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## Fuchs, Arnold oral history interview

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**ARNOLD FUCHS**

**GORHAM, MAINE**

**APRIL 18, 1997**

**Interviewer: Steve Hochstadt**

**Transcription: Nicci Leamon  
Steve Hochstadt**

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**Steve Hochstadt:** I'd really like you to start . . .

**Arnold Fuchs:** With Germany?

**Hochstadt:** . . . with Germany, with your family, your birth, anything that you can tell me that explains this.

**Fuchs:** I don't remember my birth, but I was born in 1928 and I was the only child. My father was, well, I'm not quite sure now where to start.

**Hochstadt:** It doesn't really matter.

**Fuchs:** My mother was not Jewish. My father was born in Berlin and his, his father was, too, as far as I know. My father was Jewish but totally non-observant, and being Jewish was not something that I was even aware of. My father had been in the war, 1914-18, as a volunteer. Served four years in the German Army, got wounded, served on an expeditionary force in Turkey against British and French colonial troops. By inclination he was socialist and felt very much as a German, literature, and so that was his background.

My parents knew each other during World War I. I have, I don't have them any more, I had cards, postcards that he wrote to my mother, who was, I gather, engaged to him, or at least they were very, on good terms, from the front, that he wrote her. And so eventually, after the war, they, it was not common for people to marry really young without, without a kind of a life, or at least the men had to have some kind of profession or some kind of standing before they would undertake to marry someone. So it took them a while and they got married in 1926. This is when my father had built up a business, he was a sales rep for a ladies garment manufacturer in Breslau, and he married my mother in 1926 and I was born in 1928.

When, when it was time to go to school for me, it was in the thirties, early thirties, and the NSDAP, the Nazi laws were, were rapidly being rewritten, or they were being written to exclude Jews, and my father and my mother both felt that, where we were living in Breslau, we were living in Scheitnig at the time, which was a park and a fairly exclusive neighborhood. It was a modern, one of these modern twenties type architecture apartment complex, where the mayor of Breslau also lived, as an example. And it was certainly not a Jewish neighborhood. My parents felt that with all this stuff starting, with the consciousness of anti-Jewish business, they didn't want me to get in trouble in school. So they moved into town, closer into town. We moved into an apartment on Kaiser Wilhelm Street and I was signed up at the school, it was called Am Anger, that's two words, A-M and then A-N-G-E-R. The Anger was a designation, it was an address, it was a small street right opposite the police headquarters. [laughs] And there was a synagogue and it was a reform, very large ostentatious building, and ostentatious is not, is not my term, but I read an article on synagogues and it mentioned that the intent here was to make it look like a basilica, make it look like one of the churches. It was also, you know, it was intended to not be different. But anyway, there was a school attached to it and it was, it was not a religious school. And I started, and that's where I started school and I went until I was just short of eleven, and we left Germany for Shanghai in April, I think it



was around April 1939. So my, I had four, a good four years of, four or five years of school in Germany, and it certainly helped me with remembering the language. And I've kept myself fluent both in the language and the literature ever since. All right, well, where do we do from here?

**Hochstadt:** Well, if you would say some more about your family's experiences under the Nazis, thinking about leaving, talking about leaving, preparations for leaving.

**Fuchs:** Well, my father had excellent foresight. And I've heard a few other people mention this who went to Shanghai. He wanted to leave the country, he decided that leaving the country was the, was the thing to do back in '37 and certainly '38. Partly that had to do with the way his business was going. Now he was on very good terms, most of his customers were non-Jewish. He dealt with all the local, the provincial, what would you call them, department stores in ladies' outerwear, and every little town had their store and he, and these people, the proprietors, they were on very good terms. My father, you know, kept them warm as clients and visited them on a regular basis, and little by little they would approach him and say, "You know, Herr Fuchs, I'm terribly sorry, but I'm getting a lot of pressure from the local *Gauleiter* and the Party, and we're not supposed to do business with Jews." And little by little it became more difficult. And I think he was able to read the writing on the wall that a lot of other people denied. He was certainly not in denial, as we say these days.

He realized, in 1938 he wanted to leave, and he applied, now, all different places. The United States was not a place that we ever really considered, because we had no, no relatives here to provide the affidavit and so on. But he wanted to go to Kenya, he wanted to go to British, to one of the British territories. He wanted to go to Australia, but I remember Kenya as the most viable one, solution, but it required, I think I recall him saying that we would have needed two thousand pounds sterling on deposit in a bank outside of Germany. And on the other hand it was impossible to deal with foreign currency. We couldn't get foreign currency. It was, people got shot for dealing in currency. And we didn't, you know, he didn't have the kind of business where there were foreign branches and there were, you know, he wasn't at that level. So, no money, no visa. And one thing after another washed out.

But he was ready to leave in '38. My mother was not. She was saying, "Oh, we have a small child and," you know, but there was no place to go. And still he argued and I would, I remember, and this is what other people have told me, too, I remember behind closed doors, because children were not supposed to be aware of this sort of thing, he would argue. There were other members of the family, and he was the one who tried to get his two sisters to agree to leave, and they wouldn't hear of it and they called him crazy. And I heard the same of other people whose fathers said, "We should leave," and everybody was saying, "Oh, you're always thinking the worst," and, "It'll all blow over," and, you know, "Germans are a rational people," and all the usual denial stuff. And I guess it's really, it's really his, it's up to him and, that, well, we didn't leave in '38, because we really didn't have any place to go to. Shanghai in '38, I don't recall that he knew about Shanghai in '38. He may have, but I'm not certain.

But certainly after the November '38 experience, the, the *Kristallnacht*, as they say. When I went to school that morning and went half way before I saw the smoke, column of



smoke into the sky, and realized that that was the synagogue next to my school. I never went there, I turned right around and came home, and I saw, all along the way I saw stores that had its windows smashed in, glass all over the walkway, and, you know, swastikas painted on the, the usual, I mean, the things that everybody has seen, those pictures. I saw that and I came right home, and my parents were utterly unaware of anything. My father didn't go into the office usually until later. During the off-season he had a pretty easy time. He went to the office later in the morning, and so I came home and they were shocked that I was there, and I told them that I saw burning and stores and, so that was that. At that point I think even my mother realized that there was no sense in staying then. That day in November '38 there were Jewish people along the street, I, were marched off by, by the police. I stood outside in front of our house and I, personally, I saw that. I saw various people from all up and down the streets who were escorted out and driven away.

Nobody came for my father. There were, there were two little things that probably were responsible. He was never in a, in a concentration camp. One was that the apartment house where we lived, 58 Kaiser-Wilhelm-Strasse, on the bottom floor was occupied by the regional office of the Party, the NSDAP, and I supposed that might have helped to deflect attention of any Jewish families that might have lived in the other part of the building. And the other part, and I think the one that my father thought was the crucial one, he was, he had gone to school with the police commissioner of Bres-, who was in Breslau, and he was given to understand that his name was crossed off the lists. So, however, we hid. There was a, we hid all day. I say we, because my father went into the apartment, there was a separate entrance to the building and the rear of the building was kind of unobtrusive. It wouldn't have been obvious to anybody looking at the building that there was another entrance to an apartment, kind of like a garden apartment in the back. It was occupied by a Jewish man, a very old man in his eighties, and I kept my father company while my mother was up front in our apartment just sitting there in case anybody should come. And my father and I, we marched around the table, I remember us doing this all day, the old man was sitting there and my father and I were impatient and tense and we would march, hands clasped behind our backs, we'd march around the table for hours, talked until night time, and he slept over there and I went home to sleep, just in case somebody would come. And next day he was back home and then we heard that his, my father's brother was picked up. Not in Breslau, he didn't live in Breslau, he lived in Liegnitz, a small town not too far from there. He was in a concentration camp. I'm not sure how that became known or what, what happened. And my father also had two sisters who lived in Breslau. They were not, I haven't, I actually didn't hear of women being picked up individually.

**Hochstadt:** They were not married?

**Fuchs:** No, they were not married. However, one, one of the sisters, the younger one, did marry. As a matter of fact, she may already have left then. She married a man and they both emigrated to South America. That might have been prior to the date in '38. I know it was during '38, so she may have, in fact I'm pretty sure of that now that we mention it. She was gone so it was only the other unmarried sister living in, in Breslau, and she absolutely refused

to listen to my father's story about the wisdom of leaving. He would have financed her as he financed his brother.

His brother came out, Uncle Leo came out of concentration camp, and I'm not sure, was it Sachsenhausen, I think, that name sort of rings a bell, again, by virtue of buying a ticket to Shanghai, I think, I think that's how he came out. I certainly remember the day that Uncle Leo came to see us and he looked like a totally different person, because his hair was shorn and I'd never seen a man without, [laughs] well, other than being bald. He was a very different looking man. He told his story only to my parents behind closed doors, and I was told that all of the concentration camp prisoners upon being discharged had to swear and sign that they would not talk about what happened there, or else, and they took it very seriously. My Uncle Leo also had served in World War I and had been, had become sick, had a, some kind of problem with his heart, he had a cardiac problem. He got a small pension and he was very proud to wear the, to wear the little emblem or medal that he had as a combat, ex-combat soldier in World War I, just like my father was. It was a highlight in their lives, that war. And for all of that, Uncle Leo died in Shanghai during the first year of the same, of the, I think, ultimately of the cardiac problem that he had sustained during the war.

And incidentally, I just want to make that point, too, that my father's family, World War I, my father served, his brother served and his father served in the artillery and his father was killed in action in Belgium. You know, three, three sacrifices and as they say in German so nicely, *Und der Dank des Vaterlands ist Ihr gewiß*, the gratitude, well, you speak German, right? I'm sure that weighed heavily on them, especially my father, who was very, politically very conscious and politically on the left of center, that was a heavy weight of, and the injustice of it all. Okay, now, new paragraph, where do we go?

**Hochstadt:** After *Kristallnacht*.

**Fuchs:** Yes, my mother was ultimately convinced that leaving was, was the thing to do, so as I recall, sometime around year's end or beginning of '39, my father went to Berlin and bought three tickets and he came back with them, you know, for cash. I don't know what problems he encountered, if any, but he was aware of the Shanghai situation or of the fact that one could go there with just a, as long as he had the price for a ticket. And I remember our neighbors, we had neighbors in the apartment who had some connection and money to deposit, money deposited in American account, I think, they went to the Philippines in '38. I'm very much in contact, that's one of my friends, the daughter of their, their daughter is a little younger than I, still a great friend of mine.

But we then left on the "Conte Rosso," it was an Italian, Lloyd Triestino, out of Trieste. We left in April of 1939. And at that point, you know, the laws were constantly being revised and with the effect of removing property and legal status from Jews all the time. But when we made arrangements to leave, we could take out what we wanted, but my father had to pay, I remember that he had to pay the purchasing price of any new items that we bought to export. For instance, he bought a very handy great big double couch that could be turned into a double bed. Very large, German type large, and he had to pay the sale price again in order to obtain the export license for that. They arranged for a large crate to pack everything in and

the crate was built by a carpenter so that it could serve as a wardrobe. It had two large doors with hinges and then was locked. A professional packer came to the house with all the newspapers and things, and packed all our dishes and all our crystal and stuffed rugs in between and a few of my toys I quickly stashed away. I was a great aficionado of Karl May, that was the author who wrote about Indians in the West without ever having taken a step on the continent, so I stuffed my Indian outfit in between, and it was a, it was a large crate. And then we had two additional overseas, what they used to have, what did they call those?

