

UKHMF TESTIMONY TRANSCRIPT – MARCEL ANISFELD

[Testimony: 1hr 18 mins. Artefacts: 16' 52"]

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Marcel Anisfeld

My name is Marcel Anisfeld. I was born in Nowy Sańcz, which is a small town in the southern part of Galicia, Poland, and we survived the war by being deported to Siberia and Uzbekistan, and we came to England in 1946. My parents didn't make it until 1948, and we were very happy, delighted to be living here in a democracy, UK.

[Fade to black and back up]

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Interviewer

Um, would you like to start off by telling me where you were born, a, a little bit about your family life and, and the home in which you were brought up?

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Marcel Anisfeld

I was born September 17, 1934, in a small town in southern Poland called Nowy Sańcz which is in the area of Krakow which is the second largest city in Poland,

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and, er, we'd a very happy -, I had a very happy childhood. My family were comfortable financially.

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My father who took over the business of his father's business at the age of 13, my grandpa died and my dad and one older brother - Marcus or Motek - took over the running of the business, they had a grocery wholesaler, retail grocery business and dealt with local people, and looked after the community very well,

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and, er, although there was a lot of antisemitism, we, our family didn't feel it because my father was very generous, and my uncle, to the locals, and, er, we led, led a very happy childhood.

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My father was also, apart from running the business, a little later on in his 20s he became a director of a local bank, although he didn't have any qualifications, but he was good at, with figures, and, er, yes we had, er.

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Interviewer

A comfortable, comfortable.

00:02:33:02

Marcel Anisfeld

Very comfortable life.

[Cut for sound]

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Interviewer

So Marcel we've established a little bit about your background and, and, um, that how your family lived, but can you tell me about your siblings and your extended family?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Well I had one sister who was two and a half at the time of, outset of the war, er, we both survived, anyway about that later. Er, my father had a brother who became a doctor. He had a sister who became a dentist, and another brother, a younger brother, who was sent to Italy to study pharmacy. That's all my father's side. My mother - my late mother - had, um, three brothers. They, they came from a smaller town in the same area with a much smaller population probably of around 10,000 15,000, and, er, my parents met through a *shadchan*, through a marriage broker.

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My father, my father was working quite hard, but he was doing quite well, and he was actually - and his brother Marcus - the two of them working hard and financing the two brothers and sister for their studies.

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Interviewer

So it was a big extended family. Um, could you tell us how, um, larger part of your life was religion? Were you a very religious family?

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Marcel Anisfeld

We were religious family. My grandfather, my father's dad, who died at a young age, my dad, dad was only 13 when his father died, er, I understand he had a small Yeshiva - which is religious school - and my, my own father, er, didn't go to a Polish school. He, he, he couldn't read or write Polish until years later. He, he could understand, read and understand every word, er, of Hebrew of the Torah, but later on when he went into business then he had a private teacher, er, Mr, er, *Diesenfeldt*, who came to London at one time, who gave him private lessons in Polish, how to read and write. Er [*talks over*] the town we were living in was a very Hasidic town, although my, my own family, my, my mother and father were strictly kosher, but I wouldn't say that they were extremely religious, and obviously there were, there were no motor cars in those days, to drive or not drive on a, on a Shabbat, on a Saturday.

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Um, my mother's family who came from another town from, called Brzesko, um, were also quite religious, but not as much as my father's family. In fact, my, my maternal grandma went to school in Vienna in Austria, and she could speak a perfect German and French.

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My grandfather was running a business, an egg, egg, wholesale egg business. He used to travel and buying, er, eggs from various far, farms in the area, and he stored

them in the house where they lived, in the basement, there's a big storage section, and, er, he used to export eggs all over, including I understand, a shipment went to England, but by the time it got to England, it, the eggs had gone off, and they had to drop the whole carriageload of eggs into the River Thames.

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Interviewer

Oh dear. Oh gosh.

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Marcel Anisfeld

We, we're talking about the early 1930s.

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Interviewer

Right, OK, that's sad isn't it? Um, at the outbreak of the war then, let's, let's focus about how that affected your family, and when the Germans invaded Poland, how old were you? And do you remember it?

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Marcel Anisfeld

I was, I was five, I don't exactly remember, but I, I remember the travels which we had to make. I was, I was born on 17th September. War started on the 1st September, so I was just turned five years of age, and I remember we had to, originally the word got around that, er, the Germans are taking away all the men, able-bodied men, to labour camps, er, leaving the woman and children behind,

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so at that time my father, my uncle who was with him in business, and three other men purchased a motorcar and they drove into Romania, where they felt it was going to be a safe place for them to stay while the war last for a few weeks or they thought would last a very short period. A few weeks went by, and, er, they heard that the Germans weren't taking any men away at that time, and, although they occupied the, our home town, er, there, there weren't too many problems,

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so my father and his friends came back, stayed for a short while, but then things go a, a little worse,

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so we moved eastwards towards Russia. We stopped and stayed for a few weeks in a town called Przemysl and, um, we were there for only a few weeks I think. That's before the Germans, no the Germans were already there. In fact, I remember an incident, quite clearly, where my mother was pushing my sister, who was two and a half years of age, and I was turned five, she was pushing us in the street, took us for a walk, and a German soldier walked up to my mother - who was a very pretty lady - and, er, offered her some sweets for the children, and she thanked him, walked away quickly, and she told us, I can't give you these sweets, they may be poisoned, and, er, so we didn't have them. We were upset that we couldn't have the sweets,

but obviously we didn't eat them. Um.

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Interviewer

Would, would you see that as your first experience of, of, of antisemitism, your mum kind of passed down to you? You really understood then the danger that you were in as a community?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Well this wasn't antisemitism, the, the, this was the Germans, the enemy, um, the antisemitism was from the Polish community. Although we, as I said before, we didn't suffer too badly because my father was a generous man and, er, by, by looking after his neighbours financially we didn't suffer, although there was antisemitism, but, er, the antisemitism got worse as we travelled eastwards towards Russia. The Poles were very very antisemitic.

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Anyway, continuing the story, we were in Przemysl for quite a short time, as the Germans came in and things got a little tougher, we moved further east towards, in a town called Lvov, which is now called Lviv.

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Now Lvov was occupied by the Russians, but they had a treaty, there was a peace treaty between Russia and Germany, so, er, we were there for a short time, and we heard, we had correspondence from our grandmother who stayed behind in her home town looking out with one of her sons - one of my mother's brothers - looking after the egg business, and she wrote to us saying that there weren't any shortages, and life went on as normal under the Germans, this is in the early part of the war in the late 1939 or early 1940. Where we were in Lvov we were having a very very tough time getting any, any food products including bread. We had to wait for hours and hours to get any shopping done, and having tough time. So what my parents and many other people in our, er, community they wanted to go back again to Poland to their home town, where they came from.

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So we put our name down on a list, my father put his name on a list to travel. You couldn't just get on a train or a, or a car to go wherever you liked. Everything had to be done on paper with, with passes and visas, and, er, a little while went, went by and again I remember quite clearly we were living in a small apartment in Lvov when in the middle of night we had a banging on the door. My father went to the door and he was shocked, he was frightened, there were two Russian soldiers standing there with fixed bayonets, er, screaming at him, get your family, you've got to be down in the street within ten minutes, and my father said, OK, OK, where are you taking us, he said, no talking now, hurry up and get, get downstairs. So within ten minutes or so we marched downstairs. I was very upset. I had a pair of skis that my parents bought me for my five birthday in Poland, and, er, I wanted to take them with me, and my father said, no, no, no leave them, er, we haven't got time, we've got other things to take with us, important things. Anyway, we went into the street, and there were hundreds of other people that were already there, this in the middle of the night, in

the dark. Everybody is shouting where, to the Russian soldiers, where are you taking us? They said, don't worry about that, you put your name down on the list to travel, now you're gonna travel. They didn't say where to. Anyway, they marched us to the station, the local station, Lvov station, pushed us into cattle trucks and shut the doors without any windows, without any seating, just standing up there, if, if there were space for people to sit down, obviously they did. And, er, the train left with a good few hundred people on, on board and the train started moving.

