. Did you...

D.K. You know the books?

L.B. Yes...I do...

D.K. All this I studied in yeshiva.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And I still use them now. I have a group here...? *Koeningberg* will tell you, I have a group, I study with them every Saturday.

L.B. Oh, are you the leader of the group here?

D.K. That's right.

L.B. Ohhh.

D.K. Yeah, and I study with Bachrach....twice a week, sometimes 3 times, when they are here, we study every day.

L.B. Uh huh, I see. Now, did you intend to be a rabbi, or what?

D.K. Well, uh, I didn't intend to be a rabbi, but I loved the Talmud.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. Till today....I love the...to study the Talmud, I love the, the so... sophistication...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...sophisticated! You know, if something, you like it, uh... and since then, since I was in the yeshiva...uh, I never, un...I left it in one day, I shouldn't took out a book and use it for a while, and look out for something.

L.B. Do you find, uh, that...the law, the reasoning...the way of thinking, of approaching a problem, as it is in the Talmud, is helpful in, uh...applies in, in ordinary life?

D.K. Well, I wouldn't say all what it says in Talmud, because most of the things in Talmud, uh...it was written, the Talmud...it was good enough, uh, when the Jews were in, in, in Israel, with a, had their own country...so they had to apply, all the laws, it belongs to a Jewish country.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. They have a<sup>1</sup> , the temple...

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. And they have this, um,<sup>1</sup>

L.B. Yes.

D.K. Yes? *the sacrifices*

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. All this, you can't use it today. It's never been, uh, most of the, most of the laws....a half of the Talmud you can't apply today.

L.B. But wasn't the Talmud written after the Bab...dur...after the Babylonian exile?

D.K. It was written after.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But was....before, they had it before, too, but it was not compiled, you know, they compiled it after...uh, after the Bab...mm, the Second, the destruction of the Second Temple.

L.B. Right.

D.K. But, everything....they had notes.

L.B. It all applied to before?

D.K. To before...not all of them...

L.B. No?

D.K. No, it applied, they had the social laws.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. That is, uh, you apply them today, too, the same thing.

L.B. Right, right.

D.K. But it was written, it wasn't collected.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. They collected it, and made it in a form, on a...on a book, in books.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. They had the<sup>1</sup> books.

L.B. That's right.

D.K. This was, uh, written, and compiled, and organized....uh, 1500 years ago, already.

L.B. So that's, uh, 400...

D.K. And it took 300 years to organize this, and to write it down, to...uh, uh, make it an order, you know, this thing took 300 years to do it.

L.B. So some of it is still applicable...

D.K. Oh yeah, sure.

L.B. ...and some of it, uh, you feel is, uh, pertains only to ancient times?

D.K. Ancient times, Oh, they will, maybe they will apply it...when we'll be completely independent, and they'll have most of the Jews live in Israel; most of the Jews of the world will gather to Israel, then we'll have to build the Temple,

and have to apply all the old laws, but, um...<sup>3</sup> people to the Temple, you know.

L.B. Do you actually foresee such a thing?

D.K. Hmm...

L.B. A sacrifice, you think people would still sacrifice?

D.K. Well, that's a hard question to answer, you know, it is, uh...they have different opinions of it, and...and they will not decide it now, they say, "We'll decide it when the time will come, when we'll have to decide it."

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So, they, uh, they refuse to make a decision about it.

L.B. Yeah. Are you still an Orthodox Jew?

D.K. Uh...

L.B. Or would you n...you ~~do~~ don...uh, don't...

D.K. No, I'm not an Orthodox. I'm a 'nationalist Jew, and, I would say, a traditional Jew. Now, whatever it means, traditional Jew, that's, uh...hard to define, you know. To different definitions, one will say, "A traditional Jew has got to observe all the 613, uh, uh..."

L.B. Mitzvahs.

D.K. "...mitzvahs." And some will say, "No, you can be a traditional Jew and just apply the social, uh, uh, mitzvahs." You know, that's uh...that's why they have 3 kind of groups...

L.B. I know. (Laughs).

D.K. The Reform...and Conservative, and Orthodox.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Hasidim und mitnagdim.

L.B. Right.

D.K. See? It's, uh, I wouldn't define how much, how far I'll go...but I'm not a strictly Orthodox, I wouldn't say so. I never was.

L.B. When you were growing up, did your family observe the, uh, the uh, holidays, and the wri...the ru... the rules, and the laws, regularly?

D.K. Yes, my parents...observed everything, strictly.

L.B. How often did your father go to shul?

D.K. At least once a day.

L.B. Once a day.

D.K. At least once, every morning. And sometimes, when they had times, uh, to go for a <sup>minchah</sup> ~~minchah~~, you know...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. You know what <sup>minchah</sup> ~~minchah~~ the second...second prayer.

L.B. That's the evening, or the af...that's the afternoon prayer?

D.K. Afternoon prayer.

L.B. Right.

D.K. <sup>Minchah</sup> ~~Minchah~~ and 'mireh... But Shabbos, we used to go twice a day, in the morning... and then <sup>Minchah</sup> ~~Minchah~~, mireh, comes one after the other, together.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. And you went Friday night.

D.K. Friday night, and Yun Tov, sure.

L.B. Right. And your father wore a beard? (Tape off). Hold on...

D.K. Korvno gub...Korvno gubernya, and 'Subalko gubernya, that's where <sup>Litha</sup> ~~Litha~~ <sup>Litha</sup> ~~Litha~~.

L.B. <sup>Litha</sup> ~~Litha~~ is Korvno...and what?

D.K. Subalk, used to be, uh, today it's different, it changed.

L.B. That's Lithuania.

D.K. Lithuania, that's <sup>Litha</sup> ~~Litha~~, Lithuania's Litha.

L.B. But there's a, on this map...

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. ...there's a section which is called, and, and this is what they called the Lithuanian district, and this part was always part of Poland, in here.

D.K. Yeah, after the First...it was...

L.B. No.

D.K. White Russia. Now here's White Russia...

L.B. Right.

D.K. Out to the right.

L.B. Right.

D.K. And this is Minsk...

L.B. Right.

D.K. Minsk.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Bobruisk. Where's Grodno, you haven't got Grodno.

L.B. Yeah, I...

D.K. Where?

L.B. It's here, here's Grodno, but it's in the Lithuanian part, you see?

D.K. Well, I'll tell you...then...it was a time when Lithuania was large, even part of Ukraine belonged to Lithuania.

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

D.K. Through that, um, uh...

L.B. But that goes back to the middle ages, then, right?

D.K. Mm, not in the middle ages, about 200...

L.B. No?

D.K. 200 years ago...250, something like that. Uh, you see...this Lith...uh, Lith...Lithuanian District...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Uh, Grodno...at, uh...this map was made, in this perio...for this period, when Grodno belonged to ~~Lith~~ <sup>Lith</sup>. But, nowadays, Grodno never belonged to ~~Lith~~ <sup>Lith</sup>. It's not the First World War, not between, and not now.

L.B. This is called the kingdom of Poland, and I wonder when, I don't know when this map was made, that's what bothers me, there's no date, it's so stupid to make a map without a date.

D.K. Yeah, very...very, you could make different...

L.B. Sure.

D.K. You could make a date...a map today, it would be different, I'm telling you.

L.B. Ach.