**Hochstadt:** Trunks?

**Fuchs:** Trunks, great big trunks, yeah, two large trunks. And then other suitcases.

**Hochstadt:** Were there any German officials watching you pack?

**Fuchs:** No, no, no, it was . . .

**Hochstadt:** You could pack anything you wanted?

**Fuchs:** We could pack anything we wanted. It was always open, I mean, the possibility always existed that, we were, I think everybody was aware that anybody could come, any official could come at any time and do anything. It was beginning to feel that way, but I don't recall that, now, I couldn't swear on that because I just wasn't aware on that, but perhaps there was somebody who sort of gave a final stamp, that's possible. I know that happened, that happened in Shanghai when we were leaving in 1950. In order to obtain the exit visa, well, we got the exit visa and, again, I packed a large trunk to go with us with, I can tell you in retrospect, later on when I opened it in New York, the whole thing was thrown out because it was just old stuff. But we didn't have anything else so I, we thought we would have to take that along. But when we packed that trunk, there was a Chinese official looking at it, and nevertheless I put my radio in the middle, we weren't supposed to have radios, in Shanghai that is, and anyway I got that out. [laughs]

But in Germany, possible, but we were very much aware of the danger of doing anything that could spoil, that would ruin the, the, our leaving to the extent, and I know this for a fact, that all gold had to stay there. My mother's earrings, she took them to the jeweler and replaced the gold studs, I mean, if you can believe that, with silver, and for my first birthday I had been given a twenty Mark gold piece by my aunt and that had been made into a ring. She left the ring. They, my father bought new wrist watches, steel instead of gold. It was all turned in just to be certain that there would be no problem at the frontier, because if there was a problem you were never heard from again. And we, they didn't want to take the chance. They were very law abiding and absolutely, you know, if somebody said stand up straight, they stood up straight. And I hear stories about people, you know, smuggling things out. It didn't occur to us to do that. The risk was far too great.

So, that was the, let's see, we packed everything, the crate was packed, trunks were packed, and my father did a, what we would call here a yard sale, up on the third floor of the

apartment. He labeled everything that was gonna be, that we weren't taking and that was going to stay there, labeled everything, how much it was going to be and people, some people, I don't know where they came from, but he had people come and get rid of the rest of it. He had, see, he had money, but it was German money, D-mark. No, it wasn't D-mark, D-mark is now. Reichsmark. But it couldn't be transferred so it was, the question came up, well, what do we do? So he bought new, like that couch, it was very expensive, and other new things. He outfitted all of us with tropical weight clothing and we had new suits, I had new suits, and he had, and he got a linen suit and things like that. I remember, we were talking, that he had lists of what we would call, like our L.L. Bean you know, tropical outfitters, and, let's see, he bought a whole set of silver, stainless steel table cutlery. So, you know, in order to use up the money. And as it was he paid for the tickets to Shanghai with cash and still had money left over. I mean, ultimately we would have to leave with ten Marks in our pocket, you heard that story, that was all, and he had money left over and he deposited a whole lot of money to the ship, on shipboard, so that we could just sign chits. You know, we ordered, and I, even I was given carte blanche to order orange juice or whatever I desired and sign for it, because there was money, was in the account, there wasn't any other way to deal with it. Or at least he didn't have any other way to deal with it.

So we left in April, pretty sure it was April. We went from Breslau by train to Trieste via Vienna. We arrived in Vienna during evening and had to move from one station to the south station, where the train to Trieste went. My father mentioned to me, you know, as far as any picture of what it was like to leave, I must confess to me it was one great adventure. I couldn't wait to go, to leave, it was all fascinating. I've always, to this day I love traveling and I get all excited about reading train schedules, and to me it was a great adventure. We took taxis to the railroad station in Breslau and took off. And my father said that at the railroad station, as we were leaving, some railroad personnel were waving and saying "*Auf Nimmer Wiedersehen*," you know, people were saying "*Auf Wiedersehen*," and they were saying "*Auf Nimmer Wiedersehen*," which rankled him. They were his people. And, but I don't recall any firsthand difficulties or anything like that.

We came to Vienna, they asked me what I wanted to eat for dinner, I said, "*Wiener Schnitzel*," what else? And we moved and we got into a new train, an Italian train, I was really, I was kind of a train buff, always have been, very impressive train, and it was filled with people going down to Trieste and other places to ship out. There were Japanese army officers who spoke fluent German, Indians, Chinese, all kinds of people who were getting out of Europe and, either because they, well, because they felt that war was coming and they wanted to go home. And people like the Swiss fellow that was at our table on board ship who had his, who had just completed his five-year home visit. He was in some Swiss firm in the Phillipines. This was the usual thing in those days, that foreigners, Europeans lived in the Far East, got vacations every year and every five years you had a home trip, six months paid vacation. So there was a whole group of people who were shipping out.

And we got to Trieste and we had to spend one night before boarding the ship. Big, twenty thousand, well, doesn't sound that large now but it was, to me it was the most adventurous thing, huge, to me it appeared like a huge white ship that we were getting on. And I loved the whole business about claiming our staterooms and finding my way around the



ship. I disappeared for several hours, just on my own, just checking everything out. It was a big adventure. Next day we stopped for the day in Venice and I got a chance to go to St. Mark's and no place else because, again, we didn't have any money to take the boat up the Grand Canal, but we stayed right on the St. Mark's Place and that was a, made a very big impression on me, going into St. Mark's basilica. And I talked about it for so long that this past, this year past in February, I took my wife and we went to Venice for the week during school vacation, and it was just as I remembered. After all, what's a few years, what's fifty years, it's been there for a few hundred years.

And after that we went on to Port Said, that was interesting. I got, people, I didn't get off the boat. Other people who had friends went, they brought me back a turban such as was being worn, it was called a *fez*, F-E-Z, a red hat with a black tassel on it. It's what Egyptians wore. Anyway, that's what I got. And then we went through the Suez Canal. That was a, I remember that, too, I remember the view from the boat, it seemed like a very narrow strait we were going through. And there was a Bedouin on a camel going parallel with us and that was straight out of Karl May also, because he wrote, also wrote books about the Kurds and that part of the country. And we went, it got pretty hot, we went to Djibouti, I think, or maybe Aden, and after that long trek, maybe ten days just across the Indian Ocean to Bombay, and Bombay, being under the Raj at that time, under the British rule, did not permit us to stretch our feet upon its friendly shores. Couldn't get off. But little boats with traders came all around and I, for some fruit, fresh fruit that we had plenty of on board, I got a little ebony elephant. It was nicely carved. I kept that for practically into recent history and it's disappeared on me somewhere, I don't know where. And then we went on from there to, from Bombay, to Ceylon and the, and Colombo, and Ceylon permitted us to get off the boat for whatever reason. And we did, we spent a nice day in Colombo. Had a great big sign across the harbor, Ceylon tea, advertising their major export. And we went, my father got a rickshaw and we went to a folk art museum where they were, where they, well, folk art, figures of people in previous times. Colombo, then we went on to, I think straight, oh, we went to Singapore, right, and we got off in Singapore, too, although that was British. But they permitted us graciously and I spent the afternoon there. We went, I think I met, my uncle was on the boat with us, too, and we, I think we met him, he was wandering around. We had coffee in one of those native coffee houses that served you coffee that you could stick a spoon in, sweet coffee. And next day we were off to Hong Kong, and we couldn't get off in Hong Kong, the British wouldn't let us off. And after that Shanghai.

I had a good time on board, it was over, more than a three-week trip, and I had a real good time, I was very excited. Great big adventure. And I must say the, so did my parents. My mother had a great time playing bridge with all kinds of interesting people and we had, you know, balls every other day, there was parties and people. Please do. I'm sorry that it's . . .

**Hochstadt:** Would you like some more?

**Fuchs:** No thanks. Probably cold, I should have put it on the . . .

**Hochstadt:** Still feels warm.



**Fuchs:** So there was dancing on the top of Vesuvius, you know, it was the last, the last hurrah for people. And they were very conscious of it. I know my father was very conscious, you know, let's do, let's do it up properly because once we land, we don't know what's going to happen. You know, as long as we were on board ship, we were, we had money, we were all paid up, we had a home. Once we landed it was, couldn't even, people couldn't even fantasize what it would be like because nobody knew, it was absolutely unknown territory.

And so we, the boat pulled into the harbor and stayed, they were, large ships like that usually stayed anchored in mid-stream and then there were small boats that transferred people to a jetty, municipal jetty, and customs, and I don't recall that there was any hold up at all. We landed and just walked right through, and we were on the Bund. You know, the city was the most wicked city in the world and there were trucks there that had been organized by people who had been there earlier and, a small existing Jewish community, who were being totally overwhelmed. I mean, imagine, I don't know at what intervals, but it seemed like every week there was a new entire boat load. I mean, these were, there were mostly refugees on, mostly Jewish refugees on there. There were a few other people, but mostly these ships had European refugees on there.

An entire ship load would land with no place to go, so the existing organization became rapidly overwhelmed. And so we came out and there was this truck and we piled on the truck and it started moving out of Shanghai, across the bridge into what later we knew was Hongkew, and on and on until we came into a section where there was literally not a stone left on top of another stone. It was flat, leveled, had been, that had been the fighting ground in 1937, just a couple of years earlier, over the, I think it was the 7th Chinese Army, or something like that, they were fight-, they were doing a last stand, last ditch stand against the Japanese invading forces, and they leveled that part of the city completely. I think what, and what hadn't been leveled was leveled by people who picked through the ruins. But you could see the, they were, the electricity or other service poles, they were metal, and on one direction they were peppered with holes, machine gun holes on one side only.

Anyway, we were out there and there was this one former mission school and there were a number of those. The fence, a wall actually around it, administrative buildings and dorm buildings, and all the brick buildings were leveled, ruins and they had quickly repaired some of the other, some other buildings and everybody got stuffed into that camp, what people later on called *Heim*, or German for camp, and that's where we were. And this was known as Chaoufoong Road and it was rough and it was in, at that point, it was May, my birthday is in May so I just turned eleven, it was hot like hell, and couldn't drink the water and there was tropical diseases immediately started flourishing. Cholera, ty-, there was a cholera epidemic, there was one building in the back of this compound that served as a hospital, and I remember, I mean, that they would carry them in the front door and out the back door. The heat was a, humid heat was a wholly different, wholly new experience for people. If you're a New Yorker you kind of get used to, you kind of know, but where we came from that just was not, was not anything that people had experienced. And the tension and the tremendous tension of living in conditions where each room had bunk beds and there would be one, two, three, four, five, there would be, a small room would be five double bunks and five different

couples would be there. The children had their own dorm, I was quickly . . .