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We didn't know where we were going to, or where we were being, we presumed at that time that we were going back to Poland to our, where we had come from, but, er, we didn't know. Anyway, days went by. Once a day the doors were opened and people were let out, and there were people standing there with buckets of hot soup, and, er, obviously people had to go and do, do their, er, relieve themselves in, in the woods around there. There weren't any, any to, toilets around, and I'm, I'm sure a lot of people had accidents on the train as well, and prob, the stench and the heat affected. I can't remember, but I'm sure a number of people died on that train. Anyway, this, this went on for about three to four weeks, and as we were going all that time we could see the, the snow was getting higher and higher, and we realised that we were, weren't going west into Poland, we were going somewhere into Russia.

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At the end of the journey, the train stopped, and everyone told, everybody out and we ended up in a small town in Siberia called Asino, A-S-I-N-O, which was in the area, in the district of Tomsk in outer Siberia. We were marched off again into big building, wooden building structure, big wooden structure, were told make yourself at home 'cause this is where you're going to be staying for the time being. Again, no beds, no mattresses, no nothing, nothing to help us really, and, er, that,

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my, my father was fortunate to be given a job distributing coupons or rations of food, so, because he, the men were asked what, what jobs they would do, and my father said that he was, er, an accountant, a book keeper, so fine, food wise we weren't too badly off. Anyway.

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Interviewer

Can, can I just ask you, I, I, we will return exactly to that point in a moment, can I ask you, I mean, you said you were on that, on that train for three or four weeks, that's a huge amount of time, you were only five, do you remember any of that time? Or are you re...are you recounting what you've been told

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Marcel Anisfeld

I remember it partly [*talk over each other*]

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Interviewer

of that time of your life? What, what do you remember exactly of that, of that three or

four weeks on a train?

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Marcel Anisfeld

I remember coming out and, er, and getting some hot food; hot, hot soup. I can't say I can remember every little thing because at the age of five, you know, one doesn't, er, at that age I can't remember everything, but a lot of things that we talked about with my parents, er, you know, all the hard times we had together.

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Interviewer

So you've, you've pieced together this bit of your life

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Marcel Anisfeld

Yes absolutely

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Interviewer

as what you were told had happened, rather than being able, which is completely understandable at five, how would you, and also, you know, it's a very traumatic period of your, of your life, isn't it? You know, quite often people block things like that, but, but, but, but part of this is what you've been told happened to you rather than that you remember?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Well it's, it's a long time unfortunately - going forward a bit - my, my mother died at the age of 51 in London, my father died at the age of 56, so in, My, my mother died in 1961, my dad 1959, four weeks after I got married, so it's still 50, 60 years since I heard those incidents. [*Talk over each other*]

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Interviewer

Of course, absolutely, OK. OK, so, so at this point we are in Siberia.

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Marcel Anisfeld

We're in Siberia and after a day or two, er, the officers came in and said, all the men and all the boys over the age of 14 come out into the woods and start chopping down trees, and, er, I, I, I don't think they had any electrical equipment. All done manually with choppers, and, er, then made, made boards or whatever, to build homes, and weeks later, er, there were a number of homes built, and we were allocated, my family, the four of us, allocated one room jointly with another family, er, one room with a, with a blanket hanging down the centre to, separating them - there were two - er, Mr and Mrs Zalcwasser, er, very nice gentlemen who was a number years older than my father, he was very helpful to my father in fix, fixing up whatever he could to make our, you know, life bearable there.

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Interviewer

Do you, do you remember much of that time at all or not? Do you remember what that room looked like or how it felt like to be crammed in, into that space as a family?

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Marcel Anisfeld

I remember partially, yes, We, we had one, one heater which, er, you can imagine - this was the end of 1940 - er, how freezing it was and the snow was high, you had to, sometimes you had to, if you wanted to go outdoors, you had to build a tunnel through the, through the snow to be able to get out.

[Cut for card change]

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Interviewer

You were, telling us how you were sharing a room with a middle-aged couple. Is it Zalcwasser?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Zalc, Zalcwasser, translation being, salt water, Zalcwasser

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Interviewer

And at that point there could have been no education for you or your sister,

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Marcel Anisfeld

No.

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Interviewer

no facilities and no toys or anything as a young child,

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Marcel Anisfeld

No, not,

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Interviewer

Do you remember what that felt like?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Well, our main concern was food. Always, very hungry. What it is, as I said before, we, we had a, bed, little more than most other people because my, my dad, was the one in charge distributing the, the rations to people. And er, we had no, no contact with any other members of the family.

00:21:49:14 Zalcwasser

Some of my, my mother's family uh, we're, was sent to Siberia but we didn't know whether we're, it's my mother's, gran, er father, my maternal grandfather and two of my mother's brothers with wife and two children and one uncle was single. And we were there for, good few months. We were there till, 1941, when er, Germany declared war on Russia and at this stage, we were told that we can leave Siberia, as long as we stayed within the Russian borders.

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W, what I forgot to mention before, we were told, w, we were asking these Russians where they were taking us. They wouldn't tell us but at the end of the journey, has said, or half way through the journey, they said, "well you put your name down to travel, now you're going to travel because we consider you German spies". They thought we wanted to go back out of Russian territory, back into Poland under Germany and we were going to tell the Germans, all the secrets we found out in Russia.

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Interviewer

And was that why you weren't allowed to leave Russia? You could, you could move around Russia but you weren't allowed to go back home?

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Marcel Anisfeld

We're, we're talking about 1941, when there was er, war between the Russians and Germany, I don't think anyone would've been able to travel if they wanted to, they'd be allowed to. Anyway, they said that we had to stay within the borders and er, it was decided by the elders of the community, people with more experience of weather conditions, we'd had enough of the freezing cold. We wanted to go to a warmer climate. So, majority of the people from where we were, chose to go to Uzbekistan, which is, er, in the area, part of, part of the USSR, er, bordering with Iran or Persia as it was then called

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and we ended up in a city called Bukhara, ancient city, well known for rug making.

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My grandfather, we found out, with his two sons, went to another city in Uzbekistan called Samarkand. And unfortunately, we had, we knew that he'd gone there but we couldn't go to visit each other. It was just i, impossible, unless you wanted to stow away like some of the refugees in Calais are doing. Er,

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Interviewer

But the conditions in Bukhara were wildly different to Siberia?

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Marcel Anisfeld

They were complete, completely different [*talking over each other*]

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Interviewer

In terms of the climate and where did you live when you were there?

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Marcel Anisfeld

We were allocated a home, a large home, mud, mud build, with a, with a Bukari Jewish family. There were a lot of Jews living there, many generations. I think they were probably, mainly in the rug-making business. They, they were kind to us, the, they gave us a room, I don't think there was any rent to be paid and they gave us a room, not in the house but they had a small courtyard and about fifty, sixty steps, wooden steps, going right up in an outhouse and we had a room at the top of the stairs. Er, fairly comfortable. I can't remember, there was, er, one room or two rooms but, er, certainly there was no, no running water. There was no, er, no toilet facilities. The only f-, toilet facilities were, in the courtyard down below with a big hole, dug in

the ground. You can imagine the sanitation was dreadful and, and one time, there was a, very, very serious epidemic of typhus, where, it affected majority of families who were there.