D.K. This would be Russia already.

L.B. Yeah. (Pause). Well, now let's see...we're on the tape, and, um, now we talked about how your father made a living, and what kind of a house you, you lived in. Um...were you allowed to play...with any children in the town...any Jewish children? Or were you not allowed...were there some Jewish children you were not allowed to play with?

D.K. I never heard such a thing. Jews, among themselves, used to play. Why not? Even the, the Christians. Of course, the Christians didn't like to play, because we didn't like the Christians...but, no such a thing, not allowed to play. We weren't allowed to play with girls...the Orthodox boys.

L.B. You were not?

D.K. Orthodox boys, of course not.

L.B. Right.

D.K. But with boys...why not, sure, we used to play.

L.B. Cause I have, my father was only allowed to play with certain boys in the town...in his village.

D.K. What do you mean, "with certain boys"?

L.B. Only boys that came from the same...um...class.

520 D.K. Well, this is natural, you see. Well, I was a yeshiva bocha...uh, to me, I had no interest to play...with boys, that were shoemakers, you know. I didn't play with them because they, there they used to have, I wouldn't want to talk with them about shoes. So I used to play with the yeshiva bocha, we used to talk about the Comorra, about the studies...That, that's the reason, but not, no such a thing you're not allowed. Uh, I used to go with a nice girl, her father was a  
530 blacksmith. Of course, ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup>, this girl was an intelligent girl, so I used to...  
533 um, play with her, why not? I wouldn't marry her, because? yichus...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But, for the...

L.B. Say that...say, say, uh...

D.K. Yeah?

L.B. You would have lost yichus, you'd have lost status.

D.K. It was a lo...yeah, sure...it was a lower, he was a schneide, you know, blacksmith.

L.B. I was a yeshiva bocha, a student...you know what I mean? And my father was a businessman, a , and he was schneiden.

L.B. Was she pretty?

D.K. Oh yeah.

L.B. (Laughs). Too bad.

D.K. Yeah, she's in Israel today.

L.B. Huh?

D.K. The girl's in Israel today.

L.B. She is?

D.K. And her husband is a dentist.

L.B. So she did all right.

D.K. She did all right.

L.B. Right. (Laughs). That's funny. But, you know, at the time it must have been very, very important. Suppose you had...suppose you had decided to marry this girl?

D.K. It was no tragedy, you know, but it is , it wouldn't look nice.

L.B. You know,

L.B. People would say, "Look..."

D.K. People would say...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Uh, uh, Motel Kam, my father's name was Motel, Motel Kam...uh,?

L.B. That his son married a blacksmith's daughter.

D.K. ...blacksmith's daughter...

L.B. Right, right.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Now, I spoke to a woman the other night, who was telling me about her marriage, and her marriage was arranged...for her, by her father, between her father and the, and the boy's father.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. Now, did you marry in Europe?

D.K. Yes.

L.B. You married while you were in Europe?

D.K. Yeah, in Poroszova.

L.B. Was your marriage arranged?

D.K. No.

L.B. No?

D.K. No. You see, I'll tell you. Uh...the girl I married, she was a teacher, a Russian teacher, and I was a Hebrew teacher, so we had something in common to talk about. So we went out together until we fell in love and got married.

L.B. Was there such a thing as arranged marriages in your town?

D.K. No, by the Hasidim....., but misnagdim didn't have it....married...you know, uh, you know they had matchmakers, sure...

L.B. Yeah?

D.K. It happened, a matchmaker brought together the groom...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...a boy and a girl. But it wasn't arranged through the parents without the, the knowledge of the children. No, not in our...town.

L.B. No, huh?

D.K. Used to be by the Hasidim, by the fanatics.

L.B. No, this woman was not a Chusid, but she was from the Ukraine...a very small town in the Ukraine.

D.K. Yeah, and then, how many years was it?

L.B. She's going to be 90.

D.K. Oh, 90, maybe, uh, uh, 70 years ago, 75 years ago, uh, everything turned out. But now...

L.B. She was younger, she was about 15 when she married.

D.K. Oh, she was 15, that was over 70 years.

L.B. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

D.K. Uh, everything? , but not in our town, you know...uh, in Lithuania we, we call it, there were Litvaks, in Litvak they call it a tsellem kup, you know?

L.B. No, I know a, what a kup is, but not a tsellem. What's a tsellem?

D.K. A, a tsellem, "a cross"...a tsellem, "a cross", you know?

L.B. Yeah, like "a Christian head"?

D.K. That's right.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. It's a tsellem kup.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. He's a? , you know, he's a? you know, he's a... he's no good, he's not a good Jew.

L.B. If he was a Litvak?

D.K. Yeah. Even today they say, "A Litvak...?"

A goy...

L.B. He's not pious...

D.K. A goy.

L.B. He's a Christian.

D.K. He's a goy.

L.B. A goy.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Why do they say that?

D.K. Uh, because, uh, the, uh, Lithuanian Jew, they didn't recognize the Hasidim. They, they said the Hasidim are too fanatic, they're old-fashioned, uh, their clothing, and their whole, uh, environment...

L.B. You mean, they rejected them?

D.K. Uh, they didn't rejected them, but we despised them, you know?

L.B. Yes, I know. So, were you of that group?

D.K. Oh, I was a Litvak, of course. I didn't care for Hasidim, I never knew them before.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But I know the Hasidim are too fanatics, you know, too old-fashioned.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. The whole behaviour was, uh...it was 200 years ago...too old. So that, that's why they called the Litvaks a tsellem kup, you know, a goy. You know, uh, he had in the mind...? tsellem, you know, a christ, a cross.

L.B. Yeah. He's, he's next door to being a Christian.

D.K. ...a Christian.

L.B. (Long pause). So, you went to yeshiva until 21.

D.K. Until 21.

L.B. The Germans came...

D.K. The Germans came, and when the Germans left in uh....1819...

L.B. 1918.

D.K. In 1918, 1918, between '18, '18, uh, '18 and '19...So, uh, I was, uh..... with my girl I used to, to...we used to go together, and study together, and read together, and then we got married.

L.B. And you were living, then, in independent Poland.

D.K. Inde,,,yes, in Poland.

L.B. You were then, it was Poland then, right?

D.K. It was Poland, yeah.

L.B. How, how was it when the Germans occupied?

D.K. It was not bad.

L.B. It was not bad?

D.K. No, it was not bad at all. Of course, they were, uh, occupants, you know, they were, uh...um...uh, you can't expect...they should treat us like Germans.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Because, uh, if they needed grain, or they needed metal, or something, they just take it away, but, but they paid money for that, they took nothing from us without, without pay. Suppose they needed, uh, skins, to make leather...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So they took away from my father a couple hundred skins...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But they paid him the regular price, the market price.

L.B. How, how did you feel about the Russians?

D.K. Well, we were glad we got rid of the Russians.

L.B. You were?

D.K. Because we were afraid of the Cossacks, you know.

L.B. Yeah. And how did you feel about the Poles?

D.K. The Poles were no good, the Poles were anti-Semites. Not in our town, uh... but, I knew, in Poland, the pogroms, you know...In our town it was quiet, we didn't...

L.B. It was quiet in your town?

D.K. Was quiet....yeah.

L.B. Did you have incidents, yourself, of, individual incidents?