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE ONE, SIDE B

**Fuchs:** Yeah, I liked the idea of being in a dorm with other boys, I always liked, the best summer that my parents arranged for me was when they sent me to camp in the Riesengebirge, that is the stretch of mountains between Silesia, between Germany and Czechoslovakia. I was in a place called Agnetendorf, and being an only child, I suppose, it was a particular treat for me to be with other boys and I just loved that. So I took to life quite nimbly out at Chaoufoong Road. But the adults did not, the adults were, it was a horrendous problem. I would observe, and this is first hand observation, people having, what would you call it, a nervous breakdown, I suppose is a non-professional way of saying they had uncontrolled outbursts and had to be restrained. It was simply, you know, the heat and the tension and the living together, closely together. Food was prepared *en masse*, you know, and you had to come there with your bowl. But to me, hey, I had a good time. There was no school at that point, although to my chagrin, you know, Germans started organizing things right away and there was a wonderful, a highly credentialed school principal, Mrs. Hartwich, people have mentioned her, I've heard other people mention her in the document, eventually she ran the, I'm not sure, the Shanghai Jewish School, or that's what it was called, the Kadoorie School?

**Hochstadt:** Yes.

**Fuchs:** That's what it was called. Yeah, she ran that. And so, and she started right then in Chaoufoong Road, classes began to be organized within, oh, I don't know, maybe a week or two or three into our stay there. But I found plenty of time to organize a group of boys and we would go into the ruins and we would pick lattice, make them, shape them into Roman swords and develop two sides, and one would, one would defend and the other, the castle, and the other would storm the castle, and we had great times. I practically said hi to my parents once a day or so and, because they, they considered that I was probably going to the dogs. [laughs] But, you know, they lost control of me and I had a good time. Heat or no heat didn't make any difference. Then school started and we had to kind of buckle down every day for a few hours.

**Hochstadt:** Did you have this school right in the *Heim*?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, it was just temporary, yeah, so I presume other *Heims*, because there were other *Heims*, had something similar going, until eventually it got organized into one school. But that was, I'm no longer, I was no longer part of it then. I don't know that. My parents had a rough time with each other and I can't tell you exactly how long, how many months into living at Chaoufoong Road, my parents split up. And, you know, looking at it, looking back at it now, it's



directly related, I mean, they made the decision then and that was their responsibility, that's true, but it was directly related to events, because the kinds of things that I heard were at the bottom of this were my father's infidelity, which was not anything very new. Had they continued on, you know, in, really in hindsight as an adult, I can, you know, evaluating how my mother dealt with situations and my father dealt with situations, now that I'm, that I can look back on that, I would have predicted that if everything had gone on in Germany, they would have stayed, you know, if they had stayed and if the whole Hitler thing hadn't happened, they would have just continued on the way it was and my mother would have got upset sometimes and my father would have stopped whatever he was doing for a while and it would probably have continued on.

However, things got totally changed. My mother was a professional hairdresser and wig maker, and that was a big thing then. She had had a career before she married. She had a, she was a journeyman, she had a large, a huge diploma, and she had trained and worked in Breslau in a, in a kind of salon where the aristocracy came. She had actually had, her customers were some of the aristocracy, and when she got married at age, at age, she was twenty-six or something like that, no, more than that. She was, '26, thirty-one. So when she got married she actually, she had some silver, table silver, given to her by one of the, these people. So she had a career and she was quite independent anyway, and she had stopped working when she got married, as was the custom. Well, in Shanghai she was, she had brought all her, she brought a big box with all her utensils and her tools, and even though the situation was bad, women always went to the hairdresser. I mean, they had to have their hair shampooed and it was something that people used to do. You went, you know, you didn't jump in the shower in the morning and wash your hair. It was different. So she was able to make a living and she certainly saw the potential for her to be independent. She didn't have to sit there. And so I'm sure that that, well, I know that that prompted her to break the routine, or the usual, you know, I'll do this and you can do that. So they broke up. It was difficult, I was, I mean, they were living in this one room with maybe four, at least four other couples and there were, and there was no place to go to have a discussion in private other than walk around in the evening [unclear] . They walked around and screamed at each other, and it was, I listened to that and concerned and I was afraid. It was hard. It was traumatic.

My mother then asked me, then she made contact with the Catholic diocese. There were a number, and this, I don't think this has come out in much of the stories, but there were a goodly number of non-Jewish people. There were Protestants and there were Catholics, where one or the other part was non-Jewish, and my mother had made contact and they offered her housing outside, you know, independent housing, and so she asked me if that was all right with me, and we would, and we would join the Catholic community there, the refugee Catholic community, and asked me and I said, "Yup." And so, I don't know how long we stayed in Chaoufoong Road, but it wasn't very long, a few months perhaps. She and I went to live in a newly renovated, newly rebuilt lane and I know the concept lane is something that you're familiar with and I took some pains in my writing to explain how that all was, but I shan't do that here, because you are familiar with the lane concept, which was essentially a compound with a gate at one side, which was not closed. It was for protection really. Anyway, the Catholic diocese had in Hongkew rebuilt one of these demolished lanes, and there was a series



of, with two, two series of houses in that sort of lane that belonged to them and we were offered the bottom of one of the houses, which consisted of one room and a little nook in the back of it. And then there was a family upstairs, a couple upstairs, and another couple with two children also upstairs.

And we moved in there and she got out her tools and started working. And she would go to people's houses. She developed a career doing that, and it was hard. She had two heavy bags, two big heavy canvas bags, that she had all her tools, all her stuff, and that she would go, and she would go on public transport, she'd take the tram. And it was word-of-mouth. Her customers were mainly in the city, in the International Settlement or the French Concession, and she would go into these apartments and rather very posh apartments and these people, these women were so happy to have a European woman come and do their hair in their own home, and it was mostly the kind of thing, my mother was specialized in dying hair and, you know, coloring and this kind of thing, and this was all considered to be a great hush-hush, you know. What was that advertising jingle? Only your, only your . . .

**Hochstadt:** Hairdresser knows for sure.

**Fuchs:** . . . your hairdresser knows for sure? Well, that was the kind of situation. It was done in their home and nobody was the wiser. So she had a very faithful clientele that she developed. But it was hard work. I mean, there she was on foot taking street cars, and she made a living for us. And I started school right away at St. Francis Xavier's, was the Marist brothers, Jesuit, the priest was a Jesuit priest who was in charge of that whole business. He was, his name was Pater Truxler, T-R-U-X-L-E-R, and he was addressed as Pater.

**Hochstadt:** A German?

**Fuchs:** Well, it's Latin, Pater.

**Hochstadt:** But, I mean, he was German?

**Fuchs:** He spoke fluent German because he was from Alsace-Lorraine, *Elsass-Lothringen*, the German part of the French, so he spoke German. And in school I started the first, the first day, I had, remember, I had had English for a year, perhaps for a year, a little longer, in Germany. I'd learned, that was voluntary, that was a foreign language that I could choose, so I had learned English, and certainly the time I was in Shanghai, well, I don't know how much English I needed, but I was supposed to know something. Well, when I got into that classroom, partly it was the kind of dialect that was being, English was the language that, although it was, no, English was the language of the Jesuit priest and the other heavily in the diocese was French. But I sat there and I didn't understand a word. [laughs] And during the break the teacher came over to me and asked me in German where I was from, and I said, "Breslau," and he said he was from Silesia, too. It was a young, his name was Norbert, Brother Norbert, and it made me feel so much more at home right away. He was very young. Thinking back on that now, he must have just had his teaching credentials. [laughs] And it turned out there was another



German brother in the other, Brother Leo, in the other form, in the other class. So, from not understanding, absolutely not one word, it took maybe a week and I was right into it, and of course got books to read and I had no problem and I won the prize at the end of that year for being a bright little boy. [laughs]

And life was, became sort of an organized business, where my mother would take off for work and I would start walking down, we lived on Seward Road, and it was, the walk to the school was considerable. I, it seems to me as if it might have been a half hour walk, but I'm not certain. I'd have to retrace it.

**Hochstadt:** Where was the school? Do you remember what road it was on?

**Fuchs:** Oh, yes, well, the school was right at the, was on the Hongkew part of the creek that separated Hongkew from the International Settlement. It was not in the Settlement, it was just outside, so I didn't have to cross over into it. It was, seemed to be sort of almost straight, straight down Seward Road into, well, I can't tell, I don't know. But it was around a church, it was, I want to say Sacred Heart Church. The church was on the opposite, on the other side of the road from the school, and so it was, there was, there were a lot of Catholic holidays and specific Catholic holidays and we would troop over from school to church and we would get holy pictures and we would drop our pennies into the box for the children in Africa. [laughs] And every Sunday, you know, went to mass. I started being an altar boy, and I think I messed up the very first time with all the bells. I couldn't get that straight, so somebody else did that and I, but I served as altar boy all that time for those years. And so, church in the morning on Sundays and then everybody gathered around outside and, the usual kind of social, then we'd all walk back home.

Other people who lived there, there was a couple, a childless couple from Breslau who were both, who both were half-Jewish, both he and she, and they had both been raised as non-Jews, but he worked in my father's company, he was the accountant there. They were very good friends of ours and they happened to live there, too, they went there. There was a woman whose husband had died. She was, husband was Jewish, they were from Graz, no, from, well, from deep in the provinces in Austria, and he had died almost immediately upon landing in Shanghai, and she was there with her son, he was my age, and we played together. She lived there. There was a family down the lane toward the end, it was a Polish family, also mixed. He'd been an officer in the Polish army and, you know, with the Germans all of that was worthless and he was lucky, he took off. And he had a daughter I was friendly with. There was another Austrian couple, again both were half Jewish, and there were others. So there was a small community. There was a phys ed teacher from Austria, as I recall, and we were a small, self-contained community.

We had to pay rent, it wasn't for free. We had to pay rent. Rents were assessed individually in terms of means and my mother had a tough time. She was a very attractive woman, you know, still, she was what, quite, looking at it now, quite young, [laughs] but everybody appears young to me these days. She was an attractive woman, very vivacious, very, tremendous energy, and I think the, the administration kind of looked askance. You know, she was a single woman, as far as they were concerned, and they were so concerned



with morality in the Catholic sense, that I think they looked at her somewhat askance and gave her a hard time about rent. I remember it was difficult. So that went on.