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At that time my grandfather died in Samarkand. We couldn't unfortunately, couldn't go, or my mother couldn't go to see him, we heard about it, er yeah, months later. And, er, my father's brother who was in business with him, in Poland, Marcus, he came to a, he was taken away from Lwov, walking the street, he was picked up by the Russian and sent away to a labour camp in the Ural Mountains somewhere. His wife, Bronya, had no idea where he was and in fact, at that time, she lost a child - Would have been my cousin and was a year older than me - with meningitis. So, you can imagine how broken she was, not knowing where the husband was, having lost a child. Anyway, while we were in Bukhara, we were, our parents were writing wherever they could, to try and find out where he was, where my father's brother was. And, and one day, I remember this clearly. A, a tramp came walking into our building, standing there and, and my father said, "It's my brother". Hadn't seen him for about five years, four, five years and we got him upstairs to get him cleaned up and er, then, we found out where his wife, my Aunt Bronya was. She's, she'd been, she spent years with her brother, single brother. And er, in another part of Russia, not quite sure where she was but she came to Bukhara, where we were, join her husband, which was a wonderful reunion, of them. She was still heartbroken by the loss of the [coughs] of the son. Um,

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My, my father did something to earn a living, what the Russians called a *spekulyant*, which is, a speculator. He'd always been a, a business man, so he found sources of food, where you could buy and sources where you could sell, so, and that way he could make a little profit and I was his messenger. I used to deliver goods to people because it was safer than my father carrying products because if he'd been stopped, he would have been arrested, probably put in jail for, at least ten years. So, I, I remember going to the people, where my father sold the goods to.

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My mother had a job, got a job, a government job in a factory sorting eggs. Because my mother's family were in, in the egg business and she told the authorities that er, she understood everything about eggs. So, it was egg sort, sorting factory where they made egg powder, during the war. You couldn't k, you couldn't store fresh eggs, so, they made egg powder out of it, probably leaving it out, leaving the eggs out in the heat. Drying them in the heat. Drying them and making egg powder out of it. Apart from that, it still didn't bring enough funds into the family to feed us and clothe us. My mother in her spare time, used to do a little baking, from some of the products my father used to handle and she went out at night - there was a cinema near by and she was standing outside, - selling these biscuits, possibly some made out of chocolates and er, sell them to people. The cinema, I used to go there with my sister. Er, watch her from time to time. We c, we didn't understand what a cinema was, we could hear voices, I think it was an open roof and er, we thought it was a theatre, you know, people on the stage but it was explained to us. No, no, films are not the same as live, live actors on the the stage. Um,

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Interviewer

You were quite enterprising yourself, weren't you, can you tell us about the cigarette papers?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Yes, yes,

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Interviewer

And also was it the water?

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Marcel Anisfeld

I, I added to my family's income, two, two jobs which I had. Er, one was, I used to go, about, travel about half a mile to a local well and fill up the, the bucket with water - cold water - bring it back to where we lived and stand out in the street because, the, the house where we lived in, the building where we lived in was on route to the big market and people, there were many, many people tr, walking backwards and forwards to the market. People, very, very thirsty, there weren't any, any canned, drinks to buy anywhere; so people, used to, I used to sell cupfuls of water to people; which brought a little income. I can't remember what I charged them, probably whatever they offered to give me.

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Another, another little item I remember quite clearly, I used to go and queue up in a morning in a, I can't remember if there was a shop or in the street where they used to sell newspapers. I used to buy a couple of newspapers - not that I could read, cause I hadn't had any education - and I used to bring them home, cut the newspapers up into little pieces and sell these for people to roll their own cigarettes, for there weren't any cigarettes and no, no, er, people had to roll their own for smoking.

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And, er, I used to play - or my sister and I used to play - with the local kids: some Polish, some Russian. Er, The R, the Russian ones, well I think both, if they weren't Jewish, they were both very antisemitic, used to call me names: "you dirty Jew," *yevrey*, is the Jew in Russian. And er, I'm embarrassed to it say now but one of the boy's actually wee'd on me, on my face. And er, I cried bitterly. I went crying to my parents - I must have been about eight, nine years of age then - my par-, my father was at home and came down and took me away from the kids, "don't play with them anymore." And er, but some, some of the children were friendly and er, we used, there used to be, er, er man used to come with a mule, carry, carrying. Er, milk, which were selling. And er, I used to h, help him, he was pouring out milk into jugs or whatever and I used to help him with that. I used to get a ride on the, on the mule. And another thing that I remember, there used to be a lot of cotton being grown in the area. And er, my sister and I used to run after these o, open air, er, carri, trucks. Horse-drawn carriages actually carrying them down. We used to pull off, some of the cotton, off the, er, and, and used to suck it; because you'd get, there was some oil in them. It was m, means of getting ex, extra nourishment.

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Interviewer

You sounded like an unbelievably enterprising young boy. You were always looking for opportunities clearly, to help your family. Did you, were you aware that that was part of your role in the family to help, did you, did you,

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Marcel Anisfeld

That's right,

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Interviewer

Feel that sense of responsibility at that age. Tell us about when your, there were a number of members of your family that caught typhus didn't they, and you became quite, quite responsible very quickly?

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Marcel Anisfeld

That's right, that's right

00:35:34:09

Interviewer

Um, tell us about when your, there were a number of members of your family that caught typhus, didn't they and you became quite, quite responsible very quickly?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Right. The one time, I think it must have been in 1942, er, there was, Polish Army based, it was connected with British Army. Er, lead, lead by a Polish General and er. We actually had a letter to say, as did many families in the area, had letters that they could join, they were allowed to leave Russia and join this Polish Army, *en*

famille and from there, they would, the Army was based at the time, was based in, in Persia, in Iran. Whether they were gonna stay, the, the men obviously would do the fighting and the women would be looked after, in, in the area, possibly some er, w, would be, would be sent, I understand that some of the families who did go, were actually, ended up in Palestine, which is now Israel, obviously. Er, we couldn't go unfortunately. We would like to have gone and left Russia, cause we weren't very happy. Er, but both my parents and my sister were both suffering with typhus during the epidemic. I was the only one who, who was okay, health wise. Er, but, so the time past and it was too late, by the time they got better and the, the only way they got better was, by, by bartering some of my mother's jewellery which she had, to get, er, doctors or to buy medicines. Anyway, thank God we survived that. But er, the, the heat was unbelievable and I used to, all I had in that whole period, all I had a pair of, er, shorts or possibly even an old pair of underwear which I used to wear and run around without shoes. I've still got a scar to prove it, on my foot where else, running around and I jumped onto a broken bottle and had a big, big scar. I had to go, was taken to a hospital and had it stitched. Um, very, very difficult. The heat and the I, lack of sanitation, I, lack of de, decent food and no education.

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I hadn't, I was, by then I was, eight, nine, ten years of age and I hadn't had st, any, any education, whatsoever, other than what my parents might have taught me at home.

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Interviewer

And at that whole time, that period of your life, your whole family must have worried and wondered what was happening to your extended family, back at home?

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Marcel Anisfeld

Yes, of course. None, none of us knew what was going on; and we, we knew that my maternal grandfather [*clear throats*] and his two sons and family were in Samarkand but we had very little contact with them but apart from that and then my father's, father's brother who came out of the labour camp in tatters. Er... We didn't, had no idea what had happened to the extended family.