D.K. No....I wouldn't say, uh...personal incident, never had it, no.

L.B. Just what you heard?

D.K. What I heard. Sometimes I...uh...I heard, uh, when a Jew is quarrelling with a, with a Christian, to be...to tell him, "Dirty Jew."

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. But not more.

L.B. But still, the feeling, amongst the Jews...

D.K. We were friendly with them.

L.B. You were friendly?

D.K. Friends with them, but socially we kept separate. We were se~~pa~~parate, we never, um, socialized together...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...with the gentiles, never.

L.B. (pause). Was this by choice, you think?

D.K. Yes, by choice.

L.B. Uh, on both...

43 D.K. We used to? with them, they were our customers, we had a store.

L.B. Yeah...yeah.

D.K. Because, naturally, they were all gentiles.

L.B. How did you dress, how did you dress? Did you dress, uh, so that you'd be recognized as a Jew?

D.K. Same thing here....the same thing as here.

L.B. You didn't wear the, the hat?

D.K. No, no, no, that was in Poland, the Polish Jews.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. We, the same dressing as here, the same thing, modern dress.

L.B. You did dress that way?

104 D.K. Yeah. You know the, the Hasidim, they used to call the' Jews  
"al deutschen", they are Germans.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. Deutsche, the deutsche, a deutsche juden.

L.B. That's what I heard.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. About the Polish Je...they...

D.K. That's right.

L.B. They called me, who? The Lithuanian and the Polish Jews?

D.K. The Lithuanians, they are deuschen, and a deutsche means a...

L.B. A German.

D.K. ...a', a COY.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. I've heard that.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Is that true?

D.K. Of course.

L.B. Were you a deutsche?

D.K. Yeah, sure. Uh, by the Hasidin I was a deutsch.

L.B. But, in yourself, how did you think?

D.K. What I think, I, well I'm a Jew, I was an Orthodox Jew, not strictly Orthodox, I was not a fanatic.

L.B. I understand, yeah.

D.K. But I was a good Jew. Especially, a Zionist, I was always a Zionist.

L.B. You were always a Zionist?

D.K. Oh, a Zionist...!

L.B. Now, how did that happen, was that whole section of Europe, of, of Poland, was that all Zionist? Or was it just your town?

D.K. Eh, well, in, in the large towns, the different groups, uh, the Bundists, if you know...the Bund...There were assimilationists, and, uh, other groups...uh, anarchists. But in a small town, uh, we had only 150 families, you, you, you couldn't have too many groups.

L.B. No.

D.K. You know, if you want to belong to something, you have to belong to the, the group, it was a Zionist group, that's all.

L.B. Right, that's the, there was...

D.K. Even if you felt different...

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. You sympathized with a different group, but you have no choice, if you want to be together in a group, and to socialize there...you had to go in the, uh, in the organization...the one they have in that town. We only had a Zionist organization.

L.B. Now, in that Zionist organization, were there other kinds of people? Were there anarchists and assimilationists and socialists and communists?

D.K. Yeah, yeah, a few singles, you know, uh, one here, one there...but, uh, they did...they couldn't act like, like anarchists...or assimilationists.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So, they didn't go to shul, on Saturday...?

L.B. Oh, is that how they showed it?

D.K. Yeah. Or, some of them used to smoke on Saturdays, they didn't, nobody see it, you know...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. They, they wouldn't do it in, in front of, uh, uh...of Jewish people, they were afraid.

L.B. Now, you know, like this woman I was telling you about, whose marriage was arranged...she was saying that, uh, the opinion of other...

769

(Tape ends)

Side 2

000

L.B. ...er, she told me, was very strong. Now, she had beautiful black hair, as a young girl, and she refused to shave her...I'll get it...she refused to shave her hair and wear a sheitel. So her mother-in-law never spoke to her, or would let her in her house. Because, she said, "Du bist nicht a trimmeh...You're not a pious Jewish woman."

D.K. That's right.

L.B. And, "What will people say?" Is this true?

D.K. That was true in the town where you have Hasidim...but not in, in, in Lithuania, there were misnagdim....young girls never wear sheitels...

L.B. No, what I'm, I'm not talking about sheitels, I'm talking about the, the force of public opinion. Was it very strong?

D.K. The public wa...was of opinion, we didn't, uh, uh, work on Saturday, Uh...

L.B. If you smoked, you did it in secret.

D.K. We didn't smoke in front of Jewish people.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Uh, but, uh...I wouldn't say they forced somebody....it was not nice, you know what I mean? He's a goy...they would say..."

L.B. By force I don't mean...uh, you know, physical force, but I mean there's a strong pressure from, from people.

D.K. Well, not, not in Lithuania.

L.B. No?

D.K. No...not in Lithuania. Of course, a lot of people didn't go to shul, many people. And many people, ...not kosher.

L.B. They ate things...

D.K. But they...ate...

L.B. ...that were not kosher?

D.K. ...kosher, and people knew it....but they were...but nobody, uh, was going to say anything to them.

L.B. So it was already changing?

D.K. Yeah, sure. It didn't...

L.B. So, it was, sort of, beginning to assimilate?

D.K. Yes.

L.B. And how did these people look at themselves? Did they see themselves as partly Russian, or going towards Poland, or more like the Germans?

D.K. More like the Germans.

L.B. This is...

D.K. The Germans were more modern.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. So they said, "This is too old-fashioned. We have to be modern. We should do like the German...Jews doing."

L.B. So, what they wanted to cop...

D.K. They went to, they went to, uh, high school, the high school, uh, they call it gymnasia...

L.B. Yes.

D.K. Gymna...gymnasia...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Now, if you went to high school in Russia...in Russia the schools is open 6 days a week, on Saturday too.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And you had to go in school on Saturday, and write on Saturday. So the, uh, the people, they are the strict Orthodox, they couldn't send the children to high school, because in high school you had to...work on Saturday.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And you had to travel, Saturdays, to the high school.

L.B. Right.

D.K. And you had to carry the books on Saturday.

L.B. Right.

D.K. You see? In the large towns...so, the, the...uh, there were all kinds, different groups. You know...the public opinion's different, because in a large town, they have a group, a generation is in a group by himself...

L.B. Yes, yes.

D.K. So we, we were not single people that could, uh, be afraid, or could, uh, wouldn't want to tell them something....because they're a group by themselves.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But, uh, in a small town, he is, he's one, uhh...he is not real kashrus... so he was afraid, I mean...he, he, he...

L.B. Yeah, he had no support.

D.K. ...he did it...nobody should know it, nobody should see it. But people knew it and they kept quiet.

L.B. But what, uh, what, the other question that I asked you was that, if you were going to...copy, or try to be like anyone, it would have been the Germans, because you felt they were the most modern.

D.K. That's right, that's why we call it a Ger...a, a...

L.B. A deutsche.

D.K. A, a deutsch.

L.B. Was, uh, what is Isaac Bashevis Singer? Is he a Galician?

D.K. Who?

L.B. Isaac Bashevis Singer, the writer...Bashevis...

D.K. He is a, a Galician, yes.

L.B. He is?

D.K. Yes.

L.B. He's not a deutsche, is he?

D.K. No, he, uh...uh...he's a modern Jew, he's not a Orthodox Jew. All the writers, or, um, let's say 99%, they're not Orthodox Jews.