As a consequence of being at SFX, as the school was called, I really had almost no contact with the rest of the refugee community. I mean, we were our own community. I didn't know most of the kids my age that I normally would have been with had I gone to the other school, with one or two exceptions. I did know some friends, but that was of no concern. I mean, it was not a problem, it was not seen as a problem. We were still part, we were a small close community, but we were still very much a part of the larger refugee community and the flavor of being a refugee clung to us. And that's a big deal for me, and this is something that I had always objected and I had suffered about being a refugee and fought it, fought the image, fought the concept of refugee and, you know, basically really don't accept the fact that someone said, "You are no longer a part of the German, or you are no longer a part of this community." I don't accept that for myself. It was identity problem, you know, an identity problem, and this is a problem for me at this point still. You know, when I look, when people talk about refugees and think of refugees, you see faceless masses of people in Africa or India or someplace like that, and that is not the way I identify myself or want to be identified by others, or want to be, you know, want to be seen as. And I think it's a tremendously important identity problem for people, and it's a, it's what the Germans did was, had a lasting effect. I think that's, if anything else, that's a PTSD diagnosis for post-traumatic stress syndrome right, based on that.

**Hochstadt:** Did you feel it at that time?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, I felt it because it was thrown up to me in school. We had some rather uncouth Russian students and they would, they would do that, they would say that and use it as a pejorative term.

**Hochstadt:** The word refugee?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Hochstadt:** You weren't the only refugee, though, in your school? There were some others?

**Fuchs:** For a while I was the only one, then somebody else, but that was, it was, I was pretty much alone, yeah. And I made friends with a Philippino boy and with some others, but it was, I mean, they didn't know where I'd come from and, you know, it's, I, that problem sort of also transferred itself later on when we got out of Shanghai and we went back to, we went back to Europe, I mean, to Germany, briefly. We put up another whole, this group of, one that I was a group of, hundred and six that traveled together, we, again we were being seen, as we landed, we were being seen as displaced persons, refugees, and we were going to be treated, in no way were we going to be treated that way. They, we were on a train into Bremen and they, the former Anderson army, that was the Polish general, Anderson, who had formed a brigade in London of Polish troops. As a reward after the war, they were given jobs as the security for

the UNRRA, for the camps, all the displaced persons. They had, they wore blue, blue was the United Nations color always, blue helmets and blue uniforms, they didn't wear weapons but they, and, you know, being good Polish boys, they were all antisemitic, but they were made into the security. They were all ready to, waiting for us with their DDT, what do you call them, powder dispensers, to stick them into our clothing against lice and, you know, because here was this bunch of displaced persons coming down the line. And, well, we stopped proceedings right then and there. We stayed right on the train and somebody went to get the American social worker who was in charge of that whole camp, and we engaged in some discussion and [laughs] we clarified who we were, but see, again, we were refugees, faceless, nameless, stateless, and that's a terrible situation to be in.

As somebody mentioned in the, mentioned at the meeting, I forget, I think it was those four audio tapes, among those, where it was, somebody mentioned that to, being stateless, being pronounced as no longer being part of this community, it, it left you bereft of consular protection in a foreign country. Consular protection in a foreign country, we may not think about that much, but, you know, if you're a traveler now and you go from one country to the other, there aren't any problems, but to be without consular protection in those days, when things were kind of heated up, was a real loss, because essentially people could do whatever they wanted with you. You had no papers, there was no country behind you standing up and saying, "Hey, this is my citizen. You don't do this to my citizen." You can do anything you want and nobody would have protected, protested. So that whole concept of being a refugee is an ongoing problematic situation. And I've talked with some of the people at the meeting there and they told me that they had felt similarly, some of them did.

**Hochstadt:** Can I ask, you've been in this country now for a long time, and so you've been a citizen for a long time.

**Fuchs:** Oh, yes.

**Hochstadt:** So how does this having been a refugee, what difference does it make to you now?

**Fuchs:** Well, the, a concrete difference is, for instance, whenever I'm out of the country and I come back, I am, I have the warmest possible feeling for that little booklet that I carry that says passport. You know, I'm so grateful for having that. And walking through the passport control, I'm sure that they're not aware of it, I don't know if they are, but when you show, you give your passport to the officer and he looks at you usually, they usually go through a little bit of a production number here, and sort of, it sounds spontaneous, and perhaps it is, perhaps it isn't, but I can't tell you how good those words sound, when he hands it back to me and he says, "Welcome back to the United States." That . . .

**Hochstadt:** Do you think that that makes you a different kind of citizen or, does it give you a different feeling about being in the United States or about the United States?





**Fuchs:** Well, I think of myself, I think I always have, well, I don't know if I always have, I think of myself as a citizen of the world and, in one way, in terms of, in sort of, in a cultural way, I think of myself. And in a, again, in a cultural way I think of myself more as a European, but European American, American European, it's all one, you know. I live in the Northeast, northeastern New England because it has, I'm sure it is mostly due to the fact that I really like it here, I like New England, it seems the most European, the most alien I think to me is the South, the South and the Southwest. I don't really have a sense of things there, but I feel at home here. And so I think of myself as a Euro-American, culturally. Politically, very much American. As much as I like to go, American in the sense of United States of America, political sense. As much as I like to go to Europe, as much as I like to go to Germany, and I have friends, and I have, even I have a cousin, and I certainly have friends there, and my first wife was German from Bremen, I met her during that seven months, and I am so happy to come back here and not to have to live, from a political point of view, not to have to live in one of those societies. Because I think, I think we're, we're the most fortunate, the most free society still. With all the problems that we have, it doesn't com-, to me, it doesn't compare, you know, politically, to United States of America experiment that we've been living for a couple hundred years. I see nowhere where that kind of, you know, history has been successfully even attempted. So I feel very much a part of that, I'm very happy to leave, until I'm ready to go back again to Europe, but to leave and to know that I am part, that I am a supposedly full-fledged part of the American experiment, political experiment. I don't think there's, anybody has invented anything better. And, yeah, I'm, that's it.

**Hochstadt:** Thank you. I wanted to ask you about this change that you made, or maybe it wasn't so big of a change, from being part of your family, I don't remember, you didn't say much about religious training before, but suddenly you were in like very Catholic . . .

**Fuchs:** I had none before.

**Hochstadt:** So you had sort of no religion, or no religious training and then suddenly at age eleven or twelve, you were put in a very Catholic environment.

**Fuchs:** Eleven, yeah, yeah. What . . .

**Hochstadt:** Did you welcome that? Was that, how did that transition feel?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, I did. I did. I liked that. I liked the rituals and, you know, I had first communion, you know, I was part of it. I felt part of it very much. It made a lot of sense to me, I liked the ritual, it was very important, all that, the English would say the High Church, all that incense and the mass and all of that. By around age fourteen, fifteen, up came the usual adolescent scepticism, and we had a lot of, I and other kids, other boys my age, we had a lot of discussions about religion. It was important. And I remember that my position was that Christianity was the only, was the only religion that made, that took us, that took humanity out of an earlier very primitive eye-for-an-eye kind of standard, and that, you know, the message of love was the step out of, you know, you killed mine, I kill yours. Even though it was of course pointed



out right away that more people have been killed in the name of Christianity probably than anything else. That doesn't matter. I'm, I was saying that the concept of the fact that that idea was implanted, at least in some, at least that the idea was invented, the Christian, you know, love thy neighbor as thyself, and with love rather than, you know, turn the other cheek. I felt that that was a, forever one of those everlasting truths, that even if you don't live up to it, the fact that it was invented by a human was in itself a step up. And that was, that's why I felt, that's what I wanted to adhere to. The fact that I gave up practicing and all the ritual and all the stuff that became meaningless to me then, but I still felt that I, as far as my appreciation of a belief system was concerned, that I took that position. Does that answer your . . . ?

**Hochstadt:** Yes. Do you know if your mother thought at all about going back to Germany?

**Fuchs:** She didn't want to. No. She didn't want to. She was very eager, she became a naturalized citizen here, she was very eager to come here. It had, we had no, and as I say, we had no relatives, no, you know, nobody here to make that possible, so we didn't even entertain the notion, but no, she never wanted to go back to Germany. Absolutely not. She had, there were two sets of close friends that she had, non-Jewish, in Breslau, and they, one of them, and she made contact through the Red Cross, her sister also had, my mother's sister had stayed there and had a child, and we found out later on that my brother-in-law had, was a missing person in Stalingrad, and my mother's sister died in, I think in '42, very early, we didn't know that until after the war, and the child was raised by a relative, and that's my only cousin. That's a woman that I'm close to, very close to. My mother, no, didn't want to go back. There was, well, she was angry with the whole business, she didn't want any part of it.

**Hochstadt:** I've been told that the German embassy or consular people in Shanghai sometimes approached Christian women who married Jewish men and said, "You can go back to Germany, you can leave your husband." That didn't happen?

**Fuchs:** Didn't happen, didn't happen. No, she was as anti-German [laughs] as I can remember anybody, more than I. Because I was, I've always been very close to the German language and culture, I mean, I feel that's my, really my background of choice. Not for her. As I said, she was a vivacious, very energetic woman who, she always said, "Never look back, always look forward." And what she looked forward to was doing, creating a new life here, and she did.

**Hochstadt:** So maybe we can pick up the story. You're in this Catholic compound and going to St. Xavier's, St. Francis Xavier's. Whatever the next milestone is. Maybe it's the Proclamation that, or the outbreak of the war is perhaps the next milestone.

**Fuchs:** Yes, yes, well, that's an often told story, because of the dateline, it occurred for us on the next day, I think. It was December 7th?

**Hochstadt:** Yes.

**Fuchs:** Oh, maybe it was on December 6th, I forget how that goes, but anyway it was the next day for us, and it was during the night. And I lived in this Catholic compound on Seward Road and during the night there was bombardment, there were loud noises, you know, and the next day we learned, oh, I don't remember how, radio or maybe the newspaper. Somebody came by, said that the Japanese had invaded the International Settlement, or it was going on right at that time, and that the explosions we heard was a gunboat that was hit. There was a British and an American gunboat apparently. I, you know, I was a kid, I didn't know that much about it. But that's when the trap was shut and the formerly free and open French Concession and International Settlement were now in Japanese hands, and so Shanghai was cut off.

But for me nothing changed. I mean, I went to school the next day, just like before and, see, in Hongkew had always been outside of, you know, it was outside the International Settlement, so we were used to seeing Japanese patrols, there were always Japanese patrols, it didn't really matter, except that on the bridge going over into the International Settlement, there was, there used to be a Japanese sentry, and Chinese going by had to kind of bow their head and they had to be examined sometimes, their goods were examined. Now I think that sort of all became one city and Japanese were in complete control. And shortly thereafter began to organize all the foreigners according to their political status, meaning that they handed out armbands. So there were the Allied, the enemy American and British, they were packed up into camps and it was outside of Shanghai, I don't know where, but I'm sure that's all known documented history. But it seemed like that film, "The Rising Sun," I think?