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It's, it's only when the war finished we had a telegram from my aunt in London - who came to London just prior to the war starting - she said, "Family are all dead." We didn't know, we couldn't understand the meaning, the words "all dead". So we had find somebody who spoke English, so, well, the, they all b, "all died, during the war".

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Interviewer

Do you remember that day?

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Marcel Anisfeld

I do remember that day yes, yes.

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Interviewer

Can you describe it in a bit more detail?

00:40:12:17

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, as a child, it didn't affect me quite as much as my parents. I mean, you can imagine how my parents were in, in tears and most, most heartbroken, b, by the news. My mother left her, her own mother there, and, and her brother. My dad left a brother and sister... I, my father's sister, who was the, the dentist. She was at the outset, before the war started, she went back to, from her small town, where she lived, [CLEARS THROAT] no, she lived in Nowy Sacz as well, that's right. She went to Warsaw, she wanted to get another medical degree. As the war started, she didn't get the opportunity of coming back and she became from what I, we understand, became, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto. My uncle, who's the doctor, we don't know what happened to him, he was, he was very religious man, he was a, He was a, adviser, medical adviser to the chief, chief rabbi of our area; and, er, we don't know. He, he never married, single man, a, we're not sure whether he died or deported from our home town or whether he went to, to Warsaw to, to his sister, not quite sure what happened to him. But er, my Aunt Helena, who was the dentist, her husband and the, had two sons, in our home town Nowy Sacz. He, he left, at, one of the sons died, also meningitis but the younger one survived. He was about four years older than me. So, when the war started he was about nine, ten years of age. They ended up, they travelled then managed to get out of Poland, and er, they, ended up travelling, through the, through the Middle East and eventually they got to India, to Mumbai - Bombay - is it these days? - and they lived the war years there.

00:42:46:01

Interviewer

Considering the fate of your family. Um, just thinking about the fact that your family put their name down on a list wanting to travel. Inadvertently, when the Russians had that list and banged on your door with the fixed bayonets, you were telling us about, they inadvertently saved your life, by sending you to Siberia?

00:43:05:23

Marcel Anisfeld

Absolutely. My, my story's called, 'Survival by Deportation.' We, we hated being deported but in a way we survived, cause we never, never made it back home.

00:43:25:13

Interviewer

And if you, hadn't had that deportation your fate would?

00:43:29:17

Marcel Anisfeld

I'm sure I wouldn't,

00:43:31:02

Interviewer

Most likely be like that of your family,

00:43:32:18

Marcel Anisfeld

I'm sure I wouldn't be here, to tell the story.

00:43:37:03

Interviewer

That must be quite hard to live with?

00:43:41:08

Marcel Anisfeld

Very hard. Extremely hard. Lost, lost a lot of members, I felt immediate grandmother, uncles, many, many cousins. And, er, but, we, we survived. Our fortunes as I mentioned before because of the problems, hardships during the war, both my parents died very young. And my, and mother came to England, from Poland after the war and within a year, she had a mastectomy for cancer. She lived er, for 12 years, the cancer, spread every two years, spread, different parts of the body... She died at the age of 51, which is no age.

00:44:38:13

Our, our eldest daughter is now 55. They're a lovely family, lovely children... Our wonderful grandchildren.

00:44:52:09

Interviewer

Marcel, can you tell me when your family returned to Poland?

00:44:57:14

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, in 1946, beginning of 1946, Some people were allowed to, some immigrants from Poland were allowed to leave, quite soon after the war finished. We weren't allowed to leave, er, because we didn't have Polish passports. We had what they call Bezagranichnyy passports - which means stateless passports - and they kept us back, right, for almost a year. Er, war finished in May '45, we weren't allowed to leave till about March or April '46.

00:45:39:05

And, we went back to Poland, to a part of Poland which was Germany previously, a town called, er, Breslau in German and Wrocław, a part of Germany was allocated to Poland, after there was, conversation I presume. My father - we went by train. One of the things I remember on the train ride from Russia into Poland. We were, we were searched by, by the Russian soldiers and er, they took away any valuables that my parents might have had, but what a, I was very upset because they, I had a lovely stamp collection, they took that away from me. I was very, very upset about that because I spent a lot of time collecting stamps from all over the world; whatever post came to us.

00:46:37:01

What, what we did receive, we, we had packages from time to time, received from -

not sure whether it was from Britain or from the USA - packages of food organised by the United Nations, ah, UNRRA Foundation, and, er, they were always very welcome. Some packages - they all had tinned foods, tinned milk, tinned fish and some, some, clothing. Huh, we're not sure exactly who organised that for us but we were very, very delighted to receive these, ah, once in a while.

[Cut for card change]

00:47:26:06

Interviewer

Um, we're going to now move on to the period of your life where you returned to Britain and you met Rabbi Schonfeld?

00:47:33:06

Marcel Anisfeld

Schonfeld, Schonfeld.

00:47:33:24

Interviewer

Mm, how did that work out?

00:47:37:06

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, let me tell you how that, er, happened. We had, when we came back into Poland, which was, as I said, German occupied, German territory. Before, we heard, soon after we arrived we heard that there was an organisation led by Rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld who was looking for orphaned children to bring, bring back to England and, er, although we were, I still had my parents, er, my parents wanted to get my sister and me very badly back to England. We had, er, two aunts and uncles living in London who came just prior to the war.

00:48:25:11

So my parents moved us to live with my uncle, who was originally my, my father's partner in business. He, the one who was in the labour camp. Er, he c, he came back to Poland, well, which was Germany, you know, Wrocław: Breslau he came a few months before us and he bought - I don't know if he bought - he was allocated a little grocery shop and he had a couple of rooms at the back and my sister and I went to live with him. Er, not, my parents took us there to live there. To show if the committee came along to say that these are two orphans. So we did a bit of cheating. Um, we, we passed.

00:49:21:07

Interviewer

Do you remember that at the time? Do you remember being told that you weren't allowed to say that you had

00:49:25:13

Marcel Anisfeld

Yeah. *[talking over each other]*

00:49:25:10

Interviewer

parents or anything like that? Can you explain that a little bit more because that's... How old were you at this point?

00:49:31:07

Marcel Anisfeld

I was 12.

00:49:31:24

Interviewer

12. So it was quite a big thing to ask a 12-year-old to do, wasn't it, to, to pretend that both your chil, both of your parents were dead?

00:49:38:34

Marcel Anisfeld

Yeah. Well, we were qu, we were questioned. I don't know if we were questioned personally or my uncle was questioned. Er, but, er, said, he told them that my parents hadn't, hadn't survived the war and they were taking care of us and we've got family in England and they'd like to send us over to the family in England. And we were accepted and, er, short period, within a couple of weeks, er, my uncle was told, "bring the children to the port," in, er, north, north of Poland.

00:50:19:20

A place called Gdynia, next to Gdańsk, which was a famous port. And, er, we were told we were staying in a hotel in a little town near Gdynia called Sopot. Grand Hotel at Sopot. It wasn't very grand. In those days, you can imagine, just after the war. But, er, and we were there for a couple of days. My parents actually came, er, to say, "Goodbye," to us. No one asked who they were or what they were doing there, but anyway we had a very, very, very sad parting, being the first time in our lives that we'd been apart from our parents. Because we were very, very close. You can imagine in the hardships that we had in Siberia or Bukhara, we were very, very close. And my sister and I, exceptionally close. She'd rely on me and everything and. She was, she was like the big sister to me. Any, anyway, we were there for a couple of days in this hotel, er, the ship was ready for us.