L.B. Mm.

D.K. There were orthodox writers, too...but, uh, uh, in...uh, 90, 99%, Lucille, were not, were not Orthodox...they're modern Jews, already, they studied, they went to colleges...Universities, they went to....uh, uh, different countries, studied in Switzerland, in Italy...So they became modern, already.

L.B. Now let me ask you about you. You went to 3 yeshivas.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. 4, 3?

D.K. 3.

L.B. And before that you went to cheder.

D.K. Cheder.

L.B. Did you ever go to, and did you go to the Russian public school, too?

D.K. No.

L.B. No. Now...

D.K. First, we had in our town...we had a school.

L.B. Yeah. elementary

D.K. A public school, just a, a...public school, ~~the~~ school, that's all we had.

L.B. Yeah, who ran that?

D.K. Only gentiles went to school.

L.B. Only gen...

D.K. Jews didn't go to the, to the public school...because, in public school, they had to go on Saturday, too. You see? So that's why everybody, went to cheder. And that...if you wanted, uh, to study Russian, with Russian teachers, Jews. Like my wife, my wife was a Russian teacher.

L.B. Now that's what I was going to ask you. Did you learn Russian, and Russian history, and Russian literature?

D.K. Yes.

L.B. Where?

D.K. In, in our town.

L.B. You had a special teacher?

D.K. A teacher, the one that became my wife later.

L.B. Oh, she was your teacher?

D.K. She was my teacher.

L.B. Ohhhh...

D.K. I, you see...I was her teacher in Hebrew, and she teach me...Russian.

L.B. I see.

D.K. Russian and math, and Russian history. Of course, I didn't have the full course...because I started late, I started when I was 21.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. I knew Russian a little, but, uh...uh, not systematically, then I learn something...

L.B. Can, can you speak Russian?

D.K. Oh yes.

L.B. You can read it?

D.K. I could read it, I could speak, sure.

L.B. And you can write it?

D.K. Write it, I...

L.B. All right...

D.K. I have even some Russian books here.

L.B. All right, now you...

D.K. I have here Pushkin...all the writings of Pushkin, here...right here.

L.B. So you...I, I see. So what, what you, I want to figure out how many languages. You have Yiddish...

D.K. I have...

L.B. What did you speak at home? Was it Yiddish?

D.K. Yiddish.

L.B. Your parents spoke Yiddish?

D.K. Yiddish.

L.B. Not Polish?

D.K. No.

L.B. O.K. So, and you spoke Yiddish, too, then and to your brothers and sister?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. So you have Yiddish.

D.K. Yiddish.

L.B. You have Hebrew.

D.K. Hebrew and Russian.

L.B. And Russian.

D.K. And then, when the Germans were...in our town, in the First World War, when they occupied our country; so I studied German. So I knew German, too. Now I forgot already.

L.B. What? The German?

D.K. The German language.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Yeah, I knew the German language, I studied for 3 years.

L.B. You did?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. And now you know English. So that's 5.

D.K. Now I know English, not so good, you know, you can hear it, my English.

L.B. No, but that's an accent, but your, your English, the command of the language is very good, so I wouldn't worry about that. That's, uh, so that's 5 languages. Did you ever study French, or Latin?

D.K. Latin I did study...yes.

L.B. Where? In the yeshiva? No...that...no...

D.K. Not in yeshiva...no. That was between the First World, uh, uh...when the Germans come in...to our town...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And I had, and I couldn't go to yeshiva no more...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So I was studying, as a pharmacist, I went to be a pharmacist.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. And to have a pharmacy, you got to know a little Latin. So I studied Latin.

L.B. All right, now, when the Germans came in, in 1916, what was the feeling, uh, not only you, but among the other people in the town? Who, could you say whom they wanted to win the war?

D.K. Well, in our town, even the, the, the gentiles...wanted the Germans to win, because they were Poles, you know, Poles...

L.B. Yeah, uh huh.

D.K. Catholics.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. They didn't like the Russians. So, they got rid from the...they were glad to get rid of the Russians.... And, of course, the Jews...uh, certainly they were glad, uh...they didn't like the Russians, didn't like the pogroms, anti-Semitism, and the limitations, you know.

L.B. Even though they had not experienced it in their town?

Even though in your town, nothing had happened...yeah...

D.K. We knew it, we knew it from, from the newspapers, and the stories, and from the history, that in Russia was always anti-Semites...til today.

L.B. Who, in your opinion, who's a worse anti-Semite, a Pole or a Russian?

D.K. Well, I think a Pole.

L.B. Why?

D.K. I don't know why, their...the history, why they were, uh...

L.B. No, why do you feel it?

D.K. Uh...why do I feel it?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Because, in our town we didn't, we never felt it, you know. Because in our town, they, they were, they were Catholics, not Poles; you know there's a big difference...they were Catholics. But...

L.B. But most Poles are Catholics.

D.K. ...not, it was not Lithuanians, you know, history...

L.B. Oh, oh, oh.

D.K. No, they were, they were...they were never....it was a time, uh, when Poland, won a war and they occupied our, our...neighborhood, our region. But it was never, historically, it was never Poland.

L.B. It was Lithuania.

D.K. But, since they were Catholics, and Catholics, the Russians...didn't like Catholics.

L.B. Right.

D.K. In fact, they took over a lot of Russian...Ca...Polish churches, they converted them into...in, uh, Russian churches. So they hate the...the Russians, too...the Catholics. So that's why they want to get rid of them, we were glad when the Germans occupied our little...uh, our neighborhood.

L.B. But you said...what you said was that these people were not really Poles.

D.K. So that's why...

L.B. What, what were they, if they...

D.K. That's why it was no anti-Semitism in our town.

L.B. What were they?

D.K. They didn't like the Jews, I didn't say they love it...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Because they were not real Poles, they were hating the Russians, too.

L.B. What they were, if they were not real Poles?

D.K. They were, just Catholics, let's see, like the Italians are Catholics.

L.B. No, but they had to have some national origin.

D.K. The national or...origin, they was Lithuanian, years ago.

L.B. All right. That's what I want. That's, there was a separate section.

D.K. Or White Russian, White Russian. It was never Pole...I mean, historically, it was never Poland there.

L.B. O.K., that's right, all right, I understand. Now, um...so you were, you and, you think, the, the people in your town and in your area, were mostly pro-German, right?

D.K. The, the Catholics were pro-German?

L.B. And the Jews, too?

D.K. But, the villages, uh, uh, all around the town, they were Russians, so they were against the Germans.

L.B. Oh.

D.K. They were Russian, they were speaking Russian, or White Russian, not Polish, they didn't talk Polish.

L.B. Oh.

D.K. They didn't like the Poles.

L.B. So the Poles and Lithuanians were in favor of the Germans, and the Jews were in favor of the Germans.

D.K. Yes...the Germans, but the Russians...

L.B. And, the Russians, and the White Russians...

D.K. They hate the Germans, sure.

L.B. ...were, were for the Russians. O.K. Now, when, um, after the, the peace treaty, and Poland became independent...

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. That was in...1918...19...

D.K. 19...19, '19...

L.B. ...'19.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. All right, what happened to you then?