**Hochstadt:** "Empire of the Sun".

**Fuchs:** One of those films, where, that depicted one of those camps where British and Americans were. So, but it took a while for all that to happen, so for a while everybody had an armband. It was a red armband for the allied, the enemy, that kept them out of everything. Then there were the, those countries that had been overrun by the Germans. They were the Danes and the Norwegians, and of course the Italians were part of the Axis, and they had something to identify them. And then there were the neutrals, the Swiss and the Swedish, and there were citizens of all of those countries there because of the shipping. You know, there were a lot of Danish seamen, a lot of Norwegian and Swedish seamen, and their consulates took care of them. And they were all caught in the trap. They had, literally, they had been on board their ships when this, when December 7th, ready to leave as the regular, you know, regular scheduled freighters and it was all, that was when the, when the harbor was closed, and they were all caught in the trap, so there were large groups like that. Interesting, the Italians, at first they were part of the Axis, great friends, when things turned the wrong way in Italy and Marshall Badoglio rebelled and had their, and they attempted to have a separate peace or something, the Italians had a choice. There was an Italian, a large ocean liner in the harbor and their whole crew was among others, they were given a choice, you're gonna vote for Badoglio or the Duce, and depending on which, you were either enemy or friend. I don't know who, I don't know what choices they made, [laughs] it was difficult to know.

And so everybody wore their armbands and had to be subjected to some kind of



observation by Japanese, I suppose. British and Americans disappeared from the scene when the camps were erected and so they were gone, and the bus-, their business, their, their consular businesses was taken over by the Swiss who maintained their consulate, and the Norwegians to some degree. The reason why I'm somewhat familiar, I knew some of these people to the consular staff is that later on I became an apprentice to a dentist in the city, in Shanghai, not in Hongkew, and some of their, one of the dentists in that group had a contract. He was a Hungarian and he had a contract with the Norwegian cons-, Norwegian and Swedish consulates to do the dental work for their seamen, for their people over there, so I was given the bills, I went to collect the cash. [laughs] I got the bills so I was, I had a chance to go into, what to me were really posh, you know, really European kind of, I mean, these Norwegian and these Swiss and Swedish consular officials . . .

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE B

BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE A

**Hochstadt:** So, we were talking about the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. Was anyone in the school? Were there any people teaching at St. Francis Xavier's who were Americans or British?

**Fuchs:** No, they were all religious, they were all brothers, so that, the robes of the brother carried a mult-, concealed [laughs] a multitude of sins. No, they were, there was an Irishman and there was an Englishman, and there were a couple of Frenchmen and there were a couple of Germans, but they were all religious brothers and that absolutely made no difference, no. I stopped going to school, because my mother couldn't afford the books. I had, school was free, but, it was free for me, it was rather expensive, it was an expensive school, but it was free for me, because I lived with the, you know, Catholic housing there, and we did have to provide our own books and it was a stack, it was always new, nothing second hand, you couldn't get second hand, and it was very expensive, and to tell the truth, I also kind of had it with school, so I didn't put up a big fuss, but we didn't have the money. And, you know, that was, well, that was that. So I became apprenticed to a dental technician and . . .

**Hochstadt:** At what age is this now?

**Fuchs:** Fourteen. That's, again, that's the German, that was the German style. I mean, there was a, if you didn't go to a *Gymnasium* with a, ultimately with an, for an academic career with university entrance, you know, you went to either a middle school, usually a middle school, that's, or a trade school, and at fourteen you could do that. And dental technician was considered to be rather, you know, a high level kind of a technical skill. It was a four-year apprenticeship after which you had to produce, you had to do something, you know, a piece of work that was judged, and you had to have attended this trade school all along, which like our

voc, voc schools, your vocational schools here. You also took other, took other things, math and English, history. My parents are responsible for that and that was a big bone of contention later on. They, my, both of my parents always said, especially my father, said, "You have to learn something concrete. You have to learn a craft. You don't know where you're going to wind up, you need to have something concrete you can offer. We've got enough attorneys and physicians," and attorneys, we had, like, the German expression is "*Sand am Meer*," and of course they couldn't practice. That's strictly cultural. And I think both of my parents did not, as much as they believed in education, it was a very high value for them and they admired people with degrees, they couldn't possibly believe that their son might be inclined that way. And I had to do my own, literally against anybody's judgment, so I went along with getting out of school at fourteen and going into this technical thing, and . . .

**Hochstadt:** With whom did you apprentice?

**Fuchs:** I apprenticed with a Mr. Frye, F-R-Y-E, I think, yeah, Herr Frye. He was from Berlin, I think, yes, he was from Berlin, and he was a widower, yeah, I think, a widower, and he had a son whom he sent to England with a *Kindertransport*, you've heard of that. And he was a very lonely man, older man. I think he much regretted having sent his son away, but of course at that time that might have been, that might have saved his life, who knows. Well anyway, Herr Frye looked for an apprentice and I apprenticed, and he, Frye, moved his, he had a laboratory where he did the dental technician stuff, he moved in with a Chinese-English firm, namely the Jitts dentist in the Settlement, in the International Settlement, and after a while that didn't work out so well, and he left again, but I stayed. They kind of adopted me and that became my second family. I stayed there. I didn't sleep there but I stayed there all day, and later on as the war progressed I had all my good clothes, all the things that I felt that I wanted with me, I could, you know, if I was, if I lost everything else, I had a knapsack and a steel helmet, a British, one of these British ones, that I took with me always in the office, because later on, as you know, we were bombed by our well-meaning friends, but, you know, that's, nobody really takes that, blames anybody. But we were bombed and I didn't want to, well, I kept my stuff there.

Anyway, so I stayed with them and one little, well, one side, this business that you heard about with the ghetto, the so-called ghetto which was, it was a concept rather than an, I mean, the actuality was that fear kept us on the line. There was no actual gate or anything. It was a demarcation line on a map, but you're not supposed to go outside that and whoever did, and some people did, but they, they took their life in their own hands. So it was, for all practical purposes, it was a Designated Area, and we, you heard about this fella Ghoya, and I was in mortal fear of him, although there was no history that he'd done anything to children, but he would slap people, and it was, as far as I was concerned, it was a matter of life and death if you went there. So I had to go and get, I was fortunate because I had a proper job, I was employed, you know, full time employment. When it started out I only had to go every three months. I had a three months pass, so that was okay. Later on they did away with that and you had, only got a four weeks pass, and there was one occasion, the line was so long, and he didn't move, he didn't do anything. I waited in line, and you had your same place again that

you, next morning, for three weeks. I couldn't go in town. And I'm sure that they didn't believe me, they thought I was goofing off, but I was standing there for three weeks trying to get permission. And the pass was only for four, so then I had to start all over again. It was difficult. But for most of the time I was one of those fortunate ones, and there were a number of others who had these permanent blue permission cards, every three months, and so that was one story.

The other was that after the declaration was promulgated by the Japanese headquarters, the people in the Catholic compound received a one year deferment. We didn't have any place to go and no money. And, you know, business conduc-, is conducted in China and generally in the Far East with payment of *baksheesh*, you know, of, it was called key money in those days, and you had to have a sum of money, and it was just a bribe. But you had to pay somebody off to even get to first base. Now, not only did, we didn't have any money to pay off, we didn't have money for high rents, so it was getting to be a real hairy problem. We didn't know what to do. The church, the diocese didn't do anything, didn't arrange anything, like open up a similar compound within the Designated Area. So we had to move and as I recall there was, we ultimately, my mother rented a room in the District and she even worked out of that. She rented another little room where she did her hair, but at first the pressure was on, we gotta get out, I mean, you had to get out. And I think we wound up in an awful hovel that had been set up sort of as a last possible resort by some organization. They'd built these little row hovels out of more mud than cement and the floor was just like a dirt floor and it was way out in the, behind the last tram. It was pretty awful and my mother found, did find, she found the money to pay, or maybe did it on future. However, that was, all of those things, turned out that the room, well we had, we shared it with another family, that room, and the man was tubercular and I got infected later on, I got TB, and it was clearly from the conditions. So things were, for a long time, for that year, it was, it was getting really tense, because we didn't know where we would wind up.

**Hochstadt:** That was true for these other people in the Catholic community you described who were also . . . ?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, they had, yes, they all dispersed. I don't know where they all went, but they all found someplace to crawl under. And the compound that we lived in was, became privately bought out or rented by other people.

**Hochstadt:** Your mother's business had now shifted into her own room or . . . ?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, yeah.

**Hochstadt:** She was still able to keep it going in this, during the ghetto time?

**Fuchs:** Yes, she did, she did. Talk about the necessity for women to have their hair done. I mean, that was next in importance to eating, I suppose. It was, you know, it's a good sign, people wanted to maintain their appearance.



**Hochstadt:** You were bringing in some money, your mother was bringing in some money, and that was enough to get by on?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, we scraped by. There was no money to do anything, or, I mean, anything other than food and transportation and clothing, although we, she had a friend and we, the friend was, had access to American Friends Society, Quakers. They had clothing, they had second hand clothing, and we would, I remember at least twice, go there and pick out clothing and a pair of shoes. These were all American clothes and it was a big deal, second hand shoes with crepe rubber soles. I thought that was one hell of a thing. [laughs] So that, I remember once, this is before the District so it's in the early forties, she worked, she got me a new, a raincoat. There was a factory owned by refugees that made, I mean, we had all kinds of wonderful, we had factories, they had theaters and they did all kinds of wonderful things. We didn't have any money for any of that, but she worked off the price of a new raincoat for me. It was a blue, a blue raincoat, and then she had to do, I don't know how many times she had to go and do their hair, and it was, that's what she did. But I was always well clothed and I was never hungry like many people, and I never went to the *Heim* kitchen to pick up the, now, a good friend of mine on the West Coast, he remembers, and I remember seeing him. His mother had no income, he was, his father had died earlier, and he had to go, in order to survive he had to go and get beans on Tuesday and noodles on Thursday, or whatever it was, a fixed menu. That, he survived with that. No, I never had to do that. My mother paid, there were various things that she did. One time she paid, there was a, there was a physician from Breslau, his wife and his son. I was friendly with his son. She paid the woman for me to eat there, the main meal. I mean, she wasn't around, she was out all day, and, you know, Germans, whether they live in Germany or in China, their main meal was at noontime. So she paid to have me, you know, have a paying guest. Another time I was a paying guest at a kindergarten and I ate with the kindergarten teachers.

Another time, that was my favorite, my, the highlight of my, of my days there, was when she had enough money to make me a half boarder at St. Francis Xavier's. And that was fantastic, because after the school was out and everybody left, the boarders, it was a boarding school, the boarders and the half boarders stayed, played and then we had a meal served to us in the rather posh dining room, you know, highly polished mahogany tables, long tables, and at one end, it was very English, like an English public school, one end was a raised bay with three brothers sitting there and eating, watching us cutting up over there in long rows of tables and food was served by Chinese wai-, Chinese boys in white dress. I thought, I really belong now. You know, it was a humanizing experience. I wasn't in some hovel out in Hongkew. It was nice. And that lasted for a while and I left school. It got me closer to some of the kids, too.