00:51:32:23

A ship called, a Polish ship called the *Batory* - B. A. T. O. R. Y., er, that brought a lot of people out of Poland into various Western European countries. Anyway we were, the ship left. The seas - this is in November 1946 - um, the seas were extremely, extremely rough. The ship had to [?] goes immediately back to England. He had to stop in Sweden en route until the weather calmed down a bit. We stopped, stopped in a place called Gothenburg in Sweden. Er, we were, we were fed all the time with chocolate. People -, the organisation said, "Oh, these children haven't had much luxury in their lives, so we'll give 'em chocolate." So that made it, it worse because as sick as we felt, eating chocolate [*laughs*] made it even worse. Anyway, the journey took a few days and we arrived, the ship arrived in Tilbury.

00:52:45:24

At Tilbury, there were coaches to take us into London and, er, took us to a building

which was part of, er, Rabbi Schonfeld's synagogue, a communal hall of a synagogue in Stamford Hill in London. And most of the children had no family to go to so they were allocated to go to some, some to families that they didn't know, some to orphanages, some to various organisations who placed them in various places. These are all children from the age of eight up to 14. So I, I was, at the time, I was 12. My sister was nine. And there waiting for us was my aunt, my mother's younger sister, Dora, and her husband and,

00:53:50:17

Interviewer

Had you met them before?

00:53:53:01

Marcel Anisfeld

W, as a child, she came. She lived, her husband was born in Leipzig in Germany so they did come to our home town - my mother's younger sister - she came to see my mother and me as a child and her own mother in the small town of Brzesko. Er, I don't know how often she came. Possibly once a year.

00:54:18:02

Interviewer

I was just trying to establish, last time, you said, so your, your sister was nine, you were 12-and-a-half. It was a very big journey to make on your own at that age having gone through all the trauma that you'd gone through as a family to, um, in some way have that burden of, um, telling everybody that your parents were dead, so that you could get some freedom and, and some security and safety in the UK. And, and that journey of, of travelling across the seas together. Er, you said that she was the older sister to you, but did you feel a real sense of responsibility for her and your family continuing?

00:54:56:23

Marcel Anisfeld

Oh, I did. Very much so, yes, yes. I felt responsible for my daughter, my sister, and, er, obviously we didn't know at the time what would happen about our, our parents. Er, [noise] when we arrived in London, as I mentioned, my, my mother's younger sister, Dora, and her husband, Nat, were there. They decided, the two families, my mother's sister and my father's brother, between them, they'd decided who was going to live where. So my aunt Dora, wanted me to go and live with her in Hampstead. Um, she had two, two sons of her own. They were both, one was two years younger than, one was a boy of three.

00:55:48:06

Er, my uncle, my father's younger brother, who had been studying pharmacy in Italy before the war started, he was helped to come over to England by my aunt Dora who, they weren't really related; they were, you know, related to us. Er, they wanted my sister to, to be living with them. My, my sister, at the age of nine, became a nanny because they had a little child.

00:56:23:17

Interviewer

So that's what happened was it? You were separated?

00:56:25:22

Marcel Anisfeld

We were separated.

00:56:26:22

Interviewer

So how did that feel?

00:56:29:02

Marcel Anisfeld

Not very happy about it.

00:56:30:17

Interviewer

Did you have any say about it at all?

00:56:32:04

Marcel Anisfeld

No, none at all.

00:56:33:15

Interviewer

That must have been so hard.

00:56:33:12

Marcel Anisfeld

Wasn't, wasn't easy, since we've spent, you know, six years in hardship and seeing each other every minute of the day and being parted, and, er, so my sister went to live with an, an aunt and uncle in, in Willesden. Uncle had a pharmacy, a shop, and they lived, they had a flat above that. Er, my sister was a nanny to a, a little cousin who was two years of age then. She did quite a bit of housekeeping and, er, quite a bit of cooking, all at the age of nine, for my aunt and uncle who were busy running the shop, the pharmacy downstairs.

00:57:19:00

Interviewer

How often did you see each other?

00:57:22:08

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, going back to my side of the story, that was, when I came, my aunty Dora arranged an English teacher to come because I couldn't speak any English, er, to give me a few lessons in British, and he was practising his Russian on me. *[Laughs]* Because I could speak perfect Russian and he's come from Russia originally years ago. Er, but soon afterwards, my aunt, er, got me a place in a boarding school, a Jewish boarding school in Brighton called Aryeh House School where there were a lot of immigrants' children. A lot of them came from, er, the Middle East, Jewish

families fleeing the Middle Eastern, countries like Syria, Iraq, er, Egypt. So a lot of those children couldn't speak very good English e, either. But, you know, we managed to, er, get along and, er, became very friendly and, er, the, the only thing I, I didn't like, everything was fine, I, I got, I got the slipper a few times, yeah I got punished for bad behaviour. [noise] The, the only thing I didn't, I didn't like was the, the boiled vegetables they were serving us. I, [laughs] I used, to, er, get rid of those under the table during meal times.

00:58:49:20

Interviewer

And after two years, your parents got a chance to join you again?

00:58:53:17

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, no, going, going back to my sister. My sister, I used to see my sister once a month. My aunt Dora with her husband used to come and visit her son, older son, who was at the school with me. His name was Wolfy and he was, as I said, two years younger than me, for once, once, a month there was a visiting time for parents. So, and they used to bring my sister. Pick her up in Willesden and bring her to see me. Again, it was very emotional. And, er, my sister had a lot of letters, almost daily letters from our parents who were left behind in Poland. I must have had a lot of letters but I can't, can't trace those. But my sister, a lot more methodical.

00:59:46:23

She became a pharmacist in the end - my sister - and, er, she got a lot, lots of correspondence from our parents in a time when we were in England. They were back in Poland. Er, all, all in Polish. Er, I've got some here which, er, my sister kept over the years and, er, although I can, I can speak Polish fairly well, mainly to the large Polish population over here at the moment, and I understand Polish is a second language in the UK.

01:00:28:04

Interviewer

Ah, so there you are. Times are changing again.

01:00:30:20

Marcel Anisfeld

So my, my Polish actually in the past few years has improved. We, we've employed a couple of Polish builders [laughs]

01:00:38:00

Interviewer

Ah, like the rest of us [talking over each other]

01:00:39:08

Marcel Anisfeld

in our home.

01:00:41:09

Interviewer

Um, So, Marcel, let, let's just talk about your, your parents then. So it took two years for them to finally to get permits to enter Britain? *[talking over each other]*

01:00:46:20

Marcel Anisfeld

Right, now how my parents happened to come over here, with the help of Rabbi Schonfeld, who knew at that time that my parents, that we weren't orphans, our parents were alive and, er, through my aunts and uncles doing a little bit of pushing, er, Rabbi Schonfeld arranged that they could, he could arrange visas for them to come. My father as a caretaker at the Hasmonian School - which was founded by Rabbi Schonfeld -and my mother as a housekeeper for one of the family in London. Well, neither of them actually did those jobs but that was one way of getting them over here and not relying on, on the government for payouts.