D.K. Oh...to me? Our town became Poland.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Till...about Minsk, you know, they took away the whole region. So, it became Poland, and I got married....and, I had a store, a hardware store. But, business was not so good, so I left Poland, and I went to Belgium...Antwerp. And over there I was 2 years.

L.B. What did you do there?

D.K. Over there I was a diamond cutter.

L.B. You learned a new trade?

D.K. I learned a new trade, to cut diamonds. They call it a cleaver, they call it a, a...cleaving diamonds.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. And then it happened, a crisis in the diamond? , so I came to this country.

L.B. When you were in Antwerp, did you work for a Jewish....jeweler?

D.K. Of course, of course.

L.B. Why of course?

D.K. Not for a jeweler, for a manufacturer of diamonds.

L.B. All right. And why of course?

D.K. Because the manufacturers of diamonds were all Jews.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. In Belgium, and in Holland.

L.B. Did you know someone?

D.K. 100%.

L.B. Did you know someone, or did you just go and look?

D.K. Well, I had a brother-in-law there....in Antwerp. He was the rabbi there.

L.B. That's your...

D.K. The rabbi of Antwerp.

L.B. ...your wife's brother?

D.K. My wife's brother was the rabbi of Antwerp. So, and he, he sent me a certificate, I should be able to come. You know, you got to have papers to, you couldn't....get a visa...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...to go to, uh, to Belgium, without a, without certificate, without a visa... somebody wants you there. You know what I mean? So my brother sent me papers, my brother-in-law...and I came to Antwerp.

L.B. Now, uh...if I could take you back to Poland. In 1917, the War between Germany and Russia ended, and the Czar was overthrown...

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Oh no the, well the war actually ended after that, but the Czar was overthrown, and Kerensky was...the head of the government. Did you know about this?

D.K. Of course we knew, we read newspapers.

L.B. Were...yeah, but some people told me they didn't know and they didn't care.

D.K. Because they didn't read, I used to read, I got the German newspaper.

L.B. Were you interested?

D.K. Yeah, I used to know German, and I ~~was~~ a German newspaper.

L.B. Were you interested in what was happening over there?

D.K. Of course.

L.B. Why?

D.K. What do you mean, why? Because I was, uh, uh, I was, in Israel, interested, to hear, to know the news, what they're in, in Russia, or in France, and all over the world. I was intelligent boy....and, uh, I was interested to know, of course I was.

L.B. Did you feel that the, uh, overthrow of the Czar had anything, any import, for the Jews?

D.K. Oh yes. In fact...I was, the first time...when the, the Communists took over...

L.B. Now wait...

194 D.K. ?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. After Kerensky.

L.B. After Kerensky.

D.K. I was a communist.

L.B. O.K.

D.K. For 2 months. Then, the Russian....it was a war between Russia and Poland, if you remember.

L.B. Well this is what I'm, I'm just beginning to get clear in my mind.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. What started that war between Russia and Poland?

D.K. The war started between Russia and Poland because....um, Poland became independent.

L.B. Right.

D.K. And she took away parts of, uh, of Russia, you know...

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. ...that belongs to Russia, like our town.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. It's now Russia, too.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And uh, uhh...uh...Bialystok...Grodno...and so forth....Slonim...Wilna... Russia didn't like it, so Russia declared war on Poland. That was the war, the war be...the, that was the...the Communist Russia, already....with Poland.

L.B. That was the Communist...

D.K. It was Communist Russia, was at war with Poland, sure....Communist Russia.

L.B. Now what year was this? Do you remember? What year?

D.K. It was in 1918 and 1919.

L.B. And who were the generals?

D.K. After the Germans left...after the Germans left, so Poland took over.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Uh, our town. Und then the Russians declared war on Poland, and they took it back.

L.B. Who did they send in for their generals? Do you remember who the generals, the Russian generals, were?

D.K. Oh, there was a lot of them. Well, I'll tell you....then Russia took over our town.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. And they start to mobilize all the young people, took in the Army, because they figured it was theirs...it was theirs before...

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. So I left, I run away. I smuggled over to Lithuania, to Wilna. Wilna, if you remember, Lithuania was a, uh, independent country.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. Uh, a, a few years, not a few years...

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. ...between the First World War and the Second World War.

L.B. Right, right.

D.K. So I went to Lithuania. And...the Bolsheviki occupied our town.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. In, uh, uh, then...I...I saw that the Communists...is not what I like it, and I was against communism, so I was only a communist for 7, 8 weeks, that's all.

L.B. But actually, you were in favor of Kerensky? Were you?

D.K. Well, yeah, Kerensky was not a communist...

L.B. No, I understand, but I'm trying to follow you.

D.K. I was in favor of Kerensky, but then, it was when Lenin took it over...

L.B. When Lenin and Trotsky took over, you thought that was all right, too?

D.K. I, I figured it was all right.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Of course I didn't know, I didn't see what they do.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But here they, they occupied our town.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Und, uh, I, I see what they do, so I say, "No, that's not communism. That's barbarism."

L.B. Now tell me something. You didn't like the Poles...and you didn't like the Russians, but when the Russians came in, to take back ta...land that had been theirs previously...

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. ...you felt that was barbarism, why?

D.K. Not because they, they coveted land, I mean the way they treated the people.

L.B. Chhh.

D.K. That's why. And it, you know, when they came, it was, uh, uh, everything, you couldn't buy even a pound of bread....you know, they, it, it, you're not allowed to have a store, we had a store, we had to close the store. My father had merchandise, they requisitioned it...they took it away, everything. You know what happened in, in the first years, in Russia. So we, we were suffering from that. So we were figuring, uh, that, bojour, a bojour, everything on the bojour; my father was a merchant. You know what I mean?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And we had a store. So, when, then when the, then when the Bolsheviki came in...we had no more store, my father wasn't a merchant....so we were starving. Not me...everybody.

L.B. Yeah. (Pause). Now, Poland, the Polish Army...got rid of the Russians, didn't they?

D.K. Yes.

L.B. They did? What year was that?

D.K. It was 2, uh, 2, in our...town, the Russians were about 2 weeks, only, 2, 2 months...2 months. And then the Poles chased them out.

L.B. And then the borders went back to what, uh...uh, the treaty...the...

D.K. The border was...went back far away from our town, about 100 miles, Russian miles, maybe.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. (Pause). Til near Minsk...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Almost near Minsk.

L.B. Yeah. So, then there was still an independent Poland. Did you go back to Poland then?

D.K. I have to go back, of course, yeah, then I came back.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. When the, the Poles came back.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. See, I ran away because I didn't want to go to the, um... Russian Army.

L.B. Russian Army, uh, yeah.

D.K. When Poland took it over...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...I came back to Poland.

L.B. Now, then, you said, then there were hard times, so that was when you left for Antwerp.

D.K. Yeah, that was in 19...25.

L.B. Oh, so that was quite, that was almost 5 years later.

D.K. Yeah, 5, 6 years later.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Then I went to Belgium, and from Belgium I came here.

L.B. So you got here about what year?

D.K. Really I came here in 1927.

L.B. That was quite late.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. Most Jews had come much earlier.

D.K. Much earlier?

L.B. The Eastern European Jews, the ma...the, most of them came much earlier.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. (Long pause). Did you come straight to, uh, the United States, or...

D.K. New York.

L.B. You did? You didn't go to Canada? How did you get here?