But that's how we survived. There was, it was, you know, food and clothing and there was nothing else. There was not, there was no, nothing there for anything else, so that, one thing that was, had always bothered me a great deal was living in such unfinished, half ready living conditions. For instance, all those years when we, since we lived in that place, we were, we lived in an upstairs of a house that had belonged to Japanese who had very nice *shoji* screens, kind of. Well, when they left, they tore everything out and we had open work, as I call it, open work walls, and nothing on top other than the rafters. I mean, it was cathedral ceiling

because they had taken everything away. And it wasn't, you know, it wasn't home. I mean, I had to live that way with, you know, half torn out things, and I remember if I had occasion sometimes I would visit someone or go somewhere who lived in neat, you know, neat rooms where there were walls that were painted and things looked like they were sort of, quote, normal. That made a great impression over me. I always lived in unfinished, half done kind of places, and, I guess perhaps it's a minor point, but it wasn't minor to me. It was a reflection of who I was. I wasn't worthy of living in any other circumstances.

**Hochstadt:** Did it make a difference in your interactions with people in Hongkew that the great majority of the Europeans were Jewish and you were not?

**Fuchs:** No. No. I didn't feel any different. I didn't feel any different. I had some friends, and it didn't make any difference. I went, I think it was after the war that I went to the, to that, to the Shanghai Jewish School, the Kadoorie School, I think, then. They had a youth group there and I went to that, and out of that we formed a theater group and I became active in that and I starred in some of the productions, and I did some rewriting and, it was, no, that didn't come as any problem. I wasn't, frankly, at that point in my life, I was not much interested in religion.

**Hochstadt:** Would you say something about the theater group and what kinds of activities you did and plays you put on?

**Fuchs:** We did "Scarface," that was Al Capone. That was a play, and I think my friend and I shortened it. We went and cut out some scenes to make it fit and we had a great time. I forget another, what the other one was. It was definitely after the war, it must have been after the war. And I met some of the, well, some of the people were at the last meeting in the Catskills and the one before at Philadelphia, there were two of the women who were there, they were part of that group, two or three.

**Hochstadt:** Who were they?

**Fuchs:** One was Eva Mannheim, now Zunterstein, you might have seen her. She was there. And I think the girl, Chaja Ambaras, now Haas. She was at both of these. She was part of that. And my friend in Palo Alto, he was not at the meeting, but he was part of that, René Willdorff. I don't remember other, other names.

**Hochstadt:** Who was sponsoring that? What kind of adults were in charge, or were there any adults who were in charge?

**Fuchs:** I don't remember any adults. [laughs] I think at that point, how old would we be? Oh, certainly old enough, let's see, oh, we were old enough to not want any adults messing around. I, you know, it was part of the youth center. I wasn't involved in any of the other activities there.





**Hochstadt:** Did it take place at the Kadoorie School?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, as I recall there was a, what do you call it, a U-shaped kind of a building, as I recall. That's all I remember.

**Hochstadt:** Right, that was the Kadoorie School.

**Fuchs:** That was, that's, you're familiar with that, yeah, okay. There must be pictures of that, yeah, that's where it was. And we did a party afterwards, yeah, we were, we were late adolescents, we had a party with a tremendous amount of food and drink and it was, it was, I got totally drunk at that and was taken home by two of my friends, and I was in trouble with my mother for a long time after that. And it, it cured me of any intention that I had of drinking, drinking to excess. It was a clear, it was a very important clear experience for me to, you know, I couldn't believe that that would happen to me, that I would black out. My father didn't drink. We had a very civilized, we had a glass of wine, glass of beer kind of civilized drinking history, but one did not get drunk. Period. And when I did, totally, I mean, I don't know what I did all night, that was it for me. And I guess it held true. But that's what we did. We had a great, at the time we thought we had a great time.

**Hochstadt:** Is there anything else to talk about during the war? Before the war ends?

**Fuchs:** Oh, there were all these, I mean they were, I suppose, experiences, short little things. I think, looking back on it now, it's, I think it's fair to say that the uncertainty, the constant uncertainty of what was going to happen next was in the air, was there, and made things very difficult. You never knew. Walk down the street, and you'd run into a Japanese patrol that cordoned off the street and everybody had to go through and be body searched. You never knew what they would do.

**Hochstadt:** Did that happen to you?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, oh, yeah. Especially, at some point there was a lot of underground activity, assassination attempts on the part of Chinese underground, you know, and as soon as that happened the patrols came and they cut off different streets and you'd have to go through and they'd pat you down. I must say, in all fairness, being Europeans, being white foreigners, still, at some point in general carried some weight in the sense that, or maybe it was just because I was a kid, I was a young person, that I never had any problem. I mean, yeah, they'd pat me down but they didn't even do that sometimes, because there was a time when I was known to walk around with a dagger in my boot, and I, that was not the thing to do, and I wondered sometimes, what would I do if they start patting me down, but they never did.

There were times when the public health service would do the same thing. They'd cordon off and everybody had to go through and show their current cholera and typhus shots, and you could get a shot there for free if you didn't mind the same needle going in. I didn't mind, I always got mine, I always got my shot for free on the street.

But it was, one time I was walking down home and I was still, that was still in the Catholic compound so it must have been before 1943, and there was a Japanese marine on the other side and he had a great big German shepherd and all of a sudden there was that shepherd on my backside, clutching it. And I didn't know what was going to happen next, until he whistled him off and I could proceed down the road. But it's that kind of situation where you're, where we were, I was and I think in general we were at the total, at the mercy of forces that were beyond our control. I think that's one of the, lack of control. Being a good German, I, I appreciated that very much, or I didn't appreciate the fact that there was, you never knew what was going to happen next, and nothing anybody could do, nobody could protect you, and I think that was one of the hardest things.

**Hochstadt:** So maybe you could say something about the end of the war?

**Fuchs:** Well, my mother and I lived in a lane on, at that point, on Wayside Road exactly opposite the entrance to a factory. It was a factory with a central tower of several stories and then two side wings. And it was known that it was a factory and it was a Japanese factory, but I don't know that people knew exactly what it was. Well, it turned out that that was a torpedo factory, it was well known, it was well known to the American intelligence, too, and we were just on the same street, right literally opposite. They camouflaged with a whole lot of wooden contraptions and netting so, to camouflage the building, but I think it was quite clear that everybody knew it was there. So we were in dire straits living, just living there, because as you know there were no shelters and if I was home, if I wasn't at the Jitts in town, I was there and that happened a number of times. One time particularly when planes came over and you heard the crunch, the crunching sound of bombs and they hit the power station, they loved to hit the power station which meant that we had no electricity for days and sometimes weeks, and fortunately nobody had a refrigerator anyway so that, or air conditioning, so it didn't matter, but it did matter that we had no power. And we heard the crunching and I was, I remember, standing in the doorway, at least I had the wooden protection of the doorway, we just stood around and we watched the planes. They didn't come and bomb the torpedo factory, however. I think they purposefully did not do that, because for sure we would have gone up in smoke on the other side of the street.

The lane where we lived was two lanes deep where, you know, Europeans were refugees. The rest was still occupied by Japanese families who worked over in the factory, administrative or whatever people. And I maintained the usual bowing low ceremony with them. They were very nice, they were very, they kept to themselves but in the morning every morning we'd see them, we'd go, do my, I forgot all the Japanese that I knew, a little bit, "*Ohayoo gozaimas*" kind of thing, and they'd smile and we'd bow, we said how it was, and so that's where we lived.

And we lived there and they lived there, and it was, I remember it was very, very hot in August and at that point in August we had lost, at least I had lost any news. Up to that point there was news broadcast by the Russian state radio and when Russia, at the very end of the war, declared war on Japan, that stopped so we didn't hear any. I mean, I was unaware of how bad or good things were. According to the Japanese, the English language Japanese newspaper

sank the entire American fleet three times over, if you counted up, somebody did that, counted up the times. In the meantime there were task force planes, American planes from task forces way out in the Chinese, in the Yellow Sea, bombing us, so it was clear that they were coming close and that something was happening. And we knew that in Europe the tide had turned and when the Russian news still came through every day they announced the villages and the towns that had been liberated from the Germans, so we knew it was going that way, but we didn't know, I didn't know, exactly how far. And it was very hot in August and, hot meaning that people slept outside on the street on mats, and I don't know who or how the word came, but suddenly there was word that something happened and the war is, would be over. Something happened. I never heard of a bomb or two, or of the, you know, what kind of bomb. It was just that something terrible, mysterious happened and the war was just going to be over. And I think that lasted a couple of days and all of a sudden those Japanese all disappeared back of us. They all went into trucks and gone, boom, at night, melted away.

And we knew that things were, I mean, from then on, and I think there was great concern at the time, I think this is easily forgotten, but there was great concern of what would happen to a city left open to itself with no governing, no police, no nothing. If the Japanese were just to walk out, who, there was concern that there would be rioting and, you know, mob rule. And it didn't happen. The Japanese stayed on, the soldiers stayed on, minimally at least, until the actual first jeeps rolled into town from the airfield. So things sort of melted away. The Japanese just quietly left and American troops quietly came in.

And with them, of course, the all important big rations, cartons with rations. That was the first, I mean, I had not had any, had not eaten any chocolate in I think five years. You know, for a kid, that's fairly important. Milk, butter, all of those things, most meat was not, was something that I hadn't seen in years. Vegetables, we were supposed to, you know, were not supposed to eat those growing low on the ground because night soil was being used, so I, water you couldn't drink, you had to always boil. It was difficult, and, so we got, there was a, someplace you had to go and my mother and I went and we got our first ration. It was a great big box that was totally waxed in, it was for the, prepared for the tropics and in it, and we opened it up, and in it a big can of bacon and butter, which was not very good because it was, there was something in there to make it, to keep it, and this kind of ruined it. But there were all these prepared, these cans with food and then there was this, oh, thing of chocolate that was actually a survival, flyers got that and took that, carried that, and you could survive for I think fourteen days on this. You ate it fast, it made you dizzy. I ate it fast and it made me dizzy. [laughs] It was, that was a red letter day when we got our first box of the UNRRA, I think UNRRA made those available. And from there on in we got more, you know, later, more food came in.

And, well almost immediately, people began leaving. The population began to drop as people got ready to leave. There were lots of people who were, who had papers, you know, and, the entire German quota had been unused for the years of the war and before, because the Nazis didn't allow, they encouraged Germans to come back, they wouldn't allow anybody to emigrate from Germany. And so that, the entire quota was available and so anybody born in Germany at the time that, whatever was German at the time they were born, the German quota, that did not include the Austrians, it did not include all those Jewish people living in

Germany who had been born in what used to be Poland, in Poland. Polish quota was infinitesimally smaller. The State Department didn't like to have Poles, they didn't mind Germans, they didn't even mind, well, that's another story. So there were lots of people, including my father who was, who got a, eventually got a, an affidavit, a sort of a, what was it. Initially you had to have a family sponsor you, but then later on there was a general sponsorship and that's where he, he was born in Berlin, he had German quota, he could leave. He stayed on a while because I was sick at that time, and he left in '48 to come to the States. And . . .