01:01:44:22

Er, my parents came in July '48, which is more or less, more or less two years after we left. You can imagine my, at one time, I wasn't sure if my, I would see my parents again. And I used to call my aunt 'mother'. I was 12, 12-and-a-half years of age and, you know, I was very, very attached to her and she was very kind to me. In fact I think she spoilt me more than she spoilt her own two sons. Er, my mother's younger sister, Dora

01:02:25:21

and my parents came and my uncle, Dora's husband Nat, managed to buy a house for us, er, with somebody - p, part of a house. One of his book-keepers used to live in part and he sold him the other part of the house, in an area called Haringey in London, all for the sum of £300; which, er, is gonna be, you know, our home. And eventually the, the people who live there, the other family, the *[Mellerson?]* family, they actually bought something else and we took over the whole house.

01:03:13:14

Interviewer

Um, okay, and, and then abouts, you started to re-establish your life as a family in Britain. How hard was that?

01:03:26;02

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, it was wonderful to be together with my parents, and, er, life was,

01:03:31:17

Interviewer

Do you remember the day that you, that they arrived? Do you remember how you felt?

01:03:36;20

Marcel Anisfeld

I can't remember this very moment.

01:03:38:18

Interviewer

Ok. No problem. No, that's fine [*talking over each other*]

01:03:42:07

Marcel Anisfeld

But all I can say is that we were both very, very delighted and I was, I was still in school in, in Brighton and they said, er, "finish, finish the term there," and they, they want me back with them. And my sister lived in Willesden with my aunt and uncle. They said they want her back. And, er,

01:04:06:17

Interviewer

But finally you were all reunited.

01:04:09:00

Marcel Anisfeld

We were all reunited [*talking over each other*]

01:04:09:20

Interviewer

Which must have been amazing after everything that you'd been through.

01:04:12:00

Marcel Anisfeld

Absolutely, yes.

01:04:14:07

Interviewer

Do you remember how you were received as part of, um, the British community at that point? Do you remember how people responded to you as a family, as an immigrant family?

01:04:24:10

Marcel Anisfeld

I can't remember exactly how they responded to us as a family, but, er, all I know is, I, I was very fortunate, er, because I'd had very little education, er, in the four terms that I was at boarding school. My B, English language improved obviously, er, but still wasn't great. But when we came to England, er, but when we came to London, er, we lived in Haringey. I can't remember who it was mentioned that, er, they make an appointment for my sister to go to a school in Highbury - near the Arsenal Football Club - called the Highbury Hill Girls' School. And, er, she went there. She had to write, er, had a short exam to do and she was accepted at the school. She did go to a school in Willesden while she was living with an aunt and uncle.

Er, now, she asked the headmistress who examined her, er, that she's got a brother, older brother. Could he get a place in school in the area? So a phone call was made to the headmaster of Highbury Boys' School, Highbury, which became the first grammar school in the UK.

01:05:56:04

Interviewer

Wow so you were able to [*talking over each other*]

01:05:57:15

Marcel Anisfeld

Highbury Coun, Highbury County Boys' School. I was asked to come for an interview. I wasn't asked to do any written exam. I was just questioned by the headmaster for about a half-an-hour and he said, "You've got a place here."

01:06:13:00

Interviewer

Right. That's amazing

01:06:14:11

Maurice Ansfeld

You can imagine being in a country only two years, not having spoken a word of English, not having had

01:06:21:04

Interviewer

Any form of education [*talking over each other*]

01:06:22:06

Maurice Ansfeld

any form of education.

01:06:24:00

Interviewer

That's extraordinary. That's amazing, and a life-changing experience for you presumably once that started.

01:06:29:09

Marcel Anisfeld

It certainly, it certainly was [*talking over each other*]

01:06:30;15

Interviewer

Marcel, can I ask you a few general questions about that period of your life when you were - as a family - very peripatetic weren't you? I mean, you moved very quickly around.

01:06:44:06

Marcel Anisfeld

We did [*talking over each other*]

01:06:45:04

Interviewer

I mean in lots of different counties. Um, as a child, you wouldn't have known any different.

01:06:51:23

Marcel Anisfeld

No.

01:06:53:01

Interviewer

So did it feel like you were on an adventure or did it feel like you were on the run?

01:06:59:21

Marcel Anisfeld

I think it probably felt that we were on the run. Everything was done in a, in a rush. Like the original time when the Russians came, "You've got ten minutes to pack. Now, get out." And, er, then we were told we could leave Bukhara. We got a limited period of time to get ready. You were going to travel back to Poland and then we were told within a couple of weeks, er, "you're going to be, you're going to be an orphan and you've gotta travel to England." You know, everything, it was quite, everything was quite, quite a rush. But, you know, we coped with it [*talking over each other*]

01:07:41:09

Interviewer

You encountered great hardship, didn't you, when you were a, a very young child. That must have been very difficult to get your head round later on in life when you have established yourself. You've got a full family, you've got amazing grandchildren and, and to be able to reflect back and look at that period of your life and realise what you went through when you were very small.

01:08:03:00

Marcel Anisfeld

Absolutely, yes.

01:08:04:09

Interviewer

How much of your [*talking over each other*]

01:08:06:08

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, it's, it's left, it's left me with one thing, that we love travel. [*Laughs*]

01:08:10:15

Interviewer

Well, that's positive yeah [*talking over each other*]

01:08:12:24

Marcel Anisfeld

More luxurious travel though

01:08;14:04

Interviewer

Yeah, I bet

01:08:14:34

Marcel Anisfeld

than, than one we had at my early age.

01:08:17:14

Interviewer

How much of your experiences as a young boy did you share with your own children as they were growing up, going through the same stages as you went through but when you had so much uncertainty. You were able to give them real stability. What did you share with your children?

01:08:36:05

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, I, I told my children of my experiences and our hardships and the, the most important thing, we pleaded with them and told them, "Education is the most important thing," which I didn't get at an early age. And, er, at a very young age, my, my two younger daughters and my wife and I, we took them to Poland. This is in 1985. P, Poland was still in a communist country and we took, we took 'em to my home town and we took 'em to Auschwitz concentra, concentration camp, which they said that, that it was the most memorable part of their life so far and they're both in their '40s now.

01:09:34:30

Interviewer

So you clearly feel that by sharing your experiences, and those of your wider family, you've been able to educate your family, but those around you as well?

01:09:47:12

Marcel Anisfeld

I think so. We, [*talking over each other*]

01:09:48:06

Interviewer

Why do you think it's so important to talk about the experiences?

01:09:53:05

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, I think, I think, as we all know, it is important for the future generations, er, to know what went on. How, er, we lost many, many members of our family. How, how we lost six million Jews. Unfortunately there were many millions of other nationalities who died: Germans, Russians, gays, gypsies, but obviously we being Jewish - a traditional Jewish family - they are, you know, closer to us than the others.

01:10:36:10

And, er, we are all, all our four children, with their families all very traditional. Some are more Orthodox than others. Er, we all keep to kosher cuisine, at home and out. We don't eat any, er, meat or shellfish. Unfortunately we couldn't do that in, in Russia during the war. We could, we ate whatever was available. But since then, we're not particularly, my wife and I not particularly Orthodox but we are traditional Jewish. Keep, observe all the Jewish festivals.

01:11:24:12

Interviewer

Okay. Um, I've been struck in the testimony that you've given of your memory, you can remember all the places and all the names and the ports and the names of the ships and you've got a very clear memory of, of the kind of documents of your life, haven't you really?

01:11:39:18

Marcel Anisfeld

Yeah.

01:11:40:05

Interviewer

But I'm just interested about your emotional, um, memory, as it were, and how you feel like you've been able to process the great hardship that you experienced when you were very young?