D.K. I was a stowaway.

L.B. Oh, that's right. So, you didn't have papers, you didn't have anything.

D.K. Nothing, I had no papers, I didn't have no passport, nothing, the passport I threw it away, because I'm afraid if I have a, uh, the passport...maybe, uh, the police will get me...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And I had no visa, nothing, in the passport, so I threw away the passport.

L.B. (Whispering -- I want to see'). So, here you are, illegally. Where's your wife?

D.K. My wife, back in Belgium.

L.B. She stayed?

D.K. She stayed there for 3 years. Uh, after I was 3 years here...so the Congress made a new law, all the one that came in illegally, they should report to the police...and they'll legalize them. Then I brought my wife...and our child, I had one child then....the older boy.

L.B. How did you earn a living during those 3 years, if you were here illegally?

D.K. Well, I had here a cousin, who had a factory....of underwear, ladies' underwear.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. He's still here. So, he took me in, in the shop, and he learned me a trade, to be a cutter.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. And then I went to school, and learned pattern making, and designing.

L.B. Where did you go to school?

D.K. In New York.

L.B. I know, what, what school? Who ran the school?

D.K. It was a private school...College of Designing, they used to call it. I don't know what, uh, if the, the school still exists or not. But they had a private school, they called College of Designing, by the name of Rosenfeld. And I went there a short time, and I learned the trade...pattern making, designing. And I remained with this line....til I retired.

L.B. Whom did you work for?

D.K. Well, the first, uh, job, I worked for my cousin, you know.

L.B. No, I mean as a design maker, and a pattern maker?

D.K. No, first, as a cutter I worked for my cousin.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. Then I, then I, I learned...the trade, pattern-making...so I got a job through a...a newspaper, it was a, a, a newspaper, English newspaper, "The World", if you remember.

L.B. Yes.

D.K. "The World".

L.B. Yes.

D.K. In, in the World, it was an advertisement, they were looking for a pattern maker. And, so I answered it, the, the, uh, the ad, with a letter; and then I was called for an interview, and they put me on, and I was working there 31 years in one place.

L.B. What firm was that? Do you remember?

D.K. What firm?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. You mean what was the name of the firm?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Uh, uh, uh...Livingston Brothers, Livingston Brothers.

L.B. Was it men's clothing, or women's?

D.K. No, no, uh...

L.B. It was women's?

D.K. Women's, women's clothing, we used to make, uh...blouses, skirts, beachwear...

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. Slacks...um...bras...And I was, uh, beauty designing all that.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. I was a designer. And I worked there, the same place, until I retired...31 years.

L.B. Now, did you go to school while you were in the United States, at all? Did you learn English through school?

D.K. I went to school, I started to go, uh, in a school, to a private school, it was a ~~school~~ school, Preparatory School, on East Broadway.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. It was a private school. Uh...it used to cost \$10/month. So I went for a couple months, and then I had to stop because, in the place where I was working, I had to work overtime...

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. ...til 7:00, 8:00 in the evening. So...and work Saturdays, and sometimes Sunday, half a day. So...physically it was impossible.

L.B. Yeah, yeah.

D.K. I used to work about 60 hours a week, 50 hours, 60 hours; so I had to stop it.

L.B. Mm. (Pause). Do you do much, are you still reading? Did you do much reading during this time, or were you so, uh, working so many hours that you weren't able to read?

D.K. Umm, yes, I'll tell you. When I learned the trade...and, I felt I could, uh, earn some more, so I got a job, so I was working 5 days a week only, and I belonged to the union, I had to belong...the union...

L.B. Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

D.K. ...the shops were...uh, not Amalgamated, International.

L.B. I.L.G.W.U.

D.K. International.

L.B. Yeah, O.K.

D.K. See, I was not, I didn't get anything from the Union, because I was the manager of the place, foreman.

L.B. Ohh.

D.K. But, see, the shop was a union shop, so I had to belong to the union, too. And I belonged to the union, and we used to work 35 hours a week...uh, we weren't allowed to work more...uh, I was not allowed to work overtime. So I only worked 35 hours a week, 5 days a week, so I had plenty time to read and to study, and go to museums, and...and, uh, I had a class...All my time, I had a class Friday night, with a group, and studied with them the Bible, and Talmud, all the time.

L.B. Where did you live?

D.K. In the Bronx.

L.B. In the Bronx?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. And where was your place of work?

D.K. My place work was in, uh, the last job, which was 31 years, was on... uh, Thirty...third Street, and Broadway, across Macy's, Macy's on...between 4th and...

L.B. Is that right? Yeah.

D.K. Macy's was 3rd and 4th...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And our shop was just across Macy's on 33rd Street, on 33rd Street, and, uh, between Broadway and 7th Avenue. I was there, I was 31 years in the same place, still I retired...until I retired.

L.B. So you had to come down from the Bronx, to Manhattan, every day?

D.K. Yeah, that's right, yeah, I went by the subway, of course.

L.B. Yeah. And where were all the, where was the study group, and so on?

D.K. Study group was in the Bronx.

L.B. In the Bronx?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. What kind of people, were, did you live amongst Jews up there?

D.K. All the time, all among Jews....sure. Bron...Bronx was a Jewish neighborhood all the time.

L.B. Was it, uh, Eastern European Jews, or were there German Jews, too?

D.K. Hmm, uh, no, mm, German Jews were, maybe some of them, one or two...It was, uh, used to have, uh, Galicians, Rumanians...uh, Russian Jews, mostly Russian Jews, Polish Jews....Hungarians, you know, all kinds.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. Immigrants.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. Some of them American born already.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And I used to, we had a...I used to belong to a Zionist organization. In the Bronx we had....a club, the...the name was...The West Bronx Paoli Zionists. You know what the paoli Zionists? So we used to, we had a club, we used to meet every Friday night. Und....before we started the meeting, we...you know it, uh, it was a political organization, a Zionist organization, so we used to study the Bible. And I was, Friday, I was the teacher there.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. I didn't get paid for that.

L.B. No.

D.K. It was just a hobby.

L.B. Yeah...right.

D.K. I, I did it for 40 years.

L.B. Tell me something. Uh, we, we ask everybody the same question. If you had, you came to...Antwerp, and you lived there 3 years?

D.K. 2 years.

L.B. 2 years. And you learned a trade.

D.K. Yes.

L.B. And you were there from, uhhh, '26 to '28. Is that correct? 1926 to 1928?

D.K. '25, yes, when the...in '25 to '27.

L.B. From 1925 to 1927. At that time, did it ever occur to you, as a Zionist, to go to Palestine?

D.K. Yes. But...I'll tell you. It was very hard to go to Palestine, you know... when the English mandate was there.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So, it was limited...

L.B. Yes, I know.

D.K. Immigration, they limited. You could only go if you had 5000....ruble.... Russian rubbles. And then, uh, the, uh...if you had 1000 pounds, English pounds, I didn't have the money. If you had that kind of money, you get, you get a visa. If you didn't have the money you couldn't go there...unless you get a certificate from an organization, and this, it was hard to get, you had to have, you had to have a pull, you know. So I couldn't go to Palestine. And then,

I was married already.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. And the family was in Poland, <sup>yet</sup> for 3 years. They came to Antwerp after, uh, later.

L.B. You mean your wife and your child?