**Hochstadt:** So you and your mother weren't thinking of leaving right away, partly because you were sick?

**Fuchs:** Well, I would've left, yeah, but I was sick. And so . . .

**Hochstadt:** Was this the TB?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, and I had a real problem with that. And that's another whole, that's another whole chapter. I got, I was the first one to get this new drug that was, had been developed here, streptomycin, and Charlie Jordan got it flown over for me, the Army flew it in. Nobody knew anything about that. People up to that point, treatment was essentially rest, bed rest, and, you know, there was nothing, and it didn't work for me. And I was the guinea pig and I got the drug, the new drug for, injected every three hours around the clock for four weeks and it just cured me, totally. I began gaining weight and eating like a horse and gaining weight, and then I, with that I went to the American Consulate and applied and, of course, they could see what was, the x-rays showed that there was a problem and they said, "Well, you've got to come back every three months, and if after a year it's all stable, the situation is stable, we'll talk again." So that immediately deferred anything that I could do. Because at that point, somebody made that point during the meeting there, there were surveys after surveys of where would you like to resettle. And I filled out every one of them. You know, different places, Australia, United States. United States was a closed situation, I mean, I could go if they, I could go if I could go, but I was, I just had to wait. But there were other countries, but nothing ever happened. Nobody ever invited us to go anywhere, despite all these surveys. It became a laughing matter after a while. But that was, so we just, I got a job then with UNRRA and became, worked in the immigration department. That was the first time I made some, I made an income and things, well, there's a whole area there that, stories . . .

**Hochstadt:** I'd like to hear about working for UNRRA. You mentioned this group of people who were still there after the Communists came in. I'm really interested in knowing how many people there were and also, especially what social characteristics those people had that differentiated them from people who had left. So whatever of that you could tell me. And people that you worked with, names of important people in UNRRA or things you know about Charlie Jordan [unclear] person.

**Fuchs:** Well, Charlie, and you know, I saw, in one of the video tapes that I saw, there was Laura Margolis. You know, Laura, you know, I was just so tickled to see her in that video. I don't know if she's still alive. She was quite elderly.

**Hochstadt:** I've heard that she's still alive in the Boston area.

**Fuchs:** In New Jersey.

**Hochstadt:** In the Boston area, somewhere, she's in a nursing home there.

**Fuchs:** Really, I thought, I, oh, because I think, I mentioned her name when I called the Leo Baeck Institute and they knew about her, of course, and they said she was in New Jersey. But anyway, she was a friend of mine. She was, well, she was there when I got the job at the immigration department. That was before '49. '49 the Communists took over. This was in '48. But they were all going to leave. Now Charlie Jordan was named director of European operations and he left first. She was still there as I recall. I had, I had no idea that she had been in Shanghai already before the war. See, I didn't, I found all that out from documents that I have that I got since. David Kranzler, I think, in his book possibly mentioned her, yes, I think he did.<sup>1</sup> I had no idea that she was that knowledgeable. I just knew her from 1948, and we used to talk and she used to make fun of me, well, make fun with me, anyways, we, and then of course as the situation got to the point where you had to leave if you wanted to leave, and they all, she left. I met her again on the ship as we came into Bremerhaven, after we'd, two years later in 1950 we came back to Germany, we pulled into Bremerhaven, and there she was. And it was good to see her. I remember she asked me, what did I want. I said, "Hey Laura, I need a beer," because I had, because American ships are liquor free, Navy ships are liquor free, so, anyway, I wanted a beer. That was all I needed at the time. And then after that, after I was in Bremen for seven months I lost track of her. And I picked up again when I saw the video with her. And she was very knowledgeable about, well, much more than I had thought. I learned a whole lot about what she was doing. Let me skip over and, after the Communists came in . . .

END OF TAPE TWO , SIDE A

BEGIN TAPE TWO, SIDE B

**Fuchs:** . . . well, let's see, the people who, anybody who could left at the last, up to the last moment in 1949 just before the troops, the Communist troops actually came into the city. We actually, we had planes leaving and one of them, one of the planes was actually shot at, I mean,

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<sup>1</sup> Fuchs refers to David Kranzler, Japanese, Nazis and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945 (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976).

they were, and there were refugees, our people, in there and they were, at that point they were mostly Austrians. Just before that time, there was a neat little solution. Canada, I'm trying to think now, Canada, what did they do? Now Austria provided Austrians with citizenship, officially. I think they, they declared them to be citizens again, and with that you could, with that paper in hand you could go to the Canadian consulate and get a visiting visa to Canada. That was one of those stories that they, one of those deals that they cooked up, somebody cooked up, and so people did that, you know, a whole mass of people got out that way. But you had to be Austrian, not German. So there were, we were shipping people out and anybody who could, but there was really no other big deal. Those people left and I don't know who else.

So everybody else who was left was either sick, had some kind of legal problem that prevented them from getting entry into the United States, even though they might have had German quota and all of that. There were a fair number of people with some legal history. There were also a couple who had alleged traitor, treacherous kinds of things during the war, you know, collaboration with the Japanese, there were a couple of people that were alleged to have done that. But, let's see, who else was there? There were a lot of sick, people were sick, people had legal history, I don't know, well, my own case, you know, I had been sick and I was waiting for clearance, it was that kind of thing. And they asked me if I wanted to stay. At that point it was the IRO, International Refugee Organization that had taken over from UNRRA, and as I said, I prepared, during that year from when the Communists came in in '49 to when that first group of foreigners was permitted to leave a year later from, through Tientsin, that episode I mentioned earlier, there was no business for us in immigration, and there were, one, two, three, I think three or four of us working there and we were, basically we were making a record of people who were there and what their problems were, you know, basic statistical data.

**Hochstadt:** Do you remember the names of these other people who were working with you?

**Fuchs:** One man's name was Rapaport. He was an older man at that time already and he was a music, not a musician, but he was a very cultured person who knew a lot of music. Another one who worked there, his name was Roth, R-O-T-H.

**Hochstadt:** Leo? From Berlin?

**Fuchs:** No, no, he was a singer. You know him?

**Hochstadt:** I interviewed him. He's a cantor now. Well, he's retired.

**Fuchs:** I wonder if that's the same, must be. I wonder if, could you do a cross check and see if he has a memory . . .

**Hochstadt:** I'll be glad to do that.

**Fuchs:** . . . for Rapaport and, see, I was his boss, kind of. They didn't, they didn't care too much for me, because, see, I was the one who spoke real English, you know, and I had the connection to the American staff and I was the youngest, I was all of twenty-odd and that didn't wash too well, but I had to tell them what to do. [laughs] And they were, those two were always talking music and I remember Roth going to his voice classes. I bet you that's the same fella. I'd, I'd appreciate knowing whether that is, whether he remembers working at the immigration with his friend Rapaport. Okay? And so we did that statistical thing, and you're asking me who, they were mostly sick and older people. People that had not been able to be replanted somewhere else, so it must, that was pretty desperate. Of course it was their right to be repatriated to their homeland, but many, I think many of those, it was over in the Communist zone and, you know, a bit crazy.

**Hochstadt:** How many people are we talking about?

**Fuchs:** A few hundred. The group that I left with was a hundred and six. We were all, that was sort of the forgotten few. I mean, there was an older couple who had children in the States and who had their visa but it was, again, the consular kind of a gentleman decided not to work on that, and so they were there. They left right away, but, then we had a few others who were mentally ill and others who ended up in hospital back home, but the ones that stayed, there were a few hundred. I know that, somebody who went to visit later, years later, there were still some there. I don't know what happened.

**Hochstadt:** This year that elapsed between the arrival of the Communists and when you could leave, what was the hold up during that year? Was it on the American side, or . . . ?

**Fuchs:** No, it was the Communists. They sealed themselves off. They just would not allow anybody to come in or out. It was Communist regime. They had to solidify their grip on the country first, I would imagine.

**Hochstadt:** Were you or other people in IRO negotiating with them, trying to persuade them to let people leave?

**Fuchs:** No, no. Before that there was a lot of activity with UNRRA. The Russians who were there, they were White Russians, originally White Russian, they were absolutely panicked. They thought that Communist troops come in, we'll all be strung up on the next pole. Didn't happen. But there was, there was a transport and I was given the option of joining it to the Philippines, to a camp in the Philippines, just before the troops, the Communist troops came in. And I was given this sheet and directions and where to go and what time to be there with one suitcase, and I thought that was, I'd rather take my chances than go to some God forsaken jungle camp in the Philippines. But once the troops, the Communist regime was in, I'm not aware of any consultation or any dealings. I know there were all kinds of dealings with American sources, I don't know, military or otherwise. As I said, there was, there was one plan that seemed to be, that seemed to work, where they would have landing boats come in and leave the ship, a naval ship, outside the three mile zone and we'd go in landing boats. It



would have been a little more civilized I think than what actually happened later on with those barges that were towed out of Tientsin, now why not Shanghai? I mean, it was, supposedly the harbor was mined and so, well, they could have mined it, but that, no activity that I'm aware of. Although ultimately that permission to go up to Tientsin to get permission to go on the train first, we had to have that exit visa with us the whole time going up north to Tientsin that was arranged obviously with local authorities.

**Hochstadt:** You were with your mother on that trip?

**Fuchs:** I was with my mother the whole time. There was in Tientsin while we were waiting to be towed out in the barges and everybody was collecting behind the barbed wire area, there was a commotion up front at the entrance gate, and there was a, we saw a white man, turned out to be an American, drunk as a skunk, who was starting a to-do with a Japanese armed sentry to the point where he took the gun away, the rifle away from the sentry, and then of course they got him and they marched him away and everybody was all upset about that, what's going to happen, and eventually a Chinese commissar came up, spoke English, and addressed the whole crowd of us and said that there was an American who was being taken away for re-education. Never heard from him, I don't know whatever happened. I mean, they didn't shoot him right then and there, but I'm sure he was not very happy when he became clear again. I talked for a long time on that trip on the barge going out with an American chap from the Consulate and he gave me his card, when we, when we disembarked later on, he gave me his card and he had a post office box in Virginia, and he said I should write him, you know, he would help me. I never did. He was CIA. [laughs] I never, I could have probably got some help that way, but I, I was very much into doing my own thing those days.

**Hochstadt:** So you got taken on this barge out to this American presidential ship . . . ?

**Fuchs:** Three mile, yeah, American president . . .

**Hochstadt:** . . . went over to San Francisco?

**Fuchs:** Yeah, there was a, and there was a group of a hundred and six people who, we were all outfitted with a temporary, with an exit visa from China, with a temporary, with a transit, but we didn't have, it wasn't real, it wasn't, see, there were visas, immigration visas, then there were visitors' visas, then there were transit visas. People had to be in transit, I mean, you could be in the States, but you had to be in transit from coming in and going out, and we didn't even have that. We had a transit visa good only for a sealed train. So we landed in San Francisco and my friend came on board, I mean, it wasn't some kind of, there was no, there were no soldiers surrounding it, it was, I could have walked off any time. But it was illegal. I mean, what was I gonna do? My friend came on board, we had, we took pictures, we had the afternoon together, I have pictures, and then it got time everybody got called together and we were, I guess the train was right near the yard, the yard where the ship was, and we all marched down to this very nice Pullman train and it had a beautiful dining car attached to it.