01:11:58:15

Marcel Anisfeld

It's difficult to say. I, I still feel very close, although my parents are both gone for many years, I'm still very close to them and I feel very close to my sister. She always feels extremely close to me because through the hardships we went through during the war. And, er, but I must say, since, since we've been, since our family was established here and after our education, we both married within the same year. We're both married to the same partners, both hav, having her been married 55 years, both my sister and her husband, Jack, and my wonderful wife, Irene. We married 50, 55 years ago. And, er, we, we think the British Government has been extremely kind to us and we, we loved every moment of life here.

01:13:11:11

Interviewer

And you've both made huge successes of your lives and you've moved on and, as I said, you've had a very full and rich family life with amazing children and grandchildren that are the biggest blessing, aren't they?

01:13:22:23

Marcel Anisfeld

Yes, of course they are.

01:13:24:05

Interviewer

But do you feel like you have put the beginning part of your life away or do you integrate in your, in, in the way that you think day-to-day?

01:13:33:06

Marcel Anisfeld

I don't integrate it but obviously I, I do think about things.

01:13:38:20

Interviewer

Do you. Um?

01:13:40:07

Marcel Anisfeld

And, er, I look, I look at the films, er, both at the cinema and on television and iPads shows me things that, er, have gone and are going on and now unfortunately with all the murders of not just, er, you know, Christians and Jews and Muslims in the world. It's, it's a, in a way it's, it's different but similar situation to what, er, Hitler tried to do.

01:14:20:03

Interviewer

That must make you feel very frustrated that lessons haven't been learned from that period of history?

01:14:25:17

Marcel Anisfeld

Absolutely. Yes, yes.

01:14:27:23

Interviewer

Can you tell me a bit more about that? How do you feel, um, or rather do you feel that we have learned many lessons from that time?

01:14:36:09

Marcel Anisfeld

I don't think people have learned. It's, it's, I would say it's mainly politicians who look at things to benefit their own pockets more than anything else. And, er, certainly ideologies like communism, and fascism obviously which is rampant at the moment, but not ram, not fascism but antisemitism worldwide which is how things started in the 1930s when, when Hitler was in power. Er, it is very difficult for Jewish people like ourself to see what's going on - having had the misfortune of losing close members of the family to fascism - and now we've got different but similar situation where it seems people all over the world, in, including some people in the UK, feel that, er, Jew, Jews are troublemakers. Or they've got, or they're too rich. But all I can tell you, my parents made a good life for us and they made, made money by working extremely, extremely hard here to support ourself. Never got a penny from the government - not like some of the people coming into this country and the first thing they do is queue up to get, er, dole money; and, er, I, I would say that the majority of Jewish people worldwide are very, very hard working. Ambitious, yes, and I, I was gonna say 'clever'. Maybe not cleverer than other nation, other religions and nationalities but they're, they're bright but the families and education come first.

01:16:48:19

Interviewer

Yes, I understand. How important is it do you think that we remember the events of the Holocaust and that whole period of history that had your family being sent all round Europe?

01:17:06:13

Marcel Anisfeld

And Asia.

01:17:08:05

Interviewer

Pardon?

01:17:08:23

Marcel Anisfeld

And Asia. Siberia. [*Chuckles*]

01:17:10:07

Interviewer

Absolutely. Of course. Yeah. How important do you think it's, it is to remember that period of history?

01:17:17:16

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, I think that's the reason we're sitting here discussing it for the future generations. Tell 'em, tell 'em of my experiences. Unfortunate experiences. But time has passed and, er, the U, the UK has been very, very good to us whether it's financially or religiously. We got freedom of, of religion and, er, hav, having said that, I, I did get, when I first went to school in, in London - I went to Highbury Grammar School - I did, I did have a few fights with boys who, who called me names, er, but in, in the end, when I beat them in a fight, they became my best friends. [*Laughs*]

01:18:15:14

Interviewer

That's often the way isn't it?

- END OF INTERVIEW -

ARTEFACTS

ARTEFACT 1: postcards from his maternal grandmother to her husband

01:18:19:13

Marcel Anisfeld

I'm holding two postcards which were written at the outset of the war, er, by my maternal grandmother. She's writing them to her husband, my maternal grandfather, who was in Russia and saying that, er, she hadn't been receiving any letters from him. She wonders why and, er, she's quite well and she's there with one of her sons, one of my mother's brothers, who stayed behind in Poland. Er, still running the egg business, which my grandfather established. Er, my grandfather was, he was, originally the same as us in Siberia. Not with us but in another area. And then he went to Uzbekistan and stayed in a place called Samarkand, another large city in Uzbekistan, er, with two of his sons, two of my uncles. They took care of him. He must have been at that time - I would say, - in his mid-fifties, early, maybe early 60s. No, no, 50s probably, but people in their fifties in those days looked a lot older than [*Laughs*] people in their 50s now. Er, she, she's writing to him that she hadn't heard from him and why. She doesn't realise that during the war post isn't as, as quick as it

should be. Now, she's actually writing -, the common language was Polish - or Yiddish in those days - but she's actually writing these cards in German and give, giving him and herself German sounding names in order for, for the Germans, pretending that, that they're Germans, not Polish Jews. And the cards actually did get to him. And, er, they were forwarded on to my sister who gave them to me.

01:20:27:24

Interviewer

They must be very precious to you.

01:20:29:17

Marcel Anisfeld

They are.

01:20:30:19

Interviewer

What happened to them in the end?

01:20:33:03

Marcel Anisfeld

To?

01:20:33:21

Interviewer

Your grandparents.

01:20:35:13

Marcel Anisfeld

Well, my, my grandmother was killed during the Holocaust, we think in Belsen. Er, my grandfather, who came to Uzbekistan after Siberia, he died of the typhus epidemic. My, the two uncles who were with my grandfather, and two of the children, two of the boys, er, after the war, they ended up in Israel. No, they, they left for Czechoslovakia originally - that's right - where one of my cousins became a journalist and his, his parents and younger brother went to Israel. Yeah, unfort-, unfortunately they're all gone now.

01:21:21:14

Interviewer

Okay. Your grandmother has written beautifully, hasn't she, but she's crammed every single space with information.

01:21:31:14

Marcel Anisfeld

Absolutely. Both sides. Er, as I said, the letters are written in, in German, although she spoke perfect German and French. She was ed-, educated, part of her education was actually in Vienna before the war. And she, and she also understand, she played the harp

ARTEFACT 3: Marcel's childhood autograph book

Scan 30: lady

Scan 48: village	01:21:52:16 Marcel Anisfeld o/o/v [sound only] I'm holding a little book, autograph book,
Marcel wide [on the Red camera]	which, which says, and the front says,
Scan 2: Belong to Marcel Anisfeld	"Belong to Marcel Anisfeld." Not 'belongs', 'belong', which were my first bit of English writing.
Page with a drawing of a tower or a lighthouse	[...]This goes back to 1945, just before the war finished and, er,
Scan 61: sketch of a village on the left hand side.	I took it with me from, from Russia to, to Poland, er, and then to England. So, I've got children's
	Sound & picture comments here in memory from, from Russia, from Poland and from my school in England
Scan 55: writing with Carnation flower on right	Marcel Anisfeld o/o/v and some, some of the messages are in different languages. In fact,
Page 32 & 33: Hebrew, left hand page, 'Ruta Federbusz' right hand page.	I've got one here in, in Hebrew as well. I, I'm not sure, er, who wrote that and I don't know what it means.
Scan 42: child advertising Palmin	Marcel Anisfeld o/o/v But some of the messages, these are all from children between the age of nine
	Marcel iv and, and 12. If you read them you understand that they sound like they've been, they've been written by adults. Very, very moving messages [...]
Scan 13: Page 23: message and fish	One, one of them says, er, to do with religion, "Be a Jew, act as a Jew, and God, God will look after you the rest of your life." Isn't that?
	Marcel Anisfeld iv

	Could you believe nine, ten-year-old child in this day and age writing a message like that? Unless they came from a very, very religious family.
Scan 20: Page with a cut out flower from an advertisement for Carnation Milk	Marcel Anisfeld o/o/v Do you remember, Carnation Milk? This, this was cut out from a, a label, Carnation Milk,
	Marcel iv and d, different fishes from cans,
Scan 69: fish	Marcel Anisfeld o/o/v cans of, er, tuna and
Scan 34: Page with Fr Christmas	Marcel o/o/v Father Christmas. This, this came from, er, packages that we received
Page 21: cut out picture of a tuna with a pen corner turned back & 'sekret'	in Bukhara from, er, you know, from the UNRRA organisation.
Scan 56 Page 109: with tinned fish	So we used to cut, cut off the labels and stick 'em into the -,
Scan 66: flowers on right	It's very, very, Butterflies and flowers.
	Marcel iv Some very moving messages. Some of them which
Scan 73: Page 142 & 143: blurry tin on the right hand page	I can't understand because they're written har, hurriedly by children and -, but
Scan 65: Pages 126 & 127: elaborate flower on the left hand page, fish on right	quite a few, I, I understand. It's very, very cl, only
	this little thing which, hand, handmade, it's, it's been cut from a large book, and, er, which I made myself with cot-, cotton, wool and this, this is, you know, over, over 70 years old. And, the, the paper, you can see how it's aged. And it's, it's very, very important to me and, er, I try not to,
Scan 31 Page 59: rose on the right hand page	I did lose it for a number of years and now I've found it again. I'll try not to lose it again.

FS7 head & shoulders	01:25:15:04 Interviewer Why, why do you think you made that book? What do you think prompted you as a young boy to record your journey?
	01:25:21:24 Marcel Anisfeld I, I think, I think
Pages 16 & 17: page signed by his English teacher	o/o/v most young kids, maybe not in England, but, er, in, in Poland, most kids had,
Scan 37: boy on a pig blowing a horn	you know, [...] something to remember of their childhood.
Scan 63: signed by friends in Bukhara	Unfortunately most of the names don't mean anything to me now but some, some do.
Scan 49: signed by Martin Haw	Especially the ones from, from my school in Brighton. It means a lot to me.
	01:25:52:20 Interviewer Do you remember feeling angry at that point of your life that you were moving around so much?
	01:25:58:07 Marcel Anisfeld I, I didn't know any better. I'll be quite honest with you. The, the worst part was when we had to leave our parents in, in Poland and come to England. And be, before that, as a five, six, seven-year-old child, I mean, we suffered. I didn't know any better. I didn't remember from when I was three and four-year-old where we had all the luxuries. I couldn't remember those days.
	So like most children, we had to fight. In, in other instants, er, I'm ashamed to say now, but in, in Bukhara during the war, there was a big market there. I used to go and steal things from, things

	<p>that were laid out on the ground. Didn't tell my parents about it. <i>[Laughs]</i> Mai, mainly food.</p>
	<p>Because we were, we never had enough food. And, er, the weather there, extremely, excruciatingly hot. And not far away from where we lived, there was a swimming pool, an outdoor pool. It was open to the public. Didn't have to buy tickets or anything like that. We used to go there.</p>
	<p>In the heat, used to go there for a swim to cool off. Stay there for a while, started making my way home, by the time I got half-way home, I was too hot. I went back again. I did that three or four times. <i>[Laughs]</i> But, we had no, we had no clothes. Neither my sister or I had any decent clothes. I had a pair of, a pair of shorts. No, no shoes. And, er, we were very jealous.</p>
	<p>From time to time, we used to see visitors from, possibly from America, coming to our, to Bukhara. Er, there was, to, to look around – tourists - and they were beautifully dressed, colourful clothes, which, you know, we didn't, didn't have.</p>
	<p>But, er, life went on and, as I said, we, we, children didn't know any better. Obviously my parents would have suffered a lot more than we did. That's why unfortunately they both died at a very young age, through all the bad times that we had. But at least we lived together, saw us both, both my sister and me married and, er, we lost them too early. Much too early.</p>
	<p>01:28:43:17 Interviewer Holding that book connects you to a very sad part of your life?</p>
	<p>01:28:50:06 Marcel Anisfeld</p>

	It does.
	01:28:53:07 Interviewer Can you tell me about how that makes you feel?
	01:28:59:10 Marcel Anisfeld [Sighs] Well, in a way it makes me feel sad that we had to struggle as we did. But in a way, I must say that we survived the bad times and for many years now, without my parents, without my wife's parents - they both died quite early as well - we've had a good, good life, wonderful marriage, wonderful grandchildren and looking forward to the next generation. Our eldest grandson got married last year and we're looking forward to the next generation.
FS7: head and shoulders	01:29:37:19 Interviewer OK, so if you could just read me a couple of your messages just before we finish.
Marcel wide [Red camera]	01:29:40:09 Marcel Anisfeld Right, er, one of the messages from a young lady who passed away some years ago, but she was married to, er, one of our best friends here in London, she wrote, er, on the 18th of June 1947,
Scan 62: 'I am no poet'	'I am no poet, I have no fame, but I'll do you a favour and I'll sign my name.' This, this is a girl of about 12 and a half, 13 years of age. I was three or four months younger than her.
Scan: 'Rita' [cowboy on a camel stamp]	Another one here by, er, signed by a lady called Rita, I got a lot more girls' names in here than boys, I wonder why. 'Um, when the golden sun is settling
FS7: head and shoulders	and the path no more is trod, sorry,

Scan Page with Rita's poem repeated	you, your name in gold will be written in the book of God', best wishes, Rita.
Wide: Red camera	01:30:41:11 Interviewer Why did that make you feel sad?
	01:30:44:06 Marcel Anisfeld I don't know, but it did.
Scan: Carnation & butterfly page.	Best wishes for the future, a good friend mine David Berkowitz, 'four hours before the biology GCE.'
Marcel wide [Red camera]	This is a poem in Polish, but I'll try and, try and translate it
	<i>Polish words</i>
	It's from my sister, I'll translate it:
Scan 75: Tusia Anisfeld's poem	'How many leaves there are in a forest, how many stars there are in the sky so I love you, in memory of my dearest brother for, for memory, your loving sister, Tusia Anisfeld.
	Marcel iv My aunt when she came to England, my aunt changed her name from Tusha to Jacqueline, which I don't think my sister was very happy about, but. No I can't, it's a Polish one, it's very difficult to read.

PRAYER

FS7	Can I, if, if, if we're finished the question, can I make a dedication to my beloved parents, my beloved grandparents, er, my beloved parents-in-law, and the six million Jews who died. I'd like to make a Kaddish. Will that be in order?
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	<p>01:32:55:09 Interviewer Of course it will be. Thank you</p>
	<p>Translation of the <i>kaddish</i> 01:32:58:13 Glorified and sanctified be God's great name throughout the world which He has created according to His will. May He establish His kingdom in your lifetime and during your days, and within the life of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon; and say, Amen. May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity. Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that are ever spoken in the world; and say, Amen. May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen. He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may He create peace for us and for all Israel; and say, Amen.</p>
	<p>Thank you for interviewing me, and thank you. I hope my grandchildren and their children will be able to see this and lead a traditional life and be friendly with everyone around. Peace, peace we want worldwide and happiness. Thank you very much for everything.</p>