D.K. Yeah, my wife...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. ...and child, there. So I had to make a living.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And I had a chance to go America, so I went to America.

L.B. (Pause). I see. When did the, uh, I don't remember now, what year did the British clamp down on the amount of immigration? Was it about 1923? Do you remember?

D.K. Uh, no, later.

L.B. It was later than that?

D.K. It was in 1929, '28. And then, uh, then when the White Paper, that's in 1932. The White Paper, if you remember.

L.B. Yeah. It...

D.K. Uhh, it was after the pogroms, they had the pogroms from the...from the Arabs. So the...British was afraid for the Arabs...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And they had to satisfy them.

L.B. Right.

D.K. So they limited immigration.

L.B. Right. I thought it was earlier than that. It was '20, not '32, was it? It was '22.

D.K. No, in '22 it was no...uh...

L.B. It was still easy?

D.K. It was easy, yeah.

L.B. Yeah?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. But nobody was much interested, then.

D.K. Well, who had money to go there?

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. You know, in, in Palestine, there was no factories there...

L.B. Right, right.

D.K. Unless you, you'd be a chaltutz.

L.B. Right.

D.K. A pioneer.

L.B. Right.

D.K. Uh, not, uh, every...want to be, wanted to be a pioneer.

L.B. No.

D.K. And then, uh, I was already married, so I couldn't, I have to support a family, so I couldn't go pioneering there...and work for a, just for, to make a, to eat, to, to get room and board, that's all that they made there.

L.B. Mm hm. So you were a communist for 2 months?

D.K. For 2 months, until I, until I, I recognized them, I, I saw them.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So I dropped it.

L.B. Were you ever a socialist?

D.K. I, I'm still a socialist.

L.B. In the sense of a Poali Zi...

D.K. Poali Zionists were socialists, sure.

L.B. Yeah...yeah. (Long pause). Have you read a lot, uh, in politics? Do you keep in touch with political events, as they happen?

D.K. Yes, sure.

L.B. But you never joined an organization, or did you?

D.K. Well, the Coali Zionists were a socialist organization.

L.B. Other, other than...yes, other than that?

D.K. No.

L.B. That was the only thing you ever joined?

D.K. Well, the Forbond, you know, that Koenigsburg belongs.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. This is, we're a socialist organization.

L.B. Now what is the Forbond? How was it different from the Coali Zion?

D.K. Well the difference, Forbond, besides we're a socialist...we are, um... a fraternal organization, too.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. Supposed...there are cemeteries.

L.B. Social...oh.

D.K. With doctor service.

L.B. Oh.

D.K. You know. And...

L.B. What does "Forbond" mean?

D.K. Forbond means, um...um...an organization, that, to give...forbond means "together".

L.B. "To bind".

D.K. "To bind together."

L.B. Mm.

D.K. To bind together these kind of people with these ideas.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. That means "Forbond." See, the Forbond is really more, now...more than a fraternal organization. Since the establishment of Israel, so we have very little to do with politics, politics Israel is doing now.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Before we had to make the politics for them.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. Now they do it themselves.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. But it's still remains a fraternal organization.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. They have cemeteries, they have doctor service. And, uh, they have cultural, um...pro...projects.

L.B. Uh huh.

D.K. Uhh, a journal, they call it!

L.B. Oh, is that the Forbond journal?

D.K. That's the Forbond journal.

L.B. Mm.

D.K. It...it's the Forbond journal.

L.B. Mm hm.

D.K. Forbond, uh, the Zionists...together.

L.B. Let me see now, how we're doing. No, we still have some time on here. Now...

D.K. There's "The Frontier", our English paper.

L.B. That's a Forbond paper?

D.K. Yeah, "The Frontier", Forbond and Coali Zionist are the same thing. You ever saw "The Frontier"?

L.B. No, I'm just trying to...

D.K. It's in the English language.

L.B. Yeah, no, I never saw it. Now, I want to see if there's anything that I should have asked you that I didn't. Tell me something....When you were growing up....who were your heroes?

11. My heroes were, were...the Jewish historic heroes, let's say, the Maccabees. You know who the Maccabees were?
12. Yeah.
13. And...the tanoyim and the anaurim. You know what the Tanoyim is?
14. Now wait a minute...
15. Tanoyim means...
16. They were the ones that put together the Tanach.
17. ...the ones that collected the Talmud.
18. Right.
19. Not Tanach, the Talmud.
20. Oh, not the Tanach? The Talmud?
21. The Talmud. The Tanach was a different group...And these are the heroes, Rabbi Akiva...uh, , which you know, if you know...
22. Yes.
23. ...if you ever heard the name.
24. Yeah, yeah.
25. D.K. This kind of people...those were my heroes. My hero was Abram?
26. Uh huh.
27. King David, King Solomon, and so forth, they were my heroes, and they are my heroes up to today.
28. Well, did you read...in modern political Zionism?
29. Of course.
30. Now, who did you read?
31. D.K. Herzl came.
32. Yeah.
33. D.K. Dr. Herzl. And, all the followers of Herzl, like Dr. , Dr. Dr. Shmyer Levin, and so forth, the whole group.
34. Did you ever hear Shmyer Levin?
35. Yes, I did.
36. I just read his autobiography.
37. Yeah, Dr. Shmyer Levin, sure.
38. Yeah.
39. I heard him in Antwerp, in Belgium.
40. You did?
41. He was the best speaker I ever heard in my life.
42. Oh, his book is so beautiful.
43. The best speaker I ever heard in my life. He spoke in, uh, in, uh, in Jewish, but not Jewish, mostly German.
44. Yeah. He was a Russian.
45. He was a Russian, sure.
46. Yeah. But he had trouble learning Russian, as I...I'm remembering now; he, he was, uh, Yiddish, I mean he spoke Yiddish. He had trouble learning Russian, and he had trouble learning German. He...
47. D.K. Yeah, but still he was a, a very man.
48. Yeah, oh he was a brilliant man, yes.
49. Brilliant man, he was a Russian doctor.
50. Yeah. His book was just beautiful.
51. Yeah, I read his, uh, books, in Hebrew.
52. In Hebrew?
53. Yeah. He wrote it in Hebrew, in the beginning.
54. He di...what, his autobiography?
55. Uh, yes, he wrote it in Hebrew. And then they translated it in...(English?)
56. He was friends with Jabotinsky?
57. Yeah, they're from the same town, they lived in the same town.
58. And Echod Achan.
59. Who?
60. Echod Achan.

D.K. Echod Aham, yes, right.

L.B. Right? So he...

D.K. And Sishkin.

L.B. Right. He mentions...

D.K. Sishkin.

L.B. Right, he mentions all those names.

D.K. Yeah, and Sishkin, and , and so forth.

L.B. Did you read these, right, right, did you read all these people?

D.K. Of course. I still have the books.

L.B. Now, were you, were these heroes of yours, too, or not?

D.K. Oh yeah, sure. Since I became a Zionist, these were my heroes. You know, they, they created the Zionist organization. You know, it's thanks to them we have Israel. If not, there, if not Jabotinsky, and, and Dr. Shmyer Levin, and Sishkin, never, it would never happen anything. They organized it. They travelled to, uh, the whole world, and they organized organizations, and branches all over the world, and clubs. And that's what became the Zionists' the Zionist organization.

L.B. So, from Europe, when you came here, you still continued your activities in that same organization?

D.K. Yes, of course.

L.B. And uh...now, when you left Poland, you left...your mother and father there?

D.K. Left my mother and father, lost my sister, and 2 brothers, younger brothers.

L.B. Did they ever come over here?

D.K. No...they never came over here. And what happened with them, like with all Jews, in the Nazi concentration camps...in Treblinka, in Auschwitz. I know my, my mother, know, she was in Treblinka. You know, nothing left, uh, I was the only one left in my family.

L.B. You?

D.K. The only one. There were, my sister was married, <sup>with</sup> children, my 2 brothers was married, my mother was alive...

L.B. They never wanted to come here?

D.K. Well, or they never considered it, I don't know. They made a living there.

L.B. Yeah, life was, the, uh, many Poles say this, many Polish Jews. Life was not bad there.

D.K. Life was bad, if they want to make, uh, the people, they made a living...

L.B. Yes.

D.K. ...they didn't have to go to America.

L.B. Right.

D.K. They had their own houses.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. The family's there...they, small children, they go to school...

L.B. That's right.

D.K. ...the yeshivas, and in cheder. So it's hard, you know, to...to break off everything, and come here and, to a new language, you know it's a...

L.B. They didn't...know...

D.K.

L.B. And who could, who could see what was going to happen?

D.K. Yeah, that's a natural thing, here, nobody would...know what happened.

L.B. (Long pause). So...but your wife has family in Israel?

D.K. Uh, yes...my wife had a brother in Israel.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. The, uh, <sup>my</sup>rabbi...my wife's brother was a rabbi in Antwerp.

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

D.K. And then, uhh...and then he went to Israel, he was the rabbi in Tel Aviv, the chief rabbi in Tel Aviv, my wife's brother.

L.B. Oh, he was?

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. Hmm.

D.K. Here, wait, which one is it? (Talking away from recorder). This is my brother-in-law, my wife's brother.

L.B. Let me see. You know something, I'm going to say thank you and turn off the tape.

D.K. Oh, all right.

(Tape Off)

L.B. I wanted to just know whether you would say, as you think back, that your family life, when you were home, as a young boy, was a happy one?

D.K. Yes. I liked the yeshiva, you know, the study. I, I was in love...with the Talmud, with the books.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. I was studying for 18 hours a day. We call it a , you know,  
to study steady, call it?

L.B. Like the boy the...Bialik wrote about?

D.K. That's right.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. So I loved it. I was not, uh, , you know, I was not...fanatic, but I, I loved the, the books. That's where I was glad, and I was very sorry... after, I was in yeshivas for 7 years, I was in yeshivas, out of town, out of my home, I used to come home once a year, that's all. But then...

L.B. So this was the happiest time of your life?

D.K. That's right, the happiest time of my life was in the yeshivas. I was there a whole year in the yeshiva, I used to come only for Pesach, that's all...once a year. And the rest was, was in yeshiva.

L.B. Would you say that your family life was happy?

D.K. Uhhh....

L.B. Your, with your mother and your father and your brothers, and so on.

D.K. Well, ummm...it was friction sometimes. I had a sister, she was, uh, you know, not so good-natured. So I had little frictions.

L.B. How did you get along with your father?

D.K. O.K.

L.B. Oh...

D.K. With my father and mother, I got along all right. But with my sister I didn't get along.

L.B. Yeah. Well that's not so important as a mother and a father.

D.K. Yeah.

L.B. A mother and a father, for example, did they approve of what you were doing?

D.K. Yeah, sure...

L.B. They did?

D.K. ...they sent me to yeshiva, they sent me money...

L.B. Yes.

D.K. ...it cost me money there.

L.B. Yeah. So they wanted you to go?

D.K. Yes. Sure, they, they used to send me 7 rubles a month...for room and board, that's all it cost there...7 rubles.

L.B. And that was...that...

D.K. That was every month.

L.B. That was your life, too.

D.K. It was my life, yeah.

L.B. So, then when you...

D.K. I used to be a boarder in a room, there.

L.B. So then when you had to earn a living, and support a family, how did you feel then?

D.K. Well, there comes a time when you get married, uh, to...uh, raise a family, so I had to do something. So I went to, in business, same thing in my father's business, with skins, you know, raw skins.

L.B. Yeah, yeah. But you  would not...

D.K. I had a store, I opened a store, with a partner, a hardware store.

L.B. Wait a minute... (pause). I think what I'm trying to get...ask you is.... that, if you had a choice, you would rather have continued studying Talmud?

D.K. That's right. If not, uh, the Germans, if not the War, I wouldn't have stopped it, at that time.

L.B. What would you have done then? Suppose there was no War.

D.K. To, to, because there is no War, I was figuring to go to Berlin.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. In Berlin it was a Seminary.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. A, a Rabbinical Seminary.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. To study there, not to be a rabbi, not to be a ra...a rab.

L.B. No.

D.K. Just...for the sake of studying.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. That's what I planned. But then the War broke out, and uh...uh, all this, uh...uh, worked out otherwise...

L.B. All right, now, suppose you had gone to Berlin, and become a, well, you would have been a Doctor of Theology, something like that.

D.K. That's right, Doctor, Philosophy...

L.B. Right? Right. Then what? You would have...

D.K. That was my plan, to study in Berlin....in...

L.B. Ahhh.

D.K. In, uh...Chaim Heller Seminar, that was the Seminar.

L.B. Chaim Heller?

D.K. Chaim Heller, Rabbi Chaim Heller.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. He was in America, later.

L.B. That was an Orthodox Seminary?

D.K. That was an Orthodox Seminary in Berlin.

L.B. Yeah, and...

D.K. That was my plans. If the, if the War wouldn't break out, I would another year be in yeshiva...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. And then I would, uh...try to go to Berlin, or to Frankfurt. That was, uh, the best places to study, there.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. In Germany.

L.B. And then you would be a teacher after that?

D.K. Then, uh, I don't know, you can't make plans.

L.B. No.

D.K. My plans was to study, to know, to learn. And if you learn, you can find a way, you know.

L.B. Yeah. Now, uh...

130 D.K. But, in that, , the War...uh, you know, broke up all my plans, destroyed all my plans.

L.B. Now...because the W...uh, how did, so once the War was over, you couldn't continue this?

D.K. First place, I got married... during the War...

L.B. You got married, that was your mistake. (Laughs).

D.K. And I had a baby. So I, I had to, to work...I went into business.

L.B. Yeah, yeah. I see.....I see.

D.K. Sure, I used to...with the girl I married, uh...uh, 3 years we...uh, and 3 years before I got married.

L.B. Yeah.

131 D.K. We got used to it, so I...

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. I couldn't, couldn't get rid of her anymore...

L.B. (Laughs). I see. All right, that's that's pretty much, uh, wha...you would say, then, that your family life was...pretty much O.K., they let you do pretty much what you wanted, actually. Is that true?

D.K. Yes. Uh, if you asked me, if I was born now, what would I start, what would I do.

L.B. Yeah.

D.K. I would say, "I would go to yeshiva, and study," not to be a doctor...

L.B. Ho.

D.K. ...or a lawyer...just study. And then...what you develop from it, you help make some difference with it.

L.B. Yeah.

???

(Tape ends)