Every day they'd attach a new dining car, and we would all find our seats and have our beds made. It was a regular Pullman accommodation. And the train took off and it took three days to get to New York.

And when we got to New York, the train went right on the siding in Hoboken next to the ship that was ready to go back empty to pick up more refugees on the other side. At that point, you know, so there was a hundred and six of us in this train, and wherever it stopped, each compar-, each train or each wagon had a gentleman not in uniform but a deputy of some sort, federal, just going along, and we would, I mean, we didn't want any problem, we didn't want to create any problems with anybody, so we were very careful. I would ask him, can I get out on the siding, you know, it was stopped in Chicago, and I just wanted to walk a little bit. You get kind of logy in a train, and we stayed right close and got right back on again. But basically most everybody stayed in the train. We didn't want to give these guys a hard time.

But when it came to New York, there was a small group, and I was included in that for some reason, probably mostly because I spoke, you know, I spoke fluent English, I was, I had worked for IRO and I, we attempted to obtain permission to stay in the country and pursue our paperwork in the country. I mean, stayed right in New York and done it. Ultimately, three weeks later, that was found not to be possible. Now there were other people who came with a regular transit visa, I had a friend who did that, and they went to Montreal, went to the Consulate, the American Consulate there, and got their paper and then could come back. It didn't work for us. That was, but it was hard work. We tried very hard to drum up a lot of interest in the group of a hundred and six, as we called it, and it didn't work.

**Hochstadt:** So you were then all put on another ship and off to Bremen.

**Fuchs:** We went on another ship and went to Bremen, and it was 1950 and right during that ten-day trip, the Korean situation broke out, and that was another really bad moment, because the way we heard the news on board ship, I wasn't sure that we weren't, we wouldn't be met by the Russian *Panzers*, you know, it was that kind of touch and go situation. But they weren't there and we disembarked in Bremen and I love the city, stayed right there.

**Hochstadt:** And how long did you stay in Bremen?

**Fuchs:** I stayed, it took seven months and I got myself a job. Again I asked Charlie after a while, "Look, I can't hang around here like some camp person, you know, I gotta do some work." And I got a job in the legal department in a displaced person camp where there, at this point, now remember, this is five years after the war, there were still a lot of DPs in Europe, and they were being shipped out. It had taken that long to clear their various records and so on. I got a job in the legal department and I actually, which was run by a Czech lawyer, an anti-Communist, Czechoslovakia was Communist, there were a number of Czech refugees who, who had fled after the Communists took over. And I actually went to court, went to German court with our clients to represent them and, I didn't have a law degree but under the aegis of that. Who they were, they were these former Anderson Brigade Polish soldiers. They didn't want to go to Poland, it was Communist, you know, they had the fresh air of democracy



in the West and they wouldn't, they didn't get permission to do, to stay in the West unless they could show that they had no obligations in the East, such as wifey and children. You know, there was this business of, if you had that, and if you did have that, you had to have written letters from your wife that she let you, that she was going to divorce you and, so that there was nothing hanging. And so we had to go with, each of these cases had to be documented and had to go to district court in Bremen and the judge would hear the story and would give the permission, and I would, they spoke very poor, they're not very talented, they weren't very talented in languages, and so I spoke fluent German, I represented them, and it was acceptable to the court. [laughs] But I had something to do.

**Hochstadt:** What was your mother doing at that time?

**Fuchs:** She was just living with the other people there. She was with that other group of a hundred and six and she had her friends, she played bridge, and . . .

**Hochstadt:** Was this in a camp, a DP camp?

**Fuchs:** We stayed in a DP camp in Bremen, yeah. In a, that was a barracks, it was a military barracks. It is again now, I went there afterwards to take a look at it. But it was good accommodations, you know, it was empty. There was, it was empty, nobody there, actually, when we came there because they had cleared out, and it was a place where they collected before going on board ship from other camps within Germany, so it was only used when there was a group ready to go. And we were there alone and the other people who, there were four or five others in a small group, who led this group who kind of, they were poker buddies of the camp director, who was an American social worker and so we generally had a good time. But again, they lost, you know, my Shanghai records were lost and I had to call Charlie Jordan in Paris, and he made phone calls, he found the records in Japan, you know, it was, it just dragged on and on. And I was ready to go, you know. I had my permission to go. By the time I was, that was cleared up, my health status was again, had run out, I had to have a new, new x-rays and a new look, and you know, each time the anxiety grew, what if it isn't all right. It was all right. So it was not without trying awfully hard for a few years to get over that. I'm dry. [laughs]

**Hochstadt:** Well, then, thanks very much.

BREAK IN TAPING

**Fuchs:** Is it on?

**Hochstadt:** Now it's on.



**Fuchs:** Wasn't it . . .

**Hochstadt:** No, I just, I had turned it off.

**Fuchs:** But it was on before, the whole time?

**Hochstadt:** Yes.

**Fuchs:** I always considered myself very fortunate at precisely the age that I was when I got to Shanghai. Younger, well, they wouldn't, there were children born there, they wouldn't necessarily remember much, but older, I was, I think I was fortunate that I was only eleven, because there were adolescents, there were people who came as adolescents, even five or six or seven years older than I am, who had a, well, whose career was in some ways messed up. They didn't go to school any more, they were too old for school, they didn't have, they didn't learn anything. They were sort of plucked out of, in the middle of what was to be their career building age, and a lot of them never really fit in. So I think, you know, I was able to re-, to redo my whole education. I came to the United States and I started with evening high school, and I did that for a year. And I have until I graduated and got myself into college and went to college and eventually went to graduate school. I was able to do that, I was young enough, just, just about, but people five years older coming here, you know, they went to work and they, whether, they couldn't fulfill their dreams. I think in some ways it was much more difficult. So I, I think I hit, I hit it just right.

I can't think of anything more to say in that respect. As I mentioned earlier, my parents, especially my father, urged me to pick up a career, do something practical. I don't know, I think I might have mentioned that, and I was not particularly of that mind. And partially I'm sure it's, that's due to the high regard that my parents, both of them, had for education and culture, I mean, academic education. But they didn't think that I would fit into that. So I had to find my own way and I did enter an academic career eventually. It just didn't work, it just didn't work out. I was too much of a klutz with my hands.

**Hochstadt:** As a dental technician.

**Fuchs:** Yes. Yeah, my father wanted, you know, he said, become a tailor or, you know, something like that, that has some use. Well, that came strictly out of the experiences that, you know, he didn't have anything of use when he came to Shanghai. They didn't need a sales rep for ladies' coats, and he never, he had a hard time making, doing anything there. Eventually he developed something along those lines, but it was very very difficult. He lived in a *Heim* for a long time.

**Hochstadt:** That's what I was going to ask you. Did he ever, was he ever able to move out of the *Heim*?

**Fuchs:** At the very end only, the very end. Partly it was also to save money, but he didn't have

much and found it very difficult. He teamed up with someone else who had brought some machines, some, I'm trying to think, what you, what that's called. Can't think of it now, to, dealing with, again, with womens' coats, womens' outer apparel with some Chinese firms and he was able to do some work, but it was hard, it was hard going. And so, you know, he didn't have a trade that he could pick up and continue on, something that was needed for everyday life. So you know, out of that came a desire for me to at least learn something practical. But his, but I think, especially these days when you talk about problems in education that we face and reform needed and all of that, I think the utmost importance is family values for education, which is missing I think to a great degree here. Especially in Maine, certainly in some of the, some of the more outlying areas, there's no such thing as having regard or having, seeing education as a value, as a high value, and it's one of the most important, I think, one of the most important things that parents can provide is the sense of value for education. Which has always been a high thing for immigrants, I think, especially Jewish immigrants have always had a high regard for education.

**Hochstadt:** Do you see yourself now as Jewish? How does that work? Or maybe I should just ask you the more general question, how do you see yourself in religious terms or ethnic terms?

**Fuchs:** Well, ethnic, ethnic terms more German, ethnic cultural terms. Yeah, I find, I don't have any particular affinity for Jewish versus non-Jewish. Religion, organized religion is not one of my interests. It's, I think it's unresolved, it's an unresolved, it's an unresolved conflicted situation that I'll probably take to my grave. I don't have any, I must say when I, even in Shanghai there were these very highly religious groups in a Yeshiva, one of those, that always appeared totally foreign to me, and I have no sense that that's anything meaningful to me or anybody else. So I, no, I think that's part of the problematic of mixed marriages and I think that one is forever trying to straddle a fence. All I can do is try not to get stuck on that fence. It hurts. [laughs] I wish that whole topic was not existent, but it obviously is. But from, but in terms of cultural ethnic, it's German. And I, you know, the, there's an expression particularly used by people from Poland about the German Jews, calling them *Jekes*, I really object to that, having that term pinned to me, although I recognize again from my father's telling me about how things were in Germany in the twenties and thirties, that they were not, they, the German Jewish population, was not very nice to the refugees from Poland and were embarrassed by them and didn't want anything, didn't particularly help them. You know, I can certainly understand that they, that they would feel that way, being, coining that term.

**Hochstadt:** Was that term ever applied to you?

**Fuchs:** Oh, yeah, sure. Well, in a fun kind of way my great friend who was in the Philippines, who's married to a rabbi, she's from [unclear], she will use that term but in a kind of a fun way. But she might use it in a fun way. I don't, for me it's not funny. I think it's a, again it's a pejorative term, but I can see where it has its roots and where it's, where they can, they certainly must have a bad feeling about those, all that whole Jewish, German Jewish population that believed it could, it could deny the whole, the problem of difference and



separateness, and it's an unresolved, I think it exists now. I think that's why I found Goldhagen's recent book fascinating,<sup>2</sup> that the same anti-Semitic feelings, you scratch deep enough and you come up with them anywhere. And it's nothing that I can resolve, because the more one, the more one tries to say, I am this and that, we're being defined by others and that is an unresolvable problem. You know, I don't like to be defined by others, but it's, there it is.

**Hochstadt:** It's a good place to stop.

**Fuchs:** Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

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<sup>2</sup> Fuchs refers here to Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).



Arnold Fuchs was born in Breslau in 1928, where he went to school. His father was Jewish, his mother was not. After his uncle was sent to Sachsenhausen in the wake of *Kristallnacht*, his family took passage on the “Conte Rosso” to Shanghai in April 1939. Soon after arrival, his parents divorced, and he moved with his mother into a Catholic compound. He attended St. Francis Xavier School. He later worked as an apprentice to a dental technician, and after the war for the UNRRA.

Fuchs and his mother sailed as part of a transport of 106 refugees from Tientsin to San Francisco, then across the U.S. in a sealed train, and sailed further to Bremen in 1950. They were able to come back to the U.S. in 1951. He became a practicing psychologist in Maine.

This transcript is part of the Shanghai Jewish Community Oral History Project, an effort to collect and transcribe interviews with Jews who lived in Shanghai, directed by Steve Hochstadt at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. It was prepared with support from Bates College, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, and the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture.